Remind-Me Presuppositions and Speech-Act Decomposition: Evidence from Particles in Questions

Uli Sauerland
Kazuko Yatsushiro

In this article, we investigate questions like *What is your name again?*, which presuppose that the answer was already made common-ground knowledge in the past (Sauerland 2006). We call this a *remind-me* presupposition. While repetitive particles can trigger a remind-me presupposition in German and English, Japanese uses a specialized particle *kke* to bring about such a presupposition. We argue for an account of remind-me presuppositions based on syntactic decomposition of the question speech-act into an imperative part and a make-it-known part. On this account, the repetitive particles take scope between the two parts of the decomposed question speech-act. The proposal correctly predicts how both particles interact syntactically with the periphery of the clause in slightly different ways. The interaction with polar questions corroborates our proposal that the decomposed question speech-act parts are syntactically projected parts of the question structure. Our data therefore corroborate a syntactic representation of aspects of speech-acts.

**Keywords:** speech-acts, movement, scope, imperative, common ground

1 Introduction

The starting point of this article is the following example from German (Sauerland 2006, 2009, Pittner 2009):

(1) Wie ist wieder Ihr Name?
    how is again your name
    ‘What is your name again?’

The question in (1) and its English translation have a special meaning that we can initially paraphrase as follows: ‘I used to know your name, but forgot. Could you remind me what your

For their helpful comments, we are grateful to Andreea Nicolae and two anonymous reviewers, as well as the audiences at GLOW in Asia 2013 at Mie University, FAJL 6 at ZAS, the 2013 LSA meeting in Boston, the Tokyo Semantics Research Group, Harvard University, and Tel Aviv University. This work benefited from the support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), grant 01UG1411; the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, grant 3.5-8160-DEU/1122211; the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), bridge fellowship 2011; the German Research Council (DFG), grants SA 925/8-1 and SA 925/11-1; and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), grant 57245547.
name is?’ The presupposition that your name was known in the past is triggered by the repetitive particles wieder ‘again’ in German and again in the English translation. When the particles are omitted, this presupposition is absent. In this article, we use the descriptive label remind-me presupposition for a presupposition of prior knowledge of the answer.\footnote{The prior knowledge is indeed presupposed by (1), rather than being part of the assertion. Otherwise—that is, if my name was never common knowledge—the question in (1) ought to be answerable by None or Nothing, as is possible for (i).} Besides the focus particles again in English and wieder ‘again’ in German, the German focus particle noch mal ‘again’ (lit. ‘another time’) can also enforce the remind-me reading of a question, and is in fact preferred by many speakers.

(2) Wie ist noch mal Ihr Name?
   how is again your name
   ‘What is your name again?’

One interesting property of remind-me presuppositions in German and English is that the focus particles wieder and again can only trigger it in questions. Consider the declarative counterpart of (1) in (3) and its English translation. (3) cannot be used in a scenario where the statement was either made known to the hearer or added to the common ground in the past.

(3) Mein Name ist wieder Kai.
   my name is again Kai
   ‘My name is Kai again.’

Rather, the presupposition triggered by wieder and again in (3) is one of event repetition, as discussions of such focus particles in the semantic literature predict (e.g., Klein 2001). One possible scenario where (3) is acceptable is a multiple-name-change scenario: specifically, my name was originally Kai, but then I changed it to something else, and now I have changed it back to Kai. We call this the event repetition reading. It requires focus on the name Kai. A second scenario supporting (3) is the following: there is a salient referent of the name Kai in the context, who recently announced his name; so, I am the second person who is announcing that his name is Kai in the relevant context. We call this reading, which requires focus on the possessive mein ‘my’, the name repetition reading.

In questions, instead of either of these two readings, wieder/again can trigger the remind-me presupposition. The event repetition reading is also available in questions, in which case the remind-me presupposition is not triggered.\footnote{The name repetition reading is also available with wieder/noch mal in polar questions, as in (i), and in wh-questions where the wh-phrase does not relate to a position in the scope of wieder/noch mal, as in (ii).} But the remind-me presupposition is much more prominent in (1) and (2) because of our world knowledge that name changes are rare.

(i) Ist Ihr Name wieder / noch mal Kai?
   is your name again / again Kai
   ‘Is your name Kai like someone else’s before?’
Now, consider the semantic content of the remind-me presupposition. Actually, the paraphrase provided above for (1) and (2) is slightly inaccurate, because it requires that the speaker be the one who has prior knowledge of the answer. As Sauerland (2009) points out, the presupposed prior knowledge need not be the speaker’s, but can simply have been contributed to the common ground. Specifically, (1) and (2) are acceptable in the following scenario: At the beginning of a reception, the names of all the participants are announced. However, I make no effort to listen to the announcement. Later, I encounter you, and want you to tell me your name. In this scenario, the speaker never knew the name of the addressee, but the addressee’s name was contributed to the common ground in the past by the announcer. This scenario shows two interesting aspects of the remind-me presupposition of (1) and (2). First, (1) and (2) do not presuppose that the speaker knew the answer to the question before; rather, it is sufficient that the answer was contributed to the common ground in the past. Second, (1) and (2) do not presuppose that it was the addressee who contributed the answer to the common ground—in the present scenario, it was the announcer. In both respects, the remind-me reading differs from the interpretation of (4), which presupposes that I asked you before, but does not presuppose that you or anyone else answered my earlier question.³

(4) Noch mal: Wie ist Ihr Name?
               again how is your name
   ‘Again: What is your name?’

Now, consider remind-me presuppositions in Japanese. In Japanese, such a presupposition cannot be brought about by the focus particles corresponding to English again (see (16) and (17) below). Instead, it is expressed by the special question particle *kke*, as shown in (5).

(5) Namae-wa nan-da-kke?
      name-TOP what-COP-kke
   ‘What is your name again?’

The suffix *kke* is part of a spoken register of Japanese, and, as far as we could test, it is available in all dialects of Japanese: all Japanese speakers we have asked accept examples like (5) with a remind-me reading. Although *kke* does not seem to have been studied much by linguists so far, we found one description in an online grammar for learners of Japanese (http://dev.jgram.org/pages/viewOne.php?tagE=kke, accessed 25 January 2014): ‘*[kke] is used only in conversation.

(ii) Wessen Name ist wieder / noch mal Kai?
       whose name is again / again Kai
  ‘Whose name is Kai like someone else’s before?’

We think that this reading is not available for (1) and (2) because there is a conflict between the presupposition that someone else had name *n* before, and asking for name *n*.

³ While *noch mal* and *wieder* are frequently interchangeable, (4) is actually ungrammatical with *wieder*. 
It is used when asking a question in order to confirm/affirm something." This description and the examples presented on this site are fully consistent with our account.

Interestingly, German and Japanese differ with respect to where remind-me readings are possible. Specifically, neither noch mal nor wieder can trigger a remind-me presupposition in a polar question in German, as (6) shows. Rather, noch mal/wieder in (6) can only trigger the same presuppositions as the the declarative (3): either (6) presupposes that the addressee underwent multiple name changes, or it presupposes that some other, just-mentioned person had the name Kai. Unless we are in one of these unusual scenarios, (6) is an odd question.

(6) #Heißen Sie noch mal / wieder Kai?
   are.named you again / again Kai
   ‘Was your name again Kai?’

Japanese kke, however, can trigger a remind-me presupposition with a polar question, as (7) shows. (7) can be used in a scenario where I knew in the past whether your name is Kai, but now I want to be reminded about that. In the same scenario, German (6) is unacceptable (Pittner 2009).

(7) Namae-wa Kai-da-kke?
   name-TOP Kai-COP-KKE
   ‘Tell me again whether your name is Kai.’

