

Wh-Questions in Paloor¹**Goals of this talk**

- describe the properties of wh-questions in Paloor
- show that Paloor is an i-situ language
- discuss Wh questions properties with respect to movement
- show that Paloor Wh-questions is sensitive to islands.

Roadmap of the talk

1. Language Background
2. Main clause questions
3. Embedded clause questions
4. Partial movement
5. Constraints on Wh-questions: Islands
6. Summary and perspectives for further research

1. Language Background

- Paloor² is one of the five languages of the cangin group (along with Ndut, Saafi, Noon, Lehar) belonging to the West Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo language family (According to Pichl 1966, Soukka and Soukka 2011).
- It is an endangered language spoken in Senegal, specifically in Pout, a city located in the South East the region of Thiès (Wane 2017).
- Paloor is SVO and is an agglutinative language.

(1) *di woolaate* Barat.

di wool -i -u -te Barat.
s/he send -PST -PASS -PERF Barat.
“She was sent away to Barat.”

(Thornell 2016:115)

In (1) the morphemes referring to tense, voice and aspect are attached to the verb.

1.1 The noun class system

- Paloor uses a system of five noun classes as illustrated in the Table 1 where examples of nouns along with their respective noun classes are provided.

¹ I would like to thanks my Paloor informants Aby Faye and Ibrahima Ciss.

² Paloor has two dialects: Kajoor and Ba’ol. The kajoor dialect refers to the area closer to Thies (formally known as Kajoor) whereas the Ba’o dialect, used in the present study is spoken to the area closer to Diourbel (formerly known as Baol).

Table 1: The noun class system

Singular			Plural		
Noun Class	Indefinite	Definite	Definite	Indefinite	
\emptyset	gin “a village”	gin-a “the village”	-y	gin y-a “the villages”	bi gin “villages”
<i>m-</i>	miis “some milk”	miis m-a “the milk”		miis y-a “the milks”	bi miis “milks”
<i>f-</i>	pónis “horse”	pónis f-á “the horse”		pónis f-á “the horses”	bi pónis “horses”
<i>k-</i>	kúum “a bee”	kúum k-á “the bee”		kúum k-á “the bees”	bi kúum “bees”

Adapted from Thornell (2016:50-51)

- According to Thornell (2016) the noun class system does not seem to be semantically conditioned.
- The suffix *-a* occurs with the class marker to refer to definiteness. The *m-* noun class seems to be restricted to mass nouns. Borrowed words get the \emptyset class.

1.2 Distribution of pronouns

Table 2 provides an overview of personal pronouns in Paloor; note that Paloor is not a pro-drop language.

Table 2: Personal pronouns

Person	Subject	Object	
		Direct	Indirect
1SG	mi	so	so
2SG	fu	ro / do	ro / do
3SG	di	ri/ di / ni ³	
1PL INCL	yen	yen	yen
1PL EXCL	fun	fun	fun
2PL	dón	ron	ron
3PL	ba	wa	wa

Adapted from Thornell (2016:50-77)

1.3 Focalization in Paloor

The word *daa* is a focus marker used to emphasize a particular DP in a given proposition. In the following examples the focus marker is used in different contexts.

³ the pronoun *ri* can appear in various forms according to its phonological environment.

2.1 Subject Wh-questions

(4) **diwa** “who”

a. jaal -a ñam-pe maala
man -CL.DEF eat-PERF rice. CL.DEF
“The man ate the rice”

b. (diwa) daa ñam maala ?
(who) FOC eat rice. CL.DEF
“Who ate the rice?”

c. diwa *(daa) ñam maala?
who FOC eat rice. CL.DEF
“Who ate the rice?”

