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# On the Argumenthood of Quotes in Japanese: A Study of Argument Doubling\*

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## 1 Introduction

Quotative phrases in Japanese, which are quintessentially headed by *-to*, have been subject to extensive investigation, with much attention being paid particularly to the relationship between their syntactic structures and interpretations. This paper aims to deepen our understanding of constructions with a quote (QU) followed by an accusative object (AO) in Japanese, as exemplified in (1). We dub constructions of this sort the QU-AO sequence.

- (1) Jun<sub>i</sub>-wa [yooyaku karezisini<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to mus<sub>i</sub>-no ii koto-o  
Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to insect-GEN good something-ACC  
tubuyaita.  
whispered  
Lit: “‘Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,’ Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.’

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Although the QU-AO sequence has been reported by Eguchi (1992), Fujita (2000), and Oshima and Sano (2012), among others, it has received relatively little attention in the generative literature, to the best of our knowledge, with the exception of Miyamoto (2017).<sup>1</sup> This paper proposes that the structural configuration of the QU-AO sequence in Japanese is analogous to argument doubling in the sense of Saito (2017, 2024). It will be shown that syntactic and semantic properties exhibited by the QU-AO sequence in Japanese naturally follow from the proposal developed below without any additional stipulations. We also explore the implications of the current proposal, suggesting that the unavailability of its counterparts in English stems from the fundamental differences between Japanese and English—that is, the presence or absence of phi-feature agreement and weak heads comparable to overt case-markers.

This paper is organized as follows: In the next section, we describe the basic properties of the QU-AO sequence to be dealt with in this paper. In Section 3, we discuss the argumenthood of QUs, which suggests that the QU-AO sequence is an instance of argument doubling. Section 4 introduces Saito's (2017, 2024) analysis of argument doubling in Japanese, and Section 5 offers our proposal on the QU-AO sequence, which crucially rests on Saito's proposal. In Section 6, by showing that the (un)availability of the sequence under consideration in English and Japanese is naturally explained under Saito's proposal, which relies on the presence/absence of phi-features, we support the current proposal on the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. Section 7 concludes this paper.

## 2 Some Restrictions on the QU-AO Sequence in Japanese

One intriguing property of the QU-AO sequence in Japanese is that, as noted by Miyamoto (2017), QUs cannot occupy the focus position of cleft sentences, while AOs can, as shown in the contrast between (2a) and (2b).

- (2) a. \*[Jun<sub>i</sub>-ga mus<sub>i</sub>-no ii koto-o tubuyaita]-no-wa [[yooyaku karezis<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga  
Jun-NOM insect-GEN good something-ACC whispered-C-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM  
subete umaku iku] to] da.  
all well go to COP  
Lit: 'It is "every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well" that Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.'
- b. [Jun<sub>i</sub>-ga [yooyaku karezis<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to tubuyaita]-no-wa [mus<sub>i</sub>-no  
Jun-NOM finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to whispered-C-TOP insect-GEN  
ii koto]-o da.  
good something-ACC COP  
Lit: 'It is something selfish that Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered, "every plan of his<sub>i</sub> would finally go well."'

Additionally, Fujita (2000) points out that AOs, exemplified in (1), must be of a type that can *evaluate* or *judge* the content indicated by QUs, suggesting that *musi-no ii koto-o* 'something selfish' in (1) can be replaced with AOs with the function in question, such as *iikagenna koto-o*

<sup>1</sup> Due to space limitations, our discussion that follows only concerns the QU-AO sequence, in which QUs are potential selectees by verbs of saying/reporting/thinking, setting aside cases where QUs are of pure adjunct types, in that they are not semantically required to saturate the meaning of relevant verbs. Interested readers are referred to Goodhue and Shimoyama (2022), Özyıldız and Uegaki (2023), and Tomioka and Kim (2024) for detailed discussion of such constructions.

‘something irresponsible’ or *asahakana koto-o* ‘something inconsiderate’.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, AOs, such as *hitotu-no koto-o* ‘one thing’ or *nitizyootekina koto-o* ‘mundane matters’, are unable to follow QUs because they cannot *evaluate* or *judge* the content denoted by QUs, as demonstrated in (3).

- (3) \*Juni-wa [yooyaku karezisini-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to hitotu-no koto-o /  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to one-GEN something-ACC  
 nitizyootekina koto-o tubuyaita.  
 mundane something-ACC whispered  
 Lit: ‘“Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered one thing/mundane matters.’

No such restrictions apply to the occurrence of AOs in cases where QUs are absent, as evidenced in (4), indicating that relevant restrictions emerge only in the presence of QUs.

- (4) Jun-wa hitotu-no koto-o / nitizyootekina koto-o tubuyaita.  
 Jun-TOP one-GEN something-ACC mundane something-ACC whispered  
 Lit: ‘Jun whispered one thing/mundane matters.’

Besides, focus particles, such as *-dake* ‘only’, can be attached to AOs but not QUs, as shown in (5) (see Fujita 2000 for other focus particles incompatible with QUs).

- (5) Juni-wa [yooyaku karezisini-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to(\*-dake) musu-no ii  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to-only insect-GEN good  
 koto(-dake)-o tubuyaita.  
 something-only-ACC whispered  
 Lit: ‘(\*Only) “every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered (only) something selfish.’

The main focus of this paper is to clarify the relationship between QUs and AOs with regard to matrix verbs. To explain the peculiar properties of the QU-AO sequence that we have seen so far, we propose that the QU-AO sequence in Japanese is an instance of argument doubling in the sense of Saito (2017, 2024). In Section 3, we will examine and confirm the argumenthood of QUs.

### 3 On the Argumenthood of Quotes

The discussion so far has not addressed the grammatical status of QUs in the aforementioned QU-AO sequence in Japanese. We will argue that relevant QUs serve as arguments, rather than adjuncts, setting the stage for our proposal to be presented in Section 5.

First of all, *tubuyaku* ‘whisper’ can select a QU, and its omission results in the unacceptability of the sentence, except in cases where the QU is contextually salient and recoverable, as shown in (6) (# in the following example stands for a marker indicating that a sufficient context is required for the sentence to be acceptable).

<sup>2</sup> If predicates other than *tubuyaku* ‘whisper’ are used, a similar but slightly different (semantic) restriction applies to the occurrence of AOs. For instance, the verb *yakusokusuru* ‘promise’ permits the QU-AO sequence (Fujita 2000), but in this case, AOs are delimited to a concrete plan or a proposition associated with the content of QUs. Although the current paper discusses AOs with *tubuyaku* ‘whisper’, the reader will easily see that our proposal can accommodate cases with other verbs.

- (6) Jun<sub>i</sub>-wa #([yooyaku karezisin<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to) tubuyaita.  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to whispered  
 Lit: “‘Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,’ Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered.”

Therefore, the QU behaves like an argument in that it can be selected by predicates, and its omission is permitted only in the presence of contextual information.

Secondly, let us examine how the *soo su* ‘do so’ replacement applies to the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. Generally speaking, as demonstrated in the examples in (7), vP adverbs can be stranded when a verb phrase is replaced with *soo su* ‘do so’, whereas objects must be involved within a domain that the relevant replacement targets (Miyamoto 2017).

- (7) a. Aki-wa isoide ringo-o tabeta.  
 Aki-TOP quickly apple-ACC ate  
 ‘Aki ate apples quickly.’  
 b. Taroo-mo (isoide) soo sita.  
 Taroo-also quickly so did  
 ‘Taroo did so (quickly).’  
 c. \*Taroo-mo (isoide) mikan-o soo sita.  
 Taroo-also quickly orange-ACC so did  
 Lit: ‘Taroo also did so oranges (quickly).’

The contrast between (7b) and (7c) indicates that arguments of verbs must be targets for the *soo su* ‘do so’ replacement in Japanese, with vP adverbs being optionally replaced with it. With this argument versus adjunct asymmetry in the *soo su* ‘do so’ replacement in mind, let us consider whether QUs in the QU-AO sequence behave in a way analogous to arguments of verbs or adjuncts. Consider the examples in (9a) and (9b). Suppose that (9a) and (9b) are continuations of (8). Of importance here is that only (9a) is seen as an appropriate continuation after (8).

