

## The cartography of *yes* and *no* in West Flemish

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### 1 Introduction

- We investigate a particular property of the response particles *yes/no* in the Lapscheure dialect of West Flemish: they show morphology which looks like pronominal marking (1a).
- This property is one that is shared with a number of other dialects of Dutch, although with considerable dialectal variation ((1b, c); see Paardekooper (1993), Barbiers, Bennis, De Vogelaer, Devos, & van der Ham (2005) and De Vogelaer and Van der Auwera (2010) for a survey of the dialectal variation and for references).

- (1) a. Q: Oan-k gelyk?  
Had-I right?  
'Was I right?'  
A: Ja-g.  
Yes-you [Lapscheure]
- b. Q: Hebben ze al gegeten?  
have they already eaten  
'Have they already eaten?'  
A: Jaa-n-s.  
yes-AGR.3pl-they (Barbiers et al. 2005, p. 54)
- c. Q: Kom Marie mergen?  
comes Mary tomorrow  
'Is Mary coming tomorrow?'  
A: Jui-s.  
yes-she [Wambeek Dutch: (van Craenenbroeck, 2010, p. 211)]

- Van Craenenbroeck (2010), investigating primarily Wambeek Dutch, analyses such cases as cliticisation of a subject pronoun to the response particle, in construction with a silent TP.
- We make a detailed case study of the Lapscheure West Flemish pattern shown in (1a).
- We argue that, while van Craenenbroeck's analysis covers the Wambeek data, it does not extend to the West Flemish cases.
- We propose an analysis building on but distinct from van Craenenbroeck's, in which the pronominal marking is in fact agreement morphology, hence 'conjugated' *ja/nee*.
- In our analysis conjugated *ja/nee* in West Flemish are themselves TP proforms (following Krifka (2013)). They show agreement morphology and move to Fin, both

in order to satisfy V2, and in order to license the presence of phi-features on Fin which are satisfying the Subject Criterion (Rizzi, 2003; Rizzi & Shlonsky, 2007).

- We also investigate the properties of 'reversal' answers. A response particle which is 'reversing' a declarative statement bears extra morphology, a 'reversal schwa':
- (2) Q: Marie goa morgent kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow come  
'Marie will come tomorrow.'  
A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Nee-s-e.  
no-3sg.f-RVRS  
'No she won't.'
- We investigate the interaction of this morphology with the person morphology, and with the clausal left periphery, proposing that it drives movement to a high PolFocP (à la Holmberg, 2001; 2007).

### 2 The data

#### 2.1 The basic patterns in Lapscheure West Flemish

- (3) a. Q: Goa Marie morgent kommen?  
Goes Marie tomorrow come  
'Is Marie coming tomorrow?'  
A<sub>SAME</sub>: Ja-s (ze goat morgent kommen).  
yes-3sg.f (she goes tomorrow come)  
'Yes (she is).'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Nee-s (ze goat morgent niet kommen).  
no-3sg.f (she goes tomorrow not come)  
'No (she isn't).'
- b. Q: Goa-j morgent kommen?  
Go=you tomorrow come?  
'Are you coming tomorrow?'  
A<sub>SAME</sub>: Ja-k (kgoan morgent kommen).  
yes-1sg (I=go tomorrow come)  
'Yes (I am).'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Nee-k (kgoan morgent niet kommen).  
no-1sg (I=go tomorrow not come)  
'No (I'm not).'
- (4) a. Q: Goa der morgent eentween kommen?  
Goes there tomorrow someone come  
'Will there be someone coming tomorrow?'  
A: Ja-t. / Nee-t.  
yes-3sg.expl no-3sg.expl  
'Yes (there will)/No (there won't).'

- b. Q: Goa t morgent regenen?  
Goes it tomorrow rain  
'Will it rain tomorrow?'  
A: Ja-t. / Nee-t.  
yes-3sg no-3sg  
'Yes (it will)/No (it won't).'

- The answer particle shows obligatory pronominal marking matching the subject of the question. Paradigm:<sup>1</sup>

(5)

PERSON/NMB	<i>Yes</i>	<i>no</i>
1SG	Ja-k	Nee-k
2SG	Ja-g	Nee-g
3SG MASC	Ja-j	Nee-j
3SG FEM	Ja-s	Nee-s
3SG NEUT	Ja-t	Nee-t
1PL	Ja-m	Nee-m
2PL	Ja-g	Nee-g
3PL	Ja-s	Nee-s

- If a full clause is used, subject marking shows up on *ja/nee* and then the subject appears again in the main clause, whether as a subject pronoun (6a, c) or a full DP (6b). Other patterns are ungrammatical.

- (6) Q: Goa Marie morgent kommen?  
Goes Marie tomorrow come  
'Is Marie coming tomorrow?'  
a. A: Ja-s ze goat morgent kommen.  
yes-3sg.f she goes tomorrow come  
b. A: Ja-s Marie goat morgent kommen.  
yes-3sg.f Marie goes tomorrow come  
c. A: Ja-s morgent goa-ze kommen.  
yes-3sg.f tomorrow goes=she come  
d. A: \*Ja-s goat morgent kommen.  
yes-3sg.f goes tomorrow come  
e. A: \*Ja ze goat morgent kommen.  
yes she goes tomorrow come  
f. A: \*Ja Marie goat morgent kommen.  
yes Marie goes tomorrow come

## 2.2 Cross-dialectal microvariation

- Pronominal marking on *yes/no* is common in many dialects of Dutch (Barbiers et al. 2005 and references cited), but its exact status is not clear, and there seems to be variation across dialects.
- The dialect survey in Barbiers et al. (2005), which is based on the SAND questionnaires, shows a lot of variation in the form of the pronominal marking following *ja/nee* (pp. 53-5), and no fully clear generalisation emerges.

<sup>1</sup> In isolation, *ja* is pronounced [ja]. When the pronominal marking is attached, regular phonological processes in West Flemish result in the pronunciation *joa* [jɔ:] e.g. *joa-k* [jɔ:k]. We continue to write *ja* for clarity.

- "The clitics ... look like obvious reduced forms of the weak pronouns '*k, je, ie, ze, 't, we, je* and *ze* ('I, you, he, she, it, we, you and they' respectively), which are attested in Standard Dutch as well. But in many cases, it is not immediately clear what might be the nature of a certain pronoun following *ja* ('yes') or *nee* ('no')." (Barbiers et al: p. 53)

In some dialects *ja/nee* carry what looks like verbal agreement (the same as is found on complementizers in such dialects) in addition to what looks like a clitic pronoun.

- (7) a. A: Èèn Piet en Jan gewonnen?  
have Pete and John won  
B: Ja-n-s.  
yes-AGR.PL-they<sub>CLITIC</sub>  
b. Kpeize da-n Piet en Jan gewonnen èèn.  
I.think that-AGR.PL Pete and John won have  
(Van Craenenbroeck 2010, 217, Waregem Dutch)

Some dialects (such as the Wambeek Dutch investigated by van Craenenbroeck) do not show verbal agreement, but show a pronominal element which is "identical to the clitic pronoun that is right-adjoined to the complementizer in embedded clauses" (van Craenenbroeck 2010, 217)

- (8) a. A: Kom Jef mergen?  
comes Jeff tomorrow  
'Is Jeff coming tomorrow?'  
B: Jo-n.  
yes-he<sub>CLITIC</sub>  
b. Ik paus dat-n mergen komt.  
I think that-he<sub>CLITIC</sub> tomorrow comes

We focus solely on West Flemish data from the dialect of Lapscheure which shows a third, different pattern (see esp. Devos 1986): (i) there is no verbal agreement, and (ii) the pronominal marking more closely resembles clitics which appear to the *left* of verbs in V2 patterns, not to the right.

