

THE INTERROGATIVE IN THE S.A. BANTU LANGUAGES

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1. Aim

The article will give an overview of questions in the S.A. Bantu languages with specific attention to the syntax and semantics of these sentences, i.e. the structure and meaning of interrogative clauses. For this purpose the following issues will be dealt with:

- The difference between statements and questions with focus on the features of questions;
- The difference between yes-no questions and specifical questions with interrogative words, as well as between direct and indirect questions;
- Interrogative words and their functional positions in sentences;
- Clefted sentences with questions.

2. Yes-No questions

Questions of this type usually prefer an answer which is either **yes** or **no**:

Sesotho:	Ba-fihl-ile? (They-arrive-perf: did they arrive?)
Yes:	E, ba-fihl-ile (Yes, they have arrived)
No:	Tjhe, ha-ba-a-fihl-a (No, neg-they-neg-arrive-fv: No, they didn't arrive)

2.1 Semantics

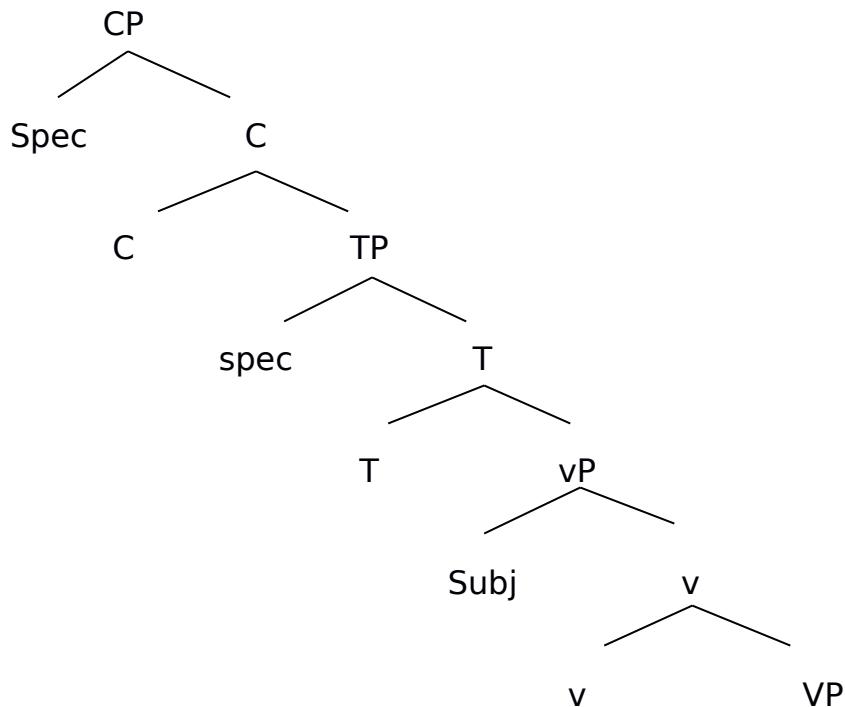
The term interrogative refers to sentences which are used for asking questions in which information is requested. Such questions may appear with interrogative words to give rise to specifical questions.

See also LDCE (1987:850-851) for some ways in which questions can be used: when complaining or criticizing, introducing people, inviting, offering, ordering, asking permission, requesting, sympathizing, threatening or suggesting.

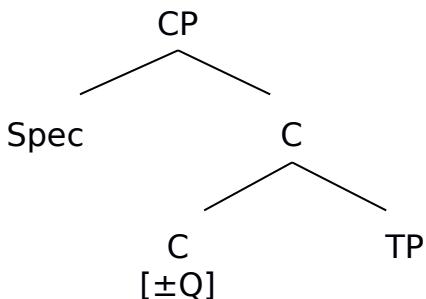
The context in which a question is used is frequently relevant for its interpretation (p. 850).

2.2 Structure

Within the Minimalist Program for syntax (see Chomsky 1995) a structure with two verbal shells has been developed, based on the work of Lees (1988). These shells are indicated with heads [vP] and [VP]:



The complementizer node (C) above bears the Q marker or trigger which may be represented by [+Q] for questions and [-Q] for declarative sentences:



[+Q]: IsiXhosa: Abantwana ba-fik-ile?
 (2children 2they-arrive-perf: did the children arrive?)

[-Q]: IsiXhosa: Abantwana ba-fik-ile
 (2children 2they-arrive-perf: the children have arrived)

There are various arguments which may be invoked to establish the status of the Q-node above. See i.a. Du Plessis (1978) and Stockwell a.o. (1973:603) for certain sentence adverbials, negative proverbs and other proverbs which may not appear in interrogative clauses in English.

In the case of the Bantu languages these considerations are also relevant but focus will be on the following arguments for the establishment of the Q-node.

2.3 Intonation

There seems to be general agreement in the literature of these Bantu languages about the role of tone in questions. Louw (1968:88) gives the following considerations:

"The tone sequences may stay basically the same in statements and questions, but in the last, the relative key in which all these tones are spoken is raised very high and the long length which occurs as boundary marker in the statements, becomes much shorter and if the tone on this shortened syllable is high, it becomes much higher and if it is low it remains rather low.:

These sentiments are also expressed by Ziervogel a.o. (1976:197). An alternative view is given by Poulos (1990:451).

2.4 Interrogative markers

The interrogative markers are not compulsory in questions, but the following markers may appear (questions have no change in word order):

IsiXhosa: [...na] at end of clause or after a verb for emphasis:

U-ya-yi-bon-a [na] le ngxaki si-ku-yo?
(you-pres-it-see-fv na this problem we-loc-it: do you see the problem in which we are?)

U-za ku-ya edolophini [na]?
(you-fut to-go to-town na: will you be going to town?)

Xitsonga: [na], [ke] at end of clause; [xana] at beginning and/or end of clause:

U-ta-win-a khaphu [ke]?
(you-fut-win-fv cup ke: will you win the cup?)

Va-fik-ile [xana]?
(they-arrive-perf xana: did they arrive?)

U-lungh-is-ile movha [na]?
(You-repair-perf car na: did you repair the car?)

Tshivenda: [na] at beginning and/or end of clause: [kani] at beginning or end of clause:

[Na] a-si vhone vhane vha mavu aya [kani]?
(Na neg-be he owner of soil this kani: is he not the owner of this soil?)

[Na] inwi a-ni-vha-vhon-i-who [na]?
(na you neg-you-them-see-neg na: do you not see them?)

[Kani] o-d-a ngeno?
 (kani he-perf-come-fv here: did he come here?)

Sesotho: [na] at beginning and/or end; [ana] at beginning of clause:

[Ana] o-fihl-ile?
 (ana he-arrive-perf: did he arrive?)

[Na] taba eo o-e-ents-e ka maikutlo?
 (na matter that he-it-do-perf with thought: did he do that matter thoughtfully?)

2.5 Polite requests

Polite requests can be made with the following:

IsiXhosa:	[ingaba] or [ngaba]: Ingaba u-mk-ile (maybe he has left)
Sesotho:	[ekaba] Ekaba o-tloh-ile (maybe he has left)
Itsongwa:	[kumbe]: Kume u-suk-ile (Maybe he has left)
Tshivenda:	[khamusi]: (Khamusi vh-o- ḫuwa (maybe he has left)

2.6 Negative focus

IsiXhosa:	U-ya-ya edolophini [okanye hayi]? (you-pres-go to-town or not?)
Sesotho:	O-tla-ya toropong [kapa tjhe]? (You-will-go to-town or not?)

2.7 Subjunctive

See Doke (1965:343): "The present-future subjunctive tense is used in permissive interrogation, in asking questions when advice is sought:

Ngi-hamb-e?
 (I-go-subj: shall I go?)

IsiXhosa:	Si-sebenz-e?
Sesotho:	Re-sebetse-e?
Tshivenda:	Ri-shum-e? (Should we work?)

