DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Tag questions in fiction dialogue

KARIN AXELSSON

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Abstract

This study investigates the use of tag questions (TQs) in British English fiction dialogue by making comparisons to spoken conversation. Data has been retrieved from two subcorpora of the *British National Corpus* (BNC): a Fiction Subcorpus and the demographic part of the spoken component. More than 2,500 TQs have been analysed for their formal features and more than 600 TQs also for their pragmatic functions.

The results show that declarative tag questions (DecTQs) are underrepresented in fiction dialogue, whereas imperative tag questions (ImpTQs) are overrepresented. Moreover, several differences between the formal features and pragmatic functions of TQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation have been reported.

In fiction, reporting clauses and comments in the narrative provide the reader with information the author believes the reader needs to interpret the dialogue in the way the author has intended; hence, fiction dialogue is enriched with information which is useful in the analysis of a linguistic phenomenon such as the TQ.

For the functional analysis of TQs, a hierarchical model has been developed and applied. Most DecTQs turn out to be used rhetorically; only a minority are response-eliciting and, in fiction dialogue, a small number also exchange goods and services. The functional patterns for DecTQs are quite different in the two subcorpora. Most rhetorical DecTQs are addressee-oriented in fiction dialogue, but speaker-centred in spoken conversation. Among the response-eliciting DecTQs, there are similar proportions of confirmation-seeking DecTQs, but, in fiction dialogue, there are proportionately more confirmation-demanding DecTQs, and also a few conversation-initiating DecTQs. All ImpTQs exchange goods and services; in fiction dialogue, there is a higher proportion of ImpTQs used as commands, and a lower proportion of ImpTQs providing advice.

The distinctive functional patterns for TQs in fiction dialogue seem largely due to the depiction of problems, conflicts and confrontations and an avoidance of conversations on trivial matters. In fiction dialogue, authors utilize the full potential of DecTQs, which results in large formal and functional variation, whereas they tend to prefer the most conventional form of ImpTQs. Differences between the functional patterns of TQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation may partly explain the differences in frequencies and formal features.

Keywords: tag questions, fiction dialogue, direct speech, spoken conversation, pragmatics, corpus-based study, BNC, British English

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations:

AmE	American English
BNC	British National Corpus
BrE	British English
COLT	The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language
CONV	reduced BNC conversation dataset of DecTQs
CONVERSATION	BNC conversation sample
CONVERSATION[+]	larger independent BNC conversation sample of ImpTQs
DecTQ	declarative tag question
ESPC	English-Swedish Parallel Corpus
ExcTQ	exclamative tag question
FICT	reduced BNC fiction dialogue dataset of DecTQs
FICTION	BNC fiction dialogue sample
ImpTQ	imperative tag question
IntTQ	interrogative tag question
LSAC	Longman Spoken American Corpus
LSWE Corpus	Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus
n.s.	not significant
NZE	New Zealand English
p.c.	personal communication
pmw	per million w-units/words
sBNC	spoken component of the BNC
TQ	tag question
vs.	versus
wBNC	written component of the BNC
1st person	first person
2nd person	second person
3rd person	third person

Symbols in examples:

<-|->	beginning and end of overlapping speech in sBNC
<unclear>	stretches in sBNC which the transcribers could not interpret
(...)	omitted parts
*	unacceptable
underlining	tag question
double underlining	tag
broken underlining	part of the anchor which does not affect the formation of the tag, usually a subordinate clause
wavy underlining	not a tag question
double wavy underlining	not a tag
italics	the author's original italics
boldface	words or strings of words under discussion

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fiction dialogue is a type of language which we all encounter quite often, as fiction is read for pleasure by many people, and as extracts from fiction are common in teaching materials. The language we perceive when reading fiction dialogue influences our picture of spoken language, and, hence, possibly also our own production of speech. For second-language learners, this may affect the naturalness of their spoken language.

It is therefore important to investigate to what extent the language of fiction dialogue reflects real-life conversation. Everybody who has seen a transcription of spontaneous spoken conversation knows that it looks quite different from fiction dialogue. It seems messy, and most obvious are "features of normal non-fluency" such as hesitation pauses, false starts and syntactic anomalies (Leech & Short 2007:130) as well as a great deal of overlapping speech. However, there may also be other, less obvious but still important, linguistic differences between fiction dialogue and real-life conversation.

There have been some studies comparing the language of fiction to other genres (e.g. Biber 1988, 1990), but the problem is that fiction texts are heterogeneous: the dialogue and the narrative parts have very different purposes, as only the former tries to mimic spoken language. Stanzel (1984) states "[t]he novel is not a homogenous genre but a mixture of diegetic-narrative and mimetic-dramatic parts", "the dialogue scene" being "a foreign body in the narrative genre" (1984:65–66). Biber (1990) studied the language of various genres in the Lancaster-Oslo Bergen Corpus (LOB) and reported large variation in fiction samples as to 1st-person vs. 3rd-person pronouns and present vs. past tense, as well as in the occurrence of contractions. Biber's conclusion is that this "probably reflect[s] changing purposes within the course of a text; for example (…) shifts from narrative to description to dialogue" (1990:259,261).

There has been relatively little linguistic research on the language of fiction dialogue. One reason is probably that, with the advent of spoken corpora, there has naturally been a focus on spoken conversation. Another reason may be that corpora are not normally adapted for research on fiction dialogue; the dialogue is interspersed in the fiction texts and usually not separately tagged in corpora, which makes corpus research on the language of fiction dialogue complicated.

The language of fiction dialogue is dealt with in Oostdijk (1990) and de Haan (1996, 1997). Oostdijk (1990) reports some preliminary findings from a study on the language of dialogue in

fiction. Without making any comparisons to spoken corpus data, Oostdijk states that "[t]ypical for direct speech (…) was the use of *and*, *or*, and *but* sentence-initially as connective adjuncts" and also "the high [sic] frequent use of imperatives, interrogatives (especially tag-questions) and exclamatory phrases, and of course such items as vocatives, interjections, clitic forms and responsive phrases"; she also found various forms of ellipsis, for example, omission of question operators in interrogative sentences and of subjects in declarative sentences, and unfinished sentences at the end of turns, as well as "numerous instances of incomplete sentences and loose phrases" (1990:239). Oostdijk also remarks that topicalization was frequent and that she found "creative use (…) of substandard vocabulary and syntax to characterize the speech of some of the characters" (1990:239–240). De Haan (1996) reports that, in comparison with non-dialogue in fiction, sentences with direct speech are shorter, and de Haan (1997) finds that such sentences are characterized by larger variation in sentence types, as well as a more extensive use of the present tense and more occurrences of marked word order.

De Haan (1996) proposes further research, suggesting especially "[a] comparative study of spoken conversation on the one hand and dialogue in fiction on the other" (1996:38); in de Haan (1997), he finds that "[u]ltimately, a comparison between what goes on in actual spoken language and in dialogue in fiction may reveal interesting parallels, and provide a better understanding of authors' techniques" (1997:116). This thesis sets out to make such an investigation of the language of fiction dialogue with comparisons to spoken conversation.

Very many grammatical structures might be studied in such research; the one selected for this thesis is the tag question, as in (1):

(1)   It's interesting, isn't it?

A tag question, hereafter called TQ, consists of two parts: an anchor and a tag, as shown in Fig. 1.1:

<div style="text-align:center">

It's interesting,   isn't it?

anchor   tag

tag question (TQ)

</div>
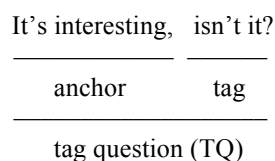
Fig. 1.1.   Basic terminology for tag questions

TQs are of special interest when fiction dialogue is compared to spoken conversation as they are very frequent in spoken BrE conversation (4,383 TQs per million words in British colloquial conversation (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:288)), and, as shown above, TQs have also been reported to be typical of direct speech in fiction (Oostdijk 1990:239). The natural question is, then, whether they are used to the same extent and in a similar way in fiction dialogue as in spoken

conversation. The TQ is an interesting linguistic phenomenon in itself for two major reasons. Firstly, TQs may vary as to many different formal features, and secondly, TQs may have a range of pragmatic functions. The use of all these formal features and functions can be compared in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation.

In comparing the language of fiction dialogue to spoken conversation, it is important to be aware that direct speech in fiction is "an *idealization* of real speech" (Page 1973:18), and even if fiction dialogue tries to mimic real-life conversation – if it did not, we would not find it credible – it differs from real-life conversation, being produced under other circumstances and for other purposes. Moreover, it should be noted that the conversations (or parts of conversations) presented in fiction dialogue are a selection made by the author, who naturally focuses on dialogue which forwards the plot and/or gives the reader interesting information on the characters. Another difference in the conditions between real-life conversation and fiction dialogue is that "conversationalists can rely on rich non-linguistic resources of context", whereas "writers are forced to create context (…) mainly through language" (Rühlemann 2007:75).

1.2 Aim and scope

The overall aim of this thesis is to study the use of TQs in BrE. The main focus is on the use of TQs in fiction dialogue with comparisons to spoken conversation. These are the primary research questions:

- How frequently are TQs used in fiction dialogue compared to spoken conversation?
- What are the formal features of TQs in fiction dialogue compared to spoken conversation?
- What are the pragmatic functions[1] of TQs in fiction dialogue compared to spoken conversation?
- Are there any relations between functions and formal features of TQs? If so, what are they?
- Are there any other special characteristics of TQs in certain functions?
- If there are differences in the frequencies, formal features, functions and other characteristics of TQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation, what may be the reasons?

---

[1] In the rest of this thesis, the shorter term *function* is used for *pragmatic function*.

This study is restricted to TQs where the tag consists of an operator[2] and a pronominal subject, with or without a negation. An integrated form such as *innit* is included, as *innit* is derived from *isn't it* (or maybe *ain't it*), whereas invariant tags such as *eh*, *right*, *OK*, *isn't that so*, *am I right* and *why don't you* are excluded.

The restriction to BrE in both the written and spoken data is due to TQs apparently being used to a different extent and possibly also with different functional patterns in some other varieties of English: Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) have shown that TQs are nine times as frequent in colloquial conversation in BrE as in AmE, and they have also reported some functional differences between these two varieties.

1.3   Material

The data for the present study is taken from the *British National Corpus* (BNC) in its World Edition version. BNC was the first-hand choice for the present study, as it has large amounts of material from both fiction and spoken conversation. For fiction, a subcorpus from the written component[3] of the BNC was especially created for the present study; it is hereafter called the Fiction Subcorpus. For spoken conversation, the demographic part of the spoken component of the BNC has been used.

1.3.1   The Fiction Subcorpus

The Fiction Subcorpus is restricted to David Lee's[4] genre 'fiction prose' and to 'book' as medium of text, thereby excluding poetry and drama as well as some unpublished writings. There is also a publication date restriction to the latest period, viz. to 1985–1993; this is due to a wish to mirror as modern fiction as possible. Furthermore, there is a restriction to the UK and Ireland as domicile of author, since British usage is of primary interest in the present study; this restriction excludes a number of texts where there is no information on the domicile of the author, but also a few texts categorized as written by authors with a domicile outside the UK and Ireland.

---

[2] The term *operator* is used instead of the term *auxiliary*, as it is more precise in denoting the "*first or only auxiliary*" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:79).

[3] For more information on the design of the written component of the BNC, see Burnard (2000:5–11).

[4] The division of the BNC files into genres was carried out by David Lee on his own initiative after the first version of the BNC was released; his genres were later incorporated into the BNC World Edition (see Hoffmann *et al.* 2008:30); David Lee's genres are selectable on the query pages of the BNCweb (see section 1.4). The grounds for the division into genres is discussed in Lee (2001).

These restrictions mean that the Fiction Subcorpus contains 262 files with totally 9,711,727 w-units.[5]

The strategy for the compilation of the written component of the BNC was to get a sample which is representative of received rather than produced written language. The fiction part of the BNC is thus intended to represent what British people actually read, not a selection of 'good' literature.[6] There is a classification in the written component of the BNC for perceived level of difficulty with three categories: low, medium and high. For the Fiction Subcorpus, the fiction extracts from books with a perceived high level of difficulty are in a clear minority (11.4 per cent of the w-units); almost half of the data is from books with a perceived medium level of difficulty (49.1 per cent), and as much as 39.6 per cent from books classified as having a perceived low level of difficulty.[7]

1.3.2   The spoken demographic part of the BNC

The demographic part of the spoken component of the BNC[8] (4,206,058 w-units) is used in the present study to get data from spoken conversation. It consists of transcriptions of informal face-to-face conversations recorded by 153 respondents, and is thus intended to be representative for normal British everyday conversation. The respondents were randomly selected to be demographically representative for people in the United Kingdom as to age, sex and social class.

Although men and women were almost equally represented among the respondents, there are more w-units spoken by women than by men (53 per cent, vs. 34 per cent, 12 per cent are unknown). The reason is that there were "more female speakers, who on the whole took more turns and longer turns" (Rayson *et al.* 1997:135). This might be seen as an imbalance, but if women do speak more, it reflects the reality of real-life conversation.

Apart from age, sex and social class of most of the individual speakers, information about their occupations, their dialects and their roles in relation to the respective respondents is usual-

---

[5] Most w-units are orthographic words, but multi-word units such as *of course* and parts of contractions such as *n't* are also w-units.

[6] For the book extracts to be included, about half of the them were selected randomly from Whitaker's *Books in Print 1992*, whereas the other half were selected more systematically, using bestseller lists, shortlists for literary prizes and library lending statistics.

[7] For a discussion on the qualitative categorization of fiction samples and their proportions in corpus material, see Axelsson (2009a:196–197).

[8] There is also a context-governed part of the BNC with spoken language from more formal contexts (see Burnard 2000:14–16).

ly also given. On the other hand, information on the settings of the conversations as well as the activity going on is very brief and sometimes missing.

The spoken demographic part has some further drawbacks, especially for the functional analysis of TQs. Firstly, there is no prosodic mark-up except indications of pauses, and the tape recordings are practically inaccessible.[9] Secondly, the addition of punctuation seems inconsistent (see section 6.4.2). Thirdly, there are a great deal of <unclear> passages where the transcribers have not been able to hear or interpret what is being said on the tapes.[10] Despite these drawbacks, the spoken demographic part of the BNC seems nevertheless to be the best corpus material available for data from contemporary[11] BrE spoken conversation.[12]

1.4 Method

The method in the present study turned out to conform to the procedure later suggested in Amador-Moreno (2010) for exploring "literary speech representation" (2010:531) in corpora:

> Step 1, devising the criteria for what one wants to include in the study (in order to do this it might be useful to run a pilot search first and look at what type of patterns come up);
>
> Step 2, finding all the occurrences of the item one is interested in (i.e. obtaining a concordance of the search item);
>
> Step 3, discarding the uses that are of no interest for one's study (i.e. cleaning the concordance); and
>
> Step 4, analysing the examples one is left with in order to draw (...) conclusions. This last stage can be subdivided into (a) formal analysis and (b) functional analysis. (...)
>
> Step 5 (...) could involve comparing literary and real spoken data.
> (Amador-Moreno 2010:538–539)

---

[9] The tape recordings are deposited at the British Library Sound Archive, and may currently only be listened to there. Unfortunately, at present, they are stored in a way which makes it difficult to make use of them. However, there is an ongoing project to digitize the tapes; the immediate aim is to provide information where to find a certain word on the tapes, and eventually the recordings may be anonymized and published. For more information on the project, see <http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/mining_speech/Datasets.html>.

[10] For more information on the design of the demographic part of the BNC, see Burnard (2000:12–14).

[11] The recordings were made in 1991–1993.

[12] The only publicly available spoken corpus with prosodic marking seems to be the London-Lund Corpus (Greenbaum & Svartvik 1990). The problem is that these recordings are quite old now (mainly made in the 1960s and 1970s); moreover, the speakers are predominantly highly educated adults (cf. Kennedy 1998:32).

A formal definition of TQs was first established for the present study (see section 3.2). TQs were then retrieved from the two BNC subcorpora using lexical searches in BNCweb[13] (for details of the search procedure, see section 3.3 and Appendix A). As the two subcorpora are very large and TQs fairly frequent, the query results were randomly thinned to 20 per cent for the Fiction Subcorpus, and to six per cent for the spoken demographic part. This meant nevertheless that as many as 10,970 matches from the Fiction Subcorpus and 5,037 matches from the spoken demographic part had to be checked manually in order to discard a very large number of irrelevant matches, mainly interrogatives.

The TQs found in the thinned Fiction Subcorpus were divided into those appearing within fiction dialogue and those appearing outside the dialogue in fiction; only the TQs within the dialogue are considered in the present study.[14] The sample from fiction dialogue is hereafter called FICTION. All the TQs found in the thinned spoken demographic part of the BNC form a sample hereafter called CONVERSATION. TQs may have declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative anchors, but only clear examples of the two former types were found in the two samples. Hence, the two main samples were divided into declarative TQs (DecTQs) and imperative TQs (ImpTQs). As there are well over one thousand DecTQs each in FICTION and CONVERSATION, two random datasets of 250 DecTQs each were created for the time-consuming functional analysis; these are hereafter called FICT and CONV. There is also an independent sample of ImpTQs called CONVERSATION$^+$. Fig. 1.2 displays the samples and their sizes.

The investigation of the TQs in these samples was divided into three parts. Firstly, all the DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION were analysed and compared to each other as to frequencies and formal features. Secondly, the DecTQs in FICT and CONV were used for the functional comparison between DecTQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation. A functional model for DecTQs was developed during this investigation; this model was drawn up in a combination of bottom-up and top-down analysis (for more details, see section 5.1). Thirdly, the ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION were analysed and compared to each other as to frequencies, formal features and functions. As the ImpTQs are very few in CONVERSATION (only 13 instances), a separate independent sample of 54 ImpTQs, CONVERSATION$^+$, was retrieved from the spoken demographic part of the BNC in order to enable a comparison of formal features and functions to the ImpTQs in FICTION (for more details, see section 8.2.4).

---

[13] I am very grateful to Sebastian Hoffmann and Stefan Evert for letting me use a CQP beta version of the BNCweb for the BNC World Edition, as it is in many ways better than the preceding version. This CQP version was never publicly released; it was instead updated for the coming BNC XML Edition. More information on BNCweb can be found in Berglund *et al.* (2002) and in Hoffmann *et al.* (2008); see also <http://www.bncweb.info>.

[14] The TQs outside the dialogue in fiction are discussed in Axelsson (in prep.)

All the TQs found in the thinned corpus material were entered into databases together with their formal features, and, for the DecTQs in FICT and CONV, also their functional categories. The databases were used to compile the statistics presented in the result chapters.

All TQ samples
2,554 instances

TQs from
the thinned Fiction Subcorpus
1,226 instances

TQs from
the thinned spoken demographic part
1,328 instances

(fiction non-dialogue
sample: 94 instances)

fiction dialogue sample
(FICTION)
1,132 instances

conversation sample
(CONVERSATION)
1,328 instances

DecTQs
1,066 instances

ImpTQs
66 instances

DecTQs
1,315 instances

ImpTQs
13 instances

fiction dialogue
dataset
(FICT)
250 instances

conversation
dataset
(CONV)
250 instances

larger
independent
sample of
ImpTQs in
conversation
(CONVERSATION^{+})
54 instances

Fig. 1.2.   TQ samples in the present study and their sizes

The raw frequencies have been extrapolated into normalized frequencies: the frequency results are given in TQs per million w-units (pmw).[15] In order to investigate the frequency of TQs in fiction dialogue, it was first necessary to establish the proportion of dialogue in the Fiction Subcorpus. A statistical investigation was conducted, which shows that approximately 31.9 per cent of the w-units in the Fiction Subcorpus are part of the dialogue; for details on this statistical investigation, see Appendix B.

---

[15] In references to previous work, the abbreviation *pmw* is also be used for per million words.

The statistical significance of the quantitative results has been tested where appropriate, utilizing three different website calculators: the log-likelihood calculator for corpus frequencies at <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html> for frequency comparisons between the subcorpora, the two-sample frequency comparison test of the SIGIL Corpus Frequency Test Wizard for comparisons of features between various samples,[16] and the one-sample frequency comparison test of the SIGIL Corpus Frequency Test Wizard for testing whether differences between features within a sample are statistically significant; the two latter calculators are both found at <http://sigil.collocations.de/wizard.html>. When there are more than two rows in a table in the present study, the information about the level of statistical significance always refers to each row against the combination of all other rows in that table. Three levels of statistical significance are applied: $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$.

Concerning the functional analysis, it should be admitted that such an analysis inevitably involves a measure of subjectivity, as it relies heavily on the interpretation of the linguistic context. However, the contexts of the TQs in the fiction texts turned out to be very informative, as such texts have been written and edited in order to be fully coherent. The functional analysis of the spoken examples was somewhat more problematic, as a file in the spoken demographic part of the BNC may be a collection of short, unrelated and intertwined conversations with many <unclear> passages. In order to improve the quality of the functional analysis of the DecTQs in CONV, 33 instances with <unclear> passages in or close to the TQs or with very unclear references for other reasons were removed and replaced by 33 other random instances.

1.5   Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 gives a background to fiction dialogue and discusses its relation to real-life conversation. Chapter 3 treats the formal features of TQs, including the formal definition of TQs used in the present study. Chapter 4 then deals with previous work on the functions of TQs, and chapter 5 introduces the functional model for DecTQs applied in the present study. The results are presented in chapters 6 to 8: chapter 6 deals with the frequencies and formal features of DecTQs, chapter 7 with the functions of DecTQs and chapter 8 with non-declarative TQs, in particular ImpTQs. Lastly, the findings are summarized and discussed in chapter 9.

---

[16] "The wizard automatically chooses between chi-squared (X^2) and log-likelihood (G^2), depending on which test is deemed to be more accurate for your data" (Hoffmann *et al.* 2008:85). For the calculations of statistical significance in the present study, the wizard has mostly selected the chi-square alternative; the log-likelihood alternative seems to have been selected primarily when the samples are of very different sizes.

2 Fiction dialogue

2.1 Introduction

A very important part of fiction texts is what characters say to each other. Their conversations help the reader to get to know the characters: their interests, their aims, their way of talking, etc., but, above all, their relations to other characters. The most vivid speech presentation is found in fiction dialogue, where we can almost imagine hearing their voices, as in the emboldened parts of (1):

(1)   "**Are you all right?**" asked Julius, looking at her closely.
"**Oh, fine**," she said with a loud gulp. "**I mean, letters like that are just a laugh, aren't they?**" she rushed on with a very poor effort at bravado. "**You enjoy the joke and then throw them away.**"
"**I'm not laughing,**" he said evenly. (wBNC H8F 337–341)[1]

In fiction dialogue, speech is presented in direct speech, i.e. in principle as if real-life speech had been written down. Direct speech is, however, not the only speech presentation type in fiction: there is also indirect speech, etc.; the various speech presentation types are described in section 2.2, where the use of direct speech vs. other speech presentation types is also discussed. The definition of fiction dialogue for the present study is then presented and discussed in section 2.3.

Fiction dialogue differs from real-life conversation in that it is produced for another purpose: it must have a function in relation to the whole work of fiction. There are also special constraints and conventions for fiction texts as products; these matters are discussed in section 2.4. On the other hand, the corpus researcher has usually no direct access to real-life conversation, only to corpus transcriptions, where parts of the original information are lost or distorted. In comparison, fiction dialogue is enriched by information given in reporting clauses (see the non-emboldened parts of (1)) and the surrounding narrative; the different conditions for the analysis of the language in fiction dialogue and conversation in corpora are discussed further in section 2.5. Boldface is used in order to highlight elements under discussion.

---

[1] All italics in the fiction dialogue examples in the present study are the authors' original italics.

2.2   Speech presentation in fiction

The most extensive study of speech presentation so far is presented in Semino and Short (2004). Their team have analysed all speech presentation (as well as all writing and thought presentation) in a quarter-million-word corpus, the *Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation Corpus*, with three subcorpora: prose fiction, (auto)biography and newspaper news reports. They propose five categories of speech presentation on a scale which is "ordered in relation both to the linguistic features involved and also to the number of faithfulness claims with respect to the original" (2004:10). Compare the emboldened parts of the examples of these five categories:

1.   (Free) Direct Speech:

   – Free Direct Speech:

   (2)   He looked straight at her. '**I'll definitely come back tomorrow!**'
         (Semino & Short 2004:10)

   – Direct Speech:

   (3)   He looked straight at her and said **'I'll definitely come back tomorrow!'**
         (Semino & Short 2004:10)

2.   Free Indirect Speech:

   (4)   He looked straight at her. **He would definitely come back tomorrow!**
         (Semino & Short 2004:10)

3.   Indirect Speech:

   (5)   He looked straight at her and told her that **he would definitely return the following day**.
         (Semino & Short 2004:10)

4.   Narrator's Representation of Speech Acts:

   (6)   He looked straight at her and **told her about his imminent return.**
         (Semino & Short 2004:10)

5.   Narrator's Representation of Voice:

   (7)   **She talked on**. (Semino & Short 2004:43)

Semino and Short's (2004) model is based on Leech and Short's (1981) model, but they discuss and refine the categories of speech presentation further. Semino and Short merge Leech and Short's direct speech (where there are accompanying reporting clauses) and free direct speech

(without any accompanying reporting clauses) into one category called (free) direct speech; they find that "there is no obvious functional difference between them, particularly in relation to faithfulness claims" (2004:194). For simplicity, Semino and Short's category (free) direct speech is hereafter referred to as just direct speech. The basic definition of direct speech is that the words of a character are reported verbatim.

Indirect speech conveys what has been said by the original speaker in the words of a subsequent reporter (cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985:1021), whereas free indirect speech is:

> a form between [indirect speech] and [direct speech] because it shares linguistic features associated prototypically with both [indirect speech] and [direct speech] forms. Typically, it will not have the quotation marks associated with [direct speech] and often does not have the reporting clause associated with [direct speech]. It may contain some deictic features (…) appropriate for [direct speech], and at the same time, others which are appropriate for [indirect speech]. (Semino & Short 2004:11)

Narrator's representation of speech acts "prototypically has only one clause, with the 'speech report' verb often followed by a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase indicating the topic of the speech presented" (Semino & Short 2004:11), whereas for narrator's representation of voice, "we are informed that someone engaged in verbal activity, but we are not given any explicit indication as to what speech acts were performed, let alone what the form and content of the utterances were" (2004:44).

Direct speech has been claimed to be "a norm or baseline for the portrayal of speech" (Leech & Short 2007:268). Semino and Short's (2004) corpus investigation "lends quantitative support" (2004:89) for this claim, in particular for fiction: 75 per cent of all occurrences of speech presentation in their fiction subcorpus are instances of direct speech (2004:67). Moreover, from Semino and Short's data (2004:67–68), one may calculate the proportion of direct speech at about 22–23 per cent of the whole fiction texts.[2] It should be noted that there is tremendous variation in the amount of direct speech in fiction texts, especially between individual works but also probably between different literary genres.[3]

The question is then: Why is direct speech the norm for presenting speech in fiction? Semino and Short (2004) explain that the advantage is that it brings "vividness and dramatization",

---

[2] My statistical investigation of the proportion of fiction dialogue in the BNC Fiction Subcorpus indicates an even higher proportion, viz. 31.9 per cent (see Appendix B).

[3] Bönnemark (1997) reports a higher proportion of direct speech in detective fiction (39 per cent) than in suspense fiction (32 per cent) (1997:192). She finds that "[t]he reason why there is a great deal of dialogue in detective fiction is that it fulfils genre-specific, particularly relevant functions", one of them being to give "summaries and evaluation", adding that "the final resolution is often couched in dialogue form" (1997:256); moreover, through the dialogue, readers are given the impression that they can access clues directly, and thereby be able to draw their own conclusions (1997:173).

adding that such speech presentation "feels foregrounded, vivid and immediate" (2004:12) and "serves the purposes of dramatization and characterization which are central to novels and short stories" (2004:89).

Carter and Nash (1990) have listed the functions of fiction dialogue, i.e. direct speech in fiction:

> 1. To interrupt the flow of general narration, slow down the movement of the story, and concentrate attention on a particular event, relationship, etc.
>
> 2. To bring out character, and relationships between characters; personalities being revealed by what they say, what others say to or about them, and how they respond to what others say.
>
> 3. To create the sense of a background by supplying impressions – conveyed through personal interactions – of a society, its manners, its concerns, its material objects.
> (Carter & Nash 1990:90)

Carter and Nash's description focuses on the effect of fiction dialogue on the reader. However, their description of fiction dialogue as an interruption in the narration may conceal the fact that what characters say to each other is often an important part of a fictional story; the story is carried forward not only in the narrative parts but also in the dialogue. It has, however, been claimed that "although dialogue will often serve to advance the plot (...), its more customary role is to contribute to the presentation and development of character" (Page 1973:14). An example where direct speech is used for the latter reason is found in (8):

> (8)   And almost immediately Stratton had been talking freely ...
>   They must have thought him a bit insensitive – running off like that, the day after ... But he'd seen the advert in The Oxford Mail, and the prospect of an Open Day at Didcot had proved irresistible. He'd walked round the engine sheds, he said, where he'd looked long and lovingly at the old locomotives, and where he'd seen schoolboys and middle-aged men carefully recording numbers and wheel-arrangements in their note-books. ("All of them apparently sane, Inspector!") And then he'd had the thrill of actually seeing ("a life-time's ambition") the Flying Scotsman! He'd stayed there ("in Didcart") much longer than he'd intended; and when finally he tore himself away from the Cornish Riviera and the Torbay Express he'd walked back to Didcot Parkway Station at about five o'clock, and caught the next train back to Oxford, where he'd, er, where he'd had a quick drink in the Station Buffet. Then he'd been walking back to The Randolph when he suddenly felt he just couldn't face his excessively sympathetic countrymen, and he'd called in a pub and drunk a couple of pints of lager.
>   "**The pubs were open, were they, Mr Stratton?**" asked Lewis.
>   But it was Morse who answered: "**If you wish, Lewis, I will give you the names and addresses of the three of them there that open all day. Please continue, Mr Stratton.**"
>   Well, at about half-seven he'd gone into a restaurant in St Giles (...)
> (wBNC HWM 858–869)

In (8), Inspector Morse in interrogating a suspect, and the interrogation is mainly presented through indirect speech and free indirect speech (with snippets of direct speech given in brackets). Then, suddenly, the presentation changes into ordinary direct speech when Morse's subordinate, Lewis, poses a TQ to the suspect; however, it is instead Morse who answers with irri-

tation, displaying his patronizing attitude towards Lewis. These passages of direct speech (emboldened in (8)) do not give the readers any information which advances the plot in the detective story; the speech is presented in this way in order to characterize the relationship between Morse and Lewis.

Page (1973) points out that authors "at any point (...) must choose between dialogue and narrative or descriptive prose, or a combination of these (...)", and "[i]f he decides to make use of dialogue, a further selection has to be made among the various ways of presenting speech" (1973:21–22). Direct speech is, as discussed above, the norm for speech presentation, and when there is a norm there must be motives for breaking it. Semino and Short (2004) suggest some reasons why other forms of speech presentation, involving "a move from this 'norm' towards the narrator's end of the speech presentation scale" (2004:83), might be selected instead of direct speech. For example, narrator's representation of speech acts "can be used to provide minimal summaries of utterances" with "a backgrounding effect – i.e. their use suggests that the precise form and content of the relevant utterances are relatively unimportant" (2004:75), forming "a background for fuller discourse presentational modes" (2004:52), as in (9), where there are passages of direct speech just before and after the emboldened line of narrator's representation of speech acts:

(9)   "Yes, she does look a bit grey for her doesn't she? Of course she was very close to Paula, I understand. Anyway, let's talk about something quite different. What have you been up to?"
        She told him about Paris and her new assignment for *Focus Now*.
        "And what about you?" she asked. "How is the advertising business?"
        (BMW 1414–1420)

Indirect speech might be used instead of direct speech "because it is the propositional content (as opposed to the lexico-grammatical form) of a particular utterance that is relevant or significant in context" (Semino & Short 2004:78). An important contrast between direct and indirect speech is "the shifting back and forth between a narrator's and a character's point of view" (Lucy 1993:19); direct speech lets characters speak for themselves, whereas indirect speech involves some interpretation on the part of the narrator. Direct speech and indirect speech may very well be mixed in the presentation of connected utterances in conversations, as in (8), where the first emboldened stretch is indirect speech and the second direct speech:

(10)   He asked her **if she was all right** and she said, "**I'm fine**", but (...) (wBNC FYY 709)
                    indirect speech   direct speech

Toolan (2001) discusses the authors' motives when choosing between direct and indirect discourse; direct discourse stands for both direct speech and direct thought:

Usually the reader feels a greater distance and detachment from characters and their words when these are mediated via Indirect Discourse. [Direct Discourse] is an environment where characters appear to be in control and speak for themselves, while in [Indirect Discourse] the narrator is more overtly still in control, and reports on behalf of the characters. But the appearance or illusion of character control should not be overstated: behind all the fictional individuals, however reported, stands the controlling teller (...) But if character vividness and seeming autonomy are potential corollaries of [Direct Discourse] reporting, then equally [Indirect Discourse] becomes positively desirable when a narrator judges that projecting such vividness is not appropriate. This might be because the topic of speech or thought is mundane, or has already been recorded earlier in the narrative. Or it may be that projecting character depth, authenticity and autonomy is inappropriate because the particular character is quite minor in the larger story, and it would be misleading to endow them with so much individuality.
(Toolan 2001:129–130)

From the accounts above, one may draw the conclusion that the different forms of speech presentation are never selected at random by authors; instead, they are used for various stylistic reasons and to convey the plot and the intended impression of the characters in the most efficient way. Direct speech is the norm, but when other forms of speech presentation are selected, they are used for good reasons. Direct speech is used for vividness, dramatization and characterization, but may also forward the plot.

The use of direct speech in relation to other forms of speech presentation has been discussed in this section. Now focus will be on direct speech in fiction dialogue: first, a more exact definition of fiction dialogue needs to be established, and then, fiction dialogue will be compared to real-life conversation.

2.3   The definition of fiction dialogue

The term fiction dialogue may be used in two ways: either for sentences or whole sections in fiction texts where direct speech is presented, i.e. including reporting clauses, or, as in the present study, just for the direct speech parts of these conversations (see the emboldened parts in (1) above). Hence, fiction dialogue is used almost synonymously to direct speech in the present study.

Direct speech[4] is defined by Semino and Short (2004) as strings where "it is assumed canonically by readers that [they report] exactly the words and structures used by the character to say whatever they said in the 'anterior' discourse" with the reservation that, in fiction, "there is no actual anterior speech to be presented": "we merely pretend 'conventionally' that the conversation 'reported' took place in the world of fiction" (2004:12). Semino and Short's definition of direct speech forms the basis for the definition of fiction dialogue in this thesis. However, as the

---

[4] Semino and Short (2004) use the term *(Free) Direct Speech* (see section 2.2).

concepts which are defined are not identical, and the purposes for the definitions are different,[5] the definition has been somewhat modified (and condensed); my definition is formulated as follows:

> Fiction dialogue presents verbatim what characters
> are claimed to have uttered in the fictional world.

This definition is intended to make the comparison of TQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation as fair as possible: what is compared in this investigation is what has been uttered in the fictional world and the real world, respectively. Hence, some marginal types of direct speech which are included by Semino and Short are excluded in the present definition. These concern mainly hypothetical speech, i.e. "future, possible, imaginary or counter-factual" (2004:159) speech events, as in the emboldened part of (11), where the speech is only planned, not performed:

(11)   The old quip, "**sweet enough, are you?**" sprang immediately to mind, but she repressed it. She was in no mood for jokes. (wBNC HHA 649–650)

Hypothetical speech is not claimed to have been uttered in the fictional world; it is just strings formulated in the mind of a character and expressed in the form of direct speech for potential use.

Most stretches of direct speech in fiction dialogue are found between quotation marks. However, quotation marks are not a completely reliable criterion for fiction dialogue. Firstly, quotation marks are sometimes missing even if it is obvious that a stretch is part of fiction dialogue; such cases are probably due to printing or scanning errors. Secondly, quotation marks may also be used around, for example, hypothetical speech, as in (11) above.

2.4   Fiction dialogue vs. real-life conversation

Fiction dialogue can be described as "the writer's attempt to portray everyday natural language conversation" (Oostdijk 1990:235). Novelists thus normally try to give "the illusion of real conversation" (Leech & Short 2007:132). If they do not succeed in doing this, readers will not find the dialogue realistic and credible; "we judge a writer's 'ear for conversation'" (Leech & Short

---

[5] Semino and Short's (2004) purpose was to investigate the speech presentation potential in written texts and they needed to devise categories (and sub-categories) where all stretches of speech presentation could be accounted for. Hence, direct speech in their study includes also some stretches which are not really part of dialogue, but which are nevertheless closer to direct speech than any of the other speech presentation categories.

2007:129).[6] Toolan (1990) states that "many crucial structural and functional principles are at work just as much in fictional dialogue as in natural conversation. It is hard to see how we could recognize and respond to the former as a version of the latter if this were not so" (1990:275). However, "there is an inevitable gap – wider or narrower at different times, but never disappearing entirely – between speech, especially in informal situations, and even the most 'realistic' dialogue in a work of literature" (Page 1973:6). In the words of Leech and Short (2007): "the 'ear for conversation', if it is well tuned for literary purposes, will tend to distance itself from the raw realities of spoken discourse" (2007:129). If one has studied transcripts of real-life conversation, it is quite obvious that "normal characteristics of the spoken language (...) would be quite unacceptable in the *written* medium of the novel"; these characteristics include, for example, hesitations, repetitions and false starts as well as "grammatical inconsistencies and incompleteness and frequent changes of direction" (Page 1973:6). Such features occur in spoken conversation "whenever our planning falls behind our delivery" (Leech & Short 2007:130), but are "normally overlooked by participants in real-life conversation" and "can be omitted from fictional conversation without impairing the realistic effect" (Leech & Short 2007:133). However, such features may sometimes be employed purposely in fiction dialogue; they then "tend to have a communicative effect", being, for example, "signs of nervousness, tentativeness or careful weighing of words" (Leech & Short 2007:133), as in (12), where there is an emboldened instance of disfluency – *er* – in the TQ on the first line:

(12)　　　"You were – **er** – you were just joking earlier, on the dance-floor – weren't you?" she murmured, not daring to raise her eyes as she toyed with some of the pink salmon mayonnaise on her plate. (wBNC JXX 627)

Fiction dialogue may at first sight seem similar to natural spoken language. In (13), there is a coherent mixture of statements, exclamations and various kinds of questions (including a TQ), informal words like *guy* and *damn*, and pragmatic markers such as *then* and *well*:

(13)　　　"Then, why did you do it?" she cried bitterly. "I said you were crazy not to go along with the Corporation's proposals, didn't I? But you wouldn't listen to me. Oh no! Not you, you had to be the good guy. You had to do a Custer. Well, look where it's got you. And do you think for one minute they care a damn about you? You've got to be joking. And what about me? Do I go back to modelling for a living?" (wBNC AC2 1773–1783)

---

[6] However, an author may, for literary purposes, sometimes choose, in the dialogue, "not to pretend or simulate very hard – just as Shaw or Beckett did not feel bound in their plays to give characters dialogue that sounded undetectably similar to everyday natural conversation" (Toolan 2001:124). Such cases are to be seen as exceptions proving the rule: direct speech is normally written in a way which makes the reader find it credible.

The language in (13) may thus seem realistic and credible to the reader. However, despite the speaker's agitation, the language is perfectly coherent and orderly, in particular in comparison to what spontaneous spoken conversation may look like in written transcriptions, as in, for instance, example (14), which is repetitive, disorderly and incoherent:

(14)   No, I says to her, I says <pause> Saturday, I says er <pause> if you get stuck, I says <pause> we're supposed to be going to see his nan <pause> into Ashley House up <pause> anyway, I told Bill <pause> I says, eh! I just thought <pause> just before er, I come over, I says, just thought I says, I <pause> suppose he'll take her over there Saturday, won't he? (sBNC KCX 410–411)

As already mentioned in section 1.1, fiction dialogue is "an *idealization* of real speech" (Page 1973:18). The language of fiction dialogue is a compromise between two opposite requirements; it must seem realistic without being too realistic. Page states that "for most novelists, the acceptable solution has generally been (...) to create or adapt, and observe, consciously or otherwise, a set of conventions which will vary in nature and importance from novel to novel" (1973:10). It has even been claimed that "all novelistic dialogue is conventionalized or stylized to some degree" (McHale 1978:259).

One such convention is "[t]he principles of selection and concentration (...) generally at work to give fictional dialogue a quality quite different from that of real speech" (Page 1973:16). Authors only use dialogue when it serves a purpose; either it should "advance the plot" or "contribute to the development of character" (Page 1973:14, see also section 2.2). Nash (1990) finds that dialogues in popular fiction usually "fall into one or the other of three categories, all related to the progress of the narrative and the furnishing of information to the reader" (1990:99). These categories are worth looking at, as popular fiction forms a large part of the Fiction Subcorpus, and also as these categories might apply to all kinds of fiction. Here are Nash's three categories of dialogue:

1. confrontational dialogue, which "includes challenges, quarrels, disputes, interviews, and any kind of personal encounter in which the participants are in covert or overt opposition to each other" (1990:99).

2. instructional dialogue, which "convey[s] information – ostensibly from one character to another, but ultimately from author to reader – about matters of science, technology, politics, world events, etc, some knowledge of which is essential to the understanding of the plot" (1990:99–100).

3. collaborative dialogue, which contains "a series of exchanges which cumulatively present, for the reader's benefit, a picture of events, histories, personalities, and relationships" (1990:100).

Typical examples of confrontational dialogue are quite easy to find among corpus examples with TQs from fiction, as in (15), where the characters are falling out with each other:

(15)   "Well, Phena won't hear it from me! Anyway, I shan't be here, shall I? I'm to leave in the morning, remember?"
         "And that really rankles, doesn't it? That's really what it's all about, isn't it? Wanting to stay here. Share in some of the wealth!"
         "No, it is not! I don't need, or want, your blasted wealth!"
         "Don't you? (...)" (wBNC HGY 2326–2335)

However, instructional dialogue is much more difficult to identify without reading very long, or even whole fiction texts, as what is important for the whole plot is difficult to grasp in short fiction extracts. However, the extract in (16) might represent Nash's concept of instructional dialogue, as the readers are given information on the characters' former spy activities during the Cold War:

(16)   "The Berlin Wall's down, Eastern Europe's put on democracy like an old coat, Russia's bankrupt and we're all suckers, Wallace. Nobody won. Don't you think that's funny? And you're supposed to be down here finding out whether some crazy old man was a double. Now, I'm surprised to learn that you don't know the answer. After all, you were working the wrong side of the fence yourself, weren't you? A chain of information set up by you that ended somewhere in East Germany. I just passed on what I knew." Carey gave a bark of laughter. "And with every stolen syllable, the people's revolution came closer. That's what I was – a link in the chain. But you were something much grander than that. Much more glamorous. You were a traitor. But times change, Wallace, don't they? And here you are, a survivor, working for the winning side." (wBNC FP7 653–668)

The extract in (17) may be seen as being collaborative, as the characters discuss her dreams of him coming to her:

(17)   Beth stood there in the doorway, framed by the soft light of the living room behind her and to her left. She smiled. "I knew you were coming. I dreamed of you last night."
         He laughed and went to her, then held her tightly against him, kissing her tenderly. "Your dreams ..." He gazed into her eyes, loving the beauty, the measureless depth of them. "They never fail you, do they?"
         She smiled and kissed his nose. "No. Never" (wBNC FRF 226–236)

However, for large parts of the fiction dialogue, there may often be a mixture of two or three of these kinds of dialogue. It seems reasonable to regard confrontational, instructional and collaborative dialogue as three functions of fiction dialogue rather than three types. These functions may be at work simultaneously; for example, the dialogue in (16) is both instructional and confrontational. Nash's confrontational and collaborative dialogue appear to fulfil Carter and

Nash's (1990) (see section 2.2) second function of fiction dialogue ("[t]o bring out character, and relationships between characters; personalities being revealed by what they say, what others say to or about them, and how they respond to what others say" (1990:90)), whereas instructional dialogue appears to fulfil their third function ("[t]o create the sense of a background by supplying impressions – conveyed through personal interactions – of a society, its manners, its concerns, its material objects" (1990:90)) (for the first function, see section 2.2).

The most important conclusion to be drawn from Nash's (1990) categorization of dialogue is that speech between characters not fulfilling any of these three functions might not be represented at all in fiction dialogue (and probably nor in any other form of speech presentation in fiction). Nash finds that "it is comparatively rare for [fiction] dialogue to be compositionally idle, representing nothing more than small talk or phatic communion" (1990:98). Moreover, it was noticed by Toolan (1985), when he tried to apply Conversational Analysis to fiction dialogue, that fiction dialogue is "very often non-routine": "several of the features focussed on by [Conversational Analysis] – such as closings and openings – are not often prominent, or rendered fully, in fictional dialogue"; what is found in fiction dialogue is instead "what author and reader take to be extremely tellable material", and the dialogue "may well be designed (in ways that make it less like a transcript of ordinary talk) so as to enhance its tellability" (1985:204).

When comparing fiction dialogue to real-life conversation, one must not forget that "there is no specific real speech event against which the report may be measured as a more or less accurate record" (Leech & Short 2007:129): "direct speech in fiction is a simulation of a pretence" (Toolan 2001:124). This fact is clearly expressed by Thompson (1994): "[in] a novel, there is no original speaker and no original language event. The words exist only in the writer's imagination" (1994:1).

Fiction dialogue is thus under the total control of the author (and the editor); it is "planned, revised and edited" (de Haan 1996:26) in order to be correct and coherent, but also to function according to the author's intentions at each point in the story. The whole fiction text can be surveyed by the author (and the editor), and earlier parts may be revised in order to better fit in with later parts, and all parts of the novel must make sense.

The conditions for the production of real-life conversation are quite different. Conversation is a joint action; it is "multiple-source" (Warren 2006:29), i.e. no single individual has total control and the interactants may very well have different goals for the interaction. Real-life conversation is also linear; interactants have only access to what has come before, and they cannot go back and edit what they said earlier. A characteristic of real-life conversation is also its "high level of inexplicitness" (Warren 2006:13); "the spoken word in real life (...) derives much of its significance from the context of situation" (Page 1973:8). Page further states that the language

of real-life conversation is related to "all those extra-linguistic features which, in a novel, must be rendered consciously and explicitly, and can only be rendered partially, by linguistic means"; it follows that "fictional dialogue is likely to be more heavily burdened with informative and suggestive detail than the speech of everyday life" (1973:8).

In real-life conversation, prosody also gives important information to listeners, but this resource is not available in the same way in fiction dialogue, which must be compensated for. Page (1973) states:

> Dialogue in a novel, which is written to be read, usually silently, will necessarily involve a redistribution of balance whereby the words themselves may carry as much as possible of that proportion of the total meaning which, in the spoken language, is conveyed by phonological features (...) Dialogue [in fiction] is likely therefore, to be fuller and more explicit in its statements, lacking the suggestions and implications, the undertones and overtones, which may constitute a significant dimension of even the most trivial utterances. (Page 1973:9)

Admittedly, readers of fiction are aware that fiction dialogue would have been accompanied by intonation if it had been spoken: "[o]f course, intonation is recognized by us and exists as a stylistic factor even with silent reading of written speech" (Bachtin 1986:85). However, the imagined intonation of fiction dialogue is based on subjective interpretation, which is dependent on the reader's own experience and thus not inherent in the text itself.

A characteristic feature of spoken conversation is overlapping speech. This is indicated in the BNC transcriptions with the symbol <-|-> at the start and end of overlapping speech, as in (18):

(18)   Ann: He <-|-> says <-|->
       Joyce: <-|-> It's <-|-> not a rest <-|-> is it? <-|->
       Ann: <-|-> He said <-|-> it's not a rest. (sBNC KB2 4515–4517)

Hence, in (18), Ann's *says* is uttered simultaneously with Joyce's *it's*, and Joyce's *is it?* with Ann's *He said.* Overlapping speech is practically impossible to render in fiction, where only one speaker seems to talk at a time. Admittedly, a speaker may be interrupted, but then he or she always seems to stop talking. This may be indicated by a dash in fiction, as in (19), or by three dots, as in (20):

(19)   "You've let him think it," Mrs Alderney said repressively. "If you did not mean it so – "
          "I've Amarinta to think of, haven't I?" **interrupted** the old lady.
          (wBNC HGV 1802–1804)

(20)   Roy hung his head. "I know it sounds bad, Mickey, but he is my father-in-law **…** "
          "I couldn't give a fuck if he was the Immaculate Conception! There's something wrong,
          ain't there? The Roy I knew would never take that from anyone, not in a million years."
          (wBNC CR6 1236–1240)

In (19), it is very clear that there is an interruption: the first speaker's sentence is unfinished and the reporting clause states that the second speaker interrupted the first one. In (20), it is only the three dots which indicate that there is an interruption. This seems to be the closest one can get to overlapping speech in the linear organisation of fiction dialogue.

The concept of turn is often used when spoken conversation is studied, in particular within Conversation Analysis: turn is "short for 'turn constructional unit', essentially an utterance: a meaningful component of a conversation, which might be a sentence, a phrase, a word or even a nod of the head or a conversationally encouraging noise like 'Mm-hm'" (Allott 2010:189). The turn-taking organisation in conversation is complicated with overlapping speech and recurrent feedback. In the present study, the term *turn* is also used for the organisation of speech in fiction dialogue: a turn is defined as continuing until the speaker stops talking and leaves the floor to another speaker; however, a turn may also finish a conversation. Turns are discussed further in section 6.4.3, where the turn positions of DecTQs are dealt with.

There are thus several differences in the production of fiction dialogue compared to real-life conversation. Firstly, fiction dialogue is idealized in order to be enjoyable, informative and easily readable. Secondly, what is found in fiction dialogue is a selection of what must have been said in a similar 'story' in real life. Thirdly, there are features of real-life conversation which are practically impossible to render in fiction dialogue.

2.5   Analysing fiction dialogue vs. spoken conversation

When analysing corpus data of fiction dialogue and spoken conversation, one must be aware that there are different kinds of and different degrees of distortion of the original language event. The fiction texts appear in the corpus almost exactly in the way they were originally presented in the books, the major difference being that whole novels are usually not included; however, each file is a rather long and coherent text. Minor changes in relation to the original language event are scanning errors, and the fact that the division of the fiction texts into paragraphs, sections and chapters is not always clear in the corpus version. In contrast, in spoken corpora, such as the spoken demographic part of the BNC, real-life spoken conversation is transcribed into written form; of course, words and phrases may be distorted and lost in this transfer. However, also most of the extra-linguistic context is lost: the situational context, referred to, for example, by deictic expressions, and other aspects of shared context, for example the shared knowledge and beliefs of the interactants. Example (21) is an extract from the spoken part of the BNC, where it is overall very unclear what the interactants (Michael, Wendy and their 25-year-old daughter Bev) are talking about, and in the middle of this conversation, Michael suddenly exclaims *Will you stop playing with that*; for the interactants, it was probably perfectly clear

what he referred to at that time, but, when reading the transcription afterwards, this is totally impossible; it is also not quite clear to whom this command is addressed.

(21)	Wendy:	It looks like <unclear>. It's nine o'clock.
	Michael:	What?
	Bev:	<unclear>.
	Wendy:	What? Is that the one you're going over now?
	Bev:	<unclear> in there wouldn't you?
	Michael:	Yeah, I did, that's right. That's <unclear>, <-|-> that's <-|->
	Bev:	<-|-> What? <-|->
	Michael:	the problem.
	Bev:	What?
	Michael:	**Will you stop playing with that!**
	Wendy:	Well I took them both. And put them your side since we found that I did them <pause> for you. And I don't <pause> believe <unclear> at all.
	Michael:	I only had two left.
	Wendy:	Yeah, that's right. (sBNC KE6 6163–6180)

Furthermore, paralinguistic features are lost to a large extent, even if some of them may be included in transcriptions; in the spoken part of the BNC, information of voice quality such as whispering and laughing is included (Burnard 2000:33), but this is only a minor part of all paralinguistic information which was available for the interactants at the time of the conversation. A multi-modal corpus where the interactions are filmed would have given access to more extralinguistic and paralinguistic features.

Fiction dialogue and real-life conversation are produced with very different goals. Fiction dialogue is designed not only in order to convey what the author intends it to do at that particular point in the story, but also normally to be grammatically correct and fully understandable to the reader. The author of fiction, so to speak, directs the 'understandability' of the speech towards the reader, whereas conversationalists direct the 'understandability' of their speech only towards their interactants and do not have any secondary recipients (such as transcribers or linguistic researchers) in mind when they make their utterances. Therefore, even if conversational utterances are mostly fully understandable for the interactants, they are much less so for the secondary analyst, who only has access to transcriptions.

When analysing spoken conversation in corpora, one may get some information on the interactants in the metadata. For the demographic part of the BNC, there is usually information on the name, sex, age, occupation, dialect and social class of each speaker as well as his or her role in relation to the respondent; however, all or part of this information is missing for many interactants. In fiction extracts in corpora such as the BNC, more or less of this kind of information may be found when the context is studied; however, it is sometimes necessary to read quite large amounts of context, for example in order to establish the relation between interactants. Example (22) below is a good illustration of a complication for the analysis of fiction dialogue:

the same character may sometimes be referred to by his first name and at other times by his second name; if one does not understand that James and Cobalt refer to the same person, the analysis becomes difficult:

> (22)   (...) "It's too far to walk in this weather," Rain said. "We'll give you a lift to the boat, won't we, **James**?"
> **Cobalt** could hardly refuse, but Joseph was adamant he would not accept. He ran out into the wet streets saying he would find a taxi. (wBNC GV2 3277–3279)

In corpus transcriptions of spoken conversation, there is often some kind of intonational mark-up, although sometimes only a very rudimentary annotation of pauses etc. It would be impossible to account for all aspects of intonation in corpus transcriptions, so the intonation of real-life conversation is more or less lost in such transcriptions. Of course, there is no similar annotation of intonation in fiction dialogue; however, indications of the intonation may actually be rendered in different ways in fiction: in the dialogue itself, in reporting clauses or in the surrounding narrative. Punctuation is a notational system used in writing to compensate for the lack of intonational cues. However, Page (1973) states:

> such devices as punctuation, though not without their expressive uses, are only a relatively crude and sometimes ambiguous attempt to convey such meaningful features of the spoken language as pause, stress, tempo, volume and intonation (...) (Page 1973:9)

On the other hand, Leech and Short (2007) find:

> (...) even if [phonetic factors such as intonation and voice quality] are unavailable (as they are in written dialogue) tone can be indicated by varied and subtle use of grammatical, lexical and graphological markers, as well as by authorial descriptions of a character's manner of speech. (Leech & Short 2007:248)

The use of punctuation is conventionalized; deviations from the conventional punctuation may therefore indicate a special tone of voice. After TQs, the normal punctuation is a question mark, but sometimes there may instead be, for example, a full stop, as in (23), or an exclamation mark, as in (24); the punctuation gives the impression that the TQ in (23) is uttered in a tone of disappointment, whereas the TQ in (24) is exclaimed.

> (23)   "Ah, Miss Abbott. Money. **That stops me being a real artist in your eyes, doesn't it.** Money. Dear, dear. Miss Abbott, I must peel the scales from your eyes entirely. (...)"
> (wBNC H8X 1418–1423)

> (24)   She nodded approvingly. "You'll do lass, though you had better keep that hood well down over your head. **You are pretty as a picture and we would not want you drawing attention to yourself, would we!**" (wBNC CCD 2455–2457)

A grammatical marker indicating stress is emphatic *do*, as in (25); the use of emphatic *do* may therefore be increased in fiction to compensate for the lack of intonational cues.

(25)   Blanche turned to her sergeant with a weary smile. "You really **do** need some sleep, don't you?"
"What do you mean, guv'?" replied the sergeant resentfully. (wBNC G1W 1004–1006)

Stress can also be indicated graphologically by italics (Leech & Short 2007:258), as with *know* in the first line and *exactly* in the last line of (26); italics as an indication of stress can be considered a literary convention for fiction dialogue.

(26)   "We don't *know* until we've read it all, do we?" he retorted, creaky with self-restraint. "But it might put a cat among the pigeons."
"Not *exactly*. The importance is literary – " (wBNC APR 2279–2282)

The way reporting clauses are used in fiction is also probably governed by literary conventions. Reporting clauses are the narrator's (or rather ultimately the author's) resource of indicating how and why something was said. It seems that reporting clauses are used for two purposes: to help the reader hold track of who is talking, and to indicate how things are being said, but only when this is of importance: there are many turns without reporting clauses. The reporting verbs and other words in the reporting clauses, such as manner adverbials, may indicate the intention of the speaker and the tone of voice used, as in (27)–(29):

(27)   "(...) That's good profit, ain't it?" she **remarked cheekily**. (wBNC FPK 1505)

(28)   "You trust him, don't you?" he **asked curiously**. (wBNC FR0 3819)

(29)   "Don't let him get away with it, will you?" **pleaded Bella, her voice almost a whine**. (wBNC ACB 2849)

In (27), the reporting verb *remarked* indicates that the TQ is to be seen as rhetorical, and *cheekily* reinforces this impression, whereas in (28), *curiously* underlines that the speaker of the TQs is eager for a response, i.e. the TQ is not rhetorical. In (29), the reporting verb indicates that the directive in the anchor is a plea, and the addition about her whining voice underlines this, and favours an interpretation of the tag as being emphatic.

In the subsequent narrative, it may be indicated, for instance, that a TQ was responded to extra-linguistically, using body language, as in the emboldened part of (30), where a negative spoken answer is replaced by a headshake. In comparison, such information is usually lost in transcriptions of spoken language.

(30)   "You'll stay for a meal, won't you?"
Harry shook his head. (wBNC FS1 2018–2019)

In real-life conversation, interactants mostly try to co-operate, complying to Grice's (1975) Co-operative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (1975:45). However, not all contributions in spoken conversation receive the intended reaction:

> [t]he rest of the participants do not accept participants' contributions every time they speak. Sometimes, especially in spoken, colloquial language, what a speaker says has no influence on the structural development of the conversation; his contribution is not 'picked up' by the others. (Pons Bordería 2006:94)

Not even questions, including TQs, where the speaker wants an answer are always responded to. The addressee may not have been attentive enough or the TQ may not have been perceived due to overlapping speech or other distractions, but it may also be because the addressee does not want to answer for some reason. Why a TQ is not answered can be difficult to interpret when analysing transcriptions from spoken conversation. This is, however, often easier for readers of fiction. If an author decides that his character should refrain from answering a TQ, this is usually explained in the subsequent narrative. In the emboldened part of (31), it is said that the addressee did not answer: it is quite clear that the addressee heard and understood the TQ, and that it was expected to be answered.

(31)   His bitterness had surprised her. "Surely not," she had answered. "Father wouldn't want that, would he?"
        But he had not answered, only looked away, the bitterness in his face unchanged.
        (wBNC FRF 400–403)

Hence, fiction prose has the advantage of providing a great deal of useful complementary information to the dialogue in reporting clauses and the surrounding narrative; in comparison, the complementary information in drama is usually restricted to stage directions. Nevertheless, Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b), who have studied the functions of TQs in sixteenth-century drama, state:

> in fact it is often easier [to assign functions] because of the clues given by authors and the existence of a coherent co-text – authors construct dialogue to propel the action forward, and there are few overlaps or unclear passages.
> (Tottie & Hoffmann 2009b:140)

To sum up, the conditions for analysing the language of fiction dialogue and conversation in corpora are different. The analyst of fiction has access to all the information the author considered necessary for the reader to interpret the fictional work in the way the author intended, whereas an interactant in real-life conversation had access to more information than the analyst can find in the transcriptions of spoken corpus material. This must be kept in mind when the

functions of a linguistic phenomenon such as TQs are to be compared in subcorpora of these different kinds; the analysis of functions in the spoken material can only be based on what is actually found in the corpus, and may therefore not be as reliable as the analysis of fiction data. However, these differences between the subcorpora are not large enough to disallow a comparison between the functions of TQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus and the spoken demographic part of the BNC.

3   Formal features of TQs

3.1   Introduction

This chapter forms the basis for the investigation of TQs in the present study. First, a formal definition of TQs is formulated and discussed in section 3.2. Then, the potential lexical combinations in tags are dealt with in section 3.3 in order to establish what elements should be included in the lexical searches for tags in the BNC. However, some basic terms need to be established first. In this thesis, the basic terminology for TQs follows that of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006); this is shown in Fig. 3.1 (a repetition of Fig. 1.1 in section 1.1):

It's interesting,   isn't it?
———————— ———
anchor   tag
——————————————
tag question (TQ)
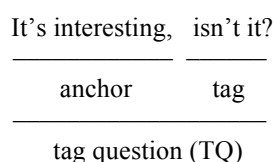
Fig. 3.1   Basic terminology for tag questions

A tag question (TQ) thus consists of two parts: an anchor and a tag. Henceforth, in all examples, the whole TQ is underlined, and the tag is indicated by double underlining, as in (1); single underlining thus indicates the anchor:

(1)   It's interesting, isn't it?

The term *tag question* goes back to Jespersen (1924:323) and has been very common ever since. However, it has been used in two ways over the years, which may cause some confusion: sometimes for just the tag (e.g. by Quirk *et al.* 1985:810), but increasingly, as in this thesis, for anchor plus tag. The tag may also be called *question tag*, but, for simplicity, the shorter term *tag* is used in the present work.[1] The term *anchor* for the first part of the TQ is transparent in indicating that the tag is 'anchored' in a preceding clause; this term was introduced by Huddleston and Pullum (2002:891).

---

[1] The terms *tag question* and *question tag* are actually not ideal, as the term *question* is mostly used for the function of a clause, not for its syntactic form. The term *interrogative tag*, used by, for example, Huddleston and Pullum (2002:238) and Biber *et al.* (1999:139), might have been preferable, as the tag is syntactically interrogative, but this term has also been used to denote a tag appearing after an interrogative anchor, for example, by McGregor (1995:99).

A TQ thus consists of two clauses which have a relationship to each other.[2] There is no tag without an anchor, and no anchor without a tag; they only become anchor and tag, respectively, when they combine into a TQ. When discussing the phenomenon in general terms, it is therefore preferable to talk about TQs, not tags.

3.2   The formal definition of TQs

The formation of tags is rather complex, making it difficult to formulate a short formal definition of TQs. In the four-part definition below, TQs and tags are first defined. Then, the formation of tags in relation to the anchor is described; tags with imperative anchors are dealt with separately, as their formation deviates from tags with other sentence types as anchors (for a further discussion of the formation of tags with imperative anchors, see section 8.2.1).

1. A tag question is the combination of an anchor and a tag; there may be TQs with declarative, imperative, exclamative and interrogative anchors.

2. A tag is an interrogative clause which is connected to an immediately preceding (or surrounding) clause called an anchor; this anchor is normally a main clause and may be declarative, imperative, exclamative or interrogative.

3. A tag with a declarative, exclamative or interrogative anchor is a string of words with inverted word order, consisting of an operator, a personal pronoun as subject (or existential *there*) and an optional enclitic negation *n't* (or a non-enclitic negation *not*), and expressing the same proposition as in a preceding (or surrounding) declarative, exclamative or interrogative anchor uttered by the same speaker and to which it relates. The tag subject is thus co-referential with the anchor subject (which may be ellipted but implied), and the tag operator is identical to or substitutes with forms of *do* for the anchor finite (which may also be ellipted but implied); substitution occurs when there is a lexical verb as anchor finite: the form of *do* has then the same tense, number and person properties as the anchor finite.

4. A tag with an imperative anchor is a string of words with inverted word order, consisting of an operator, a personal pronoun as subject and an optional enclitic negation *n't* (or non-enclitic negation *not*), and which is appended to a preceding imperative anchor uttered by

---

[2] There has been a great deal of discussion in previous work, particularly within generative grammar, whether the tag is derived from the anchor or not; for a discussion see, for example, Nässlin (1984:11ff). Another issue is whether the relation between the anchor and the tag is paratactic or hypotactic; this issue seems not to have been resolved: grammars appear to agree that tags are neither typically dependent nor typically independent clauses (Quirk *et al.* 1985:919,1115, Biber *et al.* 1999:197,208, Huddleston & Pullum 2002:1359).

the same speaker; the tag subject is *you* when the preceding imperative is in the 2nd person, and *we* when the preceding imperative is in the 1st person plural, i.e. with *let's*.

TQs may thus not only be declarative, as in (2), but also imperative, as in (3) and (4), exclamative, as in (5) and (6), and interrogative, as in (7):

(2)   It's interesting, isn't it?

(3)   Open the door, will you?

(4)   Let's go back, shall we?

(5)   How nice he is, isn't he?

(6)   What a nice surprise, isn't it?

(7)   Are you coming, are you?

According to the definition, a tag may either be connected to an immediately preceding clause, (as in (2)–(7) above), or to a surrounding clause; in the latter case, the tag is thus not final, but inserted, as in (8):

(8)   "You understood, didn't you, the real point of Dr Kemp's phone call? (...)"
       (wBNC HWM 2340)

Quirk *et al.* (1985) state that tags may be inserted between constituents in the anchor (1985: 811), but Biber *et al.* (1999) point out that tags "cannot precede the verb phrase of the main clause" (1999:208).[3]

As stated in the definition above, the anchor is normally a main clause including its subordinate clauses, if any, as in (9):

(9)   "You thought I was in here slitting my wrists, didn't you?" (wBNC APU 1926)

The subordinate clause in (9) does not affect the formation of the tag; it is therefore presented with broken underlining. Subordinate clauses cannot normally constitute the anchor of a tag; however, a well-known exception is *that*-clauses after expressions like *I believe*, *I suppose*, *I guess*, *I reckon*, *it seems*, *it appears*, *it follows* and *this means* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:894), as in (10), since, in such cases, "communicatively it is the subordinate clause that is primary" (2002:893).

---

[3] However, Oreström (1983) gives an example from the London-Lund Corpus, where the tag precedes the finite, *is*, in the anchor:

(i)   Course another factor in disagreement isn't it **is** the fact that a third of the whole of the department (...)
       (Oreström 1983:133)

(10)   (...) she says , "I think that was all right, wasn't it?" (wBNC J17 293)

The criterion of inverted word order in the definition means that utterances with declarative tags (Biber *et al.* 1999:139), as indicated by the wavy underlining in (11), are excluded.

