A Minimalist Approach to the Kam Construction in Taiwanese

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to examine within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) the kam sentences in Taiwanese and argue that kam should be considered as a raising verb taking an AGRsP as its complement. It is proposed that AGRs contains a strong feature, [+Q] (cf. Shen, 1997), so kam needs to move to AGRs for feature checking before Spell Out under the Economy Principle. It is claimed that X0 movement should be classified into three types (cf. Rizzi, 1990), and Taiwanese is subject to the third type of X0 movement. Furthermore, AGRs is assumed to have a [+focus] feature (cf. Ouhalla, 1992), which unlike [+Q], will be discharged to Spec of AGRsP via Spec-head Checking, and hence a covert movement of XP to Spec of AGRsP for feature checking after Spell Out is motivated by Procrastinate. Finally, additional evidence from islandhood is found to support the present analysis.

Keywords: the Kam Construction, Taiwanese, Minimalist, GB Theory

Introduction

Taiwanese1 kam, which usually appears in front of VPs, can denote three types of reading: non-assertive, assertive2 and rhetorical, as shown in (1):

(1) a. I kam u lai kue?
   he KAM do come Asp
   (Lit.)'Did he ever come here?'
   (Lit.)'Did you say that he ever came here?'

b. I kam- m-zi u lai kue?
   he KAM-not-is do come Asp
   'He has come here, hasn’t he?'

When a speaker presupposes something, a non-assertive reading is obtained, but if he presupposes a statement already expressed, then it is an assertive reading; in the rhetorical reading the speaker, however, just shows surprise, but expects no reply from the addressee. As can be seen in (1a), the speaker can either presuppose the modal u or simply show surprise, so it has both a non-assertive reading and a rhetorical reading. In 1(b), however, the statement i u lai kue has been presupposed, so it has an assertive reading. Though kam has three readings, due to the limits of space we will only focus on the non-assertive reading of kam in this study.

The Mandarin counterpart for Taiwanese kam should be the question particle ma since it can also denote the above three types of reading, as shown in (2):

(2) a. Ta lai guo ma?
   he come Asp Q
   (Lit.)'Did he ever come here?'
   (Lit.)'Did you say that he ever came here?'

b. Ta bu-shi lai guo ma?
   he not-is come Asp Q
   'He has come here, hasn’t he?'

However, Taiwanese kam appears predicate-initially while Mandarin ma is sentence-final. Besides, although there are many sentence-final question particles3 in Taiwanese, such as bo 'not-do',
bue 'not-will', and m 'not-want,' none of them can denote all three types of reading, as shown by the question particle bo in the following examples:

(3) a. I u tai kue bo?
   he do come Asp Q
   (Lit.) 'Did he ever come?'
   (Lit.) 'Did you say that he ever came here?'

b. *I m-si- u tai kue bo?
   he not-is do come Asp Q
   'He has come here, hasn't he?'

In (3) bo can denote only the non-assertive reading. In addition, sometimes kam can appear in the sentence-initial position, as in (4), compared with (1a):

(4) KAM I u tai kue?
    KAM he do come Asp Q
    'Did he (or his sister) ever come here?'

However, when kam appears in different positions, the sentence will have different meanings. In (1a), the question contrast is on the modal u 'do', which immediately follows kam; however, the question contrast of (4) is on the subject i 'he', which also immediately follows kam. That is, it seems that kam can assign a contrastive focus to the immediately following words.

Inspired by these peculiar properties, this paper aims to explore the syntactic properties of kam and provide an account for the Taiwanese kam construction within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) by examining its non-assertive reading. This paper is organized as follows: section 2 examines the properties of Taiwanese kam sentences and reviews the previous analyses; section 3 presents the present proposal and accounts for the island constraints on kam sentences; section 4 discusses the remaining problems of the present study; finally, section 5 briefly concludes.

