

CUSP 5 Abstract
Inquisitive and non-inquisitive disjunctions
Lauren Winans
UCLA

Languages such as Chinese [3], Finnish [2], Basque [5], and Malagasy (Keenan, p.c.), among others, have been described as having two disjunctive lexical items where one is restricted to questions. Haspelmath (2007) labels the latter an interrogative disjunction (in contrast to a standard disjunction). Both standard and interrogative disjunctions can occur in interrogative clauses, however interrogative disjunctions occur in alternative questions and standard disjunctions in polar questions. Haspelmath defines these question types in terms of their response patterns; alternative questions must be answered with one of the disjuncts, and polar questions with *yes* or *no*. For all the languages surveyed, the item used in declarative clauses is the one that is also used in polar questions. We can imagine a language with a different pairing, where the disjunction used in declaratives is also used in alternative questions and a separate lexical item is used in polar questions, but this pattern is unattested. In this paper, I look at two disjunctive lexical items in Egyptian Arabic. The words *wallaa* and *aw* conform to Haspelmath's descriptions of interrogative and standard disjunctions, respectively. Using a more articulated typology of question types (from Gool and Roelofsen (2010)), I show that the distribution of these lexical items does not conform to the subset relation Haspelmath describes—rather, their distribution is disjoint. In addition, *wallaa* and *aw* exhibit different semantic restrictions on what they can disjoin. Using Inquisitive Semantics [1], the differences between *wallaa* and *aw* can be captured as a difference in inquisitiveness. While this analysis accounts for the observed data in Egyptian Arabic, it also explains why the cross-linguistic data patterns as it does.

[1] Groenendijk, Jeroen, and Floris Roelofsen. 2009. Inquisitive semantics and pragmatics. In Stanford workshop on Language, Communication and Rational Agency .

[2] Haspelmath, Martin. 2007. Coordination. Language typology and syntactic description vol. II: Complex constructions. 2nd ed.:1–51.

[3] Li, Charles N., and Sandra A. Thomson. 1981. Mandarin chinese: A functional reference grammar. University of California Press.

[4] Roelofsen, Floris, and Sam van Gool. 2010. Disjunctive questions, intonation, and highlighting. In Logic, Language, and Meaning: Selected Papers from the 17th Amsterdam Colloquium , ed. T. de Jager M. Aloni, H. Bastiaanse and K. Schulz, 384–394. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

[5] Saltarelli, Mario. 1988. Basque . Croom Helm.