

Prosodic vs Morphological Prominence in Japanese Echo Questions

Stephen Jones^a, Chi Lun Pang^b, and Louise Mycock^a
^aUniversity of Oxford, ^bUniversity of Liverpool

Echo questions: immediately questioning a previous utterance

A question that quotes a previous utterance is an echo question (EQ), or a question-echo-question (QEQ) where the previous utterance is itself a question. Japanese short-form echo questions repeat the utterance, replacing constituents with question words as necessary, and finally adding the particle *tte*.

- ◆ How does prosody differ for content questions (CQ), EQ, and QEQ?
- ◆ What role does morphosyntax play in this?

Japanese sentence prosody

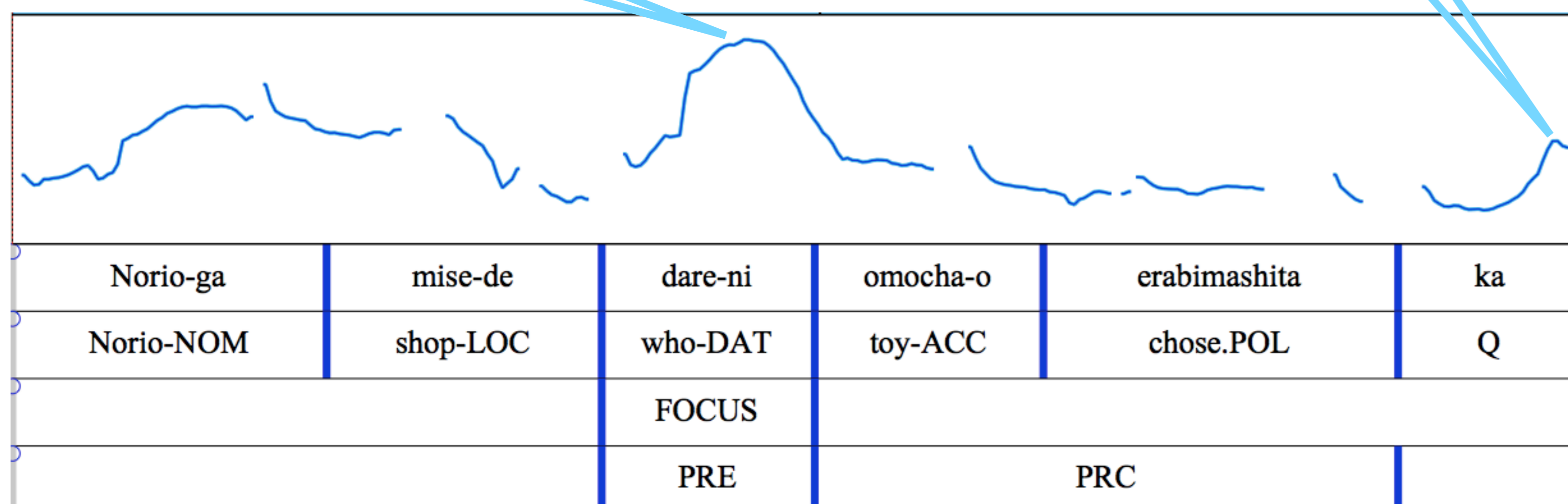
Japanese words carry lexical pitch accent. An intonational phrase (IP) comprises one or more accentual phrases (AP). Within an AP, F0 rises to a high tone H, with a sharp fall at the pitch accent. The height of H in an AP falls across the IP with catathesis, but this is modulated by pitch range expansion/compression (PRE/PRC).

Prosody for CQ is distinctive (1): the focus of the question is marked by PRE at the question word followed by PRC for the remainder of the utterance. Whether or not the question particle *ka* is present, there is an utterance-final LH tune also subject to PRE.

