

Not on the same page: negotiating not-at-issue content with *bəra* (Marathi)

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ABSTRACT

This case study of Marathi discourse particle *bəra* in medial position makes two contributions: 1. *bəra* is used to *question* (how come *p*?) or *reject* (as if *p*) the prejacent *p*. Importantly, *p* is necessarily part of not-at-issue content of the preceding context update proposal 2. Hence, not-at-issue updates should be represented as proposals too. In advancing these points, a unified account of the two readings is offered. Formally, the proposalhood of not-at-issue updates is represented in the *waiting room* model (Biezma & Rawlins 2017) of discourse. The resulting outlook therefore shows that being at-issue \neq being a proposal. Instead, at-issueness should only be relativized to the current QUD.

1 Introduction

It is a standard assumption that sentence meaning is made up of more than just what is *said*. It has components peripheral to what is said (the ‘main point’ of the utterances) such as presuppositions, implicatures, entailments etc. Discourse is sensitive to this in a particular way. All else being equal, normally, we object to or negotiate what is said/the main point (hence, labeled *at-issue content* in Potts 2005) and let the peripheral (not-at-issue, henceforth NAI) content slide.¹ Following current literature, I take at-issue content as content that addresses the current question under discussion (Beaver et al. 2017). Since we negotiate on content of utterances, utterances in a discourse are taken as *proposals* to update the context (Stalnaker 1978). So proposals (at-issue content) are evaluated but peripheral (NAI) content is taken as not intended for negotiation. A well-established empirical observation supporting this view regarding the at-issue/NAI distinction is that at-issue content can be directly (anaphorically) denied whereas, NAI content cannot be denied directly. In (1), the nominal appositive, taken to be NAI, cannot be felicitously challenged by direct denial as in B_2 whereas, the asserted component can be challenged in B_1 .

- (1) A: John, the blues guitarist, is visiting Mary tomorrow.
B₁: That’s not true/No – John is not visiting Mary.
B₂: #That’s not true/#No – John is not a blues guitarist.
B₃: Wait. This is peripheral to your point but: John isn’t a blues guitarist.

This is not to say that NAI content cannot be challenged at all. In (1), B_3 is a response that challenges the content of the nominal appositive. But note that doing so halts the discourse. This is very clear in cases of presupposition failures where interlocutors have to backtrack and update the context non-monotonically as the discourse crashes. Observations such as

¹This is of course simplifying given cases of presupposition failure.

these regarding anaphoric deniability² of at-issue content have repercussions in discourse pragmatics that models how the common ground³ (CG) is updated. As a specific instance of this, in the influential and successful ‘table model’ of Farkas & Bruce (2010), proposals have a special slot (the table) where they are evaluated but NAI content lacks such a slot. In turn, literature that models context update phenomena (such as Murray 2014, Anderbois et al. 2015, Rett 2021) has thus treated NAI updates to be *forced* (or directly added) into the common ground as opposed to at-issue updates which go through negotiation stage.

The present paper brings evidence from Marathi discourse particle *bārā*⁴ and shows that it exclusively targets NAI updates. This means that the strategy to prevent addition of NAI content into CG is grammaticalized. Such conventionalized means of challenging NAI updates, then, is also a monotonic process exactly like challenging at-issue content with response particles such as *No*. Therefore, as I show in this paper, NAI content is also negotiated in a discourse, and it needs to be represented as such i.e., at the proposal stage. Note that the claim here is not that the at-issue/not-at-issue distinction is irrelevant. The empirically novel fact is the existence of a dedicated lexical device whose argument is part of the NAI content of the previous proposal. The emerging outlook is that at-issueness should not be equated with proposalhood. Instead, both at-issue and NAI updates are proposals.

1.1 Setup

The particle *bārā* occurs optionally clause-medially in declaratives as well as in clause-final position across declaratives, imperatives and wh-interrogatives. Deo (2025) provides the first account of clause-final *bārā*. See (2) illustrating this occurrence of *bārā*.

- (2) CONTEXT: *Anu needs Bilal to stay at home because the plumber will be coming and someone needs to be in the house to meet him.*

Anu: mi aata office-la dza-te ahe *bārā*
 1SG.F NOW office-DAT GO-IMPF.F.SG BE.PRES BARA
 ‘I am going to the office now (alright?/ok?)’ (Deo, 2025, ex. 4)

In (2), Anu communicates to Bilal new information that she deems beneficial/important for Bilal to take into consideration. The presence of *bārā* in (2) conveys Anu’s expectation that Bilal commits to the prejacent⁵ respectively and act in accordance with it. Deo’s account, relying on Condoravdi & Lauer’s (2012) framework, explains interpretive effects arising out of interaction of *bārā* with the clause-types it occurs in. Under that account, presence of *bārā* has an *advisory* effect: informally, the speaker indicates a preference for the addressee to take commitment to the prejacent of *bārā* in view of some salient goal.

²Cf. Krifka (2013), Roelofsen & Farkas (2015), and Snider (2017) for instance on anaphoricity of response particles.

³What we jointly accept to be the case, Stalnaker (2002).

⁴Historically, an adjective meaning “well/good”.

⁵The sentence without *bārā*.

In this paper, I provide a first account of clause-medial *bārā*. Unlike its clause-final counterpart, clause-medial *bārā* is only licensed in declaratives and it is distinct from clause-final *bārā* in two ways: (i) it shows agreement; (ii) clause-medial *bārā* contributes a *rejecting/questioning* effect. The basic data of interest is the following. Compare the paradigm in (3) and (4) which have minimally distinct contexts resulting in very different interpretations. Note that the only difference is whether the preceding update proposal is about predictions about the future (easily taken as not settled) in (3) where we get *rejection* vs. events easily taken to be settled in (4) where we get *questioning* interpretation.

(3) **Rejecting *bārā***

CONTEXT: *A is telling B about an upcoming concert in the city. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows that Anu doesn't like going to large concert venues. A only knows that Anu likes this type of music.*

A: There is a Beyonce show happening in June. I should tell Anu.

(Assumption: Anu will be interested in going to this concert)

B: anu bār-i itk-ya moṭ^h-ya concert-la dza-il⁶
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT go-FUT
 'As if Anu will go for such a big concert'...#*but I think she'll go*

(4) **Questioning *bārā***

CONTEXT: *A is telling B about a recent Beyonce concert A went to. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows that Anu doesn't like going to large concert venues. B asks A, "how was the concert?"*

A: It was great! Anu was singing along to every song!

