

Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions in Dutch

A by-product of the loss of Negative Concord

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Abstract: Double Negation languages such as Dutch and German still exhibit constructions, such as Dutch *niemand niet* ('nobody not') or *nooit geen* ('nothing no'), that seem to have a Negative Concord (NC) reading. Since these constructions normally have an emphatic reading, these are called Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions (EMNE's). In this paper I discuss the difference between so-called EMNE's and plain NC constructions. I demonstrate that EMNE's are fundamentally different from NC constructions, and that for that reason EMNE's should not be taken to indicate traces of NC in DN languages. Instead I argue that EMNE's are best analysed as lexical items that consist of two semantic objects, of which one is semantically negative. By applying partial reconstruction at LF both semantic objects can take scope from a different position in the tree. EMNE's are the result of the disappearance of NC in Dutch. After the loss of the preverbal negative marker *en/ne*, strings containing two *n*-words or an *n*-word and a negative marker *niet* could no longer act as a cue for NC and therefore had to be stored in the lexicon. The death of Dutch NC, so to speak, led to the birth of EMNE's. Finally the discussion of EMNE's and the fact that they could not be taken to be instances of NC sheds more light on the nature of NC. The fact that NC is subject to parametric variation supports the view that *n*-words in NC languages are not negative quantifiers.

1 Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions in Dutch

In languages such as Dutch and German every morphosyntactically negative element corresponds to a semantic negation. Consequently, whenever two such elements occur in the same clause, the semantics of this clause also contains two negations. Such languages are called Double Negation (DN) languages after the law of Double Negation, according to which two negations cancel each other out. Examples of multiple negative expressions in Dutch can be found in (1) below.

- (1) a. *Niemand zei niets* Dutch
Nobody said nothing
DN: 'Nobody said nothing' = 'everybody said something'

- b. *Geen mens was daar niet bij*
 No man was there NEG at
 DN: ‘No man wasn’t there’ = ‘everybody was there’

The fact that there is a one to one correspondence between morphosyntactically negative elements and semantic negations is not surprising from a compositional perspective. The semantics of the sentences in (1) follows immediately from the lexical semantics of the negative items. However, DN languages are typologically quite rare. Most languages that exhibit multiple negative items in one clause do not exhibit DN readings (cf. Haspelmath 1997; Zeijlstra 2004). Instead, many languages exhibit Negative Concord (NC). In NC constructions multiple morphosyntactically negative elements correspond to only one semantic negation. This is illustrated in (2) for Italian and in (3) for West Flemish. Although each negative element can express negation in isolation, a joint occurrence of two negative elements in those languages yields only one semantic negation.

- (2) a. *Non ha telefonato* Italian
 NEG has.3SG called
 ‘He didn’t call’
 b. *Nessuno ha telefonato*
 Nobody has called.3SG
 ‘Nobody called’
 c. *Non ha telefonato a nessuno*
 NEG has called.3SG to n-body
 NC: ‘He didn’t call anybody’
- (3) a. ... da Valère *nìe* nor us goast¹ West Flemish
 ... that Valère NEG to house goes
 ‘... that Valère doesn’t go home’
 b. ... da Valère *niemand* kent²
 ... that Valère nobody KNOWS
 ‘... that Valère doesn’t know anybody’

¹ After (Haegeman 1995: 118)

² After (Haegeman 1995: 128)

- c. ... da Valère *niemand nie* kent³
 ... that Valère nobody NEG KNOWS
 NC: '... that Valère doesn't know anybody'

The difference between DN and NC languages seems to be an instance of parametric variation. Within the Indo-European language family most Germanic languages (with the exception of West Flemish, Bavarian, Yiddish and a number of Dutch and German dialects) exhibit DN, whereas most Slavic and Romance languages exhibit NC.

However, in DN languages such as Dutch and German one may find examples of constructions in which two negative elements also yield one single semantic negation, as is shown in (4) and (5). These constructions are prescriptively ruled out, but found in many (substandard) varieties of Dutch and a substantial number of German (substandard) varieties. Since these constructions go along with an emphatic reading (see section 2.1), these constructions are called *Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions* (EMNE's).

- (4) a. Zij heeft *nergens geen* zin in⁴ Dutch
 She has nowhere no lust in
 'She doesn't feel like anything at all'
- b. Hij gaat *nooit niet* naar school
 He goes never NEG to school
 'He never ever goes to school'
- c. Zij hebben *nooit geen* geld
 They have never no money
 'They never have any money'
- (5) Sie hat *nie keine* Lust German
 She has never no lust
 'She never feels like anything at all'

In parallel constructions, such as the one in (6), the presence of an additional negative marker on the final conjunct is even the preferred option as has been reported by (Barbiers 2002).

³ After (Haegeman 1995: 131)

⁴ All examples have been judged by at least 15 native speakers of Dutch. In cases where judgements differed this has been indicated by the percentage sign (%).

- (6) Niemand was op het feest, Piet *niet*, Jan *niet*, *niemand* [?](*niet*) Dutch
 Nobody was at the party, Piet NEG, Jan NEG, nobody NEG
 ‘Nobody was at the part. Piet wasn’t, Jan wasn’t, nobody was’

The question now rises what the status of these EMNE’s (in DN languages) is. Either these EMNE’s are instances of NC that surface in DN languages, or EMNE’s constitute a phenomenon of their own and are only superficially reminiscent of NC expressions. The first position has been defended by (Van der Wouden 1994; Giannakidou 2000; Weiss 2002) amongst others. In this paper I defend the opposite view by demonstrating that EMNE exhibit fundamentally different behaviour from NC and that they should thus be analysed in a different fashion. I argue that EMNE’s are complex lexical items consisting of one semantic negation and one or more indefinites. I then show that this analysis correctly accounts for the syntactic and semantic behaviour of EMNE’s. Furthermore, I motivate the idea that EMNE’s are complex lexical items by demonstrating that they are a by-product of the change of Dutch from an NC to a DN language that took place around the 17th century.