(11)   He's alright he is.[4] (Biber *et al.* 1999:140)

The definition gives two alternatives for the negation in the tag: either it is enclitic *n't* attached to the operator, as in, for example, (10) above, or non-enclitic *not* placed after the tag subject, as in (12):

(12)   "You are getting rather involved, are you not? (...)" (wBNC HTG 3622)

The criterion of co-reference of the tag subject and the anchor subject means that instances such as (13) are excluded:

(13)   "I find that an astonishing painting, don't you?" (wBNC EEW 1629)
         (=I find that an astonishing painting. Don't you also find that an astonishing painting?)

In (13), the subject in the first clause is *I,* whereas the subject in the second clause is *you*; the tag-like addition is thus a new truncated question which cannot ask for the confirmation of the proposition in the preceding clause. Moreover, the fact that instances such as (13) constitute a different phenomenon than TQs as defined above is indicated by the stress being put on the subject *you*, not on the tag operator as with tags in TQs.

The criterion of co-reference between the tag subject and the anchor subject means, for example, that *they* may be used as tag subject after anchors with indefinite pronouns such as *some-one*/*somebody*, *anybody*/*anyone*, *no one*/*nobody* and *everyone*/*everybody* (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 771), as in (14); of course, the tag operator adapts to the plural subject in such cases:

(14)   "Well, then," said Constance, "**no one**'s going to miss her, are they?"
         (wBNC G1D 440)[5]

The subject and/or the finite of the anchor may be ellipted, as in (15):

(15)   "An actress, aren't you? (...)" (wBNC ACE 352)
         = **You are** an actress, aren't you?

---

[4] Wavy underlining is used to stretches which are under discussion as not being TQs.

[5] Boldface is used to highlight elements under discussion; these elements are only sometimes part of the TQs.

The formulation in the definition "uttered by the same speaker" excludes follow-up questions, as in B's utterances in (16):

(16) A: It's interesting.
      B: (Yes,) isn't it? / (Oh,) is it?[6]

For B's utterances in (16), it could be argued that there are elliptical anchors, which would mean that such utterances are TQs, but in the present study, they are regarded as interrogatives, as there is no trace of an anchor uttered by the same speaker.

Punctuation should not form part of a grammatical definition, but very often, all examples of TQs in grammars (e.g. in Quirk *et al.* 1985 and Huddleston & Pullum 2002) and other previous work are given with a comma before the tag and a question mark after the tag, as this is the conventional way of representing TQs in writing. This may give the incorrect impression that such punctuation is required; all kinds of punctuation as well as no punctuation at all must be accepted, both before and after the tag.

In previous work, reversed polarity is often seen as part of the definition of TQs, and constant polarity is presented as an exception (see e.g. Quirk *et al.* 1985:810–812), but in the present study, they are regarded as two varieties of TQs, and accordingly, polarity is not mentioned in the definition above. The difference between the formal features of reversed-polarity and constant-polarity TQ is described in the next section, 3.2.1.

3.2.1   Reversed and constant polarity

TQs mostly display reversed polarity[7], i.e. a negative tag follows a positive anchor, as in (17), or a positive tag follows a negative anchor, as in (18):

(17)   It's interesting, isn't it?

(18)   It isn't interesting, is it?

However, it is also possible to have positive constant polarity, where both the anchor and the tag are positive, as in (19):

---

[6] Quirk *et al.* (1985) state that the former "affirms the speaker's agreement with what another speaker just said", whereas the latter may suggest that the speaker does not have information enough to express an opinion (1985:810).

[7] The term *reversed* was probably introduced by O'Connor (1955:7), who distinguished between *reversed* and *direct tag questions*, later to be revived by Huddleston (1970), who coined the term *reversed polarity* and introduced the contrasting term *constant polarity* (1970:215). These two terms have since then been predominant; they have been used in, for example, Nässlin (1984), Roesle (2001), Huddleston and Pullum (2002) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006), but the closely related term *reverse polarity* is also found (e.g. in Algeo 2006 and Kimps 2007).

(19)   It's interesting, is it?

On the other hand, declarative TQs with negative constant polarity, i.e. where both the anchor
and the tag are negative, are contested; such TQs have been claimed not to have been "clearly
attested in actual use" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813). However, research on spoken corpora has re-
vealed "some genuine examples" (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:284), as, for instance (20), which is
from the context-governed part of the BNC:

(20)   They don't come cheap don't they? (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:283, sBNC KGL 110)

In (21), there is a famous example of a negative constant-polarity DecTQ; Jespersen (1940)
found this example in the fiction dialogue of a novel published in 1894:

(21)   "You can't catch me."
        "I can't, can't I?" (Jespersen 1940:496)

The negation in the anchor is often *not/n't*, but all clausal negations[8] make the anchor nega-
tive. The negative element can thus also be *never*, *no*, *nobody*, *no one*, *nothing*, as in (22), or
"adverbs and determiners which are negative in meaning but not in form", for example, *seldom*,
hardly, *little* and *few* (Quirk *et al.* 1985:780), as in (23):

(22)   (...) "There's **nothing** wrong is there, darling?" (wBNC C98 24)

(23)   (   ) "That's **hardly** sufficient, is it?" (wBNC G01 629)

When there is a negation in a subordinate *that*-clause after *I believe*, *I suppose* etc. (see sec-
tion 3.2), as in (24), there is, of course, a positive tag if reversed polarity is intended.

(24)   I suppose you would**n't** come with me, would you?

However, the negation in (24), which semantically belongs to the subordinate clause, may be
transferred to the main clause without any change in meaning, and the anchor would still be
perceived as negative (Quirk *et al.* 1985:1033); hence, the tag would still be positive if re-
versed-polarity is intended, as in (25):

(25)   "(...) I do**n't** suppose you'd come with me, would you?" (wBNC HNJ 2635)

---

[8] Negations may also be sub-clausal, thereby not affecting the polarity of the whole clause (Huddleston & Pullum
2002:789), as in (ii), where the anchor is positive despite the occurrence of *no*:

(ii) We were friends in no time, weren't we? (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:789)

For declarative TQs, it has been suggested that there are functional differences between reversed-polarity and constant-polarity instances; this is dealt with in section 4.6. Reversed polarity vs. constant polarity in imperative TQs is discussed in section 8.2.

3.2.2 Marginal TQs

What the tags fulfilling the definition in section 3.2 have in common is that they may be used to ask for confirmation of the proposition in the anchor. The definition is designed to cover the TQ phenomenon, and seems to do that fairly well in the Fiction Subcorpus. However, in spoken language, there are strings which look like tags but do not fulfil the formal requirements in the definition as to the formal relationship to the anchor, although they seem to have similar functions to other tags and can be replaced by the expected tags without a change of function in the contexts where they occur. Such marginal instances have earlier been noted by, for example, Biber *et al.* (1999), who state that "[t]ags are not always strictly modelled on the main clause" (1999:209) and Algeo (1988:179–180), who states that "performance errors account for some anomalies" (cf. also Krug 1998:157ff). TQs of that kind are mainly found in spontaneous speech, as such language is produced linearly with the pressures of on-line processing, whereas written language, particularly texts intended for publishing, go through a process of revision and editing intended to improve the text and remove what might be considered as errors. The intention of comparing fiction dialogue to spoken conversation in the present study makes it necessary not to disfavour the spoken material; a very strict application of the definition could have skewed frequency comparisons if proportionally more phrases intended as tags were discarded in the material from the spoken demographic part than in the material from the Fiction Subcorpus.

The guideline when I decided what marginal instances to include was thus that the string should look like a tag (with operator and subject, with or without a negation)[9] and that it should be possible, as argued above, to replace it with the expected tag without a change of function. In order to facilitate the analysis, the included marginal instances were divided into three groups: tags used invariantly, modified tags and erroneous tags.

Tags used invariantly are restricted to certain wordings such as *isn't it, innit* and *ain't it*, and mostly found in the spoken data, as in (26):

---

[9] Krug (1998) claims that *it* may be deleted from tags through phonetic reduction. However, this is probably a very marginal phenomenon, and even if a few examples such as (iii), which Krug found in the Bank of English Corpus, could be identified, it would be very difficult to check all such potential tags, and decide what instances would be cases of a deleted tag subject and what instances would be, for example, unfinished sentences.

   (iii) This is just laughable **isn't**. Yeah. (Krug 1998:158)

(26) should be in all day <u>innit</u>? (sBNC KPE 2205)
Expected tag: *shouldn't you?*

Modified tags have an unexpected form in relation to the anchor, but are logical on the basis that there is a plausible alternative wording of the anchor with a similar meaning, as in (27):

(27) There's Toby <pause> <u>this **is** at the zoo was it?</u> (sBNC KBH 3003)
Expected tag: *is it?*

The situation in the photo which is discussed in (27) can be talked about using either the past or the present tense; the expected tag in (27) is *is it?*; or, it might instead be expressed the other way around: the anchor is followed by *was it*, as if the speaker had said *this was at the zoo*. Modified tags are mainly found in spoken conversation; the modification of tags conforms to the hypothesis that we tend to remember the content of speech rather than the exact wordings: "[l]imitations on storage capacity [in working memory] mean that it is under pressure (...) to shed *verbatim* information and replace it with abstract propositions (one complete idea instead of a number of words)" (Field 2004:326).

Erroneous tags cannot be explained as modifications; instead, there are indications that the speaker failed to produce the correct form due to special circumstances. It may be a young speaker, as in example (28), which was uttered by a four-year-old girl, who seems not to have fully mastered the formation of tags yet:[10]

(28) one, two, <-|-> <u>you count, one, two, three, four, don't it?</u> <-|-> (sBNC KD1 4155)
Expected tag wording: *don't you?*

The analysis of potential TQs is clearly more complicated in transcriptions of spoken conversation than in corpus material of written language. One reason is that real-life conversation is less orderly than edited written language, as argued above. Another reason is that corpus transcriptions of spoken language are imperfect renderings of what was actually uttered; transcribers often have difficulties hearing what is said, especially when there is overlapping speech; hence, there are a large number of passages labelled <unclear> in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, either affecting only parts of the anchors as in (29)–(30), or sometimes the whole anchor as in (31):

(29) Wendy: <u>She's very <unclear> isn't she?</u>
Bev: Oh, well it's either that or she's just ignorant! (sBNC KE6 5384–5385)

---

[10] The formation of tags is acquired rather late in children's language development (Dennis *et al.*1982:1254).

(30) June: (...) Well he said I must <-|-> <unclear> <-|->
      Peggy: <-|-> <u>unclear</u> <-|-> <u>Aunty Emma <u>didn't she?</u></u>
                   <-|-> I'm not an Aunty any more. <-|->
      June: <-|-> <unclear> Well <-|-> I mean she she hadn't to have one part of the
                   house. (sBNC KSS 1180–1183)

(31) Rachel: <unclear > again.
      Corale: No.
      Rachel: <unclear> <u>is she?</u>
      Corale: No she's alright now. (sBNC KCM 531–534)

It would have skewed the overall frequency comparisons between fiction dialogue and spoken conversation if what seem from the context to be TQs in the spoken data had been discarded due to <unclear> passages in the anchors, as in (29)–(31) above. Therefore, such instances are included in the conversation sample. This means, however, that some formal features, for example, polarity, cannot be analysed for all instances.

3.3   Lexical combinations in tags

The operators in tags are most obviously all the finite forms of the primary verbs *be*, *do* and *have*, the modal auxiliaries *can/could*, *may/might*, *will/would*, *shall/should*, *must* and the marginal modal *ought* (without *to*). If these operators are combined with the tag subjects *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, *they*, *one*[11], and existential *there*, there are 144 word combinations for positive tags, and twice as many for negative tags, as the negation may be either enclitic or non-enclitic; there would thus be at least 432 different potential word combinations in tags.[12]

However, the picture is more complicated than indicated above. Some of the potential forms above are practically non-existent, as some operators are avoided in negative contractions, sometimes being replaced by other operators with similar meaning. The most clearly avoided negative contraction is *amn't*, which is replaced by *aren't*, as in (32); other forms which are avoided are *mayn't* and *oughtn't* (Quirk *et al.* 1985:811–812).

(32)   "<u>I'm pretty hopeless at relationships, aren't I?</u>" (wBNC A0F 2366)

---

[11] The possibility of using the marginal pronoun *one* in tags is mentioned by, for example, Huddleston and Pullum (2002:426–427) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006:283).

[12] It has been claimed that subjects in tags after declarative anchors may also be non-pronominal, as in (iv):

   (iv) <u>John always wins at poker, doesn't the bastard</u> (Knowles 1980:393; also quoted in Algeo 1988:179).

Moreover, other pronouns than personal pronouns may appear in tags after imperative anchors, as in (v):

   (v) <u>Turn on the light, will somebody or other?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813).

Instances of these types are probably extremely rare and very difficult to find in corpus searches, and therefore disregarded in the present study.

Some additional tags, such as *aren't I*, are combinations of elements found in standard tags. However, there are also additional potential forms of tags with elements not found in standard tags; such tags need also to be considered in the lexical searches in order to capture as many as possible of all tags.

Firstly, even if it is unlikely that the marginal modals *need*, *dare* and *used* (without *to*, but also in the form *usen't*) are employed in tags, they should be included in the lexical searches for tags in the present study.

Secondly, the fairly common non-standard contraction *ain't* used "in place of *am not*, *is not*, *are not*, *has not*, and *have not*" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:129) must, of course, be included.

Thirdly, the integrated form *innit* should also be included, as it is a phonologically reduced form of *isn't it*, which has received a standard orthographic form. It may be used both instead of *isn't it*, i.e. variantly, and instead of other tags, i.e. invariantly (Andersen 2001:104ff). The use of *innit* instead of *hasn't it* must also be regarded as a variant use, as it cannot be excluded that *innit* may also have connections to *ain't it*; see the discussion in Andersen (2001:197ff). *Innit* is also sometimes spelt *in it*, and related forms are *int it*, *in't it* and *in't it*. The forms *in*, *int* and *in't* may also appear with *he*, *she* and *there*. In analogy with *innit*, there is also an integrated form of *doesn't it*: *dunnit*. All these more or less integrated forms should be included in the lexical searches for tags.

Fourthly, tags may display other non-standard spellings than those mentioned above. The problem was to find out what non-standard spellings are found in tags in the BNC. Test searches in the BNC were made of non-standard contractions found on a list of *Contracted forms and associated tags in BNC2*[13], and POS-tag searches were also performed for all operators and personal pronouns in order to see what alternative forms are tagged as operators and personal pronouns. Based on these investigations, it was decided to include also the following non-standard spellings in the lexical searches: *'ave*, *'as* and *'ad* for *have*, *has* and *had*, as *'e* for *he*, and *ya*, *ye* and *yer* for *you* as well as *dae* for *do*.

Based on the considerations above, a list of potential word combinations was established to be used in the lexical searches for tags in the present study. These lexical combinations should cover tags appearing in TQs with all kinds of sentence types as anchors: declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative TQs. This list is displayed in Fig. 3.2:

---

[13] URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/docs/fused.htm>.

Negative tags with enclitic negation			Positive tags (and negative tags with non-enclitic negation)		
ain't aren't isn't wasn't weren't haven't hasn't hadn't don't doesn't didn't can't couldn't mayn't mightn't won't wouldn't shan't shouldn't mustn't oughtn't needn't daren't usedn't usen't ain't in't i'n't 'aven't 'asn't 'adn't daren't in	+	I you he she it we they one there ya ye yer 'e	am are is was were have has had do does did can could may might will would shall should must ought need dare used 'ave 'as 'ad dae	+	I you he she it we they one there ya ye yer 'e (+not)
Negative tags with integrated negation					
innit dunnit					

Fig. 3.2   Word combinations in the lexical searches for tags in the BNC

The fact that non-enclitic forms consist of the corresponding positive form immediately fol-
lowed by *not* entails that non-enclitic forms can be captured when the immediate subsequent

context is considered without *not* having to be included in the search string. More information on the search procedure is found in Appendix A.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, a definition of the formal features of TQs has been presented and discussed. Even if the definition is designed to cover as many as possible of the TQs in the data, there are also some marginal instances, particularly in the spoken demographic part, which do not fully comply with the definition but, nevertheless, have been included in the data samples of TQs. There are a large number of possible lexical combinations in tags; these have been discussed in this chapter, and a list of combinations to be used in the lexical searches for tags in the BNC has been established.

4 Previous work on the functions of TQs

4.1 Introduction

Tag questions (TQs) display a large functional versatility and the functions of TQs have received a great deal of attention in previous work. Several functional systems have been suggested, in particular by Holmes (1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1995), Algeo (1988, 1990, 2006), Roesle (2001) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006, 2009a, 2009b). There are substantial differences between the proposed functional systems; Holmes and Algeo developed their systems independently for different purposes and they are based on different kinds of data. Roesle adapted Algeo's system to her data, and Tottie and Hoffmann, using similar data to Roesle, merged the systems of Holmes and Algeo. All these functional classifications focus on declarative TQs (DecTQs), as these are much more frequent than imperative, interrogative and exclamative TQs. However, non-declarative TQs are sometimes included in the data, although they are mostly only referred to very briefly, if at all. The functional systems of Holmes, Algeo, Roesle, and Tottie and Hoffmann are discussed in sections 4.2–4.5, with focus on the functions of DecTQs; previous work on the functions of non-declarative TQs is discussed in chapter 8, in particular the functions of imperative TQs (see section 8.2.2).

These previous functional systems encompass both reversed-polarity and constant-polarity TQs (see section 3.2.1). However, constant-polarity TQs have traditionally been claimed to be used under certain conditions (see e.g. Quirk *et al.* 1985:812), and their functions have been studied separately by Kimps (2007); previous work on the functions of constant-polarity TQs, in particular Kimps's research, is presented in section 4.6.

The integrated tag *innit* (see section 3.3) has received a great deal of attention during the last few decades as a new development of tags, particularly among young people, where *innit* may also be used invariantly; moreover, it has been suggested that the functional potential of *innit* has developed beyond that of the standard form (Erman 1998, Andersen 2001, Stenström *et al.* 2002). The functions of *innit* are discussed in section 4.7.

4.2 Holmes

Holmes (1982) is an early functional classification of tags based on corpus material, which also presents distributional data. She extracted canonical tags, i.e. variant tags, as well as invariant tags such as *eh*, from a 43,000-word corpus with spoken New Zealand English ranging from

41

informal conversations to more formal speech situations, and she discussed these tags in terms of solidarity, i.e. as positive politeness devices. In Holmes (1984a, 1984b), she showed that there are different functional patterns for men's and women's use of tags: women were found to use more tags "expressing speaker's solidarity with or positive attitude to addressee" (1984a: 54). Holmes (1995) used a somewhat extended corpus, and restricted her data to variant tags;[1] she there distinguished two functional macro-categories, the second of which is divided into three categories:

1. epistemic modal tags
2. affective tags: a. facilitative tags
                            b. softening tags
                            c. challenging tags

Holmes based her classification on politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987), which states that positive politeness strategies try to save the addressee's positive face, i.e. "the desire (in some respects) to be approved of", whereas negative politeness strategies try to save the hearer's negative face, i.e. "the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions" (1987:13). Nevertheless, the tags in Holmes's (1995) first category, epistemic modal tags, "express genuine speaker uncertainty rather than politeness" (1995:80), as in (1):

> (1)   (Husband searching in newspaper for information says to wife)
>   Fay Weldon's lecture is at eight isn't it (rising tone on the tag) (Holmes 1995:80)

Politeness is, however, crucial to the three functions in her macro-category of affective tags. Facilitative tags are thus "positive politeness devices (...) invit[ing] the addressee to contribute to the discourse" (1995:81), as in (2):

> (2)   (Host addressing a guest at her dinner party)
>   You've got a new job Tom haven't you (falling tone on the tag) (Holmes 1995:81)

Softening tags, on the other hand, are "negative politeness devices, used to attenuate the force of negatively affective utterances such as directives (...) and criticisms" (1995:82), as in (3):

> (3)   (Older brother to younger brother who has just stepped on the cat's bowl and spilled her milk all over the floor)
>   That was a really dumb thing to do wasn't it (falling tone on the tag) (Holmes 1995:82)

---

[1] The data in Holmes (1982, 1984a, 1984b) comprises 73 variant tags and 17 invariant tags, whereas the number of variant tags in Holmes (1995) is not provided, but can be estimated to around 100.

Lastly, challenging tags are "impolite devices" (1995:81) which "pressure a reluctant addressee to reply or aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act" (1995:80), as in (4):

> (4)   (Superintendent A criticising Detective Constable B)
>   A: Now <u>you er fully understand that, don't you?</u> (falling tone on the tag)
>   B: Yes, Sir, indeed, yeah. (Holmes 1995:81; quoting Thomas 1989:151)

Holmes showed that women used proportionately more facilitative tags than men; she suggests that the reason is that women have a tendency "to adopt a supportive and facilitative role in conversation" (1995:83). Holmes's focus on politeness has made a substantial contribution to the knowledge about this aspect of TQs.

4.3   Algeo

Algeo (1988, 1990, 2006), on the other hand, was interested in potential differences between BrE and AmE use of TQs. He observed that there are also impolite uses of TQs, which he considered would not be found in AmE: "the impoliter types are distinctively British" (1990:449).[2] Algeo (1990) distinguished five functional categories, which show "a progressive decline in politeness and in the degree to which they draw the addressed person into the conversation" (1990:445):

1. informational tags
2. confirmatory tags
3. punctuational tags
4. peremptory tags
5. aggressive tags

According to Algeo, informational tags are "genuine requests for information" (1990:445) with no expectation of a particular answer, i.e. they are not conducive (see Quirk *et al.* 1985: 808), as in (5):

> (5)   Q: <u>You don't have to wear any sort of glasses or anything, do you?</u>
>   A: Well, I wear glasses for reading sometimes. (Algeo 1990:445)

Algeo's confirmatory tags naturally ask for confirmation, as in (6), but they can also be used to "draw the person addressed into the conversation" (1990:445).

---

[2] A British use of condescending TQs had earlier been noticed by Dubois and Crouch (1975): "far from signalling lack of confidence, this usage is overbearing, intended to forestall opposition" (1975:292).

(6) Q: But <u>you don't have Swindon on your little map, do you?</u>
     A: No, I don't have Swindon on my map. (Algeo 1990:445)

Punctuational tags are not used to elicit information or confirmation but are "self-centered" in "treat[ing] addressees as audience rather than participants"; such a tag "emphasizes the point that the speaker wishes to make under the guise of asking a question" (1990:446), as in (7):

(7) You classicists, <u>you've probably not done Old English, have you?</u> Course you haven't.
     (Algeo 1990:446)

Peremptory tags are said to follow "statement[s] of obvious or universal truth", implying that "everyone knows the truth of the preceding statement, and therefore even someone of the limited intelligence of the addressee must be presumed to recognize it" (1990:446); "the intent – and often the effect – (...) is to leave speechless the person to whom it is directed" (1990:447), as in (8):

(8) <u>I wasn't born yesterday, was I?</u> (Algeo 1990:447)

Lastly, aggressive tags are claimed to follow statements which "the addressee cannot be reasonably expected to know"; "[by] implying that the addressees ought to know what they actually cannot know, the aggressive tag is insulting and provocative" (1990:447), as in (9):

(9) A: I rang you up this morning, but you didn't answer.
     Q: Well, <u>I was having a bath, wasn't I?</u> (Algeo 1990:447)

Algeo's numerous examples of aggressive tags (1988:186, 1990:447) mostly have *I* as tag subject, indicating that these tags deal with the speaker, about whom the speaker usually has more knowledge than the addressee. In fact, all Algeo's examples of aggressive tags seem to be A-events (Labov & Fanshel 1977:100), i.e. the event is known by the speaker but not by the addressee. Algeo (1990) claims that aggressive tags (as well as punctuational and peremptory tags) "seem to have begun with the lower orders" (1990:448) (cf. Hudson 1975:24, Cheshire 1991:66, Quirk *et al.* 1985:1479), but that their use has spread later.

    Algeo's most important contribution to the knowledge about TQs is that he brought attention to impolite uses of TQs. He suggested that there might be functional differences between BrE and AmE, but never tested his functional categories systematically on corpus data.[3] However, this was later done by Roesle (2001).

---

[3] Algeo's categories are based on an eclectic mix of examples: in Algeo (1988), mostly from British television series, in Algeo (1990), supplemented with selected spoken examples from the corpus of the *Survey of English Usage*, and in Algeo (2006), with examples from BrE fiction dialogue.

4.4 Roesle

Roesle (2001) applied Algeo's categories to BrE and AmE spoken corpus material, using data from the *Longman Spoken American Corpus* (LSAC) and the spoken part of the BNC. Her analysis of this corpus data led to a modification of Algeo's (1990) categories (Roesle 2001:36):

1. informational tags
2. confirmatory tags
3. involving tags
4. punctuational tags
5. peremptory tags
6. aggressive tags
7. hoping/fearing tags
8. conspiratory tags

Roesle's informational tags are "genuine requests for information" (2001:31), as in (10):

(10)   There doesn't happen to be a pen in there does there? (Roesle 2001:31)

Roesle divided Algeo's confirmatory tags into two categories: confirmatory tags and involving tags. Her confirmatory tags are restricted to instances where "the speaker is not 100 per cent sure of the proposition he/she is putting forward and thus seeks confirmation" (2001:32), as in (11), where the interlocutors discuss a screen version of a book:

(11)   Katherine: I haven't se I've read the book I didn't see.
        Patrick: Well I think you did see it, didn't you? No?
        Katherine: No, well I can't remember. (Roesle 2001:32)

Involving tags are, on the other hand, used for instances where "the speaker is sure of the truth of his proposition", being "a means of drawing the addressee into the discourse" (Roesle 2001: 32), as in (12), and thus comparable to Holmes's facilitative tags.

(12)   This is quite nice an anorak isn't it? (Roesle 2001:33)

Roesle's punctuational tags are similar to Algeo's; she finds that such a tag "functions as a form of emphasis and underlines the proposition (...) just put forward" (2001:34), as in (13):

(13)   I said we're gonna have to start still doing what we said, erm, getting the money beforehand I think. You know it's ridiculous isn't it? Well you don't bleeding know whether them other people turned up do you? Did your mum take it to let you know? (Roesle 2001:34)

Roesle's peremptory and aggressive tags are similar to Algeo's categories. Here is one example of each: a peremptory tag in (14) and an aggressive tag in (15):

(14) Orgady: When is the end of the month?
      Unknown: At the end of the month, innit? (Roesle 2001:35)

(15) (...) when I wanted the bugger last time I couldn't see it, could I? (Roesle 2001:35)

Roesle also added two functional categories, the first one being hoping/fearing tags, where the speaker "either hopes or fears that the proposition may be true" (2001:36), as in (16) and (17):

(16) I didn't offend you did I? (Roesle 2001:36)

(17) I mean you're not locking him in any more are you? (Roesle 2001:36)

The other new category is conspiratory tags, which are "used by the speaker to appear more convincing to a third party" (2001:36), as in (18):

(18) Well, we went and had lunch didn't we darling? (Roesle 2001:36)

The speaker in (18) wants confirmation, but, in contrast to confirmatory tags, where the speaker is uncertain, the speaker of the TQ in (18) is quite certain and so is the addressee. The speaker does not need confirmation for her own sake; instead, she wants the confirmation to be heard by another person present.

The main conclusion in Roesle's study is that "British and American English differ in their usage of TQs in terms of frequency, pronunciation, grammar and pragmatics" (2001:86). The most striking finding is that TQs were found to be five times as frequent in BrE as in AmE (Roesle 2001:55). The main pragmatic differences reported by Roesle are that confirmatory and punctuational tags are proportionately more common in BrE, whereas involving tags are proportionately less common. The other pragmatic types (informational, peremptory, aggressive, hoping/fearing and conspiratory tags) display very low percentages in both varieties; the impolite tags (peremptory and aggressive) could not be shown to be significantly more common in BrE than in AmE (Roesle 2001:65).

Roesle's main contributions to the functional analysis of tags are that she tested Algeo's categories on large corpora and discovered some specialized uses seemingly not discussed before: hoping/fearing and conspiratory tags.

4.5   Tottie and Hoffmann

Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) re-used Roesle's database but restricted their BrE data to TQs from the spoken demographic part of the BNC, as they consider this part of the spoken component of the BNC to be more comparable to the data from the *Longman Spoken American Corpus* (LSAC), which consists of colloquial AmE. In their data, TQs were found to be as much as nine times as common in BrE as in AmE, further underlining the Britishness of TQs.

Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) decided to merge the functional systems of Algeo (1990) and Holmes (1995). Tottie and Hoffmann's categories are:

1.   informational tags
2.   confirmatory tags
3.   facilitating tags
4.   attitudinal tags
5.   peremptory tags
6.   aggressive tags

Tottie and Hoffmann's informational tags are said to be "genuine requests for information" (2006:300), as in (19), and are thus similar to Algeo's and Roesle's informational tags.

(19)   Stuart: You're getting paid for this, are you?
          Mark: Twenty five quid. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:300)

Their confirmatory tags are similar to Roesle's, as they are used when "the speaker is not sure of what s/he says" and "wants confirmation" (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:300), as in (20):

(20)   A: I'm gonna try to go walking for a little bit. I don't need a jacket, do I?
          B: No, it's still pleasant. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:300)

Their facilitating tags are comparable to Roesle's involving tags and Holmes's facilitative tags; they are used when "the speaker is sure of the truth of what s/he says but wants to involve listener" (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:301). In contrast to Holmes, Tottie and Hoffmann argue that facilitating tags are "not always [used] out of politeness" (2006:300), as in (21):

(21)   Teacher: Right it's two isn't it?
          Pupil: Mm. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:300)

Tottie and Hoffmann's attitudinal tag "emphasizes what the speaker says" and "does not expect involvement or reply" (2006:300), as in (22); such tags are comparable to Algeo's and Roesle's punctuational tags.

(22) Larna: yeah <u>she'll be in trouble, won't she</u>, she often gets her own drinks anyway,
                she sort of like, she's at that age she can, it's only when they get out there
                together.
     Pauline: mh. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:300)

Tottie and Hoffman adopt Algeo's peremptory and aggressive tags, using his formulations in their descriptions of these categories, although giving their own examples: a peremptory tag, shown here as (23), and an aggressive tag, shown here as (24):

(23) Kathleen: How old's your mum and dad?
     Unknown: (laughs)
     Kathleen: He don't know neither.
     Unknown: They're in their forties anyway I think.
     Enid: That's what I said.
     Kathleen: Well <u>we come to that conclusion didn't we</u>?
     Unknown: Me dad's think me dad's forty seven. Me mum's about forty three, forty four.
                 (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:301)

(24) Ernest: … well I put, I thought you were staying to tea so I put six eggs on.
     Arthur: oh aye, yeah, alright.
     Peggy: you put what?
     Ernest: <u>put six eggs on didn't I?</u> anyhow, I'm putting, I'm putting two on.
                (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:301)

Tottie and Hoffmann did not find any "unequivocal examples of Holmes's *softening* category" (2006:300) in the data they analysed functionally (371 instances from the BNC and 500 from the LSAC).

Tottie and Hoffmann's (2006) discussion of all these categories and the integration of these systems is an important contribution to the understanding of the functions of TQs. However, it could be noted that Tottie and Hoffmann's functional system seems closer to Algeo's (and Roesle's) than to Holmes's. Tottie and Hoffmann report the same functional distribution in the LSAC data (2006:302) as Roesle (2001:65), the difference being that they call Roesle's involving tags facilitating and her punctuational tags attitudinal and collapse Roesle's hoping/fearing and conspiratory tags into "other" types (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:302). For the BNC, Tottie and Hoffmann's functional distribution (2006:32) is somewhat different from Roesle's (2001: 65), as they restricted their BNC data to the demographic part. Their findings about functional differences between BrE and AmE are nevertheless similar to Roesle's: confirmatory and attitudinal tags are found to be proportionately more common in BrE and facilitating tags proportionately less common; other functions display very low percentages.

The functional system of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) is based on spoken data only. Later on, they have applied this system to smaller sets of written data of two different kinds: in Tottie and Hoffmann (2009a), to written TQs which are not "representations of spoken language" (2009a:306), and in Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b), to TQs in sixteenth-century drama. In the

former work, they find that "the predominant use of tag questions in written texts is to express the writer's attitude, or *stance*" (2009a:311); such TQs are thus attitudinal. In the latter work, they adapt their functional system to their historical drama data: the informational category is subsumed within the confirmatory category, and the peremptory and aggressive categories are conflated into a challenging category.[4] Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) also adjust the descriptions of the functional categories to the drama data, stating that confirmatory TQs "clearly seek and receive answers and (...) do not have any strong affective functions" usually being turn-final, although not necessarily so, whereas attitudinal TQs "appear in the middle of long turns and do not seem to expect an answer but to express the speaker's *attitude*", and challenging TQs "do not expect and do not receive answers" (2009b:142–143). Hence, factors such as speaker expectations, responses or not to the TQs and the turn position of TQs receive more attention in the descriptions of the functional categories of the written data of Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) than in the descriptions of the spoken data of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006). It could also be noted that Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) only found one single facilitative TQ among their historical data of 137 instances.

Tottie and Hoffmann have thus made major contributions to the knowledge of the functions of TQs by studying both spoken and written TQs as well as TQs in historical data.

4.6   The functions of constant-polarity DecTQs: Kimps

Constant-polarity DecTQs are claimed in several grammars to be used in other ways than reversed-polarity DecTQs: "such structures frequently echo a previous statement or draw a conclusion from something the previous speaker has said" (Biber *et al.* 1999:209), or put differently, they are "characteristically preceded by *oh* or *so*, indicating the speaker's arrival at a conclusion by inference, or by recalling what has already been said" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812). Wierzbicka (1991) labels these two uses of constant-polarity DecTQs echoing and interpreting, respectively (1991:226). Quirk *et al.* add that the effect may be "scolding", as in (25), "sarcastic", as in (26), or "sarcastically contradictory" (1985:812), as in (27):

(25)   Oh, <u>you've had another accident, have you?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812)

(26)   So <u>that's your game, is it?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812)

(27)   So <u>your car is outside, is it?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812)

---

[4] Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) also introduce a hortatory category "with directive functions" (2009b:144) to account for the functions of imperative TQs (see section 8.2.6).

Most of the functional classifications presented in sections 4.2–4.5 seem to cover both reversed-polarity and constant-polarity TQs, except perhaps Algeo's; Algeo (1988) comments on constant-polarity DecTQs separately:

> Such unreversed negation-polarity tags may signal only the drawing of an inference or the stating of a fact to be obvious to everyone, or they may even be genuine requests for information. (...) Tag questions without reversed negation polarity may also connote a variety of emotional attitudes – scepticism, sarcasm, disapproval, polite surprise, conspiracy (Algeo 1988:177)

The problem with the corpus-based studies of Holmes, Roesle, and Tottie and Hoffmann (see sections 4.2 and 4.4–4.5) is that there seem to have been too few instances of constant-polarity TQs in their data for any clear conclusions on the functions of such TQs in relation to reversed-polarity DecTQs[5]. Holmes (1982) discusses constant-polarity TQs in some of her sub-categories; she shows that constant-polarity DecTQs may be used to facilitate conversation, as in (28):

(28)   (Host to guest) Still working hard at your office are you? (Holmes 1982:54)

Holmes also gives examples of constant-polarity DecTQs used to soften the negative impact of "sarcastic remarks and ironic comments" (1982:59), as in (29):

(29)   You think you're smart do you? (Holmes 1982:59)

In Holmes (1995), however, there is no discussion of constant polarity. Roesle (2001) only mentions that "British speakers appear to use [the constant-polarity] structure with greater consistency than Americans in that they often use it to refer to something that has been said before or to express a feeling of hope or irritation" (2001:68). Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) report that they were "unable to correlate polarity types with pragmatic categories" (2006:302).[6]

Kimps (2007) is a study of the functions of constant-polarity DecTQs only, based on a mixture of spoken and written corpus data. Kimps argues that such DecTQs "have their own grammatical system, convey their own meaning, and fulfil their own functions within the system of tag questions" (2007:271). She concludes that they "typically exhibit a low degree of commitment towards the truth of the proposition by the speaker and a high degree of responsibility towards the hearer" (Kimps 2007:289). Kimps divides the constant-polarity DecTQs into three categories with different "core meanings" (2007:272), displaying different kinds of attitudes:

---

[5] Holmes (1982): seven NZE instances, Roesle (2001): ca 50 BrE and 20 AmE instances, Tottie and Hoffmann (2006): ca 30 BrE and 20 AmE instances.

[6] In the sixteenth-century drama data of Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b), challenging TQs display constant polarity more often than TQs in other functions; however, "this is closely connected with authorial preferences" (2009b:148).

1. Expressing mirativity – challenging attitudes

2. Seeking verification – neutral attitudes

3. Hedging – tentative attitudes

Kimps reports the majority of attitudes of constant-polarity DecTQs to be challenging (57 per cent), neutral ones to be common (40 per cent) and tentative ones to be rare (2 per cent).

The constant-polarity DecTQs in her first category express mirativity, i.e. "the lack of con-currence between one's own belief and something patently in opposition to it" (Kimps 2007: 277, quoting Downing (2001:256); see also DeLancey 1997, 2001). The anchor presents "new or unexpected information [which] often contradicts the speaker's expectations or assumptions (...), but is believed to be true for the hearer" (Kimps 2007:277); the attitudes of such DecTQs are "rather 'assertive' because they challenge the addressee to confirm or justify the truth of the proposition" (2007:282). The basic challenging attitudes of such DecTQs are surprise (23 per cent), as in (30), disbelief (56 per cent), as in (31), or disagreement (21 per cent), as in (32):

(30) A: I got some Airfax models and that to build and slept at my brother's a couple of times
      B: Yeah. Oh, you've got brothers and sisters, have you?
      A: Yeah (Kimps 2007:283)

(31) A: He's back in training today.
      B: He's fully fit, is he?
      A: He's reported back from Czechoslovakia and he's in training today, so he is fully fit. (Kimps 2007:284)

(32) A: When dinner's ready bring it up. Cos I usually sit on my bed playing with the computer all night.
      B: So you have dinner in your bedroom do you?
      A: Well not all the time. Sometimes I eat downstairs. (Kimps 2007:284)

There may also be additional aggressive attitudes, viz. mockery, as in (33), irony/sarcasm, as in (34), or contempt, as in (35):

(33) Over here, you're typical phone in is, 'Hello, Mrs Scroggins, so you've lost you're parrot have you? Well, let's talk about that for ten minutes. People are allowed to rabbit on about nothing for ever.' (Kimps 2007:285)

(34) A: He's got six penguins …
      B: Yeah
      A: … three foot tall …
      B: Mm
      A: … a peacock …
      B: Mm
      A: … and two five foot tall parrots that all light up.
      B: And he's all right, is he?
      A: He's a lovely, he's a lovely man.
      B: Right. (Kimps 2007:286)

(35) A: but when she does ring up when he used to he used to get this same tirade like oh so
          you've managed to ring up have you (laughs) you did
      B: yes you've rung your old mother have you – yes
      A: <u>manage to pick up the phone <u>did you</u></u> yes (laughs) so she quite put him off and now he
          never rings up or anything (adapted from Kimps (2007:286))

In Kimps's constant-polarity DecTQs seeking verification, there are neutral attitudes not chal-
lenging the addressee, "for instance incredulity or uncertainty" (2007:278). There is "no contra-
diction with the speaker's erstwhile beliefs" (2007:277): "the speaker had not thought of the
proposition up to now and wants to re-establish common ground" (2007:287), as in (36):

(36) A: I'm sure she'll be back in a couple of minutes. O hold on I think she just walked in
          through the door.
      B: <u>She's just arriving <u>is she?</u></u> (Kimps 2007:287)

Kimps's hedging constant-polarity DecTQs express empathy and display tentative attitudes:
such a DecTQ may "hedge a suggestion or an opinion" (2007:278), as in (37):

(37) A: <u>We should give her the Mississippi steamer pack <u>should we</u></u>. I think we ought to do that
          really.
      B: <sigh> Ah yes. Mississippi steamer a dark blend of wine and fine old bourbon with a
          hint of orange and lemon. And we'll send her all that business... (Kimps 2007:288)

The echoing and interpreting uses are typical of Kimps's first category, the echoing uses often
being found when the speaker is surprised; in her second category, "the proposition is only a
weak inference from the previous conversation and the speaker's background information"
(2007:277), although there may also be "propositions which are an echo of a previous state-
ment" (2007:287), and in her third category, there are "suggestions and judgments (...) rather
than inferences or echo statements" (2007:276).

     Kimps (2007) suggested some correlations between functions and formal features: mirativi-
ty-expressing constant-polarity DecTQs with the basic challenging attitude of disagreement and/
or additional aggressive attitudes often have the tag subject *you*, and hedging constant-polarity
DecTQs typically combine *shall/should* with a 1st-person pronoun (2007:289).

     Kimps (2007) has compared her written and spoken data, the written data apparently being
mostly from fiction dialogue:[7] she reports that 46 per cent of the written constant-polarity
DecTQs display additional challenging attitudes, i.e. mockery, irony/sarcasm or contempt, vs.
only eight per cent of the spoken instances (2007:285); this "suggests that fiction writers are
most aware of the strongly challenging uses of [constant-polarity DecTQs] and pay little atten-
tion to the wider variety of attitudes which [they] express in actual usage" (2007:289). This con-

---

[7] Kimps's (2007) 146 written examples are taken from the *Cobuild Corpus*, but not all are from fiction dialogue, as
the genres of magazines and ephemera are also included (2007:271).

forms to the suggestion of Nässlin (1984) that spoken constant-polarity DecTQs "seem to be used primarily to ask for information, as a rule" whereas, constant-polarity DecTQs in fiction dialogue "usually express various attitudes", often being "insinuating or sarcastic" (1984:91–92).[8] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) comment on the low percentage of constant-polarity DecTQs "convey[ing] 'irony, sarcasm, mockery, or contempt'" (2006:302) in Kimps's data vs. the traditional descriptions in grammars:

> Constant polarity tags were especially frequent in the eighteenth century, and many of those seem to have been aggressive. This could explain the statements of grammarians (see Hoffmann, 2006, 43–45). (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:309).

Early grammars normally used examples from fiction: grammars such as Mätzner (1864:3–4) and Kruisinga (1922) give examples of constant-polarity DecTQs from fiction dialogue; Kruisinga states that "[t]he construction may express a friendly interest or surprise; it may also be ironical" (1922:117). It should be noted that Hoffmann's (2006) historical data also comes from fiction, more precisely from drama, not from spontaneous spoken language, which is difficult to access for historical studies.

To sum up, Kimps has published the most important study so far of the functions of constant-polarity DecTQ. However, as she focused on constant-polarity DecTQs, she has not made any corpus-based comparisons to reversed-polarity DecTQs. Other linguists have included both constant-polarity and reversed-polarity DecTQs in their data, but without reaching any clear conclusions on potential functional differences between these two polarity types, perhaps due to small amounts of data on constant-polarity DecTQs.

4.7   The functions of *innit*

The integrated form *innit* has received a growing interest among linguists during the last two decades, not only as to its form and origin (see section 3.3), but also as to its functions. Since *innit* is included among the TQs in the present study, it is relevant to discuss findings also from such previous work.

Studies on the functions of *innit* as a tag are mainly based on data from COLT[9], i.e. the use of *innit* among teenagers in London (Erman 1998, Andersen 2001, Stenström *et al.* 2002); *innit* as used by adult speakers has not received the same attention, and no corpus-based comparisons

---

[8] Nässlin (1984) does not state how many constant-polarity TQs she found in her Fiction Corpus.

[9] COLT (the *Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language*) contains about half a million words from spoken conversations between teenagers (13 to 17 years old), collected in the London area in 1993 (<http://torvald.aksis.uib.no/colt>). Parts of the COLT material are included in the spoken demographic part of the BNC.

seem to have been made between the functions of *innit* and standard variant tags.[10] Neverthe-less, the studies of *innit* indicate that *innit* as a tag may fulfil fairly similar functions to the ones described earlier for standard variant tags. However, these studies also suggest a wider func-tional potential of *innit*, in particular an imagination-appealing function "occur[ring] especially in narratives" (Andersen 2001:128, Stenström *et al.* 2002:169), which is related to Erman's (1998) discussion of *innit* as a discourse marker used "in narrative or descriptive passages" with "an emphasizing function" similar to *you know* (1998:97), as in (38), where *innit* has very little meaning:

> (38)   Kelly's one is, like, I only got a glimpse of it, but I'm sure it's like Donna's one. Gone and spoilt her hair, man. <u>She was so pretty, innit.</u> She was getting tall, nice blue eyes and then she goes and does that. (Erman 1998:97)

This narrative function of tags is also discussed by Columbus (2010a, 2010b), who states that invariant tags may be used in "trying to hold the listener's attention" (2010b:304); Columbus suggests that this narrative function is "worthy of consideration in future examinations of tags, both invariant and canonical" (2010b:298).

In these studies of *innit*, the functions of *innit* are generally described as a combination of the subjective attitude of the speaker, i.e. whether the speaker is certain or uncertain, and interactio-nal functions dealing with the speaker's evaluation of the addressee's knowledge and thus also the speaker's expectation of a response or reaction from the addressee.[11] Their way of discuss-ing the combinations of these factors inspired the functional model developed in the present study.

In addition, both Erman (1998) and Andersen (2001) discuss the relation between the func-tions and turn positions of *innit*; Andersen reports two thirds of the instances in his TQ data with *innit* to be used "turn-medially and where no response from the hearer is called for" (2001:133), as in (39):

---

[10] An empirical study comparing the functions of non-standard and standard tags is Cheshire (1991); she studied tags with standard contractions, *ain't* and *in't* in the dialect of Reading. She concluded that only tags with *in't* were used when no answer was required, i.e. for certain hostile and provocative purposes; however, tags with *in't* could also be used when "confirmation or corroboration" was required (Cheshire 1991:67).

[11] Andersen (2001) compares the categories of Millar and Brown (1979), Algeo (1988) and Holmes (1995) as to "[s]peaker's relation to [proposition] (subjective attitude)" and "[s]peaker's evaluation of the hearer's relation to [proposition]" (Andersen 2001:119). Millar and Brown (1979) is an early discussion on the functions of TQs where the "relation between proposition (P) and speaker (S)" is combined with the "relation between hearer (H) and pro-position (as estimated by the speaker)" (1979:39); however, it should be noted that their study is based on data from a specific dialect only, viz. that of Edinburgh.

(39) Look <u>it's their problem</u> <u>innit</u> I mean I just wanna get over these bloody things.
      (Andersen 2001:133)

In comparison, Holmes (1995) mentions only briefly that tags "are often final in utterances, but may also be medial" (1995:80), and Tottie and Hoffmann mainly discuss turn position in their historical study (2009b) (see section 4.5). These studies of *innit* made me aware of the importance of the turn position for the functions of DecTQs.

4.8   Summary and discussion

Two classificatory systems for the functions of tags have been developed independently of each other: Holmes (1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1995) and Algeo (1988, 1990, 2006). Holmes focused on politeness, and later also on gender differences. Her facilitative and softening tags are positive and negative politeness devices, respectively. However, Holmes also proposed that tags may be epistemic modal, expressing uncertainty, or impolite in challenging the addressee. Algeo was particularly interested in the impolite uses of tags (peremptory and aggressive tags) and potential differences between AmE and BrE. He also introduced a punctuational category – such tags are used to emphasize the point of the speaker – and an informational category of non-conducive tags; of course, Algeo also had a confirmatory category. Algeo's system was modified by Roesle (2001) in two ways: firstly, she made a distinction between confirmatory and involving tags; the latter category resembles Holmes's facilitative tags. Secondly, she proposed two further categories: hoping/fearing tags and conspiratory tags. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) merged the systems of Holmes and Algeo, although their categories seem closer to Algeo's and Roesle's than to Holmes's: they keep most of Roesle's categories, but adopt Holmes's term facilitating for Roesle's involving tags, and change the term punctuational for attitudinal; it should be noted that they did not find any softening tags in their data. In later works by Tottie and Hoffmann (2009a, 2009b), they have subsumed the informational category under the confirmatory category and collapsed the peremptory and aggressive tags into a challenging category; they have also exchanged their term facilitating for Holmes's facilitative. In Fig. 4.1, the categories of Holmes, Algeo, Roesle, and Tottie and Hoffmann are compared:

Macro-categories (Holmes 1995)	Holmes (1995)	Algeo (1990)	Roesle (2001)	Tottie & Hoffmann (2006)	Tottie & Hoffmann (2009b)
epistemic modal	modal[12]	informational	informational	informational	confirmatory
		confirmatory	confirmatory	confirmatory	
affective	facilitative	confirmatory	involving	facilitating	facilitative
	softening	–	–	–	–
	–	punctuational	punctuational	attitudinal	attitudinal
	challenging	peremptory	peremptory	peremptory	challenging
	–	aggressive	aggressive	aggressive	
	–	–	hoping/fearing	–	–
	–	–	conspiratory	–	–

Fig. 4.1.   Functional categories of TQs; partly adapted from Tottie and Hoffmann (2006:301)

Constant-polarity DecTQs have been claimed to be used in other ways than reversed-polarity DecTQs, viz. to present conclusions or to echo previous speech (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812, Biber *et al.* 1999:209). Kimps (2007), who only studied constant-polarity TQs, finds that they mostly express mirativity with various challenging overtones, but they may also be used to seek verification and for hedging. However, Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) did not find any correlations between their functional categories and constant polarity. On the other hand, it has been suggested in a couple of studies that the challenging functions of constant-polarity TQs are primarily exploited in fiction, and less in spoken conversation (Nässlin 1984, Kimps 2007).

Research on *innit* (Erman 1998, Andersen 2001, Stenström *et al.* 2002) has provided discussions on the functions of tags which may be useful also for a study on variant tags. The functions of *innit* are described as combinations of the speaker's subjective attitude of certainty or uncertainty, the speaker's evaluation of the addressee's knowledge and the speaker's expectation of a response from the addressee. Furthermore, these researchers have drawn attention to TQs often being turn-embedded, thus not expecting any responses.

Potential correlations between functions and formal features of DecTQs are rarely discussed in previous corpus-based research on DecTQs; one exception is Kimps (2007), who suggests a few correlations between some formal features and some functions of constant-polarity DecTQs. The formal feature of constant polarity is often described as a factor behind certain functions; however, no corpus-based investigations comparing constant-polarity and reversed-polarity DecTQs have so far been able to show any statistically significant differences between the distributions of the functions of these two polarity types. Researchers on *innit* (Erman 1998, Andersen 2001, Stenström *et al.* 2002) have suggested that *innit* displays a somewhat different

---

[12] Holmes (1995) uses the term *epistemic modal* for this category, but Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) refer to it as just *modal*, probably in order to distinguish it from the macro category epistemic modal.

functional potential than standard variant tags; however, they have related their own corpus-based results on the functions of *innit* to generally assumed functions of reversed-polarity Dec-TQs, not to any research of their own on reversed-polarity DecTQs.

Parts of the differences between the previous functional systems seem to be due to the tag sometimes being treated as the functional unit, but at other times, it is the whole TQ which is assigned a function. Holmes (1982) made it very clear that she found the tag to be the functional unit to investigate:

> the [tag] serves in all contexts, both linguistic and social, as a 'hedge' (...) on the illocu-tionary force of the utterance to which it is attached (...) it is remarkably easy when attempting to establish the function of a [tag] to be distracted or led astray by the mean-ing of the main clause to which the tag is attached. Distinguishing the illocutionary force of the utterance as a whole from that of the untagged utterance is a necessary step in clarifying the effect of the [tag]. (Holmes 1982:45,47)

In contrast, neither Algeo nor Tottie and Hoffmann discuss their choices of functional unit. Algeo (1988) presents "four kinds of pragmatic meaning (...) for *tag questions*": informational *tag*, confirmatory *tag*, etc. (1988:182–185; my italicizations).[13] Similarly, Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) present "pragmatic types of *tags*" (2006:300; my italicization) in a section called "The semantics and pragmatics of *tag questions* in British and American English" (2006:297; my italicization). The reason why Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) did not find any "unequivocal exam-ples of Holmes's softening tags" (2006:302) when they merged Algeo's and Holmes's functio-nal systems might be that such a category can only be applied to tags, whereas Holmes's other categories are also applicable to the whole TQs. Tottie and Hoffmann (2009a, 2009b) mainly re-fer to TQs in their discussions of functions. However, Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) make a dis-tinction as to functional units between declarative and imperative TQs: they discuss the diffe-rent functions of DecTQs, but then, for imperative TQs, they discuss the directive function of "hortatory tag questions" as well as the softening, emphatic or neutral functions of "hortatory tags" (2009b:144). Furthermore, Kimps (2007) clearly discusses the functions of the whole con-stant-polarity DecTQs, whereas Andersen (2001) assigns his functions to the tag *innit*.

Holmes finds that tags are multifunctional, although they have a "predominant or primary function" (1982:45): either a modal function, "express[ing] degree of certainty", or an affective/ interactional function, "express[ing] attitude to addressee(s)" (1982:48). Algeo, on the other hand, focuses on the interactional aspect: "the tag question signals a relationship between the participants in the language event" (1988:180). It is revealing that his confirmatory category,

---

[13] Algeo (1990) is similar to Algeo (1988) in presenting "uses of *tag questions*": "informational *tag*" etc. (1990:445; my italicizations). However, in Algeo (2006), he uses the term *tag question* for the tag, and discusses the "rhetorical uses" of tag questions (2006:297).

with a term having to do with the intended interaction, covers similar cases to Holmes's modal category. In the discussions of the functions of *innit*, Erman (1998) and Andersen (2001) clearly combine the subjective attitude and the interactional aspect for each functional category.

Another issue concerning the functions of TQs is whether the tag should be regarded as a pragmatic marker/discourse marker/discourse particle etc.; of course, this may partly depend on different definitions of these categories. Holmes (1982) does not consider tags to be discourse particles:

> [Tags] are generally aimed at eliciting a response, however minimal, from the address-ee. Discourse particles are signposts used by the speaker to mark stages in the discourse, and they do not request a response but signal the speaker is continuing with his or her speaking turn. (Holmes 1982:43–44)

When tags are included among pragmatic markers etc., they are usually not claimed to be typical members of such categories; Fraser (1996), for example, classifies tags in DecTQs as "hybrid basic markers", as they "involve a specific structure in combination with certain lexical conditions" (1996:177). Andersen (2001) finds that "there is a great deal of functional overlap between [tags] and a number of forms that are uncontroversially classified as pragmatic markers, such as *right*" (2001:22); he therefore considers tags to be pragmatic markers, despite the fact that the form of the tag is "determined by the syntax of the proposition it is attached to" (2001:23) and argues:

> Brinton's [1996][14] list of distinguishing features of pragmatic markers captures very well indeed the characteristics of [tags]: they are short, recurrent, optional, multi-functional, informal, non-propositional, predominantly spoken etc. (Andersen 2001:23).

The status of tags is also discussed by Hoffmann (2006), who does not consider tags to be discourse markers, as they have not undergone all the grammaticalization processes normally required of such items; nevertheless, he finds that "[tags] and discourse markers perform closely related functions in conversation" (2006:52).

The discussions of the functions of TQs in this chapter form a background for the development of the functional model in the present study; this model is presented in the next chapter.

---

[14] Brinton (1996) does not include tags in her inventory of pragmatic markers (1996:32).

5 The functional model

5.1 Introduction

Previous functional classifications of tag questions (TQs) have mainly been based on data from spoken conversation (see chapter 4), something which has naturally influenced the systems. The fact that focus in the present study is on the functions of TQs in fiction dialogue is, of course, of great importance. Firstly, TQs may have other functional properties in fiction dialogue than in real-life conversation, which may justify a different model. However, as one of the aims of the present study is to make a comparison to spoken conversation, the functional categories need also to be applicable to such data. Secondly, there is no access to intonational cues in fiction, but this is compensated for in various ways by authors of fiction, since they need to present a dialogue which is understandable and credible (see section 2.4). In contrast, the spoken corpora on which previous functional classifications are based provided various degrees of prosodic information and, in some cases, the conversations could be listened to. Thirdly, the analysis of functions is facilitated in fiction texts, as everything included is there for a well thought-out reason and usually found in a clear linguistic context (see section 2.5).

In previous work, the functional unit is sometimes just the tag and sometimes the whole TQ (see section 4.8). In the present study, the whole TQ is in focus when the functions are discussed, not just the isolated tag. As argued above in section 3.1, there is no tag without an anchor, and no anchor without a tag; they only become anchor and tag, respectively, when they combine into a TQ. Moreover, TQs seem often to be selected as a whole; most tags do not appear to be afterthoughts.

The functional model presented in this chapter focuses on declarative TQs (DecTQs). The most common non-declarative TQs, the imperative TQs, are quite different from DecTQs:

> Tags on statements and tags on imperatives seem to have different functions; with statements they appear to draw the listener's attention to the 'truth value' of the statement, whereas the imperative is modified along a scale of politeness from order to request, but remains at least a request; the truth value cannot come into the picture at all.
> (Bald 1980:180)

Even if the functional model is designed first and foremost for DecTQs, it might be used to relate the functions of non-declarative DecTQs to the functions of DecTQs. The functions of non-declarative TQs are discussed further in chapter 8.

It should be noted that this functional model encompasses both reversed-polarity and constant-polarity DecTQs. However, this does not mean that there might not be functional differen-

ces between the two polarity types, just that it seems possible to apply the same functional mo-del. Constant polarity is only briefly touched upon in this chapter; the functions of constant-po-larity DecTQs are mainly discussed based on the results of the functional analysis in chapter 7.

The functional model was designed in a long process of analysis of DecTQs, where relevant previous work was kept in mind (see chapter 4). However, examples of DecTQs from fiction dialogue were analysed in their contexts without pre-decided categories. The model was deve-loped as patterns emerged; examples were constantly re-checked and categories were gradually consolidated (cf. Columbus 2010b:293). The development of the model was primarily based on the analysis of DecTQs in fiction dialogue, although it was tested on part of the spoken data before it was finally established.

5.2 DecTQs exchanging goods and services vs. information

In conversation, a speaker may adopt two different speech roles: either giving or demanding, and the commodity exchanged is either goods and services or information (Halliday & Mat-thiessen 2004:107); the combination of these speech roles and commodities results in four pri-mary speech functions, as shown in Fig. 5.1:

Role in exchange	Commodity exchanged	
	goods and services	information
giving	'offer'	'statement'
demanding	'command'	'question'

Fig. 5.1.   Primary speech functions; adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:107)

When information is exchanged, we typically use statements and pose questions, whereas when goods and services are exchanged, we typically make offers and commands. These types of ini-tiations have different expected "responses", which shows that they have different communica-tive purposes: statements expect acknowledgments and questions answers, whereas commands expect undertakings and offers acceptance (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:108).

DecTQs are mainly used in order to exchange information: to get information or to share information with others (see section 5.3); in contrast, imperative TQs are typically used when goods and services are exchanged (see section 8.2).[1] However, DecTQs may also marginally be used to exchange goods and services: for example, an offer can be made, as in (1):

---

[1] Kimps and Davidse (2008) refer to Halliday's (1994:68) opposition of "information versus desired action" in their discussion on the differences between declarative and imperative constant-polarity TQs; they claim that "[d]eclara-tive utterances can only put forth, i.e., give information" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:709).

(1)　　　　(...) "I'll go and find her, <u>shall I?</u>" (wBNC HGV 3569)

When goods and services are demanded, Halliday and Matthiessen state that commands are made. However, if the proposed action would be beneficial to the speaker but "leaves an option of refusal to comply" (Lyons 1977:749) for the addressee, the speech function is rather a request. DecTQs may be employed to make indirect requests, as in (2):

(2)　　　　"(...) <u>Perhaps you could open the door, could you?</u>" (wBNC APM 385)

DecTQs as indirect requests may be followed by *yes*, but this response is not confirmatory; instead, it indicates an undertaking. It is clearly shown in (3) that the addressee's reaction is an undertaking, as the addressee promises to perform the service the speaker has requested:

(3)　　　　"(...) I'm going now. You hit the bell really hard and I'll listen really hard, right?"
　　　　　"Yes, Frank."
　　　　　"<u>You won't hit the bell until I wave, will you?</u>"
　　　　　He shook his head. "**Pomiss**."
　　　　　"Good. Won't be long" (wBNC HWC 1390–1397)

DecTQs may thus be divided into those exchanging goods and services, making indirect requests and indirect offers, and those exchanging information, as shown in Fig. 5.2:

DecTQs 〈 DecTQs exchanging goods and services / DecTQs exchanging information
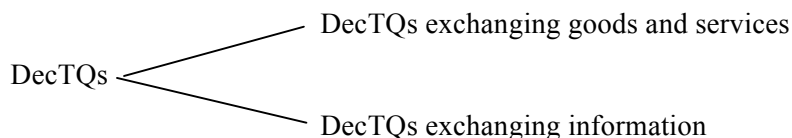
Fig. 5.2.　Main types of DecTQs

DecTQs exchanging good and services, i.e. requesting/offering DecTQs, are dealt with in the next section, 5.2.1, whereas DecTQs exchanging information are discussed further in section 5.3.

5.2.1　Requesting/offering DecTQs

DecTQs functioning as indirect requests have received relatively little attention; they are, for example, seemingly not treated in any of the three large modern grammars (Quirk *et al.* 1985, Biber *et al.* 1999 and Huddleston & Pullum 2002).[2] However, Carter and McCarthy (2006) state

---

[2] Nässlin (1984) mentions very briefly that both interrogative and declarative TQs may be exhortations (1984:31); however, she does not give any example of such a DecTQ.

61

that "interrogatives that function as requests often have the pattern of negative clause plus affirmative tag" (2006:549), as in (4):

(4)　　You couldn't carry this for me, could you? (Carter & McCarthy 2006:549)

Holmes (1982) quotes a similar example, stating that "the utterance as a whole functions as an indirect request, but the tag's function is to hedge or soften this request" (1982:47); this example is shown here as (5):

(5)　　You couldn't change half a crown for me could you?
　　　　(Holmes 1982:47; quoting Dubois & Crouch 1975:292, who quote Pride 1971)

Algeo (2006) states that "[i]nformational tag questions, which call for an active response from the addressee, are sometimes ways of making a request" (2006:298), as in (6):

(6)　　You wouldn't be a dear and collect it on the way back, would you? (Algeo 2006:298)

For DecTQs to be analysed as indirect requests, the felicity conditions for requests must be met (adapted from Searle 1975:71):

1.　Preparatory condition:　　　　　The addressee is able to perform a certain act.
2.　Sincerity condition:　　　　　　　The speaker wants the addressee to do this act.
3.　Propositional content condition:　The speaker predicates this future act of the addressee.
4.　Essential condition:　　　　　　　The utterance counts as an attempt by the speaker to get the addressee to do this act.

Requests may be formulated in many ways (see e.g. Searle 1975, Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989, Aijmer 1996 and Wierzbicka 2006). Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) present a typological scale of indirectness for requests: from "direct strategies", such as imperatives, via "conventional indirect strategies", as in, for example, expressions with *Could you ..., please?* and *Would you mind...?*, to "non-conventionally indirect strategies" only hinting what is requested (1989:17–18). They do not mention DecTQs (or imperative TQs) used as requests, but a DecTQ such as the one in (7) (repeated from (2) above) might fit into Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s conventionally indirect subcategory of query preparatory, comprising "utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability, willingness) as conventionalized" (1989:18):

(7)　　　　"(...) Perhaps you could open the door, could you?" (wBNC APM 385)

The DecTQ with *could* in (7) refers to the preparatory condition of the addressee's ability. Aijmer (1996) lists DecTQs with the negative tags *can't you* and *couldn't you* among "requestive

markers derived from assertion-based sentence stems with a modal auxiliary" (1996:150); however, positive tags with *can* and *could* also seem possible in indirect requests. The other preparatory condition mentioned by Blum-Kulka *et al*., willingness, may also be referred to in DecTQs functioning as indirect requests, as in (8):

(8) "I didn't know that ... every day."
     "You won't tell anyone, <u>will you?</u>"
     "No. Is it a secret?" (wBNC CCM 704–706)

DecTQs as indirect requests are related to imperative TQ (ImpTQ): the indirect requests in (7) and (8) above, with the tag subject *you*, correspond to the 2nd-person ImpTQs with *you* in (9) and (10), respectively:[3]

(9) <u>Open the door, could you?</u>

(10) <u>Don't tell anyone, will you?</u>

As corresponding requests can be made by using 2nd-person ImpTQs, such ImpTQs may be used as paraphrases in order to clarify the requestive function of DecTQs used as indirect requests.

An indirect request may also be made by asking about the availability of some goods, as in (11):

(11) "Marooned three years," he continued, "living on wild goats and fish. But I'm desperate for real English food. <u>You don't have a piece of cheese, do you?</u> Many nights I've dreamed of cheese."
      "If I can get on board ship again," I said, "you can have as much cheese as you want." (wBNC FSJ 644–648)

The DecTQ in (11) is "a pre-sequence or a pre-request", which "serves to check whether a more general precondition for a request is fulfilled" (Aijmer 1996:137); in the words of Weizman (1989), "a reference is made (...) to some precondition for the feasibility of the requested act" (1989:85). This kind of indirect request made by using a DecTQ with a negative anchor and a positive tag is discussed by Algeo (1988), who finds that the "effect is one of diffidence" (1988:180); Algeo refers to Foster (1968), who claims that "this first became widespread during the wartime shortages that caused bashful customers to ask fierce shopkeepers 'You don't have any cigarettes, have you'" (1968:210).

As for offers, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) state that there is "a first person imperative realizing a simple offer" with *let me* "on the analogy of *let's*", adding that such offers may also

---

[3] ImpTQs are discussed in section 8.2.

be expressed indirectly in the form of a declarative with *I'll* (2004:139).[4] Such indirect offers may also come in the form of a DecTQ, with the tag *shall I*, as shown in (12) (repeated from (1) above):

(12)   "(...) I'll get it for you, shall I?" (wBNC HA7 667)

DecTQs of the offering kind, as in (12), are mentioned in Sinclair (1990): "[i]f you are suggesting that you do something and you want to check that the person you are speaking to agrees, you can add the tag 'shall I?'" (1990:434), as in (13):

(13)   I'll tell you roughly, shall I? (Sinclair 1990:434)

Kimps (2007) includes an example which may be analysed as an indirect offer in her description of her hedging category of constant-polarity DecTQs (see section 4.6); the tags of such constant-polarity DecTQs "typically combine the auxiliary *shall* with a first person pronoun" (2007:278), as in (14):

(14)   I've found the address book and I'll post off Rita's parcel shall I (Kimps 2007:288)[5]

Constant-polarity DecTQs used as indirect requests, as in (7) above, would also belong to Kimps's hedging category, although Kimps does not discuss indirect requests. All constant-polarity requesting/offering DecTQs thus seem to conform to Kimps's hedging category. These constant-polarity cases differ from other constant-polarity DecTQs in that they, similar to ImpTQs, neither echo nor interpret the preceding discourse (see section 4.6; cf. also Kimps 2007: 276).

