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Investigating *Wh*-island Effects in Tokyo Japanese: A Replication Study*

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1 Introduction

The recent view on *wh*-island effects in (Tokyo) Japanese is that prosody can neutralize them (e.g., Deguchi and Kitagawa 2002; Ishihara 2003; Hirotani 2005; Hirose and Kitagawa 2011; Hwang 2015), in contrast to the traditional view supporting the presence of *wh*-island effects (Nishigauchi 1990; Watanabe 1992). For example, the canonical interpretation of the Tokyo Japanese sentence in (1) is the yes/no question interpretation in (1a), in which the *wh*-word *nani* ‘what’ is associated with the embedded Q complementizer *ka*. However, prosody can allow *nani* ‘what’ to be associated with the matrix Q complementizer *no*, yielding the *wh*-question interpretation in (1b).

- (1) *Tokyo Japanese*
[Naoya-wa [Mari-ga *nani*-o nomiya-de nonda **ka**] imademo oboeteru **no**]?
Naoya-TOP Mari-NOM what-ACC bar-LOC drank Q even now remember Q
a. ‘[Does Naoya still remember [what Mari drank at the bar]]?’
b. ‘[?][What does Naoya still remember [whether Mari drank at the bar]]?’
(Ishihara 2003: (34))

* I am grateful to Mizuho Tsuji Johnson for recording the stimuli for Experiment 1 and for discussions on *wh*-island effects in Tokyo Japanese. I would also like to thank all participants in the two experiments. ChatGPT was used only for language editing and stylistic revision. All errors remain my own.

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The original proposals by Deguchi and Kitagawa (2002) and Ishihara (2003), however, did not provide empirical data to support this claim. Subsequent studies, such as Hirotani (2005), Hirose and Kitagawa (2011), and Hwang (2015), offered empirical support through comprehension experiments involving prosody, but their experimental designs contained methodological issues. In Minamida (2026), I demonstrate *wh*-island effects in Osaka Japanese using a new experimental methodology, which includes a comprehension experiment with an improved design and an acceptability judgment experiment with interrogative sentence endings. In this paper, I apply this experimental methodology to test whether Tokyo Japanese is sensitive to *wh*-islands, using the stimuli from Minamida (2026) originally designed for Osaka Japanese, translated into Tokyo Japanese. Thus, this paper also aims to examine the cross-dialectal applicability of the methodology. The acceptability judgment experiment in Experiment 2 supported the view that Tokyo Japanese exhibits *wh*-island effects. However, the comprehension experiment in Experiment 1 did not yield results clear enough to determine the presence or absence of *wh*-island effects in Tokyo Japanese.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the experimental methodology used in this study, following the one proposed in Minamida (2026), and presents the results of the two experiments on Tokyo Japanese. Section 3 discusses how the stimuli for the auditory comprehension experiment can be refined to elicit more accurate judgments in Tokyo Japanese. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2 Methodology and Experiments

The experimental methodology proposed in Minamida (2026) consists of two experiments. The stimuli for the two experiments on Tokyo Japanese in this study share almost the same experimental and control items, such as those given in (2) and (3). The two sentences in (2) and (3) differ in only one respect. The experimental item in (2) bears the Q complementizer *ka* ([+Q]) in the embedded clause, whereas the control item in (3) bears the quotative complementizer *tte* ([±Q]) in the embedded clause. Thus, (2) involves a syntactic island, while (3) does not, because the embedded complementizer is ambiguous between [+Q] and [−Q]. The control items address one of the issues in previous experimental studies, such as Hirotani (2005), Hirose and Kitagawa (2011), and Hwang (2015), which did not test the hypothesis that sentences such as (2) are ambiguous in comparison with truly ambiguous sentences such as (3).

(2) *Experimental item example*

[Ayako-wa	[Yukiko-ga	<i>nani-o</i>	mita	ka]	kiita	Ø]?
Ayako-TOP	Yukiko-NOM	what-ACC	saw	Q	asked/heard	Q
a. ‘[Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]]?’						
b. ‘[What did Ayako ask/hear [whether Yukiko saw]]?’						

(3) *Control item example*

[Ayako-wa	[Yukiko-ga	<i>nani-o</i>	mita	tte]	kiita	Ø]?
Ayako-TOP	Yukiko-NOM	what-ACC	saw	±Q	asked/heard	Q
a. ‘[Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]]?’						
b. ‘[What did Ayako ask/hear [that Yukiko saw]]?’						

Sixteen base sentences were constructed following a 2×2 design. Eight sentences contained the *wh*-word *nani* ‘what’ as the embedded object, whereas the remaining eight contained the *wh*-word *dare* ‘who’ as the embedded subject. Eight sentences used *kiita* ‘asked/heard’ as the matrix verb, whereas the remaining eight used *itta* ‘said’. The two syntactic positions were tested in Minamida (2026) to examine whether they affect the interpretation of the stimuli. They were not tested in the present study, as Minamida’s data on Osaka Japanese revealed no such effect, and it is likely that the same holds for Tokyo Japanese as well. The two matrix verbs were selected because they are among the most frequently used verbs in Japanese and can take both *wh*- and *that*-clauses as complements. The sixteen base sentences were then paired with both the Q complementizer *ka* and the quotative complementizer *tte*, yielding thirty-two sentences.

2.1 Experiment 1 (Comprehension)

2.1.1 Stimuli

The *wh*-scope of a sentence is determined by the range of focus pitch compression triggered by a *wh*-word in Tokyo Japanese (Deguchi and Kitagawa 2002; Ishihara 2003). Figure 1 shows the pitch track of (2) for the yes/no question interpretation in (2a), whereas Figure 2 shows the pitch track of the same sentence for the *wh*-question interpretation in (2b). The *wh*-scope of each prosodic pattern is indicated by shaded regions. The stimuli for Experiment 1, including the two prosodic patterns illustrated in the figures, were recorded by a female native speaker of Tokyo Japanese. Praat (Boersma 2001) was used to produce the pitch tracks. The former figure illustrates the short prosody pattern between the *wh*-word and the embedded complementizer, whereas the latter figure illustrates the long prosody pattern between the *wh*-word and the matrix complementizer. The key difference between the two figures lies in the prosody of the matrix verb *kiita* ‘asked/heard’, whose surface melody is LHH in the neutral condition. This also applies to the other matrix verb *itta* ‘said’. The short prosody pattern in Figure 1 exhibits H tones due to a pitch reset after the embedded complementizer, whereas the H tones are compressed in the long prosody pattern that extends until the matrix complementizer in Figure 2.

