Q-FEATURE MOVEMENT IN JAPANESE*

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1 Introduction

• In this presentation, I will attempt to explain the following phenomena related to in-situ wh-questions in Japanese:
  – why a wh-phrase may remain in situ.
  – why constructions in which a wh-phrase is supposedly contained within a wh-island are ill-formed.
  – why constructions in which a wh-phrase is contained within an NP-island are grammatical.

• The organization of this presentation is as follows. I will:
  – provide a brief overview of the relevant wh-question data in Japanese.
  – discuss Miyagawa’s (2001) proposal (following Hagstrom 1998) that there is movement of Q-features in Japanese wh-questions.
  – argue that the ungrammaticality of certain wh-questions results from movement of Q-features that violates the Minimal Link Condition

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(MLC) (Chomsky 1995), which prevents an element from moving to a particular location in a syntactic structure if there is an intervening element of the same type.

- attempt to explain the acceptability of wh-questions in which a wh-phrase occurs within an NP-island.

2 Background

- In wh-questions in Japanese (an SOV language), a wh-phrase may remain in-situ, as in (1) below, in which the object wh-phrase dare-ni ‘who-DAT’ occurs in-situ between the subject and verb.

(1) Kare-wa dare-ni atta no?
   he-TOP who-DAT met Q
   ‘Who did he meet?’

- Although a wh-phrase may remain in-situ, there is evidence for covert wh-movement. In (2a), the in-situ wh-phrase dare-ni ‘who-DAT’ has scope over the clause, indicating that it moves to [Spec, CP] at LF, as shown in (2b).

(2) (a) Spell-out

   Kare-wa sore-o dare-ni ageta no?
   he-TOP that-ACC who-DAT gave Q
   ‘Who did he give that to?’

   (b) LF

   \[
   \text{[CP} \overset{\text{dare-ni}_1}{\text{TP}} \overset{kare-wa\ sore-o \ t_1}{\text{ageta}} \text{no]?}
   \\
   \text{who-DAT\ he-TOP\ that-ACC\ gave\ Q}
   \\
   \text{‘Who did he give that to?’}
   \]

- Further evidence for wh-movement in Japanese is what appear to be island effects (Ross 1967), as discussed by Nishigauchi (1990, 1999), Richards (2001), and Watanabe (1992a, 1992b, 2003), among others.

- The ungrammaticality of (3) is generally explained as follows: the wh-phrase nani-o ‘what-ACC’, or an operator associated with it, is unable to
move out of the embedded clause, which is a wh-island.¹

(3) ??[Doko-de nani-o katta ka] oboete-iru no?
where-LOC what-ACC bought Q remember-PROG Q
‘What do you remember where we bought?’ (adapted from Watanabe 2003:205)

• Data from English multiple wh-questions suggest that overt wh-movement is subject to island effects, but covert wh-movement is not. In (4) the wh-phrase what in the embedded clause can have wide scope, indicating that what moves covertly to the matrix [Spec, CP] and is not subject to wh-island effects.

(4) (a) Spell-out:

\[
[CP \text{Who}_1 [TP_t_1 \text{remembers} [CP \text{where} [TP \text{we bought what}]]]]?
\]

(b) LF:

\[
[CP \text{what}_2 \text{who}_1 [TP_t_1 \text{remembers} [CP \text{where} [TP \text{we bought t}_2]]]]? \quad \text{(adapted from Watanabe (2003:208))}
\]

• Following the notion that only overt wh-movement is subject to island effects, based on evidence such as (4), Watanabe (1992a, 1992b, 2003) proposes that in Japanese wh-questions there is overt movement of a null wh-operator (an XP) to [Spec, CP], and the operator originates in the specifier of a wh-phrase.

(5)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\text{OP} \\
\text{D'} \\
\hline
\text{wh-word}
\end{array}
\]

(adapted from Watanabe 2003:209)

This analysis explains why wh-island effects appear to occur in Japanese even though a wh-phrase does not move overtly.

¹A wh-island is an embedded clause that contains two or more wh-phrases, one of which is in [Spec, CP] of the clause, thereby forcing the other wh-phrase to cross a bounding node to escape to the matrix clause.
Contrary to Watanabe, in this presentation, I argue that there is no movement of a null wh-operator. Furthermore, I argue that there is no movement of a wh-phrase in these constructions.

