Clause Types and Negative Preverbal Particles in Informal Welsh

Bob Morris Jones

bmj@aber.ac.uk

January 2021

This paper presents a descriptive analysis of preverbal particles in informal Welsh whose meanings convey negation, specifically clausal negation. The account also considers their realizations (conveyed here by spellings) and to a lesser extent their stylistic and sociolinguistic distribution. Although the chief aim of this paper is to give an account of vernacular Welsh, details are also given about formal Welsh as a useful preliminary background[1].

There are four preverbal negative particles which variously occur in informal Welsh. Using the spellings of formal Welsh to represent all their realizations, they are: *ni(d)*, *na(d)*, *na(c)* and *oni(d)*. The consonants in parentheses occur before words which begin with vowels and are dropped before consonants. These particles are fully productive in formal Welsh (Thomas(1995) gives a detailed account) but matters are different in informal Welsh. We shall see that these four particles can be grouped into two, mainly on the basis of the syntax of the clauses in which they occur.

Ni(d)

In formal Welsh, *ni(d)* is placed immediately before the finite verb in main clauses and, as Welsh is a verb-first language, it occurs initially in normal-order finite clauses. Examples are given in (1).

1 a. *ni   fydd   Mair yna   heno.*
    NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair there tonight
    'Mair will not be there tonight.'

   b. *nid oedd   Mair yna   neithiwr.*
    NEG be.IMPF.3SG Mair there last+night
    'Mair was not there last night.'

Ni(d) negates the clause and its presence licenses the optional insertion of the adverbial negator *ddim* in post-subject position, as the examples in (2) show.

2 a. *ni   fydd   Mair ddim yna   heno.*
    NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair NEG   there tonight
    'Mair will not be there tonight.'

b. *nid oedd   Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
   NEG be.IMPF.3SG Mair NEG   there last+night
   'Mair was not there last night.'

The versions without *ddim* are the preferred choice in the formal style. In this style, it is not possible to retain *ddim* and omit *ni(d)*, as shown in (3).

3 a. **bydd   Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      be.FUT.3SG Mair NEG   there tonight
      'Mair will not be there tonight.'
   b. **oedd   Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
      be.IMPF.3SG Mair NEG   there last+night
      'Mair was not there last night.'

Matters are different in informal Welsh. The forms *ni* and *nid* never occur. The form *d* (variant realization *t*) occurs, and it is reasonable to assume that at some time *d / t* emerged as a remnant of *nid*. But there are three points to note. *D / t* only occurs in a negative clause which is marked as such by one by one of the main forms of clausal negation. In this paper we shall concentrate on the adverbial negator *ddim* which occurs in post-subject position.[2] Even then, it only occurs before the forms of the copula which begin with a vowel, namely the present tense and the imperfect tense. And the final point is that *d / t* is optional. Examples with *d / t* are given in (4) and examples without *d / t* are given in (5) (in written versions of vernacular Welsh, *d / t* is attached to the copula, mainly *d* when written, and that convention is followed here.) [3].

4 a. *dydy   Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      NEG.be.PRES.3SG Mair NEG   there tonight
      'Mair is not there tonight.'
   b. *doedd   Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
      NEG.be.IMPF.3SG Mair NEG   there last+night
      'Mair was not there last night.'
   c. **deisteddodd Mair ddim yn y   gadair.*
      sit.PERF.3SG Mair NEG   in the   chair
      'Mair did not sit in the chair.'
5 a. *'dy   Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      be.PRES.3SG Mair NEG   there tonight
      'Mair is not there tonight.'

b. *oedd　　　Mair ddim yna　neithiwr.*
　be.IMPF.3SG Mair NEG　there last+night
　'Mair was not there last night.'

The example in (4c) shows that *d / t* do not occur before lexical verbs that begin with a vowel. The fact that *d / t* are confined to the present tense and the imperfect tense of the copula means that the occurrence of the adverbial negator *ddim* is the only overt indication of clausal negation in vernacular Welsh with other verbal forms, as illustrated in (6).

