Suggesterrogatives
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As has been well known but by and large forgotten since the 1970s, negative why interrogatives of a particular form have a variety of impositive illocutionary forces (most typically that of suggestion) rather than that of questions:

(1)   Why don't you be a man about it, and set me free. (Kim Wilde)

I name such sentences "suggesterrogatives", alluding to Sadock's (1970) "whimperatives". While English suggesterrogatives have been subject to significant investigation in the 70s by e.g. Sadock (1974) and Green (1975), they have not received an explicit analysis, have not been examined cross linguistically, and remain poorly understood
     In Modern Hebrew, suggesterrogatives are distinguished formally from *why* questions by, inter alia, the presence of a complementizer after the *wh-* word.

(2)   a.   *lama lo   teSev?*
                why   neg sit.fut.2msg
                Why won't you sit?
         b.   *lama Se-lo   teSev.*
                why   that-neg sit.fut.2msg
                Why don't you sit.

I propose to workshop a preliminary analysis of suggesterrogatives that aspires to be cross linguistically applicable and to capture some new and old generalizations about how their force relates to their meaning and form. Specifically, I propose that suggesterrogatives, despite their surface form, are rhetorical *why-not* (as opposed to *why*) questions which, through a convention of usage, commit the speaker to the endorsement of a future action.
     Suggesterrogatives are subject to several descriptive generalizations that distinguish them from regular *why* questions and which any analysis of them should ideally capture.

1. While *why*-questions presuppose a settled issue, suggesterrogatives presuppose an unsettled one. For example, (2a) presupposes that you won't sit (and asks why), whereas (2b) presupposes that whether or not you sit is unsettled (and suggests a preferred resolution).

2. Suggesterrogatives, unlike *why*-questions, require negation (similar facts hold in Hebrew):

   (3)   a.   Why don't you have a seat. (= please sit)
            b. #Why do you have a seat. (≠ please don't sit)

3. Suggesterrogatives are restricted in tense (to the simple preset in English, to the future in Hebrew):

   (4)   a.   Why don't you go home (please).
            b.   Why didn't you go home (*please).
            c.   Why won't you go home (#please)
            d.   Why aren't you going home (#please)

4. Suggesterrogatives, despite containing negation, fail to license polarity and concord items, as

demonstrated for polarity items by the contrast in (5), and for concord items by Hebrew data given in the full paper.

(5)   a.   Why don't you eat anything? (Question)
      b.   Why don't you eat something? (Suggestion)

The descriptive generalizations about Hebrew and English are discussed more fully in the talk.

I propose to analyze suggesterrogatives as a special case of *why not* interrogatives, i.e. interrogatives that ask for reasons against resolving an issue in a certain way. Structurally, my main claim is that suggesterrogatives, in both English and Hebrew, contain a negation that does not originate in the sentential core of the *wh-* question. For example, contrary to appearances and unlike *wh-* questions, English suggesterrogatives do not involve subject-aux inversion. Unlike (5a), (5b) is not a *why* question derived by *wh-* movement from a sentential core containing a negated auxiliary.

That the contracted auxiliary *don't* is not part of the sentential core of a *why* question is made clear from the existence of suggesterrogatives that have no declarative counterpart, as well as by the fact that contraction is obligatory (6).

(6)   a.   (If you want to be safe,) why don't you be there first thing in the morning.
      b.   *You don't be there first thing in the morning.
      c.   Why do you not eat anything?
      d.   *Why do you not eat something.

Semantically, the proposal is that suggesterrogatives consist of two parts:

- A **suggesterrogator**, like *why not* or *why don't*
- A **prejacent** sentence radical or VP in the base form expressing an eventuality description.

The suggesterrogator presupposes (a) an unsettled binary issue p?, of which the prejacent is a resolution. Combined with the prejacent, it forms a rhetorical question (Han 1997) expressing the proposition that there exists no reason against the resolution expressed by the prejacent. The overall force of a suggesterrogative is impositive, which I propose to analyze along the lines of Condoravdi and Lauer's (2012) analysis of imperatives and anankastic conditionals (2016), as a self-verifying assertion that speaker has an action-relevant preference (for the resolution of p? expressed by the prejacent. That the force of suggesterrogatives has to do with action relevant preferences can be seen in their ability to occur as consequents of anankastic conditionals (cf. *if you want to eat why don't you pull over here.*), as well as in the infelicity of suggesterrogatives in which the prejacent description describes uncontrollable eventualities (# *why don't you resemble your mother, please.*). I suggest that suggesterrogatives, whose literal meaning is a rhetorical question, assume this force through a convention of use.

The assumption that negation is not part of the sentential core of suggesterrogatives, but is rather generated as part of the suggesterrogator, immediately explains their failure to license polarity and concord items, as well as the restriction to negation. The presupposition of unsettledness explains the tense restriction to tenses expressing future reference.

In the talk, I compare this line of analysis to an obvious alternative, in which negation is where it seems to be on the surface, and the force of suggesterrogatives is derived pragmatically from a rhetorical *why* question with a negative sentential core, discuss how each analysis might explain the relation between the interpretation of suggesterrogatives and their form across languages.