

## Negation – Subject Embedded Word Order

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### 1. Introduction

The canonical embedded word order in Mainland Scandinavian is S(ubject)-Neg(ation)/(Sentential) Adv(erb)-F(inite)V(erb). However, the negation may precede the subject, see (1) below. Also sentential adverbs other than negation may sometimes precede the subject, at least in Norwegian (see the dialect data in Johannessen & Garbacz 2011:175 and the discussion in Bentzen 2009, [Bentzen 2014](#)) and in Swedish (Teleman et al. 1999:IV:19). Here, mainly the embedded Neg-S word order will be discussed.

- (1) a. Det var synd att **inte jag** var med. (Swe.)  
*it was pity that not I was with*  
'It's a pity that I didn't come along.'
- b. Takk og lov at **ikke jeg** hørte på jordmora. (Norw.)  
*thanks and praise that not I listened on midwife.DEF*  
'How lucky that I didn't listen to the midwife.'
- c. ...hvis **ikke I** vil betale extra (Danish)  
*If not you.PL want-to pay extra*  
'...if you don't want to pay extra.'

According to both Faarlund et al. (1997:891) and Teleman et al. (1999:IV:94-95), the embedded Neg-S word order normally implies that the following subject get stress (unstressed subjects consequently appear before the negation) and it is further attested in an array of embedded clause types, being particularly frequent in Swedish conditional clauses (Teleman et al. 1999 IV:466). The embedded Neg-S word order is normally absent in Faroese and Icelandic.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Nordic Syntax Database (NSD)

The Neg-S embedded word order was tested in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian, cf. (2) and (3) below.

- (2) a. Vi spikade fast tavlan för att **inte den** skulle ramla ner (#866) (Swe.)

*we nailed firmly picture for that not it shall fall down*  
*DEF INF*

‘We nailed the picture (to the wall) so it wouldn’t fall down.’

- b. Så limte vi den til hylla for att **ikke den** skulle falle ned. (#866) (Norw.)

*then glued we it to shelf.DEF for that not it should fall down*

‘Then we glued it onto the shelf so that it wouldn’t fall down.’

- c. Så hæftede vi den til hylden for att **ikke den** skulle falde ned. (#866) (Danish)

*then glued we it to shelf.DEF for that not it should fall down*

‘Then we glued it onto the shelf, so that it wouldn’t fall down.’

- (3) a. Det var på den tiden då **inte vi** hade TV/bredband (#869)(Swe.)

*it was on the time when not we had TV/broadband*  
*DEF*

‘It was back in those days when we didn’t have TV.’

- b. Det var dengang da **ikke vi** hadde fjernsyn. (#869) (Norw.)

*it was that.time when not we had TV*

‘It was back in those days when we didn’t have television.’

- c. Det var dengang da **ikke vi** havde fjernsyn. (#869) (Danish)

*it was that.time when not we had TV*

‘It was back in those days when we didn’t have TV.’

The embedded Neg-S word order in the test sentences (2c) and (3c) is never accepted in Denmark, while (2a) and (3a) are judged as grammatical in almost all the Finnish locations and in the majority of the Swedish ones. In Norway the acceptability judgements vary between the sentence (2b) and (3b). The sentence (2b) is generally accepted by more informants compared to (3b), and the positive judgements

come mostly from Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal, Trøndelag, and Nordland. (2b) is rejected by the vast majority of informants from Southern and Eastern Norway in addition to the northernmost province of Finnmark. (3b) is only seldom judged as grammatical in Norway (Aremark in Østfold, Kristiansand in Vest-Agder, Kalvåg and Luster in Sogn og Fjordane, Skreia in Oppland, and Namndalen in Nord-Trøndelag). This is shown in Map 1 and Map 2 below.



Map 1: Embedded Neg-S word order in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish

(#866: *Vi spikade fast talvln för att inte den skulle ramla ner. 'We nailed the picture (to the wall) so it wouldn't fall down.'* / *Så limte vi den til hylla for at ikke den skulle falle ned. 'So we glued it onto the shelf so it wouldn't fall down.'*)

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).



Map 2: Embedded Neg-S word order in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish

(#869: *Det var på den tiden då inte vi hade TV/breband. 'It was back in those days when we didn't have TV/broadband.'*)

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score)

The embedded Neg-S word order was broadly tested in Denmark in clauses of reason, (2c) above, concessive clauses, (4), and *that*-clauses embedded under a factive predicate, (5a), under a strong assertive predicate, (5b), and under a non-asserted, non-factive predicate, (5c). The general result is that this word order is rejected in these embedded clause types, with the exception of Århus, where sentence #1336 is accepted and Falster where sentence #1326 is judged as grammatical, see Map 3 and Map 4.

