

A Constraint on the Prosodic Realization of *Wh*-Prosody

Hitomi Minamida

1. Introduction

Recent research, in particular *Contiguity Theory* (Richards 2016), explores the typology of *wh*-scope marking in relation to syntax and prosody. This paper gives a solution to what is not answered in *Contiguity Theory*, namely, what constrains cross-linguistic variation in the domain size of *wh*-prosody. I show that the domain of *wh*-prosody is the lowest possible phonological phrase permitted by the two binary parameters first proposed by Igarashi (2012): [\pm lexical tone] and [\pm multiword AP]. The focus in this paper is on *wh*-in-situ languages with and without lexical pitch accent in East Asia (e.g., Tokyo Japanese and Seoul Korean), but I show that this constraint also applies to *wh*-movement languages outside East Asia.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews Richards's (2016) claim in *Contiguity Theory*. In Section 3, I make my proposal. Section 4 looks at how my proposal works through four case studies. In Section 5, I show that my proposal for *wh*-in-situ languages also works for *wh*-movement languages. Section 6 concludes this paper.

2. *Contiguity Theory* (Richards 2016)

In *Contiguity Theory*, Richards (2016) discusses how languages mark *wh*-scope, referring to the relationship between syntax and prosody. Richards claims that a *wh*-phrase and its corresponding complementizer (C) must be in the same phonological phrase (ϕ) within the Match Theory framework as formulated by Selkirk (2011).

Two binary parameters determine whether a certain language is a *wh*-movement language or a *wh*-in-situ language: (a) whether the C of the language is to the left of a TP (head-initial C) or to the right of a TP (head-final C) and (b) whether the prosodically active edges of the language are left or right.¹ Thus, there are four possible combinations in total as in (1). To achieve the contiguity condition, a *wh*-phrase undergoes movement forming a small ϕ with only the *wh*-phrase and V(erb)-T(ense)-C, when the prosodically active edge of the *wh*-phrase and the corresponding C are on the same side (i.e., (1a) and (1d)). In contrast, a *wh*-phrase stays in-situ forming a large ϕ with all the elements in the *wh*-scope, when the prosodically active edge of the *wh*-phrase and the corresponding C are on the opposite sides (i.e., (1b) and (1c)).

- (1) a. Head-initial C + Left edges \rightarrow *Wh*-movement (e.g., English, Tagalog)
- b. Head-initial C + Right edges \rightarrow *Wh*-in-situ (e.g., Chichewa)
- c. Head-final C + Left edges \rightarrow *Wh*-in-situ (e.g., Japanese, Korean)
- d. Head-final C + Right edges \rightarrow *Wh*-movement (e.g., Basque, Georgian)

As a result, *wh*-in-situ languages use special prosody within the domain of *wh*-scope. Let us look at how Tokyo Japanese and Fukuoka Japanese, both of which are lexical pitch accent languages (see e.g.,

* Hitomi Minamida, Rochester Institute of Technology, hxmgsl@rit.edu. I would like to thank John Whitman for discussion and comments. I would also like to thank the abstract reviewers and the audience of WCCFL 42 for their comments. All errors are my own.

¹ More accurately, one language can have prosodically active edges on both sides. In English, for example, the left edges are prosodically active in general, but the right edges become prosodically active in contrastive topic constructions (see Richards 2016).

Pierrehumbert & Beckman 1988 for Tokyo Japanese; Smith 2011 and the references cited therein for Fukuoka Japanese), realize *wh*-prosody, as Richards (2010) discusses. It is known that Tokyo Japanese uses focus pitch compression prosody within a *wh*-domain (e.g., Deguchi & Kitagawa 2002; Ishihara 2003). As Figure 1², the pitch track of (2) shows, the *wh*-phrase *nani* ‘what’ receives focus, triggering pitch compression until the corresponding *C no*. In contrast, Fukuoka Japanese is known to use a different prosody from Tokyo Japanese within a *wh*-domain; as in Figure 2³, the pitch track of (3), non-focus high plateau prosody with pitch accent deletion is realized within *wh*-scope (e.g., Smith 2011, 2013 for sources written in English).⁴

(2) *Tokyo Japanese*

Naoya-ga **nani**-o nomiya-de nonda **no**?

Naoya-NOM what-ACC bar-LOC drank C

‘What did Naoya drink at the bar?’

(Ishihara 2003: (28b))

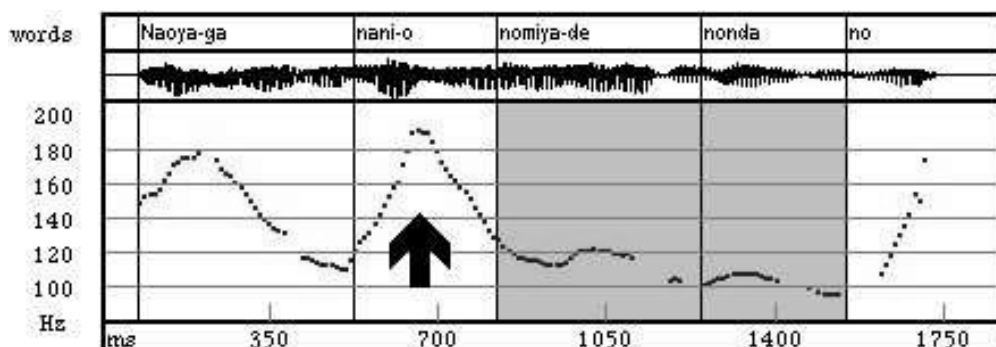


Figure 1: Focus pitch compression *wh*-prosody in Tokyo Japanese (Ishihara 2003: (28b))

(3) *Fukuoka Japanese*

Dare-ga doyoobi aomisi-ni yarareta to \emptyset ?

who-NOM Saturday caterpillar-by was done SFP C

‘Who was affected by caterpillars on Saturday?’

(Smith 2013: (2))

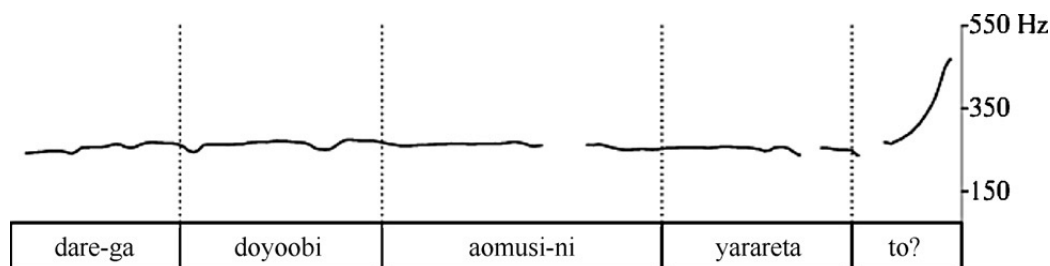


Figure 2: Non-focus high plateau *wh*-prosody in Fukuoka Japanese (Smith 2013: (2))

These two prosodies in different varieties of Japanese are realized in different prosodic domains. A widely accepted view by Japanese linguists is that Tokyo pitch compression prosody is realized in a Major Phrase (e.g., Hirotnani 2005), while Fukuoka high plateau prosody is realized in a Minor Phrase (e.g., Smith 2011). In the Autosegmental-Metrical framework, Minor Phrase corresponds to Accentual Phrase, while Major Phrase corresponds to Intermediate Phrase (see Pierrehumbert & Beckman 1988).

² I received permission from Shinichiro Ishihara to use the image.

³ I received permission from Elsevier to use the image.

⁴ Focus prosody in Fukuoka Japanese is pitch compression prosody (Igarashi 2007).

Roughly speaking, the difference between Accentual Phrase and Intermediate Phrase in lexical pitch accent languages defined by Pierrehumbert & Beckman (1988) is the number of pitch accents; one Accentual Phrase can bear at most one pitch accent, whereas there is no limitation for the number of pitch accents in one Intermediate Phrase. Intermediate Phrase, which is posited above Accentual Phrase, is the domain for focus (Pierrehumbert & Beckman 1988). The domain for Tokyo *wh*-prosody is Major Phrase/Intermediate Phrase because it is focus prosody, and the pitch accent (= pitch peak) of each word in the domain is clearly seen as in Figure 1. The domain for Fukuoka *wh*-prosody is Minor Phrase/Accentual Phrase because there is no pitch accent in the domain as a result of pitch accent deletion as in Figure 2 (see Smith 2013).

Since Richards (2016) follows Selkirk's (2011) model of the prosodic hierarchy, Minor Phrase/Accentual Phrase and Major Phrase/Intermediate Phrase must be translated into Selkirk's terminology. Adapting Ito & Mester's (2013) prosodic hierarchy with recursion, I will call Minor Phrase/Accentual Phrase the *lower phonological phrase* (*lower ϕ*) and Major Phrase/Intermediate Phrase the *higher phonological phrase* (*higher ϕ*).

Contiguity Theory does not answer the following two questions. (a) Why do *wh*-in-situ languages exhibit different phonetic effects within the domain of *wh*-scope? (b) Why may these prosodic domains differ? As we saw, focus pitch compression prosody marks *wh*-scope in the higher ϕ in Tokyo Japanese, while non-focus high plateau prosody marks *wh*-scope in the lower ϕ in Fukuoka Japanese. The goal of this paper is to answer these unanswered questions.

3. Proposal

I propose that the lowest possible phonological phrase is chosen for *wh*-scope marking in *wh*-in-situ languages. Hence, the lower ϕ is preferred over the higher ϕ . Igarashi's (2012) [\pm lexical tone] and [\pm multiword AP (= Accentual Phrase)] determine which level is selected. [+lexical tone] languages have lexical tone such as lexical pitch accent, while [–lexical tone] languages do not have such lexical tone. [\pm multiword lower ϕ] (= [\pm multiword AP]) is relevant to how many words a lower ϕ can bear. [+multiword lower ϕ] languages allow a lower ϕ to contain more than one word, while [–multiword lower ϕ] languages allow a lower ϕ to contain only one word; both (4a) and (4b) are acceptable for the former, while only (4b) is acceptable for the latter.

- (4) a. (ϕ word word)
 b. (ϕ word) (ϕ word)

My proposal makes two predictions about the typology of prosodic *wh*-scope marking, according to the (un)availability of a lower ϕ with more than one word; [+multiword lower ϕ] languages try to use the lower ϕ , whereas [–multiword lower ϕ] languages use the higher ϕ . The two binary parameters proposed by Igarashi (2012) give us the four combinations in Table 1. [+lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ] languages have the possibility to use the higher ϕ , depending on the number of pitch accents in the *wh*-domain, but the predictions for the other three combinations are straightforward.

	[+multiword lower ϕ]	[–multiword lower ϕ]
[+lexical tone]	Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese = lower or higher ϕ	Osaka Japanese = higher ϕ
[–lexical tone]	Seoul Korean = lower ϕ	Kobayashi Japanese = higher ϕ

Table 1: Predictions (based on Igarashi 2012: Table 2); = lower/higher ϕ by the author

4. Case studies

This section takes a look at each of the cases in Table 1. The first two subsections discuss [+multiword lower ϕ] languages: Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese ([+lexical tone]) in Section 4.1 and Seoul Korean ([–lexical tone]) in Section 4.2. The next two subsections discuss [–multiword lower ϕ]

languages: Osaka Japanese ([+lexical tone]) in Section 4.3 and Kobayashi Japanese ([−lexical tone]) in Section 4.4. The four case studies reveal that the predictions in Table 1 are borne out.

4.1. Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese ([+lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ])

Tokyo Japanese and Fukuoka Japanese are lexical pitch accent languages and their lower ϕ is allowed to contain more than one word, as discussed in Igarashi (2012). My proposal predicts that these languages prefer to use the lower ϕ , but [+lexical tone] blocks this. It is known that an unaccented word can form a large lower ϕ with the following word, while an accented word cannot in Tokyo Japanese (see e.g., Kubozono 1993), which also applies to Fukuoka Japanese (see Smith 2011; Igarashi 2012). (5) illustrates the four patterns of prosodic phrasing in [+lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ] languages. (5a) and (5b) show that an unaccented word and another word are in a lower ϕ . (5c) and (5d) show that an accented word forms a lower ϕ by itself, which forms a higher ϕ with the following lower ϕ .

- (5) a. (ϕ Unaccented Unaccented)
 b. (ϕ Unaccented Accented)
 c. (ϕ (ϕ Accented) (ϕ Accented))
 d. (ϕ (ϕ Accented) (ϕ Unaccented)) (Adapted from Ito & Mester 2013: (14))

Wh-words in Tokyo Japanese are all accented such as *náni* (HL) ‘what’ in Figure 1 (Shimoyama 2006), while *wh*-words in Fukuoka Japanese are all unaccented such as *dare* (LH) ‘who’ in Figure 2 (Hayata 1985). Thus, Tokyo Japanese has the patterns in (5c) and (5d) within *wh*-scope. In contrast, Fukuoka Japanese has the patterns in (5a) and (5b) within *wh*-scope. This fact explains why Tokyo *wh*-prosody is realized in the higher ϕ , while Fukuoka *wh*-prosody is realized in the lower ϕ .

4.2. Seoul Korean ([−lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ])

Seoul Korean is an accentless language (Jun 1998); in other words, words are all unaccented in this language. In Jun’s definition, an Accentual Phrase (= lower ϕ in our terminology) has the melody XHLH in Seoul Korean; each of the first two tones is associated with the first and the second syllables of a lower ϕ , respectively, while each of the last two tones is associated with the second-to-last and last syllables of the same lower ϕ , respectively.⁵ Jun’s data also show that Seoul Korean is a [+multiword lower ϕ] language (see also Igarashi 2012).

Since *wh*-words are all unaccented, Seoul Korean has the pattern (5a) within the *wh*-domain and *wh*-words in this language can always form large lower ϕ ’s. In fact, Jun & Oh’s (1996) and Yun’s (2019) experiments reveal that Seoul Korean *wh*-prosody does not have to involve focus and that this language forms an Accentual Phrase (= lower ϕ) in a *wh*-domain. Figure 3, a schematic pitch track of (6), shows that the *wh*-domain has the LHLH melody.

- (6) *Seoul Korean*
 Acwumeni-nun **encey** ecileweyo \emptyset ?
 madam-TOP when feel dizzy C
 ‘Madam, when do you feel dizzy?’ (Jun & Oh 1996: (3a))

⁵ X indicates H or L, depending on the initial sound of the first syllable (Jun 1998).

