Negated Biased Questions in English and Their Equivalents in Macedonian

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Abstract

In this paper we present the results of our analysis of English biased questions with negation (*Isn't Ivan at home?*) and their Macedonian equivalents. English negated questions have different readings depending on their discourse goals: (a) the "outer" questions verify the truth of the proposition encoded in the question, (b) the "inner" express speaker disbelief and reluctance to accept the contextual counter evidence. The two readings are disambiguated by several Macedonian translational equivalents: negated questions with the negation particle *ne* 'not' (*Ne e Ivan doma?*), questions introduced with the interrogative particles *neli* (*Neli e Ivan doma?*) and *zar/em* (*Zar Ivan ne e doma?*). *Neli*-questions assert the truth of the propositional content, while *zar*-questions challenge the truth of *p*. The analysis shows that the choice of an appropriate translation equivalent is determined by the discourse function of the biased question and the interplay of prior speaker belief and current contextual evidence.

Key words: polar questions, epistemic bias, negation, context, speech acts, English-Macedonian analysis

1 Introduction

In this paper we compare English polar questions that contain negation with their translational equivalents in Macedonian, a south Slavic language. We consider both negated polar questions in which the negation is attached to the fronted operator (*Isn't Bob at home*?) and those in which the negation is not fronted (*Is Bob not at home?*).

Polar questions (PQs) ask the interlocutor to confirm the truth of the proposition encoded in the question by providing either a positive or a negative response. There is a difference between positive and negated polar questions (Quirk et al. 1985; Büring and Gunlogson 2000; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; AnderBois 2019, among others). It is generally accepted that positive polar questions (PPQs) are neutral as to what answer is expected (1). Therefore, they are simple speech acts functioning as requests.

(1) Has Peter arrived?

Cross-linguistically, polar questions may be realized by prosodic and grammatical means. English makes use of marked intonation (High-Low) and specialized interrogative syntax involving obligatory subject-operator inversion. The operator is recruited from auxiliary verbs (*do, be, have*), modal verbs (*will, would, can, could, should, must etc*) and the copula *be*.

Polar questions in standard Macedonian are also marked by intonation, while other means such as word order changes and use of the focus particle *li* are not obligatory (2a).[1] The sentence-initial question particle *dali* (2b) can also be used in more formal registers (Lazarova-Nikovska 2003, 137).

(2) a. Dojde   **li**   Petar?
         come-AOR.3SG   Q   Peter
     b. **Dali**   dojde   Petar?
         Q   come-AOR.3SG   Peter
         'Has Peter arrived?'

Negated polar questions (NPQs) ask for confirmation of the speaker's belief in the truth of the proposition. The speaker holds a prior belief and has knowledge of the speech situation which allows her to presuppose the answer to the posed question, so "the speaker is predisposed to accept one particular answer as the right one" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 828). This creates

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1   Examples 2 – 8 are provided by the authors.

bias towards one of the poles on the epistemic scale, reflected in the form and prosody of the question. The accepted view in the literature is that "[n]egative interrogatives are normally used to ask biased rather than neutral questions" (Quirk et al. 1985, 808), which means that they usually indicate "the questioner's predisposition to think that one or other answer is the right one" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 879). Thus, NPQs have different conversational goals from PPQs. The main communicative goal of such "biased" questions is to get confirmation of the expected answer so that this information becomes part of common ground. In (3), relying on knowledge shared with the interlocutor(s) (e.g., speaker comes home and does not see Peter whom she expected to be there), the speaker believes that a negative answer is more likely, though her prior belief was most probably positive.

(3)   **Hasn't**   Peter   arrived?

Depending on the position of the negation marker, English formally distinguishes two types of negated polar questions: high and low. The former type (3) contains the preposed contracted negation fused with an operator "into one grammatical word" (Quirk et al. 1985, 809) in the presubject position. In low negation questions (4) the negation marker remains in the postsubject position, detached from the inverted operator. The negation scopes over the predicate.

(4)   Has   Peter   **not**   arrived?

It has been suggested in the literature on English NPQs that these two types of questions differ semantically and pragmatically (e.g., Vavassori 2001; Romero and Han 2004; AnderBois 2019). However, Quirk et al. (1985, 809) point out register considerations in their distribution: the high negation type is preferred in spoken English, while low negation questions are considered rather formal.

In Macedonian, both types of negated polar questions may be rendered by a negated question with the focused preverbal marker of negation (5). Strong bias is conveyed with negative questions headed by the question particle *neli* or *zar*[2] depending on the speaker's communicative intent and contextual factors. They will be referred to as *ne-*, *neli-* and *zar*-questions. The examples below indicate that they have different communicative functions: the *neli*-question, similar to tag-questions, is used to elicit addressee's agreement about the truth of the proposition, while the *zar*-question expresses failed expectation and surprise. The accent falls on the negation marker *ne*.

2   This particle is also encountered in the longer form *zarem*, but the difference between the two seems to be of stylistic nature, which is beyond the topic of this paper.

(5)   **Ne**   dojde   (li)   Petar?
      NEG   come-AOR.3SG   Q   Peter

(6)   Neli   dojde   Petar?
      Q   come-AOR.3SG   Peter

(7)   Zar   **ne**   dojde   Petar?
      Q   NEG   come-AOR.3SG   Peter

      '**Hasn't** Peter arrived?'

Bias is also expressed in so-called declarative questions (8) without interrogative syntax, both in English and Macedonian. These intonationally marked questions are excluded from the analysis.

