

## Macedonian 'da ne' constructions as distance markers

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This paper looks into discourse functions of constructions containing the modal particle *da* and a negated verb, such as: *Da ne imaš malku kafe?* 'You don't happen to have some coffee, do you?' or *Da ne ti e lošo?* 'You aren't feeling very well, are you?/ Are you feeling well?'

The Macedonian *da*-construction fulfills a wide range of functions in dependent clauses as well as in independent use. According to Kramer (1986: 33) the marker *da* combines subjunctive and optative uses, but has also "spread to include other types of modality and has become the unmarked modal particle." In dependent clauses it functions as non-factive, subjunctive marker, reflecting wishes, orders, prohibitions, assumptions and views in respect to events that may happen in the future (Topolinjska 1995: 138-143). In its independent use Kramer (1986) proposes two modal meanings: directive (optative) (*Da odime!* 'Let's go!') and conditional (*Kamo da znaev!* 'If only I had known.'). She suggests that the former express fulfillable and unfulfillable analytic directives in all persons, which are considered more polite than Imperatives (ibid.: 38). The constructions investigated in this paper belong to this class.

The aim of our research is to investigate the distance expressed in the independent *da*-clauses with a negative marker. The combination of these two modally marked particles results in a number of possible interpretations which depend on various structural and discourse factors. First it is important to distinguish two basic types: interrogative and exclamations. In the interrogative ones the negation is not literally interpreted and as a result the discourse value of the proposition may be quite remote from its semantics. Thus they can function as requests (the examples above), warnings (*Da ne preterale?* 'They haven't overdone it, have they?'), praise (*Da ne si oslabnala?* 'You do seem to have slimmed, haven't you?'), etc. It seems that this indirectness evokes politeness in the sense that they do not impose anything directly. In the exclamations the effect is rather the opposite. The negation has a direct value and conveys straightforward disallowing, which could be more or less powerful. Such clauses are interpreted as advice (*Da ne doagjas!* 'Do not come, I'd say!') or strong prohibition or even threat (*Da ne si izlegol od doma!* 'Don't you dare leave the house!').

Our feeling is that both types of *da*-clauses with a negative marker suggest certain levels of horizontal distance (Spencer-Oatey, 1996) and seem to be related to the concept of face as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987). This should be tested with the native speakers of Macedonian. The research should also give some indications as to the role of person, tense and discourse markers in the level of distancing of the speaker from the proposition expressed in the clause.

### References

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