

Dutch *ENIG*: from nonveridicality to downward entailment

Jack Hoeksema

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Abstract In combinations with singular count nouns, the Dutch indefinite determiner *enig* ‘some/any’ shows a diachronic distributional shift from nonveridical environments in general to a strict subset thereof, namely negative, conditional and interrogative contexts. Similarities with Greek indefinites of the *kanenas*-series are explored, and an argument is given that at some point *enig* has split into two uses, one of which is currently on its way out. Nonemphatic, nonreferring *enig* is disappearing, whereas emphatic *enig* is stable within a set of environments similar to those of English *any* or *ever*.

Keywords Nonveridicality · Polarity · Diachronic change · Indefinite · Prosodic differentiation

1 Introduction

Many linguists have been intrigued by the complex distributional patterns displayed by negative polarity items. Some have tried to account for these in syntactic terms (e.g. Klima 1964; Progovac 1994; den Dikken 2002, 2006;¹ Postal 2000, 2005), others in semantic/pragmatic terms (e.g. Fauconnier 1978; Ladusaw 1979;

¹Both den Dikken’s and Postal’s papers are concerned with secondary, or parasitic licensing as well as ordinary licensing. In parasitic licensing examples, licensing of a polarity item X by a trigger Y is mediated by another polarity item Z (see also Hoeksema 2007).

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J. Hoeksema (✉)

CLCG, University of Groningen, P.O. Box 716, 9700 AS Groningen, The Netherlands
e-mail: j.hoeksema@rug.nl

Zwarts 1981, 1998; Kadmon and Landman 1993; Krifka 1995; Israel 1996; van der Wouden 1997; Lahiri 1998; Giannakidou 1998; von Stechow 1999; Chierchia 2006; Gajewski 2008), or a combination of both (e.g. Linebarger 1981). However, it seems evident, that these distributional patterns are determined by more than the semantic and syntactic requirements of the polarity items themselves.

One additional factor which should be considered is paradigmatic in nature, namely the presence or absence of competing elements. For instance, in many Slavic languages, indefinite polarity items are found in all contexts in which polarity items may normally be found, except one: direct clause-mate negation (Progovac 1994; Pereltsvaig 2006). This may seem surprising, given that negation is presumably the prototypical environment for polarity items. Pereltsvaig calls this the “bagel” problem: the distribution is that of negative polarity items, but with the central core missing. The apparent source of the bagel problem is the existence, in Slavic, of negative concord, which takes precedence over alternative types of exponence involving indefinite polarity items under the scope of negation. The missing core of the bagel is the result of some sort of blocking. More generally, it has been argued for by de Swart (2010) that negative concord and the expression of negation more generally call for an optimality-theoretic treatment, which compares various alternatives and selects the optimal one according to a set of ranked constraints. Jäger (2010) likewise assumes that the complementary distribution of *any* and *some* is due to competition. The item with the more narrowly circumscribed distribution, *any*, blocks the use of its more general counterpart *some* by virtue of the Elsewhere Principle (Kiparsky 1973).²

A final complicating factor which should be mentioned here is *prosodic differentiation*. It is clear from a number of investigations that stressed occurrences of polarity items may vary in their distribution from unstressed occurrences (Sahlin 1979; Giannakidou 1997; Hoeksema 1999). Giannakidou, for instance, shows that Greek *kanenas*, when stressed, appears in a small subset of the environments where its unstressed variant can be found, namely negation, clauses introduced by *xoris* ‘without’ or by *prin* ‘before’. Sahlin, in an early study using a prosodically marked-up corpus of spoken English, notes substantial differences between stressed and unstressed occurrences of *any*. Hoeksema, finally, reports on several prosodic differences between

²While this type of explanation is certainly appealing, there are also some recalcitrant problems still waiting to be resolved. For instance, while the distribution of *some* and *any* is largely complementary, there are some areas of overlap as well. In conditionals, questions and other not strictly negative environments, either determiner is acceptable:

- (i) Do you want some coffee?
- (ii) Do you want any coffee?

The two questions are sometimes claimed to be pragmatically distinct (Borkin 1971; Ladusaw 1979), in that the latter, but not the former, question assumes a negative answer. However, the matter seems to be more subtle than that, and questions such as (ii) are certainly different from rhetorical questions. Likewise, environments of double negation are acceptable for both items as well (cf. Baker 1970, and for more contexts of double negation Szabolcsi 2004):

- (iii) I can't believe that you don't want some coffee.
- (iv) I can't believe that you don't want any coffee.

polarity-sensitive and nonsensitive *ooit* ‘ever’ in Dutch (possibility of comma intonation (in the case of nonsensitive *ooit*) and possibility of emphatic lengthening of the vowel (cf. for discussion of this phenomenon van Ommen et al. 2007) in the case of polarity-sensitive *ooit*), compare the following sentences, where the spelling *o-o-i-t* indicates emphatic lengthening:

- (1) a. Ik geloof niet dat ik o-o-i-t zo gelachen heb.
I believe not that I ever so laughed have
‘I don’t believe I have ever laughed so much.’
- b. Ik geloof dat ik ooit zo gelachen heb.
I believe that I once so laughed have
‘I believe I have once laughed so much.’
- c. *Ik geloof dat ik o-o-i-t zo gelachen heb.
I believe that I once so laughed have
‘I believe I once laughed so much.’

