1. I&T on ‘Our Even’

Iatridou & Tatevosov (2014) [I&T] discuss a use of even in wh-questions (‘our even’), which is distinct from its canonical use. Assuming the core meaning of even to be unlikelihood, they analyse this use of even as involving unlikelihood of ignorance, which they derive from the unlikelihood of the question being asked. We argue that I&T’s account needs to be refined in the following two respects.

1. There are two special uses of even in wh-questions: Discourse even (=‘our even’) and attitude even.

2. The core meaning of even is not unlikelihood, but a more general notion of low-rankedness on some scale.

2. Two Readings

We observe an interpretive difference between (2B1) and (2B2).

**Attitude even:** What the speaker of (2B2) is asking is whether there is anything worth eating at all at Oleana’s, and simultaneously signaling that they doubt there is.

**Discourse even:** (2B1) can be read this way as well, but it can also be used to ask what A seems to be presupposing, i.e. they both know what Oleana serves. In this case, B’s negative attitude is not necessarily present.

Discourse even is closer to what I&T call ‘our even’.

The contrast between these two uses is clearly illustrated by (3).

(3) A: Do you want to go to Oleana’s?
   B1: Sure!! #What do they even serve?
   B2: Sure! But what do they serve even?

The use of sure indicates B’s willingness to go to Oleana’s. This causes a conflict in (3B1) where the question expresses B’s negative attitude toward whatever is served in Oleana’s. The felicity of (3B2) indicates that it has a reading that does not involve B’s negative attitude.

3. Attitude Even

We propose that attitude even says:

\[
\text{All conceivable answers to the wh-question are low-ranked according to some modal ordering. We assume that the modal ordering can be based on the judge’s (i) desires (boulletic), goals (teleological), or expectations (epistemic).}
\]

\[
\begin{align}
\text{(even)} & \quad \text{is} \quad \text{Q} \quad \text{for all } w \in \text{Dox}_{\text{c}}(Q), \text{if } Q(w) = 1, \text{then } w \text{ is non-maximal according to the ordering source } c_q \text{.}
\end{align}
\]

\[Q: \text{a Hamblin-question denotation (set of propositions);} \]
\[
c_q: \text{ordering among } c_q \text{’s doxastic alternatives } D_{\text{c}_q}(Q)
\]

Examples:

- For (4B2), the most prominent reading is a bouletic one: B thinks that whatever is served in Oleana’s is not desirable for them.
- The teleological reading is prominent in (5): B thinks that the price of Ramen is higher than they want to pay.
- The epistemic reading is prominent in (6): B thinks that whatever Andrew is smoking is surprising.
- The question in (6) is obviously the most likely one to be asked in the context given there. This again suggests that attitude even is distinct from I&T’s use of even.
- Attitude even in the bouletic reading cannot be adequately described as involving unlikelihood, contrary to I&T’s assumption that the core meaning of even is unlikelihood.

Remarks:

- Our analysis correctly predicts that attitude even cannot appear in yes/no-questions. Since they denote two-membered covers of the set of possible worlds, the possible answers cannot both be non-maximal.
- The negative attitude expressed by attitude even is the speaker’s, which other interlocutors need not share. (4) assumes that the identity of Q depends on the epistemic state of the speaker. This seems in keeping with the general nature of alternative sets.

4. Discourse Even

Discourse even is close to I&T’s characterisation of ‘our even’. Contrary to them, however, we claim:

- We largely follow I&T’s intuition here, but we disagree with them that the core meaning of discourse even has to do with unlikelihood.
- Unlikelihood of the question being asked does not always lead to questioning the previous discourse move, e.g. (7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>A &amp; B are classifying newly discovered species according to a set of questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: The wug seems to be cold-blooded.</td>
<td>A: The wug seems to be cold-blooded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: (Skipping ahead,) what does it feed on? (even)?</td>
<td>B: (Skipping ahead,) what does it feed on? (even)?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Here, B’s question is, although relevant, unlikely to be asked at the current moment. Yet, this unlikelihood is not sufficient to license discourse even, contrary to I&T’s view.

Analysis:

- We propose that what is expressed by felicitous uses of discourse even is rejection of presupposition accommodation.
- With I&T, we assume that alternative question acts are partially ordered in a discourse, but unlike I&T, we claim that the ordering < is not only based on the (un)likelihood of the question acts, but more broadly on goals, conventional linguistic behaviour, etc.
- Let Q and Q’ be alternative question acts. Q < Q’ means Q is more basic than Q’ and needs to be resolved before resolving Q’. The function of discourse even is to challenge the other interlocutors’ pragmatic presupposition that Q is already resolved.

For (1), A assumes that the question of where Oleana’s has been resolved, but B rejects to accommodate this presupposition. For (7), B’s question is not supposed to have been resolved. Compare this to:

<table>
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<th>Context</th>
<th>A&amp;B are classifying newly discovered species according to a set of questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Moving on to the next specimen... This one must be carnivorous.</td>
<td>Moving on to the next specimen... This one must be carnivorous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Is it cold-blooded, even?</td>
<td>B: Is it cold-blooded, even?</td>
</tr>
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The effect of presupposition rejection is derived via Q’s low-rankedness on Q’ ex-pressed by discourse even, together with the speech act of asking Q.

5. Embeddability

- Attitude even can appear in an embedded context.

  (9) John is wondering what Oleana’s will even be serving on a Sunday night.
  The attitude expressed is John’s, i.e. John doubts that there will be anything worth eating at Oleana’s on a Sunday night, and cannot be the speaker’s.
  This is reminiscent of the judge-dependency of epistemic modals and predicate of personal taste ([L05, S07, M07, BMS14]), but unlike these items, attitude even is not hearer-oriented in matrix questions.
  The embeddability also suggests that the meaning of attitude even is not a conventional implicature (in the sense of Potts 2005).

Discourse even does not seem to be embeddable:

<table>
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<th>Context</th>
<th>A: Let’s meet at Oleana’s for dinner. Is that OK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B: #Where is that even,?</td>
<td>B: #Where is that even,?</td>
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