# THE QUESTION PARTICLE *ENN* 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 North-Bavarian.

(1)     *Wɔn kimd-n̩     dɔn ʃadə hɔ:m?*
       when comes-PRT your father home
       'When does your father come home?'        (MOTTAUSCH 2009: 323)

(2)     *Wos hosd     \*( 'n) gsogd?*
       what have.you    PRT said
       'What did you say?'        (BAYER 2012: 23)

This particle *'n* has three properties. First, it is obligatory (BAYER 2012: 23; MOTTAUSCH 2009: 323). MOTTAUSCH (2009: 323) calls *'n* "basically obligatory" in South Hessian, and BAYER (2012: 23) notes that omitting *'n* in (2) results in ungrammaticality.[1] Second, *'n* is restricted to direct *wh*-questions. Neither in South Hessian nor in North Bavarian does *'n* occur in direct yes/no-questions or in 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.[2]

(3)    a.    *Wos deats    'n    es     do?*
           what do.2.PL PRT you.PL there
       b.    \_\_\_    *deats    'n    es     do?*
                do.2.PL PRT you.PL there
       'What are you doing there?'        (BAYER 2013b: 41)

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[1]    SCHIEPEK (1899: 34, 47) also notes the obligatoriness of *'n* for North Bavarian but doesn't provide examples.

[2]    The set of *wh*-phrases that can be dropped is severely restricted in German: only *was* 'what' and *wo* 'where' allow *wh*-drop. I will ignore this aspect in this paper as it is orthogonal to the general claim I 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 *wh*-drop is a special case of this general requirement as only *wh*-questions have to be marked as questions in North Bavarian.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I provide some background on Thuringian and the data from Thuringian 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 seperating West from East Central German (the Germersheim 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 overlap 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

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

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 North Bavarian, namely *enn*.[3] Similar to *'n*, *enn* in Thuringian appears in *wh*-questions, licenses *wh*-drop, and is restricted to direct questions (WEISE 1900: 25).

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[3]  The relevant particle surfaces in different forms ([ən], [ə], [dn̩], [n̩], [a], [an], [ɪn]), depending on the specific subdialect and/or the phonological environment. Moreover, the 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.

(4) a. *Wu    wuhn'n S'    änn?*
       where live      they ENN
       'Where do you live?'                                    (TRÖGE 1932: 95)

   b. *Issän  jetz 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.[4] One finds examples that are basically minimal pairs in terms of discourse context and only differ in the presence and absence of *enn*, as shown 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

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.

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[4]   There is a tension between dialect descriptions and dialect literature on this issue. In 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 literature 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 literature is not really dialectal (cf. SPERSCHNEIDER 1959: 11-12 for this objection) or that the dialect descriptions highlight this unique aspect. Since the dialect literature often differs syntactically to a huge extent from the standard language, I consider it a reliable source and therefore take the particle *enn* to be optional.

In the remainder if this section, I will first show that *enn* is indeed restricted to interrogative clauses. I then show that despite its optionality, *enn* marks question-hood. The argument for this claims comes from special questions, that is, interrogative clauses that only look like questions but pragmatically are not questions. After that, I show that *enn* is not a reduced variant of the modal particle *denn* 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 unsatisfactory.

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 värenträssiert 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 föngkt.*
          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* 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 Bärlin!*
          is  you  too extreme  with the  turmoil              here      in Berlin
       'That is too extreme for here for you in Berlin, 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 there (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 many non-declarative 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).

The most famous 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 änne 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 väl    '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 micht'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. And similar to *enn* in direct questions, *enn* is optional in questions embedded under intensional verbs.

(14) *Gottschalks Theedor 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 e x c l a m a t i v e  c l a u s e s, illustrated in (15).

(15) a. *Wen hat Maria alles eingeladen!*
who has Maria all   invited
'Who did Maria invite!'
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 or deviation lies in the amount or type of people Maria invited, in (15b) it is the fact that Schulz is stupid. Interestingly, *enn* never appears in exclamatives. Two examples of *enn* missing exclamatives 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 some information, but considers the content of the proposition deviant: in (16a), it's the amount of dressing up, in (16b), it's the weight 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. Also in rhetorical questions, *enn* never appears.