(8)   Peter   has   already   arrived?
      Petar   veḱe   došol?
      Peter   already   come-PRF.3SG

In the following constructed dialogue the same biased question (as a reaction to the prejacent statement) has several Macedonian translational equivalents (stressed words are bolded). Depending on the context, the structures foreground different discourse goals: *neli* in (9) highlights speaker's prior knowledge of the interlocutor's affection for cats, while *ne* and *zar* stress that speaker belief is contradicted.

(9)   A: These stray cats get on my nerves.
              'Me nerviraat uličnite mački.'

      B1:   Don't you   **like**   cats?   You've   said many times you do.
              'Neli   **sakaš**   mački,   samata   kažuvaše.'
              Q   like-PRS.2SG   cats   yourself   say-IMPRF.2SG
              'Gi   sakaš,   neli?'
              3PL.ACC.CL   like-PRS.2SG   Q
              'You like them, don't you?'

      B2:   Don't you   **like**   cats?   /   Do you **not** like cats?
              '**Zar/Ne**   sakaš   **mački**?'³
              Q/NEG   like-PRS.2SG   cats
              'Tolku   se   ubavi.'
              so   be-PRS.3PL   cute.PL
              'They are so pretty.'

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3   The symbol / in the glosses indicates that the translator provided both options.

The asymmetric form-function correlation of English NPQs poses difficulties for Macedonian translators in rendering this type of question into Macedonian. It can also be a problem for English-speaking learners of Macedonian as the choice of an appropriate structure depends on a situational context. In order to offer some practical solutions we decided to investigate the Macedonian translation equivalents of English NPQs used in different conversation contexts in some transcripts of a TV serial (*All My Children*). Our goal is to determine the factors that influence the interpretations of English NPQs and examine how they constrain the possible Macedonian translation equivalents in various situations. This will help to capture the similarities and differences between English NPQs and their Macedonian equivalent structures. We hope this analysis will shed light on the use of English negated polar questions in discourse with a special focus on the variety of pragmatic functions they perform. The results should contribute to a better understanding of English NPQs from a typological perspective and fill the void in the contrastive studies of this phenomenon.

The paper is structured as follows: the next two sections introduce the basic theoretical prerequisites used in our analysis and the methodology of investigation. Section 4 presents the distribution of translation equivalent choices which are further analysed in section 5. A brief conclusion then summarizes the relevant theoretical insights.

2   Theoretical considerations

2.1   Studies on English NPQ

English NPQs have been extensively discussed in view of their distinction from PPQs and their inherent ambiguity. It has been claimed that the distinctions between them are basically of a semantic nature (e.g., Romero and Han 2004; AnderBois 2019). However, there is a general consensus among researchers that the different polar question forms are not equally felicitous in all situations, which necessitates a contextually based approach to these questions (e.g., Quirk et al. 1984; Vavassori 2001; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Hartung 2006; Reese 2007; Roelofsen, Venhuizen and Sassoon 2013; Domaneschi, Romero and Braun 2017, among others). As mentioned above, NPQs, like all biased questions, have a complex pragmatic structure. Reese (2007) argues that English negated polar questions, tag questions and questions with a strong polarity item represent complex speech act type ASSERTION

+ question. The double illocutionary force of such questions contributes to their various discourse functions as indirect speech acts.

The concept of *bias* in polar questions simply denotes "a belief or expectation that a particular answer to the question is the true one" (Reese 2007, 2). However, this notion is more complex. First, there are different types of bias (e.g., Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 880; Reese 2007, 83) depending on what the expected answer stems from: epistemic bias (the speaker's personal beliefs), deontic bias (social norms) and desiderative or bouletic bias (speaker's wishes). Second, it is not always simple to determine what produces the bias that characterizes the question and makes it appropriate for a particular situation: is it related to the structure of the clause (structural factors) or to the immediate and wider context (pragmatic factors)? Though we accept the fact that prosodic and syntactic structure influence the bias in NPQs, we believe that the appropriateness of their use in certain contexts depends on pragmatic factors. Following Reese (2007), along with Huddleston and Pullum (2002), we analyse NPQs in our sample as indirect speech acts.[4]

Furthermore, various factors can be involved in the creation of the bias that characterizes the question as a particular speech act. These factors have been identified and defined differently in the literature on NPQs. In our analysis we consider the following: the speaker's prior belief, contextual evidence and general knowledge the speaker believes is shared among the interlocutors (typical of rhetorical questions).

Bias in polar questions is often identified with the speaker's previous belief or expectations (presuppositions, according to Huddleston and Pullum 2002) regarding the truth of the proposition *p* expressed in the question. Romero and Han (2004) claim that the epistemic implicature in NPQs, that the speaker had a prior belief in the truth of *p*, functions as a logical operator verum. Previous beliefs and expectations can be combined with speaker's goals and desires, playing an important role in the pragmatic function of the question (AnderBois 2019, 7). It has been suggested that NPQs presuppose a positive speaker's belief (e.g., Hartung 2001, 10; Reese 2007, 80). However, the source of a speaker's prior belief has not been considered

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4   Defined by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 862) as questions in which "the propositional content actually expressed differs from that which the speaker intends to convey or questions in which the illocutionary force is different from that normally conveyed by the clause type concerned".

more extensively. Hartung (2007, 84) notes in a footnote that "Büring and Gunlogson (2000) differentiate between the belief of the speaker, which is based on general knowledge about the world and a belief, which is based on recently acquired knowledge".

