

THE QUESTION PARTICLE *EN* IN THURINGIAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF *WH*-DROP*

Andreas Pankau

1 INTRODUCTION

A number of German dialects feature the particle ‘*n*’ in questions, for example South Hessian and Bavarian.

- (1) *Wos hosd *('n) gsogd?*
what have.you PRT said
‘What did you say?’ (WEISS 2002: 324; BAYER 2012: 23)

- (2) *Wɔn kimd-ŋ dɔn fadə hɔ:m?*
when comes-PRT your father home
‘When does your father come home?’ (MOTTAUSCH 2009: 323)

This particle ‘*n*’ has three properties. First, it is obligatory. Both WEISS (2002: 324) and BAYER (2012: 23) call ‘*n*’ in Bavarian obligatory and note that omitting it in (1) results in ungrammaticality.¹ MOTTAUSCH (2009: 323) calls ‘*n*’ in South Hessian “basically obligatory” as well. Second, ‘*n*’ is restricted to direct *wh*-questions. Neither in South Hessian nor in Bavarian does ‘*n*’ occur in direct yes/no-questions² or indirect questions (BAYER 2013b: 41; MOTTAUSCH 2009: 331). Third, as extensively discussed by BAYER (2010, 2012, 2013a, 2013b), ‘*n*’ licenses *wh*-drop, that is, the ellipsis of a moved *wh*-phrase.³

- (3) *Wos/~~wos~~ deats 'n es do?*
what do.2.PL PRT you.PL there
‘What are you doing there?’ (BAYER 2013b: 41)

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¹ The obligatoriness of ‘*n*’ in Bavarian was also noted by SCHIEPEK (1899: 34, 47).

² More specifically, ‘*n*’ does not occur obligatorily in yes/no-questions (WEISS 2002: 324; BAYER 2012: 24). Crucially, if ‘*n*’ occurs in yes/no-questions, its presence comes along with an additional pragmatic effect that is absent from *wh*-questions with ‘*n*’ (BAYER 2012: 25).

³ The set of *wh*-phrases that can be dropped is severely restricted in German: only *was* ‘what’ and *wo* ‘where’ allow *wh*-drop. I ignore this aspect in this paper as it is orthogonal to the general claim I wish to make, namely that *wh*-drop is not an agreement phenomenon.

BAYER (2010) argues that all three properties of ‘*n* (obligatoriness, restriction on *wh*-questions, licensing of *wh*-drop) jointly follow if ‘*n* is analyzed as an agreement suffix for moved *wh*-phrases. The obligatoriness of ‘*n* follows because agreement suffixes are generally obligatory, for example person and number suffixes on verbs. The restriction on *wh*-questions and the exclusion of yes/no-questions follows because only *wh*-questions provide a local agreement controller for ‘*n*, namely the moved *wh*-phrase. Lastly, the presence of ‘*n* guarantees recoverability of the elided *wh*-phrase because ‘*n* can only be present if a moved *wh*-phrase was present at some stage of the structure as well.

In this paper, I challenge BAYER’s (2010) syntactic analysis of *wh*-drop in terms of agreement and recoverability and argue instead that the licensing condition for *wh*-drop is pragmatic. The argument I develop for this analysis comes from the behavior of the particle *enn* in Thuringian. The particle *enn* appears in *wh*-questions but also in yes/no-questions. So *enn* cannot be an agreement suffix for moved *wh*-phrases. Yet it is obligatory in *wh*-drop. I argue that *wh*-drop is only possible in clauses that are unambiguously marked as questions. This derives that *enn* is required in *wh*-drop because questions are marked by *enn* in Thuringian. The obligatoriness of ‘*n* in Bavarian in *wh*-drop is a special case of this general requirement as only *wh*-questions have to be marked as questions in Bavarian.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I provide some background on Thuringian and the Thuringian data that form the basis of this paper. In section 3, I turn to *enn* in Thuringian and show that it is a genuine question particle. In section 4, I show which problems the status of *enn* as a question particle creates for Bayer’s syntactic analysis of *wh*-drop. Finally, in section 5 I provide a pragmato-syntactic analysis for the obligatory presence of *enn* and ‘*n* in *wh*-drop.

2 THURINGIAN

Thuringian is an East Central German dialect spoken in an area demarcated very roughly by the Harz Mountains in the north, the river Saale in the east, the Thuringian Forest in the south, and the river Werra in the west. Its linguistic border to the north coincides with the border separating Central from Low German (the Uerdingen line), and its linguistic border to the west coincides with the border separating West from East Central German (the Gernersheim line). Its southern border to East Franconian is demarcated by a number of morphological criteria (ROSENKRANZ 1964): the shape of the diminutive suffix (*-chen* vs. *-lein*), the shape of the infinitival suffix (*-en* vs. *-e*), and the retention of stem forming *n* (*Mann* vs. *Mo* ‘man’). Its eastern border to Upper Saxon is demarcated by the shape of infinitival suffix (*-en* vs. *-e*).

Despite its name, the area of the federal state Thuringia does not coincide with the area where Thuringian is spoken. On the one hand, Thuringian is spoken also in the southern parts of the federal states Saxony Anhalt and Lower Saxony. On the other hand, there are parts of Thuringia where dialects other than Thuringian

gian are spoken. In the south west, East Franconian is spoken and in the north west, Low German is spoken. Map 1 gives an overview of the Thuringian dialect area.



Map 1 Thuringian dialect area (source: Arbeitsstelle Thüringische Dialektforschung; reprinted with permission)

The data used in this article come from two types of written sources. The first source is the dialect grammar and lexicon from Sondershausen (DÖRING 1903; 1904; 1912), and the dialect description and lexicon from Gotha (CRAMER 1998). The second source is dialectal literature. I consulted the works of the three authors: Kurt Zeising (ZEISING 1995; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2002), Bernhard Stucki (STUCKI 1996) and Walther Tröge (TRÖGE 1930; 1931; 1932).

3 THE STATUS OF *ENN* IN THURINGIAN AS A QUESTION PARTICLE

As already observed by WEISE (1900), Thuringian possesses a particle reminiscent to ‘*n* in South Hessian and Bavarian, namely *enn*.⁴ Similar to ‘*n*, *enn* in Thu-

⁴ The relevant particle surfaces in different forms ([ən], [ə], [dɨ], [n], [a], [an], [ɪn]), depending on the specific subdialect and/or the phonological environment. Moreover, the unrounded mid-high vowel is orthographically represented as either {e} or {ä}. I ignore this variation and refer to the relevant particle as *enn* throughout the paper and in the glosses.

ringian appears in *wh*-questions, licenses *wh*-drop, and is restricted to direct questions (WEISE 1900: 25).

- (4) a. *Wu wuhn'n S' änn?*
 where live they ENN
 'Where do you live?' (TRÖGE 1932: 95)
- b. *Issän jetzt schonn widder?*
 is.ENN now already again
 'What's going on now again?' (CRAMER 1998: 38)

There are however two important differences between 'n and *enn*. First, *enn* is optional.⁵ One finds examples that are minimal pairs, being pragmatically basically identical to each other and differing only in the presence of *enn*, illustrated in (5).

- (5) a. *Was mach'n S' änn da?*
 what make they ENN there
 'What are you doing there?' (TRÖGE 1931: 53)
- b. *Was machste da?*
 what make.2.PL there
 'What are you doing there?' (TRÖGE 1932: 12)

Second, *enn* is not restricted to *wh*-questions, but also appears in yes/no-questions.

- (6) *Hast 'änn oo ä schienes Lunzch'n gemacht?*
 have.2.SG ENN also a nice nap made
 'Did you also take a nap?' (TRÖGE 1931: 91)

In the next subsections, I argue that *enn* is not a *wh*-agreement suffix but a question particle. More specifically, I argue for the following characterization of *enn*.

- (7) *characterization of enn*
- a. *enn is a question particle: enn_[Q].*
- b. *If enn appears in a clause S, then S is a true question.*

⁵ There is a tension between the dialect descriptions and the dialect texts on this issue. In the dialect descriptions, *enn* is called obligatory (WEISE 1900: 25). Moreover, *enn* also appears in basically all example questions in the dialect description of Sonderhausen (DÖRING 1903; 1904; 1912) and in the dialect description of Gotha (CRAMER 1998). However, in all the dialect texts I consulted *enn* appears only optionally in questions. This is even true for the dialect of Gotha: in the dialect texts from the same author (CRAMER & KRETZSCHMAR 2005) *enn* hardly appears in questions. This could either indicate that the dialect texts are not true representatives of the dialect (cf. SPERSCHNEIDER 1959: 11-12) or that the dialect descriptions highlight this unique aspect. Since the dialect texts often differs syntactically to a huge extent from the standard language, I consider them a reliable source and therefore take the particle *enn* to be optional.

The first clause (7a) defines the relevant property of *enn*, namely that it is a question particle. The second clause (7b) captures that *enn* is optional as (7b) is compatible with clauses where no *enn* appears but that are nevertheless true questions.

In the remainder of this section, I will first show that *enn* is indeed restricted to interrogative clauses. I then show that despite its optionality, *enn* marks questionhood. The argument for this claim comes from special questions, that is, interrogative clauses that only look like questions but pragmatically are not questions. After that, I show that *enn* does not correspond to the modal particle *denn* found in Standard German because *enn* and *denn* have different pragmatic usage conditions.

3.1 *enn* is Restricted to Interrogative Clauses

In order to show that *enn* is a question particle, one needs to show first that *enn* is restricted to interrogative clauses. A number of alternatives for the occurrence of *enn* in (4)-(6) suggest themselves, all of which are inadequate.

First, *enn* could be taken as an indicator of A'-movement in general, that is, movement of an operator to SpecCP. This analysis captures the data in (4)-(6) because in each case an A'-moved operator appears in SpecCP: a *wh*-phrase in (4) and (5), and a null operator in (6) (cf. BARBIERS 2007 for arguments that yes/no-questions contain null operators). This analysis predicts that *enn* occurs in all A'-movement contexts. However, this is incorrect: *enn* never occurs in relative clauses, even though they contain an A'-moved operator, namely a relative pronoun.

- (8) a. *On e war väenträssiert fär alles, was de neie Zeit brachte.*
and he was interested for everything what the new time brought
'And he had an interest in everything the modern times brought.'
(TRÖGE 1930: 8)
- b. *Wie e sech 'mal mät Wilhelm Grimm'n, där alle ält'n Räste*
how he REFL once with Wilhelm Grimm.OBJ who all older rests
von dr deitsch'n Sprache gesammelt hat, ongerhul ...
of the German language collected has talked.with
'When he once talked with Wilhelm Grimm, who collected all the
oldest documents of the German language.'
(TRÖGE 1930: 4)
- c. *Oddo'n sei Liebstes war, en Bichchern ze läs'n, was mr ju bei*
Otto.OBJ his favorite was in books to read what one PRT at
Dorfjong'n nöch su ofte fängkt.
village.boys not so often finds
'Otto's favorite hobby was reading books, which is rather atypical for
village people.'
(TRÖGE 1930: 9)
- d. *Was hier geschräm'n on gespaßt wärd, das kann jedes hiere.*
what here written and jested becomes that can everyone hear
'What is written and jested here, that can everyone hear.'
(TRÖGE 1930: 6)

Since relative clauses are embedded, one might suggest as a second alternative that *enn* only appears in main clauses with A'-movement, that is, in all clauses containing an A'-moved operator and verb second order. This captures the data in (4)-(6) and excludes the data in (8) because the latter do not feature verb second order. This second alternative then predicts that all main clauses containing an A'-moved operator license *enn*. But this is incorrect as well: sentences featuring topic drop never feature *enn*.

- (9) *__ 's eich zu kraß mät dän Gewärche on Geflitze dahiert'n en Bärln!*
 is you too extreme with the turmoil here in Berlin
 'That is too extreme for here for you in Berlin, with all the turmoil!'
 (TRÖGE 1930: 58)

The sentence in (9) is a verb second clause and features topic drop, that is, a construction where a null pronoun is A'-moved and elided (cf. TRUTKOWSKI 2016 for a comprehensive treatment). Yet *enn* never surfaces in such clauses.

Finally, the presence of *enn* in (4)-(6) could be tied to the mood of the clauses such that *enn* is licensed in non-declarative clauses. But this option is inadequate as well because non-declarative clauses other than interrogative clauses never contain *enn*.

- (10) a. *Komm'n Se nor fix 'rein!*
 come they only quickly in
 'Please come in!' (TRÖGE 1930: 8)
- b. *Du bäst etze värheirat't?*
 you are now married
 'You are married now?' (TRÖGE 1930: 103)

(10a) illustrates an imperative clause, which is non-declarative; but *enn* never occurs in imperative clauses in Thuringian. Similarly, *enn* is never licensed in so-called rising declaratives, as shown in (10b), which are only form-wise declarative clauses but have interrogative force.

3.2 *enn* is Restricted to True Questions

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, *enn* is optional. This adds a complication to the argument that *enn* is a question particle. Consider why. That *enn* is optional means that there are interrogative clauses without *enn*. Instead of appealing to optionality, it could equally be the case that *enn* is not a question particle but a particle marking a meaning component that happens to occur in only a subset of questions. I nevertheless wish to claim that *enn* is a question particle. The reason for this is that all the interrogative clauses containing *enn* differ in one crucial aspect from the interrogative clauses not containing *enn*. The questions containing *enn* are always true questions, whereas the ones not containing *enn* can

also be special questions. Or to put it differently, the following generalization holds.

(11) *enn* never appears in special questions.

By true questions, I refer to all questions that are pragmatically questions. I follow the imperative-epistemic approach to questions (ÅQVIST 1975; HINTIKKA 1974; WACHOWICZ 1978) and take a question in the pragmatic sense to be any question where (i) the speaker requests the hearer to provide the speaker with some knowledge that (ii) the speaker doesn't have. Special questions – sometimes also called non-standard or pseudo questions – are all those questions that lack one of the two components or both (BAYER & OBENAUER 2011; MUNARO & OBENAUER 1999; OBENAUER 2004).

A well-known case of special questions are questions embedded under extensional verbs like *know*, *tell*, or *find out* (GROENENDIJK & STOCKHOF 1982). With these verbs, the meaning of the embedded question is equivalent to the true answer to the question. For example, the meaning of *I know who John likes* is 'I know the true answer to the question: Who does John like?'. So what is lacking in questions embedded under extensional verbs are both components, the one of request and the one of ignorance. As expected, *enn* never occurs in questions embedded under extensional verbs.

- (12) a. *Die wöss'n, wu mr en Jäne ä gutes Gläsch'n Weine lecke kann.*
 they know where one in Jena a good glas wine lick can
 'They know where one can drink a good glas of wine in Jena.'
 (TRÖGE 1930: 39)
- b. *Där äs öm die Zeit ömmer en Sorge, äb nöch ännne Modder*
 he is around the time always in worry if not a mother
keene Zockerdeite brängt.
 no candy.cone brings
 'He is always worried during this time of the year whether some
 mother might not afford a candy cone'
 (TRÖGE 1930: 89)

In (12a), the verb *wöss'n* 'to know' embeds a *wh*-question, in (12b) the complex predicate *en Sorge sein* 'to be worried' embeds a yes/no-question. As indicated in the translations, the meaning of the embedded questions is equivalent to the true answers to the questions. But not all embedded questions are special questions. Questions embedded under so-called intensional verbs like *wonder* or *ask* are true questions (GROENENDIJK & STOKHOF 1982; MUNSAT 1986). For example, the meaning of *I asked who John likes* is 'I asked for an answer to the question: Who does John like?'. So in questions embedded under intensional verbs the two components of ignorance and request are present. And as expected, *enn* occurs in questions embedded under intensional verbs.

- (13) a. *E hätte ämal ä ält'n Bauern gefra't, wie vül 's 'änn Drach'n*
 he had once a old farmer asked how many it ENN dragons
bei'n en Dorfe geb.
 at.him in village gives
 'He once asked a farmer how many dragons there are in the village.'
 (TRÖGE 1932: 35)
- b. *Jeder michte wösse, äb 'n das mät n Steiern su weiter*
 everyone wants know if ENN that with the taxes so further
geih' sull.
 go should
 'Everyone wants to know if it can go on like this with the taxes.'
 (TRÖGE 1932: 35)

In (13a), the verb *fra'n* 'to ask' embeds a *wh*-question, in (13b) the complex predicate *wösse nicht'n* 'want to know' embeds a yes/no-question. As both predicates count as intensional, the embedded question is a true question and the particle *enn* is licensed. Similar to *enn* in direct questions, *enn* is optional in questions embedded under intensional verbs.

- (14) *Gottschalks Theodor fra'te seine Lina, äb se 'n als Mann ha' wulle.*
 Gottschalk Theodor asked his Lina if she him as man have want
 'Theodor Gottschalk asked his Lina, if she wants to marry him.'
 (TRÖGE 1930: 49)

Apart from questions embedded under extensional verbs, there are six more types of special questions in which *enn* never occurs.

The first type is exclamative clauses, illustrated in (15).

- (15) a. *Was hat Peter lange Arme!*
 what has Peter long arms
 'What long arms Peter has!'
- b. *Ist Schulz blöd!*
 is Schulz stupid
 'Is Schulz stupid!'

Exclamative clauses look on the surface like interrogative clauses, but are not requests for information. Instead, they express that the speaker considers the content of the proposition as unexpected or deviating from a general norm (FRIES 1988). In (15a), the unexpectedness/deviation is related to the length of Peters arms, in (15b) it is the fact that Schulz is stupid. Interestingly, *enn* never appears in exclamatives in Thuringian. Two examples of exclamatives, which lack *enn*, are given in (16).

- (16) a. *Wie hatt' die sech hinte mal wädder ahngedockt!*
 how had she REFL this.evening once again dolled.up
 'How much she dolled her up this evening again!' (TRÖGE 1930: 61)
- b. *Dunnerlittch'n, hat där awer änne Schwarte!*
 gosh has he but a rind
 'Gosh, is he fat!' (TRÖGE 1930: 107)

In both examples, the speaker is not asking for information, but considers the content of the proposition unexpected/deviant: in (16a), it's the degree of dressing up, in (16b), it's the fatness of someone.

The second type are rhetorical questions with negative force, illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. *Wer zahlt schon gerne Steuern.*
 who pays already gladly taxes
 'Who likes to pay taxes.' [= No one likes to pay taxes.]
- b. *Ist Karneval lustig.*
 is carnival funny
 'Is Carnival funny.' [= Carnival is not funny]

Rhetorical questions with negative force are only questions at the surface. As indicated through the translations, they are equivalent to declarative questions whose truth value is opposite to the truth value of the proposition. So (17a) expresses that no one likes to pay taxes, and (17b) expresses that carnival is not funny. Interestingly, *enn* never appears in rhetorical questions in Thuringian.

- (18) a. *Wär wall 's sa!*
 who wants it say
 'Who can say it' [= No one can say it.] (TRÖGE 1932: 26)
- b. *Äs das nöch komesch?*
 is that not funny
 'Isn't that funny.' [= It is funny.] (TRÖGE 1931: 18)

Given the context of the two questions, both count as rhetorical questions with negative force. Regarding (18a), the author discusses several hypotheses about the etymology of the name for a typical local Thuringian festival; and in (18b), the author uttering this sentence mentions that an English and a Thuringian place have the same name.

The third type of special question is what I call attentive questions. In attentive questions, the speaker wants to highlight the importance of a certain event by first posing a question that attracts the attention towards this event. Consider a scenario where someone tells a long story with many new information, only a few of which however are in fact relevant for the course of the story. In such a scenario, the speaker can insert a general question such as (19a) to highlight what happened next, or he can insert a more specific question such as (19b).

