Unselective Binding, Case, and Relativization

It is widely known that WH-phrases in-situ in Japanese are licensed by quantificational particles (Qs) like ka ‘some/or’ and mo ‘any/every/and’ via local unselective binding (see Harada 1973; see also Cable 2007). Thus, any Q can unselectively bind as many WHs as needed, so long as there is no Q which is closer to those WHs. In an essentially similar vein, Takahashi (2002) proposes that minimality is also at stake in the contrast between (3a) and (3b): thus, intervening ka-marked WH-phrase dare-ka ‘someone’ in (3b), although semantically equivalent to hito ‘(a) person’ in (3a), blocks the long-distance association of the deeply embedded WH to mo. However, Watanabe (to appear:fn.12) correctly notes that the ill-formedness of (3b) cannot be solely attributed to minimality, since an alternative association of WH with the closer Q ka is impossible in the first place, as shown by (4) (cited from Watanabe, with slight modification). Thus, dare ‘who’ in the relative clause (RC) in question can neither be licensed by ka attached to the relative head N nor by the higher unselective binder (mo in (3b), ka in (4)) Watanabe simply left for future research the question as to why examples like (4) are unacceptable, an issue I am concerned with in this presentation.

I would like to propose that the WH-phrase within the RC cannot be bound by ka essentially because the RC in (3b)/(4) is an instance of appositive/non-restrictive relatives. (5) shows that appositive RCs cannot contain any WH-phrases. Thus, descriptively speaking, appositive RCs constitute some kind of island for unselective binding (see, e.g., Safir 1986), in contrast to the ordinary restrictive RCs (see, e.g., (1) and (3a)), and if we can show that the RCs in (3b)/(4) are instances of appositive RCs, then the impossibility of unselective binding into them is accounted for.

In this appositive RC approach, the question arises as to why the RC in (3b)/(4) cannot be a restrictive one. I propose the Case condition on Relativization, which states that RCs can be adjoined only to NPs whose head receives Case (in Japanese). This accounts for the obligatory appositive interpretation of the RCs in (4)/(3b) as follows: Fukui (1986) discusses at length that ka has a nominal [+N] feature and hence Case-receivable, as evidenced by, e.g., the fact that ka-marked interrogative clauses can optionally accompany case-particles ((1) and (2)). Then, the strict head-final word order in Japanese tells us that it is the Q ka attached to the head WH-noun dare that receives Case (manifested as a case-particle) in (4)/(3b), hence the Case condition on relativization predicts that it is the QP dare-ka that hosts the RC. The Q head ka is presumably the source of existential quantification (3), as I assume. Then, the referential/quantificational force of the entire nominal is already fixed at the semantic composition of the QP constituent dare-ka, thus the RC adjoined to this QP can receive only appositive interpretation, which does not restrict the set of possible referents but only add some additional information (presupposed by the speaker) regarding the already fixed referent.

A crucially relevant fact is the contrast between (6a) and (6b). (6a) exhibits essentially the same degradation as in (3b)/(4), where ka attached to the head WH-noun fails to license another WH-phrase within the RC, thus yields the same account. By contrast, if ka is attached to PP which takes the whole WH-NP as its complement, the example significantly improves, as shown by (6b). This clearly shows that it is not WH-NPs themselves that resist modification by Wh-containing RCs, but WH-NPs accompanying ka that do so. Thus, I take the acceptability of (6b) to mean that the RC in (6b), unlike those in (3b), (4) and (6a), can be an instance of usual restrictive RCs. The account is as follows: in (6b), the WH-noun dare receives Case from the postposition kara ‘from’, hence an RC can be adjoined to this WH-NP. The RC can be an instance of restrictive RCs, since the quantificational force of the whole WH-NP is to be determined by a yet higher Q ka, attached to PP.

The Case condition on relativization gains independent support from examples (7) to (10). (7) and (8) show that numeral-classifier phrases (which certainly have some nominal feature) can be targeted by relativization only if they receive Case. Further, the contrast between (4) and (9), and that between (6a) and (10) are significant. I follow Aoyagi (2006) in assuming that mo is a “transcategorial” focus particle that adjoins to a variety of categories without changing the categorial status of the host phrase. I specifically claim that mo, unlike ka, cannot be [+N] and hence cannot receive Case. Thus, in (9) and (10) it is the WH-noun dare that receives Case, hence allowing the restrictive RC modification.

The nature of the Case condition on relativization is ill-understood, but I suggest that the well-known observation that Japanese relativization is licensed by “aboutness” (see, e.g., Kuno 1973) is at stake here. Specifically, I propose that the aboutness condition forces RCs to be predicated of an NP without any remaining uninterpretable feature (like Case), a suggestion which is reminiscent of of the Visibility Condition of Case in the early GB theory.

(2) John-wa [dare-ga [dare-ga kita to]-mo omotte-nai ka]-o siritagatteiru. John-top who-nom who-nom came that -mo think-not ka -acc want.to.know “John wants to know who does not think [that anybody came].”

(3) Japanese: (Takahashi 2002:591)
a. [[dare-o hihansita hito]-o taihosita keikan]-mo basse-rare-ta. who-acc criticized person -acc arrested policeman -mo punish-PASS-PST “For every person x, the policeman who arrested a person who criticized x was punished.”
b. *[[dare-o hihansita dare-ka]-o taihosita keikan]-mo basse-rare-ta. who-acc criticized who-KA -acc arrested policeman -mo punish-PASS-PST “For every person x, the policeman who arrested someone who criticized x was punished.”

(4) *[dare-o hihansita] dare-ka-ga basse-rare-(masi)-ta (ka?)
who-acc criticized who-KA-NOM punish-PASS-HONORIFICS-PST KA “For some person x, someone who criticized x was punished.”
“For which person x was anyone who criticized x punished?”

(5) [dare-o hihansita] {hito*/Yamada-san]-ga basse-rare-(masi)-ta ka? you-nom criticized person/Yamada-Mr. -nom punish-PASS-HONORIFICS-PST KA “Which person x is such that {a person that criticized x/*Mr. Yamada, who criticized x,} was punished?”


I-TOP who-acc criticized who -from-KA money-acc borrowed “For some person x, I borrowed money from someone who criticized x.”

(7) boku-wa ([Taro-o hihansita]) seito-o (*[Taro-o hihansita]) san-nin mikaketa. I-TOP Taro-ACC criticized student-acc Taro-ACC criticized 3-CL saw “I saw three students who criticized Taro.”

(8) boku-wa ([Taro-o hihansita]) san-nin-o mikaketa. I-TOP Taro-ACC criticized 3-CL-ACC saw “I saw three students, who criticized Taro.”

(9) ?[[dare-o hihansita] dare-mo]-ga basse-rare-ta.
who-acc criticized who-MO-nom punish-PASS-PST “For every person x, anyone who criticized x was punished.”

(10) ?boku-wa [[dare-o hihansita] dare-mo]-kara okane-o karita.
I-TOP who-acc criticized who-MO -from money-acc borrowed. “For every person x, I borrowed money from anyone who criticized x.”

References
Cable, Seth. 2007. The grammar of Q. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.