



Interrogative Structures in nDrapa

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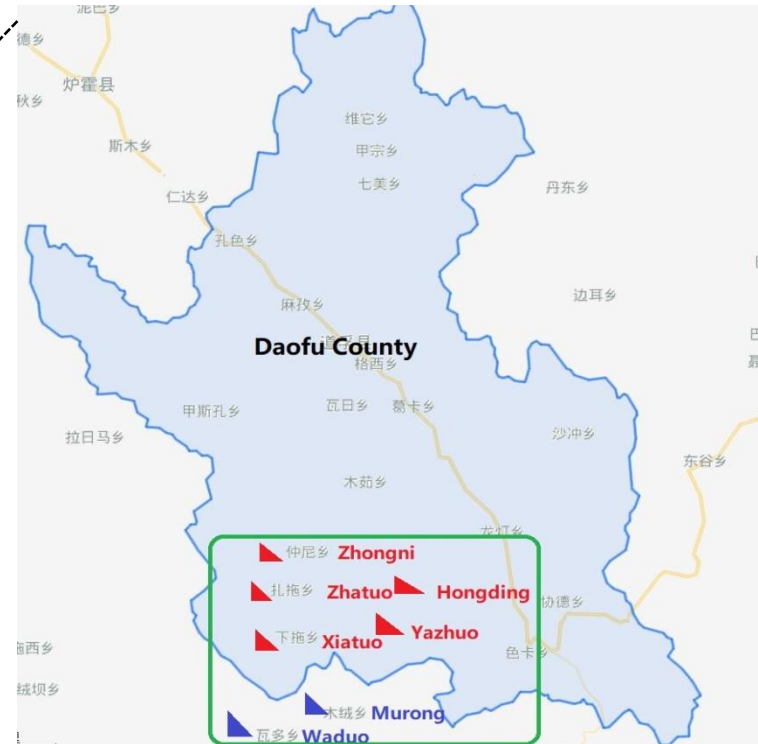
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1. INTRODUCTION

- nDrapa (འདྲཱཔ) (Qiangic, Tibeto-Burman; ISO639-3: zhb) is a severely endangered language spoken by approximately 11,230 Tibetan people in Daofu 道孚 and Yajiang county 雅江 in western Sichuan province of China (Roche et al 2018; Huang forthc.). The nDrapa people are the indigenous residents living along the Yalong River 雅砻江, who are thought to be connected with the culture of 'East Female Country' 东女国 (approx. 6th–7th century A.D) in ancient China.
- Due to its unique and isolated geological context, the nDrapa people have been living an isolated life for centuries. The nDrapa area was originally part of Kham Province. A 1983 source listed 15,000 people belonging to the nDrapa ethnolinguistic group in China.

1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

Villages	Areas where upper nDrapa is spoken	Population (approx.)
仲尼鄉 <i>Zhongni</i>	亞中、麻中、扎然、格孜、折多、貢拖、教學 <i>Yazhong, Mazhong, Zharan, Gezi, Zheduo, Gongtuo, Jiaoxue</i>	1,000
紅頂鄉 <i>Hongding</i>	紅頂、地入、俄古、向秋 <i>Hongding, Diru, Egu, Xiangqiu</i>	1,000
扎拖鄉 <i>Zhatuo</i>	波羅塘、一地瓦子、洛古、扎貢、扎拖 <i>Boluo tang, Yidiwazi, Luogu, Zhagong, Zhatuo</i>	1,000
亞卓鄉 <i>Yazhuo</i>	各布、莫洛、呷拉坎、卡六、烏拉、亞馬子、盤龍、容須卡 <i>Gebu, Moluo, Galakan, Kaliu, Wula, Yamazi, Panlong, Rongxuka</i>	2,000
下拖鄉 <i>Xiatusuo</i>	下瓦然、上瓦然、托比、容須、麥裏、左古、一無 <i>Xiawaran, Shangwaran, Tuobi, Rongxu, Maili, Zuogu, Yiwu</i>	1,000
Villages	Areas where lower nDrapa is spoken	Population (approx.)
瓦多鄉 <i>Wado</i>	杜米村、白龍村、學優村、交吾村、吾知村、中古村 <i>Dumi, Bailong, Xueyou, Jiaowu, Wuzhi, Zhonggu</i>	2,300
木絨鄉 <i>Mu'rong</i>	安桂、木絨、沙學、新衛 <i>Angui, Murong, Shaxue, Xinwei</i>	3,000

