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Title: The distribution of preverbal *en* in (West) Flemish: syntactic and interpretive properties

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In: *Lingua*, 147, 69-86, 2014.

Optional: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0024384113002313>

To refer to or to cite this work, please use the citation to the published version:

Breitbarth, Anne & Liliane Haegeman (2014). The distribution of preverbal *en* in (West) Flemish: syntactic and interpretive properties. *Lingua* 147: 69-86.

DOI: 10.1016/j.lingua.2013.11.001

Abstract

The present paper consists of two parts. We first show that the Flemish preverbal morpheme *en* in negative sentences differs from superficially similar items in other languages such as French both in terms of distribution and in terms of interpretation: Flemish *en* is dependent on finite Tense and conveys contrastive focus on the negative polarity of the clause. In the second part of the paper, we develop a new syntactic analysis of *en* and argue that although *en* syntactically encodes (low) focus, the contrastive effects associated with it are pragmatically inferred through the interaction of the focal interpretation with the discourse context. That is, we conclude that focus and contrast can be dissociated and that not all expressions of contrast are syntacticized.

Key words: Negation, Jespersen's Cycle, polarity emphasis, focus, contrast, Flemish, French

**The distribution of preverbal *en* in (West) Flemish:
syntactic and interpretive properties¹**

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1. Introduction: aim and scope of the paper

All the Germanic languages have gone through what is generally referred to as Jespersen's cycle (cf. Jespersen 1917), the diachronic development in which the expression of sentential negation, originally expressed by one preverbal element (stage I), first enters a bipartite stage (stage II) which combines the preverbal marker and an additional component (which starts out as an optional reinforcer before it becomes obligatory) and finally reaches a stage in which the erstwhile reinforcing element survives as the canonical marker of sentential negation (stage III).

Standard Dutch completed the transition from stage II to stage III by the 17th century (Burridge 1993: 190f), but many Flemish varieties of Dutch retain what seems the original preverbal marker of negation to this day.² In (1), we present some naturally occurring examples of preverbal *en* in the West Flemish (WF) dialect.

- (1) a. K woaren al eeneure bezig me kerstkoarten te
moaken.
I was already an hour busy with Christmas.cards to make
Mo t'en ging nie.
But it=EN went NEG
'I was already busy making Christmas cards for one hour. But it just wasn't
possible.'
(MV, Heist, 05.12.07)
- b. k'stungen der 5meter van. K'en zagen em nog niet.
I=stood there 5meters off. I=EN saw him yet NEG
'I was 5 meters away (from the car) and I still didn't see it.'
(AH, Lapscheure, 11.09.2011)
[Context: out on a field, it was dark and the car the speaker had to return to was
black.]
- c. k'een al overall gezocht in us en k'en vinden ze
nievers.
I=have already everywhere searched in house and I=EN find her
nowhere

‘I have looked for it everywhere and I just don’t find it anywhere.’

(MJL, Lapscheure, 11.06.2008)

- d. Ofdanze neu nog zovele stappen lyk vroeger, k’**en** peinzen’t nie.
ifthat=they now still so.much walk like before, I= EN think=it NEG

(MJL, Lapscheure, 10.01.10)

- e. Germaine, die ze nog kent, **en** goat niet
Germaine, who her still knows EN goes NEG

‘Germaine, who does know her, isn’t going [to the funeral].’

(MJL, Lapscheure, 28.3.2010, 18.10)

- f. kweten nie of dat je’t niet **en** weet
I=know NEG if that he=it NEGEN knows

‘I don’t know if he doesn’t know.’

(MJL, Lapscheure, 18.10.2008)

In the generative literature (for instance Haegeman 1995, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, 1996, or Zeijlstra 2004), data such as these were commonly analyzed as indicating that WF (and other Flemish dialects that display the preverbal particle) are somehow still in stage II of Jespersen’s cycle, implying that a WF example such as (2a) is much like its French counterpart in (2b):

- (2) a. Ik **en** kennen dienen vent **niet**.

I EN know that man NEG

‘I don’t know that guy.’

- b. Je **ne** connais **pas** cet homme.

I NE know NEG this man.

‘I don’t know that man.’

In this paper, we will first show that though both French and Flemish display a preverbal morpheme in negative sentences these items differ both in terms of distribution and in terms of interpretation. We will then explore a new analysis of the Flemish data. In addition to being relevant for the general discussion of the syntax of negation, our findings are also relevant with respect to questions concerning the division of labor between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In particular, we will

reach the conclusion that focus and contrast can be dissociated and that not all expressions of contrast are syntacticized.

The paper is organized as follows: using data from West Flemish (WF), section 2 first offers a survey of the distribution of preverbal *en* and compares it with the distribution of French preverbal *ne*. A first syntactic analysis is outlined which captures the relation between *en* and the position of the finite verb. Section 3 argues that, contrary to what is often assumed in the literature, even in finite contexts WF *en* is not optional and shows that it is incompatible with specific contexts. It is also shown that the insertion of *en* has a specific interpretive effect: *en* signals that the positive counterpart of the negative sentence in which it occurs must be discarded, thus conveying a stronger contrast with the positive counterpart of the sentence. It is also proposed that through a process of grammaticalization, preverbal *en* has lost its original role as a marker of sentential negation and has acquired a new interpretive value akin to that of discourse particles: it has become a marker of polarity emphasis. In other Dutch dialects and in standard Dutch, it was simply lost when the language reached stage III of Jespersen's cycle.

In an attempt to refine the syntactic analysis outlined in section 2 and to capture what appears to be an emphatic function of *en*, section 4 investigates existing proposals for the analysis of polarity emphasis in the literature and assesses to what extent these proposals might be implemented to capture the properties of *en*. In section 5, the initial syntactic analysis of *en* is reinterpreted and it is proposed that *en* realises a low ν P-peripheral focus head. It is also argued that the specific contrastive interpretation associated with *en* is not syntacticized, but is pragmatically inferred. The section also formulates some hypotheses about the triggers for the development of *en* in the Flemish dialects. Section 6 brings up two specific empirical points concerning WF *en* and section 7 briefly discusses what may be comparative expressions of polarity emphasis in French and Occitan. Section 8 summarizes the paper.

2. The Flemish data: a first survey

The focus of our paper is the distribution of *en* in Flemish. Our core data will be drawn from WF but where relevant we will include data from other Flemish varieties in which *en* is attested (see also Breitbarth and Haegeman 2010). In this section we describe the distribution of the WF preverbal particle *en*, which so far has been interpreted mainly as an instantiation of the preverbal marker of sentential negation in stage II of Jespersen's cycle, and, where relevant, we compare it with French preverbal *ne*.

2.1. A bipartite negation

In the WF sentences in (3), the preverbal marker *en* is – at first sight – optionally available in negative sentences. Observe that the distribution of *en* is independent of whether negation is conveyed by the canonical marker of sentential negation *niet* (3a), by n-words such as *niets* ('nothing') in (3b), or by negative adverbs such as *nooit* in (3c), and it is also – again optionally – available in sentences displaying negative concord (NC) such as (3d).³

- (3) a. K'(en) kennen dienen vent niet.
 I=EN know that man NEG
 'I don't know that man.'
- b. k'(en) een niets gekocht.
 I=EN have nothing bought
 'I didn't buy anything.'
- c. k'(en) een em dat nooit verteld.
 I=EN have him that never tell-PART
 'I never told him that.'
- d. k'(en) een nooit niemand niets verteld.
 I=EN have never to no one nothing tell-PART
 'I never told anyone anything.'

If the optionally bipartite expression of negation in WF means that WF retains stage II of Jespersen's cycle, it would be similar to French, a situation which is perhaps due to intense language contact between (West)Flemish and French. Such contact is

independently revealed by numerous and widespread lexical borrowings, as well as in the phonetic and prosodic properties (see De Schutter 1999, Ryckebøer 1991, 2004, Noske 2005, 2007a,b, Haegeman 2009) and in patterns of syllabification (Noske 2007b). However, while not excluding that language contact may have played a role in the retention of preverbal *en* in WF, the distribution and interpretive effect of *en* in present-day WF negative sentences is quite distinct from that of preverbal *ne* in present-day French negative sentences, a point usually ignored in the literature. We inventorize the most salient distributional differences in the next section.

