

The Bavarian discourse particle *fei* as a marker of non-at-issueness

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In this paper I show that the Bavarian discourse particle *fei*, in contrast to discourse particles like *doch*, cannot be added to a sentence denoting a proposition *p* if the addressee has uttered a sentence entailing that she believes that *not p*. If it follows from general background assumptions or can be inferred from the addressee's behavior that she believes that *not p*, in contrast, the addition of *fei* is felicitous. Likewise, *fei* can be added to a sentence denoting a proposition *p* if *not p* is presupposed or conversationally or conventionally implicated by a sentence that the addressee has previously uttered.

Keywords: discourse particles, assertions, at-issue-content, presuppositions, conventional implicatures, conversational implicatures

1 Introduction

This paper discusses the semantics and pragmatics of the Bavarian discourse particle *fei*, which does not have a direct counterpart in standard German. Etymologically, *fei* is related to Latin *finis* and French *fin* 'end, border' and has entered Bavarian in the 12th century (Schlieben-Lange 1979; Glaser 1999). As usual for discourse particles (cf. Jacobs ([this volume](#)); Dörre & Trotzke ([this volume](#))) the exact meaning of *fei* is hard to pin down. Traditionally, it is taken to be an emphatic particle that conveys the speaker's assumption that the content of the sentence containing *fei* (henceforth: the *prejacent* of *fei*) is surprising for the hearer (Schlieben-Lange 1979; Glaser 1999). In Thoma (2009), which is (to the best of my knowledge) the only explicit discussion of *fei* in modern, theoretical linguistic terms, *fei* is analysed as an item that is not only a discourse particle, but evokes at the same time polarity focus. Thoma (2009) proposes that the meaning of a sentence of the schematic form *fei p* can (roughly) be paraphrased as follows: The speaker believes that the hearer believes that *not p*.

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Additionally, she claims that no matter which part of the prejacent of *fei* receives the main accent, the sentence can only be understood as expressing polarity focus, i.e. focus on the truth value of the respective sentence (Höhle 1992).

In this paper, I will argue that while Thoma (2009) captures important aspects of the meaning of *fei*, there is a crucial feature setting *fei* apart from other discourse particles expressing some form of contrast such as *aber* and *doch*, which is not addressed by her analysis at all: *fei* not only makes its contribution at the level of non-at-issue content (Potts 2005) - which is standard for discourse particles; see Gutzmann (2015) and the references therein -, but also relates to non-at-issue content exclusively. Consequently, *fei* can only be added felicitously to a sentence denoting the proposition *p* in cases where the speaker's assumption that the hearer believes *not p* is not based on the hearer's prior assertion of a proposition entailing *not p*. Rather, that assumption has to be based on the hearer's non-verbal behavior in the respective situation, on general background knowledge, on conventional or conversational implicatures of sentences previously uttered by the hearer or on the presuppositions of such sentences (i.e. on propositions which the hearer, erroneously, assumes to be part of the Common Ground in the sense of Stalnaker (1978), but which the speaker in fact takes to be false).

Building on the idea that the at-issue content of an assertion has a special status insofar as it does not enter the Common Ground directly, but rather is explicitly put on the table by the speaker in a first step and has to be explicitly or implicitly accepted by the addressee before entering the Common Ground (AnderBois, Brasoveanu & Henderson 2015; Murray 2017), the fact that *fei* relates to non-at-issue content exclusively can be explained along the following lines: By adding *fei*, the speaker draws the hearer's attention to a conflict between her own beliefs and the hearer's beliefs that is not salient at the point where the respective sentence is uttered. In a case where the proposition *q* believed by the hearer that contradicts the (propositional content of the) prejacent of *fei* is the at-issue content of a sentence previously uttered by the hearer, the question of whether *q* is true is highly salient, however. Uttering a sentence that contradicts *q* therefore makes the conflict between the speaker's and the hearer's beliefs automatically salient as well. The addition of *fei* to such a sentence would thus be superfluous.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 gives some general background on discourse particles and summarizes Thoma's 2009 analysis of *fei*. Section 3 presents the novel data that motivate the account argued for in this paper. My own analysis of *fei* is presented in Section 4, and Section 5 briefly compares *fei* with another discourse particle that expresses some form of contrast, namely *doch*. Section 6 is the conclusion.

2 Thoma's (2009) analysis of *fei*

2.1 2.1 General background

Standard German as well as its dialectal variants has a large number of *discourse particles*. Discourse particles are characterized by a number of syntactic and semantic

features: They are always optional, they can only occur in the so-called middle field, they cannot receive the main accent of the respective clause¹, they cannot be questioned, they cannot be negated and they do not contribute to the truth conditions of sentences containing them (Weydt 1969; Thurmail 1989; Jacobs 1991; Ormelius-Sandblom 1997; Karagjosova 2004b; Coniglio 2011; Zimmermann 2008, 2012; Gutzmann 2015); see the papers in Bayer & Struckmeier (2017) for a recent overview). Rather, they serve to link the proposition denoted by the respective sentence to the context by indicating how it is related to the speaker's or the hearer's epistemic states or the Common Ground at the point where the sentence is uttered.

The sentences in (1b) and (1c), for example, have the same propositional content as the one in (1a) and are thus true in exactly the same circumstances. But whereas (1b) is felicitous in a context where it is an established fact that the speaker is going to Hamburg on the day following the day where the sentence is uttered and where the speaker considers it at least possible that the hearer knows that Lindner (1991); Kratzer (1999), (1c) is infelicitous in such a context. Rather, it is (very roughly) felicitous in a context where the speaker assumes the hearer to have known previously that she is going to Hamburg, but to be temporarily unaware of that fact (see Zeevat (2003); Karagjosova (2004a, 2009); Egg (2013); Grosz (2014); Rojas-Espónida (2014) for detailed analyses built on or related to that idea). The sentence in (1b), in contrast, would be infelicitous in such a context. Finally, (1a) is felicitous in both kinds of contexts.

- (1) a. Ich fahre morgen nach Hamburg.
 b. Ich fahre ja morgen nach Hamburg.
 c. Ich fahre doch morgen nach Hamburg.
 I drive (PART) tomorrow to Hamburg
 'm going to Hamburg tomorrow.'

Based on the observation that discourse particles do not alter the truth conditions of sentences containing them, but rather impose certain felicity conditions on the contexts in which they are uttered, Kratzer (1999) has proposed that discourse particles do not have truth conditions, but rather use conditions. This analysis has been formally worked out in a multi-dimensional semantics inspired by the framework of Potts (2005) in Gutzmann (2015). The basic idea behind this approach is that sentences containing discourse particles make two contributions at the same time: First, they have regular truth-conditional content that is unaffected by the respective discourse particle. At the same time, they have (non-trivial) use-conditional content that is interpreted at a level distinct from the level where truth-conditional content is interpreted. Technically, discourse particles take the entire proposition denoted by their prejacent as their argument and return a proposition whose success is not defined in terms of truth, but rather in terms of felicitous use. A sentence such as (1c), for example, is thus (a) true iff the speaker goes to Hamburg on the day following the

¹This criterion is problematic, however, in light of the fact that some discourse particles such as *doch* and *schon* have stressed variants.

day where the sentence is uttered, and (b) used felicitously iff the hearer (roughly) knew that before but has temporarily forgotten it at the time where the sentence is uttered.

2.2 Thoma's analysis of *fei*

Thoma (2009) is, to the best of my knowledge, the only existing analysis of the Bavarian discourse particle *fei* in modern, theoretical linguistic terms. Thoma assumes that *fei* is not only a discourse particle, but also encodes polarity focus (Höhle 1992), i.e. focus on the truth value of the respective sentence. She does not give a formal implementation of her analysis, but rather offers a paraphrase along the following lines: A sentence containing *fei* is felicitous in a context in which the speaker believes that the hearer believes the propositional content of the respective sentence to be false. This assumption is based on examples such as the one in (2), which can be uttered felicitously in a situation where the speaker observes the addressee to return from the restroom with his fly unzipped:

- (2) Dei Hos'ntiarl is fei auf.
 Your pant.door is fei open
 'Your fly is down.'

(Thoma 2009: 140)

In such a situation, it is plausible for the speaker to assume that the hearer believes the proposition that his fly is unzipped to be false, i.e. to believe that his fly is zipped. Intuitively, such a belief can plausibly be attributed to the hearer by the speaker for the following reasons: First, people normally (i.e. in standard social situations) don't want others to see them with their flies unzipped. Second, it is not uncommon to forget zipping one's fly after using the restroom. Further examples discussed by Thoma are the ones in (3) and (4):

- (3) A: I glaub' de Sechzga san recht beliebt in Minga.
 'I believe that 1860 (a soccer club) is pretty popular in Munich.'
 B: De meist'n Muenchna san fei Bayernfans.
 The most Munichers are fei fans.of.Bayern
 'Most Munichers are fans of Bayern München.' (Thoma 2009: 145)
- (4) A: Can I open the window?
 B: Mi friats fei.
 Me is.cold fei
 'I am cold.' (Thoma 2009: 146)

In the case of (3), the use of *fei* in B's answer is licensed as follows: A's assertion in combination with the general background knowledge that nobody is both a fan of 1860 and a fan of Bayern München entails that most Munichers are not fans of Bayern München. B thus has good reasons to believe that A believes that proposition, which is the negation of the propositional content of her utterance. In the case of B's assertion in (4), the use of *fei* is licensed since it is at least not implausible to interpret

A's question as a politeness question rather than as a genuine question, i.e. in such a way that A assumes that the speaker is not cold and thus will not object to her opening the window, but just wants to be polite. Otherwise, i.e. if A's question was a genuine question, the use of *fei* would be unexpected on Thoma's account, contrary to what Thoma herself assumes – she takes A's question to conventionally implicate that A believes that the addressee is not cold. In my view, this assumption is misguided: Asking for B's permission to open the window would be rather pointless if A already believed that the most likely reason for why B would deny her permission – namely that she is cold – can be disregarded.

Thoma's assumption that *fei* is not only a discourse particle with the felicity conditions stated above, but also encodes polarity focus, is based on the following claim: A sentence such as (5a), with focal accent on the direct object *Sepp*, is necessarily understood as introducing the polar opposite of the proposition it denotes, i.e. the proposition that Hans has not invited Sepp, as its only focal alternative. According to Thoma, the retorts in (5c) and (5d) are thus infelicitous, in contrast to the one in (5b), in a context in which Vroni and Maria are talking about Hans' upcoming party and in which Sepp is Hans's best friend.

- (5) a. Vroni: Da Hans hod fei an SEPP ei'glon.
The Hans has fei the-ACC Sepp invited
'Hans has invited Sepp'
- b. Maria: Ja wos denn sunst? Häd'an NED eilon soin?
PRT what PRT else have.he.him not invite should
'What else? Shouldn't he have invited him?'
- c. Maria: Ja wos denn sunst? #Häd'a an BÄDA eilon soin?
PRT what PRT else Have.he the-ACC Peter invite should?
'What else? Should he have invited Peter?'
- d. Maria: Ja wos denn sunst? #Häd'a an Sepp BUSSLN soin?
PRT what PRT else have.he the-ACC Sepp kiss should?
'What else? Should he have kissed Sepp?' (Thoma 2009: 144–145)

Thoma's arguments for the claim that *fei* encodes polarity focus are not convincing. First of all, neither me nor the other three native speakers of Bavarian I consulted share the intuition that (5b) is infelicitous as a retort to Maria's claim in (5a). Rather, (5b) is perfectly fine in a situation in which Vroni (wrongly) assumes Maria to believe that Hans has invited some other person instead of Peter. Second, while (5d) is indeed infelicitous as a retort to (5a), this is simply due to stress placement in (5a): If the main accent falls on the verb, as in the variant of (5a) given in (6), (5b) is in principle acceptable as a retort. It is admittedly a bit hard to think of a suitable context, i.e. one in which Vroni (wrongly) assumes Maria to believe that Hans did not invite Sepp to his party, but rather did something else to Sepp that counts as an suitable alternative to inviting him.