(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 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 asking a question that attract the attention towards this event. Consider a scenario where someone tells a long story with many new information, of which however only few 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 thereof. Not only does the speaker in fact know the answer, the person he asks cannot possibly know the answers. Attentive questions are relatively frequent in the dialect texts I consulted and they never occur with *enn*.

(20)  *On   was  moß  e   da     hiere?*
     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, 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 or with which he described an object to the hearer that he now expects to be identifiable by the hearer. 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  hängt an der Wand und gibt   jedem    die Hand?*
        what  hangs on the wall  and gives  everyone the hand
        'What hangs on the wall and shakes hands with everyone?'
     b.  *Es hängt an der Wand und gibt   jedem     die Hand; was  ist das?*
        it  hangs on the wall  and gives  everyone the hand   what is  that
        'It hangs on the wall and shakes hands with everyone; what is that?'

The answer for both questions is 'towel'; the joking flavor is due to the fact that only humans are able to shake hands. Guess questions do not count as true questions because the speaker already knows the answer and the hearer cannot be expected to surely know the answer. Consequently, *enn* is lacking from guess questions.

(22)  a.  *'s äs mein'n Vader 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
        *zwöschen 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 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 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 implicates that the he knows the answer.

The fifth type of question are e x p o s i t o r y   q u e s t i o n s (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 professors when introducing a new topic. For example, when discussing possible explanations for island phenomena in syntax, a professor 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.

(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 leads over to the burning of witches in Thuringia.

The sixth type of special questions are s e l f - a d d r e s s e d   q u e s t i o n s (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 particle because it is restricted to true, that is, information seeking questions.


### 3.3    *enn* is Not a Reduced Version of *denn*

The claim that *enn* in Thuringian is a separate question particle implies that it is distinct from the modal particle *denn* 'then' present in Standard German. This claim seems a bit strange at the outset because both *denn* and *enn* are optional and *denn* seems to share with *enn* the property that it is restricted to direct questions.[5]

(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* is nothing but a phonologically reduced version of the Standard German modal particle *denn*. However, there are five arguments that speak against such an equation.

   First, *denn* is compatible with some special questions, namely with rhetorical questions with negative force and with exclamative clauses.

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[5]    Cf. section 5 where I show that this claim is in fact incorrect.

(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* was only a reduced version of *denn*, then it is unexpected that they occur in
different environments.

The second piece of evidence against the idea that *enn* is *denn* comes from so-
called surprise questions (OBENAUER 2004). Surprise questions are questions
where the speaker doesn't expect a certain situation 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 John asks in such a
context *What's going on?*, then this question counts as a surprise question: the
state of affairs (John's girlfriend runs around screaming) is against John's expec-
tations and he asks to eventually find out why his expectations were wrong. Inter-
estingly, *enn* and *denn* can appear together in surprise questions in Thuringian.

(29)  a.   *De neie Haushälterin des    Farrers besichticht ehre Schlafkammer.*
           the new  housekeeper  of.the pastor    inspects      her  sleeping.room
           *Plötzlich rennt se  laut      schreiend  aus dähn 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 a reduced version of *denn*.

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, appropriate 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?'

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 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 involvedness 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 that 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 possibly be a reduced form of *denn*.
  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.[6]

(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

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[6] CSIPAK & ZOBEL (2014: 92) disagree with this claim by judging similar examples as 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). And polar questions always allow *denn*.

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.

(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 were nothing but a reduced version of *denn*, it should not occur in disjunctive questions. Yet it does occur in such questions.

(39)  *Wùman      a Laĕγ      otər a Kàm        kêjəlĕ?*
      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 clause initial wh-phrases.

(40)  A:  *Sagk 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 weeßt'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* because also *denn* can appear after clause initial wh-phrases (BAYER & OBENAUER 2011: 461, pace OTT & STRUCKMEIER in press).

