When 'What' Means 'Why': On Accusative Wh-adjuncts in Japanese

This paper investigates two distinct types of 'reason' adjuncts in Japanese. The **Accusative wh-adjunct** 'nani-o (what-Acc)' is usually translated in the same way as 'naze (why)', as shown in (1) (Kurafuji 1996, 1997; Ochi 1999). However, there are hitherto unnoticed differences between 'nani-o' and 'naze': (i) questions with 'nani-o' has an **animacy restriction** on its subject, and (ii) 'nani-o' is incompatible with **sluicing**. Based on these new observations, we propose that 'nani-o' is base-generated in a higher functional category than the position of standard 'reason' adjuncts. By clarifying the syntactic positions of these adjuncts, this study contributes to the typological study of adjuncts (Cinque 1990, among many others).

We observe that the subject of a clause with an Accusative wh-adjunct needs to be **animate** ((2a)), while there is no such restriction in questions with 'naze' ((2b)). The question in (2a) has a connotation that the speaker <u>is surprised at</u> and <u>disapproves of</u> the animate individual for his/her unexpected behavior; 'nani-o' is incompatible with an inanimate subject (e.g. *the ball* in (2a)) because an inanimate element is less likely to be 'blamed' for its behavior. Based on this fact, we propose that an Accusative wh-adjunct is syntactically generated in a functional projection which, in the semantics, is related to <u>speaker's attitude or an illocutionary force</u> (we will call it FP: (3)).

In our analysis (3), 'nani-o' precedes the subject in the base word order. However, the subject optionally precedes 'nani-o' as already seen in (1). We claim that the word order in (1) is derived by scrambling. Miyagawa (1989) argues that **a numeral quantifier** in Japanese needs to be base-generated adjacent to the NP it modifies; the numeral classifier in (4a) cannot modify the subject because it is base-generated in a separated position from the subject. On the other hand, the subject in (4b) *is* modified by the classifier below the Accusative wh-adjunct (Ochi 1999). This indicates that, while the subject in (4a) cannot be base-generated below the Accusative-marked object, the subject in (4b) is base-generated below 'nani-o' and then undergoes scrambling.

Kurafuji (1996, 1997) argues that Accusative wh-adjuncts receive a structural Case. He claims that the Accusative wh-adjunct 'nani-o' is compatible with transitive and intransitive verbs ((1)), but not with **passives and unaccusatives** ((5)); he concludes that 'nani-o' needs a verb with an Accusative Case-feature. However, we observe that Accusative wh-adjuncts *are* compatible with passives and unaccusatives when **the animacy restriction** is met ((6)). This indicates that the unacceptability of the 'nani-o' sentences in (5) has nothing to do with the verb's Case-feature, which in turn suggests that the Accusative Case of 'nani-o' is <u>an inherent Case rather than a structural Case</u>. Moreover, the fact that so-called **the Double-o constraint** (a constraint against having two Accusative-marked phrases in a clause: Harada 1973, Shibatani 1973) is absent (or at least weak) in sentences such as (1b) indicates that the Case of 'nani-o' has a different status than the canonical Accusative Case. Hence, our idea that an Accusative wh-adjunct is base-generated in a higher FP ((3)) is not problematic for its Case-assignment.

Another new observation of ours is that Accusative wh-adjuncts **do not allow sluicing** ((7)). Fox and Lasnik (2003) argue that a sluiced IP and its antecedent must satisfy a parallelism condition; an existential in the antecedent (e.g. *some reason*) and the trace of the sluiced wh-phrase (e.g. *why*) need to be in parallel positions. Suppose that 'nani-o' in (1) is base-generated in FP as we claim ((8a)), while standard reason adjuncts are base-generated in a VP-adjoined position ((8b)). Unlike (8b), (8a) violates parallelism because the position of the wh-trace (a position inside the FP) is not parallel to the position of the existential in the antecedent (a VP-adjoined position). Thus the data gain an explanation under our analysis.

(1) a. Kare-wa **naze/nani-o**   sawai-dei-ru   no?
        He-Top **why/what-Acc**   make.noise-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why is he making a noise?'
   b. Kare-wa **naze/(?)nani-o** henna   uta-o   utat-tei-ru   no?
        He-Top **why/(?)what-Acc** strange song-Acc   sing-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why is he singing a strange song?'
(2) a. *Ano   hito/#booru-wa*   **nani-o**   yuka-de korogat-tei-ru   no?
        That   person/#ball-Top **what-Acc** floor-on roll-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why is that person/#ball rolling on the floor?'
   b. *Ano   hito/booru-wa*   **naze**   yuka-de korogat-tei-ru   no?
        That   person/ball-Top **why**   floor-on roll-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why is that person/ball rolling on the floor?'
(3) [CP [FP **nani-o**   [IP   kare-wa [VP sawai]   dei-ru]   F]   no]
        what-Acc   he-Top   make.noise Prog-Pres   Q
(4) a. *Gakusei-ga   hon-o   **san-nin**   yon-da.
         Student-Nom   book-Acc   **3-CL(people)**   read-Past
        'Three students read books.'
   b. ?Gakusei-ga   **nani-o**   **san-nin**   sawai-dei-ru   no?
        Student-Nom   **what-Acc**   **3-CL(people)**   make.noise-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why are three students making a noise?'
(5) a. Henna uta   bakari-ga   **naze/*nani-o**   utaw-are-tei-ru   no?
        Funny song   only-Nom   **why/*what-Acc**   sing-Pass-Prog-Pres Q
        'Why are only funny songs being sung?'
   b. Densha-wa   **naze/*nani-o**   sonnani shocchuu okurete toochakusu-ru   no?
        Train-Top   **why/*what-Acc**   so   often   late   arrive-Pres   Q
        'Why do trains arrive late so often?'
(6) a. Mary-wa   **naze/nani-o**   izimer-are-tei-ru   no?
        Mary-Top   **why/what-Acc**   bully-Pass-Prog-Pres   Q
        'Why is Mary being bullied?'
   b. Kare-wa **naze/nani-o**   sonnani shocchuu   okurete toochakusu-ru   no?
        He-Top **why/what-Acc**   so   often   late   arrive-Pres   Q
        'Why does he arrive late so often?'
(7) John-ga (aru riyuu-de)   sawai-dei-ru   ga, watasi-wa **naze/*nani-o**   ka sira-nai.
    John-Nom (some reason-for) make.noise-Prog-Pres but I-Top   **why/*what-Acc** Q   know-not
    'John is making a noise (for some reason), but I don't know why.'
(8) [IP   John-ga   [VP (aru riyuu-de)   [VP sawai]]   dei-ru]   ga,
        John-Nom   some reason-for   make.noise   Prog-Pres   but
   a. *watasi-wa [CP **nani-o₁** [FP **t₁** [IP John-ga   [VP sawai] dei-ru] F] ka] sira-nai.
        I-Top   **what-Acc**   John-Nom   make.noise Prog-Pres   Q   know-not
   b. watasi-wa [CP **naze₁** [IP John-ga   [VP **t₁** [VP sawai]]   dei-ru] ka] sira-nai.
        I-Top   **why**   John-Nom   make.noise Prog-Pres Q   know-not

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