6　a. *fydd　　　Mair ddim yna　heno.*
　　be.FUT.3SG Mair NEG　there tonight
　　'Mair will not be there tonight.'
　b. *eisteddodd　Mair ddim yn y　gadair.*
　　sit.PERF.3SG Mair NEG　in the chair
　　'Mair did not sit in the chair.'

In brief, *d / t* in vernacular Welsh are (i) limited to copular forms which begin with a vowel; (ii) need the adverbial negator *ddim*; and (iii) are optional when the adverbial negator *ddim* occurs. Clearly, *d / t* have a marginal and non-essential role in clausal negation.

There is one other point whose significance becomes apparent when we discuss *na(c)* and *oni(d)*. *D / t* can be used in fully-formed finite clauses which contain both a subject and a predicate[4], as previous examples show but which is also illustrated by the examples in (7).

7　a. *doedd　　　　Mair ddim yn　gweithio neithiwr.*
　　NEG.be.IMPF.3SG Mair NEG　PROG work　　last-night
　　'Mair wasn't working last night,'
　b. *dydy　　　　Siôn　ddim wedi gwisgo het ers　blynyddoed*
　　NEG.be.PRES.3SG Siôn NEG　PERF wear　hat since years
　　'Siôn hasn't worn hat for years.'

Given an appropriate textual or situational context, the predicate can be omitted leaving the verb, the subject and the adverbial negator.

8　a. *doedd　　　　Mair ddim.*
　　NEG.be.IMPF.3SG Mair　NEG
　　'Mair wasn't.'

b. *dydy   Siôn   ddim.*
   NEG.be.PRES.3SG Siôn   NEG
   'Siôn hasn't.'

c. *oedd   Mair   ddim.*
   NEG.be.IMPF.3SG Mair   NEG
   'Mair wasn't.'

d. *'dy   Siôn   ddim.*
   NEG.be.PRES.3SG Siôn   NEG
   'Siôn hasn't.'

We can add that exactly the same applies to clauses when *d* / *t* is omitted, as (8c–d) show.

Na(d)

In formal Welsh, *na(d)* is the equivalent of *ni(d)* except that the former is restricted to complement clauses and the latter is restricted to the highest matrix clause. *Na(d)* otherwise shows the same characteristics as *ni(d)*.

In formal Welsh, *na(d)* occurs initially before the verb in normal-order finite clauses which are complement clauses, as the examples in (9) show.

9 a. *gwn   na   fydd   Mair yna   heno.*
      know.PRES.1SG NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair there tonight
      'I know that Mair will not be there tonight.'

   b. *gwn   nad oedd   Mair yna   neithiwr.*
      know.PRES.1SG NEG be.IMPF.3SG Mair there last+night
      'I know that Mair was not there last night.'

As with *ni(d)*, *na(d)* negates the clause and allows the optional insertion of the adverbial negator *ddim* in post-subject position, as the examples in (10) show.

10 a. *gwn   na   fydd   Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      know.PRES.1SG NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair not   there tonight
      'I know that Mair will not be there tonight.'

   b. *gwn   nad oedd   Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
      know.PRES.1SG NEG be.IMPF.3SG Mair not   there last+night
      'I know that Mair was not there last night.'

Also, in the formal style it is not possible to retain *ddim* and omit *na(d)*, as shown in (11).

11 a. * *gwn*   *bydd*   *Mair ddim yna heno.*
      know.PRES.1SG   be.FUT.3SG Mair   not   there   tonight
      'I know that Mair will not be there tonight.'

   b. * *gwn*   *oedd*   *Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
      know.PRES.1SG   be.IMPF.3SG Mair   not   there   last+night
      'I know that Mair was not there last night.'

Na(d) can occur initially in complement clauses in vernacular Welsh but we can make three points about its occurrences. First, it occurs as *na* or *nad* and not as *d / t* as the examples in (12) show. Second, as in formal Welsh, it can occur with or without the adverbial negator *ddim*, as the examples in (12) also show.

