_If_ vs. _when_, _wenn_ vs. _als_: microvariation in the semantics of conditional and temporal complementizers in English and German

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In this talk, I argue that while all four complementizers mentioned in the title take situation predicates as arguments and return situation predicates, they differ with respect to the constraints they impose on their arguments. It turns out that while the important point in English is whether a situation predicate characterizes a situation/a plurality of situations that is located within w_0, the important point in German is whether a situation predicate characterizes a unique situation, or a plurality of situations.

Concerning *if*-sentences, it is widely known that they can be the antecedents of indicative as well as subjunctive conditionals like the ones given in (1) and (2). Furthermore, they can also restrict operators like Q-adverbs and modal verbs, as shown in (3) and (4). Combining these observations, it has been argued by Kratzer (1986), who builds on Lewis (1975), that *if* makes no semantic contribution of its own, and that *if*-clauses in general have the sole purpose of restricting whatever overt or covert operator is present in the respective sentence. She therefore argues that in sentences like (1) and (2) a covert quantifier with universal force is present that quantifies over epistemically accessible worlds where the antecedent is true. Now, the problem with this idea is that it predicts *if*- and *when*-clauses to be completely interchangeable in adverbially quantified sentences. While this is true in many cases, as shown in (5), it does not always hold, as is evidenced by the contrasts in (6) and (7) (cf. von Fintel and Iatridou 2002). I argue that these contrasts are due to the following fact: *if* presupposes that the speaker is not sure that the situation predicate it applies to characterizes a situation that is located within w_0 (cf. (8)). This has the consequence that *if*-clauses can only restrict quantifiers over possible worlds. Now, in the case of (6a), the presupposition is violated because the situations characterized by the complement of *if* are located within a specific time interval in w_0 with respect to which the speaker seems to be well-informed. In the case of (7a), on the other hand, this presupposition is violated because it is common knowledge that professors give lectures.

Concerning well-formed examples like (3) and (5a), I argue that in these cases the *if*-clauses do not restrict the respective Q-adverb directly, as Q-adverbs do not quantify over worlds (i. e. maximal situations), but only over (non-maximal) situations. Rather, the QV-readings of these sentences come about as follows: the respective indefinite, which I assume to be topical, is moved out of the *if*-clause (cf. the well-known fact that indefinites can be interpreted specifically with respect to conditional clauses), being interpreted in the restrictor of the Q-adverb, which is fronted at LF (cf. Chierchia 1995). Furthermore, the conditional as a whole is interpreted in the nuclear scope of the Q-adverb, and the copy left behind by the moved indefinite is turned into a definite description (cf. Fox 2002) the denotation of which varies with the situations quantified over (cf. Elbourne 2005), as the NP-internal situation variable (cf. Kratzer 2004) is bound by the Q-adverb. (5a) thus receives the LF-representation given in (9a), which is interpreted as shown (in simplified form) in (9b).

The contrasts mentioned above can now be explained as follows: in sentences like (7a), for example, quantification over possible worlds is not allowed, because with respect to each of the situations quantified over – namely temporally maximal situations that contain a professor – there is no question as to whether the possible worlds that are epistemically accessible from the respective situation are such that the unique professor contained in this situation gives a lecture (see above). Concerning sentences like (3a), on the other hand, this problem does not arise, as it is not clear that each farmer owns a horse: quantification over possible worlds where the respective farmer owns a horse is thus allowed (cf. von Fintel and Iatridou 2002 for a similar analysis of sentences where *if*-clauses seem to restrict determiner-quantifiers).

Concerning *when*, on the other hand, I argue that it applies in the unmarked case, i. e. whenever the speaker *is* sure that the respective situation predicate characterizes a situation/a plurality of situations that is/are located in w_0.

Finally, I show that in German *wenn* is allowed to apply to a situation predicate whenever this situation predicate characterizes a plurality of situations. The situation predicates it returns can thus become the arguments of Q-adverbs as well as of overt or covert modal operators, as is evidenced by the examples in (10). Its application is only blocked whenever the respective situation predicate characterizes a unique situation. In these cases, *als* has to be used, as is evidenced by the contrast in

(11). I therefore assume that *wenn* applies in the unmarked case in German, while *als* has to be employed whenever the presupposition given in (12) is satisfied.

(1) If John comes to the party tonight, he will meet Mary.
(2) If Paul's new wife was a philosopher, she would earn a lot of money.
(3) If a farmer owns a horse, he is always/usually/often rich.
(4) If Mary is not in her office, she must/should be at home.
(5) a. If a drummer admires Tony Williams, he is usually good.
b. When a drummer admires Tony Williams, he is usually good.
(6) a. #Last week was difficult for Mary: Always, if she came home from her office, the refrigerator was empty.
b. Last week was difficult for Mary: Always, when she came home from her office, the refrigerator was empty.
(7) a. #If a professor gives a lecture, she is always happy.
b. When a professor gives a lecture, she is always happy.
(8) [[If]] = $\lambda P_{<s, t>}$: the speaker is not sure that the following proposition is true:
$\exists s' \leq w_0$ [P(s´)]. λs. P(s)
(9) a. [[A farmer]$_i$ [usually [if [a farmer]$_i$ owns a horse, he is rich]]].
b. Most s [∃x. farmer(x, s)]
[∀w [R(s, w) ∧ ∃y. horse(y, w) ∧ owns(y, ιx. farmer(x, s), w)
→ is_rich(ιx. farmer(x, s), w]
"For most (temporally maximal) situations *s* that contain a farmer it is the case that in all worlds that are epistemically accessible from *s* where the unique farmer in *s* owns a horse are worlds where the unique farmer in *s* is rich".
(10) a. Wenn Peter Philosoph ist, verdient er eine Menge Geld.
COMP Peter philosopher is, earns he a lot of-money.
b. Wenn ein Bauer ein Pferd besitzt, ist er meistens reich.
COMP a farmer a horse owns, is he usually rich.
c. Wenn Mary nicht in ihrem Büro ist, muss sie zu Hause sein.
COMP Mary not in her office is, must she at home be.
d. Wenn eine Professorin eine Vorlesung gibt, ist sie meistens glücklich.
COMP a professor a lecture gives, is she usually happy.
e. Die letzte Woche war hart für Mary: Immer, wenn sie nach Hause kam, war der
The last week was tough for Mary: always, COMP she PREP home came was the
Kühlschrank leer.
refrigerator empty.
(11) a. #Wenn Mary gestern nach Hause kam, war der Kühlschrank leer.
COMP Mary yesterday PREP home came, was the refrigerator empty.
'When Maria came home yesterday, the refrigerator was empty'.
b. Als Mary gestern nach Hause kam, war der Kühlschrank leer.
(12) [[Als]] = $\lambda P_{<s, t>}$: ∃s[P(s) ∧ ∀s´[P(s´) → s´ = s]. λs. P(s)

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