General Properties and Previous Analyses of Taiwanese Kam

As discussed earlier, kam is peculiar in that it seems to assign a contrastive focus to its following element. In addition, it cannot occur freely. In this section, we will first discuss its scope in section 2.1 and then explore its co-occurrence restriction in section 2.2, and finally we will review Cheng (1977), Huang (1991), and Yue (1991) in section 2.3.

Scope of Kam

Though (5) and (6) consist of the same words, they are different in word order and meaning:

(5) A-hui kin-a-jit kam kiann-lo khi hak-hau e?
    A-hui today KAM walk to school Pt
    'Does A-hui walk to school today?'

(6) A-hui kam kin-a-jit kiann-lo khi hak-hau e?
    A-hui KAM today walk to school Pt
    'Is it today that A-hui walks to school?'

(7) a. M-si, I si ce-chia khi e.
    no he is take-bus go Pt
    'No, he goes to school by bus.'

b. M-si, I si co-jit khi e.
    no he is yesterday go Pt
    'No, he walked to school yesterday.'

In (5), what is being questioned is the VP kiann-lo 'walk' which immediately follows kam, so it can be answered by m-si, si ce-chia khi e, as in (7a), while in (6) kin-a-jit 'today,' which immediately follows kam, is being questioned, so the reply is m-si, si co-jit khi e, as in (7b). Therefore, we suggest that kam should have a focus on its immediately following phrase. More evidence is found in (8):

(8) A: A-sam kam sai chia khi Tai-pat e?
    A-sam KAM drive car to Taipei Pt
    'Did A-sam drive to Taipei?'

B: a. M-si, I si ce chia khi e.
    no he is take bus go Pt
    'No, he went to Taichung by bus.'

b. M-si, I si sai tho-la-ku khi e.
    no he is drive truck go Pt
    'No, he drove a truck to Taipei.'

c. M-si, I si ce hui-ki khi e.
    no he is take plane go Pt
    'No, he went to Taipei by airplane.'

d. M-si, I si khi Tai-tiong e.
    no he is go Taichung Pt
    'No, he went to Taichung.'

In (8), the phrase immediately following kam is the VP sai-chia 'drive a car'; therefore, the VP is the questioned phrase. Interestingly, it seems that within the VP sai-chia 'drive a car,' either the word or the whole phrase can be focused and questioned. When the verb sai 'drive' is questioned, the reply is like (8a). While the noun chia 'car' is the focus, the reply could be like (8b). When the whole
phrase saih-chia 'drive a car' is questioned, the answer is like (8c), but not (8d). That is, either part of the phrase or the entire phrase which immediately follows kam can be the focus of the kam sentences (see Shen 1997 for more discussion).

Co-occurrence Restriction of Kam

Another interesting property about kam is that it cannot occur within islands as in (9)-(10) (cf. Huang, 1991):

(9) * [A-ming kam u kha] kha ho?
   A-ming KAM do go more good
   'Whether A-ming goes is better.'
(10) * A-cai chua ci-e [kam u ciin e] bo?
   A-cai marry one KAM have money Poss wife
   'A-cai marries a wife whether she is rich.'

As shown above, kam cannot occur within a sentential subject and a relative clause. Some of these facts have been discussed in previous studies, which we will review in the next section.

Literature Review

Considerable research has been done on or related to Taiwanese questions, including Lin (1974), Cheng (1977), Huang (1991), Yue (1991), and Wang & Lien (1994). Since Lin's (1974) and Wang & Lien's (1994) studies have little to do with kam, in what follows we will only review Cheng (1977), Huang (1991), and Yue (1991):

1. Cheng (1977)

Cheng (1977) considers kam a predicate-initial question particle in Taiwanese, different from other question particles, which always appear in sentence-final positions.

He argues that all sentence-final question particles have obvious relations with V-not-V question forms, but only predicate-initial kam is derived from the classical Taiwanese modal verb kam-bun 'dare to ask', which would occur sentence-initially. He further claims that since Taiwanese, like Mandarin, is shifting from an SVO language to an SOV language, the function of the predicate-initial kam is in the process of being replaced by the sentence-final question particle bo, and the emergence of the sentence-final question particle bo as a modality-neutral question marker to compete with the predicate-initial kam, would prove that Taiwanese is moving toward an SOV language system.

