

Título: VARIATION AND CHANGE IN NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ENGLISH: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

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Resumen: This is a corpus-based study of three areas of the grammar of standard spoken and written British English negation where variation and on-going change are presumed to exist. The negative constructions considered in this study are: (i) the increasing use of DO-support for main verb HAVE and the (semi-)modals NEED (TO), DARE (TO), HAVE TO and USED TO ("I don't have the time to do that") instead of the older pattern with NOT after the verb ("I haven't the time to do that"); (ii) the shift in writing towards the contraction of the operator and "not", i.e. "not-contraction" ("I don't know her") instead of the full form of the operator and not ("I do not know her"), and the variability in speech and writing between the contraction of the operator and the subject, with full "not", i.e. operator contraction ("He's not in his room"), "not-contraction" ("He isn't in his room") and the full form of the operator and "not" ("He is not in his room"); and (iii) the spread of "NOT-negation" ("She doesn't have any money"), a construction that involves the use of verbal negation and a post-verbal non-negative indefinite and that is slowly replacing "NO-negation" ("She has no money"), the use of a post-verbal negative indefinite. These developments must be set against the background of a long-term reorganization of the English verbal morphology in negative sentences as well as functional and typological pressures. In this respect, this dissertation recognizes that the choice of negative constructions is determined by a complex network of

language-internal and language-external factors. Although the study focuses on grammatical change in progress in British English, part of the analysis of the data is extended to include data from 19th and early 20th British English as well corpora of present-day American English.