This paper is constructed as follows. In section 2 I discuss a number of differences between EMNE’s and NC expression. In section 3 I propose my analysis that takes EMNE’s to be lexical items and show how the differences between EMNE’s and NC expressions follow immediately under this approach. In section 4 I discuss the diachronic development of EMNE expressions. Section 6 concludes.

2. Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions vs. Negative Concord

2.1 Empirical differences between EMNE’s and NC

Despite their superficial similarities, EMNE’s differ from standard NC constructions in at least five different aspects, which have been listed below:

- (7) Differences between EMNE’s and NC expressions:
- a. EMNE’s always have an emphatic reading; NC constructions usually do not;
 - b. EMNE’s are subject to strict adjacency conditions, contrary to NC constructions;
 - c. The first part of the EMNE must carry stress, otherwise it is ruled out;
 - d. The meaning of an EMNE is not always straightforward, contrary to most NC expressions;

- e. The formation of EMNE's is not productive; speakers generally differ with respect to which EMNE they accept and which they do not accept;

One of the most striking differences between plain NC constructions and EMNE's is, as the name has already indicated, the fact that EMNE's always give rise to emphatic readings. NC expressions, on the other hand, give rise to plain readings. Even stronger, in pure NC languages, such as Italian the usage of the NC construction is even dispreferred if an emphatic reading is intended; in those cases a Negative Polarity Item (NPI) usually replaces the n-word. This is shown in (8) and (9) for Italian and Dutch. The reading of the Dutch example in (8)a is identical to the reading of Italian (9)a, and the same holds for the readings in the b examples.

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|---------|
| (8) | a. | Hij heeft <i>niemand niet</i> gezien
He has nobody NEG seen
'He didn't see ANYbody' | Dutch |
| | b. | Hij heeft <i>niemand</i> gezien
He has nobody NEG seen
'He didn't see anybody' | |
| (9) | a. | <i>Non</i> ha visto alcunché
NEG has seen anybody
'He didn't see ANYbody' | Italian |
| | b. | <i>Non</i> ha visto <i>nessuno</i>
NEG has seen nobody
'He didn't see anybody' | |

The second difference between EMNE's and NC constructions is that the two negative elements of an EMNE have to be strictly adjacent, whereas two elements that have established an NC relation still allow other material to intervene. In Italian, as shown in (10), the two NC elements are separated by the verbs *ha* and *telefonato*. In (11) however, it is shown for Dutch that whenever other lexical material intervenes between the two negative elements, only a DN reading can be obtained.

- | | | |
|------|--|---------|
| (10) | Ieri <i>non</i> ha telefonato <i>niente</i>
Yesterday NEG has called nothing
'Nobody called yesterday' | Italian |
|------|--|---------|

- (11) a. Gisteren heeft *niemand niet gebeld* Dutch
 Yesterday has n-body NEG called
 ‘Nobody at all called yesterday’
- b. *Niemand* heeft gisteren *niet gebeld*
 Nobody has yesterday NEG called
 *‘Nobody at all called yesterday’
 √‘Nobody didn’t call yesterday’

The third difference between EMNE’s and plain NC constructions is that for EMNE’s the stress must fall on the first element. If the second element carries stress, again only the DN reading is yielded (see (12)). Stress patterns do however not change the negative semantics in NC languages in this respect.

- (12) a. Hij heeft *NIKS niet gezegd* Dutch
 He has nothing NEG said
 ‘He didn’t say anything (at all)’
- b. Hij heeft *niks NIET gezegd*
 He has nothing NEG said
 *‘He didn’t say anything (at all)’
 √‘There is nothing he didn’t say’
- (13) a. Gianni *NON* ha detto *niente* Italian
 Gianni NEG has said nothing
 ‘Gianni did NOT say anything’
- b. Gianni *non* ha detto *NIENTE*
 Gianni NEG has said nothing
 ‘Gianni didn’t say ANYthing’

A fourth difference between EMNE’s and NC is that the meaning of an EMNE construction, apart from the ‘lost negation’, is not always compositionally derived. In most cases the reading of sentence containing an EMNE corresponds to the reading of the sentence in which the second negative element is replaced by its non-negative counterpart, modulo the emphatic effect. This is illustrated in (14) below.

- (14) a. Zij leest *nooit geen* boek Dutch
 She reads never no book
 ‘She never reads any book’
- b. Zij leest *nooit* een boek
 She reads never a book
 ‘She never reads a book’

Apparently, it is the fact that the second indefinite also carries negative morphology that leads to the emphatic reading of *nooit* (‘never’). This holds for all EMNE’s that I have discussed so far. This is however not the case in (15)a below. In (15)a the negative indefinite existential quantifier *geen* (‘no’) cannot be replaced by its positive counter part *een*, or by a zero-determiner, as shown in (15)b. In order to express the non-emphatic reading of (15)a *niks* (‘nothing’) has to be removed instead of *geen* and the reading of (15)d in which *geen* is modified by the adverb *helemaal* (‘absolutely’) is equivalent to the reading of (15)a. This indicates that, apart from the loss of the negation, not all EMNE’s are built up compositionally. On the contrary, it indicates that the behaviour of some EMNE’s is idiosyncratic in some cases; on the other hand, the behaviour of plain NC expressions is not.

- (15) a. Ik heb er *niks geen* aardigheid in Dutch
 I have there nothing no pleasure in
 ‘I don’t like it all’
- b. *Ik heb er *niks* (een) aardigheid in
 I have there no pleasure in
- c. Ik heb er *geen* aardigheid in
 I have there no pleasure in
 ‘I don’t like it’
- d. Ik heb er *helemaal geen* aardigheid in
 I have there absolutely no pleasure in
 ‘I don’t like it all’

This idiosyncratic nature of EMNE’s is also reflected by the fact that the class of EMNE expressions is not productive. Several EMNE’s are accepted by most speakers of Dutch, such as *nooit niet* or *niks geen*, but many other EMNE’s are only accepted by some speakers of Dutch. Only a minority of my informants accepts the examples below.

- (16) a. %Ik heb *niemand niets* gegeven⁵ Dutch
I have nobody nothing given
'I didn't give anything to anybody at all'
- b. %Ik heb *nergens niet* gezocht
I have nowhere neg looked.for
'I didn't look (for it) anywhere'

On the basis of the differences between EMNE's and NC expressions, I conclude that these two phenomena do not represent two sides of the same coin, but are different in nature and require a different explanation.

2.2 Theoretical consequences of the differences between EMNE's and NC

The question now rises what the status of these EMNE's (in DN languages) is. Given the conclusion that has been presented above, EMNE's cannot be correctly analysed as instances of NC that surface in DN languages. This position had originally been defended by (Van der Wouden 1994; Giannakidou 2000; Weiss 2002) amongst others. (Weiss 2002), for instance, argues on the basis of such examples that DN is even an artefact of normative principles and that all speakers of a DN language actually exhibit underlying NC.

Since EMNE's are not instances of NC, they must be analysed in a different way. In the next section I propose an analysis that takes EMNE's to be complex lexical items. However, the observation that EMNE's are fundamentally different from NC constructions has not only consequences for the analysis of EMNE's, but also for NC itself.

It follows that NC is subject to cross-linguistic variation and is thus restricted to a limited number of languages. This forms a strong indication that languages are subject to parametric differences with respect to the interpretation of clauses consisting of multiple negative elements. Consequently, NC is not likely to be the result of some mode of interpretation, a view that has been proposed in the literature several times (Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991; Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996; de Swart and Sag 2002). These scholars have argued that n-words are negative quantifiers that are able to undergo a process of polyadic quantification, which results in their NC readings. However, as modes of interpretation are not subject to parametric variation, the strict distribution

⁵ The percentage sign (‘%’) indicates that the sentence is only acceptable for some speakers of the language.

between NC and DN languages cannot be explained without making additional assumptions.⁶

The problems for a negative quantifier analysis of n-words as mentioned above do not hold for other analyses of NC. Analyses that take n-words to be different from negative quantifiers already predict cross-linguistic variation with respect to NC. This is for instance the case for analyses that take n-words to be NPI's (Ladusaw 1992; Giannakidou 1997; Giannakidou 2000) or lexically ambiguous between NPI's and negative quantifiers (Herburger 2001). The same holds for the explanation of NC in terms of syntactic agreement between (multiple) n-words and a negative operator (Brown 1999; Penka and von Stechow 2001; Zeijlstra 2004).

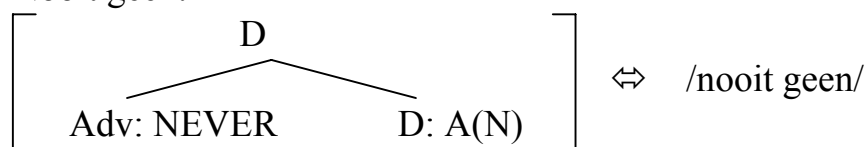
The observations and conclusions that have been formulated in section 2.1 thus further support the view that n-words are different from negative quantifiers.

3. Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions as Lexical Items

3.1 Proposal

Following on the difference between EMNE's and NC expressions, I propose that, notwithstanding their complex appearance, EMNE's are Lexical Items (LI's). In short, I take an EMNE such as *nooit geen* or *niemand niet* to be a single LI that consists of two different semantic objects: one negative indefinite and an additional non-negative indefinite or marker. Hence, the entire EMNE contains only one semantic negation.⁷ This means that the lexical representation of an EMNE like *nooit geen* is as in (17). Note that (17) denotes the lexical representation of a single morphological word that contains multiple (mismatching) semantic functions. In this sense EMNE's are crucially different from idiomatic expressions, which consist of structures of different morphological words that are lexically stored

(17) *Nooit geen*:



⁶ See (De Swart 2006) for an OT-based analysis to account for typological differences within this negative quantifier approach.

⁷ At this point in the reasoning the fact that the EMNE consists of only one negation seems a bit stipulative, but this is motivated in the next section in terms of the diachronic development of EMNE's.

The structure in (17) consists of two parts that do not match semantically: temporal adverbs cannot modify D(P)'s.⁸ In a sentence like (18) the adverb *nooit* applies to the entire VP (*geen boek leest*), whereas *geen* applies to the NP *boek* ('book').

- (18) ... dat Jan *nooit geen* boek leest
 ... that Jan never no book reads
 '... that John never reads a book (at all)'

In order to have both semantic objects take scope from their appropriate position I argue that movement followed by partial reconstruction applies in these constructions. Partial reconstruction has been adopted for many different syntactic phenomena, for instance anaphora binding or the syntax of *wat-for* constructions. Following standard syntactic assumptions the ambiguity in (19) follows from the fact that *himself* can be interpreted in either the lower or the higher copy. In the latter case *which picture of himself* is partially reconstructed in its base position (Grohmann, Hornstein et al. 2005).

- (19) John_i wondered which picture of himself_{i/j} Fred_j liked

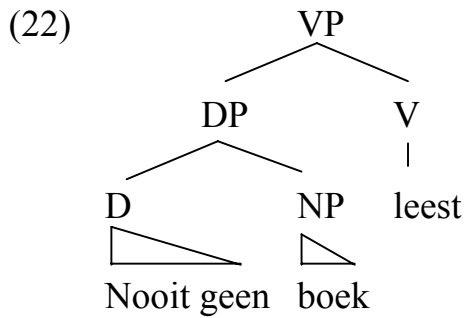
- (20) [John wondered [[which ~~picture of himself~~] [Fred liked [~~which~~ picture of himself]]]]

The same mechanism applies to EMNE constructions. Let us simply follow each step in the derivation of (18). For explanatory purposes I neglect all extra derivational steps that are required for Quantifier Raising effects, since these do not conflict with the proposal. First the LI *nooit geen*, having a D label, must select for an NP, *boek* in this case. This produces (21).

