

An Account of *Wh*-Fronting in Aleut

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1 An In-Situ Language

• subject *wh*-word:

- (1) **Kiin** Piitrax ila□ulix?
 who Peter help
 ‘Who is helping Peter?’
- (2) **Qan** ayagaadax Michax aqulixtalix
 which girl Michael like
 ‘Which girl likes Michael?’

• object *wh*-word:

- (3) Piitrax **kiin** ila□ulix?
 Peter who help
 ‘Who is Peter helping?’
- (4) Ayagadax **alqutax** istalix
 girl what say
 ‘What did the girl say?’
- (5) Michax **qan** ayagaadax aqulixtalix
 Michael which girl like
 ‘Which girl does Michael like?’

• the object may precede the subject when the relative case is used:

- (6) a. Kiin Piitra-**m** aqulixtanaa
 who Peter-REL like
 ‘Who does Peter like?’
- b. Piitrax kiin aqulixtalix
 Peter who like
 ‘Who does Peter like?’

• embedded clause constructions

- [S O V]
- [S O V]
- (7) Ivaanax [Mariiyax yaablukax aqulixtalix] anuxtaasakux
 John [Mary apples like] think
 ‘John thinks Mary likes apples.’
- (8) Piitrax [**kiin** Mariiyax aqulixtalix] aqataatulix
 Peter [who Mary like] know
 ‘Peter knows who likes Mary’
- (9) Piitrax [Mariiyax **kiin** aqulixtalix] aqataatulix
 Peter [Mary who like] know
 ‘Peter knows who Mary likes.’

2 Wonder and Think

• *wonder* takes an interrogative complement while *think* takes a non-interrogative complement:

- (10) He wonders what you bought.
 (11) What does he think you bought?

• Rizzi’s *Wh-Criterion*

A. A *Wh*-Operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an $X^0_{[+wh]}$

B. An $X^0_{[+wh]}$ must be in a Spec-head configuration with a *Wh*-operator.

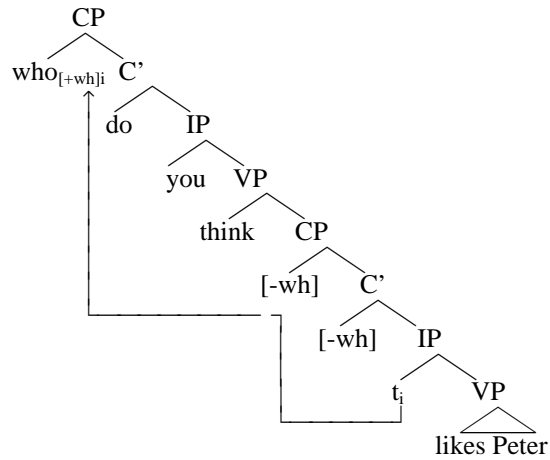
• Cheng’s *Clausal Typing*

Either *wh*-particles (overt or non-overt) or overt *wh*-movement serve to type a clause as interrogative.

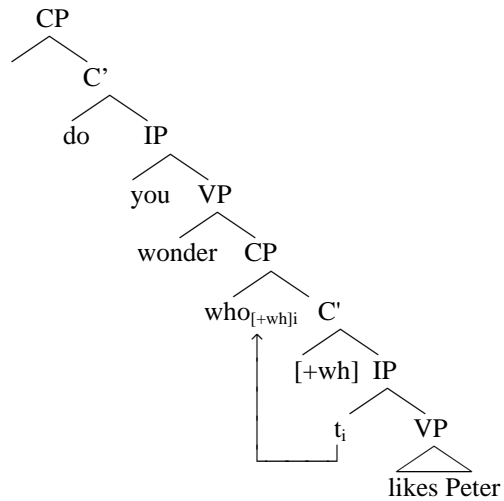
Clausal Typing Hypothesis: Every clause needs to be typed. In the case of typing a *wh*-question, either a *wh*-particle in C^0 is used or else fronting of a *wh*-word to Spec of C^0 is used, thereby typing a clause through C^0 by Spec-head agreement.

