

## Idioms, Argument Ellipsis and LF-Copy

**Abstract** In this paper, I make critical use of certain word order and semantic properties of ditransitive expressions to develop an argument for the LF-copy theory of argument ellipsis (Oku 1998; Saito 2007, 2017; Sakamoto 2016, 2017). Firstly, I summarize and extend Sakamoto's (2014, 2016, 2017) argument based on rigid ditransitive idioms and show that the possible ellipsis of a non-idiomatic argument to the exclusion of the idiom chunks and the ditransitive verb is best accounted for in terms of argument ellipsis. Secondly, I point out a hitherto unnoticed observation that no internal constituent within ditransitive figurative expressions may undergo ellipsis without losing a non-literal, metaphorical interpretation associated with its containing VP and demonstrate how this observation presents critical evidence in favor of the LF-copy theory of argument ellipsis over its competing PF-deletion alternative.

**Keywords** Japanese · argument ellipsis · LF-copy · PF-deletion · null pronouns · VP-ellipsis · ditransitive idioms · ditransitive figurative expressions · compositionality · Nanosyntax

### 1. Introduction

Research over the past 20 years or so (Oku 1998; Kim 1999; Saito 2007, 2017; Şener and Takahashi 2010; Sakamoto 2016, 2017; Takahashi 2008a, b, 2014) has amassed considerable empirical evidence pointing to the conclusion that Japanese possesses Argument Ellipsis (AE), which directly targets grammatically required arguments such as subjects and objects. The relevant evidence include, but are not limited to, sloppy/quantificational readings of null arguments, the possibility of adverb-inclusive interpretations associated with empty arguments, VP-internal trapping effects created by scrambling, and the lack of the verb-identity requirement. The focus of

current research on AE has therefore shifted from motivating the existence of AE to addressing the nature of AE itself. One contemporary issue within this renewed context is whether AE is to be analyzed through PF-deletion or LF-copy, both of which have been vigorously debated on other elliptic constructions such as sluicing and VP-ellipsis since the earliest days of generative grammar (Ross 1969; Sag 1976; Williams 1977; see also Chung et al. 1995 and Merchant 2001 for the continued debate in the contemporary minimalist framework).

Saito (2007) builds on Shinohara's (2006) data and argues that the ellipsis of the CP argument in Japanese can only be accounted for by the LF-copy theory of AE originally proposed by Oku (1998). Shinohara observes that an embedded CP argument can be elided, as shown in (1).

- (1) Taroo-ga [CP Hanako-ga hon-o katta-to] itta si, Ziroo-mo \_\_\_\_ itta.  
 Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM book-ACC bought-C said and Ziro-too said  
 'Taro said that Hanako bought a book, and Jiro also said that she bought a book.'

(Saito 2007:210)

However, Shinohara points out that this CP-ellipsis option becomes unavailable when a phrase is scrambled out of the elided CP in question, as shown in (2). Note that CP-ellipsis is fine as long as there is no scrambling from within the CP in the second clause.

- (2) **Sono hon-o<sub>i</sub>** Taroo-wa [CP Hanako-ga *t<sub>i</sub>* katta-to] itta si,  
 that book-ACC Taro-TOP Hanako-NOM bought-C said and  
 (**\*sono hon-o<sub>j</sub>**) Ziroo-mo \_\_\_\_ itta.  
 that book-ACC Ziro-too said  
 'Taro said that Hanako bought that book, and Jiro also said that she bought that book.'

(adopted from Saito 2007:210, 213)

Saito (2007) observes that the ungrammaticality of (2) with DP-scrambling is unexpected under the PF-deletion theory of AE, for no grammatical principle seems to be overtly violated in its derivation. In particular, the ungrammaticality of this example cannot be blamed on the application of DP-scrambling from within the elided CP because extraction, in principle, can take place out of an ellipsis site, as demonstrated by the grammaticality of the sluicing construction, a case of TP-ellipsis, in (3) (Merchant 2001).

(3) John kissed someone, but I don't know **who**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> ~~John kissed t<sub>i</sub>~~].

Saito argues that the ungrammaticality of (2) with DP-scrambling is correctly predicted instead by the competing LF-copy theory of AE. Assuming that a scrambled phrase in Japanese undergoes radical reconstruction at LF (Saito 1989), the LF-representation of the antecedent clause in (2) will be as shown in (4).

(4) Taroo-wa [<sub>CP</sub> Hanako-ga **sono hon-o** katta-to] itta.  
 Taro-TOP Hanako-NOM that book-ACC bought-C said  
 'Taro said that Hanako bought that book.' (Saito 2007:212)

When the subordinate CP in (4) is subsequently copied at LF onto the CP-ellipsis site in (2), the LF-representation shown in (5) will result.

(5) \* **Sono hon-o<sub>j</sub>** Ziroo-mo [<sub>CP</sub> Hanako-ga **sono hon-o<sub>i</sub>** katta-to] itta.  
 that book-ACC Ziroo-too Hanako-NOM that book-ACC bought-C said  
 'Intended: Jiro also said that Hanako bought that book.' (Saito 2007:212)

The LF-representation in (5) contains two instances of the same DP object *sono hon-o* ‘that book-ACC’. The example, then, is rendered ungrammatical because the first instance of the object remains without any  $\theta$ -role, causing the derivation to crash at LF. Crucially, this  $\theta$ -theoretic violation does not occur when the second clause in (2) does not involve DP-scrambling, a pattern which is also correctly predicted by the LF-copy theory of AE.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to furnish additional new data bearing on the existence of AE and its underlying theoretical mechanism from the perspective of idiomatic expressions. The structure of this paper is as follows. In section 2, I will first examine the AE pattern within *rigid ditransitive idioms*. I will show that the ellipsis of a non-idiomatic, variable argument to the exclusion of the idiomatic argument in this type of idiom is problematic for previous analyses of null arguments in terms of null pronouns or verb-stranding VP-ellipsis (henceforth, VVPE), but is naturally accounted for by the AE analysis, which crucially can target individual arguments within such idioms. In section 3, I will present a hitherto unnoticed finding, using certain figurative expressions based on ditransitive and other related verbs, that their internal

