

Eh-type Particles*

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July 17, 2015

G-RAW: Göttingen hosts Regine's Anniversary Workshop

1 Introduction

- In the literature on discourse particles, the particle *eh* is usually discussed together with the particle *sowieso* (a.o. Weydt 1983, Thurmair 1989, Eggs 2003).
- *Eh* and *sowieso* are also usually compared to and grouped with the adverbs *ohnehin* and *ohnedies* with respect to their function (a.o. Eggs 2003).¹

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|--|----|--|
| (1) | a. | <i>Regine ist eh toll.</i>
Regine is EH awesome | c. | <i>Regine ist ohnehin toll.</i>
Regine is OHNEHIN awesome |
| | b. | <i>Regine ist sowieso toll.</i>
Regine is SOWIESO awesome | d. | <i>Regine ist ohnedies toll.</i>
Regine is OHNEDIES awesome |

- **The focus** of our talk is *eh*. **Our goal** is to shed light on the following issues:
 - the under-investigated observation that *eh* as used in Austrian German seems to be different from *eh* as used in Federal German: are there indeed two types of *eh*?
 - the widespread claim that *eh* and *sowieso* are freely interchangeable: is this the case? (The other particles will pop up randomly as well.)

Structure of the talk:

2. Preliminaries: previous investigations of *eh* and *sowieso*
3. Corpus study: occurrences of *eh* in newspapers of different areas (Lower Saxony; Nuremberg; Austria)
4. Federal German *eh/sowieso*, Austrian German *eh*, and Austrian German *sowieso*

*We would like to thank Thomas Weskott for the title and his intuitions, as well as the colloquium audience at the German Department of the University of Vienna for comments. We would also like to thank Viola Schmitt and the students of her MA class on plurals (SoSe 2015) for their intuitions and comments.

¹*Sowieso* also has the variants *so und so/soundso* and *so oder so* which are regarded as synonymous (cf. Weydt 1983). Whether these three variants have different regional distributions, and whether they are indeed freely substitutable is still an open question.

2 Preliminaries: discourse particles, *eh*, and *sowieso*

2.1 On the contribution of discourse particles

- Discourse particles fit the current utterance to the previous discourse (cf. Zimmermann 2011).
- They contribute *not-at-issue content* (cf. Simons et al. 2010)—either via presuppositions or conventional implicatures. The *at-issue content* conveyed by the rest of the material in the utterance remains unchanged.
- **Hence:** if two particles mean “the same”, they should convey the same not-at-issue content. This also means that they should be interchangeable, and that they should ‘fit the current utterance to the previous discourse’ in the same manner.

2.2 Previous observations

- The particle *eh* originated in the south-eastern German speaking areas (i.e., Bavarian Dialects²), and was later introduced to the rest of the German speaking areas. No regional specifics can be found for the use of *sowieso* (Weydt 1983).
- **Synonymy of the particles:** *Eh*, *sowieso*, *ohnehin*, and *ohnedies* are generally argued to be synonymous and/or to perform the same function (cf. Thurmair 1989, Eggs 2003, Fisseni 2009, Bruijnen and Sudhoff 2013).

But 1: Weydt (1983) states that the synonymy of *sowieso* and *eh* is only found in those areas where *eh* was introduced later on – in the areas of northern High German³. He gives examples of Viennese German where *eh* is not used synonymously to *sowieso*, see (2).

- (2) a. “*Horchen Sie selbst, nur Mono.*” *Der Geschäftsmann blieb hart:*
hear you yourself only mono the business-man remained firm
“*Klingt eh wunderbar.*”
sounds EH great
“‘Listen for yourself, only mono.’ The business man remained firm, “Sounds EH great.”’
- b. *Sagt sie: “Habn S mirn eh net ruiniert?”*
says she have you me-it EH not ruined
‘She says, “Did you EH not ruin it?”’
(Weydt 1983:179)

⇒ Weydt reports that his Swabian informants cannot use *eh* in this manner.

⇒ He ignores the Austrian data for the rest of the paper.

But 2: Thurmair (1989) states that in southern German/Austrian *eh* and *sowieso* have co-existed for a long time – they might have diverged in their function or meaning. She does not follow this up further.

- **Sentence type restrictions:** *eh/sowieso* mainly occur in declaratives; they can occur in polar interrogatives, but only together with *nicht*, which then precedes *eh/sowieso*. The use in polar interrogatives is very infrequent (Thurmair 1989).

²These dialects are spoken in Austria (except for Vorarlberg), and in Eastern Bavaria.

³High German comprises all Upper and Middle German dialects, which are spoken in Austria, Switzerland, and the entire South of Germany until the Benrath line, which runs from Aachen, through Kassel and Berlin to Frankfurt/Oder.

- (3) *Gehst du nicht **sowieso** jede Woche zum Friseur?*
 go you not SOWIESO every week to-the hair-dresser
 ‘Don’t you go SOWIESO to the hairdresser each week?’

But 1: *sowieso* can occur in polar questions above negation (Fisseni 2009).

