Syntactic Dependencies

On the Embedding of Interrogatives in German and English

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1. Introduction

(1) a) He explained to us [CP[+*wh*] **how** life is on Mars].

b) *He explained to us [CP[+*Q*] **if** there is life on Mars].

(2) ASK [V]
· · ·
c-selection: {CP, DP}
s-selection: {*Q*}
· · ·

(3) WONDER [V]
· · ·
c-selection: {CP, PP}
s-selection: {*Q*}
· · ·

(4) a) I wonder [CP[+*Q*] **if** there is life on Mars].

b) Ich frage mich, [CP[+*Q*] **ob** es Leben auf dem Mars gibt].
I – ask – myself – if – it – life – on – the – Mars – gives

(5) I wonder [CP+*Q*+wh how life is on Mars].

(6) a) He asked [DP the time/ my name].

b) We wondered [PP about the time/ about life on Mars].

Selection of a complement clause should be independent of semantic properties of the context, i.e. of the harmony with other constituents of the matrix clause.[1] Fortmann (1994, 3)

(7) a) Der Delinquent hat gestanden, dass/ ***ob** jemand ihm einen Tip gegeben hat.
*the – offender – has – admitted – that/ *if – someone – him – a – hint – given – has*

b) Der Delinquent **wird** gestehen, ?**dass**/ **ob** jemand ihm einen Tip gegeben hat.
the – offender – will – admit – if – someone – him – a – hint – given – has

(8) a) Julie admitted that/ ***if** the bartender was happy.   (Adger & Quer 2001, 110)
b) **Did** Julie admit that/ **if** the bartender was happy?
c) Julie did**n't** admit that/ **if** the bartender was happy.

(9) a) **Noone** mentioned **any**thing/ **if** the bartender was happy.   (neg. quantifiers)

b) **Only** Julie mentioned **any**thing/ **if** the bartender was happy.   ('only'-focus)

c) **If** Julie mentioned **any**thing/ **if** the bartender was happy,we could order another drink.
(conditional)

d) We **refused** to mention **any**thing/ **if** they had the keys.   (adversative predicates)

e) **Without** mentioning **any**thing/ **if** they had the keys, there's nothing we can do.
('without' clauses)

(10) a) ?[2]Julie saw **if**/whether the bartender was happy with this solution.

b) Julie did not see **if**/whether the bartender was happy with this solution.

c) Julie saw **who** was happy with this solution.

(11) a) ?Julia erkannte, **ob** der Barmann mit der Lösung zufrieden war.
Julie – saw – if – the – bartender – with – this – solution – happy – was

b) Julia erkannte nicht, **ob** der Barmann mit der Lösung zufrieden war.
Julie – saw – not – if – the – bartender – with – this – solution – happy – was

c) Julia erkannte, **wer** mit der Lösung zufrieden war.
Julie – saw – who – with – this – solution – happy – was

(12) a) *His own family **believed who** he was.
b) His own family did **not believe who** he was.
c) His own family did **not believe** *if/ **that** it was him.

(13) a) *Seine eigene Familie **glaubte wer** er war.
his – own – family – believed – who – he – was

b) Seine eigene Familie **glaubte nicht wer** er war.
his – own – family – believed – not – who – he – was

c) Seine eigene Familie **glaubte nicht** *ob/ **dass** er es war.
his – own – family – believed – not – if – he – it – was

2. Leading the Argument

2.1 UEQs, Free Choice Reading, and Context Dependency

(14) a) **Nobody** admitted, **if** there was life on Mars.

b) ? NASA admitted, **if** there was life on Mars.

(15) a) Er hat **nicht** verstanden, **ob** sie ihn wirklich eingeladen hatte.
he – has – not – comprehended – if – she – him – really – invited – had

'He did not comprehend if she really invited him'.

b) **Hat** er verstanden, **ob** sie ihn wirklich eingeladen hatte?
has – he – comprehended – if – she – him – really – invited – had

(16) a) *Er hat verstanden, **ob** sie ihn wirklich eingeladen hatte.
he – has – comprehended – if – she – him – really – invited – had

b) *He comprehended **if** she really invited him.

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[2] In some contexts, a *Q*-feature in the complement may be pragmatically licensed. We will argue that these sentences are grammatically marked exactly because the feature is not formally licensed through a well formed dependency.