(41)  *Wer denn hat Hartz IV beschlossen!*
      who  PRT   has Hartz IV decided
      'Who decided about Hartz IV?'

However, there is a crucial difference in interpretation ignored by BAYER & OBENAUER (2011) between (40) and (41). 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, that is, neither a *wh*-agreement suffix nor a reduced version of *denn*, 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 North 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)

(43)
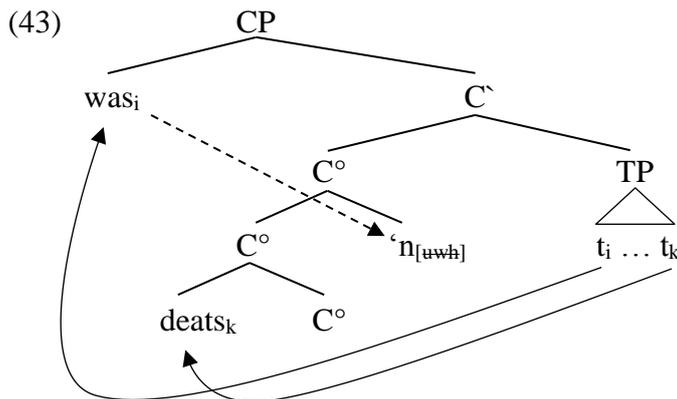


As the structure in (43) indicates, the finite verb *deats* moves and adjoins to C°, *'n* adjoins to C°, the *wh*-phrase was moves to SpecCP and is elided. The dotted arrow indicates the agreement relation between the *wh*-phrase and *'n*. Since *'n* is a *wh*-agreement suffix, it requires a local agreement 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* indicates 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 simply a consequence of the absence of any element that preserves 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 (44).

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

(45)
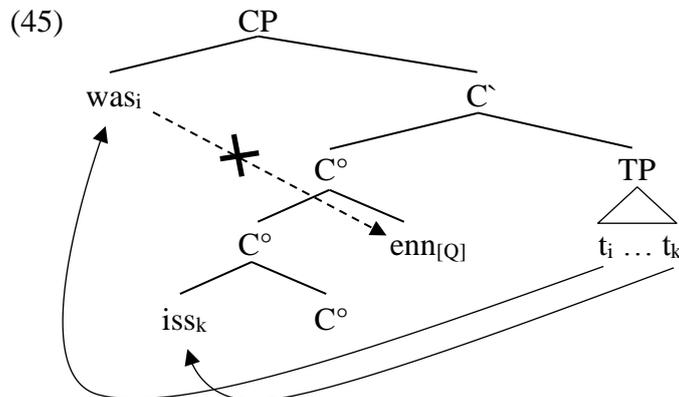


The structure differs from the one in (43) in one crucial aspect: *enn* is not a *wh*-agreement suffix, but a question particle. The trivial consequence of this is that the *wh*-phrase in SpecCP does not enter into an agreement relation with *enn*. *enn* can therefore not possibly serve the function 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* doesn't encode the presence of a *wh*-phrase, 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*[7]

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 (45) 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)

(49)
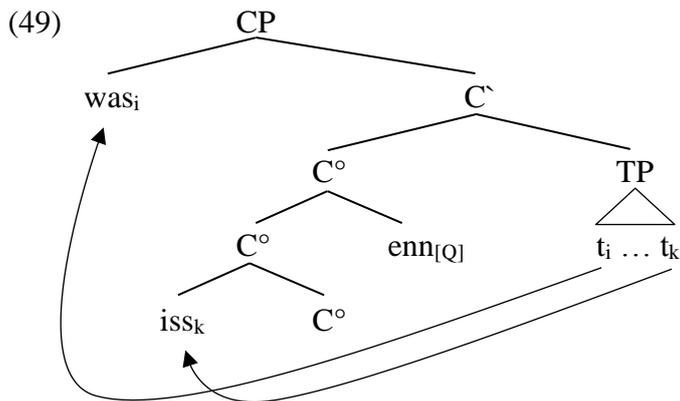


The reason that (48) is fine is that it satisfies the condition on *wh*-drop: the clause is uniquely identifiable as a question. The relevant identifier is the particle *enn*, which as I showed in section 3 is only compatible with questions but incompatible with non-questions.

