

Mandarin

Chinese *ma*:

Q morpheme,

SA intensifier,

or PQP?

Yuyang Liu
yuyang.liu.yl2472@yale.edu

Introduction

(2) *Dayal's (2021) left periphery*
[_{SAP} SA° [_{PerspP} PQP [_{CP} Q [_{TP} ...

Question morpheme

Japanese *ka* is an example Q morpheme (Cheng 1991). It can be embedded by both responsives and rogatives:

- (3) Eren-wa [Mikasa-ga ocha-o
Eren-TOP Mikasa-NOM tea-ACC
nonda **ka**] shitteimasu.
drank Q knows
'Eren knows if Mikasa drank tea.'
- (4) Eren-wa [Mikasa-ga ocha-o
Eren-TOP Mikasa-NOM tea-ACC
nonda **ka**] shiritai desu.
drank Q want.to.know is
'Eren wants to know whether Mi-
kasa drank tea.'

Mandarin *ma* is not like Japanese *ka*. It can only be embedded by rogatives:

- (5) John *(xiang) zhidao [xia yu le
John want know fall rain PRF
ma zuotian].
MA yesterday
'John wants to know/*knows if it
rained yesterday.'
(Bhatt & Dayal 2020: 1122)



(1) Xia yu le (ma)?
fall rain PRF MA
'Did it rain?'

Is *ma* a Q morpheme?

No.

Is *ma* an SA intensifier?

No.

Is *ma* a PQP?

Maybe.

Speech act intensifier

Li (2006) and Kim (2019) propose that the yes-no question (YNQ) marker *ma*₁ and the evidentiality marker *ma*₂ are the same morpheme:

- (6) *Kim's (2019) proposal*
Ma intensifies speech acts.
a. *Ma*₁ only occurs in YNQs.
b. *Ma*₂ never occurs in YNQs but occurs in declaratives, imperatives and *wh*-questions.

However, unlike *ma*₁, *ma*₂ never embeds:

- (7) *John zhidao [xia yu le ma₂].
John know fall rain PRF MA₂
Int.: 'John knows that it rained.'

Polar question particle

Hindi *kyaa* is a PQP (Bhatt & Dayal 2020, Dayal 2021). It cannot be embedded by responsives but can be *quasi-subordinated* (Dayal & Grimshaw 2009) by rogatives:

- (8) *ravi jaantaa hai [ki **kyaa** anu
Ravi know is that PQP Anu
jaaegii].
will.go
Intended: 'Ravi knows if Anu will go.'
(Dayal 2021: 9)
- (9) ravi jaannaa caahtaa hai [ki
Ravi know want is that
kyaa anu jaaegii].
PQP Anu will.go
'Ravi wants to know whether Anu will go.'
(Dayal 2021: 34)

Mandarin *ma*'s distribution is similar.

Open question

Why is more than one *kyaa* or *ma* disallowed in a sentence?

- (10) *John xiang zhidao [xia yu le
John want know fall rain PRF
ma] **ma**?
MA MA
Int.: 'Does John want to know if it rained?'