

What intervention effects tell us about wh's-in-situ in Korean and Chinese

1. Pesetsky (2000) used two diagnostics such as ACD and intervention effect (IE) to determine the type of movement that wh's-in-situ across languages undergo. Citing Beck and Kim's (1996) example, Pesetsky argues that wh's-in-situ in Korean undergo feature movement, which is blocked in the presence of an intervener like NPI.

- (1) *amwuto **mwues-ul** sa-ci anhass-ni?
anyone what-ACC buy-VE NOT-did-Q
'What didn't anyone buy?'

Kang (2017) recently notes that the prosodic accent on a wh-element-in-situ as in (2) improves the acceptability of IE configurations in Korean.

- (2) amwuto **nwuKWU-lul** manna-ci anh-ass-ni?
anyone WHO-ACC meet-VE NOT-did-Q

Based on the obviation of IE in (2), Kang goes on to argue that when a wh-phrase undergoes covert phrasal movement in Korean, this movement is represented by means of prosodic accent.

2. Korean patterns with Chinese morphologically (by allowing bare wh-words to serve non-interrogative functions), but patterns with Japanese in showing the intervention effect. Pesetsky (2000) adds on Chinese, speculating à la Aoun and Li (1993) that Chinese wh's-in-situ, unlike their Japanese/Korean counterparts, undergo covert phrasal movement. Soh (2005) endorses this speculation, noting that, unlike its counterpart in Korean, the nominal wh-phrase like *shei* 'who' in (2) of Chinese seems not to be subject to the IE:

- (2) {Meiyouren/Henshao ren/Zuiduo liang-ge ren} gan gen **shei** dajia?
nobody/few person/at most two-CL person dare with who fight
'Who is the person x such that {nobody/few people/at most two people}
dare(s) to fight with x?'(60) *{Shi/Zhiyou} Zhangsan chi-le shenme?

However, as some instances like (3), even a wh-nominal seems to be sensitive to the intervener.

- (3) *{Shi Zhangsan/Zhiyou Zhangsan / Lian Zhangsan dou} chi-le shenme?
{SHI /only} / even all eat-PERF what
Lit. 'What was x such that {it was/only/even} Zhangsan who ate x?'

Yang (2012) argues that there are two types of intervention effect in Chinese: *weak* and *strong* IEs. In (2), since without involving covert phrasal movement posited by Pesetsky (2000), wh-nominals in general in Chinese are licensed via unselective binding in the sense of Pesetsky (1987), they are not affected by the potential weak intervener. In (3), by contrast, because of the competition between the F(ocus)-Op of the intervening focus *SHI/zhiyou* 'shi/only' and Q(uestion)-Op of the in-situ wh-phrase *shenme* 'what' for the single spot, SpecFocP, the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

3. In this paper we support Pesetsky's (2000) thesis that wh's-in-situ in Korean undergo feature movement, whereas those in Chinese undergo covert phrasal movement. Meanwhile, we provide an alternative account for what Kang (2017) takes as evidence for covert phrasal movement of wh's-in-situ in Korean, and what Yang (2012) deems as a rationale

for non-movement analysis of those in Chinese.

4. Korean crucially differs from Chinese in the formation of wh unconditionals (Cheng and Huang 1996; Chung and Park 2019)

- (4) **shei** xian lai, **shei** (jiu) xian chi. Cheng & Huang (1996)
Who first come, who (then) first eat (Intended) ‘If x comes first, (then) x eats first.’
- (5) #**nwu-ka** mence o-myen, **nwu-ka** mence mek-nunta.
Who-NOM early come-if, who-NOM early eat-DEC
- (6) ni **wishenme** xihuan Zhangsan, wo jiu **wishenme** taoyan ta.
you why like Z. I then why dislike him
(Intended) ‘If you like Zhangsan for x, I dislike him for x.’ Huang (2018)
- (7) ***ney-ka** way John-ul cohaha-myen, na-nun way ku-lul silheha-nta.
you-NOM why J.-ACC like-if I-TOP why he-ACC dislike-DEC
(Intended) ‘The reason you like John is the reason why I dislike him.’

Chinese allows two argument or adjunct wh’s-in-situ in the antecedent and the consequent clauses to have a co-varying interpretation, but Korean does not (regardless of the prosody on them). Despite the pending controversy in their derivation, we take this contrast to render compelling evidence that Chinese wh’s-in-situ undergo covert phrasal movement, but Korean counterparts do not.

In addition to their distinction in wh unconditionals, Korean and Chinese differ in terms of the scope reconstruction of wh’s-in-situ across islands (cf. Longobardi 1987).

- (8) Zhangsan xiangxin [mei-ge xuesheung mai-le **sheme** de shuofa]?
Z. believe every-CL student buy-PERF what DE claim
Lit. ‘Zhangsan believes the claim that every student bought what?’ (adapted after Abe 2017: 27)
- (9) cheli-nun [haksayng motwu-ka **mwues-ul** sassta-nun cwucang-ul] tules-ni?
Cheli-TOP student all-NOM what-ACC bought-REL claim-ACC heard-Q

In (8) of Chinese, the island-internal wh-in-situ always takes wide scope over the c-commanding universal QP, but in (9) of Korean, the former (regardless of the prosody on it) can take narrow scope below the latter.

5. Given that Chinese wh’s-in-situ undergo covert phrasal movement, Korean counterparts are subject to feature movement, the strong vs. weak intervener distinction in Chinese falls out from the fact that (*weak/strong*) interveners generally (even including those in Korean) bear focus features potentially attracted to the uninterpretable focus feature in C (Kim 2002), and that language-specifically *strong* interveners in Chinese serve as a phrasal focus operator, hence precluding covert phrasal movement of wh’s-in-situ in this language. Besides, (*weak/strong*) interveners give rise to IEs for in-situ wh-adjuncts that are argued to undergo feature movement (Cheng 2000). Meanwhile, the amelioration effects of obviating the IE with special prosody on a Korean wh-in-situ as noted in Kang (2017) do not follow from its phrasal movement, but from the D-linked-hood or specificity effects of such a wh-in-situ that helps circumvent its IE.

Selected Refs. • Abe 2017. Wh-in-situ licensing. • Aoun & Li. 1993. *Syntax of Scope*. • Beck & Kim. 1996. ‘On wh- and operator scope in Korean.’ *JEAL* 6 • Cheng 2000 ‘Moving just the feature’ In *Wh-scope Marking* • Cheng & Huang 1996. ‘Two types of donkey sentences’ *Natural Language Semantics* 4. • Chung & Park 2019. ‘The Nature of Indeterminate Expressions in Chinese and Korean: Focused on Wh-phrases in Conditionals’ *Linguistic Research*. • Huang 2018. ‘Analyticity and wh-conditionals as unselective binding par excellence’ • Kang 2017 ‘Korean intervention effects are not a single phenomenon: Evidence from syntax-prosody interface’ *Linguistic Review* 34. • Kim 2002 ‘Intervention Effects are Focus Effects’ *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 10. • Longobardi 1987. ‘Extraction from NP and the proper notion of head government’ In *The Syntax of Noun Phrases*. • Pesetsky 2000. *Phrasal movement and its Kin*. • Soh 2005. ‘Wh-in-situ in Mandarin Chinese’ *LI* 36. • Yang 2012. ‘Intervention Effects and wh-Construals’ *JEAL* 21.