

OVERVIEW This paper accounts for an asymmetry in *wh*-questions of Land Dayak languages of Borneo, with a focus on the Southern Land Dayak language Simpakng. In a *wh*-question about the undergoer, the bare *wh*-word *onih* ‘what’ requires a subsequent relativizer *yang* (1). With *pongan* ‘thing’ added, the relativizer is optional (2); only *pongan* removes the need for an overt relativizer. Sommerlot (2020) similarly reports the ‘thing’ word coinciding with the relativizer’s optionality in Ribun (S. Land Dayak). All data here, unless cited otherwise, come from original elicitations. Data attributed to “T&S” come from Tadmor and Suhardi 2015.

- (1) Onih { * \emptyset / yang } tangkosak Adi nak odop?
 what REL UV.cook Adi for 1PL
 ‘What did Adi cook for us?’
- (2) Onih pongan { \emptyset / yang } tangkosak Adi nak odop?
 what thing REL UV.cook Adi for 1PL
 ‘What did Adi cook for us?’

I advocate an analysis of both (1) and (2) as pseudoclefts: a null copula – the only copula in Simpakng – connects *onih* to the rest of the question, which is a free relative. This paper’s approach finds precedent in the pseudocleft analyses of Malagasy (Paul 2001, Kalin 2010, i.a.) and Bahasa Indonesia (Cole et al. 2005), but it is the first such application to Land Dayak languages. The primary analytical contribution is that *wh*-questions with *pongan*, as in (2), engage what Citko (2004) and Caponigro (2021) call ‘light-headed relative clauses’: relative clauses headed by an overt D head, such as a quantificational element. I defend a pseudocleft analysis of *wh*-questions, show the quantificational import of *pongan*, and motivate the light-headed relative clause structure for (2) such that *onih* resides in the same syntactic position as it does in (1).

SYNTAX The sentences in (1) and (2) correlate with different types of relative clauses available in the language: headless and light-headed. In this paper, I show that *onih pongan* does not form a constituent.

- (3) Pseudocleft structure of (1), where the *yang*-clause is a headless relative clause (-HRC):
 [Onih]_{XP} [yang tangkosak Adi nak odop]_{-HRC}
- (4) Pseudocleft structure of (2), where the *pongan*-clause is a light-headed relative clause (LHRC):
 [Onih]_{XP} [pongan { \emptyset /yang} tangkosak Adi nak odop]_{LHRC}

The syntax of light-headed relative clauses in (2) is modelled in (11). As characterized by Caponigro (2021) for light-headed relative clauses cross-linguistically, the presence of an overt relativizer C head (*yang* in Simpakng) is optional so long as the D head (*pongan*) is present. Language-internally, three diagnostics favour the pseudocleft approach to (1) and (2) over an alternative analysis in which *onih pongan* is a constituent.

CLUE 1: LINEAR DISCONTINUITY First, particles like *bah* linearly intervene between *onih* and *pongan* as in (5). Moreover, the *pongan*-clause can entirely precede *onih* as in (6). These forms are predicted by a structure like (11) and the independent observation that focussed elements, including *wh*-words, can remain in situ in the language. In (5), *onih* has undergone focus-movement, but it has not in (6).

- (5) **Onih** bah pongan pedeen-eh?
 what PRT thing like.that-Q
 ‘What is the thing that is like that?’ (T&S)
- (6) **Pongan** baodan ka pulor-eh onih?
 thing name to k.o.fruit-Q what
 ‘What is the thing called “pulor”?’ (T&S)

CLUE 2: NOMINAL QUESTIONS When the question consists solely of *onih* and a DP as in (7) and (8), no *yang* is present. Following Cole et al. (2005) for Bahasa Indonesia, the Simpakng pattern suggests that *yang* can be used to form a free relative, and thereby a nominal, that can participate in the copular pseudocleft structure.

