Naañ as a Tag Question and a Discourse Marker in Hindi-Urdu

Madelaine O'Reilly-Brown[1], *McGill University*

Abstract

This study investigates the Hindi-Urdu particle *naañ*, which is ubiquitous in casual speech, but whose exact contribution has not been satisfactorily described. While some instances of *naañ* contribute an interrogative meaning, others are incompatible with one – raising the question of whether *naañ* is even a single lexical item. Following the diagnostic tests for biased questions developed in Farkas and Roelofson (2017) and Goodhue (2018), as well as the investigation into German discourse markers in Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2012), this paper proposes that *naañ* should, in fact, be analyzed as two separate lexical items, *naañ1* and *naañ2*. This investigation reveals that *naañ1* appears exclusively in clause-final position, and contributes a meaning very similar to English reversed-polarity tag questions (questions like *you're going, aren't you?*), where a declarative sentence anchor is followed by a tag with the opposite polarity of the anchor), while *naañ2* appears clause-medially or after imperative verbs, is incompatible with an interrogative interpretation, and behaves similarly to the unstressed form of the German discourse marker *doch*, with the additional ability to contribute contrastive topicalization.

1 Introduction

The Hindi-Urdu language is in possession of several particles which are untranslatable, highly idiomatic, and subject to complex usage constraints. Among them is *naañ*, which one encounters almost exclusively in spoken varieties of the language. The phonological form of *naañ* is almost identical to that of *naa*, which is one of two Hindi-Urdu negations. However, the former is distinguished from the latter in the Urdu *nastaliq* writing system by the addition of a glyph to the end of the word, which represents nasalization. For the purposes of this investigation, *naañ* and *naa* should be understood as separate lexical items, motivated by the fact that *naa* can contribute propositional negation, while *naañ* never can.

Naañ is most commonly heard appended to a declarative utterance like that in (1a), which then becomes interrogative, as in (1b):

(1)   a.   Tum mere   saath aa-o-ge
              you   1SG-OBL with   come-2PL-FUT
              'You will come with me'
        b.   Tum mere   saath aa-o-ge,   naañ?
              you   1SG-OBL with   come-2PL-FUT, naañ
              'You will come with me, *naañ*?'

Sentences like (1b) are usually translated as *you will come with me, won't you/right?* Be that as it may, *naañ* will be glossed here as *naañ* in order to avoid unwarranted assumptions.

At the same time, *naañ* can also appear sentence-medially, in which case, it not only does not contribute an interrogative meaning to the utterance in which it appears, but is actually incompatible with an interrogative interpretation. This is apparent in this modified example from the Pakistani telefilm *Behadd*, which cannot be pronounced with either final rising intonation or the sentence-initial question marker *kyaa*, both of which can normally be added to a declarative utterance to make it interrogative:

(2)   (*kyaa) ham naañ film miss kar denge   (*↑)
        (*kyaa) we   naañ film miss do give-3PL-FUT

---

[1]moreillybrown@gmail.com

'We *naañ* will miss the film'

In instances like (2), it is difficult to characterize the contribution of *naañ*, and as there is no English word or morpheme that obviously corresponds to it, *naañ* is usually omitted in English translations.

Given this brief introduction to the various uses of *naañ*, I will propose that *naañ* is actually two different lexical items, which I will refer to as *naañ1* and *naañ2*. *Naañ1* appears clause-finally, like in sentence (1b), and corresponds to English reversed-polarity tag questions (furthermore simply referred to as tag questions). *Naañ2* appears clause-medially (the one exception being that it may appear after a verb in the imperative), and I analyze it as a discourse marker that bears a close similarity to the unstressed version of the German discourse marker *doch*.

2 *Naañ1* as a tag question

As just noted, polar questions in Hindi-Urdu are formed either with simple sentence-final rising intonation, or through the addition of the morpheme *kyaa* to the beginning of a declarative utterance along with final rising intonation. The addition of *kyaa* and final rising intonation to the declarative sentence in (1a) creates the interrogative sentence in (3):

(3) Kyaa tum mere   saath aa-o-ge↑?
     kyaa you 1SG-OBL with come-2PL-FUT
     'Will you come with me?'