(17) a) Er hat sich **nicht** erinnert, **ob** er schon einmal Dostojewsky gelesen hatte.
he – has – himself – not – reminded – if – he – already – once – D. – read – had

'He did not recollect if he had read Dostojewsky.'

b) **Hat** er sich erinnert, **ob** er schon einmal Dostojewsky gelesen hatte?
has – he – himself – reminded – if – he – already – once – D. – read – had

(18) a) *Er hat sich erinnert, **ob** er schon mal Dostojewsky gelesen hatte.
he – has – himself – reminded – if – he – alr. – once – D. – read – had

b) *He recollected **if** he had read Dostojewsky.

(19) a) The discovery was made in 1998. ↮ The discovery is unknown.

b) He comprehended the invitation. ↮ He did not know if she had invited him.

c) He recollected reading Dostojewsky. ↮ He did not know if he had read D.

2.2 Factivity and Nonveridicality

(20) a) He *saw/ mentioned/ comprehended/ recollected/ regretted/ took into account/ deplored/* that the bartender was unhappy.

$(\rightarrow \llbracket$ the bartender was unhappy$\rrbracket = 1)$

b) He *claimed/ uttered/ rejected/ assumed* that the bartender was unhappy.

$(\nrightarrow \llbracket$ the bartender was unhappy$\rrbracket = 1)$

(21) a) He did not *achieve/ bring about/ make an effort/ . . .* that the bartender was unhappy.

$(\rightarrow \llbracket$ the bartender was unhappy$\rrbracket = 0)$

b) He did not *regret/ take into account/ deplore* that the bartender was unhappy.

$(\rightarrow \llbracket$ the bartender was unhappy$\rrbracket = 1)$

(22) a) He noticed **that** everyone had arrived. **(factive)**

b) He did **not** notice **if** everyone had arrived. **(–TrEv)**

c) **Did** he notice **if** everyone had arrived? **(–TrEv)**

(23) Has everyone arrived? **(interrogative, –TrEv)**

(24) a) Er hat gemerkt, **dass** schon alle da waren. **(factive)**
he – has – noticed – that – already – everybody – there – was

b) Er hat **nicht** gemerkt, **ob** schon alle da waren. **(–TrEv)**
he – has – NEG – noticed – if – already – everybody – there – was

c) **Hat** er gemerkt, **ob** alle da waren? **(–TrEv)**
has – he – noticed – that – already – everybody – there – was

(25) ***Predicates licensing UEQs***

English: *show, reveal, unveil, report, detect, find out, guess, say, realise, keep in mind, memorise, be clear, be known, notice, comprehend, know, recollect, see, mention, . . . admit(?);*

German (same order): *zeigen, verraten, aufdecken, berichten, ermitteln, heraus-finden, erraten, sagen, sehen, im Gedächtnis behalten, sich merken, klar sein, bekannt sein, merken, verstehen, wissen, erinnern, erkennen, erwähnen, . . . zugeben/ gestehen(?);*

(26) a) Er hat es zustandegebracht, **dass** alle zufrieden waren. ***(implicative)***
he – has – it – achieved – that – everyone – satisfied – was

b) Er hat es nicht zustandegebracht, **dass**/ ***ob** alle zufrieden waren. **(counterfactive)**
he – has – it – NEG – achieved – that / if – everyone – satisfied – was

(27) a) Er hat es sehr bedauert, **dass** der Barmann unzufrieden war. ***(factive)***
he – has – it – very – regretted – that – the – bartender – unhappy – was

b) Er hat es **nicht** bedauert, **dass**/ ***ob** der Barmann unzufrieden war. ***(factive)***
he – has – it – not – regretted – that/if – the – bartender – unhappy – was

(28) a) A propositional operator Op in a given context c is **non**veridical iff it holds
that: $\llbracket Op \, p \rrbracket_c = 1 \nrightarrow \llbracket p \rrbracket = 1$

b) A nonveridical operator is ***anti**veridical*, iff it holds that:
$\llbracket Op \, p \rrbracket_c = 1 \rightarrow \llbracket p \rrbracket = 0$ Giannakidou (1998, 106ff)

(29) Linguistics is *(**not**) any hobby.

(30) a) Linguistics is not any hobby.
b) *Any hobby is not like linguistics.

(31) a) Linguistics is fun:
$p = \llbracket fun \, (Lx) \rrbracket = 1$

b) Linguistics is **not** fun:
$p = \llbracket fun \, (Lx) \rrbracket = 0$ (but derived from the SD denoting $\llbracket \neg fun \, (Lx) \rrbracket$)

(32) Is there any hobby like linguistics? $\nrightarrow$ There are (no) hobbies like linguistics.

- *Q*: $\boxed{\lambda p \lambda q \, [q = p \vee q = \neg p \,]}$ (Hamblin 1973)[3]

(33) a) Most people doubt **if** there is life on Mars.

b) NASA forgot **if** there was life on Mars.

c) To many people it is equal **if** there is life on Mars or not.

d) In fact, it matters **if** there is life on Mars or not.

2.3 Other Nonveridical Markers

(34) a) We **will** see **if**/whether this is right.

b) I **wished I knew if**/whether the kids sometimes play truant.

c) It **seems** he knows **if**/whether the Socks won the match (or not).

d) He **must** reveal **if**/whether he has played all trumps out.

e) Professors notice **if**/whether the students tell the truth.

(35) a) Es wird sich zeigen, **ob** das stimmt.
it – will – itself – reveal – if – this – true-is

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3 This formula was refined by Karttunen (1977) and Groenendijk&Stokhof (1984). We do not want to discuss the advantages of the different accounts here; it is a matter of fact that a function like this must operate in the C-system of the clauses discussed here.

b) Ich wünschte ich wüsste, **ob** die Kinder manchmal die Schule schwänzen.
I – wish-IRR *– I – know*-IRR *– if – the – kids – sometimes – the – school – truant*

c) Es scheint als wisse er, **ob** Bayern das Spiel gewonnen hat (oder nicht).
it – seems – as – know-SBJ *– he – if – B. – the – match – won – has – or – not*

d) Er muss zeigen, **ob** er alle Trümpfe ausgespielt hat.
he – must – reveal – if – he – all – trumps – played-out – has

e) Professoren merken, **ob** die Studenten die Wahrheit sagen.
professors – notice – if – the – students – the – truth – say

(36) They will go to school. $\nrightarrow \exists t[t° < t \& go(t,they\text{-}to\text{-}school)]$ [4]

(37) ?Of course I saw if this was right – in fact, it was not!

3. Modal Features, Well Formed Dependencies, and Argument selection

3.1 Selection or Licensing? UEQs and German Complex Predicates

(38) a) Es hatte sich herauszustellen versprochen, ***dass**/ **ob** etwas an der Sache dran war.
it – had – promised – to – turn-out – that/ if – something – on – the – thing – on-there – was

"It had promised to turn out **if** the deal had substance".

b) Es stellte sich heraus, **dass**/ ***ob** etwas an der Sache dran war.

3.2 Coherently Negated Predicates

(39) Es ist wirklich [NICHT sicher], **ob**/*dass das stimmt.
it – is – really – not – certain – if – this – is-true

   $[_{V'} [NEG \; V] [_{CP} \; ob \ldots]]$

(40) Es ist wirklich unsicher, **ob**/*dass das stimmt.
it – is – really – uncertain – if – this – is-true

$[_{V'} un\text{-}V [_{CP} \; ob \ldots]]$

(41) Es ist nicht [schon seit jeher] sicher, **dass**/ *ob das stimmt.
it – is – not – already – since – ever – certain – that – this – is-true

NEG[ADV $[_{V'} V [_{CP} \; dass \ldots]]$

(42) a) He did not show **that** this was right.

→ It is **not** true that he showed that this was right (*or not)

b) He did not show **if** this was right.

→ It is true that he did **not** show if this was right (or not)

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[4] Therefore propositions in the future tense are not easily embedded by many factive predicates. In fact, implicature of deontic modality necessary is necessary in the SubC, which is then interpreted as factive:

(i) ?? They realise/ report/ are shocked, that they will (~must) go to school tomorrow.

3.3 Q-Selection and the Nonveridical Dependency

(43) **LF-interpretation**   (Öhl 2003, 135; cf. Roberts&Roussou 2002, 132)

The inventory of IFs in the Lexicon is universal. They are mapped to universal semantic representations on LF.

(44) **PF interpretation**   (Roberts&Roussou 2002, 132)

Structural descriptions of relations between features in a syntactic unit are idiosyncratically realised on PF.

