Subjunctive in yes-no questions

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Résumé

As widely discussed in the literature, while the expression of subjunctive in Romance languages (Quer, 1998, Kempchinsky, 2009 a.o) relies on special verbal morphology, Slavic and Balkan languages (Giannakidou, 2009, Krapova, 2001) dispose of subjunctive particles, which precede the verb.

In the present work, I address the occurrence of the Bulgarian subjunctive particle da in interrogatives. I will focus on yes-no questions headed by the interrogative word dali (1), comparing with yes-no questions of the type da+V+li (2):

(1) Dali Ivan kupi knigata?
DALI John buy.3SG.PAST book.def
"Might it be the case that John bought the book?"

(2) Ivan da kupi li knigata?
John SUBJ buy.PERF Q book.def
"Should John buy the book?"

Dali has been traditionally considered complementizer (Rudin, 1986), occurring in embedded yes-no questions. What is more, it is morphologically complex and contains the subjunctive da and the interrogative clitic li. Thus, differently from standard yes-no questions, licensed by li, the occurrence of dali conveys a flavor of wondering, captured under the possibility modal "might". Therefore, it correlates with the expression of the speaker’s attitude and commitment to the truth of the proposition (Marques, 2010, Smirnova, 2011).

However, dali-structures differ sharply from da-structures w.r.t. Tense. Dali is compatible with all tenses and it furthermore permits material intervening between it and the verb. Da, on the other hand, is obligatory verb-adjacent and only compatible with verbs (perfective and imperfective) in Present.

Thus, considering the above examples, the goal of the present work is to provide a syntactic analysis capturing the occurrence of both da and dali. Following Giannakidou (1998), I will argue that both (1) and (2) are dependant from non-veridicality, codifying the speaker’s evaluation. Additionally, I will discuss the occurrence of negation, focusing on the cases in which it acquires expletive reading.

*Intervenant
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