

Rise-fall-rise

A prosodic window on secondary QUDs

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Ingredients:

Phonology of (rise-)fall-rise

Adopting the intonational phonology of [2]:

- **Fall-rise** = falling accent, high boundary: **H*L H%**
- **Rise-fall-rise** = *delayed* fall-rise: **L*HL H%**

(This work is agnostic about the delay, i.e., the L prefix.)

Main contribution

An account of the meaning of English (rise-)fall-rise.

- a **wide range of uses** (see below)
- not obvious what they have in common
- no **unifying account** currently exists.

Using the theory of **Intonational Compliance Marking** [3].

Intonational Compliance Marking [3]

- **L / H**: the utterance (till the next %) **complies / does not comply** with all the maxims ...
- **L% / H%**: ... wrt. the **primary QUD** (= Question Under Discussion)
- ***L / *H**: ... wrt. some **focus-congruent QUD** [4]

ICM theory has been applied to rising declaratives [5] and question intonation [3,6].

The meaning of (rise-)fall-rise

As H*L H%, (rise-)fall-rise is predicted to convey:

- H%: **non-compliance** with the maxims wrt. primary QUD.
- H*L: **compliance** with the maxims wrt. some focus-congruent QUD.

This predicts that **RFR involves two QUDs**. [1]

Entailed approach: *understanding a particular usage of RFR, requires a grasp of the primary and secondary QUDs.*

★ Quiz: what could be that secondary QUD? ★

Non-at-issue content

- (1) John – he failed the **exam** – envies Fred. [7]
- (2) John, who failed the **exam**, envies Fred.

- Non-at-issue content is 'non-at-issue' in that it does not address the primary QUD.
- But it must serve *some* purpose, hence, a secondary QUD, e.g.:

Why does John envy Fred?

Uncertain relevance

- (4) Have you ever been West of the Mississippi?
I've been to **Missouri**... [8]

The secondary QUD is part of a **strategy**, e.g.:

What places did you visit that may help resolve the main QUD?

NB. Information-seeking strategy vs. presentational strategy [4,9].

Contrastive topic

- (6) What about the beans, who had those?
Fred ate the **beans**...

- (7) What about Fred, what did he eat?
Fred, ate the beans.

- (6) and (7) are not symmetrical ([12], contra [9]): only (6) leaves some QUD unresolved.

- In fact, (6) seems to be no different from (4): a *strategic* secondary QUD.

NB. In (6), unlike (4), the secondary QUD happens to be explicit the primary QUD implicit, e.g., "Who ate what?".

- By contrast, (7) is more like (3), in a way that (8) makes more explicit:

- (8) As for **Fred**, he ate the beans.

Like (3), a metalinguistic secondary QUD:

Who is this utterance about?

- Treating RFR as a marker of 'topic' is adequate for (7) (and (8)), but not for (6).

Hedges

- (3) On an **unrelated note**, Fred ate the beans.

QUDs can be metalinguistic, e.g., be about the discourse structure.

E.g., in (3) the secondary QUD could be:

How does this relate to the foregoing?

NB. (3), and arguably (2), show that sub-sentential constituents too can convey a full (propositional) intent.

Corrections (etc.)

- (5) So I guess you like [æ]pricots then?
I don't like [æ]pricots – I like [ei]pricots! [10]

Common ground *maintenance* (cf. [11]) is plausibly subservient to common ground *enrichment*.

Secondary 'maintenance' QUD:

Is the previous utterance correct?

NB. "correct" is broader than "true".

Summing up

- *Secondary QUD*: a common denominator for a range of disparate uses of rise-fall-rise.
- Derived from the broader ICM theory.
- Falsifiability depends in part on broader QUD theory.

Take home message:

- Rise-fall-rise? Ask: *What are the two QUDs?*

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