

Chamling and English Question Words: A Comparative Study

Krishna Bahadur Rai
Associate professor

pakharibas3@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the questions words of Chamling and analyze the question words of Chamling and English. For this purpose Chamling and English data related to the question words are used. The comparative and contrastive study of data reveals that the position of question words is different in Chamling—initial, middle, and final—and in English—only initial. The position of Chamling question words contrasts with English question words in interrogative sentence. The finding of study shows that question words are used to ask open questions in both languages.

Keywords: question word, yes/no question, alternative question, open question

Introduction

Question is one of the types of sentences used in daily communication. It is not possible for us to keep communication going well without asking questions. “Questions are primarily used to seek information on a specific point” (Quirk et. al, 1985, p. 804) . People use question for seeking or checking information from others. There are different types of questions. Quirk et. al (1985) suggest to divide questions into three major classes according to the type of reply they expect: yes/no questions, wh-questions and alternative questions (p. 806) but this study comprises the discussion and comparison of question words of Chamling and its equivalence in English to get more understanding of this type of question.

Review of the Extant Literatures

Question

There are several definitions of questions. A question is a linguistic expression used to seek information. Question is also termed as interrogative sentence (Crystal, 2008, p. 400). It is a type of sentence which asks a question and uses a question mark. In English question may be formed :

- a. by the use of a question word.
- b. by the use of an operator in the first position in sentence (Richards et.al, 1999, p. 303).

The first type of question is formed with question words. These question words are known as wh-words in English. They are used to form Wh-Questions. 'They begin with a word beginning with *wh*, such as why, where, when, who and what, as in:

What do you want?

Where did he go?

When did you last see her?

Who gave you that?' (Kirkpatrick, 2014, p. 39)

The second type of question is formed with auxiliary verbs. These auxiliary verbs are placed in the initial position of the sentence. This type of question is known as yes/no question in English. Primary auxiliaries or modal auxiliaries are used in the first position in a sentence.

Do you go home ?
Is this your bag?
Can I sit here?

Ultimately, questions express a desire for more information, usually requesting a reply from the listener. They are used to get the unknown information that the speakers would like to know.

Types question

The types questions are various in number in different languages. English consists of two: yes/no question, and wh-question. They are also known as closed question and open question respectively. ' Alternative question and polar question are only types of closed questions' (Huddleston & Pullum, 2007, p. 163). An open question requires far more details, whereas in a closed question, the participant can answer "yes" or "no". It does not invite the participant to provide information in details.

Similarly, Schackow (2015) mentioned that Yakhkha language has three variants of interrogative clauses: Polar questions, Disjunctive questions and Content questions (pp. 393-395).

Likewise, Bal (2007) claimed that Nepali has two varieties of question clauses: K-question and Ho/hoina questions (p. 390).

In the same way, Rai (2015) stated two types of interrogative questions in Koyee: Yes/no questions and question begins with question words (pp. 217-218).

Rai (2016) has further discussed four types of question sentences on the context of Dumi: polar interrogatives, Alternative questions, Neutral questions and Constituent questions (pp. 316-319).

Use of questions

Questions are very important in verbal communication. They are used “to ask for information (How old are you?, requests (Can I have one then, please?), suggestions (Shall we take the early train?), offers (Can I help you?) and ask permission (May I take one of these timetables?)” (Eastwood, 2002, p. 25-27). Questions are used for different purposes such as receive information, ask permission, offer, request and suggestion.

wh-question

Questions words are called wh- question words in English, “because they generally begin with wh-, the exception being how” (Sahan & Nokas, 2017, p. 4). They are formed with the aid of one of the following simple wh-words: who, whom, whose, what, which, when, where, how, why. “wh-questions generally have falling intonation” (Quirk et. al, 2017, p. 817). They are called information questions. They are used to request specific information. Eastwood (2002) states that wh-questions are used to ask information, get people to do things, and just to make a rhetorical questions which do not need an answer (p. 27). They are used in social

interaction, seeking information, for eliciting vocabulary and so on. They seek an open ended answer that can be short or long.

Different question words are used for making a question in different languages such as ko, ke, kahan, kin, kasari, kahile, kati and kasto in Nepal (Bal, 2007), and hade (what), kəla (where), komo (when), kodo (how), su (who), hamai (why) and kodo-da (how many/ how much) are question words of Dura (Nagila, 2009, pp. 171-172).

Rai (2015) further mentioned asi, (who), asi-lai (whom), mo (what), aspo (whose) hijo (when), and k^hΛmu (where) as question words of Koyee.

Schackow (2015) mentioned that in Yakkha language, question words are often marked by the focus marker = le. (ka ina=le khut-a-η ly-a-η-ga-na? = What did you tell me to bring?) (pp. 395-396). Sahan & Nokes (2017) discussed question words of Anselmus such as Sa (what), Seka (when), nansa/ neusa (why), onme (how), sekau (who/whose/whom), and fank (how many/ how much) (p. 5).

Rai (2016) pointed out seven types question words of Dumi such as sΛmΛ (what), asi (who), gΛpΛ (where), halo (when), habo (how much/ many), hak^ha (why), and hΛm/g^hΛm (which) (p. 218).

Methods of the study

The researcher collected the data from various sources. Firstly Chamling native speakers were selected as participants from Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadhi municipality and Sakela Rural Municipality and data were collected using open ended questionnaires. Further, data for the both languages were also collected from completed research works and published materials. Secondly, the contrastive approach is used to find out similarities and differences of question words in the English and Chamling languages. 'There are two basic approaches in linguistic comparison: two-dimensional comparison (or multiple-dimensional) and one-way comparison' (Linh et. al, 2017, p. 18). This study used the two-way comparison method. Finally, some conclusions would be drawn about what was being analyzed and compared.

Discussion and Result

English question words

A wh-question begins with a question word. There are nine question words in English: who, whom, what, which, whose, where, when, why and how (Eastwood, 2002, p. 28). They are questions that seek information by posing a question with a "wh"- question word. Wh-questions seek an open-ended answer that can be short or long, or simple or complex (Herring, 2016, p. 965). They are more informative than a simple yes/ no question (Greenbaum, 1996, p. 46).

Who is your favorite teacher ?

Where are you going for your winter vacation ?

In the first and second examples *who* and *where* are question words of English respectively. These two question words are used to seek details information. Thus, "wh-questions are known as information seeking questions" (Verma & Krishnaswamy, 1998, p. 205).

Types of English question words. On the basis of function English information questions can be classified as three types of questions.

Table 1 *English question words on the basis of function*

Types	Structure	Examples
Subject questions	Question word + Subject+ (auxiliary) + main verb	Who cut the tree? Which student will pass the exam ?
Object questions	Question word + auxiliary + subject + main verb	Which bag has your father bought? Whom did you see yesterday?
Complement questions	Question word +auxiliary + subject + main verb + complement	Where is Ram going ? (place) When did you come home? (Time) Why do you leave this place? (reason) How can I get there? (Manner)

On the basis of the use of auxiliary verb, English question words can be categorized into two:

a. Wh-question without auxiliary (wh-word + main verb.....?)

When a question word is the subject, it comes before the verb, and *do* cannot normally used (Swan, 2002). When *what, who, which* or *who* is the subject or part of the subject, auxiliary verb is not used.

Who (*subject*) broke that car?

What happened?

Which team won?

Whose dog dung up my flower?

In the above mentioned sentences, auxiliary verbs are not used.

b. with an auxiliary verb (Wh-word + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb...?)

What do you do for a living?

why do you go home?

Who (*object*) did you call?

In the above mentioned sentences *do* is used as auxiliary verb and it is directly followed with the subject.

Functions. Each English question word serves different function. It is mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2

Question words with their function

Question words	Functions	Examples
Who	asking what or which person (subject)	Who opened my bag?
What	asking for information about something	What have you bought from the market?
	asking for repetition or confirmation	What? I can't hear you. (Thuat, 1994, p.7) You did what?
When	asking for a time expression (Swan, 2002, p. 472)	When did you arrive home?
Which	asking about choice	Which color do you like?
Where	asking for location	Where do you live?
Whom	asking what or which person (object)	Whom did you call?
Whose	asking for possession	Whose is this pen?
How	asking about manner	How do you clean this pot?
	asking about condition	How was your first term exam?
Why	asking for a reason	Why are you laughing ? (Swan, 2002)

Chamling question words

This study is based on the Chamling language of Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadhi municipality and Sakela Rural municipality. "There are mainly two types of questions: questions that start with question words and yes/ no question words" (Rai, 2011, p. 88).

de, doko/khungko, khodā, so, deno, delo, doson, somo, and solai are question words.

de (what)

de is used to ask question about things or person in the Chamling language. The following data describe the position of *de*.

khaimo nung de ? What is your name?

pro NP QW

oko de tira? What happened this?

pro QW V

The first example reveals that *de* is placed at the final position of the sentence and in the second example, *de* is placed before the verb. On the basis of the same data, it can be stated that there are two patterns of using *de* namely det (pro.) + NP + QW, (in the final position in sentence without a verb) and det (pro) + QW + V, (question word before the verb).

khodā (where)

khodā is used to ask question about location. The following data describe the position of *khodā*.

lām khodā hinge ? Where is the way ? (Rai et.al, 2007, p. 298)

NP QW V

In the above mentioned sentence *khodā* is placed before the verb.

so (who)

so is used to ask question about person in the sentences. The following examples are *so* (who).

oko mina so ? Who is this person?

det name QW

so rō cyo? Who ate rice?

QW NP V

The first example reveals that *so* is placed at the final position of the sentence and in the second example, *so* is placed in the initial position. On the basis of the same data, it can be stated that there are two patterns of using *de* namely det + NP + QW, (in the final position in sentence without a verb) and QW + NP + V.

denā (why)

denā is used to ask question about reason in the sentence.

denā khuci mipātase? Why are they shouting?

QW pro V

The example reveals that *denā* is placed at the initial position of the sentence. On the basis of the data, it can be stated that there is a single pattern of using *denā* namely QW + NP + V.

delo (When)

delo is used to ask question about time. The data about *delo* in Chamling and their translation into English are stated in the following.

khaini delo khim tāpsie? When do you go home?

pro (NP) QW NP V

ramwa delo sākāte cyo? When did Ram eat dry meat?

NP QW NP V

Question word *delo* is placed in the middle position of the sentence before NP. On the basis of the data, it can be stated that there is a single pattern of using *delo* namely NP + QW + NP + V.

doson (How)

doson is used to ask about manner. The question of *doson* is used to ask manner and the data below reveals the form of questions *doson* in Chamling and their translation into English are stated in the following.

khānā doson tātā? How did you come?

NP (pro) QW V

khaini doson tāchāpdume? How do you write ?

NP (pro) QW V

Question word *doson* is placed before the verb in the middle position of the sentence. On the basis of the data, it can be stated there is a single pattern using *doson* namely NP + QW + V.

somo/ som (Whose)

som or *somo* is used to ask personal possession in Chamling. The following data describe the position of *som/somo*.

oko som khim ? Whose house is this?

det (pro) QW NP

tyoko somo yokho? Whose bag is that?

det (pro) QW NP

somo is placed in the middle part of the sentence. It can be preceded by pronoun and followed by Noun phrase (NP). On the basis of the data, it can be stated there is a single pattern using *somo* namely det (pro) + QW + NP.

solai (Whom)

solai is used to ask question about people. The following example describes the position of *solai*.

khaini solai tāhingie? Whom do you live with ?

NP (pro) QW V

solai is placed before the verb in Chamling. On the basis of the data, it can be stated there is a single pattern using *solai* namely NP + QW + V.

dokko /khungko (Which/ which one)

dokko and *khungko* are used ask information about thing and person. The following examples describe the position of *doko* in Chamling.

khainilae dokko chadum kaisikhalae ? Which food do you like?

NP QW NP V

khāmo dokko chhachhāmā? Which one is your daughter?

NP QW NP

khāmo chungko chuchā ? Which one is your son ?

NP QW NP

There are two question words in Chamling for question *which* namely *doko* and *khungko*. Based on the data, the question word *doko* in the middle position of the sentence. However, it has two structures such as NP+QW+ NP + V and NP (pro) + QW + NP.

Findings of Chamling question word

1. *de, so, denā, delo, doson, som/somo, solai* and *doko* are question words of the Chamling language.
2. On the basis of the pattern analysis, there are four type of question word structures in Chamling.
 - i. question word used in the final position in sentences without verb.

det + NP + QW

khumo nung de ? (What is your name?)
 - ii. Question word used before verb

NP + QW + V

khānā doson tātā? (How did you come?)
 - iii. Question word used in the middle of the sentence with verb.

NP + QW + NP + V

khainilae doko chadum kaisikhalae ? (Which food do you like?)

iv. Question word used in the middle of the sentence without verb.

det + QW + NP ?

oko som khim ? (Whose house is this?)

3. *denā* and *doko* are placed in the initial position of the sentences. There is one form of using *denā* and *doko* are in Chamling namely QW + NP + V. However *doko* is placed in the middle of the sentence without verb such as *khāmo doko chhachhāmā?*
4. The question words *de* is placed in the final part of sentence such as *khamo nung de ?* However, *de* is placed before the verb such as *oko de tirā?*
5. *so* is placed in the final position of the question without verb such as *oko minā so?* Moreover, It can be placed in the initial position of question with verb such as *so rō chyō ?*
6. *somo*, is placed in the middle of the sentence without verb such as *oko somo khim?*, and *khamo doko chhachhāmā?*

Comparison of Chamling and English question words

After discussion of the question words of Chamling and English, some differences are found out which are mentioned below:

- 1) “de”, “delo”, “denā”, “doso”, “so”, “somo”, “solai”, and “dokko/ khungko” are question words of Chamling, whereas “who”, “whose”, “whom”, “what”, “where”, “why”, “when”, “how”, and “which” are question words of English.
- 2) In Chamling, there are four types of structure of question words, whereas In English, there are only two.
- 3) Some question words—de, somo, dokko—of Chamling are used without verb in questions, whereas question words of English are always used with verb.
- 4) Question words of Chamling occur in any positions—initial, middle, and final of questions, whereas question words of English always occur in the initial position of question.
- 5) In Chamling two different question words—dokko and khungko—are used for similar meaning, whereas in English two different words are not used for similar meaning.

Conclusion

In respect of finding related to the study the question words of Chamling English shows that the system of questions question words are different. Chamling and English questions words occupy different position in question— Chamling question words in initial, middle, and final—but English question words only in initial position. Some question words of Chamling can be used without verb in question. On the other, question words of English never use without verb. Both Chamling and English question words can be used to ask open questions. Finally

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