

Excuseive questions

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A question about a question (act)

(1) A: Did John use the car yesterday? ← *antecedent question (AQ)*
B: When? ← *excursive question (EQ)*
A: In the evening.
B: No. (He used it in the morning.)

(2) Which time t is such that A asks B whether John used the car yesterday at the time t

Connectivity effects

(3) A: Which ship did they sink?

B: With what?

A: A torpedo.

B: The Japanese ship.

(4) A: Which ship sank?

B: #With what?

A: #A torpedo.

B: #The Japanese ship.

Reconstruction effects

(5) A: Did every boy₁ write a letter?
B: To which of his₁ relatives?
A: To his₁ uncle.
B: No.

A effects

(6) A: Does Bill think John used the car?
B: When?
A: Yesterday.
B: No. (Bill thinks John used the car last week.)

(7) A: Does Bill believe the claim that John used the car?
B: #When?
A: #Yesterday
B: #No.

→ EQs are not cases of echo questions

Definiteness constraint

(8) A: Did John read the book?

B: Which book?

A: Barriers.

B: No.

(9) A: Did John read a book?

B: #Which book?

A: #Barriers.

B: #No.

→ EQs are not cases of sluicing

Analysis

(10) Main ingredients

- a. Sentences come with a syntactically represented performative prefix
- b. EQs are constructed from AQs by *merge* and *trace conversion*

(cf. Stenius, 1967; Ross, 1970; Lakoff, 1970; Gazdar, 1979; Chomsky, 1981, 1986; Krifka, 2001; Fox, 2003; Sauerland, 2004; Krifka, 2015; Sauerland and Yatsushiro, 2017; Trinh and Truckenbrodt, 2018; Hackl, 2019; Trinh, 2021)

Illustration

(11) A: Did John use the car?

[CP A ASK B [CP WHETHER [TP John used the car

B: When?

[CP B ASK A [CP when_x [CP A ASK B [CP WHETHER [TP John used the car then_x

(12) A: Did John read the book?

[CP A ASK B [CP WHETHER [TP John read the_x book

B: Which book?

[CP B ASK A [CP which_x book [CP A ASK B [CP WHETHER [TP J. read the_x book

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