2.8 Indefinite question

With the potential expressing possibility, the object DP is indefinite:

IsiXhosa:
 Si-nга-thenga [tywala] apha?
 (we-can-buy beer here: can we buy any beer here?)

In IsiXhosa the preprefix [u-] of **utywala** has fallen away when indefinite.

In the other Bantu languages with no preprefix on the nouns, the object will be either definite or indefinite depending on the type of discourse:

- Sesotho: Re-ka-reka [jwala] mona?
 Tshivenda: Ri-nga-renga [halwa] afha?
 Xitsonga: Hi-nga-xava [byalwa] la?
 (Can we buy any beer here?)

With existence in copulas:

- IsiXhosa: Kukho [tywala] apha?
 Ho-na le [jwala] mona?
 Hu-na [halwa] afha?
 Hu-ni [byalwa] la?
 (Is there any beer here?)

With abstract verbs:

- IsiXhosa: W-azi [mntu] aha?
 Tshivenda: Ni-divha [muthu] afha?
 Xitsonga: U-tiva [munhu] la?
 Sesotho: O-tseba [motho] mona?
 (Do you know any person here?)

2.9 With embedded questions:

[Na] with complementizer:

- IsiXhosa: Ba-ya-buza [ukuba [beze namhlanje na]
 Sesotho: Ba-a-botsa [hore [na ba-tle kajeno]
 Xitsonga: V-a-vutisa [leswaku va-ta namuntla na]
 Tshivenda: Vha-a-vhudzisa [uri [vha-de- ñamusi na]
 (They ask whether they must come today)

3. Interrogative words

3.1 Semantic classification

There are seven semantic categories of interrogative words:

	IsiXhosa	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Sesotho
Interrogatives:				
1. Human	bani	nnyi	mani	mang
2. Non-human	nto-ni	yi-ni	mi-ni	e-ng
3. Manner	njani	ha-ni	njhani	jwang

4. Locative	phi	ngafhi	kwihi	kae
5. Temporal	nini	lini	rini	neng
6. Quantifier				
6.1 Type	-ni	de	muni	-ng
6.2 Kind	-phi	-fho	-hi	-fe
6.3 Numeral	-ngaphi	-ngana	-ngani	-kae
6.4 Quantity	-ngakanani	-ngafhani		
7. Colour		-nzani		

Of these seven types of interrogatives, the first five (1-5) will be dealt with extensively. The other 3 (6-7) are mostly nominal modifiers and they have been dealt with extensively in the literature (see i.a. Du Plessis, Visser (1992), Doke (1965), Poulos (1990) and others.

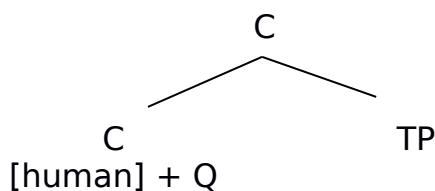
3.2 Interrogative words referring to humans:

3.2.1 Morphological forms:

	Singular	Plural
Sesotho	ma-ng	bo-ma-ng
IsiXhosa	ba-ni	oo-ba-ni
Xitsonga	ma-ni	va-ma-ni
Tshivenda	nnyi	vho-nnyi

The singular interrogatives above appear in noun class 1a with the agreement of class 1, while the plural words appear in class 2a except for Xitsonga where it appears in class 2: all of these interrogatives accept the agreement of class 2 nouns.

3.2.2 Structure



3.2.3 The external argument in the subject position

In cleft sentences

With Intransitive verbs:

The interrogative words above may not appear in the subject position of a sentence. If the interrogative word is forced into this position, a cleft sentence will be necessary where the sentence is divided into two sections: the first one appears in a copulative clause and the second one in a relative clause:

Xitsonga:

With a relative determiner:

[I mani_i [loyi_i] [pro_i ai-swi-tiv-a-ka leswi?]
(it-is who reldet pro he-it-know-fv-relmarker this: who knows this?)

Without a relative determiner:

[I mani_i [pro_i ai-nга [na [mhaka ya yena?
(it-is who pro he-be with case of him: who has his case?)

IsiXhosa:

Without a demonstrative:

[Ng-ubani_i [pro_i o_i-hamb-a phaya?]
(it-is-who pro reldet.AgrS-walk-fv there: who goes there?)

With a demonstrative:

[Ng-ubani_i [lo_i [pro_i u_i-hamb-a phaya?]
(it-is-who this pro he-walk there: who is this one going there?)

Sesotho:

[Ke-mang_i [ya_i-tsamay-a-ng moo?]
(it-is who reldet.AgrS-walk-fv-relmarker there: who goes there?)

Tshivenda:

With a relative determiner with **-ne**:

[Ndi nnyi_i [ai-ne [pro_i [ai-gidim-a afho?]
(it-is who reldet (AgrS-ne) pro AgrS-run-fv there: who is running there?)

Without a relative determiner:

[Ndi nnyi_i [pro_i ai-gidim-a-ho afho?]
(it-is who pro AgrS-run-fv-relmarker there: who is running there?)

Within subordinate clauses:

It is possible for the interrogative words to appear in the subject position of a clause if such a clause is a subordinate clause. This is only possible in Tshivenda:

Within an **uri**- clause:

[pro_i ni- $\ddot{\text{t}}$ od-a [uri [nnyi_j aj-reng-e modoro?]
(pro you-want-fv that who AgrS-buy-subj car: who do you want should buy the car?)

Within a **musi**-clause

[pro_i-nd_i-o-swik-a [musi [vho-nnyi_j [vha_j-tshi-khou- $\ddot{\text{l}}$ -a?]
(pro I-perf-arrive-fv when plural-who AgrS-ptc-imperf-eat-fv: I arrived when who were busy eating?)

However, clefted sentences with interrogative word in subordinate clauses are also possible in Tshivenda:

LD of **nnyi**:

[Ndi nnyi [musadzi a- $\ddot{\text{t}}$ od-a-ho [uri [pro a- $\ddot{\text{t}}$ uw-e?]
(it.is who 1woman 1AgrS Rel-want-fv-relmarker that 1pro 1AgrS Subj-go.away-subj: who does the woman want that he must go away?)

The relative with **-ne** or **-e** is also possible as well as factivity with **divha** in the place of $\ddot{\text{t}}$ oda.

Within participial clauses:

[Ndi nnyi [vhathu vh-o-swik-a [pro a-tshi- $\ddot{\text{t}}$ w-a?]] (See Madadzhe 1997:355)
(it.is who 2people 2AgrS-perf-arrive-fv 1pro 1AgrS-ptc-go.away-fv: who is it that the people arrived while he was going away?)

In all the other languages the interrogative words cannot appear in a subordinate clause and a clefted sentence will be necessary as above. Even in Tshivenda such a clefted sentence is a further option:

Sesotho: *Mosadi o-batl-a hore [mang] a-tloh-e

After LD of **mang**: copulative and relative clause:

With necessity after **hore** preceded by **batla**:

[Ke mang [eo [mosadi a-batl-a-ng [hore [pro a-tloh-e?]
(it.is-who 1reldet 1woman 1AgrS Rel-want-fv-relmarker [Present tense relat.) that 1pro 1AgrS Subj-go.away-subj: who does the woman want must go away?)

With factivity after **hore** preceded by **tseba**:

[Ke mang [eo [mosadi a-tseb-a-ng [hore [pro o-a-tloh-a?]
(it.is who 1reldet 1woman 1AgrS Rel-know-fv-relmarker (Present Tense

relat.) that 1pro 1AgrS-pres-go.away-fv (Present tense Indicative: who does the woman know is going away?)

In a participial clause:

*[Basadi ba-fihl-ile [mang a-tloh-a]

After LD of **mang**:

[Ke mang [eo [basadi ba-fihl-ile-ng [pro a-tloh-a?]
 it.is who 1reldet 2women 2AgrS Rel-arrive-perf-relmarker 1pro 1AgrS Ptc-go.away-fv (Present Tense participle) who is it that the women arrived while he was going away?)