- (4) *Hab ich da nun was falsch eingestellt, funktioniert diese Kombination*
 Have I there now something wrong adjust functions this combination
sowieso nicht oder brauch ich ein opt?
 SOWIESO not or need I an opt
 ‘Did I make a wrong adjustment, is it SOWIESO the case that this combination doesn’t work, or do I need an ‘opt’?’

But 2: *sowieso/eh* (depending on the regional variant) can occur in polar questions that do not contain a negative element (Bruijnen and Sudhoff 2013).

- (5) A: *Möchtest du einen Kaffee?*
 ‘Do you want coffee?’
 B: *Kommst du sowieso am Kaffeeautomaten vorbei?*
 ‘Will you pass the coffee machine anyway?’

⇒ Here, B’s question seems to ask for *sowieso*; this is usually claimed not to be possible.

- **Two types of *sowieso*?** *Sowieso* can be used as an answer particle by itself, in contrast to *eh* and *ohnehin* (cf. Thurmair 1989, Eggs 2003, Bruijnen and Sudhoff 2013).

- (6) A: *Machst du im Sommer wieder 4 Wochen Urlaub?*
 ‘Are you again going on vacation for 4 weeks this summer?’
 B: *Sowieso/*eh/*ohnehin.*

⇒ Thurmair 1989 assumes that *sowieso* is polysemous between the discourse particle use and the answer particle use.

- **Not “true particles”?** *eh* can be explicitly affirmed with “*Es ist der Fall, dass...*” (Engl. ‘it is the case that...’) which is not possible for “true discourse particles” (Eggs 2003).

- (7) a. *Du bist **aber** blass. ↗ *Es ist der Fall, dass du **aber** blass bist.*
 b. *Er ist **eh** schon nervös. ↗ Es ist der Fall, dass er **eh** schon nervös ist.*

2.3 Previous analyses

- **Weydt (1983) on *eh* and *sowieso*:**

- **Function:** *eh*, *sowieso*, and *ohnehin* are causal particles; they all perform the same function, and are used to compare a relevant and an irrelevant reason for the validity of a proposition *p*: *p* holds because of some other fact *q*, and not because of a previously suggested proposition *r*.
- Weydt argues that the common function is performed differently by the three particles:
 - * **Sowieso**(*p*) states that *p* is the case, no matter whether a given proposition *a* holds, or not.

- * **Ohnehin**(p) states that there is no causal connection between p and a given proposition a .
- * **Eh**(p) states that p was already true before a or not a was decided.

- **Thurmair (1989) on *eh* and *sowieso*:**

- **Function:** *Eh/sowieso*(p) marks the validity of p as already known to the speaker (but not to the addressee); the use signals that p was established previously to an utterance made in the immediately preceding discourse. Hence, *eh/sowieso* restricts the relevance of this preceding utterance, and corrects the hearer in his assumptions.
- Since *eh/sowieso* link back to the discourse, they cannot be used discourse-initially.

- **Eggs (2003) on *eh* and *sowieso*:**

- Following Weydt (1983), Eggs argues that *eh* and *sowieso* do not make the same contribution, but perform the same function, and are hence freely substitutable.
- The **function of *sowieso*(p)/*eh*(p)** is to refer to a set of alternatives q and $\neg q$ that were explicitly or implicitly brought up in the discourse by the addressee (e.g. a question), and to state that neither alternative is relevant given p .
- The **contribution of *sowieso*** is to take up the two alternatives q or $\neg q$ and to state that irrespective of whether q or $\neg q$ is the case, p holds.
- The **contribution of *eh*** is to make something that the speaker already knew explicit, before the question q or $\neg q$ was put forward, i.e., the validity of p was given before the validity of either q or $\neg q$ were established.

- **Fisseni (2009) and Bruijnen and Sudhoff (2013) on *eh* and *sowieso*:**

- Both follow Weydt (1983), Helbig (1994), and Eggs (2003) in assuming that *sowieso* expresses that a proposition p holds independently of some other proposition that was previously given in the discourse.

3 Are there two kinds of *eh*? – A corpus study

- Before looking at possible meaning differences between regional variants of *eh*, we are conducting a corpus study to see if we can already find differences in their distribution.
- **Our goal:** Investigate to what extent Thurmair’s claim (*eh=sowieso*) is also for Austrian *eh*, and whether we can find a difference in the behavior of *eh* for different areas in Germany.
- We chose **three different subcorpora** of the DeReKo TAGGED-T2 corpus, a collection of different newspaper articles from 2010-2014 that represent three different areas.
 - **Lower Saxony:**
Braunschweiger Zeitung (BZ), 86.11 mio tokens
Hannoversche Allgemeine (HA), 9.33 mio tokens
 - **Nuremberg (Franconia, Bavaria):**
Nürnberg Nachrichten (NN), 51.25 mio tokens
Nürnberg Zeitung (NZ), 44.73 mio tokens
 - **Eastern Austria:**⁴
Niederösterreichische Nachrichten (NoeN), 111.73 mio tokens
Burgenländische Volkszeitung (BVZ), 20.46 mio tokens

⁴As far as SZ can tell, this is also the *eh* spoken in Salzburg, Upper Austria, and Styria.

