NEGATIVE PARTICLE QUESTIONS: A DIALECTAL COMPARISON*

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1. Introduction

There are a number of ways to form yes-no questions in Chinese, though not every dialect employs all the choices. In this paper, we discuss a particular yes-no construction which uses negation markers to form yes-no questions, as in (1)-(3).

(1) Mandarin
hufei kan-wan-le nei-ben shu meiyou
Hufei read-finish-perf that-cl book not-have
"Has Hufei finished reading that book?"

(2) Cantonese
wufei lei-zo mei
Wufei come-perf not-yet
"Has Wufei come yet?"

(3) Taiwanese
i u tsiaik beng bo
he have eat rice not-have
"Did he eat?"

* We thank the audiences of the APLA meeting on Microparametric Syntax and Dialect Variation, the Workshop on Theoretical East Asian Linguistics at UC Irvine, the Sunford Workshop on Historical Chinese Linguistics, and audiences at the universities of Connecticut, Toronto, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Arizona. In particular, we would like to thank Audrey Li, Richard Kayne, Chao-Fen Sun, Rint Sybesma, and Pei-Chuan Wei for their comments and suggestions. We also thank Cheng-Sheng Liu, Xiaoguang Li, Ruo-Mei Hsieh, Sze-Wing Tang, Teresa Griffith, Pauline Huynh and Deng Wei for their native speaker judgements.
In (1)-(3), the question is marked by a negation marker at the end of the sentence. We call yes-no questions such as these Negative Particle Questions (henceforth NPQs). As shown in (1)-(3), the negation marker appears at the end of the sentence in NPQs, in contrast with the typical preverbal position of negation markers, as shown in (4)-(6).

(4) Mandarin
   hufei meiyou kan-wan nei-ben shu
   Hufei not-have read-finish that-cl book
   “Hufei did not finish reading that book.”

(5) Cantonese
   wufei mei le
   Wufei not-yet come
   “Wufei has not come yet.”

(6) Taiwanese
   i bo tsia beng
   he not-have eat rice
   “He did not eat.”

In this paper, we will first discuss the negation markers in Mandarin, Cantonese and Taiwanese as they are significant for the formation of NPQs. We show that negation markers vary depending on the aspect or verb type. In section 3, we briefly consider NPQs in Classical Chinese, which sheds light on the historical development of negation markers as question particles. We then compare the formation of NPQs in these three dialects in Chinese. It is shown that Mandarin NPQs observe the typical agreement requirement between negation and aspect/verb while Cantonese and Taiwanese do not maintain such a requirement in NPQs. We argue that the contrast between Mandarin NPQs and Cantonese/Taiwanese NPQs results from a difference in the derivation of NPQs: NPQs in Mandarin Chinese involve the movement of a negation marker to the sentence final position while no such movement is involved in the formation of NPQs in Cantonese and Taiwanese.

1.1 Are NPQs reduced A-not-A or VP-not-V questions?1

Before we proceed to the discussion on the formation of NPQs in different dialects, we need first to address the question of whether or not they are derived from other types of yes-no questions in Chinese. There are numerous ways of forming yes-no questions in Chinese (see Appendix). Among them, two might appear to resemble NPQs, namely A-not-A and VP-not-V questions. In particular, one may question the status of NPQs as a different type from A-not-A and VP-not-V questions. In this section, we examine data from Mandarin (with preverbal adjuncts and sentence-final question particles) to show that in Mandarin, NPQs cannot be reduced forms of either A-not-A or VP-not-V questions. In particular, we will see in the discussion in Section 2, there is an asymmetry in the use of various negation markers in A-not-A questions and NPQs in Cantonese and Taiwanese, which offers further evidence for NPQs being separate from A-not-A questions. See § 7 & 8 for further comparisons between NPQs and other types of yes-no questions (see also Yue-Hashimoto 1988, 1992 and 1993).

1.1.1 Preverbal adjuncts

Non-temporal and locative preverbal adjuncts can appear in NPQs (7) but not in A-not-A (8) and VP-not-V (9) questions.

(7) a. ta chang qu bu
    he often go not
   “Does he go often?”

    b. ta yijing kan-wan shu meiyou
       he already read-finish book not-have
       “Did he already finish reading the book?”

(8) a. *ta chang qu-bu-qu
    he often go-not-go
   “Does he go often?”

    b. *ta yijing you-meiyou kan-wan shu
       he already have-not-have read-finish book
       “Did he already finish reading the book?”

1 There are other types of questions on a par with VP-not-V, such as VP-not-VP and V-not-VP. We will only discuss VP-not-V questions. The arguments can be easily extended to the other types.
If NPQs are derived from A-not-A questions or VP-not-V questions by deleting the post-negation part, the contrast between (7) and (8)-(9) cannot be explained.

1.1.2 Co-occurrence with ma/ne

In Mandarin Chinese, question particles such as ma and ne can occur in sentence final position in questions, as shown in (10). Ma is a yes-no question particle while ne is the optional WH-question particle.

(10) a. ta lai-le *ne/ma
   he come-perf wh/y-n
   “Did he come?”

b. ta mai-le shenme (ne)/*ma
   he buy-perf what wh/y-n
   “What did he buy?”

As we can see in (11), A-not-A and VP-not-V questions can co-occur with the question particle ne, though they cannot appear with ma. However, NPQs cannot co-occur with either ma or ne, as in (12).

(11) a. ta lai-bu-lai ne/*ma
   he come-not-come wh/y-n
   “Is he coming?”

b. ta you-meiyou lai ne/*ma
   he have-not-have come wh/y-n
   “Did he come?”

2. Negation Forms

The crucial element in NPQs is the negation marker. To understand the formation of NPQs, we must first consider the properties of negation in Chinese. Every dialect in Chinese has more than one negation form. The negation form varies depending on the aspectual markings on the verb or the verb type itself. In other words, there is a matching or agreement requirement which holds between the negation marker and the aspect/verb form. (In the following discussion, we will not consider the negation marker in imperatives.)

2.1 Mandarin

Mandarin has two negation markers: bu and meiyou (see Wang 1965, Chao 1968 and Li & Thompson 1981). Bu is used with bare verbs and modalas. Meiyou is used with various aspects and with accomplishment verbs.3 In the ex-

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2 Though A-not-A questions take ne as a question particle, they are still interpreted as yes-no questions. This may seem strange at first glance. However, given Huang’s (1991) proposal which treats the formation of A-not-A questions on a par with typical WH-questions, the fact that ne is used is not unexpected.

