The Formation of Mandarin Modal-derived "A-Not-A" Interrogatives

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Abstract

This paper concerns the heterogenous nature of Mandarin interrogatives "M(odal)-not-M(odal)s" — a form of "A-not-A" derived from modals and negators — within the theory of Cartography. Analyses of questions initialized with "M-not-M" reveal a finite/non-finite contrast; i.e. an "M-not-M$^{EPI(STEMIC)}$" take a CP complement, while an "M-not-M^{ROOT}" take a TP complement. Adopting the generalization of mapping modals to their finiteness properties , I hereby argue that "M-not-M" interrogatives are separated into two types: (1) "M-not-M^{EPI}" derived at the higher negation position corresponding to the Focus position on the left periphery; (2) "M-not-M^{ROOT}" formed with a lower negator within TP. Under this proposal, the derivation of questions containing pre-subject modals is integrated into the cartographic account that epistemic and root modals are generated within different scopes, against the Modal-as-Verb claim that both kinds of modals undergo internal merges before raising to Foc.

Keywords: Modals; Finiteness; CP-domain