2.2. *Flemish en vs French ne*

2.2.1. *Clause mate licensing*

In both French and WF, the preverbal particle is licensed by a negative constituent with sentential scope. In French, this licensing may under certain conditions (see Kayne 1984 for first discussion) cross sentential boundaries (4a): in (4a), *ne* in the matrix clause is licensed by the n-word *personne* in the embedded (subjunctive) clause. This is not possible in Flemish, (4b).

- (4) a. Je n'ai exigé qu'ils arrêtent personne.
 I NE have demanded that they arrest-subj-pl no one
 'I have required that they arrest nobody.'
 (Kayne 1984: 24, his (4))
- b. *K'en willen da'j gie niemand utnuodigt.
 I EN want that you no one invite
 'I want that you don't invite anyone.'

Conversely, when contained in an embedded clause *en* cannot be licensed by a matrix NPI licenser such as *niet*.⁴

- (4) c. k (en) willen niet da-j doar ook moar eentwa over (*en) zegt an Valère.
 I (EN) want not that-you there also but anything about EN say to Valère
 'I don't want you to tell Valère anything about this.'

This indicates that whatever the exact licensing conditions of *en*, more about which in section 5 below, it cannot be an NPI, as proposed by Zeijlstra (to appear) for French *ne*, because NPIs can be licensed by sentential negation in a higher clause (cf. a.o. Progovac 1994, Giannakidou 1998). The embedded clause (4c) does in fact contain an NPI, *ook moar eentwa* ‘even one thing’ (lit. ‘also but something’), which is licensed by the matrix negation *niet*. The observed clause-boundedness of the licensing relation between *en* and *niet* rather points at an agreement-style solution, making Zeijlstra’s (to appear) proposal to treat French *ne* as an NPI not applicable to Flemish.⁵

2.2.2. Finiteness restriction

One distributional property distinguishing WF *en* from French *ne* is that the latter is compatible with non-finite contexts while the former is not. French infinitival clauses are compatible with *ne* (5a), while their WF counterparts are not (5b). In certain registers, French *ne* is even available in the absence of a verbal stem, as in (6a), this is excluded in Flemish (6b):

- (5) a. Prière de(**ne**) pas marcher sur la pelouse.

pleaseto (NE) NEG walk on the grass

‘Please, do not walk on the grass!’

- b. Nie ip tgas (***en**) lopen, asteblief!

NEG on the=grass (*EN) walk, please

‘Please do not walk on the grass!’

- (6) a. Article (**ne**) pas disponible en France.

Article (NE) NEG available in France

‘Article out of stock in France.’

- b. Product niet (***en**) beschikbaar.

product NEG (*EN) available

‘Product not available’

Observe that the unavailability of *en* in WF infinitival clauses (5b) is not due to structural reduction of the infinitival projection. In the WF infinitival *mee* clauses illustrated in (7) *en* is unavailable. WF *mee* clauses can be shown to be full-fledged clausal projections (contra Haslinger 2006) allowing the presence of constituents standardly taken to be located in the higher zones of the TP domain such as nominative subjects (*ie* ‘he’) (7a), and clitics (*ze* ‘them’) to the left of such subjects (7b), as well as high speaker-oriented modal expressions (7c) and the particle *tet* (7d), which has been shown to occupy a high position in the IP domain (Craenenbroeck and Haegeman 2007). In such contexts *en* is categorically excluded.

- (7) a. Mee Valère/ie da nie gekocht te (***en**) een
 With Valère/he that NEG bought to (*EN) have
 ‘Valère/he NEG having bought that’
- b. Mee ze Valère/ie nie gekocht te (***en**) een
 With them Valère/he NEG bought to (*EN) have
 ‘Valère/he not having bought them’
- c. Mee ze Valère verzekerst /spytig genoeg nie gezien te (***en**) een
 With them Valère probably/sadly enough NEG seen to (*EN) have
 ‘Valère probably/unfortunately not having seen them’
- d. Mee tetValère da nie gekocht te (***en**) een
 with *tet*Valère that NEG bought to (*EN) have
 ‘Valère not having bought them’

One might envisage that *en* is excluded from non-finite contexts because these are incompatible with NC. This cannot be the correct assumption either, because (W)F infinitival clauses are fully compatible with other instantiations of NC. ⁶

- (7) e. Mee ze niemand nie meer gezien te een
 with them no one no more seen to have
 ‘Because no one hadn’t seen her any more’
- f. Dat nooit an niemand nie zeggen!
 that never to no one NEG say
 ‘Don’t ever tell anyone about that.’

WF *en* is available in a wide range of finite clauses, including main (8a) and embedded (8b) declaratives, conditional clauses (8c), *yes/no* questions (8d), *wh* questions (8e), and imperatives (8f). As shown by the examples, *en* co-occurs both with lexical verbs and with auxiliaries. (8g) shows that WF *en* is also compatible with particle verbs, showing that it does not compete with the verbal particle.⁷

(8) a. Valère (**en**)-kent dienen boek niet.

Valère (EN) knows that book NEG

'Valère doesn't know that book.'

b. da Valère dienen boek niet (**en**)-kent

that Valère that book NEG (EN).knows

that Valère does not know that book

c. Oat nie (**en**) regent, moe-j de blommen wouter geven.

If =it NEG (EN) rains, must-you the flowers water give

'If it doesn't rain, you should water the flowers.'

(Haegeman 2002: 181)

d. (**En**)-ee-j gie doa niemand gezien? ⁸

(EN)-have-you you there no.one seen

'Did you (really) not see anyone there'

(from Haegeman 2007:fn.3)

e. Woarom (**en**)-ee-j gie da nie gezeid?

why (EN)-have-you you that NEG said

'Why didn't you say that?'

f. (**En**)-komt (tet) doa nie an!

(EN)-come (tet) there NEG on

Don't touch that. (from Haegeman and Van de Velde 2006: (15))

g. Zorgt da-se der nie an (**en**) komt!

Make sure that-she there NEG on (EN) comes

'Make sure she doesn't touch it.'

2.2.3. Verb positions and the licensing of *en*

Haegeman (1998, 2000, 2001, 2002) relates the finite/non-finite asymmetry in the distribution of WF *en* to the position of the verb. Her central hypothesis (implemented in slightly distinct ways in the papers cited) is that the WF finite verb can move to a higher TP internal position than its infinitival counterpart. Haegeman's empirical support for this hypothesis is drawn from the distribution of auxiliaries in the *Infinitivus pro participio* (IPP) pattern (see, among others, Hoeksema 1988, Vanden Wyngaerd 1994, Hinterhölzl 1999, 2006), illustrated in (9). As shown there, regardless of the linear position of the modal *willen* ('want') in relation to its infinitival complement, when the modal itself is the complement of the perfect auxiliary, it does not show up in the expected perfect participial form *gewild* ('wanted') (9a,b), but it shows up in the infinitival form *willen* (9c,d). Relevantly for our purposes, the finite perfect auxiliary may follow (9c) or precede (9d) the IPP verb cluster composed of the modal verb and its complement, *willen dienen boek lezen* ('want to read that book').

- (9) a. *da Valère [[dienen boek lezen] gewild] eet
 that Valère that book read want-PART has
 b. *da Valère [gewild [dienen boek lezen]] eet
 that Valère want-PART that book read has
 c. da Valère [willen [dienen boek lezen]] eet
 that Valère want that book read has
 d. ?da Valère ee [willen [dienen boek lezen]]
 that Valère has want that book read
 'that Valère has wanted to read that book'

Haegeman (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) shows that the position of the perfect auxiliary in (9c) and (9d) depends on three factors: finiteness, tense and, relevantly for the present discussion, the presence of *en*. (i) Non-finite auxiliaries always follow the IPP cluster (10). (ii) While present tense forms of the auxiliary preferably follow the cluster, there is a strong preference for the past tense forms to precede the IPP cluster (11).⁹ (iii) When associated with the particle *en*, the perfect auxiliary precedes the IPP cluster (12). The presence of *en* overrules the preference for present tense auxiliaries to follow the cluster: in the presence of *en*, present tense auxiliaries favour the position to the left of the cluster.

