"Surely that's not a negative declarative question?" – Polar discourses in Swedish, German and English[1]

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Abstract.
This paper discusses questions that are declarative in form, contain a negative marker, and express epistemic speaker bias. Fronting of the negative marker in Swedish is taken as a starting point for a delineation of this type of question, termed 'rejecting question', against the background of theories of declarative questions. The discussion is expanded with data from German and English. I propose that rejecting questions are a type of tentative assertion without direct reference to the addressee, and that these tentative assertions express FALSUM focus.

Keywords: Negation, illocutionary force, declarative questions, biased questions, denials

1. Introduction

In Swedish declarative main clauses, the negative marker can optionally front to the preverbal position, cf. (2) compared to the unmarked position of the negative marker in (1). Fronted negation (FN) imposes restrictions on the utterance context that low negation does not. In other words, FN is licit in fewer linguistic contexts than low negation. To explore these contexts, let us take the English negative declarative in (3) as a starting point. With falling intonation, (3) is a negative assertion. There are very few context requirements on this assertion; it can be uttered iff the speaker thinks that its underlying proposition is true. With rising intonation, (3) is a negative declarative question (NDQ). Declarative questions (DQs) generally require that there be contextual evidence for their underlying proposition and that the speaker not act as a source for this proposition (cf. the Contingent Commitment Criterion in Gunlogson 2008:121).[2]

The Swedish declarative with low negation in (1) shares both of these functions, and, in addition, it can be used to ask a suggesting question, in which the speaker is interested in a positive answer but signals that she expects a negative answer for reasons of politeness. There is no obligatory disambiguation (e.g. by way of modal particles or question tags) between declarative questions and suggesting questions in Swedish. The reading as a suggesting question is the only reading that is shared between the declarative with low negation in (1) and the declarative with fronted negation in (2). If the declarative with FN is not used as a question, it is obligatorily used as a rejection, i.e. as a reaction to a previous utterance or state of affairs. If it is used to question something, it does not function as a negative declarative question, but as a rejecting question (or as a suggesting question). Crucially, even though this usage is interpreted as a question, it is still realised with falling intonation. In summary, if we set aside the shared reading as a suggesting

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[2] A speaker S is a source for *p* iff S is committed to *p*, and iff this commitment is not dependent on another interlocutor (Gunlogson 2008:113).

question for a moment, fronting of the negation seems to introduce a rejecting component that is not present in a declarative with low negation.

(1)　*Swedish declarative with low negation*
Du　　vet　　inte　svaret
You　know　not　the.answer
<u>Falling intonation:</u>
(i) Assertion: 'You don't know the answer.'
(ii) Rejection/denial: 'You don't know the answer (even though it has been said or implied that you do).'
(iii) Suggesting question: 'You wouldn't happen to know the answer (would you)?'
<u>Rising intonation:</u>
(iv) Declarative question: 'You don't know the answer?'

(2)　*Swedish declarative with fronted negation*
Inte　vet　　du　　svaret
Not　know　you　the.answer
<u>Falling intonation:</u>
(i) Rejection/denial: 'You don't know the answer (even though it has been said or implied that you do).'
(ii) Suggesting question: 'You wouldn't happen to know the answer (would you)?'
(iii) Rejecting question: 'Surely you don't know the answer?'
<u>Rising intonation:</u>
Not available

(3)　*English negative declarative*
You do not know the answer
<u>Falling intonation</u>
(i) Assertion: 'You don't know the answer.'
(ii) Rejection/denial: 'You don't know the answer (even though it has been said or implied that you do).'
<u>Rising intonation</u>
(iii) Declarative question: 'You don't know the answer?'

The goal of this paper is to explore the nature of the different types of questions, how rejections and rejecting questions can be told apart, and what the relation is between fronting of the negation in Swedish and rejections. I will take fronted negation as a starting point from which I extend the discussion of rejecting questions to English and German as well. The paper is structured as follows: in section 2, I will explain in greater detail what is to be understood as declarative questions (in section 2.1), rejections, rejecting questions (both in section 2.2) and suggesting questions (2.3). A short overview of previous accounts of FN is given in section 3. In section 4, I show how the utterance with fronted negation in (2) systematically differs from the utterance with low negation in (1). A proposal for the meaning of rejecting questions, including questions with FN, is presented in section 5.

2. The interpretation of negative declaratives

2.1. Declarative questions and negative declarative questions

I suggested above that an English declarative with a negation and rising intonation is a negative declarative question, while a Swedish declarative with fronted negation that seems to be used as a question is not a declarative question in the same sense. To see why this would be the case, let us first explore the characteristics of declarative questions (negative or not) in English, and then compare them to the Swedish data. In the following, I will give a short overview of two theories of declarative questions – Gunlogson (2008) and Krifka (to appear) – as a background for the subsequent discussion of how (2) – the declarative with fronted negation – differs from NDQs.