In this article, we show that the contrast between (6) and (7) provides a new argument for a particular analysis of the remind-me reading: an analysis based on decomposition of question speech-acts involving silent but syntactically projected speech-act operators. In Sauerland 2009, such an analysis is already sketched for the German data. Here, we make the decomposition proposal more precise and provide an additional argument for it primarily on the basis of the comparison of Japanese and German, which we then extend to English.

The article is organized as follows. In section 2, we outline empirical properties of remind-me readings in German and Japanese. In section 3, we show how an account of remind-me readings based on speech-act decomposition in the syntax explains the German and Japanese data. In section 4, we especially seek to clarify the contributions our data make to the philosophical and linguistic literature on speech-acts.

2 Empirical Overview

In this section, we present an overview of the empirical properties of the remind-me reading that guide our analysis in section 3. In section 2.1, we explore the nature of the triggering particle (i.e., noch mal vs. kke) and the role of tense. In section 2.2, we discuss the availability of remind-me readings in different clause types, that is, the restriction to questions and the crosslinguistic variation in polar questions. In section 2.3, we further discuss the position of the particle triggering the remind-me reading.

4 As the translation in (6) shows, English has a somewhat intermediate status, which we discuss further below.
2.1 Triggering Particles and Tense

In the three languages we have looked at in detail—German, English, and Japanese—the remind-me presupposition can be triggered by the particles wieder/noch mal, again, and kke, respectively. In addition, questions with a remind-me presupposition generally can almost interchangeably contain either past or present tense. The examples presented in section 1 contain present tense throughout. However, if we replace present tense with past tense in all of them, the reading remains unchanged: (8a–b) are the past tense counterparts of (2) and (5), respectively.

\[(8)\]
\[a. \text{Wie war noch mal Ihr Name?} \]
\[\text{how was again your name} 'What was your name again?'\]
\[b. \text{Namee-wa nan-da-tta-kke?} \]
\[\text{name-TOP what-COP-PAST-KKE} 'What was your name again?'\]

In fact, in the scenario given in section 1 past tense alone is sufficient to trigger a remind-me reading. Consider the English example in (9). (9) would be odd in a scenario where it is clear that your name had never been contributed to the common ground—for example, on my just encountering you for the first time.

\[(9) \text{What was your name?}\]

Past tense in (9) and the particles in (1), (2), and (5) are therefore two independent mechanisms that work congruently in (8). Both trigger the remind-me reading, and therefore there is no conflict. But there is also no conflict if only one of the triggers is present: the remind-me presupposition is always added to the regular question meaning, which is not incompatible with the remind-me presupposition. In fact, even if I knew your name in the past, I might ask you (10).

\[(10) \text{What is your name?}\]

One difference between past tense and the particles is that past tense can actually be used in the answer to a past remind-me question, while the particles cannot, as dialogue (11) illustrates.

\[(11) \text{A: What was his name (again)?} \]
\[\text{B: His name was Kai (#again).}\]

\[5\] To our knowledge, this fact was discussed before only by Hollebrandse (2000:68).

\[6\] It seems possible to us to use (9) after a long conversation with a stranger even when the stranger’s name was not previously mentioned. We propose, however, that this constitutes a polite pretense that the name might have already been mentioned.

\[7\] As one reviewer pointed out to us, B’s first-person response in (i) is more natural in the present tense. This effect seems to relate to the presence of the speaker in the discourse situation. Even in the third person in (11), B’s response in the past tense is slightly odd if Kai is present in the discourse situation. We think this effect is related to the salience of time intervals: if an individual is present in a situation and is mentioned in a declarative sentence, the utterance time is salient. Note also that the felicity of (12) diminishes if Gregory is present in the utterance situation.

\[(i) \text{A: What was your name (again)?} \]
\[\text{B: My name was Kai (#again).}\]
We agree with Hollebrandse (2000) that past tense is possible in remind-me scenarios because a past interval is salient—namely, for (9) and (11), the time during which the name was previously announced. Musan (1997) argues that, while temporal predication generally requires interval maximization, this can be suspended when a particular interval is salient. Specifically, Musan makes use of this mechanism to explain the fact in (12). Usually, the past tense of an individual-level predicate indicates that the subject is dead. In (12), however, the individual-level predicate does not give rise to a so-called lifetime effect. Musan relates this to the fact that the first sentence makes a particular past interval salient.

(12) I had a chance to have a closer look at him. Gregory had blue eyes.
(Musan 1997:272)

We think, though, that the mechanism triggering remind-me readings with again and other particles is different from the mechanism triggering remind-me readings with past tense. Evidence for this difference comes from the data in (13) in the following scenario: A few minutes before midnight, you tell me what the current date is. Then the clock strikes midnight and, on the new day, I ask you the following:

(13) a. #What is the date again?
   b. What was the date again?

In this scenario, the tense actually makes a difference. The remind-me reading triggered by again with the present tense in (13a) isn’t satisfied, because the new date hasn’t been mentioned. But past tense in (13b) is fine; this question could be answered for example by The date was December 31st when I told you earlier, but now it’s January 1st. The effect of tense is expected if the past tense in (13b) indicates that the sentence is about an interval in the past—namely, that of the earlier date announcement—while (13b) is about the present time. The oddness of (13a) also shows that the particles trigger remind-me readings in a different way from past tense.

Now consider the particles triggering a remind-me presupposition in more detail. In English and German, they are the same particles that can also trigger a repetitive presupposition. It is worth mentioning that most other focus particles do not seem to have a similar effect.8 For example, the clause-final additive particle too in (14) is not licensed by someone else having announced his or her name nor by your having announced your name previously.

---

8 Reporting on work carried out simultaneously to ours, Iatridou and Tatevosov (2016) note that the focus particle even can give rise to an interpretation in questions that relates to knowledge of the answer. Namely, the contribution of even in (i) can be paraphrased as follows: knowing the location of MIT is more likely than knowing anything else about MIT such as its hours of operation or the members of its linguistics faculty. We think (i) may also be analyzed by means of a decomposition of the question speech-acts, such that even takes a complement meaning ‘you should announce where MIT is’, and thereby corroborates our analysis. But we leave the details of such a proposal for another occasion.

(i) Where is MIT even?
REMIND-ME PRESUPPOSITIONS AND SPEECH-ACT DECOMPOSITION

As we mentioned, *wieder/noch mal* and *again* in *wh*-questions lead to ambiguity between the remind-me presupposition and an event repetition presupposition, the latter also available with declaratives. In examples like (2), our world knowledge that multiple name changes are rare blocks the event repetition reading. But the example in (15) clearly allows both readings. Interestingly, though, as (15) also shows, the placement of focal stress disambiguates between the two readings: when the repetitive particle is unstressed, as in (15a), the remind-me reading is preferred; when the repetitive particle bears stress, as in (15b), only the event repetition reading is available. As (15b) further shows, the stress can be on either the first or the second part of German *noch mal* (lit. ‘another time’).

(15) a. Wann ist sie *noch mal* DRAN?
   when is she again on.turn
   ‘Remind me: When is it her turn?’ (remind-me reading)
   ‘When does she have another turn?’ (event repetition reading)

b. Wann ist sie NOCH mal / noch MAL dran?
   when is she again / again on.turn
   ‘When does she have another turn?’ (event repetition reading)
   *‘Remind me: When is it her turn?’ (remind-me reading)

In Japanese, iterative particles like *again* exist, but they cannot trigger remind-me readings. This is shown in (16) for *mata* ‘again’ in either sentence-medial or -initial position, and in (17) for *mooichido* ‘again’ (lit. ‘one more time’), also in sentence-medial and -initial position.

