

A Construction-Based Approach to Phrasal Adjuncts in Japanese*

Natsuko Tsujimura
(Indiana University)

Tsujimura, Natsuko. (2009). A Construction-Based Approach to Phrasal Adjuncts in Japanese. *Language Research* 45.1, 111-129.

The adverbial phrases consisting of NP-*o* NP-*ni* in Japanese exhibit a set of properties that are not apparent from each of the elements comprising them. There is no source for the Accusative Case and the constituents cannot be scrambled internal to the phrase. Furthermore, the phrase has a general meaning that provides the circumstantial background for the event described by the main clause. This article presents a construction-based approach to the adverbial phrases which recognizes them as a grammatical construction to which a set of unpredictable syntactic and semantic properties should be attributed.

Keywords: constructions, construction grammar, adjuncts, case, post-positions, Japanese

1. Introduction

Dubinsky and Hamano (2003) draw attention to a set of adverbial phrases in Japanese that are considered to have several unpredictable characteristics. An example is given in (1).

- (1) masao-wa [kiseru-**o** kuti-**ni**] aruita.
Masao-Top pipe-Acc mouth-at walked
'Masao walked with a pipe in [his] mouth'

(Dubinsky & Hamano 2003: 231)

The type of adverbial phrases in question characteristically consists of an NP marked with the Accusative Case -*o*, followed by another NP marked with the locative postposition -*ni*. In (1) the Accusative-marked NP, *kiseru-o* 'pipe-Acc', and the adjacent NP with the locative postposition, *kuti-ni* 'mouth-at', form

* I would like to thank two anonymous referees for their valuable comments. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 4th International Conference on Construction Grammar held at the University of Tokyo in 2006. I greatly benefited from comments I received from the participants at the conference.

such an adverbial phrase. The phrase serves as an adverbial modifier for the main clause event, i.e., *Masao-wa aruita* ‘Masao walked,’ describing the state in which Masao walked. The structure of this sort of adverbial modifiers is unpredictable and problematic given traditional approaches that treat Case particles as being assigned or checked. In particular, the presence of the Accusative Case on *kiseru* ‘pipe’ in (1) posits a problem because there is no verb that is normally considered an Accusative Case assigner such as a transitive verb: The adverbial phrase does not contain an Accusative Case assigner, and the sole verb in the main clause, *aruita* ‘walked’, is an intransitive verb. Furthermore, neither *kiseru-o* ‘pipe-Acc’ nor *kuti-ni* ‘mouth-at’ in the adverbial phrase is an argument of the main verb, *aruita* ‘walked’; nor are they obligatory or subcategorized adjuncts of the verb. That is, the constituents as well as the structural Case on one of them in the adverbial phrase are not licensed in a principled way. The example in (1) is not an isolated phenomenon, and sentences with expressions similar to (1) are amply found. Additional examples that are attested are given in (2-5).

- (2) [kiroi hata-ya nobori-o te-ni] hodoo-ni tatta.
 yellow flag-and (the like) banner-Acc hand-at sidewalk-at stood
 ‘[Students] stood on a sidewalk with yellow flags, banners, and the like in their hands.’
- (3) [umi-o senaka-ni] koosyo-e nigeru
 ocean-Acc back-at high place-to escape
 ‘(We) escape to a high place with the ocean in our back.’
- (4) [...hukuro-o kosi-ni] inagotori-o suru
 bag-Acc hip-at locust-hunt-Acc do
 ‘...(we) do locust hunting with a bag at the hips.’
- (5) [higeki-o mune-ni] anzen tikaoo
 tragedy-Acc chest-at safety let’s pledge
 ‘Let’s pledge for safety with the tragedy in our heart.’

Martin (1975) in fact extensively discusses the same type of adverbial phrases. He analyzes them as a case of “verb dropping” in which *X-o Y-ni site* “making X into Y” can drop the gerundive form of *suru* ‘do’, i.e., *site*, so that it functions adverbially. To illustrate a wide range of use of the resulting phrase, *X-o Y-ni* “with X as Y”, Martin gives examples like those in (6) as being derived through the “verb dropping” of *site* (pp. 470-471). For example, Martin analyzes the first phrase in (6) as being originated from *ano hito-o usio-date-ni site*.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (6) ano hito- o usiro-date- ni ... | ‘with him as backing...’ |
| kore- o kikai- ni ... | ‘taking this opportunity...’ |
| musuko- o oya-no kawari- ni ... | ‘letting son stand in for father...’ |
| kono ten- o sakai- ni ... | ‘with this point as a boundary...’ |
| sore- o itoguchi- ni ... | ‘with that as a clue...’ |
| sore- o kawakiri- ni ... | ‘with that as a starter...’ |

Dubinsky and Hamano, whose investigation centers on the source of the Accusative Case *-o* in (1), argue against Martin’s analysis that the adverbial phrase in (1) and similar cases is derived from a verbal source by dropping the verbal gerund *site*. Their reason for rejecting Martin’s approach is that there are instances in which the addition of *site* is considered ungrammatical, as (7) indicates.