It has been pointed out by Gordon and Lakoff (1975) that the same syntactic form can be used for both offers and threats: cf. the offer *Do you want some cake?* and the threat *Do you want your candy store to burn down, Mr. Schwarz?* (1975:88–89); a similar ambiguity seems quite possible also for DecTQs with *shall I*. In order for DecTQs with *shall I* to be interpreted as offers, it is vital that there are indications in the context that the service would be beneficial to the addressee.

---

[4] In principle, it would also be possible to make an offer using *shall we* when the offer is made on behalf of the speaker and someone else, as in (i):

(i)   We'll help you, shall we?

Shall we with exclusive *we* in such offers would then differ from *shall we* with inclusive *we* used in suggestions for joint action/reciprocal services.

[5] This example is from the London-Lund Corpus; it has been abbreviated and simplified in that the intonational mark-up has been removed.

An indirect request and an indirect offer may also be combined into an indirect suggestion to do something;[6] the tag subject is then *we*, as in (15):

(15)   "I'll be going abroad soon," he told Sarah. "But <u>we'll write often, won't we?</u> You're my girl now, aren't you?" (wBNC G16 1497–1499)

A corresponding ImpTQ starts with *let's* and has the tag *shall we*, as in (16):

(16)   <u>Let's write often, shall we?</u>

If the suggested services would be beneficial to both parties, there may thus be a combination of an offer and a request: in (15) above, for example, a combination of *You'll write often, won't you?* and *I'll write often, shall I?* The 1st-person plural ImpTQ in (16) is a suggestion for reciprocal services, but most 1st-person plural ImpTQs are rather suggestions for joint action, as in (17):

(17)   "(...) <u>Let's go back, shall we?</u>" (wBNC FSF 3646)

Such instances may not be as obvious cases of exchanging goods and services, but they are nevertheless also a combination of a request and an offer: the speaker both offers the action on his own part and requests the action on the part of the addressee at the same time; the suggestion that the action will be carried out is presented as being beneficial to both parties. Hence, a DecTQ suggesting a joint action, as in (18) must also be analysed as having a requesting/offering function; the corresponding 1st-person plural ImpTQ would be *Let's go through it together, shall we?*

(18)   "<u>We'll go through it together, shall we?</u> (...)" (wBNC JYB 813)

Kimps (2007) includes a few examples which may be interpreted as suggestions for joint action among her examples of hedging constant-polarity DecTQs (cf. the discussion of example (14) above; see also section 4.6), as in (19):

(19)   A: <u>We'll take the car shall we</u>.
       B: Yeah. (Kimps 2007:279)

Hence, there are three types of DecTQs exchanging goods and services; together they may form a category called requesting/offering:

---

[6] Cf. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004): "The 'you-and-me' type, with *let's*, realizes a suggestion, something that is at the same time both command and offer" (2004:139).

1. Indirect requests, asking for services which would be beneficial to the speaker
2. Indirect offers, offering services which would be beneficial to the addressee
3. Indirect suggestions for reciprocal services or joint actions, which would be beneficial to both the speaker and addressee

It should be noted that the anchors of DecTQs exchanging goods and services might function as indirect requests, indirect offers etc. on their own; however, the fact that a DecTQ is used clarifies the requesting, offering etc. made in the utterance, thereby facilitating the addressee's interpretation of the utterance in the way the speaker intended.

Requesting/offering DecTQs may be either turn-embedded or turn-final (see section 6.4.3). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) point out that "only [a response to a question] is essentially a verbal response"; a "verbal response" to an offer or a command is thus optional (2004:108). Hence, the turn position of a requesting/offering DecTQ, i.e. exchanging goods and services, seems irrelevant for its function; this is in contrast to DecTQs exchanging information, where a turn-embedded position usually entails that the DecTQ is rhetorical (see section 5.3.2).

5.3 DecTQs exchanging information

DecTQs exchanging information may be regarded as expressing modality, i.e. "the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgment of the like-lihood of the proposition it expresses being true" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:219); this would then mean that hedging and different degrees of uncertainty are expressed in DecTQs. However, using a Bakhtinian perspective, DecTQs may alternatively be seen as heteroglossic in acknowledging alternative viewpoints:

> Under the heteroglossic perspective, rather than necessarily reflecting the speaker's state of knowledge, [a modal value] can additionally or alternatively be seen as sig-nalling that the meanings at stake are subject to *heteroglossic negotiation*. It may have no connection at all with doubt or vagueness, being used, instead, to acknowledge the contentiousness of a particular proposition, the willingness of the speaker to negotiate with those who hold a different view, or the deference of the speaker for those alter-native views. (...) From this Bakhtinian perspective, therefore, I characterise as too narrowly-based those formulations which would construe such values exclusively in negative terms as 'hedges', as deviations from 'straightforward' factuality, or as points of epistemological unreliability. We should, rather, see them as acting to open up, or to extend the semantic potential available to the text - *in some contexts enhancing the possibility of a continued heteroglossic negotiation between divergent positions, and in others acting to forestall or fend off that negotiation.*[7] (my italicizations)

---

[7] http://grammatics.com/appraisal/AppraisalOutline/UnFramed/AppraisalOutline.htm. Responsible for the Appraisal Homepage is Peter R.R. White.

Hence, DecTQs exchanging information may be seen as indicating potential negotiation, and this negotiation may either be expanded or contracted (cf. Martin & White 2005:102). When the negotiation is expanded, i.e. opened up, the DecTQ is response-eliciting, as in (20), whereas when the negotiation is contracted, i.e. closed down, no response is sought, and the DecTQ must therefore be regarded as a rhetorical question, as in (21); such DecTQs are hereafter referred to as rhetorical:[8]

(20)   "<u>Not at work at the moment, are you?</u>"
         "No, but I'm going back tomorrow" (wBNC H85 3355–3356)

(21)   Bernie cast her eyes about. "<u>She had a gun, didn't she?</u> We need it."
         (wBNC FR0 4354–4356)

This distinction may alternatively be expressed as DecTQs either being closer to questions or closer to statements: the speaker may either want to receive information from the addressee or share information with the addressee. This dichotomy is illustrated in Fig. 5.3:
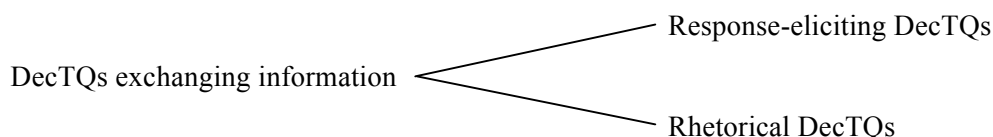
Fig. 5.3.   Types of DecTQs exchanging information

Response-eliciting DecTQs are dealt with in section 5.3.1, and rhetorical DecTQs in section 5.3.2. In the following discussions on the functions of DecTQs exchanging information, the issue of whether the proposition in the anchor is known only to the speaker, only to the addressee or to both of them is proposed as a criterion for some functional categories. Parts of a classification concerning the knowledge state of the interactants set up by Labov and Fanshel (1977:100) are then applied, where A denotes the speaker and B the addressee:

A-events: Known to A, but no to B.
B-events: Known to B, but no to A.
AB-events: Known to both A and B.

---

[8] The term *rhetorical* may also be used in a broader sense, denoting language which is "intended to be grand and impressive" (Collins COBUILD 2001:1331); in this thesis, the term is used in the more narrow sense as used in the term *rhetorical question*.

5.3.1 Response-eliciting DecTQs

The DecTQ in (22) is typically response-eliciting; the speaker, an ambulance man, is uncertain about his assumption that the addressee is no relation of the patient and he therefore wants a response:

> (22) "Felton?" The two ambulance men now exchanged sharp glances, and one of them said, "Robbie Felton?" then added, "Slipped and caught his head on a shovel? Well, well; strange things happen. Let's get him up.
> "May I come with you?"
> "Yes. Yes; they'll want particulars; somebody'll have to come. But" – the man hesitated – "you're no relation, <u>are you?</u>"
> "No; I'm no relation." (wBNC AT7 2250–2258)

Response-eliciting DecTQs are typically turn-final, as in (22). However, response-eliciting Dec-TQs may in exceptional cases be turn-embedded, as in (23):

> (23) "I got the pictures, Nick. Some beauties, I think." She was annoyed to hear the slight tremble in her voice.
> "Great." He had tossed his coat over the back of a chair and was pouring whiskies. He handed one to her, looking at her directly. "You didn't ask me over here to discuss the pictures though, Harriet – admit it. <u>It's ... the other business, isn't it?</u> **I take it you did as I suggested and got hold of a paper**."
> "Yes." She gulped at the whisky, then thought better of it. "I'll get some ice."
> (wBNC BMW 675–686)

In (23), the DecTQ is followed by a related presumption apparently added in order to leave the addressee some extra time to realize that she must admit that he is right; the addressee's positive answer is clearly related to the DecTQ, so the DecTQ may be interpreted as response-eliciting despite the turn-embedded position.

Response-eliciting DecTQs are usually followed by responses, as in (22)–(23) above. However, the presence of a response is not necessary in order to interpret a DecTQ as response-eliciting: even if most response-eliciting DecTQs actually receive responses, not all of them do, as addressees may refrain from answering for various reasons. If a response is not given to a response-eliciting DecTQ in fiction dialogue, there may be a comment in the narrative as to why not (see e.g. example (31) in section 2.5).

Turn-final position and responses are thus useful indications that DecTQs are response-eliciting, but the interpretation of the general context is often as important; it should be noted that also rhetorical DecTQs may be turn-final (see the discussion of examples (41)–(45) and (48) in section 5.3.2).

The term *response*[9] is used in the present study instead of *answer*, as the latter might be apprehended as being restricted to spoken answers; extra-linguistic responses may be reported in the subsequent narrative of a response-eliciting DecTQ (see e.g. example (30) in section 2.5).

Response-eliciting DecTQs are usually confirmation-eliciting, i.e. the speaker is genuinely interested in getting his or her assumption confirmed, as in (22) above. However, response-eliciting DecTQs may also be conversation-initiating, i.e. used primarily to start a conversation or restart a conversation on a new topic. This dichotomy is illustrated in Fig. 5.4.
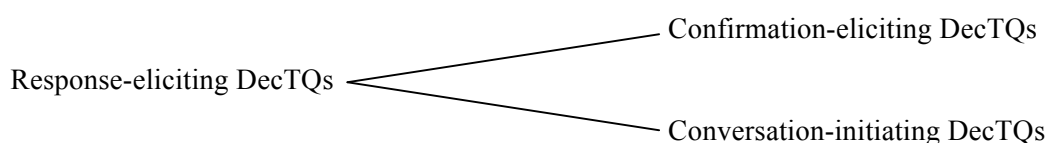
Fig. 5.4.   Types of response-eliciting DecTQs

Confirmation-eliciting DecTQs are further dealt with in section 5.3.1.1, whereas conversation-initiating DecTQs are described in section 5.3.1.2.

5.3.1.1 Confirmation-eliciting: confirmation-seeking vs. confirmation-demanding DecTQs

Of course, confirmation-eliciting DecTQs have the main aim of eliciting confirmation. However, the reason why the speaker wants confirmation may vary, depending on whether the speaker is genuinely uncertain or quite certain about the truth of the proposition in the anchor. When the speaker is uncertain, confirmation is sought from an addressee who is believed to know better than the speaker, i.e. it is a B-event (cf. Labov & Fanshel 1977:100, see section 5.3). Such DecTQs may be considered to be confirmation-seeking. A typical example of a confirmation-seeking DecTQ is found in (24) (repeated from (22) above):

(24)   "Felton?" The two ambulance men now exchanged sharp glances, and one of them said, "Robbie Felton?" then added, "Slipped and caught his head on a shovel? Well, well; strange things happen. Let's get him up.
          "May I come with you?"
          "Yes. Yes; they'll want particulars; somebody'll have to come. But; – **the man hesitated** – "you're no relation, <u>are you?</u>"
          "No; I'm no relation." (wBNC AT7 2250–2258)

In (24), the speaker is said to hesitate (see the emboldened part), which indicates that he is uncertain, and the fact that the DecTQ concerns the addressee makes it quite clear that the address-

---

[9] The term *response* is used by certain linguists in a wider sense, viz. for all kinds of reactions from the addressee, for example, by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:108).

ee ought to have better knowledge than the speaker himself. It is mainly the general context which indicates that the speaker is uncertain, but there may also be subtle indications in the DecTQs themselves, as in (25)–(26):

(25)　　　(…) "And hate is a very powerful emotion, Miss Swift. Very powerful indeed. <u>You don't feel anything of that nature for me</u> **...** <u>do you?"</u>
　　　　　"No, I most certainly do not!" (wBNC JYD 1385–1388)

(26)　　　"You were – **er** – <u>you were just joking earlier, on the dance-floor</u> – <u>weren't you?"</u> she murmured, not daring to raise her eyes as she toyed with some of the pink salmon mayonnaise on her plate.
　　　　　Glancing over at the faint quiver in the hand holding her fork, and at the nervously fluttering long eyelashes, casting dark spiky shadows on her pale, trembling cheeks, he gave her a warm and reassuring smile.
　　　　　"You're quite right, Laura. I really shouldn't have teased you as I did. (...)"
　　　(wBNC JXX 627–630)

In (25), the three dots before the tag give the impression that the speaker pauses due to uncertainty, and in (26), a disfluency, which would normally be avoided in fiction dialogue, is included to show that the speaker is uncertain.[10]

When the anchor deals with the addressee, as in (24)–(26), it is quite clear that the addressee ought to know better than the person posing the DecTQ. However, confirmation-seeking DecTQs may also deal with something else which the addressee is thought to have better knowledge of. In (27), Julia's sister asks her brother-in-law, who is a doctor, about her sister:

(27)　　　(…) She gripped his wrist. "<u>It's not dangerous, is it</u>, Anthony?"
　　　　　For a moment he was very still. Julia felt too tired and afraid to speak, but she lifted her heavy eyelids again and looked at him. He saw her expression and smiled confidently.
　　　　　"No, it's not dangerous. All right, darling?" (wBNC FSC 794–800)

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs may even deal with the addressee's opinion of the speaker, as in (28), where the tag might be an afterthought:

(28)　　　"You always think people are in love with you," said Betty. "It's a sign of advancing age or lunacy."
　　　　　"<u>No, I don't</u>," said Lydia, "<u>do I?</u>"
　　　　　"You have a tendency that way," said Betty. "You are attractive, but people do fall in love with other people, you know." (wBNC G0X 1936–1940)

If the speaker is quite certain about the truth of the proposition in the anchor, he or she may still want confirmation from the addressee, and demand an answer, as in (29); such DecTQs can be thus be labelled confirmation-demanding.

---

[10] Example (26) is also discussed as example (12) in section 2.4.

(29)   "But," pursued Mahmoud, "<u>there were three women, were there not?</u>"
         "If you say so."
         "I would like to hear you say so. With your own voice."
         "Three women, then," said the chauffeur. (wBNC J10 2053–2057)

Hence, confirmation-eliciting DecTQs may be divided into confirmation-seeking and confirmation-demanding DecTQs, as shown in Fig. 5.5:

Confirmation-eliciting DecTQs <
                                   Confirmation-seeking DecTQs

                                   Confirmation-demanding DecTQs
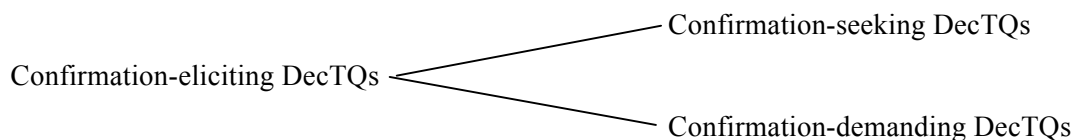
Fig. 5.5.   Types of confirmation-eliciting DecTQs

The speaker of a confirmation-demanding DecTQ seems to regard the proposition in the anchor as an AB-event, i.e. as known to both the speaker and the addressee (cf. Labov & Fanshel 1977: 100; see section 5.3). The certainty of the speaker of confirmation-demanding DecTQs usually follows from the general context, but there are sometimes explicit references to the speaker's certainty, as in (30), where the speaker prepares his DecTQ by using the phrase *unless I've made two and two equal five* in the preceding sentence:

(30)   (…) As soon as they were alone, he said awkwardly, "Look, old chap, you've every right to tell me to mind my own business, but **unless I've made two and two equal five**, then I think as your friend I ought to speak up. <u>Something's happened between you and Pickles, hasn't it?</u>"
         Harry put down the hairbrush with which he had been trying to smooth his unruly curls, and turned to face Madeleine's brother.
         "I don't know how you guessed, Aubrey, but you're absolutely right – Madeleine and I love each other. (...)" (wBNC FS1 1936–1939)

Apart from the relative certainty of the speaker and the act of demanding confirmation, there is also another characteristic of confirmation-demanding DecTQs. Ilie (1994) states that "requiring or expecting an answer is not necessarily equivalent to requiring or expecting information" (1994:77); a question may be "almost exclusively *answer-eliciting*, i.e. it does not require information, it requires a verbalized answer" (1994:80). For confirmation-demanding DecTQs, the speaker seems to think he or she already has the information, so he or she just wants the addressee to utter a confirmatory answer, i.e. such DecTQs are primarily answer-eliciting, whereas confirmation-seeking DecTQs are both answer-eliciting and information-eliciting. In (29) above, a police officer interrogates a witness who is unwilling to give a clear answer; when the addressee replies evasively, the police officer clarifies that he wants an unequivocal verbalized answer (see the emboldened part in (29)).

For confirmation-seeking DecTQs, there is a preferred confirmatory answer, but the speaker is open to an alternative answer refuting the truth of the proposition in the anchor. For confirmation-demanding DecTQs, in contrast, only a confirmatory answer appears to be regarded by the speaker as a successful outcome. In (31), it is clear that the refutation from the addressee is not accepted by the speaker of the DecTQ:[11]

(31)   "Well, Phena won't hear it from me! Anyway, I shan't be here, shall I? I'm to leave in the morning, remember?"
       "And that really rankles, doesn't it? That's really what it's all about, isn't it? Wanting to stay here. Share in some of the wealth!"
       "**No, it is not! I don't need, or want, your blasted wealth!**"
       "**Don't you?** (...)" (wBNC HGY 2326–2335)

The fact that the speaker of confirmation-demanding DecTQs leaves the floor to the addressee to respond nevertheless indicates that the speaker is to some extent willing to negotiate.

Confirmation-demanding DecTQs are used in order to make an often reluctant addressee admit or acknowledge a fact. Aijmer (1979) states that DecTQs may be used when "[t]he speaker wants to exert control over the hearer" (1979:12), as in (32):

(32)   You were there on the night of the murder, weren't you? (Aijmer 1979:12)

Such coercive use of DecTQs have been noted in court cross-examinations when lawyers "wish to pounce on a witness" (Woodbury 1984:223). However, admissions can also be sought in less formal situations than police interrogations or court proceedings, as in (31) above.

The act of admission is sometimes explicitly referred to: in (33), it is said in the narrative that the addressee *admitted*, and in (34), the speaker tells the addressee to *admit* that she has invited him under false pretences, before posing the DecTQ:

(33)   "You see? That wasn't so difficult, was it?" he said, and, when Caroline **admitted** that it hadn't been, he said that in that case, would she please agree to do another private showing in mid-afternoon? (wBNC JY7 5919–5920)

(34)   "I got the pictures, Nick. Some beauties, I think." She was annoyed to hear the slight tremble in her voice.
       "Great." He had tossed his coat over the back of a chair and was pouring whiskies. He handed one to her, looking at her directly. "You didn't ask me over here to discuss the pictures though, Harriet – **admit it**. It's ... the other business, isn't it? I take it you did as I suggested and got hold of a paper."
       "Yes." She gulped at the whisky, then thought better of it. "I'll get some ice."
(wBNC BMW 675–686)

Admissions concern something "bad, unpleasant, or embarrassing" (Collins COBUILD 2001: 21); hence, strong feelings may be expressed, both by the person posing the confirmation-de-

---

[11] Example (31) is also discussed as example (15) in section 2.4.

manding DecTQ and the addressee, as in (31) above. However, the speaker of a confirmation-demanding DecTQ may also just want the addressee to openly acknowledge a fact, as in (35), or acknowledge that a message has been understood, as in (36):

(35) "Could I at least ask a few questions?"
    "Ask by all means, so long as you understand how limited my freedom may be to answer."
    Harry took a deep breath and struggled to shape some propositions that would not offend the doctor's code of ethics. "<u>Heather had a breakdown last year, didn't she</u>, following the death of her sister?"
    This at least seemed to pass the test. "Yes," Kingdom replied cautiously.
    (wBNC H8T 2347–2352)

(36) "Parmedes, <u>you do realise what you are hearing is *highly* confidential material, don't you?</u>"
    "Madam, I was never here!" Parmedes concurred with feeling.
    (wBNC AD9 3893–3895)

DecTQs in the confirmation-demanding category as described in this section have received very little attention in previous functional systems. However, at least some of them may be included in Holmes's (1995) challenging category, as the tags in these TQs may "pressure a reluctant addressee to reply" (1995:80) (see section 4.2).

The differences between confirmation-seeking and confirmation-demanding DecTQs are summarized in Fig. 5.6:

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs	Confirmation-demanding DecTQs
S is genuinely uncertain	S is quite certain
S regards it as a B-event	S regards it as an AB-event
both answer-eliciting and information-eliciting	primarily answer-eliciting
S prefers a confirmatory answer, open to refutation	S regards only a confirmatory answer as successful

Fig. 5.6. Criteria for confirmation-seeking vs. confirmation-demanding DecTQs

A fiction extract clearly illustrating these differences between confirmation-seeking and confirmation-demanding DecTQ is found in (37):

73

(37)   Meredith's eyes filled. She bit her lip. "I wish I had *something*!" she cried passionately. "It's as if he's been wiped off the face of the earth!"

"Extraordinary!" muttered Lucenzo, obviously appalled. "To have gone to such lengths to destroy – " Meredith heard his muttered expletive, but he said no more – just began to pace the room with a restless air as if he were in a prison and desperate to get out.

Meredith had stiffened. She stared at Lucenzo in consternation, sitting erect in the chair, unnerved by a terrible idea that had come into her head. "You don't think … there could have been something … *dark* in his past that he was trying to hide, do you?"

He didn't answer for a moment, and it seemed as if he was trying to control conflicting emotions. Even with his practised deception, his uncertainty showed in the depths of his haunted eyes. "Don't ask."

"I am! What do you know?" she demanded huskily. "Are you trying to hide something? You do know things about my father, don't you?" she cried, waiting for his reply in an agony of suspense.

"It would seem that he wanted to conceal his past," he said, as if grudging her that information. He studied his hand-made shoes thoughtfully.

She shook her head in bewilderment. "But why? He was a good man, Lucenzo. He adored his family – " (wBNC H94 2142–2163)

In (37), Meredith's first DecTQ about her father is confirmation-seeking, as she is uncertain at this point, something which is indicated by the three dots interrupting the anchor twice and the tentative formulation with the negative anchor. The way the addressee, Lucenzo, evades answering, telling her not to ask about these things, makes her certain that he knows something negative about her father's background, and she therefore utters a confirmation-demanding Dec-TQ in order to force an admission from the reluctant Lucenzo; her certainty is underlined by the assertiveness of the positive anchor, which is reinforced by emphatic *do*.

5.3.1.2 Conversation-initiating DecTQs

Conversation-initiating DecTQs are used primarily to start a conversation or re-start a conversation on a new topic. In order for the intended conversation to take place, it is vital that the addressee responds to the conversation-initiating DecTQ; this response may be confirmatory, but getting a confirmatory response is not the main aim for the speaker. A clear example of a conversation-initiating DecTQ is found in (38), where, after the previous conversation has run out, the speaker restarts the conversation by posing a question which she seems to already know the answer to:

(38)   McLeish asked whereabouts and discovered it was three roads away from his own flat, so they complained enjoyably to each other about the local council.

"You were a graduate entry, weren't you?" **she asked as this conversation ran out**, "and in the Flying Squad?"

McLeish, warmed by the fact that she had taken the trouble to find out a bit about him, confirmed he had been at Reading University and had worked as a young sergeant in the Flying Squad. (wBNC AB9 747–749)

Example (38) fits into the facilitating[12] category of Holmes (1982), of which she gives an example where a host tries to facilitate a guest's entry in the conversation by posing a DecTQ, here shown as (39):

(39)   <u>Ray had some bad luck didn't you</u> Ray? (Holmes 1982:53)

Holmes states that the speaker in (39) "does not signal uncertainty" and that her "aim would still have been achieved" (1982:53) even if the addressee would have disagreed. Holmes's description of such tags inspired me to look for such DecTQs in my data. Similarly to confirmation-demanding DecTQs (see section 5.3.1.1), it is rather an answer than information which is elicited when conversation-initiating DecTQs are used. However, in contrast to confirmation-demanding DecTQs, where the speaker wants to hear the addressee utter a confirmatory response, any response to conversation-initiating DecTQs might do as long as the conversation is started.

5.3.2   Rhetorical DecTQs

A rhetorical DecTQ is found in (40); the fact that the speaker goes on talking shows clearly that the DecTQ is not meant to be responded to, i.e. the negotiation is closed down:

(40)   They sat on a couch in the empty room and Rose stared at her feet. "<u>Your friend doesn't approve of me, does she?</u>" she said. "She thinks the same as Dora, that Dieter's only interested in me because I've got money. But it isn't like that, he really cares!"
"How can you be sure of that?"
"I just know!" Rose lifted her head and looked Melissa full in the face.
(wBNC GVP 944–950)

Hudson (1975) states that rhetorical questions cannot be recognized as such due to their form; instead, "more often than not, [the hearer] recognizes a question as rhetorical because of some very obvious feature of the situation", for example, "the speaker leaves no time for answers, but just goes straight on speaking" (1975:16). Rhetorical questions are defined by Ilie (1994):

> A rhetorical question is a question used as a challenging statement to convey the addresser's commitment to its implicit answer, in order to induce the addressee's mental recognition of its obviousness and the acceptance, verbalized or non-verbalized, of its validity. (Ilie 1994:128)

Ilie includes all kinds of questions in rhetorical questions: polar interrogatives, *wh*-interrogatives and TQs; she finds that "rhetorical questions are *special uses of questions*, rather than se-

---

[12] It should be noted that the facilitating category in Holmes (1982) is much more restricted than the facilitative category in Holmes (1995).

parate types of questions" (1994:77).[13] Concerning Ilie's inclusion of TQs in rhetorical questions, Tottie and Hoffmann (2009a) point out:

> There is an important difference between archetypal rhetorical questions and tag questions in that the statements conveyed by tag questions are explicit: they are conveyed by the anchor and not by an implicit answer. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2009a:311)

There are several indications in previous work that a response is not always expected after a DecTQ; however, this has only influenced most previous functional systems marginally. Roesle (2001) finds that TQs "may also, in a number of instances, carry an emphatic meaning, underlining the preceding proposition, in which case they do not need to be answered by the addressee" (2001:84). Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) stated briefly that an attitudinal TQ "does not expect involvement or reply" (2006:300); in later work, they deal with rhetorical uses of TQs in more detail: Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) discuss a 16th-century attitudinal DecTQ from drama, where "the speaker does not answer the question in the tag" and "the tag question is the last of a series of rhetorical questions" (2009b:142–143), and Tottie and Hoffmann (2009a) discuss written non-fiction uses of TQs as being markers of stance:

> Speakers don't always receive confirmation, and often they do not expect it. Tag questions can then be used merely to convey the speaker's attitude to a proposition – they have an attitudinal function. Writers of the type of texts we have considered here cannot literally expect confirmation of their beliefs and opinions from readers, and neither can they use tag questions to involve their readers in the immediate give-and-take of an interchange. (...) the predominant use of tag questions in written texts is to express the writer's attitude, or *stance*. (Tottie & Hoffmann 2009a:311)

Allerton (2009) discusses Algeo's categories, finding that punctuational tags are rhetorical, and that peremptory as well as aggressive tags are ironic, the three categories having in common that "feedback is obviously not appropriate" (2009:316):

> i.e. the speaker knows and knows that the addressee similarly knows (as in 'punctuational' tags), or the whole world knows (as in 'peremptory' tags), or only the speaker can be expected to know (as in 'aggressive' tags), then, following Gricean maxims, some other interpretation must be sought. (Allerton 2009:316)

In the functional studies of *innit*, the fact that *innit* may be turn-embedded, not expecting a response, is mentioned in the discussion of functions (see section 4.7).

In Conversational Analysis, TQs are primarily seen as turn-allocating, i.e. leaving the floor to a specific addressee, but it has been noted that TQs in some contexts may not receive a response, for example, in child-protection helpline telephone conversations:

---

[13] Ilie (1994) does not deal with DecTQs separately except in a section on "rhetorical tag questions as answering strategies in court" (1994:180–183).

> [a]lthough tag questions can make relevant some kind of response, they are not always responded to. This is so whether they are delivered at turn-medial positions, in overlap, or in the clear, although lack of response seems most likely in turn-medial position. (...) This analysis raises the broader issue of the sense in which tag questions, while interrogative in form, actually make a response relevant. They are not requesting information, nor are they testing the recipient. Although they project confirmation and agreement, at times they do not seem to strictly require it. (Hepburn & Potter 2010:82–83)

Furthermore, Oreström (1983) finds that tags may be used as fillers before the same speaker continues: "the tag has lost its elicit function and is used as a device that increases the social contact" (1983:113).

In the present study, rhetorical DecTQs are regarded as functionally distinct from response-eliciting DecTQs. Intonation has previously been attributed as a factor related to the elicitative force of DecTQs: rising tags are then suggested to be more response-eliciting than falling tags (e.g. in Baciu 1983:18, Quirk *et al.* 1985:811, Huddleston & Pullum 2002:895).[14] In fiction dialogue, there are no indications of falling or rising intonation on the tag, but it is nevertheless quite possible to distinguish rhetorical DecTQs from response-eliciting ones by studying the content of the DecTQ in relation to the context. The most obvious criterion for rhetorical DecTQs in fiction dialogue is, as in (40) above, that the same speaker goes on talking without giving a chance for the addressee to react, whereas, in comparison, response-eliciting DecTQs are practically always turn-final (see section 5.3.1). The content of the DecTQ itself as well as the general context in which the DecTQ is uttered may also indicate that a DecTQ is to be understood as rhetorical.[15]

Even if rhetorical questions do not expect responses, as shown by the fact that the speaker very often goes on talking, there may sometimes, especially if the rhetorical DecTQ is turn-final, be a related reaction from the addressee, although "the occurrence of a verbalized response after a rhetorical question is unelicited and unpredictable" (Ilie 1994:81). Ilie suggests that there are "three main discursive functions [which] can be fulfilled by the verbalized responses to rhetorical questions" (1994:128): to reinforce, qualify or cancel the implication of the rhetorical answer. For rhetorical DecTQs, it is the assumption put forward in the anchor (cf. Tottie & Hoffmann 2009a:311, see the block quotation above) which might be reinforced, qua-

---

[14] However, Bald (1979) concludes after presenting an investigation of the intonation of TQs that "[t]he variation possible in any of the syntactically or functionally determined subclasses of tag-questions has proved to be much greater than expected, contradicting a simple statement of meaning and tone relationships" (1979:285).

[15] In the minutes of the discussion following the oral presentation of Bald (1979), the issue of there having to be other elements than intonation in fiction dialogue giving information on the functions of tags was brought forward: "Hier knüpfte die Frage an, ob in der Untersuchung auch andere sprachliche Mittel im Satz berücksichtigt wurden, die Schlüsse auf die Funktion der *tags* erlauben; insbesondere müßten in geschriebenen Versionen von Dialogen die Intonation ersetzende Elemente auftreten, die aufschlußreich sein könnten" (1979:290).

lified or cancelled. In (41), there is a reinforcing reaction, in (42), there is a qualifying reaction, and, in (43), a reaction cancelling the assumption in the anchor of the rhetorical DecTQ:

(41)   "At least let him know you're alive."
         "Yes. <u>It's not fair not to, is it?</u>"
         "**Not a bit fair.**"
         "I'll do that. And I'll see you at the Ritz at one. You don't know how much better I feel." (wBNC GV8 2340–2346)

(42)   "(...) And did you know that your dear Andrew is a commercial traveller? Well, like all commercial travellers, you know what they say about them, as they do about sailors: they have a wife in every port."
         "Shut up! Shut up! <u>You're taking a delight in this, aren't you?</u>
         "**Yes, Great-gran, a great delight, because it's paved the way for my divorce; at least, my divorcing him.**" (wBNC HWE 1964–1969)

(43)   "Then let's move on."
         "Move on?" she repeated. "Where are we going?"
         "To Kenilworth. <u>You wanted to see a ruined castle, didn't you?</u>"
         "**I think I'd sooner go back to the house**."
         "We're going to Kenilworth," Julius repeated, with absolute finality. And Jessamy knew better than to argue with him when he used that particular tone of voice.
         (wBNC H8F 2617–2624)

How can one then be fairly certain that a turn-final DecTQ is intended to be rhetorical? Firstly, one method is to check whether the conversation seems normal even if the response or reaction is removed. In (41) above, for example, the reaction may be removed as a test, and then the speaker goes on talking about a decision which is based on the conclusion made in the DecTQ, which sounds perfectly natural. Secondly, co-occurring pragmatic markers may give indications that the DecTQ is assertive and therefore rhetorical, as in (44), where *after all* is found immediately before the DecTQ:

(44)   "You think so?" A faintly mocking smile played over his lips. "And just how do you propose to stop me from getting what I want?" He leaned closer to her till she could feel the warmth of his minty breath on her skin. "**After all**, <u>you're a pussycat, Aurora – aren't you?</u>"
         "Cats have claws!" she hissed back at him, made deeply uncomfortable by his closeness.
         He smiled. "But they also like to be stroked." (wBNC JY5 1591–1598)

Thirdly, the context may give clues showing that the speaker is making a statement rather than eliciting confirmation, as in (42) above, where the DecTQ is an angry remark added after the speaker has ordered the addressee to shut up, and as in (43) above, where Julius does not seem to be willing to listen to Jessamy's wishes. Fourthly, the reaction from the addressee may include his or her interpretation of the DecTQ as rhetorical, as in (45), where the DecTQ is explicitly referred to as a remark:

(45)　　　"Well, <u>you wouldn't expect an industrial manager to be made Attorney General, would you?</u>" Mark asked.
　　　The young politician tugged at an ear lobe and eyed him narrowly. "**By that remark**, I take it you mean that I know little or nothing about industrial or trade matters?"
　　　Mark looked him straight in the eye. "I think it would be a great presumption on your part if you thought you did," he replied firmly, putting the young man down.
(wBNC AC2 2197–2202)

Lastly, the surrounding narrative may tell the readers explicitly that the DecTQ is rhetorical, as in (46):

(46)　　　"I did think that there was something between her and Peter Yeo – her partner – but nothing came out of it. He has a wife and children and <u>most men don't usually leave their wives, do they?</u> **The question was rhetorical** and McLeish waited. "Anyway, Giles was perfect for her; fourteen years older and with his own very distinguished career. I was sure she was going to be happily settled." (wBNC AB9 1381–1385)

In (46), it would have been clear even without this comment in the narrative that the DecTQ was intended as rhetorical. In other cases, a similar comment may contradict other clues in the context, as in (47), where there is an extra-linguistic reaction from the addressee – *Carolyn shook her head* – suggesting that the DecTQ might have been interpreted as confirmation-eliciting, had not the comment *It was a statement* been there:

(47)　　　"Are you coming to the Refuge today?" Clare asked quietly.
　　　Carolyn watched Clare's feet. It hadn't occurred to her that she had a choice. "Don't you need me?"
　　　"Yes." Clare grimaced. "But if you'd rather do this –"
　　　There was a silence.
　　　"<u>You don't like coming to the Refuge do you.</u>" **It was a statement.**
　　　Carolyn shook her head, still not looking up. (wBNC HJH 1932–1943)

To sum up, the analysis of DecTQs as rhetorical questions relies on a combination of the turn-embedded position, the content of the TQ itself and a range of contextual clues such as speaker reactions, comments in the narrative including reporting clauses, and the general context where the speakers' intentions can be discerned. A DecTQ may at first sight seem to be response-eliciting, as in (48), where there is a vocative, which appeals to the addressee, and a subsequent turn from the addressee which may look like a confirmatory response:

(48)　　　"Well, <u>someone knew that, didn't they</u>, John?"
　　　"Yes. Yes, of course they did. (…)" (wBNC AB9 1848–1849)

However, when a wider context is carefully considered, indications may be found that this Dec-TQ should rather be interpreted as rhetorical, as shown in (48a):

(48a)   "You find anything useful from the scene-of-crime report? I **never got beyond page two this morning.**"

      "**Not a thing. No weapon, no footprints, no fingerprints, all the bits of fibre caught on bushes came from the deceased's clothes**"

      "A clever one. Car tracks?"

      "Yes."

      "What do you mean, yes?"

      "**Lots of them. Traces of at least a dozen different cars up that wee track that leads back to the road, and of two or three heavy vehicles, all very deeply indented. The lads tell me it's a shooting estate – likely that's where people leave their cars.**"

      "Oh Christ."

      "Well, <u>someone knew that, didn't they</u>, John?"

      "**Yes. Yes, of course they did.** We *have* got a clever one here. I'll be in later, after six. Hang on." (wBNC AB9 1836–1853)

In (48a), it is evident that the speaker of the DecTQ, Bruce, has carefully studied the scene-of-crime report, whereas the addressee, John, *never got beyond page two.* In his first turns, Bruce thus reports facts which are new information to John. In the DecTQ, Bruce presents his conclusion of what he has read; as Bruce has more information on the matter than John, the DecTQ can be regarded as an A-event, or at least not a B-event; i.e. it seems unlikely that Bruce believes John to have better knowledge of the matter than himself. The beginning of John's turn after the DecTQ may be interpreted as a reinforcing reaction, uttered when John seems to realize that Bruce has drawn a useful conclusion.

Example (48a) illustrates that there are some tricky cases of DecTQs in the fiction dialogue data, where a careful examination of a rather wide context is needed in order to determine the most likely interpretation. It is sometimes necessary to study carefully several hundreds of sentences before and after a DecTQ in order to get enough information on the characters[16] and what they seem to be certain or uncertain about. However, there are limitations as to the amount of context which can be studied: limitations of time as well as limitations of available context; the fiction files in the BNC are usually long extracts from novels, but novels are seldom included in their entirety. Admittedly, some interpretations might be somewhat subjective, but this is quite natural in pragmatic analyses (cf. the discussion at the end of section 1.4).

In conversation, there is usually an addressee (or sometimes several addressees) of an utterance. However, the addressee (or addressees) may be of more or less importance in relation to the DecTQ. It seems possible to distinguish between speaker-centred DecTQs, which could, in principle, have been uttered without any addressee being there to listen, and addressee-oriented DecTQs, where the presence of the addressee is crucial. This dichotomy is illustrated in Fig. 5.7:

---

[16] Additional information on the characters and the plot has sometimes been found on the web; the website Fantastic Fiction has been particularly useful (URL: <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk>).

Rhetorical DecTQs ————————— Speaker-centred DecTQs

————————— Addressee-oriented DecTQs
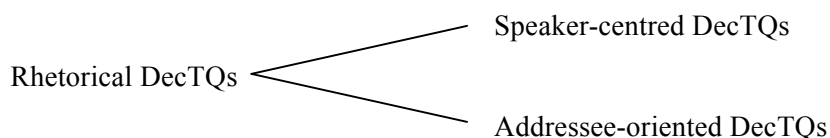
Fig. 5.7. Types of rhetorical DecTQs

Speaker-centred rhetorical DecTQs are discussed in section 5.3.2.1, and addressee-oriented rhetorical DecTQs in section 5.3.2.2. It should be noted that the terms speaker-centred and addressee-oriented are only used for rhetorical uses in the following, although response-eliciting DecTQs are, of course, also oriented towards the addressee.

5.3.2.1 Speaker-centred DecTQs

For speaker-centred rhetorical DecTQs, it is the speaker's own convictions, assessments etc. which are in focus, as in (49), whereas what the addressee might think is often considered relatively unimportant in the context:

(49)   "Achievement isn't necessarily measured by competition," returned Edward.
        "Oh, I can't agree with you," said Mrs Stannard. "**I mean**, in this day and age you don't get anywhere by just sitting back, do you? We've always felt Caroline's got it in her if only she's handled right." (wBNC G0Y 2401–2404)

The pragmatic marker *I mean* in (49) contributes to the impression that the DecTQ is rhetorical, i.e. rather a statement than a question, and *I mean* also underlines the speaker-centredness of the utterance.[17] Some speaker-centred DecTQs could very well have been uttered without an addressee being present, as in (50):

(50)   "... Yes yes, my darling ..." (Uh?) "... my darling, yes ... we're with you ... we're with you ..."
        Elinor put down the phone. She stared bleakly across at Henry.
        "My God," she said, sounding a bit like a vicar who has just discovered the Third World, "this makes one's own problems seem pretty small, doesn't it?"
        "Does it?" said Henry.
        He sucked on his lips. She put her head on one side.
        "**I think**," she said, "**that you have instincts and feelings that are not really human at all. I don't think you are human, actually. I think you're like some disgusting little animal, some creature from another planet. I'm sorry for you, Henry. One day you'll wake up and realize how utterly ghastly you are, and I don't think you'll find that very easy to live with, I'm going to bed**." (wBNC ASS 2398–2411)

---

[17] The basic meaning of *I mean* is "to forewarn upcoming adjustments" (Fox Tree & Schrock 2002:728); it is "used to focus addressees' attention (...) without explicitly requesting addressee feedback" and thus "focusses on the speaker" (2002:735,744). Schiffrin (1987) finds that *I mean* is speaker-oriented and may "be interpreted as a claim to certain (rather than uncertain) knowledge" (1987:309).

The DecTQ in (50) appears to be a general remark which the speaker could have made being alone; it is her spontaneous reaction to the dreadful news she just received on the telephone, uttered *sounding a bit like a vicar*. It says in the preceding narrative that she *stared bleakly across at Henry*; she does not seem to look him in the eyes, which means that she probably does not address him to start a conversation on the matter. Moreover, the reaction from Henry (*Does it?*) is unwelcome, as her subsequent scathing reaction indicates (see the emboldened part in (50)). In another example, (51), the speaker is indeed clearly talking to himself:

(51)　　　Jerking back from the dais, the Doctor slipped back through the circle of megaliths. Stiffly, he walked towards the entrance tunnel. "Time Lords are supposed to remain calm," **he told himself,** "but then again, I don't want to risk being late to meet Mait, do I?" Glad of the excuse, he ran from the chamber. (wBNC FSR 2665–2668)

When the speaker presents his or her conviction in a speaker-centred DecTQ, as in (49) and (51) above, he or she is quite certain of the proposition put forward in the anchor. It seems that the tag may add to this certainty, i.e. the tag may emphasize the point made in the anchor, as in (49) above, and as in (52):[18]

(52)　　　They sat on a couch in the empty room and Rose stared at her feet. "Your friend doesn't approve of me, does she?" she said. "She thinks the same as Dora, that Dieter's only interested in me because I've got money. But it isn't like that, he really cares!"
　　　"How can you be sure of that?"
　　　"I just know!" Rose lifted her head and looked Melissa full in the face.
　　　(wBNC GVP 944–950)

Such DecTQs are reminiscent of Algeo's (1990) punctuational tags, as he states that such a tag "emphasizes the point that the speaker wishes to make under the guise of asking a question" (1990:446).[19] The presence of the tag in such DecTQs indicates that the proposition might have been negotiated, but then the speaker, by proceeding, dismisses this negotiation. The fact that a negotiation is seemingly opened up, but then immediately closed down again, may give a stronger signal of certainty than a bare assertion would do; this explains why a tag may seem to emphasize the proposition put forward in the anchor. This is particularly clear in confrontational argumentation, as in (49) above, where the speaker announces her disagreement before the Dec-TQ (*Oh, I can't agree with you*), and when the speaker continues by supplying supportive argumentation for the conviction presented in the DecTQ, as in (52) above (see the emboldened part).

---

[18] Example (52) is also discussed as example (40) above.

[19] Columbus (2010a) has described a similar function for invariant tags; she suggests, among a wide range of functions, an emphatic function, where the invariant tag "emphasizes the propositional meaning intended by the speaker, making his or her attitude toward the statement more overt" (2010a:92).

However, in more uncontroversial contexts, the tags in some speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions may seem more like routine-like additions, indicating a negotiation which does not seem necessary, as in (53), where it is likely that everybody would agree with the speaker's statement of the non-existence of unicorns:

(53)   Larry took Lee's tapestry out of her hands and looked at her newly embroidered uni-
          corn.
             "Thank you," he said eventually. "It's a strange world, isn't it? <u>Unicorns don't exist, do
          they?</u> Not really."
             He looked up at her again. She had never seen anything as unspoiled as his face before.
             "I like it though," he said. "It's pure, elegant, supreme. It's OK."
          (wBNC CA3 296–305)

It might therefore be argued that speaker-centred DecTQs should be divided into those cases where the tag seems to emphasize the statement in the anchor and those where the tag is rather added as a routine hedge. However, the intonation of the whole DecTQ probably plays an important role here and since there are rarely any comments about the intonation in fiction (and no intonation mark-up in the spoken material), it is difficult to make a clear distinction between two such types. Indeed, it is sometimes possible to make both kinds of interpretations, as in (54), where the DecTQ is clearly rhetorical in presenting the conviction of the speaker, but may either be interpreted as emphatic or as uttered in a more casual way:

(54)   Evelyn O'Dowd had her own set of principles, which she changed and updated depend-
          ing on the situation.
             "Well, <u>we can't all be policemen can we?</u> He's a good kind man by the looks of him.
          You take my advice and grab him quick, then you can show him what he's doing wrong."
          (wBNC FAB 3834–3837)

In speaker-centred DecTQs presenting assessments, the subjective opinion of the speaker is presented; there is therefore often a subjective adjective in such DecTQs, as in (55):

(55)   "Mmm." Melissa sipped gratefully. "Just what I needed. I thought today's class would
          never end!"
             "<u>It was rather depressing, wasn't it?</u> But I suppose it was only natural that people should
          feel affected by what happened." (wBNC HNJ 1543–1548)

Assessments are very clearly rhetorical when they are turn-embedded, as in (55) above. When they are turn-final, there may still be no confirmation, as a subjective opinion cannot be confirmed; what the addressee may supply is just his or her own opinion as a comment. Erman (1998) states that *innit* "has little or no question function" in examples such as (56), where the meaning of the DecTQ is "[t]his is what I think + you may but need not say what you think":

(56)   Oh <u>it's lovely innit?</u> (no answer) (Erman 1998:96)

Columbus (2010a), who has suggested a post opinion/statement function for invariant tags, states that, in such instances, "the speaker simply makes his or her feelings known" and "the hearer may (...) comment on the statement if she or he wishes" (2010a:93). These descriptions of *innit* and invariant tags are also applicable to DecTQs presenting assessments: even though the floor may be left to the addressee after such a DecTQ, this does not entail that a response is elicited.

Pomerantz (1984) defines assessments as being "produced as *products* of participation; with an assessment, a speaker claims knowledge of that which he or she is assessing" (1984:57). She states that "[o]ne way of coparticipating with a co-conversant who has just proffered an assessment is by proffering a second assessment" (Pomerantz 1984:59). It should be noted that the first assessments in Pomerantz's study are not just questions of different kinds; declaratives may just as well invite agreement (or lead to disagreement). After a turn-final speaker-centred DecTQ, there might thus follow an agreeing assessment, as in (57), or a disagreeing assessment, as in (58); in Ilie's (1994) terminology (see section 5.3.2), the reactions to the speaker-centred DecTQs in (57) and (58) are reinforcing and cancelling, respectively.

(57)   "She's quite a catch, isn't she?" grinned Rizzi.
         Both Meredith and Lucenzo winced.
         "**Perfect**!" enthused his mother. (wBNC H94 4913–4915)

(58)   "I got a name – Kemp. Do you really need to know how?"
        (...)
          "(...) Kemp's a bit of a long shot, isn't he?"
          "**He came to me from a very reliable source.**"
          "The Hammond woman."
          "Indirectly, yes. (...)" (wBNC FS8 3497–3498, 3508–3511)

Columbus (2010a) states that invariant tags are added to make opinions "less committal" (2010a:93). However, even if tags in DecTQs presenting assessments may sometimes seem to reduce the commitment, there are also instances where the tag seems to emphasize the assessment, as in (59), where the speaker goes on supporting his assessment after the DecTQ:

(59)   "Sorry, I'd drifted off. I was wondering about Peter Yeo. Suppose they had been having an affair, and *she'd* dropped him?"
         McLeish considered this. "When she met Giles Hawick?"
         "Well, that's possible, isn't it? **If you remember, Hawick said – and he's not silly – that there was someone else on the scene when he first asked her out. Perhaps it was Mr Yeo? And she decided Hawick was the better bet, particularly since he wasn't married**." (wBNC AB9 2169–2177)

To sum up, speaker-centred DecTQs may range from presenting firm convictions to very subjective assessments, but they all have in common that the focus is on the speaker and that

they do not intend to elicit a response. In contrast, for other rhetorical DecTQs, the addressee is crucial; such addressee-oriented DecTQs are dealt with in the next section.

5.3.2.2 Addressee-oriented DecTQs

In contrast to the speaker-centred rhetorical DecTQs described above, the addressee is crucial to addressee-oriented rhetorical DecTQs; such DecTQs would have lost their purpose if there had not been an attentive addressee present, as they somehow concern this specific addressee. Such an addressee-oriented DecTQ may often just present an assumption about the addressee, as in (60):

> (60)   "Yes," he said in quite a different, hard voice, "you've noticed my love for Miss Ingram, haven't you? Don't you think she'll cure me of my wickedness, Jane? Oh, I can hear some of the guests in the garden. Go into the house by the back door."
> (wBNC FR6 1416–1419)

As such an assumption concerns a B-event, i.e. something which the addressee would normally have a better knowledge of than the speaker (cf. Labov & Fanshel 1977:100, see section 5.3), it seems natural for the speaker to use a DecTQ instead of a bare assertion, and thereby indicate a possible negotiation if the speaker's assumption should happen to be incorrect.

Addressee-oriented DecTQs may further, for example, remind the addressee, as in (61), where the reminding is made explicit in the reporting clause:

> (61)   "But I dunno when it 'appened," Billy said irritably.
> "Well, find out. Yer got friends down Rovver'ithe, ain't yer?" **Danny reminded him**. "Ask about, or see if there's any ole newspapers lying' about in yer ouse. There might be somefink in there about it. I'll 'ave a look too, an' I'll ask about, some o' my pals on the river might know somefink. Once yer know the date an' time o' the job yer can fink back. It'll all work out right, so don't worry." (wBNC EA5 2210–2218)

The fact that DecTQs may be used to remind the addressee is part of some previous functional discussions of *innit* (Andersen 2001:119; Stenström *et al.* 2002:168–169). When the speaker reminds the addressee, as in (61), this concerns an AB-event, i.e. something which is known by both interactants; however, the speaker suspects for some reason that the addressee might have momentarily forgotten this fact, or that this fact is not taken into enough consideration in the current context by the addressee, so he or she wants to update the knowledge of the speaker. The use of a DecTQ instead of a bare assertion indicates that the speaker realizes that the addressee might very well be aware of the fact he or she is being reminded of.[20]

---

[20] Some of the instances interpreted as speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions might also appear to remind the addressee, as, for instance, in example (52) above; however, such instances do not concern the addressee in the

The addressee in addressee-oriented DecTQs may also be accused by the speaker, as in (62), where the tag seems to emphasize the accusation:

(62)   "I reckon," said Marie slowly, "that you must think I'm a right idiot."
        "What you on about?"
        "<u>You smashed up that kiosk, didn't you?</u> You never gave them keys to Madge. You kept them and you smashed up the kiosk. You were after the takings, weren't you? Only you never knew I'd taken 'em round to Mr Bishop's brother." (wBNC ACB 1052–1058)

Accusations, as in (62), are straightforward attacks, but the addressee may also be challenged more indirectly. The term *challenging* is here used in a broad sense for situations where the speaker questions the "truth, value, or authority" (Collins COBUILD 2001:241) of the addressee. The speaker may, for example, threaten the addressee, as in (63), or tease the addressee, as in (48), where the reporting verb is, in fact, *teased*:

(63)   " ... and why can't you make the fire up properly!" She turned on me a look so cold, so calculating, that I almost shrank from her. "<u>It wouldn't be very nice, would it</u>, if I had to tell people that I had a mean niece." (wBNC AC7 416–418)

(64)   "We'll have to be careful," she said, "I don't want to get pregnant."
        "Don't worry. I have the necessary with me."
        "<u>Prepared, were you?</u>" she **teased.**
        "I've been hoping you'd agree for some time. Do you think less of me for that?"
        (wBNC AN7 4028–4034)

Addressee-oriented DecTQs thus try to exert different kinds of influence on the addressee without any responses being expected, although a potential negotiation is indicated by the tag.

5.4   Summary

The functional model proposed for DecTQs in the present study is displayed in Fig. 5.8:

---

same obvious way as the instances which have been interpreted as addressee-oriented DecTQs reminding the addressee.
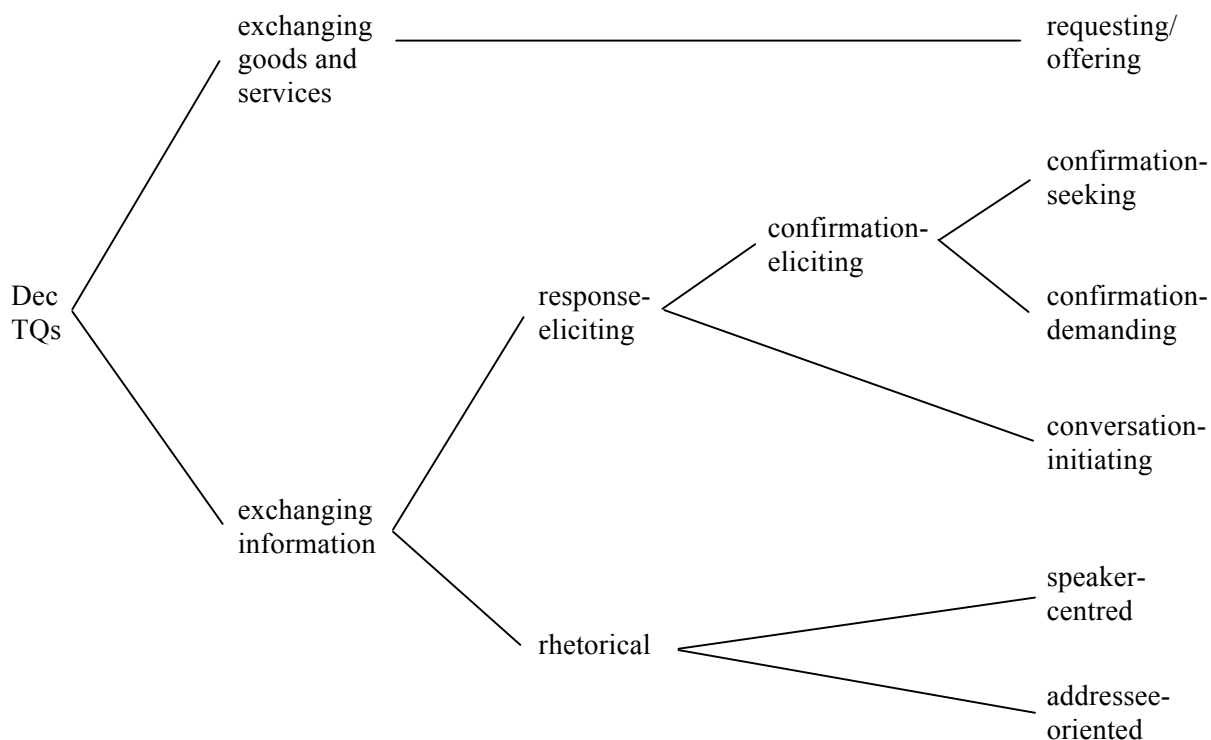
Fig. 5.8.   Model for the functions of DecTQs

In this model, there is first a distinction made between DecTQs exchanging goods and services and DecTQs exchanging information. The former constitute a category called requesting/ offering, whereas the latter may be further subdivided into response-eliciting and rhetorical DecTQs. A speaker who utters a response-eliciting DecTQ wants a response and would probably be disappointed if the addressee fails to respond, whereas a speaker of a rhetorical DecTQ does not anticipate any response, although he or she is aware that a reaction may follow, even if this may be prevented by the speaker proceeding without leaving any chance for the addressee to take over the floor. Response-eliciting DecTQs may be used primarily to initiate a conversation; such DecTQs constitute a conversation-initiating category. However, there is often a genuine interest in receiving a confirmatory response; the speaker of such confirmation-eliciting TQs may be either uncertain or quite certain. In the former case, the speaker seeks new information in an anticipated confirmatory or an unexpected rejecting response. In the latter case, on the other hand, the speaker demands confirmation from a sometimes reluctant addressee in order to be able to hear the addressee utter a confirmatory response, as in, for example, an interrogation. Hence, confirmation-seeking and confirmation-demanding DecTQs form two functional categories in the present model. Rhetorical DecTQs may be either speaker-centred or addressee-oriented. In the speaker-centred category, the speaker's own convictions, assessments etc. are in focus, and the addressee is treated as an audience, although his or her presence is not actually

necessary for the DecTQ to be uttered. For DecTQs in the addressee-oriented category, the addressee is crucial; without an addressee, such DecTQs would seem strange, as they directly concern the addressee in different ways.

An important factor in this model is speaker certainty vs. uncertainty, which is related to the speaker's view of the proposition in the anchor as being an A-event, an AB-event or a B-event (Labov & Fanshel 1977:100, see section 5.3). Another essential factor is whether the speaker leaves the floor to the addressee or continues speaking. The linguistic context is crucial for the interpretation of the functions of DecTQs. In fiction, reporting clauses and narrative comments often give important clues for the analysis of the functions of DecTQs in the dialogue. Responses, reactions and non-reactions are vital in all analysis of DecTQs, as these are usually found in a communicative setting. Stenström (1984) states:

> I do not think it is possible to interpret what A says without considering B's reaction, or non-reaction, since Q [questions] and R [responses] are so closely related.
> (Stenström 1984:45)

Aijmer *et al*. (2006) argue that "positing a core meaning (...) ensures that pragmatic uses are explicable, since they cannot be random or arbitrary" (2006:104). Although DecTQs have been shown to display a tremendous functional versatility, it seems possible to posit a core meaning, viz. negotiation. In response-eliciting DecTQs, negotiation is invited, whereas, in rhetorical DecTQs, negotiation is indicated but forestalled, or at least not encouraged. This core meaning of negotiation is also applicable to DecTQs exchanging goods and services, as the addressee may refuse to undertake a requested action and reject an offer.

6 Results: Frequencies and formal features of DecTQs

6.1 Introduction

The main hypothesis in this thesis is that there are differences between the use of declarative TQs (DecTQs) in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation; these differences may concern frequencies, formal features and functions. As differences in frequencies and formal features may be interesting in the discussion of functions, it is practical to investigate such potential differences first.

In this chapter, the frequencies and formal features of DecTQs in FICTION (i.e. the BNC fiction dialogue sample) and CONVERSATION (i.e. the sample from the spoken demographic part of the BNC) are described and compared (see section 1.3. on the material and section 1.4 on the method, in particular Fig. 1.2); frequencies are dealt with in section 6.2, and formal features in section 6.3. Moreover, some accompanying features – vocatives, punctuation and the turn position of DecTQs – are discussed in section 6.4. Lastly, there is a summary of the chapter in section 6.5. The focus in this chapter is on DecTQs in FICTION, but comparisons to the DecTQs in CONVERSATION are made along the way. This focus means that examples in this chapter are predominantly taken from FICTION.

6.2 Frequencies of DecTQs

In the thinned Fiction Subcorpus, 1,066 DecTQs were found in fiction dialogue, equalling a normalized frequency of 1,720 DecTQs per million words (pmw); hence, such DecTQs are a common phenomenon in the dialogue in BrE fiction. However, this study shows that DecTQs are used about three times less often in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation; in the thinned spoken demographic part of the BNC, 1,315 DecTQs were found, equalling a normalized frequency of 5,210 DecTQs pmw.[1] This difference is highly significant (p < 0.001).

In contrast, Nässlin (1984) reported a higher frequency of TQs in fiction dialogue[2] than in face-to-face conversation[3] (2.39 vs. 1.91 TQs per 1,000 words (1984:90), i.e. about 2,390 vs.

---

[1] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) report 4,383 TQs pmw in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. The difference between the normalized frequency in the present study (5,270 pmw) and Tottie and Hoffmann's lower normalized frequency may be due to different retrieval methods, definitions and treatments of marginal instances.

[2] Nässlin's (1984) fiction data was manually retrieved from the dialogue of ten novels and four plays (1984:200). The material comprised about 140,000 words; 335 TQs were found and analysed.

about 1,910 TQs pmw). Her higher frequency in fiction dialogue might be due to drama being included and to the fact that she only had data from 14 works of fiction, whereas her much lower frequency in face-to-face conversation might be due to a combination of other retrieval methods and other kinds of data than in the present study.[4, 5]

The 1,066 DecTQs in FICTION are distributed over 211 different files in the Fiction Subcorpus; hence, about 80 per cent of the 262 files are represented in the sample. The 1,315 DecTQs in CONVERSATION come from 123 out of the 153 files in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, which also equals about 80 per cent of the files. Hence, DecTQs were attributed to many different characters by many different authors for the fiction dialogue data and uttered by many different speakers for the conversation data.

6.3   Formal features of DecTQs

Many different formal features of DecTQs can be studied in FICTION and CONVERSATION. First of all, the starting-point may be the tags: their subjects, their tag operators and their negations, as well as the combinations of these elements, and also the position of the tag in relation to the anchor. Such descriptions and comparisons are presented in section 6.3.1. Moreover, the features of the declarative anchors on their own may be compared, for example, ellipsis in the anchors; this is presented in section 6.3.2. Then, the polarity relations between the anchor and the tag can be investigated; such comparisons of polarity types and polarity patterns are presented in section 6.3.3.

Since DecTQs have been shown to be three times as common in spoken conversation as in fiction dialogue (see section 6.2), the comparisons of features are not made as to normalized frequencies; what are compared are instead the proportions of features in the two samples. Hence,

---

[3] Nässlin's (1984) spoken data is taken from *A Corpus of English Conversation* (see Svartvik & Quirk 1980): 309 TQs were found in 170,000 words. As the retrieval method could only find tags at the end of tone units, she compensated for this and estimated that there were 15 instances followed by other words (e.g. vocatives), which had not been captured. Her frequency calculations are thus based on 324 TQs.

[4] Bald (1979) reported an even lower frequency of TQs in the whole spoken corpus material from the Survey of English Usage: 363 reversed-polarity TQs in about 335,000 words, i.e. 1,083 TQs pmw; including constant-polarity TQs, he found 439 TQs, i.e. 1,310 TQs pmw (1979:264).

[5] Mindt (2000) has also reported a higher frequency of TQs in fiction than in conversation. Using corpus data, including the BNC, he calculated frequencies of about 1.1 TQs per 1,000 words (≈1,100 pmw) in fiction, and about 0.6 TQs per 1,000 words (≈600 pmw) in spoken conversation (2000:446). The low frequency in fiction is partly due to the whole fiction texts being studied, not just the dialogue. The comparatively very low frequency found in conversation is surprising; it is not quite clear what corpus material it is based on.

when a feature is said to be more common in one of the samples, this means that it is proportionately more common, not necessarily more common in absolute numbers.

When features of DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION are compared, the statistical significance of differences in proportions is calculated and given in the column furthest to the right in the tables. Percentages which are significantly higher than the percentages in the other sample are emboldened in the tables. It should be noted that, as the data samples are quite large, statistically significant differences at $p < 0.05$, as well as often at $p < 0.01$, reflect rather small absolute differences when the entire samples are compared; only significant differences at $p < 0.001$ constitute clear absolute differences in proportions of features between the two entire samples. As fiction dialogue is the starting-point in the comparison of features between FICTION and CONVERSATION, the orders in tables follow the rank order of the feature under investigation in FICTION, unless there are other natural orders, such as grammatical person for tag subjects.

A complication in the analysis of formal features is the fact that, in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, there are quite a large number of passages labelled <unclear>, i.e. stretches which the transcribers could not interpret. At least as many as 100 of the 1,315 DecTQs found in the thinned spoken demographic part (equalling 7.6 per cent) display an <unclear> stretch in the anchor.[6] When features are unclear for some instances in CONVERSATION, the proportions are calculated only for the clear examples in order to enable a fair comparison to FICTION. The number of unclear examples varies depending on what features are investigated, as the <unclear> passages affect the anchors in different degrees and in different parts of the anchors.

6.3.1 Tags in DecTQs

The tags are first investigated as to their primary components: subjects, operators and negations (sections 6.3.1.1–6.3.1.3). Then the whole tags are dealt with: non-standard tag wordings and tags in marginal DecTQs are discussed in sections 6.3.1.4–6.3.1.5 before there is a presentation of the most common tag wordings in 6.3.1.6. Henceforth, the term *tag wording* is used when only a certain exact form of the tag is referred to, whereas the term *tag* is used to refer to various combinations of operator, subject and optional negation; tags with non-standard tag wordings as well as tag wordings with non-enclitic negation are thus included in *tags*. For example, the tag *isn't it* includes *innit*, whereas the tag wording *isn't it* does not, and *innit* is always referred to as a tag wording. Occasionally, there may be an additional word in a tag beside the primary com-

---

[6] The number may be higher, as there are sometimes <unclear> passages just before the stretch interpreted as anchor; the whole of or parts of these <unclear> passages might be part of some of these anchors.

ponents; such cases are dealt with in section 6.3.1.7. Finally, in section 6.3.1.8, the position of the tag in relation to the anchor is discussed.

