On Topic A-movement and Unvalued Interpretable Features
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**GOAL**  The goal of this paper is three-fold: (i) I argue that topic A-movement exists in Chinese, contra [5]. Specifically, argument displacement in Chinese raising verb constructions (RVC) is A-movement to Spec-TP, yet semantically exhibits topicality; (ii) building upon [7]’s observation, I show a general under-generation problem of object A-movement under a probe-driven system of movement based on feature inheritance; (iii) in view of (ii), I argue that, following [1] & [6], Chomsky’s (1) should be abandoned to derive object topic A-movement based on a fine-grained featural characterization of topic A-movement.

**DATA**  Chinese raising verbs like epistemic modal yinggai ‘should’ take a TP complement as in (2) (see [4]). Interestingly, either the subject or the object can raise over the modal, as exemplified by (3a) & (3b). Building upon [4]’s analysis of subject raising in (3a) as A-movement, I argue that the pre-modal object in (3b) appears in its surface position via A-movement as well, rather than via A’-movement or base-generation. Supporting evidence comes from (i) the lack of reconstruction in (4), (ii) the raising of idiom chunks like kai-dao (lit. open-knife) ’do surgery’ in (5), and (iii) the feeding of Binding Condition A in (6). Curiously, A-movement in RVC exhibits topicality, which is usually a property associated with A’-movement. For example, Chinese indefinite NPs are ambiguous in specificity, as shown in (7a); when it is topicalized as in (7b), only the specific reading is available. As (8) shows, A-movement of indefinite NPs in RVC patterns together with topicalization – the raised indefinite NP exhibits only a specific interpretation. Other supporting evidence (not shown here) includes the raising of strong/weak quantifier NPs, and the raised argument’s inability to function as an information focus to reply to wh-questions.

**PROBLEM**  The topicality of A-movement in RVC seems to lend support to [5]’s extension of feature-inheritance to [+topic] feature to derive topic A-movement. However, the inheritance of [+topic] from C to T is too late for T to attract the object bearing [+topic] in the embedded VP. Specifically, [7] observes an incompatibility between [3]’s PIC and the feature inheritance hypothesis due to the simultaneity of the Transfer of VP and the introduction of C into the derivation, as in (9a). T can probe only after inheriting [+topic] from C, but by this ‘time’, the VP containing the object is already Transferred, as in (9b). Thus, I conclude that object A-movement in RVC is underivable under [5]’s probe-driven system of movement based on feature inheritance. To derive object A-movement in RVC, the object needs to start moving before the probe(i.e. [+topic] on matrix C/T) enters the structure, but the implementation of this local step crucially depends on lookahead into subsequent as yet non-existent derivational steps external to the vP phase. Thus we confront the same lookahead problem observed by [2] concerning [3]’s analysis of successive-cyclic movement of Y to W across phase XP in (10) in terms of X’s EPP feature whose assignment fully relies on whether W would enter the structure later, which is unknown at stage (10b).

**ANALYSIS**  I advance a solution to this under-generation problem based on a fine-grained featural characterization of topic A-movement that is made possible if (1) is abandoned (see [1] & [6]). Two types of new features are predicted to exist under [1]’s & [6]’s system, as shown in (11). I argue that both of these two new features are necessary in the establishment of topic A-movement. First, I advance that the topic feature on the moving DP should be recast as an interpretable yet unvalued feature (= (11d)). Specifically, even though φ-features and a topic feature on DP are both interpretable, their interpretation differs in one crucial aspect – the former are inherently interpretable at the CI interface, given their lexical valuation; the interpretation of the latter by contrast is configurational, requiring a syntactic relation between a DP and another syntactic category. Consequently, the DP’s topic feature, though potentially interpretable, cannot be intrinsically valued. In addition, I assume that the topic feature on matrix T inherited from C assumed by [5] should be valued yet uninterpretable (= (11c)). It is uninterpretable since a syntactic position is not what is interpreted as “topic” at the CI interface; on the other hand, it is valued because an argument agreeing with T and moving to Spec-TP in RVC is always interpreted as the topic.

