

An argument-adjunct asymmetry at the word level

Korean is one of a handful of languages that possess little studied instances of reduplicated wh-words, hereafter wh-doublets (1). Wh-doublets differ from simple, non-reduplicated, interrogatives in Korean in entailing plurality, and exhaustivity -- characteristics which they share with standard D-linked wh's.

What will concern us here is a puzzling gap in the distribution of wh-doublets. Although most wh-words participate in doubling, the Korean equivalent to why-why is out.

We argue that this is not a lexical gap, but a reflex of a broader phenomenon: the well-known argument-adjunct asymmetry. We show how a semantic treatment of other argument-adjunct asymmetries like the ones proposed by Szabolcsi and Zwarts 1993, or Rullmann 1995, can account for the absence of why-why. To achieve this, let us note that besides disallowing *wae-wae, Korean imposes severe restriction of the interpretation of ettehkey-ettehkey, 'how-how.' As noted in (1), Korean allows the duplicated form of ettehkey, but it imposes a specific interpretation on the duplicated form. Thus, to a question like (3), Korean disallows a 'plurality of manners' answer, and uses the doublet as a device of mere emphasis (allowing an answer like "John ran like a flash," or, closer still, "really, really fast"). To a question like (4), it allows an answer like "first, by bus, then by car." Put differently, it seems to impose a sequence, or ordering.

A natural explanation for the impossibility of *wae-wae and for the interpretive constraints on ettehkey-ettehkey is available within Szabolcsi and Zwarts's 1993, or of Rullmann's 1995 semantic account of the adjunct-argument extraction asymmetries (5). (We focus here on Rullmann's account.) Rullmann's insight is that in contexts where intervention effects arise, maximality (or strong exhaustiveness) is involved, and that maximality is not defined in downward entailing contexts (formed by the intervener). Rullmann observes that this simple account works well with wh-phrases denoting degrees (how tall) or numbers (how many books), but does not extend straightforwardly to how and why.

His answer to this problem is that interveners force a maximal value of the denotation of wh-phrases, or impose reference on a previously established set. In other words, it renders wh-phrases D-linked. Rullmann observes that how and why cannot be D-linked, and cannot therefore meet the maximality-requirement imposed by the intervention effect. The argument/adjunct asymmetry then turns on whether a pre-established set can be made available for the maximality operator to pick out of.

Here we capitalize on Rullmann's observation, and claim that the reason why true adjuncts in Korean cannot be reduplicated is because they cannot be D-linked, and therefore cannot combine with the maximality operator, which we take to be associated with reduplication (as in many other cases, reduplication is associated with focus, emphasis, exhaustivity, etc.) Put differently, there is something inherent to true adjuncts (the algebraic structure, of the domain they range over) that prevents them from combining with the maximality operator. This reasoning also enables to account for why if a 'sequence' can be imposed on ettehkey, as noted in (4), reduplication all of a sudden is made possible. The Korean phenomenon of wh-doublets thus seems to lend rather strong support to the idea that there is a crucial difference in terms of algebraic structure between adjuncts and arguments, as first brought to light by Szabolcsi and Zwarts, and later refined by Rullmann. It does so, not by focusing on extraction, but on the shape of wh-words.

- (1) a. **nwukwu-nwukwu** o-ess-ni?
Who Who come-Pst-Q
'Who-who came?'
- b. **mwe-mwe** mek-ess-ni?
What what eat-Pst-Q
'what-what did you eat?'
- c. **enu-enu** chaek kacyeo-ss-ni?
Which which book bring-Pst-Q
'which book which book did you bring?'
- d. **eti-eti** ga-ss-ni?
Where where go-Pst-Q
'where-where did you go?'
- e. **encey-encey** manna-ss-ni?
when when meet -Pst-Q
'when- when did you meet him?'
- f. **ettehkey-ettehkey** ha-ess-ni?
How How do-Pst-ni
'how-how did you do it?'
- (2) **wae-wae** ha-ess-ni?
why-why do-Pst-ni
'Why-why did you do it?'
- (3) John-i ettehkey-ettehkey ttali-ess-ni?
John-Nom how-how run-Pst-Q
'How did John run?'
- (4) Ne ettehkey-ettekhey o-ss-ni?
you how-how come-Pst-Q
'How did you come?'
- (5) a. ??what do you wonder whether John read t
b. *why do you wonder whether John fix the car t

References

- Rullmann, Hotze. 1995. Maximality in the semantics of wh-constructions. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Szabolcsi, Anna, and Frans Zwarts. 1993. Weak islands and algebraic semantics for scope taking. *Natural Language Semantics* 1, 235-284.