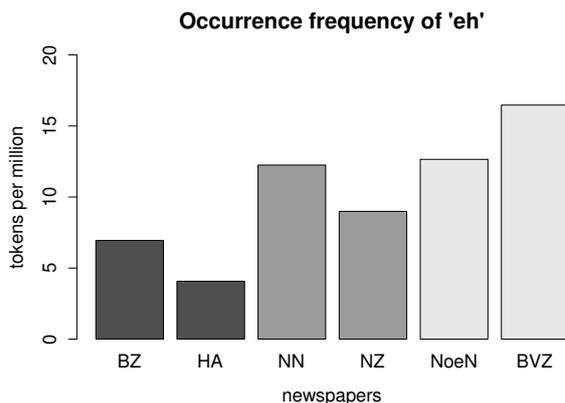
⇒ It is plausible to assume that the majority of attested uses of *eh* were produced by speakers of the respective regions.

⇒ **Two possible confounds:** writers and editors may standardize quotes, and the speakers quoted may be from regions other than the origin of the papers. We cannot control for these factors yet.

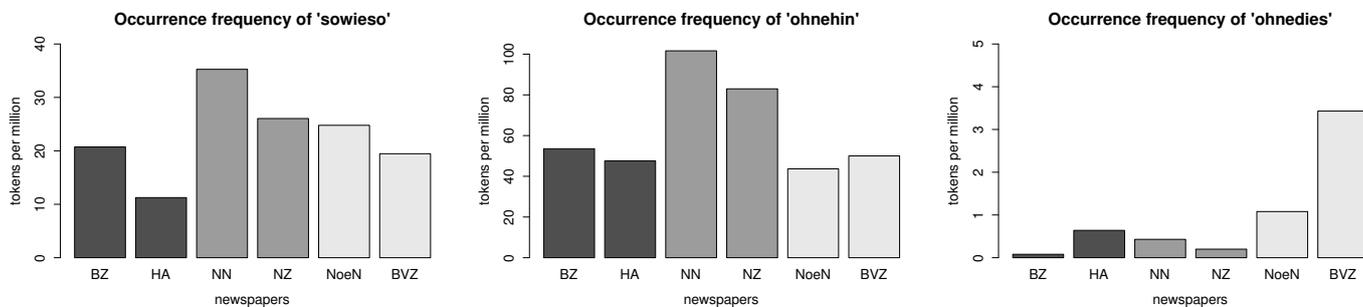
- **Query:** *eh* NICHT (*eh* "und" *je*)

Searches for *eh*, but excludes cases that co-occur in the fixed expression *eh und je* (≈ Engl. ‘always’); does not rule out the abbreviated form of *ehe* (Engl. ‘before’) – which was found to occur in no more than 1.5% of the cases.

- **Lower Saxony:** 636 hits
BZ, 598 hits (6.94 tokens/mio)
HA, 38 hits (4.07 tokens/mio)
- **Nuremberg:** 1030 hits
NN, 628 hits (12.25 tokens/mio)
NZ, 402 hits (8.99 tokens/mio)
- **Eastern Austria:** 1786 hits
NoeN, 1449 hits (12.65 tokens/mio)
BVZ, 337 hits (16.47 tokens/mio)



- Since *eh* is usually investigated in the literature together with *sowieso*, *ohnehin*, and *ohnedies*, we compared how these four expressions differ in their usage frequencies for these six newspapers. (Please note the different limits for the y-axes.)⁵



- To investigate other distributional properties of *eh* in the different variants of German, we randomly selected 500 items from each region, and annotated **the first 250 relevant(!) items** of each selection for the following properties:⁶

- **Sentence type:** What is the sentence type of the clause that *eh* occurs in?
⇒ We expect *eh* to be acceptable in declaratives and interrogatives.
- **Embedding:** Does *eh* occur in an embedded clause?
⇒ We expect *eh* to occur in complements to attitude and speech verbs. Hence, if *eh* can occur in an interrogative, it should also occur in embedded interrogatives.

⁵The corresponding plots that group the expressions with respect to the different newspapers are given in the Appendix.

⁶In addition to abbreviated forms of *ehe*, we excluded titles, headlines, and strongly fragmented text, as well as fixed expressions with discourse particle *eh* (for Eastern Austria, see Appendix), and *eh* that occurs inside a DP.

- **Negation:** Does the sentence contain a negative element?
 ⇒ If Thurmair’s hypothesis is correct, all occurrences of *eh* in interrogatives should contain a negative element. ⇒ We do not expect a preference in declaratives.

- **Distribution of *eh* – sentence type:**

	declaratives	interrogatives
Lower Saxony	249 (0.996)	1 (0.004)
Nuremberg	249 (0.996)	1 (0.004)
Eastern Austria	234 (0.936)	16 (0.064)

- ⇒ No other sentence types besides declaratives and interrogatives were found!
- ⇒ Since tag questions have a declarative “core”, they were counted as declaratives. (Csi-pak and Zobel 2014 show that discourse particles that exclusively occur in questions cannot occur in tag questions or rising declaratives.)
- ⇒ The numbers for the interrogatives are too small to say anything about a possible correlation between negation and *eh*.

