On the Interaction of the Dutch Pragmatic Particles *hoor* and *hè* with the Imperative and Infinitivus Pro Imperativo

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1. Introduction

Although closely related to Modern English, Modern Dutch exhibits many lexical and grammatical phenomena having no counterpart in English at all. Furthermore, even though reference grammars such as the two-volume *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* or *ANS* (Haeseryn et. al. 1997) mention many of these phenomena in passing, they do not describe or analyze them in any detail. Both the linguist wishing to study how such words and structures are used and the foreign student of Dutch wanting to sound less foreign will typically find in the standard reference grammars only a vast desert.

The purpose of the present paper is to discuss two such phenomena and to explain the hitherto undescribed interaction between them. First we consider the utterance-final pragmatic particles *hoor* (literally 'hear') and *hè* ('isn't it'): cf. Kirsner & Deen (1990), Kirsner & van Heuven (1997). Next we survey two imperative structures of Dutch: the bare verb stem (STM), used with finite clause word-order, and the 'infinitive used as imperative' (infinitivus pro imperativo), or IPI, primarily used with verb-final word order; cf. Kirsner, van Heuven & Caspers (1998), van Heuven & Kirsner (1999). Because English does not have an equivalent of either the *hoor-hè* contrast or the STM-IPI contrast, we provide illustrative examples.

We shall then attempt to predict on semantic and pragmatic grounds how the particles will be used together with the imperatives. Which imperative structure will favor or disfavor the use of which final particles? Our predictions will be tested empirically against (i) the results of a questionnaire experiment and (ii) counts of actually occurring imperative plus particle combinations in various Dutch texts. We shall discover that, in addition to allowing us to test our hypothesis, both the questionnaire data and the text count data raise further questions not

originally considered. We will suggest possible answers to these questions. We will conclude by examining theoretical implications of the study.

2. The utterance-final pragmatic particles *hoor* and *hè*

2.1 Observations

Consider the following examples:

(1) a. Jij komt morgen ook.
'You are coming tomorrow too'.
b. Jij komt morgen ook, hoor.
'You are coming tomorrow too, mind you./
You be sure to come tomorrow also.'
c. Jij komt morgen ook, hè?
'You are coming tomorrow too, aren't you?'

(2) a. Stikstof is een gas.
'Nitrogen is a gas.' [Can be an "encyclopedia sentence"]
b. Stikstof is een gas, hoor.
'Nitrogen is a gas, mind you/ son.'
c. Stikstof is een gas, hè?
'Nitrogen is a gas, isn't it?'

(3) a. *Stikstof is een gas, hè hoor.
'*Nitrogen is a gas, isn't it, mind you.'
b. *Stikstof is een gas, hoor hè?
'*Nitrogen is a gas, mind you, isn't it?'
c. *Stikstof is een gas, hoor?
'*Nitrogen is a gas, mind you?'

(4) a. Dag. 'Hello/Goodbye'
b. Dag hoor. 'Goodbye/Goodbye then/*Hello then'
c. Dag hè? 'Goodbye, OK? = I'm leaving now, alright?'

Examples (2b,c) demonstrate that *hè* and *hoor* are used to interact with the Hearer and are not simple statements of fact such as (2a). Consider also that the *ANS* states (Haeseryn et. al. 1998:582) that *hè* and *hoor* are

"especially used when there is a certain intimacy between speaker and hearer which makes informal language use possible". The sentences in (3) show that *hè* and *hoor* do not co-occur and that sentences containing *hoor* cannot be questions. The sentences in (4) show that when *hè* and *hoor* are added to the greeting *dag*, the utterance must be interpreted as a final rather than an initial greeting. We now attempt to account for these facts.

2.2 Analysis of the *hè-hoor* opposition

Inspired by Schiffrin's (1987) treatment of pairs of English discourse markers such as *now*, *then; I mean, y'know*, we may propose a maximally schematic analysis of *hè* and *hoor* (in the sense of Langacker 1991:265; 2000:4) in which they share certain characteristics but contrast on at least one level; cf. Kirsner & Deen (1990), Kirsner, van Heuven & van Bezooijen (1994). Observe again that whereas *dag* by itself can be used to communicate either an initial greeting (*Dag meneer Janssen!* 'Hello Mr. Janssen!') or a farewell (*Dag* 'Goodbye'), *dag* with *hoor* or *hè* can only communicate a final greeting.[1] Hence, both *hoor* and *hè* claim that contact *has already been made between Speaker and Hearer*, that there is a Speaker-Hearer relationship. And because *hoor* and *hè* do not normally combine (at least not in utterances directed towards a single hearer in a single speech act) they must contradict each other at some level of the analysis. Our analysis is given in Table 1.

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[1] Note as further support for this line of argument that the dedicated *initial* greeting *hoi!* 'hi, hello' (Cook 1995:94) does *not* co-occur with *hoor* or *hè*: **Hoi, hoor!, *Hoi, hè?* On the other hand, one of my consultants has indicated that the dedicated informal *final* greeting *doei can* be used with *hoor* at least: *Nou doei, hoor* 'Well, toodle-ooh/bye-bye, then'. (The apparent oddness of *?Nou doei, hè?* – rejected by my consultant – suggests that there is something non-negotiable about the finality of *doei*, that the Speaker need not seek confirmation from the Hearer.)

Contact has already been made between speaker and hearer	
Speaker focuses hearer's attention on material prior to particle	
Speaker explicitly ***asks*** hearer for something (=confirmation or acknowledgement)	Speaker explicitly ***does not ask*** hearer for anything
__ *hè*	__ *hoor*

Table 1. *Schematic semantic analysis of the pragmatic particles* hoor *and* hè

Two final aspects of *hè* and *hoor* deserve mention. First, a complete understanding of these particles is only possible when one considers the full range of final particles available to Dutch speakers, such as *zeg* 'say' and *joh* 'buster'; cf. Kirsner & van Heuven (1996, 1999). Second, the diachronic evolution of *hoor* seems to be much clearer than that of *hè*. According to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (Beets & Knuttel 1912:1086), *hoor* evolved from *hoort ge* 'you hear, do you hear' much in the way that English *goodbye* evolved from *God be with ye.* No clear etymology is given for *hè*, even though some native speakers opine that it comes from *heus* 'really.' In any case, the shift of *hoor* from literal 'hearing' to 'heeding' or 'paying attention' is quite reasonable: cf. Sweetser (1990:34-35). Because the final particle is entirely optional, explicit use of it can suggest (by Gricean maxims) that the Speaker is explicitly calling the Hearer's attention to something which the Hearer seems to be unaware of.

2.3 Subuses of *hoor*

The particle *hè* functions to some degree like an English tag-question and might therefore be relatively easy to understand. But because English has nothing whatsoever like *hoor*, it may be useful to briefly illustrate various conventionalized exploitations (cf. Buitenhuis 1993):

(5) URGING.
Zegt u het maar (, hoor) [counterperson in a sandwich shop]
say you it but (, hear) = 'What will it be?' (Go ahead and (do) tell me what you want to order!) Can also be FRIENDLINESS; see also SIMPLE EMPHASIS below.

(6) CORRECTION (which can either be unfriendly or friendly, depending on the exact nature of the personal relationship between Speaker and Hearer. It may be implied that the Hearer should have been aware of what the Speaker is telling him.)
Stikstof is een gas, hoor!
'Nitrogen is a gas, son.'
Note that the correction here is of an unspoken assumption rather than an explicit statement. Cf. stressed *wel* to counter the explicit negators *niet* or *geen,* as in (7):

(7) Stikstof is wel een gas!
'Nitrogen is too a gas!' (You said it wasn't).

(8) REASSURANCE
Je krijgt van de tandarts wel een verdoving, hoor
(from Buitenhuis 1993)
you get from the dentist indeed an anesthetic, hear.
'The dentist will surely give you an anesthetic, son/my dear.'

Part of the message of reassurance comes from the explicit profiling of a personal relationship between Speaker and Hearer. *Hoor* functions as "linguistic touching", a kind of linguistic pat on the shoulder or arm.

(9) SIMPLE EMPHASIS THROUGH INTERACTION WITH HEARER
Ma heeft de TV voor twee weken ingepikt. We moeten lezen! Onze taal beviel haar niet en de TV krijgt de schuld. Ze zegt dat we er stom van worden! Oenig hoor!
[From comic strip *Door dik en dun.*]
'Mom has taken away the TV for two weeks. We have to read! She didn't like the way we were talking and she blames TV. She says that it makes us stupid. Dumb hear!'

(10) WARNING
a. Dit gaat fout (,hoor)
this goes wrong = 'This isn't working right'
(, so do something!)
b. Die beker valt om (,hoor)
that cup falls over (hear) = 'That cup's spilling
(, so watch out/ grab it, etc.)'

3. The verb stem imperative (STM) versus the 'infinitivus pro imperativo' (IPI)

There are numerous ways of communicating commands and requests in Dutch; cf. (11a,c-e). In this paper, we shall consider only structures (d) and (e):

(11)
a. Verb-first: Loopt u door!
'walk you through' = 'Walk to the rear of the bus!'
b. Verb-first: Loopt u door?
'Are you walking to the rear?' [With final rise]
c. Verb-second: U loopt door!
'You are walking through! You are walking to the rear of the bus!'
d. STM: Loop door!
'Walk through'
e. IPI: Doorlopen
'(to) through-walk' (IPI 'Infinitivus pro imperativo')

3.1 Observations

We may begin by noting that STM has a wider range of uses than IPI; cf. the discussion in Paardekooper (1951), Proeme (1984), Duinhoven (1984), and Blom (1987). Whereas STM can be used to communicate commands and requests, conditional messages, and curses, IPI is limited to commands:

(12) a. Hang de was buiten. 'Hang the laundry outside.'
(Proeme 1984) COMMANDS/REQUESTS

b. Hang de was buiten en het gaat regenen. CONDITIONAL
'Hang the laundry outside and it starts raining.'
('IF you hang the laundry outside, what happens? It starts raining.')
c. Vul de bon in en win een reis! CONDITIONAL
'Fill in the coupon and win a trip!' (de Haan 1992)
d. Val dood! 'Drop dead, F* you' CURSE
e. Krijg de tering! 'Catch tuberculosis' = 'F*** off!' CURSE

(13) a. De was buiten hangen. COMMAND
b. *De was buiten hangen en het gaat regenen.
c. *Doodvallen!/ *De tering krijgen!

The imperative construction with STM is characterized as being addressed to some Hearer, some specific person with some specific time period implied. (Note that the word order is that of a finite – i.e. tensed – clause.) With the IPI, no one in particular is (felt to be) addressed and no specific time period is implied. Consider de Haan's example (1992:101).

(14) a. Houd de deur vrij. 'Keep the door open'
keep the door free Cf. Jan houdt de deur vrij.
'John keeps the door open.'
b. De deur vrij houden. 'Keep the door open'
the door free to keep

Blom (1987:185) characterizes *Rook niet!* 'Smoke not' as the personal advice of a proselytizing ex-smoker urging his interlocutor to change his behavior, while *Niet roken!* 'No smoking' is a public announcement meant to regulate behavior in a public place. Paardekooper (1951:100-101) states that whereas *Jongens, kom binnen en maak je huiswerk* 'Boys, come in and do your homework (STM)' could be said by a parent directly to his or her children, *Jongens, binnenkomen en je huiswerk maken* (IPI) is an indirect command, perhaps a parent's command being repeated by and relayed by an older sibling.

An important element of IPI is the sense that the action is part of some standard procedure of some sort, hence capable of being repeated. Blom (1987:182) contrasts *Schenk jezelf een borrel* in 'Pour yourself a drink', which might be said by a sincere host or hostess to a guest at a dinner party, with *Jezelf een borrel inschenken*, which in turn could be

said by a director of a play to remind an actor that the character the actor is playing is supposed to pour himself a drink at that point in the play.

3.2 Towards an analysis of the STM-IPI opposition

We may summarize the above discussion of differences in usage between STM and IPI as in Table 2, adapted from van Heuven & Kirsner (1999: 88).

	STM	IPI
1. Relation to hearer	Personal/direct	Impersonal/indirect [i.e. absence – but not denial – of personal perspective]
2. Characterization of event	To be imagined	Explicitly an action to be undertaken
3. Status of activity	[Unspecified]	Part of some sort of standard procedure

Table 2. *Comparison of message components associated with STM and IPI*

Now one might further be able to derive these contrasts in message fractions from a more abstract, underlying contrast in meaning between the two forms, as we did for *hoor* and *hè* in the previous section.[2] As a first approximation, one could propose the relatively abstract, schematic semantic analysis of the STM-IPI opposition shown in Table 3 below, where the meaning for STM is adapted from Proeme (1984).

[2] The theoretical issue raised by such highly schematic analyses will be discussed below in section 7.1 below.

STM	IPI
Hearer must imagine self as being the source of the action or locus of the state (named by the verb)	Standard name of action or state

Table 3. *Possible schematic analysis of the STM-IPI opposition*

To support such an abstract analysis, one would then have to argue and demonstrate that the various concrete message components listed in Table 2 result from Gricean inferential mechanisms. Consider, for example, the fact that in (13a) versus (12a), the IPI communicates not only that the hearer should *imagine* himself or herself as carrying out the action (as in conditionals) but also constitutes a command to *actually undertake* it. This could be considered a consequence of the fact that, in choosing to use IPI the Speaker also chooses to *not* use STM, in which there is an explicit component IMAGINE, allowing for a conditional interpretation. Similarly, the direct, personal flavor of STM could be derived from the fact that STM explicitly addresses a Hearer but IPI does not. And the fact that IPI but not STM suggests a standard procedure could be derived from the fact that the bare infinitive is the standard name of an action. The infinitive, after all, is used as the citation form in Dutch dictionaries and it is the verb-form which Dutch-speaking children learn first.

But it might also be the case that the IPI is a specific construction which contrasts with other constructions and which, as a consequence, could have more semantic content than merely 'standard name of an action'. In order to say more, one would need to survey the many other uses of infinitives in Dutch (cf. Lambooy 1962, IJbema 2002: 181-184) and see whether it is useful to propose a unitary analysis of infinitive morphology in them or not and what the consequences would be for the analysis of IPI given above. For the immediate purpose of predicting the possible interaction of STM and IPI with *hè* and *hoor,* we shall rely on the 'lower-level' uses given in Table 2.

3.3 Contrasts in gruffness and suddenness

Preliminary though it may be, a number of facts of usage are explained by the scheme of message components given in Table 2. For example, commands may be considered a relatively face-threatening speech act. One way of defusing the possible threat, and of being more polite, is to use non-personal rather than personal constructions; cf. Brown & Levinson (1987:191). Some native Dutch speakers judge the instruction *Doorlezen!* 'Keep on reading' (IPI), said to a pupil or student, to be less gruff, less insistent than *Lees door!* (STM). Similarly, *Nu lekker slapen!* 'Now sleep well' and *Opstaan* 'Get up', said to a child in the IPI form, suggesting a procedure rather than a single isolated action, are felt to be less abrupt, requiring less instantaneous compliance, more allowing of the unfolding of a temporal process than the STM equivalents *Slaap nu lekker* and *Sta op.* Accordingly, military commands, to be obeyed instantaneously, are typically given in the STM form rather than the IPI. One has *Geef acht!* 'Give attention' 'Attention, ten-HUT!' and *Presenteer geweer!* 'Present arms!', not *Acht geven!* or *Geweer presenteren!* A particularly interesting minimal pair is *Stop! De brug is weg!* 'Stop! (STM) The bridge has washed away' versus *Stoppen! Er staat een stopbord.* 'Stop! (IPI) There is a stop-sign'. Greater urgency and unpredictability are associated with stopping because the bridge has suddenly disappeared than with the normal stopping-procedure one executes because there is an expected, regulation-type standard stop-sign at the intersection. Freeway signs are also instructive. Someone about to drive up a freeway off-ramp encounters as a 'wrong way' sign *GA TERUG!* 'Go back' and not *TERUGGAAN!*, but once he is safely on the highway, he may see as a 'no-passing' sign not *HAAL NIET IN!* but *NIET INHALEN.*

4. Predicting the interaction of STM and IPI with *hoor* and *hè*

We now turn to the main point of the paper, the question of which imperative structure, STM or IPI, would be more compatible with and tend to co-occur with the final particles *hè* and *hoor.* On the basis of the preceding sections, we argue as follows:

(1) With the bare STM, the activity is immediately placed in a personal perspective. The shock, as it were, is not cushioned. Hence the

instruction communicated is potentially face-threatening. Also, because the activity is not explicitly characterized as part of some standard procedure, the way it would be with IPI, it is potentially unpredicted, unexpected, surprising, hence potentially alarming, face-threatening on additional grounds.

(2) If, however, the bare STM is combined with a so-called softening particle, such as *maar* (etymologically 'but') or *eens* (etymologically 'once'), the threat to face is explicitly countered.[3] There is pragmatic cushioning of the shock. The hearer is urged over an abstract barrier with *maar* (cf. Foolen 1995, Janssen 1995) or told with *eens* that the action need not be repeated, hence is not as much of an imposition as it might be. Hence STM + *maar, eens*, etc. communicates less of a threat to face than bare STM.[4]

(3) If IPI is used, rather than STM, the activity is not put in a personal perspective, and is therefore not face-threatening to begin with. Furthermore, because the activity is characterized with IPI as a standard procedure of some kind, the action can be conceived of as somewhat predictable, hence less of a surprise, and hence even less face-threatening for a second reason. It does not 'ambush' the Hearer.

(4) Compared to utterances without final particles, utterances containing *hè* and *hoor* should be potentially non-face-threatening,

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[3] Vismans (1994) presents a valuable analysis of *maar, eens* and other modal particles in different kinds of directive sentences. Vismans (1993) reports on an experimental study of the relative politeness of *eens, ook, even, maar* and 'no particle' in the carrier sentences *Kun je de deur___ dichtdoen?* 'Can you___ close the door?' and *Je moet de deur __ dichtdoen* 'You must __ close the door.' Here *maar* was judged as the most mitigating, most polite modal particle, *eens* as the least mitigating and polite, with 'no particle' (as in *Je moet de deur dichtdoen*) as the least polite utterance. Shetter & van der Cruysse-van Antwerpen (2002: 149-150) gloss *maar* variously as 'please do,' 'just', and 'go ahead and', as in *Begin maar te eten* 'Go ahead and start eating.' Van der Wouden (1998:125) glosses *maar* as 'feel free to'.

[4] We note that brusque military commands, intended to be carried out immediately and without question, cannot be downtoned. *Geef maar acht!* 'Go ahead and pay attention/ Feel free to pay attention!' or *Geef eens acht!* are comparatively strange utterances requiring very special contexts; cf. Kirsner & Deen (1990:10, fn. 6).

because of the already established contact between Speaker and Hearer which these particles suggest.

(5) Accordingly, bare STM + *hè*, *hoor* should be a maximally incoherent, internally inconsistent combination. The brusqueness, the uncushioned threat to face communicated with bare STM should collide pragmatically with the intimacy and potential friendliness communicated with *hè* and *hoor.*

(6) STM + *maar, eens* + *hè*, *hoor* should be a more coherent combination. Since the potential threat to face suggested by STM is explicitly countered with *maar, eens, gerust*, etc., the combination should be less incompatible with the intimacy suggested by the final particles. For example, the gentle urging to perform the activity communicated with *maar*, *gerust, eens* should be augmented by the urging communicated with *hoor*, suggesting to the Hearer that it is alright to perform the action, even if he had not been previously aware that it was alright; cf. the (6) CORRECTION and (8) REASSURANCE, exploitations of *hoor* discussed above.

(7) IPI + *hè*, *hoor*, in turn, should also be a maximally coherent combinations. *Hoor* and *hè* would lend a personal flavor to an utterance which, by itself, is not impersonal, but non-personal, i.e. neutral and colorless. Since IPI by itself does not communicate anything that would be a threat to the Hearer's face, and *hè* and *hoor* also suggest that the Speaker-Hearer exchange is not face-threatening, the combination of these two 'hints', both suggesting a lack of threat, should not be incompatible. We summarize in Table 4, following:

	Without final particle	With *hè, hoor*
	Unmarked (there is nothing to 'collide' pragmatically with STM or IPI)	Potentially not Face-Threatening (because of claim of already established contact between Speaker and Hearer)
STM (1) Activity placed in a personal perspective, hence Face-Threatening. (2) Activity need not be a procedure and can be unexpected, hence Face-Threatening. (3) Is not explicitly toned-down.	Potentially Face-Threatening *Doe de deur dicht*! 'Close the door!'	RELATIVELY INCOHERENT, INTERNALLY INCONSISTENT COMBINATION **Doe de deur dicht, hoor!* **Doe de deur dicht, hè?*
STM + *maar, eens*, etc.. (1) and (2) as above. (3) But Threat to Face is explicitly countered by the meaning of the optional particle, assuring the Hearer by one means or another (*maar, eens*) that the Hearer's face is not threatened.	Potential threat to Face explicitly denied. *Doe de deur maar dicht!* 'Feel free to close the door!'	COHERENT, SYNERGISTIC COMBINATION. (*Hoor, hè* augment effect of *maar, eens, gerust*) *Doe de deur maar dicht, hoor!* *Doe de deur maar dicht, hè?* 'Feel free to close the door, mind you/okay?'
IPI (1) Activity not put in a personal perspective, hence not Face-Threatening. (2) Activity is a procedure, hence familiar, predictable and not Face-Threatening.	Relative absence of threat to Face. *De deur dichtdoen!* Close the door!	COHERENT COMBINATION. *Hoor, hè* lend a personal flavor to an utterance which, by itself, is absolutely colorless. *De deur dichtdoen, hoor!* 'Remember to close the door!' *De deur dichtdoen, hè?* 'You'll close the door, won't you?'

Table 4: Predicted Interaction of STM, IPI with hoor, hè

5. The questionnaire experiment

5.1 Design

The first test of the hypothesis was an exploratory questionnaire administered to 78 native Dutch speakers. The design was as follows:

- 2 different test predicates (activities, lexicon): *De deur dichtdoen* 'close the door,' *De fiets wegzetten* 'put the bike away'
- 2 different imperative forms, IPI or STM, as in *De deur dichtdoen, De fiets wegzetten* vs. *Doe de deur dicht, Zet de fiets weg.*
- 3 possible final particle conditions: None versus *hè* versus *hoor.*
- 2 possible modal particle conditions, namely *maar* 'but' feel free to', or its absence, as in *Doe de deur maar dicht* 'Feel free to close the door, go ahead and close the door' or *Zet de fiets maar weg* 'Feel free to put the bike away, go ahead and put the bike away'; *De deur maar dichtdoen* or *De fiets maar wegzetten* versus *Doe de deur dicht, Zet de fiets weg, De deur dichtdoen, De fiets wegzetten.*

We thus have 2 predicates x 2 grammatical forms x 3 final particle conditions x 2 modal particles = 24 conditions = 24 separate test sentences. The test sentences were listed in one random order on one version of the questionnaire and in the mirror image of that random order on a second version. Each version was administered to 39 subjects.

The subjects were asked to rate all the sentences on the following two scales:

Scale 1: Does the sentence in your opinion contain a friendly request, an authoritarian command, or something in between? Assign a 'score' to the sentence as follows:

VERY FRIENDLY REQUEST	<== 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ==>	VERY AUTHORITARIAN COMMAND

We shall call this scale the Imperativity scale

Scale 2: How easily can you think of situations in which the sentence – exactly as written out here – would be said? Is the sentence unusual,

strange or is it common, normal? Assign a 'score' as follows:

UNUSUAL. STRANGE. NO CONTEXT OR SITUATIONS POSSIBLE	<== 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ==>	NORMAL. MANY CONTEXTS OR SITUATIONS POSSIBLE

We shall call this scale the Usualness scale. Note that the relatively normal linguistic task (namely that of interpreting the sentence in some way or other) had to be carried out before the more metalinguistic task of judging whether one would ever say such a thing in Dutch and, if so, how 'normal' it seemed.

Note further that, in order to create a kind of baseline against which to compare the other combinations, we included in the stimulus-sentences combinations of IPI + *maar*, which were excluded from Table 4.[5]

5.2 Initial results

Let us begin by briefly considering the Imperativity judgements. The results are plotted in Figure 1.

[5] An appreciable number of our Dutch consultants considered these combinations totally ungrammatical. The explanation for this might involve the lack of inherent temporal limitation (the non-finiteness) of the infinitive. In any case, it is suggestive that van der Wouden's gloss for the modal particle *maar* (1998:125) does not work well in English nonfinite constructions either, presumably because it foregrounds the *feeling free* at the expense of what is to be done, so that it can no longer function as a nudge or encouragement to undertake the action: cf. *Shut the door, Feel free to shut the door, It is important to shut the door* ?*It is important to feel free to shut the door, Shutting the door is important,* ?*Feeling free to shut the door is important.*

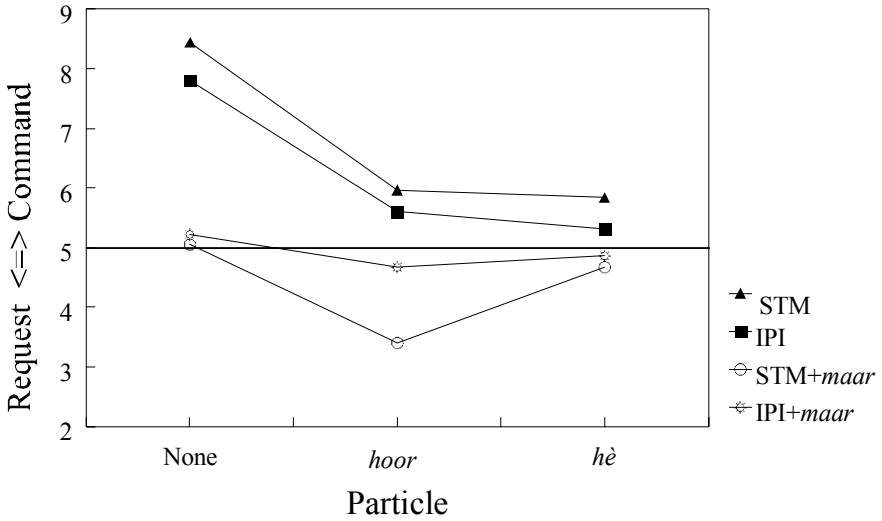

Figure 1. *Mean Imperativity Scale scores for both lexical sentences combined broken down by Final Particle, Grammatical Form, and Modal Particle*

For present purposes, it enough to note that the bare IPI is judged to be between 0.4 and 0.6 of a scale point lower in Imperativity than the bare STM across all three final particle conditions (no particle, *hoor, hè*), and that the STM + *maar* combination is between 1.2 and 3.4 scale points lower in Imperativity than the bare STM across all three final particle conditions. That is, the decrease in Imperativity as one goes from STM to STM+*maar* is far greater than the decrease in Imperativity as one goes from STM to IPI.

Figure 2 plots the results for the Usualness judgements. Because these judgements constitute an empirical test of our analysis of the interaction of final particle with imperative form, we consider them in somewhat greater detail:

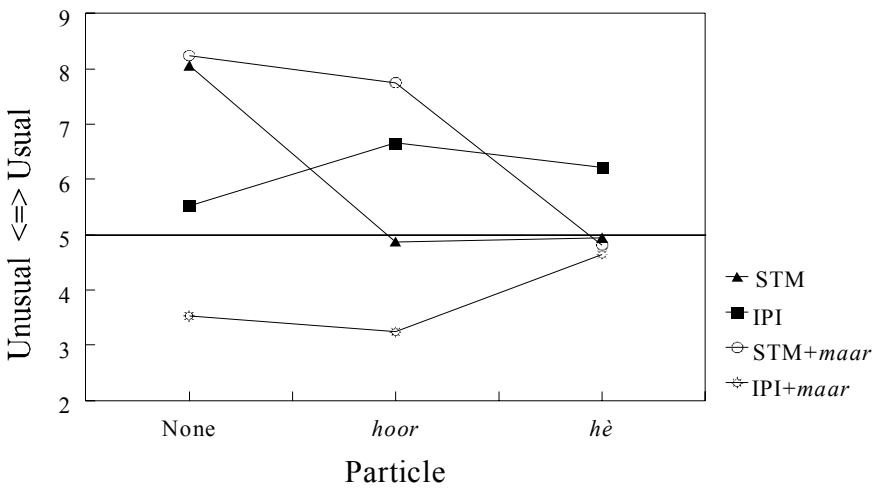

Figure 2. *Mean Usualness Scale scores for both lexical sentences combined broken down by Final Particle, Grammatical Form, and Modal Particle*

A repeated measures analysis of the questionnaire data reveals that Predicate, Imperative Form, and Final Particle are all significant main effects but that the only significant first-order interaction is Imperative Form * Final Particle (as we would expect). In other words, there was no significant first-order interaction involving Predicate, no significant difference between the two Predicates (closing the door, putting the bike away) in the way the form of the imperative or the final particle chosen behaved.

A series of paired comparisons was then carried out; we examine the essential prediction first. Averaging over the two Predicates, we find that when there is no final particle, the bare stem STM, with a mean score of 8.06, is judged as significantly more Usual than the infinitivus pro imperativo IPI, with a mean score of 5.52 ($p<.001$). However, when the final particle is *hoor*, there is a cross-over: it is IPI, with a mean of 6.66, which is significantly more Usual than the bare stem STM, with a mean of 4.87, rather than the reverse ($p<.001$). And when the final particle is *hè*, IPI, with a mean of 6.21, remains significantly more Usual than STM, with a mean of 4.94 ($p<.001$). These results are entirely in

line with our basic prediction. *Hoor* and *hè* are judged as more Usual with IPI than with STM.

5.3 Further results: the unpredicted lack of parallelism between *hoor* and *hè*

Let us now examine forms with the softening particle *maar*, beginning with STM. We note that, with no final particle, STM + *maar*, at 8.24, is judged as significantly more Usual than IPI and that STM + *maar* + *hoor*, at 7.75 *remains* significantly more Usual than both STM + *hoor*, at 4.87 (p<.001) and IPI + *hoor* at 6.66 (p<.001). However, with the final particle *hè*, the Usualness score for STM + *maar* decays: STM + *maar* + *hè*, at 4.81, is *not* significantly different from STM + *hè* at 4.94. We note that this decay of STM + *maar* + *hè* was not accounted for by the discussion summarized in Table 4 above, which assumed a parallelism between *hoor* and *hè*. We shall return to this point in section 5.4.2 below.

Turning to the *maar*-forms with IPI, we note that even though a number of our experimental subjects remarked that this combination was ungrammatical, there is interesting variation. Without any final particle, IPI + *maar*, with a mean Usualness value of 3.53, is indeed significantly less acceptable than both the bare STM, at 8.06, (p<.001) and STM + *maar* at 8.24, (p<.001) but not less acceptable than bare IPI at 5.52 (p<.26). The combination IPI + *maar* + *hoor*, with a mean Usualness score of 3.23, is indeed significantly less acceptable than each of the three other forms with *hoor* ; p<.001 in all cases. However, when the final particle is *hè*, the Usualness score of the combination with IPI + *maar* rises by more than a scale-point, attaining a mean value of 4.64,which is not significantly less Usual than that of STM + *maar* + *hè*, with a mean of 4.81, or of STM + *hè*, with a mean of 4.94. It is significantly less Usual only than IPI + *hè*, with a mean of 6.21.

5.4 Additional discussion

5.4.1 Imperativity judgements

Our prior characterization in section 3 of STM as the most forceful imperative is confirmed by the observed relative ranking in Imperativity of STM > IPI > STM+*maar* under all conditions (bare, combined with *hoor*, and combined with *hè*). But we cannot be entirely satisfied with

this finding because the data plotted in Figure 1 go beyond this hypothesis. Note first that the reasoning summarized in Table 4 was not precise enough to enable us to predict whether STM+*maar* would be weaker or stronger in Imperativity than IPI. Second, in not saying anything about *IPI+maar,* Table 4 obviously made no prediction about the relative ranking of this combination with respect to bare IPI. And third, in lumping *hoor* and *hè* together as two pragmatic particles profiling Speaker-Hearer contact, Table 4 made no prediction that *hoor* and *hè* might behave differently from each other. Nevertheless, we suggest here that the observed data may be still explained by considering the properties of the particles and the imperative structures given in Tables 1, 2, and 3, even if all the implications of those properties were not taken into account in Table 4.

Let us consider the first point above. In retrospect, one reason STM+*maar* might be judged as less of a command than IPI is that STM contrasts with IPI in not stating explicitly that the action in question is one to be undertaken and not simply imagined (cf. Table 2). Hence, the interpretation given STM (the degree of Imperativity ascribed to it) should be *more context-dependent* than that given IPI.[6] In the present case, the context is the addition of the polite and coaxing particle *maar*, to yield STM+*maar.* The result is that the politeness of *maar* must be interpreted together with the personal relation to the hearer communicated by STM. Since bare *maar*-less STM is still available to communicate true commands, it is reasonable that STM+*maar* is taken as contrasting maximally with it, namely as a request. IPI, however, remains impersonal and more explicitly a command, so it is not all that surprising that it is still judged as a command rather than a request.

Turning now to the second point, we might suggest that the position of IPI + *maar* exceedingly close to the midpoint of the Imperativity scale under all three final particle conditions (namely at 5.22, 4.67, and 4.86) reflects the fact that this combination is simply considered ungrammatical by many native speakers, so that they don't quite know

[6] For a demonstration that this is case when the 'context' is the pitch level of the utterance, see van Heuven & Kirsner (1999:87-88). The degree of perceived Imperativity of STM is much more influenced by pitch level than the perceived Imperativity of IPI is.

how to judge it.[7] (As is apparent from Figure 2, IPI+*maar* has the lowest mean acceptability of the four combinations of imperative and particle considered.)

Let us now turn to the most striking lack of parallelism in the behavior of *hoor* and *hè* seen in Figure 1, namely that between STM+ *maar*+*hoor* and STM+*maar*+*hè*. The fact that STEM + *maar* + *hè* lies near the midpoint of the Imperativity scale, at 4.67, considerably above STM + *maar* + *hoor* at 3.40, might, as in the case of IPI+*maar* just discussed, reflect the relative incoherence of this specific combination of imperative form, modal particle, and final particle. We take up this issue in more detail in the following section.

5.4.2 Usualness judgements

As noted above, the data plotted in Figure 2 are consistent with our prediction that the utterance-final pragmatic particles *hoor* and *hè* would combine more felicitously with IPI than with STM. We shall now take up two questions involving *unpredicted* differences between *hoor* and *hè* and between imperative structures with and without *maar.*

The first question is: Why is the combination of STM + *maar* + *hoor* so much better (more Usual) than STM + *hoor* while both STM + *hè* and STM + *maar* + *hè* have the roughly the same, lower, Usualness score as STM + *hoor*? The answer would seem to be as follows: Because *maar* softens a command to a request (as seen in Figure 1), the use of *hoor* with STM + *maar* is less internally contradictory than with the bare STM, as was predicted in earlier discussion; cf. Table 4. According to Janssen (1995) and Foolen (1995), *maar* indicates that there is some sort of an abstract barrier or threshold to carrying out the action. Compare the *ANS* (Haeseryn et. al. 1997:457) which characterizes *Geef die boeken hier* 'Give those books here' as a command but *Geef die boeken maar hier* as a reassuring and friendly request. In using the STM form of the

[7] Compare Osgood's Semantic Differential tasks (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957), in which subjects had to rank stimulus words (e.g. *knife, swamp*) on 7-point bipolar scales such as *strong-weak, good-bad, wise-foolish*, etc. If the property being measured on the scale had nothing whatsoever to do with the stimulus word being ranked, the word might receive an intermediate rank rather than one at either extreme; cf. Weinreich (1959), especially section 2, entitled 'Is a Knife Humble or Proud?'.

imperative together with *maar*, the Speaker 'coaxes' the Hearer, as it were, over this abstract threshold. The use of the final particle *hoor* accordingly works *synergistically* with *maar* because *hoor* can suggest that the Hearer was unaware of something: in this case, that it is not only permitted but also desirable to cross the threshold and carry out the action in question.

Hè, in contrast, works *antagonistically* – a fact which was not sufficiently kept in mind in the discussion summarized in Table 4. On the most basic, literal, level, in using *hè* together with the more direct STM, the Speaker asks the Hearer to (i) explicitly confirm or acknowledge that he is being ordered or requested to carry out an action and (ii) to agree to it. This request for acknowledgment or confirmation *undercuts* the pragmatics of commanding. It is incoherent with a pure command, just as *hè* is incoherent with genuine (pure) questions as opposed to a statement which the Hearer is being asked to confirm or disconfirm; compare **Is stikstof een gas, hè?* 'Is nitrogen a gas, isn't it?' versus *Stikstof is een gas*, *hè?* 'Nitrogen is a gas, isn't it?' But even if *hè* is interpreted in STM + *hè* not literally but metalinguistically, on the level of speech acts (cf. Sweetser 1990:70 and passim), as in *Nou dag, hè?* 'Well, goodbye, OK?' where the Speaker asks the Hearer to acknowledge and assent to his Speech Act of saying goodbye, there is something decidedly strange about the Speaker asking the Hearer to acknowledge a speech act of *commanding*.[8] It certainly is odd with unquestionable commands, such as in a military context; cf. *Ingerukt mars!* 'Dis-MISSED!' versus *???Ingerukt mars, hè?* 'Dis-MISSED, okay?' Hence, it makes sense that STM + *hè* should be judged as roughly on the same (low) level of Usualness as STM + *hoor*.

But *maar* even adds to the incoherence. If *maar* gently 'coaxes the Hearer over a barrier' to performing the action, lowering the Imperativity, the use it with of *hè* – asking for instant confirmation – increases the Speaker's insistence, which makes the command *more* of a

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[8] For the sake of completeness we note that whereas the use of *hè* to simply request *confirmation* of a statement can be paraphrased with the tag *is het niet*? 'isn't it', the metalinguistic use of *hè* to request *acknowledgment* cannot be. One has both *Stikstof is een gas, hè?* and *Stikstof is een gas, is het niet?* 'Nitrogen is a gas, isn't it?', but alongside *Nou dag, hè* 'Well goodby, alright?' one does not say *??Nou dag, is het niet?* 'Well goodbye, isn't it?' cf. Kirsner (2001:21, fn.5).

command, thereby leading to a pragmatic collision. If we follow van der Wouden (1998:125) and translate *maar* with English *feel free to*, we observe that, in contrast to *Close the door!*, *Close the door, will you?,* and *Feel free to close the door*, the combination *Feel free to close the door, will you?* is exceedingly strange. The kind invitation of *feel free to* (the rough English analogue of *maar*) is undercut by the nagging, insistent character of the *hè*-like tag-question. Presumably the same sort of mechanism underlies the internal inconsistency of *Doe de deur maar dicht, hè?, Zet de fiets maar weg, hè?*

A second question suggested by scrutiny of Figure 2 is: Why – if many subjects consider IPI+*maar* to be ungrammatical – does IPI + *maar* + *hè* nonetheless score better in Usualness than IPI + *maar* or IPI + *maar* + *hoor*? Here one might cautiously suggest that the reason is that (i) unlike STM, IPI is less personal, hence potentially less direct, and (ii) that it is here combined with two softeners, *hè* and *maar*, both of which operate to convert the name of a procedure, closing the door, into a suggestion for action rather than a command.

6. Quantitative data from texts

We now return to our main theme of the relative coherence of *hoor* and *hè* with STM and IPI. The second kind of evidence in favor of our hypothesis that *hè* and *hoor* will be more coherent with IPI than with STM is provided by text counts of the relative occurrence of STM and IPI with and without final *hoor* and *hè.*

6.1 The prediction

We predict that the more coherent combinations, IPI + *hoor,* IPI + *hè* will be more frequent in running texts than the less coherent combinations of bare STM + *hoor,* STM + *hè.* Table 5, below, presents the data for five separate corpora, covering 895 pages of text. Note that the notation STM (+ *maar*) in the table covers instances of both bare STM (without any modal particle) and STM + *maar*, *gerust*, etc. IPI here

refers, as always, to instances of IPI without *maar*: Although we encountered no final *hè* in our corpora, there were 8 instances of *hoor*.[9]

(1) Carmiggelt (1975) *Slenteren*

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	34	1	35	3
IPI	8	2	10	20

(2) Hellinger (1967) *Vlammen*

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	40	0	40	0
IPI	4	1	5	20

(3) van Straten (1989) *Lukt het Agnes?*

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	62	0	62	0
IPI	27	1	28	4

(4) Campert (1960) *Een ellendige nietsnut en andere verhalen*

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	21	0	21	0
IPI	4	1	5	20

(5) Reve (1972) *De Avonden. Een winterverhaal*

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	161	1	162	1
IPI	26	1	27	4

Table 5. *The distribution of STM and IPI with and without* <u>*hoor*</u> *in 5 Dutch texts*

We observe that the skewing is the same in each text: the percentage of IPI with *hoor* is higher than the percentage of STM (+*maar*) with *hoor.* The possibility that this distribution could occur by chance is analogous to the possibility of flipping a coin five times and getting five heads in a row, namely $(2)^5 = 1/32 = .031$, which is less than .05, the customary

[9] A further search, in an additional text, yielded one example of *hè*. See section 6.2.3 below.

threshold for statistical significance. The figures for the aggregate sample are shown in Table 6:

	Plain	With final *hoor*	Total	% *hoor*
STM (+*maar*)	318	2	320	1
IPI	69	6	75	8

Table 6. *The distribution of STM and IPI with and without* <u>*hoor*</u> *in the aggregate sample*

It should be pointed out here that our original prediction is confirmed even better than these figures indicate, for the two cases out of 320 where STM (+ *maar)* does co-occur with *hoor* contain not bare STM but only STM + softening particle. The first case is sentence (15), with the particle *gerust* 'calmly, go ahead', from a short story collection by Simon Carmiggelt. The second is from Gerard Reve's classic novel *De Avonden* and contains *maar*:

(15) Wel, wel, wel dat doet me genoegen. Wil je thee jongen? De koekjes staan op het dressoir. Neem er <u>gerust</u> een paar, <u>hoor</u>. (Carmiggelt 1975:54)

'Well, well, well. That makes me glad. Do you want tea, my boy. The cookies are on the sideboard. <u>Go</u> <u>ahead</u> <u>and</u> have a couple, hear.'

(16) Hij liet het oor los, aaide over de kop en zei iets luider: 'Huil <u>maar</u> niet, <u>hoor</u>. Zo ver is het nog niet...' (Reve 1972:212)
He let go of the ear, stroked its head and said more loudly: '<u>There</u>, <u>there</u> don't cry. (Literally: Cry <u>but</u> not, <u>hear</u>). We haven't got there yet...' (Reve n.d.:184).

Accordingly, while 8% of the 75 instances of IPI contain *hoor*, 0% of the instances of *bare* STM (without modal particle) contain *hoor*. This makes sense if, as we argue, IPI + *hoor* is a less internally contradictory combination than STM + *hoor*. An example of IPI + *hoor* found in the texts is the following (Hellinger 1967:119):

(17) 'Oh, wat een schattig autootje. Net speelgoed. Mag ik er eens in rijden?'
Vooruit dan maar. Misschien vrolijkte het haar wat op. Ik liet haar zien hoe het monstertje schakelde.
'Maar hier op het parkeerterrein blijven, hoor.'
'Natuurlijk Sid.'

'Oh, what a cute little car. Just like a toy. Might I drive it?'
Well alright. Perhaps it would cheer her up a bit. I showed her how the little demonstration car shifted gears.
'Just stay here in the parking lot, mind you.'
'Of course, Sid.'

6.2 The importance of negation

Just as was the case with the questionnaire data, we find that further scrutiny of text count data uncovers important trends not anticipated when our original hypothesis was formulated. We find, namely, that negative commands or prohibitions seem to favor both the occurrence of IPI versus STM and the presence of *hoor*. Consider Table 7.

Positive Commands

	STM (+ *maar*)	STM (+ *maar*) + *hoor*
Carmiggelt	32	1
Hellinger	38	0
v Straten	55	0
Campert	20	0
Reve	143	0
Aggregate	288	1 (0.3%)

	IPI	IPI + *hoor*
Carmiggelt	6	0
Hellinger	2	1
v Straten	16	0
Campert	2	1
Reve	20	0
Aggregate	46	2 (4.2%)

Prohibitions (with Negation)

	STM (+ *maar*)	STM (+ *maar*) + *hoor*
Carmiggelt	2	0
Hellinger	2	0
v Straten	7	0
Campert	1	0
Reve	18	1
Aggregate	30	1 (3.2%)

	IPI	IPI + *hoor*
Carmiggelt	2	2
Hellinger	2	0
v Straten	11	1
Campert	2	0
Reve	6	1
Aggregate	23	4 (14.8%)

Table 7. *The distribution of STM and IPI with and without* <u>*hoor*</u> *broken down into positive commands and prohibitions*

As one moves from positive commands to negative prohibitions, the total percentage of IPI increases from 48/337 or 14% to 27/58 or 47% and the total percentage of *hoor* increases from 3/337 or 1% to 5/58 or 9%.

6.2.1 The favoring of IPI

One might suggest three motivations for more than three-fold increase of IPI in prohibitions. The first and most obvious factor is iconicity. Having the negator in initial position immediately clues the hearer that the

message is going to be a prohibition and prevents any confusion with a positive command. That is, one could argue that a sentence like *Niet schieten!* 'Not to shoot = Don't shoot' (with the *Niet* being the very first word the Hearer receives) is less easily confused with a positive command than *Schiet niet* 'Shoot not', in which the morpheme *schiet* could be the first word in the positive commands *Schiet!* or *Schieten!* 'Shoot.'

A second possible factor might be some sort of given-new strategy. That is STM + *niet* (with the lexical verb in initial position) might be used when the activity described by the verb has been an earlier topic of conversation and *niet* + IPI might be used when the activity described by the verb has not been. It is at least suggestive that in van Straten (1989) one can find examples such as the following. In (18) *zeg* (STM) follows an earlier instance of *zeggen* 'say' but in (19) *tobben* 'worry' has not been previously mentioned:

(18) 'Als Johan nou weer belt, wat zeg ik dan'
'Weet ik niet. Zeg maar helemaal niks. Dat je het niet weet.'
(van Straten 1989:141)

'If Johan should call again, what do I say?'
'I don't know. Don't say anything at all (STM)
(Say) that you don't know.'

