## **Declarative questions in Shanghainese and Cantonese**

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Declarative questions, also commonly known as "rising declaratives" (Gunlogson 2003), are a type of non-canonical questions where a declarative clause conveys a questioning speech act; see an example in (1b).

(1) a. Do you drink coffee? Polar interrogative b. You drink coffee? Declarative question

c. You drink coffee. Statement

A genuine question like (1a) is a felicitous speech act when the speaker is completely ignorant with respect to the answer, while a declarative question like (1b) is only felicitous if the speaker is already biased, namely if the context provides some kind of clue to what the answer is. (1b) could be used when the speaker has no information about the addressee's coffee drinking habits but in the current context sees them holding a coffee cup. This is the **confirmative** use of declarative questions (Poschmann 2008). Declarative questions can also be used when the speaker is **surprised** to see the addressee with coffee in their hands, or they may use (1b) as an **incredulous** question, if, for example, the speaker believes that the addressee is trying to act like they drink coffee when in fact they are not a coffee drinker.

We address two research questions. First, while there are numerous accounts on declarative questions in English, where word order clearly marks clause type, we wonder how declarative questions are formed in Chinese languages, where clause type is often marked by sentence-final particles (SFPs). We look at Cantonese and Shanghainese and show that interrogatives and declarative questions can be distinguished based on the (un)availability of negative polarity items (NPIs). Namely, the NPIs *zen wu* 'any' (in Shanghainese) and *jam*<sup>6</sup>*ho*<sup>4</sup> 'any' (in Cantonese) can occur in interrogatives (2a, 3a) but not in declarative questions (2b, 3b), a pattern observed in other languages (see Abeillé et al. 2014 for French, Gyuris 2019 for Hungarian). This suggests that declarative questions are indeed declarative clauses.

(2) a. yeu zenwu gnin chiq kafi le vaq? [Shanghainese] exist any person consume coffee SFP SFP 'Is there anyone who had coffee?' Polar interrogative

b. \*yeu zenwu gnin chiq-ku kafi?

exist any person consume-ASP coffee

\*'There is anyone who had coffee?' Declarative question

(3) a. jau<sup>5</sup> mou<sup>5</sup> jam<sup>6</sup>ho<sup>4</sup> jan<sup>4</sup> jam<sup>2</sup>-gwo<sup>3</sup> gaa<sup>3</sup>fe<sup>1</sup> aa<sup>3</sup>? [Cantonese] exist exist.not any person drink-ASP coffee SFP 'Is there anyone who had coffee?'

b. \*jau<sup>5</sup> jam<sup>6</sup>ho<sup>4</sup> jan<sup>4</sup> jam<sup>2</sup>-gwo<sup>3</sup> gaa<sup>3</sup>fe<sup>1</sup> gaa<sup>3</sup> ho<sup>2</sup> / gaa<sup>4</sup> / gaa<sup>3</sup> me<sup>1</sup>? exist any person drink-ASP coffee SFP SFP SFP SFP SFP

\*'There is anyone who had coffee?' Declarative question

Second, we ask whether the three flavours of declarative questions are to be treated as semantic or pragmatic differences. Based on the fact that these two languages consistently mark the three flavours differently in terms of the SFPs and intonation, we propose that

confirmative, surprise and incredulous declarative questions are to be distinguished semantically. We propose an inquisitive semantic account building on Farkas & Roelofsen (2017).

## References

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