

Everyone's been wondering what are the mechanisms for interpreting embedded root clauses in German and English...

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Abstract

This paper compares three types of embedded root clause (verb second in complement clauses, embedded imperatives and embedded inverted interrogatives) in German and English. It will describe in detail how these constructions differ from their non-root counterparts syntactically and pragmatically, and how equivalent constructions in German and English differ from each other. I will then use Farkas's (2022) version of the Table model to formalise how the pragmatic characteristics of these constructions falls out from a mixture of the generations of a conventional implicature and language-specific rules on how perspectives may shift under attitude predicates.

1. Introduction

In this paper I will compare three types of embedded root clause in German and English: embedded verb second in complement position (comp-EV2), embedded imperatives and embedded inverted interrogatives (Ells). These constructions are considered ungrammatical in standard, written or formal varieties of English and German, yet are attested (with some variation in the paradigm across languages) and widely used in colloquial speech. Examples of each construction are given in (1)-(3).

(1) Comp-EV2

- a. Er sagt, sie wohnt jetzt in Bonn. German, Reis 1995: 49
He said she lives now in Bonn.
"He said she lives in Bonn now."
Compare: Er sagt, dass sie jetzt in Bonn wohnt.
- b. He said would he hell go to the party.¹ British English, adapted
from Woods 2016: 244
Compare: He said that he would never go to the party.

(2) Embedded imperatives

- a. Ich sag dir, geh nach Hause. German², Kaufmann 2012: 208
I tell you go.imp to home
"I'm telling you go home."
Compare: Ich sag dir, dass du nach Hause gehen muss.
- b. He_i said don't talk to his_i girlfriend. British English (constructed)³

(3) Embedded inverted interrogatives

¹ This is not a classical case of comp-EV2 but is the closest equivalent in English. A case of *fuck*-inversion (Sailor 2020), (1)b represents a residual form of V2 in English, which can also be embedded (see Woods 2016, 2020). It is equivalent to EV2 in German in that it expresses a (strong) assertion, however, that assertion is necessarily negative. The clause under "say" is interpreted as a type of negative declarative that features inversion by virtue of a covert negative operator in the left-periphery that is featurally linked to a taboo word to the left edge of the VP (see Sailor 2020 for more details). It is, as far as we can tell, functionally equivalent to more familiar instances of comp-EV2 and is subject to the same syntactic and semantic restrictions.

² But see Reis 2021 for arguments that German embedded imperatives are a "grammatical illusion".

³ British English examples are constructed by the author in their North West England dialect of British English.

- a. I asked Jack was she in his class. Irish English, McCloskey 2006: 87
 b. *Ich habe Johannes gefragt, geht er morgen nach Köln. German (constructed)

To summarise, the distribution of these constructions across English and German is as follows:

Table 1: Acceptability of embedded root clauses in German and English.

	Comp-EV2	Embedded imperatives	Ells
German	✓	%✓	✗
English	✓	✓	✓

The rest of this paper seeks to detail how these three constructions are similar to and differ from each other. I will describe how they differ from typical embedded clauses and how equivalent constructions in German and English differ. I will then draw on observations about the availability of ‘transparent’ readings in German to propose that language-specific pragmatic rules about perspective shifting can explain (a) the differences in interpretation of embedded root clauses between German and English and (b) the absence of embedded inverted interrogatives in German. Parts of the proposal remain necessarily programmatic given constraints of space, and I will not provide formal semantic details for the proposal or a syntactic analysis for these constructions⁴, but I hope to demonstrate fertile ground for further research based on solid empirical evidence and theory.

In the next section I will briefly present morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic arguments for (a) how the constructions of interest differ from typical clausal embedding and (b) when and why they should be treated as related phenomena.

2. Why are these structures special?

Despite their root-like verbal movement or morphology, comp-V2, Ells and embedded imperatives also share a range of characteristics with typical embedded clauses that are used to express indirect speech or attitude reports and that are not limited to spoken registers. Like typical embedded clauses, comp-V2 and Ells exhibit sequence of tense phenomena (4)-(5); all three embedded root constructions exhibit consistent, speaker-oriented indexical reference (indexicals do not shift to the original speaker’s perspective, (6)-(8)); and speakers need not commit to the putative embedded speech act (i.e. they need not be enacting the assertion, imperative or question act themselves, (9)). These characteristics are illustrated below with selected examples; in all cases, the typical embedded clause precedes the embedded root clause.

Sequence of Tense

Context: Maria was pregnant last year and is not pregnant in the current context.

(4) German (Constructed)

- a. Letztes Jahr hat Maria_i gesagt, dass sie_i schwanger war/#ist.
 last year has Maria said that she pregnant was/is
 “Last year Maria said that she was/is pregnant.”
- b. Letztes Jahr hat Maria_i gesagt, sie war/#ist schwanger.
 last year has Maria said she was/is pregnant

⁴ For previous syntactic/semantic approaches to Ells/embedded imperatives, see Woods (2016, 2020) and Dayal (2023); for an updated syntactic account taking in German comp-V2 and rel-V2, see Woods (in prep).

- (5) British English (Constructed)
- a. Last year, John asked me whether Maria was/#is pregnant.
 - b. Last year, John asked me was/#is Maria pregnant.