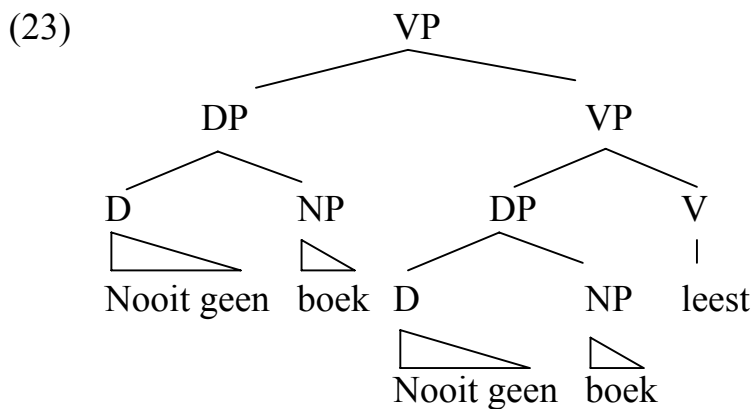
- (21) DP
-

At the same time, the verb *leest* ('reads') selects for a DP and merges with (21), thus creating (22).

⁸ Cf. (Von Stechow 2002). Moreover, due to the fact that the first part of every EMNE is always a negative quantifier (never, nowhere, nothing, nobody), the semantics of these elements do not allow an in situ interpretation.



Finally, the DP moves out of its VP complement position to a position adjoining VP, from where the adverbial part of it can already take scope, as is shown in (23).^{9,10} Following the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995), this means that the entire DP is copied and that the copy merges with VP. At this point there are two copies.

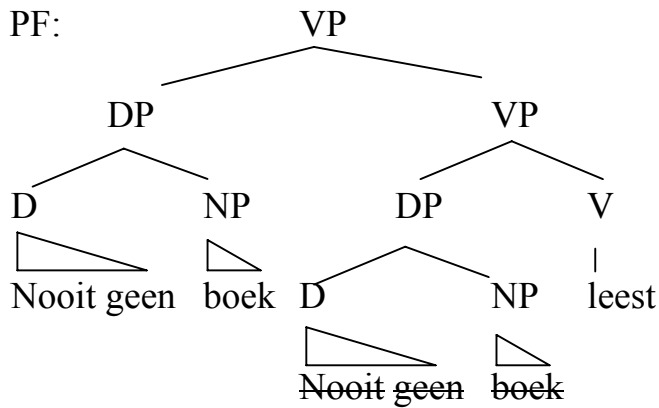


After Spell-Out, all deletion operations have to apply twice: once on the PF side, and once on the LF side. Following the copy theory of movement PF deletion usually targets the lowest copy and the highest copy gets phonologically realised. Then the derivation meets all requirements that the phonological component (the Sensori-Motor system in Chomsky's terms) imposes. The PF of (18) consists thus of (24).

⁹ Depending on one's theoretical preferences, this movement can be postponed until after Spell-Out

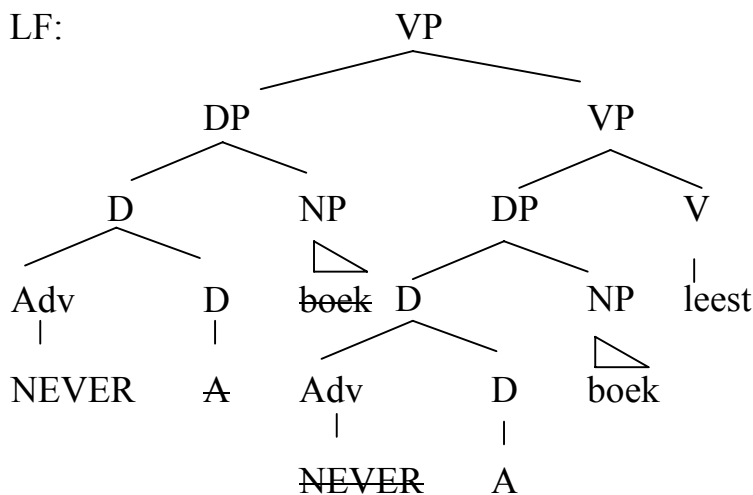
¹⁰ This kind of movement is different from the traditional minimalist movement in terms of probe-goal relations. The kind of movement described here is highly similar to Quantifier Raising, which is also triggered by semantic requirements rather than morpho-syntactic requirements. In a number of recent studies several proposals have been formulated in which so-called foot-driven movement has been said to extend to other syntactic domains (cf. Platzack 1996; Koenenman 2000; Van Craenenbroeck 2006 a.o.),

(24) PF:



On the LF side things are slightly more complicated. We have seen that the entire DP has moved to a VP adjunct position. However, only the adverbial part (*nooit*) can be interpreted in this position and not the argument DP.¹¹ On the other hand, the adverbial cannot be interpreted semantically in the lower copy, but the DP argument can. Consequently, LF deletion of one of the two copies will yield a structure that is not interpretable at LF and therefore violates Full Interpretation (Chomsky 1995). The only way that deletion can take place is by means of partial reconstruction, such that the determiner part of *nooit geen* plus *boek* is deleted in the higher copy and the adverbial part is deleted in the lower one. This means that at LF all D material will be interpreted in the lower copy, whereas all adverbial material will be interpreted in the higher one. Hence the derivation changes into (25).

