The Dutch particle *wel* as a denial of a negation[1]

Abstract
In this paper I argue that all uses of the Dutch particle *wel* share a core meaning, namely that they mark a denial of a previous negation. To substantiate this claim I will analyze the different uses in an LDRT model (Geurts & Maier 2003). Spenader and Maier (to appear) show that this model allows denial and contrast to be analyzed in similar terms, which makes it very suitable for the purpose of this paper.

1. Introduction
Discourse particles are notoriously polysemous, which means that they typically have multiple related meanings or uses[2]. Dik (1988) distinguishes two different models for the relation between the meanings of polysemous words. In one model all the meanings of the word share a core-meaning. In the other model each member of the set of meanings shares at least one aspect of meaning with another member, but two non-adjacent members do not necessarily share any such aspect. I will show that the first model applies to the different uses of *wel*. At first sight the uses of *wel* are very diverse. However, I will show that the uses have in common that they are a denial of an implicit or explicit previous negation. This property is obvious when *wel* is used to contradict a previous negation as in (1).

> (1)   a.   Jij   heet   echt   geen Jan-Peter!
>   you   have-name   really no   Jan-Peter
>   'Your name isn't Jan-Peter!'
>   b.   Ik   heet   **wel** Jan-Peter!
>   I   have-name   WEL Jan-Peter
>   'My name *is* Jan-Peter!'

However, for other occurrences of *wel* this commonality is not apparent. Consider for example the use of *wel* in (2) and (3).

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[2] I use the terms *use, meaning* and *function* indiscriminately

(2)   Ik   heb   vandaag **wel**   honderd boten geteld!
        I   have   today   WEL   hundred boats   counted
        'I have counted no less than a hundred boats today!'

(3)   Het feestje afgelopen zaterdag was   **wel** leuk
        the party   last   Saturday was   WEL nice
        'The party last Saturday was OK'

In (2) the speaker indicates by using the word *wel* that he thinks hundred boats is a lot. In (3) here the speaker says that the party was OK, neither good nor bad. *Wel* functions as a moderator to the predicate *leuk* 'nice', and weakens its meaning. The function of being a denial of a negation is not immediately clear from these examples.

Despite this apparent diversity of the functions of *wel*, I argue that they share a core-meaning. I will show that all uses of *wel* are a denial of a previous negation. Denial is analyzed as a down-date of the common ground in Layered Discourse Representation Theory. I show that four of five uses of *wel* I distinguish, indeed involve retraction of some information from the common ground. In the next section I will give an overview of the different uses of *wel*. In section 3 I introduce the framework of Layered Discourse Representation Theory and in section 4 I discuss the analysis of denial and contrast in Layered Discourse Representation Theory by Spenader and Maier (to appear). In section 5 I will analyze the uses of *wel* in line with this approach.

2. The functions of the particle *wel*
In this section I will shortly discuss the different uses of *wel* that I distinguished by means of the Spoken Dutch Corpus (for a more elaborate description of the different uses and the methods used I refer the reader to Hogeweg (2009)). The following five basic uses of functions are discerned, some consisting of subtypes:

- Wel corrects a previous negative utterance
- Wel marks a relation of explicit contrast
- Wel marks a relation of implicit contrast
- Wel marks surprise by the speaker about the content of his utterance
- Wel functions as a modifier similar to a double negation

In this section I discuss each of the functions and their subtypes and I will illustrate the different uses with examples from the corpus.

The first function of *wel* I will call *correction* and is illustrated in (4). In (4) the adverb *wel* is used to contradict a previous negative utterance, as was the case in (1). Prior to utterance (4) a boy said to his brother over the telephone that he tried to call him at Floor's but he was not there. Then the brother says:

(4)   Ik   zit   **wel**   bij   Floor
           I   sit   WEL   at   Floor
           'I *am* at Floor's'

Another function of *wel* is to mark a relation of contrast between two items. This function is named *explicit contrast.* Utterance (5) was part of a news item about a flood in Poland and it was preceded by the information that in Warsaw the situation was not that bad.

(5)   In   het zuiden   van   Polen is   de toestand   **wel**   zorgelijk
           in   the south   of   Poland is   the situation   WEL   alarming
           'In the south of Poland the situation *is* alarming'

In (5) the adverb *wel* is uttered to mark the contrastive relation between Warsaw where the situation is not that bad and the current utterance that states that in the south of Poland the situation *is* alarming.

     Wel is also used to mark a possible discrepancy between the common ground brought about by the preceding conversation, and the current utterance. I will refer to this function as *implicit contrast. Wel* is not used to contradict an explicit denial of a certain fact but to respond to an assumption that could be inferred from the conversation thus far. Example (6) is part of a conversation between a mother and a daughter about a paper the daughter handed in for school. The daughter was not satisfied with the quality of her paper and she lists a number of things that she could have done better. After that she utters (6).

(6)   Ik   had   **wel**   best   wel   veel   bronnen
           I   have   WEL   quite   WEL   many   sources
           'I did have quite a lot of sources[3]'

In (6) the first occurrence of the adverb *wel* is used to mark the inconsistency with the foregoing and the current utterance. The aforementioned quality of the paper could suggest that she did not have a lot of sources or at least makes that a more plausible option than the contrary. *Wel* is used as a reaction to that expectation.

     In some occurrences *wel* seems to bring about a sense of surprise. In general, the uses of *wel* I am grouping under the name *surprise* occur in a context in which the contrary of the sentence containing *wel* is more plausible or normal. This context is often a very general, which means not brought about by the previous conversation or the current

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[3] The paraphrases of (5) and (6) show that the English expression of the functions explicit and implicit contrast involves stressing the main verb. A detailed comparison of the use of *wel* and VERUM-focus (Höhle 1992) would be an interesting topic for further research.

surroundings. The occurrences can be subdivided into three classes. The first one is when *wel* co-occurs with the verb *lijken* 'look like/seem':

(7)   Het   lijkt   **wel**   een sollicitatiegesprek
           it   looks-like   WEL   a job-interview
           'It looks like a job interview'

Utterance (7) is part of a radio interview. This was obviously not a job interview but at some point it appeared to have become one to the person who uttered (7), to his surprise. The effect that this use of the modal particle *wel* brings about can be clearly illustrated by the following (constructed) sentence pair.

(8)   Dat   kind   lijkt   **wel**   een beetje   op   mijn   buurman
           that   child   looks-like WEL   a little   at   my
neighbour
           'That child looks a little like my neighbour'

(9)   ?Dat   kind   lijkt   **wel**   een beetje   op   zijn   moeder
           that   child   looks-like WEL   a little   at   his   mother
           'That child looks a little like its mother'

The utterance of *wel* in (9) is strange because it is very normal for children to look like their mother. *Wel* can be uttered in (8) because it is not normal or usual for children to look like people they are not related to. The second subclass of *wel* indicating surprise is exemplified in (10), the focus particle *wel* occurs in front of a quantifier and it indicates that the speaker considers the quantity to be higher than expected. This *wel* also adds an element of surprise to the sentence or a sense that the situation is extraordinary.

(10)   Heel   breed   inzetbaar   want   die   speelde
           wel
           very   broadly   employable because   he   played
           WEL
           vijf   rollen
           five   parts
           'Very versatile because he played (no less than) five parts'

In (10) the speaker indicates that he thinks playing five parts is a lot. *Wel* indicating surprise also occurs with the word *misschien* 'maybe':

(11)   Misschien   komen die   ook   nog   **wel**
          maybe   come they   also   PRT   WEL

'Maybe they will come too'

Adding this *wel* brings about the meaning that the situation expressed in the sentence is not likely to happen or to be the case. Example (11) without *wel* would be uttered if one would for instance have spoken to the people in question and they had said they might come. When *wel* is added this indicates that the speaker has no indication they will come but 'you never know'.

In the remainder of this section I will discuss the last function of *wel*. The last function of *wel* differs from the aforementioned functions. *Wel* does not occur in a context in which the opposite of the sentence containing *wel* is stated or implicated or even more plausible. Consider example (12). The modal particle *wel* is used in front of the predicate *leuk* 'nice' and it has the effect that it decreases the positivity of the modifier *leuk* 'nice'.

(12) Ja   ' t   was   **wel**   leuk
      yes   it   was   WEL   nice
      'Yes, it was OK'

Example (12) does not require a context that implicates that it was not nice nor is it the case that from world knowledge we know that things are normally not nice. The effect *wel* brings about is similar to the effect of litotes. Let me clarify this effect with the help of example (12). Let us assume the scale of "nice-ness" includes three states; *nice, neutral* and *not nice*. When *not nice* is used in a contradictory opposition to *nice,* it covers the range *neutral* and *nice* on the nice-ness scale. When one says something was *not nice* however, that mostly implicates it was the opposite (or contrary) of *nice*. When one makes use of a double negation, there is a different effect. What is literally expressed by *not not nice* encloses the states *nice* and *neutral*. What may be implicated by that utterance though is covered by the neutral state for the biggest part (Blutner 2004). The same effect is visible when *wel* is used. When someone utters *the party was 'wel' nice* that implicates he found the party somewhere in between *neutral* and *a little bit nice*. This effect is visualized in figure 1(based on Blutner 2004).
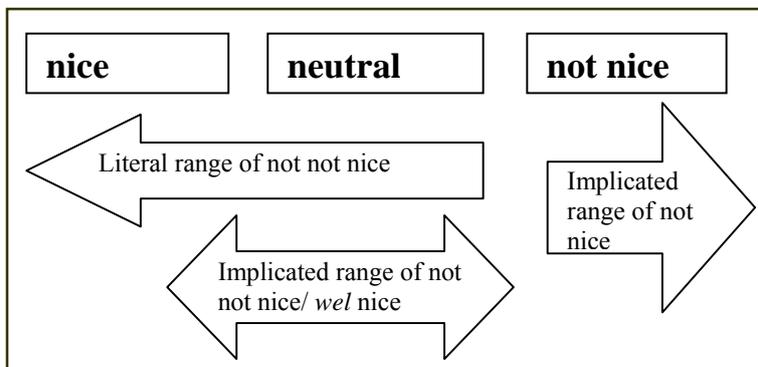
Figure 1: *not not/wel nice*

When the modal particle *wel* is used in combination with *eens* 'once' there is also nothing in the context that indicates the opposite. Together the two words mean 'once (in a while)' or 'ever'. Consider example (13). There does not have to be anything from which the speaker infers that the hearer has not seen 'him' in *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden.*

> (13) Heb jij 'm **wel** eens gezien in Goede Tijden Slechte
>   have you him WEL once seen in good times bad
>   Tijden?
>   times
>   'Have you ever seen him in (the Dutch soap opera) *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden?'*

Wel and *eens* are a fixed combination, sometimes they are even written as one word; *weleens.* The frequency that is expressed by *wel eens*, is less than the frequency expressed by *soms* 'sometimes'. Here *wel* has a similar effect as in the previous use. *Wel* denies the possibility of *not once.* On a (simplified) scale of frequency this leaves open the ranges *once, sometimes, often* and *always. Wel eens* indicates that the frequency lies just above *not once,* namely *once* or *sometimes.*

     Wel has a similar function when it occurs with the verb *zullen* 'will'. When it occurs with *zullen,* the modal particle *wel* indicates that the speaker considers the content of his utterance very plausible but he cannot be totally sure about its truth. With *zal wel* in (14) the speaker seems to indicate that based on the information available to him, he can draw a certain conclusion, but that he is aware of the fact that the available information is not sufficient to be certain.

> (14) 't Is woensdag en het is voor kerstmis
>   dus
>   it is Wednesday and it is before Christmas
>   so
>   zal **wel** koopavond uh zijn
>   will WEL late-night-shopping uh be
>   'It's Wednesday and it is before Christmas so there will probably be late night shopping today'

Example (14) does not require a context in which the reverse is stated or more plausible. This use is similar to the uses illustrated in (12) and (13). In this case, however, there are only two points on the scale. Either there will be late night shopping on Wednesday or not. It cannot be neither or somewhere in between. Taking the available evidence into consideration the speaker chooses the option that there will be late night shopping.

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In this section I discussed 5 different functions of the particle *wel* and I indicated that all uses of *wel* function as a denial of a negation. To substantiate this claim I will analyze the functions in a formal model that can handle both monotonic as well as non-monotonic effects on a discourse, namely Layered Discourse Representation Theory (LDRT). Maier and Spenader (to appear) show that, adopting an LDRT framework, contrast and denial can be analyzed as being similar phenomena. I will therefore start by discussing their analysis and LDRT in section 3 after which I will relate their theory to my analysis of *wel* in section 4.

3. Contrast as denial in Layered Discourse Representation Theory
Spenader and Maier (to appear) analyze contrast and denial as similar phenomenon within Layered Discourse Representation Theory (Geurts & Maier 2003). They build on Maier and van der Sandt's (2003) treatment of denial. In Maier and van der Sandt (2003) denial is analyzed as a non-monotonic mechanism on the discourse structure previously established. Parts of the-contribution of the previous utterance are removed from the main DRS and end up under the scope of a negation introduced by the denial. This mechanism is called *Reverse Anaphora.* Note that a denial is not the same as a negation. One speaks of a denial when it is used to object to a previous utterance. Positive sentences can function as a denial as well. A denial can be used (amongst others) to reject a proposition, as in (15), a presupposition, as in (16) or an implicature, as in (17) (Maier and van der Sandt 2003).

(15)   a. Mary is not happy (as a reaction to the utterance 'Mary is happy')
          b. Mary is happy (as a reaction to the utterance that 'Mary is not happy')

(16)   The king of France is not bald, France doesn't have a king

(17)   It is not possible, it is necessary that the pope is right

In order to model the fact that denials can target different kinds of content they adopt a Layered DRT framework where these different types of informational content are all stored in separate but interconnected layers of a single representational structure. In LDRT every type of information (e.g. presupposition or implicature) has its own label. The syntax of LDRT is similar to that of regular DRT except for the fact that in LDRT every discourse referent and every DRS condition comes with a label, specifying what kind of information it encodes. Now there can be *directed reverse anaphora*, which only removes the offensive material, that is, the material that is contradictory and needs to be removed from the LDRS.

While denial is usually treated ad a non-monotonic phenomenon, contrast is normally not analyzed as causing a revision of the common ground. However, Spenader and Maier (to appear) argue that contrast and denial should be treated as the same phenomenon. Spenader and Maier assume that speakers and hearers maintain a

representation of the discourse in which they are involved that with each new utterance can be 'updated' (information is added) or 'downdated', a slight modification of Maier and van der Sandt's (2003) Reverse Anaphora mechanism used to retract information. A denial is analyzed as having three steps (Spenader and Maier, to appear).

Issue: the common ground representation is incremented with the first speaker's utterance
Concession: the second speaker optionally concedes that part of the informational content conveyed (or suggested) by the first speaker's utterance is true and this information is added to the representation as well
Correction: the actual denial, usually consisting of some negative particle or negated echo of the utterance to be corrected, or if there were a concession, a *but* or *however*, etc. Normal update with the correction would result in an inconsistent representation, so we apply a downdate, throwing out as much of the earlier information as needed to restore consistency. The informational content of the correction (apart from any echoes which make no semantic contribution) and of the concession always remain untouched by the downdate.

A condition on denial is that it operates on something already given in the discourse. Upon recognizing the speaker's intention to deny, the hearer starts looking for information in the context that conflicts with the content of the denial. Spenader and Maier see a contrastive conjunction as an operator that triggers revision of the discourse representation. The semantic relationship holding between the different parts of contrastive relationships must fulfil certain criteria. The main criteria on the semantic relationship for the use of a contrastive marker is that there is some unspecified implication derived from the second conjunct that contradicts with the first conjunct or an inference derived from this first conjunct. This inference is called *Tertium Comparationis* (TC) by Spenader and Maier. In case of direct contrast, the inference is the negation of the first conjunct. In case of indirect contrast the identification of the inference requires world-knowledge. So, contrast involves a denial of a hidden implication of the first conjunct (either directly or indirectly) and it involves the same three steps as denial (Spenader and Maier, to appear):

Issue: the topic under discussion, the context
Concession: the information contributed by the first conjunct, a partial answer to a contextual question, a confirmation of some information.
Correction: the information contributed by the second conjunct. It initiates a search process for conflicting implications, a TC. This TC is likely an implication of the first conjunct, interpreted with respect to the issue.

