

# PhD course / Ling 315: Wh-Constructions

WiSe 2018-19

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced seminar investigates several semantic and pragmatic aspects of wh-constructions, such as the semantics of moved and in-situ wh-phrases, the semantic/pragmatic distinction between *whether* and *if*, the interaction between question semantics and the pragmatics of discourse particles, intervention effects for in situ wh-phrases, and movement and reconstruction into Relative Clauses. In examining this array of phenomena, we will work through different competing formalisms of scope taking, focus semantics and not-at-issue meaning.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Prof. Maribel Romero (short for María Isabel Romero Sangüesa)  
[maribel.romero@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:maribel.romero@uni-konstanz.de)  
G222  
Office hours: Mondays 13:30-14:30h

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

Knowledge of Formal Semantics at the very least equivalent to Ling215 and optimally equivalent to a regular Ling315.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Possibly some practice exercises
- Class presentation of a paper (Referat)
- Term paper (Hausarbeit) presented at the Mini-Conference and written up and handed in by March 1.

## TIME LINE (Tentative)

Oct 23	Introduction: Main approaches to compositional semantics of WhQs
Oct 31	Introduction / Alternative Questions
Nov 7	Alternative Questions I
<del>Nov 14</del>	⇒ Feb 13
Nov 21	Alternative Questions II
Nov 28	ASIDE: Indicative and Subjunctive hypothetical and biscuit conditionals
Dec 5	Topic A <del>READING WEEK</del>
Dec 12	Topic A
Dec 19	Topic A
CHRISTMAS	
Jan 9	Topic B
Jan 16	Topic B
Jan 23	Topic C
Jan 30	Topic C
Feb 6	<b>OUR READING WEEK</b>
Feb 13	MINI-CONFERENCE (ca. 3 hours needed)

## OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

### MAIN APPROACHES TO THE COMPOSITIONAL SEMANTICS OF WH-QUESTIONS

- Moved wh-phrases
- Binding operator plus in-situ restrictor of the wh-phrase
- In situ wh-phrase

Hamblin, Charles L. 1973. Questions in Montague English. *Foundations of Language* 10(1): 41–53.

Karttunen, Lauri. 1977. Syntax and Semantics of Questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1(1): 3-44.

Reinhart, Tanya. 1992. Wh-in-situ: an apparent paradox. In P. Dekker et al., *Proceedings of the 8th Amsterdam Colloquium*.

Rullmann, H. & S. Beck 1999. Presupposition Projection and the Interpretation of *Which*-Questions. In D. Strolovitch & A. Lawson (eds.) *Proceedings from SALT VIII*, p. 215-232. Department of Linguistics, Cornell University.

### ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

- Treatment of disjunction
- The size of the disjuncts
- The contribution of intonation
- A general picture of disjunction and intonation in declaratives and interrogatives?

Biezma, M. & K. Rawlins. 2012. Responding to alternative and polar questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 35(5):361–406 .

Erlewine M. Y. 2017. Two disjunctions in mandarin chinese. Ms. Univ. Singapore.

Han, C.-H., & Romero, M. 2004. The syntax of whether/Q...or questions: Ellipsis combined with movement. *NLLT* 22: 527-564.

Meertens, E., S. Egger, and M. Romero. 2018. Multiple accent in alternative questions. Talk presented at *Sinn und Bedeutung* 23.

Roelofsen, F. 2015/2107. The semantics of declarative and interrogative lists. Ms. Univ. Amsterdam.

Roelofsen, F. & S. van Gool. 2010. Disjunctive questions, intonation, and highlighting. In H. B. M. Aloni and T. de Jager, eds., *Logic, Language and Meaning: Selected Papers from the 17th Amsterdam Colloquium*, pp. 384–394. Heidelberg: Springer .

Romero, M. & Han, C.-H. (2003). Focus, ellipsis and the semantics of alternative questions. In C. Beyssade, O. Bonami, P. C. Hofherr, & F. Corblin (Eds.), *Empirical issues in formal syntax and semantics* (Vol. 4, pp. 291–307). Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne.

von Stechow, A. 1991. Focusing and backgrounding operators. In W. Abraham (ed.), *Discourse particles*. (pp. 37–84). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Uegaki, W. 2018. A unified semantics for the Japanese q-particle *ka* in indefinites, questions and disjunctions. *Glossa* 3(1):14.

Westera, M. 2017. *Exhaustivity and intonation: A unified theory*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam.