- (19) a. *Und was ist dann passiert?*
and what is then happened
'And then what happened?'
b. *Und wen hat Peter plötzlich gesehen?*
and who has Peter suddenly seen
'And who did Peter suddenly see?'

Both questions are fine in a situation where the speaker wants to highlight that Peter saw someone. Attentive questions are not true questions, but rather the opposite of it. Not only does the speaker in fact know the answer, the person he asks cannot possibly know the answers. Attentive questions are very frequent in the Thuringian dialect texts I consulted and they never occur with *enn*.

- (20) *On was moß e da hie?*
and what must he there hear
'And what does then hear?' (TRÖGE 1931: 8)

In (20), the speaker asks a child a relatively trivial question but gets a surprising answer. Since the speaker knows the relevant surprising answer and only wants to direct the attention of the reader towards the answering-event, the question in (20) counts as an attentive question.

The fourth type are guess questions (WILSON & SPERBER 2012: 222). Guess questions are questions that the speaker uses after he described an object or with which he describes this object such that he now wants the hearer to identify it. Typically, such questions have a joking flavor because the descriptions usually lead one up the garden path. Two examples are given in (21).

- (21) a. *Was hat vier Beine und kann fliegen?*
what has four legs and can fly
'What has four legs and can fly?'
b. *Es hat vier Beine und kann fliegen; was ist das?*
it has four legs and can fly what is that
'It has four legs and can fly; what is that?'

The answer for both questions is 'two birds'. The joking flavor results from the clash between the hearer's expectation that the question is about a single animal and his world knowledge that the animals that can fly – namely birds – only have two legs. Guess questions do not count as true questions as the speaker already knows the answer and the hearer cannot be expected to know the answer. Consequently, *enn* is absent from guess questions in Thuringian.

- (22) a. *'s äs mein'n Vater sei Jonge on dach nöch mei Bruder.*
 it is my father his boy and still not my brother
Was äs das?
 what is that
 'It's my father's son but yet not my brother; what is that?'
 (TRÖGE 1932: 27)
- b. *Ech wall dr ämal ä Ongerschied offgä. Was äs dr Ongerschied*
 I want you once a difference assign what is the difference
zwöschén ä Bäcker on ä Paster?
 between a baker and a pastor
 'Let me give you the task to find out a difference. What's the difference between a baker and a pastor?'
 (TRÖGE 1930: 27)

Both questions count as guess questions. In (22a), the context makes it clear that the speaker knows the answer because he provides the relevant description and hence indicates that he knows the answer; the joking flavor comes from the apparent inconsistency of the question (the answer the speaker gives is 'myself'). In (22b), the context makes it clear that the speaker knows the answer because he explicitly assigns a task to the hearer. Making the illocutionary force explicit is not uncommon (when using for example *let me ask you something*) but the speaker doesn't indicate that he wants to ask a question; instead, he assigns a task, which implies that he knows the answer.

The fifth type of question are expository questions (WILSON & SPERBER 2012: 222). Expository questions are questions the speaker uses in order to arouse the hearer's interest in an answer the speaker is going to give himself. A typical example are questions used by lecturers when introducing a new topic. For example, before discussing possible explanations for island phenomena in syntax, a lecturer can ask the question in (23).

- (23) *Warum kann man nun nicht aus Inseln herausbewegen?*
 why can one now not out islands to.move.out
 'Why can't one move out of islands.'

Also these questions do not count as true questions: the speaker already knows the answer and doesn't even expect an answer from the hearer. It therefore doesn't come as a surprise that *enn* never appears in expository questions in Thuringian.

- (24) a. *Wie kömbt das nunne?*
 how comes this now
 'Why is this so.' (TRÖGE 1931: 17)
- b. *Wie warsch nunne bei ons dahiert'n en Thiering'n?*
 how was.it now at us here in Thuringia
 'How was it back then here with us in Thuringia.' (TRÖGE 1932: 41)

Both questions count as expository questions. In (24a), the context is the observation that there are unexpected dialectal differences within a small region in Thuringia, and the author wants to clarify why this is so. In (24b), the author discusses the burning of witches in German history and wishes to lead over to the burning of witches in Thuringia.

The sixth type of special questions are self-addressed questions (WILSON & SPERBER 2012: 223). As the name makes clear, self-addressed questions are questions where speaker and hearer are the same person. Consider a scenario where John is shopping and wants to buy trousers and can't decide between two pairs. In such a context, he could ask the question in (25).

- (25) *Welche Hose kaufe ich jetzt?*
 which trousers buy I now
 'Which trousers will I buy?'

In true questions, the speaker asks the hearer because the speaker lacks some knowledge and expects the hearer to be able to provide him with this knowledge. Self-addressed questions then trivially don't count as true questions. Since speaker and hearer are the same person, this person would both possess and lack the relevant knowledge, which is inconsistent. Unsurprisingly, *enn* is barred from self-addressed questions in Thuringian.

- (26) a. *Was wärd wuhl aus dän Kinne wäre?*
 what will well out the child become
 'What will be the future of my child?' (TRÖGE 1930: 91)
- b. *Äs 's ämänge ä Einbrächer odder gar ä Gespenste?*
 is it maybe a burglar or even a ghost
 'Is it maybe a burglar or even a ghost?' (TRÖGE 1932: 21)

The context for (26a) is one where a mother wonders about the future life of her child, the context in (26b) is one where someone hears a strange sound downstairs and wonders where it might come from. So both sentences count as self-addressed questions, and the absence of *enn* is captured.

To sum up, even though *enn* is optional, *enn* is nevertheless a genuine question particle because it is restricted to true, that is, information seeking questions.⁶

⁶ Thuringian is not exceptional in this respect, 'n in the dialect of North East Berlin is barred from basically the same special questions as *enn* in Thuringian (PANKAU 2018). 'n in Bavarian differs. According to Josef Bayer (p.c., 2018/04/14) 'n in Bavarian is fine exclamatives, a judgment shared by Helmut Weiß (p.c. 2018/04/05), who additionally pointed out that 'n is also fine in rhetorical questions with negative force. WEISS (2002: 324) notes that echo questions bar 'n in Bavarian, similar to 'n in the dialect of North East Berlin (PANKAU 2018). Whether Thuringian allows *enn* in echo questions I could not determine because such questions did not occur in the texts I consulted.

3.3 *enn* Does Not Correspond to *denn* in Standard German

The claim that *enn* in Thuringian is a separate question particle implies that it doesn't correspond functionally to the modal particle *denn* 'then' in Standard German. This claim seems a bit strange at the outset because both *denn* and *enn* are optional, and *denn* shares with *enn* the property that it is restricted to direct questions.⁷

- (27) a. *Wen hast du (denn) eingeladen?*
 who have you PRT invited
 'Who did you invite?'
 b. *Bist du (denn) schwanger?*
 are you PRT pregnant
 'Are you pregnant?'

So a straightforward alternative for *enn* in Thuringian is that *enn* corresponds to *denn* in Standard German, the only difference being that *enn* is phonologically reduced. However, there are five arguments against such a correspondence.

First, *denn* is compatible with some special questions that *enn* is not compatible with, namely rhetorical questions with negative force and exclamatives.

- (28) a. *Wer will das denn?*
 who wants that PRT
 'Who wants that' [= Nobody wants this] (MEIBAUER 1994: 223)
 b. *Wen haben die denn heute nur wieder alles eingeladen!*
 who have they PRT today only again all invited
 'Who they again invited today!' (MOTTAUSCH 2009: 335)

If *enn* corresponded to *denn* in Standard German, then it is unexpected that they occur in different environments.

The second piece of evidence against the idea that *enn* corresponds to *denn* in Standard German comes from so-called surprise-disapproval questions (OBENAUER 2004). Surprise-disapproval questions are questions where the speaker doesn't expect a certain situation, considers this situation negative, and asks why the situation is the way it is. Imagine that Paul's girlfriend combs her hair as every morning, but this morning, she starts screaming and running around. When in such a context John asks *What's going on?*, then this question counts as a surprise-disapproval question: the state of affairs (John's girlfriend runs around screaming) is against John's expectations, he doesn't approve of it, and he asks to

⁷ But see section 5 where I show that this claim is factually incorrect and that *denn* is not restricted to questions.

eventually find out why his expectations were wrong. Interestingly, *enn* and *denn* can appear together in surprise questions in Thuringian.⁸

- (29) a. *De neie Haushälterin des Farrers besichtigt ehre Schlafkammer.*
 the new housekeeper of.the pastor inspects her sleeping.room
Plötzlich rennt se laut schreiend aus dahn Raum.
 suddenly runs she loudly screaming out the room
 ‘Was issen denn lohß?’ frahte dor Pastor vorschtöhrt.
 what is.ENN PRT loose asked the pastor puzzled
 ‘The new housekeeper inspects her sleepingroom. All of the sudden,
 she runs out of the room screaming. “What’s going on?, the pastor
 asked puzzled’ (ZEISING 1995: 8)
- b. Context: a woman runs to the station to bring her husband his suitcase
 for an unexpected trip. Upon arrival, the husband picks up the suitcase
 and locks it up into a locker. His wife doesn’t understand and asks:
Ja, mußten du denn niche wägk?
 yes must.ENN you PRT not away
 ‘Well, don’t you have to catch your train!?’ (ZEISING 2000: 35)

Note that *denn* in Standard German can never be doubled.

- (30) **Was ist denn denn los?!*
 what is PRT PRT loose
 ‘What’s going on?!’

Consequently, *enn* cannot be possibly analyzed as the correspondent of *denn* in Standard German.

Third, *enn* and *denn* have different usage conditions. As for yes/no-questions, the presence of *denn* expresses that the speaker expects the proposition he asks for to be false but that the context provides him with evidence that his expectation is wrong (HENTSCHEL & WEYDT 1983). Consider a scenario where John meets with his two friends Peter and Paul. They often discuss sports, but Peter never showed any interest in tennis. So John is very sure that Peter doesn’t like tennis. Yet this time, Peter talks to Paul about tennis rackets, tennis shoes, and the latest news from the world of tennis. In such a context, it would be natural for John to ask Peter the question in (31).

- (31) *Spielst du denn Tennis?*
 play you PRT tennis
 ‘Do you play tennis?’

⁸ This doubling also occurs in the dialect of North East Berlin (PANKAU 2018). A phenomenon similar to this type of doubling was observed for Bavarian by WEISS (2013: 772-3). Bavarian has the particle *nou/nä* that pragmatically corresponds to the Standard German modal particle *denn*. As WEISS (2013: 772) notes, some speakers allow the co-occurrence of ‘n and *nou/nä*.

The reason (31) is natural is because it expresses exactly the mismatch between John's expectation and the context: John expects Peter to not like tennis but the context (Peter's apparent expertise in tennis) provides John with counterevidence for his expectation. Crucially, *enn* in Thuringian is not pragmatically restricted in such a way. Consider the following example.

- (32) *Korz vorm Helzchen, jleich zwischen dähn erschten Baehmern,*
 shortly before.the forest right between the first trees
lahk ä tohter Fucks. De Jroohßemudder blew schtehn, zeichte uff das
 lay a dead fox the grandmother stayed stand pointed on the
Vieh und sahte for Justen: "Siehsten dähn tohten Fucks hier lähn?"
 animal and said for Juste see.2.SG.ENN the dead fox here lie
 'Shortly before the forest, right between the first trees, lay a dead fox. The
 grandmother stopped, pointed to the animal, and said to Juste: "Do you see
 the dead fox lying here?"' (ZEISING 2002: 55)

In (32), the grandmother (the speaker) cannot possibly have the expectation that Juste (the hearer) doesn't see the dead fox because the grandmother just showed the dead fox to Juste. Yet *enn* appears. Note additionally, that in such a situation, *denn* in Standard German is not licensed, that is, (33) in the context of (32) is out.

- (33) #*Siehst du denn den toten Fuchs hier liegen?*
 see you PRT the dead fox here lie
 'Do you see the dead fox lying here?'

As for *wh*-questions, it is generally agreed on that *denn* is fine those *wh*-questions that connect to something the hearer said or did (BAYER & OBENAUER 2011: 450; THURMAIR 1989; KÖNIG 1977; WEYDT 1969) and hence adds a flavor of involv- edness on the side of the speaker towards the content of question (BAYER 2012; CSIPAK & ZOBEL 2014). For this reason, *wh*-questions with *denn* cannot be uttered out of the blue. KÖNIG (1977) gives the following illustration. Consider a scenario where John wakes up and asks his wife next to him what time it is. In this scenario, John cannot possibly connect to something his wife said or did because she was asleep. For this reason, (34a) is fine but (34b) is out.

- (34) a. *Wie spät ist es?*
 how late is it
 b. #*Wie spät ist es denn?*
 how late is it PRT
 'What time is it?'

enn in Thuringian, however, can be used in questions uttered out of the blue. In (35), the context is identical to the one of (34), yet *enn* appears.

- (35) *Dän ein Tahk war bei Vetter Holzen ewwer Nacht dr Sejer stehen*
 the one day was at father Holzen over night the clock stand
jeblewwn. Dr Vetter wore munter, als dr Hahn Krähte. Da
 remained the father became awake as the rooster crowed there
knuffte seine Frau in Bette ahn un frahte: "Rieke, wie speete
 punched.he his wife in bed on and asked Rieke how late
mahks änn mant sin?"
 may.it ENN only be
 'One day, father Holzen's clock stopped working overnight. The father
 woke up when the rooster crowed. The father punched his wife in bed and
 asked: "What time is it?"' (STUCKI 1996: 12)

Given the contrast between (35) and (34), and the contrast between (32) and (31), *enn* cannot be analyzed as an element corresponding to *denn* in Standard German. A fourth difference concerns disjunctive questions, illustrated in (36).

- (36) *Willst du Pizza oder Nudeln essen heute Abend?*
 want you pizza or pasta eat today evening
 'Do you want to eat pizza or pasta tonight?'

In disjunctive questions, the pair of alternatives is explicitly stated and the speaker wants to know which alternative holds. In (36), the speaker doesn't only want to know what to eat tonight, he wants to know which of the two alternatives the hearer prefers. In disjunctive questions, *denn* is extremely bizarre.⁹

- (37) **Willst du denn Pizza oder Nudeln essen heute Abend?*
 want you PRT pizza or pasta eat today evening
 'Do you want to eat pizza or pasta tonight?'

The reason for this oddity is arguably pragmatic. Recall the usage conditions of *denn* in yes/no-questions, of which disjunctive questions are a subtype, described in connection to example (31). As mentioned there, *denn* expresses that the speaker expects the proposition he asks for to be false, but that the context provides him with evidence that his expectation is wrong. So with respect to (37), the speaker expects that the hearer does not want to eat pizza or pasta, that is, neither pizza nor pasta. If the speaker now has evidence that his expectation is wrong, then he has evidence that the hearer wants to eat both pizza and pasta. But then, the speaker should have used a conjunction instead of a disjunction, which is fine.

⁹ CSIPAK & ZOBEL (2014: 92) disagree and judge comparable examples acceptable. In my view, this discrepancy is apparent because the example they use is also compatible with the construal as a polar question (cf. BIEZMA & RAWLINS 2012), which generally allow *denn*.

- (38) *Willst du denn Pizza und Nudeln essen heute Abend?*
 want you PRT pizza and pasta eat today evening
 ‘Do you want to eat pizza and pasta tonight?’

If *enn* in Thuringian corresponded to *denn* in Standard German, it should not occur in disjunctive questions. Yet it does occur in such questions.

- (39) *Wüman a Laëy otar a Kàm kējalē?*
 want.we.ENN a kugelleich or a Kammspiel bowl
 ‘Do we want to bowl a Kugelleich or a Kammspiel?’ (DÖRING 1903: 44)

The grammaticality of (39) shows clearly that questions with *enn* pattern with interrogative clauses in Standard German without *denn*, indicating that *enn* really only marks questionhood.

The fifth and final difference relates to the position of *enn*. As (40) shows, *enn* can appear directly after a clause initial *wh*-phrase.

- (40) A: *Sag mal, Mäch’n, de hast wuhl heite frieh Dein’n Bleistöft*
 say once girl you have well today morning your pencil
ahngespötzt?
 sharpened
 ‘Say, darling, you sharpened your pencil this morning, right?’
 B: *Wuhär ‘änn weeft’e das?*
 whence ENN know.you that
 ‘How do you know?’ (TRÖGE 1931: 107)

This is at first sight not a real difference between *enn* and *denn* in Standard German because also *denn* can appear after a clause initial *wh*-phrase (BAYER & OBENAUER 2011: 461, pace OTT & STRUCKMEIER 2018).

- (41) *Wer denn hat Hartz IV beschlossen!*
 who PRT has Hartz IV decided
 ‘Who decided about Hartz IV!’

However, there is a crucial interpretative difference between (40) and (41) ignored by BAYER & OBENAUER (2011). The question in (40) is a true question: B wonders why A knows that B used A’s sharpener. The question in (41) on the other hand is not a true question, but a special question, namely what OBENAUER (2004: 364) calls obvious-x questions: the assignment of the variable bound by the *wh*-operator is generally known, hence obvious. Obvious-x questions are hence a subtype of rhetorical questions, but one type where the answer is generally known to the interlocutors. In (41), the answer is obvious, namely the SPD, the Social Democratic Party of Germany. A typical context for (41) would be a discussion where someone claims that the SPD is a left party; (41) can then be used to correct

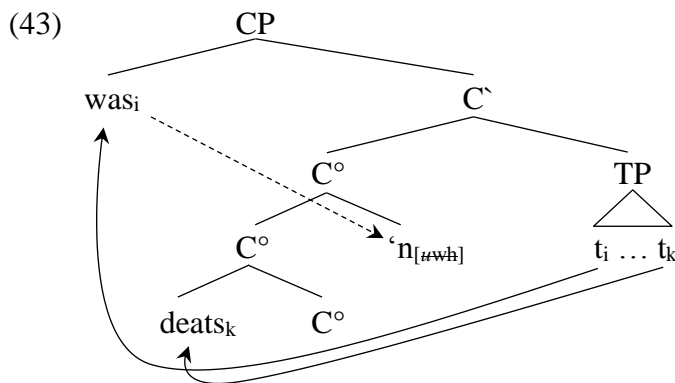
this claim. What would be an impossible context for (41) is any context where someone doesn't know who enacted the Hartz IV reforms.

4 PROBLEMS FOR BAYER'S THEORY OF *WH*-DROP

Having shown that *enn* is a genuine question particle and neither a *wh*-agreement suffix nor an element corresponding to *denn* in Standard German, I will now show that this creates a serious problem for BAYER's (2010) syntactic analysis of *wh*-drop.

BAYER (2010) develops a theory for 'n in Bavarian according to which it is an agreement suffix whose agreement controller is a *wh*-phrase that is overtly moved to SpecCP. From this, BAYER (2010) derives that *wh*-drop obligatorily features 'n: the presence of 'n guarantees recoverability of the elided *wh*-phrase. Consider the structure in (43) for the sentence in (42a).