Lack of indexical shifting

- (6) German (constructed)
- a. Maria_i sagt, dass Sabine geht nach meinem_i Hause."
 Maria says Sabine goes to my.DAT house
 "Maria says that Sabine is going to my house."
 - b. Maria_i sagt, Sabine geht nach meinem_{speaker} Hause.
 Maria says Sabine goes to my.DAT house
 "Maria says that Peter is going to my house."
- (7) Scottish English (EII attested)
- a. She_i had considered whether she_i should keep going or not.
 - b. She_i had considered should she_i keep going or not.
- (8) Tyneside English (embedded imperative attested, at a train station)
- a. The guard_i usually says/tells them_j to wait for me_{speaker}, but they_j often don't [wait for me_{speaker}].
 - b. The guard_i usually says PRO_j wait for me_{speaker} but they_j often don't.
 they/them/PRO_j = onboard train crew

Speaker need not be enacting the speech act

- (9) Caribbean English (embedded imperative attested)
- a. Stokes doesn't learn, because they keep telling him not to talk to me.
 - b. Stokes_i doesn't learn, because they_j keep telling him_i PRO_i do not speak to me_{speaker}

We see variation across the constructions in terms of multiple embedding (EII, German comp-V2 and English embedded imperatives can multiply embed, (10)-(12), English *fuck*-inversion and German embedded imperatives cannot, (13)-(14)).

Multiple embedding:

- (10) British English (constructed)
- Do you know [did he say [was he coming]]?
- (11) German (constructed)
- %Anna glaubt, [Maria sagte, [Peter ist glücklich]].
 Anna thinks Maria said Peter is happy
 "Anna thinks Maria said Peter is happy."
- (12) British English (constructed)
- He_i said [don't tell him_i [don't talk to your_{addressee} girlfriend]]
- (13) British English (constructed)
- *He thought [was she fuck really saying [would she fuck go to the party]], she just didn't want to admit it.

(14) German (constructed)

*Hans sagte, [sag deinem Vater, [ruf deine Mutter an]].

Hans said say.IMP your.DAT father call your mother up

Intended: "Hans said tell your father call your mother."

Finally, these constructions also differ from typical embedding in the following ways: they are all more restricted in terms of extraction (preposing and wh-extraction) and binding than typical embedding and they are famously restricted with respect to the predicates that can embed them (see Gärtner 2001, Meinunger 2006, Djärv 2019 *inter alia* for EV2; McCloskey 2006, Woods 2016 for EIs; Crnič and Trinh 2009, Kaufmann 2012, Reis 2021 for embedded imperatives). For further analysis of these syntactic differences from typical embedded clauses and between English and German, I refer the reader to Woods (2016, 2020, in prep).

These constructions also permit a perspectival shift to the original discourse context, which is not so readily available in their non-root counterparts.⁵ This can be illustrated through the use of discourse particles and motion verbs that orient to the original rather than the current speakers (as in (15)), or by direct denials of the content by the current speaker without giving rise to infelicity (as in (16)). However, German embedded imperatives have a restriction whereby the addressee of the original and reported imperative must be the same (Kaufmann and Poschmann 2013: 634-5, illustrated by examples (17)-(18)).

Perspective shift

(15) Yorkshire English (attested)

Context: Liz visited a town she used to live in and bumped into an old friend, who invited her to their house for coffee. She is reporting the encounter some weeks later.

They_j said oo, could we_i come over for coffee so we_i did [go over for coffee]

(16) German (constructed)

Maria sagte sie ist krank, aber ich weiß dass sie lügt.

Maria said she is ill but I know that she lies

"Maria said she is ill but I know she's lying."

Original addressee restriction in German embedded imperatives:

(17) German (Kaufmann 2015: 8)

Hans_i hat dir doch gestern schon gesagt, ruf meinen_{i,speaker} Vater an.

Hans has you.DAT PRT yesterday already told call.IMP my father to

"Hans_i already told you yesterday, call my_{i,speaker} dad."

(18) German (based on Kaufmann 2015: 8)

Hans_i hat doch gestern schon gesagt, ruf deinen_{addressee/*speaker} Vater an.

Hans has PRT yesterday already told call.IMP your father to

"Hans already said *(to me) yesterday, call your_{addressee/*speaker} dad."

⁵ The perspective shift is a point of difference between English/German on the one hand, and Swedish on the other. See Wiklund (2010), Djärv (2022) and Woods (in prep) for more on this distinction.

Table 2 summarises below the characteristics of the three embedded root clauses of interest in German and in English. Light grey shading indicates groupings of common characteristics; dark grey shading indicates points of distinction:

Table 2: Morphosyntactic, syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of embedded root clauses

	Ells	Embedded imperatives	Comp-EV2
Sequence of Tense	✓	N/A	✓
Indexicals anchor to current context	✓	✓ (German: current addr. =original addr.)	✓
Multiple embedding	✓	% (English) * (German)	%✓
Position	Follows predicate and utterance-final, cannot be fronted	Utterance-final (preferred), cannot be fronted	Follows predicate and utterance-final; can marginally be fronted
“Original” addressee restriction	✗	✓	✗
Perspective shift	✓	✓ (English) Speaker-only (German)	✓

We see that Ells and Comp-EV2 pattern very similarly; embedded imperatives differ with respect to multiple embedding and the “original” addressee restriction that is active in German. Two questions then remain: (a) why do German and English differ with respect to the interpretation of their imperatives and (b) why doesn’t German have Ells?

3. Pragmatic constraints

I propose in this section that these differences between English and German arise principally from a difference in pragmatic rules, specifically that in English, both speaker and addressee variables must shift together, whereas in German, only speaker variables may shift.

