

Fragment questions in Mandarin Chinese

Topic movement and pied-piping

Ting-Chi Wei

National Kaohsiung Normal University

This paper argues that fragment question (FQ) in Mandarin Chinese is derived from topic movement and TP deletion, contributing to the growing body of evidence that sentence fragments are syntactically full clauses (Merchant 2004). Structurally, an FQ consists of a topic-like constituent followed by a particle *ne*, which functions as a topic marker and as a constituent question particle simultaneously. The fragment is argued to move to the SpecTopP rather than SpecFocP (Wei 2013), because FQ exhibits topic properties and respects island effects such as the complex NP island and the adjunct island. However, it is insensitive to islands such as the sentential subject island and left branch condition. We propose that the absence of island effect can be attributed to the pied-piping of the entire topic-like island to the SpecTopP. In addition, the proposed analysis not only captures the ineligible FQs caused by intervention effect within the passive structures but also the eligible FQs induced by preposition drop in the language.

Keywords: fragment, question, topic movement, topicalization, ellipsis, pied-piping