Fragmentary Questions in Japanese and Korean

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Research on fragmentary sentences, especially on fragment answers to wh-interrogative questions, has yielded a number of important observations and consequences for the study of ellipsis in general. This work examines yet another kind of fragmentary expression. Relevant data come from Japanese and Korean, and we call them fragmentary questions (henceforth, FQs). We show that FQs in Japanese and Korean exhibit the same syntactic properties (hence, we may illustrate either Japanese or Korean data for lack of space), and argue that they are best analyzed in terms of ellipsis of clausal constituents preceded by movement of remnants to the edge of root sentences. Then, we consider cases of FQ with more than one remnant and show that they provide support for the cartographic structure of the left periphery, where the landing site of a contrastive-topic remnant is higher than that of a wh-phrase.

FQs in Japanese and Korean are illustrated by cases like the following:

(1) a. A: Ken-wa   Mari-ni   nani-o   ageta no?   B: Hanataba   desu.   (Japanese)
    Ken-TOP Mari-DAT what-ACC gave Q   bouquet   COP
    'What did Ken give to Mari?'   'A bouquet.'
  A: Yumi-ni-*(wa)?   *(FQ)*   A': *Yumi-ni-dake-wa?
    Yumi-DAT-TOP   'lit. To Yumi?'   Yumi-DAT-only-TOP   'lit. Only to Yumi?
  b. A: Chelswu-nun   Yenghuy-eykey   mwues-ul   cwe-ss-ni?   B: Wine   nita. (Korean)
    Chelswu-TOP Yenghuy-DAT   what-ACC gave-PAST-Q   wine   COP
    'What did Chelswu give to Yenghuy?'   'Wine.'
  A: So-Yun-eykey-*(nun)?   *(FQ)*   A': *So-Yun-eykey-man-eun?
    So-Yun-DAT-TOP 'lit. To So-Yun?'   So-Yun-DAT-only-TOP   'lit. Only to So-Yun?'

In (1a), Speaker A's second utterance only consists of *Yumi-ni* with the topic marker *wa*, but in the context where it is preceded by his first utterance, which is a wh-interrogative question, it serves as a question equivalent to *What did Ken give to Yumi*? Note that remnants in FQs require contrastive-topic marker *-wa*, as illustrated by the obligatory presence of topic marker in the second utterance of A and incompatibility with exhaustive marker *dake* , as shown in A' in (1a, b) (cf. Li 2016). Note also that the FQs exhibit a connectivity effect with respect to Case: in (1a), the remnant must have the dative Case-marker, the omission of which makes the sentence degraded. This indicates that it has the hidden structure that contains the verb *ageta* 'give,' which assigns dative case to the remnant. In addition, FQs in Japanese (as well as those in Korean) exhibit an island effect, as shown below (RC stands for relative clause):

(2) A: Kimi-wa   [NP [RC Mari-ni   yubiwa-o   okutta] otoko]-o   sitteimasu ka?
    you-TOP   Mari-DAT ring-ACC   gave   man-ACC   know   Q
    'Do you know the man who gave a ring to Mari?'
  B: Hai.   A: *Yumi-ni-wa?
    yes 'Yes.'   Yumi-DAT-TOP   'lit. To Yumi?'

Assuming the island effect to be an indicator of movement, we propose that FQs in Japanese and Korean be analyzed as in (3). The underlying structure is a full-fledged *wh*-question. Here, a remnant, which is contrastively topicalized, undergoes movement to Top-FocP (cf. Erteschik-Shir 2007, Bocci 2007). In addition, a wh-phrase covertly moves to FocP (cf. Rizzi 1997, Saito 2017). Subsequently, TP is elided (cf. Merchant 2001, 2004), resulting in FQ.

(3)   [Top-FocP XP$_i$ [FocP   (wh)$_k$ [TP —t_i— t_k—]]]

The movement + deletion analysis is further supported by the Condition A/C of the Binding Theory. The grammaticality of (4B), as well as the ungrammaticality of (5B), shows that the anaphor/R-expression is c-commanded by the subject in an underlying full-fledged clausal structure.

(4) A: Chelswu$_i$-nun Yenghuy-eykey   chokhollis-ul   sacwuessta. B: Ku.casin$_i$-eykey-nun? (K)
    Chelswu-TOP Yenghuy-DAT   chocolate-ACC bought   himself-DAT-TOP
    'Chelswu bought chocolate for Yenghuy.'   'int. What did Chelswu$_i$ buy for himself$_i$?'
(5) A: Ku$_i$-nun Yenghuy-eykey   chokhollis-ul   sacwuessta.   B: * Chelswu$_i$-eykey-nun? (K)
    he-TOP   Yenghuy-DAT   chocolate-ACC bought   Chelswu-DAT-TOP
    'He bought chocolate for Yuki.'   'int. What did he$_i$ buy for Chelswu$_i$?'

