

# On Wh-Questions and on Nature of Wh-Words in Russian in Comparison with English

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Recent studies in comparative syntax try to provide explanations for cross-linguistic variation in the expression of similar phenomena by looking at the nature of the constituents involved. Thus the different strategies employed by natural languages in the formation of wh-questions can be accounted by the difference in the nature of wh-words in those languages. The present paper is concerned with wh-words in Russian, which are claimed to be polarity items. This fact can account for their behaviour in wh-questions: obligatory multiple fronting. The question is considered within the Minimalist framework, a program proposed by Chomsky in 1995. According to this approach the triggering force of movement of the constituents is the feature-checking requirement. Strong features have to be checked before Spell-Out, which causes constituents to move. Feature strength is parameterised, with specific setting for every language. The claim is that in Russian the question feature is strong, therefore the movement of wh-phrases to the left periphery is overt. The paper also aims at providing a general picture of wh-phenomenon in Russian.

## Introduction

The present paper addresses the issue of wh-questions in Russian. It pursues two aims. The first is to provide an overview of Russian wh-questions, comparing them to English wh-questions. The second aim is to consider the nature of wh-words in Russian.

My argument is that wh-words in Russian are polarity items. They have to be licensed by the operator in the sentential context to get the [+Q] feature. This property of wh-words explains the fact of obligatory multiple wh-fronting, and accounts for some other properties of interrogative sentences in Russian.

The paper is organised in the following way:

Section I introduces some data about the general structure of Russian language, which are relevant for the examples discussed below.

Section II discusses different types of wh-questions in Russian in comparison with English and the types of constraints which are effective in Russian wh-questions.

Section III considers the nature of wh-words. I submit that wh-words in Russian are polarity items. To be interpreted as wh-phrases they have to get the [+Q] feature in the sentential context. That means that Russian has wh-proforms, which do not get any specific feature in the lexicon. Depending upon the operator that licenses them they can function either as wh-words (the [+Q] feature), or existential or universal quantifiers.

In Section IV I present the argument that Russian has an extended configurational structure of left periphery similar to that one proposed by Rizzi (1997). It has a separate Focus position. CP and FP heads are both marked for [+Q] and [+F] features, therefore both wh-words and focused elements can check their features either under the Spec CP or the Spec FP. I maintain that these are the only positions available for focused and wh-phrases, but not Spec IP as some linguists claim.

## Russian: a discourse configurational language

English is a highly configurational language. The word order in English encodes the grammatical functions of the sentence constituents. Each grammatical function is associated with a distinct position in the phrase structure. Russian language displays different properties. It belongs to the group of so-called discourse configurational languages.

According to Kiss (1995a) discourse configurational languages are characterised by two properties:

by semantic topic, the purpose of which is to foreground already-given information, which is not necessarily a grammatical subject of a sentence;

by semantic focus, which serves either to introduce new information or identify already-given information.

Both properties are realised through a particular structural relation.

Discourse configurational languages are characterised by rich morphology, i.e. grammatical subjects and objects are overtly marked for case. This allows relatively free word order in a sentence, which is the case in Russian.

Russian, however, is considered to be an SVO language because this is the order found in discourse neutral sentences:

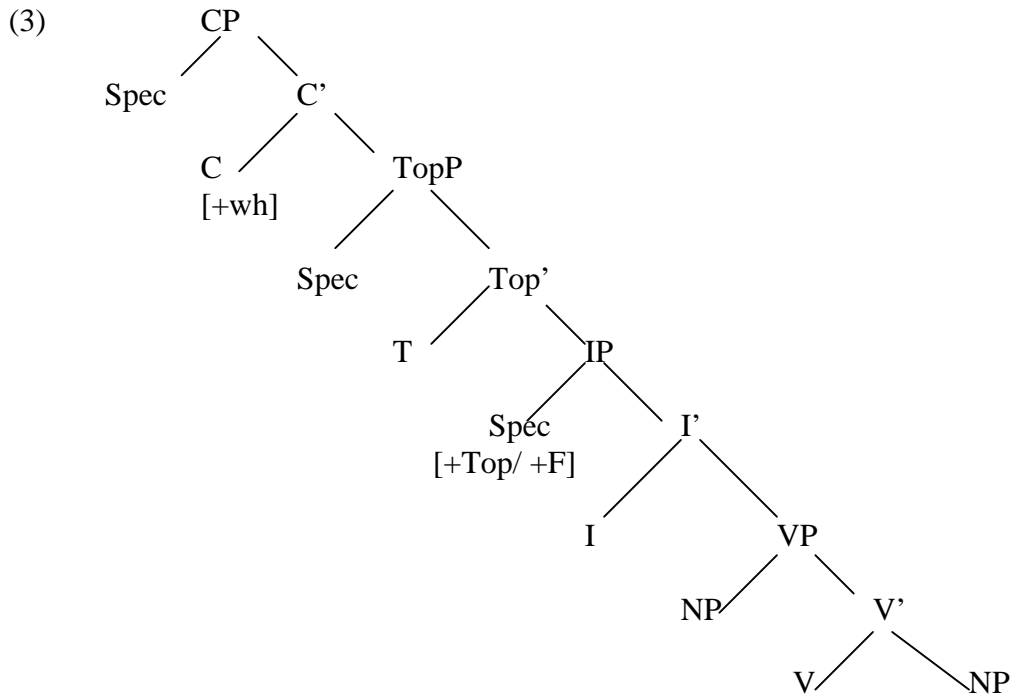
- (1) On chital knigu.  
He read book.  
He read (past) a book.
  
- (2) Esli ty reshish poyti v kino ya prisoedinyus' k tebe.  
If you decide go to cinema I join to you.  
If you decide to go to the cinema I will join you.

To satisfy the requirements of discourse interpretation the constituents have to move out of the positions defined by their structurally encoded grammatical functions into positions which define their discourse functions.

It is claimed that in Russian topics always precede discourse neutral information and foci can appear in different positions in the sentence (King, 1995). Like other discourse configurational languages Russian allows more than one topic within a sentence and only one focus. According to King (1995) topics appear left adjoined to IP, while the Spec IP is a contrastive focus position; new information focus takes clause final position.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of contrastive focus, topic can take the position in the Spec IP.

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<sup>1</sup> I consider the differences between contrastive focus and new information focus in more detail below.



The above analysis shows that King denies that Spec IP is an inherently grammatical subject position. According to her, the subject appears in Spec IP only if it is a topic of a sentence or is marked for contrastive focus.