Spenader and Maier formalize their view on contrast in LDRT. Their analysis requires four layers: a Fregean layer (*fr*), a layer for (generalized) implicatures (*imp*), a layer for accommodated presuppositions (*pr*) and a layer for contextual information (*k*). To

be able to explain contrast they introduce an additional layer: *inf* for pragmatic/relevance-based inferences. The difference between inferences and generalized implicatures is that inferences are less uniquely identifiable than generalized implicatures, which are calculable in a predictable way from the implicature trgiggering expression.

The concession together with the issue brings about such a pragmatic inference. Consider sentence (18) (Spenader and Maier, to appear):

(18)   I was hungry, but the restaurants were closed.

Say this sentence was uttered by Yan and there is an implicit issue *Did you (Yan) eat?* The issue can be represented as follows:

$[x_k|yan_k(x), eat?_{fr}(x)]$

Now Yan utters the first conjunct of (18), which is the concession. This partial answer (against the background of the issue and the assumption of a cooperative speaker) evokes the pragmatic inference that Yan ate. The DRS now looks as follows:

$\rightarrow [x_k| yan_k (x), eat?_{fr} (x), ate_{inf} (x)]$

The second conjunct of (18), the correction, brings about the inference that Yan has not eaten. Updating the DRS with that assertion and its inference would lead to inconsistency. That's why a downdate is required. Note that while Maier and van der Sandt (2003) assume that the entire layer with the offensive material is removed, Spenader and Maier argue that only as much is removed as is needed to maintain a coherent common ground.

$\rightarrow [x_k| yan_k (x), eat?_{fr} (x), ate_{inf} (x)] \downarrow [x_k, X_k|yan_k (x), restaurants_k (X), closed_{fr} (X), \neg infate_{inf}(x)] \rightarrow [x_k, X_k| yan_k (x), eat?_{fr} (x), \text{ateinf (x)}, restaurants_k (X), closed_{fr} (X), \neg infate_{inf}(x)]$

In conclusion, Spenader and Maier give a unifying account of contrast and denial by analyzing the first as a subtype of the latter. Contrast and denial have the same underlying structure and (non-monotonic) discourse effects, they only differ in the type of information they affect. While a denial removes information that has been asserted (*fr*), presupposed (*pr*) or implicated (*imp*), contrast involves removal of pragmatically inferred information (in the *inf* layer). I argue that all uses of *wel* share a core meaning, namely that they mark a denial of a previous negation. To substantiate this claim I will analyze the different uses in the LDRT model outlined above. Since this model allows correction and contrast to be analyzed in similar terms, it is very suitable for my analysis of the core-meaning of *wel*.

4. The functions of wel in LDRT

4.1 Correction

The use of *wel* I called correction is identical to the operation of denial as defined by Maier and van der Sandt (2003). They argue that a denial does not have to include a negation. Indeed, *wel* marks that a previous (negative) statement must be removed from the common ground and must be replaced by its negation.

4.2 Explicit and implicit contrast

I argue that implicit contrast and explicit contrast constitute two different relations. The difference between explicit and implicit contrast corresponds to the distinction that is sometimes made between *semantic opposition* and *denial of expectation* (in the terminology of Lakoff 1971). I will therefore shortly discuss some of the literature that concerns the difference between semantic opposition and denial of expectation. It has been argued that the two relations should be differentiated. For example, Kehler (2002) makes a fundamental distinction between the two. Kehler argues that all coherence relations belong to three general categories: cause-effect relations, resemblance relations and contiguity relations. One of the cause-effect relations Kehler identifies is *violated expectation* which corresponds to denial of expectation.

> *Violated Expectation:* Infer P from the assertion of S_0 and Q from the
> assertion of S_1, where normally $P \rightarrow \neg Q$.