(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to the big concert⁷)

B: anu bār-i itk-ya moṭ^h-ya concert-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT go-PERF-F.SG
 'Anu went to such a big concert!?' (what's up with that?)..#*but I think she didn't*

In (3), speaker B is construed as dismissive and incredulously rejecting the prejacent, which I term as the *rejection* reading. Here, the events in discussion cannot be easily taken to be settled by B (its to be seen whether Anu will be excited by the concert news). Whereas in (4), the overall effect is of incredulously questioning the prejacent (*how come p?*). This is a context involving report of past events that can be easily taken to be settled, especially since A is giving a first-hand report of events. I term this the *questioning* reading. To see the two effects clearly, observe that in (3), the rejection reading, a continuation such as *but I think she'll go* is infelicitous. Whereas, in the questioning case, (4), the speaker appears as

⁵Marathi has two ways to mark future: (i) *-il* regular(FUT) (ii) *-ṅaar* prospective (PROSP). Negated futures require prospective morphology. Some speakers accept *bārā* with PROSP – I assume this is dialectal variation.

⁶Entailments are generally considered to be at-issue but note that in (4), the entailment does not address the QUD (*how was the concert?*) therefore it is NAI. The present accounts adopts this notion of at-issueness (see section 2.2). In turn, what is at-issue is predicted to be not closed under entailment (thanks to María Biezma for raising this). A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this paper as it would take us too far from the main concerns.

accepting (but questioning) the prejacent since a continuation such as *but I think she didn't* is infelicitous.

The empirically and theoretically important observations regarding the behavior of *bārā* are as follows. When the prejacent can be easily taken to be settled, we get acceptance, although with expression of unexpectedness. When the prejacent cannot be easily taken to be settled, we get rejection. These are two contradictory moves. In both cases, the prejacent is an NAI inference obtained from the preceding proposal. The function of a *bārā* response is to shift attention to and to make at-issue what was not-at-issue previously.⁸

It might be tempting to think that the two (very distinct) readings are an instance of homophony with accidental similarities. However, I argue that they have the same underlying meaning: *bārā* conveys that the speaker finds the (NAI) prejacent highly unexpected. Interaction of this core meaning with different discourse conditions can explain the divergent resulting effects.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I show that both readings of *bārā* have the same felicity requirements: (i) Counter-expectations (section 2.1) and (ii) NAINess of the prejacent (section 2.2). I argue, in section 2.1 that *bārā* responses express that the prejacent is highly unexpected. Moreover, there has to be an epistemic conflict for the speaker. In section 2.2, I show that both types of *bārā* responses can only target NAI content of the preceding context update proposal that is unexpected. This motivates pursuing a unified approach to the analysis. In section 3, I lay out the *waiting room* formalism (Biezma & Rawlins 2017) adopted here and show in section 3.2 how to represent NAI updates as proposals. In section 4, I provide the formal entry for *bārā* and derive the two readings based on interaction between speaker's epistemic stance and considerations on relative epistemic authority of interlocutors. In section 5, I discuss future prospects of the model presented here in explaining other related phenomena that have not received dynamic treatment. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 Felicity conditions on *bārā*

Two discourse conditions are necessary for *bārā* responses to be licensed. The speaker must have prior expectations (as in what is compatible with the doxastic alternatives of the speaker) that are in conflict with the target of *bārā* (i.e., the prejacent). Next, the prejacent must be an NAI inference triggered by the preceding context update proposal. I first show in section 2.1 that *bārā* responses express that the prejacent is highly unexpected. After this, I show that contexts without an explicit epistemic conflict do not license *bārā* responses. In section 2.2, I define the relevant notion of at-issueness and show that both *bārā* responses cannot felicitously target an at-issue assertion.

⁸Additionally, while operating at the level of discourse dynamics, *bārā* is subject to agreement. This is beyond the scope of the paper, but I note that *bārā* is derived from an inflectional adjective. A number of Marathi adverbs derived from inflectional adjectives exhibit this property.

2.1 Counter-expectations

Both *rejecting* and *questioning bəɾə* express that the prejacent is highly unexpected for the speaker. We see this below in (5) as a continuation such as ‘...*but this is expected*’ is infelicitous. A comparable approximation of infelicity of the continuations in (5) is the contrast in (6) with *I find it hard to believe...* in English.

- (5) a. anu bəɾ-i gov-ya-la dza-il
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG goa-OBL-DAT GO-FUT
 ‘As if Anu will go to Goa, ...#*but this is expected*’ (rejection reading)
- b. anu bəɾ-i gov-ya-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG goa-OBL-DAT GO-PST-F.SG
 ‘Anu went to Goa?! (what’s up with that?), ...#*but this was expected*’
 (questioning reading)
- (6) a. I find it hard to believe that Anu will go to Goa ... #I expect that she would
 b. I find it hard to believe that Anu went to Goa ... #I expected that she would

Thus, in a sense *bəɾə* responses are comparable to mirative expressions (albeit with a negative affect of incredulity) which also operate on speaker’s expectations. Note that a *bəɾə* utterance does not express simple surprise. The prejacent is necessarily incompatible with the speaker’s doxastic alternatives, i.e., a speaker of a *bəɾə* utterance is biased towards $\neg p$. This is not necessary for simple surprise, e.g., one may be surprised by the first snow of winter but this is not necessarily incompatible with one’s doxastic alternatives. Thus, *bəɾə* responses require epistemic conflict with what the speaker learns in a discourse.

2.1.1 Rejecting *bəɾə* and counterexpectations

Rejecting *bəɾə* responses are incredulous rejections. Part of what it means to perform rejection involves being opinionated about its target. A context where the speaker is epistemically neutral towards the prejacent does not license rejecting *bəɾə* responses. In the context below, the speaker lacks an opinion towards the prejacent as they do not know Anu’s preferences regarding large concerts. In such a case, there is no reason for an epistemic conflict to arise and thus, the speaker cannot felicitously include *bəɾə* to perform a rejection.