3.1 *Eh* in declaratives

- **Distribution of *eh* – declaratives, embedding, and negation:**

Is there a (larger) preference or bias for Federal German *eh* to occur with negation compared to Austrian German *eh*?

- **Lower Saxony:** 249 declaratives

	no negative element	negative element	
not embedded	130 (0.52)	73 (0.30)	(= 203; 0.82)
embedded	30 (0.12)	16 (0.06)	(= 46; 0.18)
	(= 160; 0.64)	(= 89; 0.36)	

- ⇒ There is a general tendency for ‘no embedding’ and ‘no negative element’.
- ⇒ Since discourse particles are said to be a root phenomenon, the tendency towards ‘no embedding’ is expected.
- ⇒ The tendency towards ‘no negative element’ might be independently motivated.
- ⇒ There is no interaction between embedding and negation; the ratios when comparing the columns to each other and the rows to each other are “the same” both times.

- **Nuremberg:** 249 declaratives

	no negative element	negative element	
not embedded	146 (0.59)	64 (0.26)	(= 210; 0.85)
embedded	26 (0.10)	13 (0.05)	(= 39; 0.15)
	(= 172; 0.69)	(= 77; 0.31)	

- ⇒ Same results as for Lower Saxony wrt. general tendencies and lack of interaction.

- **Eastern Austria:** 234 declaratives

	no negative element	negative element	
not embedded	140 (0.60)	47 (0.20)	(= 187; 0.80)
embedded	33 (0.14)	14 (0.06)	(= 47; 0.20)
	(= 173; 0.74)	(= 61; 0.26)	

⇒ Same results as for Lower Saxony and Nuremberg.

- The data suggests that *eh*+negation seems to decline from North to South. Still to be tested: is this significant or a sampling effect?

3.2 *Eh* in interrogatives

- **Distribution of *eh* – interrogatives, embedding, and negation:**

These are the examples/the distribution found for the different areas:

- **Lower Saxony:** The one interrogative that was found is a matrix interrogative and contains negation.

(8) *Wird er es nicht eh "versaufen"?*
will he it not EH drink.away

- **Nuremberg:** The one interrogative that was found is an embedded interrogative and contains no negative element.

[**Context:** “Before the ‘Theo-Book’, the extended version of my book from 1997, was published, I asked Theo (who is now 16 years old)...”]

(9) *ob ihm das eh recht ist oder ob er irgendein Problem damit hat.*
whether him that EH okay is or whether he any problem with-it has

⇒ **But:** The author who is quoted here (Daniel Glattauer) is from Vienna.

- **Eastern Austria:** the 16 occurrences are exclusively polar interrogatives

	no negative element	negative element	
not embedded	4 (0.25)	3 (0.19)	(= 7; 0.44)
embedded	8 (0.50)	1 (0.06)	(= 9; 0.56)
	(= 12; 0.75)	(= 4; 0.25)	

⇒ All cells are attested!

⇒ **But:** too few cases to make any generalizing claims.

(10) *Bin ich hier eh in Waidhofen an der Ybbs?*
‘Am I EH in Waidhofen an der Ybbs?’ (NoeN)

(11) *Bist jetzt eh ned deppat worden?*
‘Did you EH not go crazy?’ (NoeN)

(12) *Natürlich kamen via Facebook immer wieder besorgte Anfragen von Freunden, ob es uns eh gut geht.*
‘Of course friends were worried and asked us on facebook whether we were EH all right.’ (BVZ)

(13) *Kürzlich hat uns das Land angerufen und gefragt, ob wir eh nichts dagegen haben, wenn auf 100 Parkplätze aufgestockt wird.*
‘Recently the local administration called an asked whether we are EH okay with it if they increase our parking space to 100 spaces.’ (NoeN)

- **Additional query for *eh* in interrogatives:** "*eh* /+s0 \?" (for *eh* in matrix interrogatives), "*ob* /+s0 *eh*" (for *eh* in embedded polar interrogatives), and "MORPH(pron w) /+s0 *eh*" (for *eh* in *wh*-interrogatives; overlaps with both other queries).

	matrix interrogative (abs. freq.)	tokens per million	embedded interrogative (abs. freq.)	tokens per million
BZ	1	0.01	0	0.00
HA	0	0.00	0	0.00
NN	1*	0.02	1*	0.02
NZ	2	0.04	0	0.00
NoeN	29	0.26	29	0.26
BVZ	6	0.29	5	0.24

⇒ Again tag questions were not counted (see Appendix for results).

⇒ The two occurrences in NN with the asterisk were quotes by Austrian authors.

⇒ The embedded interrogatives were all polar interrogatives.

- The three genuinely **Federal German** *ehs* (BZ and NZ):

(14) *Wird er es nicht eh “versaufen”?*

‘Won’t he drink it away?’ (BZ)

(15) *Wer denkt bei “Lachs, Pot-au-feu, Vadouvan”, “Blumenkohlttempura, Erdmandel-Püree, Preiselbeere” oder “Moelleux au chocolat mit Blutorange” nicht eh nur noch an eins?*

‘Who doesn’t only think about one thing when he hears “Salmon, Pot-au-feu, Vadouvan”, “Cauliflower tempura, tigernut mash, cranberry”, or “Moelleux au chocolat with blood orange”?’ (NZ)

(16) *Aber hat Djian (“Betty Blue”) den wilden Weg nicht eh immer mehr geschätzt als irgend ein bescheuertes Ziel?*

‘But didn’t Dijan always hold the wild journey in higher esteem than some stupid goal?’ (NZ)

⇒ **Note:** all questions contain the negation particle *nicht*; it consistently precedes *eh*.

⇒ The negation in these questions is high negation, cf. Romero and Han (2004)/the discourse particle use of *nicht* (Thurmair 1989).

⇒ While not attested in the corpus, the negative element can occur below *eh*. Then the question asks about *eh*, cf. section 2.2.⁷

(17) *War Maria eh nicht mehr da, oder ist sie extra wegen Peter gegangen?*

‘Had Maria EH left, or did she leave especially because of Peter?’

- The distribution in the **Austrian interrogatives data** wrt. negation and embedding: all cases of Austrian *eh* are polar interrogatives.

– **BVZ:** 11 interrogatives, 4 negated interrogatives (= 36.4%)

	no negation	negation		<i>eh</i> < <i>nicht</i>	<i>nicht</i> < <i>eh</i>
matrix	3 (0.273)	3 (0.273)	matrix+neg	2	1
embed.	4 (0.364)	1 (0.09)	embed.+neg	1	0

⁷In these cases, *eh* seems to do something similar to English *anyways*.

⇒ Still too few items to make generalizations.

- NoeN: 58 interrogatives; 12 negated interrogatives (= 20.7%)

	no negation	negation		<i>eh</i> < <i>nicht</i>	<i>nicht</i> < <i>eh</i>
matrix	20 (0.34)	9 (0.16)	matrix+neg	7	2
embed.	26 (0.45)	3 (0.05)	embed.+neg	3	0

⇒ Still too few items to make generalizations.

⇒ Both orders of negation and *eh* are attested (at least for matrix interrogatives).

⇒ Not enough cases to generalize the behavior of *eh* and negation wrt. order; embedded interrogatives with *nicht* preceding Austrian *eh* do exist:

- (18)
- a. *Ich weiss auch jetzt nicht, ob er **nicht eh** auch stiehlt.*
'I still don't know, whether he doesn't EH AUCH steal.'⁸
 - b. *Nicht auch noch gießen, wenn der Baum welk erscheint, sondern zuerst schauen, ob er **nicht eh** schon zu nass hat.*
'Don't water the tree if it seems withered, but check first whether it isn't EH already too wet.'⁹

⇒ All possible combinations are attested!

4 Federal German *eh* vs. Austrian German *eh*

4.1 Interim Summary

- Summary of Federal German *eh*:

- **Sentence type:** Federal German *eh* can occur freely in declaratives, but is restricted to interrogatives that contain high negation, unless *eh* (or *sowieso*) is asked about.
- **Embedding:** German *eh* can occur in matrix and embedded declaratives, as well as polar interrogatives.

- Summary of Austrian *eh*:

- **Sentence type:** Austrian *eh* can occur freely in declaratives and polar interrogatives with and without negation. It does not occur in *wh*-interrogatives – only in echo questions (cf. Csipak and Zobel 2014).

- (19)
- A: *Der Peter hat **eh** gelacht.*
'Peter EH laughed.'
 - B: *WER hat **eh** gelacht?*
'WHO laughed EH?'

- **Embedding:** Austrian *eh* can occur in matrix and embedded declaratives, as well as polar interrogatives with the same lack of restrictions.
- All combinations of embedding, presence of negation, and order of *eh* and negation are attested for interrogatives.

⁸<http://www.lobby4kids.at/?id=5&action=133&elements=2>

⁹http://www.hoefler.at/Artikel/Beitrag_Regenjahr.html

4.2 Federal German

- **Tentative proposal** for the contribution of *eh*:
 - *Eh* and *sowieso* share the same meaning, function, and distribution.¹⁰
 - They contribute the same meaning in declaratives and interrogatives.
 - $\llbracket eh \rrbracket^c(p)$: there is a salient QUD (which is different from *whether p*) such that knowing whether *p* either decides the QUD or makes it irrelevant.

- (20) A: *Did you return your library book?*
B: *(Nein,) ich muss eh Strafe zahlen.*
'No, I EH have to pay a late fee.'

B's utterance allows A to conclude that B has not returned the library book yet.
The QUD cannot be *p* itself; cf. (21).

- (21) A: *Hast du eingekauft? 'Did you get groceries?'*
B: *Ja, ich habe (??eh) eingekauft. 'Yes, I EH did.'*

In cases where B's answer makes an overt question irrelevant, *eh* is mandatory.

