

POLAR QUESTIONS IN BAMILEKE MEDUMBA

Hermann Keupdjio and Martina Wiltschko
University of British Columbia
keupsmann2011@gmail.com; Martina.Wiltschko@ubc.ca

Abstract

In this paper, we explore the form and function of polar questions in Medumba and i) establish that there are (at least) seven strategies to ask a polar question in Medumba; ii) describe the differences in the context of use of these questions; and iii) contextualize these differences and show that similar differences are found in other languages and in other areas of grammar.

Key words: Polar questions – bias – belief – speaker – addressee – Bamileke Medumba

Résumé

Dans cet article sont explorées la forme et la fonction des questions polaires en Medumba. Nous (i) établissons qu'il existe (au moins) sept stratégies de formation des questions polaires en Medumba; (ii) décrivons les contextes d'usage de ces questions ainsi que ce qui les diffèrent; (iii) contextualisons ces différences et montrons qu'elles se trouvent également dans d'autres langues tout comme sur d'autres pans de la grammaire.

Mots clés: Questions polaires – biais – locuteur – récepteur – Bamileke Medumba

1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to explore the form and function of polar questions in Medumba, a Grassfields' Bantu Bamileke language spoken in the Western region of Cameroon. Our three main objectives are i) to establish that there are (at least) seven strategies to ask a polar question in Medumba; ii) to describe the differences in the context of use of these questions; and iii) to contextualize these differences and show that similar differences are found in other languages and in other areas of grammar. The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 illustrates the seven strategies to ask a polar question in Medumba; section 3 shows that there are several ways to be biased; in section 4 we explore the seven different contexts of use of these polar questions; in section 5 we show that the Medumba system does not pattern as a typical evidential system; and in section 6 we explore polar questions and bias beyond Medumba. Section 7 concludes.

2. Seven strategies to ask a polar question in Medumba

The basic sentence structure in Medumba is SVO as illustrated in (1). Other functional elements such as tense, aspectual auxiliaries and negation can occur between S and V (for more discussion, see Keupdjio 2016).¹

- (1) [Nù mí yàú ↓m^há]S
Numi have dog
“Numi has a dog.”

¹ We use the following glosses and conventions: ↓ = downstep; ¬ = not; 1 = 1st person; 2 = 2nd person; 3 = 3rd person; A = addressee; Bel = belief; DET = determiner; DIR = direct; Foc = focus marker; L = low tone; Neg = negation; H = high tone; p = proposition; Prt = particle; Q = question particle; S = speaker; SG = singular.

To ask a polar question, speakers of Medumba can use any of seven strategies. In particular, there are several sentence-peripheral particles that serve to form questions². These include the sentence final particles *kí* (2), *áá* (3), *á* (4)-(6), and *kó* (8) as well as the sentence-initial particles *kù* (4) and *kùlá* (7). Most particles are used on their own, however *kù* and *kùlá* can co-occur with *á*, as in (4) and (6).

(2) *ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú kí* [...]s-kí
 2SG have dog PRT
 “Do you have a dog?”

(3) *ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú á-á* [...]s-á-á
 2SG have dog FOC-PRT
 “No! you have a dog? (I am really surprised! I don’t believe it!)”

(4) *kù ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú á* kù [...]s -á
 PRT 2SG have dog PRT
 “So, do you have the dog then?”

(5) *ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú á* [...]s -á
 2SG have dog PRT
 “So, do you have the dog then?”

(6) *kùlá ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú á* kùlá [...]s -á
 PRT 2SG have dog PRT
 “So (I hear) you have a dog?”

(7) *kùlá ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú* kùlá [...]s
 PRT 2SG have dog
 “So, from what I see, you have a dog?”

(8) *ú yùú ðᵐᵇʰú kó* [...]s -kó
 2SG have dog PRT
 “Do you have a dog?”

The question-formation strategies illustrated in (2-8) have not been described in the literature on Medumba. Existing work provides just a brief description of some of these strategies. In particular, Keupdjio (2011) describes the *kí* particle as the yes/no question formation particle and the combination of *kù* [...]s-á as the strategy used for confirmative questions. In Bafut (Grassfields’ Bantu), Tamanji (2009) describes the tag question *á si lá bá* as being used for confirmative questions.

The question we explore here is how these question formation strategies differ. In addition, we also wish to clarify the difference between ‘regular yes/no questions’ and confirmative questions.

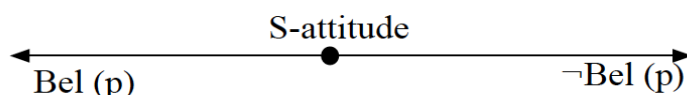
3. There are several ways to be biased

In this section, we investigate why and how the seven strategies of polar questions differ. It is a well-known fact that polar questions can be either neutral or

² The English translations are approximations of how the question might be rendered into English and hence they often include certain discourse markers. The translations are not always doing justice to the Medumba nuances in meaning. This speaks to the general problem with discourse markers whose meaning is hard to put into descriptive words, and languages differ in the kinds of discourse markers they use.

biased (see a.o. Asher & Reese 2007; Gunlogson 2001; Romero and Han 2004; Van Rooy and Šafářová 2003; Sudo 2013). With the use of a neutral polar question, the speaker (S) asks whether or not the proposition (p) expressed in the sentence radical that serves as the basis for the polar question is true or not. S does not express a bias towards either believing p (Bel (p)) or not believing p ($\neg$ Bel (p)). This is schematized in (9).

(9) **Neutral polar questions**



However, polar questions may also be biased. In particular, S may be biased towards believing p (positive bias), as in (10) or else S may be biased towards not believing p (negative bias), as in (11).

(10) **Positively biased polar questions:**



(11) **Negatively biased polar questions:**

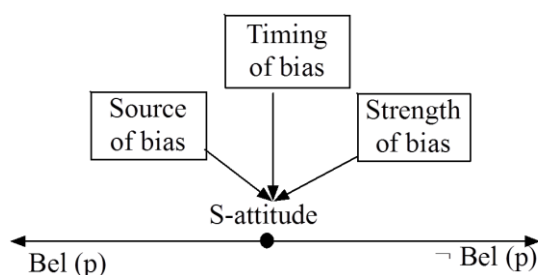


The difference in bias makes for three different types of polar questions. We will see that this is one parameter of variation that distinguishes the question strategies in Medumba (just as in other languages). However, we will see that Medumba also distinguishes between the following variables:

- a) **Source** for the bias: The bias can be based on a previous conversation with the Addressee (A) or based on some other situation.
- b) **Timing** of the bias: The bias can be based on a past or a present situation.
- c) **Strength** of the bias: The speaker bias can be either weak or strong.

The range of variation in the context of use of polar questions in Medumba is schematized in (12).

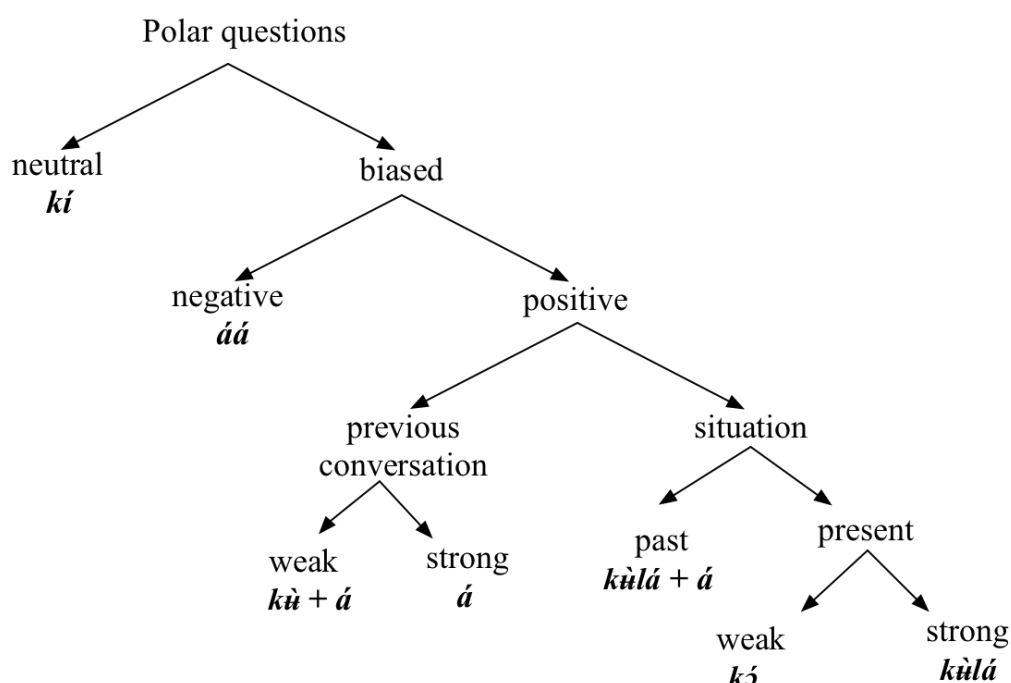
(12) **Differences in context of use**



However, not all logically possible scenarios are attested in Medumba. For example, negative biased questions are not distinguished based on the source or strength of the bias. Rather the formation of polar questions is constrained as in (13).

Specifically, there is a basic distinction between neutral and biased questions. For bias questions, the basic distinction is between negatively and positively biased questions. Next, positive biased questions divide based on the source of the bias: it can either be based on a previous conversation or based on a situation other than a previous conversation between the current interlocutors. For the former (bias based on a conversation) a distinction is made based on whether the bias is weak or strong. For the latter (bias based on a situation) a distinction is made based on the timing of the bias: is it a past or a present situation. And finally, if the bias is based on a present situation, then a distinction is made based on whether the present evidence is weak or strong.

(13) The logic of polar questions in Medumba



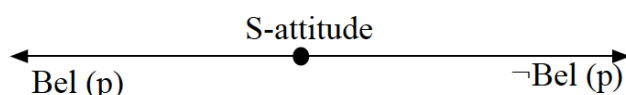
4. Exploring the seven different contexts of use

In this section, we illustrate and describe in more detail the seven different contexts of use of polar questions in Medumba.

4.1. Neutral polar question: [...]_S-kí

The “*ki*-strategy” is used for neutral polar questions in Medumba. The context for neutral questions is such that S does not display a bias towards Bel (p) or Bel (¬p) as schematized in (14).

(14) Neutral questions: no bias



Neutral questions formed with the sentence-final particle *ki* in Medumba are compatible with a context where the speaker simply doesn't know whether or not p is true. This is illustrated in (15) where the context is set up in this way. Crucially only *ki* questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question

strategies are ill-formed (marked with #, indicating that the sentence is not felicitous in the context given).

(15) **Context:** A woman is doing a survey about how many dogs there are in her neighborhood. She walks on the street, meets a man and asks:

- a. **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kí**
 2SG have dog PRT
 “Do you have a dog?”
- b. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **áá**
 c. #**kù** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 d. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 e. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 f. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú**
 g. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kó**

4.2 Negative bias: [...]_S-áá

Negatively biased polar questions are expressed using the áá -strategy in Medumba. Here, the speaker displays bias towards negative belief, $\neg \text{Bel}(p)$ as illustrated in (16).

(16) Negatively biased polar questions:



Negatively biased questions, formed with the sentence-final particle áá are compatible with a context where S leans towards not believing p, i.e., S is negatively biased. This is illustrated in (17) where the context is set up in this way. Crucially only áá questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

(17) **Context:** John is not a ‘dog person’ and has always claimed that he will never get a dog. One day, he changed his mind and decided to buy a dog. He has to inform his friend Mary. When he runs into her and tells her that he has a new dog, Mary responds:

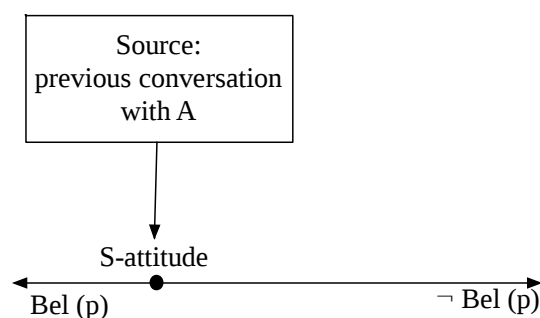
- a. **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á-á**
 2SG have dog FOC-PRT
 “No! You have a dog?”
- b. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kí**
 c. #**kù** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 d. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 e. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 f. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú**
 g. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kó**

Note that there is only one strategy to form a negatively biased question in Medumba. All other question formation strategies are positively biased. And interestingly, here Medumba differentiates among several variables depending on the source, timing, and strength of the bias.

4.3. When the positive bias is based on a previous conversation

Polar questions in Medumba cannot only encode that S is positively biased towards believing p , but they also differ depending on the source of the bias. In this section, we illustrate the strategies that are used when the source of the bias is a previous conversation with A. This is schematized in (18).

(18) Encoding source of bias



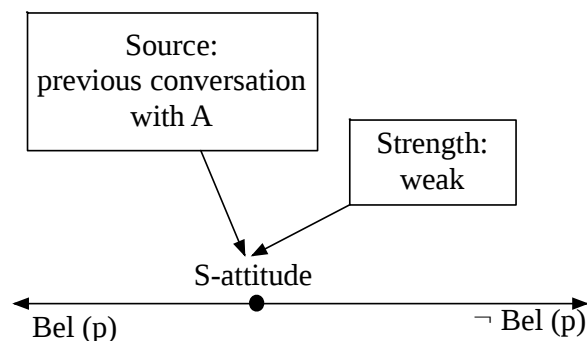
There are two strategies that are used in this context: the $kù [...]_{S-á}$ strategy and the $[...]_{S-á}$ strategy. These two strategies differ depending on the strength of the bias³. We discuss each of these strategies in turn.

4.3.1 Weak positive bias: $kù [...]_{S-á}$

The $kù [...]_{S-á}$ strategy is used to express a weak positive bias based on a previous conversation. This is schematized in (19).