(45) **PF-interpretation**   (cf. Roberts&Roussou 2002, 132)

PF-interpretation applies to structural descriptions of relations between features in a syntactic unit, i.e. chains in a syntactic dependency which are idiosyncratically realised on PF.

(46) a) D is a binary relation D(x,y).   (Sportiche 1998, 389)

b) One of (x,y) must command the other.

(47) **(α, β) is a WFD iff:**   (Öhl 2003, 66; cf. Roberts&Roussou 2002, 128)

   i.   α asymmetrically c-commands β;

   ii. α and β share at least one type of Fs that belong to a natural class.[5]

   iii. Minimality is respected.

(48) **Interpretability of Dependencies**   (Öhl 2003, 67)

   i.   there is a set of features $\{F_i \ldots F_k\}$ of the type F and

   ii. α and β are co-members in a WFD by means of F,

   $\Rightarrow$ F_α and F_β must be compatible[6].

(49) a) Non sa che io sia andato.
   NEG *– know –* COMP *– I –* AUX-SBJ *– gone*

   'He does not know whether I have gone.'

b) Sai che lui sia andato?
   know – COMP *– he –* AUX-SBJ *– gone*

c) Chi sai che sia andato?
   who – know-2nd sg *–* COMP *–* AUX-SBJ *– gone*

   %'Who do you know if has gone?'

d) Se sai che lui sia andato…
   if – know – COMP *– he –* AUX-SBJ *– gone*

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[5] We concede that it is not easy to give an abstract definition of 'natural classes' of IFs. However, it should be intuitive that there are certain groups of features that can be defined according to the entities they denote, e.g. features of tense, or the *modal features* we take to relate predicates to possible worlds.

[6] What we call compatibility might also be expressed in terms of *feature sharing*, which is analysed as the basis of *agreement* by Pesetsky&Torrego (2004).

Agreement and Feature Sharing   (adapted from Pesetsky&Torrego 2004, 4)

An unvalued IF at syntactic location α scans its c-command domain for another instance of IF at location β with which to agree. Replace IF_α with IF_β, so that the same IF is present in both locations.

(50) [_CP_ Ich [_C'_ habe_i_ [_VP_ mich gefragt_i_, [_CP_ ob_i_ [_VP_ er kommen_i_ wird_i_]···]
I – have – myself – asked – Q – he – come – will

⇒ *Q* of the complement licensed by WFD with the matrix verb

3.4 *Q*-Operators: Binders of Polarity Features

(51) a) He did not tell **that** he would come. → He was planning to

b) [[told(x,[come(x)]]] = 0 come but did not tell.

(52) a) He did not tell **if** he would come. → He did not tell whether he

b) [[¬told(x,[come(x)∨¬come(x)]]] = 1 was planning to come or not.

(53) a) ¬∃e∃x∃p[tell(e,x,p)]

b) ∃e∃x∃p[¬tell(e,x,[p∨¬p])]

(54) a) Julie did not mention **that** the bartender was unhappy.

"It is not true that Julie said that it was true that the bartender was unhappy."

b) Julie did not mention **if** the bartender was unhappy.

"It is true that Julie did not say whether the bartender was happy or not."

- **nonveridical dependency [OpQ – [π [V – [Q . . .]]**

(55) a) Maria hat [**nicht** erwähnt] ob_i_ der Kellner unzufrieden war.
Mary – has – NEG – mentioned – if – the – barkeeper – unhappy – was

b) Julie did [_NegP_ **not**_i_ [_VP_ [π_i_ [mention]] [**if**_i_ the bartender was unhappy]…]

(56) a) Maria hat öffentlich [_v°_ NICHT erwähnt] **ob** der Kellner unzufrieden war.
M. – has – publicly – NEG – mentioned – if – the – bartender – unhappy – was

b) Maria hat [nicht [öffentlich [[_v°_ erwÄHNT] **dass**/?ob der Kellner unzufrieden war].