- (8) Jun<sub>i</sub>-wa [yooyaku karezisin<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to mus<sub>i</sub>-no ii koto-o  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to insect-GEN good something-ACC  
 tubuyaita.  
 whispered  
 Lit: “‘Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,’ Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.”
- (9) a. Taroo-mo soo sita.  
 Taroo-also so did  
 ‘Taroo did so.’  
 b. \*Taroo<sub>j</sub>-mo [yooyaku karezisin<sub>j</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to soo sita.  
 Taroo-also finally himself-gen plan-NOM all well go to so did  
 Lit: ‘Taroo<sub>j</sub> also did so, “every plan of his<sub>j</sub> will finally go well”.’

The unacceptable continuation in (9b) after (8) is an indication that QUs in the QU-AO sequence should be arguments of verbs of saying/reporting/thinking, as they show exactly the same behavior as the arguments of verbs in (7). Neither QUs nor AOs in ordinary transitive sentences can be stranded when the *soo su* ‘do so’ replacement is executed; thus, they should be grouped together with *arguments* of predicates. The examples in (9), coupled with the examples in (7), empirically

support the claim that QUs in the relevant QU-AO sequence in Japanese have argumenthood.

Based on the discussion so far, it has been confirmed that QUs, as well as AOs, have argumenthood in the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. Note that QUs indicate the content of verbs of saying/reporting/thinking, as just discussed above. Given the argumenthood of QUs, both AOs and QUs receive the *Theme* theta-role from these kinds of verbs in the QU-AO sequence. Therefore, it seems likely that the construction in question is an instance of argument doubling, as defined by Saito (2017, 2024), in that a verb takes two internal arguments that receive the same theta-role from it. In the next section, we will review Saito's accounts of argument doubling in Japanese. Subsequently, we will analyze the QU-AO sequence in Japanese, building upon Saito's analysis.

#### 4 Argument Doubling in the Sense of Saito (2017, 2024)

Based on Harada's (1973) observation, Kuroda (1988) postulates that Japanese allows for sentences with multiple AOs, as in (10a). The marginality of (10a) is argued to come from a surface constraint against the realization of multiple AOs within a single clause, which Harada (1973) calls the double-*o* constraint.

- (10) a. ?\*Aki-ga kudamono-o budoo-o tabeta.  
           Aki-NOM fruit-ACC grape-ACC ate  
           Int: 'Aki ate fruits, and it was one grape.'  
       b. [Aki-ga kudamono-o tabeta]-no-wa budoo-o hito-tu da.  
           Aki-NOM fruit-ACC ate-C-TOP grape-ACC one-CL COP  
           Lit: 'It is only one grape that Aki ate fruits.'

Given the double-*o* constraint, it is expected that if one of the AOs undergoes dislocation across a clause, the grammaticality of the sentence improves. This expectation is, in fact, borne out in (10b), where the second argument is dislocated to the focus position of the cleft sentence (Harada 1973; Saito 2017, 2024; among others). Saito (2017, 2024) refers to multiple AOs of this kind as argument doubling, proposing that argument doubling can be licensed in Japanese.

However, argument doubling is not always acceptable even when transformed into cleft constructions, as demonstrated in (11b), a stark contrast to what was observed in (10b).

- (11) a. \*Mary-ga John-o gakusei-o san-nin hometa.  
           Mary-NOM John-ACC student-ACC three-CL admired  
           Int: 'Mary admired John and three students.'  
       b. \*[Mary-ga John-o hometa]-no-wa gakusei-o san-nin da.  
           Mary-NOM John-ACC admired -C-TOP student-ACC three-CL COP  
           Lit: 'It is three students that Mary admired Taroo.'

To account for the grammatical contrast between (10b) and (11b), Saito (2017, 2024) proposes two conditions on argument doubling. First, the first argument in argument doubling necessarily plays a role in specifying a set of alternatives for the second argument, which is ultimately interpreted as a focus (Rooth 1992). Specifically, the first argument *kudamono-o* 'fruits' in (10) delineates the set of alternatives for the second argument *budoo-o* 'grape'; thus, the first argument

restricts the set of alternatives to fruits, as represented in (12). Accordingly, (10) in fact indicates that it is only *one grape* among the members of the set in (12) that Aki could eat.

- (12) {one apple, two peaches, five oranges, one grape, ...}

Saito (2017, 2024) argues that the ungrammaticality of (11) can be analyzed as resulting from the failure of *Taroo* to determine a set of alternatives for *gakusei-o san-nin* ‘three students’.

