Questions and Answers

Linguistics 472
2016 Sheridan, 2nd Floor
Wed 4:30–7:30

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Course Description

We will study the semantics and pragmatics of questions and answers. Topics include: major compositional semantic approaches to questions, the "goodness" and relevance of answers to a given question, exhaustivity, NPI-licensing, explicit and implicit questions in discourse, intonation and information structure, topics at the syntax-semantics interface. We will discuss classic papers and more recent research. Students are encouraged to explore related areas, such as cross-linguistic, computational or psycholinguistic aspects of the topic.

Prerequisites: Graduate status or permission of the instructor.

Teaching method: Lectures, student presentations, and discussions.

Readings: Selected readings from the primary literature.

Evaluation: Completion of readings, regular attendance and involvment in discussions are expected of all participants. All students are expected to present at least one of the readings in class. In addition, students taking the course for credit are required to write a paper on a topic of their choice, for which they must have my approval by the end of October. The paper is due on Monday, Dec 06. Late papers will not be accepted unless prior approval is given.

Notice to students with disabilities: In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 847–467–5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. Additionally, I am available to discuss disability-related needs during office hours or by appointment.

Syllabus

This schedule may be altered during the quarter to suit students' interests. Any changes will be announced in class and via email. An up-to-date version of the syllabus will always be available upon request and on the web at the following URL (clickable from my "Courses" page):

`http://ling.northwestern.edu/~kaufmann/Classes/472/syllabus.pdf`

───────────────── *Introduction: Sep 22* ─────────────────

- What is a question? What is an answer?
- Types of questions
- Preview of the seminar
- Refresher on intensional semantics

───────────────── *Basics: Sep 29, Oct 06* ─────────────────

- Alternative semantics, partition semantics
- Structured meanings
- Compositionality
- Embedded questions and question-embedding verbs
- Exhaustivity; mention-all *vs.* mention-some
- Logical relations, relative answerhood

  Hamblin (1958, 1973); Karttunen (1977); Groenendijk and Stokhof (1997)

───────────────── *Topics: Oct 13 — Nov 17* ─────────────────

<u>Note:</u> We will spend six sessions on *some of* the following topics. The topics, their order, and the readings listed are tentative. We will fix the details early in the quarter. Suggestions for changes or additions are certainly welcome!

Resolvedness and answerhood: 2 sessions

- Relevance and context dependence
- Utility of information and decision theory

  Ginzburg (1995); Beck and Rullmann (1997, 1999); van Rooy (2003b)

Negative polarity items: 2 sessions

- NPIs and their distribution
- What's special about questions
- Informativity and bias

  Kadmon and Landman (1993); Krifka (1992b, 1995); Han and Siegel (1996, 1997); van Rooy (2003a); Guerzoni and Sharvit (2004)

Dialogue structure: 1 session

- Discourse goals and strategies
- Questions under discussion
  Carlson (1983); Roberts (1996); Ginzburg (1997); Groenendijk (1999)

Intonation: 1 session

- Rising interrogatives, rising declaratives, and falling declaratives

- Commitments and biases

  Gunlogson (2001)

Focus and echo questions: 2 sessions

- The theory of focus

- Focus in questions and answers

- Echo questions

  von Stechow (1991); Rooth (1992); Büring (1997, 1999); **?**); **?**); Aloni and van Rooy (2002); Artstein (2002a)

Quantification: 2–3 sessions

- Scope interactions with quantifiers

- Pair-list answers and functional answers

- Adverbs of quantification and quantificational variability

  Engdahl (1986); Chierchia (1991, 1993); Higginbotham (1993); Berman (1994); Szabolcsi (1997); Romero (1998); Williams (2000); Lahiri (2000); Sharvit and Beck (2001); Krifka (2004a)

Exhaustivity and answerhood: 2 sessions

- Identification questions and individual concepts
- Exhaustivity in dynamic semantics
  Hintikka (1976); Boër and Lycan (1975, 1986); Zeevat (1994); Gerbrandy (1997); Aloni (2000, 2002); van Rooy and Schulz (2004)

——————————— *Student presentations: Dec 01* ———————————

Technically, this a makeup class for the eve of Thanksgiving (Nov 24). Time per student: $180/n - 10$ minutes, where n is the number of students taking the course for credit

——————————— ❣ *Final papers due by 5pm on Monday, Dec 06!* ❣———————————

Readings

Ackema, P. and A. Neeleman. 1998. Optimal questions. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 16:443–490.

Aloni, M. 2000. *Quantification Under Conceptual Covers*. PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam.

Aloni, M. 2002. Questions under cover. In Barker-Plummer, D., D. Beaver, J. van Benthem, and P. S. de Luzio, editors, *Words, Proofs, and Diagrams*. CSLI Publications.

Aloni, M. 2005. Individual concepts in modal predicate logic. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*. To appear.

Aloni, M. and R. van Rooy. 2002. The dynamics of questions and focus. In *Proceedings of SALT 12*.

Åqvist, L. 1965. *A New Approach to the Logical Theory of Interrogatives*. Filosofiska Föreningen, Uppsala, Sweden.

Artstein, R. 2002a. A focus semantics for echo questions. In Bende-Farkas, A. and A. Riester, editors, *Workshop on Information Structure in Context*, pages 98–107, University of Stuttgart. IMS.

Artstein, R. 2002b. *Parts of Words: Compositional Semantics for Prosodic Constituents*. PhD thesis, Rutgers.

Aun, J. and Y. Li. 1993. Wh-elements in situ: Syntax or LF? *Linguistic Inquiry*, 24:199–238.

Bach, E. 1971. Questions. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 2:153–166.

Baker, C. L. 1968. *Indirect Questions in English*. PhD thesis, University of Illinois.

Bar-Hillel, Y. and R. Carnap. 1953. Semantic information. In Jackson, W., editor, *Communication Theory: Papers read at the Symposium on "Applications of Information Theory" held at the Institution of Electrical Engineers, London, September 22nd-26th 1952*, pages 503–512, London. Butterworth Scientific Publications.

Beck, S. 1996. *Wh-constructions and Transparent Logical Form*. PhD thesis, Tübingen.

Beck, S. and H. Rullmann. 1997. Degree questions, maximal informativeness, and exhaustivity. In Dekker, P. and M. Stokhof, editors, *Proceedings of the 10th Amsterdam Colloquium*, pages 73–92.

Beck, S. and H. Rullmann. 1999. A flexible approach to exhaustivity in questions. *Natural Language Semantics*, 7:249–298.

Beck, S. and Y. Sharvit. 2002. Pluralities of questions. *Journal of Semantics*, 19:105–157.

Berman, S. 1994. *On the Semantics of Wh-Clauses*. Garland.

Boër, S. and W. Lycan. 1975. Knowing who. *Philosophical Studies*, 28:299–344.

Boër, S. and W. Lycan. 1986. *Knowing Who*. MIT Press.

Bolinger, D. 1987. Echoes reechoed. *American Speech*, 62(3):261–279.

Borkin, A. 1971. Polarity items in questions. In *Proceedings of CLS 7*, pages 53–62.

Brody, M. 1995. *Lexico-Logical Form: A Radically Minimalist Theory*. MIT

Press.

Büring, D. 1997. *The Meaning of Topic and Focus — The 59th Street Bridge Accent.* Routledge, London.

Büring, D. 1999. Topic. In Bosch, P. and R. van der Sandt, editors, *Focus: Linguistic, Cognitive, and Computational Perspectives*, volume 2, pages 142–165. Cambridge University Press.

Büring, D. 2003. On D-trees, beans, and B-accents. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 26:511–545.

Carlson, L. 1983. *Dialogue Games: An Approach to Discourse Analysis.* D. Reidel.

ten Cate, B. and C. chieh Shan. 2002. Question answering: from partitions to prolog. In Egly and Fermüller (2002), pages 251–265.

Cheng, L. L.-S. 1997. *On the Typology of Wh-Questions.* Garland.

Chierchia, G. 1991. Function WH and weak crossover. In *Proceedings of WCCFS 10.* CSLI Publications.

Chierchia, G. 1993. Questions with quantifiers. *Natural Language Semantics*, 1:181–234.

Chung, S., W. Ladusaw, and J. McCloskey. 1995. Sluicing and logical form. *Natural Language Semantics*, 3:1–44.

Cole, P. and G. Hermon. 1998. The typology of wh-movement: Wh-questions in Malay. *Syntax*, 1:221–258.

Comorovski, I. 1988. Discourse linking and the wh-island constraint. In *Proceedings of NELS19.*

Comorovski, I. 1996. *Interrogative Phrases and the Syntax-Semantics Interface*, volume 59 of *Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy.* Kluwer.

Cresswell, M. 1973. *Logics and Languages.* Methuen & Co Ltd, London.

Cresswell, M. 1985. *Structured Meanings: The Semantics of Propositional Attitudes.* MIT Press.