(16) a. Namae-wa mata nan-desu ka?
   name-TOP again what-is Q

b. Mata namee-wa nan-desu ka?
   again name-TOP what-is Q

(17) a. Namae-wa mooichido nan-desu ka?
   name-TOP again what-is Q

b. Mooichido namee-wa nan-desu ka?
   again name-TOP what-is Q

All four questions in (16) and (17) are grammatical, but they only have an interpretation where the speaker changed his or her name at one time and then changed it back to the original. This interpretation is similar to the one available in English and German when the repetitive particle occurs in a declarative, as shown in (3). A remind-me reading is not available in (16) or (17). In

---

9 Here and in what follows, it does not seem necessary for our purposes to distinguish between the repetitive and restitutive readings of von Stechow (1996) and others. We intend the term *event repetition reading* to cover both of these readings.

10 If *mooichido* is followed by a pause, example (17b) also allows a reading where it is presupposed that I asked you the same question in the past. This was also mentioned regarding (4) and clearly differs from the remind-me presupposition.
Japanese, the remind-me presupposition can only be triggered by the suffix *kke* (see (5)), which, as far as we can tell, has no other uses than triggering such presuppositions.

In sum, we showed in this section that the particles *noch mal/wieder* in German and *again* in English can and *kke* in Japanese must trigger a remind-me presupposition in questions and that the particles do so independently of past tense.

### 2.2 Speech-Acts and the Remind-Me Reading

In this section, we show how the particles that trigger the remind-me presupposition relate to the speech-act and sentence-type of the sentence they occur in. Recall from section 1 that remind-me presuppositions are restricted to questions and that the availability of remind-me readings in polar questions varies from language to language: Japanese allows them, but German does not. In what follows, we support and sharpen both of these observations with additional data. Specifically, we argue that remind-me readings are restricted to question speech-acts that consist of a sentence-type question; in addition, we corroborate the German/Japanese difference regarding polar questions and show that English seems to have an intermediate status.

Consider first the restriction to matrix questions. For German and English, the contrast between the remind-me questions in (1)–(2) and the declarative in (3) shows that declaratives do not allow the repetitive particles to trigger a remind-me presupposition. This shows that the availability of remind-me presuppositions in German and English is due to the interaction between the repetitive particles and the question semantics. In Japanese, any sentence with the suffix *kke* is interpreted as a question, so the link between questions and *kke* might be more direct: *kke* might be a question-marking particle itself, like the normal question-marking particle *ka* in (18a).

In the data with *kke* shown so far (e.g., (5)), *kke* seems to take the place of *ka*, which is not overtly expressed. However, several Japanese consultants also accept examples like (18b), where both *kke* and *ka* occur.

\[(18)\] a. Namae-wa nan desu-ka?
   name-TOP what COP-Q
   ‘What is your name?’

\[\text{b. Namae-wa nan da-kke-ka?}\]
   name-TOP what COP-KKE-Q
   ‘What is your name again?’

Example (18b) makes it plausible that *kke* is not itself a question marker, but an independent particle interacting with the question interpretation to yield the remind-me reading.

While matrix questions allow remind-me readings, embedded questions do not. Specifically, (19) shows that ungrammaticality results when *kke* is suffixed to an embedded clause in Japanese.

\[(19)\] *Doko-ni simatta-kke siri-tai desu?*
   where-LOC put.away-KKE know-want COP
   Intended: ‘[I] want to know, ‘where did [I] put [the keys] again?’’

In German, as (20) shows, the empirical picture is more complex. However, the data are as predicted since German allows embedding of speech-acts in some cases. Specifically, on the basis
of the distribution of the modal particle *denn*, Krifka (2003) argues that two classes of German question-embedding predicates differ with respect to speech-act embedding.\(^{11}\) Krifka’s analysis of German is corroborated by the data in (20). As predicted, the extensional predicates *wissen* ‘know’ and *verkünden* ‘announce’ in (20a) do not allow a remind-me reading of the embedded question; they give rise only to the pragmatically infelicitous reading presupposing multiple name changes of the addressee. The intensional predicates *wissen wollen* ‘want to know’ and *sich fragen* ‘wonder’ in (20b), however, allow a remind-me interpretation.\(^{12}\)

\[(20)\]
\[
a. \text{Lina weiß / verkündet, was (#noch mal) Dein Name ist.} \]
\[
\text{Lina knows / announces what (#again) your name is} \]
\[
\text{‘Lina knows/announces what (#again) your name is.’} \]
\[
b. \text{Lina will wissen / fragt sich, was noch mal Dein Name ist.} \]
\[
\text{Lina wants know / asks self what again your name is} \]
\[
\text{‘Lina wants to know/wonders what your name is and Lina thinks your name was known in the past.’} \]

Finally, consider the observation in (21) concerning the relation between remind-me readings and sentence-type. It is well-known that in many cases declaratives with rising intonation can function in ways similar to questions (e.g., Gunlogson 2013). However, rising declaratives generally do not allow remind-me readings. This is unsurprising for rising declaratives that function as polar interrogatives in German since, as illustrated in (6), polar interrogatives in German do not allow remind-me readings. However, the restriction also applies to rising declaratives containing an indefinite like (21b). Without the repetitive particle *noch mal*, both (21a) and (21b) could be answered in the same way by a list of people I have in mind. But despite this functional similarity, only the real question (21a) allows a remind-me reading. *Noch mal* in (21b) must be interpreted as triggering a repetitive presupposition that is also available in declaratives. This observation indicates that remind-me readings depend on the formal sentence-type question, not on the speaker’s intended speech-act.

\[(21)\]
\[
a. \text{Wen hast Du noch mal im Sinn?} \]
\[
\text{who have you again in the mind} \]
\[
\text{‘Who do you have in mind again?’} \]
\[
b. \text{Du hast (#noch mal) jemand im Sinn.} \]
\[
\text{you have (#again) someone in the mind} \]
\[
\text{‘You have someone in mind (#again).’} \]

\(^{11}\) The relevant distinction is not a lexical one among verbs, but one of context. Several attempts have been made to characterize the distinction semantically (see McCloskey 2006 and references therein). McCloskey (2006) shows that some dialects of English that allow embedded root questions provide evidence for speech-act embedding, while Standard English, like Japanese, does not seem to allow embedding of speech-acts.

\(^{12}\) All previous German examples asking about the name, such as (2), used the interrogative pronoun *wie* ‘how’ rather than *was* ‘what’ because *wie* sounds more polite. It may be that German speakers use *wie* to avoid the use of *was* for the addressee’s name, though syntactically and semantically *was* ought to be appropriate. In (20b), however, *was* sounds more natural than *wie*—possibly because politeness is less important since the speaker’s responsibility for the embedded speech-act in (20b) is lower than for matrix speech-acts like the one in (2).
Now consider more specifically the types of question that can license a remind-me reading. The generalization we will establish is the one mentioned in section 1: in German, constituent questions allow remind-me readings, but polar questions do not; but in Japanese, both constituent questions and polar questions allow remind-me readings. Furthermore, we will observe that polar questions in English are difficult to evaluate since they involve some interspeaker variation.

In constituent questions in German, remind-me readings are available regardless of the interrogative pronoun. So far, the German data have illustrated remind-me readings with the interrogative pronouns *wie* ‘how’ (2), *was* ‘what’ (20b), and *wen* ‘who..acc’ (21a). (22a) illustrates that complex *wh*-phrases, pied-piped *wh*-phrases, and degree questions also license remind-me readings, while (22b) illustrates the remind-me reading with different adjuncts. In all of these examples, the remind-me reading is the only felicitous interpretation, because the verbs used are not compatible with repeated action.

(22) a. {Welche Bücher / Wessen Bücher / Wieviele Bücher} hat er noch mal vernichtet?
   ‘Which books/Whose books/How many books did he destroy again?’

b. {Wann / Warum / Wie / In welchem Alter} ist sie noch mal gestorben?
   ‘When/Why/How/At what age did she die again?’

Multiple questions also allow a remind-me reading, as (23) shows. The presupposition of (23) is that the complete answer to the question was contributed to the discourse, not just a partial answer.

(23) Wer hat noch mal was zerstört?
   ‘Who destroyed what again?’