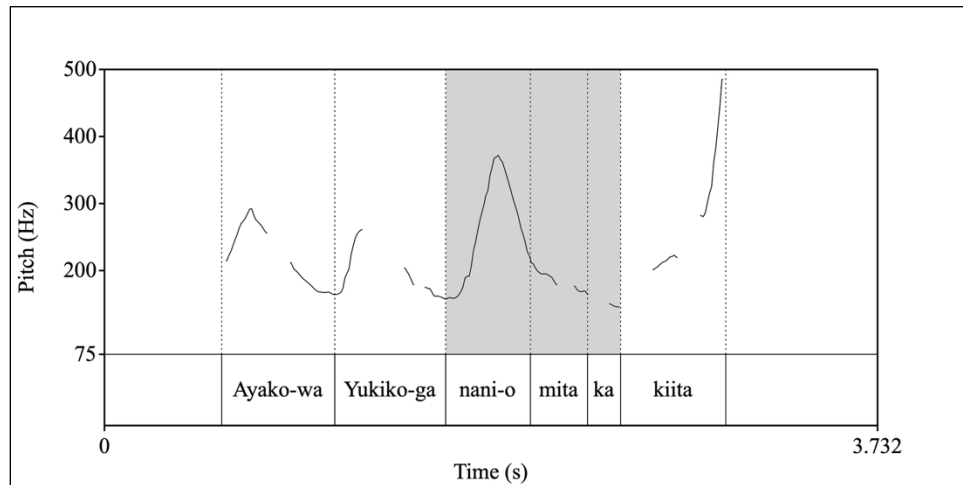


Figure 1: Short prosody pattern for (2a)

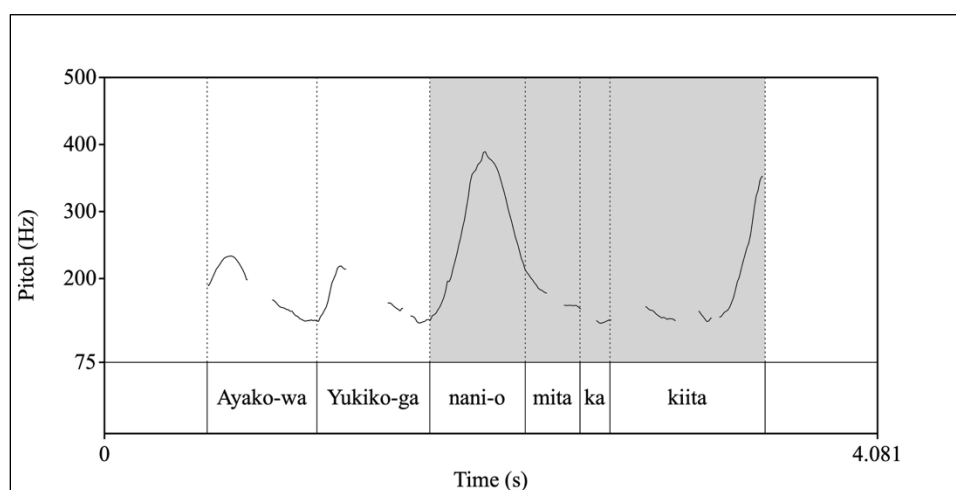


Figure 2: Long prosody pattern for (2b)

The same set of stimuli used in Minamida's (2026) Experiment 1, translated into Tokyo Japanese, was employed in the present experiment. That is, each of the sixteen base sentences was paired with the Q complementizer *ka* and also with the quotative complementizer *tte*, yielding thirty-two sentences. Following previous experimental studies, such as Hirotani (2005), Hirose and Kitagawa (2011), and Hwang (2015), each of the thirty-two sentences was recorded with both prosodic patterns, yielding sixty-four sentences in total. These sixty-four sentences were distributed across four lists following a Latin square design. Each participant therefore answered sixteen questions from one of the lists, along with thirty-two filler items, which were identical across all lists. The four conditions tested in Experiment 1 are presented in (4).¹ The *wh*-scope of each sentence is highlighted in gray.

- (4) a. *Experimental + Short prosody*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **ka**] kiita **Ø**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw Q asked/heard Q
 'Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]?'
- b. *Experimental + Long prosody*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **ka**] kiita **Ø**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw Q asked/heard Q
 'What did Ayako ask/hear [whether Yukiko saw]?'
- c. *Control + Short prosody*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **tte**] kiita **Ø**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw +Q asked/heard Q
 'Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]?'

¹ A complete set of stimuli for Experiment 1 is available on my website, together with a complete set for Experiment 2.

d. *Control + Long prosody*

[Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga nani-o mita tte] kiita Ø]?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw -Q asked/heard Q
 ‘[What did Ayako ask/hear [that Yukiko saw]]?’

2.1.2 Participants

Forty-four native speakers of Japanese participated in Experiment 1. They self-reported that they grew up speaking Tokyo Japanese in the Tokyo metropolitan area (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba). Of the forty-four participants, twenty-one were female. The average age of the participants who reported their age at the time of the experiment was 40.38 years (SD = 9.77), ranging from twenty-two to sixty-three years. The participants were recruited as crowdworkers on *CrowdWorks*, a crowdsourcing platform in Japan. Each of the four lists was completed by eleven participants.

2.1.3 Procedure

あなた 花子さん

▶ 0:00 / 0:03

(問1) 花子さんの質問への回答としてふさわしいものを1つ選んでください。

(Q1) Choose one appropriate answer to Hanako's question.

☐ 「うん。」

☐ 「葉子。」

☐ 不自然なイントネーションである。

• “Yes.”

• “Yoko.”

• Unnatural intonation.

クリックして続ける

Figure 3: Survey screen (English translations not shown in the actual experiment)

PsyToolkit (Stoet 2010, 2017), version 3.4.2, was used as the online experimental platform. For each question, participants were given three answer options in Japanese: a yes/no answer (only “yes” was provided; a “no” answer was not available), a *wh*-answer in the form of a DP/NP, and “unnatural intonation” (*husizenna intoneesyon de aru*). Participants first judged the naturalness of the prosody in each question. If they judged the prosody to be natural, they then selected the more appropriate answer option between the yes/no answer option and the *wh*-answer option. Figure 3 shows an example of the survey screen. No contextual information was provided, apart from a

picture taken from the Japanese clip art website *Irasutoya*. In the picture, the woman on the right, named Hanako, is asking the woman on the left (“you”) a question.

