Negation and (lack of) DO-support
in a case of pseudo-archaic English

Introduction

Aim: to describe and account for a case of **register variation** in English.

Corpus: *The Silmarillion* (J.R.R. Tolkien), fantasy literature – the language of the book is an idiolect, displaying a particular '**peripheral grammar**'.

Target structure: **negative sentences** – there is language-internal **parametric variation** with respect to the **raising of main (lexical) verbs**

Method: provide a **quantitative and qualitative description** of negation with and without *DO*-support.

1. Pseudo-archaic English – general characteristics

Lexicon:

o **archaic and/or poetic words**: Ns: *raiment, thrall, thralldom*, the plural *brethren;* Vs: *to halt, to hearken, to essay*, Advs: *nigh, ere, afar, apace*

(1) a. Eregion was <u>nigh to</u> the great mansions of the Dwarves. (= close)
   b. … and <u>well-nigh all</u> the dragons were destroyed. (= almost)
   c. Thingol was long silent <u>ere</u> he spoke. (= before)
   d. None have ever come back from the mansions of the dead, <u>save only</u> Beren son of Barahir. (= except)

o **unusual usage of some of the verbs**: *to stay* – sometimes used as a transitive verb (= 'to stop')

(2) a. Fëanor followed him, and at the door of the king's house <u>he stayed him</u>.
   b. … for the Orcs wavered, and their onslaught <u>was stayed</u>.

o **lack of semantic bleaching:** *to will* – full verb (= 'to want, to decide')

(3) Therefore <u>he willed</u> that the hearts of Men should seek beyond the world.

Morphology:

o **verbal endings** retained in the language of the characters: 2nd sg *-st* (*hast, dost, knowest, saist, namest etc.*) and 3rd sg *–th* (*hath, attempteth, rejoiceth, seeth etc.*)

o *BE* – occurrences of the forms *art* and *wert* (2nd sg).

o **personal pronouns** – the number distinction is conserved: **2nd sg** *thou* (Nom.) – *thee* (Acc.) – *thy* (Gen.) – *thine* (Gen. predicative) **vs**. **2nd pl** *ye* (Nom.) – *you* (Acc.) – *your* (Gen.) – *yours* (Gen. predicative).

Syntax:

o **traces of differential auxiliary selection** for the perfect aspect (for unaccusative verbs, *BE* instead of *HAVE*, just like in Old English).

(4) a. For the Noldor <u>were become</u> fierce and desperate.
   b. But in the morning when the storm <u>was passed</u>…

o **nominal expressions** – a handful of scattered **post-nominal adjectives** → the noun could raise to a higher functional projection within the DP

(5) a. <u>Tears unnumbered</u> ye shall shed!
   b. … the wells of <u>sorrow unfathomed</u> at the foundations of the Earth

2. Negation in *The Silmarillion*

Classification of negation:

I. **word (affixal) negation** – takes scope over a single word and is expressed by means of an inherently negative affix: *immeasurable, unmoved, unrest, discontent etc.*

II. **phrasal or constituent negation** - takes scope over a certain phrase but does not render the whole utterance negative:

(6)   a.   … his kin, that dwelt [<u>not</u> [AdvP far away.]]

       b.   But the delight of Aulë is [PP in the deed of making], and [PP in the thing made], and [<u>neither</u> [PP in possession]] [<u>nor</u> [PP in his own mastery]].

III. <u>**sentential (nexal, clausal) negation**</u> – the negative element takes scope over the entire clause

  i. **in the lexical domain** – negative quantifiers:

(7)   a.   As yet [DP <u>no</u> flower] had bloomed.

       b.   Swiftly the wolf grew, until he could creep [PP into <u>no</u> den].

       c.   … you may [PP by <u>no</u> means] pass through the realm of King Thingol;

       d.   They swore an oath which <u>none</u> shall break, and <u>none</u> should take.

       e.   and he sat (…) in the deepest shadows of his house, speaking to <u>none</u>.

       f.   … for <u>nothing</u> could escape the sight and scent of Huan.

       g.   He forgets <u>nothing</u>, and he knows all things that shall be.

       h.   Therefore <u>naught</u> was done at that time.

       i.   … for they <u>never</u> beheld the Light that was before the Sun and Moon.

       j.   Then she halted in wonder, and fled <u>no more</u>, and Beren came to her.

       k.   From the shadow of death you can <u>no longer</u> save Lúthien.

       l.   He dwells <u>nowhere</u> long, but moves in all the deep waters about or under the Earth.

  ii. **in the Left Periphery (CP layer)** – *neither* and *nor* are used as **negative complementizers**, introducing sentential negation

(8)   a.   …he swore an oath to her ¹/ that he would <u>neither</u> slay Beren ²/ <u>nor</u> imprison him ³/.

       b.   The Orcs made <u>no</u> boast of that duel at the gate ¹/; <u>neither</u> do the Elves sing of it, for their sorrow is too deep ²/.

       c.   … and I will maintain my power in the Vale of Sirion ¹/ (…), so that <u>none</u> shall mark thy going ²/, <u>nor</u> shall any find there the hidden entrance against thy will ³/.