6.3.1.1 Tag subjects

The distributions of the tag subjects are displayed in Table 6.1:[7]

Table 6.1.   Tag subjects in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
I	72	6.8%	66	5.0%	n.s.[8]
we	63	5.9%	78	5.9%	n.s.
you	415	**38.9%**	238	18.1%	$p < 0.001$
he	88	8.3%	97	7.4%	n.s.
she	43	4.0%	80	**6.1%**	$p < 0.05$
it	299	28.0%	545	**41.4%**	$p < 0.001$
they	54	5.1%	178	**13.5%**	$p < 0.001$
one	1	0.1%	–	–	n.s.
there	31	2.9%	33	2.5 %	n.s.
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table 6.1 shows that the clearly most common tag subject in FICTION is *you* (38.9 per cent) with *it* in second place (28.0 per cent), whereas the rank order of these tag subjects is the opposite in CONVERSATION: *it* is clearly more common than *you* in CONVERSATION: 41.4 vs. 18.1 per cent. Another highly significant difference between the two samples is that *they* is more common in CONVERSATION than in FICTION: 13.5 vs. 5.1 per cent. The proportions of the other tag subjects are similar in the two samples.[9, 10, 11]

---

[7] Non-standard forms of tag subjects are included: *you* includes *ya* and *yer*, *he* includes *'e*, and *it* includes *-it* in *innit* and *dunnit*. This is henceforth the case when tag subjects are referred to in general.

[8] n.s. = not significant

[9] As for tag subjects in the spoken demographic part, Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) report similar percentages to the present study; they report a still significant, but less pronounced, difference between *you* (ca 21 per cent) and *it* (ca 38 per cent). The difference between their study and the present study might partly be due to the fact that Tottie and Hoffmann include also non-declarative TQs and exclude TQs with tags used invariantly.

[10] As for tag subjects in fiction dialogue, Nässlin (1984:95) reports a very similar distribution to the present study; however, her results cover only reversed-polarity TQs. For her spoken data, she reports an even larger predominance for *it*, but otherwise rather similar results to the ones of the present study; again, she only covers reversed-polarity TQs.

[11] Hiller (1984) contains a small study of tag subjects in some spoken files of the Survey of English Usage (184 instances) and two drama texts (106 instances). He categorizes the tag subjects into five categories (the terms are my translations from German): neutral pronouns (*it/there*), pronouns referring to the speaker (*I, we*), pronouns referring

The clear differences between the proportions of *you*, *it* and *they* reflect significant differences in the distributions of tag subjects in the 2nd and 3rd person in the two samples; the proportions of 1st-person tag subjects and *there* are, on the other hand, similar in the two samples. This is displayed in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2.   Grammatical person of tag subjects in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
1st person	135	12.7%	144	11.0%	n.s.
2nd person[12]	415	**38.9**%	238	18.1%	p < 0.001
3rd person	485	45.5%	900	**68.4**%	p < 0.001
there	31	2.9%	33	2.5%	n.s.
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

The predominance of *you* in FICTION and of *it* in CONVERSATION makes it interesting to investigate the distributions of the semantic feature of animacy in this context, as this will show the extent to which human beings are referred to in the tags. Animate tag subjects are all the instances of *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *we* and *one*, as well as those instances where *they* refers to animate antecedents. Inanimate tag subjects are *it*, *there* and those instances where *they* refers to inanimate antecedents. As there are sometimes unclear references in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, it is not always evident whether *they* refers to animate or inanimate antecedents; these unclear cases were removed before the proportions were calculated in order to allow a more accurate comparison between FICTION and CONVERSATION.[13] In FICTION, animate subjects turn out to constitute about two thirds of all tag subjects; in CONVERSATION, on the other hand, only about half of the tag subjects are animate. Hence, human beings are referred to much more often in the tags of DecTQs in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. These differences are highly statistically significant, as shown in Table 6.3:

---

to the addressee (*you*), pronouns referring to animate singular 3rd persons (*he*, *she*) and other plural pronouns (*they*). The most common category in his spoken data is neutral pronouns (57 per cent; in just the surreptitious part of the data: 59 per cent), whereas, in his written drama data, pronouns referring to the addressee are predominant (53 per cent).

[12] It should be noted that some instances of generic *you* are included here.

[13] For other tag subjects than *they*, only the animacy of the tag subject has been considered, not a potentiality different animacy of the anchor subject. It could be argued, for example, that *it* in tags used invariantly may refer to animate antecedents, as in (i):

(i)   (**you**) should be in all day in**it**? (sBNC KPE 2205)

However, a tag used invariantly may also be regarded as referring to the whole anchor in the way of *isn't that so*, and then *you* is not the antecedent of *it* in (i). At any rate, the instances where the animacy may not be as expected are so few that this might only marginally affect the results of the investigation of the animacy of tag subjects.

Table 6.3. Animacy of tag subjects in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
animate tag subject	716	**67.2%**	675	51.7%	p < 0.001
inanimate tag subject	350	32.8%	630	**48.3%**	p < 0.001
Subtotal	1,066	100.0%	1,305	100.0%	
unclear	–		10		
Total	1,066		1,315		

A tag subject may be affected by a change of addressee during the course of a DecTQ. Change of addressee in general is described by Sidnell (2009):

> (...) to whom a turn-at-talk is addressed is frequently worked through in the course of its production. Not only can different components of an utterance target different participants as the primary addressed recipient, but, moreover, a speaker may modify the utterance to make it appropriate to the primary addressed recipient of the moment.
> (Sidnell 2009:148)

DecTQs involving a change of addressee have previously been observed by Biber *et al.* (1999), who find that "the speaker has shifted the assignment of conversational roles during the course of speaking" (1999:209). To be more precise, a change of addressee involving a change of subject in a DecTQ occurs when the speaker first addresses participant A in the anchor presenting an assertion about participant B, and then turns to participant B in the tag, as in (1), where *you* is the tag subject instead of the expected *he.*[14]

(1)   "(...) <u>Ted knows that, don't you</u>, **Ted**?" (wBNC G16 2706)

Changes of addressee where *you* is found instead of a 3rd-person pronoun as tag subject occur in eleven instances in FICTION (1.0 per cent), but only in five instances in CONVERSATION (0.4 per cent); this difference is however too small to be statistically significant. For ten of these eleven instances in FICTION, there is a vocative (see section 6.4.1) after the tag, as in (1), clearly indicating this change of addressee, whereas only one of the five instances in CONVERSATION is followed by a vocative, viz. (2):

(2)   So does Stuey and <u>so does Bob, don't you</u> **Bob**? (sBNC KB7 14164)

The reason why vocatives are usually found in these cases in FICTION but not in CONVERSATION is probably that a real-life speaker may instead show a change of addressee by moving his or her gaze (see e.g. Sidnell 2009).

---

[14] It should be noted that there may be a change of addressee between the anchor and the tag without any effect on the tag subject; this happens when there is no reference to the addressee of the tag in the anchor.

6.3.1.2 Tag operators

In the investigation of tag operators, the operators in non-standard tags are regarded as varieties of the standard forms which would normally have been used. This means, for example, that *do* in combination with a 3rd-person singular tag subject, as in (3), is regarded as being a variety of the tag operator *does*:

(3)   "(...) it stands to reason like ... don't it?" she added (wBNC AC2 2353) (=**does**n't it)

Likewise, *were* is regarded as a variety of *was* in combination with a 3rd-person singular tag subject, as in (4):

(4)   He was the C O weren't he? (sBNC KE6 8657) (=**was**n't he)

Furthermore, for tags with *ain't*, some instances are considered as forms of *is*, as in (5), forms of *are*, as in (6), and forms of *am*, as in (7), whereas others are treated as forms of *have*, as in (8), or as forms of *has*, as in (9):

(5)   "Oh, my Gawd! She's a cracker, ain't she?" (wBNC CR6 329–330) (= **is**n't she?)

(6)   (...) "You're just dying of curiosity, ain't you, (...)?" (wBNC H8M 2464) (= **are**n't you?)

(7)   "Just trying to get used to him, ain't I? (...)" (wBNC AC5 3106) (= **am** I not?)

(8)   (...) "The surprise is ruined! I've spoilt it, ain't I?" (wBNC FPK 1199) (= **have**n't I?)

(9)   Eh David's got a dog kennel ain't he? (sBNC KR0 2414) (= **has**n't he?)

In the same way, *innit* is either regarded as containing a form of *is*, as in (10), or a form of *has*, as in (11):

(10)   "Then it's private, innit?" (wBNC J13 2018) (= **is**n't it?)

(11)   Cos that's been shut for ages innit? (sBNC KE6 470) (= **has**n't it?)

When tags are used invariantly (see section 6.3.1.5), the operator is considered to be a form of *is*. For more information on non-standard tags, see section 6.3.1.4.

The distributions of tag operators are displayed in Table 6.4:

Table 6.4. Tag operators in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
is	245	23.0 %	445	**33.8**%	p < 0.001
do	185	**17.4** %	136	10.3%	p < 0.001
are	122	11.4%	122	9.3%	n.s.
did	108	10.1%	113	8.6%	n.s.
was	69	6.5%	94	7.1%	n.s.
will	63	**5.9**%	52	4.0%	p < 0.05
have	54	5.1%	79	6.0%	n.s.
would	51	**4.8**%	36	2.7%	p < 0.05
does	41	3.8%	75	**5.7**%	p < 0.05
can	31	2.9%	47	3.6%	n.s.
were	28	2.6%	21	1.6%	n.s.
has	21	2.0%	41	3.1%	n.s.
could	14	1.3%	19	1.4%	n.s.
am	10	0.9%	9	0.7%	n.s.
shall	7	**0.7**%	1	0.1%	p < 0.05
had	6	0.6%	8	0.6%	n.s.
must	5	0.5%	4	0.3%	n.s.
should	4	0.4%	12	0.9%	n.s.
ought	2	0.2%	–	–	n.s.
might	–	–	1	0.1%	n.s.
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table 6.4 shows that *is* is the most common tag operator in both samples. However, *is* is significantly more common in CONVERSATION than in FICTION: 33.8 vs. 23.0 per cent. On the contrary, *do* is significantly more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION: 17.4 vs. 10.3 per cent. These highly significant differences mean that *is* is more than three times as common as *do* within CONVERSATION (p < 0.001), whereas *is* is only significantly more common than *do* at the lowest level of statistical significance (p < 0.05) within FICTION. The proportions of the other operators are similar in the two samples.

When all forms of *be* in tags are brought together, it is clear that there are significantly fewer instances of the tag verb *be* in FICTION than in CONVERSATION: 44.5 per cent vs. 52.5 per cent. This is displayed in Table 6.5, which also shows that the tag verbs *do* and *will/would* are significantly more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. Hence, as far as tag verbs are concerned, there is more variation in FICTION than in CONVERSATION.[15]

---

[15] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) report similar percentages in their study of tag verbs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC; however, they report a lower percentage for *be*: 49 per cent. The reasons for this difference between their study and the present study might partly be due to the fact that they include also non-declarative TQs and exclude TQs with tags used invariantly.

Table 6.5. Tag verbs in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
be	474	44.5%	691	**52.5%**	p < 0.001
do	334	**31.3%**	324	24.6%	p < 0.001
will/would	114	**10.7%**	88	6.7%	p < 0.001
have	81	7.6%	128	9.7%	n.s.
can/could	45	4.2%	66	5.0%	n.s.
shall/should	11	1.0%	13	1.0%	n.s.
must	5	0.5%	4	0.1%	n.s.
ought	2	0.2%	–	0.3%	n.s.
may/might	–	–	1	–	n.s.
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

The predominance of the tag verb *be* in CONVERSATION has a connection to the relatively high proportion of inanimate tag subjects in that sample (see Table 6.3 above), and, conversely, the relatively high proportion of the tag verb *do* in FICTION has a connection to the clear predominance of animate tag subjects in that sample (again, see Table 6.3 above). These connections are clearly shown in Table 6.6–Table 6.7:

Table 6.6. Tag verbs combined with inanimate vs. animate tag subjects in DecTQs in FICTION

	inanimate tag subjects		animate tag subjects		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
be	268	**76.6%**	206	28.8%	p < 0.001
do	42	12.0%	292	**40.8%**	p < 0.001
other tag verbs	40	11.4%	218	**30.4%**	p < 0.001
Total	350	100.0%	716	100.0%	

Table 6.7. Tag verbs combined with inanimate vs. animate tag subjects in DecTQs in CONVERSATION

	inanimate tag subjects		animate tag subjects		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
be	500	**79.4%**	188	27.8%	p < 0.001
do	67	10.6%	254	**37.6%**	p < 0.001
other tag verbs	63	10.0%	233	**34.5%**	p < 0.001
Total	630	100.0%	675	100.0%	

The connections between the tag verb *be* and inanimate tag subjects as well as between the tag verb *do* and animate tag subjects are quite similar both in FICTION and CONVERSATION. Hence, in the data of the present study, there is a tendency in DecTQs for people to **do** something, whereas things etc. **are** something. It should also be noted that the other tag verbs taken together show the same tendency as *do*, i.e. they occur mostly in combination with animate tag subjects.

When the distributions of the tenses of the tag operators are compared, no significant differences are found: about a quarter of all tag operators are in the past in both samples (see Table C.1 in Appendix C).

6.3.1.3 Tag negations

Most tags are negative, but significantly less often in FICTION than in CONVERSATION, as shown in Table 6.8; this is related to the distribution of reversed-polarity polarity patterns (see section 6.3.3).

Table 6.8. Negative/positive tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
negative	651	61.1%	930	**70.7%**	p < 0.001
positive	415	**38.9%**	385	29.3%	p < 0.001
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

The negations in tags may be enclitic, non-enclitic or integrated (as in *innit* and *dunnit*). The distributions of these forms of negation are significantly different in the two samples, as shown in Table 6.9:

Table 6.9. Types of negation in tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
enclitic	628	**96.5%**	808	86.9%	p < 0.001
non-enclitic	20	**3.1%**	2	0.2%	p < 0.001
integrated	3	0.5%	120	**12.9%**	p < 0.001
Total	651	100.0%	930	100.0%	

As could be expected, enclitic negation is predominant in both samples. Neither is it surprising that integrated negation is significantly more common in CONVERSATION than in FICTION. Non-enclitic negation is found in both samples, but significantly more often in FICTION than in CONVERSATION; all the tag wordings with non-enclitic negation in the data are displayed in Table C.2 in Appendix C. At least about a third of the instances with non-enclitic negation in FICTION are found in extracts from historical novels; these stories are set in the Middle Ages up to the Edwardian era.[16] As enclitic negation probably did not begin to develop until the 16th century

---

[16] Information on the settings of the novels has been found on the web, in particular on the website Fantastic Fiction: <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk>. Unfortunately, information on the setting in time could not be found for all 17 novels contributing tags with non-enclitic negation to the data.

(Rissanen 1994), non-enclitic negation reflects the usage of the time in fiction which is set in the Middle Ages, as in (12):

(12)　　(...) "My prince meanwhile is heir presumptive, is he not?" (wBNC CCD 995)

Hoffmann (2006) has shown that non-enclitic negation in tags increased steadily in drama from the 16th century up to the early 20th century, when there was still non-enclitic negation in about ten per cent of the tags (2006:46); hence, using non-enclitic negation in historical novels often reflects the usage of the historical time. However, non-enclitic negation is also used in novels with more contemporary settings; the reason for using non-enclitic negation in fiction dialogue might then be that the situation is formal. According to Quirk *et al.* (1985*)*, non-enclitic negation in tags is found in "formal English" and "informal English in Northern BrE dialects" (1985: 810).[17] Formal situations are sometimes found in the Fiction Subcorpus, whereas the spoken demographic part contains almost only informal situations. The two examples of non-enclitic negation in CONVERSATION seem to reflect dialectal usage, as in (13), where the speaker uses a north-eastern BrE dialect; in contrast, in FICTION, dialectal usage seems not to be a major reason for using non-enclitic negation.

(13)　<-|-> And they closed that er <-|-> school did they not? (sBNC KB8 7784)

Another reason for using non-enclitic negation might be to avoid a specific contraction; this appears to be the case in (14), where *ought we not* is found instead of *oughtn't we* (*oughtn't* is an avoided contraction (Quirk *et al.* 1985:812)):

(14)　　(…) "Erika, Fritz, Rosa … we really ought to see you more often, ought we not? (...)"
　　　　(wBNC A7A 85)

---

[17] Beal (1993) describes the TQ system of Tyneside English, stating that it is "syntactically more complex than that of Standard English" (1993:203). Tags with enclitic negation after positive anchors are said to ask for confirmation, whereas tags with non-enclitic negation after positive anchors are said to ask for information. Tags after negative anchors are non-enclitic when information is sought, whereas tags used after negative anchors, where confirmation is sought, have double negation, as in (ii):

(ii) She can't come, can't she not? (Beal 1993:203)

Millar and Brown (1979) state that non-enclitic negation with "the isolate negative *no*", as in (iii), is a regular and common form in Scots; the operator and the subject "must be in low pitch" and *no* is the tonic syllable (1979:28–29), as in (iii):

(iii) She can cook can she no? (Millar & Brown 1979:28)

When there is no other detectable reason for the use of non-enclitic negation in the tag, it may be suspected that such negation is used for emphasis. This is quite obvious in the underlined DecTQ in (15):

> (15)   "I know, I know. I'm coming too"
> "To – to the cottage?"
> "Where else – where he goes I go. **I'm** his jester. **Isn't** it, Irina? <u>**There'll** be a little hole for poor Pat to crawl into, will there not?</u>"
> "Yes, yes," she said smiling, half laughing at him.
> "And **we'll** sing there too, **won't** we? Have you heard her sing? (...)"
> (wBNC APM 3028–3037)

In the extract in (15), the speaker uses contractions twice before and twice after the tag with non-enclitic negation as well as in the anchor of the DecTQ, which indicates that non-enclitic negation is probably not his normal usage. In (15), it might be the case that the speaker uses emphasis on the tag in order to reinforce the jesting appeal of the DecTQ, where the speaker refers to himself as *poor Pat*.

6.3.1.4 Non-standard tags

Non-standard tag wordings include the contractions *ain't*, *in't*, *int* and *in*, the integrated forms *innit* and *dunnit*, tags with non-standard spellings of the tag subjects *you* (*yer* and *ya*) and *he* (*'e*), and tags with the spelling *'as* for the tag operaror *has*. However, there are also operators which have a standard form but are combined with subjects in a non-standard way as in, for example, *don't it* and *weren't he* (see examples (3)–(4) in section 6.3.1.2). It should be noted that *aren't I* is not regarded as non-standard here, as it is "widely used" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:129).

Non-standard tags are much less common in FICTION (2.3 per cent) than in CONVERSATION (17.5 per cent), as shown in Table 6.10:

Table 6.10. Standard/non-standard tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
standard tags	1,041	**97.7**%	1,085	82.5%	p < 0.001
non-standard tags	25	2.3%	230	**17.5**%	p < 0.001
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100 .0%	

The most common non-standard tag wording in FICTION is *ain't it* with six instances, as in (16):

> (16)   (…) "Oh, <u>it's your family, ain't it?</u>" she cried. (wBNC FPK 1918) (= *isn't it?*)

In FICTION, *innit*, as in (17), is found in second place with three instances (all from the same file):

(17)   "Then it's private, innit?" (wBNC J13 2018) (= *isn't it?*)

The non-standard spelling *yer*,[18] as in (18), is also found in six instances in FICTION, but in combination with five different operators:

(18)   "Think you're fucking clever, do yer?" (wBNC J13 1903) (= *do you?*)

The reason why non-standard language is used in fiction dialogue is seemingly to characterize people; the use of a dialect may have a "distancing and stigmatising effect" (Leech & Short 2007:136). A character normally uses non-standard forms not only in tags but also in the surrounding context, as in (19), where all non-standard forms have been emboldened:

(19)   "Well, find out. **Yer** got friends down Rovver'ithe, **ain't yer**?" Danny reminded him. "Ask about, or see if there**'s** any **ole** newspapers **lyin'** about in **yer 'ouse**. There might be **somefink** in there about it. I'll **'ave** a look too, **an'** I'll ask about, some **o'** my pals on the river might know **somefink**. Once **yer** know the date **an'** time **o'** the job **yer** can **fink** back. It'll all work out right, so don't worry." (wBNC EA5 2211–2218) (= *haven't you?*)

Even if non-standard tags may be used to characterize people in fiction dialogue, this opportunity is not utilized as much as might be expected, non-standard tags being clearly underrepresented in FICTION compared to CONVERSATION. Krug (1998), who has studied the use of *innit* and *in't it* in the written vs. the spoken components of the BNC, finds *innit* and *in't it* to be "highly underrepresented in writing", concluding that "[a]pparently they have not been discovered as style markers for oral discourse in written English" (1998:175).

In CONVERSATION, *innit*, as in (20), is by far the most common non-standard tag wording with 100 instances.[19]

(20)   It's lovely innit? (sBNC KE0 2468) (= *isn't it?*)

---

[18] The non-standard form *yer* for *you* is only found in FICTION; *yer* is the conventionalized representation in written English for informal pronunciations of *you* and *your* (Collins COBUILD 2001:1819). The corresponding non-standard form in CONVERSATION is spelt *ya*.

[19] Research on *innit* has mainly focused on its use among teenagers (see section 4.7). It should therefore be noted that, despite the fact that COLT files are included in the spoken demographic part of the BNC (see footnote 9 in chapter 4), only 14 of the 100 instances of *innit* in CONVERSATION are used by teenagers, whereas 68 are used by adults (the age is unclear in 18 instances); cf. Krug (1998:181), who has shown that *innit* is used by speakers in all age bands in the spoken component of the BNC.

Other quite common non-standard tag wordings in CONVERSATION are *weren't it* (22 instances), as in (21), *int it* (16 instances), as in (22), *in it* (14 instances), as in (23), and *dunnit* (10 instances), as in (24):

(21)   The card was forty nine p weren't it? (sBNC KBF 5302) (= *wasn't it?*)

(22)   it's a dry cough int it? (sBNC KBB 11316) (= *isn't it?*)

(23)   Well it's easy in it? (sBNC KDY 1376) (= *isn't it?*)

(24)   This looks totally different dunnit? (sBNC KD5 3327) (= *doesn't it?*)

All the non-standard tag wordings are displayed in Table C.3 in Appendix C, where also their standard correspondences are given (see also examples (3)–(11) in section 6.3.1.2). It could be noted that the large majority of non-standard tags are negative, in particular in CONVERSATION, as shown in Table 6.11:

Table 6.11. Negative/positive non-standard tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
negative tags	20	80%	224	**97%**	p < 0.01
positive tags	5	**20%**	6	3%	p < 0.01
Total	25	100%	230	100%	

6.3.1.5 Tags in marginal DecTQs

The large majority of tags in the data are used variantly, i.e. the tag subject is co-referent with the anchor subject and the operator repeats the anchor finite, or, if there is a lexical verb as finite, substitutes this with a form of *do*, which displays the same tense, number and person properties as the anchor finite. However, in a few instances, tags with a form similar to variant tags are used invariantly (see section 3.2.2). Such instances are found in both samples, but less often in FICTION than in CONVERSATION: two vs. twelve instances,[20] i.e. 0.2 vs. 0.9 per cent; this difference is small but statistically significant (p < 0.05) (see Table C.4 in Appendix C).[21]

---

[20] Beside the twelve rather clear instances of tags used invariantly in CONVERSATION, there are also ten instances where *isn't it* (five instances), *innit* (two instances), *is it* (two instances) and *in it* (one instance) occur after anchors with <unclear> passages in the anchor, making it impossible to establish whether the tags are used variantly or invariantly, as in (iv):

The two instances of tags used invariantly in FICTION are shown in (25)–(26):

(25)   But the girl cried in a clear voice, "No, Mighty One, let de old lady stay. <u>She come to do worship, ain't it</u>, She-Who-Carries-Torch?" (wBNC HA0 2517–2518)
Expected tag: *hasn't she?*

(26)   "(...) He got de temp'ry permit which clears him to work for up to six month, but I hear you makin' him your general manager <u>which got to last more than that, isn't it?</u>"
(wBNC FRS 1137) Expected tag: *hasn't it?*

The DecTQs in (25) and (26) appear to be uttered by people who do not have BrE as their native tongue;[22] tags used invariantly are a common phenomenon "in regional varieties of English as a second language" (Crystal 2003:299; cf. also Quirk *et al.* 1985:28). The authors of these files probably wanted to depict the characters as speakers of such varieties.

In CONVERSATION, the most common tag wording among the twelve tags used invariantly is *isn't it*, as in (27):

(27)   Well what did he say? Glen her, <u>Glen [last name] they say, isn't it?</u> (sBNC KE6 6087)
Expected tag: *don't they?*

The other tag wording used invariantly more than once in CONVERSATION is *innit*, as in (28):

(28)   Grace: <u>should be in all day innit</u>? Will you be in all day?
Samantha: Aye. (sBNC KPE 2205–2007)
Expected tag: *shouldn't you?*

There are 100 instances of *innit* in CONVERSATION, and only four[23] of them are used invariantly; hence, the large majority of the instances with the tag wording *innit* are used variantly.[24] In comparison, Andersen (2001), who has studied the use of *innit* in COLT,[25] found that *innit* was used invariantly in 56 per cent of the instances (2001:108); hence, it seems that the invariant use

---

(iv) Tina: (…) But they have met. <pause dur=50>
     Josephine: Ooh <pause> <u><unclear> isn't it?</u>
     Tina: Mm. Chinese. <pause> Don't hear much about China. (…) (sBNC KCN 5562–5566)

There are also 27 other instances with <unclear> passages in the anchor affecting the subject and/or the finite, but where there are other tags than *isn't it*; hence, these tags are regarded as being used variantly.

[21] The distribution of tag wordings used invariantly is displayed in Table C.5 in Appendix C.

[22] The extract in (25) is found in a story set in Papua New Guinea (see wBNC HA0 2502), and the extract in (26) is from a story probably set in the Caribbean (see wBNC FRS 3).

[23] Two further instance of *innit*, with <unclear> passages in the anchors, might also be invariant. See footnote 20.

[24] The DecTQs with invariant use of *innit* constitute 0.3–0.5 per cent in the present study. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) found 27 instances of invariant *innit* in their dataset of 5,000 TQs from the spoken component of the BNC, i.e. about 0.5 per cent; these invariant instances were then excluded from their dataset (2006:286).

[25] For information on COLT, see footnote 9 in chapter 4.

of *innit* in the early 1990s was more common among teenagers, as represented in COLT, than in other age groups, as mainly represented in the spoken demographic part of the BNC.[26]

DecTQs with modified tags (see section 3.2.2) are more common in CONVERSATION than in FICTION: 39 vs. 3 instances. In CONVERSATION, about half of the modifications concern only the tense, as in (29) (see also example (27) in section 3.2.2):

(29)   But that **can** be the same anywhere couldn't it? (sBNC KE6 5259)
       Expected tag: *can't it?*
       Alternative anchor wording: *that **could** be the same anywhere*

The modification may also involve only the subject (which, of course, may lead to the use of another form of operator), as in (30), where *it was* means 'the price was' and *they were* means 'they cost':

(30)   Pauline: sixteen nineteen[27] nine they were
       Larna: What's that? Oh **it was** sixteen nineteen nine were they?
       Pauline: Mm
       Larna: I wonder why they reduced them then, (...) (sBNC KD1 3316–3320)
       Expected tag: *wasn't it?*
       Alternative anchor wording: ***they were** sixteen nineteen nine*

Some modifications are more complex, as in (31), where the anchor *there won't be anybody coming this week* could be rephrased into *nobody should be coming this week*, thus explaining the tag form *should they*:

(31)   Sandra: she may go in his lecture, she'll meet him. Or like that when they
                  <-|-> <unclear> <-|->
       June: <-|-> Well **there** <-|-> **won't be** <-|-> **anybody** <-|->
       Sandra: <-|-> how much <-|-> er
       June: coming this week should <-|-> they? <-|->
       Sandra: <-|-> and <-|-> er
       Pat: No. (sBNC KDW 185–191)
       Expected tag: *will there?*
       Alternative anchor wording: ***nobody should be** coming this week*

Overlapping speech, as in (31), may distract the speaker, resulting in modified tags. However, overlapping speech may also increase the risk of mistranscriptions, as it may be difficult to discern what is being said on the tapes. Transcription errors might explain some unexpected forms of tags, but, on the other hand, it may very well be the case that transcribers have 'corrected' some unexpected forms of tags. As long as the recordings are difficult to access, the researcher must nevertheless rely on what is found in the transcriptions.

---

[26] See footnote 19.

[27] *Nineteen* is probably a mistranscription of *ninety*.

In FICTION, there are three tags which may be regarded as modifications. In two of these, the verb *must* is involved. *Must* usually takes main verb negation (Quirk *et al.* 1985:795), i.e. it is not the modal auxiliary but the following infinitive which is negated; hence, *mustn't* is normally not the negative equivalent of *must*. However, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) state that *mustn't* can nevertheless be used in negative interrogatives, including negative tags, as in (32):

(32)   We must stop soon, mustn't we. (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:205)

In (32), *must* has deontic modality;[28] in CONVERSATION, there is a similar example, viz. (33):

(33)   Hmm I must go to Croydon mustn't I to change that bra. (sBNC KBH 6736)

Tags with *mustn't* are also found when *must* has epistemic modality, as in (34):

(34)   To remain seated was impossible. Abruptly she stood up and crossed to the window. "I must have done, mustn't I" (wBNC JY8 4148–4150)

Even if tags with *mustn't* are possible, some speakers may prefer to use tags with other operators, as in (35), where *aren't you* is used, and as in (36), where *won't you* is used:

(35)   "(...) You **must** let me know as soon as you know when you're moving, **won't** you? (...)" (wBNC AC5 3256)[29]
        Expected tag: *mustn't you?*

(36)   (...) Jackson said, "You **must be** worried. **Aren't** you?" (wBNC FS8 1085–1086)
        Expected tag: *mustn't you?*

In (35), *must* has deontic modality, and therefore, it is natural that the operator *will* is used, as deontic modality deals with future actions, whereas, in (36), *must* has epistemic modality, and a present form of *be* is therefore used instead.

The third example of a probable modified tag in FICTION, shown here as (37), may be interpreted in at least two ways.

---

[28] For the difference between deontic and epistemic modality, see Huddleston and Pullum (2002:178).

[29] This example is also quoted in Mindt (2000); he states that "[i]f the [anchor] expresses an invitation, a proposal, or a suggestion in the form of a complex verb phrase (polite form of an imperative), the corresponding tag is WILL" (2000:453).

(37)   "You wish to see her?"
        "No. I've come to collect her."
        "You have come to collect her?" He was staring at Ward, his eyes gone hard, almost
black in the sunlight. "Why?" The broad, open face was no longer smiling. "Who are you?"
        "Ah think you know that already. (...)" (...)
        "Your name is Ward. Correct?"
        "Iain Ward." He nodded.
        "And <u>you are here about the boat, is it?</u> The boat for this expedition. Are you the man
who put up the money to buy it?"
        "Ye know damn well Ah am." (wBNC GV6 1638–1646, 1652–1659)
    Expected tag: *aren't you?*
    Alternative anchor wording: ***It's** the boat you are here about*

One possibility is that the tag in (37) is used invariantly. However, this speaker is not depicted in the surrounding context as speaking non-standard English, although his addressee is (cf. examples (25)–(26) above); hence, it seems more likely that this instance should be regarded as a modification.

Erroneous tags are cases where an unexpected tag cannot be explained as a modification, although it is still fairly obvious that a tag was intended. As shown in example (28) in section 3.2.2, this may happen when the speaker is too young to master the rather difficult task of producing the expected tag. Erroneous tags may also be produced by a speaker who is upset, as in (38), where June discusses fire exits with her husband, when he seems to be leaving in the middle of the discussion:

(38)   June: Yeah well what about if the fire's between the box room and this exit?
        Geoffrey: Well that's where they are \<pause\> \<unclear\> \<pause\> \<unclear\> \<pause\>
                I went \<pause\> that slid across there like that, phewf!
        June: Where are you going? \<pause\> What ab– oi! \<pause\> Don't ask then!
                I mean <u>I won't even talk to myself am I?</u> (sBNC KCT 7947–7952)
    Expected tag: *will I?*

Another reason for erroneous tags may be influence from the linguistic context. In (39), the tag is probably influenced by present tense *are* (indicated in bold) in the subclause, whereas the expected tense in the tag would be past tense *were* (also indicated in bold) as in the main clause of the anchor:

(39)   \<-|-\> Aye <u>people</u> \<-|-\> **were** more serious in them days than they **are** now <u>aren't they?</u>
    (sBNC KBX 1647)
    Expected tag: *weren't they?*

The speaker may also be influenced by an interlocutor, particularly when there is overlapping speech, as in (40), where Stuart talks about the first helicopter flight in the singular in the anchor, using *was*, but then uses *weren't they* in the tag seemingly influenced by Mark, who uses *were* when talking about helicopters in the plural:

(40) Mark: that helicopter's were fucking around during the second World War <-|-> but
                     they, **they were** <-|->
      Stuart: <-|-> I̲ ̲t̲h̲i̲n̲k̲ t̲h̲e̲ ̲f̲i̲r̲s̲t̲,̲ ̲t̲h̲e̲ ̲f̲i̲r̲s̲t̲ <-|-> h̲e̲l̲i̲c̲o̲p̲t̲e̲r̲ ̲f̲l̲i̲g̲h̲t̲ **was** t̲h̲i̲r̲t̲y̲ ̲s̲e̲v̲e̲n̲ **w̲e̲r̲e̲n̲'̲t̲**
                     t̲h̲e̲y̲?̲ (sBNC KDA 6842–6843)
      Expected tag: *wasn't it?*

As shown in this section, marginal instances of DecTQs are less common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. In fiction dialogue, such marginal DecTQs are a minor issue, whereas they are frequent enough to affect results in the investigation of spoken conversation, as they constitute 5.7 per cent of all DecTQs in CONVERSATION. The distributions of different types of marginal instances are displayed in Table C.6 in Appendix C.

6.3.1.6 Tag wordings

In section 3.3, it was shown that there are well over 400 different potential tag wordings, not including a whole range of non-standard tag wordings. Of course, all these tag wordings do not appear in the data samples, but there is nevertheless large variation: there are 167 different tag wordings in FICTION and 169 in CONVERSATION. As the CONVERSATION sample is 23 per cent larger than the FICTION sample,[30] these figures indicate somewhat larger variation in FICTION. It could be noted that only 123 tag wordings are found in both of the samples; hence, there are totally 213 different tag wordings.

Isn't it is the most common tag wording in both samples; in fact, *isn't it* has almost the same proportion in both samples: about 12 per cent. The rank order for the eleven following tag wordings is quite different in the two samples, as shown in Table 6.12. Only half of the twelve most common tag wordings in FICTION are found among the twelve most common tag wordings in CONVERSATION; tag wordings only found among the twelve most common tag wordings in one of the samples have been emboldened in Table 6.12:

---

[30] The type-token ratio is 0.157 in FICTION and 0.129 in CONVERSATION. However, it is difficult to compare type-token ratios in samples of different sizes, as the type-token ratio is likely to be lower in a larger sample.

Table 6.12. Rank order of the most frequent tag wordings in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

FICTION				CONVERSATION			
Rank	tag wording	*n*	%	Rank	tag wording	*n*	%
1	*isn't it*	128	12.0%	1	*isn't it*	165	12.5%
2	*don't you*	80	7.5%	2	***innit***	100	7.6%
3	*do you*	63	5.9%	3	*is it*	69	5.2%
4	*is it*	48	4.5%	4	***aren't they***	50	3.8%
5	*aren't you*	44	4.1%	5	***don't they***	35	2.7%
6	***are you***	43	4.0%	6	*do you*	33	2.5%
7	***didn't you***	28	2.6%	7	*don't you*	31	2.4%
8	***won't you***	27	2.5%	8	*wasn't it*	27	2.1%
9	*wasn't it*	23	2.2%	9	***isn't he***	24	1.8%
10	***have you***	22	2.1%	10	***haven't you***	21	1.6%
11	***did you***	21	2.0%		*aren't you*	21	1.6%
12	***was it***	19	1.8%	12	***doesn't it***	20	1.5%

Table 6.12 shows that *don't you* is in second place in FICTION, whereas *innit* is the second most common tag wording in CONVERSATION. These two tag wordings represent the most common tag wordings, respectively, in comparison to the other sample.[31] All tag wordings in both samples are listed in Table C.7 in Appendix C in the rank order found in FICTION.

The tag wordings may be amalgamated into categories where non-standard tag wordings as well as tags with non-enclitic negation are brought together with the standard enclitic forms that they may be replaced by; these categories are thus the various combinations of operator, subject and optional negation found in the two samples, i.e. what is usually referred to by the term *tag* in the present study. Naturally, the number of tags is considerably lower than the number of tag wordings, viz. 137 in FICTION and 134 in CONVERSATION.[32] These figures point to clearly larger variation in FICTION.[33]

Table 6.13 displays the twelve most common tags in both samples; tags only found among the twelve most common tags in one of the samples have been emboldened:

---

[31] The X^2 value is 33.9 for *don't you* and 74.5 for *innit*. More tag wordings which are clearly more common in one of the samples are displayed in Table C.8–Table C.9 in Appendix C.

[32] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) found 188 different combinations of operator, subject and optional negation in 3,724 TQs in their study of TQs in the demographic part of the BNC (200 different combinations when also their data of 2,311 TQs from the Longman Spoken American Corpus is considered).

[33] The type-token ratio for tags is 0.129 in FICTION and 0.102 in CONVERSATION.

Table 6.13. Rank order of the most frequent tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

FICTION				CONVERSATION			
Rank	tag	*n*	%	Rank	tag	*n*	%
1	*isn't it*	140	13.1%	1	*isn't it*	294	22.4%
2	*don't you*	81	7.6%	2	*is it*	69	5.2%
3	*do you*	64	6.0%	3	***aren't they***	53	4.0%
4	*is it*	48	4.5%	4	*wasn't it*	49	3.7%
5	*aren't you*	47	4.4%	5	*doesn't it*	39	3.0%
6	***are you***	43	4.0%	6	*do you*	35	2.7%
7	***didn't you***	29	2.7%		***don't they***	35	2.7%
8	***won't you***	27	2.5%	8	*don't you*	32	2.4%
9	*wasn't it*	24	2.3%		***isn't he***	32	2.4%
10	***have you***	22	2.1%	10	***haven't you***	25	1.9%
11	***did you***	21	2.0%	11	*aren't you*	24	1.8%
12	*doesn't it*	20	1.9%	12	***didn't I***	18	1.4%

The tag *isn't it* is at the top in both samples in Table 6.13; however, in FICTION, the tag *isn't it* is followed by the tag *don't you*, whereas the tag *is it* is found in second place in CONVERSATION. The most common tag in FICTION in comparison to CONVERSATION is *don't you*. All the tags which are typical of FICTION, i.e. much more common than in CONVERSATION (p < 0.001) are displayed in rank order in Table 6.14 according to the X^2 values of their differences to CONVERSATION:

Table 6.14. Typical tags in DecTQs in FICTION compared to CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance	
	n	%	*n*	%	level	X^2 value
don't you	81	**7.6%**	32	2.4%	p < 0.001	33.6
are you	43	**4.0%**	14	1.1%	p < 0.001	21.0
won't you	27	**2.5%**	6	0.5%	p < 0.001	17.1
do you	64	**6.0%**	35	2.7%	p < 0.001	15.7
aren't you	47	**4.4%**	24	1.8%	p < 0.001	12.7

The two tags in CONVERSATION which are typical of CONVERSATION, i.e. much more common than in FICTION (p < 0.001) are *isn't it* and *aren't they*. They are displayed in rank order in Table 6.15 according to the X^2 values of their differences to FICTION:

Table 6.15. Typical tags in DecTQs in CONVERSATION compared to FICTION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance	
	n	%	*n*	%	level	X^2 value
isn't it	140	13.1%	294	**22.4%**	p < 0.001	33.0
aren't they	11	1.0%	53	**4.0%**	p < 0.001	19.1

The clear predominance of the tag *isn't it* in CONVERSATION contributes to there being less variation in that sample. All tags in both samples are listed in Table C.10 in Appendix C in the rank order found in FICTION.

6.3.1.7 Additional words in tags

A tag may occasionally contain an additional word beside operator, subject and potential negation; these additional words are adverbials or pragmatic markers. Such additions are optional, and may seemingly occur in any tag. There are six tags in FICTION and seven tags in CONVERSATION with additional words. The most common addition in FICTION is *now*; it is found either in final position (three instances), as in (42), or in initial position (one instance), viz. (41):

(41)   "(...) And you don't want a plum tree growing up inside you, do you **now**?"
(wBNC AC5 1160)

(42)   "(...) Sybil had never even set eyes on Rodney so they couldn't possibly suspect him of her murder, **now** could they? (...)" (wBNC HNJ 3152)

Now in (42)–(41) is the pragmatic marker *now* (Aijmer 2002), not the time adverbial *now*. In CONVERSATION, there is one clear instance of *now* in final position in the tag, viz. (43):

(43)   (...) oh I've gotta bring a cup of tea in for you, have I **now**? (sBNC KSV 3099)

There are another six instances of *now* before the operator of the tag, but the lack of punctuation between the anchor and the tag in these cases makes it unclear whether *now* is a pragmatic marker belonging to the tag or a time adverbial belonging to the anchor, as in (44):

(44)   (...) And you've read for me in bed before **now** haven't you? (sBNC KCH 1728)

Beside *now* in FICTION, adverbials found in final position in tags are *still* and *once*, as shown in (45)–(46):

(45)   "Nearly there they say, sir. All right are you **still**? No damage to us but someone caught it further up. (...)" (wBNC ACE 3686–3688)

(46)   "(...) We had a fuck, didn't we **once**? A few years back." (wBNC ASS 2271–2272)

Beside *now* in CONVERSATION, addtional words found in final position are *still*, *here* and *really*, as shown in (47)–(49):

(47)   <-|-> She is a heavy smoker <-|->, is she **still**? (sBNC KDM 13714)

(48)   Oh sorry Carrie, I hope we're not <pause> putting you to too much trouble are we **here**? I mean (sBNC KDM 3479–3480)

(49)   Couldn't make a lot with that <unclear>, could I **really**? (sBNC KB7 6554)

In CONVERSATION, there are three instances of final *really* with no comma before *really* but a question mark after *really*, as in (49), indicating that *really* is part of the tag. However, there are also two instances with *really* where there is a comma before *really*, as in (50):

(50)   It's a bit disheartening isn't it, <-|-> **really** <-|->? (sBNC KST 811)

When there is a comma, *really* is regarded as an added afterthought, not being part of the tag, whereas the instances with *really* without a comma have been interpreted as tags with additional words.

Furthermore, there is one tag in CONVERSATION where there is an addition of *or was it?*, viz. (51):

(51)   Kevin: (...), not to the leukaemia was it **or w–** <-|-> **was it?** <-|->
        Ruth: <-|-> Think it <-|-> was cancer <pause> childhood cancer or <-|-> something. <-|-> (sBNC KD0 68–69)

Erades (1943) argued that such an "alternative repeated question" does not form an independent sentence: "it remains a tag" (1943:42). Be that as it may, the function of the addition seems to be that the speaker has become even more uncertain, and modifies the conducive DecTQ into a non-conducive interrogative.

6.3.1.8 Position of tags

The default position of the tag is after the anchor: this is the case in 98.1 per cent of the DecTQs in both samples (see Table C.10 in Appendix C). Hence, only 1.9 per cent of the tags are inserted in the anchor. In most of these cases, an adverbial clause[34] follows the tag, as in (52):

(52)   (…) "It wouldn't be very nice, would it, if I had to tell people that I had a mean niece?" (wBNC AC7 418)

Inserted tags may also be followed by, for example, a *to*-infinitive clause, as in (53), or a direct object after the tag, as in (54); what follow in these cases are major clause constituents, which are important parts of the proposition in the anchor.

---

[34] Clauses starting with *because/cos* and *so* are not regarded as part of the anchor of the preceding TQ; such clauses may themselves be tagged, as in (v):

(v) You can't call it the league cup can you? Cos there's already a league cup int there? (sBNC KBD 2763–2764)

> (53)   "(...) He had to sell his business, <u>didn't he</u>, **to pay off Eddie's debts?**"
> (wBNC HGM 1253)

> (54)   "<u>You understood, didn't you</u>, **the real point of Dr Kemp's phone call?** (...)"
> (wBNC HWM 2340)

Sometimes, a tag is followed by a right-hand dislocation added as an afterthought, as in (55) and (56), or other additions providing specifications or clarifications, as in (57):

> (55)   "<u>He's very nice, isn't he</u>, **that Dr Kent?**" said Bobbie, later. (wBNC JY0 5399)

> (56)   "What I *was* going to say is that <u>it's not working out, is it?</u> **Sharing, I mean?**
> (wBNC HHA 2125–2126)

> (57)   "No, <u>it would have to be someone from a family of rank, wouldn't it?</u> **Like mine.**"
> (wBNC J10 1377–1378)

Admittedly, the additions in (55)–(57) are connected to the anchor of the preceding DecTQ, but it is impossible to draw a clear line between connected clarifications/specifications and other following phrases or clauses, in particular in CONVERSATION. Hence, the tags before additions such as those in (55)–(57) have been regarded as final.

6.3.2   Anchors in DecTQs

There is large variation in the length of declarative anchors. However, it is sometimes difficult to establish where the anchor starts, for example, should discourse markers such as *I mean*, as in (58), be regarded as part of the anchor, and what about long preposed subordinate clauses and words such as *then*, as in (59)?

> (58)   (...) "**I mean**, <u>you're not even related, are you?</u> (...) (wBNC ACB 2049)

> (59)   "(...) **If those devils can wring the necks of chickens and slit the throats of sheep, then** <u>they shouldn't object to some shot, should they?</u>" (wBNC CFY 973)

In the spoken demographic part of the BNC, there are additional difficulties of deciding where an anchor starts, in particular, the many <unclear> passages. The method used to compare the length of the anchors selected for the present study was therefore to analyse how many words there are between the anchor finite and the tag operator.[35]

The anchors in FICTION, measured in the way described above, turn out to be slightly longer than those in CONVERSATION: 4.14 vs. 3.87 words. The number of words between the anchor finite and the tag operator ranges from none to 19 in the FICTION and from none to 20 in CON-

---

[35] Nevertheless, 86 of the 1,315 instances in CONVERSATION had to be disregarded due to <unclear> passages with unknown numbers of words between the anchor finite and the tag operator.

VERSATION.[36] The DecTQ from CONVERSATION with 20 words between the anchor finite and the tag operator, (60), is a very long TQ indeed:

(60)　Ann:　　　　(...) you did**n't go into it in detail and** <pause> **get the time and motion study** <-|-> **man** <-|->

　　　　Enid:　　　<-|-> No. <-|->
　　　　Ann:　　　**in to look at the job** did you? (sBNC KC0 7196–7198)

In FICTION, there are two anchors where there are 19 words between the anchor finite and the tag operator; in both of these, the tag is found after a full stop, as in (61):

(61)　　　"We shan't be very long. And Miss Lilian will **be here to take her a nice little some-thing on a tray if she wakes before we're back**. Won't you, Lilian? (wBNC AC5 1308–1310)

This method of measuring the length of the anchors after the finite (or implied finite) is not affected by the occurrence of ellipsis in the anchor.

　Ellipsis is significantly more common in CONVERSATION (19.3 per cent) than in FICTION (12.9 per cent), as shown in Table 6.16:

Table 6.16. Ellipsis in declarative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
no ellipsis	929	**87.1**%	1,022	80.7%	p < 0.001
ellipsis	137	12.9%	245	**19.3**%	p < 0.001
Subtotal	1,066	100.0%	1,267	100.0%	
unclear	–		48		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Ellipsis sometimes concerns only the anchor subject, as in (62):

(62)　　　(...) "Know all about me, don't you?" (wBNC G0E 767)
　　　　(= **You** know all about me, don't you?)

Ellipsis of only the anchor subject is found in very informal conversation. In such cases, the re-ferent of the subject must be figured out by the addressee, who may rely on shared context with the speaker, or find the information in the tag subject later on in the DecTQ, and then recon-struct the full anchor. Ellipsis of only the anchor finite, as in (63), is non-standard:

(63)　　　(...) "You　　in the kitchen, ain't you?. (...)" (wBNC H8M 1442)
　　　　(= You **are** in the kitchen, ain't you?)

---

[36] The standard deviations are also similar: 2.79 in FICTION and 2.71 in CONVERSATION.

However, ellipsis in declarative anchors mostly concerns both the subject and the finite, as in (64):

(64)　　　 "(...) <u>Nice, isn't it?</u>" (wBNC A7A 718)
　　　　　(= **It is** <u>nice, isn't it?</u>)

Ellipsis of both the subject and the finite is quite normal when a form of *be* is ellipted, in particular when the tag *isn't it* is ellipted, as in (64) above.[37] However, such ellipsis also occurs with forms of *have*, as in (65), and *will*, as in (66), and even with forms of *do*, but then only in CONVERSATION, as in (67):

(67)　　　 (...) "<u>Realised it's just too difficult, have you?</u>" (wBNC HGT 2501)
　　　　　(=**You have** <u>realised it's just too difficult, have you?</u>)

(66)　　　 (...) "Or what, Mother dear? <u>Throw me out, will you?</u> Disown me? No ... I don't think you'd do that to your little boy. (...)"[38] (wBNC FPK 420–424)
　　　　　　　　　(= **You will** <u>throw me out, will you?</u>)

(67)　Phyllis:　　　<-|-> She <-|-> **gets a wage**.
　　　Margaret:　　So, <-|-> they're working <-|->
　　　Raymond:　　<-|-> Full stop? <-|->
　　　Margaret:　　for a company
　　　Raymond:　　But I imagine they <-|-> got <-|->
　　　Phyllis:　　　<-|-> <u>Not</u> <-|->　　　<u>if they don't work or something, do they?</u>
　　　　　　　　　(sBNC KDM 11837–11842)
　　　　　　（**They do** <u>not</u> [**get a wage**] <u>if they don't work or something, do they?</u>）

Many of the anchors with ellipsis of the subject as well as ellipsis of a finite form of *be* contain an adjective, as in (64) above; this is the case in 56 per cent of the instances in FICTION, but only in 39 per cent of the instances in CONVERSATION; this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

　　Table 6.17 shows the distribution of the ellipsis types:

---

[37] It seems unlikely that the tag wordings *isn't it*, *is it*, *innit* and *in it*, which may be used invariantly (see section 6.3.1.5), are used invariantly when both the subject and the finite of the anchor are ellipted, as it would then be almost impossible for the addressee to figure out the ellipted anchor subject and finite. In (vi), *innit* is used after an anchor with an ellipted subject; however, the speaker reformulates the DecTQ into an ordinary interrogative with the explicit subject *you* before the addressee has had time to respond, perhaps as she has realized that the referent of the ellipted subject may have been unclear for the addressee.

　(vi) Grace:　　　<u>should be in all day</u> <u>innit</u>? **Will you be in all day?**
　　　 Samantha:　　Aye. (sBNC KPE 2205–2007)

[38] The reasons why this example is not an imperative TQ is discussed in footnote 3 in chapter 8.

Table 6.17. Ellipsis types in declarative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
both subject and finite	103	75.2%	176	71.8%	n.s.
only subject	30	21.9%	55	22.4%	n.s.
only finite	4	2.9%	14	5.7%	n.s.
Total	137	100.0%	245	100.0%	

Table 6.17 shows that the distributions of the three ellipsis type described above are similar in the two samples: about three quarters of the ellipsis instances concern both the subject and the finite; ellipsis of only the subject is also fairly common, whereas ellipsis of only the finite is quite rare.

Ellipsis in the anchors of DecTQs has not received much attention in previous work (notable exceptions are Bolinger 1957, Kay 2002 and Allerton 2009). There are a large variety of types of ellipsis, which would merit further study, but this is out of the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, a special type of ellipsis needs to be discussed here. When there is ellipsis, it should normally be possible to reconstruct a full anchor, as indicated within brackets after examples (62)–(67) above, without any changes to the forms appearing in the anchor. However, there are two examples in each of the samples where the verb in the anchor seems not to be a finite, but an infinitive, as in (68):

(68)　　　　　　(...) "Try to give you short change, did he?" (wBNC B20 2348)
　　　　=　*He try to give you short change, did he?
　　　=　He tried to give you short change, did he?

These instances are treated as declarative anchors with ellipsis in the present study, as they seem to be used in a similar way as other DecTQs (with or without ellipsis).[39] This is illustrated in (69), where the same speaker uses four DecTQs in the same turn: in the second and the fourth DecTQ, there is an infinitive in the anchor, whereas the other two anchors have past participles, making it possible to reconstruct full anchors without any changes to the original wordings.[40]

(69)　　　　"Something sharp cut the pocket lining. Lost a kitchen knife, have you, Roxie?"
　　　　Roxie looked sullen.
　　　　"Threaten you with it, did he, Roxie? Where's your daughter, Roxie? Sent her away, haven't you? Threaten her with the knife, if you talked, did he?" (wBNC H85 31–37)

---

[39] An alternative analysis of (68) is that it is an instance of an interrogative TQ with ellipsis, as in (vii):

(vii)　　"Try to give you short change, did he?" (= Did he try to give you short change, did he?)

However, this seems less likely as interrogative TQs are a rare and contested phenomenon (see section 7.3).

[40] Only the fourth of the DecTQs in example (69) is part of the FICTION sample.

Both the examples from FICTION in (68)– (69) above have *did* in the tag, and so have the two examples in CONVERSATION, shown here in (70) and (71); these two instances are from the same file, but they are not uttered by the same speaker.

(70)   <u>tell you did I?</u> (sBNC KSS 2843)

(71)   <u>forget</u> <-|-> <u>didn't he?</u> <-|-> (sBNC KSS 3417)

The DecTQ in (71) is particularly interesting, as is shown in (71a) below, where the preceding context is included: the speaker first uses a DecTQ with a full anchor where the verb is a finite in the past, but when she repeats the message with an elliptical DecTQ, she has an infinitive in the anchor.

(71a)   June: (...) <pause> oh there was summit on t'other day, Sunday, and I told him and
                 <u>he forgot about it didn't he?</u>, The Bluebird
         Ernest: oh yes
         June: <u>forget didn't he?</u> (sBNC KSS 3414–3417)

Example (71a) and the fact that infinitival anchors are found also in fiction dialogue indicate that using an infinitive in such anchors is not a mistake, but an alternative to ellipted DecTQs with *did* in the tag, particularly when there is constant polarity: three of the DecTQs with an infinitive, i.e. those in (68)–(70), have constant polarity. In the entire two samples, there is only one constant-polarity DecTQ with an ellipted anchor subject and *did* in the tag where the verb in the anchor is not an infinitive, viz. (72):

(72)   (...) "I bet she told you all sort of tales. <u>Told you I was half-dead, did she?</u>"
            (wBNC ACB 2691–2692)

It might therefore be speculated that using an infinitive in the anchor of a constant-polarity Dec-TQ with *did* in the tag might be the default choice. However, this deserves further research on larger material (cf. the discussion of example (19) in chapter 7). DecTQs with infinitives in the anchor were earlier noted by Bolinger (1957): he found that examples such as *Find it did he?* are results of fronting, and that examples such as *Found it did he?* are cases of "mixing" of a question and a non-question (1957:18).[41] At any rate, it seems rather clear that the use of the infinitive in declarative anchors before tags with *did* is related to the normal use of the infinitive in the *do*-construction.

---

[41] According to Bolinger (1957), the TQ construction in general developed through fronting of the accented element, leaving the de-accented element at the end as a tag (1957:17); hence, TQs with elliptical anchors would have been used earlier than TQs with full anchors.

There are three elements in the anchors which are important for the formation of tags: subjects, finites and negations. The distributions of different kinds of subjects and negations are similar in FICTION and CONVERSATION (see Table C.12–Table C.13 in Appendix C). For anchor finites[42], on the other hand, there are some differences between the two samples, as shown in Table 6.18:

Table 6.18. Anchor finites in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

		FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
be	copula	392	36.8%	571	**45.0%**	p < 0.001
	operator	75	7.0%	87	6.9%	n.s.
	be to	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	n.s.
lexical/main verb[43]		224	21.0%	231	18.2%	n.s.
modal operator		179	**16.8%**	166	13.1%	p < 0.05
have	perfective	58	5.4%	56	4.4%	n.s.
	have got	15	1.4%	51	**4.0%**	p < 0.001
	have got to	2	0.2%	19	**1.5%**	p < 0.01
	had better	4	0.4%	2	0.2%	n.s.
do	*+ not/n't*	90	**8.4%**	79	6.2%	p < 0.05
	emphatic	24	**2.3%**	6	0.5%	p < 0.001
Subtotal		1,066	100.0%	1,269	100.0%	
unclear		–		46		
Total		1,066		1,315		

Table 6.18 shows that finite forms of *be* as copula is the most common finite in both samples; however, *be* as copula is more predominant in CONVERSATION with 45 per cent of the anchor finites. In contrast, the proportions of *be* as operator are similar in both samples. Hence, it is only *be* as copula which accounts for the higher proportion of tags with *be* in CONVERSATION (see Table 6.5 above). Furthermore, Table 6.18 shows that declarative anchors with *have got* and *have got to* are less common in FICTION, whereas perfective *have* is found in similar proportions in both samples.

---

[42] It should be noted that, in the investigation of anchor finites, elliptical finites are also included; these have been reconstructed from the choice of operator in the tags and the content of the anchor.

[43] *Have* (including *have to*) as a main verb is included in this category, as the operator in the tag then usually is a form of *do*. All instances with *have to* in the anchors in the two samples (twelve in FICTION and six in CONVERSATION) have *do* in the tag, except one instance in FICTION, viz. (viii):

    (viii)   "(...) Every time you want to see me you **have to** make an excuse, haven't you, tell a fib of some sort? (...)" (wBNC CFY 789)

Among the other cases with *have* as a main verb, only two out of 19 instances in FICTION, and only two out of 17 instances in CONVERSATION, display tags with forms of *have*, as in (ix):

    (ix)   (...) "You've no idea where they are, have you?" (wBNC G0S 1617)

In section 2.5, it was hypothesized that emphatic *do* might be more common in fiction dialogue than in real-life conversation in order to compensate for the lack of intonational cues. Indeed, emphatic *do* is significantly more common in FICTION. However, as emphatic *do* cannot co-occur with other operators, it is more fair to compare the occurrences of emphatic *do* to the occurrences where emphatic *do* could have occurred (i.e. where there is a lexical verb as anchor finite), as in Table 6.19:

Table 6.19. Emphatic *do*/lexical verbs as anchor finites in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
emphatic *do* as anchor finite	24	9.7%	6	2.5%	p < 0.01
lexical verb as anchor finite	224	90.3%	231	97.5%	p < 0.01
Subtotal	248	100.0%	237	100.0%	

Table 6.19 confirms that emphatic *do* is significantly more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. The reason may be to compensate for the lack of intonational cues, but there may also be another factor involved: fictional characters may be depicted as being more assertive than the average real-life person in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. In 19 of the 24 instances with emphatic *do* in FICTION, the subject is *you*, as in (73), whereas none of the six instances with emphatic *do* in CONVERSATION has *you* as anchor subject.

(73)   (...) "(...) You **do** understand what I'm saying, don't you?" (wBNC HGY 1227)

Several of the DecTQs with emphatic *do* and the subject *you* in FICTION are used in confrontational dialogue; hence, an interest in depicting conflicts in fiction may explain part of the more common use of emphatic *do* in FICTION than in CONVERSATION.

6.3.3   Polarity in DecTQs

The distribution of polarity types, reversed and constant polarity, are first presented, then the distribution of the two reversed-polarity patterns, and lastly, constant-polarity DecTQs are discussed. The distributions of polarity types are displayed in Table 6.20:

Table 6.20. Polarity types in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	961	90.2%	1,154	90.4%	n.s.
constant polarity	105	9.8%	123	9.6%	n.s.
Subtotal	1,066	100.0 %	1,277	100.0%	
unclear	–		38		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Table 6.20 shows that reversed-polarity DecTQs, as in (74) and (75), are predominant in both FICTION and CONVERSATION:

(74)   "You want the real answers, don't you?" (wBNC G0E 2961)

(75)   "You don't give an inch, do you?" she said wearily. (wBNC H94 721)

Constant-polarity DecTQs, as in (76), are thus in a clear minority in both samples:

(76)   "You know the men in here, too, do you?" Herr Nordern asked.
        (wBNC A7A 1322–1323)

Kimps (2007), who has made a corpus-based investigation of constant-polarity DecTQs only, suggests:

> [Constant-polarity DecTQs] are typical of spoken, conversational language and they are frequently used in informal, casual contexts. Because of this, [constant-polarity Dec-TQs] tend to be relatively less attested in standard corpora [in comparison with reversed-polarity DecTQs]. (Kimps 2007:271)

This suggestion is not confirmed in the data of the present study, as constant-polarity DecTQs constitute very similar proportions in FICTION and CONVERSATION, viz. about ten per cent.[44]

The distributions of reversed-polarity patterns are displayed in Table 6.21:

Table 6.21. Reversed-polarity patterns in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	651	67.7%	895	**77.6%**	p < 0.001
neg. anchor + pos. tag	310	**32.3%**	259	22.4%	p < 0.001
Total	961	100.0%	1,154	100.0%	

---

[44] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) found that eight per cent of the TQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC displayed constant polarity; this figure is close to my result, but it should be noted that their data is not restricted to DecTQs. In contrast, Nässlin (1984) found as much as 16.5 per cent constant-polarity TQs in her spoken corpus material from the Survey of English Usage (1984:188). Nässlin also studied reversed-polarity and constant-polarity TQs in fiction dialogue, but she only provides frequency data for reversed-polarity TQs.

Table 6.21 shows that the pattern positive anchor plus negative tag, as in (74) above, is predominant in both samples. However, this pattern is less predominant in FICTION than in CONVERSATION: 67.7 vs. 77.6 per cent. This significant difference of ten percentage units may seem small, but this pattern is accordingly 3.4 times more common than the other pattern (negative anchor plus positive tag, as in (75) above) in CONVERSATION, but only 2.1 times more common in FICTION. One might imagine that the less predominance of *isn't it* in FICTION would be the major reason for this difference to CONVERSATION; however, the difference as to reversed-polarity patterns is instead somewhat more pronounced among DecTQs where the tag is not *is it/isn't it* (see Table C.14–Table C.15 in Appendix C).

Constant polarity almost exclusively means that both the anchor and the tag are positive, as in (76) above. There are no instances of negative constant polarity in FICTION, whereas there are four instances in CONVERSATION. Two of these involve invariant uses of tags, as in (77), and there is also a modified tag in another instance.

(77) Unknown: (...) If I put another ring on it cuts like that one.
      Betty: Oh
      Unknown: And it cuts right <-|-> in my fingers. <-|->
      Betty: <-|-> Can't wear three <-|-> isn't it?
      Unknown: Can you?
      Betty: <unclear> no. (sBNC KBE 8024–8029)

Only one of the negative constant-polarity DecTQs in CONVERSATION might be interpreted as involving a non-marginal variant tag, viz. if the anchor in (78) is interpreted as starting with *it's*:

(78) It's not today you can't get them innit? It's yesterday when you bought you it.
      (sBNC KE6 3787–3788)

The anchor in (78) might alternatively be interpreted as starting with *you can't* and, if so, the tag is used invariantly; however, the polarity would in any case be negative constant polarity. Negative constant-polarity DecTQs are thus rare and only found in the CONVERSATION sample; and, when they occur, they are found in instances which are marginal or non-standard in other ways as well.

One feature for which there is a very clear difference between reversed-polarity and constant-polarity DecTQs is ellipsis in the anchor (see section 6.3.2). Such ellipsis is much more common in DecTQs with constant polarity; this is the case in both samples, as shown in Table 6.22–Table 6.23:

Table 6.22. Ellipsis and polarity in DecTQs in FICTION

	reversed polarity		constant polarity		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
ellipsis	88	9.2%	49	**46.7%**	p < 0.001
no ellipsis	873	**90.8%**	56	53.3%	p < 0.001
Total	961	100.0%	105	100.0%	

Table 6.23. Ellipsis and polarity in DecTQs in CONVERSATION

	reversed polarity		constant polarity		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
ellipsis	200	17.5%	45	**36.6%**	p < 0.001
no ellipsis	944	**82.5%**	78	63.4%	p < 0.001
Total	1,144	100.0%	123	100.0%	

This tendency might seem to be stronger in FICTION, but no statistically significant difference between the two samples can be shown (see Table C.16 in Appendix C), since there are only just over hundred constant-polarity DecTQs in each sample. The combination of constant polarity and ellipsis is discussed further in section 7.4.2.

6.4 Accompanying features of DecTQs

There are some accompanying features of DecTQs which merit investigation: vocatives, punctuation and the position of the DecTQs in the turns of talk; these are discussed in sections 6.4.1–6.4.3, respectively.

6.4.1 Vocatives

Vocatives sometimes accompany DecTQs, as in (79):

(79)   "You do love Seb a little, <u>don't you</u>, **Anna**?" (wBNC HHC 1759)

The distributions of accompanying vocatives are displayed in Table 6.24:

Table 6.24. Vocatives accompanying DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	123	**11.5%**	30	2.3%	p < 0.001
no vocative	943	88.5%	1,285	**97.7%**	p < 0.001
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table 6.24 shows that there is an accompanying vocative for 11.5 per cent of the DecTQs in FICTION. In CONVERSATION, on the other hand, there are significantly fewer vocatives: only 2.3 per cent. It should be noted that this percentage probably does not reflect all the vocatives, as <unclear> passages before, within or after the DecTQs may hide some vocatives. However, the difference is strongly significant, and even if only a third of all vocatives accompanying the DecTQs in CONVERSATION have actually been transcribed, the difference to FICTION will still be significant.

The reason why there are more vocatives in FICTION is probably to indicate for the reader whom the speaker is addressing, for example when there is a change of addressee (see section 6.3.1.1). In real-life conversation, gaze is crucial in indicating who the addressee is (see e.g. Sidnell 2009), so vocatives are often not needed for that purpose. However, there are additional functions of vocatives; they may also be used to summon the attention of the addressee, especially in initial position, or "to establish or maintain the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee(s)", particularly in final position (Leech 1999:108).