Previous experimental studies, such as Hirotsu (2005), Hirose and Kitagawa (2011), and Hwang (2015), did not (adequately) test the compatibility of questions involving a *wh*-island with the long prosody pattern. The inclusion of the third answer option, “unnatural intonation,” in the experimental design adopted in Minamida (2026) makes it possible to evaluate the well-formedness of the experimental items under the long prosody condition. If this combination turns out to be ill-formed, it provides evidence that Tokyo Japanese exhibits *wh*-island effects.

2.1.4 Results and Discussion

The pie charts in Figure 4 show the results of Experiment 1.² For comparison, the results of Experiment 1 on Osaka Japanese from Minamida (2026) are also presented in Figure 5. See also Minamida (2026) for detailed statistical analyses of the Osaka data. The Osaka data show that both the experimental and control items were more likely to be interpreted as yes/no questions under the short prosody condition, whereas only the control items were more likely to be interpreted as *wh*-questions under the long prosody condition. Nearly sixty percent of “unnatural” responses for the experimental items under the long prosody condition indicate that prosody does not alleviate *wh*-island effects in Osaka Japanese.

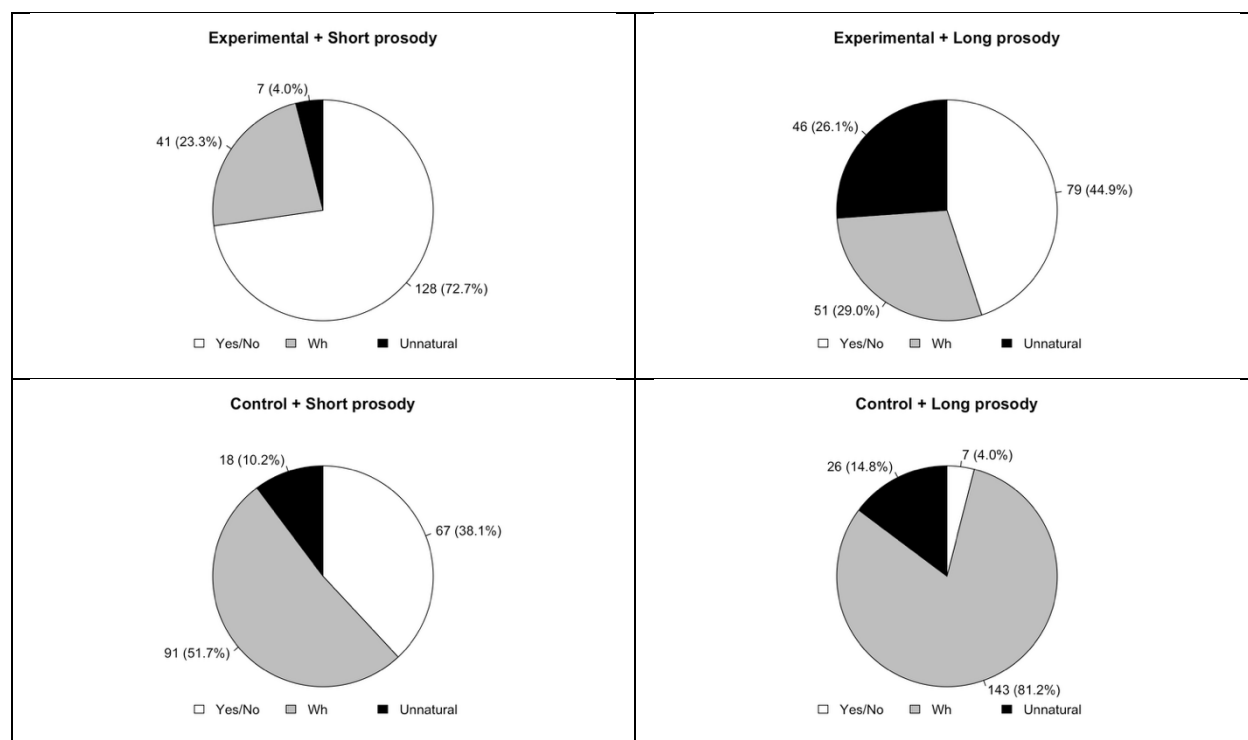


Figure 4: Results of Experiment 1 (Tokyo Japanese)

² The pie charts were generated using base R functions such as `pie()` (R Core Team 2025).

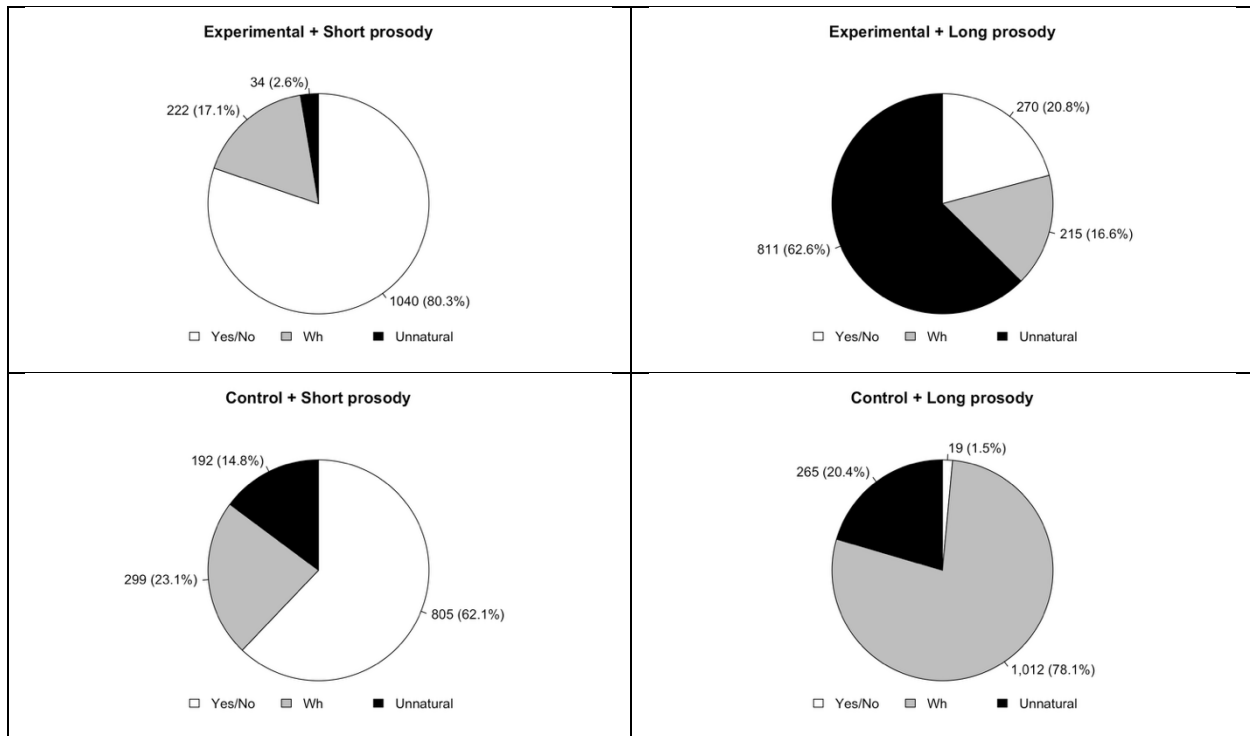


Figure 5: Results of Osaka Experiment 1 (Minamida 2026)

In contrast, the Tokyo data do not show a clear pattern. The main interest lies in how participants responded to the experimental items under the long prosody condition. Unlike in the Osaka results, the “unnatural” option was not strongly preferred. Additionally, the *wh*-answer option received the highest proportion of responses for the control items under the short prosody condition, even though the yes/no answer option was expected to be dominant under the short prosody condition.

2.2 Experiment 2 (Acceptability Judgments)

2.2.1 Stimuli

Two sentence endings for interrogative sentences in Tokyo Japanese were employed in this acceptability judgment experiment. As shown in (5), *nokai* is used for yes/no questions (Q[−wh]), whereas *ndai* is used for *wh*-questions (Q[+wh]) (e.g., Chiba 1979; Yoshida 2019). The status of *wh*-islands in Tokyo Japanese has typically been investigated through auditory comprehension experiments, in which participants listen to each question and select the more appropriate answer between the two options: a yes/no answer option or a *wh*-answer option (e.g., Hirotani 2005; Hwang 2015). One concern with this approach is that speakers do not always provide literal answers to such questions.³ For example, “Does Naoya still remember what Mari drank at the bar?” is the English translation of the yes/no question interpretation of the sentence in (1). This is a yes/no question, but cooperative speakers may respond with additional information, such as “(yes,) beer.” Such DP/NP-type answers appear similar to *wh*-answers and may affect the results of

³ See Minamida (2026) for a discussion of this issue.

comprehension experiments. The design of the acceptability judgment experiment proposed in Minamida (2026) addresses this issue, as it makes it possible to assess the well-formedness of the experimental items when combined with the sentence ending used for *wh*-questions. The incompatibility of the experimental condition in this study with *ndai* for *wh*-questions in Tokyo Japanese has been reported in Chiba (1979) and Yoshida (2019). This experiment also aims to evaluate their impressionistic observations.

- (5) a. *Nokai for yes/no questions*
*Taroo-ga kita nokai/*ndai?*
 Taro-NOM came Q[−wh]/Q[+wh]
 ‘Did Taro come?’
- b. *Ndai for wh-questions*
*Dare-ga kita ?*nokai/ndai?*
 who-NOM came Q[−wh]/Q[+wh]
 ‘Who came?’

(Yoshida 2019: (42))

As in Experiment 1, the same set of stimuli used in Minamida’s (2026) Experiment 2, translated into Tokyo Japanese, was employed in the present experiment. Eight of the sixteen base sentences from Experiment 1 were used. Four contained the *wh*-word *nani* ‘what’ as the embedded object, and the remaining four contained the *wh*-word *dare* ‘who’ as the embedded subject. As the matrix verb, four sentences used *kiita* ‘asked/heard’, whereas the other four used *itta* ‘said’. To balance the number of stimuli containing *kiita* ‘asked/heard’ and *itta* ‘said’, some of the stimuli in Experiment 1 that originally contained *kiita* ‘asked/heard’ were modified to contain *itta* ‘said’, and vice versa.

The eight base sentences were each paired with both the Q complementizer *ka* and the quotative complementizer *tte*, yielding sixteen sentences. These sixteen sentences were then each combined with *nokai* for yes/no questions and *ndai* for *wh*-questions, resulting in a total of thirty-two sentences. The thirty-two sentences were distributed across four lists according to a Latin square design. Each list contained eight sentences, together with sixteen filler items that were identical across all four lists. The four conditions tested in Experiment 2 are given in (6).

- (6) a. *Experimental + YNQ*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **ka**] kiita **nokai**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw Q asked/heard Q[−wh]
 ‘[Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]]?’
- b. *Experimental + WhQ*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **ka**] kiita **ndai**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw Q asked/heard Q[+wh]
 ‘[What did Ayako ask/hear [whether Yukiko saw]]?’
- c. *Control + YNQ*
 [Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita **tte**] kiita **nokai**?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw +Q asked/heard Q[−wh]
 ‘[Did Ayako ask/hear [what Yukiko saw]]?’

d. *Control + WhQ*

[Ayako-wa [Yukiko-ga *nani-o* mita *tte*] kiita *ndai*?
 Ayako-TOP Yukiko-NOM what-ACC saw -Q asked/heard Q[+wh]
 ‘[What did Ayako ask/hear [that Yukiko saw]]?’

2.2.2 Participants

Forty-eight crowdworkers were recruited through CrowdWorks to participate in Experiment 2 (female: 24, male: 24). According to their self-reports, they were raised in the Tokyo metropolitan area (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba) and spoke Tokyo Japanese as their first language. None had participated in Experiment 1. At the time of the experiment, participants who reported their age ranged from twenty-four to sixty-two years old (mean = 42.79 years, SD = 10.06). Twelve participants completed each of the four lists.

2.2.3 Procedure

As in Experiment 1, participants completed the survey via PsyToolkit (Stoet 2010, 2017), version 3.4.2. Each participant viewed twenty-four items from one of the four lists (eight stimuli and sixteen fillers), which were displayed simultaneously on a single screen, and rated each as either “acceptable” (*ieru*; lit. ‘I can say it’) or “unacceptable” (*ienai*; lit. ‘I cannot say it’). A forced-choice task, rather than a Likert-scale task, was adopted because the base sentences themselves are grammatical, and interrogative sentences are typically divided into yes/no questions and *wh*-questions.

2.2.4 Results and Discussion

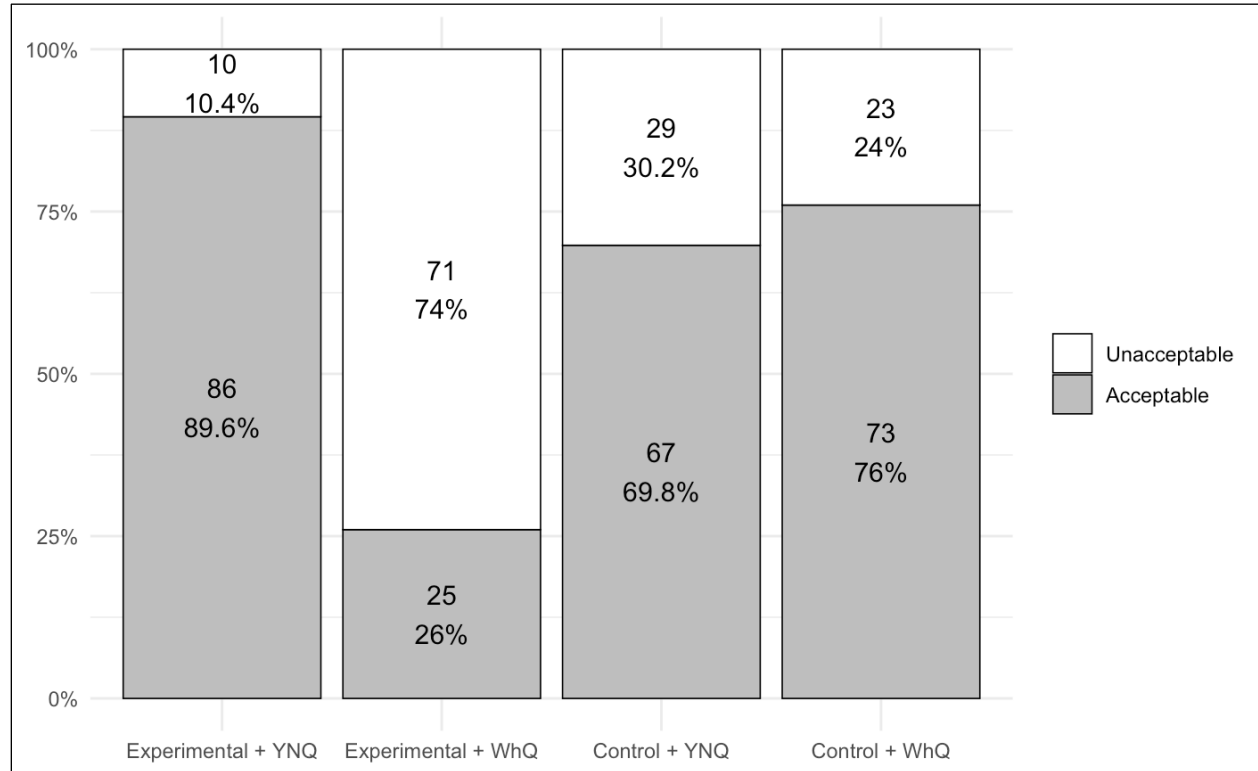


Figure 6: Results of Experiment 2 (Tokyo Japanese)

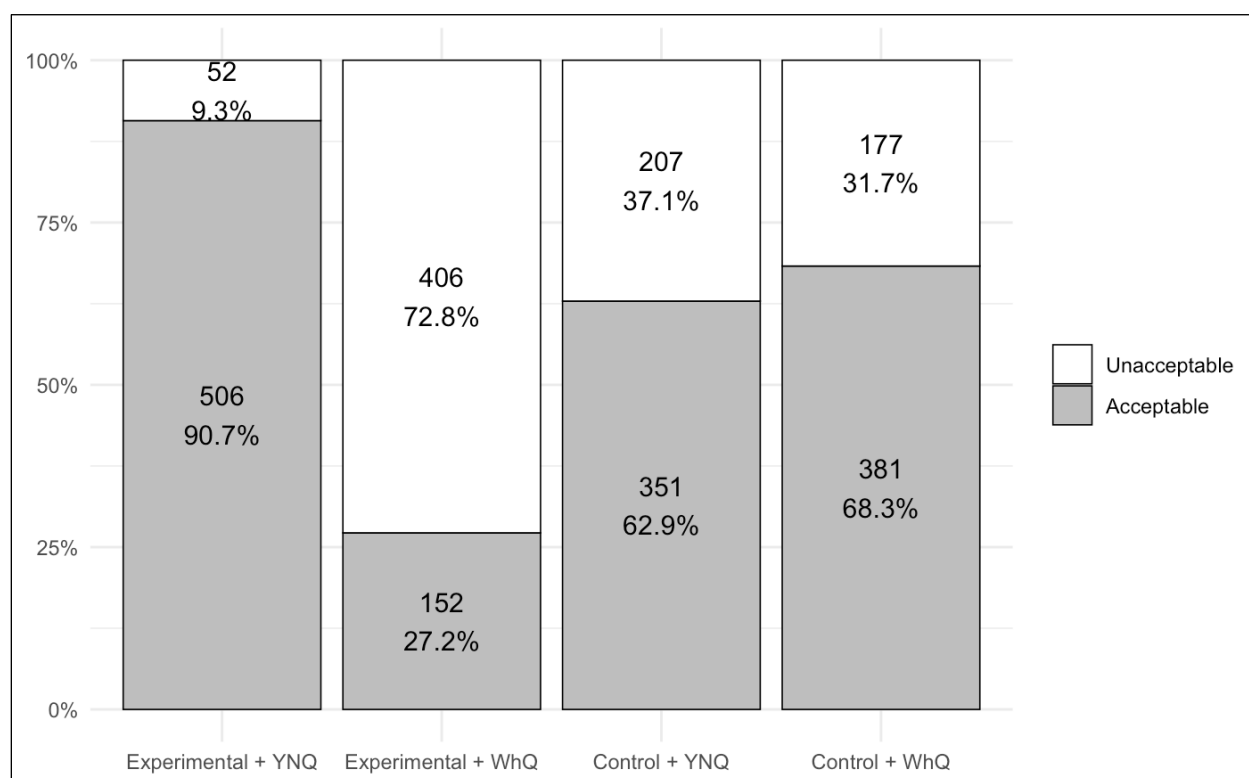


Figure 7: Results of Osaka Experiment 2 (Minamida 2026)

Figure 6 shows the results of Experiment 2.⁴ For reference, Figure 7 presents the results of Experiment 2 in Minamida (2026) for Osaka Japanese. Unlike the results of Experiment 1 for Tokyo Japanese and those of Experiment 1 for Osaka Japanese, both varieties show a similar pattern in Experiment 2. In both varieties, the experimental items with the sentence ending for yes/no questions (Q[–wh]) were judged acceptable, with an acceptability rate of nearly ninety percent, whereas the experimental items with the sentence ending for *wh*-questions (Q[+wh]) were judged unacceptable, with an acceptability rate of twenty-six percent in Tokyo Japanese and an acceptability rate of approximately twenty-seven percent in Osaka Japanese. The control items were rated as moderately acceptable regardless of the sentence ending in both Tokyo and Osaka Japanese.

Statistical analyses were conducted using R (R Core Team 2025), following the procedures used in Minamida (2026) for Osaka Japanese.⁵ For each response, “acceptable” was coded as 1, whereas “unacceptable” was coded as 0. A generalized linear mixed model with a binomial distribution was fit using the R package lme4 (Bates et al. 2015). The model examined the interaction between the two embedded complementizers and the two interrogative sentence endings, with participant and item as random effects.⁶ The difference between the embedded complementizers was statistically significant ($\hat{\beta} = -3.86$, $SE = 0.50$, $z = -7.78$, $p < .001$),

⁴ The bar plot was generated with the R package tidyverse (Wickham et al. 2019.)

⁵ The data frames and R code used for the analyses of the Tokyo data are posted on my website.

⁶ The formula used for the analysis was: `glmer(rating ~ complementizer * sentence_ending + (1 | participant) + (1 | item), family = binomial, data = ...)`.

showing that the experimental items were rated as more acceptable than the control items.⁷ In contrast, the difference between the two sentence endings was not statistically significant ($\hat{\beta} = -0.53$, $SE = 0.42$, $z = -1.28$, $p = .20$). Crucially, a strong interaction between complementizer type and sentence-ending type was observed ($\hat{\beta} = 5.99$, $SE = 0.75$, $z = 7.99$, $p < .001$), indicating that the effect of sentence-ending type was conditioned by the embedded complementizer.

To further investigate the data, separate generalized linear mixed models with a binomial distribution were fit to the experimental and control items using the *lme4* package (Bates et al. 2015).⁸ The models included participant and item as random effects. The model for the experimental items revealed a significant effect of sentence-ending type ($\hat{\beta} = 20.78$, $SE = 5.05$, $z = 4.12$, $p < .001$). In contrast, the model for the control items showed no significant effect ($\hat{\beta} = -0.45$, $SE = 0.37$, $z = -1.20$, $p = .232$). These results indicate that only the sentence ending for yes/no questions was judged acceptable in the experimental condition, whereas both sentence endings were rated as equally acceptable in the control condition. The models therefore support the presence of strong *wh*-island effects in Tokyo Japanese and provide empirical support for the observations reported by Chiba (1979) and Yoshida (2019). The results are also consistent with those reported in Minamida (2026) for Osaka Japanese, indicating that both varieties are sensitive to *wh*-islands.

3 Refinements to the Auditory Stimuli for Experiment 1

Tokyo Japanese clearly exhibited *wh*-island effects in the acceptability judgment experiment (Experiment 2), which parallels the results of Osaka Experiment 2 in Minamida (2026). In contrast, the comprehension experiment (Experiment 1) did not yield clear evidence of such effects in Tokyo Japanese. This finding differs from Osaka Japanese, in which strong *wh*-island effects were demonstrated in Minamida's Experiment 1. Notably, the present study on Tokyo Japanese employed the same sets of stimuli as the two Osaka experiments in Minamida (2026). Given that auditory stimuli must be constructed more carefully than written stimuli, the results of Tokyo Experiment 2 can be considered more reliable than those of Experiment 1. Moreover, possible pragmatic effects were also taken into account in the design of Experiment 2. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Tokyo Japanese is sensitive to *wh*-islands.

One of the differences between Tokyo Japanese and Osaka Japanese lies in the past tense form of some verbs (see Frellesvig 2010). Notably, the two matrix verbs used in Tokyo Experiment 1 were *kiita* 'asked/heard' and *itta* 'said'. In Osaka Japanese, on the other hand, *kiita* 'asked/heard' is still *kiita*, but *itta* 'said' is *yuuta* (see Minamida 2026). (7), which presents the stimuli used in Experiment 1 for both varieties, illustrates this dialectal contrast in the verb meaning 'said'.

- (7) a. *Tokyo Japanese*
 [Miyoko-wa [Mariko-ga nani-o nonda ka] itta Ø]?
 Miyoko-TOP Mariko-NOM what-ACC drank Q said Q
 '[Did Miyoko say [what Mariko drank]]?'

⁷ This is most likely due to an effect of prescriptive grammar, as the Q complementizer appears in both formal and informal speech, whereas the quotative complementizer occurs only in informal speech in both varieties.

⁸ The models were fit using the following formula: `glmer(rating ~ sentence_ending + (1 | participant) + (1 | item), family = binomial, data = ...)`.

b. *Osaka Japanese*

[Miyoko-wa [Mariko-ga nani nonda ka] yuuta Ø]?
 Miyoko-TOP Mariko-NOM what.ACC drank Q said Q
 ‘[Did Miyoko say [what Mariko drank]]?’