iii. **in the functional domain (IP layer)**

  i. **raising verbs:** copula, auxiliaries, modals

(9)   a.   … and I would weep, if I <u>were not</u> so weary.

       b.   But this Man <u>is not</u> Beren.

       c.   The fate of Men after death <u>is not</u> in the hands of the Valar.

       d.   In that time the woodmen <u>were not troubled</u> by the Orcs.

       e.   Ilúvatar <u>has not revealed</u> what he purposes for the Elves after the World's end, and Melkor <u>has not discovered</u> it.

       f.   This kingdom thou <u>shalt not take</u> for thine own!

       g.   I <u>will not debate</u> with you, Dark Elf.

       h.   … for she <u>might not endure</u> the cold and the pathless voids.

       i.   Further counsel I <u>cannot give</u>.

       j.   Melkor hated the Sea, for he <u>could not subdue</u> it.

       k.   … for those who will defend authority against rebellion <u>must not</u> themselves <u>rebel</u>.

  ii. <u>**main (lexical) verbs**</u> – two strategies:

    A. **DO-support** – the normal (and the only) strategy in contemporary Standard English

(10)   Thus Elendil held himself in readiness, and <u>did not meddle</u> in the evil deeds of those days; and ever he looked for a sign that <u>did not come</u>.

    B. **Raising** – impossible in the contemporary language; belongs to an earlier stage of English (15th – 16th centuries)

(11)   Then Thingol fortified the marches of his realm, and <u>went not</u> to war, nor any out of Doriath save Mablung and Beleg (…). To them Thingol gave leave to go, so long as they <u>served not</u> the sons of Fëanor.

Quantitative overview:

TOTAL	Sentential negation			Constituent Negation
	in the functional domain (IP layer)	in the lexical domain (negative quantifiers)	Left Periphery (CP negation)	
	714	542	88	
1426	1344			82

TOTAL IP negations	714
RAISING VERBS (auxiliaries and modals)	416
MAIN (lexical) VERBS	298

Used strategy	Total = 298	Percentage
DO-support	123	41.28 %
Raising of the lexical verb	175	58.73 %

DO-support vs. Raising – distribution:

- main verb negations that are immediately followed by **another** negation expressed by **raising** of an **auxiliary** tend to adopt the raising strategy as well:

  (12) a. The oath <u>says not</u> that we <u>may not</u> bide our time

  b. … and though they <u>knew not who</u> in truth he was they <u>would not</u> admit him to that land.

  c. … and though he <u>knew not</u> yet that Maedhros <u>had not</u> forgotten him at the burning of the ships…

- **the lexical verb** *to have* (with its possessive meaning) resorts to the raising construction when it is in the proximity of the auxiliary HAVE

  (13) And thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that <u>hath not</u> its uttermost source in me (…). For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself <u>hath not imagined</u>.

- there are certain fragments (paragraphs or even pages) where **one strategy seems to be predominant**

➔ tendency towards uniformity!

- **BUT:** sometimes the two strategies may **co-occur** in the **same** complex **sentence**:

  (14) a. This was known to the kings, but they <u>hindered it not</u>, so long as the Elendili departed from their land and <u>did not return</u>.

  b. … and he <u>saw not</u> to the depths of Melkor's heart, and <u>did not perceive</u> that all love had departed from him for ever.

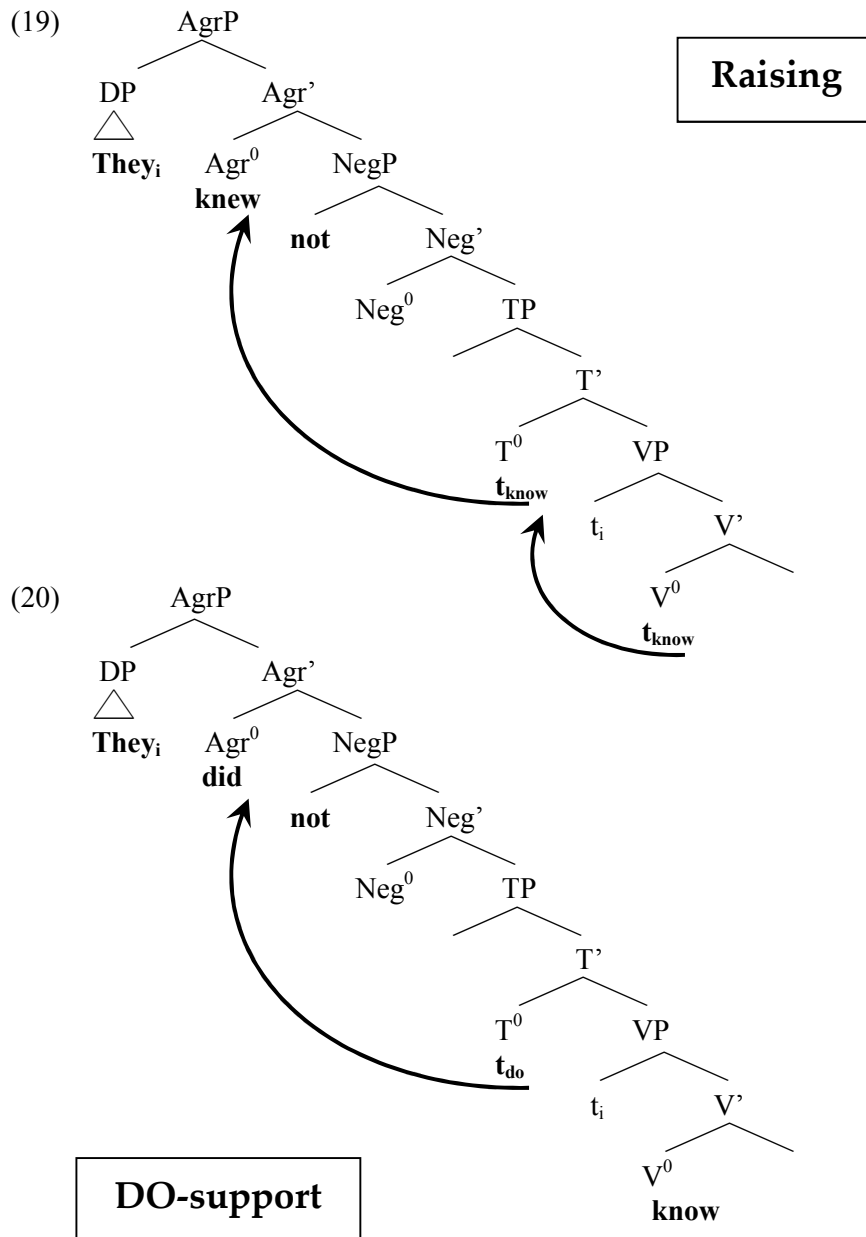- **negative questions** - always employ the standard non-raising strategy:

  (15) a. <u>Do I not strike</u> near the truth?

  b. <u>Dost thou not see</u> that these things have a life of their own…?

- **negative imperatives:**

  (16) <u>Do not flaunt</u> the title of your wife before me!

  (17) a. <u>Doubt not</u> the power of Morgoth Bauglir!

  b. <u>Slay him not</u>, but lead him hither to the King's judgement!

  c. <u>Enter not</u> into it!

  d. <u>Let them not</u> so swiftly <u>forget</u> that their father is a lord of the Noldor!

  (18) a. <u>Be not hasty!</u>

  b. <u>Do not be troubled!</u>

➔ no real coherent pattern!

3. DO-support vs. Raising – syntactic structures:

(19)

```
              AgrP
             /    \
           DP      Agr'
           △      /    \
        Theyᵢ   Agr⁰    NegP
                knew    /    \
                      not     Neg'
                             /    \
                          Neg⁰     TP
                                  /   \
                                       T'
                                      /   \
                                    T⁰     VP
                                  t_know  /   \
                                        tᵢ    V'
                                               \
                                               V⁰
                                             t_know
```

Raising

(20)

```
              AgrP
             /    \
           DP      Agr'
           △      /    \
        Theyᵢ   Agr⁰    NegP
                did     /    \
                      not     Neg'
                             /    \
                          Neg⁰     TP
                                  /   \
                                       T'
                                      /   \
                                    T⁰     VP
                                   t_do   /   \
                                        tᵢ    V'
                                               \
                                               V⁰
                                              know
```

DO-support

4. Account and Conclusions

The data can only be explained from a **diachronic perspective**. By retracing the steps of the rise of DO-support in Standard English, one can see that Tolkien's language suffers a **reverse process** as an effect of the fact that main verbs can still undergo raising.

According to a theory of **Grammar Competition** (Kroch 1989, 1994), linguistic change consists in the **resetting of a Parameter**: at a certain moment in time, speakers of a language may have **two alternative grammars**, which differ with respect to one Parameter. But a process of selection takes place, one of the two variants is gradually eliminated, and the Parameter receives a **new value**.

Thus, I would like to propose that Tolkien's *Silmarillion* language has been **artificially brought back** to the stage in which English had two alternative grammars, with different values for the raising Parameters (like in **the 15th century**). There is, therefore, some minor **code-switching** happening whenever the author selects one of the two strategies. In this way, the language of the corpus is **peripheral grammar** in itself, but, in addition to this, it includes **two separate sub-grammars** that give rise to the two constructions. The fact that the data includes comparable numbers of instances of the two strategies and that no apparent pattern can be discerned is another argument in favor of this **unbalanced state** of the **two alternative systems**.

As to **the reasons** for which this apparent **reversal of language change** has been made, we should take a **sociolinguistic approach**. It is a generally-accepted fact (Butters 2001: 201) that speakers speak according to a set of expectations (related to genre, social class *etc*.). This idea can be applied to books as well: **books are written as the readers expect them to be written** – or, at least this is true in the case of *The Silmarillion*. The author and the editor knew that fans **expected an 'old' book**. Its special status as the 'background' for Tolkien's other works, the fact that the plot is set in the earliest eras of his fantasy universe and the author's **esthetic preference** for a seemingly 'older, higher' language have led to the creation of a **register which adopts some structures of earlier stages** of the language, *i.e.*, **a pseudo-archaic peripheral grammar**.

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