In contrast to the general availability of remind-me readings with constituent questions, remind-me readings are impossible with polar questions in German, as (24) shows (see also (6)). The only interpretation available for (24) assumes that the tower was rebuilt between two destructions; the remind-me reading is impossible.

(24) #Hat sie noch mal den Verteidigungsturm zerstört?
   ‘Did she destroy the defense tower again?’

Note furthermore that alternative questions behave like constituent questions: unlike the polar question (24), the alternative question (25) allows a remind-me reading. This is predicted by an analysis of alternative questions like Nicolae’s (2013, 2014), as a type of constituent question.

(25) Hat sie noch mal den Verteidigungsturm oder die Brücke zerstört?
   ‘Which of the defense tower and the bridge was it again that she destroyed?’
Furthermore, note that past tense can trigger a remind-me reading of polar questions in German. (26) illustrates this and also shows that even when the remind-me reading is present for a polar question, insertion of *noch mal* triggers the event repetition presupposition in addition. (26) further corroborates that past tense and the repetitive particle can independently trigger remind-me presuppositions in constituent questions, as we proposed above. The triggering by past tense, via presupposed salience of a past time interval, is predicted to be available with polar questions as well. So (26) underscores that something specific to *noch mal* blocks it from bringing about remind-me readings in polar questions.

(26) Hattest Du (#noch mal) grüne Augen?
    have.PAST you (#again) green eyes
    ‘Remind me: Did you have green eyes?’

Now consider Japanese in comparison. As far as we can tell, Japanese does not differ from German with respect to constituent and alternative questions, but where polar questions are concerned, as illustrated in (7) (repeated in (27a)), there is a difference. Generally, remind-me readings are unproblematically available with polar questions in Japanese, as (27b) also shows.

(27) a. Namae-wa Kai-da-kke?
    name-TOP Kai-COP-KKE
    ‘Tell me again whether your name is Kai.’

b. Anata-no me-wa midori-dat-ta-kke?
    you-GEN eye-TOP green-COP-PAST-KKE
    ‘Tell me again whether your eyes were green.’

The German and Japanese judgments on the availability of remind-me readings in polar questions are shared by all speakers we consulted and seem generally clear to them. For English *again*, however, there seems to be interspeaker variation. Specifically, we found variation with example (28) in the following scenario: We meet up at a concert. When you arrive, you list for me which of the musicians you know: “Albert, I don’t know, Bill, I know, . . .” But I forget, and some time later I wonder whether you know Bill.

(28) %Do you know Bill again?

We found that while some English speakers reject (28), others judge it acceptable. For the German and Japanese counterparts of (28), we found no such variability in speakers’ judgments; rather, we found uniform unacceptability in German and uniform acceptability in Japanese. At this point, we do not have the resources to investigate the English data in more detail. However, the explanation of the German/Japanese contrast that we will offer predicts that English should behave like German in some relevant ways and like Japanese in others.

In sum, the descriptive generalization established here is that remind-me readings can only arise in matrix questions that consist of a sentence-type question. In German, remind-me readings are further restricted: they are not allowed in polar questions. In Japanese, and to a lesser extent in English, this constraint does not apply.
2.3 The Position of the Remind-Me Particle

One of the most noticeable differences between *kke* in Japanese and *noch mal* in German concerns their position in the sentence. Japanese *kke* is a suffix that attaches to the tensed verb. Because Japanese is a verb-final language, *kke* occurs sentence-finally in all examples given above. German *noch mal*, however, can occur in sentence-medial positions (see (2)). The positions that remind-me *noch mal*—and remind-me *wieder*, for those speakers who allow it—can occupy are a subset of those that temporal adverbials can occupy. This observation accounts for the fact that in many examples, *noch mal* can trigger the event repetition reading as well as the remind-me reading.¹³

Word order is generally more flexible in German than in English (see, e.g., Haider 2010); and like that of other adverbs, the position of remind-me *noch mal* can vary. For example, (29) is fully grammatical, like (2), and has the same interpretation.

(29) Wie ist Ihr Name noch mal?
   how is your name again
   ‘What is your name again?’

That *noch mal* occupies sentence-final position in (29) is only possible because the finite verb *ist* ‘is’ has moved to second position. With a periphrastic verb form, however, the nonfinite part of the verb remains in final position and, as (30) shows, *noch mal* must precede it.

(30) Was ist (noch mal) ihr Name (noch mal) gewesen (*noch mal)?
   what is (again) her name (again) been (*again)
   ‘What was her name again?’

So far, we have shown that *noch mal* cannot occur in positions where other adverbs also cannot occur. But the distribution of remind-me *noch mal* is in fact more restricted than that of other adverbs: remind-me *noch mal* is subject to restrictions similar to those that hold for other discourse particles in German, and it is subject to intervention effects. To begin with the first restriction: Bayer and Obenauer (2011:465–467) argue that discourse particles are generally blocked from occurring in embedded clauses.¹⁴ Example (31) shows that remind-me *noch mal* is also subject to this restriction.

(31) Wer hat (noch mal) erzählt, dass sie (#noch mal) Tamilisch kann?
   who has (again) narrated that she (#again) Tamil can
   ‘Remind me: Who said that she knows Tamil?’

¹³ Von Stechow (1996) and Beck and Johnson (2004) discuss in detail the positions that event repetition *wieder* and *again* can occupy, and how these positions affect interpretation.

¹⁴ Bayer and Obenauer (2011:465) discuss example (i), where an interrogative phrase has been extracted from the embedded clause and the discourse particle *denn* can occur in the embedded clause.

(i) Wie denkst Du, dass es denn weitergehen soll mit Euch?
   how think you that it DENN onward.go should with you.PL
   ‘How do you think that the two of you should carry on?’

Remind-me *noch mal* also seems to be marginally possible in such examples.

(ii) Wie denkst Du, dass es noch mal weitergehen soll mit Euch?
   how think you that it again onward.go should with you.PL
   ‘Remind me how you think that the two of you should carry on.’
Next, consider intervention effects. Sauerland (2009) notes that there is a contrast in (32) depending on the word order of noch mal/wieder and the quantificational subject jeder ‘everyone’.

(32) a. Was hat noch mal / wieder jeder bestellt?
   what has again / again everyone ordered
   ‘Tell me again what everyone ordered.’

   b. ??Was hat jeder noch mal / wieder bestellt?
   what has everyone again / again ordered
   ‘Tell me again what everyone ordered.’

But in (33), the differing word order of noch mal/wieder and the nonquantificational subject Manfred does not lead to a similar contrast.

(33) a. Was hat noch mal / wieder Manfred bestellt?
   what has again / again Manfred ordered
   ‘Tell me again what Manfred ordered.’

   b. Was hat Manfred noch mal / wieder bestellt?
   what has Manfred again / again ordered
   ‘Tell me again what Manfred ordered.’

While Sauerland (2009) does not provide an account of these data, we suggest that remind-me noch mal and wieder are subject to quantifier intervention effects of the type discussed by Beck (1996, 2006) and others. Beck has shown that in-situ wh-phrases in German cannot be c-commanded by certain quantificational operators (see also Mayr 2010). Specifically, we assume that movement across quantificational phrases is blocked at LF in German (Beck 2006). Then a difference in the position of quantificational and nonquantificational elements is predicted since movement of noch mal/again is blocked by an intervening quantifier only in (32b).

Consider also the data in (34). The intervention effect arises in (34a) with the negative quantifier fast keiner ‘almost no one’. (34b) shows again that the effect disappears when the intervening subject is not a quantifier, and (34c) shows that there is no intervention effect when fast keiner does not c-command remind-me noch mal.

(34) a. #Welche Sprache kann fast keiner noch mal sprechen?
   which language can almost no one again speak
   *‘Remind me: Which language can almost no one speak?’

   b. Welche Sprache kann er noch mal sprechen?
   which language can he again speak
   ‘Remind me: Which language can he speak?’

   c. Welche Sprache kann noch mal fast keiner sprechen?
   which language can again almost no one speak
   ‘Remind me: What language can almost no one speak?’