The Tokyo form for ‘said’, *itta*, makes it difficult to obtain a clear prosodic contour compared to the Osaka form *yuuta*, since the Tokyo form contains a geminate, whereas the Osaka form contains a long vowel. This prosodic contrast between the two varieties is presented in the following four figures. Figures 8 and 9 show the short and long prosody patterns for the sentence in (7a) in Tokyo Japanese. Figures 10 and 11 show the short and long prosody patterns for the sentence in (7b) in Osaka Japanese, taken from Minamida (2026). The Osaka stimuli were recorded by the author, a female native speaker of Osaka Japanese.

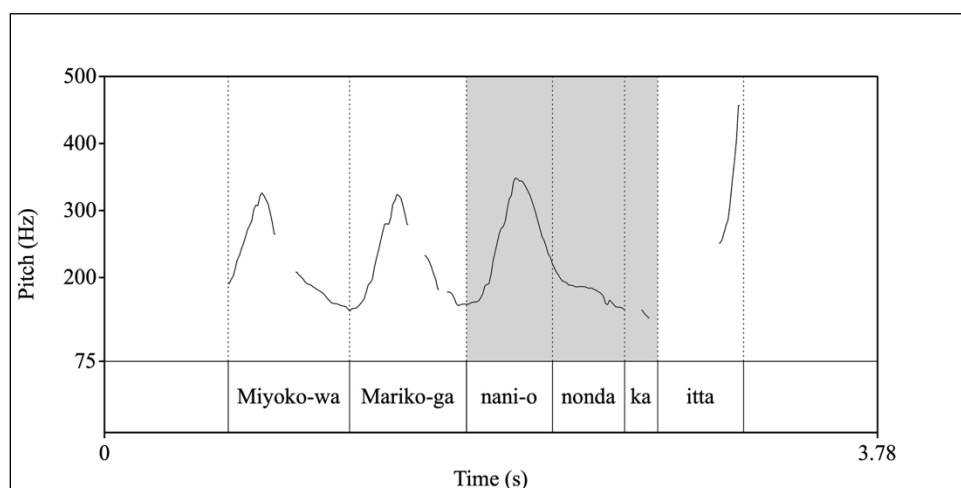


Figure 8: Short prosody pattern for (7a) in Tokyo Japanese

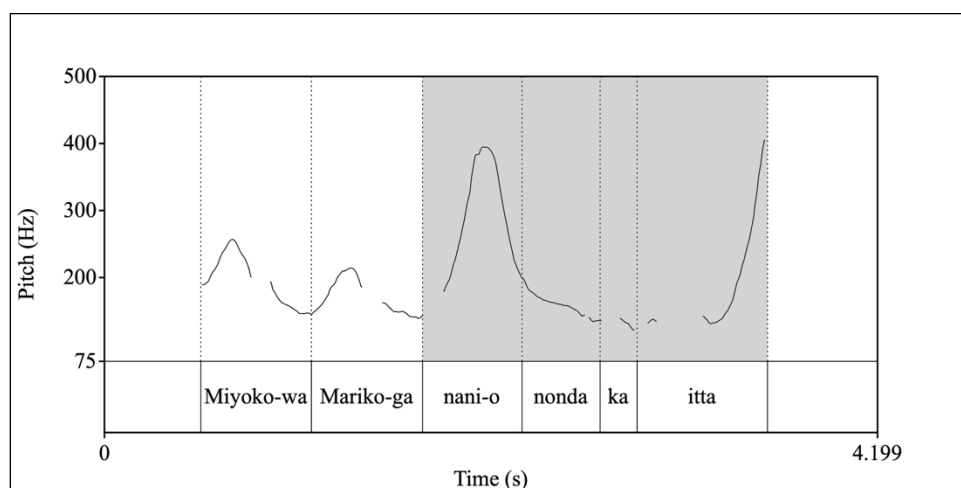


Figure 9: Long prosody pattern for (7a) in Tokyo Japanese

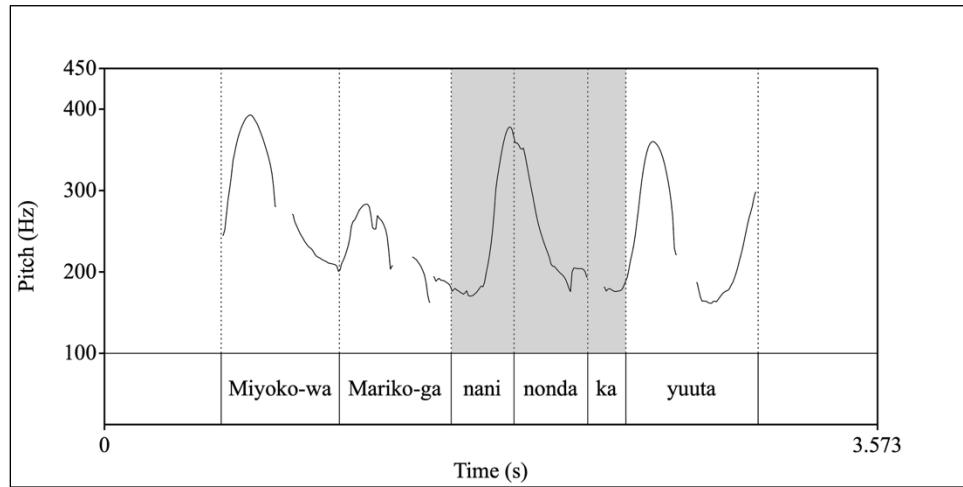


Figure 10: Short prosody pattern for (7b) in Osaka Japanese (Minamida 2026)

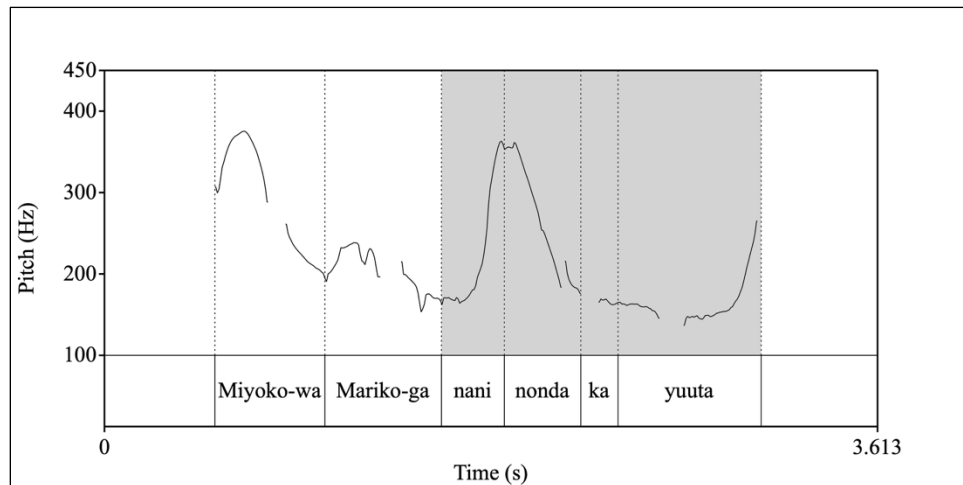


Figure 11: Long prosody pattern for (7b) in Osaka Japanese (Minamida 2026)