There is independent evidence that German and English may differ in terms of default interpretation of situations under attitude predicates. Schwarz (2012) notes that he and Ezra Keshet, in their respective work⁶ on situation pronouns, differ in their judgement as to whether transparent interpretations are available in contexts such as the following:

- (19) Context: The teacher thinks the glasses A, B, and C, which contained a clear liquid, were filled with vodka (they actually contained water).
- a. The teacher thinks John should be punished because he drank glasses A, B, and C.
 - b. The teacher thinks John should be punished because he drank every glass with water in it.

Schwarz (2012, pp.35-36)

Schwarz claims that a transparent interpretation of the context (19)b is available, while Keshet’s judgements are consistent with the claim that only the opaque reading in (19)a is available. In this

⁶ For Keshet’s approach, see e.g. Keshet (2011).

way, Schwarz’s grammar allows representations from the current context to be used in the description of the teacher’s behaviour, where the original perspective holder’s perspective is privileged in Keshet’s grammar.

Woods (2016: 163), a first language English speaker, notes that she agrees with a Keshet-type interpretation rather than a Schwarz-type judgement. Noting that Keshet is also a first language English speaker, whereas Schwarz is a first language German speaker, she conducted an informal survey of 5 English and 5 German and Swedish speakers on contexts and examples like (19), which revealed that the English speakers only accepted (19)a while the German and Swedish speakers accepted both.

While requiring further investigation, this indicates that speakers of these languages may have acquired fundamentally different ways of interpreting perspective under attitude reports, and that these interpretations are brought to the fore in the interpretation of embedded root constructions. I will now turn to these constructions to tease apart in more details how they are interpreted.

3.1. The formalism

In the rest of the paper I will use Farkas and Bruce’s (2010) Table model, updated by Farkas (2022), to formalise how the constituent parts of our embedded root structures contribute to conversational meaning. In this section I briefly lay out the model components.

The model is built on four principal components required for conversation: a Table on which issues are placed to be resolved, the discourse commitments of the speaker (DC_{Sp}) and the addressee (DC_{Ad}) and the projected set of canonical responses to issues on the Table. The discourse commitments are fairly straightforward and map to the interlocutors’ public (and it is assumed private) commitments in the discourse context.

Starting then with the Table, an issue placed on it takes a specific syntactic form and expresses some proposition(s). It can be resolved if it can be accepted into the interlocutors’ shared commitments in that context, otherwise known as the common ground (Stalnaker 1978). If issues remain on the Table, the conversation is considered “unstable”.

The form in which the issue is expressed determines its conventional discourse effects, which is to say how it is expected to be interpreted and responded to by an addressee. These conventional discourse effects shape the projected set, which is a set of preferred next discourse moves (or commitments) that the speaker expects the addressee to make. These moves typically are a step towards folding the (one of the) propositions on the Table into the common ground of the discourse participants, with the aim that future common grounds are always more informative than the one that precedes them.

To demonstrate for a root declarative utterance like *Mary likes Sam*, the speaker commits to an issue consisting of a single proposition p and places that on the Table for the addressee to respond to. Furthermore, they project that the addressee’s next discourse move will be to commit to p too (on the basis that canonically, when uttering a declarative clause, the speaker expects the addressee to take the proposition it contains to be true). This is demonstrated in Figure 1.

DC_{Sp}	Table	DC_{Ad}
P	<'Mary likes Sam'[DECL]; p >	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad} \cup \{p\}\}$		

Figure 1: Conversational state after utterance of a declarative with the propositional content "Mary likes Sam".

Should the addressee act canonically and commit to p , it will be in both interlocutors' discourse commitments, which is reducible (in this context) to it being in the shared common ground. The proposition can then be removed for the table and the issue is considered to be resolved.

Interrogative utterances (for ease here I limit myself to polar interrogatives) consist of the speaker commits to an issue consisting of a set of propositions, meaning that they commit to one of the propositions in the set being true in the relevant context. They add that set to the Table to be resolved, which is canonically achieved by the addressee committing either to the truth of the positive or the negative proposition. This is visualised in Figure 2:

DC _{Sp}	Table	DC _{Ad}
{ $p, \neg p$ }	<'Mary likes Sam'[Q]; p >	
Projected set: {DC _{Ad} U { p }, DC _{Ad} U { $\neg p$ }}		

Figure 2: Conversational state after utterance of the interrogative clause "Does Mary like Sam?"

This is a necessarily brief outline of the Table model that omits finer formal details, including rules for addition and reduction, for which the reader is directed to Farkas (2022). In brief or in full, this technology is particularly useful for my aims here because it focuses on how to relate syntactic forms and conventional discourse effects. I will now go on to show how it can help us understand, with a little expansion, how the discourse effects of EIs, comp-V2, embedded interrogatives and their non-root counterparts play out.

3.2. A conventional implicature

Before embarking upon the conventional discourse effects of embedded speech acts, I must first flag a conventional implicature that they generate. Examples like (20)-(21) demonstrate that an embedded root clause generates the implicature that some speech or thought act actually occurred.

(20) US English (attested 18 May 2018; felicity judgment from British English speaker)
I didn't say don't interview them [survivors]. #(I said don't interview them in the first minutes after surviving a massacre).⁷

(21) German, Truckenbrodt 2006: 296
Hans glaubt nicht, Peter hat gewonnen, #(er glaubt nur, dass Peter gut abgeschnitten hat)
Hans believes not Peter has won he believes only that Peter good done has
'Hans does not believe that Peter has won, he only believes that Peter has done well.'

