Deceptive Overt wh-movement in Bùlì

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In this talk, I examine the distribution of wh-questions in Bùlì. Despite the occurrence of wh-phrases in the left periphery of the clause, I argue that this is not overt wh-movement but base generation. I show that Bùlì is a wh-in-situ language with covert phrasal movement. Wh-phrases can appear in-situ (1a) or in clause initial position (1b). In-situ phrases are licensed by the presence of ká a morpheme that appears once per clause and is attached to the highest ‘wh’-phrase. Ká is optional in clause initial position (1b). Non-subject wh-phrases in initial position are to the left of átí (1b).

(1) a. Asouk dìg *(ká) b wā;
   Asouk cook.PST FOC what
   ‘what did Asouk cook?’

   b. (ká) b wā átí Asouk dìgi;
      FOC what C who cook.PST
      ‘what is it that Asouk cooked?’