- (7) **Sp neutral toward p , infers that Ad believes that p**
 CONTEXT: *A is telling B about an upcoming Beyonce concert. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows Anu fairly well but doesn’t know her preferences regarding live music venues.*
- A: Beyonce is playing a show here in June. I should tell Anu.
 (Assumption: Anu will be interested in going to this concert)
- B: #anu bəɾ-i itk-ya mot^h-ya concert-la dza-il
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-FUT
 #‘As if Anu will go for such a big concert’

Similarly, in a context where speaker's expectations are actually aligned with the relevant inference (in this case, the assumption), *bəɾə* responses are not licensed. In (8), the speaker has no reason to find the addressee's assumption unfounded, since the speaker shares the assumption, and hence there is no epistemic conflict. As expected, *bəɾə* is infelicitous here.

(8) **Sp expects *p*, infers that Ad believes that *p***

CONTEXT: *A is telling B about an upcoming Beyonce concert. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows Anu fairly well and knows that she loves Beyonce so much that if there is a concert by her she will go.*

A: Beyonce is playing a show here in June. I should tell Anu.

(Assumption: Anu will be interested in going to this concert)

B: #anu bəɾ-i itk-ya moɬ^h-ya concert-la dza-il
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-FUT
 #‘As if Anu will go for such a big concert’

Now compare (7) and (8) with (9) below (a minimally distinct context) where the speaker is also opinionated about the prejacent. Here, the speaker is aware that Anu does not prefer large concert venues. It can be inferred that the addressee thinks Anu might be interested in going for this concert. Here, a rejecting *bəɾə* response is licensed.

(9) **Sp expects $\neg p$, infers that Ad believes that *p***

CONTEXT: *A is telling B about an upcoming Beyonce concert. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows that Anu doesn't like going to large concert venues.*

A: Beyonce is playing a show here in June. I should tell Anu.

(Assumption: Anu will be interested in going to this concert)

B: anu bəɾ-i itk-ya moɬ^h-ya concert-la dza-il
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-FUT
 ‘As if Anu will go for such a big concert’

Thus, misalignment between speaker's expectations and addressee's assumptions is necessary for licensing of rejecting *bəɾə* responses.

2.1.2 Questioning *bəɾə* and counterexpectations

bəɾə responses express unexpectedness of the prejacent. Questioning *bəɾə* responses, while accepting the prejacent, do not express simple surprises, since the prejacent is totally incompatible with speaker's beliefs. They require presence of counterexpectations just like rejecting *bəɾə*. Similar to rejecting *bəɾə*, the speaker of questioning *bəɾə* responses is also opinionated about the prejacent prior to the preceding context update proposal. As shown in (10), in the absence of any prior expectation, a questioning *bəɾə* response is infelicitous. In (11), the speaker's expectations align with what is learned hence, *bəɾə* is infelicitous.

(10) **Sp neutral toward *p*, infers that Ad believes that *p***

CONTEXT: *Ram has been planning a surprise vacation for his new partner Anu. I*

don't know anything more about this plan. I am familiar with Anu but I don't know her preferences regarding vacation destinations or climate. I meet Ram and ask him "weren't you planning a surprise for Anu? What did she like the most". Ram says to me -

Ram: Yes! Anu loved Anjuna beach!

(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to Goa)

Me: #anu bər-i gov-ya-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG goa-OBL-DAT GO-PERF-F.SG
 'Anu went to Goa?!(What's up with that?)'

(11) **Sp expects p , infers that Ad believes that p**

CONTEXT: *Ram has been planning a surprise vacation for his new partner Anu. I know that Anu's favorite vacation destinations involve seaside. If there is a beach, she will definitely go there. I meet Ram and ask him "weren't you planning a surprise for Anu? What did she like the most?". Ram says to me -*

Ram: Yes! Anu loved Anjuna beach!

(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to to Goa)

Me: #anu bər-i gov-ya-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG goa-OBL-DAT GO-PERF-F.SG
 'Anu went to Goa?!(What's up with that?)'

Compared to examples presented above, In (12), the speaker's expectations that Anu will not go to the seaside are in conflict with the addressee's implicit commitment that Anu went to Goa – which is necessary to license the questioning interpretation.

(12) **Sp expects $\neg p$, infers that Ad believes that p**

CONTEXT: *Ram has been planning a surprise vacation for his new partner Anu. I know Anu very well and I know that she despises the seaside. I meet Ram and ask him "weren't you planning a surprise for Anu? What did she like the most?". Ram says to me -*

Ram: Yes! Anu loved Anjuna beach!

(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to Goa)

Me: anu bər-i gov-ya-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG goa-OBL-DAT GO-PERF-F.SG
 'Anu went to Goa?!(What's up with that?)'

In summary, both questioning and rejecting *bərə* responses express that the speaker finds the prejacent of *bərə* to be highly unexpected. Additionally, both readings require an epistemic conflict with an inference from the preceding update proposal. In the next section, I show that *bərə* responses necessarily only target NAI component of the preceding update proposal.

2.2 NAIness of the prejacent

There are different conceptions of at-issueness in the literature. Following Roberts (1996), at-issueness is relativized to the current question under discussion (QUD) in the discourse (Beaver et al. 2017 a.o.). On the other hand, literature following Stalnaker (1978) (such as Farkas & Bruce 2010 and the consequent body of work), emphasizes the proposal component of utterances equating it with at-issueness (call it *p*-at-issueness). Furthermore, theories of “rhetorical” relations in discourse structure (Hunter & Asher 2016 a.o.) define at-issue proposition as corresponding to the component of freshly uttered sentence that can attach to the discourse tree via some ‘coherence relation’ (*c*-at-issueness). Koev (2018) shows that these notions of at-issueness are distinct and not equivalent. Thus, it is important to define the relevant notion of at-issueness for the purposes of the present inquiry. I follow Beaver et al. (2017) in relativizing at-issueness with the current QUD. The following definition, for the so-called *Q*-at-issueness, is adopted from Koev (2018):

- (13) ***Q*-at-issueness:** A proposition *p* is *Q*-at-issue relative to a question under discussion *Q* and a context *c* iff
- a. *p* is relevant to *Q* in *c*.
 - b. *p* is appropriately marked as such relative to *Q* in *c*.

Speakers often address and draw attention to NAI content in their language use. Consider (14)⁹, in the most natural occurrence of A’s question, it is taken as an indirect request. Per (13), what is at-issue in (14) is whether B minds or not but NAI is related to the request. B’s response cannot be interpreted as answering the question. It is taken as affirming to A’s request that they will take the trash out. Thus, the “main point” is not necessarily at-issue.

- (14) A: Do you mind taking the trash out?
B: Of course! (?!I mind taking the trash out/ ✓I will take the trash out)

The empirical contribution of this paper is that *bārā* targets only the NAI inferences that is obtained from the preceding context update proposal. Such a class of particles is not well-studied. There is, however, work on particles that perform denial/disagreement that target NAI meaning along with at-issue meaning. *Mica* in Italian (Frana & Rawlins 2019) and *thorii* in Hindi-Urdu (Bhatt & Homer 2025) appear very similar to *rejecting bārā* but they also target at-issue content. English exclamatory *as if* constructions (Bledin & Srinivas 2020) as well as sarcastic *like* (Camp & Hawthorne 2008) have a profile similar to *rejecting bārā* but they target at-issue content as well.

We have seen positive evidence of *bārā* targeting NAI content so far. To see that *bārā* exclusively targets NAI content, consider (15-a) where a *rejecting bārā* response is infelicitous while targeting Ram’s assertion. Whereas, a denial with regular negation or *thodii*¹⁰ (Bhatt & Homer 2025) is felicitous as in (15-b). A *bārā* response targeting the tacit assumption, which is a precondition to getting married, is felicitous as seen in (15-c).

⁹p.c. María Biezma

¹⁰The Marathi counterpart does not differ in its function from Hindi.

(15) **Sp expects $\neg p$, Ad asserts p** (Rejecting *bərə*)

CONTEXT: *Someone asks me and Ram, “what are Anu’s plans after her graduation?”, I know that Anu wants to focus on her career over anything else. Ram says:*

Ram: Anu will get married next year

(Assumption: Anu will look for a partner)

- a. #anu bər-i ləgnə kər-el puq^h-ch-ya vərʃ-i
anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG marriage do-FUT next-GEN-OBL year-IN
‘As if Anu will get married next year’ (#*at-issue challenged*)
- b. anu ləgnə nahi / thodii kər-ŋaar ahe puq^h-ch-ya vərʃ-i
anu.F.SG marriage NEG / THORII do-PROSP be.PRES next-GEN-OBL year-IN
‘Anu will not get married next year’ (✓ *at-issue challenged*)
- c. anu bər-i mulg-a shodh-el puq^h-ch-ya vərʃ-i
anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG boy-M find-FUT next-GEN-OBL year-IN
‘As if Anu will look for a partner’ (✓ *NAI challenged by bərə*)

Similarly, in (16-a), questioning *bərə* also fails to target at-issue content from the preceding context update proposal. Whereas, an utterance without *bərə* as in (16-b) is felicitous. (16-b) also expresses surprise (uttered with an intonation involving a high rise). Alternatively, a response that directly expresses the ‘*how come?*’ part is also felicitous.

(16) **Sp expects $\neg p$, Ad asserts p** (Questioning *bərə*)

CONTEXT: *I know that Anu and Mina don’t get along at all. Anu had sworn to me she will not speak with Mina again. Mina recently fell very sick. I go to Anu’s house and I see that she isn’t there. I ask her roommate Ram, “where is Anu?”. Ram says:*

Ram: Anu went to see Mina.

(Implicature: Anu cares about Mina now)

- a. #anu bər-i mina-la b^het-ayla ge-l-i
anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG mina-DAT meet-INCP go-PERF-F.SG
‘Anu went to see Mina!/? (what’s up with that?)’ (#*at-issue challenged*)
- b. anu mina-la b^het-ayla ge-l-i!/?↑/ kəs-ə kaay?
anu.F.SG mina-DAT meet-INCP go-PERF-F.SG how-NEUT what
‘Anu went to see Mina!/?’/ ‘how come?’ (✓ *at-issue challenged*)
- c. anu bər-i mina-ch-i chinta kar-ayla laag-l-i ahe
anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG mina-GEN-F.SG worry.F.SG do-INCP v2-PERF-F.SG BE.PRES
≈ ‘Anu cares about Mina now!/? (what’s up with that?)’
(✓ *NAI challenged by bərə*)

The class of not-at-issue meanings is heterogeneous and large. I have not provided the exact characterization of the felicitous NAI target of *bərə*. Intuitively, a felicitous NAI target of *bərə* can be thought of as a pre-condition to accepting addressee’s immediately preceding at-issue context-update proposal. Objecting to pre-conditions results in a ‘resistance move’ in the sense of Bledin & Rawlins (2016), where, for example in (16), the at-issue update proposal (i.e., that *Anu went to see Mina*) is put in ‘limbo’ which cannot be resolved till the

issue brought forward by a *bərə* response (that *Anu cares about Mina now*) is addressed. As a result, *bərə* responses shift the issue at hand by making at-issue what was previously not-at-issue in the context update proposal awaiting evaluation. In doing so, *bərə* responses indicate *not being on the same page* regarding the NAI proposition.

In summary, a felicitous *bərə* response must target the NAI proposition q from the preceding proposal that conflicts with speaker's own expectation that q is highly unexpected. In doing so, *bərə* responses yield a resistance move. Therefore, *bərə* is a grammaticalized means to challenge NAI updates meaning that NAI updates are also negotiated. Hence, they must be represented at the proposal stage. This is shown in the next section.

3 Formal implementation

Contrary to the conclusions of previous section, it is a standard assumption in much of the extant literature (e.g., Anderbois et al. 2015, Murray 2014, Rett 2021) that NAI updates directly enter CG bypassing the negotiation stage that at-issue updates must go through. While concerned with related but different issues, recent literature such as Simons (2025) (a.o.) presents cases where some backgrounded content is available for interlocutors while not being CG. The present paper provides further empirical support to this line of thinking and calls for representation of NAI content as proposals in our models of discourses.

Farkas & Bruce's (2010) influential 'table model' has been very successful in modeling various discourse phenomena. In the table model, discourse moves are functions from an input discourse structure K_i to another discourse structure K_o representing the modifications proposed by the utterance. When the modifications are accepted the current context becomes K_o . If rejected, then it stays the same.