The difference between the question in (1b), formed with *naañ1*, and the question in (3), is that in uttering (1b), the speaker indicates that he or she has some previous belief about what the answer to the question should be. This contrasts with (3), which does not indicate that the speaker has any opinion either way.

This section will attempt to identify the distribution of *naañ* questions, characterize the type of bias they contribute, and to compare them with some of the better-studied English question types, such as high negation questions (HNQs) and reversed-polarity tag questions. Ultimately, *naañ1* proves to be most similar in distribution to the latter, and thus we will attempt to extend the analysis for reversed-polarity tag questions formulated in Farkas and Roelofson (2017) to the behavior of *naañ1*.

2.1 Bias for what?

The following scenario, modified from Goodhue (2018), is one in which the speaker is necessarily neutral with regard to the two alternatives, p (The weather is good) and $\neg p$ (The weather is not good). The scenario is then followed by (4a), a positive polar question formed with *kyaa*, and (4b), a question with the same sentence radical followed by *naañ1*:

(4) A has been in a windowless, basement computer lab for the last eight hours. Given her background knowledge, it is equally likely that it could be nice out or that it could be raining. Then B walks in from outside. A asks:

   a. Kyaa mausam acchaa hai?
      Kyaa weather good   is
      'Is the weather good?'
   b. #Mausam acchaa hai, naañ?
      weather good   is   naañ1
      'The weather is good, *naañ1*?'

The *naañ1* question is unacceptable in a context of neutrality of speaker opinion, which illustrates that *naañ1* must convey speaker bias towards either p or $\neg p$, i.e., the question conveys epistemic

bias. Let us consider a scenario in which a speaker is biased for ¬p, and note that a *naañ1* question is not felicitous:

(5)   Context: Jane has an abysmal understanding of geography, and mistakenly believes that Vienna is located in Germany. She is in history class one day, and her professor mentions the city of Vienna in connection with Austria. Jane leans over and asks her fellow classmate:

   a. #Viyanaa aasTriiaa meñ hai, naañ?
      Vienna Austria in is naañ1
      'Vienna is in Austria, *naañ1*?'

This leaves only the option that *naañ1* conveys speaker bias for *p*, which, indeed, it does. Take the following example, also modified from Goodhue (2018), in which the speaker is biased for *p*, and note that a *naañ1* sentence is felicitous.

(6)   Context: A is in a windowless basement computer lab. She reads the weather report online, which says: "There's a 75% chance that it's raining." B comes in from outside. A asks:

   a.   Baarish ho   rahii hai, naañ?
        rain   happen IPFV AUX naañ1
        'It is raining, *naañ1*?'

Having established that *naañ1* questions convey epistemic bias for *p*, the goal of the next sections is to compare the distribution of *naañ1* questions with English rising declaratives, confirmationals, high negation questions (HNQs) and reversed-polarity tag questions, all of which convey epistemic bias for *p*.

2.2   Rising declaratives

As per Farkas and Roelofson (2017), rising declarative questions, which consist of a declarative utterance with final rising intonation, convey speaker bias for *p*. Below is an example taken from their paper, which illustrates a scenario in which a rising declarative is felicitous, but a tag question is not (an upward-facing arrow indicates rising intonation):

(7)   Belinda is going through a pile of job applications. Chris has not seen any of them yet. Belinda hands Chris the application that she just finished reading, and tells him to have a look at it. Chris to Belinda:

   a.   This is a good one↑?

(8), which is the Hindi-Urdu translation of the sentence radical this is a good one with *naañ1* appended to the end of the utterance, is infelicitous in the context in (7):

(8)   #Yeh acchii waalii darkhwaast hai, naañ?
      This good   one   application is   naañ
      'This is a good application, *naañ*?'

This indicates that we should discard English rising declaratives as a possible corresponding question type for *naañ* questions.

2.3   Confirmationals

This scenario from Wiltschko and Heim (2016) licenses the English invariant tags *eh, huh,* and *right,* which they refer to as 'confirmationals' because they are used to request that the addressee confirm the truth of or their knowledge of the truth of the proposition:

(9) Context: John knows that Mary would like to have a new dog. He hasn't seen her in a long time. One day, he runs into her while she's walking a new puppy. John utters:

    a. You have a new dog, eh/huh/right?

The Hindi-Urdu equivalent of the host sentence in (9-a) with *naañ1* added is infelicitous:

(10) #Tumhaare paas nayaa Daag hai, naañ?
    your.OBL near new   dog is   naañ1
    'You have a new dog, *naañ*?'

The authors also identify a usage particular to *eh*, in which the speaker asks for confirmation of her own assumption that the addressee knows p is true. In this context, neither *huh* nor *right* is felicitous. An example from their paper is shown in (11):

(11) Context: Mary is walking her new dog when she runs into John. She is expecting that he would congratulate her on the new dog, but he's not mentioning it. She isn't sure anymore whether he actually realizes that she has a new dog. So she utters:

    a. I have a new dog, eh/*huh/*right?

In this context, the Hindi-Urdu version of the host sentence with *naañ1* added sentence-finally is infelicitous:

(12) #Tumhaare paas nayaa Daag hai, naañ?
    your.OBL near new   dog is   naañ1
    'You have a new dog, *naañ*?'

From these examples, I conclude that *naañ* should be analyzed as bearing similarity neither to English *eh*, nor to *huh* or *right*, as the distribution of *naañ* does not match either.

2.4 Comparing tag questions and HNQs

Having demonstrated that *naañ* is not felicitous in the same contexts as English rising declaratives or confirmationals[2], we are left with tag questions and HNQs as question types that bear a possible correspondence to *naañ*. As it turns out, the distinction between tag questions and HNQs is extremely fine-grained, and so a detour into the details and distributions of these question types in English will be necessary.

    Previous work (Reese 2007, Northrup 2014, Farkas and Roelofson 2017) has observed that the tag portion of a tag question may have either rising or falling intonation, and that the two have different discourse effects. As Northrup (2014) explains, rising tag questions are appropriate whenever the speaker has a prior belief in p, while falling tags are only licensed if there is enough contextual evidence for the speaker to infer that p. An example context which licenses rising but not falling tag questions is in (13) (modified from Northrup 2014):

(13) Context: Teddy is the only person who ever comes over for dinner at Gertrude and Marcine's house. Gertrude comes home, and Marcine has just started pulling out dishes for dinner. Independently, Gertrude believes Teddy was planning to come over for dinner. Gertrude:

    a. Teddy's coming to dinner, isn't he↑?
    b. #Teddy's coming to dinner, isn't he↓?

Because Gertrude has no direct contextual evidence to infer p, a rising tag question is not felicitous.

---

[2]This investigation will only compare *naañ1* questions with English reversed polarity tag questions, and will leave aside questions formed with invariant tags, such as *right* and *innit*. English possesses such a myriad of invariant tags, each with its own pecularities, that it was not feasible to address them in this study, although hopefully future work will devote more attention to them.

While Northrup (2014) claims that HNQs require contextual evidence for ¬p, Goodhue (2018) shows that HNQs are also felicitous in the absence of evidence for either p or ¬p. Observe that the tag question in (13) rephrased as an HNQ in (14) is perfectly acceptable in the context in (13), in which there is no contextual evidence either way:

(14)   Isn't Teddy coming to dinner?

In fact, HNQs and rising intonation tag questions appear to be identical in their distribution in English. However, HNQs contrast with falling intonation tag questions in that they cannot be used in a context in which the speaker has direct contextual evidence for p. For example, the following context (from Farkas and Roelofson 2017) licenses a falling tag question, but does not license a rising tag question or an HNQ:

(15)   Context: Gertrude notices an extra place setting. When there's a guest, it's always Teddy, but Gertrude thought Teddy wasn't coming. Gertrude:
         a.   Teddy's coming to dinner, isn't he↓?
         b.   #Teddy's coming to dinner, isn't he↑?
         c.   #Isn't Teddy coming to dinner?

2.5   *Naañ1* as a tag

The basis for the argument that *naañ1* corresponds with English tag questions, rather than HNQs, is that *naañ1* can be used in contexts in which HNQs are not licensed, namely, contexts in which the speaker has direct contextual evidence for p. Like tag questions in English, *naañ1* also has two intonational forms, one of which is rising intonation, and one of which is "flat". It is the "flat" intonation version of *naañ1* that is licit in contexts of direct contextual evidence for p. Revisiting the situation in (15), we see that the Hindi-Urdu translation of the sentence radical Teddy's coming to dinner with *naañ1* added is acceptable if *naañ1* has flat intonation (indicated by underlining the morpheme), but not if it has rising intonation:

(16)   a.   Teddy khaane par aa   rahaa   hai, naañ?
              Teddy eat-OBL on   come PRS.PROG AUX naañ1
              'Teddy is coming to eat, *naañ1*?'
         b.   #Teddy khaane par aa   rahaa   hai, naañ↑?
              Teddy eat-OBL on   come PRS.PROG AUX naañ1
              'Teddy is coming to eat, *naañ1↑*?'

However, (16-b) is acceptable in the context in (13), patterning with the rising tag question. It is safe to generalize that *naañ1* with rising intonation patterns with rising tag questions, and *naañ1* with flat intonation patterns with falling tag questions.

Another situation in which rising tag questions and HNQs are illicit, but falling tag questions are acceptable, is one in which a speaker delivers an opinion that they are certain their hearer shares. In (17-c), the speaker has already formulated the opinion that p, and is seeking acknowledgement from the addressee that he agrees:

(17)   a.   Jane: Mark broke his foot again. I heard it was a boating accident.
         b.   Carl: He's always up to something crazy, he's so reckless!
         c.   Jane: He's a pretty wild guy, isn't he↓?

A *naañ1* sentence with flat intonation is acceptable in this same scenario:

(18)   Woh paagal hai, naañ?
         He   wild   is   naañ1
         'He is wild, *naañ1*?'

Examples of this type of *naañ1* sentence can be found even in newspaper headlines, such as the following from the Pakistani news outlet, *Dawn* (modified for clarity for non-Pakistani readers):

(19)   Nawaz Sharif Nelson Mandela bhii to   naheeñ haiñ, naañ!
        Nawaz Sharif Nelson Mandela also CONTRAST NEG   is   naañ1
        'Nawaz Sharif is no Nelson Mandela either, *naañ1*!'

Native speakers confirm that this headline is not an information-seeking question, but rather the expression of an opinion that the writer believes is shared by his readership. Note that in English, a tag question with falling intonation seems to convey the same meaning, while an HNQ is completely illicit:

(20)   a.   Nawaz Sharif is no Nelson Mandela either, is he↓?
        b.   #Isn't Nawaz Sharif no/not Nelson Mandela?

In addition, Reese (2007) identifies another reading of tag questions which he describes as being neutral. In (21) the speaker suspects that Lorraine *does* have a beehive hairdo:

(21)   Wait, I just gotta ask – Lorraine doesn't have a beehive hairdo, too, does she??

This is in contrast to Reese's claim that (21) is roughly equivalent to the polar question *Does Lorraine have a beehive hairdo too?* Rather, (21) conveys speaker bias towards the belief that Lorraine *does* have a beehive hairdo, which is not present in the polar question version. It also seems that (21) must be pronounced with final rising intonation in order to be licit.

The Hindi-Urdu equivalent of this question conveys the same bias towards the belief that Lorraine *does* have a beehive haircut that (21) does, provided that *naañ1* is pronounced with rising intonation:

(22)   Uskaa   saadnaa haircut to   naheeñ hai, naañ↑?
        She.OBL-GEN beehive haircut CONTRAST NEG   is   naañ1
        'She doesn't have a saadnaa (beehive) haircut, *naañ1*↑?'

(21) and (22) are curious because, unlike in the previous tag question examples where the speaker conveys bias for p, these two examples convey bias for $\neg p$. This clearly differs from HNQs, which can only ever convey bias for p.

However, there is one situation in which *naañ1* does not line up exactly with an English reversed polarity tag question, which when such a tag question is used, as Reese (2007) describes, as an "implicit request for an explanation" (pp. 58). This type of request is conveyed by using a tag question with falling intonation. The following example, taken from that paper, illustrates this:

(23)   You're up early this morning, aren't you↓.

The Hindi-Urdu equivalent of this sentence with *naañ1* is shown below:

(24)   Aaj   to   tum jaldi uTh   gaye, naañ?
        Today CONTRAST you early get.up went naañ1
        'Today you got up early, *naañ1*?'

While the English sentence (23) expresses something like suspicion or reproach, the Urdu version in (24) does not. Rather, (24) serves most naturally as the first part of an explanation, and might be followed by something like *and that's why your breakfast isn't ready yet*. The lack of this "suspicious" reading remains a puzzle, and one that I leave to future research.

Overall, however, *naañ1* questions appear to pattern nicely with the various uses of English tag questions, even sharing the two intonational options and associated shades of meaning, while analyzing *naañ1* as an HNQ fails to capture its non-information-seeking uses. Therefore, I propose to analyze *naañ1* as performing a function similar to that of an English reversed-polarity tag question.

2.6   An analysis for tag questions

Farkas and Roelofson (2017) propose to integrate declarative and interrogative sentences into a framework in which both sentence types have a semantic value which includes inquisitive content and informative content. They propose that there are two sorts of clause type markers, the first being DEC/INT, and the second CLOSED/OPEN. They state that, in English root clauses, the presence of DEC is signaled by declarative word order, and INT by interrogative word order, while in embedded clauses, the complementizer *that* marks DEC, and *if/whether* marks INT. CLOSED is signaled by falling sentence-final intonation, and OPEN is marked by sentence-final rising intonation. They propose that a sentence radical ϕ combines first with DEC or INT, and then that result combines with CLOSED or OPEN:

(25)

They treat tag interrogatives as consisting of a falling declarative, plus a falling or rising tag, which is interrogative (indicated by interrogative word order in the tag).

(26)
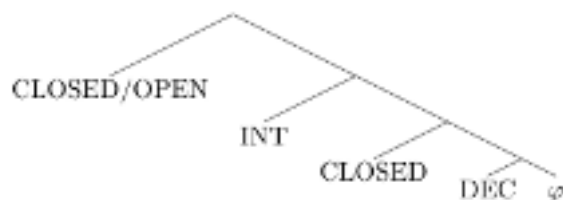
They characterize the bias one observes in tag interrogatives and rising declaratives as "special discourse effects". They argue that bias consists of the speaker indicating that he or she has some evidence for the highlighted alternative (the information state picked out by the sentence anchor), and then marking their level of credence in the evidenced alternative. For example, the rising declarative *You have a new dog?* uttered by speaker A indicates that A has some evidence to believe that the actual world is one in which the addressee has a new dog, and, according to the authors, the use of a rising declarative, specifically, indicates that this level of credence is anywhere from zero to low. Crucially, they suggest that the level of credence on the part of the speaker in the evidenced possibility is indicated by rising or falling intonation. They include a schema as follows:

(27)   a.   ↑ = zero to low credence
       b.   ↓↑ = moderate to high credence
       c.   ↓↓ = high credence

(27-b) and (27-c) apply to rising and falling tag interrogatives, respectively, with the downward-pointing arrow on the left referring to the falling intonation of the sentence anchor in both types. Therefore, (28) indicates that the speaker has moderate-to-high belief that Jane is coming, while (29) indicates that the speaker has high belief that Jane is coming.

(28)   Jane is coming↓, isn't she↑?

(29)   Jane is coming↓, isn't she↓

2.7 Extending the analysis to *naañ1*

Assuming an analysis in the style of Farkas and Roelofson (2017), Hindi-Urdu *naañ1* questions can be segmented, like English tag questions, into a declarative anchor with falling intonation, and an interrogative tag with rising or falling intonation, as schematized in sentence (2), now renumbered as (30):

(30)   Tum mere   saath aaoge↓,   naañ↑/↓?
       you 1SG-OBL with come-2PL-FUT, naañ1
       'You will come with me, *naañ1*?'

Unlike in the English tag questions that Farkas and Roelofson examine, Hindi-Urdu does not have interrogative word order to indicate the presence of INT, and *naañ* is, at least at the overt level, an invariant tag. Assuming that, as in English, intonation indicates the presence of CLOSED/OPEN, then the only element remaining that could contribute INT is *naañ1*. However, given that in Hindi-Urdu, positive polar questions are created by adding the particle *kyaa* to the beginning of an utterance, plus sentence-final rising intonation, then their analysis would analyze *kyaa* as an INT operator as well.

Another issue is the difference between variant and invariant tags, and even the differences within the family of invariant tags. As has been demonstrated, the various question tags are all unique, but this account would predict that behave identically. However, leaving aside the broader theoretical issues regarding tag questions, the Farkas and Roelofson analysis extends quite well to the behavior and distribution of *naañ1* questions, thereby supporting the tag question analysis.

3   *naañ2* as a discourse marker

When *naañ* appears sentence-medially or after a verb in the imperative, it contributes a discourse-marker meaning. This form of *naañ*, *naañ2*, can appear after a variety of constituents including NPs and PPs. In these positions, its behavior patterns with other Urdu-Hindi discourse markers, and its pragmatic contribution appears to be something like the German discourse marker *doch*.

3.1 Background on Hindi-Urdu discourse markers

Like German, Hindi-Urdu has an inventory of frequently-used discourse markers. Sharma (1999) lists the main Hindi-Urdu discourse markers as:

(31)   a.   *hii* exclusive contrastive focus ('only')
       b.   *bhii* inclusive contrastive focus ('also')
       c.   *to* contrastive topic

Sharma argues that discourse markers are not morphological affixes, but rather syntactic clitics. In the following examples from her paper, she contrasts the discourse particle *hii* with the oblique affix, showing that *hii* can take scope over conjoined nominals, but the oblique affix cannot:

(32)   *[kutt- aur ghor] -e]
        dog   and horse -OBL

(33)   [kutt-e   aur ghor-e]   =hii
        dog-OBL and horse-OBL =hii

Like *hii*, *naañ2* can also take scope over conjoined nominals:

(34)   [kutt-e aur ghor-e] naañ   maidaan men phir   rahe hain
        dogs   and horses naañ2 field   in   wander IPFV AUX

8

'The dogs and horses *naañ2* are wandering around the field'

Sharma also states that a single discourse markers may not appear more than once in a clause, which is also the case for *naañ2*. However, it is possible for *naañ2* to co-occur with other discourse markers:

(35) Maiñ naañ taazii sabziyaañ (hii) / (*naañ) khariidtii huuñ
      I   naañ2 fresh vegetables hii / naañ2 buy   AUX
      'As for me, I buy fresh vegetables (only)/(*naañ2)'

Additionally, *naañ2* mirrors other Hindi-Urdu discourse markers in terms of its syntactic distribution. Hindi-Urdu discourse markers may follow any NP, a V/VP, and some adjuncts such as PPs and AdvPs (although these appear to sometimes be degraded, according to Sharma). This is the same distribution as *naañ2* when it is not behaving as a question tag.

Because of these various similarities with Hindi-Urdu discourse markers, I hold that in sentence-medial position, *naañ2* is also a discourse marker.

3.2   A description of the meaning contributed by *naañ2*

Like many discourse markers, the meaning of *naañ2* is difficult to characterize. Generally, the usage of *naañ2* presupposes that the content of the utterance is or should be generally known and established as fact. Take, for example, the sentence in (2) (renumbered here as 36-a) in context:

(36) Context: A and her daughter, B, are preparing to leave the house to meet their friends at the movie theatre. B is dawdling, and A says:
      a. Ham naañ film mis kar denge
          we   naañ2 film miss will do
          'We *naañ2* will miss the film' ≈ 'As for us, we'll miss the film you know'