- (10) a. Mee Valère te [willen dienen boek lezen] een
 with Valère to want that book read have-INF
 b. *mee Valère te een[willen dienen boek lezen]
- (11) a. *??da Valère [willen dienen boek lezen] oat
 that Valère want that book read have-PAST
 b. da Valère oa [willen dienen boek lezen]
- (12) a. da Valère nie [willen dienen boek lezen] (*en)-eet
 that Valère not [want that book read] (*EN) has
 b. da Valère nie en-ee [willen dienen boek lezen]
 c. da Valère nie en-oa [willen dienen boek lezen]

While in French the finite verb arguably occupies a higher TP internal position than its non-finite counterpart (Pollock 1989), this does not affect the availability of *ne* which, regardless of the movement of the verb, always occupies a high functional position (arguably T) in the clausal domain (cf. (5a)).

2.2.4. A first antisymmetric analysis (Haegeman 2000, 2002)

Haegeman (2002) elaborates an analysis of the distribution of WF *en* adopting Kayne's (1994) antisymmetry hypothesis. To capture the distributional constraints on the distribution of *en*, she elaborates an articulated structure of the WF middle field as shown in (12): the low functional head F3 is an aspectual head associated with perfectivity, the intermediate functional head F2 hosts *en* and is identified as a polarity head, the highest functional head (F1) carries the tense features and is taken to also host infinitival *te*.

With respect to the distribution of the verb, Haegeman proposes that infinitival *een* lacks a Tense feature and remains in the lower head F3. Infinitival *te* realizes F1. Past tense forms of the verb (e.g. *oat*) have a strong Tense feature and must move to F1 to check their Tense features. Present tense forms (e.g. *eet*) may but need not move to F1. Haegeman assumes that lacking overt Tense morphology, the WF

present tense paradigm is syntactically ambivalent between a paradigm that is not marked for tense or a paradigm with a zero tense morpheme (cf. Pollock 1989 for early discussion of the ambivalent patterning of French infinitives).

WF *en* is merged in F2, a polarity head. To capture its dependence on Tense, Haegeman proposes that *en* carries a strong T feature. In addition, as a bound morpheme *en* selects a V-stem, this is encoded by a V-feature. As a result, to satisfy both its strong Tense feature and its V-feature, *en* will have to cliticize onto a verb which has moved to Tense (i.e. F1). To capture the dependence on a clause mate negation, Haegeman proposes that *en* has uninterpretable polarity features which are checked by an agreement relation with a clause mate negative constituent.¹⁰

Though representation (12) managed to derive the distribution of *en*, it had little to say about the fact that (i) *en* is never obligatory, and (ii) *en* has the interpretive effect described briefly in section 1. In what follows we first detail the interpretive effect conveyed by *en* in Flemish varieties of Dutch and we update the account in (12) to capture this effect.

3. Revisiting the data: Flemish *en* is not optional

It has been assumed in the literature (cf. Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, 1996) that *en* is optional in finite clauses, which is usually taken to be a two-way property: whenever *en* is present it can be deleted without loss of grammaticality, and in the appropriate environments (see discussion above which shows some finite clauses are incompatible with *en* because of specific licensing conditions of the particle) *en* can freely be inserted. Though *en* is indeed optional in the sense that deletion of *en* does not lead to loss of grammaticality, it must be pointed out that even in contexts in which *en* would be syntactically licensed, *en* cannot always be freely inserted. We will turn to this point in section 3.2.

It is clear that WF *en* is not truth-conditional: it does not change the propositional content of the clause: a negative clause containing *en* remains a negative clause, and the variants of a negative clause with and without *en* have identical truth conditions. Indeed this lack of propositional content would appear at first sight to lead to the conclusion that *en* is functionally redundant in the dialects, again raising the question about why it has survived in Flemish dialects 400 years after Dutch and many/most of its dialects made the transition to stage III of Jespersen's cycle. What is more, not only does *en* survive in some Flemish dialects, it is also incorporated in the supradialectal Flemish regiolects (see DeCaluwe 2007, Breitbarth and Haegeman 2010, for some data).

However, in spite of not contributing to the propositional content of the clause, the presence of *en* has an impact on the interpretation of the clause. We will first consider the interpretive value of *en* in section 3.1.

3.1. En has expressive content

Most discussions of WF *en* assume that it is optionally present in finite clauses and that its semantic function is like that of French *ne*, i.e. it simply is part of a bipartite expression of sentential negation (but see Breitbarth 2009 for a different analysis of the role of the preverbal particle Jespersen's stage II). However, a number of authors (Overdiep 1933;1937, Beheydt 1998:93, Haegeman 2000: 11, 2002, Breitbarth and Haegeman 2010) have pointed out that the presence of *en* in a negative sentences

emphasizes the negative value of the clause. More precisely, Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010, to appear) propose that *en* conveys that the negative clause is unexpected in a context in which its positive counterpart is the expected state of affairs. This is illustrated in the attested examples in (13): in (13a) the speaker reports on a visit to a newly opened local sports center. She had been expecting to see her cousin Valère there, and indeed at some point she thought she saw him (*Ge zou lyk peinzen dat da Valère is*, ‘One would think that that is Valère’) and then she realised that she was mistaken. In (13b) the speaker reports on a visit to the doctor’s: contrary to expectations (and to what is the normal practice) they are not invited to fix a new appointment.

- (13) a. *Ge zou lyk peinzen dat da Valère is.*
 you would think that that’s Valère.
 Mo t’en is Valère niet.
 But it EN is Valère not.
 ‘One would think it was Valère. But it wasn’t Valère.’
 (MJL, Lapscheure, 12.8.2012, 18.00)
- b. [doctor:] ‘*Kom gie binnen zes maanden ne keer terug.*’
 come you in six months once back
 ‘Come back in six month’s time.’
 M’en een wonder zelfs geen ofsproake gemoakt.
 we= EN have we even no appointment made.’
 ‘We haven’t even made an appointment.’
 (MJL, Lapscheure, 15.05.2008)

Observe that whereas in (13a) the positive counterpart of the negative clause containing *en* is provided in the discourse, in (13b) this is not the case, but the proposition ‘We will make an appointment’ is contextually salient in that it is what the speaker would have been led to expect on the basis of her past experience.

When used in a negative sentence, *en* has the effect of strongly opposing that negative sentence to its contextually salient positive counterpart. In Relevance Theoretic terms (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), a sentence containing *en* conveys an instruction to eliminate the contextually highly salient positive counterpart from the

discourse context (see Breitbarth and Haegeman, to appear). In more general terms, the presence of *en* signals that the negative proposition is not in keeping with the existing discourse context, i.e. it is unexpected. Depending on the context, in addition to having the effect of contrast and elimination and, the presence of *en* may convey additional effects such as disappointment (13a), surprise (13b), irritation, defiance, apology, warning etc.

Thus *en* seems to convey some form of emphasis on the polarity of the clause. One might at first sight align the emphasis expressed by *en* with that expressed through Höhle's *VerumFocus* (1992), which focuses on the truth value of the proposition. However, this hypothesis is problematic in view of the fact *en* can also be used with imperatives (8f), which cannot naturally be said to have a truth value.

3.2. *En is not optional*

Though in all the examples illustrated so far *en* is 'optional' in the sense that it can be deleted without loss of grammaticality, certain contexts are incompatible with *en*. Three such contexts are illustrated in this section.

Recall that the presence of *en* in a negative sentence serves to oppose the negative state of affairs expressed in the proposition to its contextually highly salient positive counterpart and that it provides an instruction to eliminate the positive counterpart. Put informally, in association with proposition P *en* conveys that 'though P is expected and contextually prominent, NOT P is actually the case'. This leads to the prediction that *en* will be incompatible with contexts in which the negative proposition itself is already contextually salient and in which, as a consequence, its positive counterpart cannot be said to be contextually prominent. An interesting illustration of exactly such a context is created by the Flemish discourse particle *weer* ('again') used in requests for reminders. The (W)Flemish adverbial particle *(al)weer* 'again' has at least two functions: (i) it can convey that an action or a state of affairs expressed in the clause is being repeated or (ii) in questions it can be used to encode a request for the repetition of given information, i.e. a question containing *weer* can function as a request for a reminder.¹¹ In its reminder use, *weer* signals that the information targeted by the clause is given ('hearer old' in the sense of Prince 1992) but that it is (for some reason) no longer sufficiently salient ('discourse new', in Prince's terms). The two uses of *weer* are illustrated in (14a) with two informal

paraphrases corresponding to the interpretations. The repeated action reading presupposes that there was at least one occurrence of the act of refusal in the past, no such presupposition is present with the request for reminder reading.

(14) a. Waarom heb je dat nu **weer** geweigerd?

why have you that now again refused

(i) Repeated action: 'Why did you refuse that for a second time?'

(ii) Request for reminder: 'Remind me, what was your reason for refusing that?'

The particle *weer* is also available in negative questions, again with the two readings being available (14b). However, relevant for our discussion is the observation that in negative questions the presence of *en* cancels the reminder reading of *weer* (14c):

(14) b. Waarom heb je dat nu **weer** niet gedaan?

why have you that now again NEG done

(i) Repeated action: 'Why did you fail to do this/'not do this' for a second time?'

(ii) Request for reminder: 'Remind me of the reason why you failed to/did not do that.'

c. Waarom en ee-j da nu **were** nie gedoan?

why EN have you that now again NEG done

(i) Repeated action: 'Why did you fail to do this/'not do this' for a second time?'

(ii) *Request for reminder: 'Remind me of the reason why you failed to/did not do that.'

The absence of the reminder reading of *weer* in the presence of *en* is expected. The presence of *en* signals that the positive counterpart of the negative sentence (i.e. in (14c) of the question) is contextually salient, and conveys that the negative proposition is unexpected. This implication is immediately contradicted in a request for reminder because such a request conveys that the negative proposition itself is already present in the discourse context.

A second context in which preverbal *en* is inappropriate is that of negative questions used as polite requests:

- (15) (En) Eej-gie men geen cigaretje?
(EN) have-you you me no cigarette?
'Would you have a cigarette for me?'

Without *en* (15) may either have the literal reading: 'Is it true that you do not have a cigarette?' or it may be seen as a request ('Can I have a cigarette?'). With *en* only the literal reading is available: the sentence conveys that the speaker strongly doubts that the interlocutor does not have cigarettes and implies that he or she assumes in fact that he should have them ('Do you really not have cigarettes?'). *En* conveys that the salient positive alternative has to be discarded from the discourse. Roughly (15) with *en* conveys: 'I thought you had cigarettes, but you apparently don't have them after all'. However, a request reading of the negative question in fact comes with the presupposition that the interlocutor does indeed have cigarettes and will be willing to give one. In such a context, inserting *en* which is an instruction to discard the positive alternative, is inappropriate.

These examples also show that *en*, contrary to what one might intuitively think (e.g. Cecilia Poletto, p.c.), is not comparable to 'presuppositional' negators such as, the Italian particle *mica* (Cinque 1976, Zanuttini 1997, Visconti 2009).¹² Unlike *en*, *mica*, can be used in polite requests illustrated in (16), even in the absence of the neutral expression of sentential negation.¹³

- (16) (Non) Hai **mica** una sigaretta/un fiammifero?
NEG have MICA a cigarette/a lighter
'Would you happen to have a cigarette/ a lighter?'
(Cinque 1976:319)

A third context in which *en* is unavailable is briefly discussed in Haegeman (2010b) and concerns conditional clauses. Many Flemish dialects have a conditional auxiliary, *moest* ('had to'), which is used in conditional antecedents as in (17a) (cf. Boogaert

2007). Conditional *moest* can also move to the left periphery, leading to a V2 pattern (17b):

- (17) a. Als hij dat **moest** geweten hebben, dan zou hij boos geweest zijn.
If he that must-PAST know=PART have then would he angry be=PART be
'If he had known that, he would have been angry'.
b. **Moest** hij dat geweten hebben, dan zou hij boos geweest zijn.
must-PAST he that know=PART have then would he angry be=PART be
'Should he have known that, he would have been angry.'

The specific use of *moest* illustrated here is essentially restricted to conditional clauses. We refer to Haegeman (2010b) for some discussion. Relevant for our purposes, Haegeman (2010b: 614, (53)) observes that conditional *moest* is not compatible with preverbal *en*:-

- (17) c. Oa-se da nie (***en**) moest geweten een, ...
if-she that not (*EN) must-PAST know-PART have
'If she hadn't known that,...'
d. (***En**) moest ze da nie geweten een,...
(*EN) must-PAST she that not know-PART have
'If she hadn't known that,...'

We return to the ungrammaticality of *en* in (17c) and (17d) in section 5.1.

Observe that though Flemish preverbal *en* conveys polarity emphasis, the relation between polarity emphasis and the presence of *en* in negative sentences is not bidirectional. Preverbal *en* is not obligatory in emphatic contexts, as shown in the following exchange from the East Flemish dialect from Buggenhout, which also displays preverbal *en* in negative sentences (see De Pauw 1973, Breitbarth and Haegeman 2010)

(18) Enne... ze zee tege mij: 'wat erre gij daar gezeet?'
 and she said against me what have you there said
 'And she said to me: 'what did you say there?''
 'Ik iet(s) gezeet? ... 'k em ekik niks gezeet'
 I something said I have I=I nothing said
 'Me, say something? I didn't say anything!'
 'Da's wel! G'eet daar iet gezeet;' 'Ik 'em niks gezeet', zei'k
 that's well you=have there something said I have nothing said said I
 'You did. You did say something there.' 'I didn't say anything' I said.'
 (Buggenhout Opstal, De Pauw 1973: 1.7-8)

4. The expression of polarity emphasis

As discussed above, the insertion of *en* in a negative clause conveys polarity emphasis. In this section we compare Flemish *en* to expressions of polarity emphasis phenomena in other languages. Most of these have been analysed as involving syntactic encoding of polarity emphasis in the clausal left periphery. We will show that *en* behaves differently from those expressions, both functionally/interpretively and syntactically, calling for a different account of the syntax and interpretation of *en*.

4.1. Left peripheral markers of polarity emphasis

Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010) analyse the emphatic function of *en* as a focussing strategy: the presence of *en* focuses on the negative polarity of the clause and contrasts this with its positive counterpart. In line with much work according to which contrastive focus is associated with the (split) CP (see below), their analysis assimilates the syntax of *en* with that of other left-peripheral expressions of polarity emphasis reported in the literature. However, such an analysis of *en* needs to be revisited, as the distribution of CP-related expressions of polarity emphasis differs significantly from that of *en*.

One example of a CP-related expression of polarity emphasis is sentence-final *NO* in the Veneto dialects discussed in Zanuttini (1997) and Poletto (2009), illustrated in (19) below. Veneto sentence-final *NO* is available in embedded domains that tolerate root phenomena (19b,c), but not, for instance, in temporal adverbial clauses (19d) and conditional clauses (19e). Contrary to that, both these contexts are compatible with WF *en*, as seen in example (20), which can have either a temporal or conditional interpretation.¹⁴

(19) a. No ghe so ndà NO.

NEGthere be-1SG gone NO

'I did NOT go there.'

(Poletto 2009: (9))

b. Credo che non venga NO.

believe-1SG that NEGcome-SUBJ-3SG NO

'I think that he is not coming at all'

(Poletto 2009: (38a))

c. Mi ha detto che non viene NO.

me has tell-PART that NEG come-3SG NO.

'He told me that he is not coming at all'

(Poletto 2009: (38b))

d. Dovrebbe aver finito il suo lavoro per stasera.

must-COND-3SG have finish-PART the his work for tonight

*Quando non lo aveva finito NO, l'ho fatto io.

when NEG it have-PAST-3SG finish-PART NO it-have-1SG do-PART I

e. Dovrebbe finire il lavoro per stasera.

must-COND-3SG finish the work for tonight

*Se non lo finisce NO, lo faccio io.

If NEG it finish-3SG NO it do-1SG I

(C. Poletto, pc. 22.10.08)

(20) [Oa-t nie en regent] moe-j de blommen wouter geven.

If/when=it NEG EN rains must=you the flowers water give

'If/when it DOESN'T rain, you have to water the plants.'

(Haegeman 2002: 181)

The Veneto data in (19) pattern with a range of expressions of polarity emphasis in other languages that have recently received some attention in the literature (including among others Danckaert to appear, Holmberg 2007, Hernanz 2007a, 2007b, 2011, Poletto 2009, Zanuttini 1997, Martins 2007, Kandybowicz 2007, 2008). Cross-linguistically, these distributionally restricted expressions of polarity emphasis appear to behave relatively homogeneously and are amenable to a fairly uniform syntactic analysis, although the precise implementations differ depending on the theoretical assumptions of the individual researchers. Previous and current analyses of these expressions of polarity emphasis converge on the hypothesis that the expression of polarity emphasis is ‘syntacticized’ (in the sense of Cinque and Rizzi 2010) and that it is encoded in the left periphery of the clause.

For instance, returning to the Veneto example in (19) specifically, Poletto (2009) proposes a left peripheral analysis outlined in the citation below and summarized in (21) in order to account for the final position of *NO* in (19a):

According to this analysis, *NO* is always moved from within the NegP where it originates [note omitted, b&h] to a Focus position, which, following standard assumptions on the structure of the clause in Italian is located low in the CP area. When *NO* is in first position, there is no IP fronting. When *NO* is in sentence final position, this is the result of a movement of the whole IP to a position, GroundP, which is located in the Topic field, higher than Focus (again following standard assumptions on the CP layer) [note omitted b&h]
(Poletto 2009:6)

- (21) [SpecGroundP [IP no ghe so ndà] [Ground° [CPFocus **NO**]
[FinP [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]] [Fin° [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]]
(Poletto 2009:6, her (13))

Precise implementations of the left-peripheral accounts vary, but most accounts (including Holmberg 2007, Hernanz 2007a, 2007b, 2011, Poletto 2008, 2009, Zanuttini 1997, Martins 2007, Kandybowicz 2008, to appear) appeal to one or more

left-peripheral projections in terms of a split CP along the lines of Rizzi (1997). The derivation of the phenomena in question has been argued to implicate (an operator in) a designated left-peripheral functional projection encoding focus on the polarity of the sentence in these constructions, possibly attracting a lower polarity projection (Laka's 1993, 1994 ΣP , as in Martins' 2007 analysis, for instance). In such cases of CP-related polarity emphasis, the restriction to root clauses and a subset of embedded clauses will follow from whatever account is invoked for the restricted distribution of other Main Clause Phenomena (MCP). We refer to Aelbrecht *et al.* (2012) for discussion of the options that have been explored and to Haegeman (2012a,b) for a specific syntactic analysis based on locality conditions on movement.

Given its unrestricted syntactic distribution, it is clear that despite its focal nature, Flemish *en*, cannot be viewed as encoding of polarity emphasis in the clausal left periphery, contra Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010).

4.3. Unrestricted polarity emphasis

En is not unique as an expression of polarity emphasis whose distribution is not restricted to root contexts. In a large-scale study of the expression in African languages of what they call 'auxiliary focus' – emphatic assertion conveyed through focus on the auxiliary – Hyman and Watters (1984: 256) show that while in many languages, the expression of polarity emphasis is restricted to main clauses, and those embedded clause that can be assimilated to them, in other languages, in other languages polarity emphasis is available across clause types. The authors propose that when auxiliary focus is an instance of what are now usually called MCP, "focus marking is grammatically [...] controlled" (1984: 256), while in languages in which it is distributionally unrestricted, it is pragmatically controlled. This distinction might be taken to correlate directly with the syntactization, i.e., syntactic encoding, of a polarity emphasis phenomenon: One that patterns as an MCP would be syntacticized, one with unrestricted distribution would be pragmatically derived.

However, it has emerged recently that expressions of emphatic polarity that do not have the restricted distribution of MCP do not pattern in a homogeneous way and cannot all be subsumed under what Hyman and Watters call 'pragmatically controlled' phenomena without a syntactic reflex. While Wilder's (in press) analysis of

emphatic *do* in English, for instance, does endorse the view that in this particular case polarity emphasis is not syntactically encoded, other authors, such as Batllori and Hernanz (to appear) on Catalan and Kandybowicz (to appear) on Nupe, have argued for a syntactic analysis of those expressions of polarity emphasis which are not MCP.

Batllori and Hernanz (to appear) distinguish two types of emphatic polarity particles (EPPA) in Catalan, ‘high’ EPPA such as *bé* (‘indeed’, lit. ‘well’) (22a,b) and ‘low’ EPPA such as *ben* (lit. ‘well’) (22c). ‘High’ EPPA are associated with the Focus projection in the CP layer, and pattern with MCP, ‘low’ EPPA are not MCP.¹⁵ According to Batllori and Hernanz, ‘low’ EPPA such as *ben* are located in a low Focus projection situated between FinP and the *v*P field (22d). ‘High’ EPPA, such as *bé* (22a), are incompatible with this low position (22b). We refer to their paper for illustrations and further discussion.

(22) a. **Bé** ha cantat la soprano.

indeed has sung the soprano

‘The soprano HAS sung’

b. La soprano s’ha ***bé** enfadat.

the soprano SE=has indeed got.angry

‘The soprano HAS got angry’

c. La soprano ***ben** s’ha **ben** enfadat.

the soprano BEN SE=has BEN got.angry

‘The soprano has really got angry’

d. [_{ForceP} [_{FocusP} high EPPA [_{PolP} [_{FinP}.. [_{FP} low EPPA [_{vP} ...]]]]]]]

(after Batllori & Hernanz, to appear)

Kandybowicz (2007, 2008, to appear) shows that also in Nupe, a Benue-Congo language of Central Africa, polarity emphasis is expressed in two quite distinct ways. In addition to the distributionally restricted sentence-final particle *ní:*, which patterns with MCP (23a), a second device for emphasizing polarity is verb doubling (23b). Verb doubling is not distributionally restricted: (23c) illustrates the doubling of *gí* (‘eat’) in the clausal complement of the noun *gànnán* (‘news’), a domain that is not compatible with MCP (see Haegeman 2012b: 67). To set apart the two patterns of

encoding polarity emphasis, Kandybowicz argues for the availability of “at least two loci of emphasis”: a high left peripheral position and a low TP-internal site, which dominates νP .

- (23) a. *Musa gí kinkere ní:* Musa eat scorpion *ní*
 ‘(I assure you) Musa DID eat the scorpion.’
 (Kandybowicz, to appear: his (1a))
- b. *Musa gí kinkere gí.*
 Musa eat scorpion eat
 ‘Musa DID eat the scorpion.’
 (Kandybowicz, to appear: his (1c))
- c. *wo labari gánán Musa gí kinkere gí.*
 3PL hear newsCOMP Musa eat scorpion eat
 ‘They heard the news that (apparently) Musa DID eat the scorpion.’
 (Kandybowicz, to appear: his (6b))

The evidence from Catalan and Nupe suggests that polarity emphasis can be encoded syntactically in two areas, CP and νP , and that both of these can be activated within one language.

In the remainder of this paper, we propose an updated syntactic analysis of the Flemish particle *en* with respect to (12). Along the lines of the Jayaseelan’s proposal (2010) and in keeping with the proposals in Batllori and Hernanz (to appear) and Kandybowicz (to appear), we analyse *en* as a realization of a low, νP -related Focus-head.