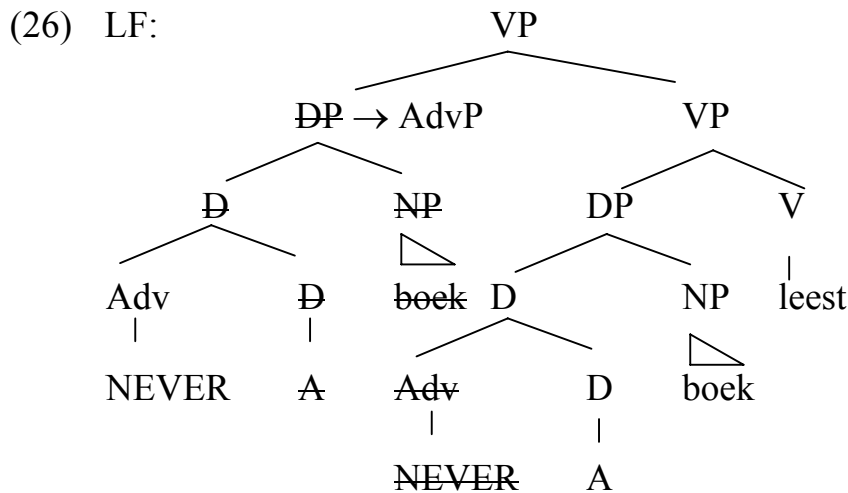
(25) LF:



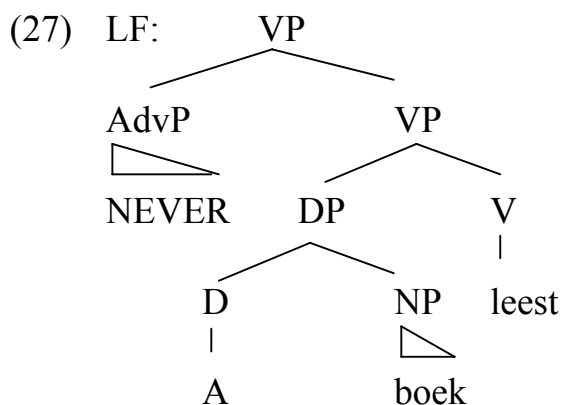
However, (25) still faces problems: the VP still seems to be modified by a DP in adjunct position. The highest copy in (26) seems to be one in which *nooit* is a DP headed by an empty D° that is adjoined to the adverb. However, despite the

¹¹ In proposals such as Cinque (1999) adverbial classes have functional projections of their own. This does not change the argumentation, since those positions are not available for DP's either.

fact that the EMNE *nooit geen* has been lexically assigned the categoral status of a determiner (which was required in order to select for NP's), the adverb *nooit*, as it surfaces in the higher LF copy, may by no means carry determiner status in the LF (26). But on closer inspection, this is what has already been achieved. Let us focus at the higher DP copy in (25). Every element in this copy that contains a D feature has been deleted. Since projection is nothing but the projection of one feature of the heading element, in this case the D label on the top node of the copy can only result from the presence of D-features in the highest copy. But in (25) all these features have been deleted. Hence there is no D feature to project in the first place, and (25) is actually (26) in disguise, where the label DP has changed into AdvP, since the [Adv] feature is the only feature available that can project.



Trivially, (26) can be rewritten as (27), which is the same LF as that of a sentence in which a negative adverb would have been combined with an indefinite DP, such as (28).



- (28) ... dat Jan *nooit* een boek leest
 ... that Jan never a book reads
 ‘... that Jan never reads a book’

The fact that at LF (18) and (28) are structurally identical demonstrates that the fact that EMNE’s consist of two different semantic objects, i.e. objects with different semantic functions, does not imply that these semantic objects cannot be part of one and the same LI.

Additional evidence in favour of the analysis in terms of complex lexical items that undergo partial reconstruction at LF comes from the occurrence of split scope constructions. Take for instance the expression in (29):

- (29) Er hoeft niemand te vertrekken
 There needs nobody to leave
 ‘Nobody needs to leave’ $(\neg > \square > \exists)$

The only possible reading that is available for this sentence is one in which negation scopes above the modal verb, but where the modal outscopes the indefinite. (Penka and Zeijlstra 2005) argue that the negative quantifier must be analysed as a complex lexical item that consists of a negation (NOT) and an indefinite (A PERSON), spelled out together as /niemand/.¹² (Penka and Zeijlstra 2005) argue that in the case of (29) the entire LI *niemand* raises to a position higher than the modal. Since *hoeft* is an NPI it must be outscoped by negation; however, due to the there-construction the embedded indefinite is not to allow scope over the modal verb and therefore the indefinite part is only interpretable in a position below *hoeft*. The LF of (29) is thus:

- (30) [[NOT A PERSON]_i [needs [[NOT A PERSON]_i to leave]]]

Hence, much in the same vain as the EMNE’s, partial reconstruction must apply, thus providing extra support for the analysis of EMNE’s in terms of complex lexical items.

3.2 Explaining the differences between EMNE’s and NC

Thus far I have shown that it is possible to take EMNE’s to be LI’s and have their different components operate from different structural positions as a result

¹² Adopting this analysis implies that EMNE’s can be lexically decomposed into one negation and two indefinites. The reader can verify that adopting this proposal does not change about the presented analysis.

of partial reconstruction. This lexical analysis demonstrates that it is not necessary to account for EMNE's in terms of NC and it paves the way for a parametric account for NC. In this subsection I argue that the differences between EMNE's and NC constructions immediately follow as a result of their lexical status. For reasons of convenience, below I repeat the list of differences mentioned in (7).

(31) Differences between EMNE's and NC expressions:

- a. EMNE's always have an emphatic reading; NC constructions usually do not;
- b. EMNE's are subject to strict adjacency conditions, contrary to NC constructions;
- c. The first part of the EMNE must carry stress, otherwise it is ruled out;
- d. The meaning of an EMNE is not always straightforward, contrary to most NC expressions;
- e. The formation of EMNE's is not productive; speakers generally differ with respect to which EMNE they accept and which they do not accept;

The fact that EMNE's, being emphatic, have a slightly different meaning, than their counterparts consisting of a single negative element, is no longer unexpected, since they are all different LI's. The question now is why all these EMNE's are emphatic and do not exhibit other semantic differences in comparison to their non-EMNE counterparts. In other words, why is it that *nooit geen boek* obtains an emphatic reading and *nooit een boek* does not? The answer to this question lies in the diachronic development of EMNE's, and will be dealt with in the next section.