- (17) A discourse structure K in Farkas & Bruce (2010) (F&B) consists of:
- a. **Common ground (CG)**: the set of propositions all discourse participants commit to for the communicative purposes.
 - b. **Discourse commitments (DC_x)**: for each participant x , the set of propositions x publicly commits to during the conversation.
 - c. **Table (T)**: a push-down stack of issues that models discourse salience.
 - d. **Projected set (ps)**: the set of propositions that are being considered for addition into the CG.

Below, I present how NAI updates have been represented in the table model as implemented in Rett (2021). Let S be a declarative sentence *I should tell Anu about the concert* such that p be the assertion and q the background assumption that *Anu will be interested in going to the concert*. Then the effect of the declarative S with at-issue content p and not-at-issue content q can be modeled as in (18) where q directly enters CG without going on the table.

- (18) Declarative update by S with at-issue content p and not-at-issue content q :
- i. $DC_{a,o} = DC_{a,i} \cup \{p\}$
 - ii. $T_o = push(\langle S; \{p\} \rangle, T_i)$ (at-issue update)

- iii. $ps_o = ps_i \cup \{p\}$
- iv. $\underline{CG_o} = \underline{CG_i} \cup \{q\}$ (not-at-issue update)

The core mechanism of the table model involves updating the *table* which stores issues to be evaluated (in this framework, both assertions and questions are issues, differing only in their set cardinalities). Thus, at-issue content goes on the table to be negotiated. Since the table model does not differentiate between declaratives and questions in terms of how they update the context (i.e., both update the table and project addition of proposition(s) to CG), the notion of at-issueness is *p*-at-issueness which emphasizes proposalhood. As a consequence, being on the table = being a proposal = being at-issue. Given the conclusions from section 2.2, the treatment of NAI updates as in (18) cannot be right as it will make the wrong predictions for the data presented so far. Thus, we ought to represent NAI content at the proposal stage where it is available for negotiation instead of being forced into the common ground. To do so in the F&B model would require changing the fundamental architecture of the table model, an endeavor that I do not pursue here. Instead, I present the dynamic assumptions required to implement proposalhood of NAI content in the *waiting room* model of discourse in Biezma & Rawlins (2017) (henceforth, B&R) which preserves the spirit of the table model but defines context update process and proposalhood differently.

3.1 The dynamic assumptions of the discourse structure

For the goals of this paper, we will need a context structure that tracks the QUD and content that addresses it (or not). Following Stalnaker (1978) and Farkas & Bruce (2010), we will assume that utterances are proposals to update the context. Moreover, we will assume that the aim of conversation is a communal inquiry organized around questions that participants agree to jointly pursue (the QUD). Thus, a declarative is a proposal to update the CG or its associated context set (*cs*). Interrogatives, in turn, are proposals to update the inquiry to be pursued i.e., the QUD stack (Roberts 1996). In B&R’s model, proposalhood is captured by defining a ‘local context’ distinguished from the proposed update in the context. A local context (l_c) is the way things are at a given point in the discourse i.e., what is jointly accepted to be the case (*cs*) and the joint inquiry to be pursued (QUD). A proposal, then, is a window into the way things would be if the proposed change to the way things are is accepted. This projected/future context is structurally the same as the local context but *with* proposed modifications. Thus, a full context consists of the local context and a potential projected context. The projected context is the proposal waiting to be evaluated – the “waiting room”.

(19) A *local context* l_c of a context c is a tuple $\langle cs, \mathcal{Q} \rangle$ where:

- a. cs is a context set.
- b. \mathcal{Q} is a stack of sets of propositions - QUD.

(20) A *context* c is a tuple $\langle cs, \mathcal{Q}, \mathcal{F} \rangle$ that is characterized as:

- a. $l_c = \langle cs, \mathcal{Q} \rangle$ is a local context.
- b. \mathcal{F}_c is either a local context or \emptyset . \mathcal{F}_c is called the *projected context*.

Note that the *projected context* is a copy of the local context *with* certain modifications (the local update). Assuming the standard *push*, *pop* and *top* operations¹¹ on QUD stacks, the immediate QUD in a local context l_c is always $top(Q_c)$. The updates by a declarative and an interrogative utterance are defined as follows:

- (21) Local updates over a local context l ,
- a. $l \oplus \ulcorner \varphi_{\langle s,t \rangle} \urcorner = \langle cs_l \cap \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket, Q_l \rangle$ (Declarative update)
Felicity constraints:
i. cs_l is compatible with $\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket$ (assertability)
ii. $\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket$ is relevant to $top(Q_l)$
- b. $l \otimes \ulcorner \varphi_{\langle s,t \rangle} \urcorner = \langle cs_l, push(Q_l, \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket) \rangle$ (Interrogative update)
Felicity constraints:
i. cs_l is compatible with $\{w \mid \exists p \in (\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket) : p(w)\}$ (answerability)
ii. $\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket$ is relevant to $top(Q_l)$ or $Q_l = \langle \rangle$

Given the operations defined above for local contexts, B&R define context update operations for an assertion and a question. Along with acceptance and rejection, a ‘maintenance’ operations is defined – namely, elimination of a QUD once resolved ($\langle \rangle$ denotes the empty stack). These are given in table 1.

Update operations		Constraints
Assertion	$c + \ulcorner \text{Assert}(\varphi) \urcorner = \langle cs_c, Q_c, l_c \oplus \ulcorner \varphi \urcorner \rangle$	(i) $\mathcal{F}_c = \emptyset$; (ii) $l_c \oplus \ulcorner \varphi \urcorner$ is felicitous.
Questioning	$c + \ulcorner \text{Question}(\varphi) \urcorner = \langle cs_c, Q_c, l_c \otimes \ulcorner \varphi \urcorner \rangle$	(i) $\mathcal{F}_c = \emptyset$; (ii) $l_c \otimes \ulcorner \varphi \urcorner$ is felicitous.
Maintenance		Constraints
Dispel	$c + \ulcorner \text{Pop} \urcorner = \langle cs_c, pop(Q_c), \mathcal{F}_c \rangle$	$\mathcal{F}_c = \emptyset, Q_c \neq \langle \rangle$
Evaluation		
Accept	$c + \ulcorner \text{Accept}_x \urcorner = \langle cs_{\mathcal{F}}, Q_{\mathcal{F}}, \emptyset \rangle$	
Reject	$c + \ulcorner \text{Clear} \urcorner = \langle cs_c, Q_c, \emptyset \rangle$	

Table 1: Context update operations

Acceptance replaces the original context by the projected context and leaves the proposal slot (the projected context) empty. In section 3.2, I will illustrate the dynamics with a working example. To represent NAI updates at the proposal stage we will tweak how \mathcal{F} is updated by a declarative update as in (21-a) to include the total information extracted from the move.

