Continuity or change? The post-cyclic development of preverbal negation in Continental West Germanic

In my doctoral research I will look at the single preverbal negation marker *ne/en* in Middle Low German, Middle Dutch and Middle High German, all languages which have already undergone Jespersen’s Cycle and therefore developed bipartite or single postverbal negation. Very little has yet been said about the fate of the original preverbal element, which continues to exist in certain constructions, especially exceptive clauses. In these contexts, *ne* does not express sentential negation anymore, but marks an adverbial clause expressing a positive exception to a situation or stipulation in the main clause (Breitbarth 2015). According to the corpus data of Middle Low German I looked into so far, it appears that there is still a preverbal use of *ne/en* which expresses sentential negation. I will talk about the syntactic analysis of my data, claiming that in Middle Low German different instances of *ne/en* coexist that can be distinguished by the amount of internal syntax.