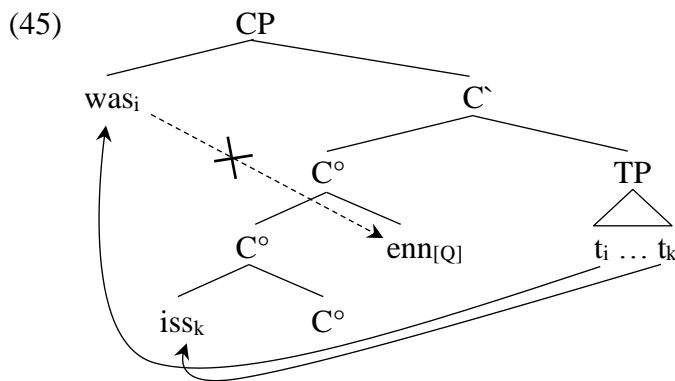
- (42) a. ~~Was~~ *deats-n es do?*
 what do-ENN you.PL there
 b. *~~Was~~ *deats es do?*
 what do you.PL there
 'What are you doing?' (BAYER 2013b: 41)



As the structure in (43) indicates, the finite verb *deats* moves and adjoins to C° , 'n adjoins to C° , the *wh*-phrase *was* moves to SpecCP and is elided. The dotted arrow indicates the agreement relation between the *wh*-phrase and 'n. Since 'n is a *wh*-agreement suffix, it requires a local agreement controller. This is the *wh*-phrase in SpecCP. For ease of exposition, the requirement of 'n for an agreement controller is implemented via a specific feature on 'n, namely [*uwh*]; strike-through indicates that agreement has applied. After agreement with the *wh*-phrase, 'n marks the presence of a *wh*-phrase. Elision of the *wh*-phrase can now apply because 'n preserves the information that a *wh*-phrase was present. The ungrammaticality of (42b) is then a simple consequence of the absence of any element preserving the information that a *wh*-phrase was present. Consequently, elision of the *wh*-phrase is not licensed.

The crucial ingredient for BAYER’s (2010) analysis is therefore that ‘*n* serves the function to encode the presence of a *wh*-phrase. Now the problem *enn* creates for this analysis is that *enn* is required in *wh*-drop but that *enn* is not a *wh*-agreement suffix. Consider the sentence in (44) and its structure in (45).

- (44) ~~Was~~ *issän* *jetz* *schonn* *widder*?
 what is.ENN now already again
 ‘What’s going on now again?’ (CRAMER 1998: 38)



The structure differs from the one in (43) in one crucial aspect: *enn* is not a *wh*-agreement suffix, but a question particle. The trivial consequence of this is that the *wh*-phrase in SpecCP does not enter into an agreement relation with *enn*. *enn* can therefore not possibly serve the function to encode the presence of a *wh*-phrase. But then, the obligatoriness of *enn* in *wh*-drop in Thuringian is not captured under Bayer’s analysis. In fact, since *enn* does not encode the presence of a *wh*-phrase at all, the possibility for *wh*-drop should be independent of the presence of *enn*. So *enn* is predicted to be as optional in *wh*-drop as in *wh*-questions. But this is not the case: *enn* is obligatory in *wh*-drop in Thuringian.

5 A PRAGMATO-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF *WH*-DROP

If *enn* is not a *wh*-agreement suffix, then why is it obligatory in *wh*-drop? What I suggest is that *wh*-drop is not restricted by a condition on the recoverability of the dropped *wh*-phrase but by a condition on the shape of the clause it applies to. More specifically, I suggest the condition in (46).

- (46) *Wh-drop is possible in any clause S if S is identifiable as a question.*

The notion “identifiable as a question” is defined in (47).

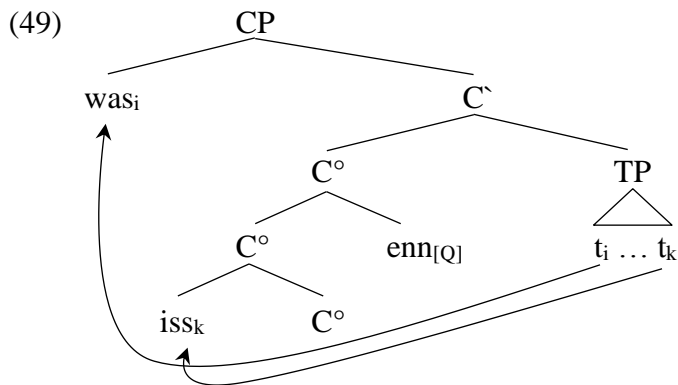
- (47) *A clause S is identifiable as a question iff S contains at least one grammatical formative F such that F is incompatible with non-questions.*

In a nutshell, what (46) requires is that *wh*-drop is possible only in questions that have a marker that signals questionhood. I will now show that this condition captures the obligatory presence of *enn* and ‘*n*’, and that it excludes the option to have *denn* in *wh*-drop.

As for *enn*, consider the sentence in (48) and its structure in (49).

- (48) ~~Was~~ *issän* *jetz* *schonn* *widder*?
 what is.ENN now already again
 ‘What’s going on now again?’

(CRAMER 1998: 38)

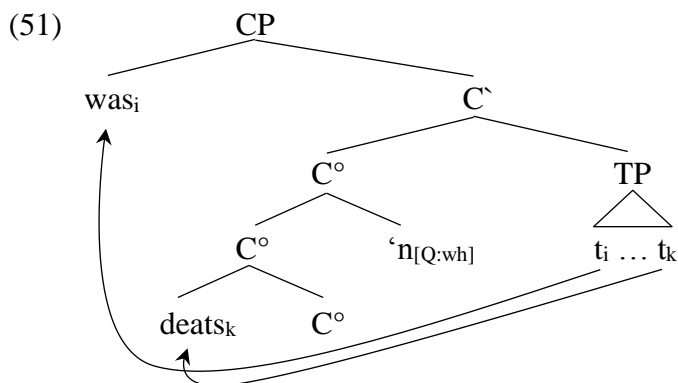


The reason that (48) is fine is that it satisfies the condition on *wh*-drop: the clause is uniquely identifiable as a question. The relevant identifier is the particle *enn*, which as I showed in section 3 is only compatible with questions but incompatible with non-questions.

The same line of reasoning applies to ‘*n*’ in Bavarian. Consider the sentence in (50) and its structure in (51).

- (50) ~~Was~~ *deats-n* *es* *do*?
 what do-ENN you.PL there
 ‘What are you doing?’

(BAYER 2013b: 41)



Instead of analyzing ‘*n*’ as a *wh*-agreement suffix, I take ‘*n*’ to be a question particle that is restricted to *wh*-questions. In (51), this is indicated by the subscript on ‘*n*’, which is [Q:wh]. So the reason that (50) satisfies the condition on *wh*-drop is that ‘*n*’ makes the clause uniquely identifiable as a question because there are no non-questions in Bavarian that contain ‘*n*’. Singling out *wh*-questions seems dubious, but it is a common phenomenon that *wh*-questions and yes/no-questions are treated separately. For instance, there are languages that use distinct question particles for *wh*-questions and yes/no-questions (KROEBER 1997). Moreover, predicates selecting questions in German come in three types: some allow both yes/no- and *wh*-questions, some allow only *wh*-questions, and still others only allow yes/no-questions.

- (52) a. *Ich frage, √wer kommt. / √ob er kommt.*
 I ask who comes if he comes
 ‘I wonder who comes/if he comes.’
- b. *Ich beschreibe, √wer kommt / *ob er kommt.*
 I describe who comes if he comes
 ‘I describe who comes/* if he comes.’
- c. *Er bettelt, *wer Geld für ihn hat / √ob jemand Geld für ihn hat.*
 he begs who money for him has if someone money for him has
 ‘He begs * who has money/√ whether someone has money for him.’

