The expressive *en maar*-construction

Hans Broekhuis & Norbert Corver

Abstract: This article discusses constructions of the type *En maar zeuren!* 'You keep on nagging', which express a negative attitude of the speaker towards the proposition expressed by the construction. We will argue that *en* 'and' should be seen as a regular conjunction conjoining a phonetically empty clause with an overt infinitival clause: *[[Ø] en [maar zeuren]]*. The proposition expressed by the empty clause is determined by the common ground and contrasts with the propositional content of the second clause. This contrast is essential for obtaining the expressive meaning, but is potentially problematic in light of the regular interpretation of *en*. We solve this by claiming that the contrastive reading is expressed by the conjunction in tandem with the discourse particle *maar*, which can also be used as a contrastive/oppositional conjunction.

Keywords: expressivity, conjunction *en*, root infinitive, discourse particle

1. Introduction

Dutch has various construction types starting with the conjunction *en* 'and' which are used to express the speaker's attitude towards a certain state-of-affairs. Some examples are given in (1). In examples such as (1a) the conjunction *en* is followed by a nominal phrase modified by a relative-like

clause (which is sometimes left out):[1] exclamative utterances like these are used to express the speaker's positive or negative attitude towards the proposition expressed by the utterance. Example (1b) most likely involves some verbal projection: the fact that the noun phrase *Peter* functions as the subject of the infinitival verb *zeuren* 'to nag' or *lachen* 'to laugh' excludes an analysis according to which the phrase following *en* is a nominalisation. This construction is used to express a negative attitude of the speaker towards the event of Jan nagging/laughing. Example (1c) differs from (1b) in that the external argument is not overtly expressed and in principle this construction could therefore be analysed as involving either a nominal or a verbal phrase. We will argue, however, that we are not dealing with a nominal construction, which receives some initial support from the fact that the construction differs from the one in (1a) in that it cannot be used to express a positive attitude of the speaker towards the event of Jan nagging/laughing. For completeness' sake, note that although silent external arguments in examples such as (1c) can have a first, second or third person interpretation, we will render them as *you* in the English translations (unless a first or second person interpretation is forced by contextual factors).

---

[1] It is in fact not a priori clear that the relative clause analysis suggested here is correct. The main reason is that the element *dat* cannot always be analysed as a relative pronoun because it does not always agree in gender and number with the nominal element taken to be the antecedent. For example, the singular non-neuter noun *pret* 'fun' would require the relative pronoun *die* while the construction *En een pret die ze hadden!* is excluded. So, a possibly better analysis would be that we are dealing with an independently used finite non-main clause, which would also be in line with the fact that such clauses are more often used with an expressive function; cf. Boogaart & Verhey (2013). A problem for such an analysis would be, however, that we have to assume topicalisation of the noun phrase *een pret*, which is normally disallowed in non-main clauses. We will not digress on this intricate issue any further here and leave it for future research: the main point is that (1a) certainly does not involve an infinitival phrase.

(1) a. En   een pret/verdriet dat ze   hadden!
    and a fun/sadness   that they had
    'They had so much fun/sorrow inside!'

 b. En Peter   maar zeuren/lachen!
    and Peter PRT   nag/laugh
    'Peter keeps on nagging/laughing!'

 c. En   maar zeuren/lachen!
    and PRT   nag/laugh
    'You keep on nagging/laughing!'

This article will focus on the semantic and the syntactic properties of the EXPRESSIVE *EN MAAR*-CONSTRUCTION in (1c), while the two *en*-constructions in (1a-b) will be discussed only in as far as they shed light on the properties of the construction in (1c). Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to point out here that Section 2.2 will show that pattern (1b) displays similar grammatical properties as pattern (1c). This suggests that, in spite of the asymmetry regarding the realisation of the external argument, they belong to the same construction type and this is indeed what we will argue in our discussion of the examples in (22) to (24). We will provisionally conclude that the question as to whether the subject is overtly realised is related to its information-structural status: the subject is covert if it is a discourse topic but overt if it is a contrastive focus.

Semantically, expressive *en maar*-constructions such as (1c) are characterised by the three meaning parts indicated in (2).

(2) a. Propositional content: some contextually determined person P is
    nagging/laughing.
 b. Aspectual dimension: the eventuality of P nagging/laughing is
    continuous.
 c. Expressive dimension: the speaker has a negative attitude towards the
    eventuality of P nagging/laughing.

The propositional content needs little discussion, apart from the fact that the person P involved in the eventuality referred to by the proposition is normally a discourse topic or a discourse participant (the speaker/addressee). That the eventuality is continuous is clear from the fact that telic predicates like *vallen* 'to fall' or *boos worden* 'to become angry' in (3) receive an iterative interpretation.

(3) a. En maar vallen!
       and PRT fall
       'You keep on falling all the time!'
    b. En maar boos worden!
       and PRT angry become
       'You keep on getting angry!'

The expressive dimension is probably the most conspicuous part of the meaning of the construction.[2] As this dimension of meaning has hardly been addressed within generative grammar, the main challenge of the present investigation is answering the question how to relate this part of the meaning to the main syntactic ingredients of the construction: (i) the infinitival verb, (ii) the conjunction *en*, and (iii) the discourse particle *maar*.

Example (4) starts by showing that the infinitival verb is indeed an essential ingredient of the construction: it cannot be replaced by, e.g., a finite verb or a participle.

