

Island sensitivity in Chinese topicalization

Xu and Langendoen (1985) argue that topicalization in Chinese does not induce any island effect since a topic element can be generated without involving movement. As observed by Zhang (2002), however, Chinese topicalization is sensitive to the predicate distinction inside islands. Island effects arise in episodic eventuality contexts equivalent to specific eventualities, but they do not in stable state contexts. Grounded on Zhang's (2002) empirical claim, Pan (2014) argues the topicalization in Chinese cannot be analyzed as a single type phenomenon, and he goes on to extend ex-situ constructions into four types based on the two ingredients of extraction and base-generation. The fact that we can infer from the paradigm of these data conforms that there is a distinction between episodic eventuality contexts and stable state contexts in terms of island sensitivity. In other words, the island effects are detected only in episodic eventualities in Chinese, but not elsewhere, as found in such constructions as topicalization in (1), wh-ex-situ in (2), and clefting in (3).

(1) a. ??Zhe ben shu, (wo xiang) du-guo de ren lai-le. (Topicalization)

this CL book I think read EXP DE person come-PER

Intended: 'This book, I think the person who read came.'

b. Zhe ben shu, (wo xiang) du-guo de ren bu duo.

this CL book I think read EXP DE person not many

'This book, (I think) the person who read are not many.'

(2) a. *Na ge xuesheng, Lao Wang zuotian zenyang piping-le? (Wh-ex-situ)

that CL student Lao Wang yesterday how criticize-PER

'Intended: 'How does Lao Wang criticize that student everyday?'

b. Na-bu dianying, kan-guo de ren bu shao?

which-CL movie see-EXP DE person not few

'Which movie, the people who saw (it) are many?'

(3) a. * Shi Meiguo, wo qunian qu-le. (Cleft construction)

BE US I last-year go-PER

'It was the US that I went last year.'

b. Shi na-bu dianying, kanguo de ren hen duo.

BE that-CL movie see-EXP DE person very many

'It is that movie that the people who saw (it) are many.'

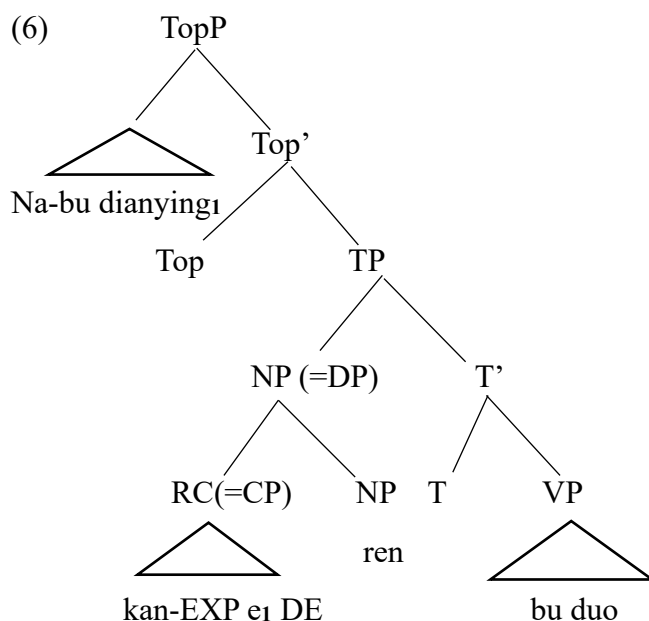
The run-of-the-mill topic in the sentence-initial position in (1a) is extracted from the complex NP structure. This sentence is not acceptable. On the other hand, (1b) is perfectly acceptable. The only difference between (1a) and (1b) lies in predicate type. (1a) contains a predicate denoting episodic eventuality context, whereas (1b) contains the one denoting a stable state context. In the latter no island effect arises. The same contrast also holds between (a)-sentence and (b)-sentence of (2) and (3).

In this paper, we will argue that the obviation of island effects in such sentences as (1b), (2b), and (3b) vis-à-vis (1a), (2a), and (3a) is to be understood on a par with the comparable obviation of the effects in relativization of Korean and Japanese as in (4) and (5) initially observed by Kuno (1973) for Japanese and Han and Kim (2004) for Korean.

(4) [RC₁ [RC₂ e_i e_j tha-ko tani-nun] cha-ka_j mesci-n] sinsai
 e_i e_j ride drive-ADN car-NOM_j stylish-AND gentleman
 'the gentleman_i [RC₁ who_i the car_j [RC₂ which_j e_i is driving e_j] is stylish]'

(5) [[kite-iru] yoohuku-ga yogorete-iru] sinsi
 wearing-is suit-NOM dirty-is gentleman
 'gentleman who the suit [he] is wearing is dirty'

Following the lead by Han and Kim (2004), where apparently double relative clauses in Korean and Japanese stem from double subject clauses which are excellently formed with stative verbs or adjectives, we argue that (1b), (2b), and (3b) have the structure quite comparable to that of double relatives in Korean and Japanese. More specifically, the apparently displaced topic element in (1b), (2b), and (3b) does not originate from inside the RC island, but from the outer specifier of TP or [Spec,TopP] (that a major subject occupies) outside the inner specifier of TP (that a grammatical subject occupies) in the higher clause, as represented below with (2b):



Along this line of analysis, we will investigate both the issue at hand and the coverage of Korean/Japanese-type double subjects in various constructions of Chinese. The consequence of this analysis will be that we can provide a uniform movement analysis of topicalization in Chinese, with its peculiar behavior in the context of stable state predicates falling out from the particular syntactic structure that the latter give rise to.

Selected reference: Han, Chung-hye and Jong-Bok Kim, Are there “double relative clauses” in Korean?. *Linguistic Inquiry* 35: 315-337. Pan, Victor Junnan (2014). Wh-ex-situ in Chinese: Mapping between information structure and Split CP. *Linguistic Analysis* 39: 371-413. Zhang, Ning (2002). Island effects and episodic eventualities in Chinese topicalization. ZAS-Berlin.