In this paper we’re going to look at the analysis of Wh-movement in MC, including problems of overt/covert movement (Logical Form), Focused sentence in MC, and the relative issues of irland/subjacency rules and restrictions in MC.

Our initial questions including the following two: (1) what kind of movement in involved (or is there movement involved?) in MC wh-questions? (2) Do all the wh-words behave the same way in regarding to movement? Interestingly, an brief investigation of the literatures in this field shows that the first question was typically dealt with in papers published in the 1980s (Huang, 1982; Xu, 1985; Chiang, 1989), while the second is a topic commonly seen in papers beginning from 1990s until now (Tsai, 1994,1999; Pesetsky, 2000; Soh, 2005).

Fact: while the wh-in-situ is the most commonly seen type of question in MC, it is perfectly acceptable in many cases to ask a question with a fronted wh-phrase in natural discourse, especially when s/he wants to focus on/stress the wh-item.

In Huang’s 1982 paper, which might be the earliest writing on this topic (and cited from time to time by following people), he pointed out that although structures such as those involving wh-questions in Chinese showed no evidence of movement at S-Structure, it was plausible to assume that such structures involve operator movement at LF. Hence the LF representation of (1) would be as in (1a):

(1a)[cp Shui [IP ni xiang [cp ti [IP Xi lai]]]] ?
  Who do you want to come

Note that the latter sentence represents only the covert movement of WH-word in LF, while no overt movement is permitted in such a sentence to be grammatical.

While I have no knowledge to judge this theory, there are other researchers questioned Huang’s arguments. Most notably, Xu and Langendoen (1985) maintained that wh-words in MC are interpreted in situ. The fronting of the wh-words is interpreted as the fronting of the base-generated topics. It is widely recognized that languages such as Chinese and Japanese are topic languages as opposed to English as a subject-object language. In a nutshell, in Chinese or Japanese, there is a topic of the sentence, which might be generated in subject or object position, appears in the initial place of a sentence. Example is shown in (2):
The soccer game you today watch ASP ending-question-marker
Did you watch the soccer game today?

It is obvious that the topic zuqiusai here is generated in base position(ei). Not the subject of the sentence.
Thus Xu treated wh-words in Chinese as the base-generated topics.
And its fronting movement is explained through the topic theory.

In a 1989 paper, Hoh and Chiang proposed a new interpretation of wh-movement in MC, arguing against both Xu(1985) and Huang(1982). They provided evidence showing that wh-items in MC are indeed moved categories, and they assume the S-structure move-wh in MC to be motivated by an abstract syntactic feature, FOCUS, which interacts with semantic focus/emphasis in interesting ways.
This is the analysis that I find convincing now and I’ll discuss it in contrast of Xu’s TOPIC analysis next.

Preclausal wh-phrases as TOPIC and as FOCUSsed items

Xu’s analysis could account for (3):

(3) [TOP shui de yanchu [ni zui ai kan ei?]]
    “whose performance do you like to see the most?”

However, note that the examples (4)(5)(6) show that only the gap in a TOPIC structure—but not a wh-question—can be filled by another NP:

(4) Alison de yanchu ni zui ai kan____
    “You love (to see) Alison’s performance the best.”[topic structure]

(5) Alison de yanchu ni zui ai kan Feijialuodehunli.
    “(As for) Alison’s performance, you like (to see) The Marriage of Figaro the best.”

(6)* Shui de yanchu ni zui ai kan Feijialuodehunli?
    “Whose performance do you like to see The Marriage of Figaro the most?”

We see different behavior here between a TOPIC and wh-movement structure.
In (4) we have the common topic structure in MC, with a gap in the post-verbal object position. When it is filled in (5), it is still a grammatical sentence. But the wh-question counterpart in (6) is ungrammatical, indicating that the wh-phrase “shui de yanchu” (whose performance) may have left a trace hence blocking the NP *The marriage of Figaro* occupying that place. Chafe (1976) “Chinese style topics VS topics that undergone movement.” “We would rather not consider the latter as ‘topics’ at all but as focused elements.” This is one argument that questioned the TOPIC theory and we’ll see the FOCUSed movement theory now.

Overall: wh-movement motivated by the FOCUS movement. When FOCUS is moved the wh-phrases must move.

Explain what is focus with examples. There is a focus marker, usually “shí”, and where it occurs, the word following it is meant to be focused/stressed. It can occur it many places which we will discuss below. We’ll also see examples later.

Both the movement of the focus and wh-word is represented in trees.

Object and shi(tree)-fronting
Subject and shi(tree)-fronting
Intermediate landing site-fronting

**TREE STRUCTURE IN ANOTHER SHEET OF PAPER**

Briefly mentioned restrictions of FOCUS
(1) Object focusing—ungrammatical [he ate NO FOCUS the apple.]
(2) More than one focus—ungrammatical
(3) THE FRONTING OF Wh cannot coexist with cleft sentence pp.57-58—might indicate that fronted wh-phrase is with a focus

Wh-phrase as FOCUSed item
Now we’ll see
These Eight examples show the same behavior between the FOCUSed structure and the moved wh structure.

Sentences below manifest the two options of FOCUS (FOCUS being in either INFL or C position) for the major categories of subject NP and PP:
(7) women dou zhidao shi Zhangsan li jia chu zou le. In-situ
We all know that it was Zhangsan who has left home.
(8) shi Zhangsan women dou zhidao li jia chu zou le.
It was Zhangsan that we all know who has left home.
You said that it was in May that they met.

According to the analysis, FOCUSed movement also involves wh-phrases, it is to be expected that move-wh and wh-in-situ should exist with the same constituents as well. This is precisely what we find:

Who do you know has left home?

Who did you say that they met?

Moreover, we find that (this is linked to the first restriction of FOCUS: not permitted in object position), Focus object in situ: not grammatical Wh- object in situ: grammatical. Hence, when the wh-object is in situ (which is grammatical), it is apparent that the structure cannot be generated with FOCUS. Thus, the unique constraint on the focusing of the post-verbal object provides the crucial piece of evidence that move-wh structures are FOCUSed while wh-in-situ questions are not.

The Only Superficial difference between FOCUSed wh- and non-wh-structure is that the first can appear without FOCUS marker but the second cannot.

To sum up: When FOCUSing is employed, i.e., when FOCUS is generated at D-structure, move-wh at S-structure is obligatory in Chinese.

If we have more time

2. recent analysis: wh-phrases fall into two groups, nominal and adverbial, only adverbial wh-phrases (wheishenme, why) raise to their scope position at LF, while

My own thoughts:

1. different treatment of what and who, where, when...
2. the analysis of wh-movement in Chinese seems to have always been interpreted as other types of sentence structures. Wonder whether an independent analysis is possible.