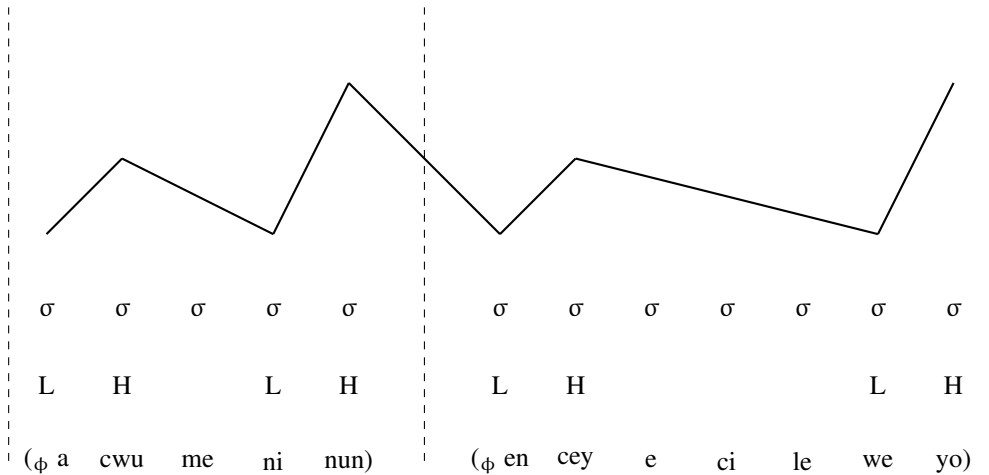


Figure 3: Non-focus *wh*-prosody in Seoul Korean (adapted from Jun & Oh 1996: Figure 5)

4.3. Osaka Japanese ([+lexical tone, –multiword lower φ])

Osaka Japanese is a lexical pitch accent language, but unlike in Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese, an unaccented word cannot form a large lower φ with the following word (Pierrehumbert & Beckman 1988). Thus, accented and unaccented words in Osaka Japanese have the prosodic phrase patterns in (7); one lower φ contains only one word and one higher φ can contain more than one lower φ.

- (7) a. (φ (φ Unaccented) (φ Unaccented))
 b. (φ (φ Unaccented) (φ Accented))
 c. (φ (φ Accented) (φ Accented))
 d. (φ (φ Accented) (φ Unaccented)) (cf., (5))

In Minamida (2020) (see also Minamida 2021), I showed that Osaka Japanese uses focus pitch compression prosody although *wh*-words in this language are all unaccented. This is because of the property [–multiword lower φ]. Thus, (7a) or (7b) is observed in a *wh*-domain. Figure 4 presents the pitch track of the Osaka *wh*-question in (8). In the figure, the *wh*-word *dare* ‘who’ gets a pitch boost, reducing the pitch peak of each word until the corresponding C at the end of the sentence. The prosodic domain for this *wh*-prosody is the higher φ for the following two reasons. First, it is focus prosody, whose domain is the higher φ (Pierrehumbert & Beckman 1988). Second, each word in the *wh*-domain in Figure 4 retains its pitch accent (= pitch peak); since one lower φ can bear zero or only one pitch accent, according to Pierrehumbert & Beckman’s definition, the domain cannot be the lower φ.

(8) Osaka Japanese

Jiro-wa Marina-ga **dare** Minoh-ni yonda-te yuuta ∅?

Jiro-TOP Marina-NOM who(-ACC) Minoh-to invited-that said C

‘Who did Jiro say that Marina invited to Minoh?’

(Minamida 2021: (A1))

