“Why” in situ in Northern Italian dialects

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Trevigiano, a Venetan dialect, has two forms for “why”: parché and parcossa. Crosslinguistically, “why” has been argued to be merged directly in the Left Periphery (Hornstein 1995, Ko 2005, Rizzi 1990, 2001, Stepanov and Tsai 2008, Thornton 2008, Shlonsky and Soare 2011), so one does not expect it to appear sentence-internally. We show that parché behaves as a well-behaved ‘why’ but parcossa is merged sentence-internally.

Aims of this paper:
- Introduce novel data on parché and parcossa in Trevigiano;
- Study the different distributional properties of parché and parcossa;
- Explain how “why” is licensed sentence-internally in Trevigiano.

1. Trevigiano

(1) a. *Chi a-tu visto al marcà?*  
who have-you<sub>CL</sub> seen at.the market  
“Who did you see at the market?”

b. *A-tu visto chi al marcà?*  
have-you<sub>CL</sub> seen who at.the market

a’. *Che profesor a-ea visto al marcà?*  
what professor has-she<sub>CL</sub> seen at.the market  
“Which professor did she see at the market?”

b’. *A-ea visto che profesor al marcà?*  
has-she<sub>CL</sub> seen what professor at.the market

(2) a. *Chi pens-ea [ che te ga visto al marcà ]?*  
who thinks-she<sub>CL</sub> that you<sub>CL</sub> have seen at.the market  
“Who does she think you saw at the market?”

b. *Pens-ea [ che te ga visto chi al marcà ]?*  
thinks-she<sub>CL</sub> that you<sub>CL</sub> have seen who at.the market

a’. *Che maestra pens-ea [ che te ga visto al marcà ]?*  
what teacher thinks-she<sub>CL</sub> that you<sub>CL</sub> have seen at.the market  
“Which teacher does she think you saw at the market?”

b’. *Pens-ea [ che te ga visto che maestra al marcà ]?*  
thinks-she<sub>CL</sub> that you<sub>CL</sub> have seen what teacher at.the market

French: D-linked and non-D-linked wh-phrases “in situ”; but “insituness” and SCII are NOT compatible (Mathieu 1999, Boskovic 2000, Cheng & Rooryck 2002) (3a-b). TV: “insituness” triggers obligatory Subject-Clitic Inversion (SCII):

(3) a. *As-tu mangé quand?  
    have-you eaten when  
    “When did you eat?”  
   
b. *T’as mangé quand?  
    you’ve eaten when

North Italian dialects (Poletto 1993, Poletto & Vannelli 1993): Clefting is the most productive question formation strategy (4a-b):

(4) a. Chi ze-o che te a visto jeri?  
    who COP-expl that youCL have seen yesterday  
    “Who is it that you saw yesterday”  
   
b. Ze-o chi che te a visto jeri?  
    COP-expl who that youCL have seen yesterday

1.1 Parcossa

Parcossa obligatorily triggers SCII (5a-b):

(5) a. Parcossa si-tu ndàa al marcà?  
    parcossa is-youCL gone,F to.the market  
    “Why did you go to the market?”  
   
b. *Parcossa te si ndàa al marcà?  
    parcossa youCL is gone,F to.the market

Parcossa is perfectly fine “in situ” in the true (as opposed to echo) question reading (5c), and it can be licensed both in regular (6a) and in reverse clefts (6b):

(5) c. Si-tu ndàa parcossa al marcà?  
    is-youCL gone,F parcossa to.the market

(6) a. Parcossa ze-o che te me ciami a ste ore?  
    parcossa COP-expl that youCL call me at these hours  
    “Why are you calling me so late?”  
   
b. Ze-o parcossa che te me ciami a ste ore?  
    COP-expl parcossa that youCL call me at these hours

1.2 Parché

Parché CANNOT be combined with SCII (7a-b):

(7) a. *Parché si-tu ndàa al marcà?  
    parché is-youCL gone,F to.the market  
    “Why did you go to the market?”  
   
b. Parché te si ndàa al marcà?  
    parché youCL is gone,F to.the market

Parché is very marginal “in situ” in the non-echo reading (7c):
(7) c. ??Te si ndàa parché al marcà?
youCL is goneF parché to.the market

Parché is ungrammatical in regular clefts (8a), and slightly degraded in reverse clefts (8b):

(8) a. *Parché ze-o che te me ciami a ste ore?
parché COP-expl that youCL call me at these hours
   “Why are you calling me so late?”
 b. ?Ze-o parché che te me ciami a ste ore?
   COP-expl parché that youCL call me at these hours

Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parché</th>
<th>Parcossa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex situ + SCII</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex situ NO SCII</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Regular cleft</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Reverse” cleft</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 : Distribution of parcossa and parché in TV

1.3 The position of lexical subjects in questions with parché and parcossa

(9) a. Parcossa cant-ea, to mama?
   parcossa sings-sheCL # your mother
   “You mother, why is she singing?”
 b. *Parcossa to mama cant-ea?
   parcossa your mother sings-sheCL
   “Why is your mother singing?”
 a’. Cuando cant-ea, to mama?
   when sings-sheCL # your mother
   “Your mother, when does she sing?”
 b’. *Cuando to mama cant-ea?
   when your mother sings-sheCL
   “When does your mother sing?”