- (7) [hana-o ryoote-ni (??site)] yattékita.
 flowers-Acc both hands-at(do) came
 ‘He came with flowers in both hands.’
 (Dubinsky & Hamano 2003: 234)

They instead claim that the presence of the Accusative Case in the adverbial phrase can be adequately accounted for within the Minimalist Program. Their analysis is specifically based on the following arguments: (i) the locative postposition *-ni* in (1) entails [+result], (ii) the adverbial phrase, *kiseru-o kuti-ni*, forms an AspP that bears the feature of [+result], and (iii) the Accusative Case is checked within this AspP. Based on these claims, they propose that the structure of (1) should look like (8).

- (8) [_{AspP} [kiseru-o]_i [_{PP} t_i kuti-ni_{+STATE}]] Asp_{+RESULT}]
 (Dubinsky & Hamano 2003: 239)

The primary goal of this paper is not necessarily to discuss Dubinsky and Hamano’s detailed analysis concerning the source of the Accusative Case in adverbial phrases like (1-5). Instead, I shall demonstrate that the type of modification relation between the main clause and the adverbial phrase as is illustrated in (1-5) is even more generally manifested than previously realized, sometimes taking slightly different surface configurations. Based on a wide range of modification patterns similar to (1-5), I will argue that adverbial phrases of the type in (1-5) as well as others to be shown in this paper are better characterized as a grammatical construction that serves as an adjunct with circumstantial meaning whose precise sense may range from spatial, temporal, causal, manner, and conditional, among others. A construction grammar approach enables us to group together seemingly separate kinds of adverbial

phrases into a unique construction, and to better capture the unpredictable semantic and functional characteristics that are underlying individual instances as a set of properties that belong to the construction itself.

2. Recognizing a Construction – The Circumstantial Adjunct Construction

Martin (1975) lists more than 200 phrases that he calls “phrasal postpositions” which take the sequence of a NP-*ni* followed by the gerundive form of a verb, as is schematized in (9). Examples of phrasal postpositions that he identifies include those given in (10). He explains that these expressions establish an adverbial relationship with a main predicate.

(9) NP-*ni*V-te (gerundive)

(10) a.	NP- <i>ni</i>	hansite oppose	‘against, contrary to’
b.	NP- <i>ni</i>	tuite attach	‘with respect to, about’
c.	NP- <i>ni</i>	awasete adjust	‘in adjustment to/with, in accord with’
d.	NP- <i>ni</i>	hazurete deviate	‘deviating from, contrary to’
e.	NP- <i>ni</i>	kagitte limit	‘in particular, only’
f.	NP- <i>ni</i>	makasete rely	‘leaving matters to’
g.	NP- <i>ni</i>	narrate follow	‘in imitation of’
h.	NP- <i>ni</i>	oite put	‘with respect to’

He gives the following description of phrasal postpositions (p. 577): “The items in the list vary in the degree of internal cohesiveness that each displays, as well as in versatility and breadth of distribution.” Many of the phrasal postpositions seem to have undergone semantic bleaching, thereby losing their compositional meanings, and have now come to be used more idiomatically. What Martin characterizes as “tighter internal cohesiveness”, I believe, refers to the degree of the idiomatic character that phrasal postpositions can display. To illustrate the tighter internal cohesiveness, Martin argues that the NP in the phrasal postposition NP-*ni* *tuite* ‘about NP’ in (10b) cannot be focused by the

particle *-mo*, as in (11a), but rather the entire unit must be focused, as in (11b). The same observation can be made concerning NP-*ni oite* in (10h), as is illustrated in (12).

- (11) a. *NP-*ni-mo tuite*
 b. NP-*ni tuite-mo* ‘about NP also/even’
- (12) a. *NP-*ni-mo oite*
 b. NP-*ni oite-mo* ‘with respect to NP also/even’

The tight cohesion is further observed on semantic grounds. The verbs in the gerundive form in (11) and (12), *tuite* and *oite*, have the literal meanings of ‘attach’ and ‘put’, respectively, but these meanings are not compositionally reflected in the semantic properties of the adverbial phrases. As phrases that take the form of (9), (11b) means ‘about X’ and (12b) ‘with respect to X’. Thus, the literal meanings of the verbs are no longer detectable in these adverbial phrases. It suggests that the meanings of these phrases are not compositional, and they are more like those of idioms.

Martin goes on to describe another set of similar expressions like those in (13), to which he refers as “quasi particles”.

- (13) a. NP-*o kiso-to site* ‘on the basis of NP, on grounds of NP’
 foundation
 NP-*o mohan-to site* ‘modeling after NP, with NP for a model’
 model
 NP-*o syugi-to site* ‘making NP a principle’
 principle
 b. NP-*o moto-ni site* ‘with NP as basis, on the basis/ground of NP’
 basis
 NP-*o tane-ni site* ‘with NP as a source’
 seed/source
 NP-*o gisei-ni site* ‘at the sacrifice/cost of NP’
 sacrifice

The significance of this set of phrases for the purpose of our discussion is that while (13a) and (13b) take slightly different forms, they all pattern with the phrasal modifier of (1-5) in several relevant respects. First, the phrases in (13) can take the form identical to those in (1-5) particularly concerning the sequence of the NP-*o* NP-*ni*. This is shown in (14), where the verbal element in (13), i.e., *site*, is eliminated, leading to the parallel sequence of NP-*o* NP-*ni* of (1-5).

