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How why *is different: wh-in-situ in Krachi*

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Several varieties of *wh*-in-situ have been documented. One type is found in multiple questions in languages like English, where one *wh*- expression moves and the other remains in-situ. A second variety is found in languages like Chinese and Japanese, where *wh*-in-situ is not limited to multiple questions. Languages that employ this strategy often have dedicated interrogative particles. There is also a third variety, where the option to move or freeze the interrogative exists outside the domain of multiple questions and no overt question particle appears in the clause. French has been reported to belong to this class, and Krachi, a Kwa language of Ghana, clearly employs this strategy. As illustrated below, in Krachi, a *wh*- expression may either appear in-situ or in a left-peripheral position. When moved, the constituent accompanies the focus marker *jí*, which is also found outside interrogative clauses.

(1) a. ɔtʃíw   ɛ-mò   **bwatéo momo**?
    woman 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST chicken   which
    'Which chicken did the woman kill?'
  b. **Bwatéo momo** jí   ɔtʃíw   ɛ-mò?
    chicken which   FOC woman 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST
    'Which chicken did the woman kill?'

In Krachi, there is a striking asymmetry with respect to the merge possibilities of *wh*- constituents. Unlike all other interrogatives in the language, *why* may not appear in-situ. It must surface pre-verbally in a left-peripheral focus position.

(2) a. **Ṇse** ɛ-mò   bwatéo?
    who 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST chicken
    'Who killed the chicken?'
  b. ɔtʃíw   ɛ-mò   **ne**?
    woman 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST what
    What did the woman kill?'
  c. ɔtʃíw   ɛ-mò   bwatéo **nɛnɛ**?
    woman 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST chicken how
    'How did the woman kill the chicken?'
  d. **Nání** jí ɔtʃíw   ɛ-mò   bwatéo (***nání**)?
    why FOC woman 3^[RD].SG-kill.PST chicken   why
    'Why did the woman kill the chicken?'

Similar facts obtain in embedded domains, as illustrated below. Space limitations preclude an enriched paradigm, but see Kandybowicz & Torrence (2011) for a

comprehensive data set covering all *wh-* expressions and a variety of embedded contexts, including embedded questions, which display the same pattern as in (1)-(2).

(3) a. Fe nu fé ɔtʃíw ɛ-mò **ne**?
2$^{\text{ND}}$.SG hear COMP woman 3$^{\text{RD}}$.SG-kill.PST what
'What did you hear that the woman killed?'

 b. Fe nu fé ɔtʃíw ɛ-mò bwatéo **nɛnɛ**?
2$^{\text{ND}}$.SG hear COMP woman 3$^{\text{RD}}$.SG-kill.PST chicken how
'How did you hear that the woman killed the chicken?'

 c. *Fe nu fé ɔtʃíw ɛ-mò bwatéo **nání**?
2$^{\text{ND}}$.SG hear COMP woman 3$^{\text{RD}}$.SG-kill.PST chicken why

This asymmetry suggests a fundamental difference between *why* and the other interrogatives of Krachi, and dovetails with similar asymmetries observed for *why* cross-linguistically. For example, Reinhart (1998) observes that *why* in English does not occur in-situ even in multiple *wh-* questions (*Who ate what* versus **Who ate the rice why*). Muriungi (2005) shows that in the Bantu language Kitharaka *why* and *how* are unlike other *wh-* expressions in the language in that they cannot occur in-situ. Similarly, Sabel (2003) shows that in Malagasy, an optional *wh-* movement language, *why* and *how* do not occur in-situ. (Note that *how* can occur in-situ in Krachi, cf. (3b).)

This cross-linguistic comparison raises the issue of how to analyze *why* (and *how* in Kitharaka and Malagasy). Recent analyses account for these kinds of asymmetries by positing that *why* alone is native to the left periphery. Rizzi (2001) argues that unlike other *wh-* expressions in Italian, *why* is base-generated in the left periphery and surfaces higher than the positions occupied by other moved interrogative constituents in the language. Ko (2005) shows that Korean *why* is base-merged in the left periphery and, unlike other interrogatives in the language, does not undergo covert movement to the clausal edge. For Zulu, another Bantu language, Buell (2011) demonstrates that, when *why* occurs postverbally, it occupies a (left-peripheral) position different from that of other post-verbal *wh-* expressions in the language that surface vP/TP-internally.

Krachi thus furnishes additional evidence that among *wh-* expressions, *why* is different. It does not have low or high merge variants, but is rather a dedicated peripheral operator.

References

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