Finally, note that an in-situ interrogative phrase also is an intervener for remind-me noch mal. This is illustrated by the contrast between (23) and (35), where noch mal follows the in-situ wh-phrase.
We take this pattern of intervention with wh-in-situ to indicate that remind-me noch mal is associated with a higher position in the left periphery of the question than the in-situ wh-phrase.

In summary, the above data show that remind-me noch mal in German must not be separated from the edge of the matrix clause by either a clause boundary or an intervening quantificational element, even though it usually occurs in sentence-medial adverb positions. For Japanese kke, these considerations do not apply, because kke must always occur in sentence-final position at the edge of the matrix clause.

3 Speech-Act Decomposition

In this section, we present our account of the facts discussed in section 2. Our account for German mostly follows the sketch offered in Sauerland 2009. We show how that account derives several descriptive generalizations established in section 2, such as the dependence of the remind-me reading on the sentence-type question and the syntactic restrictions on the position of remind-me noch mal. We then extend the analysis to polar questions and show that such data provide further support for the speech-act-decomposition account. Specifically, we argue that the German/Japanese difference concerning remind-me presuppositions in polar questions relates to whether the particle that triggers the presupposition must undergo movement to the edge of the clause to trigger the presupposition (German) or is already base-generated in the right position (Japanese). We relate this to the independent observation that scopal movement from polar questions is blocked. Then, remind-me readings of repetitive particles are predicted to be impossible in polar questions because languages like German require movement for the particle to trigger a remind-me presupposition.

3.1 The Basic Account

One central motivation for the speech-act-decomposition account is the assumption that repetitive particles like noch mal have the same lexical semantics for both the remind-me and the event repetition readings. Specifically, in what follows we adopt the lexical entry that von Stechow (1996:95) provides for again. Von Stechow’s account assumes the notion of event, along with the notion that events are partially ordered in time by both the temporal precedence relation < and the inclusion relation □. Furthermore, von Stechow makes use of a maximization operator, max, that turns a predicate of events P into a different one that is only true of events e of which P is maximally true (i.e., there is no e’ □ e with P(e’)). We assume the following lexical entry for AGAIN for repetitive particles generally—that is, both for German noch mal and wieder and for English again.15

15 As noted earlier, many German speakers prefer noch mal over wieder to express a remind-me presupposition. We think this is related to the fact that wieder can occur as a verbal prefix, as in wiederverwerten ‘recycle’ and wiedererlangen ‘reacquire’, while noch mal cannot. We assume that wieder has a morphological feature allowing it in structurally lower positions, while noch mal is less ambiguous and therefore admits the remind-me reading more readily.
(36) \[\text{\texttt{again}}(p)(e) \text{ is defined, iff } \exists e' < e \max(p)(e') = 1, \text{ and, where defined, } \]\[\text{\texttt{again}}(p)(e) = 1 \text{ iff } p(e) = 1\]

Von Stechow argues that \textit{wieder} in German can attach to different positions in the clause, in order to explain data such as (37a–b) in terms of structural ambiguity. These examples are given in the verb-final word order of a German embedded clause and must follow a suitable embedding string as indicated by the ellipsis points. The ambiguity von Stechow addresses is that in (37a) the presupposition that \textit{wieder} triggers can be the \textit{restitutive} presupposition that the plane was on the ground before, whereas (37b) can only have the stronger \textit{repetitive} presupposition that the plane has landed before.

(37) a. . . . das Flugzeug wieder landete.
    . . . the plane again landed
    ‘. . . the plane again landed.’ (repetitive/restitutive)
b. . . . wieder das Flugzeug landete.
    . . . again the plane landed
    ‘. . . again the plane landed.’ (repetitive/*restitutive)

To account for the difference, von Stechow proposes that unaccusative verbs like \textit{landen} ‘land’ are decomposed (here, using English words) into the light verb \textit{become} and a stative part, specifically \textit{(be) on land} for \textit{landen}. The subject is base-generated as the argument of \textit{(be) on land} but must move overtly into the subject position in the specifier of \textit{become}. From this, it follows that only (37a) allows the structure in (38a), where \textit{again} is attached to the stative part of the unaccusative. In this structure, \textit{again} triggers the weaker, restitutive presupposition. For (37b), however, only the structure in (38b) is available, where \textit{again} applies to the small vP including \textit{become}, triggering the stronger, repetitive presupposition.

(38) a. [the plane] \(\lambda_x [\text{\texttt{again}} [x \text{ on land}]] \text{ become}\)
b. \text{\texttt{again}} [([the plane] \(\lambda_x [x \text{ on land}] \text{ become}]]

On von Stechow’s account, the complement of \textit{again} directly determines the presupposition it triggers.

A similar explanation for the remind-me reading requires that there be a constituent with a meaning \(p\) such that \(p\) applied to a past interval yields the remind-me presupposition. Sauerland (2009) sketches such an account of the remind-me reading, building on an analysis of question meaning by Truckenbrodt (2004). Truckenbrodt argues that the meaning of the sentence-type question should generally be described as an order to contribute the answer to the question to the common ground. Truckenbrodt observes that his proposal explains why questions can be used not only by speakers who do not know the answer, but also by, for example, teachers in exams. In this scenario, the speaker wants the addressee to show the public whether the addressee knows the right answer, although the speaker might very well know the answer. The common ground also plays a role in the remind-me presupposition, as noted earlier. But the remind-me presupposition does not correspond to Truckenbrodt’s entire question meaning. Rather, as we pointed out, the
remind-me presupposition is satisfied as long as someone contributed the answer to the question to the common ground in the past. If the entire question meaning was the argument of again, only the interpretation that A asked B the same question previously could be generated. As discussed above, this interpretation is distinct from the remind-me reading and actually not available with clause-medial wieder/noch mal in German.

We now want to make a decomposition of question meaning into at least two components more concrete. Specifically, we propose that questions contain the imperative morpheme \textsc{imp}-2 and a morpheme that we call \textsc{cg}, and that both morphemes head silent projections as in (39).\footnote{Meyer (2013) argues that declaratives contain a silent necessity modal that she abbreviates \textsc{k}. Meyer’s \textsc{k} might be related to our \textsc{cg}, but at this point we leave the relationship open.}

\begin{equation}
\text{(39) \textsc{imp}-2} \ \text{[\textsc{cg} [what is your name]]}
\end{equation}

For \textsc{imp}-2, we assume the general meaning of imperatives: the speaker obliges the addressee to do what the complement of \textsc{imp}-2 specifies. As far as we can see, our specific analysis is compatible with a variety of accounts of \textsc{imp}-2, but for concreteness we adopt the universal modal analysis of Schwager (2005) and Kaufmann (2012) in (40). Kaufmann argues first that imperatives themselves generally contain two pieces of silent structure: the core imperative part \textsc{imp} and a part that restricts imperative subjects to the second person. Consider first \textsc{imp}. Kaufmann argues (a) that \textsc{imp}, like the necessity modal \textit{must} (Kratzer 1977), takes two contextual parameters (\(f\) and \(g\)) in addition to a possible-world argument \(w\), and (b) that the meaning of \textsc{imp} consists of universal quantification over a set of possible worlds, determined from the contextual parameters and \(w\), by an operator that Kaufmann writes as \(O\).

\begin{equation}
\text{(40) \textsc{imp}}(f, g, w)(p) = 1 \iff \forall w' \in O(f, g, w) \ p(w') = 1
\end{equation}

(Schwager 2005:99)

Kaufmann argues, furthermore, that imperatives require that the subject of the constituent corresponding to \(p\) must at least overlap with the addressee(s), and she develops an agreement analysis to capture this restriction. Following her analysis, we assume that \textsc{imp}-2 in (39) can be further decomposed into three morphemes, as shown in (41): Kaufmann’s \textsc{imp}, a silent subject pronoun \textsc{pro}-2 with second person agreement, and the light verb \textsc{do}.

\begin{equation}
\text{(41) \textsc{imp} \textsc{pro}-2 \textsc{do} [\textsc{cg} [what is your name]]}
\end{equation}

The interpretation of \textsc{do} takes three arguments—a predicate of events \(p\), the subject \(x\), and a possible world \(w\)—and expresses that, in \(w\), subject \(x\) causes an event that makes \(p\) true (e.g., Davidson 1967).

\begin{equation}
\text{(42) \textsc{do}}(p)(x)(w) = 1 \iff \exists e \ x \text{ causes in } w \text{ the event } e \text{ with } p(e) = 1
\end{equation}
In what follows, the decomposition of IMP-2 is not important, and we continue to use IMP-2 as an abbreviation for the more complex structure shown in (41).