Xitsonga: *Wansati u-lav-a leswaku [mani] a-suk-a?

After LD of **mani** with necessity after **leswaku** with **lava**:

[I mani [loyi [wansati a-lav-a-ka [leswaku [pro a-suk-a?
 (it.is who 1reldet 1woman 1AgrSRel-want-fv-relmarker (Present Tense relat.) that 1pro 1AgrSDep-go.away-fv (Dependent mood): who is it that the woman want should go away?)

With factivity after **leswaku** with **tiva**:

[I mani [loyi [wansati a-tiv-a-ka [leswaku [pro w-a-suk-a?
 (it.is who woman 1AgrS Rel-know-fv-relmarker (Present tense relative) that 1pro 1AgrS-pres-go.away-fv (Present tense Indicative): who does the woman know is going away?)

In a Dependent mood clause:

*[Vavasati va-fik-ile [mani [a-suk-a]

After LD of **mani**:

[I mani [loyi [vavasati va-fik-e-ke [pro a-suk-a?
 (it.is who 1reldet 2women 2AgrS Rel-arrive-perf-relmarker 1pro 1AgrS Dep-go.away-fv (Dependent mood): who is it that the woman arrived while he was going away?)

IsiXhosa: *[Umfazi u-fun-a ukuba bani e-mk-e?]

After LD of **bani** with necessity with **ukuba** and **funa**:

[Ngu-bani [a-m-fun-a-yo umfazi [ukuba [e-mk-e?]

(it.is-who 1AgrS rel-1AgrO-want-fv-relmarker 1woman that 1AgrS-go.away-subj: who does the woman want that he must go away?)

With factivity:

[Ngu-bani [a-m-azi-yo umfazi [ukuba [e-mk-a?]

(it.is-who 1AgrS-1AgrO-know-relmarker woman that 1AgrS Ptc-go.away-fv

(Present Tense participle): who is it that the woman knows that he is going away?)

Within a participial clause:

*Abafazi ba-fik-ile [bani e-mk-a]?

After LD of **bani**:

[Ngu-bani [aba-fik-ile-yo abafazi [pro e-mk-a?]

(it.is-who reldet-arrive-perf-relmarker women 1pro 1AgrSptc-go.away-fv

(Present tense Ptc): who is it that the women arrived while he was going away?)

In subject inversion:

IsiXhosa: [pro_i ku_i-balek-a [bani [phaya?]]
(pro expl-run-fv who there: there runs who there?)

Xitsonga: [pro_i ku_i-tsutsum-a [mani [laha?]]
(pro expl-run-fv who there: there runs who there?)

Sesotho: [pro_i ho_i-math-a [mang [moo?]]
(pro expl-run-fv who there: there runs who there?)

Tshivenda: [pro_i hui-gidim-a [nnyi [afho?]]
(pro expl-run-fv who there: there runs who there?)

With a passive verb:

Xitsonga: [pro_i ku_i-nghen-iw-a [hi [mami]?]
(pro expl-enter-pass-fv copula who: there is being entered by who?)

IsiXhosa: [pro_i ku_i-ngen-w-a [ng-[ubani]?]
(pro expl-enter-pass-fv copula-who: there is being entered by who?)

Sesotho: [pro_i ho_i-ken-w-a [ke[mang]?]
(pr expl-enter-pass-fv copula who: there is being entered by who?)

Tshivenda: [pro hu-dzhen-w-a [nga [nnyi]]
(pro expl-enter-pass-fv with who: there is being entered by who?)

With transitive verbs:

The interrogative subject will also appear in clefted sentences as above with intransitive verbs:

Xitsonga: [I mani [loyi a-swek-a-ka [vuswa]?]
(it.is who reldet 1AgrS-cook-fv-relmarker porridge: who is cooking porridge?)

- Sesotho: [Ke mang [ya-pheh-a-ng [papa]]?
 (it.is who reldetAgrS-cook-fv-relmarker porridge: who is cooking the porridge?)
- IsiXhosa: [Ngu-bani [o-phek-a-ng [isidudu]]?
 (it.is who reldet AgrS-cook-fv-relmarker porridge: who is cooking the porridge?)
- Tshivenda: [Ndi nnyi [a-bik-a-ho [vhuswa]]?
 (it.is who AgrS-cook-fv-relmarker porridge: who is cooking the porridge?)

3.2.4 The internal argument in the object position

Interrogative as object

- IsiXhosa: [pro_i ni_i-fun-a [bani]]?
 (pro you-want-fv who: who do you want?)
 [pro_i ui_i-nik-a [bani] [umntwana]]?
 (pro you-give-fv who child: to whom do you give the child?)
 [pro_i ui_i-mj_j-nik-a [bani] [umzali_j]]?
 (pro you-him-give-fv who parent: who do you give to the parent?)
- Tshivenda: [pro_i ni_i-tod-a [nnyi]]?
 (pro you-want-fv who: who do you want?)
 [pro_i ui_i-ne-a [nnyi] [nwana]]?
 (pro you-give-fv who child: to whom do you give the child?)
 [pro_i ui_i-ne-a [mubebi] [nnyi]]?
 (pro you-give-fv parent who: who do you give to the parent?)
 [pro_i ui_i-mu_j-ne-a [nnyi] [mubebi_j]]?
 (pro you-him-give-fv who parent: who do you give to the parent?)
- Itsongwa: [pro_i mi_i-lav-a [mani]]?
 (pro you-want-fv who: who do you want?)
 [pro_i ui_i-nyik-a [mani] [n'wana]]?
 (pro you-give-fv who child: to whom do you give the child?)
 [pro_i ui_i-nyik-a [mutswari] [mani]]?
 (pro you give-fv parent who: who do you give to the parent?)
 [pro_i ui_i-n'wi_j-nyik-a [mani] [mutswari_j]]?
 (pro you-him-give-fv who parent: who do you give to the parent?)
- Sesotho: [pro_i le_i-batl-a [mang]]?
 (pro you-want-fv who: who do you want?)
 [pro_i o_i-ne-a [mang] [ngwana]]?
 (pro you-give-fv who child: to whom do you give the child?)
 [pro_i o_i-ne-a [motswadi] [mang]]?
 (pro you-give-gv parent who: who do you give to the parent?)

[pro_i o_i-mo_j-ne-a [mang] [motswadi_j]?
 (pro you-him-give-fv who parent: who do you give to the parent?)

Cleft sentences

- Xitsonga: [I [mani_i] [pro_j mi_j-n'wi_i-lav-a-ka?]
 (it-is who pro you-him-want-fv-relmarker: it is who that you want?)
- Sesotho: [Ke [mang_i] [eo_i [pro_j le-mo_i-batl-a-ng?]
 (it-is who reldet pro you-him-want-fv-relmarker: it is who that you want?)
- Tshivenda: [Ndi [nnyi_i] [a_i-ne [pro_j n_j-a-mu-^{tod}a-a?]
 (it-is-who reldet (-past) pro you-cons-him-want-fv: it is who that you want?)

- IsiXhosa: [Ng-ubani_i] [e-ni-m_i-fun-a-yo?]
 (it-is-who reldet-you-him want-fv-relmarker: it is who that you want?)