Gunlogson (2008) uses commitment to propositions as a central mechanism in analysing DQs: the speaker uses a DQ to signal contingent commitment to p, which becomes actual commitment iff the addressee acts as a source for p immediately afterwards. The role of rising intonation is to signal that the speaker's commitment to p is contingent. This means that the addressee needs to be a possible source for p. Crucially, there also needs to be contextual evidence for p that has to be evident to both interlocutors. DQs usually exhibit rising intonation, but – with the help of markers like 'so' or 'I see' which make it explicit that the speaker's commitment is contingent on the addressee – can be questions even with falling intonation. Negative declarative questions function exactly alike, except that the questioned proposition contains a negation: the speaker signals contingent commitment to $\neg p$, which ultimately means that the addressee needs to be a possible source for $\neg p$.

Another analysis of DQs is proposed by Krifka (to appear), where DQs are derived with the help of a REQUEST operator that embeds speech acts. In the case of DQs, the embedded speech act is an assertion – in other words, the speaker uses a DQ with the underlying proposition p to request that the addressee assert p, as shown in (4). The REQUEST operator is introduced by the rising intonation (specifically L* H- H%).

(4)   It's raining?
        p: 'it is raining'
        LF: [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ REQUEST$_{<S,A>}$ [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ ASSERT [$_{\text{TP}}$ p]]]

While it is not specifically mentioned by Krifka, one can assume that the requested assertion is subject to the same sincerity conditions (the speaker must believe that p, the speaker must not know that p is false etc.) as an unrequested assertion. The analysis captures the same constraint on DQs that is expressed by Gunlogson's constraint that the addressee must be a possible source for the questioned proposition, and that there be some contextual evidence for the questioned proposition since otherwise there would be no reason to assume that the addressee could fulfil the request.

Both in Gunlogson's and Krifka's proposal, it is necessary that the polarity of the asserted proposition and that of the contextual bias match: if there is contextual evidence for a negative proposition (e.g. 'it is not raining'), a negated DQ must be used (e.g. 'It is not raining?'); if there is contextual evidence for a positive proposition, a positive DQ must be used (e.g. 'It is raining?'). This follows from the fact that if there is contextual evidence for $\neg p$ that is available to the speaker and the addressee, there is no reason to assume that the addressee will be able to act as a source for or assert p, and vice versa. The type of questioning declarative that is at issue in this article violates this constraint, no matter which framework it is derived from. I will show this in detail in section 4.1.

Since both proposals presented here derive the functional difference between declarative assertions and declarative questions from the formal difference in intonation (falling for assertions, rising for questions), it is predicted that questions with fronted negation (FNQs) behave differently from DQs, because the former are always realized with falling intonation. At the same time, it is predicted that FNQs should in most cases be functionally identical to assertions.

One of the few shared properties of declarative questions and all utterances with fronted negation, whether they are assertions or questions, is that they are root phenomena and that their illocutionary force is not compatible with disjunctions. (5) shows that DQs and FNQs cannot occur in disjunction, while (6) shows that they cannot be embedded.

(5)   a.   *Disjunction of DQs*
               *Solen   skiner   eller   det   regnar?
               The.sun   shines   or   it   rains
               Only as an echo question with a reading like '(You said that either) the sun is shining or it's raining?! (But it can be overcast without rain!)'
        b.   *Disjunction of FNQs*
               *Inte   skiner   solen   eller   inte   regnar   det?
               Not   shines   the.sun   or   not   rains   it
               Intended ≈ 'Surely the sun isn't shining or surely it's not raining?'

(6)   a.   *Embedded DQ*
               *Peter   sa   att   solen   skiner?
               Peter   said   that   the.sun   shines
               'Peter said that the sun is shining?'
               (Only as a DQ about Peter's utterance, not about whether the sun is shining)
        b.   *Embedded FNQ*
               *Peter   sa   att   inte   skiner   solen?
               Peter   said   that   not   shines   the.sun
               Intended ≈ 'Peter said that surely the sun isn't shining?'
               (Syntactic violations: no verb movement in embedded clauses allowed, no CP recursion allowed:
               *[CP ø [C att [CP inte [C skiner₁ [TP ... [VP [DP solen] [V t₁]]]]]])

Declarative questions will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.1, where they will also be compared to rejecting questions, to which we turn next.

2.2. Rejections and rejecting questions

Let us now turn to rejections and rejecting questions. Rejections are not truly new assertions of a negative proposition, they occur in non-neutral contexts, and negotiate the Common Ground (CG) status of a controversial proposition (cf. van der Sandt 1991 and Repp 2009).[3] This is in contrast to negative assertions, which can introduce a non-controversial, new proposition into CG in a neutral context. This is illustrated with the contrast between (7) and (8): in (7), the negative assertion is used to introduce new information that none of the interlocutors necessarily had any public commitment to. If every interlocutor accepts the negative proposition as true there is no explicit acknowledgment needed from anyone and the proposition is added to CG (cf. Farkas & Roelofsen 2012:21 on the optionality of responses to assertions). A negated utterance with fronted negation is not licit in such a neutral context (7b).

