

Optional *wh*-movement and topicalization in Eastern Cham

Eastern Cham (Austronesian: Vietnam) is a *wh*-in situ language, but *wh*-phrases can be moved to the left periphery. We argue that this movement operation is featurally identical to topicalization and orthogonal to the relation between *wh* and C_Q . This contrasts with other instances of apparent optional *wh*-movement in Austronesian that have been attributed to (pseudo)clefts or focus-movement (e.g. Cheng 1991; Potsdam 2006 on Malagasy). Finally, we propose a means by which *wh*-phrases can be topical, via what we call *discourse connectedness* and the inability of *wh*-phrases to supply referential indices.

Three arguments are given that apparent *wh*-movement is identical to topicalization and independent from C_Q . First, in situ *wh*-phrases are interpreted not by phrasal movement, but by movement of the Q-particle (Cable 2010). Moved and in situ *wh*-phrases are ungrammatical in islands (1a), implying that both enter an Agree relation with C ((a) is grammatical in the absence of a *wh*-phrase). However, only overt movement can save a *wh*-phrase from intervention effects such as under the scope of ‘only’ ((1b), cf. Kotek 2014 and others). This ungrammaticality implies that covert phrasal *wh*-movement is not an option. Instead, there can only be covert movement of the Q-particle.

- (1) a. {***thěj**} hi plěj đō bǎŋ pō {***thěj**} ɲǎ?
 who 2SG buy stuff eat COMP who make
 INTENDED: ‘You buy the food that who makes?’
- b. {**ʔjæ paj hlej**} tha ɟěj ʔaj thùəŋ ki {*} mǐn
 soup which only older.sibling Thuận like EMPH
 ‘Which soup does only Thuận like to eat?’

Second, in situ *wh*-phrases do not intervene on the movement of other *wh*-phrases, as in (2). (Note that this is a serial verb construction, not an embedded CP.) If movement of *ket* involved an articulated probe (e.g. [wh,topic]) or a peripheral \bar{A} -feature (cf. Aravind 2017), one would expect at least a mild ungrammaticality effect from the locality violation due to feature inclusion (Friedman, Belletti & Rizzi 2009).

- (2) **ket_j** thùəŋ ʔa **thěj_i** maj bǎŋ t_j
 what Thuận invite who come eat
 ‘Who did Thuận invite to come eat what?’ [wh_j...wh_i...t_j]

Third, moved topics *do* intervene on the movement of *wh*-phrases. When multiple phrases are moved to the left periphery, their dependencies must be nested (cf. Baclawski Jr. & Jenks 2016 on the closely related language Moken). In (3a), the paths of the *wh*- and non-*wh*-phrases nest. But in (b), they are crossed, resulting in strong ungrammaticality. We conclude that the probe that drives this movement cannot involve *wh*.

- (3) a. **han ni_j nǐ?** m:ej **thít hlej_i** thùəŋ ʔa t_i maj bǎŋ t_j
 cake this child woman small which Thuận invite come eat
 ‘Which little girl did Thuận invite to come eat this cake?’ [XP_j...wh_i...t_i...t_j]
- b. ***nǐ?** m:ej **thít nan_i han hlej_j** thùəŋ ʔa t_i maj bǎŋ t_j *[wh_i...XP_j...t_i...t_j]

Despite the structural parallelisms between topicalization and the movement of *wh*-phrases, it still bears explanation how a *wh*-phrase can be topical, as it has been argued that their focal or interrogative properties preclude topicality (cf. Cable 2008). We argue

that these movement operations in fact reflect *discourse connectedness* (DC), a property of certain discourse anaphora such that the antecedent’s sentence *discourse subordinates* the anaphor’s sentence. DC obtains when the event denoted by a sentence is interpreted as a subevent of another, such as (4a–b), but not in sequences of events like (a–b’).

- (4) a. CONTEXT: ‘Look at my father boil one pot of ing-aong[frog sp.] and one pot of frog.’
 b. ja ni kɔʔ kɛit oŋ nən tɔʔ ŋǎʔ nən
 now pot what old.man that PROG make that
 ‘Now, what pot is that old man making [working on]?’ ✓Subordination
 b''. #ja ni kɔʔ kɛit oŋ nən tɔʔ bǎŋ nən
 now pot what old.man that PROG eat that
 ‘Now, what pot is that old man eating?’ ✗Subordination

DC requires the discourse anaphor to project a referential index that binds the DP (cf. Schwarz 2009 on anaphoric determiners). For example, *kɔʔ kɛit* ‘what pot’ above projects a referential index that refers to the set of pots in the context. We show that in certain constructions, such as partitives, that referential index can be overt ((5a); cf. Jenks 2018 on Mandarin appositives). (Note that whole partitives must be DP’s, as they undergo A-movement, such as to subject position in unaccusatives.) *Wh*-phrases are permitted inside partitives (b), but they cannot occupy the referential index position (c). This provides an account for the conflict between *wh*-phrases and topics: they can be bound by a referential index (and pied-piped to the left periphery), but they themselves cannot supply it.

- (5) a. kǎw plɛj [DP ʔɔʔ ni_{i,ref.index} ɕuh pɔh t_i]
 1SG buy mango this 7 CLF
 ‘I bought seven of these mangoes.’
 b. hi plɛj [DP ʔɔʔ ni_{i,ref.index} tum pɔh t_i]
 2SG buy mango this how.many CLF
 ‘How many of these mangoes did you buy?’
 c. *hi plɛj [DP kɛit_{i,ref.index} ɕuh pɔh t_i]
 2SG buy what 7 CLF
 INTENDED: ‘What did you buy seven of?’

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