- (4) a. Jeg har tænkt mig at tage med til festen selvom **ikke du** kommer. (#1326)(Da.)

*I have thought me to take with to party.DEF even.if not you come*

‘I have been thinking about going to the party, even if you won’t come.’

- b. Det sjove er at småknægte på (#1336) (Da.)

*the fun is that children on*  
 10-12 år godt kan selvom **ikke**  
*10-12 years well can although not*  
**de** har prøvet det før.  
*they have tried it before*

‘The funny thing is that ten-twelve year-old children can do it although they haven’t tried it before.’

- (5) a. Godt **ikke vi** kørte i grøften. (#1324) (Danish)

*good not we drove in ditch.DEF*

‘It was fortunate that we didn’t drive into the ditch.’

- b. Han sagde at **ikke han** ville. (#1333) (Danish)

*he said that not he wanted-to*

‘He said he didn’t want to.’

- c. Det kan godt være **ikke jeg** har hørt det før. (#1338) (Danish)

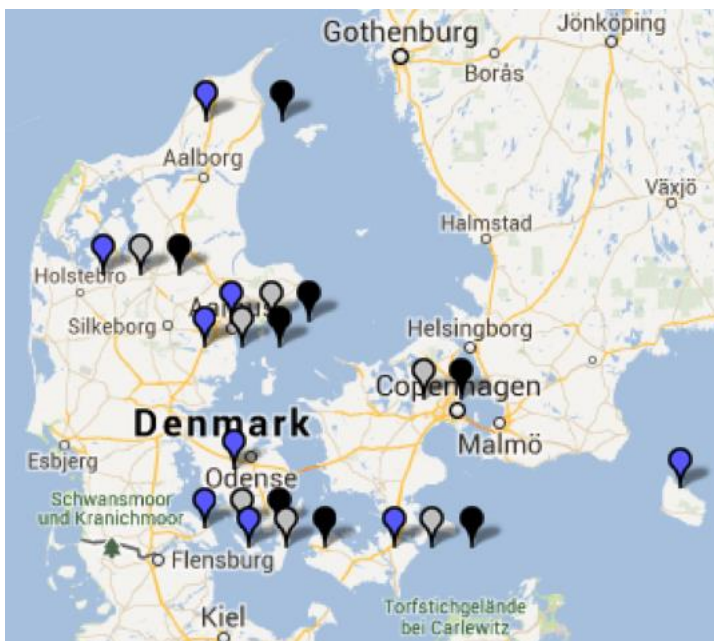
*it can well be not I have heard it before*

‘It is possible that I haven’t heard it before.’



Map 3: The acceptance of test sentences #1326 and #1336 in Denmark

(Blue = places where #1326 has been judged as grammatical, grey = places where #1336 has been judged as grammatical)



Map 4: The acceptance of test sentences #1324, #1333, and #1338 in Denmark

(Blue = places where #1324 has been rejected, grey = places where #1333 has been rejected, black = places where #1338 has been rejected)

Further, the embedded Neg-S word order in Danish was tested in embedded questions, (6), relative clauses, (7), in conditional clauses (8), and in temporal clauses (9). The test sentences in (6) and (7) were rejected univocally, while the sentences in (8) and (9) were accepted in almost all the Danish locations (with the exception of #1330 that were rejected in Falster), see Map 5 below.

- (6) a. Han spurgte hvorfor **ikke hun** kom til tiden. (#1331) (Danish)  
*he asked why not she came to time.DEF*  
 ‘He asked why she didn’t come on time.’
- b. Han spurgte hvem **ikke der** var kommet. (#1332) (Danish)  
*he asked who not there was come*  
 ‘He asked who hadn’t arrived.’
- (7) a. Jeg siger selvfølgelig ikke noget som **ikke jeg** må. (#1337) (Danish)  
*I say of.course not anything that not I must*  
 ‘Of course, I don’t say anything that I don’t have to.’
- b. De ting **ikke han** kunne sælge herhjemme, kunne han tage til København med. (#1339)(Da.)  
*the things not he could sell around.here could he take to Copenhagen with*  
 ‘The things he couldn’t sell around here, he could bring to Copenhagen.’
- (8) Jeg bliver vred hvis **ikke du** gør det nu (#1330) (Danish)  
*I become angry if not you do it now*  
 ‘He will get angry if you don’t do it now.’
- (9) Hvorfor skulle han gøre sig umage når **ikke du** gør din del (#1334)(Da.)  
*why should he do REFL bother when not you make your part*  
 ‘Why should he bother if you don’t do your part?’