I argue that this is not the case. Spec IP is a subject position in Russian. In discourse neutral sentences without topicalised or focused constituents, the subject has to raise to the Spec IP. However, if a subject is a new information focus it has to appear post-verbally to satisfy the requirement of discourse interpretation, therefore it stays *in situ* in the Spec VP.

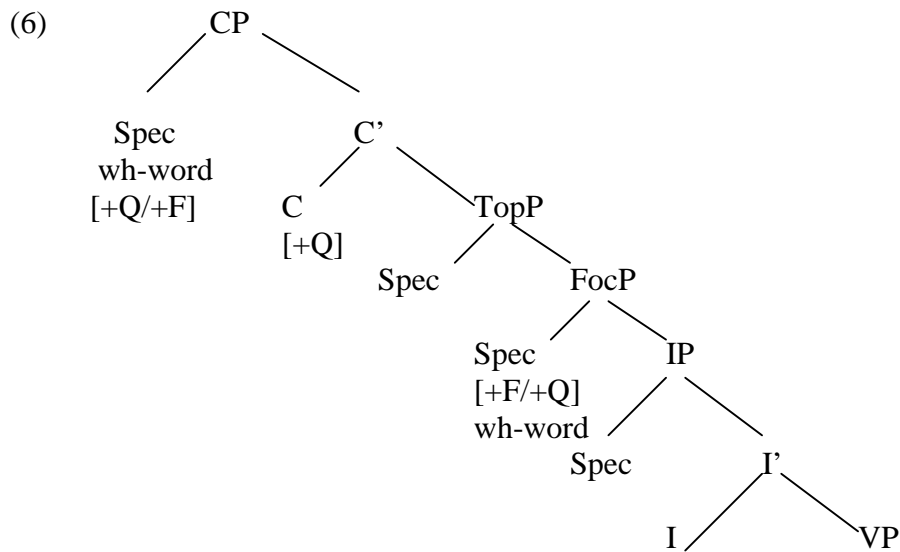
Like English, Russian requires overt wh-movement in wh-questions. Wh-words have to be sentence-initial (except for echo questions):

- (4) Pochemu ty ne kupil khleb?  
 Why you not bought bread?  
 Why didn't you buy bread?

Unlike in English in Russian multiple wh-questions all wh-words have to move clause initially.

- (5) Kto komu chto kupil?  
 Who whom what bought?  
 Who bought what for whom?

Following Rudin (1988), King (1995) claims that in Russian only the first wh-word goes under the Spec CP and the rest adjoin to IP. Further in this paper I argue that in Russian wh-words take either Spec CP or Spec FP position:



## Wh-questions in Russian

Russian and English display some similarities in the formation of wh-questions, as well as in the types of constraints that are effective in both languages. However, there are some significant differences between these two languages.

I consider similarities and differences in Russian and English wh-questions in the present section.

### *Single wh-word questions*

Questions with one wh-word in Russian are similar to those in English:

- (7) Chto Mat' dala synu?  
 What mother gave son?  
 What did the mother give to the son?

A wh-word moves to the Spec CP to check its [+Q] feature, leaving a trace in a base position, which is c-commanded by a moved element or by a lexical head.

Russian has sentences of the type:

- (8) Otets komu mashinu kupil?  
 Father whom car bought?  
 Whom did the father buy a car?

This type of question cannot be considered an echo question, but the wh-word is not clause initial. I propose that in Russian the Focus position is marked for [+Q], thus strong [+Q] feature of a wh-word can be checked in Spec FP, in addition to the Spec CP. This issue is addressed in detail later in this paper.

*Multiple wh-argument questions*

Russian allows two or three wh-argument words in one sentence, which can occur in different sequences without affecting the meaning of the sentence:<sup>2</sup>

- (9) Kto chto prines ?  
Who what brought?  
  
Chto kto prines?  
What who brought?  
Who brought what?
- (10) Kto komu chto skazal?  
Who whom what said?  
Who said what to whom?

*Multiple wh-argument and adjunct questions*

Wh-argument word(s) can occur with one and two adjuncts in a sentence.

- (11) Kto kuda poshel?  
Who where went?  
  
Kuda kto poshel?  
Where who went?  
Who went where?
- (12) Kto s kem kuda poshel?  
Who with whom where went?  
Who went where with whom?
- (13) Kogo gde i kogda ty vstretil?  
Whom where and when you met?  
Who did you meet where and when?

Combinations of an argument (or two arguments) and an adjunct (or two adjuncts) are licit in Russian. Different order variations are permissible in these cases as well. However, the third wh-adjunct should be joined with a conjunction 'and'. Compare:

- (14) \*Kogo gde kogda ty vstretil?  
Whom where when you met?  
Whom did you meet where and when?

According to Rudin (1986) this is a general restriction on co-occurrence of wh-adverbs which is true for English as well:

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<sup>2</sup> There is a difference in discourse interpretation depending on the word order, but not in semantics.

- (15) \*What did you find where when?  
 (16) What did you find where and when?

In multiple questions in Russian a non-wh constituent can intervene between multiple wh-words:

- (17) Komu on chto kupil?  
 Whom he what bought?  
 For whom did he buy what?

In these cases the second wh-word goes in the Spec FP, which is specified for the [+Q] feature. An intervening element is Topic, as one can see from tree structure (6).

### *Specificity Filter*

Of interest are the cases of co-occurrence of 'why' with other wh-words in multiple questions. 'Why' can occur in a multiple question. Its usage, however, is restricted by some conditions. 'Why' cannot appear in front of another wh-word and can only follow it:

- (18) Kuda i zachem on hodil?  
 Where and why he went?  
 (19) \*Zachem i kuda on hodil?  
 Why and where he went?  
 Where did he go and why?

The phenomenon can be explained as a result of a Specificity Filter (Kiss, 1993).

### *Specificity Filter*

If Operator  $i$  is an operator which has scope over Operator  $j$  and binds a variable in the scope of Operator  $j$ , then Operator  $i$  must be specific.'

Non-specific operators are forbidden from having wide scope. Kiss suggests that expressions can be specific or non-specific inherently by their lexical properties, or can be predisposed for specific or non-specific interpretation depending upon the context or situation.

This means that 'why' in Russian is inherently a non-specific operator. Therefore it cannot have a wide scope and must appear in the scope of another wh-operator.

### *Wh-questions with a focused constituent*

A wh-question can contain a focused element with the morphologically realised focus feature – particle '-to'. The focused element follows the wh-word, as in (20):

- (20) Komu Pavel-to zvonil?  
 Whom Pavel-to called?  
 Whom did Pavel (foc) call?