3 There are some apparent counterexamples to this description of the usage of bu and meiyou. As we can see in (1), bu seems able to appear with the aspectual marker -the “PROG”:

(i) ta bu bao-zhe zhen-tou shui-jiao
   he not hold-prog sleep
   “He does not sleep by holding a pillow.”
amples below, we see that *meiyou cannot appear with the modal hui (13b), while bu cannot appear with the perfective aspect -le (14b) or the experiential aspect -guo (14e). (14a) shows that *meiyou is interpreted as perfective without the presence of the perfective aspect -le (and in fact, *meiyou cannot co-occur with -le (14c), see Wang (1965) for an account of this restriction).

(13) a. ta bu lai
    he not come
    "He is not coming."

b. hufei bu/*meiyou hui qu
    Hufei not/not-have will go
    "Hufei will not go."

(14) a. hufei meiyou qu xuexiao
    Hufei not-have go school
    "Hufei did not go to school."

b. * hufei bu qu-le xuexiao
    Hufei not go-PERF school
    "Hufei did not go to school."

c. * hufei meiyou qu-le xuexiao
    Hufei not-have go-PERF school
    "Hufei did not go to school."

d. hufei meiyou qu-guo
    Hufei not-have go-EXP
    "Hufei has not been (there)."

e. * hufei bu qu-guo
    Hufei not go-EXP
    "Hufei has not been (there)."

Both of these negation markers can appear in NPQs as question particles.

(15) hufei hui qu bu
    Hufei will go not
    "Will Hufei go?"

(16) hufei qu-le meiyou
    Hufei go-PERF not-have
    "Did Hufei go?"

Note that both bu and *meiyou can be used in A-not-A questions. As we will see in subsequent sections, in Cantonese and Taiwanese, not all negation markers can appear in A-not-A questions, further supporting our claim that NPQs cannot be derived from A-not-A questions.

(17) a. qiaofeng qu-bu-qu
    Qiaofeng go-not-go
    "Is Qiaofeng going?"

b. qiaofeng you-meiyou qu
    Qiaofeng have-not-have go
    "Did Qiaofeng go?"

2.2 Cantonese

Cantonese has three negation forms: m, mou, and mei (see Cheung 1972 and Yue-Hashimoto 1993). M is used with bare verbs and modals (on a par with bu in Mandarin) and cannot be used with aspectual markers (18a-c). Mou is

However, it should be noted that (ii) is ungrammatical.

(ii) * ta bu bao-zhe zhou-tou
     he not hold-PROG pillow
     "He is not holding a pillow."

Example (ii) shows that bu cannot appear with the progressive marker -zhe. The contrast between (i) and (ii) is due to the fact that -zhe does not really have an aspectual reading in (i) but rather an instrumental reading.

It should be noted that meiyou appears able to co-occur with neng "can":

(iii) ta meiyou neng qu
     he not have can go
     "He could not go."

4 In Beijing Mandarin, instead of (17b), it is possible to say (i):
   (i) qiaofeng qu-mei-qu
       Qiaofeng go-not-go
       "Did Qiaofeng go?"

5 It should be noted that Mandarin also has a negation marker, wei "not yet" which corresponds to mei "not-yet" in Cantonese. However, the negation form wei "not-yet" has to co-occur with the adverbials shang "yet" or hai "yet".

(i) a. ta shang/hai wei lai.
     he yet not come
     "He has not come yet."

b. * ta wei lai
     he not come
     "He has not come yet."

The contrast in (i) shows that wei is no longer a free form in Mandarin.
used with various aspects and accomplishment verbs and, like *meiyou in Mandarin, it cannot co-occur with the perfective aspect marker and its mere presence is interpreted as perfective. *Mei is similar to mou except that the former has an added meaning of "not yet".

(18) a. keoi m lei he not come
   "He is not coming."

b. keoi m*/mou*/mei hoyi lei
   he not/not-have/not-yet can come
   "He will not come."

c. * keoi m lei- zo
   he not come-perf
   "He didn't come."

(19) a. keoi mou lei
   he not-have come
   "He didn't come."

b. * keoi mou lei- zo
   he not-have come-perf
   "He didn't come."

(20) a. keoi mei lei
   he not-yet come
   "He has not come yet."

b. * keoi mei lei- zo
   he not-yet come-perf
   "He has not come yet."

In contrast with Mandarin, which allows both bu and *meiyou to be used in NPQs, in Cantonese, only mei can appear in NPQs.6

6 It should be noted that mou "not-have" can be used in NPQs only when the verb is the possessive verb jau "to have", as shown in (i):
   (i) 
   keoi jau tsin mou
   he have money not-have
   "Does he have money?"

This indicates that there is a contrast between mou being the suppletive form of NEG plus the aspectual jau "perfective" and mou being the suppletive form of NEG plus the verb jau "to have". We will leave this issue open.

(21) a. keoi lei- zo mei he come-perf not
   "Has he come yet?"

b. * keoi lei m
   he come not
   "Is he coming?"

c. * keoi lei- zo mou he come-perf not
   "Did he come?"

However, both m and mou can appear in A-not-A questions while mei cannot.

(22) a. keoi lei-m-lei
   he come-not-come
   "Is he coming?"

b. keoi you-mou lei
   he have-not-have come
   "Did he come?"

c. * keoi lei-m-lei
   he come-not-yet-come
   "Has he come?"

This shows a complementary distribution of negation markers in these two types of questions: the ones that appear in A-not-A questions cannot appear in NPQs. We will come back to the complementary distribution noted here in section 5.4.

2.3 Taiwanese

Taiwanese has four monosyllabic negation markers, m, bo, be, and buei (see P. Li 1971, Teng 1992 and T.-C. Tang 1993). M is the neutral negation, bo the perfective negation, be the future negation and buei is the negation marker indicating "not-yet".

(23) a. i m lai
   he not come
   "He is not coming."
b. i be lai
he not-fut come
“He will not come.”

c. * i m/bo/buei e lai
he not/not-have/not-yet will come
“He will not come.”

d. i m/*bo/*buei/be gaN chu-ki
he not/not-have/not-yet/not-fut dare out-go
“He dare not/will not dare go out.”

