A movement approach to non-local wh-Polarity Sensitive Items in Korean

**Goal** This paper examines the distributional pattern of non-local wh-Free Choice Items (FCIs) and Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) in Korean, which together are called Polarity Sensitive Items (PSIs) (Choi 2007), and presents evidence for the movement theory of wh-indeterminates and against an in-situ approach.

**Background** A wh-indeterminate (Kuroda 1965) and a focus particle –to, meaning ‘also’ or ‘even’ in English, form a PSI as in (1), and the association between them can be non-local when wh-indeterminates are within the c-command domain of –to as in (2).

   M-Top who-Foc like Neg-Pres-Decl
   ‘Mary does not like anyone.’ (NPI)

   M-Top who-Foc this work-Acc do-can-Comp say-Past-Decl
   ‘Mary said that anyone can do this work.’ (FCI)

(2) Mary-nun nwukwu-lul cohaha.ci-to anh-nun-ta.
   M-Top who-Foc like-Foc Neg-Pres-Decl
   ‘Mary does not like anyone.’

Though non-local PSIs as in (2) has not been researched much in Korean, a non-local wh...–mo universal construction in Japanese has been discussed a lot. There are two major approaches to the non-local universal construction in Japanese: a non-movement approach (Shimoyama 2006) and a movement approach (Takahashi 2002, Watanabe 1992), which can be carried over to non-local PSIs in Korean.

A non-movement approach Shimoyama (2006), adopting Hamblin’s (1976) semantics for wh-phrases as sets of alternatives, argues that wh-indeterminates generate sets of alternatives and expend them until they encounter an operator that computes on a set of alternatives and gives a singleton set in return. Under this approach, a wh-indeterminate and the alternative-set-absorbing operator –mo is not associated by movement. This approach can be extended to the non-local association across island boundaries as in (3): no movement is posited; hence, no island effects. However, the unavailability of association in (4) is not predicted. In (4), one more layer of complex NP boundary is added between nwukwu ‘who’ and –to, and no operator absorbing a set of alternatives intervenes the two, while the non-local association is unavailable. Hence, (4) seems to suggest that alternative semantics approach cannot be extended to Korean wh-PSIs.

   this region-in-Top who-Nom wrote book-Foc well sell-Pass-Pres-Decl
   ‘In this region, whoever wrote a book, it is well sold.’ (Complex NP island)

b. Mary-nun [etten umsik-ul mek.i ceney]-to son-ul an ssis-nun-ta.
   M-Top which food-Acc eat before-Foc hands-Acc Neg wash-Pres-Decl
   ‘Mary doesn’t wash her hands before eating any food.’ (Adjunct island)

(4) [dp[cp]-[dp2]-nwukwu]-ka sun] casecen]-ul kyocenhaz] saram]-to bonus-lul
   who-Nom wrote biography-Acc proofread person-Foc incentives-Acc
   receive Neg-Past-Decl
   ‘People who proofread biographies that anyone wrote didn’t receive incentives.’

**Movement approach** argues that wh-indeterminate and –to are associated via movement. There are several versions of accounts on how wh-indeterminates are associated with particles determining functions and interpretations of wh-indeterminates, depending on what is moving. For instance, Watanabe (1992) argues that a null operator born as a unit with a wh-indeterminate undergoes movement to form relation with a Question particle; Hagstrom (1998) proposes that a

---

1 (4) is grammatical only when the wh-indeterminate is interpreted as an interrogative and –to as ‘also’ or
particle associated with a wh-indeterminate moves; Nishigauchi (1990) argues that a wh-indeterminate moves.

Analyses under the movement approach have to provide account for lack of island effects as in (3), while (4) can easily be predicted as a case of island violation. In order to account for lack of island effects such as (3), Nishigauchi (1990) argues that an island is pied-piped to a wh-indeterminate and undergoes covert movement to the vicinity of a particle as a whole. However, this approach has to assume a subsequent reconstruction after a covert movement to attain a correct interpretation as pointed out by Shimoyama (2006). Hagstrom (1998), on the other hand, argues that a particle may be base-generated outside of an island immediately containing wh-indeterminate, which can be followed by a particle movement. However, this account does not explain why a particle should be appended to an island closest to the wh-indeterminate.

**Proposal** I argue that the particle -to in Korean is a focus sensitive operator, and triggers a movement of a wh-indeterminate motivated by focus as proposed by Chomsky (1976). Moreover, following Brockett (1994)’s assumption on –mo in Japanese, I argue that -to in Korean provides an escape hatch. Chomsky (1976) argues a focus constituent covertly moves which informs the focus-sensitive operator such as only about the meaning of a focus and its scope.

(5) SS: [VP introduced Bill to Sue]

| LF: [Bill [introduced t to Sue]] |

Interpretation: <BILL, A, λx, [INTROD(SUE)(x)]>²

Adopting this analysis on Focus, I argue that wh-indeterminates are focus elements like Bill_t in (5), which are forced to undergo movement in order to form the right semantic structure. This obligatory covert movement can be supported by (6) in which FCIs located lower than a Q-adverb taykey ‘mostly’ has wide scope over a head noun of a relative clause which is located higher.

(6) [DP[CP[ett en chak-ul ilkun] haksayn] -to taykey ku cakka-lul pinanha-n-ta.³

which book-Acc read student-Foc mostly its author-Acc criticize

a. *most_k [book(y) & student(y) $ read (y,x)][y criticized x’s author]

b. V_λ [paper(x)][most_k [student(y) & read (y,x)][y criticized x’s author]]

The interpretation in (6b) will be made available when etten chak-ul ‘which book’ is covertly moved to the spec of –to phrase, as suggested by Brockett (1994).

One might wonder how this movement does not induce island effects as in (3). Provided that every movement occurs cyclically, etten chak-ul ‘which book’ will first undergo movement to spec, CP1 in (6) and –to as an escape hatch allows it moves further to its spec. The unavailability of (4) is easily captured under this analysis. In (4), DP2 is not appended with –to, which means that the DP2 does not have an escape hatch that allows nwukwu ‘who’ to circumvent crossing an island; therefore, preventing the long-distance association.

**To summarize,** non-movement analysis for wh-indeterminates cannot be extended to account for the distributional pattern of wh-PSIs in Korean, and the unavailability of long-distance association in (4) suggests that the movement approach is on the right track. Among various analyses within the movement approach, I argue that wh-indeterminates undergo focus-driven movement to spec of –to phrase which, I assume, is to be a focus-sensitive operator. If this analysis is on the right track, the distributional pattern of non-local PSIs can constitute evidence for the movement theory of focus association.


---

² (5) is from Krifka (2006) (5).
³ This example modified a Japanese counterpart provided by Brockett (1994)(5).