In (8), on the other hand, Mary's indirect question presupposes the proposition 'that Peter is coming'. Mary is now publically committed to this presupposed proposition, and the context is not neutral any longer, but biased in favour of this proposition. Jim can either accept it tacitly or overtly, or he has to reject it. An utterance with fronted negation *can* be used here (8b). In other words, if fronted negation occurs in non-questioning speech acts, it must occur in rejections, while low negation can occur in rejections *and* assertions.[4]

(7)   *Negative assertion*
       Contextual evidence: neutral
       Speaker's assertion: $\neg p$
       Speaker's previous belief with respect to $\{p, \neg p\}$: any or none[5]
       a.   *Low negation*
           Peter   ringde   mig   just   nu.   Han   kommer   inte   till   mötet.
           Peter   called   me   just   now   he   comes   not   to   the.meeting
       b.   *Fronted negation*
           Peter   ringde   mig   just   nu.   #Inte   kommer   han   till   mötet.
           Peter   called   me   just   now   not   comes   he   to   the.meeting
           Intended for both: 'I just got a call from Peter. He isn't coming to the meeting.'

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[3] Following Gunlogson (2008:110), I assume that a proposition p is controversial in a context C iff $\neg p$ is a commitment of at least one but not all interlocutors, and p is not a commitment of all interlocutors.

[4] See section 4 for a qualification of this statement.

[5] For more details on speaker preference and speaker beliefs, see sections 4.3 and 5.

(8)   *Rejection*
        Contextual evidence: *p*
        Speaker's assertion: ¬*p*
        Speaker's previous belief with respect to {*p*, ¬*p*}: ¬*p*
        Context for both (a) and (b): Mary says: 'I wonder when Peter will finally show up.'
        Jim replies:
        a.   *Low negation*
               Han   kommer   inte   till   mötet.
               He   comes   not   to   the.meeting
        b.   *Fronted negation*
               Inte   kommer   han   till   mötet.
               Not   comes   he   to   the.meeting
               'He isn't coming to the meeting.'

Examples of rejecting questions are given in (9). Note that low negation is not licit here (9a) unless it is combined with the modal particle 'väl'. Fronted negation can occur with or without 'väl' in a rejecting question, with no change of communicative effect. Let us first investigate the difference between (9a) *with* the modal particle and (8a), the utterance with low negation but no modal particle, since there is a formal difference to go with the functional difference. (9a) is supposed to be informative; Mary can for example react with 'Oh, OK'. (9a) is not informative; Mary cannot acknowledge that Jim told her that Peter isn't coming, because that is not what Jim has done. What Jim has done is indicate a *preference* for excluding *p* ('that Peter is coming to the meeting') from CG, without outright asserting ¬p like in (8a). This allows inferences about his previous belief state that will be described in greater detail in section 3.3. For the moment, note that there is no lexical or intonational difference between (8b) and (9b), so while the modal particle in (9a) may be part of the explanation of the difference between rejections and rejecting questions with low negation, it will likely not be a sufficient explanation for rejections and rejecting questions with fronted negation.

(9)   *Rejecting question*
        Contextual evidence: *p*
        Speaker's assertion: none
        Speaker's previous belief with respect to {*p*, ¬*p*}: ¬*p*
        Context for both (a) and (b): Mary says: 'I wonder when Peter will finally show up.'
        Jim replies:
        a.   *Low negation*
               Han   kommer   #(väl)   inte   till   mötet?
               He   comes   MP[6]   not   to   the.meeting
        b.   *Fronted negation*
               Inte   kommer   han   till   mötet?

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[6] MP stands for 'modal particle'. I will not go into detail with respect to the precise contributions or meanings of Swedish and German modal particles in this article, and instead just note when they are obligatory for a certain reading of their host sentence.

Not comes he to the.meeting
Intended for both: 'Surely he isn't coming to the meeting?'

For comparison, consider the English and German utterances in (10), which I propose can also be classified as rejecting questions. Like the Swedish rejecting question with low negation in (9a), these have to be lexically disambiguated from rejections – with modal particles in German, and in English with an adverb ('surely') that lexically indicates a high degree of certainty on the part of the speaker. Swedish fronted negation is 'odd', cross-linguistically, in not requiring any overt means of disambiguation between rejections and rejecting questions.