Map 5: Neg-S word order in Danish conditional clauses (#1330) and temporal clauses (#1334).

(Blue pins = places where #1330 gets a high score, grey pins = places where #1334 gets a high score).

Finally, the embedded Neg-S word order was tested in two temporal clauses, (10) and (11), and in a purpose clause (12). The purpose clauses have got the most positive judgements from the Danish informants.

- (10) Sålænge **ikke frosten** er gået af (#1328) (Danish)  
*as.long.as not frost.DEF is gone of*  
 jorden kan det ikke betale sig at plante ud.  
*ground.DEF can it not pay REFL to plant out*

‘As long as the soil is frozen, there is no point in planting.’

- (11) Når **ikke der** var flere øller tilbage gik de hjem. (#1335) (Danish)  
*when not there was more beers left went they home*  
 ‘When there were no beers left, they went home.’



(12) Sådan må vi hellre gøre det for **ikke** det bliver for forvirrende (#1341)(Da.)

*Such must we rather do it for not it becomes too confusing*

‘We rather have to do it in this way, so that is doesn’t get too confusing.’

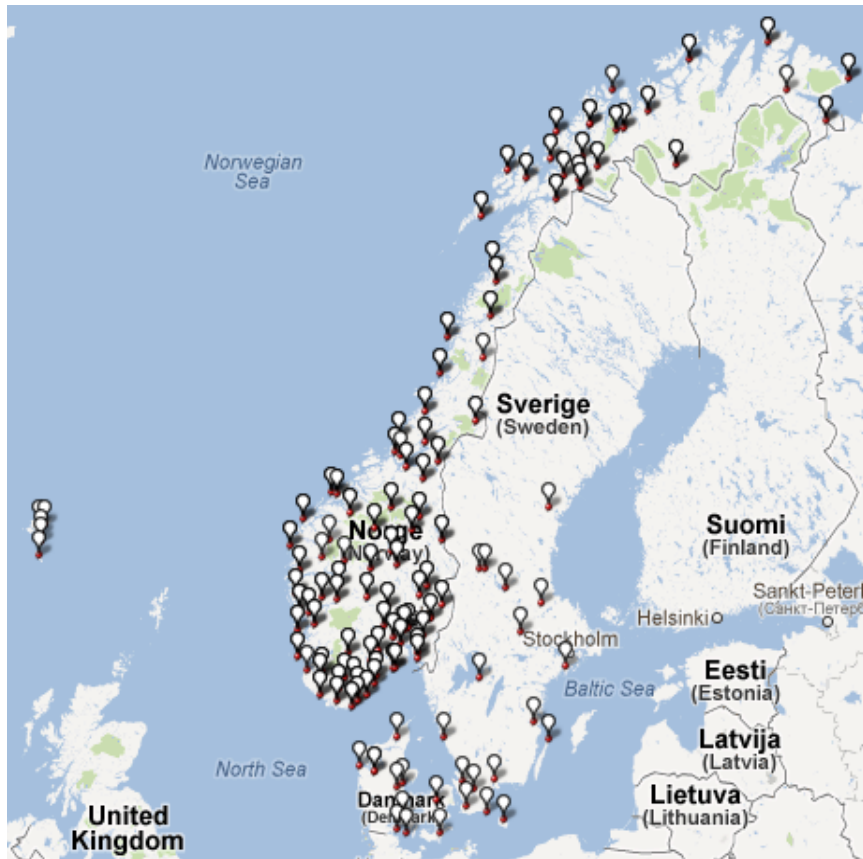


Map 6: *Neg-S* word order in Danish (#1328; #1335; #1341).

(Black pins = places where #1328 gets a high score, blue pins = places where #1335 gets a high score, grey pins = places where #1341 gets a high score).

## 2.2 Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC)

In the NDC, the embedded Adv-S word order (including the embedded Neg-S word order) is broadly attested in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and in the Faroe Islands, see Map 7.



Map 7: Attestations of the embedded Adv-S word order in Scandinavia (White = places of attestation).

However, as can be seen in Map 7, the embedded Adv-S word order is not found in the following two Norwegian areas: (1) parts of Rogaland, Aust-Agder and Telemark and (2) parts of Møre og Romsdal and Sør-Trøndelag, as well as in big parts of Central and Northern Sweden and in Finland. The fact that this word order is unattested in parts of Norway may indicate the existence of an isogloss, but the lack of hits in parts of Sweden and Finland has rather to do with the lack of transcriptions and/or lack of proper tagging of the raw data material from these regions in the NDC.

