

On the so-called Overt Pronouns in Japanese and Korean*

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1. Introduction

It has been suggested in Kang (1988, pp. 193-196) and Suh (1988, forthcoming) that the so-called Korean overt pronoun ku 'he' is able to function as a bound variable, contrary to the well-known observation that the so-called Japanese overt pronoun kare cannot be construed as a bound variable. In light of a great deal of similarities between Korean and Japanese elsewhere in their syntax, this difference between Korean ku and Japanese kare seems to be somewhat puzzling. In this paper, I will argue that this state of affairs is, contrary to the surface appearance, essentially as expected, given the observations of the sort noted in Hoji (to appear) regarding the possibility of bound variable construal for the various nominal expressions in Japanese.

2. A Puzzle

2.1. Ku

Kang (1988, pp. 193-196) indicates that the so-called Korean overt pronoun ku can be construed as a bound variable, providing the sentences in (1).

(1) (Kang's (34), (35), (36) and (37))¹

a. Chelsu-ka *nuku-eke* [*ku*-ka mengcheni-la-ko] malhae-ss-ni?
-NOM who-DAT he-NOM fool-COP-COMP say-PAST-Q

'To whom_i did Chelsu say that he_i is a fool?'

b. Chelsu-nun *nuku-eke-na* [Yenghi-ka *ku*-lul ttaeli-l kes-ila-ko]
-TOP everyone-DAT -NOM he-ACC hit-will-COMP

malha-ess-ta

say-PAST-DEC

'Chelsu said to everyone_i that Yenghi would hit him_i.'

c. *nukuna* [*ku*-lul ccocha-o-nun salam-lul] silh-e ha-n-ta
everyone he-ACC chase-come-PNE person-ACC hate-IMPERF-DEC

'Everyone_i hates the person who chases him_i.'

d. *nukuna ku*-uy emeni-lul coaha-n-ta

everyone he-GEN mother-ACC like-IMPERF-DEC
'Everyone_i likes his_i mother.'

Contrary judgments are reported in Hong (1985, pp. 95-101) (and presumably in Choe (1988) as well). Hong (1985) provides the following sentences with the judgments indicated.²

(2)

a. (Hong's (1985, p. 95) (50b))

*nukuna_i ki_i-ka toktokhata-ko sangakhanta
'Everyone_i thinks that he_i is intelligent.'

b. (Hong's (1985, p. 101) (55c))

*nu_i-ka ki_i-ka toktokhata-ko sengakha-ci
who-NOM he-NOM be smart-COMP think-Q
'Who_i thinks that he_i is smart?'

Kang (1988, p. 193) provides the sentence in (3), which has the identical structure as Hong's (2), and states that "[i]n this particular example, the bound variable reading of ku 'he' is very marginal, in contrast to the case where a name, say John, replaces nuku-na," in which case, he states, the coreference between John and ku is acceptable.

(3) (Kang's (33))

??Nuku-na_i [ku_i-ka hyunmyungha-ta-ko] saengkakha-n-ta
everyone he-NOM wise-DEC-COMP think-IMPERF-DEC
'Everyone_i thinks that he_i is wise.'

Stating that most speakers accept the bound variable interpretation for ku in sentences in (1), Kang seems to claim that Korean ku can in general be construed as a bound variable.³

In the following, I will base my discussion on the judgments reported in Kang (1988) and Suh (1989, forthcoming). I hasten to add that it is not crucial for my argument below that the bound variable construal in (1) is completely acceptable, as long as there is a significant difference between Korean ku and Japanese kare in their ability to be construed as bound variables.⁴

2.2. Kare

The generalization stated in (4) has been noted and appears to be

widely accepted in the literature; cf. Nakai (1976, 1977), C. Kitagawa (1981), Nakayama (1982), Saito and Hoji (1983) and other subsequent works.

(4) Overt pronouns in Japanese cannot be construed as bound variables.

This is illustrated by the examples in (5) and (6).

(5) (based on Nakai's examples (1976, pp. 32-34b))

- a. *{donna hito_i/dare_i}-ga kare_i-no zyoosi-ni sakaraimasita ka
 what kind of person/who-NOM he-GEN boss-DAT rebelled Q
 '{What kind of a person_i/Who_i} rebelled against his_i boss?'
- b. *{subete-no gakusei_i/onoono-no gakusei_i}-ga sensei-ni
 all-GEN student/each-GEN student-NOM teacher-DAT
 [NP [S' kare_i-ga tukutta] kikai]-o miseta (koto)
 he-NOM made machine-ACC showed
 '{all the students_i/each student_i} showed the professor the machine
 that he_i made.'