This novel understanding of topic feature and topic A-movement can be combined with [2]’s moving-element-driven approach to syntactic movement to derive object topic A-movement in RVC as depicted in (12). I will also (i) explain why object topic A-movement is not possible in Chinese mono-clausal structures, but generally allowed in languages like Finnish, and (ii) discuss whether an unvalued interpretable feature causes CI crash when entering CI without being syntactically valued.
(1) Valuation/Interpretability Biconditional: A feature F is uninterpretable iff F is unvalued. (Chomsky 2001: 5)

(2) Yinguai [TP Akiu zhunbei.hao wancan le] should Akiu prepare.dinner PERF ‘It should be the case that Akiu has prepared the dinner.’

(3) a. [TP Akiu, yinggai [TP t, zhunbei.hao wancan le]] ‘Akiu should have prepared the dinner.’
   b. [TP Wancan, yinggai [TP Akiu zhunbei.hao t, le]] ‘The dinner should have been prepared by Akiu.’

(4) *[TP [Tazij-de pengyou] yinggai [TP Akiu bu hui beipan t]] himself-MOD friend should Akiu not will betray
   Intended: ‘It should be the case that Akiu, will not betray his own, friend.’ [Against A’-movement analysis]

(5) Zhe-tai tao yinggai [TP hui shi Chen Yishi lai kai ___ ]
   this-CL knife should will FOC Chen Doctor come open
   ‘It should be the case that this surgery will be done by Dr. Chen.’ [Against base-generation]

(6) [TP Akiu, yinggai [TP zhiyou [tazij-de laopuo] shodeliao t]]
   Akiu should only himself-MOD wife tolerate
   ‘It should be the case that only his own, wife can tolerate Akiu.’ [Supporting evidence for A-movement]

(7) a. You yi-ge Meiguoren yinde le guanjun
   have one-CL American win ASP championship
   ‘An (specific or not) American won the championship.’

b. You yi-ge Meiguoren, a, yinde le guanjun
   have one-CL American TOP win ASP championship
   ‘A specific American won the championship.’

(8) a. You yi-ge Meiguoren, yinguai [TP t, yinde le guanjun]
   have one-CL American should win ASP championship
   ‘A specific American should have won the championship.’

b. You yi-dao cai, yinguai [TP Akiu zhunbei t]
   have one-CL dish should Akiu prepare
   ‘There is one specific dish that should be prepared by Akiu.’

(9) a. [CP C [TP T [VP yinggai [TP T [+[+p Akiu [VP zhunbei.hao wancan [+topic le]]]]]]]]
   C-to-T [+topic] inheritance

b. [CP C [TP T[+topic]] [VP yinggai [TP T [+[+p Akiu [VP TRANSFERRED[=]]]]]]]

(10) a. [W[if, ik, EPP] ... [XP ... X ... Y[if, uk] ... (XP a phase)
   b. [X[if, uk] ... X[EPP ... t] ... (XP a phase)

(11) a. ifF[ ] (uninterpretable unvalued, e.g., φ on T, Case on NPs)
   b. ifF[val] (interpretable valued, e.g., φ on NPs)
   c. ifF[val] (uninterpretable valued)

\[\text{New features under [1]’s and [6]’s system}\]

(12) a. [+[+p OBJECT[interpretable topic]] SUBJECT [VP VERB t]]

(13) (The unvalued interpretable topic feature triggers object movement to phase edge to avoid being Spelled-out)

(Chomsky’s [2000] PIC is adopted here since there is no reason to delay Transfer under the proposed system)

b. [CP C [TP uninterpretable-topic [VP yinggai [TP [+[+p OBJECT[topic] SUBJECT [VP TRANSFERRED[=]]]]]]]]

(Matrix C passes down the valued uninterpretable topic feature to T, à la [5])

c. [CP C [TP OBJECT[+topic] T[+topic] [VP yinggai [TP [+[+p SUBJECT [VP TRANSFERRED[=]]]]]]]]

(Object bearing unvalued topic feature moves as a probe to matrix Spec-TP to c-command the valued counterpart on T to obtain a value, following [2]’s moving-element-driven approach to syntactic movement)

References: