Q-feature Movement in Single and Multiple Wh-questions in Japanese

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I argue that in in-situ wh-questions in Japanese, a Q-feature that is base generated within a wh-phrase raises overtly to C, via head movement, where it satisfies an uninterpretable Q-feature. This proposal accounts for certain wh-question facts in Japanese; notably, why a wh-phrase may remain in situ, and why constructions in which a wh-phrase is supposedly contained within a wh-island are ill-formed. Furthermore, I argue that the well-formedness of certain multiple wh-questions can also be accounted for in terms of Q-feature movement.

I claim that a Q-feature is associated with every wh-phrase that has scope in a clause, and that this Q-feature raises to C, where it surfaces as a Q-particle when it is pronounced. I also argue that a Q-feature is not always pronounced. I follow work by Hagstrom (1998) and Miyagawa (2001), who argue for movement of a Q-feature in Japanese. Hagstrom (1998:72) claims that a Q-particle, which contains a Q-feature, originates “as low in the tree as possible” and his analysis implies that a wh-question can only have one Q-feature. In this paper, I differ from Hagstrom in that I argue that there may be more than one Q-feature in a wh-question that contains multiple wh-phrases.

Although a wh-phrase may remain in-situ in Japanese, there appear to be wh-island effects, which is generally taken to be an indication that there is some type of covert phrasal movement (e.g., Richards 2001) or operator movement.

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1. In a similar manner, Maki (1995) argues that a wh-feature moves from a wh-aphrasal argument to C and that a wh-argument does not move. Maki argues for movement of a wh-feature, whereas Hagstrom and Miyagawa argue that a Q-feature moves.
(e.g., Watanabe 1992a, 1992b, 2003). For example, in (1), the *wh*-phrase *nani-o* 'what-ACC' occurs inside a *wh*-island and the result is marginal, at least for some speakers. Interestingly, example (1b) is better because of the addition of the *wh*-phrase *dare-ni* 'who-DAT' outside of the *wh*-island.

(1) (a) ??John-wa [CP Mary-ga *nani-o* katta kadooka] Tom-ni
   John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether Tom-DAT
   tazunetta no?
   asked Q
   ‘What did John ask Tom if/whether Mary bought?’

   (b) John-wa [CP Mary-ga *nani-o* katta kadooka] *dare-ni*
      John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether who-DAT
      tazunetta no?
      asked Q
      ‘Who did John ask if/whether Mary bought what?’ (Adapted from
      Watanabe 2003:208)

The following generalization can then be made. A construction in which a *wh*-phrasal argument occurs within a *wh*-island, such as in the configuration in (2a) is ill-formed and this type of construction improves with the addition of a *wh*-phrase outside of the *wh*-island, as in (2b).

(2) (a) *...[wh-island ...wh-phrase ...]...
    (b) ...[wh-island ...wh-phrase ...] *wh-phrase...*
I argue that the ill-formedness of constructions which contain wh-islands, such as those with the configuration in (2a), is the result of a *Minimal Link Condition* (MLC) (Chomsky 1995) violation involving Q-feature movement, and furthermore, the improvement of this type of construction with the addition of a wh-phrase in the matrix clause, as in the configuration in (2b), can be accounted for in terms of the *Principle of Minimal Compliance* (Richards 2001).

Watanabe (1992a, 1992b, 2003) accounts for the wh-question data in (1) in a different manner by arguing that overt wh-movement, but not covert wh-movement, shows island effects. Watanabe proposes that in Japanese, movement that looks covert can really be overt. This movement cannot be seen because it is movement of a null wh-operator to [Spec, CP]. The operator is located in the specifier of the DP that contains a wh-word. Therefore, in (1a), an operator associated with *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’ moves overtly to [Spec, CP] out of a wh-island, thereby resulting in ill-formedness. In the well-formed (1b), an operator associated with *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’ moves overtly to [Spec, CP]. This movement is not out of an island, and so it is well-formed. Then the wh-phrases *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’ and *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’ adjoin to the operator at LF. Crucially, movement of the wh-phrases occurs at LF, so this movement is not subject to wh-island effects.

