

Another Look at Sluicing in Japanese: The Presence and the Absence of the Copula*

TAKESHI OGURO
Chiba University of Commerce
t2oguro@cuc.ac.jp

Abstract: Sluicing in English is generally understood to involve a WH-phrase in [Spec, CP], which is typically raised to that position, and TP-deletion. Sluicing in Japanese is widely assumed to involve a reduced cleft structure, which is evidenced by the optional presence of a copula. This paper shows that certain WH-expressions in Japanese allow sluicing but are not compatible with a cleft structure and suggests that the English type of sluicing is possible in Japanese.

0. Introduction

Sluicing is an elliptical structure where an interrogative clause is reduced to a WH-phrase, with other elements missing. (1a) is a typical example, and it is synonymous with (1b).

- (1) a. Somebody just left -- guess who.
b. Somebody just left -- guess who just left.

Given this, Ross (1969) and Merchant (2001) argue that the second conjunct in (1b) is a result of WH-movement and TP-deletion that follows it, as in (2).

- (2) Guess [CP who [~~TP~~ just left]].

This structure has TP and CP, which are unpronounced, and it can be understood as a question.

Takahashi (1994) suggests that exactly the same thing takes place in Japanese. He provides the following example.

- (3) Mary-ga nanika-o katta rasii ga, boku-wa [nani-o ka] wakara-nai.
Mary-NOM something-ACC bought likely but I-TOP what-ACC Q know-not
'It is likely Mary bought something, but I don't know what.'

In (3) the second conjunct involves the part which is composed merely of the WH-phrase and the question marker but it is interpreted as an interrogative clause. Takahashi claims that the sluicing part has the following structure:

* I am extremely grateful to Yasuyuki Fukutomi, who helped me develop the material presented here. Warren Elliott deserves special mention for suggesting stylistic improvements. Thanks also go to Stefan Huber for suggestions.

- (4) [CP nani-o [~~TP Mary-ga t_i katta~~] ka]
 what-ACC Mary-NOM bought Q

In (4) the WH-phrase is scrambled to [Spec, CP], moving out of TP, which is elided. Assuming (4), (3) can correctly be understood as involving an interrogative clause.

Takahashi's claim has been questioned by many authors including Nishiyama, Whitman & Yi (1996) and Kuwabara (1997). One important question comes from the optional presence of a copula. Thus, the second conjunct of (3) can be realized as in (5).

- (5) ... boku-wa [nani-o da ka] wakaranai.
 I-TOP what-ACC COP Q not-know
'I don't know what.'

Nishiyama, Whitman & Yi (1996) and Kuwabara (1997) claim that Japanese sluicing involves a cleft structure with the subject clause being deleted. Given their ideas, I assume that the sluicing part of (3) has the following structure:

- (6) [CP Op₁ [TP [~~CP Mary-ga t_i katta no~~]-ga [VP nani₁-o (da)]] ka]
 Mary-NOM bought C-NOM what-ACC COP Q
'What it is that Mary bought'

The example in (3) involves a cleft structure, where the clausal subject is elided.

The sluicing constructions in English and Japanese can be summarized as in (7).

- (7) a. English: a WH-phrase in [Spec, CP], TP deleted
 [CP WH [~~TP.....~~]]
 b. Japanese: Cleft, subject CP deleted, a WH-phrase in VP
 [CP₁ [TP [~~CP₂.....~~]] [VP WH (copula)]] Q]

In English sluicing, the WH-expression is in [Spec, CP] and the whole TP is deleted. In the Japanese counterpart, the clausal subject is elided, and the WH-element stays in the complement position in VP, which is followed optionally by a copula and obligatorily by the Q-marker. This analysis conforms to the fact that Japanese is a non-WH-movement language.

It is important to note that the optional presence of a copula is the key in analyzing Japanese sluicing as involving a cleft structure. It is expected that they are all compatible with a copula and with a cleft construction. In this study, I show that some WH-expressions in Japanese allow sluicing but are not compatible with a copula nor with a cleft construction, which suggests that Japanese has the English type of sluicing cases, with the WH-expression in [Spec, CP].