The other condition, Saito (2017, 2024) argues, is related to a restriction on the number of events/states depicted by a predicate. The abstract schema of argument doubling in (13a) must satisfy the condition in (13b), with the two AOs obliged to be included in only one event/state. Saito also points out that two AOs are to receive the same theta-role (e.g., *Theme*) from a predicate.

- (13) a. [TP ... DP-ACC<sub>1</sub> DP-ACC<sub>2</sub> ...]  
 b. [TP DP-ACC<sub>1</sub> ...] and [TP ... DP-ACC<sub>2</sub> ...] depict the same event/state (Saito 2017: 12)

The difference in grammaticality in (10b) and (11b) can be explained in a principled way. In (10b), Aki eating a fruit and her eating one grape is interpretable as describing the same event, resulting in a grammatical sentence. In contrast, in (11b), Mary admiring John and her admiring three students cannot be taken as the same event/state, and thus, (11b) is analyzed as ungrammatical.

## 5 Proposal

Recall that in the QU-AO sequence under discussion, appropriate AOs are limited to those that can evaluate or judge the content indicated by QUs (Fujita 2000). Given the restriction on the appearance of AOs in such sentences, we propose that the Japanese QU-AO sequence under consideration is homogeneous with argument doubling in the sense of Saito (2017, 2024), arguing that the QU designates a set of alternatives for the AO, which obtains a focus interpretation.

This proposal readily captures the semantic restriction imposed on the occurrence of AOs in the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. For example, let us consider (1), repeated here as (14), where the AO *musi-no ii koto-o* ‘something selfish’ follows the bracketed QU. In this case, we hypothesize that the QU specifies a set of alternatives for the AO, confining its possible alternatives to something that can evaluate or judge the content denoted by the QU, as represented in (15).

- (14) Jun<sub>i</sub>-wa [yooyaku karezisini<sub>i</sub>-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to musi-no ii koto-o  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to insect-GEN good something-ACC  
 tubuyaita.  
 whispered  
 Lit: ‘“Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.’

- (15) {something selfish, something irresponsible, something inconsiderate, ...}

With this proposal, the ungrammaticality of (3) can be straightforwardly explained in a way that the AOs, *hitotu-no koto-o* ‘one thing’ or *nitizyootekina koto-o* ‘mundane matters’, cannot be taken to be something capable of evaluating or judging the content that the QU indicates. They are not suitable for a set of alternatives delineated by the QU, thereby leading to ungrammaticality.

As discussed in Section 4, the first argument in argument doubling cannot serve as a focus element in clefts because the second argument, which is necessarily interpreted as a focus, is in

turn contained within a presupposed clause, resulting in a contradiction to what argument doubling requires in terms of semantic and informational perspectives. If the QU-AO sequence in question can be analyzed as analogous to argument doubling, this analysis is readily extended to the contrast between (2a) and (2b). Based on the current analysis, example (2a) is ungrammatical because the AO with an inherent focus interpretation is involved within a presupposed part of the cleft sentence, violating the proposed semantic and informational restrictions imposed on the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. In (2b), on the other hand, the AO occupies a focus position, whereby no contradiction arises with the semantic and informational constraints on the AO under discussion.

The ungrammatical pattern in (5) can be accounted for in the same way as that of (2a). The AO in the QU-AO sequence is compatible with the overt focus particle *-dake* ‘only’ because it is inherently focused. In contrast, as discussed above, the QU must specify a set of alternatives for the AO. We assume that if the QU is focused instead of the AO, a correct interpretation of the QU-AO sequence cannot be derived, because the AO under consideration, unlike the QU, is unable to determine an appropriate set of alternatives for the QU.

It is worthwhile noting here that the same restriction applies to argument doubling. As exemplified in (16), the presence of *-dake* ‘only’ on the first argument makes the sentence completely ungrammatical (= (16a)), whereas, as argued by Saito (2017, 2024), the sentence improves when the relevant focus particle is attached to the second argument (= (16b)).

