Optional *wh*-movement is discourse-connected movement in Eastern Cham

Kenneth Baclawski Jr. (University of California, Berkeley)

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1. Problem

How is it that *wh*-phrases are optionally moved to the left periphery in Eastern Cham (Austronesian: Vietnam)?

- How can *wh*-movement be optional?
  - It is not (§2); it is pragmatically and featurally identical to topicalization (§3–4)
- How then is topicalization optional?
  - It marks *discourse connectedness*, an anaphoric property (§3)
- When can *wh*-phrases be anaphoric?
  - If they are pied-piped by a referential index (§5)

2. Covert Q-movement

- *Wh*-movement is predicted not to be optional in the general case (Cheng’s 1991 Clause Typing Hypothesis; contra Denham 2000)
- There is no phrasal *wh*-movement in Eastern Cham, only covert Q-movement (Cable’s (2010) Q-adjunction)
  - *Wh*-in situ is sensitive to islands, implying Agree with C (§1)
  - But in situ *wh*-phrases cannot escape intervention effects (§2)

3. Discourse-connected movement

Moved *wh*-phrases and topics have the same pragmatics in Eastern Cham: *discourse connectedness* (DC)

- Involve an anaphoric link between two sentences related by subordinating discourse/rhetorical relations (e.g., Elaboration; leave superordinate sentence open (Grosz & Sidner 1986); diagnosed by English pronoun coherence (Asher & Vieu 2005))
- DC does not require focus or open Questions Under Discussion like contrastive topic

4. Locality

- When multiple *wh*-phrases and/or topics are moved, their chains must be nested (§5); crossing results in ungrammaticality (§6)

5. Optionality & *wh*-anaphora

DC-movement is optional in the same sense that pronouns are optional

- Patel-Groz & Groz (2017) propose the structure in Figure 7 for strong pronouns, with a referential index binding the DP
- An additional DCP layer accounts for DC-movement (Figure 8)

Notes

- Contact: kbclawski@berkeley.edu
- Examples are transcribed using a romanization of traditional Cham script known as Rumi (Baclawski Jr. 2018)
- Data comes from the author’s fieldwork elicitation with 35 native speakers from the Cham villages of Ninh Thuận province, Vietnam
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Abbreviations  ANIM = animate, CLF = numeral classifier, COMP = complementizer, CT = contrastive topic, DC = discourse connected, EMPH = emphatic particle, NEG = negation particle, PROG = progressive aspect marker, QUd = question under discussion, SG = singular, (VN) = loanword or code-switching in Vietnamese

References
Cable, Seth. 2010. The Grammar of Q. Oxford University Press.