The distribution of *non*, *nenny* and *non fait* in Pre-Classical and Classical French

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Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est de tracer l'évolution de l'emploi des marqueurs *nenny*, *non* + verbe (*non fait*) et *non* en emploi absolu entre le milieu du XVᵉ siècle et la fin du XVIIIᵉ. En moyen français, *non* recouvre déjà tous les usages des marqueurs anciens *nenny* et *non fait*, mais il reste minoritaire. En français préclassique (1550–1650), la fréquence de *nenny* et de *non fait* diminue considérablement et, en français classique (1650–1789), ils deviennent archaïques. Au milieu du XVIIᵉ siècle, *non* assume définitivement les fonctions des marqueurs médiévaux, qui disparaissent. L'analyse de la distribution temporelle de ces marqueurs permet de dater la transition entre les usages anciens et les modernes. Nombre d'études portant sur des phénomènes phonétiques, morphologiques et syntaxiques ont cherché aussi à dater le tournant entre la langue médiévale et la langue « classique », qui a lieu pendant la période dite « pré-classique ». Cette recherche veut contribuer également à la réflexion sur la position de la frontière entre le français pré-classique et classique par des critères pragmatiques. Les résultats permettent de situer cette frontière plutôt dans la décennie 1620–1630, comme d'autres recherches l'ont fait des pour des phénomènes morphosyntaxiques.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to track the evolution in the use of the markers *nenny*, *non* + verb (*non fait* 'no, it doesn't') and *non* in its absolute use between the middle of the 15th century and the end of the 18th. In Middle French, *non* already covers all the uses of the old markers *nenny* and *non fait*, but it remains in the minority. In Pre-Classical French (1550–1650), the frequency of *nenny* and *non fait* decreases considerably and, in Classical French (1650–1789), they become archaic. In the mid-17th century, *non* definitively assumes the functions of the medieval markers, which disappeared. The analysis of the temporal distribution of these markers helps to date the transition from ancient to modern uses. Several studies of phonetic, morphological and syntactic phenomena have also aimed to date the turning point between the medieval and the "classical" language, which occurs during the so-called "pre-classical" period. This research also seeks to contribute to the debate on the position of the boundary between Pre-Classical and Classical French on the basis of pragmatic criteria. The results support placing this boundary within the decade 1620–1630, as other studies did for morphosyntactic phenomena.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article we analyse the evolution of the distribution of the response particles *nenny* and *non*, and the disagreement responsive structure *non* followed by a finite verb – *non feray* ('I won't do this'), *non est* ('it's not'), *non a* ('he hasn't') –, in drama texts from the mid-15th to the late 17th century. The mid-17th century is considered a turning point in the history of French, as it corresponds to the culmination and the beginning of several morphosyntactic changes. For linguists such as Combettes (2003) and Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2008), this turn describes the transition from Pre-Classical to Classical French. More recently, new studies (Ayres-Bennett and Caron, 2016; Amatuzzi *et al.*, 2020) have examined the dating of this delimitation, proposing new dates and new perspectives on the periodization of French. An additional aim is to contribute to the discussion regarding the boundary between Pre-Classical and Classical French by analysing pragmatic data – the use of the (dis)agreement markers *nenny*, *non* and *non* + V –, instead of morphosyntactic data, which is more usual in this type of study.

The question of periodization underlies any research in diachrony. In a more or less conventional way, linguists describe a specific phenomenon placing it within predefined time boundaries.[1] There is a broad consensus regarding the division of the history of French into five stages: Old French (842–1330), Middle French (1330–1550), Pre-Classical French (1550–1650), Classical French (1650–1789) and Contemporary French (19th and 20th centuries).[2] However, as Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2008: 355) point out, there is nothing immutable about periodization. Indeed, advances in the description of the functioning of the language throughout history make it possible to shift boundaries, establish new ones or remove them altogether.

The segmentation criteria of French are usually based on phonological, morphological, syntactic or lexical phenomena. To the best of our knowledge, there is a regrettable lack of works on periodization based on the study of pragmatic markers[3] (Gómez-Jordana, 2013). In this way, we will evaluate the accuracy of the

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[1]From a methodological point of view, Hilpert (2013: 34) argues that "[a] desirable feature of periodization would be that it operates not on the basis of subjective impressions, but instead on the basis of the data itself." This, in fact, aligns with the aims of the more recent studies cited above.

[2]This division, refined over time, is based, among others, on the work of Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2008; 2010), Combettes (2003) and Marchello-Nizia (1999). These authors, like many others, encourage further research in order to confirm all the stages of this periodization. This is what we will set out to do in this research with the pre-classical period. We use the same terminology as Hansen (2014: footnote 3) for the different stages of the history of French. We include the Pre-Classical French, which does not appear in her proposition of periodization.

[3]Response particles are generally considered part of the grammatical or informational sphere of discourse insofar as they have a polar (or modal) value and represent a previous proposition in its positive or negative form. Only those particles that do not substitute a previous proposition are considered pragmatic particles with an interactional value (Kerbrat-Orecchini, 2001). From our side, we consider that the opposition polarity/interactional value is not always clear-cut, and therefore the analysis of these particles should consider the conversational and pragmatic dimension of the context in which they appear, as argued for *oui*, *non* and *si* in Contemporary French by Plantin (1978) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2001) – among others –, or by Saiz-Sánchez (2020a) for some (dis)agreement markers in Medieval French. To us, response particles

commonly accepted final boundary, namely 1650, from a pragmatic and conversational perspective but also reflect on the relevance of establishing a "Pre-Classical" period in the history of French, through the study of the evolution of the minimal answers *non* and *nenny*[4] and the next to minimal answer (Hakulinen, 2001) *non* + V (*non feray*, *non est*, *non avra...*) from 1450 until the end of the 17th century.

This research is based on a corpus of 865 tokens from Frantext. The qualitative and quantitative analysis conducted will allow us to identify 1. the discourse contexts in which the (dis)agreement markers *non*, *non* + V and *nenny* are used in Middle French, 2. the evolution in the use of each marker, and 3. the dates on which the uses disappear or increase. The results of this study will be compared with those of Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016) and Amatuzzi *et al.* (2020), who identify a break around 1620–1630, rather than 1650. These authors invite further research on other linguistic phenomena in order to confirm their results. This research follows on from theirs considering the role of the three negative markers.

In Old and Middle French, *nennil/nenny* makes the pair with *oïl/ouy*,[5] and *non* + V is one of the members of the structure *si/non* + V (+ pronominal subject) (*si suis, non fait, si arai ge, non fera il...* 'I am', 'it doesn't', 'I'll have', 'he won't do it'). In general terms, the difference in the use of the (dis)agreement markers *oïl/nennil* and *si/non* + V (+ pronominal subject) is based on the type of utterance they respond to: the pair *oïl/nennil* is used to answer "real" questions,[6] i.e. questions that address a request for information where the speaker who asks it has no prior idea about the answer (or presents it as such). In (1), *nennil* rejects or disagrees with the proposition of the question *sont tout li enfant Rose mort et a fin venu?* ('did all the children of Rose die?'):

(1) "(…) Or me dites, amis, apaisiés mon argu:
     sont tout li enfant Rose mort et a fin venu?"
     "*Nennil*", dist Esmerés, au corage esleü,
     "li doy sont en prison a Paris retenu
     et jë en sui li tiers, (…)."
     (*Baudoin de Sebourc*, 1350, p. 177)

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essentially function at a pragmatic level and they should always be analysed within the adjacency pair in which they appear (Schegloff, 2007), i.e. taking into account not only the polarity and modality of the discourse segment to which the particle responds, but also its semantic and pragmatic value as a speech act (Searle, 1969), or as an *action* in the Conversation Analysis terminology (Schegloff, 2007).

[4]Throughout this work, we will use the expressions *non* + V or *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* without differentiating between them in order to schematize markers of the type *non feray*, *non suis*, *non a*, etc. in Medieval French. Similarly, we will only use *nenny* to designate, unless otherwise stated, all the morphological and graphic variants in Medieval French which pair with *oïl/ouy* (*nenil*, *nenni*, *nanil...*).