Vocatives accompanying DecTQs are mostly found in final position, as in (79) above; this conforms to the pattern of vocatives in general (Leech 1999:115). However, in some instances, the vocative is positioned just before the anchor, as in (80):

(80)   "**Parmedes**, you do realise what you are hearing is *highly* confidential material, don't you?" (wBNC AD9 3893)

Vocatives are also sometimes positioned just before the tag, as in (81), where the vocative becomes an integrated part of the DecTQ:

(81)   "You're happy at last, **my darling**, aren't you?" (wBNC ACE 2915)

The distributions of the positions of the vocatives are similar in both samples (see Table C.17 in Appendix C).

6.4.2   Punctuation

The stereotypical way of using punctuation in connection to DecTQs is to put a comma between the anchor and the tag, and a question mark after the tag, as in (82):

(82)   "You like her**,** don't you**?**" (wBNC APM 1959)

However, if such punctuation had been required in the search for DecTQs in the Fiction Subcorpus, only 81.3 per cent of the DecTQs would have been found, as punctuation may vary considerably even in carefully edited writing such as published fiction.

A comma is found immediately before the tag in 93.8 per cent of the instances in FICTION. In the remainder, there is a full stop, as in (83), a dash, as in (84), three dots, as in (85), an exclamation mark, as in (86), or no punctuation at all, as in (87):

(83)   "It's the middle of the sodding night**.** Isn't it?" (wBNC HTL 75–76)

(84)   (...) "After all, you're a pussycat, Aurora – aren't you? (wBNC JY5 1595)

(85)   "(...) You don't feel anything of that nature for me **…** do you?" (wBNC JYD 1387)

(86)   (...) "And now he has *changed* us all**!** Hasn't he? He has made us think!"
         (wBNC HR9 1721–1723)

(87)   "You won't tell anyone will you?" (wBNC CCM 705)

The use of punctuation such as full stops, dashes, three dots and exclamation marks before the tag may indicate that there is a short pause between the anchor and the tag; the tag would then be depicted as more of an afterthought than if there is a comma or no punctuation at all.[45]

Immediately after the tags in FICTION, a question mark is found in 85.3 per cent of the instances. In 13.0 per cent of the cases, there is a comma instead: for example, before a vocative, as in (88), before a clarification, as in (89), or after an inserted tag (see section 6.3.1.8), as in (90):[46]

(88)   "You do love Seb a little, don't you**,** **Anna**?" (wBNC HHC 1759)

(89)   "He's very nice, isn't he**,** **that Dr Kent?"** said Bobbie, later. (wBNC JY0 5399)

(90)   "You understood, didn't you**,** the real point of Dr Kemp's phone call? (...)"
         (wBNC HWM 2340)

Other kinds of punctuation immediately after tags in FICTION are full stops, as in (91), exclamation marks, as in (92), dashes, as in (93), and three dots, as in (94):

(91)   "I don't know. We could call it community work, couldn't we**.**" (wBNC A6J 345–346)

(92)   (...) "Oh, no! You're already married, aren't you**!**" (wBNC AD9 1480–1481)

(93)   "That's what you want to do, is it – leave him?" (wBNC H8T 1945)

(94)   "But there's more to it, isn't there **…** there's a kind of secret" (wBNC CCM 577)

---

[45] The use of full stops, dashes, three dots and exclamation marks before the tag is not the idiosyncratic use of a few authors: the 28 instances are found in 25 different files.

[46] In these cases, there is usually a question mark at the end of the sentence. At the end of the sentences where Dec-TQs occur in FICTION, there is a question mark in 95.8 per cent of the instances; see Table C.20 in Appendix C, which makes a comparison to CONVERSATION.

When there is a question mark after an inserted tag in fiction dialogue, there may be dashes before and after the tag to separate it from the surrounding anchor, as in (95):

(95)　　　"(...) It was easy to pinpoint the period of time within which the theft must have occurred, and <u>not to difficult – was it**? –** to find out</u> where the great majority of you had been during the crucial forty-five minutes. (...)" (wBNC HWM 3064)

When there is an inserted tag in FICTION, there is usually a question mark at the end of the anchor, as in (96), but there may also be a full stop, as in (97):

(96)　　　"<u>Funny, isn't it, how things just slip away without you noticing?</u> (...)"
(wBNC AC5 400)

(97)　　　(...) "<u>It wouldn't be very nice, would it, if I had to tell people that I had a mean niece**.**</u>"
(wBNC AC7 418)

One possibility is that the use of a full stop at the end of the DecTQ, as in (91) and (97), indicates falling intonation, which might mean that the DecTQ is not intended as a genuine question.

To sum up the punctuation in FICTION, there is mostly some kind of punctuation both immediately before and after the tags. In CONVERSATION, in contrast, there is very little punctuation before the tags (8.1 per cent), although usually a question mark after the tags (85.9 per cent), as in (98):

(98)　　<u>They didn't do bad did they**?**</u> (sBNC KC1 531)

Hence, punctuation of the stereotypical type, illustrated in (82) above, is only found in 4.7 per cent of the DecTQs in CONVERSATION. The transcribers of the BNC were instructed to add syntactically appropriate punctuation, where "[a] full stop or comma marks a syntactically appropriate termination or pause in an utterance, approximating to use in written text" and "[q]uestion marks and exclamation marks indicate questioning and exclamatory utterances" (Crowdy 1994: 27), which makes it remarkable that there is so little punctuation before tags. Only in 6.3 per cent of the instances in CONVERSATION is there a comma before the tag, as in (99):

(99)　　<u>That's quite a good one, isn't it?</u> (sBNC KCD 3427)

When there is a full stop, an exclamation mark or a dash before the tag in CONVERSATION, this might indicate that the transcriber interpreted the tag as coming after a short pause. In fact, in about a third of these instances, there is a <pause> indicated between the anchor and the tag, as in (100):

(100)   <u>Your Madge is too fastidious.</u> **<pause>** <u>Isn't she?</u> (sBNC KBB 3277–3278)

When there is no question mark immediately after the tag in CONVERSATION, there is mostly no punctuation at all; this occurs, for example, after most tags followed by a vocative, as in (101), and often when there is an inserted tag, as in (102):

(101)   And <u>it could come up again couldn't it</u> **dad**? (sBNC KD2 334)

(102)   Hmmm <u>I must go to Croydon mustn't I</u> to change that bra. (sBNC KBH 6736)

After the tags in CONVERSATION, there may also be a comma, a full stop, or an exclamation mark, or even a combination of a question mark and a comma or a full stop, as in (103):

(103)   <u>That's Robbie in the same class isn't it **?,**</u> Robbie there. (sBNC KD0 13898–13899)

When there is an inserted tag in CONVERSATION, there is sometimes a question mark at the end of the whole DecTQ, as in (104), but there may also be full stop, a comma or an exclamation mark, or no punctuation at all.

(104)   <-|-> oh <u>it's easier</u> <-|-> <u>innit, to get to the room**?**</u> (sBNC KDM 9218)

As shown in this section, there is large variation as to punctuation in both samples, but more punctuation in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. In some cases, a special kind of punctuation may give hints as to pauses and intonation and may thus be helpful in the analysis of functions of DecTQs. Table C.18–Table C.20 in Appendix C compares the distributions of punctuation between the two samples.

6.4.3   Turn positions

The turn positions of DecTQs in CONVERSATION are dealt with first, since turn organization is normally studied in spoken conversation, and as the conditions for presenting turns are quite different in fiction.

In many descriptions of DecTQs, one may get the impression that these are normally only found at the end of turns, the speaker leaving the floor to another speaker. Indeed, TQs have been discussed as typical turn-taking devices within Conversation Analysis: Sacks *et al.* (1974) state that the TQ is "the generally available 'exit technique' for a turn" (1974:718; cf. also Baciu 1983):

The effectiveness of tag questions in this regard is that they invoke rule 1a [If the turn-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use of a 'current speaker selects next' technique, then the party so selected has the right and is obliged to take next turn to speak; no others have such rights or obligations, and transfer occurs at that place], making the start of a particular next speaker's turn relevant on THEIR completion.
(Sacks *et al.* 1974:718,704)

In the present study, a distinction is made between turn-final DecTQs, where the speaker leaves the floor, as in (105), and turn-embedded DecTQs, where the speaker goes on speaking, as in (106):

(105) Gordon: <u>She liked the dress did she?</u>
        Audrey: Oh yes, she thought it was lovely. Mm. (sBNC KBC 5772–5774)

(106) Ginny: <u>He's funny isn't he</u>, he's no interest in settling having a family of his own.
       Keith: He can't find anybody, <unclear>, sort of girl that the wants to marry <unclear>. (sBNC KC9 5372–5373)

A turn is here defined as continuing until the speaker stops talking and another speaker starts talking. It should be noted that a turn is considered to be completed even if the other speaker only gives some kind of short feedback, as in (107), since such feedback may constitute a response to a DecTQ:

(107) Larna: What's that? Oh <u>it was sixteen nineteen nine were they?</u>
       Pauline: **Mm**
       Larna: I wonder why they reduced them then, (...) (sBNC KD1 3317–3320)

A complication when studying turns in spoken corpus transcriptions is the large amount of overlapping speech; 21 per cent of all DecTQs in CONVERSATION are completely or partly overlapped by another speaker (or several other speakers). In the present study, instances where the speaker keeps the floor despite overlapping feedback, as in (108), are regarded as turn-embedded.[47]

(108) None: it's fancy <-|-> **isn't it?** <-|->
       Sandra: <-|-> **yeah** <-|->
       None: it's like the, cos I keep saying if you must do those F's you do it at school I said, but do not do them for me (...) (sBNC KDW 6634–6636)

---

[47] For the sake of consistency, turns have been analysed as turn-embedded even if there may be overlapping minimal feedback, as in (x), where the addressee overlaps with *mm* during both the anchor and the tag:

(x) Unknown   Where was it?
    Audrey: What was the name of the place Gordon? Stewart Hotel wasn't it? Southsall.
    Gordon: Ne– near the Pleasure Beach in Blackpool.
    Unknown   Oh! It was <-|-> Blackpool <-|->
    Audrey   <-|-> **Mm**. <-|->
    Unknown   was it?
    Audrey: <-|-> **Mm mm**. <-|->
    Unknown   Oh right. (sBNC KBC 5017–5027)

Sometimes, the speaker of the DecTQ and another speaker start speaking at the same time after the DecTQ; these cases of DecTQs followed by subsequent overlap are also regarded as turn-embedded in the present study, as the speaker of the DecTQ does not leave the floor, as in (109):

(109) Wendy: (...) <u>he wears glasses <u>doesn't he?</u> <-|-> **And said** <-|->
       Norma: <-|-> **And he**, <-|-> he doesn't at all now. (sBNC KP8 2029–2031)

The distribution of turn positions for DecTQs in CONVERSATION is displayed in Table 6.25:

Table 6.25. Turn positions of DecTQs in CONVERSATION

		n		%	
turn-final		910		70.4%	
turn-embedded	no overlap[48]	297		23.0%	
	subsequent overlap	61	382	4.7%	29.6%
	keeping floor despite overlap	24		1.9%	
Subtotal			1,292		100.0%
unclear			23		
Total			1,315		

Table 6.25 shows that 29.6 per cent of the DecTQs in CONVERSATION are turn-embedded. However, what can be seen in the transcription is not all that happened in the conversation; indications of answers given only in body language, such as headshakes, nods, and shrugs, are missing. Hence, some DecTQs interpreted as turn-embedded might have been responded to in extra-linguistic ways, as in (110), where it seems likely that the cashier gave a nod as confirmation to the DecTQ:

(110) Unknown: Twenty chicken nuggets. <-|-> Any sauce? <-|->
       Dorothy: <-|-> And <-|-> er yeah <pause> tomato ketchup and sweet and sour <pause> please. <u>I can have two of each <u>can't I?</u> And <pause> french fries. (...)
                 (sBNC KBW 3962–3966)

Hence, it is quite possible that the proportion of turn-embedded DecTQs in CONVERSATION is higher than in reality. This fact and other fundamental differences in the conditions for presenting turns in fiction dialogue and transcriptions of spoken language made me decide to present and discuss the turn positions of the DecTQs in the two samples separately.

In fiction dialogue, there is never any presentation of overlapping speech; in fact, there is no convention for this in fiction. The same kind of symbols as in transcriptions might have been

---

[48] 'No overlap' means that there is no overlap which might affect the interpretation of the turn position; overlap which is irrelevant for the interpretation of the turn position may still be found.

used, but the problem is that such speech presentation is not reader-friendly. On the other hand, extra-linguistic answers are sometimes rendered in the narrative, as in (111):

(111)   (...) "I bet she told you all sorts of tales. <u>Told you I was half-dead, did she?</u>"
          Marie **nodded** her head, dumbly.
          "No wonder you look gone-out. (...)" (wBNC ACB 2691–2694)

Such extra-linguistic answers must be regarded as turns; hence, the DecTQ in (111) is classified as turn-final. If such extra-linguistic turns had been disregarded, twelve DecTQs would have been interpreted as turn-embedded instead of turn-final. Moreover, the presentation of conversations in fiction sometimes ends abruptly, making it difficult to know if the conversation stopped there or not, as in (112); such instances have been classified as unclear as to turn position.

(112)   (...) The rent to Mrs Parvis was only ten shillings. "But <u>once your father comes home, things'll start perking up, won't they?</u>"
          But being on the priority list didn't, after all, seem to make any difference. They went on waiting. (wBNC AC5 2899–2902)

Example (113) is a typical example of a turn-embedded DecTQ in FICTION:

(113)   (...) "<u>It's an amazing place, isn't it?</u> And they ask me for hardly any rent, which is the other nice thing about it."
          "There's no justice in the world" (wBNC A0F 3324–3326)

It is important to distinguish between the position of the tag in relation to the anchor (see section 6.3.1.8) and the turn position of the whole DecTQ. Hence, in (114), the tag is inserted, but the DecTQ is turn-final:

(114)   "<u>It was wrong, wasn't it, to keep thousands of people locked up in those dreadful old Victorian institutions with no hopes of release?</u>" said Clarissa.
          "Oh, undoubtedly," said Guy. (wBNC G1D 3049–3050)

Sometimes, there is a short addition or clarification after the DecTQ not considered as a part of the DecTQ (see section 6.3.1.8), as in (115); such DecTQs are classified as turn-final in the present study.

(115)   "<u>That's what you want to do, is it</u> – **leave him**?"
          "On my own terms, yes." (wBNC H8T 1945–1946)

The distribution of turn positions of DecTQs in FICTION is displayed in Table 6.26:

Table 6.26. Turn positions of DecTQs in FICTION

	n	%
turn-final	562	54.8%
turn-embedded	464	45.2%
Subtotal	1,026	100.0%
in monologues	3	
unclear	37	
Total	1,066	

Table 6.26 shows that turn-embedded DecTQs are a very common phenomenon in FICTION; they are found in 45.2 per cent of all the DecTQs in that sample. Hence, turn-embedded Dec-TQs are significantly more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION ($p < 0.001$), where they constitute less than 30 per cent of the instances; this claim is made with the reservation that the conditions for representing turns are quite different in fiction dialogue than in spoken corpus transcriptions. To the best of my knowledge, there are no previous studies of the turn position of DecTQs in fiction dialogue. Previous studies of the turn position of TQs in spoken BrE conversation show fairly similar results to the rate of turn-embedded DecTQs found in the present study (29.6 per cent): Bald (1979:267–268): 33.9 per cent, Oreström (1983:67): 27 per cent, Nässlin (1984:125): 21.6 per cent, Andersen (1998:5): 24.7 per cent, and Roesle (2001:90): 29.9 per cent.[49,50] Andersen (2001) has also found *innit* used by teenagers in COLT to be "turn-holding" to a fairly high degree, viz. in a third of all instances (2001:315). Although these previous results show some variation in the proportion of turn-embedded TQs in spoken conversation, these proportions are all much lower than the proportion of turn-embedded DecTQs in fiction dialogue found in the present study.

---

[49] Roesle (2001) found that there is more often a change of speaker after TQs in AmE: only in 17.5 per cent of these cases does the same speaker go on talking.

[50] The different percentages are probably due to a combination of different data and perhaps somewhat different definitions of turns. However, minimal responses seem to be regarded as separate turns in most of these studies. Oreström (1983) distinguishes between TQs followed by a turn and TQs followed by a brief confirmation, but I treated them both as turn-final when I calculated the proportion of turn-embedded TQs in his study. Moore and Podesva (2009) report a higher rate of turn-medial tags, viz. about 40 per cent (2009:457); however, their study is restricted to conversations between high school girls in northwest England, and, apparently, they do not consider feedback as constituting separate turns (Moore & Podesva 2009:474).

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, DecTQs were first shown to be three times less frequent in the fiction dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC; then, the proportions of a wide range of formal and accompanying features have been compared.

Several statistically significant differences between the formal features of DecTQs in FIC-TION and CONVERSATION have been found in this investigation. Features which are typical for one of the samples, i.e. clearly more common (p < 0.001) than in the other sample are displayed in Fig. 6.1:

Feature	FICTION	CONVERSATION	see Table
tag subject	*you*	*it*, *they*	Table 6.1
	in the 2nd person	in the 3rd person	Table 6.2
tag operator	*do*	*is*	Table 6.4
tag verb	*do* *will/would*	*be*	Table 6.5
positive/negative tag	positive tags	negative tags	Table 6.8
negation in tag	enclitic negation non-enclitic negation	integrated negation (*innit*, *dunnit*)	Table 6.9
standard of tag	standard tags	non-standard tags	Table 6.10
tag	*don't you* *are you* *won't you* *do you* *aren't you*	*isn't it* *aren't they*	Table 6.14– Table 6.15
ellipsis in anchor	no ellipsis	ellipsis	Table 6.16
anchor finite	emphatic *do*	the copula *be* *have got*	Table 6.18
reversed-polarity pattern	negative anchor + positive tag	positive anchor + negative tag	Table 6.20

Fig. 6.1   Typical formal features of DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION

The differences between the two samples displayed in Fig. 6.1 seem to be of several diffe-rent kinds, some being mainly connected to characteristics of spoken conversation and some mainly to the characteristics of fiction dialogue.

Firstly, some of the differences are related to some well-known general differences between spoken and written language; this concerns the use of *innit* and other non-standard forms as well as ellipsis. In these respects, fiction dialogue does not give a true picture of real-life conversa-

tion; the written standard probably influences authors of fiction to underrepresent these apparent features of spoken conversation.

Secondly, the characteristic common use of *isn't it* (including the non-standard tag wordings *innit, int it, in it, in't it* and *ain't it*) in CONVERSATION contributes to significantly higher proportions of *it* as tag subject, 3rd-person tag subjects, the operator *is* (including most of the operators in *innit, int it, in it, in't it* and *ain't it*), *be* as tag verb, negative tags and the polarity pattern positive anchor plus negative tag. Similarly, the common use of *aren't they* (including the non-standard tag wording *ain't they*) in CONVERSATION contributes to significantly higher proportions of *they* as tag subject, 3rd-person tag subjects, *be* as tag verb, negative tags and the polarity pattern positive anchor plus negative tag.[51] The high proportions of *isn't it* and *aren't they* as well as other tags with the verb *be* in CONVERSATION are related to a higher proportion of *be* as copula in CONVERSATION than in FICTION. The reason for all this might be different functional patterns in the two samples, favouring the use of DecTQs with *isn't it* and *aren't they* as tags.

Thirdly, the significantly higher proportion of *have got* in CONVERSATION is not countered by a significantly lower proportion of lexical *have*. Instead, the total use of lexical *have* plus *have got* is somewhat higher in CONVERSATION ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the lower use of *have got* in FICTION may be related not only to a somewhat less informal style but also to the topics discussed.

Fourthly, the significantly higher proportions of the tag subject *you* and the tag verb *do* may say something about what kind of conversations are included in fiction dialogue. The tag subject *you* is significantly more common in FICTION; this is the case even if the tag subjects *it* and *they* (which are significantly more common in CONVERSATION) are disregarded; hence, the high proportion of *you* in fiction dialogue seems to be characteristic of DecTQ in fiction dialogue, not just a secondary effect of there being fewer instances of *isn't it* (and *aren't they*) in FICTION. Accordingly, it appears that DecTQs in fiction dialogue deal with the addressee to a larger extent. All the tags which are clearly more common in FICTION have *you* as tag subject. On the whole, people are referred to more often in FICTION than in CONVERSATION, as shown in the investigation of the semantic feature of animacy. Moreover, the higher proportion of the operator *do* and the tag verb *do* in FICTION seem to indicate an interest in fiction to present conversations where it is discussed what people do; it might be the case that DecTQs with *do* bring the plot forward to a larger extent than DecTQs with *be*, which might be used in more phatic communion; such conversations might not be as interesting to present in fiction dialogue (see section 2.4).

---

[51] However, the operator *are* is not more common in CONVERSATION than in FICTION, as *are you* and *aren't you* are common in FICTION.

Fifthly, emphatic *do* is more common in FICTION; two hypotheses for this was brought forward in section 6.3.2: emphatic *do* might compensate for the lack of intonational cues as to stress, and fictional characters may be depicted by the authors in order for their stories to be interesting to read as being assertive and in real or potential conflict with other characters.

Sixthly, non-enclitic negation is more common in FICTION. This may partly be explained by the fact that some fiction texts are set in historical times; in such texts, the language may be adapted to appear to reflect the language of that time. It is also possible that more conversations in fiction dialogue are found in formal situations.

At this stage, only taking into account formal features, I have no hypothesis as to why the reversed-polarity pattern postive anchor plus negative tag is generally less predominant in FICTION than in CONVERSATION and why *will/would* as tag verb is more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION.

There are some indications that there is somewhat larger variation in the formal features of DecTQs in FICTION than in CONVERSATION. The type/token ratio for tags, is, for example, higher in FICTION. Moreover, the most common type of several formal features in FICTION is less predominant than the most common type of these features in CONVERSATION, for example, *you* as tag subject, 3rd person as tag subject, *is* as tag operator, *be* as tag verb, negative tags, the tag *isn't it*, and the pattern positive anchor plus negative tag. On the other hand, there is more variation in CONVERSATION as to non-standard tags and ellipsis in the anchors.

Of course, there are also formal features which are similar in both samples. Some features which are very similar are particularly noteworthy: the tense in the tags and the distribution of reversed vs. constant polarity.

As for accompanying features to DecTQs, clear differences between FICTION and CONVERSATION have been found for all the three investigated features. Firstly, vocatives are more common in FICTION; one reason is probably that the author wants to indicate to the reader whom the speaker is addressing. Secondly, as could be expected, there is more punctuation in connection to DecTQs in FICTION, particularly before the tags; however, there are many types of punctuation in both samples. Thirdly, there are more turn-embedded DecTQs in FICTION than in CONVERSATION.

The investigation of formal features has thus revealed interesting formal patterns for DecTQs and substantial differences between the two samples; these differences are suggested to be due to some general characteristics of spoken conversation and to what kind of conversation might be interesting to include in fictional works. These findings are useful as a basis for the discussion of the functions of DecTQs in the next chapter.

7 Results: Functions of DecTQs

7.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss differences in the functions of declarative tag questions (DecTQs) in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation; this requires a description and discussion of the functions of the DecTQs in the data. A hierarchical model for the investigation of the functions of DecTQs was introduced in chapter 5. This model has now been applied to two randomly reduced datasets of FICTION and CONVERSATION, each comprising 250 DecTQs; these datasets are hereafter referred to as FICT and CONV, respectively (cf. Fig. 1.2 in section 1.4).

This investigation has revealed substantial differences between the functions of DecTQs in FICT and CONV. Firstly, there are large differences in the quantitative distributions of functional categories. Secondly, there are, in several cases, qualitative differences within the same categories in FICT and CONV. It will be shown in this chapter that many of the differences between FICT and CONV can be connected with the depiction of problems, conflicts and confrontations in fiction dialogue.

In Fig. 7.1, the proportions of the functional categories in the functional model developed for DecTQs are displayed: the percentages for FICT are given first, and, below these, the percentages for CONV; it should be noted that all the percentages in Fig. 7.1 are related to the whole datasets. Fig. 7.1 shows that there are large differences between the functional distributions of DecTQs in the two datasets. To begin with, there are 13 DecTQs exchanging goods and services in FICT but none in CONV, where, accordingly, all DecTQs exchange information. Second, a clear majority of the DecTQs exchanging information have been found to be rhetorical in both datasets: about two thirds in FICT and about three quarters in CONV. Third, among the response-eliciting DecTQs, confirmation-eliciting DecTQs are clearly predominant; conversation-initiating DecTQs have turned out to be rather few in FICT, and none have been found in CONV. Fourth, among the confirmation-eliciting DecTQs, confirmation-seeking DecTQs are predominant in both datasets. Fifth, among the rhetorical DecTQs, the addressee-oriented DecTQs are predominant in FICT, whereas, in CONV, it is the other way around: speaker-centred DecTQs are instead clearly predominant there.[1]

---

[1] In Appendix D, there are tables comparing all the dichotomies in the hierarchical model; see Table D.1–Table D.5 in Appendix D. In Table D.2–Table D.5 the percentages are related to the sums of the compared categories in each table, whereas the percentages in Table D.1 and Table 7.1, as well as the percentages in Fig. 7.1, are related to the whole datasets.
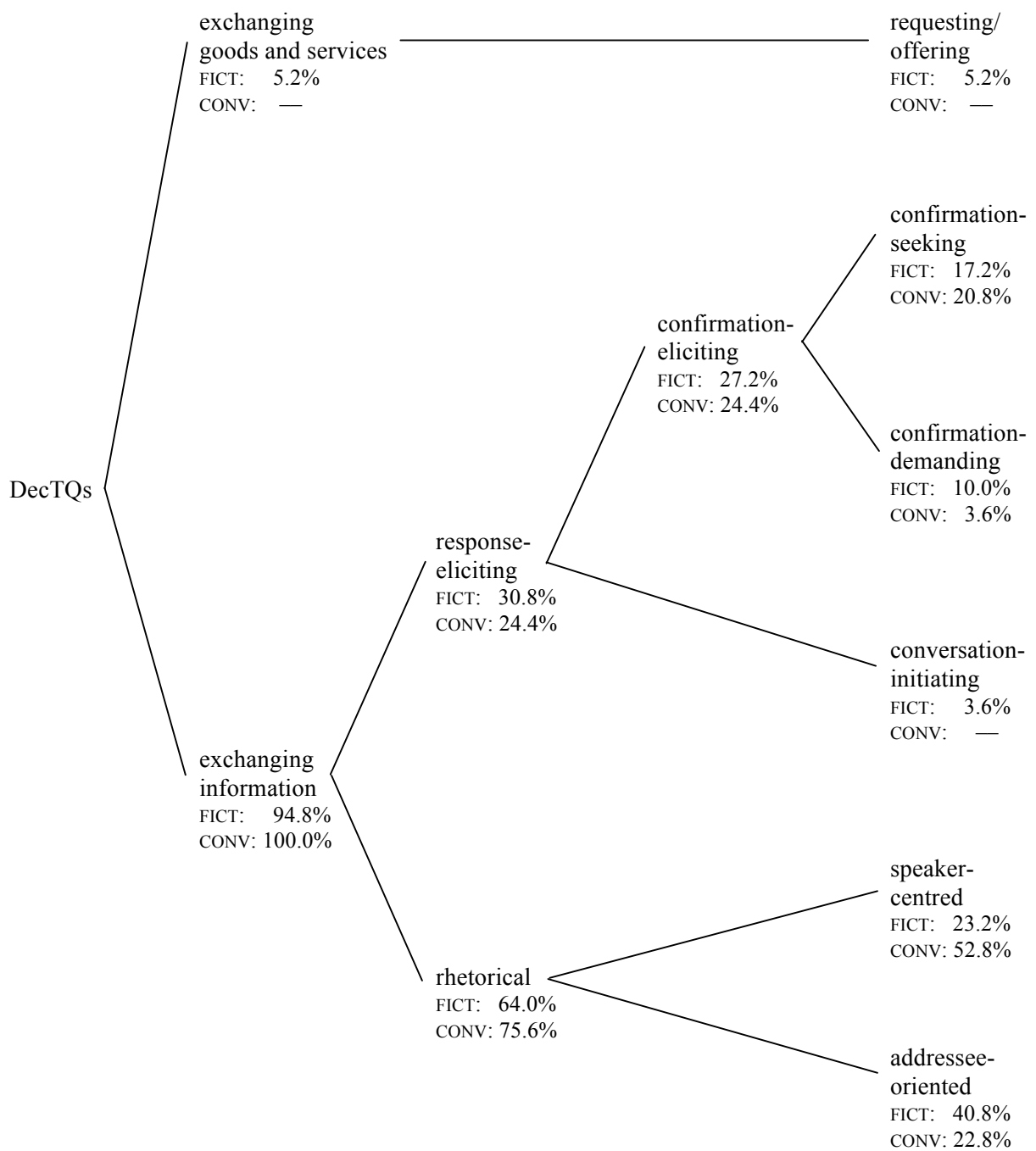
Fig. 7.1.   Functional distributions of DecTQs in FICT and CONV

Table 7.1 compares the proportions of the six categories found furthest to the right in the functional model:

Table 7.1. Functional categories of DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
addressee-oriented	102	**40.8%**	57	22.8%	p < 0.001
speaker-centred	58	23.2%	132	**52.8%**	p < 0.001
confirmation-seeking	43	17.2%	52	20.8%	n.s.
confirmation-demanding	25	**10.0%**	9	3.6%	p < 0.01
requesting/offering	13	**5.2%**	–	–	p < 0.001
conversation-initiating	9	**3.6%**	–	–	p < 0.01
Total	250	100.0%	250	100.0%	

Table 7.1 shows that addressee-oriented DecTQs form the largest category in FICT with 40.8 per cent of the instances; this is a significantly higher proportion than in CONV, where such DecTQs constitute just 22.8 per cent. Speaker-centred DecTQs are found in second place in FICT with 23.2 per cent; these are much less common than in CONV, where such DecTQs form the clearly largest category with 52.8 per cent. In third place in FICT, the confirmation-seeking category has 17.2 per cent; this is similar to the proportion in CONV: 20.8 per cent. Confirmation-demanding DecTQs, on the other hand, form a much higher proportion in FICT than in CONV: 10.0 vs. just 3.6 per cent. Lastly, the two smallest categories, requesting/offering and conversation-initiating DecTQs, have only been found in FICT; they display 5.2 and 3.6 per cent, respectively. These distributions suggest that there is more functional variation in FICT than in CONV.[2]

In the following sections, the DecTQs in the categories at the different levels of the model are described, and comparisons are made between their uses in FICT and CONV. The discussions on functional differences between FICT and CONV are related to the functional categories as such, but also to some typical formal features and to some qualitative differences within the categories; the distributions of various typical uses within certain categories are sometimes revealing. Requesting/offering DecTQs are dealt with in the next section, response-eliciting DecTQs in section 7.3 and rhetorical DecTQs in section 7.4.[3]

---

[2] When the terms *function* and *functional category* are used without specification henceforth, they usually refer to the functions enumerated in Table 7.1, not necessarily to the functional categories further up in the hierarchy.

[3] The functional categories at the various levels of the model are also discussed thoroughly in chapter 5, where the model is presented; many examples are discussed there, and some of them are repeated in the discussions of the results in this chapter.

7.2 Requesting/offering DecTQs

Requesting/offering DecTQs have only been found in FICT,[4] and there are just 13 instances: nine of them are indirect requests, usually with *you* as tag subject,[5] as in (1), three are indirect offers with *I* as tag subject, as in (2), and one is a suggestion for reciprocal services with *we* as tag subject, viz. (3):[6]

(1)   I exclaimed, bewildered. "But she must be seventy."
"Sixty-eight. But she has such power, such spiritual power. And those eyes ... <u>You won't tell anyone, will you?</u> Because of her marriage and her religion, she's terrified of a scandal. (...)" (wBNC AE0 2667–2672)

(2)   "They're locked in my desk," Merrill said tartly. "I'm still working on them, waiting for some details from Mike. And the key to my desk is in my handbag. <u>I'll get it for you, shall I?</u>"
"No hurry," he said laconically. "And I apologise if I've interrupted your work."
(wBNC HA7 664–669)

(3)   "I'll be going abroad soon," he told Sarah. "But <u>we'll write often, won't we?</u> You're my girl now, aren't you?" (wBNC G16 1497–1499)

Reversed polarity, as in (1) above, is found in nine instances; constant polarity thus occurs in four instances: in the three indirect offers, as in (2) above, and in one of the indirect requests, viz. (4):

(4)   The doctor, who evidently, and not unreasonably, on the basis of the conversations with Franca, thought he was dealing with a madman, said to Marcus, "I think we should all go now and have a nice conversation downstairs. Nothing whatever can be done here. <u>Perhaps you could open the door, could you?</u>" He motioned to Jack, who moved slightly away from the door, drawing Alison with him. (wBNC APM 383–386)

Requesting/offering DecTQs are similar to imperative TQs (ImpTQs) both functionally and formally. As for function, both these groups of TQs exchange goods and services, and constant polarity is used without any interpretation or echoing of the preceding discourse. As for formal features in requesting/offering DecTQs and ImpTQs, firstly, there is a predominance of the tag

---

[4] The fact that no requesting/offering DecTQs have been found in CONV does not imply that such DecTQs never occur in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, just that they are quite rare and did not happen to turn up in CONV. In the larger sample of CONVERSATION, there is, at least, one instance of an indirect offer:

(i)   Fiona was saying to me today at school, oh Emma can I have a bit if your height please? I was thinking, oh yeah <u>I'll just chop my legs off at the knee shall I?</u> (sBNC KCE 865–866)

[5] There is an exceptional instance in the data of an indirect request where the tag subject is *he*. The indirect request is made to the wife of the man who is referred to in the tag:

(ii)   "<u>Edward won' min' if I borrow his typewriter, will he?</u>" (G0Y 3717)

[6] No instance of an indirect suggestion for joint action has been found in FICT; example (18) discussed in section 5.2.1 was found in the larger sample of FICTION.

operators *will* and *shall*, as in (1)–(2) above, and, secondly, there are restrictions concerning possible tag subjects to 1st and 2nd person. Moreover, turn position seems irrelevant in both cases, as verbal responses are only optional when goods and services are exchanged. Furthermore, both requesting/offering DecTQs and ImpTQs are clearly more frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. The reasons for the relatively high frequency of ImpTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus are discussed and connected to requesting/offering DecTQs in section 8.2.6.

Some of the DecTQs used as indirect requests are more or less pleading with the addressee, as in (1) above; however, ImpTQs may be even clearly pleading (see section 8.2.6). Several DecTQs used as indirect requests in FICT are related to conflicts in various ways: the speaker may want to avoid a potential conflict, as in (1) above, where a woman is *terrified of a scandal*, or prevent a conflict from escalating, as in (4), where the speaker *thought he was dealing with a madman*, or start a necessary conflict in the interest of the addressee, as in (5), where a mother suspects that her husband is about to abuse their daughter:

> (5)   "And what did Daddy say?"
> "He said I was still a baby. But I'm not, am I, Mammy? I'll soon be eight … well, not till December and I know it's only summer, but I'll be eight in December, won't I?"
> "Yes, of course you will, and … and being eight, you'll be able to have the bathroom to yourself. But till then, I'll bath you. And – " She turned her daughter's face fully to her and cupped her cheek as she said, "You must tell Daddy that you want me to bath you. <u>You will, won't you?</u>"
> "Yes. Well, he … he might get angry." (wBNC HWE 1054–1062)

There are too few instances of DecTQs used as indirect requests in FICT in order to draw any clear conclusions why they are found in FICT but not in CONV, but it may be speculated that the depiction of problems and conflicts in fiction may promote the use of DecTQs as indirect requests.

7.3   Response-eliciting DecTQs

About a third of the DecTQs in FICT have been analysed as response-eliciting. In CONV, response-eliciting DecTQs form only about a quarter of all DecTQs; however, the difference to FICT is not large enough to be statistically significant (see Table D.2 in Appendix D). It is remarkable that only a minority of the DecTQs in the present study have turned out to be response-eliciting, as DecTQs have often been described as typically asking for confirmation or verification (e.g. in Quirk *et al*. 1985:811), i.e. as response-eliciting.

The way response-eliciting DecTQs are responded to may reveal something about the response-eliciting DecTQs themselves. Addressees turn out to provide non-co-operative responses significantly more often in FICT than in CONV, as shown in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2.   Responses to response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

		FICT			CONV			statistical significance
		n		%	*n*		%	
co-operative	confirmatory	48[7]	48	64%	48[8]	52	**90%**	p < 0.01
	commenting	–			4			
non-co-operative	refuting	13	27	**36%**	4	6	10%	p < 0.01
	evasive	9			–			
	no response	5			2			
	Subtotal		75	100%		58	100%	
unclear			2			3		
	Total		77			61		

The addressees in FICT respond in a non-co-operative way in 36 per cent of the cases compared to only 10 per cent in FICT. This tendency for less co-operation in FICT is present in both confirmation-seeking and confirmation-demanding DecTQs.[9]

Table 7.2 above shows that co-operative responses are mostly confirmatory, as in (6):

(6)   "Hey, look, <u>you are going to be OK, aren't you?</u>"
           "**Yes**, sorry – my way of talking. (...)" (wBNC A0F 1375–1376)

In CONV, but not in FICT, there are also some co-operative comments; commenting responses seem to occur when the addressee is uncertain, but nevertheless tries to respond, as in (7):

---

[7] Including four instances where it is indicated in the narrative context that a confirmatory response was given, either in words, as in (iii), or extra-linguistically, as in (iv) (see also section 2.5):

   (iii)   "You see? <u>That wasn't so difficult, was it?</u>" he said, and when **Caroline admitted that it hadn't been**, (...) (wBNC JY7 5919–5920)

   (iv)   "<u>You weren't particularly impressed either with racing or with me as a driver, were you?</u>"
              Ashley shook her head. "Why did you give up Formula One?" she enquired. (wBNC JY9 1949–1951)

[8] Including four instances where there are indications in the context that a confirmatory extralinguistic response was given (see the discussion of example (110) in section 6.4.3).

[9] The difference in co-operation is statistically significant for the confirmation-seeking category (see Table 7.3 below), but not for the confirmation-demanding category, probably partly due to the small amount of data (see Table D.6 in Appendix D). In the conversation-initiating category, there are five co-operative and four non-co-operative responses.

(7)	Kevin:	The irony of it is this is that he \<pause\> has done a lot, he gave ten \<-|-\> thousand \<-|-\>
	Ruth:	\<-|-\> Yeah. \<-|-\>
	Kevin:	pounds, is it, <u>not to the leukaemia <u>was it</u></u> or w– \<-|-\> was it? \<-|-\>
	Ruth:	\<-|-\> **Think it** \<-|-\> **was cancer** \<pause\> **childhood cancer or** \<-|-\> **something.** \<-|-\> (sBNC KD0 66–69)

Non-co-operative responses are refuting, as in (8), evasive, as in (9), or cases without a re-
sponse, as in (10), where there is a comment about that in the narrative:[10]

(8)   "Rohmer," continued Gilbert. "Were you lying? <u>It's still happening, isn't it?</u>"
         "**No, it's not.** We're quite safe." (wBNC G0E 517–521)

(9)   "She won't listen."
         "She will! <u>She trusts you, doesn't she?</u>"
         "**Dunno**," said Marie "I don't know what she thinks about me."
(wBNC ACB 1395–1399)

(10)   His bitterness had surprised her. "Surely not," she had answered. "<u>Father wouldn't want
         that, would he?</u>"
             But he had not answered, only looked away, the bitterness in his face unchanged.
         (wBNC FRF 400–403)

The lower proportion of co-operative responses in FICT suggests that response-eliciting DecTQs
may more often be confrontational in FICT than in CONV; however, see the discussion of the
non-co-operative responses to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in section 7.3.1.1.

In the functional model of the present study, response-eliciting DecTQs are divided into con-
firmation-eliciting DecTQs, where the speaker is genuinely interested in getting his or her
assumption confirmed, and DecTQs which are primarily conversation-initiating; the former,
which are clearly predominant among the response-eliciting DecTQs are discussed in the next
section, 7.3.1, and the latter, which have only been found in FICT, in section 7.3.2.

7.3.1   Confirmation-eliciting DecTQs

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs are found in similar proportions in both datasets, whereas confir-
mation-demanding DecTQs are much more common in FICT than in CONV; the former are dealt
with in section 7.3.1.1, and the latter in section 7.3.1.2.

---

[10] In the two cases in CONV where there is no response to response-eliciting DecTQs, the speaker seems to be ignored
by the other interactants, who appear to prefer other topics, as in (v):

(v)	Margaret:	She was a heavy smoker wasn't she?
	Phyllis:	Mm.
	Brian:	\<-|-\> But they've got the mobile home \<-|-\>
	Margaret:	\<-|-\> <u>She is a heavy smoker</u> \<-|-\>, <u>is she still?</u>
	Brian:	in there. \<pause\> In the lakes \<pause\> so, they're gonna spend as much time as they can \<pause\> \<-|-\> round the \<-|-\>
	Margaret:	\<-|-\> Up there. \<-|-\> (sBNC KDM 13711–13717)

7.3.1.1 Confirmation-seeking DecTQs

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs are found in similar proportions in FICT and CONV: 17.2 and 20.8 per cent, respectively, i.e. 43 and 52 instances. This is thus the only of the six functional categories where there is no clear proportional difference between FICT and CONV.

As these DecTQs concern B-events, the tag subject is often *you*, as in (11):

(11) (...) Then before she could stop herself she asked: "<u>You're not really going to Australia are **you**</u>, Harriet?"
"Yes, I am." (wBNC BMW 1539–1540)

The tendency for *you* is particularly manifested in FICT, where more than half of the tag subjects are *you*, but the data is too small to attest a significant difference to CONV, where only a third of the tag subjects are *you* (see Table D.7 in Appendix D).

Similar to response-eliciting DecTQs in general (see Table 7.2 above), confirmation-seeking DecTQs are more often responded to in a non-co-operative way in FICT than in CONV, as shown in Table 7.3:

Table 7.3.   Responses to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

		FICT			CONV			statistical significance
		n		%	*n*		%	
co-operative	confirmatory	28	28	65%	40	43	**88%**	$p < 0.05$
	commenting	–			3			
non-co-operative	refuting	9	15	**35%**	4	6	12%	$p < 0.05$
	evasive	4			–			
	no response	2			2			
	Subtotal		43	100%		49	100%	
unclear			–			3		
	Total		43			52		

Less co-operation suggests more confrontation in FICT; indeed, there seems to be some degree of confrontation in about half of the non-co-operative responses in FICT, for example, in the refuting response *Yes, I am* in (11) above, and the evasive response in (12):

(12) "Horrible, isn't it?" Kosi had moved up beside her after checking in with the duty manager. "All that space."
Ace turned in surprise. "<u>You're not agoraphobic are you?</u>"
"**So what if I am?**" Kosi replied a little defensively. "All that open ground. No factories. No living towers. And those horrible white things floating up there, just waiting to fall down and smother us. Ugh!" Kosi shivered, seemingly unable to understand why Ace giggled softly. (wBNC G1M 607–619)

However, the confrontation in non-co-operative responses in FICT is fairly mild and often appears to be the result of some surprise expressed in the DecTQ. As the speaker in a confirma-

tion-seeking DecTQ is uncertain and therefore displays a tentative rather than an assertive attitude, confrontation is in many cases unlikely. Hence, non-co-operative responses to confirmation-seeking DecTQs seem often to be due to the speaker just having made an incorrect assumption, as in (13), where the speaker thought that the girl had just arrived at the railway station:

(13)   He drew up ahead of her. She came running up to the van and climbed in beside him. It was a hot night but she was shivering. He asked her where she wanted to go.
    "Anywhere," she said.
    "Anywhere?"
    "I don't know where I am, so how can I say where I want to go?"
    "You came here on the train, didn't you?"
    She started laughing and through her laughter her teeth chattered.
    "I came out of there." She turned round and pointed back at the Victorian building with the campanile chimney.
    "What is it?" he said.
    "Don't you know? It's a bin. A funny farm. It's what my gran calls a lunatic asylum."
(wBNC CDB 1742–1757)

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs where the speaker makes an incorrect assumption are somewhat more common in FICT than in CONV; it might be speculated that such confirmation-seeking DecTQs would contribute more to the plot and the characterization of personalities than confirmation-seeking DecTQs where a correct assumption is just confirmed.

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs in the data mostly display reversed polarity, although constant polarity is fairly common, especially in CONV, where they constitute a third of all the instances, as shown in Table 7.4; however, the difference to FICT is too small for any statistical significance:

Table 7.4.   Polarity types in confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	37	86%	35	67%	n.s.
constant polarity	6	14%	17	33%	n.s.
Total	43	100%	52	100%	

In FICT, more than two thirds of the reversed-polarity DecTQs display the pattern negative anchor plus positive tag, as in examples (11)–(12) above. This is remarkable, as this pattern constitutes only a third of all DecTQs (see Table 6.17 in section 6.3.2). In contrast, the two reversed-polarity patterns are found to the same extent among the confirmation-seeking DecTQs in CONV, but the difference to FICT is too small for any statistical significance, as shown in Table 7.5:

Table 7.5. Reversed-polarity patterns in confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	12	32%	18	51%	n.s.
neg. anchor + pos. tag	25	68%	17	49%	n.s.
Total	37	100%	35	100%	

However, in both FICT and CONV, the pattern negative anchor plus positive tag is significantly more common among the confirmation-seeking DecTQs than in the other functional categories, a shown in Table 7.6–Table 7.7:

Table 7.6. Reversed-polarity patterns in confirmation-seeking DecTQs vs. other DecTQs in FICT

	confirmation-seeking		other functions		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	12	32%	131	**69%**	p < 0.001
neg. anchor + pos. tag	25	**68%**	59	31%	p < 0.001
Total	37	100%	190	100%	

Table 7.7. Reversed-polarity patterns in confirmation-seeking DecTQs vs. other DecTQs in CONV

	confirmation-seeking		other functions		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	18	51%	155	**79%**	p < 0.01
neg. anchor + pos. tag	17	**49%**	41	21%	p < 0.01
Total	35	100%	196	100%	

The question is then why the pattern negative anchor plus positive tag is typical of confirmation-seeking DecTQs? Part of the explanation for this might be sought in what negative utterances, such as negative anchors, may convey:

> From a dialogistic perspective, we can see Denial (negation) as a resource for introducing the alternative positive position into the dialog, and hence acknowledging it and engaging with it, and then rejecting it. Thus in these interpersonal/dialogistic terms, the negative is not the simple logical opposite of the positive, since the negative carries with it the positive, while the positive does not reciprocally carry the negative.[11]

The use of negative utterances thus invokes alternative positions, i.e. they are heteroglossic. In the words of Leech (1983): "negative propositions are, in pragmatic terms, denials of positive propositions which are in some sense 'present in the context'" (1983:101), as in (14):

---

[11] http://grammatics.com/appraisal/AppraisalGuide/Framed/Frame.htm, for which Peter R.R. White is responsible.

(14)   "Felton?" The two ambulance men now exchanged sharp glances, and one of them said, "Robbie Felton?" then added, "Slipped and caught his head on a shovel? Well, well; strange things happen. Let's get him up.
        "May I come with you?"
        "Yes. Yes; they'll want particulars; somebody'll have to come. But" – the man hesitated – "<u>you're no relation, are you?</u>"
        "No; I'm no relation." (wBNC AT7 2250–2258)

In (14), the ambulance man first assumes that the girl who wants to come with them in the ambulance is a relation of the patient's, as this is normally the case, but, as the ambulance men seem to know the patient, one of them becomes uncertain and therefore addresses a DecTQ to the girl. When a speaker is uncertain about something, a negative proposition may also be more unspecific and tentative than a positive one, as in (15):

(15)   "Yes. <u>It's not time yet, is it?</u>"
        "Not yet. (...)" (wBNC GV2 777–779)

According to Leech (1983), negation may also be "a hedging or mitigating device, the motivation for which may be politeness or simply euphemistic reticence in the expression of opinion and attitudes" (1983:101–102), as in (16):

(16)   "When my father died," said Scarlet, "his best friend was a philosopher, the sort that was in fashion then, and he kept telling me there was no after-life. I think he meant to be consoling. I think they think hope and faith are bad for you."
        "They think if you go round hoping and faithing, you won't do anything about conditions on the streets," said Constance. "Or maybe he thought your dad was bound for the other place."
        "I haven't got any hope and faith anyway," said Scarlet, "so he needn't have worried."
        "And <u>you weren't all that fond of your dad, were you?</u>" said Constance.
        "No," said Scarlet. (wBNC G1D 2260–2267)

The combination of the typical pattern negative anchor plus positive tag and the typical tag subject *you* results in some very typical reversed-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs, as in (11), (14) and (16) above. Such very typical confirmation-seeking DecTQs are significantly more common in FICT than in CONV, as shown in Table 7.8:

Table 7.8.   Reversed-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs with tag subject *you* in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
neg. anchor + pos. tag with tag subject *you*	15	**41%**	5	14%	p < 0.05
others	22	59%	30	**86%**	p < 0.05
Total	37	100%	35	100%	

The constant-polarity DecTQs in the confirmation-seeking category would typically belong to Kimps's (2007) verification-seeking category, where the speaker exhibits an uncertain attitude, perhaps supplemented with some incredulity (see section 4.6), as in (17):

(17) "Yes. It was a pity, really. Do you know," he said animatedly, "when they lived in Little Russell Street, in Bloomsbury, Mrs Livesey would sometimes come down to tea with my wife."
"Hmm ... <u>Slumming, was she?</u>"
Peace bridled. "No, indeed! She's a real lady! Even after they moved, and that's ten years ago now, she would make a point of coming up for the children's party, at Christmas." (wBNC ANL 2551–2560)

Constant-polarity DecTQs may be interpreting or echoing (see section 4.6); all the six constant-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT are interpreting, as they draw weak inferences from the preceding discourse (or the immediate situation), as in (17) above. In CONV, there are both interpreting and echoing instances; in (18), the speaker echoes *Blackpool*:

(18) Unknown: Where was it?
Audrey: What was the name of the place Gordon? Stewart Hotel wasn't it? Southsall.
Gordon: Ne– near the Pleasure Beach in **Blackpool**.
Unknown: Oh! <u>It was</u> <-|-> **Blackpool** <-|->
Audrey   <-|-> Mm. <-|->
Unknown: <u>was it?</u>
Audrey: <-|-> Mm mm. <-|->
Unknown: <-|-> Oh right. (sBNC KBC 5017–5027)

Constant-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs echoing the preceding discourse, as in (18), seek clarification of old information, whereas constant-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs which make interpretations, as in (17) above, seek new information; the latter may thus better contribute to the plot in fiction dialogue. The aim of getting new information makes the interpreting constant-polarity instances closer to interrogatives; it seems quite possible to replace the interpreting confirmation-seeking DecTQ in (17) with an interrogative in the context where it occurs: *Was she slumming?* This information-seeking nature of some constant-polarity DecTQs has been previously noted by Algeo (1988): "unreversed negation-polarity tags (...) may even be genuine requests for information" (1988:177). Moreover, Nässlin (1984) found that constant-polarity DecTQs in spoken conversation "seem to be used primarily to ask for information, as a rule" (1984:91). However, there must be a reason why a constant-polarity DecTQ is selected instead of an interrogative; this reason could be a wish to indicate weak conduciveness, which is quite natural, as the proposition in the anchor is inferred from the preceding discourse. Three of the confirmation-seeking constant-polarity DecTQs in FICT as well as two in CONV are elliptical; these all contain weak inferences of the preceding discourse and seek new information, as in (17) above, and as in (19):

(19)   Bob Busby is still busy at his bulletin board, rearranging old notices around the new one, like a fussy gardener tidying a flower bed. He cocks an inquisitive eyebrow at Robyn as she passes.
    "Is it your impression that Philip Swallow is a bit hard of hearing?" she asks him.
    "Oh, yes, it's been getting worse lately," says Bob Busby.
    "It's high-frequency deafness, you know. He can hear vowels but no consonants. He tries to guess what you say to him from the vowels. Usually he guesses what he happens to be thinking about himself, at the time."
    "It makes conversation rather a hit-or-miss affair," says Robyn.
    "<u>Anything important, was it?</u>"
    "Oh no," says Robyn, disinclined to share her disappointment with Bob Busby.
(wBNC ANY 1013–1023)

It has been suggested by Bolinger (1957) that what look like elliptical constant-polarity DecTQs may be the result of fronting, or of mixing of a question and a non-question (cf. section 6.3.2). Indeed, the use of *anything* in (19) might support such an analysis, as no natural full anchor may be reconstructed: *It was anything important, was it?* According to Bolinger's suggestion, *anything important* would be the fronted element of a corresponding interrogative: *Was it anything important?*

Several of the confirmation-seeking DecTQs, particularly in FICT, involve hope, as in (20), or fear, as in (21):

(20)   "A holiday's probably just the thing for you, you know. How long are you going to be gone for?"
    "For good."
    "You mean you're moving there?"
    "Sort of."
    "Hey, look, <u>you are going to be OK, aren't you?</u>"
    "Yes, sorry – my way of talking. (...)" (wBNC A0F 1370–1376)

(21)   "That sailor said Matthew would come home a man. <u>We won't know him, will we</u>, Beth?"
    "Of course we'll know him." She laughed softly. "Don't forget we all change. Every day we change a little, but you wouldn't expect Matthew not to know us, would you, eh?"
(wBNC FPK 2277–2282)

The DecTQ in (20) might have been paraphrased into *I hope you're going to be OK*, and the DecTQ in (21) into *I fear we won't know him*, but then the response-eliciting function is lost; hence, these DecTQs are basically confirmation-seeking, although with an additional element of hope or fear. TQs involving hope and fear have previously been noticed by Roesle (2001), who proposed a hoping/fearing category (see section 4.4). In the functional model of the present study, DecTQs involving hope and fear do not form a separate category; they are just additional elements found in certain functional categories. The hope and fear involved in confirmation-seeking DecTQs constitute very uncertain expectations, and therefore, the speaker seeks reassurance from someone who is believed to know better. However, in some other situations, the speaker may express hope and fear in addressee-oriented rhetorical DecTQ (see section 7.4.2).

Confirmation-seeking DecTQs involving hope or fear seek reassurance; such DecTQs are significantly more common in FICT than in CONV, as shown in Table 7.9:

Table 7.9.   Confirmation-seeking DecTQs seeking reassurance in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
seeking reassurance	20	**47%**	2	4%	p < 0.001
confirmation-seeking only	23	53%	50	**96%**	p < 0.001
Total	43	100%	52	100%	

DecTQs seeking reassurance are used when there are problems to worry about. It may be speculated that characters in fiction are faced with a great deal of problems, as plots without problems would not constitute interesting reading.

When hope is involved in confirmation-seeking DecTQs, the speaker seeks reassurance in a confirmatory response from the addressee, whereas, when fear is involved, the speaker seeks reassurance in a refuting response from the addressee, as in (21) above, where the addressee delivers the reassurance by saying *of course we'll know him*. Among the confirmation-seeking DecTQs, there are more instances involving hope than fear: in FICT, there are 18 instances involving hope but only two involving fear, whereas in CONV, both the reassuring-seeking instances involve hope. The fact that there are more confirmation-seeking DecTQs involving hope than fear is probably due to it being more natural to want a confirmatory than a refuting response.

In this section, the use of confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT and CONV has been described and compared; in the next section, it will be shown that the confirmation-demanding DecTQs are used somewhat differently.

7.3.1.2 Confirmation-demanding DecTQs

Confirmation-demanding DecTQs are almost three times as common in FICT as in CONV: 10 per cent vs. just 3.6 per cent, i.e. 25 vs. just nine instances. Their rarity in spoken conversation may have contributed to the fact that such DecTQs have received comparatively little attention in previous work.

In contrast to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT, where the tag subject *you* is predominant, *you* is only found in a quarter of the confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT; the difference between these two categories in FICT is statistically significant, as shown in Table 7.10:[12]

Table 7.10. The tag subject *you* in confirmation-demanding vs. confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT

| | confirmation-demanding | | confirmation-seeking | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
you as tag subject	6	24%	23	**53%**	p < 0.05
other tag subjects	19	**76%**	20	47%	p < 0.05
Total	25	100%	43	100%	

This difference reflects that confirmation-demanding DecTQs deal with AB-events, i.e. are regarded by the speaker as known to both the speaker and the addressee, whereas confirmation-seeking DecTQs are seen as B-events.

As for polarity patterns, a clear majority of the confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT display the reversed-polarity pattern of positive anchor plus negative tag; there is thus a significant contrast to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT where this pattern is in a minority, as shown in Table 7.11:[13]

Table 7.11. Reversed-polarity patterns in confirmation-demanding vs. confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT

| | confirmation-demanding | | confirmation-seeking | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	21	**84%**	12	32%	p < 0.001
neg. anchor + pos. tag	4	16%	25	**68%**	p < 0.001
Total	25	100%	37	100%	

The question is then why positive anchors are predominant in confirmation-demanding DecTQs, when they are not in confirmation-seeking DecTQs. In section 7.3.1.1, it was noted that negative anchors invoke previous positive propositions in the context, acknowledging heteroglossia, and also that such anchors may be more tentative; the basic reason for this is the uncertainty of the speaker. Positive anchors would then instead be monoglossic, not invoking alternative propositions in the anchors (although, of course, later in the tags), and thus more assertive;

---

[12] In CONV, all the nine confirmation-demanding DecTQs have other tag subjects than *you*; however, no significant difference to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in CONV can be attested due to small amounts of data (see Table D.8 in Appendix D).

[13] Most reversed-polarity DecTQs in CONV also display the pattern positive anchor plus negative tag; however, this pattern is less predominant in CONV; hence, no significant difference to confirmation-seeking DecTQs in CONV can be attested (see Table D.9 in Appendix D).

this conforms to the certainty of the speaker in confirmation-demanding DecTQs. Such DecTQs may thus deal with matters which the interactants have not discussed or considered before, as in (22), where new information is brought up in a quarrel:

(22)   "Well, Phena won't hear it from me! Anyway, I shan't be here, shall I? I'm to leave in the morning, remember?"
        "And that really rankles, doesn't it? That's really what it's all about, isn't it? Wanting to stay here. Share in some of the wealth!"
        "No, it is not! I don't need, or want, your blasted wealth!"
        "Don't you? Then, just out of curiosity, who paid for the hotel in Dublin? It's one of the most expensive in the city. Got another poor sap on a string?" (wBNC HGY 2326–2338)

However, confirmation-demanding DecTQs may occasionally have negative anchors in order to mitigate the demanding: in (23), the addressee is wheedled into admitting that something *wasn't so difficult*:

(23)   Afterwards, Raimondo kissed her again.
        "You see? That wasn't so difficult, was it?" he said, and, when Caroline admitted that it hadn't been, he said that in that case, would she please agree to do another private showing in mid-afternoon? (wBNC JY7 5918–5920)

In contrast to the confirmation-seeking category, there are no constant-polarity instances in the confirmation-demanding category. Kimps (2007) states that constant-polarity DecTQs "typically exhibit a low degree of commitment towards the truth of the proposition by the speaker" (2007:289) (see section 4.6); this description does not seem to be compatible with confirmation-demanding DecTQs, where the speaker is quite certain.

There are two typical uses of confirmation-demanding DecTQs, one involving a change of addressee between the anchor and the tag, and one without, as shown in Table 7.12:

Table 7.12. Typical uses of confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
without change of addressee	20	**80%**	1	11%	p < 0.01
with change of addressee	5	20%	8	**89%**	p < 0.01
Total	25	100%	9	100%	

Table 7.12 shows that the confirmation-demanding DecTQs without a change of addressee are clearly predominant in FICT with twenty instances; in these DecTQs, the speaker wants the addressee to admit or acknowledge something. Such confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT are generally assertive and several are clearly aggressive, as in (22) above, and as in (24):

148

(24)	"I *knew* you would want to set all to rights," Rose said softly, smiling warmly at her. "You may easily do so, you know."

"How?" Theda demanded, eyeing her visitor with acute suspicion.

"Dear Theda, you must surely be able to see that for yourself. It is so obvious!"

"Indeed? We will have it in plain words nevertheless. How does a woman with a large inheritance commonly bestow it on a man? That is what you mean, is it not? I should marry Benedict."

"Good God, no!" ejaculated Mrs Alderley, startled. "I had not even thought of it."

Theda frowned. "You had not *thought* of it?"

"I swear not! It is Benedict who concerns me, yes, but – but *that* is not the solution I had in mind." (wBNC HGV 3234–3250)

In contrast, there is only one single instance of a confirmation-demanding DecTQ without a change of addressee in CONV, viz. (25), and this instance is rather unconfrontational, as the speaker just wants the addressee to confirm that she has reasoned cleverly (see the emboldened part):

(25)	Kathleen:	If he can't afford to smoke he should not smoke. If he can afford to smoke he should buy them himself. <pause> Shouldn't he?
	Steve:	Mm. <pause>
	Kathleen:	See <unclear> this time, **weren't I clever?** (sBNC KCX 6980–6984)

The fact that confirmation-demanding DecTQs without a change of addressee is proportionately twenty times more common in FICT than in CONV shows that such DecTQs are included in fiction dialogue to a much higher degree than in real-life conversation; this reflects the interest in conflicts and confrontations in fiction.

In the other typical use of confirmation-demanding DecTQs, found in a handful of instances in both datasets, there is thus a change of addressee between the anchor and the tag (see section 6.3.1.1). The reason for this change is that the information in the anchor is addressed to one person, but then the speaker demands another person present to confirm this fact, as in (26):

(26)	Louise slipped her hand into Martin's.

"He's made a marvellous recovery since he's been with us in Barbados. I've been looking after **him**, haven't I, **Martin**?" The possessive way she looked and spoke was not wasted on Christina.

"This holiday has been a godsend and couldn't have come at a better time. I have Louise to thank for that." He squeezed her hand then let it drop.

"We're old friends as well; did Martin not tell you?" the girl pressed.

Christina shook her head.

"We go back to when I was a silly little girl of eleven with a schoolgirl crush on Martin. Our families have been friends for years."

He looked slightly embarrassed and made no answering comment.

(wBNC FRS 815–826)

In (26), the speaker wants her boyfriend Martin to praise her in front of her potential rival, Christina. The anchor is addressed to Christina, but the tag to Martin; the wording of the anchor indicates clearly that the anchor cannot have been addressed to Martin, as *him* refers to Martin.

There are four similar instances in FICT; in three of these, a vocative is added after the DecTQ in a similar way as in (26) above. However, there may also be a change of addressee without a vocative, as in (27):[14]

> (27) "This is my girlfriend, Stacey," he said. "We went to see Len last night," he added after a pause.
> "How was he?" asked Rachel, pleased that Jimmy seemed to have gone to the hospital again of his own accord.
> "<u>Not too bad, was he?</u>" **He turned to Stacey**.
> "No, not too bad," she echoed. "But it must be terrible to be like that – not to be able to move – or to feel anything." (wBNC JXY 2299–2305)

In (27), it says in the narrative that the addressee *turned* to another person. The speaker, Jimmy, thus addresses the anchor to his sister Rachel as a response to her question, but the tag is addressed to his girlfriend Stacey, who co-operates in her response by echoing the assertion from the anchor of the DecTQ.

Confirmation-demanding DecTQs involving a change of addressee and uttered for a confirmatory answer to be heard by the addressee of the anchor resemble the DecTQs in Roesle's (2001) conspiratory category (see section 4.4). The speaker of such a DecTQ obviously demands support from the addressee of the tag; such DecTQs are thus highly conducive. This is reflected in the fact that none of the 13 instances in FICT and CONV receives a non-co-operative response. In contrast to the confirmation-demanding DecTQs without a change of addressee, the confirmation-demanding DecTQs with a change of addressee are normally not confrontational: the speaker just demands co-operation.

7.3.2   Conversation-initiating DecTQs

There are only nine instances of conversation-initiating DecTQs in FICT, and none in CONV; this is thus the smallest category among the DecTQs. They all display reversed polarity; this might be due to the absence of related previous context: constant-polarity DecTQs usually interpret or echo such previous discourse (see section 4.6). Moreover, all the nine instances display the pat-

---

[14] Vocatives, as in (vi), are found in three out of eight confirmation-demanding DecTQs with a change of addressee in CONV:

> (vi) Tim (3-year-old son):   <unclear> standing up <-|-> <unclear>
> Andrew (father)   <-|-> No no <u>we don't</u> <-|-> <u>stand up t– to have our dinner do we</u> **mum**?
> Dorothy (mother):   Oh no. <-|-> Oh no. <-|->
> Christopher (5-year-old son):   <-|-> Yes we <-|-> do.
> Andrew (father):   <-|-> We don't. <-|->
> Dorothy (mother):   <-|-> Can you <-|-> sit down properly please. (sBNC KBW 835–841)

Vocatives are otherwise quite rare in CONV; only totally nine DecTQs in the entire dataset of 250 instances are accompanied by a vocative; a third of the accompanying vocatives in CONV are thus found among the eight confirmation-demanding DecTQ with a change of addressee.

tern positive anchor plus negative tag. It could be speculated that this might be related to the conversation-initial position of these DecTQs: there are at least no immediate prior related positive utterances to invoke (cf. the discussion of reversed-polarity patterns in section 7.3.1.1); however, this reversed-polarity pattern is the most common in DecTQs in general, so it might be just a coincidence that all the nine instances display this polarity pattern.

Conversation-initiating DecTQs are uttered mainly to start new conversations or re-start conversations on new topics, as in (28):

> (28)   McLeish asked whereabouts and discovered it was three roads away from his own flat, so they complained enjoyably to each other about the local council.
>   "You were a graduate entry, weren't you?" **she asked as this conversation ran out,** "and in the Flying Squad?"
>   McLeish, warmed by the fact that **she had taken the trouble to find out a bit about him**, confirmed he had been at Reading University and had worked as a young sergeant in the Flying Squad. (wBNC AB9 747–749)

The reporting clause in (28) – *she asked as this conversation ran out* – indicates that she wants to keep the conversation going, and, in the subsequent narrative, it says that *she had taken the trouble to find out a bit about him*, which indicates that she is not uncertain about the truth of the utterance, and that he is aware that she is certain, but he still gives a confirmatory answer; it is as if both of them pretend it to be a DecTQ which has to be responded to.

