

Jespersen's cycle and the interaction of predicate and quantifier negation in Flemish

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the construction *en niemand niet* 'no one' (literally 'not no one not') in East Flemish dialects, and finds it to be unaccounted for in current typological work about negation. We present a hypothesis on how predicate negators like *not* and quantifier negators like *no one* interact and develop. Crucial reference is made to what is known as "Jespersen's cycle". Within this hypothesis, *en niemand niet* will be analyzed as an intermediate stage. From the point of view of dialect geography, *en niemand niet* is also an intermediate form. The paper furthermore discusses an *iemand niet* construction which has the same 'no one' meaning (literally 'someone not'), and a sentence-final predicate negator *niet*.

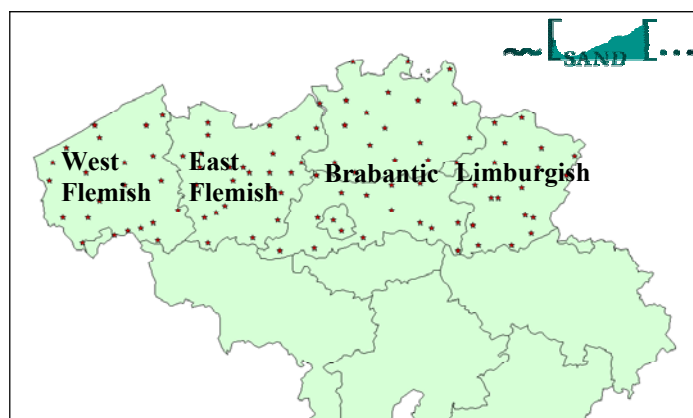
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<i>niemand (niet)</i> |
| 2. Triple negation | 6. Brabantic <i>iemand niet</i> |
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1. Introduction

This paper discusses a type of triple negation in which one semantic negation is expressed with two so-called "predicate negators" (like *not*) and one "quantifier negator" (like *no one*). In section 2 this type will be further characterized and distinguished from similar constructions. In section 3 we briefly discuss what has been called "Jespersen's cycle", the observation by Jespersen (1917) that predicate negators may replace one another in a peculiar way. We also pay attention to the relevance of Jespersen's cycle for quantifier negators and we conclude that the present typological literature cannot provide an account for the triple negation discussed in section 1. In section 4 we supply a unified account of the cyclicity of predicate and quantifier negators. We describe various "Jespersen cycles"¹ and integrate them into one scenario. In this hypothesis, the triple negation that we started with is analyzed as an intermediate stage. In section 5 we turn to the

geographical spread of the triple negation and point out that the dialect geography of the construction conforms to this point of view. In section 6 we turn to another construction, “discovered” during the field work. In keeping with the title of the book, the paper shows that dialectology and typology are of high mutual relevance.

The paper is primarily based on data elicited in the SAND project. *SAND* stands for *Synctactische Atlas van de Nederlandse Dialecten* ‘Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects’.² Exceptions are some of the sentences used in sections 2 and 5. The SAND data and the maps shown in this paper are preliminary in more than one sense. First, some of the data derive from sampling points that will not be shown in the atlas envisaged by the project. Second, we do not have access yet to all the materials of the sampling points for the eventual atlas. Third, for the purpose of this paper, we only represent the Belgian dialects of Dutch, for it is in these dialects that the relevant type of triple negation is attested. The sampling points that the present paper is based on are shown on Map 1. The map also includes the names “West Flemish”, “East Flemish”, “Brabantic”, and “Limburgish”. The adjective “Flemish” and the noun “Flanders” are commonly used in two senses: (i) to refer to the Dutch-speaking area of Belgium, and (ii) to refer to the Southwestern part of the Dutch-speaking area, covering the Belgian provinces of East Flanders, West Flanders, but also French Flanders and the southern part of Dutch Zeeland. In the second sense, we can speak about “West Flemish” and “East Flemish” dialects. Together with Brabantic and Limburgish they are dialects of Flemish (first sense).



Map 1. Sampling points

2. Triple negation

The type of triple negation studied in this paper is illustrated in (1):

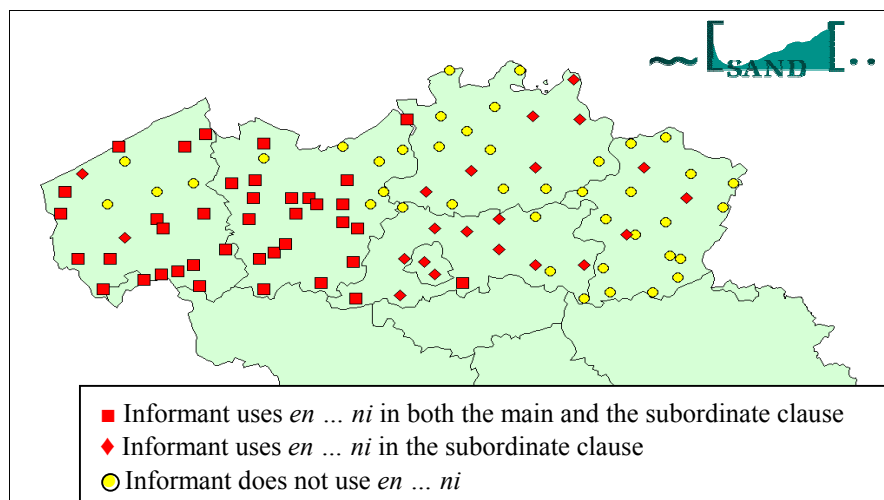
- (1) East Flanders (SAND)
'k en ben niemand ni tegengekomen
 I not am nobody not met
 'I have not met anyone.'

First of all, it is important to point out that (1) is not an isolated occurrence. The exact spread of the phenomenon will be discussed in section 3. Secondly, semantically, there is only one negation. (1) says that it is false that the speaker has met someone. (1) is the negation of (2).

- (2) *'k ben iemand tegengekomen*
 I am someone met
 'I have met someone.'