I account for these data in a different fashion. Watanabe's analysis is based on the notion that in Japanese, a wh-operator, which is a specifier (an XP), moves to [Spec, CP]. Instead, I argue that there is no specifier movement of a wh-phrase or operator in these wh-constructions. Rather, a Q-feature (a head) moves for a wh-question to obtain its interpretation, and this Q-feature movement can account for the relevant data in (1). The advantage of this analysis is that it does not rely on the presence of a null operator. Furthermore, the relevant data can be accounted for solely in terms of overt movement, as opposed to both overt and covert movement.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In section 2, I explain why wh-phrases in Japanese can remain in-situ. In section 3, I account for the ill-formedness of constructions such as (1a) in which a wh-phrase is contained within a supposed wh-island. In section 4, I account for the well-formedness of multiple wh-constructions such as (1b). Section 5 is the conclusion.

2. Why wh-phrases can remain in-situ
Miyagawa (2001) argues that movement of Q-features in *wh*-questions in Japanese allows *wh*-phrases to remain in-situ. He proposes that a *wh*-phrase contains a *wh*-feature and that a question particle (*ka* or *no*) contains a Q-feature. Miyagawa follows Hagstrom's (1998) proposal that the Japanese Q-particle can be base generated next to a *wh*-phrase and then raise to C to satisfy a Q-feature on C. According to this proposal, C in English contains both a *wh*-feature and a Q-feature, which are uninterpretable, and a *wh*-phrase contains the interpretable counterparts of both features. Therefore, when a *wh*-phrase moves to [Spec, CP], it checks both of these features on C. In Japanese, on the other hand, a *wh*-word contains a *wh*-feature and a question particle contains a Q-feature, so the two features are contained on separate lexical items. The question particle then raises to C, where it checks an uninterpretable Q-feature. Miyagawa argues that movement to CP in both languages is motivated by the EPP-feature, in accord with Chomsky (2000). \(^4\)

Following Hagstrom's proposal, a Q particle moves from a *wh*-phrase to C, as shown below.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(3)} \\
C' \\
\hline \\
TP \\
\hline \\
vP \\
\hline \\
\text{wh-phrase} t_i \\
\hline \\
wh-phrase t_i \\
\hline \\
T' \\
\hline \\
\text{ka}_i \\
\hline \\
T \\
\hline \\
\text{Q'} \\
\hline \\
C \\
\hline \\
\end{array}
\]

Because movement of a Q-particle satisfies the Q-feature in C, there is no need for overt *wh*-movement in Japanese. \(^5\) For example, In (4) below, the Q-

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\(^4\) I note that movement could just as well be motivated by an uninterpretable feature on C, or it could be the case that an uninterpretable feature on C is the EPP. I leave this issue for further analysis.

\(^5\) This leaves open the issue of why a *wh*-phrase does not need to move to check a *wh*-feature. One possibility, argued for by Miyagawa (2001), is that in Japanese, a *wh*-feature is checked on T and movement of a *wh*-phrase to [Spec, TP] can check a *wh*-feature, but a *wh*-phrase does not have to move if a non-*wh*-DP satisfies the EPP feature on T. This issue is worthy of further analysis.
feature in C is checked by overt movement of the Q particle no and the wh-phrase remains in-situ.

(4) \([cp [c [tp John-ga, [vp t_1 [nani-o t_2] katta]] \textbf{no}_2]]\)?

‘What did John buy?’ (Miyagawa 2001:320)

The following diagram shows the internal structure of (4).

In (5), no ‘Q’ moves to check the uninterpretable Q-feature in C. The wh-phrase nani-o ‘what-ACC’ remains in-situ because it does not have to move to check the Q-feature in C.

Notably, there is some diachronic and cross-linguistic evidence to support this analysis. Hagstrom (1998) gives the following example from a classical Japanese text, Nihon Shoki, in which a wh-phrase occurs in-situ with an adjacent Q-particle ka.

(6) Sisi husu-to \textbf{tare-ka} kono koto oomae-ni maosu?

beast lie-QUOT who-Q this thing emperor-DAT say

‘Who reported to the emperor that beasts were lying?’ (Adapted from Hagstrom 1998:25, per Moriyama 1971:32, per Ogawa 1977:221)
The subject *tare* ‘who’ is adjacent to the Q-particle *ka*, and *ka* does not occur clause finally. Hagstrom also shows that in some other *wh*-in-situ languages a Q-particle may occur adjacent to a *wh*-phrase, as in the following example from Sinhala. In (7), the Q-particle *də* occurs in-situ in a position next to the *wh*-phrase *mokak* ‘what’.

