



On Wh-Elements in Central Kurdish: A Minimalist Approach

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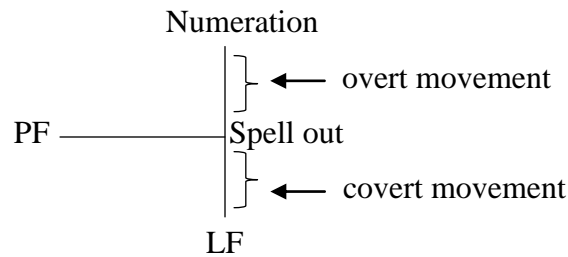
Abstract

The paper sheds light on the status of wh-elements in Central Kurdish (CK) with respect to the framework of the Minimalist Program (MP). From across the globe, there exist various types of languages whose wh-elements behave according to wh-parameter. There are languages whose wh-elements move, some others have in-situ wh-elements, and there are others in which the movement is optional. This paper aims to observe CK wh-elements in an empirical way to indicate their parametric features and their conformance to the universal principles. The notion of movement in MP is included within merge, which falls into two types: Internal merge (I-merge) and External merge (E-merge). Another important term in connection with overt movement is the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) according to which the subject position should be occupied by a phonologically expressed constituent. A fact to be known is that not all languages, among them CK, conform to this principle. The violation of certain CK wh-elements to this principle varies because they do not function in the same way. The paper presents several results revealed in the conclusion section which can be regarded as the contribution of the paper to the field of the generative syntax. One of the conclusions arrived at in the paper is that CK wh-elements are not considered as one inseparable set since they behave differently.

Keywords: CK; Copy + Delete; EPP; Merge; Wh-element.

1. Introduction

In the MP, the metaphor of Copy + Delete can be envisaged as an alternative to the moved element and its trace in Government-Binding (GB) model. The process involves the merging of two elements: the source, which is phonologically null, and a phonologically pronounced copy. Both of them represent the same entity whose semantic content is not deleted. The movement process falls into two types, namely overt and covert. In the former, which is a pre-spell out process, the entire element is moved while in the latter, being a post-spell out process, checking features happens to the elements whose features are not completely checked, i.e. not fully interpreted. Spell-out is merely a step in the derivation, hence it is an entirely different concept from the GB levels of representation: D-structure and S-structure. Covert movement, being preferred to overt movement as it is economical, has no effect on PF as less material moves in it. Hence, the overt movement occurs only if forced. The whole syntactic process in MP is called Computational process (as shown below). Numeration pertains to lexical items, syntactic and semantic features are checked in Logical Form (LF) while phonetic features are checked in Phonetic Form (PF). It is worthwhile to highlight that the linear order is a PF phenomenon rather than a syntactic component. Also, Theta roles are in LF because there is no D-structure in MP (Chomsky, 2015a; Cook & Newson, 2007).



Speaking cross-linguistically, there exist various types of wh-movements. Also, there are languages whose wh-elements remain in-situ, for example Japanese and Chinese. The wh-element may move overtly in PF or covertly in LF. An alternative view to covert movement is that the wh-element does not move. Instead, the features of the wh-item move, which is known as feature movement. Hence, English in-situ echo questions can be regarded as having covert phrasal movement. To put it another way, in-situ wh-elements may undergo movement, but their movement does not appear in overt syntax, meaning that it is in LF (Cheng, 2003; Grewendorf, 2015; Kato, 2009; Tallerman, 2015). It is important to realize that the process of deletion pertains to uninterpretable features in that “Interpretable features cannot be deleted . . . and therefore remain accessible to the computation and visible at LF” (Chomsky, 2015a, p. 258). It follows that uninterpretable features are deleted through the process of checking features (see also Lotfi, 2006).

Taking movement into account, according to J. Greenberg (as cited in Btoosh, 2010), there exist three classes of languages worldwide: languages with obligatory wh-movement, languages with optional wh-movement, and wh-in-situ languages. For him, the wh-element does not undergo any movement in SOV languages. Greenberg’s argument can be argued against observing CK as an SOV language since it is proved true that (see section 4) some CK wh-elements remain in-situ while others may move optionally or obligatorily.

