

## To Q or not to Q?

**Background** Rudin (2018) (*PhD*); Rudin & Rudin (2022) (*FASL29*) discuss a typological generalization that languages where *rising declaratives* (L\* H-H%) comprise non-canonical yes/no questions (YNQs), like English and Bulgarian, also allow for *rising imperatives*, used as friendly requests or disinterested suggestions, as in (1), but languages where rising declaratives comprise regular YNQs, like Macedonian, don't.

- (1) a. You poured me wine<sub>L\* H-H%</sub>? (rising declarative as a non-canonical question)  
 b. Pour me wine<sub>L\* H-H%</sub>? (rising imperative as a friendly request)  
 c. A: What should I do while I'm waiting for you?  
 B: I don't really care. Pour yourself wine<sub>L\* H-H%</sub>? (rising imperative as a disinterested suggestion)

**This paper** looks at Russian, further expanding the typology of how languages realize various discourse-oriented meanings across sentence types. While, like in Macedonian, regular Russian YNQs are formed via an “intonation-only” strategy, said intonation doesn't involve a rising tune, but what I call here the *Q-Peak*. I show that the Q-Peak can also be used in friendly, but invested requests similar to (1b)—but not in disinterested suggestions like (1c). I propose that the Q-Peak realizes an operator that asks the addressee to respond to an issue—appropriate in (some) questions and invested requests, but not in disinterested suggestions.

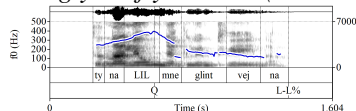
**Q-Peak in questions** In Russian, the default strategy of forming a neutral matrix YNQ is to have the same string one would have in a declarative sentence and to place a special prosodic peak, which I will call the *Q-Peak* and label as Q, on the locus of prosodic focus marking within the semantically focused constituent. The Q-Peak, illustrated in (2) for what Esipova & Romero (2023) (*Ms.*) call *polarity-seeking YNQs* (with semantic focus on polarity, whose prosodic locus in this case is the stressed syllable of the inflected verb), is articulatorily and perceptually distinct from focus marking in assertions (e.g., Meyer & Mleinek 2006, *JoP*).

- (2) *You were supposed to pour me mulled wine. I'm asking you if you have (no bias either way).*

Ty nalil<sub>Q</sub> mne glintvejna<sub>L-L%</sub>? ♣

you poured me mulled-wine

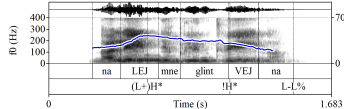
‘Have you poured me mulled wine [or not]?’



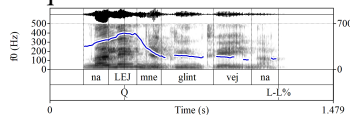
**Q-Peak in requests** I observe that the Q-Peak can be used in different sentence types to mark friendly, but invested requests. I illustrate two cases here. (i) Imperatives: (3a), with an (L+)H\* on the verb, is by default interpreted as a command, but (3b), with a Q-Peak on the verb, is a friendly (but invested) request; (4) is a naturalistic example of a Q-Peak-marked friendly imperative request. (ii) FUT.1SG Q-Peak-marked declarative string sentences asking for permission in (5) (constructed) and (6) (naturalistic).

- (3) Nalej mne glintvejna  
 pour.IMP me mulled-wine

a. Command ‘Pour me mulled wine!’ ♣



b. Request ≈ ‘Pour me mulled wine[, will you]?’ ♣



- (4) Nužno mnogo deneg. Pomogite nam<sub>L-L%</sub>? ♣

need.ADJ much money help.IMP us

‘A lot of money is needed. Help us[, will you]?’ (MURCO)

- (5) Ja nalju<sub>Q</sub> sebe glintvejna<sub>L-L%</sub>? ♣

I pour.FUT.1SG myself mulled-wine

≈ ‘I’ll pour myself mulled wine[, OK]?’

- (6) Mam, ja voz’mu<sub>Q</sub> kovrik<sub>L-L%</sub>? ♣

Mom I take.FUT.1SG rug

≈ ‘Mom, I’ll take the rug[, OK]?’ (MURCO)

**No Q-Peak in suggestions** Rudin & Rudin (2022) already report some discrepancies between invested requests like (1b) vs. disinterested suggestions like (1c) in some Bulgarian speakers. The distinction between the two appears even sharper in Russian, as the Q-Peak cannot be used in such disinterested suggestions. Thus, in (10-i), the asserted indifference clashes with the speaker’s investment in the outcome signalled by the Q-Peak. Note that this isn’t an issue of where the Q-Peak goes, i.e., what the semantic focus is. Russian declarative string YNQs can have a sentence-level focus and, consequently, a sentence-level Q-Peak under