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<sup>1</sup> Saito (2007) assumes that LF-copy takes place after radical reconstruction. One may wonder whether this rule ordering is permissible within the current minimalist framework. This technical issue won’t arise if we adopt Saito’s (2003) updated minimalist rendition of radical reconstruction. Under this view, radical reconstruction results from the derivational interpretation of scrambling chains via the deletion of the D-feature from the landing site. Consequently, the scrambled object in (2) is derivationally interpreted in its base position, with only the phonetic features being evaluated at the landing site. Then, LF-copy may target the embedded CP in (4) without incurring the ordering issue raised above, but the result still ends up being ill-formed, as shown in (5), due to a  $\theta$ -theoretic violation.

constituent resists AE. I will demonstrate how this observation supports the LF-copy theory of AE over the PF-deletion alternative. Section 4 is the conclusion.

## **2. An Idiomatic Argument for AE in Japanese: A View from Rigid Ditransitive Idioms**

In this section, I will present an argument in favor of the existence of AE based on what I call *rigid ditransitive idioms* (Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004; Kishimoto 2008; Tsujioka 2011). To the best of my knowledge, Sakamoto (2014, 2016:247–249, 2017:57–62) was the first to develop this particular argument for the AE analysis over the *pro*-drop/VVPE analysis using the two ditransitive idioms, *X-ni keti-o tuku* ‘attach meanness to X’ (idiomatically meaning ‘to criticize X’) and *X-ni tuba-o tuku* ‘spit on X’ (idiomatically meaning ‘to prevent others from taking X’). The argument presented below, therefore, should be taken as a summary and extension of Sakamoto’s (2014, 2016, 2017) original argument applied to some other ditransitive idioms in the literature, which nonetheless adds new important data rejecting some other potential alternative treatments of the possible elliptic patterns observed within this class of idiom (not addressed in Sakamoto’s work), including those resorting to *paycheck* pronominalization (Karttunen 1969) and an idiom-specific surface contiguity condition. As Sakamoto also notes, the rationale behind the present argument for AE dates back to Kim’s (1999) observation that a possessor argument alone within VP may undergo ellipsis to the exclusion of other VP-internal materials in the double accusative possessor-body part expression in Korean.

As reported by Miyagawa and Tsujioka (2004) and Kishimoto (2008), Japanese has a large number of goal-V idioms and theme-V idioms composed of ditransitive verbs, as illustrated in (6) and (7), respectively.

(6) Sato-sensei-wa zibun-no gakusei-o **ki-ni** **kaketeiru.** (goal-V idiom)

Sato-teacher-TOP self-GEN student-ACC mind-to hanging

‘Professor Sato keeps an eye on his students.’

(7) Sato-sensei-wa zibun-no gakusei-ni **te-o** **yaiteiru.** (theme-V idiom)

Sato-teacher-TOP self-GEN student-DAT hand-ACC burning

‘Professor Sato has difficult times with his students.’

Flipping the order of the two internal arguments (the accusative and dative arguments) in each case results in the total loss of the idiomatic interpretation, as shown in (8) and (9), respectively.

For this reason, I will hereafter call this type of idiom *rigid ditransitive idioms*.

(8) \* Sato-sensei-wa **ki-ni** zibun-no gakusei-o **kaketeiru.** (goal-V idiom)

Sato-teacher-TOP mind-to self-GEN student-ACC hanging

‘Professor Sato keeps an eye on his students.’

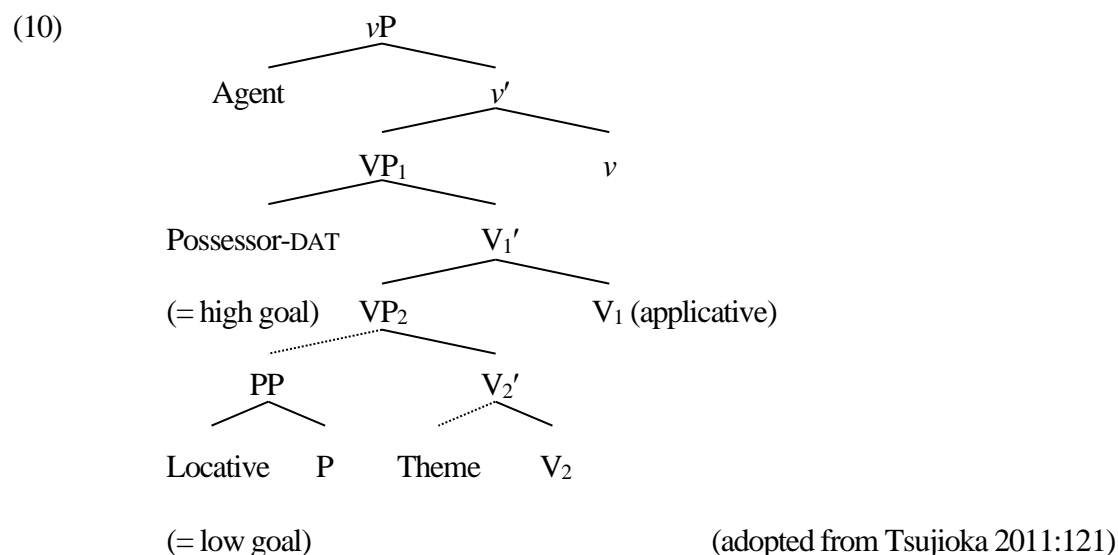
(9) \* Sato-sensei-wa **te-o** zibun-no gakusei-ni **yaiteiru.** (theme-V idiom)

Sato-teacher-TOP hand-ACC self-GEN student-DAT burning

‘Professor Sato has difficult times with his students.’

Miyagawa and Tsujioka (2004) provide evidence from scope and quantifier floating facts to show that ditransitive verbs in Japanese project two goal positions, as illustrated in (10). As shown in (10), the high goal is base-generated higher than the low goal and the

theme, with the only possible word order permutation being restricted to the relative order of the low goal vis-à-vis the theme, as indicated by the dotted lines.