In this paper I will discuss an almost completed change in the distribution of a Dutch polarity item, *enig*. I will argue that the narrowing of the distribution of this item is compatible with the hypothesis that the item has been reanalyzed from a non-referential indefinite to a more emphatic type of indefinite with the property of pragmatic strengthening in the sense of Kadmon and Landman (1993). This reanalysis is accompanied by a change in distribution from nonveridical environments toward downward-entailing environments. The evidence on which the diachronic claims are based, comes from a collection of more than 100,000 occurrences of Dutch negative polarity items, collected by the author from various sources, including electronic texts such as the ones in the Digital Library of Dutch Literature and Language (see www.dbnl.org) and other Internet sources, the digital newspapers at the website of the Dutch Royal Library (www.kb.nl), but also from books and magazines read by the author over a long period. This collection is currently large enough to study diachronic changes in the more frequent polarity items, such as Dutch *enig*.³

2 Dutch *enig*

The West Germanic languages all have determiners derived from the numeral *one* by means of the affix *-ig* (which developed into *-y* in English), compare German *einig*, Dutch *enig*, and English *any* (Old English *ænig*). While these determiners share a common origin, it is clear that they have developed in different directions. English *any* is now the best-known example of a negative polarity item, German *einig* is not a polarity item, and Dutch *enig* takes a middle position: it is a polarity item when combined with a singular count noun, and not polarity-sensitive with mass or plural nouns (cf. Hoeksema and Klein 1995).⁴ This general behavior is illustrated by the examples in (2):

³The data file used for the study of *enig* in this paper can be downloaded from my homepage (see <http://www.let.rug.nl/hoeksema>).

⁴English *any* shows a similar differentiation between singular count uses and plural/mass uses: Free choice *any* is restricted to singular count nouns. For instance, in the following sentences, only (i)a shows an

- (2) a. We hebben enige tijd.⁵
 We have some time
 ‘We have some time.’
- b. We hebben nooit enige tijd.
 We have never any time
 ‘We never have any time.’
- c. We hebben enige problemen.
 We have some problems
 ‘We have some problems.’
- d. We hebben nooit enige problemen
 We have never some problems
 ‘We never have any problems’
- e. *We hebben enig probleem.
 We have some problem
 ‘We have some problem.’
- f. We hebben nooit enig probleem.
 We have never any problem
 ‘We never have any problem.’

In English, *any* is a well-known polarity item, and shows up in the following collection of environments (cf. Klima 1964; Ladusaw 1979; Linebarger 1981; Horn 1989, 2000a, 2000b, 2005; Kadmon and Landman 1993; and much other literature):

ambiguity due to the difference between free choice and NPI *any*, whereas (i)b appears to only have the NPI reading:

- (i) a. If you like any apple, you will (even) like this one.
 b. If you like any apples, you will (even) like these.

However, the English situation is complicated by the fact that in combinations with numerals, plural *any* may also have a free-choice reading (Carlson 1981):

- (ii) Any four men will be able to lift this casket.

Israel (1999) notes that English *some* in its so-called *spesumptive* use, where the speaker cannot or will not specify the identity of the referent, is likewise restricted to singular count nouns. Hence (iii)a is rather odd, while (iii)b is just fine (examples from Israel 1999):

- (iii) a. #Noah rented some film for us to watch. It’s an old favorite of mine: The Unbelievable Truth.
 b. Noah rented some films for us to watch. They’re old favorites of mine: Trust, Suspicion and The Maltese Falcon.

⁵One of the reviewers did not much like sentences a and c. Examples of this kind are well-attested, however. I believe that the reviewer’s intuitions might reflect a certain preference (by no means absolute) to use *enige problemen* in negative contexts (about 50% of occurrences, according to a search of newspaper data from LexisNexis) and *enige tijd* as an adverbial, rather than a direct object, as in (1a). Note, however, that these preferences are neither of them very strong. Attested examples similar to (1a) and (1c) are:

- (i) a. Omdat er weinig meer van het lichaam over is, zal de vaststelling van de
 Because there little more of the body left is, will the determination of the
 identiteit nog enige tijd in beslag nemen.
 identity still some time in seizure take
 ‘Because there is little left of the body, the determination of the identity will take some more
 time.’

(De Telegraaf, 14-8-2008)

(3) **Negative Contexts**

- a. Negative sentences
- b. Questions
- c. Protasis (=antecedent) of conditionals
- d. Complements of negative (“adversative”) predicates
- e. Clausal complements of *too*
- f. Complements of *without*
- g. Complement of *before*⁶
- h. The scope of quasi-negative quantifiers such as *little, few, seldom*
- i. Scope of XP modified by restrictive adverbs (*only, hardly*)
- j. Relative clauses modifying universal or superlative noun phrases
- k. Comparative clauses (both of equality and of inequality)

This set of environments is also characteristic of the distributional properties of modern Dutch *enig* and of English *ever*, provided we ignore for the moment those uses of *ever* where it signifies ‘always’: *He was ever the same. Ever since the accident, he was a changed man* (cf. Israel 1998 for discussion). It is the classical set of negative polarity contexts, often referred to as downward-entailing or monotone-decreasing contexts (cf. Ladusaw 1979; Zwarts 1981; van der Wouden 1997).⁷ Illustrations of *enig* in the various attested environments are given in (3) below, which mirrors the list in (3) above:

- (4)
- a. Geen van hen heeft enig dier geslacht.
none of them has any animal slaughtered
‘None of them has slaughtered any animal.’
 - b. Heeft u ooit enig voorstel verworpen?
Have you ever any proposal rejected
‘Have you ever rejected any proposal?’
 - c. Als ik enig voorstel verwerp, wordt hij boos.
When I any proposal reject, becomes he mad
‘When I reject any proposal, he gets mad.’

-
- b. Het college verwacht dat dit echter in de praktijk nog enige problemen kan opleveren.
The college expects that this however in the practice yet some problem can create
‘The college expects that this, however, may still cause some problems in practice.’
(*Veluws Dagblad*, 2-8-2008)

⁶Not all *before*-clauses permit polarity items, but only so-called nonveridical *before* (cf. Anscombe 1964; Landman 1991; Sánchez-Valencia et al. 1994, and for a somewhat different view, Condoravdi 2010).

⁷Actually, there are a number of well-known problems with the characterization of the contexts of *any* as downward-entailing. In particular, questions are a well-known problem (cf. Giannakidou 1998; van Rooij 2003) as well as restrictive adverbs such as *only* (Atlas 1996; von Stechow 1999; Giannakidou 2006), superlatives (Hoeksema 1986; von Stechow 1999), conditional clauses (Heim 1984; von Stechow 1999) etc. It is not my goal in this article to solve the problem of the semantic characterization of the distribution of *any* but rather to document a case of an indefinite polarity item that shows a shift in distribution from something very close to the *kanenas*-variety of polarity items (cf. Giannakidou 1997, 1998 and elsewhere) to that of English *any*. The title of the paper should be read with this cautionary note in mind.