- (14) a. NP-o kiso-ni 'on the basis of NP, on grounds of NP'
 NP-o mohān-ni 'modeling after NP, with NP for a model'
 NP-o syugi-ni 'making NP a principle'
 b. NP-o moto-ni 'with NP as basis, on the basis/ground of NP'
 NP-o tane-ni 'with NP as a source'
 NP-o gisei-ni 'at the sacrifice/cost of NP'

Second, as Dubinsky and Hamano (2003) discuss, while Japanese extensively exhibits scrambling phenomena, phrasal modifiers in (1-5) do not allow for scrambling between NP-*o* and NP-*ni*, as is shown in (15a). The same restriction applies to the phrases in (14), as is demonstrated in (15b).

- (15) a. *masao-wa [kuti-**ni** kiseru-**o**] aruita. (cf. (1))
 *[te-**ni** kiirōi hata-ya nobori-**o**] hodoo-ni tatta. (cf. (2))
 *[senaka-**ni** umi-**o**] koosyo-e nigeru (cf. (3))
 *[mune-**ni** higeki-**o**] anzen tikaoo (cf. (4))
 *[kosi-**ni** ...hukuro-**o**] inagotori-o suru (cf. (5))
 b. *kiso-**ni** NP-**o** 'on the basis of NP, on grounds of NP'
 *mohān-**ni** NP-**o** 'modeling after NP, with NP for a model'
 *syugi-**ni** NP-**o** 'making NP a principle'
 *moto-**ni** NP-**o** 'with NP as basis, on the basis/ground of NP'
 *tane-**ni** NP-**o** 'with NP as a source'
 *gisei-**ni** NP-**o** 'at the sacrifice/cost of NP'

The restriction on scrambling within these adverbial phrases may be interpreted to suggest a tight configurational relation, which is often associated with idiomatic expressions. In fact, as briefly mentioned above, such interpretation is supported by the fact that some instances in (14) and more examples like them that appeared in Martin's original list imply idiomatic readings. For example, the word *tane* in the second phrase in (14b), NP-*o tane-ni* 'with NP as a source', can be interpreted either as 'seeds' for flowers and plants or as (more metaphorical) 'source' when it appears as an independent noun. In the sequence of NP-*o tane-ni*, however, the meaning of 'seeds' does not arise, and as a whole the adverbial phrase identifies the source of the matter that is described in the main event.

It should be pointed out that the word order restriction illustrated above is an unpredicted property that seems to be specific to the construction. The scrambling phenomenon is prevalent in Japanese, and the relative order between an NP marked with the Accusative Case -*o* and an NP with -*ni*, whether -*ni* being analyzed as the Dative Case or the locative or directional postposition, is generally flexible. This is shown in (16-17).

- (16) a. taroo-ga purezento-o hanako-ni ageta.
 Ttaro-Nom present-Acc Hanako-Dat gave
 ‘Taro gave a present to Hanako.’
 b. Taroo-ga Hanako-ni purezento-o ageta.
- (17) a. hanako-ga buroochi-o mune-ni tuketa.
 Hanako-Nom brooch-Acc chest-at put on
 ‘Hanako put on a brooch on the chest.’
 b. hanako-ga mune-ni buroochi-o tuketa.

The *-ni* in (16) is the Dative Case while that in (17) is a locative postposition. Regardless of the nature of *-ni*, the NPs that are marked with *-ni* and those marked with the Accusative Case can be scrambled. That is, the word order restriction that is imposed on the construction in (15) is not applied in other constructions. Instead, it seems to be a special property that is unique to phrases like those in (1-5) and (14).

Third, the meaning and function of the expressions in relation to the main clauses are parallel between the two cases, (1-5) on the one hand and (14) on the other, in that they all serve as adjuncts describing the circumstances under which the events described in the main clauses take place. What I call the “circumstantial meaning” generalizes finer-grained semantic instantiations specific to the nature of the events and dependent upon the context. Thus, the circumstantial meaning ranges from spatial, temporal, manner, conditional, and causal, among others. Adverbial phrases in (1-5) internally illustrate spatial relations which further describe the manner in which each of the main event occurs; and those in (14) describe somewhat more abstract conditional or situational relations. Additional examples exhibiting other specific interpretations will be given later.

Finally, as Dubinsky and Hamano discuss, the source of the Accusative Case *-o* in (14) is not traceable, equally in (1-5). Internal to each of the phrases in (14), there is no verb, of which the NP marked with the Accusative Case serves as an argument. It is conceivable that the adverbial phrases in (14) are indeed abbreviated versions of (13), where the Accusative Case is attributed to the verbal element, *site* (the gerundive form of *suru*). In fact, such analysis seems to be plausible in the presence of the expressions with the verb *suru* in (18) which correspond to the phrases in (14).

- (18) a. NP-o kiso-to suru
 NP-o mohan-to suru
 NP-o syugi-to suru
 b. NP-o moto-ni suru
 NP-o tane-ni suru
 NP-o gisei-ni suru

Note, however, that NP-*o* X-*to suru* in (18a) and NP-*o* X-*ni suru* in (18b) have the structure and the Case array that are not predictable based on the light verb *suru* alone. Furthermore, the meaning is not compositional. The expressions in (18), instead, have the properties that resemble idioms. The Accusative Case in (14) cannot be attributed to the light verb *suru*. If the Case assignment in question has anything to do with the verbal source of (18) at all, it is not because of the presence of the verbal source *suru*, but because the Accusative Case is already present as a part of the idiom-like construction. When an adverbial phrase with the same structure is less idiomatic, the verbal source with the light verb *suru* like those in (18) is often not available. Dubinsky and Hamano's example in (7) falls under such cases; and (5) is another instance, as is shown in (19).

- (19) ??higeki-o mune-ni suru
 tragedy-Acc chest-at

The adverbial modifiers in (1-5) apparently share a set of properties with the noun-based “quasi particles” like those in (14). More important to our discussion is that whether or not the phrases in (14) find their source in the verbal structures of (13), the surface forms and meanings as well as constraints pertinent to them exhibited in (14) are much too similar to those in (1-5) to be treated separately. As was mentioned above, the verb-based “quasi particles” in (13) are fairly idiomatic in the current use especially with the light verb *suru* which displays instances of unpredictable behavior compared to its heavy verb counterpart. I would like to emphasize here that the same degree of unpredictability is shown in (1-5) and (14), and it is in part reflected by the Accusative Case marker on the first NP. Thus, I wish to claim that the form and meaning pair, namely the string of words consisting of NP-*o* and NP-*ni* with the general circumstantial meaning, comes from a construction which I will call the circumstantial adjunct construction. In so analyzing, I assume the definition of construction found in Goldberg (1995: 4): “a construction is posited in the grammar if it can be shown that its meaning and/or its form is not compositionally derived from other constructions existing in the language.” As I mentioned above, the unpredictable formal and semantic properties of adverbial phrases in (1-5) and (14) may in fact be predictable based on the existing idiomatic expressions like those in (18), but I will demonstrate in the remainder of this paper that the form-meaning pair that I call the circumstantial adjunct construction exhibits an ability to extend its instantiation beyond phrases that could have idiomatic verbal sources.

3. The Nature of the Circumstantial Adjunct Construction

At this point let us examine more closely the nature of the circumstantial adjunct construction as illustrated in (1-5) by extending the range of examples. Recall that we have briefly introduced Dubinsky and Hamano's (2003) analysis in (8), which is repeated below.

- (8) [_{AspP} [kiseru-o]_i] [_{PP} t_i kuti-ni_{+STATE}] Asp_{+RESULT}]

They identify *-ni* in this representation as a locative postposition that is associated with the feature [+result]. In their analysis the feature [+result] is crucial for the Accusative Case to be checked. Their basis of analyzing *-ni* as having the feature [+result] is that “*ni* is characteristically used in construction involving a positive result, or the attainment of a goal” (p.238). The “attainment of a goal” in the case of (1), for instance, is presumably meant to refer to an event in which a pipe is brought to a locational goal, namely, a mouth. It is seemingly possible to have comparable interpretations for (2-5) where some motion events can be presumed, but not all circumstantial adjuncts are required to assume such dynamic events which would lead to some results. Consider the examples in (20-25).

- (20) masako-wa [aza-**o** senaka-**ni**] umareta.
 Masako-Top birthmark-Acc back-at was born
 ‘Masako was born with a birthmark on her back.’
- (21) takao-wa [yudayazin-**o** titioya-**ni**] umareta.
 Takao-Top Jewish-Acc father-at was born
 ‘Takao was born to a Jewish father.’
- (22) ... kawamoto-mo [Kato-san-**o** onsi-**ni**] purogu-o
 Kawamoto-also Mr./Ms.Kato-Acc teacher-at programming-Acc
 hazimemasita.
 started
 ‘Kawamoto also started programming with Mr./Ms. Kato as his/her
 teacher.’ (http://www.ksen.biz)
- (23) sono yama-wa [ookii mizuumi-**o** usiro-**ni**] sobieteiru.
 that mountain-Top big lake-Acc behind-at towers
 ‘The mountain towers with a big lake behind it.’

- (24) [nido-ni wataru oiru syokku-**o** keiki-**ni**] koodo keizai
 twice-ranging Oil Shock-Acc turning point-at high degree economic
 seityoo zidai-wa syuuen-si...
 growth time-Top end

‘With (the effects of) two oil crises as a turning point, an era of high economic growth ended, ...’