The fact that EMNE's are subject to strict adjacency conditions also falls out immediately. Given the fact EMNE's are LI's (and single words), they must be included spelled out in one and the same position.

Since under this approach EMNE's are single LI's, they are expected to be subject to phonological reduction. Other frozen expressions, such as English *how'bout* or *thank you*, for instance are pronounced as if it were more or less one word. Phonological reduction effects are indeed found with respect to EMNE's, but are not that strong. People still recognise an EMNE as consisting of two different parts. Nevertheless, it can be shown that the phonological behaviour of EMNE is different from that of two independent words, as is

shown below for the way that EMNE's give rise to special stress patterns. Take for instance the following minimal pair:

- (32) a. ... dat Jan *NOOIT* *geen* boek leest
 ... that Jan never a book reads
 '... that Jan never reads a book'
- b. ... dat Jan *nooit* *GEEN* boek leest
 ... that Jan never a book reads
 '... that Jan never reads a book'

In (32)a the first part of the EMNE obtained stress, in (32)b the second part. These stress effects do not stand on their own. Elements carrying heavy stress, as in (32), require a preceding phonological break Φ , as shown in (33).

- (33) a. ... dat Jan Φ *NOOIT* *geen* boek leest
- b. ... dat Jan *nooit* Φ *GEEN* boek leest

However, as is well known from the work by (Selkirk 1984) (adopted in a somewhat different version by (Van der Koot and Neeleman 2006)), prosodic structure reflects syntactic structures. Phonological boundaries cannot be introduced at each point in the structure, but can only follow after the right edge of a maximal phrase. The prosodic structures in (33) must be derived from different structures in (34).

- (34) a. ... [[dat Jan] [[NOOIT geen boek] leest]]
- b. ... [[dat Jan] [[nooit] [GEEN boek] leest]]

It follows from (34) that for the b sentence *nooit* must constitute a maximal projection on its own, whereas this is not required for the a sentence with stress on *nooit*. Since EMNE's are LI's no part of it can be a maximal projection, thus ruling out EMNE's carrying stress on their second part.

The fourth and fifth differences between EMNE's and plain NC constructions also follow from the fact that EMNE's are LI's. EMNE's such as *niks geen* in (35) behave differently from most other EMNE's in the sense that not the first element modifies the second but that the second one seems to be modified by the first.

- (35) Ik heb er *niks* *geen* aardigheid in Dutch
 I have there nothing no pleasure in
 ‘I don’t like it all’

In (35) *niks*, although it is a shortened form of *niets* (‘nothing’) is not an argument. At first sight this seems to run against the observation that in EMNE constructions the second element modifies the first one. However, in older variations of Dutch non-argument *niks* could be used with a reading of ‘not at all.’ The following examples from 18th and 19th century Dutch illustrate this behaviour of *niks*:

- (36) Ik geloof nix aan den satan¹³
 I believe nothing to the Satan
 ‘I don’t believe in Satan at all’
- (37) Die studie is me niks meegevallen¹⁴
 That study is me nothing with.fallen
 ‘That study didn’t meet my expectations at all’

For most of my informants this usage is still possible in examples like (38)-(39) in contemporary Dutch, although the utterances sound slightly archaic. It should be noted that currently this usage of *niks* does not render any emphatic effects anymore.

- (38) a. Ik heb er zin in
 I have there lust in
 ‘I feel like it’
- b. Ik heb er geen zin in
 I have there geen lust in
 ‘I don’t feel like it’
- c. %Ik heb er niks zin in
 I have there nothing lust in
 ‘I don’t feel like it’
- (39) a. Ik heb er last van
 I have there load of
 ‘I suffer from it’

¹³ Leevend: 4.40

¹⁴ Gelukkige familie: 235

- b. Ik heb er geen last van
I have there no load of
'I don't suffer from it'
- c. %Ik heb er niks last van
I have there nothing load of
'I don't suffer from it'

Niks geen is thus nothing but the semantic combination of the negation (the meaning of *niks*) and the indefinite *een* ('a(n)'). Now, it follows that *geen* can be replaced by *niks geen*, resulting in an emphatic reading 'absolutely not a', which is of course equivalent to 'absolutely no'.¹⁵ The fact that *niks* can still be used in EMNE constructions, but is no longer productive as an emphatic negation is not surprising under the lexical analysis of EMNE's.

The fifth property concerns the large amount of speaker variation with respect to EMNE's. Since the acquisition of EMNE's is a purely lexical and not a syntactic process, each EMNE has to be acquired independently. Therefore relatively infrequent EMNE's such as the ones in (40) are only accepted by only a minority of speakers.

- (40) a. %Ik heb *niemand niets* gegeven Dutch
I have nobody nothing given
'I didn't give anything to anybody at all'
- b. %Ik heb *nergens niet* gezocht
I have nowhere NEG looked.for
'I didn't look (for it) anywhere'

To conclude, all differences between EMNE's and plain NC constructions immediately follow when the proposal presented in section 3.1 is adopted. I take this to be firm support for the analysis that EMNE's are not instances of NC, but are LI's consisting of two independent semantic objects, of which one is semantically negative.

¹⁵ Note that *niks* can still be used as a negative argument, also in EMNE constructions.

3.3 *Additional questions*

In this section two further questions will be addressed: (i) is it possible for EMNE's to appear in Spec,CP position and (ii) why is the usage of an EMNE in a parallel construction almost obligatory

A property of V-to-C languages, such as Dutch and German, is that only one constituent may appear to the left of the finite verb in main clauses. It is thus predicted that EMNE's, being LI's, should be able to appear in this projection. This is indeed the case for most EMNE's as shown in (41) and (42).

- (41) *Nooit geen* boek heb ik gelezen Dutch
 Never no book have I read
 'I have never ever read a book'

- (42) *Niks geen* aardigheid heb ik er in Dutch
 Nothing no pleasure have I there in
 'I don't like it at all'

However, not every EMNE is allowed to occur in first position. *Nooit niet*, for example, is not allowed in this position. If *nooit niet* is indeed an LI, the question rises why (43) is ruled out.

