



## Czech questions with two wh-words

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova

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# Interrogative strategies in Czech

*Hana Gruet-Skrabalova*

## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses three question forms the Czech language uses in questions containing two wh-words. The three question forms are exemplified in (1). In (1a), both wh-words are fronted. In (1b), both wh-words are fronted and the conjunction *a* ('and') appears between them. In (1c), one wh-word is fronted and the other one is introduced by the conjunction *a* in clause-final position.

- (1) a. **Kdo** **komu** koupil knihu ?                    (*multiple fronting*)  
       who-NOM who-DAT bought book  
       'Who bought a book for whom ?'
- b. **Kdo** **a** **komu** koupil knihu ?            (*fronting and conjunction*)  
       who-NOM and who-DAT bought book  
       'Who bought a book, and for whom ?'
- c. **Kdo** koupil knihu **a** **komu** ?            (*conjoined final wh-word*)  
       who-NOM bought book and who-DAT  
       'Who bought a book, and for whom ?'

Assuming that languages are economical, the fact that a language uses three question forms with the same linguistic material as in (1) implies that we should find differences in their interpretation and in their syntactic structure. Moreover, the syntax of these questions should tell us something about the structure of the CP domain in Czech.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, 3 and 4, I discuss semantic and syntactic properties of the question like in (1). The section 5 discusses some hypotheses about the structure of CP and IP domains in Czech and proposes an analysis of multiple fronting. The section 6 deals with conjoined wh-words. The section 7 deals with the questions containing a final wh-word.

## 2. Semantic interpretation

### 2.1 Questions with multiple fronting

Questions like in (1) do not receive the same interpretation. It has already been noted for other Slavic languages (Boškovič 2002, Przepiorkowki 1994, Rudin 1988) and for Hungarian (Liptak 2001) that questions with multiple fronting trigger pair-list reading, as in (2).

- (2) a. **Kdo** **koho** pozval na večírek ?<sup>1</sup>  
 who-NOM who-ACC invited to party-ACC  
 ‘Who invited whom to the party ?’
- b. for each  $x$  and  $y$ , which  $x$  invited which  $y$  to the party ?
- c. Petr pozval Marii, Pavel Alenu a Jan Evu.  
 Petr-NOM invited Marie-ACC, Pavel-NOM Alena-ACC and Jan-NOM Eva-ACC  
 ‘Peter invited Mary, Paul (invited) Alena, and John (invited) Eva.’

However, specific reading is also possible for multiple fronting in cases there is a specific pair  $x$  and  $y$  given in the context, and the question simply asks to identify the role of both  $x$  and  $y$  in the event denoted by the verb, as in (4). The two wh-words here contrast with each other, so that we can speak about a contrastive specific reading.

- (4) (*speaking about Caïn and Abel*)
- a. **Kdo** **koho** zabil ?<sup>2</sup>  
 who-NOM killed who-ACC ?  
 ‘Who killed whom ?’
- b. given  $x$  and  $y$ , is it  $x$  who killed  $y$  or is it  $y$  who killed  $x$  ?
- c. Kain zabil Abela, (a ne Abel Kaina).  
 Caïn-NOM killed Abel-ACC (and not Abel-NOM Caïn-ACC)  
 ‘It is Caïn who killed Abel.’

## 2.2 Questions with conjunction

Questions with fronted wh-items and conjunction only receive specific reading, as we can see in (5). Contrary to multiple fronting, however, the single pair is not presupposed here, so that the specific reading is not a contrastive one.

- (5) a. **Kdo** **a koho** pozval na večírek ?  
 who-NOM and who-ACC invited to party-ACC  
 ‘Who invited whom to the party ?’
- b. for which  $x$  and  $y$  is it true that  $x$  invited  $y$  to the party ?
- c. Petr pozval na večírek Marii.  
 Petr-NOM invited Marie-ACC to party-ACC  
 ‘Peter invited Mary to the party.’

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1 Czech questions with multiple fronting do not show any superiority effects, although some order preferences have been reported by Meyer (2004). The order of wh-words simply indicates how the demand of information is structured.

2 Moreover, superiority effects hold in these questions, as noted by Meyer (2002).

The question in (5) cannot be paraphrased by a sentential coordination, nor the conjunction *a* ('and') replaced by the conjunction *nebo* ('or'). This also shows that both wh-words here are involved in a single event denoted by the verb.

- (6) a. \***Kdo** pozval na večírek **a** **koho** pozval na večírek ?  
           who-NOM invited to party-ACC and who-ACC invited to party-ACC  
       b. \***Kdo** **nebo** **koho** pozval na večírek ?  
           who-NOM or who-ACC invited to party-ACC

On the contrary, questions with final conjoined wh-word are always interpretable as two independent questions. In (7), for instance, the first question asks to identify the *x* who came. The second one presupposes that *x* has been identified and only asks when *he/she/they* came.

- (7) a. **Kdo** přišel **a** **kdy** (přišel) ?<sup>3</sup>  
           who-NOM came and when (came)  
           'Who came, and when ?'  
       b. for which *x* is it true that *x* came and when did *he/she* come ?  
       c. Přišel Martin, **a** **to** **v** úterý.  
           came Martin, and that on Tuesday  
           'Martin came on Tuesday.'

We may thus conclude that questions in (1) are not semantically equivalent, since questions with multiple fronting trigger a pair-list or a contrastive specific reading, questions with fronting and conjunction a specific non contrastive reading, and questions with final conjoined wh-word a sentential reading.

### 3. Constituency of wh-words

#### 3.1 Questions with multiple fronting

The questions in (1) also differ with respect to the constituency of their wh-words. In questions with multiple fronting, the two wh-words are syntactically independent constituents. Indeed, second position clitics, which must immediately follow the first phrasal constituent of the clause, normally follow the initial wh-word (Lenertova 2001).

- (8) a. **Komu** jsi **co** koupil ?  
           who-DAT CL:AUX-2SG what-ACC bought  
           'what did you buy for whom ?'

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3 Questions in (7) are only possible with non-argumental final wh-word (see section 4).

- b. \***Komu co** jsi koupil ?

Lenertova (2001) has also noted that, sometimes, both wh-words may precede the clitics, as in (9b). In such case, however, only a specific contrastive reading is available, as in (4) above. On the contrary, the question (9a) triggers a pair-list reading. I will propose in section 5 that wh-words in (9a) and (9b) respectively do not occupy the same positions both at surface and at *LF*.

- (9) a. **Kdo si koho** váží víc ? (Lenertová 2001)  
 who-NOM CL:REFL who-ACC appreciated more  
 = for every *x* et for every *y*, which *x* appreciated more which *y* ?
- b. **Kdo koho si** váží víc ?  
 who-NOM who-ACC CL:REFL appreciated more  
 = given *x* and *y*, is it *x* who appreciates more *y* or is it *y* who appreciates more *x* ?

Another evidence for independency of the fronted wh-words comes from the placement of the particle *že*, which must follow the first wh-words and precede the clitics, as in (10). Note that the question in (10a) is not interpreted as an information question, but rather as an echo-question, i.e. question asking what proposition was actually asserted or intended to be asserted (Arnstein 2002).

- (10)a. **Kdo že mu co** koupil ?  
 who-NOM that-PART CL:he-DAT what-ACC bought  
 ‘(did he actually say that) the person A bought the thing B to him ?’
- b. \***Kdo co že mu** koupil ?

### 3.2 Questions with conjunction

Turning to questions with conjunction, we observe that clitics as well as the particle *že* must follow both wh-words. This implies that wh-words and conjunction form a single constituent. Again, the presence of the particle *že* forces to interpret the question (11a) as an echo-question.

- (11)a. **Kdo a co (že) mu** koupil ?  
 who-NOM and what-ACC that-PART CL:he-DAT bought  
 without *že*: ‘who bought what to him ?’  
 with *že*: ‘(did he actually say that) the person A bought the thing B to him ?’
- b. \***Kdo že mu a co** koupil ?

We may thus conclude that questions in (1) also differ with respect to their constituency, since wh-words do form distinct constituents in questions with

multiple fronting, while they do form a single constituent in questions with fronting and conjunction. In questions with conjoined final wh-item, the wh-words clearly do not form a constituent.

#### 4. Argumental properties

Finally, wh-words are not equally acceptable in questions like in (1), depending whether they are arguments or adjuncts (see Przepiorkowski (1994) for asymmetry between arguments and adjuncts in other Slavic languages).

##### 4.1 Argumental wh-words

Starting with argumental wh-words (subject and verb complements), we observe that both questions with multiple fronting and question with conjunction are felicitous. A slight preference for order subject > complement can be observed when both wh-words refer to the same semantic type, probably due to some processing difficulties, as suggested by Meyer (2004).

(12)a. **Kdo koho** / **?Koho kdo** doporučil komisi ? (Meyer 2004)  
 who-NOM who-ACC / who-ACC who-NOM recommended committee-DAT

b. **Komu co** / **Co komu** řekl ?  
 who-DAT what-ACC / what-ACC who-DAT (he) said

(13)a. **Kdo a koho** / **Koho a kdo** doporučil komisi ?  
 who-NOM and who-ACC / who-ACC and who-NOM recommended committee-DAT

b. **Komu a co** / **Co a komu** řekl ?  
 who-DAT and what-ACC / what-ACC and who-DAT (he) said

On the contrary, questions with conjoined final wh-word are ruled out, except for those where the final wh-word is an optional complement, as in (14b'). This should not be not surprising, since these questions are interpreted as independent questions.

(14)a. **\*Kdo** doporučil komisi **a koho** ?  
 who-NOM recommended committee-DAT and who-ACC

a'. **\*Koho** doporučil komisi **a kdo** ?  
 who-ACC recommended committee-DAT and wh

b. **\*Komu** řekl **a co** ?  
 who-DAT said and what-ACC

b'. **Co** řekl **a komu** ?  
 what-ACC said and who-DAT

#### 4.2 Non-argumental wh-words

Turning to non-argumental wh-words, we observe that questions with multiple fronting are ruled out, while question involving conjunction are all felicitous.

- (15) \***Kdy jak** / \***Jak kdy** skončila stoletá válka ?  
 when how / how when finished hundred-years' war
- (16) **Kdy a jak** / **Jak a kdy** skončila stoletá válka ?  
 when and how / how and when finished hundred-years' war
- (17)a. **Kdy** skončila stoletá válka **a jak** ?  
 when finished hundred-years' war and how  
 b. **Jak** skončila stoletá válka **a kdy** ?  
 how finished hundred-years' war and when

#### 4.3 Mixed wh-words

Finally, when the wh-words are of different types, questions with multiple fronting are good, except for those containing *proč* (why) and *jak* (how). Questions with *jak* (how) are however judged acceptable by some speakers<sup>4</sup>.

- (18)a. **Koho kde** / **Kde koho** viděl ?  
 who-ACC where / where who-ACC (he) saw  
 b. ??**Kdo jak** / ?**Jak kdo** cestoval na konferenci ?  
 who-NOM how / how who-NOM went to conference-ACC  
 c. \***Kdo proč** / \***Proč kdo** přišel ?  
 who-DAT why / why who-NOM came

Questions with conjoined wh-items are mainly good, although the order adjunct > argument seems a little degraded:

- (19)a. **Koho a kde** / **Kde a koho** viděl ?  
 who-ACC and where / where and who-ACC (he) saw  
 b. **Kdo a jak** / ?**Jak a kdo** cestoval na konferenci ?  
 who-NOM and how / how and who-NOM went to conference-ACC  
 c. **Komu a proč** / ?**Proč a komu** to dal ?  
 who-DAT and why / why and who-DAT it (he) gave

It is plausible that the weak contrast in acceptability in (19bc) is again due to some processing difficulties, since it seems easier to obtain a construal in which

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4 Acceptable judgements for examples like (18b) can also be found in Meyer (2004).

a manner is assigned to an individual, than a construal in which an individual is assigned to a manner.

Finally, questions with conjoined final wh-word are excluded when an obligatory argumental wh-word is in clause-final position, as in (14) above.