This very subtle distinction can be illustrated by clauses appearing under *verba non dicendi* like *glauben* ('think', as in (21)), *wonder* and *not know*:

(22) British English (Woods 2020: 301)
a. Everyone wanted to know whether Joe could come to the party.
no implicature: the question about Joe's attendance was actually asked
b. Everyone wanted to know could Joe come to the party
Implicature: Joe's attendance was overtly discussed in some form

⁷ Taken from <https://twitter.com/JonAcuff/status/997566058142760961>, last accessed 29 Sep 2023. For context and to demonstrate that this is not strictly a direct quotation, the original tweet reads: "I don't think we should immediately shove a camera and a microphone in the face of a 15yo who has just survived a school shooting minutes ago. That's for ratings not healing. We need their voices but not in the 1st minutes of PTSD. We use victims as props and it's gross." A reply reads: "Not interviewing people directly impacted by events (both good and bad) sort of defeats the purpose of the news and journalism."

Woods (2020) demonstrates that the implicature (that a speech act with the propositional content of the EI was made) is conventional on the following grounds:

(23) Woods (2020: 313)

- a. Conventionality and detachability: EIs are always an alternative to typical embedded interrogatives (cf. also de Villiers et al. 2011; Stringer 2015) and, in the absence of subject-auxiliary inversion, the implicature disappears (cf. (22)a vs. (22)b, (24) below).
- b. Non-cancellability: the implicature cannot be denied by the speaker (see (24) below).
- c. Non-backgrounding: the information that a speech act was made addressing such [propositional content] is a new piece of information conveyed by the current speaker (the hearer need not already know that a relevant previous speech act was made).
- d. Projection through negation and interrogation: these operators do not affect the implicature that some speech act was performed (see (25) below), though the exact content may be queried.
- e. Independence of at-issue meaning: EIs do not impose new or additional discourse requirements.
- f. Speaker-oriented: in the sense that the speaker is choosing to and takes responsibility for expressing the implicature that the relevant speech act was made.

(24) British English (Woods 2020: 313)

- a. I wanted to know if Joe was coming to the party but didn't mention it at all.
- b. I wanted to know was Joe coming to the party #but didn't mention it at all.

(25) British English (Woods 2020: 313)

- a. I didn't ask would he cook tea for me # (, I asked would he cook lunch).
- b. Did Jane ask was Mary coming? \models something was asked

To our knowledge, (23)a-f also hold for German EV2, and for embedded imperatives (modulo the construction-specific claim in (23)a).

In order to capture the pragmatic rules of using embedded root clauses, then, both the shifting rules of each language and the fact of their conventional implicatures must be captured.

3.3. EIs in the Table model

Turning back to language-specific shifting patterns, I contend that on the basis of their contextualised language input – of which EIs are potentially a key part – English-acquiring children learn that both speaker and addressee perspectives can shift under attitude predicates, and that if a shift occurs, all parameters shift together. Key to their acquisition of these rules are examples that flout or explicitly illustrate these rules (e.g. the attested embedded imperative examples in (8)-(9)).

To deal with non-root embedded interrogatives I need to add to the model by including prosody in the form of the utterance, as prosody crucially affects the interpretation of interrogatives (and canonical responses to them) in both matrix (e.g. Farkas and Roelofsen 2017) and embedded cases (Schafer et al 2000, McCloskey 2006, Dayal 2023).

I will focus on final contours, marking them with \searrow for a final fall and \nearrow for a final rise. This is necessary because we need to capture the contexts in which it is perfectly canonical to respond to an interrogative embedded under a declarative with an answer to the embedded clause – indeed in some contexts it's pedantic not to do so. That said, to ask a question using an embedded imperative is still a

marked *form* relative to a matrix question as the addressee must recognise that there is also a matrix proposition that is plausibly at issue.

Let's start by modelling an embedded interrogative with a final fall as in (26); a case in which, I argue, the embedded interrogative is not expected to elicit a response:

- (26) *Context: Sam is back from university for the holidays. An old friend that he doesn't want to see, Mary, has been asking his sister Taylor when he'll be back. Taylor reports the conversation to her friend Jay, who knows all the backstory, saying:*
 Taylor: Mary asked if Sam was home ↘.

The utterance in (26) results in the conversational state modelled as follows:⁸

DC _{Sp}	Table	DC _{Ad}
p	<'Mary asked if Sam was home'[DECL]; p; ↘>	
Projected set: DC_{Ad} ∪ {p}		

Figure 3: Conversational state after utterance of "Mary asked if Sam was home" with final falling contour

In (26)/Figure 3, the speaker places a single proposition on the table for discussion, the complex proposition *p* *Mary asked if Sam was home*, and the falling tone reinforces the response expected by the speaker to their syntactic/prosodic choices – that the addressee will accept as true that proposition and add it to their own discourse commitments. As a corollary of the syntactic and prosodic choices made, the speaker does not raise the issue of whether Sam is home, and the addressee is not expected to take a stance on it either.

Let's now model a string-identical embedded interrogative in a different context with a final rise, below in (27):

- (27) *Context: Sam is back from university for the holidays. An old friend, Mary is throwing a party and wants to invite him, so she has been asking his sister Taylor when he'll be back. Taylor hasn't spoken to Sam lately but knows that their mutual friend Jay will be up to date. Taylor wants to help Mary out so says to Jay:*
 Taylor: Mary asked if Sam was home ↗.

DC _{Sp}	Table	DC _{Ad}
p, {q, ¬q}	<'Mary asked if Sam was home'[DECL]; p; <'Sam was home'[Q]; q> ↗>	
Projected set: {DC_{Ad} ∪ {p ∧ q}, DC_{Ad} ∪ {p ∧ ¬q}}		

Figure 4: Conversational state after utterance of "Mary asked if Sam was home" with final rising contour

In (27)/Figure 4, two sets of propositions are placed on the Table and the resulting projected set is more complex, with two canonical responses that the addressee is expected to choose from; they will either choose to accept the matrix proposition and confirm that the embedded proposition holds, or accept the matrix proposition but reject the embedded proposition.

