Question Formation and Epistemicity in Khatso

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Khatso

- $[k^ha^{55}tso^{31}]$, Khatso
  - Also Katso, Gazhuo, Yunnan Mongolian
- Tibeto-Burman/Ngwi
- Xīngměng 兴蒙
  - Pop. ~5600
- Typology
  - 8 tones
  - Isolating morphology
  - Verb final

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Question Particles

- Tonal languages often employ particles to do the job that intonation does in others
  - Sinitic / Ngwi languages use phrase-final particles
- A subset often related to question formation
  - Lisu: 1
  - Akha: 2
  - Nuosu: 2
  - Lahu: 4
  - Khatso: 12
    - Many combine more than one meaning/function

(Bradley 2017; Hansson 2017; Gerner 2013; Matisoff 1973)

Questions in Khatso

- Variety of strategies to formulate questions, depending on…
  - Type of question
  - Aspect marking
  - Speaker's ideas about
    - Premise of question
    - Likelihood of an answer
- Formation strategies
  - Verb reduplication
  - Interrogative pronouns
  - Phrase-final particles
  - Tone manipulation

Polar Questions

▸ Polar questions: verb reduplication

i^{323} i^{323} ?
go   go
'(are you) going?

$la^{24}ka^{33}$ ka^{33} ?
play   play
'(are they) playing?'

η^{33} ηa^{33} ?
COP   COP
'isn't (it)?'

Content Questions

- Interrogative pronouns

  $xa^{33}jo^{35}$ 'who' $xa^{33}ȵa^{53}$ 'where'

  $xa^{33}ma^{44}$ 'what' $xa^{33}ni^{33}$ 'how'

  $xa^{33}tɕʰa^{55}kʰɣ̩^{33}$ 'when' $xa^{33}ma^{35}ti^{33}li^{323}$ 'why'

- Used in situ; requires $ŋa^{31}$

  i^{33} $xa^{33}ma^{44}$ $vɣ^{323}$ $ŋa^{31}$?
  3SG   what   buy   CNT.Q
  'What did she buy?'   (KL–Sewing)

Question Particles

Particle	Meaning/Function	Host
ηa^{33}	COP	polar
wa^{31}	PFV (cf. wa^{33})	polar
la^{31}	PFV.IRR / IRR.Q	polar
ta^{33}	IPFV.IRR	polar
ηa^{31}	CONT.Q (PRS/PST)	content
$pa^{51} \eta a^{31}$	CONT.Q (FUT)	content
sa^{31}	still.Q (cf. $s\epsilon i^{31}$)	polar/content
sa^{44}	CRTN.Q	declarative
$p\epsilon i^{33}$	CFRM.Q	declarative
ta^{31}	RHET.Q	content
ni^{35}	top.Q (cf. ni^{31})	declarative
ηuo^{31}	COP.Q	copula
a^{35}, m^{35}	INTJ.Q	––
^{35}	ECHO	lexeme

Polar Questions & Aspect

- Without a particle, polar construction assumed to have progressive aspect

- Perfective wa^{31} (cf. wa^{323} PFV)

$$s\gamma^{55} \quad s\gamma^{55} \quad \mathbf{wa^{31}} \; ?$$
know know **PFV.Q**
'Did (you) know (her)?'   (YJR–Weeds)

- Perfective irrealis la^{31} (cf. la^{31} IRR.Q)

$$o^{53}ts\gamma^{33} \; t\varepsilon i^{33}ma^{44} \; k^h\gamma^{33} \; t\varepsilon i^{33} \quad t\varepsilon i^{33} \quad \mathbf{la^{31}} \; ?$$
under this   in   pack pack   **IRR.Q**
'(Did you) put (it) under this?'   (KL–Sewing)

Polar Questions & Aspect

▸ Imperfective irrealis ta^{33}

$p\gamma^{53}$ $p\gamma^{53}$ **ta^{33}** sa^{31}, $t\varepsilon i^{33}t\varepsilon^ha^{55}k^h\gamma^{33}$?

play play **IPFV.IRR** still.Q this.time

'Is (he) still playing, these days?' (KL-Erasers)

Content Questions & Aspect

- Content questions considered perfective or progressive by default
- For future meaning, must add pa^{53} to ηa^{31} (< pa^{53} 'to want, tell')

$n\epsilon i^{33}$ $xa^{33}ni^{33}$ $t\varphi i^{33}$ **pa^{53} ηa^{31}** ?

2SG   how   make   **FUT**   **CNT.Q**

'How will you handle (it)?'   (YJR-Grandfather)

sa^{31} still.Q

- sa^{31} still.Q can also modify polar & content questions (cf. sɛi^{31} 'still, again')
  - Only post-verbal ADV in language

a^{33}tɕʰa^{55}kʰʏ^{33} pʏ^{323} ɕa^{35}pʰiɛ^{35} tso^{323} tso^{323} **sa^{31}** ?
that.time   POSS   photo   EXIST   EXIST   **still.Q**
'Do (you) still have photos of that time?'   (KL-Childhood)

xa^{33}ɳa^{53} kei^{33} tsʰa^{31}lia^{35} tso^{323} **sa^{31}**   pa^{53} ŋa^{31} ?
where   from   yield   EXIST   **still.Q** FUT   CONT.Q
'Where would there still be (such a) yield?'   (HPH-Weeds)

ni^{35} TOP.Q

- ni^{35} TOP.Q used for interrogative topics (cf. ni^{31} TOP)

o^{31} tsʅ^{323} pa^{323} n̠ɛ^{323} a^{33}tɕʰa^{55}kʰɣ̩^{33} **ni^{35}** ?
five seven eight CL   that.time   TOP.Q
'And '57, '58 that period?'   (KL–Childhood)

xa^{33}ma^{44} n̠a^{31} **ni^{35}** ?
what   speak   **TOP.Q**
'And say what?'   (YJR–Grandfather)

sa^{44} CRTN.Q

- sa^{44} CRTN.Q changes declarative to question
  - High degree of certainty about premise
  - Affirmative response is expected

ma^{31} k^{h}ɣ̩^{24} ni^{31} mɤ^{323} ma^{31} li^{323} **sa^{44}** ?

