Questions and Answers of the Ishiculu Language

Ming Zhang

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1   Polar questions

Polar questions are formed in Ishiculu with the polar question particle *le* at the end of the sentence.

(1) a. Meyi shɣ   u-ka-shi-ke-ła-mbi   Ari ntało kitabu.
         CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari CLF.7 book(7)
         'The teacher gave Ari the book.'
     b. Meyi shɣ   u-ka-shi-ke-ła-mbi   Ari ntało kitabu le?
         CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari CLF.7 book(7) Q
         'Did the teacher give Ari the book?'

2   Response to polar questions

Ishiculu uses particles *yebo*, 'yes' and *cha*, 'no' to respond to polar questions. Ishiculu's response strategy is also truth-based; that is, *cha* confirms a negative question, and *yebo* contradicts the negation of a negative question.

(2) a. Meyi shɣ   u-ka-shi-ke-ła-mbi   Ari ntało kitabu le?
         CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari CLF.7 book(7) Q
         'Did the teacher give Ari the book?'
     b. Yebo.
         yes
         'Yes(, the teacher gave Ari the book).'
     c. Cha.
         no
         'No(, the teacher did not give Ari the book).'

(3) a. Meyi shɣ   pa u-ka-shi-ke-ła-mbi   Ari ntało kitabu le?
         CLF.3 teacher(3) not 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari CLF.7 book(7) Q
         'Did the teacher not give Ari the book?'

    b. Yebo.
       yes
       'Yes(, the teacher gave Ari the book).'

    c. Cha.
       no
       'No(, the teacher did not give Ari the book).'

3 Content questions

Content questions are formed with the question particle *le* at the end of the sentence. Some WH-words in Ishiculu include *uba*(2), 'who;' *uni*(4), 'what;' *una*, 'where.'

    When the WH-word is the subject, the question is formed with the WH-word *in situ*.

(4) a. Wɣ   babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   wena shizi.
          CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 2SG   cheese(4)
          'Your parents fed you cheese.'

      b. Uba   ka-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   wena shizi   le?
          who(2) 2.SG-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 2SG   cheese(4) Q
          'Who fed you cheese?'

    Non-subject WH-words need to be moved to the post-verbal position.

(5)   Wɣ   babamama ba-ka-u-nde-ła-mbi   uba shizi   le?
        CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2.SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST who cheese(4) Q
        'To whom did your parents feed cheese?'

(6)   Wɣ   babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   uni   wena le?
        CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-4.SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST what 2SG   Q
        'What did your parents feed you?'

(7)   Wɣ   babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   una   wena shizi   le?
        CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST where 2SG   cheese(4) Q
        'Where did your parents feed you cheese?'

    When there are more than one WH-word, one of them is regarded as the primary WH-word, which follows the WH-word movement described above. The remaining WH-words are *in situ*.

(8) a. Uba ka-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   wena uni   le?
          who 2.SG-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 2SG   what Q
          'Who fed you what?'

      b. Uba ka-uw-u-nde-ła-mbi   uni   wena le?
          who 2.SG-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST what 2SG   Q
          'What did who feed you?'