Figure 12 presents the results of Tokyo Experiment 1, excluding the stimuli with the matrix verb *itta* ‘said’, because the other matrix verb *kiita* ‘asked/heard’ does not contain a geminate. One difference between the original data containing *itta* ‘said’ in Figure 4 and the data in Figure 12 is that the yes/no answer option was the most frequently chosen option for the control items under the short prosody condition, which parallels the Osaka data in Figure 5. However, the proportions of the three answer options for the experimental items under the long prosody condition did not change substantially. These results suggest that further refinements of the Tokyo auditory stimuli for Experiment 1 may be necessary.

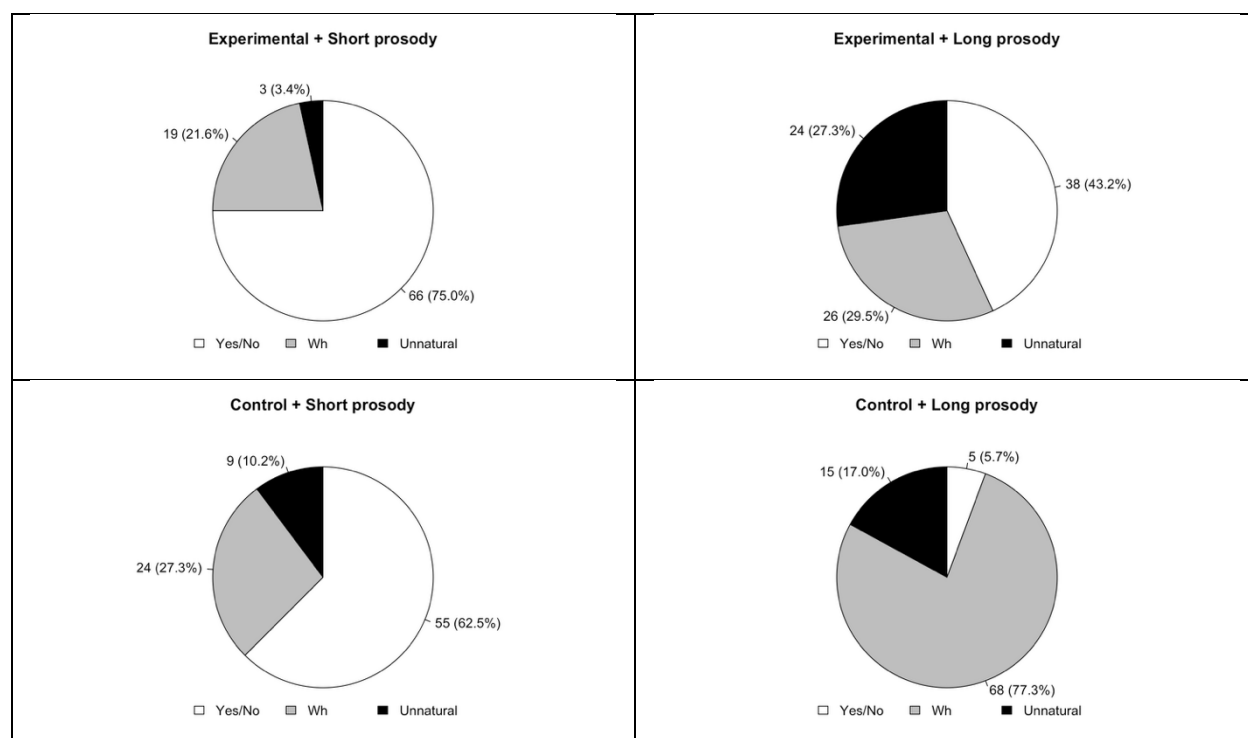


Figure 12: Results of Tokyo Experiment 1 excluding the matrix verb *itta* ‘said’

The crucial prosodic cue in Experiment 1 is the pitch height of the lexical item immediately following the embedded complementizer, as pitch compression marks *wh*-scope in Tokyo Japanese. Thus, the initial tone-bearing unit of this item should carry an H tone to determine whether it is clearly pitch-compressed. This position is typically occupied by a matrix verb, as in the stimuli used in my experiments. Osaka Japanese also marks *wh*-scope with focus pitch compression, as noted in Minamida (2026). The stimuli used in Osaka Experiment 1 were ideal in this respect, since both matrix verbs *kiita* ‘asked/heard’ and *yuuta* ‘said’ have an HLL melody (see Figure 10 for *yuuta* ‘said’). In contrast, both verbs have an LHH melody in Tokyo Japanese. These verbs were selected because they are ideal for the control condition, which is clearly ambiguous between the two interpretations. Therefore, they cannot be replaced by other verbs. One possible solution to this issue would be to insert an adverb beginning with an H tone immediately before the matrix verb.

4 Conclusion

This paper replicated the two experiments conducted on Osaka Japanese in Minamida (2026), applying the same design to Tokyo Japanese to examine *wh*-island effects. The acceptability judgment experiment (Experiment 2) revealed clear *wh*-island effects, supporting the traditional view proposed by Nishigauchi (1990) and Watanabe (1992). In contrast, the same conclusion could not be drawn from the comprehension experiment (Experiment 1), likely because the auditory stimuli did not function for Tokyo Japanese in the same way as they did for Osaka Japanese due to the prosodic differences between the two varieties. I suggested that inserting an adverb with an initial H tone immediately prior to the matrix verb in the stimuli may address this issue. More

conclusive results from future auditory comprehension experiments following the design of Experiment 1 in Minamida (2026) are awaited for a better understanding of *wh*-island effects in Tokyo Japanese.

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