Formally, however, sentence (1) contains three negative markers:

- (i) *en* is an old negative marker; as the sole marker of negation, it seems to have disappeared in all of Germanic, except in some Flemish dialects, and then only in some frozen expressions.
- (ii) *ni* is a relatively new negative marker; through the phenomenon often called 'Jespersen's cycle', which will be discussed later on, it was first used in combination with the old *en* marker, and then replaced it; in all of Germanic the replacement stage has been reached, but some of the Flemish dialects retain the *en ... ni* stage; Map 2 is a SAND map that shows the sampling points where *en ... ni* has surfaced, either in the subordinate clause or in both the main and the subordinate clause.
- (iii) *niemand* is the negative indefinite pronoun meaning 'no one'; morphologically it is composed of the positive indefinite pronoun *iemand* 'someone' and the negative prefix *ne*, an allomorph of the negative marker *en* under (i).



Map 2. The use of *en ... ni* in main and subordinate clauses

We will call the *en* and the *ni* of (1) “predicate negators”, and *niemand* a “quantifier negator”. For the meaning, we will speak about “predicate” and “quantifier negation”.³ We can thus state that the kind of triple negation that we focus on in this paper involves the expression of one semantic negation with the help of two predicate negators and one quantifier negator. Just like the survival of *en* in Flemish dialects is probably unique within present-day Germanic, this construction too is unique, and, as we will see in detail later on, it is not simply a consequence of the survival of *en*, for *en niemand ni* appears in only part of the *en ... ni* zone.

The triple negation focussed on in this paper is of course just one of several types of triple negation. There are two parameters:

- (i) how many negations are there (semantically)?
- (ii) how many of the negators are predicate negators? how many quantifier negators?

Different parameter settings give different types of triple negation. Some types are illustrated in (3–5).

- (3) West Flanders (Haegeman 1995: 132)
da Valère an niemand niets gezeid en-oat
 that Valère to none nothing said not-had
 ‘that Valère had not said anything to anyone’
 Semantically: 1 negation
 Formally: 1 predicate negator and 2 quantifier negators
- (4) West Flanders (Haegeman 1995: 132)
da Valère nooit an geen mens niets gezeid oat
 that Valère never to no person nothing said had
 ‘that Valère had never told anyone anything’
 Semantically: 1 negation
 Formally: 3 quantifier negators
- (5) West Flanders (Haeberli and Haegeman 1999: 108)
da Valère nie en-durft niets zeggen
 that Valère not not-dares nothing say
 ‘that Valère does not dare not to say anything’
 Semantically: 2 negations
 Formally: 2 predicate negators and 1 quantifier negator

Like (1), the sentences in (3) and (4) express one semantic negation with three negators, but instead of the two predicate negators and the one quantifier negator of (1), sentence (3) employs one predicate negator and two quantifier negators, and sentence (4) employs three quantifier negators. Like (1), sentence (5) employs two predicate negators and one quantifier negator, but the semantic effect is that of two negations.

Of course, the “triplicity” of the negation can also be seen as a parameter. There are also quadruple and even quintuple negations. Subtypes are illustrated in (6) and (7), but they will also remain outside the scope of the paper.

- (6) West Flanders (Haegeman 1995: 132)
da Valère nooit an geen mens niets gezeid en-oat
 that Valère never to no person nothing said not-had
 ‘that Valère had never told anyone anything’
 Quadruple negation
 Semantically: 1 negation
 Formally: 1 predicate negator and 3 quantifier negators

- (7) West Flanders (Haegeman 1995: 133)
da Valère nooit an geen mens nie niets gezeid en-oat
 that Valère never to no person not nothing said not-had
 ‘that Valère had never said nothing to anyone’
 Quintuple negation
 Semantically: 2 negations
 Formally: 2 predicate negators and 3 quantifier negators

3. Jespersen’s cycle

It was Dahl (1979: 88) who coined the felicitous term “Jespersen’s cycle” for the scenario, described by Jespersen (1917), in which, for reasons of heightened expressivity, a negative marker may be accompanied by another word, which later takes over the role of marking the negation to the extent that the original marker disappears. A three-step representation for French is given in (8).

- (8)
- | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | <i>jeo ne dis</i> | Old French |
| 2 | <i>je ne dis pas</i> | Modern Standard French |
| 3 | <i>je dis pas</i> | Modern Colloquial French |
| | ‘I do not say’ | |

(9) shows a five-step representation, in which the bracketing indicates the optional addition and the optional omission of a marker.

- (9)
- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>jeo ne dis</i> |
| 2 | <i>je ne dis (pas)</i> |
| 3 | <i>je ne dis pas</i> |
| 4 | <i>je (ne) dis pas</i> |
| 5 | <i>je dis pas</i> |

The representation of the three or five stages of the cycle is one thing, the interpretation is something else. There are at the moment two dominant perspectives. The first is a grammaticalization account, involving the usual dynamics of strengthening (and weakening) and bleaching.

		Perspective I
(10)	1	<i>jeo ne dis</i>
	2	<i>je ne dis (pas)</i> the negator is strengthened
	3	<i>je ne dis pas</i> the strengthener bleaches and becomes part of the negator
	4	<i>je (ne) dis pas</i> the original negator loses ground
	5	<i>je dis pas</i>

One finds this account both in functionalist and in formalist linguistics, e.g. both in Haspelmath (1997: 204–205) and in Van Kemenade (2000), with the former taking grammaticalization to be driven by semantics, and the latter stressing its morphosyntactic features. The second type of perspective includes the first one, but it furthermore stresses the role of a word order change.

		Perspective I	Perspective II = Perspective I +
(11)	1	<i>jeo ne dis</i>	the negator is preverbal
	2	<i>je ne dis (pas)</i> the negator is strengthened	
	3	<i>je ne dis pas</i> the strengthener bleaches and becomes part of the negator	the discontinuous negator embraces the verb
	4	<i>je (ne) dis pas</i> the original negator loses ground	
	5	<i>je dis pas</i>	the negator is postverbal

What is at least as essential as the grammaticalization, according to the advocates of the second approach, is the development of a preverbal to a postverbal negation, via an intermediate stage in which the negation is

discontinuously both preverbal and postverbal (“embracing”).⁴ Again, versions of this type of account are found in functionalist and in formalist writings, e.g. in Van der Horst and Van der Wal (1979: 24–26) or Horn (1989: XXI) and in Beukema (1999:10). Some connect the word order change with a change in the general word order profile of the language, an idea which surfaced with Vennemann (1974). With respect to this word order change, proponents of the first perspective hold that it is not part of the Jespersen cycle itself, only a possible consequence.

With respect to this controversy, we support version I. We have two reasons. The first is that languages can be said to evidence the typical Jespersonian process of negative renewal without any effect on word order. For Latin it would be reasonable to posit the scenario – in a three-step format – shown in (12).

- (12)
- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ne</i> V |
| 2 | <i>ne oenum</i> V ‘not one’ |
| 3 | <i>non</i> V |

We start with a preverbal negator, we end with one, and the midstage negator is preverbal, too. The second reason for preferring perspective I is that even for languages for which the word order version of the cycle has been proposed, the application is not without problems. Dutch is such a language. For main clauses, the cycle indeed involves the expected word order change, but in subordinate clauses the negators remain preverbal throughout the cycle.

- (13)
- | Declarative main clauses | Subordinate clauses |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 <i>en</i> V | 1 <i>en</i> V |
| 2 <i>en</i> V <i>niet</i> | 2 <i>niet en</i> V |
| 3 V <i>niet</i> | 3 <i>niet</i> V |

Given that we support version I, we have the option to discuss word order or to leave it out. For reasons of space, we will leave it out.

Jespersen’s cycle is a generalization about the development of predicate negators. But there is nevertheless a double link with quantifier negators. First of all, the element that strengthens the original negator and that will grow into the new negator may be a quantifier negator. There is no necessity, though. French *pas* ‘step’ or Latin *oenum* ‘one’ are not quantifier negators. Dutch *niet*, on the other hand, or English *not* are. Their original

meaning was 'nothing'. Secondly, quantifier negators have been analyzed with a Jespersen cycle too, albeit a shorter one, with only the last two stages of the three-stage scenario. Stages (8.2–3) for French predicate negators are nicely paralleled for quantifier negators (Haspelmath 1997: 204; cf. also Burridge 1983: 31–33).

(8) 1 *jeo ne dis*
2 *je ne dis pas*
3 *je dis pas*
'I do not say'

(14) 1 --
2 *je ne dis rien*
3 *je dis rien*
'I say nothing'

The effect of the quantifier negator mini-cycle is that it creates a universally undesirable pattern, that of expressing the negation of a sentence containing a quantifier negator only once, viz. in a negativized quantifier. The universal default, as argued most persuasively by Haspelmath (1997: 201–205), building on earlier work by Bernini and Ramat (1992) and Kahrel (1996), is to express the quantifier negator in the company of a predicate negator. This universal preference, Haspelmath argues, can be withstood in two kinds of circumstances, one of which involves Jespersen's cycle. But, as Haspelmath (1997: 205) further shows, the preference is so strong that it can undo the effect of Jespersen's cycle. For Québec French, for instance, there is a (14.4) stage (the data are from Muller 1991: 262; further support in Daoust-Blais 1976: 1127).

(14) 1 --
2 *je ne dis rien*
3 *je dis rien*
4 *je dis pas rien*
'I say nothing.'

This now is the point to turn to the type of triple negation that is central to this paper. Can the existence of (1) be explained with any hypothesis mentioned so far?

- (1) East Flanders (SAND)
'k en ben niemand ni tegengekomen.
 I not am nobody not met
 'I have not met anyone.'

The answer is negative. Given the parallelism between the predicate and quantifier cycles (8) and (14), valid also for Dutch, one would expect (15).

- (15) *'k ben niemand tegengekomen*
 I am nobody met
 'I have not met anyone.'

(15) is indeed available: it is simply the standard Dutch strategy. From the point of view of the clash between Jespersen's cycle and the universal preference for a quantifier negator to be accompanied by a predicate negator, and the fact that the universal default can get the upper hand, sketched with Québec French (14.4), one would expect (16).

- (16) *'k ben niemand ni tegengekomen*
 I am nobody not met
 'I have not met anyone.'

And indeed, (16) also occurs, and as we will see in section 5, it occurs in a wide variety of the Flemish dialects (and elsewhere in West Germanic). But nothing, so far, can explain why one could get both the old predicate negator *en*, the new predicate negator *ni* and the quantifier negator. This is what we will do in the next section.

4. An integrated scenario

In what follows, we sketch the development of some of the Flemish predicate and quantifier negator constructions. The focus is not on the exact shape of the markers nor on the exact chronology, only on the general processes. We also do not discuss the various proposals about factors that can speed up the cycle, such as the difference between main clause and subordinate clause, or the position of the negator. For data we rely on Van der Horst and Van der Wal (1979), De Meersman (1980), Burridge (1983) and Beheydt (1998). It will be useful to work in terms of the five-stage

model. The generalization that will be sketched will apply only to Dutch. To capture the negation facts from French or Latin, for example, the cycle will have to provide more scenarios.⁵

In the oldest stage of Dutch, predicate negation could employ the single predicate negator *en*. This is stage 1 of the Jespersen cycle. On the side of quantifier negation, it seems that the language behaved in conformity with the universal preference for marking negation with both a predicate negator and a quantifier negator. In Figure 1 we note *en niemand* 'not no one', which we will follow up to the present, and *en niet* 'not nothing', which we will only follow up to the point that *niet* is marshaled into predicate negator service.⁶

Stage	Predicate negator	Quantifier negator	
1	<i>en</i>	<i>en niet</i>	<i>en niemand</i>

Figure 1. Dutch negation: Stage 1 of the Jespersen cycle

Obviously, *niet* and *niemand* are complex forms, consisting of a negation and a positive quantifier *iet* 'something' and *iemand* 'someone'. We assume that it is the ordinary predicate negator *en* that combines with the positive quantifier (cf. Stoett 1923: 160–161, and Bernini and Ramat 1996 on Old Saxon and Gothic). This, we further assume, leads to a pattern that goes against the universal preference. This time it is not Jespersen's cycle that creates the problem but the second of the two processes that Haspelmath (1997: 203) recognizes as the disturbing factors, viz. what he calls "negative absorption", the fusion of negator and quantifier.⁷ The effect is then undone by reintroducing the predicate negator.

Stage	Predicate negator	Quantifier negator	
1	<i>en</i>	<i>en iet</i>	<i>en iemand</i>
		\ /	\ /
		<i>niet</i>	<i>niemand</i>
		↓	↓
		<i>(en) niet</i>	<i>(en) niemand</i>
		↓	↓
		<i>en niet</i>	<i>en niemand</i>

Figure 2. Dutch negation: Developments for quantifier negation within stage 1 of the Jespersen cycle

Stage 1 is attested in the oldest documents of Dutch, but these also show that the language has entered stage 2. The quantifier negator *niet* is reanalyzed as a strengthener of the predicate negator. Maybe in that period, a formal split or divergence occurs. The ‘nothing’ quantifier is formally differentiated from the predicate negator strengthener: ‘nothing’ becomes *niets*, the strengthener remains *niet*.⁸

Stage	Predicate negator	Quantifier negator	
1	<i>en</i>	<i>en iet</i>	<i>en iemand</i>
		<i>niet</i>	<i>niemand</i>
		<i>(en) niet</i>	<i>(en) niemand</i>
		<i>en niet</i>	<i>en niemand</i>
2	<i>en (niet)</i>	<i>en niets</i>	<i>en niemand</i>

Figure 3. Dutch negation: Stages 1 and 2 of the Jespersen cycle

Between stages 2 and 3 the *niet* strengthener becomes progressively more and more obligatory. In the course of this obligatorification, one can imagine it spreading to quantifier negator constructions. In Figure 4, where we henceforth only mark the fate of *en niemand*, we show two scenarios. In one scenario *niet* is added as a strengthener and in the other it is not.

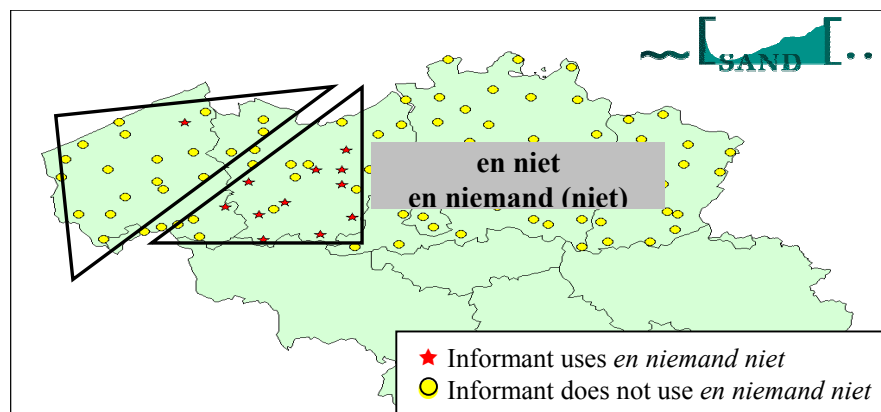
Stage	Predicate negator	Quantifier negator	
1	<i>en</i>	<i>en niets</i>	<i>en niemand</i>
2	<i>en (niet)</i>	<i>en niets</i>	<i>en niemand (niet)</i>
		<i>en niets</i>	<i>en niemand</i>

Figure 4. Dutch negation: The optional spread of *niet* into quantifier negation

Both scenarios make sense, and even for the same reason. If *niet* is optionally added in a quantifier negation context, it might be through analogy with its optional presence in a predicate negation context. The absence of *niet* in the quantifier negation context can also be linked with the forces of analogy. With predicate negation *en (niet)*, we are working towards double negative marking, a model already set by quantifier

negation. Because of this analogy, there is no analogical pull towards triple marking in the case of quantifier negation.⁹

There is also some empirical support. On Map 3, the two triangles roughly indicate the present-day main clause *en niet* zone. In the left triangle *en niet* occurs together with *en niemand* – one of the two scenarios hypothesized in Figure 4. In the right triangle it occurs together with *en niemand (niet)* – the other scenario.



Map 3. *en niet, en niemand, en niemand (niet)*

The data on Map 3 show us a synchronic, present-day dialectological picture. As evidence for a diachronic scenario, a synchronic picture cannot be sufficient, but at least it shows that the predicate negator strategy *en niet* can coexist as easily with the quantifier negator strategy *en niemand* as with the quantifier negator strategy *en niemand (niet)*.¹⁰

In stage 3 of the Jespersen cycle obligatorification has succeeded, in the predicate negation context, of course, but also in one of the two scenarios for quantifier negation. Furthermore, the analogical pressure to add *niet* to *en niemand* must be even stronger than in stage 2, for now *niet* has become obligatory for predicate negation.

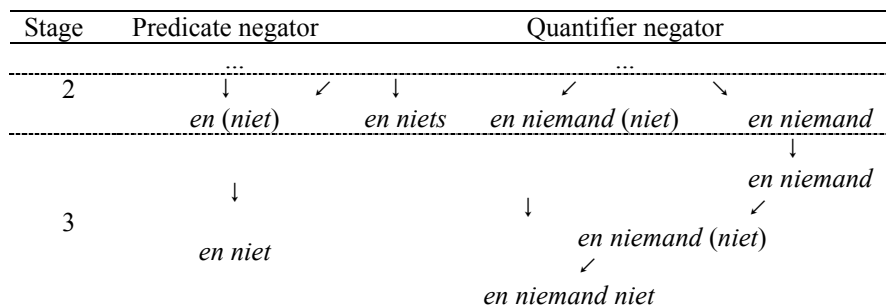


Figure 5. Dutch negation: Stages 2 and 3 of the Jespersen cycle

In stage 4 the old *en* negator is disappearing, for predicate negation as well as for quantifier negation, and in both scenarios, and in stage 5 *en* is lost completely. Once again there is analogical pressure for the *niet*-less quantifier negator strategy to get enriched by *niet*, and at stage 5 pressure is particularly strong, as the *niemand* stage also goes against the universal default.¹¹

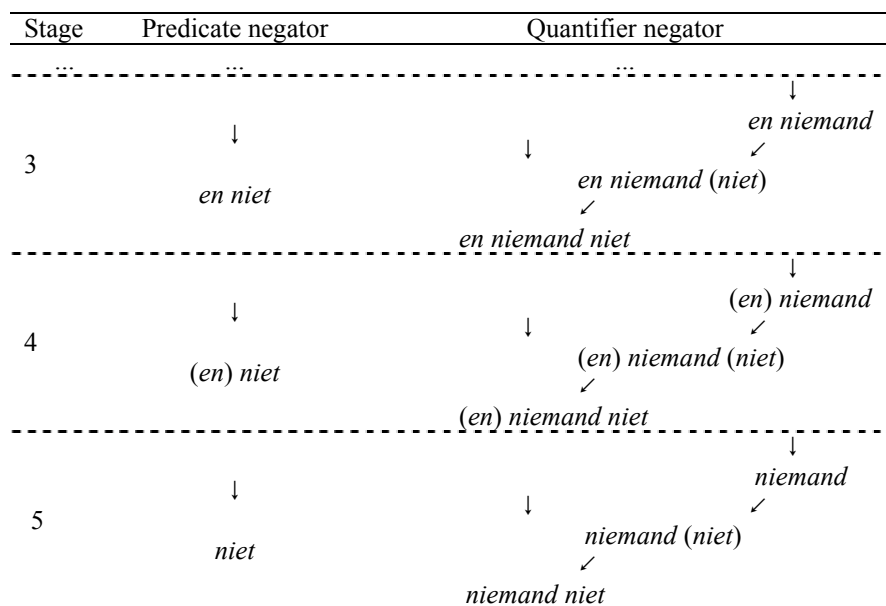


Figure 6. Dutch negation: Stages 3 to 5 of the Jespersen cycle

Figure 6 contains the parallelism noted when we paired (8) with (14), marked in Figure 7 with the uninterrupted lines. But it also shows three Jespersen cycles going from *en niemand* to *niemand niet*, marked with the interrupted lines. They differ with respect to the stage at which *niet* is allowed. Two have a fully classical *en niemand niet* intermediate stage, one has *(en) niemand (niet)*. In this way, we could say that the full scenario integrates at least five more or less classical Jespersen cycles.

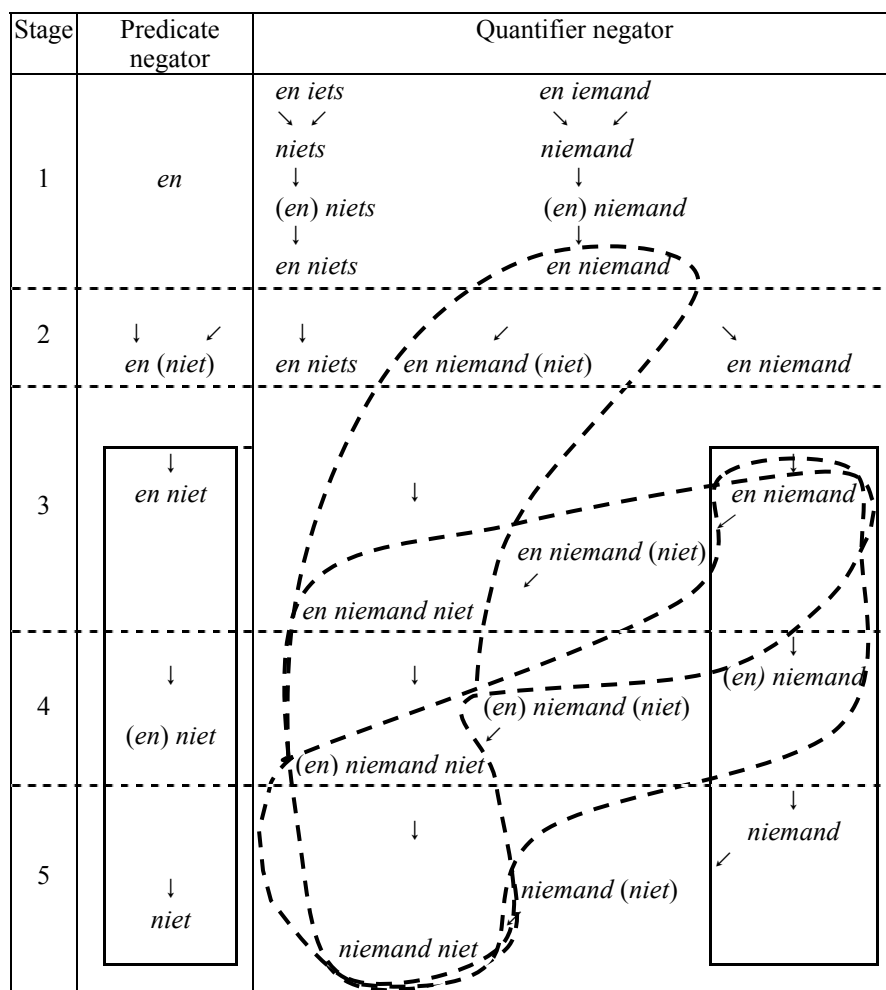


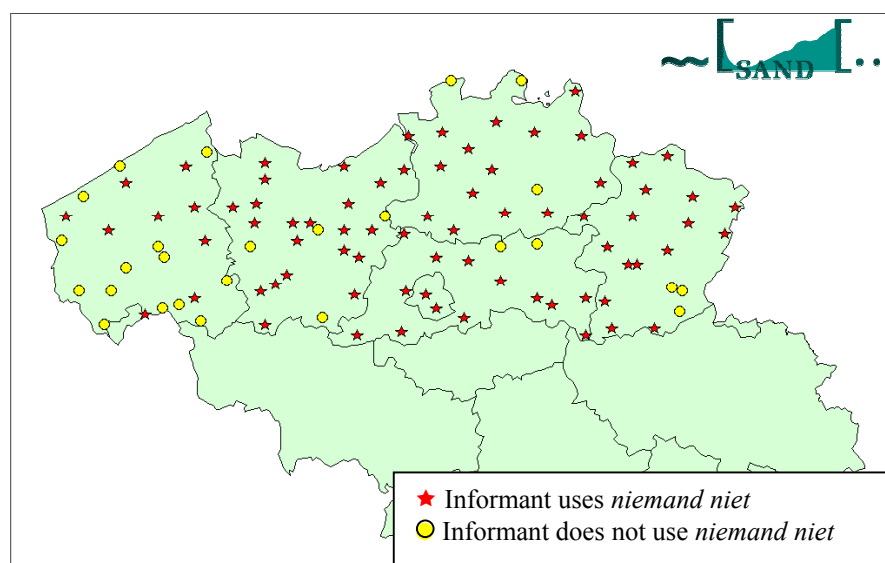
Figure 7. Five Jespersen cycles

5. The dialect geography of (*en*) *niemand* (*niet*)

We have seen that *en niemand niet* is a stage that is intermediate between *en niemand* and *niemand niet*. We will now show that this intermediacy is reflected geographically as well.

Map 4, first of all, gives an idea of the wide geographical spread of the construction *niemand niet*. Informants were asked whether sentence (17) is acceptable in their dialect.

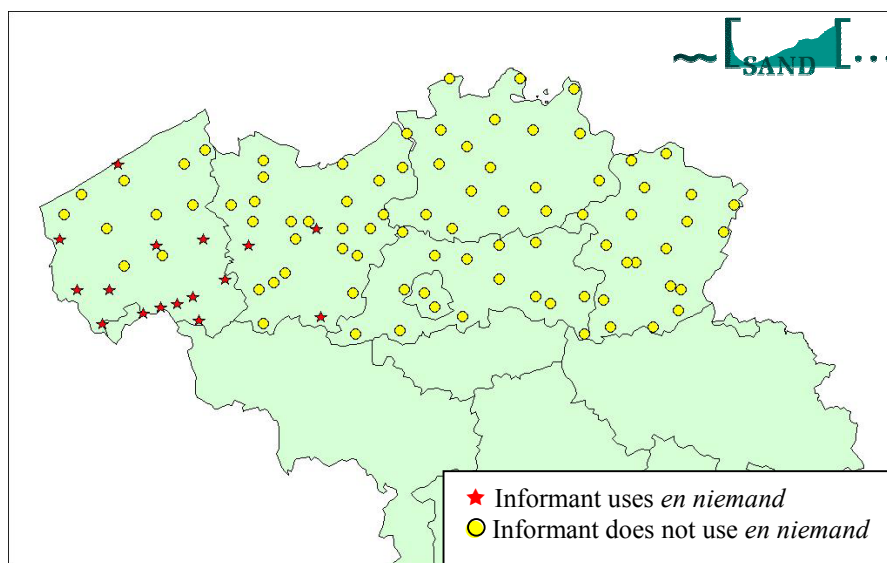
- (17) *er wil niemand niet dansen*
 there wants no one not dance
 ‘There is no one that wants to dance.’



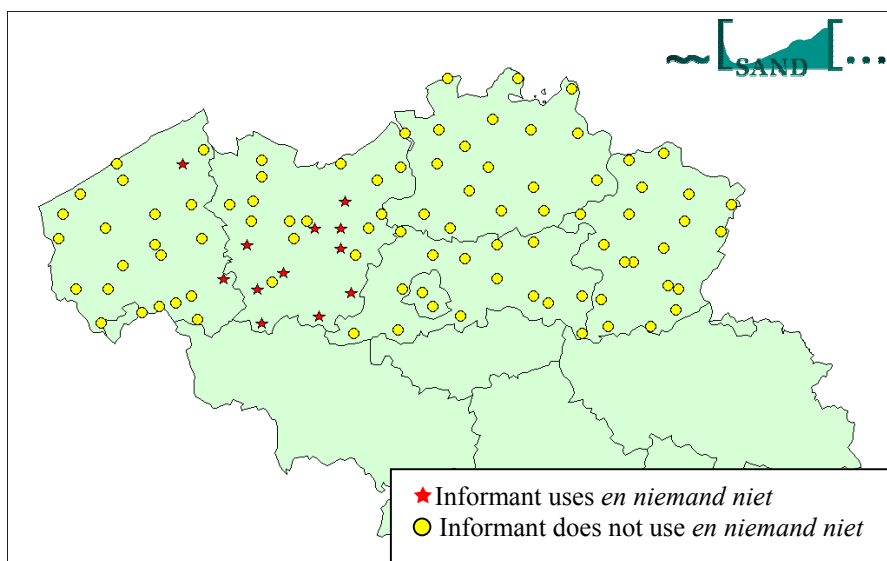
Map 4. *niemand niet*

Map 4 shows that *niemand niet* is widely accepted. There is small resistance zone in Brabant, which we will comment on in section five, but most resistance has been found in West Flanders. In West Flanders, especially in the southern part, informants translate *niemand niet* as *en niemand*. This is shown in Map 5.

Some informants spontaneously translated sentence (17) using *en niemand niet*. Map 6 shows that *en niemand niet* occurs in southern East Flanders.¹²

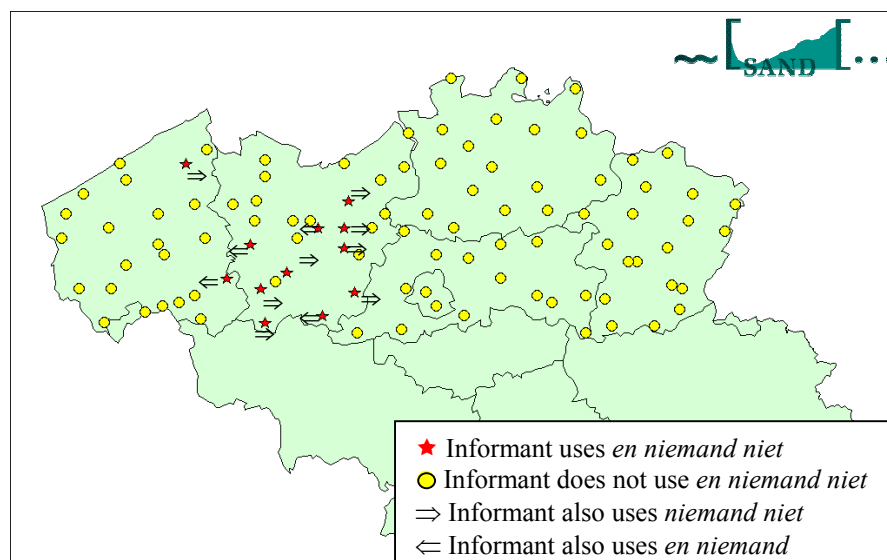


Map 5. *en niemand*



Map 6. *en niemand niet*

If we compare Maps 4 to 6, we see that *en niemand niet* can easily be considered a zone of transition between *niemand niet* and *en niemand*. But there is more. Informants that volunteered *en niemand niet* also gave alternative translations. Some went with southwestern *en niemand*, marked on Map 7 with an arrow pointing in that direction (\Leftarrow). Some gave the central-eastern *niemand niet* variant; we marked them with \Rightarrow .



