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# 1

## **WH-DOUBLING IN SWISS GERMAN: COPYING OF WH-WORD AS TAG- FORMATION**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper deals with wh-doubling in the dialect of Uri, a Swiss German dialect spoken in central Switzerland. In doubling structures wh-words appear at the very end of sentences in addition to their canonical (in this language) sentence initial position. In section 1 I give a description of this rare phenomenon and show the regularities that can be observed in the data. In section 2 I present an analysis of wh-doubling which was suggested in Frey (2001) and which takes into account the function of wh-words in information structure. Frey (2001) adopts the proposal of Erteschik-Shir (1997) that wh-words can be interpreted as focus or topic according to the given context and that a focus constituent must be stressed. According to this analysis wh-doubling is a prosodic process which results from the interaction of two factors: the association of wh-words with focus and prosodic impairment of monosyllabic wh-words with respect to stress marking. In section 3, I argue that a better explanation of wh-doubling is to regard it as an instance of tag formation. The function of such wh-tags as I assume is to boost the illocutionary force of wh-interrogatives. In section 4 I briefly review two other accounts of wh-doubling in other languages and give some short comments on the situation in other Swiss German dialects. A summary in section 5 concludes the paper.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the volume editors, the anonymous reviewers, and also Claudia Bucheli Berger and Elvira Glaser for their helpful comments.

# 1. DATA FROM THE DIALEKT OF URI

In the following subsections, I present the data of wh-doubling from the dialect of Uri and show the restrictions for this phenomenon. The data are taken from Frey (2001) and are based on spontaneous speech recordings and an oral elicitation being in progress. Sections 1.1 and 1.2 deal with formal characteristics of wh-doubling, section 1.3 shows its prosodic features. In section 1.4, I comment on its pragmatic aspect.

## 1.1 The phenomenon

The dialect of Uri displays wh-doubling in interrogative main clauses. The wh-word can occur in sentence initial as well as in sentence final position in the same sentence. Compare (1a) and (1b):

- (1) a. *Was machämer moorä?*  
what do-we tomorrow  
'What do we do tomorrow?'
- b. *Was machämer moorä was?*  
what do-we tomorrow what  
'What do we do tomorrow?'

Doubling is optional and thus the sentences like (1b) can be always replaced by their non doubled counterpart without changing the meaning of the sentence. For many speakers of the Uri dialect the doubling structure is a preferred option for information questions. Yet, not all speakers accept them as grammatical. The following data illustrate properties of wh-doubling of those speakers who use it as preferred option for wh-interrogatives. Although 'preferred' it is still an option. Not all wh-words can be doubled and doubling can not occur in all types of wh-interrogatives.

## 1.2 Position of the sentence final wh-word and sentence type

The wh-word at the right edge of the sentence is situated in the final field at the absolute end of the sentence to the right of the verb final position as shown in (2a).<sup>2</sup> The occurrence of the wh-word in situ in addition to sentence initial position is ungrammatical. Compare (2b) and (2c):

- (2) a. *Wer [isch da gsi] wer?* vs. *Wer [isch da gsi]?*  
who AUX there been who  
'Who was there?'
- b. *Wiä [wotsch das [x] machä] wiä?*

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<sup>2</sup> Square brackets mark the verb second and the verb final positions (linke bzw. rechte Satzklammer) according to the topological model (field structure) of German clause. The final field extends to the right of the verb final position.

how want-you it do how  
'How do you want to do it?'

- c. *Wiä* [wotsch das (\**wiä*) machä]?  
how want-you it how do  
'How do you want to do it?'

As to sentence type, the doubling option is limited to true information questions. In the following wh-question types doubling is excluded:

- (i) echo questions with the wh-word sentence initial as well as in-situ (3a);<sup>3</sup>  
(ii) alternative wh-questions as (3b) where the second part of the sentence represents an alternative of choices;  
(iii) rhetorical questions with negative polarity (3c); and  
(iv) negative wh-question (3d):

- (3) a. *WO* chasch dü mitgaa (\**wo*)? / *Dü* chasch *WO* mitgaa (\**wo*)?  
where can you with-go where  
'Where can you go?'

- b. *Was* macht de der da (\**was*), (Feeriä oder Schaffä) (\**was*)?  
what do MP he here what holidays or business  
'What does he do here, holidays or business?'

- c. *Was* wusch dü nu verliärä (?*was*)? ("Nyd")  
what want you MP lose what (Nothing)  
'What do you want to lose?' („Nothing“)

- d. *Was* isch de nig-gangä (\**was*)?  
what AUX MP NEG-gone what  
'What didn't work?'

