Discourse *Even* vs. Attitude *Even*

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Summary..

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.
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1. I&T on 'Our *Even*'

Iatridou & Tatevosov (2014) [I&T] discuss a non-canonical use of *even*, e.g. (1B).

(1) A: Let's meet at Oleana's for dinner. Is that OK?
    B: Where is that **even**?

They claim that *even* in (1) has "an epistemic inference that the speaker [is] ignorant about the most basic thing about (an issue relating to) the Question under Discussion".

They observe that this use of *even* is syntactically limited; it can only appear at the end of the question ((1B), ($2B_1$)), or on the VP (($2B_2$)) but not elsewhere (($2B_3$), ($2B_4$)).

(2) A: Shall we go to Oleana's for dinner?
    B_1: What do they serve **even**? B_3: #Where is **even** Oleana's?
    B_2: What do they **even** serve? B_4: #What do they serve **even** there?

I&T claim that this use of *even* expresses the **unlikelihood of ignorance**, derived from the unlikelihood of the question being asked, assuming that the basic meaning of *even* is **unlikelihood**. We will challenge this idea.

2. Two Readings

We observe an interpretive difference between ($2B_1$) and ($2B_2$):

- **Attitude** *even*: What the speaker of ($2B_2$) is asking is whether there is anything worth eating at all at Oleana's, and simultaneously signaling that they doubt there is (thereby indirectly objecting to A's suggestion).
- **Discourse** *even*: ($2B_1$) 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?
    B_1: Sure!! #But what do they **even** serve?
    B_2: 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 ($3B_1$) where the question expresses B's negative attitude toward whatever is served in Oleana's. The felicity of ($3B_2$) indicates that it has a reading that does not involve B's negative attitude.

3. Attitude *Even*

We propose that **attitude** *even* says:

> **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 (*j*) desires (**bouletic**), goals (**teleological**), or expectations (**epistemic**).

(4) $[\![even_{att}]\!]^C(Q)$ expresses that for each $q \in Q$, for all $w \in Dox_{c_w}(c_S)$, if $q(w) = 1$, then w is non-maximal according to the ordering source c_O.

- Q: a Hamblin-question denotation (set of propositions);
- c_O: ordering among c_S's doxastic alternatives $Dox_{c_w}(c_S)$

Examples:

- For ($4B_2$), 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.
  (5) [Context: B wants to eat something good and cheap for lunch.]
      A: Why don't you go have ramen at Ippudo London?
      B: How much does a ramen **even** cost there?
- The **epistemic** reading is prominent in (6): B thinks that whatever Andrew is smoking is surprising.
  (6) [Context: Andrew is smoking something that is causing a pungent smell.]
      What is Andrew **even** smoking!?

Problems for I&T:

- 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:

> Discourse *even* rejects the presupposition that another interlocutor is implicitly making that the question has been solved. This effect is derived via the low-rankeness of the question in the discourse.

- 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).
  (7) [Context: A&B are classifying newly discovered species according to a set of questions.]
      A: The wug seems to be cold-blooded.
      B: (Skipping ahead,) what does it feed on (#**even**)?
  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:
    (8) [Same context as (7)]
        a. Moving on to the next specimen... This one must be carnivorous.
        b. Is it cold-blooded, **even**?
- The effect of presupposition rejection is derived via Q's **low-rankedness** on $<$ expressed 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:
  (10) A: Let's meet at Oleana's for dinner. Is that OK?
       B: #I wonder where that is, **even**?

References: [I&T] Iatridou & Tatevosov (2014) Our *even*. SuB 19. [L05] Lasersohn (2005) Context dependence, disagreement, and predicate of personal taste. *L&P*. [S07] Stephenson (2007) Judge dependence, epistemic modals, and predicates of personal taste. *L&P*. [M07] McCready (2007) Context shifting in questions and elsewhere. SuB 11. [BMS14] Bylinina, McCready & Sudo (2014) The landscape of perspective shifting. Talk at Tübingen.