Murong nDrapa



Waduo nDrapa



2. Interrogative Structures in nDrapa

- Like many languages in China, nDrapa uses various question types (i.e., polar questions, content questions, yes-no questions, exclaimed questions, surprise questions, and echo questions) to constitute the interrogative categories (Shirai 2007).
- Content questions stands in a *wh-in-situ* position (Cheng 1991) to seek information with regard to the distinct scopes of a sentence.
 - ◆ Content questions and polar questions are marked with sentence-final question particles which must agree with aspectuality and egophoricity.
- Surprise questions are associated with intonation.
- Exclaimed questions use a question mark with rising tones after a point of fact.
- *Yes-no* questions show a behavior of ‘doubling’ question particles, whose model results from a contact with the adjacent Sinitic languages.
- Echo questions are formed on a basis of a particular question particle as well as modality markers to seek answers from the addressee.

3. Standard Polar Question

- Standard polar question is an interrogative type whose expected answer is either 'yes' or 'no'. As a general category, this question type is marked with the sentence-final particle *me*³³ and *mɛ*³³ in nDrapa.
- Both *me*³³ and *mɛ*³³ originate from a negative *ma*³³ 'not'. Once grammaticalized, they can work as a sentence-final question particle.
- Functionally, *me*³³ is only related with the past-time context where the predicate of the sentence must be in the form of its perfective aspect, while *mɛ*³³ occurs in the context with imperfective aspectuality, in which the predicates are marked with habitual, (progressive) durative, prospective aspect markers.
- Although *mɛ*³³ is valid to work with habitual, progressive, durative, and prospective aspect, its tone value is changeable according to distinctive aspects. It has a middle-level tone (↑ 33) when cooperating with the habitual aspect, yet a high falling tone (↓ 53) with the durative and prospect aspect.

3. Standard Polar Question

➤ Sentence-final question particle + perfective aspect

- (1) *je³³nə⁵⁵ a⁵⁵mε⁵⁵ s^ha⁵³-k^hə³³ le⁵⁵ka³³ mue⁵⁵ tə⁵⁵-tε^ho⁵⁵ me³³?*
yesterday mum ground-LOC work CVB DIR-went.3pl QUES.PFV
tə⁵⁵-tε^ho⁵⁵. / tə⁵⁵-ma⁵⁵-tε^ho³³.
DIR-went.3pl DIR-NEG-went.3pl
'Did mother go to work on the farm yesterday?'
'Yes she went there./ No, she didn't went there.'

- (2) *nu⁵⁵ tʊ³³zə⁵³ p^hu⁵⁵-ji⁵⁵-mbə³³rə³³ tʂo⁵⁵ me³³?*
2sg DIST beg-NMLZ-DEM saw QUES.PFV
Did you see that begger?

- (3) *je³³nə⁵⁵ tε⁵⁵stse³³ndu³³ vʒɪ²⁴ a⁵⁵htɪ⁵⁵ me³³?*
yesterday Kangding (place name) snow DIR-fell QUES
a⁵⁵-htɪ⁵³ / a⁵⁵-mə³³-htɪ⁵³.
DIR-snowed DIR-NEG-snowed
'Did Kangding snow yesterday?'
'Yes, it snowed/ No, it didn't snow.'