Although there appear to be wh-island effects in Japanese wh-constructions, there are no island effects when a wh-phrase is located inside of an NP-island. In (6), the wh-phrase *dare-o* ‘who-ACC’ has scope over the matrix clause, and the result is grammatical.

\[ (6) \quad \text{Kimi-wa} \quad \text{DP}\quad \text{dare-o\quad egaita\quad hon-o\quad yomimashita} \]
\[ \text{you-TOP\quad who-ACC\quad described\quad book-ACC\quad read} \]
\[ \text{ka?} \]
\[ \text{Q} \]
\[ \text{‘You read a book such that it described who?’} \quad \text{(Nishigauchi 1999:274)} \]

These island effects are different from those in English. For example, in (7a) a wh-phrase moves out of a wh-island, and in (7b) a wh-phrase moves out of an NP-island. Both constructions are ungrammatical.

\[ (7) \quad \text{(a) ??\text{What}_1 \text{ do you remember [CP where we bought } t_1]}? \]
\[ \quad \text{(b) ??\text{Who}_1 \text{ is he reading [DP a book that criticizes } t_1]}? \quad \text{(adapted from Watanabe (2003:205))} \]

These data present a paradox. In English, a wh-phrase may not move out of a wh-island or an NP-island (as shown in (7)). However, unlike in English, there do not appear to be NP-island effects in Japanese, as shown in (6). In this presentation, I attempt to account for this paradox.

3 Why wh-phrases can remain in-situ


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"An NP-island is a noun phrase that contains a clausal modifier with a wh-phrase."
Following Hagstrom (1998), Miyagawa argues that a question particle moves from a wh-phrase to C, where it checks an uninterpretable Q-feature.

(8)

Because movement of a Q-particle satisfies the Q-feature in C, there is no need for overt wh-movement in Japanese.

4 Phrasal movement or feature movement?

The ill-formedness of example (3), repeated below, can be accounted for if the wh-phrase *nani-o ‘what-ACC’, or an operator associated with it, is unable to move out of the embedded clause, which is supposedly a wh-island.

(3) ??*[Doko-de *nani-o katta ka]* oboete-iru no?
where-LOC what-ACC bought Q remember-PROG Q
‘What do you remember where we bought?’ (adapted from Watanabe 2003:205)

But if a Q-particle (a head), rather than a wh-phrase or wh-operator (an XP), moves, then the ungrammaticality of this construction is not the result of an island effect involving movement of an XP.

Below is a simplified diagram of the relevant parts of (3) before Spell-Out.
If the Q-particle *ka*, which is associated with *doko-de* ‘where-LOC’, raises first to C of the embedded clause, then the Q-particle *no*, which is associated with *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’, will be unable to move through this filled C to arrive in the matrix C, because an MLC violation will result.

Below is a diagram of the embedded clause before Spell-Out, but after the Q-particle associated with *doko-de* ‘where-LOC’ has raised to C. The lower Q-particle *no* is unable to raise to the matrix clause because of the intervening Q-particle in the embedded C.
Note that [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause is empty. If this is the case, then the embedded clause is not a wh-island. Further examples may support
Watanabe (1992a, 2003) as well as Richards (2001) consider (11) below to be ungrammatical due to an island effect. In order for there to be an island effect, this example must contain a wh-island, and so some element must be in [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause.

(11) ??John-wa [Mary-ga nani-o katta kadooka] Tom-ni
     John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought whether Tom-DAT
tazuneta no]?
     asked Q
     ‘What did John ask Tom whether Mary bought?’ (Watanabe 2003:208)

Below, I argue that there is no wh-island in (11) because there is no element in [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause.

If there were an element in [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause then it would most likely be kadooka ‘whether’ or part of the lexical item kadooka. One possibility is that kadooka ‘whether’ has a complex structure consisting of a head and a specifier that occur in C and [Spec, CP] respectively. In the following example, ka is in C and dooka is in [Spec, CP].

(12) CP
     C’ Spec
dooka
     Spec
     C kare-ga ita
     TP ka ‘he-NOM went’
     ‘Q’

But is it reasonable to assume that the specifier of CP occurs to the right of C, even though the specifiers of other projections appear to occur to the left of their heads? For example, the subject kare-ga ‘he-NOM’ in (13) appears to occur in a specifier to the left of T.
If specifiers occur to the right of their relevant heads, then the subject *kare-ga* ‘he-NOM’ in (13) could not be in [Spec, TP], but would have to be in some other position. Another possibility is that [Spec, TP] occurs to the left of T, but [Spec, CP] occurs to the right of C. These proposals seem unnecessarily complicated.

- Instead, I propose that *kadooka* ‘whether’ is a head that occurs in C.

- Compare (11), repeated below, with (14). These examples have the same (or virtually the same) meaning; they’re both ungrammatical in the same way (Junko Ginsburg, Yuko Watanabe, p.c.). The only difference between the two examples is what follows *ka*; *dooka* follows *ka* in (11), and *to* ‘COMP’ follows *ka* in (14).

(11) ??John-wa [CP [C [Mary-ga nani-o katta] ka-dooka]]

John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought whether

*Tom-ni tazuneta no?*

Tom-DAT asked Q

‘What did John ask Tom whether Mary bought?’ (Watanabe 2003:208)
The element *to* is a complementizer because it can occur by itself at the end of an embedded clause, as can be seen in the following example.