The purpose of this paper is to deal with wh-questions empirically in CK and their characteristics in terms of movement in the framework of MP. The language under investigation is spoken in Iraqi Kurdistan (most of Northern Iraq). It is indicated that CK, like other languages, has its parametric variation with respect to wh-movement. After taking two studies as the literature review, CK wh-elements are dealt with within the sentence. The data which has been discussed and analyzed are common sentences used by speakers speaking CK. The sentences are analyzed using tree diagrams, which are regarded as one of easy tools of sentence analysis. Hence, the study is an empirical one.

Thus far, no research has been done on the status of wh-movement in CK. Therefore, it can be regarded as a problem or a question which needs to be answered through research to indicate whether they move or remain in-situ. The study is limited to deal with interrogative sentences, more concisely, with CK wh-questions from a generative syntax perspective focusing on the MP as the newest version of the generative approach to syntax. The value of the study can be seen in the field of comparative linguistics in that it becomes helpful to those who are concerned with comparing different languages on the basis of the Principles and Parameters. The paper consists of several sections such as introduction, literature review, two basic notions which are related to the topic, and an empirical section which is the central part of the paper.

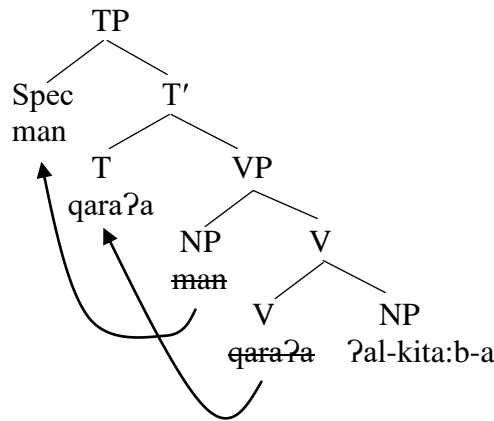
2. Literature Review

Two examples are taken into consideration, which are Standard Arabic (SA) and Polish, in the literature review on wh-movement. In the former, wh-movement occurs while it is optional in the latter. As for SA, Btoosh (2010) states that wh-movement can be found in SA, but it is not triggered by Case or Theta roles. Therefore, what makes wh-movement happen is focalization. Btoosh affirms that the wh-element must move from subject, object, or non-

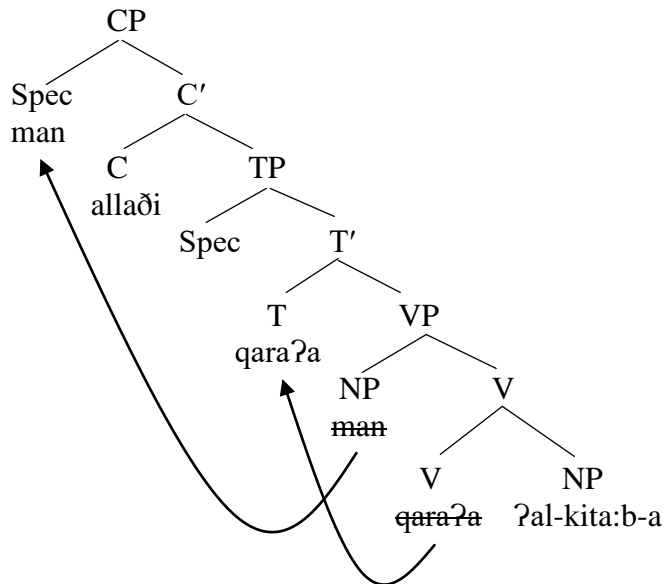


argument positions to a potential landing site which is either spec, TP or spec, CP. The wh-element moves to the spec, CP in relativized questions. Let us consider the following example sentences.

- (1) a. Qaraʔa Zayd-un ʔal-kita:b-a.
Read-3rd Sg-Masc Zayd-NOM DEF book-ACC
Zayd read the book.
- b. Man qaraʔa ʔal-kita:b-a?
who read-3-Past-Sg-Masc. DEF-book-ACC?
Who read the book?



- c. Man allaði qaraʔ-a ʔal-kita:b-a?
who who/that read-3rd-Past-Sg-Masc. DEF-book-ACC?
Who read the book?



Btoosh concludes that the wh-element in SA must be in a spec position (spec, TP or spec, CP) in both matrix and subordinate clauses. It must be noted that there exist two types of declarative sentences in SA: nominal and verbal. What Btoosh claims about is in verbal sentences which they begin with a verb (hence VSO).

Concerning optional movement, which can be found in Polish, Szczegielniak (2001) states that movement in Polish, including wh-movement, is optional. He also adds that wh-movement is not constraint-free in that it is constrained by Subjacency. For him, Polish wh-



movement is a matter of A'-movement rather than A-movement. He concludes that Polish optional movement is not that of checking features because it violates Last Resort operation.

3. Two Basic Concepts in Wh-Movement

3.1 Merge

As the name suggests, merge refers to the combining of two nodes. According to Hornstein (2018), GB's PS-rules have turned to be merge in MP, and transformations to Copy + Delete. Hence, "Unifying movement and phrase building is an MP innovation" (p. 58). Chomsky (2013) states that there are two types of merge, namely Internal merge (I-merge) and External merge (E-merge). In the former, one element is internal to the other selecting one as the label. In this type of merge, an element moves from its original position, leaving a copy of itself, to be merged with another element. Thus, one of the elements has two copies. In E-merge, the two elements are independent of one another, selecting one as the label. The thematic dependency between the predicate and its internal argument is an example of E-merge. It is worth noting that head merges with its complement, not vice versa (see also Cook & Newson, 2007; Hornstein, 2018).

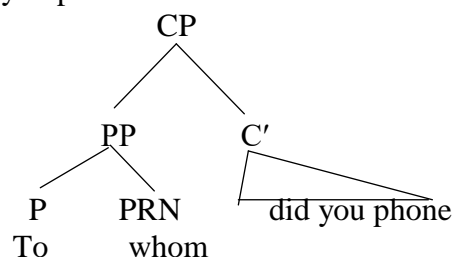
An important notion which pertains to merge is No Tampering Condition (NTC) according to which once a structure is built, we do not tamper with its internal argument. After copying an element within the structure, we delete its phonological content and the structure remains untouched. We should bear in mind that NTC rules out lowering movements (Chomsky, 2015b; Hornstein, 2018). It should be taken into account that Feature deletion is totally different from Copy + Delete. The former is an operation rendering the affected features invisible to the semantic component but leaving them visible to the phonetic component. Conversely, the latter pertains to the form of the copied constituents making it invisible to the phonetic component as they are not pronounced, but leaving them visible in the semantic component (Radford, 2004).

3.2 Extended Projection Principle (EPP)

EPP is a feature obliging an element to move overtly to the spec position of another element which has a potential landing site for the moved element. On this basis, overt movement is closely related to the checking of an EPP feature since EPP motivates overt movement. In this regard, wh-elements in English move overtly to spec, CP because the C in wh-questions carries an EPP that leads to the movement of the wh-element to spec, CP (Chomsky, 2001 cited in Radford, 2004; Rizzi, 2016). Sometimes, the wh-element is accompanied by a preposition. In such a case, the preposition is pied-piped with the wh-element and moves to the spec, CP. This happens because the wh-element is itself the complement of the preposition (Cook & Newson, 2007). In CK, it is always so and we cannot separate them from each other.

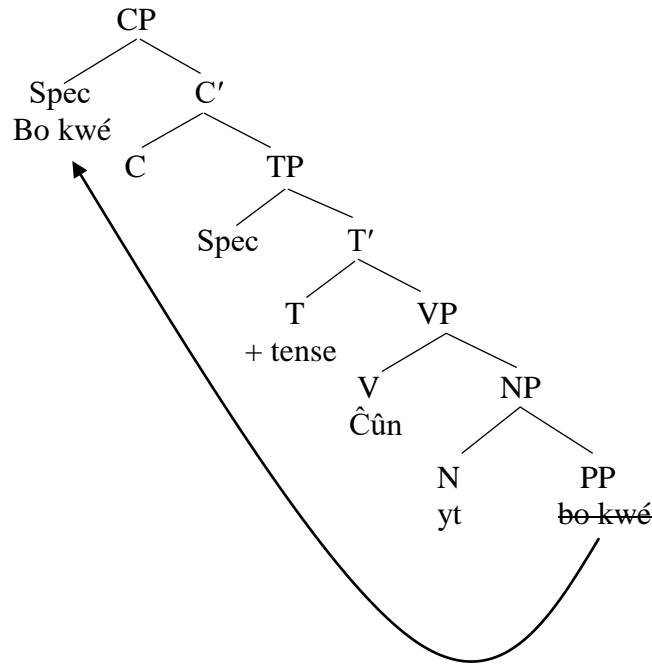
(2) a. I phoned to Tom.

b. To whom did you phone ~~to Tom~~?