With a passive verb

- Sesotho: [Ho-batl-w-a [mang] ke lona?]
 (expl-want-pass-fv who copula you: there is being wanted who by you?)
 [Ke mang_i [ya_i-batl-w-a-ng ke lona?]
 (it-is who reldet agrs-want-pass-fv-relmakrer by you: who is being wanted by you?)
- IsiXhosa: [Ku-fun-w-a [bani] nini?]
 (expl-want-pass-fv who by-you: there is being wanted who by you?)
 [Ng-ubani_i [oi-fun-w-a nini?]
 (it-is who reldet-want-pass-fv by-you: who is being wanted by you?)
- Xitsonga: [Ku-lav-iw-a [mani] hi n'wina?]
 (expl-want-pass-fv who copula you: there is being wanted who by you?)
 [I mani_i [loyi_i [a_i-lav-iw-a hi n'wina?]
 (it-is who reldet he-want-pass-fv cop you: who is being wanted by you?)
- Tshivenda: [Hu-^{tod}w-a [nnyi] nga inwi?]
 (expl-want-pass-fv who instr you: there is being wanted who by you?)
 [Ndi nnyi_i [a_i-^{tod}w-a-ho nga inwi?]
 (it-is who reldet Agr-want-pass-fv-relmarker instr you: who is being wanted by you?)

With an applicative verb

Sesotho: O-sebel-ets-a mang?
 (you-work-appl-fv who: for whom do you work?)

Xitsonga: U-tirh-el-a mani?
 (you-work-appl-fv who: for whom do you work?)

Tshivenda: U-shum-el-a nnyi?
 (you-work-appl-fv who: for whom do you work?)

IsiXhosa: U-sebenz-el-a bani?
 (you-work-appl-fv who: for whom do you work?)

3.2.5 Complement

Of the possessive:

Tshivenda: U-^ṭod-a [peni [ya [nnyi]]?
 (you-want-fv pen of who?)

Sesotho: O-balt-a [pene [ya [mang]]?
 (You-want-fv pen of who?)

Xitsonga: U-lav-a [peni [ya [mani]]?
 (you-want-fv pen of who?)

IsiXhosa: U-fun-a [usiba [lu-ka-bani]]?
 (you-want-fv pen AgrS-of-who: whose pen do you want?)

Of the locative:

IsiXhosa: U-za ku-ya ku-bani?
 (You will go to who?)

Sesotho: O-tla-ya ho mang?
 (You will go to who?)

Xitsonga: U-ta-ya eka mani?
 (you will go to who?)

Tshivenda: U-^ṭo-ya kha nnyi?
 (You will go to who?)

Of the instrumental nga/ka/hi:

IsiXhosa: U-thetha nga-bani?
 (You talk about who?)

Sesotho: O-bua ka mang?
 (You talk about who?)

Xitsonga: U-vulavula hi mani?
 (You talk about who?)

Tshivenda: U-amba nga nnyi?
 (You talk about who?)

Of associative le/na:

IsiXhosa: Uza kuhamba [na-bani]?
 (You will go with who?)

Sesotho: O-tla-tsamaya [le mang]?
 (You will go with who?)

Tshivenda: U-do-tshimbila [na nnyi]?
 (You will go with who?)

Xitsonga: U-ta-famba [ni mani]?
 (You will go with who?)

Of a noun:

Sesotho: E-tla-ba madi a [ngwana mang]?
 (It will be blood of what child?)
 Ha-ho-tsottelehe na ke [mora mang]?
 (It is not surprising it is what son?)
 Ekaba ke-tla-ba [ngwana mang]?
 (Maybe I will be what child?)

Of a copula

With singular and plural interrogatives

Xitsonga: [Hosi ya bona] [i [mani]]?
 (Chief of them it-is who?)
 [I [mani] [vito ra yena]]?
 (It-is who name of him?)
 [Vanhu lava] [i [va-mani]]?
 (People these it-is who (plur.)?)

IsiXhosa: [Lo mntu] [ng-ubani]?
 (This person it-is-who?)
 [Ng-ubani] [le ndoda]?
 (It-is-who this man?)
 [Aba bantu] [ng-oobani]?
 (These people it-is who (plur.)?)

Sesotho: Motho eo] [ke [mang]]?
 (Person that it-is who?)
 [Ke [mang] [morena wa bona]]?
 (It-is who chief of them?)
 [Batho bana] [ke [bo-mang]]?
 (People these it-is who (plur.))

Tshivenda: [Mudededzi] [ndi [nnyi]]?
 (Teacher it-is who?)
 [Ndi [nnyi] [mufunzi wa vhona]]?
 (It-is who preacher of them?)

(Ava vhathu] [ndi [vho-nnyi]?
 (These people it-is who (plur.)

First and second person subjects

Xitsonga: Wena [u mani]? (you you are who?)
 N'wina [ni va-mani]? (you (pl) you are who?)
 W-a-ndzi-tiva [ndzi mani]
 (He-pres-me-know I who: he knows me who I am)

IsiXhosa: Wena [u-ngu-bani]?
 (You you are who?)
 Nina [ni ng-oobani]?
 (You you cop-who (plor): who are you (plur)
 U-ya-nd-azi [ndi-ngu-bani]
 (He-pres-me-know I-cop-who: he knows me who I am)

Tshivenda: Iwe u nnyi]? (you you are who?)
 Inwi [ni vho-nnyi]? (you you are who?)
 U-a-n-divha [ndi nnyi]
 (He-pres-me-know I who: he knows me who I am)

Sesotho: Wena [o mang]? (you you are who?)
 Lona [le bo-mang]? (You you are who (plur)
 U-ya-n-tseba [ke mang]
 (He-pres-me-know I who: he knows me who I am)

Pronouns with interrogatives

Xitsonga: Hi wena mani? (It is you who: who are you actually?)
 Hi n'wina vamani? (you plur)
 Hi yena mani? (he)
 Hi vona vamani? (they)

IsiXhosa: Ngu-we wena ubani? (Who are you actually?)
 Ni-ni nina oobani? (You (plur)
 Ngu-ye yena ubani? (he)
 Nga-bo bona oobani? (they)

Sesotho: Ke wena mang? (Who are you actually?)
 Ke lona bomang? (you (plur)
 Ke yena mang? (he)
 Ke bona bomang? (they)

Tshivenda: Ndi iwe nnyi? (who are you actually?)
 Ndi inwi vho-nnyi? (you (plur)
 Ndi ene nnyi? (he)
 Ndi vhone vho-nnyi? (they)

Relative clause

IsiXhosa: Ngumntwana wakhe [o-ŋ-ubani lowo]?
 (It-is-child of-him reldet-cop-who that: It is his child who is who that one?)

Possessive

IsiXhosa: Amanye amazwi [i-bi-ŋ-a-w-oobani]?
 (Other words it-past-copula-poss-who: the other words were of who?)
 Z-ezi-ka-bani ezi nkomo?
 (It-is-of-who these cattle?)

3.3 Interrogative words referring to non-humans

3.3.1 Morphological forms

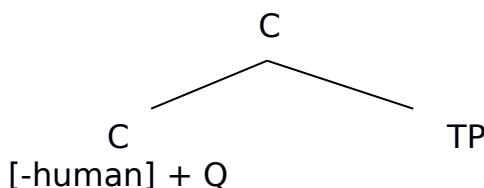
Sesotho: -ng, -e-ŋ

IsiXhosa: -ni, -nto-ni

Xitsonga: -ni, -yi-ni

Tshivenda: -ni, -mi-ni

3.3.2 Structure



3.3.3 The external argument in the subject position

In cleft sentences

As above with human interrogatives, these interrogatives are not allowed in the subject position, but cleft sentences are needed:

Xitsonga:

With a relative determiner in class 7:

[I [yini [lexi [proi xihi-sivel-a-ka proj?]]]
 (it-is what reldet pro it-us-hinder-fv-relmarker: what is hindering us?)

Without a relative determiner:

[I [yini [proi xihi-karhat-a-ka proj?]]

(it-is what pro it-you-bother-fv-relmarker pro: what is worrying you?)

Sesotho:

[Ke [engi [ei [tsamay-a-ŋ moo?]]]

(it-is what reldet agr walk-fv-relmarker there: what is going there?)

Tshivenda:

[Ndi [mini [tsh-nei [tshi-a-gidim-a afho?]]]

(it-is what reldet (-past) it-cons-run-fv there: what is running there?)