The implied prior beliefs have to be compared to new information arising in the current discourse situation (contained in a prejacent or otherwise in the situational context), which may provide *compelling evidence* for or against *p,* or be neutral in that respect.[5] It has been shown that different combinations of original speaker bias and contextual evidence bias are linked to specific types of PQs (e.g., Vavassori 2001; Roelofsen, Venhuizen and Sassoon 2013; Domaneschi, Romero and Braun 2017). Regarding the English NPQs, the two formal types with a preposed *n't* and those with uninverted *not*, called high and low NPQs, respectively, have been claimed to reflect underlying semantic and pragmatic distinctions. High NPQs are considered to always express prior speaker bias, while low NPQs can also be used in a neutral context without such bias (Romero and Han 2004).

Romero and Han (2004) suggest that high negated questions are ambiguous between two interpretations, labelled as outer and inner negation. The distinction is conditioned on the interpretation of the scope of negation and contextual factors. In inner negation polar questions (INPQ) negation scopes over the proposition it encodes, while in outer negation polar questions (ONPQ) it scopes over the modal operator. The discussion focuses on the felicity conditions appropriate for each of the readings.

On the INPQ reading, the speaker requires confirmation for the new, contextual evidence for *not p* signalled by the presence of positive polarity items (10a), while ONPQs seek confirmation for *p* admitting negative polarity items (10b).[6]

(10) a.   A: We have to go to the centre for lunch.

B: Isn't there *any* good restaurant around here? (INPQ, double-check *not p*)

  b.   A: I'm starving. Let's have lunch.

B: Yeah. Isn't there *some* good restaurant around here? (ONPQ, double-check *p*)

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5   The concept of *compelling evidence* was suggested by Büring and Gunlogson (2000) and applied in Vavassori (2001), Reese (2007), AnderBois (2019), and others.

6   See Büring and Gunlogson (2000) and Domaneschi, Romero and Braun (2017), among others, for similar conclusions.

INPQs are felicitous in *contradiction scenarios* (a term from Romero and Han 2004, 36), in which contextual evidence contradicts speaker's presuppositions (Vavassory 2001; Büring and Gunlogson 2000; Roelofsen, Venhuizen and Sassoon 2013; Domaneschi, Romero and Braun 2017). Such questions have a complex bias source because the speaker's hope for a positive response is countered by new evidence causing emotional effects. In that respect, Quirk et al. (1984, 809) note: "Because the old expectation tends to be identified with the speaker's hopes or wishes, negatively orientated questions often express disappointment or annoyance."

ONPQs prefer contexts in which the conflict between the speaker's prior belief and contextual evidence is not highlighted, especially in so called *suggestion scenarios* (Romero and Han 2004, 36). In (10b) speaker B indirectly agrees with the previous statement via a suggestion that is based on an epistemic-deontic belief that there must be restaurants nearby. The examples above also show that the two question types depending on the context may have different conversational goals: apart from verifications, ONPQs are generally employed for suggestions and reminders, whereas INPQs often render reproaches and criticisms. The speaker's reluctance to accept the available compelling evidence that contradicts her prior belief manifests in disbelief, surprise, disapproval and indignation. In some contexts, these questions represent complex expressive speech acts conveying surprise-disapproval or admiration-approval depending on their propositional content. Therefore, the context[7] and speaker's conversational goals should be taken into account when interpreting the pragmatics of negated questions (cf. Van Rooij and Šafářová 2003).

2.2   NPQs in Macedonian

Macedonian polar questions, especially those with negation, have been severely understudied. Several studies of yes/no-questions that have come to our attention focus on form, word order in general or the placement of the question particle *li* and/or *dali* (Englund 1977; Rudin et al. 1999; Lazarova-Nikovska 2003), saying very little about the use of the interrogative variants. A more recent study by Jordanoska and Meertens (2018) examines the pragmatic effects of *li* in one type of PPQs. As explained in section 1, apart from the simple inverted question with the negative particle preceding the verb (*ne*-question)

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7   Understood as a combination of speaker belief and contextual evidence (Venhuizen 2010, 19).

and the optional focusing particle *li*,[8] negated polar questions in Macedonian are also realized with question particles, similar to the neighbouring South Slavic languages, especially to Bulgarian and Serbian.[9] We have not found any relevant study on *neli*- and *zar*-questions, apart from some general remarks in grammar books. Topolinjska (2009, 52–53) notes their presuppositional nature, while Minova-Gjurkova (2000, 163–64) delineates their function: *zar* can be used to express wonder and disapproval, and *neli* seeks an affirmative response.

Ne-questions have a broad range of uses. They imply some speaker's prior belief about *p* ranging from very weak to quite strong; moreover, they occur both in neutral and contradiction contexts (11).

(11) Ne   ti   studi   po kratki rakavi?

      NEG   2SG.DAT.CL   feel cold-PRS.3SG   in short sleeves

      'Aren't you cold in a sleeveless top?'

Questions with the particles *zar* and *neli* are particularly marked – epistemically and/or emotionally.[10] Both can be used in positive and negative polar questions but with opposite functions. While *neli* asserts the truth of *p*, *zar* challenges it by reversing the polarity of bias: in positive polar questions it implies a belief that *p* is not true but in negated questions *zar* intensifies speaker's belief in the truth of *p*. *Zar* strongly implies a conflict between the presupposition that *p* (or *not p*) and compelling contextual evidence against this presupposition, generating speaker's surprise that the previous belief has been cancelled. In posing a *zar*-question the speaker wants to make sure whether it is really the case that *p* (or *not p* in negated questions), which gives rise to some additional meaning, such as disbelief, astonishment and dissatisfaction (12), often accompanied with some deontic or bouletic implications. In addition, *zar* is used in tag questions (usually with *ne*) to ask for agreement (*Ama toa e sepak premnogu, zar ne*? 'But it's still too much, isn't it?') or in rhetorical questions (*Zar sakaš da se razboliš*? 'Do you want to get sick?'). In all these situations it can be replaced with a negation-stressed *ne*-question, which has a decreased affective meaning.

