

Grammatica et verba
Glamor and verve

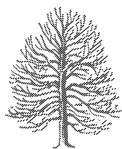
Studies in South Asian, historical, and Indo-European
linguistics in honor of

Hans Henrich Hock

on the occasion
of his seventy-fifth birthday

edited by

Shu-Fen Chen and Benjamin Slade



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Polar Questions and Non-headed Conditionals in Cross-linguistic and Historical Perspective*

OLAV HACKSTEIN

1 The expression of polar questions in ancient Indo-European languages

In a typological survey, Siemund (2002:1012–8) lists six strategies for marking polar questions. In decreasing order of cross-linguistic frequency, these are intonation, interrogative particles, interrogative tags, disjunction (A-not-A construction), constituent order, and verbal inflection. A complete documentation of polar question marking in the older Indo-European languages has not been undertaken so far. The indications are, however, that ancient Indo-European accords with the typological frequency pattern described by Siemund, in that intonation is the most widespread strategy employed. For some representative examples, see the following table.

PROSODY/INTONATION → POLAR INTERROGATIVE	
Vedic	“pluti”: trimoric prolongation of word-final vowels (Strunk 1983:16, Etter 1986:13–5, 118–22)
Greek	morphologically and syntactically unmarked polar questions (Hirt 1937:35, Schwyzler 1950:628f., Chantraine 1986:10f.)
Latin	morphologically and syntactically unmarked polar questions (Hirt 1937:35, Hofmann and Szantyr 1972:460, Kühner and Stegmann 1976:501–3)
Tocharian	see §3.4
Hittite	occasional plene spelling of the vowel in the final syllable of the constituent under interrogative focus (Mascheroni 1980:53f., Hoffner 1995:88, Hoffner and Melchert 2008:348; cf. Oettinger apud Strunk 1983:117f.)

The second-most frequent way of marking polar questions in older Indo-European

*I am indebted to Dieter Gunkel and Ron Kim for valuable comments on a preliminary version of this paper. Glosses follow the Leipzig glossing rules (<http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>). The following abbreviations are also used: VRaise = verb fronting; NegRaise = negation fronting; INPQ = inner negative polar question; ONPQ = outer negative polar question (see below §3.2.2.1).

consists in prefixing or suffixing polar questions with rhetorical questions (i.e. the subtype of polar questions called stimulus questions, see Hackstein 2004:168f. n. 2), which may eventually develop into polar question particles via grammaticalization. Among the source structures of polar question particles are content questions (THING, MANNER) and negation particles. Following is a selective overview of examples:

STIMULUS Q → POLAR QUESTION PARTICLE			
Source Domain	Target Language		Literature
THING	Sanskrit	<i>kad</i>	Etter 1986:122f., 133, Hackstein 2005:263
	Latin	<i>quid, quippe</i>	Hackstein 2004:180f., 182f.
MANNER	Polish	<i>czy</i>	Hackstein 2004:174f.
	Latin	<i>atqui</i>	Hackstein 2004:173f.
	Toch. A	<i>aśsi</i>	Hackstein 2004:174f.
NEGATION	OHG	<i>ni/ne...na</i>	Lühr 1997:329–32
	Latin	<i>nōn(ne)</i>	Kühner and Stegmann 1976:516

The third-most frequent strategy of marking polar questions is to change the word order (cf. Hirt 1937:38–40). Particularly widespread is fronting the negator (if present) and the verb (VRaise, NegRaise). Cf. the contrasting word order in OHG SVO-declaratives (1a) versus VSO-interrogatives (1b), and Latin SOV-declaratives (2a) versus VSO-interrogatives (2b):

OHG

1. a. *ih fursahu [unholdun].*
 1SG.NOM renounce.PRS.1SG devil.ACC.SG.M
 ‘I renounce the devil.’
 b. *forsahhis=tu unholdun?*
 renounce.PRS.2SG=2SG.NOM devil.ACC.SG.M
 ‘Do you renounce the devil?’ (*Fränk. Taufgelöbnis* 1; Müller 2007:98)

Latin

2. a. *hortum et gestationem videt.*
 garden.ACC.SG.M and promenade.ACC.SG.M overlook.PRS.3SG
 ‘It (the room) overlooks the garden and promenade.’ (Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.13)
 b. *vides hunc?*
 see.PRS.2SG he.ACC.SG
 ‘Do you see him?’ (Plin. *Ep.* 9.23.4)