---

[2] We prefer the broad label EXPRESSIVE (cf. e.g., Cruse 1986 and Potts 2007) to the more specific label EXCLAMATIVE (see e.g., Zanuttini and Portner 2003 and Castroviejo 2008) because we cannot investigate the exclamative nature of the expressive *en maar*-construction in a systematic way here. We can mention, however, that this construction seems to share specific meaning properties with exclamative constructions of the type in (1a): for instance, it seems to exhibit the widening (high degree) interpretation, the unexpectedness feature and factivity. For a good state of the art study on exclamatives, we refer the reader to Villalba (2008).

(4) a. En maar zuipen!

   and PRT booze$_{\text{infinitive}}$`

   'You keep on drinking!'

   b. *En maar zuipt/gezopen!

   and PRT boozes$_{\text{finite}}$/boozed$_{\text{participle}}$

The examples in (4a) and (5a-b) illustrate that the infinitival verb can be intransitive, transitive, or ditransitive. Furthermore, the examples in (5c-d) show that it is possible for the verb to select a prepositional object or a secondary predicate. We may therefore conclude that there are no obvious restrictions on the valency of the verb.

(5) a. En maar leugens$_{\text{direct object}}$ verspreiden!

   and PRT lies   spread

   'You keep on spreading lies!'

   b. En haar$_{\text{indirect object}}$ maar leugens$_{\text{direct object}}$ vertellen!

   and her   PRT lies   tell

   'You keep on telling lies to her!'

   c. En maar liegen over alles$_{\text{prepositional object}}$.

   and PRT lie   about everything!

   'You keep on lying about everything!'

   d. En alles   maar kapot$_{\text{secondary predicate}}$ maken!

   and everything PRT broken   make

   'You keep on destroying everything!'

We have already seen that it is not *a priori* clear with what kind of infinitival construction we are dealing. Is it a clausal expression or is it a nominalisation, as depicted in (6a) and (6b), respectively?

(6) a. [En [clause maar zuipen_verbal-infinitive]]

    b. [En [NP maar zuipen_nominal infinitive]]

If the analysis in (6a) is on the right track, we are dealing with root infinitives of the kind found in child language: example (7), taken from Blom (2002), is an example uttered by Abel at the age of 1;11.26. Such infinitival constructions are not restricted to child language but can occasionally also be found in adult language in specific contexts: clear examples are the question in (7b), the exclamation in (7c) and the announcement in (7d); the infinitival imperative in (7e) can perhaps be seen as another instantiation. We refer the reader to Blom (2002/2008) for more detailed discussion.

(7) a. in soel   zitten

       in chair   sit

       'I want to sit in the chair.'

    b. Een biertje   hebben?

       a beer   have

       'Would you like to have a beer?'

    c. Deze vraag   beantwoorden?! Ik denk er   niet aan!

       this question answer?   I think there not about

       'Answering this question? No way!

    d. Even   een sigaret   roken.

       just   a cigarette   smoke

       'I am just going to smoke a cigarette.'

    e. Doorlopen!

       prt.-walk

       'Keep on walking!'

Because (1a) suggests that the conjunction *en* can also be followed by a noun phrase, the analysis in (6b) should also be considered a serious

candidate. According to this analysis we are dealing with a nominalisation of the type found in (8a&b), which we will refer to as INF-nominalisation: that we are dealing with noun phrases is clear from the fact that they can occupy the regular subject/object position of the clause, where verbal projections are normally excluded.[3] Nevertheless, we will opt for the verbal analysis in (6a) for various reasons which will be discussed in Section 2.

(8) a. Ik denk dat [NP zuipen] ongezond is.
       I think that   booze   unhealthy is
       'I believe that drinking to excess is unhealthy.'
    b. Ik weet dat artsen   [NP zuipen] beslist   afraden.
       I know that physicians booze   definitely advice.against
       'I know that physicians definitely advice against boozing.'

The name "expressive *en maar*-construction" makes clear that the construction contains two other obligatory elements: the introductory conjunction *en* and the discourse particle *maar*. That these elements are indeed obligatory is shown by our grammaticality judgements in (9a&b). Example (9a′) is added to show that (9a) without the discourse particle *maar* becomes fully acceptable if we add a relative-like clause; the fact that (9a′) is in fact unacceptable with the particle *maar* present is a second indication that the expressive *en maar*-construction should not be considered as a special case of the construction exemplified in (1a). Furthermore, the fact that *en* is obligatory in (9b) is a third indication that the infinitival phrase in the expressive *en maar*-construction is not nominal because the conjunction *en* in constructions such as (1a) is often (but not always) optional: *(En) een pret/verdriet dat ze hadden!*

---

[3] In order to be precise we should use the notion *bare* INF-nominalisation to distinguish this type of nominalisation from nominalisations that are introduced by a determiner, such as *het zuipen* 'the boozing', but we will leave this out for brevity.

(9) a. En *(maar) zuipen!
         and   PRT   booze
     a′. En (*maar) zuipen dat hij deed!
         and   PRT   booze   that he did
         'Boy, did he drink!'
     b. *(En) maar zuipen!
           and   PRT   booze

Section 3 will investigate what the syntactic behaviour of the discourse particle *maar* is and what it contributes to the meaning of the utterance: one assumption is that it can be held responsible for the continuative reading of the construction, as *maar* may express a similar meaning aspect in other constructions, but we will argue that there may be more. With regard to *en* we will adopt the null hypothesis that it is a regular coordinating conjunction in that it combines two phrases (conjuncts), just as in (10a). If so, there should be a phonetically empty left conjunct in the expressive *en maar*-construction, as indicated by the symbol ∅ in (10b).

(10) a. [[Marie roddelt] en   [Jan verspreidt leugens]].
          Marie gossips   and Jan   spreads   lies
     b. [$_{ConjP}$ ∅ [$_{Conj'}$ en   [maar zuipen]]].
                         and   PRT   booze
         'You keep on drinking!'

The hypothesis embodied in (10b) raises several issues that will be addressed in Sections 3 and 4. Section 3 will provide the background that is needed to understand the nature of this left conjunct and the way in which it relates to the right conjunct. Section 4 will address the question why *en* is obligatorily present and will suggest that it contributes to the meaning of the

entire utterance by signalling the speaker's evaluation of the propositional contents of the second conjunct.

2. The infinitive

The introduction has already given a number of *a priori* reasons for assuming that the infinitival phrase in the expressive *en maar*-construction is not nominal but clausal. Section 2.1 will discuss a number of additional phenomena that can be used to argue against a nominal and in favour of a verbal analysis, We conclude from this discussion that we are dealing with a clause headed by a root infinitive of the kind illustrated in (7) above. Since it is well-known that infinitival clauses may differ in size, Section 2.2 investigates the size of the infinitival clause in the expressive *en maar*-construction and we will conclude that we are dealing with a full clause (TP or CP).

2.1. Root infinitive versus nominal infinitive

This subsection provides five reasons for assuming that the infinitival phrase in the expressive *en maar*-construction is not nominal but clausal. First, INF-nominalisations typically have a generic reading; cf. Broekhuis & Keizer (2012: 195). The silent subject of *verspreiden* 'to spread' in (11a), for instance, has the meaning 'one' or 'people': "It is immoral if one spreads lies". Furthermore, the use of the second person reflexive pronoun *je* in (11b) shows that we are dealing with the covert counterpart of the generic pronoun *je* 'one'.

(11) a. [Leugens verspreiden] is immoreel.
      lies   spread   is immoral
      'Spreading lies is immoral.'

    b. [Je   vergissen]   is menselijk.
      REFL be.mistaken is human
      'Making mistakes is human.'

The infinitive in the *en maar*-construction, on the other hand, does not have a generic meaning; the silent subject of *verspreiden* in (12a) can, for instance, be used to refer to the addressee, as is clear from the following imperative. Furthermore, the second person reflexive pronoun *je* in (12b) is anaphorically linked to the referent of the antecedent *jullie* in the following sentence. This shows that the silent subject of the *en maar*-construction is referential (non-generic).

(12) a. En maar leugens verspreiden! Hou daar toch mee op!
      and PRT lies   spread   stop there PRT with prt.
      'You keep on spreading lies! Stop doing that!'

    b. En je   maar vervelen! Wanneer gaan jullie wat   doen?
      and REFL PRT being.bored when   go   you   something do
      'You keep on being bored. When are you going to do something?'

Second, the theme argument can be marginally realised as a postnominal *van*-PP (cf. Broekhuis & Keizer 2012) in INF-nominalisations while this is entirely impossible in the case of the *en maar*-construction. Note in passing that Haeseryn et al. (1997: 884) claim that INF-nominalisations such as (13a) are impossible, but we detect a sharp contrast with the *en maar*-construction in (13b)

(13) a. ?Verspreiden van leugens is immoreel.

    spreading   of lies   is immoral

  b. *En maar verspreiden van leugens!

     and PRT   spread   of lies

Third, the theme argument of an INF-nominalisation is preferably nonspecific: usage of an argument introduced by a definite article or referential possessive pronoun normally leads to a marked result, while this is more readily possible in the *en maar*-construction.[4] This again suggests that the latter construction involves a clausal expression.

(14) a. (*Het/ᵗMijn) werk afkraken is niet aardig.

     the/my work   debunk   is not kind

  b. En *het*/*mijn werk* maar afkraken! Is dat nou   aardig?

     and the/my work PRT debunk   is   that PRT kind

     'You keep on debunking my work! Do you think that's nice?'

The fourth reason to adopt a clausal analysis is that the *en maar*-construction can be extended by means of clause-peripheral elements, such as right-dislocated DPs, vocative noun phrases and interrogative particles.

---

[4] This argument is somewhat weak, as it is easy to find exceptions to the general rule. For instance, the theme argument of an INF-nominalisation may be introduced by a definite article or a referential possessive pronoun if it is headed by a so-called relational noun such as *koning* 'king' or *moeder* 'mother' in *De koning/Mijn moeder bezoeken is leuk* 'Visiting the king/my mother is fun'). Furthermore it is not easy to construct convincing minimal pairs.

Such peripheral elements are typically found as extensions of the clausal domain.[5]

(15) a. En maar klagen, *die kerel van jou*.   [right-dislocated "subject"]
       and PRT complain that bloke of yours
       'He keeps on complaining, that husband of yours.'

    b. En *'m* maar plagen, *die arme man*! Durf je wel!
                                                    [right-dislocated "object"]
       and him PRT tease   that poor fellow dare you PRT
       'You keep on teasing him, that poor man! How dare you!'

    c. En maar doorgaan, Jan! Is dat nou leuk?   [vocative expression]
       and PRT continue Jan   is that PRT fun
       'You keep on doing that, Jan! Do you think that's funny?'

    d. En maar luieren,   *hè*! Doe eens wat nuttigs!
                                                    [interrogative particle]
       and PRT laze.away PRT do   PRT   something useful
       'You keep on lazing, don't you? Try do to something useful!'

The fifth and final reason is that there is a related construction featuring an overtly realised subject, namely the verbal expressive *en*-construction in (1b). Example (16a) shows that this overt subject carries the default nominative case and must be emphatically stressed. The appearance of the overt subject is reminiscent of so-called incredulity clauses such as (16b), which also involve an emphatically stressed nominative pronoun; see Akmajian (1984) for a discussion of the corresponding English construction.

---

[5] Note that right-dislocated phrases in (15a&b) are not clausal constituents but associated with another (pronominal) element in the clause that functions as subject or direct object. The clause-internal subject in (15a) is covert but can also be overtly realised as in *En **hij** (= 'he') maar klagen, die kerel van jou*.

(16) a. En *IK/JIJ/HIJ* maar denken dat ik/je/hij het begreep!

      and I/you/he PRT think that I/you/he it understood

      'I/you/he keep(s) thinking that I/you/he understood it!'

    b. *Hij* een boek lezen? Geloof je het zelf?!

      he a book read believe you it yourself

      'Him reading a book, do you believe it yourself?'

Since incredulity clauses have been analysed as clausal/verbal constructions, the similarity between the verbal expressive *en*-construction with an overt subject in (1b) and the expressive *en maar*-construction without an overt subject in (1c) again hints at a clausal analysis of the latter construction. This argument may become more powerful if our suggestion in Section 2.2 is correct that the two constructions are in fact two alternative realisations of the same construction types.

2.2. What is the "clausal size" of the root infinitive?

We may provisionally conclude from the previous subsection that the expressive *en maar*-construction involves a clausal and not a nominal infinitival phrase. If so, the question presents itself what the "size" of the infinitival clause is: which functional layers are included? The starting observation is that the silent subject must be syntactically present. Evidence in support of this claim comes from the binding/construal phenomena in (17): the reflexive/reciprocal pronoun, the "floating" quantifier *alletwee* 'both', and the supplementive *naakt* all require that a subject be syntactically present. This shows that the lexical projection of the verb must be complete in the sense that it at least includes the base position of the external argument, that is, it must be a *v*P in current generative terminology.

(17) a. En *zichzelf/elkaar*   maar loven!
      and himself/each.other PRT   praise
      'He/they keep(s) on praising himself/each other!'

   b. En *alletwee* maar zuipen!
      and both   PRT booze
      'The two of them keep on drinking!'

   c. En maar *naakt* lopen!
      and PRT nude   walk
      'You keep on walking nude!'

The referent of the silent subject must be part of the active domain of discourse: it can be third person (refer to an active discourse topic) or second person and even first person (refer to a discourse participant). This is clear from the form of the reflexive pronouns in (18a) and the right-dislocated strong subject pronouns in (18b), which must all be connected to the silent subject.

(18) a. En mezelf/jezelf/zichzelf   maar loven!
      and myself/yourself/himself PRT   praise
      'I/you/he keep(s) on praising myself/yourself/himself!'

   b. En maar zuipen, ik/jij/hij/die vent!
      and PRT booze, I/you/he/that bloke
      'I/you/he/that bloke keep(s) on drinking!'

The presence of adverbial modifiers further tells us that the "size" of the infinitival clause goes beyond the lexical domain of the verb. VP-modifiers (those modifying the event) such as the manner adverb *stug* 'stiff' are all fine, but this is of course expected as they are arguably internal to the lexical domain of the verb: see Broekhuis & Corver (2016:ch.8). We illustrate this in (19a) for the manner adverb *stug* 'stiff', but the same can be shown for temporal and locational adverbials. That the size goes beyond the lexical

domain of the verb is clear from the fact that negation can be present: Broekhuis & Corver (2016) have also shown that negation demarcates the boundary between the functional and the lexical domain of the clause. The use of the modal adverbial in (19b) clearly shows that the clausal structure is quite big. The use of the subject-oriented adverbial in (19c) is perhaps a bit marked but the resulting structure seems to be fully acceptable, which again suggests that the infinitival clause is at least a TP because subject-oriented adverbials normally must be preceded by a subject in the regular subject position, SpecTP.[6]

(19) a. En maar *stug*   volhouden dat hij het niet wist! [manner]
         and PRT stubbornly persist   that he it   not knew
         'He keeps on persisting that he didn't know it!'

     b. En *natuurlijk* maar *niet* luisteren!   [modal/negation]
         and of.course   PRT   not listen
         'You obviously keep on refusing to listen!'

     c. En *stom genoeg*   maar zuipen!   [subject-oriented]
         and stupidly enough PRT   drink
         'You keep on drinking, stupidly enough!'

Note in passing that example (19b) also shows that the particle *maar* behaves like a regular discourse particle in that it is placed in between the modal adverbial and negation; this will become relevant in our discussion of *maar* in Section 3.

---

[6] That the infinitival clause is at least a TP is perhaps also supported by the fact that unaccusative verbs such as *vallen* can be used in the expressive *en maar*-construction because under the standard analysis the internal argument of such verbs is placed in SpecTP: cf. *En maar vallen!* Note that for some reason passivisation gives rise to a somewhat marked result: cf. ?*En maar bewonderd worden!* Perhaps this is related to the degree of control that the silent subject should have over the eventuality: if one is careful, one is able to avoid falling but not able to avoid being admired.

Word order phenomena also tell us something about the size of the clause. For example, if we assume that A-scrambling (nominal object shift) targets a case-position in the functional domain of the clause (cf. Chomsky 2001 and Broekhuis 2008), the acceptability of example (20a) shows that the clause must be larger than vP. The same holds for the fact illustrated in (20b&c) that A′-scrambling such as negation movement and weak proform shift is possible. We refer to Broekhuis & Corver (2016:ch.13) for a discussion of the various forms of scrambling and their landing sites within the functional domain of the clause.

(20) a. En de buurman$_i$ maar t_i plagen!   [object shift]
         and the neighbour PRT   tease
         'You keep on teasing the neighbor!'
     b. En maar *nergens*$_i$ tevreden [t_i mee] zijn!   [negation movement]
         and PRT nowhere satisfied   with be
         'You keep on being dissatisfied with everything!'
     c. En *er*$_i$ maar ontevreden [t$_i$ mee] zijn!   [weak proform shift]
         and there PRT   dissatisfied   with be
         'You keep on being dissatisfied with it!'

The examples above support the claim that the size of the infinitival clause is at least TP. That it could also be a full CP is more difficult to prove because example (21b) shows that *wh*-movement (topicalisation and question formation) is excluded; note that we illustrate this here by means of extraction from an embedded clause in order to avoid interference of the various scrambling options illustrated in (20).

(21) a. En maar denken [dat je *dat boek* al   gelezen had]!
        and PRT think   that you that book already read   had
        'You keep on thinking that you have already read that book!'
    b. *En *dat boek*$_i$/*wat*$_i$ maar denken dat je t_i al   gelezen had!
         and that book/what PRT   think   that you already read   had

Before we continue, we should note that the verbal expressive *en*-construction with an overt subject in (1b) also exhibits the properties of the *en maar*-construction illustrated in (18a) and (19)-(21). We illustrate this in (22) for cases with the subject pronoun *jij* 'you'. This shows that the two verbal expressive *en*-constructions have identical properties in these respects.

(22)   a. En jij jezelf maar loven!   [cf. [18a]]
       b. En jij *natuurlijk* maar *niet* luisteren!   [cf. [19b]]
       c. En jij de buurman$_i$ maar t_i plagen!   [cf. [20a]]
       d. *En dat boek$_i$/*wat*$_i$ jij maar denken [dat je t_i al gelezen had]! [cf. [21b]]

The evidence discussed so far thus shows that the infinitival clauses in the two verbal expressive *en*-constructions are at least as large as TP. The impossibility of *wh*-movement may suggest that the CP-layer is absent, but the argument is not very strong because there is reason to assume that topicalisation is restricted to finite main clauses (cf. Broekhuis & Corver 2016: Section 11.3.3, sub II) and that question formation is restricted to finite clauses, at least in colloquial speech (cf. Broekhuis & Corver 2016: Section 4.2). If true, there is no *a priori* reason for excluding the possibility that we are dealing with a full CP.

        And even if one would allow *wh*-movement in independently used non-main clauses (cf. footnote 1), the conclusion that we are dealing with a TP would not be compelling. An alternative hypothesis would then be to say that *wh*-movement to SpecCP is blocked because this landing site is already

occupied by the silent subject, as in representation (23a) for the sentence *En (Peter/hij) maar zuipen*, where the silent subject is given in outline and the empty complementiser is indicated by C$_\varnothing$. The reason for assuming this is that the subject of the expressive *en maar*-construction is a discourse topic, which is typically located in SpecCP. If correct the pattern in (23a) might be compared with the phenomenon of topic drop that we find in finite clauses; cf. 𝔻𝕒𝕥$_i$ *weet ik toch* t_i 'I do know that'). The difference with the expressive *en*-construction with an overtly realised subject, as in (23b), would then be that the overt subject is a contrastive focus; because contrastively focused phrases must be stressed, they cannot be left implicit.

(23) a. En [$_{CP}$ ℙ𝕖𝕥𝕖𝕣$_i$/𝕙𝕚𝕛$_i$ [$_{C'}$ C$_\varnothing$ [$_{TP}$ t_i [$_{T'}$ T$_{[-fin]}$ maar [$_{VP}$ ... zuipen ...]]]]]!

[ℙ𝕖𝕥𝕖𝕣/𝕙𝕚𝕛 is silent]

b. En [$_{CP}$ PETER$_i$/HIJ$_i$ [$_{C'}$ C$_\varnothing$ [$_{TP}$ t_i [$_{T'}$ T$_{[-fin]}$ maar [$_{VP}$ ... zuipen ...]]]]]!

That the two representations differ in contrastivity is clear from the minimal pair in (24), which shows that the *en*-construction without an overt subject cannot stand in a contrastive relation with the subject of the first conjunct.

(24) a. Iedereen zat aan het bier en   JIJ   maar water drinken!
everyone sat to the beer   and you PRT   water drink
'Everyone was drinking beer, while YOU drank just water!

b. *Iedereen zat aan het bier en 𝕛𝕚𝕛 maar water drinken!   [𝕛𝕚𝕛 is silent]

Note that the provisional conclusion that the two constructions in (23) are alternative realisations of a single expressive *en maar*-construction strengthens the parallel with root infinitives in child language, as the examples in (25) cited from Blom (2008:1/21) show that these may also contain an overt subject with default case (nominative in Dutch but accusative in English).

(25) a. Jij de walvis maken.   [Daan 2;04.28]
      you the whale make
      'You must make the whale.'
   b. Him fall down.   [Nina 2;3.14]

From the discussion above we may probably conclude that, regardless our assumption about whether *wh*-movement should be allowed in infinitival CPs, the infinitival clause in the expressive *en maar*-construction can be considered a full clause of the type CP. Although the hypothesis embodied in (23) certainly requires more investigation, we will adopt it in the remainder of this paper for concreteness' sake.

3. On the syntactic behaviour and interpretation of *maar*

The element *maar* is a particle that does not contribute to the propositional meaning of the clause, but connects the proposition interpretatively to the larger context; cf. Foolen (1993/1995). Example (26a) shows that the distribution of the discourse particle *maar* is similar to that of focus particles like *zelfs* 'even', *ook* 'also' and *alleen* 'only' in that it is located in between modal adverbials such as *waarschijnlijk* 'probably' and negation; cf. Broekhuis & Corver (2016; Section 8.4, sub III).[7] Example (26b) shows, however, that *maar* differs from the focus particles mentioned above in that it is immobile, as is clear from the fact that it cannot be topicalised. We refer

---

[7] This is consistent with the fact that *maar* is typically preceded by discourse-old information, which typically precedes the modal adverbs, and followed by discourse-new material, which is typically merged with sentence negation: *Ik heb <de/*een fiets> maar <een/*de fiets> gekocht* 'I have bought the/a bike'.

the reader to Foolen (1993/1995) for a more extensive discussion of the particle *maar*.

(26) a. Ik kom   <*maar> waarschijnlijk <maar> niet <*maar>.
    I   come   PRT   probably   not
    'I probably won't come.'

   b. *Maar kom   ik waarschijnlijk niet.
     PRT   come I   probably   not

The distribution of *maar* follows if we adopt Barbiers' (2010/2014) claim that we should distinguish two types of focus particles. First, there are phrasal focus particles such as *zelfs* 'even', *ook* 'also' and *alleen* 'only', which occupy the specifier position of a FocusP located in between the modal adverbials and negation; being phrasal such focus particles may undergo topicalisation. Second, there are focus heads such as *maar*, which occupy the head position of FocusP; being heads such focus particles cannot be topicalised. If this is on the right track, we can make the representation in (23) more precise as in (27); we refer the reader to Bayer & Obenauer (2011) for a discussion of a wider range of discourse particles that can be considered heads.

(27) a. En [$_{CP}$ Peter$_i$/hij$_i$ [$_{C'}$ C$_\varnothing$ [$_{TP}$ t_i [$_{T'}$ T$_{[-fin]}$ [$_{FocP}$ ... [$_{Foc'}$ maar [$_{VP}$ ... zuipen ...]]]]]]]!
     En [$_{CP}$ PETER$_i$/HIJ$_i$ [$_{C'}$ C$_\varnothing$ [$_{TP}$ t_i [$_{T'}$ T$_{[-fin]}$ [$_{FocP}$ ... [$_{Foc'}$ maar [$_{VP}$ ... zuipen ...]]]]]]]!

    We will follow Foolen (1993/1995), who argues that *maar* indicates that the common ground (the information/knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer) contains information about an alternative for the proposition expressed by the clause containing *maar*. We illustrate this here by means of the discourse chunk in (28):

28) A. Wat wil je drinken? 'What would you like to drink?'

    B. Ik lust wel een wijntje. 'I'd like to have some wine.'

    A. Sorry, de wijn is op. 'Sorry, the wine has run out.'

    B. Doe dan *maar* bier. 'Give me some beer instead then.'

The usage of *maar* in B's second utterance expresses that there is a contextually given alternative (namely "Give me wine") for the option expressed by this clause (namely "Give me beer"). Another example is given in (29), which describes a situation that suggests an alternative (namely "Jan cannot jump") for the option expressed by the clause (namely "Jan can jump")

(29)   Situation: Jan is standing near the swimming pool and doesn't dare to jump into the water. His father notices that Jan does not want to jump and encourages him to jump by saying: Niet bang zijn, Jan, je kan het: Spring *maar*! 'Don't be afraid, Jan, you can do it: jump!'

We find a similar contrast in the expressive *en maar*-construction: the second sentence in (30a) introduces the alternative of Jan working for the contextually given proposition of Jan spending more time on his family expressed by the preceding sentence. Note that something similar holds for the expressive *en*-construction in (30b) with an overt subject, which adds the additional contrast between the two subjects.

(30) a. Jan zou   meer tijd aan zijn gezin moeten besteden. En maar werken!
        Jan should more time to his family   must   spend   and PRT work
        'Jan should spend more time on his family, but he is working instead.'
        contextually given alternative: Jan spends more time on his family.
        proposition expressed by the overt clause: Jan spends his time on working.

b. Jan was lekker op vakantie. En wij *maar* werken!
Jan was nicely on holiday and we PRT work
'Jan had a nice holiday. And we kept on working!;
contextually given alternative: we should have a nice holiday, too.
proposition expressed by the overt clause: we are working.

We may conclude that the discourse particle *maar* designates that the event denoted by the clause stands in a contrastive relation with an alternative event that is taken to be part of the common ground. At a slightly more speculative level, we propose that the focus particle *maar* has scope over a polarity phrase (expressing affirmation versus negation) in its c-command domain, which would be in line with the fact noted earlier that *maar* must precede negation. The only addition is that we have to assume that the affirmative marker *wel* can be left unexpressed as affirmation is the default option of a declarative clause; leaving out *wel* in (31a) does not affect the affirmative nature of the clause while omission of *niet* transforms the negative clause into an affirmative clause (which is indicated by the number sign #).

(31) a. Spring maar (wel)!
jump PRT AFF
'Yes, you can jump!'
b. Spring maar #(niet)!
jump PRT NEG

If this suggestion is on the right track, the representations in (27) can be made more precise as in (32), in which the outline font again indicates phonetically empty material.

(32) a. En [_CP Peter_i/hij_i [_C'_ C_∅ [_TP t_i [_T'_ T_[-fin]_ [_FocP_ ... [_Foc'_ maar [_PolP_ niet/wel [_VP_ ...
zuipen ...]]]]]]]]!

b. En [_CP PETER_i/HIJ_i [_C'_ C_∅ [_TP t_i [_T'_ T_[-fin]_ [_FocP_ ... [_Foc'_ maar [_PolP_ niet/wel [_VP_
... zingen ...]]]]]]]]!