However, Cheng's claim that kam is a predicate-initial particle is problematic in the following respects. First, since particles appear frequently in sentence-final position in most Chinese dialects, and if kam is the only predicate-initial particle, such a claim evidently misses a generalization. Second, there is no empirical evidence for the claim that the question particle kam results from the fusion of kam-bun. Hence, such a phonology-driven analysis is not convincing.

2. Huang (1991)

Huang (1991) considers the kam-question a type of constituent question and claims that Mandarin A-not-AB questions (which require a reduplication rule) are variants of the kam question. But, the reduplication rule in Taiwanese is replaced by a different rule which puts the word kam into Infl, as shown in (12), the SS structure of (11):

Moreover, Huang argues that kam has wh-question-like properties, such as Long-distance Dependency and Island Effects, as can be seen in (13), cited from Huang (1991):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Li kam u lai kha ho?</td>
<td>you KAM have lai more good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Li kha ainn [kam u ciin e] lang?</td>
<td>you more like KAM have money POSS person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Huang (1991) further proposes that kam is in complementary distribution with Taiwanese A-not-AB type questions, as in (14b), but not with the AB-not-A type, as in (14a):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Li kam si Ci-ming m-sl?</td>
<td>you KAM is Ci-ming not-la?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Li kha ainn [kam u ciin e] lang?</td>
<td>you more like KAM have money POSS person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. "*l kam si-m-si Ci-ming?
you KAM is-not-is Ci-ming?
'Are you Ci-ming (or not)7?"

However, there are some problems with Huang's analyses. First, since kam can be used in three types of yes-no questions (i.e., assertive, non-assertive, and rhetorical), but V-not-V questions can only be considered non-assertive, it is not adequate to classify kam-questions as V-not-V questions. Second, to assume that kam is a 'wh-like element in Infl is problematic, since according to Chomsky (1986), wh-like elements are XPs, and they cannot appear in Infl, which can only be occupied by X’s. Therefore, Huang's analysis is theory-driven and lacks empirical evidence.

3. Yue (1991)

Following Zhu (1985), Yue (1991) treats the kam-question as the manifestation of V-not-V questions in Taiwanese. She assumes that the modern colloquial kam + VP form has sprung from the premodern colloquial stratum kho/chi + VP-NEG form, and claims that there are at least three different strata of this syntactic form in Southern Min, including a premodern colloquial stratum with the form kho/chi + VP-Neg, as in (15a), from which the modern colloquial kam + VP form may have sprung, as in (15b), a standard southern Min stratum with the form VP-Neg, as in (15c), and a non-native stratum in the form of V-not-V, as in (15d), as a result of contact with northern dialects:

69 a. I kho cai gua siu-khoo but-ninn?(Classical)
she KHO know I suffer Neg
'Does she know that I suffer?'(kho + VP-Neg)
b. I kam cai-ian gua te siu-khoo?
she KAM know I Prog suffer
'Does she know that I am suffering?'(kam + VP)

c. I cai-ian gua te siu-khoo bo?
she know I Prog suffer Neg
'Does she know that I am suffering?'(VP + Neg)
d. I cai-m cai gua te siu-khoo?
she know-not-know Prog suffer
'Does she know that I am suffering?'(V-not-V)

That is to say, kam in (15b) may result from the fusion of the adverb kho and the negative but-ninn in (15a), so there must be a word order change by which the negative particles are attracted to kho/chi, although the factors, as Yue notices, are still unclear.

Problems arise with Yue’s explanations. First, as discussed in the previous section, it is not appropriate to consider the kam-question as the Taiwanese V-not-V question, since kam can be used in every type of yes-no questions, but V-not-V questions can only be non-assertive. Second, as Yue herself points out, no empirical evidence is found to prove her claim that kam results from the fusion of kho/chi with other negative markers.

In this section, we have discussed the syntactic properties and the previous literature on kam. In fact, none of these studies aims to look at the kam construction. In Cheng (1977), kam is examined as part of the research on Taiwanese question particles, while in Huang (1991), the kam sentence only serves as evidence for the study of Mandarin V-not-V questions. In Yue (1991), kam is little discussed, since her main interest is in the origin of Taiwanese V-not-V forms. In the next section, based on the properties of kam, we will present our account of the kam construction within the Minimalist framework.

Toward A Solution

Our proposal will be presented in section 3.1. Our predictions regarding the island constraints and scope of kam will be made in sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.

The Present Proposal

As can be seen below, it seems that kam can be treated as a raising verb since it can precede a sentence idiom, as shown in (16):

70 I kam fa-ah thiann laif.
he KAM duck listen thunder
'Is he totally confused?'

Second, subject movement is optional in kam constructions, as in (17):

71 a. Kam Ci-ming e lui gun tau?
KAM Ci-ming will come to my house
'Will Ci-ming (or Chun-kiau) come to my house?'
b. Ci-ming kam e lui gun tau?
Ci-ming KAM will come to my house
'Will Ci-ming come to my house (or not)?'
However, there also arise some problems with this alternative view that kam is a raising verb. First, raising verbs can be used both in declarative and in interrogative clauses (cf. Shen, 1997), but kam only in the latter, as illustrated in (18):

(18) a. *Ci-ming kam e chua Chun-kiau.  
   Ci-ming KAM will marry Chun-kiau  
   'Ci-ming will marry Chun-kiau.'

b. Ci-ming kam e chua Chun-kiau?  
   Ci-ming KAM will marry Chun-kiau  
   'Will Ci-ming marry Chun-kiau?'

Second, raising verbs can occur in islands, but kam cannot, as shown in (19):

(19) a.* [1 kam chut-koh a] si tat-ke long cai e.  
   he KAM go-abroad Pt is everyone all know Pt  
   'Whether he went abroad was known by everyone.'

b.* I siong-sin [li kam co-kue çhatJ e iau-gian.  
   he believe you KAM kill-Asp man poss rumor  
   'He believed the rumor whether you were a thief.'

To sum up, though to claim that kam is a raising verb is problematic, we find that there is additional evidence which seem to suggest that this proposal is still possible, as exemplified below:

(20) a. Kam sann tiam a?  
   KAM three 0' clock Pt  
   'Is it three o'clock?'

b. Hi-liap lai-ah kam ho A-sam ka-kue?  
   that pear KAM Pass A-sam bit  
   'Was that pear bitten by A-sam?'

As (20) and (21) show, Taiwanese raising verbs, like their English counterparts, can take a non-referential NP (i.e., weather or time) as their subject, and they can be transformed into passive structures without changing their meaning. Hence, with this additional evidence, we would like to suggest that kam is a raising verb, but it differs from other raising verbs in that it can only be used in interrogative sentences. Inspired by Chen (1991)\(^{13}\), we assume that AGR\(_s\) has a [+Q] feature and kam must obligatorily move to the matrix AGR\(_s\) for feature checking before Spell Out. Following Shen (1997), the LF representation for a kam sentence like (22) within the Minimalist framework is (23):

In (23), kam has to move to the matrix AGR\(_s\) to check off the [+Q] feature before Spell Out according to the Economy Principle, and then the subject moves covertly from Spec of VP to the embedded Spec of AGR\(_s\)P at LF. But further movement of the subject i to the matrix Spec of AGR\(_s\)P seems unmotivated: since the embedded AGR\(_s\) contains a modal, the subject should be able to be case-marked in the embedded Spec of AGR\(_s\)P via Spec-Head Checking. Moreover, as shown below, when the subject appears after kam, the sentence is still grammatical:

(24) a. Kang-pe kam e lai?  
   Kang-uncle KAM he will come  
   'Will he (or you) come?'

b. *Kang-pe a, kam e lai?  
   Kang-uncle TP KAM he will come  
   'Uncle Kang, will he come?'

In (25b), the subject can be followed by a top-
ic marker \( a \), and so we would like to argue that it occupies a topic position. Hence, \( i \) in (23) does not move to the matrix Spec of AGR\(_ s \) \( P \), but to the Spec of Topic\( P \), to check off the \([+\text{definite}]/[+\text{generic}] \) feature in the Topic position by Procrastinate, as shown in (26), an LF representation of (22):

\[
\omega
\]

\[
\text{To summarize, the present study treats } \text{kam as a raising verb. At LF, it must obligatorily move into the matrix AGR\(_ s \) to check off the } [+Q] \text{ feature. Since Taiwanese is a topic-prominent language, subjects can move to the Spec of Topic\( P \) to check off the } [+\text{definite}]/[+\text{generic}] \text{ feature by Procrastinate.}
\]

**Predictions**

In this section, we will discuss our predictions concerning the island constraints on kam.

1. Sentential Subjects

   As discussed earlier in section 2, kam cannot occur inside a sentential subject, as shown in (27):

   \[
   \text{If kam u lai] kha ho.}\)
   \]
   \[
   \text{he KAM do come more good.}
   \]
   \[
   \text{"Whether he comes is better."}
   \]
   
   The LF representation of (27) is (28):

   \[
   \text{Since in the present analysis AGR\(_ s \) is assumed to contain a strong } [+Q] \text{ feature, kam then needs to undergo head movement to the matrix AGR\(_ s \) to check off the feature before Spell Out under the Economy Principle. However, since there is no closer governor intervening between the traces of kam and their antecedents, according to Rizzi, the ECP is satisfied in (28). Then, we will wrongly predict that (28) is well-formed. Apparently a modification of Rizzi’s Minimality seems necessary here. Inspired by Rivero (1991) and Haege- man (1994), we would like to suggest that Rizzi’s Minimality on X\(_ 0 \) movement should be classified into the following three types:}

   a. Condition 1
   \[
   \text{\([X^0 Z^0 Y^0]\): X\(_ 0 \) antecedent-governs Y\(_ 0 \) only if there is no Z\(_ 0 \) such that Z\(_ 0 \) is a typical potential antecedent-governor for Y\(_ 0 \). For example: short movement in English}
   \]

   b. Condition 2
   \[
   \text{\([X^0 Z^0 Y^0]\): X\(_ 0 \) antecedent-governs Y\(_ 0 \) although there is Z\(_ 0 \) such that Z\(_ 0 \) is a typical potential antecedent-governor for Y\(_ 0 \). For example: long head movement in Bulgarian}
   \]

   c. Condition 3
   \[
   \text{\([X^0 [\alpha Y]\]): X antecedent-govern Y only if there is no } \alpha \text{ such that } \alpha \text{ is a clause boundary, which is a CP. For example: kam movement in Taiwanese}
   \]

   Based on modified Relativized Minimality in (29), let’s take a look at the X\(_ 0 \)-chain in (28) again. When kam moves to the matrix AGR\(_ s \), kam is unable to antecedent-govern t\("\)j, because a CP is crossed, according to the modified condition on the X\(_ 0 \)-chain. Therefore, the ECP is violated in (28), resulting in its ungrammaticality.

2. Relative Clauses

   A kam sentence with a relative clause like (30) can be ruled out by Condition 3 as well, as can be seen in (31):

   \[
   \text{He likes those whether speak English.'}
   \]
Since the relative clause is a CP, which blocks kam movement according to the third condition on X\(^0\) movement, t"\(^1\) cannot be antecedent-governed by kam. Hence, the ECP is violated in (31) and sentence (30) is correctly predicted to be ungrammatical.

To sum up, the non-occurrence of kam in islands can be well accounted for by the present proposal that kam must move to AGR\(_s\) to get [+Q] at LF. In the next section, we will discuss the scope problem of the kam sentences.

**Scope Revisited**

In section 2, we have assumed that kam has the function of selecting its immediately following phrase as the information focus, as shown in (8) in section 2, here repeated as (32):

\[ (32) \text{A-sam kam sai chia khi Tai-pat e?} \]
\[ \text{'Does A-sam drive a car to Taipei?'} \]

In (32), the immediately following VP sai-chia 'drive a car' is selected as the focus. Why can kam have this function? To explain this, we assume that the matrix AGR\(_s\) should have a [+focus] feature\(^{2}\) as well as a [+Q] feature. The focused phrase is moved to the matrix Spec of AGR\(_s\)P to get properly interpreted after kam movement, as shown in (33), where for simplicity we skip the derivation of subject movement from the VP-internal position:

However, as we discussed in section 2, kam can select either part of the phrase or the whole phrase immediately following it as the focus. To explain this, we will follow Cole's et al. (1993) Feature Percolation Principles, as defined in (34):

\[ (34) \text{Feature Percolation Principles (FPP)} \]
\[ (a) \text{The features of the mother node and the features of the daughter nodes will be identical.} \]
\[ (b) \text{If the features of the daughter nodes conflict, the mother node will have the features of the head node.} \]

We assume that the [+focus] feature of the mother node can be further percolated down to its daughter nodes. Therefore, in (33), when the [+focus] feature is percolated down to the verb sai 'drive', then it will have a contrastive reading and get a reply as in (35):

\[ (35) M-si, l si ce chia khi e. \]
\[ 'No, he goes by bus.' \]

However, when the [+focus] feature is percolated from the mother node to the noun phrase chia 'car', it is the noun phrase which will have a contrastive reading and get a reply like (36):

\[ (36) M-si, l si sai tho-la-ku khi e. \]
\[ 'No, he drives a truck to Taipei.' \]

Moreover, when the [+focus] feature is not percolated, the mother node VP will keep this feature. Then the contrastive focus should be on the
whole phrase, and the reply to (32) is like (37):

(37) M-si, I si ce hui-ki khi e.
   no he is take plane to Pt
   'No, he goes by airplane.'

To sum up, after kam moves to the matrix AGRₜ to check off the [+focus] feature, [+focus] has the function of assigning a contrastive reading via Spec-head Checking to the focused phrase in the matrix Spec of AGRₜP. Hence, the word or the phrase immediately following kam can be focused.

In this section, we have presented our proposal for the kam construction in Taiwanese and have shown that the present analysis can account for the island effects and scope of kam. In the next section, we will re-examine the sentences in which kam occurs in sentential subjects and explain why some native speakers accept them.

The Remaining Problem of The Present Study

In section 2, we have claimed that there are island constraints on kam. However, some native speakers think sentence (38) is acceptable:

(38) [i kam u lai] kha ho?
   he KAM do come more good
   'Is it better that he come (or not come)??'

We would like to suggest that when (38) sounds acceptable, it is derived from (39):

(39) [AGRₜP/Kam/AGRₜ/i u lai] [vp kha ho]]
   KAM he do come more good
   (Lit.)'Is it better that he come (or not come)?'
   (Lit.)'Is it better (or worse) that he come?'

Structure (39) is ambiguous. It has two readings. In the first reading, i u lai is interpreted as the subject of the whole sentence. In the second reading, i is the subject of the whole sentence. The first reading can be obtained by moving the subject i u lai to Spec of TopicP, as can be seen in (40)

(40) TopicP
    CP
    i u lai Topic
    AGRₜP₁
   ‘he comes’
    NP AGRₜ
   pro AGRₜ VP
   [+Q]
   V
   i AGRₜ P2
   CP AGRₜ’
   ‘is better’

In (40), the subject NP within the sentential island is topicalized to Spec of the matrix TopicP. Such an XP movement is legitimate since there is no intervening barrier with respect to Rizzi’s (1990) Relativized Minimality, and Subjacency is obeyed. Therefore, with two different deep structures for (39), we can explain why sentence (38) is perfectly acceptable to some speakers but totally unacceptable to others.
Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that *kam* is a raising verb taking an AGR_sP as its complement. Moreover, under the assumption that AGR_s contains a [+Q] feature and a [+focus] feature, we have shown within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) that the present proposal can successfully explain why *kam* cannot occur in islands and account for the various contrastive readings of the *kam* sentences. Finally, different structures have been proposed to explain why some native speakers accept sentences with *kam* present in sentential subjects.