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8   The focus particle *li* does not seem to have an effect on the felicity conditions for these questions, although its pragmatic contribution still needs to be investigated.

9   See Dukova-Zheleva (2010) and Rakić (1984).

10   The particle *zar* comes from the Turkish adverb *zahir* 'obviously, of course', 'apparently, possibly' (cf. Vlajić-Popović 2016).

(12)   [B enters the library with her child and is told that children are not allowed.]

    A: Ova   e   biblioteka
            this   be-PRS.3SG   library
            'This is a library.'

    B: I?   Zarem   nemate   detski knigi? (RB)
            and   Q   not have-PRS.2PL   children's books
            'So what? Don't you have children's books?'

The particle *neli* is a blend of the negation *ne* and the focusing particle *li*, resulting from the univerbization of the phrase *ne e li?* 'isn't it' (cf. Popov, Georgieva and Penchev 1994, 54).[11] *Neli*-questions are also biased, implying a positive prior belief. By asking the question the speaker foregrounds this belief (Is it not the case that *p*?), irrespective of the polarity and the strength of the contextual evidence. It seems that with *neli* the speaker "coerces" agreement from the interlocutor(s), appealing to their interpersonal knowledge, be it related to shared background, common experience or previous communication.

The *neli*-question often functions as an assertion and can be used for fulfilling various communication goals, e.g., reproach (13). The use of a *ne*-question instead of *neli* would considerably change the meaning of the utterance.

(13)   Što si barala da odiš do supermarketot?
    'Why did you go to the supermarket?'
    Neli   te   boli   kolkot?[12] (RB)
    Q   2.SG.ACC.CL   hurt-PRS.3SG   hip-DEF
    'Don't you have a hip pain?'

The particle *neli* with rising tone can occur in sentence-final position functioning as a tag-question which requests verification of the assertion (14).[13] In declarative sentences, *neli* is often used as a pragmatic marker in medial position. It entices solidarity by implying that the information in (15) is part of the common ground with the interlocutors.

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11   It has similar functions as the Bulgarian particle *nali*.

12   The examples marked RB were taken from the stories by Rumena Bužarovska.

13   As Quirk et al. (1985, 811) note, tag-questions express "maximum conduciveness towards positive or negative orientation".

(14) Petre   dojde,   neli?

      Peter   come-AOR.3SG   Q

      'Peter has arrived, hasn't he?'

(15) Petre   neli   dojde.

      Peter   Q   come-AOR.3SG

      'Peter y'know has arrived.'

3   Research questions and methodological procedure

Since *zar*- and *neli*-questions perform opposite conversational goals, they may not be equally appropriate in some situations. However, they can often be used felicitously in the same context, because each highlights different aspects and consequently expresses different speaker intents. For instance, in a negated variant of (13) *zar* can replace *neli* conveying reproach. It seems that the outer negation reading is rendered with *neli*-questions, while inside negation interpretation overlaps with *ne*-questions and *zar*-questions. Our analysis of possible translation equivalents of the English NPQs aims to test this assumption by providing answers to the following research questions:

(a) Are *ne*-, *neli*- and *zar*-questions the most frequent Macedonian translation equivalents for the English NPQs?

(b) What contexts do *ne*-, *neli*- and *zar*-questions prefer?

(c) In which contexts are *zar*-questions and *neli*-questions mutually replaceable?

To answer these questions, we examined the uses of negated questions in the transcript of the American soap opera *All My Children* from 2001. This text of around 300,000 words consists of short dialogues on various subjects that concern the protagonists of the show. The familiarity relations reflected in the language use come from the speakers' similar social backgrounds, kinship and friendship ties.

The sample was compiled from all negated questions found in the above text. The bulk (109) are the high negation type, while low negation questions are underrepresented (only four examples). The 16 declarative negated questions were not analysed because they lack interrogative syntax. All examples were translated into Macedonian by two highly-skilled professional translators. The original questions and their translations were stored in a database for the next

step of the analysis, in which the translation variants were classified according to the translational strategy applied. In some cases, the translators offered several choices of these strategies.

In the first stage of the analysis we counted the different types of translation equivalents the translators suggested for the English NPQs. In some cases, the translators offered several choices of these strategies, which complicated the classification. We counted the combinations of translational equivalents to see which Macedonian forms and combinations of forms were chosen and in what ratio. In the second stage, we looked at the pragmatic functions of the negated questions in context in order to identify the factors that determined the choice of a particular combination of translational equivalents for each English original negated question.

4   Results

In this section we present the translation equivalent option for the 114 English NPQs as offered by the two translators. Their number exceeds the total number of examples in the sample because in some cases the translators offered more than one translation. As pointed out above, an NPQ in English can be variously interpreted depending on the speaker's intent, while Macedonian tends to pattern specific structures with particular communicative goals. Table 1 shows the number of options chosen by each translator. The total score provides data that answers the first research question: the most frequent Macedonian translation equivalents for the English NPQs are *ne-*, *zar-* and *neli-* questions.[14] It is, however, obvious that the translators differ in their preferences: the first translator opted more often for *zar-*, while the second favoured *ne-*questions. Since *ne-*questions have a broad range of use, as noted in section 2.2, they may be adjusted to many situations. Given that the translators had only the text at their disposal (i.e., without sound and video recording), some speech situations in which the examples occurred may have been interpreted differently. Furthermore, different interpretations of the same NPQs may well be attributed to their ambiguity or vagueness, as they simultaneously accomplish several conversational goals.

