

Sluicing and Quasisluicing in Mandarin

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1 Introduction

In sluicing sentences we see only a *wh*-phrase (the remnant) in place of an expected full clause, e.g. *Someone just left – guess who*. (Ross (1969)) I assume that sluicing is derived by *wh*-extraction from IP, followed by deletion of IP. A remarkable fact about sluicing is that it occurs in many unrelated languages, including *wh*-in-situ languages. In the case of Mandarin, however, previous work has failed to completely unify its sluicing with sluicing in other languages. I argue that we must divide the so-called sluicing cases in Mandarin into **quasisluicing** and **true sluicing**. A gap in possible true sluices is explained by a binding requirement on *wh*-words.

1.1 Quasisluicing

Some so-called sluices are better analyzed as reduced identificational clauses. For example:

- (1) Zhangsan zuotian yujian mouren, keshi wo bu zhidao shi shei
Zhangsan yesterday meet someone, but I not know SHI who
'Zhangsan met someone yesterday, but I don't know who.' Wang (2002)

This sentence has been analyzed as a sluice, where *shei* 'who' is the remnant, with support from *shi*, which is both a copula and focus marker. However, a sentence like this can also be analyzed as being derived from a sentence like (2):

- (2) Zhangsan zuotian yujian mouren_i, keshi wo bu zhidao ta_i shi shei
Zhangsan yesterday meet someone, but I not know he SHI who
'Zhangsan met someone yesterday, but I don't know who he was.'

Since pro-drop is robust in Mandarin, this kind of derivation is expected anyway.

1.2 True sluicing

Since quasisluicing cannot explain all so-called sluices (such as those with adjunct phrases in the remnant), we still have to analyze real sluicing. These cases look mundane but we have an unexpected gap: sluices with bare *wh*-words are ungrammatical; those with composite *wh*-phrases are grammatical. This is **the sluicing gap**.

Following Aoun and Li (1990), Tsai (1994), Dong, I take *wh*-words as variables which must be bound by a [+Q] Operator. In English, where *wh*-words are morphologically complex, this Op[Q] is merged with the *wh*-word itself. Mandarin *wh*-words are morphologically simplex, so Op[Q] must merge higher to bind bare *wh*-words; for composite *wh*-words, merging directly with the *wh*-phrase is possible.

I argue that Mandarin imposes a condition on binding relationships: deletion of a bound trace will leave the rest of its chain unbound (unless an undeleted chain element is also bound). Bare *wh*-words are bound by Op[Q] in C; when we move the *wh*-word to Spec, CP and delete IP, deleting the bound trace in IP renders the sentence ungrammatical. With composite *wh*-phrases, however, Op[Q] is merged with the phrase itself, and consequently continues to bind it when we move the phrase to Spec, CP. Thus we have explained the sluicing gap.

This abstract has 499 words.