The examples in (23a-d) show that bo “not-have” and buei “not-yet” cannot appear with modals (such as e “will” and gaN “dare”). M can appear with typical modals except e “will” (probably due to the fact that be “not-future” is the suppletive form of NEG and e “will”).

(24) a. i bo ki hak-hao
he not-have go school
“He did not go to school.”

b. * i m u ki hak-hao
he not have go school
“He didn’t go to school.”

(25) a. i a buei lai
he yet not-yet come
“He has not come yet.”

b. * i a buei lai a
he yet not-yet come-perf
“He has not come yet.”

All four negation markers in Taiwanese can appear in NPQs.

(26) a. li ki m
you go not
“Are you going?”

b. i u tsiaK beng bo
he have eat rice not-have
“Did he eat?”

(27) a. i si-m si hakseng
he be-not-be student
“Is he a student?”

b. * i lai-m lai
he come-not-come
“Is he coming?”

(28) a. * i lai-bo-lai
he come-not-have-come
“Did he come?”

b. * i lai-be-lai
he come-not-fut-come
“Will he come?”

c. * i lai-buei-lai
he come-not-yet-come
“Has he come yet?”

Hence, Taiwanese offers further evidence for our claim that NPQs are not derived from A-not-A questions.

3. Classical Chinese

NPQs can be traced back to Classical Chinese—Pre-Qin Dynasty to Han Dynasty. Zhang (1990) notes that the appearance of NPQs in Classical Chinese predates the appearance of other types of yes-no questions. This further supports our analysis that NPQs are not derived from other types of yes-no questions. Furthermore, Zhang (1990) proposes that some NPQs are from [VP-NEG +
Q-PARTICLE]. He shows that there were sentences of the VP-NEG form followed by a question particle, as in (29), where the negation is *fou* followed by the question particle *hu*. It should be noted that Classical Chinese has more than a dozen negation markers. However, only *bu, fou, wei, fei*, and *wu* can occur in NPQs.

(29) ruci ze dongxin *fou-hu* (Gongsunchou, Shang)  
if-so then move-heart not-Q-PARTICLE  
"If this is so, will you be inclined (to do it)?"

According to Zhang (1990), the sentence-final question particle later disappeared in these cases (i.e., in sentences with negation following the VP), as in (30). This development can be interpreted as either the incorporation of the question particle into the negation (and thus *fou* at this stage was no longer a mere negation marker) or the deletion of the question particle with the negation taking over the function of the question particle.

(30) zhi ke *fou* (Zhuangzi, 10)  
know possible not  
"(Someone) knows whether it’s possible."

(31) jie *wei* (Zhongbenqijing, 148)  
understand not-yet  
"Do (you) understand it yet?"

We also see [NEG+ Q-PARTICLE] as well as NEG as a question particle occurring in the same text:

(32) jia-zhong suo you mi dang yu *bu-ye* (Zapiiuyiijing, 509)  
house-in have rice should give not Q-PARTICLE  
"Should we give the rice in the house to (someone)?"

(33) you gui mai *bu* (Zapiiuyiijing, 507)  
have ghost sell not  
"Do you have ghost for sale?"

The data in Classical Chinese above show the historical development of negation markers as question particles. We will see that this sheds light on the formation of NPQs in various dialects of Chinese.

4. Dialectal differences in NPQs

We have so far presented data showing that the three dialects under discussion differ with respect to the number of negation forms they have as well as which one(s) can be used in NPQs. It is also clear that there is agreement between the negation form and the aspect/verb. We now present data showing that such agreement is maintained in NPQs in Mandarin while in Cantonese and Taiwanese, the agreement collapses in NPQs.

Consider first examples of NPQs in Mandarin.

(34) a. *ta qu-le bu*  
he go-PERF not  
"Did he go?"

b. *ta qu-guo bu*  
he go-EXP not  
"Has he gone?"

c. *ta qu bu*  
he go not  
"Is he going?"

(35) a. *ta qu-le meiyou*  
he go-PERF not-have  
"Did he go?"

b. *ta qu-guo meiyou*  
he go-EXP not-have  
"Has he been (there)?"

In (34a-b), the negation marker *bu* which appears as a question particle (henceforth NEG-particle) cannot appear with the perfective aspect -le or the experiential aspect -guo. In contrast, we can use the NEG-particle *meiyou* with
these two aspects, as shown in (35). Further shows that in NPQs, 
_can appear with modals while meli(you) cannot. Hence, in Mandarin, the agreement that we have seen in Section 2.1 between negation and verb/aspect is maintained in NPQs as well.

In Cantonese, however, the agreement between negation and aspect/verb does not seem to hold in NPQs. As noted earlier, meli “not-yet” is the only negation form that can be used in NPQs. Thus, if agreement were to hold in NPQs in Cantonese, we would expect that NPQs cannot contain modals, as meli cannot appear with modals, as we have seen in (18b). It turns out however that though meli carries the interpretation of “not-yet”, it can still appear with modals (37), as well as the typical perfective and experiential aspects in NPQs (38).

(37) a. ngo hoi/yi/yi glo ceot-hoei mei
I can/should go-out not-yet
“Can/should I go out?”

b. keoi hai-dou se seon mei
he write letter not-yet
“Is he writing the letter?”

(38) a. keoi sik-ko fan mei
he eat PERF rice not
“Has he eaten?”

b. keoi heoi-go meigok mei
he go EXP America not
“Has he been to America?”

The sentences in (38) and (37) show that even though Cantonese exhibits agreement between negation and aspect/verb in typical negation environments, such agreement is not observed in NPQs.

Taiwanese is similar to Cantonese in that there is no strict matching/agreement requirement in NPQs. We have shown earlier that Taiwanese is similar to Cantonese and Mandarin in that there is agreement between negation

and aspect/verb in typical negation sentences. However, there is no such agreement in NPQs in Taiwanese, as shown in (39)-(40).

(39) a. i e lai m/bo/buei/be
he will come not/not-have/not-yet/not-PUT
“Will he come?”

b. i gaN chu-ki m/bo/buei/be
he dare out-go not/not-have/not-yet/not-PUT
“Does he dare to go out?”