The diachronic data from Indo-European languages suggest that the VI-interrogative construction, as grammaticalized in Germanic, arose from an earlier linguistic stage

where the default marking of polar questions was intonational with no verb or negation movement required, but where the negation and the verb could be fronted for semantic and pragmatic reasons, e.g. to signal the speaker's strategic choice to highlight negator and verb as new topics. Consider the following pairs of polar questions in Latin, where the SOV order (3a) contrasts with V_{Foc}OV (3b), and SONEGV (4a) contrasts with NEG_{Foc}VO (4b):

3. a. *Etiam tu argentum tenes?*
also 2SG.NOM money.ACC.SG.M hold.PRS.2SG
'Do you really have the money?' (Ter. *Heaut.* 235)
- b. *Tenes_{Foc} quid dicam?*
hold.PRS.2SG what say.PRS.SBJ.ISG
'Do you know what I'm supposed to say?' (Ter. *Heaut.* 700)
4. a. *Pugnantia te loqui non vides?*
contradicting.ACC.PL.N 2SG.ACC speak.INF NEG see.PRS.2SG
'Don't you see that you contradict yourself?' (Cic. *Tusc.* 1.13)
- b. *Non_{Foc} vides me ex cursura*
NEG see.PRS.2SG ISG.ACC out.of running.ABL.SG.F
anhelitum etiam ducere? [ONPQ¹]
breathless.ACC.SG.M also pull.INF
'Don't you see I'm out of breath from running?' (Pl. *Asin.* 327)

As will emerge from the data presented in this article, this latter system is reconstructible for Proto-Indo-European. In the course of later developments in the individual Indo-European languages, some languages like German, English, and Dutch have grammaticalized verb movement as the standard syntactic means of expressing polar questions.² By contrast, Latin, Vedic, Tocharian, and Hittite preserve the older system, in which verb and negation fronting as a mark of polar questions was driven by semantic and pragmatic factors.

Ancient Indo-European languages that change word order to express polar questions include:

¹ = Outer Negated Polar questions, as per Buring and Gunlogson 2002 and Hartung 2006, see §3.2.2.

²For typological data exemplifying the functional unity of interrogative subject-verb inversion and focus marking, see Haiman 2002.

WORD ORDER → POLAR INTERROGATIVE		
Word Order Change	Language	Literature
VRaise	Germanic	Schrodt 2004:200; see §3.2.1.1
	optionally in Latin, Tocharian, Hittite	see §§3.3, 3.4, 4
NegRaise	optionally in Vedic	Etter 1985:15f.
	Germanic	see §§3.1, 3.2
	Latin	see §3.3
	Tocharian	see §3.4
	Hittite	see §4
	Vedic	see §4

2 **Overlap of polar questions with conditionals and complementizers**

It is a well-known fact that the function of questions is not restricted to conveying interrogative speech acts, but includes non-interrogative speech acts as well as the organization of discourse.

Function	Interrogative Construction
Directive speech act	<i>Would you mind repeating that?</i>
Discourse organization	interrogative discourse particles
	causal-evidential English <i>why?! (Quirk et al. 1985:819)</i> Latin <i>quippe</i> , additive Skt. <i>kim ca (Hackstein 2004:180–3)</i>

One indication of the importance of interrogative-based discourse organization is the frequent grammaticalization of rhetorical questions as complementizers (Interrogative-to-Complementizer Shift; for an overview, see Hackstein 2004). While content questions may undergo the Interrogative-to-Complementizer shift, polar questions develop differently. Here it is not the construction marker but the structural configuration which takes on new functions. In particular, the word order template of polar questions tends to converge with the template of conditionals and complementizers.

Haiman (1978, 1993:926f.) was the first to document the cross-linguistic tendency to cast protases in the form of polar questions, and he convincingly laid out the connection between the functional affinities and the formal overlap of polar questions and conditionals as well. To begin with, “conditionals may (in a sense) be paraphrased as questions”; furthermore, they overlap functionally with questions, because “conditionals are topics,” and correspondingly “the formal mark of topic status in a number of languages is often an interrogative morpheme or construction” (Haiman 1978:571). Yet although Haiman’s explanation is persuasive, the apparent syntactic identity of

headless conditionals with polar questions alone does not prove a source-target relationship between the two constructions. In fact, the formal overlap between polar questions and conditionals is frequently not complete. Thus, German and English headless V_I-conditionals exhibit interrogative word order but not interrogative intonation. To maintain that questions diachronically develop into conditionals, cases like these necessitate the additional assumption of a loss of interrogative intonation.