- d. Hij ontkende enig dier geslacht te hebben.
he denied any animal slaughtered to have
'He denied having slaughtered any animal.'
- e. Het was te koud om enig kledingstuk uit te doen.
It was too cold for any piece of clothing off to do
'It was too cold to take off any piece of clothing.'
- f. Hij vertrok zonder enig voorstel verworpen te hebben.
he left without any proposal rejected to have
'He left without having rejected any proposal.'
- g. Nog voor enige student iets kon zeggen, was de docent
Yet before any student something could ask, was the teacher
al verdwenen.
already gone
'Even before any student could say anything, the teacher had already left.'
- h. Weinig mensen hebben enig voorstel ingediend.
Few people have any proposal submitted
'Few people have submitted any proposal.'
- i. Alleen Jan gaf enig teken van leven.
Only Jan gave any sign of life
'Only Jan gave any sign of life.'
- j. Iedereen die enig voorstel gedaan heeft, krijgt antwoord.
everybody who any proposal done has, receives answer
'Everybody who has made a proposal, will receive an answer.'
- k. Hij was langer dan / zo lang als enige andere speler.
He was taller than / as tall as any other player
'He was taller than / as tall as any other player.'

Unlike *any*, however, *enig* does not have a use as a free-choice item:⁸

- (4) l. *Neem een appel, enige appel.
Take an apple, any apple
'Take an apple, any apple.'
- m. *Jan kan enig probleem oplossen.
Jan can any answer solve
'Jan can solve any problem.'

⁸In English, the phenomenon of subtrigging plays a role as well (LeGrand 1975; Dayal 1998). This is the phenomenon that free choice readings are more easily obtained when the *any*-expression is modified as in (i) below:

- (i) Anyone with any sense had already left town (line from Bob Dylan, 'Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts')
- (ii) *Anyone had already left town.

For Dutch *enig*, I have been unable to discern any subtrigging effects. For some crosslinguistic discussion of subtrigging effects, see Choi and Romero (2008).

- n. *Enig probleem zal opgelost worden.
 Any problem will solved become
 ‘Any problem will be solved.’

To the extent that the above examples are acceptable at all, they receive an existential, nonspecific reading. E.g. (4m) would read as ‘Jan can solve some unspecified problem.’ The universal reading of free-choice items is almost completely absent. This is strikingly different from the situation in Afrikaans, where universal readings of *enig* abound, no doubt due to the influence of English on that language (examples taken from the Internet):

- (5) a. Dit is ook van waarde vir enige student wat teologiese kennis
 This is also of value for any student who theological knowledge
 soek
 seeks
 ‘This is also valuable to any student seeking theological knowledge’
 b. Hy dink vir enige student is intervarsity die groot hoogtepunt van die
 He thinks for any student is intervarsity the big highlight of the
 jaar
 year
 ‘He thinks intervarsity is the highlight of the year for any student’

For accounts of English *any* that postulate two separate uses, free-choice and NPI *any*, this state of affairs is not a problem: Dutch simply lacks one of the two uses. For unified accounts of *any* and similar indefinites, the Dutch situation is more surprising, and does not receive an easy solution.

3 Historical developments

Based on a corpus (cf. fn. 3) collected by the author of over 3000 occurrences of *enig* with singular count nouns (ambiguous cases of nouns that could be either count or mass were kept out of the database), a number of generalizations can be made regarding the diachrony of *enig*.

3.1 Contexts in early modern texts

When we look at older texts, even going back a mere 50 years will suffice to show that the distribution of *enig* has not always been what it is now. Besides the list in (3) above, the following types of environment are all attested in much larger numbers than they are today. (Hard-to-translate particles are glossed here simply as ‘PRT’.)

- (6) *Modal contexts*
 a. Men moest toch wel enige aanwijzing hebben.⁹
 one ought PRT PRT some clue have
 ‘One should have some clue.’

⁹ *Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945, deel 4C-I, Verhoren: 7* [text from 1949].

- b. Ziedaar een paar vragen, waarop ik gaarne eenig antwoord zou see-there a few questions to-which I gladly some answer would willen ontvangen.¹⁰

want receive

‘These are some questions for which I would like to receive an answer.’

Imperatives

- c. Kom daar maar eens om in enig ander land.¹¹
come there PRT PRT for in some other country
‘Try to find / get that in any other country.’

Subjunctives

- d. En wie geen steenen kan aandragen storte [...] eenige gift in de
And who no stones can to-carry throw some gift in the
offerbus¹²
offertory-box
‘And who cannot carry bricks, should donate some gift in the offertory-box’

Disjunctions

- e. [...] terwijl mijne oudste Zuster tusschen beide in den Bijbel of eenig
while my oldest sister between both in the Bible or some
stichtelijk boek las¹³
edifying book read
‘(..) while in between my oldest sister was reading in the Bible or some devotional book’

Habitual sentences

- f. Vrienden en bekenden hadden de gewoonte om eenig deel van
Friends and acquaintances had the custom to some part of
een nieuw gebouw¹⁴ te versieren met een glas
a new building to decorate with a glass
‘Friends and acquaintances had the habit to decorate some part of a new building with a glas’

Sporadic occurrences of “some or other” readings (10% of about 300 “positive” occurrences):

- g. Hy zondt enige Benden zyner Lyfwachten naar enig Binnen-landts
He sent some troups of-his bodyguards to some interior
Dorp, dat wat verre van de handt ligt.¹⁵
village that a-bit far from the hand lies

¹⁰*De Navorscher*, 1898: 11.

¹¹*Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 4 December 1999: 2.

¹²*De Navorscher*, 1871: 453.

