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Head Internal Relative Clauses and WH-questions

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ABSTRACT

There are two or more types of relative clause constructions in natural languages. One of them is a well-known head external relative clause constructions (HERC) in which the head noun either precedes or follows a relative clause. English is a former type while Japanese is a latter one. Another type is a head internal relative clause (HIRC) whose head noun resides inside CP. Yet one more type is a correlative in which a relative pronoun appears in-situ with the internal head inside CP and is linked with the CP external item called correlate. Hindi is this type.

In this talk, we examine various types of the head noun in HIRC and of the sentence which HIRC appears with special reference to Japanese. There are some peculiar characteristics of the relative clause in Japanese. To mention:

(1) a. No overt relative pronoun exists.
b. HERC with head final is used.
c. HIRC with head internal is also used.
d. No distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive is observed.

Consider the HERC and HIRC examples as follows:

(2) a. Tom-ga [[Mary-ga [e] kattekita] ringo]-o tabeta.
Nom Nom bought+brought apple(s) Acc ate
|_____|
"Tom ate apple(s) that Mary bought and brought home."
b. Tom-ga [[Mary-ga ringo-o kattekita] no]-o tabeta.
Nom Nom apple(s) bought+brought *NO* Acc ate
(nominalizer)

(2a) is a HERC version, which has a gap marked as [e] linking with the head noun. (2b) is a case of HIRC in which the head, *ringo* appears in the gap position in (2a). The item *no* follows the clause in this case. It is mentioned as nominalizer in the literature, but the status of this morpheme is controversial. It might be the case that *no* is the overt realization of D feature, since the definiteness is exhibited in HIRC. We will observe various cases of head noun phrases such as proper nouns, common nouns and numeral noun phrases. It seems that the choice of head nouns is more restricted than we expect.

We will also consider the Wh-phrase in the head of HIRC as well as Wh-phrases in other positions than the head of HIRC to see if it is island-sensitive or not.