(10) a. Parché a canta, to mama?
    parché sheCL sings, your mother
    “Your mother, why is she singing?”
 b. Parché to mama a canta?
    parché your mother sheCL sings
    “Why is your mother singing?”
Standard Italian (StandIT) (Rizzi 2001), perché (11a-b vs. 12a-b):

(11) a. *Perché ha parlato Gianni?
   perché has spoken Gianni
   “Why did Gianni speak?”
   (StandIT)
   b. *Perché Gianni ha parlato?
   perché Gianni has spoken
   (StandIT)

(12) a. Quando ha parlato Gianni?
   when has spoken Gianni
   “When did Gianni speak?”
   (StandIT)
   b. *Quando Gianni ha parlato?
   when Gianni has spoken
   (StandIT)

Conclusion:
- Parché can be analysed as externally-merged in the left periphery.
- The different behaviour of parcossa can be attributed to its being externally-merged TP-internally and then (optionally) moved to the left periphery.

2. The interaction of parché and parcossa with negation and focus

2.1 (In)compatibility with focus

(13) a. Why didn’t you fix the car?
   (StandIT)
   b. *How didn’t you fix the car?

(14) a. *Parché no te si vignuo
   why NEG youCL are come
   “Why didn’t you come?”
   (StandIT)
   b. *Parcossa no si-tu vignuo?
   why NEG are-youCL come

In a bi-clausal sentence, both parché and parcossa can be construed either with the high or with low clause (15a-c):

(15) a. Parcossa dizì-tu [ che a ze vignua ]?
   why say-youCL that sheCL is come
   “Why are you saying that she came?”
   ✔ short construal, ✔ long construal
   b. *Parché te dizì [ che a ze vignua ]?
   why youCL say that sheCL is come
   “Why are you saying that she came?”
   ✔ short construal
   c. *Parché dizì-tu [ che a ze vignua ]?
   why youCL say that sheCL is come
   “Why are you saying that she came?”
   ✔ long construal

With negation (16 vs. 17):

(16) a. *Parcossa no dizì-tu che a ze vignua?
   parcossa NEG say-youCL that sheCL is come
   ✗ short construal, ✗ long construal
   b. Parcossa dizì-tu che no a ze vignua?
   parcossa say-youCL that NEG sheCL is come
   ✔ short construal, ✗ long construal
(17) a. *Parché no te dizi che a ze vignua?* parché NEG you say that sheCL is come ⬗ short construal, ✗ long construal
   b. *Parché dizi-tu che no a ze vignua?* parché NEG say-youCL that sheCL is come ⬗ long construal
   b’. *Parché te dizi che no a ze vignua?* parché you say that NEG sheCL is come ⬗ short construal

2.2 (In)compatibility with focus

(18) a. ??Cuando a-tu dato I POMI a Gianni?
    when have-youCL given THE APPLES to Gianni
   b. ??Cuando a-tu dato i pomi A GIANNI?
    when have-youCL given the apples TO GIANNI

(19) a. *Parché te ghe gato I POMI aa Maria?*
    parché you DAT have given THE APPLES to.the Maria
   b. *Parché te ghe gato i pomi AA MARIA?*
    parché you DAT have given the apples TO.THE MARIA

(20) a. *Parcossa ghe ga-tu dato I POMI aa Maria?*
    why DAT have-youCL given THE APPLES to.the Maria
   b. *Parcossa ghe ga-tu dato i pomi AA MARIA?*
    why DAT have-youCL given the apples TO.THE MARIA

(21) a. *Ghe ga-tu dato parcossa I POMI aa Maria?*
    DAT have-youCL given parcossa THE APPLES to.the Maria
   b. *Ghe ga-tu dato parcossa i pomi AA MARIA?*
    DAT have-youCL given parcossa the apples TO.THE MARIA

2.3 Parcossa can have a ‘pure’ reason interpretation

(22) *But-ei parcossa i persegheri, de sta stajon?*
    blossom-they parcossa the peach.trees, in this season
    “Why are the peach trees blossoming so early?”

References