- (21) Pavel-to komu zvonil?  
 Pavel-to whom called?  
 Whom did Pavel (foc) call?

In the above example the focused element precedes the wh-phrase, from which it follows that Spec CP is marked [+F] in addition to [+Q].

- (22) Komu otets dom-to ostavil?  
 Whom father house-to left?  
 Whom did father leave the house (foc)?

The constituent appearing between a wh-phrase and a focused phrase is a topic.

*Embedded wh-questions*

- (23) Kogo Ivan skzal (chto) videl?  
 Whom Ivan said (that) saw?  
 Whom did Ivan say (that) he saw?

As in English, the wh-word moves sentence initially, undergoing a cyclic movement through Spec CP2.

- (24) Kogo kogda Ivan skzal (chto) videl?  
 Whom when Ivan said that saw?  
 Who did Ivan say that he saw when?

Both wh-words moved out of the embedded clause sentence initially. That means that the embedded clause also allows multiple wh-fronting Spec CP.

Here are the possible variations of sentences with embedded wh-question:

- (25) Ty думаеш кто когда придет?  
 You think who when arrives (future)?  
 Who do you think will arrive when?

Kto kogda ty думаеш придет?  
 Who when you think arrives (future)?

Kto ty думаеш когда придет?  
 Who you think when arrives (future)?

Kogda ty думаеш кто придет?  
 When you think who arrives (future)?

As the above sentences show that in the embedded multiple wh-questions, all wh-words have to move obligatory to either the Spec CP of the main clause or the Spec CP of the embedded clause. There is, however, no strict ordering of wh-words in Spec CP position. The ungrammaticality of the following example can be explained by the failure of one of wh-words to move to the Spec CP:

- (26) \*Kto ty думаеш придет когда?  
Who you think arrives (future) when?

The Specificity Filter that we observe with ‘why’ is valid for the embedded clause as well:

- (27) Chto i zachem ty думаеш он купил?  
What and why you think he bought?  
What do you think he bought and why?

Chto ty думаеш zachem он купил?  
What you think why he bought?

\*Zachem chto ty думаеш он купил?  
Why what you think he bought?

\*Zachem ty думаеш chto он купил?  
Why you think what he bought?

The following examples contain both an embedded wh-question and a focus constituent marked with the focus particle -to:

- (28) Dom-to ty думаеш кому отets оставит?  
House-to you think whom father leaves (future)?

Dom-to кому ty думаеш отets оставит?  
House-to whom you think father leaves (future)?

Komu ty думаеш dom-to отets оставит?  
Whom you think house-to father leaves (future)?

Ty думаеш кому dom-to отets оставит?  
You think whom house-to father leaves (future)?  
To whom do you think the father will leave the house?

Both main clauses and embedded clauses can have CP and FP positions filled at the same time, and [+Q] and [+F] features can be checked in both positions.

## Problems

The above data raise a number of questions, which I consider in turn:

### *Obligatory wh-multiple fronting*

Why do all wh-words have to move clause initially in multiple wh-questions? According to the Last Resort Condition (Chomsky, 1995) constituents move only if they have a strong feature that is in need of checking. It is presumed that in English multiple wh-questions all wh-words in a sentence are bound by a single wh-operator. The wh-word closest to the CP moves to its Spec position while the rest wh-words stay *in situ*, being bound by the same operator. This principle, however, is not applicable for

Russian as the data show. In Russian ‘true’ wh-questions<sup>3</sup> all wh-words have to move clause initially. One possible explanation is that wh-words in Russian are not bound by a single operator and each wh-word requires an individual operator. This requirement can be accounted by the fact that the nature of wh-words in Russian is different from that one in English. I claim that wh-words in Russian are polarity items.

As in English the [+Q] feature on wh-words in Russian is strong, therefore all wh-words have to move overtly to check it.

#### *The Shortest Move Condition*

Is the Shortest Move Condition effective in Russian? According to the Shortest Move Condition a wh-word closest to the Spec CP moves to that position. This explains the ungrammaticality of the second example in English, because the condition is violated:

(29) Who brought what?

(30) \*What brought who?

Russian as we saw allows variation. I repeat example (9)

Kto chto prines?  
Who what brought?

Chto kto prines?  
What who brought?

The Shortest Move Condition, however, is not violated. The explanation for this fact is the nature of the Russian language. In English declarative sentences constituents are assigned grammatical positions. They cannot move out of these positions: a subject always precedes an object, therefore it is always closer to Spec CP. Russian, being a discourse configurational language, allows relatively free word order, i.e. to satisfy certain discourse functions object can appear before subject in a sentence. Pesetsky (1987) suggests that wh-words can be discourse-linked or non-discourse-linked. Comorovski (1989) develops this idea further and suggests that while discourse-linked wh-words exhibit free word order, non-discourse-linked wh-words conform to strict ordering requirements (subject, indirect object, direct object, PP). This is true for Russian as well: in discourse neutral questions the order is as it is specified by Comorovski: Who what brought? If the object or adjunct phrase are focused or topicalised, they appear before the subject in the sentence and, therefore they are closer to the Spec CP.

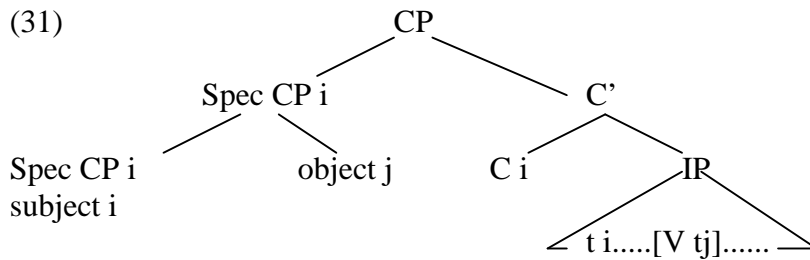
#### *Traces*

How are variables bound in the base position? I consider first the data from Bulgarian. Rudin (1988) claims that Bulgarian exhibits complex superiority effect, i.e.

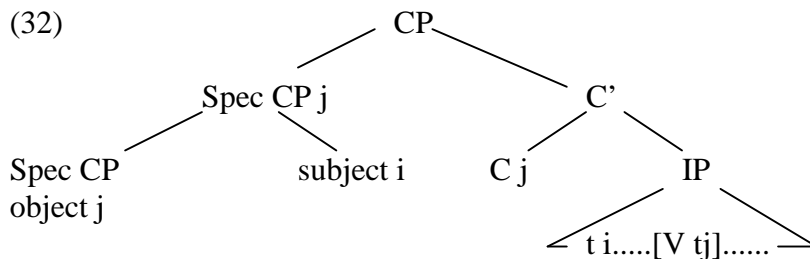
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<sup>3</sup> In the present paper I will not consider echo questions, in which wh-words either can stay *in situ* or take a different position in the sentence.

there is a certain order in which multiple wh-words must appear in the Spec CP: the left most is a subject position and the rest of the wh-words adjoin to it on the right.



The superiority effect is caused by ECP: the object trace  $t_j$  is properly governed by the verb, while the subject trace  $t_i$  is licensed by co-indexed C which head-governs it, i.e. both traces are properly governed. The following configuration according to Rudin is ungrammatical because the subject trace does not receive proper government:



As the above examples (9), (13) show Russian does not manifest the Superiority Effect and wh-object or wh-adjunct words can precede wh-subject. The order of multiple wh-words in a question depends upon the discourse functions of the sentence constituents, i.e. whether a constituent is topicalised or focused. This has to be freshly determined in every particular discourse situation.

The question of how the traces get the proper government still remains. According to ECP (Chomsky,1981) an empty category must be either lexically or antecedent governed. That explains the ungrammaticality of the examples in English:

- (33) \*I don't recall who left why.  
 (34) \*I don't recall why who left.<sup>4</sup>

Object traces get their government from lexical verbs. Neither subject nor adjunct position can be head governed. Both wh-subject and wh-adjunct traces require antecedent government, when a wh-word moves to the Spec CP and assigns its index to the head. This type of government, however, is available only to one constituent. The question then is how government is realised in cases where there is a subject and an adjunct (or two adjuncts) wh-words. These constructions as we can see are licit in Russian:

- (35) Kto kuda poshel?  
 Who where went?  
 Who went where?

<sup>4</sup> Examples from Hornstein and Weinberg (1995).

The solution to this problem is proposed by Hornstein and Weinberg (1995) in terms of Generalised ECP and g-projection. *The core idea is that the union of g-projections of all of the ecs bound by the same antecedent must constitute a sub-tree* (Hornstein and Weinberg, p. 259). By ‘sub-tree’ they mean a configuration when there is one antecedent for several empty categories; g-projection is defined as:

Y is a g-projection of X if

- (i) Y is a projection of X (in the usual sense of X' theory) or a g-projection of X, or
- (ii) X is a structural governor and Y immediately dominates W and Z, where Z is a maximal projection of a g-projection of X, and W and Z are in a canonical government configuration.

*Canonical Government Configuration (CGC)*

W and Z are in a CGC if

- (i) V governs NP to its right in the grammar of the language in question and W precedes Z
- or
- (ii) V governs NP to its left in the grammar of the language in question and Z precedes W.

It is assumed, however, that adjuncts are not properly governed. Therefore, the trace of adjunct cannot initiate a g-projection with its antecedent. The generalised EPC version can account for this phenomenon.

A g-projection set Gb of a category B where D governs B  
 for all P, P = a projection of D -> P is a member of Gb;  
 B is a member of Gb;  
 if K dominates B and K does not dominate D then K is a member of Gb.

*The Generalised ECP*

Let B<sub>1</sub>...B<sub>j</sub>, B<sub>j+1</sub>...B<sub>n</sub> be a maximal set of empty categories in a tree T such that there is an A, such that for all j, B<sub>j</sub> is locally bound by A. then {A}U(UG B<sub>j</sub>), 1 < j, n, must constitute a sub-tree of T.

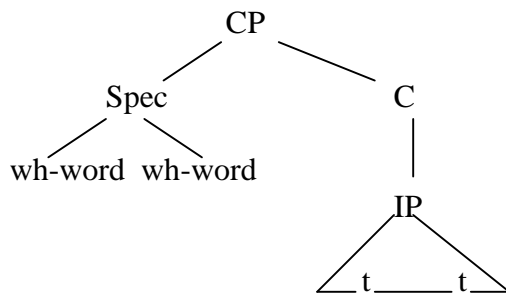
According to this *a given gap can be connected to its antecedent even if it cannot itself sprout a g-projection linking it to the antecedent just in case it connects to a g-projection of an ec with the same antecedent that does have a licit g-projection* (Hornstein and Weinberg, p. 259).

This means that the wh-word that moves to the Spec CP first assigns its index to the CP and a variable in the base position is governed by a c-commanding relation. The trace of the other wh-word gets government from a structural governor by means of a g-projection.

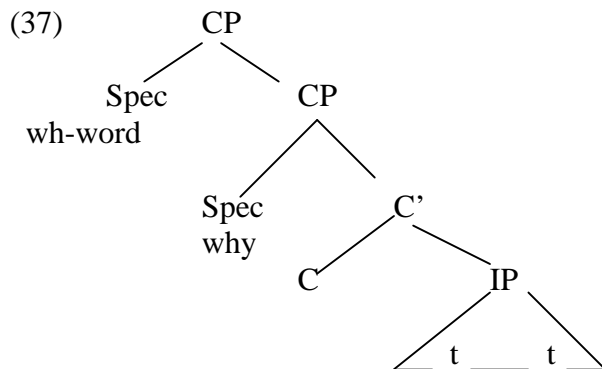
It may be the case that prepositions in Russian are structural governors and can initiate a g-projection. This question, however, remains not fully researched and needs additional consideration.

### *Wh-Landing Site*

What are the landing sites of wh-words in Russian? There are two options for the landing site of wh-words. As I said earlier, King (1995) claims that only the first word goes in the Spec CP and the rest adjoin to IP. I argue that if no other constituents go between wh-words they all land in the Spec CP. If there is an intervening element between them (Topic), then the wh-word following this element goes in the Spec FP:<sup>5</sup>



In multiple wh-questions containing 'why', 'why' appears in the scope of a higher wh-word yielding a structure in the following configuration:



At LF the possibility of an appearance of multiple wh-words can be accounted for the Scope Principle proposed by May (1985). According to May wh-words are quantifiers. Each of them has a narrow scope and they interact with each other. Wh-phrases adjoin to each other at LF, which results in the existence of a mutual c-command relation. The operators that bind wh-features have scope over each other freely. When one wh-word appears in the focus position, it raises to the Spec CP at LF and enters into a c-commanding relation with the other wh-word. In questions with a single wh-word in Focus position, movement of a wh-word is also applied at LF because it has to have a scope over the topicalised element. In multiple wh-questions with 'why', 'why' does not rise at LF. It has narrow scope and remains in the scope of a higher wh-word.