- (25) [tokyo-no sitamati-**o** butai-**ni**] akarui seikatu-o
 Tokyo-Gen downtown-Acc background-at lively life-Acc
 okutteita ikka
 was leading family

‘the family who was leading a lively life with downtown Tokyo as its base’

The circumstantial adjunct in (20) describes the presence of a birthmark upon Masako’s birth. No event leading to a birthmark is conceivable. In (21) and (22) neither ethnic identity nor personal relationship where one individual is being considered a teacher seems to involve an event with an attainable goal. The circumstantial adjunct in (23) refers to a configuration in a naturally formed geographical setting. In this example, even the main clause denotes a spatial configuration, and thus nowhere in the entire sentence is an event that would induce a result or would assume a goal described. The phrases in (24) and (25) present yet another situation that would not be accurately captured either as a positive result or as an attainable goal: they refer to a temporal or spatial location that does not invoke dynamic events and simply provide static background information as a supplement to the events described in the main clauses. Thus, none of the adverbial phrases in (20-25) exemplifies what can be characterized as a positive result or an attainable goal. Instead, the semantic function of the adjuncts in (20-25) are better subsumed under the circumstantial meaning whose exact interpretations are more globally determined by figuring out how each adjunct contributes to the description of the main event. This often requires pragmatic considerations. In (20), for example, a spatial relation or inalienable possession is described internal to the adjunct, which in turn contributes to a physical depiction of Masako at birth. Internal to the adjunct in (22) is stated a particular personal relation, but the context of this sentence leads us to the interpretation that Kato being Kawamoto’s teacher is a condition under which Kawamoto started to take a programming seminar.

In our examples given thus far, we have observed a variety of specific semantic relationships that circumstantial adjuncts can have with main events. Some representative ones are repeated below, and additional examples are

given in (26-31) that imply causal relation, temporal relation, manner, and means to illustrate the wide scope of relations that circumstantial adjuncts may have with their main clauses.

spatial/locational relation

(2) [kiroi hata-ya nobori-**o** te-**ni**] hodoo-ni tatta.
yellow flag-and (the like) banner-Acc hand-at sidewalk-at stood
'[Students] stood on a sidewalk with yellow flags, banners, and the like in their hands.'

(23) sono yama-wa [ookii mizuumi-**o** usiro-**ni**] sobieteuru.
that mountain-Top big lake-Acc behind-at towers
'The mountain towers with a big lake behind it.'

conditional

(22) ... kawamoto-mo [kato-san-**o** onsi-**ni**] purogu-o
Kawamoto-also Mr./Ms.Kato-Acc teacher-at programming-Acc
hazimemasita.
started
'Kawamoto also started programming with Mr./Ms. Kato as his/her teacher.'
(<http://www.ksen.biz>)

(26) [CM-sityoo-**o** zyookken-**ni**] zizituzyoo muryoo-de
commercial-viewing-Acc condition-at virutually free-at
bangumi-o tanosimeru-koto-ni naru
program-Acc enjoy-fact-to become
'We can enjoy virtually free programs under the condition that we watch commercials.'
(<http://nikkeimedialab.jp>)

causal relation/reason

(27) ... kappuru-ga [inu-**o** kikkake-**ni**] koosai-o
couple-Nom dog-Acc opportunity-at dating-Acc
hukkatusareru-kamosirenai
revive-may
'... the couple may revive their relationship with dogs for reasons'
(<http://abcdane.net>)

(28) gozisin-ga [kega, byooki-**o** genin-**ni**] nyuuinsareta baai, ...
self-Nom injury illness-Acc cause-at hospitalization occasion
'... on occasion that you get hospitalized due to injury or illness ...'
(www2.jalux.com)

temporal relation

- (29) ... inkujettoprinta-wa [deru-no sannyuu-o tenki-ni] ... ookina
 inkjet printer-Top Dell-Gen inclusion-Acc turning point-at big

henka-ga aru-daroo
 change-Nom be-will

‘There will be a big change in inkjet printers with the inclusion of Dell as a turning point.’
 (www.itmedia.co.jp)

means/manner

- (30) [kisetu-no mezurasii yasai-o zairyoo-ni] tukuru kimuti
 season-Gen new vegetable-Acc ingredients-at make kimchee
 ‘kimchee that are made with new seasonable vegetables as ingredi-
 ents’
 (www.koparis.com)

- (31) [sekai-o aite-ni] tatakau gizyutu
 world-Acc opponent-at fight technology
 ‘the technology with which a battle is fought against the world’
 (www.atmarket.co.jp)

All these examples point to the conclusion that while individual instances of the circumstantial adjunct construction may vary in their exact interpretations as to what sort of modification relationships they have with main events, the fundamental semantic role that they play is captured broadly as a general description of a situation under which the main event takes place. In this sense the semantic nature of circumstantial adjuncts does not seem to be localized to some unique feature such as [+result]. Nor is the fundamental semantic (or functional) property of “providing circumstances” given rise to by putting the meaning of each word within the phrase compositionally together. While the precise nature of a given circumstance, such as condition, causal relation, temporal relation, and means/manner, may be determined by the compositional meaning, it should be emphasized that the more general functional meaning of these phrases is not predictable given each composite of the phrase. Instead, the nature of the semantic properties is inherent to the construction as a whole, especially taking into consideration a globally and often pragmatically understood relationship with the modified main event.

The semantic characterization of circumstantial adjuncts is reminiscent of the “semantic indeterminacy” that Kortmann (1991) describes of the absolute construction in English such as *With a beautiful bride in his arm, Bill walked out of church.* (cf. Stump 1985, Riehemann & Bender 1999) English absolutes are interpreted in many ways (e.g., temporal, causal, and conditional, among others), depending on the nature of the matrix clauses. Kortmann also points out

that absolutes appear more frequently in the written form than in speaking. The instances of circumstantial adjuncts in Japanese discussed in this paper also appear to have a tendency for the written style although a formal study needs to be conducted to confirm this. The set of linguistic properties that has been described as specific to circumstantial adjuncts, then, may well underlie similar constructions in various languages, bearing a typological significance.

The frequent use of circumstantial adjuncts in the NP-*o* NP-*ni* pattern is readily supported by the data obtained in our internet search. The extent to which circumstantial adjuncts are commonly attested, however, is even better understood when we pay close attention to Martin's original description of examples like (1): That is, what we have identified as circumstantial adjuncts are not restricted to the NP-*o* NP-*ni* sequence, but rather include the pattern where an adjectival form appears in place of NP-*ni*. Martin's sole example is in (32) (Martin 1975: 472), but additional samples of the same pattern that are actually attested are given in (33-36).

- (32) [makura-**o** takaku] neru
pillow-Acc high sleep
'sleep with one's pillow high (=in peace)'

- (33) mune hatte [mesen-**o** takaku] aruite-kudasai
chest hold eye-Acc high walk-please
'Please walk with your head and eyes high'

(<http://blog.golfdigest.co.jp>)

- (34) [kuti-**o** ookiku] hanasu-no-ga yokatta-ne
mouth-Acc big speaking-Nom was good-wasn't it
'It was good to speak with his/her mouth open, wasn't it?'

(www.c-mam.co.jp)

- (35) [koe-**o** hikuku] hanasu-no-ni kusinnsita
voice-Acc low speak-in order to made efforts
'(s/he) made efforts in speaking in a low voice'

- (36) syoppingutuaa-de [ryookin-**o** yasuku] iku-koto-mo dekiru-keredo
shopping tour-in cost-Acc cheap going-also can do-but
'in a shopping tour (you) can go at a low cost, but...'

(www.alan1.net)

In each of the examples of (32-36), the rightmost word within the bracketed phrase is an adjective in the *ku*-form. Adjectives in the *ku*-form normally have an adverbial function, modifying predicates. In the examples of (32-36), how-

ever, the adjectives *takaku* 'high', *ookiku* 'big', *hikuku* 'low', and *yasuku* 'cheap' modify the preceding NPs marked with the Accusative Case *-o*. Notice that the Accusative Case is not expected to appear in association with predicative adjectives. Nor does the Accusative Case in these examples associated with the verbs that describe the main events: *neru* 'sleep' in (32), *aruku* 'walk' in (33), *hanasu* 'speak' in (34-35), and *iku* 'go' in (36). These verbs are intransitives and the NPs that are marked with the Accusative Case are not subcategorized by the verbs, as is shown in (37).

- (37) (cf. 32) *makura-o neru
 (cf. 33) *mesen-o aruite-kudasai
 (cf. 34) *kuti-o hanasu
 (cf. 35) *koe-o hanasu
 (cf. 36) *ryokin-o iku

Furthermore, in each of the examples of (32-36) the NP that is marked with the Accusative Case *-o* and the adjectival form cannot be scrambled, as in (38). Recall that this is the restriction imposed on the circumstantial adjuncts of the form NP-*o* NP-*ni*, as was illustrated in (15).

- (38) *[takaku makura-o] neru (cf. (32))
 *mune hatte [takaku mesen-o] aruite-kudasai (cf. (33))
 *[ookiku kuti-o] hanasu-no-ga yokatta-ne (cf. (34))
 *[hikuku koe-o] hanasu-no-ni kusinnsita (cf. (35))
 *syoppingutuaa-de [yasuku ryokin-o] iku-koto-mo
 dekiru-keredo (cf. (36))

The meaning and function of the phrases in (32-36) resembles our earlier examples of circumstantial adjuncts as well. They all modify the main predicates and bear circumstantial interpretations. For instance, the adjunct in (34) describes the manner of speaking, namely, with the mouth wide open, which is an indication of clear speaking; and in (36) the low cost of traveling describes the condition or circumstance of the traveling.

Interestingly, the NP-*o* NP-*ni* sequence and the NP-*o* Adj-*ku* sequence such as those in (32-36) are not the only patterns that share the properties we have been focusing on. Added to these two structural patterns is the sequence of an NP-*o* followed by an adjectival noun. An example of this pattern is taken from our internet source, as is given in (39).