References


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Notes

1. The Taiwanese examples used in this paper are mainly agreed upon by native speakers in Kaohsiung, which is located in the southern part of Taiwan.

2. Cheng (1977) found Taiwanese exhibits two types of yes-no questions: the assertive and the non-assertive. An assertive sentence presupposes a statement or view already expressed or understood to be asserted, and it is usually characterized by the alternative question that uses si co­

3. According to Cheng (1977), Taiwanese sentence-final particles can be divided into question particles and non­

5. As pointed out by one of the reviewers, though kam cannot occur in islands, it cannot appear in sentential objects as in (i), either:

   (i) Wo can-iann i kam u lai kue?
      I know he KAM have come Q
      'I know whether he came before.'
      But the fact that kam cannot occur in a sentential object is not clear. As can be seen in (ii) and (iii), kam occurs in a sentential object, but the sentences are O.K. to us:

   (ii) Li can-iann i kam be lai kue jia bo?
      you know he KAM ever come Exp here Q
      'You know whether he came here before.'

   (iii) Yi xiu-bi-can-iann li kam u lai kue?
      he wonder you KAM have come Q
      'He wondered whether you came before.'

5. However, Dai (1990) claims that constituent questions, including both nominal questions, like shei 'who' in (i-ia), and non-nominal, such as zen-me 'how' in (i-ib), can oc­

6. However, Dai (1990) claims that constituent questions, including both nominal questions, like shei 'who' in (i-ia), and non-nominal, such as zen-me 'how' in (i-ib), can oc­

7. Wang & Lien (1994) claim that V-not-V sentences are always non-assertive, that is, they are neutral questions. However, kam­

8. Zhu (1985) treats V-not-V questions and ko + VP questions as the same type. He claims that the latter appears in many Chinese dialects, like ah + VP in the Sichou dialect. Since both belong to the same type, they cannot co­

9. In order to look for the evidence, Yue investigates several classical written works of colloquial Southern Min from different historical periods. These documents include 'The Litchi (Mirror) Tale', 'The Golden Flower Girl', 'Su Liu-niang', and 'The Schoolmate and Zither Book.'

10. Lin & Tang (1990) and Tsao (1990, 1993) claim that Mandarin keneng 'likely' is a raising verb. Its counterpart in Taiwanese is kho-ling 'likely', which can also take a sentence idiom as its complement and precede a subject. Tsao (1994) considers it an epistemic modal.

11. What needs mentioning here is that the position of kho­

12. This can be illustrated by the raising verb 'likely' and the non-raising verb 'eager', as shown in (ia-b) and (iia-b):

   (i) a. The teacher was likely to punish the students.
      b. The students were likely to be punished by the teacher.

   (ii) a. The teacher was eager to punish the students.
      b. The students were eager to be punished by the teacher.

13. Chen (1991) assumes that Infl contains a [+Q] feature. In the Minimalist Program, we assume that the [+Q] feature is a head feature associated with AGRs.

14. According to Chen (1994), Mandarin has three topic posi­
tions, i.e., the IP adjoined position, Spec of CP, and Spec of TopicP. Chomsky (1986) also assumes that topicalization is an XP movement to the IP adjoined position. Hence, in the spirit of Chomsky (1986) and Chen (1994), we assume that Taiwanese has a TopicP (a position very similar to the IP adjoined position in the pre-minimalist framework), being the complement of C.