- (6) Vroni: Da Hans hod an Sepp fei EI'GLON.
The Hans has the-ACC Sepp fei invited

I therefore conclude that the focal alternatives introduced by a sentence containing *fei* are not restricted in the way Thoma claims them to be, and that there is thus no need to complicate the semantics of *fei* by assuming that it is not only a discourse particle with the felicity conditions stated above, but additionally encodes polarity focus.

Thoma points out that the infelicity of *fei* both in direct answers to questions and in questions themselves (see 7–9) is directly predicted by her account: Concerning direct answers to questions, it would make little sense to add *fei*, since that would indicate that the person answering the question assumes the person who has asked the question to believe the polar opposite of the respective answer. Asking a (non-rhetorical) question, however, commits the speaker to not already believe one of its possible answers to be true. Someone who adds *fei* to her answer would thus assume the person who asked the question to have acted irrationally. Concerning questions themselves, the addition of *fei* would likewise make little sense, since *fei* is defined to operate on propositions, not sets of propositions (examples from Thoma 2009: 148).

- (7) A: Schneibts draussn?
‘Is it snowing outside?’
B: #Ja, es schneibt fei.
‘Yes it snows fei.’
- (8) A: Wer mog an Kafä?
‘Who wants coffee?’
B: #I mog fei an Kafä.
I want fei a-ACC coffee
- (9) a. #Schneibts fei draussn?
snows.it fei outside
b. #Wer mog fei an Kafä?
who wants fei a-ACC coffee

Additionally, Thoma points out that the unacceptability of *fei* in infinitival commands such as (10b), as opposed to its acceptability in ‘real’ imperatives such as (10a), which project a CP layer, follows from the status of *fei* as a discourse particle: As such, it needs to be hosted in the CP-layer at LF (see Zimmermann 2012 and the references therein for discussion; see also Gärtner 2013, 2014b,a for additional discussion.² Apart from that basic observation, Thoma does not say anything about the conditions under which *fei* is acceptable in imperatives. I will return to that point in Section 3.

- (10) a. Bass fei auf!
watch fei out

²As pointed out to me by Josef Bayer, *fei* is at least marginally acceptable in more elaborate infinitival commands such as *und dann beim Gebetleitn (owa) fei wieder dahoam sei!* (and then be home again when the prayer bell rings).

- b. *Fei aufbass'n!
fei out.watch

Thoma ends her paper by a brief comparison of *fei* and *doch*. As already mentioned in Section 2.1, *doch* is (roughly) felicitous iff the speaker assumes that the hearer previously believed the propositional content of the prejacent of *doch*, but has either forgotten it at the time where that sentence is uttered or believes it to be false. It is thus predicted that replacing *fei* by *doch* in (2), repeated here as (11a), leads to infelicity (in the absence of a special context), as shown in (11b): While it is plausible for the speaker to assume that the hearer is unaware of his fly being down (and hence believes it to be not down) when he returns from the toilet, it is implausible to assume that he was previously aware of his fly being down and has temporarily forgotten it. I will turn to a more detailed comparison between *fei* and *doch* in section 5.

- (11) a. Dei Hos'ntiarl is fei auf.
your pant.door is fei open
'Your fly is down.'
b. #Dei Hos'ntiarl is doch auf.
your pant.door is doch open.
- (Thoma 2009: 150)

3 New Data

In the last section we have seen that Thoma (2009) analyses *fei* as a discourse particle encoding the speaker's belief that the hearer believes the polar opposite of the respective sentence's propositional content. In this section I will show that while Thoma's analysis captures an important part of *fei*'s felicity conditions, it misses another crucial aspect: *fei* is infelicitous iff the hearer has previously uttered a sentence whose at-issue content entails the polar opposite of the proposition denoted by the sentence containing *fei* (cf. Schwenter 2005 for related discussion concerning the use of negation in Brazilian Portuguese).

Consider the sentences in (12) and (13b). The second sentence in (12) is felicitous in a situation in which the speaker can plausibly assume the hearer to have a generally positive attitude towards the movies of Sofia Coppola, and thus to believe that her new movie is good as well (or at least not bad). Similarly, (13b) is felicitous in a context in which the Maria can plausibly assume that the Tom does not like twelve tone operas and hence did not know that *Moses and Aron* is a twelve tone opera when he (implicitly) suggested to watch it on TV by uttering (13a).

- (12) Gesta'n hob i den nei'n Film von da Sofia Coppola g'seng. Des is fei a
Yesterday have I the new movie by the Sofia Coppola seen That is fei a
richtiga Schmarr'n.
real nonsense
'Yesterday I have seen the new movie by Sofia Coppola. It's real nonsense.'

- (13) a. Tom: Heit o'mnd kimt *Moses und Aron* im Feanseh'n.
 Today evening comes Moses and Aron in.the TV
 'Moses and Aron is on TV tonight'
 b. Maria: Des is fei a Zwölftonoper.
 That is fei a twelve-tone opera
 'It's a twelve-tone opera.'

In these two examples as well as in Thoma's (2009) examples of felicitous uses of *fei* discussed in Section 2.1, the speaker's belief that the hearer believes the polar opposite of (the propositional content of) *fei*'s prejacent is always an inference based on (a) the hearer's behavior in combination with general background assumptions ((2)), (b) a previous utterance of the hearer in combination with general background assumptions ((3), (4), (13)), or (c) general background assumptions about the hearer exclusively ((12)). Now, Thoma's analysis makes a clear prediction: A sentence containing *fei* should be perfectly fine in a situation in which the hearer has previously uttered a sentence entailing the negation of the propositional content of that sentence, or a sentence entailing that she believes the negation of the propositional content of that sentence. After all, the fact that someone has uttered a sentence entailing *not p* or the proposition that she believes that *not p* is an excellent reason to believe that she believes that *not p* (in fact, the best I can think of). Consequently, the second sentence in (12) and the one in (13b) should both be fine in a context in which the hearer has previously uttered a sentence entailing that she does not believe the new movie by Sofia Coppola to be complete nonsense, and that she does not believe *Moses und Aron* to be a twelve-tone opera, respectively. This prediction is not borne out, however: The two sentences are extremely awkward in the respective contexts, as shown in (14) and (15).