[Ndi [mini [tshi-gidim-a-ho afho?]
 (it-is what it-run-fv-remarker there: what is running there?)

IsiXhosa:
 [yi-nto-ni [e [-hamb-a apho?]
 (it-is-what reldet agr walk-fv there: what goes there?)

In subject inversion

Xitsonga: Kasi pro_i ku_i-karhat-a yini?
 (But pro expl-worry-fv what: but there is worrying what?)

Tshivenda: pro_i hui-gidim-a mini afho?
 (pro expl-run-fv what there: there is running what there?)

IsiXhosa: pro_i ku_i-hl-e ntoni?
 (pro expl-happen-perf what: there happened what?)

Sesotho: pro_i ho_i-tsamay-a eng moo?
 (pro expl-walk-fv what there: there is going what there?)

With a passive verb

Sesotho: [pro_i ho_i-a-tsama-uw-a [ke eng] [moo?]
 (pro expl-pres-walk-pass-fv cop what there: there is being walked by what there?)

Xitsonga: [pro_i ku_i-famb-iw-a [hi yini] laha?]
 (pro expl-walk-pass-fv cop what there: there is being walked by what there?)

Tshivenda: [pro_i hui-gidiñ-w-a [nga mini] afho?]
 (pro expl-ruñ-pass-fv instr what there: there is being run by what there?)

IsiXhosa: [pro_i ku_i-hanj-w-a [yi-ntoni] phaya?]
 (pro expl-walk-pass-fv cop-what there: there is being walked by what there?)

3.3.4 The internal argument in the object position

Interrogative as object

With transitive verb:

Tshivenda: ni_i-toda-a mini?] (pro you-want-fv what?)
 Sesotho: [pro_i le_i-batl-a eng?] (pro you-want-fv what?)
 Xitsonga: [pro_i mi_i-lav-a yini?] (pro you-want-fv what?)
 IsiXhosa: [pro_i ni_i-fun-a ntoni?] (pro you-want-fv what?)

With transitive verb with two objects:

Tshivenda: [Muthu_i ai-nga-ny-it-a-ni?]
 (person he-can-me-do-what: what can a person do to me?)

Xitsonga: [pro_i ui-lav-a [ku-vaj-byel-a proj yini?]
 (pro you-want-fv to-them-tell-fv pro what: what do you want to tell them?)

IsiXhosa: [pro_i be-ndi_i-mj_j-enz-e proj ntoni?]
 (pro past-I-him-do-perf pro what: what did I do to him?)

Sesotho: [pro_i o_i-ka-n_j-k-ets-a-ng proj?]
 (pro you-can-me-do-fv what pro: what can you do to me?)

With ditransitive verbs:

Tshivenda: [pro_i ui-ne-a vhana mini?]
 (pro_i ui-ne-a mini vhana?)
 (what are you giving to the children?)

IsiXhosa: [pro_i ui-baj-nik-a ntoni abantwana_j?]
 (What are you giving to the children?)

Sesotho: [pro_i o_i-ne-a bana eng?]
 [pro_i o_i-baj-ne-a eng bana_j?]
 (What are you giving to the children?)

Xitsonga: [pro_i ui-nyik-a vana yini?]
 (pro_i-ui-vaj-nyik-a yini vana_j?)
 (What are you giving to the children?)

Cleft sentences

Tshivenda: [Ndi [mini [tshi-ne [n-a-tshi-⁺tod-a?]
 (it-is what reldet (-past) you-cons-it-want-fv: what is it that you want?)
 [Ndi [mini [ni-tshi-⁺tod-a-ho?]
 (it-is what you-it-want-fv-remarker: what is it that you want?)

Xitsonga: [I [yini] [lexi [a-nga-xi-von-a?]
 (it-is what reldet he-past-it-see-fv: what is it that he saw?)

IsiXhosa: [Yi- [ntoni na [le [u-yi-fun-a-yo?]
 (it-is what Q this you-it-want-fv-remarker: what is it that you want?)

Sesotho: [Ke [eng [eo [o-e-batl-a-ng?]
 (it-is wat reldet you-it-want-fv-remarker: what is it that you want?)

LD from a subordinate clause:

With a complementizer:

Tshivenda: see Madadzhe (1997:359-361):

Ndi mini musadzi a-toda-ho uri vhana vha l-e?
 Ndi mini musadzi a-t̄oda-ho uri vhana vha-tshi-l-e?
 Ndi mini musadzi a-tshi t̄odaho uri vhana vha-l-e?
 Ndi mini musadzi a-tshi-t̄odaho uri vhana vha-tshi-l-e?

Sesotho: Ke eng eo mosadi a-e-batlang hore bana ba-e-je?

IsiXhosa: Yintoni na le ayifunayo umfazi ukuba abantwana ba-yi-ty-e

Xitsonga: I yini lexi wansati a-xi-lavaka leswaku vana va-xi-dya?

The four possible sentences in Tshivenda above are also possible in these 3 languages.

With the Infinitive

Tshivenda: Ndi mini vhana vha-todaho u-la?
 Ndi mini vhana vha-tshi-todaho u-la
 Ndi mini vhana vha-todaho u-tshi-la
 Ndi mini vhana vha-tshi-todaho u-tshi-la?

Sesotho: Ke eng eo bana ba-e-batlang ho-e-ja

IsiXhosa: Yintoni na (bayifunayo abantwana ukuyitya)/(abafuna ukuyitya abantwana)

Xitsonga: I yini lexi vana va-xi-lavaka ku-xi-dya

See Tshivenda above for other possible varieties.

With the applicative verb

Sesotho: [pro_i le_i-thol-etse-ng?]
 (pro you-be.silent-appl.perf-what: why are you silent?)
 [pro_i-o_i-batl-a ho-m-polel-l-a-ng?]
 (pro you-want-fv to-me-tell-appl-fv-what: why do you want to tell me?)

Tshivenda: [pro_i-u_i-lil-el-a mini?]
 (pro you-cry-appl-fv what: why are you crying?)
 [pro_i o_i-vha [ai-tshi-khou-vha-vhidz-el-a-ni?]]
 (pro he.perf-vha he-ptc-busy-they-call-appl-fv-what: why was he calling them?)

IsiXhosa: [pro_i-u_i-lil-el-a ntoni?]
 (pro you-cry-appl-fv what: why are you crying?)
 (pro_i ui-yj-aphul-el-e ntoni [le komityi_j?])
 (pro you-it-break-appl-perf what this cup: why did you break this cup?)

Xitsonga: [pro_i ui-ril-el-a yini?]
 (pro you-cry-appl-fv what: why are you crying?)

[pro_i ui-ndzi-vit-el-a yini?]
 (pro you-me-call-appl-what: why are you calling me?)

With causative verbs

Xitsonga: A-nga-n'wi-pfun-is-a kuyini n'wana loyi?
 (How can he help this child?)
 Swi-twala ngophfu leswi mi-swi-vulavulaka hikuva loko mi-ku
 ndzi-tshika se-ndzi-ta-tshikisa ku yini mina?
 (It is heard what I speak because when you say I have (beer),
 how will I leave I?)
 Hi-nga-endlisa ku yini hi-ta-hatla hi-sun-gula ku-nghena na
 hina
 (How can we do we hurry we begin to enter also us)
 Hi-ta-n'wi-tirhisa ku yini?
 (How will we work him?)
 Hi-ta-swi-endlisa ku yini?
 (How will we do it?)
 U-swi-tivise ku yini leswaku ndzi-ta-hundza la?
 (How did you know that I will pass here?)

With passive verbs

Xitsonga: [pro ku-lav-iw-a yini hi n'wina?
 (There is being wanted what by you?)
 [I yini [lexi xi-lav-iw-a hi n'wina?]
 (It is what that it-is-being-wanted by you?)

IsiXhosa: [pro ku-fun-w-a ntoni ni-ni?
 (There is being wanted what by you?)
 Yi-ntoni le i-fun-w-a-yo ni-ni?
 (It is what that it-is-being-wanted by you?)