3. Standard Polar Question

- **Sentence-final question particle + imperfective aspect (habitual/ +33)**

(4) *ndza⁵⁵pi³³ shue⁵⁵-ze⁵⁵ va⁵⁵ko⁵⁵ηe³³mi⁵³ kə⁵⁵-hʈsɿ⁵⁵ la³³ga⁵⁵-ndu⁵⁵ mɛ³³?*
nDrapa people-PL smelling pork DIR-eat like-MOD QUES.IMPFV
'Do the nDrapa people like eating smelling pork?'

(5) *lɛ³³mɛ⁵⁵ ηə³³ηə⁵⁵ to⁵⁵to⁵⁵-ɕhu⁵⁵-tʂə⁵⁵ mɛ³³?*
monk everyday chant scriptures-MOD-DUR QUES.IMPFV
'Does the monk recite scriptures every day?'

(6) *a⁵⁵mi³³ pʊ³³pi⁵⁵ nka⁵⁵-tʂə⁵⁵ mɛ³³?*
grandpa caterpillar fungus dig-DUR QUES.IMPFV
nka⁵⁵-tʂə⁵⁵-zɛ³³. /nka⁵⁵-ma³³tʂə⁵⁵-zɛ³³.
dig-DUR-EMPH dig-NEG-DUR-EMPH
'Is grandpa digging the Chinese caterpillar fungus?'
'Yes, he is./ No, he is not.'

3. Standard Polar Question

- **Sentence-final question particle + imperfective aspect (durative, prospective/ ʏ⁵³)**

(7) *ne*⁵⁵ *kɛ*³³*mə*⁵⁵ *tʃ^ha*⁵⁵-*tʂə*⁵⁵ *mɛ*⁵³?
2pl clothes wash-DUR QUES.IMPFV
*tʃ^ha*⁵⁵-*tʂə*⁵³. / *tʃ^ha*⁵⁵-*ma* ³³*tʂə*⁵³.
wash-DUR wash-NEG-DUR
'Are you washing the clothes?' 'Yes, we are./ No, we are not.'

(8) *ŋe*⁵³ *ʃ^ho*⁵⁵*nɛ*⁵⁵ *ʃ^ha*²⁴ *ta*⁵⁵-*hka*⁵⁵ *fɛi*⁵⁵-*tʂə*⁵⁵ *mɛ*⁵³?
1pl next year farm one-CL buy-PROS QUES.IMPFV
*fɛi*⁵⁵-*tʂə*³³. /*fɛi*⁵⁵-*ma* ³³*tʂə*⁵³.
buy-PROS buy-NEG-PROS
'Will we buy a farm next year?' 'Yes, we will./ No, we will not.'

(9) *nu*⁵⁵ *tʊ*³³*zə*⁵⁵-*tɕʊ*³³ *ja*³³*ɟy*⁵⁵ *li*²⁴ *mue*⁵⁵-*tʂə*⁵⁵ *mɛ*⁵³?
2sg 3sg-BEN potato steam bun make-PROS QUES.IMPFV
*mue*⁵⁵-*tʂə*⁵³. /*mue*⁵⁵-*ma* ³³*tʂə*⁵³.
make-PROS make-NEG-PROS
'Will you make the potato steam bun for him?' 'Yes, I will./ No, I won't.'

4. Surprise Question

- Surprise questions implicate a surprise and mirative mood. nDrapa uses a Sinitic-loan *mbo*³³吧 to enforce the surprising reflection of the addresser.

- (10) *ŋe*⁵³ *ji*⁵⁵*ze*⁵⁵-*ŋi*³³ *kə*⁵⁵-*fə*³³*a*³³ *mbo*^{33?}
 1pl last year-ABL DIR-know-DISJ QUES
*tɕi*³³*zɕ*⁵³, *fə*²⁴. /*ma*³³*ji*⁵⁵, *ma*⁵⁵-*fə*³³?
 COP-EMPH know NEG-COP NEG-know
 ‘Did we know each other from last year? (I’m so surprised!)’
 ‘Yes, we did know.../ No, we didn’t know.’
- (11) *ŋe*⁵³ *tɕu*⁵⁵-*kʰə*⁵⁵ *zo*³³*le*⁵⁵ *mue*⁵⁵-*tɕə*⁵⁵ *mbo*^{33?}
 1pl city-LOC earn money CVB-DUR QUES
 ‘Are we earning money in the city? (I’m so surprised!)’