[5]Originally, *oïl* and *nennil* were formed from the Latin demonstrative pronoun *hoc* and the adverb *ne*, to which was added a personal pronoun corresponding to the subject of the previous utterance. In the early days of Old French, we find a wide variety of forms such as *oie*, *o vos*, *oal*, *naie* or *naje*. From the beginning of the 13th century, these adverbs were no longer perceived as a "construction" syntactically linked to the previous utterance, which resulted in them being fixed with 3rd person pronouns independently of the previous discourse. Despite the syntactic fixation, there was some graphic variety: *oïl*, *ouy*, *oy*, *ouyl*, *nenil*, *nennil*, *nanil*. For further explanations see Denoyelle (2007) or Saiz-Sánchez (2020a: 311–312).

[6]This distinction between real and argumentative questions follows from Diller (1984). The latter corresponds, in English, to "orientation questions".

'– Tell me now, friend, calm my spirit: did all the children of Rose die? – No, says Esmerés, the chosen one for his courage, the two of them are in prison in Paris and I am the third one.'[7]

The pair *si/non* + V (+ pronominal subject) is used mainly to disagree with injunctions and assertions, but also with orientation questions, i.e. requests for confirmation of a point of view asserted more or less explicitly by the speaker. Negative interrogatives, for example, are a type of orientation question: the speaker is already directing his question towards a positive or a negative answer (Heritage, 2002). In (2), *non ferons* disagrees with a request, *Yssiez, je vous en prie* ('I beg you to get out of here'), the most frequent type of sequence in Middle French:

(2)   Et [elle] dit: "*Yssiez*, je vous en prie; (…)!
      – *Non ferons.* "
      (Eustache Deschamps, *Le Miroir de mariage*, 1385, p. 112)
      '– And she says: "I beg you to go out of here! – No, we won't!"'

The detail of these and other uses of *nenny* and *non* + V will be explained in Section 3. The complementary use of the two pairs is well established until the end of Middle French, when *non* in its absolute use – which already exists in Medieval French but is in the minority – becomes much more frequent leading to the decline of *nenny* and *non* + V.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 reflects on how to approach the periodization of Pre-Classical French, which will help us to define some hypotheses. Then, Section 3 describes the uses of *nenny*, *non* + V and bare *non* between 1450 and 1700. Section 4 studies the distribution of these markers during this period on the basis of a corpus of different texts in different genres for Middle French, as well as in purely dramatic texts from 1550 onwards. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the results of the analysis and presents the general conclusions.

2. HOMOGENEITY AND DELIMITATION: THE QUESTION OF PRE-CLASSICAL FRENCH

Periodization roughly consists in establishing boundaries within an object whose evolution is continuous, and as such is problematic: "délimiter des périodes conduit inévitablement à segmenter une réalité caractérisée en fait par la continuité" ('delimiting periods inevitably leads to segmenting a reality characterised in fact by continuity') (Combettes and Marchello-Nizia, 2010: 133). In this incessant evolution, Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2010) distinguish stability periods and instability phases.[8] In both cases, changes occur, but in the stability phases there is an impression of equilibrium, and in the instability phases, an impression of a boiling system.[9] Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2010) also explain that Middle

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[7]All translations into contemporary English are ours. We assume responsibility for any errors.
[8]For further epistemological proposals on how to approach the periodization of languages see Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016: 340–342).
[9]I borrow the expression "boiling system" from Eberenz (1991: 105), who uses it to describe the so-called "classical" period of the Spanish language.

French and Pre-Classical French are unstable periods, which make the transition between more homogeneous or stable language states (Old French and Classical French, in this case).

The periodization of Pre-Classical French is relatively recent compared to the other more or less accepted periods (Medieval French, Classical French and Modern French). Before the isolation of the decades 1550–1650, grammars that described this period in the history of French tended to homogenize the "language of the 17th century" (Gougenheim, 1974) and the "language of the Renaissance" for the earlier decades (Huchon, 1998). The historical division of this period was based, at best, on historical facts related to the French language and the construction of a norm (the publication of the first grammars from 1520 onwards, the creation of the *Académie Française* in 1635, etc.), or simply on a temporal delimitation by centuries, which was much more practical.

In the 1990s, broader studies on the history of French (Picoche and Marchello-Nizia, 1991; Marchello-Nizia, 1999) and more specific ones on the French language of the 16th and 17th centuries (Buridant, 1997) attempted to characterize the language of this period. These studies already noted – or at least perceived – that the French language of the early 16th century did not function like the language of the late 16th and 17th centuries. There was no linguistic homogeneity within these two centuries. It was a "hybrid" period where old and new usages co-existed. Combettes's (2003) publication, based on an analysis of syntactic phenomena, implied the introduction of a "pre-classical" stage in the history of French between 1500 and 1650 (or 1660). A few years later, Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2010) postponed the initial boundary to 1550, on the basis of new linguistic descriptions.

From a linguistic point of view, the pre-classical stage is characterized, among many other features,[10] by the regularization of the demonstrative determiners (base *cet-*) and the paradigms of demonstrative pronouns (base *cil-* and *cel-*), which alternated in Medieval French. The specialization of the pronouns occurs around 1550, while that of the determiners occurs around 1650, the initial and final dates for Pre-Classical French proposed by Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (2010). During this changing period between the 15th and 17th centuries, the sentence order SVO was imposed, which had been limited to VO since the 13th century.[11] As regards the lexicon, certain alternations of the old language were reduced or fixed, as the adverbs *très/beaucoup*, whose modern use was established at the expense of *moult*, or *avant/ains*, whose old term *ains* disappeared at the end of the 16th century.

For authors such as Caron (2002) or Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016: 344) the notion of "instability period" is not compatible with the very notion of "period", since the latter presupposes a homogeneity absent in the notion of "instability". One way of getting around the problem of segmenting a moving object is to use the notion of "chronolect", analogous to that of "dialect" from a diachronic perspective. Thus, relatively brief moments (limited to about thirty years or one generation) could be distinguished where very rapid changes occur which give rise to a new widespread use in a linguistic community. Contrary to what we might think,

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[10]We only mention some of the changes that characterize Pre-Classical French from the works cited above, to which I refer for exhaustive descriptions.

[11]For further studies on the disappearance of the null subject in Medieval French, see Balon and Larrivée (2016) and Prévost and Marchello-Nizia (2020).

changes are not necessarily gradual. There is not always a balance between the old usages and the new ones. Sometimes the change is "dramatic": after a long decline of the old variant, the new variant clearly takes over (Caron, 2002). However, Traugott (2022: 36–37) distinguishes *innovations* and *changes*: innovations are new individual uses of the language that may diffuse (or not) into one or more linguistic communities, giving rise to a change. For her, morphosyntactic change is gradual in the sense that the old and the new uses may co-exist for a long time. This rejects the "catastrophic" hypothesis of the language change. In the lexical domain, the innovations are instantaneous, but their conventionalization process is gradual as well. As Traugott (2022) explains, linguistic change is a matter of language use, so any description of the evolution of language should be based in the analysis of the use of individual speakers in order to determine whether or not a simple innovation spreads leading to an effective change in the language. Thus, a comparison of the frequency of different structures' use (with their different values) provides evidence on the pace of the change process.

Coming back to the Pre-Classical French's periodization, Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016) and Amatuzzi *et al.* (2020) discuss the accuracy of the boundaries proposed by Combettes and Marchello-Nizia (1550–1650), and even the relevance of defining this period characterized by heterogeneity and constant asynchronous changes. It is obvious that the dates used for any periodization are somewhat arbitrary, on the one hand, because changes do not occur overnight, and on the other hand, because the beginning and the end of each evolutionary process do not coincide with those of another evolutionary process. Moreover, the material linguistic traces that attest to the evolution of the language in written texts – mostly of a literary nature – can not be synchronized with real spoken uses. In other words, the literary written discourse is likely to be more conservative than the spontaneous spoken language and innovations will thus be attested later.[12] Research into texts belonging to discourse traditions[13] that are not written and literary can provide new insights into the division of language history (Kabatek, 2012: 40). That is what Amatuzzi *et al.* (2020) have done by looking at sermons and correspondence from the 16th and 17th centuries.[14]

For Caron (2002), the periodization of Pre-Classical French remains inappropriate or somewhat uncertain. In the continuous evolution of French, Caron observes a break in the 1620s, and Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016) and Amatuzzi *et al.* (2020) confirm a very abrupt transition phase around 1630. Among the morphosyntactic innovations described in these two studies are the reduction of

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[12]"Le plus grand nombre des innovations, puis changements repérés à l'écrit sont en fait la trace de changements survenus à l'oral." ('The greatest number of innovations, and then changes identified in written language are in fact the result of changes that occurred in spoken language.') (Marchello-Nizia, 2014: 166).