This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 presents the existence of WH-expressions, namely, *nandemata* 'why' and *nandatte* 'why,' which allow sluicing but do not work well with a cleft construction. Section 2 shows that the English WH-expression *how come* is also compatible

with sluicing and incompatible with the cleft construction. Section 3 suggests that these WH-adjuncts are base-generated in the CP domain, on a par with *how come*. I attempt to derive this property from these expressions being conveyors of speaker's strong attitude. Section 4 discusses the behavior of *ittai naze* 'why the hell' and *why the hell*. Section 5 concludes the paper.

1. Acceptable Sluicing Cases Where the Copula Is Disallowed

The majority of studies on Japanese sluicing are based on the widely held observation that it optionally allows the presence of the copula *da*. There are, however, cases which go against this generalization, though they have gone unnoticed hitherto. Let us begin with the non-sluiced cases.

- (8) a. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [naze *pro* kubini-natta ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but why got-fired Q-TOP unclear-COP
'John got fired, but why he got fired is unclear.'
- b. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [nandemata/nandatte *pro* kubini-natta ka]-wa
 John-NOM got-fired but why got-fired Q-TOP
 fumei-da.
 unclear-COP
'John got fired, but why he got fired is unclear.'

Both of the indirect questions in (8) concern the same thing, namely the reason for John's being fired. They can both undergo sluicing.

- (9) a. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [naze ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but why Q-TOP unclear-COP
'John got fired, but why he got fired is unclear.'
- b. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [nandedemata/nandatte ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but why Q-TOP unclear-COP
'John got fired, but why he got fired is unclear.'

Both of the examples in (9) are fine. It is predicted under the cleft analysis that these WH-adjuncts should be compatible with the cleft construction. This prediction is only partially correct.

- (10) a. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [naze da ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but why COP Q-TOP unclear-COP
'John got fired, but why is unclear.'
- b. * John-ga kubini-natta ga, [nandemata/nandatte da ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but why COP Q-TOP unclear-COP

(10a) is fine, but (10b) is degraded. The discordance between these WH-expressions and a copula shows up even more clearly in matrix questions.

- (11) a. John-wa kubini-natta yo.
 John-NOM got-fired PRT
 'John got fired.'
- b. Naze desu ka?
 why COP-POLITE Q
 'Why?'
- c. * Nandemata desu ka?
 why COP-POLITE Q
- d. * Nandatte desu ka?
 why COP-POLITE Q

On a par with (10) and (11), this contrast is also observed in the cleft construction.

- (12) a. [_{CP1} [_{TP} [_{CP2} John-ga kubini-natta no]-ga [_{VP} naze da]] ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired C-NOM why COP Q-TOP unclear-COP
 'Why it is that John got fired is unclear.'
- b. * [_{CP1} [_{TP} [_{CP2} John-ga kubini-natta no]-ga [_{VP} nandemata/nandatte da]] ka]-wa
 John-NOM got-fired C-NOM why COP Q-TOP
 fumei-da.
 unclear-COP

Some WH-expressions are incompatible with copulas but they do allow sluicing. This paradigm raises the question of why some WH-expressions resist a cleft structure. The next section shows that a similar pattern can be found in English, which serves as a key to answering the question.

2. Similar Examples in English: *How Come*

It is interesting to note that English has a WH-expression which patterns in exactly the same way as these Japanese expressions. In addition to *why*, there is another WH-expression asking for a reason, namely *how come*. Both *why* and *how come* allow sluicing, as shown in (16).

- (13) A: Dick murdered his wife.
 B: Why? / How come?
 (Zwicky & Zwicky 1973: 931)

In the case of a cleft construction, only *why* is allowed and *how come* is disallowed.

- (14) a. It is [because of the hours] that John quit his job.
b. Why is it [e] that John quit his job?
c. * How come it is [e] that John quit his job?
(Collins 1991: 35)

In (14a), the reason for John quitting his job is focused. When asking the reason in this cleft construction, only *why* is allowed as in (14b), while employing *how come* leads to deviance, as in (14c), with nothing to be focused in the focus position. This shows that English sluicing is not derived from a cleft structure, as strongly advocated by Merchant (2001).

