

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

Park, Myung-Kwan
(Dongguk University)

1. Introduction

Suggesting that the Wh-Complementizer Choice and the Pronunciation Rules are operative in regulating overt wh-movement and wh-situ strategies across languages, Pesetsky (2000) used two diagnostics such as antecedent-contained deletion (ACD) and intervention effects (IE(s)) to determine the type of movement that wh's-in-situ across languages undergo. Citing Beck and Kim's (1996) celebrated example, Pesetsky argues that wh's-in-situ in Korean undergo feature movement, which is blocked in the presence of an intervener like an NPI.

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

Kang (2017), however, 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 IEs in (2), Kang goes on to argue that when a wh-phrase undergoes covert phrasal movement in Korean, this movement is signaled by means of prosodic accent on a wh-element-in-situ.

2. Background

Korean apparently patterns with Chinese morphologically (by allowing bare wh-words to serve non-interrogative functions), but in fact patterns with Japanese in displaying 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 IEs:

- (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?'

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 postulated 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 both the F(ocus)-Op of the intervening focus *SHI/zhiyou* 'shi/only' and Q(uestion)-Op of the in-situ wh-phrase *shenme* 'what' compete for the single spot (i.e., [SpecFocP]), the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

3. An Alternative Analysis

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. Arguments for Chinese Phrasal and Korean Feature movement

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 (or overt phrasal movement, followed by tail pronunciation), but Korean counterparts do not.

In addition to their distinction in wh conditionals, 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. Demonstration

Given that Chinese wh's-in-situ undergo covert phrasal movement (or overt phrasal movement, followed by tail pronunciation), 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.

6. Korean vs. Chinese in indeterminates

We would like to note that Korean and Chinese diverge as regards indeterminates. First, Chinese has indefinites that have the exactly same form as interrogatives (i.e., wh-indefinites), thus both of them being called indeterminates. For example, *shenme* 'what/something' in Chinese are used either as run-of-the-mill indefinites or wh-indefinites. By contrast, Korean/Japanese distinguish wh-indefinites and non-wh indefinites. In particular, in Korean the latter can be marked explicitly by attaching a certain affix (i.e., *-n-ka* in Korean) to the interrogative form. Thus, in Korean *mwues* 'what' and *mwues-nka* 'something' are distinguished in form, though the former can also be used as indefinites.

Bruening (2007, p. 159) compares these two types of indeterminates in a number of languages and presents the following generalization: "(i) Chinese type of indeterminates that do not include additional morphology for non-wh-indefinites are precluded from taking wide scope and in fact usually take only narrowest scope. However, (ii) Korean/Japanese type of indeterminates that do include additional morphology for non-wh-indefinites may take wide scope and may even be interpreted referentially (as specific indefinites)," the quoted part of which is taken from Yun (2019).

On top of the difference between Chinese and Korean in the morphological composition

of indeterminates, the two languages differ in regard to the availability of morphological Case/case marker on them. In Korean, the morphological Case/case marker immediately empowers the indeterminate to readily serve as a wh/non-wh indefinite, thereby the Novelty Condition disallowing the second occurrence of the Case/case-marked indeterminate from co-varying with its first occurrence. By contrast, in Chinese the absence of morphological Case/case marker cannot readily enable the indeterminate to serve as a wh/non-wh indefinite. Thus, on the one hand, an indeterminate undergoes covert wh-movement (or overt phrasal movement, followed by tail pronunciation) to be licensed as a wh-indefinite in the context of regular wh-question clauses and unconditional constructions. On the other hand, an indeterminate is licensed as an existentially interpreted non-wh-indeterminate via existential closure in the contexts of 'yes/no' question, 'if'-clause, negation, complement of a non-factive verb, complement of the verb SEEM, etc.

Selected References

- Abe 2017. Wh-in-situ licensing.
- Aoun and Li. 1993. *Syntax of Scope*.
- Beck & Kim. 1996. On wh- and operator scope in Korean. *JEAL* 6.
- Bruening. 2007. Wh-in-situ does not correlate with wh-indefinites or question particles. *Linguistic Inquiry* 38, 139-166.
- 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.