5. Echo Question

- Echo questions are formed on a basis of content questions and yes-no questions. It employs a specific question particles $\nu\epsilon^{33}$ to seek answers from the addressee. $\nu\epsilon^{33}$ sometimes marks the mood of uncertainty of the speaker.

(12) $t\omega^{33}z\partial^{55}$ $sho^{33}n\partial^{55}$ $t\epsilon^h\partial^{55}t\epsilon^{33}$ mue^{33} $\nu\epsilon^{33}?$
3sg tomorrow what do QUES
'(Please tell me now) what is he going to do tomorrow?'

(13) $t\omega^{33}z\partial^{55}$ $tsu^{55}ku^{55}$ $sh\partial^{55}-t^ha^{55}$ $\partial^{55}-nt\epsilon^hi^{33}-\xi ti^{55}$ $\nu\epsilon^{33}?$
DIST just now who-LOC DIR-curse-PFV.VIS QUES
 $t\zeta a^{55}\epsilon i^{53}-t^ha^{33}$ $\partial^{55}-nt\epsilon^hi^{53}-\xi ti^{33}$.
Zhaxi-LOC DIR-curse-PFV.VIS
'(Please tell me now) who did he curse just now?' 'He cursed Zhaxi.'

6. Exclaimed Question

- Exclaimed questions are not marked with particular question particles or reversed word orders. Rather, it only use a question mark with rising tones (i.e., from 33 to 24) after a point of fact.

- (14) *pui⁵⁵pa³³ shue⁵⁵-ze⁵³ dzye²⁴ tsɿ²⁴-ndu²⁴-tʂɛ³³²⁴ ?*
Tibetan people-PL fish eat-MOD-DUR:EMPH
'The Tibetan people (like) eating fish?'
- (15) *ɲue³³vzɿ⁵³ se³³pə⁵⁵ta³³ tɛ⁵⁵-tɕy⁵⁵ kə⁵⁵-hʈsɿ⁵⁵-ʂtɿ³³²⁴ ?*
bear rabbit one-CL DIR-eat-PFV.VIS
'I saw a bear eating a rabbit?'

7. Yes-No Question

- A yes-no question is formally known as a subcategory of polar questions in general. In most Sinitic languages in China, it has a more peculiar form as [A—not A]. Numerous minority languages in this area usually copy this from the adjacent Sinitic languages. nDrapa further shows a behavior of ‘doubling’ question particles in this structure as [A *me*³³—not A *za*³³].

(16) *ŋa*⁵⁵ *nu*⁵⁵ *ga*⁵⁵-*mbə*³³*rə*³³ *ʂue*⁵⁵ *tɕi*³³-*zɛ*⁵⁵ *me*³³ *ma*³³*ji*⁵⁵ *za*³³?
 1sg 2sg love-ATTR man COP-EMPH QUES NEG-COP QUES
*tɕi*³³-*zɛ*⁵⁵. /*ma*³³*ji*⁵⁵-*zɛ*³³.
 COP-EMPH NEG-COP-EMPH

‘Am I the man you love or not?’ ‘Yes, you are./ No, you are not.’

(17) *ne*⁵⁵ *tɛ*⁵⁵*ʂtse*³³*ndu*³³ *zi*²⁴ *ɛ*^{h0}⁵⁵-*kə*⁵⁵-*ntɛ*^{h0}⁵⁵-*zɛ*³³ *me*³³ *kə*⁵⁵-*ma*⁵⁵-*ntɛ*^{h0}³³ *za*³³?
 2sg Kangding go AUX-DIR-want-EMPH QUES DIR-NEG-want QUES
 ‘Do you want to go to Kangding nor not?’