This English paradigm, then, can be taken to suggest that the behavior of *nandemata* and *nandatte* should receive about the same treatment as that of *how come*.

3. An Analysis

Below, an analysis of *nandemata* and *nandatte* is presented, based on the treatment of *how come*.

3.1. How Come

The pattern in (14) shows that *how come* cannot be related to the focus position. Collins (1991) claims that it is an interrogative head, which is always base-generated in the head position of an interrogative clause. Thus, (14c) is bad because *how come* originates in the sentence-initial position and there is nothing to fill the focus position. Ochi (2004) assumes *how come* to be phrasal and to be base-generated in [Spec, CP] of an interrogative clause. Ochi's view seems empirically favorable, since it has been known that in English complementizers like *whether* and *if* (as well as auxiliaries raised to the complementizer position) do not allow sluicing, while WH-phrases can readily allow sluicing. The forced absence of an interrogative complementizer in a sluicing context makes it difficult to assume *how come* (or even just *come*) to sit in the complementizer position. I assume (15), following Ochi.¹

- (15) *How come* is base-generated in [Spec, CP] of an interrogative clause.

With (15), the effect of (14) concerning *how come* can be captured. I also assume that *why* does not necessarily have to be base-generated in an interrogative Comp, in order to account for its behavior given in (14b).

¹ The lack of the subject-auxiliary inversion can be captured by assuming that the verbal part *come* in *how come* checks off the feature responsible for the inversion. See Ochi (2004) for details.

In (19) *how come* originates in the clause initial position and therefore it is unable to fill the focus position, which is instead filled by *John*. There is nothing wrong with the structure.

3.3. Motivating (16)

The proposal in (16) can capture the relevant effect, which shows that Japanese sometimes allows the English kind of sluicing. This leads to the question why (16) holds. In other words, what makes *nandemata* and *nandatte* different from *naze*?

To answer this question, it would be useful to look at another scenario where *nandemata* and *nandatte* are similar to *how come*. This additional parallelism is that speakers who utter questions involving these expressions do not know the answers and are emotionally affected.

As the paradigm in (20) shows, *how come* questions sound better when the matrix predicate *know* is negated.

- (20) a. I know why/??how come John is upset.
 b. ^(?) I don't know why/how come John is upset.
 (adapted from Ochi 2004: 34)

The same effect is observed in the questions with *nandemata* and *nandatte*.

- (21) a. Boku-wa [naze/*nandemata/*nandemata John-ga kubini-natta ka] sitteiru.
 I-TOP why John-NOM got-fired Q know
 'I know why John bought the book.'
 b. Boku-wa [naze/nandemata/nandemata John-ga kubini-natta ka] sira-nai.
 I-TOP why John-NOM got-fired Q know-not
 'I don't know why John bought the book.'

There are studies on WH-expressions which reflect the speaker's strong emotions, notably by Pesetsky (1987), den Dikken & Giannakidou (2002), and Huang & Ochi (2004). One of the important properties that they all notice is that these elements must appear somewhere high in a sentential structure. To account for this effect, I assume the following:

- (22) WH-expressions associated with strong emotions originate in [Spec, CP].³

The generalization in (22) answers the question. *Nandemata* and *nandatte* are required to be in [Spec, CP] because they carry strong emotions.

³ One difference between these expressions and *how come* is that while *how come* must originate in an interrogative Comp, *nandemata* and *nandatte* can originate in a declarative Comp, taking long distance scope.

4. *Ittai Naze* ‘Why the Hell’ and *Why the Hell*

So far we have examined and analyzed the behavior of *nandemata* and *nandatte*, drawing on the properties of *how come*. In this section, we see the distribution of similar expressions, which seem to be problematic at first sight, but actually are easily explained, under the present analysis.

4.1. *Ittai Naze* ‘Why the Hell’

In addition to *nandemata* and *nandatte*, there is another emotionally-colored reason-asking WH-expression, namely *ittai naze* ‘why the hell.’ On a par with *nandemata* and *nandatte*, speakers who utter this expression do not know the answers and they are in a strongly emotional state.