(19) Weakly bias based on previous conversation

³ An anonymous reviewer asked whether the notion of weak bias introduced in this question could be analyzed in terms of Romero and Han's 2004 *notion of verum focus*. That is, suppose the propositional content ('A buys a dog') was raised as an issue in a previous conversation, and now the questioner wants to inquire about the actual truth value of this proposition. There does not seem to be any bias in the sense of strong expectations either way. Rather, the weak bias is induced by the way the question is formed, namely in the affirmative, indicating that it was indeed the positive proposition, and not its negative counterpart, which was raised as an issue in prior conversation. However, it does not seem to be the case that the questioner just wants to inquire about the actual truth value of a previously raised proposition. Rather there is also a bias in the sense that there is an expectation the speaker has: if there is a weak expectation (expect $\neg p$), the $kù \dots á$ strategy is used (weak bias) and if there is a strong expectation (expect p), the $\dots á$ strategy is used (strong bias). If we reduce this to the notion of *verum focus*, then one wonders why two strategies are being used in Medumba.



The *kù* [...]_{S-á} strategy is compatible with a context where S tentatively leans towards believing *p*, however, the bias is not very strong. Specifically, S's bias is based on a previous conversation s/he had with A. This is illustrated in (20) where the context is set up in this way. Crucially only *kù* [...]_{S-á} questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

(20) **Context:** John and Mary are good friends and John never keeps his promises. One day, John tells his friend Mary that he is going to buy a dog. Mary congratulates him. A few days later, Mary runs into John on the street. Mary isn't sure whether John bought the dog they talked about in a previous conversation. Now she just wants to check whether John bought the dog or not. So, Mary asks:

- a. *kù* *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *á*
 PRT 2SG buy dog PRT
 “So, did you buy the dog then? (as I don't trust you)”
- b. # *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *kí*
 c. # *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *áá*
 d. # *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *á*
 e. #*kùlá* *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *á*
 f. #*kùlá* *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá*
 g. # *ú* *ʒʷín* *↓mbʰá* *kó*

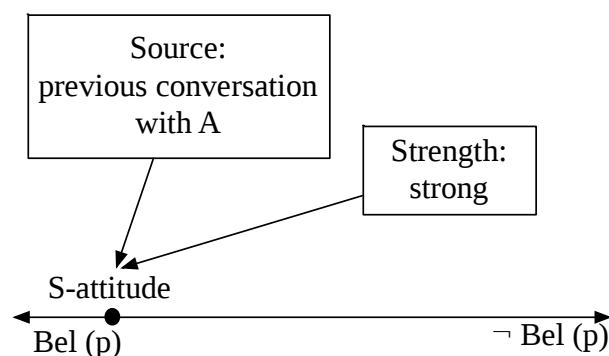
Note in passing that a similar type of marking is found with nominal phrases as well. The morpheme *mbílá* in (21) indicates that the speaker had a conversation with the addressee about the discourse referent ('the dog' in this context).

- (21) *má* *jún* *↓mbʰá* *mbílá*
 1SG saw dog DET
 “I saw the dog (we talked about)”

4.3.2. Strong positive bias: [...]_{S-á}

We now turn to the strategy used to express a strong positive bias based on a previous conversation. This type of bias is schematized in (22).

(22) Weakly bias based on previous conversation



The [...]_{S-á} strategy is compatible with a context where S strongly leans towards believing p . Like with the $kù$ [...]_{S-á} strategy, S's bias is based on a previous conversation s/he had with A, but the difference lies in the strength of the bias. A relevant context where the [...]_{S-á} strategy is used is illustrated in (23). Crucially only [...]_{S-á} questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

(23) **Context:** John and Mary are good friends and John always keeps his promises. One day, John tells his friend Mary that he is going to buy a dog. Mary congratulates him. A few days later, Mary runs into John on the street. She has a strong feeling that John bought the dog they talked about in a previous conversation and is very excited to hear about it. So she asks:

- a. $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $\acute{a}$
 2SG buy dog PRT
 “So did you buy the dog then?”
- b. # $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $kí$
 c. # $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $áá$
 d. # $kù$ $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $\acute{a}$
 e. # $kùlá$ $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $\acute{a}$
 f. # $kùlá$ $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $\acute{a}$
 g. # $\acute{u}$ $\mathfrak{Z}^{wín}$ $\downarrow m^b h^á$ $kó$

4.4. When the positive bias is based on a situation

In this subsection, we discuss the question strategy used when the positive bias is based on a situation (as opposed to a previous conversation with A). When a speaker is biased towards a certain belief there is usually a source for this bias. If the source is based on anything but a previous conversation with the addressee, we refer to this as a bias based on a situation. Note that this includes conversations with people other than the current addressee.⁴ The positive bias based on a situation corresponds to three distinct strategies, which are distinguished based on two variables: strength of bias, and timing of bias. We start by introducing the distinction based on the timing of the

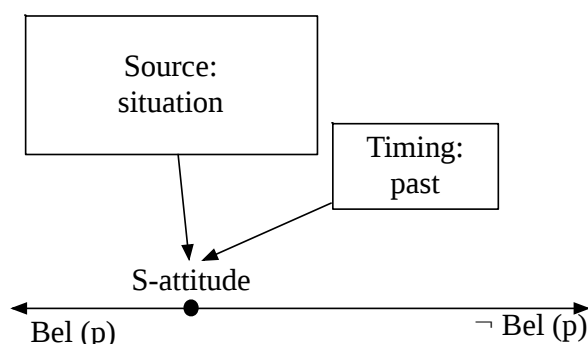
⁴ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, bias based on hearsay and bias based on non-linguistic, directly perceptible evidence seem to be treated on a par in Medumba. This could be explained by the fact that Medumba is not a typical evidential system (see section 5). Given that this is an initial investigation into discourse particles in Medumba, further research is needed to explore whether bias based on hearsay and bias based on non-linguistic, directly perceptible evidence are treated on a par in Medumba.

bias. In particular, the situation which serves as the source of the bias can have occurred prior to the utterance situation (i.e., a past situation). In addition, there may be something about the utterance situation itself, that sways the speaker towards believing *p*. Medumba question formation is sensitive to this distinction, as we now show.

4.4.1. Bias based on past situation: *kùlál*[...]_{S-á}

The *kùlál* [...]_{S-á} strategy is used to express a positive bias based on a past situation. This type of bias is schematized in (24).

(24) Weakly bias based on previous conversation



The *kùlál* [...]_{S-á} strategy is compatible with a context where *S* is biased towards believing *p*. This bias is based on a past situation, that is, *S* comes to the utterance situation already biased towards believing *p*. A relevant context where the *kùlál* [...]_{S-á} strategy is used is illustrated in (25). Crucially only *kùlál* [...]_{S-á} questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

(25) **Context:** John tells Mary that their common friend Greg has a new dog. Mary is really happy for Greg. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street (the dog is not there). So Mary asks:

- a. *kùlál* *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *á*
 PRT 2SG have dog PRT
 “So (I hear) you have a dog?”
- b. # *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *kí*
 c. # *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *áá*
 d. #*kù* *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *á*
 e. # *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *á*
 f. #*kùlál* *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú*
 g. # *ú* *ɣùú* *↓^mb^hú* *kó*

4.4.2. Bias based on present situation

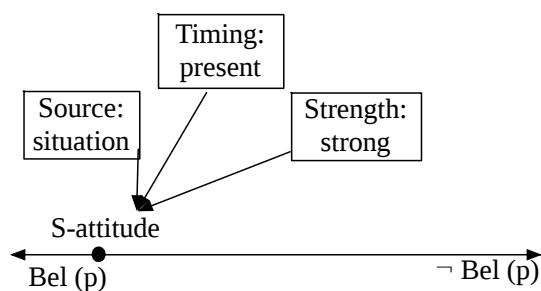
Now we turn to strategies that are used when the bias is based on a present situation, i.e., when there is something in the context of utterance that makes *S* believe that *p* might be true. In this case, there are two scenarios to consider: on the one hand the evidence that is present in the context of the utterance may be strong, leading to a

strong bias; on the other hand, the evidence may be weak leading to a weak bias. We discuss each of these scenarios in turn.