- In general in this dialect the left- and right-adjoined clitics are syncretic, but they come apart for second person singular and third person expletive.

- (9) a. G/\*j' eet eur gezien. Initial: [fɪ]  
you have her seen  
b. Toen ee-j/\*g eur gezien. Post V: [j]  
then have-you her seen  
c. da-j/\*g eur gezien eet Post C: [j]  
that-you her seen have  
d. Ja-g/\*j. Post *ja/nee*: [x]  
Nee-g/\*j.

- (10) a. T/\*der is veel volk geweest. Initial: [t]  
it/\*there is much people been  
'There was a large crowd.'
- b. Toen is ter/\*t veel volk geweest. Post V: [dər/tər]  
then is there/\*it much people been  
'that there were many people'
- c. dat der/\*t veel volk geweest is Post C: [dər/tər]  
that there/\*it much people been has  
'that there were many people'
- d. Joo-t/\*der. Post *ja/nee*: [t]  
Nee-t/\*der.

### 2.3 Reversal schwa

- In response to declaratives, a denial or 'reversal' requires the addition of a schwa after the pronominal marking (glossed here as RVRS).

- (11) a. Q: Marie goa morgent kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow come  
'Marie will come tomorrow.'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Nee-s-e. / \*Nee-s.  
no-3sg.f-RVRS / no-3sg.f  
'No she won't.'
- A<sub>SAME</sub>: Ja-s. / \*Ja-s-e.  
yes-3sg.f / yes-3sg.f-RVRS  
'Yes (she will).'
- b. Q: Marie goa morgent nie kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow not come  
'Marie won't come tomorrow.'
- A<sub>SAME</sub>: Nee-s-(\*e).  
no-3sg.f-RVRS  
'No (she won't).'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Ja-s-\*(e).  
Yes-3sg.f-RVRS  
'Yes she will.'

- Overt marking of reversal by *e* is only generally available in response to statements (with declarative word order) (de Vos and Vandekerckhove 94). It is an alternative to Short Do Replies (SDRs; see also van Craenenbroeck 2010), a way of expressing reversal with the verb *doen* 'do'.

- (12) a. Q: Marie goa morgent kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow come  
'Marie will come tomorrow.'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Ze doet/Z'en doet.  
she does/she=NEG does  
'No she won't.'

- b. Q: Marie goa morgent nie kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow not come  
'Marie won't come tomorrow.'
- A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Ze doet/ Z'en doet.  
she does/she=NEG does  
'Yes she will.'

*Ja/nee* with 'reversal schwa' can co-occur with *doet*:

- (13) a. Q: Marie goa morgent kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow come  
'Marie will come tomorrow.'
- A: Nee-s-e doet.  
no-3sg.f-RVRS does  
'No she won't.'
- b. Q: Marie goa morgent nie kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow not come  
'Marie won't come tomorrow.'
- A: Ja-s-e doet.  
yes-3sg.f-RVRS does  
'Yes she will.'

### 2.4 Interpretation

The pronominal marking on *ja/nee* does not have to match a matrix subject in the antecedent.

- (14) Q: Weet-je gie of da Valère a thus is?  
know=2sg you if that Valère already home is  
'Do you know if Valère is already home?'
- A1: Ja-k./Nee-k.  
yes-1sg/no-1sg  
'I (don't) know.'
- A2: Ja-j./Nee-j.  
yes-3sg.m/no-3sg.m  
'He is (not) home.'

In (14) the reply depends on what is 'at issue': the main clause ('do you know') or the embedded clause. Similarly in (15):

- (15) Q: Ee-se gezeid of da Valère a thus is?  
Has=she said whether that Valère already at.home is  
'Did she say whether Valère is already at home?'
- A1: Ja-s/nee-s.  
A2: Ja-j/nee-j.

If a declarative is embedded in an 'assertion' context (e.g. under a bridge verb like *say*) then *ja/nee* can pick up its content, but if a declarative is embedded in a presuppositional/backgrounded environment (e.g. under factives like *know/be happy*), *ja/nee* cannot pick it up.

- (16) S: Ze zegt da Valère a thus is.  
She says that Valère already home is  
'She says that Valère is already home.'  
A1: Nee-s-e.  
no-3sg.f-RVRS  
'No she doesn't say that.'  
A2: Nee-j-e.  
no-3sg.m-RVRS  
'No he isn't already home.'
- (17) S: Z'is blye da Valère a thus is.  
she=is happy that Valère already home is  
A1: Nee-s-e. 'No she isn't happy'  
A2: \*Nee-j-e. 'No he isn't already home'
- (18) S: Z'is blye omdat Valère a thus is.  
she=is happy because Valère already home is  
A1: Nee-s-e. 'No she isn't happy'  
A2: \*Nee-j-e. 'No he isn't already home'

## 2.5 Bare *ja/nee* and embedding

- In the dialect, bare *ja* without pronominal marking is not ungrammatical as such.
  - But in an answer to a polar question, it is a *non sequitur*; it means something like 'I can hear you'. In this context roughly comparable to English 'okay' (see also Krifka, 2013)
- (19) S: Goa Marie da doen?  
goes Marie that do?  
'Will Mary do that?'  
A: Ja-s./#Ja.  
yes-3sg.f/JA  
'Yes./ #Okay.'
- There are various other contexts, however, in which bare *ja* can (and must) appear.
- (20) a Answering the door: Ja/\*Ja-k.  
b Response to call/address: A: Marie! B: Ja/\*Ja-k.  
c Interjection: Ja,/\*Ja-k, wat moet ik nu zeggen?  
JA/JA-1sg what must I now say  
d Agreement to course of action:  
A: k'gaan t'achtnoene werekommen we!  
I go in the afternoon back come PRT  
B: 'kzeggen. "Ja, 't is goed 'e."  
I say: JA it is good PRT  
(Dialect recording Ghent University, Oostkerke 29.12.60)  
e Response to imperatives:  
Pakt da mo mee.  
Take that PRT with  
R: Ja / ??Ja-k.