7. Yes-No Question

- The sentence-final question particle can also phonologically reduced as *a*³³ within a structure of [A *me*³³—not A *a*³³].

(18) *ne*⁵⁵ *lɔ*⁵⁵*ptʂa*⁵⁵-*kʰə*³³ *tɛye*⁵⁵ *me*³³ *ma*⁵⁵-*tɛye*³³ *a*³³?
2pl school-LOC stay QUES NEG-stay QUES
'Are you in the school or not?'

(19) *nu*⁵⁵ *zə*⁵⁵ *gu*⁵⁵*htʂhe*³³ *na*²⁴ *me*³³ *ma*⁵⁵-*na*³³ *a*³³?
2sg GEN hair black QUES NEG-black QUES
Is your hair black or not?

8. Content Question

- Content questions use interrogative words/ *wh*-words such as when, where, which, who, how, etc., to specify the information that is desired by the addresser. nDrapa is a *wh-in-situ* language, no movement is needed. Only four question particles (*a*³³, *za*³³, *gia*³³, *tʂa*³³) are valid in this interrogative type.
- *a*³³, as a Sinitic loan, is a versatile question particle in the *wh*-question type.
- *gia*³³ interfaces with aspectuality and egophoricity (San Roque et al. 2018:23). It individually interacts with the perfective aspect and second person.
- *za*³³ is fused with non-egophoricity. It individually interacts with the third-person subject rather than the first and second one.
- *tʂa*³³ is not restricted with any person, but it is only harmonious with the imperfective aspectual situations (i.e., durative, prospective aspect).

8. Content Question

➤ **Sentence-final question particle + perfective aspect + third person**

(20) *s^{hə}53 nu55-wu33 “ŋa55 t^hɪ24 mə55-h^htsɿ55-tʂɛ33”-dɛ33 dzɛ53 za33?*
who 2sg-DAT 1sg beef NEG-吃-DUR:EMPH-QUOT say QUES.3
Who said “I don’t eat beef”?

(21) *tʊ33zə55 zə33 ja55-wu55 tɛ^hə55tɛ33 kə55-dzi55 za33?*
3sg GEN hand-LOC what DIR-paste QUES.3
What did he paste on this hand?

8. Content Question

➤ Sentence-final question particle + imperfective aspect + third person

(20) *mɛ³³lə⁵⁵* *ki⁵⁵tɛ⁵³* *tʂhe⁵³-ze³³* *tɛa⁵⁵-tʂə³³* *ʒa³³?*
butter where sell-NMLZ have-DUR QUES.3

‘Where is the place to sell the butter?’

(21) *pə³³dzə⁵⁵* *tɛhe⁵⁵to³³* *a⁵⁵-mne³³-tʂə³³* *ʒa³³?*
child when DIR-leave school-DUR QUES.3

‘When does the child usually leave school?’

(22) *mɔ³³gu⁵⁵* *a⁵⁵-hti⁵⁵* *a³³-mu³³* *kɛ⁵³tʂə³³* *ʒa³³?*
rain DIR-fall DIR-CVB why QUES.3

‘Why does it often rain?’

8. Content Question

➤ Sentence-final question particle + perfective aspect + second person

(23) *nu*⁵⁵ *s^hə⁵⁵-m^ts^ha⁵⁵* *ŋa⁵⁵zə³³* *ə⁵⁵-jə³³* *gia*^{33?}
2sg who-COM Xinlong (place name) DIR.PFV-go QUES.2
'Who went to Xinlong with you (lit., You went to Xinlong with whom?)'

(24) *nu*⁵⁵ *je*³³*nə⁵⁵* *tɛ^hə⁵⁵tɛ³³* *kə⁵⁵-fɛi⁵⁵* *gia*^{33?}
2sg yesterday what DIR.PFV-buy QUES.2
'what did you buy yesterday?'