## THE ROLE OF FOCUS IN WH-PHRASES

- Indeterminate stems: between indefinites and wh-phrases
- Focus and wh-phrases
- Focus and Q-particles

Beck, S. 2006. Intervention Effects Follow from Focus Interpretation. *Natural Language Semantics* 14: 1-56.

Cable, S. 2010. *The Grammar of Q: Q-particles, Wh-movement, and pied-piping*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eckardt, R. 2007. Inherent focus on wh-phrases. In E. Puig-Waldmüller, ed., *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 11*, pp. 209-228. Barcelona, UPF.

Hagstrom, P. 1998. *Decomposing Questions*. Ph.D. thesis, MIT .

Haida, A. 2007. *The Indefiniteness and Focusing of Wh-Words*. Ph.D. thesis, Humboldt Univ.

Shimoyama, J. 2006. Indeterminate phrase quantification in Japanese. *Natural Language Semantics* 14(2): 139-173

Slade, B. 2011. *Formal and philological inquiries into the nature of interrogatives, indefinites, disjunction, and focus in Sinhala and other languages*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Urbana, Illinois.

## INTERVENTION EFFECTS

- Intervention in WhQs: Focus-based approaches
- Intervention in WhQs: Other approaches
- Extension to intervention in AltQs

Beck, S. 2006. Intervention Effects Follow from Focus Interpretation. *Natural Language Semantics* 14: 1-56.

Beck, S. & S.-S. Kim. 2006. Intervention Effects in Alternative Questions. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 9(3): 165-208.

Erlewine, M. Y. & H. Kotek. 2017. Movement and alternatives don't mix: Evidence from Japanese. In *Proceedings of the 21st Amsterdam Colloquium*, pp. 245–254.

Li, H. & J. Law. 2016. Alternatives in different dimensions: A case study of focus intervention. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 39:201–245.

Mayr, C. 2014. Intervention effects and additivity. *Journal of Semantics* 31:513–554.

Tomioka, S. 2007b. Pragmatics of LF intervention effects: Japanese and Korean interrogatives. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39:1570–1590.

## EMBEDDING VERBS AND THE DECLARATIVE / INTERROGATIVE DIVIDE

- Responsive vs. rogative verbs. A unified approach of declarative vs. interrogative complements?
- Responsive vs. non-rogative verbs
- Embedding puzzles: *surprise*+WhQ/\*AltQ/\*PolQ puzzle, *realize*+WhQ/\*AltQ/\*PolQ puzzle, *admit*+whether/\*if puzzle
  - Adger, D. and J. Quer. 2001. The syntax and semantics of unselected embedded questions. *Language* 77(1):107–133
  - Elliott, P. D., N. Klinedinst, Y. Sudo, and W. Uegaki. 2017. Predicates of relevance and theories of question embedding. *Journal of Semantics* 34(3):547–554.
  - George, B. R. 2011. *Question embedding and the semantics of answers*. Ph.D. thesis, University of California
  - Guerzoni, E. 2007. Weak exhaustivity and *Whether*: A pragmatic approach. In T. Friedmann and M. Gibson, eds., *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 17*, pages 112–129.
  - Nicolae, A. 2013. *Any questions? Polarity as a window into the structure of questions*. Ph.D. thesis, Harvard.
  - Roelofsen, F. To appear. *Surprise* for Lauri Karttunen. In C. Condoravdi, ed., *Festschrift for Lauri Karttunen*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
  - Roelofsen, F., M. Herbstritt, and M. Aloni. To appear. The *\*whether* puzzle. In K. von Heusinger, M. Zimmermann, and E. Onea, eds., *Questions in discourse, vol. 1: Semantics*.
  - Romero, M. 2015. *Surprise*-predicates, strong exhaustivity and alternative questions. In S. D'Antonio, M. Morroney, and C. R. Little, eds., *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 25*, pages 225–245.
  - Theiler, N., F. Roelofsen, and M. Aloni. 2018. A uniform semantics for declarative and interrogative complements. *Journal of Semantics* 35(3):409–466 .
  - Uegaki, W. 2015. *Interpreting questions under attitudes*. Ph.D. thesis, MIT.
  - Uegaki, W. and Y. Sudo. 2018. The *\*hope-wh* puzzle. Ms., Leiden University and UCL.

### Other potential topics:

- discourse particles and questions
- degree of exhaustivity in questions
- relative clauses