- (20)a. **Koho** viděl **a kde** ?  
 who-ACC (he) saw and where  
 a'.\***Kde** viděl **a koho** ?  
 where (he) saw and who-ACC  
 b. **Kdo** hodnotil studenty **a jak** ?  
 who-NOM evaluated students-ACC and how  
 b'.\***Jak** hodnotil studenty **a kdo** ?  
 how evaluated students-ACC and who-NOM

The table below gives an overview of the properties of the questions in (1):

	(1a) Wh1 Wh2	(1b) Wh1 Conj Wh2	(1c) Wh1 ... and Wh2
Reading	a) Pair-list b) Specific contrastive	Specific	Sentential
Constituency	a) Wh1 <i>že Cl</i> Wh2 b) Wh1 Wh2 <i>že Cl</i>	Wh1 Conj Wh2 <i>že Cl</i>	Wh1 <i>že Cl</i> ... Wh2
Wh-arguments	ok	ok	* / ok <sup>5</sup>
Wh-adjuncts	*	ok	ok
Wh-mixed	?? jak /* proč	ok	* / ok <sup>5</sup>

Table 1 : properties of questions with two wh-words

## 5. Multiple fronting

Evidence provided in previous sections to show that questions in (1) have different semantic and syntactic properties suggests that these questions also involve different constructions. Before turning to their analysis, I would like to introduce some preliminary hypotheses about the clause structure in Czech.

### 5.1 The CP and IP domain

Rizzi (1997, 2002) proposes that the CP domain of the clause contains several syntactic positions each dedicated to a particular element with respect to the type of the clause and its information structure, as indicated in (21):

- (21) [ForceP [TopP\* [IntP [TopP\* [FocP [TopP\* [FinP [IP]]]]]]]]]

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5 If *Wh2* is an optional argument.









in (30), since these questions trigger neither distributive nor contrastive reading. The next section will deal with the syntax of these questions.

- (30)a. **Kde a jak** Petr uhodil Pavla ?  
 where and how Petr-NOM hit Pavel-AC  
 b. **Proč a kam** Petr poslal Pavla ?  
 why and where Peter-NOM sent Paul-ACC

## 6. Multiple fronting with conjunction

### 6.1 Conjunction as a focus particle

Penn (1999) claims that the morpheme *i* ('and') that occur between wh-words in Serbo-Croatian is not a conjunction, but a focus particle ('also'), as in (31ab). He thus proposes to consider questions in (31c) as questions with *multiple fronting* in which wh-words are simply focused.

- (31)a. Ivan je **i danas** sreo Mariju.<sup>7</sup> (Penn 1999)  
 Ivan CL:AUX-3SG also today met Mary-ACC  
 'Ivan also met Mary today (not only yesterday).'
- b. Knjigu **i Mariji** odnesi.  
 book-ACC and Mary-DAT bring-IMP  
 'Bring the book to Mary.'
- c. **Ko i kome** je kupio auto ?  
 who-NOM and who-DAT CL:AUX-3SG bought car  
 'Who bought the car for whom ?'

There are however three pieces of evidence against Penn's analysis in Czech. First, fronted wh-words and conjunction form a single constituent (see section 3). Second, they do not trigger list-pair reading (see section 2). Finally, the conjunction *a* cannot be analyzed as a focus particle, contrary to the conjunction *i* ('and'), which may actually function as a focus particle ('also', 'even'), see (32ab). However, *i* cannot appear between wh-words, as shown in (32c).

- (32)a. Jan potkal Marii **včera a / i dneska**.  
 Jan-NOM met Marie-ACC yesterday and / and today  
 with *a* : 'John met Mary yesterday and today.'  
 with *i* : 'John met Mary both yesterday and today.'

<sup>7</sup> The glosses and the translations in the example (31) are taken from Penn (1999).

- b. Jan potkal Marii \*a / i dneska.  
 Jan-NOM met Marie-ACC and / even today  
 ‘John met Mary even today (not only yesterday).’
- c. Kdo a / \*i komu koupil auto ?  
 who-NOM and / and who-DAT bought car-ACC  
 ‘Who bought the car to whom ?’

I conclude thus that questions with conjunction do not involve multiple fronting, but rather coordination of wh-words.

## 6.2 Wh-coordination

Coordination of wh-words may seem problematic, since constituents with different syntactic functions cannot normally be coordinated (Peterson 2004), as shown in (33a). However, coordinations with conjuncts bearing different functions become felicitous with conjuncts being focussed (Liptak 2001), as in (33b). Note that the example (33b) is a possible answer to the question in (33c).

- (33)a. \*Jan by chtěl pozvat [ConjP [NP Marii] a [PP do kina]].  
 Jan-NOM CL:COND wanted invite Marie-ACC and to cinema-GEN
- b. Jan by chtěl pozvat [ConjP[+Foc] **MARI** a **DO KINA**].  
 John CL:COND wanted invite Mary-ACC and to cinema  
 ‘John would like to invite Mary to the movie.’
- c. [ConjWhP[+Foc] **Koho** a **kam**] by chtěl Jan pozvat ?  
 who-ACC and where CL:COND wanted Jan-NOM invite  
 ‘Whom would John like to invite, and where ?’

Assuming that focusing licenses coordination of unlike categories, I suggest that coordinate wh-phrases are licensed because wh-words share two features: [+wh] and [+focus] (Liptak 2001). A coordinate wh-phrase, forming a single focused constituent, would move to a single position in the left periphery of the clause, the Spec of ContrastP. Embedding of the two words within a coordinate phrase would block their mutual scope, allowing only for their specific reading:

- (34) [ForceP [ContrastP [ConjWhP **Koho** a **kam**] [Contrast' [FinP *by* [IP chtěl  
 who-ACC and where CL:COND wanted  
 Jan pozvat ]]]]] ?  
 Jan-NOM invite

## 7. Questions with conjoined final wh-word

In questions with clause-final wh-word introduced by the conjunction *a*, the clause including the initial wh-word and the final wh-word are interpreted as

two independent single questions. I argue thus that these questions involve clausal coordination with one elliptical conjunct. Clausal coordination prevents the argument of the verb from occurring in the clause-final position and explains the sentential interpretation of these questions. It also predicts that such questions may combine with multiple fronting and wh-coordination:

- (35) a. [**Kdo**    **komu** koupil knihu] **a** [**kdy**] ?  
           who-NOM who-DAT bought book and when  
           ‘Who bought a book to whom, and when ?’  
       b. [**Kdo**    **a** **kam** šel] **a** [**proč**] ?  
           who-NOM and who-DAT went and why  
           ‘Who went where, and why ?’

It seems however difficult to analyze the elliptic conjunct as a clause with deleted material. The deletion analysis would be indeed plausible if syntactic reconstruction with identity were always possible, which is not the case. The syntactic reconstruction is only possible when the initial wh-word is an adjunct; if it is an argument, an NP or a pronoun must appear in the second clause, as in (36c):

- (36)a. [**Kdy** jsi            potkal Jana]    **a** [**kde** (jsi            potkal Jana)] ?  
           when CL:AUX-2SG met Jan-ACC and where CL:AUX-2SG met Jan-ACC  
           ‘When did you meet John and where (did you meet him) ?’  
       b. \*[**Koho** jsi            potkal] **a** [**kde** (jsi            potkal)] ?  
           who-ACC CL:AUX-2SG met and where CL:AUX-2SG met  
           (\*‘Who did you meet John and where did you meet ?’)  
       c. [**Koho** jsi            potkal **a** [**kde** (jsi            **ho** potkal)] ?  
           who-ACC CL:AUX-2SG met and where CL:AUX-2SG CL:him met  
           ‘Where did you meet John and where did you meet *him* ?’

According to Ginzburg and Sag (2001), elliptical clauses as in (35) and (36) are syntactically clausal fragments, which are only interpreted as complete clauses. An analysis in terms of semantic reconstruction seems thus to be needed for this kind of question. Such an analysis goes however beyond the limits of this paper.

## 8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed and analyzed three types of questions with two wh-words that occur in Czech. It was shown that these questions involve different syntactic constructions with different semantic representations. In questions with multiple fronting, wh-words either activate DistributiveP and ShareP projections at *Logical Form*, which leads to their pair-list reading, or the

second one moves to ContrastP, which leads to their contrastive specific reading. In questions with fronting and conjunction, the coordinate wh-phrase occupies the Spec of ContrastP, which leads to a specific reading of conjoined wh-words. Questions with a final conjoined wh-word involve conjoined single questions.

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Hana Gruet-Skrabalova  
Clermont Université, Université Blaise Pascal  
EA 999, Laboratoire de recherche sur le langage  
BP 10448  
F-63000 CLERMONT-FERRAND  
hana.gruet-skrabalova@univ-bpclermont.fr