(40) a. i u ki hak-hao m/bo
he have go school not/not-have
“Did he go to school?”

b. i lai buei
he come not-yet
“Has he come?”

The examples in (39) and (40) contrast with the ones in (23)-(25). In (23), we see that m, bo, and buei cannot appear with the modal e “will”. However, in the NPQ in (39a), all the negation markers can appear with e “will”. Similarly, in (24b), we see that m cannot appear with the perfective aspect. In contrast, in the NPQ in (40a) we see that m can be used even though the perfective marker u is present.

In short, the formation of NPQs differs in these dialects. Mandarin NPQs retain the same kind of agreement observed in typical negation environments while Cantonese and Taiwanese NPQs do not.

5. Analysis

Two apparent questions arise given the above data in Classical Chinese and in the three synchronic dialects of Chinese:

i. What is the relationship between Classical NPQs and synchronic NPQs in different dialects?

ii. Why do dialects differ with respect to the presence of agreement in NPQs?
We have noted in Section 3 that the development in Classical Chinese NPQs can be considered as incorporation of the question particle into the negation marker ('incorporation' here is used in a non-technical sense). Hence, NEG takes over the function of the question particle and the presence of NEG in the sentence final position indicates a yes-no question. Turning now to synchronic NPQs in the three dialects under investigation, we do not see the co-occurrence of NEG and a Q-particle. Instead, we see only NEG in the sentence final position. Hence, one simple way of looking at the synchronic data is that the NEG in the sentence final position is no longer a simple NEG but a NEG with whatever features that a Q-particle has. However, this simplistic view does not explain the second question, that is, it does not offer an explanation for the dialectal difference we have observed in terms of agreement in NPQs.

Before we address this question, we must first consider the position of the NEG-particle. We assume, following T.-C. Tang (1989), that the sentence final question particles in Mandarin (e.g. ne, ma) as well as those in other dialects are in the C⁰ position. Since negative particles are sentence final and they also mark yes-no questions, we consider them on a par with other question particles in that they are also in the C⁰ position, though they clearly differ from typical question particles in their ability to function as negation markers in a sentence.

5.1 Agreement vs. non-agreement dialects

Let us now turn to the second question, the question of dialectal difference with respect to agreement. Consider first the dialects which lack agreement in NPQs (i.e., Cantonese and Taiwanese). We consider these dialects to resemble Classical Chinese in the formation of NPQs. In particular, as we have noted earlier, in Classical Chinese the negation markers were grammaticalized as question particles. In other words, we propose that the negation markers in the non-agreement dialects are base-generated in the C⁰ position on a par with typical question particles. The lack of agreement is thus naturally explained since the base-generated negation markers which are used as question particles are not in a position which can be construed with verb types and aspect types. Certain issues related to these two non-agreement dialects as well as to the nature of negation remain and we will come back to these issues in section 5.3.

Consider now Mandarin, the dialect which displays agreement in NPQs. We have seen that Mandarin NPQs observe the same agreement restriction that holds between negation and verb/aspect (as in (34)-(36)). That is, the use of bu vs. meiyou depends on the verb/aspect or modal in the sentence regardless of whether or not the negation markers are used as regular negative markers or question particles. Suppose for the moment that the agreement that we see between negation and verb/aspect is due to a selectional relation between negation and verb/aspect. The agreement phenomenon in NPQs in Mandarin can be captured if the negation marker moves to the C⁰ position in overt syntax. The agreement which holds for typical negation forms thus also holds for NEG-particles since they are in fact the same elements. Given this hypothesis, the difference between Mandarin and Cantonese/Taiwanese in the formation of NPQs is that the former involves movement of a negation marker to C⁰ while the latter involves a base-generated negation marker in the C⁰ position.

Some immediate questions arise given this analysis:

(41) a. Why can't negation markers in Mandarin be base-generated in NPQs?
   b. Why can negation markers in Mandarin be moved to the C⁰ position?
   c. Why can’t negation markers in Cantonese/Taiwanese undergo movement in NPQs?
   d. Why is it the case that some negation markers cannot be used in NPQs?

These questions are related to the nature of negation as well as to the nature of the NEG-particle in these dialects. Before we turn to these questions, we will first consider some supporting evidence for the movement vs. base-generation distinction.

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9 It should be noted that in Shanghai, the sentence final negative particle has a 'literal' incorporated question particle, as shown below:
   (i) yi qie le a (ii) yi qie le va (iii) yi ve qi he go PERF Q he go PERF not-Q he not go "Did he go?" "Did he go?" , "He is not going."

As we can see in (iii), the typical negation form is ve and the one used in NPQ is the combination of ve and the question particle a. We need to examine Shanghai more closely to see the pattern of NPQs. Furthermore, it is pointed out to us (Sybesma, p.c.) that in a Northern dialect of Mandarin, NPQs with bu can co-occur with ma, though the ordering of the Q-particle and the negation marker appears to differ from what we find in Classical Chinese:

(iv) ni qu ma bu you go Q not "Are you going?"

Further tests are needed to see whether these are genuine NPQs (see Appendix for some basic tests).
5.2 Supporting evidence

We have so far examined simplex NPQs, which illustrate a basic dialectal difference in terms of agreement. Below we present data involving verbs which take clausal complements. In particular, we consider sentences in which the agreement requirement of the matrix verb differs from that of the embedded verb. We show that such cases provide further evidence for a movement analysis in the formation of NPQs in Mandarin Chinese. Consider first a very simple case, where the matrix and embedded verbs share the same agreement requirement:

(42)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta yiwei ni qu bu} \\
\text{he think you go not}
\end{align*}
\]
(a) “Does he think or not think that you are going?”
(b) “Does he think that you are going or not going?”

(43)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. ta bu yiwei ni (hui) qu} \\
\text{he not think you will go} \\
\text{“He doesn’t think that you will go.”}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b. ta yiwei ni bu qu} \\
\text{he think you not go} \\
\text{“He thinks that you are not going.”}
\end{align*}
\]

In (42), the NEG-particle is in the matrix C^0 indicating that the sentence is a matrix yes-no question. (We will come back to cases with embedded questions.) The matrix verb *yiwei “to think” and the embedded verb *qu “to go” can both occur with the negation marker *bu. As the (a) and (b) readings indicate, the sentence in (42) is ambiguous. We call the (a) readings the matrix reading and the (b) reading the embedded reading. For the moment, we simply assume that the embedded reading arises when the NEG-particle moves to the matrix (regardless of whether or not the NEG-particle originates from the embedded NEG^0 or C^0). Compare (42) with (44) below:

(44)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{*ta hui yiwei ni yinggai qu meiyou} \\
\text{he will think you should go not-have}
\end{align*}
\]
(a) “Will he think or not think that you should go?”
(b) “Will he think that you should go or not go?”