An example of a sentence pair between which this relation exists is:

    (19)   Bill was about to be impeached, but he didn't call his lawyer

In Kehler's categorization of coherence relations between sentences *contrast* (which corresponds to semantic opposition) is a subtype of the resemblance relation. Kehler argues that the recognition of resemblance requires that commonalities and contrasts among corresponding sets of entities and relations are recognized. Kehler gives two definitions of what he calls contrast. In the first, exemplified in (23) the relations expressed by the utterances are contrasted. In the second definition, exemplified in (24), a set of parallel entities is contrasted (accented words are italicized).

    (20)   Gephard *supported* Gore, but Armey *opposed* him

    (21)   Gephard supported *Gore*, but Armey supported *Bush*

Another advocate of distinguishing between the two relations which I call implicit contrast and explicit contrast, is Malchukov (2004) who argues that there are languages that use different markers to express the different relations

However, many scholars argue that both relations (explicit contrast or semantic opposition versus implicit contrast or denial of expectation) can be captured by one definition (e.g. Winter and Rimon (1994), Foolen (1993), Spenader (2004)). For example, Winter and Rimon argue that both types of the contrastive conjunction p *con* q are felicitous in a given context if there is a statement *r* such that p implies *not*(r) and q implies r (q denies *not*(r)). Spenader and Maier (to appear) also consider both types to involve the same operation of removal of an inference from the common ground. Although they do state that semantic opposition examples usually depend more on the context than traditional denial of expectation examples.

I argue that the relations I have labeled *explicit contrast* and *implicit contrast* have a similar underlying semantics, namely that they remove information from the context. However, there is a difference between the two relations. In the case of explicit contrast the concession *is* a partial positive or negative answer to the question or issue in the context, while in case of implicit contrast the concession evokes a pragmatic inference that is a positive or negative answer to the question in the context. To clarify this I will first elaborate somewhat on the notion *issue*.

Spenader and Maier (t.a.) argue that the context is very important in finding a *Tertium Comparationis*. The concession evokes a certain inference only with respect to the issue in the context. A similar restriction was argued for by Umbach (2005). Umbach too, argues for one notion of contrast. However, she argues that accounts like that of Winter and Rimon, that see *but* as an indication of violated expectations (the expectation being based on default world knowledge) cannot be right. Umbach argues that a *but*-sentence is an appropriate answer to an implicit or explicit question that consists of two conjuncts of which one will be confirmed and the other one denied. Consider example (22).

(22) a. Adam: Did John clean up his room and wash the dishes?
  b. Ben: [yes] John cleaned up his room and [yes] he washed the dishes.
  c. #[yes] John cleaned up his room, but [yes] he washed the dishes.
  d. #[no] John didn't clean up his room, but [no] he didn't wash the dishes.
  e. [yes] John cleaned up his room, but [no] he didn't wash the dishes.
  f. [yes] John cleaned up his room, but [no] he skipped the washing-up.
  g. [no] John didn't clean up his room, but [yes] he did the washing-up.

If the answer to both conjuncts of the question in (22) is positive, as in (22c), using *but* instead of *and* is not felicitous. If the answers are both negative, as in (22d) *but* cannot be used either. Only if the answer to one of the conjuncts is positive, while the other is negative, *but* is perfectly acceptable. Umbach distinguishes between four classes of *but*-conjunctions: (i) the subjects of the conjuncts are the same and the predicates differ from each other, (ii) the predicates are the same and the subjects differ from each other, (iii) both subjects and predicates are different yet comparable and (iiii) subjects and predicates are not comparable to each other, we have to compare entire propositions. In the last case,

exemplified in (23), the entire propositions in the conjuncts are alternatives with respect to each other. Sentence (23a) and (23b) are answers to the question in (23c). In (23a) one part of the question is explicitly negated, in (23b) it has to be reconstructed.

(23)   a. It is raining but we are not going to stay at home
         b. It is raining but we are going to go for a walk
         c. Is it raining and are we going to stay at home?

Let us now return to the analysis of *wel*. While Umbach (2005) argues that a contrastive relation is established in answer to a twofold question. Spenader and Maier give a singular question as an example of an issue. I think the difference between a twofold question as an issue and a singular question as an issue is precisely what distinguishes between explicit and implicit contrast. Consider example (24).

