Wh-Questions in Malay: An Explanation for the Restriction of Extraction to Subject Position with *Yang*

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Abstract

In *wh*-question formation in standard Malay, only extraction from the subject position is possible. This is in contrast to the English language, where extraction is possible from positions lower than the subject position. In fact, in Malay, any argument in a position lower than that of a subject has to be passivised to become a derived subject before extraction can occur. When an extraction occurs, from an embedded clause in question formation, the verb in the matrix clause has to be passivised as well. In this paper, an explanation is offered to account for this phenomenon in standard Malay. The framework adopted to explain the phenomenon is based on the principles and parameters approach (see Chomsky, 1981a, 1981b, 1986a, 1991), and the Minimalist Programme (See Chomsky, 1995). In particular, Rizzi's theory of relativised minimality and its conjunctive notion of the Empty Category Principle (ECP) (1990) are referred to. Additionally, Shlonsky's treatment of Palestinian Arabic relativisation (1992) is extended to Malay *wh*-question formation. The motivation for such an exercise is that this will have implications in terms of contribution to the body of literature in Malay linguistics, particularly from the generative perspective.

Introduction

It has been observed that in the formation of *wh*-questions in standard Malay, only extraction from the subject position is possible. Extraction

is not possible from any position lower than the subject and a direct object would have to be passived before it can be extracted. Additionally, note that the word *yang* is involved the formation of the Malay questions. Traditionally this word is described as a relative connector (e.g. Nik Safiah Karim et al., 2008: 252). However, following Hung (1987) and Cole et al. (1997), the word relative *yang* is reanalysed as an overt complementizer (C) in standard Malay. This is in contrast to the English language where extraction is possible from positions lower than the subject position. Unlike standard Malay, no overt complementizer is involved. An explanation will be offered in this paper for the restriction of extraction to subject position with *yang*. This is the objective of the paper. Such an explanation is interesting in itself as it will contribute to the body of linguistic literature with regard to *wh*-question in Malay, particularly from the generative perspective.

To achieve the objective of this paper, the formation of *wh*-questions in Malay is first described. Then the distribution of the complementizers in the Malay language is discussed. Finally, an explanation is provided for the restriction of extraction from the subject position with the complementizer *yang* in standard Malay *wh*-questions.

Malay *wh*-questions

Questions take two forms in Malay. One is when the question word remains in-situ and in this case, no movement is involved. This is shown in examples (2) and (3).

1. *Mary   membeli   sebuah   buku.*
    Mary   ACT(IVE)+buy   CL(ASSIFIER) book
    Mary bought a book.
2. *Siapa membeli sebuah buku?*
    Who ACT+buy   CL   book
    Who bought a book?
3. *Mary membeli   apa?*
    Mary ACT+buy   what
    What did Mary buy?

The other type of question is when the question word is moved or extracted.

4. *Siapakah¹ yang membeli   buku itu?*
    Who+Q   C   ACT+buy   book the
    Who bought the book?

In standard Malay, the subject can be extracted or questioned directly when questions are formed with the complementizer *yang*. This is illustrated in (4) above and (5) below.

5. *Apakah yang menyebabkan kebakaran itu?*
    What+Q C   ACT+cause   fire   the
    What caused the fire?

In this case, there is a relation or dependency between *siapakah/apakah* and the subject in (4) and (5). Speakers interpret these as being questions about the subject of the action.

But it is not possible to directly form a question with the direct object in standard Malay. The following example illustrates this point.

6a. **Apakah yang Mary   membeli?*
    What+Q C   Mary   ACT+buy
    What did Mary buy?

The verb must be passivised and the direct object moved to the subject position before question formation can take place. Thus from (1) and (7a), we get (6b) and (7b) when we passivise the direct object, and (6c) and (7c) when the derived subjects of these sentences are questioned.

6b. *Buku itu dibeli   (oleh)² Mary.*
    Book the PASS+buy (by)   Mary
    The book was bought by Mary.

6c. *Apakah   yang dibeli (oleh)   Mary?*
     What+Q   C   PASS+buy (by) Mary
     What did Mary buy?/What was bought by Mary?

7a. *John   menumbuk   Mary*.
     John ACT+punch   Mary
     John punched Mary.

7b. *Mary   ditumbuk   (oleh) John*.
     Mary   PASS+punch (by)   John
     Mary was punched by John.

7c. *Siapakah yang ditumbuk   (oleh) John?*
     Who+Q   C   PASS+punch (by) John
     Who did John punch?/Who was punched by John?