We further observe that in FQs interpreted as *wh*-questions such as the one in (1), *wh*-phrases

can optionally evade ellipsis: thus, FQs in (1) can be expressed alternatively as below:

(6) a. Yumi-ni-wa   nani-o?   (J)   b. Yenghuy-eykey-nun   mwues-ul?   (K)
    Yumi-DAT-TOP   what-ACC   Yenghuy-DAT-TOP   what-ACC
    'lit. To Yumi what?'   'lit. To Yenghuy what?'

Here the topicalized dative phrase is followed by the *wh*-phrase, both of which undergo overt movement to the left periphery, with the rest of the sentence elided. What is noteworthy is another fact that (6) gets degraded if we reverse the order of the remnants.

(7) a. *Nani-o   Yumi-ni-wa?   (J)   b. *Mwues-ul   Yenghuy-eykey-nun?   (K)
    what-ACC   Yumi-DAT-TOP   what-ACC   Yenghuy-DAT-TOP
    'lit. What to Yumi?'   'lit. What to Yenghuy?'

This word order restriction directly follows from the cartographic phrase structure shown in (3), where the contrastive-topic remnant moves to a higher position than a wh-phrase.

Furthermore, the multiple FQ data argue for the movement + deletion analysis against the in-situ analysis (Kimura 2010) or the cleft analysis (Hiraiwa and Ishihara 2002, Saito 2004, Saito and An 2014). Kimura (2010) argues for the analysis of the sluicing construction according to which remnants do not undergo movement, with ellipsis applying to non-constituents, as shown in (8b), where the analysis of the second sentence in (8a) is indicated:

(8) a.   Harry met someone yesterday. Guess who.
    b.   Guess [CP C [TP ~~Harry met~~ who ~~yesterday~~]]

If we apply this line of analysis to FQs, the FQ in (6), for instance, should be treated as in (9):

(9) a. [CP Ken-wa { Yumi-ni-wa   nani-o   / nani-o   Yumi-ni-wa } ageta no]   (J)
        Ken-TOP Yumi-DAT-TOP what-ACC / what-ACC   Yumi-DAT-TOP gave Q
        'What did Ken give to Yumi?'
    b. [CP ~~Ken-wa~~   {Yumi-ni-wa nani-o / nani-o Yumi-ni-wa }   ~~ageta no~~]

In (9a), the sentence is fully spelled out. Note here that the order of a contrastive topic element and a wh-phrase may be reversed. Then, ellipsis applies to all the elements of the clause except for the contrastive topic phrase and the *wh*-phrase as shown in (9b), deriving the surface form of the FQ in (6). Then, the non-movement analysis would predict that (7) should be possible because it would derive (9b) from (9a) by deleting the non-constituents. FQs provide us, therefore, with an argument that movement to the left periphery needs to be assumed.

Furthermore, the fact that FQs in Japanese and Korean allow the combination of wh- and non-wh-remnants (see (6)) indicates that FQs are not derived from cleft constructions; Takahashi and Lin (2012) show that clefts in Japanese do not allow the combination of wh- and non-wh- remnants, while sluicing allows the combination, as shown in (10)-(11). In this respect, FQs in Japanese and Korean behave like sluicing, allowing the combination of wh- and non-wh remnants.

(10) *[Benkyoo-sita no]-wa dono   onnnanoko-ga   tosyokan-de desu ka?   (J)
        study-did   C-TOP   which   girl-NOM   library-at   COP   Q
        '(Lit.)Which girl at the library is it that studied?'

(11) a. Ken-wa [dono otokonoko-ga kyoositu-de   benkyoo-sita ka] sitteiru. (J)
        Ken-TOP   which boy- NOM   classroom-at   study-did   Q   know
        'Ken knows which boy studied at the classroom.'
    b. Yumi-wa [dono onnanoko-ga   tosyokan-de ka] sitteiru.
        Yumi- TOP   which girl-NOM   library-at   Q   know
        '(Lit.) Yumi knows which girl at the library.'

Empirically, the analysis presents a significant wealth of data concerning FQs in Japanese and Korean. Theoretically, by arguing for the movement and deletion approach, this study sheds a new light on the current debate on sentential and non-sentential approach to fragments.

Selected References

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