- Ja/nee*, whether with pronominal marking or bare, cannot be embedded under complementizers like *dat* that introduce finite clauses, but they can (somewhat marginally) be embedded under *van* (which can introduce a non-finite clause in West Flemish, as (22) shows), in which case they obligatorily do not show pronominal marking (on this use of *van* in Dutch and Flemish see van Craenenbroeck 2002, Hoeksema 2006, 2008).
- (21) A: Is Valère geweest?  
is V. been  
'Has Valère been?'  
B: \*Kpeinzen dat ja/ja-j.  
I.think that yes/yes-3sg.m  
intended: 'I think so.'
- (22) Ik peinzen van morgent te goan.  
I think of tomorrow to go  
'I intend to go tomorrow.'
- (23) a Ze veronderstelt van ja/\*ja-s.  
she supposes of yes/yes-3sg.f  
b Ze veronderstelt van neen/\*nee-s.  
she supposes of no/\*no-3sg.f  
c A: Boer, ga je der weer uitvallen, de?  
Farmer, go you there again out drop, PRT?  
B: k zeggen: "Kgeloven van ja."  
I say: "I believe of ja"  
(UGhent, Dialect recording Oostkerke 29.12.66)
- Finally, *ja/nee* can appear under *van* in construction with the verbs *knikken* 'nod' and *schudden* 'shake' (and some other verbs of 'motion of the body' like *gebaren* 'gesture'). In such contexts they obligatorily do not show pronominal marking.
- (24) a Ze knikte van ja/\*ja-s.  
she nodded of yes/yes-3sg.f  
'She nodded her head yes.'  
b Ze schudde van neen/\*nee-s.  
she shook of no/\*no-3sg.f  
'She shook her head no.'  
c Ze gebaarde van ja/neen/\*ja-s/\*nee-s.  
she gestured of yes/no/yes-3sg.f/no-3sg.f

## 2.6 Explananda

- How is the pronominal marking with *ja/nee* to be analysed?
- How does it interact with the 'reversal schwa' *ja-s-e* 'Yes she did'?
- What explains the cases where bare *ja/nee* show up? How is the distribution of pronominal marking to be captured?

We turn first to the first of these questions: how does the pronominal marking end up on *ja/nee*?

### 3 Arguments against a PF-deletion analysis

We might initially think that what is going on is base-generation of *ja/nee* in a left-peripheral position, cliticisation of a pre-verbal subject pronoun to *ja/nee*, and PF-deletion of the rest of the clause, as in (25); see e.g. Kramer and Rawlins (2011), Holmberg (2013) and Servidio (2014) for such elliptical accounts of *yes/no* responses in various languages.

- (25) Is Valère geweest? – Ja-j<sub>i</sub> <t<sub>1</sub> is geweest>  
is Valère been yes-3sg.m is been  
'Has Valère been? – Yes.'

This account would assimilate *ja/nee* responses to analyses of fragment answers (Merchant, 2004) or sluicing (Merchant, 2001) which propose PF-deletion of a clause.

- (26) a. What did John eat? – Chips <he ate t>.  
b. John ate something, but I don't know what <he ate t>.

However, there are reasons to believe that a clausal PF-deletion analysis of polarity particles is not on the right track, at least for West Flemish conjugated *ja/nee*.

#### 3.1 Non-optionality of 'clausal silence'

PF-deletion is usually optional:

- (27) a. What did John eat? – John ate chips.  
b. John ate something, but I don't know what he ate.

However, for WF *ja/nee*, we cannot suppose that PF-deletion is optional. The overt source for the structure proposed in (25) would be ungrammatical.

- (28) Is Valère geweest? – \*Ja-j is geweest.

Rather the overt version would be as in (29):

- (29) a. Ja-j, j' is geweest.  
b. Ja-j, Valère is geweest.

Such examples look like two separate clauses: in WF root clauses the preverbal clitic never co-occurs with a second preverbal clitic or with a preverbal full DP:

- (30) a. \*Je je is geweest.  
b. \*Je Valère is geweest.

Assuming that the presence of the subject marking on *ja-j* diagnoses that there is *some* form of clausal structure here, it seems that this clausal structure is *obligatorily* silent, while PF-deletion/ellipsis is generally taken to be an optional process.

#### 3.2 No pronominal marking in clearer cases of PF-deletion

In patterns which are less controversially analysed as PF-deletion, such as sluicing or fragment answers, subject marking does not show up (as discussed by van Craenenbroeck (2010:231); see also Lobeck (1995) and Merchant (2001))

- (31) Z'èèn iemand ezieng, maar k'en wee nie wie(\*-n-s).  
they=have someone seen but I=neg know not who(-AGR.PL-they<sub>CLITIC</sub>)  
'They saw someone but I don't know who <they saw>.'  
[van Craenenbroeck 2010:231, Waregem Dutch]

- (32) Z'èèn eentwien gezien, maar k'en weten nie wien (\*s).  
they=have someone seen but I=neg know not who(-they<sub>CLITIC</sub>) [Lapscheure]

It does not seem to generally be the case, then, that subject marking/subject clitics can 'survive' PF-deletion of a clause in the way that an ellipsis analysis would suggest. This is true even when the answer is answering a polar question, e.g.

- (33) Q: Ee-g genoeg geld?  
have=you enough money?  
A: Misschienst-\*k.  
possibly-1sg

So there is something 'special' about *ja/nee* in allowing pronominal marking.

#### 3.3 Lack of extraction

Given a PF-deletion/ellipsis account, extraction should be possible from the deletion site (as it is in e.g. VP ellipsis in English)

- (34) Apples, I like. Pears, I don't <like t>.

In English, left-peripheral topics are also possible in *yes/no* replies (possible support for elliptical analyses such as those of Kramer & Rawlins (2011), Holmberg (2013), and Servidio (2014))

- (35) A: Did you tell them?  
B: John yes <I told t>, but Mary no <I didn't tell t>.

But in WF, in such cases *wel/niet* are used rather than just *ja/nee*. Where *wel/niet* are followed by *ja/nee* with pronominal marking, we take the latter to be tags associated with the clause (cf. Smessaert 1995).

- (36) Q: Ee-j t an entwien gezeid?  
Have-you it to anyone said  
'Did you tell anyone?'  
a. A: ?\*An Valère ja-k, maar an Tijs nee-k.  
to Valère yes-1sg but to Tijs no-1sg  
b. A: An Valère wel, maar an Tijs niet.  
to Valère well, but to Tijs not  
c. A: An Valère wel, ja-k, maar an Tijs niet.  
to Valère well, yes-I, but to Tijs not

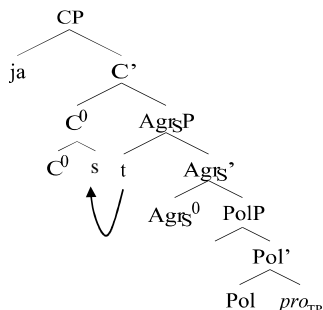
These patterns suggest that *ja/nee* do not involve PF-deletion of a clause.

## 4 Van Craenenbroeck (2010): a TP pro-form

### 4.1 Summary

- Rather than PF-deletion, van Craenenbroeck (2010) in his analysis of Wambeek Dutch proposes that *ja/nee* occur in construction with a null TP proform.
- This proform has the semantics of a predicate, and its referent is picked up from the surrounding discourse, in the same way as proposed by e.g. Hardt (1993) for VP ellipsis in English.
- Above this TP proform, a clitic subject is base-generated in [Spec, AgrsP], and this clitic then moves to adjoin to C. *Ja* is base-generated in [Spec, C].<sup>2</sup>

(37) (from van Craenenbroeck (2010)'s (23))



Semantically, the subject argument saturates the predicate denoted by *pro*:

- (38) a. Is Marie thus?  
is Marie home  
'Is Marie at home?'
- b. Ja  $s_n$   $pro_{TP}$   
yes 3sg.f pro
- (39) a.  $\llbracket pro_{TP} \rrbracket = \lambda x. x$  is at home (picked up from context)  
b.  $\llbracket s_n \rrbracket^g = g(n) = \text{Marie}$   
c.  $\llbracket pro_{TP} \rrbracket (\llbracket s_n \rrbracket^g) = \text{Marie is at home}$

The use of a TP proform explains the failure of extraction: the pro-form is structureless, and so extraction is not possible.

It also explains the other differences between *ja/nee* and other forms of 'clausal silence' such as fragments answers and sluicing (no pronominal marking in the latter, no extraction in construction with *ja/nee*); they just aren't the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> Van Craenenbroeck actually does assume PF-deletion of AgrsP. This is (a) to ensure that no material which might be base-generated in Pol<sup>0</sup> or Agrs<sup>0</sup> is pronounced, and (b) to license the TP pro-form, which would otherwise be ungoverned; PF-deletion is a form of 'rescue by ellipsis'. See van Craenenbroeck for full details. However, the silence of the TP part of the clause is derived by the use of a TP proform.

### 4.2 Issues

We adopt the general line of van Craenenbroeck's analysis. In particular we adopt the idea that a TP pro-form is involved in conjugated *ja/nee* constructions.

However there are some issues with the implementation of van Craenenbroeck's analysis. Some are general and some are specific to the West Flemish data we are considering.

- In order to capture the badness of cases like (40) (i.e. the 'non-optionality' of 'clausal silence' with *ja/nee*, there needs to be a mechanism to *force* a null TP pro-form to appear in construction with *ja/nee*; but it's not clear what forces this. It should in principle be possible to generate a full TP in the position where the pro-form is, but examples like (40) seem to show that this is not possible.

(40) \*Ja-j is geweest.

- Giving the TP-proform the semantics of a predicate predicts that it should be able to pick up any salient predicate (in the way that VP ellipsis can in English, for example). But this does not seem to be true: *ja/nee* are restricted in the antecedents they can pick up, only what is 'at issue' (in a similar way to fragment answers: Jacobson (2013), Weir (2014))

- (41) S: Ze zegt da Valère a            thus is.  
she says that Valère already home is  
'She says that Valère is already home.'
- A1: Nee-s-e.  
no-3sg.fem-RVRS  
'No she doesn't.' (at issue: does she say that?)
- A2: Nee-j-e.  
no-3sg.masc-RVRS  
'No he isn't.' (at issue: is Valère already home?)
- (42) S: Z'is blye omdat Valère a            thus is.  
she=is happy because Valère already home is.  
'She is happy because Valère is already home.'  
(note: Valère being home presupposed, not at issue)
- A1: Nee-s-e.  
no-3sg.fem-RVRS  
'No she isn't (happy).'
- A2: \*Nee-j-e.  
no-3sg.masc-RVRS  
intended: 'No he isn't at home'. (can't deny presupposition)

Note that English VP ellipsis *does* have the power to be anaphoric to not-at-issue content (AnderBois, 2010), i.e. to deny presuppositions. If *ja/nee* involved a predicate pro-form as van Craenenbroeck proposes, we might expect *nee-j-e* above to have this power too; but it doesn't.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Note that *no* here is also fairly felicitous in English as long as it co-occurs with other material (*no* alone can barely target the presupposition (i.e. deny that Valere is home) here, but *no he isn't* can). This would suggest that *yes/no* behave differently in English from West Flemish: it could in particular be interpreted as support for a

- (43) A: She's happy because Valère is already home.  
B: (Wait a minute,) no he isn't!

- The status of AgrsP is debated in current theory (Chomsky 1995). Van Craenenbroeck acknowledges this and argues that the appearance of a subject clitic in this high position is perhaps evidence for the existences of AgrsP.
  - To preview our analysis, we will retain van Craenenbroeck's hypothesis that there is a dedicated projection for the subject in *ja/nee* answers, but we will reinterpret AgrsP as Rizzi (2003)'s SubjP.

These issues aside, for the dialects that van Craenenbroeck investigates (chiefly Wambeek Dutch), an analysis in which a subject clitic encliticises to *ja/nee* may well be correct. However, the patterns observed in the West Flemish dialect we are concerned do not follow from his analysis.

- If *ja* is in [Spec, C] and the subject clitic moves to C, then the pronominal marking on conjugated *ja/nee* is predicted to be the form that shows up after complementisers, or after verbs in V2 position.
- However, in West Flemish, the pronominal marking more closely resembles the pre-verb form of the clitic (Devos 1986):

- (44) a. G/\*j'eet eur gezien.                    initial: [fɪ]  
          you have her seen  
      b. da-j/\*g eur gezien eet                post-C: [j]  
          that-you her seen have  
      c. Ja-g/\*j.                                post-*ja*: [x]

In the dialects that van Craenenbroeck discusses, the clitic is the post-complementizer form, as shown previously in (8).

So we accept that his analysis is plausible for these dialects. However, it does not immediately extend to the West Flemish dialect under examination, which shows pronominal marking with greater similarity to pre-verbal clitics.

## 5 Our analysis

The chief questions to answer are:

- Why is a TP pro-form obligatory with conjugated *ja/nee* (i.e. why can a full TP not be generated in the same clause as *ja/nee*)?
- What explains the form of the pronominal marking we see in West Flemish?

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clausal ellipsis analysis of English short *yes/no* replies, especially when paired with the observation that clausal ellipsis (at least in English) has to target the QUD rather than presupposed content (Reich, 2007; AnderBois, 2010; Weir, 2014), while VP ellipsis does not have this constraint. However, we leave detailed comparison of the English and West Flemish systems to future work.

### 5.1 Explaining 'clausal silence': *ja/nee* are TP proforms

To understand why a TP pro-form should be obligatory with *ja/nee*, we adopt Krifka (2013)'s analysis of *ja/nein* in German and propose that *ja/nee* are the TP pro-forms.

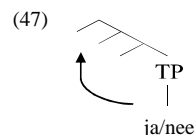
- Semantically, *ja/nee* are not predicates, but are rather anaphoric to the Question under Discussion (QUD).
- We assume, following Biezma & Rawlins (2012), that the denotation of a polar question ?*p* is the singleton set {*p*}.
- ja* denotes the proposition which is in the Question under Discussion. This captures the fact that *ja* is anaphoric to what's 'at issue' rather than just being able to pick up any proposition in the context.<sup>4</sup>

- (45)  $\llbracket ja \rrbracket = \lambda p. p \in \text{QUD}$

- (46) a. Is Valère thus?                                QUD = { $\lambda w. \text{Valère is at home in } w$ }  
          is Valère at home  
          'Is Valère at home?'

- b. Ja-j.      $\llbracket ja \rrbracket = \lambda p. p \in \text{QUD}$   
          yes-3sg.masc                                =  $\lambda w. \text{Valère is at home in } w$   
          'Yes (he is).'

A first schematic version of the syntactic analysis: TP is realised as *ja/nee* (depending on polarity) and moves to a left-peripheral position (holding off for the moment on understanding how the pronominal marking appears, and which specific left peripheral position it is)



The fact that conjugated *ja/nee* cannot occur in construction with clausal material is explained: *ja/nee* are the clauses themselves, or more accurately, TP pro-forms.

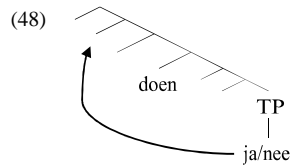
The initial empirical support for movement to the left periphery (as opposed to leaving *ja/nee* in situ) comes from the fact that while conjugated *ja/nee* cannot co-occur with full clauses (\**ja-j is geweest*), conjugated reversal *ja/nee* can co-occur with the auxiliary *doen* 'do'. If we

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<sup>4</sup> In this respect we depart from Krifka (2013), who proposes that *ja/nein* (in German) are anaphoric to a salient proposition. This cannot be quite right as the examples in (17, 18) showed: it's not enough (at least in West Flemish) that the propositions merely be salient, they have to be 'at issue' in the context.

We are passing over a number of issues in the semantics here. In particular the semantics of *nee* 'no' is not straightforward here: it is not simply the negation of the proposition in the QUD, as this does not account for the 'neutralisation' effect in response to negative questions (*Is John not coming? – Yes/No = John is not coming*). There is considerable discussion of this in the literature (Kramer & Rawlins, 2011; Holmberg, 2013; Krifka, 2013; Roelofsen & Farkas, 2014). We are not committed to the precise semantics shown (either Biezma & Rawlins' semantics for polar questions, or the proposed semantics for *ja/nee*); the important aspects for us are that (i) *ja/nee* are of propositional type and (ii) they are in some way anaphoric to what is 'at issue'/the Question under Discussion.

assume movement of a TP to the left periphery, there is functional space for the insertion of this auxiliary. Again we hold off on understanding exactly where it is generated.



## 5.2 Where does the pronominal marking come from?

- The immediately obvious answer is that the marking is a clitic pronoun, as proposed in the literature, and this is likely correct for some of the dialects that have conjugated *ja/née* (see Barbiers et al 2005 and references cited there).
- BUT: we argue that the pronominal marking in West Flemish is agreement, not a clitic pronoun.
- While the pronominal marking likely has the clitic pronoun system as its diachronic source, we argue that the clitics have been reanalysed and synchronically have the status of agreement inflection in West Flemish.

One reason that this is initially plausible is that (unlike other dialects of Dutch that show pronominal marking on *ja/née*) the relevant persons (1sg, 1pl, 3pl) in West Flemish dialect under consideration do not show the nasal segments on *ja/née* that correspond to the verbal agreement and to the agreement on complementizers. This could be interpreted as this system ‘losing’ agreement on *ja/née*, but it is equally consistent with the pronominal marking itself being interpreted as the agreement. We do not speculate here on the possible causal link between loss of verbal agreement and the presence of ‘pronominal agreement’, although see de Vogelaer & van der Auwera (2010) for discussion.

(49) Q: Hebben ze al gegeten?  
have they already eaten  
‘Have they already eaten?’

A: Jaa-n-s. (Barbiers et al. 2005, p. 54)  
yes-AGR.3pl-they

Our main argument for analysing the pronominal marking as agreement comes from phonology. In West Flemish, unvoiced consonants generally voice intervocalically at word boundaries and at derivational morphology boundaries (De Schutter and Taeldeman 1986, Simon 2010)

- (50) a. *goat* ‘goes’ [fɔ:t] → *goat André* [fɔ:dandre]  
b. *zus* ‘sister’ [zʌs] → *zuseke* ‘sister-DIM’ [zʌzəkə]  
c. *vis* ‘fish’ [vis] → *vishaak* ‘fish-hook’ [vɪzɔ:k]

However, the voiceless forms of pronominal marking on *ja/née* do *not* become voiced when the reversal schwa *e* is attached to the end.

- (51) a. *ja-s* ‘yes-3sg.f’ [jɔ:s] → *ja-s-e* ‘yes-3sg.f-RVRS’ [jɔ:se] NOT [jɔ:zə]  
b. *ja-g* ‘yes-2sg’ [jɔ:x] → *ja-g-e* ‘yes-2sg-RVRS’ [jɔ:xe] NOT [jɔ:ʏə]

A near-minimal pair can be constructed: if the discourse particle *eh* is added after conjugated *ja/née* (creating a word boundary), the pronominal marking *does* become voiced.

- (52) a. *ja-s-e* ‘yes-3sg.f-RVRS’ [jɔ:sə] BUT: *ja-s eh* ‘yes-3sg.f PRT’ [jɔ:ze]  
b. *ja-g-e* ‘yes-2sg-RVRS’ [jɔ:xə] BUT: *ja-g eh* ‘yes-2sg PRT’ [jɔ:ʏe]

This leads to the perhaps surprising conclusion that, as it does not trigger intervocalic voicing, the reversal schwa *e* is an integral part of the word *ja-s-e* (i.e. *e* is not derivational morphology, nor is *e* a separate word of its own).

If the reversal schwa in *ja-s-e* is indeed an integral part of the word, this has consequences for the analysis of the pronominal marking: if we maintained an analysis in which the pronominal marking was a clitic pronoun, then it would have to somehow ‘infix’ between the head *ja* and the reversal schwa. This does not have a precedent elsewhere in West Flemish: for example, post-complementizer clitics appear after the agreement morphology, not before.

- (53) dan ze / \*da-ze-n Valère kennen  
that-AGR.pl they / that-they-AGR.pl Valère know  
‘that they know Valère’

We therefore have to consider the pronominal marking on *ja/née* as a form of morphology, presumably inflectional morphology, and plausibly agreement morphology.

We argue, then, that even in the absence of verbal agreement (i.e. agreement parallel to that which shows up on complementisers) on *ja/née* in this dialect, there is nevertheless pronominal agreement. (For discussion of subject clitics as agreement markers in Italian dialects see also Rizzi (1982) and many others after him, for French see Culbertson (2010) and the references cited there).

➔ Note that this contrasts with dialects of Dutch which show verbal agreement of the complementizer type *and* pronominal marking which looks clitic-like.

- (54) jaa-n-s  
yes-AGR.3pl-they (Barbiers et al. 2005, p. 54)

➔ For these a different analysis is required (probably one resembling van Craenenbroeck (2010)’s analysis – i.e. that these genuinely are clitics). However, we concentrate on the West Flemish pattern here, and argue that at least in this case, the pronominal marking is agreement morphology.

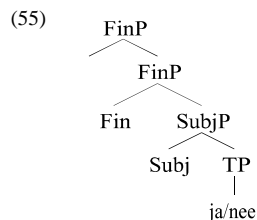
Questions we now have to consider:

- Where does this agreement come from?
- Why is it obligatory?
- How can we ensure that the phi-features are the ‘right’ ones (i.e. the ones that would have been those of the subject if a full clause had been spoken)?