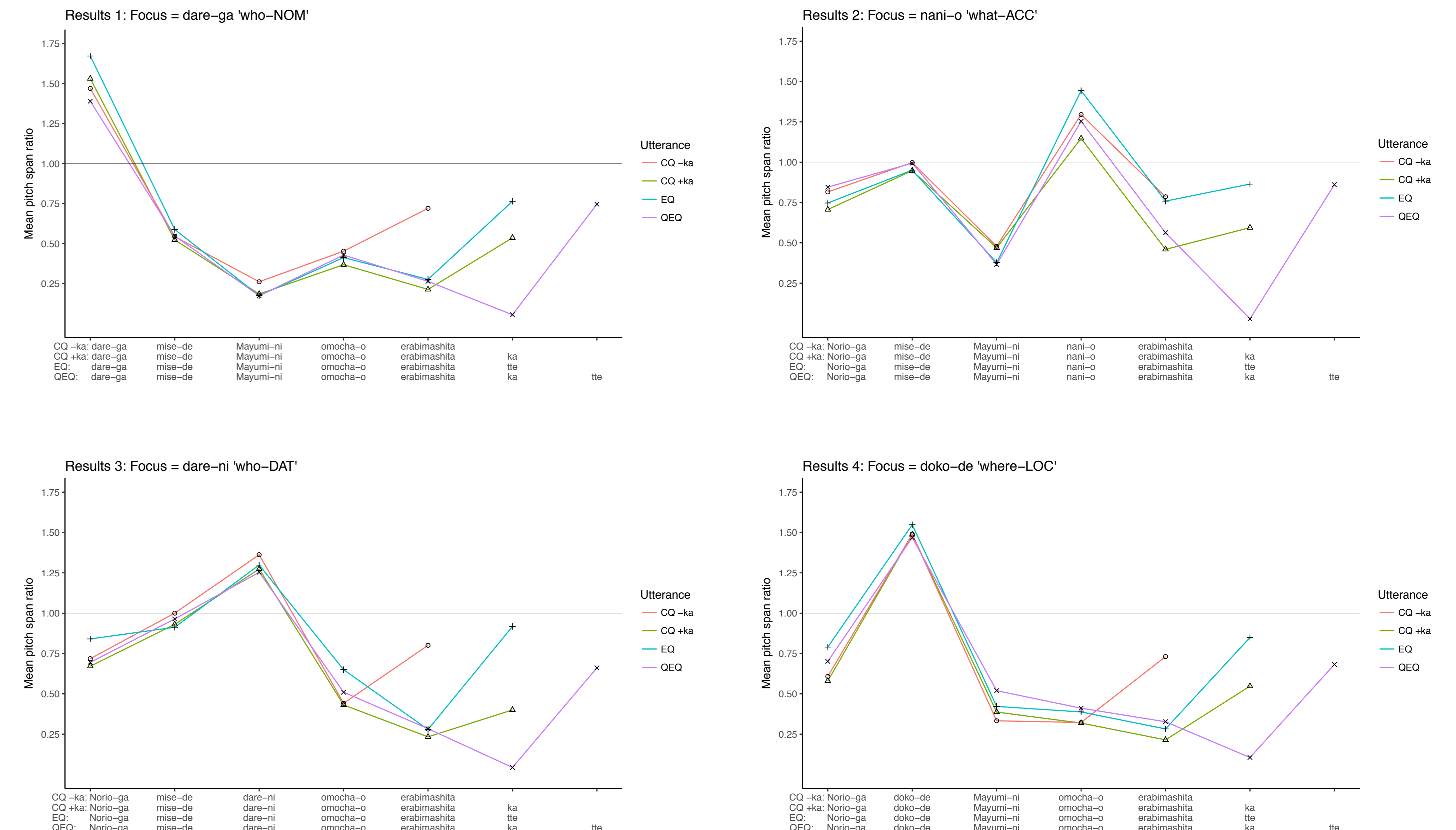
- (1) CQ: *Norio-ga mise-de dare-ni omocha-o erabimashita ka*
 Norio- shop-LOC who-DAT toy-ACC chose.POL Q
 “Who did Norio choose a toy for at the shop?”

Focus in CQs is indicated by PRE on the focused word, followed by PRC.

Question-final tune also shows PRE



Experimental findings



Sentence-final PRE shows consistent patterns across question types. Comparing these:

- ◆ No real variation for PRE of focused constituent between question types
- ◆ **CQ -ka** vs **CQ +ka**: CQ-final PRE is greater when intonation alone signals question
- ◆ **CQ +ka** vs **EQ**: PRE on EQ-final *tte* is greater than PRE on CQ-final *ka*
- ◆ **CQ +ka** vs **QEQ**: question particle *ka* does not inherently carry LH tune or PRE
- ◆ **CQ +ka** vs **QEQ**: PRE on QEQ-final *tte* is greater than PRE on CQ-final *ka*

Conclusions

EQ and QEQ prosody differs from CQ prosody in the size of question-final PRE. There is some evidence that more morphological cues result in smaller PRE. PRE is a gradient phenomenon, varying systematically with the degree of prominence.