

The Middle Dutch negative clitic: status, position and disappearance

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The syntactic and prosodic properties of the Middle Dutch negative prefix *ne/en* have baffled researchers. De Haan & Weerman (1984) have analyzed it by assigning it a dual status as an element which is syntactically a proclitic (since it must appear to the left of the finite verb), but phonologically an enclitic. I will adopt this proposal, but make one amendment, to wit, that while the syntactic status as a proclitic is absolute, the phonological status as an enclitic may be overridden by other concerns. Nonetheless, I argue that it is the enclitic properties of *en/ne*, in combination with its semantic vacuity (I take it to be meaningless, except for a few archaic constructions), which have led to its ultimate demise in early modern Dutch.

Reference:

Ger de Haan en Fred Weerman (1984), 'Taaltypologie, taalverandering en mogelijke grammatica's: het Middelnederlandse *en*,' in: *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 100, 161-190.

Ger de Haan en Fred Weerman (1984), "Taaltypologie, taalverandering en mogelijke grammatica's: het Middelnederlandse *en*," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 100, 161-190.