5. Revisiting the syntax of *en*

5.1. The proposal

Jayaseelan (2010: 321, fn. 20) proposes that WF *en* is merged in the νP -associated FocP. This proposal captures the focussing function of *en* directly and is in line with

the proposals in Battlori and Hernanz (to appear) and Kandybowicz (to appear). We adopt his proposal and adjust representation (12) accordingly, identifying the projection FP2 hosting *en* as FocP, a projection that dominates ν P. We furthermore assume that the perfective auxiliary is a light ν which heads ν P. We continue to assume that *en* carries an unvalued negative feature [μ Neg] which makes it dependent on the presence of a clause-mate licensing constituent encoding sentential negation. We also continue to adopt Haegeman's hypothesis that *en* carries an unvalued tense feature and selects for a verbal root (cf. (12)). This accounts for the observation that that *en* is restricted to finite clauses in which it can move to a finite verb in F (i.e. T). F1:

Observe that the presence of a μ T-feature on *en* accounts for the failure of *en* to be used in *moest*-(‘should’-) conditionals (cf. Haegeman 2010b) illustrated in (17c,d): etymologically, conditional *moest* is the past (subjunctive) tense form of *moeten* (‘must’) but in the conditional use *moest* does not (and cannot) convey past time. Following Breitbarth’s (2012) analysis of the analogous conditional modal *solite* ‘should’ in German, we propose that conditional *moest* is merged in a functional head directly above Tense and hence does not express any temporal information. This explains its compatibility with apodosis in any tense, despite its historical past tense form, i.e., there is no sequence of tense between protasis and apodosis as is normally the case in conditionals.

5.2. Low FocP and contrastive focus?

It was argued above that the main interpretive effect of *en* is to strongly oppose the negative proposition it occurs in to the contextually salient positive counterpart of this proposition, that is, to express a form of contrast. This is a potential problem for the syntactic analysis proposed in the previous subsection because the ν P-related FocP postulated among others by Belletti (2001, 2004 etc), is generally understood only to be able to associate with information focus, not contrastive focus (for detailed argumentation see Belletti 2004:29, Cardinaletti 2012).

We have seen in section 4.2 that *en* is not to be assimilated with the better known CP-related expressions of polarity emphasis, which are commonly analysed as left-peripheral contrastive focus on polarity, because *en* is distributionally rather different: crucially it is not an MCP. To solve this problem, we propose that *en* spells out the lower ν P related FocP. However, if *en* realizes a low, ν P-related Foc-head, which gives a descriptively adequate account of its syntactic behavior, the question arises how the emphatic or contrastive meaning component of *en* can arise, given that the low FocP is independently shown not to be able to (syntactically) encode contrast.

In order to resolve this paradox, we propose to distinguish the contrastive component of the emphasis conveyed by *en* from the focus on polarity it expresses. The latter, as argued above, is encoded in the syntax. The former, however, we argue not to be encoded in the syntax. Rather, we retain from Breitbarth and Haegeman (to appear) the hypothesis that, in Relevance-Theoretic terms, the specific contrastive component of the interpretation of sentences containing *en* is procedural rather than conceptual (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Blakemore 1987, 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2012). The presence of *en* in the low FocP of a negative sentence activates alternatives, and this is interpreted as a processing instruction to the hearer to identify a relevant alternative, i.e. positive, proposition in the context. This instruction is part of the *explicature* of the utterance containing *en* (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995). In this sense *en* is comparable to other items expressing ‘contrast’ such as *but* or *however* (e.g., Blakemore 2002), for which one would probably also not assume that they realize a syntacticized ‘contrast’ feature.¹⁶ Put

differently, our proposal is that focus is syntacticized and realized by *en* but that the contrast (lexically) associated with it is not.

5.3. Grammaticalisation

Given that *en* has developed out of the former ‘Stage I’ marker of sentential negation (in Old Dutch), the question arises how, historically, it got to occupy the low Foc-head as argued in this paper, and how its semantic change from expressing negation to expressing emphasis on polarity came about.

One proposal concerning the interpretive development of *en* is advanced in Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010). These authors follow Breitbarth’s (2009) assumption that the original preverbal negator in the West Germanic languages was reanalyzed as a marker of affective polarity at stage II of Jespersen’s cycle and was lost in the transition to stage III because it became functionally redundant as soon as its presence was entailed by the (obligatory) presence of a clausemate marker of sentential negation. Given its functional redundancy, the preverbal affective marker became unstable, which ultimately led to its disappearance from English, German, and from the majority of the Dutch dialects, in particular the standard language.

The situation in the modern Flemish dialects was obviously different, as *en* has been preserved in negative contexts. Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010) take the survival of *en* to indicate that *en* has acquired a new function, viz. the expression of polarity emphasis. For them, it is precisely this further development that has saved Flemish *en* from suffering the fate of its cognates in the other West Germanic dialects: in Flemish, *en* is not functionally redundant.

However, Breitbarth and Haegeman’s (2010) analysis cannot be easily combined in its details with the syntactic proposal made in the current paper, because they also take *en* to be a CP-related expression of polarity emphasis, which, as shown above in the current paper, is implausible given its unrestricted distribution. Therefore, a new account of the historical development of Flemish *en* is required.

We argue that *en* underwent both a syntactic change and a semantic change. Syntactically, it changed its position in the clausal hierarchy from being merged as the head of NegP to being merged as the head of FocP. Semantically, it underwent

grammaticalization in the sense of Relevance Theory (in particular, Nicolle 1998, Wilson 2011). We now discuss the two connected developments in turn.

As argued above, we take *en* to realize a low, νP -related Foc-head in the present-day language. Given that *en* expresses emphasis on the polarity of the clause, FocP must take NegP in its scope. Assuming, as is common in the literature (e.g., Haegeman 1995; Zeijlstra 2004) and building on the literature on French (e.g., Pollock 1989; Rowlett 1998, but see Rooryck 2008 and Zeijlstra, to appear, for different views), that *en* realized the head of NegP while it was involved in the expression of sentential negation at an earlier stage of Jespersen's Cycle, *en* would undergo an upwards reanalysis from the head of NegP to the head of FocP. Note that this development is not entirely to be equated to Roberts and Roussou's (2003) grammaticalization by upwards reanalysis, as in the present case, it is not the case that the movement of *en* from Neg to Foc was uniformly triggered by a feature on *en* that, after the reanalysis, could be satisfied by direct merge into Foc. Rather, speakers were trying to make sense of the continued presence of an item that had otherwise ceased to fulfill a clear grammatical function.

As potential triggers for this reanalysis we can identify three factors, two structural and one functional. First, *en* lost the ability to express sentential negation, second its frequency in negative clauses decreased, third, *en* always attaches to the finite verb. This means that in terms of the structural analysis (first and third factors), *en* became superficially ambiguous, because its linear position does not allow one to identify whether it is merged in Neg or in Foc. Functionally, the reanalysis reflects the attempt of the speaker/language acquirer to ‘make sense’ of the decreasing frequency of *en* in negative clauses. Though not all negative clauses are associated with polarity focus, a negative clause always does weakly convey a contrast with a positive counterpart. For those cases in which *en* is overt, speakers related its presence to the contrastive property inherently associated with negative clauses: *en* became associated with polarity focus, i.e. with setting the negative clause off against its positive alternative. This interpretation is compatible with *en* being the spell out of the low ν P-related Foc-head.

This structural change goes together with a change in the lexical meaning of *en*. We have argued in the previous subsection that in the present-day language, *en* encodes focus on polarity syntactically, by merging in the low, ν P-related Foc-head, but that the contrast it conveys is introduced as part of the procedural meaning *en* encodes. We adopt the Relevance-Theoretic distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning (Blakemore 1987, 2002; Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Wilson and Sperber 2012), with the proviso that every lexical item may have both types of meaning in different proportions (Nicolle 1998; Fraser 2006; Wilson 2011). This allows for an understanding of grammaticalization as a shift along this continuum from ‘more conceptual’ to ‘more procedural’. Negation being truth-conditional, the old meaning of *en* was therefore more conceptual. Its new meaning as being a processing instruction to the hearer to identify a relevant positive proposition in the context with which to contrast the uttered negative one is purely procedural. We argue that this semantic change proceeded in lockstep with the structural reanalysis described above.

