

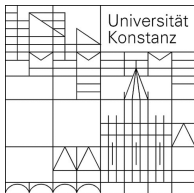
# Less is more: Revisiting interrogative flip

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# Overarching issues

- ▶ Division of labor
- ▶ Reference to the 1st person
- ▶ Cross-linguistic variation

# Interrogative flip I

Evidentials track the source of the semantically determined information

- **the speaker's** in root declaratives
- **the addressee's** in interrogatives

(1) Bulgarian (South Slavic; Bulgaria)

- |    |   |               |
|----|---|---------------|
| a. | Mečka e                      mina- <b>l</b> -a                      ottuk.    | DECLARATIVE   |
|    | bear    be.3SG.PRES    pass- <b>IND.PST</b> -F    from.here                   |               |
|    | 'A bear passed here, <b>I hear/infer.</b> '                                   |               |
| b. | Mečka li e                      mina- <b>l</b> -a                      ottuk? | INTERROGATIVE |
|    | bear    Q    be.3SG.PRES    pass- <b>IND.PST</b> -F    from.here              |               |
|    | ' <b>Given what you heard/infer</b> , did a bear pass here?'                  |               |

## Interrogative flip II

## ► Logically possible interpretations

(1b) Mečka li e                      mina-**l**-a                      ottuk?  
 bear    Q   be.3SG.PRES   pass-**IND.PST**-F   from.here  
 'Did a bear pass here?'

- (i) ✓ *Kit and I are hiking in the bear country and see fresh tracks. Kit talks to a ranger (I can't hear them). I then ask: ≈ 'Given what you heard, did a bear pass here?' ADDRESSEE-ORIENTED*
- (ii) # *Kit and I are hiking in the bear country and see fresh tracks. I talk to a ranger, but forget what I am told. ≈ 'Given what I heard, did a bear pass here?' SPEAKER-ORIENTED*

# Interrogative flip III

## A universal pattern

If an evidential can be used in information-seeking questions, it will flip  
 [data sources in the appendix]

- Bulgarian
- Cheyenne
- Cuzco Quechua
- Japanese
- Korean
- St'át'imcets
- Tagalog
- Tibetan
- Turkish
- ...

NB see (Korotkova 2016b, 2017; AnderBois 2017) on putative counter-examples from (San Roque et al. 2017)

# The puzzle

1. How to derive the flip?
2. How to preclude the lack of flip?

# Outline

## Existing approaches

- The flip in questions is obligatory
- The flip is due to a dedicated syntactic and/or semantic mechanism (Speas and Tenny 2003; McCready 2007; Lim 2010, 2011; Murray 2012; Lim and Lee 2012; Bylinina et al. 2014)

# Outline

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## Today's proposal

- The flip in questions is optional
- The flip is due to a general pragmatic pressure
- Evidentials incompatible with speaker-oriented readings due to subjectivity



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## Testing ground

Range of interpretations in non-canonical questions

# Roadmap

1. Setting the stage
2. Route #1: Obligatory mechanism
  - Indexical approaches
  - Universal approaches
3. Route #2: Pragmatic pressure & division of labor
4. Non-canonical questions
5. Conclusions

# Existing approaches: obligatory mechanism

## 1. Indexical approaches

- Evidential shift is a variety of indexical shift
- Overgeneration: indexicals do not shift in questions

## 2. Universal approaches

- Perspective has a unified representation in the syntax/semantics
- There are dedicated mechanisms of perspectival shift
- Too coarse: not all perspectival expressions are created equal

# Indexical approaches

# Indexicality

- Root declaratives
  - indexical pronouns (*I, here, now*): **the speaker's** circumstances
  - evidentials: **the speaker's** evidence
- Questions
  - indexicals: **the speaker**
  - evidentials: **the addressee**

## (2) Cheyenne (Algonquian; USA)

a. DECLARATIVE

**ná**-hó'téhevá-**máse**  
 1-win-**REP**  
 'I won, I heard.'

a. INTERROGATIVE

mo=**ná**-hó'téhevá-**máse**  
 y/n=1-win-**REP**  
 '**Given what you heard**, did I win?'  
 (Murray 2010: 73)

# Indexicality

## Central claim of indexical approaches

Evidential shift in questions is a variety of indexical shift

(Lim 2010; Lim and Lee 2012; Murray 2010, 2012)

- Variety of indexicals (cf. Schlenker 2003 on Amharic):
  1. **Rigid**: always faithful the utterance context (as per Kaplan 1989)
  2. **Flexible**: switch reference in some grammatical environments
- Explaining the flip
  - Evidence holder is a flexible indexical
  - Questions introduce an entity such indexicals may refer to
  - Example of an implementation: perspectival recentering in dynamic frameworks (Bittner 2007, 2011, also Roberts 2015b)



# Bottom line

- ▶ Indexical approaches overgenerate
- ▶ Technical workaround: further split indexicals (cf. Podobryaev 2017)
- ▶ Conceptual shortcomings:
  - ▶ Outlook on variation: not all languages have flexible indexicals in attitudes while interrogative flip is universal
  - ▶ Not all expressions referring to the speaker are indexicals



# Universal approaches

## Interrogative flip (Tenny 2006)

Affects not just evidentials but a range of expressions intuitively dealing with point of view of a sentient individual

- **the speaker's** perspective in declaratives
- **the addressee's** perspective in interrogatives

## (4) Experiencer predicates; Japanese (cf. Kuno 1973)

- a. **watashi** / \*anata / \*kare wa sabishii desu.                      DECLARATIVE  
 I                      / you                      / he TOP lonely COP  
 '✓I am / #you are / #he is lonely.'
- b. #watashi / ✓anata #kare wa sabishii desu ka                      QUESTION  
 I                      / you                      / he TOP lonely COP  
 '#Am I / ✓Are you lonely?'                      (adapted from Tenny 2006: 247)

## Central claim of universal approaches

Point-of-view has a unified syntax and/or semantics

(Speas and Tenny 2003; McCready 2007; Bylinina, Sudo, and McCready 2014; Zu 2017)

- Example of a syntactic implementation:
  - Discourse participants are represented in the syntax
  - The identity of perspectival center is linked to the clause type
  - Addressee is the closest binder in questions

# Predictions

## ➤ Point-of-view galore:

- appositives
- epistemic modals
- experiencer predicates
- expressives
- logophors
- predicates of personal taste
- shifts
- spatial deixis
- speech act adverbials
- ...

## ➤ Universal theories predict a uniform behavior across the board

But Logophoricity is varied (Charnavel et al. 2017)

But The nature the knower of epistemics and the taster of predicates of taste: debated (von Stechow and Gillies 2008; MacFarlane 2014)

But Interrogative flip is sometimes optional

But Non-uniform behavior in attitudes

But ...

# Bottom line

- Universal approaches are not fine-grained enough to account for the differences between point-of-view phenomena
- There should be more space for cross- and intra-linguistic variation
- Language has many ways to refer to the 1st person

# Roadmap

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# The upshot

1. The pragmatics of questions makes interrogative flip **possible**
2. The semantics of evidentials creates the **obligatory** effect

# Pragmatic pressure I

## Proposal (cf. Garrett 2001)

- Pragmatics of information-seeking questions: signal the speaker's ignorance and ask about the addressee's opinion (Searle 1969; Sadock 1974; ...)
- Only natural that expressions of point-of-view **may** shift in the right context, such as the one introduced by questions
- Preserving the spirit of universal approaches without the main shortcoming:
  - no uniform representation for point-of-view necessary
  - more space for variation



## Pragmatic pressure II

- Prediction: unless overridden by hard constraints, the flip should be optional [the reason a purely pragmatic approach has been refuted in the past]
- Prediction borne out: spatial deixis (Barlew 2016), slifting constructions (Ross 1973; Haddican et al. 2014)
  - The flip is possible

- (5) a. The climate is changing fast, *I think*. DECLARATIVE
- b. How fast is the climate changing *do you think*? INTERROGATIVE
- But not obligatory
- (6) a. How fast is the climate changing *did I say*? 1P SUBJECT
- b. How fast is the climate changing *did John say*? 3P SUBJECT

# Obligatory flip of evidentials: semantics

- Interrogative flip with evidentials is not optional

(1b) Mečka li e                      mina-**l**-a                      ottuk?                      Bulgarian  
 bear    Q   be.3SG.PRES   pass-**IND.PST**-F   from.here  
 'Did a bear pass here?'

- (ii) *#Kit and I are hiking in the bear country and see fresh tracks. I talk to a ranger, but forget what I am told.. ≈ 'Given what I heard, did a bear pass here?' **SPEAKER-ORIENTED***

- Proposal: an instance of subjectivity of evidentials

# Subjective heart of evidentiality

- Evidentials: about introspective self-knowledge and privileged experiences (Korotkova 2015, 2016a,b)
- The experiencer enjoys a special epistemic status
- Semantics in a nutshell: 1-person attitude ascriptions
  1. Mental state component: type of evidence
  2. 1-person component: evidence holder, a pronominal element
- Guiding parallel: subjective expressions such as 1-person pain and attitude reports

## Subjective heart of evidentiality II

- Subjectivity manifests itself across environments (dialogues, attitudes) and constrains the linguistic behavior:
  - Statements with evidentials only felicitous if the evidence holder is aware of their epistemic state
  - A third party: no access to someone's evidence
  - Even if the third party is the evidence holder who doesn't recognize herself

(7) *Alexis and I are watching a muted video of an escape room. Someone talks to a team member and rushes to the left corner. A. thinks that that person—herself, in fact—was told about a clue's location.*

#Alexis [ ipucu köşe-dey-**miş** ] de-di. Turkish  
 Alexis [ clue corner-LOC-**IND** ] say-PST  
 Intended: 'Alexis said that the clue was in the corner (she was told).'

# Subjectivity in questions

- Only the evidence holder has access to their evidence
- An evidential anchored to the speaker in an information-seeking question would signal that the speaker does not have access to their own epistemic state
- Speaker-oriented readings not available

# Interim summary

1. Previous approaches: interrogative flip is hard-wired to the semantics/syntax
2. Proposal: the flip is due to pragmatics
3. Optionality of the flip depends on the type of content one can be ignorant about

# Caveat

- No expectation that all subjective expressions will be subject to the same constraint
- Some have non-addressee-oriented readings in questions
- Case in point: predicates of personal taste (*delicious*) and epistemic modals (*might*)

(8) *Pascal and Mordecai are playing Mastermind. After some rounds where Mordecai gives Pascal hints about the solution, Pascal asks:*

**Must** there be two reds?

- (i) # not a reply based on the addressee's knowledge (given the rules)
- (ii) a reply based publicly available knowledge (as per Hacking 1967)  
[not speaker's exclusive knowlegde; pace Roberts 2015a]

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1. Setting the stage
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# Recap

- ▶ Interrogative flip can be explained in two ways:
  1. Route #1: obligatory mechanism
  2. Route #2: pragmatic pressure
- ▶ How to differentiate: look at non-canonical questions

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	Canonical Qs	Non-canonical Qs
syntax		interrogative clause
semantics		answer set / partition
pragmatics	inquiry for information	<b>depending on type</b>

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# Non-canonical questions: predictions

## ► General expectations

	Ordinary Qs	Non-canonical Qs
obligatory mechanism	flip	flip
pragmatic pressure	flip	<b>depends</b>

## ► Testing ground: quiz questions

# Testing predictions: Evidentials in quiz questions I

## (9) Bulgarian

koja ot tezi e bi-l-a дума в бългaрskиja?  
 which of this.PL be.3SG.PRES be-**IND.PST**-F word in Bulgarian  
 'Which of these is-**EV** a word in Bulgarian?'

### 1. Information-seeking question context

I am absolutely clueless about Bulgarian and ask a linguist who has only learned Bulgarian phonotactics.

### 2. Quiz question context

I am native speaker of Bulgarian and ask a linguist who has only learned Bulgarian phonotactics.