- (14) a. Maria: Da neie Film von da Sofia Coppola is supa.
 'The new movie by Sofia Coppola is great.'
 b. Tom: (Quatsch!) Des is (#fei) a richtiga Schmarrn.
 Bullshit That is fei a real nonsense
 'Bullshit! It's complete nonsense.'
- (15) a. Maria: *Moses und Aron* is a Belcanto Oper.
 'Moses and Aron is a belcanto opera.'
 b. Tom: (Quatsch!) Des is (#fei) a Zwölftonoper.
 'Bullshit! It's a twelve-tone opera.'

Likewise, the sentence with *fei* in (3) is infelicitous as a reaction to an utterance entailing the negation of its propositional content, as shown in (16):

- (16) A: Koa Muenchna is a Bayernfan.
 'No Municher is a fan of Bayern München.'
 B: (Quatsch!) De meist'n Muenchna san (#fei) Bayernfans.
 Bullshit The most Munichers are fei fans.of.Bayern

'Bullshit! Most Munichers are fans of Bayern München.'

Consider next the contrast between the infelicity of the sentence with *fei* as a reaction to A's utterance in (17), and its felicity as a reaction to A's utterance in (18).

- (17) A: Da Bäda is a Depp.
 'Peter is an idiot'
 B: (Quatsch!) Da Bäda is (#fei) koa Depp.
 '(Bullshit!) Peter is no idiot'
- (18) A: I frog an Bäda ob'a mei oids Radl kafa mecht. I mecht
 I ask the-ACC Peter if.he my old bicycle buy wants I want
 mindestens 200 Euro dafür ho'm.
 at.least 200 euros for.it have
 'I'll ask Peter if he wants to buy my old bicycle. I would like to have at
 least 200 Euros for it.'
 B: Da Bäda is fei koa Depp.
 the Peter is fei no idiot
 'Peter is no idiot'

In (17) B asserts the negation of the sentence previously uttered by A. This seems to be incompatible with the felicity conditions of *fei*. In (18), in contrast, B asserts the negation of a proposition that she can plausibly assume A to believe, given a suitable context – namely a context in which A's old bicycle is known to be worth far less than 200 Euros and in which it would consequently be irrational for Peter to pay 200 Euros or more for it. Again, since B only infers that A believes the negation of the propositional content of B's utterance on the basis of a previous assertion by A in combination with background knowledge, the addition of *fei* is perfectly fine. A similar contrast obtains between (19) and (20): Adding *fei* is fine in (20), where B infers from A's behavior that A believes the negation of the propositional content of her utterance (i.e. that it is not cold), but infelicitous in (19), where A has previously asserted the corresponding proposition.

- (19) A: S'is goa ned koit drauss'n.
 It.is at.all not cold outside
 'It's not cold at all outside'
 B: (Quatsch!) S'is (#fei) saukoit drauss'n.
 Bullshit It.is fei terribly.cold outside
 '(Bullshit!) It's terribly cold outside'
- (20) [A is about to leave the house wearing only a shirt.]
 B: S'is fei saukoit drauss'n.
 It.is fei terribly.cold outside

Finally, consider the contrast between the infelicity of *fei* in B's reaction to A's utterance in (21), and its felicity in B's reaction to A's utterance in (22). The only difference

between (21) and (22) is that in the case of (21), A has asserted the negation of the proposition asserted by B, while in the case of (22) A has asserted a proposition that conversationally implicates the negation of that proposition.

- (21) A: Da Otto hot den ganz'n Kuacha gess'n.
The Otto has the whole cake eaten
'Otto has eaten the whole cake.'
- B: (Quatsch!) Da Otto hot den Kuacha (#fei) ned gess'n. Des woa
(Bullshit) The Otto has the cake fei not eaten That was
d'Maria.
the.Maria
'(Bullshit!) Otto has not eaten the cake. It was Maria.'
- (22) A: Da Otto is in da Kich g'wen und da Kuacha is weg.
The Otto is in the kitchen been and the cake is gone
'Otto was in the kitchen and the cake is gone.'
- B: Da Otto hot den Kuacha fei ned gess'n. Des woa d'Maria.

Now, there is a plausible pragmatic explanation for the data considered in this section so far that allows us to stick with the felicity conditions of *fei* stated by Thoma (2009): Whenever an interlocuter A in a conversation utters *Not p, I believe that not p* or a sentence entailing one of those propositions, the other interlocuters automatically know that A believes that *not p* (at least in a standard setting where A is assumed to be sincere). Since *know* is stronger than *believe*, the addition of *fei*, which only requires the speaker to believe that the hearer believes that *not p*, may be blocked. The reason for the contrast between (21) and (22), for example, would thus be that in (21) B knows that A believes that Otto has eaten the cake since A has publicly committed to believing the corresponding proposition, while in (22) B only believes that A believes that Otto has eaten the cake: After all, A has only asserted a proposition that conversationally implicates that Otto has eaten the cake, and since it is one of the defining characteristics of conversational implicatures that they are defeasible (Grice 1989), A could have continued her first sentence in (22) by uttering (the Bavarian equivalent of) ... *but he has not eaten the cake* without contradicting herself. Consequently, in (22) B only believes, but crucially does not know that A has eaten the cake, and similarly for all other cases considered so far where *fei* is felicitous.

But now consider the contrast between (23) and (24): While the infelicity of *fei* in B's reply in (24) is directly predicted by Thoma's (2009) analysis augmented by the pragmatic reasoning just sketched, the felicity of *fei* in B's reply in (23) is entirely unexpected.

- (23) A: Da Kini von Frankreich is a Depp.
'The king of France is an idiot.'
- B: In Frankreich gibts fei koan Kini nemma. Des is a Republik.
In France there.is fei no king anymore That is a rebuplic
'In France there is no king anymore. It's a republic.'

- (24) A: In Frankreich gibt's imma no an Kini.
 in France there.is always still a king
 ‘In France there is still a king.’
 B: (So a Schmarr’n). In Frankreich gibt's (#fei) koan Kini nemma.
 such a nonsense in France there.is fei no king anymore
 ‘(What nonsense!) In France there is no king anymore. It’s a republic.’