Here we face a longstanding problem of syntactic reconstruction, and the question whether the formal similarity or identity of two functionally different constructions entitles us to cast them in a diachronic source-target relationship. By itself and without additional criteria, such conclusions may represent pitfalls; cf. Harris and Campbell 1995:84 on the marker-structure fallacy. To exclude such fallacies, additional criteria are needed. In Hackstein 2005:265, I enumerated three principal provisos:

- a. the attestation of prototypes;
- b. the existence of typological parallels;
- c. the explanatory power of the claimed source-target development in explaining constructional anomalies.

In fact, the diachronic survey of Indo-European languages to follow brings to light additional cases of interrogative-based conditionals while satisfying the criteria needed to bolster the Question-to-Conditional/Complementizer Shift proposed by Haiman (1978).

3 Data from English, German, Latin, and Tocharian

3.1 Early Modern English and Present-Day English

To express a conditional, Present-Day English may use the diachronically persistent headless V_I-conditional construction alongside the innovative and standard *if*-clause format. As is known, V_I-conditionals exhibit the same word order as interrogatives:

5. a. *I'm wondering, could I get a convincing answer?*
 b. *Could I get a convincing answer, I'd be happy.*

The attested linguistic history of English indeed substantiates the claim of an underlying diachronic continuity between interrogative and conditional syntax. For instance, the interrogative origin of V_I-conditionals explains a formal quirk. In English, negated headless conditional clauses demand the word order AUX-SUBJECT-*not*, which precludes the use of the clitic form of the negation *-n't*, e.g.

6. a. *Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I would not have believed it.* (Quirk et al. 1985:1094)
 b. **Hadn't I seen it . . .*

On closer inspection, the AUX-SUBJECT-*not* template turns out to reflect the diachronically persistent word order that was standard in interrogatives of the Early Modern English period. Thus in Early Modern English, negated polar interrogatives require the negation to follow the auxiliary and the subject, if the subject is a pronoun, i.e. AUX-SUBJECT-*not*, see Blake (2002:253):

7. *Hadst thou not order?* (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* 2.2.8)

Shakespeare's VI-conditionals likewise exhibit the same word order, cf. Blake 2002: 210:

8. *Had I not known those customs,
I should haue beene beholding to your paper.* (*Henry VIII* 4.1.20–1)

In sum, the diachronic continuity between interrogative and conditional syntax offers the best explanation for the constructional anomaly of negated Present-Day English VI-conditionals.

3.2 Old and Middle High German

3.2.1.1. POLAR Q + VRAISE. Verb fronting is the diachronically persistent and standard way of marking polar questions in German, cf. Schrodtt (2004:200):

OHG

9. *furstuontut ir thisu elliu?*
understand.PST.2PL you.2PL this.ACC.PL.N all.ACC.PL.N
'Did you understand all of this?' (*T.* 77.5; *Matt.* 13:51)

MHG

10. *tuont si dir iht?*
do.PRS.3PL they you.DAT.SG something
'Are they doing something to you?' (*Iwein* 491)
11. *kumet uns Kriemhilt?*
come.PRS.3SG we.DAT Kriemhilt
'Is Kriemhild coming to us?' (*Nib.* 768.2)
12. *wil du mir helfen, edel Sîvrit,/ werben
die minneclichen?*
want.PRS.2SG you.SG I.DAT help.INF noble Siegfried court.INF
ART.ACC.SG.F lovely.ACC.SG.F
'Do you want to help me, noble Siegfried, to court the lovely maid?' (*Nib.* 332.1–2)

3.2.1.2. CONDITIONAL + VRAISE (VI-CONDITIONAL). The VI-conditional construction prevails in OHG and MHG. For a minimal pair contrasting question and conditional, cf. (12) above and (16) below.