(15) *Hideya-wa [CP [C [Junko-ga sore-o katta] to]]*

*Hideya-TOP Junko-NOM that-ACC bought COMP*

*kare-ni iimashita.*

*him-DAT told*

‘Hideya told him that Junko bought that.’

I assume that *to* cannot occur in [Spec, CP] because it is a complementizer, meaning that in (14), [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause does not contain an overt element. Since *kadooka* has virtually the same meaning and occurs in the same position as *ka-to*, it may also be reasonable to assume that there is no overt element in [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause in (11). Therefore, I propose that *kadooka* as well as *ka-to* form a complex C head, as shown below.

(16) \[ CP \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{C'} \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{C}
\end{array} \]

\[ \text{ka + dooka/to} \]

‘Q’

If *kadooka* and *ka-to* are heads that occur in C, then I can account for the ungrammaticality of (11) and (14) in terms of the MLC. I propose that *kadooka* and *ka-to* are base generated in C. Following the MLC, movement of the Q-particle *no* is blocked by the intervening Q-particle *ka.*
Further evidence for this analysis can be seen in (18), in which there is clearly no overt element in [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause. Therefore, the ungrammaticality of this example cannot be the result of an island effect caused by an overt specifier in the embedded CP.

(18) ??John-wa [Mary-ga nani-o katta ka] Tom-ni
John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought Q Tom-DAT
tazuneta no]?
asked Q
‘What did John ask Tom whether Mary bought?’

Only a Q-particle ka appears at the end of the embedded clause, as shown in the following diagram of the embedded clause before Spell-Out.
I have argued that there are no wh-island effects in Japanese because there is no movement of wh-phrases or wh-operators, at least in certain wh-constructions. If there are no wh-island effects, then it is not surprising that there are no NP-island effects either.

Example (6), repeated below, is grammatical, even though the wh-phrase is
contained in an NP-island.

(6) *Kimi-wa* [\(\text{DP} \ dare-o \ egaita \ hon\)-o \ yomimashita \(\text{ka}\)? yomimashita \(\text{ka}\)?

\(\text{you-TOP} \ who-ACC \ described \ book-ACC \ read \ Q \)

‘You read a book such that it described who?’ (Nishigauchi 199:274)

- The ‘standard’ analysis (following Nishigauchi 1990; Choe 1987; Pesetsky 1987; Richards 2000, 2001; Watanabe 1992a, 1992b, 2003; among others) is that the entire NP-island is pied-piped to [Spec, CP].

- Nishigauchi (1990, 1999) argues that a wh-feature turns a complex DP into a wh-phrase (notated below as DP\(\rightarrow\)WhP). The complex DP *dare-o egaita hon* ‘book that described who’, from (6) then becomes a wh-phrase, which enables it to move directly to [Spec, CP] of the matrix clause and avoid an island effect, as shown below.

(20)

```
CP
 /\
 /  \\
DP→WhP / \\
   / \\
(dare-o egaita hon-o)1 / \\
   / \\
  / \\
TP / \\
   / \\
(dare-o egaita hon-o)1

(\(\text{who-ACC described book-ACC}\))

\(\text{kimih-wa t1 yomimashita read}\)

\(\text{you-TOP read}\)

\(\text{ka}\)

‘Q’
```

- This NP-pied piping analysis accounts for the data, but I think that it is unnecessarily complex.

- I propose that the lack of island effects found in NP-island constructions is evidence that features associated with in-situ wh-phrases, but not the phrases themselves, move. In (6), the Q-feature associated with *dare-o* ‘who-ACC’ raises to C. There is no island effect because there is no specifier that must move out of an NP-island to arrive in [Spec, CP].
6 Conclusion

- The ungrammaticality of certain wh-questions in Japanese is not the result of wh-island effects because these constructions do not contain wh-islands, as [Spec, CP] of their embedded clauses is empty. Instead, ungrammaticality results from a violation of the MLC; a Q-feature in the embedded C prevents a lower Q-feature from raising to the matrix C.

- The lack of NP-island effects is straightforward; a Q-feature associated with an in-situ wh-phrase moves, but an XP associated with a wh-phrase does not move. This is an indication that a Q-feature (a head) is not subject to NP-island effects.
• In conclusion, I have attempted to show that movement of Q-features accounts for certain in-situ wh-question facts in Japanese. I note that this analysis does not require movement of a null wh-operator, as argued for by Watanabe (1992a, 1992b, 2003), nor does it require pide-piping of an NP, as argued for by Nishigauchi (1990, 1999).

• Some remaining issues are:
  – the grammaticality of multiple wh-questions with respect to movement of Q-features.
  – the ungrammaticality of constructions in which a quantificational element, such as a negative polarity item or quantifier, c-commands a wh-phrase.

References