In contrast with the grammatical and ambiguous (42), (44) is ungrammatical (i.e., neither the matrix nor the embedded reading is available). The ungrammaticality of (44) is in fact not surprising. Recall that the NEG-particle in Mandarin must ‘agree’ with the verb/aspect of the sentence. The NEG-particle in (44) cannot agree with the matrix or the embedded predicate: the matrix contains the modal *hui “will” while the embedded clause has the modal *yinggai “should”. Since *meiyou cannot appear with modals, (44) is ungrammatical.

The ungrammaticality of (44) is not at all surprising given our basic generalization that the NEG-particle needs to agree with the verb/aspect type. Assume for the moment, in contrast with the movement hypothesis presented earlier, that the agreement requirement is a result of some non-local constraint. That is, let us tentatively assume a constraint that requires the NEG-particle in C^0 to agree with the verb/aspect type. Such a constraint may indeed account for the sentences in (42) and (44). In (42), the embedded reading can be accounted for if we assume that *bu is base-generated in the embedded C^0 position and subsequently moves to the matrix C^0 position (due to the fact that verbs such as *yiwei “to think” do not take embedded questions). The matrix reading will simply involve a base-generated NEG-particle in the matrix C^0. On the other hand, in (44), the constraint will rule out both matrix and embedded readings since the NEG-particle *bu cannot be generated in either C^0 position because of the incompatibility between the matrix and embedded verb/aspect.

Such a non-local constraint however runs into problems when there are mixed verb/aspect types in the sentence. The data presented above are sentences in which the matrix and the embedded predicate belong to the same type with respect to agreement with the NEG-particle. Consider now ‘mixed’ cases in (45) and (46) below.

(45)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta yiwei ni qu-guo bu} \\
\text{he think you go-exp not}
\end{align*}
\]
(a) “Does he think or not think that you have been (there)?”
(b) “Does he think that you have been (there) or you haven’t been (there)?”

(46)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta hui yiwei ni qu-guo meiyou} \\
\text{he will think you go-exp not-have}
\end{align*}
\]
(a) “Will he think or not think that you have been (there)?”
(b) “Will he think that you have been (there) or you haven’t been (there)?”
In (45), the NEG-particle is \textit{bu} and only the matrix verb satisfies the agreement requirement since the embedded one has the experiential marker attached to it. As expected, the question does not have an embedded reading. On the other hand, the NEG-particle in (46) is \textit{meiyou} and only the embedded predicate can agree with it since the matrix has the modal \textit{hui} “will”. And again, as expected, the question does not have a matrix reading.

If the agreement constraint is some sort of non-local constraint on the C\textsuperscript{0} and the verb/aspect, it is possible to account for (45) but not for (46). For (45), it is still possible to maintain that the NEG-particle cannot be base-generated in the embedded C\textsuperscript{0} due to the constraint. Thus, the only possibility is for it to be base-generated in the matrix. However, (46) presents a problem for such an analysis. It should be noted that even though the allowed reading in (46) is an embedded reading, it is still a matrix question. Thus, though \textit{meiyou} is allowed to be base-generated in the embedded clause since it can occur with the experiential aspect marker -\textit{guo}, it has to move to the matrix C\textsuperscript{0}. That is, the NEG-particle will eventually end up in the matrix C\textsuperscript{0}, even though the modal \textit{hui} “will” is present in the matrix. The non-local agreement constraint which rules out sentences such as (44) will also rule out (46).

The above data show that if NEG-particles in Mandarin were to be base-generated in C\textsuperscript{0} positions, sentences such as (46) cannot be accounted for. On the other hand, given a movement analysis, the grammaticality and the readings of the sentences in (42), and (44)-(46) naturally follow. Let us consider the sentences one by one. In the grammatical and ambiguous (42), the NEG-particle \textit{bu} can be either generated in the embedded NEG or matrix NEG. In the embedded case, the NEG-particle moves to the matrix C\textsuperscript{0} via the embedded C\textsuperscript{0}. In (44), the NEG-particle \textit{meiyou} cannot be generated in either the embedded NEG or the matrix NEG due to the selectional restriction between the verb/aspect and the NEG and thus the sentence is ruled out. On the other hand, in (45), even though the NEG-particle \textit{bu} cannot be generated in the embedded NEG due to the experiential aspect marker -\textit{guo}, it can be generated in the matrix NEG and subsequently moves to the matrix C\textsuperscript{0}. Turning now to the problematic case for the non-movement analysis, in (46) we see that the NEG-particle \textit{meiyou} can indeed be base-generated in the embedded NEG. As in the ambiguous case in (42), \textit{meiyou} first moves to the embedded C\textsuperscript{0} and it subsequently moves to the matrix C\textsuperscript{0}. The movement from the embedded C\textsuperscript{0} to the matrix C\textsuperscript{0} does not involve the matrix predicate, nor does it involve the matrix NEG. Hence, even though the verb/aspect type of the matrix in (46) does not appear to agree with the NEG-particle which ends up in the matrix C\textsuperscript{0}, the sentence is still grammatical, with the embedded reading.

### Taiwanese

(47)
\begin{align*}
\text{Taiwanese} & \quad i \ giosi \ li \ (e) \ ki \ m
\end{align*}
\begin{enumerate}
\item “Does he think or not think that you are leaving?”
\item “Does he think that you are leaving or not leaving?”
\end{enumerate}

(48)
\begin{align*}
\text{Taiwanese} & \quad i \ e \ giosi \ li \ yinggai \ ki \ bo
\end{align*}
\begin{enumerate}
\item “Will he think or not think that you can leave?”
\item “Will he think that you can leave or cannot leave?”
\end{enumerate}

### Cantonese

(50)
\begin{align*}
\text{Cantonese} & \quad i \ e \ giosi \ li \ ki-gue bo
\end{align*}
\begin{enumerate}
\item “Will he think or not think that you have been (there)?”
\item “Will he think that you have been (there) or you haven’t been (there)?”
\end{enumerate}

10 It should be noted that even though the sentences are ambiguous, in some cases, there is a preferred reading.
It thus appears that *bu is similar to *ma in that both have a ‘matrix property’. The matrix property of *ma has been attributed to the speaker-oriented interpretation of *ma. We suggest that *bu is on a par with *ma in its speaker-oriented property.

