Wh-constructions:
Questions and relative clauses

Tallerman, Chapter 8
WH-questions: Languages with wh-movement

- **English** (movement to C position, leaving a gap)
  - Jack put the book on the table.
  - **Where** did Jack put the book __.
  - **What** did Jack put __ on the table.
  - **Who** __ put the book on the table?

- Wh words: *who, what, which, where, when, why, how*
- Wh-movement does not change grammatical relations
– **Welsh** (movement to beginning of sentence, prior to finite verb)

- *Gwelais i ddraig yn yr ardd*
  saw:1SG I dragon in the garden
  ‘I saw a dragon in the garden.’

- **Beth welaist ti __ yn yr ardd?**
  What saw:2SG you __ in the garden
  ‘What did you see in the garden?’
• Wh-landing site is a position immediately before the complementizer (C)

  – Frisian
    • Wat \textit{oft} ik drinke woe?
      what whether I drink would
      ‘What would I drink?’

  – Colloquial Moroccan Arabic
    • \textit{Mc}amn \textit{lli} hdarti?
      with.whom that you.spoke
      ‘Who did you speak to?’
• Wh-movement also occurs in embedded clauses:
  • I know [\textit{what} Jack put on the table].
  • They wonder [\textit{which cereal} John had for breakfast].
  • Bill persuaded John to ask [\textit{where} Mary put the books]
    – Where is the gap for these wh-phrases?
    – What category is the wh-phrase?
    – How do embedded questions differ from matrix questions in English?
Languages with in-situ wh-questions

• **English echo questions:**
  - Kim put the book on **which table**?
  - Sue bought **how many copies** of that wonderful book?

  – Echo questions are used to express incredulity or to ask for clarification of what the hearer said.
• Many languages (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean) use in situ strategy even for ordinary questions
  – **Japanese**
    • Hanako-ga kinoo [tomodati-to] [susi-o] tukurimasita
      Hanako-NOM yesterday friend-with sushi-ACC made
      ‘Hanako made sushi with her friends yesterday.’
    • Hanako-ga kinoo [dare-to] [susi-o] tukurimasita
      Hanako-NOM yesterday who-with sushi-ACC made
      ‘Who did Hanako make sushi with ___ yesterday?’
    • Hanako-ga kinoo [tomodati to] [nani-o] tukurimasita.
      Hanako-NOM yesterday friend-with what-ACC made
      ‘What did Hanako make ___ with her friends yesterday?’
• Some languages allow both strategies
  – **French**
  • Tu vois Pierre ce soir.
    you see:2SG Pierre this evening
    ‘You’re seeing Pierre this evening.
  • **Qui** tu vois __ ce soir?
    who you see:2SG __ this evening
    ‘Who are you seeing __ this evening?’
  • Tu vois **qui** ce soir?
    you see:2SG who this evening
    ‘Who are you seeing __ this evening?’
Multiple wh-questions

- **English**
  - Fred put the book on the table.
  - *What* did Fred put *where*?
  - *What where* did Fred put?

- **Bulgarian**
  - *Kogo* vižda John.
    - Who sees John.
    - ‘Who does John see?’
  - *Koj kogo* vidjal?
    - Who whom saw
    - ‘Who saw whom?’
– **Japanese**

- Taroo-ga [Yosiko-ni] [hon-o
  Taroo-NOM Yoshiko-DATIVE book-ACC
  ni-satu] ageta
  two-CLASSIFIER gave
  ‘Taroo gave two books to Yoshiko.’

- Taroo-ga [dari-ni] [nani-o] ageta no?
  Taroo-NOM who-DATIVE what-ACC gave QU
  ‘Who did Taroo give what?’
– **Malagasy**

- **Iza no nividy inona?**
  who PRT bought what
  ‘Who bought what?’

- **Anasan’ iza inona ny savony?**
  washes who what the soap
  ‘Who washes what with the soap.’

- **Aiza inona no vidinao?**
  where what PRT buy:2
  ‘Where do you buy what?’
Focus & Topic Preposing

• English Topicalization:
  – How do you feel about vegetables?
  – BEANS I LIKE __, but CARROTS I can’t STAND__.

• English Focus Preposing:
  – They got a new dog.
  – FIDO they named it __.
– **Welsh** focus preposing

- Oedd fy ffrind **yn** dweud ei hanes wrth yr athro heddiw
  was my friend PROG tell her story to the teacher today
  ‘My friend was telling her story to the teacher today.’

- [pp wrth yr athro] oedd fy ffrind **yn** dweud ei hanes **__** heddiw
  to the teacher was my friend PROG tell her story today
  ‘It was [to the teacher] that my friend was telling her story today.’