- (22) A: *Could you order some toner for me please?*
B: *Das wollte ich ??(eh) machen.*
'I was EH going to do that.'

- **Observation 1:** The QUD can follow *eh(p)*.

- (23) *Ich war gestern eh mit dem Rad unterwegs, also habe ich einen Kasten Bier gekauft.*
'I was EH using my bike yesterday, so I bought a thing of beer.'

- **Observation 2:** *eh* can associate with its right adjacent element if it gives rise to (scalar) focus alternatives, cf. a similar observation for *schon* in Zimmermann (2014).

- (24) **Context:** Regine is an invited speaker at the 2016 LSA. Jefferson is wondering if he should take a welcome packet to her room.
- a. *Regine ist eh gestern angekommen.*
'Regine arrived EH yesterday.'
 - b. *??Regine ist gestern eh angekommen.*
'Regine arrived yesterday EH.'

In (24-a), there are focus alternatives in which taking a welcome packet to Regine's room make sense. These are *she arrives today; she arrives tomorrow; she arrives the day after tomorrow; . . .* By asserting (24-a) the speaker not only signals that she believes that Regine arrived yesterday, but also that this makes Jefferson's question obsolete. Because the focus alternatives need to be made available by *yesterday*, (24-b) is odd.

¹⁰Further research is needed!

4.3 Austrian German

- We assume that *sowieso* in Austrian German works as Federal German *eh* and *sowieso*. Hence, Austrian German *sowieso* and *eh* are expected to behave differently.
- **Tentative proposal** for the contribution of **Austrian *eh***:

- The proposals are based on simple matrix declaratives and interrogatives. In contexts where *eh* is embedded under a verb of saying, the attitude expressed by *eh* seems to be shifted to the reported speaker. The behaviour of *eh* in adverbial clauses is still an open issue.

[**Context:** The speaker talks about his second biggest inebriation of his life that he had after a “Zeltfest”.]

- (25) *I hab mich an den Zaun gelehnt, weil meine Füße sind eh schon von allein gegangen.*
 ‘I leaned on the fence because my feet EH already walked by themselves.’
 (NoeN)

- ***eh* in declaratives:** The particle *eh* seems to convey that the speaker thinks that the addressee currently actively entertains $\neg p$, but wants him to discard it.

- (26) $\llbracket eh \rrbracket^c(p)$: c_S wants c_A to exclude $\neg p$ from his doxastic alternatives.

\Rightarrow **Restriction on the context of use:** c_S must not be sure that c_A does not actively entertain $\neg p$.

\Rightarrow In contexts in which there is no reason for the speaker to assume that the addressee thinks/might think that $\neg p$ is the case, the use of *eh* is pragmatically odd (the use of *sowieso* might be fine!).

[**Context:** A and B talk about the salaries of scientific personnel. A and B have had the same opinions for their entire conversation.]

- (27) A: *Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter verdienen generell zu wenig.*
 ‘Scientific personell generally does not earn enough.’
 B: #*Das find ich eh.*
 ‘I believe that EH.’
 B’: *Das find ich sowieso.*
 ‘I believe that SOWIESO.’

\Rightarrow The effect of reassuring the addressee of a desirable fact which is often found with *eh* is not part of the contribution of *eh*, but is an additional effect arising in the “right” contexts.

[**Context:** Speaker B complains about C not yet calling him, and wonders whether C will do as he promised. Speaker A can interrupt B’s worrying.]

- (28) *Hör auf dir Gedanken zu machen! Er macht eh immer was er will.*
 ‘Stop worrying! He EH always does what he wants.’

- ***eh* in polar interrogatives:** The particle *eh* seems to convey that the speaker has a bias for p but cannot exclude that $\neg p$.

- (29) $\llbracket eh \rrbracket^c(p)$: c_S wants (c_S) to exclude $\neg p$ from his doxastic alternatives.

$\Rightarrow p$ is the sentence radical of the polar interrogative, i.e., a proposition.

⇒ **Restriction on the context of use:** c_S cannot know that p .

⇒ *Eh* is expected to be infelicitous in exam questions:

Teacher: *#Ist zwei plus zwei eh vier?*

‘Is two plus two EH four?’

- In contexts in which there is no salient QUD, but the addressee behaves as if he actively considers $\neg p$, *eh* is fine, but *sowieso* is not, e.g. if there is no actual discourse between the speaker and his addressee.

[**Context:** The coach of a soccer team to the referee.]

(30) *Brauchst ihnen nicht zu helfen! Die sind eh gut genug!*

‘You don’t have to help them! They are EH good enough!’ (BVZ)

⇒ *eh* not substitutable with *sowieso*

- Austrian *eh* in polar interrogatives can only rarely be substituted by *sowieso* to ask the same question, since Austrian *eh* does not have to co-occur with a negative element.

(31) a. *Magst du Zwetschenkuchen eh?*

‘Do you like it EH?’

b. ??*Magst du Zwetschenkuchen sowieso?*

‘Do you like it SOWIESO?’