It is generally assumed, following Strawson (1950), that the definite article presupposes the existence and uniqueness (possibly with respect to a contextually restricted domain) of an individual satisfying the predicate denoted by its NP-complement. This is shown by the fact that the negation of a sentence such as *The king of France is bald*, i.e. *The king of France is not bald*, is not simply true in virtue of France’s being a republic. Rather, the non-existence of a king of France seems to prevent the negated as well as the non-negated sentence from getting a truth value. Not being effected by semantic operations such as negating or questioning is one of the defining features of presupposed as opposed to asserted content: Consequently, a question such as *Is the king of France bald?* cannot be understood as asking for the existence of an individual that has the property of being the unique king of France and of being bald. Rather, a person who asks such a question can only be understood as taking the existence of a unique king of France for granted and asking whether that individual is bald.

By uttering the sentence in (23), A therefore does not assert, but rather presupposes, i.e. takes for granted the existence of a (unique) king of France. Consequently, he (wrongly) assumes the proposition that there is a (unique) king of France to be included in A’s and B’s Common Ground (Stalnaker 1978), i.e. to be one of their mutually shared assumptions. This, however, entails that A believes that there is a king of France, and B consequently knows as soon as A has uttered the first sentence in (23) that she believes there to be a king of France. Consequently, given the pragmatic reasoning just outlined, the use of *fei* in B’s reply should be just as infelicitous in (23) as it is in (24), contrary to fact. The contrast between the felicitous and the infelicitous uses of *fei* can thus not be derived from the contrast between the respective speaker’s believing vs. knowing that the hearer believes the negation of the proposition denoted by the sentence containing *fei*. Rather, what seems to be crucial is whether the negation of that proposition has entered the context via being asserted by the hearer or not: If it has, using *fei* is infelicitous. This is confirmed by the following contrast:

- (25) A: Gesta'n bin i mi'm Bäda im Wirtshaus g'wen. Dea hot
 Yesterday am I with.the Peter in.the pub been He has
 mi'm Raucha aufgheat.
 with.the smoking stopped
 ‘Yesterday I was in the pub with Peter. He has stopped smoking.’
 B: Da Bäda hot fei no nia g'raucht.
 The Peter has fei as.yet never smoked
 ‘Peter never smoked.’

- (26) A: Da Bäda raucht.
 The Peter smokes
 ‘Peter smokes.’
 B: (So a Schmarr’n). Da Bäda hat (#fei) no nia g‘aucht.
 Such a nonsense the Peter has fei not never smoked
 ‘(What nonsense!) Peter never smoked.’

Just like the definite article presupposes the existence and uniqueness of an individual satisfying the predicate denoted by its NP-complement, the verb *stop* presupposes that its subject used to be engaged in the activity denoted by the verb it combines with (see Beaver (1997) and the references cited therein). Consequently, A in (25) (wrongly) assumes the proposition that Peter used to smoke to be in the Common Ground of A and B, which entails that A believes that Peter used to smoke. B therefore knows in both (25) and (26) that A believes that Peter used to smoke as soon as A has uttered the respective first sentence. Nevertheless, the use of *fei* is only infelicitous in (26), where A has asserted the corresponding proposition.

Apart from presuppositions, there is a second kind of linguistic content that is not affected by semantic operations such as negation and questioning – namely so-called conventional implicatures (in the sense of Potts (2005) such as nominal appositives, appositive relative clauses and expressives. The sentences in (27a)-(27b) and (28a)-(28b), for example, are both not understood as negating or questioning that Peter is a great dancer/an idiot, respectively.

- (27) a. Peter, (who is) a great dancer, did not come to the party.
 b. Did Peter, (who is) a great dancer, come to the party?
 (28) a. That idiot Peter did not come to the party.
 b. Did that idiot Peter come to the party?

Consider now the contrast between (29) and (30), on the one hand, and (31) and (32), on the other: In both (29) and (30) B knows after A’s utterance that A believes Chomsky to be a sociologist, and in both (31) and (32) B knows after A’s utterance that A considers Peter to be an idiot. Nevertheless, *fei* can felicitously be added to a sentence entailing the negation of the respective proposition believed by A in (29) and (31), where that proposition is a conventional implicature. In (30) and (32), in contrast, where that proposition is the at-issue content of A’s utterance, the addition of *fei* is infelicitous.

- (29) A: Da Chomsky, a berühmte Soziologe, is a Anarchist.
 ‘The Chomsky a famous sociologist is an anarchist’
 B: Da Chomsky is fei koa Soziologe.
 ‘The Chomsky is fei no sociologist’
 (30) A: Da Chomsky is a berühmte Soziologe.
 ‘The Chomsky is a famous sociologist’

- B: (So a Schmarr'n). Da Chomsky is (#fei) koa Soziologe.
such a nonsense the Chomsky is fei no sociologist
‘What nonsense! Chomsky is no sociologist!’
- (31) A: Dea Saudepp Bäda is a Anarchist.
That pig.idiot Peter is a anarchist
‘That idiot Peter is an anarchist.’
- B: Da Bäda is fei koa Depp.
‘The Peter is fei no idiot’
- (32) A: Da Bäda is a Saudepp.
‘The Peter is a pig.idiot’
- B: (So a Schmarr'n!) Da Bäda is (#fei) koa Depp.
such a nonsense the Peter is fei no idiot
‘What nonsense! Peter is no idiot!’

The fact that *fei* can be added felicitously to sentences entailing the negation of a proposition that is either presupposed or conventionally implicated by a previous utterance of the interlocutor shows that the pragmatic account sketched above cannot be maintained: In both cases the speaker can be as certain that the hearer believes the respective proposition as she could be if that proposition had been the at-issue content of a previous assertion by the hearer. In Section 4 I will thus present an analysis of *fei* that retains the insights of Thoma (2009) but can at the same time account for the full range of data considered in this section. But before I will turn to that analysis, I will briefly return to an issue that I have briefly mentioned at the end of Section 2: The fact that *fei* can be added to imperatives.

Thoma (2009) points out that the contrast between (10a) and (10b), repeated here as (33a)–(33b), directly follows from the status of *fei* as a discourse particle which as such requires a C-projection. Since (10a)/(33a), but not (10b)/(33b), is a full CP, *fei* can only be added to the former, but not the latter. Apart from the remark that the use of *fei* in imperatives such as (10a)/(33a) is quite common in Bavarian, Thoma (2009) does not say anything more about the distribution of *fei* in imperatives.

- (33) a. Bass fei auf!
watch fei out
‘Watch out!’
- b. *Fei aufbass'n!
fei out.watch

Let us now turn to the question of whether the licensing conditions of *fei* in imperatives are identical or at least related to those in assertions. There is an obvious complication: Since declarative sentences clearly denote propositions, it is unproblematic to assume that by adding *fei* to a declarative sentence α the speaker indicates that she does not believe the hearer to believe the proposition p denoted by α . Concerning imperatives, in contrast, the question of what semantic objects they denote

is rather controversial. Kaufmann (2012) assumes imperatives to denote implicitly modalized propositions and therefore to be essentially equivalent to performatively used sentences with overt deontic modals. Setting aside the contribution of *fei*, (33a) is thus equivalent to a sentence such as *You must/should be careful*, on the performative use. Portner (2007), in contrast, assumes imperatives to denote properties that get added to the addressee's *To-Do-List*, where *To-Do-Lists* are sets of properties that commit an individual to act in such a way that those properties apply to her in the future. Ignoring the contribution of *fei* again, uttering an imperative such as (33a) on Portner's (2007) account thus has the effect of committing the addressee to act in such a way that the property of being careful applies to him in the future.

Developing a unified analysis that accounts for the behaviour of *fei* in both declaratives and imperatives is straightforward if one adopts an analysis along the lines of Kaufmann (2012), but more complicated if one assumes with Portner (2007) that imperatives denote properties rather than propositions. Since the analysis of imperatives is not my main concern in this paper, I will thus without further argument simply adopt Kaufmann's (2012) analysis of imperatives. This allows us to retain the assumption that *fei* can only felicitously be added to a sentence α if the speaker believes that the addressee believes the negation of the propositional content of α .

Concerning (33a), its felicity is predicted since it is quite plausible to assume that when uttering a warning the speaker assumes the hearer to be not aware of the need to be careful, i.e. to believe that he does not have to be careful. Likewise, the command in (34) is predicted to be felicitous in a context like the following one: The speaker, who is the mother of the addressee, is about to leave the house and, based on previous experience, assumes that her teenage son does not see the need to clean up his messy room, i.e. to believe that he does not have to clean up his room. This prediction seems to me to be correct.

- (34) Reim fei dei Zimmer auf!
 Clean fei your room up
 'Clean up your room!'

Concerning the second crucial felicity condition of *fei*, namely that it cannot be added to sentences entailing the negation of the at-issue content of a previous utterance by the hearer, this is a little harder to test for imperatives, since it is not easy to construe natural scenarios where that condition is violated. Nevertheless, the following observation provides preliminary evidence that with respect to the second felicity condition, too, *fei* behaves identically in declaratives and imperatives: If the variant of the first sentence in (35) with *fei* is uttered in the context of (35), it sounds rather awkward. At the same time, the sentence is felicitous in a context where the speaker assumes on the basis of general background knowledge or the addressee's non-verbal behavior that she might be interested in drinking another glass of beer, but is unsure of whether she is allowed to do so.

- (35) A: I deaf ma bestimmt koa Bia mea nemma, sunst
 I may myself certainly no beer anymore take otherwise

- langt's nimma für d'Maria.
 it.suffices no.more for the.Maria
 'I'm certainly not allowed to take another glass of beer, otherwise there
 won't be enough left for Maria.'
- B: Nimm da (#fei) no a Bia! S'is no gnuag do.
 Take yourself fei still a beer It.is still enough there
 'Take another glass of beer! There's still enough left.'

Consider finally the following contrast, which has been pointed out to me by Josef Bayer: The sentence in (36) is felicitous in a context where the speaker assumes on the basis of general background knowledge concerning the addressee's violent behavior in the past that he is about to beat up his son. At the same time, it would be extremely awkward for the speaker to utter the same sentence in a situation where she is directly observing that the addressee is beating up his son.

- (36) Hau fei dein Bua'm ned!
 Beat.up fei your boy-ACC not
 'Don't beat up your son!'

Intuitively, this contrast is related to the constraint preventing the usage if *fei* in cases where a sentence entailing the negation of the (propositional content of the) prejacent of *fei* has been asserted by the addressee: Performing an action in the utterance situation that brings about a state of affairs which is the direct opposite of the state of affairs that the speaker wants the addressee to bring about by uttering an imperative seems to have the same status as the assertion of a contradicting proposition by the addressee in the case of declaratives. That this only holds for imperatives is shown by the felicity of (37) in the same situation in which (36) is infelicitous.

- (37) Du deafst fei dein Bua'm ned hau'n!
 you may fei your boy-ACC not beat.up
 'You must not beat up your son!'

Since the analysis of imperatives is not my main concern in this paper, I will leave a deeper investigation of that contrast and its consequences as a topic for future research.

4 The Analysis

In the preceding section we have seen that *fei* not only indicates the speaker's belief that the hearer believes the negation of the propositional content *p* of the speaker's utterance Thoma (2009), but is subject to an additional felicity condition: The negation of *p* may not be entailed by the at-issue content of a previous assertion by the hearer. Consequently, the speaker's belief that the hearer believes *not p* either has to be inferred on the basis of extralinguistic contextual information or general background

assumptions (or a combination thereof), or *not p* is presupposed or conventionally or conversationally implicated by a previous utterance of the addressee. An adequate analysis of *fei* has to account not only for the first, but also for the second felicity condition.

Concerning the first felicity condition, there is a subtle complication that I have set aside so far. Consider the sentence in (38) uttered in the context of (38):

- (38) A: I woaf ned ob i ma des neie Buach üba d'Münchna
 I know not if I myself the new book about the.of.Munich
 Räterepublik kafa soi.
 Soviet.republic buy should
 'I don't know if I should buy the new book about the Soviet republic of
 Munich.'
 B: Des is fei interessant.
 that is fei interesting
 'It's interestung.'