4.4.2.1. Strong evidence: *kùlálá* [...]_S

The *kùlálá*-[...] _S strategy is used to express a strong positive bias based on a present situation. In this context then, all three variables (source, timing, and strength) are relevant. This is schematized in (26).

(26) Bias based on present situation with strong evidence



The *kùlálá* [...] _S strategy is compatible with a context where S is biased towards believing p. This bias is based on evidence present in the context of utterance. That is, S may have had no bias towards believing p before the time of the utterance context. However, within this context of utterance there is evidence present that sways S towards believing p. In particular the *kùlálá* [...] _S strategy is used when this evidence is strong. A relevant context where the *kùlálá* [...] _S strategy is used is illustrated in (27). Here the evidence is strong, because A has the dog with him and hence S can assume that A does indeed have a dog. Crucially only *kùlálá* [...] _S questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

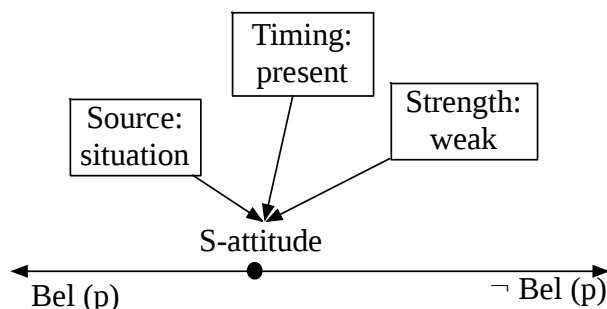
(27) **Context:** John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street. **Greg is with a dog.** So Mary asks:

- a. *kùlálá* *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú*
 PRT 2SG have dog
 ‘‘So (I hear) you have a dog?’’
- b. # *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *kí*
 c. # *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *áá*
 d. #*kù* *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *á*
 e. # *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *á*
 f. #*kùlálá* *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *á*
 g. # *ú* *ɣùú* ↓^m*b^hú* *kó*

4.4.2.2. Weak/indirect evidence: [...] _S-*kó*

In contrast to the *kùlálá* [...] _S strategy, which is based on strong (direct) evidence, the *kó*-strategy is used to express a positive bias based on a present situation when the evidence is indirect, and hence weak. Consequently, the bias is not as strong as when the evidence is more direct. This is schematized in (28).

(28) Bias based on present situation with weak (indirect) evidence



The *kó*-strategy is compatible with a context where S is biased towards believing p. Like with the *kùlá* [...] strategy, this bias is based on evidence present in the context of utterance. However, in this case the evidence is indirect and hence weaker. A relevant context where the *kó*-strategy is used is illustrated in (29). Here the evidence is weak, because A has only a leash (rather than a dog) with him. Hence S might infer that A has a dog but there may be other reasons that would lead A to carry a leash. Crucially only *kó* [...] questions are allowed in this context. As illustrated below, all other question strategies are ill-formed.

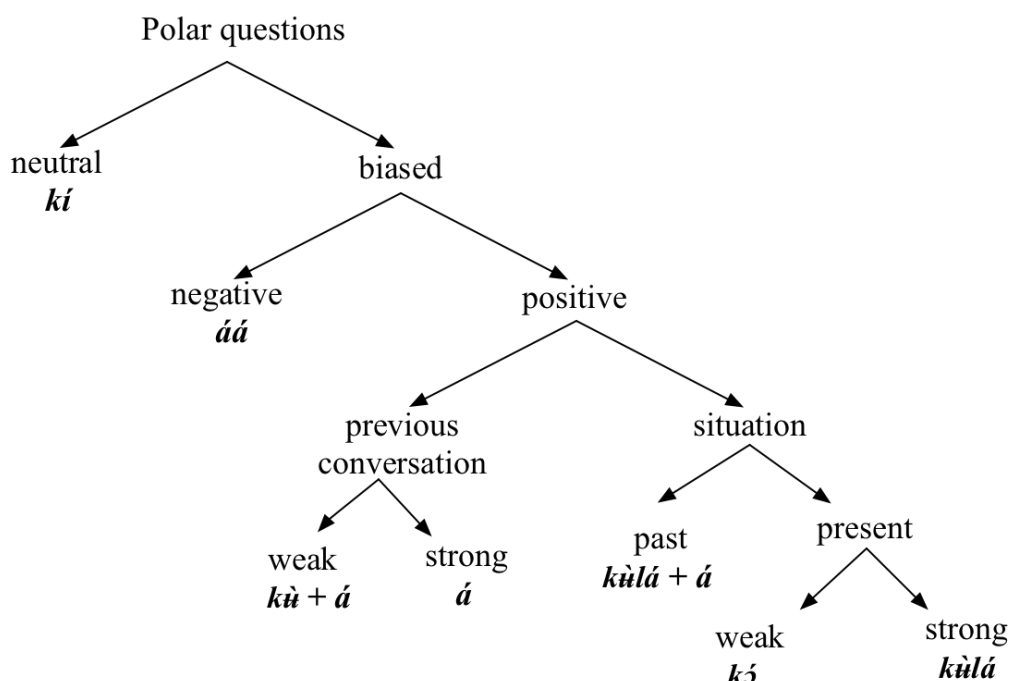
(29) **Context:** John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street (Greg is carrying a leash). So Mary asks:

- a. **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kó**
 2SG have dog PRT
 “So (I hear) you have a dog?”
- b. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **kí**
 c. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **áá**
 d. #**kù** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 e. # **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 f. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú** **á**
 g. #**kùlá** **ú** **γùú** **↓^mb^hú**

4.5. Summary

We have now seen that the seven strategies to form polar questions in Medumba differ in their context of use. In particular, a polar question can be **neutral** (the *kí*-strategy) or **biased**. The bias can either be **negative** (the *áá*-strategy) or **positive**. Positive biased questions can be based either on a **previous conversation with A or based on a situation** (including conversation with individuals other than A). With regard to the previous conversation, the speaker can have either a **weak bias** (the *kù ... á* strategy) or a **strong bias** (the *á*-strategy). As for the situation, the bias can be based either on a **past situation** (the *kùlá ... á* strategy) or **on a present situation**. With the present situation, the bias is either based on **strong evidence** (the *kùlá*-strategy) or on **weak/indirect evidence** (the *kó*-strategy). The logic of polar questions in Medumba is represented below repeated from (13) above.

(30) The logic of polar questions in Medumba:



We have now seen that the seven strategies for polar questions in Medumba all have different conditions on their context of use. In what follows, we address two questions that arise in light of these results. First, we discuss the relation between some of the constraints on polar questions in Medumba and systems of evidentiality (section 5). Second, we explore whether the variables that play a role in the formation of polar questions in Medumba can be found in other languages as well (section 6).

