Constraints on extraction in Akan vs. English

Akan is a Kwa language spoken in Ghana. It looks superficially very similar to English: it is SVO, and can form questions by placing the question word in the left periphery (as well as in situ). However, unlike English, it freely allows violation of island constraints. Question words can target positions inside complex NPs, embedded questions and adjunct clauses. This talk will focus on two issues: (i) the need for a separate mechanism for question formation in English (movement) vs. Akan (pronominal binding), and (ii) the fact that in certain tasks, involving quick, non-reflective judgment, Akan appears to obey the block on questioning inside an adjunct clause (the only structure so far tested). I will consider the implications for language acquisition theory, specifically whether the subset principle can be reduced to sentence processing.