- In (4)a the sentence is a typical affirmative clause from which (4)b and (4)c are derived. In (4)b the question word replaces the subject and is followed by the focus marker *daa*.
- A very striking feature of Paloor Wh-question is the fact that the wh-word can be dropped without ungrammaticality as (4)c shows.
- “Wh-drop” has been extensively discussed in the field of language acquisition (Roberge & Strik 2014). However, this kind of construction also occurs in some German dialects like Bavarian (Bayer 2010).
- Interestingly, when the wh-word occurs in the plural form, dropping the wh-word is no longer possible as **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.** shows.

(5) ***(bi-diwa)** daa ñam maala?
3PLwho FOC eat rice. CL.DEF
“Who_{pl} ate the rice?”

- (6) follows the same pattern as *diwa* ‘who’ with the question word *yi* ‘what’ at subject position.

(6) **yi** “what” as subject

a. pónis -f -á ac -ce
child -CL -DEF come-PERF
“the horse came”

- b. **(yi)** daa ac
what FOC come
“What came?”

. In (6) when the wh-phrase, typically related to object position, appears at subject position and can be dropped as well.

2.2 Non-subject Wh questions

- This subsection deals with wh-expressions in non-subject position with *dīwa* ‘who’, *yi* ‘what’, *di* ‘where’, *dī* ‘how’, *kiri?* ‘when’, *yi daa tax* ‘why’.

(7) Non-subject Wh questions

- a. kukóy-á ot **dīwa?**
boy- CL.DEF see who
“Who do you see?”
- b. kukóy-á ñam **yi?**
boy- CL.DEF eat what
“What did the boy eat?”
- c. kukóy-á ñam **dī?**
boy- CL.DEF eat where
“Where did the boy eat?”
- d. kukóy-á ñam **dī?**
boy- CL.DEF eat how
“How did the boy eat?”
- e. kukóy-á ñam **kiri??**
boy- CL.DEF eat when
“When did the boy eat?”
- f. **yi** **daa** **tax** kukóy-á ñam _____?
what FOC cause boy- CL.DEF eat
“Why did the boy eat?”

- In (7)a-e all the wh-phrases remain in situ with the exception of *yi daa tax* ‘why’ which must appear ex situ in (7)f.
- A similar asymmetry has been discussed in the literature of wh-questions in Niger-Congo languages (see Muriungi (2005) Buell (2011) and more recently Torrence & Kandybowicz (2015) to name but a few).

2.3 Wh-ex situ questions

Despite the fact that wh-expressions typically remain in situ, they can also appear ex situ as shown in (8).

(8) Wh-ex situ

- a. **diwa** daa fu ot _____?
 who FOC 2SG_{NOM} see
 “Who do you see?”
- b. **yi** daa kukóy-á ñam _____?
 what FOC boy- CL.DEF eat
 “What did the boy eat?”
- c. **di** daa kukóy-á ñam _____?
 where FOC boy- CL.DEF eat
 “Where did the boy eat?”
- d. **di** daa kukóy-á ñam _____?
 how FOC boy- CL.DEF eat
 “How did the boy eat?”
- e. **kiri?** daa kukóy-á ñam _____?
 when FOC boy- CL.DEF eat
 “When did the boy eat?”
- f. **yi** **daa tax** kukóy-á ñam _____?
 what FOC cause boy- CL.DEF eat
 “Why did the boy eat?”

- In (8)a-f, all wh-words appear at the left periphery of the clause.
- In addition they are each followed by the focus marker *daa*.
- In Paloor Wh-ex situ plays the role of echo questions which are believed to have “very special contextual and prosodic requirements” (Bayer and Cheng 2017:2) and as such are never the used to ask a regular question.

3. Embedded clause questions

Regarding embedded clauses, all wh expressions occur in situ except for *yi daa tax* ‘why’, hence the ungrammaticality of (9)g.

(9) in situ Embedded questions

- a. Faatu liiḅ ti Awa laḅ **diwa** ?
 Faatu think COMP Awa hit who
 “Who did Faatu think that Awa hit?”
- b. Faatu liiḅ ti Awa ñam **yi** ?
 Faatu think COMP Awa eat what
 “What did Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- c. Faatu liiḅ ti Awa ñam **di** ?
 Faatu think COMP Awa eat where

“Where did Faatu think that Awa ate?”