(6) (based on C. Kitagawa's (1981) (29a))

- *daremo_i-ga [S' kare_i-no ronbun-ga itiban ii to] omotte ita
 everyone-NOM he-GEN paper-NOM most good that thought
 'everyone_i thought that his_i paper was the best'

As expected, the replacement of kare by zibun results in acceptability; and so does the replacement of the matrix subject NP by a referential NP such as John.

In Hoji (to appear) I have related the inability of kare to be construed as a bound variable to the well-known fact that ka in kare is analogous to a in the ko/so/a/do 'this/that/that/which' demonstrative paradigm in Japanese, following the lead made in Yasuda (1928/79, p. 327), Mikami (1955/72, p.174), C. Kitagawa (1981) and Fiengo and Haruna (1987), for example. The argument there is in part based on Nishigauchi's (1986, Ch. 6) and Yoshimura's (1988, forthcoming) observations that expressions such as sore and soko can be construed as bound variables. Consider (7), taken from Nishigauchi (1986).

(7) (Nishigauchi's (7) on p. 240)⁵

- [Dono teema]_j-ga [{sore_i-o/e_i } eranda gakusei]-ni
 which theme-NOM it-ACC chose student-DAT
 mottomo yuueki-desi-ta ka?
 most profitable-was-Q

'[which research topic]_i was most profitable to the students who chose it_i?'

While it is not clear that sore in examples of this sort is to be analyzed as an instance of bound variable anaphora, it is demonstrated in Yoshimura (forthcoming) and Hoji (forthcoming, Ch. 4) that sore and soko indeed can be construed as bound variables.⁶ For example, the acceptability of sentences like (8) has been cited in Hoji (forthcoming) as confirming evidence that soko can be construed as a bound variable.⁷

(8) (Hoji (forthcoming; Ch. 4)

[Toyota to Nissan]_i-ga [NP [S' ec_k zyuu nen-izyoo-mo mae-kare
Toyota and Nissan-NOM 10 years-more-even ago-since

soko_i-de hataraiteta] hito_k]-o kyuu-ni kubinisita (koto)

there-at were working person-ACC suddenly fired

'[(each of) Toyota and Nissan]_i suddenly fired (some) people who had
been working there_i for over 10 years'

What is significant is the fact that the replacement of sore 'it/that' by are 'that' in (7) and the replacement of soko 'there' by asoko 'there' in (8) result in total unacceptability. The kare's inability to be construed as a bound variable is thus (largely) reduced to the inability of the members of the a system to be so construed; cf. footnote 13 below.

3. The Demonstrative Paradigms in Korean and Japanese

It is therefore not unreasonable to hypothesize that the ability of ku to be construed as a bound variable is related to the properties of the Korean demonstrative system. As we will observe directly, this indeed seems to be the case.

Consider the demonstrative paradigms in Korean as given in (9) and (10).

(9)

a. i chayk 'this book' (corresponding to kono hon in Japanese)

b. ku chayk 'that book' (corresponding to sono hon in Japanese)

c. ce chayk 'that book' (corresponding to ano hon in Japanese)

d. enu chayk 'which book' (corresponding to dono hon in Japanese)

(10)

a. i koss 'this thing/this one' (corresponding to kore in Japanese)

b. ku koss 'that thing/that one' (corresponding to sore in Japanese)

c. ce koss 'that thing/that one' (corresponding to are in Japanese)

d. enu koss 'which thing' (corresponding to dore in Japanese)

Two types of 'that' are distinguished in Korean, just as in Japanese, depending on the relative distance of the referent from the speaker and the hearer. The Korean counterparts of Japanese expressions kore 'this', sore 'that' and are 'that' are literally 'this thing' and 'that thing,' without the prenominal modification marker (or the genitive marker). Similarly, the literal translation of ku saram 'that/the person' in Japanese is the unacceptable *so hito. Furthermore, and crucially, the literal Japanese translation of the so-called overt pronoun in Korean ku is ungrammatical *so.

The relevant correspondence between Japanese and Korean is illustrated in (11), (12) and (13).