     Subjects in embedded or subordinate clauses can be questioned, provided the matrix verb is passivised. However, in this instance, an additional complementizer is involved. A typical sentence with a complement clause in standard Malay is the following:

8a. *Mary mengatakan bahawa John   akan   membeli buku itu.*
     Mary ACT+say   C   John ASP(ECT) ACT+buy book the
     Mary said that John will buy the book.

     When the subject of the complement clause is questioned, the subordinating complementizer *bahawa* disappears and is replaced by the Malay null complementizer [C Ø] and the result is the following:

8b. *Siapakah yang dikatakan (oleh) Mary [Ø/*bahawa akan membeli buku itu*]?*
     Who+Q   C   PASS+say (by) Mary   C   ASP ACT+buy book the
     Who was it said by Mary that will buy the book?/ Who did Mary say will buy the book?

     The direct object in an embedded or subordinate clause cannot be questioned directly even when the matrix verb is passivised[3].

9a. **Apakah yang dikatakan (oleh) Mary John akan membeli?*
What+Q C   PASS+say (by) Mary John ASP ACT+buy
What did Mary say John will buy?

9b. **Siapakah yang didakwa   (oleh) Tom John telah menumbuk?*
Who+Q   C   PASS+claim (by) Tom John ASP ACT+punch
Who was it claimed by Tom that John punched?

However, upon passivisation of the embedded verb, the construction is good. Again the subordinating complementizer *bahawa* disappears and is replaced by the Malay null C [C Ø] and the result is the following:

10a. *Apakah yang dikatakan (oleh) Mary [Ø/*bahawa akan dibeli (oleh) John]?*
What+Q C   PASS+say (by)   Mary C ASP PASS+buy (by) John
What did Mary say John will buy?

10b. *Siapakah yang didakwa (oleh) Tom [Ø/*bahawa telah ditumbuk (oleh) John]?*
Who+Q   C   PASS+claim (by) Tom C   SP PASS+punch (by) John
Who was it claimed by Tom that was punched by John?

Here, speakers interpret (10a - b) as being questions about the object of the action.

Finally, the prepositional object of a sentence can only be questioned indirectly after the operations of dative movement and passivisation have been applied.

11a. *Mary akan membeli   sebuah buku untuk gadis itu.*
Mary ASP ACT+buy   CL   book for   girl the
Mary will buy a book for the girl.

11b. *Mary akan membelikan[4]   gadis itu sebuah buku.*
Mary ASP ACT+buy+BEN girl the   CL   book
Mary will buy the girl a book.

11c. *Gadis itu akan   dibelikan   sebuah buku oleh Mary.*
     Girl   the ASP PASS+buy+BEN CL book by Mary
     Mary will buy the girl a book.

11d. *Siapakah yang akan   dibelikan   sebuah buku oleh[5] Mary?*
     Who+Q   C   ASP PASS+buy+BEN CL   book by Mary
     For whom will Mary buy a book?

Additionally extraction of an embedded prepositional object is also not allowed in standard Malay.

12a. **Siapakah yang mereka mengatakan Joe telah membincangkan cerita itu*
     Who+Q   C   they   ACT+say   Joe ASP ACT+discuss
     story the
     dengan?
     with
     Who(m) did they say Joe discussed the story with?

This construction is not good in Malay for two reasons. Firstly, any extraction below the subject position is unacceptable. Secondly, Malay does not allow preposition stranding. Thus the grammatical equivalent of (12a) is (12b).

12b. *Siapakah yang dikatakan (oleh) mereka telah membincangkan cerita itu dengan*
     Who+Q that PASS+say (by)   them   ASP ACT+discuss
     story the with
     Joe?
     Joe
     Who was it said by them discussed the story with Joe?/
     Who(m) did they say discussed the story with Joe?

The next section describes the distribution of the complementizers in the Malay language.

Distribution of the complementizers *yang, bahawa* and [$_C$ Ø]

In this paper, it is assumed that there are three complementizers in Malay which will be directly relevant to a discussion of *wh*-question formation in standard Malay. They are:

a.   *yang*
b.   *bahawa*
c.   an empty complementizer [$_C$ Ø]

   Yang is obligatory where arguments are relativised, or fronted in questions. *Bahawa* is the regular subordinating complementizer in non-interrogative, non-relative embedded clauses. The null complementizer [$_C$ Ø] obligatorily heads embedded clauses from which arguments have been extracted. All three will be discussed although we will focus on *yang* as it is involved in both interrogative and relative clause formation.