Conversation-initiating DecTQs may be used in order to facilitate for the addressee, as in (28), but the speaker may also use a conversation-initiating DecTQ to start a conversation mainly for his or her own sake; the DecTQ may then be used to get the attention of the addressee, as in (29):

> (29)   The Sergeant came up from the rear to join Charles as they left the Carriageway and took the long asphalt path that leads diagonally away from Marble Arch.
>   "Funny thing, sir, ain't it?"
>   **"What is, Sergeant?"**
>   "Here we are in Hyde Park – in peacetime. There's the Serpentine, no one boating' or fishing'. There's the bandstand – deserted. It's a fine sunny day in August – but where are all the loafers lying' about on the grass?"
>   "Where indeed? Or the nannies and the nursemaids who lately pushed their prams up and down, and gossiped under the plane trees? Where are all the children?"
>   "Shoved off out of London an' I don't blame whoever sent them."
> (wBNC ACE 818–828)

In (29), it is quite impossible for the addressee to know what the speaker finds funny; therefore, the addressee requests a clarification. A conversation-initiating DecTQ may also be used to introduce a conversation with a complete stranger, as in (30):

(30)   "You work at Cadogan's, don't you?" she said.

He turned, surprised, his head full of Cindy, of Alexandra. Looking at her more closely, he realized she was much older than he had at first thought. There were lines around her mouth and eyes, and a kind of earnestness which he did not associate with prepubertal girls.

"How did you know that?" he said.

"I saw you at Sir James Cadogan's party recently. (wBNC GV8 3544–3549)

In (30), the speaker surprises the addressee, as it does not seem normal to address a DecTQs to a stranger; the addressee reacts with a counter-question *How did you know that?* instead of the expected response. Conversation-initiating DecTQs are not always successful; in (31), the speaker, a hospital patient, fails to involve his co-patient in the kind of conversation he had in mind:

(31)   (...) As he looked to be of West Indian extraction, Amiss thought they might have a sensible chat about cricket.

"What did you think of the Test series, then?" he asked jovially. "Exciting, wasn't it?"

The man looked at him solemnly. "I have put such childish things behind me," he intoned, "since I discovered the word of the Lord. (...)" (wBNC HTG 1603–1607)

The conversation-initiating category comprises some instances which might have been interpreted as rhetorical had they not appeared at the start of a conversation, as in (29) and (31) above; however, the main point of these two DecTQs is to get a response from the addressee, so that the desired conversation can be started, not just to present the speaker's assessment.

It is somewhat surprising that there as so few conversation-initiating DecTQs in FICT and none in CONV, [15] as DecTQs used in order to facilitate conversation have been reported to be numerous in previous work on the functions of DecTQs, for example, by Holmes (1995) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006).[16] However, Toolan (1985) states that "openings (...) are not often prominent, or rendered fully, in fictional dialogue" (1985:204); hence, openings containing conversation-initiating DecTQs might be presented in other kinds of speech presentation or not at all, i.e. they might often be too uninformative in relation to the plot to merit inclusion in fiction dialogue.

---

[15] It might be problematic to identify conversation-initiating DecTQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, as the discourse is fairly loosely organized. The problem is also what should be considered a new topic. The DecTQ in (vii), for example, has been interpreted as speaker-centred, since the DecTQ is related to the ongoing discourse:

(vii)   Susan: Are you doing French at school yet?
            Jonathan: No.
            Susan: Oh you will go <-|-> when you go to the other school. <-|->
            Kathleen: <-|-> They've gotta start <-|-> learning <-|-> some more sex haven't they? <-|->
            Susan: <-|-> You can teach us all to learn <-|-> French when you, once you start.
            June: Yeah.
            Jonathan: Oh oh. (sBNC KCT 5403–540)

[16] Holmes (1995) does not report the total number of facilitative tags; the proportions for facilitative tags illustrated in a figure are given for men and women separately: about 40 per cent of the men's tags and about 55 per cent of the women's tags are indicated as facilitative. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) report facilitating tags to constitute 36 per cent of the TQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC (see section 4.5).

7.4 Rhetorical DecTQs

Rhetorical DecTQs are clearly more common than response-eliciting DecTQs in both datasets. In FICT, they constitute two thirds of all DecTQs, and, in CONV, three quarters; this difference is, however, not statistically significant (see Table D.2 in Appendix D). This is an unexpected finding, as DecTQs have traditionally been described as seeking confirmation or verification (cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985:811).

Rhetorical questions in general are "*special uses of questions*, rather than separate types of questions" (Ilie 1994:77); i.e. they can only be defined as to their function, not as to their form. Indeed, the formal and accompanying features of the rhetorical DecTQs in FICT are strikingly similar to those of the response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT (see Table D.10–Table D.21 in Appendix D). What characterizes rhetorical DecTQs is that they often occur in turn-embedded position. This is, in particular, the case in FICT, where almost two thirds of the DecTQs analysed as rhetorical are found in such a position; in CONV, in contrast, only 30 per cent of the rhetorical DecTQs are turn-embedded.[17] However, as discussed in section 6.4.3, the conditions for the turn organization are quite different in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation. Another characteristic of rhetorical DecTQs is that there are often various kinds of pragmatic markers within or adjacent to the DecTQ, as in (32):

(32) "She's got no family," said Scarlet. "The only ones she's got are in America."
   "**Well, then**," said Constance, "<u>no one's going to miss her, are they?</u>"
   "You never really meant to go to the police at all, did you?" said Scarlet.
   (wBNC G1D 438–441)

In FICT, co-occurring pragmatic markers are found for about half of the rhetorical DecTQs vs. for only about quarter of the response-eliciting DecTQs. In CONV, pragmatic markers seem more common in turns with rhetorical DecTQs than with response-eliciting DecTQ; even if the pragmatic markers are often outside, or not even adjacent to the DecTQ, they may contribute to the impression of the speaker as being assertive, in particular when there are many of them, as in the extract in (33):[18]

---

[17] See Table D.22 in Appendix D; cf. the turn positions of response-eliciting DecTQs in Table D.23 in Appendix D.

[18] Only the first DecTQ in (33) is part of the CONV sample.

(33) Wendy: **Well** if, I sometimes feel a letter, **I mean** you what she said that morning when you phoned?
      Bev: Yeah.
      Wendy: I sometimes, this is what I said Marion <pause> I just feel a letter <pause> doesn't pressurise them. **Alright,** you gotta wait a couple a days for a reply <pause> **but** erm <pause> **I do think** sometimes, **anyway**, <u>it's on paper **then** isn't it?</u>
      Bev: Yeah.
      Wendy: **I mean** fortunately <u>you put all that in that first letter didn't you?</u>
                (sBNC KE6 7170–7175)

The general aim of rhetorical DecTQs is to share information with the addressee; a response is thus not expected, but there may, nevertheless, sometimes be a reaction from the addressee. There is large functional diversity among the rhetorical DecTQs; a major distinction is made in the functional model of the present study between speaker-centred instances, where the convictions, assessments etc. of the speakers are in focus, and addressee-oriented instances, where the DecTQs concern the addressee in various ways. This distinction is vital for the comparison between FICT and CONV, as there has turned out to be a clear predominance of addressee-oriented instances in FICT, but, instead, an even clearer predominance of speaker-centred instances in CONV; this is the most striking difference between the functional distributions of DecTQs in FICT and CONV. First, the speaker-centred DecTQs are dealt with in section 7.4.1, and then, the addressee-oriented DecTQs in section 7.4.2.

7.4.1 Speaker-centred DecTQs

Speaker-centred DecTQs are quite common in FICT; the 58 instances equal 23.2 per cent, i.e. almost a quarter of all DecTQs in FICT. However, this is a much lower proportion than in CONV, where 132 speaker-centred DecTQs constitute more than half of all the DecTQs in CONV, viz. 52.8 per cent. Hence, the speaker-centred DecTQs form about a third of the rhetorical DecTQs in FICT, but as much as about two thirds of the rhetorical DecTQs in CONV (see Table D.5 in Appendix D).

Despite the clear proportional differences, the formal features of the speaker-centred DecTQs are very similar in FICT and CONV. However, a short account of the typical formal features of speaker-centred DecTQs may give a good characterization of this category. The predominant tag subject is *it*; hence, most tag subjects in the speaker-centred category are inanimate. Moreover, the tag verb *be* is predominant within the speaker-centred category.[19] The predominance of *be* is connected to the high proportion of inanimate tag subjects: it was shown in section 6.3.1.2, that there is a general connection between the tag verb *be* and inanimate tag subjects.

---

[19] See Table D.24–Table D.26 in Appendix D.

Hence, speaker-centred DecTQs tend to be impersonal, dealing with what things are rather than what people do etc. Somewhat surprisingly, the tag subject *you* sometimes appears in the speaker-centred category; however, these instances are all cases of generic *you,* which refers to "people in general" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:353), as in (34):

(34) "Achievement isn't necessarily measured by competition," returned Edward.
   "Oh, I can't agree with you," said Mrs Stannard. "I mean, in this day and age **you** don't get anywhere by just sitting back, do **you**? We've always felt Caroline's got it in her if only she's handled right." (wBNC G0Y 2401–2404)

DecTQs with generic *you* as tag subject seem typically speaker-centred: two out of three cases of generic *you* in FICT and ten out of eleven in CONV are found in speaker-centred DecTQs. As for polarity types, there are no constant-polarity DecTQs in the speaker-centred category; the reason seems to be that a constant-polarity DecTQ "gives the impression that the speaker attributes the proposition to the hearer" (Kimps 2007:277), whereas it is the speaker's own conviction or assessment etc. which is in focus in a speaker-centred DecTQ. Moreover, among the reversed-polarity instances, the pattern positive tag plus negative tag is predominant (see Table D.27 in Appendix D); i.e. the most common pattern in general. Vocatives seldom accompany speaker-centred DecTQs; this is, of course, due to addressees being of relatively little importance when speaker-centred DecTQs are uttered.[20]

In section 5.3.2.1, speaker-centred DecTQs presenting the speaker's conviction or assessment were discussed. Such DecTQs present the speaker's stance, i.e. the "lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgment, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message" (Biber & Finegan 1989:93 in Tottie & Hoffmann 2009a:311). Beside such cases, there are also some speaker-centred DecTQs presenting sudden recollections made by the speaker; these will be discussed below. Table 7.13 displays the distribution of the three typical uses of speaker-centred DecTQs:

Table 7.13. Typical uses of speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
presenting assessments	28	48%	45	34%	n.s.
presenting convictions	26	45%	84	**64%**	p < 0.05
presenting recollections	4	7%	3	2%	n.s.
Total	58	100%	132	100%	

Table 7.13 shows that DecTQs presenting assessments and convictions, respectively, each account for just below half of the speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT; the DecTQs presenting recol-

---

[20] See example (48) in section 5.3.2 for the only speaker-centred DecTQ with a vocative in FICT.

lections have thus turned out to be very few. The proportion of DecTQs presenting assessments is somewhat higher in FICT than in CONV; however, there are nevertheless fewer DecTQs presenting assessments in FICT, as the whole category is so much smaller in FICT than in CONV. The proportion of DecTQs presenting convictions is significantly lower in FICT than in CONV, where DecTQs presenting convictions are clearly predominant. The 84 speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in CONV constitute a third of all DecTQs in CONV, i.e. this typical use of speaker-centred DecTQs alone displays a higher proportion than any of the other functional categories in CONV. In contrast, the 26 speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in FICT constitute only a tenth of all the DecTQs in FICT.

The question is then why there are so few speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in FICT. A contributing factor seems to be that stance-taking speaker-centred DecTQs, and, in particular, those presenting convictions, show different tendencies in FICT and CONV as to the topic matters in the turns where such DecTQs appear; these tendencies probably affect the inclusion of speaker-centred DecTQs in fiction dialogue.

In FICT, many of the turns with stance-taking speaker-centred DecTQs display argumentation where the speaker seems to be well aware that the addressee might have another opinion, whereas in CONV, the speaker-centred DecTQs often concern everyday matters where the speaker could assume that the addressee holds a similar view as the speaker. Moreover, in FICT, quite many of the speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions occur in clearly confrontational dialogue, as in (35), where the speaker attacks her father for not letting her move away from home:

> (35)   She did not immediately come back with an answer, but looked at him steadily for some seconds before she said, "That's why you think you've got me here for good, isn't it, Father? But there's plenty of places I could go. Remember, Miss Carter wanted me to go pupil-teaching and then take a teacher's course, well that's one thing I could do; it's not too late, I'm only twenty-two. Or, I could run somebody's business, couldn't I? I've had plenty of experience for that. Oh" – her lips curled – "you saying you couldn't do without me, Father, doesn't cut any ice, Good night." (wBNC AT7 564–569)

As the speaker of speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in FICT is often aware that the addressee might have another view, it is also common for turns with speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in FICT to try to convince the addressee, as in (36), where the addressee has just called an earlier conclusion of the speaker in question:

(36)   Morse grinned at his sergeant. "Great minds, Lewis yours and mine!"
            "You really think there's a possibility it wasn't Kemp who rang?"
            "Yes, I do. And it would give us a whole new time perspective, wouldn't it? You know,
with the best will in the world, Max will never give us too much help if he thinks he can't.
Quite right, too. He's a scientist. But if we can narrow the time down – or rather, widen it
out, Lewis ... "
            For a while he appeared deep in thought. (wBNC HWM 951–960)

Hence, a clear majority of the speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in FICT deal with
controversial stance-taking on important matters as part of an argumentation to confront or con-
vince the addressee. Such dialogue brings the plot forward and may characterize the personali-
ties, which makes it into interesting reading.

Speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions in CONV, on the other hand, are often about
uncontroversial everyday matters, as in (37), where the topic is a TV programme:

(37)   Antony: <-|-> That's <unclear>, oh that was on telly <-|-> weren't it?
       Graeme: Sorry?
       Antony: That was on telly <-|-> yesterday<-|->
       Graeme: <-|-> On <-|-> QED. (sBNC KCB 907–910)

In (37), the speaker first uses a DecTQ, but then, when asked to repeat, he uses a bare assertion,
indicating that the DecTQ was not meant to be responded to. In another example, (38), the
speaker makes some remarks about different forms of medicine, which she has no reason to be-
lieve that the addressee would disagree with:[21]

(38)   Raymond: There's a jar already done, you just pour it in
       Margaret: Yeah, I suppose and mostly to erm, medicines are, are in tablet form aren't
                   they? You know you don't get that many liquids it's usually for children
                   <-|-> isn't it? <-|->
       Raymond: <-|-> Ninety <-|-> percent probably (sBNC KDM 6901–6904)

Some speaker-centred DecTQs interpreted as presenting convictions in CONV are very routine-
like general remarks, as in (39):

(39)   Well, is that better than carrying a bag, you never know do you? (sBNC KCE 6141)

It should be underlined that these differences are tendencies. There are a few DecTQs in FICT
which are rather uncontroversial remarks, and there are some speaker-centred DecTQs in CONV
where there is confrontation, although usually not about important matters; in (40), for example,
the interactants are arguing about what to call a special kind of shoes:

---

[21] Only the first DecTQ in (38) is part of the CONV sample.

```
(40)   Unknown:   Yeah. <pause> <unclear> deck shoes.
       Mark:      Plimsolls!
       Unknown:   Deck shoes.
       Mark:      Plimsolls.
       Unknown:   Deck shoes. <unclear>
       Mark:      They're sort of plimsolls aren't they? <-|-> Fucking hell <-|->
       Unknown:   <-|-> No <-|->. Deck shoes. (...) (sBNC KDA 4107–4116)
```

There is thus an abundance of rather uncontroversial speaker-centred DecTQs in CONV. It may be suggested that such DecTQs are seldom interesting enough to include in fiction dialogue, as these would normally not contribute to the characterization of the personalities or to the forwarding of the plot. This conforms to Toolan's (1985) characterization of fiction dialogue as "very often [being] non-routine" (1985:204).

Beside speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions and assessments, there are also a few speaker-centred DecTQs presenting sudden recollections made by the speaker. A very clear example is found in (41), where the speaker adds *I'd forgotten that* after the DecTQ:

(41)   "I saw her once – Jeanne."
       "Jeanne?" He frowned. "Oh Turpie. He always called her Jeanne, didn't he? **I'd forgotten that.** I asked him why he did once and he said it was a more beautiful name. But Euturpia's nice too, that's her real name. Doesn't use Jeanne any more. (...)"
       (wBNC FPF 1070–1078)

In DecTQs presenting recollections, the speaker recalls facts which he or she had almost forgotten, but which become relevant during the conversation, i.e. the DecTQ is about some renewed knowledge; this knowledge suddenly becomes more salient in the mind of the speaker. Such DecTQs are very clearly self-centred; they seem to be uttered by the speaker for the speaker, almost as if he or she is thinking aloud. Speaker-centred DecTQs used when facts are recalled are related to addressee-oriented DecTQs used to remind the addressee (see section 5.3.2.2), the difference being that DecTQs reminding the addressee have the purpose of updating his or her knowledge.

A further potential use of speaker-centred DecTQs needs to be discussed here. In previous work on *innit*, it has been suggested that *innit* may have an imagination-appealing function in narratives; *innit* is supposed to have very little meaning in such cases (see section 4.7). In FICT, there is only one DecTQ with *innit* as tag wording, viz. (42):

(42)   "Nah, I prefer them, tell the truth. Dikes are clean ... They usually are. You get smack cut with all kinds of shit. A geezer down in Catford once mixed smack with flour. Imagine cranking up with that! Flour and water's an adhesive, innit? You don't want glue in your veins, do ya? Bloody Catford – they're out of the ark down there."(wBNC J13 2642–2650)

The DecTQ in (42) has been analysed as speaker-centred in the present model, as it presents the conviction of the speaker; however, it might also fit into the imagination-appealing function proposed for *innit.* Somewhat surprisingly, no such imagination-appealing use of *innit* has been found among the 22 DecTQs with *innit* in CONV.[22]

7.4.2   Addressee-oriented DecTQs

Addressee-oriented DecTQs form the largest category in FICT: the 102 instances equal 40.8 per cent. This is a significantly higher proportion than in CONV, where there are only 57 instances, equalling 30.2 per cent. The addressee-oriented DecTQs thus constitute almost two thirds of the rhetorical DecTQs in FICT, compared to less than a third of the rhetorical DecTQs in CONV (see Table D.5 in Appendix D).

   Similar to the speaker-centred category, the addressee-oriented DecTQs display no clear formal differences between FICT and CONV; however, a short account of the typical formal and accompanying features of the addressee-oriented DecTQs may also here give a good characterization of the category. The tag subject *you* is, as could be expected, predominant among the tag subjects in the addressee-oriented category; however, *you* is less predominant than one might think: *you* is the tag subject in just above half of the addressee-oriented DecTQs in both datasets (see Table D.28 in Appendix D). In addition, the tag subject *we* may also refer to the addressee, both in its inclusive use, i.e. referring to both the speaker and the addressee, as in (43), and in its use as addressee-only *we*, as in (44) (the use of addressee-only *we* is discussed further below):

>   (43)   "It would be so much easier to maintain this truce if we were indifferent to each other, but <u>we're far from that, aren't we</u>, Fran?" He laughed softly, deeply, his eyes dark and full of secrets. "Who knows what causes an attraction between a man and a woman? Maybe it does have something to do with the juxtaposition of the planets. (...)"
>   (wBNC JXV1239–1242)

>   (44)   Maxim trailed into the room behind him, vaguely looking for a fresh drink and finding Ages instead, who had been more than vaguely looking for him. "<u>Mixing in White House circles, are we,</u> Harry? What changes in American policy can we hope for as a result of your high-level talks?"
>   "He was telling me about the Russian visit." (wBNC HR4 1438–1442)

When the tag subject is not *you* or inclusive *we*, *you* may often be found in the anchor without being the anchor subject, as in (45), where the tag subject is exclusive *we*:

---

[22] There are, on the whole, no indications that the DecTQs with *innit* in CONV deviate functionally from other DecTQs within the categories where they occur: most of them, 17 instances, have been analysed as speaker-centred, but four as addressee-oriented and one as confirmation-seeking.

(45)   "Herr Hocher's long face split into a welcoming smile – or what might, charitably, have
         passed for one. "Ha! ha! ha! familiar faces ... yes ... but not too familiar, I'm sorry to say.
         Ha! ha! Klaus, isn't it? and Klara – Oh, of course – " corrected – "Erika, Fritz, Rosa ... <u>we
         really ought to see **you** more often, ought we not?</u> Don't you have a duty to support ... ."
         (wBNC A7A 82–86)

The possessive *your* may also indicate addressee-orientation, as in (46):

(46)   "Ah, Miss Abbott. Money. <u>That stops me being a real artist in **your** eyes, doesn't it.</u>
         Money. Dear, dear. Miss Abbott, I must peel the scales from your eyes entirely. (...)"
         (wBNC H8X 1418–1423)

When *you* (or *your*) is found neither in the tag nor in the anchor, it is usually possible to make
paraphrases with *you*, as in (47):

(47)   Roy hung his head. "I know it sounds bad, Mickey, but he is my father-in-law ... "
         "I couldn't give a fuck if he was the Immaculate Conception! <u>There's something wrong,
         ain't there?</u> The Roy I knew would never take that from anyone, not in a million years." He
         lowered his voice. "Come on, Bruv. What's the SP?" (wBNC CR6 1236–1243)
         (Paraphrase with *you*: *There is something wrong **with you**, ain't there?*)

The tag subjects are animate in a clear majority of the addressee-oriented DecTQs in both data-
sets; hence, people are mostly the topic when addressee-oriented DecTQs are used. The high
proportion of addressee-oriented DecTQs thus reveals an interest in people in fiction dialogue,
in particular in the addressee. The tag verb is mostly not *be* in addressee-oriented DecTQs;
hence, addressee-oriented DecTQs are not mainly about what people or things are, but what
people do, have, will, can, etc. As for polarity, there are some constant-polarity DecTQs in the
addressee-oriented category in both datasets; these seem restricted to a couple of typical uses of
addressee-oriented DecTQs. Most reversed-polarity addressee-oriented DecTQs display the pat-
tern positive anchor plus negative tag; there is, in fact, here a weak significant difference be-
tween FICT and CONV in that this pattern is somewhat less predominant in FICT than in CONV;
however, there appears to be no clear reason for this.[23]

   Vocatives accompany some of the addressee-oriented DecTQs, particularly in FICT; the pro-
portion of vocatives is similar to response-eliciting DecTQs in both datasets, but higher than for
speaker-centred DecTQs: this difference is, however, statistically significant only for FICT.[24]

   The general function of addressee-oriented DecTQs is to supply information to the addressee
in order to influence him or her in different ways; the addressee is mainly challenged or remind-
ed, but the speaker may, for example, also make an assumption concerning the addressee. These

---

[23] Table D.29–Table D.32 in Appendix D make comparisons between FICT and CONV as to all the features mentioned
in this paragraph.

[24] See Table D.33–Table D.37 in Appendix D.

three typical uses were discussed already in section 5.3.2.2. Beside these, two additional uses have been found, viz. reactive and attributing DecTQs; these will be discussed further below. Table 7.14 displays the distributions of these five typical uses of addressee-oriented DecTQs:

Table 7.14. Typical uses of addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
challenging	44	**43%**	6	11%	p < 0.001
assuming	26	25%	22	39%	n.s.
reminding	26	25%	21	37%	n.s.
reactive	4	4%	2	4%	n.s.
attributing	2	2%	6	**11%**	p < 0.05
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table 7.14 shows that challenging uses are predominant in FICT; they form 43 per cent of the addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. only eleven per cent in CONV. The reason why the challenging DecTQs are significantly more common in FICT is apparently that these DecTQs are confrontational: as argued before in this thesis, confrontations and conflicts are often depicted in fiction. Table 7.14 shows further that assuming and reminding uses form a quarter each of the addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT; these two uses are predominant among the addressee-oriented DecTQs in CONV. Lastly, reactive and attributing DecTQs have turned out to be rare in both dataset. However, the attributing DecTQs are somewhat less common in FICT; this difference is significant despite low numbers, but might be seen as a secondary effect of the low number of challenging DecTQs in CONV.

First, the challenging uses of addressee-oriented DecTQs will be discussed in some detail, as they are typical of fiction dialogue, and as there is large functional variation among these DecTQs; the other four typical uses of addressee-oriented DecTQs will be discussed after that.

More than a third of the challenging DecTQs in FICT are direct attacks where the addressee is accused or reproached. Several of these constitute very serious accusations, as in (48), where the addressee is accused of a crime:

> (48)　　　"Shut up!" Marie was saying, sickened. "I bet you crawled round Bella like that, didn't you? <u>Didn't stop you from taking her money though, did it?</u> – Where is it, then? What have you done with it?"
> 　　　　"I haven't got it," said Gazzer. "I told you! It wasn't me! It was Simon."
> 　　　(wBNC ACB 2297–2305)

Some of these DecTQs in FICT reproach the addressee for a serious flaw in his or her character, as in (49):

161

(49)   (...) "You'll be all right?"

"Have you ever known me to be anything else?"

"Aw!" He shook his head with impatience. "<u>Nobody can be kind to you, can they,</u> Aggie? You won't take kindness, will you? You get worse, you know that? more sour." He turned now and went hastily from the room, and she repeated to herself, "You get worse, you know that? more sour." (wBNC CK9 577–584)

In FICT, there are also reproaches concerning the addressee's apparent inability of understanding the speaker's situation, as in (50):

(50)   He laughed, a short, strained little laugh. "<u>You really don't have any faith at all in me,</u> <u>do you?</u>" he said, and his voice sounded strangely sad. "Trust me. It isn't something you easily forget," he added enigmatically, and with that he turned on his heel and strode back down to his office, emerging a moment later back in his normal working clothes.
(wBNC JYB 987–990)

In contrast, both the two reproaching DecTQs in CONV deal with the addressee just being slightly inconsiderate in everyday situations, as in (51):

(51)   Evelyn: I've not brought another spoon, give me yours. Ah look what you've done! All over the cloth
        Arthur: Er
        Evelyn: that tea! \<pause\> \<-|-\> You've spilt it. \<-|-\>
        Arthur: \<-|-\> Well you \<-|-\> it's <u>rushing me aren't you?</u>
        Evelyn: No I'm not. \<pause\> (sBNC KBB 3433–3440)

Furthermore, among the challenging addressee-oriented DecTQ in FICT, there are eight instances where the speaker makes an assertion in the anchor which is the opposite of what the speaker actually believes is true, thereby flouting Grice's maxim of quality – "[t]ry to make your contribution one that is true" – and, more specifically: "[d]o not say what you believe to be false" (1975:46), as in (52):

(52)   (...) "As I was saying, we usually dress for dinner – "

"Well, <u>we can't ruin an age-old custom for the sake of an absent mistress, can we?</u>" she interrupted as she untwined her legs and stood up to face him. Pain and jealousy had spurred that **sarcastic retort**. "I'm afraid a very weathered cotton sundress is the best I can muster – " (wBNC JY4 1919–1922)

In (52), it is explicitly stated in the context that the speaker was *sarcastic* when uttering the DecTQ; *sarcasm* is also mentioned in the reporting clause of the DecTQ in (53):

(53)   "I think they think we're rats," said Grimma.

"And <u>that would be all right, would it?</u>" said a nome **with withering sarcasm**. "Rats are OK. We've never had any trouble with rats. No call to go around giving them poisoned food." (wBNC HTH 2047–2051)

In five of the eight sarcastic challenging DecTQs, there is constant polarity, as in (53) above. These constant-polarity DecTQs would belong to Kimps's (2007) mirativity-expressing category, with the additional aggressive attitude of irony/sarcasm (see section 4.6). The mirativity is very clear in (54):

(54)   She watched him as he crossed to a table where an assortment of bottles and glasses were laid out. "**You're paranoid,**" she said. "I'm not a saboteur."
    He was pouring something. He flicked a glance across his shoulder. "So, I'm paranoid, am I?" **The notion seemed to amuse him**. "**Well, I suppose that's possible ... but what I think is more possible ... **" He turned and headed towards her, carrying two glasses. "**What I think is more possible is that I'm right.**" (wBNC JXT 277–286)

In (54), the DecTQ involves all of Kimps's three basic challenging attitudes found in constant-polarity DecTQs expressing mirativity, viz. surprise, disbelief and disagreement: the speaker's amusement appears to be due to a combination of surprise and disbelief, and his disagreement is made even more explicit in the rest of the turn. Some of the constant-polarity sarcastic DecTQs echo words uttered by the addressee, as in (54) above, whereas others interpret the preceding discourse, as in (52)–(53) above.[25]

The speaker of a challenging DecTQ may also use a sarcastic tone without asserting the opposite of what he or she believes to be true in the DecTQ. Such challenging DecTQs are patronizing, as in (55):

(55)   "Oh, Miss Ferguson and her partner only have a very small practice – just companion animals. I don't suppose ... " She glanced at Sophie **maliciously**, "I don't suppose you are busy enough to justify employing a nurse, are you?"
    Sophie was **speechless** for a moment, then, just before she could think of an appropriate retort**,** Dawn gave Giles a brilliant smile and sauntered off. (wBNC JYE 1631–1634)

In (55), the speaker is said to glance *maliciously* at the addressee, and the addressee is then left *speechless*. In (56), the whole turn with the patronizing DecTQ is *flung* at the addressee *with malevolent force*, leaving the addressee at a loss, as shown in the reaction *I don't know what you mean!*:

---

[25] In CONV, there do not appear to be any challenging DecTQs where the speaker asserts in the anchor the opposite of what he or she believes to be true; on the other hand, there are in CONV a couple of speaker-centred DecTQs presenting assessments where the speaker is ironic in saying the opposite of what she really thinks without challenging the addressee, as in (viii), where the speaker is ironic about the unusually cold weather in June:

(viii)   Some glorious first of June my goodness, isn't it? I was wearing my coat and my gloves in the park.
    (sBNC KBK 4140–414)

(56)   "Your grandmother had enough money to buy a home if she'd wanted to," Lucenzo ob-
            served in a soft growl.
                "But I didn't know that!" she cried in frustration. "Not until I took control of her affairs
            – and, in any case, I would still have looked after her – "
                The fingers tightened and every word he spoke was slow, deliberate and **flung at her
            with malevolent force** through his clenched teeth. "Very convincing. Applause, applause!
            Pity about the tiny audience for your heart-rending portrayal of genteel poverty and
            devotion. But then, you're born to it, aren't you?"
                "**Born ... ? I don't know what you mean!**" she whispered hoarsely, searching his
            frozen face for clues to the mystery. (wBNC H94 519–528)

A patronizing use is found in three of the six challenging DecTQs in CONV, as in (57), where
Chris and David want Steven to speak in broad Scottish:

(57)   Chris: (...) just spit out with it
        Steven: Yeah I know but I can't do that
        Chris: Can't ya?
        Steven: <-|-> No <-|->
        David: <-|-> Well that's <-|-> no good is it?
        Chris: Can't you come out with anything? (sBNC KBM 1331–1336)

Moreover, among the challenging DecTQs in FICT, there are also a few constant-polarity in-
stances, where the addressee is teased by the speaker; these are not really unfriendly, but, as the
speaker makes fun of the addressee, the addressee may feel challenged, as in (58):

(58)   A hand strokes the back of her neck.
            "Boo!"
            Rainbow jumps, spilling coffee all over the table and herself. "What the hell did you do
            that for? Bloody stupid ... "
                "Oooh, edgy are we?" says Naomi, snatching up a fistful of napkins and mopping en-
            thusiastically. She orders a passion fruit tart, a puff-pastry butterfly, and a slice of death by
            chocolate. (wBNC HGN 1068–1074)

These teasing constant-polarity DecTQs would belong to Kimps's (2007) category of constant-
polarity DecTQs expressing mirativity, with the basic challenging attitude of surprise and the
additional aggressive attitude of mockery (see section 4.6); the surprise in (58) above is in-
dicated by *Oooh* before the DecTQ. These constant-polarity DecTQs interpret the preceding
discourse, as in (58) above, or something else in the immediate situation, as in (59), where the
speaker teases his brother for having dyed his hair:

(59)   "A dark-haired man, it has to be," said Dora. "That's you, Steve."
            Cliff looked at Steve, ran his hands through his own hair, and said, "That's right, Steve.
            I've got plenty left, but it's the wrong colour. Yours is bearing up well. Touch it up, do
            you? What's that stuff called? Grecian?"
                Steve hit his brother playfully but rather hard on the shoulder. (wBNC FB0 1332–1340)

Furthermore, in these constant-polarity DecTQs teasing the addressee, there is ellipsis of both
the subject and the finite in the anchor. Moreover, in two of them, the tag subject is addressee-

only *we*, as in (58) above (see also example (44) above). Addressee-only *we* is "coloured by strong attitudinal meaning" (Herriman 2009:110); Huddleston and Pullum (2002) exemplify that it may be patronizing or convey mockery, and claim that the addressee is "likely to be to someone I have a regular association with; my boss or teacher, perhaps, or a child I have in my care" (2002:1467). However, in the two teasing DecTQs where addressee-only *we* is found in FICT, the speaker and the addressee appear to be close friends. The combination of constant polarity, ellipsis in the anchor and addressee-only *we* as tag subject might be a special pattern for teasing DecTQs.[26,27]

Challenging DecTQs may further threaten the addressee; there are six such instances in FICT but none in CONV. DecTQs threatening the addressee usually include an *if*-clause, as in (60):

> (60)   (...) He held up the second finger. "You are to tell them nothing. They may offer you money. **If you take it**, I shall hear, and you know what to expect, don't you? On the other hand, if you report all to me it may be that I shall give you money. Understand? (...)"
> (wBNC J10 604–609)

However, there may also be a *when*-clause, as in (61):

> (61)   The Mason's hand shot out and caught hold of Davey's ear as if he would tear it off. "And **when I've done emptying**, I **could** come back here and empty your brains on the ground, couldn't I?" (wBNC HTN 1463–1464)

In (61), the possibility that the threat might not be enforced is indicated by the use of *could* in the main clause. There are connections between threats and offers (see section 5.2.1): some of the challenging DecTQs threatening the addressee may be paraphrased into DecTQs with *shall I*, for instance the DecTQ in (61): *And when I've done emptying, I'll come back here and empty your brains on the ground, shall I?* The difference is that offers deal with services which would be beneficial to the addressee, whereas threats provide information on potential actions which would be detrimental to the addressee. The aim of challenging DecTQs threatening the address-ee is to make the addressee ponder the situation and take precautions so that the threat will not

---

[26] In the larger sample of FICTION, there are two teasing DecTQs with addressee-only *we* as tag subject but with reversed-polarity, as in (ix):

> (ix)   "Can't keep way from this part of town, can we?" I needle her. "A little homesick, for your roots, maybe?"
> (wBNC HGN 453–455)

These reversed-polarity instances have a negative anchor and a positive tag. It might be the case that the selection of reversed polarity in (ix) is due to a wish to avoid negative constant polarity, which, in fact, does not seem impossible here (cf. example (21) in section 3.2.1; Jespersen's example with negative constant polarity is a somewhat teasing retort).

[27] Addressee-only *we* is also found in some 1st-person plural imperative TQs (see the discussion of examples (44)–(45) in section 8.2.6).

have to be enforced; when there are reactions to threatening DecTQs, they are unwelcome: there is a negative emotional reaction in (62), and a counter-threat in (63):

(62)   "You want it to be him, don't you?"
Melissa shifted uncomfortably. "I don't know what you mean."
Scorn at the feeble prevarication glittered in Iris's eyes.
"Yes, you do. <u>If Rick didn't do it, we come back to your lover-boy, don't we?</u>"
"**Iris, you're hateful!** I know Barney didn't do it!" (wBNC HNJ 687–694)

(63)   She watched the play of emotions on her father's face and knew her words had struck home. "So I'm not going to stand by and let you use me and destroy me as you did my brother!"
"Brave words, Katharine, but how do you think you're going to stop me?" William Ash had lowered his head, and reminded Kate rather too forcefully of a bull about to charge.
"<u>You can't exactly go ahead if I refuse to marry Ace, can you?</u>" she answered defiantly.
"**No, but if you refuse I'll reveal to the Press just how he blackmailed you into being his mistress.** That'll go down really well with his sponsors and Carlisle Flint. In fact it might just finish him for good!" (wBNC HGM 2630–2637)

There are also a couple of challenging DecTQs in FICT where the speaker uses a DecTQ in order to provoke the addressee by presenting an obvious truth; one of them is shown in (64):

(64)   "Recognize this invoice?" Sabrina asked, holding up the one given to her by the station-master.
The porter pointed to the name printed in the top left-hand corner. "That's me. Deiter Teufel. Teufel means "devil". Deiter the Devil, especially with the women."
"I don't give a damn about your social life," Graham snapped. "So you dealt with this particular cargo when it arrived here yesterday?"
"<u>It's my name, isn't it?</u>"
"**I don't need your sarcasm, boy**." (wBNC ECK 1024–1034)

The DecTQ in (64) conforms to Algeo's (1990) peremptory category (see section 4.3), as it provokes the addressee by presenting something which is so obvious that it would be absurd to respond to it; cf. Allerton's (2009) claim that "feedback is obviously not appropriate" (2009:316). The only reason for uttering the DecTQ in (64) is to provoke, and this fact is recognized by the addressee, who reacts by saying that he does not *need* that *sarcasm*; it should be noted that this sarcasm does not involve asserting the opposite of the speaker's own belief.

Lastly, there is a challenging DecTQ in FICT which may fit into Algeo's (1990) definition of aggressive tags, viz. (65):

(65)   "**Marie, I phoned up from there last night**." He was pointing to a telephone-box, over by the chalets.
"That box doesn't work any more. It hasn't worked for years."
"Yes, it does. It's still connected. <u>I phoned up from it, didn't I?</u> I phoned my Mama and Dad, told 'em I was staying round somebody's house. – Not that they'd be bothered. – But I daren't go home, see. He knows where I live."
Marie made no reply. (wBNC ACB 2503–2514)

Algeo's aggressive tags imply "that the addressees ought to know what they actually cannot know" (1990:447), i.e. they are about A-events, and, consequently, the tag subject is often *I* (see section 4.3); in (65), the speaker tries to aggressively persuade the addressee that he is right in claiming that the telephone works, as he has used it himself. In CONV, there is also a challenging DecTQ with the tag subject *I* which might be interpreted as a similar case, viz. (66), where Mark rejects something Sue just said concerning him (however, her exact words are <unclear>):

(66) Mark: In some cases your pause button <pause> the reason the pause button is taped over on this is cos the pause button
      Sue: <unclear>
      Mark: But <u>I'm not going to am I!</u> That would be a rather silly!
      Sue: It would! Oh you've started it have you?
      Mark: Yeah, course I have!
      Sue: Oh God! (sBNC KD5 871–877)

Assuming addressee-oriented DecTQs present assumptions about the addressee without being challenging; such DecTQs are common in both FICT and CONV: there are 26 and 22 instances, respectively. Some of these involve hope or fear; as the assuming DecTQs are rhetorical, the instances involving hope can be paraphrased with *I hope,* as in (67), and those involving fear with *I fear*, as in (68); cf. the confirmation-seeking DecTQs involving hope and fear, where the response-eliciting function is lost in paraphrases with *I hope* and *I fear* (see section 7.3.1.1).

(67)   "Hang on, Nigel, you're rushing me. A party on Friday, you say, at your house?"
        "It'll be great, Julie, I've got a lot of people I want you to meet, and there'll be lots to drink – You are coming, aren't you? You must! I'm holding it for you – "
        "It is short notice." Did she feel like a party right now? She felt more like hiding in a corner and never coming out.
        "<u>You're not working, are you?</u> If you are, get another nurse to do your shift for you – you can do that, can't you? And do you realise it's almost a week since I saw you?" His tone became low and intimate. "I've missed you, Julie, darling. Have you missed me?"
        "Of course."
        "I wish you didn't have to do that awful job, it takes up too much of your time, and I get jealous." (wBNC JY0 1004–1019) (Paraphrase: *I hope you're not working*)

(68)   A surprisingly warm smile made her turn and frown at him.
        "<u>You're not going to believe half the things I tell you, are you?</u>"
        She hunched her shoulders a little. "Well, no, not when I know perfectly well that you love every minute of your life!" she challenged. (wBNC HGM 1056–1059)
        (Paraphrase: *I fear you're not going to believe half the things I tell you*)

It was shown in section 7.3.1.1 that hope is more commonly involved than fear among confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT; among the assuming DecTQs in FICT, instances involving fear are instead somewhat more common than instances involving hope, but the difference is not statistically significant. However, there is a clear difference to the confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT, as shown in Table 7.15:

167

Table 7.15. DecTQs involving hope/fear in assuming DecTQs vs. confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT

| | assuming addressee-oriented | | confirmation-seeking | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
DecTQs involving fear	8	**67%**	4	15%	p < 0.01
DecTQs involving hope	4	33%	22	**85%**	p < 0.01
Total	12	100%	26	100%	

It was speculated in section 7.3.1.1 that it is less natural to involve fear than hope in confirmation-seeking DecTQ, as those involving fear needs to be refuted by the addressee in order to re-assure the speaker. However, this factor is not present when fear is expressed in rhetorical DecTQs, and this may explain why hope and fear are found to similar extents among assuming DecTQs.

Reminding DecTQs, which are common in both datasets, are used to update the knowledge of the addressee in case he or she has momentarily forgotten a fact, or does not take a familiar fact into enough consideration in the current context; this is done without challenging the addressee. For the reminding DecTQs, there are often co-occurring pragmatic markers, in particular *after all*, as in (69):

(69)   "The Berlin Wall's down, Eastern Europe's put on democracy like an old coat, Russia's bankrupt and we're all suckers, Wallace. Nobody won. Don't you think that's funny? And you're supposed to be down here finding out whether some crazy old man was a double. Now, I'm surprised to learn that you don't know the answer. **After all**, <u>you were working the wrong side of the fence yourself, weren't you?</u> A chain of information set up by you that ended some-where in East Germany. I just passed on what I knew." Carey gave a bark of laughter. "And with every stolen syllable, the people's revolution came closer. That's what I was – a link in the chain. But you were something much grander than that. Much more glamorous. You were a traitor. (...)" (wBNC FP7 653–666)

Lewis (2006) states that the pragmatic marker *after all* must be followed by an assertion which justifies a related preceding claim; "[t]he speaker's strategy is to bolster the hearer's acceptance of the first idea" (2006:45). By using a reminding DecTQ as justification, as in (69) above, the speaker is even more persuasive. Other pragmatic markers co-occurring with reminding DecTQ are, for example, *anyway*, as in (70), *besides*, as in (71), and *but then*, as in (72); *well* may also prepare for a reminding DecTQ, as in (73):

(70)   I laughed. "How do you mean?" I asked.
         "I think a part of me probably died when I took your job, though it may have been just the settling-down thing. **Anyway**, <u>I wanted it all badly enough, didn't I?</u>"
         (wBNC A0F 3065–3069)

(71)   "No, honest!" protested Gazzer, putting on his aggrieved expression. "I'm telling the truth now! – It was there; where you just said: Seal Sands Lock. Madge told me. Honest! – **Besides**, <u>it was in the papers wasn't it?</u> That bird-watcher bloke found 'im ... ."
         (wBNC ACB 661–665)

168

(72)   Swinging round to face him, she demanded furiously, "Did you try to see it from mine?"
        "No," he admitted, "**but then** <u>you don't have a sister like Phena, do you?</u> It's like living on a time bomb! Waiting for the explosion, for it all to start up over again, terrified she would find out." (wBNC HGY 4048–4051)

(73)   "Don't say you don't remember me, Rosie Fortinbras." Of course she remembered when they first saw Siena together. Before she could think of an appropriate greeting, Rosie said, "Welcome back to Italy. Better luck this time."
        "I'm not quite sure what you mean."
        "**Well,** <u>you didn't do all that well on our grizzly school trip, did you</u>? Not if you were on the look-out for adventure." (wBNC FB9 1883–1889)

Among the addressee-oriented DecTQs, there are also a few reactive DecTQs. These are constant-polarity DecTQs which constitute surprised reactions towards the addressee without being challenging; mirativity usually entails challenging attitudes, but Kimps (2007) makes the reservation that surprise is "not necessarily accompanied by more negative, challenging uses" (2007:282). These reactive DecTQs typically refer to what the addressee just said, as in (74), where the speaker utters a DecTQ which is described in the emboldened reporting clause as unnecessary:

(74)   "We've got Jimmy Devlin in the back," said Lawrence.
        The policeman stuck his head through the opened window and examined Jimmy as if he was some strange zoological specimen.
        "<u>That's him, is it?</u>" said the policeman **unnecessarily**.
        Lawrence grunted, and the camera bulb flashed again, immediately answered by a fizzling flash of blue-white electricity in the sky and a rumbling of thunder. Too late, Jimmy quickly raised his non-manacled hand in front of his face.
        "We'll raise the barrier. You can take him straight in." (wBNC G0E 111–117)

Among the reactive DecTQs in FICT, there is an instance of a tag with an additional *now*, viz. (75):

(75)   Arthur Ford was a tiny, wry little man who appeared silently behind his front door as Coffin banged on the knocker.
        "Hello, are you the man from the Social?"
        "No."
        "Then you're the man from the Sally Army about the soup plates?"
        "No." (...) "I'm moving into Mouncy Street. I bought **Ted Mosse**'s house, and now I'm wondering what sort of man he was. Worries me, I've got to live in the house."
        "Well, it would."
        "You knew him. I'm told so."
        "Oh yes, poor old fellow." (...) "Come on in, I never mind a chat." (...)
        He led Coffin to a bright back kitchen, furnished in the most modern style, with new canary-yellow paint. A bird to match sang in a cage in the window, noisily saluting the room.
        "Shut up, Daisy girl." He banged on the cage. "We are both a bit deaf so you'll have to talk up." He sat down on a hard kitchen chair and stared hopefully up at Coffin. "<u>Ted Mosse, was it **now**?</u> I used to take Meals on Wheels to him when he got past caring for himself."
        "You didn't know him earlier?" (wBNC K8V 1494–1498, 1500–1509, 1512–1520)

In (75), the surprised reaction is delayed as the speaker first has to let the visitor in; when he utters the DecTQ, he seem to use *now* to indicate a return to the topic of Ted Mosse (cf. Aijmer 2002).

Lastly, there are a few attributing instances among the addressee-oriented DecTQ. Such a DecTQ is addressed to someone who is physically and/or mentally unable to perceive it and/or to respond or react to it; these DecTQs must be regarded as rhetorical, as no response is possible, but the presence of the addressee is necessary for such DecTQs to be uttered, which makes them addressee-oriented. There are only two attributing DecTQs in FICT; the one in (76) is addressed to a mute, and possibly mentally retarded, girl:

> (76)   Loopy Lil grinned and Dot saw she didn't understand much of anything that other people said.
> "Miss Lilian has an appetite fit for the good trooper that she is. **Lilian, as you can see, was not gifted by our dear Lord, with either beauty or brains, but with a willing heart. Weren't you,** Lilian?"
> Loopy Lil beamed with pleasure but said nothing as she watched Mrs Hollidaye fill her bowl to the brim. (…)
> "And Lilian is my right-hand man. I don't know what we'd have done without her in those dark years. <u>Always here to keep up our spirits, weren't you</u>, my dear? **She came with the rest of the evacuees, didn't you**, Lilian? Will you try a little porridge with some honey, Dorothy, my dear? It's from our own bees. Some people say you can actually taste the clover in it. Or cream? (…)" (wBNC AC5 1080–1084, 1088–1095)

In (76), there are also two other attributing DecTQs in the same extract (see the emboldened parts): the author apparently uses these DecTQs to characterize the interactants and their relationship. The addressee in the other attributing example in FICT is addressed to a deaf man, and among the six instances in CONV, one is addressed to a baby and five to pets, probably dogs, as in (77):

> (77)   John: He waits for them to <unclear> on the ba– , on the jar you know! <pause>
>   And of course he tips the jar off eventually, and we have fill it up again!
>   <pause dur=6> I've never known a dog eat so many wasps!
>   Brian: <u>Strange animal aren't you</u> Rick?
>   John: You're strange! (sBNC KCL 4050–4054)

As the addressees in attributive DecTQs cannot understand and/or respond or react to the message of these DecTQs, the information in them seems intended for another person present. However, these DecTQs are apparently also used in order to increase the contact with the addressee of the tag. In the first and third attributing DecTQ in (76), there is a clear change of addressee: the anchors are addressed to the guest and the tags to Lilian. It should be noted that there is a vocative accompanying all the three attributing DecTQs in (76) as well as the one in (77). The change of addressee makes these attributing DecTQs resemble confirmation-demanding Dec-

TQs uttered for a confirmatory answer to be heard by the addressee of the anchor (see examples (26)–(27) in section 7.3.1.2).

The account in this section has shown that there is tremendous functional diversity among the addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT: the speaker wants to influence the addressee in many different ways. Constant-polarity DecTQs in the addressee-oriented category seem restricted to the challenging uses of being sarcastic in asserting the opposite of the truth or teasing the addressee and the reactive use, where the speaker shows surprise without being challenging.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, the functions of the DecTQs in FICT, i.e. the 250-instance dataset of DecTQs in fiction dialogue, have been described and compared to the DecTQs in CONV, i.e. the 250-instance dataset of DecTQ in spoken conversation. A functional model designed in the present study (see chapter 5) for the investigation of the functions of DecTQs has been applied; it was developed mainly based on data from fiction dialogue, although it was tested to be applicable also to spoken conversational data. The model is hierarchical, making distinctions between goods and services vs. information being exchanged, response-eliciting vs. rhetorical uses, confirmation-eliciting vs. conversation-eliciting uses, confirmation-seeking vs. confirmation-demanding uses, and speaker-centred vs. addressee-oriented rhetorical uses. At the bottom of the hierarchy, there are thus six functional categories: their characteristics in FICT are here summarized in the order of their appearance in FICT:

- Addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT are rhetorical instances where the addressee is crucial, as the speaker intends to influence the addressee in various ways. Most addressee-oriented DecTQs challenge the addressee, but DecTQs reminding the addressee or presenting an assumption concerning the addressee are also common. The most typical formal feature is, of course, the tag subject *you*. The tag subjects are mostly animate and the tag verb is often *do*; hence, these DecTQs tend to deal with people and what they do. There are some constant-polarity DecTQs in this category; they all express some degree of mirativity.

- Speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT are rhetorical instances where the speaker usually presents his or her conviction or assessment, i.e. they are stance-taking; however, speaker-centred DecTQs may occasionally also present recollections. Typical formal features are the tag subject *it* and the tag verb *be*; hence, these DecTQs tend to be impersonal, dealing with what things are rather than what people do. There are no constant-polarity DecTQs

171

in this category; this is probably due to constant-polarity DecTQs usually being attribut-
ed to the addressee, whereas speaker-centred DecTQs focus on the speaker.

- Confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT are used when the speaker is genuinely uncertain
and believes that the addressee knows better, i.e. such DecTQs concern B-events; hence,
the tag subject is mostly *you*. The tentative attitudes of the uncertain speakers favour the
pattern negative anchor plus positive tag, where the negative anchor invokes alternative
positions, i.e. heteroglossia. There are some constant-polarity DecTQs in this category.
These seek verification of inferences drawn from the preceding discourse or the imme-
diate situation.

- Confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT are used when the speaker is quite certain and
demands that the addressee should admit or acknowledge something, or confirm a fact to
another person present; in the latter case, there is a change of addressee between the an-
chor and the tag. The assertive attitudes of the speakers favour the pattern positive anchor
plus negative tag. There are no constant-polarity DecTQs in this category; the reason ap-
pears to be the certainty of the speaker.

- Requesting/offering DecTQs in FICT are indirect requests, indirect offers or indirect sug-
gestions; they have formal and functional connections to ImpTQs, which also exchange
goods and services. Some of the DecTQs in this category display constant polarity; this is
suggested to be due to the connection to ImpTQs, as constant-polarity DecTQs in this ca-
tegory neither interpret nor echo the preceding discourse, something which is the case in
constant-polarity DecTQs exchanging information.

- Conversation-initiating DecTQs constitute a small category in FICT without any distinc-
tive formal features; these DecTQs may resemble DecTQs in other categories, but they
have in common that their main purpose is to start or re-start conversations. There are no
constant-polarity instances in this category; it may be speculated that this is due to the
lack of preceding discourse to interpret or echo.

The comparison has shown that the functional patterns of DecTQs in FICT and CONV are
quite different:

- Addressee-oriented DecTQs have turned out to be much more common in FICT than in
CONV. It is the challenging uses which account for this difference; the reason seems to be
that conflicts and confrontations, which characterize these DecTQs, are often depicted in
fiction. The challenging uses exhibit large diversity; these DecTQs may be accusing,
reproaching, sarcastic, patronizing, teasing, threatening, peremptory or aggressive.

- In contrast, speaker-centred DecTQs have been found to be much less common in FICT than in CONV; it is, in particular, the DecTQs presenting convictions which are less common. There is a tendency in FICT for stance-taking DecTQs, in particular those presenting convictions, to display argumentation where the speaker seems well aware that the addressee might have another opinion, often resulting in attempts to convince the addressee or even in clearly confrontational dialogue. The relatively few speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT bring the plot forward and contribute to the characterization of personalities. In contrast, the tendency when convictions and assessments are presented in speaker-centred DecTQs in CONV is that these often concern uncontroversial everyday matters; they may even be very routine-like general remarks. Such uncontroversial topics seem to be avoided in fiction dialogue. In the few cases where there is some kind of confrontation in speaker-centred DecTQs in CONV, the conflicts are about rather unimportant matters.

- The DecTQs traditionally considered to be most typical, the confirmation-seeking instances, have been found, in the present study, to constitute only about a fifth of the DecTQs in both datasets; it is the only functional category which shows similar proportions in FICT and CONV. However, there are nevertheless differences between the confirmation-seeking DecTQs in the two datasets. Firstly, there are more non-co-operative responses in FICT than in CONV; some of these reflect mild confrontations, but others are instead due to the speaker having made an incorrect assumption. Secondly, there are more confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT seeking reassurance; these DecTQs mostly involve hope, but also sometimes fear. These characteristics of confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT contribute to the plot and the characterization of personalities.

- Confirmation-demanding DecTQs are more common in FICT than in CONV. The typical use of demanding that the addressee should admit or acknowledge something accounts for this difference; these instances are confrontational and sometimes even aggressive. Again, it seems clear that the depiction of conflicts and confrontations in fiction influences the kind of DecTQs which are included in fiction dialogue.

- Requesting/offering DecTQs have only been found in FICT. It can be noted that several of the instances are pleading and/or related to real or potential conflicts.

- Conversation-initiating DecTQs have also only been found in FICT. One reason why no instances have been found in CONV might be that the loosely organized discourse in the spoken data makes such DecTQs difficult to detect, whereas the low number in FICT may be due to openings often being left out in fiction dialogue.

The data in the present study encompasses both reversed-polarity and constant-polarity Dec-TQs. It has been previously claimed that constant-polarity DecTQs may differ functionally from reversed-polarity DecTQs, but, in this chapter, it has been shown that the functional model designed for DecTQs in the present study may embrace both reversed-polarity and constant-polarity DecTQs. As shown above, the constant-polarity DecTQs in FICT are unevenly distributed across the functional categories: they are only found among the addressee-oriented, confirmation-seeking and requesting/offering DecTQs. This means, nevertheless, that constant-polarity DecTQs are found in all the major categories higher up in the hierarchy: they may exchange goods and services as well as information, and the information-exchanging constant-polarity DecTQs may be both response-eliciting and rhetorical.

The functional potential of constant-polarity DecTQs in CONV seems fairly similar to FICT: in the functional categories without constant-polarity instances in FICT, there are no constant-polarity instances in CONV either. Constant-polarity DecTQs in CONV are thus only found in the addressee-oriented and confirmation-seeking categories. However, there are clear distributional differences between the two datasets; Table 7.16 compares the occurrence of constant-polarity DecTQs in the functional categories of the present model:[28]

Table 7.16. Constant-polarity DecTQs in functional categories in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
addressee-oriented	13	**57%**	2	11%	p < 0.01
speaker-centred	–	–	–	–	n.s.
confirmation-seeking	6	26%	17	**89%**	p < 0.001
confirmation-demanding	–	–	–	–	n.s.
requesting/offering	4	17%	–	–	n.s.
conversation-initiating	–	–	–	–	n.s.
Total	23	100%	19	100%	

Table 7.16 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the two datasets despite the fairly small number of constant-polarity DecTQs: in FICT, most of the constant-polarity DecTQs are addressee-oriented, whereas, in CONV, an even clearer majority are instead confirmation-seeking. In the addressee-oriented category, there are reactive DecTQs in both datasets, whereas challenging addressee-oriented DecTQs have only been found in FICT (nine instances): these are sarcastic or teasing. These results conform to Nässlin's (1984) suggestion that spoken constant-polarity DecTQs "seem to be used primarily to ask for information" (1984:91), whereas constant-polarity DecTQs in fiction dialogue "usually express various attitudes", often being

---

[28] It should be noted that the constant-polarity DecTQs are too few to affect the statistically significant differences between FICT and CONV as to the proportions of the functional categories in Table 7.1 above.

"insinuating or sarcastic" (1984:92), and Kimps's (2007) proposal that "fiction writers are most aware of the strongly challenging uses of [constant-polarity DecTQs] and pay little attention to the wider variety of attitudes which [they] express in actual usage" (2007:289). However, the use of constant-polarity DecTQs in fiction dialogue may instead be expressed in the following way: authors of fiction exploit skilfully the challenging potential of constant-polarity DecTQs, as such DecTQs are efficient in depicting conflicts and confrontations between characters, while they avoid including confirmation-seeking constant-polarity DecTQs, as these might rather delay than advance the plot.

In short, the differences between FICT and CONV as to the functional patterns of DecTQs seem mainly due to the requirement that fiction should make interesting reading. There is a focus in fiction on problems, conflicts and confrontations, and an avoidance of conversations on trivial matters, which would not bring the plot forward or contribute to the characterization of personalities.

Differences in the functional patterns of DecTQs between FICT and CONV may partly explain the difference in the frequency of DecTQs between the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus and the spoken demographic part of the BNC (see section 6.2). The speaker-centred DecTQs are much less frequent in the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC as to normalized frequencies (see Table D.38 in Appendix D).

Moreover, differences in the functional patterns of DecTQs in FICT and CONV may also explain some of the differences in the formal features of DecTQs between FICTION and CONVERSATION (see chapter 6). The very different proportions of addressee-oriented and speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT and CONV may account for the fact that *you* is the most common tag subject in FICTION and *it* the most common tag subject in CONVERSATION (see Table 6.1 in chapter 6). The proportions of these two functional categories also seem to partly explain the different proportions of the tag verbs *do* and *be* (see Table 6.5 in chapter 6). Moreover, the fact that requesting/offering DecTQs have only been found in FICT probably contributes to the higher proportion in FICTION of the tag verb *will/would* (see Table 6.5 in chapter 6) and the tag operators *will* and *shall* (see Table 6.4 in chapter 6). The fact that the reversed-polarity pattern positive anchor plus negative tag is less predominant in FICTION (see Table 6.21) reflects weak tendencies in several of the functional categories, not only in confirmation-seeking DecTQs, where negative anchors can be related to tentative attitudes, but also in speaker-centred and addressee-oriented DecTQs. However, it was suggested in section 6.5 that there may also be other explanations than different functional patterns behind differences in the formal features of DecTQs between FICTION and CONVERSATION, for example, an adherence to written standards.

Lastly, a major finding in this investigation of the functions of DecTQs is the predominance of rhetorical uses: about two thirds of the DecTQs in FICT and about three quarters of the DecTQs in CONV have been found to be used rhetorically. This is unexpected as DecTQs have often been described as typically seeking confirmation or verification.

8 Results: Non-declarative TQs

8.1 Introduction

TQs usually have declarative anchors, but imperative, interrogative and exclamative anchors may also occur; this chapter deals with such non-declarative TQs: their frequencies, formal features and functions. The data comes from the same samples as was used in the study of the frequencies and formal features of declarative TQs, i.e. the samples called FICTION and CONVERSATION, respectively (cf. Fig. 1.2 in section 1.4).The data is also supplemented by a separate independent sample of imperative TQs from the spoken demographic part of the BNC; this sample called CONVERSATION^{+} is described further in section 8.2.4.

There have turned out to be very few non-declarative TQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION: only 79 clear instances have been identified, and they are all imperative TQs. These are dealt with in section 8.2. A few instances which might be regarded as interrogative TQs have been found in the two samples, but their status as TQs may be contested; this issue is discussed in section 8.3. Lastly, there are no instances of exclamative TQs in the two samples. However, as is shown in section 8.4, this does not mean that there are no such instances in the two studied subcorpora of the BNC, just that they were too few to turn up in the samples retrieved for the present study.

8.2 Imperative TQs

8.2.1 Introduction

Imperative TQs (ImpTQs) constitute a well-established phenomenon, as they are described in some detail in the large grammars (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813, Biber *et al.* 1999:210, Huddleston & Pullum 2002:942–943). ImpTQs are of two main types: 2nd-person ImpTQs, as in (1), and 1st-person plural ImpTQs, as in (2):[1]

    (1)   Open the door, <u>will you?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813)

    (2)   Let's play another game, <u>shall we?</u> (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813)

---

[1] According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), there is also a 1st-person singular imperative with *let me* "realizing a simple offer" (2004:139) (cf. declarative TQs used as indirect offers, see section 5.2.1).

Tags in ImpTQs are described separately in my definition of TQs (see section 3.2), as their formation differs from TQs with other sentence types as anchor; the formation of tags in Imp-TQs will now be discussed further.

The subject is naturally *you* in tags after anchors with 2nd-person imperatives, as in (1) above, and *we* in tags after anchors with 1st-person plural imperatives, as in (2) above; hence, the possible tags subjects in ImpTQs are more restricted than in declarative TQs (DecTQs). 2nd-person imperative clauses normally do not include a subject, but a non-contrastive *you* may occasionally be included for stress (Quirk *et al.* 1985:828), as in (3)–(4):

(3) **You** be quiet. (Quirk *et al.* 1985:828)

(4) Don't **you** open the door. (Quirk *et al.* 1985:830)

Bolinger (1977) finds that "when a non-contrastive *you* is added after *don't*", as in (4), "tagged *will* becomes extremely unlikely" (1977:155), and Aarts (1987) finds that adding tags to imperative clauses such as those in (3)–(4) "can presumably be ruled out on pragmatic grounds" (1987:244).

Furthermore, the formation of tags in ImpTQs differs from tags in TQs with other sentence types in the anchor, as there is no finite in the imperative anchor to repeat or substitute. Admittedly, *do* may be used in negative imperative clauses, as in (4) above, and *do* may also be added in positive 2nd-person imperative clauses to make them "more persuasive and insistent" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:833), as in (5):

(5) **Do** have some more tea. (Quirk *et al.* 1985:833)

However, *do* and *don't* in imperative clauses do not fulfil "the strict conditions of *do*-support": they act as introductory imperative markers (Quirk *et al*. 1985:833); hence, *do* is not repeated in tags after imperative anchors. Bolinger (1977) states that "tagged *will* is common" after positive imperatives with *do*, as "affirmative *do* cajoles" (1977:155), as in (6):

(6) **Do** come over tomorrow, won't you? (Bolinger 1977:155)

The operators may only be *will*, *would*, *can* or *could* in tags in 2nd-person ImpTQs, and *shall* in tags in 1st-person plural ImpTQs (e.g. Huddleston & Pullum 2002:942–943); these restrictions are discussed by Huddleston and Pullum (2002):

> The tags attached to imperatives cannot be derived by grammatical rules of the kind we suggested for tags attached to declaratives. They can be regarded as elliptical versions of (...) full interrogatives (...), but the reason truncated versions of these can be attached to the imperative anchors is that they are interrogatives of the types that are commonly used as indirect directives (...) The indirect force of the interrogative [tag] thus matches the direct force of the imperative anchor. (...) The construction is *conventionalised* in that the tags correspond to only a subset of the interrogatives that can be used with indirect directive force. (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:942; my italicization)

The selection of operators available in tags in ImpTQs is thus conventionalized instead of dependent on the form of the anchor.

In contrast to DecTQs, where constant polarity is in a clear minority, it is quite normal for ImpTQs to display constant polarity, in that *will you*, as in (1) above, is generally regarded as the default tag after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors (e.g. Biber *et al.* 1999:210). It should be noted that, similar to requesting/offering DecTQs, constant-polarity ImpTQs do not interpret or echo the preceding discourse (cf. section 7.2). However, also reversed polarity is found in 2nd-person ImpTQ, as shown in (7):

(7)　Open the door, won't you?" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813)

Hence, there might seem to be a free choice between *will you*, *won't you*, *would you*, *wouldn't you*, *can you*, *can't you*, *could you* and *couldn't you* after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors; however, some subtle differences between them have been suggested, for example, concerning the degree of insistence: *won't you* and *would you* are generally regarded as less insistent than *will you* (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813, Biber *et al.* 1999:210, Huddleston & Pullum 2002:943). Intonation has also been suggested to influence the insistence and politeness of tags in ImpTQs (see e.g. Quirk *et al.* 1985:813); however, intonation is disregarded in the present study, as information on intonation is not provided in the BNC. Moreover, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) find that tags with *can* and *could* "tend to retain some of their direct inquiry force" and that the tag *can't you* "typically conveys some impatience" (2002:943).

In contrast, after negative 2nd-person imperative anchors, there is a virtual restriction to the tag *will you* (see e.g. Huddleston & Pullum 2002:942), as in (8):

(8)　Don't tell anyone, will you? (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:942)

In the following sections, some previous corpus-based work on ImpTQs is first presented in section 8.2.2. Then in section 8.2.3, the frequencies of the ImpTQs in the two samples are compared to each other and to the frequencies of DecTQs in the same samples. The formal and accompanying features of the ImpTQs are dealt with in sections 8.2.4–8.2.5, respectively. Then,

the functions of the ImpTQs are discussed in section 8.2.6. Lastly, the findings on ImpTQs are summarized in section 8.2.7.