¹³Willem van den Hull, *Autobiografie* [1778–1854], Verloren, Hilversum, 1996: 526. [text from late 1840’s].

¹⁴*De Navorscher*, 1860: 136.

¹⁵*Boekzaal der geleerde Waerelt*, 68, 1749: 534.

‘He sent some groups of his body-guards to some interior village, that is lying a bit out of the way.’

- h. Die de minste kennis van de manieren van Den Haag hebben, who the least knowledge of the manners of The Hague have, weeten, dat het een gerecipieerd gebruik is, dat Jonge Juffrouwen know, that it a received custom is, that young ladies nooit alleen in een Gezelschap komen, maar altyd verzeld van never alone in a gathering come but always accompanied by hunne Moeders, of eenige andere getrouwde Vrouw¹⁶ their mothers or some other married woman
‘[Even] those who have the least knowledge of the manners of The Hague, know, that it is a received custom, that young Ladies never appear alone in society, but always accompanied by their Mothers, of some other married Woman’

The examples in this list mostly fall within the category of *nonveridical* contexts (Zwarts 1995; Giannakidou 1997, 1999). Their defining characteristic is nonentailment of the truth of embedded propositions. More precisely, when XpY is true, and X_Y is a nonveridical environment, it does not follow that p is true. Typical nonveridical environments are negative environments of all kinds, questions, conditional clauses, etc., the classical hosts of standard negative polarity items, but in addition, the positive contexts in (6a–f) are also nonveridical. Giannakidou (1997, 1998, 1999) in particular has made much of the interesting distribution of Greek indefinite pronouns and determiners of the *kanenas*-series, showing that they appear in nonveridical environments only.¹⁷ Some of her examples are given in (7):

- (7) a. Dhen idha kanenan fititi. [negation]
not saw.1SG. any student
‘I did not see any student.’
b. Elpizo na emine kanena komati. [nonveridical affirmative]
Hope.1SG. left any piece
‘I hope there is a piece left.’

¹⁶*Deductie voor Vrouwe S.A. van Haren, etc.*, Ferwerda, Leeuwarden, 1762: 23.

¹⁷The English *WH the hell*-construction also appears to behave as an NPI licensed by nonveridicality (cf. den Dikken and Giannakidou 2002). Compare:

- (i) *John knows who the hell killed his dog.
(ii) Nobody knows who the hell killed John’s dog.
(iii) John wants to know who the hell killed his dog.

While the difference between (i) and (ii) can be ascribed to the presence of negation in (ii), the difference between (i) and (iii) seems to depend on the nonveridical propositional-attitude verb *want*. This shows that nonveridicality is not solely relevant for indefinite NPIs. A comparison with other constructions involving *the hell*, e.g. examples such as *get the hell out of here* (which are positive polarity items, cf. Hoeksema and Napoli 2008) lends plausibility to the assumption that the polarity sensitivity of *WH the hell* is not a property of *the hell* itself, but of the entire construction *WH the hell* in which it takes part.

- c. Pijene se kanenan jatro! [nonveridical imperative]
 Go to any doctor
 ‘Go to a doctor!’

Besides occurrences in nonveridical contexts, but less commonly, also nonspecific uses in veridical contexts can be found, even today. Here, the intended meaning seems to be indifference on the part of the speaker: “some X or other,” as in examples g-h above. (Cf. also Haspelmath 1997; Farkas 2002; Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002; and Vlachou 2007 on non-specific and specific/unknown uses of indefinite pronouns.)

In Table 1 below, diachronic distributional developments are sketched. Note especially the rows for conditional and positive contexts (which show a strong decline) and those for negation, comparatives and clauses introduced by *zonder* ‘without’ (which show a strong increase).

The developments in Table 1 are complex and open to several interpretations. Some contexts are expanding, whereas others are shrinking or disappearing. Note that we are working with percentages, and so an increase in some category necessarily implies a decrease elsewhere and vice versa. I take the driving force behind the developments in this table to be the gradual disappearance of nonveridical occurrences. As a result, other categories that were important already, such as negation, complements of *zonder* ‘without’ and comparatives, became relatively more important.¹⁸ Let’s assume, tentatively, that the gradual reduction of occurrences in conditional clauses is related to the general reduction of nonveridical environments, although conditional clauses are also among the standard examples of negative contexts (cf. e.g. Kadmon and Landman 1993). Note that in English, a conditional clause is a good host both for *any* and *some* in its ‘some or other’ sense:

- (8) a. If you meet any stray dog, shoot it.
 b. If you meet some stray dog, shoot it. It may have rabies.

It is clear that the two sentences do not have the same meaning. While (8a) has universal force (‘shoot every stray dog on sight’), (8b) does not. Moreover, (8a) is emphatic (Kadmon and Landman’s *strengthening*) but (8b) is not. Occurrences of *enig* in the protasis of a conditional are, in the absence of emphasis marking, ambiguous between the emphatic *any*-type use and the nonemphatic *some or other* nonspecific use of English *some*. Consider the following example from the corpus:

- (9) Het soude mij seer lieff weesen, indien ick van U Ho.Ed.G. hier eenigh
 It would me very dear be if I from you HONOR here some
 antwoord op kost bekomen¹⁹
 answer to could receive
 ‘It would please me very much if I could receive some answer to this from
 you [HONORIFIC]’

¹⁸Because the data were hand-collected from a variety of sources, many of them not electronically available, it is not possible to provide useful information such as number of occurrences of *enig* per 1000 words, and the like.

¹⁹*De Briefwisseling van Anthonie Heinsius 1702–1720*, dl 3, 1704: 169.