- (39) [nihongoban-ga urikireteru-koto-o saiwai-ni] tyuugaku
 Japanese version-Nom sold out-fact-Acc lucky-at middle school

itinen-no musume-ni eigoban-o koonyuu-simasita
 first year-Gen daughter-for English version-Acc bought

‘Luckily with the Japanese version sold out, I bought the English version for my daughter, who is the first year in middle school.’

(www.amazon.co.jp)

The last word in the bracketed phrase in (39), *saiwai* ‘lucky’, is an adjectival noun. It resembles a noun in that its conjugation patterns follow those of nouns and shares the descriptive meaning with another type of adjective that we have examined in (32-36) above. Thus, adjectival nouns have properties both as nouns and as adjectives. However, this class of words separates itself from nouns and adjectives on the basis of its prenominal modification pattern: It needs to be accompanied by *-na* when a modified noun follows it. This is shown in (40).

- (40) itigatu-ni-wa saiwai-na koto-ga takusan atta.
 January-in-Top lucky thing-Nom many was
 ‘There were many lucky things in January.’

If *saiwai* were a noun, it would be marked with the Genitive Case, *-no*, before another noun *koto* ‘thing’; but the fact that *saiwai* appears with *na* as a prenominal modifier suggests that the word belongs to the adjectival noun category. The NP marked with the Accusative Case and the adjectival noun *saiwaini* in the adjunct in (39) cannot be switched in the word order. Furthermore, the sequence has a circumstantial interpretation: The unavailability of the Japanese edition, evaluated as being fortunate here, has led to a purchase of the English edition, which is helpful to her daughter’s education. Thus, while exact constituents of a phrase may slightly differ, whether NPs, adjectives, or adjectival nouns, the syntactic and semantic nature of the phrases in (32-36) and (39) is no different from all the examples of circumstantial adjuncts that are formed with nouns as the second required member. Treating these cases separately seems to lose important general properties that are shared by them. Instead, these general properties belong to the circumstantial adjunct construction itself. Various manifestations of the construction with slightly different constituent categories that we have demonstrated above, then, could well be considered family members of the circumstantial adjunct construction.

It is interesting to further point out that the rightmost constituent that is found within the circumstantial adjunct construction, i.e., NP-*ni*, Adj-*ku*, or AdjN-*ni*, can appear in sequence within the same circumstantial adjunct. This seems to be true at least for NP-*ni* and Adj-*ku*. The examples in (41-42) con-

firm the observation.

- (41) taroo-wa [sono kessin-**o** mune-**ni** kata-**ku**]...
 Taro-Top that decision-Acc chest-at firm
 ‘With that decision firm(ly) in his mind, Taro...’

cf. taroo-wa [sono kessin-**o** mune-**ni**]...
 Taroo-wa [sono kessin-**o** kata-**ku**]...

- (42) itidan-wa [hata-**o** sora-**ni** taka-**ku**]...
 team-Top flag-Acc sky-in high
 ‘With the flag high in the sky, the team...’

cf. Itidan-wa [hata-**o** sora-**ni**]...
 Itidan-wa [hata-**o** taka-**ku**]...

As the examples in (41-42) illustrate, NP-**ni** and Adj-**ku** in the circumstantial adjunct construction can appear either individually or in sequence, maintaining the same range of circumstantial meaning. When they appear in sequence, however, the order seems to be fixed between the two, with NP-**ni** first and Adj-**ku** second. The reverse ordering as in (43-44) makes the construction unacceptable.

- (43) *taroo-wa [sono kessin-**o** kata-**ku** mune-**ni**]...

- (44) *itidan-wa [hata-**o** taka-**ku** sora-**ni**]...

Thus, whether they appear individually or in sequence, all the properties of the circumstantial adjunct construction are observed to the same extent.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that adjuncts of the three slightly varying forms, as is schematized in (45), constitute a family of the circumstantial adjunct construction.

- (45) a. [_αNP-*o* NP-*ni*] [IP ...]
 b. [_αNP-*o* Adj-*ku*] [IP ...]
 c. [_αNP-*o* AN-*ni*] [IP ...]

α=adjunct to IP

The meaning paired with the forms in (45) is captured as providing a general description of a situation under which the event depicted in a main clause occurs. The specific semantic and pragmatic nature of a circumstantial adjunct is dependent upon the nature of the matrix clause and is determined individually.

There are several issues that have motivated a construction approach. First, the source of the Accusative Case is not found given standard views of Case assignment. The Accusative Case generally assumes the presence of a verb or at least some predicative or functional element, but the Accusative Case in circumstantial adjuncts is not associated with any such predicative or functional elements. That is, the presence of the Accusative Case is entirely unpredictable. Second, the fixed word order within a circumstantial adjunct is unexpected given the wide-spread scrambling phenomena in the language. Third, the function and the meaning of such a string of circumstantial adjuncts are not predictable on the basis of the meaning and function of individual words within the adjuncts or the composition thereof. These properties are all shared by the instances of the construction in (45). Note that the same line of argument may be extended to verb-based “quasi particles” in (13) since the degree of unpredictability that motivated a constructional approach to the forms in (45) is mostly observed in (13).