¹¹These operations are traditionally defined as follows for a QUD stack Q :

1. $push(e, Q)$ is the new stack obtained by adding an item e to the top of the stack Q .
2. $pop(Q)$ is the stack obtained by popping off the top item of the stack Q .
3. $top(Q)$ is the top item of the stack Q .

3.2 NAI updates as proposals

Let us work through the context update process in the *waiting room* formalism using example (4) repeated here as (22).

(22) **Questioning *bəra***

CONTEXT: *A is telling B about a recent Beyonce concert A went to. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows that Anu doesn't like going to large concert venues. B asks A, "how was the concert?"*

(QUD: How was the concert that A went to?)

A: It was great! Anu was singing along to every song!

(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to a big concert)

B: anu bər-i itk-ya moṭ^h-ya concert-la ge-l-i
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-PERF-F.SG
 'Anu went to such a big concert!?' (what's up with that?)'

Suppose that before B's question to A, $CG = \{\text{RECENT-CONCERT-IN-TOWN, ARTIST-PLAY-BIG-CONCERTS, ANU-LIKE-ARTIST, A-WENT-TO-CONCERT}\}$. The dynamic context update process is demonstrated in Table 2. Let \otimes be a placeholder for update operations \oplus and \odot .

$c = \langle cs, Q, \mathcal{F} \rangle$			
	The way things are $l_c = \langle cs_c, Q_c \rangle$ (local context)		What they may become ('waiting room') $\mathcal{F} = l_c \otimes \psi$
	What participants mutually accept	Participants' goals	
c_0	cs	Q	\emptyset
B: How was the concert? ($\{p_1, \dots, p_n\}$)			
c_1	cs_{c_0}	Q_{c_0}	$\mathcal{F} = l_{c_0} \odot \{p_1, \dots, p_n\} = \langle cs_{c_0}, \text{push}(Q_{c_0}, \{p_1, \dots, p_n\}) \rangle$
A: It was great! $\{p_m\}, m \in [1, n]$; $[\text{Accept}_B(c_2) + \text{Proposal that } p_m(c_3)]$			
c_2	$cs_{\mathcal{F}_{c_1}} = cs_{c_0}$	$Q_{\mathcal{F}_{c_1}} = \text{push}(Q_{c_0}, \{p_1, \dots, p_n\})$	\emptyset
c_3	cs_{c_0}	Q_{c_2}	$\mathcal{F} = l_{c_2} \oplus \{q\} = \langle cs_{c_0} \cap p_m, Q_{c_2} \rangle$
[Silence/subsequent utterance by A]			
c_4	$cs_{\mathcal{F}_{c_3}} = cs_{c_0} \cap p_m$	Q_{c_2}	\emptyset
Maintenance operation: IQUD resolution > dispel IQUD			
c_5	$cs_{c_4} = cs_{c_0} \cap p_m$	$\text{pop}(Q) = Q_{c_0}$	\emptyset
$c_5 = \langle cs_{c_0} \cap p_m, Q_{c_0}, \emptyset \rangle$			

Table 2: Update mechanism illustrated

At c_0 , the waiting room is empty as there is no proposal to be evaluated. After B's question, the local context is fixed as $l_{c_0} = \langle cs_{c_0}, Q_{c_0} \rangle$ and a questioning update is performed which pushes B's question on top of the stack in the projected context. A's response to the question indicates that the proposed question is accepted resulting in the waiting room being emptied out. Acceptance results in the updated context c_2 . Next, A's answer is the new proposal. At c_3 , the local context is fixed as $l_{c_2} = \langle cs_{c_0}, Q_{c_2} \rangle$ and the waiting room is populated with the proposed declarative update. Since A is not interrupted and continues with their next utterance, the preceding proposal is tacitly accepted by B and the waiting room is emptied out resulting in c_4 where the content of \mathcal{F}_{c_3} are copied onto the local context l_{c_2} . Since resolved QUDs are popped off the stack, we yield the context c_5 .

A lot more information is learned from a discourse move than just what is said (such as entailments, presuppositions, (non-canceled) implicatures, intentions etc.) (Gunlogson 2008). In the framework adopted here, the way things currently are is distinct from what they might become. Therefore, this secondary content must also be part of what things might become i.e., the projected context. This information is also tracked and evaluated by agents. Based on Biezma (2014), let's call such information extracted from a move M_i by an agent a , the *information gain* I_{a,M_i} and the literal content of the move M_i as $Content(M_i)$.

- (23) a. $I_{a,M_i} = \{p : p \text{ is TRIGGERED by } M_i\}$ (Information gain from a move)
 b. $Content(M_i) = \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c,g}$, where α is the linguistic form used in M_i

So a declarative update involves projecting the total information gain from the move into the waiting room \mathcal{F} i.e., the declarative update operation in (21-a) is modified as in (24).

- (24) Given a context, $c = \langle cs, Q, \mathcal{F} \rangle$, M_i a discourse move to be evaluated in c , \mathcal{F}_c defined above, a declarative update proposed via M_i by an agent a is defined as:
 $\mathcal{F}_{a,cs_c,M_i} = \langle \{w : w \in (\bigcap I_{a,M_i}) \cap cs_c\}, Q_c \rangle$ (Total update proposed)
paraphrase: The cs_c update proposed by a via M_i is the set of worlds in the intersection of information gain from M_i that are part of cs .

Therefore, the NAI meaning is part of the total update that would take place if the projected update is accepted which allows us to represent NAI updates as part of the proposal. This is where the target $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ is located. I demonstrate this with the example in (22) in Table 3. Continuing from c_5 in table 2, the waiting room is empty at c_5 as there is no proposal to be evaluated. B continues by asserting that *Anu was singing along to every song*. This triggers the NAI inference that *Anu went to the concert*. In the proposed update by A's utterance, the information gain I_{A,M_3} would contain both these propositions. At c_6 , the local context is fixed as $l_{c_5} = \langle cs_{c_5}, Q_{c_0} \rangle$. Moreover, the waiting room is populated with the total update resulting from A's move. Observe that in c_6 there is a proposal waiting to be evaluated. This proposal contains both the asserted information (p) and the associated NAI information (q).

$c_5 = \langle cs_{c_4}, \mathcal{Q}_{c_0}, \emptyset \rangle$			
	The way things are $l_c = \langle cs_c, \mathcal{Q}_c \rangle$ (local context)		What they may become (“waiting room”) $\mathcal{F} = l_c \otimes \psi$
	What participants mutually accept	Participants’ goals	
c_5	cs_{c_4}	\mathcal{Q}	\emptyset
A: Anu was singing along to every song! (p) \rightsquigarrow Anu went to the big concert (q); $I_{A,M_4} = \{p, q\}$			
c_6	cs_{c_5}	\mathcal{Q}_{c_0}	$\mathcal{F} = l_{c_5} \oplus (\bigcap I_{A,M_3}) = \langle cs_{c_4} \cap (\bigcap I_{A,M_3}), \mathcal{Q}_{c_0} \rangle$

Table 3: Updating with NAI as proposals

Thus, **considering the total information gain from a move to be part of what is evaluated allows us to represent NAI content at the proposal stage** and the NAI target of $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ responses can be located in the context update this way. Having shown how to represent NAI updates as proposals, in section 4, I provide a formal entry for $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ and give a unified account deriving the two readings.

4 Core interpretation of $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$

Informally, $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ responses express that there is a not-at-issue proposition q in the information extracted from the preceding move that is highly unexpected because speaker considers $\neg q$ to be very likely. Thus, $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ signals misalignment in that NAI q needs to be negotiated before the at-issue p update can be resolved. We have seen that the NAI target of $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ can be located in the information extracted from the preceding context update proposal. For the purposes of the analysis, I assume that $b\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ takes propositional scope. Given this, I provide a surprise-style entry (see Romero 2015) to model unexpectedness. Let a, b be agents, $(Un)exp_{b,w}$ be a selection function which pairs a proposition p with a degree of (un)expectedness d for an agent b , and $\theta_{b,c}$ be the contextually provided threshold then,

$$(25) \quad \llbracket b\bar{a}r\bar{a} q \rrbracket^{c,g}(w) = 1 \text{ iff } \forall w' \in \bigcap \text{Dox}(b, w). \exists d [Unexp_{b,w'}(q, d) \wedge d > \theta_{b,c,high}]$$

(counter-expectation)

defined only if,

- $\exists M_{a,i}$, a move with an update proposal by a awaiting evaluation ($\mathcal{F}_c \neq \emptyset$)
 - $\exists q \in I_{a,M_i} \& q \neq \text{Content}(M_i)$ (q is not-at-issue in M_i)
 - $\forall w'' \in \bigcap \text{Dox}(b, w) : \exists d' [Exp_{b,w''}(\neg q, d') \wedge d' > \theta_{b,c,high}]$ (speaker bias)
- paraphrase: In all the worlds compatible with the speaker’s beliefs, q is more unexpected than a contextually provided threshold. Defined only if q is the NAI content extracted from the immediately preceding discourse move and the speaker believes that $\neg q$ is very likely.

(25-a) rightly predicts that *bəɾə* responses are infelicitous out of the blue. (25-b) encodes the NAI-ness constraint and with the asserted component it encodes the felicity constraint of counter-expectations. Given this formal entry for *bəɾə* and having achieved our goal of representing NAI updates at the proposal stage in section 3.2, I will now show how the two seemingly distinct readings of *bəɾə*, *incredulous rejection* and *questioning*, can be derived from the same mechanism. When our expectations are violated, often the acceptance/rejection of the unexpected information depends on the credence of the information and the communicator. The governing factor, therefore, will be interaction of the speaker’s expectations with considerations on relative epistemic authority of the interlocutors.

4.1 Deriving rejection

The rejection reading obtains when the speaker does not consider the addressee a reliable source for the commitments expressed in their utterance. This is a scenario where the speaker of *bəɾə* response infers that they have more epistemic authority regarding the events under discussion. Consider our core case in (3) reproduced below as (26):

(26) CONTEXT: *A is telling B about an upcoming concert of an artist in the town. This artist only plays at big arenas. B knows that Anu doesn’t like going to large concert venues. A only knows that Anu likes this type of music.*

A: Oh! I should tell Anu about this.

(Assumption: Anu will be interested in going to this concert)

B: anu bəɾ-i itk-ya moʰ-ya concert-la dza-il
 anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-FUT
 ‘As if Anu will go for such a big concert’

Supposing that $CG = \{UPCOMING-CONCERT, ARTIST-PLAY-BIG-CONCERTS, ANU-LIKE-ARTIST, A-KNOWS-ANU-LIKES-ARTIST\}$, before the *bəɾə* response, the speaker reasons as follows:

1. **Speaker knowledge:** Apart from the CG facts, B also knows that Anu doesn’t like going to big concerts at all. Her doing so would be highly unexpected.
2. **Addressee’s move:** A expresses their intention to tell Anu about the concert, assuming that Anu will be interested in going to this concert.
3. **Reliability inferences:** If A knew Anu’s preferences they wouldn’t express such intentions at all. Which means, A’s assumption is based on their ignorance of Anu’s preferences. Therefore, A is determined to be an unreliable source of their implicit commitment to the assumption.
4. **Epistemic conflict:** If A’s update proposal regarding their intentions is accepted, the NAI assumption also gets accepted as part of total information gain. This results in a discrepancy between the B’s own beliefs and the information they must accept – It must be challenged immediately.

Following the above reasoning, speaker B utters (26)-B resulting in a rejection of A's assumption. Note that at no point has the speaker accepted the NAI assumption that *Anu will be interested in this concert*. Thus, the NAI content could not have been automatically *CG*.