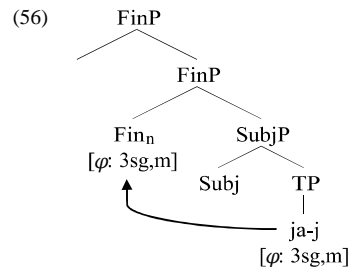
### 5.3 Conjugated *yes/no* as satisfaction of V2

- We analyse pronominal agreement on *yes/no* as being related to the need to satisfy V2.
- We assume, following Haegeman (1996) and van Craenenbroeck & Haegeman (2007), that V2 is a requirement to fill the Fin head. This head will be projected above the TP proform *ja/nee*.
- We also assume also that between FinP and TP there is a specialised functional projection for the subject: Subject Phrase (Rizzi, 2003; Rizzi & Shlonsky, 2007)



- SubjP plays roughly the same role in our analysis as AgrSP plays in van Craenenbroeck (2010)'s analysis, but with a different semantic role.
- This projection roughly serves the discourse function of encoding the 'aboutness' topic of a clause: here, it links the proposition expressed by *ja/nee* with its aboutness topic.<sup>5</sup>
- Rizzi (2003)'s Subject Criterion requires that the Spec of SubjP be filled (i.e. an encoding of the requirement that clauses must have subjects)
- However, we propose that in this case, SubjP does not have a specifier and does not host an argument. Rather, following Rizzi & Shlonsky (2007)'s analysis of subject extraction, we argue that the Subject Criterion can be satisfied either by a nominal constituent in SpecSubjP or by nominal phi-features present on Fin.
- The phi-features on Fin play the role of indicating the 'aboutness topic' of the utterance (i.e. they are the semantic argument of Subj); i.e. we assume that they have the semantics of pronouns, and bear indices like pronouns do.
- Following Rizzi and Shlonsky (2007)'s analysis of subject extraction, we also assume that the nominal features on Fin have to be licensed.
- We argue that the phi-features on Fin are licensed by the pronominal marking on *ja-k*, *ja-s*, *ja-j*, etc. which moves to Fin.
- Assuming that single words can be ambiguous between XP and X<sup>0</sup> status (Muysken 1982, Muysken and Van Riemsdijk 1986), then conjugated *ja/nee* can move as a head to Fin to license the nominal features on Fin.

<sup>5</sup> This can't be the whole story, because expletives can occupy [Spec, SubjP], although they cannot be aboutness topics. We assume, following Rizzi (2003) and Rizzi & Shlonsky (2007), that the necessity to fill [Spec, SubjP] (Rizzi's Subject Criterion) is a formal requirement that can be satisfied by an expletive. On the semantic side, we could imagine that an expletive simply has no content (i.e. a sentence containing an expletive in subject position simply has no aboutness topic), or alternatively perhaps that an expletive can express a situation or event argument as aboutness topic. We leave detailed discussion of this aside here, although see Rizzi (2003) and Rizzi & Shlonsky (2007) for some discussion.



- If *ja/nee* are TP/T<sup>0</sup>, then this in fact represents the normal case of T-to-C/Fin movement in V2 languages.

The semantics of what is going on here:

$$[[ja]] = \lambda p. p \in \text{QUD}$$

$$[[\text{Subj}]] \approx \lambda p. \lambda x. p, \text{ iff } x \text{ is the 'aboutness topic' of the proposition expressed by } p^6$$

$$[[\phi_{3\text{sg,masc,n}}]]^g = [[he_n]]^g = g(n) \text{ iff } g(n) \text{ is singular and male}$$

$$[[\text{Subj}]][[ja]] \approx \lambda x. \lambda p. p \in \text{QUD}, \text{ iff } x \text{ is the 'aboutness topic' of } p$$

$$([[\text{Subj}]][[ja]])([[\phi_{3\text{sg,masc,n}}]]) = ([[\text{Subj}]][[ja]])([[\text{he}_n]]) = \lambda p. p \in \text{QUD}, \text{ iff } g(n) \text{ is singular and male and is the 'aboutness topic' of the proposition expressed by } p$$

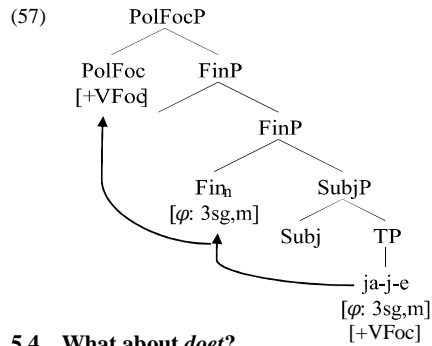
- The presupposition that the Subj head imposes, that the referent of the phi-features on Fin be interpreted as the aboutness topic of the utterance, ensures that we don't get the 'wrong' phi-features – we get the phi-features that would be appropriate for the subject if a full clause were used.

Back to syntax: what about forms with the 'reversal schwa' *ja-s-e*, *nie-s-e*?

Suppose that these have an additional Verum Focus feature that needs to be checked in a left-peripheral PolFoc projection.<sup>7</sup> *Ja-s-e/nie-s-e* raise first to Fin to check its phi-features and to satisfy V2, and then onwards to check the Verum Focus feature:

<sup>6</sup> Very strictly speaking, propositions (qua sets of worlds) are not structured enough semantic objects to have 'aboutness topics'. The real denotation of Subj might have to be something more syncategorematic: '[Subj]([TP])(x) = [TP] iff x is the aboutness topic of the utterance of which TP is a part.' Working out precisely how to encode the discourse function of a subject in the Subj head is beyond the scope of this paper, though.

<sup>7</sup> This can be seen as a particular cartographic implementation of Holmberg (2001; 2007; 2013)'s left-peripheral  $\Sigma\text{P}/\text{C}_{\text{POLFOC}}/\text{FocP}$ . Holmberg proposes that *yes/no* response particles are base-generated in such a projection (an assumption also made by van Craenenbroeck (2010)), while we propose that – at least for West Flemish – they move there to check features, in a similar way to how Holmberg proposes that verb phrases can move to this position in Finnish and various other languages. In as much as our proposal involves the movement of a TP constituent to a left-peripheral position, it resembles Holmberg's analysis of Finnish.

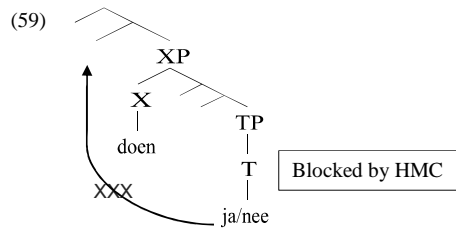


#### 5.4 What about *doet*?

We have said that conjugated *ja/nee* move as heads through *Fin* to satisfy V2. But the ‘emphatic’/reversal forms with the reversal schwa can also co-occur with the verb *doen*.

(58) Ja-s-e doet.  
yes-3sg.f-RVRS does

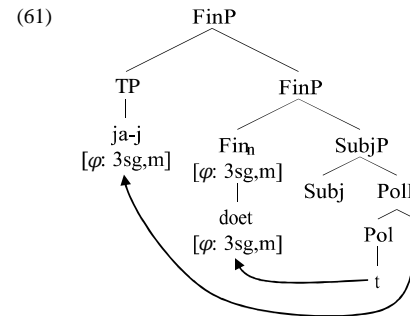
- As we are assuming that the TP proform does not have internal structure, *doen* has to be generated outside the TP-proform *ja/nee*, which would imply that *ja/nee* has to move past it
- But if *ja/nee* move as heads, will that not lead to a violation of the Head Movement Constraint?