Now consider the meaning of CG in the structures (39) and (41). Since the idea is that again in its remind-me reading can take scope over CG, the meaning of CG must correspond to the remind-me presupposition. The lexical entry is required to accomplish this correspondence. The two arguments of CG in the structure in (43) are the question and an event, but in addition CG is sensitive to the current speaker, as we will show.\(^{17}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
(43) \quad \llbracket CG \rrbracket_p(q^{(st, t)}(e)) = 1 \text{ iff event } e \text{ is a discourse, the speaker } \sigma \text{ is participating in } e, \text{ and } \\
&\text{the complete answer to } q \text{ is part of a common ground of } e
\end{align*}
\]

We assume here that events and common grounds are related in the following way: a discourse is a special type of event, and each discourse event has associated with it a common ground and a set of discourse participants. For ordinary questions, (43) is slightly stronger than Truckenbrodt’s (2004) proposal because it requires that the speaker be a participant of the common ground that the addressee is asked to contribute the answer to. This strengthening seems generally desirable: if A asks B a question, and then B tells a third person C with no relation to A the answer to A’s question, A wouldn’t think B answered the question. We think that all cases where it appears that an answer given to a third person seems acceptable actually involve an abstract second person. Consider for example the following scenario: For a centralized exam, Professor A formulates and distributes a set of questions. But the students’ answers are read and graded by assistants, and there is no plan for Professor A to see any of this. In this context, Professor A’s questions don’t oblige the examined students to seek out Professor A personally, so initially (43) seems too strong. But actually, in the same context Professor A could start the exam questions with phrases like “Please tell me . . . ,” without obliging students to talk to her personally. Therefore, we assume that Professor A and the teaching assistants doing the grading are both taking the role of an abstract persona (e.g., an exam service), in such a context, which is captured by the semantics in (43).

Remind-me readings provide further evidence for the lexical entry of CG in (43). We assume that the remind-me presupposition arises when again takes scope over CG, as shown in (44).

\[
\begin{align*}
(44) \quad \text{IMP-2 } \lceil \text{again } [\llbracket CG \text{[what is your name?]]} \rrbracket \rceil
\end{align*}
\]

The meaning of (44) corresponds quite closely to the paraphrase ‘you ought to make it known to me again what your name is’. Specifically, the predicate CG(q) in (44) is true of a discourse

\(^{17}\) We assume that the current speaker is one of the parameters of interpretation and write it in (43) as a superscript of the interpretation function \(\llbracket—\rrbracket\), following Kaplan (1978) and many others.
if and only if the current speaker participates in \( e \) and the complete answer to \( q \) is part of the common ground of \( e \). Again adds its presupposition to this predicate: namely, that there must be a (possibly partial) discourse \( e' \) prior to \( e \) such that up until the end of \( e' \) the answer to \( q \) is part of the common ground of \( e \). Therefore, \( \text{IMP}-2 \) obliges the speaker to bring about an event \( e \) where \( q \) is answered in \( e \), and presupposes that \( p \) is satisfied in any such \( e \). If the presupposed prior discourse \( e' \) is completed before the utterance time, the remind-me presupposition is the result. Though \( e' \) is part of a possible world introduced by the imperative, all worlds the imperative quantifies over share the past with the actual world, and therefore the prior discourse \( e' \) must also exist in the actual world. However, at this point we have not yet ruled out a second possibility: that \( e' \) is completed in the future of the utterance time. The remind-me presupposition is not satisfied in such a scenario, as the contrast between (45a) and (45b) shows. (45a) cannot be understood as a request to remind me of your name at some later time.

(45) a. #What is your name and what is your name (tomorrow) again?
   b. Tell me now and then again tomorrow what your name is.

We propose that (45) relates to a more general difference between overt imperatives and questions: namely, the verb in imperatives can be freely temporally restricted (e.g., by \textit{tomorrow} in (45b)), but in questions the silent morphemes \textit{cg} and \textit{do} that we postulated seem not to allow free temporal restriction. (46a) cannot be understood as a request to tell me sometime tomorrow what your name is. Only temporal restrictions that start at the utterance time, as in (46b), are possible with questions. We call this the \textit{Immediacy Constraint}.

(46) a. #Tomorrow, what is your name (again)?
   b. In the next two minutes, what is your thesis about?

At this point, we do not investigate the Immediacy Constraint further because the rough understanding we have given is sufficient to explain the oddness of (45a): namely, the presupposition of \textit{again} in (45a) could only be satisfied with a restriction to times after the first answering of the question. However, this requires a temporal restriction to an interval starting in the future of the utterance time, which is blocked by the Immediacy Constraint.

The account on the basis of (44) confirms the specific semantics provided for \textit{cg} in (43) in two ways. Specifically, \textit{cg} requires that the speaker, but not the addressee, be part of the discourse where the question is answered. In (44), this predicts that the speaker, but not the addressee, must have participated in the presupposed prior discourse where the answer to the question was contributed to the common ground. Recall from section 1 the scenario involving an announcer, which showed that the addressee of a question need not have been speaking in the presupposed prior discourse. But in that scenario, both speaker and addressee still participated in the prior discourse. Now, let us consider two scenarios where one of the interlocutors did not participate in the prior discourse. First, a scenario where the speaker was not part of the prior common ground but the addressee was: Assume A and B meet at a conference. A knows for a fact that B had to say her name at the registration desk just five minutes ago. However, A was in a different room at that time, and A never met B before. In this scenario, (2) isn’t acceptable. Second, a
scenario where the speaker was part of the prior common ground but the addressee was not: This time, assume A was just talking about B with a group of people not including B. They said B’s name to A and both A and B know about that, but A forgot B’s name already. In this scenario, (2) is acceptable. This contrast is expected from the lexical entry of CG in (43).

The speech-act-decomposition analysis is now complete. The two important assumptions of our analysis are that (a) noch mal, wieder, and again have the normal repetitive meaning but are attached at the high structural position shown in (44), and that (b) the question speech-act is decomposed into at least two parts: one containing an imperative component, and the other containing a component that makes reference to the common ground. Only one of these components is part of the scope of again for the remind-me reading. In the next section, we take up two questions that we claim are actually related: first, under what structural conditions is again licensed to occupy the high position where it triggers the remind-me presupposition, and second, how does the account apply to remind-me readings with kke in Japanese?

### 3.2 Polar Questions in German and Japanese

In this section, we argue for a specific explanation, within the speech-act-decomposition analysis, of the German/Japanese difference we observed concerning the availability of a remind-me reading in polar questions. First, we propose that Japanese kke actually has the same lexical interpretation as again, but can only be base-generated in the high structural position in (44). Hence, kke can only trigger the remind-me presupposition, not any other event repetition presupposition. As illustrated in (16) and (17), Japanese has the repetitive particles mata and mooichido, which can however only express the event repetition reading, not the remind-me reading. As (47) shows, neither of these particles can occur in the left periphery of a Japanese question, where kke occurs in (5).