(24)   Piet deed de afwas niet maar John wel
         'Piet didn't do the dishes but John did'

Let us see whether we can analyze the explicit contrastive relation in the conjunction in (24) as an answer to the question: *Did John do the dishes*? In that case this question would be the issue, the first conjunct of (24) would be the concession and the second conjunct the denial. However, I think there are two distinct interpretations of this sentence, namely the explicit contrastive reading (when the sentence answers the question *Did Piet and John do the dishes?*) and the implicit contrastive reading (when the sentence answers the question *Did John do the dishes?*). I therefore assume that there are indeed two types of contrast, but they share the property that they remove information from the context.

In line with Umbach (2005), I argue that two conjuncts that establish an explicit contrastive relation (with *wel*) are answers to a twofold questions (*are Piet and John coming*) or one question that entails two question (*Is your band coming?* entails *Is Piet coming?* and *Is John coming?*). However, then it cannot be the case that the first conjunct evokes some inference *r* and the second conjunct evokes or is the negation of *r*. If you ask: *Komt je band*? 'Is your band coming' and the answer is *Piet komt niet* 'Piet is not coming' *maar John komt wel* 'but John ís coming', you cannot argue that Piet's not coming raises the expectation that the band is *not* coming while John's coming implicates that the band *is* coming. That is, the overall answer to the question must still be: no, the band is not coming. This is similar for a twofold question: *Komen Piet en John?* 'are Piet and John coming?' with the answer *Piet komt niet maar John komt wel* 'Piet is not coming but John is'. The overall answer (if there is any) must still be that no, the couple Piet and John is not coming.

I argue that in the case of an explicit contrastive relation there is a question (an issue) like *Did Piet and John do the dishes?* which suggests that Piet and John are similar with respect to the predicate *doing the dishes*. A question like *Did Piet and John do the*

dishes? can have a proper twofold question interpretation, which treats *Piet* and *John* independently. However, it can also have a simple polar interpretation, which groups *Piet* and *John* together.The semantics of questions is often said to be the set of possible answers. This is defined by Krifka (1999) as follows:

(25)   The meaning of a question […WH…] is the set of propositions denoted by […α…] where   α ranges over the sort of the question constituent WH

In case of a polarity question the truth value of the proposition could be seen as the question constituent. The meaning of the question *Did Piet and John do the dishes?* is the set of possible answers {*Piet did the dishes and John did the dishes, Piet did the dishes and John didn't do the dishes, Piet didn't do the dishes and John did the dishes, Piet and John didn't do the dishes*} but in a context that favors the polar interpretation, it is the set of the two answers {*Piet and John did the dishes, Piet and John didn't do the dishes*}. If we assume a two-fold question as the issue of the contrastive relation in (24), what should be considered the concession and the correction? One could argue that because of the first conjunct *Piet didn't do the dishes,* the expectation is evoked that John didn't do the dishes either, because *Piet* and *John* are grouped together. However, in that case the first conjunct can not be analyzed as a concession because it answers a different question (the first conjunct would then answer the question *Did Piet do the dishes?* whereas the second conjunct would answer the question *Did John do the dishes?).* The first conjunct can not function as the issue to the second conjunct either because then there would be no issue against which the first conjunct evokes the negation of the second conjunct. If both conjuncts are analyzed as answers to the same question (*Did Piet and John do the dishes?*) the first conjunct can be analyzed as a concession to the assumption that Piet and John are similar (with respect to doing the dishes). That is, the first conjunct on its own does not suggest that Piet and John are similar but at this point it is still a possibility. Furthermore, the concession further specifies this suggestion. Whereas, before the first conjunct two possible answers are suggested {*Piet and John did the dishes, Piet and John didn't do the dishes*}, after the first conjunct this is narrowed down to {*Piet and John didn't do the dishes*} and it is this suggestion that is removed from the inference layer by the use of *wel*.