• An Illustration: English

(12)



(13)



3 Aleut Sentences with *Know* and *Think*

SUBJECT WH-WORDS

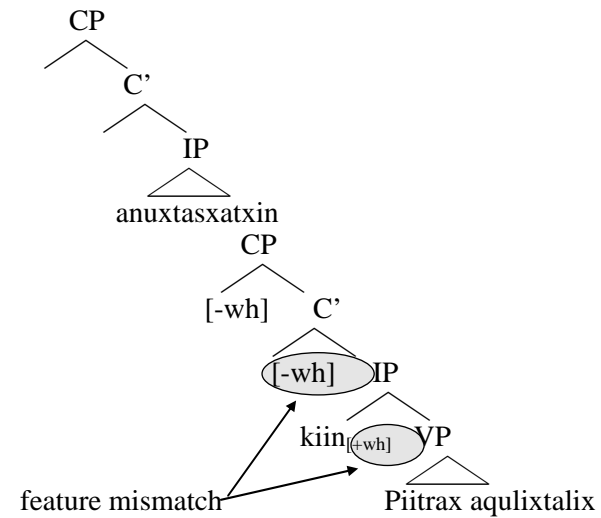
(14) Kiin anuxtasxatxin Piitrax aqulixtalix
 who think-you Peter like
 'Who do you think likes Peter?'

(15) *Kiin aqataltxin Piitrax aqulixtalix
 who know-you Peter like
 'Who do you know likes Peter?'

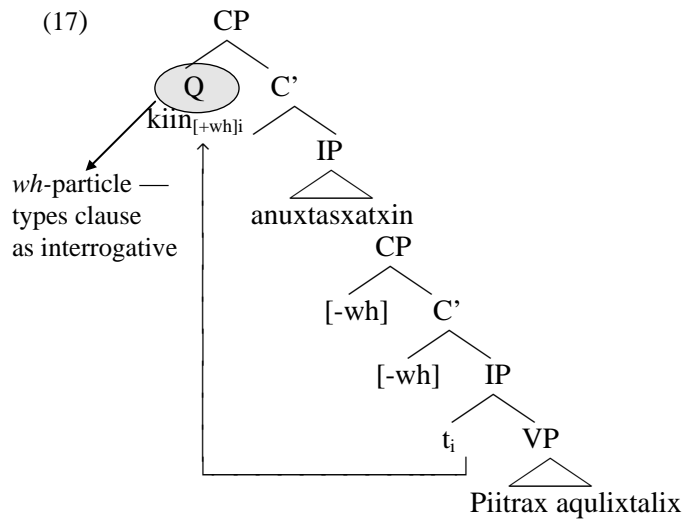
There is no motivation for *kiin* to move out of its in-situ position since the clause is already typed.

• Proposal: C^0-I^0 Agreement Includes $[\pm wh]$

(16)



Because the feature of *kiin* does not match the dominating C's feature, *kiin* is not allowed to stay in place, but moves to the next higher CP, yielding the correct S-structure:



OBJECT WH-WORDS

They front for topicalization only

- relative case

(14) *Kiin anuxtasaxatxin Piitrax aqulixtalix*
who think-you Peter like
'Who do you think likes Peter?'

(18) *Kiin anuxtasaxatxin Piitram aqulixtanaa*
who think-you Peter-REL like-s.REL
'Who do you think Peter likes?'

Leer (1987): one use of the relative case in Aleut is in topicalized NPs:

(19)a. *tayagux qax qalux* b. *qax tayagum qakuu*
man fish eat fish man-REL eat
'the man is eating a fish' 'the fish, a man is eating it'

And both orders are also possible with *wh*-words in simple sentences:

(20)a. *Kiin Piitram aqulixtanaa* b. *Piitrax kiin aqulixtalix*
who Peter like Peter who like
'Who does Peter like?' 'Who does Peter like?'

There is a preference for a *wh*-word to occur sentence-initially
Non-fronted order is also possible, so movement of the *wh*-words is not required

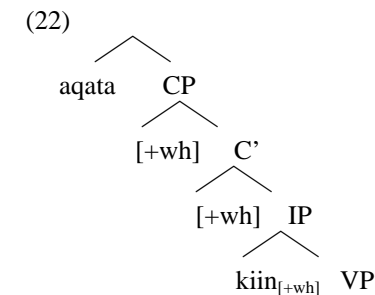
- Recall that (15), with a fronted subject *wh*-word and the matrix verb *aqata-*, 'know', is prohibited:

(15) **Kiin aqaltaxin Piitrax aqulixtalix*
who know-you Peter like
*'Who do you know likes Peter?'

However, when *kiin* is the object and there is relative case marking on the subject and verb, fronting is allowed:

(21) *Kiin aqaltaxin Piitram aqulixtanaa*
who know-you Peter-REL like
'Who do you know Peter likes?'

This suggests that *kiin* in (15) is fronted for topicalization and not because of some sort of requirement on the position of *wh*-words specified by the verb or by features. By the same token, we may assume that *kiin* in (18) is fronted for topicalization.



5 Conclusions

Wh-words are not permitted to stay in the position adjacent to CP when C carries a [-wh] feature, since C-I agreement is violated.
Other instances of fronting are simply topicalizations.