- [vp dweud ei hanes wrth yr athro] oedd fy ffrind **__** heddiw.
  Tell her story to the teacher was my friend today
  ‘??It was [telling her story to the teacher] that my friend was today.’
- **Hungarian pre-verbal focus position**

  - Péter olvasta a könyvet.
    Peter read:DEF the book:ACC
    ‘Peter read/was reading the book.’

  - Péter a könyvet olvasta
    Peter the book:ACC read:DEF
    ‘It’s a book that Peter read.’
– Scrambling in Japanese

• Kinoo Taroo-ga Ginza-de susi-o tabeta.
  Yesterday Taroo-NOM Ginza-in sushi-ACC eat:PAST
  ‘Taro ate sushi in Ginza yesterday.’

• Taroo-ga Ginza-de Kinoo susi-o tabeta.
  Kinoo susi-o Taroo-ga Ginza-de tabeta.
  Susi-o kinoo Taroo-ga Ginza-de tabeta.
  Ginza-de Taroo-ga kinoo susi-o tabeta.
  Kinoo Ginza-de susi-o Taroo-ga tabeta.
Relative Clauses

– **English**
  • I liked the **man** [who came to dinner].
  • A **man** [that I met] helped me.
  • We would like to go back to the **cities** [where we were born].

– A subordinate clause that modifies a noun, restricting it to a particular individual or subset that the speaker wants to talk about.
  • I liked the man + the man came to dinner
  • A man helped me + I met the man.
  • We would like to go back to the cities + we were born in the cities.
– Relative clauses start with a wh-word (relative pronoun) or the complementizer *that*.
  • NOTE: In some cases they don’t start with anything:
    – A man [I met] helped me.

– Relative clauses contain a gap in the relativized position:
  • [who [__ came to dinner] ]
  • [that [I met __] ]
  • [where [we were born __] ]

– The complementizer *that* can always be replaced by a wh-word:
  • A man [who [I met __] ] helped me.

– Thus, relative clauses involve wh-movement internally.
Externally, relative clauses modify a head noun
  • They function as adjuncts of the noun

EXAMPLES:
  • I wouldn’t want the job which Lee applied for last week.
  • That storm we had last night was amazing.
  • The application forms that arrived yesterday look quite hard.

QUESTIONS:
  • What are the head nouns?
  • What are the relative clauses?
  • How is the relative clause introduced?
  • What is the relativized position (gap) in each relative clause, and what grammatical relation does it have?
Cross-Linguistic Variation in Relative Clauses

• Probably, all languages have relative clauses.
• Relative clauses in all languages involve a restrictive clause modifying a head noun.
• Three parameters of variation:
  – Presence or absence of relative pronoun or other relativizer.
  – Relative clause follows or precedes the head noun
  – The relative clause does or does not contain a gap.
• **Tinrin**
  – wa *mwîê rra [nrâ sùveharru nrâ toni] nrâ truu numea*
    the woman there 3SG like SM Tony 3SG stay Noumea
    ‘The woman that Tony likes lives in Noumea.’
  – **The relative clause is not introduced by any relative pronoun or other special marker.**

• **Japanese**
  – [Kimura-san-ga __ katte-iru] __ inu
    Kimura-Mr.-NOM keeps-NONPAST dog
    ‘the dog that Mr. Kimura keeps’
  – **Relative clause precedes the head noun**
• **Hausa**
  - *wuqud* [da ya kashe ta da *ita*]
    knife REL he killed her with it
    ‘the knife that he killed her with __’
  - Relative clause contains a ‘resumptive pronoun’ instead of a gap.

• In informal English, we also sometimes find a resumptive pronoun instead of a gap:
  - There’s that *guy* in the leather jacket [that we saw *him* around a few times in the market].
Complex NPs within sentences

• Noun phrases modified by relative clauses can fill any NP slot in a matrix clause:
  – English
    • [The dog that Mr. Kimura keeps] has a bad cough..
    • I’ve never liked [the dog that Mr. Kimura bought].
  – Japanese
    • [Kinoo Ziroo-ga __ yondeita hon]-ga nakunatta
      yesterday Ziro-NOM (ACC) was.reading book-NOM missing
      ‘[The book that Ziro was reading __ yesterday] is missing.’
Two Kinds of Complex NP

• Another kind of complex NP is an NP containing a full complement clause:
  – Relative clause:
    • The fact that Bill reported in his article.
      – *Bill reported in his article.
      – The fact which Bill reported in his article.
      – The fact Bill reported in his article.
      – The one that Bill reported in his article.
  – Complement clause:
    • The fact that Bill was late.
      – Bill was late.
      – *The fact which Bill was late.
      – *The fact Bill was late.
      – *The one that Bill was late.
Practice Problems

• Tallerman (p.262-266)
  – Problem 1 (Turkish wh-questions)
  – Problem 2 (Focus in Malayalam)
  – Problem 4 (Focus in Basque)