Map 7. *en niemand niet* between *niemand niet* and *en niemand*

We conclude that the present-day dialect geography is in conformity with the cyclicity hypothesis presented in section 3. It is important, however, to stress that we are not claiming that the present-day geographical facts prove the correctness of the cyclicity hypothesis. In the cyclicity hypothesis the intermediate nature of *en niemand niet* has a system-internal explanation: it is because of analogy with their predicate negator system, because of the Jespersonian succession of weakening and strengthening or because of a conformity with the universal default that speakers of *en niemand niet* have added *niet*. But a system-external explanation is possible, too. In this case speakers adapt their system in analogy with another system. *En niemand niet* can thus be seen as a mix between *en niemand* and *niemand niet*. It concerns conservative speakers who adjust their stage 3 *en niemand* or their stage 4 (*en*) *niemand* and insert a *niet* out of the progressive system of their neighbors, more precisely out of these speakers' fifth stage *niemand niet*

strategy. Interestingly, the actual steps in such a development are already part of the cycle. In Figure 8 we highlight both scenarios. Within this system-external account *en niemand niet* is actually intermediate also: it is a conservative construction with a progressive feature of someone else's system.

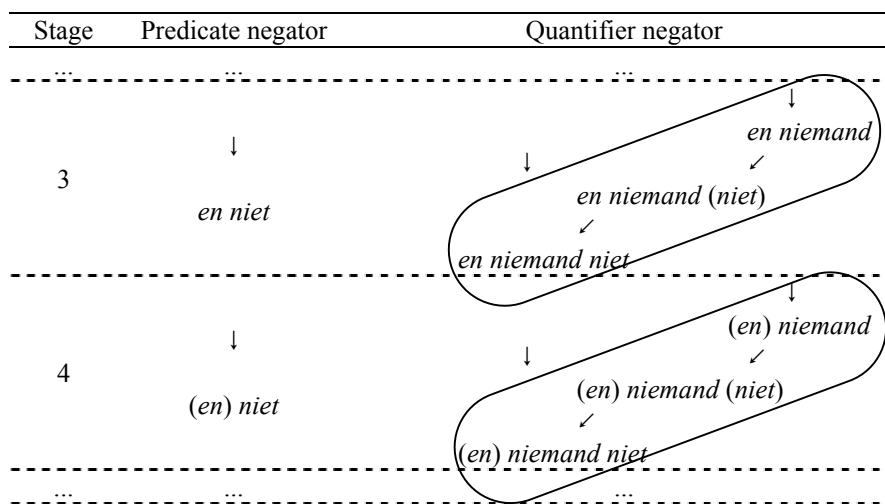
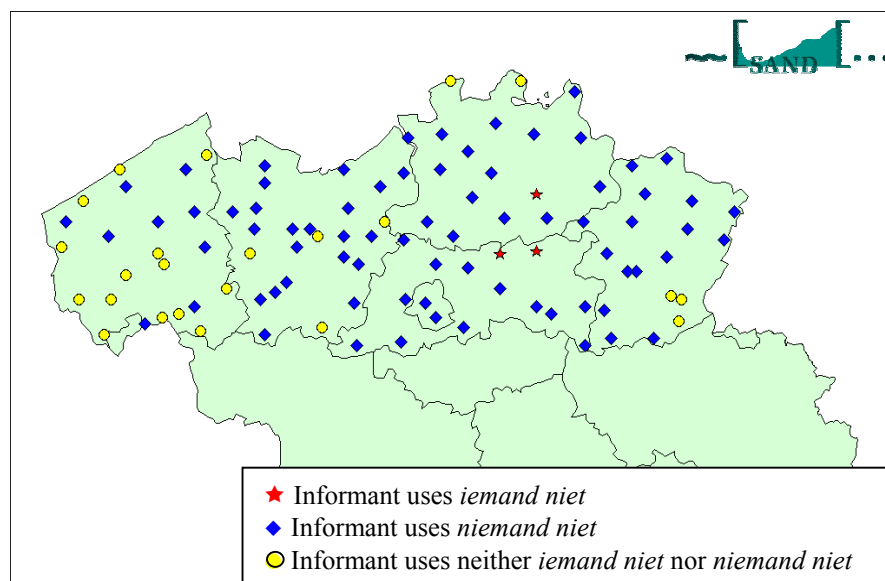


Figure 8. The development of Dutch predicate and quantifier negators – stages 3 and 4

6. Brabantic *iemand niet*

Let us now return to the Map 4, repeated here with an expanded legend as Map 8.

In a small Brabantic area, around the city of Aarschot, informants do not come up with the expected *niemand niet*, but rather with *iemand niet* ‘someone not’. This was noted already by Pauwels (1958: 457-460). He argues that *iemand niet* must have developed out of *niemand niet*, and that negative *niemand* can only be replaced by positive *iemand* when *niet* follows. In other words, it is not the case that *iemand* has itself become a negative quantifier. We have entered the change from *niemand niet* to *iemand niet* in a preliminary way onto the general scenario in Figure 9.



