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On negative island e□ects and exhaustification with adjunct *nani-o* in Japanese

Introduction It has been acknowledged that accusative wh-phrases in Japanese can be interpreted as reason adjuncts. This paper o□ers new empirical data to argue against syntactic explanations for the (lack of) negative island e□ects observed in accusative wh-adjuncts and proposes that covert exhaustification operator even associated with this construction is responsible for it.

Apparent Negative Island E□ects (1a) exemplifies adjunct accusative wh-phrases (wh_{accR}, hereafter) in Japanese, where the accusative marked wh-element is not an argument of the predicate (e.g. *sawagu* 'clamour'). The wh_{accR} phrases have been shown to exhibit similar syntactic behaviors to the ones of usual reason adjunct wh-phrase, *naze* 'why', but these two di□er in that only the former is susceptible to negative island e□ects, as in (1a)-(1b) (Kurafuji (1996)). This contrast has been attributed to where these two are base-generated: while *naze* is base-generated above negation, wh_{accR} is merged below negation and the movement from that position crossing negation is banned because of (feature-based) Relativized Minimality (e.g. Endo (2015)). This explanation, however, is untenable in the light of the data in (2), where negation does not disallow wh_{accR} ((2a) is from Takami (2010)).

(1) a. Nani-o karera-wa sawai-{dei-ru/*dei-nai} no?
what-acc they-top clamour-asp-prs/-asp-neg q
"Why are/aren't they clamouring?" Kurafuji (1996)

b. Naze karera-wa sawai-
Why they-top

Proposal Our proposal is that the apparent negative island e□ects in (1a) results, because the described event is not "surprising" enough with respect to the speaker's expectation. We formalize this "surprise" connotation as covert even below (the moved) wh_{accR} (=(5a)), which checks whether its prejacent is less likely than its alternatives (=(5b)). We also propose that the unlikeliness ordering for this covert even is fed pragmatically by what the speaker considers "normal" (see Beaver and Clark (2008), Greenberg (2017) for flexibility of scales for *even*). Specifically, we propose that wh_{accR} induces a presupposition that p in $[wh_{accR}(p)]$ should not be true in the best worlds where the speaker's norms are satisfied, as in (5c).

(5) a. LF: $[_{CP}$ nani-o_1 even $[_{IP}$ $they_i$ $[_{NegP}$ $[_{vP}$ t_i $clamour_F$ for $t_1]$ neg] asp]] q]

b. $[\![$ even $]\!]^{c,w} = \lambda p_{s,t}$. p(w) = 1, defined if q C. [q