

## Semantic Selection of Interrogatives in Turkish Nominalized Clauses

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**Abstract.** This paper examines patterns of finite nominalized clauses in Turkish with a focus on s(ematic)-selection of interrogative clauses. Finite nominalized clauses in Turkish require verbal disjunction to satisfy s-selection of *polar*-interrogatives. I argue that this pattern is due to a smaller structural size of nominalization, which involves TP and lacks the CP domain. I show that the verbal disjunction spells out a valued [Q]-feature in the *v* head as a result of clause-typing in the absence of the CP domain. The disjunction strategy has a Last Resort nature, as it is obligatory only in embedded nominalized contexts. This claim, in turn, extends to scope of in-situ *wh*-phrases that interacts with s-selection and with types of interrogative operators.

**Keywords.** s(ematic)-selection; nominalized clauses; interrogatives; disjunction; *wh*-in-situ; Turkish

**1. Introduction.** Turkish allows embedded finite clauses to be nominalized with the presence of a nominalizing morphology, which is a commonly attested strategy across the Turkic languages. The Turkish pattern is illustrated in (1), where the morpheme *DIK* heads a finite clause with the proposition-taking predicate *san* ‘to think’.<sup>1</sup>

(1) *Nominalized DIK-clause in Turkish*

Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın elma-yı ye-**diğ**-in]-i **san**-dı.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **think**-PAST  
 ‘Murat thought that Ayla ate the apple.’

Now, observe that the *DIK*-clause must involve a disjunctive morphology in the embedded verb (in the form of *v*-CONJ *v*-NEG) if the matrix predicate requires its complement clause to be *polar*-interrogatives. This pattern is illustrated with the predicate *sor* ‘to ask’ in (2).

(2) *Verbal disjunction for interrogatives in DIK-clause*

Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın elma-yı yi-**yip** ye-**me**-diğ-in]-i **sor**-du.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-CONJ eat-NEG-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **ask**-PAST  
 ‘Murat asked if Ayla ate the apple.’

This observation contrasts with the pattern of CP clauses in (3), where the complementizer *diye*-clause encodes the interrogative information in the question particle *mI*, which I assume to spell out the Force head that is responsible for clause-typing of *polar*-interrogatives (Kim 2022; also see Özyıldız 2016; Kesici 2019 for the view that the question particle *mI* spells out a peripheral functional head in the CP domain).

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<sup>1</sup> Capitalization (e.g., *DIK*) indicates phonological variations in Turkish: *D* alternates between *d/t*; *K* alternates between *k/ğ* (consonant voicing/weakening); *I* alternates between *i/i/u/ü*; and *A* alternates between *a/e* (vowel harmony).

(3) *Question particle for interrogatives in diye-clause*

Murat [<sub>CP</sub> Ayla elma-y1 ye-di **mi** diye] **sor**-du.  
Murat [ Ayla apple-ACC eat-PAST **Q** COMP] **ask**-PAST  
‘Murat asked if Ayla ate the apple.’

Focusing on the contrast between the nominalized *DIK*-clause in (2) and the complementizer *diye*-clause in (3), this paper argues that the presence of verbal disjunction in *DIK*-clauses reflects the smaller size of finite nominalized clauses, which involves the TP-level structure lacking the CP domain. The contrast between two types of embedded clauses is illustrated in (4).

- (4) a. *CP-sized clause* → Force encodes Q      b. *TP-sized clause* → *v* encodes Q  
[<sub>CP</sub> ... TP ... **Force**<sub>polar-Q</sub> C ] **ask**      [<sub>TP</sub> ... *v*<sub>polar-Q</sub> ... T ] **ask**  
⇕ SPELLED-OUT AS      ⇕ SPELLED-OUT AS  
***mI***      **v-CONJ v-NEG**

This paper is organized as follows. I start with properties of nominalized *DIK*-clauses in Section 2, where I demonstrate that they lack the CP domain despite of being finite. In Section 3, I argue that this smaller clause size results in verbal disjunction when s-selection of *polar*-interrogatives is required. This strategy, in particular, instantiates a Last Resort nature, which arises due to the absence of the Force head to realize the [Q]-feature in nominalized contexts. Section 4 extends this claim to patterns of *wh*-interrogatives, where a competition between two types of question operators (*polar*-operator and *wh*-operator) derives differences in *wh*-scope. Section 5 concludes with a brief summary and some implications in a broader context of syntactic theories.

