

‘Why’ and ‘How’ WH-words in Earlier Southern Min Texts: Interface of Inherent Properties of ‘why/how’ WH-words and their Syntactic Positions*

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The paper examines the interface of inherent properties of ‘why/how’ WH-words and their syntactic positions in earlier Southern Min texts, hybrid playscripts written in a mixture of Chaozhou and Quanzhou dialects, dating back as early as 16th century (Wu 2001a-d). The WH-words falls into two major types: *mih*⁴ 乜-based WH-words and *chai*⁷ 俚-based WH-words. The meaning of each type of WH-words is partially conditioned by the structural position it occupies. Four dedicated positions are found: force, premodal, preverbal and postclausal. Force, premodal, preverbal and postclausal WH-words are conducive to rhetorical question, cause/reason, manner, and purpose reading respectively. Most of ‘why/how’ WH-words are headed by *cho*³ 做. I propose that starting out as a marker of focus *cho*³ 做 is instrumental in turning variable-bearing WH-words into adjunct WH-words.

Key words: why/how WH-words, structural position, interpretation, earlier Southern Min

1. Introduction

The paper aims at ferreting out the patterns of adjunct WH-words in terms of the interface of three dimensions, viz., inherent properties, syntactic positions and functions of WH-words, based on earlier Southern Min texts of Ming and Qing playscripts.¹ In the bulk of the present paper, I mainly explore two types of why and how WH-words: 1) 物-based WH-words, and 2) 俚-based WH-words.² Then I will discuss the distribution and

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¹ The Southern Min texts comprise four plays, viz. the Jiajing (1522-1566), Wanli (1573-1619), Shunzhi (1644-1661) and Guangxu (1875-1908) edition of the *Legend of Litchi Mirror* dating back to the sixteenth century (see Wu 2001a-d). They are believed to be written in a mixture of Quanzhou and Chaozhou dialects.

² Unlike ordinary WH-words such as *what* and *who* that form variables or arguments of predicates,

interpretation of each type of WH-words and generalize the patterning of WH-words in terms of the three dimension as well as the implications of each finding.

2. The 物-based WH-words

In this section, I will first explore various types of WH-words formed out of *mih*⁴ 物 as a ‘what’ WH-word such as *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事, *mih*⁴-*eng*⁷ 乜用, *cho*³-*mih*⁴ 做乜 and *in*¹-*mih*⁴ 因乜. But first I will give a brief account of the emergence of *mih*⁴ 乜 as a ‘what’ WH-word.

2.1 The rise of the 物 as a WH-words

There are basically two co-existing types of WH-words in Southern Min: 1) the 底-based system, and 2) the 物-based system. The WH-words discussed in the paper are based on the word 物. 物 is a thing-denoting word. It occurred in the collocate 何 attested in *Shi Shuo Xin Yu* 世說新語, a text of the 5th century. Depending on the context, 何物 can be interpreted as what.thing ‘what?’ when 物 still retained its thing-denoting sense or simply ‘what’, as in 何物人 what.person ‘who?’ where 何物 as a prenominal modifier means ‘what’ and 物 was no longer a thing-denoting word (Chou 1953:268-270). In its later development in the Tang (the early 6th to early 11th century) the reduction of the phonological form 何 in 何物 gave rise to the reduced form 阿沒 ‘what’, as in 於身有阿沒好處 ‘what advantage is there for oneself?’ in Buddhist popular ballads like *Yanzi Fu* 燕子賦 in the Tang³ (Jiang 1997:511-512). At this stage 沒 superseded 何 as the carrier of the interrogative force and when 阿 as the reduced form of 何 underwent further attribution, 物 written as 沒 alone has become a full-fledged WH-word meaning ‘what’. Such a use is inherited in Southern Min as attested in the sixteenth text *Li Jing Ji* 荔鏡記 *Legend of the Litchi Mirror* where 物 is rendered as 乜, a demotic character with a wide circulation.

‘why/how’ WH-words such as *why* and *how* are subtypes of adjunct WH-words which do not form variables. Unless otherwise stated, I will use WH-words to refer to adjunct why/how WH-words in the interest of brevity.

³ 阿沒 is the demotic rendition of 何物 reflecting the loss of the onset of 何. 沒 ‘sink, submerge’, a word with the nasal bilabial onset, is adopted as a phonetic loan character to render the sound of 物 which, when functioning as an interrogative word, still retains the bilabial nasal /m/ in the onset position, whereas the word 物 in other uses may have lost its labial nasal. The onset of 物 belongs in the Middle Chinese 微 phonological category. The attrition of the bilabial onset of a set of words in the 微 category may start no later than the beginning of the Tang in the early 7th century.

2.2 A preliminary look at the 乜-based WH-phrase or words

WH-word constructions, as in (i) and (ii), viz., *cho*³ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 做乜事 and *cho*³ *mih*⁴-*eng*⁷ 做乜用, each consist of V *cho*³ 做 ‘do’ + DP.⁴ The DP in turn comprises an AP or NP *mih*⁴ 乜 ‘what’ as a variable and a class-denoting noun such as *tai*⁷ 事 ‘affair’ and *eng*⁷ 用 ‘use’.⁵ The variable *mih*⁴ 乜 constitutes a focus in the sentence set against its presuppositional part in terms of information structure.⁶ In contrast to such rare cases, there are more frequent occurrences of *cho*³ *mih*⁴ as given in (iii), a verb + DP construction, that has been transformed into a WH-word. *Eng*⁷ 用 may replace *cho*³ 做 as a focus marker, as in (iv).

| | Focus marker | Focus | Class | Construction | Gloss |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| i | <i>cho</i> ³ | <i>mih</i> ⁴ | <i>tai</i> ⁷ | <i>cho</i> ³ <i>mih</i> ⁴ - <i>tai</i> ⁷ | what matter |
| ii | <i>cho</i> ³ | <i>mih</i> ⁴ | <i>eng</i> ⁷ | <i>cho</i> ³ <i>mih</i> ⁴ - <i>eng</i> ⁷ | what use |
| iii | <i>cho</i> ³ | <i>mih</i> ⁴ | | <i>cho</i> ³ <i>mih</i> ⁴ | why |
| iv | <i>in</i> ¹ | <i>mih</i> ⁴ | | <i>in</i> ¹ <i>mih</i> ⁴ | why |

2.3 *Mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事

*Cho*³ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 做乜事 do what.matter ‘do what’ originates as a verb phrase comprising the verb *cho*³ 做 ‘do’ and the noun phrase *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 what.matter ‘what’, which in turn consists of the question word 乜 ‘what’ in the attributive position and the head noun *tai*⁷ 事 ‘matter, affair’. But the five examples attested in the texts no longer serves as predicates.⁷ Instead, they assume the function of a why-question word

⁴ As a matter of expediency all the spelling of Southern Min in this paper is largely based on Church Romanization codified in Douglas (1873). I have made some modifications, however. For example, the diacritic tone marks have been abandoned in favor of numerical superscripts. No distinction is made between *ch* and *ts* or *chh* and *tsh* as they do not stand for phonemic contrast. The open *o* and the closed *o* are rendered as *oo* and *o*, as in *too*⁵ 圖 ‘drawing’ and *to*⁵ 逃 ‘escape’. Nasalization is indicated by a double *n*. Pinyin spelling is used to render early Mandarin examples.

⁵ 乜 (<物) as a variable can function as a free-choice indefinite element (Cheng 1997), as it can be coerced into a universal quantificational reading by the particle *to*¹ 都, as in *mih*⁴ *to*¹ *too*⁷ *lu*² 乜都度你 what all give you ‘Everything will be given to you’ (16.061, SZ).

⁶ Focus is the non-presuppositional part of a sentence and carries new information, whereas its presuppositional part carries old information. So focus is in complement to presupposition (Erteschik-Shir 2007:7-80).