The structure of (3a), the second option with the wh-word in situ position, and the nuclear stress on the wh-word do not allow doubling even if used as true information question. The first option cannot be a true information question for prosodic reasons (cf. 1.3). The restriction for alternative questions (3b) also applies, even if the alternatives are mentioned in the previous discourse and not explicitly in the question. The judgements of rhetorical questions as in (3c) are delicate. The speakers hesitate to accept these sentences but they do not reject them resolutely. There is no doubling in rhetorical questions in recorded data presented in Frey (2001). This is the reason for labeling the occurrence of the second wh-word in (3c) with question mark.

Finally, wh-doubling does not occur in embedded wh-clauses and in sentence structures with other embedded or subordinate clauses (for example with a relative clause). I do not assume syntactic reasons for this but rather pragmatic and prosodic ones (see next section).

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<sup>3</sup> In echo questions wh-items bear sentence stress which is indicated here in capitals. MP = modal particle.

### 1.3 Prosodic prominence of wh-items

Some wh-items are phonetically more prominent than others. Prominence is to be understood as how wh-items are perceived. Long or stressed words and phrases are more prominent than short or unstressed ones. Thus the prosodic prominence of a wh-item depends on the number of syllables and the strength of the stress compared to the nuclear stress and the other (un)stressed elements.

The following restriction concerns the weight of wh-items measured in syllables. Wh-doubling is acceptable only with monosyllabic wh-words as shown above in (1b), (2a) and (2b) and in (4a and b) below. Polysyllabic wh-elements are excluded as illustrated in (4c) and (4d):

- (4) a. *Was lisisch dü da was?*  
what read you here what  
'What do you read here?'
- b. *Wenn hesch dü dyys Referat wenn?*  
when have you your talk when  
'When will you give your talk?'
- c. *Uf wenn het d' Anna Bsuäch (\*uf wenn) / (\*wenn)?*  
on when has the-Anna visit on when / when  
'When does Anna receive visitors?'
- d. *I welem Zug gaasch dü hinächt üüsä (\*i welem?) / (\*i welem Zug)?*  
in which train go you tonight out / in which / in which train  
'Which train do you take tonight?'

In (4c) and (4d) bare wh-words (*wenn* 'when', *welem* 'which' or *in welem* 'in which') cannot be doubled either. This restriction also holds for wh-word consisting of two or more syllables like *wiäso*, *warum* 'why' as well as for wh-constituents which can be splitted like *was für* 'what kind of' and *wohär* 'where' as is shown in (5). In those sentences as in (4c) and (4d) above neither the wh-part nor the whole wh-element can be doubled:<sup>4</sup>

- (5) a. *Wo gömmer här (\*wo) / (\*wohär)?*  
where go-we Prt where  
'Where do we go?'
- b. *Was isch das für Gmiäs da drin (\*was) / (\*was für Gmiäs)?*  
what is for vegetables there in what / what for vegetables

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<sup>4</sup> Prt = direction particle.

‘What kind of vegetables is there?’

At this point it is worth noting a very peculiar feature of wh-questions in Uri dialect and in Swiss German in general. Whereas in Standard German or in English wh-words can bear secondary stress in non-echo wh-questions in Standard German or in English (or in Russian even the nuclear stress), the most prominent element in Swiss German dialects is the finite verb in verb second position. It has primary stress even when it is an auxiliary, as illustrated in (6):

- (6) *Wer ISCH da gsi (wer)?*  
who AUX there been who  
‘Who was there?’

This prosodic pattern is observed in wh-questions both with and without doubling. However, the nuclear stress can fall on another constituent if this constituent is contrastively emphasized. In this case, the finite verb receives the secondary stress. In any case, the monosyllabic wh-word seems to be prosodically less prominent in the sentence, and in rare cases it can be dropped:

- (7) [ ] *hesch dü gnu (was)?*  
[ ] AUX you taken what  
‘What did you take?’

Such “rare cases” represent situations in which the dropped wh-item can be easily inferred by the addressee. I call such cases ‘rare’ because they occur rarely. One can get the data like in (7) by observation but not by the normal data elicitation, since the informants usually reject wh-interrogatives with omitted wh-word in the sentence initial position (cf. footnote 12). In this case too, doubling is optional.

The next observation concerns the length of the sentence. Wh-doubling has the affinity to occur in short sentences. A short sentence is understood to contain as little new material as possible. Questions like (7), (8a) and (8b) are well formed and more natural than (8c) for example:

- (8) a. *Was isch was?*  
what is what  
‘what’s up?’
- b. *Wenn gaasch de dü si ga psüächä wenn?*  
when go MP you them go visit when  
‘When are you going to visit them?’
- c. *Wenn gaasch de dü dyni Frindä z Auschtraaliä ga psüächä (?wenn)?*  
when go MP you your friends in Australia go visit when  
‘When are you going to visit your friends in Australia?’