5. Is Medumba an evidential system?

Recall that some Medumba polar questions are sensitive to the strength of the evidence that lead to the bias. In particular, two different strategies are used depending on whether there is direct or indirect evidence for the bias. The examples we have introduced above which illustrate this contrast are repeated below for convenience. Here S has some evidence to believe that A has a dog. In (31), the evidence is direct (A has a dog with him) whereas in (32) the evidence is indirect (A is carrying a leash).

(31) Context: John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street. **Greg is with a dog.** So, Mary asks:

kùlá **ú** **yùú** [↓]**m^bh^u**

PRT 2SG have dog

“So, from what I see do you have a dog?”

(32) Context: John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street. **Greg is carrying a leash.** So Mary asks:

ú **yùú** [↓]**m^bh^u** **kó**

2SG have dog PRT
 “Do you have a dog?”

The difference between the above strategies relies on whether the speaker’s positive bias is shaped by direct evidence (hence a strong bias) or indirect evidence (hence a weak bias). This appears to be reminiscent of evidential marking. Evidential marking languages distinguish between evidentials that are used when evidence is direct or indirect. According to de Haan (2013) “Indirect evidentials are used when the speaker was not a witness to the event but learned of it after the fact. There are two broad sub-categories, inference and quotative. Inferential evidentials are used when the speaker draws an inference on the basis of available physical evidence.” An example for a marker typically classified as an indirect evidential is presented in (33). In Khalkha (Mongolian) *biz* is used when the speaker has only indirect evidence for the truth of the proposition.

(33) **ter irsen biz** Khalkha (Mongolian)
 he come infer
 “He must have come.”

Street 1963: 129

Similarly, de Haan 2013 notes that “Direct evidentials are used when the speaker has some sort of sensory evidence for the action or event he/she is describing. Normally, a direct evidential denotes visual evidence.” An example illustrating a direct evidential marker is given in (34). In Fasu (Trans-New Guinea), the circumfix *a—re* is used when direct, visual evidence is available to the speaker.

(34) **a-pe-re** Fasu (Trans-New Guinea)
 vis-come-vis
 “(I see) it coming.”

Loeweke and May 1980: 71)

The Medumba question strategies shown in (31) and (32) appear to fit this description. The *kùlá* [...]s strategy is used when the speaker has direct evidence for the bias, whereas the *kā-* [...]s strategy is used when the speaker has indirect evidence for the bias. However, the Medumba markers differ from typical evidentials in two ways. First, typical evidentials are used in assertions (see (33) and (34) above). The Medumba strategies for marking direct/indirect evidence never result in assertions but always produce questions. This is illustrated in (35).

(35) a. **kùlá** **ú** **yùú** **↓mbʰú**
 PRT 2SG have dog
 = So, from what I see you have a dog?
 # You have a dog. And I have evidence for that.

b. **ú** **yùú** **↓mbʰú** **kó**
 2SG have dog PRT
 = Do you have a dog?
 # You must have a dog.

The second difference between typical evidentials and the Medumba question markers pertains to the fact that the former – if they are well-formed in the context of questions - display a shift in perspective (also known as *interrogative flip*) depending on the clause-type they are used. If used in assertions, they mark whether the evidence is accessible to the speaker. If they are used in questions, they mark whether the

evidence is relevant for A. This perspectival shift is illustrated below based on data from Nuu-chah-nulth (36) and Cheyenne (37).

- (36) a. [[**mił-aa** **IP**] -**waʔiś** CP] Nuu-chah-nulth (Wakashan)
rain-cont-3C.quote
‘‘It’s raining, according to what I’ve been told.’’

- b. [[**mił-aa** **IP**] -**ħač** CP]
rain-cont-3C.Indir.Inter
‘Is it raining, according to what you’ve been told.’

Déchaine et al. 2014: 3 (2)

- (37) a. **É-néméne-Ø** Cheyenne
3-sing-DIR
‘‘He sang, I’m sure’’

- b. **Mo = é-néméne-Ø?**
y/n=3-sing-DIR
‘‘Given what you know, did he sing?’’

Murray 2010: 2(1)

This contrasts with the question strategies in Medumba where the strength of the bias is relative to S, even though they occur in questions.⁵

Table 1 summarizes the similarities and differences between typical evidential systems and the Medumba question formation strategies.

	Typical evidentials	Medumba Q-strategies
Encodes direct vs. indirect evidence	yes	yes
Typically associated with assertions	yes	no
Displays interrogative flip	yes	no

Table 1 Evidentials vs. Medumba question marking strategies

We conclude that the Medumba question formation strategies are not to be analyzed *en par* with typical evidential systems. This is not surprising given that grammatical categories can be constructed in different ways (Wiltschko 2014). Furthermore, the conclusion that we are not dealing with a proto-typical evidential system is consistent with the fact that the Medumba question strategies that encode the strength of the bias are part of a larger paradigm for question formation. That is, the distinction between strength of bias is only one variable in the typology of polar questions (along with timing and source of bias). This is not true for proto-typical evidential systems which display a dedicated evidential paradigm.

6. Beyond Medumba

While at first sight the plethora of polar question strategies in Medumba appeared bewildering, we have seen that the core difference is between neutral and biased questions, and among the biased questions there is a number of distinctions that can be made to establish the source, strength, and timing of the bias. As is well known, the

⁵ An anonymous reviewer asked whether this connects to the epistemic discourse particle ‘‘wohl’’ in German (Zimmermann 2008, 2011), which, in questions, is directed at A as the epistemic non-authority on the issue at hand and in questions is only licit in contexts in which S can assume uncertainty on the side of A and are not licensed in ‘expert context’ (see Gunlogson 2001). Medumba interrogative are insensitive to this distinction.

contrast between biased and unbiased questions is also found in English (6.1). We further show that in English the source, timing, and strength of the bias is not encoded in biased questions (6.2). And finally, we show that the distinctions found in Medumba polar questions are active in other languages and in other areas of the grammar (6.3-6.4).

6.1. Biased questions in English

In English, unmarked polar questions are formed via subject auxiliary inversion. That is, if the corresponding declarative contains an auxiliary (or modal), this auxiliary is realized in a position following the subject in a declarative (38a) but in the position preceding the subject in polar questions (38b). If on the other hand the corresponding declarative does not include an auxiliary (39a), then the polar question is formed with the *dummy* auxiliary *do* (39b).

- (38) a. You can buy a dog.
b. Can you buy a dog?

- (39) a. You have a dog.
b. Do you have a dog?

However, there are other ways to ask questions in English. Specifically, there is a number of sentence-final tags that serve to turn a declarative into a request for information (i.e., a question): some of these tags are derived via copying the auxiliary of the declarative (or inserting *do* if there isn't one) in combination with VP-ellipsis as in (40) (see Sailor 2014 for a recent discussion).

- (40) You have a dog, don't you ~~have a dog~~.

English also has a number of so called invariant tags, i.e., sentence-final particles that modify the illocutionary force of the utterance. For example, a declarative, which in the unmarked case is interpreted as an assertion is interpreted as a request for confirmation in the presence of such a particle. Some examples are given in (41).

- (41) You have a dog, {eh, right, huh, yeah, ...}

Finally, in English the intonational contour of the sentence can serve to turn a declarative into a question. This is the case with so-called rising declaratives (Gunlogson 2001). That is, a declarative clause is interpreted as an assertion if it is realized with falling intonation (indicated by \ in (42a)), whereas it is interpreted as a question if it is realized with a rising intonation (indicated by / in (42b)).

