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# Polar questions

### **Structure of polar questions**

In Kina Rutul, polar questions are formed by adding interrogative suffix -ma to the finite verb. The marker -ma cannot be moved to any other part of the sentence:

1. ramazana mixtaba ruʔuruma?
2. Nine nek awɨrama?
3. Nine nek awɨrama?
4. \*Nine-ma nek awɨra?
5. \*Nine nek-ma awɨra?

The same suffix is used for questions to verbs in any tense:

1. Rɨšira xɨw hɨʔɨrama?
2. Raisat rurusɨ(ma) maxačkale?
3. Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ(ma)?

When the predicate consists of a nominal (attributive?) part and a copula, the interrogative suffix -ma is attached to the copula:

1. Rɨšira hɨʔɨd i-ma xɨwbɨr?

Word order in polar questions is relatively free, so it is possible to move constituents, according to the informational structure of the sentence. Examples () and () are both equally felicitous for Kina speakers:

1. Had halukɨrɨ(ma) gravata.
2. Had gravata halukɨrɨma?

Questions can be asked just by intonation, without any morphological and syntactic markers. In this case, intonation goes high:

1. χɨnɨχ (j)-eše-r=a?
2. had q’irq’ɨrɨ šeherda?

A question can be asked to a negative predicate. Then the interrogative marker -ma follows the negative marker *dɨš.* Answers for this type of questions can be positive (yes, I do) or negative (no, I did not).

1. Wɨ ʁɨjʁa tʲukana rurusɨ dɨšma?
2. Wɨ ʁijʁa ɢaɢašiχda rɨχɨr dɨšma? – Ej, rɨχɨra. / Waʔ, rɨχɨrdɨš.

### **Meditative**

There is a special strategy for meditative questions such as ‘I wonder’:

1. Nine nek xɨnimešis awɨd i-ma-jden?

‘I wonder whether mother poured children some milk.’

Questions can be formed by an an irrealis marker *-jden/-j* which follows finite verb or copula with the interrogative marker -ma. Marker -*jden* comes from irrealis mood where it attaches to verb forms in conditional clauses, indirect questions and indefinite pronouns [Dobrushina 2018].

In example (15) there is a simple polar question without -jden/-j:

1. Nine nek xɨnimešis awɨra-ma?

Both variants *ma + jden* (18) and *ma + j* (19) are equally possible:

1. Nine nek xɨnimešis awɨra-ma-jden?
2. Nine nek xɨnimešis awɨra-ma-j?

My consultants describe the difference between (17) and (18)/(19) this way: in (17) ‘you ask me if mother poured milk or not’, and both in (18) and (19) ‘you ask yourself as if you doubt or you don’t really know whether mother did it or not’. Thus, ma+jden and ma+j oppose to -ma and are equal, so I suppose that *-j* maybe a shorter realization of *-jden*. (???)

Meditative question can also be asked if the predicate is negative:

1. Mij uble a-dɨš-ma-jden?

‘I wonder if there are no wolves.’

### **Focus**

In questions there can be a narrow focus on a certain constituent:

1. [Šeherde] ruʔura-ma had (dišde muˁɢʷa)?  
   ‘Is it a town where he goes to (or it is a village)’?

Focused constituent is followed by the verb or copula with interrogative marker. There are two strategies of focus: the questioned constituent remains can either remain in situ (22) or be fronted (23). In any case, verb moves together with the focused element. Consultants say that there are no difference between (22) and (23).

1. Maˁlim [mi sɨde] jiq’ɨrɨ-ma?  
   ‘Was it this year that teacher died? (or was it last year)’
2. [Mi sɨde] jiq’ɨrɨma maˁlim?  
   Idem

If the predicate is formed by nominal part and a copula, the copula follows the constituent which is in narrow focus:

1. [Xed] wiʔima χɨnχɨra jidχɨd? (dišde nek)  
   ‘Was it water that the boy brought?’ (or milk)
2. [Χɨnχɨra] wiʔima jidχɨd xed? (dišde rɨš)

‘Was it the boy who brought water?’ (or the girl)

### **Answers for polar questions**

Typical answers for polar questions are *ej* ‘yes’ or *waʔ* ‘no’. The predicate (the finite verb or copula) can be repeated:

1. Rɨšira xɨw hɨʔɨrama? – Ej / waʔ / hɨʔɨra.

As an answer for questions with narrow focus, they say *waʔ* ‘no’and repeat the focused constituent, if the answer is negative, or say *ej ‘*yes’, if the answer is positive. In case it is positive, repeating the constituent is not necessary.

1. [Χɨnχɨra] jiʔima jidχɨd xed? – Ej. / Ej, xɨnχɨra.
2. [Χɨnχɨra] jiʔima jidχɨd xed? – waʔ, rɨsera.

Meditative question usually do not require answer.

### **Tag questions**

In Kina Rutul, there are tag questions which are formed by a copula with the interrogative marker *-ma*. There are two tags: *i-ma* and *dɨš-ma. Dɨš-ma* is used in positive sentences and *i-ma* is used in sentences with negative predicates. A tag is placed at the end of the sentence with normal, non-question word order:

1. had qirq’ɨrɨ šeherde, dišma?  
   ‘He’s come from the town, hasn’t he?’
2. had qirq’ɨrɨ-dɨš šeherde, i-ma?

‘He hasn’t come from the town, has he?’

Dɨš-ma is a negative form copula that attaches to verb, and the predicate is posed at the end of the sentence, so sometimes we cannot differ a tag question from a regular polar question:

1. Wɨ ʁɨjʁa tʲukana rurusɨ-dɨš-ma?

However, the speakers can make a pause between the verb and *dɨšma:*

1. Wɨ ʁɨjʁa tʲukana rurusɨ // dɨšma?

Negative tag dɨšma cannot be used in negative sentences:

1. \*had qirq’ɨrɨdɨš šeherde, dišma?  
   lit.: ‘He didn’t come from the town, didn’t he?’

Positive tag *ima,* otherwise, can be used in positive sentences:

1. okhad qirq’ɨrɨ šeherde, ima?

lit.: ‘ħe came from the town, did he?’

It seems that questions with dɨšma are used more often, and consultants produce these sentences easier, though both are possible. Some speakers prefer to say a regular polar question rather than a tag. Examples (35) and (36) are all plausible, but consultants prefer (36):

1. Maˁʔlim jiq’ɨrɨ šesdɨ sɨda, i-ma? / dɨš-ma?

‘Teacher died last year, did he / didn’t he?’

1. Maˁʔlim jiq’ɨrɨ-dɨš-ma šesdɨ sɨda?

‘Didn’t teacher die last year?’

When a tag is separated from the verb by several words, consultants like this sentence more.

1. iz-dɨ jiʔi rixɨ-d sen, dɨšma?

‘I am seven years old, aren’t I?’

is better than:

1. had qirq’ɨrɨ šeherde, dišma?

‘He’s come from the town, hasn’t he?’

### **Alternative questions**

If alternative questions are formed by interrogative marker -ma on the predicate and a conjunction *dišde* ‘or’ or a Russian loan word *ili* ‘or’.

1. had mixdaba ji<r>q’ɨ-r-i-ma dišde / ili balʲnicae?

‘Did he come to school or to the hospital?’

If there is no narrow focus in the question, the first alternative remains in situ and all the others are usually placed at the end of the sentence:

1. Maˁlim mi sɨde jiq’ɨrɨma dišde šes?

‘Did teacher die this year or last year’

1. Mašinara haʔa č’i giwirajma ili zer?

‘Did the car run over a sheep or a cow?’

Though, according to the informational structure, an alternative can be fronted:

1. [č’i] haʔa mašinara giwiraj ili zer?

‘Was it a sheep that the car ran over, or a cow?’

Predicates can also be alternatives. In this case both verbs are marked with interrogative marker -ma:

1. Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ-ma ili čej haʔarɨ-ma?

‘Are you cooking food or making tea?’

Conjunction can be omitted:

1. Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ-ma, čej haʔarɨ-ma?

But interrogative markers cannot be omitted:

1. \*Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ, čej haʔarɨ?

Interrogative marker should be on both verbs, asymmetry is not possible:

1. \*Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ-ma dišde čej haʔarɨ?
2. \*Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ, čej haʔarɨ-ma?

Alternative questions can also be meditative. Markers *-jden* or *-j* are attached after interrogation on the verbs:

1. Wad ilesdɨ haʔarɨ-ma-j(den) ili čej haʔarɨ-ma-j(den)?

‘I wonder if you are cooking food or making tea.’

An answers for an alternative question is repeating one of the alternatives:

1. Wad ilesdɨ haʔari-ma ili čej haʔari-ma? – zad ilesdɨ haʔari.

‘Are you cooking the food or making tea? – I’m cooking.’

# Parametric questions

In parametric questions the next question words (wh-words) are used: *wuš* ‘who’, *šɨw* ‘what’, hile ‘where’, *šuwna* ‘how’, *mɨs* ‘when’, *jiχdɨ* ‘why’, *jildɨ* ‘which’, *šumɨd* ‘how many’, *šuda* ‘how much’. Parametric questions are formed by question words:

1. mɨs liwir zer?

‘When did they eat the cow?’

Interrogative marker -ma cannot be used in parametric questions:

1. \*mɨs liwir-ma zer?

‘When did they eat the cow?’

There are several position for question words: they can remain in situ, be fronted or moved to the end of the sentence:

1. Mɨs muˁɢʷa hɨkɨsɨ prazdnik?

‘When will be a celebration in the village?’

1. muˁɢʷa hɨkɨsɨ prazdnik mɨs?

‘When will be a celebration in the village?’

1. muˁɢʷa mɨs hɨkɨsɨ prazdnik?

‘When will be a celebration in the village?’

Consultants insist that there is no difference between sentences 52-54.

Parametric questions can be asked to the subject. The question word is usually in the front (in situ?).

1. Wuš suq’ura mɨrɨj?

‘Who is sitting at the …’

1. Hal č’abal wɨq’e awɨʔɨra?

‘Who killed the sheep?’

Question to the direct object:

1. Šuw liʔira ismaila?

‘What did Ismail eat?’

And it is also possible to move the question word *šuw:*

1. ismaila šuw liʔira?

Variants with fronted question words are the first when I asked the consultants to translate a sentence, so movement is probably preferable, but other positions of question words are also plausible.

Below there are questions to other constituents.

1. Hile izdɨ ʁilijdɨbɨr?

‘Where are my boots?’

1. Šuwna haʔasɨ gɨrcbɨr?

‘How to prepare chudu?’

1. Jiχda wad hanuwula ʁa jičibxɨdi?

‘Why did you hit him?’

Parametric questions can contain several question words. Their order is determined pragmatically:

1. Abdula duχarɨs hɨwɨra k’apɨr.

‘Abdula gave his son a dagger’

1. Hala halɨs hɨwɨra k’apɨr?

‘Who gave whom a dagger?’

And also possible:

1. Halɨs hala hɨwɨra k’apɨr?

’ Who gave whom a dagger?’

### **Meditative questions**

Parametric meditative questions are formed by marker -jden/j. Interrogative marker -ma cannot be used in parametric questions, so markers ma+jden / ma+j cannot be used here either:

1. Hal i-jden raq jedad?

‘I wonder who is knocking the door’.

1. Hal i-ma-jden raq jedad?

‘I wonder who is knocking the door’.

Answers for parametric question contain the constituent which had been replaced by the question word:

1. Hal i-ma-jden raq jedad? – rɨšbe diʔi / rɨš.

‘I wonder who is knocking the door? – a girl. ’.

1. Hile wiʔi nek? – mij wiʔi / mij.

‘Where is the milk?’

# Indirect questions

Indirect questions are formed with an irrealis marker -jden:

1. Zas hac’ardɨs nine nek xɨnimešis awɨra-ma-jden?

‘I don’t know whether mother poured children the milk.’

1. Zas hac’ardɨs nine nek xɨnimešis awɨrama-j?

Examples 69 and 70 do not differ, but example 71 does. Questions like (71) can also be asked, but consultants describe their meaning as ‘question to the mother herself’, so it is more like a direct quotation.

1. Zas hac’ardɨs nine nek xɨnimešis awɨrama?