Speakers reject doubling in sentences like (8c) stating that “it is too long”. The acceptance of (8c) depends on the ability of the speaker to pronounce the sentence as one prosodic unit without break. Sentences with wh-doubling must be pronounced without any prosodic break. Thus, (8c) is deviant for prosodic reasons. It seems that wh-doubling is negatively affected by the increasing distance in syllables between two wh-words in the sense that the shorter sentences are preferred. Hence, the question mark in (8c) does not refer to the grammatical but to the prosodic well-formedness. And finally, independent of the sentence length, there is no prosodic break before the sentence final wh-word.

#### 1.4 Difference between doubled and non doubled wh-interrogatives

As a difference between sentences like (9a) and (9b) (cf. section 1) speakers indicate firstly that (9b) is ‘the stronger question’ than (9a). The strength can be described as ‘I absolutely want to know what we do tomorrow’. With sentences like (9b) speakers emphasize the question as illocutionary force (in the sense of Searle’s (1962) speech act theory), insisting on the answer.

- (9) a. *Was machämer moorä was?*  
 what do-we tomorrow what  
 ‘What do we do tomorrow?’
- b. *Was machämer moorä?*  
 what do-we tomorrow  
 ‘What do we do tomorrow?’

Secondly, asking (9a), speakers expect an exact and detailed answer. Thus, (10a) would meet such expectations, but (10b) would not. For (9b), both (10a) and (10b) are satisfactory answers.

- (10) a. *Moorä sind-mer bi der Anna z’Psüäch.*  
 tomorrow are-we by the Anna on-visit  
 ‘Tomorrow we are going to visit Anna’
- (b) *Ach, nyt Psunderigs, vilicht gaand-mer ga spaziärlä.*  
 oh nothing special maybe go-we go take-a-little-walk  
 ‘Oh, nothing special, maybe we are going to take a little walk’

In this section I showed the restrictions for wh-doubling in the dialect of Uri. These are essentially two. Namely (i) the question type: doubling occurs only in true information questions. It is not allowed in echo, rhetorical, alternative and negative wh-questions. And (ii) the syllable content of wh-items: only monosyllabic wh-words can be doubled. Wh-interrogatives with doubling convey a weak bias: speakers display some attitude toward the illocutionary force and the possible answer. Doubling boosts the question, and a detailed answer is expected.

## 2. WH-ITEMS IN TOPIC-FOCUS-STRUCTURE

Starting from the description of wh-questions in Swiss German shown in the previous sections I propose the analysis of wh-doubling which takes into consideration the function of wh-items in the information structure of the sentence. I suggest to account for wh-doubling as an instance of stress assignment to a wh-element associated with the focus constituent (cf. 2.2). My proposal is based on the analysis of the topic-focus structure of wh-questions in Erteschik-Shir (1997).

### 2.1 Wh-words and the focus structure (Erteschik-Shir 1997)

Wh-items are generally assumed to be the focus of wh-questions. Erteschik-Shir (1997) develops a theory of topic-focus-structure in which wh-words alongside their association with focus can also be interpreted as topics in restrictive contexts. By defining topic Erteschik-Shir refers to Reinhart (1981) who in turn draws on Strawson (1964). Strawson assigns three central properties the topic:

- a. The topic is what the statement is about.
- b. The topic is used to invoke “knowledge in the possession of an audience.”
- c. The statement is assessed *as* putative information *about its topic*.

Every sentence must have a topic. The topic must have reference. Focus of the sentence is defined as following: The Focus of a sentence S = the (intension of a) constituent c of S which the speaker intends to direct the attention of his/her hearer(s) to, by uttering S.

There has to be at least one (non-contrastive) focus in the sentence which is assigned freely to a syntactic constituent. Topic and focus are related by the function of predication. In languages which use pitch accent to mark focus, focus constituents must be stressed.<sup>5</sup>

Two points are crucial for my argumentation in the next section:

- (i) wh-phrases alongside their focus function can be interpreted as topics in certain contexts namely in restrictive contexts;
- (ii) the focus constituents must be stressed (stress rule).

The following examples illustrate what (i) means.

- (11) a. [What] did you<sub>Top</sub> [buy t]<sub>Foc</sub>  
b. [Which book]<sub>Top</sub> [did you buy t]<sub>Foc</sub>

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<sup>5</sup> For details see Erteschik-Shir (1997: 7–15).



(11a) is uttered in a non restrictive context. There is no set for wh-word to range over. The speaker has no idea what the answer could be. In this case wh-word is associated with focus [buy t].<sup>6</sup> The topic is *you*, it is an utterance about *you*.