- (43) **Nooit niet* heb ik het gedaan Dutch
 Never NEG have I it done
 'I never ever did it'

I suspect that this ban on sentence-initial *nooit niet* follows from a more general ban on the negative marker *niet* immediately preceding a finite verb in verb second position, as shown in (44).

- (44) **Niet* heb ik gegeten Dutch
 NEG have I eaten
 'I didn't eat'

The ban on sole negative markers in sentence-initial position is a property that is attested across language (see (Payne 1985; Horn 1989) for an overview of facts, analyses and discussions). However, as (Barbiers 2002) has shown, there are contexts in Dutch where *niet* in sentence-initial position is accepted, as shown in (45).

- (45) [√]Ik had wel gezien dat Jan aankwam, Dutch
 maar *niet* had ik gezien dat Ed vertrok.¹⁶
 I had PRT seen that Jan arrived, but NEG had I seen that Ed left
 ‘I did see that Jan arrived, but I had not seen that Ed left’

According to some informants, the replacement of *niet* by *nooit niet* improves the sentence. This may account for the ban on *nooit niet* in sentence-initial position.

- (46) [%]Ik had altijd wel gezien dat Jan aankwam, Dutch
 maar *nooit niet* had ik gezien dat Ed vertrok.
 I had always PRT seen that Jan arrived, but never NEG had I seen that Ed left
 ‘I did see that Jan arrived, but I had not seen that Ed left’

However, one should be careful since informants are uncertain about their judgements, as sentences such as (46) are hard to evaluate. In any case, I argue that the ban on sentence-initial *nooit niet* follows from some particular properties of this EMNE, and that the analysis that EMNE’s are LI’s not contradicted by these data.

Finally the example in (47) needs to be discussed. The question is why *niet* in the final conjunct is almost obligatory. Why can’t *niemand* appear on its own?

- (47) a. *Niemand* was op het feest, Piet *niet*, Jan *niet*, *niemand niet*
 Nobody was at the party, Piet NEG, Jan NEG, nobody NEG
 ‘Nobody was at the part. Piet wasn’t, Jan wasn’t, nobody was’
 b. [?]*Niemand* was op het feest, Piet *niet*, Jan *niet*, *niemand*
 Nobody was at the party, Piet NEG, Jan NEG, nobody
 ‘Nobody was at the part. Piet wasn’t, Jan wasn’t, nobody was’

Note that the reading of final *niemand* must be emphatic. This already calls for either an EMNE, or another emphatic modifier, such as *helemaal* (‘absolutely’), as shown in (48)

- (48) *Niemand* was op het feest, Piet *niet*, Jan *niet*, *helemaal niemand*
 Nobody was at the party, Piet NEG, Jan NEG, absolutely nobody
 Nobody was at the part. Piet wasn’t, Jan wasn’t, nobody was’

¹⁶ Barbiers (2002: 21)

A second reason why an EMNE is preferred in these parallel constructions is that the prosodic parallelism must be maintained as well. Take the example in (49). Here the particle *wel* is used in both the main clause and the first and second conjuncts. If *wel*, which is not required in the final conjunct for semantic reasons, is left out, the sentence sounds odd as well. This is the second reason why final *niet* in (47) may not be left out.

- (49) Er waren wel wat mensen gekomen. Marie wel, Piet wel, mijn vrienden
 *(wel)
 There were PRT some people come. Marie PRT, Piet PRT, my friends PRT
 ‘Some people came, Marie did, Piet did, my friends did’

To conclude, although EMNE’s are normally prescriptively ruled out, the empathic reading and particularly the prosodic parallelism requirement call for the inclusion of an EMNE. This joint force is stronger than the purely emphatic reasons effects that have played a role in the other examples discussed in this paper, which explains why the inclusion of EMNE’s is almost obligatory in these parallel constructions, despite the fact that they are prescriptively ruled out.

4 The development of Emphatic Multiple Negative Expressions

Thus far I have addressed the question of how EMNE’s should be analysed. Yet one of the main questions, why are there are EMNE’s in the first place, is still open. The answer to this question is of acute interest since it still needs to be explained why meanings assigned to EMNE’s contain only one negation. In order to answer this question, one first needs to have a look at the way sentential negation was expressed in Middle Dutch.

Middle Dutch was special with respect to the expression of negation in two ways: first, it was an NC language, contrary to Modern Dutch; second, it had two negative markers instead of one: *en/ne* and *niet*, much like French *ne...pas*. The first property is shown in (50), the second in (51).

- (50) a. Ic *en* sag *niemen*¹⁷ Middle Dutch
 I NEG saw n-body
 ‘I didn’t see anybody’

¹⁷ Cf. Hoeksema (1997)

- b. Die *niemen en spaers*¹⁸
That nobody NEG saves
'Who saves nobody'
 - c. Den onderseten *niet en* was // gheoorlooft *niets niet* met allen //
aen enen andren paus te vallen¹⁹
The shephards NEG NEG was // allowed nothing NEG with all
PRT an other pope to attack
'The shephards were not at all allowed to attack another pope
together'
- (51) a. *En laettine mi spreke niet*²⁰ 13th Century Dutch
NEG let.he me speak NEG
'If he doesn't let me speak'
- b. *Sine ware niet genedert heden*²¹
She.NEG were NEG humiliated currently
'She wasn't humiliated currently'
 - c. *Dat si niet en sach dat si sochte*²²
That she NEG NEG saw that she looked-for
'That she didn't see what she looked for'

A particular property of Middle Dutch *en/ne* is that it cannot occur by itself (except for a number of contexts, cf. (Postma 2002)). In negative sentences without indefinite arguments (without n-words, that is) the additional negative marker *niet* licenses the presence of *en/ne*. In contexts in which there is an n-word, the n-word may license *en/ne* as well and *niet* can be left out. Although *niet* may participate in NC relations as well (see (50)c), this does not seem to serve any specific purpose and therefore the co-occurrence of *en/ne* in combination with both an n-word and *niet* is rather rare. The same holds for combinations of *en/ne* in combination with more than one n-word. Note that many instances of multiple n-words are often redundant. Take for instance current Italian (52):

¹⁸ Vanden levne ons heren 2018.

¹⁹ Brabantsche yeesten 7957-9.

²⁰ Lanceloet: 20316.

²¹ Lanceloet: 20166.

²² Lanceloet: 20042.

- (52) Nessuno ha detto niente a nessuno
 N-body has said n-thing to nobody
 ‘Nobody said anything to anybody’

In this example the presence of the second *nessuno* is superfluous since it already follows from the fact that nobody said anything that nobody said anything to anybody. Hence, without special motivation combinations of n-words tend to be avoided.

As a result the majority of negative sentences in Middle Dutch consisted either of *en/ne* in combination with *niet* or a single n-word. However, as has been known since Jespersen’s seminal work (Jespersen 1917) preverbal negative markers such as Middle Dutch *en/ne* lost force and gradually started to disappear. Its usage became optional as shown below in (53), which consists of two examples out of one text. In the middle of the 17th century for instance the usage of *en/ne* was almost entirely gone. The development of en-deletion in Holland Dutch is shown in table 1.

- (53) a. Maer *niemant* gaf gehoor²³ 1638 Dutch
 But nobody gave obeying
 ‘But nobody obeyed’
 b. Dat *niemant* zich het woên der vyanden *en* kreunde²⁴
 That nobody SE the raging of.the enemies NEG moaned
 ‘That nobody cared about the raging of the enemies’

Table 1: *En*-deletion in Holland Dutch (in %) (Burridge 1993)

	V1	V2	V-final
1300	43	28	8
1400	75	25	36
1500	77	48	28
1600	100	30	8
1650	100	100	98

Following the line of reasoning pursued in this paper, NC has been taken to be subject to parametric variation. This means that the language learner on the basis of the language input has to determine whether the target language is an NC or a DN language. This means that if the cue to set the parameter to NC is robust enough the language will be taken to be an NC language. For the NC/DN distinction such a cue is formed by sentences with more than one

²³ Gysbrecht V: 1368.

²⁴ Gysbrecht V: 1410.

morphosyntactic instance of negation that is interpreted with only single semantic negation. As the majority of such cues to consist of examples consisting of *en/ne* in combination with either *niet* or a single n-word, as a result of *en*-deletion the cue robust enough to set the language as an NC language has disappeared. This leads to the following situation: the majority of NC expressions has disappeared from Dutch. Therefore the language can no longer be interpreted as an NC language. But there are still these much rarer former NC expressions consisting of multiple n-words or n-word(s) + *niet*. Since the language learner could not interpret these instances as instances of NC, they had to be analysed as LI's as some kind of last resort option. Since in the language input the adult NC speakers still assigned an NC reading to these constructions, these LI's have been analysed as carrying only one semantic negation. The death of Dutch NC led to the birth of EMNE's.

The explanation above also accounts for the fact that EMNE's bear an emphatic reading. As addressed above the usage of multiple n-words easily leads to an emphatic effect, if it coincides with an inclusion of a redundant indefinite, which is known to yield emphatic effects. The entailed sentences in (54) are also emphatic for that reason.

- (54) a. John never eats → John never eats anything
 b. John didn't say anything → John didn't say anything to anybody

This was also the case in most Middle Dutch expressions in which multiple n-words were used, as it is the case with current languages where inclusion of an n-word indefinites can sometimes be optional. In those cases the NC variant is always emphatic, as is illustrated for Afrikaans in (55).²⁵

- (55) a. Sy is *nooit nie* beskikbaar *nie*
 She is never NEG available NEG
 'She's never available'
 b. Sy is *nooit* beskikbaar *nie*
 She is never available NEG
 'She's just never available'

²⁵ Thanks to Theresa Biberauer for providing me these examples.

In languages in which NC constructions are obligatory, these emphatic effects do not rise, since there is no redundant indefinite present. Therefore, the Italian sentence in is not emphatic.

- (56) Gianni non ha ditto *(niente)
 Gianni NEG has said nothing
 ‘Gianni didn’t say anything’

Since most of the original NC constructions that had surfaced after *en*-deletion yielded this emphatic effect. The emphatic readings of EMNE’s were already there in most of their Middle Dutch counterparts. When EMNE’s got reanalysed as LI’s this emphatic meaning has become part of its lexical semantic representation. This explains why *nooit geen* yields an emphatic effect, but *nooit een* does not in the following minimal pair:

- (57) a. Jan leest nooit geen boek
 Jan reads never no book
 ‘Jan never ever reads a book’
 b. Jan leest nooit *(een) boek
 Jan reads never a book
 ‘Jan never reads a book’

In (57)b the indefinite article is obligatory present, and therefore there is no redundant indefinite that can trigger an emphatic effect. As the same holds for (57)a the emphatic reading must directly be encoded in the lexical semantics of *nooit geen*.

6. Conclusions

In this paper I have discussed the difference between so-called EMNE’s and plain NC constructions. I have provided five different arguments against the hypothesis that EMNE’s are an NC constructions, and that for that reason EMNE’s should not be taken to indicate traces of NC in DN languages.

I have argued that EMNE’s are best analysed as LI’s that consist of two semantic objects, of which one is semantically negative. By applying partial reconstruction at LF both semantic objects can take scope from a different position in the tree.

EMNE’s are the result of the disappearance of NC in Dutch. After the loss of the preverbal negative marker *en/ne*, strings containing two n-words or an n-word and a negative marker *niet* could no longer act as a cue for NC and

therefore had to be stored in the lexicon. The death of Dutch NC, so to speak, led to the birth of EMNE's.

Finally the discussion of EMNE's and the fact that they could not be taken to be instances of NC shed more light on the nature of NC and provides a new argument that NC is subject to parametric variation.

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