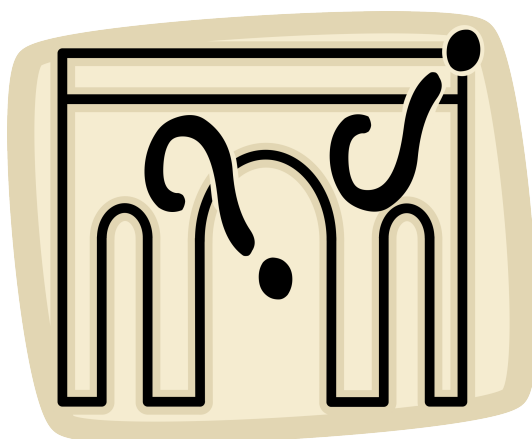


Programme of InqBnB4:
Inquisitiveness Below and Beyond the Sentence Boundary

Chair: Floris Roelofsen
Local Chair: Valentin D. Richard

June 20, 2023



9:00-9:30 Welcoming

9:30-9:40 Introducing words

9:40-10:35 Invited talk: *The MECORE database and the *whether-puzzle*, Wataru Uegaki

10:35-11:00 break

11:00-12:30 Presentations:

- *Short answers as tests: A post-suppositional view on wh-questions and answers*, Linmin Zhang
- *Referential Transparency and Inquisitiveness*, Jonathan Ginzburg and Andy Lücking
- *Uninquisitive questions*, Tom Roberts

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Presentations:

- *mage as a bias particle in interrogatives*, Maryam Mohammadi
- *Dynamic Questions: Evidence from Mandarin Think-”Xiang”*, Anshun Zheng
- *The indefinite-interrogative affinity in sign languages: the case of Catalan Sign Language*, Raquel Veiga Busto, Floris Roelofsen and Alexandra Navarrete González

15:30-16:00 break

16:00-16:55 Invited talk: *Question Bias, Polarity Focus, and Salience*, Todor Koev (joint work with Cory Bill)

16:55-17:00 Closing words

The MECORE database and the *whether-puzzle Wataru Uegaki

I will present the MECORE database (Özyıldız, Qing, Roelofsen, Romero & Uegaki 2023, SIGTYP 5), which contains information about combinatorial and semantic properties of representative clause-embedding attitude predicates in multiple languages. The database currently includes data in 15 languages (Catalan, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kîtharaka, Mandarin, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish), and is designed to enable researchers to assess cross-linguistic generalizations about clause-embedding predicates, such as those that relate semantic properties of predicates with their combinatorial restrictions (e.g., Zuber 1982; Egré 2008; Mayr 2019; Theiler et al., 2019; Uegaki and Sudo 2019). I will discuss the design of the database as well as the methodology of the data collection. I will furthermore discuss a case study of a theoretical implication of the data by focusing on the so-called *whether puzzle, i.e., the puzzle concerning the incompatibility between emotive factive predicates and “whether”-clauses (Karttunen 1977; d’Avis 2002; Abels, 2004; Guerzoni, 2007; Sæbø, 2007; Nicolae, 2013; Romero, 2015; Roelofsen 2017).

Short answers as tests: A post-suppositional view on wh-questions and answers Linmin Zhang

This paper explores a post-suppositional view on wh-questions and their answers with dynamic semantics. I propose a unified treatment of items like modified numerals, focus items, and wh-items: they introduce a discourse referent (dref) in a non-deterministic way and then impose definiteness tests in a delayed, post-suppositional manner at the sentential level. Thus, by asking a question like “who smiled”, we get the (maximally informative) dref “the one(s) who smiled”. An answer like “Mary and Max” is considered another post-suppositional test, checking whether the dref “the one(s) who smiled” is identical to the sum “Mary+Max”. I analyze various question-related phenomena to see how far this proposal can go.