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14   In some examples these particles were used as tags. Though tag-questions are in some respects different, we do not discuss them separately here due to a lack of space.

Table 1. Translation options used by translators.

Translation option[15]	*ne*	*zar*	*neli*	*posQ*	*daQ*	*da ne*	*excl*	*contQ*
Translator 1	44	63	40	7	0	1	4	0
Translator 2	73	5	21	9	5	3	3	3
Total	117	68	61	16	5	4	7	3

The other types of translation equivalents suggested by the translators are more distinct and suitable for specific contexts. PosQs are mainly used when the translator chooses opposite polarity (16), or the negation occurs in the complement clause (17).

(16) Isn't that right, Greenlee?
      'Taka   li   e   Grinli?'
      so   Q   be-PRS.3SG   Greenlee

(17) Don't you think I know that?
      'Misliš   ne   znam?'
      think-PRS.2SG   NEG   know-PRS.1SG

Questions with the modal particles *da* and *da ne* are multifunctional (Mitkovska, Bužarovska and Ivanova 2017, 60–61). Polar questions combine modality and positive bias to accomplish hedging functions. *Da*-questions are translations of the negated questions with a modal verb (18).[16] All five uses of *da*-questions have the force of suggestions, whereas *da ne*-questions (19) are mild reprimands.

(18) Joe, can't you just tell Josh that you were mistaken?
      'Džo,   a   da   mu   kažeše   na Džoš
      Joe   but   SBJ   3DAT.M.CL   say-IMPRF.2SG   to Josh
      deka   si zgrešil?'
      COMP   err-PRF.2SG

(19) Isn't that a little harsh?
      'Da   ne   si   malku ostar?'
      SBJ   NEG   be-PRS.2SG   little harsh

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15   Abbreviations: *ne* – *ne*-questions, *zar* – *zar*-questions, *neli* – *neli*-questions, *posQ*- positive polar questions, *daQ* – *da*-questions, *da ne* – *da ne* questions, *excl* – exclamatory sentences, *cont*Q – content questions.

16   The translation is preceded by the discourse particle *a* which blends the meaning of 'but' and 'and' conveying 'how about'.

Exclamatory sentences feature as translation equivalents for the NPQs expressing admiration (20). They do not contain a negation marker, but degree (intensifying) particles (*baš* 'so', *kolku* 'how'). The three negated content questions (21) are rhetorical.

(20) Well, aren't they pretty.
      'Baš   se   ubavi.'
      so   be-PRS.3PL   pretty.PL

(21) Don't you get it?
      'Kako   ne   razbiraš?'
      how   NEG   understand-PRS.2SG

The combinations of structures chosen for an English NPQ by the two translators are presented in Table 2. They indicate which translation equivalents may be adequate for certain uses of these questions. The fact that *zar*- and *ne*-questions were by far the most frequently suggested as alternative options (35%) corroborates their semantic proximity: both imply a prior speaker belief contradicted by situational evidence (section 2.2). *Ne*-questions achieve a similar interpretation as *zar*-questions via intonation and emphatic stress on negation. Given that our sample is based on a written text this issue cannot be addressed in the present paper.[17] However, since *ne*-questions do not necessarily require contradicting evidence, they can overlap with *neli*-questions, which occurred as the second most frequent combination in our sample (about 10%).

Table 2. Distribution of translation equivalent combinations (TECom) in the sample.

TE-Com	*zar/ne*	*ne/ne*	*ne/neli*	*zar/neli*	*zar/ne/neli*	*neli/neli*	*neli/excl*	*daQ/ne or zar*	*ne/da ne*	*posQ/neli*	*posQ/posQ*	*other*	Total
Nr.	42	9	12	5	10	8	7	5	3	3	2	13	119
%	35	7.6	10	4	9	6.7	6	4	2.5	2.5	1.7	11	100

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17   More on the role of intonation in the derivation of bias see Asher and Reese (2007).

The nine cases where both translators chose *ne*-questions do not come as a surprise, but the translation options of *zar* and *neli* for the same example need to be further explained. In eight cases both translators opted for a *neli*-question, but a tag-question was used six times by the second translator and once by the first one. This indicates that the particle *neli* functions similarly when placed at the beginning and at the end of the question. In all seven occurrences exclamations were combined with *neli*-questions (three of which are tags) expressing some kind of positive feeling, which the speaker wants to share with the interlocutor by an appeal for agreement (see 20). The use of *zar*-questions by both translators was marginal (only one occurrence). *Zar*, as an emotionally charged particle, is more subject to personal choice, which is reflected in its asymmetrical use by the two translators (see Table 1). In the next section, we examine the pragmatic functions of the English NPQs in relation to the suggested translation equivalents in the sample.

5   Discussion of translation equivalent choices

Biased questions do not function as typical inquiries for information since the speaker's intent is to assert something rather than elicit a response.[18] For that reason they can be considered indirect speech acts with varying degrees of indirectness (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 862). In fact, the bulk of the NPQs in our sample (57/114) are used as rhetorical questions for reinforcement of the speaker's claim, with hardly any expectation for a response. Only in forty examples is the interrogative component highlighted because the speaker requires further explanation, but not all of them receive a response. The borderline between rhetorical and proper (interrogative) NPQs is rather blurred. In seventeen situations both the rhetorical and the interrogative aspect of the question were equally felt. Such cases are categorized here as transitory NPQs.

