Quexjunction: Japanese Questions are Disjunctions(, as well as Existentials)
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The Japanese particle **-ka** <か> has various semantic functions, depending on the morphosyntactic positions where it appears. In the sentence-final position, it signals a question. When suffixed to a plain declarative sentence such as (1a), it is a *yes*/*no*-question (1b), and if the sentence contains a so-called 'indeterminate' (INDT) expression, it will be a *wh*-question as in (1c).

(1) a. Mary wa kita.   b. Mary wa kita **-ka**?   c. Dare   ga   kita **-ka**?
         TOP came   TOP came   INDT(PERSON) NOM came
         'Mary come.'   'Did Mary come?'   'Who came?

The particle **–ka** also functions as cross-categorial disjunction (Gazar 1980, Rooth & Partee 1983, among others), coordinating nominal phrases (2a), adjectival phrases (2b), verb phrases (2c), postpositional phrases (2d), or clauses (2e).

(2) a. John-**ka** Mary ga   kita.   b. John wa tuyoi   **-ka** takumasii.
             NOM came   TOP be.strong   be.sturdy
       'John or Mary came.'   'John is strong or sturdy.'

    c. Mary wa sigoto ni itta **-ka** uti   ni kaetta.
            TOP work to went   home to returned
       'Mary went to work or returned to home.'

    d. Doroboo ga   mado   kara **-ka** uraguti   kara haitta.
         thief   NOM window from   backdoor from entered
       'A thief entered from the window or the backdoor.'

    e. John ga   kita **-ka** Mary ga   kita.
          NOM came   NOM came
       'John came or Mary came.'

All the disjunctive sentences can be questioned, by adding another **-ka** to the sentence-final position, which would be an alternative question. For example, (2e) will be as in (3) below.

(3)   John ga   kita **-ka** Mary ga   kita **-ka**?
          NOM came   NOM came
     'Did John come or did Mary come?'

Suffixed directly to an 'indeterminate' expression, the particle **-ka** serves as an existential quantifier, with the indeterminate serving as a restrictor predicate and a variable (Kuroda 1965).

(4)   Dare   **-ka** ga   kita.
     INDT(PERSON)   NOM came
     'Someone came.'

Existential statements can also be made into a question by adding another sentence-final **-ka**.

(5)   Dare   **-ka** ga   kita **-ka**?
     INDT(PERSON)   NOM came
     'Did anyone come?'

Since the seminal work of Hamblin (1973), questions have been analyzed as denoting a set of propositions that are answers to the questions, and the *wh*-phrases, if any, are existential quantifiers (Karttunen 1977). Employing a two-sorted type logic, Groenendijk & Stokhof (1982, *et seq*.) developed the so-called partition semantics for questions, in which a question denotes a partition of the logical space of possible worlds and the extension of the question in a given world is the intension of a proposition that is a true answer to the question in that world. Simply put, a question forms a set of possible worlds, whose partition contains propositions that are true answers to the question.

The logical affinity between existential quantification and disjunction has long been noted, and McCawley (1981) suggests a possibility of unifying the semantics of conjunctions and quantifiers, by treating them both as operators applying to a set of propositions — conjunctions to an extensional set of enumerated propositions and quantifiers to an intensional set of propositional descriptions. In particular, existential quantification is equivalent to disjunction.

Independently developing is a Hamblin-style semantics for disjunction as a set of alternatives, to deal with various problems of the classical semantics of binary, inclusive, disjunction in veridical contexts, such as Aloni (2003), Simons (2005), Alonso-Ovalle (2006), among others. A set-based semantics is also proposed for quantification, in particular for Japanese (Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002, Shimoyama 2006, among others.)

Taking stock, this paper sketches a possible direction for a unified semantics of *-ka*, proposing that the particle *-ka* is what can be dubbed "*quexjunction*" operator ($\sqcup$), which forms a set of alternatives by collecting the 'associated' denotations and existentially quantifies over world-variables.

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