Movement, Wh-agreement and apparent Wh-in-situ
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In current Minimalist syntax (Chomsky 2000, 2001), movement is an operation that does not introduce a trace but rather leaves behind a complete copy of the moved element, with the result that structures formed by movement exhibit multiple copies of the moved element. In the phonology, it is determined which of these copies is phonetically realized, the usual assumption being that only the highest copy is pronounced. This copy theory of movement allows for an option not available in trace theory; namely, language-particular conventions might dictate that the copy privileged for pronunciation is the lowest, as opposed to the highest. The possibility has been productively explored by Groat and O’Neil (1996), Pesetsky (1997), Boskovic (2001), Bobalijk (2002), and others. On this view, certain types of wh-in-situ instantiate “hidden” movement configurations, created by wh-movement in narrow syntax followed by pronunciation of only the lowest copy.

We investigate the interaction of this option with the phenomenon of “wh-agreement” -- the special morphological effects, however analyzed, which are found on verbs or complementizers along the path of overt wh-movement in some languages. It is evident from the well-studied cases--e.g. Irish (McCloskey 1979), Hausa (Tuller 1986, Green 1997), Chamorro (Chung 1998), Palauan (Georgopoulos 1985)--that when successive-cyclic movement occurs across a clause boundary, wh-agreement can manifest itself in two ways. Either the special inflectional morphology surfaces on every V/C along the path of movement (e.g. Chamorro; ex. (1)); or else it surfaces only on the V/C closest to the highest copy--the copy which, typically, is pronounced (e.g. Hausa; (2)).

When these typological results are combined with the copy theory of movement, a clear prediction emerges: it should be possible for a language to exhibit wh-agreement as well wh-movement in narrow syntax, followed by pronunciation of only the lowest copy. The result should be “apparent” wh-in-situ whose participation in syntactic movement leaves visible morphological effects. We claim there are such cases, two of which we discuss: in-situ questions in Coptic Egyptian (Afroasiatic; 4-14th c. AD) and head-internal relative clauses in Passamaquoddy (Algonquian). Both Coptic and Passamaquoddy exhibit special morphological effects in wh-constructions, which we analyze as wh-agreement: relative tenses in Coptic and participial agreement in Passamaquoddy. Focusing on the apparent wh-in-situ, we show that when this element takes higher scope--that is, when the moved element, according to our analysis, undergoes successive-cyclic wh-movement across a clause boundary--the manifestations of wh-agreement are just those expected if overt movement had occurred. In Passamaquoddy long-distance head-internal relatives, participial agreement occurs on every V, thereby flagging every copy of the moved internal head (see Bruening 2001; (3)). In Coptic in-situ questions with long-distance scope, relative tense occurs only in the highest clause, flagging only the highest copy--which, of course, is unpronounced (see Reintges 2002; (4)).

Our analysis of these patterns takes wh-agreement to be a visible footprint of the operations Agree and Move, which are successive-cyclic, passing through the edges of successive strong phases, in conformity with the Phase-Impenetrability Condition. The result is that the patterning of apparent wh-in-situ in Coptic and Passamaquoddy is assimilated to the patterning of overt wh-movement in Irish and Hausa. All of these languages have wh-movement in narrow syntax; they differ only in (i) which copy of the moved element is pronounced and (ii) how wh-agreement is manifested when movement is successive-cyclic across a clause boundary. Our analysis, we claim, accounts for the facts more successfully than an analysis in terms of covert LF movement (cf. Bruening 2001). We conclude by discussing some differences between Coptic and Passamaquoddy that argue that in Coptic, but not Passamaquoddy, the spell-out of wh-agreement plays a role in determining which copy of the moved element is pronounced.
Data Sheet

A. **Chamorro**

(1) Manu na lepblu [c] malagu’-ñiha [t na u-taitai] ?


“Which book do they want to (lit. that they should) read?” (Chung 1998:230 (42a))

B. **Hausa**

(2) wane littaafii (ne) kakke tsammaani [t Ali yaa sayaa t]


“Which book do you think Ali bought?” (Adapted from Tuller 1986:53 (68a))

C. **Passamaquoddy**

(3) Nót nit [el-itahasi’-c-il] kisi=pson-a’-c-il otu’hk-ol ]

that.AN that.IN IC.thus.think-3AN-PTCP:OBV:SG PAST=catch-DIR-3AN-PTCP:OBV:SG deer-OBV:SG

“That is the deer that he thought he was going to get.” (Adapted from Bruening 2001:229 (595))

D. **Coptic Egyptian**

(4) e-n-r khria k’e m mntre [ e-r u tšin tenu ]

REL(-PRES)-1PL-make need pcl as witness to-make(-INF) what? since now

“What further witness do we need to be borne now?” (Mark 14:63)

References