**2. Nominalized Clauses in Turkish.** In Turkish, there are two strategies of nominalizing a clausal argument, illustrated in (5). In (5a), repeated from (1), the *finite DIK*-clause is selected by the proposition-taking predicate *san* ‘to think’. In (5b), the *non-finite mA*-clause is selected by the predicate *iste* ‘to want’, which typically requires a subjunctive, irrealis complement clause.

(5) *Two types of nominalized clauses in Turkish*

- a. Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın elma-y1 ye-**diğ**-in]-i      **san**-di.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **think**-PAST  
‘Murat thought that Ayla ate the apple.’  
b. Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın elma-y1 ye-**me**-sin]-i      **iste**-di.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **want**-PAST  
‘Murat wanted Ayla to eat the apple.’

The two types of embedded clauses in (5) share a lot of common characteristics as *nominalized* clauses (see Borsley & Kornfilt 1999; Kornfilt & Whitman 2011, *among others*, for discussion). They require a genitive case-marking for their subject (here for *Ayla*), a possessive  $\varphi$ -agreement marking, and a case-marking for the entire embedded clauses (here the accusative case *-i*).

2.1. DEFICIENCY OF NOMINALIZED CLAUSES. The *DIK*-clause in (5a) is *finite* in that it specifies its own tense, and that it is selected by proposition-taking predicates such as *san* ‘to think’ or *sor* ‘to ask’. On the other hand, the *mA*-clause in (5b) is *non-finite*, and it is selected by predicates that require an irrealis (tenseless) complement clause. Kornfilt (2003), based on this distinction on finiteness, refers to *DIK*-clauses as *indicative* clauses, and to *mA*-clauses as *subjunctive*

clauses. This view is in line with the claim that nominalized *mA*-clauses involve a *vP*-level structure (e.g., Kornfilt & Whitman 2011), given that no tense/aspect/modality (TAM) marking can be included in *mA*-clauses. This is illustrated in (6).

(6) *No TAM marking in mA-clause*

\*Murat [DP Ayla-nın elma-yı ye-**di**-me-sin]-i iste-di.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-**PAST**-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC want-PAST  
 (intended) ‘Murat wanted Ayla to have eaten the apple.’

*DIK*-clauses, on the other hand, specify their independent tense information. The morpheme *DIK* indicates the non-future tense of the event, which renders *DIK*-clauses ambiguous between the past tense and the present tense interpretation. If the embedded clause were to indicate the future tense, a different morpheme, *AcAK*, must be used as in (7).<sup>2</sup>

(7) *AcAK-clause indicates the future tense*

Murat [DP Ayla-nın elma-yı yi-**yeceğ**-in]-i san-dı.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-**NMZ.FUT**-POSS.3SG]-ACC think-PAST  
 ‘Murat thought that Ayla would eat the apple.’

Although the nominalizing morphemes for finite clauses (*DIK* for non-future; *AcAK* for future) specify their own tense, they cannot include any additional TAM morpheme by suffixation.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, *DIK*-clauses are similar to *mA*-clauses in that they do not allow TAM-suffixation internal to nominalized clauses (see Kennelly 1996, Aygen 2002, Keleşir 2021, *among others*, for deficiency of *DIK*-clauses; also see Demirok & Sağ 2023 for the view that finite clauses may be aspectless in Turkish). This observation is illustrated in (8).

(8) *No TAM suffixation in DIK-clauses*

\*Murat [DP Ayla-nın elma-yı y-**iyor**-duğ-un]-u san-dı.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-**PROG**-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC think-PAST  
 (intended) ‘Murat thought that Ayla was eating the apple.’

We are left with a conundrum. On the one hand, *DIK*-clauses clearly indicate the status of *finite* clauses, in that they are selected by proposition-taking predicates and that they have their own tense specification camouflaged in the form of nominalizer. On the other hand, *DIK*-clauses seem to be deficient, in that they cannot have any additional TAM marking in their verbal domain. This pattern again contrasts with *diye*-clauses, which may include additional TAM markings such as the progressive aspect marking *-iyor* and the past tense marking *-DI* in (9).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I glossed the morpheme *AcAK* as NMZ.FUT. In this sense, it would be more accurate to gloss the morpheme *DIK* as NMZ.NON-FUT. However, for the sake of simplicity, I use NMZ for the nominalizer *DIK* with the past tense interpretation. This choice of glossing convention for *DIK* is irrelevant for the main claim in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> The reason for emphasizing ‘suffixation’ is because it is possible to embed a certain set of TAM morphemes with the help of the auxiliary verb *ol*. See Section 3.2 for more discussion, with respect to the issue of syntactic locality.