In contrast to that, (11b) is an utterance in restrictive context. That is, the wh-word *which* ranges over a set of items provided by the discourse (d-linking). In this case it is a set of books under discussion. Thus, the context provides a topic set of possible answers and the question asks the hearer to pick up one of the items of the set. *Which book* is interpreted as topic. (11b) is an utterance about books. *Which* alone is not the topic but a part of the topic constituent *which book*. In both cases (11a) and (11b) wh-words are operators ranging over a set of possible true answers. In (11a) such a set is empty.<sup>7</sup>

Basically, the main difference between (11a) and (11b) is whether or not the speaker has in mind an object associated with the wh-word or phrase. Question types associated with restrictive contexts in the framework of Erteschik-Shir are *rhetorical* and *negative* questions. In rhetorical questions the topic set is inferable from the context or from the question itself:

(12) Who lives forever anyway?

In questions with negation such a set needs not be explicitly mentioned. The following context illustrates this. Imagine a situation where A is back from a short visit in Paris. A says to B:

(13) A: I could not see all I wanted.  
B: What didn't you see?

For asking a question as in (13) B must have an idea of sights in Paris. Otherwise there is no sense or reason for him/her to ask the question in this way.<sup>8</sup>

The second crucial point (ii) concerns the stress rule for focus constituents. Erteschik-Shir (1997) proposes this rule for languages which mark focus with pitch accent. It follows partly from the definition of focus, since a straightforward way to direct attention of the hearer to a constituent is to stress it.

These two assumptions, the interpretation of wh-items as focus or as topic and the stress rule, provide the basis for my account of wh-doubling in the dialect of Uri following in the next section.

## 2.2 Doubling as compensation for lacking stress on wh-words

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of (11a), I do not mean, that the wh-word *is* a focus. It is rather *associated* with the focus constituent in some way. It indicates the gap to be filled by the hearer.

<sup>7</sup> As an anonymous reviewer points out, *which*-phrases are not necessarily topics as for instance in the discourse: Tell me about yourself. *Which subjects* have you studied in school? *Which subjects* is to be interpreted as a part of the focus constituent. It is nevertheless d-linked and it ranges over a restrictive set of school subjects.

<sup>8</sup> The same effect can be achieved with semantic negation as well:  
(i) What did you miss in Paris?

As shown in the previous section wh-items can have topic interpretation in restrictive contexts. Recall from section 1.2 that there is a weak bias against doubling in restrictive contexts and that rhetorical and negative questions are precisely cases where wh-doubling in the dialect of Uri is excluded. This is shown in (3c) and (3d) repeated here as (14a) and (14b):

- (14) a. *Was* wiusch dü nu verliärä (\**was*)? (“Nyd”)  
what want you MP lose what (Nothing)  
‘What do you want to lose? („Nothing“)’
- b. *Was* isch de nig-gangä (\**was*)?  
what AUX MP NEG-gone what  
‘What didn’t work?’

In (11a) the wh-word ranges over an empty topic set. In (14b) the topic set consists of those things which the speaker thinks can go wrong.

The third sentence type which does not allow wh-doubling is *alternative* questions. This question type is the best candidate for restrictive context as well, since the restriction is expressed explicitly by the two alternatives in the question. Consider (3b) repeated here as (15):

- (15) *Was* macht de der da (\**was*), Feeriä oder Schaffä?  
what do MP he here what holidays or business  
‘What does he do here, holidays or business?’

At this point I arrive at the conclusion that wh-doubling is not allowed in restrictive contexts where the wh-word ranges over a set of possible answers. And doubling is fine in non-restrictive contexts in which the wh-word does not function in this way. Such an embedding of wh-words in the context (i. e. d-linking) seems to be *one* of the factors on which wh-doubling depends. The other factor concerns the stress rule for the focus constituent: (ii) the focus constituents must be stressed.

The stress rule requires focus constituents to be stressed. This is supposed to hold for languages which mark focus with pitch accent. The dialect of Uri meets this condition (cf. Claus 1969). As noted in section 1.3 monosyllabic wh-words cannot be stressed in (non-echo) wh-questions displaying their weak form while the finite verb receives the nuclear stress. Consider the wh-question in (4a), here as (16), embedded in the following dialogue:

- (16) A: ... ich bin am lesen.  
I am at read  
‘... I am reading now.’  
B: *Was* lisch dü da *was*?  
what read you here what  
‘What are you reading here?’

In order to obey the stress rule there is nothing of the focus constituent to be stressed except the wh-word *was* 'what'. The finite verb is stressed due to the second position but not by virtue of being the focus (cf. 1.3). Since the intention of B is to direct attention of A to the object of reading, which is replaced by the wh-word, and since it is impossible to stress it, a conflict arises: the wh-word does not show the required prosodic prominence. To avoid this conflict the wh-word is repeated at the very end of the sentence. This 'doubling for stress' strategy<sup>9</sup> enables the wh-word otherwise in its weak form and unstressed to improve its prosodic weakness in order to be associated with focus.

