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Donna B. Gardiner
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THE EMBEDDED QUESTION IN SOUTHERN TIWA:
WHAT DOES IT RESEMBLE?

Donna B. Gardiner

0. Introduction
1. Some Cross-linguistic Observations
2. Southern Tiwa Word Order
3. Relative Clauses
4. Wh-Questions
5. Cleft for Focus
6. Comparing the Indirect Question
7. Conclusions

0. There are three syntactic constructions which manifest a number of similarities in the syntax of a wide variety of languages, even though these constructions are usually overtly distinct. These are the Relative Clause (RelCl), the Wh-Question (WhQ), and Cleft sentence. Keenan and Hull, 1973, posit that the similarities can be explained on the basis of logical similarities that underlie all three structures. They also observe that, in general, indirect questions have the syntactic form of either an embedded Wh-Question, or an embedded Relative Clause, and argue that this is to be expected because these forms have the same truth conditions, according to their analysis.

1. Keenan and Hull summarize some of the similarities between these three constructions, seen in a wide sampling of languages. Many times, all three constructions are characterized by a clause constituent which occurs in a place outside of its unmarked clause position. Sometimes
this dislocated constituent is separated from the rest of the sentence by the same particle in all three cases. And for many more languages, two of the three constructions will include the same particle. They also observe that languages generally have constraints upon which grammatical relations are accessible to the dislocation process in each of these constructions. Generally, the same grammatical relations are accessible to all three, or to two of the three, in a given language. Cleft and WhQ are often marked by similar items. In S-O-V languages, the differences in surface form are greater than in other languages. And, when all three constructions are dissimilar, there is a tendency for WhQ and Cleft to pattern similarly, both differing from the RelCl.

Regarding indirect questions, Keenan and Hull (1973:351) observe:

We find that in natural languages one of three things happen; either such indirect questions appear only in the syntactic form of embedded relative clauses (RelCl), or they appear only in the form of embedded questions (WhQ), or there is free variation between these two constructions. (1973:351)

2. Southern Tiwa has an unmarked word order S-O-V, though the object is normally incorporated into the verb. There are rare instances of an object noun following the verb, and to my knowledge, this occurs only when both subject and object are proper nouns. Proper nouns are never incorporated.

(1) john pienu-m mary love-pres
    John loves Mary.

(2) seuanide liora-hwiet-pan
    man woman-hit-pst
    The man hit the woman.
I know of only one other instance in which an object is unincorporated. It is possible to have a free-standing object before the verb when the object is a human animate noun, and the subject is first or second person.

(3) seuanide ti-mu-ban  
man 1s:3s-see-pst
alternates with (4) ti-seuan-mu-ban  
1s:3s-man-see-pst

I saw the man.  
I saw the man.

Since it so rarely happens that objects are unincorporated, it is difficult to say definitely whether Southern Tiwa is an S-O-V or S-V-O language. But instances like example (3) have influenced us toward the S-O-V analysis.

3. Subject, object, and oblique relatives are all possible, i.e. subjects, objects, and non-terms are all accessible to relativization.

(5) ukhlen wan-ba-'i liorade theumda mi-we  
yesterday come-pst-sub lady tomorrow go-pres

ukhlen liorade wan-ba-'i theumda mi-we  
yesterday lady come-pst-sub tomorrow go-pres

The lady who came yesterday goes tomorrow.

(6) a-natheu-mu-ban ti-na-pe-ba-'i  
2s-house-see-pst 1s:3s-agr-make-pst-sub

Did you see the house I built?

(7) yede natheu- at te-theu-'i shachat na-m  
that house-loc 1s-live-sub nearby be-pres

That house I live in is nearby.

Notice that the nouns being modified are not dislocated from their normal syntactic positions, and are not given linear precedence.
The position of the RelCl in relation to its matrix clause is dependent on the matrix function. When the modified noun is subject of the matrix clause, as in (5), the relative clause precedes the matrix verb. The noun modified can either be included in the RelCl, or directly follow it. Inclusion of the noun in the RelCl results in a "headless" relative (Gorbet, 1977). When the noun being modified is object of the matrix clause, as in (6), the matrix clause takes linear precedence, and the noun is included within it. The RelCl which follows has no incorporated noun, but in this case contains the agreement particle -na-. When the noun being modified bears an oblique relation to the matrix verb, the matrix takes linear precedence, and may or may not retain the noun head.

(8) ti-hwien-hwiet-pan yemben la-ba mem-wia-ba-'i
   1s:3s-dog-hit-pst that stick-instr 2s:3s:ls-give-pst-sub

   I hit the dog with that stick you gave me.

(9) ti-hwien-hwiet-pan yemben mem-la-wia-ba-'i-ba
   2s:3s:ls-stick-give-pst-sub-instr

   I hit the dog with that stick you gave me.