<sup>4</sup> There exists a variation as to the acceptability of *diye*-clauses with certain verbs. For example, some speakers find (9) degraded with verbs like *san* ‘to think’ or *söyle* ‘to say’ and prefer the COMP-less clause in this context. While my informants report that (8) is fully acceptable, I leave this issue of variation open for future study.



between non-future and future (also see Kornfilt 2007 for the defective nature of the T head in nominalization with respect to case assignment).<sup>5</sup> This defective T head in turn restricts what can appear inside of *DIK*-clauses. (8) illustrated that TAM markings cannot be suffixed within *DIK*-clauses. In a similar vein, the morpheme *DIK* is in complementary distribution with other TP-level morphemes in the language. For example, the existential predicate *var* ‘to exist’, which shares common properties with the TP-level copula in Turkish, cannot appear under *DIK* in (13).

- (13) *No existential predicate with DIK-clauses* (Kelepir 2021; glosses slightly modified)  
 \*bu ev-de fare var-diğ-in-i  
 this house-LOC mouse exist-NMZ-POSS.3SG-ACC  
 (intended) ‘that there were mice in this house’

Also, so-called high negation, *değil*, cannot appear in *DIK*-clauses in (14). This incompatibility is expected given that *değil* is a TP-level ‘copular’ negation (e.g., Jeretič 2023; Kim 2024).

- (14) *No high negation with DIK-clauses* (Kelepir 2021; glosses slightly modified)  
 \*Ozan-in İstanbul-da değil-diğ-in-i  
 Ozan-GEN İstanbul-LOC H.NEG-NMZ-POSS.3SG-ACC  
 (intended) ‘that Ozan was not in İstanbul’

To summarize, *DIK*-clauses involve TP-level nominalization, given their finite nature and their own tense specification. However, the T head is rendered defective in nominalization (*i.e.*, in the vicinity of D) in that it shows a deficient nature compared to the T head in *diye*-clauses.

**3. Semantic Selection of Polar-Interrogatives in Turkish.** As *DIK*-clauses involve TP-level nominalization, they lack the CP domain although still being construed as *finite* (see Adger 2007; Todorović & Wurmbrand 2020, *among others*, for the view that *finiteness* is not the property of CP, but the matter of *where* this finiteness is encoded, which may vary between vP, TP and CP). The structural schematization for the two categories of embedded clauses is illustrated in (15).

- (15) a. *Finite complementizer diye-clause as CP*  
 Murat [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> Ayla elma-yı ye-di] **diye**] san-dı.  
 Murat [ [ Ayla apple-ACC eat-PAST] **COMP**] think-PAST  
 ‘Murat thought that Ayla ate the apple.’  
 b. *Finite nominalized DIK-clause as TP*  
 Murat [<sub>DP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> Ayla-nın elma-yı ye-diğ-in]]-i san-dı.  
 Murat [ [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-NMZ-POSS.3SG]]-ACC think-PAST  
 ‘Murat thought that Ayla ate the apple.’

The crucial point is that both clauses in (15) are *finite*, and may be selected by proposition-taking predicates. This section presents the claim that morphological reflexes of *polar*-interrogatives in these embedded clauses reflect the structural difference between *diye*-clauses and *DIK*-clauses.

<sup>5</sup> The tense specification in *DIK*-clauses is dependent on the matrix tense, as the tense of *DIK*-clauses is determined on a par with the tense of the matrix event. For this reason, *DIK*-clauses were argued to involve the AspP structure, with the dichotomy of the anterior (*DIK*) and prospective (*AcAK*) aspects (Kennelly 1996; Aygen 2002). While their view fares well with the presented observation, the *defective* TP shares its spirit with the AspP-level structure. In this regard, the choice between the AspP and the defective TP would be a matter of syntactic labels.

3.1. VERBAL DISJUNCTION AS A LAST RESORT. In Turkish, nominalized *DIK*-clauses must include the disjunctive form of the embedded verb when they are selected by the interrogative-taking predicate *sor* ‘to ask’. This observation is repeated in (16).

