...the range of constituents that can be “questioned” is actually quite small and, with one possible exception, is restricted to Noun Phrase and probably to the Determiner constituent of NP. (Katz & Postal 1964: 98)

(1) Chukchi (Chukotko-Kamchatkan)
req-deriv-der
pro-drop
g-just
əirkə
m-in
req-deriv-der
pro-drop
g-just
-PROG-EMPH
right-now
2SG-POSS
son
ABS
“What is your son doing right now?”
(http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~spena/Chukchee/chapter4.html)

Certain interrogative pro-word types have been considered rare or even nonexistent.

This excludes the possibility of interrogative pro-verbs, as illustrated in (1), and must therefore be rejected.

This will allow for interrogative pro-verbs, but this is not very good either, for it fails to account for the fact that interrogative pro-verbs are a rare phenomenon.


This cannot be a full answer either. Why would a two word construction be more economical than a one word construction?

Aims:

Elucidate further the issue of the rarity/ nonexistence of several types of interrogative pro-words against the background of a more general hypothesis on what constitutes a possible interrogative pro-word

General hypothesis
- a statement on the generality of the presupposition going with constituent questions
- a claim on the relevance of the endocentric vs. exocentric distinction

All theories on constituent questions make room for the idea that a constituent question is based on a presupposition with a variable. In (2) the presupposition says that John saw somebody, and the variable is the ‘somebody’ whose identity the hearer is invited to disclose.

As the example of an interrogative pro-verb illustrated in (1) with Chukchi shows, it is important to allow the predicate of the constituent question as a possible variable. In order to account for this, we propose the definition in (3).

The structure is the presupposition that the situation under interrogation (possibly) exists, existed or will exist. The variable \( x \) constitutes the focus of the constituent question and of its possible answer, and it is formally expressed by an interrogative pro-word.
Endocentric vs. exocentric distinction

Which elements can be variables that the value of the HAPPEN/EXIST (…) predicate can depend on?

Phrasal level elements:
- Interrogative pro-phrasal elements
  - Interrogative pro-noun phrase
  - Interrogative pro-verb phrase
  - Interrogative pro-adjective phrase
  - Interrogative pro-numeral phrase
  - Interrogative pro-adposition phrase
  etc.

If we want to find out what categories of interrogative pro-words can exist in the languages of the world, we should first determine which elements can potentially be variables that value that of the HAPPEN/EXIST (…) predicate can depend on. Clearly, these are first of all phrasal categories. In other words, every phrasal level element can potentially be an argument of the HAPPEN/EXIST (…) predicate. Hence, an interrogative pro-element for any phrase level element can theoretically exist:

However, in the lexicon we are not dealing with phrases, but with words which correspond to terminal categories in syntax. Therefore, in order to find out which interrogative pro-words can exist, a good use can be made here of a distinction between endocentric and exocentric constructions.

Endocentricity principle:

Interrogative pro-words can be of endocentric phrase creating categories only

Interrogative pro-adverb: (4) Where do you live?
Interrogative pro-adjective: (5) In what town do you live?
Interrogative pro-noun: (6) In what do you live?
etc.

Typically intransitive predicates & endocentric principle = OK!

Non-verbal predicates
- Interrogative pro-“non-verbal predicates”
  - Nominal predicates
  - Adjectival predicates
  etc.
  Interrogative pro-nominal predicates
  Interrogative pro-adjectival predicates
  etc.
  *metapredikativy“pro-predicatives” (Dragunov 1952)

What about verbs?

Endocentricity dilemma

Verb Phrase
- Endocentric
- Exocentric
- Intransitive verb
- Transitive verb

What does this tell us about interrogative pro-verbs?
- IPVs are not ruled out completely
- IPVs must be less common than other types of interrogative pro-words
- If an IPV is possible in the language at all, it will first of all be intransitive

The endocentricity parameter turns out to be somewhat difficult to apply to verb phrases in a straightforward way.
Interrogative pro-“non-verbal predicates” are often called “interrogative verbs” in grammars. Interrogative pro-“non-verbal predicates” are much more frequent than interrogative pro-verbs proper. BUT much depends on the analysis!

Languages where all interrogative pro-words function as predicates …wh-questions in Salish generally take the form of clefts … in which the wh-word evidently is not in a complementizer-like position, but rather in the predicate of the higher clause of a biclausal construction. (Kroeber 1999:247)

(9) Thompson (Salishan; Kroeber 1999:265)

\[ \text{Which did you see?} \]

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(10) Kolyma Yukaghir (Yukaghir; Maslova 1999:480)

\[ \text{Wow, what have you said?} \]

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(11) Kayardild (Tangkic; Evans 1995:371)

\[ \text{What are you doing?} \]

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(12) a. – What did he do?
   b. – He swam/ He killed a bird.

(13) Tohono O’odham (Uto-Aztecan; Madeleine Mathiot, p.c.)

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\[ \text{What are you doing?} \]
Cross-linguistic frequency:

'**do**' + 'what?, how?'

interrogative pro-verb

90%

10%

**NB: A language can have both strategies**

(14) Kuot (East Papuan; Lindström 2002:13-14, 216)

a. *amani* 'do what?'

b. *Mani i* k-ve t-ke u-me a-kosar...?

'What does [that brother of yours] do...?' (B: 'He just fools around.')

If a language has both strategies, it is counted as an instance of IPV. Counts have been made on a sample of some 350 languages of more than 70 language families/phyla (according to Ethnologue)

Pacific Rim divided in 3 areas: (1) Austronesian+Papuan+Australian, (2) Paleoasiatic+Tungus+Eskimo-Aleut+Salish+a few other families in North America, (3) Aymaran&Quechuan families. Plus, probably, Hadza polysemy between ‘do how?’ & ‘do what?’. Languages in other parts of the world reported, for instance, by Hagège 2003 have proven to be instances of smth else than IPVs.

**Correlations**

- A good deal of head-marking
- A good deal of ‘verby’ features: extensive use of verbalization (rather than nominalization) widespread incorporation often other kinds of predicative interrogatives are present as well
- Genetic (i.e. areal) predisposition

Correlations are rather tentantive.

Australia & Head-marking: Non-Pama-Nyungan vs. Pama-Nyungan

Verbalization – often as conversion!

This seems to confirm the idea that IPVs do not constitute the preferred way of questioning the VP