(11)	<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Korean</u>
a. this (thing)	kore	i koss
b. that (thing) (far from the speaker and close to the hearer)	sore	ku koss
c. that (thing) (far from both the speaker and the hearer)	are	ce koss
d. which (thing)	dore	enu koss

(12)	<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Korean</u>
a. this book	kono hon	i chayk
b. that book (far from the speaker and close to the hearer)	sono hon	ku chayk
c. that book (far from both the speaker and the hearer)	ano hon	ce chayk
d. which book	dono hon	enu chayk
(13)	<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Korean</u>
a. this person	kono hito	i saram
b. that person (far from the speaker and close to the hearer)	sono hito	ku saram
c. that person (far from both the speaker and the hearer)	ano hito	ce saram
d. which person	dono hito	enu saram

It must thus be borne in mind that Korean ku corresponds to Japanese so.

As noted above, the members of the so series such as sore 'it/that' and soko 'there' in Japanese can function as bound variables, but the so-called overt pronoun kare 'he' cannot.⁸ In Hoji (to appear) I have related this to the observation made in Mikami (1955/72, 1970) that the so series, unlike the a series, can be used non-deictically. Mikami (1955/1972) observes that there are expressions with so that do not have any deictic flavor, such as those in (14).and (15), to be contrasted with those in (16) and (17), respectively.

(14) (Mikami (1955/1972, p. 182)

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. sorewa sorewa | 'extremely' |
| b. sorega | 'however' |
| c. soreni | 'in addition' |
| d. soretomo | 'or' |

(15)

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| a. sono hi | gurasi |
|------------|--------|

- that day life
'a hand-to-mouth life'
- b. sono ta 'etc.'
c. sono mukasi 'a long time ago'
d. sono uti ni 'in a short while'
e. soretonaku 'indirectly'

- (16)
a. *arewa arewa 'extremely'
b. *arega 'however'
c. *areni 'in addition'
d. *aretomo 'or'

- (17) (Cf. (15).)
a. *ano hi gurasu
b. *ano ta
c. *ano mukasi
d. *ano uti ni
e. *aretonaku

Given the correlation between the "strictly deictic" nature of the a system and the inability of the members of the a system to be construed as bound variables, and given the close relationship of kare and the a system, the inability of kare to be construed as a bound variable is now reduced to the "demonstrativity" of kare.

One might then suspect that there is also a significant difference between the members of the ku system and the member of the ce system that is analogous to that found between so and a in Japanese. It indeed appears to be the case that there is such a difference, in fact somewhat more striking than the difference between so and a. Shin (1984, pp. 18-23) points out that when the object/individual in question is physically absent, the ku system is most naturally used even in the environments where the a system would be used in Japanese. Thus what Kuno (1973, Ch. 24) calls the "anaphoric use" of ko, so and a is rather restricted in the case of the members of the ce system.⁹ We might informally state the generalization as (18).

(18) The ce system is more deictic than the ku system.

It also seems that the ku may be used in some of the Korean counterparts in (14) and (15). Since the expressions in (14) and (15) are more or less idiomatic, it is not surprising that not all of them have well-formed Korean counterparts. It is, however, significant to note that the Korean counterparts of (16) and (17), with ce, are all impossible, i.e. as impossible as the Japanese examples in (16) and (17). The informal generalization given in (18) thus seems to be confirmed by this observation.

As is easily expected, bound variable anaphora is never possible with the members of the ce system. Thus while the Korean sentences corresponding to (19) yield the bound variable interpretation with members of the ku system (to varying degrees among speakers), they NEVER do so with members of the ce system.

(19)

- a. Every linguist_i thought that Chomsky would like that linguist_i's paper most.
- b. Which linguist_i brought that person_i's students to this conference?

This, of course, is completely parallel to the observation made earlier in Japanese.

4. Demonstrativity and Bound Variable Construal

Given the generalization in (18) and the fact that the so-called Korean overt pronoun ku is indeed a member of the ku system (in fact the ku itself), the puzzle noted at the outset of this paper (i.e. the fact that Korean ku 'he' can be construed as a bound variable while the Japanese kare 'he' cannot) is now reduced to a more general problem: how to explain the difference between the so/ku system on the one hand and the a/ce system on the other, in regard to the possibility of bound variable construal. The relevant generalizations are summarized in (20) and (21).