<sup>5</sup> I will consider here the derivation structure when a wh-word goes under Spec FP. More about it is in Section IV.

## Types of Syntactic constraints in Russian

Like English the Russian language observes some constraints on the extraction:

*Complex Noun Phrase Constraint*: extraction from a complex NP is not possible in Russian. No elements contained in a sentence dominated by a noun phrase can be moved out of that noun phrase:

- (38) \*Kakomu ansamblyu ty napisal [pesnyu [kotoraya byla o chem]]?  
 Which band you wrote song [which was about]  
 \*Which band did you write [a song [which was about]]?

*Subject Constraint*: extraction from a sentential subject is not allowed:

- (39) \*Kakuyu Rock zvezdu [chto politsiya arestuet] ozhidalos’?  
 Which Rock star that police would arrest expected?  
 \*Which rock star was [that police would arrest] expected?

*Left branching constraint*, however, is not observed in Russian:

- (40) Chiyu zhenu ty vstryl?  
 Whose wife you met?  
 Whose wife did you meet?
- Chiyu ty vstretil zhenu?  
 Whose you met wife?

The explanation for this is that the wh-words ‘whose’ and ‘which’ in Russian carry phi-features, i.e. in addition to case they are marked for gender and number. They are therefore interpretable at PF. According to the Minimal Effort Principle constituents move only by necessity. I presume that the second element moves to satisfy a discourse requirement, but otherwise stays in its base position.

*Island Constraint* also does not work in Russian: wh-elements can be extracted out of clauses introduced by another wh-element. Spec CP allows multiple branching, and at LF wh-operators interact with each other according to the Scope Principle, therefore, nothing blocks the movement of a wh-word.

Russian, however, observes the *strict cyclic condition*: wh-words moving from the lower clause to the higher clause go through the lower Spec CP. But because Russian allows multiple wh-branching in Spec CP there is no blocking for wh-phrases there.

A necessary requirement for wh-NP movement is that constituents must move from their case positions (Roberts, 1997). Case is assigned by a verb, therefore if the verb is non-finite, case is not assigned, the sentence is uninterpretable and the derivation crashes:

- (41) \*Kto kazhetcya [t govorit po Kitaiski]?  
 \*Who seems [ t to speak Chinese]?

## Summary

The above data show that there are a number of similarities in Russian and English wh-questions. The [+Q] feature is strong in both languages, it needs to be checked, therefore, overt movement is obligatory. Both languages display the properties outlined by Chomsky (1977):

- a wh-element moves to wh-XP;
- a wh-element leaves a trace in starting position;
- a wh-element moves to the position c-commanding the trace;
- a wh-element does not (necessarily) move to the closest possible position to its trace;
- a wh-element obeys the Structure Preservation Constraint;
- a wh-element moves to the Spec CP

As in English, the Shortest Move Condition, ECP, CNPC, the Subject Constraint and the Strict Cycling Condition are effective in Russian. However, Russian shows some significant differences from English:

- in multiple wh-questions all wh-words have to move clause initially;
- in addition to Spec CP, Spec FP is marked [+Q] in Russian;
- Spec CP in Russian allows multiple branching;
- Island Constraint and the Left Branching Constraint are not operative in Russian.

### Nature of Wh-words

In this section I argue that the nature of wh-words in Russian is significantly different from the nature of wh-words in English. In English the wh-feature is morphologically realised on the word and incorporated with the core in the lexicon. Russian wh-words are polarity items that lack inherent quantificational force. That means that they come out of the lexicon underspecified and get the [+Q] feature from a sentential operator at the S-structure.

I adopt the definition of a polarity item from Tsimpli and Roussou (1996). They define it as *an element whose distribution and interpretation are regulated by certain (specifiable) clausal properties and have no inherently negative or existential (in our case also interrogative) reading* (Tsimpli and Roussou, 1996, p. 51). In other words, they are items with an open position, not marked for any feature that is responsible for their interpretation. The position has to be closed by some operator which will make the item interpretable at PF and LF.

In Russian wh-proforms can have different interpretations depending on the feature that they receive:

*Wh-Proforms :*

kto who/ someone/ somebody/ anyone/ anybody/ everyone

chto what/ something/ anything

kuda where/ somewhere

kogda when/ sometime

kak how/ somehow

The interrogative reading of wh-words takes a bare form, the indefinite reading is derived either from the bare form or the bare form with a particle, and the universal reading is derived from the bare form in certain affective environments.

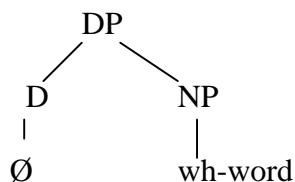
Russian has true existential quantifiers: kto-nibud' – someone/ anyone; chto-nibud' – something/ anything; kuda-nibud' – somewhere/ anywhere; kogda-nibud' – sometime, kak-nibud' – somehow. I show how the usage of polarity items functioning as existential quantifiers is different from the usage of real quantifiers.

## Interrogative wh-words

I adopt the hypothesis suggested by Cheng (1991) for Bulgarian and Polish, other Slavic languages with obligatory multiple wh-fronting. Cheng claims that *since the interrogative reading of a wh-word can alternate with an indefinite reading if a certain affix is present, the null hypothesis is that the wh-words themselves do not have inherent quantificational force* (Cheng, 1991, p.84).

The question is what gives quantificational force to wh-words and what serves as a trigger that licenses polarity items. I consider first the cases when wh-words function as interrogative wh-phrases, and then as existential and universal quantifiers.

Because wh-questions in Polish and Bulgarian do not have any overt question particles Cheng proposes that the interrogative force on a wh-word is determined by a null determiner, which attaches to wh-word:



Russian, similarly to Polish and Bulgarian, does not have an overt question particle, therefore I presume that Cheng's null determiner hypothesis is true for Russian:

- (42) Kogo ty videl?  
Who you saw?  
Who did you see?

- (43) Kuda on poshel?  
Where he went?  
Where did he go?

Cheng further claims that multiple fronting of wh-words is due to the licensing requirement, i.e. [D  $\emptyset$  [+wh]] must be licensed under a C head because it is marked [+Q]. Therefore the landing sites for interrogative wh-words are either Spec CP

(Bulgarian) or Spec CP and a position adjoined to IP (Polish). Licensing of wh-words in the IP position is possible because it is being c-commanded by a C head.