# Testing predictions: Evidentials in quiz questions II

- ▶ Licensing of the indirect evidential

	Information-seeking Q	Quiz Q
speaker	no knowledge: #EV	full knowledge: #EV
addressee	inference: ✓EV	inference: ✓EV

- ▶ **Interrogative flip as a result of an obligatory mechanism**  
The sentence should be able to function as a quiz question as long as the licensing conditions of the evidential are satisfied
- ▶ **Interrogative flip as a result of pragmatic pressures**  
The sentence should not be able to function as a quiz question:
  - Pragmatically, there is no reason for the evidential to shift
  - The evidential should stay speaker-oriented
  - The evidential is incompatible with the speaker's evidence

## Testing predictions: Evidentials in quiz questions III

## (10) Bulgarian

koja ot tezi e bi-l-a дума в бългaрskиja?  
 which of this.PL be.3SG.PRES be-IND.PST-F word in Bulgarian  
 'Which of these is-**EV** a word in Bulgarian?'

1. **Information-seeking question context**

I am absolutely clueless about Bulgarian and ask a linguist who has only learned Bulgarian phonotactics.

✓in this context

2. **Quiz question context**

I am native speaker of Bulgarian and ask a linguist who has only learned Bulgarian phonotactics.

infelicitous in this context

# Bottom line

## ► General expectations

	Ordinary Qs	Non-canonical Qs
obligatory mechanism	flip	flip ☹️
pragmatic pressure	flip	<b>no flip</b> 😊

# Bonus: evidentials and epistemic bias I

## (11) Bulgarian

a. Ortcutt e                      špionin?                      Plain Q  
 Ortcutt be.3SG.PRES spy  
 'Is Ortcutt a spy?'

b. *I see Ortcutt on the beach and he looks suspicious. I conclude that he is a spy and ask to confirm this conclusion.*

Ortcutt e                      špionin **nali?**                      BIASED Q  
 Ortcutt be.3SG.PRES spy                      **PRTCL**  
 'Isn't Ortcutt a spy?'

c. *I hear rumors that Ortcutt is a spy. I ask to confirm that.*

Ortcutt bi-**l**                      špionin **nali?**                      BIASED Q + Ev  
 Ortcutt be-**IND** spy                      **PRTCL**  
 ≈ 'Ortcutt is a spy, *I heard*. Is that true?'

## Bonus: evidentials and epistemic bias II

- Bhadra (2017): similar data from Bangla (Indo-Aryan)
  - The evidential itself introduces a bias
  - Claim: there are languages that flip and languages that don't
- Today's proposal
  - Flip on construction-by-construction rather than language-by-language basis



# Roadmap

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# Recap

- The pattern: evidentials shift in information-seeking questions
- Previous approaches: an obligatory mechanism
- Proposal: division of labor
  - the shift is due to the pragmatics of questions
  - the obligatory effect is rooted in the subjectivity of evidentials
- Speaker-oriented readings: possible in e.g. quiz questions
  - not predicted if the shift is due to the syntax and/or semantics
  - fall out naturally under the proposed account

# Welcome predictions

- ▶ Welcome predictions: other subjective expressions behave similarly across pragmatically different types of questions
  - ▶ Subjectivity-sensitive agreement in Newari may be speaker-oriented in rhetorical questions (Coppock and Wechsler 2018)
  - ▶ English subjective expressions not interpreted as information-seeking in interrogatives

(12) Am I hoping to summit Mt. Rainier?

- ▶ Future: embedded questions, litmus test for the semantics-pragmatics divide

Thank you!

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- ▶ Cheyenne (Algonquian; USA): Murray (2010, 2014, 2016)
- ▶ Cuzco Quechua (Quechuan; Peru): (Faller 2002, 2004, 2011, 2012)
- ▶ Korean (isolate; Korea): Lim (2010); Lim and Lee (2012), own fieldwork
- ▶ St'át'imcets (Salish; Canada): Matthewson et al. (2007); Littell et al. (2010)
- ▶ Tagalog (Austronesian; Philippines): Schwager (2010); Kierstead (2015)
- ▶ Tibetan (Tibeto-Birman; China, Nepal): Garrett (2001); Kalsang et al. (2013)
- ▶ Turkish (Turkic; Turkey, Germany): Şener (2011); Mericli (2015), own fieldwork