Note that the use of negation is marked with the verb *zuipen* 'to booze' because not boozing is normally considered a positive thing, but fully acceptable with verbs such as *luisteren* 'to listen' as not listening is normally considered a negative thing: cf. *En maar niet luisteren/*^?*zuipen!* This again emphasizes that by using the expressive *en maar*-construction the speaker signals a negative attitude towards the proposition expressed by the overt clause.

4. Some speculations on the expressivity of 'en'

On the basis of our discussion in section 3, we may come to a better understanding of the presence of *en* 'and' in the expressive *en maar*-construction. We can maintain that *en* is a regular coordinating conjunction by assuming that the silent left conjunct represents the alternative provided by the common ground. The utterances in the primeless examples in (33) thus have the simplified structures given in the primed examples, where the meaning of $\emptyset$ is provided by the common ground and stands in opposition to the meaning of the right conjunct (and where $\mathbb{X}$ stands for the contextually determined subject of the second conjunct). The coordinator *en* must not only be present but must also be accented, which we indicate by means of small capitals.

(33) a. EN maar leugens verspreiden!
and PRT lies spread
'You keep on spreading lies!'

a′. [ConjP ∅ [Conj′ en [CP 𝕏 maar wel leugens verspreiden]]]

b. EN maar niet luisteren!
and PRT not listen
'You keep on refusing to listen!'

b′. [ConjP ∅ [Conj' en [CP 𝕏 maar niet luisteren]]]

We will assume as a working hypothesis that the accent on the coordinator marks contrastive focus; it marks the contrast between the alternative provided by the common ground for the proposition expressed by the second conjunct: "x should not spread lies/x should want to listen" versus "x spreads lies/x doesn't want to listen". Or more abstractly: the contrastive focus on the conjunction *en* indicates a polarity opposition concerning a proposition P: P should be true but P is false (or P should not be false but P is true). This opposition is normally not expressed by means of the conjunction *en*, but rather by the contrastive/oppositional conjunction *maar* 'but'. So what might be the case is that the polarity opposition is expressed by the conjunction *en* and the particle *maar* together on the assumption that *maar* is a multifunctional item, the semantics of which is determined by its place in the syntactic configuration. One even more speculative option would be that there is an Agree-like relation established under c-command between the focused conjunction *en* and the particle *maar* which makes the contrastive/oppositional semantics of *maar* available to the conjunction *en*, but we may also be dealing with some kind of pragmatic effect; we leave this open for future research.

That emphasis may affect the function/meaning of functional heads is also familiar from the phenomenon in (34), where the interrogative complementiser *of* gets an affirmative meaning if it is emphasised in root

contexts. Possibly, focused *of* "picks up" an affirmative meaning from the polarity head (which has an affirmative value as default).

(34) a. Wist   Jan dat?   [discourse participant A]
       knew Jan that
       'Did Jan know that?'

    b. Nou, OF   ie dat wist!   [discourse participant B]
       well whether he that knew
       'Well, surely he knew that!'

    b′. [$_{CP}$ of [$_{TP}$ ie dat wel wist]]

In line with the speculative option given above, we might assume that emphasis overrules the regular meaning of *of*, which subsequently obtains an affirmative meaning under Agree with the polar head wel under c-command, but again we will leave this option open for the moment. What we do want to stress, however, is that focused *en* may also express contrast in contexts without *maar*. The sentence *Of ie dat wist!* in (34b), for instance, may optionally be preceded by *en*, in which case contrast with some proposition from the preceding discourse is again implied. That contrast is involved is especially clear in discourse chunks such as the one given in (35a&b). The response of B, in which emphatically accented *en* normally must be overtly present, expresses strong denial of the proposition given by A. Under our proposal that *en* is a regular coordination conjunction, this can readily be accounted for by assuming that this proposition is syntactically realised as ∅ in representation (35b′).

(35) a. Jan wist   dat niet.   [discourse participant A]

       Jan knew that not

       'Jan didn't know that?'

   b. Nou, EN OF   ie dat wist!   [discourse participant B]

       well and whether he that knew

       'Well, surely he knew that!'

   b.′ [$_{ConjP}$ $\varnothing$ [$_{Conj'}$ en [$_{CP}$ OF [$_{TP}$ ie dat wel wist]]]]

At this point the question arises as to whether introductory *en* can be analysed as a regular coordinating conjunction in other constructions where it adds expressive meaning (expresses the speaker's attitude towards the propositional contents of the overt phrase). A typical case is illustrated by the minimal pair in (36), where the presence of introductory *en* in (36b) turns the regular *wh*-question in (36a) into some sort of rhetorical question: the speaker knows the answer himself, but he wants the addressee to draw his own conclusion. We may perhaps assume that *en* "neutralizes" the *wh*-interrogative reading by turning the *wh*-pronoun *wie* into an indefinite pronoun with the meaning "someone" as a result of the fact that the silent left conjunct represents information available to the speaker, in this case the speaker's knowledge about Jan's entering the room. Note that the speaker may emphasize the rhetorical nature of the question by answering the question himself (that is, by explicating the contents of the silent left conjunct).

(36) a. Wie kwam er   binnen?   [true *wh*-interrogative]

      who came there inside

      'Who entered?'

   b. EN wie kwam er   binnen?! Jan!   [rhetorical question]

      and who came there inside   Jan

      'And who entered. You'll never guess: Jan!'

Another case is represented by the minimal pair in (37), where the presence of introductory *en* optionally turns the exclamative phrase *Een lol dat ze hadden!* into an exclamative with an ironic flavour. The precise interpretation of (37b) depends on the interpretation of the silent left conjunct, that is, the representation of the speaker's knowledge/evaluation of the amount of fun Peter and Marie had.

(37) a. Een lol dat Peter en Marie   hadden!

                                            [extremely high degree reading only]

      a fun   that Peter and Marie had

      'Peter and Marie had so much fun!'

    b. EN een lol dat Peter en Marie   hadden!   [ironic reading possible]

      and a fun   that Peter and Marie had

A similar case is given in (38), where the addition of introductory *en* may likewise trigger an ironic interpretation: while the exclamative in (38a) can only receive a high degree exclamative reading, the expressive *en*-construction in (38b) may also get the ironic reversed reading that Els is quite stupid. The difference in reading is made more visible by the continuations: while the exclamative high degree reading in (38a) cannot be revoked, as is indicated by means of the hash sign, this is quite natural in the expressive *en*-construction in (38b).

(38) a. Slim   dat Els is! #Zelfs onze schildpad is slimmer!

                                            [high degree reading only]

      smart that Els is   even our turtle   is smarter

      'Els is so smart! #Even our turtle is smarter!'

    b. En   slim   dat Els is! Zelfs onze schildpad is slimmer!

                                          [ironic reversed reading]

      and smart that Els is   even our turtle is smarter

      'Els is so smart! Even our turtle is smarter!'

5. Conclusion

This article has argued that *en* in the expressive *en maar*-construction is the regular coordinating conjunction *en* 'and', which conjoins two clausal expressions as indicated in (39) for the utterance *En maar niet luisteren!* We argued that the first conjunct expresses a proposition which is somehow given by the context (including the common ground) and that it contrasts with the second conjunct in some sense. This oppositional nature of the conjunction is essential for obtaining the expressive meaning. The contrastive/oppositional nature of the conjunction is potentially problematic in light of the regular (continuative) interpretation of *en*, but we suggested that this may be due to the fact that the contrastive reading is expressed by the conjunction in tandem with the discourse particle *maar*, a form which can also be used as a contrastive/oppositional conjunction.

(39)   [$_{ConjP}$ $\varnothing$ [$_{Conj'}$ en [$_{CP}$ $\mathbb{X}$ maar niet luisteren]]].
                          and   PRT   not   listen
        'You keep on refusing to listen!'

Our finding that *en* is a regular coordinating conjunction gives rise to the expectation that it is also a regular conjunction in other expressive *en*-constructions. We therefore concluded our discussion by addressing a small number of expressive/subjective constructions with introductory *en* for which we believe that this conclusion may indeed turn out to be true.

References

Akmajian, Adrian. 1984. Sentence types and the form–function fit. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 2:1-23.

Barbiers, Sjef. 2010. Focus particle doubling. In Jan-Wouter Zwart and Mark De Vries (eds.), *Structure preserved. Studies in syntax for Jan Koster*, 21-29. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Barbiers, Sjef. 2014. Syntactic doubling and deletion as a source of variation. In M. Carme Picallo (ed.), *Linguistic variation in the minimalist framework*, 197-223. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bayer, Josef, and Hans-Georg Obenauer. 2011. Discourse particles, clause structure, and question types. *The Linguistic Review* 28:449-491.

Blom, Elma. 2002. On the use and interpretation of root infinitives in early child Dutch. In Sjef Barbiers, Frits Beukema and Wim van der Wurff (eds.), *Modality and its interaction with the verbal system*, 103-131. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Blom, Elma. 2008. *The acquisition of finiteness*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Boogaart, Ronny, and Kim Verheij. 2013. Als dát geen insubordinatie is! De pragmatiek van zelfstandige conditionele zinnen, 13-28. Amsterdam: Uitgaven Stichting Neerlandistiek VU.

Broekhuis, Hans. 2008. *Derivations and evaluations: object shift in the Germanic languages*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Broekhuis, Hans, and Norbert Corver. 2016. *Syntax of Dutch. Verbs and verb phrases, Volume 3*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Broekhuis, Hans, and Evelien Keizer. 2012. *Syntax of Dutch, nouns and noun phrases, volume 1*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Castroviejo Miró, Elena. 2008. Deconstructing exclamations. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 7:41-90.

Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by phase. In Michael Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale. A life in Language*, 1-52. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Cruse, David Alan. 1986. *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foolen, Ad. 1993. *De betekenis van partikels. Een dokumentatie van de stand van het onderzoek, met bijzondere aandacht voor 'maar'*, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen: PhD thesis.

Foolen, Ad. 1995. Dutch modal particles: The relevance of grammaticalized elements. In Thomas F. Shannon and Johan P. Snapper (eds.), *The Berkeley Conference on Dutch Linguistics 1993*, 57-70. Lanham: University of America Press.

Haeseryn, Walter, Kirsten Romijn, Guido Geerts, Jaap de Rooij, and Maarten C. van den Toorn. 1997. *Algemene Nederlandse spraakkunst*. Groningen: Nijhoff.

Potts, Christopher. 2007. The expressive dimension. *Theoretical Linguistics* 33:165-197.

Villalba, Xavier. 2008. Exclamatives: a thematic guide with many questions and few answers. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 7:9-40.

Zanuttini, Raffaella, and Paul Portner. 2003. Exclamative clauses: at the syntax-semantic interface. *Language* 79:39-81.