

Context and Form: Declarative or Interrogative, that is the Question

Robbert-Jan Beun*

Abstract

Questions in spoken dialogues are often uttered in a declarative form. In more than 50% the question function of these utterances cannot be recognized without contextual features. Therefore, a speaker must, at the risk of misunderstanding, have special reasons for using a declarative form instead of an interrogative one. Two experiments were carried out to determine the contextual features that contribute to the use of a declarative question. Dialogues were presented on paper in both experiments. In the first experiment, subjects had to indicate whether a question in the dialogue was originally used in a declarative or an interrogative form; in the second, the subjects had to estimate the speaker's certainty about the correctness of the propositional content of the questions in the first experiment. The experimental results indicate that declaratives are often used for questioning if the speaker wants to verify information already provided in the dialogue and that the use of declaratives significantly correlates with the speaker's degree of certainty about the propositional content of the question. Moreover, from the experimental results it is hypothesized that abrupt changes of topic may decrease the use of declaratives.

*I am grateful to Harry Bunt, Kees van Deemter and Reinder Haakma for their extensive comments on earlier versions of this paper. I would also like to thank the Cooperation Center Tilburg and Eindhoven Universities, the Netherlands, who supported the research.
Author's address: R.J.Beun, Institute for Perception Research (IPO), PO Box 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven, The Netherlands. email: rjbeun@natlab.research.philips.com

1 Introduction

The relation between the linguistic form of an utterance and its illocutionary force is a complex matter and the subject of a large body of literature. To indicate, for instance, the question function of an utterance in a dialogue, a speaker may use different syntactic cues; the utterance may begin with a WH-word ('where', 'what', 'how', etc.) or an auxiliary verb (did, can, are, etc.) to indicate a WH-question or a Yes/No-question, respectively. Also the notion of *literal force* subscribes the idea that illocutionary force is indicated by syntactic markers such as sentence form (Levinson, 1983). This means that, unless the sentence possesses explicit performative properties, a declarative is meant for stating something, an interrogative for questioning and an imperative for ordering or requesting.

In natural dialogues, however, it is not to be expected that a one-to-one relation will ever be found between sentence features and the illocutionary force of an utterance (see e.g., Huddleston (1976) and Perrault (1990)). In spoken information dialogues, for instance, almost 20% of questions are put in a declarative form and in more than half of these cases the question function cannot be identified without contextual information (Beun, 1989). Since hearers almost always interpret these declarative questions (DQs) correctly, they must use contextual (discourse as well as non-discourse) knowledge for identification. The speaker, on the other hand, must be sure that the question function will be recognized, so he or she must count on the contextual knowledge available to the hearer. Therefore, at the risk of misunderstanding, the speaker must have reasons for using a declarative (D-form) instead of an interrogative (I-form) as the preferred syntactic form of a question.

In this chapter we will try to find out how contextual aspects influence the use of a D-form of questions in natural-language dialogues. To this end, the preference of subjects for the use of one of the two forms was tested in an experiment. Subsequently, in a second experiment the speaker's certainty about the propositional content of D-forms was tested. It will be hypothesized that a D-form is used in particular where certainty about the propositional content is relatively high. We will assume that information about the content may come from different sources, such as the previous discourse or background knowledge of the participants. In the experiment, the domain of discourse will be restricted to the exchange of information about arrival and departure times of planes and trains.

Before we discuss the experiments and their results, let us first focus on some proposed functions of DQs in the literature.

2 The function of declarative questions

Consider the following telephone dialogue between an informant at Amsterdam airport (**I**) and an information seeker (**S**):¹

Dialogue A

- I:** Schiphol Information
S: Good morning. Next Monday I want to go by plane to Paris,
I: Yes...
S: and I have to be there at about two o'clock in the afternoon.
What time do I have to leave to be there in time?
I: Well, the plane leaves at 10.25 and it will arrive at 11.25
in Paris and there is another one at, no,
You said Monday?

¹The original Dutch versions of the dialogues is included in the Appendix.

The italicized utterance by **I** is an example of a question in D-form. Here, the use of the declarative as a question is accentuated by the question mark. In spoken dialogues, prosodic characteristics may be used, like a final rising intonation, but often overt prosodic markers are omitted and most of the question recognition comes from contextual cues. Geluykens (1987; 1988) has shown that, at least in British English, intonation is often not used to distinguish genuine questions from interrogatives without question status and that in cases where a declarative sentence type was used, a falling intonation pattern was by far the most frequent pattern (68%). Our findings confirm this for Dutch; in Beun (1989) it was found that only 48% of the declarative questions in a corpus of recorded telephone dialogues (see below) had a rising intonation at the end.

It is not immediately clear *why* a D-form was used in dialogue A instead of an I-form. If a speaker asks a question with a declarative sentence type he or she is typically violating the Gricean principle of cooperation (Grice, 1975) and one or more of its corresponding maxims; so the speaker might have special reasons for choosing the declarative form. In Bunt (1989) it was suggested that the declarative form may be interpreted as a *verification*. That is, apart from the usual felicity conditions on questioning² the speaker indicates that he or she suspects that *p*, where *p* is the propositional content of the question. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1972) state that the speaker puts a positive (or negative) *assumption* and a neutral *expectation* in a DQ, and that the casual tone suggests that the speaker takes the answer ‘*yes*’ (or ‘*no*’) as a default conclusion. This is not easily verified, however. If a speaker has a certain assumption about the answer to his question, then how can his expectation be neutral? And, is there any reason to expect that a speaker has certain beliefs or makes certain assumptions about the content of the answer, other than by our own intuition?

To some extent, the speaker’s assumptions can be inferred from empirical data. Taking a closer look at the IPO corpus of recorded telephone dialogues (Prüst, Minnen & Beun (1984) and Cramer (1985)), we see that 64 out of 77 DQs (83%) evoked an affirmative reply (e.g. ‘*yes*’, ‘*indeed*’) from the dialogue partner; in only 5 cases (6%) was the answer negative. Hence, it appears that the questioners have certain assumptions or beliefs about the truth value of the content of the question, as it seems implausible that they would otherwise evoke so many positive responses.³

More evidence about the assumed belief comes from the form of repetitions of answers in the dialogues (Beun, 1985). A frequently occurring scheme of functional elements in the dialogue structure is the following:

- A:** – *Question*
- B:** – *Answer*
- A:** – *Repetition of the answer*
- B:** – *Response to the repetition*

It was found that one of the possible functions of the *repetition of the answer* is a verification of that answer. The speaker’s belief about the propositional content of the verification seems to be very strong, because this information has just been supplied by the dialogue partner. In all cases where a repetition was a complete sentence, the sentence type was declarative and the repetition evoked an affirmative response. So, in these cases, questions with a declarative form indicate a strong belief of the speaker about the message content.

If an answer is repeated by means of a DQ, the information about the content of the DQ

²I.e., ‘The speaker wants to know whether *p*’ and ‘The speaker suspects that the hearer knows whether *p*’.

³Although it is tempting to say that the beliefs of both participants about the propositional content of the DQ correspond, we can only conclude that the belief of the responding person corresponds to the content of the DQ. Whether the content of the DQ corresponds to the belief of the questioner is precisely what we are trying to find out.

is literally provided by the dialogue partner in the preceding discourse; however, as we can see in dialogue **B** and dialogue **C**, the information may come from other sources as well.

Dialogue B

I: Schiphol Information

S: Good morning, this is H.K. Next week I am going by plane to Montreal. I don't know the flight number, KL671 or KL 571. Can you tell me what time I have to catch the train in Tilburg to be in time at Schiphol?

I: Your flight is KL 671.

S: Yes.

I: And it will leave at 14.40
You would like to come by train?

Dialogue C

I: Schiphol Information

S: Good morning. I would like to know the arrival time of the plane from Nice, flight number KL 338.

I: *That is today?*

In dialogue **B** the information is implicitly built in in **S'** question. **S** indicates that she has to catch the train to go to Schiphol, from which **I** infers that she wants to go by train. We will say that the information follows *by presupposition* from the previous discourse. In dialogue **C**, the information in the DQ that the arrival time refers to the same day as the day of the conversation cannot be derived from the propositional content of the utterance by **S**. The information seems to come from a default rule which roughly states that, if no information is provided about the day of arrival, the day of the conversation is assumed as long as there is no evidence to the contrary. We will assume that the inference is triggered by the Gricean principle of cooperation, since **S'** utterance is conversationally inadequate with respect to an unequivocal determination of the day of arrival. In line with Grice (1975) we will call this type of inference *implicatures*.

In other cases the information about the content of the question is not supported by evidence from the previous discourse, but may come from general background knowledge of the speaker. This is exemplified in dialogue **D**:

Dialogue D

I: Schiphol Information

S: Hello, this is G.M. I have to go to Helsinki, from Amsterdam. Can you tell me which flights leave next Sunday?

I: Just a moment.

I: Yes, there are several flights. One leaves at 9.10, one at 11.10 and one at 17.30.

S: *The flight takes about three hours?*

To sum up, we hypothesize that, in certain cases, a question of the declarative sentence type will be caused by a strong belief or assumption about the content of the question and that the origin of the belief may come from different sources, such as the previous discourse, particular pieces of world knowledge or both. More precisely, we will consider the following sources of information about the propositional content of the question:

- The information is *literally* given by the dialogue partner in the previous discourse or *presupposed* in a previous utterance of the dialogue partner (for example, dialogue **A** and dialogue **B**, respectively).
- The information is derived by *implicature* from Gricean conversational principles (for example, dialogue **C**).
- The information is not derivable at all, or can be derived from the speaker's *world knowledge* relating to the question (for example, dialogue **D**).

3 The experiments

Two experiments were carried out to test how contextual information influences the subjects' preference for a D or I-form in questioning and how this information influences the estimated certainty of the speaker about the truth value of the propositional content of the DQ. In both experiments dialogues were presented in printed form to 24 subjects; the experiments were performed with different subjects. All subjects were Dutch native speakers, all over 18, and most of them were students and staff members from the Institute.

3.1 General structure of the dialogues

The content of the dialogues was inspired by eighteen transcriptions of dialogues from the IPO-corpus, which consists of spoken dialogues, recorded in an earlier experiment, between an informant (**I**) from Amsterdam airport (Schiphol) and an information-seeker (**S**). To improve legibility, irrelevant errors (such as '*to Montre/eh.. Toronto*') and hesitations were removed from the transcriptions. In all cases the dialogue

material presented to the subject presented was not a complete dialogue but only a relevant part. The dialogues were relatively short, i.e. the shortest dialogue had 3 speaking turns and the longest had 9 turns including the initial stage. The sequential organization of the dialogues used in the experiment was as follows (see also the example dialogues **Ba** and **Bb** below):

- Each dialogue consisted of two parts: first, the *contextual part*, where contextual information was provided, and second, the *target part*, on which the subjects had to make certain judgements. The target part in the first experiment consisted of two questions, (i) and (ii). One of them was put in a D-form, the other in an I-form. In both cases question marks were put at the end. In the second experiment the target part only consisted of the D-form of the first experiment. In this case the question was replaced by a full stop, so that the utterance looked like a statement by **I** or **S**.⁴
- Each dialogue had an initial stage of identification and greeting, for example, 'Schiphol Information', 'Good morning', and so on. These opening sequences were added to induce the subjects to think that the only information exchange between **I** and **S** was the information available on paper.
- After the initial stage **S** asked a question; in some cases **S** supplied introductory information about his travel plans between the question and the initial stage.
- All dialogues ended after the target part. Hence, no dialogue had a closing section (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), i.e. sequences such as **A**: 'OK', **B**: 'OK', **A**: 'Bye', **B**: 'Bye' had been omitted from the transcriptions. This was done to prevent the subjects

⁴This was done because we were only interested in the subject's judgement about the propositional content of the utterance which is expressed more directly in a statement than in a question.

having more information available about the discourse than the fictitious dialogue participants at the moment of the verbalization of the target part.

In both experiments, two versions of each dialogue were presented. These pairs differed mainly with respect to the information about the propositional content of the target that was included in the discourse. In what follows we will refer to these two versions respectively as ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ versions of the dialogue.

The following example shows a translation in English of an *a* and a *b* version of a dialogue used in the first experiment. The contextual part is represented in typewriter style, the target part in italics.

Dialogue B_a

I: Schiphol Information

S: Good morning, this is H.K. Next week I am going by plane to Montreal. I don’t know the flight number, KL671 or KL 571. Can you tell me what time I have to catch the train in Tilburg to be in time at Schiphol?

I: Your flight is KL 671.

S: Yes.

I: And it will leave at 14.40
i. You would like to come by train?
ii. Would you like to come by train?

In the second version the information that **S** wants to catch the train is removed from the contextual part and therefore the information can only come from world knowledge on the part of **I**:

Dialogue B_b

I: Schiphol Information

S: Hello, next week I take the plane to Singapore. I don’t know the flight number, HF 410 or HF 510. Can you tell me what time I have to leave The Hague to be in time at Schiphol?

I: Your flight is HF 410.

S: Yes.

I: And it will leave at six in the evening
i. You would like to come by train?
ii. Would you like to come by train?

Note that the flight numbers, cities, times and introductions were changed, although the structure of the edited dialogue remains the same. This was done to prevent the subjects from recognizing the intended differences between the two dialogues.

3.2 The task

Experiment 1

In the first experiment the subjects were told that all dialogues were taken from real-life telephone dialogues. The subjects were asked to indicate what form of the target part was originally used in the dialogue, the D or the I-form. To counterbalance both forms, all dialogues were presented twice, so that both forms were presented equally as (i) and (ii). An advantage of this method is that the consistency of the subjects’ responses can be checked. In all, 72 dialogues ($2 \times 2 \times 18$) were presented in the first experiment.

Experiment 2

The task of the subjects in the second experiment was to judge, on a 5-point scale from 0 to 4, how certain the speaker (**I** or **S**) of the target sentence was about the propositional content of the declarative sentence. *Very uncertain* was represented by 0, *very certain* by 4. Here, no counterbalance was needed with respect to the target part, so only 36 dialogues were presented to the subjects.

4 Results

Table 1 shows the results for the 36 dialogues in pairs labelled a & b. The *source* column shows the source of information about the content. Here we have three options: ‘N’ (no information available in the discourse), ‘I’ (implicature) and ‘L’ (literally in the discourse or inferable by presupposition). The dialogues **A**, **Ba**, **Bb**, **C** and **D** presented in the previous sections agree with the dialogues 1b, 10a, 10b, 8a and 11a, respectively, in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey of the source of information of the target part for the 18 pairs of dialogues. ‘L’ indicates that the information was literally or by presupposition derivable from the discourse, ‘I’ indicates that the information was derivable by implicature and ‘N’ indicates that the information was not derivable from the discourse. Column *exp1* shows the percentage declaratives predicted by the subjects in the first experiment; column *exp2* shows the mean degree of certainty on a 5-point scale (0-4) scored by the subjects in the second experiment. The star \star indicates a significant difference between the a and b versions.

TABEL 1 here

Column *exp1* indicates the percentage declaratives that were predicted by the subjects in the first experiment (100% = 48 responses). Dialogues 2, 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 17 show a significant difference between the a and b versions in the use of declaratives (in all cases $\chi^2_{df=1} > 4.80$, $p < 0.05$). Significant differences are indicated by ‘ \star ’.

The column *exp2* shows the mean degree of certainty scored by the subjects in the second

experiment on a scale from 0 to 4. Dialogues 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 show a significant difference between the a and b versions in the degree of certainty (sign test applied over the degree of certainty per subject; in all cases $p < 0.05$). Significant differences are indicated by ‘★’.

For all pairs of dialogues where both the use of declaratives and degree of certainty show a significant difference (dialogues 4, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 17), the results show the same behaviour. That is, if the use of declaratives increases, the estimated certainty of the speaker also increases, and vice versa. The hypothesis that the two are not correlated can be rejected, with $p < 0.02$. (Here, the sign test was applied over the differences in results of the percentage of declaratives and the degree of certainty.)

FIGURE 1 here

Figure 1: The choice of declaratives in percentages (black rectangle) and the degree of certainty on a 5-point scale (white rectangle) as a function of the source of information.

In Figure 1 the average percentage declaratives and the average degree of certainty are shown as a function of the source of information. In both experiments the sources of information have significantly different effects. (Percentage declaratives: LI: $\chi^2_{df=1} = 18.2$, $p < 0.001$, IN: $\chi^2_{df=1} = 28.5$, $p < 0.001$, LN: $\chi^2_{df=1} = 155$, $p < 0.001$. Degree of estimated certainty: LI: $p < 0.001$, IN: $p < 0.005$, LN: $p < 0.001$; in this case the sign test was applied over the mean value of the degree of certainty per subject.)

5 Discussion

The results indicate two ways in which the speaker’s certainty about the propositional content of the target question is related to the use of a D-form. Firstly, the use of a D-form is significantly related to the estimated degree of certainty indicated by the subjects. When

certainty about the content increases, the use of D-forms also increases. Secondly, both the number of D-forms and the degree of certainty show the same behaviour towards the source of information. When we look at the individual dialogues, however, we should be careful in our conclusions. Let us therefore consider a few dialogues more closely.

In dialogues 5a and 5b (dialogue **E**, *a* and *b* versions, respectively) the use of a D-form was relatively frequent in both cases, scoring 79% and 60% respectively (see Table 1).

Dialogue E

- I:** Schiphol Information
- S:** Good morning, H.B. speaking. Are there any bus services from various places to Schiphol?
- I:** Yes, these are ordinary KLM buses.
- S:** What time do they leave from Eindhoven, and can I use them when I want to pick someone up and didn't book myself?
- I:** That is no problem,
- a.* but I don't have any time schedules about buses here. In that case you have to call another number.
 - b.* they leave every hour from Eindhoven.
- S:**
- i.* You don't know whether they leave that early in the morning?
 - ii.* Don't you know whether you leave early in the morning

The score for the *certainty*, on the other hand, is relatively low, 1.8 and 0.5 respectively. So, in this case too, D-form and certainty show the same correlated behaviour, but subjects prefer a D-form although the estimated certainty is low compared to other dialogues. Probably the high percentage of D-forms can be explained by the form of the target part, which was the following sentence uttered by **S**, '*You don't know whether a train leaves that early?*'. Here, a D-form may have been preferred because of politeness. The underlying rule seems to be related to Leech's approbation maxim: 'minimize dispraise of the other' (Leech, 1983). The D-form indicates that it could be expected that the hearer does not know the train departure times. In other words, the hearer is already excused if she cannot provide an appropriate answer. When a negated I-form is used instead ('*Don't you know whether a train leaves that early?*'), the question sounds more offensive, almost like: '*Don't you even know whether a train leaves that early?*'. Such a question would be impolite in many discourse situations. Of course a lot depends on the sentence's intonation pattern, which was not available to the subjects. Another reason could be that an I-form expresses surprise and from the dialogue it did not follow that **S** had any reason to be surprised. Whatever the explanation may be, the certainty about the propositional content of the target question is very low and the preference for a D-form is very high, so this case is an exception to our hypothesis that D-forms are only used in cases where certainty is high.

On the other hand, in Table 1 we may observe that dialogues 11a and 11b have a significant decrease in the D-form score (71% and 2% respectively) although the estimated certainty was almost equal in both cases (1.8 and 2.1, respectively). So, in this case a direct relation between certainty and D-form does not seem to exist. The result may be explained by an abrupt topic change in 11b. In the contextual part of both dialogues **S** asked which flights are going to Helsinki. **I** answers the question and then **S** continues with the target part (here only represented in D-form):

- 11a **S:** *The duration of the flight is about three hours?*
- 11b **S:** *I can go by bus from Utrecht to Schiphol?*

Hence, in 11a **S** continues talking about the flight mentioned by **I**, whereas in 11b, **S** starts talking about the trip from Utrecht to Schiphol. Therefore, it seems to be the case that an I-form is preferred when a speaker introduces an abrupt topic change. It should be mentioned, though, that the result is in contrast with the findings of Springorum (1986). Springorum describes Dutch dialogues where a doctor is diagnosing a patient's illness, and notes that questions asked by the doctor are often put in a D-form when attention is shifted to another topic. So, topical aspects may influence the use of a particular sentence-type in questions, but the choice of the form may be influenced by the discourse situation. In Springorum's dialogues, a doctor is diagnosing the patient's illness. Roughly speaking, this means that the doctor (the expert) is asking questions until he or she has diagnosed the case; in our dialogues questions were asked by the information-seeker (the non-expert). The doctor, supposed to be the expert, can hide ignorance by asking the question in a D-form.

In the results we have seen a significant correlation between the degree of certainty and the source of information. The information was divided into three parts; 1, literally in the text or presupposition; 2, implicature and 3, background knowledge or no information. Clearly, the classification should be refined in some cases, since background knowledge may cause a strong belief about the proposition expressed in the target. An example of this can be found in dialogue 6a, where **S** asked, without any discourse knowledge, whether a train leaves at 11.30 from Tilburg. Some of the subjects confronted afterwards with the results stated that 'everybody knows that there is a train around 11.30 from Tilburg'. Of course, background knowledge is influenced by the place where people live and is also culturally determined.

6 Conclusion

From the experiments it follows that the use of a declarative form as a syntactic device for questioning is positively correlated with the certainty of the speaker's belief about the truth value of the propositional content of the question. Moreover, a declarative form is mainly used if information about the content of the question is already provided in the dialogue. The information may be derived from presuppositions in the previous discourse or by default inferences such as Gricean implicatures. Hence, speakers often use a declarative for questioning if they have a weak belief about the content. But, if a speaker wants to know the answer, why then does he also want to express such a belief? In other words, what effect do speakers want to have on the hearer's mental state by expressing their weak belief? Since DQ's are often used when the information is literally provided in the dialogue or can be derived by presupposition or implicature from one or more previous utterances, the speaker is aware that the hearer knows that the speaker has evidence about the content of the DQ. So, if speakers do not express this evidence, they give the impression that relevant parts of the discourse were not well understood. Note also that in normal circumstances it is considered inattentive to repeat the same question in an interrogative form if the question was already answered. So, although the Gricean maxim of style is exploited by using a D-form for questioning, the maxim seems to be adhered to at some deeper level to prevent the hearer from thinking that certain parts of the discourse were misunderstood. In this respect, the declarative question seems to fulfill the control function of an acknowledgement.

It cannot be concluded, however, that a high certainty automatically causes a declarative form to be used and a low certainty an interrogative form. Especially where attention is shifted to another topic in the dialogue, the use of a declarative form may decrease although the estimated certainty about the content does not decrease. Also, a declarative form may be preferred when the estimated certainty is low, in cases where certain rules of politeness may conflict with the use of an interrogative form. These observations about topic-change and politeness are not supported by significant evidence from the experiment our experiments,

and should be examined in future research.

References

- Beun, R.J.** (1985) The Function of Repetitions in Information Dialogues. *IPO Annual Progress Report, 20*, 91-98.
- Beun, R.J.** (1989) Declarative Question Acts: Two Experiments on Identification. In: M.M. Taylor, F. Néel & D.G. Bouwhuis (Eds.): *The Structure of Multimodal Dialogue*. Amsterdam: North Holland. 313-321.
- Bunt, H.C.** (1989) Information Dialogues as Communicative Action in Relation to Partner Modelling and Information Processing. In: M.M. Taylor, F. Néel & D.G. Bouwhuis (Eds.): *The Structure of Multimodal Dialogue*. Amsterdam: North Holland. 47-73
- Cramer, Y.M.** (1985) Transcriptie dialoogexperiment juni 1985. *Report no. 513*. Eindhoven: Institute for Perception Research.
- Geluykens, R.** (1987) Intonation and Speech Act Type – An Experimental Approach to Rising Intonation in Queclaratives. *Journal of Pragmatics, 11*, 483-494.
- Geluykens, R.** (1988) On the myth of rising intonation in polar questions. *Journal of Pragmatics, 12*, 467-485.
- Grice, H.P.** (1975) Logic and Conversation. In: P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.): *Speech Acts. Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 11*. New York: Academic Press. 41-58.
- Huddleston, R.** (1976) *An Introduction to English Transformational Syntax*. London: Longman.
- Leech, G.N.** (1983) *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Levinson, S.C.** (1983) *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perrault, C.R.** (1990) An Application of Default Logic to Speech Act Theory. In: P.R. Cohen, J. Morgan and M.E. Pollack (eds.) *Intentions in Communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 161-185.
- Prüst, H.H.A.M., Minnen, G.A.G. & Beun, R.J.** (1984) Transcriptie dialoogexperiment juni/juli 1984. *Report no. 481*. Eindhoven: Institute for Perception Research.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G. & Svartvik, J.** (1972) *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.
- Schegloff, E.A. & Sacks, H.** (1973) Opening up Closings. *Semiotica, 7-4*, 289-327.
- Springorum, Th.P.A.F.** (1996) In de Marge van het Gesprek: een Onderzoek naar het Verschijnsel Afdwalen in Institutionele Gesprekken. *Report no. 51268*. Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen.

