WH-QUESTION PARTICLES IN SOME LANGUAGES OF THE SOUTHERN NORTHWEST COAST

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At least three languages of western Oregon mark wh-questions with a special particle or affix that is distinct from the polarity question marker. Wh-questions are thereby distinguished from other constructions that involve interrogative pronouns. In at least one of these languages, too (Alsea), the particle is largely restricted to sentences that have the full interactional force of questions (expecting an answer from an addressee). The geographical distribution of the relatively uncommon trait of a particle specifically for wh-questions crosscuts language family boundaries, appearing in Tillamook but not, apparently, in other Salish languages in the vicinity, and also appearing in some but not all of the putatively Penutian (at any rate, non-Salish) languages of the Oregon and Washington coast: possibly some local diffusion of the trait has occurred.

After sketching a partial typology of interrogative particles as they interact with wh-questions (section 1), I lay out in more detail the facts of Alsea (section 2) and Tillamook (section 3) as I currently understand them. I then more briefly consider the patterns found in the rest of the Salish family (section 4) and in other languages of the southern Northwest Coast (section 5), tentatively considering the issue of diffusion.¹

1. PARTICLES IN WH-QUESTIONS

Cross-linguistically, polarity questions are frequently marked by a particle (sentence-peripheral, in this paper.

¹ Tillamook and all the non-Salish languages exemplified here (except Trique) are extinct. Data on languages other than Tillamook are drawn largely from published text collections: the texts collected by Boas (1894) in Lower Chinook, and those published by Leo Frachtenberg in Alsea (1917, abbreviated as "J"; 1920, abbreviated as "ATM"), Sinuwalan (1914), and Coos (1913). Tillamook data come largely from manuscript sources: in particular, the dictionary that is being prepared by M. Terry Thompson (n.d., abbreviated as "TillD"), and the text files of May Edel (in the University of Washington archives; these include some texts collected by Franz Boas). (Lexical and grammatical files on Alsea and Tillamook collected by Melville Jacobs, both in the University of Washington archives, have also been consulted to some extent but are not cited here; the recent paper on Tillamook by Egesdal and Thompson (forthcoming) has been very helpful.) Much of my work on Alsea and Tillamook was supported by a postdoctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution. Work on Alsea has also been assisted by discussions with Gene Buckley and especially by his making available to me a database version of most of Frachtenberg's Alsea texts.

For all the languages discussed here, the grammatical analyses that I present in the main text or in morpheme glosses are often tentative; I'd appreciate the pointing out of inelicities or errors, though I hope to have avoided problems that will affect the main points under discussion in this paper.

or else in some kind of sentential second position, after the first phonological word or phrase of the sentence), but this is less common for wh-questions. I have not conducted a systematic survey, but as best I can tell at present, languages that mark polarity questions by a particle (glossed "Q" below) typically do one of two things in wh-questions: (i) they may use the same particle to mark wh-questions; or (ii) wh-questions may simply be left without a particle, like declarative sentences. (Ultan [1978: 228] reports both types as about equally frequent, but does not specify whether the question particle in wh-questions is the same as the particle in polarity questions. Sadock and Zwicky [1986] do not examine this particular parameter either.)

The first is the pattern followed by Takelma, where both kinds of questions are marked by a particle =di, enclitic in sentential second position (Sapir 1912: 254f., 277f.); it is found in various other languages too (e.g., Maricopa [Gordon 1986: 61-65], Lakhota [Van Valin 1993: 97ff.]).²

Takelma
1) Polarity question
   a. go.Aorist-2sAorist-Q
      "Did you go?" (Sapir 1912: 66)
   b. gi di hami-t'ban db'm-k'a
      1s Q father-2pPo kill-1sInfer
      "Was it I that killed your father?" (Sapir 1909: 158, lines 2f.)

2) Wh-question
   nök'=di gu'x-dök' lohō-n
   who=Q wife-1sPo die-Caus
   "Who caused my wife to die?" (Sapir 1909: 142, line 9)

² I have in general retained the transcriptions of my sources; most of these are in one or another version of the older Americanist transcriptional system where <o> = [o], <e> = [e], <i> = [i], and so on. Morphological analysis, use of hyphenation and other punctuation, and glossing often differ from that of the sources, however. (Note that I use the double hyphen to connect clitics with their hosts.)
The second pattern, in which wh-questions are left without a particle, is followed by most Salish languages.

**Thompson River Salish (Nie?kepmxcin)**

3) **Polarity question**
   x"uy' kʷ n' nés
   Fut 2aSu Q go
   "Will you go?" (Thompson & Thompson 1992: 143)

4) **Wh-question**
   swét e nés
   who Art go
   "Who went?" (fieldnotes)

But there are occasional languages in which wh-questions are marked by a particle different from the one that marks polarity questions. A clear case is Copala Trique as described by Hollenbach (1992). Declarative sentences are marked with clause-final a’32 or one of various other particles; polarity questions by clause-final nabs or zhab 2; and wh-questions by clause-final gfi’ or omt”, which I will gloss "WhQ" (237; superscript numerals represent tones). The wh-word itself is fronted to clause-initial focus position (226). (Somewhat surprisingly for a language with sentence-final particles, 'l’rique evidently has rigid verb-initial word order except that fronting of a single nonverb constituent is allowed.)

**Copala Trique**

5) **Declarative**
   nawi’3 kune-x’3 sinduh3 yanx3 tuhwa3 shna-x3 a”3
   Cpl.finish Cpl.seat-1s doll wax mouth cornfield(Possessed)-ls Decl
   "I’ve finished placing the wax dolls at the edge of my cornfield" (Hollenbach 1992: 418)

6) **Polarity question**
   narih4 zoh1 ree6 zoh1 nah3
   Cpl.find 2s father 2s Q
   "Did you find your father?" (Hollenbach 1992: 225)

7) **Wh-question**
   me3 ze32 kirax3 gwas4 gs4
   which it Cpl.buy John WhQ
   "What did John buy?" (Hollenbach 1992: 226) (me” ze” is a phrase translatable as "what")

On the southern Northwest Coast, Alsea and its immediate northern neighbor Tillamook approximate to this type.

2. **ALSEA**

In Alsea, polarity questions are marked by a particle š’, usually in some sort of sentential second position.

8) qalí’x-al-tx=apet ə’
   shout-Ctn-Intr=2d Q
   "Do you two always shout?" (ATM 130.12)

But wh-questions are marked by a different particle, ſ’n (here glossed "WhQ"), which is also typically in some sort of sentential second position. (Both question particles likely are enclitics, since they must be preceded by something, and indeed Frachtenberg often connects them to the preceding word by a hyphen, even though they frequently bear their own stress. I write them here as separate words, however.)

9) a) sqá’tit=ipst š’n qau’wis ku’w-al-txa
   which=2d WhQ first embark-Ctn-Intr
   "Which of you two enters the canoe first?" (ATM 130.13)

   b) k=ná’k’-s
   Fut=where-to WhQ 3Po=heart=3Po distribute-(?) Ctn-Passive
   "Where shall his heart be scattered?" (ATM 66.7f.)

   In the above examples, the WhQ particle is postposed to the interrogative pronoun; other enclitics, in particular the subject pronominals, intervene between the two as in (9a). However, the WhQ particle may alternatively be postposed to some other sentence-initial host (perhaps only k’ Future or tem “then”), while the interrogative pronoun follows later in the clause; this seems to be most frequent when the "pronoun" is an interrogative pro-verb (10a), but is also sometimes attested with other interrogatives (10b-d).

10) a) k=ip š’n ta’xti
    Fut=2p WhQ do.what
    "What are you going to do?" (ATM 22.4)

   b) tem š’n muw’hú qa-d’keai l-ha1’š-an-al-x
      then WhQ now Erg-who Pref-look.after-Ctn-Cpl
      "And who looks after it usually ...?" (ATM 140.38)

   c) te’m=ipst š’n muw’hú lía’
      then=2d WhQ do what-TrFut
      k’ilí’l-al-txa
      "Then how do you two get in?" (ATM 130.15f.)

   d) k’in š’n ta’xti ná’k’-eai lítq’a’a
      Fut=1s WhQ Anger where do what-TrFut
      "Where, then, am I going to put it?" (ATM 132.1)

In this second pattern, the WhQ particle is clearly a sentence-level particle, not a morphological part of the interrogative pronoun itself. Indeed, in available examples in which the WhQ particle
is postponed to an interrogative pronoun, the latter either is sentence-initial or else is preceded within the sentence just by a possibly proclitic particle (as far as the evidence goes, only k-Future or tem "then", plus any pronominal or other enclitics): so it may be possible to argue that all instances of the WhQ particle immediately follow the first phonological word of the clause, and thus that it is always a sentence-level (second-position) particle.

Most of the Alsea interrogative pronouns also function as indefinites in non-interrogative sentences. (This is of course fairly common cross-linguistically [Haspelmath 1997: 170-79]; it is true of all the languages discussed in the present paper. Haspelmath, usefully, distinguishes various subtypes of indefinite pronoun—specific known or unknown, irrealis, free-choice, negsted, and so on—which may be coded differently in a given language, but I will not try to explore such distinctions here.)

11) a) ὶk=an=iyati̇ nāk-s y̗ːx-aun not=1s=not where-to go-Ctn "I am not going anywhere" (ATM 78.12) b) ḥu̇tak qa̱-u̱'keai qai̱kw̱-a'yu̱ maybe Erg-who harm-Incho-2sOb "perchance somebody will hurt thee" (J 67.5) c) k=in ay̱-a'̱i̱-m ḻ-x̱̱-ḻḏ-u̱ ṯ is hi̱telum nāk-s Fut=1s go-Incho-Fut Prep seek(?)-Inf Prep people where-to "I will go to look for people somewhere" (ATM 66.21)

Scanty evidence (essentially consisting just of the examples cited below) suggests that in a clause containing both the polarity question particle a̱ and an interrogative pronoun, the latter must or may be interpreted as indefinite rather than as interrogative.3

12) a) a̱a', k=in=uḵ a̱ ta̱ṯi̱ nāk-s ay̱-a'̱-sal-tx-am yes Fut=1s=away Q Anger where-to go(?)-Perf-Intr-Fut "Indeed, (for what cause) should I have gone away anywhere?" (ATM 64.9) [The translation is Frachtenberg's, but a better one would probably be "Should I have gone away anywhere?", Context shows this to be a rhetorical question, equivalent to "I didn't go anywhere."] b) k=i̱yati ṉi̱k ṟa̱' s̱ i̱ḻṯq-anm Fut=not just what Q do-what-Passive "Is not anything going to be done to him?" (ATM 152.36)

3 Compare Lakhota and Maricopa, where interrogative/indefinite pronouns are interpreted as indefinite if there is no sentence-final interrogative particle or suffix, but are ambiguous when there is a sentence-final interrogative particle: they may be interpreted as interrogative pronouns, and the sentence as a wh-question, or they may be interpreted as indefinites, and the sentence as a polarity question (Gordon 1986: 61; Van Valin 1993: 98.).
from anyone, and to which neither the speaker nor anyone else knows answer at the time the question is asked, (the latter property distinguishes this variety of question from rhetorical questions proper, to which the speaker assumes that the answer is obvious); a question expressing the speaker's puzzlement or indecision. In the texts published by Frachtenberg, such questions either are addressed by the speaker to himself (or herself) and are answered by the same speaker, or else lack any reply and are not clearly addressed to anybody; translations such as "I wonder what/where/..." generally seem appropriate. All examples of quasi-rhetorical questions I have noted so far in the Alsea data are wh-questions; in principle, one would expect quasi-rhetorical polarity questions to be possible too, and I presume that their rarity or absence is simply an accident of the data.5

15) a) k=zi'tn=aux hi'ts muw'hu lâ kîwa-y'-â's 
Fut=1s=ax-3d Surprise how wh-question
"(I) wonder in what way I can fool those two?" (J 75.15f.) 
[Same speaker continues: "Yes, (disguised) as a child I will float in a canoe"]

b) k=qî't' nî'k'-s ay-â'I-m 
Fut=Uncertain where-to go Incho:IntrFut Det seal
"I wonder where the seal is going to go?" (ATM 168.22) 
[No clear addressee; no reply]

In contrast to quasi-rhetorical questions like those of (15), the true wh-questions of (9) and (10), with the wh-question particle, all immediately receive an answer from someone other than whoever uttered the question. Thus to (9a) "Which of you enters the canoe first?", the addressee immediately responds "Oh! my elder sister usually embarks first" (ATM 130), and to (9b) "Where shall his heart be scattered?", the addressee responds "To the south and also to the east" (ATM 66). The particle s'n thus is largely restricted to sentences that have full interrogative interactional force, requiring an answer from some addressee.

Quasi-rhetorical questions constitute a sort of transition between the genuinely interrogative use of interrogative pronouns in true wh-questions and their use as indefinites. An indefinite, like an interrogative pronoun used in a quasi-rhetorical question, requires no response from the audience. On the other hand, presumably the propositional content of a sentence containing a true indefinite, such as (11b) "(Perchance someone will hurt thee)", is expected to be informative to its addressee; but a quasi-rhetorical question such as (15b) would not be informative if the interrogative pronoun were interpreted as an indefinite ("The seal is going somewhere"): in the narrative context at this point, the characters must already know that the seal towing the canoe is going somewhere or other. (It is considerations like this that give me some confidence in Frachtenberg's translations of quasi-rhetorical questions as questions—more exactly, as questions embedded under "I wonder"—rather than as declarative sentences with an indefinite pronoun, though certainly ambiguity is sometimes possible.)

Occasional exceptions to the above generalizations for the use of the question particles have turned up in the Alsea texts: isolated examples of an apparent wh-question marked by the polarity question particle a', of a polarity question marked by the WhQ particle s'n, of a wh-question marked by both together, and so on. One exceptional pattern is frequently enough attested that it is likely to be a legitimate alternative construction (though very much in the minority) rather than just a performance error, namely a true wh-question without the particle.

16) tem=1x nî'k'eai ts=ha'm hâ'ul-â=1x then=3p where Det=2sP0 brother-P=3p
"And where are thy brothers?" (ATM 30.17)
[Next speaker replies: "Alas, the house suddenly closed on them"]
(Cf. also ATM 108.11f., J 67.36f.)

The wh-question particle is evidently not absolutely obligatory in true wh-questions.

3. TILLAMOOK

In Tillamook, immediately to the north of Alsea, polarity questions and wh-questions are likewise marked by different particles in sentential second position. The polarity question particle is hî; the wh-question particle is kî (sometimes transcribed k'i by Edel).6

17) a) té c-hawaâ'ów-sâ (h)i 
Fem Asp-hungry-M-2sSu Q
"Are you hungry?" (TillD s.v. (h)i)

b) ?u', té ?îtx'ûlêt hi (do) cu kwen-én-s 
oh Fem young.woman Q (Art) ptc get-Tr-2sSu
"Oh, did you get a young woman?" (TillD s.v. (h)i)

c) (e) gohandzâ'xel hi
/ Ï / 
and(?) Irr-go-Time-wind-Incho Q
"Is it going to blow?" (Edel text files, The Lucky Bones 4)

18) a) n(o) cê(k)nûs ki desc. â-yîl-ên-â-at where WhQ Masc (?)-find Tr-2sSu
"Where did you find it?" (TillD s.v. cêns)

b) g'atû ki c-watâ'k ü who WhQ Asp-pass-Intr

6 The Tillamook examples are in two different orthographies, depending on source; for examples drawn from Edel's unpublished texts, I have provided both her spelling and a tentative retranscription into the orthography of Egesdal and Thompson (forthcoming) and Thompson (n.d.), the latter within slash brackets.
"Who's passing by?" (TillD s.v. ْgُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُـُ~

c) daga'ta'uc ki /
**/da=gataw-ś** ki /
Masc=who-2sSu WhQ

"Who are you?" (Edel text files, Panther and Flint Man 12)

It is hard to tell from the data whether the WhQ particle must be postposed to the interrogative pronoun or whether it is a second-position particle that happens to be preceded by an interrogative particle in attested instances that I have observed so far; Tillamook evidently requires more rigidity than does Alees that interrogative pronouns be clause-initial.

(I ignore here some complications which will eventually have to be faced. Thompson (n.d., s.v. k-i) cites a few examples of the wh-question particle that are evidently not in wh-questions, e.g. watahaf ki [all WhQ] "all of them?", apparently a polarity question. There may also be examples in Edel's texts of ki, or a homophonous particle, in non-interrogative contexts with some sort of modal sense. The complete range of functions of this particle remain to be determined; but it is the case both that ki occurs most frequently by far in wh-questions and that true wh-questions in main clauses regularly contain ki.)

Interrogative pronouns in other contexts than main-clause wh-questions (e.g., in embedded questions or when functioning as indefmites) are not accompanied by the WhQ particle ki (though there may well be sporadic exceptions). (Evidence on embedded polarity questions in Tillamook is not clear at this point.)

19) Embedded questions
a) *qe?ā qē nā-ʔes-nāx-i* n [čēns
not ptc Pref-know-Tr-1sSu P where
čā čī č ĭs-αnā(ʔ)win ]
Det Dem ptc 2sPo-house
"I don't know where your house was" (TillD s.v. ʔes')

b) *qā(ʔ)č qāncζ'ανux* čēns conθ/
not Ptc Pref-know-Tr where 3sIndep
"He didn't know where he was" (Edel text files, Nothing but Women 27)

20) Indefinites
a) *gʷʔαn-ʔāl-ı* na čēns
Irř=go-1sSu to where
"I'm going somewhere" (TillD s.v. čēns)

b) *ĩ=naʔč-ʃtξx* in gʷʔαtu
Fem=enter-house(-?) who
"Someone has come into the house" (TillD s.v. gʷʔαtu)

One or two examples have turned up which might be considered quasi-rhetorical wh-questions, too (though I am not entirely certain of their proper analysis); ki does not occur in these examples.

21) *la=ta-xtca'n-o* avul
P1=Asp-do.\what(-?)Middle then(-?)
"What are they doing then?" (self-directed; no verbal answer expected) (Edel, text files, The Boy Stolen By Thunder 31)

Interrogative pronouns in their indefinite use can (and normally do?) follow the main predicate of their clause, while as interrogatives (in main-clause or embedded questions) they are normally clause-initial.

4. OTHER SALISH LANGUAGES
Most other Salish languages use no interrogative particle in wh-questions—that is, they resemble Thompson (4) rather than Tillamook. The only clear exception of which I am aware is Bella Coola, geographically and genetically distant from Tillamook. Nater (1984: 116f., 128) reports that interrogative wh-words host an enclitic sequence =ʔi=ks, =ʔl=ks, =ks, distinct from the polarity question enclitic =(ʔ)α.

Bella Coola

22) a) *ti=ka=ks ti=?ay-uc-m-it ac ?al=mlň* Art=which=WhQ Art=do-mouth-MP-3s0b:gpSu those Prep=us
"Which one of us is it they are talking about?" (Davis & Saunders 1980: 45f., sentence 28)

b) *kā=ks si-k*=l-us-m-s where=WhQ Nz(-?)face-MP-3sSu
"Where did he get down on his hands and knees?" (Davis & Saunders 1980: 46, sentence 35)

Wh-words lack these enclitics when they have an indefinite sense (23) (in which case they are usually preceded by an article) and in embedded questions (24).

Bella Coola

23) *ʔaX=k w* ti=ka=ʔa-tq-i ti=ka-stam *ʔal=ta-as-ts* x=s not=Quot Art=Irr=Asp-stuck=Dim Art=Irr=what at=Art=Loc-inside-3Po
ta=su=tXw Art=house=Dem
"There was nothing at all on the walls inside the house" (Davis & Saunders 1980: 105, s. 99)

24) *ʔixlqX [ (s-)stam-s ti=?al-ip'ic=t'aκx ]
guess Nz(-?)what-3sSu Art=Asp-hold-3s0b:1sSu=Dem
"Guess what I am holding!" (Nater 1984: 117)
Though the Bella Coola enclitic sequences 醺=ks, 醺=ks are similar in their distribution to the Tillamook and Alsea WhQ particles, they do not appear to be cognate with Tillamook ki: I would normally expect Bella Coola (and Proto-Salish) k to correspond to Tillamook Unhandled k should reflect rather Proto-Salish *k* or possibly *w* (The Bella Coola element =ks, moreover, is not confined to questions; it occurs in other enclitic strings as well [Nater 1984: 128].) It is quite likely, therefore, that the WhQ particle of Tillamook is an independent development, not an inheritance from Proto-Salish.

As of this writing, it is not clear to me whether Upper Chehalis can be said to have a distinctive wh-question particle; further study of this language is required. In texts that I have seen (e.g., Kinkade 1987), interrogative pronouns in wh-questions are often followed by particles such as (*uk*”a “I suppose”, (*a)na “interrogative”, but as far as I can tell at present these seem not to be limited to wh-questions (see the entries for *uk*”a and na in Kinkade 1991) nor do wh-questions invariably contain them.7

5. OTHER LANGUAGES OF THE SOUTHERN NORTHWEST COAST

Of the non-Salish languages in the neighborhood of Tillamook and Alsea, only Coos, on the Oregon coast south of Alsea and Siuslawan, appears to have something like a WhQ particle. (I have investigated only Hains Coos so far, not Miluk.) The interrogative pronouns ivil "who", ivil "what", tirc "how" (also ivil "when", and possibly qant "where", but apparently not wince "which") take a suffix -i in main-clause wh-questions, but not when they are used as indefinites "someone/anyone", "something/anything", "somehow/anyhow" (Frachtenberg 1922a: 407f., 411); nor, apparently, do they take this suffix in embedded wh-questions. The suffix -i is distinct from the polarity question particle i (often sentence-final) (394).

Coos

25) Main-clause wh-question

a) ivil-teitc-ii et-xa’l-al
Manner-how-WhQ 2s-do-Durate(?)
"What are you doing?" (Frachtenberg 1913: 36.13)

b) ivil-ii he te e-xi wil-iwat
what-WhQ Frequent that 2s-look-for-Frequentative
"What are you continually looking for?" (Frachtenberg 1922a: 408)

Indefinite

i ivil il iwa-iwat sê
when what 3p eat-Frequentative intend

7 It would also be interesting to know whether any Salish languages distinguish a formal category of quasi-rhetorical question, like Alsea and (possibly) Tillamook, but I lack evidence at this point. I have the impression that the Thompson Salish evidential enclitic nke Conjectural sometimes attaches to interrogative words with somewhat the effect of a quasi-rhetorical question, but am not at all certain of this.
Any case for diffusion being.

before the verb without requiring any special morphosyntactic treatment of the verb (cf. Kroeber
suggestive that Kinkade (1979?) has noted similarities between the enclitic
and, to a lesser extent,
evidently close enough that some Clatsop and Nehelim Tillamook were intermarrying in
from Alsea to Tillamook (or vice versa), since no actual morphemic material has been borrowed.
Tillamook and Alsea (or other
Alsea
and not with Chinookan. It is not easy to prove that this grammatical feature has diffused
resemblances in the treatment of wh-questions in Tillamook and Alsea might also be due to
rather than to
-alta,

historical times, to the point that Clatsop was replaced by Tillamook [Boas 1894: 5; Silverstein
1990: 535; Seaburg and Miller 1990: 560].

And Chinook, Tillamook (again somewhat atypically for a coastal Salish language), and
Alsea, though basically verb-initial, all rather readily allow fronting of arguments to a position
before the verb without requiring any special morphosyntactic treatment of the verb (cf. Kroeber
[1991: 342-346]; the remarks about Alsea there turn out to be unnecessarily tentative). (For
some additional suggestions as to shared features, see Silverstein [1974: 587ff.], Thompson and
Kinkade 1990.) And ethnohistorically, relations between Lower Chinookans and Tillamook were
evidently close enough that some Clatsop and Nehelim Tillamook were intermarrying in
historical times, to the point that Clatsop was replaced by Tillamook (Boas 1894: 5; Silverstein

Nonetheless, the wh-question particle appears to be a trait that Tillamook shares with
Alsea and not with Chinookan.
It is not easy to prove that this grammatical feature has diffused
from Alsea to Tillamook (or vice versa), since no actual morphemic material has been borrowed.
Any case for diffusion will rest on indirect arguments: the cross-linguistic infrequency of a
wh-question particle, which makes its independent innovation in two adjacent languages less likely;
evidence for diffusion of other traits between the languages in question. It is perhaps
suggestive that Kinkade (1979?) has noted similarities between the enclitic pronominials of Alsea
(and, to a lesser extent, Siuslawan) and the subject suffixes of Salish (e.g., 2nd person singular
Alsea -x, Proto-Salish *-ax; 1st person plural Alsea -əl, Lushootseed -əl, Tillamook -əl, Saanich
-ələ, Bella Coola -əl) which are striking enough that they might be due to diffusion (perhaps from
rather than to Salish). If this be accepted, that would make it somewhat more likely that
resemblances in the treatment of wh-questions in Tillamook and Alsea might also be due to
diffusion rather than simple coincidence. On the other hand, lexical resemblances between
Tillamook and Alsea (or other non-Salish languages in the area) do not seem particularly
impressive, as far as I can tell at present (further study of the lexicons of most of the languages is
needed, though); one might expect significant grammatical borrowing to be accompanied by
significant lexical borrowing. I will therefore leave the diachronic issue undecided for the time
being.


TillD: Abbreviation for Thompson n.d.