OHG

13. *far ih uf ze himile, dar pist=tu mit*
 move.PRS.ISG I up to heaven.DAT.SG.M there be.PRS.2SG=you with
herie
 army.DAT.SG.N
 ‘If I ascend to heaven, there you will be with an army.’ (O. 1.7.3)

MHG

14. *solt=tu immer herzenliche zer werlde*
 shall.PRS.2SG=you ever very on.DAT.SG.F world.DAT.SG.F
werden vro/ daz geschiht von mannes minne.
 become.INF happy this happen-PRS.3SG through man.GEN.SG love.DAT.SG.F
 ‘Should you ever become happy on this earth, this would come about through the love of a man.’ (Nib. 14.2–3)
15. *erloubet mir=z min herre, ich getuo im*
 allow.PRS.3SG I.DAT=it.ACC.SG my master.NOM.SG.M I do.PRS.ISG he.DAT
leit.
 woe.ACC.SG.N
 ‘If my master allows me to, I’ll kill him.’ (Nib. 866.3)
16. *wil=tu niht eigen sin,/ so muost=(t)u dich*
 want.PRS.2SG=you NEG owned be.INF so must.PRS.2SG=you you.ACC.SG
scheiden
 separate.INF
 ‘If you don’t want to belong to the servants, you have to separate.’ (Nib. 830. 1–2)

3.2.1.3. Anomaly: Main clause phenomenon. The interrogative origin of the conditional and its erstwhile syntactic autonomy explains the uninverted subject-verb word order of the matrix clauses immediately following the conditional, as in MHG *daz geschiht* (14) and *ich getuo... leit* (15). The uninverted subject-verb word order, which reflects two juxtaposed root clauses, namely interrogative plus declarative, later yields to the obligatory inversion in Present-Day German, thus indicating that the clausal fusion has been accomplished. An example is the Modern German rendering

of (15): *Erlaubt mir's mein Herr, füge ich ihm Leid zu* with obligatorily inverted verb-subject-pronoun sequence *füge ich*.

3.2.2.1. NEG POLAR Q + NEGRAISE + VRAISE

OHG

17. *nihil-ne aliud te esse meministi?*

né-uueíst tu dānne dīh iēht
 NEG-know.PRS.2SG you.NOM.SG otherwise you.ACC.SG something
ānderes sin? [ONPQ]
 other.GEN.SG be.INF

'Don't you know you're nothing else?' (Notker Nbo3826, Boethius, *Cons.*)

18. *ne mag iuuīh ouh taz irren na?* [ONPQ]

NEG can.PRS.3SG you.ACC.PL also this disconcert.INF Q

'Won't this disconcert you?' (Notker Nbo9903, Boethius, *Cons.*)³

It can be observed that negation raising is often a mark of rhetorical questions, in which the interrogative negation of a proposition conveys a strong assertion of the same proposition. It is possible to integrate the phenomenon of interrogative negation reversal into the context of inner and outer negated polar questions. Inner polar questions involve the neutral questioning of a negated proposition ($\neg p$) with no expectation of either a positive or negative answer on the part of the speaker.

- a. Inner negated polar question (INPQ = neutral yes/no question) + low (= post-subject) negation, e.g.

19. *Is Jane not coming?* Possible answers are: *Yes, she is./No, she isn't.*

By contrast, outer negated polar questions instantiate the *counterexpectational* questioning of a negated proposition ($\neg p$), thereby reversing the negation and asking the addressee for confirmation of the positive proposition.

- b. Outer negated polar question (ONPQ = rhetorical question) + high negation, e.g.

20. *Isn't Jane coming too?* Expected answer: *Yes, she is.*

For this important distinction, see inter alia Büring and Gunlogson 2000 and Hartung 2006, both of which have elaborated on the possible morphosyntactic differentiation of the two types of negative polar question. For instance, Hartung (2006:3)

³For OHG Notker *ne* ... *na*, see Lühr 1997:329–31; on the etymology of OHG *na*, see ibid. 332.

points out the formal difference between high and low negation, which formally corresponds to the outer and inner negated polar question types (= ONPQ, INPQ). In fact, there are diachronic data which support this distinction and suggest that older Indo-European languages made use of negation fronting in polar interrogatives to formally differentiate outer negation polar questions (= rhetorical questions) from inner negation polar questions.

3.2.2.2. NEG CONDITIONAL + NEGRAISE + VRAISE. Negated conditionals exhibit the same word order pattern as negated polar questions. In OHG, the fronted negation *ne/ni* serves a double function, as negation and conditional complementizer (Schrodt 2004:181, 195). In fact, the employment of fronted sentential negation as a negated conditional complementizer is common to at least three branches of Indo-European, being attested in Latin and Tocharian in addition to Germanic (see §§3.3.2.2, 3.4.2.2).