⇒ Context in which a. is good, but b. is bad:

[**Context:** A is invited to B’s place for coffee and cake. B brings out a plum cake.]

(32) B: *Magst du Zwetschenkuchen eh?*

‘Do you like plum cake EH?’

A: *Ja!*

‘Yes!’

⇒ In those polar interrogatives where *sowieso* is asked for, *eh* can never appear by itself; it is possible to have *eh sowieso*, though. (Compare to Federal German (5).)

(33) A: *Magst du einen Kaffee?*

‘Do you want coffee?’

B: *Gehst du eh #(sowieso) zum Kaffeeautomaten?*

‘Will you go to the coffee machine anyway?’

⇒ Austrian German *eh* cannot be asked for!

- In declaratives, *eh* and *sowieso* can also co-occur in either order; **but:** the two orders do not mean the same thing.

[**Context:** The speaker asks about the prescribed fishing exam to get his fishing license.]

(34) *Warum macht man überhaupt noch Prüfungen? Ich finde der was angeln will der beschäftigt sich eh sowieso damit und kann es nur lernen durch Erfahrung bzw. auch durch Hilfe von Fischerkollegen.*

‘Why are there even still exams? I believe that someone who wants to fish EH SOWIESO tries to learn all about it, and can only learn it through experience or with the help of fishing colleagues.’¹¹

¹¹<http://anglerforum.at/anglerforum/thread.php?threadid=12559&sid=83deedb8876b59fa8009dca6815dca89>

⇒ The addressee is told not to worry that people who want to fish will try to learn everything about fishing anyway.

[**Context:** Announcement on facebook for a musical cabarett.]

(35) *Liebe Freunde, Kollegen und sowieso eh' Alle!*
'Dear friends, colleagues, and SOWIESO EH everyone!'¹²

⇒ It is conveyed that no matter what, no one has to worry that they are not addressed.

- **Observation:** Austrian *eh* also seems to be sensitive to information structure.

[**Context:** A is invited to B's place for coffee and cake. B brings out a plum cake.]

(36) B: *Magst du Zwetschkuchen eh?*
'Do you like plum cake EH?'
B'?? *Magst du eh Zwetschkuchen?*
'Do you like EH plum cake?'

⇒ "Zwetschkuchen" is given; *eh* cannot precede it.

5 Conclusion and open issues

- Federal German *eh*, Federal German *sowieso*, and Austrian German *sowieso* make (so far) indistinguishable contributions to the utterance they occur in.
- They convey that the fact that *p* holds settles or makes irrelevant some salient QUD.
- Austrian *eh* is different: it conveys that the speaker wants someone (c_A or c_S) to exclude $\neg p$ from their doxastic alternatives.
- **Open issues/questions:**
 - Particle combinations: Which particles do Federal German and Austrian German *eh* and *sowieso* preferably co-occur with? Is the contribution of the combinations compositional or not?
 - Take a closer look at the right adjacent material found with *eh* with respect to the question of information structure sensitivity of *eh*.
 - Take a closer look at the embedded cases of *eh*. Are there any specific embedded clauses that *eh* preferably occurs in for both Federal German *eh* and Austrian *eh*?
 - Investigate *sowieso* for Federal German and Austrian German.

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¹²<https://www.facebook.com/121733171239114/photos/a.391473000931795.71236987.121733171239114/43996643274>

