Rethinking *Wh*-island

Introduction: In the linguistic studies of *wh*-in-situ languages, it has long been assumed that while *wh*-arguments of Japanese-type exhibit *wh*-island effects, those of Chinese-type do not, although both types are unconstrained by strong islands. This distinction has given rise to different approaches to how *wh*-phrases take scope in these languages (see, for example, Nishigauchi 1986, 1990, Watanabe 1992, Aoun and Li 1993, Tsai 1994, Reinhart 1997). In this talk, we will provide evidence showing that, 1) Chinese *wh*-arguments do exhibit *wh*-island effects, contrary to what has been assumed in the past; 2) the apparent lack of *wh*-island effects is simply due to the disguise of D-linking; 3) Chinese-type and Japanese-type *wh*-arguments still cannot be patterned together, although they seem to behave similarly w.r.t *wh*-island effects; 4) this leads to the need to reinvestigate the mechanisms underlying the *wh*-elements of the *wh*-in-situ languages on the one hand and those triggering *wh*-island effects on the other.

Capturing *wh*-island effects: Upon closer scrutiny, it is observed that Chinese-type *wh*-arguments embedded in *wh*-islands are at best interpreted as D-linked in order to be judged grammatical. This can be readily captured by the 'how-many' phrases. In English 'how-many' phrases can be interpreted as either 'presuppositional' (1a) or 'non-presuppositional' (1b). When they are put into a *wh*-island in (2), only the presuppositional reading survives (Longobardi 1987, Cinque 1990, Cresti 1995, Lahiri 2002, Miyagawa 2004).

(1) Q: How many people should I talk to ___ ?
     a. 'For what n: there are n-many people x, such that I should talk to x?'
     a'. A: You should talk to Bill, Jenny, and Tom.   (^ok presuppositional)
     b. 'For what n: I should talk to n-many people?'
     b'. A: Three.   (^ok non-presuppositional)

(2)   How many people do you wonder [whether I should talk to ___]?
                    (^ok presuppositional, *non-presuppositional)

In Chinese the evidence becomes even more transparent since the presuppositional-vs.-non-presuppositional contrast is overtly reflected on the presence-vs.-absence of the D-linked marker *na* 'which'. Specifically, the 'how-many' phrases in Chinese are exclusively construed as asking the number, i.e., the non-presuppositional reading in (3a). To derive the presuppositional one, the D-linked demonstrative marker *na* 'which' must be added in (3b).

(3) a. Ni   mai-le   ji-ben-shu?   (non-presuppositional reading only)
       you   buy-Perf.   how.many-CL-book
       'How many books did you buy ___?'
    b. Ni   mai-le   **na**-ji-ben-shu?   (presuppositional reading only)
       you   buy-Perf.   which-several-CL-person
       'Which books did you buy ___?'

When the 'how-many' phrase is embedded in a *wh*-island in (4), it cannot survive without the D-linked marker *na* 'which'. In other words, the non-D-linked *wh*-interpretation is ruled out by the *wh*-island, a manifestation of *wh*-island effects.

(4) a. *Ni xiang-zhidao [women zai-nali   mai-le   ji-ben-shu]   ne?
        you want-know   we   at-where buy-Perf. several-Cl-book Q
        'How many books do you wonder [where we bought ___]?'
    b.   Ni xiang-zhidao [women zai-nali   mai-le   **na**-ji-ben-shu]   ne?
        you want-know   we   at-where   buy-Perf. which-several-Cl-book Q
        'Which books do you wonder [where we bought ___]?'

Strong island, (anti-)crossing, multiple *wh*-interpretation: Although the above observation seems to pattern Chinese-type and Japanese-type *wh*-arguments together, further evidence shows that they are still different. First of all, the non-presuppositional, number-reading survives the strong islands with the short answer, a sharp contrast to the pipe-pied answer in Japanese (Nishigauchi 1986, Pesetsky 1987, Choe 1987, Richards 2008).