This strategy applies only to monosyllabic wh-words, since polysyllabic wh-elements such as *warum* 'why' or *für was* 'for what' are independent prosodic units: they can bear secondary stress exactly due to their property of being polysyllabic. This is the reason why 'heavy' wh-items are not prone to doubling. I also count monosyllabic wh-words in echo questions as 'heavy' wh-items (cf. (3a) in section 1.2). In such questions wh-doubling is not allowed. In this sentence type, the wh-word is the most prominent element, thus no doubling is needed. With respect to echo questions, the question arises why is it impossible to use the stress instead of doubling. The answer is simple: this option is occupied. It would be pragmatically very odd to stress the wh-word in (true) information questions, since they would get echo interpretation, which is not intended. Moreover, the strong stress on wh-words is an *integral* part of echo questions, whereas wh-doubling is an *additional* device, which can be used freely in information questions. Precisely this *additional* character of wh-doubling allows it to make the wh-word more prominent.

It appears that in the dialect of Uri wh-words that can be doubled are monosyllabic, associated with focus and they cannot be stressed. Repeating the wh-word at the end of the sentence extends it to two syllables. Although they are scattered to the sentence edges, the wh-word is better perceived more readily in this form than in its single form. That way the wh-word improves its prosodic prominence, which is necessary for its focus interpretation. In this regard, the question arises why there is no wh-doubling in other Swiss German dialects or in the majority of languages. Recall that wh-doubling is optional and an instance of individual choice. Thus, the question what weak wh-words must be like in order to be doubled is treated partly individually depending on intention of the speaker to direct hearer's attention at one element or another. The easiest way to do this is to stress the wh-word. In the dialect of Uri it is not an option since it results in an echo interpretation. What is left is the reduplication at distance (doubling). This again raises the question why wh-words are doubled at the end of the sentence. I deal with this question in the next section.

### 3. WH-DOUBLING AS TAG FORMATION

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This method can be observed in other languages as well. For example in Russian echo questions can be realized either as (i) with strongly stressed wh-word or as (ii) with reduplication of the wh-word.

Compare:

- (i) *KTO* naš nacal'nik?
- (ii) *Kto-kto* naš nacal'nik.  
'Who is our chief?'

In contrast to Russian the Uri dialect shows a kind of 'reduplication at distance'.

In this section I give a brief general overview of tag questions focussing on implications of tagging on illocutionary force of the sentence. I suggest that wh-doubling in Swiss German can be seen as an instance of tag formation. Such wh-tags provide the wh-questions with an additional interrogative force.

### 3.1 Tag questions

Tag questions are best known from English. In this language, tag questions have particular formal properties. They consist of a modal or an auxiliary, which can be negated, and a subject pronoun:

- (17) a. You like fish, don't you?  
b. You don't like fish, do you?  
c. You like fish, do you?  
d. You don't like fish, don't you?

Tags display either reversed as in (17a) and (17b) or constant polarity as in (17c) and (17d). They can be attached to sentences of different types (moods), changing the illocutionary force, which is canonically associated with the given sentence type, slightly. In (17a) the tag attached to a declarative turns an assertion into a question expressing the speaker's expectations concerning agreement or disagreement. From the functional point of view tag questions are either positively conducive (expecting agreement) or negatively conducive (expecting disagreement). They cannot be neutral. In (17a) the negated tag elicits a positive answer, in (17b) the absence of negation elicits a negative answer. In general tag sequences have falling intonation. Intonation on constant-polarity tags has to rise (cf. Hudson 1975, Kay 2002, Holmes 1982).

In other languages the same function is expressed with so-called invariant tags. These are words like for example the English tags *right*, *eh*, *ok*, *innit* etc. (18a) and (18b) show typical tag questions in German. Wh-word *was* 'what' can also be used as tag as illustrated in (18c) from German and in (18d) from Tagalog (cf. Ultan 1978):

- (18) a. Du gehst jetzt noch nicht nach Hause, *oder*?  
You go now yet not to home or  
You don't got home now, do you?  
b. Er hat angerufen, *nicht wahr*?  
he has called not true  
He has called, hasn't he?  
c. Das war ein langer Tag *was*?  
This was a long day what  
It was a long day, wasn't it?  
d. Hindi mabait ang babae, *ano*?  
NEG nice the girl what  
'The girl isn't nice, is she?'

In Swiss German dialects, constructions like (18c) and (18d) are not possible, while (16a) and (16b) are well formed. Moreover there is a strong preference for words like *oder* 'or' (cf. Glaser 2003).<sup>10</sup>

Tags on exclamatives in English allow exclusively reversed polarity and they are attached to positive clauses. They are used to seek confirmation with the exclaimed statement (cf. Hudson 1975):

(19) What a nice girl she is, isn't she?

Imperatives can also be tagged. In those cases the subject of the tag does not need to be a pronoun (cf. McGregor 1995, who cites Quirk *et al.* 1985):

- (20) a. Open the door, won't you/can't you?  
b. Open the door, won't somebody/anybody?  
c. Come in, will you?

According to Quirk *et al.* (1985) an imperative tag can – depending on the situation – soften or increase the force of directives, among other effects (see also Bolinger 1967 and Fraser 1980).

The most interesting case for this paper is tags attached on interrogatives. This seems to be impossible at least in English. However, Hudson (1975) cites Bolinger (1957) and Cattell (1973) who give examples like (21), which are acceptable in some varieties of American English and in Australian English:

- (21) a. Did he go there, did he?  
b. Did John drink beer, did he?  
c. Will he fairly soon, will he?  
d. Did John do it, was it?  
e. How did he go there, did he?

The authors do not give any comment on differences in meaning or on the illocutionary force of those sentences. However, all tag question types (tag on declaratives, exclamatives, imperatives and interrogatives) have two common characteristics: tags modify the proposition expressed in the sentence host in some way, and they bring the hearer to respond to the speaker's utterance. The main function of tag questions is establishing and maintaining discourse interaction (cf. Holmes 1982). In the next section, I develop some reasonings for an account of wh-doubling as a kind of tag on wh-interrogative.

### 3.2 Doubling as tag formation

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<sup>10</sup> There are of course many other tag words and expressions in Swiss German. I do not mention them all, since it is not relevant for the argumentation.

For my argumentation it is important to state from the previous section that (i) tags add some interrogative force to declarative exclamative and imperatives. In tagged imperatives they affect the strength of the illocutionary force in the host sentence; and (ii) at least in some varieties of English *y/n* and *wh*-interrogatives can be tagged.<sup>11</sup>

For tags on interrogatives as in (21) I assume that they affect the strength of the illocutionary force in the same way as they do in imperatives. According to Cindy Banks (p. c.) who is a native speaker of American English speakers use sentences like in (21) in order to enforce the question insisting on a promptly answer.

The interpretation of *wh*-doubling as a tag formation is motivated by following considerations. Tags and *wh*-doubling share some characteristic properties, namely: (a) doubling likewise tags on interrogatives does not change the illocutionary force but makes an increasing impact on its strength; (b) it does not change the meaning of the proposition expressed in the interrogative; (c) the doubled *wh*-word occupies the sentence final position, a characteristic tag position<sup>12</sup>; (d) doubling and tags are optional: there is no element in the sentence host which requires *wh*-word to be doubled or tag to be attached; (e) the modification caused by doubling or tag is always speaker's point of view, they both express speaker's attitude or mental state concerning the proposition in the host. Both doubling and tags are response soliciting. Recall from section 1.4 that the questions with doubling express (i) speakers' expectations for a detailed answer and (ii) the boosted illocutionary force.

In section 2.2, I suggested that *wh*-doubling is a prosodic process (doubling for stress strategy). However, it has an impact on the syntactic structure. It remains to be investigated how such a process interacts with the syntax. For syntactic analysis of English tag questions cf. Kay (2002), Bender and Flickinger (1999) and Culicover (1992). These works deal essentially with the relation of the tag form and the relevant elements in the host sentence. In the case of invariant tags like in German (see ex. 18a-18c) or Swiss German this problem does not arise.

### 3.3 Focus structure and tags

In this section I attempt to establish a connection between the two proposals I made in sections 2.2 (focus structure) and 3.2 (tag). They do not contradict one another, they are rather two different perspectives on the same phenomenon. The one perspective (presented in section 2.2) poses the question, whether there is a difference between sentences with and without doubling, if we consider the function of *wh*-words in the information structure. In this regard one can observe the following regularity: In the case of doubling, *wh*-words are not *d*-linked and do not range over a set of possible answers, that is, the speaker has no idea what the answer could be. This correlates naturally with the boosting of the illocutionary force (another perspective) proposed in section 3.2 (tag-formation). Respectively, in the case of a *d*-linked *wh*-word no

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<sup>11</sup> In Swiss German and I think in many other languages interrogatives can always be tagged by an interjection like *he*. Compare the examples from Swiss German (Bern):

(i) Chunsch morn, *he?* 'Do you come tomorrow, eh?'

(ii) Was hesch gmacht, *he?* 'What did you do, eh?'

<sup>12</sup> For sentence initial tags see Ultan (1978).

doubling is observed presumably because of a decreased degree of speaker's curiosity. However, the correlation of wh-doubling with the status of d-linking of the wh-word and with its association with the focus constituent does not explain the optionality of that phenomenon. In contrast, the analysis of wh-doubling as tag formation perfectly allows for optionality. In addition to this, the tag analysis shows the function of wh-doubling in a more adequate way. But there is no contradiction between the two. The first one says, that there is a force marker deficiency (unstressed wh-word) and where the reason for this shortcoming is (an wh-element associated with focus is prosodically weak). The second (tag formation) shows, what strategy can be used in order to counterbalance this deficiency. The dialect of Uri exercises the tag option by doubling the wh-word.

