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Author's address: Department of Applied Linguistics, Portland State University,
P.O. Box 751 LING, Portland, OR 97201-0751, USA
santelmannl@pdx.edu
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Marina Stoyanova, *Unique focus: Languages without multiple* wh-*questions* (Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today **123**). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008. Pp. vii + 184.

Reviewed by Sandra Paoli, University of Oxford

This monograph, based on the author's doctoral dissertation, is a comparative investigation of the lack of multiple *wh*-questions in four unrelated languages, Somali, Berber, Italian and Irish. It aims at providing a typological specification of languages that do not license multiple *wh*-questions within the typological system developed for languages that do. In this aim, the investigation starts from an overview of the strategies employed by multiple *wh*-question languages (i.e. multiple *wh*-fronting, multiple *wh*-in-situ, a mixture of both) and relates them to the strategy of question formation employed by non-multiple *wh*-question languages, viz. single *wh*-fronting. The questions addressed are the following:

1. Why do languages without multiple *wh*-questions not allow for a mixed system, e.g. fronting one *wh*-element and leaving the other one in situ?
2. Why is multiple *wh*-fronting not an option either?

The analysis that the author provides is based on the parallel behaviour displayed by *wh*-questions and focusing constructions: in both cases, the fronted element is adjacent to a head with specific properties. This requirement is captured by the 'Head-Adjacency Generalisation'; together with the 'Uniqueness Hypothesis', which states, roughly, that there is a unique position in which both *wh*- and focus phrases are licensed, it accounts for the behaviour of non-multiple *wh*-question languages. Let us now turn to the organisation of the monograph.

The aim and structure of the book are presented in chapter 1, 'Introduction', which lays out the research questions, discusses their relevance and interest for current research, and devotes a brief section to highlighting salient points of the theoretical programme adopted, Chomsky's Minimalism. This is followed by an evaluation of three generative accounts of *wh*-questions, which make use of (i) clausal typing (Cheng 1997), (ii) the parallel behaviour of *wh*-questions and focus constructions (e.g. Rizzi 1991),

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and (iii) the need for *wh*-questions to satisfy both clausal typing and focus requirements (Sabel 2006). Each of these analyses falls short when applied to multiple *wh*-question languages, either by failing to provide an exhaustive explanation for them, or by making predictions that are not borne out. Moreover, from a typological point of view, a number of questions about the nature of languages that do not allow multiple *wh*-questions remain unanswered, such as, for example, what prohibits the possibility of multiple questions in languages as typologically diverse as Irish, Italian, Berber and Somali. The chapter concludes with a few words on the theory of focus, introducing the two types identified in the literature, information focus (IF) and contrastive focus (CF), as well as Rizzi's (1997) split Complementiser Phrase (CP) hypothesis.

Chapter 2, 'Previous analyses of the ungrammaticality of multiple *wh*-questions', sketches three analyses that have been proposed for Italian and Irish (Adams 1984), Italian and Berber (Calabrese 1987) and Somali (Lecarne 1999), chosen for their relevance to the four languages under investigation, and because they attempt a comparative explanation of the impossibility of multiple *wh*-questions in these languages. However, Adams's proposal does not satisfactorily account for the variability and full range of *wh*-constructions in Italian and Irish; the analysis put forward by Calabrese can produce the right outcome only with a number of stipulations; and Lecarne's ideas are problematic in that they result in contradictory typological properties for Somali.

After these two introductory chapters, the volume proceeds to the 'core' – in terms of both length and content – of the discussion in chapter 3, 'The overview: What is possible in which language?'. The chapter presents and discusses the facts in each of the four languages under investigation, addressing focus constructions as well as *wh*-questions. Stoyanova poses five questions that guide her enquiry (167):

Q1: Is the lack of multiple *wh*-questions related to any other syntactic phenomena?
Q2: How do these phenomena interact with one another?
Q3: Which properties block multiple *wh*-question formation?
Q4: Are there any other relevant similarities between the four languages under investigation?
Q5: Is it possible to achieve a uniform analysis of the phenomenon?

The section on Italian (3.1) establishes two generalisations. The first one concerns IF and CF, which Stoyanova claims are structurally non-distinct and occupy the same position, viz. the specifier position of the Focus Phrase (SpecFocP). The differences between the two types of focus are accounted for by assuming remnant movement of the background part of the sentence: in IF but not in CF constructions, the remaining Inflection Phrase (IP) must undergo remnant movement after the focalised phrase has moved to the left

periphery. *Wh*-elements also occupy SpecFocP; it follows that only one focused or *wh*-element is permitted in a sentence, hence ruling out the possibility of multiple *wh*-questions. The second generalisation is that there is an adjacency requirement between a focused or *wh*-element and a [+Focus] head, which can be either lexically filled or left empty. These generalisations also hold for Somali (in which the relation between *wh*-elements and focus is tangibly represented by the former being expressed through the use of a focus marker particle), and for Berber and Irish (in which *wh*-questions and focus constructions are expressed as clefts). In all four languages, *wh*-questions and their answers (i.e. focus constructions) display the same structural properties, and they are analysed as syntactically identical. The chapter concludes by providing the following answers to the five questions above (126–127):

A1: Both *wh*-questions and focusing constructions in languages without multiple *wh*-questions require the fronting (or base generation) of ONE element into a designated positions, identified as Spec, Foc, and adjacency to a [+Focus] head;
A2: The two phenomena are the same, syntactically speaking;
A3: The existence of a unique Focus position, which allows neither multiple *wh*-questions nor multiple foci;
A4: The four languages display the same properties with respect to focus and question formation;
A5: Given the parallels between the four languages, only a unified analysis can make sense.