In sentence (8), the head noun is retained in the matrix, and directly precedes the RelCl, whereas in sentence (9), the noun is incorporated into the RelCl, leaving it a "headless" relative.2

4. Wh-Questions have a sentence-initial interrogative pronoun. The interrogative suffix -u always separates this pronoun from the remaining sentence, and alerts the addressee to the question.
There is no evidence of subordination in Wh-Questions

5. Cleft is a type of focusing device which occurs in English and in many other languages.

(16) *It's the man that shot the dog*

In English, the noun in focus is dislocated to the left of the clause to which it belongs, and is marked. In this case, the verb 'be' characterizes Cleft. In Southern Tiwa, as in many other languages, the functional
Equivalent of 'be'-Cleft is a single-clause construction in which the noun in focus is given linear precedence, and separated from the clause by means of a particle, or in this case, a suffix.

(17) seuanide hwien-hu-ban
    man    dog-kill-pst

    The man killed the dog.

(18) seuanide-u hwien-hu-ban
    man-FOCUS dog-kill-pst

    It was the man who killed the dog.

(19) hwienide-'a we-hu-te-ba seuanide-ba3
    dog-NEG:FOC 3sNEG-kill-pass-pst man-by

    seuanide hwienide-'a we-hu-ba
    man    dog-NEG:FOC 3sNEG-kill-pstNEG

    It wasn't the dog the man killed.

(20) la-ba-u te-hwiet-e-ban
    stick-by-FOC 1s-hit-pass-pst

    It was a stick I was hit with.

In the Southern Tiwa equivalent of Cleft, a positive -u or negative -'a are affixed to the dislocated noun. In number (19), two equivalent expressions were given, but I feel that the first, where passivization has occurred is the more natural, because the noun in focus is in the front (subject) position.

6. Indirect questions in Southern Tiwa resemble the syntax of the RelCl in that there is a subordinate clause marked by the suffix -i.

(21) a-nakacha-m p'ay-'a pan-kha-ba-'i
    3s-know-pres who-emb bread-bake-pst-sub

    He knows who baked bread.
(22) a-nakacha-m yoade-'a ti-kan-tuwi-ba-'i
3s-know-pres which-emb 1s:3s-horse-buy-pst-sub

He knows which horse I bought.

These are different from the relative clause in that the Indirect Question (IndQ) always begins with a referential pronoun, and the relative clause does not. As is normal for an S-0-V language, the head noun follows the RelCl when it is unincorporated. Therefore, I cannot say that the head noun takes the same position held by the pronoun in an indirect question. Also, an indirect question always follows the matrix clause, whereas a relative clause may either precede or follow it.

The presence, and position, of a referential pronoun in the indirect question makes it resemble the WhQ. But the fact remains that a WhQ is an independent sentence, and the IndQ is subordinate.

The suffix -'a on the pronoun of the indirect question bears a resemblance to the negative suffix used in the Cleft construction, but once again, the Cleft construction does not contain a subordinate clause like the IndQ.

7. In the context of the cross-linguistic observations made by Keenan and Hull, the following summarizing remarks can be made about Southern Tiwa. First of all, the WhQ and Cleft are marked by an apparently identical -u, which is affixed to a pronoun in the Wh-Questions, and to the noun in focus in the Cleft construction. Both of these constructions seem to be results of focus, and this could explain the occurrence of -u. Also, both of these constructions are single independent clauses. This supports the Keenan and Hull hypothesis that these two constructions will pattern similarly in S-0-V languages, and that they will differ from the RelCl.
The RelCl does not isolate a constituent in the same sense that the other constructions do, but it can incorporate the noun being modified, thus preventing its occurrence in the matrix clause, as long as that noun does not function as object of the matrix clause. In Southern Tiwa any noun phrase, no matter what its grammatical relation to the verb, seems to be accessible to any of the four constructions being considered here.

I also conclude that the indirect question bears the strongest resemblance to the RelCl, on the basis of the fact that both are subordinate constructions, in contrast to the WhQ and Cleft. I feel that the resemblances which the IndQ bears to these other two are not as compelling as the resemblance of subordination.

FOOTNOTES

1There is a set of nouns in Southern Tiwa which begin with the syllable na-. This set includes such things as nominalized verbs, abstract nouns, mass nouns, and general activities. In a complex sentence like (5), which contains the nominalization natheu meaning 'house', the clause which lacks the overt object will nevertheless retain the na to mark agreement. I do not yet understand the significance of this affix. It will be considered in a later work.

2The phenomenon of the instrumentalized relative clause will be discussed in forthcoming papers on the relative clause in Isleta.

3See footnote 4 in Allen, Barbara and Donna Gardiner, 'Noun Incorporation in Isleta', in this volume for an explanation of animate noun suffixes.
Allen, Barbara, unpublished workpapers on the relative clause in Isleta (Southern Tiwa).

Allen, Barbara and Donna Gardiner. 1977. 'Noun Incorporation in Isleta' in this volume.