- Our solution: *ja/nee* can also move as phrases, too (exploiting the XP/X<sup>0</sup> ambiguity, cf. Muysken 1982)
- If *doet* fills *Fin* (to satisfy V2), then *ja/nee* can move as phrases to [Spec, *FinP*] and onwards to [Spec, *PolFocP*].
- *Doet* is only compatible with ‘reverse/disagree’ answers:

(60) Q: Marie goa morgent kommen.  
Marie goes tomorrow come  
‘Marie will come tomorrow.’  
A<sub>SAME</sub>: Ja-s (\*doet).  
yes-3sg.f does  
A<sub>REVERSE</sub>: Nee-s-e (doet).  
no-3sg.f-RVRS does

- To capture this, and in line with van Craenenbroeck (2010), we propose that *doen* is generated in a Polarity phrase between TP and SubjP (for Flemish see also Haegeman 2002, see also Holmberg (2013))
- *Doen* is a way of spelling out ‘reversal’, but it is only exceptionally generated (à la last-resort *do*-support<sup>8</sup>) in circumstances where it is required to satisfy V2, i.e. if there is no finite verb to move into *Fin* and when conjugated *ja/nee* moves as XP
- *Doen* then moves to *FinP* (satisfying V2) and *ja/nee* undergo phrasal movement to [Spec, *FinP*] (and onwards to [Spec, *PolFocP*]):



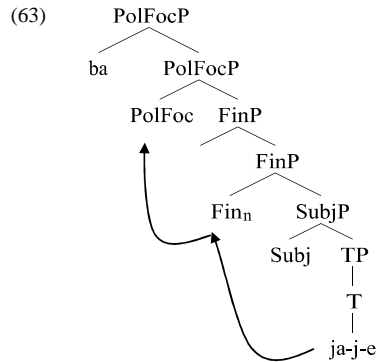
Support from this analysis comes from the pattern of data below: the discourse particle *ba* can be generated along with conjugated *ja/nee*, but it is not compatible with *doet* (for discourse particles with *ja/nee* see also Smeesaert 1995, Devos & Vandekerckhove 2005; for similar restrictions in Wambeek Dutch see van Craenenbroeck 2010).

(62) Hij komt morgent niet.  
he comes tomorrow not  
‘He isn’t coming tomorrow.’  
(a) Ja-j-e.  
yes-3sg.m-RVRS  
‘Yes he is.’  
(b) Ja-j-e doet.  
yes-3sg.m-RVRS does  
‘Yes he is.’  
(c) Ba ja-j-e.  
BA yes-3sg.m-RVRS  
‘But he is.’  
(d) \*Ba ja-j-e doet.  
BA yes-3sg.m-RVRS does

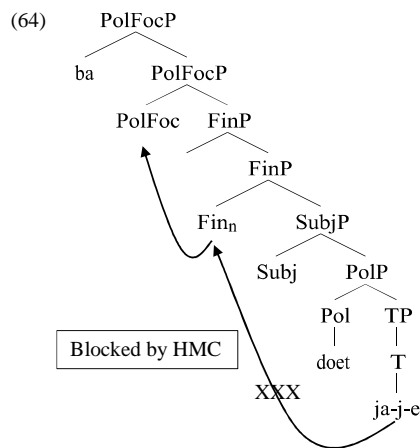
- Given that there is no discernable semantic difference between (a) and (b) (except that (b) sounds slightly redundant, as the reversal marking is expressed twice, once by the schwa and once by *doet*), it’s unlikely that the contrast between (c) and (d) is to be found in the semantic contribution of *ba*.

<sup>8</sup> Van Craenenbroeck also proposes that *doet* in this construction (and ‘short *do*-replies’) is last-resort *do*-support, although for van Craenenbroeck the reason is to provide a bearer for phonological stress rather than to satisfy V2. We refer the reader to van Craenenbroeck for full details.

- Rather, suppose that *ba* is generated in the Spec of the same phrase (say PolFocP) that attracts *ja-j-e/nee-j-e*.
- Then *ja-j-e/nee-j-e* would have to move as a head so that there is ‘room’ for *ba* in the Spec.



- But if *ja-j-e/nee-j-e* is moving as a head, then there will be a problem with the Head Movement Constraint if *doet* is in the structure: *ja-j-e/nee-j-e* will not be able to move past it.



- We thereby derive the incompatibility of *ba* with *doet*.

## 6 Conclusion and questions for future research

- We argue that pronominal marking on *yes/no* in West Flemish is best analysed as agreement morphology on a TP proform.
- Phi-features are generated on Fin to satisfy the Subject Criterion. Conjugated *ja/nee* move to Fin in order to license these features and to satisfy V2.
- This study is an in-depth analysis one particular West Flemish dialect. Other (West) Flemish dialects show different patterns of pronominal marking/verbal agreement on *yes/no*, and it remains to be explained how this microvariation can be captured in one comprehensive analysis. We hope to return to this in future work.
- Our analysis of West Flemish conjugated *ja/nee* hinges on a number of assumptions about the cartographic analysis of V2 and highlights the role of SubjP. In future work, we will explore the ramifications of our analysis for the analysis of V2 in general and for the analysis of subject doubling in Flemish.
- The ‘grammaticalisation’ of pronouns into agreement morphemes postulated is reminiscent of the development of pronominal marking into agreement forms in construction with *pro*-drop, as reported in the literature on Romance. It merits exploration in this broader context.

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## Appendix: *ja/neen* without conjugation and embedded *ja/neen*

In some environments, *ja* or *neen* can show up without conjugation, and in fact conjugation marking is ungrammatical.

*Ja/neen* show up embedded under the preposition *van* in two kinds of cases. In neither case is person marking on *ja/neen* grammatical.<sup>9</sup>

- In construction with the verbs *knikken* 'nod' and *schudden* 'shake' (and some other verbs of 'motion of the body' like *gebaren* 'gesture')
- (65) Ze knikte van ja/\*ja-s  
she nodded of yes/yes-3sg.f
- In construction with bridge verbs: *zeggen* 'say', *peinzen* 'think', *veronderstellen* 'suppose', etc. (see van Craenenbroeck 2002).
- (66) Ze veronderstelt van ja/\*ja-s.  
she supposes of yes/yes-3sg.f

These two cases seem to have different statuses:

- *Van ja/van neen* obligatorily extrapose to the right under bridge verbs. Under *knikken/schudden* etc., *van ja/van neen* do not extrapose; in embedded clauses they appear in the middle field.
- (67) a. omdat ze veronderstelt van ja  
because she supposes of yes
- b. \*omdat ze van ja veronderstelt
- c. omdat ze van ja knikte  
because she of yes nodded
- d. \*omdat ze knikte van ja
- In construction with bridge verbs, *van ja/neen* patterns like a clausal argument. In construction with *knikken/schudden*, *van ja/neen* patterns like a nominal/PP argument.

<sup>9</sup> The negative particle appears as *neen* in isolation.

We suggest that *van ja/van neen* when in construction with the ‘verbs of gesturing’ like *knikken* ‘nod’ and *schudden* ‘shake’ represents a nominal use of *ja/neen*, in the same way as we see below.

- (68) a. Laat jenen ja nen ja zyn en jenen neen nen neen.  
let your yes a yes be and your no a no  
‘Let your yes be yes, and your no, no.’ (Matthew 5:37)
- b. Den neen in Schotland was niet onverwacht.  
the no in Scotland was not unexpected  
‘Scotland’s no (vote) was not unexpected.’