The embedded Adv/Neg-S word order is thus, as expected, found in the spontaneous data from Norway, (13) and Sweden (14), but it is also present in the Danish and the Faroese part of the NDC.

(13) du E så lat **att** **ikkje** **du** giddar gå i fra Sannvikstårge (Nor.)

*you are so lazy that not you have walk from Sandvikstorget  
the  
energy  
to*

‘You are so lazy that you don’t even have the energy to walk from Sandvikstorget.’ (bergen\_03gm)

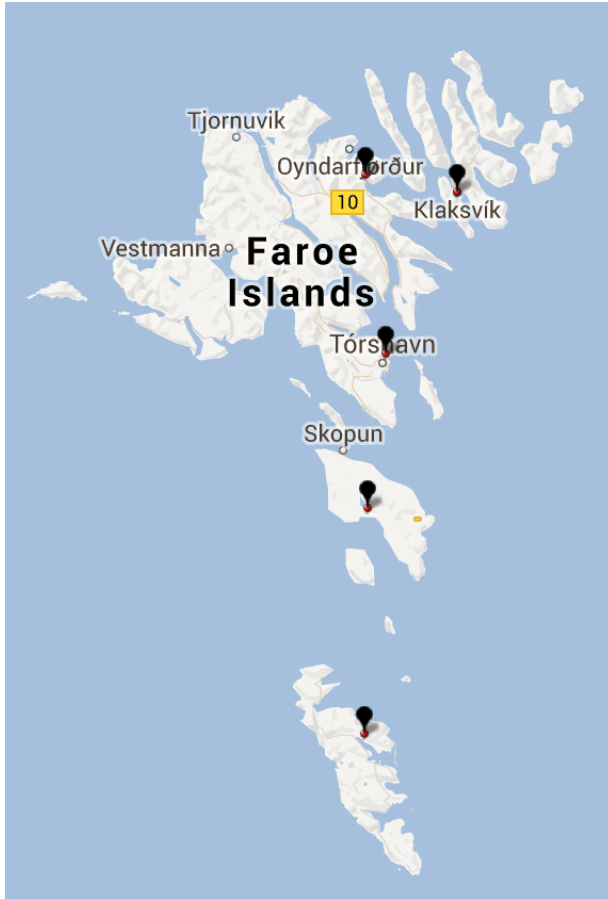
- (14) då kan hända **att inte en** får sitta när en kommer fram (Swedish)  
*then can happen that not one gets sit when one comes there*  
 ‘Then it can happen that you can’t get a sit, when you have got there.’ (leksand\_ow3)

In contrast to what the results from the judgments indicate, the embedded Neg-S word order is not restricted to conditional clauses in Danish in the NDC data, but appears also in temporal clauses (15a) and concessive clauses (15b). Such clauses are normally judged as ungrammatical in the NSD, cf. Section 2 above.

- (15) a. **Når ikke man** har børn # så... (Danish)  
 When not one has children # so  
 ‘if one doesn’t have children, then...’ (falster1)
- b. **selvom inte det** er ret langt herfra (Danish)  
 although not it is right far here.from  
 ‘although it is not far from here’ (harboeere\_48)

Interestingly, in the Faroese part of the NDC, there are a couple of examples of the embedded Neg/Adv-S word order in conditional clauses (26a,b) and in temporal clauses (16c). The places of attestation are shown in Map 8.

- (16) a. **viss ikki babba** kom norð eftir mær (Faroese)  
*if not daddy came north after me*  
 ‘...if my daddy didn’t follow me to the north.’ (sandur\_s9)
- b. **viss nú eg** tosi við ein ein ein ein náttklubbaeigara... (Faroese)  
*if now I speak with a a a a night-club-owner*  
 ‘if I then speak with a night club owner...’ (torshavn\_t34)
- c. hvussu var tað **tá jú tað** er broytt (Faroese)  
*How was it when then it is changed*  
 ‘how is it, when it is changed.’ (fuglafjoerdur\_f25)



Map 8: Attestations of the embedded Adv-S word order in the Faroe Islands (Black = places of attestation).

As stated above, in Norwegian, the Adv/Neg-S word order is not only found in various clause types, but also with various adverbials preceding the subject, (17), and with both stressed subjects and unstressed subjects, (18a) and (18b) respectively.

- (17) a. så velldi rart **att** bærre Ål sjil se ut så velldi (Norwegian)  
*so very strange that only Ål differs REFL out so much*  
 'how very strange that it is only Ål that is so different' (aal\_01um)

- b. e lura på **åmm jeddna** dæi æu hadde oenninga (Norwegian)  
*I wonder on whether possibly they also had o-ending.DEF*  
 'I wonder if they might also have had the o-ending.' (gjesdal\_03gm)

- c. **visst no** vi finn ett dyr somm e sykt (Norwegian)  
*if now we find an animal that is sick*  
 'if we now find an animal that is ill' (kaafjord\_01um)

- (18) a. ja æ velldi fint att **ikke** **jæ** ær de (Norwegian)  
 yes is very nice that not I am it  
 'Yes, it is very good that I'm not like that.' (fredrikstad\_02uk)
- b. ...att **ikke** **mann** får denn på plass (Norwegian)  
 That not one get it on place  
 'that it cannot be finished' (kirkenes\_03gm)

### 3. Discussion

The Neg-S embedded word order is generally judged as grammatical by, and attested in the speech of, the informants speaking Norwegian and Swedish. In Danish, the word order was judged as grammatical in conditional clauses and, to some extent, in purpose clauses. It was also attested in Danish conditional, temporal and concessive clauses in the NDC. The embedded Neg-S word order was neither tested on the Faroe Islands nor on Iceland, but it is attested in the Faroese material. Finally, it is apparent that not only negation, but also other sentential adverbs, can be placed in front of the subject in an embedded clause in Norwegian and Faroese.

#### 3.1 *Embedded Neg-S word order and the subject*

Both Teleman et al. (1999:IV:94-95) and Faarlund et al. (1997:891) claim that the embedded Neg-S word order predominantly co-occurs with a stressed subject. However, the results from the NDC show, in line with Johannessen & Garbacz (2011:175), that subject stress is not a necessary condition for this the embedded Neg-S word order to appear. In Danish, it seems that the subject can follow negation, only when the negation constitutes a unit with the subjunction, or when it is stressed.

Bentzen (2009) has shown that the placement of the indefinite subject in front or behind some adverbs in Northern Norwegian correlates with the reading of the subject. When the indefinite subject follows one or more adverbs, she claims, it can only have a non-specific reading. Since the relevant hits from the NDC almost only contain pronominal or definite subjects, it is difficult to take a position on this issue here.

#### 3.2 *Origin*

The placement of the negation in front of the subject in embedded clauses might have its roots in a development in main clause word order that has been described for the Norwegian dialect of Bergen by Pettersen (1973:49-50). The reduced negation form *ke* (< *ikke*) attaches to the finite verb when the verbal form is a one-syllable word, but not otherwise. It is then regarded as a minimal unit that cannot be separated. The development from the first stage, (19a), through the second stage, (19b), and into the third stage, (19c) is illustrated below.

- (19) a. *Eg har ikke Tid* (Bergen dialect of Norwegian)  
 I have not time
- b. *Eg hakke tid* (Bergen dialect of Norwegian)  
 I haven't time  
 'I have no time.' (Pettersen 1973: 50)
- c. *Nå hakke eg Tid* (Bergen dialect of Norwegian)  
 Now haven't I Time  
 'Now, I have no time.' (Pettersen 1973: 50)

The patterns in (19) are also known from other dialects of Norwegian, cf. Venås (1971).

A similar development can be assumed for embedded clauses: the negation is cliticized to a monosyllabic subjunction and the two then constitute a unit that is not separable. This is in line with the argument presented in Teleman et al. (1999:IV:466), who claim that the negation can - in some cases - be on its way to create a unit together with the preceding subjunction. This is why - according to Teleman et al. (ibid.) - one can find the negation (or a sentential adverb) in front of a stressed subject in an embedded clause. This explains however not the fact that the embedded Neg-S word order can appear after subjunctions that have two or more syllables, see for instance the example in (20).

- (20) *menn # denn bli itt kjørrd ættesåmm itt e ha førekorrt* (Norwegian)  
*but it becomes not driven since not I have driving\_licence.DEF*

'...but it will not drive it, since I don't have a driving licence.' (roeros\_01um)

In such examples, it seems that the subject is always stressed (another condition for the embedded Neg-S word order mentioned in Section 1). This is the case of (20) and that this fact makes it possible for the adverb to precede the subject, although it is not cliticized to the preceding subjunction.

## References

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### Web sites:

- Nordic Atlas of Language Structures (NALS) Journal: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nals>
- Nordic Dialect Corpus: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html>
- Nordic Syntax Database: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html>