NEG be.empty TOP make.sound NEG   know.how **CRTN.Q**

'(If it) isn't empty, (it) won't make (a) sound, right?'

(KL, YLW-Learning)

la^{31} IRR.Q

- la^{31} IRR.Q changes declarative to question
  - Marks current/future events, also NP
  - Some certainty, but less than sa^{44}
  - Isomorphic with PFV IRR la^{31} in polar questions

k^{h}a^{55}tso^{31}tɕ^{h}i^{31} n̠a^{31} **la^{31} ?**
Khatso.language speak **IRR.Q**
'Do (you) speak Khatso?'   (KL–Competition)

pɤ^{323}xai^{31}sɿ^{35} mɛi^{44} k^{h}ɣ^{33},   a^{33}ma^{44} **la^{31} ?**
north.sea.temple CL   inside   that   **IRR.Q**
'In North Sea Temple, that one?'   (KL–Dragon Pools)

pɛi³³ CFRM.Q

- pɛi³³ CFRM.Q changes declarative to question
  - Seeking confirmation about uncertain premise
    - Often co-occurs with sa²⁴ 'perhaps'

ço³¹	no⁵³	ti³³	sa²⁴	ja³³	pɛi³³ ?
pare	complete	PROG	**perhaps**	IPFV.EMP	CFRM.Q

'(And so you) are cutting (them) off?' (KL-Stools)

ta^{31} RHET.Q

- ta^{31} RHET.Q used in content questions
  ◦ Marks questions for which an answer is not expected, e.g. rhetorical use

xa^{33}ni^{33} tɕi^{33} **ta^{31}** ?
how   do   RHET.Q
'What should (I) do?'/'What (can one) do?'   (KL–Elicitation)

i^{323}xo^{323} mɛi^{44} mo^{55} tɤ^{44} xa^{33}ma^{44} m̩^{33} **ta^{31}** ?
button CL   want CLNK what   do   RHET.Q
'(You) want a button (here) to do what?'   (KL–Sewing)

Tag Questions

▸ Tag questions formed with copula η^{33}
  ◦ Typically seek agreement or confirmation

$\eta^{33}\ \eta a^{33}$ neutral; listener may disagree

COP COP

$\eta^{33}\ sa^{44}$ certainty; expect agreement

COP CRTN.Q

$\eta^{44}\ \eta uo^{31}$ high certainty; rhetorical feel

COP COP.Q

$\eta^{33}\ wa^{31}$ certainty; reproachful feel

COP PFV.Q

Question Interjection

- Interjection signaling that an utterance should be repeated
  - Typically because it has not been heard
  - a^{35} most common, but also $\textrm{ɤ}^{35}$, $æ^{35}$, $\textrm{m̩}^{35}$

A: $nɛi^{33}tsʰɤ^{33}$ $na^{53}tsʰo^{31}$ li^{323} li^{323} ?
     2PL   sing   know.how know.how
     'Do you know how to sing?'

B: a^{35} ?
     INTJ.Q
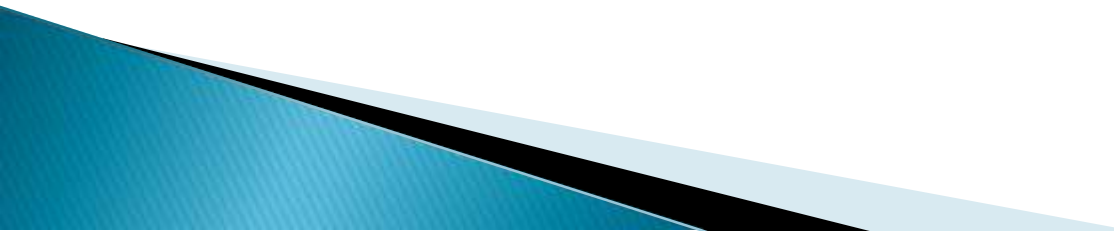   'Huh?'   (KL, YJF–Dance Parties)

Echo Questions

- Questions that repeat part or all of previous utterance
  - Typically because listener was not paying attention or because content surprises or raises doubts
  - Involves tone fusion with a^{35} INTJ.Q

A: $a^{33}t\varsigma^{h}a^{55}k^{h}\gamma^{33}$ $n\varepsilon i^{33}ts^{h}\chi^{33}$ $xa^{33}ni^{33}$ $k^{h}o^{53}$ za^{31} lo^{53} ηa^{31} ?

that.time   2PL   how   CL   DIM   reach CNT.Q

'At that time how old were you?'

B: $a^{33}t\varsigma^{h}a^{55}\mathbf{k^{h}\gamma^{335}}$? $[^{33} + {}^{35} = {}^{335}]$

that.time.ECHO

'At that time?'   (KL, YJF-Childhood)

Question Particles

- These strategies remind us that questions do more than request information
- They provide a way to present information
  - Express feelings & opinions about information
  - And build relationships through interaction
- Grammars often focus only on the two basic types
  - Polar questions
  - Content questions
- Analysis of discourse likely to uncover these other question-formation strategies

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