(47) a. *Namae-wa nan-desu (ka) mata (ka)?
   name-TOP what-is (q) again (q)

   b. *Namae-wa nan-desu (ka) mooitido (ka)?
   name-TOP what-is (q) again (q)

Following Yatsushiro (1999, 2009), we assume that covert movement is unavailable in Japanese. Then the only way a remind-me reading could be derived in Japanese is by base-generating again in the high structural position shown in (44). However, as (47) indicates, the repetitive particles are blocked from this position. We assume that kke fills what would otherwise be an expressibility gap of Japanese, and that it selects for a CG complement and is thereby restricted to a position in the periphery of questions. (48) summarizes our parameterization of four lexical items meaning ‘again’ in Japanese and German.\(^{18}\)

---

\(^{18}\) We omit German wieder from the table since it also can merge to V (see footnote 15).
In Japanese, *mata* and *mooitido* can only merge to VP and cannot be remerged, while *kke* is restricted to CG. German *noch mal* can also only merge to VP, but can optionally remerge to CG. We assume furthermore that Remerge to CG in German must be covert. The parameterization of *noch mal* predicts that the overt position of *noch mal* must differ from that of *kke* even when both bear a CG feature: *kke* occurs in the right periphery of the clause because it must merge to CG, while *noch mal* must occur in a clause-medial position, as shown in section 2.3. But in contrast to Japanese, German allows covert movement via Remerge (e.g., Sauerland and Bott 2002, Wurmbrand 2008). If representation (44) of the remind-me reading of repetitive particles is correct, German *noch mal* is required to move covertly to take scope over CG.

\[ (49) \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{a. Japanese} & \quad \text{IMP}-2 \left[ \text{CG [what your name is]} \right] - \text{KKE} \\
\text{b. German} & \quad \text{IMP}-2 \left[ \text{noch mal [CG [what your name ____ is]}} \right]
\end{align*} \]

The postulation of covert movement for German remind-me *noch mal* is corroborated by the quantifier intervention data discussed in section 2.3. Specifically, we noted two kinds of intervention effect with remind-me *noch mal*. In the type in (32b), a quantifier c-commanding *noch mal* in the overt form caused intervention. This type of intervention is predicted straightforwardly if quantifiers generally block covert movement of *noch mal*, as Beck (1996) proposes. In the type in (34a), the lower *wh*-phrase in multiple *wh*-questions causes the intervention effect. In this case, remind-me *noch mal* differs from *wh*-in-situ since one *wh*-in-situ does not intervene for another, as illustrated by the triple *wh*-question in (50). The difference between *wh*-in-situ and *noch mal* is expected, however, because *noch mal* must move to a position higher than the question Spec,CP that *wh*-in-situ moves to.

\[ (50) \quad \text{Wer hat wem was geschenkt?} \\
\text{who.NOM has who.DAT what.ACC presented} \\
'\text{Who gave whom what as a present?'} \]

Next, consider focus. Regarding (15b) (repeated in (51)), we noted that the remind-me reading of *noch mal* is incompatible with focus, while the repetitive reading allows stress.

\[ (48) \quad \begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Language} & \text{Items} & \text{Parameter setting} \\
\hline
\text{Japanese} & \text{mata, mooitido} & \text{merge to V/VP} \\
& \text{kke} & \text{merge to CG} \\
\text{German} & \text{noch mal} & \text{merge to VP (remerge to CG)} \\
\end{array} \]

19 The covertness might be a general requirement on Remerge of the type considered here since Remerge of *noch mal* leaves no semantic trace in the lower position. Hence, the result of Remerge would not differ from that of having only one merger of *noch mal* in CG. Another example of covert movement that does not leave a trace behind is movement of *even* (see, e.g., Crnić 2014).
Coniglio (2011) and others have observed that modal particles in German generally cannot be stressed. Since Coniglio (2011) and Bayer and Obenauer (2011) argue for covert movement of modal particles similar to the movement of noch mal that we postulate, the requirement that remind-me noch mal be unstressed is predicted.

Finally, consider the difference between German and Japanese polar questions. We propose that this, too, is explained by the (im)possibility of covert movement. Prior evidence has shown that covert movement out of polar questions is generally impossible (Chierchia 1993, Moltmann and Szabolcsi 1994). Furthermore, such a general movement restriction is predicted by Nicolae’s (2013) analysis of polar questions. Let us consider both points in more detail. The evidence for the movement-blocking effect of polar questions comes from both matrix questions and embedded questions. Chierchia (1993) points out that matrix polar questions with quantifiers like (52) do not license a pair-list interpretation. Specifically, (52) should have the same pair-list interpretation as the wh-question Who does John love?, but it does not.

(52) Does John love everybody?
    (Chierchia 1993:208)

Moltmann and Szabolcsi’s (1994) evidence is shown in (53a) and (54b); we have added (53b) and (54a) to create minimal contrasts. In (53a), every boy cannot take scope over whether; Mary could only have found out either that every boy needed help or the negation of that. (53b), however, allows a reading where Mary found out the specific needs of each individual boy—that is, every boy can take scope over what.

(53) a. Mary found out whether every boy needed help.
    (Moltmann and Szabolcsi 1994:387)
    b. Mary found out what every boy needed.

Second, the difference between (54a) and (54b) concerns wide scope of the embedded subject over the matrix subject. In (54a), the embedded subject cannot take such wide scope, but in (54b), it can.

(54) a. Some librarian or other found out whether every boy needed help. (*∀ >> ∃)
    (Moltmann and Szabolcsi 1994:381)
    b. Some librarian or other found out which book every boy needed. (∀ >> ∃)

To explain why covert movement out of polar questions is blocked, different proposals have been made. For present purposes, which explanation turns out to be correct is actually immaterial. For concreteness, consider Nicolae’s (2013) proposal (based on facts from the licensing of negative polarity items in polar questions) to analyze polar questions as conditionals. In a nutshell, Nicolae
(2013:157) proposes that (55a) is analyzed like (55b). To make Nicolae’s proposal fully compatible with our assumptions, we adopt the structure in (55c) for polar questions, where if is the polar question complementizer but is interpreted as conditional if. 20 We assume that (55c) is derived by a movement of the if-clause as indicated that leaves behind the same lexical material except for the complementizer if. This material is struck out in (55) because it is syntactically not active, but it is fully accessible for interpretation. We think that the syntax of (55c) can be integrated with the version of the copy theory of movement outlined by Sauerland (2007) that does not use indices, but we leave the specifics for future research.

How is the correct interpretation for (55c) derived? We assume that cG′ is a version of cG from (43) that applies to single propositions rather than sets—that is, cG′(p) = cG({p}). Also we assume, following Nicolae, that standard conditional if is pragmatically strengthened to the biconditional if and only if (see, e.g., Geis and Zwicky 1971) and that this strengthening is obligatory in polar questions. In conditionals, the strengthening is not obligatory, but Farr (2011) shows experimentally that focus on the conditional clause makes it essentially obligatory. Since Truckenbrodt (2013) argues that the features [focus] and [+wh] are identical, strengthening is therefore predicted to be similarly obligatory in polar questions. Furthermore, adopting a second suggestion of Nicolae’s, we assume that cG, like its paraphrase we believe, is a neg-raising predicate (i.e., we assume that ‘not cG p’ entails ‘cG not p’). Therefore, the interpretation of (55c) can be paraphrased as follows: the speaker wants the addressee to bring about that (a) if ‘Mary ordered’ is true, it be common knowledge that Mary ordered, and (b) if ‘Mary ordered’ is false, it be common knowledge that Mary did not order. This captures the polar question meaning. An additional prediction of her proposals is important here: the conditional analysis predicts that for extraction, polar questions should behave like conditionals and not like other questions. The data in (52)–(54) corroborate this prediction.

Nicolae’s analysis derives the generalization that covert movement out of questions is impossible with polar questions, but possible with constituent questions. This generalization, together with our assumption about the respective positions of noch mal in German and kke in Japanese

20 An anonymous reviewer notes a problem with Nicolae’s (2013) original formal implementation of her idea: namely, Nicolae assumes that polar questions denote (singleton) sets of propositions of type (st, t) and analyzes (55a) as (i), where whether denotes the restricted universal quantifier over sets of propositions λR ∈ D(st,t) λS ∈ D(st,t) · R ⊆ S. Taking into account conditional perfection and neg-raising of I want to know, (i) predicts that for any proposition q ≠ p, the speaker wants to believe that q is false. Our proposal (55c), however, avoids this problem and shows that Nicolae’s underlying idea is sound.

(i) [(whether λq q = □(Mary ordered)] λq [I want to know q]]
in (49), predicts the distribution of remind-me readings in both languages correctly. The two derivations in (56) show how the remind-me reading of a polar question can be derived in Japanese, while it is blocked in German.

(56) a. Japanese

\[ \text{IMP-2} \left[ \left[ \text{IF} \left( \text{your name is Kai} \right) \right] \left[ \text{CG} \left( \text{your name is Kai} \right) \right] \text{kke} \right] \]\n
b. German

\[ \text{IMP-2} \left[ \left[ \text{IF} \left( \text{your name is Kai} \right) \right] \left[ \text{noch mal} \left[ \text{CG} \left( \text{your name is Kai} \right) \right] \right] \right] \]

Consider first the interpretation we derive for the Japanese example (56a). Since we assume that kke lexically selects for CG as its complement, the IF-clause must move to a position higher than kke. The interpretation arising from (56a) can be paraphrased as follows: I want you to, if your name is Kai, make that known again. The presupposition triggered by kke in (56a) is that it was known at some point in the past that your name is Kai. This interpretation corresponds to the remind-me reading, because a polar question with kke indeed conveys a bias that the speaker expects the response "yes." The derivation (56b), on the other hand, is ruled out by syntactic principles. For example, (56b) violates the c-command restriction on movement and also the constraint on movement out of conditional clauses.

The present proposal also accounts for the interspeaker variation in English mentioned earlier. Observe that again occurs in sentence-final position in (57). Therefore, the sentence is predicted to be structurally ambiguous, as follows. When again is attached low, as in (57a), only the event repetition reading is predicted to be possible. But (57b) is predicted to have only the remind-me reading, just like the Japanese example (56a). So, if an English speaker can access the structure in (57b), he or she is predicted to allow the remind-me interpretation. This predicts that remind-me readings in polar questions should be more accessible in English than in German, but at the same time less accessible in English than in Japanese. Specifically, English allows the two structures in (57) while Japanese allows only the one structure in (56a). In addition, there is a general processing preference in English to attach modifiers low, which makes the structure in (57a) more accessible.

(57) a. \text{IMP-2} \left[ \text{CG} \left[ \text{is your name Kai again} \right] \right]

b. \text{IMP-2} \left[ \left[ \text{CG} \text{is your name Kai} \right] \text{again} \right]

The account in terms of ambiguous attachment is confirmed by the contrast between again in final position and again in medial position in (58). In (58b), the remind-me interpretation is predicted to be unavailable.

(58) a. Do you know Spanish again?

b. #Do you again know Spanish?

Furthermore, we observed above that alternative questions allow a remind-me reading even in German. This is predicted because, as Nicolae (2013) argues, alternative questions do not have
the conditional-like structure in (55); instead, they are a type of \textit{wh-question}. Therefore, movement of \textit{noch mal} is predicted to be available.\footnote{Our analysis initially seems to predict that polar alternative questions should also allow remind-me readings in German since they do not involve a conditional structure. However, in a polar alternative question like (i) the Coordinate Structure Constraint is expected to block movement of \textit{again}. Therefore, we correctly predict the unavailability of a remind-me reading.}

### 4 Conclusion

In this article, we presented the (as far as we know) first in-depth discussion of remind-me readings of questions. These readings, illustrated in (59), are characterized by a presupposition that the answer to the question was already known in the past. Looking at data from English, German, and Japanese, we found three key differences. First, the data vary substantially in surface form. On the one hand, in English (59a) and German (59b), repetitive particles can trigger the remind-me presupposition. Japanese, on the other hand, uses a special particle \textit{kke} that only ever occurs with remind-me readings; see (59c).

\begin{align*}
(59) & \quad \text{a. What is your name again?} \\
& \quad \text{b. Wie ist noch mal Ihr Name?} \\
& \quad \text{\quad how is again your name} \\
& \quad \text{c. Name-wa nan da-kke?} \\
& \quad \text{\quad name-TOP what COP-KKE}
\end{align*}

Second, the position of the particles \textit{again}, \textit{noch mal}, and \textit{kke} in (59) differs. Third, Japanese allows remind-me readings in polar questions, while English does so only marginally and German doesn’t at all. The main accomplishment of our analysis is to relate the variation in (59) to the absence of remind-me readings with polar questions.

One central tenet of our analysis was to reduce the remind-me use of \textit{again} and \textit{noch mal} in (59) to the repetitive particle, and to assume the same lexical meaning \textit{AGAIN} for \textit{kke}. A second central assumption was a set of language-universal speech-act morphemes decomposing the question interpretation into \textit{IMP-2} (roughly, ‘you must . . .’) and \textit{CG} (roughly, ‘. . . make it common knowledge’). The interaction of \textit{AGAIN} with the speech-act morphemes, however, is determined by the selectional properties of \textit{AGAIN}, which in turn correspond directly with the word order differences in (59). Specifically, German \textit{noch mal} selects for VP and must undergo covert movement to remerge with \textit{CG}, while Japanese \textit{kke} only selects directly for \textit{CG}, as it occurs in the clausal periphery. For English \textit{again}, both selections are possible. This parameterization also predicts the variation with polar questions in the three languages, because there is independent evidence that polar questions block covert movement. The reduction of the German/Japanese contrast to independent principles therefore corroborates our account of remind-me readings.
We think the most interesting aspect of remind-me readings is that they allow us to empirically evaluate different accounts of speech-acts. One aspect of our proposal relates to a discussion about the classification of question speech-acts introduced by Searle (1975). Searle proposes that there are five basic types of speech-acts (assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative), questions being a subtype of directives. Searle arrived at this classification primarily on the basis of philosophical considerations: specifically, questions and other directives oblige the addressee to undertake some activity to change the world according to the content of the utterance. But, as far as we know, most current work on speech-acts assumes that this classification of questions was wrong, and that they constitute a type of their own. For example, Zaefferer (2001, 2006) argues explicitly against Searle’s classification of questions on the basis of a typological generalization he observes: ‘‘All languages have interrogative structures, all languages have imperative structures, but nowhere are the former a specialization of the latter’’ (Zaefferer 2001:211). Even more frequently, authors tacitly reject Searle’s classification and assume that questions are a basic type of entities that make up discourses. For example, Portner (2004) develops a semantic theory of clause types according to which declarative, imperative, and question correspond to distinct entities: the common ground, the to-do list, and the question set. Our data, however, corroborate Searle’s proposal empirically. In fact, they support a stronger version of the proposal than Searle might have had in mind. Searle’s original intent was primarily to create a taxonomy. If our proposal is correct, all questions—at least in Japanese, English, and German—involve the imperative morpheme. If results similar to ours could be extended to other clause types and languages in the future, a universal inventory of clause-type-dependent silent speech-act operators such as our IMP-2 and CG could be established, amounting to a viably restricted version of Ross’s (1970) performative hypothesis.

References


*Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS)*

_Schützenstraße 18_

_10117 Berlin_

_Germany_

_uli@alum.mit.edu_

_kazukoyatsushiro@gmail.com_