12 a. *dw*   *i*   *'n*   *deall*   *na fydd*   *Mair (ddim) yna   heno.*
      be.PRES.1SG I   PROG   understand   NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair   not   there   tonight
      'I understand that Mair will not be there tonight.'

   b. *dw*   *i*   *'n*   *deall*   *nad oedd*   *Mair (ddim) yna   neithiwr.*
      be.PRES.1SG I   PROG   understand   NEG   be.IMPF.3SG Mair   not   there   last+night
      'I understand that Mair was not there last night.'

Third, not all speakers use *na(d)* in informal Welsh. It is heard in northern dialects and (at a guess) mainly by older speakers. Other speakers (probably the majority) who do have *na(d)* in their grammar use adverbial *ddim* with or without *d / t*. That is, the grammar of clausal negation in a complement clause is the same as that of a highest matrix clause, as shown in the examples in (13) (which can be compared with the equivalent examples in (4–5).

13 a. *dw*   *i 'n*   *deall*   *(dy)dy*   *Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG   understand   NEG.be.PRES.3SG Mair not   there   tonight
      'I understand that Mair is not there tonight.'

   b. *dw*   *i 'n*   *deall*   *(d)oedd*   *Mair ddim yna   neithiwr.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG   understand   NEG.be.IMPF.3SG Mair not   there   last+night
      'I understand that Mair was not there last night.'

   c. *dw*   *i 'n*   *deall*   *fydd*   *Mair ddim yna   heno.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG   understand   be.FUT.3SG Mair not   there   tonight
      'I understand that Mair will not be there tonight.'

In brief, *na(d)* (i) is used only by some speakers in northern dialects in complement clauses; (ii) is not reduced to *d / t*; and (iii) does not need adverbial *ddim*, which is optional. The dialectal and sociolinguistic constraints make *na(d)* marginal in vernacular Welsh.

Finally, like *d / t*, *na(d)* can be used in fully-formed finite clauses and ellipsed versions.

14 a. *dw   i 'n   deall   na fydd   Mair yn   gweithio heno.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG understand NEG be.FUT.3SG Mair PROG work   tonight
      'I understand that Mair wasn't working tonight,'

   b. *dw   i 'n   deall   na fydd   hi.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG understand NEG be.FUT.3SG she
      'I understand that she won't be.'

15 a. *dw   i 'n   deall   nad oedd   Siôn wedi gwisgo het ers   blynyddoed*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG understand NEG be.IMPF.3SG Siôn PERF wear   hat since years
      'I understand that Siôn hasn't worn hat for years.'

   b. *dw   i 'n   deall   nad oedd   o.*
      be.PRES.1SG I PROG understand NEG be.IMPF.3SG he
      'I understand that he hasn't.'

We shall discuss the significance of this when we consider *na(c)* and *oni(d)*.

Na(c)

The first point to note about *na(c)* is that, unlike *ni(d)* and *na(d)*, it is as productive in vernacular Welsh as it is in formal Welsh. The only difference is that whereas the form which occurs before vowels is limited to *nac* in formal Welsh, in the dialects of vernacular Welsh, *nac*, *nag*, *nad* and *nach* are to be heard. For simplicity of presentation, *nac* is used in the examples in this study.

The norm is that a clause containing *na(c)* normally contains only the particle and a finite verb, [*na(c)* + finite verb], as in (18) [5]. We will come to the functions of such clauses shortly.

16 a. *na   fydd.*
      NEG be.FUT.3SG
      'no.'

   b. *nac oedd.*
      NEG be.IMPF.3SG
      'no.'

c. *coedd.
   NEG+be.IMPF.3SG
   'no.'

These examples show differences between *na(c)* and *ni(d)*. One is that *na(c)* retains its full form as in (16a–b) and is not contracted to the linking vowel as (16c) shows. Two others are that *na(c)* can occur without the adverbial negator *ddim* and another is that pro-drop productively occurs. However, some speakers can include a pronominal subject as in (17).

17 *nag yw e*?
    NEG be.PRES.3SG
    'isn't he?'

And some speakers can optionally include the adverbial negator *ddim*.

18 *nag yw   ddim*.
    NEG be.PRES.3SG NEG
    'no.'

