What Polar *kyaa* Tells Us About Speech Acts

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I first present the findings of Bhatt and Dayal (2014) about a wh expression *kyaa* in Hindi-Urdu that optionally occurs with polar and alternative questions, but not wh questions:

1a. (kyaa) tum cai piyoge
    What you tea will-drink
    “Will you drink tea?”

1b. (kyaa) tum cai piyoge yaa cofii
    What you tea will-drink or coffee
    “Will you drink TEA or COFFEE?”

1c. *kyaa kaun cai piyegaa
    What who tea will-drink
    “Who will drink tea?’

Polar *kyaa* is analyzed by Bhatt and Dayal as a Speech Act operator QUEST in ForceP, rather than a Y/N question operator. While this is fairly unremarkable for matrix questions, embedded contexts present a more nuanced picture. A close look at the interaction between the distribution of *kyaa* and the nature of embedding verbs and matrix speech acts leads to a revision. An account is presented that derives the distribution without appealing to embedded speech acts. The distribution of polar *kyaa* tracks that of inversion in embedded interrogatives studied by McCloskey 2006, Krifka 2001, 2009 and Dayal and Grimshaw 2009. An account for polar *kyaa* that does not take recourse to embedded speech acts therefore has obvious implications for accounts of embedded interrogatives more generally.