(16) *Verbal disjunction as polar-interrogatives in DIK-clauses*

Murat [DP Ayla-nın elma-yı yi-yip ye-me-diğ-in]-i sor-du.  
 Murat [ Ayla-GEN apple-ACC eat-CONJ eat-NEG-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC ask-PAST  
 ‘Murat asked if Ayla ate the apple.’

I argue that the presence of verbal disjunction in (16) reflects the smaller size of embedded clauses which lack the CP domain. Recall that complementizer *diye*-clauses<sup>6</sup> require the presence of the question particle *mi* to encode the *polar*-interrogative information in (17a). The same observation holds for matrix-level *polar*-interrogatives in (17b).

(17) *Question particle mi is required for non-nominalized contexts*

- a. Murat [CP Ayla elma-yı ye-di mi diye] sor-du.  
 Murat [ Ayla apple-ACC eat-PAST Q COMP] ask-PAST  
 ‘Murat asked if Ayla ate the apple.’
- b. Ayla elma-yı ye-di mi?  
 Ayla apple-ACC eat-PAST Q  
 ‘Did Ayla eat the apple?’

The structures of interrogative clauses in (17) share a common property that they project the CP domain. I assume that the question particle *mi* spells out the Force head in the clausal periphery (Kim 2022). This assumption follows the cartographic nature of clausal periphery (Rizzi 1997), where the Force head is responsible for clause-typing. Further, I assume that the interrogative information is encoded in the Force head by the presence of a *polar*-operator in Spec,ForceP, which bears the valued [Q]-feature: [*i*Q:*val*]. This valued operator establishes a typical Spec-Head agreement in the ForceP domain (as a clause-typing operation; à la Lasnik & Saito 1984), which values the uninterpretable [Q]-feature in the Force head: [*u*Q:*val*]. The verbal disjunction in (16), on the other hand, is obligatory only in *embedded* and *nominalized* contexts. The difference is that *DIK*-clauses *lack* the CP domain: there is no Force head available for clause-typing. The strategy of verbal disjunction thus has a Last Resort nature in order to morphologically spell out the valued [Q]-feature. In the absence of ForceP, the *v* head bears an uninterpretable [Q]-feature, so that the *polar*-operator agrees with it and values the [Q]-feature in the *v*P domain.<sup>7</sup> Such a Last Resort strategy is necessary in order for the embedded clause (i) to encode the *polar*-interrogative

<sup>6</sup> There are some alternative approaches to the complementation involving the morpheme *diye*. For example, Major (2021) argues that what corresponds to *diye* in other Turkic languages (mainly from Uyghur) is a composite form of *say* verb and the linking morpheme, which gives rise to what looks like a serial verb construction. While I assume *diye*-clauses to be full-fledged CP for the sake of simplicity, my claim hinges on the presence of ‘more’ syntactic structure in *diye*-clauses than in *DIK*-clauses. However, for discussion, see Major (2021) and references therein.

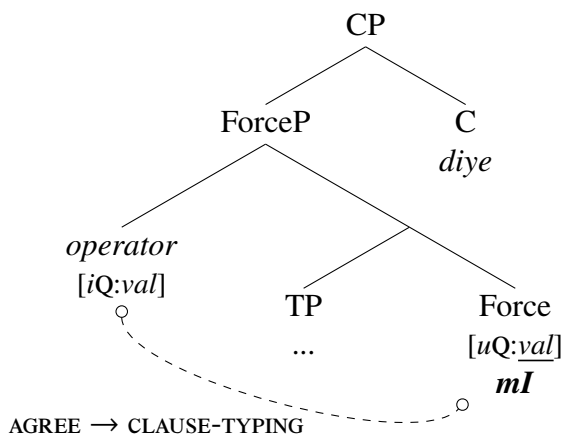
<sup>7</sup> It has been argued that many languages utilize the *v* head instead of the C (Force) head in order to establish the required  $\bar{A}$ -dependency: Rackowski & Richards (2005) for Tagalog; Manetta (2010) for Hindi-Urdu; Van Urk & Richards (2015) for Dinka, *among others*. Their motivation, however, arises mainly from the [EPP]-reason with respect to successive cyclicity. In my claim, the presence of the [Q]-feature in the *v* head in Turkish is required only if the higher CP structure is *not* available: nominalized contexts. I take this observation to reflect a Last Resort nature.

information and (ii) to satisfy s-selection of interrogative clauses. This difference in clause-typing mechanism is roughly schematized in (18), where either the Force head or the  $v$  head serves as the locus of the clause-typing depending on the structural size of clauses.