(10)   Context for both (a) and (b): Mary says: 'I wonder when Peter will finally show up.' Jim replies:
        a.   Surely he's not coming to the meeting?
        b.   Er kommt #(doch wohl) nicht zum Meeting?
                He comes MP   MP   not to.the meeting

2.3. Suggesting questions

Recall that both (1) and (2), i.e. Swedish negated declaratives both with low and with fronted negation, have a reading I labelled 'suggesting question'. These are (usually) polite questions that emphasize that the speaker does not expect an affirmative answer, similar to the English question given in (11). I call them 'suggesting' questions because the speaker is generally interested in an affirmative answer – i.e. the speaker suggests that a proposition might be true even though it is unlikely.

(11)   You wouldn't happen to know the answer (, would you?)

In English or German this reading requires the support of modal particles or modal verbs ('would' in (11)), adverbs or verbs that stress that the underlying proposition is true only by coincidence ('happen' in (11)), and/or question tags, although, with an appropriate, somewhat special intonation, negation alone can be enough, at least in German. In Swedish, the suggestion reading can be reinforced with these elements, as well, but reinforcement is much less necessary than it is in English and German. In other words, in Swedish there is no obligatory disambiguation between '*You wouldn't happen to know the answer?*' (a suggesting question with low negation) and '*You don't know the answer.*' (a declarative assertion with low negation). Since the focus of this article is on properties of fronted negation, and since the availability of the suggestion reading is a property of Swedish negation in general, the issue of how the suggesting question reading arises without the support of modalising elements or question tags will be left to further research.[7]

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[7] It is the negative particle that makes the suggestion reading available, cf. (i) below: an unnegated declarative can only be understood as a declarative assertion (or question, with rising intonation, which requires contextual evidence for its underlying proposition).
(i) Du   vet   svaret. / ?
     You   know   the.answer

3. Previous accounts of FN

Fronted negation (variously called 'negative preposing' and 'topicalised negation') has not received much attention in the literature so far. Usually it is only brought up as a diagnostic for the phrasal status of negation in the North Germanic languages (e.g. in Holmberg & Platzack 1995). To my knowledge, there are two different classifications of subtypes of FN, which have been proposed by Petersson (2008) and Lindström (2007). I will give a short overview of Lindström's classification.

Lindström (2007) identifies three functional subtypes of FN: *additive*, *interrogative* and *responsive* negation. Additive negation occurs in lists of negative (but not necessarily negated) propositions; interrogative negation is Lindström's term for all types of questioning utterances with FN (be they suggesting or rejecting); and responsive negation essentially includes every other usage that is not included in the other two categories. I will exclude additive negation from the discussion for a variety of reasons: it does not exhibit any modal effects, is entirely optionally fronted (i.e. in (12), there is no difference in meaning whether one, both or none of the negative markers are fronted), and it behaves exactly like low negation – i.e. if it occurs in questions, it only ever occurs in true NDQs. Furthermore, the negative particle is stressed in cases of additive negation and unstressed in cases of interrogative and responsive negation. I assume that there is a different mechanism of fronting underlying additive negation, but set this issue aside for now (cf. Østbø Munch 2013:241 for a syntactic analysis along these lines).

(12)   *Additive negation*
        Han kom inte till mötet   igår   och inte kom han idag   heller.
        He   came not to   the.meeting yesterday and not   came he   today either
        'He didn't come to the meeting yesterday and neither did he come today.'

I hope to show that it is not possible to draw a strict division between the other two types, as discussed in sections 4 and 5.

Two recent articles, Brandtler & Håkansson (2012, 2014), have focused exclusively on fronted negation. They propose an analysis that boils down to FN associating with a contrastively focused element in the sentence. In particular, they make the claim that a rejection with FN is always functionally identical to a sentence with the contrastively focused element in a cleft. That this is not always the case can be shown with example (8b), which is repeated below. There is no contrastive focus in (8b), therefore all cleft paraphrases fail.

(8)   b.   *Fronted negation*
             Inte   kommer han till   mötet.

        = 'You know the answer. / ?'
        ≠ 'You happen to know the answer?'
        ≠ 'Do you happen to know the answer?'

Not   comes   he   to   the.meeting
'He isn't coming to the meeting.'

≠   Det   är   inte   HAN   som   kommer   till   mötet
It   is   not   he   REL.PR   comes   to   the.meeting
'It's not HIM that is coming to the meeting.'

≠   Det   är   inte   till   MÖTET   som   han   kommer
It   is   not   to   the.meeting   REL.PR   he   comes
'It's not to the MEETING that he's coming.'

A similar approach has been proposed by Zeijlstra (2013) – here, fronted negation is analysed as the result of a process of partial topicalisation of a contrastively focussed constituent, which faces the same problem as Brandtler & Håkansson's approach: while it is certainly possible for fronted negation to be associated with contrastive focus lower in the sentence, it is not required.

4. A close look at declarative vs rejecting questions

This section widens the scope from fronted negation in order to give a detailed overview of the various ways in which declarative questions and rejecting questions differ. There are three main differences to discuss: context conditions (discussed in section 4.1), licencing of polarity items (discussed in section 4.2), and expression of speaker beliefs (discussed in section 4.3).