Miyagawa and Tsujioka observe that an animate possessor can be associated with either the high goal or low goal positions, whereas an inanimate phrase can only be positioned in the low goal position.

Keeping (10) in mind, let us now consider how elliptical arguments behave within rigid ditransitive idioms. Example (11) illustrates the ellipsis of the theme argument within a goal-V idiom. Example (12) illustrates the ellipsis of the goal argument within a theme-V idiom.

(11) Sato-sensei-wa zibun-no gakusei-o syottyuu **ki-ni** **kaketeiru**-kedo,

Sato-teacher-TOP self-GEN student-ACC often mind-to hanging-but

Suzuki-sensei-wa {<sub>EDF</sub>/karera-o} **ki-ni** **kaketeinai**. (goal-V idiom)

Suzuki-teacher-TOP them-ACC mind-to not.hanging

‘Professor Sato often keeps an eye on his students, but Professor Suzuki does not keep an eye on his students.’

- (12) Sato-sensei-wa    zibun-no gakusei-ni    sootoo            **te-o**            **yaiteiru**-kedo,  
 Sato-teacher-TOP    self-GEN student-DAT considerably    hand-ACC    hanging-but  
 Suzuki-sensei-wa    {*e*<sub>DP</sub>/karera-ni}    **te-o**            **yaiteinai**.    (theme-V idiom)  
 Suzuki-teacher-TOP    them-DAT    hand-ACC    not.burning  
 ‘Professor Sato has considerable difficulties with his students, but Professor Suzuki  
 does not have considerable difficulties with his students.’

The patterns of elliptic arguments reported here cannot be accounted for by the null pronoun analysis or the VVPE analysis. Starting with the null pronoun analysis, the null arguments in (11–12) allow both strict and sloppy interpretations. Let us adopt the plausible heuristic assumption that the structure and meaning of empty pronouns mirrors that of their corresponding overt pronouns. Given this assumption, the *pro*-analysis (Kuroda 1965; Ohso 1976; Saito 1985; Hoji 1985) would wrongly predict the sloppy interpretations in these examples to be impossible because when the null argument is replaced with the corresponding overt third-person pronoun *karera* ‘them’, only the strict interpretation is available.

It is well-known that in certain contexts, overt pronouns do allow sloppy interpretations. One such context involves so-called *paycheck* pronominalization (Karttunen 1969), as illustrated in (13).

- (13) The man who gave his paycheck to his wife was wiser than the man who gave it to his  
 mistress. (Karttunen 1969:114)

Similarly, the inanimate pronoun *sore* ‘it’ in Japanese seems to be able to permit a sloppy interpretation, as shown in (14). This example is different from (11) in that the direct object in



the former is referred to by *sore*. Here, it is not difficult to obtain the sloppy interpretation, namely that Professor Suzuki worries about his own students' career paths after their graduation.

- (14) Sato-sensei-wa    zibun-no    gakusei-no    sotugyoogo-no    sinro-o  
 Sato-teacher-TOP   self-GEN   student-GEN   after. graduation-GEN   career.path-ACC  
 totemo   ki-ni   kaketeiru.   Suzuki-sensei-mo   {*e*<sub>DP/sore-o</sub>} **ki-ni**   **kaketeinai.**  
 much   mind-to   hanging   Suzuki-teacher-also   it-ACC   mind-to   hanging  
 'Professor Sato cares much about his students' career paths after their graduation.  
 Professor Suzuki also cares about his students' career paths after their graduation.'

My point here is that some overt pronouns do permit a sloppy interpretation, but the availability of this interpretation is tied to the choice of an overt pronoun. It suffices for my present purposes to point out that the animate third-person plural pronoun *karera* in (11–12) never permits sloppy interpretations under any context, but the inanimate pronoun *sore* 'it' may easily do so (see also Tomioka 2014 for relevant discussions).

The VVPE analysis (Huang 1987, 1991; Otani and Whitman 1991; Funakoshi 2016), on the other hand, would have no way of yielding the elliptical patterns in (11–12), for VP-ellipsis cannot target the theme DP in (11) or the goal DP in (12) without also deleting the idiomatic arguments contained within the same VP, given the ditransitive structure shown in (10). Note, in particular, that we cannot save the VVPE analysis by dislocating the idiomatic PP/DP over the missing arguments and hence outside the VP, in view of the strict word order restriction imposed by rigid ditransitive idioms – recall (8–9). The AE theory, by contrast,

straightforwardly predicts the ellipsis patterns in (11–12) as grammatical, as desired. In (11), the theme DP undergoes AE whereas in (12) the goal PP does.<sup>2</sup>

One might still counter that the null argument options in (11–12) could be compatible with the VVPE analysis in the following way. Let us say that the examples in (8–9) are excluded by a surface contiguity condition to the effect that no element may linearly intervene between the body part idiom chunks and the ditransitive verbs. The grammaticality of the examples in (11–12), then, can be correctly predicted by the VVPE theory if the remnant chunks and the verbs are both dislocated to escape VP-ellipsis so that they end up being contiguous in the output surface structure. Notice, however, that the examples in question are so designed to exclude this analysis as an analytical option. More specifically, such an analysis would predict that VP-level adverbs – *syottyuu* ‘often’ in (11) and *sootoo* ‘considerably’ in (12) – would be included in the interpretation of the ellipsis site. This interpretation, however, is near to impossible to come by in these examples. For instance, the elliptical clause in (11) means that Professor Suzuki does not care about his own students, but cannot mean that he doesn’t do so often. Again, the AE theory correctly accounts for the unavailability of this adverb-inclusive interpretation in (11–12) because adverbs, not being arguments, cannot themselves undergo AE (Oku 1998; see also Simpson et al. 2013 and Funakoshi 2016).