- (23) Boku-wa [ittai naze John-ga kubini-natta ka] ^{??} sitteiru/sira-nai.
 I-TOP the-hell why John-NOM got-fired Q know/know-not.
 ‘I (don’t) know why the hell John bought the book.’

Ittai naze allows sluicing, as expected.

- (24) a. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [ittai naze *pro* kubini-natta ka]-wa
 John-NOM got-fired but the-hell why got-fired Q-TOP
 fumei-da.
 unclear-COP
 ‘John got fired, but why the hell he got fired is unclear.’
 b. John-ga kubini-natta ga, [ittai naze ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired but the-hell why Q-TOP unclear-COP
 ‘John got fired, but why the hell is unclear.’

Contrary to expectation, *ittai naze* is compatible with the copula, that is to say, compatible with the cleft construction.

- (25) [CP1 [CP2 [TP2 John-ga kubini-natta] no]-ga ittai naze da ka]-wa fumei-da.
 John-NOM got-fired C-NOM the-hell why COP Q-TOP unclear-COP
 ‘[Why the hell it is that John got fired] is unclear.’

I show that this does not pose a problem to the present analysis.

It has been observed that *ittai* and its WH-associate can be separated.

- (26) Ittai sore-ga naze da ka-wa fumei-da.
 the hell it-NOM why COP Q-TOP unclear-COP
 ‘[Why the hell it is] is unclear.’

It is obvious that *ittai* and *naze* occupy different positions. What we have seen tells us that (26) has a structure as in (27).

way, the fine status of (30) can be captured. Though details need to be worked out, this seems to be a possible direction.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Japanese allows the English type of sluicing when the WH-expression involved is *nandemata* or *nandatte* because, unlike other expressions, they are base-generated in [Spec,CP], due to their emotionally colored nature.

References

- Collins, Chris. 1991. *Why and How Come*. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 15: 1–45.
- Dikken, Marcel den, and Anastasia Giannakidou. 2002. From *Hell* to Polarity: “Aggressively non-D-Linked” WH-Phrases as Polarity Items. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33: 31–61.
- Huang, James C.-T., and Masao Ochi. 2004. Syntax of the Hell: Two types of dependencies. *Proceedings of the North East Linguistic Society* 34: 279–293.
- Kuwabara, Kazuki. 1997. On the Properties of Truncated Clauses in Japanese. In Inoue, Kazuko (ed.), *Researching and Verifying an Advanced Theory of Human Languages*. Kanda University of International Studies, 61–83.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The Syntax of Silence: Sluicing, Islands, and the Theory of Ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nishiyama, Kunio, John Whitman, and Eun-Young Yi. 1996. Syntactic Movement of Overt *Wh*-Phrases in Japanese and Korean. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics*. Vol. 5. Stanford: CSLI, 337–351.
- Ochi, Masao. 2004. *How Come* and Other Adjunct *Wh*-Phrases: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective. *Language and Linguistics* 5: 29–57.
- Pesetsky, David. 1987. WH-in-situ: Movement and Unselective Binding. In Reuland, Eric, and Alice ter Meulen (eds.), *The Representation of (In)definites*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 98–129.
- Ross, John Robert. 1969. Guess Who? In Binnick, Robert, Alicia Davison, Georgia Green, and Jerry Morgan (eds.), *Papers from the 5th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 252–286.
- Saito, Mamoru. 2004. Ellipsis and Pronominal Reference in Japanese Clefts. *Nanzan Linguistics 1: Research Results and Activities*, 21–50.
- Sprouse, Jon. 2005. The Accent Projection Principle: Why the Hell Not? In Eilam, Aviad, Tatjana Scheffler, and Joshua Tauberer (eds.), *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics* 12.1: 349–359.
- Takahashi, Daiko. 1994. Sluicing in Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 3: 265–300.
- Zwicky, Arnold, and Ann Zwicky. 1973. *How Come* and *What for*. In Kahane, Henry Romanos, Renée Kahane, and Braj B. Kachru (eds.), *Papers in Honor of Henry and Renée Kahane*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 923–33.