The *Wh*-NP (Rhetorical) Question
—Structure and Negative Context—*

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Abstract

This article explores the structure and negative context of *wh*-NP rhetorical questions (RQs) with *doko-ga* “where-Nom” or *nani-ga* “what-Nom” in Japanese by comparing them with similar constructions in English. Departing from Yamadera’s (2010) adjunct analysis, this article first posits that *wh*-NP RQs are copular sentences that consist of an embedded structure within which even direct quotes can occur. Second, it is argued that *wh*-NP RQs have a weak negative context, and this negativity is further applied to ordinary questions (OQs), as it has been to the *at most n N* phrase. The current analysis also supports Caponigro and Sprouse’s (2007) claim that OQs and RQs are syntactically and semantically the same.

Keyword ; rhetorical question, syntax, negative context, copula

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1. Introduction
Previous studies have argued that the same syntactic structure underlies ordinary questions (OQs) and rhetorical questions (RQs) (Caponigro and Sprouse (C&S) 2007, Cheung 2009, Fujii 2014, etc.). According to C&S (2007), RQs are also semantically identical to OQs. Cheung (2009) provides cross-linguistic data concerning wh-questions as seen in (1) and terms the constructions “Negative WH-Constructions (NWHCs)” to differentiate them from typical RQs.

(1) a. Kare-no doko-ga 1 metoru 80 senti nano?! he-Gen where-Nom 1 meter 80 centimeter Decl.Q [Japanese]
   ‘No way is he 6 feet tall.’ (lit. ‘Where of him is 1.80 m?!’) (Cheung 2009: 310)
b. Since when is John watching TV now?! [English] (ibid.)

While Cheung (2009) does not mention the syntactic structure of such wh-questions in detail, Yamadera (2010) discusses this kind of wh-questions as in (2) and claims that nani-ga ‘what’ or doko-ga ‘where’ is an adjunct in the CP area.

(2) Nani-ga/Doko-ga Shinjuku-ga what-Nom/where-Nom Shinjuku-Nom yakei-ga kirei na no?! night.view-Nom beautiful Cop C ‘What about this is it Shinjuku where the night view is beautiful?’[1] [Japanese; Yamadera (2010: 171)]

With respect to a semantic analysis, Cheung (2009) argues that NWH construction (NWHC) is defined as (3).

(3) NWHC + p?! = there is no q such that in view of q, p.
   “Since there is no choice of q that can make p true, NWHCs entail ~p in all the contextually relevant conversational backgrounds. This explains why “NWH+p?!” is interpreted as equivalent to ~p." (Cheung 2009: 317)

Cheung (2009) proposes that the obligatory negative interpretation of NWHCs comes from semantics (conventional implicature), as opposed to the general RQ interpretation, which is attributed to pragmatic subject matter (C&S 2007). We must ascertain whether NWHCs contain the structure argued by Yamadera (2010) and whether the negativity of their constructions is as strong as ~p in semantics.

In this article, we first propose that, contrary to Yamadera’s analysis, the wh-NP rhetorical questions with nani-ga or doko-ga are copular sentences with embedded structures as in (4), wherein even direct quotes can occur. This structure also applies to the English data of (5).

(4) [CP[TP[DP wh-NP phrases]]{PREDP [(in)direct quoted phrases] ] (no)]
(5) What about this is “I’ll help you?”

Moreover, as opposed to Cheung’s (2009) interpretation of ~p in (3), we argue that the negativity of the wh-NP RQs (NWHCs) is considered to be a weak negative context, which is shared with the phrase at most n N and even with OQs.

This article is organized as follows: Section 2 observes Yamadera’s data and examines wh-questions with nani-ga “what-Nom” and doko-ga “where-Nom” by comparing them with their English counterparts. It is proposed that these wh-NP rhetorical questions are copular sentences and have an embedded structure wherein any type of predicate can occur. Section 3 discusses the negative interpretations of RQs and NWHCs, and argues that RQs including NWHCs are not strong negative contexts contrary to the opinions of Han (2002) or Cheung (2009). Finally, section 4 concludes this article.