Taiwanese *m also cannot indicate embedded questions, in contrast with the other negation markers, as shown in (59).

(59) i shung-be-zaiyeN li e ki *m/bo/be/buei
he want-to-know you will go not/have/not-fut/not-yet
“he wants to know whether you are going.”

Hence, the speaker-oriented property is unrelated to the movement of the negation marker to form NPQs.

5.3 Content of negation

We have shown that data involving embedded sentences with mixed verb/aspect types present further support for our hypothesis of the dialectal differences in the formation of NPQs. We now turn to the questions raised earlier in (41), repeated below as (60):

(60) a. Why can’t negation markers in Mandarin be base-generated in NPQs?
   b. Why can negation markers in Mandarin be moved to the C0 position?
   c. Why can’t negation markers in Cantonese/Taiwanese undergo movement in NPQs?
   d. Why is it the case that some negation markers cannot be used in NPQs?

These questions all relate to the properties of negation and C0.

Following Cheng (1991), we assume that the clause type of interrogative sentences can be marked by the insertion of a question particle or by movement of an appropriate element to the C0 position or to SPEC of C (see also Chomsky 1995). Consider first the non-movement dialects. In Cantonese and Taiwanese, we maintain that some negation markers are base-generated in C0 on a par with typical question particles. In other words, these negation markers must carry the formal feature that marks a sentence as a yes-no question. Let us assume it to be [Q] (Chomsky 1995, among others). Thus, they are elements with a dual status, as negation markers or as question particles. In other words, these elements have a [Q, NEG] feature. Note that we maintain that only certain negation mark-
ers are both negative markers and question particles because not every negation marker can be used in NPQs (for example, in Cantonese, only *mei* can be used in NPQs). These ‘dual status’ negation markers are thus like some negation markers in Classical Chinese in that they can function as a negation marker or as a question particle.

Let us turn now to the movement dialect, Mandarin. Following Chomsky (1995), we assume that overt movement is triggered by unchecked features. Hence, in Mandarin, movement of the negation markers is to check some formal feature in C0. Note that the negation markers in Mandarin cannot be inserted as question particles in C0 to mark yes-no questions. In other words, negation markers in Mandarin do not have a dual status, even though they do appear in C0. We propose that Mandarin has a phonologically null C0 with the formal features [Q, NEG]. This C0 can be considered to be another residue of the historical development of negation as question particles. That is, instead of having a full-fledged negation marker functioning as a question particle, Mandarin has a C0 with [Q, NEG] features, with just a ‘trace’ of negation in it. This [NEG] feature however has to be checked off in order for the sentence to be properly interpreted as a yes-no question. Thus, negation markers *bu* and *meiyou* can and must move to C0 to check the [NEG] feature.

The picture that has emerged here provides answers to the questions in (60). In particular, the answers all relate to the properties of C or NEG. With respect to Mandarin, its negation markers cannot be base-generated in NPQs because they are ‘pure’ negation markers rather than those with a dual status. And what ‘allows’ negation markers to move in Mandarin is the particular feature [NEG] in the C0. The answer to the question raised in (60c) may have to do with Economy. Given the fact that Cantonese and Taiwanese also have negation markers, why is it the case that they cannot undergo movement, just as negation markers do in Mandarin? There are indeed two different possibilities:

(a) Cantonese / Taiwanese also has a C0 with a [Q, NEG] feature;
(b) Cantonese / Taiwanese does not have such a C0.

Consider possibility (b) first. If these two dialects do not have such a C0, there is then no motivation for the negation markers to undergo movement. On the other hand, if we have possibility (b), the trigger for movement is present, and the question then is why movement is lacking. Note however that these dialects have negation markers as question particles which can be directly merged into the computation. Assuming that Merge is less costly than Move (see Chomsky 1995), the Merge option and thus the insertion of these negation markers always rules out the movement possibility.

### Distribution of NPQs and A-not-A Questions

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<tr>
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<th>NPQs</th>
<th>A-not-A Questions</th>
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<td>meiyou</td>
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Note that in Mandarin, *mei* can be used alone in both NPQs and A-not-A questions. The difference between *mei* and *meiyou* in A-not-A questions is shown in (61) (see also footnote 4). We assume here that *mei* is a reduced form of *meiyou*, which has a verbal element *you* “to have” in it.

(61) a. *ta* lai-meilai
      he come-not-have
      “Did he come?”

b. *ta* lai-meiyou-lai
      he come-not-have-have
      “Did he come?”

The pattern of distribution shown above also has a dialectal split: in Cantonese and Taiwanese, the negation markers used in NPQs and those used in A-not-A questions are in complementary distribution; in contrast, Mandarin negation markers do not show complementary distribution (aside from *meiyou*, which we will come back to immediately below). The complementarity in
Cantonese and Taiwanese as well as the dialectal split may appear to be mysterious. However, we suggest that the analysis proposed in this paper together with Huang’s (1991) analysis of A-not-A questions provide an answer to the above distribution.

Huang (1991) proposes that the formation of A-not-A questions involves a PF-insertion of a negator. In other words, the negator in A-not-A questions does not enter into the computation. At PF, the insertion of a negator is to occupy the ‘not’ slot in A-not-A questions. It is thus reasonable to assume that only ‘pure’ negators can be inserted. The complementary distribution in Cantonese and Taiwanese is thus explained. In both dialects, the negators that can be used in NPQs have dual status. They thus do not qualify as ‘pure’ negators. On the other hand, in Mandarin, negators differ from the ones in Cantonese/Taiwanese in that they are simple NEG elements and thus they can also be inserted in A-not-A questions. Note that metyou cannot be inserted in A-not-A questions because metyou is a composite form consisting of both the negator mei and the verb you “to have”. Thus PF insertion will only see mei listed as a NEG.

The analysis of NPQs presented above thus provides a rather simple account of the complementarity noted as well as the dialectal split in terms of A-not-A questions.