As seen above in (3) and (4), the fronting of negation in polar questions corresponds to a pragmatically conditioned option in some of the older-attested Indo-European languages. Negation fronting in polar questions serves (inter alia) to establish contrasting counterexpectational topics, e.g. *Don't you agree? [I hope you DO.]* This latter function is shared by negated counterfactual conditionals, e.g. *if you agree, that's fine; [if not]_{ContrFoc} time to start an argument*. Here the counterfactual *if not* allows a paraphrase as a topic-raising question *Don't you agree?* It can be hypothesized that this functional overlap of negated polar questions and negated conditionals (expressing counterexpectation) explains the conflation of negation fronting and counterfactual conditional, which is attested in (older) Germanic, Latin and Tocharian.

21. *kuning nist in worolti, ni sí imo thiononti*
king NEG=be.PS.3SG in world NEG be.PS.SBJV.3SG he.DAT.SG serving
'There is no king on earth, unless he be a servant of his.' (O. 1.5.48; Schrodt 2004:182)

The type of negative conditional with a raised negation (and raised verb) is superseded in Middle High German by conditional SVO clauses with a negated verb, marked by prefixed verbal negation *en-* followed by the adverb *danne, denne* 'otherwise'.⁴

22. *wir sîn vil ungescheiden, ez en-tuo dan*
we be.PS.3PL very unseparated it NEG=do.PS.SBJV.3SG otherwise
der tôt
ART.NOM.SG.M death.NOM.SG.M
'We firmly stand by you, unless death separates us.' (Nib. 1281.3)

⁴There is a tendency to elide the negation, thereby transferring its negative polarity to *denn*; cf. the Modern German idiom *es sei denn* 'were it not that; except if', and see Paul, Wiesel, and Grosse 1998:410f.

However, the raised negation construction persists in old formulae, most prominently in the phrase

23. OE *ne=wære*
 OHG *ni=wári*
 MHG *ne=were*
 NEG=be.PST.SBJV.3SG
 ‘were it not (that)’

which, by subsequent allegro reduction (MHG *nīwer, nūwer* → *niur*), yields the Present-Day German particle *nur* ‘only, just’, cf. Behaghel 1923/32:232f. and Paul, Wiehl, and Grosse 1998:411.

3.3 Latin

The syntactic convergence in word order of polar questions and conditionals recurs in Latin and Tocharian. In contrast to Germanic, however, the raising of the negation and verb in these two languages is not grammaticalized as an obligatory mark of polar questions, but is rather conditioned by information structure.

3.3.1.1. POLAR Q + VRAISE. In polar questions without the polar question particle *=ne* (see Hofmann and Szantyr 1972:460, Kühner and Stegmann 1976:501f.), there is a tendency to raise the verb and the negation, e.g.

Old Latin

24. *ibo igitur intro?*
 go.FUT.1SG thus inside
 ‘Will I thus go inside?’ (Pl. *Truc.* 205)
25. *Prompsisti tu illi vinum?*
 serve.PERF.2SG you.SG that.one.DAT.SG wine.ACC.SG.N
 ‘Did you serve him wine?’ (Pl. *Mil.* 829)

However, SOV is also attested, e.g.

26. *hoc pueri possunt, viri non potuerunt?*
 this.ACC.SG.N boy.NOM.PL.M can.PRS.3PL man.NOM.PL.M NEG can.PERF.3PL
 ‘Boys are capable of this, and men haven’t been capable of achieving it?’ (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.34)

3.3.1.2. CONDITIONAL + VRAISE (VI-CONDITIONAL)

27. *voltis, empta=st;*
 want.prs.2PL buy.PERF.PTCP.NOM.SG.FEM=COP.PRS.3SG
nolitis, non empta=st.
 NEG.want.prs.2PL NEG buy.PERF.PTCP.NOM.SG.FEM=COP.PRS.3SG
 ‘You want, she’s bought; you don’t want, she’s not bought.’ (Caecil. *com.* fr. 4, Warmington 1956–61:1.470)
28. *tepeat satis est*
 be.warm.prs.sbjv.3SG enough COP.PRS.3SG
 ‘Should [the barrel] be warm, it is sufficient.’ (Cato *Agr.* 69.2)

3.3.2.1. NEG POLAR Q + NEGRAISE + VRAISE. The sentence negation *nōn* may be raised to indicate a rhetorical question (Kühner and Stegmann 1976:503, 516). The same applies to the coexisting sentence negation *nī* in Old Latin (e.g., *quid=nī* ‘why not’), which is the standard negation in Oscan and persists in Classical Latin in idioms such as *nī=mīrum* ‘no surprise, no wonder’.

29. *non tu tenes?* [ONPQ]
 NEG you.NOM.SG hold.prs.2SG
 ‘Don’t you realize it?’ (Pl. *Men.* 824)

Raised *nōn* frequently carries a flavor of disapproval and astonishment, as in the following examples (Kühner and Stegmann 1976:516f.):

30. *Quid? Non sciunt ipsi viam?* [ONPQ]
 what NEG know.prs.3PL self.NOM.PL.M way.ACC.SG.F
 ‘What? They don’t know the way themselves?’ (Ter. *Hec.* 360)
31. *Non mi-st laterna in manu?* [ONPQ]
 NEG I.DAT-COP.prs.3SG lamp in hand.ABL.SG.F
 ‘Don’t I hold a lamp in my hand?’ (Pl. *Amph.* 406, preceded by *nonne* questions)

3.3.2.2. NEG CONDITIONAL + NEGRAISE. The same raising is found in Old Latin negated conditionals with *nī* (Kühner and Stegmann 1976:421f.), e.g.

32. *si in ius vocat, ito.*
 if to court call.prs.3SG.ACT go.prs.impv.3SG.ACT
 ‘If somebody summons someone to appear in court, (the defendant) shall go.’
nī it, antestamino.
 NEG go.prs.3SG.ACT call.for.witness.prs.3SG.MP
 ‘If he doesn’t go, they shall call for a witness.’ (Leg. XII. tab. 1.1)

3.3.3. Anomalies: Latin *nī* and negation reversal as persistent ONPQ property.

Old Latin *nī* is also used to introduce sentential complements after verbs meaning ‘to pledge, bet’ (Kühner and Stegmann 1976:422), an anomalous use, since we expect *nī* to express negation, which it does not here. This is best explained under the assumption of a diachronically underlying biased polar question. Biased polar questions scope over the negation in calling the negation into question, thus reversing the negation into a strong affirmation. In both examples (33) and (34), it is possible to render the *nī*-clause as a negated polar question:

33. *nī ergo matris filia est[?] [ONPQ + NegRaise]*
 NEG in.fact mother.GEN.SG daughter.NOM.SG COP.PRS.3SG
in meum nummum, in tuum talentum
 in my.ACC.SG.N coin.ACC.SG.N in your.ACC.SG.N talent.ACC.SG.N
pignus da!
 pledge.ACC.SG.N give.PRS.IMPV.2SG
 ‘Isn’t she really her mother’s daughter? Bet a talent for my coin [that she is]. =
 Bet that she is her mother’s daughter!’ (Pl. *Ep.* 700f.)
34. *da hercle pignus, nī memini*
 give.PRS.IMPV.2SG by.Hercules pledge.ACC.SG.N NEG recall.PERF.1SG
omnia et scio
 all.ACC.PL.N and know.PRS.1SG
 ‘Give, by Hercules, your pledge that I recall and know everything.’ (lit. ‘Give,
 by Hercules, your pledge: Don’t I recall and know everything?’) (Pl. *Pers.* 186)

3.4 Tocharian

In Tocharian, neither a change in the basic SOV word order nor the use of interrogative particles such as Tocharian A *āssī* (38, 39) and *te* (38) is obligatory. Given the typological studies and Indo-European comparanda noted above (§1), the default way of marking polar questions in Tocharian was in all likelihood by intonation (35–7), which, however, is no longer recoverable from the texts.

3.4.1.1. POLAR Q WITHOUT VRAISE

35. *pañākte wat yopsa, nānde wat*
 Buddha.NOM either enter.PRT.3SG Nande.NOM or
 ‘Has Buddha or Nanda [just] entered?’ (B HMR 2 b2)
36. *ate kampāl yamaṣasta*
 away coat.ACC do.PRT.2SG
 ‘Have you put [your] coat away?’ (B337 a5)

37. *şerskana, se nomiyeşse bhājam*
 sister.VOC.PL this.NOM.SG.M jewel.NOM.SG.M bowl.NOM.SG.M
rerinu star=me epe mā
 leave.PST.PTCP.NOM.SG.M COP.PRS.3SG=YOU.PL OR NEG
 ‘Sisters, have you left this jewel-bowl for me or not?’ (B107 b8)
38. *ynālek te lo kälk ašši*
 elsewhere Q away go.PRT.3SG Q
 ‘Has he gone somewhere else?’ (A119 b4)
39. *pāšlune ypamām wrašäl slā ašši*
 protection do.PRS.PTCP.MP suffering bring.PRT.ISG Q
 ‘Did I perhaps bring you suffering by providing you protection?’ (A79 b2)

3.4.1.1.2. POLAR Q + VRAISE. If the verb receives contrastive information focus, as in alternative questions (40), or Verum focus (42), the verb is raised, e.g.

40. *kärsanoyem toyⁱ tu epe mā*
 know.IMP.3PL they this.ACC.SG OR NEG
 ‘Did they [the animals] know this or not?’ (B575 a3f.)

Cf. the contrast with the alternative question in (41), where the subject rather than the verb is focused and consequently fronted:

41. *şar ckācar epe šäm epe spaktānik epe nšäkk oki lokit*
 sister.NOM daughter.NOM or wife.NOM or servant.NOM or I like guest
kakmus nä=ŋ
 come.PRT.PTCP.NOM.SG.F COP.PRS.3SG=3SG.PRN
 ‘Has she come as the sister, or the daughter, or the wife, or the servant? Or like me, as a guest?’ (A6 a2f.)
42. *arar=čⁱ po ša(r)m(a)n(a)*
 cease.PRT.3PL=2SG.PRN all cause.NOM.PL.F
 ‘Have all causes ceased [to exist]? = Is it true that all causes ceased [to exist]?’
 (B45 a1)

In Tocharian, both headless conditional clauses and polar questions exhibit pragmatically conditioned verb fronting.

3.4.1.2.1. CONDITIONAL WITHOUT VRAISE (SVX/SOV)

43. *sukyo yomnāş ksalune, mänt mā käckal*
 joy.INSTR reach.SBJV.3SG extinction how NEG rejoice.GER2.NOM
 ‘If he happily reaches extinction, why should a giver not rejoice?’ (MSN 29 [I.2] a5, JWP 28f.)

44. *ārkwī parsī =ne =ks =ārkwī watkässi*
 white ask.OPT.3SG =3SG.PRN =INDEF =white decide.CAUS.OPT.3SG
 ‘If somebody asked him about “white”, he would decide “white”.’ (B28 b4)
45. *šuwisa yāmām nano kartse*
šuwī.PERL do.SBJV.3SG again good
 ‘If he does it with *šuwī*, it is also good.’ (B Fill. Y2 b6)

3.4.1.2.2. CONDITIONAL + VRAISE (V_I-CONDITIONAL)

46. *šmeñc=ats dakšinakī tmäk korpac*
 come.SBJV.3PL=INDEF receiver-of-alms.NOM.PL then together
yš=ām
 go.PRS.3SG=3PL.PRN
 ‘When the receivers of alms arrive, he goes to meet them.’ (A YQI9[III.11]b4)

3.4.2.1.1. NEG POLAR Q + NEGRAISE + SOV. In negated polar questions, Tocharian shows a tendency to front the negation alone, leaving the verb in sentence-final position, e.g.

47. *tämne mā te nāš šmā(wā)* [ONPQ]
 so NEG Q I sit.IMP.F.1SG
 ‘Wasn’t I sitting like that?’ (A91 b5)
48. *mā te tam ñi štmo* [ONPQ]
 NEG Q then I.DAT stand.PRT.PTCP.NOM.SG.M
 ‘Didn’t he then stand by me?’ (A342 a2)

3.4.2.1.2. NEG POLAR Q + NEGRAISE + VRAISE. Alternatively, both the negation and the verb may be raised, especially if the verb is under contrastive focus as in alternative questions, as in (50–1) (A-not-A construction, see Siemund 2002:1016).

49. *sne klop mā t[e] pkāte tu ārkisōši*
 without suffering NEG Q intend.PRT.3SG.MP you.NOM.SG world
lutkässi [ONPQ]
 become.PRS.SBJV.CAUS.INF
 ‘Didn’t you intend to free the world from suffering?’ (A221 a2)
50. *mām̄t nu tsitim tālo nāš mā te tsinām* [ONPQ]
 how now touch.OPT.1SG miserable.NOM I NEG Q touch.PRS.1SG
 ‘How could I the miserable one touch it? **Or don’t I** touch it?’ (A23 b6–24 a1)

51. *cämpäl te nasam cesäm wrasaśśi waste*
 be.able.GER2.NOM Q COP.PRS.ISG this.GEN.PL being.GEN.PL refuge
mäskatsi, mā te cämpäl (na) sam [ONPQ]
 be.INF NEG Q be.able.GER2.NOM Q COP.PRS.ISG
 ‘Am I able to provide refuge to the beings, or am I not able?’ (A69 b4)

