Aa4 & yes-no question particles

- **Cantonese yes-no Q particles**
  - Highly sensitive to bias
  - Positive bias: ho2
  - Negative bias: maa3
  - Neutral bias: A-not-A

- **Aa4 [a]’s main function: seeks confirmation**

  1. Aiming wui lai a4a (cf. declarative w’/ a4a [a’])

- **Aa4’s main function: seeks confirmation**

- **Aa4 seeks confirmation from two levels:**
  - **proposition p vs. addressee’s belief of p**
  - Negative rhetorical readings arise as a conversational implicature when seeking confirmation of addressee’s belief

- **The two-level uses resemble Canadian English eh** (Wattleschke & Heim 2016)

Evidential Bias vs. Epistemic Bias

- **Differentiating between sources of bias** (Sudo 2013, Gyuris 2017)
  - Epistemic bias: The speaker’s belief (i.e. epistemic state)
  - Evidential bias: contextual evidence that is “mutually available to the participants in the current discourse situation”

- **The division of labor between a4a & other yes-no Q prts**
  - Epistemic bias: ho2 (+ve), maa3/A-not-A (neutral)
  - Evidential bias: a4a (+ve)

- **Aa4 returns Q, s.t.: (i) Q=(p, ¬p) ∧ ¬Know(s, Anq(Q))**
  - (ii) Ev(C) = Probably(p)
  - (iii) s puts a under obligation to ASSERT(Anq(Q))

  where “s” = speaker, or addressee, Ev(C) = evidence available in a context C (Gyuris 2017), probably = weak necessity modal in Kratzer (1991)

- **Positive evidential bias**
  - Ming’s promise in the epistemic state (+ve)
  - Lack of contextual evidence (neutral)

- **Two claims**
  - **Aa4 requires positive evidential bias and is underspecified for epistemic bias**
    - A need to distinguish between sources of bias: contextual evidence vs. epistemic states (Sudo 2013)

  - **Aa4 seeks confirmation from two levels:**
    - **proposition p vs. addressee’s belief of p**
      - Negative rhetorical readings arise as a conversational implicature when seeking confirmation of addressee’s belief
      - The two-level uses resemble Canadian English eh (Wattleschke & Heim 2016)

      - **Possible to analyze the higher-level use as a speech act operator** (Law, Li & Bhadra 2018, this workshop)

  - **Confirmation of belief**
    - **Non-SoK (seat of knowledge) requirement:**
      - Speaker must not know the Anq of a4a-Qs
    - **Cannot be used w/ ‘after all’ for rhetorical Qs**
    - **Highly sensitive to sources of bias**
      - Differentiating between sources of bias (Sudo 2013, Gyuris 2017)

      - **Aa4 asks for confirmation of belief of p**

    - **Positive evidential bias**
      - Ming’s promise in the epistemic state (+ve)
      - Lack of contextual evidence (neutral)

      - **Evidential bias: contextual evidence vs. addsressee’s belief of p**

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      - **Evidence to the participants in the current discourse situation**

      - **Aa4 returns Q, s.t.: (i) Q=(p, ¬p) ∧ ¬Know(s, Anq(Q))**
        - (ii) Ev(C) = Probably(p)
        - (iii) s puts a under obligation to ASSERT(Anq(Q))

        where “s” = speaker, or addressee, Ev(C) = evidence available in a context C (Gyuris 2017), probably = weak necessity modal in Kratzer (1991)

- **Positive evidential bias**
  - Ming’s promise in the epistemic state (+ve)
  - Lack of contextual evidence (neutral)

  vs. **Positive evidential bias**
  - No prior belief (neutral)
  - vs. Positive **epistemic bias** (neutral)

  - vs. Positive **epistemic bias** (neutral)

  vs. **Both**
  - Positive belief (+ve) (induced by strong evd)
  - vs. **Strong positive evidential bias** (neutral)

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  - **Triggers of a4a’s higher-level confirmation**
    - (i) Speaker is the SoK of p s.t. p is (obviously) false
      - Know(s, ¬p) ∧ Believe(s, ¬p)
      - a4a asks for confirmation of belief of p

    - (ii) Positive contextual evidence for addressee’s belief of p (i.e. inconsistent with speaker’s belief of CG)
      - Ev(C) = Probably(Believe(a, p))
      - Conferring addressee’s belief

      - p puts a under obligation to ASSERT(Anq(Q))

      - **Conversational implicature**
        - Challenges the addressee’s belief, giving rise to the negative rhetorical reading (i.e. p is wrong, are you sure you still want to believe it?)