- (42) a. You have a dog \ → assertion
b. You have a dog / → question

These question strategies in English differ in terms of their context of use.⁶ While unmarked questions formed by subject-auxiliary inversion are used when there is no bias towards or against Bel(p), this is not so for the other strategies. Consider the neutral context in (43). In this context, S really does not know whether A has a dog, i.e., there is no bias. In this context, the subject-auxiliary inversion strategy is well-formed. As for rising declaratives, they exhibit some dialectal differences as some

⁶ There is another strategy to derive biased questions in English, which is to reverse the polarity of the underlying radical, as in i) which is well-formed if S is positively biased towards believing that A has a dog (cf. Romero & Han 2004 a.o.).

i) Don't you have a dog?

speakers find them well-formed in this context as well (43d). But the tag questions are not acceptable.

(43) **Neutral Context:** A woman is doing a survey about how many dogs there are in her neighborhood. She walks on the street, meets a man and asks:

- a. Do you have a dog?
- b. #You have a dog, **don't** you?
- c. #You have a dog, **eh**?
- d. %You have a dog?

In contrast, if the speaker is negatively biased against believing p (the context where Medumba uses the [...]s-áá strategy) then the subject-auxiliary strategy is dispreferred.⁷ Similarly, tag questions are not compatible with a negative bias. Rising declaratives on the other hand are compatible with a negative bias.

(44) **Negatively biased Context:** John is not a 'dog person' and has always claimed that he will never get a dog. One day, he changed his mind and decided to buy a dog. Then he has to inform his friend Mary. He runs into her and tells her that he has a new dog. Mary responds:

- a. #Do you have a dog?
- b. #You have a dog, don't you?
- c. #You have a dog, eh?
- d. You have a dog/?

Like in Medumba, the majority of question strategies in English derive positively biased questions. While the unmarked polar question is not really infelicitous, its use suggests that the speaker is concealing her bias. Tag questions on the other hand are used to mark the bias, hence they are often described as deriving a request for confirmation. Requesting confirmation is only possible if there is something to confirm, namely the positive bias.

(45) **Context:** John has some reason to believe that Mary has a dog but he is not completely sure. Next time John runs into Mary he asks her:

- a. ?Do you have a dog?
- b. You have a dog, don't you?
- c. You have a dog, eh?
- d. You have a dog/?

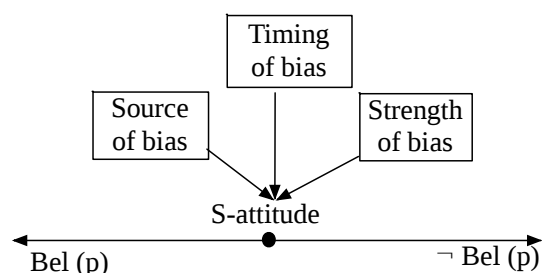
A note is in order about the use of the rising declarative in (45). In particular, we have seen that rising declaratives are compatible with a negative bias (44d). So how is it possible that the same strategy is compatible with a positive and a negative bias? It has to do with the fact that there are two different biases involved: one is based on what the speaker believes before the context of utterance, and the other one is based on evidence available at the context of utterance. In particular, Sudo 2013 argues that rising declaratives are used if there is a contradiction between what the speaker believes (what Sudo refers to as the *epistemic bias*) and the evidence available at the context of utterance (what Sudo refers to as the *evidential bias*).

⁷ With the appropriate intonation, these questions are more acceptable even when S is negatively biased.

We have now seen that just as Medumba, English also has a number of different ways to ask biased questions. While the unmarked question formation strategy (subject-auxiliary inversion) does not come with a bias, there are other strategies available that do: tags and rising declaratives. This raises the question as to whether the different strategies for biased questions are sensitive to the same distinctions as those in Medumba.

Recall from section 4, that Medumba positively biased questions differ according to the source, timing and strength of the bias as illustrated in (46), repeated from above.

(46) Differences in context of use



We have seen already, that rising declaratives are used if there is a contradiction between the previous belief of the speaker and the current evidence available. In our terms this means that rising declaratives are sensitive to the timing of the bias.

Turning now to the kind of contexts that differentiate between question strategies in Medumba, we now show that English biased questions are not sensitive to either of the variables. Consider first the context where there is a weak positive bias based on a previous conversation with the addressee, as in (47). In this context, unmarked questions are possible, though they might be marked with a sentence-initial particle such as *so* (indicating that *S* has some particular reason to ask the question). However, none of the sentence-final tags, nor the rising declarative are felicitous in this context.

(47) Weak Positive bias based on previous conversation. Context: John does not always keep his promises. One day, he tells his friend Mary that he is going to buy a dog. Mary congratulates him. A few days later, Mary runs into John on the street. Mary isn't sure whether John bought the dog they talked about in a previous conversation. Now she just wants to check whether John bought the dog or not. Mary asks:

- a. (So) Did you buy a dog?
- b. #You bought a dog, didn't you?
- c. #You bought a dog, eh?
- d. #You bought a dog/?

Next consider the context in (48) where there is a strong positive bias based on a previous conversation with *A*. Like before the unmarked question is felicitous (especially if marked with *so/hey*). In this context, the tag questions are also felicitous but the rising declarative is not.

(48) Strong positive bias based on previous conversation Context: Bob always does what he says he will do. One day, he tells his friend Mary that he is going to buy a dog. Mary congratulates him. A few days later, Mary runs into Bob on the street. She is very excited to hear about whether Bob bought the dog or not. So, she says:

- a. Hey Bob, did you buy a dog?

- b. You bought a dog, **didn't** you?
- c. You bought a dog, **eh**?
- d. #You bought a dog?

We now turn to a context where the bias is based on a past situation, which includes conversations with individuals other than the utterance participant. As indicated in (49a), again the unmarked question is well-formed, though with the use of *so* S indicates that he has a reason for his question (though unlike in the cases above in this case A does not necessarily know what this reason might be). If the question is not so marked, A will not know that S has some reason to believe that what s/he is asking is true. So, in some contexts this may be perceived as deceptive. Likewise the reverse polarity tag as well as the use of *eh* is also well-formed in this context: both strategies explicitly mark that S has some reason to believe that p might be true (49b,c). The rising declarative is felicitous as well (49d).

(49) **Positive bias based on past situation.** Context: John tells Mary that their common friend Greg has a new dog. Mary is really happy for Greg. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street (the dog is not there). So, Mary asks:

- a. (So) do you have a new dog?
- b. You have a new dog, **don't** you?
- c. You have a new dog, **eh**?
- d. You have a new dog/?

Finally, we turn to contexts in which the bias is based on a present situation. In this context, the unmarked question and the reverse polarity tag are infelicitous whereas the *eh*-tag (50c) and the rising declarative (50d) are well-formed.

(50) **Positive bias based on present situation** (direct evidence): John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street. Greg is with a dog. So, Mary asks.

- a. #Do you have a dog?
- b. #You have a dog, **don't** you?
- c. You have a dog, **eh**?
- d. You have a dog?

In a context where there is indirect evidence (51) all the question strategies except the reverse polarity tag (51b) are well-formed.

(51) **Positive bias based on present situation** (indirect evidence): John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street (Greg is carrying a leash). So Mary asks:

- a. Do you have a dog?
- b. #/?You have a dog, **don't** you?
- c. You have a dog, **eh**?
- d. You have a dog?