In this connection and particularly concerning the Accusative Case in the circumstantial adjunct construction, it could still be possible, as Martin (1975) originally did, to attribute the Accusative Case to the presence of the light verb *suru*. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that even some instances of circumstantial adjuncts with adjectives in the form of (45b) appear with *suru*, as is shown below in (46-47).

(46) [makura-o taka-ku **site**] neru (cf. (32))
makura-o takaku suru

(47) [kuti-o ookiku **site**] hanasu-no-ga yokatta-ne (cf. (34))
??kuti-o ookiku suru

As mentioned earlier, on the other hand, not all examples of the circumstantial adjunct construction show their verbal sources with the light verb *suru*. Furthermore, the same assumption cannot be made with the pattern of (45c): A parallel structure of (39) with the light verb the gerundive form of *suru* (i.e., *site*) is not available; nor, is it possible to posit its sentential source, as in **X-o saiwai-ni suru*. All cases considered, then, it is difficult to always connect the circumstantial adjunct construction to another construction with the verb *site/suru*. One potential way of looking at this situation is that particularly in the construction type of (45a) and perhaps (45b), the construction originally comes from its verbal source, where the Accusative Case is indeed traced back

to the verb, *suru*, as a part of an idiom, but has gained the status as an independent construction. And by analogy the construction is now extended to other lexical categories to fully include the types in (45b) and (45c) as well as a wider range of instances that take the pattern of (45a). In either way, a synchronic analysis of the range of data available in the modern Japanese is adequately accommodated by the construction approach adopted in this paper.

The unpredictable property of the presence of the Accusative Case has an interesting implication to the way in which Japanese Case markers are viewed especially in the context of Case systems in general. While we customarily call *-ga* and *-o* the Nominative and the Accusative Cases in Japanese, as Andrew Spencer originally pointed out to me (cf. Tsujimura 2007), these Case markers exhibit properties somewhat different from Case systems observed in other languages such as Latin, Russian, and Old English. In the general Case systems we see that Case endings are considered a part of noun, and as such, their deletion or replacement by other elements is not possible. It is well known in Japanese, however, that what we call Cases, or Case particles, can be dropped especially in casual speech, or they can be replaced by focus markers like *mo* 'also' and *sae* 'even'. Thus, it is plausible that Japanese Case markers may not be generalized into a more common type of Case systems and this may well contribute to the unexpected appearance of the Accusative Case in circumstantial adjuncts. However peculiar the Japanese Case system may be in this respect, in discussing circumstantial adjuncts we have witnessed that not all instances of Case realization have resulted, or can result, from Case assignments of some sort, where some predicative or functional elements are responsible for the distribution of Case markers. We have adopted a construction approach and have viewed the Accusative Case as a part of a larger set of properties that belong to the construction. This view of Case-marking then does not seem inconsistent with a more global Case determination discussed in Sells (2005), who suggests a variety of factors for Case-marking including referential properties of arguments, lexical semantic properties of verbs, tense, aspect, and clause-level implicatures (cf. Spencer 2003). I believe that the construction approach adopted in this paper in fact adds to the inventory of Case-marking patterns.

It might be said that our investigation of the circumstantial adjunct construction has focused on a somewhat peripheral phenomenon whose linguistic behavior falls outside the core grammar. However, the non-standard Case pattern, among other unpredictable properties of the construction, would not have been otherwise revealed and explained, and it is often the study of peripheral phenomena that leads to capturing accurate linguistic generalizations. In this sense, the examination and discussion of circumstantial adjuncts in this paper, I believe, is consistent with the spirit advocated in construction grammar in general.

References

- Dubinsky, Stanley and Shoko Hamano. (2003). Case checking by AspP: The syntax and semantics of predicative postpositions. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 12, 231-242.
- Goldberg, Adele. (1995). *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. University of Chicago Press.
- Goldberg, Adele. (2006). *Constructions at Work*. Oxford University Press.
- Kortmann, Bernd. (1991). *Free Adjuncts and Absolutes in English: Problems of Control and Interpretation*. Routledge.
- Martin, Samuel. (1975). *A Reference Grammar of Japanese*. Yale University Press.
- Riehemann, Susanne and Emily Bender. (1991). Absolute constructions: On the distribution of predicative idioms. *WCCFL* 18, 476-489.
- Sells, Peter. (2005). Non-dative oblique subjects in Japanese. Paper presented at the LSA Meeting.
- Spencer, Andrew. (2003). A realizational approach to case. Butt, M. and T. Holloway King, eds., *Online Proceedings of the LFG03 Conference*. CSLI. 387-401.
- Stump, Gregory. (1985). *The Semantic Variability of Absolute Constructions*. Reidel.
- Tsujimura, Natsuko. (2007). *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics*, 2nd edition. Blackwell.

Natsuko Tsujimura
Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures
Goodbody Hall 248
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana 47405, USA
E-mail: tsujimur@indiana.edu

Received: October 30, 2008

Revised version received: May 13, 2009

Accepted: May 22, 2009

КСІ