Evidence for this analysis is as follows: firstly, in this context, an overt response to the matrix proposition alone, e.g. *I know she did*, is considered infelicitous in the sense that it is interpreted as

⁸ This model was proposed in Woods (2016: 189); the models that follow are inspired by that work but represent an updated and more accurate version.

pedantic. Relatedly, bare *yes*, *of course* or *mhm* answers of acceptance are not appropriate responses to (27) and must indicate explicitly that they target the embedded utterance.

- (28) Taylor: So we're organising a party, and Mary asked if Sam was home[↗].
- Jay: #Yes.
 - Jay': #Yes, I heard (that she asked...)
 - Jay'': Yes, he is.
 - Jay''': Of course! (= Of course she did...; ≠ Of course he is)
 - Jay''': Of course he is.
 - Jay''': ?Is that right? (= that she asked...)

Note that (28)a, (28)b, (28)f are all acceptable in response to (26) with its final fall, but (28)c would fall oddly on first-language speakers' ears. This is because typical embedded interrogatives with final falls do not mark the addressee of the embedded interrogative, so plausibly, the question could be live for either the original or current addressee, though the *canonical* case is that it is live for the original addressee only. In contrast, the final rise on (27) marks the current addressee as being responsible for settling the issue in the embedded interrogative.

Let's now turn to EIs. To capture EIs we require one further addition to the Table model, namely the indexing of propositions to contexts. As demonstrated empirically in section 2, EIs shift perspective to the original discourse context (when the original and current context are the same, the illusion of non-shifting can occur). To capture this, I represent here potential contexts for evaluation as indices (0 for the discourse context, 1 for some other relevant discourse context).

(29) illustrates an EI used in its most canonical form as a report of an act in a previous discourse:

- (29) *Context: Jay has heard that people have been speculating about Sam's whereabouts and knows that Taylor has been party to some of the discussions. They ask Taylor about this and Taylor replies:*
 Mary wanted to know was Sam home.

DC _{Sp0}	Table	DC _{Ad0}
p Sp/PH ₁ overtly raised an issue related to q in w ₁ (=π)	<<'Mary wanted to know was Sam home'[DECL]; p> ₀ <'Sam was home'[Q]; q> ₁ ↘> ₀	
Projected set: {DC _{Ad0} ∪ {π ∧ p ∧ {DC _{Ad1} ∪ {q, ¬q}}}}		

Figure 5: Conversational state after the utterance "Mary wanted to know was Sam home" with final falling contour

Figure 5 demonstrates that the current speaker expresses as not-at-issue content the fact that a speaker or perspective holder (PH) in the relevant previous discourse, here identified as Mary, raised some issue in that discourse (π). The locution "related to q" is intentionally weak; Mary may have raised the exact issue of whether Sam is home (q), or a higher-level question that could be answered, in part or in whole, by the answer to q, e.g. *Who is home?* The reasons why a weaker characterisation of the issue is necessarily will become clear shortly.

The current speaker also expresses as at-issue content the fact that Mary wanted to know whether Sam was home (p). As such, predicate negation in proposition p (with narrow scope) is not acceptable, because the fact that Mary raised an issue in the original context can't be denied – a contradiction with the not-at-issue content would result.

- (30) British English (constructed; see Woods 2016: 121)

- a. Mary wanted to know was Sam home #but never actually asked anyone about it.
- b. A: Mary wanted to know was Sam home.
B: #No she didn't, she never said a thing.

However, the *content* of the act can be rejected, as well as *how* it was expressed:

(31) British English (constructed)

- A. Mary wanted to know was Sam home.
- B. No, she asked was *Robin* home.

(32) British English (adapted from Woods 2016: 89)

- A. Mary wanted to know was Sam home.
- B. But she didn't ask it like that!
- A. True, she actually asked was that bore home.

As such, the proposition π bypasses the table and passes straight into the addressee's discourse commitments, while proposition p is placed on the table but is expected to be accepted by the addressee into their discourse commitments.

With respect to the root embedded clause, its form and its indexing require it to be placed separately on the table because it is marked in these ways relative to the non-root embedded clause and must have an impact on canonical discourse effects. It is true that the not-at-issue assertion of π is one such effect, but the creation of a set of propositions q by the inversion in the embedded clause also creates expectations on the part of some relevant speaker. That speaker is marked as the speaker/perspective holder in the original discourse, and the expected addressee as the original addressee⁹, due to the rules already discussed for English about how context parameters shift together under attitude predicates. Therefore, the current addressee can only add to their discourse commitments that q is at issue for the addressee in the original discourse (Ad_1) – it would not be canonical for the current addressee to respond to it directly. In terms of open issues being added to discourse commitments, see Farkas (2022) for a Romanian particle *oare* that does just this, and Woods and Haegeman (in press) for a West Flemish discourse marker, *kwestje*, which has a similar effect of informing an addressee that a question is open but not for them to solve.

There is an implication here that if the speaker and addressee in the current context are identified with the speaker and addressee in the original context, then it should be fine to respond directly to an EII. This falls out, with a little help from intonation (a final rise) and an extended pause after the EII:

- (33) A: I was asking Mary was Sam home already...?
- B: Yes, he got back last week.

Note however that example (29) in the context given fails to get this meaning, even with rising intonation. This is because there is no way of identifying the original speaker/addressee with the current ones:

DC_{Sp0} (Taylor)	Table	DC_{Ad0} (Jay)
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⁹ There may be some occasions where the addressee in the matrix context was not an optimal addressee for a question – for example if they weren't expected to know the answer, but were expected to know how to find out. See (34)/Figure 7 for such a case. For simplicity's sake I will still refer to the "addressee" in the original context as that knowledge holder is in some sense being indirectly accessed in the original context, but this could use further reflection and research.

p Mary overtly raised an issue in $w_1 (= \pi)$	<<'Mary wanted to know was Sam home'[DECL]; $p >_0$ <'Sam was home'[Q]; $q >_1$ $\nearrow >_0$	
Projected set: None - DC_{Ad0} can't access a set of propositions from which to provide a true answer		

Figure 6: Conversational state after uttering "Mary wanted to know was Sam home" with final rising contour, without authority to speak on behalf of Mary

If I adjust the context in which the string in (29) is uttered, as in (34), we have more luck, however.

- (34) Context: Taylor is Mary's secretary and is tasked with finding out whether Sam is back from university to be able to come to Mary's party. Taylor knows that Jay will know Sam's whereabouts, and also knows Taylor's relationship to Mary. Taylor says to Jay:
Mary wanted to know was Sam home?

In (34), the current speaker has the authority/duty to speak on behalf of Mary and can reasonably be identified with her, at least in terms of her intentions relative to this issue. Resolving the issue of identity of the addressee is a little harder, but can be done if Mary expects or instructs Taylor to ask Jay, making Jay an indirect addressee (perhaps more accurately, source of information) in the original context.

DC_{Sp0} (Taylor for Mary)	Table	DC_{Ad0} (Jay)
p Mary overtly raised an issue in $w_1 (= \pi)$	<<'Mary wanted to know was Sam home'[DECL]; $p >_0$ <'Sam was home'[Q]; $q >_1$ $\nearrow >_0$	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge \{DC_{Ad1} \cup \{q, \neg q\}\}\}$ $: \{\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge q\}\}, \{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge \neg q\}\}\}$		

Figure 7: Conversational state after utterance of "I want to know was Sam home" with final rising contour

As this requires some complex pragmatic reasoning, it may not be surprising that many speakers of EII dialects (including myself) would likely prefer a kind of direct quotation approach here, as in (96), indicated by the lack of sequence of tense:

- (35) Mary wanted to know is Sam home?

Moreover, the projected set in Figure 7 is ultimately very similar to that of a typical embedded interrogative with rising tone (see (27), Figure 4) with the addition only of π , which in this context is fully redundant because it's not only communicated overtly in the matrix clause (p) but is also embodied in this context – literally, it is what is happening at the time of the utterance.

A related but more natural example can be seen in (36), where the original and current discourses are the same but the matrix clause is also interrogative:

- (36) Context: Taylor is planning a party next week but isn't sure if Sam is still away at university.
Taylor asks Jay:
Do you know is Sam home?

DC_{Sp0}	Table	DC_{Ad0}
$\{p, \neg p\}$ Sp/PH ₁ overtly raised an issue with content q in $w_1 (= \pi)$	<<'You know is Sam home'[Q]; $p >_0$ <'Sam is home'[Q]; $q >_1$ $\nearrow >_0$	

Projected set: $\{\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge \{DC_{Ad1} \cup \{q, \neg q\}\}\}, \{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge \neg p \wedge \{DC_{Ad1} \cup \{q, \neg q\}\}\}\}$ $:\{\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge q\}\}, \{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge \neg q\}\}, \{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge \neg p \wedge \{q, \neg q\}\}\}\}$

Figure 8: Conversational state after utterance of "Do you know is Sam home?"

As you can see in Figure 8, the effect of uttering (36) is different from the effect of uttering (29) because the matrix proposition p is also at issue. Note that in the relativised projected set (the second line in the projected set in Figure 8) that it is not possible for the speaker to potentially commit to $\neg p$ (I don't know) and either q (Sam is home) or $\neg q$ (Sam is not home) severally. Though these options look as if they should be logically possible, the fact that the speaker cannot know $\{q, \neg q\}$ while also committing to not knowing $\{q, \neg q\}$ rules this option out.

In summary, the conventional response to an EII in English is to accept that an issue was raised with the content of the embedded clause, by contextually-specified actors (π). That the issue was raised by those actors will be new information for the addressee of the EII, as will the information that it was an open issue for them (i.e. was not yet resolved in that context; $DC_{Ad1} \cup \{q, \neg q\}$).

An EII may be deployed in the current context by the speaker to elicit a response from the addressee, but this is a marked use of the EII due to the redundancy arising (a) from the similarity to the conventional effect of a typical embedded clause with a final rising contour and (b) from expressing as non-at-issue content the fact of the act, through the act itself. This situation improves if the EII is couched within a question, as the first type of redundancy no longer obtains.

A prediction arises here that EIIs are less likely than typical embedded interrogatives to be interpreted as indirect questions; this question can be investigated through corpora and experimental work requiring more space than is left in this paper.

3.4. Comp-EV2 and embedded imperatives in the Table model

Turning now to comp-EV2 in German, I assume that the typical canonical interpretation of an embedded *dass*-clause is as in (37)/Figure 9.

- (37) *Context: Taylor and Jay are chatting about their friends Maria and Peter. They haven't heard directly from Peter, but Taylor has been in contact with Maria, who has seen him recently. She tells Jay:*
 Maria glaubt, dass Peter glücklich ist.

DC _{Sp}	Table	DC _{Ad}
p	<'Maria glaubt, dass Peter glücklich ist'[DECL]; $p \searrow$ >	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad} \cup \{p\}\}$		

Figure 9: Conversational state after utterance of "Maria glaubt, dass Peter glücklich ist."

(98)/Figure 9 mirrors the case of an English embedded clause as in (87)/Figure 3. Let's now take a comp-EV2 clause in the same context:

- (38) *Context: Taylor and Jay are chatting about their friends Maria and Peter. They haven't heard directly from Peter, but Taylor has been in contact with Maria, who has seen him recently. She tells Jay:*
 Maria glaubt, Peter ist glücklich.

DC _{Sp0}	Table	DC _{Ad0}
p_0 Sp ₁ overtly raised an issue with content q in w_1	<<'Maria glaubt, Peter ist glücklich'[DECL]; $p >_0$	

	<p><'Peter ist glücklich'[D]; $q >_{\langle Sp/PH1, Ad0 \rangle}$ $\searrow >_0$</p>	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge q\}\}$		

Figure 10: Conversational state after utterance of "Maria glaubt, Peter ist glücklich."

(38)/Figure 10 differs from an English EII because, as discussed earlier, the addressee is fixed to the current addressee for all information on the Table and only the speaker/perspective holder parameter can shift.¹⁰ This can plausibly be identified as the current speaker, but the conventional discourse effects modelled here are that the addressee has 2 propositions to address: one is asserted at issue by the speaker, namely p , and one is asserted by the speaker as not-at-issue content, namely π . The embedded proposition q is placed on the Table but not asserted by the speaker as it is interpreted relative to the original speaker/perspective holder. This comes as a result of the marked form that the speaker has chosen to use to report the proposition, though as this is purely a conventional discourse effect, it can be overridden by context. I suggest that this is easier in the case of EIIs because assertions are generally typically more strongly linked to speakers than questions are (cf. the wide range of non-canonical questions cross-linguistically), but this idea requires further consideration.

Let's turn now to embedded imperatives. For the purposes of this paper I will assume that imperatives add to the Projected Set the proposition that the addressee should enact the content of the imperative, expressed here for an imperative with content m as $DC_{Ad0} \cup \{Ad_0 \square m\}$. Whether this is the most accurate way to represent an imperative in the Table model I leave for further research.

Assuming the above, a root imperative enters the discourse as follows:

(39) Context: Taylor and Jay are talking about train timetables. Jay needs to get to central London for 11am and is considering leaving Newcastle at 8am. Taylor says: Leave earlier.

DC_{Sp}	Table	DC_{Ad}
m	<'PRO leave earlier'[IMP]; $m \searrow >$	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{Ad \square m\}\}$		

Figure 11: Conversational state after utterance of the root imperative "Leave earlier."

When embedded in English, the imperative will be indexed as follows:

(40) Context: Jay needed to get to central London for 11am and was considering leaving Newcastle at 8am. Mary has considerable experience of the route and had been talking to Taylor about Jay's plans. Jay ends up delayed and missing their meeting. Taylor is talking to Sam about Jay's nightmare travel experience. Mary said leave earlier.

DC_{Sp0}	Table	DC_{Ad0}
<p>p Sp_1 overtly raised with Ad_1 an issue with content q in w_1 $(=\pi)$</p>	<p><<'Mary said leave earlier'[DECL],$p >_0$ <'PRO leave earlier'[IMP];$m >_1$ $\searrow >_0$</p>	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge DC_{Ad1} \cup \{Ad_1 \square m\}\}\}$		

Figure 12: Conversational state after utterance of "Mary said leave earlier."

¹⁰ See Djärv (2022) for an account of a similar kind of perspective holder shift in Swedish EV2.

Again, if the context is such that the context parameters of perspective holder and addressee are the same in the current and original discourse contexts, then embedded imperatives like (40) can be interpreted as live in the current discourse, but not otherwise.

With respect to German, speakers have learned through years of contextually-situated experience of embedding under attitude predicates that addressee parameters do not shift, though perspective holder parameters can. Therefore, an embedded imperative like (41) has the conventional discourse effect shown in Figure 13.

(41) German (Kaufmann 2015: 8)

Context: Context: On Monday, Magda tells Michael "Claudia should leave at 5, not 7." ON Tuesday, Michael tells Claudia, who intends to book the train at 7:

Magda hat gesagt fahr schon früher
 Magda has said leave.IMP already earlier
 "Magda said leave earlier.

DC _{Sp0}	Table	DC _{Ad0}
p_0 Sp_1 overtly raised with Ad_1 an issue with content q in $w_1 (= \pi)$	$\langle \langle 'Magda \text{ hat gesagt fahr schon } \text{früher}' [\text{DECL}], p \rangle_0$ $\langle 'PRO \text{ fahr schon fruher}' [\text{IMP}]; m \rangle_{\langle Sp_1, Ad_0 \rangle}$ $\searrow \rangle_0$	
Projected set: $\{DC_{Ad_0} \cup \{\pi \wedge p \wedge \{Ad_0 \square m\}\}$		

Figure 13: Conversational state after utterance of "Magda hat gesagt fahr schon früher."

The effect of using an embedded imperative is that the command (or order, or offer) holds of the addressee in the current context, coercing the addressee more strongly to enact its content than an embedded modalised predicate (by way of an alternative construction).

The fact that it expresses a kind of "double command" relative to the addressee due to the not-at-issue proposition π could be expected to lead to redundancy and reduced acceptability in German, but the same problem would not typically hold in English. This could be the source of differences between German and English in terms of the wider acceptability of embedded imperatives in spoken English (compared with the greater individual variation we see in German).