5.1   Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions (RQs) are treated in the literature as "disguised statements" intended to convince readers/listeners to change or reinforce their beliefs, values and behaviour. The mismatch between their interrogative syntax

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18   See Reese (2007) for the view that a biased question instantiates a complex speech act made up of assertion and question.

and assertive discourse function contributes to their stylistic expressivity (Reimer 2018).

We found 57 rhetorical questions out of a total of 114. About 40% (23 uses) were translated with the combination *zar/ne*-questions, five were translated with *neli*-questions and exclamatives, in eight cases a positive question combined with another positive, a *neli*- or *zar/ne*-questions or all of them. The remaining examples feature *neli*-questions in combination with *neli*-tags or with *zar*-questions and other less frequent options.

The contextual analysis of these questions reveals that the most common combination with *zar/ne*-questions was used in contradiction contexts in which the speaker's prior belief is challenged by new compelling evidence. The negated question in (22) displays epistemic and deontic bias, triggered by a conflict between a common belief (people understand sound arguments) and the addressee's reaction (reluctance to accept speaker's argumentation). Our sample contains a considerable number of questions similar to (22) of the type *Don't you trust me*, *Don't you see*, etc. Such questions intensify the speaker's previous assertion by appealing to the addressee for understanding. Emotionally loaded, they serve as effective persuasion strategies, especially pronounced in *zar*.

(22)   Babe: And you're sure? You're sure this is the right thing for you?
      Jamie: Hey, I don't have a choice.
                Don't you get that?
      T1:   'Zar   ne   sfaḱaš?'
             Q   NEG   understand-PRS.2SG
      T2:   'Ne   sfaḱaš?'
          NEG   understand-PRS.2SG

Deontic bias is more pronounced in RQs with the illocutionary force of criticism or reproach. In (23) the speaker criticizes the interlocutor's refusal of help, which contrasts the common belief that family members should help each other.

(23) Jesse: It's not safe with me being here – it's not safe for your family.

       Tad: You are my family. Why don't you let me do something for you?

                Don't you think you owe me a couple of answers at this point?

       T1:   'Zar ne/ Ne   misliš   deka   treba   da   odgovoriš

                Q NEG/NEG   think-PRS.2SG   COMP   should   SBJ   answer-PRS.2SG

                na nekolku prašanja?'

                to some questions

       T2:   'Zar   ne   mi   dolžiš   nekolku odgovori?'

                Q   NEG   1SG.DAT.CL   owe-PRS.2SG   some answers

Bouletic bias is typically expressed in negated questions with the preposed *can*. In (24), the speaker emphasizes disagreement with the interlocutor with two consecutive appeals directed at his emotional indifference, manifested in his behaviour. Since interlocutor's ability to comprehend speaker's feelings is challenged, these quasi-questions are meant as emphatic criticism.

(24) Greenlee: Mr. Right? Mr. Right? It's you I want.

                 Can't you tell? Don't you see?

       T1:   'Zar ne gledaš?   Ne   se   gleda?'

                 Q NEG   see-PRS.2SG   NEG   REFL   see-PRS.3SG

       T2:   'Zar   ne   razbiraš?   Ne   gledaš?'

                 Q   NEG   understand-PRS.2SG   NEG   see-PRS.2SG

       Ryan: I don't see it.

Critical reminders bordering on reproach are rendered in Macedonian by the combination of *neli-* and *zar*-questions. *Neli* may occur independently, separated from the previous sentence, but still functioning as a tag. In the following verbal exchange (25), the speaker, relying on general knowledge, reminds the interlocutor of her legal obligation which is in contrast with her present behaviour. The *zar*-question conveys a certain degree of irritation which is absent in a more neutral *neli*-tag.

(25) J.R.:   Aunt Phoebe has offered you a second chance… Go for the loot.

    Brooke: You know, you… have a legal and moral obligation to follow all instructions on this will.

                    Isn't that right?

    T1:   'Zar   ne   e   taka?'

              Q   NEG   be-PRS.3SG   so

    T2:   'Neli?'

              Q

Neli-tags were suggested as translational equivalents of RQs in non-contradiction contexts, when the proposition expressing speaker belief is in the previous affirmative clause. The certainty of the speaker's expectation is communicated in the tag (26), which does not require a response.

(26) Kendall: Greenlee, I know what I need.

    Erica: Exactly. Kendall's a Kane, and we triumph over stress.

                    Don't we, sweetheart?

    T1:   'Neli,   draga?'

              Q   dear

    T1:   'Neli,   dušo?'

              Q   sweetheart

Rhetorical questions are not restricted to contradiction contexts. They may occur in contexts in which prior beliefs are confirmed by situational evidence. We found seven instances in which English negated questions express a strong emotional reaction to an entity. The speaker establishes common ground with the interlocutor by an appeal to share her admiration, e.g., for the baby's voice in (27). Macedonian translation equivalents realize these expressive speech acts by a *neli*-question in combination with an exclamative sentence or a declarative polar question. The optional use of a *zar*-question reinforces the emotional force of the question.

(27) Erica: Open your eyes and see your beautiful baby. Can you hear her?

Isn't it the sweetest sound you've ever heard?

