

## What a contrastive approach can tell us about the formal status and syntax of causal interrogatives in West-Germanic and Romance

On the basis of cross-linguistic evidence, several authors have proposed that the adjunct causal *wh*-interrogative ‘why’ and its lexical counterparts in other languages, differently from other elements of the same nature, are externally merged in a CP position, IntP (cf. Hornstein 1995, Rizzi 2001, Ko 2005, Stepanov & Tsai 2008), or move locally from a high position in the IP situated above NegP ([Spec,ReasonP] in Shlonsky & Soare 2011) to IntP to avoid Criterial Freezing and account for interpretative issues.

This analysis, which excludes upward movement of *why*, is based on solid grounds with respect to the languages taken into account. One of the main arguments in favor of an IntP / ReasonP base generation is that this element does not leave a trace in the area below such positions. However, data from German, a single *wh*-movement system, suggest that *warum* (‘why’) does, in fact, exhibit the same syntactic behavior as other interrogative *wh*-elements such as *was* (‘what’) as to its Merge position. In fact, it seems that *warum* may pied-pipe (multiple) modal particles to the left periphery (cf. Bayer & Trotzke 2015) (ex. (1)).

This indicates that the *wh*-element originates in the middle field and moves to the left periphery, optionally taking the particle(s) along. Moreover, *wh*-intensifiers like *zum Teufel* (‘the hell’) may move together with the *wh*-element to the CP or, in a slightly more marked construction, remain in the lower area as a litmus test of the trace of *warum* in that position (ex. (2)).

This is also true of embedded contexts, in which *warum* exhibits exactly the same behavior in relation to modal particles (ex. (3)) and *wh*-intensifiers (ex. (4)).

Insofar, German apparently represents an ‘exception’ to Rizzi’s (2001) and Shlonsky & Soare’s (2011) seminal observations on the cross-linguistic behavior of *why*, implying that e.g. in Italian, English and Romanian this element is merged either in [Spec,IntP] or in [Spec,ReasonP], since the a/m systems disallow *wh*-intensifier split.

A possibility to investigate would be that the SOV syntax of German may have implications for the base generation of ‘why’. In fact, Dutch, another West Germanic language in which the underlying word order is SOV, allows for the same phenomenon with the *wh*-pronoun *waarom* (ex. (5)) - crucially, just like German, but differently e.g. from Italian and English, two SVO systems.

Not all causal interrogatives in German and Dutch, however, exhibit the same formal status: for instance, etymologically related German *wieso* and Dutch *hoezo* (‘how come’) show striking functional differences: for instance, *wieso* (but, crucially, not *hoezo*) can function as a pseudo-relative pronoun in contexts of the type *This is the reason why...* (*Das ist der Grund*, <sup>OK</sup>*warum*/<sup>OK</sup>*wieso...* vs. *\*Dat is de reden*, <sup>OK</sup>*waarom*/*\*hoezo...*).

It seems, therefore, that a closer look at the structural features of causal *wh*-pronouns in West Germanic, at least w.r.t. the languages at stake here, reveals on the one hand an instance of macro-variation (German/Dutch as OV systems vs. English as a VO system exhibiting a partially non-Germanic syntax) and on the other hand one of micro-variation (German vs. Dutch). Given that there is independent evidence for a Split-CP in German à la Rizzi (1997) and differences in base-generation site are, therefore, not necessarily attributable to a reduced CP, such facts may call for a typological investigation implying a classification of languages based on the Merge site of causal interrogatives.

## Examples

- (1) a. *Warum denn bloß sollte ich parallel dazu noch ein Programm kaufen?*  
 why PRT PRT should I in-parallel to-it still a program buy
- b. *Warum denn sollte ich bloß parallel dazu noch ein Programm kaufen?*  
 why PRT should I PRT in-parallel to-it still a program buy
- c. *Warum sollte ich denn bloß parallel dazu noch ein Programm kaufen?*  
 why should I PRT PRT in-parallel in-addition still a program buy  
 ‘Why should I buy another program?’
- (2) a. [*Warum zum Teufel*]<sub>i</sub>; *bin ich* [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>] *nicht gegangen?*  
 why to-the devil am I NEG gone
- b. [*Warum*]<sub>i</sub>; *bin ich* [[<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>] *zum Teufel*] *nicht gegangen?*  
 why am I to-the devil NEG gone  
 ‘Why the hell didn’t I go there?’
- (3) a. [*Ich fragte ihn*], *warum denn bloß wir uns nicht besser verstanden hätten.*  
 I asked him why PRT PRT we REFL NEG better understood  
 had  
 ‘I asked him why we hadn’t had a better relationship.’
- b. [*Wir haben*] *höflich nachgefragt, warum er denn bloß so krumm am Instrument sitze.*  
 we have politely asked why he PRT PRT  
 so crooked at-the instrument sits  
 ‘We asked (him) politely why he was sitting so crooked at his instrument.’
- (4) a. *Ich frage mich, warum zum Teufel ich mich nicht in dich verlieben kann.*  
 I ask REFL why to-the devil I REFL NEG in you  
 fall-in-love can  
 ‘I wonder why I can’t fall in love with you.’
- b. *Will wissen, warum du zum Teufel nicht an deinem Platz bist.*  
 want-to know why you to-the devil NEG at your  
 place are  
 ‘I want to know why you’re not in your place.’
- (5) a. *Waarom in vredesnaam heb je dat gedaan?*  
 why in peace-name have you that done  
 ‘Why on earth did you do that?’
- b. *Maar Augustine, waarom heb je in vredesnaam dat kind hier gebracht?*  
 but Augustine why have you in peace-name the kid  
 here brought  
 ‘Oh Augustine, why on earth have you brought the kid here?’

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