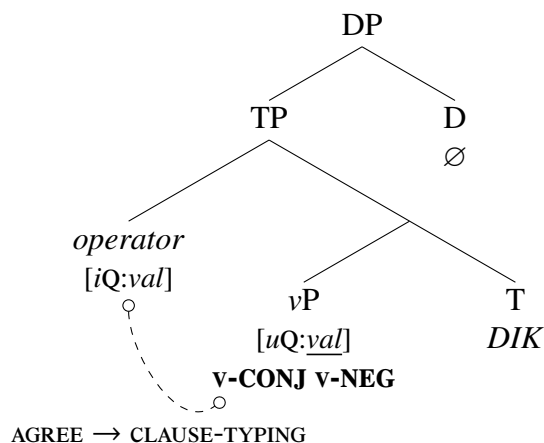
- (18) a.  $\text{Force}_{[uQ:\_]} \xrightarrow{\text{AGREE WITH \& VALUED BY POLAR-OPERATOR}} \text{Force}_{[uQ:val]} \Leftrightarrow mI$   
 b.  $v_{[uQ:\_]} \xrightarrow{\text{AGREE WITH \& VALUED BY POLAR-OPERATOR}} v_{[uQ:val]} \Leftrightarrow v\text{-CONJ } v\text{-NEG}$

The detailed structures are illustrated in (19) and (20), respectively. In (19), the *polar*-operator with the valued [Q]-feature establishes an agreement dependency with the Force head, and the now-valued Force head is spelled out as the question particle. On the other hand, in (20), the same *polar*-operator merges in Spec,TP, the highest verbal projection.<sup>8</sup> In order to establish the clause-typing dependency, the  $v$  head bears the uninterpretable [Q]-feature, which gets valued by agreeing with the *polar*-operator. As a result, the valued [Q]-feature in the  $v$  head is spelled out as verbal disjunction, satisfying s-selection. This reflects the Last Resort nature, as the strategy of disjunction is required only if the Force head is absent due to the smaller size of *DIK*-clauses.<sup>9</sup>

(19) *ForceP* present  $\rightarrow$  question particle



(20) *ForceP* absent  $\rightarrow$  verbal disjunction



3.2. VERBAL DISJUNCTION IS SYNTACTICALLY CONDITIONED. I argued that verbal disjunction has a Last Resort nature, in the sense that it is a strategy to encode the *polar*-interrogative information and to satisfy s-selection in the absence of a structural domain designated to do so (*i.e.*, ForceP). This strategy seems to be obligatory only in limited syntactic contexts as well (*i.e.*, embedded *and* nominalized contexts). If the strategy of disjunction is indeed constrained by syntax rather than by a mere lexical condition to satisfy s-selection, this strategy would prefer the most local way in valuing the [Q]-feature. This claim, then, has an interesting prediction with respect to syntactic locality. Recall that no additional TAM marking may be embedded under *DIK*-clauses

<sup>8</sup> While it is possible to assume that this operator is located in the lower Spec,vP position, I assume it to be in Spec,TP. This is because the vP-level nominalized clause, (*i.e.*, *mA*-clauses), is not able to encode interrogatives. Although this difference might stem from *finiteness*, assuming the *polar*-operator in Spec,vP requires an additional explanation as to why vP-level *mA*-clauses cannot be s-selected as interrogatives with verbal disjunction.

<sup>9</sup> Also, the morpheme *-(y)Ip* used in verbal disjunction is limited in vP-level structure (Kabak 2007). If disjunction targets any bigger structure, the morpheme *veya* ‘or’ must be used. I take the presence of *-(y)Ip* to be a supporting argument for the vP-level disjunction.

by *suffixation* as shown in (8). However, observe in (21) that a certain set of TAM markings (e.g., the progressive aspect *-Iyor*) may be included in the *DIK*-clause if the two morphemes are separated by the auxiliary verb *ol*.

(21) *DIK*-clause allows TAM marking with the auxiliary verb

Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın gid-iyor **ol**-duğ-un]-u san-dı.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN go-PROG AUX-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC think-PAST  
(roughly) ‘Murat thought that Ayla was going.’