- (3) a. *Ĉûyt bo kwé?*
 Went-you to where?
 Where did you go?
 b. *Bo kwé ĉûyt bo kwé?*
 To where went-you to where?
 Where did you go?



It is argued that EPP and Empty Category Principle (ECP) can be unified in that both have an important feature in common which is the subject position, meaning that both focus upon the crucial role the subject has. On this ground, EPP and ECP seem to be clearly violated in certain languages in which spec, TP can be considered as an alternative to spec, CP (Rizzi, 2015, 2016). In a similar vein, Chomsky (2015b) confirms that “English-type languages observe ECP, but null subject languages do not” (p.9). It therefore follows that CK, being a null subject language (a pro-drop language), violates EPP and ECP in certain circumstances. This leads to the fact that parametric differences across languages must be taken for granted.

4. Wh-elements in CK

Let us now turn our attention to CK wh-elements. In the MP, movement is regarded as a Last Resort to eliminate unreadable features at PF or LF interface. This indicates that elements move iff they are forced to. In the cases where the wh-element does not move, there are three possibilities: the spec, CP may be occupied; there may be no CP layer; or the spec, CP may remain empty, hence the violation of EPP (see Cheng, 2003; Rizzi 2015, 2016).

Movement does not apply to a static structure which has already been built. Thus, such a structure is inactive since all its features have been checked (see Cook & Newson, 2007). Movement in certain structures of CK is either costly, which is violation to the principle of economy, or the wh-element has full interpretation and there is no need to move to check features. Like English, CK wh-elements can appear in three different positions. For instance, *ké* (who) occurs as the head of CP, *kam* (which) in examples like *kam kitéb* (which book) appears in spec, QP, and *kwé* as in *bo kwé* (to where) functions as the object of preposition. CK wh-elements can be classified into four categories as explicated in the following sub-sections.

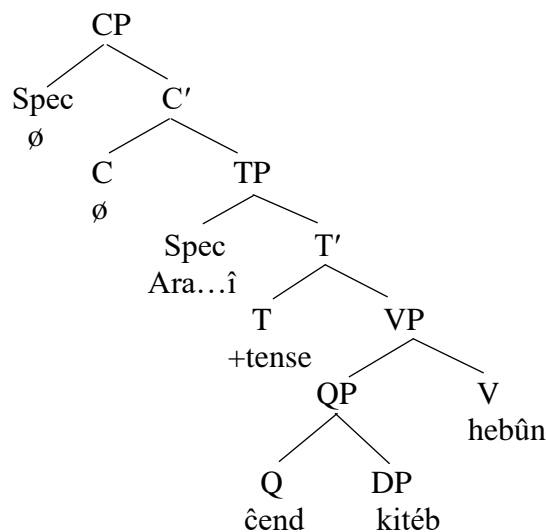


4.1 Wh-in-situ Questions

A group of CK wh-elements are base-generated and do not undergo any Copy + Delete or I-merge processes. All the three types mentioned previously, namely head (as in 4), spec, QP (as in 5), and object of preposition (as in 6), have membership in this group. Hence, the questions are regarded as wh-in-situ constructions. In this type of structure, CK wh-questions violate EPP because the spec, CP remains empty. The question words belonging to this group are *êi* (what), *êend* (how many / how much), *kam* (which), and *lekwé* (where).

- (4) Ara *êi* dekat?
Ara what is-doing?
What is Ara doing?
- (5) Ara *êend* kitébî heye?
Ara how many book-NOM have?
How many books does Ara have?
- (6) Ara *lekwé*ye?
Ara where-is?
Where is Ara?