The same line of reasoning applies to *'n* in North 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)

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[7]   As already mentioned in footnote 2, I ignore that *wh*-drop also puts heavy restrictions on the set of droppable *wh*-words.

(51)
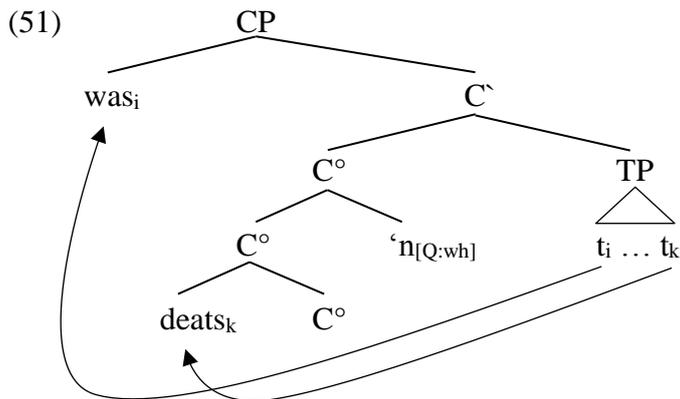


Instead of appealing to *'n* as a *wh*-agreement suffix, I analyze *'n* as a question particle that is restricted to *wh*-questions. In (51), this is indicated by the subscript on *'n*, which is [Q:wh]. So the reason that (50) satisfies the condition on *wh*-drop is that *'n* makes the clause uniquely identifiable as a question. Because there are no non-questions in North Bavarian that contain *'n*. Singling *wh*-questions out seems dubious, but that *wh*-questions and yes/no-question are grammatically treated separately is a common observation. For instance, there are languages that use distinct question particles for *wh*-questions and yes/no-questions (KROEBER 1997). Moreover, predicates selecting questions 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.'

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 jetz  schonn widder?*
         what is  now already again
         'What's going on now again?'                              (CRAMER 1998: 38)
     b.  * ~~Was~~ *deats es      do?*
         what do    you.PL there
         'What are you doing?'                                     (BAYER 2013b: 41)

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, as desired.

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,[8] 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?'

(55)
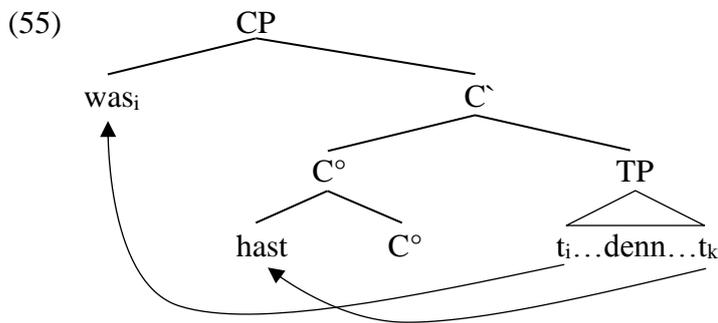


At first sight, the ungrammaticality of (54) appears to be a problem for my analysis because *denn* is usually considered to be restricted to interrogative clauses (THURMAIR 1989). But this view is as wrong as it is common. Already MEIBAUER (1994: 222) notes that *denn* is not restricted to interrogative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

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(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 conse-
quence of the condition in (46): the clause is not uniquely identifiable as a ques-
tion because *denn* is also compatible with non-questions.


## 6        CONCLUSION

I have argued in this paper for a pragmato-syntactic analysis for *wh*-drop, accord-
ing 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 pure-
ly syntactic account is not viable. According to such an 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 North 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, name-
ly *enn*, but *enn* is not restricted to *wh*-questions. Instead, *enn* must appear in all
questions. Hence it cannot be an agreement suffix but is a marker for question-
hood, which claim I backed up by ample evidence from its behavior in special
questions. I extended this analysis to North 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.


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