

# On the Q-particles in embedded declaratives and clausal complementation in Japanese

Teruyuki Mizuno

University of Connecticut  
teruyuki.mizuno@uconn.edu

December 17, 2020 @ BCGL 13 Lightning Talk

# Introduction

Q-particles (Hagstrom 1998; Cable 2010; Uegaki 2018; a.o.):

- functional items that play a role in alternative-related phenomena
- e.g., Japanese ‘*ka*’

- |     |  |                    |     |   |                   |
|-----|--|--------------------|-----|---|-------------------|
| (1) | <i>Jo-wa kita ka?</i><br>Jo-TOP came Q<br>‘Did Jo come?’           | <i>Polar-Q</i>     | (2) | <i>[Dare-ga kita ka] osiete</i><br>who-NOM came Q tell<br>‘Tell me who came.’ | <i>Wh-Q</i>       |
| (3) | <i>[Jo ka Bo]-ga kita.</i><br>Jo Q Bo-NOM came<br>‘Jo or Bo came.’ | <i>Disjunction</i> | (4) | <i>[Dare-ka]-ga kita.</i><br>who-Q-NOM came<br>‘Someone came.’                | <i>Indefinite</i> |

## Q in embedded declaratives

The puzzle: 'ka' in embedded declaratives

- (5) *Jo-wa [jibun-ga erabareru]-to kitaisiteita.*  
JO-TOP self-NOM is.elected-COMP **hoped**  
'Jo hoped that she would be elected.'
- (6) *Jo-wa [jibun-ga erabareru ka]-to kitaisiteita.*  
JO-TOP self-NOM is.elected Q-COMP **hoped**  
(lit.) 'Jo hoped that if she would be elected.'

Intuition: the presence of *ka* 'weakens' agent's commitment

- I use 'if' to reflect this intuition in English translations

# Research questions and proposal

I call Qs under declaratives **MFQs (Modally Functioning Q-particles)**

- seem to operate on agent's epistemic state
- 'weaken' agent's commitment to the complement

We want to ask:

- under what predicate can MFQs appear?
- what is their syntactic/semantic status?

My proposal:

- MFQs can only appear under emotives and dubitatives
- MFQs encode unsettledness presupposition
- MFQs don't have interrogative functions

# Classifying attitudes: Anand and Hacquard 2013

Anand and Hacquard (2013) classify attitudes by two semantic criteria:

- **Representationality:**

- convey a 'mental picture' (Bolinger 1968)
- provide its own information state (Veltman 1996; Yalcin 2007)

- **Preference-basedness:**

- induce ordering among alternatives (Heim 1992; Villalta 2009)
- preference, likelihood, etc.

- 1 Attitudes of acceptance: [ + representational, - preference-based]
- 2 Directives/Desideratives: [ - representational, + preference-based]
- 3 Emotives/Dubitatives: [ + representational, + preference-based]

1. Attitudes of acceptance: [ + representational, - preference-based]
  - *believe, report, discover, imagine, etc.*
  - typically indicative mood governors in Romance
  - allow both necessity and possibility epistemic modals
  
2. Directives/Desideratives: [ - representational, + preference-based]
  - *order, demand / want, wish, etc.*
  - typically subjunctive mood governors in Romance
  - disallow both necessity and possibility epistemic modals

3. Emotives/Dubitatives [ + representational, + preference-based]

- *hope, fear / doubt, suspect, etc.*
- cross-linguistic variation in mood selection in Romance
- allow possibility epistemics, but disallow necessity epistemics

(7) *Jean craint que Marie puisse avoir connu son tueur.*  
Jean **fears** that Marie **can**.SUBJ have known her killer  
'Jean fears that Mary may have known her killer.'  
(French: Anand and Hacquard 2013: 18)

(8) #*Jean craint que Marie doive avoir connu son tueur.*  
Jean **fears** that Marie **must**.SUBJ have known her killer  
'Jean fears that Mary must have known her killer.'  
(French: Anand and Hacquard 2013: 19)

To take stock:

	Non-preference-based	Preference-based
Representational	Attitudes of acceptance	Emotives / Dubitatives
Non-representational	—	Directives / Desideratives

## Distribution of MFQs

Japanese complementizers ‘-to’ and ‘-yoo’ (Nakau 1973, Uchibori 2000)

- -to: only for representational attitudes
- -yoo: only for non-representational attitudes

(9) *Jo-wa [Bo-ga kuru]-{to / \*yoo}* **sinjiteiru** / **hookokusita** /  
Jo-TOP Bo-NOM come-COMP **believe** **reported**  
**kitaisiteiru** / **utagatteiru.**  
**hope** **suspect**  
‘Jo {believes/reported/hopes/suspects} that Bo will/would come.’

(10) *Jo-wa [Bo-ga kuru]-{\*to / yoo}* **negatteiru** / **yooseesita.**  
Jo-TOP Bo-NOM come-COMP **wish** **demanded**  
‘Jo {wishes / demanded} that Bo (would) come’

Observe: *ka* only appears under emotives and dubitatives:

- (11) \**Jo-wa [Bo-ga kuru ka]-yoo negatteiru / yooseesita.*  
Jo-TOP Bo-NOM come Q-COMP **wish** **demanded**  
'Jo {wishes / demanded} that Bo (would) come'
- (12) \**Jo-wa [Bo-ga kuru ka]-to sinjiteiru / hookokusita.*  
Jo-TOP Bo-NOM come Q-COMP **believe** **reported**  
(lit.) 'Jo {believes / reported} that if Bo will/would come.'
- (13) *Jo-wa [Bo-ga kuru ka]-to kitaisiteiru / utagatteiru.*  
Jo-TOP Bo-NOM come Q-COMP **hope** **suspect**  
(lit.) 'Jo {hopes / suspects} that if Bo will/would come.'