Finally, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, German dialects treat indirect questions quite differently. Whereas indirect yes/no-questions involve a separate complementizer, namely *ob* ‘if’, indirect *wh*-questions are built around indirect declarative clauses involving the complementizer *dass* ‘that’. So the idea that ‘*n*’ is a question particle restricted to *wh*-questions instead of a *wh*-agreement marker is independently motivated.

As for questions without *enn* or ‘*n*’, as shown in (53), they are excluded because they do not contain any element that marks them uniquely as questions

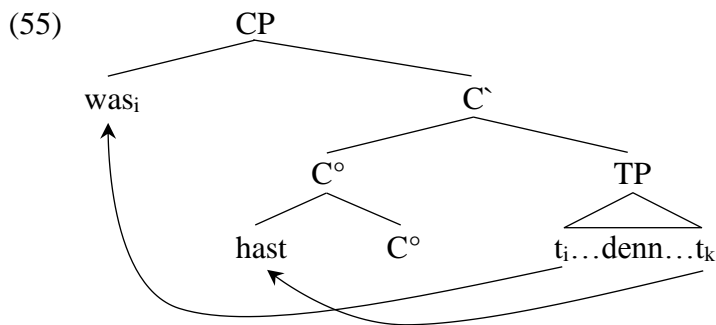
- (53) a. *~~Was~~ *iss jetzt schonn widder?*
 what is now already again
 ‘What’s going on now again?’ (based on CRAMER 1998: 38)¹⁰
- b. *~~Was~~ *deats es do?*
 what do you.PL there
 ‘What are you doing?’ (BAYER 2013b: 41)

¹⁰ An anonymous reviewer correctly points out that CRAMER (1998) does not explicitly state that *wh*-drop requires *enn*. However, all the examples in CRAMER (1998) with *wh*-drop feature the particle *enn*, whereas there are numerous *wh*-questions in that very same work that lack *enn*. This asymmetry allows in my view the inference that *enn* is obligatory in *wh*-drop, similar to Bavarian and the dialect of North East Berlin (Pankau 2018).

After *wh*-drop, the clauses look like topic drop clauses (cf. 9), that is, like declarative clauses. So the condition in (46) is violated and the sentences are excluded.

An important consequence of this analysis for *wh*-drop is that it also accounts for the curious fact that the modal particle *denn* does not license *wh*-drop,¹¹ as shown in (54), whose structure is provided in (53) (for ease of exposition, I assume that *denn* is adjoined to VP and hence appears TP-internally).

- (54) *~~Was~~ hast du denn gemacht?
 what have you PRT made
 ‘What have you done?’



At first sight, the ungrammaticality of (54) appears to be a problem for my analysis because *denn* is usually considered to be restricted to interrogative clauses (THURMAIR 1989). But this view is as wrong as it is common. Already MEIBAUER (1994: 222) notes that *denn* is not restricted to interrogative clauses but is also fine in free conditionals (cf. THEILER 2018; ZOBEL & CSIPAK 2017; HÄUSSLER 2015).¹²

¹¹ BAYER (2010: 35) shares my intuition that *denn* doesn't rescue *wh*-drop. He later partly retreats his view (BAYER 2013b: 42) on the basis of data by Andreas Trotzke from Ruhrdeutsch according to whom data like (54) are fine, that is, *denn* does rescue *wh*-drop. In order to resolve the contradictory observations, BAYER (2013b: 42) makes the important observation that *denn* in Ruhrdeutsch must have already undergone weakening because *denn* only saves *wh*-drop when it appears in the Wackernagel position.

(i) *~~Was~~ hast du dem Hans denn gegeben?
 what have you the Hans PRT given
 ‘What did you give to Hans?’

I would even go a step further and claim that speakers don't judge *denn* but the substandard version *'n*. Although *'n* is usually treated as a reduced version of *denn* (WEGENER 2002: 379; THURMAIR 1991: 378) they are different modal particles because they have different usage conditions (PANKAU 2018).

¹² Additionally, Hans-Martin Gärtner has pointed out to me (p.c., 2018/03/28) that *denn* is also licensed in declarative clauses embedded in an interrogative clause, cf. (i).

(i) Glaubst du, dass es denn stimmt?
 believe you that it PRT is.right
 ‘Do you think it's true?’

- (56) A: *Wir müssen um 6 Uhr aufstehen.*
 we must around 6 o'clock get.up
 'We have to get up at 6 am.'
- B: *Na wenn es denn sein muss.*
 well if it PRT be must
 'Well, if we really have to.'

Taking this observation into consideration, the exclusion of (54) is a trivial consequence of the condition in (46): the clause is not uniquely identifiable as a question because *denn* is also compatible with non-questions.¹³

6 CONCLUSION

I have argued in this paper for a pragmato-syntactic analysis for *wh*-drop, according to which *wh*-drop is licensed if the clause hosting *wh*-drop can be uniquely identified as a question. The reason for adopting such an approach is that the purely syntactic account suggested by Bayer (2010) is not viable. According to this approach, *wh*-drop is an agreement phenomenon that is licensed if the dropped *wh*-phrase can be recovered via an agreement suffix. This approach fares well for dialects like Bavarian: *wh*-drop requires the presence of the element '*n* and '*n* is restricted to *wh*-questions. However, Thuringian also requires a specific element to appear, namely *enn*, but *enn* is not restricted to *wh*-questions. Instead, *enn* must appear in all questions. Hence it cannot be an agreement suffix but must be a marker for questionhood, which claim I backed up by ample evidence from its behavior in special questions. I extended this analysis to Bavarian and suggested that '*n* is a question particle for *wh*-questions. I also argued that this analysis captures why the modal particle *denn* does not license *wh*-drop.

¹³ For the sake of completeness, let me mention that there are two aspects of *wh*-drop that this analysis does not capture. First, as already mentioned in footnote 2, the set of droppable *wh*-phrase is restricted to *was* (and to some extent *wo*). Second, *wh*-drop is restricted to verb-second clauses (BAYER 2013a: 202). The first aspect deserves further investigation quite generally because there are cases where *was* in my view cannot be dropped.

- (i) **Stimmt 'n nun?* / **Interessiert 'n dich am meisten?*
 is.right PRT now interests PRT you at.the most
 'What's true now?' 'What interests you most?'
- (ii) **Hast 'n du dich für beworben?*
 have PRT you REFL for applied
 What did you apply for?

As for the second aspect, all I can offer is the speculation that the host for '*n* and *enn* in C° needs to be properly lexical, which includes finite verbs but excludes complementizers.

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