(20)

The a/ce system is more deictic/demonstrative than the so/ku system.

(21)

The members of the a/ce system cannot yield bound variable construal (while those of the so/ku system can).

There is, however, evidence that suggests that being deictic/demonstrative does not necessarily preclude bound variable construal. Evans (1977, p. 273) points out that that logician in (22) functions like a bound variable.

(22)

Every logician_i was walking with a boy near that logician_i's house.

This means that (21) does not necessarily follow from (20). This in turn

means that the reduction of the initial puzzle at the outset of the paper to the generalization in (20) still needs an explanation.

If that logician in (22) is indeed construed as a bound variable, sono ronrigakusya 'the/that logician', which behaves very much like that logician in (22), can be considered as corresponding to that logician (instead of, or in addition to, the logician.) It must be pointed out, incidentally, that it is not completely clear that the relevant reading for that logician in (22) is that of bound variable anaphora. One of the reasons for this is that while (23a) is acceptable, (23b) is not.¹⁰

(23)

a. dono daigaku-mo_i

which university-ALSO

[NP sono daigaku_i-no gengogakusya]-o tairyooni kubinisita

that university-GEN linguist-ACC many fired

'every university_i fired that university_i's linguists by a large number'

b. *[Furansu-no daigaku to Itariya-no daigaku]_i-ga

France-GEN university and Italy-GEN university-NOM

[NP sono daigaku_i-no gengogakusya]-o tairyooni kubinisita

that university-GEN linguist-ACC many fired

'[(the/a) French university and (the/an) Italian university]_i fired that university_i's linguists by a large number'

When sono daigaku 'that university' in (23b) is replaced by soko 'there/that place/it', the resulting sentence given in (24) is acceptable.

(24)

[Furansu-no daigaku to Itariya-no daigaku]_i-ga
France-GEN university and Italy-GEN university-NOM
[NP soko_i-no gengogakusya]_i-o tairyooni kubinisita (koto)
there-GEN linguist-ACC many fired
'[(the/a) French university and (the/an) Italian university]_i fired it's
linguists by a large number'

If sono N' functions like a bound variable on a par with soko, then (23b) should be as acceptable as (24). Although space limitation prevents me from discussing it, similar complications seem to arise in the case of English that logician as well.

Notwithstanding such complications, it is nevertheless clear that being demonstrative does not necessarily preclude a category from being bound by a quantified NP, as indicated in (22).

5. On the Status of "Ku" and "Kare" as "Overt Pronouns"

We have seen that the properties of ku and kare in regard to their ability to be construed as bound variables are directly related to the properties of the ku and so demonstrative systems of these languages. The so-called overt pronoun kare in Japanese is related to ano hito 'that person' and are 'that/that thing' while Korean ku is in fact Korean analogue of Japanese so.¹¹ One might therefore raise a question, at this point, as to whether ku and kare should in fact be treated as "pronouns".

The following discussion is restricted to Japanese, but the essentials of the arguments to be given, I would suspect, are applicable to Korean as well.

At a non-formal level, the point has frequently been made in the past that kare is not a personal pronoun, and it has further been suggested that Japanese does not have overt pronouns; cf. Sakuma (1936/1983, p. 22), Mikami (1955/1972, p. 184), Kuroda (1965, p. 123), Martin (1975/1988, p. 1074), Kuno (1978, p. 127) and C. Kitagawa (1979, 1981), Fiengo and Haruna (1987). The "multiplicity" of the categories that may correspond to I, you, he and so on is the most frequently cited argument for this position. It thus seems that there is good reason to believe that kare is not a pronoun.

At a formal level, within the so-called government and binding (referred to as "principles and parameters" framework in the more recent years), the so-called pronounhood is formally identified by means of the feature [+p]. Binding condition B (or principle B of Binding Theory), which

states in effect that [+p] categories must be free in their local domain, refers crucially to this feature. As indicated in Oshima (1979) and confirmed further in Hoji (forthcoming, Ch. 2), the binding theoretic considerations do not single out any categories as [+p]; cf. also Kuno (1986). Furthermore, as seems clear from the bound reading for members of the so system, such as soko 'there/the place/that place' and from the bound reading in sentences like (22), the possibility of bound variable construal cannot be the determining factor for the [+p] feature.¹²

The non-formal consideration as well as the formal consideration noted above, thus, indicate that kare is NOT a pronoun, and further that there are no "pronouns" in Japanese.

6. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have first presented (in section 2) what appeared to be a puzzle with respect to certain interpretive properties of the so-called Korean overt pronoun ku and the so-called Japanese overt pronoun kare. The examination in section 3 of the relationship between these expressions and the demonstrative paradigms in Korean and Japanese, however, has revealed that the relevant difference between kare and ku is exactly what we expect.¹³ The initial puzzle has thus been reduced to a more general fact that the ku/so systems are not as strongly deictic as the ce/a systems.

The discussions in sections 4 and 5 are less conclusive. In section 4, it is pointed out that being demonstrative cannot be the sufficient condition for the exclusion of bound variable construal. Finally, in section 5, I have suggested, following many past works, that Japanese does not have so-called personal pronouns. At a formal level, this is to claim that no overt categories are marked [+p] in Japanese. (I assume that this holds true also in Korean.)

It has been assumed that there is a syntactic (in particular, binding theoretic) feature [+/-pronominal] in linguistic theory, thereby predicting that the child acquiring a language pays attention, so to speak, to some categories that belong to the class of [+p]. If the conclusion in section 5 is correct and if it turns out that, as I argue elsewhere (Hoji (forthcoming)), binding condition B does not refer to [+p], it will force us to reconsider our general view of binding theory and of our view of the so-called "pronouns".

It is obvious that the nominal categories in languages can be divided into several classes. The standard way of syntactically partitioning them is by means of [+/-anaphoric] and [+/-pronominal]. The

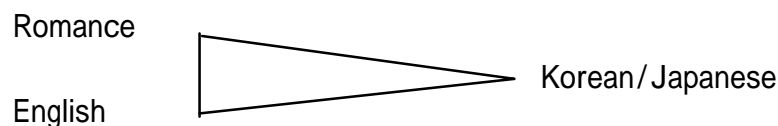
preceding discussion can therefore be considered as a challenge to this standard view.

A comparative look at Japanese and Korean (as well as English) reported in this paper has then produced the two results.

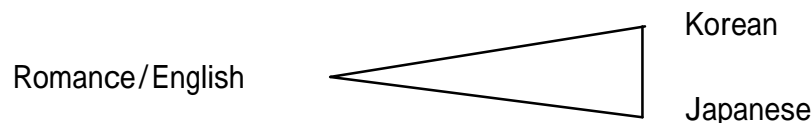
- (I) The discrepancy between kare and ku is not problematic in itself. It is problematic only if we consider them as "overt pronouns".
- (II) The status of "pronounhood" in linguistic theory is much less clear than it appears.

To evaluate the consequences of these results, we need to conduct a more rigorous examination of the demonstrative systems in Korean and Japanese and how they relate to the so-called pronouns in languages like English. How natural languages express quantification is a much related question. In the course of the investigation, we expect to discover some systematic differences between Japanese and Korean that bear on the issues of theoretical relevance. As the explicit characterization of such differences emerge, we will be in a position to contribute directly to the search for deeper principles and parameters that make language acquisition possible. We seem to be in a better position than ever, in my opinion, to seriously start what Emonds (1984) calls "three-cornered comparative syntax", of the sort indicated in (25b).¹⁴

(25) a.



b.



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¹ PNE in (1c) stands for the "prenominal ending marker". In (1) and the subsequent examples cited from works by other linguists, subscripts are sometimes added to clearly indicate the intended readings.

² Hong's original examples contain the trace of the matrix subject NP, indicating that his structures represent the LF representations of the relevant sentences, given the assumption that these NP's do undergo LF raising. The trace is suppressed in (2).

³ Kang's statement is somewhat tentative. He states (p. 195-196):
I just want to indicate that there are many cases in which the bound variable reading of Korean pronominal ku is acceptable, some exceptions (such as (3)--HH), being I suspect, controlled by possibly pragmatic factors that are poorly understood at this point.

Suh (1988) makes an explicit claim that "the Korean overt pronoun ku, unlike Japanese kare, can be bound to A'-binders," discussing also the structures that are often identified as weak crossover and "reconstruction" constructions as well as what Yoshimura (forthcoming) calls the "parasitic pronoun" construction. Suh (1988, footnote 5) notes that "ku in [(i)] prefers to refer to somebody other than "John".