In conclusion, the difference between explicit and implicit contrast is that in the case of implicit contrast, the issue is a singular question and the concession evokes an inference based on the issue and world-knowledge. In case of an explicit contrast, the issue suggests two possible situations which are narrowed down to one by the concession. Note that for explicit contrast the inference is not only suggested to be true it is also already partly confirmed. The inference *Piet and John didn't do the dishes* is already partly confirmed by the utterance that *Piet didn't do the dishes*. So part of it is already present in the Fregean layer. Note that the part in the Fregean layer does not have to be removed because the new information is not in conflict with just this part.

4.3 Wel as a surprise marker

Wel indicating surprise marks that the speaker suspected the negation of the proposition expressed by the sentence containing *wel*. This suspicion is not based on the current discourse but rather on more general expectations about the world.

Zeevat (this volume) discusses *only* as a mirative particle. He argues that *only* indicates surprise by the speaker about the small size of a particular quantity. The semantics of mirativity is defined as a presupposed expectation that is asserted to be false. Zeevat argues that mirative markers can be used for corrections but the expectation may also be much weaker than the belief of the speaker (or the common ground, or of a second speaker). Zeevat argues that *only* triggers a weak presupposition (p. 3): *The presupposed expectation can be common ground, it can be the speaker's or the hearer's or they can be the expectation of a third party or a possible third party. The weakest possible expectation is "there might be somebody who might think that A". The presupposition mechanism tries to find the weak presuppositions in the common ground and in the opinions of highly activated persons, but also allows suggestions and attitudes by other people as antecedents and can in the last resort just assume that there could be someone who accepts the weak presupposition.*

According to Zeevat, the notion weak presupposition can be implemented by a variant of regular presupposition. When a weak presupposition occurs, the context is searched for accessible antecedents. Only now two additional possibilities for antecedents are added. The first new option is the possibility to find antecedents in subordinate contexts which are introduced by positive attitude and modal operators. The second option is that the antecedent can be inferred from the context. The hearer should search for a reason to think *not p* by looking for an *r* such *if r then normally not p*. If even the last two options provide no suitable antecedent, the uncontroversial "it might be thought that p" might be added to the context, instead of normal accommodation or a failure of the update.

Wel also marks surprise and could therefore be classified as a weak presupposition trigger. We saw that *wel* as a marker of implicit contrast removes an inference from the LDRS and as such can also be classified as a weak presupposition trigger. *Wel* as a marker of surprise is weaker because the inference it denies is not caused by the discourse thus far but by more general knowledge about the world. Nonetheless, this information is part of the common ground. The nature of this common ground, however, is such that it is less dependent on the particular conversation. The same information may be common ground in all conversations of people who share the same world view or culture. I propose to formalize this type of presupposition as a default inference. Default inferences bear the same label as inferences made on the basis of a particular proposition. The difference lays in the fact that *wel* as surprise is not dependent on a certain issue, nor is there a concession. As we saw, for the contrastive relation, the immediate context (the issue) is very important. Furthermore, in case of contrast, a concession is present which suggests an *r* or a *Tertium Comparationis.* When *wel* marks surprise, these two requirements are not met. Therefore,

it cannot be said to mark a contrastive relation. However, the fact that it does remove an inference shows that it bears family resemblance to this relation.

4.4 Wel as a modifier
The last use of *wel* differs fundamentally from the aforementioned uses since it does not involve retraction of any information from the context. The contribution containing this *wel* constitutes a monotonic update of the common ground. Nonetheless, I assume this use of *wel* shares the core-meaning of a denial of a negation because its pragmatic effect is similar to that of a double negation, or litotes. Interestingly, in case of a double negation the first negation often functions as contradictory negation and the second as a contrary negation; (not unhappy = contradictory (contrary (happy))) (Horn (1989). A denial always forms a contradictory opposition with the proposition being denied. This indicates that this use of *wel* indeed constitutes a denial of a negation. I suggest this can be analyzed as having two negations in the Fregean layer, which then brings about the pragmatic effect as described in section 2.

5. Conclusion
I have argued that the different functions of the discourse particle *wel* share a core-meaning, namely that they are a denial of a negation. Adapting an LDRT framework, I showed that four of the five functions of *wel* involve retraction of some information from the context. Crucial to the use of *wel*, is that this information contains a negation. The last use of wel functions as a denial of a negation within one turn in conversation and has a pragmatic effect on the meaning of the utterance.

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