4.2 Deriving questioning

The questioning reading results in the speaker appearing as accepting the prejacent along with a *questioning* effect that can be paraphrased as '*how come p is the case?*'. This reading obtains when the speaker determines that the addressee is a reliable source of their commitments i.e., the speaker does not have epistemic authority on the matters being discussed. Consider the core case in (4) reproduced below as (27):

(27) CONTEXT: *A is telling B about a recent concert of an artist in the town. This artist only plays at big arenas. I know that Anu doesn't like going to large concert venues. B asks A, "how was the concert?"*

A: It was great! Anu was singing along to every song!
(Defeasible entailment: Anu went to a big concert)

B: anu bər-i itk-ya mo^h-ya concert-la ge-l-i
anu.F.SG BARA-F.SG DEM.much.PROX-OBL big-OBL concert-DAT GO-PERF-F.SG
'Anu went to such a big concert!?' (what's up with that?)'

Suppose that $CG = \{\text{RECENT-CONCERT-IN-TOWN, ARTIST-PLAY-BIG-CONCERTS, ANU-LIKE-ARTIST, A-WENT-TO-CONCERT}\}$ After A's assertion, the speaker reasons as follows:

1. **Speaker knowledge:** Apart from the *CG* facts, B knows that Anu doesn't like going to big concerts at all. Her doing so would be highly unexpected.
2. **Addressee's move:** In saying that Anu was singing along to every song, A also implies that Anu was at the concert. This is a first-hand report of the events at the concert.
3. **Reliability inferences:** Given that A went to the concert, they are a reliable source of information they are providing. Therefore, B must accept the proposal as in case of an open disagreement, B will lose.
4. **Epistemic conflict:** Accepting the at-issue proposal means accepting that Anu went to the concert. This would cause discrepancy between B's own beliefs and the information they must accept.
5. **Contingency of Speaker commitment:** This discrepancy must be resolved immediately. For this, A is determined as the epistemic authority in this matter, thus B is dependent on A to resolve this discrepancy.

Let's take stock. A is implicitly determined as authoritative on this matter. At the same time, B cannot easily, straightforwardly reject or accept that Anu went to the concert. B is dependent on A to resolve this conflict. This is the hallmark of *questioning* flavor in

Gunlogson (2008) cashed out in terms of the *contingent commitment criterion* wherein an utterance of a declarative is *questioning* to the extent that the speaker's commitment to it is taken to be contingent on the addressee's ratification of the same. Therefore, the *questioning* flavour here marks the dependency or contingency of the speaker's commitment on the addressee to commit to the relevant proposition. Note that at no point has the speaker already accepted the NAI update. Thus, the NAI content cannot have been *CG*.

Thus, the two seemingly different discourse effects can be derived from the same underlying mechanism of reasoning based on the epistemic stance of the speaker and considerations on relative epistemic authority. As argued here, we see from the reasoning that the NAI content from preceding update proposal is not directly added to the common ground. It must be part of the proposal to be targetted by *bəra* responses. Proposalhood of NAI updates was represented in B&R's *waiting room* model of discourse.

5 Future outlook

The present investigation is a step towards a general theory of understanding not-at-issue updates and strategies to challenge them. *bəra* is not the only particle that exclusively challenges not-at-issue content. Hinterwimmer & Ebert (2018), Hinterwimmer (2019) show that Bavarian particle *fei* exclusively targets not-at-issue content as well. Due to space constraints, I cannot provide a detailed description and analysis of *fei* but I briefly sketch their approach and compare it with *bəra*.

Like *bəra*, *fei* also seems to require an epistemic conflict between speaker (p) and inferred addressee beliefs ($\neg p$). Unlike *bəra*, *fei* can target conventionally triggered meanings such as presuppositions and conventional implicature (i.e., projective content). *rejecting bəra* performs incredulous rejection glossed as *as if p*. This gloss is a very close translation of the effect. Thus, it is worth exploring whether the present account extends to exclamatory *as ifs*. The main difference being that *as ifs* target both at-issue and not-at-issue content of a preceding utterance.

Hinterwimmer (2019) takes *fei* to be a marker of resistance to adding the at-issue content q to CG owing to a background misalignment on p that becomes salient due to the at-issue update. As a result, the proposed semantic account posits that *fei* is licensed when there is no recent assertion by the addressee that entails $\neg p$. Crucially, the assumption therein also equates at-issueness with proposalhood thus not reaching the conclusions argued for in this paper. Given the similarity between the two particles' function, the formalism presented in this paper provides a way towards a discourse dynamic account of *fei*.

Finally, Bledin & Srinivas (2020) provide an exclamation based account of *as ifs* relying on the EX-operator combined with a treatment of *as if* as a hypothetical comparative. This account is also purely semantic. Exclamatory *as ifs* target some content learned from the preceding move so a discourse dynamic treatment is desirable and worth exploring. The present dynamic model's conception of proposalhood offers a basis to explore the complex interaction between discourse dynamics and compositional semantics of *as if*.

6 Conclusion

The main takeaway is that the strategy of directly challenging not-at-issue updates is grammaticalized. *bəɾə* is one of the rare particles that exclusively targets NAI component of the preceding context update proposal. In doing so, it makes at-issue what was not-at-issue in the previous move. There are other means to turn at-issue what was not-at-issue such as bare *if*-clauses (Biezma 2025) and *que*-clauses (Biezma 2026) in Spanish which are metadiscursive claims about the shape of the context – checking that all participants are on the same page about some backgrounded content or that a proposal of a particular kind needs to be evaluated. *bəɾə* responses are not just checking devices. They not only specify the shape of the context i.e., what the previous move requires one to accept if the move is accepted. In addition to identifying specific not-at-issue content, they also convey the speaker’s attitude towards this specific NAI meaning being treated as uncontroversial previously (that it is unexpected). This results in *rejection* or *questioning how come* interpretation. Since acceptance/rejection often involves considerations about credence of information provided. The present proposal derive these seemingly distinct effects from interaction between speaker expectations and considerations on addressee’s credence.

bəɾə shows us that NAI updates are also proposals so they must be represented as such at the proposal stage. I have shown using the waiting room framework of Biezma & Rawlins (2017) that considering the total information extracted from a move as part of the projected update allows us to do this. Therefore, at-issueness should not be equated with proposal-hood. Instead, being (not-)at-issue has to be understood in terms of whether a proposition addresses the current QUD or not. Finally, present formalism also has potential to be extended to other related and similar phenomena mentioned here.

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