6. Conclusion

We have argued that the main dialectal difference between Mandarin and Cantonese/Taiwanese is due to the NEO^0-to-C^0 movement in the former and the lack of it in the latter. We have seen a basic difference in terms of agreement patterns in these two types of dialects. Sentences involving embedding further support our claim that in Mandarin, there is NEO^0-to-C^0 movement.

The dialectal variation we have seen may be traced back to historical development of negation markers as question particles. It appears that Cantonese/Taiwanese maintains the grammaticalization of negation markers as question particles and thus these negation markers can be simply inserted in the C^0 position to form a yes-no question. On the other hand, Mandarin negation markers are no longer question particles. The only ‘trace’ of the grammaticalization of negation markers as question particles that remains in this dialect can be seen in the C^0 feature [Q, NEG], which triggers the movement of NEG in NPQs.

Lastly, we would like to point out that NPQs are not just found in Chinese dialects. It appears that NPQs exist in languages such as Cambodian, Thai and Vietnamese:

Cambodian (Griffith p.c.).

(62) a. Sowan min mœel sœphín nul tœe
    Sowan not read book that NEG
    “John didn’t read the book.”

b. Sowan mœel sœphín nul tœe
    Sowan read book that Q
    “Didn’t John read the book?”

Thai (Noss 1964)

(64) thaen kaa-tœe lìg: māj
    want coffee more yes/no
    “Will you have some more coffee?”

(65) phôm māj-khaœj pøj: leaj
    I not-have go there
    “I have not gone there.”

Vietnamese (Huyah p.c.)

(66) a. John có hồn Mary không
    John has kiss Mary not
    “Has John kissed Mary?”

b. John không có hồn Mary
    John not has kiss Mary
    “John has not kissed Mary.”

If our analysis is correct, it may be extended to explain these sentences in languages other than Chinese. We leave this for future research.
Appendix

Comparison of NPQs with other kinds of yes-no questions

We examine here in detail the properties of NPQs and show that they are interpreted as other types of yes-no questions (such as Mandarin ma questions, tag-questions, haishi-questions, A-not-A questions, VP-not-V questions, VP-VP questions), but that they differ from other types of yes-no questions. We will discuss Mandarin and Taiwanese, the former a representative of the movement type in NPQs, the latter a representative of the base-generation type in NPQs.

Mandarin yes-no questions

Before we compare NPQs with the other types of yes-no questions, we first provide a brief overview of some yes-no question types in Mandarin.

(67)  
Ma-question
\[\text{ta lai-le ma} \]
he come-PERF q
"Did he come?"

(68)  
Tag-question
\[\text{ta hui lai, bu shi ma} \]
he will come not be q
"He is coming, isn't he?"

Ma-questions are characterized by the sentence final particle ma. As we can see, ma is also needed in tag-questions.

(69)  
Haishi-question
\[\text{ta lai haishi bu lai} \]
he come or not come
"Is he coming or is he not coming?"

(70)  
A-not-A question
\[\text{ta xihuan-bu-xihuan ni} \]
he like-not-like you
"Does he like you?"

(71)  
VP-not-V question
\[\text{ta xihuan ni-bu-xihuan} \]
he like you-not-like
"Does he like you?"

(72)  
VP-VP question
\[\text{ni chi fan chi mian} \]
you eat rice eat noodle
"Do you want to eat rice or noodle?"

VP-VP questions do not use any question particle or conjunction. The question is indicated by the juxtaposition of VPs.

Comparisons

Besides the two differences noted in section 1.1. in the main text, there are other differences between NPQs and the other types of yes-no questions.

Negated vs. non-negated verb

Some yes-no questions have a constraint on the verb form. In particular, the constraint is that the verb has to be affirmative.\(^{11}\) For example, in NPQs, the verb has to be affirmative as shown in (73).\(^{12}\)

(73)  
a. ta qu bu
he go not
"Is he going?"

b. *ta bu qu bu
he not go not
"Isn’t he going?"

c. ta ku-le meiyou
he cry-PERF not-have
"Did he cry?"

d. *ta meiyou ku meiyou
he not-have cry not-have
"Didn’t he cry?"

The same restriction can be found in A-not-A questions and VP-not-V questions, as in (74) and (75).

---

\(^{11}\) Some yes-no questions are irrelevant in this sub-section, such as ma-questions, tag-questions and haishi-questions. The ma-questions are irrelevant because the questions cannot be considered to consist of a yes and a no part. As for tag-questions and haishi-questions, there is no requirement on the co-occurrence of yes and no parts. VP-VP questions require that both VPs consist of non-negated verb forms.

\(^{12}\) The NPQs with the negation marker m in Taiwanese are an exception. See example (86) for details.
(74) a. ta qu-bu-qu
he go-not-go
"Is he going?"

b. *ta bu qu-qu
he not go-go
"Isn’t he going?"

c. ta you-meiyou qu
he have-not-have go
"Did he go?"

d. *ta meiyou qu qu
he not-have go go
"Didn’t he go?"

(75) a. ta xihuan ni-bu-xihuan
he like you-not-like
"Did he like you?"

b. *ta bu xihuan ni-xihuan
he not like you-like
"Did he like you?"

c. ta kan-wan nei-ben shu meiyou kan-wan
he read-finish that-cl. book not-have read-finish
"Did he finish reading that book?"

d. *ta meiyou kan-wan nei-ben shu kan-wan
he not-have read-finish that-cl. book read-finish
"Did he finish reading that book?"

This property alone may indicate that NPQs seem to be related to A-not-A questions or VP-not-V questions. However, we saw earlier that NPQs cannot be derived from A-not-A or VP-not-V questions: preverbal adjuncts and ne, which may appear with these question types, may not appear in NPQs.

Co-occurrence with aspect markers

Each Chinese dialect has a number of aspectual markers. As already pointed out in section 2.1., aspect markers can appear in NPQs, as shown in (76).

(76) a. ta qu-guo meiyou
he go-exp not-have
"Has he been there?"

b. ta qu-le meiyou
he go-perf not-have
"Has he gone?"

However, neither A-not-A questions nor VP-not-V questions take aspectual markers.

