

Locality constraints on wh-in-situ in Tatyshly Udmurt

Vlad Orlov
 Institute of Linguistics of RAS
vladorlovling@gmail.com

My talk concentrates on wh-in-situ in Tatyshly Udmurt (<Permic) and discusses the behavior of wh-phrases in structures that constitute barriers to overt movement. I argue that wh-questions in Tatyshly Udmurt are derived without covert movement of the wh-phrase to the left periphery of the clause and are instead interpreted in-situ. I also show some challenges to the proposed analysis, such as the exclusion of wh-in-situ from finite relative clauses and nominalized complement *-em* clauses, as well as argument-adjunct asymmetry attested in non-finite relative *-em* clauses (see a unified account of *-em* clauses in (Dékány&Georgieva 2020)), and propose solutions. The data comes from elicitation sessions with the speakers of Tatyshly Udmurt, as well as from the fieldwork text corpus (http://udmurt.web-corpora.net/tatyshly_corpus/search).

A basic example of wh-in-situ in Tatyshly Udmurt is given in (1); the wh-phrase can be scrambled around within the clause to any preverbal position. Long-distance movement of the wh-phrase is dispreferred by most speakers (2), so (3) is ambiguous between the embedded and the matrix readings.

- (1) *mar pet'a (mar) tolon (mar) ləmšor-əň (mar) s'i-i-z (*mar)*
 what Petya what yesterday what noon-LOC what eat-PST-3SG what
 'What did Petya have for lunch yesterday?'
- (2) * *kin-e₁ pet'a malpa-Ø-z [vas'a t₁ šukk-i-z šüə-sa]*
 who-ACC Petya think-PST-3SG Vasya hit-PST-3SG say-CVB
Intended: 'Who did Petya think Vasya hit?'
- (3) *pet'a ž'ua-Ø-z [vas'a kin-e (meda) šukk-i-z šüə-sa]*
 Petya ask-PST-3SG Vasya who-ACC INTER_PTCL hit-PST-3SG say-CVB
 a. 'Whom did Petya ask Vasya hit?'
 b. 'Petya asked whom Vasya hit'.

The analysis of wh-in-situ since (Huang, 1982) has intertwined with the notion of covert movement, which is understood as such movement that is not reflected in the surface word order. One of the main arguments for covert movement in wh-in-situ comes from the syntactic islands. The ban on wh-in-situ in islands constitutes a parallel between overt and covert movement and, thus, can argue for the presence of the latter (Simpson 2000: Ch.1).

However, wh-in-situ in Tatyshly Udmurt is largely insensitive to islands. As (4) shows, the wh-phrase in a non-finite adjunct clause can get matrix interpretation. As I will show in my talk, a similar pattern can be found in finite adjunct clauses. Wh-questions are also acceptable, if they occur in wh-islands and as the second conjuncts in the coordinate structure.

- (4) *vas'a [maša mar ləʔž'ə-ku] gožtet gožt-i-z*
 Vasya Masha what read-CVB.SIM letter write-PST-3SG
 'Which x is such, that Vasya was writing a letter while Masha was reading x?'

This data suggests that there is no covert wh-movement in Tatyshly Udmurt. Instead, I assume pointwise composition of the wh-question (Beck, 2006, Kotek 2019a a.m.o.) to derive its meaning. Another advantage of the analysis is that it accounts for (Focus) Intervention effects, also present in the language. Thus, (5.a) is considered ungrammatical because the wh-phrase is preposed by the negative quantifier, which is an intervener to the interpretation of the wh-phrase. The inverse word order is grammatical (5.b).

- (5) a.* *no-kin=no* *tolon* *kin-en* *öz* *ektä*
 NEG-who=ADD yesterday who-INS NEG.PST.3 dance
- b. *kin-en* *no-kin=no* *tolon* *öz* *ektä*
 who-INS NEG-who=ADD yesterday NEG.PST.3 dance
 ‘With whom did no one dance yesterday?’.

However, data from relative clauses and nominalized complement *-em* clauses pose problems to this approach. As can be seen in (6,7), these structures do not allow wh-in-situ. The constraints are difficult to explain in terms of pointwise composition since no obvious intervention takes place in those cases.

- (6) * *maša kn'iga-ze* [*kud-ze* *kin gožt-em*] *läž-e*
 Masha book-ACC.POSS.3SG which-ACC.POSS.3SG who write-PST2 read-PRS.3SG
 ‘Intended: ‘Which x is such, that Maria read a book which x had written?’
- (7) ??/* [*ruslan-les’ mar bas’-em-ze*] *maša malpa-Ø*
 Ruslan-GEN2 what take-NMLZ-ACC.POSS.3SG Masha think-PRS.3SG
 ‘What does Masha think Ruslan bought?’

An even more difficult problem is presented by the argument-adjunct asymmetry found in non-finite relative *-em* clauses. The internal argument wh-phrase in (8) can receive the matrix interpretation. However, a similar example with the adjunct wh-phrase *kü* ‘when’ is ungrammatical. The analysis adopted here does not postulate any differences in the interpretation between arguments and adjuncts. Therefore it cannot predict the asymmetry.

- (8) a. *ruslan* [[*kätč’ä vetl-em*] *pi-jez*] *pumita-Ø-z*
 Ruslan where.ILL go-PTCP.PST boy-ACC meet-PST-3SG
 ‘Which place x is such that Ruslan met a boy who was going to x?’
- b.* *ruslan* [[*klub-e kü vetl-em*] *pi-jez*] *pumita-Ø-z*
 Ruslan club-ILL when go-PTCP.PST boy-ACC meet-PST-3SG
 ‘Which moment x is such, that Ruslan met a boy who went to the club at x?’

In the talk I will show how a generalized theory of Focus Intervention suggested in Kotek, (2019b) can help us account for these exceptions based on the idea of the incompatibility of in-situ interpretation of the wh-phrase with movement and λ -abstraction. I will also discuss the notion of relativized λ -abstraction and how it can predict argument-adjunct asymmetry observed in Tatyshly Udmurt.

References

- Beck, S. (2006)** *Intervention Effects Follow from Focus Interpretation*. Natural Language Semantics, 14(1), pp. 1–56.
- Dékány, É Georgieva, E. (2020)**. Three ways of unifying participles and nominalizations: The case of Udmurt. In: A. Alexiadou and H. Borer (eds.) *Nominalization: 50 Years on from Chomsky’s Remarks*. Oxford University Press, 2020. P. 169-202.
- Huang, C.T.J. (1982)** *Logical relations in Chinese and the theory of grammar*. Ph.D. thesis. MIT.
- Kotek, H. (2019a)** *Composing questions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press (Linguistic Inquiry Monographs, #80).
- Kotek, H. (2019b)** *Wh-intervention is caused by movement into regions of focus alternatives computation*. Yale University, manuscript.
- Simpson, A. (2000)** *Wh-movement and the theory of feature-checking*. Philadelphia, PA Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