(19) En opeens keek hij Agnes aan, met wijd opengesperde ogen en zei een beetje plechtig: 'Agnes..ik scháám me zo!'
Braaf zei Agnes dat er voor Daniël werkelijk helemaal niets was om zich voor te schamen.
Maar wat herkende ze die schaamte.
'Niet meer tobben,' zei ze, 'lekker slapen.' En ze deed zijn bedlampje uit. (van Straten 1989:34)

And suddenly he looked at Agnes, with wide open eyes, and said somewhat solemnly: 'Agnes, I am so ashamed!'
Decently Agnes said that there was nothing that Daniel needed to be ashamed about.
But how she recognized that shame.
'No more worrying = Don't worry anymore (IPI),' she said, 'to sleep tight (IPI).'And she turned off his little bedside lamp.

Finally, a third factor might be that IPI in its entirety is something of an innovation. It did not exist in Middle Dutch (Stoett 1923:241; Weijnen 1971:98). Consequently, with at least certain verbs, the older STM imperative seems old-fashioned and the IPI colloquial.[10] A preacher might still say *Zondig niet meer* 'Sin no more' in a Bible lesson, but this phrasing is much more formal than *Niet meer zondigen* 'No more sinning', where, however, the use of IPI would clash with the solemnity inherent in the lexical meaning of this particular verb. Nevertheless, by bringing in a final *hoor* (another colloquial element) to underscore the personal contact between Speaker and Hearer, the Speaker can temper this solemnity further and create a playful ironic effect: *Niet meer zondigen, hoor!* 'No more sinning, mind you!'. It would not be possible to do this in the same way with the original STM variant (e.g. *Zondig niet meer, hoor!* 'Sin no more, mind you!') because of (i) the original pragmatic clash already discussed between bare STM and *hoor*, and because of (ii) the huge register class between the solemn *Zondig niet meer* and *hoor*.[11] Such stylistic factors as the perceived novelty of a construction and its colloquial flavor might well play a role in the further propagation of that construction.

6.2.2 The favoring of *hoor*

We now turn to the second apparent trend seen in Table 5, namely the apparent favoring of *hoor* with prohibitions in general. As noted above, the overall increase as one moves from positive commands to prohibitions is from 0.9% to 8.6 % or +7.7% . If future research shows this to be a real trend, perhaps its explanation is to be sought in Duinhoven's claim (1997:406-7) that negative imperatives are by nature weaker than positive ones and constitute more of a recommendation than

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[10] See further Givón's concept of the diachronic conservatism of negation (Givón 1979:121-142). Suppose we have a verb V with a sense A and which is evolving a new sense B. If negative environments are conservative, as Givón's discussion of the English modal verbs suggests, then STM+NEG would tend to preserve the older A sense of the verb relative to STM. The newer, B sense of the verb would tend to be favored by the innovation IPI with or without NEG.

[11] An analogue would be the sarcastic quotation of the solemn, Biblical Eighth Commandment followed by *hoor*: *Gij zult niet stelen, hoor* 'Thou shalt not steal, mind you.' – cf. Haiman's 1990 discussion of quotation in sarcasm.

a genuine command. If this were true, a negative imperative could be potentially less of a threat to the Hearer's face than a positive command and more compatible with other elements, such as *hoor*, whose use also indicates that the Hearer's face is not being threatened.

Though the sample is perhaps too small to generalize from, there is an interesting asymmetry worth further study. The percentage of *hoor* with STM (+ *maar*) rises from 1/239 = 0.3% to 1/30 = 3% while the percentage of *hoor* within the IPI category rises from 2/48 = 4% to 4/27 = 15%. This 12% difference between IPI and STM in the rate of attraction of *hoor* in prohibitions might be explained by the same mechanism outlined above. If negative imperatives involve less of a threat to face than positive ones, IPI would seem to be the form of choice and there would be a synergy between the use of IPI rather than STM(+*maar*) and the use of *hoor*. A example from Reve:

(20) Viktor dronk met een vertrokken gezicht. '<u>Niet</u> de boel verpesten, <u>hoor</u>,' zei Frits. 'Zo'n kwaad smoel kunnen we hier niet hebben...' (Reve 1972:117)
Victor pulled a face as he drank. 'Now don't spoil things,' (Literally: <u>Not</u> the matter mess-up, <u>hear</u>) said Frits. 'We can't have dirty looks like that here...' (Reve n.d.: 100)

6.2.3 A note on *hè*

In making counts of the kind reported here, one discovers that final particles may be quite rare in a text, so that no data are obtained on their combination with STM and IPI. As noted already, out of 395 imperative structures counted, only 8 contained *hoor* and 0 contained *hè.* That *hè* does in fact occur with imperatives is shown by an additional count of the first 100 pages of Dorrestein (2000). This time, IPI + *hè* was encountered, but not IPI + *hoor* (and of course neither bare STM + *hè* nor bare STM + *hoor*). Though the numbers are too small to be significant, the distribution is similar to that seen for *hoor*. It is tantalizing that the sole example of IPI + *hè* which should occur is in a *negative* command, a (softened) prohibition. The data are displayed in Table 8.

Positive Commands	STM (+ *maar*)	STM (+ *maar*) + *hè*
	34	0
	IPI	IPI + *hè*
	4	0
Prohibitions	STM (+ *maar*)	STM (+ *maar*) + *hoor*
	2	0
	IPI	IPI + *hè*
	1	1

Table 8. *The distribution of STM and IPI in the first 100 pages of Dorrestein (2000) with and without final particles, broken down into positive commands and prohibitions*

The datum in question is (21):

(21) 'En je moeder geen verdriet doen, hè?
And your mother no pain do, eh?
'And you won't cause your mother any distress, will you?'
(Dorrestein 2000:38)

7. Some theoretical implications

In this paper, we have explored what could be called the 'ecology' of linguistic forms. After introducing the utterance-final pragmatic particles *hè* and *hoor* and after sketching the contrast in usage between the verb-stem imperative and the infinitive used as an imperative, we focused on the interaction of these two components of Dutch grammar. On the basis of a semantic analysis of *hè* and *hoor* and of STM and IPI, we argued that the use of these particles would be more compatible with – and hence also more frequent with – IPI than with STM. Our prediction was borne out by the results of a questionnaire experiment with native Dutch consultants and by frequency counts of combinations of STM and IPI with and without *hè* and *hoor* in a number of Dutch texts. In addition, examination of both the questionnaire data and the text count data revealed other, unanticipated phenomena for which we sketched possible explanations. We shall conclude this paper by discussing several theoretical issues which are raised by these phenomena.

7.1 Maximalist (bottom-up) linguistics versus minimalist (top-down) linguistics

Consider first of all our prediction in Table 4 that both the combination STM + *maar* + *hoor* and the combination STM + *maar* + *hè* would be acceptable. This prediction was based on the assumption that, because both *hè* and *hoor* claim that contact has already been made between Speaker and Hearer, both particles would indicate that less of a threat to the Hearer's face was present and, hence, *both* should be compatible with *maar*, a particle used to 'coax' the Hearer over an imaginary barrier, thereby decreasing the threat to the Hearer's face posed by STM. As we discussed at some length above, this prediction was incorrect; Figure 2 shows that although sentences like *De deur dichtdoen, hoor* and *De Deur dichtdoen, hè?* are judged similarly (both ranking above sentences like *Doe de deur dicht, hoor* and *Doe de deur dicht, hè?,* which are also judged similarly on the Usualness scale), sentences like *Doe de deur maar dicht, hè?* are judged as significantly *less* Usual than *Doe de deur maar dicht, hoor*. The assumed parallelism between *hè* and *hoor* thus breaks down. The reason why STM + *maar* + *hè* is worse than STM + *maar* + *hoor* can be explained only (as we did above) by considering not what *hè* has in common with *hoor* but how they differ. This entails scrutiny of the particular meaning signaled specifically by *hè*, roughly REQUEST FOR CONFIRMATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, and the particular uses which this schematic meaning gives rise to. Our initial error was thus in failing to recognize the greater importance of *lower level* schemas 'in the computation or evaluation of novel expressions' (Langacker 1991:286; cf. also Langacker 2000:29-31), with the 'novel expressions' being in this case the different imperative structures with the final particles and with and without *maar*.