Sesotho: [pro ho batl-w-a eng ke lona?
 (There is being wanted what by you?)
 Ke eng e batl-w-a-ng ke lona?
 (It is what that it-is-being-wanted by you?)

Tshivenda: [pro hu-^{ts}-tod-w-a mini nga inwi?
 (There is being wanted what by you?)
 Ndi mini tshi -^{ts}-tod-w-a-ho nga inwi?
 (It is what that it-is-being-wanted by you?)

With eka/ahal

Pro ho-ets-ahal-a eng hae?
 (there happens what at home?)
 pro kw-enz-ek-a ntoni kule lali?
 (there happens what in this village?)

INTERROGATIVES WITH THE VERB THI (ISIXHOSA)

Kutheni

Subjunctive

Kutheni ungangeni nje?
(Why do you not come in?)

Kube bekutheni angayenzi le nto kwangaphambili?
(Why didn't he do this thing at first?)

Ukuze + Subjunctive

Kutheni na ukuze abe kule meko?
(Why is he in this condition?)

Kutheni na ukuze/Yile nto kutheni na ukuze ugoduke?
(Why are you going home?)

ukuba + Subjunctive

Kutheni ukuba unqabe ngolu hloblo?
(Why are you difficult in this way?)

Kutheni na ukuba angabikho xa bekukho abantu basemzini?
(Why is he not present when there were people of the village?)

Relative

Kutheni le nto angafikiyo?
(Why doesn't he arrive ?)

Kutheni le nto abanye abantu bangayithandiyo le ntombi ?
(Why do some people not like this girl?)

Participle

Kutheni na/Yile nto kutheni na lo mfazi ebulele inkuku nje?
(Why does this woman kill the chicken?)

Kungokuba kutheni na egoduka nje?
(Why is he going home?)

Indicative

A-Past Tense

Kutheni waqiniseka?
(Why are you sure?)

Kutheni na wafaka iimpahla ezimnyama?
(Why do you put on black clothes?)

Present Tense

Kutheni kushushu nje kule dlu?
(Why is it hot in this house?)

Kutheni unemoto ekrikrizayo nje?
(Why do you have a squeaking car?)

Future Tense

Kutheni kuza kuqala lo mfo?
(Why there will begin this chap?)

Compound Tense

Kutheni ubungambambi nje?
(Why didn't you catch him?)

Ngathi

Kutheni na ngathi nifuna ukuwona lo mzi?
(Why does it seem as if you want to ruin this village?)

Kutheni na ngathi akutyhilekanga nje namhla?
(Why does it seem as if you are not friendly today?)

End of clause

Wena ungarabaleli nje kutheni?
(Why are you not telling them?)

Uqqiba ukuyithetha kutheni?
(Why do you finish saying it?)

kuba/ngokuba kutheni

linkomo uzikhupha kuba kutheni?
(The cattle you take them out because of why?)

Ayikapheli na le mbizo yenu? Utsho ngokuba kutheni ?
(Your meeting has not as yet ended? You say so because of why?)

xa kutheni

Andzai ke ukuba ibakho impambuko xa kutheni na
(I don't know whether there is a problem when it is why?)

thi + ni

Say

Uthini?
(What does he say?)

Wathini kuye?
(What did you say to him?)

Uthetha ukuthini xa uthi akwazi nto?
(You mean to say what when you say you know nothing?)

Umazi ukuthini kwakhe? Yindlela ophendula ngayo leyo
(You know him to say what of him? It is the way in which he answers that)

Uqqibe ekuthinini?
(He ended in saying what?)

Action

Ndimelwe kukuthini?
(What must I do?)

Ubabulala betheni? Belele
(You kill them while they were doing what? They were sleeping)

Uya kuthini akuwubona lo monakalo?
(What will he do when he sees this damage?)

Nithe abantu baza kuthini na
(You said the people will do what?)

Xa injalo loo nto bendinokuthini mna?
(If that is so, what could I do?)

Event

Lada lathini elaa tyala lakhe?
(What in the end happened to his case?)

Kwaza kwathini emva koko?
(What happened after that?)

Bekutheni na kuqala?
(There happened what at first?)

Okokoko kwathini? Okokoko ndashiywa ngumfazi
(When there happened what? When my wife left me)

Cause

Ndakuthini ukuphunga iti engenabisi?
(Why shall I drink tea without milk?)

Uya kuthini umsi ukungabi ngaka?
(Why is the smoke not so much?)

Passive with thi

Lithiwani ke eli yeza xa lisetyenziswa?
(This medicine is being done what when it is used?)

Uthetha ukuba kothivani?
(You say that there will be done what?)

Kuthiweni kwabaya bantu?
(There has been done what to those people?)

Ke ngoku uthi makuthiweni?
(Now you say there must be done what?)

Relative thi

Yihagu etheni yona ixhelwa iinyanga ezintathu?
(What kind of pig is it being slaughtered at 3 months?)

Ngumntu otheni onokucinga into enjalo?
(It is wat kind of person who can think such a thing?)

Yintetho etheni?
(It is wat kind of speech?)

Potential thi

Le kofu ndingathini na ngayo?
(What can I do with this coffee?)

Ingathini into enje ngale ukungothusi?
(What can a thing like this do to not make people afraid?)

Potential thi with Infinitive

Ungathini ukuhlala ixesha elide?
(Why do you stay a long time?)

Singathini ukumthuthuzela lo mfazi?
(How can we comfort this woman?)

Ndingathini ukuthiyaabantu abangazange bakone?
 (How can I hate people who didn't do any wrong to you?)

Angathini ukuya kungena ekhitshini?
 (How can she go and enter the kitchen?)

AgrO with thi

Xa angafuniyo uza kumthini?
 (If he doesn't want what will you say to him?)

Siza kumthini uThemba lo?
 (What will we do with this Themba?)

Ndiza kukuthini oku kutya kwakhe?
 (What shall I do with this food of him?)

Ndiza kulithini na eli tyala lingaka?
 (What shall I do about this big debt?)

Copulative with Infinitive thi

Kukuthini le nto uthi xa uhamba ungaxeli?
 (Who do you not tell when you go?)

Kukuthini ukusuka ndiwelwe ngumntu ndingamenzanga nto?
 (Why was I then attacked by a person I didn't do anything to him?)

With the verb ri (Xitsonga)

Ndzi te yini?
 (I said what?)

Ma-n'wi-twa kuri u-ri yini?
 (You hear him that he says what?)

Mi ri yini hi mhaka leyi?
 (You say what about this case?)

A-va-ndzi-hembeli loko va-ku yini?
 (They don't lie to me when they say what?)

Ndzi-ta-vona leswaku ekaya u-ta-fika u-ku yini?
 (I shall see that at home you will arrive saying what?)

A-a-ta ku yini?
 (He came to say what?)

Hi-nga-ku yini?
 (We can say what?)

With the verb re (Sesotho)

Ke-tla-reng ho ngwana eo?
(I will say what to that child?)

Ha ho thwe mohlwa ke pontsho ya motse ke ho reng?
(When there is said grass is sign of village, it is to say what?)

Re-tla-utlwa hore na ditaba tse ntjha tsa lefatshe di-reng?
(We will hear that the new issues of earth are what?)

Ri mini (Tshivenda)

u-tou-vhuyelela hangei sibadela a-pfe uri u-ri mini?
(he will return there to the hospital and hear that he says what?)

[Yini] (IsiXhosa)

Infinitive

Yini ukundicingela kakubi kangaka?
(Why do you think so badly of me?)

Yintoni ukundothusa kangaka?
(Why do you frighten me so?)

Yini ukuzala umntwana omnye?
(Why do you beget another child?)

ukuba + subjunctive

Yini na ukuba niziphathe kakubi?
(Why do you behave so badly?)

Yini na ukuba nithi khunubembe?
(Why are you so despondent?)

Subjunctive

Yini ningayekeli kuthi batsha sihambe imitshato?
(Why don't you leave it to us young people we go to weddings?)

Indicative

Yini ngathi akwazi?
(Why is it as if you don't know?)

Yini uThixo akasalamli ngani?
(Why doesn't God intervene about you?)

3.3.5 Complement

Locative

- IsiXhosa: Locative interrogatives with **-ni:**
 Nto-ni → e-ntwe-ni-ni, kw-into-ni
 ni → e-ni-ni, kwa-yi-ni
- With intransitive verbs
 Le nto i-ngen-a [e-ntwe-ni-ni]
 (This thing it-go-in in-what?)
- With transitive verbs (compulsory AgrO):
 Amanzi uza ku-wa-fumana [kw-into-ni]?
 (Water you will it find in what?)
- With enini:
 La mazwi a-singisel-e [e-ni-ni]?
 (These words they-referred to-what?)
- With kwayini:
 (Le ndlela i-qal-e [kwa-yi-ni])?
 (This road it-began at-what place?)
- Xitsonga:
 U-ta-kum-a mati [eka [yini]]?
 (You will find water in what?)
- Tsivenda U-do-wana mađi [kha [mini]]?
 (You will find water in what?)
- Sesotho: O-tla-fumana metsi [ho [eng]]?
 (You will find water in what?)

Possessive

- IsiXhosa: [Li-hlazo [la-[ntoni] [eli [ni-l-enz-a-yo]]?
 (It-is disgrace of what this you-it-do?)
 [U-fun-a [imali [ya-[ntoni]]]?
 (You want money of what?)
- Sesotho: [Ke [monko [wa [eng] [oo [re-o-nkg-a-ng]?]
 (It is smell of what that we it smell?)
- Tshivenda: Ndi munukho wa mini afho?
 (It is smell of what there?)
 Vha-khou-ya ngafhi nahone [nga [nthani [ha [mini]]]
 (He is going where and because of what)
- Xitsonga: U-lav-a [mali [a [yini]]]?
 (You want money of what?)
 I nuwa ya yini kwalaho?
 (It is shouting of what there?)
 [Hikwalaho [ka [yini] a-nga-xavis-i tihomu]?
 (It is because of what he not sell cattle?)
 [Hikokwalaho [ka [yini] ndzi-nga-n'wi-von-angi]?
 (It is because of what I did not see her?)

Instrument

- Sesotho: [Ha [re-fokotsa dikgomo] [re-tla-lema ka-ng]?
 (If we-decrease cattle, we-will-plough with-what?)
 O-bua ka eng?
 (You-talk about what?)
 Re-ka-phela ka eng ha dinku di-ka-nk-uw-a ke mashodu
 kaofela?
 (We-can-live with what if sheep they-can-be-taken by thieves
 all of them?)
 Jwale nna o-se o-bone ka-ng hore ha-ke-swaswe?
 (Now I you-already you-saw with-what (how) that not-I-joke)
- Tshivenda: Ni-do-vha-thusa nga mini?
 (You-will-them-help with what?)
 Vh-o-lila nga mini?
 (They-cried about what?)
 Ni-do-nwala nga mini?
 (You-will-write with what?)
 Vh-o-amba nga mini?
 (They-talked about what?)
 A-ni-mu-ofh-i ngani?
 (You are-not-afraid of him why?)
 Ndi ngani ni-tshi-ri ni-ṭoda u-ṭuwa?
 (It is why you-say you-want to-go-away?)
 (Also: **Ndi mini + ptc** Ndi nga mini vha-tshi-amba?)
- Xitsonga: U-nga-swi-xava hi yini swibye swo tani:
 (You can buy with what dishes like these?)
 A-ndzi-tivi leswaku ndzi-ta-ya tsala hi yini
 (I don't know that I-will-go-write with what?)
 U-rila hi yini?
 (You cry about what?)
 Hi ta hanya hi yini?
 (We will live with what?)
- IsiXhosa: Ubabulele ngantoni? Ngezembe
 (You killed them with what? With an axe)
 Ucinga ukumtyhola ngani ke lo mfo?
 (You think to accuse him about what this man?)
 Bekuxoxwa ngantoni embizweni?
 (There was talked about what in the meeting?)
 Indlela yabo ba-ya ku-yi-gangatha ngantoni?
 (Road of them they will construct it with what?)

Ngani / Kungani

Ukuba + Subjunctive

Ngani na ukuba angandixeleli?
 (Why doesn't he tell me?)

Ngani ukuba nenze njalo?
 (Why do you do in this way?)

Kungani na ukuba uthi mandigqithe?
 (Why do you say I must pass?)

ukuba + Indicative

Ngani ukuba nifuna ukuzekela uVuma nimbona uThemba?
 (Why do you want a wife for Vuma while you see Themba?)

Participle

Kungani na kusihla ezi zinto nje?
 (Why there happen these things?)

End of clause

Ubulikhathalele ngani ihlebo lentombazana?
 (Why were you anxious about the information of the girl?)

Buza entombini yakho ukuba sikho ngani na apha?
 (Ask your daughter why we are here)

Lo uzixabanisa ngani nexhwele?
 (Why does this man make himself to quarrel with the herbalist?)

[-nani]

Unani ungalithabathi eli thuba?
 (Why don't you take this opportunity?)

Xi, HA

Xitsonga

Xi yini

A ri vulavula xi yini?
 (He speaks it what language?)

A ri vulalavula Xitswana
 (He speaks Setswana)
 (ri<riri mi (language))

Ha yini

Loko mina ndzi nga tangi laha kamareni ya wena, swi ku tsandza ha yini
 ku ndzi endzela ekamareni ya mina?

(If I have not come here in your room, it stops you because of what to visit me in my room?)

Associative

- IsiXhosa Kunani kona ukuba kuperhendulwe nokuba inye?
 (How is it that there be answered although it is one)
 Nithi unani na lo mfazi?
 (You say she has what this woman?)
 Yimali enantoni le kubonakala ukuba kuza kutshabalala ubomi
 ngenxa yayo?
 (It is money which has what this which there is clear that there
 will be destroyed life, because of it)
 Yintoni na le uhangene nayo?
 (You met with what?)
- Sesotho: O tla tsamaya le eng?
 (You will go with what?)
- Xitsonga: Va ta ndzi vuyela ni yini?
 (They will return to me with what?)
 Kasi ku na yini swin' wana?
 (But there is what else?)
- Tshivenda: Vha do tangana na mini?
 (They will meet with what?)

Copulative

- Xitsonga: Xihoxo i yini?
 (Mistake it-is what?)
 Xana [leswi [ndzi-swi-twa-ka i yini?
 (That which I hear it-is what?)
 [Swi lo yini [u-ndzi-xambarhisa [ndzi-nga-onh-angi nchumu?]
 (What is it you make me feel ignorant I did not do anything
 wrong?)
 Se leswi mi-ng-o-rhurhumela [swi lo yini]?
 (Now as you have just merely trembled, what is it?)
 Kasi ndzi lo yini?
 (But what is it with me?)
- Tshivenda: Khakho I mini?
 (Mistake it-is what?)
 [Tshi-ne [tsh-a-nga-vha [tsh-o-pingaredza [mukalaha wa-who]
 [i-nga-vha [i mini?]
 (That which might have been a stumbling block to her old man,
 it can be what?)
- IsiXhosa [DP], PP [N]
 [Yi-ntoni na] [unobangela]?
 (it-is what Q reason?)

DP [N+Poss]
 [linjongo [z-o-ku-nga-lal-i [kw-a-kho] [i-b-i- [yi-[ntoni]]?
 (Aims of not sleeping of you it-was-what?)

DP [N+Rel]
 [Yi-ntoni ke] [enye [e-fun-ek-a [emfazini [nga-phandle [kwi-ezi
 [zinto [ndi-zi-bala-yo]?
 (It-is-what another thing which-is-needed in-woman except of-
 these things which I-count-them?)

DP [DP + Ptc]
 [Yi-ntoni [loo nto [i-mantyi]?
 (it-is what that thing it-being-magistrate?)

DP[DP+LOC]
 [Yi-ntoni] [loo nto [ku-we apha]?
 (It-is-what that thing to-you here?)

DP [Dem]
 [Yi-ntoni na] [le]?
 (It-is-what Q this?)

DP [Adj]
 [Yi-ntoni] [e-m-bi]?
 (It-is-what bad (thing)?)

DP [Adj+Rel]
 [Nga-ba [yi-ntoni na] [e-m-bi [e-ku-hl-el-e-yo]?
 (Maybe it-is-what Q bad (thing) which happened to you?)

DP [AgrS-]
 1ps Agrs
 [Mna [ndi-ya [ku-ba yi-ntoni]?
 (I I-will-be what?)
 [Ndi-[yi-ni [ku-we?]
 (I-am-what to-you?)
 [Ndi- [yi-ntoni [emcimbini]?
 (I-am-what in-case?)

2ps AgrS
 [U- [yi-ntoni na [ku-Nontando]?
 (You are what to-Nontando?)

Noun class AgrS
 Cl. 14: [Ubuhle [be-bu-[yi-ntoni]?]
 (Beauty it-was-what?)
 Cl. 7: Isiqhamo [sa- [loo nto] ke [si-be [yini]?
 (Fruit of-that thing it-was what?)
 Cl. 10: [Zi- [yi-ntoni] na [ezi [zinto [z-enz-ek-a [namhla]?
 (They-are-what these things which happen today?)

Expletive **ku-**

[Khangela ke ngoku], [ku-yi-ni?]

(Look now, it-is-what?)

[Nokuba [ku-yi-ni na] [a-ndi-na-kho [u-ku-jik-a [ku-le nto]

(Although it-is-what, I cannot turn from this thing)

Infinitive: class 15:

[Uku-yi-thanda [no-ku-nga-yi-thand-i intombi [ku- [yi-ni [na-thi]?]

(To her love and not to her love a girl, it-is-what with us?)

Cl. 9: Ndi-thi [nantsi [i-[ntoni [ku-lo mntwana]?]

(I-say here-it-is it-is-what to this child?)

(What is it I say to this child?)

[nga-]

(I- [nga- [ntoni] [incoko]?)

(It-is-about-what conversation?)

[poss-]

[Y- [e- [ya- [ntoni] na [le nto]?)

(It-is-of-what this thing?)

[rel-]

[L-uthando po- lu- [yi-ni] [olu [lwa-kho [lu- [nga-sa-phel-i-yo]?]

(It-is love which-is-what this of-you which does not as yet end?)

[Kazi [ndi- [ngu- [mntu [o-yi-ni na ebantwini]

(But I-am-person who-is-what with-people?)

Ni- [ng- [abantu [a-ba- [yi-ntoni] na?

(You are people who are what?)

Sesotho: [DP-]

[Ba-botsa [monna eo] [hore [na [ekaba [molato [ke-eng [ha
[batho ba-bokan-e moo]

(They-ask that man that problem it is what when people met there)

[Thuso] [ke [eng [ho-phela [le yena [a-sa-kgotsofala]

(Use it is what to live with him he not being satisfied)

[Se fedisitseng [maswabi [a [hao] [ke [eng]

(That which finished grief of-you it-is what?)

[V Cop]

[O-tsoha [o-sohlok-eh-ile [ke [eng] na?

(You-wake-up you-being-shabby by what?)

[Ho-lla [ke [eng]?

(There is crying by what?)

Na boholoko bo-tshwan-etse ho-latela monate ka mehla? Ha-ho-na-ng.

(Must pain always follow niceness? Not at all.)

Ke eng+Ptc

[Ke [eng [mosadi [a-bua [jwalo]?)

(It is what (why) woman talk so?)

Ptc+ke eng

[Ba-sa-fihle Maseru [ke eng [koloi e-qhoj-w-a ke lekaaka la lepolesa?]

(They not arrive at Maseru it is what (why) while car is being driven by such a policeman)

Ke eng ha....

Mohlamong le-tla-makala hore na [ke [eng [ha [ke-bits-itse lona]

(Maybe you will be surprised why I called you)

Ke eng rel...

Re-hlalosets-e hore [ke- [ng [ho-se-ng [ho-ena [le [ba-se-ng [ba-sakgotsfala ke yena]

(Explain to us why there are still there are they who as yet they are not satisfied with him)

3.4 Locative interrogatives

Sesotho: kae, hokae

IsiXhosa: phi, ngaphi

Tshivenda: fhi, ngafhi

Xitsonga: kwihi

With intransitive verbs:

Tshivenda: Vha-ya ngafhi?

Sesotho: Ba-ya kae?

IsiXhosa: Ba-ya phi?

Xitsonga: Va-ya kwihi

(They-go where?)

With transitive verbs:

The locative interrogative may appear after the object DP except in IsiXhosa:

Xitsonga: Mi-ta-kuma mali [kwihi]?

Sesotho: Le-tla-fumana tjhelete [kae]?

Tshivenda: Ni-do-wana tshelede [ngafhi]?

(You will find money where?)

It is compulsory for the locative interrogative to appear after the verb in IsiXhosa: the object has then to be moved but it leaves a copy of it behind. It is also possible in all the languages although not compulsory.

IsiXhosa: Ni-za ku-yi-fumana phi imali?

Xitsonga: Mi-ta-yi-kuma kwihi mali?

Tshivenda: Ni-do-i-wana ngafhi tshelede?

Sesotho: Le-tla-e-fumana kae tjhelete?
(You will find it where money?)

Copulative:

Sesotho: Bana ba kae?
 Xitsonga: Vana va kwih?
 IsiXhosa: Abantwana ba-phi?
 Tshivenda: Vhana vha ngafhi?
 (Children they are where?)

Cleft:

Sesotho: Le-dula kae?
 (Ke hokae moo le-dula-ng teng?)
 Tshivenda: Ni-dzula ngafhi?
 Ndi ngafhi hune na-dzula hone?
 Ndi ngafhi ni-dzula-ho hone?
 IsiXhosa: Ni-hlala phi?
 Ku-phi aphon ni-hlala khona?
 Xitsonga: Mi-tshama kwih?
 I kwih laha mi tshama-ka kona?
 (You stay were?)
 (It is where that you stay there?)

3.5 Manner interrogative

Answers to questions with this interrogative may only be interpreted by looking at the discourse:

IsiXhosa: U-yi-lima njani le ntsimi?
 Xitsonga: U-rima nsimu njhani?
 Tshivenda: U-lima tsimu hani?
 Sesotho: O-lema tshimo jwang?
 (You plough land how?)

Answers: Manner: kakuhle (well)
 Instrument: ngeenkabi (with oxen)
 Frequency: kabini ngonyaka (twice per year)
 Permission: Ngoba ndiyiphiwe [because I was given it]

In Tshivenda: the causative verb with **hani** will give an interpretation of cause:

Ndi-nga-mu-wan-is-a hani?
 (I can find her how?)

This interrogative may also appear in the copulative as the locative interrogative.

3.6 Temporal interrogative

IsiXhosa: U-za ku-fika nini?
 Sesotho: O-tla-fihla neng?
 Xitsonga: U-ta-fika rini?
 Tshivenda: U-do-swika lini?
 (You will arrive when?)

With copulatives and a participial clause the meaning of this interrogative changes to indicate a length of time:

IsiXhosa: Ku-nini ba-buy-ile?
 Sesotho: Ke neng ba-bo-ile?
 Xitsonga: Hi rini va-vuy-ile?
 Tshivenda: Ndi lini vho-vhuya?
 (It is long ago they have returned)

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