   In this study, we propose that *yang* is a complementizer in Malay (following Cole et al., 1997; Hung, 1987). Since *yang* which we will assume is the complementizer involved in both relativisation (Nik Safiah Karim et al., 2008: 252, 505) and question formation (Nik Safiah Karim et al., 2008: 446-447)[6], it is thus specified as [±predicative]. We will assume that there is *wh*-movement in the derivation of *wh*-argument questions (following Saddy, 1991; Cole and Hermon, 1995; Cole et al., 1997)[7] and pace (Sie, 1988; Martohardjono, 1993[8]; Cheng, 1997[9] & Voskuil, 1996[10]). Although *yang* can alternate with [$_C$ Ø] in some dialects[11], only interrogatives with *yang* are considered grammatical in standard Malay.

   The overt *wh*-word/phrase is adjoined to the question marker -*kah*. In standard Malay, -*kah* is the surface or overt morphological marker of interrogation in the specifier position and agreement occurs between this marker and *yang*. In other words, it is the overt reflex of agreement between *yang* and the *wh*-phrase. It is therefore a question inflection with a [+*wh*] feature.

Bahawa is a non-predicative [-pred] subordinating complementizer (or a 'complement word' in Nik Safiah Karim et al.'s terms (1993: 241)). It is never used in question formation as shown in (13):

13. *Siapakah [$_C$ yang] membeli buku?*
           *[$_C$*bahawa]¹²*
     Who+Q   C   ACT+buy book

Its function is to introduce embedded declarative and epistemic clauses. In these cases *bahawa* is obligatory, except when the following subject is extracted. Construction (14) is a standard Malay sentence where *bahawa* is obligatory while (15) and (16) are standard Malay constructions in which *bahawa* is ungrammatical, and is replaced by a null [$_C$ Ø].

14. *Dia   mengatakan [$_{CP}$ bahawa [$_{IP}$ Ali telah berjumpa*
     dengan John]].
     3P(erson)S(ingular) ACT+say   C   Ali ASP ACT+meet
     with John
     S/he said that Ali met John.

15. *Siapakah yang dikatakannya¹³ /olehnya [$_{CP}$ t' [$_C$ Ø] *bahawa [$_{IP}$ t*
     telah
     Who+Q   C   PASS+say+3PS/by+3PS   C
     ASP
     berjumpa dengan John]]?
     ACT+meet with   John
     Who(m) did s/he say met John?

16. *Siapakah yang dikatakannya/olehnya [$_{CP}$ t' [$_C$ Ø]*bahawa [$_{IP}$*
     dijumpai
     Who+Q   C   PASS+say+3PS/by+3PS   C
     PASS+meet
     (oleh) Ali t]]
     (by) Ali
     Who did s/he say was met by Ali?

Bahawa is obligatory, however, when it introduces embedded questions where the question word remains in situ.

17. *Polis mendakwa bahawa penceroboh itu telah mencuri apa*?
    Police ACT+allege that   intruder   the ASP ACT+steal what
    What did the police allege the intruder stole?

It appears, then, that *bahawa* can neither govern a subject trace, nor agree with a trace in its specifier. When a subject is extracted across *bahawa* the sentence is ungrammatical ((15) and (16) above). In such cases the null complementizer [$_C$ Ø] makes subject extraction grammatical.

Explaining the restriction of extraction to subject position with *yang*

At this point, we need to consider why the complementizer *yang* might allow movement only from a (derived) subject position. In order to explain this restricted kind of movement in standard Malay questions, an account of Palestinian Arabic (henceforth PA) by Shlonsky is extended to the Malay case. The behaviour of Malay *wh*-questions involving the complementizer *yang* is very similar to the behaviour of relative clauses involving the complementizer   *ʔilli* in PA described in a study by Shlonsky (1992). Shlonsky notes that in relative clauses in PA, formed with the introducing complementizer   *ʔilli*, only the subject position gives rise to movement. In all other positions, resumptive pronouns are bound directly by the head of the relative clause that is there is no movement.

According to Shlonsky (1992), there are two complementizers in PA. They are   *ʔinno* and   *ʔilli*. The former is the regular subordinating complementizer while the latter is the predicative complementizer.   *ʔilli* shows up in relative clauses, clefts and interrogative clauses, and it never heads subordinate clauses. These PA complementizers have certain properties that severely restrict syntactic *wh*-movement. Shlonsky follows the feature system developed by Rizzi (1990) for classifying

complementizers. Thus *ʔinno* is the [-predicative] complementizer, and   *ʔilli* the [+predicative] complementizer.

Shlonsky also contends that in PA   *ʔilli* selects an argument (A) specifier (unlike *tha*t in English, which selects a non-argument (A') specifier).   This means that in PA, while an immediately following subject can move from [Spec, IP][14] to [Spec, CP][15], any other moved argument (object, prepositional object, embedded subject, embedded object and embedded prepositional object) will cross the subject and give rise to a Minimality Condition violation, traditionally termed the Specified Subject Condition (SSC) (Chomsky, 1973)[16] which is made relevant by a lexical property of the complementizer   *ʔ illi*. It is also a minimality requirement that traces be bound by the closest potential governor.

Shlonsky argues that the obligatory gap in the highest subject position in a PA relative clause is a direct consequence of economy guidelines[17]. When movement is ruled out a resumptive pronoun occurs. This, according to him, is a last resort strategy. In fact, he claims that the full distributional paradigm of resumptive pronouns in PA can be assimilated to the last resort strategy.

We now need to consider why complementizers like   *ʔ illi* select arguments instead of non-arguments as their specifier. Shlonsky suggests that the standard theory offers two views of agreement: structural agreement, where a head and its specifier are simply coindexed; and 'feature-sharing', where heads are 'endowed with a feature grid consisting of slots that must be ... saturated by coindexation' (1992: 456). In the latter case, because heads 'take on' the feature specification of their specifiers, where these specifiers have been extracted from argument positions, the heads inherit their argument status. Shlonsky notes that it is on analogy with the I(nflection) system, that the Specifier of such an agreeing complementizer is determined as an A-position.

In order to understand what this last resort strategy entails, it is necessary to see how the resumptive pronoun is distributed in PA relative clauses (examples are from Shlonsky, 1992). A resumptive

pronoun is impossible and a gap is obligatory in the highest subject position in the relative clause (movement from subject position):

18. I-bint   ʔilli (*hiy) raayha   ʕ al beet
     the-girl that (she) going   to house
     'the girl that is going home'

Resumptive pronouns are obligatory in direct object, embedded subject and embedded object positions:

19   I-bint   ʔilli   šufti-*(*ha*)
     the girl that (you.F) saw-(*her*)
     'that girl that you saw'

20. I-bint   ʔilli   fakkarti ʔinno *(*hiy*) raayha   ʕalbeet
     the-girl that (you.F) thought that   *(*she*) going to the house
     'the girl that you thought that (she) is going home'

21. I-bint   ʔilli   fakkarti ʔinno Mona habbat-*(*ha*)
     the-girl that (you.F) thought that   Mona loved-(*her*)
     'the girl that you thought that Mona loved'

Thus PA allows a resumptive pronoun in direct object, embedded subject and embedded object positions while a gap is obligatory in the highest subject position[18]. Wherever a resumptive pronoun is obligatory, a gap is impossible: the two never overlap in their distribution in PA.

In this paper, it is claimed that a strategy similar to that used in PA is employed in question formation in standard Malay but instead of a resumptive pronoun, passivization of the direct object is invoked. It is assumed that the complementizers *yang* and *bahawa* are distinguished from the English null C $[_C \emptyset]$ and *that* because they select argument specifiers. Shlonsky's 'feature-sharing' account of the determination of [Spec, CP] as an A position will be conceptualised by assuming that PA and Malay complementizers have a categorial feature [+D], which means that an argument DP must move into [Spec, CP]. This would be just like the strong [D] feature of I which forces subjects to move from VP to [Spec, IP] (see Chomsky, 1995: 196)[19].

If *yang* selects an argument specifier, no non-argument *wh*-phrases should co-occur with *yang*. This appears to be the case as adjunct *wh*-words like *mengapa* 'why' cannot co-occur with *yang*.

22.   *Mengapa (*yang) John menjerit   tadi*?
      Why   C   John ACT+shout just now?
      Why did John shout just now?

Since *yang* selects argument specifiers, the consequence is that *yang* questions cannot be formed from non-subject positions. As a result, standard Malay turns these non-subject arguments into derived subjects via passivisation (see for example, (6c) and (7c)). Question formation then takes place from the (derived) subject position.

