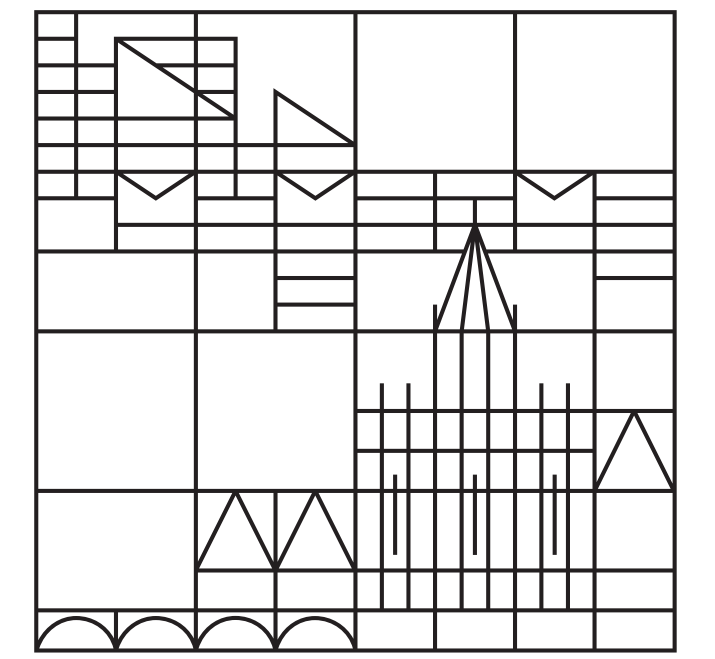




Rising and Falling Repeat Questions in German

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Background

- in German, word order differs between matrix and embedded clauses: in matrix clauses the finite verb appears in the second position, while in embedded clauses are verb-final
 - the embedded word order can surface without an overt matrix clause in questions in certain contexts
 - Verb-Last Questions
- (1) a. *Wo ist die Katze?*
where is the cat
'Where is the cat?' Matrix Question
- b. *Wo die Katze ist.!?*
where the cat is
'Where is the cat?' + prosody
Verb-Last Question
- two main contexts: self-addressed questions and **repeat questions** (Zimmermann 2013)

Question Repeating

- questions can be repeated with a final rise or fall
- antecedents can be matrix or embedded questions
- repeat questions do not license discourse particles
- the speaker or a third participant can repeat the question to the addressee with a final fall (speaker repeat question, **SRQ**)
- repeating is only licensed if the addressee asked for a repeat or did not acknowledge the original question
- the addressee or a third participant can repeat the question back to the speaker with a final rise (addressee repeat question, **ARQ**)
- used in discourse to confirm the content of the question or to question its relevance or appropriateness
- repeat questions are standardly analysed as resulting from ellipsis (Altmann 1987) with a clause type corresponding to the prosody in unmarked contexts
- both kinds of repeats pattern with standard questions in discourse continuations; allowing the speaker to be the source of content (*yes*) but not simple uptake (*oh*) in polar repeat questions vs rising polar interrogatives (RPI):

utterance type	yes-response	oh-response
FD	#	✓
RPI	✓	#
SRQ	✓	#
ARQ	✓	#

Observation: SRQ and ARQ mainly differ in prosody, with final fall and rise as a distinguishing feature.

The Table Model

- Farkas & Bruce (2010) offer a framework of discourse representation tracking individual commitments as well as common ground updates.
- Common Ground** cg : background knowledge and public commitments
- Discourse Commitments** DC_X : set of propositions that X has publicly committed to which are not in the cg
- Projected Discourse Commitments** DC_X^* : set of propositions that X is expected to commit to
- Table:** QUD stack of issues
- Projected Set** ps : set of possible future common grounds
- model for standard assertions and questions, with discourse moves for raising and resolving issues

Rising and Falling Declaratives

- falling declarative (FD) with meaning p : standard assertion
 - add p to the Table and to DC_{Sp}
- two kinds of rising declaratives (Jeong 2017):
 - inquisitive rising declaratives (IRD): allow *yes*-response
intuition: biased question, expected to be confirmed
→ the rise changes the meaning from an assertion p to a polar question $\{p, \neg p\}$
→ add $\{p, \neg p\}$ to the Table, add p to DC_{Ad}^*
 - assertive rising declaratives (ARD): allow *oh*-response
intuition: tentative assertion
→ the rise does not change the declarative, but signals a metalinguistic issue (*MLI*) about the assertion p ; typically about relevance or appropriateness
→ add p to the Table and to DC_{Sp} , add MLI^p to the Table
- Jeong (2017) also finds that the steepness of the final rise can predict whether a rising declarative is interpreted as assertive or inquisitive: steep rises are more likely to signal IRDs, while weak rises are more likely to signal ARDs
- Rudin (2017) proposes that falling intonation signals speaker commitment, while rising intonation indicates lack of speaker commitment: an utterance with falling intonation adds the informative content of the utterance to the DC_{Sp}

Rising and Falling RQs

- Assumption 1:** Despite differing word order, verb-last questions are semantically questions, that is, sets of possible answers (Hamblin 1973).
- Assumption 2:** There are two types of ARQ.

Addressee Repeat Questions: Type 1

- the addressee wants to confirm the content of the question:

(2) a. *A: Wo ist die Katze?*
where is the cat
'Where is the cat?'

b. *B: Wo die Katze ist?*
where the cat is
'You mean where the cat is?'
- a likely follow-up response from the addressee (speaker of the repeat question) is to provide an answer
- intuition: biased question, expected to be confirmed
 - similar to IRD
 - the rise changes the meaning from a (polar) question $\{p, \neg p\}$ to a polar super-question $\{\{p, \neg p\}, \{p, \neg p\}\}$
 - add the super-question to the Table, add $\{p, \neg p\}$ to DC_{Ad}^*
- this requires a change of discourse commitments to being a set of both propositions and sets of propositions

Addressee Repeat Questions: Type 2

- the addressee wants to question the relevance or appropriateness of the original question:

(3) a. *A: Wo ist die Katze?*
where is the cat
'Where is the cat?'

b. *B: Wo die Katze ist?*
where the cat is
'Are you (seriously) asking where the cat is?'
- likely not followed by an answer to the question
- intuition: neither question nor assertion, not only about the content
 - similar to ARD
 - the rise signals an *MLI* about the question $\{p, \neg p\}$
 - add $\{p, \neg p\}$ and $MLI^{\{p, \neg p\}}$ to the Table

Speaker Repeat Questions

- the question posed last has not been reacted to by the addressee or a repeat has been requested
- likely followed by an answer
- intuition: unbiased question, but a request rather than an invite
- prediction from Rudin (2017): Falling Interrogatives (FI) commit the speaker to a tautology unclear what this means
- add $\{p, \neg p\}$ to the Table, plus some effect that distinguishes rising and falling interrogatives in general

Open Questions

- Is there a difference in prosody between the two ARQ types?
- Does the final fall of SRQ differ from FD?

References

Altmann (1987): Zur Problematik der Konstitution von Satzmodi als Formtypen · Farkas & Bruce (2010): On Reacting to Assertions and Polar Questions · Hamblin (1973): Questions in Montague English · Jeong (2017): Intonation and Sentence Type Conventions: Two Types of Rising Declaratives · Rudin (2017): Intonation as Speech Act Modifier: Rising Declaratives and Imperatives · Zimmermann (2013): Ob-VL-Interrogativsatz