Having uttered the sentence in (38), it is quite clear that A does not believe the new book about the Soviet republic of Munich to be uninteresting. Rather, he is presumably unsure about whether it is interesting or not (i.e. in some worlds that are compatible with his beliefs it is interesting, while in others it is not) and by uttering the sentence in (38) indirectly asks for B's opinion. Therefore, it would be rather unreasonable for B to believe that A believes the new book about the Soviet republic of Munich to be uninteresting. But the sentence in (38) sounds perfectly reasonable in the context of (38). What B seems to indicate by the addition of *fei* is not that she believes that A believes the book to be uninteresting, but rather that she believes that B considers it a likely option that the book is uninteresting.

Thoma (2009) states her analysis of *fei* in informal terms. In this section, I will propose an implementation in a possible worlds framework along the lines of Hintikka (1969) for concreteness. Hintikka (1969) analyses the propositional attitude verb *believe* as a universal quantifier over worlds that are compatible with what the (individual referred to by the) respective subject believes. Consequently, for a sentence α' with *fei* to be felicitous it would be required that it is true in all worlds w' compatible with what the speaker believes in the actual world that the negation of α' 's propositional content p , i.e. *not p*, is true in all worlds w'' that are compatible with what the addressee believes in w' . While this is unproblematic for many of the examples discussed above, it is clearly too strong for cases such as (38) where it does not have to be the case that the speaker assumes *not p* to be true in all of the addressee's belief worlds. Rather, it is sufficient that she believes *not p* to be true in some of the addressee's belief worlds. What we thus need is not universal, but existential quantification over the addressee's belief worlds. This gives the right result for the cases where it is plausible for the speaker to believe that *not p* is true in all of the addressee's belief worlds as well, since existential quantification is then guaranteed to be satisfied as well. At the same time, completely unrestricted

existential quantification over the addressee's belief worlds is probably too weak, since it predicts that the use of *fei* is felicitous whenever the speaker believes that the hearer does not completely exclude the possibility that *not p* is true. Intuitively, what we want is *fei* to be felicitous in cases where the speaker believes that the addressee at least considers *not p* to be a plausible or likely option. I will thus assume existential quantification not over the entire set of the addressee's belief worlds, but over the subset containing only those worlds that correspond to the addressee's assumptions about what is stereotypically the case (cf. Kratzer's (1981) analysis of modal verbs).

Let us now turn to the second felicity condition, which, recall, precludes the use of *fei* in cases where the negation of the respective proposition is entailed by the at-issue content of a previous utterance of the addressee, but allows it when the same content is presupposed or conversationally or conventionally implicated by a previous utterance of the addressee. To state this condition precisely, we first need to define the notion of at-issue content as opposed to secondary (i.e. non-at-issue) content. Currently, there are two lines of analysis on the market. The first one takes as its starting point the assumption that a sentence in an oral or written discourse always answers an implicit or explicit question, the so-called *question under discussion* (QUD) (Roberts 1996; Roberts 2012; see also Klein & von Stutterheim 1987 and van Kuppevelt 1995 for similar views). In cases where there is no explicit QUD, the implicit QUD is reconstructed on the basis of the focus-background structure: Roughly speaking, the focal part of a sentence replaces the wh-term contained in the question the sentence answers, thus picking one from the set of possible answers. The given or inferable material contained in the respective sentence, the background, in contrast, corresponds to the remaining part of the question. Simons, Tonhauser, Beaver & Roberts (2010) (see also Beaver, Roberts, Simons & Tonhauser 2017) now assume that the at-issue content of a sentence is that part which addresses the current QUD. Evidence for this assumption is provided by contrasts like the one between (39) and (40), where only the matrix clause, but not the appositive relative clause can answer the respective question.

- (39) A: Where did Martin buy his new suit?
B: Martin, who lives in Cologne, bought it at a store in Düsseldorf.
- (40) A: Where does Martin live?
B: #Martin, who lives in Cologne, bought his new suit at a store in Düsseldorf.
B': Martin, who bought his new suit at a store in Düsseldorf, lives in Cologne.

As observed by Gutzmann (2017b), however, there are cases like B's answer in (41B) to A's question in (41A) where the appositive clearly contributes to answering the respective question.

- (41) A: Why is Alex so sad recently?
B: Alex is in love with Chris, who doesn't love her back.

Interestingly, even in such cases A can react to B's utterance by uttering a proposition which entails the negation of the appositive's content, but not the content of the main clause. Consequently, the sentence in (42A) would be felicitous as a reaction of A to (the Bavarian version of) of B's utterance in (41B), but not the one in (42B).

- (42) A: Da Chris liebt die Alex fei aa.
 The Chris loves the Alex fei also
 'Chris is in love with Alex, too.'
 B: #Die Alex liebt an Chris fei goa net.
 The Alex loves the Chris fei at.all not
 'Alex isn't in love with Chris at all.'

This shows that the behaviour of *fei* with respect to the distinction between at-issue and secondary content cannot be accounted for in terms of the QUD-approach, i.e. it is not the case that *fei* cannot be added to a sentence whose propositional content entails the negation of a proposition that addresses the current QUD.

The second line of analysis assumes that at-issue content differs from secondary content in the way in which it enters the Common Ground (AnderBois, Brasoveanu & Henderson 2015; Murray 2017). It is only the at-issue content that is asserted, where for a proposition to be asserted means that the speaker explicitly proposes to add it to the Common Ground. It is only after the addressee has implicitly or explicitly accepted the proposal that the respective proposition actually is added to the Common Ground. Consequently, the addressee can always directly react to the at-issue content of an utterance by denying it or questioning it. Conventional implicatures, in contrast, are not proposed, but rather "imposed", i.e. they enter the Common Ground directly, without an intermediate step. Consequently, denying or questioning the content of a conventional implicature requires some extra effort. Similarly, since presupposed content is treated by the speaker as if it already was part of the Common Ground, the addressee likewise cannot deny or question it directly, but only via special means that interrupt the flow of the conversation such as saying "Hey, wait a minute!" first (Shanon 1976; von Fintel 2004). Finally, concerning conversational implicatures, the fact that they can be cancelled by the speaker without contradicting herself shows that they are likewise not asserted.