Table 1 ENIG—distribution of singular count occurrences [minus those of the collocation *op enig moment*]

Context	before 1600 N = 133	1600– 1700 N = 238	1700– 1800 N = 426	1800– 1900 N = 721	1900– 1950 N = 507	1950– 2000 N = 790	2000– 2009 N = 374
Negation	24%	29%	32%	33%	32%	37%	36%
Before	0.8%	2%	0.5%	0.3%	1%	1%	0.5%
Conditional	17%	14%	9%	6%	5%	3%	3%
Comparative	11%	5%	6%	10%	15%	16%	21%
Comp of Eq.	–	5%	4%	1%	0.4%	0.3%	–
Few / little	–	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%
Hardly	1%	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	1%
Neg. pred.	4%	3%	5%	6%	8%	6%	5%
Question	9%	5%	7%	7%	8%	9%	5%
Seldom	0.8%	–	0.2%	1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%
Superlative	2%	1%	0.7%	1%	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%
Too	–	–	0.5%	1%	1%	0.9%	0.5%
Universal	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%	0.5%	1%
Without	15%	13%	15%	14%	18%	20%	22%
Positive	15%	17%	14%	14%	8%	3%	2%

It appears plausible that this example lends itself to translations with *some*, or *some or other*, as well as with *any*. So it could both have a nonemphatic (and nonveridical) reading ‘I would like to receive an answer’ and an emphatic reading ‘it would please if I were to receive any answer at all’. Given the large drop in conditional environments in Table 1, it is likely that the non-strengthening, nonspecific uses represent the majority of occurrences in the early modern period, and that it is these unemphatic occurrences that disappear, in conditional clauses and elsewhere. The Dutch research dictionary *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT) (2010) notes in its entry for *eenig* that this expression, at least in its *any*-type usage, formerly could be used without stress, but that ‘nowadays’ (the volume in which the entry was published dates from 1916) it had to bear stress.

Also worth pointing out in the table is a jump in negative occurrences for *enig* between the 16th and 17th centuries: It is quite likely that this is due to the disappearance, in Dutch, of negative concord in the early-modern period, which in the 16th century was still an important competitor of negation + *enig*, much like Middle English preferred *Nobody did nothing* etc. to *Nobody did anything* (cf. e.g. Hoeksema 1997; Postma 2002; Zeijlstra 2004).

Finally, note the temporary drop in frequency of *enig* in comparatives of inequality, which seems due to the competition, at least in the written language, of comparatives of equality. After all, if one wanted to state that some woman is very beautiful, one could write, in early modern Dutch, that she is *schoner dan enige vrouw* ‘more beautiful than any woman’ or *zo schoon als enige vrouw* ‘as beautiful as any woman.’ Comparatives of inequality and comparatives of equality, although they differ in meaning, nonetheless should be viewed as semantic competitors from the point of view of the writer. Unlike English *any* or *ever*, in Dutch the use of *enig* in comparatives in equality disappeared from the written language, mirroring similar developments in the distribution of the negative polarity item *ooit* ‘ever’. Other types of Dutch polarity-sensitive indefinites still appear in comparatives of equality, however, e.g. *wie dan ook* ‘who then also = whoever, anyone’:

- (10) a. Jan is groter dan wie dan ook.
 Jan is larger than wie then also
 ‘Jan is larger than anyone.’
 b. Jan is net zo slim als wie dan ook.
 Jan is just as smart as who then also
 ‘Jan is just as clever as anyone.’

3.2 *Enig* and its competitors

The drop shown in Table 1 above in “positive” occurrences of *enig* in the period 1900–2009 coincides with several other developments in Dutch, such as the emergence of *wh*-items with NPI and Free Choice uses: *wie dan ook* ‘who then too’ meaning *whoever*, *welke N dan ook* ‘which then too’ meaning *whichever*, *wat dan ook* ‘what then too’ meaning *whatever* etc., as well as the emergence of the complex determiner *een of ander* ‘one or other = some or other’, which is nowadays the preferred mode of expression for speaker-unknown or speaker-indifferent indefinites.²⁰ In Table 2, some corpus data involving *welk dan ook*, a complex determiner, are compared to *enig*.²¹

Noteworthy in this table is not only the higher percentage of so-called positive occurrences for *welk dan ook* and especially *any*, but also the big differences in *without*-clauses and comparatives between the three determiners. These differences seem hard to explain in terms of traditional licensing conditions or in syntactic terms. There is no apparent reason why *enig* is that much more common in *without*-PPs than *welk dan ook* or *any*, and I assume that this is the result of a collocation effect: environments may favor certain items, which will then appear more frequently in these environments than might have otherwise been predicted. Such effects tend to be gradual,

²⁰Indefinites of the WH + *dan ook* type are attested since the early 19th century. *Een of ander* is a bit older, and attested at least since the beginning of the 18th century.

²¹The percentages do not quite add up to 100% because some of the minor contexts were left out. The Dutch data were hand-collected by the author, the English data for *any* come in part from an Internet corpus compiled by the author in the early 1990’s (cf. e.g. Hoeksema 1994 for other material from this corpus), and hand-coded by the author, and in part from books and newspapers. In the case of *any*, it should be noted that the distribution is highly sensitive to the status of the noun modified: e.g. free choice use is most common with singular count nouns, less so with plurals and mass nouns. The table does not distinguish among these cases.

Table 2 Distribution of *enig* versus *welk dan ook* ‘whichever’ [post-1950 data] and *any*

Context	Enig N = 1105	Welk (dan) ook N = 652	Any N = 7307
<i>before</i> -clause	1%	0.3%	1%
comparative	17%	31%	5%
comparative of equality	0.3%	3%	1%
conditional	3%	3%	7%
negation	37%	32%	32%
negative predicate	6%	10%	7%
question	8%	3%	11%
<i>without</i>	21%	3%	3%
positive (free choice)	3%	9%	30%

rather than absolute, and current theories by and large deal with them by ignoring them (but see van der Wouden 1997 for an important exception). It seems reasonable to assume that collocation effects are directional in nature. For instance, *enig* does not select *without*-PPs as a favorite environment, but rather, *without* selects *enig* as a good indefinite to appear within its scope. Presumably, when a speaker formulates a sentence, the choice of *without* will be determined primarily by the meaning s/he intends to convey, whereas the choice from among *enig*, *een*, *welk dan ook* and other indefinite determiners is more or less free, given that they express roughly the same meaning. Collocation effects show that there are preferred choices, for a given environment, from the various options provided by the grammar.

The complex determiner *een of ander* ‘one or other’ has a rather different distribution than the items discussed so far.²² Unlike *welk dan ook*, but like polarity sensitive *enig*, it only combines with singular count nouns. Negated occurrences are fairly rare,²³ and positive occurrences are the norm, whether in nonveridical or veridical contexts. Often, the use of *een of ander* signals either that the speaker finds the identity of the person or object irrelevant, or that he wants to distance himself from

²²Actually, there are two variants of this expression: *een of ander* and *de een of ander* ‘the one or other’. In spite of the presence of the definite article, the second variant is likewise indefinite, and behaves, as far as I have been able to ascertain, exactly like the first variant. For example, either variant can be used in existential contexts:

- (i) Er was (de) een of andere ruzie gaande.
 There was some row going-on
 ‘There was some row.’

²³In a sample of 171 occurrences, I found 26 negated cases, or 15%. Compared to *enig* or *welk dan ook*, this is not much. Mostly, it concerns either negation of matrix predicate, while *een of ander* appears in a subordinate clause, or cases of contrastive negation: *ik ben je vrouw, niet een of andere sloerie* ‘I am your wife, not some bimbo.’ Regular clause-mate negation does not appear possible: **Ik heb niet met een of andere student gesproken* ‘I did not talk to some student.’ Clearly the matter deserves further attention.

that person or object.²⁴ Compare the examples in (11), in which I have paired off occurrences of *een of ander* with occurrences of English *some*:

- (11) a. Pick some number [irrelevant which one]
Kies een of ander getal
- b. Is he some rancher from Texas or is he the President of the
Is hij een of andere rancher uit Texas of is hij de president van de
USA?
VS?
- c. Every 15 minutes, some woman is raped on this
Elke 15 minuten wordt een of andere vrouw verkracht op deze
planeet.
- d. I don't want my daughter to go out with some
Ik wil niet dat mijn dochter uitgaat met een of andere
jerk / *somebody
vlerk

In (11a) and (11b), the use of *some* indicates that the identity of the *number* or *rancher* in question is irrelevant or unknown. In (11c), we have *some* in the scope of a universal quantifier. The use of *some* to signal reference in a derogatory or pejorative way is strikingly different from the normal use of *some*. As illustrated in (11d), it is perfectly acceptable in negative sentences, quite unlike neutral *some*, which is a well-known positive polarity item (Klima 1964; Ladusaw 1979). And this is not because it has wide scope. Clearly, (11d) does not have to mean that there is some particular jerk that the speaker does not want his daughter to go out with.

To study the pejorative use of the indefinites in some more detail, I did a Google-search of combinations with a number of derogatory nouns, comparing them with combinations involving neutral nouns. The results are in Tables 3 and 4 and show three things: *een of ander* has a higher overall frequency than *enig*; *een of ander* is more common with derogatory nouns than with neutral nouns; *enig* is more common with neutral nouns than with derogatory ones. If we assume that the pejorative use of *some* really constitutes a separate use, and, more-over, assume that the same is true for *een of ander*, then the lower percentages of *enig* for derogatory nouns is simply the result of the fact that *enig* is neutral with respect to speaker-stance, and therefore dispreferred whenever there is a dedicated indefinite determiner for the expression of pejorative meaning.²⁵

²⁴The possibility of reference to objects that are speaker-unknown, or that the speaker does not want to identify is a clear point of similarity *een of ander* and the German *irgend + INDEF* series (*irgendein, irgendwas, irgendwer* etc., cf. Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002). Nonetheless, there are some important differences as well, such as the lack of free choice readings in imperatives. In particular, (11a) has a nonspecific indefinite reading, but not a quasi-universal reading compare to *Pick any number*. Hence the analysis proposed by Kratzer and Shimoyama, using alternative semantics along the lines of Hamblin (1973), cannot be carried over straight-forwardly to *een of ander*.

²⁵The use of Google for linguistic purposes has become rather a common-place practice, especially when the goal is to find examples of rare phenomena (see for instance Condoravdi 2010), but sev-

Table 3 Derogatory nouns—Google counts

Noun	Translation	+ een of ander	+ enig
Halve gare	Halfwit	72	–
Oen	Nut	45	–
Sukkel	Loser	147	–
Klootzak	Asshole	111	–
Snol	Tramp	41	–
Wijf	Bitch	86	1
Total		502	1

Table 4 Neutral nouns

Noun	Translation	+ een of ander	+ enig
Nederlander	Dutchman	29	4
Auto	Car	59	6
Vrouw	Woman	154	13
Huis	House	146	35
Dier	Animal	212	81
Total		600	139

In Table 5, a general overview of the options is given. Note that the table is somewhat misleading in that the contexts and uses are orthogonal categories. For instance, a pejorative use can be found in veridical as well as negative or positive but non-veridical contexts. A three-dimensional table would have been more appropriate, but is more difficult to show on paper.

Another point worth making concerns the distribution of *een of ander*. While this expression can be used in all contexts, including episodic past tense contexts which are completely off-limits for expressions like *any* or singular-count *enig*, it appears to be far more frequent in negative and other nonveridical contexts. In a small sample of 113 occurrences, collected from books and newspapers, I found that 95, or 84%, were in nonveridical contexts, and 18, or 16%, in veridical contexts where the speaker was

eral linguists, including one of the reviewers of this paper, have warned against the use of Google counts as evidence for usage frequency (cf. also various postings on Mark Liberman's Language Log—<http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll>). Alternative sources of texts, such as newspaper corpora are not large enough, however, when it comes to combinations of not so frequent expressions—for instance, LexisNexis provided from dozens of Dutch newspapers over a period of 18 or so years only a meagre 5 instances of the combination *een of andere halve gare* 'some half-wit', and similarly disappointing yields for the other nouns in Table 3. Therefore I have decided to stick by the Google counts as a rough estimation of usage frequency. The numbers given in Tables 3 and 4 do not give the total number of hits as estimated by Google, but only the actual number of hits provided by Google. This means the largest numbers (those in the rightmost column) are greatly underestimated, but for our purpose, this should not matter, given that the main differences between Table 3 and Table 4 lie in the other columns. The Google counts reported here are from August 13, 2008. An earlier version of this paper used figures from spring 2007, which were different, obviously, but showed the same overall pattern: a serious difference between derogatory and neutral nouns when it comes to the choice between *enig* and *een of ander*. Hits for the string *de enige* 'the only' were for obvious reasons not included among those for *enig*.