Question: why can MFQs appear only under emotives and dubitatives?

# Unsettledness presupposition

Back to AH's observation: only possibility epistemics are allowed in emotives and dubitatives

AH's analysis: emotives and dubitatives always come with 'unsettledness presupposition'

(P) The attitude holder's epistemic state entails neither  $p$  nor  $\neg p$

## Semantic status of MFQs

Proposal: MFQs transparently encode the unsettledness presupposition

(14) [Jo had wanted to hold the conference at her university. She was notified that her university was elected as the venue next year.]

a. *Jo-wa [jibun-no daigaku-ga erabareta]-to wakuwakusiteiru.*  
Jo-TOP self-GEN univ.-NOM was.elected-COMP **is.thrilled**  
'Jo is thrilled that her university was elected.'

b. #*Jo-wa [jibun-no daigaku-ga erabareta ka]-to wakuwakusiteiru.*  
Jo-TOP self-GEN univ.-NOM was.elected Q-COMP **is.thrilled**  
(lit.) 'Jo is thrilled that if her university was elected.'

The presence of *ka* leads to presupposition failure.

(15) [Jo had wanted to hold the conference at her university. The raffle for the venue took place today, but Jo doesn't know the result yet.]

a. *Jo-wa [jibun-no daigaku-ga erabareta ka]-to wakuwakusiteiru.*  
Jo-TOP self-GEN univ.-NOM was.elected Q-COMP **is.thrilled**  
(lit.) 'Jo is thrilled that if her university was elected.'

b. #*Jo-wa [jibun-no daigaku-ga erabareta]-to wakuwakusiteiru.*  
Jo-TOP self-GEN univ.-NOM was.elected-COMP **is.thrilled**  
'Jo is thrilled that her university was elected.'

- The absence of *ka* leads to infelicity.
- I suggest that this is due to *Maximize Presupposition!* (Heim 1991)

To take stock:

- The presence of *ka*:  $p$  or  $\neg p$  is not yet settled in agent's mind
- The absence of *ka*:  $p$  or  $\neg p$  is settled in agent's mind

Notice: 'unsettledness' shares some semantic core with other uses of Qs

- Questions, disjunctions, and indefinites inherently presume more than one alternative (cf. Inquisitive Semantics; Ciardelli et al. 2018)
- MFQs similarly require that agent's doxastic state be open to multiple live possibilities (e.g.,  $p$  and  $\neg p$ )
- This study therefore highlights a novel aspect of Q-particles

## Syntactic status of MFQs

I suggest that MFQs don't have interrogative function

'*ka-to*' under communicative predicates (Saito 2012, 2015):

- (16) *Jo-wa [jibun-ga erabareru ka]-to tazuneta/itta*  
JO-TOP self-NOM is.elected Q-COMP asked/said  
(lit.) 'Jo asked/said that if he would be elected'

Embedded *wh* can take matrix scope crossing MFQs, but not 'ask':

- (17) *Jo-wa [dare-ga erabareru ka]-to ??tazuneta / kitaisiteiru /*  
JO-TOP who-NOM is.elected Q-COMP asked hope  
*utagatteiru no?*  
suspect Q?  
(lit.) 'Who {did Jo ask / does Jo hope / does Jo suspect} that if  
will/would be elected?'

- MFQs don't constitute a *wh*-island to (covert) *wh*-movement
- I suggest that they are rather a Mood head

For more details, come to my breakout room!

(I am grateful to Nadine Theiler, Wataru Uegaki and Muyi Yang for their insights and comments.)

- Anand, Pranav, and Valentine Hacquard. 2013. Epistemic and attitudes. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 6:1–59.
- Bolinger, Dwight. 1968. Post-posed main phrases: An english rule for the romance subjunctive. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 14:3–30.
- Cable, Seth. 2010. *The grammar of Q: Q-particles, wh-movement, and pied-piping*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ciardelli, Ivano, Jeroen Groenendijk, and Floris Roelofsen. 2018. *Inquisitive Semantics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hagstrom, Paul Alan. 1998. Decomposing Questions. Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Heim, Irene. 1992. Presupposition projection and the semantics of attitude verbs. *Journal of Semantics* 9:183–221.
- Saito, Mamoru. 2012. Sentence types and the japanese right periphery. In *Discourse and grammar: From sentence types to lexical categories*, ed. Günther Grewendorf and Thomas Zimmermann, 147–175. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Saito, Mamoru. 2015. Cartography and selection: Case studies in Japanese. In *Beyond Functional Sequence*, ed. Ur Shlonsky, 255–274. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Uegaki, Wataru. 2018. A unified semantics for the japanese q-particle *ka* in indefinites, questions and disjunctions. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3:1–45.
- Veltman, Frank. 1996. Defaults in update semantics. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 25:221–261.
- Villalta, Elisabeth. 2009. Mood and gradability: an investigation of the subjunctive mood in spanish. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 31:467–522.
- Yalcin, Seth. 2007. Epistemic modals. *Mind* 116:983–1026.