8.2.2 Previous corpus-based work on ImpTQs

In the previous corpus-based studies of TQs presented in chapter 4, very few or no ImpTQs were included in the data. Holmes (1995) mentions briefly the possibility of ImpTQs (1995:82). Roesle (2001) reports 0.5 per cent ImpTQs in the spoken component of the BNC (2001:49); this equals 5.78 ImpTQs pmw (2001:51,58).[2] Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) include ImpTQs in their corpus data without reporting any proportion for them. Hence, the ImpTQ appears to be an infrequent phenomenon in spoken English in relation to all TQs. ImpTQs have also been noted in some corpus-based studies of imperatives (Aarts 1994, De Clerck 2006); these studies indicate that less than one per cent of all imperatives are followed by tags.

Two corpus-based studies have yielded enough instances for comments on the formal features of ImpTQs: Roesle (2001) and Kimps and Davidse (2008). Roesle's (2001) data includes 41 ImpTQs from the spoken component of the BNC and the *Longman Spoken American Corpus*. The tag *will you* occurs in about half of the instances in her data, but a range of other tags are also found, including three instances of *shall we* after 1st-person plural imperatives. Kimps and Davidse (2008) have only studied constant-polarity ImpTQs; they have collected a mixture of written and spoken instances (71 and 29 per cent, respectively, Ditte Kimps, p.c.) from various corpora, in total 103 instances. 83 per cent of these are 2nd-person ImpTQs, and 17 per cent 1st-person plural ImpTQs; the former have mainly the tag *will you*, but also *would you* and *can you* occur, whereas the latter have the tag *shall we* or, marginally, *can we*.

The functions of ImpTQs have received less attention than the functions of DecTQs (see chapter 4), partly probably because they are so rare in spoken data. However, Holmes's (1995) softening tags are explicitly stated as being able to "attenuate the force of negatively affective utterances such as directives" (1995:82), as in (9):

(9)   Make a cup of tea would you. (Holmes 1995:74)

Furthermore, Holmes's challenging tags "may (...) aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act" (1995:80); however, she does not explicitly mention directives here or give an ImpTQ as example. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) included ImpTQs among other uses in their functional classification of TQs (see Tottie & Hoffmann 2009b:146, note b). However, when Tottie and Hoffmann (2009b) studied sixteenth-century drama, they found quite a few ImpTQs, so

---

[2] In the *Longman Spoken American Corpus*, Roesle (2001) reports 0.7 per cent ImpTQs (2001:58).

they introduced a hortatory macro-category, where ImpTQs have "directive functions" (2009b: 144); they further subdivided this macro-category according to the effect of the tag in relation to the directive into three categories: emphatic, neutral and softening.

Kimps and Davidse (2008) is a corpus-based study of the functions of constant-polarity Imp-TQs. They divide their 103 corpus instances into five categories according to their illocutionary force:

1. Commands
2. Requests
3. Proposals for joint action
4. Advice
5. Invitations/offers

These categories form a continuum from speaker-oriented types (commands and requests) via neutral proposals to hearer-oriented types (advice and invitations/offers). At the first end, the speaker "expresses volition and desire"; at the other end, the hearer is "willing to act" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:711).

In ImpTQs used as commands, the speaker is "the dominant speech participant as well as the beneficiary", and there is "a strong expectation that the hearer will comply" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:713), as in (10):

(10)   "Get a move on, will you? Lewis whispered down my neck.
          (Kimps & Davidse 2008:713)

In ImpTQs used as requests, "the speaker's level of authority is less high in relation to the hearer's and the speaker is not always the sole beneficiary"; furthermore, "the hearer's compliance with the imperative in the [anchor] is less obligatory than with commands" (Kimps & Davidse 2008: 714), as in (11):

(11)   "Compliments of the General Manager, sir."
          "Please thank him for me, will you?" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:714)

Proposals for joint action are typically expressed by 1st-person plural ImpTQs with the tag *shall we*; these are "strongly cajoling devices" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:715), as in (12):

(12)   Erm now let's let's talk about FX shall we (Kimps & Davidse 2008:715)

Kimps and Davidse argue further about proposals for joint action:

The speaker appears to propose to join in action with the hearer in which both will be on a level of solidarity and from which both will benefit. Actually, on closer examination, the *let's* imperative and the tag (...) functions as persuasive softeners. The speaker uses this type of tag question as a means to establish empathy and togetherness in order to cajole the hearer into the action described in the [anchor]. The speaker – who is actually in charge most of the time – may use this type of tag question in order to save the hearer's face. The same is true of the relative benefits for speaker and hearer: the benefits appear to be in balance, but the construction may only lead the hearer to believe this. (Kimps & Davidse 2008:715)

The speaker of an ImpTQ with the illocutionary force of advice or invitation/offer "is not dominant and the addressee is presented as the beneficiary" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:717). An ImpTQ providing advice is found in (13):

(13)   Oh lord you know here we go all kinds of things and so you know <u>hang onto your common sense in all of this will you.</u> You're going to need it. (Kimps & Davidse 2008:716)

In (14), there is an ImpTQ used as an invitation, and in (15), there is an ImpTQ used as an offer:

(14)   <u>Sit down here would you</u> (Kimps & Davidse 2008:716)

(15)   Rhodry reached into his shirt and pulled Othara's talisman free. "<u>Take this, will you</u>" (Kimps & Davidse 2008:716)

The majority of the ImpTQs in their data are commands (38 per cent), and many are requests (22 per cent); proposals and advice are also common (19 per cent each), whereas invitations/offers are more rare (6 per cent). Kimps and Davidse have thus studied the function of the whole ImpTQs using illocutionary forces, but they have also analysed "the softening versus insisting effect" (2008:717) of the tags. They find that the tags are softening in about 70 per cent of the ImpTQs used as commands and requests, but mainly have an insisting effect in ImpTQs used as proposals and ImpTQs providing advice (18 and 12 per cent respectively); the few ImpTQs used as offers are "intrinsically (100%) insistent and, in a sense, difficult to refuse" (2008:781).

The illocutionary forces used for Kimps and Davidse's (2008) categories of ImpTQs are some of the most apparent illocutionary forces of imperatives. However, more fine-meshed lists of illocutionary forces of imperative have been suggested, for example, by Verschueren (1985) and De Clerck (2006); see also Quirk *et al*. (1985:831–832) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 929–931). Some of these illocutionary forces may be included in Kimps and Davidse's larger categories, whereas others are unlikely to be found in ImpTQs.

8.2.3 Frequencies of ImpTQs

In the present study, 66 ImpTQs have been found in the dialogue of the thinned Fiction Sub-corpus, but only 13 in the thinned spoken demographic part of the BNC.[3] The 66 ImpTQs in FICTION are distributed over 48 different files in the Fiction Subcorpus, and are thus used by a range of different authors. The 13 ImpTQs in CONVERSATION come from 13 different files in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, i.e. they are all uttered by different speakers. These numbers render a normalized frequency of 107 ImpTQs per million words (pmw) in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus vs. 52 ImpTQs pmw in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. The frequency of ImpTQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC in the present study is higher than in some previous studies on spoken English (Aarts 1994, De Clerck 2006, Roesle 2001; see section 8.2.2); this may partly be due to what kinds of spoken language are included in the corpus material. Nevertheless, there are more than twice as many ImpTQs pmw in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC ($p < 0.001$).

However, the frequencies of ImpTQs are much lower than the frequencies of DecTQs (107 vs. 1,720 pmw in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus and 52 vs. 5,210 pmw in the spoken demographic part of the BNC), as shown in Fig. 8.1, which also illustrates another clear difference between the two subcorpora: ImpTQs are clearly more frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus, whereas DecTQs are instead much less frequent (see section 6.2). Hence, ImpTQs constitute as much as almost six per cent of the TQs in FICTION, but only one per cent of the TQs in CONVERSATION.

---

[3] The ImpTQs were retrieved together with the DecTQs (see section 3.3), as they have tag wordings in common. Hence, all TQs in the thinned query results had to be interpreted as to their type of anchor; this task was quite unproblematic for the large majority of instances, but, occasionally, ImpTQs and DecTQs may look very similar when a tag wording which is acceptable in an ImpTQ follows a declarative anchor with ellipsis of the subject and the finite, as in (i):

(i)   He laughed in her face. "Or what, Mother dear? <u>Throw me out, will you?</u> Disown me? No... No... I don't think you'd do that to your little boy. You couldn't bring yourself to punish me when I was a child and guilty of all manner of things ... you'd rather punish poor little Beth, wouldn't you, eh? (...)" (wBNC FPK 419–425)

At first sight, the TQ in (i) may be interpreted as an ImpTQ. However, the context indicates clearly that no directive is pronounced: instead, the speaker questions that his mother would throw him out; i.e. it must be a DecTQ.
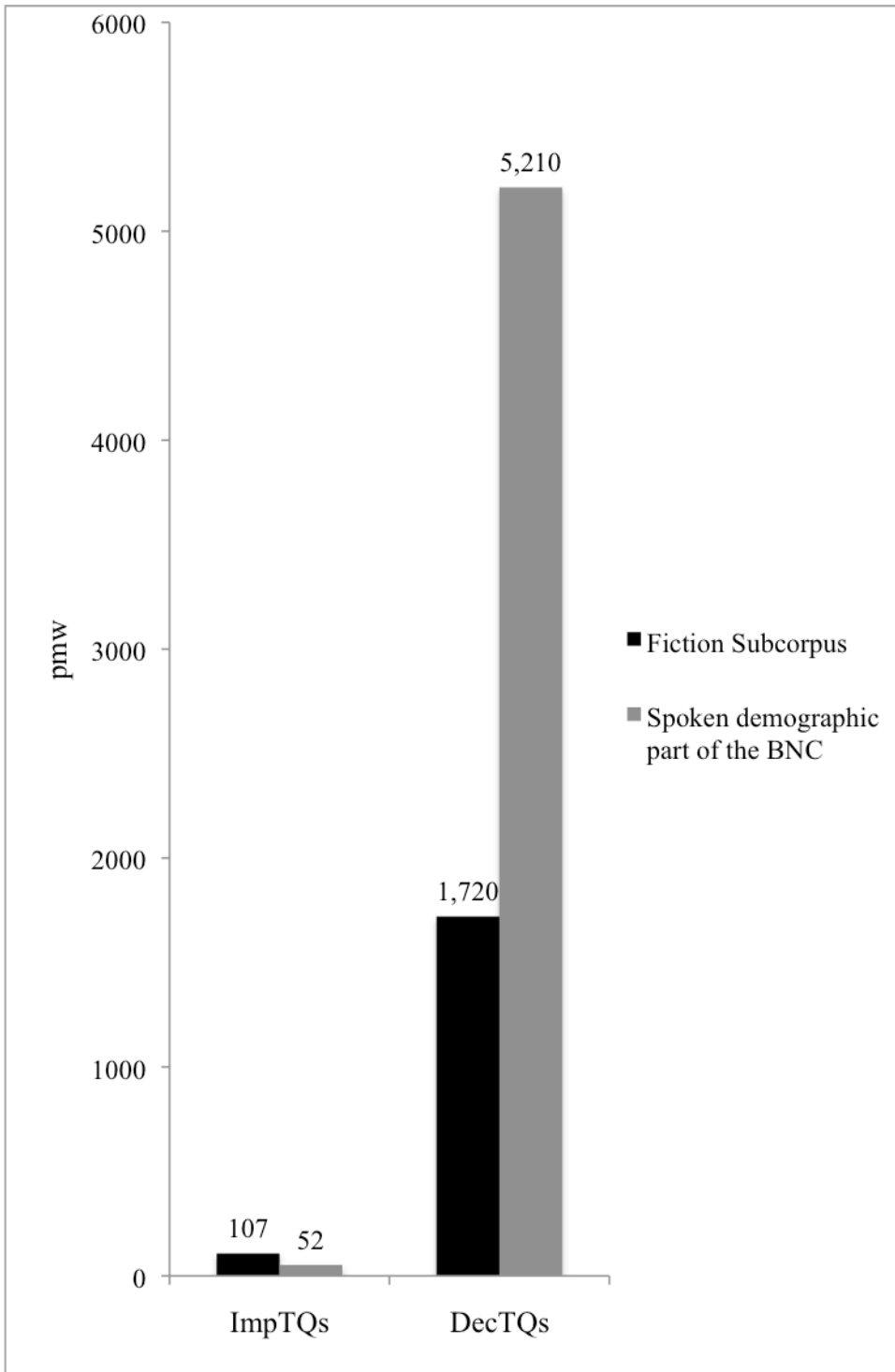
Fig. 8.1.　　　　　Normalized frequencies of ImpTQs and DecTQs

One reason for the more frequent use of ImpTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus could have been that imperatives in general are more frequent in the dialogue of that subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any studies of the frequency of imperatives in the BNC, and such investigations are out of the scope

of the present study. However, a previous comparison on comparable data may give some guidance: Biber *et al.* (1999:221) report that there are about 10,000 imperatives pmw in conversation, but only about 2,000 pmw in fiction.[4] Their fiction data is not restricted to dialogue, and they comment that "the lower frequency of imperative clauses in fiction follows from the simple fact that imperatives are virtually restricted to dialogue passages" (Biber *et al.* 1999:222). The studies available on the proportion of dialogue in fiction show a higher proportion of dialogue than 20 per cent (22–23 per cent in Semino and Short's (2004) material and 32 per cent in the present study, see Appendix B); imperatives are thus probably not more frequent in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation. Hence, the frequent use of ImpTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus cannot be explained by a higher frequency of imperatives in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation.

The reasons for ImpTQs being twice as frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC may be sought in both genres. It might, for example, be the case that imperatives need not be modified by tags as often in conversation, since other strategies may be used instead. Holmes (1995) states that, in real-life conversation, "[e]ven paralinguistic signals such as pauses and vocal hesitations like *um* and *er* can be used to express a speaker's reluctance to impose" (1995:75). As paralinguistic signals are difficult to convey in fiction dialogue and hesitations are avoided in direct speech presentation, this may increase the frequency of ImpTQs in fiction dialogue. Biber *et al.* (1999) report that modifications of imperative clauses (mainly an overt subject *you* or a vocative but also, for example, tags) are found for about every fourth imperative clause in fiction but only for about every sixth imperative clause in conversation (1999:221), suggesting that "[t]he lower proportion of modification in conversation is probably due to the informal situations and the intimate relationship between many of the participants" (1999:222). Furthermore, there are a variety of indirect ways of issuing directives, in particular requests (see e.g. Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:17–18, Aijmer 1996:132–133, Wierzbicka 2006). The drawback of several of these formulations is that they are quite wordy, as in, for example, *I was wondering if you could...*. It might be speculated that a contributory reason why ImpTQs are more frequent in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation is that they are relatively short and clear directives without being as abrupt as bare imperatives. Of course, the more frequent use of ImpTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC might also be related to different func-

---

[4] Biber *et al.* (1999) used the *Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus* (the LSWE Corpus), where the sampling criteria for fiction and conversation resemble those of the BNC (1999:29–31): their conversation data has also been collected by informants and the fiction data mostly come from novels. An important difference is, however, that the LSWE Corpus also covers other varieties, especially AmE, whereas the BNC is mainly restricted to BrE.

tional patterns of ImpTQs in these two subcorpora; this will be discussed in section 8.2.6. However, before that, the formal and accompanying features of ImpTQs in the data will be presented and discussed.

8.2.4   Formal features of ImpTQs

Most of the ImpTQs are in the 2nd person in both FICTION and CONVERSATION; only a small minority are 1st-person plural ImpTQs, as shown in Table 8.1:[5]

Table 8.1.   2nd-person ImpTQs and 1st-person plural ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
2nd-person ImpTQs	57	88%	11	85%	n.s.
1st-person plural ImpTQs	8	12%	2	15%	n.s.
Total	65	100%	13	100%	

The formal features related to the forms of the tags are best dealt with by treating 2nd-person ImpTQs and 1st-person plural ImpTQs separately; the 2nd-person ImpTQs are dealt with first.

Most of the anchors of 2nd-person ImpTQs are positive in both samples, as shown in Table 8.2:

Table 8.2.   Positive/negative anchors in 2nd-person ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
positive anchor	49	86%	7	64%	n.s.
negative anchor	8	14%	4	36%	n.s.
Total	57	100%	11	100%	

As expected (see section 8.2.1 above), there are several different tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors, but only *will you* after negative 2nd-person imperative anchors, as in (16):

(16)   "Don't tell anyone about this, will you?" (wBNC GV8 1763)

---

[5] Only 65 out of the 66 ImpTQs are included in the investigation of formal features and functions, as one abnormal ImpTQ has been disregarded:

(ii)   "Write," he said, "don't you? Because I can't. Write. OK?"
          "Sure," I said. (wBNC HR9 3655–3659)

The context in (ii) shows that the anchor ought to be interpreted as being imperative; however, the tag wording *don't you* seems strange in an ImpTQ. It might very well be the case that *don't you* is a printing or scanning error; it is quite possible that the tag wording should be, for example, *won't you*.

186

Since there is only variation in tags after positive anchors, only these will now be compared between FICTION and CONVERSATION. The distributions of tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors are displayed in Table 8.3:[6]

Table 8.3. Tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
will you	39	80%	3	43%	n.s.
won't you	5	10%	1	14%	n.s.
would you	4	8%	–	–	n.s.
can't you	1	2%	2	**29%**	$p < 0.05$[7]
can you	–	–	1	14%	n.s.
Total	49	100%	7	100%	

Table 8.3 shows that the tag *will you*, as in (17), is clearly predominant after positive imperative anchors in FICTION:

(17)   "(...) Pass the word, will you?" (wBNC ANL 615)

In contrast, *will you* is in a minority in such cases in CONVERSATION; however, no statistically significant difference can be attested for *will you* due to the very small number of instances in CONVERSATION. The predominance of *will you* in FICTION is a reason for a clear predominance of positive tags after positive anchors in that sample, as shown in Table 8.4:

Table 8.4. Positive/negative tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
positive tags	43	88%	4	57%	n.s.
negative tags	6	12%	3	43%	n.s.
Total	49	100%	7	100%	

Table 8.4 shows that positive tags after 2nd-person imperatives are less predominant in CONVERSATION, but no statistically significant difference can be shown here either. Furthermore, the predominance of the tag *will you* in FICTION is the major reason for a clear predominance of *will/would* vs. *can/could* as tag verb in FICTION, as shown in Table 8.5; this difference to CONVERSATION is statistically significant, but, again, numbers are low.

---

[6] There are three instances of non-standard spellings of *you* in the tags of 2nd-person ImpTQs: two instances with *will yer* and one with *will ye*; these tag wordings are henceforth included in the tag *will you*.

[7] This weak significance is unreliable due to the small number of instances.

Table 8.5. Tag verbs in tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
will/would	56	**98%**	8	73%	p < 0.01
can/could	1	2%	3	**27%**	p < 0.01
Total	57	100%	11	100%	

It is a problem that the number of 2nd-person ImpTQs with positive anchors is so small in CONVERSATION: only eleven instances. In order to further investigate potential differences between ImpTQs in fiction dialogue and spoken conversation, a larger independent sample of ImpTQs was retrieved from the spoken demographic part of the BNC; the aim was to get a sample of ImpTQs of about the same size as FICTION (i.e. about 65 instances). The following tag wordings were searched for: *will you, won't you, would you, wouldn't you, can you, can't you, could you, couldn't you* and *shall we*.[8] The search result was thinned randomly to 30 per cent,[9] and 54 ImpTQs were found: 48 2nd-person ImpTQs and six 1st-person plural ImpTQs. This sample is henceforth called CONVERSATION[+].[10] The CONVERSATION[+] sample will be used in the further investigation of the formal features of ImpTQs, as well as in the investigations of accompanying features and functions of ImpTQs in the next sections; results for the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs will be noted in footnotes.

The distributions of 2nd-person ImpTQs with positive and negative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+] are displayed in Table 8.6:

Table 8.6. Positive/negative anchors in 2nd-person ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
positive anchor	49	86%	36	75%	n.s.
negative anchor	8	14%	12	25%	n.s.
Total	57	100%	48	100%	

---

[8] Although these seven tag wordings are the ones mostly regarded as possible in ImpTQs (see section 8.2.1), it is not impossible that other tag wordings may occur; hence, this was a search for certain typical tag wordings in ImpTQs, not a search for all potential ImpTQs. The search also included non-standard spellings of *you*: *ye/yer/ya.* However, no 2nd-person ImpTQs with these non-standard spellings turned up in CONVERSATION[+]. Tag wordings with non-enclitic negation were not included, as a previous search had shown that there are no such instances in the entire BNC.

[9] The original query result from the spoken demographic part of the BNC was randomly thinned to six per cent (see Appendix A), rendering a sample of 13 ImpTQs in CONVERSATION. Hence, five times as many ImpTQs were expected to be found in CONVERSATION[+], i.e. around 65 instances. The number of ImpTQs found, 54, was thus somewhat below the target.

[10] The 54 ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] are distributed over 37 different files in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, and are thus used by a range of different speakers; no individual speaker contributes more than two ImpTQs.

Table 8.6 shows that the proportion of positive anchors is somewhat higher in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+], but the difference is not statistically significant. As expected, all the 2nd-person ImpTQs with negative anchors have the tag *will you.*

When the 2nd-person ImpTQs with positive anchors in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+] are compared, the tag *will you* turns out to be significantly more common in FICTION; this is shown in Table 8.7 (cf. Table 8.3 above):

Table 8.7.   Tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
will you	39	**80%**	19	53%	p < 0.05
won't you	5	10%	7	19%	n.s.
would you	4	8%	1	3%	n.s.
can't you	1	2%	3	8%	n.s.
can you	–	–	5	**14%**	p < 0.05
couldn't you	–	–	1	3%	n.s.
Total	49	100%	36	100%	

Table 8.7 shows that other tags than *will you* are found in almost half of the 2nd-person ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+], in particular *won't you*, *can't you* and *can you*. As there are no instances of *can you* in FICTION, there is also a weakly significant difference between the two samples as to this tag. As for positive/negative tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors, positive tags display a higher proportion in FICTION, but the difference to CONVERSATION[+] is still not statistically significant, as shown in Table 8.8 (cf. Table 8.4 above):

Table 8.8.   Positive/negative tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
positive tags	43	88%	25	69%	n.s.
negative tags	6	12%	11	31%	n.s.
Total	49	100%	36	100%	

However, the clear difference in tag verbs between FICTION and CONVERSATION displayed in Table 8.5 above is confirmed when a comparison is made to the larger sample of CONVERSA-TION[+], as shown in Table 8.9:

Table 8.9.   Tag verbs in tags after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
will/would	48	**98%**	27	75%	p < 0.01
can/could	1	2%	9	**25%**	p < 0.01
Total	49	100%	36	100%	

The suggestion that *can/could* in tags attached to imperative anchors "tend to retain some of their indirect inquiry force" (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:943; see section 8.2.1) may make such ImpTQs less clearly directive than ImpTQs with *will/would* in the tags. This might be a reason why no ImpTQs with *can you* have turned up in FICTION, but five instances in CONVERSATION[+], among them the ImpTQ in (18):

(18)   Lisa: (...) I won't switch the oven off just in case. \<pause\> <u>Try a bit from the middle first can you?</u>
         Melvin: It's hot. (sBNC KD3 1186–1188)

Clarity in words is more important in written texts, whereas the directive force in spoken conversation may be clarified through intonation and gestures. As for the tag wording *can't you*, there is only one instance in FICTION, viz. (19), but three in CONVERSATION[+], among them (20):

(19)   "You got ever such nice legs," Dot said. "Hope I get legs like yours when I grow up."
                "Oh, <u>leave me alone with your silly talk, can't you!</u> said Gloria, then softened and gave Dot's cheek a gentle pinch (...)" (wBNC AC5 2996–2998)

(20)   Helen: Think you have to clear that with dad first. Hm.
         Amy: It's my money.
         Helen: I know, but I want to see how much there worth, so there about, <u>see if we can get one for less than twenty pounds can't you.</u>
         Amy: Why, they get heavier. The heavier they are the \<unclear\>.
         Helen: Oh right, let's go quickly across to Marks. (sBNC KCD 1262–1268)

All the ImpTQs with the tag *can't you* in the data conform more or less to Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) characterization of them as "typically convey[ing] some impatience" (2002: 943); in (19) above, the content of the anchor clearly indicates the impatience of the speaker, which is underlined by the use of an exclamation mark, and in (20) above, the context indicates that the speaker gets impatient when her daughter wants to buy too expensive shoes.

All the negative tags in both samples display enclitic negation, but, as there are very few negative tags in the two samples, no clear conclusion can be drawn from this fact. However, a separate search for potential tag wordings in ImpTQs with non-enclitic negation in the entire BNC did not render any such examples; it may therefore be suggested that enclitic negation is the norm for negative tags in 2nd-person ImpTQs.

Despite Bolinger's (1977) and Aarts's (1987) claims (see section 8.2.1), three ImpTQs with an apparently non-contrastive subject *you* in the anchor have been found in CONVERSATION[+]: two negative ones, as in (21) and a positive one, viz. (22); however, no such instances have been found in FICTION.[11,12]

(21)   <u>Don't **you** leave anything will you?</u> (sBNC KC8 1193)

(22)   **You** be careful <u>won't you?</u> (sBNC KE2 7022)

As for the 1st-person plural ImpTQs, all of them (eight in FICTION and six in CONVERSATION[+]) have positive anchors with *let's* followed by the tag *shall we*, as in (23):[13]

(23)   "<u>Let's go over next year, shall we,</u> George? (...)" (wBNC FAB 60)

Now, two formal features of all ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+] will be compared: position of the tag and polarity types.

The position of the tag in relation to the anchor in ImpTQs is almost always final, as in (16)–(23) above (see Table E.1 in Appendix E). In FICTION, the very few inserted tags in ImpTQs are followed by an adverbial clause, as in (24) (see also example (44) below):

(24)   "<u>Pour me on, will you,</u> when you've taken your coat off. (...)" (wBNC BMW 668)

There are also a couple of inserted tags in ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+], as in (25):[14]

(25)   <u>Put another top on him will you for me</u> please? (sBNC KDP 2575)

Constant polarity has turned out to be more predominant in ImpTQs in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+], as shown in Table 8.10:[15]

---

[11] Moreover, no ImpTQs with *do* in positive imperative anchors have been found in any of the ImpTQ samples, despite Bolinger's (1977) claim that they are common (see section 8.2.2).

[12] There are no instances of a non-contrastive subject *you* in the anchors of the eleven 2nd-person ImpTQs in the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs.

[13] Both the 1st-person plural ImpTQs in the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs also have the tag *shall we.*

[14] In the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, all the 13 tags are found in final position.

[15] In the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, there are six instances of constant polarity and seven instances of reversed polarity; the difference to FICTION is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 8.10. Polarity types in ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
constant polarity	51	**78%**	31	57%	$p < 0.05$
reversed polarity	14	22%	23	**43%**	$p < 0.05$
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

The higher proportion of constant-polarity ImpTQs in FICTION is mainly due to the predominance of *will you* in that sample, but also to a somewhat higher proportion in CONVERSATION[+] of ImpTQs with negative anchors, where there is always reversed polarity, as *will you* is the only possible tag. The proportion of constant polarity is, as expected, much higher in ImpTQs than in DecTQs, where only about ten per cent display constant polarity (see Table E.2–Table E.3 in Appendix E); constant polarity is thus the norm in ImpTQs.

8.2.5 Accompanying features of ImpTQs

Accompanying features investigated for ImpTQs are vocatives, punctuation and the addition of the politeness marker *please*;[16] the 65 ImpTQs in FICTION have been compared to the 54 Imp-TQs in CONVERSATION[+].

Vocatives sometimes accompany ImpTQs, both 1st-person plural ImpTQs (see example (23) in section 8.2.4), and 2nd-person ImpTQs, as in (26):

(26) "(...) <u>Stay here in the waiting room, will you</u>, **Jack**?" (wBNC CCM 2330)

Vocatives have been found to accompany ImpTQs to a similar extent in the two samples: 14 per cent in FICTION and 17 per cent in CONVERSATION[+], as shown in Table 8.11:[17]

Table 8.11. Vocatives accompanying ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	9	14%	9	17%	n.s.
no vocative	56	86%	45	83%	n.s.
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

In contrast, for DecTQs (see section 6.4.1), there is a significant difference as to accompanying vocatives: 11.5 per cent in FICTION vs. only 2.3 per cent in CONVERSATION (see Table 6.24 in

---

[16] The turn positions of ImpTQs vary in the data, but this seems irrelevant to the functions of ImpTQs (cf. requesting/ offering DecTQs, see section 7.2).

[17] There is only one ImpTQ accompanied by a vocative among the 13 ImpTQs in the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs.

section 6.4.1)). The proportions of accompanying vocatives in FICTION are thus similar for Imp-TQs and DecTQs (see Table E.4 in Appendix E). On the other hand, there is a significant difference between ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] and DecTQs in CONVERSATION as to accompanying vocatives; these are much more common with ImpTQs, as shown in Table 8.12:

Table 8.12. Vocatives accompanying ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] vs. DecTQs in CONVERSATION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	9	**17%**	30	2%	p < 0.001
no vocative	45	83%	1,285	**98%**	p < 0.001
Total	54	100%	1,315	100%	

The question is then why vocatives accompany ImpTQs more often than DecTQs in the spoken data. It might be the case that it is more vital in real-life conversation to get the attention of the addressee when the speaker wants goods or services to be exchanged than when information is exchanged; the vocative may also function as an appeal to the addressee in an attempt to increase the possibility that the desired action will be performed.[18]

As for the punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQs in FICTION, there is a question mark in three quarters of the instances (see examples (16)–(18) and (21)–(22) above); other punctuation marks are commas, which are used, for example, when a vocative follows, as in (23) and (26) above, or when the tag is inserted, as in (24) above, exclamation marks, as in (19) above, or full stops, as in (27):

(27)   (...) "Now clear off, will you." (wBNC ABX 292)

No punctuation at all occurs only before vocatives, as in (28):

(28)   "Sit over there, will you hen?" (wBNC A74 149)

Compared to the punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+], there are, in FICTION, more commas and less cases without punctuation (see Table E.6 in Appendix E); this tendency is similar for DecTQs (cf. section 6.4.2 and Table C.19 in Appendix C). When the distributions of punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQ and DecTQs are compared, it is clear that there are fewer question marks immediately after tags in ImpTQs; instead, there are more cases of no punctuation, as well as other punctuation marks, in particular, exclamation marks (see Table E.7–Table E.8 in Appendix E).

---

[18] Similar to DecTQs, the positions of vocatives accompanying ImpTQs vary; see Table E.5 in Appendix E. In the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, the only vocative is found just before the anchor.

The politeness marker *please* does not accompany any of the ImpTQs in FICTION. In contrast, there are six instances in CONVERSATION[+]; this difference is statistically significant, as shown in Table 8.13:[19]

Table 8.13. *Please* accompanying ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
please	–	0%	6	**11%**	$p < 0.05$
no *please*	65	**100%**	48	89%	$p < 0.05$
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

It might be speculated that using both a tag and *please* with an imperative clause is felt to be redundant by authors of fiction, as "the functional load of *please* is very similar to [tags]" (De Rycker 1984:76).

8.2.6 Functions of ImpTQs

The functional analysis of ImpTQs in the present study focuses on the whole TQs, in the same way as for the functional analysis of the DecTQs (see section 5.1). Admittedly, tags in ImpTQs may have different politeness effects, but such an analysis is often dependent on information on the intonation, and in particular, the tone of voice, which is unavailable in most of my BNC data. Reporting clauses, comments in the narrative and punctuation may only give indications as to the tone of voice in a very restricted number of the ImpTQs in FICTION. De Rycker (1984) discusses the problems when trying to establish the effect of tags:

> Politeness is a very context-sensitive phenomenon: it can be encoded verbally, but more often it is determined by the prosodic or paralinguistic component of the utterance as well as the semantic properties of the sentence (...). Moreover, (...) the characteristic function of tags [as a marker of politeness] may be contradicted or cancelled by a variety of contextual parameters. As Dekeyser et al. (1979:249) observe, though tagged imperatives typically function as mild requests, their precise semantico-pragmatic purport is often elusive: they may well be used to indicate irritation, insistence, sarcasm, and so on – and it can be added: or serve no particular conversational purpose at all.
> (De Rycker 1984:72)

All the ImpTQs in the data belong to the requesting/offering category in the functional model of the present study (see Fig. 5.8 in section 5.4), i.e. they all exchange goods and services. In order to further investigate the functional diversity of these ImpTQs, Kimps and Davidse's (2008) categorization of ImpTQs into five illocutionary forces (see section 8.2.2) has been applied; the categories used are thus commands, requests, proposals, advice and invitations/offers.

---

[19] For the 13 ImpTQs in original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, there are no instances accompanied by *please.*

Kimps and Davidse's categories cover both 2nd-person ImpTQs and 1st-person plural ImpTQ; this is the case also for the implementation of this categorization in the present study. Kimps and Davidse themselves applied their illocutionary categories to constant-polarity ImpTQs only, but these have turned out, in the present study, also to be applicable to reversed-polarity Imp-TQs.

The 65 ImpTQs in FICTION have thus been analysed as to illocutionary force and compared to the illocutionary forces of the 54 ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+]. Table 8.14 displays the distributions of the five categories in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+]:[20]

Table 8.14. Illocutionary forces of ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
commands	29	**45%**	10	19%	p < 0.01
requests	23	35%	25	46%	n.s.
proposals	7	11%	5	9%	n.s.
advice	4	6%	14	**26%**	p < 0.01
invitations/offers	2	3%	–	–	n.s.
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

Table 8.14 shows that most of the ImpTQs in FICTION, 45 per cent, are used as commands, as in (29):

> (29)   The next morning he was woken up by someone kicking at the shop door.
>   "Open the door, will you?" shouted a voice through the keyhole.
>   "Yes, sir"
>   "I suppose you're the new boy," said the voice through the keyhole.
>   (wBNC FRK 168–171)

About a third of the ImpTQs in FICTION are used as requests, as in (30):

> (30)   "(...) Do me a favour, would you? Find me a decent cup of coffee."
>   (wBNC FAB 1466–1467)

Furthermore, about a tenth of the ImpTQs in FICTION are used as proposals; these are all 1st-person plural ImpTQs, as in (31):

> (31)   "Let's go over next year, shall we, George? (...)" (wBNC FAB 60)

Only a few per cent of the ImpTQs in FICTION provide advice, as in (32):

---

[20] For the 13 ImpTQs in the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, there are, similar to CONVERSATION[+], a majority of ImpTQs used as requests, viz. six instances; the remainder provide advice (three instances) or are used as commands (two instances) and proposals (two instances).

(32)   "<u>Don't sleep with her, my dear, <u>will you,</u></u> for though she would not melt, she would crack if she fell. Real mothers don't sleep with their babies. They might overlay them. (...)" (wBNC AC5 2351–2353)

Lastly, there are only a couple of ImpTQs used as invitations/offers in FICTION, viz. (33)–(34):

(33)   "<u>Sit over there, will you</u> hen?" she says, pointing to the chair by the fire. (wBNC A74 149)

(34)   "<u>Have a drink, will you?</u> I'm going to. Gin, whisky? I've got vodka. I think it's the sort of evening for a vodka." (wBNC K8V 1860–1864)

Table 8.14 above shows that ImpTQs used as commands are significantly more common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+]. This is probably related to the depiction of conflicts and confrontations in fiction, but maybe also to a higher degree of asymmetric power relations. In several of the ImpTQs used as commands, particularly in FICTION, there is a boss telling a subordinate what to do, as in (35):[21]

(35)   He pressed the button on his intercom.
           "<u>Bring be in a cuppa, Debbie, will you?</u>"
           "All right, Mr Kelly." (wBNC FAB 1666–1668)

In some cases in FICTION, the speaker just usurps authority, as in (36):

(36)   "Come on, Tel. Don't play hard to get, I'm on the payroll – remember?"
           "Not any more you're not."
           He reached into a drawer down to his left and produced a cheque-book, one of the big fat jobs that meant it was a company one, not a personal account.
           "I think a thousand should cover it. After all, you haven't been here anywhere near a week and you don't seem to be getting anywhere."
           "That's where you're wrong," I said as he reached for a pen. "<u>Leave the Payee line blank will you?</u>"
           "Just what do you want?" he asked, his pen poised above the signature space. (wBNC HWL 655–663)

In (37), there is an ImpTQ which could have been used as an offer; however, it is explained in a narrative comment as instead being a command:

---

²¹ In CONVERSATION[+], several of the commands are addressed to very small children, as in (iii), where two-year-old Charlotte is allowed to go into the garage, but told not to touch anything:

(iii)   Charlotte: I come in the garage.
           Carole: yes alright <-|-> you can come. <-|->
           Ron: <-|-> Will you come in <-|-> the garage? <pause> <u>Don't touch anything will you.</u>
                 (sBNC KBH 1905–1908)

(37) (...) She motioned towards the tea-table. "Pour me out a cup of tea, please." And as he started to do so, "Take one yourself, will you?" There was **a Hanoverian command to her voice**, not particularly feminine, but **full of authority**.
"Not for me, thank you." (wBNC K8V 1417–1421)

In about half of the ImpTQs used as commands, both in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+], the speaker is annoyed with something the addressee is doing and tells him or her to stop doing that, as in (38):

(38) He had turned on her and said with cold savagery, "For fuck's sake, stop kicking me, will you?" (wBNC CDB 889)

Sometimes, it is formulated as a command to do something else instead, as in (39):

(39) "Stop prevaricating!" she demanded. "Answer me, Lucenzo! Answer me honestly for once, will you?" (wBNC H94 3206–3208)

In several of these commands, *just* indicates that there is something the addressee should stop doing, and instead focus on the desired action referred to in the ImpTQ, as in (40):

(40) "Cybershit, Belle! I said I'll do it, OK? **Just** check the suit and open the airlock, will you?" (wBNC F9X 2690–2692)

ImpTQs used as requests are found in similar proportions in both samples. However, in FIC-TION, there are five clearly pleading requests. These are strong requests "convey[ing] a sense of earnestness and urgency" as well as "an appeal to the hearer's sympathy and a special manner of performance" (Bach & Harnish 1979:48); problems and strong feelings are thus involved.[22] In two of these pleading requests, the reporting verb is *pleaded*, as in (41):

(41) "Don't let him get away with it, will you?" **pleaded** Bella, her voice almost a whine. (wBNC ACB 2849)

In (42), there is narrative comment about a *pleading* note in the speaker's voice:

(42) (...) A note crept into Nina's voice which Alexandra recognized with surprise as **pleading**.
"What?"
"Don't tell anyone about this, will you?" (wBNC GV8 1761–1763)

In two other clearly pleading requests in FICTION, the pleading is evident from the content of the turn, as in (43), where the speaker is in fear of his life:

---

[22] Pleading requests are also found among DecTQs used as indirect requests (see section 7.2).

(43)   He whispered, "Oh <u>hush, hush, will you?</u> If they find me, it means my death!"
         (wBNC F99 172–173)

In contrast, there are no clearly pleading instances in CONVERSATION[+];[23] hence, there is, in fact, a weak significant difference in that respect between the ImpTQs used as requests in the two samples, as shown in Table 8.15:

Table 8.15. Pleading requests and other requests in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

| | FICTION | | CONVERSATION[+] | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pleading requests	5	**22%**	–	–	p < 0.05
other requests	18	78%	54	**100%**	p < 0.05
Total	23	100%	54	100%	

ImpTQs used as proposals, as in (31) above, are found in similar proportions in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+]. Contrary to expectation, all 1st-person plural ImpTQs are not used as proposals, as the tag subject *we* may sometimes be addressee-only *we* (cf. the discussion of example (58) in section 7.4.2), as in (44):

(44)   "No, he doesn't have a name as far as you're concerned. So <u>let's cut out all the smart answers, shall we,</u> lady, if you know what's good for you?" (wBNC JXV 278–279)

The 1st-person plural ImpTQ from FICTION in (44) has been analysed as being used as a command; it is only the addressee who is supposed to *cut out all the smart answers*. Similarly, in example (45) from CONVERSATION[+], the 1st-person plural ImpTQ has not been interpreted as a proposal:

(45) Wayne: Fucking idiot what you doing? Oh listen
      Martin: You stupid guy
      Wayne: <u>let's be good citizens shall we</u> <-|-> and let everyone through <-|->
      Martin: <-|-> Here are, race that fucking whore and get her out <-|-> the bloody way
               (sBNC KE5 424–428)

In the extract in (45), the speaker is driving when he and his passenger get annoyed with other road-users and imagine addressing them directly with very rude language; however, the ImpTQ in (45) is a fairly civilized request, although implying that they themselves are good citizens, but not the addressees.

As shown in Table 8.14 above, ImpTQs providing advice are significantly less common in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+]: only six per cent vs. 26 per cent. One reason for the higher proportion of ImpTQs providing advice in CONVERSATION[+] might be that some of these are

---

[23] There are no pleading requests in the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs either.

about rather trivial everyday matters, which might not be interesting enough to include in fiction dialogue to the same extent; an illustrative example from CONVERSATION[+] is found in (46) (repeated from (18) above), where the speaker advises her husband to check whether the food is hot enough to eat:

(46) Lisa: (...) I won't switch the oven off just in case. <pause> <u>Try a bit from the middle first can you?</u> <pause>
Melvin: It's hot.
Lisa: Is that alright? I'll switch the oven off then. (sBNC KD3 1186–1190)

This is related to the tendency among speaker-centred DecTQs in conversation to be about trivial everyday matters; in section 7.4.1, it was argued that a major reason why speaker-centred DecTQs are less common in the dataset of FICT than in the dataset of CONV is that such topics do not bring the plot forward or contribute to the characterization of personalities.

The rank order of the five illocutionary forces of ImpTQs in FICTION (see Table 8.14 above) is the same as in Kimps and Davidse's (2008) study of constant-polarity ImpTQs: 1. commands, 2. requests, 3. proposals, 4. advice, 5. invitations/offer. On the other hand, the rank order of the categories of ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] is quite different: 1. requests, 2. advice, 3. commands, 4. proposals. This is perhaps quite natural, as Kimps and Davidse's ImpTQ data is mainly written (71 per cent); however, it should also be remembered that Kimps and Davidse's study only included constant-polarity ImpTQs. The analysis of the spoken ImpTQs in my data conforms to the description of them as "typically function[ing] as mild requests" (De Rycker 1984, see the block quotation above, where he refers to Dekeyser *et al.* 1979).

It was shown in section 8.2.4 above that constant polarity is more common in ImpTQs in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+] (see Table 8.10). The polarity types have also turned out not to be evenly distributed across the ImpTQs with different illocutionary forces in the data, as shown in Table 8.16–Table 8.17:

Table 8.16. Illocutionary forces of ImpTQs with constant polarity vs. reversed polarity in FICTION

	reversed polarity		constant polarity		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
commands	2	14%	27	**53%**	p < 0.05
requests	8	57%	15	29%	n.s.
proposals	–	–	7	14%	n.s.
advice	4	**29%**	–	–	p < 0.001
invitations/offers	–	–	2	4%	n.s.
Total	14	100%	51	100%	

Table 8.17. Illocutionary forces of ImpTQs with constant polarity vs. reversed polarity in CONVERSATION[+]

	reversed polarity		constant polarity		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
commands	3	13%	7	23%	n.s.
requests	9	39%	16	52%	n.s.
proposals	–	–	5	16%	n.s.
advice	11	**48%**	3	10%	p < 0.01
Total	23	100%	31	100%	

Table 8.16–Table 8.17 show that, among the ImpTQs providing advice, there are significantly more reversed-polarity vs. constant-polarity instances in both samples. On the other hand, among ImpTQs used as commands, there is instead a predominance of constant-polarity instances; this tendency is, however, only clear in FICTION.

To sum up, despite fairly small samples, it has been possible to show that there are functional differences between ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+]: the main differences are that ImpTQs used as commands are more common in FICTION, whereas ImpTQs providing advice are less common; moreover, among the ImpTQs used as requests, clearly pleading instances have only been found in FICTION.

8.2.7 Summary of ImpTQs

In the FICTION sample, 66 ImpTQs were found, and in the CONVERSATION sample, 13 ImpTQs. The latter sample turned out to be too small to render any interesting results when compared to the FICTION sample. A separate larger independent sample of ImpTQs, CONVERSATION[+], was therefore retrieved from the spoken demographic part of the BNC. Most comparisons in this chapter have thus been made between the 65 ImpTQs in FICTION (one abnormal instance was disregarded) and the 54 ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+].

As for formal features, tags display variation only after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors; the tag after negative 2nd-person imperative anchors is always *will you*, and after 1st-person plural imperative anchors always *shall we.* The tag *will you* turned out to be significantly more common after positive 2nd-person imperative anchors in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+]. One reason may be that tags with *can/could*, in particular *can you*, retain some inquiry force, making them less clear as directives; *will you* might therefore be preferred in fiction dialogue, where clarity is often sought. Constant polarity is predominant in both samples, but more so in FICTION, mainly due to the clear predominance of *will you*, but also to a somewhat lower proportion of 2nd-person ImpTQs with positive anchors vs. negative anchors in FICTION; constant polarity is thus the norm in ImpTQs.

All ImpTQs exchange goods and services, and are therefore functionally close to requesting/offering DecTQs (see section 7.2). In order to further investigate the functional diversity of the ImpTQs in the data, the five categories of illocutionary forces proposed by Kimps and Davidse (2008) have been applied: commands, requests, proposals, advice and invitations/offers. The main functional differences found between the two samples are that ImpTQs used as commands are significantly more common in FICTION and that ImpTQs providing advice are significantly less common in FICTION; moreover, among the ImpTQs used as requests, there are only pleading instances in FICTION.

The high proportion of ImpTQs used as commands in FICTION can be related to the frequent depiction of conflicts and confrontations in fiction, and, probably as well, to a higher degree of asymmetric power relations. The low proportion of ImpTQs providing advice in FICTION may be due to such ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] being about rather trivial everyday matters; such ImpTQs might not be interesting enough to include in fiction dialogue. The pleading requests in FICTION are probably a result of the depiction of problems and conflicts in fiction dialogue.

The different functional patterns for ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+] may partly explain why ImpTQs are more than twice as frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC (107 vs. 52 pmw): the depiction of conflicts and confrontations as well as more asymmetric power relations may promote a more frequent inclusion of ImpTQs used as commands in fiction dialogue. However, there are probably also other reasons why ImpTQs are more frequent in fiction dialogue. In spoken face-to-face conversation, paralinguistic signals may make it easier than in fiction dialogue to issue directives without using imperatives, whereas ImpTQs constitute short and clear directives suitable for fiction dialogue, where brevity and clarity often seem to be sought. These reasons for the more frequent use of ImpTQs may also be factors behind requesting/offering DecTQs having only been found in the fiction dialogue data.

8.3 Interrogative TQs

Interrogative TQs (IntTQs) constitute a contested phenomenon; and if there are such TQs, they seem very rare. They are, for example, not treated in Quirk *et al.* (1985). Moreover, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) only give an example of an interrogative followed by an invariant tag, viz. (47):

    (47)   <u>Is it genuine, do you think?</u> (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:892)

However, Biber *et al.* (1999) claim that question tags "may also be appended to interrogative clauses" (1999:210), as in (48)–(49):

(48) <u>Do you want this do you</u>, anywhere? (Biber *et al.* 1999:210)

(49) Oh <u>is it tonight is it?</u> (Biber *et al.* 1999:210)

Biber *et al.* find that "the tag underlines the speech-act function of the main clause" and that such use is "parallel to the use of declarative tags" (1999:210), whose function is "quite different" to question tags (Biber *et al.* 1999:139); a declarative tag is shown in (50):

(50) <u>He is alright he is.</u> (Biber *et al.* 1999:140)

In some corpus-based studies of TQs, a few instances of IntTQs have been reported. Nässlin (1984) found one potential IntTQ in her mix of spoken and written data (1984:4), Roesle (2001) claims to have found about one per cent of TQs in her spoken data to be IntTQs (2001:49–50), and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) mention briefly that IntTQs are included in their spoken data (2006:289).

It appears that IntTQs may be contested on three grounds. Firstly, IntTQs may be seen as mistakes or disfluencies; Bolinger (1957), for example, claimed that IntTQs such as *Did he go there did he?* "result from or are helped by a confusion between *Did he go there?* [and] *He went there did he?*" (1957:36). Secondly, IntTQs may be regarded as only found in certain dialects. Beal (1993) states that IntTQs are used in Tyneside English but not in standard English (1993: 202), and Allerton (2009) finds that IntTQs are not used in his AmE, but "seem limited to BrE, and perhaps even to a subvariety of this" (2009:322). Moreover, IntTQs have been claimed to be fully acceptable in, at least, Australian English by the Australian linguists Cattell (1973:616) and McGregor (1995:94). Thirdly, potential instances are not regarded as IntTQs if the tag is uttered as a separate unit. Culicover (1992) finds IntTQs to be marginal; "in order for these examples to be acceptable, it is necessary to use a particular intonation, which might be understood as sarcastic" and "there is no significant break between [the anchor] and [the tag]" (1992:204–205). Furthermore, Beal (1993) finds that a structure similar to IntTQs "only occurs in standard English by way of afterthought or repetition" (1993:202), and Siertsema (1980) argues:

> In this position [after a direct question] the tag certainly is a repetition and thus even more of a new question in its own right. It may be preceded by a pause, and its semantic function is more clearly that of a certain insistence (...) repetitive questions repeat and insist – they may be viewed as 'intensifiers' (Siertsema 1980:305,307)

In the FICTION sample, there are seven instances which might be potential IntTQs, as they conform to the formal definition of TQs in the present study (see section 3.2): the potential tag

has inverted word order and repeats the finite and the subject of a preceding clause uttered by the same speaker and to which it relates. However, none of these potential tags appear after a comma; most of them appear after a question mark, as in (51):

(51)　　He laughed bitterly and he said, "<u>Do you know what it was all for? Do you?</u> I mean, do you really?" (wBNC H9N 2722–2724)

Admittedly, no requirements of certain forms of punctuation are included in the definition of TQs, as punctuation before and after tags may vary and is often missing or inconsistent in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, and may be idiosyncratic in fiction dialogue. However, the punctuation before these potential tags after interrogatives is an indication that these potential tags are to be seen as representing Siertsema's (1980) repetitive questions (see the block quotation above). Furthermore, the contexts of all these seven instances indicate that the repetitions are used to insist on an answer. For example, in (51) above, the interrogative in the potential tag is clarified as being sincere by the addition of *really* in a further repetition of the interrogative. In section 6.3.1.7, it was shown that tags in DecTQs may occasionally contain an adverbial or a discourse marker, either in initial or final position, including *really* in final position. If additional words are accepted also in potential tags after interrogatives, the absurd result would be a TQ where the tag is longer than the anchor, as in (52):

(52)　　"You look wonderful," she said quietly and Ana's face flushed with pleasure.
　　　　"<u>Do I? Do I really?</u> The trouble with being blind is that you cannot see yourself. (...)"
　　　　(wBNC HGK 1190–1193)

The potential tags in (51)–(52) must thus be regarded as separate repeated questions, probably uttered after a short pause. Such a short pause is probably the reason why there are three dots between the interrogative and the potential tag in (58):

(53)　　"I beg your pardon?" There was no mistaking the sudden anger in his deep voice, and despite herself Fran took a step back, feeling a tiny tremor running through her limbs. "<u>Are you accusing me of being involved with the people who did this ... are you?</u> He reached out, catching her by the shoulders to jerk her back towards him and give her a hard shake that made her head spin. (wBNC JXV 1628–1631)

Hence, no clear instances of IntTQs have been found in FICTION. In CONVERSATION, 15 potential IntTQs have been found; one of them is shown in (54):

(54)　　<u>D'ya want your head scratching do you?</u> Ah! (sBNC KB1 2847–2848)

For most of the potential IntTQs in CONVERSATION, there is no punctuation between the interrogative and the potential tag. However, as punctuation is inconsistent in the spoken demo-

graphic part of the BNC, and as there is very little prosodic information, it is impossible to tell whether these instances are 'real' IntTQs or just repetitive questions comparable to the instances found in FICTION. The existence of IntTQs in spoken conversation requires further research on corpora where soundfiles are available, as prosody might be a crucial factor in deciding whether an utterance should be regarded as an IntTQ or not.

As for the function of potential IntTQs, it is probable that their function would not differ very much from most other interrogatives; they would also be non-conducive questions. On the other hand, they would differ functionally from response-eliciting DecTQs, which are generally conducive. This indicates that IntTQs, if they exist, constitute quite a different phenomenon from declarative, imperative and exclamative TQs.

8.4   Exclamative TQs

Exclamative tag questions (ExcTQs) are, for example, discussed in Quirk *et al.* (1985); they give examples of ExcTQs both with *how*, as in (55), and *what*, as in (56):

(55)   How thin (she is), isn't she? (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813)

(56)   What a beautiful painting (it is), isn't it? (Quirk *et al.* 1985:813)

Quirk *et al.* state briefly that agreement from the addressee is invited (1985:813), whereas Huddleston and Pullum (2002) discuss the function of ExcTQs in more detail:

> (...) an exclamative anchor will normally take a falling tag because I can hardly ask you to confirm my exclamation: *What a mess I've made of things, haven't I?* With an exclamative the truth of the proposition is not at issue, so that such an anchor is inconsistent with the expression of doubt. The falling tag may therefore have the character of a rhetorical question, where an answer-response is unnecessary.
> (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:895)

Hence, ExcTQs would probably be rhetorical in the functional model designed for DecTQs in the present study (see Fig. 5.8 in section 5.4). Huddleston and Pullum (2002) further argue the ExcTQs "can be used to seek agreement – but note that this is agreement with the subjective attitude (...), not just the statement component" (2002:922). The subjective attitude means that assessments are made in exclamatives: the *wh-word* (*how* or *what*) "indicates an extreme position on some scale of value, and therefore can appear at points in the sentences where an expression of degree is possible" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:834). Hence, ExcTQs would probably mainly be speaker-centred rhetorical assessments in the model of the present study, as in (55)–(56) above.

Quirk *et al.* (1985) state that ExcTQs are "occasionally used" (1985:813), but, for example, in the corpus data of Holmes (1982), Roesle (2001) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) (see chapter 4), no ExcTQs were found. However, Roesle noticed a few ExcTQs outside her samples, among them (57) from the spoken demographic part of the BNC:

(57)   Oh <u>what a mess everywhere <u>isn't it?</u></u> (Roesle 2001:52; sBNC KBP 3519)

In the samples of FICTION and CONVERSATION of the present study, no ExcTQs were found either. In order to check whether there are any ExcTQs at all in the BNC Fiction Subcorpus, a separate search was conducted in the entire subcorpus for all instances of *how* followed by an adjective, and all instances of *what* followed by (*a/an*) plus adjective plus singular noun, (*a/an*) plus singular noun, and (adjective) plus plural noun. Only one instance was found, viz. (58):

(58)   She glanced at Sarah and said impulsively, "Here I am going on, and it's even more exciting for you, isn't it, Sar? It must have been terrible for you all these years, but <u>what a day it'll be when Thomas comes home, won't it?</u>"
       Sarah nodded, but she looked self-conscious and guilty. She was just about to speak, to tell Anne how she really felt, when Gerry gave out a loud cry and the moment passed.
       (wBNC G16 2673–2676)

The ExcTQ in (58) seems intended to be rhetorical; the speaker appears to suppose that she knows the addressee's feelings. As the ExcTQ in (58) concerns the addressee, it must interpreted as addressee-oriented, presenting an assumption about the addressee. It thus seems that ExcTQs are normally rhetorical, and may either be speaker-centred or addressee-oriented.

The fact that only one ExcTQ was found in the whole dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus makes ExcTQs extremely rare (0.3 pmw) in comparison to ImpTQs (107 pmw), and, in particular, in comparison to DecTQs (1,720 pmw). A separate search for ExcTQ was also conducted in the entire spoken demographic part of the BNC: nine instances were found, which equals 2.1 pmw, i.e. not significantly more than in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus.

8.5 Summary

Most TQs in the data of the present study are DecTQs; non-declarative TQs have been found to be very rare in comparison. Only clear instances of imperative TQs (ImpTQs) have been found in the data. Somewhat unexpectedly, ImpTQs have turned out to be more than twice as common in FICTION as in CONVERSATION. One reason for this might be the depiction of conflicts and confrontations in fiction, but also perhaps more asymmetric power relations than in the spoken material; these factors may account for the significantly higher proportion in FICTION of ImpTQs used as commands. No clear instances of interrogative TQs have been found in the data; a

few potential instances in FICTION have been interpreted as instead being repetitive questions, and the lack of prosodic information in the data from the spoken demographic part of the BNC makes it difficult to interpret the few potential instances in CONVERSATION. No exclamative TQs were found in the two samples; however, separate searches in the entire Fiction Subcorpus and the entire spoken demographic part of the BNC have shown that there are a very small number of such TQs in these subcorpora.

The function of ImpTQs is to exchange goods and services, whereas the function of exclamative TQs is rhetorical; these TQs are either speaker-centred assumptions or addressee-oriented assessments. Imperative and exclamative TQs may thus be classified according to the functional model primarily designed for DecTQs in the present study. However, if IntTQs exist, they would probably be non-conducive questions; hence, they would not be encompassed by the functional model of the present study.

9 Summary and conclusions

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate the use of tag questions (TQs) in fiction dialogue: their frequency, formal features and pragmatic functions. Previous work has shown that TQs are very frequent in spoken conversation and may display large variation in formal features and a range of different functions. As fiction dialogue usually aims to mimic spoken conversation, it is natural to make comparisons to the use of TQs in that genre.

There has been relatively little previous research on the language of fiction dialogue. One reason is probably that the dialogue is interspersed in fiction texts; hence, it is complicated to retrieve such data from corpora. However, fiction dialogue is a type of language we all encounter quite often; it may thus influence our picture of the spoken language. Even if fiction dialogue is "an idealization of real speech" (Page 1973:18), it must remain credible and give readers "the illusion of real conversation" (Leech & Short 2007:132). Speech may be presented in several other ways than in direct speech, for example in indirect speech, but direct speech is the norm for the presentation of speech in fiction, as it brings vividness to the text. Authors normally make careful deliberations when deciding what kind of conversations to present and in what form; fiction texts are written, revised and edited so that all parts make sense in relation to the whole work: fiction dialogue should either "advance the plot" or "contribute to the development of character" (Page 1973:14). Moreover, reporting clauses and comments in the narrative provide information which the author believes the reader needs to interpret the dialogue in the way the author has intended. Hence, compared to spoken corpus transcriptions, fiction dialogue is enriched with information which is useful in a functional analysis of a linguistic phenomenon such as the TQ. In contrast, the corpus transcriptions in the spoken component of the BNC contain very little prosodic information; moreover, paralinguistic features and the extra-linguistic context, which were important for the interactants when the conversations were had in real life, are largely unavailable for the analyst of the transcriptions.

This investigation has revealed that the frequencies of declarative TQs (DecTQs) and imperative TQs (ImpTQs) are quite different in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC:

- DecTQs are three times less frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus.
- ImpTQs are more than twice as frequent in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus.

The two other types of TQs have turned out to be very marginal phenomena:

- Exclamative TQs are very rare in both fiction dialogue and spoken conversation.
- No clear instances of interrogative TQs have been attested in the data.

Several formal features of DecTQs in FICTION (the fiction dialogue sample) have been shown to differ significantly from those in CONVERSATION (the spoken conversation sample); the most striking difference is that the tag subject *you* is predominant in FICTION, but the tag subject *it* in CONVERSATION. For ImpTQs, it has been shown that the tag *will you* is more predominant in FICTION than in CONVERSATION[+] (an independent sample of ImpTQs).

For the functional analysis of TQs, I developed and applied a hierarchical model; it was designed primarily for DecTQs and mainly based on data from fiction dialogue. This model focuses on the communicative intention of the speaker when using a TQ, i.e. anchor plus tag. First, a distinction is made between TQs exchanging goods and services, and TQs exchanging information. The former constitute a category called requesting/offering, whereas the latter are further sub-divided into response-eliciting and rhetorical TQs. The speaker of a response-eliciting TQ may either have the intention of eliciting confirmation of the assumption in the anchor, or primarily use the TQ in order to initiate a conversation. In the former case, TQs may be either confirmation-seeking or confirmation-demanding. Lastly, rhetorical TQs may be speaker-centred or addressee-oriented. Hence, there is large functional diversity among TQs; however, a core meaning of TQs as indicating negotiation may be posited.

Several relations between functions and formal features of DecTQs have been found; some of them are listed here:

- Addressee-oriented DecTQs have, as expected, often the tag subject *you*; moreover, the tag subjects are mostly animate and the tag verb is relatively often *do,* i.e. addressee-oriented DecTQs tend to deal with people and what they do.
- Speaker-centred DecTQs typically have the tag subject *it* and the tag verb *be*; hence speaker-centred DecTQs tend to be impersonal, dealing with what things are rather than what people do.
- The tentative attitudes of uncertain speakers in confirmation-seeking DecTQs favour the pattern negative anchor plus positive tag.
- The assertive attitudes of quite certain speakers in confirmation-demanding DecTQs favour the pattern positive anchor plus negative tag.
- Constant-polarity DecTQs have only been found in the addressee-oriented, confirmation-seeking and requesting/offering categories.

However, it could be noted here that the formal features of rhetorical DecTQs have been found to be strikingly similar to those of response-eliciting DecTQs, in particular in FICT; this conforms to Ilie's (1994) characterization of rhetorical questions as generally being "*special uses of questions*, rather than separate types of questions" (1994:77). Moreover, vocatives may accompany both response-eliciting and rhetorical DecTQs, although seldom speaker-centred DecTQs.

The functional analysis of DecTQs in the present study has shown that the functional pattern of DecTQs is quite different in FICT (the reduced fiction dialogue dataset) than in CONV (the reduced conversation dataset); the functional categories are presented in the order of their appearance in FICT:

- Addressee-oriented DecTQs constitute a much higher proportion in FICT; the challenging uses account for this difference.
- Speaker-centred DecTQs constitute a much lower proportion in FICT than in CONV; those presenting the speakers' convictions are particularly less common in FICT.
- Confirmation-seeking DecTQs are found in similar proportions in FICT and CONV; however, there are proportionately more confirmation-seeking DecTQs seeking reassurance in FICT.
- Confirmation-demanding DecTQs constitute a significantly higher proportion in FICT; those where the speaker wants the addressee to admit or acknowledge something account for this difference.
- Requesting/offering DecTQs have only been found in FICT.
- Conversation-initiating DecTQs have also only been found in FICT.

In sum, in both FICT and CONV, DecTQs have turned out to be rhetorical in a clear majority of the cases; this is somewhat surprising, as DecTQs have traditionally often been described as seeking confirmation or verification.

All ImpTQs exchange goods and services, but in order to investigate their functional diversity further, Kimps and Davidse's (2008) five illocutionary categories have been applied: commands, requests, proposals, advice and invitations/offers. The following functional differences have been found between the ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+]:

- ImpTQs used as commands constitute a significantly higher proportion in FICTION.
- ImpTQs providing advice constitute a significantly lower proportion in FICTION.
- ImpTQs used as pleading requests have only been found in FICTION.

The functional differences between the DecTQs in FICT and CONV and between the ImpTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION[+] have been related to the requirement of fiction to constitute in-

teresting reading; hence, some kinds of conversations are favoured in fiction dialogue: prob-
lems, conflicts and confrontations are often depicted, as such matters involve the reader, who is
driven to find out how these things are resolved. Confrontational dialogue is defined by Nash
(1990) as including "challenges, quarrels, disputes, interviews, and any kind of personal en-
counter in which the participants are in covert or overt opposition to each other" (1990:99), and
Toolan (1985) states that, in fiction dialogue, "conversations are often power-struggles between
participants who adopt various strategies for dissent, in pursuit of the objective that the con-
versational outcome is consonant with their own conversational goal" (1985:194). Moreover,
Leech and Short (2007) argue:

> When characters are at cross-purposes (...), their models are at variance. Such variance
> is the basis of the dramatic interest in conversational dialogue.
> (Leech & Short 2007:240)

On the other hand, conversations about trivial matters are often avoided in fiction dialogue, as
these seldom contribute to the plot or the characterization of personalities. Nash's (1990) state-
ment on fiction dialogue may be worth repeating: "it is comparatively rare for [fiction] dialogue
to be compositionally idle" (1990:98); instead, fiction dialogue "may well be designed (...) so as
to enhance its tellability" (Toolan 1985:204).

The depiction of problems, conflicts and confrontations may thus explain why TQs in the
following functions or typical uses are proportionately *more* common in the fiction dialogue
data:

- challenging uses of addressee-oriented DecTQs
- constant-polarity addressee-oriented DecTQs, in particular challenging uses
- confirmation-demanding DecTQs where the speaker wants the addressee to admit or ac-
  knowledge something
- confirmation-seeking DecTQs where the speaker seeks reassurance
- ImpTQs used as commands
- ImpTQs used as pleading requests

The avoidance of trivial matters in fiction dialogue may explain why TQs in the following
typical uses are proportionately *less* common in the fiction dialogue data:

- speaker-centred DecTQs presenting convictions
- constant-polarity confirmation-seeking DecTQs, in particular echoing instances
- ImpTQs providing advice

The speaker-centred DecTQs in CONV often concern everyday matters where the speaker could assume that the addressee holds a similar view to the speaker; such DecTQs often seem to contain too little new information to merit inclusion in fiction dialogue.

Differences in the functional patterns of DecTQs between FICT and CONV may account for a large part of the differences between the formal features of DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION, for example, the strikingly different proportions of the tag subjects *you* and *it*. However, there may also be other factors behind some of the differences between the formal features of DecTQs in the two datasets, for example, a certain adherence in fiction dialogue to written standards, disfavouring, for example, the use of DecTQs with non-standard tags and DecTQs with ellipsis in the anchor.

The lower frequency of DecTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC may partly be explained by speaker-centred DecTQs about trivial matters being used to a much less extent.

The higher frequency of ImpTQs in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus than in the spoken demographic part of the BNC may partly be explained by the depiction of problems, conflicts and confrontations as well as perhaps more asymmetric power relations in fiction dialogue, favouring the inclusion of ImpTQs used as commands; however, there may also be other reasons, for example, the lack of paralinguistic signals in fiction dialogue, which in real-life conversation may be used to indicate that an interactant would like somebody else to do something.

The general conclusion of the present study is that authors of fiction utilize the full potential of DecTQs; there are, in fiction dialogue, generally fewer DecTQs of the kinds which are very common in spoken conversation, and a larger number of some kinds of DecTQs which are not so common in spoken conversation. Hence, there is a tendency towards more variation in the use of DecTQs in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation, both as to formal features and functions. On the other hand, ImpTQs display less formal variation in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation by adhering to the norm for ImpTQs to a larger extent.