In any case, the question of what is wh-doubling is still open.

## 4. WH-DOUBLING IN OTHER DIALECTS AND LANGUAGES

In this section I briefly address the question of which dialects and languages exhibit a similar phenomenon and what analyses are proposed. The next section provides some indications to the geographical distribution of wh-doubling in other Swiss German dialects (sec. 4.1). The given examples are still under examination and thus a potential topic for future research. Other languages in which wh-doubling is attested are limited to some North-Eastern Italian dialects (sec. 4.2) and to the American Sign Language (sec. 4.3).

### 4.1 Other Swiss German dialects

In addition to the dialect of Uri wh-doubling as preferred construction for wh-interrogatives is attested in some other Swiss German dialects (cf. Frey 2006). These are the neighboring dialects of Uri: Nidwalden, Obwalden, Luzern and Schwyz which are situated in the central part of Switzerland. It is also found in the dialects of cantons Basel-Land, Zurich, Aargau and Appenzell Ausserrhoden. Speakers who do not prefer wh-doubling in true information questions accept it nevertheless as an option in rhetorical questions (cf. Frey 2005).

If wh-doubling is a kind of tag formation, as I assume, based on the prosodic weakness of monosyllabic wh-words which is in all probability at the speaker's own discretion, then it should be possible to find doubling of polysyllabic wh-words and phrases in other dialects. This can be observed very rarely in spontaneous conversation. The following sentences were uttered by a speaker of the dialect of Winterthur:<sup>13</sup>

- (22) *Vo wo chunsch denn du urschprünglech vo wo?*  
from where come MP you originally from where  
'Where do you come from originally?'

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<sup>13</sup> This dialect was classified as wh-doubling free (cf. Frey 2006).

- (23) *Wieviel Zins* hesch denn du *wieviel*?  
how-much interest have MP you how-much  
'What is your interest rate?'

Typically, speakers deny having uttered sentences like (22) and (23), they even deny them if asked immediately after the utterance.<sup>14</sup> In the case of (22), the speaker indicated a high degree of curiosity as a motivation for doubling structures.<sup>15</sup>

What is known about wh-doubling in Swiss German suggests that generally wh-doubling is a real option in the majority of dialects. In certain cases when frequently used as in Uri dialect it can display some regularities. In other cases, as in (22) and (23), it is hidden by their very rare occurrence and by the speaker's uncertainty. This state of affairs poses a challenge for every linguist doing fieldwork in a dialectal area. Anyway, more data and research are needed for a better understanding of this doubling phenomenon.

#### 4.2 North Eastern Italian dialects

Some North Eastern Italian dialects exhibit wh-doubling configurations. This is illustrated in (24) taken from Poletto and Pollock (2004):

- (24) a. *S'a-lo fat che?* Illasi (Verona)  
what-has-he done what  
'What has he done?'
- b. *Ndo e-lo ndat endoe?*  
where is-he gone where  
'Where has he gone?'

Poletto and Pollock (2004) propose a purely syntactic clitic doubling analysis for wh-interrogatives which accounts for this phenomenon in North Eastern Italian dialects and in French. This analysis explains the variation of occurrence of wh-words (wh-in situ, wh-initial and wh-doubling) in these languages. The authors claim that there are such elements as wh-clitics. In Illasi, the wh-word *che* 'what' is doubled by a clitic *s'* which is the short form of another word for 'what', *cossa* (cf. (24a)). In (24b), *endoe* 'where' has the clitic counterpart *ndo*. Wh-doubling is possible only with wh-words which have a wh-clitic. The clitic form occupies the sentence initial position to the left of the verbal complex, the 'long' wh-word is located at the right edge of the sentence. The two wh-forms are merged as a phrase headed by a clitic with the 'long' wh-form in the specifier: [CIP whP wh-cl]. At the end of the derivation the two

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<sup>14</sup> For more details to such a peculiar reaction of informants cf. Bucheli Berger and Glaser (2002) and Bucheli Berger (2005).

<sup>15</sup> This self reflection remark goes perfectly with the interpretation of doubling as tag formation from the functional point of view.



elements of the CIP have moved to two different positions in the left periphery which is supposed to consist of at least three projections:

(25) [WhP1 Wh1 [ForceP Force [WhP2 Wh2 [IP ... ]]]]

The clitic and the non-clitic counterpart are moved to WhP1 and to WhP2, respectively. IP is moved to ForceP via remnant movement. This way the structure for (25) is derived.<sup>16</sup> The Clitic Phrase is regarded as a universal property and the variation in Romance languages with respect to the position of wh-items and to doubling option is explained by parameter setting in each language: the positions in the CIP can be filled or not. In the case of Illasi both positions are occupied and the language displays wh-doubling as a consequence. In the case of North-Eastern Italian dialects the authors consider doubling as a clearly syntactic phenomenon, as a result of subsequent movements of the wh-elements constituting the CIP and of the IP remnant movement.

I do not apply the analysis of Poletto/Pollock to the data from the dialect of Uri, since (i), the wh-words in Swiss German do not display the clitic properties assumed for the North Eastern Italian (NEI) dialects (there is no such clear difference between weak and strong forms in Swiss German as in NEI dialects. Compare *ndo* vs. *endoe* in NEI and *wo* (unstressed) vs. *wo* (stressed) in Swiss German), and (ii), as a consequence of (i) there is no reason to assume a wh clitic phrase in Swiss German and the resulting analysis. In addition, Poletto/Pollock do not show wh- doubling from the pragmatic perspective such as the correlation with the question type.

### 4.3 American Sign Language (ASL)

Another language in which wh-doubling is attested is the American Sign Language (ASL). According to Neidle *et al.* (2000) the wh-doubling constructions are quite common in ASL. In general wh-words can either stay in situ or optionally move to SpecCP which is assumed to the right of TP.<sup>17</sup> In (26) one wh-word is in the in situ position. The sentence final wh-item is thought to be a tag:<sup>18</sup>

(26)

hs
_____
wh

WHO LIKE JOHN, WHO  
Who likes John, who (does)?

The wh-phrase at the right edge of the sentence is assumed to appear outside of CP, in a higher tag projection. The sentence and the tag may be separated by a slight

<sup>16</sup> For details see Poletto and Pollock (2004: 266-267).

<sup>17</sup> For the discussion on the structure of the left periphery in ASL cf. Neidle *et al.* (2000) and Petronio Lillo-Martin (1997).

<sup>18</sup> The line in capital letters represents manual signs. Non-manual markings are indicated by underlined normal letters. The line shows the extent of non-manual marking over the manual signs. wh = wh-question marking, hs = head shake.

prosodic break. According to Neidle *et al.* (contra Lillo-Martin (1997)) wh-doubling is possible not only with heads (as *who*, *what*, *why* etc.) but also with wh-phrases like *which film*. The tag is considered to be a reduced copy of the elements in the matrix clause. Thus, wh-doubling in the ASL can be seen as a result of a syntactic copying process (movement) and of spelling out a copy at the PF.

I adopted the idea of tag from Neidle *et al.* (2000). However, in the ASL the tag in [Spec, CP], as a result of spelling out of both the wh in situ and the wh-word in [Spec, CP] poses the question of what triggers the spelling out of the two wh-elements. As for prosodic prominence, in the ASL the equivalent to the prosody is the non manual marking. In the example (26) it is hs (head shake) together with wh-marking. As (26) shows hs is spread over the sentence final wh-word. Thus, there may be a close relation, as I assume, between wh-doubling and the non manual marking in the ASL.<sup>19</sup>

## 5. SUMMARY

In this paper I have shown the phenomenon of wh-doubling in one Swiss German dialect. The data presented in section 1 demonstrates the following properties of wh-doubling constructions in the dialect of Uri. First, wh-doubling is not an option in certain question types (rhetorical, echo, alternative and negative wh-question). Second, only monosyllabic wh-items can be doubled. As an explanation for this pattern I proposed to take into consideration the role of wh-words in the information structure of the sentence. Erteschik-Shir's (1997) theory of focus-structure provides two crucial assumptions: focus vs. topic interpretation of wh-items, and the stress rule for focus constituents (cf. section 2). It appears that doubling occurs in sentences where the wh-word is associated with focus and where it shows up in its weak form, which is not sufficient for focus marking. Doubling of the wh-word at the end of the sentence solves that problem.

In section 3, I gave a sketch of an alternative account for wh-doubling. Regarding its pragmatic function it can be considered a tag attached to a wh-interrogative. The function of such a tag is on the one hand to boost the question force: the question becomes more insistent. On the other hand the speakers use doubling as a means of showing their attitude towards the expected answer: it is expected to be exhaustive, precise and not too general. Thus, wh-interrogatives with doubling are biased in this respect.

Doubling as tag formation may seem strange at the first glance. However, there is nothing that excludes this option formally. Functionally, wh-doubling shares the most properties with tags (cf. 3.2). Concerning the nature of wh-doubling in Swiss German dialects, I suggest that it is a matter of prosody rather than syntax, due to the fact that it yields the same effect as stress usually does.

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<sup>19</sup> Wh-doubling is also common in the Swiss German Sign Language (Petrea Bürgin, p. c.).

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