[13]Discourse traditions are the linguistic conventions that characterize the different discourse genres (graphic or phonic) in a given language community. Discourse traditions are subject to diachronic, diatopic and other variations. For more comprehensive presentations of this notion, we refer to Koch (1997), Oesterreicher (1997) or Kabatek (2005).

[14]"En faisant l'analyse des sources de nature différente, qui pourraient attester des usages émergents, nous avons la possibilité de voir si on arrive à une périodisation différente, et notamment d'examiner si l'usage littéraire est plutôt conservateur par rapport aux genres plus informels, plus spontanés, ou plus proches de l'oral." ('By analysing sources of a different nature, which could attest to emerging uses, we have the possibility of researching for a different periodization, and in particular of examining whether literary use is rather conservative compared to more informal, spontaneous, or oral genres.') (Amatuzzi *et al.*, 2020: 302).

allomorphic bases of verbal paradigms (*véquit/vécut*), the specialization as pronouns or determiners of ambivalent morphemes (*chacun/chacune*), the rise of clitic pronouns between the verb and the infinitive (*je le veux faire/je veux le faire*), or the classification either as adverbs or prepositions of certain terms (*dedans*, *dessous*, *dessus*, *dehors*). All these morphosyntactic evolutionary processes go through a turning point in the 1620s, either because the progressive changes accelerate by selecting the modern usage, or because the old usages start to fall into decline.

Our study on the evolution of the use of the (dis)agreement markers *non*, *nenny* and *non + estre/avoir/faire* does not seek to describe a more relevant change than the morphosyntactic ones mentioned above. Aware that the evolution of language is not continuous at any level (morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic), our aim is to provide arguments based on the change of a pragmatic feature – using a specific corpus – in order to support Combettes and Marchello-Nizia's (2010) periodization or Ayres-Bennett and Caron's (2016) one.

The following section presents the evolution of the use of the Medieval French markers *nenny* and *non + estre/avoir/faire*, which disappear in the course of the 17th century.[15] We will identify the moment when *non* in its absolute use assumes the role of the former markers. The aim is to determine whether the years 1620–1630 also represent a turning point at a pragmatic level – at least as far as the expression of disagreement is concerned.

3. DISTRIBUTION OF *NENNY, NON* + V AND *NON* (1450-1700)

3.1 Presentation of the data used

As we have already seen, in Ayres-Bennett and Caron's (2016) and Amatuzzi *et al.*'s (2020) studies the selection of the data is of great importance from a methodological point of view. The authors analyse texts that would reflect a usage as close as possible to speech, not as a phonic realization, but rather in the conceptual perspective[16] of Koch and Oesterreicher (2001). Thus, these studies concern sermons and correspondence. In this research we focus exclusively on the dramatic texts[17] of Frantext dated between 1550 and 1700 in order to analyse the evolution in the use of *non*, *nenny* and *non + V*. Although the authors of classical plays had strict rules of composition (rules of decorum, unity of time, etc.), the language had to be accessible to a contemporary audience:[18] "[Play-texts] have enough points of similarity to suggest to the audience that the use of knowledge of conversation in

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[15]Using a smaller corpus, Pohl (1976: 206) already detected this change in the middle of the 17th century.

[16]Instead of opposing *oral* and *written* in terms of *medium* (graphic or phonic), Koch and Oesterreicher (2001) propose placing *oral* and *written* at the ends of a discursive *continuum* of a conceptual type that selects parameters that define the degree of communicative proximity of a discourse in a given context.

[17]"[T]here appears to be widespread agreement that, where diachronic data are concerned, drama texts, personal correspondence, novelistic dialogue, and trial documents constitute valid sources for the investigation of more speech-like usage" (Hansen and Rossari, 2005: 182).

[18]The referees commented that other constraints have to be taken into account when studying the dramatical corpora, especially for the 17th century, as the stylistic trends of the period or the use of the verse or the prose. These constraints are essentially linked to the plays' sub-genre. Although the language in the comedies is more spontaneous than in the tragedies, which is more formal, Table 1 shows that the differences in the theatrical sub-genres are not relevant in our case.

Table 1. *Textual sub-genres of the dramatic texts (1550–1700)*

	Comedy	Humanistic comedy	Tragedy	Tragicomedy	Humanistic tragicomedy	Others
Nenny	9	0	0	2	1	1
Non* + *V	35	0	13	13	0	4
Non	8	1	2	0	1	0
Non non (1550-1649)	4	1	19	9	0	0
TOTAL	**56**	**2**	**34**	**24**	**2**	**5**

their interpretative procedures is appropriate (…). And playwrights exploit this knowledge" (Culpeper and Kytö, 2010: 211). Our corpus from 1550 to 1700 includes 34 texts classified as tragedies, 56 as comedies and 24 as tragicomedies – some of these latter two are humanist or pastoral.[19]

Data in Table 1 do not show a correlation between the drama sub-genre and the use of the old markers (*nenny* and *non* + V) or the modern ones (*non* and its reduplicated version *non non*). As the three major drama sub-genres (tragedy, comedy and tragicomedy) are present in our corpus – comedy being the most represented one (46%) –, we consider that the representation of the oral language is sufficiently close to the spontaneous usages of the time, at least as regards the refuting markers of this study.

In order to analyse the relevance of isolating the "Pre-Classical" period in the history of the French language, data from Frantext of the period 1330–1549 (Middle French) has also been added. Thus, the evolution of the use of *nenny*, *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* and *non* will be described from the late medieval period. Concerning the second boundary of Pre-Classical French, the extension of the analysis until 1700 will enable us to confirm the trends perceived between 1550 and 1650 for Classical French. The final aim is to determine whether the break described for morphosyntactic structures between 1620 and 1630 also affects the use of disagreement markers *nenny*, *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* and bare *non*.

Table 2 shows the dimensions of our corpus (number of texts, authors and words), divided in time slots, that are not homogeneous, but neither is the number of texts for each segment nor the number of authors or tokens. Since our aim is to define the transition of Pre-Classical French between 1620 and 1650, wider breaks have been made in Middle French (between 20 and 50 years) and Classical French (between 15 and 25 years). For Pre-Classical French (1550–1659), the time cuts have been set at periods of 10 years, except from 1550 to 1599. The slot 1610–1619 does not count any token or text.[20]

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[19]Due to the high frequency of the reduplicated marker *non non* for the period 1550–1700 (290 occ.), we have only considered the period 1550–1649, in which 81 occurrences appear in 33 texts.

[20]Hilpert (2013: 34) argues this methodological option explaining that "diachronic corpus data should be partitioned in a way that retains as much as possible from the rich temporal information while reducing this information to a level that reliably brings out its general characteristics."

Table 2. *Dimensions of the corpus analysed*

		nº texts	nº authors	nº word	Text genres
Middle French	**1330-1449**	188	29	5,823,137	all
	1450-1499	81	29	2,220,307	all
	1500-1549	67	35	1,790,987	all
Pre-Classical French	**1550-1599**	37	19	701,909	drama
	1600-1609	10	4	182,725	drama
	1610-1619	0	0	0	drama
	1620-1629	9	5	192,536	drama
	1630-1639	48	17	820,019	drama
	1640-1649	15	8	263,525	drama
Classical French	**1650-1659**	10	6	157,261	drama
	1660-1675	43	5	571,442	drama
	1676-1700	58	8	915,789	drama
		566	**165**	**13,639,637**	

Data from the period 1330–1549 (Middle French) concern all types of text in Frantext and not only the dramatic ones, as for the later states of language (Pre-Classical and Classical French). In previous studies (Saiz-Sánchez, 2016a; 2020a) we found that the pragmatic functioning of *nenny* and *non + estre/avoir/faire* is stable in Old and Middle French: they appear in the same contexts in all the textual genres studied (verse and prose novels, *chansons de geste*, plays, criminal registers, etc.). The only particularity related to the textual genre is the distribution of the structure *si/non + V* (+ pronominal subject), which mostly expresses disagreement with assertions and orientation questions, but in prose novels of the 13th century it is much more used to agree with injunctions (Saiz-Sánchez, 2020a: 277-sq). Therefore, considering all textual genres in Medieval French enables us to increase our corpus and to offer a more accurate description of the initial values of our markers.[21]

This article will focus on the evolution in Pre-Classical French of *nenny* and *non + V*, the Old and Middle French disagreement markers. These two markers were the negative terms of the double marker system *oïl/nennil* ('yes/no') and *si/non +* verb (+ pronominal subject) (*si suis, non fait, si aurai ge, non fera il…* 'I am', 'it doesn't', 'I will have', 'he won't do it'). All allomorphic variants of *nenny* (*nennil,*

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[21]The inclusion of tokens of other textual genres does not distort the analysis insofar as the studied markers appear in conversational contexts (reported speech) that may be assimilated to dramatical conversations. *Nenny* and *non + V* are always used in dialogues or dialogical monologues (Bres, 2005), and never in the predicate of a sentence. As previously mentioned, the pragmatic uses of *nenny* and *non + estre/ avoir/faire* are stable in Old and Middle French in any textual genres (Saiz-Sánchez, 2016a; 2020a). However, we will use normalised frequencies in quantitative analysis.