- d. Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam **di**?
Faatu think COMP Awa eat how
“How did Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- e. Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam **kiri?**?
Faatu think COMP Awa eat when
“When did Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- f. **yi daa tax** Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam?
what FOC cause Faatu think COMP Awa eat
“Why did Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- g. *Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam **yi daa tax**?
Faatu think COMP Awa eat what FOC cause
“Why did Faatu think that Awa ate?”

- The ungrammaticality of (9)g can be account for by the fact that *yi daa tax* ‘why’ is base generated to the complementizer domain of the clause (Buell 2011).

The wh-expressions can also occur ex situ in the left periphery of the initial clause as (10) show.

(10) Wh-ex situ with Embedded clauses

- a. **(diwa)** daa Faatu lii6 ti Awa la6 ?
who FOC Faatu think COMP Awa who
“who does Faatu think that Awa hit”
- b. **yi** daa Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam _____?
what FOC Faatu think COMP Awa eat
“What does Faatu think that the boy ate?”
- c. **di** daa Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam _____?
where FOC Faatu think COMP Awa eat
“Where does Faatu think that the Awa ate?”
- d. **di** daa Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam -a _____ ?
how FOC Faatu think COMP Awa eat -MAN
“How does Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- e. **kiri?** daa Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam _____
when FOC Faatu think COMP Awa eat
“When does Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- f. **yi daa tax** Faatu lii6 ti Awa ñam-pe ?
what FOC cause Faatu think COMP Awa eat-PERF
“Why did Faatu think that Awa ate?”

- (10) provides evidence that the wh-expressions can undergo long distance movement as the wh word moves out of the CP it originated from.
- The wh-expressions can actually mover in higher position. This is illustrated in (11).

(11) Evidence of cyclic movement

- a. Awa wan ti Faatu lii6 ti kukóy-à lom **yi**
Awa say COMP Faatu think COMP child -CL.DEF buy what
“What does Awa say that Faatu thinks that the boy bought?”
- b. **yi** **daa** Awa wan ti (**daa**) Faatu lii6 ti (**daa**) kukóy -à lom____?
what Awa say COMP FOC Faatu think COMP FOC child -CL.DEF buy
“What does Awa say that Faatu thinks that the boy bought?”

- In (11)a the wh-word remains in situ in the lowest clause.
- In contrast, in (11)b it moves to the highest clause in a chain; the movement is cyclic.
- This is substantiated by the fact that the focus marker *daa* may appear at each Spec CP.

4. Partial wh -movement

Apart from allowing long distance movement and in situ, Paloor also allows partial movement.

In this situation, the wh-phrase moves from the in situ matrix clause to an intermediate Spec CP (Cheng 1997). Consider (12).

(12) Partial movement

- a. Faatu lii6 ti (**diwa**) daa Awa la6 ?
Faatu think COMP who FOC Awa hit
“who does Faatu think that Awa hit”
- b. Faatu lii6 ti **yi** daa Awa ñam
Faatu think COMP what FOC Awa eat
“What does Faatu think that the boy ate?”
- c. Faatu lii6 ti **di** daa Awa ñam]?
Faatu think COMP where FOC Awa eat
“Where does Faatu think that the Awa ate?”
- d. Faatu lii6 ti **di** daa Awa ñam -a ?
Faatu think COMP how FOC Awa eat -MAN
“How does Faatu think that Awa ate?”

- e. Faatu lii6 ti **kiri?** daa Awa ñam ?
Faatu think COMP when FOC Awa eat
“When does Faatu think that Awa ate?”
- f. Faatu lii6 ti **yi daa tax** Awa ñam-pe ?
Faatu think COMP what FOC cause Awa eat-PERF
“Why did Faatu think that Awa ate?”