Cresti, D. 1995. Extraction and reconstruction. *Natural Language Semantics*, 3:79–122.

Dayal, V. 1994a. *Locality in WH Quantification: Questions and Relative Clauses in Hindi*, volume 62 of *Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy.* Kluwer.

Dayal, V. 1994b. Scope marking as indirect wh-dependency. *Natural Language Semantics*, 2:137–170.

Egly, U. and C. G. Fermüller, editors. 2002. *Automated Reasoning with Analytic Tableaux and Related Methods*, volume 2381 of *Lecture Notes in Computer Science.* Springer-Verlag.

Engdahl, E. 1980. *The Syntax and Semantics of Questions in Swedish.* PhD thesis, UMass.

Engdahl, E. 1986. *Constituent Questions.* Kluwer.

Fanselow and Mahajan. 1996. Partial movement and successive cyclicity. In Lutz, U. and G. Müller, editors, *Papers on Wh-Scope Marking.* Arbeitspapiere des Sonderforschungsbereiches 340. Arbeitspapiere des Sonderforschungsbereiches 340.

Garrett, E. 1996. Wh-in-situ and the syntax of distributivity. In Garrett, E. and F. Lee, editors, *Syntax at Sunset.* UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics.

Gerbrandy, J. 1997. Questions of idendity. In Dekker, P., M. Stokhof, and
    Y. Venema, editors, *Proceedings of the 11th Amsterdam Colloquium*, pages
    133–138, Amsterdam. ILLC.

Ginzburg, J. 1992. *Questions, Queries and Facts: A Semantics and Pragmatics
    for Interrogatives*. PhD thesis, Stanford.

Ginzburg, J. 1995. Resolving questions I/II. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 18:
    459–527/567–609.

Ginzburg, J. 1996. Dynamics and the semantics of dialogue. In Seligman, J.
    and D. Westerståhl, editors, *Logic, Language and Computation*, pages 221–
    238. CSLI Publications.

Ginzburg, J. 1997. Querying and assertion in dialogue.
    http://www.dcs.kcl.ac.uk/staff/ginzburg/gq-as-in-dia1.ps. Last checked
    September, 2004. Chapter from the book *A Semantics for Interaction in
    Dialogue* (forthcoming).

Ginzburg, J. and I. Sag. 2000. *Interrogative Investigations: The Form, Meaning,
    and Use of English Interrogatives*. CSLI Publications.

Groenendijk, J. 1999. The logic of interrogation. In Matthews, T. and
    D. Strolovitch, editors, *Proceedings of SALT IX*. CLC Publications.

Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. 1981. Semantics of wh-complements. In Groe-
    nendijk, J., T. Janssen, and M. Stokhof, editors, *Formal Methods in the Study
    of Language [=Proceedings of the 3rd Amsterdam Colloquium]*, pages 153–181,
    Amsterdam. Mathematisch Centrum.

Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. 1984a. On the semantics of questions and the
    pragmatics of answers. In Landman, F. and F. Veltman, editors, *Varieties of
    Formal Semantics*, volume 3 of *Groningen-Amsterdam Studies in Semantics
    (GRASS)*, pages 143–170. Foris.

Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. 1984b. *Studies in the Semantics of Questions
    and the Pragmatics of Answers*. PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam.

Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. 1989. Type-shifting rules and the semantics
    of interrogatives. In Chierchia, G., B. H. Partee, and R. Turner, editors,
    Properties, Types and Meanings, volume 2, pages 21–68. Kluwer.

Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. 1997. Questions. In van Benthem, J. and A. ter
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    rogative clauses. http://web.uconn.edu/sharvit/elenayaelsep8.pdf.

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    in English*. PhD thesis, UC Santa Cruz.

Hagstrom, P. 1998. *Decomposing Questions*. PhD thesis, MIT.

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    F., editor, *Questions and Answers*, pages 85–96. Reidel.

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Kadmon, N. and F. Landman. 1993. Any. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 16: 353–422.

Karttunen, L. 1973. Presuppositions of compound sentences. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 4(2):169–193.

Karttunen, L. 1977. Syntax and semantics of questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 1:3–44.

Karttunen, L. and S. Peters. 1976. What indirect questions conventionally implicate. In *Proceedings of CLS 12*.

Keenan, E. and R. D. Hull. 1973. The logical presuppositions of questions and

answers. In Petöfi, J. and D. Franck, editors, *Präsuppositionen in Philosophie und Linguistik*. Athenäum, Frankfurt.

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Linebarger, M. 1987. Negative polarity and grammatical representation. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 10:325–387.

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