By contrast, a case like *veronderstellen van ja* ‘suppose of yes’ represents the TP pro-form that we have argued for above.

Questions:

- What rules out the person marking in *veronderstellen van ja/\*ja-s*?
  - If ‘clausal’, unconjugated *ja/neen* is grammatical as such (e.g. in embedded clauses), why is it not grammatical in matrix clauses, where the conjugated forms are obligatory (on the relevant interpretation)?
  - Why can’t the TP pro-form show up in other places where TPs appear, like in embedded finite clauses? I.e. why is the reply below ungrammatical?
- (69) A: Is Valère geweest?  
is V. been  
‘Has Valère been?’
- B: \*Kveronderstellen dat (je) ja.  
I.suppose that he yes  
intended: ‘I suppose so.’

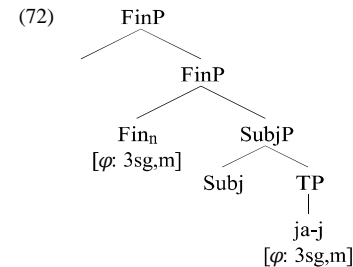
Question 1: what rules out person marking in embedding under *van*?

- *Van* can embed a non-finite clause in West Flemish, but not finite clauses.
- (70) kpeinzen van no de cinema te goen  
I-think of to the cinema to go  
‘I’m thinking of going to the cinema.’
- Suppose that non-finite clauses are structurally impoverished and that SubjP is not projected (Rizzi & Shlonsky, 2007), and that in *van* complements FinP is not projected either, or alternatively that non-finite Fin cannot be associated with nominal phi-features.
  - Then there is no way of licensing the phi-features generated on *ja/nee*. No features will be generated on FinP to be licensed by the features on *ja-s/nee-s* (because there is no FinP), and so those phi-features cannot be generated on *ja/nee*. *Ja/neen* without phi-features are however fine, as these would not need to license or be licensed by anything.

Question 2: if generating *ja/neen* without phi-features is OK in principle, why are the conjugated forms obligatory in root cases (when answering polar questions)?

- (71) Q: Goa Marie da doen?  
Goes Marie that do?  
‘Will Mary do that?’  
A: Ja-s./#Ja.  
yes-3sg.f/1A

- The answer lies in the role of the Subject Criterion.
- In root clauses, SubjP is projected, and must have its Criterial requirements satisfied.
- In replies to polar questions, this happens by the generation of phi-features on Fin.
- If phi-features are not generated on Fin, then the Subject Criterion is not satisfied.
- But if phi-features are generated on Fin, then following Rizzi and Shlonsky’s (2007) account of subject extraction, they need to be checked by the movement of (conjugated) *ja/nee* to Fin (or [Spec, Fin] if *ja/nee* are moving as phrases).



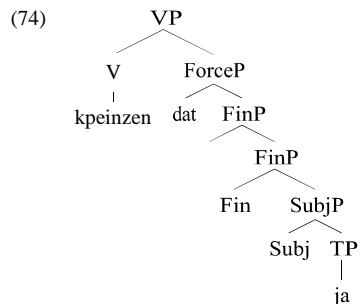
- There is therefore no way of generating non-conjugated *ja/nee* with the relevant reading (the ‘I’m listening’ reading will be discussed below); the requirement to satisfy the Subject Criterion forces the generation of phi-features.
- In embedded cases like *veronderstellen van ja*, which embed non-finite clauses, no SubjP is projected (Rizzi & Shlonsky, 2007). As such, there is no Subject Criterion, and so no problem with generating non-conjugated *ja/nee*.

Question 3: Why can’t the TP pro-form show up in other places?

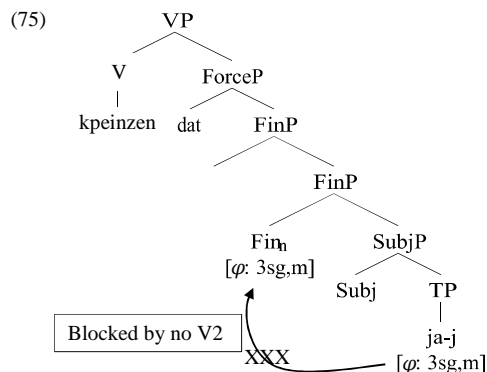
- (73) A: Is Valère geweest?  
is V. been  
‘Has Valère been?’
- (a) B: \*Kveronderstellen dat ja.  
I.suppose that yes
- (b) B: \*Kveronderstellen dat ja-j.  
I.suppose that yes-3sg.m
- (c) B’: \*Kveronderstellen dat je ja.  
I.suppose that he yes

We might expect one of the above to be grammatical if *ja* is a TP pro-form. Why aren’t they?

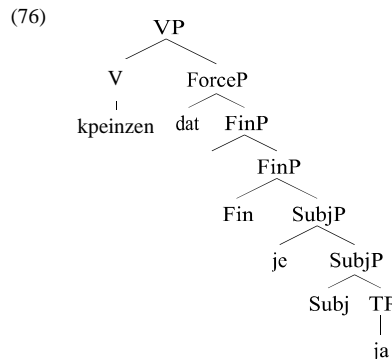
- Take (a) first. In finite clauses, SubjP is projected, and the Subject Criterion has to be satisfied. It isn't in (a); there are no phi-features in Fin or anywhere else that can be satisfying the Subject Criterion.



- In (b) we try to fix that by putting phi-features on *ja-j*. But that requires that *ja-j* move to Fin to check these features.
- But movement to Fin (i.e. verb-second) does not happen in embedded clauses in West Flemish. Whatever rules this out in general also rules it out in (b).



- In (c), we try another solution: base-generating a subject pronoun in [Spec, SubjP].



- The 'geometry' of this would work, and the Subject Criterion would be satisfied.
- We propose that this is ruled out because a subject pronoun base-generated in [Spec, SubjP] has no means of getting Case.

There is therefore no way of simultaneously generating *ja* in embedded position, satisfying the Subject Criterion, and satisfying the constraint that there is no verb-second (filled Fin) in West Flemish. We predict, then, that *ja/nee* cannot show up anywhere that finite TPs can, but rather only in root position (and when they are in root position, they must be conjugated).

Generally, *ja* is inappropriate in root position answering a polar question.

(77) S: Goa Marie da doen?  
Goes Marie that do?  
'Will Mary do that?'  
A: Ja-s./#Ja.  
yes-3sg.f/JA  
'Yes.'/ '#Okay.'

Note that *ja* is not ungrammatical here as such, but it is a non-sequitur; it means 'I'm listening'.

There are other contexts (listed in (20)), however, in which *ja* is licensed and in which conjugated *ja-k/nee-k* (etc.) would not be grammatical: e.g. a response to someone knocking at the door.

- We propose that this *ja* is simply a different word.
- It is very unlikely to be a propositional anaphor: to what proposition/question is it anaphoric in the 'knocking at the door' case? (Note that it can't be 'can the knocker come in': *neen* is not appropriate even if you don't want the knocker to come in!)
- Rather, this is a phatic/discourse particle: *ja* is something like 'I agree with the way that this discourse is going', 'this is OK'.
- We don't commit to its semantics or to its syntax, but we propose that what these things certainly are not is TP proforms.
- As such we would not expect them to show up with person marking in the way that we have proposed above.