Referential Transparency and Inquisitiveness Jonathan Ginzburg and Andy Lücking

The paper extends a referentially transparent approach which has been successfully applied to the analysis of declarative quantified NPs to wh-phrases. This uses data from dialogical phenomena such as clarification interaction, anaphora, and incrementality as a guide to the design of wh-phrase meanings.

Uninquisitive questions Tom Roberts

The sort of denotation a sentence is assigned is typically motivated by assumptions about the discourse function of sentences of that kind. For example, the notion that utterances which are functionally inquisitive (asking a question) suggest denotations which are semantically inquisitive (expressing the multiple licit responses to that question) is the cornerstone of interrogative meaning in frameworks like Alternative Semantics (Hamblin, 1973) and Inquisitive Semantics (Ciardelli et al., 2018).

This paper argues that at least some kinds of questions systematically do not involve utterances with inquisitive content, based on novel observations of the Estonian discourse particle *ega*. Though *ega* is often labeled a ‘question particle’, it is used in both assertions and questions with sharply divergent discourse effects. I suggest that the relevant difference between assertive and questioning uses of *ega* is not semantic or sentence type-related, but rather reflects an interaction between a unified semantics for declaratives *ega*-sentences and different contexts of use. I then show that if we assume that *ega* presupposes that some aspect of the discourse context implicates the negation of *ega*’s prejacent, and that it occurs only in declarative sentences, we can derive its interpretation across a range of contexts: with the right combination of ingredients, we can ask questions with semantically uninquisitive sentences.

‘mage’: a Bias Sensitive Discourse Particle Maryam Mohammadi

This paper studies discourse particle *mage’* in Farsi, which is predominantly used in interrogatives, including polar and constituent/WH questions. I will show that *mage’* requires both contextual evidence and speaker’s bias (expectation) in that they contradict. While in polar questions (PQs), both types of bias can be straightforwardly captured by the means of the (uttered) proposition (cf. Mameni 2010), WH-questions (WHQs) do not provide such propositional object. I propose Answerhood as the relevant notation that brings the required object source for *mage’* (inspired by Theiler 2021). The proposal provides the felicity-condition as well as the meaning of *mage’* with respect to the (contextually) restricted answerhood in both polar and constituent questions.

Dynamic Questions: Evidence from Mandarin Think–”Xiang” Anshun Zheng

This paper investigates the clausal embedding pattern of the Mandarin verb ”*xiang*” (think) and explores its internal anti-interrogative nature, despite the possibility of ”*xiang Q*” in certain cases. Through various stativity tests, we establish that the results are consistent with the generalization proposed by Özyıldız (2021), with minor deviations observed in neg-raising and the stativity of ”*xiang P*”. Additionally, we employ a semantic shift perspective to explain instances of neg-raising failure. Overall, this study sheds light on the unique characteristics of the verb ”*xiang*” and contributes to a better cross-linguistic understanding of CP selection.

The indefinite-interrogative affinity in sign languages: the case of Catalan Sign Language Raquel Veiga Busto, Floris Roelofsen and Alexandra Navarrete González

Prior studies on spoken languages have shown that indefinite and interrogative pronouns may be formally very similar. Our research aims to understand whether sign languages show a similar affinity. This paper presents an overview of the phenomenon and reports on the results of an empirical investigation conducted with three deaf consultants of Catalan Sign Language (LSC). Our study shows that, in LSC, certain signs have both existential and interrogative readings and it describes the contexts that make existential interpretations available.

Question Bias, Polarity Focus, and Salience Todor Koev (joint work with Cory Bill)

We argue that original bias in a subset of non-canonical polar questions is triggered by focus marking on some polar operator, such as low or high negation, VERUM, or conversational really. The proposed mechanism of bias generation rests on the assumption that, if a question partition cell is made salient by a contrasting focus antecedent, the speaker must be biased for that cell. While this mechanism generates a default bias that is weak, obligatory and of the opposite polarity to that of the focus domain, pragmatic factors may independently raise the degree of commitment and strengthen the bias.