

# Rising declaratives on the border between assertions and questions

## Abstract

The talk reports on work done in collaboration with Kajsa Djärv. We propose a unified, compositional account of rising declaratives (RDs), exemplified in (1), and (2), that combines an account of the interpretive contribution in English, with the interpretive contribution of declarative form.

- (1) A: It's so cold in here. I am wearing three layers and I am still cold.  
B: **The heater's not working?** / Is the heater not working?
- (2) *Father bringing his son to swim class for the first time.*  
**I am here for the Petite Baleene's class? My son's name is Joshua Wolf?**  
#Am I here for the Petite Baleene's class? #Is my son's name Joshua Wolf?

The wide array of possible interpretations of RD is accounted for by paying close attention to the pragmatic circumstances in which they are uttered. We adopt the general framework in Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) but depart from the account of RDs proposed there, and follow Gunlogson (2001), Rudin (2019), Goodhue (2025) a.o in giving rising intonation a purely contextual contribution. Consequently, the semantic content of RDs of all stripes is taken to be identical to that of their declarative radical. Building on Goodhue (2025), we propose that rising intonation contributes a post-supposition requiring the utterance to which it attaches to add a non-singleton issue to the discourse Table.

## References

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- Rudin, D. (2019). Embedded Rising Declaratives and Embedded Quotation. In K. L. Katherine Blake, Forrest Davis and J. Rhyne, editors, *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 29)*, pages 1–21.