15. In English, this position can be filled by a dummy subject like it or there; however since Chinese is topic-prominent (Tsao 1977) and it has no expletives (Li 1990), we assume that this position is filled with pro here. Hence, after the pronoun i moves from Spec of VP to Spec of AGRsP2, it cannot move into Spec of AGRsP1 and then to Spec of TopicP.

16. To some speakers, this sentence may be acceptable. We will discuss this example further later.

17. As Rivero (1991) points out, Relativized Minimality does not apply to head movement in Bulgarian. Long head movement is legitimate in Bulgarian while English has only short movement.

18. To explain the asymmetry between English and Bulgarian with respect to Rizzi's Relativized Minimality, Haegeman (1994) suggests that X^0 movement should be classified into two types.

19. On the other hand, Taiwanese also has the first type of X^0 movement, as shown in (i):

(i) a. I kho-ling e lai.  
   he likely will come  
   '(He is likely to come.)

b. *I e kho-ling lai.  
   he will likely come

Schematically (i) is like (ii):

(ii) c. *I e kho-ling t lai.  
   X Z Y

In (ii), since antecedent government of Y by X is blocked by Z, it becomes ungrammatical. However, since the first type of condition only applies to syntactic movement, it will not apply to kam movement, which takes place at LF.

20. We skip the discussions about complex NPs and wh-islands here. For more discussion, see Shen (1997)

21. Following Ouhalla (1992), we assume that [+focus] is a specifier feature of AGRs and it has the contrastive function. That is, the focused phrase will have contrastive discourse continuation. For example, in (32), since the focused phrase is the VP sai chia 'drive a car', a contrastive discourse continuation, as in (i), is possible:

(i) A-sam kam sai-chia khi Tai-pat e, (la-si ce A-sam KAM drive-car to Taipei Pt or take hui-ki khi e)? plane to Pt  
   'Does A-sam drive a car (or take a plane) to Taipei?'

22. Here we also skip the derivation of subject movement from the VP-internal position.

23. As one of the reviewers pointed out, the CP node dominated by AGRsP2 in (41) is a potential barrier for t'' to move to Spec of TopicP in the present framework. But crucially since i movement here is an XP movement, rather than an X^0 movement, we may follow Lasnik and Saito's (1984) assumption that an argument trace can be deleted at LF, as long as its original trace is properly governed. This explanation can indeed apply to (41), since t_i is already antecedent governed; hence t''i, an intermediate trace, can be deleted at LF. (28) is, however, different from (41), since kam movement in (28) is an X^0 movement, not an XP movement. This certainly raises an interesting question as to how the proposed Condition 3 operates in Taiwanese and Mandarin under Rizzi's Relativized Minimality. Further investigation is necessary to look at more construction types in order to make the present proposal more convincing. But what is certain is that languages may not differ with respect to certain principles, but possibly with respect to the nature of the functional categories and lexical categories (cf. Fukui, 1995). That is to say, Rizzi's original proposal may be carefully reexamined to see if there are languages like Taiwanese where CP, a functional category, may have a dual status. This seems to be possible, since the nature of AGR varies cross-linguistically. Hence, AGRP may play a different role in different languages.
從極小理論看台語的「敢」字句

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本文旨在應用杭士基教授 (Chomsky, 1995) 一九九五年的極小理論 (Minimalist Program) 分析台語的「敢」字句。文中提議台語的「敢」可視為一提升動詞 (raising verb)，後接呼應詞組 (AGRsP)；此呼應詞在台語包含三個強烈屬性 (strong features)：一是疑問記號 ([+Q])，另一是焦點記號 ([+focus])。因此二屬性之故，台語的「敢」須在邏輯層 (LF) 移至呼應詞之位置，此移位過程證實台語「敢」字移位屬第三型主要語移位 (X₀ movement) 與其它語言不同，移位不可超過一大句子 (CP)。此移位理論除能解釋台語的「敢」字句中的孤島效應 (island effects) 外，對台語的「敢」字句中的焦點訊息亦能提出適當之解說。

關鍵詞：「敢」字句、台語、極小理論、管轄約束理論