6. Two notes on the distribution of *en* in Flemish dialects

6.1. A further diachronic development?

The use of *en* in Flemish is not fully stabilized. In many Flemish dialects it has disappeared entirely, and where it does survive it is relatively rare (see Breitbarth and Haegeman 2010). While it has become integrated in the supra-dialectal Flemish colloquial language (*tussentaal*) of some speakers, it probably remains restricted to those speakers in whose own dialect *en* has survived. In the absence of more information we cannot provide insightful discussion: more empirical data are needed for a full-fledged account.

However, one set of data may be worth pointing out, even though the empirical evidence is at the moment purely anecdotal. Our corpus of naturally occurring examples contains some rare dialectal instances of *en* being used in non-negative, non-affective/polar contexts:

(28) a. Me kwamen doa toe. K'**en** zoagen 't al...

We came there on. I **EN** saw it already

'We arrived there and I immediately saw it...'

(Dialect of Lapscheure, MJL, 5.12.08 16.00)

b. Wachte, wachte, wachte... K'**en** zyn ier, wè.

Wait, wait, wait... I **EN** am here, wè

'Wait, I'm coming.'

(Dialect of Heist, MV 16.08.2009)

Similar (again extremely rare) cases are also reported in Neuckermans (2008), who gives, among others, the following example. Neuckermans does not discuss whether *en* conveys emphasis in such examples:

(29) a. Das zo zeker as één en één twee **en** es. (K274a, Sint-lozef-Olen)

that-is as sure as one and one two **EN** is

'That is dead certain.'

- b. Ze pakte eu portefeuille waar dase eu sleutelke in **en** doet. (0248, Halle)
 she took her wallet where that she her key in EN puts
 ‘She took the wallet in which she puts her key.’
 (Neuckermans 2008: 187-191)

Such instances of non-negative sentences containing *en* would obviously be completely unexpected if *en* were still analysed as the spell out of the functional head encoding sentential negation. One might indeed decide to discard examples such as these as performance errors. The examples become less mysterious, though, and in fact rather interesting, if present-day Flemish *en* is taken to encode polarity focus, as proposed in the current paper. In the – admittedly rare – cases in which *en* appears in a positive sentence, it seems that it no longer is restricted to negative contexts. This can be accounted for if it is assumed that for those speakers who allow such examples *en* it has lost the [uNeg] feature entirely.

6.2. Eliciting *en*

In our discussion, we have underlined that for the Flemish speakers on whose use of *en* we have based our discussion, the particle *en* is not discourse-neutral. *En* has a specific pragmatic function: by focusing on the negative polarity of the clause it creates a contrast with its (contextually salient) positive counterpart and the presence of *en* pragmatically functions as an instruction to discard the positive alternative. The fact that *en* is associated with this particular discourse-function means that in neutral discourse contexts in which there is no such highly salient positive proposition, speakers will not use *en*. The discourse restrictions associated with *en* may in fact entail that in elicitation tests the use *en* will be underreported. Van der Auwera and De Vogelaer (2009) provide a detailed survey of the distribution of *en* in the SAND data, collected through questionnaires in the a large number Dutch and Flemish locations. We cannot go over the results of these questionnaires in detail but we want to illustrate the impact of the discourse on the results by means of just one example.

Van der Auwera and De Vogelaer (2009) point out that while in root *yes/no* questions with initial verb (30a) *en* is infrequently elicited, it is slightly more frequent with initial *maar*:

(30) a. (*En*) heeft Gunther (*niet*) gebeld?

En has Gunther NEG call-PART

b. Maar (*en*) kom je *niet*?

But (*en*) come you NEG

(Van der Auwera and De Vogelaer 2009: 65)

One might conclude from this contrast that *en* is simply incompatible with initial position, but this conclusion is not inevitable. In particular, observe that introducing the question with *maar* as in (30b) explicitly creates a context in which the contrast between the positive and the negative polarity of the clause becomes more salient. We speculate that the difference in elicitation results between (30a) and (30b) correlates directly with the discourse function of *en*, which is more naturally triggered by the presence of *maar* (30b). Indeed, among the examples we have collected on an anecdotal basis several instances with *en* are introduced with *maar*, (1a) is an example and in both (1b) and (1c) *maar* can be added, as shown in (31a,b).

(31) a. k'stungen der 5 meter van. **Mo** k'**en** zagen em nog niet.

I stood there 5 meters off but I EN saw him NEG yet

'I was 5 meters away (from the car) and I still didn't see it.'

(AH, Lapscheure 11.09.2011, 18.00)

[Context: out on a field, it was dark and the car the speaker had to return to was black.]

b. k'een al overall gezocht in us

I have already everywhere searched in house

Mo k'**en** vinden ze nievers.

but I=EN find her nowhere

'I have looked for it everywhere and I don't find it.'

(MJL, Lapscheure, 11.06.2008)

The strong discourse requirements imposed on the use of *en* also mean that to avoid underreporting, when eliciting judgements on the use of *en* care will have to be taken to create the appropriate discourse context. In the absence of such contexts, it is to

be expected that *en* will not be elicited and that speakers may consider its use unacceptable.

7. A return to Romance

7.1. Preverbal *ne* and emphasis in French?

While preverbal *ne* is infrequently used in contemporary spoken French, it still has not entirely disappeared and, interestingly for our purposes, in some varieties of French preverbal *ne* also has been argued to have acquired the emphatic function which we ascribe to Flemish *en*. However, we do wish to signal potentially relevant findings by Fonseca-Greber (2007), who has studied the use of *ne* in Swiss French speakers. She concludes that preverbal *ne* is used in a very low, but stable, 2.5% of the possible contexts in the conversational speech of educated middle-class Swiss French speakers and attributes the survival of *en* to two factors. On the one hand, the use of *en* may be due to ‘micro-shifts’ into a more formal register; these occur typically when speakers are discussing ‘institutional’ or legal topics.¹⁷ On the other hand, and importantly for the current discussion, Swiss French speakers seem to manifest a novel use of *ne* in bipartite negation: as a marker of emphasis. Fonseca-Greber shows how the use of *ne* in her corpus of conversational Swiss French correlates with the use of other markers of emphasis, for instance, lexical means such as *strictement* ‘strictly’, *franchement* ‘frankly’, *absolument* ‘absolutely’, repetition, slower speech rate, pitch prominence, contrast, or a combination of these means.

(32) S1: et ben les répondeurs ça sert à quelque chose...**non**..(...)

And *ben* answering machines that serves to something NON..

‘Well, answering machines have a use, don’t they?’

S2: mais nous on a même pas de répondeur... mais papa il n’en veut pas...

But we we have not even an answering machine but daddy he NE of them want not

‘but we don’t have an answering machine, but daddy doesn’t want one.’
(Fonseca-Greber 2007 :262)

The similarity to the development in the Flemish varieties discussed above is striking: Just as in Flemish, the Swiss French varieties studied by Fonseca-Greber seem to have reinterpreted the low frequency of the old preverbal element in negative clauses to mean that it expresses polarity emphasis instead of negation. The reanalysis then led to the stabilization of the low frequency observed in the data.

7.2. *Occitan*

The Occitan dialects of southern France have preserved the old preverbal marker in the form of *nou(n)*. Although traditional grammars state that *noun* is archaic/literary and that in the presence of a postverbal reinforcer like *pas* it tends to be omitted (Camproux 1958: 473f), Camproux reports that in the Gévaudan dialect, *noun* is frequently used in the spoken language. In particular, it is used in expletive contexts, and, more interestingly from the perspective of the present paper, in emphatic contexts:

L’emploi de *noun* s’étend à bien d’autres cas où il semble que l’intention du sujet parlant soit d’insister sur la négation [...]. [...] Non seulement il suffit à y indiquer la négation, mais encore il y donne une force particulière à l’idée niée. [...] Il est par excellence la négation forte. C’est lui que l’on emploie chaque fois que l’on veut insister. ¹⁸
(Camproux 1958: 475f)

Standard negation is expressed only with *pas* in the Gévaudan dialects: “Si bien qu’a côté de *noun*, négation forte, nos parlers présentent une négation faible qui est *pas*, et qui équivaut au *ne...pas* du français” (Camproux 1958: 477).¹⁹ The emphatic use of *noun* is illustrated in (33) in which, *noun* leads to “une force de négation beaucoup plus grande que celles où entrent pas *noun*” (Camproux 1958: 476), i.e. ‘a much higher negative force than in examples without *noun*’.