Despite fairly few constant-polarity instances in the data, it has been shown in the present study that constant-polarity DecTQs appear to have a more restricted functional potential than reversed-polarity DecTQs, and that the distribution of constant-polarity DecTQs is significantly different in fiction dialogue than in spoken conversation. A study based on a larger sample of constant-polarity DecTQs might render additional information on the functions of constant-polarity DecTQs, and shed more light on when and why constant-polarity DecTQs are selected instead of reversed-polarity DecTQs. The use of elliptical confirmation-seeking constant-polarity DecTQs is particularly interesting, as such instances border on interrogatives, both formally and functionally.

This study has also shown that ellipsis in declarative anchors is common, in particular in spoken conversation, but also in fiction dialogue. There are indications that there might be connections between ellipsis in the declarative anchors and the functions of DecTQs; ellipsis is, for example, much more common in constant-polarity DecTQs than in reversed-polarity DecTQs. There is also variation in the types of ellipsis, both as to what elements are ellipted and in what kinds of anchors ellipsis appears. More knowledge on elliptical DecTQs requires further research on a large sample of elliptical DecTQs to be compared to DecTQs with full anchors.

As ImpTQs are much less frequent than DecTQs in fiction dialogue, the samples of ImpTQs investigated in the present study are much smaller than the samples of DecTQs. As the possible tags in ImpTQs are restricted, it would be quite possible to retrieve larger samples from corpora, and perform a more extensive study of ImpTQs, rendering more information on the functions of ImpTQs, and why they are overrepresented in fiction dialogue.

The present study has focused on British English. As the use of DecTQs has previously been shown to be less frequent in AmE than BrE conversation (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006), it would be interesting to investigate whether there are also fewer TQs in the fiction dialogue of novels written by American authors.

In this thesis, only TQs within the dialogue in fiction have been investigated. However, TQs also appear outside the dialogue in fiction; 94 instances outside the dialogue were captured in the query results of the lexical searches for tags in the Fiction Subcorpus. The use of TQs outside the dialogue in fiction has apparently not been investigated empirically before.

The investigation of TQs in spoken language has, in the present study, been restricted to the spontaneous face-to-face conversations found in the spoken demographic part of the BNC. However, there are also other speech situations where TQs might be used, viz. in more formal settings and when people hold speeches as well as in other kinds of monologues. The use of such TQs might be studied, for example, in the spoken context-governed part of the BNC, and compared to the use of TQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC, and, of course, also to fiction dialogue, where there are sometimes more formal speech situations.

For further corpus research on TQs in spoken conversation, it is important that soundfiles are made easily accessible, as intonation and other paralinguistic features may be important for the interpretation of the functions of TQs; multi-modal corpora would be particularly useful in also providing extralinguistic context.

In the future, it is also desirable that fiction dialogue is annotated as such in corpora of fiction texts, enabling corpus searches restricted to fiction dialogue and facilitating frequency calculations; the language of fiction dialogue deserves a great deal of further research.

References

Websites

BNCweb (CQP-Edition). URL: <http://www.bncweb.info>, accessed 17 March 2011.

Contracted forms and associated tag sin BNC2. URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/docs/fused.htm>. Dated 17 March 2000. Accessed 10 June 2008.

An introductory tour through appraisal theory. URL: <http://grammatics.com/appraisal/AppraisalOutline/UnFramed/AppraisalOutline.htm>, accessed 10 July 2010.

The Lancaster Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation Written Corpus. URL: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/stwp/written.htm>, accessed 13 September 2009.

Log-likelihood calculator. URL: <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>, accessed 31 July 2010.

Mining a Year of Speech. URL: <http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/mining_speech/Datasets.html>, accessed 22 June 2010.

Fantastic Fiction. URL: <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk>, accessed 17 May 2010.

COLT: The Bergen Corpus Of London Teenage Language: <http://torvald.aksis.uib.no/colt>, accessed 30 September 2009.

Written sources

2001. *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.* 3rd ed. Glasgow: Harper-Collins.

Aarts, F. 1987. Imperative sentences in English: properties and constraints. In *Perspectives on language in performance. Volume 1: Studies in linguistics, literary criticism, and language teaching and learning: to honour Werner Hüllen on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. by W. Lörscher and R. Schutze. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 230–249.

Aarts, F. 1994. Imperative sentences in A Corpus of English Conversation. *Leuvense bijdragen* 83: 145–155.

Aijmer, K. 1979. The function of tag questions in English. In *Papers from The Fifth Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics, Frostavallen, April 27–29 1979. Part 1, Section papers*, ed. by T. Pettersson. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 9–17.

Aijmer, K. 1996. *Conversational routines in English: convention and creativity.* London: Longman.

Aijmer, K. 2002. *English discourse particles: evidence from a corpus.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Aijmer, K., A. Foolen and A.-M. Simon-Vandenbergen. 2006. Pragmatic markers in translation: a methodological approach. In *Approaches to discourse particles*, ed. by K. Fischer. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 101–114.

Algeo, J. 1988. The tag question in British English: It's different, i'n'it? *English World-Wide* 9 (2): 171–191.

Algeo, J. 1990. It's a myth, innit? Politeness and the English tag question. In *The state of the language*, ed. by C. Ricks and L. Michaels. Berkeley: University of California Press, 443–450.

Algeo, J. 2006. *British or American English? A handbook of word and grammar patterns.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Allerton, D. J. 2009. Tag questions. In *One language, two grammars? Differences between British and American English*, ed. by G. Rohdenburg and J. Schlüter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 306–323.

Allott, N. 2010. *Key terms in pragmatics*. London: Continuum.

Altenberg, B., K. Aijmer and M. Svensson. 2001. *The English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC): Manual of enlarged version* [www]. URL: <http://www.englund.lu.se/corpus/corpus/espc.html>. Accessed 29 January 2008.

Amador-Moreno, C. P. 2010. How can corpora be used to explore literary speech representation? In *The Routledge handbook of corpus linguistics*, ed. by A. O'Keeffe and M. McCarthy. London: Routledge, 531–544.

Andersen, G. 1998. *Are tag questions questions? Evidence from spoken data*. Paper presented at the 19th ICAME conference, Belfast, UK, May 1998 [www].
URL: <gandalf.aksis.uib.no/~gisle/pdf/BELFAST.pdf>. Accessed 22 February 2008.

Andersen, G. 2001. Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic variation: A relevance-theoretical approach to the language of adolescents [electronic resource]. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Axelsson, K. 2004. *Tag questions in English and their Swedish equivalents*. Unpublished undergraduate paper. English Department, University of Gothenburg.

Axelsson, K. 2006. Tag questions in English translations from Swedish and Norwegian – are there differences? In *Svenska som källspråk och målspråk: aspekter på översättningsvetenskap*, ed. by B. Englund Dimitrova and H. Landqvist. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 4–21.

Axelsson, K. 2009a. Research on fiction dialogue: problems and possible solutions. In *Corpora: Pragmatics and discourse. Papers from the 29th International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 29), Ascona, Switzerland, 14–18 May, 2008*, ed. by A. H. Jucker, D. Schreier and M. Hundt. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 189–201.

Axelsson, K. 2009b. Tag questions in translations between English and Swedish. In *Northern lights: translation in the Nordic countries*, ed. by B. J. Epstein. Oxford: Peter Lang, 81–106.

Axelsson, K. in prep. Tag questions outside the dialogue in fiction.

Bach, K. and R. M. Harnish. 1979. *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge, Mass., U.S: MIT Press.

Bachtin, M. M. 1986. The problem of speech genres. In *Speech genres and other late essays*, ed. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Transl. by V. W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 68–102.

Baciu, E. 1983. The function of minor questions in conversation. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* 28: 15–19.

Bald, W.-D. 1979. English tag-questions and intonation. In *Anglistentag 1979*, ed. by K. Schumann. Berlin: Technische Universität, 263–291.

Bald, W.-D. 1980. Some functions of *yes* and *no* in conversation. In *Studies in English linguistics for Randolph Quirk*, ed. by S. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik. London: Longman, 178–191.

Beal, J. 1993. The grammar of Tyneside and Northumbrian English. In *The grammar of English dialects in the British Isles*, ed. by J. Milroy and L. Milroy. London: Longman, 187–213.

Berglund, Y., S. Hoffmann, D. Lee and N. Smith. 2002. *BNCweb manual* [www].
URL: <http://homepage.mac.com/bncweb/manual/bncwebman-home.htm>. Accessed 13 March 2008.

Biber, D. 1988. *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. 1990. Methodological issues regarding corpus-based analyses of linguistic variation. *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 5 (4): 257–269.

Biber, D., S. Johansson, G. Leech, S. Conrad and E. Finegan. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow: Longman.

Blum-Kulka, S., J. House and G. Kasper. 1989. Investigating cross-cultural pragmatics: an introductory overview. In *Cross-cultural pragmatics: requests and apologies*, ed. by S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper. Norwood, N. J, U.S.: Ablex, 1–32.

Bolinger, D. 1957. Interrogative structures of American English (the direct question). *The American Dialect Society* 28: 1–184.

Bolinger, D. 1977. *Meaning and form.* London: Longman.

Bönnemark, M. 1997. *The mimetic mystery: a linguistic study of the genre of British and American detective fiction including a comparison with suspense fiction.* Stockholm: Stockholm University, Department of English.

Brinton, L. J. 1996. *Pragmatic markers in English.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brown, P. and S. C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: some universals in language usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burnard, L. 2000. *Reference Guide for the British National Corpus (World Edition)* [www]. URL: <www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/archive/worldURG/urg.pdf>. Accessed 3 April 2011.

Carter, R. and W. Nash. 1990. *Seeing through language: a guide to styles of English writing.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Carter, R. and M. McCarthy. 2006. *Cambridge grammar of English: a comprehensive guide: spoken and written English: grammar and usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cattell, R. 1973. Negative transportation and tag questions. *Language* 49 (3): 612–639.

Cheshire, J. 1991. Variation in the use of *ain't* in an urban British English dialect. In *Dialects of English: studies in grammatical variation*, ed. by P. Trudgill and J. K. Chambers. London: Longman, 54–73.

Columbus, G. 2010a. 'Ah lovely stuff, eh?' – invariant tag meanings and usage across three varieties of English. In *Corpus-linguistic applications: current studies, new directions*, ed. by S. T. Gries, S. Wulff and M. Davies. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 85–102.

Columbus, G. 2010b. A comparative analysis of invariant tags in three varieties of English. *English World-Wide* 31 (3): 288–310.

Crowdy, S. 1994. Spoken corpus transcription. *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 9 (1): 25–28.

Crystal, D. 2003. *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Culicover, P. W. 1992. English tag questions in Universal Grammar. *Lingua* 88: 193–226.

De Clerck, B. 2006. *The imperative in English: a corpus-based, pragmatic analysis.* PhD thesis. Ghent: Ghent University.

de Haan, P. 1996. More on the language of dialogue in fiction. *ICAME Journal* 20: 23–40.

de Haan, P. 1997. Syntactic characteristics of dialogue and non-dialogue sentences in fiction writing. In *Corpus-based studies in English: Papers from the 17th International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 17), Stockholm, May 15–19, 1996*, ed. by M. Ljung. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 101–117.

De Rycker, T. 1984. *Imperative structures.* Antwerpen: Unversiteit Antwerpen.

DeLancey, S. 1997. Mirativity: the grammatical marking of unexpected information. *Linguistic Typology* 1 (1): 33–52.

DeLancey, S. 2001. The mirative and evidentiality. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (3): 369–382.

Dennis, M., J. Sugar and H. A. Whitaker. 1982. The acquisition of tag questions. *Child Development* 53 (5): 1254–1257.

Dubois, B. L. and I. Crouch. 1975. The question of tag questions in women's speech: They don't really use more of them, do they? *Language in Society* 4: 289–294.

Erades, P. A. 1943. On alternative repeated questions. *English Studies* 25: 41–45.

Erman, B. 1998. 'Just wear the wig innit!' From identifying and proposition-oriented to intensifying and speaker-oriented: grammaticalization in progress. In *Papers from the 16th Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics*, ed. by T. Haukioja. Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 87–100.

Field, J. 2004. *Psycholinguistics: the key concepts.* London: Routledge.

Foster, B. 1968. *The changing English language.* London: Macmillan.

Fox Tree, J. E. and J. C. Schrock. 2002. Basic meanings of *you know* and *I mean*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (6): 727–747.

Fraser, B. 1996. Pragmatic markers. *Pragmatics* 6 (2): 167–190.

Gordon, D. and G. Lakoff. 1975. Conversational postulates. In *Syntax and semantics. Volume 3: Speech acts*, ed. by P. Cole and J. L. Morgan. New York: Academic Press, 83–106.

Greenbaum, S. and J. Svartvik. 1990. *The London Lund Corpus of Spoken English* [www]. URL: <http://khnt.hit.uib.no/icame/manuals/londlund/index.htm>. Accessed 15 June 2010.

Grice, H. P. 1975. Logic and conversation. In *Syntax and semantics, Volume 3: Speech acts*, ed. by P. Cole and J. L. Morgan. New York: Academic Press, 41–58.

Halliday, M. A. K. and C. M. I. M. Matthiessen. 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar.* 3rd ed. London: Arnold.

Hepburn, A. and J. Potter. 2010. Interrogating tears: some uses of 'tag questions' in a child-protection helpline. In *'Why do you ask?' The function of questions in institutional discourse*, ed. by A. F. Freed and S. Ehrlich. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 69–86.

Herriman, J. 2009. The use of *we* in argumentative essays by Swedish advanced learners of English. In *Corpora and discourse - and stuff*, ed. by R. Bowen, M. Mobärg and S. Ohlander. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 105–120.

Hiller, U. 1984. *Untersuchungen zu kontextuellen und registerspezifischen Einflüssen auf Morphemreduktionen im Englischen: eine vergleichende Korpusanalyse der Realisierung von Auxiliary Reduction und Not-Contraction.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Hoffmann, S. 2006. Tag questions in Early and Late Modern English: historical description and theoretical implications. *Anglistik* 17 (2): 35–55.

Hoffmann, S., S. Evert, N. Smith, D. Lee and Y. Berglund Prytz. 2008. *Corpus linguistics with BNCweb – a practical guide.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Holmes, J. 1982. The functions of tag questions. *English Language Research Journal* 3: 40–65.

Holmes, J. 1984a. Hedging your bets and sitting on the fence: some evidence for hedges as support structures. *Te Reo* 27: 47–62.

Holmes, J. 1984b. 'Women's language': a functional approach. *General Linguistics* 24: 149–178.

Holmes, J. 1995. *Women, men and politeness.* London: Longman.

Huddleston, R. 1970. Two approaches to the analysis of tags. *Journal of Linguistics* 6: 215–222.

Huddleston, R. and G. K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge grammar of the English language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, R. A. 1975. The meaning of questions. *Language* 51 (1): 1–31.

Ilie, C. 1994. *What else can I tell you? A pragmatic study of English rhetorical questions as discursive and argumentative acts.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Jespersen, O. 1924. *The philosophy of grammar.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

Jespersen, O. 1940. *A modern English grammar on historical principles.* Vol. 5. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard.

Kay, P. 2002. English subjectless tagged sentences. *Language* 78 (3): 453–481.

Kennedy, G. 1998. *An introduction to corpus linguistics.* London: Longman.

Kimps, D. 2007. Declarative constant polarity tag questions: a data-driven analysis of their form, meaning and attitudinal uses. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39: 207–291.

Kimps, D. and K. Davidse. 2008. Illocutionary force and conduciveness in imperative constant polarity tag questions: a typology. *Text & Talk* 28 (6): 699–722.

Knowles, J. 1980. The tag as a parenthetical. *Studies in Language* 4 (3): 379–409.

Krug, M. 1998. British English is developing a new discourse marker, *innit*? A study in lexicalisation based on social, regional and stylistic variation. *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 23 (2): 145–197.

Kruisinga, E. 1922. *A handbook of present-day English. Volume 2: Accidence and syntax.* 3rd ed. Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon.

Labov, W. and D. Fanshel. 1977. *Therapeutic discourse: psychotherapy as conversation.* New York: Academic Press.

Lee, D. Y. W. 2001. Genres, registers, text types, domains, and styles: clarifying the concepts and navigating a path through the BNC jungle. *Language Learning & Technology* 3 (3): 37–72.

Leech, G. 1983. *Principles of pragmatics.* London: Longman.

Leech, G. 1999. The distribution and function of vocatives in American and British conversation. In *Out of corpora: studies in honour of Stig Johansson*, ed. by H. Hasselgård and S. Oksefjell. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 107–118.

Leech, G. and M. Short. 1981. *Style in fiction: a linguistic introduction to English fictional prose.* 1st ed. London: Longman.

Leech, G. and M. Short. 2007. *Style in fiction: a linguistic introduction to English fictional prose.* 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson.

Lewis, Diane M. 2006. Discourse markers in English: a discourse-pragmatic view. In *Approaches to discourse particles*, ed. by Kerstin Fischer. Amsterdam: Ellesmere, 43–59.

Lucy, J. A. 1993. Reflexive language and the human disciplines. In *Reflexive language: reported speech and metapragmatics*, ed. by J. A. Lucy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 9–32.

Lyons, J. 1977. *Semantics.* Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, J. R. and P. R. R. White. 2005. *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Mätzner, E. 1864. *Englische Grammatik. Zweiter Theil: Die Lehre von der Wort- und Satzfügung. Erste Hälfte.* Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.

McGregor, W. 1995. The English 'tag question': a new analysis, is(n't) it? In *On subject and theme: a discourse functional perspective*, ed. by R. Hasan and P. Fries. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 91–121.

McHale, B. 1978. Free indirect discourse: a survey of recent accounts. *A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3 (2): 249–287.

Millar, M. and K. Brown. 1979. Tag questions in Edinburgh speech. *Linguistische Berichte* 60: 24–45.

Mindt, D. 2000. *An empirical grammar of the English verb system.* Berlin: Cornelsen.

Moore, E. and R. Podesva. 2009. Style, indexicality, and the social meaning of tag questions. *Language in Society* 38 (4): 447–485.

Nash, W. 1990. *Language in popular fiction.* London: Routledge.

Nässlin, S. 1984. *The English tag question: a study of sentences containing tags of the type isn't it?, is it?* Stockholm: Stockholm University, Department of English.

O'Connor, J. D. 1955. The intonation of tag questions in English. *English Studies* 36: 97–105.

Oostdijk, N. 1990. The language of dialogue in fiction. *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 5 (3): 235–241.

Oreström, B. 1983. *Turn-taking in English conversation.* Lund: Liber/Gleerup.

Page, N. 1973. *Speech in the English novel.* London: Longman.

Palmer, H. E. 1924. *Grammar of spoken English: on a strictly phonetic basis.* Cambridge: Heffer & Sons.

Pomerantz, A. 1984. Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In *Structures of social action: studies in conversation analysis*, ed. by J. M. Atkinson and J. Heritage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 57–101.

Pons Bordería, S. 2006. A functional approach to the study of discourse markers. In *Approaches to discourse particles*, ed. by K. Fischer. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 77–99.

Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language.* Harlow: Longman.

Rayson, P., G. Leech and M. Hodges. 1997. Social differentiation in the use of English vocabulary: some analyses of the conversational component of the British National Corpus. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 2 (1): 133–152.

Rissanen, M. 1994. The position of *not* in Early Modern English questions. In *Studies in Early Modern English*, ed. by D. Kastovsky. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 339–348.

Roesle, A. 2001. *Tag questions in British and American English: a matter of gender, regional dialect and pragmatics*. M.A. thesis. Englisches Seminar der Universität Zürich.

Rühlemann, C. 2007. *Conversation in context: a corpus-driven approach.* London: Continuum.

Sacks, H., E. A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50 (4): 696–735.

Schiffrin, D. 1987. *Discourse markers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. R. 1975. Indirect speech acts. In *Syntax and semantics. Volume 3: Speech acts*, ed. by P. Cole and J. L. Morgan. New York: Academic Press, 59–82.

Semino, E. and M. Short. 2004. *Corpus stylistics: speech, writing and thought presentation in a corpus of English writing.* London: Routledge.

Sidnell, J. 2009. Participation. In *The pragmatics of interaction*, ed. by S. D'Hondt, J.-O. Östman and J. Verschueren. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 125–156.

Siertsema, B. 1980. Sidelights on tag questions. In *The melody of language: intonation and prosody*, ed. by L. R. Waugh and C. H. van Schooneveld. Baltimore: University Park Press, 299–314.

Sinclair, J. (ed.) 1990. *Collins Cobuild English grammar*. London: HarperCollins.

Stanzel, F. K. 1984. *A theory of narrative.* T. b. C. Goedsche. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stenström, A.-B. 1984. *Questions and responses in English conversation.* Malmö: Gleerup.

Stenström, A.-B., G. Andersen and I. K. Hasund. 2002. *Trends in teenage talk: corpus compilation, analysis and findings.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Svartvik, J. and R. Quirk. 1980. *A Corpus of English Conversation.* Lund: CWK Gleerup.

Sweet, H. 1890. *A primer of spoken English.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Thompson, G. 1994. *Collins COBUILD English guides 5: Reporting.* London: HarperCollins.

Toolan, M. 1985. Analysing fictional dialogue. *Language & Communication* 5 (3): 193–206.

Toolan, M. 1990. *The stylistics of fiction: a literary-linguistic approach.* London: Routledge.

Toolan, M. 2001. *Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction.* London: Routledge.

Tottie, G. and S. Hoffmann. 2006. Tag questions in British and American English. *Journal of English Linguistics* 34 (4): 283–311.

Tottie, G. and S. Hoffmann. 2009a. Tag questions as markers of stance in written English. In *Corpora and discourse – and stuff*, ed. by R. Bowen, M. Mobärg and S. Ohlander. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 305–315.

Tottie, G. and S. Hoffmann. 2009b. Tag questions in English: the first century. *Journal of English Linguistics* 37 (2): 130–161.

Verschueren, J. 1985. *What people say they do with words: prolegomena to an empirical-conceptual approach to linguistic action.* Norwood, N.J., U.S.: Ablex.

Warren, M. 2006. *Features of naturalness in conversation.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Weizman, E. 1989. Requestive hints. In *Cross-cultural pragmatics: requests and responses*, ed. by S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper. Norwood, N.J., U.S.: Ablex, 71–95.

Wierzbicka, A. 1991. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: the semantics of human interaction.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Wierzbicka, A. 2006. Anglo scripts against 'putting pressure' on other people and their linguistic manifestations. In *Ethnopragmatics: understanding discourse in cultural context*, ed. by C. Goddard. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 31–63.

Woodbury, H. 1984. The strategic use of questions in court. *Semiotica* 48 (3/4): 197–228.

Appendices

Appendix A. Details of the lexical search procedure for tags

In order to reduce the number of matches, the query results were randomly thinned in two steps. First, the query results were randomly thinned within BNCweb to 40 per cent for the Fiction Subcorpus and to twelve per cent for the spoken demographic part in each of the query results. Then, the remaining query results were manually thinned by half to 20 and six per cent, respectively, as only every second match on the concordance print-outs from the two subcorpora were considered. The two-part thinning was employed in order to have easy access to more data if the thinning had resulted in too few relevant matches.

The thinning in the Fiction Subcorpus was calculated to render around 700 TQs; however, as many as 1,226 instances were found. The calculations were based on my own research on TQs (Axelsson 2004, 2006, 2009b) in the English original fiction texts in the *English-Swedish Parallel Corpus* (ESPC) (Altenberg *et al.* 2001); it thus turned out that TQs are more frequent in the Fiction Subcorpus than in the ESPC. Two reasons for this might be that the fiction texts in the ESPC are restricted to BrE, and that the ESPC only has beginning samples, whereas the Fiction Subcorpus contains fiction texts in BrE only and a mix of samples from different parts of books.

The thinning in the spoken demographic part was calculated to render about the same number of TQs as was found in the Fiction Subcorpus, i.e. around 1,100 relevant matches. This calculation was based on the frequency findings in the spoken demographic part of the BNC reported by Tottie and Hoffmann (2006). Again, more TQs than expected were retrieved, viz. 1,328 instances. This difference in the frequency of TQs between my study and Tottie and Hoffmann's may be due to differences in the retrieval methods, the definitions and the treatments of marginal types of TQs.

The result was that more TQs than expected were retrieved, but it was nevertheless decided to include all these examples in the study of formal features, as this will give more reliable results, and also as the basic analyses of formal features had already been made for each TQ in connection with the analysis of whether the matches were TQs or not.

The numbers of matches in the lexical searches for TQs are displayed in Table A.1–Table A.2.

Table A.1. Matches in the lexical search for TQs in the Fiction Subcorpus

Matches in BNCweb	Matches after a random thinning in BNCweb to 40%	Matches after a manual random thinning to 20%	Relevant matches	
			DecTQs	ImpTQs
54,849	21,940	10,970	1,066	66

Table A.2. Matches in the lexical search for TQs in the spoken demographic part of the BNC

Matches in BNCweb	Matches after a random thinning in BNCweb to 12%	Matches after a manual random thinning to 6%	Relevant matches	
			DecTQs	ImpTQs
80,443	10,074	5,037	1,315	13

The numbers of relevant matches – declarative and imperative TQs – are also given in the two tables above. This shows that only about 10 per cent of the matches in the Fiction Subcorpus and about a quarter in the spoken demographic part were found to be relevant.

Discarding irrelevant matches in the Fiction Subcorpus was in many cases possible just by looking at the concordance lines: in other cases, more context had to be checked. Although there were about half as many matches to check in the spoken demographic part, this task was much more time-consuming than for the Fiction Subcorpus, as much fewer irrelevant matches could be discarded by just looking at the concordance lines. There are several reasons for this: on the concordance lines in the spoken demographic part, there are no indications of some crucial features, such as speaker change and overlapping speech; in the BNC version I used, the indications of pauses and unclear passages are also missing on the concordance lines. Furthermore, the punctuation (or lack of it) may be misleading. All relevant matches were printed out with context for more thorough checking and later analysis.

Appendix B. The proportion of dialogue in the Fiction Subcorpus

In order to compare the frequency of TQs in the thinned Fiction Subcorpus and the thinned spoken demographic part of the BNC, the size of the two subcorpus materials had to be established. The problem is that fiction dialogue is not tagged as such in the BNC, so the searches for TQs in the Fiction Subcorpus had to be made in the entire fiction texts, and then the matches were divided into those appearing within fiction dialogue and those appearing outside. Accordingly, in order to enable frequency calculations, the proportions of dialogue in the Fiction Subcorpus had to be investigated. It should be noted that the term fiction dialogue covers only the direct speech parts of the dialogue, not the reporting clauses etc.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no previous studies on the proportion of dialogue in the fiction parts of the BNC.[1] It was thus necessary to investigate the proportion of dialogue in the Fiction Subcorpus by performing a statistical investigation on the texts in the Fiction Subcorpus.[2] Preliminary calculations of probable confidence intervals showed that a random sample of 2,000 w-units from the Fiction Subcorpus would yield a fairly reliable proportion of dialogue. The plan was thus to retrieve 2,000 w-units randomly from the texts in the Fiction Subcorpus and then analyse if these w-units were parts of stretches of dialogue or not. Unfortunately, such a statistical investigation could not be performed within the BNC, so the solution was to retrieve the full texts from the Fiction Subcorpus and make the investigation outside the BNC itself. As such full texts were only available on the DVD to the BNC XML Edition, it was decided to use that BNC version despite the fact that the searches for TQs had been made using the earlier World Edition.

It is a problem, though not a serious one, that this statistical investigation had to be performed on the BNC XML Edition. The change from SGML to XML format is not the only difference between the two BNC versions: a small amount of corrections of errors were made

---

[1] Semino and Short (2004) studied speech, writing and thought presentation in a specially designed corpus, the *Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation Corpus*, the fiction part of which has 87,709 words. Semino and Short present the number of occurrences of different speech presentation categories and the mean word length of these occurrences (2004:67–68), which makes it possible to calculate the proportion of direct speech in their fiction data to somewhere between 22 and 23 per cent. However, this proportion cannot be used for the present study, as the composition of Semino and Short's fiction subcorpus is different from my BNC Fiction Subcorpus. One clear difference is, for example, that half of their fiction samples come from 'serious fiction', whereas the Fiction Subcorpus only contains 11.4 per cent fiction material from the comparable category of books with a high level of perceived difficulty (see section 1.3.1).

[2] For a discussion on various solutions to the problem of doing corpus research on fiction dialogue, see Axelsson (2009a).

before the BNC was re-launched as the XML Edition, and the annotation principles for multi-word units[3] were changed: a multiword unit is tagged as one single w-unit in the BNC World Edition, whereas the individual words in multiword units are each given a w-unit status in the BNC XML Edition. However, all multiword units in the BNC XML Edition are enclosed within mw-tags, so it was possible in the programming to consider all w-units within an mw-unit as one w-unit.[4] After this procedure, the number of w-units in all the XML files was 9,711,449, to be compared with the Fiction Subcorpus in the BNC World version, which has 9,711,727 w-units. The very small difference of 278 w-units (0.000029 per cent fewer w-units in the XML version) is probably mainly due to the corrections made in the BNC XML Edition, and must be regarded as not affecting the significance of the statistical investigation.

All the w-units (thus including the mw-units) in the 262 XML-files from the corpus were first automatically counted and each given an individual number. Then, a programme with a cryptographically secure true random number generator[5] selected 2,000 of the 9,711,449 numbers, and extracted the s-units with the w-units with those numbers from the 262 files together with five s-units of context before and five s-units of context after each of these s-units. The 2,000 extracts were then exported to pdf-format, from where they were then printed for ease of analysis. Two examples of entries are found in Fig. B.2–Fig. B.1; one with a word within the dialogue and one with a word found outside the dialogue:

w-unit: 44980 of 9711449 (N.B. w-units in mw-units have been concatenated into one w-unit in this count)
s-units: 397-402-407 in A0F.xml (40478 w-units, 375 mw-units, 791 w-units in mw-units, 3417 s-units)

'Yes, but how many of these wonderfully high-paid jobs have you been offered over the past eighteen months?' 'There's no need to rub it in. You don't know how difficult it is.' 'I do know. That's why I keep telling you to apply for teaching jobs.' 'Yes, **but** as I keep trying to get through to you, I don't want to teach any more. That's why I left SIS in the first place.' 'But you've got to earn a living, Dorothy. You'll be living on fresh air soon if you're not careful.' 'I know that, thank you. That's why we're having tunafish this evening instead of poached salmon.'

Fig. B.1.   An entry with a word found within the dialogue

w-unit: 251454 of 9711449 (N.B. w-units in mw-units have been concatenated into one w-unit in this count)

---

[3] A multi-word unit is "[a] group of two or more orthographic words" forming a grammatical unit, for example, *of course* (Berglund *et al.* 2002).

[4] The random retrieval of w-units from the Fiction Subcorpus texts and the method for displaying them required computer-programming skills which I did not have myself. Robert Andersson, system administrator and IT-coordinator at the Swedish National Graduate School of Language Technology at the University of Gothenburg, volunteered to help me with programming and other computational problems. I am very grateful for his assistance; we had many fruitful discussions on what was desirable and achievable.

[5] The Crypt::Random module to the programming language Perl (<http://search.cpan.org/~vipul/Crypt-Random-1.25>).

s-units: 1541-1546-1551 in A6N.xml (34256 w-units, 352 mw-units, 774 w-units in mw-units, 2431 s-units)

'Not a thing in the wide world, thanks be to God.' She was relieved to hear the tone. 'You'll have the whole place to yourself today. Rose and myself are away for the day.' 'When do you think you'll be back, Daddy?' Rose had left out his brown suit and shirt and tie and socks and he had started to **dress**. 'We'll be back when you see us. We'll be back before night anyhow,' he said as he tucked his shirt into his trousers, hoisting them round his hips. 'I'm holding everybody up,' Rose fussed self-effacingly. She looked well, even stylish in a discreet way, in her tweed suit and white blouse. 'Daddy looks wonderful.

Fig. B.2.   An entry with a word found outside the dialogue

In each entry, the randomly retrieved w-unit is marked in bold and the whole s-unit where this w-unit is found is shaded in grey. Above each entry, there is information on the w-unit number in this file, but even more importantly, also information on the BNC file name (A0F and A6N, respectively, in Fig. B.2) and the s-unit numbers[6], as this makes it easy to find the s-unit in the BNC and get more context if necessary for a more reliable analysis. The information within brackets in Fig. B.2 shows the number of w-units, mw-units, w-units within mw-units, and s-units in the BNC file where the extract comes from (A0F and A0L respectively in Fig. B.2). The 2,000 randomly retrieved w-units were then analysed as being within or outside dialogue. In Fig. B.2, the first entry shows a random w-unit found within the dialogue, whereas the second entry shows one found outside the dialogue. 638 out of the 2,000 randomly retrieved w-units were categorized as being found within stretches of dialogue. This gives a proportion for dialogue of 31.9 per cent.[7] As this investigation is statistical, there is a margin of error, but it is not very large; the confidence interval is 29.9–34.0 per cent at $p < 0.05$.[8]

The Fiction Subcorpus where the searches for tags were made contains 9,711,727 w-units. The query results were then randomly reduced to 40 per cent, but as only half of them were checked, this equals 20 per cent of the Fiction Subcorpus; hence, the results considered correspond to a subcorpus size of 1,942,345 w-units. Using the proportion for dialogue calculated here above, the size of the dialogue part of the thinned Fiction Subcorpus could be calculated at about 619,608 w-units.

The definition of dialogue in this statistical investigation was the same as for the analysis of TQs in the Fiction Subcorpus (see section 2.3). It turned out to be more difficult to decide whe-

---

[6] The first s-unit number is the number of the first s-unit in the extract, the second number is the number of the s-unit where the randomly retrieved w-unit is found, and the last s-unit number is the number of the last s-unit in the extract.

[7] Hence, the difference between the proportion for dialogue found in my statistical investigation of the Fiction Subcorpus and the one calculated for the *Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation Corpus* (see footnote 1) is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). It can therefore be concluded that, if the proportion from the *Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation Corpus* had been taken to be valid also for the BNC Fiction Subcorpus, the results of the frequency comparisons in the present study would have been severely skewed.

[8] At $p < 0.01$, the confidence interval is 29.3–34.7 per cent, and at $p < 0.001$, it is 28.6–35.4 per cent.

ther random words were part of dialogue or not in the statistical investigation of dialogue than among examples of TQs. Firstly, more instances were checked in the statistical investigation (2,000 random words vs. 1,226 TQs). Secondly, it seems, in general, easier to decide that a word or phrase is within dialogue than outside, as what looks like non-dialogue can be part of a long story told in direct speech, so a large span of context needs to be checked before it can be concluded that such passages are outside the dialogue. As a comparison, TQs seldom seem to be used in such long story-telling; TQs are instead typically found at the end of utterances, and then it is relatively easy to see that the TQ is found within the dialogue. A clear majority of the random words were found to be outside the dialogue (68.1 per cent) compared to only a small minority of the TQs in the thinned Fiction Subcorpus (7.7 per cent).

Appendix C. Formal, semantic and accompanying features of DecTQs

Table C.1.   Tag operator tenses in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
present	786	73.7%	1,011	76.8%	n.s.
past	280	26.3%	304	23.1%	n.s.
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table C.2.   Tags with non-enclitic negation in DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION

	FICTION	CONVERSATION
is it not	3	–
were you not	2	–
am I not	1	–
are there not	1	–
are they not	1	–
are we not	1	–
are you not	1	–
did it not	1	–
do you not	1	–
is he not	1	–
ought we not	1	–
was it not	1	–
was there not	1	–
were there not	1	–
will it not	1	–
will there not	1	–
would it not	1	–
did you not	–	1
did they not	–	1
Total	20	2

Table C.3. Non-standard tag wordings in DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION

	FICTION			CONVERSATION		
	n	corresponding standard form		*n*	corresponding standard form	
ain't it	6	*isn't it*	5	4	*isn't it*	3
		hasn't it	1		*hasn't it*	1
innit	3	*isn't it*[9]	3	100	*isn't it*[9]	90
					hasn't it	6
					invariant use	4
ain't I	2	*amn't I*	1	–	–	–
		haven't I	1			
ain't you	2	*aren't you*	2	2	*aren't you*	2
don't it	2	*doesn't it*	2	9	*don't it*	9
will yer	2	*will you*	2	–	–	–
ain't she	1	*isn't she*	1	4	*isn't she*	1
					hasn't she	3
ain't there	1	*isn't there*	1	1	*aren't there*	1
ain't yer	1	*haven't you*	1	–	–	–
'as 'e	1	*has he*	1	–	–	–
can yer	1	*can you*	1	–	–	–
didn't yer	1	*didn't you*	1	–	–	–
do yer	1	*do you*	1	–	–	–
in't it	1	*isn't it*	1	2	*isn't it*	2
weren't it	–	–	–	22	*wasn't it*	22
int it	–	–	–	16	*isn't it*	16
in it	–	–	–	14	*isn't it*[10]	13
					invariant use	1
dunnit	–	–	–	10	*doesn't it*[9]	10
ain't he	–	–	–	7	*isn't he*	5
					hasn't he	2
weren't he	–	–	–	5	*wasn't he*	5
don't he	–	–	–	4	*doesn't he*	4
ain't they	–	–	–	3	*aren't they*	3
int he	–	–	–	3	*isn't he*	3
int she	–	–	–	3	*isn't she*	3
ain't ya	–	–	–	2	*haven't you*	2
can't ya	–	–	–	2	*can't you*	2
do ya	–	–	–	2	*do you*	2
haven't ya	–	–	–	2	*isn't she*	2
in't she	–	–	–	2	*haven't you*	2
aren't ya	–	–	–	1	*aren't you*	1
couldn't ya	–	–	–	1	*couldn't you*	1
do it	–	–	–	1	*does it*	1
don't she	–	–	–	1	*doesn't she*	1
don't ya	–	–	–	1	*don't you*	1
have he	–	–	–	1	*has he*	1
have it	–	–	–	1	*has it*	1
wasn't we	–	–	–	1	*weren't we*	1
were it	–	–	–	1	*was it*	1
weren't she	–	–	–	1	*wasn't she*[11]	1
wouldn't ya	–	–	–	1	*wouldn't you*	1
Total	25		25	230		230

---

[9] Two of the anchors are <unclear>.

[10] One of the anchors contains an <unclear> passage.

[11] The anchor contains an <unclear> passage.

Table C.4. Variant/invariant use of tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
variant use	1,064	**99.8%**	1,293	99.1%	p < 0.05
invariant use	2	0.2%	12	**0.9%**	p < 0.05
Subtotal	1,066	100.0%	1,305	100.0%	
unclear	–		10		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Table C.5. Tag wordings in tags used invariantly in DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION

	FICTION	CONVERSATION
isn't it	1	7
ain't it	1	–
innit	–	4
in it	–	1
Total	2	12

Table C.6. Types of marginal DecTQs in FICTION and CONVERSATION

	FICTION	CONVERSATION
DecTQs with modified tags	3	39
DecTQs with invariant tags	2	12
DecTQs with erroneous tags	–	14
Total	5	65

Table C.7. Tag wordings in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION	CONVERSATION
isn't it	128	165
don't you	80	31
do you	63	33
is it	48	69
aren't you	44	21
are you	43	14
didn't you	28	13
won't you	27	6
wasn't it	23	27
have you	22	14
did you	21	13
was it	19	16
doesn't it	18	20
haven't you	16	21
isn't he	16	24
didn't he	15	14
wouldn't it	13	6
would you	12	7
isn't she	11	11
aren't they	10	50
didn't I	10	18
don't they	10	35
isn't there	10	7
weren't you	10	5
will you	10	3
do I	9	3
can't you	8	10
doesn't he	8	3
wouldn't you	8	7
do they	7	11
has he	7	2
hasn't he	7	4
haven't I	7	4
wasn't she	7	6
ain't it	6	4
are we	6	5
did he	6	3
didn't she	6	10
don't we	6	5
do we	6	12
is she	6	8
is there	6	14
was he	6	2
are they	5	15
aren't we	5	6
can we	5	–
is he	5	4
were you	5	4
would it	5	3
am I	4	2
aren't I	4	7
can I	4	3
didn't it	4	3

(to be continued overleaf)

228

(continued)

didn't we	4	9
does it	4	11
doesn't she	4	8
hasn't it	4	8
shall I	4	1
weren't we	4	2
will he	4	1
can it	3	2
can't I	3	3
could I	3	1
did I	3	2
did it	3	1
didn't they	3	10
haven't we	3	9
innit	3	100
is it not	3	–
must we	3	–
shall we	3	–
wasn't I	3	2
weren't they	3	3
will it	3	6
won't they	3	7
wouldn't he	3	1
ain't I	2	–
ain't you	2	2
aren't there	2	4
can you	2	12
could it	2	1
couldn't I	2	1
did she	2	5
does she	2	3
don't I	2	3
don't it	2	9
hadn't you	2	2
have they	2	4
was I	2	–
wasn't he	2	7
wasn't there	2	2
was there	2	1
were they not	2	–
will they	2	3
will we	2	–
will yer	2	–
won't we	2	7
would he	2	2
wouldn't I	2	1
would we	2	–
ain't she	1	4
ain't there	1	1
ain't yer	1	–
am I not	1	–
are there	1	–
are there not	1	–
are they not	1	–
are we not	1	–
are you not	1	–

(to be continued overleaf)

(continued)

'as 'e	1	–
can he	1	1
can she	1	2
can they	1	6
can't they	1	–
can't we	1	6
can yer	1	–
couldn't he	1	–
couldn't it	1	4
couldn't we	1	4
could she	1	1
could they	1	–
could we	1	–
could you	1	5
did it not	1	–
didn't yer	1	–
did we	1	5
does he	1	4
doesn't one	1	–
doesn't there	1	1
do yer	1	–
do you not	1	–
hadn't I	1	1
hadn't we	1	1
had we	1	1
had you	1	–
has it	1	5
have I	1	7
have we	1	3
in't it	1	2
is he not	1	–
mustn't I	1	1
mustn't they	1	–
ought he	1	–
ought we not	1	–
should I	1	–
shouldn't they	1	1
shouldn't we	1	2
should they	1	2
was it not	1	–
was she	1	1
was there not	1	–
weren't there	1	3
were there not	1	–
were they	1	3
were we	1	–
will I	1	1
will it not	1	–
will she	1	1
will there not	1	–
won't he	1	4
won't I	1	1
won't it	1	11
won't there	1	–
would I	1	–
would it not	1	–

(to be continued overleaf)

(continued)

wouldn't we	1	–
would they	1	3
weren't it	–	22
int it	–	16
in it	–	14
haven't they	–	13
dunnit	–	10
ain't he	–	7
did they	–	5
weren't he	–	5
don't he	–	4
hasn't she	–	4
has she	–	4
ain't they	–	3
in he	–	3
int she	–	3
wouldn't they	–	3
ain't ya	–	2
can't ya	–	2
do ya	–	2
hadn't it	–	2
haven't ya	–	2
in't she	–	2
mustn't it	–	2
shouldn't he	–	2
shouldn't I	–	2
shouldn't it	–	2
weren't she	–	2
aren't ya	–	1
couldn't ya	–	1
couldn't you	–	1
did they not	–	1
did you not	–	1
do it	–	1
don't she	–	1
don't ya	–	1
had I	–	1
have he	–	1
have it	–	1
mightn't I	–	1
mustn't you	–	1
should it	–	1
wasn't we	–	1
were it	–	1
won't she	–	1
would she	–	1
wouldn't she	–	1
wouldn't ya	–	1
Total	1,066	1,315

Table C.8. Typical tag wordings in DecTQs in FICTION compared to CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance	
	n	%	*n*	%	level	X^2 value
don't you	80	**7.5%**	31	2.4%	p < 0.001	33.9
are you	43	**4.0%**	14	1.1%	p < 0.001	21.0
won't you	27	**2.5%**	6	0.5%	p < 0.001	17.1
do you	63	**5.9%**	33	2.5%	p < 0.001	16.7
aren't you	44	**4.1%**	21	1.6%	p < 0.001	13.3

Table C.9. Typical tag wordings in DecTQs in CONVERSATION compared to FICTION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance	
	n	%	*n*	%	level	X^2 value
innit	3	0.3%	100	**7.6%**	p < 0.001	74.5
aren't they	10	0.9%	50	**3.8%**	p < 0.001	18.5
weren't it	–	–	22	**1.7%**	p < 0.001	16.2
int it	–	–	16	**1.2%**	p < 0.001	11.3

Table C.10. Tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION	CONVERSATION
isn't it	140	294
don't you	81	32
do you	64	35
is it	48	69
aren't you	47	24
are you	43	14
didn't you	29	14
won't you	27	6
wasn't it	24	49
have you	22	14
did you	21	13
doesn't it	20	39
was it	19	17
haven't you	17	25
isn't he	17	32
didn't he	15	14
wouldn't it	14	6
isn't she	12	17
weren't you	12	5
will you	12	3
would you	12	7
aren't they	11	53
isn't there	11	7
didn't I	10	18
don't they	10	35
do I	9	3
can't you	8	12
doesn't he	8	7
has he	8	3
haven't I	8	4
wouldn't you	8	8
do they	7	11
hasn't he	7	6
wasn't she	7	8
amn't I[12]	6	7
aren't we	6	6
are we	6	5
did he	6	3
didn't she	6	10
don't we	6	5
do we	6	12
is she	6	8
is there	6	14
was he	6	2
are they	5	15
can we	5	–
didn't it	5	3
hasn't it	5	15

(to be continued overleaf)

---

[12] The tag wording *amn't I* is not found in either of the two samples; *amn't I* is nevertheless used here as the tag category covering *aren't I*, *ain't I* and *am I not*.

(continued)

is he	5	4
were you	5	4
would it	5	3
am I	4	2
can I	4	3
didn't we	4	9
does it	4	12
doesn't she	4	9
shall I	4	1
weren't we	4	3
will he	4	1
aren't there	3	5
can it	3	2
can't I	3	3
can you	3	12
could I	3	1
did I	3	2
did it	3	1
didn't they	3	11
haven't we	3	9
must we	3	–
shall we	3	–
wasn't I	3	2
wasn't there	3	2
weren't they	3	3
will it	3	6
won't they	3	7
wouldn't he	3	1
couldn't I	2	1
could it	2	1
did she	2	5
don't I	2	3
does she	2	3
hadn't you	2	2
have they	2	4
was I	2	–
wasn't he	2	12
was there	2	1
weren't there	2	3
will they	2	3
will we	2	–
won't it	2	11
won't there	2	–
won't we	2	7
would he	2	2
wouldn't I	2	1
would we	2	–
are there	1	–
can he	1	1
can she	1	2
can they	1	6
can't they	1	–
can't we	1	6
couldn't he	1	–
couldn't it	1	4
couldn't we	1	4

(continued)

could she	1	1
could they	1	–
could we	1	–
could you	1	5
did we	1	5
does he	1	4
doesn't one	1	–
doesn't there	1	1
hadn't I	1	1
hadn't we	1	1
had we	1	1
had you	1	–
has it	1	6
have I	1	7
have we	1	3
mustn't I	1	1
mustn't they	1	–
ought he	1	–
oughtn't we[13]	1	–
should I	1	–
shouldn't they	1	1
shouldn't we	1	2
should they	1	2
was she	1	1
were they	1	3
were we	1	–
will I	1	1
will she	1	1
won't he	1	3
won't I	1	1
would I	1	–
wouldn't we	1	–
would they	1	3
haven't they	–	13
hasn't she	–	7
did they	–	5
has she	–	4
wouldn't they	–	3
couldn't you	–	2
hadn't it	–	2
mustn't it	–	2
shouldn't he	–	2
shouldn't I	–	2
shouldn't it	–	2
won't she	–	2
had I	–	1
mightn't I	–	1
mustn't you	–	1
should it	–	1
wouldn't she	–	1
would she	–	1
Total	1,066	1,315

---

[13] The tag wording *oughtn't we* is not found in the data: there is just one instance of *ought we not* in FICTION (see example (14) in section 6.3.1.3); the tag category is nevertheless called *oughtn't we*.

Table C.11. Positions of the tags in relation to the declarative anchor in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
final	1,046	98.1%	1,282	98.1%	n.s.
inserted	20	1.9%	25	1.9%	n.s.
Subtotal	1,066	100.0%	1,307	100.0%	
unclear	–		8		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Table C.12. Types of anchor subjects in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
personal pronouns	726	77.8%	781	75.2%	n.s.
nominal NPs	88	9.4%	86	8.3%	n.s.
demonstrative pronouns	75	8.0%	126	12.1%	n.s.
existential *there*	28	3.0%	28	2.7%	n.s.
indefinite pronouns	8	0.9%	4	0.4%	n.s.
clauses	3	0.3%	2	0.2%	n.s.
others	5	0.5%	11	1.1%	n.s.
Subtotal	933	100.0%	1,038	100.0%	
ellipsis of subject	133		232		
unclear	–		45		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Table C.13. Negations in declarative anchors in FICTION VS. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
in't/not[14]	267	86.1%	228	86.4%	n.s.
never	21	6.8%	11	4.2%	n.s.
nothing	6	1.9%	4	1.5%	n.s.
hardly	6	1.9%	1	0.4%	n.s.
no	4	1.3%	11	4.2%	n.s.
nobody/no one	3	1.0%	2	0.8%	n.s.
none	2	0.6%	–	–	n.s.
in't + no	1	0.3%	3	1.1%	n.s.
neither – nor	–	–	2	0.8%	n.s.
nowhere	–	–	1	0.4%	n.s.
nay	–	–	1	0.4%	n.s.
Subtotal	310	100.0%	264	100.0%	
no negation	756		1,013		
unclear	–		38		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Table C.14. Reversed-polarity patterns in DecTQs with the tags *isn't it/is it* in FICTION VS. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	140	81.9%	283	88.4%	n.s.
neg. anchor + pos. tag	31	18.1%	37	11.6%	n.s.
Total	171	100.0%	320	100.0%	

Table C.15. Reversed-polarity patterns in DecTQs with other tags than *isn't it/is it* in FICTION VS. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	511	64.7%	612	**73.4%**	p < 0.001
neg. anchor + pos. tag	279	**35.3%**	222	26.6%	p < 0.001
Total	790	100.0%	834	100.0%	

---

[14] Transferred negation (see example (25) in section 3.2.1) is found in four instances in FICTION and in five instances in CONVERSATION.

Table C.16. Ellipsis in constant-polarity DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
ellipsis	49	46.7%	45	36.6%	n.s.
no ellipsis	56	53.3%	78	63.4%	n.s.
Total	105	100.0%	123	100.0%	

Table C.17. Positions of vocatives accompanying DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
just after the tag	107	87%	28	90%	n.s.
just before the anchor	8	7%	1	3%	n.s.
between the anchor and the tag	7	6%	2	6%	n.s.
within the anchor	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
Total	123	100%	31	100%	

Table C.18. Punctuation immediately before tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
comma	1,000	**93.8**%	84	6.4%	p < 0.001
full stop	19	1.8%	18	1.4%	n.s.
dash	6	0.6%	1	0.1%	n.s.
three dots	2	0.2%	–	–	n.s.
exclamation mark	1	0.1%	3	0.2%	n.s.
no punctuation	38	3.6%	1,209	**91.9**%	p < 0.001
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table C.19. Punctuation immediately after tags in DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	909	85.3%	1,130	85.9%	n.s.
comma	139	**13.0**%	69	5.2%	p < 0.001
full stop	9	0.8%	21	1.6%	n.s.
exclamation mark	3	0.3%	3	0.2%	n.s.
dash	2	0.2%	–	–	n.s.
three dots	2	0.2%	–	–	n.s.
question mark + comma	–	–	13	**1.0**%	p < 0.01
question mark + full stop	–	–	1	0.1%	n.s.
no punctuation	2	0.2%	78	**5.9**%	p < 0.001
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%	

Table C.20. Punctuation at the end of sentences with DecTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION

	FICTION		CONVERSATION		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	1,022	**95.9**%	1,180	89.9%	p < 0.001
comma	20	1.9%	39	3.0%	n.s.
full stop	17	1.6%	35	2.7%	n.s.
exclamation mark	3	0.3%	6	0.5%	n.s.
dash	3	0.3%	–	–	n.s.
three dots	1	0.1%	–	–	n.s.
question mark + comma	–	–	12	**0.9**%	p < 0.01
question mark + full stop	–	–	1	0.1%	n.s.
no punctuation	–	–	39	**3.0**%	p < 0.001
Subtotal	1,066	100.0%	1,312	100.0%	
unclear	–		3		
Total	1,066		1,315		

Appendix D. Functions of DecTQs

Table D.1. DecTQs exchanging information/goods and services in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
exchanging information	237	94.8%	250	**100.0%**	p < 0.001
exchanging goods and services	13	**5.2%**	–	–	p < 0.001
Total	250	100.0%	250	100.0%	

Table D.2. Rhetorical/response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
rhetorical	160	67.5%	189	75.6%	n.s.
response-eliciting	77	32.5%	61	24.4%	n.s.
Total	237	100.0%	250	100.0%	

Table D.3. Confirmation-eliciting/conversation-initiating DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
confirmation-eliciting	68	88%	61	**100%**	p < 0.05
conversation-initiating	9	**12%**	–	–	p < 0.05
Total	77	100%	61	100%	

Table D.4. Confirmation-seeking/confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
confirmation-seeking	43	63%	52	**85%**	p < 0.01
confirmation-demanding	25	**37%**	9	15%	p < 0.01
Total	68	100%	61	100%	

Table D.5. Addressee-oriented /speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
addressee-oriented	102	**63.8%**	57	30.2%	p < 0.001
speaker-centred	58	36.3%	132	**69.8%**	p < 0.001
Total	160	100.0%	189	100.0%	

Table D.6. Responses to confirmation-demanding DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

		FICT			CONV			statistical significance
		n		%	*n*		%	
co-operative	confirmatory	15	15	65%	8	9	100%	n.s.
	commenting	–			1			
non-co-operative	refuting	3	8	35%	–	–	0%	n.s.
	evasive	3			–			
	no response	2			–			
	Subtotal		23	100%		9	100%	
unclear			2			–		
	Total		25			9		

Table D.7. The tag subject *you* in confirmation-seeking DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
you as tag subject	23	53%	17	33%	n.s.
other tag subjects	20	47%	35	67%	n.s.
Total	43	100%	52	100%	

Table D.8. The tag subject *you* in confirmation-demanding vs. confirmation-seeking DecTQs in CONV

	confirmation-demanding		confirmation-seeking		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
you as tag subject	0	–	17	33%	n.s.
other tag subjects	9	100%	35	67%	n.s.
Total	9	100%	52	100%	

Table D.9. Reversed-polarity patterns in confirmation-demanding vs. confirmation-seeking DecTQs in CONV

	confirmation-demanding		confirmation-seeking		statistical significance
	n	%	*n*	%	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	7	78%	17	49%	n.s.
neg. anchor + pos. tag	2	22%	18	51%	n.s.
Total	9	100%	35	100%	

Table D.10. Tag subjects in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
I	14	9%	6	8%	n.s.
we	12	8%	4	5%	n.s.
you	60	38%	31	40%	n.s.
he	6	4%	7	9%	n.s.
she	9	6%	3	4%	n.s.
it	42	26%	23	30%	n.s.
they	14	9%	2	3%	n.s.
there	3	2%	1	1%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.11. Grammatical person of tag subjects in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
1st person	26	16%	10	13%	n.s.
2nd person	60	38%	31	40%	n.s.
3rd person	71	44%	35	45%	n.s.
there	3	2%	1	1%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.12. Animacy of tag subjects in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
animate tag subject	112	70%	51	66%	n.s.
inanimate tag subject	48	30%	26	34%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.13. Tag operators in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
is	35	22%	16	21%	n.s.
do	30	19%	12	16%	n.s.
are	23	14%	11	14%	n.s.
did	17	11%	5	6%	n.s.
was	10	6%	9	12%	n.s.
will	5	3%	6	8%	n.s.
have	6	4%	3	4%	n.s.
would	10	6%	1	1%	n.s.
does	3	2%	2	3%	n.s.
can	10	6%	–	–	n.s.
were	5	3%	7	9%	n.s.
has	–	–	3	4%	n.s.
could	3	2%	–	–	n.s.
am	1	1%	1	1%	n.s.
had	–	–	1	1%	n.s.
must	–	–	–	–	n.s.
should	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
ought	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.14. Tag verbs in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
be	74	46%	44	57%	n.s.
do	50	31%	19	25%	n.s.
will/would	15	9%	7	9%	n.s.
have	6	4%	7	9%	n.s.
can/could	13	**8%**	–	–	$p < 0.05$
shall/should	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
ought	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.15. Tag operator tenses in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
present	114	71%	54	70%	n.s.
past	46	29%	23	30%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.16. Ellipsis in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

| | rhetorical | | response-eliciting | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
ellipsis	19	12%	9	12%	n.s.
no ellipsis	141	88%	68	88%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.17. Polarity types in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

| | rhetorical | | response-eliciting | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	147	92%	71	92%	n.s.
constant polarity	13	8%	6	8%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.18. Reversed-polarity patterns in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

| | rhetorical | | response-eliciting | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	97	66%	42	59%	n.s.
neg. anchor + pos. tag	50	34%	29	41%	n.s.
Total	147	100%	71	100%	

Table D.19. Question marks directly after tags in rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

| | rhetorical | | response-eliciting | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	143	89%	63	82%	n.s.
no question mark	17	11%	14	18%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.20. Question marks at the end of sentences with rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

| | rhetorical | | response-eliciting | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	154	96%	76	99%	n.s.
no question mark	6	4%	1	1%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.21. Vocatives accompanying rhetorical vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	rhetorical		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	16	10%	13	17%	n.s.
no vocative	144	90%	64	83%	n.s.
Total	160	100%	77	100%	

Table D.22. Turn positions of rhetorical DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance[15]
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
turn-embedded	98	**65%**	57	30%	p < 0.001
turn-final	53	35%	130	**70%**	p < 0.001
Subtotal	151	100%	187	100%	
unclear	9		2		
Total	160		189		

Table D.23. Turn positions of response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
turn-final	70	93%	52	85%	n.s.
turn-embedded	5	7%	9	15%	n.s.
Subtotal	75	100%	61	100%	
unclear[16]	2		–		
Total	77		61		

---

[15] As the conditions for the turn organization are so different in fiction and spoken conversation (see sections 2.5 and 6.4.3), reservations are made for the results of statistical significance in Table D.22–Table D.23.

[16] The turn position of a DecTQ is unclear in FICT when the presentation of a conversation changes from direct speech to narrator's representation of speech act (see section 2.2) immediately after the DecTQ, and it is not indicated who speaks next: whether it is the same speaker or another speaker, as in (i), where James Cobalt is addressed in the tag:

> ( ) "It's too far to walk in this weather," Rain said. "We'll give you a lift to the boat, won't we, James?"
> Cobalt could hardly refuse, but Joseph was adamant he would not accept. He ran out into the wet streets saying he would find a taxi. (wBNC GV2 3277–3280)

Table D.24. Tag subjects in speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
I	3	5%	7	5%	n.s.
we	2	3%	2	2%	n.s.
you	2	3%	10	8%	n.s.
he	4	7%	8	6%	n.s.
she	6	**10%**	3	2%	p < 0.05
it	28	48%	70	53%	n.s.
they	12	21%	31	23%	n.s.
there	1	2%	1	1%	n.s.
Total	58	100%	132	100%	

Table D.25. Animacy of tag subjects in speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
animate tag subject	26	46%	55	42%	n.s.
inanimate tag subject	32	54%	77	58%	n.s.
Total	58	100%	132	100%	

Table D.26. Tag verbs in speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
be	73	55%	32	55%	n.s.
other tag verbs	59	45%	26	45%	n.s.
Total	132	100%	58	100%	

Table D.27. Reversed-polarity patterns in speaker-centred DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	102	77%	39	67%	n.s.
neg. anchor + pos. tag	30	23%	19	33%	n.s.
Total	132	100%	58	100%	

Table D.28. Tag subjects in addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

| | FICT | | CONV | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
I	11	11%	3	5%	n.s.
we	10	10%	8	14%	n.s.
you	58	57%	31	54%	n.s.
he	2	2%	1	2%	n.s.
she	3	3%	–	–	n.s.
it	14	14%	11	19%	n.s.
they	2	2%	2	4%	n.s.
there	2	2%	1	2%	n.s.
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table D.29. Animacy of tag subjects in addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

| | FICT | | CONV | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
animate tag subject	86	84%	45	79%	n.s.
inanimate tag subject	16	16%	12	21%	n.s.
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table D.30. Tag verbs in addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

| | FICT | | CONV | | statistical significance |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
be	42	41%	20	35%	n.s.
do	37	36%	19	33%	n.s.
will/would	8	8%	8	14%	n.s.
have	6	6%	8	14%	n.s.
can/could	8	8%	2	4%	n.s.
ought	1	1%	–	–	n.s.
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table D.31. Polarity types in addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	89	87%	55	96%	n.s.
constant polarity	13	13%	2	4%	n.s.
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table D.32. Reversed-polarity patterns in addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT VS. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
pos. anchor + neg. tag	58	65%	46	**84%**	p < 0.05
neg. anchor + pos. tag	31	**35%**	9	16%	p < 0.05
Total	89	100%	55	100%	

Table D.33. Vocatives accompanying addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT vs. CONV

	FICT		CONV		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	15	15%	3	5%	n.s.
no vocative	87	85%	54	95%	n.s.
Total	102	100%	57	100%	

Table D.34. Vocatives accompanying addressee-oriented vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in FICT

	addressee-oriented		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	15	15%	13	17%	n.s.
no vocative	87	85%	64	83%	n.s.
Total	102	100%	77	100%	

Table D.35. Vocatives accompanying addressee-oriented vs. response-eliciting DecTQs in CONV

	addressee-oriented		response-eliciting		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	3	5%	5	8%	n.s.
no vocative	54	95%	56	92%	n.s.
Total	57	100%	61	100%	

Table D.36. Vocatives accompanying speaker-centred vs. addressee-oriented DecTQs in FICT

	addressee-oriented		speaker-centred		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	15	**15%**	1	2%	p < 0.05
no vocative	87	85%	57	**98%**	p < 0.05
Total	102	100%	58	100%	

Table D.37. Vocatives accompanying speaker-centred vs. addressee-oriented DecTQs in CONV

	addressee-oriented		speaker-centred		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	3	5%	1	1%	n.s.
no vocative	54	95%	131	99%	n.s.
Total	57	100%	132	100%	

Table D.38. Normalized frequencies (pmw) of functional categories of DecTQs

	FICT		normalized frequency (pmw) in the dialogue of the Fiction Subcorpus	CONV		normalized frequency (pmw) in the spoken demographic part of the BNC	difference in normalized frequency in FICT vs. CONV
	n	*%*		*n*	*%*		
addressee-oriented	102	40.8%	702	57	22.8%	1,188	–486
speaker-centred	58	23.2%	399	132	52.8%	2,751	–2,352
confirmation-seeking	43	17.2%	296	52	20.8%	1,084	–788
confirmation-demanding	25	10.0%	172	9	3.6%	188	–16
requesting/offering	13	5.2%	89	–	–	–	+89
conversation-initiating	9	3.6%	62	–	–	–	+62
Total	250	100.0%	1,720	250	100.0%	5,210	–3,491

Appendix E. Formal and accompanying features of ImpTQs

Table E.1. Positions of tags in relation to the imperative anchor in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
final	61	94%	52	96%	n.s.
inserted	4	6%	2	4%	n.s.
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

Table E.2. Polarity types in ImpTQs vs. DecTQs in FICTION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	14	22%	961	**90.2%**	p < 0.001
constant polarity	51	**78%**	105	9.8%	p < 0.001
Total	65	100%	1,066	100.0 %	

Table E.3. Polarity types in ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] vs. DecTQs in CONVERSATION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
reversed polarity	23	43%	1,154	**90.4%**	p < 0.001
constant polarity	31	**57%**	123	9.6%	p < 0.001
Subtotal	54	100%	1,277	100.0%	
unclear	–		38		
Total	54		1,315		

Table E.4. Vocatives accompanying ImpTQs vs. DecTQs in FICTION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
vocative	9	14%	123	11.5%	n.s.
no vocative	56	86%	943	88.5%	n.s.
Total	65	100%	1,066	100.0%	

Table E.5. Position of vocatives accompanying ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
just after the tag	6	67%	1	11%	n.s.
just before the anchor	–	–	4	44%	n.s.
between the anchor and the tag	3	33%	3	33%	n.s.
at end of sentence with inserted tag	–	–	1	11%	n.s.
Total	9	100%	9	100%	

Table E.6. Punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQs in FICTION vs. CONVERSATION[+17]

	FICTION		CONVERSATION[+]		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	49	75%	34	63%	n.s.
comma	11	**17%**	2	4%	p < 0.05
full stop	1	2%	5	9%	n.s.
exclamation mark	2	3%	4	7%	n.s.
no punctuation	2	3%	9	**17%**	p < 0.05
Total	65	100%	54	100%	

Table E.7. Punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQs vs. DecTQs in FICTION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	49	75%	909	**85.3%**	p < 0.05
comma	11	17%	139	13.0%	n.s.
full stop	1	2%	9	0.8%	n.s.
exclamation mark	2	**3%**	3	0.3%	p < 0.05
dash	–	–	2	0.2%	n.s.
three dots	–	–	2	0.2%	n.s.
no punctuation	2	**3%**	2	0.2%	p < 0.05
Total	65	100%	1,066	100.0%	

Table E.8. Punctuation immediately after tags in ImpTQs in CONVERSATION[+] vs. DecTQs in CONVERSATION

	ImpTQs		DecTQs		statistical significance
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	
question mark	34	63%	1,130	**85.9%**	p < 0.001
comma	2	4%	69	5.2%	n.s.
full stop	5	**9%**	21	1.6%	p < 0.01
exclamation mark	4	**7%**	3	0.2%	p < 0.001
question mark + comma	–	–	13	1.0%	n.s.
question mark + full stop	–	–	1	0.1%	n.s.
no punctuation	9	**17%**	78	5.9%	p < 0.01
Total	54	100%	1,315	100.0%	

---

[17] In the original CONVERSATION sample of ImpTQs, eleven tags in ImpTQs are immediately followed by a question mark, and two are followed by a comma; there is no statistically significant difference to FICTION.