⁷ The source of each example is given in parentheses. The numerals separated by a dot stand for act and line in that order, and the capital letters are abbreviations of the four editions of scripts of play featuring the *Legend of the Litchi Mirror*: JJ (Jiajing 嘉靖), WL (Wangli 萬曆), SZ (Shunzhi 順治) and GX (Guangxu 光緒) (Wu 2001a-d).

meaning ‘what for, why’, as in (1a) and (1b), where *cho*³ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 做乜事 occurs in the clause-final position.⁸ In this syntactic position the why-question word carries a purposive (rather than cause) reading. In terms of information structure the WH-question word always forms the focus of the sentence, whereas the rest of the sentence functions as the topic or presupposed part.

- (1) a. Toa³-lui⁷ goa² **cho**³ **mih**⁴-**tai**⁷ (19.212, JJ)
帶累我做乜事
implicate me do-what
‘What did you get me into trouble for?’
- b. Mng⁷ goan² **cho**³ **mih**⁴-**tai**⁷ (29.154, JJ)
問阮做乜事
ask us do-what
‘Why did you ask us for?’

By contrast, *kan*³ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 幹乜事 ‘do what.matter’ structurally on par with *cho*³ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 做乜事 always function as a predicate taken in its literal sense meaning ‘do what’, as shown in the question and answer pair, (1c) and (1d). The question why in (1c) is answered in (1d).

- (1) c. Heng¹-hua³ lang⁵ lai⁵ chi²-te³ **kan**³ **mih**⁴-**tai**⁷ (8.017, JJ)
興化人來只處幹乜事
Xing-hua person come this place do-what
‘What is the man from Xinghua doing here?’
- d. Lai⁵ pak⁸ lang⁵-sng⁵ (8.018, JJ)
來縛籠床
come tie steam.basket
‘(He is here to) make the bamboo steamer.’

The different behavior of *cho*³ 做 and *kan*³ 幹 both meaning ‘do’ with respect to its collocate *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 shows that *kan*³ 幹 emerges to fill the void left by *cho*³ to denote the sense of ‘do what’. *Kan*³ 幹 here can be taken as a focus marker *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 as a focus.⁹

⁸ If the head noun is *tai*⁷-*chi*³ 事志 ‘matter, affair’ rather than *tai*⁷ 事 governed by the verb *u*⁷ 有, as in *Bi*⁷ *ti*¹ *goo*⁶-*niu*⁵ *u*⁷ *mih*⁴ *tai*⁷-*chi*³ 未知五娘仔有乜事志 not.yet know Wu.Niang-SUF have what.matter ‘I wonder what’s the matter with Wu Niang’ (26.270, JJ), then *mih*⁴ *tai*⁷-*chi*³ 乜事志 ‘what matter’ remains an argument rather than an adjunct.

⁹ For the theoretical model of focus or information structure, see Erteschik-Shir (1997, 2007). Constraints of space prevent me from showing that actually *si*⁷ 是 plays important roles in the

The word *beh*⁴ 卜 ‘want’ in addition to *cho*³ 做 or *kan*³ 幹 may combine with the WH-word *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 what matter ‘what’ (affair) to yield *beh*⁴ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 卜乜事 want what-matter ‘what do you want’. It may also occur alone, often preceded by a vocative (a term of address), as in (2).

- (2) Sio²-chhit⁴ lu² **beh**⁴ **mih**⁴-**tai**⁷ (39.020, GX)
 小七你卜乜事
 Little.Seven you want what
 ‘Little Seven, what do you want?’

*Beh*⁴ *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 卜乜事 may form a purpose clause to show the purpose of an action denoted by a main predicate, as shown in the exchange in (3a) and (3b).

- (3) a. Kio³ Sio²-chhit⁴ **beh**⁴ **mih**⁴-**tai**⁷ (27.178, SZ)
 叫小七卜乜事
 call Little.Seven want what
 ‘What did you call Little Seven for?’
 b. Goa² *beh*⁴ siunn² i¹ (27.179, SZ)
 我卜賞伊
 I want grant.reward he
 ‘I want to award him.’

When not preceded by a modal element like *beh*⁴ 卜, *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 what.matter ‘what’ in the clause-final position may be ambiguous between two interpretations: 1) the predicate reading and 2) the why-question word reading. Among the five instances sharing the construction X-*kio*³ 叫-Y-*mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 X-call-Y-what.matter, four instances feature the predicate reading, and one instance, the why-question word reading. The first reading involves a pivotal construction roughly meaning ‘what does X ask Y to do’. So there seems to be a gap before the question word *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 ‘what’ that a verb of doing 做 ‘do’ can fill. As shown in (4a-b), the exchange between the female lead Wu Niang 五娘 and her servant Little Seven 小七, the purpose of Wu Niang’s calling Little Seven is to ask him to look for the master.¹⁰

formation of ‘what/who’ WH-words as well as ‘why/how’ WH-words (See Lien 2009 for the detail). In addition, the existence as one of the senses denoted by the copular *si*⁷ 是 also provides evidence based on earlier Southern Min texts that existential quantifier is involved in the formation of WH-words (see Li 1992, Lin 1998 and Cann 2007). In the same vein, *kan*³ 幹 can also function as a focus marker.

¹⁰ 甲 *kah*⁴ in (4b) is a phonetic loan of the directive-causative verb 教 ‘order, have’. Here are the

- (4) a. A¹-niu⁵ kio³ sio²-chhit⁴ **mih⁴-tai⁷** (30.076, SZ)¹¹

啞娘叫小七乜事

PRFlady ask Little-Seven what

‘What did you call me for?’

- b. Goa² beh⁴ kah⁴ li² khi³ chhe⁷ koann⁵-lang⁵

我卜甲爾去尋恁官人

I want order you go look.for you master

‘I wish to ask you to look for your master.’

Unlike its counterpart in (4a-b) as a causative-directive verb, *kio³* 叫 in (5a) is a verb of calling. As shown in the exchange (5a-b), Little Seven 小七 wondered why the lady Wu Niang 五娘 called him. She replied that it is due to the fact that Chen San 陳三, a despicable guy from Quanzhou, broke the mirror. In this second reading, (5b) provides a reason to solve the why question raised in (5a). The reason concerns a past event rather than a future action to be executed, as the case with the first reading.

- (5) a. A¹-niu⁵ kio³ sio²-chhit⁴ **mih⁴-tai⁷** (5.446, SZ)

啞娘叫小七乜事

PRFlady ask Little-Seven what

‘How comes that you are calling me, Ma’am?’

- b. Choan² chiu¹ che¹ a² liah⁸ lin² kiann³ phah⁴ phoa³ (5.447, SZ)

泉州儕仔力恁鏡打破

Quanzhou person.DS PM you mirror beat break

‘Cause the guy from Quanzhou broke the mirror.’

For the expression *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 an important diagnostic test for its why-question sense is to determine whether the number of the argument the predicate ranges over is saturated or not. Take (6a). *Chhio³* 笑 ‘laugh at’ is a two-place predicate. The argument structure for this predicate meets the requirement of saturation in that both arguments *li² niu⁵* 你 ‘your lady’ and *gun²* 阮 ‘I’ (< ‘we’) are present. So *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 ‘what’ is amenable to the interpretation of a why-question word. The answer to (6a), which

abbreviations used in the gloss: CL (classifier), DS (diminutive suffix), PM (patient marker), PRF (prefix), PRT (particle), RC (resultative complement), SUF (suffix), and VM (vocative marker).

¹¹ Terms of address in the playscripts are used in lieu of personal pronouns to refer to interlocutors (speaker or addressee) in keeping with proper social decorum. *Sio²-chhit⁴* 小七 is used by the speaker (a male servant) to refer to himself as a humble way to show respect to his mistress Wu Niang 五娘.

provides the reason for why the lady is being laughed at, as given in (6b), lends an additional support to such an interpretation.¹²

- (6) a. Sio²-be⁷ li² niu⁵ chhio³ gun² **mih⁴-tai⁷** (17.019, WL)¹³
 小妹你△笑阮乜事
 little.sister you lady laugh.at us what
 ‘Sis, what is you lady laughing at me for?’
- b. Chhio³ lin² chin¹-chiunn⁷ chit⁸ e⁵ lang⁵ (17.020, WL)
 笑恁親像一个人
 laugh.at you (pl.) look.like one CL person
 ‘She laughs at you for looking like somebody.’