2. The Structure of Wh-NP RQs (NWHCs)
This section examines the structure of Japanese wh-NP RQs (NWHCs) as in (6) by comparing them with similar expressions in English such as (7).

   hanaseru tte iunoyo! speak Quote.say.C
"What about this is Kenji can speak English?"
(See Yamadera (2010: 166))

b. Kare-no doko-ga 1 meter 80 senti nano?!
he-Gen where-Nom 1 meter 80 centimeter Q
‘No way is he 6 feet tall.’ (lit. ‘Where of him is 1.80 m?!’)  
(Cheung 2009: 310)

(7) What about this is “I’ll help you!”

After reviewing Yamadera’s (2010) observation, we will provide more data from Japanese and English, and propose our analysis.

2.1. Yamadera (2010)

While Cheung (2009) provides a Japanese example of kare-no doko-ga ‘where of him’ as in (6b), Yamadera (2010) illustrates some examples with nani-ga ‘what-Nom’ and she mentions that it can alternate with doko-ga ‘where-Nom’ as illustrated in (6a). The wh-NPs can occur with various predicates. They appear with noun phrases as in (8), transitives as in (9), intransitives as in (10), unaccusatives as in (11), passive sentences as in (12), and adjectives as in (13).

is Q
‘What about this is a non-bureaucratic government?’
(See Yamadera 2010: 166)

cleaned Quote say Q
‘What about this is you cleaned the room?’
(See ibid.)

(10) Nani-ga/doko-ga anata-ga hashittat te.
what-Nom/where-Nom you-Nom ran Quote
‘What about this is you ran?’

come Quote
‘What about this is a tsunami will come?’
(See Yamadera 2010: 166)

(12) Nani-ga/doko-ga watashi-ga what-Nom/where-Nom I-Nom
yugusarete te iu no.
be.treated.favorably Quote say Q
‘What about this is I am treated favorably? (I’m not.)’  
(See ibid.)

(13) Nani-ga/doko-ga kare-ga yasashii no.
what-Nom/where-Nom he-Nom kind C
‘What about this is he is kind?’

Yamadera (2010) mentions that these wh-NPs can occur with any type of predicates. I translated Yamadera’s Japanese data into English; later, in subsection 2.2, I will show that these translations are certainly acceptable in English.

Nani-ga can appear at the sentence-initial position of (14a) and between the subject and object of (14b) but not between the object and the verb as seen below.

(14) a. Nani-ga anata-ga heya-o what-Nom you-Nom room-Acc
sojishitat te iu no.
cleaned Quote say Q
‘What about this is you cleaned the room?’

b. Anata-ga nani-ga heya-o what-Nom you-Nom room-Acc
sojishitat te iu no.

(15) a. Nani-ga Shinjuku-ga yakei-ga what-Nom Shinjuku-Nom night.view-Nom
kireina no.
beautiful C
‘What about this is it is Shinjuku where the night view is beautiful?’

b. ?? Shinjuku-ga nani-ga yakei-ga
kireina no.
beautiful C

(See Yamadera 2010: 171)
Thus, Yamadera (2010) concludes that *nani-ga* is in the CP area and analyzes it as an adjunct. Yamadera mentions that many of her illustrative examples iterated above from (8) through (15) contain a quote phrase but she provides no explanation for this occurrence. In the next subsection, we will provide our analysis, which takes the quoted phrases into account.

2.2. The Structure of *Wh-*NP RQs

In contrast to Yamadera’s (2010) analysis, this subsection proposes that these Japanese *wh-*NP RQs (NWHCs) like (15a) are copular sentences and have embedded structures as in (16a), wherein any types of predicates can occur in the (in)direct quotation.

(16) a. \[CP\{TP\{DP *nani-ga/Doko-ga phrases\}[PredP \{in\}(direct quoted phrases)\}\]
    b. \[CP\{TP\{CP\{TP\{DP *nani-ga/Doko-ga\}[PredP\{in\}(direct quoted phrases)\}\}\}\{te\}(anata iu) no\]

   *Quote (you) say C*

   The basic structure is demonstrated in (16a) although phrases like *te iu no* “Quote-(you) say C” are sometimes added at the end of the question as in (16b). The question with *since when* in (17) should be analyzed as an adjunct located in the CP area as Yamadera (2010), because *do* occupies the C head, and this sentence does not contain a copula.

   (17) Since when do biologists need all that math and physics?! (Cheung 2009: 301)

However, the proposed structure is compatible with the English sentences with *what about this* as in (18), which contain the copula *is* and can appear with any types of predicates: nominal predicates as in (18a), transitives in (18b), intransitives in (18c), unaccusatives in (18d), passives as in (18e), and adjectives as in (18f).