The analysis here might also predict that we find embedded imperatives more frequently in English, and that they are judged more grammatical, because they are more flexible in terms of the contexts in which they occur. The addressee restriction in German means that embedded imperatives are restricted to contexts where imperatives are both reported and "current" at the same time, requiring very specific conversational and contextual set-ups. A first route for investigating this would be to run a corpus analysis of speech in each language, comparing occurrences of root and non-root imperatives in terms of frequency and context of use.

3.5. The interrogative gap

The work laid out above helps us understand the final step in the embedded root clause paradigm that we saw in Table 1, namely why only English has embedded interrogatives. As interrogatives typically require shift towards the addressee (cf. interrogative flip, e.g. Garrett 2001), the fact that the addressee does not shift in German embedded contexts could form the basis for the lack of embedded interrogatives in German.

But if we interrogate it, this doesn't seem straightforwardly to explain the problem. The addressee might not shift but the perspective holder can, so why can't the perspective holder shift to the

addressee? Identity between the perspective holder and another parameter in the context tuple can't itself be a problem, as the speaker is frequently the perspective holder.

However, if the perspective holder and the addressee share identity, then only a limited range of question types could be expressed in such a context, namely self-addressed questions. Plausibly, then, an embedded inverted interrogative such as (42) should be able to obtain in German:

- (42)German (constructed)
Ich frage mich, soll ich zur Party gehen?
I ask me, should I to.the party go.INF
"I ask myself, should I go to the Party?"

The issue here is that as the parameters in the two contexts will always be identical, such examples will always be string-identical (or near to) with direct quotation, and there will be very few contextually-situated examples to suggest otherwise, as contexts in which one might reflect overtly on one's own self-questions are rare. As such, then, there are vanishingly few contexts in which a German speaker might construct or hear embedded interrogatives that are not identifiable as direct quotation, and so a recognisably distinct class of embedded interrogatives does not emerge.

3.6. Situating English and German perspective shifting more broadly

This cross-linguistic variation in perspective shifting mirrors the variation available in indexical shifting as identified by Anand and Nevins (2006). Anand and Nevins note most importantly that mixed perspectives are not available in a single clause (i.e., all perspectival elements must shift together). This holds true in embedded root clause perspective shifting too, as we see in (15), repeated here as (43).

- (43)Yorkshire English (attested)
Context: Liz visited a town she used to live in and bumped into an old friend, who invited her to their house for coffee. She is reporting the encounter some weeks later.
They_i said oo, could we_i come over for coffee so we_i did [go over for coffee]

In (43), the discourse marker *oo*, roughly expressing pleasure or surprise, and the spatial orientation of the verb *come* both orient to the perspective of the old friend, who is the original asker of the question. In this case it is not possible for *oo* to express Liz, the current speaker's, pleasure or surprise, and from her current perspective, she would be more likely to express direction of travel using *go*, but this degrades the acceptability of this EII.

Variation also exists crosslinguistically as to *which* variables may shift in a given context. In their paper, Anand and Nevins identify two types of shift: one kind in which all parameters shift (exemplified by Zazaki (Indo-Iranian)) and one in which the "author" (the speaker or perspective holder) shifts, but no other parameters do (exemplified by Slave (Athabaskan)). Again, English and German perspective shifting map onto these types of indexical shifting. Rather excitingly, perspective shifting in Slave of the perspective-holder only type is optional, just as perspective shifting is in German. These similarities suggest that the shifting phenomena investigated here are not simply a cultural accident or idiosyncrasy of Germanic.

4. Conclusion: Pragmatics affects the linguistic distribution of certain embedded root clause types

In this paper I have demonstrated that the distribution of embedded root clauses in English and German is determined by pragmatic rules governing the interpretation of perspectives under attitude

predicates, in conjunction with a conventional implicature brought about by use of matrix-like verb movement or morphology. The lack of EIs in German results from the pragmatic rules of the language which allow shifting of the perspective holder, but not of the addressee parameter (cf. Kaufmann and Poschmann 2013). As this restricts (a) the type of questions that might be embedded and (b) the ways in which such questions may differ from direct quotation, German speakers do not generate or receive sufficient experience to justify differentiating a class of EIs from self-addressed direct quotation.

In contrast, the full range of embedded root clause types is available because of the greater “shiftiness” of English – that is to say that all contextual parameters may shift under attitude predicates, and indeed *do* shift when the form of the embedded clause is marked. I predict that this has an effect on the shape of EIs that we see, namely that they tend to involve a third person matrix argument (that is, an “original” interlocutor who is not part of the current discourse) and that they tend to be used in reporting contexts rather than as indirect question forms. This remains to be examined through corpus and experimental study.

Empirically, additional future study is required on other Germanic languages and other so-called “partial” V2 languages, including those outwith Germanic that exhibit relevant properties like rel-V2, for example Estonian. On the theoretical side, much work remains to be done into the intricacies of modelling embedded clauses in general, but I hope the claims here provide a stimulating point of departure.

Abbreviations

Ad – addressee, BNC – British National Corpus, Comp-V2 – Verb second clause in complement position, DAT – dative, DC - discourse commitments, DECL – declarative clause typing feature, EI – embedded inverted interrogative, (E)V2 – (embedded) Verb second, IAP – Illocutionary Act Phrase, IMP – imperative clause-typing feature, PH - perspective holder, Q – interrogative clause typing feature, Rel-V2 – Verb second relative clause, SAP – Speech Act Phrase, Sp – speaker, SUBJ - subjunctive

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