

10. Particles with question and disjunction uses

Supervisors: Uwe Junghanns & Clemens Steiner-Mayr

PhD Student: Zhao Zeki

I. The form-meaning mismatch

- Particles with both a question and a disjunction use manifest a 1:many form-meaning mismatch.

(1) Polar question use

- Čy vin pryjde? (Ukrainian)
part he come
- Pridët li on? (Russian)
come part he
'Will he come?'

(2) Disjunction use

- Vin buv veselyj čy napidpytku. (Ukrainian)
he was happy part tipsy
- On byl vesel ili pod xmel'kom. (Russian)
he was happy and-part tipsy
'He was happy or tipsy.'

II. Motivation

- Question-disjunction affinity observed in typologically diverse languages (Japanese *ka*, Hindi *ya*, Hausa *ko*; ...).
- Not a case of accidental homophony but systematic:
 - One form systematically associated with two meanings.
 - The two meanings are not arbitrary.
- Question use associated with particular sentence type and speech act (unlike disjunctive use).
- Despite existing work (e.g. Haspelmath 2007; Haida 2012; Szabolcsi 2015; Mayr 2017) consensus is lacking.

III. Research questions

- What is the cross-linguistic picture regarding the question-disjunction affinity?
- How should the intuitively very different meaning contributions of *čy/li* and other such particles be related?
- Is there a semantic property of these particles that makes them usable in both questions and disjunctions?
- If such a property exists, why does it have this effect?
- Do the two different uses correlate with distinct morphological, syntactic and/or prosodic properties?

IV. Hypotheses and method

- Three hypotheses will be investigated:
 - Morphological complexity hypothesis:** question uses are morphologically and semantically more complex than disjunctive ones (e.g. Karttunen 1977; Guerzoni 2004).
 - Operator hypothesis:** the meanings of question and disjunctive uses are equivalent on some level but are embedded under operators giving rise to different meanings (Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002; Fox & Johnson 2016; Ciardelli, Groenendijk and Roelofsen 2019).
 - Pragmatics hypothesis:** the semantic representations of question and disjunctive uses are parallel, the differences lying solely in the the pragmatics, requiring an appropriate theory of speech acts to derive them (Condoravdi & Lauer 2012; Lauer 2013).
- Gathering of novel empirical data will be through one or more of the following methods (dependent on language):
 - Classic field work
 - In-depth work with informants (also via Skype)
 - Questionnaires,
 - Mining of text corpora,
 - Large scale online gathering of judgments using Amazon Mechanical Turk,
 - Analysis of the prosodic patterns using the PRAAT software (Boersma & Weenink 2007).
- How the PhD student proceeds:
 - Detailed cross-linguistic comparison of languages within one branch of a language family (e.g. Slavic, Chadic, ...) or investigation of two typologically disparate languages (e.g. Russian vs. Japanese).
 - Based on the generalizations found, a formal analysis of the data reflecting one of the three hypotheses (or an alternative one) is developed, taking into account different levels of linguistic analyses.

V. Connections to other research projects

- Type of form-meaning mismatch: [11](#), [12](#) (1:many form-meaning mismatch)
- Empirical domain: [1](#), [4](#), [7](#) (language variation across modalities)
- Content: [6](#), [7](#), [11](#)
- Methods: cross-linguistic comparison: [4](#), [9](#); fieldwork: [2](#); corpus studies: [virtually all](#)

VI. Possible follow-up studies

- Wider typology of question-disjunction affinity
- Diachronic development of question-disjunction affinity
- Modal particles incorporating question particles