Appendix: Dialogues in Dutch

Dialogue A

I: Schiphol Inlichtingen

S: Goedemorgen. Ik wil graag maandag naar Parijs met het vliegtuig,

I: Ja ...

S: en ik moet daar ongeveer om twee uur zijn. Hoe laat kan ik dan het beste een vliegtuig nemen?

I: Nou, er is een vliegtuig dat hier om vijf voor half elf vertrekt en die is in Parijs vijf voor half twaalf en dan is er ook een vliegtuig, nee,
U zei maandag?

Dialogue B

I: Schiphol Inlichtingen

S: Morgen, met H. Ik vertrek volgende week met het vliegtuig naar Montreal en nu weet ik niet meer of het de KL 671 is of de KL 571. Maar kunt u mij vertellen hoe laat ik de trein vanuit Tilburg dan moet nemen om dat vliegtuig te halen?

I: Het is KL 671

S: Ja

I: en het vertrekt 14 uur 40.
U wilt graag met de trein daarnaartoe?

Dialogue C

I: Schiphol Inlichtingen

S: Goedemorgen. Ik wilde graag de aankomst weten van het toestel uit Nice, vluchtnummer KL 338.

I: *Dat is vandaag?*

Dialogue D

I: Schiphol Inlichtingen

S: Dag, U spreekt met K. de L. Ik moet aanstaande zondag van Amsterdam naar Helsinki. Kunt u mij zeggen welke vluchten er gaan?

I: Ogenblikje.

I: Ja, er zijn er verscheidene hoor. Er is er een die vertrekt om 9 uur 10, een om 11 uur 10 en een om 17 uur 30.

S: *De vluchttijd is een uur of drie?*

Dialogue E

I: Schiphol Inlichtingen

S: Goede morgen, met H.B. Rijden er op dit moment nog bussen vanuit diverse plaatsen in ons land naar Schiphol?

I: Ja hoor, dat zijn gewoon KLM-bussen.

S: Hoe laat vertrekt die vanuit Eindhoven en kan ik daar ook gebruik van maken als ik iemand af ga halen en niet zelf geboekt heb?

I: U kunt daar gerust gebruik van maken,
a. maar ik heb hier geen busdiensten hoor. Dan moet u een ander nummer bellen.
b. die vertrekken om het hele uur vanuit Eindhoven.

S: *i. U weet niet hoelang die bussen erover doen?*
ii. Weet u niet hoelang die bussen erover doen?

<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>exp1</i>	<i>exp2</i>	
1	a	N	33	1.1 *
	b	L	58	3.0 *
2	a	I	71 *	2.4
	b	I	40 *	2.1
3	a	L	71	3.5 *
	b	L	67	2.9 *
4	a	N	40 *	2.5 *
	b	L	73 *	3.6 *
5	a	I	79	1.8 *
	b	N	60	0.5 *
6	a	N	17	3.7 *
	b	N	4	2.0 *
7	a	I	50	3.3 *
	b	I	42	2.6 *
8	a	I	48	2.5
	b	N	33	1.9
9	a	N	2	2.3
	b	N	15	2.5

<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>exp1</i>	<i>exp2</i>	
10	a	L	92 *	3.6 *
	b	N	29 *	1.5 *
11	a	N	71 *	1.8
	b	N	2 *	2.1
12	a	N	13	1.6
	b	I	27	1.5
13	a	I	40 *	3.1 *
	b	N	2 *	1.8 *
14	a	N	35	1.6
	b	N	13	1.7
15	a	L	71 *	2.9 *
	b	I	42 *	1.8 *
16	a	I	21 *	1.9 *
	b	L	67 *	3.4 *
17	a	I	48 *	2.2 *
	b	I	77 *	2.8 *
18	a	L	63	3.5 *
	b	N	65	2.9 *

Table 1

Figure 1