By way of illustration, let us look at the tree of one of the above examples (5, for instance), one can see that the wh-element is in spec, QP and remains in-situ.



Now, it is important to consider that EPP is violated by the wh-elements of this group since it remains empty. Moving the wh-element to spec, CP leads to ungrammaticality. A remarkable parametric feature of CK is that the subject, and also the object, is typically accompanied by a morpheme which attaches to another element in the sentence. The subject, or the object, and the morpheme are coreferential. Here, the morpheme which is coreferential to the subject is 'î', which is in nominative Case and appears with 'kitéb'.

4.2 Wh-movement

The only wh-element which obligatorily moves in CK is *boêi* (why). It is originally post-verbal in declarative sentences, but the sentence must always be a complex one. The wh-element can move to two different positions with two different interpretations when questioning. First, it raises to spec, VP when it is spelt out. It follows that spec, CP remains empty and it is not occupied by any element. Hence, the violation of EPP in the wh-structure as in (7). Second, it raises to spec, CP and consequently conforms to EPP. It is obvious that



both structures are questions, but in the first case we ask about the reason of happening an event, while in the second we ask about the selection of the doer of the action. Thus, the scope of the second structure is wider than that of the first as can be seen in (8) below. The complex sentence ‘*Sakar cû bo Hewlér bo ewey hendék poşak bénét.*’ can be converted into interrogative in two ways as shown in (7 & 8).

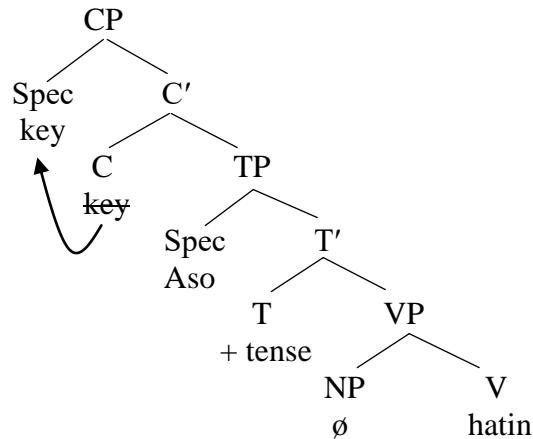
- (7) Sakar bo cû cû bo Hewlér?
 Sakar why went to Hewlér?
 Why did Sakar go to Hewlér?
- (8) Bo cû Sakar cû bo Hewlér?
 Why Sakar went to Hewlér?
 Why did Sakar go to Hewlér?

The wh-element of example (8) has a wider scope than that of (7) as it includes the subject as well, not only the action which is the case in (7) in that it is preverbal. The wh-element of (7) asks about the reason behind going to Hewlér, while it asks about the reason behind selecting Sakar to go to Hewlér in (8), meaning that why Sakar, not somebody else. More importantly, both sentences have the same equivalent in English, i.e. they have to be translated in the same way. The only way to make distinction between the two meanings in English is by the use of sentence stress, whereas the word order can do it in CK. Finally, the wh-element of (7) violates EPP, but that of (8) conforms to it.

4.3 Optional Movement

Certain CK wh-elements can appear in more than one position. On this basis, the movement is optional. There are three wh-elements which behave in this way: *bo kwé* (where), *key* (when), and *cûn* (how). Concerning the first one, the normal position of the wh-element is the end of the sentence, i.e. after the verb, where it is base-generated. When copying the element, it moves to a preverbal position. The question word is originally the object of preposition ‘bo’. Thus, they are pied-piped together. This upward movement is not A-movement; it is A'-movement. As for the second one, which appears as the head, can raise to be copied in spec, CP as in (10b) whose tree diagram is drawn below. It is worth noting that the first occurrence of the wh-element, namely being base-generated, is much more common than the second.

- (9) a. Aso de cêt bo kwé?
 Aso will-go to where?
 Where will Aso go?
- b. Aso bo kwé de cêt bo kwé?
 Aso to where will-go to where?
 Where will Aso go?
- (10) a. Aso key dé?
 Aso when will-come?
 When will Aso come?
- b. Key Aso key dé?
 When Aso when will-come?
 When will Aso come?



