

Japanese I

Translations and syntactic/semantic judgments provided by: #22, Oct. 2006

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General notes: Japanese is an SOV, wh-in-situ language.

Wh combination	MWh	CWh
Complement/complement	S	
Mixed	see below	
Adjunct/adjunct		

Mixed cases in detail	MWh	CWh
Adjunct/complement: <i>where</i> (<i>who</i> subj)	S	
Adjunct/complement : <i>where</i> (<i>whom</i> obj)	•	
Adjunct/complement: <i>when</i> (<i>who</i> subj)	•	
Adjunct/complement: <i>when</i> (<i>whom</i> obj)		

I. who/what

SP context: Someone tells you, “I saw a friend of yours reading something unusual.”

PL context: You’re the professor in a seminar, and last week each student in your class chose an article to read and report on this week. Now you’re in class, getting ready to hear the various students’ reports.

- a. **dare-ga nani-o yomi-masita ka?**
 who-NOM what-ACC read.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘Who read what?’
 PL only
- b. ***nani-o dare-ga yomi-masita ka?**
 what-ACC who-NOM read.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘What did who read?’
 Both (a) and (b) are weird, but (a) is slightly better
- c. ***dare-ga to nani-o yomi-masita ka?**
 who-NOM and what-ACC read.PST-POLITE Q
- d. ***nani-o to dare-ga yomi-masita ka?**
 what-ACC and who-NOM read.PST-POLITE Q

II. who/where

SP context for a-d: Someone tells you, “A friend of yours saw Keiko in a strange place.”

PL context for a-d: You are a police detective investigating the mysterious disappearance of Keiko. You are conferring with other investigators on the case, trying to reconstruct Keiko’s last known movements from what witnesses have told you.

- a. **dare-ga dokode Keiko-o mi-masita ka?**
 who-NOM where Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘Who saw Keiko where?’

- PL only
- b. **?dokode dare-ga Keiko-o mi-masita ka?**
 where who.NOM Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘Where did who see Keiko?’
 (Slightly unnatural, but OK)
- c. *dare-ga to dokode Keiko-o mi-masita ka?
 who.NOM and where Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
- d. *dokode to dare-ga Keiko-o mi-masita ka?
 where and who.NOM Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q

SP context for e-h: Someone tells you, “Keiko saw a friend of yours in a strange place.”

PL context for e-h: You suspect that Keiko is a spy, and are trying to find out who her contacts are by observing whom she meets with during the course of a day. You have a number of people secretly observing her, and are now about to gather whatever information they have about Marie.

- e. **Keiko-wa dare-o dokode mi-masita ka?**
 Keiko-NOM who-ACC where see.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘Whom did Keiko see where?’
 PL only
- f. **Keiko-wa dokode dare-o mi-masita ka?**
 Keiko-NOM where who-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
 ‘Where did Keiko see whom?’
 PL only
- g. *Keiko-wa dare-o to dokode mi-masita ka?
 Keiko-NOM who-ACC and where see.PST-POLITE Q
- h. *Keiko-wa dokode to dare-o mi-masita ka?
 Keiko-NOM where and who-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q

III. who/when

SP context: Someone tells you, “A friend of yours saw Keiko at the worst possible moment.”

PL context: You are a police detective investigating the mysterious disappearance of Keiko. You are conferring with other investigators on the case, trying to reconstruct Keiko’s last known movements from what witnesses have told you.

- a. **dare-ga** **itu** **Keiko-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
who.NOM when Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
‘Who saw Keiko when?’
- b. **itu** **dare-ga** **Keiko-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
when who.NOM Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
‘Where did who see Keiko?’
- c. ***dare-ga** to **itu** **Keiko-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
who.NOM and when Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
- d. ***itu** to **dare-ga** **Keiko-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
when and who.NOM Keiko-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q

SP context for e-h: Someone tells you, “Keiko saw a friend of yours at the worst possible moment.”

PL context for e-h: You suspect that Keiko is a spy, and are trying to find out who her contacts are by observing whom she meets with during the course of a day. You have a number of people secretly observing her, and are now about to gather whatever information they have about Keiko.

- e. **Keiko-wa** **dare-o** **itu** **mi-masita** **ka?**
Keiko-NOM who-ACC when see.PST-POLITE Q
‘Whom did Keiko see when?’
- f. **Keiko-wa** **itu** **dare-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
Keiko-NOM when who-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q
‘When did Keiko see whom?’
- g. ***Keiko-wa** **dare-o** to **itu** **mi-masita** **ka?**
Keiko-NOM who-ACC and when see.PST-POLITE Q
- h. ***Keiko-wa** **itu** to **dare-o** **mi-masita** **ka?**
Keiko-NOM when and who-ACC see.PST-POLITE Q

IV. where/when

SP context: Someone tells you that your favorite performer, the famous singer Keiko, is performing in town for one night only.

PL context: Someone tells you that Keiko is going on a concert tour this summer.

- a. *Keiko-wa itu dokode utai-masita ka?
Keiko-NOM when where sing.PST-POLITE Q
'Where did Keiko sing when?'
- b. *Keiko-wa dokode itu utai-masita ka?
Keiko-NOM where when sing.PST-POLITE Q
(Order in (a) is a lot more natural)
'When did Keiko sing where?'
- c. *Keiko-wa itu sosite dokode utai-masita ka?
Keiko-NOM when and where sing.PST-POLITE Q
'Where and when did Keiko sing?'
- d. *Keiko-wa dokode sosite itu utai-masita ka?
Keiko-NOM where and when sing.PST-POLITE Q
'When and where did Keiko sing?'