Note that in (77b), at a first glance, there seems to be co-occurrence between A-not-A questions and aspectual markers. However, comparison of (77b) and (77a, c) shows that the verb which has the A-not-A form cannot take aspectual marking. In (77b), it is the aspectual marker you “have” which carries the A-not-A form while the main verb qu “go” takes the aspectual marker guo.

So far we have seen that NPQs differ from the other types of yes-no questions. If NPQs are derived from reduced forms of the other yes-no questions, the asymmetry noted above cannot be accounted for.

Conflict of presupposition

We have so far shown that NPQs differ from A-not-A, VP-not-V and VP-VP questions. Now let us turn to the difference between NPQs and ma-questions. As noted in Li & Thompson (1981), ma-questions serve to question the validity of a statement (example (78) is from Li & Thompson 1981:549).

(78) Speaker A:
ni haoxiang shou-le yidian
you seem thin-perf a little
"You seem to have lost some weight."
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b.  daodi ta hui qu bu
    really he will go no
    “Is he really going?”

c.  daodi ta lai-le meiyou
    really he come-PERF not-have
    “Did he really come?”

Taiwanese yes-no questions

Compared to Mandarin, Taiwanese has ma-type questions, tag-questions and haishi-type questions, but not A-not-A questions (except in cases with the copula si “be”), VP-not-V questions, and VP-VP questions. However, Taiwanese has other kinds of yes-no questions like gam-questions and VP-a-VP questions. 14,15

(82)  Tag-question
      i m lai, si bo
    he not come be not-have
    “He is not coming, is he?”

(83)  Haishi-type question
      i e lai asi be lai
    he will come or not-PUT come
    “Is he coming or is he not coming?”

(84)  Gam-question
      i gam e lai
    he q will come
    “Is he coming?”

(85)  VP-a-VP question
      i jiak beng a jiak miN
    he eat rice or eat noodle
    “Does he want to eat rice or noodle?”

14 We will not discuss all kinds of Taiwanese yes-no questions here.

15 For a discussion of the pragmatic function of various Taiwanese sentence-final question particles, see Chen (1993).
Comparisons

Let us now turn to the comparison between Taiwanese NPQs and these other types of yes-no questions.

Positive and negative

Except for m, in NPQs the verb has to be in a non-negation form, as shown in (86).

(86) a. i ki/ m ki m
    he go/not go not
    "Is he going? Is he not going?"

b. i u/*bo ki bo
    he have/not-have go not-have
    "Did he go?"

c. i e/*be ki be
    he will/not-FUT go not-FUT
    "Will he go?"

Since Taiwanese has neither A-not-A nor VP-not-V questions, no comparison can be made with such sentences. This constraint is irrelevant for hio-questions, sibo-questions, asi-questions and gam-questions. The hio- and gam-questions are irrelevant because they cannot be treated as consisting of a yes and no part. As for sibo-questions and asi-questions, there is no requirement on the co-occurrence of yes and no parts. VP-a-VP questions require both VPs to consist of negation or non-negation verb forms.

Non-temporal preverbal adjuncts

As with Mandarin NPQs, in Taiwanese it is possible for NPQs to have preverbal adjuncts, as in (87).

(87) a. i tian tian ki m
    he often go not
    "Does he go often?"

b. i yiting e ki be
    he certainly will go not-FUT
    "Will he certainly go?"

Note that, except for VP-a-VP questions, other types of Taiwanese yes-no questions can also take non-temporal/locative preverbal adjuncts.

(88) a. i ying lai a hio
    he already come-PERF Q
    "Did he already come?"

b. i jin jiaN m lai, shi bo
    he really not come be not-have
    "He is really not coming, is he?"

c. i yiting e lai asi be lai
    he certainly will come or not-FUT come
    "Is he definitely coming or is he definitely not coming?"

d. i gam tiaN tiaN e lai
    he Q often will come
    "Is he coming often?"

(89) ?* i tiaN tiaN jiak beng a jiak m iN
    he often eat rice or eat noodle
    "Does he often eat rice or noodles?"

Aspectual markers

In Taiwanese NPQs, aspect markers can appear, as in (90).

(90) a. i ki gue bo
    he go EXP not-have
    "Has he ever been there?"

b. i jiak-a boe i
    he eat-PERF not-yet
    "Has he eaten?"

However, aspect markers cannot appear in VP-a-VP questions, though they can occur in the other types of Taiwanese yes-no questions.

(91) * i ki gue migok a ki gue yinggok
    he go EXP America or go EXP England
    "Has he been to America or England?"
Co-occurrence with other particles

According to Chen (1993), there are at least nine kinds of sentence final question particles in Taiwanese. They are -han, -hio, -hon, -le, -lio, -lo, -ne, -ni, and -o. With respect to -hio, Chen claims that it cannot appear in WH-questions, disjunctive questions, hypothetical questions, truncated questions, and confirmation questions. It seems that NPQs and non-gam questions are all barred from taking this question particle.

(92) a. *i ki m hio
    he go not q
    "Does he go?"

b. *i u ki bo hio
    he have go not-have q
    "Did he go?"

c. *i e ki be hio
    he will go not-fut q
    "Will he go?"

(93) a. *i jinjiaN m lai, si bo hio
    he really not come be not-have q
    "He really isn't coming, is he?"

b. *i yiting e lai asi be lai hio
    he certainly will come or not-fut come q
    "Will he certainly come or not come?"

c. ?i gam tiaNiaN e lai hio
    he q often will come q
    "Is he coming often?"

d. *i jiaK beng a jiaK miN hio
    he eat rice or eat noodle q
    "Does he eat rice or noodles?"

Presupposition

According to Chen (1993), -hio is used to indicate strong assumption, but NPQs are used in neutral contexts.

Co-occurrence with gamgong and daote

Lastly, the adverbials like gamgong “really” can appear only in hio-type questions, whereas adverbials such as daote “on earth” can occur only in NPQs.

(94) a. i gamgong m lai hio
    he really not come q
    "Does he really not come?"

b. *i daote m lai hio
    he on-earth not come q
    "Is he really not coming?"

(95) a. *i gamgong u lai bo
    he really have come not-have
    "Did he really come?"

b. i daote u lai bo
    he on-earth have come not-have
    "Did he really come?"

The comparisons discussed above have clearly shown that while NPQs and certain other questions are semantically yes-no questions, they are syntactically very distinct from one another.

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