The crucial point for the current claim is that two *verbal* elements are present in the embedded clause, namely the lexical verb *gid* ‘to go’ and the auxiliary verb *ol* ‘AUX’. If verbal disjunction is syntactically conditioned such that it requires the closest verbal candidate (*i.e.*, *vP*) to bear the uninterpretable [Q]-feature and to realize the interrogative information, an immediate prediction is that the *higher* auxiliary verb *ol* would appear in disjunction, but not the *lower* lexical verb in interrogative contexts. This prediction is borne out, as the contrast in (22) shows.

(22) *Disjunction appears in the highest verbal element*

- a. \*Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın gid-**ip** git-**m**-iyor ol-duğ-un]-u **sor**-du.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN go-**CONJ** go-**NEG**-PROG AUX-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **ask**-PAST  
(intended) ‘Murat asked if Ayla was going.’
- b. Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın gid-iyor ol-**up** ol-**ma**-dığ-ın]-ı **sor**-du.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN go-PROG AUX-**CONJ** AUX-**NEG**-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC **ask**-PAST  
(roughly) ‘Murat asked if Ayla was going.’

If the verbal disjunction itself is enough for clause-typing of interrogatives, the contrast in (22) is not expected. However, the ungrammaticality of (22a) suggests that the strategy of disjunction is not a lexical constraint but a syntactic one, in that it must appear in the closest syntactic domain to the *polar*-operator in Spec,TP. A similar observation holds true when the *DIK*-clause includes a non-verbal predicate, in which the auxiliary verb *ol* is obligatory. See (23).

(23) *Disjunction appears in auxiliaries with non-verbal predicates*

- a. Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın öğretmen **ol**-duğ-un]-u san-dı.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN teacher AUX-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC think-PAST  
‘Murat thought that Ayla was the teacher.’
- b. Murat [<sub>DP</sub> Ayla-nın öğretmen ol-**up** ol-**ma**-dığ-ın]-ı **sor**-du.  
Murat [ Ayla-GEN teacher AUX-**CONJ** AUX-**NEG**-NMZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC ask-PAST  
‘Murat asked if Ayla was the teacher.’

It is also worth noting that the strategy of disjunction is cross-linguistically attested in signaling *polar*-interrogatives (A-not-A question in Huang 1991; Hagstrom 2006, *among others*). While the presence of the question particle *mi* warrants the interrogative information in *diye*-clauses, the question particle may optionally appear in a disjunctive form, as illustrated in (24).

(24) *Question particle may appear in disjunction*

Murat [Ayla git-ti **mi** (git-**me**-di **mi**) diye] sor-du.  
Murat [Ayla go-PAST **Q** (go-**NEG**-PAST **Q**) COMP] ask-PAST  
‘Murat asked if Ayla went (or not).’







which I take to involve TP-level nominalization lacking the CP domain. The smaller size of finite nominalized clauses must opt for the disjunction strategy, which is a morphological reflex of the valued [Q]-feature in the  $\nu$  head. This strategy shows a Last Resort nature, in that (i) disjunction is obligatory only in nominalized contexts, and that (ii) it is subject to syntactic locality. Second, s-selection of interrogatives may be satisfied either by a *polar*-operator or by a *wh*-operator. Such being the case, variations in *wh*-scope systematically interact with the position of each operator and are constrained by the properties of s-selection depending on the matrix predicates.

5.2. SOME IMPLICATIONS. The present claim has a couple of implications in a broader context of syntactic theories. First, it supports the view that finiteness comes in different sizes of clauses, varying between  $\nu$ P, TP and CP (e.g., Adger 2007; Todorović & Wurmbrand 2020). Turkish *DIK*-clauses, in particular, show that finite nominalized clauses may come in a smaller size than CP. Crucially, the strategy of verbal disjunction is not due to the nominalization itself, but to the smaller size of finite clauses (see Kim to appear for the claim that CP-level nominalization in languages like Korean and Japanese does encode the interrogative information in the ForceP domain). Second, it confirms the view that the Relativized Minimality is subject to the featural content of an intervener (Rizzi 2004), such that *polar*-operators do not act as an intervener for the higher-level *wh*-dependency. However, they do preempt the possible criterial position for *wh*-operators, resulting in systematic variations of *wh*-scope. This view, in turn, confirms that s-selection is indeed responsible for the properties of criterial freezing (Rizzi 2006).

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