- In (12)a-f, the wh phrase moves to the Spec CP of the clause containing it, the intermediate Spec CP.
- In (13) I show interesting properties of Wh-phrases with respect to resumptive pronouns. Consider (13)a-d.

(13) Wh-question and resumptive pronouns

- a. **yi daa** Awa wan ti Faatu lii6 ti kukóy-á lom (**ni**)?
COMP FOC Awa say COMP Faatu think child -CL.DEF buy PRN
“What does Awa say Faatu thinks that the child bought (it) ?”
- b. Awa wan ti **yi daa** Faatu lii6 ti kukóy-á lom (**ni**)?
Awa say COMP what FOC Faatu think COMP child -CL.DEF buy PRN
“What does Awa say Faatu thinks that the child bought (it) ?”
- c. *Awa wan ti Faatu lii6 ti **yi daa** kukóy-á lom (***ni**)?
Awa say COMP Faatu think COMP think FOC child -CL.DEF buy PRN

- In (13) a resumptive pronoun can appear at the object position of the moved wh-expression.
- Interestingly the resumptive pronoun cannot co-occur with the focus marker in the same clause, hence the ungrammaticality of (13)c.

5. Constraints on Wh-questions: Islands

In this subsection, I show that wh-movement in Paloor is sensitive to islands (Ross 1967).

(14) Sentential subject

- a. ñaam-ee di ñaam **maala** ra, fey -te so
eat-? he/she eat rice.CL.DEF ? surprise -PERF me
“the fact that she ate the rice, surprised me”
- b. ñaam-ee di ñaam **yi** ra, fey -te so
eat-? he/she what what ? surprise -PERF me
“the fact that she ate what, surprised me”

- c. * **yi daa** ñaam-ee di ñaam _____ ra, fey -te so
 whay-FOC eat-? he/she eat what ? surprise -PERF me

- In (14)a, a sentence with a sentential subject is provided; it is possible to ask a question about the object of the sentential subject as long as it remains in situ.
- Indeed, an island effect is noted with an attempt to move the wh-word ex-situ.
- A similar constraint is observed with coordinate structure.

(15) Coordinate structure

- a. Awa ñaam -pe maalu , han -te miis
 Awa eat -PERF rice.INDF drink -PERF milk
 “Awa ate some rice and drank some milk”

- b. Awa ñaam -pe maalu a han -te **yi**
 Awa eat -PERF rice.INDF and drink -PERF **what**
 “Awa ate some rice and drank what”

- c. * **yi daa** Awa ñaam -pe maalu a han -te _____
 what FOC Awa eat -PERF rice.INDF and drink -PERF

- In (15) the wh- phrase can remain in situ ((15)b) but cannot undergo movement ((15)c).
- Similar situations have been discussed in Torrence and Kandybowicz (2015) for Krachi.
- More specifically, Torrence and Kandybowicz have provided evidence that in Krachi “island effects can be ameliorated by simply not moving the offending *wh*-expression” (Torrence and Kandybowicz 2015:22),

Finally in (16), the wh-phrase cannot remain in situ, nor can it move ex-situ.

(16) Possessive NP

- a. mi lom-pe pónis f-i **Musaa**
 I buy-PERF horse CL-i Musaa
 “I bought Musaa’s horse”

- b. *mi lom-pe pónis fi **diwa**
 I buy-PERF horse CL-i who

- c. * **diwa daa** mi lom-pe pónis fi _____
 who FOC I buy-PERF horse CL-i

6. Summary and perspectives for further research

- In this paper I have described some syntactic properties of Wh-questions in Paloor.
- I have shown that it is a “Wh-in situ” language that also allows Wh ex situ as echo questions.
- Various characteristics of the language i.e wh-drop, partial movement, long distance movement etc. have also been dealt with.
- This paper is not only a contribution to the literature of wh-questions but also a contribution to the syntax of Paloor, and endangered research.
- Future research might focus on a deeper syntactic analysis of the wh-questions and also extend other languages of the cangin group.

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