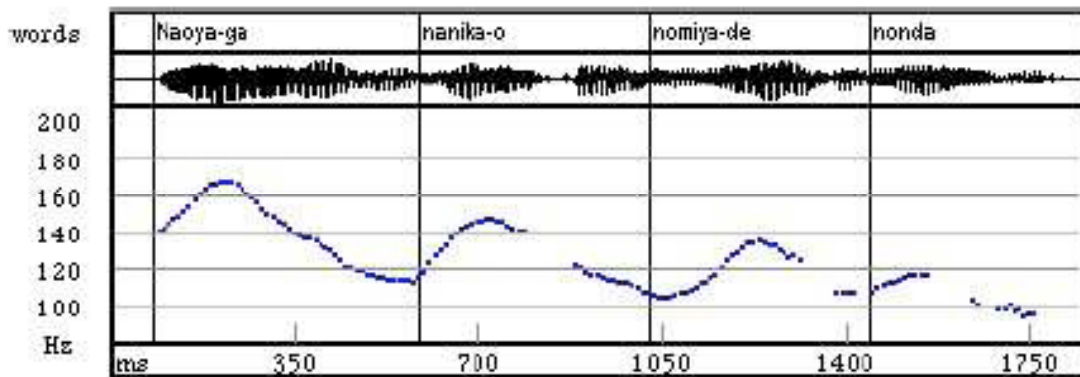


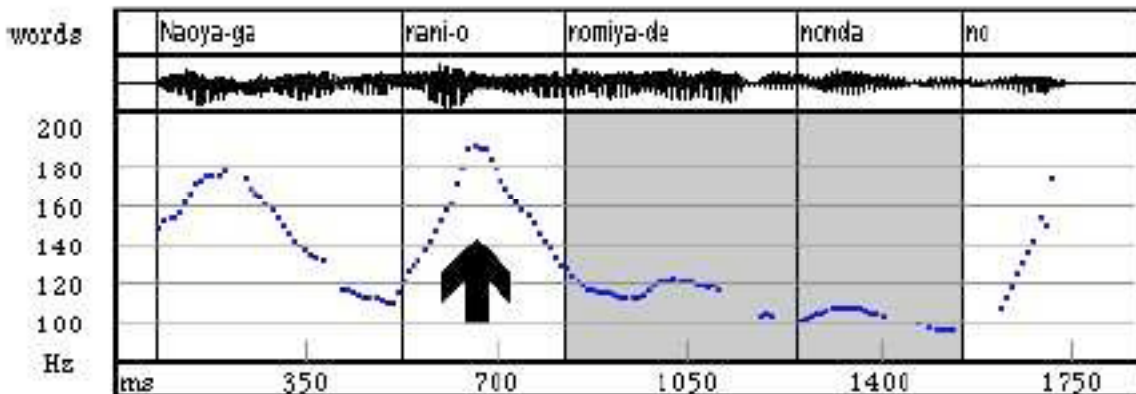
Beyond strength and weakness:
Japanese wh-prosody as a model for wh-syntax

A number of recent works (Deguchi and Kitagawa 2002, Ishihara 2003, Smith 2005, Sugahara 2003...) have focused on the interesting intonational effects associated with wh-in-situ in Japanese. Roughly speaking, these effects involve (in Tokyo Japanese) a domain of pitch compression, lying between the wh-phrase and the C where the wh-phrase takes scope. The effects are illustrated in the contrasting pitch tracks below, taken from Ishihara 2003; the shaded domain in (1b) is the domain of pitch compression:

- (1) a. Naoya-ga nanika-o nomiya-de nonda
 Naoya NOM something ACC bar LOC drank
 ‘Naoya drank something at the bar’



- b. Naoya-ga nani-o nomiya-de nonda no?
 Naoya NOM what ACC bar LOC drank Q
 ‘What did Naoya drink at the bar?’



Following much of the work on these intonational effects, I will assume that Japanese wh-prosody involves the creation of a prosodic domain beginning with the wh-phrase and ending with the C where the wh-phrase takes scope.

The new proposal of this paper will be that this Japanese phenomenon instantiates one strategy for satisfying a universal requirement on well-formed PF representations:

(2) In wh-questions, the wh-phrase and the C in which it takes scope must be contained in a single phonological phrase.

How a language satisfies the condition in (2) depends on two independently observable parameters; the position of C relative to the rest of the clause, and the rules the language uses for constructing prosodic objects. We will see that (following Selkirk 1986 and much subsequent work) one point of variation has to do with whether languages construct boundaries for phonological phrases at right edges or at left edges of certain syntactic domains.

In some languages, like Japanese, (2) can be satisfied simply by manipulating the existing prosodic structure of the sentence, creating the new phonological phrase that (2) demands. Japanese C is on the right, and Japanese phonological phrases (particularly Minor Phrases, following Selkirk and Tateishi 1988) are bounded at left edges of certain maximal projections, including DPs. Japanese is therefore capable of creating a new phonological phrase which begins at the left edge of a wh-phrase and ends at C; phonological phrases in Japanese routinely begin at left edges of DPs like the wh-phrase in (1).

In other languages, the basic rules of prosody do not allow for the straightforward creation of such prosodic domains. We will see that Basque, for instance, is like Japanese in having a head-final C, but unlike Japanese in that (following Elordieta 1997) it creates boundaries for its Minor Phrases at right edges of certain maximal projections. Consequently, Basque, unlike Japanese is not in a position to create a phonological phrase that begins at the left edge of a wh-phrase and ends at the final complementizer. The wh-phrase must therefore move as close to C as possible, and indeed this is what we find; Basque wh-questions are required to immediately precede the V-T-C complex:

- (3) a. Mirenek séin ikusi rau? a'. *Séin Mirenek ikusi rau?
Miren-ERG who-ABS see-PRF AUX.PR
'Who has Miren seen?'
- b. Jon señek ikusi rau? b'. *Señek Jon ikusi rau?
Jon-ABS who-ERG see-PRF AUX.PR
'Who saw Jon?'

A similar pair will be constructed for head-initial languages (here the relevant pair will be Tagalog and Chichewa). Hopefully, the result is a theory in which the behavior of single-wh questions is predictable from independently observable properties of languages; in particular, the placement of C and the rules for construction of prosodic domains. The resulting theory allows us to dispense with any syntactic parameterization in this area; if this approach is right, we no longer need a strong/weak distinction for wh-movement.