Additionally, where extraction takes place from embedded clauses, the complementizer *bahawa* which obligatorily introduces declarative embedded clauses cannot remain and be grammatical. Instead, a null complementizer is required. Compare the grammatical (23b) with the ungrammatical (23c):

23a. *Dia mengatakan   [$_{CP}$ [$_C$ bahawa   [$_{IP}$ Ali menumbuk John]]]*.[20]
      3PS ACT+say   C   Ali punch   John
      3PS says/said that Ali punched John.

23b. *Siapakahi yang dikatakannya/oleh dia [$_{CP}$ t$_i$ [$_C$ +Agr Ø [t$_i$ menumbuk John]]]*?
      Who+Q   C   PASS+say+3PS/by+3PS   C   punch John
      Who did s/he say punched John?

23c. **Siapakahi yang dikatakannya/oleh dia [$_{CP}$ t$_i$ [C bahawa [t$_i$ menumbuk John]]]*?
      Who+Q   C   PASS+say+3PS/by+3PS   C
      punch   John
      Who did s/he say punched John?

Following the arguments of Rizzi (1990)[21] that traces must be both properly head-governed and antecedent-governed or coindexed

with a referential expression (an antecedent) (Rizzi, 1990: 85 – 92), this suggests that *bahawa*, like complementizers in the default case, is not a potential head governor. By contrast, the null complementizer [C Ø] is such a governor and therefore must have an Agreement [+Agr] feature which licenses a following subject trace[22].

We therefore conclude that where *bahawa* has a specifier, that specifier must be an argument. However, if *siapakah* in (23c) is an argument, and the chain it forms with its traces is an argument chain, why is (23c) not grammatical?

Rizzi (1990) has claimed that anaphoric elements are generally incompatible with agreement. The trace left by an argument is standardly assumed to be an anaphor. Thus the trace in the specifier of *bahawa* in (23c) cannot agree with *bahawa*, and its [D] feature cannot be satisfied. It is argued that when *bahawa* is deleted, the whole CP layer of the embedded clause is deleted, turning the sentence into a kind of raising construction where the subject trace in the embedded clause is directly head-governed by the higher verb (*dikatakan* in (23b)).

In sum, it is noted that in *wh*-argument question formation in standard Malay, *wh*-phrases move to the specifier position of an obligatory interrogative complementizer *yang*. The specifier, being an argument position, does not allow extraction from positions other than the highest subject position as this gives rise to a universal constraint. Standard Malay resorts to passivisation to form questions on other argument positions. In the case of extraction from embedded clauses, deletion of the normally obligatory declarative complementizer *bahawa* is required to avoid a violation of the Empty Category Principle (ECP)[23].

Conclusion

The analysis in the paper has shown that Malay complementizers have features that seem to be different from that of the English language. The features of the interrogative and declarative complementizers in standard Malay can be summarised as follows:

Interrogative

Malay: *yang*   [C, -pred, +wh, +Agr, +D]

Declarative

Malay: *bahawa*   [C, -pred, -wh, +Agr, +D]
                 Ø   [C, -pred, +Agr]

      Both the interrogative *yang* and declarative *bahawa* complementizers are specified with the D feature. The D feature of Malay *yang* requires that *wh*-phrases be arguments. In addition to the two overt complementizers, Malay also has a null complementizer which lacks both the wh, and the D features. Based on the analysis, we accounted for the way the relevant complementizers select an Argument versus a non-Argument as specifiers. We also showed how this choice of Argument specifier affects the way *wh*-questions are formed in Malay. The analysis in the paper contributes to the gap in the body of literature in generative Malay linguistics, particularly with regard to *wh*-question formation. Additionally, the findings will have implications for research in the process of acquisition of English as a second language (L2) by first language (L1) Malay speakers, with regard to *wh*-questions in this case. In other words, such knowledge can help us to explain the influence the L1 of standard Malay speakers has on the way they acquire English as an L2.

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Note:

[1]   The suffix -kah in these questions is a question marker.

[2]   The preposition oleh 'by' is optional in standard Malay.

[3]   Although Chung (1976a, 1976b) and Keenan and Comrie (1977) claim that it is possible to directly extract the direct object in relative clause formation in Malay and Indonesian (and by extension, in wh-question formation), Yeoh (1979) and my informants judge such constructions as unacceptable in standard Malay. In fact, Comrie (1981:150) later altered this stand and claimed that Malay is an example of a number of Austronesian languages that does not allow direct object relativisation.

[4]   –*kan* in this case is a Benefactive affix which attaches to the verb in the double object construction.

[5]   In this case, oleh 'by' is obligatory.

[6]   This is in addition to samples of standard Malay questions and relative clauses supplied by my informants.

[7]   Saddy (1991) claims that wh-fronting in Indonesian is an instance of focussing.

[8]   Both Sie and Martohardjono worked on Indonesian.

[9]   Cheng (1997: chapter 3) argues that questions with fronted wh-phrases in optional fronting languages, including Indonesian, do not instantiate overt wh-movement but are similar to cleft and topicalization structures.

[10]   Voskuil (1996) did a comparative study of verb taxonomy in Indonesian, Tagalog and Dutch within the Optimality Theory framework.

[11]   In some non-standard dialects, for example Colloquial Singapore Malay (Cole et al., 1997), wh-questions can be formed without yang. Cole et al. (1997) claim that in the former, only the wh element moves in a long distance fashion, while in the latter, the wh word is local, and the element which undergoes movement is the null operator internal to the headless relative clause.

[12]   The following questions are possible in Singapore Malay (Cole et al. 1997):

   ai.   *Siapa kau nampak?*
           Who you see
           Who did you see?

   aii.   *Apa Ali beli?*
           What Ali buy
           What did Ali buy?

       It is claimed here that these are cases of subjective passives involving a null interrogative C, a dialectal variant of yang. The structures of (ai) and (aii) are as follows:

   bi. $[_{CP}$ *Siapa* $[_C$ Ø$]$ $[_{IP}$ t *kau-nampak* $]]$?

   bii. $[_{CP}$ *Apa* $[_C$ Ø$]$ $[_{IP}$ t *Ali-beli* $]]$?

       Note here the absence of -kah in the specifier of CP. This dialect appears to have a null interrogative C which agrees directly with the wh-phrase in its specifier and licenses a subject trace – just like English.

[13]   *-nya* is the third person singular accusative in standard Malay. Gender is not specified.

[14]   Spec- Specifier; IP- Inflection Phrase

[15]   CP- Complementizer Phrase

[16]   This condition states that no rule can involve X, Y in the structure ...X... $[α$ ... Z ... WYV ...$]$ ... where Z is the specified subject of WYV in $α$ (cited in Culicover, 1997:63).

[17]   An identical phenomenon is found in Irish - the highest subject restriction (McCloskey, 1990).

[18]   Resumptive pronouns are also obligatory in oblique and object-of-noun positions in PA as shown in the following examples:

   a.   I-bint   ʔilli   fakkarti fii-*(ha)
          the-girl that (you.F) thought on-(her)
          'the girl that you thought about'

   b.   I-bint   ʔilli   šufti beet-*(ha)
          the girl that (you.F) saw house-(her)
          'the girl whose house you saw'

[19]   See also footnote 34 on p. 215 of the same.

[20]   In cases like (23a) we assume that bahawa's [D] feature is checked by the higher verb mengatakan. In the Minimalist Program such checking would be the result of the merge operation, rather than move/attract.

[21]   Rizzi (1990) proposes the theory of relativized minimality, which characterizes the locality conditions on government as well as movement relations. This version of minimality sees each type of movement as being associated with its own kind of minimality condition and is opaque to others. Relativized Minimality is thus defined as:

X   α-governs Y only if there is no Z such that:

i.   Z is a typical potential α-governor for Y;

ii.   Z c-commands Y and does not c-command X, (Rizzi, 1990:7).

From the Minimalist Program perspective, this condition is now subsumed under the Shortest Movement Principle or the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) (Chomsky, 1995: 181 -183; 294 – 297; Kitahara, 1997).

[22]   In Singapore Malay, Cole et al. (1997) also claim that yang can be used to introduce complement clauses:

John memberitahu saya tadi   yang Mary sakit semalam.
John   ACT+tell   me just now   C   Mary sick yesterday.
John told me earlier that Mary was sick yesterday.

However, according to my informants, this construction is not a standard Malay construction.

[23]   Related to the relativised minimality condition is the conjunctive notion of the Empty Category Principle (ECP). This Principle states that

A non-pronominal empty category must be:

i.   properly head-governed;

ii.   theta-governed or antecedent-governed (Rizzi, 1990: 74).

Other versions of the ECP have been posited, for example, in Haegeman and Guéron version (1999: 398), the ECP is stated as: Non-overt elements must be identified.