	Unmarked	Ellipsis tag	Eh-tag	Rising declarative
No bias	✓	#	#	%
Negative bias	#	#	#	✓
Weak bias based on previous conversation	✓	#	#	#
Strong bias based on previous conversation	✓	✓	✓	#
Bias based on past situation (I heard context)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bias based on present situation: strong evidence	#	#	✓	✓
Bias based on present situation: indirect evidence	✓	#	✓	✓

Table 2 Polar question strategies in English

To sum, the above table shows that neutral polar questions in English, are formed with the unmarked question strategy (there are some dialectal differences with regard to the felicity of rising declaratives). In contrast, for negatively biased questions, only the rising declarative is felicitous. With weak positive bias based on a previous conversation, only the unmarked question formation strategy is felicitous whereas with strong positive bias based on a previous conversation, only the rising declarative is infelicitous. For bias based on a past situation, all the question strategies are well-formed. As for the bias based on a present situation, the *eh*-tag and the rising declaratives are felicitous if there is strong evidence, however only the reverse polarity tag is infelicitous if there is indirect evidence. This pattern indicates that, unlike in Medumba, in English there is no one-to-one correspondence between the form of the question and its context of use.

6.2. Past vs. present situation

We have now seen that the strategies to form biased questions in English are not sensitive to the same type of variables as those in Medumba. In particular, there is no contrast between a bias that is based on previous knowledge and a bias based on evidence present at the utterance situation. At the same time, we have seen that rising declaratives in English and the *áá*-strategy in Medumba are used if there is a mismatch between these types of evidence.

In this section we show that the contrast between bias based on previous evidence and bias based on current belief is not unique to Medumba. The same contrast is observed in Austrian German. In (52) we have a context where Mary has no previous reason to believe that A has a dog. This is established via the fact that Mary indicates to John that she has no idea whether Greg has a dog. At the time of utterance however, Mary encounters some evidence that Greg might indeed have a dog. Hence this is a context where there is a bias based on the present situation. In this context, speakers of Austrian German have a dedicated particle at their disposal: *leicht*. Note that this is the context where English speakers might use a rising declarative but they may also use *eh*. Hence in this respect the English tag *eh* differs from its German equivalent *goi* in that the latter is not compatible with a context where the speaker doesn't already believe *p* at the context of utterance.

(52) Context: John asks Mary whether their common friend Greg has a dog. Mary says she has no idea. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street. **Greg is with a dog.** So, Mary asks:

a. **Du** **host** **leicht** **an** **neichn** **Hund?**

You have PRT a new dog
“You have a new dog?”

b. **#Du** **host** **an** **neichn** **Hund** **goi?**

You have a new dog PRT
“You have a new dog, eh?”

Next consider a context where S believes p before the context of utterance. Here, *leicht* is infelicitous but instead the sentence-final tag *goi* is used, as shown in (53).

(53) Context: John tells Mary that their common friend Greg has a new dog. Mary is really happy for Greg. The next day Mary runs into Greg on the street (the dog is not there). So, Mary asks:

a. **#Du** **host** **leicht** **an** **neichn** **Hund?**

You have PRT a new dog
“You have a new dog?”

b. **Du** **host** **an** **neichn** **Hund** **goi?**

You have a new dog PRT
“You have a new dog, eh?”

The contrast between (52) and (53) establishes that German *leicht* and *goi* are in complementary distribution: *leicht* is used for beliefs that come about at the context of utterance while *goi* is only felicitous if the speaker already believes p before the context of utterance. Hence like in Medumba, German tags are sensitive to the timing of the bias. This contrasts with English where the timing of the bias is irrelevant for the use of the sentence final tag *eh*.

6.3. Knowledge based on previous conversation vs. knowledge based on situation

Recall that question strategies in Medumba are sensitive to whether the bias is based on a previous situation (including a conversation with someone other than A) or whether the bias is based on a previous conversation with A. In this subsection, we show that this difference has been previously observed in German, albeit in other parts of the grammar. Specifically, the difference is reminiscent of a distinction found in German determiners. German distinguishes between so-called strong and weak determiners (see Schwarz 2009 for detailed discussion). Strong determiners denote unique referents which have been established as unique in the discourse. In the present context, this amounts to saying that uniqueness is based on a conversation with A. An example is given in (54). Crucially, the strong determiner has to be used in this context because S is introducing the discourse referent in a previous sentence. In this context, the weak determiner (incorporated into the preposition *im* is infelicitous.

(54) **Bei der Gutshausbesichtigung hat mich**
During the mansion tour has me

eines der Zimmer besonders beeindruckt.
One the rooms especially impressed.

“During the mansion tour, I was especially impressed by one of the rooms”

Angeblich hat Goethe im Jahr 1810 eine Nacht
Supposedly has Goethe in-the_w year 1810 a night

#im / in dem Zimmer verbracht.”

in-the_w / in the_s room spent

‘Supposedly, Goethe has spent a night in that room in 1810.’

Based on Schwarz 2009: 29 (26)

In contrast, if the uniqueness of the discourse referent is established via the situation rather than the ongoing discourse, then the weak determiner has to be used whereas the strong determiner is infelicitous. This is illustrated in (55).

(55) Context: John is looking for a book in his house. There is only one glass-cabinet in the house. His wife utters:

Das Buch, das du suchst, steht im / #in dem Glasschrank
the book that you look for stands in the_w in the_s glass-cabinet

‘The book that you are looking for is in the glass-cabinet.’

Based on Schwarz 2009: 28 (40)

The contrast between weak and strong determiners in German is based on a contrast that plays a crucial role in Medumba question formation, namely whether the uniqueness of a referent is based on the discourse (i.e., anaphoric) or based on the current situation. The parallel between discourse referents and propositions is not surprising as both are included in the common ground.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Summary

The goal of this paper was to describe the form and function of seven strategies to ask a polar question in Medumba. Specifically, we have seen that polar questions are all formed with either sentence-initial or sentence-final particles or a combination of such particles. The strategies differ based on whether the question is neutral or biased. If biased, questions differ as to whether the bias is negative or positive. And finally, if the bias is positive then there are differences between a bias that is based on a previous conversation (in which case the bias can be weak or strong) or whether the bias is based on a situation. In the latter case this situation can either be past or present, and if present the evidence available can either be indirect (weak) or direct (strong). We have further seen that the variables that distinguish the seven strategies for polar questions in Medumba are found elsewhere. For example, English has several strategies to express negative or positive bias but English does not distinguish between source, timing, and strength of bias in the same way as Medumba does. We have also seen that these variables are found in other languages and in other domains of the grammar: specifically, in German determiners differ depending on whether the discourse referent has been introduced in the ongoing discourse or whether is situationally unique.

We have also seen that the difference between strong direct and weak indirect evidence for the bias does not have the typical profile of evidentials in that the evidence for the bias is always relative to S, whereas in evidential systems, evidential markers undergo the interrogative flip.