- (7) Onih pumur-mo?
 what dream-2SG
 ‘What is your dream?’ (T&S)
- (8) Nyen onih?
 DEM.MED what
 ‘What is that?’ (T&S)

CLUE 3: VOICE MORPHOLOGY For transitive predicates, the one argument eligible for relativization in Simpakng is tracked by the verbal “voice” morphology. The relative clause can be predicated of a focussed undergoer when the verb has undergoer-voice morphology as in *tangkosak* ‘cook’ in (1) and (2). Not shown

for space reasons, replacing the verb in either question with the actor-voice form *nangkosak* is ungrammatical. That is, the focussed constituent must be the undergoer when the verb has undergoer-voice marking. With relativization limited to the privileged subject position, this voice-based restriction supports the analysis of *wh*-questions as specificational pseudoclefts because they display connectedness (Kalin 2010): the focussed constituent behaves like it resides in the gapped position.

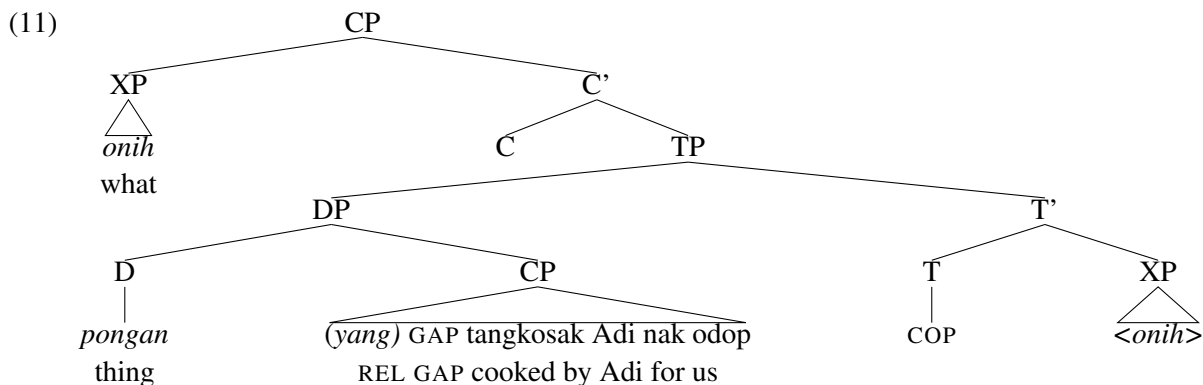
COMPOSING WITH *pongan* In declaratives, *pongan* is a narrow-scoping existential, as in (9) and (10).

(9) Iyo miyak pongan
3SG AV.take thing
'She took something.'

(T & S)

(10) Kue nto naas pongan
cake DEM.PROX UV.eat thing
'Something (non-referential) ate this cake.'

In a light-headed relative clause analysis of (2), *pongan* takes a CP complement as in (11). The CP-external position of *pongan* correctly predicts, in Ribun (Sommerlot 2020) and Simpakng, that the relativizer cannot precede the word for 'thing.' Compositionally, the DP is existentially quantified. If a light-headed relative clause inherits the quantificational force of its light head (Caponigro 2021), then it is puzzling why *wh*-questions like (2) can be interpreted maximally. That is, (2) could anticipate an answer of what all Adi cooked. Importantly, this strengthened interpretation of *pongan* is only reported in *wh*-questions. The strengthening can follow from established semantic or pragmatic accounts of exhaustification in questions cross-linguistically: questions call for maximal answers, and even questions with existential quantification can admit exhaustive answers (Xiang 2022). On this view, the same entry for *pongan* exists in (2) and (9); in *wh*-questions the existential force can be strengthened to seek a maximal answer. With no attested *wh*-questions containing a stronger 'all' word in place of *pongan*, the strengthening of *pongan* proceeds without competition from other lexical items.



ABBREVIATIONS In addition to Leipzig conventions, I use the following: AV for actor voice, MED for medial, PRT for discourse particle, REL for relativizer, and UV for undergoer voice.

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