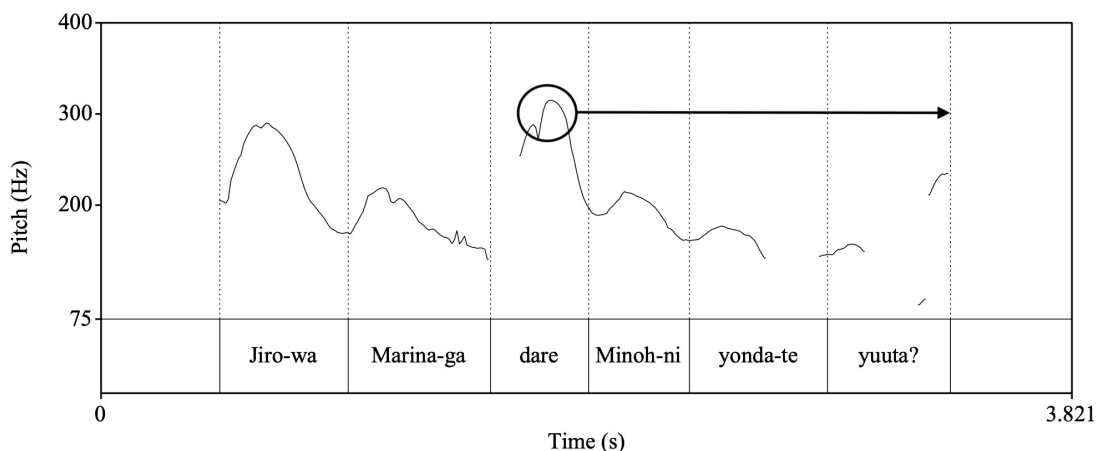


Figure 4: Focus pitch compression *wh*-prosody in Osaka Japanese (Minamida 2021: (A2))

4.4. Kobayashi Japanese ([–lexical tone, –multiword lower ϕ])

Igarashi (2012) classifies Kobayashi Japanese⁶ as a [–lexical tone, –multiword lower ϕ] language because it is an accentless language and one lower ϕ cannot contain more than one word in this language. Figure 5⁷, the pitch track of (9), shows Kobayashi *wh*-prosody. Igarashi (2006) claims that *wh*-prosody in Kobayashi Japanese is focus pitch compression prosody, which is similar to the pattern used in Tokyo Japanese, because this prosody is also used in focus contexts and the melody for each lower ϕ , L...H, is retained in the prosody. In contrast, Sato (2013) claims that the final H in each lower ϕ is deleted, resulting in a large lower ϕ in our terminology, because the L...H melody of each word is not clearly seen in Figure 5. I adopt Igarashi's view here because Igarashi's claim is based on his experiment and statistical analysis, while Sato's claim is just based on her impressionistic observations. The prosodic domain for Kobayashi *wh*-prosody must be the higher ϕ because it is the domain for focus in Japanese.

(9) Kobayashi Japanese

Dai-ga biiru nonda to ke?

who-NOM beer(-ACC) drank NMZ C

'Who drank (the) beer?'

(Sato 2013: (2.6b))

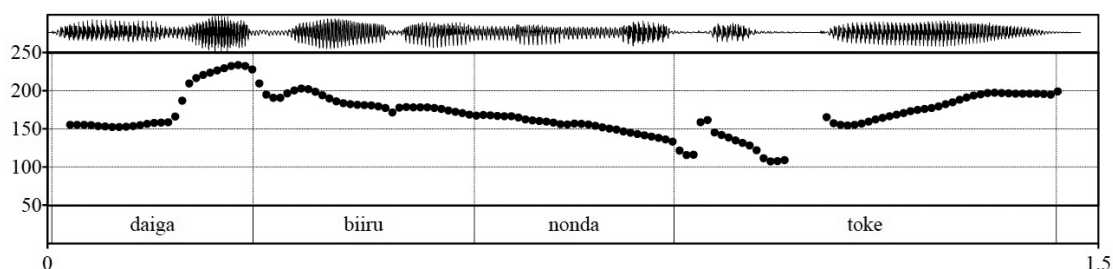


Figure 5: Focus pitch compression *wh*-prosody in Kobayashi Japanese (Sato 2013: Figure 2.2)

5. Extension to *wh*-movement languages

I have shown that my proposal in Section 3 works for *wh*-in-situ languages such as Japanese and Korean. In this section, I show that my proposal gives an answer to the problem that is left unsolved

⁶ Kobayashi Japanese is a variety of Japanese spoken in Miyazaki Prefecture.

⁷ I obtained permission from Kyushu University Press to use this image.

in *Contiguity Theory*, namely, the treatment of *wh*-movement languages with a final C and right active edges (see (1d)) such as Basque and Georgian.

In Richards's (2016) analysis, Basque and Georgian should form a small ϕ with a *wh*-phrase and V-T-C by *wh*-movement. Richards showed that his theory works for Georgian, but that a prosodic boundary is inserted between the *wh*-phrase and V-T-C in Basque, which must be banned in *Contiguity Theory*. I show that the approach proposed here using Igarashi's (2012) two binary parameters can reinterpret the problem as the difference in the level of ϕ . The data by Elordieta (1997) tell us that (Lekeitio) Basque is a lexical pitch accent language ([+lexical tone]) and allows a lower ϕ to contain more than one word ([+multiword lower ϕ]) as in Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese (see Section 4.1). In contrast, (Tbilisi) Georgian is not a lexical pitch accent language ([−lexical tone]) and one lower ϕ in this language can contain more than one word ([+multiword lower ϕ]) as in Seoul Korean (see Section 4.2), according to the data by Vicens & Jun (2014).

Table 2 shows what my proposal predicts for Lekeitio Basque and Tbilisi Georgian. Since Lekeitio Basque is [+lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ], it is predicted to use the lower or higher ϕ , depending on the (un)accentedness of the *wh*-words. In contrast, the lower ϕ is predicted to be used in Tbilisi Georgian because it is [−lexical tone, +multiword lower ϕ].

	[+multiword lower ϕ]	[−multiword lower ϕ]
[+lexical tone]	Tokyo and Fukuoka Japanese and Lekeitio Basque = lower or higher ϕ	Osaka Japanese = higher ϕ
[−lexical tone]	Seoul Korean and Tbilisi Georgian = lower ϕ	Kobayashi Japanese = higher ϕ

Table 2: Predictions with Lekeitio Basque and Tbilisi Georgian

These predictions are borne out. Let us look at Tbilisi Georgian first. Vicens & Jun (2014) report that in a *wh*-question, a *wh*-phrase and a verb usually form an Accentual Phrase (= lower ϕ in our terminology) in this language. Vicens & Jun's Figure 6.10, the pitch track of the Tbilisi Georgian *wh*-question in (10)⁸, shows that the *wh*-phrase *romel-ma gamomdziebel-ma* 'which investigator' and the verb *gaabedniera* 'made happy' constitute an Accentual Phrase (= lower ϕ) because it is marked by the AP (= Accentual Phrase/lower ϕ) phrase accent H+L.

(10) *Tbilisi Georgian*

Romel-ma gamomdziebel-ma gaabedniera lamazi meomari?
which-ERG investigator-ERG made happy beautiful soldier

'Which investigator made the beautiful soldier happy?' (Vicens & Jun 2014: Figure 6.10)

For Lekeitio Basque, Elordieta's (1997) data tell us that *wh*-words are all accented in this language, which means that the prosodic phrase patterns in (5c) and (5d) occur in the higher ϕ as in Tokyo Japanese. Thus, what happens in Basque is that an accented *wh*-phrase forms a higher ϕ with V-T-C, inserting a lower ϕ boundary right after it. Igarashi's (2012) parameters make it possible to maintain Richards' (2016) original analysis.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I showed that both *wh*-in-situ and *wh*-movement languages try to use the lowest possible phonological phrase (ϕ) for prosodic *wh*-scope marking. ϕ has the lower ϕ and the higher ϕ . Which level is chosen is determined by Igarashi's (2012) two binary parameters: [\pm lexical tone] and [\pm multiword lower ϕ] ([\pm multiword AP (= Accentual Phrase)]) in Igarashi's original work). [+multiword lower ϕ] languages generally use the lower ϕ , but some languages are constrained to

⁸ The gloss of (10) is from Richards's (2016) (3.74).

use the higher ϕ when a *wh*-phrase cannot form a large lower ϕ with the following words due to the properties of their lexical pitch accent systems.

Abbreviations

ACC = accusative, ERG = ergative, LOC = locative, NMZ = nominalizer, NOM = nominative, SFP = sentence-final particle, TOP = topic

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