3.4.2.2.1. NEG CONDITIONAL + NEGRAISE + SOV

52. *mā spē akālk knelle star-ñ*
 NEG and wish.NOM fulfill.GER2 COP.PRS.3SG=ISG.PRN
 ‘and if the wish cannot be fulfilled for me’ (B100 a5)

The following example, the syntactic parsing of which has been a matter of controversy,⁵ is best subsumed under the same conditional construction, as exemplified below:

53. *mā (t)e nātāk cam brā[mam] e[pe] mā (t)e was*
 NEG Q master this.ACC.SG Brahman or NEG Q IPL.ACC
entsaträ, was nu tamne-wkämnyo nātkis yāsluntaśśäl
 keep.SBJV.3SG.MP we now thus master.GEN.SG enemy.PL.COM
mā cämplye [na]s[amäs cam ypeyam mäskatsi]
 NEG be.able.GER2.NOM.PL COP.PRS.IPL this.LOC country.LOC be.INF
 ‘Does the master not keep this Brahman or does he not keep us? [Regardless of this,] we will not be capable of staying in this country thus, with such enemies of the master.’ (A342 b2f.)
54. *mā nw ayu=ne mäkte yam (päst) ... aikre*
 NEG now give.SBJV.ISG=3SG.PRN how go.sbjv.3SG.ACT (away) ... empty
wrotse rāke
 great sage
 ‘But if I don’t give him [alms], how should the great sage go away empty[-handed]?’ (B25 a7f.; cf. Sieg and Siegling 1949:42, Peyrot 2013:721.)

3.4.2.2.2. NEG CONDITIONAL + NEGRAISE + VRAISE

55. *kātsi no wnołme śate mäsketrä mā*
 how now being.NOM.SG.M rich be.PRS.3SG NEG
cāñcan=ne spē āyor aitsi?
 be.pleased.PRS.3SG=3SG.PRN and gift give.SBJV.INF
 ‘How can a being be rich, and not be pleased to give alms? = How can a being be rich, if it doesn’t take pleasure in giving alms?’ (BK 6a5)

⁵Cf. the rendering by Thomas 1993:196 as an indirect interrogative: “Ob der Herr diesen Brahmanen oder uns behält ...”

4 Conclusion

Latin, Hittite and Tocharian almost certainly made use of intonation to mark polar questions, leaving preverbal negation and SOV intact, but raised the negation and verb if these constituents were assigned information focus. Focusing the negation in interrogatives is employed *inter alia* to express outer negative polar questions (ONPQ, rhetorical questions). Thus in Latin, raising the negation *nōn* in polar questions is typically associated with rhetorical questions (Kühner and Stegmann 1976:503, 516). Likewise, Hittite tends to front the negation *natta* in rhetorical questions (Hoffner 1986:89f., Hoffner and Melchert 2008:342f.). Vedic also often attests a contrast between non-rhetorical inner negated polar questions without NegRaising and rhetorical outer negated questions with NegRaising, cf. e.g.

56. a. *kathā grāmam nā prcchasi?* [INPQ, non-rhet. Q - NegRaise]
 How village.ACC.SG.M NEG ask.PRS.2SG
 ‘Why do you not ask for the village?’ (RV 10.146.1c; Etter 1985:120)
 b. *nā tvā bhīr iva vindatīṣm?* [ONPQ, rhet. Q + NegRaise]
 NEG you.ACC.SG fear.NOM like grip.PRS.3SG
 ‘Doesn’t something like fear grip you?’ (RV 10.146.1d; *ibid.*)

In sum, the interrogative origin of the headless conditionals, along with the focus-driven negation raising in polar interrogatives, explains both cross-linguistic phenomena, namely,

- the tendency to front negation and verb in conditionals (semantic and pragmatic focus in polar questions);
- the tendency of the negation to occupy the complementizer position in negative conditionals, and the conflation of conditional negation and conditional complementizer (Germanic, Latin, Tocharian);

and language-specific peculiarities of headless conditionals, which may be explained as persistent properties of the diachronically underlying polar questions:

- the Aux-S-Neg-V pattern in English V_I-conditionals (§3.1);
- main clause phenomena in the OHG and MHG V_I-conditionals (conditional plus independent matrix clause) (§3.2.1.2); and
- the occurrence of Latin negated *nī* as an affirmative complementizer with verbs of betting and pledging (§3.3.3).

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