(57) Julie did [_NegP_ not_i_ [_VP_ publicly [[_v°_ π_i_ [mention]] **if** the bartender was unhappy]]

(58) Julie did [_NegP_ not [_VP_ publicly [_VP_ mention **that** the bartender was unhappy] ···]

4. On the Specifity of *wh*-Clauses

4.1 *Q ≠ wh*

(59) a) Hugo staunt[7], **wer** sich hier mit wem gegen ihn verschworen hat.
H. – is-amazed – who – himself – here – with – whom – against – him – conspired – has

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[7] It was suggested that clauses like this are embedded exclamatives which are selected by specific predicates like 'amazing'. This would explain the presence of a *wh*-pronoun in a non-interrogative. However, this is obviously not the only kind of verb allowing this asymmetry. Secondly, it is not even evident that this is a case of embedded exclamation. Verbs like those can always be negated or replaced by their antonyms. In this case, there is no exclamative reading possible:

(i) John was (not) amazed what a nice guy Bill was.

(ii) John was ignoring what a nice guy Bill was.

b) Hugo staunt, **dass** sich seine Nachbarn gegen ihn verschworen haben.
H. – is-amazed – that – themselves – his – neighbours – against – him – conspired – have

c) *Hugo staunt, **ob** sich seine Nachbarn gegen ihn verschworen haben.
H. – is-amazed – if – themselves – his – neighbours – against – him – conspired – have

(60) a) Helmut hat begriffen, **dass** er demnächst gehen muss.
John – has – realised – that – he – soon – leave – must

b) Helmut hat begriffen, **wer** demnächst gehen muss.
John – has – realised – who – soon – leave – must

c) *Helmut hat begriffen, **ob** er demnächst gehen muss.
John – has – realised – if – he – soon – leave – must

Verbs subcategorising for a *[+w]*-complement should be unspecified for it realisation and therefore allow generally both a *Wh*-clause and a clause with the *[+w]*-CMP (Gm. **ob**).[8]
(Fortmann 1994, 3)

(61) a) John is amazed **who** has been conspiring against him.

b) John is amazed **that** his neighbours have been conspiring against him.

c) *John is amazed **if** his neighbours have been conspiring against him.

(62) a) John has realised **that** he must leave soon.

b) John has realised **who** must leave soon.

c) *John has realised **if** he must leave soon.

1. The presence of *Q* is not dependent on *wh*-operators.

2. *Wh*-clauses selected by predicates not selecting *Q* do not contain *Q*.

(63) a) Hugo fragt, **ob** sich wer gegen ihn verschworen hat.
H. – asks – if – self – someone – against – him – conspired – has

b) Hugo fragt, **wer** sich gegen ihn verschworen hat.
H. – asks – who – self – against – him – conspired – has

4.2 *wh*-Interrogatives

(64) a) Who has conspired against Hugo? **No one.**

b) ⇒ ¬∃e¬∃x[conspired(e,x,against-Hugo)]

c) ⇏ ∃e¬∃x[conspired(e,x,against-Hugo)]

(65) a) What did Hugo say? **Nothing.**

b) ⇒ ¬∃e¬∃x[said(e,Hugo,x)]

c) ⇏ ∃e¬∃x[said(e,Hugo,x)]

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[8] Translated from German, P.Ö.: Verben, die für einen *[+w]*-Komplementsatz subkategorisiert sind, sollten gleichgültig gegen dessen spezifische Realisierung sein und daher generell sowohl einen Satz mit einleitender w-Phrase zulassen als auch einen mit dem *[+w]*-Komplementierer **ob**.

(66)

	Θ – reference	event instantiation
Y/N-interrogative, *if* – clause	+	–
wh-clause (interrogative)	–	–
wh-clause (non-interr.)	–	+
'declarative', *that*-clause	+	+

(67) a) **āyā** Armin aks-e ye dinosaur-o be bābā-š dād?   (Lotfi 2001, 166)
　　 Q – Armin – picture-of – one – dinosaur-ACC – to – father-his – gave

　　 'Did Armin give his father a picture of a dinosaur?'

　 b) **āyā** Sohrab be pedar **če** goft?
　　 Q – Sohrab – to – father – what – said

　　 'What did Sohrab tell his father?'

　 c) man nemīdānam **ke āyā či-o**$_i$ ū t$_i$ mīxānad.   (Ahmad Lotfi, p.c.)
　　 I – wonder –COMP – Q – what-ACC – he/she – studies

　　 'I wonder what he/she studies.'

　 d) **či-o**$_i$ ān porsīd **ke āyā** to t$_i$ xāndi.
　　 what – DEM – asked – COMP – Q – you – studied

　　 'What did he/she ask if you studied?'

(68) a) He was asking [who] did not listen.   (focus on the variable)

　 b) He was asking [if anybody did not listen] .   (maximal focus)

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