1. Introduction

This paper will bring some new data to bear on the question of how “overt movement” is to be characterized. I will argue that Probes which trigger overt movement cannot be requiring movement to a position c-commanding them, as standardly assumed. The account will be consistent with accounts like that of Richards (2010, 2016), which require only that “overt movement” land in a position which is linearly close to the triggering Probe.

The data will all come from Tagalog. We will see, first, that Tagalog wh-movement is generally obligatorily overt. However, there is a class of wh-phrases in Tagalog (wh-predicates), which I will argue are incapable of overt wh-movement. We will see that these wh-phrases can form wh-questions just if they are linearly adjacent to the interrogative complementizer which begins the clause, and that they are never in the structural position occupied by wh-moved phrases.

2. Wh-predicates in Tagalog

Tagalog is a predicate-initial language. Predicates of any lexical category are typically initial in the clause:

* (Acknowledgments to be added)

I will use the abbreviations of Rackowski (2002) to gloss Tagalog’s Austronesian-style voice system; NOM will indicate that the verb agrees with the underlying Nominative argument, ACC for the Accusative argument, DAT for a Dative argument, and OBL for an Oblique argument. ANG is the marker of the argument agreed with by the verb (this morpheme has two allomorphs, si for proper names of human beings and ang for other nominals). The other two nominal cases are DAT, for datives, and UNM(arked), which is for nominals not marked ANG or DAT. Other abbreviations include FUT (Future), LI (Linker), PRED (Predicate), and PL (plural).
And wh-questions, whether matrix or embedded, may have initial predicates as their wh-phrases\(^1\):

(1) a. Na-sa unibersidad ang lola ninyo

\[
\text{PRED-DAT university ANG grandmother your.PL}
\]

‘Your grandmother is at the university’

b. Mabilis ang butiki

\[
\text{fast ANG house.lizard}
\]

‘The house lizard is fast’

c. Pangulo si Duterte

\[
\text{president ANG Duterte}
\]

‘Duterte is president’

d. Bibilh-in ni Juan ang mga libro-ng ito

\[
\text{FUT.buy-ACC UNM Juan ANG PL book-LI this}
\]

‘Juan will buy these books’

And wh-questions, whether matrix or embedded, may have initial predicates as their wh-phrases\(^1\):

(2) a. Na-saan ang lola ninyo?

\[
\text{PRED-where ANG grandmother your.PL}
\]

‘Where is your grandmother?’

b. Gaano kabilis ang butiki?

\[
\text{how fast ANG house.lizard}
\]

‘How fast is the house lizard?’

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\(^1\) I have glossed the complementizer *kung* with C\(_{OP}\), which is intended to indicate that it is a complementizer that triggers operator movement to itself. This is not the complementizer used in ordinary declarative clauses, but it is used in embedded questions, in relative clauses with non-DP relative operators (see Otsuka and Tanaka 2016, Hsieh 2018 for further discussion), and in adjunct clauses with meanings like *if* or *when* (and see Larson 1985, Eng 1987, Bhatt and Pancheva 2006, along with much other work, for arguments that these kinds of clauses involve operator movement).
(3) a. Hindi ko alam [kung na-saan ang lola ninyo]
   not UNM.I know C_{OP} PRED-where ANG grandmother your.PL
   ‘I don’t know where your grandmother is’

b. Hindi ko alam [kung gaano kabilis ang butiki]
   not UNM.I know C_{OP} how fast ANG house.lizard
   ‘I don’t know how fast the house lizard is’

c. Hindi ko alam [kung ano-ng klase-ng Pangulo si Duterte]
   not UNM.I know C_{OP} what-LI kind-LI president ANG Duterte
   ‘I don’t know what kind of president Duterte is’

d. Hindi ko alam [kung aanh-in ni Juan ang mga libro-ng ito]
   not UNM.I know C_{OP} FUT.what-ACC UNM Juan ANG PL book-LI this
   ‘I don’t know what Juan will do with these books’

The boldfaced material in (2-3) actually has two reasons to be initial in the Tagalog clause. Not only are these predicates, in a generally predicate-initial language, but they are wh-phrases, and wh-movement is obligatory in Tagalog:

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2 Here there is apparently some cross-speaker variation: Law and Gärtner (2005) describe speakers of Tagalog who accept (4b). Speakers that I have consulted have uniformly rejected it. All that will be important for the claims to be made here is that speakers who reject (4b) exist; speakers with the grammar described by Law and Gärtner will also be consistent with the paper’s claim, though they will not offer the same kind of evidence for it.
But in fact, we will see evidence that wh-predicates in Tagalog are incapable of wh-movement; they must remain in situ. One piece of evidence for this conclusion comes from long-distance wh-questions. It turns out that wh-predicates in Tagalog cannot be extracted long-distance:

(5)  a.  *Na-saan ninyo sinabi [-ng __ ang lola ninyo]?
    PRED-where UNM.you.PL ACC.said C ANG grandmother your.PL
    ‘Where did you say your grandmother was?’

b.  *Gaano kabilis sinabi ng dalubhasa [ na__ ang butiki]?
    how fast ACC.said UNM expert C ANG house.lizard
    ‘How fast did the expert say the house lizard was?’

c.  *Ano-ng klase-ng Pangulo ang sinasabi ng mga diyaryo [ na__ si D.]?
    what-LI kind-LI president ANG ACC.saying UNM PL newspaper C ANG D.
    ‘What kind of president are the newspapers saying Duterte is?’

d.  *Aanh-in sinabi ng guro [ na __ ni Juan ang mga libro-ng ito]?
    FUT what-ACC ACC.said UNM teacher C UNM Juan ANG PL book-LI this
    ‘What did the teacher say Juan would do with the books?’
Demonstrating that wh-predicates cannot wh-move in monoclausal questions in Tagalog is harder to do, since predicates and wh-phrases are both typically clause-initial. I turn to that task in the next section.

3. Wh-predicates in monoclausal wh-questions

Much of the literature on Tagalog agrees that predicate-initial word order is created by movement of the predicate to a syntactic position higher than the arguments of the clause (Kroeger 1993, Richards 1993, 2000, Rackowski 2002, Aldridge 2004, and much other work). Certain kinds of material can intervene between the fronted predicate and overt complementizers, indicating that the landing site of predicate fronting is not C:

(6) Sinabi ni Maria [na hindi naintindihan ng propesor ang kanyang tanong]

ACC said UNM Maria C not understood-DAT UNM professor ANG her question

‘Maria said that the professor did not understand her question’

In (6), the predicate of the embedded clause, naintindihan ‘understood’, is separated from the embedding complementizer na by the negative morpheme hindi. Data like (6) have been taken to argue (for example, by Richards 2003 and Aldridge 2004), not only that the landing site of predicate fronting is not C, but that it should not be the sister of C, either; there must be a certain amount of syntactic space between C and the position of the predicate.

Negation is not the only kind of material that can occupy this space. Certain kinds of phrases may be fronted to positions before the predicate, where they are followed by an invariant morpheme ay:
I will refer to the process in (7), following Schachter and Otanes (1972), as *ay-inversion*. It is generally optional, and if it has effects on information structure, they are quite subtle. *Ay*-inverted material precedes negation:

(8)  

a. Si Maria ay hindi Pilipina.  
\[ \text{ANG Maria AY not Filipina} \]  
‘Maria is not Filipina’

b. *Hindi si Maria ay Pilipina  
\[ \text{not ANG Maria AY Filipina} \]

Descriptively, then, the Tagalog clause can begin with at least the following items, in this order:

(9)  
\[ \text{C [ay-inverted phrase] Neg Predicate} \]

To this description we may add the landing site of ordinary fronted wh-phrases. These must precede *ay*-inverted phrases, and follow the complementizer:
In embedded wh-questions, the order in (10) is the only possible one for these elements. In particular, an \textit{ay}-fronted phrase cannot intervene between the interrogative complementizer \textit{kung} and the fronted wh-phrase:

\begin{equation}
\text{(11)} \quad *\text{Alamin} \quad \text{muna} \quad \text{\textit{kung} \ \textit{ikaw} \ \textit{ay} \ \textit{kailan} \ \textit{hihinto}.} \\
\text{ACC.know} \quad \text{first} \quad \text{\textit{COP} when} \quad \text{\textit{ANG.you} \ \textit{AY} \ \text{NOM.will.stop}}
\end{equation}

‘Figure out first \textbf{when you will stop’}

(\text{http://www.casinopatnubay.com/pagseet-ng-budget/}, accessed 5/22/20)

We can think of (11) as an illustration of what it means to say that Tagalog has obligatory wh-fronting; wh-fronting is to a position just to the right of the embedding complementizer \textit{kung}, and the wh-phrase cannot be separated from this position. We can update the description in (9) as follows:

\begin{equation}
\text{(12)} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{[wh-phrase] [\textit{ay}-inverted phrase] \textit{Neg Predicate}}
\end{equation}

The description in (12) is not exhaustive; there are other kinds of things that can precede the Tagalog predicate, such as fronted topics and certain kinds of adverbs. But this description will suffice for our purposes.

The fact that the wh-phrase follows the complementizer \textit{kung} rather than preceding it is surprising on conventional assumptions about the architecture of the clause; if wh-movement lands in the specifier of CP, we should expect that wh-phrase to precede the complementizer.
The literature contains several plausible proposals about this problem, any of which would be consistent with the point being made here. Kroeger (1993) and Otsuka and Tanaka (2016) claim that Tagalog wh-movement is to the specifier of a projection below the one headed by *kung*. Sabbagh (2014) posits wh-movement to the specifier of *kung*, together with conditions on how Tagalog syntactic structure is mapped onto prosodic structure which guarantee that the wh-phrase must be linearized after the complementizer.

More generally, a natural question to ask at this point would be how the facts in (12) should be represented in a tree. We might consider one extreme in which each of the elements involved occupies its own dedicated maximal projection:\footnote{There can be multiple *ay*-inverted phrases, each with its own *ay* (Schachter and Otanes 1972, 498):

(i) \begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Bukas ay kami ay pupunta}
\item \textit{tomorrow AY ANG.wE.EXCL AY NOM.will.go}
\end{itemize}

Thus, if we decide to posit *ayP*, it either cannot have *ay* as its head, or we would have to be willing to countenance multiple *ayPs.}

(13) a. Hindi ko alam [ kung bakit si Maria ay hindi umalis]
    not \hspace{0.5cm} UNM.I know \hspace{0.5cm} why \hspace{0.5cm} ANG Maria AY \hspace{0.5cm} not NOM.left

    ‘I don’t know why Maria didn’t leave’

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{b. CP}
\item \textit{C}
\item \textit{kung}
\item \textit{COP}
\item \textit{kung}
\item \textit{AdvP}
\item \textit{wh'}
\item \textit{bakit}
\item \textit{wh}
\item \textit{ayP}
\item \textit{DP}
\item \textit{si Maria ay}
\item \textit{‘Maria AY’}
\item \textit{NegP}
\item \textit{Neg}
\item \textit{hindi}
\item \textit{‘not’}
\item \textit{TP}
\item \textit{umalis}
\item \textit{‘NOM.left’}
\end{itemize}
A logically possible opposite extreme would posit a single projection hosting all of the material after C, perhaps with the predicate occupying the head of the projection, and the rest of the material in various adjunct and specifier positions:

(14) a. Hindi ko alam [ kung bakit si Maria ay hindi umalis]
    not UNM.I know C OP why ANG Maria AY not NOM.left
    ‘I don’t know why Maria didn’t leave’

    b. CP
       C
       XP
       kung C OP
       AdvP X’
       bakit DP X’ ‘why’
       si Maria ay X NegP X ‘Maria AY’
       hindi umalis X not TP ‘NOM.left’

One argument against the radically impoverished structure in (14b) comes from the behavior of ellipsis in Tagalog. Tagalog has sluicing (and Sprouting):

(15) a. May dumating, pero hindi ko alam kung sino.
    EXIST NOM.came but not UNM.I know C OP who
    ‘Somebody came, but I don’t know who’

    b. Umalis si Maria, pero hindi ko alam kung bakit.
    NOM.left ANG Maria but not UNM.I know C OP why
    ‘Maria left, but I don’t know why’

Sluicing may elide negation:
(16) Hindi umalis si Maria,

not NOM.left ANG Maria

pero hindi ko alam kung bakit hindi umalis si Maria

but not UNM.I know COP why not NOM.left ANG Maria

‘Maria didn’t leave, but I don’t know why Maria didn’t leave’

Tagalog also allows ellipsis of the material following negation:

(17) Hindi ko alam kung nagbigay ako ng pera sa simbahan,

not UNM.I know COP NOM.gave ANG.I UNM moneyDAT church

pero sinabi ni Maria na hindi

but ACC.said UNM Maria C not

‘I don’t know whether I gave money to the church,

but Mary said that I didn’t give money to the church’

On the other hand, an ay-inverted phrase may not precede an ellipsis site:

(18) *Si Maria ay hindi umalis,

ANG Maria AY not NOM.left

pero si Juan ay umalis

but ANG Juan AY NOM.left

‘Maria didn’t leave, but Juan did leave’

In a structure like the one in (13b), the facts in (15-18) are easy to describe: Tagalog can elide ayP and TP, but not NegP. In (14b), on the other hand, description is less straightforward.

Whether we want to posit all the structure in (13b) is unclear, but at least with our current understanding of how ellipsis is licensed cross-linguistically, it is hard to see how the structurally impoverished structure in (14b) can be the right one.
We now seem to have found a kind of case in which the position of the predicate and the position of a fronted wh-phrase can be linearly (and, I have just argued, structurally) distinguished; material can intervene between these two positions. Where does a wh-predicate appear?

The fact is that wh-predicates are incompatible with ay-inversion in embedded questions:

(19)  
  a. *Alamin muna kung ikaw ay na-saan ngayon  
      know.ACC first COP you AY PRED-where now  
      ‘Figure out first where you are now’  
  b. *Alamin muna kung na-saan ikaw ay ngayon  
      know.ACC first COP PRED-where you AY now  
      ‘Figure out first where you are now’  

Neither of the orders in (19) is possible. We can relate the ill-formedness of (19a) to the contrast in (10-11), repeated here as (20):

(20)  
  a. Alamin muna bago ka magsimula-ng tumaya  
      ACC.know first before ANG.you start-LI NOM.bet  
      kung kailan ikaw ay hihinto.  
      COP when ANG.you AY NOM.will.stop  
      ‘Figure out first before you start betting when you will stop’  
  b. *Alamin muna kung ikaw ay kailan hihinto.  
      ACC.know first COP ANG.you AY when NOM.will.stop  
      ‘Figure out first when you will stop’
As (20) reminds us, we have already seen that wh-phrases cannot be separated from the complementizer by ay-inverted phrases. But in (19b), we can see that fronting the wh-predicate across the ay-inverted phrase is also unacceptable. The ill-formedness of (19b) is reminiscent of the facts in (5), repeated as (21):

(21) a. *Na-saan ninyo sinabi [-ng __ ang lola ninyo]?

    PRED-where UNM.you.PL ACC.said C ANG grandmother your.PL

    ‘Where did you say your grandmother was?’

b. *Gaano kabilis sinabi ng dalubhasa [ na__ ang butiki]?

    how fast ACC.said UNM expert C ANG house.lizard

    ‘How fast did the expert say the house lizard was?’

c. *Ano-ang klase-ng Pangulo ang sinasabi ng mga diyaryo [ na__ si D.]?

    what-LI kind-LI president ANG ACC.saying UNM PL newspaper C ANG D.

    ‘What kind of president are the newspapers saying Duterte is?’

d. *Aanh-in sinabi ng guro [ na __ ni Juan ang mga libro-ng ito]?

    FUT.what-ACC ACC.said UNM teacher C UNM Juan ANG PL book-LI this

    ‘What did the teacher say Juan would do with the books?’

Wh-predicates, like other wh-phrases, must be adjacent to the interrogative complementizer, but in every case in which fronting a wh-predicate would not be string-vacuous, fronting is blocked; they cannot front across clause boundaries, as (21) shows, but they also cannot front within their clause, as we see in (19).

The facts in matrix wh-questions are somewhat more complicated. Here it is possible for ay-inverted phrases to precede wh-predicates4:

4 Matrix non-predicate wh-phrases can also precede ay-inverted material, again in a particularly formal register:

(i) Ngunit ang karunungan ay saan ba nagbubuhat?
(22) Ang Diyos mo ba ay na-saan?

ANG God your Q AY PRED-where

‘Where is your God?’ (Psalms 42:10, Magandang Balita Bible)

Speakers I consulted found examples like (22) old-fashioned and formal, but acceptable. Perhaps ay-inversion can be to higher positions in matrix questions than in embedded questions, or perhaps it is relevant that there is no overt interrogative complementizer in matrix questions, corresponding to the complementizer kung which appears in embedded wh-questions.

Putting matrix questions aside, then, let us review what the facts of embedded questions seem to teach us.

(23) a. Hindi ko alam kung saan inilagay ni Juan ang libro

not UNM.I know C OP where OBL-put UNM Juan ANG book

‘I don’t know where Juan put the book’

b. Hindi ko alam kung nasaan ang libro

not UNM.I know C OP PRED-where ANG book

‘I don’t know where the book is’

We have now seen evidence that the boldfaced wh-phrases in (23) are in different syntactic positions. Saan ‘where’ in (23a) is in a comparatively high structural position, preceding the positions of negation and ay-inverted phrases. The predicate wh-phrase nasaan ‘PRED-where’ in (23b), on the other hand, is in a comparatively low structural position, the predicate-initial

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but ANG wisdom AY where Q NOM.come.from

‘But where does wisdom come from?’ (Job 32:8, Magandang Balita Bible)
position typically occupied by predicates. In fact, we have seen that wh-predicates cannot move any higher than the positions that predicates occupy\(^5\).

The description in (24) covers the data under discussion:

(24) In Tagalog, wh-phrases must be linearly adjacent to C.

On this view, the wh-phrase in (23a) satisfies (24) via actual wh-movement, while the wh-phrase in (23b) satisfies (24) because of the general processes that typically make predicates initial in Tagalog. In fact, we have now seen that if a wh-predicate cannot satisfy (24) while staying in the ordinary position of predicates, then (24) is violated and the result is ill-formed; wh-predicates cannot undergo the kind of wh-movement that we see in (23a).

The condition in (24) would be a natural consequence of an approach to overt movement like that in Richards (2010, 2016). In that approach, overt movement takes place because of conditions that require Probes and Goals to share prosodic structures of certain kinds; in effect, overt movement is triggered by the need to make Probes and Goals linearly closer. On this kind of account, we should expect to find generalizations like (24).

Generalizations like (24) are not the mainstream way of understanding overt movement, however. On standard approaches, overt movement takes place because of features on a head which require that head to have a specifier (often, a Goal with which a Probe on the head has Agreed). Can some version of this kind of approach account for the Tagalog data?

It is always dangerous to bet against the ingenuity of future syntacticians, of course, but it is difficult to see how any account of this kind can succeed. This is particularly clear if we are

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\(^5\) I will refer interested readers to Richards (2009) for some discussion of why this might be. Briefly, Richards proposes that Tagalog nonverbal predicates involve a null copula, which cannot be stranded by movement (he compares the Tagalog null copula to the AAVE one in (ib) (Labov 1969)):

(i)

a. He Ø fast in everything he do.

b. *How beautiful you Ø !
justified in positing anything like the structurally rich approach represented in the tree in (13b); ordinary wh-movement in Tagalog lands in the specifier of one kind of functional projection, and predicate wh-phrases reside in a completely distinct functional projection, and the two are separated by some structural distance\(^6\). It is hard to see how a single structural condition could cover all the cases.

4. Conclusion

The best generalization about Tagalog wh-questions appears to be that the wh-phrase must immediately linearly follow the interrogative complementizer\(^7\). For most wh-phrases, this requirement is satisfied by wh-fronting, which lands in a position to the right of the complementizer and to the left of negation and ay-inverted phrases. Such wh-fronting is generally obligatory in Tagalog, as we have seen. But we have also learned that wh-predicates must satisfy the general condition on wh-questions in Tagalog in a different way; they must be linearly adjacent to the interrogative complementizer, but they cannot move in order to get there, even if the movement would only take them past an intervening ay-phrase. In other words, the requirement that wh-movement must be overt in Tagalog cannot be associated with a particular syntactic position; fronted wh-phrases and wh-predicates do not occupy the same syntactic position (the ay-inverted phrase intervenes between them), but both can (and must) satisfy the condition on wh-phrases in Tagalog. An account of the standard kind, which says that wh-questions

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\(^6\) Even if we were to claim that phrases like ayP and NegP are only present when they are occupied by material, we would still be left with the central distinction; there is some host for wh-movement which is above the ordinary position of predicates (and above ayP and NegP, when they are present), and this host is the landing site for ordinary wh-movement but not for wh-predicates. The account would fall short of its goal of finding a single structural configuration for wh-phrases to occupy.

\(^7\) We can think of the literature positing a ban on Vacuous Movement in English (George 1980, Chung and McCloskey 1983, Chomsky 1986) as arguing for a similar claim for English; English wh-phrases need only be linearly adjacent to C, and string-vacuous movement therefore does not take place. Other work has posited a more general condition of Anti-Locality (Abels 2003, Grohmann 2003, Erlewine 2016, Brillman and Hirsch 2016, Brillman 2017), banning movement which does not cross certain kinds of material. Whether this kind of proposal can be reduced to the idea defended here is another question I will have to leave for future research.
fronting is obligatory in some languages because a particular head demands that the wh-phrase land in its specifier, appears to fail for Tagalog. Overt wh-movement is obligatory in Tagalog, but there is no single structural landing site for wh-movement.
Bibliography