Table 3. *Number of tokens of* nenny, non + V *and* non *in Middle, Pre-Classical and Classical French*

	Middle French (1330-1549)	Pre-Classical French (1550-1649)	Classical French (1650-1700)	Total
Nenny	462	22	3	487
Non	17	123	30	171
Non + **verb**	189	17	1	207
non + *faire*	169	15	1	185
non + *estre*	0	0	0	0
non + *avoir*	20	2	0	22

nennil, *nanil*, etc.) were taken in account.[22] Concerning the markers of the type *non* + V, all tokens of *non* followed by the finite verbs *estre*, *avoir* or *faire* were analysed.[23]

As we shall see later, the drop of use of *non* + V begins around 1450 and it is *non* in absolute use that takes over in the 17th century. However, bare *non* is already attested as a disagreement marker in the medieval language (Hansen, 2020). The frequency of *non* as a negation adverb is extremely high because of the other contexts where it may appear to negate the following proposition – or particle – instead of referring to the preceding discourse (i.e. Non *seulement il étudie, mais il travaille aussi* 'Not only does he study, but he also works'). To avoid the manual sorting of an overwhelming number of tokens of *non*, we searched in Frantext for punctuation marks followed by between zero and four tokens and then by *non*.

The results of this research are shown in Table 3, in which the three last lines correspond to the detail of the *non* + V structure with the verbs *faire*, *estre* and *faire*.

The general trend is evident: the disagreement markers *nenny* and *non* + V of Medieval French decline in Pre-Classical French in favour of *non*, as shown by Pohl (1976: 206) and more recently by Saiz-Sánchez (2016a; 2020a) and Hansen (2020). A more detailed analysis will be conducted below in Section 3.3 with narrower periods for the purpose of determining the change of pace as well as any eventual turning points.

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[22]The forms *nennil* and *nanil* are the most represented between 1330 and 1449, and *nenny* the most represented from 1450 onwards (Saiz-Sánchez, 2020a: 312–313).

[23]The expressions *je non* + V are only attested five times between 1155 and 1285, always expressing disagreement, and do not correspond to the structure *non* + verb + pronominal subject, which only expresses agreement. Two of these occurrences appear in monological contexts. In the three other occurrences there seem to be a metric problem: the author needed one more syllable and added the pronominal subject before the refutative structure *non* + V, emphasising on the speaker's responsibility of the assertion. Responses of the type *ge non* ('not me') have not been included either in our data. We found 18 occurrences of *ge non* in the BFM and Frantext between 1155 and 1240, and one in 1400. The restrictive expressions *se ge non*, characteristic of Old French, have not been taken in account either as they do not answer to a previous utterance and they correspond to "si ce n'est moi" ('if not me').

3.2 Uses of nenny, non + V and non (1450–1700)

This section summarises the pragmatic functioning of *nenny*, *non* + *estre/avoir/ faire* and bare *non* in Middle French (Saiz-Sánchez, 2016a; 2020a; Hansen, 2020). As explained before, only the markers that fit in a dialogue or a dialogical monologue were included in the corpus.[24] In this period, the expressions *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* (+ pronominal subject) are preferred to express disagreement. Agreement is generally marked by using *oïl* ('yes'), *volentiers* ('of course') or any other confirmatory expression as *je le ferai* ('I will do it'), as shown in Saiz-Sánchez (2016b). This description will highlight the innovations in the usage of *nenny*, *non* + V and *non* in Pre-Classical French, from 1550 onwards.

3.2.1 Functions of nennil

In Old and Middle French, the particle *nennil/nenny* is paired with *oïl/ouy* and is mostly a negative response to a neutral question that performs a request for information. In (3), the two *nenny* answer questions (*Esperez vous envers moy de mesprendre?* and *Me voulez vous jouer de passe passe?*) that the addressee interprets as non-oriented, i.e. as information requests:

(3)   L'EMPEREUR.
      Esperez vous envers moy de mesprendre?
      SAINCT MARTIN.
      Mon chier seigneur, *nenny*, sauf vostre grace.
      L'EMPEREUR.
      Bonne raison ad ce ne puis entendre;
      Me voulez vous jouer de passe passe?
      SAINCT MARTIN.
      Nenny, vrayment, mais puisque j'ay espace,
      Je vous diray pour quoy je suis venu.
      (André de La Vigne, *Le Mystère de saint Martin*, 1496, p. 124–125)
      '– Are you willing to act badly against me? – Dear sir, no, I'm not, for God's sake. – I can't find a good reason for this; do you want to play a bad trick on me? – No, I don't, for sure, but as I have space, I will tell you why I came here.'

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[24]Outside of dialogical contexts, *non* is used to negate the proposition it precedes. In the following example, *non* followed by *pas* concerns the adjective *déterminée*:

CLIDAMANT.
[Certains ambassadeurs sont venus] Pour requerir la paix?
MEROVEE.
Non pas determinée,
Mais bien pour differer cette grande journée, (…). (Georges de Scudéry, *Ligdamon et Lidias ou la Ressemblance*, 1631, p.40)
'– Have some ambassadors come asking for peace? – Not a definitive one, but rather to postpone this great day.'

This type of configuration was excluded from the analysis, as well as the few examples of *mais non*.

In (4), the interrogative *Je ne say si me mentira/De sa promesse* ('I don't know if his promise is fake') may be interpreted as an indirect question introduced by the verb *savoir* in a negative form, *je ne say si* ('I don't know if'):

(4)   LA PREMIÉRE NONNE.
       Dame, se Dieu me gart d'annui,
       G'y envoiay dès devant hier,
       Et m'a mandé frére Gautier
       Que sanz faillir icy venra.
       Je ne say si me mentira
       De sa promesse.
       DEUXIESME NONNE.
       Nanil voir: espoir qu'il confesse, (…)
       (*Miracle de la nonne qui laissa son abbaie*, 1345, p. 311)
       '– Dame, as God keep me from trouble, I sent it the day before yesterday, and
       frère Gautier told me he would come here for sure. I don't know if his promise
       is fake. – No, it's not, indeed. I hope he will confess'

The clause *Je ne say si me mentira/De sa promesse* may be interpreted also as an assertion of the speaker's doubt. Indeed, *nenny* can also respond to an assertion. In example in (5) *nenny* follows *je te retiens mon gouverneur*. The second speaker refutes the assertion and corrects it:

(5)   LE ROY.
       Tu soyes doncques le bien venu.
       Je te retiens mon gouverneur.
       SOTTINET.
       Nenny, mais vostre gros veneur;
       Je cuyde qu'il le doibt bien estre.
       (*Sottie nouvelle à six personnaiges du roy des sotz*, 1451, p. 227)
       '– Then, you're welcome. You may stay as my commandant. – No, but as your
       hunter, I think he must be that.'

In early Middle French, *nennil* may also respond to an injunction, but only if it has a negative polarity (at least in this data). In these infrequent cases, *nennil* is an agreement marker, not a disagreement one. In (6), *nenil* is used to agree with *ne me lais point mener* ('do not let me be taken away'). In (7), *nennil* responds to *gardez que vous ne laissiez point ceste sente* ('do not leave this path'). Although the main clause has positive polarity, at a pragmatical level, *nennil* agrees with the negative orientation of the utterance:

(6)   Hautement s'escrÿa: "(…) Mon seigneur me lairéz et n'en yréz ariere." Et quant
       le roy l'oÿ, se dist a lye chiere: "A, doulz amiz Garins, pour Dieu te fay prière:
       Ne me lais point mener par nezune maniere. – Nenil, se dist Garin, par mon
       seigneur saint Piere!"
       (*Les enfances Garin de Monglane*, 1400, p. 50)

'She exclaimed loudly: "Sir, if you let me, I will go back". And when the king heard him, he told to the one he loved: "Ah, my friend Garins, for God I beg you: Do not let me be taken away. – No, I won't, said Garin, for my Lors Saint Peter!'

(7) DEUXIESME VENEUR.
Sire, se Dieu me vueille aidier,
Ne fauderez en nulle fin,
Se vous alez par ce chemin,
Que briefment assez n'en truissiez;
Mais *gardez que vous ne laissiez*
Point ceste sente.
LE ROY.
Nanil, ce n'est mie m'entente.
J'en vois, biaux seigneurs; or avant!
(*Miracle du roy Thierry*, 1374, p. 298)
'– Sir, if God want to help me, you will soon find some [beasts] if you take this route, be careful not to leave this path. – No, I won't, this is not my intention. I see wild game, Sir; go ahead!'

In the 16th century, *nenny* can also mark disagreement with a positive polarity injunction, an innovation compared to Old French. In (8), *nenny* responds to the order *donnez moy ving quatre deniers et allez* ('give me twenty deniers and leave'):

(8) La dame dist: "Cher amy, *donnez moy ving quatre deniers et allez*". – "*Nenny*", ce dist Ulespiegle, "vous me donnerez vingt quatre deniers, (…)"
(*Ulenspiegel*, 1530, p. 180)
'The lady said: "Dear friend, give me twenty *deniers* and leave". – "No, I won't", said Ulespiegle, "you'll give me twenty-four *deniers*".'

In Medieval French, the (dis)agreement markers rarely appear in isolation. Normally, they are accompanied by a term of address or by an adverb that modalises the assertion such as *certes*, *bien*, *voir* or *voirement* (Denoyelle, 2007: 3–8). Frantext shows 19 examples between 1357 and 1597 of the combination *nenny(,) non*, where *non* reinforces *nenny*. *Non* followed by *nenny* is not attested. The combination *nenny(,) non* always responds to assertions that are refuted or to "real" questions:

(9) LE SECOND.
(…) Suis je ou l'en sieche les drappeaux?
LE PREMIER.
He! nous ne sommes pas si veaulx.
LE SECOND.
Suis jë en une estimerie?
LE PREMIER.
Et *nenny, non*, bon gré ma vie.
(*Sottie pour porter les presens à la feste des roys*, 1475, p. 303)
'– Am I at the place where cloths are dried? – We're not that dumb. – Am I in a pewter shop? – No, we're not, by my life.'

(10)   LE VALLET.
  Sire, (…)
  Je ne scé, se n'est au moustier.
  Se vous avez de li mestier,
  Querre l'iray (ma fille).
  L'OSTE.
  Nanil, non, je l'attenderay.
  (*Miracle de Theodore*, 1357, p. 105)
  '– Sir, I don't know if she [my daughter] is at the church. If you need her, I'll
  ask her to come. – No, don't, I'll wait for her.'

In (9), the speakers are not quite sure where they are. The second asks the first suggesting various places, including a pewter shop. The first speaker responds to the request for information with *nenny, non*. In (10), *nanil, non* responds to the assertive utterance *Se vous avez de li mestier, querre l'iray* ('If you need her, I'll ask her to come') that accomplishes an offer. This offer implies a question, "do you want me to ask her to come?", which is a request of information as well. In this view, the negative answer *nanil* is absolutely natural in Medieval French. In all the occurrences, *non* is optional and reinforces the negative particle *nenny*.

The cumulation of *nenny* and *non* is quite possible in Middle French. In contrast, it is not possible to find the combination of *non* + V and *nenny*, since their functions are complementary from a pragmatic point of view: *nenny* provides new information to the addressee (as it answers a "real" question), whereas *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* disagrees with the pre-existing opinion of the first speaker concerning the question he formulates (which is presented as an orientation question) or responds to an injunction.

3.2.2 Functions of non + V

In Medieval French, the refutative expressions *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* (*non fist, non suis, non a…* 'he didn't', 'I'm not', 'he hasn't')[25] are part of the system of markers *si/ non* + V (+ pronominal subject), which in Medieval French mark agreement or disagreement, depending on whether the pronominal subject is expressed or not, respectively. The markers studied here only express negative disagreement as the pronominal subject is always omitted. In (11), *non fait il* agrees with the negative injunction *ne vous desplaise*; the pronominal subject is not omitted:

(11)   "Sire, or *ne vous desplaise* que cil nouvel chevalier vuelent venir a mon hostel,
  et je les retiens anuit mes avec moi. – *Non fait il*, dist li roys, aléz, si les festoiéz
  bel et richement. "
  (*Artus de Bretagne: roman en prose de la fin du XIIIᵉ siècle*, 1305, p. 228)

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[25]Our description of these markers, from the 9th to the 18th century, is mainly based in Saiz-Sánchez (2016a; 2016b; 2020a: 239–297, 310–317). Hansen (2020) also proposes a diachronic study from the 10th to the 21st century. However, some methodological choices – such as the exclusion of the instantiations in indirect speech or the disregard of the function of the postposed pronominal subject – limit to certain extent her results, with which we mostly agree.

'Sir, do not be displeased that this new knights want to come to my home, and that I keep them there for the night with me. – No, I'm not, says the king, go and celebrate abundantly with them.'

The verbs *estre*, *avoir* and *faire* function as pro-forms that replace a finite verb from the previous discourse. In Old French, there was a wider variety of verbs for these expressions. In addition to *faire*, the auxiliaries *estre* and *avoir*, and some modal verbs such as *pooir* ('can'), would also enter these constructions. In Pre-Classical French we rarely find verbs other than *faire*. The positive expressions *si +* V and the negative ones *non* + V express disagreement and have divergent evolutions. *Si + faire* is used up until the Classical French period, frozen into the form *si fait*, and later reduced to the current contradiction marker *si*. On the other hand, as we shall see here, *non* + V dies out towards the beginning of the 17th century in favour of *non* in absolute use.

The disagreement markers *non* + *estre/avoir/faire* are used to refute positive assertions (12, *vous vous truffez de moy*), argumentative questions oriented towards a positive response (13, *Ne sont mie?*), positive injunctions (14, *Venés vous en avesque moy*) or assertions that accomplish an injunctive act (15, *j'en aurés XXV*, i.e. give me 25 candles):

(12)   Je cuide à mon advis que *vous vous truffez de moy*. – *Non fais*, dit l'autre, mais vous de moy, (…)
(Philippe de Vigneules, *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. C. Livingstone, 1515, Nouvelle 19, p. 108)
'I think, in my opinion, that you are making fun of me. – No, I'm not, says the other, but you of me.'

(13)   PATHELIN.
Trois aulnes pour moy, et pour elle
– A elle est haulte – deux et demye:
ce sont six aulnes. *Ne sont mie?*
Et *non sont*! Que je suis becjaune!
(*Farce de maître Pierre Pathelin*, 1456, p. 72)
'Three *aulnes* for me, and two and a half for her – she is tall –: that's six *aulnes*, isn't it? No, it isn't! I'm such a fool!'

(14)   LE HOSTE DE SAINT REMY.
Venés vous en avesque moy (…).
LE MASSON.
Non feray, pour la Magdelenne!
(*Le Mystère de S. Bernard de Menthon*, 1450, p. 142)
'– Come along with me. – No, I won't, for the Magdalene.'

(15)   – "Mon amy," dit la bonne femme, qui vit bien qu'il estoit simple homme, "on
         ne compte pas ainsi les chandeilles comme tu l'entens, (…), et vecy ton
         quarteron bien livrés. S'il te plaist, si les prens ou les lesse. – Ho! par Dieu,
         nenny! fait il, *j'en aurés XXV* ou je n'en repourtera ja chandeille. – Et par
         Dieu, dit la femme, *non aurez*! or va ton chemin; (…)."
         (Philippe de Vigneules, *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. C. Livingstone, 1515,
         Nouvelle 19, p. 108)
         '– "My friend," says the good woman, who clearly saw that he was a simple-
         minded man, "we don't count the candles as you think (…), and here is your
         quarter of a pound. Please, take it or leave it. – Ho! For God's sake, no! he
         says, I'll have 25 candles or I won't have any. – For God's sake, says the
         woman, you won't have them! Go your way".'

   In Middle French, the verb can be elided when introduced by a reporting verb +
que structure. A reporting verb + *que si* expression is also often uttered by the other
speaker, mostly in the context of a dispute in literary or drama texts.[26] The drop of
the verb reflects the process of disintegration of the medieval system *si/non + estre/
avoir/faire* (+ pronominal subject):[27]

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[26]The expressions *que si*, *que non* are not found together in the all discourse genres. Indeed, in the two
volumes of the *Registre criminel du Châtelet* (BFM), there are 62 occurrences of reporting verb + *que
non* and 10 of reporting verb + *que non* + V (8 *faire*, 1 *estre*, 1 *avoir*) – which all express disagreement –,
and only four occurrences of reporting verb + *que si* + *faire* – three of them followed by a pronominal
subject, which express agreement instead of disagreement. Generally, when the respondent reports
himself a speech, the substitute verb is maintained, whereas it is omitted when the respondent's
discourse is directly reported.

> (…) auquel homme icellui Paradis dist qu'il lui baillast l'argent qu'il portoit, ou il seroit batu. Lequel
> homme *respondi que non feroit*, (…). (*Registre criminel du Châtelet*, t. 2, 1389–1392, p. 265)
> 'this man told the said Paradis to give him the money he was carrying or he would beat him. The man
> replied that he would not.'

As in (17), in the expressions reporting verb + *que non* from these texts, there is no elision of the
substitute verb, since it corresponds to bare *non*. The language in this text is somehow formulaic and we
always find the structre *requis(e) p, dit que non* ('asked p, X said no'):

> *Requis* se il congnoist l'evesque de Poitiers ou aucuns de ses gens, *dit par son serment que non*, et que
> s'il les veoit, il ne les congnoistroit. (*Registre criminel du Châtelet*, t. 1, 1389–1392, p. 546)
> 'Asked if he knew the bishop of Poitiers or any of his people, and he swore that he did not, and said
> that if the saw them, he would not know them.'

[27]Other evidence of the disintegration of the system concerns the reduction of the verbs that could fit into
these constructions. This is the last example of *non* followed by a verb other than *faire* in our data (*non + avoir*):

> BETA. Et ayant entendu que ma maistresse estoit de ce pais là, il a souvent cherché les moiens de
> parler à elle, et prendre sa cognoissance. AUGUSTIN. Ce qu'il a fait. BETA. *Non a*, non: oyez si vous
> voulez la fin. (François d'Amboise, *Les Neapolitaines*, 1584, p. 183)
> '– As he heard that my mistress was in this country, he often tried to speak to her, and to meet her. – This is
> what he did. – No, he didn't, no: listen to the end if you want.'

The lower frequency in use of *non + V* sometimes leads to the appearance of *pas*, which was impossible in Old
French:

> LA FILLE. (…) Madame donc, suyvant ce myen conseil,/Donnez le [le chapeau] moy. LA FEMME. *Non feray
> pas*, m'amye. (Marguerite de Navarre, *Comédie du parfait amant*, 1549, p. 332)
> '– Following my advice, give me the hat. – No, I won't, my friend.'

(16)   – Je gageray a vous, s'il vous plaist, pour une demye douzaine de bien fines chemises encontre le satin d'une cotte simple, que nous vous bouterons bien dedans, tout ainsi que vous estes. – Par ma foy, dit il, *je gage que non*. – *Et je gage que si.*
(*Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. F. Sweetser, 1456–1467, XXVIIe nouvelle, p. 184–185)
'– I wager you for half a dozen shirts against the satin of a simple leotard that we'll put you inside, as you are just here. – By my faith, he said, I wager not. – And I wager yes.'

(17)   Quant Ulespiegle estoit venu de Romme, il vint loger en un logis où l'hoste n'estoit pas à la maison, et demanda à l'hostesse si elle ne cognoissoit pas Ulespiegle. L'hostesse *dit que non*: "Ains j'ai bien ouy dire qu'il est ung esleu coquin et malicieux".
(*Ulenspiegel*,1530, p. 214)
'When Ulespiegle came back from Rome, he went to a house where the host was absent, and asked the hostess if she knew Ulespiegle. The hostess said she didn't: "But I have heard that he is a mischievous and malicious judge".'

Example (16) is a case of elision of the verb (*faire*). The presence of the equivalent positive expression *je gage que si* just after *je gage que non*, without the verb *faire* either, is a sign of the bare use of *non* when introduced by a reporting verb. On the other hand, in (17), *non* answers a question that requests an information (do you know Ulespiegle?), a type of utterance that cannot be followed by *non* + V. The absence of a refutative expression such as reporting verb + *que si* in the context is normal as it does not correspond to a *non* + V structure where the verb is elided. Already in Old and Middle French, *non* could appear in absolute use (Hansen, 2020: 323). In our literary and drama corpus, *non* is less frequent (19 tokens) than *nenny* (462 tokens) and *non* + V (189 tokens). Other text genres document a higher frequency of *non* in its absolute use, i.e. the criminal registers (see footnote 26).

3.2.3 Functions of non in absolute use
The bare particle *non* is excluded from the double marker system of Old French[28] formed by *oïl/nennil* and *si/non* + V (+ pronominal subject). In Middle French, *non* in absolute use marks agreement with a negative utterance or disagreement with a positive one. The limited number of tokens of *non* in the data (19 tokens) for the period 1330–1549 – excluding the reporting verb + *que non* structure – makes it

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[28]Still in the 15th century, literary texts oppose *ouy/oïl* to *nenny/nennil*, instead of *non*, as the following extracts attest it:

Tout bien ou tout mal m'en yra/Car, quant voustre bouche dira/*Ouÿ ou nenny* seulement (…). (Alain Chartier, *Rondeaulx et Balades*, 1410, p. 376) 'Everything will go good or bad to me as your mouth will say yes or no only'

LE BERGIER. Bee! PATHELIN. Et dy *ouÿ ou nenny*. (*La Farce de maître Pierre Pathelin*, 1456, p. 172) 'And say yes or no.'

difficult to describe a general trend. In this period, bare *non* is mostly introduced in an indirect speech: Frantext shows 140 occurrences of *dire/respondre que non* ('to say/to answer no') and only 5 occurrences of *dire/respondre que nennil*. As said in 3.3.2, reported speech seems to be the context where bare *non* begins its expansion.

Outside indirect speech, *non* appears in dialogues (63%) or in dialogical monologues (37%). In 32% of the cases, *non* confirms the negative orientation of a question:

(18)   Es tu plus saiges de Platon?
        Es tu de Socrate et Cathon
        Plus constans? *Non certes, nenil.*
        (Eustache Deschamps, *Le Miroir de mariage*, 1385, p. 182)
        'Are you wiser than Plato? Are you more constant than Socrates and Cato? No for sure, no.'

In (18), the questions are presented as confirmation requests of the negative assertions "you are not wiser than Plato" and "you are not more constant than Socrates or Cato". In the answer – uttered by the same speaker – *non* agrees with these inferred negative assertions, and *certes* reinforces the assertive value of *non*. *Nennil* confirms afterwards the answer. In two cases (10%), *non* follows the question tag *non?* that requests also the confirmation of a previous negative assertion ('I won't bring him back and neither will you'):

(19)   A voir dire avés faly, dist ly preudons, car nient ne l'en reporteray [l'enfant] et aussy ne ferés vous. – *Non?* fait ly chevalierz. – *Non voir*, fait ly ermittes.
        (*Ysaÿe le Triste*, 1400, p. 34)
        'In truth, you failed, said the honorable man, because I won't bring him [the child] back and neither will you. – Won't I? says the knight. – No, for sure, says the eremite.'

In two other occurrences, the previous question concerns the locutionary act itself, i.e. the accuracy of the chosen term in the utterance. In (20), *non* returns to the term *autrement* and confirms the negative assertion *Pas ne vauroye par souhait/Que il fust de my autrement* ('I would not want it to be otherwise for me'):

(20)   Dame, en ordure me presistes
        Et en vilté me remesistes, (…):
        Pas ne vauroye par souhait
        Que il fust de my autrement.
        Autrement? Non, se Dieu m'ament!
        (*Le Dit du prunier*, 1330, p. 83)
        'Dame, you pulled me from the waste and you put me back into baseness: I wouldn't want this to be otherwise for me. Otherwise? No, for God's sake!'

In example (21), *non* concerns the accuracy of the verb *porterons* ('we will take'), to which the speaker opposes the verb *trainnerons* ('we will drag').

(21) PREMIER DYABLE.
      Alons, Vehemot, sanz attendre,
      Si le hapons en un sursaut.
      Sa, prevost, en enfer le chaut
      Vous porterons.
      SECOND DYABLE.
      Non pas, mais nous l'i trainnerons.
      (*Miracle de un prevost que Nostre Dame delivra*, 1352, p. 247)
      '– Come on, Vehemont, without delay, we will take him with a jolt. Provost,
      we will take you to hell where it's hot. – No, but we will drag him.'

    Non may also refute a previous positive assertion (21%). In (22), *non pas*
disagrees with *je le ferés venir tout incontinant qu'il serait jour et l'amenerés ceens*:

(22) – Et bien doncques, dit le bon homme, je le ferés venir tout incontinant qu'il
      serait jour et l'amenerés ceens. – *Non pas*, dit elle, si tres fort matin affin qu'il
      ne resveille noz enfans.
      (Philippe de Vigneulles, *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. C. Livingstone,
      1515, Nouvelle 93, p. 366)
      '– Then, says the good man, I will make him come as soon as it's daylight light
      and I will take him here. – No, you won't, she says, but very early in the
      morning so he doesn't awake our children.'

    In Middle French, the data also show two examples of *non* as an acceptance marker
of a negative injunction, as in (23) *ne vous desplaise*, or of a negative assertion (*Il ne fault
point que l'en la chace*), which performs an indirect speech act, as in (24):

(23) LE PREMIER PELLERIN.
      Et je croy qu'en ceste cité
      Vous estes gens d'auctorité:
      Mettés vous en devocion,
      A tout la crois et confacion,
      Et alés ce dyable destruire.
      C'est ce que nous vous volons dire,
      Mon chier seigneur, *ne vous desplaise*.
      L'EVESQUE D'OSTE.
      Non pas, enfans; mais sui bien aise
      De ce que bien nous advisé.
      (*Le Mystère de S. Bernard de Menthon*, 1450, Première Journées, XIV,
      p. 52)
      '– I think in this city you are an authority: pray, believe in her and confess,
      and go to destroy this devil. This is what we want to tell you, my dear sir, if
      it doesn't displease you. – No, child; I am pleased that you warn me.'

(24)   LE PREMIER VENEUR.
        Vaz hardiement; vaz, je la voy,
        Qu'elle te suit assez a trace.
        Il ne fault point que l'en la chace,
        Ce m'est advis.
        DEUXIESME CHEVALIER.
        Non voir.
        Or enten mon devis:
        Va t'en droit au palais du roy
        Et nous nous mettrons en arroy
        D'aler après. (…)
        (*Miracle de saint Jehan le Paulu, hermite*, 1372, p. 130)
        '– Go boldly; go ahead, I can see her tracking you, as she should. We mustn't
        chase her away, this is my opinion. – No, for sure. Listen now to me: go
        directly to the king's palace and we'll get ready to go after her.'

The expression *non pas* in (23) agrees with the interdiction *ne vous desplaise* ('if this does not displease you'), which is made explicit later by *mais je suis bien aise* ('I am pleased'). In (24), the negative assertion *il ne faut pas que l'en la chace* ('we must not chase her away') is also interpreted as a negative injunction to the addressee of the type "do not let her go", with which *non voir* agrees. As in 90% of the attestations in this period, *non* is accompanied by a modal adverb, in (23) *pas* and in (24) *voir*. *Non* is combined with other modal assertion terms such as *certes* (32%) or *dea/dya* (10%),[29] or with the negative marker *pas* (32%).

Between 1330 and 1599, *non* marks agreement and disagreement, but its use until 1626 is minor (19 occ. outside indirect speech) compared to *non* + V (202 occ.) or to *nenny* (479 occ.). From that date onwards, its use increases at the expense of the old markers, which had been in gradual decline. From the second quarter of the 17th century[30] onwards, dramatic texts show new contexts where *non* can appear in absolute use, often accompanied by an interjection (25), a term of address (26), or a phrase that explicates its refutative value (27) – in a dialogic monologue:

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[29]For studies on *certes* and *dea/dya* in Medieval French see Rodríguez Somolinos (1995) and Parussa (2020), respectively.

[30]In her Table 1, Hansen (2020) lists 48 occurrences of *non* in the 14th and 15th centuries, without separating *non* + V and bare *non*. She only explains that "by the 16th c. [*non*] appears without a following verb in 2/3 of its occurrences" and that it rarely appears in response to an "implicated question", that is a positive polarity utterance that performs a question. In the 17th century, *non* is followed by a verb only in 8% of her data, and, from the 15th century onwards, *non* would increasingly respond to questions or implied questions. Before the 17th c., *non* responds preferentially to positive polarity utterances or utterances without a clear polarity, according to Hansen (2020). We agree with these results but we would point out that in Middle French *non* in absolute use and *non* + V expressions (those paired with *si* + V) do not correspond to the same *non*. Bare *non* was used in a similar way as *nenny*, and *non* + V was used in complementary contexts to answer to "disharmonious" pragmatic utterances. Moreover, bare *non* would preferably appear after a reporting verb + *que* structure rather than in a direct speech.

(25)   DORISE.
        Ne te mocques-tu point?
        PHILENE.
        Ha! non, je te le jure
        (Jean Mairet, *La Sylvie*, 1630, p. 78)
        '– Aren't you making fun of me? – Oh! no, I swear it.'

(26)   LYSARQUE.
        Viens çà, dis-nous,
        N'as-tu point ici vu deux
        Cavaliers aux coups?
        PYMANTE.
        Non, Monsieur.
        (Pierre Corneille, *Clitandre ou l'Innocence délivrée*, 1632, p. 122)
        '– Come here, tell us, haven't you seen here two knights fighting? – No, Sir.'

(27)   SYLVANIRE.
        (…) Où suis-je, ô Dieux! que suis-je, vive ou morte?
        Vive, *non*, je mourus, (…)
        Morte, *non*, car je voy (…).
        Seroit-ce point peut-estre
        Ceste seconde vie
        Dont parlent nos Druydes?
        Ah! non, ce ne l'est pas, (…).
        (Honoré d'Urfé, *La Sylvanire ou la Morte-vive*, 1627, p. 363)
        '– Where am I, oh God! Am I alive or dead? Alive, no, I died. Dead, no, because I see. May this be the second life our druids talk about? – Oh! no, it's not.'

In (25) and (26), *non* disagrees with negative interrogations: *ne te mocques-tu point?* ('aren't you making fun of me ?') and *n'as-tu point ici vu deux cavaliers aux coups?* ('haven't you seen here two knights fighting?'). Both interrogations are orientated towards a positive response, which would have been refuted with *non* + V in Medieval French (*non ai* and *non est*, respectively). In (27), the first two *non* answer requests of information, *suis-je vive/morte?* ('am I alive/dead ?'), which in Medieval French would have been answered by *nennil*. The third *non* follows to the interrogative *seroit-ce point peut-estre ceste seconde vie dont parlent nos Druydes?* ('might this be the second life our druids talk about?'), which may be interpreted as an orientation question. Therefore, in Medieval French, the answer would have been *non est*.

The uses of *nenny* and *non* + V remain the same until they both disappear.[31] During this period of decline, *non* + V undergoes innovations that detach it from the Old French system *si/non* + V (+ pronominal subject). The following section looks at the evolution of the distribution of the three negative markers presented. The distribution of their occurrences will allow us to describe how old usages disappear and how modern ones are established.

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[31]Hansen (2020) explains that from the 18th century, *nenny* is used in new contexts, expressing "a more emphatic form of negation".