(7) Siri mokak də keruwə?
Sri what Q did
‘What did Siri do?’ (adapted from Gair & Sumangala 1991:93, per Hagstrom 1998:20)

These examples may then be evidence that the Q-particle is base-generated in a position adjacent to a *wh*-phrase.

One potential problem for this analysis is that movement of a Q-feature to C is not blocked by certain intervening heads, as this is a violation of the Head Movement Constraint (Travis 1984), which states that “a head cannot be separated from its trace by an intervening head (Lasnik 2003:70).” For example, in (5) above, *v* is filled with *ka* ‘buy’ and *T* is filled with the past tense morpheme *-tta*, yet the Q-feature is able to move over these heads to arrive in C. This is a form of Long Head Movement (Rivero 1991) of a Q-feature over intervening *v* and *T* heads. Hagstrom (1998:61) hypothesizes why this long head movement is possible, as follows:

...feature attraction drives movement of the closest element with the relevant feature. If a feature F is being attracted and a head H carries the feature F, movement of H will only be blocked if there is an intervening head which also carries the feature F. Any head which does not carry this feature is irrelevant.

Following Hagstrom, a Q-feature may move over any intervening head that does not carry the same feature F that is being attracted by the head C. One possibility is that the relevant feature is a quantificational feature (Simin Karimi, p.c.) because movement of a Q-feature can be blocked by an intervening quantificational element. For example, when a negative polarity item or
quantifier, both quantificational elements, c-commands a wh-phrase the result is ill-formed.\(^6\)

Another potential problem for this analysis is that the Q-particle can be dropped in Japanese. However, when a Q-particle is dropped, a wh-question interpretation is available when there is rising intonation at the end of the question.\(^7\) For example, if the Q-particle is dropped from (4), repeated below, thereby resulting in (8), an expected answer would state what it was that John bought.

\begin{equation}
(4) \left[ \begin{array}{c}
  \text{CP} \\
  \text{[C [TP John-ga, [vP t₁ [nani-o t₂] katta]] no₂]} \\
  \text{John-NOM what-ACC bought Q}
\end{array} \right]?
\end{equation}

‘What did John buy?’

\begin{equation}
(8) \left[ \begin{array}{c}
  \text{CP} \\
  \text{[C [TP John-ga, [vP t₁ [nani-o t₂] katta]] Q-F₂]} \\
  \text{John-NOM what-ACC bought}
\end{array} \right]?
\end{equation}

In (8), a Q-feature moves to C where it is pronounced as rising intonation, rather than as a Q-particle, and a wh-question interpretation is still available.

\(^6\) For example, the wh-phrase nani-o ‘what-ACC’ is c-commanded by the negative polarity item (NPI) sika ‘only’ in (ia) and by the quantifier dare-mo ‘everyone’ in (ib).

\(^7\) Miyagawa (2001:312) writes that "the Q-particle contributes quantificational force to the wh-question" and that it is required for questions that have exhaustive, pair-list, and functional interpretations (cf. Miyagawa 2001:311-312). Therefore, questions with and without Q-particles may not be entirely identical.
In summary, Miyagawa and Hagstrom provide an explanation for why there does not need to be overt wh-movement in Japanese; a Q-particle checks a Q-feature in C and a wh-feature does not need to be checked by overt movement. In the next section, I attempt to account for wh-question data in terms of Q-feature movement.

3. Wh-islands

Example (1a), repeated below can be accounted for if movement of the Q-feature associated with nani-o 'what-ACC' results in a violation of the Minimal Link Condition (MLC), which requires attraction of the closest element of the relevant type.

(1)  

(1a) ??John-wa [:\text{CP} Mary-ga \text{ nani-o} katta kadooka] Tom-ni  
John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether Tom-DAT  
tazunetta no?  
asked Q  
‘What did John ask Tom if/whether Mary bought?’

The MLC is stated below.

(9) \text{Minimal Link Condition (MLC)}  
K attracts $\alpha$ if there is no $\beta$, $\beta$ closer to K than $\alpha$ such that K attracts $\beta$. (Chomsky 1995:311)

In accord with the MLC, in the following configuration, movement of the Q-feature (Q-F\textsubscript{1}) to the matrix C is blocked by an intervening Q-feature (Q-F\textsubscript{2}), which is closer to the matrix C.
I argue that Q-feature movement from nani-o ‘what-ACC’ is blocked by a Q-feature of the lexical item kadooka ‘if/whether’, and so the illicit configuration in (10) is representative of (1a). However, in order for kadooka ‘if/whether’ to block Q-feature movement, it must contain a Q-feature, or some other similar type of feature.

Evidence that kadooka ‘if/whether’ has a Q-feature is that it contains the syllable ka, which has the same pronunciation as the Q-particle ka. Therefore, one possibility is that kadooka ‘if/whether’ has a complex structure consisting of a head and a specifier that occur in C and [Spec, CP] respectively. This leads to the difficulty of trying to determine if ka ‘Q’ is the initial or the last syllable of kadooka, as kadooka begins and ends with ka. If ka ‘Q’ is the last syllable, then kadoo would be a specifier occurring in [Spec, CP]. But if this were the case, then kadoo should appear clause initially rather than clause finally, as shown below.

(11)

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CP
   /\   /
  kadooo C'
   /\   /
  TP C
   /\   /
  kare-ga ita 'he-NOM went'
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This is highly ungrammatical, as kadoo cannot appear clause initially.

The only way to obtain the appropriate word order, under this analysis, is if ka ‘Q’ is the initial syllable of kadooka ‘if/whether’. This is not a novel assumption. For example, Watanabe (1992a) and Tanaka (1999) indicate that kadooka consists of ka and dooka. According to this line of argumentation, dooka is a specifier appearing to the right of the head ka ‘Q’. Watanabe (1992a:264) states that [Spec, CP] occurs to the right of C in Japanese, although he notes that this assumption is “without justification.” Also, Tanaka (1999:384), following arguments by Watanabe (1992a), writes “that kadooka consists of two parts; ka is a [+wh] Comp and dooka is in specifier position.” Furthermore, Tanaka argues that a specifier occurs to the right of its head in Japanese, and that kadooka has the following structure:
But this analysis raises the following question: 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 in Japanese? I note that Miyagawa (1997, 2001, 2003) indicates that specifiers occur to the left of their heads in Japanese. For example, the subject *kare-ga* ‘he-NOM’ in *Kare-ga hon-o yomimashita* ‘he read a book’, shown below, occurs in a specifier to the left of T, because the subject occurs at the beginning of the sentence.

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 the specifier of TP occurs to the left of T, but the specifier of CP occurs to the right of C. These proposals seem unnecessarily complicated.

Rather, I argue that the first syllable of *kadooka* is a Q-feature in C and that *dooka* is not a specifier. I do not have an account of the exact position of *dooka*, but some possibilities are as follows: 1) *dooka* also occurs in C, so *kadooka* is a single head with a Q-feature, 2) *dooka* occurs in some other projection in an
elaborated CP, along the lines of that proposed by Rizzi (2000). These possibilities are worthy of further analysis, but for the sake of simplicity I assume 1); that *kadooka* forms a single head in C, and that this head has a Q-feature, as shown below.

(14)

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    (\text{CP})
       \text{TP} \rightarrow \text{C} \rightarrow \text{C'}
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The following examples may provide evidence for this proposal. These examples have the same (or virtually the same) meaning; they're both ungrammatical in the same way. The only difference between the two examples is what follows *ka*; *dooka* follows *ka* in (1a), repeated below as (15a), and *to* ‘COMP’ follows *ka* in (15b).

(15) (a) ??John-wa [cp Mary-ga \text{nani-o} katta ka-dooka] Tom-ni
     John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether Tom-DAT
     tazunetta no?
     asked Q
     ‘What did John ask Tom if/whether Mary bought?’

     (b) ??John-wa [cp Mary-ga \text{nani-o} katta ka-to] Tom-ni
     John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought Q-COMP Tom-DAT
     tazunetta no?
     asked Q
     ‘What did John ask Tom if/whether Mary bought?’

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.
I assume that to cannot occur in [Spec, CP] because it is a complementizer, meaning that in example (15b), [Spec, CP] of the embedded clause does not contain an overt element. Since kadoooka 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 (15a). 8

The ill-formedness of example (1a) can then be accounted for in terms of the MLC under the assumption that both nani-o ‘what-ACC’ and kadoooka ‘if/whether’ have a Q-feature. In order for the matrix clause to be a wh-question, the Q-feature associated with nani-o ‘what-ACC’ must raise to the matrix C. However, movement of the Q-feature associated with nani-o ‘what-ACC’ is blocked by the intervening Q-feature of kadoooka ‘if/whether’ in the embedded C, as this is the closest Q-feature to the matrix C. Below is a diagram. 9

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8. Example (15b), along with (i) below, based on an example pointed out to me by Yosuke Sato (p.c.), may support the notion that there is an elaborated CP in accord with Rizzi (2000).

(i) Watashi-wa [Junko-ga kuruma-de itta kadoooka to] tazuneta.

I think that it is unlikely that ka and to in (15b), and kadoooka and to in (i) can co-occur in C. Therefore, they may be heads of different projections in the left periphery.

9. The structure of this sentence is rather complex. The diagram given in (17), as well as that in (19) below, follow Larson’s (1988) analysis of certain Dative Shift constructions in English in which the direct and indirect objects are both sisters to V (cf. Larson 1988:359), as in a construction such as sent Mary a letter, in which Mary is an indirect object and a letter is a direct object, and both objects are sisters to V, as shown in (i). Note that a letter is a sister to a V head. The initial VP corresponds to the vP of more recent work in the Minimalist Program. Whether or not this structure is accurate is an issue worthy of further analysis.

(i) \[\text{VP} \left[ v \left[ v \text{sent } \left[ \text{DP Mary } \right] \left[ \text{DP a letter } \right] \right] \right] \]
In this section, I have argued that certain wh-island violations result from Q-feature movement, and that these supposed islands do not contain overt specifiers. One possibility, however, is that they contain covert specifiers. If this were the case, their ungrammaticality could result from movement of an XP; i.e. movement of a wh-phrase would be blocked by a null element in [Spec, CP]. However, I claim that the ungrammaticality of these examples follows straightforwardly as MLC violations involving head movement of Q-features, and so there is no reason to postulate the presence of a covert specifier in CP.

4. Multiple wh-questions

In the previous section, I accounted for the ungrammaticality of (1a), repeated below. Now recall that the addition of a wh-phrase to the matrix clause results in grammaticality, as shown in (1b), repeated below.
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(1) (a) ??John-wa [\text{CP} Mary-ga \text{nani-o} katta kadooka] Tom-ni
John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether Tom-DAT
tazunetta no?
asked Q
‘What did John ask Tom if/whether Mary bought?’

(b) John-wa [\text{CP} Mary-ga \text{nani-o} katta kadooka] \text{dare-ni}
John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether who-DAT
tazunetta no?
asked Q
‘Who did John ask if/whether Mary bought what?’

In (1b), the Q-feature associated with *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’, in this case *no*, moves overtly to the matrix C, where it checks the Q-feature of C. Also, *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’ has scope in the matrix clause, which I assume indicates that its Q-feature moves to the matrix C. In this way, it appears as though there may be more than one Q-feature in C, but only one of which is pronounced. However, this is problematic because movement of the second Q-feature to C should violate the MLC, as there are two Q-features that are closer to the matrix C, the Q-feature associated with *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’ and the Q-feature associated with *kadooka* ‘if/whether’.

Richards (2001) provides a possible explanation in terms of what he refers to as the Subjacency Tax Approach, which is based on Brody’s (1995) view that Subjacency only needs to be satisfied once “per *wh*-comp (Richards 2001:9).” Once Subjacency is satisfied, any other movement of a *wh*-phrase “is free of Subjacency (Richards 2001:9).” According to this approach, (1b) is grammatical because *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’ is able to move to the matrix C without violating Subjacency, as it does not pass over two bounding nodes. The Subjacency Tax is paid and further movement of the *wh*-phrase *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’ from the embedded clause is not subject to Subjacency, as this phrase passes over two TP bounding nodes on its way to the matrix C.

Subjacency refers to movement of phrases that occur in specifiers of projections and not to movement of heads. My analysis relies on head movement instead of specifier movement, and so a similar approach that can account for head movement is needed. A related proposal of Richards’ may be suitable. This is the *Principle of Minimal Compliance* (PMC), defined below,
which is the notion “...that a given constraint only has to be satisfied once in a certain domain (Richards 2001:197).”

(18) (a) Principle of Minimal Compliance (PMC)

If the tree contains a dependency headed by H which obeys constraint C, any syntactic object G which H “immediately c-commands” can be ignored for purposes of determining whether C is obeyed by other dependencies.

(b) A immediately c-commands B iff the lowest node dominating A dominates B and there is no C such that A asymmetrically c-commands C and C asymmetrically c-commands B. (Richards 2001:199)

Richards provides evidence of various phenomena to support the existence of the PMC. For example, he shows how the PMC accounts for instances of reflexivity in Dutch, weak-crossover in English, VP-ellipsis in English, long-distance scrambling of adjuncts in Japanese, etc. If the PMC can explain various phenomena in different languages, then it may be a principle that is at work in language in general, and so an explanation of the multiple wh-question facts in Japanese in terms of the PMC may be desirable.

The Subjacency Tax Approach falls under the PMC as a subcase because it is the stipulation that Subjacency, a constraint, only needs to be satisfied once in the relevant portion of a sentence. This Subjacency Tax Approach can then be reformulated in terms of the MLC and the PMC. In a multiple wh-question, when the Q-feature in the matrix C is checked by the closest Q-feature, the MLC is satisfied. Therefore, the Q-feature in the matrix C heads a well-formed dependency. This Q-feature in C immediately c-commands itself, and so it may be ignored with respect to the MLC, thereby allowing a more distant Q-feature to raise to C.

The grammaticality of (1b), repeated below, can then be accounted for in terms of the PMC.
The LF representation of this example is shown below in (19). Here, the Q-feature associated with *dare-ni* ‘who-DAT’ raises to the matrix C to check an uninterpretable Q-feature, and this Q-feature is overtly pronounced as *no*. Movement of this Q-feature satisfies the MLC because there is no intervening head to block its movement. Therefore, *no* ‘Q’ in the matrix C heads a well-formed dependency. Since this Q-feature is c-commanded by C, as it is in C, it may be ignored with respect to the MLC. Therefore, the matrix C may attract a lower Q-feature. The next closest Q-feature is the Q-feature associated with *kadooka* ‘if/whether’ in the embedded C. However, this Q-feature already satisfies the uninterpretable Q-feature in the embedded C and so it has no reason to move. Therefore, the matrix C is able to attract the lower Q-feature associated with *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’.
This example then shows that once the MLC is satisfied with respect to the matrix C, the matrix C may attract the next available Q-feature. Since the Q-feature associated with *kadooka* ‘if/whether’ in the embedded C is not available, the matrix C is able to attract the Q-feature associated with *nani-o* ‘what-ACC’.

There is another remaining issue. In (1b) above, two Q-features are present in the matrix C, but only one Q-particle is pronounced. When two Q-particles are pronounced, as in the following example, ungrammaticality results.

(20) (b) *John-wa [CP Mary-ga nani-o katta kadooka]
    John-TOP Mary-NOM what-ACC bought if/whether
dare-ni tazunetta no no?
who-DAT asked Q Q
‘Who did John ask if/whether Mary bought what?’
These facts can be accounted for by the following generalization.

(21) There may not be more than one Q-particle (a Q-feature that is pronounced) in C.

This constraint may be a case of haplology (Heidi Harley, p.c.) which prevents there from being two identical adjacent morphemes at Spell-Out. Some possible causes for (21) may be production and/or processing difficulties, or that when two Q-features occur next to each other, they merge into one Q-feature at Spell-Out.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that the unacceptability of single wh-questions in which a wh-phrase is contained within a supposed wh-island results from a violation of the MLC that involves head-movement of a Q-feature. Furthermore, when the MLC is satisfied by movement of the closest Q-feature to C, then C may attract the next available Q-feature. Crucially, in accord with the PMC, this secondary Q-feature movement is not subject to the MLC. Although there may be two Q-features in C in multiple wh-questions, only one of them may be pronounced due to a constraint against pronouncing two adjacent Q-features. Notably, this analysis accounts for wh-questions such as (1a-b) in terms of Q-feature movement and its interaction with the MLC and the PMC, without the requirement that there be XP movement of a null wh-operator, as argued for by Watanabe (1992a, 1992b, 2003). Furthermore, the wh-question data are accounted for in terms of movement that occurs at a single level, because movement of Q-features is overt. This differs from an account that relies on both overt and covert wh-movement, as argued for by Watanabe.

References


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