

Why does *way* ‘why’ have Anti-Superiority Effect in Korean?

The fundamental issue of this paper is to provide the answer to the question: why does the so-called Anti-Superiority effects, as opposed to Superiority effects, exist in the grammar of languages like Korean and Japanese?

The Superiority effect arises in a multiple question when more than one wh-phrase is relevant to the answering patterns for the question. In such a case the syntax needs to decide on a pattern of wh-movement within that question. In English, where only one wh-phrase moves to Spec CP overtly, the Superiority effect is responsible for the contrast as in (1):

(1) Superiority Effect

a. Why did you bought what?

b. *What did you buy why? Pesetsky (2000, P.15)

Chomsky’s (1995, P.296) Minimal Link Condition (MLC) and Pesetsky’s (2000, P.15) Attract Closest (AC) play a crucial role of the Superiority Condition for the movement in essence, where the movement is viewed as triggered by particular features of a target head. However, conditions like MLC and AC cannot explain the restriction in the use of adverbial wh-phrases like *naze* ‘why’ in Japanese and *way* ‘why’ in Korean. As you see in the following data in (2):

(2) Anti-Superiority Effect in Japanese

a. ?Kimi-wa nani-o naze katta no?

You-Top what-Acc why bought Q

‘Why did you buy what?’

b.* Kimi-wa naze nani-o katta no?

You-Top why what-Acc bought Q

‘What did you buy why?’ Watanabe (1991, P.18)

Unlike English, when a nominal wh-phrase and an adverbial wh-phrase, *naze* ‘why’, in Japanese share their interrogative scope, the former can c-command the latter but not vice versa. The same phenomenon occurs in Korean.

A lot of scholars have tried to account for this restriction in various ways: argument vs. adjunct asymmetry (Huang (1982)), referential vs. non-referential asymmetry (Cinque (1990)) and nominal vs. adverbial asymmetry (Tsai (1994)). However, these analyses cannot explain why there is no Anti-Superiority Effect in the following Korean data in (3):

(3) a. Nu-nun mwues-ul etieyse saess-ni?

You-Top what-Acc where bought-Q

‘Where did you buy what?’

b. Nu-nun etieyse mwues-ul saess-ni?

You-Top where what-Acc bought-Q

‘Where did you buy what?’

We can find the solution in Chomsky’s (1998,1999, 2001) framework. I argue that the crucial difference between English and the wh-in-situ languages like Japanese and Korean in these phenomena is the composition of features in Complementisers and wh-phrases. According to Chomsky (1998, P.44), wh-phrase has an uninterpretable wh-feature and an interpretable Q-feature, which matches the uninterpretable probe, Q-feature of a complementiser (C) in the final stage. The operation Agree occurs between a probe and a goal in this stage in English. However, in my paper, in Korean and Japanese, neither C nor wh-phrase has an uninterpretable feature. Japanese and Korean wh-phrases do not have an uninterpretable wh-feature but only interpretable

variable features. Thus, there is no Agree operation between them. Instead, there is Binding relation between Cs and wh-phrases. As for (2) and (3), I will also show the differences between the adverbial *way*, ‘why’, and the other adverbial phrases in Korean. Under the different linking system between Cs and wh-phrases in English and Korean, these differences cause Anti-Superiority effects in multiple wh-questions that contain adverbial wh-phrases like *naze* ‘why’ in Japanese and *way* ‘why’ in Korean.

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