As already mentioned in the introduction, the assumption that only the at-issue content of an utterance is asserted offers an attractive explanation for the observation that *fei* relates to non-at-issue content exclusively: By adding *fei*, the speaker draws the hearer's attention to a conflict between her own beliefs and the addressee's beliefs that is not salient at the point where the respective sentence is uttered. But now consider what happens in a case where the proposition *q* believed by the addressee that contradicts the (propositional content of the) prejacent of *fei* has been asserted by the addressee: The addressee has put *q* on the table explicitly, and the question of whether *q* is true is consequently highly salient. Uttering a sentence that contradicts *q* therefore makes the conflict between the speaker's and the hearer's beliefs automatically salient as well. The addition of *fei* to such a sentence would thus be superfluous. Putting

everything together, the use conditions of *fei* can thus be stated informally as given in (43), and more formally as given in (44).

- (43) *fei* can be added felicitously to a sentence α denoting the proposition p in a context C iff
- (i) all of the speaker's belief worlds contain at least one world that is compatible with as many of the addressee's assumptions about what is stereotypically the case as possible where the negation of p is true (i.e. the speaker believes that the addressee considers the negation of p at least a likely option),
 - (ii) there is no recent assertion by the addressee of a proposition q such that in all worlds where q is true, the negation of p is true (i.e. q entails the negation of p), where *recent* just means that the addressee has not asserted q in the current conversation.
- (44) *fei* can be added felicitously to a sentence α denoting the proposition p in context C iff
- (i) $\forall w' \in \text{DOX}_{SP,w*} [\exists w'' \in \text{MAX}_{\text{Stereo-ADR}}(\text{DOX}_{ADR,w'})[\neg p(w'')]]$, where
 - SP is the speaker in C ,
 - ADR is the addressee in C ,
 - $w*$ is the world of C , $\text{DOX}_{SP,w*}$ is the set of worlds compatible with what SP believes in $w*$, and
 - $\text{MAX}_{\text{Stereo-ADR}}$ is the function mapping a set of worlds to the subset that makes as many of ADR 's assumptions about what is stereotypically the case true as possible.
 - (ii) $\neg \exists e [\text{ASSERTION}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, ADR) \wedge \text{RECENT}(\pi(e)) \wedge \text{CONTENT}(e) = q \wedge \forall w [q(w) \rightarrow \neg p(w)]]$, where
 - $\phi(e)$ is the run time of e .

5 A Comparison of *fei* and *doch*

As already mentioned in Section 2, Thoma (2009) observes that *fei* differs from *doch* insofar as *doch* is only felicitous if the speaker assumes that the hearer previously believed the propositional content of the sentence containing *doch*, but has either forgotten it at the time where that sentence is uttered or believes it to be false. Replacing *fei* in (11a), repeated here as (45a), by *doch* thus leads to infelicity, as shown in (11b), repeated here as (45b): While it is plausible for the speaker to assume that the hearer is unaware of his fly being down (and hence believes it to be not down) when he returns from the toilet, it is implausible to assume that he was previously aware of his fly being down and has temporarily forgotten it.

- (45) a. Dei Hos'ntiarl is fei auf.
 Your pant.door is fei open
 'Your fly is down.'

- b. #Dei Hos'ntiarl is doch auf.
 Your pant.door is doch open (Thoma 2009: 150)

Interestingly, *doch* differs from *fei* in another respect as well: In contrast to *fei*, *doch* is not sensitive to the distinction between at-issue and secondary content, i.e. *doch* can felicitously be used in cases where the proposition contradicting the propositional content of the sentence containing it was previously asserted by the addressee. To see this, compare the *doch*- and *fei*-variants of the sentences in (15), (17) and (24), for example, given here as (46b), (47) and (48), respectively. The variant of (46b) with *doch*, for example, is perfectly fine: First, given Maria's previous utterance it is extremely plausible that Tom assumes her to be unaware of *Moses und Aron* being a twelve tone opera at the utterance time. Second, it is at least not implausible for him to assume that Maria knew that before, but has temporarily forgotten it. A similar reasoning applies to the variants with *doch* in (47) and (48).

- (46) a. Maria:*Moses und Aron* is a Belcanto Oper.
 'Moses and Aron is a belcanto opera.'
 b. Tom: (Quatsch!) Des is (#fei)/doch a Zwölftonoper.
 'Bullshit! It's a twelve-tone opera.'
- (47) A: Da Bäda is a Depp.
 'Peter is an idiot.'
 B: (Quatsch!) Da Bäda is (#fei)/doch koa Depp.
 '(Bullshit!) Peter is no idiot.'
- (48) A: In Frankreich gibt's imma no an Kini.
 In France there.is always still a king
 'In France there is still a king.'
 B: (So a Schmarr'n). In Frankreich gibt's (#fei)/doch koan Kini
 Such a nonsense In France there.is fei/doch no king
 nemma.
 anymore
 '(What nonsense!) In France there is no king anymore.'

6 Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that the German discourse particle *fei* is special among discourse particles insofar as it relates to non-at-issue content exclusively. It indicates the speaker's belief that the addressee believes the negation of the (propositional content of the) prejacent of *fei*, at least considers the negation of the (propositional content of the) prejacent of *fei* to be a likely option (recall the discussion of (38) in the context of (38)). Crucially, the speaker's belief may not have been caused by a previous utterance of the addressee whose at-issue content entails the propositional content of the prejacent of *fei*. Rather, it has to be based on contextual information, general background assumptions or on the presuppositions or conventional or conversational

implicatures of the addressee's utterances. I have argued that *fei*'s resistance against at-issue content is a consequence of its discourse function: *fei* draws the addressee's attention to a conflict between her beliefs and the speaker's beliefs that is not salient at the point where the sentence with *fei* is uttered. In virtue of having been explicitly put on the table for the interlocutor(s) to accept or reject, however, the content of an assertion is by definition highly salient.

Given that *fei* relates to non-at-issue content exclusively, I would like to end this paper by suggesting a new test that could be an additional diagnostic for distinguishing at-issue from non-at-issue content: Whenever you want to know whether some part of a sentence denotes at-issue or non-at-issue content, translate the sentence containing it into Bavarian and check with a native speaker whether *fei* can felicitously be added to a sentence negating the respective proposition as a reaction to an utterance of the original sentence.

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