(33) a. **Re noun** benguet

n.thing NE came

‘Absolutely nothing has come.’

b. Degus **noun** li poudiô **re** dire.

n.one NE him could n.thing say

‘Noone could tell him absolutely anything at all’

(Camproux 1958:476)

Though we do not pursue this point here, it is obviously tempting to analyse *noun* as another exponent of the low encoding of polarity emphasis which has grammaticalized by the processes discussed above: the loss of the ability to express negation by itself, the reanalysis as low focus, and the loss of conceptual meaning and concomitant turning into a procedure guiding the interpretation of the clause as emphatic.

8. Summary

The first part of the paper characterizes the syntactic and semantic properties of Flemish preverbal *en*, a particle that originally encoded sentential negation in what is referred to as Stage I of Jespersen’s cycle in older stages of Dutch and which survives in many varieties of Flemish. It is first shown that, though superficially similar to preverbal *ne* in French, Flemish *en* has specific syntactic and interpretive properties to set it apart from *ne*, notably a restricted distribution due to its dependence on finite Tense and an interpretive effect of conveying contrastive focus on the negative polarity of the clause by setting up a contrast with its positive counterpart.

In the second part of the paper we develop the syntactic analysis of *en* based on Jayaseelan (2010) according to whom it realizes a νP -peripheral low Focus head (in the sense of Belletti 2001, etc). We then argue that while *en* syntacticizes focus, it does not syntactically encode the contrastive effects also associated with it. Rather, our claim is that these contrastive effects associated with *en* are pragmatically

inferred through the interaction of the focal interpretation with the discourse context. This inference is triggered by the procedural meaning we have argued *en* to have retained after losing all conceptual meaning.

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¹ Liliane Haegeman's research is funded by FWO as part of project 2009-Odyseus-Haegeman-G091409

Anne Breitbarth's research is funded by FWO as part of project FWO12/PDO/014.

² For extensive discussion we refer to van der Auwera and Neuckermans (2004), Zeijlstra (2004) and Van der Auwera and de Vogelaer (2009) for Flemish dialects in general, to Haegeman (1995, 1998, 2000, 2002), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991, 1996) and Haerberli and Haegeman (1999) for West Flemish, and to De Caluwe (2007), Breitbarth and Haegeman (2010) for the Flemish tussentaal, the supradialectal colloquial variant of Dutch which is used in informal situations by a majority of Flemish speakers.

³ NC in (3d) is not conditional on the presence of *en*: without *en* NC remains available.

⁴ In fact, (4c) would also not be possible in French, casting doubt on Zeijlstra's (in press) analysis of French *ne* as an NPI discussed below:

(i) Je **ne** veux pas que tu (***ne**) dises quoi que ce soit à Valère.

I NE want NEG that you (*NE) say.2SG whatever it is to Valère

'I do not want you to say anything at all to Valère'

Thanks to Amélie Rocquet for help with the data. Obviously she is not responsible for our interpretation of her judgements.

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- ⁵ Also Zeijlstra's (2004) analysis is not without problems for Flemish. Zeijlstra (2004) assumes that the uninterpretable feature [μ NEG] of *en* is licensed under agreement with an interpretable feature on a covert negative operator. As discussed in Haegeman and Lohndal (2010, n. 11), the assumption of a covert operator as a licenser creates problems for the analysis of negative concord, because on Zeijlstra's account, it is unclear why *en* requires a clause mate n-word.
- ⁶ These data also confirm that in WF NC is not dependent on *en*. See note 3.
- ⁷ The distribution of the Flemish particle differs from that in the Drents variant of Dutch described by Postma and Bennis (2006). In particular in the latter dialect the preverbal negative particle is incompatible with the presence of a preverbal particle on a lexical verb. Text example (8f) is a constructed example based on LH's intuitions. (i) below is attested in the tussentaal of a speaker of the Ghent dialect:
- (i) k'heb nog niets gezegd van die vijf dagen met de Gentse feesten
 I have still nothing said of those five days with the Gentse Feesten,
 diede dan nog nie af **en** trekt van uw verlof.
 that you then still NEG off EN pull of your holidays
 'I haven't even mentioned those five days at the Gentse Feesten which you don't deduct from the holiday.'
 (CM, Origin Ghent, 16.02.2010; 10.30)
- ⁸ According to Martineau and Vinet (2005: 202, their (13)) *ne* is obligatorily present in *yes-no* interrogatives with inversion (i), while it is optional in non-inverted contexts (ii)::
- (i) a N'est elle pas belle?
 NEG is-she NEG lovely
 'Isn't she lovely?'
 b *Est-elle pas belle?
 Is-she NEG lovely
- (ii) Elle (n) est-pas belle?
 She (NEG) is NEG lovely?
- In WF *en* is not obligatory inversion contexts such as (i) and it will tend to be absent in rhetorical questions. See also the discussion of text-example (16).
- Thanks to Cecilia Poletto (p.c.) for bringing this paper to our attention. See also Benincà and Poletto (2005) for similar effects in Veneto dialects.
- ⁹ Based on the *Corpus of Spoken Dutch* Haegeman and Oosterhof (2012) show that the effect of finiteness and of tense is statistically significant in Flemish.
- ¹⁰ Observe that the analysis outlined here (based on Haegeman 1999, 2000, 2002) has repercussions for the analysis of V2: if sentence final *en+V* is in T, the position of the finite verb in V2 sentences must be higher than T, regardless of whether the sentences is subject-initial or not. This is in line with Haegeman (1996) and Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman but goes against for instance Zwart's (1997) analysis of Flemish V2.
- ¹¹ The examples are given in standard Dutch spelling, as the judgments are valid in all varieties.

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- ¹² The intuitive similarity becomes apparent when reading Cinque's (1976) characterization of *mica*.
 "... [i]l *mica* aggingue qualcosa di piú specifico. Piú che rafforzare la negazione logica, ne amplia le presupposizioni. La mia tesi è che, affincando il *mica* al semplice non, il parlante vuol negare una aspettativa da parte di qualcuno piuttosto che una asserzione. *Mica*, cioè, ha un contenuto puramente presupposizionale." (Cinque 1976: 314)
 [... *mica* adds something more specific. More than reinforcing the logical negation, it amplifies its presuppositions. I hypothesize that by appending *mica* to the simple non, the speaker wishes to negate an expectation on the side of someone rather than an assertion. That is, *mica* has a purely presuppositional content. -b&h]
- ¹³ A further difference between *mica* and *en* is that in the standard language *mica* is restricted to root clauses, while *en* can occur in conditional and restrictive relative clauses and a number of other contexts that usually resist root phenomena (8c,20) (see Danckaert and Haegeman 2012):
- (i) Mi ha regalato quei libri che non leggeva (*mica)
 me have-PRES give-PART those books that NEG read-PAST MICA
 'He/she has given me those books that he/she didn't read.'
 (Cinque, 1976:313)
- ¹⁴ Cf. also footnote 9.
- ¹⁵ Batllori and Hernanz assimilate this to what Gallego (2007) calls *mild focus* (Batllori and Hernanz in press, fn. 14).
- ¹⁶ This makes the contribution of *en* akin to a conventional implicature. We refrain from entering the ongoing theoretical debate regarding the correct analysis of conventional implicatures (cf. Bach 1999, Potts 2005, Carston 2002, 2004).
- ¹⁷ Observe that this factor cannot be invoked for Flemish *en*, which is only used in colloquial informal varieties.
- ¹⁸ Tr. 'The use of *noun* extends to quite a few cases where it seems that the intention of the speaker is to insist on the negation [...] not only is it sufficient to indicate negation but it gives a particular force to the negated idea [...] it is the strong negation par excellence. It is that form which is used each time that one wants to insist.'
- ¹⁹ Tr. 'Besides *noun*, the strong negation, our languages also have a weak negation, which is *pas*, and which is equivalent to French *ne ...pas*.'