This utterance conveys a sense of reproach that B has seemingly failed to appreciate the obvious fact that she will make them late. Additionally, *naañ2* seems to highlight the constituent it follows, in this case ham 'we' and relate it to others who are also going to see the movie, and who are presumably not late. This 'highlighting' only occurs when *naañ2* follows the leftmost constituent in an utterance. (36-a) seems to convey something similar to what Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2012) describe for *doch* sentences, namely, that they express the speaker's belief that the proposition is given or uncontroversial. Grosz (to appear), another investigation of *doch*, also notes the particle's appearance in corrective contexts, such as the following:

(37) A: Schau mal! Diese Blumen sind so hässlich.
          Look mal these flowers are so ugly
          'Have a look! These flowers are so ugly.'
      B: Was   hast du denn? Diese Blumen sind *doch* schön!
          What have you then   these flowers are   *doch* beautiful
          'What's your problem? These flowers are *doch* beautiful!'

An Urdu equivalent of (37) conveys something quite similar:

(38) A: Dekho! Yeh phool kaafi badsoorat haiñ
          Look   these flowers quite ugly   are
          'Look! These flowers are so ugly.'
      B: Are! Yeh phool naañ khoobsoorat haiñ
          Are these flowers naañ2 beautiful   are
          'What do you mean? These flowers *naañ* are beautiful!'

Grosz also notes that *doch* can be used in contexts in which an utterance conveys information which is new to the hearer. The Hindi-Urdu version of an example given by Grosz in which *doch* is acceptable is shown below:

(39)   Context: You are talking to a new colleague who doesn't know you and tell them about how it's hard to go on holidays. You say:

    a.   Hameň hamesha dog sitter rakhnaa hai
        We.DAT always   dog sitter hire   AUX
        'We always have to hire a pet sitter.'

    b.   Hamaare paas naaň do   billiiaaň haiň
        We   have naaň2 two cats   are
        'We have *naaň2* two cats.'

In this case, the information that the speaker has cats was previously unknown to the hearer, but follows obviously from the previous statement about the speaker's need for a pet sitter.

The variety of context types in which *doch* and *naaň2* are licit, both with similar interpretations, lends support to the idea that there is a correspondence between them.

3.3   Overlapping environments for *naaň2* and *doch*

A distinguishing feature of *doch* mentioned in Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2012) is that it can appear alongside imperatives and performative modals. Like *doch*, *naaň2* may appear with performative modals:

(40)   Tumheň apne kamre ko   naaň saaf karnaa hai
       You.DAT your room   ACC naaň2 clean do   AUX
       'You must clean up your room *naaň*'

Naaň2 is also perfectly felicitous in imperatives, although it seems to have two interpretations, one (41-a) persuasive, and the other (41-b) aggressive:

(41)   Tum jaao   naaň
       you   goIMP naaň2
       'Go *naaň*!' ≈

    a.   'Go [don't stay for my sake]'
    b.   'Just go!'

Furthermore, as was noted in (2), *naaň2* is barred from interrogative utterances. This is the same for *doch*, which they argue is a consequence of the fact that *doch* presupposes the truth of the proposition already established.

3.4   An analysis for *doch*

The formula for *doch* given in Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2012), which I will suggest can be extended to *naaň2*, is as follows:

(42)   Level of Assertion: *doch(p)* is equivalent to *p*.

(43)   Level of Presupposition: In addition, the speaker is committed to the belief that the following is in the common ground:

    a.   Normally, in a situation like *c*, any rational agent whose goal is to find out whether *p*, does find out whether *p* (from information already available or in the immediate surroundings)   (Uncontroversiality)
    b.   *c* is not normal in the sense of (43-a).   (Abnormality)

While applying this analysis to *naañ2* accounts for some intuitive notions about its meaning, there are some differences between *naañ2* and *doch*. The most evident is that the position of *naañ2* is not fixed, while the position of *doch* is. Furthermore, when *naañ2* follows the leftmost constituent in an utterance, it contrasts that constituent with others of the same paradigm, as seen in (36-a). I suggest that this may be an instance of contrastive topicalization,[3] and that *naañ2* can serve as a contrastive topicalization marker. This usage is limited to when *naañ2* follows the leftmost constituent is because, as Montaut (2011) explains in her investigation of Hindi-Urdu *to*, topicalization in the language is indicated solely by fronting, and thus a contrastive topicalization marker must follow a fronted constituent.[4] This difference is illustrated by the minimal pairs below, in which *naañ2* is placed after the subject NP (44) versus after the PP – a non-leftmost constituent (45):

(44) Ham naañ film mis kar denge
      We   naañ2 film miss do give-FUT
      ≈ 'WE [as opposed to the others] will miss the film, [why are you behaving as if we aren't running late?]