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Appendix

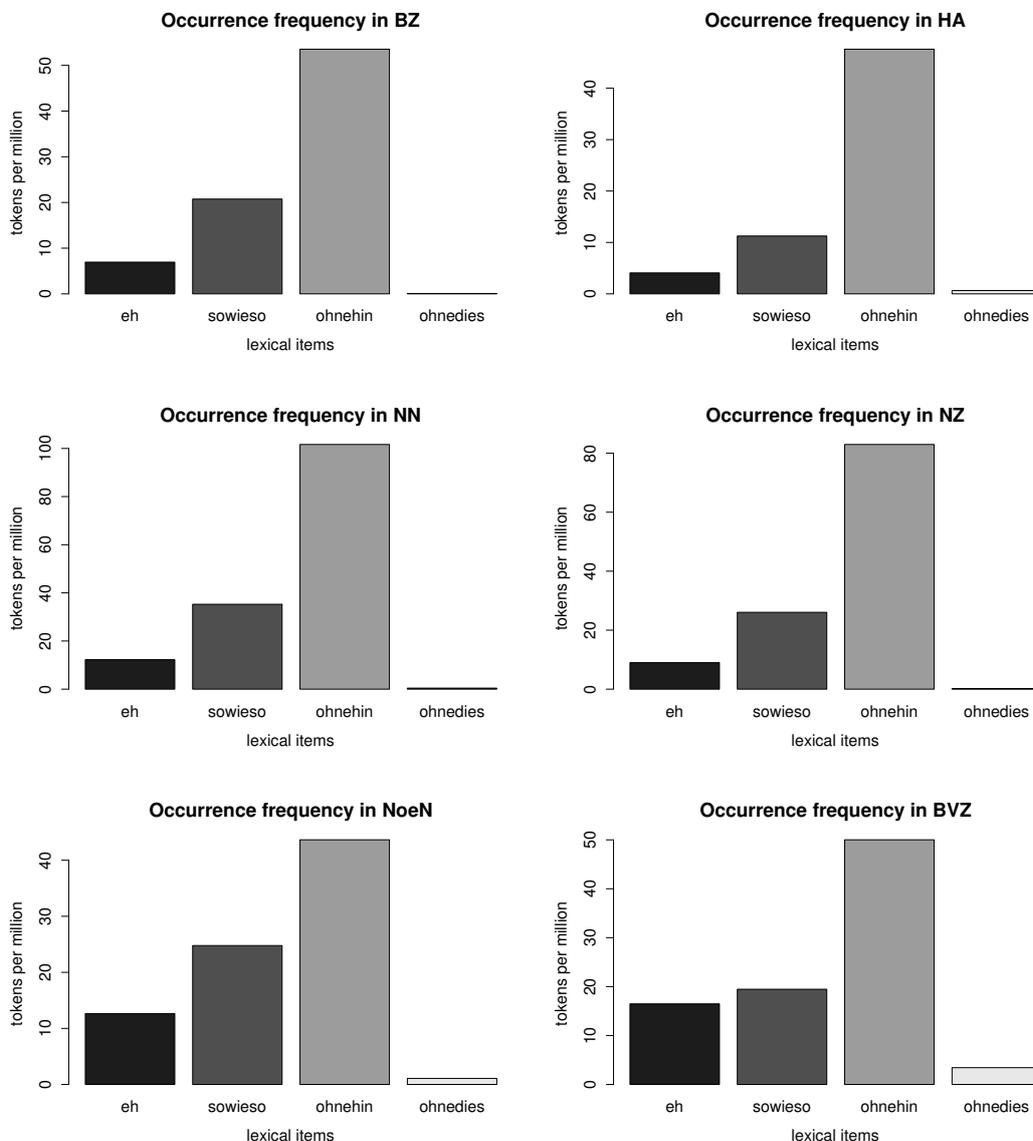
- High German and Bavarian dialect maps (public domain images, Wikipedia):



High German comprises all Upper German and Middle German dialects; these are the varieties spoken in Austria, Switzerland, and the south and center of Germany until the Benrath line, which runs from Aachen, through Kassel and Berlin to Frankfurt/Oder.

The Bavarian dialects are spoken in Austria and the eastern part of Bavaria.

- Occurrence frequencies (tokens per million) of *eh*, *sowieso*, *ohnehin*, and *ohnedies* for the six newspapers (again, note the different limits of the y-axes):



- **Fixed expressions** with discourse particle *eh* that were excluded from the corpus study for Eastern Austria:

– ***Eh klar***: abbreviated version of “*es/das ist eh klar*” (Engl. ‘it/that is obvious/unsurprising’); occurs by itself or with a complement clause:

- (37) a. ***Eh klar***, bei einer Stadt mit 25.000 Bürgermeistern!
 ‘Of course, given that it’s a city with 25,000 mayors!’
- b. *Sogar innerhalb des Dorfes soll es Ressentiments geben – so ätzen die Bewohner des oberen Ortsteiles nun über die unteren, dort wo die Tat begangen wurde: “eh klar, dass das bei euch passiert ist. . .”*
 ‘Even inside the village there seems to be resentment – those of the upper part of the village now make acid remarks about those of the lower part

where the crime was committed: “It’s unsurprising that this happened in your area . . . ”:

- **Wissen’S eh**: unclear whether it is an abbreviated version of “*Wissen Sie das eh?*” (Engl. ‘do you EH know that’) or “*Sie wissen das eh*” (Engl. ‘you EH know that’); the effect might be approximately like saying “*you know*” in English, although “*you know*” seems to be far less restricted; intuitively it says: “I am quite sure that you already know the following since it is a well known fact (but I’m not completely sure that you know it)”; the non-polite, second person singular form “*weiß eh*” also exists.

(38) *Er wurde gleich von den Damen aufgeklärt: “Wissen’S eh, da ist der Markt, auf dem es so schöne Gestecke gibt.”*

‘He was immediately enlightened by the ladies: “You know, there’s the market where they sell those beautiful sprays.”’

- **eh scho(n) wissen**: a very colloquial way of saying “*you know who/what I’m talking about*” or “*as you know*”.

(39) *“den (eh scho’ wissen) mag’ ich net!”*

‘I don’t like him (you know who)!’

- The number of **tag questions** containing *eh* found in the corpora (query: “**eh** /+s0 \?”):

	number of hits	tokens per million
BZ	3	0.03
HA	0	0.00
NN	4	0.08
NZ	1	0.02
NoeN	4	0.04
BVZ	3	0.15

⇒ no interesting pattern to be found

- (40) a. *Spielt doch eh’ keine Rolle, oder?*
 ‘That doesn’t play a role, does it?’ (BZ)
- b. *Eh alles guat, oder?*
 ‘Everything is EH fine, isn’t it?’ (BVZ)