- (16) a. \*Aki-ga kudamono-dake-o budoo-o hito-tu tabeta.  
 Aki-NOM fruit-only-ACC grape-ACC one-CL ate  
 Int: ‘Aki ate only fruits, and it was one grape.’  
 b. ?Aki-ga kudamono-o budoo-o hito-tu-dake tabeta.  
 Aki-NOM fruit-ACC grape-ACC one-CL-only ate  
 Int: ‘Aki ate fruits, and what she ate was only one grape.’

Assuming that in argument doubling, the first argument generates a set of alternatives for the second argument (Saito 2017, 2024), the ungrammaticality of (16a) is likely to be explained in a way parallel to the QU-AO sequence; to be more specific, an appropriate interpretation of argument doubling is rendered unavailable when focus is assigned to the first argument.

Recall that Saito (2017, 2024) argues that the number of events/states denoted by predicates in argument doubling is confined to one; no multiple events/states can be invoked in such constructions. This also holds for the QU-AO sequence in Japanese. In fact, Fujita (2000) observes that *yagate* ‘eventually’, which is an adverb indicating the time gap, cannot intervene between the QU and the AO in the QU-AO sequence. Other adverbs of this sort, such as *sibarakusite* ‘after a while’ and *yayaatte* ‘after a moment’, exhibit the same behavior, rendering sentences ungrammatical. Example (17) demonstrates this point.

- (17) \*Juni-wa [yooyaku karezisini-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to yagate / sibarakusite /  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to eventually after.a.while  
 yayaatte musu-no ii koto-o tubuyaita.  
 after.a.moment insect-GEN good something-ACC whispered  
 Lit: ‘“Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” eventually/after a while/after a moment, Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.’



One might take it that it is inserting adverbs between a QU and an AO, not the number of events/states, that leads to ungrammaticality. However, the position of adverbs does not matter here, as manner adverbs, such as *bosobosoto* ‘in a mumbling tone’, can intervene between the QU and the AO, as shown in (18).

- (18) Jun<sub>i</sub>-wa [yooyaku karezisini-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] to bosobosoto mus<sub>i</sub>-no  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go to in.a.mumbling.tone insect-GEN  
 ii koto-o tubuyaita.  
 good something-ACC whispered  
 Lit: ‘“Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish in a mumbling tone.’

It is thus evident that the ungrammaticality of (17) is attributed to the constraint on the number of events/states applicable to argument doubling, providing additional support for our proposal that these two constructions are essentially of the same nature.

To sum up, the issues surrounding the QU-AO sequence in Japanese can be succinctly explained in a theoretically reasonable way if we subsume the relevant construction under argument doubling discussed by Saito (2017, 2024).

## 6 Cross-Linguistic Difference

This section addresses a cross-linguistic difference between Japanese and English. Of interest to us is the fact that, as shown in (19a) and (19b), neither the QU-AO sequence nor argument doubling is licensed in English (see Oshima and Sano 2012 and Saito 2017, 2024 for relevant discussion).

- (19) a. \*Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered [that every plan of his<sub>i</sub> would finally go well] something selfish.  
 b. \*Aki ate fruits (only) one grape.

Saito (2016, 2017, 2024) aims to account for the absence of argument doubling in English, relying on Chomsky’s (2013, 2015) labeling algorithm framework. According to Chomsky (2013, 2015), syntactic objects generated by Merge do not project their labels, unlike in earlier syntactic theories. Chomsky (2013, 2015) argues that a label of a set is determined by Minimal Search (MS), which searches a syntactic structure from the top node. For instance, when a set consists of a head *X* and a phrase *YP*, as in  $\{\alpha X, YP\}$ , the label of the set is determined as *X* because MS locates the head *X* first. Things are, nevertheless, complicated when it comes to a situation where both members of a set are phrases, as in  $\{\alpha XP, YP\}$ . It is assumed that both *X* and *Y* are found simultaneously by MS in this case, and some modifications are necessary to unambiguously determine the label of the relevant set. Chomsky (2013, 2015) provides two strategies to overcome this problem. The first way is to make one of the two constituents undergo movement out of the set. If *XP* moves out of a set  $\{\alpha XP, YP\}$ , MS only detects *YP*, identifying *Y* as the label of the set based on the assumption that a copy left behind movement is invisible to MS. The other way is contingent on agreement. If *X(P)* and *Y(P)* share a prominent feature *F* as a result of agreement, its label is designated as the shared agreement feature *F*.