7.2 Open issues

While the present paper is a first attempt to describe the many strategies to derive polar questions, there have been many questions left open. In particular, what needs to be established is whether it is possible to develop a compositional analysis of polar questions. Specifically, several of the particles used in the question strategies we have seen are used in several strategies, though in different combinations. Furthermore, it needs to be determined whether the sentence-initial vs. sentence-final position is significant, and how it can be derived. In that vein, an anonymous reviewer asked whether the sentence final particle [a] is the same as the high tone focus particle á. The answer is no as the sentence final [a] particle used in these questions is the Q-particle and is toneless. It occurs in most interrogative contexts (including wh-questions – Keupdjio 2016) in Medumba and carries the tone of the preceding syllable as illustrated below.

- (56) a. **kù** **ú** **fə** **ʒʷín** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **á**
 PRT 2SG Aux. buy dog PRT.H
 Lit: So, did you buy the dog we talked about?

- b. **kù** **ú** **fə** **ʒʷín** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **ʔkòk** **à**
 PRT 2SG Aux. buy dog yesterday PRT.L
 Lit: So, did you buy the dog we talked about yesterday?

- (57) a. **ú** **fə** **ʒʷín** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **á**
 2SG Aux. buy dog PRT.L
 Lit: So, did you buy the dog we talked about?

- b. **ú** **fə** **ʒʷín** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **ʔkòk** **à**
 2SG Aux. buy dog yesterday PRT.L
 Lit: So, did you buy the dog we talked about yesterday?"

Unlike the Q-particle, the focus particle [á] carries an invariant High tone regardless of whether it is preceded by a high or low tone syllable as given below.

- (58) a. **kù** **ú** **fə** **fá** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **á** **Nùgà** **à**
 PRT 2SG Aux. give dog FOC Nuga PRT
 Lit: So, did you give the dog we talked about to Nuga_{FOC}?

- b. **kù** **ú** **fə** **fá** **ɔ̃mbʰú** **ʔkòk** **á** **Nùgà** **à**
 PRT 2SG Aux. give dog yesterday FOC Nuga PRT
 Lit: So, did you give the dog we talked about yesterday to Nuga_{FOC}?

Likewise, the reviewer asks whether the combination of *kù* and *á* in the weak bias contexts simply expresses the combination of negation and verum focus. Although the low tone *kù* is used for constituent negation in Medumba and is always left

adjoined to the constituent it negates in these interrogative contexts, we don't think that *kù* is expressing negation. In these questions, it acts as a modifier of illocutionary force by weakening the bias (see Keupdjio and Wiltschko in progress for further discussion). Notice that the particle *kù* can co-occur either with the sentential negation *kùù?* or the constituent negation *kù* as illustrated below.

- (59) a. *kù* *ú* *kùù?* *fə* *fá* *ɿmbʰú* *Nùgà* *à*
 PRT 2SG NEG Aux. give dog Nuga PRT
 Lit: So, it is not the case you gave the dog we talked about to Nuga, right?

- b. *kù* *ú* *fə* *kù* *fá* *ɿmbʰú* *Nùgà* *à*
 PRT 2SG Aux. NEG give dog Nuga PRT
 Lit: So, you did not give the dog we talked about to Nuga, right?

Most importantly, *kù* interrogatives are not interpreted as negative as shown below.

- (60) *kù* *ú* *fə* *ʒwín* *ɿmbʰú* *á*
 PRT 2SG Aux. buy dog PRT
 = So, did you buy the dog we talked about?
 # Didn't you buy the dog?

Crucially, double negation is illicit in Medumba as illustrated by the ungrammatical example below.

- (61) **ú* *kùù?* *fə* *kù* *fá* *ɿmbʰú* *Nùgà*
 2SG NEG Aux. NEG give dog Nuga

Given that double negation is not allowed in Medumba and the particle *kù* can co-occur with other negative particles, it is difficult to motivate an analysis according to which *kù* is the negative marker even in polar questions.

Note in passing that when *kù* is used as a negative marker, the construction it is used in is also negative as shown in (62).

- (62) a. *kù-zó-tá*
 NEG-know-father
 Lit: Does not know the father
 'A person whose father died at his/her birth'
- b. *kù-zó-twíín-vúdl-í*
 NEG-know-lowerpart-body-3sg
 Lit: Does not know lower part of his/her body
 'idiot/foolish person'
- c. *má-kù-mén*
 mother-Neg-child
 Lit: mother without child
 'childless'

In sum, there are many questions that need to be addressed in light of the data we have discussed here. We hope that the present paper will inspire future research on sentence peripheral particles in Bantu languages as they seem to provide us with a wealth of insight into the form and function of biased questions.

References

- Asher, N., & Reese, B. 2007. Intonation and discourse: biased questions. *Interdisciplinary studies on information structure*, 8, 1-38.
- Déchine, Rose-Marie, Claire Cook, Jeff Muehlbauer, and Ryan Waldie (2014). (De-)constructing evidentiality. Ms. UBC.
- de Haan, Ferdinand. 2013. Semantic Distinctions of Evidentiality. In: Dryer, Matthew S. & Haspelmath, Martin (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. (Available online at <http://wals.info/chapter/77>, Accessed on 2016-08-10.
- Gunlogson 2001. True to Form: Rising and Falling Declaratives as Questions in English. Ph.D. thesis, UCLA
- Keupdjio, Hermann. 2011. Les mouvements Qu et l'architecture propositionnelle en Medumba. MA thesis. University of Yaounde 1-Cameroon.
- Keupdjio, Hermann (2016). Wh-movement, A-bar agreement and Resumption in Bamileke Medumba. In *proceedings of the Qualifying Papers Mini-conferences 2013–2014*, Andrei Angheliescu, Joel Dunham, and Natalie Weber (eds.), University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics 42.
- Keupdjio, H. and Wiltschko (in prep). Towards the syntax of discourse particles in Medumba (ms.). University of British Columbia.
- Loeweke, Eunice and May, Jean. 1980. General Grammar of Fasu (Namo Me): Lake Kutubu, Southern Highlands Province. In Hutchisson, Don (ed.), 5-106. Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Murray, S. E. 2010. Evidentials and Questions in Cheyenne. In Suzi Lima (ed.), *Proceedings of SULA 5: Semantics of Under-Represented Languages in the Americas*, pp. 139–155.
- Romero, M. and Han, C. 2004. On negative Yes/No questions. In *Linguistics and philosophy* Vol 27, Issue 5, pp 609-658.
- Schwarz, F. 2009. Two types of Definites in Natural Language. PhD dissertation, UMass-Amherst.
- Sailor, Craig. 2014. The Variables of VP Ellipsis. Doctoral dissertation, UCLA.
- Street, John C. 1963. Khalkha Structure. Indiana University Publications, Uralic and Altaic Series, 24. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sudo, Y. 2013. Biased polar questions in English and Japanese. *Beyond expressives: Explorations in use-conditional meaning*, 275-295.
- Tamanji, P. N. (2009). *A Descriptive Grammar of Bafut*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Van Rooy, R., & Šafářová, M. (2003). On polar questions. In *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* (pp. 292-309).
- Wiltschko, M. (in press) Ergative constellations in the structure of speech acts. (to appear). Coon, Jessica; Diane Massam & Lisa Travis (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of ergativity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zimmermann, M. 2008. Discourse particles in the left periphery. In: B. Shaer et al. (eds.). *Dislocated Elements in Discourse: Syntactic, Semantic, and Pragmatic Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 200–231.
- Zimmermann, M. 2011. Discourse particles. In P. Portner, C. Maienborn, and K. von Stechow (eds.), *Handbook of Semantics/Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2012– 2038.