The wh-element in (9a) remains in-situ while it undergoes Copy + Delete in (9b) and it is available phonetically in a preverbal position (cf. Grewendorf, 2015). Despite the fact that Copy + Delete happens in (9b), the structure still violates EPP. As mentioned before, the wh-element is the complement of a preposition. After merging together, the wh-element is pied-piped with its head to appear before the verb. This indicates that the occurrence of stranded preposition is not allowed in CK. This phenomenon is similar to Left Branching Condition (LBC), but LBC is not applied to prepositional phrases (PP) in English. Therefore, it can be posited that LBC is modified in CK to incorporate PPs as well. As for example sentences in (10), there is conformance to EPP in (10b) while there is not in (10a).

In relation to the third one, which is *çon* (how), it can also appear in two different positions, but only in one of them it constitutes a question. This is a prominent difference between this wh-element and the other two. Let us consider the following.

- (11) Ara *çon* yaryekey birdewe?
 Ara how game-DEF won?
 How did Ara win the game?

The example sentence of (11) above has the structure of a question. When moving the wh-element to spec, CP, the sentence is no longer a question. Rather, it turns to be an exclamatory sentence as can be seen in (12) below.

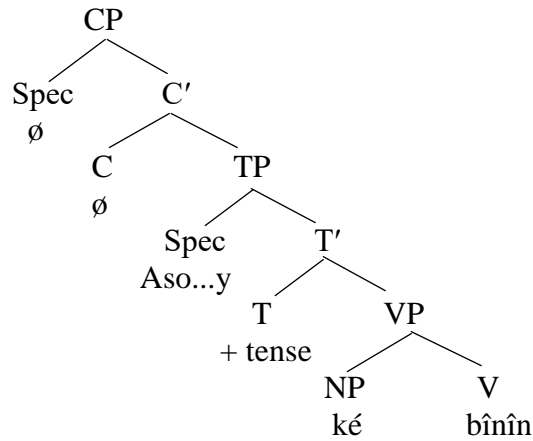
- (12) *Çon* Ara yaryekey birdewe!
 How Ara game-DEF won?
 How Ara won the game!

In (12), the speaker has not expected Ara to win the game, thus he is surprised to know such a thing. Needless to say, intonation also plays its role in expressing the utterance.

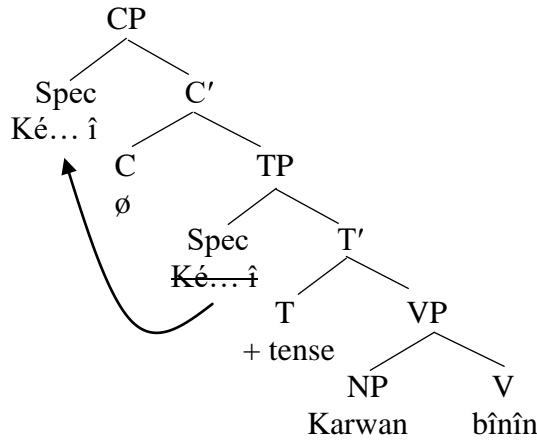
4.4 Ké (Who)

This wh-element has a specific characteristic in that it can appear in two different positions with two different functions. It invariably appears as the head. In CK, *ké* (who) can question the subject as well as object. When the wh-element *ké* undergoes Copy + Delete, it functions as the subject in the sentence. Conversely, when it is in-situ, it is the object of the sentence and it is originally base-generated within VP. We have to realize that the case is not considered as optional wh-movement because the function of the wh-element varies in accordance with its position whether it appears in its original position or in a potential landing site, namely spec, CP.

- (13) Aso *kéy* bîní?
 Aso who-NOM saw?
 Who did Aso see?



- (14) Ké Karwanî bînî?
 Who Karwan-NOM saw?
 Who saw Karwan?

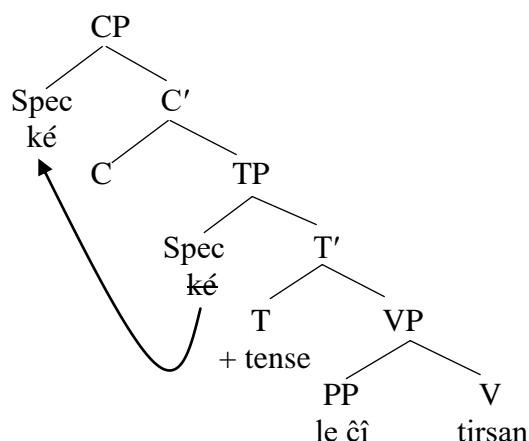


Concerning the above two examples, E-merge occurs in (13) as the wh-element functioning as object merges with the verb of the sentence. Additionally, the structure violates EPP since spec, CP remains empty. Conversely, I-merge happens in (14) as the wh-element, originally being subject, moves from spec, TP to spec, CP. Consequently, the structure conforms to EPP.

4.5 Multiple Wh-Elements

In questions with multiple wh-elements, locality plays its vital role according to which the closer element to spec, CP raises to the potential landing site (see Cheng, 2003). When two wh-elements such as *ké* (who) and *êî* (what) come together in the same interrogative structure, the one which is used to ask about the subject must appear in spec, CP. The appearance of *êî* in spec, CP results in ungrammaticality. Hence, the structure converges in the first case while it crashes in the second, as can be seen in (15 a & b) below.

- (15) a. Ké le êî tirsá? (convergence)
 Who from what feared?
 Who feared what?
 b. *Êî le ké tirsá? (crash)
 What from who feared?
 *What feared who?



In the example above, the wh-element *ké* (who) in spec, TP undergoes Copy + Delete process to check its uninterpretable features via overt movement to spec, CP. The reason is that it is closer to spec, CP, meaning that it is local with respect to the domain of spec, CP and it is structurally higher than *cî* (what). The deleted form is not expressed phonetically. In contrast, the PP *le cî* (from what), which is equivalent to the English wh-element ‘what’, does not move as all its features have been checked. It is worth focusing upon that *ké* raises from spec, TP because it is originally the subject of the sentence. It raises because spec, CP is empty and ready to receive the wh-element *ké* due to EPP feature (cf. Radford, 2004). Thus, two wh-elements can appear initially in CK wh-questions. This can be considered as a contrastive point between CK and English wh-elements.

5. Conclusion

On the basis of the Principles & Parameters Approach, each language has some characteristics in common with other languages with respect to the principles, and simultaneously differs from the rest with respect to its parameters. Focusing on wh-parameter, CK possesses various features since not all its wh-elements behave in the same way. Sometimes, no wh-movement occurs and spec, CP remains empty; therefore, EPP is violated. In other cases, wh-movements is available in that the wh-element moves to spec, CP. Hence, the structure conforms to EPP. Also, wh-movement is optional with the existence of certain wh-elements. One other important point is that when the wh-element can appear in more than one position, the structure may convert from interrogative to exclamative. Finally, we conclude that CK wh-elements cannot be regarded as one inseparable set. Rather, they are classified into four subclasses in accordance with their conformance to EPP as whenever they move, they move overtly, not covertly. On such grounds, examples from CK bear witness that it is not true to claim that all wh-elements of a language should belong to one and only one type in terms of movement, either moving or remaining in-situ. This indicates that CK is a unique language whose wh-elements can be simultaneously similar to and different from wh-elements of other languages, English for example whose wh-elements must move.

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وشه پرسه کان له کودری ناوه راستدا: شیوازیکی مینیمه لیست

صالح ابراهیم احمد

زانکۆی راپهرین

پوخته

ئهم تووژینه وهیه (دهرباره ی وشه پرسه کان له کودری ناوه راستدا: شیوازیکی مینیمه لیست) تیشک ده خاته سهر دۆخی وشه پرسه کان له دیالیکتی کودری ناوه راستدا له چوارچێوه ی پرۆگرامی مینیمه لیست (که مکردنه وه). له سهرتاسه ری جیهاندا، زمانی زۆر و جۆراوجۆر هه ن که وشه پرسه کانیا ن به گۆیره ی تایبه تمه ندیه کانی (پهرامینه ره کانی) زمانه که ره فتار ده که ن. هه ندئ زمان هه ن که وشه پرسه کانیا ن ده جۆلین له کاتی دروستکردنی پرسیاردا، له هه ندیکه تر یاندا جۆله روونادات، وه له هه ندیکه تر دا جۆله ئاره زومه ندانه یه. مه به ست له م تووژینه وه یه دیراسه کردنی جۆله ی وشه پرسه کانه به شیوه ی تاقیکردنه وه یی بۆ نیشاندانی تایبه تمه ندیه کانیان له کودری ناوه راستدا و به پابه ندییان به بنهما جیهانیه کان. چه مکی جۆله له پرۆگرامی مینیمه لیستدا له ناو تیکه لبووندا ده رده که ویت، که ئه میش دوو جۆری هه یه: ناوه کی و دهره کی. چه مکی گرنگی تر که په یوه ندی به جۆله ی ئاشکرا وه هه یه بریتیه له بنهما ی فراوانکردن و به ره مه یانان که به هۆیه وه پێگه ی بکه ره یه به وشه یه کی گۆکراو پر بکریته وه. له راستیدا هه موو زمانه کانی جیهان، له ناویشیاندا کودری ناوه راست، گۆرپایه لی ئه م بنهما یه ناکه ن. وشه پرسه کانی کودری هه موویان هه مان پابه ندییان نییه بۆ ئه م بنهما یه چونکه به شیوازی جۆراوجۆر ئه رکی خۆیان ده یینن، نه ک هه موویان به هه مان شیوه. تووژینه وه که پیک دیت له چوار به ش: پێشه کی، پێداچوونه وه به کاری پێشو، دوو چه مکی بنه رته ی په یوه ندان به جۆله ی وشه ی پرس، وه به شیکی تاقیکردنه وه یی بۆ تاوتووی جۆله ی وشه ی پرس له کودری ناوه راستدا. تووژینه وه که کۆتایی دیت به پێشکه شکردنی ئه نجامه کان و سه رچاوه به کارهاتوه کان. یه کیک له ئه نجامه کان ئه وه یه که جۆله ی هه موو وشه پرسه کانی کودری ناوه راست وه ک یه ک هه ژمار ناکریت چونکه به شیوازی جۆراوجۆر ئه رکی خۆیان ده یینن له رسته ی پرسیاریدا.

کلیله وشه کان: کودری ناوه راست، کۆپی + سپینه وه، ئی پی پی، تیکه ل کردن، وشه ی پرس

کلمات الاستفهامیه فی لهجه الكوردیه المتوسطة: منهج التقلیصی (مینیمه لیست)

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ملخص

هذا البحث يلقي الضوء على حالة كلمات الاستفهامية في لهجة الكوردية المتوسطة في اطار منهج التقلیصی (مینیمه لیست). في جميع انحاء العالم، هناك عدة لغات التي توجد فيها كلمات الاستفهامية تتحرك عند صياغة السؤال، و في بعض اللغات تحدث الحركة برغبة المتكلم. الغرض من هذا البحث دراسة حركة كلمات الاستفهامية من حيث التجربة لعرض خصائص لهجة الكوردية المتوسطة و التزامها لمبادئ العالمية. مفهوم الحركة في برنامج مینیمه لیست تظهر في المزج و الأختلاط، و هو نوعان: داخلي و خارجي. هناك مفهوم مهم اخر الذي يرتبط بحركة كلمات، وهو مبدأ التوسع و استثمار بسببها يلزم مكانة الفاعل أن تلفظ. في الحقيقة بعض لغات العالم، و من ضمنها اللغة الكوردية المتوسطة، لا تلتزم بهذا المبدأ، ليست للكلمات الاستفهامية الكوردية الألتزام بهذا المبدأ البحث يتكون من اربعة اقسام: المقدمة، مراجعة اعمال السابقة، مفهومان مرتبطان بحركة كلمات الاستفهامية، و قسم تجريبي لحركة كلمات الاستفهامية في لهجة الكوردية المتوسطة. ينتهي البحث بتقديم النتائج و المصادر، احدي النتائج هي ان جميع حركة الكلمات الاستفهامية في لهجة الكوردية المتوسطة ليست على حد سواء لأنها تقوم بدورها بانواع مختلفة في جملة الاستفهامية.

كلمات مفاتيحه: الكوردية المتوسطة، كۆپی + بیست، ئی بی بی، الأختلاط، كلمات الاستفهام