- An impersonal question can correlate with a causative marker, where the question marker *gia*³³ indicates the potential agent of the second-person pronoun.

(25) *nu*⁵⁵ *zə³³* *ja⁵⁵-wu⁵⁵* *tɛ^hə⁵⁵tɛ³³* *kə⁵⁵-dzi⁵⁵-tʂ^hu³³* *gia*^{33?}
2sg GEN hand-LOC what DIR-paste-CAUS QUES.2
'What is pasted on your hand? (lit., (You) make your hand paste what?)'

8. Content Question

- In some cases, while the subject is not second-person, *gia*³³ is also used as an person-sensitive question marker, implying the second-person agent is the causer of the actions.

(26) *tɛə*⁵⁵*tɛ*⁵⁵ *ki*⁵⁵*tɛ*⁵³ *kə*⁵⁵-*lɿ*⁵⁵ *gia*³³?
book where DIR-put QUES.2
‘Where did (you) put the book?’

(27) *ta*⁵⁵*je*³³ *ki*⁵⁵*tɛ*⁵⁵ *kə*⁵⁵-*ŋo*⁵⁵*ŋo*³³ *gia*³³?
money where DIR-hide QUES.2
‘Where did (you) hide away the money?’

8. Content Question

➤ Sentence-final question particle + imperfective aspect

- *tʂa*³³ may be a fused form of the imperfective marker *tʂə*³³ and the versatile question particle *a*³³. It thus shows the function of imperfectivity.

(28) *ŋe*⁵⁵ *tsʰə*³³ *pɛ*⁵⁵ *ʈe*⁵⁵-*wu*⁵⁵ *ta*⁵⁵*je*³³ *kɛ*⁵⁵*ɛʰə*³³ *tə*⁵⁵-*ʂtɛ*⁵³ *tʂa*³³?
1pl LNK month-DAT money how DIR-return QUES.IMPFV
'Next month, how can we return the money?'

(29) *nu*⁵⁵ *tɛ*^{hɛ}*ʰe*⁵⁵*to*³³ *tə*⁵⁵-*ka*³³ *tɛa*³³ *tʂa*³³?
2sg when DIR-get up QUES.IMPFV
'When will you get up?'

(30) *tʊ*³³ *ʂə*⁵⁵ *tɛ*^{hə}*ʰə*⁵⁵*tɛ*³³ *mue*³³ *tʂa*³³?
3sg what do QUES.IMPFV
'What is he doing?'

9. Discussion

QuesP	Interrogatives		Aspectuality			Persons		
	Polar	Content	Perfective	Durative	Prospective	1	2	3
<i>=tʂa³³</i>		+		+	+	+	+	+
<i>=a³³</i>		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>=zɑ³³</i>		+	+					+
<i>=gia³³</i>		+	+				+	
<i>=me³³</i>	+		+			+	+	+
<i>=mɛ³³</i>	+			+	+	+	+	+
<i>=mbo³³</i>	+		+	+	+			

10. Conclusion

- Like many languages in Asia (Chisholm et al. 1984), nDrapa have a variety of interrogative structures understood as a kind of illocutionary act to seek for answers from the addressee.
- Standard polar questions are marked with numerous sentence-final particles that should be in agreement with aspects. The morphological change of the distinct particles is realized by vowel alternation on the one hand (i.e., $me^{33} \leftrightarrow m\epsilon^{33}$), and tone change on the other (from **33** to **55**).
- Exclaimed questions are only marked with the sentence-final intonation. Surprise and echo questions also enjoy their specific question particles, with some of the particles borrowed from the adjacent Sinitic languages.
- Content questions are *wh-in-situ* types. The selection of the sentence-final particles in this type should not only agree with particular aspectuality, but also with person sensitivity and shiftability which may potentially interface with the egophoric/non-egophoric system in this language.

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Thank you!
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