either unaware of or indifferent to the identity of the individual or object described. Not included in this sample were cases of the highly frequent combination *op (de) een of andere manier* ‘in some way’, which does not share this rather slanted distribution. Presumably, this reflects the different ontological status of manners vis á vis objects or persons with respect to individuation. Many of the nonveridical contexts were unreal contexts created by modals or propositional attitude verbs as *wish, hope, seek, imagine* and *try*. It is likely that the rapid emergence of *een of ander* (starting in the 18th century) has pushed out *enig* from such contexts.

3.3 Special cases

A striking feature of *enig* is the fact that it appears quite often in combination with the adjective *ander*, the Dutch word for *other*. For the period 1950–2009, this combination accounts for somewhat more than 5% of all occurrences of *enig*, and it is interesting to note the strong effect that the presence of *ander* has on the distribution of *enig*. Table 6 below shows two things: an enormous disparity in the category *comparative*, and an equally spectacular one in the category *without*. Other changes, like the drop in negation environments, probably just reflect a relative decline due to the expansion of comparative-triggered occurrences.

In the case of the comparative, we seem to be looking at a logical nicety of natural language. Normally, when I make a quantified statement, certain members of the domain are excluded for pragmatic reasons (cf. the discussion in Hendriks and de Hoop 2001). When I say ‘I can see everybody from here quite well’, I do not mean

Table 5 Contexts and uses of 6 indefinite determiners

Context/use	Any	Some	A(n)	Enig (SG count)	Een of Ander	Een
Veridical (neutral)	*	✓	✓	*	✓	✓
Negative (neutral)	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nonveridical positive (neutral)	*	✓	✓	*	✓	✓
Generic/Free choice	✓	*	✓	*	*	✓
Pejorative	*	✓	*	*	✓	*
Reference irrelevant	*	✓	*	*	✓	*

Table 6 *Enig ander* “any other” compared to *enig* without *ander*

Context	+ander N = 194	–ander N = 911
comparative	59%	7%
conditional	3%	3%
negation	31%	39%
neg. predicate	0.5%	6%
question	1%	9%
without	1%	25%
positive	2%	3%

to include myself, for example. The same can be said for the statement ‘Chomsky is a better dancer than any linguist’. Here, we naturally assume that the set of linguists under consideration does not include Chomsky, or else we would be making the paradoxical claim that Chomsky is a better dancer than himself. Most of the time we do this kind of pragmatic restriction of the domain of quantification almost automatically, but the collocation *enig ander*, used in the comparative, offers a semantic solution to this problem. I propose that this is the reason behind the big difference in the category *comparative* in Table 6.

The big drop in *without*-phrases is rather harder to account for. It will have to be explained somehow, as it appears quite unlikely that it is a mere statistical fluctuation.

Another contextual effect I want to point out is the effect of disjunction on the distribution of polarity items. In Table 7 below, I have brought together some corpus data involving the Dutch WH-indefinites *wie dan ook*, *wat dan ook*, *welke dan ook* etc., comparing uses as part of a disjunction with all other uses. Here, the main thing to note is the increase of negation-environments whenever the item is inside a disjunction. This effect is also found for English *any*, on a slightly smaller scale. One may also find this type of distributional effect among polarity items that are themselves disjunctions, such as *make head or tails of something*, or *in any way*, *shape or form*, or *for love or money*. All of them have a pretty strong preference for purely negative environments, more so than *any* or *ever*, for example.

Table 8 below shows what happens to *enig ander* in disjunctive contexts. In particular, we are looking at the difference between sentences such as (12a) and (12b):

- (12) a. Jan werkte harder dan enige andere student.
 Jan worked harder than any other student
 ‘Jan worked harder than any other student.’
- b. Jan werkte harder dan Fred of enige andere student.
 Jan worked harder than Fred or any other student
 ‘Jan worked harder than Fred or any other student.’

Here, the raw numbers are low, so most percentages should be viewed *cum grano salis*. However, what cannot be ignored here is the sudden disappearance of the cat-

Table 7 Disjunctions: WH dan ook (*wie dan ook*, *wat dan ook*, etc.) and ANY

Context	WH dan ook +DISJ (N = 149)	WH dan ook -DISJ (N = 1325)	ANY + DISJ (N = 131)	ANY - DISJ (N = 5616)
comparative	3%	40%	2%	4%
compar. of equality	–	3%	1%	1%
conditional	3%	3%	8%	7%
negation	50%	29%	44%	30%
negative predicate	5%	7%	5%	6%
universal	1%	2%	2%	0.5%
question	7%	2%	7%	12%
without	9%	4%	2%	2%
positive	15%	7%	29%	34%

Table 8 *of enig ander* ‘or any other’

Context	%...of enig ander... N = 23	% enig ander N = 194
comparative	–	59%
conditional	9%	3%
negation	65%	31%
neg. predicate	9%	0.5%
question	9%	1%
without	4%	1%
positive	4%	2%

egory *comparative*. This is strikingly similar to the situation in Table 7, which also shows a plunging percentage of occurrences of the WH-items in comparative contexts when they are embedded in a disjunction.

