

There are three main issues that are problematic for this view. The first is that wh-words in language after language (Latin, Slovenian, Chinese,...) double up as (polarity sensitive/epistemic) indefinites. The following is an example from Slovenian:

(3) Janez mora koga poklicati

John must wh call 'John must call someone'

The view sketched in (1) assumes that wh-words are (interpreted as) λ -abstractors. If so, how come they wind up being construed/interpreted so often as epistemic indefinites?

Second, the approach in (1) makes no prediction on the relation between which wh-words show up in Qs and which in FRs. Depending on whether one or the other (or both) of the shifts in (1) is partial, one would expect finding languages in which the wh-words in Qs are a subset of those found in FRs, or viceversa, as well as languages in which they overlap. However, the extensive cross-linguistic analysis of FRs in Caponigro (2003) shows that this is not so. The pattern attested in English (where, for example *which N* or *why* are fine in Qs but out in FRs) appears to hold crosslinguistically: the wh-words found in FRs systematically are a proper subset of those found in Qs.

Third, again as noted by Caponigro, maximality in FRs sometimes fails. While, e.g., (4a) would be false if there is something on John's plate I didn't throw away, (4c) wouldn't be false if I failed to go to some of the places where I could find help:

(4) a. I threw away what was on John's plate → all the things that were on J's plate

b. I went where I could get help → some of the places where I could get help

In other words, the FR in (4a) must be interpreted maximally/universally, while the one in (4b) can be, and typically is, interpreted non maximally/existentially. It is not easy to understand why, on the approach outlined in (1).

There is a different take on the relation between FRs and Qs that can be schematically illustrated as follows:

(5) [FR[Qwhat John left on his plate]]

The idea is that FRs are in fact derived from Qs. They denote, essentially, what constitutes a short answer to Qs. This very simple switch (whose consequences on D&C's analysis, or, for that matter, any labeling algorithm for FRs, need to be explored) can explain the phenomena observed above. First, a canonical Karttunen-style analysis for wh-words (in which they are treated indeed as indefinites) can be maintained for (5). Second, if the shift that takes us from Q meanings to FR meanings is partial, one would immediately explain Caponigro's generalization (as the wh-words in FRs would never stand a chance at being anything but a subset of those in Qs). Third there is a striking correlation between the distribution of maximality in FRs and that of answers to Qs. A case in point is constituted by 'Mention Some' Qs. The answer to (6a) has to be construed maximally/exhaustively as specifying all the things on John's plate; the one in (4b) doesn't have to be (which is what is known as the MS phenomenon):

(6) a. What did John leave on his plate? An asparagus and a piece of potato exh

b. Where can I find help? Right at the corner

non exh

If FRs are derived much like short answer to Qs are construed, the phenomenon of non maximal FRs would receive a principled account.

Selected references

- Caponigro, I. (2003) Free not to ask. On the semantics of wh-words and free relatives, cross-linguistically, Ph. D. Diss., UCL.
- Donati, C. & C. Cecchetto (2011) 'Relabeling heads. A unified account for relativization structures, *Linguistic Inquiry*, 42.
- Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof (1983) *Studies in the semantics of questions and the pragmatics of answers*, Ph. D. Diss., U. of Amsterdam
- Jacobson, P. (1995) On the Quantificational Force of English Free Relatives. In E. Bach, E. Jelinek, A. Kratzer, and B. Partee (eds.), *Quantification in Natural Languages*. Kluwer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht.