

Wh-Scope Marking in Bani Malik Asiri Arabic (BMA)

Like other languages, BMA employs wh-scope marking to question out of embedded clauses. This phenomenon has been identified as another variety of long-distance wh-extraction used along with full wh-movement to question out of embedded clauses (Riemsdijk, 1982). In some languages including BMA, where full wh-movement doesn't take place, a wh-scope marker appears in the matrix clause and directly or indirectly associated with the true wh-phrase in the embedded clause (Dayal, 1994). For more illustration, see the following example (1) from BMA.

- (1) **?aiʃ** galalat Sara **kam kursi** ?enn xalid ?aftra ti?
what said Sara how many chair that Khalid bought
'How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?'

There are two main approaches of analyzing wh-scope marking: *direct dependency approach* (DDA) and *indirect dependency approach* (IDDA). In the DDA, the wh-phrase moves partially to the specifier of the embedded CP. While a wh-scope marker defined as an expletive element is base-generated in the specifier position of the matrix CP and takes a scope over the wh-phrase within the embedded clause. This scope marker forms a chain with the embedded wh-expression and its trace as well (McDaniel, 1989). Regarding the IDDA, Dayal (1994) argues that the wh-scope marker is a wh-phrase that occurs within an argument position. This implies that there is no direct relationship between this wh-argument and the wh-phrase in the embedded clause. The main issue with BMA data is that it challenges both approaches; the DDA and IDDA. For more clarification, see the following sentences in (2-3).

- (2)
- a. **?aiʃ/Ø** galat sara ?enn xalid ?aftra **kam kursi?**
what said Sara that Khalid bought how many chair
'How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?'
- b. **?aiʃ/Ø** galat sara ?enn **kam kursi** xalid ?aftra ?
what said Sara that how many chair Khalid bought
'How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?'
- c. galat **?aiʃ/Ø** sara ?enn xalid ?aftra **kam kursi?**
said what Sara that Khalid bought how many chair
'How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?'

In (1), it seems that BMA data cannot be generated by the DDA because of the position of the embedded wh-phrase *kam kursi* 'how many chairs'. In (1.a), the wh-scope marker *?aiʃ* 'what' licenses wh-in-situ while this is not allowed as Cheng (2011) has argued for German. However, the wh-phrase in (1.b) moves to an intermediate position that is lower than spec-CP of the embedded clause. Moreover, we can notice that the wh-scope marker doesn't always occur in the spec-CP of the matrix clause as shown in (1.c). Now, we are left only to one analyzing option which is the IDDA but BMA data challenges this analysis as well as illustrated in (3) below.

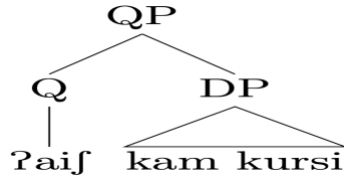
- (3)
- a. galat sara ?enn **?aiʃ** xalid ?aftra **kam kursi?**
said Sara that what Khalid bought how many chair
"How many chairs did she say that she bought?"

- b. galat **?aif/Ø** sara ?enn xalid ?astra **kam kursi?**
 said what Sara that Khalid bought how many chair
 ‘How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?’

First, we notice that the wh-scope marker *?aif* ‘what’ can be silent which is not allowed for an argument element in an object position in BMA, and this implies it is not an argument element. Moreover, In (3.a), *?aif* occurs after the complementizer *?enn* ‘that’ which means it is not base generated within the main clause. Therefore, I believe that this analysis cannot account for the BMA data.

Given the above discussion, I argue that the wh-scope marker *?aif* ‘what’ occurs with the true wh-phrase in the same clause namely the embedded clause as in (3.a) This can be taken as a poof that *?aif* has a strong syntactic relationship with the *wh*-expression. More precisely, I propose that *?aif* occurs in a position within the maximal projection that dominates the *wh*-phrase and must always occur to the right of the *wh*-phrase. This means that *the direct dependency analysis* can account for the BMA data. First, I assume that *?aif* occurs within the maximal projection of the *wh*-phrase but not a part of the *wh*-phrase itself. Following the Q-theory (Cable, 2007), I argue that *?aif* ‘what’ in complex *wh*-interrogatives in BMA is a Q-particle that is base-generated in a head position of a QP and a *wh*-expression occurs within its complement position as illustrated in the following structure (4).

(4)



In the following example (5), the wh-word *?aif* ‘what’ can be spelled out with its wh-complement at the same position in some context. However, it’s worth mentioning that BMA speakers generally don’t pronounce the Q-particle to avoid redundancy as *?aif* ‘what’ is a homophonous with the wh-argument *?aif* ‘what’; and mainly because the [WH] features that the Q-particle in BMA has already exist in the true wh-expression.

(5)

- a. galat sara ?enn xalid ?astra **?aif** **kam kursi?**
 said Sara that Khalid bought what how many chair
 ‘How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?’
- b. **?aif** **kam kursi** galat sara ?enn xalid ?astra?
 what how many chair said Sara that Khalid bought
 ‘How many chairs did Sara say that Khalid bought?’

Based on the above structure, I argue that the QP in BMA is attracted to move to the specifier of the matrix CP by a [+Q] feature on the head C. Also, following the *phase theory* (Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2004, 2008), I assume that the QP moves in a successive cyclic fashion targeting every specifier position of every phase in the interrogative clause. This can account for the existence of both the Q-particle *?aif* and the wh-expression in a position lower than spec-CPs. Finally, to account for the discontinues spell-out of the QP in which the wh-scope marker is pronounced in a higher position leaving the wh-expression stranding in a lower position, I follow *the selective spell-out theory* (Tsoulas and Norman, 2017). I argue that the QP moves overtly to its scop position (spec-CP), and at the PF level, a copy of the wh-scope marker can be pronounced at any spec-phase as long as a copy of the wh-element is pronounced along with it at the same position or in a lower position.

To conclude this, I argued that the DDA can account for the wh-scope marking in BMA. I provided empirical data from BMA which proves that what looks like a wh-scope marker *ʔaif* is actually a Q-particle base-generated in a head position of a QP which dominates a wh-phrase. The QP moves overtly in a successive cyclic fashion targeting every edge of phases in BMA namely vP and CP to satisfy a [+Q] feature of the head C of the maximal CP. Finally, at the PF level, the Q-particle and the wh-element within its complement can be spelled out at the same position or in different positions. However, if they spelled out in different positions, *ʔaif* must precede the wh-expression.

References

- Cable, S. (2007) *The grammar of Q: Q-particles and the nature of Wh-fronting, as revealed by the Wh-questions of Tlingit*. Doctoral thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Cheng, L. L. S. (2011). Moving just the feature. In *Wh-scope marking* (pp. 77-99). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Chomsky, N. (2000) 'Minimalist inquiries: The framework. Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik, (ed.) by Roger Martin, David Michaels, and Juan Uriagereka, 89–155'. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2001) 'Derivation by phase ', in Kenstowicz, M. (ed.) *Ken Hale: A life in language*. Cambridge: MA, MIT Press, pp. 1-52.
- Chomsky, N. (2004). Beyond explanatory adequacy. *Structures and beyond: The cartography of syntactic structures*, 3, 104-131.
- Chomsky, N. (2008). 6 On Phases. *Foundational issues in linguistic theory: Essays in honor of Jean-Roger Vergnaud*, 45, 133.
- Dayal, V.S. (1994) 'Scope marking as indirectwh-dependency', *Natural language semantics*, 2(2), pp. 137-170.
- McDaniel, D. (1989) 'Partial and multiple wh-movement', *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 7(4), pp. 565-604.
- Riemsdijk, H. C. (1982). *Correspondence effects and the empty category principle*. Tilburg University, Department of Language and Literature.
- Tsoulas, G., & Yeo, N. (2017). Scope assignment: From wh-to QR. *Glossa*.