T1:	'Neli	e	ova	najslatkiot	zvuk	na	svetot?'
	Q	be-PRS.3SG	this	sweetest	sound	in	world-DEF
	'Zar ne/Ne	e	ova	najslatkiot	glas	na	svetot?'
	Q NEG / NEG	be-PRS.2SG	this	sweetest	voice	in	world-DEF
T2:	'Si čul		posladok	zvuk!?'			
	hear-PRF.2SG		sweeter	sound			

5.2   Interrogative NPQs

The majority of the English negated questions requiring an explanation were found in contradiction contexts (26/40), but ten were in neutral context and in three cases there was contextual evidence for *p*. In contradiction contexts, there is a conflict between speaker's prior belief and contextual evidence. This evidence may be obtained from the interlocutor's previous statement or inferred from contextual clues (e.g., interlocutor's behaviour). The strength of this evidence influences the degree of epistemic conflict. Such questions are considered to have "a so-called inner negation reading in which the speaker wants to double-check *not p*" (Domaneschi, Romero and Braun 2017, 3; Büring and Gunlogson 2000, 3). They represent various speech acts disguised as requests for confirmation of negative assumptions, conveying an affective meaning as they reveal speaker attitude and emotional stance to the current speech situation. In our sample, the translators mostly used *zar-* and *ne*-questions in such contexts, but in eight cases a *neli* option was suggested in combination with both or only with a *ne*-question.

In (28) the conflict is between the speaker's prior belief (about the baby's future name) and strong contextual evidence against it: the speaker's mistaken assumption is overridden by the interlocutor's reaction. The surprised speaker requires confirmation of this contextual implication via a negated question. Both translation equivalents render the speaker's intent properly, with *zar* bringing out the emotional tone (astonishment, disappointment, disapproval) more explicitly.

(28) Maggie: I will turn my life back around after little Myrtle is born.

Bianca: "Little Myrtle"?

Maggie: Well, yeah.

Aren't you going to name the baby after Mrs. Fargate?

T1:	'Zar nema/ Nema	da	go	krstiš	bebeto
	Q NEG / NEG	SBJ	3SG.N.ACC.CL	name-PRS.2SG	baby-DEF

po g-ǵata Fargejt?

after Mrs. Fargate

Bianca: No, I'm not.

In (29) the speaker's assumption based on shared knowledge is in conflict with the contextual evidence. The assumption is realized in a negated question as a reminder laced with concern for the interlocutor.

(29) Greenlee: Don't you have a plane to catch?

T1:	'Zar	ne	treba	da	stigneš	na	avion?'
	Q	NEG	should	SBJ	get-PRS.2SG	on	plane

T2:	'Ne	treba	da	fatiš'		avion?
	NEG	should	SBJ	catch-PRS.2SG		plane

Jackson: I'm not going anywhere.

Greenlee: You need to get back to your clients.

This type of NPQ is often used for challenge and indirect criticism or re-proach, but also for reassurance and motivation (combined with bouletic bias). The following dialogue (30) exemplifies the use of a negated question for encouragement to action. The speaker foregrounds her contextual assumption in a negative question relying on conflict between the situational evidence (getting a message) and common practice (checking messages), prompting the interlocutor to action. Here, too, *zar* sounds more insistent, while the PPQ suggested by T2 is the least persuasive.

(30) Kendall: There's a message.
                         Aren't you going to check it?
         T1:   'Zar nema/ Nema   da   ja   pročitaš?'
                         Q NEG / NEG   SBJ   3SG.F.ACC.CL   read-PRS.2SG
         T2:   'Ќe   proveriš?'
                          will   check-PRS.2SG
         Zach: Go ahead.
         Kendall: No, I don't want to pry, in case it's something personal.

The use of *neli* in contradiction scenarios implies a reminder, ranging from suggestion to persuasion or reproach. The following example (translated with *zar-ne-* and *neli*-questions) involves the use of the deontic *should*. The speaker's knowledge about the interlocutor's obligations is countered by compelling evidence (his presence in the speech situation) yielding an unpleasant surprise. All three translational equivalents have slightly different conversational goals. The *ne*-question is the most neutral as it merely seeks verification of speaker's assumption of the new evidence. The *neli*-question (functioning as a reminder and highlighting the interpersonal knowledge) intends to elicit positive answer, while the *zar*-question (expressing a surprise and disapproval) requires an explanation.

(31) Angie: Shouldn't you be on rounds?
         T1:   'Neli   treba   da   si   na vizita?'
                        Q   should   SBJ   be-PRS.2SG   on rounds
         T2:   'Ne   si   na vizita?'
                        NEG   be-PRS.2SG   on rounds
         Jake: Oh, I switched with Henderson. Someone's got to give you a ride to the doctor.

In a neutral context, the interrogative NPQs in our sample were most often translated either with *ne*-questions in combination with *neli* (32), or *ne*-questions only. They sound like indirect assertions and mainly express a request for confirmation or agreement with speaker's presupposition, but in some there is a tone of criticism or suggestion. *Neli* adds an implication that the interlocutors share prior knowledge, while in *ne*-questions this remains backgrounded.

(32) Greenlee: Isn't he in Europe somewhere?
     T1:   'Neli   e   nekade vo Evropa?'
               Q   be-PRS.3SG   somewhere in Europe
     T2:   'Ne   beše   nekade vo Evropa?'
               NEG   be-IMPF.3SG   somewhere in Europe

There are only three questions that occur in contexts containing evidence for *p*, all of which express different intent and the translation equivalents are of disparate types. However, they all seek agreement or support for the proposition.

