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### **Constant polarity tag questions: A data-driven typology of their core meaning and contextualizations**

This paper is concerned with constant polarity tag questions (henceforth CPTQs). The form of CPTQs consists of a host clause followed by a tag with the same polarity, as illustrated by the following example:

A: He's back in training today.

B: He's fully fit, is he? (CB)

The data-driven analysis is based on an extensive data collection extracted from the COBUILD corpus and supplemented with data containing information about intonation from COLT and LLC.

I will argue that CPTQs are not an erratic exception to the system of reverse polarity tag questions (e.g. *She's pretty, isn't she?*), but constitute a system of their own. In my data collection, I have found not only CPTQs with a declarative as host clause, but also CPTQs with an imperative e.g. *listen, pal, do me a favour will you?* or an interrogative e.g. *Do you sell er newspaper do you?*. These instantiations all show positive constant polarity. Negative CPTQs are rather exceptional. For each subtype, except for the latter, I will discuss the core meaning and main types of contextual uses.

I will start from McGregor's (1995) characterization of CPTQs' general function, viz. modalizing the proposition in the host clause and soliciting response. I will then show that, corresponding to each type based on the mood of the host clause the tags in CPTQs can express a questioning, softening or checking modification. These receive further differentiated contextualizations (e.g. uncertainty, irony, impatience). The core meanings and contextual subtypes link up with different distributional patterns of the tag's personal pronouns and auxiliaries as well as of the particles, with different intonation and with varying responses to the CPTQs (Buttiens & Lens 1977, Nässlin 1984).

Insight into the different functions and implications will prove to be important for understanding the role of CPTQs in real discourse. They are a significant means of participation and manipulation within the speaker-hearer dyad.

#### References:

- Buttiens, L. and F. Lens. 1977. *Tag Question: A Status Questionis. A Corpus Analysis of British Theatrical Language*. Leuven: Kul. Faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte.
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