Assuming that Japanese lacks phi-feature agreement but has overt case-markers, such as nominative *-ga* or accusative *-o*, Saito (2018, 2024) proposes that these case-markers are analyzed as *K* heads attached to DPs (Travis and Lamontagne 1992 and Fukuda 1993), and they are weak heads in the sense of Chomsky (2015). Saito (2018, 2024) goes on to argue that if  $\alpha$  in  $\{\alpha, \beta\}$  is a

weak head or search into  $\alpha$  hits a weak head, then search on the  $\alpha$  side is terminated, and only the  $\beta$  side is subject to further search. Given this proposal, Saito (2018, 2024) argues that the label of  $\alpha$  in  $\{\alpha \{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}, \{_{T(P)} VP, T\}\}$  is labeled as T(P) because search on the  $\{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}$  side is suspended due to the presence of a weak K head.

The (un)availability of argument doubling in English, as in (19b), immediately follows if we adopt Saito's (2018, 2024) analysis. Saito (2017, 2024) argues that argument doubling is licensed in Japanese, as no labeling failure occurs within VP owing to the weak head (i.e., the accusative case-marker on the objects), as in  $\{_{V(P)} \{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}, \{\{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}, V\}\}$ . In contrast, English lacks overt case-markers but employs phi-feature agreement, and thus, this language only makes recourse to phi-feature agreement when it comes to labeling within VP. However, a labeling problem arises when VP contains two AOs at the same time because a higher AO and VP do not share any feature, yielding a labeling failure of the top node, as in  $\{_{??} \{_{V(P)} V, DP\}, DP\}$ .

If the current analysis is accurate, the absence of the QU-AO sequence in English, which is evidenced in (19a), stems from the labeling failure within VP. See (20). Even though the set  $\{V, CP\}$  is labeled felicitously as V(P), the set  $\{\{_{V(P)} V, CP\}, DP\}$  is sent to the interfaces without being assigned an appropriate label due to the absence of any shared agreement feature between  $\{_{V(P)} V, CP\}$  and DP. Therefore, English does not allow for the QU-AO sequence.

- (20)  $\{_{??} \{_{V(P)} \text{whispered}, \{_{C(P)} \text{that every plan of his would finally go well}\}, \text{something selfish}\}$

Another implication of our proposal presented in Section 5 is that the *to* head attached to QUs in Japanese serves as a weak head (cf. Saito 2024); hence, it successfully labels VP, as in (21).

- (21)  $\{_{V(P)} \{_{C(P)} \underline{CP}, to\}, \{_{V(P)} \{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}, V\}\}$

This analysis is confirmed by the fact that deletion of the *to* head itself gives rise to ungrammaticality, as evidenced in (22). It is reasonable to argue that the absence of *to* induces a labeling failure within VP, as shown in (23), a situation parallel to the QU-AO sequence in English.

- (22) \*Juni-wa [yooyaku karezisini-no keikaku-ga subete umaku iku] musu-no ii koto-o  
 Jun-TOP finally himself-GEN plan-NOM all well go insect-GEN good something-ACC  
 tubuyaita.  
 whispered  
 Lit: “‘Every plan of his<sub>i</sub> will finally go well,” Jun<sub>i</sub> whispered something selfish.’”

- (23)  $\{_{??} CP, \{_{V(P)} \{_{D(P)} \underline{DP}, K\}, V\}\}$

We thus conclude that the *to* head in question can be construed as a weak head, and labeling within VP succeeds in the QU-AO sequence in Japanese thanks to the presence of the *to* head itself.

## 7 Conclusion

This paper has dealt with the QU-AO sequence in Japanese, with the aim of explaining the syntactic behaviors QUs exhibit and revealing its syntactic structure. We have argued that the QU-AO sequence in Japanese and argument doubling in the sense of Saito (2017, 2024) can be seen

as syntactically and semantically homogeneous, showing that our proposal accounts for various data straightforwardly. Furthermore, we have suggested that the presence or absence of a weak head is key to licensing the QU-AO sequence in a given language; Japanese has the *to* head, which is regarded as a weak head, thereby allowing for the QU-AO sequence; on the other hand, English does not have a head equivalent to the *to* head, and hence, the QU-AO sequence is not tolerated.

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