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<sup>2</sup> One might also argue that the ellipsis patterns in (11) and (12) would be amenable to the VVPE analysis if we assume that the dative/accusative idiom chunks and the verb form a complex predicate, which will then undergo V-to-T movement, followed by VP-ellipsis. See Sakamoto (2014, 2016:248–249, 2017:60–62), however, for convincing arguments against this particular alternative based on grammatical examples involving focus particles, genitive modification and discourse particles intervening between the idiom chunks and the verb.

### 3. PF-Deletion or LF-Copy? New Evidence from Figurative Ditransitive Expressions

In the previous section, I followed Sakamoto's (2014, 2016, 2017) lead and made critical use of the word order restriction imposed by rigid ditransitive idioms as a novel piece of evidence in favor of the existence of AE in Japanese over the competing null pronominal analysis and the VVPE analysis. In this section, I will investigate the distribution of elliptical arguments within what I call *figurative ditransitive expressions* in Japanese to shed light on the contemporary debate regarding the theoretical mechanism underlying AE itself. I will present a hitherto unnoticed finding that no internal figurative constituent included within this type of expression may undergo AE without losing the non-literal, metaphorical interpretation associated with it. The observation, I will show, provides empirical support for the LF-copy theory of AE over the PF-deletion alternative.

#### 3.1. *Figurative Ditransitive Expressions*

Japanese boasts a large number of figurative expressions which consist of a variable goal DP, followed by a fixed body part and one of the ditransitive verbs, such as those shown in (15) (Miyagawa 1997; Fujimaki 2005; Kishimoto 2008).

#### (15) Figurative Ditransitive Expressions (Goal PP + Fixed Body Part + Ditransitive Verb)

- |                                  |         |                         |        |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|--------|
| a. kubi-o                        | tukkomu | f. te-o                 | someru |
| neck-ACC                         | stick   | hand-ACC                | dye    |
| 'to pry (into someone's affair)' |         | 'to become involved in' |        |
| b. me-o                          | mukeru  | g. te-o                 | nobasu |
| eye-ACC                          | direct  | hand-ACC                | extend |
| 'to turn one's concentration to' |         | 'to expand into'        |        |

c. me-o            hikaraseru	h. te-o            dasu
eye-ACC    brighten	hand-ACC    let.out
‘to pay particular attention to’	‘to dabble in’
d. mekuzira-o            tateru	i. tenouti-o            miseru
corner.of.eye-ACC    hold up	palm.of.hand-ACC    show
‘to easily get angry at’	‘to reveal one’s strategy/true intention/secret’
e. se-o            mukeru	j. mimi-o            katamukeru
back-ACC    turn	ear-ACC    lean
‘to pretend not to see’	‘to listen carefully’

All the examples above involve a figurative meaning extension from physical to abstract motion. What differentiates this class of expression from rigid ditransitive idioms discussed in section 2 is that reversing the canonical word order of the variable, non-idiomatic goal PP and the fixed body part DP expression does not result in the loss of the metaphorical meaning. Below, I illustrate this relative word order freedom with the example in (15i), *tenouti-o miseru* ‘to show one’s palm of hand’, metaphorically meaning ‘to reveal one’s strategy/true intention/secret.’

- (16) a. Taro-ga    teki-ni            **tenouti-o**            **misetesimatta.**  
Taro-NOM    opponent-to    palm.of.hand-ACC    showed  
‘Taro showed his strategy to his opponent.’
- b. Taro-ga    **tenouti-o<sub>i</sub>**            teki-ni            *t<sub>i</sub>*            **misetesimatta.**  
Taro-NOM    palm.of.hand-ACC    opponent-to            showed  
‘Taro showed his strategy to his opponent.’

- c. ? **Tenouti-oi** Taroo-ga teki-ni  $t_i$  **misetesimatta**.  
 palm.of.hand-ACC Taro-NOM opponent-to showed  
 ‘Taro showed his strategy to his opponent.’
- d. ?? **Tenouti-oi** Hanako-ga Taroo-ga teki-ni  $t_i$  **misetesimatta-to** itta  
 palm.of.hand-ACC Hanako-NOM Taro-NOM opponent-to showed-C said  
 ‘Hanako said that Taro showed his strategy to his opponent.’
- e. ( $\phi$  Teki-ni **tenouti-oi**) Hanako-ga Taroo-ga  $t_i$  **misetesimatta-to** itta.  
 opponent-to palm.of.hand-ACC Hanako-NOM Taro-NOM showed-C said  
 ‘Hanako said that Taro showed his strategy to his opponent.’

(16a) represents the base order of the figurative expression in question. (16b) shows that the body part constituent may undergo VP-internal scrambling over the goal PP with the figurative meaning intact. Similarly, the same constituent may also undergo clause-internal scrambling, as shown in (16c) (see Miyagawa 1997 and Fujimaki 2005). When the same DP undergoes long-distance scrambling, it becomes difficult to maintain the figurative interpretation, as illustrated in (16d). Interestingly, however, as pointed out by Agbayani et al. (2015), the relevant interpretation remains easily accessible even in this context if the body part expression is scrambled together with the goal PP as a single prosodic phrase (designated by the symbol  $\phi$ ), as shown by the grammaticality of (16e) with the figurative interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The grammaticality of the examples in (16b, d, e) shows that scrambling can be interpreted with reconstruction. In particular, (16b) has an important implication for the proper analysis of VP-scrambling. Here, the scrambled phrase must be interpreted with reconstruction, a result that runs

Given this liberal mobility, it may be tempting to dub expressions such as *tenouti-o miseru* ‘to reveal one’s strategy/true intention/secret’ *loose ditransitive idioms*, as opposed to *rigid ditransitive idioms* in section 2. However, as far as I know, there are no examples consisting of the fixed goal PP body part expression and a ditransitive verb to the exclusion of the variable, non-figurative theme DP where the PP may undergo dislocation via scrambling while keeping the idiosyncratic figurative meaning intact. Recall from section 2 that genuine ditransitive idioms may take either the rigid goal-V or the rigid theme-V order. For this reason, I will continue to call the class of expressions illustrated in (15) *figurative ditransitive expressions* to keep them separate from ditransitive idioms.

One important question that arises here is why there is a difference in movability between rigid ditransitive idioms and figurative ditransitive expressions. I suspect that movability is tied to compositionality. Rigid idioms such as *ki-ni kakeru* ‘to care about’ as in (6) and *te-o yaku* ‘to have difficult times with’ as in (7) do not distribute their idiomatic reading to their component parts but instead must be listed in the lexicon as the whole unitary phrases.

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counter to the observation (see Mahajan 1990, Nemoto 1993, and Tada 1993, among others) that VP-internal scrambling does not reconstruct, as illustrated by the Condition (C) effect in (i).

(i) \*Yoichiro-ga [DP1 otagai-o]<sub>i</sub> [DP2 Hikari-to Megumi]<sub>i</sub>-ni *t*<sub>DP1</sub> syookaisita.

Yoichiro-NOM each.other-ACC Hikari-and Megumi-DAT introduced

Intended: ‘Yoichiro introduced Hikari to Megumi and Megumi to Hikari.’

I would like to come back to this intriguing issue in my future research. Thanks to the *JEAL* editor for pointing this out to me.

Figurative expressions like those in (15), on the other hand, are such that a clear one-to-one correspondence can be established by speakers between the meaning of the entire expression and the meanings of its constituent parts by means of figuration. For example, the figurative meaning of *tenouti-o miseru* ‘to reveal one’s strategy/true intention/secret’ can be computed by distributing its component meanings to the body part constituent and the ditransitive verb.

The distinction I suggested above to draw between idioms and figurative expressions corresponds to a similar distinction drawn in English by Nunberg et al. (1994:491) between *idiomatic phrases* such as *kick the bucket*, whose meanings are not distributed among their parts, and *idiomatically combining expressions* such as *spill the beans*, whose meanings are more or less computable from their parts by means of figurative meaning extension. In this connection, it is important to note that the latter, not the former, may undergo transformation such as passivization, as shown by the contrast between (17b) and (18b) with respect to idiomatic interpretations.

(17) a. Pat spilled the beans.

b. The beans were spilled by Pat. (Nunberg et al. 1994:510)

(18) a. Pat kicked the bucket.

b.#The bucket was kicked by Pat.

It stands to reason, then, to hypothesize that relative movability of internal constituents within figurative ditransitive expressions vis-à-vis rigid transitive idioms is linked to the semantic compositionality of the former. The contrast in semantic compositionality illustrated above, then, provides another rationale for my proposed separation of figurative ditransitive expressions from rigid ditransitive idioms. Relatedly, given the compositional character of

figurative expressions/idiomatically combining expressions, it is plausible to assume further that their component parts may well be entitled to some discourse-referential function if appropriate contexts permit, so that they may antecede overt pronouns. This assumption will be crucial in the next subsection.

### 3.2. *Figurative Ditransitive Expressions and the LF-Copy Theory of AE*

Having outlined the semantic and linear order properties of figurative ditransitive expressions in Japanese, let us now explore their theoretical significance for the debate concerning the theoretical underpinning of the phenomenon of AE. Consider Example (19).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I consulted eight native speakers of Japanese, all advanced undergraduate students of linguistics who are familiar with basic tenets of the acceptability judgement task adopted in generative grammar, about the acceptability of the ellipsis/pronominal options in (19). Six speakers reported that the ellipsis option is very marginal whereas the pronominal option is acceptable. The most typical reaction expressed by this group of speakers when they read and attempted to parse the elliptical clause was that the clause was felt to be somehow incomplete due to the lack of an overt object of the verb. As one of the consultants put it, “I feel the clause is semantically incomplete; I mean, what did Mr. Suzuki show to his competitor company?” The relevant speakers also noted that the ellipsis in (19) is unacceptable under any interpretation, strict (where Sato and Suzuki revealed the same secret to their respective parties) or sloppy (as reflected in the free Japanese translation). The remaining two speakers found both options acceptable under either interpretation.



- (19) Sato-kun-wa      ukkari      koosyooaite-ni      tenouti-o  
 Sato-TIT-TOP      inadvertently      negotiating.partner-to      palm.of.hand-ACC  
 misetesimatta. Suzuki-kun-wa      raibarutasya-ni      { \**e*<sub>DP</sub>/sore-o } misetesimatta.  
 showed      Suzuki-TIT-TOP      competitor.company-to      it-ACC      showed  
 ‘Mr. Sato inadvertently showed his secret plan to his negotiating partner. Mr. Suzuki  
 showed his secret plan to his competitor company.’

In this example, the body part expression *tenouti* ‘palm of hand-ACC’ resists ellipsis. The *pro*-analysis cannot accommodate the impossibility of this ellipsis because its corresponding overt pronoun *sore* ‘it’ may occur in the relevant position without any loss of the figurative interpretation – recall from section 2 that this pronoun can support sloppy interpretations, unlike other animate pronouns. The ability of this pronoun to refer back to *tenouti* in (19) comes as no surprise because the relevant body part expression, being a meaningful constituent of the compositional figurative phrase, makes it possible for speakers/hearers to associate it with some concrete content in some of the situational contexts implied by the sentence in (19), for example, Mr. Suzuki’s company’s secret plan, his true intention behind his current negotiations, his plan B, and so on. The clear contrast in acceptability between the overt pronoun option and the

ellipsis option in (19), expressed by a majority of my native speaker consultants, thus proves problematic for the *pro*-drop analysis.<sup>5,6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out that examples such as (19) appear to improve in acceptability when the verb in the second clause is changed to involve negation, along with some other minor changes that accompany the insertion of negation, as shown in (i) below:

- (i) Sato-kun-wa        ukkari        raibarutasya-ni        tenouti-o  
       Sato-TIT-TOP        inadvertently    competitor.company-to        palm.of.hand-ACC  
       misetesimatta-kedo,    Suzuki-kun-wa    issai        dare-ni-mo {\**e*<sub>DP</sub>/sore-o}    misenakatta.  
       showed-but        Suzuki-TIT-TOP    absolutely anybody-to-mo    it-ACC    didn't.show  
       'Mr. Sato inadvertently showed his secret plan to his competitor company, but Mr. Suzuki  
       didn't show his secret plan to anybody.'

The six native speakers of Japanese who found the ellipsis option very marginal in (19) (see note 4) failed to detect any noticeable effect of negation on the second clause, and reported that the pronominal option, but not the null argument option, is acceptable in both (19) and (i). In fact, they all pointed out to me that the contrast in acceptability between the two options is actually clearer in (i) than it is in (19).

<sup>6</sup> As stated in the text, the example in (19) supports the AE analysis over the *pro*-analysis in accounting for the ellipsis pattern within a figurative ditransitive expression. This result in no way means that Japanese does not allow null pronouns elsewhere. As one reviewer points out, examples like (i) below are most likely to involve a null referential pronoun in subject position, not the AE option, because it is commonly assumed that AE requires a linguistic antecedent.

The impossibility of the body part expression in a figurative ditransitive idiom to undergo ellipsis provides crucial evidence in favor of the LF-copy theory of AE (Oku 1998; Saito 2007, 2017; Sakamoto 2016, 2017) over the PF-deletion alternative. The logic of this argument runs as follows. It has been widely acknowledged in the generative literature (see Nunberg et al. 1994, O’Grady 1998, Jackendoff 1997 and Harley and Noyer 1999, among others) that figurative expressions, or idiomatically combining expressions in Nunberg et al.’s (1994) term, are completely compositional as far as their internal syntax is concerned, but that their individual constituents still have to be listed together as co-occurrence restrictions so that

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(i) *e* ochita-yo.

fell-PRT

‘It fell.’

Takahashi (2008b) already pointed out the need for Japanese grammar to allow both options (AE and null pronouns) based on examples such as (iia, b), similar to (i), where the null subject and object may refer to some particular student prominent in the ongoing non-verbal situation.

(ii) [Observing a student smoking in the classroom]

a. Taroo: *e* haigan-de sinu kamosirenai.

lung.cancer-of die may

‘He may die of lung cancer.’

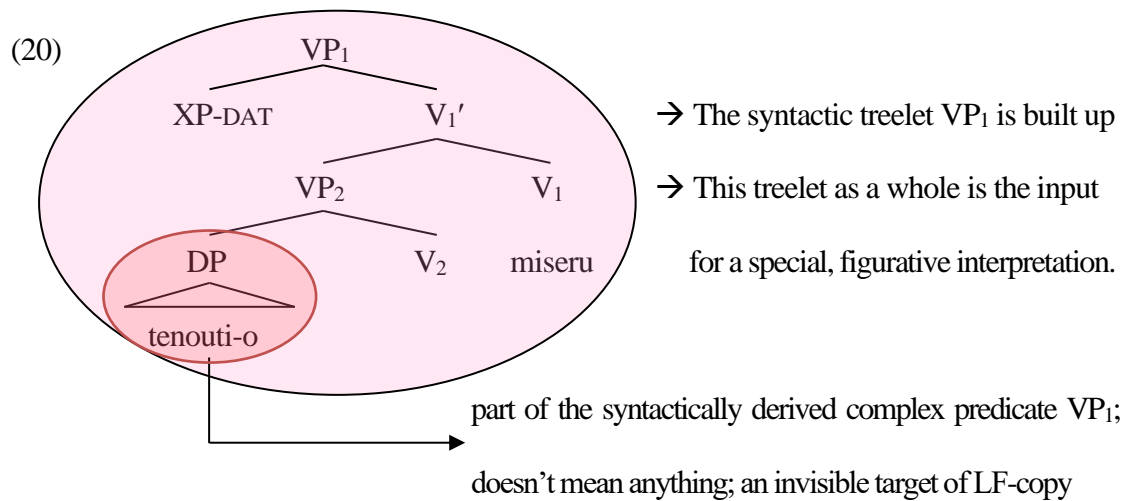
b. Taroo: Sensei-ga *e* sikaru daroo.

teacher-NOM scold will

‘The teacher will scold him.’

(Takahashi 2008b: 416)

the entire phrases are interpreted by means of figurative extension in the semantic component. To illustrate this point, *strings* may only be used to mean “personal connections” when and only when it co-occurs with the verb *pull*, which refers to “to exploit” in this particular relation. Given this independently attested co-occurrence restriction on VPs for figurative interpretations, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a special meaning of this kind is *computed over an entire idiom/figurative expression at LF* (for example, in the Encyclopaedia component in the framework of Distributed Morphology), so that only a certain lexically registered sequence of its syntactic constituents as a whole may be entitled to the relevant meaning at this level of semantic interpretation. Here, let us follow Nediger’s (2015, 2017) formal implementation of this assumption within the framework of Nanosyntax and say that the target of special (idiomatic or figurative) interpretation is a syntactic subtree; if, at any point in the derivation, the relevant subtree, say, for *pull the strings*, is built up, it can receive the special/idiomatic interpretation (i.e., “to exploit personal connections”). Under this Nanosyntax-based approach, the syntactic verb phrase *tenouti-o miseru* literally meaning ‘to reveal one’s palm of hand’ may be interpreted *in the form of this whole syntactic subtree* as metaphorically meaning ‘to reveal one’s strategy/true intention/secret’ at LF at any time in the syntactic derivation where the following schematic syntactic treelet is assembled.



Note that it is the whole treelet in (20), not the theme DP *tenouti-o* alone, that is the target of the special/figurative interpretation at LF because the DP in question may only mean something like ‘strategy/true intention/secret’ in combination with the ditransitive verb *miseru* ‘to show’. The DP may therefore be considered as a part of a syntactically derived complex predicate. This being the case, I propose that the body part expression in the antecedent clause in (19) cannot serve as the suitable target for LF-copy because it has already become an unanalyzable part of the whole atomic VP by the time when the elided part in the elliptical clause in (19) is to be filled by LF-copy.

My current analysis can also answer the following question from one of the anonymous reviewers: if the second clause in (19) were sent out to LF for idiomatic interpretation after the application of the LF-copy operation of the direct object DP in the antecedent clause onto the ellipsis site, then why wouldn't the copied element be successfully interpreted as the figurative expression in collocation with the sentence-final verb in the second clause? After all, all the individual parts of the whole VP necessary for its figurative interpretation would be assembled. As stated above, however, such a derivation is excluded. The relevant DP becomes a non-

meaningful part of the complex phrasal predicate *tenouti-o miseru* once the VP-level treelet in (20) has been constructed and given a special/figurative interpretation. Consequently, the

theme DP in the antecedent clause is no longer an accessible target for LF-Copy by the time when the elliptical clause is to be interpreted with the help of AE/LF-copy.<sup>7,8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The same reviewer asks what exactly the difference would be between the body part expression in (19) and anaphoric expressions such as *zibun-zisin* ‘oneself’ with respect to the possibility of AE because neither type of expression is meaningful unless it co-occurs with a particular acceptable ditransitive verb or an appropriate antecedent. As is well-known, the latter may undergo AE, as shown by the well-formedness of the second conjunct in (i) below with the sloppy interpretation (i.e., ‘Hanako didn’t criticize herself’).

- (i) Taro-wa        zibun zisin-o        semeta-ga,        Hanako-wa        *e*<sub>DP</sub>        semenakatta.  
       Taro-TOP        oneself-ACC        criticized-but        Hanako-TOP        didn’t.criticize  
       ‘Taro criticized himself, but Hanako didn’t criticize herself.’

The critical difference between the body part and anaphoric expressions lies in their relative inherent lexical meaningfulness. As stated in the text, the body part expression *tenouti* ‘palm of hand’ itself literally does not mean anything in the figurative context under discussion unless it forms part of the complex predicate represented by the relevant syntactic treelet VP<sub>1</sub> shown in (20). The anaphoric expression *zibun-zibun* ‘oneself’, on the other hand, has the lexically stored reflexive interpretation on its own; it is just that a suitable antecedent has to be found for the reflexive in a syntactic context. This relative independent meaningfulness, thus, has an effect on the AE potential of the anaphoric, but not the body part, expressions.

<sup>8</sup> The same reviewer asks why the direct object DP part of the VP<sub>1</sub> in (20) may undergo scrambling, as shown in (16b, c, e), when the same expression is not impenetrable by LF-Copy,

On the other hand, the PF-deletion theory of AE would predict that the ellipsis of the body part expression should be just fine in (19). If AE were implemented in terms of PF-deletion, then it should be able to apply to the relevant idiomatic theme expression because we have already shown that it functions as an independent constituent due to the regular compositional syntax of the figurative expression under discussion.

Before concluding this section, let us briefly address one question regarding (19).<sup>9</sup> I have argued earlier how the impossibility of the ellipsis of the idiom chunk there supports the AE analysis over the *pro*-based alternative. Given the Nanosyntax-based analysis outlined in (20), the grammaticality of the example in (19) with *sore* ‘it’ in direct object position implies that a pronoun (overt or null) can be employed even when its antecedent is a part of a syntactically derived complex predicate at LF. It would thus be desirable to demonstrate that this is indeed a general property of pronouns in Japanese, as opposed to ellipsis. As stated above, a nominal component of a figurative ditransitive expression may serve as an antecedent for an overt pronoun when it forms a meaningful constituent of the compositional figurative phrase and is entitled to bear some referential function to pick up

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given that both scrambling and LF-copy are syntactic operations. I find this question ill-conceived. Both scrambling and LF-copy are indeed syntactic operations, but their derivational timing and target is different: scrambling applies to a syntactic constituent in an ongoing syntactic derivation (see note 1 for some pertinent discussion) whereas LF-Copy targets an LF object created once the relevant derivation is completed. As such, by the time when the VP structure in (20) is created, the erstwhile independent DP object which was still accessible to scrambling at a mid-derivational stage, will have become inaccessible to LF-Copy.

<sup>9</sup> I thank the *JEAL* editor for the question.



some concrete individualized content in an ongoing discourse. This property of pronouns is indeed independently observed by the (un-)pronominalizability of other (non-ditransitive) figurative expressions such as those shown in (21a, b). (21a) involves the transitive VP expression *X-no hanasi-no kosi-o oru* ‘to break the waist of one’s X story’, figuratively meaning ‘to interrupt X in one’s talk (with a question)’ whereas (21b) involves the transitive VP expression *hone-o oru* ‘to break one’s bone’, figuratively meaning ‘to take great pains’.

- (21) a. Tuma-ga iroioto kigenyoku hanasiteiru-toki, otto-wa  
 wife-NOM variously in.good.mood talking-when husband-TOP  
 kessite hanasi-no kosi-o orazuni nikonikoto  
 never talk-GEN waist-ACC without.breaking with.a.smile  
 kikituzukeru-no-ga huuhuenman-no hiketsu-desu. yahari  
 continue.listening-NMLZ-NOM happy.marriage-GEN secret-COP.POL after.all  
 {*\*e/soko-o*} ottesimau-to huuhunaka-ga kimazuku-nari-masu.  
 there-ACC break-when marital.relation-NOM awkward-become-POL  
 ‘The husband should patiently listen to his wife with a smile when she is talking  
 about various things in good mood. That is the secret to happy marriage. Marital  
 relations will get awkward when the husband butts in and spoils her talks.’
- b.\* Megumi-wa hahaoya-no kaigo-ni-wa zuibun hone-o otta-ga,  
 Megumi-TOP mother-GEN nursing-to-TOP a.lot bone-ACC broke-but  
 titioya-no kaigo-ni-wa {*\*e/soko*} zenzen or-anak-atta.  
 father-GEN nursing-to-TOP there-ACC at.all break-NEG-PAST  
 ‘Megumi took great pains in nursing her mother, but didn’t take any pain at all in  
 nursing her father.’

The grammaticality of (21a) indicates that the direct object NP, *kosi* ‘waist’, of the transitive figurative VP may be picked up by the inanimate locative pronoun *soko* ‘there’, a pattern that is not surprising given that the NP in this VP expression has some clear semantic content roughly corresponding to important parts of someone’s talk. This is not the case with the transitive figurative VP in (21b), where its direct object NP, *hone* ‘bone’, has no identifiable referential function, as reflected by its inability to be referred back to by *soko* ‘there’ in a subsequent clause. Note incidentally that the ellipsis option of the relevant NPs in both transitive VPs results in ungrammaticality. The contrast between (21a) and (21b), then, provides independent support for my view that parts of an LF-derived complex predicate, of which figurative expressions are an archetypical example, may remain accessible to pronominalization to the extent that they may be associated with some concrete, prominent discourse-sensitive referentiality, as opposed to elliptical arguments.

### 3.3. *Non-Figurative Ditransitive Expressions and the LF-Copy Theory of AE*

My proposed analysis of (19) predicts that the ellipsis of the same body part expression should be acceptable when no special/figurative interpretation is involved. This prediction is indeed borne out by the contrast in acceptability between (19) and (22) with respect to AE.

- (22) Sato-kun-wa koohai-ni tenohira-o miseta. Suzuki-kun-wa  
 Sato-TIT-TOP junior-to palm of hand-ACC showed Suzuki-TIT-TOP  
 senpai-ni {*e*<sub>DP</sub>/sore-*O*<sub>i</sub>} miseta.  
 senior-to it-ACC showed  
 ‘Sato showed the palms of his hand to his junior. Suzuki showed the palms of his hand to his senior.’

The contrast between (19) and (22) is quite robust. The six native speaker consultants of Japanese who found the ellipsis option to be very marginal in (19) (see notes 4 and 5) reported that the same option was completely acceptable in (22). Where (22) differs from (19) is that the former involves the combination of the body part expression *tenohira* ‘palm of hand’ with the verb *miseru* ‘to show’. In Japanese, this particular combination does not yield any figurative extension, unlike the collocation of the same verb with the semantically equivalent body part expression *tenouti* ‘palm of hand’, and instead only yields a literal interpretation, as indicated in the translation of (22). Consequently, the ellipsis of the body part expression is fine, as predicted by the LF-copy analysis of AE. On the other hand, it remains unclear under the competing PF-deletion analysis of AE how the possibility of the figurative meaning extension can be linked to the ellipsis potential of the body part expression within a given figurative VP because the application of PF-deletion should not be sensitive to any idiosyncratic information concerning particular collocations of syntactically independent constituents or their possibility for figurative meaning extensions.

A similar set of examples in (23–25) makes the same argument for the LF-copy theory of AE. The examples here involve the figurative causative VP *hana-o motaseru* ‘to let (someone) have flowers’, metaphorically meaning ‘to let someone have the credit (for a success)’, as shown in (23a). The example in (23b) shows that the relevant VP is a figurative expression of which the theme DP constitutes a syntactically independent argument of the verb.

- (23) a. Sato-butyoo-wa konkai buka-no Suzuki-kun-ni **hana-o motaseta.**  
           Sato-TIT-TOP    this.time subordinate-GEN Suzuki-TIT-to flower-ACC let.have  
           ‘Sato, the director, let his subordinate Suzuki have the credit this time.’

b. Sato-butyoo-wa konkai **hana-o** buka-no Suzuki-kun-ni **motaseta**.

Sato-TIT-TOP this.time flower-ACC subordinate-GEN Suzuki-TIT-to let.have

‘Sato, the director, let his subordinate Suzuki have the credit this time.’

Keeping this point in mind, the example in (24) shows that the theme DP *hana-o* ‘flowers-ACC’ alone may not undergo AE, but may be pronominalized by the inanimate anaphoric pronoun *sore* ‘it’.

(24) Zenbu buka-ga yattekureta-to hookokusite hana-o motaseru

all subordinate-NOM did-C by.reporting flower-ACC let.have

zyosi-mo iruga, Sato-butyoo-ni-wa buka-ni { \*<sub>DP</sub>/sore-o }

boss-also exist.but Sato-TIT-DAT-TOP subordinate-to it-ACC

motaseru-dake-no otokogi-wa nai.

let.have-degree-GEN generosity-TOP not.exist

‘There are bosses who try to let their subordinates take the credit by saying that they did it all, but Sato, the director, does not have the generosity to let his subordinates take the credit.’

Contrast this example now with (25), which has only the compositional reading for the identical VP *hana-o motaseru* ‘to have flowers’ due to contextual cues associated with photo shooting.

(25) Sotugyoarubamu-yoo syasin-satuei-no-tame Sato-sensei-wa koodoo-de

yearbook-for photo-shooting-GEN-for Sato-TIT-TOP auditorium-in

zemisee-ni hana-o motaseta. Suzuki-sensei-wa okuniwa-de

seminar student-to flower-ACC let.have Suzuki-TIT-TOP backyard-in

{*e*<sub>DP/sore-o</sub>}    motaseta.

it-ACC    let.have

‘To take photos to be included in the yearbook, Professor Sato let his seminar students carry flowers in the auditorium. Professor Suzuki let his seminar students carry flowers in the backyard.’

The contrast in grammaticality between (24) and (25) with respect to the availability of the AE option was felt to be quite sharp by all the eight native Japanese speakers I consulted (see notes 4 and 5). Again, the contrast reported here provides crucial support for the conclusion that the phenomenon of AE is better to be analyzed in terms of LF-copy over the PF-deletion alternative.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this paper, I have investigated the phenomenon of AE and its underlying theoretical mechanism in Japanese from a new angle of rigid idioms and figurative expressions based on ditransitive verbs (Miyagawa 1997; Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004; Fujimaki 2005; Kishimoto 2008; Sakamoto 2014, 2016, 2017). I have demonstrated that the full range of elliptical patterns attested within these expressions provides crucial evidence not only for the existence of AE itself in Japanese grammar but also for the LF-copy theory of AE, rejecting other conceivable analyses in terms of PF-deletion, null pronouns and VP-ellipsis.

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