(45) Ham film naañ mis kar denge
      We   film naañ2 miss do give-FUT
      ≈ 'We will miss the film, [why are you behaving as if we aren't running late?]

In (44) *ham* 'we' is contrasted with others of the same paradigm (in context, the others who are going to see the movie). However, in (45) *naañ2* does not follow a topicalized constituent, and therefore the constituent it follows, *film* 'film' is not contrasted with others of the same paradigm (other things one could miss). However, if *film* is fronted and followed by *naañ2*, then it receives a contrastive interpretation:

(46) Film naañ ham t   mis kar   denge
      Film naañ2 ham miss do   give-FUT
      ≈ 'We will miss the film, [so let's do something else instead]'

(46) contrasts directly with (45), and shows that the phrase *film naañ* only receives a contrastive interpretation when fronted, as was predicted.

In summary, this suggests that *naañ2* carries the same presuppositions as *doch*, while also having the capacity to act as a contrastive topicalization marker when following a topicalized constituent. Hopefully, further work will be able to integrate these two functions into one semantic analysis.

4 Conclusion and further questions

This investigation has found that the Hindi-Urdu particle *naañ* is actually two lexical items, which can be differentiated based on their position within a sentence: *naañ1* appears clause-finally, (except in imperatives) and is interpreted as a tag question, while *naañ2* appears within a clause or after an imperative utterance and is interpreted as a discourse marker which presupposes that the obviousness of *p* is readily available from the surroundings, but that the addressee has failed to discover or acknowledge *p*, and which can also act as a contrastive topic marker.

It seems within reason to wonder whether these two lexical items could be united under one analysis, given, first of all, the fact that the two versions of *naañ* are phonologically identical, and secondly, the intuitive similarity between *naañ1* pronounced as a flat tag and *naañ2*, which both involve a request by the speaker, who has a high level of commitment to *p*, that the addressee also acknowledge *p*. Furthermore, there has been little work done on the differences between variant

---

[3]Thank you to commenters at FASAL 10 who suggested the idea of topicalization.
[4]The distribution of *naañ2* is also quite similar to that of *to* as described in that paper, and further investigation is warranted into the similarities and differences between the two particles.

and invariant tags in English, leading one to wonder whether invariant tags (of which *naañ1* is one) could in fact be related to the family of discourse markers. Hopefully, future research will lead to a more conclusive answer to these questions.

References

Farkas, Donka F. and Floris Roelofson. 2017. Division of Labor in the Interpretation of Declaratives and Interrogatives. *Journal of Semantics* 34:237–289.

Goodhue, Daniel. 2018. *On Asking and Answering Biased Polar Questions*. Ph.D. thesis, McGill University. pages 82–152.

Grosz, Patrick. to appear. German 'doch': an element that triggers a contrast presupposition. In *Proceedings of CLS 46*. University of Chicago.

Kaufmann, Magdalena and Stefan Kaufmann. 2012. Epistemic particles and performativity. In *Proceedings of SALT 22*, pages 208–225.

Montaut, Annie. 2011. The Hindi particle to: from grammar to discourse. In *Selected Papers from the Linguistic Society of India Conference 2011*. Cambridge, UK.

Northrup, Oliver. 2014. *Grounds for Commitment*. Ph.D. thesis, UC Santaz Cruz.

Reese, Brian. 2007. *Bias in Questions*. Ph.D. thesis, The University of Texas at Austin.

Sharma, Devyani. 1999. Nominal Clitics and Constructive Morphology in Hindi. In *Proceedings of the LFG99 Conference*. CLSI Publications.

Wiltschko, Martina and Johannes Heim. 2016. The syntax of confirmationals. In *Outside the Clause: Form and function of extra-clausal constituents*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.