And some speakers, less certainly, can include both a pronominal subject and the adverbial negator *ddim*.

19 *nag w   i ddim*.
    NEG be.PRES.1SG I NEG
    'no.'

The sociolinguistics of the use of pronominal subjects and the adverbial negator *ddim* is not clear. The norm is to omit both a pronominal subject and the adverbial negator and their inclusion may be more common in southern dialects than northern dialects.

The crucial difference between *na(c)* on the one hand and *ni(d)* on the other is that the former is restricted to ellipsed clauses which lack predicates[6]. Fully-formed clauses do not occur.

20 a. *na fydd   e 'n   gweithio heno*.
        NEG be.FUT.3SG he PROG work   tonight
        'he will not be working tonight.'

b. *_nag yw_ _e yn deall_ _y broblem_?

   NEG be.PRES.3SG he PROG understand the problem

   'doesn't he understand the problem.'

c. *_nag yw_ _e ddim yn hoffi brocoli._

   NEG be.PRES.3SG he NEG PROG like brocolli

   'he doesn't like brocolli?'

d. *_nag w_ _i ddim wedi colli 'r arian._

   NEG be.PRES.1SG I NEG PERF lose the money

  'I haven't lost the money.'

The use of clauses which contain _na(c)_ are dependent on an anaphoric source. They answer questions or agree or disagree with previous statements, as illustrated in (21) and (22) respectively.

21 _wyt_ _ti_ _'n moyn paned_?

   be.PRES.2g you.sg PROG want cuppa

   'do you want a cup of tea?

   nac ydw, _diolch._

   NEG be.PRES.1SG thanks

   'no, thanks.'

22 _oedd_ _hi 'n achosi lot o drafferth._

   be.IMPF.3SG she PROG cause lot of trouble

   'she was causing lot of trouble.'

   nac oedd.

   NEG be.IMPF.3SG

   'no.'

They can also be used to question a previous statement.

23 _dw_ _i ddim wedi cysgu 'n iawn ers amser._

   be.PRES.1SG I NEG PERF sleep PRED right since time

   'I haven't slept well for a time.'

   nac wyt?

   NEG be.PRES.2SG.

   'no?'

As the information has already been given by a previous speaker, this question can indicate surprise or can be quite perfunctory perhaps indicating that the speaker is paying attention (real or otherwise)[7].

The anaphoric source can also be an utterance produced by the same speaker and the *na(c)* clause very commonly occurs as what is described as a tag. There is some variety in the production of tags in Welsh (see Rottet and Sprouse (2008) for details) but for some speakers a tag in a negative clause is produced by a *na(c)* clause.

24 a. *doedd   hi ddim yn   ofni neb,   nac oedd*?
       NEG.be.IMPF.3SG she NEG   PROG fear nobody NEG be.IMPF.3SG
       'she wasn't afraid of any one, was she?'

   b. *ti   ddim yn   mynd i' falu dy   toys,, nag wyt.*
       you.2SG NEG   PROG go   to break CL.2SG toys   NEG be.PRES.2SG
       'you aren't going to break your toys, are you.'

A tag with *na(c)* prompts a negative response, which is asked for when the tag is given interrogative intonation as in (24a) but is assumed in the case of declarative intonation as in (24b).

In brief, *na(c)* (i) occurs as *na* or *nac* and never *c*; (ii) must have an anaphoric source (a cataphoric source is more of a rhetorical device and is rare); (iii) obligatorily occurs in an ellipsed clause which lacks a predicate; (iv) occurs in responses and tags in these ellipsed clauses; and (iv) normally lacks a subject and adverbial *ddim* but which can be optionally inserted by some speakers (possibly subject to dialectal variation). Unlike *ni(d)*, *na(c)* is very productive in vernacular Welsh.

Oni(d)

In formal Welsh, *oni(d)* occurs before a finite verb and is clause-initial. In that style, it is said to produce negative questions.

25 a. *onid   yw   'r tywydd yn   braf*?
       NEG+Q be.PRES,3SG the weather PRED fine
       'isn't the weather fine?'

   b. *oni   fydd   Siân yn   lywydd   da*?
       NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG Siân PRED president good
       'won't Siân be a good president.'

Oni(d) in vernacular Welsh is different in form and in use. Unlike *na(c)* but like *ni(d)* it can be contracted. But there are a number of possible forms and it is convenient to present them in a table[8].

Table 1. The vernacular forms of *oni(d)*

(*t* is a variant of *d* but has not been displayed for simplicity of presentation)

	Before consonant		Before vowel	
Full forms	*yn'*	*on'*	*yn'd*	*on'd*
Shorter forms	*'n'*		*'n'd*	
Shortest form	*'d*			

First, the initial vowel of *oni(d)* can be *o* or *y* — the former in southern dialects and the latter in northern dialects. Second, the vowel represented by *i* in *oni(d)* is lost. Third, and last, the forms can be shortened: the initial vowel is omitted to produce *'n'* and *'n'd*; and in the case of the latter further contraction leaves only the linking consonant. The latter is spelled in this study as *'d* to distinguish it from *d / t*, discussed above.

The distribution of vernacular *oni(d)* is very similar to that of *na(c)*. Like *na(c)*, the clauses in which *oni(d)* occurs require an anaphoric source. It can occur in responses to a previous clause which is positive and declarative. It implies agreement but does not occur as an answer.

26 a. *oedd   yr   ardd   yn   hardd.*
      be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful
      'the garden was lovely.'
      yn'd   oedd?
      NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG
      'wasn't it?'
   b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr.*
      be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late
      'Mair will be late.'
      yn'   bydd?
      NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG
      'won't she?'

It occurs in tags to positive clauses, and cues a positive answer, which is asked for when the tag has interrogative intonation as in (27a) but is assumed in the case of declarative intonation as in (27b).

27 a. *oedd   yr   ardd   yn   hardd, yn'd   oedd?*
      be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG
      'the garden was lovely, wasn't it?'

b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr, yn'   bydd.*
   be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late   NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG
   'Mair will be late, won't she?'

Vernacular *oni(d)* can optionally occur with a personal pronoun subject in both responses and tags.

28 a. *oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd, yn'd   oedd   hi?*
      be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG it
      'the garden was lovely, wasn't it?'

   b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr, yn'   bydd   hi?*
      be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late   NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG she
      'Mair will be late, won't she?'

29 a. *oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd.*
      be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful
      'the garden was lovely.'

      yn'd   oedd   hi?
      NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG it
      'wasn't it?'

   b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr.*
      be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late
      'Mair will be late.'

      yn'   bydd   hi?
      NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG it
      'won't she?'

But *oni(d)* does not occur with adverbial *ddim*, which is an option with *na(c)* for some speakers.

30 a. **oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd, yn'd   oedd ddim?*
       be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG NEG
       'the garden was lovely, wasn't it?'

   b. **fydd   Mair yn   hwyr, yn'   bydd   ddim?*
       be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late   NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG NEG
       *'Mair will be late, won't she be late?'

31 a. *oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd.*
      be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful
      'the garden was lovely.'

yn'd   oedd   ddim?

  NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG it NEG

  'wasn't it?'

b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr.*

  be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late

  'Mair will be late.'

yn'   bydd   ddim?

  NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG it NEG

  'won't she?'

The greatest difference between *na(c)* and *oni(d)* is that the latter can occur in exclamatory clauses, in which case it occurs with a predicate and a subject.

32 a. *'dydy   'r   ardd   yn   lliwgar*!

  NEG+Q.be.PRES.3SG the garden PRED colourful

  'isn't the garden colourful!'

b. *'doedd   Mair yn   gweithio 'n   galed*!

  NEG+Q.be.IMPF.3SG Mair PROG work   PRED smart

  'wasn't Mair working hard!'

This possibility makes it difficult to assess whether the use of *oni(d)* in tags and responses is confined to ellipsed clauses. Consider the examples in (33–34).

33 a. * *oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd, yn'd   oedd   hi 'n   hardd*?

  be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG it PRED beautiful

  'the garden was lovely, wasn't it?'

b. * *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr, yn'   bydd hi yn hwyr*?

  be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late   NEG+Q be.FUT.3SG

  *'Mair will be late, won't she be late?'

34 a. *oedd   yr ardd yn   hardd.*

  be.IMPF.3SG the garden PRED beautiful

  'the garden was lovely.'

  yn'd   oedd   hi yn   hardd?

  NEG+Q be.IMPF.3SG it PRED beautiful

  'wasn't it?'

b. *fydd   Mair yn   hwyr.*

  be.fut.3SG Mair PRED late

  'Mair will be late.'

yn'	*bydd*	*hi*	*yn*	*hwyr*?
NEG+Q	be.FUT.3SG	it	PRED	late

'won't she?'

A full clause in a tag is not possible. But it is quite possible to have *oni(d)* in fully-formed clauses in responses, but such clauses are exclamatory. Essentially, it is reasonable to conclude that non-exclamatory *oni(d)* in tags and responses is confined to ellipsed clauses and that it is only exclamatory *oni(d)* which allows a fully-formed clause.

Traditional reference grammars say that *oni(d)* is used in negative questions as illustrated in (25). But examples like those in (32) are exclamatives and not interrogatives. So if examples like those in (32) are not interrogatives, how are negative questions formed in vernacular Welsh? They are produced by taking a negative sentence like the examples in (4–5) with interrogative intonation.

35 a.
dydy	*'r*	*ardd*	*ddim*	*yn*	*lliwgar*?
NEG.be.PRES.3SG	the	garden	NEG	PRED	fine

'isn't the garden colourful?'

b.
doedd	*Mair*	*ddim*	*yn*	*gweithio*	*'n*	*galed*?
NEG+Qbe.IMPF.3SG	Mair	NEG	PROG	wear		PRED	hard

'wasn't Mair working hard?'

36 a.
'dy	*Mair*	*ddim*	*yna*	*heno?*
be.PRES.3SG	Mair	NEG	there	tonight

'Mair is not there tonight.'

b.
oedd	*Mair*	*ddim*	*yna*	*neithiwr?*
be.IMPF.3SG	Mair	NEG	there	last+night

'Mair was not there last night.'

The questions in (35–36) can expect an answer, which does not apply to the exclamations in (32). Further, the adverbial negator *ddim* cannot be inserted into exclamatives.

37 a.
* *'dydy*	*'r*	*ardd*	*ddim*	*yn*	*lliwgar*!
NEG+Q.be.PRES.3SG	the	garden	neg	PRED	colourful

'isn't the garden colourful!'

b.
* *'doedd*	*Mair*	*ddim*	*yn*	*gweithio*	*'n*	*galed*!
NEG+Q.be.IMPF.3SG	Mair	neg	PROG	work		PRED	smart

'wasn't Mair working hard!'

In brief, *oni(d)* (i) occurs in ellipsed clauses which have an anaphoric source; (ii) occurs in a tag or response in such clauses; (iii) does not occur with adverbial *ddim*; (iv) normally occurs without a subject but which is an option with some speakers; (v) occurs in exclamatory clauses which (a) can be fully-formed but (b) do not contain the adverbial negator *ddim*.

Summary and conclusions

We can bring together general comments which help to establish two groups: *ni(d)* and *na(d)* on the one hand and *na(c)* and *oni(d)* on the other hand.

Productivity

Na(c) and *oni(d)* are fully productive in vernacular Welsh. There are instances of *ni(d)* and *na(d)* in the vernacular but they are so constrained that there is no adequate and sufficient basis to say that they are fully productive. *Ni(d)* is limited to negative clauses such as those which contain the adverbial negator *ddim* and then only *d / t* optionally occur with forms of the copula which begin with a vowel. *Na(d)* is not limited to vowel-initial copular forms and can occur without or with the adverbial negator. But it is absent from the grammar of many speakers and is limited to certain speakers in northern dialects.

Anaphora

Ni(d) and *na(d)* can occur in utterances which are new to the discourse. This is also true of *oni(d)* in one of its uses, namely, making an exclamation. Otherwise, both *na(c)* and *oni(d)* occur in clauses which necessarily relate to a previous utterance. The latter may be produced earlier in the discourse by another speaker, to which *na(c)* and *oni(d)* are responses. They can also occur in tags, in which case the anaphoric context is supplied by the immediately occurring utterance of the same speaker, typically separated by a comma in the written medium.

Predicate

The requirement or otherwise of an anaphoric source has repercussions on the syntax of the clauses which contain a negative preverbal particle. *Ni(d)* and *na(d)* do not require an anaphoric source and can occur in fully-formed clauses which contain a predicate (but with ellipsis being an option). *Na(c)* and *oni(d)* require an anaphoric source, and as responses or tags they only occur in ellipsed clauses which lack a predicate. But exclamatory clauses do not require an anaphoric source and can occur in fully-formed clauses.

Pro-drop and adverbial *ddim*

The anaphoric source can also be said to influence pro-drop. Pro-drop is productive in formal written Welsh but very much less so in the vernacular. The norm in clauses which include *ni(d)* and *na(d)* is to include an overt pronominal subject and to exercise pro-drop as an option. The norm in clauses which contain *na(c)* and *oni(d)* is to use pro-drop and to include a pronominal subject as an option. Exclamatory clauses do not require an anaphoric source and, like clauses which contain *ni(d)* or *na(d)*, the norm is to include an overt subject and to exercise pro-drop as an option.

The occurrence of the adverbial negator *ddim* further distinguishes the two groups but to a lesser extent. *Ni(d)* obligatorily requires *ddim* but *ddim* is an option with *na(d)*. *Oni(d)* obligatorily occurs without *ddim* but *na(c)* allows the inclusion of *ddim* as an option at least for some speakers. Borsley and Jones (2005) classify verbs on the basis of the strength of their negativity and talk about weak and strong verbs: the former require adverbial *ddim* and the latter do not. For our purposes in this study we can (informally at least) apply this distinction to preverbal particles: *d / t* is so weak that it must occur with *ddim* and can even be omitted; *na(d)* is strong enough to be able to occur without *ddim* but allows it as an option; *na(c)* is also strong enough to occur without *ddim* but also allows it as an option. *Oni(d)* does not allow *ddim* and we could say that this is because its negativity is too strong. But there is another explanation for *oni(d)*. The anaphoric source for *oni(d)* is always a positive clause, and as a tag it cues a positive answer. This association with a positive polar feature blocks the occurrence of the adverbial negator *ddim*. In other words, *oni(d)* occurs in a positive clause. This also applies to the exclusion of *ddim* from exclamatory clauses.

The overall picture

Table 2 summarises the properties of the four particles and shows how they fall into two groups on the basis of the properties of the clauses in which they occur.

Table 2. The dual grouping of the preverbal particles

	ni(d) and *na(d)*	*na(c)* and *oni(d)*
Productive?	hardly	yes
Requires anaphoric source?	no	yes, except exclamative use of *oni(d)*
Co-occurs with predicate?	yes	no, except exclamative use of *oni(d)*
Pro-drop?	Not the norm	yes, except exclamative use of *oni(d)*
Needs *ddim*?	*ni(d)* but not *na(d)*	no

There is sufficient evidence to establish two groups but neither group is completely homogeneous: *na(d)* is different to *ni(d),* and *oni(d)* is different to *na(c)*, and the exclamative use of *oni(d)* makes it syntactically and semantically different to its use as a response and as a tag. We can say that the need for an anaphoric source underlies the differences between the two groups. Its influence produces ellipsed clauses which lack a predicate, and such clauses occur as tags and responses which use *na(c)* and *oni(d)*. Clauses which do not have an anaphoric source can occur as fully-formed clauses and such clauses use *ni(d)* and *na(d)* (but largely ousted by the use of the adverbial negator *ddim*). Exclamatory clauses also do not need an anaphoric source and also occur as fully-formed clauses.

We shall not attempt a theory-based analysis of the syntax of these particles in this study except to note that the main issue is whether preverbal particles are complementizers which form a constituent with the rest of the clause, or whether they are something else which forms a constituent with the finite verb, or some version of both. These various views can be found in Harlow (1983), Sadler (1988), Rouveret (1994), Willis (2004) and Borsley and Jones (2005). The general details of their approaches are conveniently sketched in Borsley, Tellerman and Willis (2007: 36–37).

References

Ball, Martin J. (1987/88). 'The Erosion of the Welsh Pre-Sentential Particle system', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 22/23: 134–145.

Borsley, Robert D. and Bob Morris Jones (2005). *Welsh Negation and Grammatical Theory*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Harlow, Stephen (1983). 'Celtic relatives'. *York Papers in Linguistics* 10, 77–121.

Jones, B.M. (1999). *The Welsh Answering System*, Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Jones, B.M. (2004). 'The licensing powers of mood and negation in spoken Welsh: full and contracted forms of the present tense of *bod* 'be'', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics*, 8, 87–107.

Rottet, Kevin J. and Rex A. Sprouse. (2008). 'Tag Questions in Welsh', *Diachronica*, volume 25. issue 1, pp 20–53.

Rouveret, Alain (1994). *Syntax du gallois: princpes généraux et typologie*. Paris: CNRS Editions.

Sadler, Louise (1988). *Welsh Syntax: a Government-Binding Approach*. London: Croom Helm.

Thomas, Peter Wyn (1996). *Gramadeg y Gymraeg*, Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru.

Willis, David (2005). A Minimalist Approach to Jespersen's Cycle in Welsh. Unpublished manuscript, University of Cambridge.

---

[1] Negative preverbal particles are part of a larger preverbal particle system which is at its most extensive and complete in traditional literary Welsh. As well as negative particles, there are interrogative, declarative and relative particles. A concise outline can be found in Borsley, Tallerman and Willis (2007: 34–37). The preverbal

particle system is different in informal speech and Ball (1987/88) examines the differences between the systems in speech and writing.

2 There is another method of clausal negation which licences *d / t*, namely, *dim* which negates a nominal phrase and which Borsley and Jones (2005) label quantifier *dim*.

i. *doedd   dim siwgr yn y te.*
   NEG.be.IMPF NEG sugar in the tea.
   'there was no sugar in the tea.'

For simplicity of presentation we shall involve only adverbial *ddim* in the discussion. But we can note that there is an apparent exception to the requirement that *d / t* require adverbial *ddim* in examples like the following.

ii. *dydw   i 'n   poeni dim.*
    NEG.be.PRES.1SG I PROG worry NEG
    'he isn't worried at all'.

Some discussion is available in Borsley and Jones (2005: 144–145).

3 Jones (2004) gives a fuller account of the forms of the copula which can occur without the preverbal particle.

4 The term predicate traditionally refers to a phrase which contains a verb as its head and one or more complements. It is used somewhat loosely in this study to refer to phrases which occur after the subject, which may in some cases meet the conventional definition but not always.

5 In informal Welsh, the finite verb can be omitted, leaving *na* alone. It can occur in all the contexts in which [*na(c)* + finite verb] occurs.

6 *Nag* can occur in negative clauses in some southern dialects (see Borsley and Jones (2005)).

7 These examples show how yes-no answer words are formed in Welsh. The Welsh system is partly an echo system which repeats the verb in the previous utterance or question. This also applies to positive answers or responses. The verb is repeated (with changes for person) but without a negative preverbal particle: for example, *ydw* answers *wyt ti 'n moyn paned*? ' do you want a cup of tea?'. Jones (1999) presents a detailed account of the entire answer system.

8 There is also a form *onid* in which the final *d* is not a linking consonant but is part of the form of the lexeme. In literary Welsh it occurs before focussed phrases in fronted clauses. In vernacular Welsh it is used as a tag or general responsive in various forms including *yndefe* in southern dialects (presumably from *onid efe*) and *ynde* in northern dialects (presumably from *onid e*).