4.1. Context conditions on declarative questions and on rejecting questions

As has been mentioned in section 2.1, DQs require contextual evidence that is of the same polarity as that of the questioned proposition. This is illustrated with Swedish DQs in the (a) and (b) examples of (13) and (14). The context with contextual evidence for $\neg p$ in (13) allows NDQs (13b), but no PDQs (13a), while the context with contextual evidence for p in (14) allows PDQs (14a), but no NDQs (14b). (13c) through (13f) show what has been mentioned already: in a context that licences NDQs, rejecting questions are not licit. Rejecting questions are licenced if there is contextual evidence for p, cf. (14c) through (14f).

(13)   *Evidence for $\neg p$: licencing of NDQs, anti-licencing of PDQs and rejecting questions*
          Context: Peter is sitting in a windowless room. Mary comes in with a closed, dry umbrella.
          Peter says:
    a.   *Positive declarative question*
          #Det   regnar?
          It   rains
    b.   *Negative declarative question*
          Det   regnar   inte?
          It   rains   not
    c.   *Rejecting question with fronted negation*
          #Inte   regnar   det?
          Not   rains   it

d.   *Rejecting question with 'väl'*
      #Det   regnar   väl   inte?
      It   rains   MP   not

e.   *English rejecting question*
     #Surely it's not raining?

f.   *German rejecting question*
     #Es   regnet doch wohl nicht?
     It   rains   MP   MP   not

(14) *Evidence for p: licencing of PDQs and rejecting questions, anti-licencing of NDQs*
      Context: Peter is sitting in a windowless room. Mary comes in dripping wet.
      Peter says:

a.   *Positive declarative question*
     Det   regnar?
     It   rains

b.   *Negative declarative question*
     #Det   regnar   inte?
     It   rains   not

c.   *Rejecting question with fronted negation*
     Inte   regnar   det?
     Not   rains   it

d.   *Rejecting question with 'väl'*
     Det   regnar   väl   inte?
     It   rains   MP   not

e.   *English rejecting question*
     ?Surely it's not raining?

f.   *German rejecting question*
     Es   regnet   doch wohl nicht?
     It   rains   MP   MP   not

4.2. Polarity items

Fronted negation does not anti-licence positive polarity items (PPIs) and does not licence negative polarity items (NPIs). (15a) gives an example of a PPI occurring in the scope of FN; (15b) shows an NPI failing to be licenced by FN.

(15) a.   *PPIs in FN questions: redan ('already')*
           Context: Peter and Mary are at a cake eating contest.
           Mary: 'I don't know if I'm going to be able to finish this whole cake.'
           Peter replies:
           Inte   tänker   du   ge   upp   redan[PPI]?
           Not   want   you   give up   already
           'Surely you don't want to give up already?'

b.   *NPIs in FN questions: någonsin ('ever')*
Context: Peter and Mary are about to travel to Greenland.
Mary: 'It will be nice to see Greenland again.'
Peter replies:

*Inte	har	du	någonsin[NPI]	varit	på	Grönland?
Not	have	you	ever	been	on	Greenland

'Surely you haven't ever been to Greenland?'

(16) shows that normal negative declarative questions anti-licence PPIs (16a) and licence NPIs (16b).

(16)   a.   *PPIs in NDQs: redan ('already')*
Context: Peter and Mary are at a cake eating contest.
Mary: 'It's too early to give up.'
Peter replies:

*Du	tänker	inte	ge	upp	redan[PPI]?
You	want	not	give	up	already

'You don't want to give up already?'

b.   *NPIs in NDQs: någonsin ('ever')*
Context: Peter and Mary are about to travel to Greenland.
Mary: 'It will be nice to finally see Greenland.'
Peter replies:

Du	har	inte	någonsin[NPI]	varit	på	Grönland?
You	have	not	ever	been	on	Greenland

'You haven't ever been to Greenland?'

This pattern is reminiscent of the difference in PI licencing between polar questions with outer negation (ONPQs) and polar questions with inner negation (INPQs), as described for English by Romero & Han (2004). German examples are given in (17). This difference has been analysed by Romero & Han (2004) as resulting from the scopal interaction between negation and the VERUM operator, which is used to express that the speaker is sure that *p* should be added to CG (first proposed by Höhle 1992), and by Romero (2014) as resulting from FALSUM occurring in ONPQs (FALSUM being an operator used to express that *p* should not be added to CG – proposed by Repp (2009), who also discusses PI licencing under negation and FALSUM). LFs of the sentences in (17) are given in (18).

(17)   a.   *Ambiguous negative polar question*

Ist	Peter	nicht	in	der	Schule?
Is	Peter	not	in	the	school

Reading 1: 'Is it the case that Peter is not at school?'
Reading 2: 'Is it not the case that Peter is at school?'

      b.   *PPI in negative polar question: only outer negation reading is available*
           Ist   Peter   nicht   schon[PPI]   in   der   Schule?
           Is   Peter   not   already   in   the   school
           Reading 1: *'Is it the case that Peter is not already at school?'
           Reading 2: 'Is it not the case that Peter is already at school?'

      c.   *NPI in negative polar question: only inner negation reading is available*
           Hat   Peter   nicht   [alle Tassen im   Schrank][NPI]?
           Has   Peter   not   all   cups   in.the   cupboard
           Reading 1: 'Is it the case that Peter is not quite right in the head?'
           Reading 2: *'Is it not the case that Peter is quite right in the head?'

(18)   (17a), reading 1; (17c):   [$_{CP}$ Q [NEG [$_{TP}$ ... *PPI/NPI ...]]
       (17a), reading 2; (17b):   [$_{CP}$ Q [FALSUM [$_{TP}$ ... PPI/*NPI ...]]

I will continue the discussion of NPQs in the following section on speaker beliefs. Returning to rejecting questions, consider (19), which gives a German example of a PPI occurring directly below negation in a rejecting question. The same goes for English 'surely not' questions, cf. (20). This seems to suggest that negation shows unorthodox PI licencing behaviour in rejecting questions cross-linguistically.

(19)   Context: there is contextual evidence that Peter is at school earlier than normal. Mary says:
       Peter   ist   doch   wohl   nicht   schon[PPI]   in   der   Schule?
       Peter   is   MP   MP   not   already   in   the   school
       'Surely Peter isn't at school already?'

(20)   Surely you wouldn't [rather be][PPI] somewhere[PPI] else?

4.3. Speaker beliefs

Rejecting questions allow inferences about the speaker's previous beliefs and her willingness to accept the questioned proposition that declarative questions do not (at least in the absence of incredulity intonation or extralinguistic cues like e.g. facial expression). In (21a), the only conclusion that can be drawn about Peter's previous belief state is that he did not know that it was raining. This is because he chooses to ask a question at all; if he had previously been sure that it was raining, there would be no reason for him to ask a question. There is no reason to believe that he is unwilling to accept that it is raining (in the absence of incredulity intonation), or that he would prefer the present state of affairs to be such that it is not raining (outside of any world knowledge biases to that effect).

In (21b), the same inference that Peter did not know that it was raining can be drawn, but in addition to that, it can be inferred that – at the very least – he would prefer $\neg p$ over p. Even stronger inferences can (but do not have to) be drawn, namely that he was committed to $\neg p$, and possibly even that he refuses to believe p. Questions with FN can even border on the rhetorical in

the sense that the speaker seems to all but presuppose one of two answers (namely ¬*p*), but compared to a negated declarative with low negation, falling intonation, and no modal particles (21c), there is still at least a pretence on the part of the speaker of being willing to be overruled (note that (21c), without any other accompanying speech acts – e.g. a preceding 'Why are you wet?' – is bizarrely uncooperative).[8]

(21)   *Contextual evidence for p (=14)*
       Context: Peter is sitting in a windowless room. Mary comes in dripping wet.
       Peter says:
       a.   *Positive declarative question*
               Det   regnar?
               It   rains
               'It's raining?'
       b.   *Rejecting question with FN*
               Inte   regnar   det?
               Not   rains   it
               ≈'Surely it's not raining?'
       c.   *Negative declarative assertion*
               #Det   regnar   inte.
               It   rains   not
               'It's not raining.'

Inferences about the speaker's belief state can be made explicit. In the following, we compare reactions to Peter's utterances in (21) above. In particular, we want to see if it is possible to presuppose or double-check surprise on the part of Peter after his questions in (21). In (22a), a wh-question about the reason for Peter's surprise is asked – that he was surprised is therefore presupposed. This is strange after a positive declarative question, but fine after a question with fronted negation. (22b) shows that, while Peter can be asked whether he is surprised after he uttered a PDQ, this question must be neutral and must not contain 'verkligen' ('really'), which I propose expresses VERUM focus and therefore double-checks whether to add the proposition 'that Peter was surprised' to CG (cf. Romero & Han 2004 on English 'really'). Since this proposition is not inferable from the context of Peter asking a PDQ, it cannot be double-checked very well. Conversely, double-checking whether to add 'Peter is surprised that it is raining' is fine after an FNQ, since an FNQ introduces this speaker-oriented bias.

(22)   *Reactions to (21)*
       a.   *Presupposing that the speaker of (21) is surprised*
               Varför   överraskar   dig   det?
               Why   surprises   you   that
               'Why does that surprise you?'

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[8] Questions with FN cannot be true rhetorical questions, however, since polar rhetorical questions differ in polarity between their form (e.g. 'After all, is it raining?' – positive) and their meaning (e.g. 'It is not raining.' – negative), while questions with FN, if they are taken to be assertions, are still negated assertions.

> OK after rejecting question
> Marked after PDQ

    b.   *Double-checking whether the speaker of (21) is surprised*
> Överraskar   dig   det   verkligen?
> Surprises   you   that   really
> 'Does that really surprise you?'
> OK after rejecting question
> Marked after PDQ

Let us come back to the comparison between rejecting questions and ONPQs begun in the previous section. Although both of these question types fail to anti-licence PPIs, they seem to be exact opposites in terms of speaker expectation and contextual evidence requirements. Consider (17b) and (19), repeated here as (23), and their contextual parameters given in (24). An ONPQ requires that the speaker believe that a positive proposition is true in the face of absence of evidence for it, while a rejecting question requires that the speaker believe that a positive proposition is false in the face of evidence for it.

(23)   a.   *Rejecting question*
> Peter   ist   doch   wohl   nicht   schon^{PPI} in   der   Schule?
> Peter   is   MP   MP   not   already   in   the   school
> 'Surely Peter isn't at school already?'

    b.   *Polar question with outer negation*
> Ist   Peter   nicht   schon^{PPI} in   der   Schule?
> Is   Peter   not   already   in   the   school
> 'Isn't Peter already at school?'

(24)   a.   *Rejecting question (23a):*
> p: 'Peter is already at school'
> Speaker believes $\neg p$
> There must be contextual evidence for p (see section 4.1)

    b.   *ONPQ (23b):*
> p: 'Peter is already at school'
> Speaker believes p
> There must be no contextual evidence for p (cf. Büring & Gunlogson 2000)

The epistemic bias of ONPQs can also be made explicit in responses to them, in which questioning the speaker's beliefs is fine after an ONPQ (25a), but presumptuous after a PPQ (25b).

(25)   a.   Mary: Isn't Peter already at school?
> Jim: It's 7 o'clock. Did you really think he'd be at school already?

    b.   Mary: Is Peter already at school?
> Jim: It's 7 o'clock. ??Did you really think he'd be at school already?

5. The meaning of rejecting questions

Let us take declarative questions as a foundation for the analysis. To reiterate: the negation in DQs is propositional, and therefore anti-licences PPIs. DQs are assertions, but directly involve the addressee in a way that non-questions do not. This can be modelled by assuming contingent commitment, following Gunlogson (2008), or by way of the REQUEST operator, following Krifka (to appear) – the important point is that this addressee reference explains why DQs are illicit if the addressee is asked to assert something that is not compatible with contextual evidence. The meaning of a declarative question (containing negation) is given in (26).

(26)   *Declarative question:*
        [$_{ForceP}$ REQUEST$_{<S,A>}$ [$_{ForceP}$ ASSERT … [$_{CP}$ V ... [$_{TP}$ NEG [$_{TP}$ ... *PPI/NPI ...]]]

Rejections or denials with fronted negation (and rejections in general) contain FALSUM. The speaker is asserting (unconditionally) that a proposition p, which needs to be sourced by the addressee (hence explaining why assertions with fronted negation cannot be regular negated assertions of new material), should not be part of CG. FALSUM allows PPIs to occur in its scope, since there is no negation at the propositional level. The definition of FALSUM and the meaning of a rejection (no matter the surface position of negation) are given in (27) and (28). $Epi_x(w)$ is the set of worlds that conform to x's knowledge in w, and $Conv_x(w')$ is the set of worlds that conform to x's conversational goals in w'.

(27) $[[FALSUM]]^x = \lambda p_{<s,t>}\lambda w. \forall w' \in Epi_x(w)[\forall w'' \in Conv_x(w')[p \notin CG_{w''}]]$

(28)   *Rejection/denial:*
        [$_{ForceP}$ ASSERT [$_{ForceP}$ FALSUM … [$_{CP}$ V ... [$_{TP}$ ... PPI/*NPI ...]]]]

The meaning of rejecting questions cannot be identical to (28) because, among other reasons, rejecting questions are never informative. But if we simply assume the above meaning, except embedded under another CG management operator that yields a question-like interpretation, namely REQUEST, we encounter the problem that the addressee cannot be reasonably expected to assert FALSUM(p) in the contexts in which FNQs are licit (because the addressee can be actually committed to p prior to the rejecting question). This arguably incorrect meaning is illustrated in (29).

(29)   *Rejecting question (problematic meaning):*
        #[$_{ForceP}$ REQUEST$_{<S,A>}$ [$_{ForceP}$ ASSERT [$_{ForceP}$ FALSUM … [$_{CP}$ V ... [$_{TP}$ ... PPI/*NPI ...]]]

In general, since rejections and rejecting questions are so close in meaning and, in Swedish, in form, it would be desirable to have minimal difference between the meaning of rejecting questions and (28), i.e. the meaning of rejections. I propose that this minimal difference hinges on the ASSERT operator. Rejections are actual, unconditional speech acts: as soon as a rejection is uttered, the speaker has excluded p from CG. Rejecting questions on the other hand are conditional speech acts: the speaker does not fully commit to excluding p from CG unless further

conditions are met. I use ASSERT_{tentative} as a name for this modified speech act operator in (30), with the caveat that the resulting utterance is not a tentative assertion in the sense of Farkas & Roelofsen (2012), i.e. it is not a declarative question / rising declarative.

(30)   *Rejecting question:*
        [_{ForceP} ASSERT_{tentative} [_{ForceP} FALSUM … [_{CP} V ... [_{TP} ... PPI/*NPI ...]]]]

Tentative or contingent commitment in this sense must not strictly be dependent upon the addressee (as it is assumed by Gunlogson 2008), because otherwise the previously discussed problem arises that in a context that licences a rejecting question, the addressee is usually not a possible source for FALSUM(*p*). Instead, what contingent commitment does in rejecting questions is to restrict future discourse moves. In particular, the speaker makes it impossible for herself to insist on the truth of FALSUM(*p*) – if the addressee insists on *p*, the speaker must yield (cf. (31b), as opposed to the actual rejection in (31a)). The meaning of a rejecting question can be paraphrased as 'I will reject *p* unless I am given a reason not to reject it (and if given that reason, I will accept being overruled)'. Furthermore, we have to assume that if no reason is given, *p* will not actually be rejected, because the speaker of a rejecting question cannot be held accountable for the truth of FALSUM(*p*) if it later turns out that *p* is true, as illustrated by (32). In other words, the CG status of *p* remains unclear after a rejecting question until and unless some interlocutor sources either *p* or ¬*p*.

(31)   a.   Mary: I wonder when Peter will show up.
               Jim: Peter is not coming to the meeting.
               Mary: Yes, he IS.
               Jim: Oh, OK. / No, he ISN'T.
       b.   Mary: I wonder when Peter will show up.
               Jim: Surely Peter's not coming to the meeting?
               Mary: Yes, he IS.
               Jim: Oh, OK. / #No, he ISN'T.

(32)   Mary: I wonder when Peter will show up.
       Jim: Surely Peter's not coming to the meeting?
       Mary: I don't actually know. I just assumed he was coming.
       Later, Peter enters the room.
       Mary: ??Hey Jim, you were wrong.

Another reason why direct addressee-reference should be absent from the meaning of rejecting questions is that in certain contexts, rejecting questions are licit even if the addressee is not a better source for either *p* or ¬*p* than the speaker, cf. (33). The core pragmatic effect of rejecting questions seems to be that the speaker indicates that she would prefer to exclude *p* from CG, but is not certain enough to actually exclude it. It is *possible* for the addressee to clear up the issue of whether *p* should be in CG or not, but the only necessary reaction that is needed from the addressee is an acknowledgment of the speaker's wish to exclude *p* from CG (i.e. in (33), Peter has to at least indicate his own ignorance).

(33)   Mary and Peter are in a windowless room and both ignorant of the weather, but there
        is the sound of raindrops on the roof.
        Mary says:
        Es regnet   doch wohl nicht?
        It   rains   MP   MP   not
        ≈ 'Surely it's not raining?'

For the Swedish data, the questions arises how the two ASSERT operators are encoded if there is no intonational or lexical difference whatsoever between Swedish FNQs and rejections. Falling declaratives that are understood as questions (e.g. 'You got a haircut.') face the same problem, which is solved by Gunlogson (2008) by assuming that the context in such a case all but requires the speaker's commitment to be contingent (i.e. the speaker almost certainly cannot intend to inform someone that they got a haircut, which gives rise to the pragmatic effect of the speaker seeking confirmation). This route is not available for rejecting questions with fronted negation because the speaker *can* intend to inform someone e.g. that Peter is not coming to the meeting. I will therefore have to assume that in Swedish there is some yet to be found intonational difference between rejections with fronted negation and rejecting questions which is not the same as that between declarative assertions and DQs (i.e. a final rise), but still sufficient to signal that the speaker is not performing an outright rejection. Further research is required on this issue.

Another question that remains unanswered is the precise syntactic process of fronting of the negative marker in Swedish, in particular with respect to the difference between fronted negation as discussed in this article and additive negation in the sense mentioned in section 3, which almost certainly does not express FALSUM. Furthermore, an analysis of the interaction of negation and modal particles is required, because while Swedish low negation can be used in actual rejections, it requires the support of the modal particle 'väl' to be used in rejecting questions – if intonation is sufficient to disambiguate rejections from rejecting questions in the case of fronted negation, as postulated above, it should also be sufficient for the same task in the case of low negation, which it is not. Since modal particles are also required to produce a rejecting question reading in German, they will have to be taken into account more explicitly.

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