I argue that the movement is caused by the [+Q] feature that is in need of checking. In English because wh-words are prespecified for [+Q] in the lexicon they are all bound by the same operator at PF, therefore only one wh-word needs to move and the rest stay *in situ*. Other wh-words move to the Spec CP at LF according to the principle Procrastinate (Chomsky, 1995). In Russian wh-words are polarity items. They receive the [+Q] feature at S-structure from the null determiner. Because of this property of wh-words they are not bound by the same operator, therefore all of them are required to move clause initially to check their [+Q] feature.

I claim that in Russian C is not the only head marked for [+Q]. According to Tsimpli (1995), in Greek, the Focus Head is specified for a [+Q] feature in addition to the [+F] feature. From this it follows that an interrogative wh-word can check its feature in the Spec FP as well. Greek, however, does not allow both a wh-phrase and a focus phrase within a single clause (Tsimpli, 1995). The reason for this is that there is only one landing site for both the Focus phrase and the wh-phrase in Modern Greek, and they have identical scope domain at LF. That is why their co-occurrence is excluded.

According to Rudin (1986) for Bulgarian, a language which shows features similar to Russian, in 'true' (Rudin's terminology) wh-questions the syntactically focused position has to be unfilled because wh-words are related to the focus position through their semantics. Due to this fronted wh-words do not normally co-occur with other focused constituents within one sentence:<sup>6</sup>

- (44) \*Kakvo Ivan (Foc) pravi?  
 What Ivan does?  
 What is Ivan doing?

Rudin admits that there is a separate Focus position in the interrogative sentences in Bulgarian, but that it cannot be filled.

The data (examples 20, 21, 22) show that the Russian language allows for wh- and focus positions to be filled at the same time. It is necessary to keep clear that two types of focus should be distinguished: Contrastive and New Information (Kiss, 1995b).

Kiss distinguishes Focus operator and Informational (Presentational) Focus. They differ in few respects: a focus operator expresses exhaustive identification, whilst informational focus serves to convey new information. A focus operator takes scope, while an informational operator does not. The Focus operator is moved to Spec FP, informational focus does not involve any movement.

For the purpose of this paper the Focus operator presents more interest as it involves scope relations.

In Russian the value of the [F] feature can be set either positively (then it is realised morphologically with the particle *-to*, which attaches to the focus element) or negatively. When the [F] value is set positively the movement is obligatory. The particle '*-to*' attaches to different parts of speech:

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<sup>6</sup> Examples are from Bulgarian (Rudin, 1986)

- (45) Pochemu ty moloko-to ne kupil?  
Why you milk-to not bought?  
Why didn't you buy milk (foc)?
- (46) Kogda ty krasnoe-to (platie) kupila?  
When you red-to (dress) bought?  
When did you buy a red (foc) dress?
- (47) Kto skazal-to tebe?  
Who told-to you?  
Who (foc) told you that?

Hence the question: what is the landing site of the focused elements? As I mentioned earlier, King (1995) claims that Spec IP is a contrastive focus position. The [V] feature on the verb is strong in Russian. The verb has to raise to the I position to check its feature. Then there is a problem with the landing site of the focus particle '-to'. '-To' is a F morpheme and can be thought as the spell out of the [+F] feature. According to the F-criterion (Tsimplici, 1995) the following conditions should be observed:

*The F-Criterion:*

A [+F] X' must be in Spec-Head agreement with an F-Operator.

This means that an I head should be [+F] with '-to' going under I, which is a verb position. In the case where the verb is focused and presumably goes under Spec IP, it still leaves a trace in the I position and the particle -to cannot go there. Based on this I propose that Russian has a separate Focus position, which appears to the left of IP.

The only constituents that can intervene between a wh-word and a focused element is a subject or an object expressed by a pronoun:

- (48) Pochemu on ne zashel-to (k nam)?  
Why he not stopped (at our place)?  
Why (foc) didn't he stop at our place?

The next question is whether wh-words can appear in the Spec FP. The data show that wh-words cannot appear clause initially in a 'true' wh-question:

- (49) Otest chto emu kupil?  
Father what him bought?  
What did the father buy for him?

Or multiple wh-words can appear in both clause initial position and the third position:

- (50) Komu on chto kupil?  
Whom he what bought?  
What did he buy for whom?

These examples prove that wh-words can appear in the focus position, presuming that the second position is Topic.

Another indication of the fact that a wh-word, which does not appear clause initially, has to be in a focused position is the ungrammaticality of the following example:

- (51) \*Komu otets-to chto kupil?  
 Whom father (foc) what bought?  
 What did father buy for whom?

The noun 'otets' (father) marked with particle '-to' is a focused element in the sentence, i.e. it fills the position under Spec FP. As I said earlier, Russian allows only one focus position in the sentence and it is filled by the noun 'otets'; therefore the sentence is ruled out.

From this it follows that interrogatively marked wh-phrases in Russian can check their [+Q] feature either under Spec CP or Spec FP. It is necessary, however, to exclude the possibility that an interrogatively marked wh-word can also be marked for a [+F] feature. Because it is a polarity item, it cannot be licensed for more than one feature at the same time.

The presence of a constituent between a wh-word and a focused element (pronoun subject or object) can be explained by the fact that the position after C can be occupied by a Topic (Rizzi, 1997). However, 'heavy' information usually goes at the end of the sentence.

### Wh-words as existential quantifiers

Polarity items licensed as existential quantifiers can appear either in a bare form or take a particle. First I consider cases with bare form.

Cheng analyses data from Polish, where the bare form of wh-word also can be interpreted as an existential quantifier in certain affective environments (yes-no questions, conditional sentences). Cheng proposes that *when a bare wh-form is interpreted as existential, it appears with no determiner...only the core is present* (Cheng, 1991, p. 105). In this case a rule of 'existential closure' applies, which introduces a non-overt existential quantifier. This non-overt existential quantifier gives the core quantificational force, and at the same time it serves as a binder.<sup>7</sup> I show that this is the case for Russian when just a bare wh-form appears in a sentence:

- (52) Esli kto pozvonit day mne znat'.  
 If somebody calls let me know.
- (53) Esli chto sluchitsya ty budesh otvechat'.  
 If something happens you will be responsible.

Russian yes-no questions, however, require a real existential quantifier:

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<sup>7</sup> Cheng adopts the idea of existential closure from Heim (1982).

- (54) On tam kogo-nibud' videl?  
 He there anyone saw?  
 Did he see anyone there?

In some cases when wh-proforms function as existential quantifiers the particle '-to' is attached to a wh-word. As I have shown earlier the particle '-to' can function as a contrastive focus marker in Russian. It attaches to lexical parts of speech. A strong [+F] feature, which is in need of checking, causes the constituent to raise to the Spec FP. When '-to' attaches to wh-proforms it serves as a trigger and gives quantificational force to the wh-word. The ability of the particle '-to' to turn a polarity item into an existential quantifier, however, depends also on the tense of the clause:

- (55) Kto-to pozvonil.  
 Someone called.  
 Someone has called .
- (56) On kuda-to ushel.  
 He somewhere went.  
 He has gone somewhere.

The specificity of the tense feature which appears in Infl affects '-to'. Where the specificity of the tense feature is present only true existential quantifiers can function in a sentence:

- (57) Kto-nibud' pozvonit.  
 Someone call (future).  
 Someone will call.
- On kuda-nibud' poidet.  
 He somewhere go (future).  
 He will go somewhere.

The specificity of the tense feature does not necessarily require the presence of polarity items functioning as existential quantifiers. It can appear with true existential quantifiers. However, it affects the meaning of the sentence:

- (59) Emu kto-nibud' uzhe vse raskazal.  
 Him someone already all told.  
 Someone has told him everything already. (I think)
- (60) Emu kto-to' uzhe vse raskazal.  
 Him someone already all told.  
 Someone has told him everything already. (It is obvious)

These sentences differ only in the use of quantifiers. In the first example with a true existential quantifier there is just a probability in the speaker's remark, while in the second one with a polarity item, the speaker is certain in his statement. That means that there is an interaction between the tense feature on the verb and the particle '-to'. Because existential quantifiers raise to IP at LF, I propose that in declaratives with the

polarity item functioning as an existential quantifier, the particle ‘-to’ appears in IP, and it is in this position that it attracts the polarity item. This raising blocks ‘-to’ from appearing with a distinct feature (i.e. the focus feature) in the higher F position; therefore sentences containing both a polarity item functioning as existential quantifier and a focused constituent with ‘-to’ are illicit:

- (61) \*Ivan-to komu-to uzhe vse raskazal.  
 Ivan-to someone already everything told.  
 Ivan (foc) has already told everything to someone.

In the above example the Focus operator interacts with the polarity item (and the operator that binds it) which results in MLC violation.

### Wh-words as universal quantifiers

In certain affective environments ‘kto’ (who) proform can function as a universal quantifier:

- (62) Komu chto nravitsya.  
 Everyone something likes.  
 Everyone likes something different (tastes differ).
- (63) Kto kuda poshel.  
 Everyone somewhere went.  
 Everyone went somewhere.

This type of sentences has to contain two bare wh-forms, which I presume is the condition of the triggering environment. The first wh-word gets licensed as a universal quantifier, with a wide scope, while the second one is licensed as an existential quantifier, which gets narrow scope and appears in the scope of the universal quantifier. This is the only possible reading. In both cases only the core is present. An existential polarity item gets its quantificational force from a non-overt existential quantifier by means of existential closure. I presume that there is another non-overt quantifier that licenses the first wh-word as a universal quantifier. In this paper, however, I am unable to explain this licensing mechanism and leave this question open.

### Summary

In this section I tried to prove that Russian wh-words are polarity items that do not have inherent quantificational force and come out of the lexicon underspecified. They have to be licensed in the sentential context to be interpretable both at PF and LF. Russian has a null determiner that attaches to wh-words and gives them interrogative force. Polarity items functioning as existential or universal quantifiers get quantificational force from non-overt quantifiers.

Because wh-words are polarity items the [+Q] feature should be checked on each them. That explains the fact of obligatory movement of all wh-words clause initially, i.e. multiple wh-fronting in Russian. Because in Russian the Focus head is marked for [+Q], a wh-word can check its feature in the Spec FP as well.

## Wh-question Derivation Structure

In the previous section I briefly introduced the structure for Russian declarative sentences proposed by King (1995). For Russian wh-questions King adopts the structure suggested by Rudin (1988) which will be considered below. Before proceeding with it I present the derivation structures proposed for other Slavic languages, specifically Bulgarian (Rudin, 1988) and for Polish (Lasnik and Saito, 1984 ; Dornish, 1995).

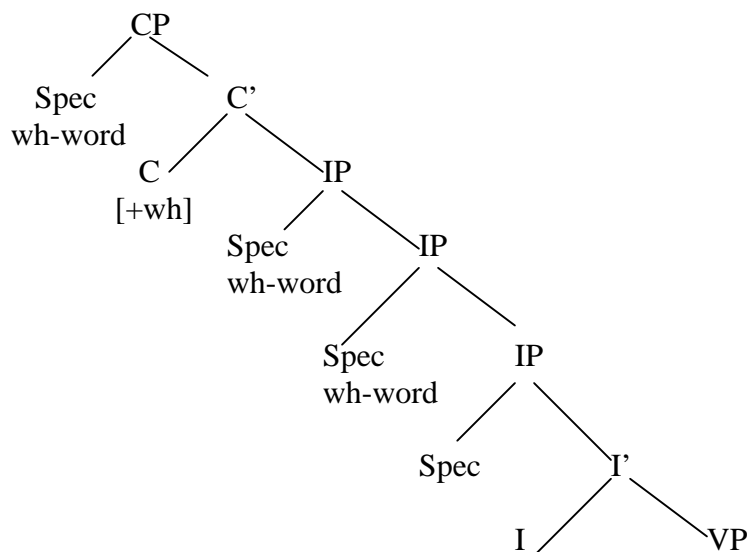
Rudin claims that in Bulgarian movement of wh-constituents to the Spec CP is obligatory. A sentence containing a wh-word in other than clause initial position is considered to be an echo question. This, as it was shown in the previous sections, is not true for Russian. Therefore I claim that in Russian wh-words have to move to the left periphery, i.e. be above the IP domain, but not necessarily to the Spec CP.

Rudin argues that in multiple wh-fronting in Bulgarian all wh-words move under the Spec CP. They act as a single unit and no constituents can be inserted between them. As I mentioned earlier Rudin does not allow a Focus position (or the Focus position must remain unfilled) in wh-questions in Bulgarian.

Rudin also analysis Russian data and suggests that in Russian only the first wh-word goes under the Spec CP, while the rest adjoin to the Spec IP. The reason for that is that other words can appear between wh-words in Russian interrogative sentences.

Lasnik and Saito (1984) propose a similar configuration for Polish:

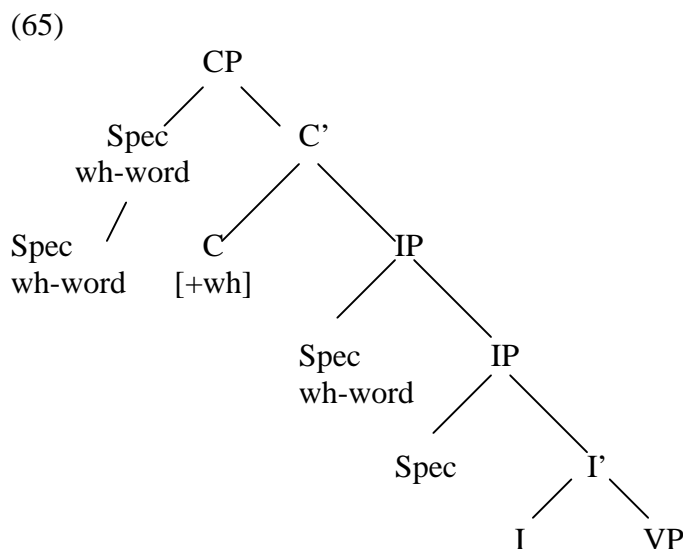
(64)



They advocate Rudin's view that in Polish in multiple wh-questions only the first fronted wh-phrase moves to the Spec CP, all the remaining adjoin to the IP. Lasnik and Saito put the following argument in support of their structure: clitics can appear after the first wh-phrase in the sequence of fronted wh-phrases or after the whole sequence. Since it is generally acknowledged that clitics move to C, then the rest of wh-words should adjoin to the IP.

Dornisch (1995), however, objects to this view. She points out the fact that clitics in Polish can go after the whole multiple wh-construction, which means either that all wh-phrases go under the Spec CP or that clitics take another position in the derivation tree but not C. Dornisch proposes her own version. Following Pesetsky (1987) she divides wh-phrases into discourse linked and non-discourse linked categories. She further claims that all non-discourse linked wh-phrases move into the

Spec CP and discourse linked wh-phrases adjoin IP. If a sentence contains only discourse linked wh-phrases, then to satisfy the wh-criterion the first wh-phrase moves to the Spec CP and the rest raise only to the Spec IP. The structure proposed by Dornisch looks like this:



I argue that none of the above proposed structures is suitable for Russian. I believe that the structural configuration put forward by Rizzi (1997) reflects the structure of Russian sentences.

Rizzi suggests a basic configurational structure of the left periphery (left of IP) which includes interrogative and relative pronouns, topic and focalised elements. Movement of sentence constituents to these positions according to Rizzi is caused not by the fact that they have to check their features, but by the requirement to satisfy discourse interpretation criteria. I believe that this is the case for topicalised elements in Russian, while wh-words and focused elements move to check their features, because [+Q] and [+F] are strong in Russian.

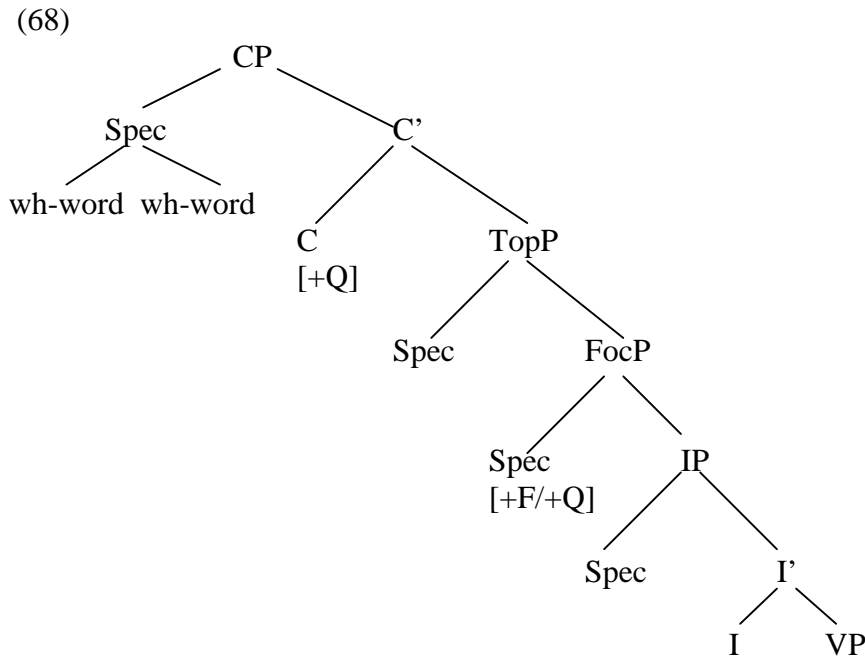
I argue that all wh-constituents move to the left periphery, i.e. to the left of IP. All wh-phrases in Russian move into the Spec CP if there is no intervening element. Wh-words are in c-commanding relations with each other. If a constituent appears between wh-words then a wh-word following this constituent appears in the Spec FP where it can check its [+Q] feature as well. At LF it raises to the Spec CP for scope reasons. The support for this claim is the following example:

- (66) Chto komu otets-to kupil?  
 What whom father (foc) bought?  
 What did father (foc) buy for whom?

The noun 'father' is marked with the contrastive focus particle '-to' and as I said before the Focus position is higher than the IP position which means that both wh-words go in the Spec CP. The ungrammaticality of the example which I repeat here supports the evidence for the hypothesis that the second wh-word should be in the Spec FP:

- (67) \*Chto otets-to komu kupil?  
 What father (foc) whom bought?  
 What did father (foc) buy for whom?

Based on the above analysis I propose that the derivation structure of a sentence in Russian has the following configuration:



## Conclusion

In the present paper a number of conclusions have been drawn. I repeat here only the most significant. My argument was that wh-words in Russian are polarity items that do not get any specific feature in the Lexicon. To be interpretable at PF and LF they have to be licensed by a sentential operator. Depending upon the operator that binds them, polarity items in Russian can function as interrogative wh-words, existential quantifiers or universal quantifiers.

This property of interrogative wh-words accounts for the obligatory multiple wh-fronting in Russian. Each wh-word has its own operator, therefore each of them has to move clause initially to check the [+Q] feature.

In Russian not only the C head, but also the F head is licensed for [+Q]. This property allows wh-words in Russian to check their features either in the Spec CP or the Spec FP.

Finally I argued that Russian has an extended structure of the left periphery, similar to that proposed by Rizzi (1997). It has separate Topic and Focus positions. In true wh-questions all wh-words have to move to the left periphery, i.e. above IP.

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