This point is perhaps reinforced by examining STM + *maar* + *hoor* and IPI + *hoor*, both of which ranked – as we predicted – appreciably above STM + *hoor* on the Usualness scale. From our schematic analysis, emphasizing potential threats to the Hearer's face, there was no way to predict the *additional fact* that native speakers would judge STM + *maar* + *hoor* to be significantly *more* Usual than IPI + *hoor*. On the other hand, given one native speaker's judgement that *Doe de deur maar dicht, hoor* is more condescending than *De deur dichtdoen, hoor*, one might be able to relate this to the explicit coaxing over a barrier communicated by *maar*. The fact remains that these combinations, to greater or lesser

degrees, lead a life of their own and have – almost like lexical items – emergent properties which are not entirely predictable from those of their components; cf. Langacker's example that a *printer* 'is not just 'something that prints'' (2000:38).

7.2 Degrees of idiomaticity of collocations

The data presented in Table 7 present us with a number of new puzzles which might not be entirely solvable at the schematic level at which the data are presented. On the one hand, one can argue (as we did) that, with negation, the IPI is a handy thing to have, for it allows the negator to stand iconically in initial position, where its alerting, warning function is maximally clear. Yet before one begins a relatively abstract discussion about prohibitions and commands in general, and why the frequency of *hoor* tends to increase with negation, one might also want to know more about which *particular* verbs tend to occur with and without negation in Dutch and whether there is a tendency to favor STM or IPI in each case. How does the lexical meaning of each verb interact with the semantics of each construction and each particle? Hoeksema (1992) has argued that *all* instances of IPI, whether with negation or without negation, are 'idiomatic,' and are learned separately, for each verb, one by one. After reading Blom (1987), with her stimulating example of the play director, mentioned above, I am however not totally convinced that, say, alongside *Niet zeuren!* 'No complaining!' one could *not* – pace Hoeksema (1992:128) – also say *Zeuren* 'Complain! You are supposed to *complain* at this point in Act 3'. Nevertheless, Hoeksema's point is well taken. As is the case with Goldberg's (1992) study of the English ditransitive construction, full understanding of the interaction of STM and IPI with negation and with *hè* and *hoor* would seem to require more detailed scrutiny of the Dutch verbal lexicon.

7.3 Syntax versus semantics versus pragmatics

Finally, the data of Table 7 suggest that Dutch is moving towards the situation seen in languages such as Hebrew, Spanish, and Italian (Zanuttini 1997 cited in Hyams 2002) where instead of negative imperatives, one finds negator + future tense, negator + subjunctive, and/or negator + infinitive: cf. Italian *Telefona!* 'Call!' but *Non telefonare!* 'Not to call'

instead of **Non telefona!* Certainly the emergence in Dutch of a fixed infinitival collocation such as the warning *Niet doen!* 'not to do' for '*Don't!* (Cook 1995:142) is intriguing. Nevertheless, because Dutch *does* have productive negative imperatives such as *Ga niet weg!* 'Don't go away!' alongside neg + IPI, such as *Niet weggaan!,* it seems to have escaped the attention of those formal grammarians who would explain the all-or-nothing Italian phenomena in purely syntactic terms. The skewing seen in the Dutch data presented here suggests that, whatever the synchronic end point reached, the *process towards that endpoint* is driven at least in part by pragmatic and processing considerations rather than syntax.

Nevertheless, there might also be an additional factor at work: a basic clash between negation and the pragmatic force of the imperative.[12] The presence of such a clash seems to have been considered intuitively obvious by logicians such as Hans Reichenbach, who claims (1966:342) that the symbolic formulation of the negation of an imperative is 'meaningless.' Compare also Han's claim (1998:40) that 'the directive force contributed by the imperative mood cannot be negated by a negative marker.' Accordingly, if negative imperatives are – to at least some degree – internally inconsistent, less coherent than positive ones, and if, in consequence, less assertive forms (such as the future or subjunctive or *infinitive*) have to (or tend to) be brought into play with negation to communicate the intended negative message, one could argue that prohibitions cannot really be commanded but only suggested; cf. Duinhoven (1997) mentioned earlier.

Yet another tack would be to consider the pragmatic role that negation plays in discourse and the greater suitability of the infinitive

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[12] Further evidence for the greater force of positive commands in Dutch (and hence of their greater potential threat to the Hearer's face) is perhaps provided by special imperative constructions which cannot be negated at all. First of all, it is difficult to imagine a prohibition *Presenteer geen geweer!* 'Do *not* present arms!' alongside the military command *Presenteer geweer!* And, second, one has in Dutch the special 'success imperative', such as *Eet ze!* 'Enjoy your meal' (literally: Eat them!), *Werk ze!* 'Have fun working' (literally: Work them!), described in Cook (1995:226) and Coppen (1998), which cannot be negated either: **Eet ze niet!* 'Do *not* enjoy your meal', **Werk ze niet!* 'Do *not* have fun working'.

rather than the verb stem to facilitate that role. Following Contini-Morava's discussion of the asymmetry between positive and negative utterances (1989:3-5,172-181), one could argue that positive commands, like positive statements, are typically not made against a background of specific negative expectations while negative commands, like negative statements, *are* made against a background of specific positive expectations.[13] Just as a sentence like *John did not eat the fish* is usually uttered in a context where it might have been possible for John to eat the fish, *Don't eat fish* might be uttered in a context where there would be a possibility that the Hearer would eat fish. Since possibility rather than actuality is usually communicated explicitly, transparently, by modal or at least nonfinite verbal forms, it would make sense that there would be a tendency for prohibitions to be communicated more often with a negator plus IPI rather than a negator plus the more strongly affirmative STM.[14]

We conclude by noting that the study of even such apparently humble and particular phenomena as two kinds of imperatives in Modern Dutch and two (out of many) of its pragmatic particles unavoidably touches fundamental theoretical and methodological issues: the distinction between meaning (what is explicitly signaled by a linguistic form) and the messages which such forms are used to communicate, the relative merits of top-down versus bottom-up analyses, the boundary between semantics and pragmatics, and the very nature of commands and negation. We have also attempted to demonstrate that linguistic analysis is

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[13] Consider Contini-Morava's remark (1989:172) that normal discourse is usually more concerned with actually occurring events than with events that fail to occur, whose number is infinite; cf. the oddity of *John did not get up and then he did not have a cup of coffee*, which – though suggesting by mentioning these actions that getting up and having coffee were possible events in the context–still does not tell us what John actually did do. Analogously one could argue that since there are an infinite number of actions which a Hearer might be told not to carry out, commands would be more informative, more communicatively useful if they were employed to tell Hearers what to *do,* what to actually carry out, than what to refrain from doing. This suggests that positive commands will be more frequent than negative ones, which is certainly the case in Table 5, where it is seen that there are 337/58 = 5.8 times as many positive commands as prohibitions in our data base.

[14] Cf. Hoekstra & Hyams' suggestion (1998:103) that the infinitive specifies the event as [–realized].

served best when it moves beyond isolated anecdotal examples to quantitative data provided by, on the one hand, psycholinguistic experiments with a number of native speakers (such as the questionnaire) and, on the other, detailed studies of actual usage.[15]

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[15] NOTE ADDED IN PROOF. Since this paper was completed and submitted to the editors, two further relevant items have come to my attention. First, in a questionnaire listing various options to select from, I chanced upon the polite instruction *Graag doorstrepen wat niet van toepassing is* 'Please strike through what does not apply,' using IPI. Now if STM is 'gruffer' than IPI, one would certainly predict that STM would be less compatible with this use of *graag* (literally 'gladly') to communicate a request. And indeed, native speakers confirm that *Streep graag door wat niet van toepassing is*, using STM, is quite strange. Second, Egbert Fortuin (2003) "De directieve infinitief en de imperatief in het Nederlands", *Nederlandse Taalkunde* 9.1.14-43 appeared. This very important article demonstrates that the STM-IPI opposition is even richer – even more subtle and complex – than the initial characterizations of it given by Blom, Duinhoven, and Proeme.

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