(i) John-i [S' ku-ka ttokttokhata-ko] sayngkakhanta
-NOM he-NOM be-intelligent-COMP think
'John thinks that he is intelligent'

Notice that the sentence in (i) has the identical structure as that of (2) and (3), with the subject being a referential NP (suppressing the difference between the nominative marker and the topic marker).

Notice that the Hong's examples in (2) has the verb "think" and ku occupies the embedded subject position. The referential association between the embedded NP and the matrix NP in such construction seems to be sensitive to the factors that have to do with "point-of-view" and "logophoricity", as indicated in Kuno (1986, p. 41; 1987, p. 138).

⁴ It is noted in Kang (1988, p. 196):

[t]he use of Korean pronominal ku, whether bound variable or referential, creates some marginality in colloquial speech, and is avoided in general. This is presumably because the independent use of Korean pronominal ku is a fairly recent development in Korean language, dating back to 1920s, even though the ku as a specifier (as in ku + N') has a long history in Korean. Due to this historical fact, Korean speakers are in general less accustomed to the usage of the pronoun in colloquial speech, so that the language learners in their early stage are not frequently exposed to the usage of the pronoun ku.

See also Suh (1988, footnote 5).

As is well known, the situation of kare is somewhat analogous to that of ku; cf. the references given in Hoji (to appear, forthcoming; Ch. 4). Fiengo and Haruna (1987, p. 116), for example, states:

..., the fact that Japanese lacked pronouns until recently is suggestive, as is the fact that Japanese speakers frequently report the intuition that somehow kare/kanozō give sentences the flavor of having been translated from an Indo-European language.

⁵ While giving a "*" to (7) with sore, Nishigauchi (1986, p. 272, fn. 3) notes that "some speakers might find [(7)] with the overt pronoun only mildly unacceptable." Since most speakers seem to accept the binding of this sort given in (7) quite readily, I have eliminated the "*" from this example.

⁶ The relevant complications include those having to do with Pesetsky's (1987) "D-linking" analysis of certain wh-phrases; cf. also the bound variable v.s. the E-type pronoun controversy regarding the so-called donkey anaphora (Geach (1962/1980), Evans (1977), Heim (1982, 1990) and the references therein).

⁷ See Yoshimura (forthcoming) and Hoji (forthcoming) for further arguments.

⁸ As noted above, even among the members of the so system there is gradation with respect to how easily they can be bound by a non-referential NP. It is least easy for [NP sono + N'], and easiest for soko and sore. Notice that sore, soko and soitu are not phrasal (they consist of two bound morphemes) while [NP sono + N'] is obviously phrasal (i.e., whatever appears as N' may occur independently as an NP). The relevant gradation in question is most likely related to this distinction.

It is not clear, however, at this point, that the gradation under discussion is indeed the gradation of "acceptability" of bound variable construal or that of what one might call "pseudo coreference." See Hoji (forthcoming; Ch. 4).

⁹ The division of labor between ku and ce seems quite analogous to that between so and a in Japanese when the object/individual in question is physically present.

¹⁰ For discussion of the wh...+mo construction of the sort given in (23a), see Kuroda (1965, Ch. 3), Nishigauchi (1986) and Kang (1988).

¹¹ In this sense, one might suggest that Japanese kare corresponds to ce, if the latter could mean 'that person.' But the actual data seem to

be far more complicated than one might expect. It appears, for example, that ce, at least in some dialects/styles, can mean 'self', analogous to caki. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present and/or assess the relevant data.

¹² Based in part on these observations, I have argued in Hoji (forthcoming) that condition B must be reformulated so as to regulated [-a] categories.

¹³ I have not discussed the difference between kare and members of the a system. That is, kare does not seem to be as strongly deictic as the members of the a system. It appears that some "lexicalization" process is currently taking place with respect to kare and, as indicated in Mikami (ibid.), kare might be on its way to losing its strongly deictic property. The "lexicalization" or "de-deicticization" of this sort might in fact be the source of the judgmental variations regarding the bound variable construal for ku, (and to a lesser degree, some members of the so system, with certain non-referential "antecedents").

¹⁴ The triangle in (25a) represents Emond's strategy. He investigates two (groups of) languages that are close to each other AND another (group of) language(s) that is/are quite different from the former.

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