(18) a. What about this is a non-bureaucratic government?
    b. What about this is you cleaned the room?
    c. What about this is you ran?
    d. What about this is a tsunami will come?
    e. What about this is I am treated favorably?
    f. What about this is he is kind?

As for Japanese data of *wh-*NP RQs like (15a), it is possible to analyze *nani-ga* ‘what-Nom’ as an abbreviation of *kore-no nani-ga* ‘what about this’; ‘about this’ is not overtly expressed.

First, we will provide evidence for the embedded structure. Importantly, even direct quotes can occur in the questions as in the English example of (19). The direct quote in Japanese is also shown in (20). The string in the square brackets represents a direct quotation supported by the fact that the ending particle *yo* is contained in the quote.

(19) What about this is “I’ll help you?”
(20) *Nani-ga/Doko-ga [boku-wa kimi-o what-Nom/where-Nom I-Top you-Acc aishiteiru yo] da yo. love C Cop C*
   ‘What about this is “I love you, you know”?’

The embedded structure proposed here is further supported by data in Nagasaki Japanese (NJ). The example in (21) suggests that the genitive subject *anta-no* is Neutral Description (ND) reading as genitive subjects in NJ (and other Hichiku dialects) appear with ND.

(21) Nan-ga/Doko-ga [anta-no yasashika]?[NJ]3)
   *what-Nom/where-Nom you-Gen kind*
   ‘lit. What (about this) is you are kind?’

The ND interpretation of *anta-no* in (21) is explained only if the subject occurs in a subordinate clause and if it encompasses an ND reading as illustrated in (22); the second person subject in a main clause is presupposed in a conversation (Kuno 1973), and not an ND reading, which cannot take the genitive in NJ as seen in (23).

(22) Minna-wa [anta-no yasashika].
   *everyone-Top you-Gen kind*
   koto-ba shittoru.
   *that-Acc know*
   ‘Everyone knows that you are kind.’
(23) Anta-{ga/*no} yasashika.  [NJ]
you-Nom/Gen kind
‘You are kind’  (See also Nishioka 2014)

(24) Nan-ga/Doko-ga [anta-no yasashika]?  [NJ]

Thus, subjects marked as genitive like anta-no in (21) indicate that the whole sequence of anta-no yasashika is embedded as illustrated in (24). Accordingly, the proposal that the construction has an embedded structure is confirmed.

Second, in the copular sentence, as hypothesized, the copula is appears overtly in English examples as in (19). Although the Japanese copula may not always occur explicitly, the copula da is realized if the speaker is a male as in (20).9 Copular sentences are divided mainly into four types: predicational, specification, identification, and identity (see Higgins 1979, and Kishimoto 2012 among many others). In the predicational sentence, the argument kare-no oniisan “his elder brother” and the predicate (kanari-no) keppekisho “fairly-Gen fastidious” are not interchangeable as seen in (25) and (26). However, an argument and its predicate are capable of being exchanged in the other types of copular sentences (Kishimoto 2012). The noun phrases kare-no doko “He-Gen where” and kanari-no keppekisho “fairly-Gen fastidious” are not interchangeable as in (27) and (28); hence, these sentences are classified as predicational.

(25) Kare-no oniisan-ga kanari-no He-Gen elder.brother-Nom fairly-Gen keppekisho da. (Kishimoto 2012: 45) fastidious Cop
‘His elder brother is fairly fastidious.’

(26) *Kanari-no keppekisho-ga kare-no fairly-Gen fastidious-Nom He-Gen oniisan da.
elder.brother Cop
‘Being fastidious is his elder brother.’

(27) Kare-no doko-ga kanari-no He-Gen where-Nom fairly-Gen keppekisho da yo!? fastidious Cop C
‘What about him is fairly fastidious?’

(28) *Kanari-no keppekisho-ga kare-no fairly-Gen fastidious-Nom He-Gen doko da yo!?
where-Nom Cop C
‘lit. Being fastidious is where about him?’

Predicational sentences such as (29) have a structure as noted in (30) (See Baker 2003, Bower 1993, Nishiyama 1999, Kishimoto 2012 etc.)

(29) a. Chris is a teacher.
b. Chris-[wa/ga] sensei da.5)
Chris-Top/Nom teacher Cop
‘Chris is a teacher.’

(30) a. [CP[TP [DP Chris ] [PredP Pred [DP teacher]]]]
b. [CP[TP [DP Chris ] [PredP [DP sensei ] Pred]]]

Since English is a head initial language and Japanese is a head final language, a head of a predicate phrase is realized as in (30). Thus, it is reasonable that the construction in question contains the predicate phrase in the position shown in (16a).

To recapitulate this section, we proposed the structure for the wh-NP rhetorical questions based on data from English and Japanese (including Standard Japanese and Nagasaki Japanese). The structure was analyzed as a copular sentence with an embedded part, which was supported by the following facts: 1) even direct quotes can occur in Japanese and English, 2) the copula overtly appears in English and Japanese male speaker’s utterances, 3) genitive subjects can appear in NJ.

Before moving on to Section 3, we shall provide data pertaining to OQs, to which the proposed structure applies. (31) is used for seeking information and considered to be an OQ. The projected structure presented here as (32) can depict the data of OQs.

(31) Hanako: Kare-no doko-ga yasashii (no)?
He-Gen where-Nom kind C
‘What about him is kind?’

Yumi: Ryorishite kureru tokoroyo.
Cook fact.C
‘The fact is that he cooks for me.’

(32) [CP[TP [DP Nani-ga/Doko-ga phrases] [PredP [(in)direct quoted phrases] Pred]]]
Our assessment is consistent with that of C&S (2007) or Fujii (2015); there is an equivalency in the syntactic structures of OQs and RQs. In the next section, we will turn to discuss negative interpretations of these wh-NP rhetorical questions (NWHCs) by comparing them with usual RQs.

3. The Negativity of RQs/NWHCs

In this section, we will focus on interpretation of RQs and NWHCs and will examine the negativity of these questions. Cheung (2009) argues that “NWH+!” is interpreted as equivalent to ~p as in (3). Han (2002) analyzes RQs as negative assertions because they license Negative Polarity Items like lift a finger. Contrary to these analyses, it is our claim that the negativity of these questions is not as potent as not or nothing; the questions contain a weak negative context as the at most n N phrases or OQs. We shall first discuss phrases that are said to be related to RQs: after all in English, and to-iu-no/te-iu-no ‘quote-say-C’ in Japanese.

3.1 After all and to-iu-no/te-iu-no ‘quote-say-C’ in RQs

It has been asserted that OQs and RQs behave differently (Sadock 1971, Han 2002, C&S 2007, etc.). If the introductory phrase after all occurs in a question as in (33) and (34), only a rhetorical interpretation is available.

(33) a. After all, does Fred have a red cent?
   (Sadock 1974: 83)
   b. After all, do phonemes have anything to do with language?
   (Han 2002: 203)
(34) After all, who helped Mary?
   (Han 2002: 204)

In Japanese, the phrase to-iu-no/te-iu-no ‘quote-say-C’ tends to make questions rhetorical (Fujii 2015, Sprouse 2007). The speaker can utter (35b) after (35a). The te-iu-no phrase can also appear with NWHCs as is seen in (36).

(35) a. Dare-ga soji-o tetsudattekuretat
   who-Nom cleaning-Acc helped
   ‘Who helped you with the cleaning?’
b. Dare-mo tetsudawanakatta desho.
   anybody help.not.Past Cop.Mod
   ‘Nobody helped you, did they?’ (See Fujii 2015)
(36) a. Kare-no doko-ga ki-ga tsuyo
   he-Gen where-Nom mind-Nom strong
   te iunoyo.
   Quote say.C
   ‘lit Where of him is strong in mind?’
b. Zenzen tsuyoku nai.
   at.all strong not
   ‘He is not strong at all.’

In the next subsection, we will review Han’s (2002) opinions and discuss the licensing of a Negative Polarity Item (NPI) in an RQ.

3.2. Negative Polarity Items and Han (2002)

RQs have been reported to license Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). NPI licensing in RQs in English is shown in (37). Examples of NWHCs are seen in (38) and (39).

(37) After all, who lifted a finger to help Luca?
   (C&S 2007: 3, see also Han 2002: 205)
(38) After all, since when has John lifted a finger to help Paolo?
(39) After all, what about this is she lifted a finger to help him?! She didn’t help him at all.

Now let us briefly examine Han’s (2002) views with respect to NPI licensing in RQs. Following Zwarts’s (1996) observation, Han (2002) considers NPIs such as lift a finger and a damn strong NPIs. According to Han’s (2002) analysis, in RQs as (40a), the covert whether maps onto a negative polarity, as the result of a post-LF derivation. Thus, the question is interpreted as a negative assertion as in (40c). When it comes to wh-questions as (41a), the wh-phrase maps onto a negative quantifier at post-LF level by translating what into nothing in an intensional logical way.
(40) a. Did I tell you that writing an article was easy?  
\[ \text{NP} \downarrow \text{CP} \downarrow \text{C'} \]  
\[ \text{whether} \quad \text{did I tell you that writing an article was easy} \]  
\[ \sim \]  
c. \[ \text{[I told you that writing an article was easy]} \]  
(Han 2002: 219)

(41) a. What1 has John done t1 for you?  
\[ \text{NP} \downarrow \text{CP} \downarrow \text{C'} \]  
\[ \lambda x \exists x \text{[inanimate(x)]} \land \text{have-done-for-you'(x)(j)]} \]  
\[ \text{what1 has John done t1 for you} \rightarrow \lambda y \text{: have-done-for-you'(y)(j)} \]  
nothing  
(Han 2002: 220)

Han (2002) considers RQs negative assertions that are strong negative contexts. The next subsection examines whether RQs and NWHCs are such forceful negative environments as have been argued by Han (2002) or Cheung (2009).

3.3. The Negative Context of RQs/NWHCs

Based on Yoshimura (1998, 2000), we will first verify whether NPIs like lift a finger are strong NPIs as asserted by Han (2002). Second, the negative contexts of RQs and NWHCs will be discussed.

Yoshimura (1998) classifies English negative contexts into three classes: negative contexts of weak, middle, and strong, following van der Wouden’s (1997) classification in Dutch.9 According to Yoshimura (1998), lift a finger and a damn are weak NPIs, which can be licensed even in negative contexts with at most n N (Yoshimura 1998) or if other than not and no as in (42) and (43), respectively; at most n N is considered a weak negative context and if belongs to a weak class of medium strength as it behaves rather similarly to a weak negative context.

(42) a. At most 3 people lifted a finger to help the drowning boy. (Yoshimura 1998: 139)

b. At most 3 people did a damn thing to help the drowning boy. (ibid.)

(43) a. If John had lifted a finger to help the drowning boy, he would have lived.

b. If John had given a damn when Paolo was in trouble, he would have sent him money.

Accordingly, the NPI of medium strength until and the relatively strong NPI half bad, cannot be licensed in such contexts as in at most n N or if clauses as seen in (44) and (45), respectively (Yoshimura 1998).

(44) a. * At most 3 of his friends arrived until after dinner. (Yoshimura 1998: 139)

b. * At most 3 of the applicants are half bad. (ibid.)

(45) a. * Here, you will be regarded as ill-mannered if you start to eat or drink until your boss does. (Yoshimura 1998: 142)

b. * What are you going to do about him if his work is half bad? (ibid.)

We have confirmed that lift a finger and a damn are weak NPIs. Now let us turn to the examination of the strengths of negative contexts contained in RQs and NWHCs. RQs, as in Han (2002), have been analyzed as negation like not or no(thing) as illustrated in (40) and (41). The NPI of medium strength until is licensed by nothing as in (46), but cannot be licensed in RQs of (47b), which indicates that what is not semantically interpreted as nothing, contrary to Han’s (2002) analysis in (41b).

(46) Nothing started until all the guests had arrived.  
(Yoshimura 1998: 141)

(47) a. * The event started until all the guests had arrived.

b. * After all, what started until all the guests had arrived?

Besides, the NPI half bad, classified as a relatively strong NPI as in (48), cannot be acceptable in NWHCs without negation as in (49b).

(48) a. That’s not half bad.

b. * That is half bad.

c. ?? Nothing is half bad.
(See also Yoshimura 1998)

(49) a. What about this isn’t half bad? This is bad.¹⁰
b. * What about this is half bad? This isn’t bad.

Contrary to Han’s (2002) claim, we have clarified that what in (47b) is not interpreted as nothing. Moreover, NWHCs cannot license strong NPIs while not does license them. This fact cannot be denoted through Cheung’s (2009) analysis. The fact that the negative context of RQs or NWHCs is a weak context is much clearer when we refer to Japanese NPIs.

In Japanese, minimizers like yubiippondemo ‘one finger DEMO,’ which can appear in a weak negative context like seizei ‘at most n N’ (Yoshimura 2000) are acceptable in these questions as in (50).

(50) a. Kare-ga yubiippon-demo furetat
   he-Nom one.finger-DEMO laid
   teiuno?
   Quote.say.C
   ‘lit. Did he lay one finger?’

b. Doko-ga kare-ga yubiippon-demo
   where-Nom he-Nom one.finger-DEMO
   furetat
   laid
   teiuno?
   Quote.say.C
   ‘lit. Why do you say that he laid one finger?’

On the other hand, NPIs of medium strength such as darenimo, or strong NPIs such as kesshite ‘(not) at all/never’ (Yoshimura 2000), cannot be licensed in RQs as in (51) or NWHCs as in (52).

(51) a. * Kare-ga darenimo attat teiuno?
   he-Nom anybody met
   Quote.say.C
   ‘Did he meet anybody?’

b. * Doko-ga kare-ga kesshite
   where-Nom he-Nom at.all
   dakyosurut
   compromise
   teiuno?
   Quote.say.C
   ‘Why do you say that he compromises at all?’

As seen in Japanese data provided above, RQs and NWHCs cannot license NPIs of medium strength or strong NPIs. Thus, these questions are weak negative contexts such as at most n N.

In sum, RQs, including NWHCs, do not behave as negative assertions with not or nothing. The fact that NPIs of medium strength or strong NPIs are not licensed in RQs or NWHCs indicates that these questions are not very strong negative contexts, contrary to the analysis in Han (2002). Although Cheung (2009) argues that “NWH+p!!” is interpreted as equivalent to ~p as in (3), the negative interpretation is not as forceful as ~p.

As noted by Yoshimura (1999, 2000), since weak English NPIs such as lift a finger or the Japanese minimizer yubiippondemo even occur in at most n N or if clauses, it is questionable whether such minimizers can be licensed in OQs. Let us consider the cases below in Japanese and in English.

Context 1: Before Taro left home, he told his son Kenji never to touch this picture. If Kenji touches the picture even just a little bit, Taro has to restore it. When Taro came home, he asked his wife Hanako about Kenji.

(53) Taro: Kenji-ga kono e
   Kenji-Top this picture-Dat
   yubiippon-demo fureta?
   finger.1-DEMO laid
   ‘Did Kenji lay one finger?’

Hanako: Iie. / Hai. (plain intonation)
   No/ Yes

Context 2: Mary never helps her mother with the housework. One day, her father told Mary to help her mother. The next night, when her father came home from work, Mary had already gone to bed. He asked his wife about Mary.

(54) Mary’s father: Did Mary lift a finger to help you?
   Mary’s mother: No./ Yes. (plain intonation)
In both the instances provided above, the questions seek information and the speakers do not know what the true answer will be (See also Borkin 1971, Guerzoni 2004). Thus, questions with minimizers as in (53) and (54) are considered to be OQs. Consequently, since minimizers (weak NPIs) are licensed both in RQs(NWHCs) and OQs, there is no difference between them with regard to negative contexts, as opposed to Cheung (2009) who contends that contrary to ordinary RQs (C&S 2007), the obligatory negative interpretation of NWHCs stems from semantics. We have argued that wh-NP RQs (NWHCs) are syntactically the same as OQs in section 2. Hence, our analysis of the structure and negative interpretation of wh-NP RQs is consistent to C&S (2007), which shows RQs are syntactically and semantically identical to OQs.

Before concluding this thesis, it is worth discussing questions that include (mono)ka, which license strong NPIs like kesshite ‘not’ at all/never as illustrated in (55). It is natural that the question obtains the rhetorical interpretation with a strong negative context because of the presence of monoka as in (55b). Oguro (2015) assumes that the ka at hand is different from the ka used in OQs. According to Oguro (2015), it contains the negative feature that licenses NPIs.

(55) a. Kesshite iku (mono) ka.
   ‘I will never go.’ (See Yoshimura 2000)
   Never go MOD Q

b. Dare-ga kesshite iku (mono) ka!
   Who-Nom never go MOD Q
   ‘No one will go.’

Therefore, unless some strong negative expressions such as monoka appear, RQs cannot license strong NPIs.

4. Conclusion

The initial examination of wh-NP RQs (NWHCs) confirmed that the syntactic structure of wh-NP RQs is analyzed as a copular sentence with an embedded part, which is supported by data from English and (Nagasaki) Japanese. As for the interpretation of RQs including wh-NP RQs (NWHCs), the current analysis made it clear that the negativity of these RQs is a weak negative context and not as strong as ~p because only weak NPIs are available as at most n N. As weak NPIs are also allowed in OQs, there is no semantic difference between OQs and RQs with respect to the negative interpretation. Since the proposed structure of the wh-NP RQs (NWHCs) can be applied to OQs, our analysis is consistent with C&S (2007), according to whom OQs and RQs are syntactically and semantically equivalent. There exist some differences between OQs and the wh-NP RQs at the pragmatic level and these require to be further explained at a future forum.

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Notes

1) I have translated Yamadera’s (2010) Japanese data of wh-questions into English in this article as these translations are not provided in her paper.
2) We will discuss the phrase te iu no in Section 3.
3) Adjectives in NJ have the -ka inflectional ending as yasashika “kind” corresponding to the -i form in standard Japanese.
4) In Nishiyama’s (1999) view, da is a contracted form of de aru. Nishiyama analyzes de as a predicative copula and ar as a dummy copula. Da is a prenominal allomorph of copulae like na or no. See Nishiyama (1999) for details. Also, according to Blight (1997), be is the overt realization of Pred.
5) According to Kishimoto (2012), the difference between ga and we does not affect the grammatical relation between subjects and predicates because the difference appears only in a main clause and not in a subordinate clause.
6) With respect to syntactic analysis, RQs can be embedded as OQs as exemplified in (i) (C&S 2007).
(i) SITUATION: No one at the office likes the boss, and the boss knows this. One day she gets fed up with the situation, and says:

SPEAKER: Should I even ask who would give a damn if I stopped coming to work? (C&S 2007: 6)

In addition, as for semantic analysis, RQs with multiple wh-words are acceptable as single-pair readings as OQs (C&S 2007: 5-6).

(ii) a. Who danced with who first? (OQ)
   b. After all, who danced with who first? (RQ)

Thus, C&S concludes that RQs are syntactically and semantically identical to OQs. They argue that differences between OQs and RQs are attributed to pragmatics. When it comes to NWHCs, they can be embedded by adding the *toiuno* phrase as in (6). However, they cannot contain multiple wh-words; hence we will provide another analysis to examine the interpretation of the construction in Section 3.

7) Fujii (2014) provides an instance of an OQ using the *toiuno* phrase.

(i) Asuno kaigi-dewa dare-ga soji-o tomorrow’s meeting-during who-Nom cleaning-Acc tetsudattekurut te (anata-wa) iuno? help Quote you-Top say.C ‘lit. Who (do you say) is going to help us clean during tomorrow’s meeting?’

8) Although Han (2002) argues that OQs do not license NPIs such as *lift a finger*, this observation is not shared with my informants of English and Japanese. Later in this section, I will provide an explication related to this issue.

9) van der Wouden’s (1997) classification of Dutch negative contexts, posits ‘monotone decreasing,’ ‘anti-additive,’ and ‘antimorphic’ in order of increasing strength.

10) In (49), *after all* does not appear, but the speaker’s addition of “This is bad.” in (49a) or “This isn’t bad.” in (49b) assures us that the statement is an RQ.

References


20) Saruwatari, A., “Wh-NP Rhetorical Questions in Japanese and Chinese,” *Theoretical Approach to Natural Language: Research Project at Graduate School of Language and
Later in this section, I will provide an explication of NPIs such as (i) Asuno 1971. Copular anti-negative contexts are treated as *soji* word pairs, e.g., *soji* -18- wh traveling, R. C., *kaijis gaiso* (Professor Haruhiko Fujii’s Retirement Commemorative Theses), ed. by A. Tamai, 961-972, Eihosha, Tokyo, 2000. However, *soji* -18- wh does not appear, but the speaker does not provide an explication of (i) Asuno 1971. Copular anti-negative contexts are treated as *soji* word pairs, e.g., *soji* -18- wh traveling, R. C., *kaijis gaiso* (Professor Haruhiko Fujii’s Retirement Commemorative Theses), ed. by A. Tamai, 961-972, Eihosha, Tokyo, 2000.


22) Saruwatari, A., “Wh-NP shujigimonbun no kozo to hiteikankyoniokeru kosatsu (On the structure and negative context of Wh-NP Rhetorical Question),” poster presented at the the 11th summer lecture course of the Linguistic Society of Japan, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, August 20, 2018.


