

Fragment Question and Ellipsis in Chinese

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This paper argues that the derivation of Fragment Question (FQ) in Chinese can be assimilated to that of Fragment Answer (FA) in English (Merchant 2004) and in Korean (Yim 2012) by analyzing the fragment of FQ as having raised to a peripheral specifier position of a clause prior to TP ellipsis.

FQ in Chinese can be subcategorized into the FQ with linguistic antecedent and the FQ without specific linguistic antecedent. The former type is constrained by syntactic parallelism and derived from focus movement and TP-ellipsis, whereas the latter, being subject to pragmatic or discourse factors, cannot be approached from syntactic parallelism on ellipsis. Regarding its form and function, FQ in Chinese is characterized by a focused constituent followed by a final particle *ne*, which is used to type FQ as a constituent question and to solicit answer on the basis of linguistic antecedent or from context.

With a focus on FQ with linguistic antecedent, we observe that the grammatical contrast in Chinese FQ indicates that there exists a clear-cut boundary between FQ-fitting elements and non-FQ-fitting ones in syntax. More specifically, FQ with target adverbs lower in syntactic position, such as manner and frequency adverbs, are not allowed, whereas those target adverbs higher in syntactic hierarchy, such as locative and time adverbs, are permitted. In addition, nominal arguments such as subject and object argument are not affected by their syntactic positions, so are certain cases of verbal phrase. This grammatical contrast points to the fact that the dividing line may lie in the clause-internal phasal domain, ν P (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

Along this vein, we further suggest that the focus movement is subject to the PIC and anti-locality conspiracy with phasal domains, CP, ν P, and DP (Bošković 1994, 1997, 2005, to appear a, b) and that outer specifier of ν P projection provides an escape hatch for the extracted elements under VP (Chomsky 2001, 2005, Abels 2003, Gengel 2007, 2009, Funakoshi 2012). Further, given deletion at PF (Merchant 2001), under the split CP hypothesis, ([CP-FP] (Craenenbroeck 2004), not [FP-CP] (Merchant 2004)), all the un-interpretable features should be repaired by TP ellipsis (Fox and Lasnik 2003, Merchant 2008). However, TP ellipsis cannot remedy island sensitive effects, such as CNPC, adjunct island, and *wh*-island in Chinese FQ. With these, we infer that deletion may occur in syntax (Baltin 2007, 2012) in Chinese FQ, not at PF (cf. Aelbrecht 2010). Meanwhile, we further argue that two island-insensitive cases, sentential subject island and left branch condition, are not counterexamples to our analysis and can be resolved by the analysis that the fragment has been successfully extracted out of the “islands” at the point just prior to TP-ellipsis.

Moreover, an interesting paradigm displaying the behaviors of FQs in Chinese affective *ba* construction, passive *bei* construction, and preposition stranding in PP strengthens the fact that the target of FQ moves as a syntactic constituent. Finally, we conclude that FQ with linguistic antecedent is a result of the non-spell out of TP or a remnant of TP-ellipsis, distinctive from FQ without linguistic antecedent, being subject to pragmatic and discourse variables.