3.4 In conclusion

Its gradual disappearance from positive, mainly nonveridical, uses has turned *enig*, at least in combinations with singular count nouns, into a negative polarity item. This change is interesting for several reasons. First, it shows that nonveridicality is not just an exotic property of some Greek pronouns: Germanic languages, which so far had seemed rather different from Greek in not appearing to have pronouns sensitive to nonveridicality, also appear to show sensitivity to this property. Sensitivity to nonveridicality is of course a sign that a pronoun or determiner is used in a nonreferring way. Obligatory nonreferentiality may lead to a pronoun being used only in nonveridical, including negative, contexts. In negative contexts, emphatic use of items may develop into a special use with different distributional properties than nonemphatic, nonstressed occurrences. For Greek *kanenas*, it was shown by Veloudis (1982) and Giannakidou (1997) that stressed occurrences have a far more limited distribution, being acceptable only in negative sentences, the scope of *xoris* ‘without’, and *prin* ‘before.’ For English *any*, the importance of stress and focus was forcefully argued for by Sahlin (1979) and Krifka (1995). Finally, Hoeksema (1999) argued that Dutch *ooit* ‘ever’ has developed two prosodically-distinct uses, one allowing for comma intonation, the other for emphatic lengthening of the vowel. The latter is a negative polarity item, the former is not. Let us therefore assume that in certain environments, such as negation, the possibility of stress changed *enig* from an expression primary used to express nonreferentiality, to an expression of emphasis, much like Greek stressed *kanenas*, and with an almost identical distribution (comparatives being the main difference). The main difference with the Greek situation is that the two types of *kanenas* remained equally grammatical, whereas the nonreferential, nonemphatic form of *enig* has virtually disappeared.

4 Conclusions and outlook

On the basis of diachronic data, I have argued that Dutch *enig* changed from a nonreferential indefinite found primarily in nonveridical contexts into a regular negative-

polarity item restricted to downward-entailing contexts. The role of stress is hypothesized to have played a role in this process. The distribution of polarity items tends to be fairly unstable, as these items are prone to develop sometimes idiosyncratic collocation restrictions (van der Wouden 1997; Sailer and Richter 2002) and therefore it appears, at any given moment in time, to be rather messy. Detailed historical and synchronic corpus study of usage patterns will be needed to further disentangle and expose the general forces behind the chaos.

Meanwhile, some general ideas have emerged already as fruitful hypotheses regarding the relation between polarity items and their distribution. For scalar expressions, the prevailing idea is that their function is pragmatic strengthening and that their distribution is somehow determined by this function (cf. Kadmon and Landman 1993 and much subsequent work). For weak polarity items that require nonveridical environments, the central factor in determining this distribution seems to be a requirement of nonreferentiality: these indefinites can only be guaranteed not to refer to anything in nonveridical environments. One may wonder, at this point, whether polarity items that are licensed by nonveridicality are necessarily indefinite pronouns or determiners. The answer is no (cf. also fn. 18). Oosterhof (2004) has pointed out that the Dutch verb *doorgaan* ‘go through, continue’ has a use where it means ‘to take place as scheduled.’ This use, he argues, is restricted, by and large, to nonveridical contexts.²⁶ Compare:

- (13) a. Het feest ging niet door.
The party went not on
‘The party did not take place.’
- b. Het feest ging door.
The party went on
‘The party continued.’
- c. Jan hoopte dat het feest door zou gaan.
Jan hoped that the party on would go
‘Jan hoped the party would take place / Jan hoped the party would continue.’

Here the pertinent factor is, once more, nonreferentiality, but now at the level of events: events that do not take place do not exist. It would be of some interest for the typology of negative polarity items to identify more types of expressions in a variety of languages that likewise show a restriction to nonveridical contexts.

The general treatment of distributional changes among indefinites in Jäger (2010) prompts the question of whether the changes documented here for *enig* fit within that framework. To summarize, Jäger postulates three types of indefinites, and two features to classify them. Normal and PPI-indefinites are unmarked, polarity items are [+affective] and n-indefinites (n-words) are [+affective, +neg]. Only plus values are

²⁶Out of the 166 occurrences of this verb, in the intended reading ‘take place’, in my material, there are 120 from negative sentences, 9 from questions, 8 from conditional clauses, 2 are licensed by restrictive adverbs (type *only*) and 1 is in the complement of a negative predicate. The 26 remaining positive occurrences are almost all either cases of denial of a negative presupposition (*het feest ging wél door* ‘the party DID take place’) or nonveridical cases similar to (13c). Only three cases are positive and veridical.

allowed for these features. The feature [+neg], finally, implies [+affective], and so only three types of indefinites are allowed. N-words are viewed as polarity-sensitive indefinites, triggered by (possibly covert) negation (see also Penka and von Stechow 2001; Zeijlstra 2004; Penka 2007). This system is simple and elegant, and capable of describing a great many attested changes in the use of indefinites in terms of the addition or loss of features. However, it is not, as yet, fine-grained enough to distinguish among weak polarity-items such as early-modern Dutch *enig*, from polarity items with a more restricted distribution, such as English *ever*, or present-day Dutch *enig*. Clearly, more features are needed, not only to distinguish more subclasses of negative-polarity items, but also to separate positive-polarity items like *some* from neutral indefinites like *a(n)*. Whether a marginally larger set of features will suffice to characterize the distributional patterns of the various items, is highly doubtful, however. Languages like Dutch, English or German have large numbers of indefinites whose distributions vary in all sorts of ways. We have seen several instances of such variation in this paper. For instance, the Dutch polarity-sensitive indefinite *wie dan ook* ‘anyone, whoever it may be’ is found in comparatives of equality, but *enig* ‘any’, which used to occur in that context as well, has disappeared from it. Some indefinites abound in disjunctions, others do not (cf. the discussion of *ook maar iets* versus *zelfs maar iets* in Hoeksema and Rullmann 2001). Quite often, this is due to strong collocational effects (cf. the discussion of *enig + ander* ‘any other’ above). My conclusion from this is that polarity items are far more intricately connected to fine details of syntactic contexts than is commonly assumed.

I hope that this paper will inspire others to look in more detail at the various polarity items in their language. Typological work such as that of Haspelmath (1997) suggests that many languages have various series of indefinites which are in competition with one another. Fine-grained corpus analysis will help to shed light on the complex distributional patterns to which this competition gives rise.

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