4. DISTRIBUTION AND EVOLUTION OF *NENNY, NON* + V AND *NON*

In this section, the qualitative study that precedes will be complemented by a quantitative analysis. Table 4 reflects the number of tokens in Frantext of the different types of markers presented above. We have added 290 occurrences of the reduplicated marker *non non* which frequency raises from 1556 onwards.[32]

The disappearance of the old markers *nenny* and *non* + V occurs between the end of the 16th century and the very beginning of the 17th century. In the period 1610–1619, Frantext shows no occurrences of our markers. After 1610, only two occurrences of *non* + V were found (in 1633 and 1669). As far as *nenny* is concerned, data show 14 occurrences between 1550 and 1579 and only three occurrences between 1580 and 1585, then none until 1630. Thereafter, between 1630 and 1700, we found only eight *nenny* in the 174 plays of Frantext, which is an almost negligible number. Moreover, in these occurrences, the use of *nenny* is deliberately archaic or shows a lower register.[33] The absolute use of *non* – not introduced by a reporting verb + *que* – is infrequent until 1620-1629, when there is a notable peak in frequency (see Figure 1). Between 1330 and 1599 we find only 19 occurrences of *non* in 373 texts, then, between 1600 and 1625, no occurrences are found. Afterwards, in 1627 alone, there are 16 occurrences of *non*. Between 1626 and 1639, the corpus shows 108 occurrences of bare *non*, which is 63% of all those collected between 1330 and 1700. Before the complete disappearance of the ancient markers around 1600 to the relatively strong emergence of *non* in 1626, refutation in dramatic texts is ensured by the reduplicated marker *non non*. Although the phenomenon of reduplication already existed in Medieval French (Saiz-Sánchez 2020b), it does not appear in this corpus of dramatic texts until 1556.[34] The gap created by the disappearance of *non* + V and *nenny* is initially filled by *non non*, until *non* takes over in the 1620s and 1630s.

The above results must be interpreted with caution, as the temporal division of our corpus does not lead to temporal sections with an identical number of texts and words. Figure 1 shows the normalised frequency of *nenny, non* + V, *non* and *non non* over the analysed period.

The results do not significantly change but they are put into perspective. The decline in the use of *nenny* is gradual until it disappears at the beginning of the 17th century. We still find some residual uses from 1630 onwards (see footnote 33). The

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[32]This is the first attestation of *non non* we found in our corpus of dramatic texts:

> JASON. Qu'il vive, je te pri'par celui même flanc/Qui le porta. MEDEE. *Non, non*, il mourra, c'est ton sang. (Jean Bastier de la Péruse, *La Médée*, 1556, p. 31)
> '– I want him to live, I beg you for this same side. – No, no, he will die, it's your blood.'

The reduplication of (dis)agreement markers has been studied in many contemporary languages (see Stivers (2004) for *no no* in English and Saiz-Sánchez (2022) for French). Reduplication is a phenomenon that allows the reduplicated marker to refer to a previous speech which, for whatever reason, is problematic for the speaker. Saiz-Sánchez (2020b) analysed reduplication in Medieval French. In her study, Hansen (2020) does not distinguish the use of *non* and *non non*.

[33]We find two examples of *nenny* in the play *Don Quixote* by Guyon Guérin de Bouscal (1639), where the author tries to reproduce an older language.

[34]In a larger corpus, Saiz-Sánchez (2020a: 372–374) collects three late occurrences of *non non* in Middle French, 743 between 1550 and 1649, and 1,238 between 1650–1789.

Table 4. *Distribution of* non + V, *nenny,* non, *and* non non *between 1330 and 1700*

		Non + V	*Nenny*	*Non*	*Non non*
Middle French	1330-1449	127	302	10	0
	1450-1499	40	101	5	0
	1500-1549	22	59	2	0
Pre-Classical French	1550-1599	13	17	2	29
	1600-1609	3	0	0	12
	1610-1619	0	0	0	0
	1620-1629	0	0	33	3
	1630-1639	1	5	75	27
	1640-1649	0	0	13	10
Classical French	1650-1659	0	1	1	19
	1660-1675	1	0	18	121
	1676-1700	0	2	12	69
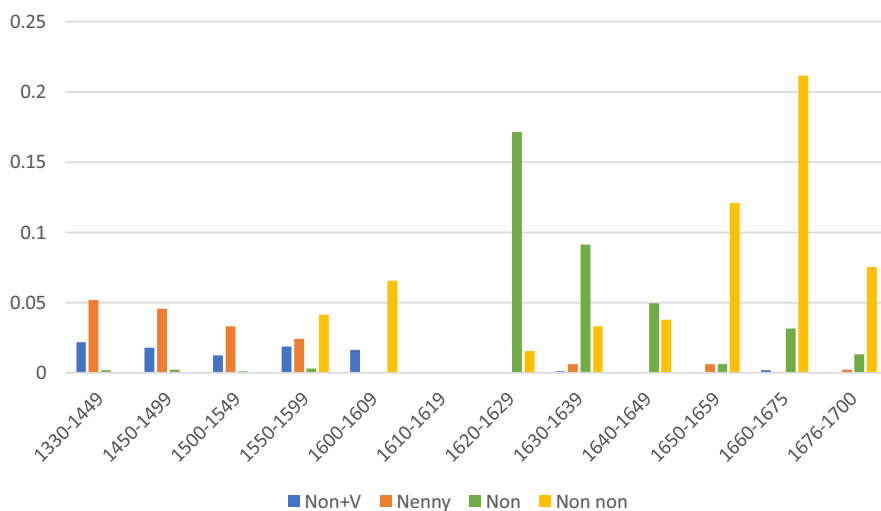
Figure 1. *Normalised frequency of* non + V, *nenny,* non, *and* non non *between 1330 and 1700*

use of *non* + V is more or less stable until 1610, when it disappears as well. The emergence of *non non* is rather strong in the middle of the 16th century, compared to the old markers' frequency. The presence of *non non* increases progressively until 1660–1675, when it reaches its peak. Before 1626, the frequency of bare *non* is very low, and there are no occurrences between 1600 and 1625 indeed. Then, between 1626 and 1629, its frequency increases drastically, and decreases progressively

afterwards. Between 1620 and 1700, the evolution in the use of *non* and *non non* seems reversed: the reduplicated *non* tends to be more used over time than the simple *non*, which progressively decreases. In the same period, *nenny* and *non* + V are not in use anymore. As said before, *non non* assumes the refutative role when *nenny* and *non* + V disappear, at the beginning of the 17th century, until *non* acquires a predominant position in the 1620s.

   None of the evolutionary patterns proposed by Ayres-Bennet and Caron (2016: 344) entirely fits the trend observed in this graph. It would correspond to an evolutionary pattern between the first: "the archaic variant disappears completely (after a long period of gradual obsolescence) and the modern variant predominates" although the old forms may still survive "in legal jargon or in a socio- or geo-lect"; and the second pattern: "the balance between the two variants of a variable suddenly changes in a dramatic way at the expense of the archaic one". In the case of the negation markers, the archaic variants (*nenny* and *non* + V) disappear progressively, whereas the new variants (bare *non* and reduplicated *non non*) emerge strongly and they are then stabilised in different proportions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Two conclusions may be drawn from this study. Firstly, the quantitative analysis confirms that the change in the use of French disagreement markers occurs between 1600 and 1620. Although we have no data for 1610–1620, in the decade 1620–1630, the use of the new markers *non* and *non non* is well established. The gradual decline of the older forms (*nenny* and *non* + V) is precipitated at the end of the 16th century and leads first to the sudden appearance of reduplicated *non non* in the middle of the 16th century. Then, *non* in its absolute use takes over from 1626 onwards, co-existing in different proportions with its reduplicated version. The 1620s seem to represent as well a turning point for the expression of refutation.

   The second conclusion concerns the relevance of keeping the "pre-classical" period in the history of French. It is certainly not a period of stability, but it is a time when old usages disappear at a more accelerated pace and new usages begin to be established, namely the appearance of *non non* around 1550 and the greater frequency of use of *non* from 1626, and the subsequent generalisation of both markers afterwards. The notion of chronolect would avoid setting a boundary in this period of constant change. However, the possibility of delimiting the evolution of French temporally using accurate linguistic criteria is still methodologically convenient.

   The analysis of the evolution of pragmatic elements coincides with the trends perceived by Ayres-Bennett and Caron (2016) and Amatuzzi *et al.* (2020) for morphological and syntactic elements. Thus, both findings of this study support the possibility of advancing the final boundary of Pre-Classical French, at least, to the decade 1620–1630, which has been proposed in the former works. This research should also be completed with data from other textual genres in order to confirm the finding for dramatic texts.

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