5.3 Transitory NPQs

In seventeen cases the interrogative and the assertive component had equal values so it was difficult to determine which prevailed. Conflicting contexts dominate, and – similar to RQs – transitory NPQs underline the speaker's claim, launching a criticism, reproach or persuasion. For most of these questions the *zar/ne* combination was suggested by the translators. In (33) Erin is about to leave, and Zarf tries to persuade her to stay by drawing on conventional wisdom, but she takes it as a genuine question and defies him with a RQ. The difference between *zar* and *ne* is in the strength of the assertion encoded in the question.

(33) Zarf: Don't you yearn for a home that's only light, no more pain?
     T1:   'Zar   ne   kopneeš   po dom kade što ḱe ima samo svetlina
               Q   NEG   yearn-PRS.2SG   after home where will be only light
               i ḱe nema bolka?'
               and no pain
     T2:   'Ne   kopneeš   za dom   koj   e   svetol, bez bolka?'
               NEG   yearn-PRS.2SG after home   COMP be-PRS.3SG bright no pain
     Erin: Don't we all?

Contradiction contexts may admit *neli*-questions (in combination with *ne*-questions) when they present compelling evidence that is hard to refute, thus seemingly "extorting" agreement from the addressee. In (34) the question is meant as a critical reminder that shades into a warning. Another possible situation is when strong bouletic bias is expressed. In (35) the speaker reacts to the interlocutor's rejection and *neli* strengthens the plea, compelling agreement. Some irritation is conveyed in the interpersonal discourse marker *pa*.

(34) David: Isn't it illegal to misrepresent yourself as someone's legal counsel?

    T1:   'Neli   e   nezakonski   da   se   pretstavuvaš

    T2:   'Ne   e   nezakonski   da   se   pretstavuvaš

         Q/NEG   be-PRS.3SG   illegal   SBJ   REFL   represent-PRS.2SG

         kako nečij praven zastapnik?'

         kako nečij advokat?'

         as someone's legal counsel

(35) Tad: Well, couldn't you at least lie a little, for my sake?

    T1:   'Pa neli možeš   barem edna mala laga   da   kažeš,   za mene?'

         well Q   can-PRS.2SG at least one little lie   SBJ   say-PRS.2SG for me

    T2:   'Pa ne   možeš   barem edna mala laga   da   kažeš,   za mene?'

         well NEG can-PRS.2SG at least one little lie   SBJ   say-PRS.2SG for me

Translations with *neli* prevail in transitory NPQs in neutral contexts, where they combine with *ne-* or *zar-*questions. In (36) the speaker comforts the addressee, whose close friend is in a coma, by suggesting she should persist in her belief. The translation with *neli* intensifies the emphatic tone.

(36) Ethan: OK. You need to keep praying and keep believing.

         Isn't that what Bianca would have you do?

    T1:   'Neli e   toa   što   Bjanka bi sakala   da   napraviš?'

         Q   be-PRS.3SG this   COMP Bianca would like SBJ do-PRS.2SG

    T1:   'Ne e   toa ona što   Bjanka bi sakala   da   napraviš?'

         NEG be-PRS.3SG it   that COMP Bianca would like SBJ do-PRS.2SG

6   Concluding remarks

In this paper we showed that English questions with inverted negation are translated in Macedonian predominantly with three forms that express bias: *ne-*, *zar-* and *neli*-questions. The analysis confirmed the initial assumption that they tend to pattern with the two readings of these questions: outer and inner negation. *Neli*-questions mainly render outer negation questions, *zar*-questions express inner negation questions, while *ne*-questions are rather ambiguous and their interpretation may depend on prosodic features. The interplay of two pragmatic factors decides the choice of the translational equivalent: the context and the conversational goal of the question.

As regards the second research question addressing the contextual preferences of these questions, the findings suggest the following conclusions. It was found that *zar*-questions occur predominantly in contradiction contexts often conveying disbelief, indignation and reproach. Therefore, they were used as effective rhetorical strategies in persuasive communication to convince or call for interlocutor's action (examples 22–25). *Neli*-questions, on the other hand, were offered as translational equivalents predominantly in a neutral context, especially in interrogative and transitory NPQs. They possess higher assertiveness as they foreground the speaker's prior belief, which is expected to be confirmed by the hearer. In many cases this expectation results from the implication of some interpersonal knowledge which facilitates building rapport between the interlocutors. In the *ne*-question option of the translation equivalents (as in examples 32–35) there is no such implication, though common knowledge is not excluded.

Concerning the mutual replaceability of Macedonian translational equivalents (the third research question) our results indicate certain tendencies. In several instances we found an overlap of a *zar*- and a *neli*-question as translational options of the same English negated question, which can be accounted for by the translators' foregrounding different conversational goals (see examples 25 and 31). *Ne*-questions seem to be most neutral regarding context preferences as well as emotional effects. They group either with *zar*- or *neli*-questions depending on the type of context they occur in, as well as with both for the same example (e.g., 27, 31), each implying a different speaker intent.

This investigation was conducted on a rather small sample of examples (114), but these examples are not void of authenticity as they reproduce various situations of real life in a dialogic discourse. The research results yielded noteworthy insights not only regarding translational practices but also contribute to theoretical issues. Specifically, the distribution of translational options in Macedonian supports the claims in the literature that English high negation questions have two interpretations. However, these findings should be taken as indications of tendencies in patterning NPQs with certain translational equivalents in standard Macedonian, as they need to be verified using data from a larger number of translators and/or by examining native speakers' judgments. Furthermore, given that prosody and body language play an important role in the interpretation of NPQs, the conclusions require further investigation with an application of contextual clarifications by sound and image.

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