A third phenomenon that is investigated alongside *wh*-questions and focus constructions is the anti-agreement effect: Somali, Berber, Irish and some Italian dialects, but not Standard Italian, require (or allow) lack of agreement in a variety of constructions, mainly (short distance) A′-dependencies. In Somali and Berber, the anti-agreement phenomenon is found in both *wh*-questions and focus constructions, while in Irish and the Italian dialects there does not appear to be a direct relation between the two. Anti-agreement phenomena have been explained on the basis of the properties and distribution of different empty categories. Stoyanova concludes that (i) it is unlikely that anti-agreement effects can be accounted for in a unified way, (ii) anti-agreement effects are not among the properties of a language that block multiple *wh*-questions, and (iii) the relation between the two phenomena is indirect.

Chapter 4, 'Analysis', investigates the realisation of the three parameters that make up the Uniqueness Hypothesis – lack of in-situ focus, lack of multiple specifiers and recursion of FocP – and briefly considers their theoretical implications. In Stoyanova's analysis, the triggering force behind movement of the *wh*-element to a designated position is its uninterpretable, strong focus feature, a proposal already put forward in Sabel (2006).

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Chapter 5, 'Conclusion', closes the book with a lucid summary of the claims made. It reflects on the possible potential combinations of *wh*-question formation and focusing strategies, which may or may not involve movement, and presents these combinations (and the languages that instantiate them) in tabular form.

Stoyanova's book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of focus and *wh*-questions, both in its integration of typological observations and theoretical syntax and in its comparative approach to languages that do not allow multiple *wh*-questions, however unrelated to one another they may be. The study contributes to current debate in generative linguistics by combining newly awakened interest in Information Structure phenomena with traditional research on *wh*-questions. Stoyanova's argumentation is overall clear and systematic, and the data presented, although mostly not collected by the author herself, provide a useful reference for anybody interested in a comparative approach to focus and *wh*-constructions.

A couple of more specific comments: one of the fundamental assumptions of Stoyanova's account of the impossibility of having multiple *wh*-questions in Italian is the syntactic identity of IF and CF. This is needed in order to reconcile Rizzi's (1991) and Calabrese's (1987) analyses, which equate *wh*-questions with, respectively, CF and IF constructions. The two types of focus constructions are shown to share the same structural properties, and the suggestion of a higher CF projection adjacent to a lower IF projection is rejected on the basis that CF and *wh*-questions cannot co-occur. Hence, Stoyanova concludes that CF and *wh*-elements must occupy the same syntactic position. However, there is evidence that suggests that CF, unlike IF, does not need to be adjacent to the finite verb, as illustrated in (1)–(2). This is particularly apparent in Sicilian (cf. the asymmetry with respect to verb-adjacency between IF *a virità* 'the truth' and CF *na littra* 'a letter').

(1) (*Standard*) *Italian* (Rizzi 1997: 296, ex. (37e))
    Credo che QUESTO, a Gianni, domani, gli dovremmo dire
    I-think that THIS, to Gianni, tomorrow, to-him we-should say
    'I think that we should say THIS to Gianni tomorrow.'
(2) *Sicilian* (Bentley 2007: 53, ex. (7a–b))
    (a) Chi cci ricisti a tò niputi?
        what to-him you-said to your nephew?
          A VIRITÀ (*a mè niputi) cci rissi
          the truth (*to my nephew) to-him I-said
        'What did you say to your nephew?
          I told (*my nephew) him the truth.'
    (b) NA LITTRA, a Pina, cci scrissi, no un pizzinu
        a letter, to Pina, to-her I-wrote, not a card
        'It was a letter I wrote to Pina, not a card.'

This clear difference between CF, on the one hand, and *wh*-constituents and IF, on the other, suggests that IF and CF cannot be understood as syntactically identical: the incompatibility of CF and *wh*-questions may not be due to the two competing for the same position. Furthermore, interpreting the fact that both IF and CF display properties of moved elements as an indication that they move to the same slot is too hasty a conclusion.

Stoyanova makes reference to Italian marginally allowing multiple questions, alongside multiple CF constructions, but discards the evidence on the basis that it clashes with the data put forward in Calabrese (1984) and Rizzi (1997). Given the well-known diatopic variation of Italian, it would be interesting to investigate this claim in more depth, obtaining more data and systematically testing for the connection between multiple *wh*-questions and multiple focus.

At the start of this book, the author sets out the characteristics of question formation strategies employed by multiple *wh*-question languages, and proceeds to discuss how these relate to what is found in languages that do not allow multiple *wh*-questions. While this is a typologically relevant and interesting question that aims at gathering evidence for language profiling, it nevertheless runs the risk of turning into a contradiction in terms. Occasionally, the reader cannot help but suspect that non-multiple *wh*-question languages are being defined on the basis of a typology styled on multiple *wh*-question languages, almost as if the former constituted part of the latter. This suspicion is confirmed when Stoyanova presents the typology of multiple *wh*-question languages in a table that subsumes both languages with and languages without multiple *wh*-questions (163). Logically, it is not possible to define [not A] as part of [A].

Although the Minimalist analysis provided is attractive and elegant, it does not come without assumptions and postulations that may not necessarily be plausible. The most valuable parts of Stoyanova's book are, in my view, her generalisations about languages without multiple *wh*-questions and the typological classification derived.

The book will certainly be of interest to any scholar working on *wh*-questions, who will appreciate the breadth of the data and the ideas presented. The book constitutes a stimulating incentive to find answers to Stoyanova's insightful five questions, answers which will contribute a further piece to the puzzle presented by the typology of *wh*-questions.

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Author's address: Centre for Linguistics and Philology, Walton Street,
Oxford OX1 2HG, UK
sandra.paoli@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk

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