Map 8. *iemand niet*

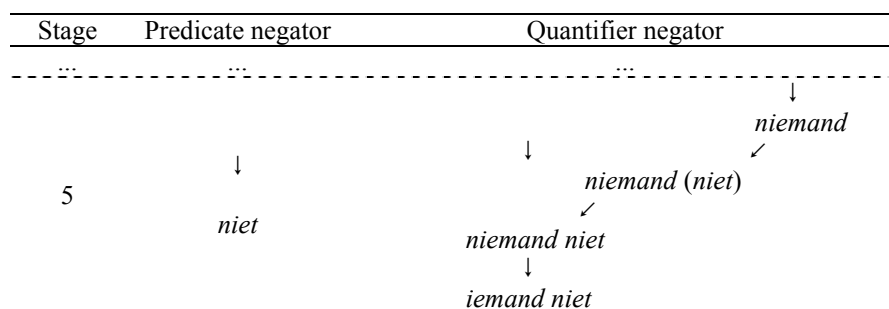


Figure 9. The development of Dutch predicate and quantifier negators – stage 5

Of course, previous stages of the Aarschot dialect – or any other dialect, for that matter – might have had *iemand niet* too, for the *niet* has been around since stage 2, and there is no reason why the presence of *en* couldn't have allowed the change, too. The point is that there is so far no evidence for constructions such as *en iemand niet*. Positive *iemand* is, of course, found in the first stage, before the univerbation. Pauwels (1958: 458) explicitly refers to the ancient univerbation of *en iemand* into *niemand*, and he says that the new Aarschot construction can be seen as a development in the

reverse sense. This is true, but it is no less true that the development should not be considered as a simple process that can run in two directions.

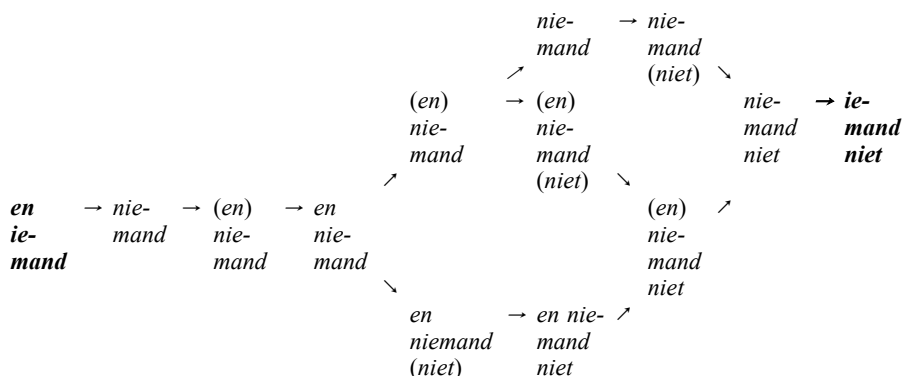


Figure 10. From *en iemand* to *iemand niet*

Interestingly, in the dialectal literature on Dutch negation, Pauwels (1958) is famous for his description of a special clause-final negator, a predicate negator that is optionally added to the predicate negator (*en*) *niet*, to the triple negation strategy studied in this paper, and even to the *iemand niet* construction.

(18) Brabant (Pauwels 1958: 438)
Hij zal niet komen nie.
 he will not come not
 'He won't come.'

(19) Brabant (Pauwels 1958: 454)
Dat is iets dat ik niet en wil nie.
 that is something that I not not want not
 'That is something that I don't want.'

(20) Brabant (Pauwels 1958: 443)
Ik geloof dat er niemand niet en komt nie.
 I believe that there no one not not comes not
 'I believe that no one comes.'

linguistic variation can be as challenging as cross-linguistic variation. A theory of variation has to deal with both.

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Notes

1. Since there is more than one, we will use “Jespersen cycle”, without ‘s and ensuing definiteness.
2. The project runs from 2000 to 2003 and is funded by the *Vlaams-Nederlands Comité voor Nederlandse taal en cultuur* ‘Flemish-Dutch Commission for Dutch language and culture’ (G.2214.00). On the Flemish side data have been gathered by the second author, as well as by Gunther De Vogelaer (Ghent) and Vicky Van Den Heede (Antwerp). Help came from the whole binational SAND team, but especially from Magda Devos (Ghent), Guido Vanden Wyngaerd (Brussels) and Sjef Barbiers (Amsterdam). This article extends the analysis offered in van der Auwera and Neuckermans (in press).
3. There are many other terms in the literature, and some are used with more than one sense. Table 1 lists some of the more common ones and shows how they correspond to our usage of “predicate negation” and “quantifier negation”.

Table 1. Terms for the negative markers of (1)

<i>en, ni, niemand</i>	<i>en, ni</i>	<i>niemand</i>	
negation	predicate negation	quantifier negation	this paper
sentence negation	standard negation	quantifier negation	Payne 1985
	sentence negation	constituent negation	Van Kemenade 1999
negative concord	bipartite negation	negative concord	Haegeman 1995
			Van der Wouden 1997
		negative concord	Haspelmath 1997

4. In these discussions, “verbal” refers to a finite verb, whether lexical or auxiliary.
5. French is different at least because neither the strengthener *pas* nor the negative quantifier *personne* are originally negative. Latin is different because the strengthener fuses with the old negator and it is this univerbation that will become the new one. Also, the old negator does not disappear.
6. We have dialect data only for *niemand*. We therefore do not claim that the story of *niemand* generalizes to all the other quantifier negators.
7. Interestingly, judging on the basis of Haspelmath’s (1997: 209) claims on English, he would not accept any absorption analysis for *niemand* and *niet*.
8. In some West Flemish dialects *niet* can mean ‘nothing’. The split would not seem to have occurred there. *nieten* is another ‘nothing’ word. It makes sense to analyze it as *iet* with both a proclitic and an enclitic *en*. Both observations are due to Reinhild Vandekerckhove.
9. There is no systematic diachronic study of triple negations, but it is clear that they are not a recent phenomenon (see e.g. Beheydt 1998: 88).
10. English seems to have had a strong preference for the second scenario, a preference deemed worthy of the name “Jack’s Law” by Laing (2002: 299) – the reference is to Jack (1978a, b).
11. The idea that the predicate negator may make its entry in the quantifier negation system at stage 5 of the predicate negator cycle was also expressed by Blancquaert (1923: 61).
12. This is not to say that *en niemand niet* does not occur outside of this area. Thus Haegeman (1995: 116) accepts it for West Flemish.

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