(5) A: Ni shouji-le [[ji-ge-guojia faxing] de youpiao] le ne?
        you collect-Perf. several-Cl-country issue DE stamp Perf. Q
        'How many countries have you collected the stamps that ___ issued?'
     B: 76-ge(-guojia).
        76-Cl-country

Second, while English exhibits the crossing effects in (6) (Richards 2001), Japanese presents the opposite distribution, the so-called anti-crossing effects (Saito 2004).

(6) a. ?Which book$_i$ do you know who$_j$ to persuade t_j to read t_i

   b. *Who$_j$ do you know which book$_i$ to persuade t_j to read t_i

However, Chinese lacks neither crossing nor anti-crossing effects where structural height of the *wh*-arguments does not present any difference for them to take scope (Takita, Fuji, & Yang 2007).

(7) Zhangsan xiang-zhidao [shei mai-le shenme] ne?
     Zhangsan want-know who buy-Prf. what Q
     a. [For which x] Zhangsan wants to know [for which y] x bought y
     b. [For which y] Zhangsan wants to know [for which x] x bought y

Third, Kitagawa, Roehrs, and Tomioka (2004) suggest that when multiple *wh*-phrases are embedded in a non-island, the sentence may exhibit either a single- or a multiple-pair interpretation. When the same *wh*-phrases are embedded in a wh-island, the sentence can only exhibit a single-pair interpretation. We will show that both readings are acceptable in Chinese counterparts.

Rethinking *wh*-island: The above observation prompts two lines of thoughts: 1) the mechanisms behind the Chinese-type in-situ *wh*-arguments are to be reinvestigated; 2) the *wh*-island effects are to be considered as a cross-linguistic phenomenon. <u>For the former</u>, if the implicit movement approach is adopted, problems arise in explaining the above mentioned contrasts. For instance, Kitagawa et al. (2004) suggest that the loss of the multiple-pair interpretation in Japanese is due to the blocking of covert movement of the *wh*-elements in question (cf. Hagstrom 1998, Bošković 2003). Following their reasoning, it amounts to saying that the relevant *wh*-elements in Chinese do not undergo any movement. On the other hand, if the non-movement approach is adopted, it would predict the absence of *wh*-island effects, contrary to the above observed. <u>For the latter</u>, the *wh*-island effects may be re-interpreted as some other effects, for example, intervention effects (cf. Beck 1996, Beck and Kim 1997, Pesetsky 2000, Miyagawa 2004, Beck 2006, among many others). For the *wh*-moved languages, the effects are triggered by the blocking of the movement path where extraction of a "more richly specified" *wh*-phrase from a *wh*-island is better than a less-specified one (Rizzi 2006, 2013, see also Starke 2001). For *wh*-in-situ languages, we propose that the effects may be attributed to the blocking of the probe-goal relation of a certain agreement system as in (8) in a broad sense of Relativized Minimality.

(8)a. [+Q, +Top]…[+Q]…[+Q, +Top]   b. *[+Q]…[+Q]…[+Q]   c. *[+Q]…[+Q, +Top]…[+Q]

Either way, *wh*-islands pose as a cross-linguistic, independent phenomenon against the structure-dependent strong islands (cf. Bošković 2015) and should, therefore, be independently dealt with, e.g., to subsume it into a general constraint requiring relativized minimality on either movement or agreement.

Selected References: Cresti, D. 1995. Extraction and reconstruction, Natural Language Semantics 3, 79-122. | Bošković, Ž. 2015. From the complex NP constraint to everything: on deep extractions across categories. The Linguistic Review 32:4, 603-670. | Kitagawa, Y., D. Roehrs, and S. Tomioka. 2004. Multiple Wh-interpretations. In *Generative Grammar in a Broader Perspective: Proceedings of the 4th GLOW in Asia 2003*, ed. Yoon, H.-J., Hangkook, 209-233. Seoul: Hankook Publishing Company. | Rizzi, Luigi. 2013. Locality. *Lingua* 130, 169-186.