The instances of *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 preceding a negated VP are far rarer in number than its postcausal counterparts discussed above.¹⁴ Thus, as shown in (7a-d), *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 occurs before negatives like *m⁷* 不 alone or negatives + modals like *m⁷ kann²* 不敢 ‘dare not’, *m⁷ thang¹* 不通 ‘may not’, *boe⁷ 袂* ‘cannot’.¹⁵ In the latter situation negative elements precedes or rather are higher than modals in the hierarchy of functional categories. Though literally meaning ‘what’, *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 in this syntactic position inevitably takes on the function of a ‘why’ WH-question word meaning ‘why’. Unlike its post-clausal counterpart, it always features the cause/reason reading rather than the purpose reading, and even takes on the reading of rhetorical question.¹⁶

- (7) a. Li² **mih⁴-tai⁷** m⁷ kann² seh⁴ i¹ thiann¹ (10.095, SZ)
 你乜事不敢說伊聽
 you what not dare speak he listen
 ‘Why didn’t you dare tell him?’

¹² When *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 is decoupled from *cho³* 做, and becomes an object of the predicate *u⁷* 有 ‘have’, *bo⁵* 無 ‘not have’, *gi⁵* 疑 ‘doubt’, *m⁷ chai¹* 不知 ‘not know’, *kan¹* 干 ‘concern’, etc., it functions as a ‘what’ word occupying an argument position within the VP.

¹³ △ is the demotic character of 娘.

¹⁴ There is only one instance of *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 preceding a negated VP in JJ and WL. It was not until SZ and GX that more examples are found.

¹⁵ *Boe⁷ 袂* is a portmanteau word fusing *m⁷ 毋* (a negative element) and *oe⁷ 會* (< 解) (a modal).

¹⁶ All the examples in (7) except (7d) are echo questions. Given the wide scope of negation made possible by the presence of the particle *iau²* 天 and the negative element *m⁷* 不, *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 in (7d) can be alternatively construed as an indefinite pronoun. Thus, the sentence means that there is nothing that will not satisfy you. In other words, everything will be satisfactory to you.

- b. Kan², **mih⁴-tai⁷** boe⁷ jin⁷-tit⁴ (11.326, SZ)
 簡乜事袂認得
 bondmaid what unable recognize
 ‘Why didn’t I not know him?’
- c. **Mih⁴ tai⁷** m⁷ thang¹ (16.041, GX)
 乜事不通
 what not may
 ‘Why can’t it be (done)?’
- d. Iau² **mih⁴-tai⁷** m⁷ ting³ a¹-niu⁵ (11.139, SZ)
 天乜事不中啞娘
 still/yet what not please PRFlady
 ‘What else is there that is not agreeable to you?’

The WH-word question featuring pre-negation WH-words always functions as an echo question *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 that takes on the reading of rhetorical question, as shown in the exchange in (8a-b) where the echo question also implies that the addressee should accept the fare.

- (8) a. Gun² ia⁷ m⁷ siu¹ lin² chun⁵ chinn⁵ (40.027, JJ)¹⁷
 阮也不收佢缸錢
 we also not accept you (pl.) boat money
 ‘I wouldn’t accept your ferry fare.’
- b. Lin² **mih⁴-tai⁷** m⁷ siu¹ chinn⁵ (40.028, JJ)
 佢乜事不收錢
 you (pl.) what not accept money
 ‘Why wouldn’t you accept the fare?’

2.4 *Mih⁴-eng⁷* 乜用

Mih⁴-eng⁷ 乜用 ‘what use’ can be used in place of *mih⁴-tai⁷* 乜事 ‘what’. It may be preceded by *beh⁴* 卜 ‘want’, as in (9a-c), or go alone, as in (9d-e). Whereas *beh⁴* 卜 is a verb in (9b-d), it is a boulomaic modal in (9a), as it is followed by a verb phrase. *Beh⁴ mih⁴-eng⁷* 卜乜用 is quite similar to but not exactly the same as *beh⁴ mih⁴-tai⁷* 卜乜事

¹⁷ In a polite speech *gun²* 阮 ‘we’ (an exclusive first person plural pronoun) rather than *goa²* 我 ‘I’ is used to refer to the speaker alone. In the same vein, *lin²* 佢 ‘you (pl.)’ (a second person plural pronoun) is used in place of the singular form *lu²* 你 ‘you (sg.)’ to denote the addressee alone.

since it is concerned with the use of an action. (9a-b) carries a purpose-like reading, but (9d-e) function as rhetorical questions. For example, (9d) is used in the context in which Chen San unbosoms himself to his love Wu Niang that if she dies, what is the use of his being alive?

- (9) a. Chhi⁷ i¹ beh⁴ **cho³ mih⁴-eng⁷** (19.350, JJ)
飼伊卜做乜用
rear him want do what-use
‘What is the use of bringing him up?’
- b. Chhi⁷ i¹ **beh⁴ mih⁴-eng⁷** (9.572, SZ)
飼伊卜乜用
rear him want what-use
‘What do I bring him up for?’
- c. Tiam² teng¹ beh⁴ **mih⁴-eng⁷** (6.044, JJ)¹⁸
點燈要乜用
light candle want what-use
‘What did you light the candle for?’
- d. Beh⁴ sio²-lang⁵ **mih⁴-eng⁷** (15.408, SZ)
卜小人乜用
want mean person (i.e., ‘I’ humble) what-use
‘What do you want me for?’
- e. Kiu²-long⁵ toa³ li² chhut⁴ jip⁸ **mih⁴-eng⁷** (32.052, JJ)
九郎帶你出入乜用
Jiu-lang take you exit enter what-use
‘What is the use of Jiulang taking you with him?’

2.5 The multiple functions of **cho³ mih⁴** 做乜

Mih⁴ 乜 is a multiple function word which occurs as an interrogative word as well as an exclamative marker. What is relevant at present concerns *mih⁴* 做 in its interrogative function in combination with *cho³* 做. *Cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 ‘do what’ together form ‘why’ and ‘how’ WH-words. Before examining its semantic and syntactic properties, I give a brief introduction to its diachronic development.

¹⁸ 要 is taken here to be a semantic loan character from Mandarin to stand for 卜 in Southern Min.

2.5.1 The historical origin of *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 做乜

According to Lü (1985:309-310) (cf. Shimura 1984) *zen*³ 怎 /tsən/ (< */tsəm/) is derived from **tsak ma* 作麼. Like its cognate *zen*³ 怎 in Mandarin *choann*² or *chainn*² in modern Southern Min is a portmanteau word derived from **tsak* 作 + *mut* 物 by regressive assimilation of place of articulation. The ‘how’ WH-expression *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 做乜 was a disyllabic form in sixteenth century Southern Min. Such a trait seems to be a quite conservative trace of Middle Chinese grammatical feature. *Cho*³-*mih*⁴ 做乜 as a WH-word has been superseded by its descendant *choann*²/*chainn*² 怎 in modern Southern Min.¹⁹ It is still very much in evidence developed into a monosyllabic word in modern Southern Min. *Mih*⁸ 乜 (< 物) refers to an object but it takes on a more abstract sense denoting to kinds in later times. Thus its function as a variable is motivated (see Jiang 2000).

2.5.2 *Cho*³ + *mih*⁴ 做乜

In some rare examples, as in (10a-b), *cho*³ + *mih*⁴ 做乜 is an incomplete sequence followed by a gap that needs to be filled. *Cho*³ 做 ‘do’ as a transitive verb takes a DP as its complement and the DP comprises the what WH-word *mih*⁴ 乜 as a modifier and an NP to be filled. Thus, it is quite obvious that *cho*³ + *mih*⁴ 做乜 does not form a constituent, nor can it be an adjacent WH-word.

- (10) a. Noa⁷ chha⁵ thang¹ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ tong³-inn⁵ (10.106, WL)
 爛柴通**做乜**棟楹
 rotten wood can do what pillar-beam
 ‘What pillars and beams can rotten wood be made into?’
- b. Si⁷ lan² ching⁵-si³ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ kau¹-tang³ (39.045, WL)²⁰
 是赧前世**做乜**勾當
 be us previous life do what-matter
 ‘What was it that we had done in our previous existence?’

¹⁹ Due to the presence of the vowel /a/ *choann*² or /tsuã²/ in IPA rendition may be construed as a fusional form of 作何物 attested in Buddhist texts in the Nanbeichao period (5th to 6th century CE). I am indebted to Pei-chuan Wei for checking and verifying the attested examples. My students and I have found /ha mi?/ as an interrogative word meaning *what* in Penang Hokkienese in our 2012 summer fieldwork there. It may well be a reflex of 何物.

²⁰ *Lan*² 赧 is an inclusive first person plural pronoun.

2.5.3 *Cho*³ *mih*⁴ 佐乜 in post-clausal position

As shown in §2.5.1, *mih*⁴ 乜 is a ‘what’ WH-word that acts a variable, but the presence of *cho*³ 做 or its graphic variant 佐 is instrumental in turning it into an adjunct WH-word.²¹ *Cho*³ *mih*⁴ 佐乜 may start as a focus structure consisting of focus marker *cho*³ 佐 and focus *mih*⁴ 乜, as in (10a-b), and then develop into an adjunct WH-word. In this capacity it can appear in three syntactic positions: 1) premodal, 2) preverbal, and 3) postclausal position. Let’s consider its occurrence in postclausal position first. When occurring post-clausally, it first forms the focus with the preceding clause as the topic (viz., the presuppositional part), and then *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 佐乜 as a whole develops into an adjunct WH-word, as in (11a-c).

- (11) a. Oan³-chhoe⁴ sim¹-mia⁷ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ (11.132, SZ)
 怨切心命佐乜 (切 < 憾)
 resent fate do-what
 ‘Why do you resent your fate?’
 b. Gi⁵ sio²-lang⁵ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ (15.418, SZ)
 疑小人佐乜
 suspect I (humble) do-what
 ‘What did you suspect me for?’
 c. Phah⁴ i¹ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ (8.036, SZ)
 打伊做乜
 beat him do-what
 ‘Why did you beat him?’

In (12), *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 佐乜 in a purposive phrase headed by *khi*³ 去 still retains its original function as a verbal phrase meaning ‘do what’ forming the focus of the sentence.

- (12) Li² kio³ i¹ jip⁸ khi³ **cho**³ **mih**⁴ (11.556, SZ)
 你叫伊入去佐乜
 you ask him enter to do-what
 ‘What do you ask him in for?’

*Cho*³ *mih*⁴ 做乜/佐乜 coupled with *beh*⁴ 卜 ‘want’ acts as a purpose clause in postclausal position.

²¹ 做 is rendered alternatively in many cases as 佐 in the Shunzhi 順治 edition of *Li Zhi Ji* 荔枝記. 做 and 佐 are interchangeable and there is no difference between them other than graphic variation.

- (13) a. Chhioh⁴ gun⁵ beh⁴ cho³ mih⁴ (3.206, SZ)
 借銀卜做乜
 borrow silver want do-want
 ‘What do you borrow money for?’
 b. Chhioh⁴ gun⁵ siunn² lin² chhun¹-lai⁵ (3.207, SZ)
 借銀賞恁春來
 borrow silver reward you (pl.) Chunlai
 ‘I do so to grant Chunlai a reward.’

2.5.4 *Cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 in preverbal and premodal position

Having examined *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 in postclausal position, let’s now deal with *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 in preverbal position, as in (14a-b), or premodal position, as in (15a-e), *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 in preverbal position acts as a manner WH-word, whereas it takes on the function of the ‘reason/why’ WH-word in premodal position. It is conducive to the interpretation of rhetorical question especially in postclausal position.

- (14) a. **Cho³-mih⁴** pat⁴ i¹ (14.297, JJ)
 做乜識伊
 do-what know him
 ‘How did you get to know him?’
 b. Iah⁴-chhun li² **cho³-mih⁴** jin⁷-tit⁴ (11.325, SZ)
 益春，你佐乜認得
 Yichun you do-what able.recognize
 ‘Yichun, how did you know him?’
 (15) a. Lin² **cho³-mih⁴** thang¹ hi³-lang⁷ i¹ (4.242, SZ)
 恁做乜通戲弄伊
 you do-what can tease he/her
 ‘How can you tease her?’
 b. **Cho³-mih⁴** kam¹ phah⁴-ma⁷-a (24.362, WL)
 做乜甘打罵阿
 do-what grudge beat scold SFP
 ‘How can I have the heart to beat and scold him?’
 c. Sio²-be⁷ **cho³-mih⁴** kann² hiam⁵ (17.101, SZ)
 小妹佐乜敢嫌
 little-sister do-what dare detest
 ‘How dare I detest it?’

- d. Goa² **cho³-mih⁴** m⁷ thiann³ i¹ (32.104, SZ)
 我佐乜不疼伊
 I do-what not dote-on him
 ‘How can I not dote on him?’
- e. Goa² **cho³-mih⁴** m⁷ tang⁵ a¹-niu⁵ sim¹-i³ (15.109, SZ)
 佐乜不同啞娘心意
 do-what not share PRFlady intention
 ‘Why shouldn’t I share the lady’s intention?’

As an interim summary, we can observe that the post-clausal *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜/佐乜 functions as a ‘reason/why’ WH-word unless it is preceded by *beh⁴* 卜. In that case, it takes on a purposive reading. By contrast, *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜/佐乜 in preverbal or premodal position always features the ‘why’ WH-word. It may occupy an even higher position in the hierarchy of functional categories when it occurs before modals.

2.6 *In¹-mih⁴* 因乜

In¹-mih⁴ 因乜 differs from *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 in at least two respects. First, unlike *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜, *in¹-mih⁴* 因乜 ‘why’ can occur in preverbal position, as in (16a-b), or adverbial position, as in (17a-c), but not post-clausal position. Second and intimately relating to its syntactic position, *in¹-mih⁴* 因乜 always functions as a why question word denoting reason rather than purpose.

- (16) a. **In¹-mih⁴** lai⁵ kau³ chi² (24.375, WL)
 因乜來到只
 due.to-what come reach here
 ‘Why did you come here?’
- b. San¹ ko¹ **in¹-mih⁴** chionn⁷ tham¹ bin⁵ (29.035, JJ)
 三哥因乜障貪眠
 Third Brother due.to-what so greedy.for sleep
 ‘Why are you such a sleepyhead, Third Brother?’
- (17) a. **In¹-mih⁴** to¹ bo⁵ lang⁵ ti⁷ thiann¹ siong⁷ (37.007, JJ)
 因乜都無人在廳上
 due.to-what PRT have-no person at hall on
 ‘Why isn’t there any one in the hall?’
- b. Li² **in¹-mih⁴** m⁷ in³ i¹ (26.169, JJ)
 你因乜不應伊
 you due.to-what not answer he
 ‘Why didn’t you respond to him?’

c. **In¹-mih⁴** kin¹-toann³ koo¹-un¹-hu⁷-gi⁷ (23.037, JJ)

因乜今旦辜恩負義

due.to-what now ungrateful

‘Why are you ungrateful?’

Given the semantic similarity between *in¹-mih⁴* 因乜 and *cho³ mih⁴* 做乜, there are some differences in the co-occurrence with other modals or negative elements. Both can be followed by negative elements like *m⁷* 不 or modals like *e⁷* 會, but *in¹-mih⁴ m⁷* 因乜不 is more productive than *cho³ mih⁴ m⁷* 做乜不. *Cho³ mih⁴* 做乜 rather than *in¹-mih⁴* 因乜 occurs before *thang¹* 通 and *kann²* 敢. By contrast, *in¹-mih⁴* 因乜 rather than *mih⁴ m⁷* 做乜 is followed by *beh⁴* 卜 and *bo⁵* 無.

3. *Chai⁷* 俛-based ‘how’ WH-words

The ‘how’ WH-word *chai⁷* 俛 may have been a portmanteau word of 做 and 乜 parallel to 怎 in Mandarin.²² As shown in the following table, the ‘how’ WH-word may come from a construction consisting of focus marker, focus and manner, viz., *cho³ chai⁷ (ni⁵)* 做俛年 where *(ni⁵)* 年 is an optional element, as in (i).²³ Replacement of the focus marker of *cho³* by *si⁷* 是 yields *si⁷chai⁷ ni⁵* 是俛年, as in (ii), where *(si⁷)* is optional. If the slot of manner is filled by *iunn⁷* (Quanzhou) / *ionn⁷* (Zhangzhou) 樣, what we get is *chai⁷-ionn⁷*, which can be optionally preceded by *cho³* 做 or *si⁷* 是, as in (iii). If only focus is kept, the result is *chai⁷* 俛, as in (iv). There is probably a mismatch in the last case in that *chai⁷* 俛 might have incorporated focus marker and manner into itself. *Cho³ ni⁵* 做年 can function as a ‘how’ WH-word without *chai⁷* 俛, as in (v). This is a ‘how’ WH-word uniquely found and attested in present-day Chaozhou dialect.

| | Focus marker | Focus | Manner | Construction | Gloss |
|-----|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------|
| i | | <i>chai⁷</i> | | | why, how |
| ii | <i>(si⁷)</i> | <i>chai⁷</i> | <i>ni⁵</i> | <i>(si⁷)-chai⁷-ni⁵</i> | how |
| iii | <i>(cho³)/(si⁷)</i> | <i>chai⁷</i> | <i>iunn⁷</i> | <i>(cho³)/(si⁷)chai⁷-iunn⁷</i> | how |
| iv | <i>cho³</i> | <i>chai⁷</i> | <i>ni⁵</i> | <i>cho³-chai⁷-(ni⁵)</i> | how |
| v | <i>cho³</i> | | <i>ni⁵</i> | <i>cho³ ni⁵</i> | how |

²² The modern reflexes in Southern Min of 俛 could be *chainn²* 怎 (Xiamen, alias Amoy), *choann²* (Zhangzhou), *chuinn²* (Quanzhou variety) (Douglas 1873:575) and *chai⁶* (Shantou variety of the Chaozhou dialect) (Shi 1999). If the hypothesis is on the right track, the Chaozhou form without nasalized vowel can be taken as a loss of nasalization. Given the presence of /a/ *choann²* may well be the fusional form of 做何物.

²³ *Ni⁵* or presumably its weakened form *ni⁰* as a particle might be derived from *njar in Old Chinese (Ōta 1988:363-366). Interestingly, Chou (1972:151-155) notes that it also functions as a sentence-final particle apart from being a demonstrative pronoun in Old Chinese.

In what follows, I will explore *chai*⁷ 俚, *chai*⁷ *ni*⁵ 俚年, *si*⁷ *chai*⁷ *ni*⁵ 是俚年, *chai*⁷ *iunn*⁷ 俚樣, *cho*³ *chai*⁷ 做俚, and *cho*³ *chai*⁷ *ni*⁵ 做俚年. Though not a *chai*⁷ 俚-based ‘how’ WH-word, *cho*³ *ni*⁵ 做年 will be brought up for comparison due to its affinity to ‘how’ WH-words.

3.1 *Chai*⁷ 俚

I propose that *chai*⁷ 俚 corresponding to 怎 in Mandarin is a fusional form of 做 and 乜. It experienced the loss of a nasal element. The ‘how’ WH-word *chai*⁷ 俚 occurs in preverbal position, as in (18a-e), or premodal position, as in (19a-e), but not post-clausal positions. The modals that *chai*⁷ 俚 precedes comprise *thang*¹ 通, *e*⁷ 會, *kann*² 敢 and *tit*⁴ 得.

- (18) a. I¹ iah⁴ **chai**⁷ kam¹-sim¹ (4.64, SZ)
 伊亦俚甘心
 he too how willing
 ‘How can he be willing too?’
 b. **Chai**⁷ hiau²-tit⁴ goan² niu⁵-a² sim¹-chiann⁵ (24.027, JJ)
 俚曉得阮娘仔心情
 how know we lady-DS mind
 ‘How do I know my lady’s mind?’
 c. **Chai**⁷ kinn³ tit⁴ chhin¹-chhiunn⁷ li² (6.218, JJ)
 俚見得親像你
 how appear look.like you
 ‘How do you know that he looks like you?’
 d. Niu⁵-kiann² **chai**⁷ sia² tit⁴ ma⁷ i¹ (26.578, JJ)²⁴
 娘仔俚捨得罵伊
 lady-DS how not.grudge scold him
 ‘How can you grudge rebuking him?’

²⁴ Terms of address in Chinese especially in traditional Chinese society can be used in lieu of personal pronouns to refer to speaker or addressee to show social status or degree of intimacy. Here Chen San 陳三 as the speaker uses the term of address *niu*⁵-*kiann*² 娘仔 as a respectful form to refer to the addressee Wu Niang 五娘. Likewise, Chen San uses *sio*²-*lang*⁰ 小人 mean person as a humble form to refer to himself in (9d). The same is true of (20a) where Chen San 陳三 as a servant deliberately uses the more intimate term *a*¹-*niu*⁵ 啞娘 to speak to Wu Niang 五娘 as an addressee.

- e. Kah⁴ goa² **chai**⁷ tng¹ tit⁴ khi² (26.515, JJ)
 甲我俾當得起
 let me how bear
 ‘How can I bear it?’
- (19) a. **Chai**⁷ thang¹ liah⁸ kiann² kang⁷ i¹ phit⁴-phoe³ (5.709, SZ)
 俾通力仔共伊匹配
 how can take daughter with he match
 ‘How can you marry me to him?’
- b. **Chai**⁷ e⁷ kai² tit⁴ goa² sim¹ huai⁵ (10.02, SZ)
 俾會改得我心懷
 how can change RC I mind
 ‘How can my mind be changed?’
- c. **Chai**⁷ kann² khui¹-sim¹ bo⁵ heng⁵-chi² (15.428, SZ)
 俾敢虧心無行止
 how dare unfair not.have good-conduct
 ‘How can I be faithless and not behave properly?’
- d. **Chai**⁷ tit⁴ ke³-sim¹ (27.163, SZ)
 俾得過心
 how can bear-the-thought-of
 ‘How can I bear the thought of it?’
- e. A¹-ma² tit⁴ ti¹, goa² **chai**⁷ tit⁴ si² (26.478, JJ)
 啞媽得知，我俾得死
 grandma obtain know I how can die
 ‘If my mother knows it, how can I end my life?’

3.2 *Chai*⁷-*ni*⁵ 俾年

The ‘why’ WH-word *chai*⁷ 俾 can be further followed by a kind classifier *ni*⁵ 年 yielding the compound ‘why’ WH-word *chai*⁷-*ni*⁵ 俾年. It denotes reason and cause in most cases occurring before modals like *beh*⁴ 卜 as well as adverbs such as *to*¹ 都, *m*⁷ 不 and *chiah*⁴ 即, as in (20a-e), but in rare cases it takes on the manner reading when occurring before verbs of saying like *tann*⁷ 坦 (Chaozhou variety) and *seh*⁴ 說 (Quanzhou variety), as in (21).

- (20) a. A¹-niu⁵ **chai**⁷-**ni**⁵ to¹ m⁷ kann² tann⁷ (11.314, SZ)
 啞娘俾年都不敢坦
 PRFlady why PRT not dare speak
 ‘Why daren’t you/she speak?’

- b. Cho³ lang⁵ **chai⁷-ni⁵** m⁷ pat⁴ chin³-thoe³ (10.041, SZ)
 做人**俾年**不八進退
 be-person why not know advance-retreat
 ‘Why don’t you know how to behave?’
- c. Li² **chai⁷-ni⁵** beh⁴ phah⁴ phoa³ goan² kiann³ (19.282, JJ)
 你**俾年**卜打破阮鏡
 you why want beat broken our mirror
 ‘How comes you want to break our mirror?’
- d. **chai⁷-ni⁵** chia⁴ m⁷ pat⁴ koann⁵-ke⁷ (10.101, WL)²⁵
 在**年**即不識高下
 why so not know high low
 ‘Why are you so insensible?’
- e. **Chai⁷-ni⁵** to¹ bo⁵ jin⁵-cheng⁵ (23.008, WL)
 在**年**都無人情
 why PRT no human sentiment
 ‘How comes you are unexpectedly cold?’
- (21) Bo⁵ boo² too⁷ goa² **chai⁷-ni⁵** tann⁷ (23.255, SZ)
 無△度我，**俾年**說
 not.have wife give me how say
 ‘No wife is given to me. How do you put it?’

3.3 *Si⁷ chai⁷-ni⁵* 是俾年

The ‘why’ WH-expression *si⁷ chai⁷-ni⁵* 是俾年 occurs in the predicative position, as in (22a-c) where the copula *si⁷* 是 seems to function as a focus marker of the focus *chai⁷-ni⁵* 俾年/在年 which functions as a ‘why’ WH-word denoting purpose, as in (22a-b), or a ‘how’ WH-word denoting manner, as in (22c).

- (22) a. Liah⁸ kiann³ phah⁴ phoa³ **si⁷ chai⁷-ni⁵** (17.142, WL)²⁶
 掠鏡打破**是在年**
 PM mirror beat broken be why
 ‘What did he break the mirror for?’
- b. Thoat⁴-loh⁸ keng¹-oe⁵ **si⁷ chai⁷-ni⁵** (13.039, WL)
 脫落弓鞋**是在年**
 remove bow.shoe be why
 ‘What did she remove her bow-shaped shoes for?’

²⁵ 俾 is sometimes rendered as 在, a phonetic loan character.

²⁶ 在年 is a graphic variant of 俾年.

- c. Be⁷ ti¹ in¹-ian⁵ si⁷ chai⁷-ni⁵ (12.010, JJ)
 未知姻緣是俾年
 not know fate-for-marriage be what
 ‘I don’t know how the predestined love fares.’

3.4 Chai⁷-iunn⁷ 俾樣

The ‘why’ question-word *chai⁷* 俾 can be further followed by a kind classifier *iunn⁷* 樣 producing the ‘how’ WH-word *chai⁷-iunn⁷* 俾樣 denoting manner or fashion that can be optionally preceded by the verb *beh⁴* 卜, *cho³* 做 or *si⁷* 是, as in (23a-d). It also forms a predicate by itself, as in (23e-f). *Chai⁷-iunn⁷* 俾樣 always occurs in the predicate position and denotes what a situation is like or what a thing looks alike.

- (23) a. A¹-niu⁷ tann¹ beh⁴ chai⁷-iunn⁷ (15.26 SZ)²⁷
 啞娘今卜俾樣
 PRFlady now want what-kind
 ‘What should we do now, Madam?’
- b. Sinn¹ tit⁴ kah⁴ cho³ chai⁷-iunn⁷ (14.378, JJ)²⁸
 生得可做俾樣
 be-born RM SIP do-what-kind
 ‘What does he look like?’
- c. Niu⁵-a² li² sim¹ tiong¹ si⁷ chai⁷-iunn⁷ (33.030, JJ)
 娘子你心中是俾樣
 lady-DS you heart-inside be what-kind
 ‘What do you feel like, Madam?’
- d. Lau⁷-ia⁵ cho³ kiann¹ chai⁷-iunn⁷ (31.179, SZ)
 老爺佐官俾樣
 master do official what.kind
 ‘What is it like being an official, master?’
- e. Lim⁵ chhu³ chhin¹-chiann⁵ tann¹ chai⁷-iunn⁷ (26.576, JJ)
 林厝親情今俾樣
 Lin house relation now what.kind
 ‘How are your relations in Lins?’

²⁷ *Tann¹ beh⁴ chai⁷-iunn⁷* 今卜俾樣 ‘what should we do now?’, optionally preceded by a vocative term of address, is an expression often used by the speaker to ask the addressee what the step should be taken to copy with a predicament. Thus, it has taken on a discourse function.

²⁸ To be more exact, *cho³ chai⁷-iunn⁷* 做俾樣 is a complement in the verb-complement construction with an infixal phase element *tit⁴* 得.

3.5 *Cho³-chai⁷* 做俚

Though a fusional form of 做 and 乜, *chai⁷* 俚 can be further preceded by *cho³* 做, since the ‘do’ sense in it has been breached. The ‘how’ WH-word *cho³-chai⁷* 做俚 occurs in preverbal position and after the boulomaic modal 卜 *beh⁴*, as in (24a-b). As a ‘how’ WH-word denoting manner occurs in the adjunct position in the VP domain.

- (24) a. Beh⁴ **cho³-chai⁷** in³ tia¹-ma² (51.143, JJ)
 卜做俚應爹媽
 want do-what answer dad mom
 ‘How do I respond to my parents?’
 b. Beh⁴ **cho³-chai⁷** si² (23.101, SZ)
 卜佐俚死
 what do-what die
 ‘How do I die?’

Cho³-chai⁷ seh⁴ 做俚說 is a high-frequency fixed expression where *cho³-chai⁷* 做俚 functions a ‘how’ WH-word, as in (25a-b). It develops into a formulas used to demand explanation or repetition in response to a speech, as in (25b). From the type of verbs of saying *seh⁴* 說 uniquely found in the Quanzhou variety of Southern Min, we can infer indirectly that *cho³-chai⁷* 做俚 is a Quanzhou-unique expression.

- (25) a. Chu¹ chiunn⁷ **cho³-chai⁷** seh⁴ (10.016, GX)
 書上做俚說
 book on do-how-say
 ‘How is it said in the book?’
 b. **cho³-chai⁷** seh⁴ (19.244, JJ)
 做俚說
 do-how-say
 ‘Pardon?’

Cho³-chai⁷ tit⁴ ho² 做俚得好, as in (26), is also a highly frequent fixed expression used in interrogative mood. It expresses the speaker’s predicament as to what to do next in a dilemma. Since *cho³-chai⁷* 做俚 is a ‘how’ WH-word, it seems to form an adjunct to an implicit VP. *Cho³-chai⁷ tit⁴ ho²* 做俚得好 is therefore a VP realized an extent verb-*tit⁴*-complement construction which *ho²* 好 stands for the extent to be attained.

- (26) Thinn¹-a, beh⁴ **cho³-chai⁷** tit⁴ ho² (50.053, JJ)
 天啞，卜**做俾**得好
 Heaven-VM want do-how can good
 ‘Oh Heaven! What should I do?’

3.6 **Cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** 做俾年

Cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵ 做俾年 as an adjunct ‘how’ WH-word denoting manner occurs right before a predicate like *ho²* 好, as in (27a-b). It may be immediately preceded by a time adverb like *tann¹* 今 ‘now’, as in (27a). The manner ‘how’ WH-word and the predicate may form an indirect question, as in (27b).

- (27) a. Lim⁵-chu³ tho² chhin¹ chionn⁷-kin², tann¹ **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** ho² (38.018, WL)
 林厝討親障緊，今**做在年**好
 Lin house ask.for bride so urgent, now do-how good
 ‘The Lins presses for the bride. What should we do now?’
 b. Im¹-sin³ choat⁸-bo⁵ tann¹ siunn⁷ **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** ho² (43.012, WL)
 音信絕無，今想**做俾年**好
 message absolutely not.have, now think do-how good
 ‘We have not heard from him. I am wondering how we should do now.’

Besides being an adjunct ‘how’ WH-word **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** 做俾年 alone or when preceded by the boulomaic modal *beh⁴* 卜 can function as a predicate, as in (28a-b). It seems that there is an implicit VP involved to which **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** 做俾年 ‘how’ function as an adjunct.

- (28) a. Khann³ lu² au⁷-lai⁵ **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** (23.265, SZ)
 看你后來**做俾年**
 look you later do-how
 ‘I will see what will happen to you later on.’
 b. Kah⁴ gun² beh⁴ **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** (37.030, GX)
 甲阮卜**做俾年**
 cause we want do-how
 ‘What should we do?’

Unlike **cho³-ni⁵** 做年 that can occur in preverbal and premodal position, to be discussed soon, **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** 做俾年 and **cho³-chai⁷** 做俾 are alike in preceding a covert or overt VP, but only **cho³-chai⁷-ni⁵** 做俾年 may occur in the clause-final position.

3.7 *Cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年

Since *cho*³ 做 ‘do’ quite often occurs with its collocate *chai*⁷-*ni*⁵ 俾年, it acquires the interrogative force from the question word *chai*⁷ 俾 ‘how’. That is why *cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 can function as a how question-word denoting manner that always occurs in preverbal rather than premodal position, as in (29a-c).

- (29) a. *Sio*²-*be*⁷ ***cho*³-*ni*⁵** *tann*⁷ (20.145, WL)²⁹
 小妹做年咀
 sister how speak
 ‘Sis, how do you put it?’
- b. *M*⁷ *chai*¹ *sim*¹-*thau*⁵ ***cho*³-*ni*⁵** *siunn*⁷ (20.133, WL)
 不知心頭做年想
 not know hear-SUF how think
 ‘What is in your mind?’
- c. ***Cho*³-*ni*⁵** *si*² (11.437, SZ)
 做年死
 how die
 ‘How did he die?’

*Cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 in some rare cases like (30) takes on the function of the ‘why’ WH-word when preceding the negative element *m*⁷ 不.

- (30) ***Cho*³-*ni*⁵** *m*⁷ *thang*¹ (8.090, GX)
 做年不通
 how not can
 ‘Why shouldn’t (the gold hairpin be returned)?’

²⁹ *Cho*³-*ni*⁵ *tann*⁷ 做年咀 is a highly frequent fixed expression. From the collocate *tann*⁷ 咀, a Chaozhou 潮州-unique verb of saying, we can be sure that *ho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 is a ‘how’ WH-word in Chaozhou. This hypothesis is confirmed by the use of *cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 as a ‘how’ WH-word in the present-day Chaozhou grammar (Shi 1999). Li (1999) claims that *ni*⁵ 做 *cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 in the Chaozhou dialect comes from 乜 (< 物), a hypothesis that rests on the phonological shift of *m*- to *n*- that has yet to be justified. Another difficulty of this hypothesis is that there also exists *mih*⁴ 乜-based WH-word in this dialect (Shi 1999). But there could be another more plausible source for 年. If the sentence-final particle 呢 of constituent WH-word questions in early modern Chinese develops from 𪛗 in Middle Chinese which in turn comes from 爾 in Old Chinese (Ōta 1981:363-366), *ni*⁵ 年 may very well be a descendant of 爾 rather than 物. The co-occurrence of WH-words with the question particle 年 indirectly bears on the issue of the clause-typing hypothesis (Cheng 1997).

4. Distribution and Interpretation of *mih*⁴ 乜-based and *chai*⁷ 僥-based WH-words

The aim of the paper is to pin down the patterns of WH-words in terms of three dimensions, viz., the interface of inherent properties, syntactic positions and functions of WH-words based on Southern Min texts of Ming and Qing playscripts. Syntactic positions of WH-words comprise force, premodal, preverbal, verbal and post-clausal positions. For *mih*⁴ 乜-based WH-words (see Table 1) there are four positions in the configuration of the WH-words in the sentences: force, premodal, preverbal and postclausal.³⁰ WH-words may express cause/reason, manner, and purpose in addition to carrying the interpretation of rhetorical question.

Table 1: Distribution and interpretation of *mih*⁴ 乜-based WH-words

| WH-words/phrases | force | premodal | preverbal | postclausal |
|--|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| (cho ³ /beh ⁴)- <i>mih</i> ⁴ -tai ⁷ | rhetorical | cause/reason | | purpose/reason |
| (cho ³ /beh ⁴)- <i>mih</i> ⁴ -eng ⁷ | rhetorical | | | purpose |
| cho ³ - <i>mih</i> ⁴ | rhetorical | cause/reason | manner | purpose |
| in ¹ - <i>mih</i> ⁴ | | | cause/reason | |

*Mih*⁴-tai⁷ 乜事 can occur in premodal and postclausal position. It acts as a cause/reason WH-word and tends to take on the interpretation of rhetorical question when occurring in the premodal or preposition position. It could be interpreted as a cause/reason or purpose WH-word in postclausal position, but the sentence involved could never be a rhetorical question. Cho³ *mih*⁴-tai⁷ 做乜事 in the postclausal position is amenable to a cause/reason or purpose reading depending on context, whereas beh⁴ *mih*⁴-tai⁷ 卜乜事 in the same position is limited to the purpose reading. Unlike *mih*⁴-tai⁷ 乜事, *mih*⁴-eng⁷ 乜用 optionally preceded by ho³ 做 or beh⁴ 卜 appears only in postclausal position, but it can have a context-sensitive reading of purpose or cause/reason, and may take on a rhetorical reading. Cho³ *mih*⁴ 做乜 may appear in premodal, preverbal or postclausal position and takes on the reading of reason/cause, manner and purpose/cause/reason in each position. Cho³ *mih*⁴ 做乜 is amenable to the interpretation of rhetorical question. In¹-*mih*⁴ 因乜 appears only in preverbal position where the VP may be further preceded by adverbs or negatives. It features reason/cause reading but does not further takes on the interpretation of rhetorical question.

³⁰ Force due to Rizzi (1997) as the locus of illocutionary force can be split into finer projections in that context-induced interpretation of rhetorical question is higher than mood (i.e., interrogative, imperative, declarative, and exclamative clause). Rhetorical question features an interrogative form but an assertion of the opposite polarity (Han 2002).

Unlike *mih*⁴ 乜-based WH-words, *chai*⁷ 俚-based WH-words (see Table 2) can never occur in postclausal position.³¹ Another difference is that no *chai*⁷ 俚-based WH-words except the shortest form *chai*⁷ 俚 develops the interpretation of rhetorical question.

Table 2: Distribution and interpretation of *chai*⁷ 俚-based WH-words

| WH-words/phrases | force | premodal | preverbal | verbal |
|--|------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| <i>chai</i> ⁷ | rhetorical | cause/reason | | |
| <i>chai</i> ⁷ - <i>ni</i> ⁵ | | cause/reason | manner | |
| <i>si</i> ⁷ - <i>chai</i> ⁷ - <i>ni</i> ⁵ | | | | purpose/manner |
| (<i>beh</i> ⁴ / <i>cho</i> ³ / <i>si</i> ⁷) <i>chai</i> ⁷ - <i>iunn</i> ⁷ | | | | manner/mode |
| <i>cho</i> ³ - <i>chai</i> ⁷ | | | manner | |
| <i>cho</i> ³ - <i>chai</i> ⁷ - <i>ni</i> ⁵ | | | | manner |
| <i>cho</i> ³ - <i>ni</i> ⁵ | | cause/reason | manner | |

*Chai*⁷ 俚 occurs in no other position than premodal position, and expectedly takes on the reading of a cause/reason WH-word question particularly rhetorical question. Both *chai*⁷-*ni*⁵ 俚年 and *cho*³-*ni*⁵ 做年 appear in premodal and preverbal position and take on cause/reason and manner reading. *Cho*³-*chai*⁷ 做俚 only occurs in the preverbal position featuring only manner reading. Be it *chai*⁷-*ni*⁵ 俚年 or *chai*⁷-*iunn*⁷ 俚樣, when preceded by *beh*⁴ 卜, *cho*³ 做 or *si*⁷ 是, it occurs in the verbal position and takes on the reading of purpose, manner or mode.

When Table 1 and Table 2 are reviewed together, we can arrive at generalizations concerning the distribution and interpretation of both *mih*⁴ 乜-based and *chai*⁷ 俚-based WH-words along the following lines. Premodal WH-words are amenable to cause/reason reading and even the reading of rhetorical question. Preverbal WH-words are conducive to manner reading, and postcausal WH-words especially when further preceded by *beh*⁴ 卜 tend to have purpose reading. But WH-words in the postclausal position are often construable as featuring purpose or cause/reason reading.

5. Concluding remarks

I have shown in the bulk of the paper that the interpretation of adjunct WH-words hinges partially but crucially on the syntactic positions each type occupies and the associated interpretation of each position. The syntactic and semantic properties of these WH-words can be teased out by examining the interface of the two dimensions. Although the present paper does not examine the emergence of adjunct WH-words in formal

³¹ I include *cho*³ *ni*⁵ 做年 in this table on the assumption that the interrogative force of 做 may come from *chai*⁷ 俚 in the collocate of 做俚.

perspective, the finding in the present endeavor merits a comparison with the cartographic approach in which the C system has been decomposed into a sequence of functional projections such as Force Phrase (ForceP) and Interrogative Phrase (IntP) positioned higher than and decoupled from Finiteness Phrase (FinP) (Rizzi 1996, 1997, Cinque 1999, Stepanov & Tsai 2008, Tsai 2008). Modals or negatives are located at FinP and VP is under FinP. To generalize the syntactic positions of WH-words, three major categories can be identified: 1) the premodal WH-words when taking on the interpretation of rhetorical question that occupies the specifier position of ForceP, 2) the premodal WH-words that occupy the specifier position of the IntP in the left periphery, and 3) the preverbal WH-words that occupy the specifier position of the modifier under TP. The postcausal WH-words cannot find a niche in the fine structure of left periphery since they occur at the right periphery.³²

It is a plausible proposal that focus structure plays a pivotal role in the formation of WH-word questions in early modern Sinitic languages, Southern Min included. I argue in Lien (2009) that *si*⁷ 是 is a focus marker, and the part, viz., ‘what’ WH-word, that follows is the focus, and the rest in the sentence is the presupposition.³³ In the same vein, *cho*³ 做 can be treated as a focus marker, when *cho*³ 做 still acts a verb taking the following NP as its complement, as in *cho*³ *mih*⁴ *seng*¹-*li*² 做乜生理 do what business (12.28, GX) ‘what business are you doing?’ where *mih*⁴ *seng*¹-*li*² 乜生理 as a variable-bearing argument forms the focus. By contrast, *cho*³-*mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 做乜事 or simply *cho*³-*mih*⁴ 做乜 is lexicalized as an adjunct WH-word where *cho*³ 做 loses its verbal status.³⁴ One may conjecture that *cho*³ 做 has the effect of nullifying the capacity of the

³² The projection of functional categories in the right periphery may run counter to the universal constraint that all functional projections occur in the left periphery (Kayne 1994). So our finding in this regard seems to have important theoretical consequence. Parallel phenomena of functional projection in the right periphery are attested, for example, in sign languages (Neidle et al. 1999).

³³ When *si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜 is still a focus phrase, *si*⁷ 是 is a focus marker, and *mih*⁴ 乜 a focus. *Si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜 is construed as a phrase structure featuring copula + nominal variable (a predication nominal). But when *si*⁷ 是 loses its verbal status as a result of the lexicalization of *si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜, the positional restriction on *mih* 乜 is lifted (see Brinton & Traugott 2005 for the notion of lexicalization). In other words, *si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜 as a constituent WH-word can occur as subject as well as direct or indirect object. But unlike the adjunct WH-word *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 做乜 which may be an ex-situ WH-word and in a structural position beyond VP, *si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜 is always an in-situ WH-word in Southern Min.

³⁴ From the coexistence of *kan*³ *mih*⁴ *tai*⁷ 幹乜事 ‘do what?’ and *cho*³ *mih*⁴ *tai*⁷ 做乜事 ‘why’ with a different interpretation, as shown in §2.3, we can see that Jespersen cycle seems to be at work here in the replacement of *cho*³ 做 by *kan*³ 幹 to rejuvenate the variable-bearing function of the *mih*⁴ *tai*⁷ 乜事. Roughly Jespersen’s cycle means that a new cycle will begin when the attrition of an old linguistic form with a certain function is refueled by a new form (see Jespersen 1917, Eckardt 2006, and Van der Auwera 2009).

‘what’ WH-word *mih*⁴-*tai*⁷ 乜事 ‘what (affair)’ or *cho*³ 乜 ‘what’ being a variable-bearing element and turning it into an adjunct WH-word, viz., a WH-word positioned at the edge of a clause.

Looking at both *shen*² *me*⁰ 甚麼 ‘what’ and *zen*³ *me*⁰ 怎麼 ‘why/how’ in Mandarin alone one is hard put to detect any connection between them except the shared 麼. But from the perspective of what is revealed in early Southern Min playscripts the link is quite explicit in the paired pattern of *si*⁷ *mih*⁴ 是乜 be what ‘what’ and *cho*³ *mih*⁴ 做乜 do what ‘why/how’ in that the difference between them lies in the choice of the predicate for the ‘what’ WH-word *mih*⁴ 乜 ‘what’. *Si*⁷ 是 makes a variable-bearing WH-word out of *mih*⁴ 乜, whereas *cho*³ 做 produces an adjunct WH-word out of *mih*⁴ 乜. In a sense, *cho*³ 做 acts as the head of ‘what’ WH-words and turns it into an adverbial expression.

In a focus structure focus elements in a sentence comprise a sequence of focus marker, focus (viz., variable) and optional elements denoting class or category.³⁵ Focus has to be phonologically realized, and class-denoting elements have the effect of narrowing down the scope of the variable. In the predicate position *cho*³ 作 or *si*⁷ 是 functions as verb and focus marker, viz., when it is a pro-verb, it takes the sequence comprising focus and optional class as its DP. Even though both *cho*³ 作 and *si*⁷ 是 are focus markers, there is textual evidence showing that it is *cho*³ 作 rather than *si*⁷ 是 that can serve as an operator that triggers the fronting of the WH-word. So it can be posited a la Rizzi (1996) that the operator occupies the spec-XP position attracting WH-word *mih*⁴ 乜 ‘what’ to it landing at various sites in the fine structure of functional categories. X in XP may be Force, Interrogative, or Manner. The idea proposed here regarding the formation of adjunct WH-words seems to be able to provide a new point of departure for sorting out the patterns of syntactic distribution of various kinds of adjunct WH-words in Mandarin such as *zen*³-*me* 怎麼 ‘how, why’, *wei*⁴-*shen*²-*me* 爲甚麼 ‘why’, *zuo*⁴-*shen*²-*me* 做甚麼 ‘do what? what for’, *gan*⁴-*shen*²-*me* 幹甚麼 ‘do what, why’ and *gan*⁴-*ma*¹ 幹麼 ‘what on earth, why’ in Mandarin.³⁶

³⁵ The intimate relationship between focus and WH-words that we postulate for the emergence of WH-words in Southern Min is quite similar to what is found in Cushitic languages in African where focus and interrogative markers work together to form interrogative words (Frascarelli & Puglielli 2007, Reintges 2007).

³⁶ Examples of 怎麼 as an early Mandarin WH-word are sparse in the early Southern Min playscripts examined here. They are found in the interlocution between magistrate and defendant in official setting such as the court hearing. One might entertain the idea of making a detailed comparison of adjunct WH-words in earlier Southern Min, as treated here, and their counterparts in present-day Southern Min. But due to space constraints I must leave it for a future endeavor.

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早期閩南語文本中「緣由/樣式」疑問詞： 疑問詞固有屬性和句法位置之互動

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本文探討早期閩南語文本中「緣由/樣式」疑問詞固有屬性和句法位置的互動關係，這些早期閩南語文本是潮州和泉州方言的混合戲文，最早可回溯到十六世紀 (Wu 2001a-d)。這類疑問詞分兩大類：「乜」為本的疑問詞和「俾」為本的疑問詞，每類疑問詞的詮釋部分取決於其出現的結構位置，這類疑問詞出現於四個位置：語勢、情態詞前、動詞前及子句後。這類疑問詞出現於語勢、情態詞前、動詞前和子句後的位置都分別產生反詰、緣由、樣式、目的語意。緣由/樣式疑問詞都以「做」為本，「做」充當焦點標記可能是帶有變項的疑問詞蛻變為附加語疑問詞的推手。

關鍵詞：緣由/樣式疑問詞，結構位置，詮釋，早期閩南語