The adverbial qo in Iraqw

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THE ADVERBIAL qo IN IRAQW[*]

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Qo is a problematic morpheme in Iraqw: it does not fit in the major grammatical categories and its meaning is hard to discover. Whiteley (1958:61) characterises qo as follows: "Mention must also be made of the item 'qo', which invariably occurs between the selector and the radical. In some contexts it can scarcely be translated at all, merely giving continuity to the utterance. In other contexts it may best be translated by 'then, so then'." Qo can be added to nearly every sentence without changing the meaning drastically. Some speakers use qo more often than others do.

1. Qo in verbal clauses: Its status as a grammatical element.

Most frequently, qo occupies the same position as verbal adverbs. Both verbal adverbs and qo follow the selector. The selector is the verb 'to be' (copula, locative, dependent, impersonal), which obligatorily occurs in every clause. The Iraqw predicate phrase has the following order: Selector (Object)-(Adverbial)-Verb. Most tense/aspect/mood distinctions are encoded on the selector; subject and object are also marked on the selector.

Qo partly occupies positions that are similar to those of adverbs, but is excluded from some other adverbial positions. Adverbials, for our purpose, are of two types (1) verbal adverbs, viz. **mak** 'just, somewhat', **lak** 'almost', **baló** 'ever', **malé** 'again', and (2) lexical nouns with

one of the following case markings **-as** 'causal', **-ar** 'instrumental', **-i** 'directive', **-wa** 'ablative' [1]

These adverbs and **qo** may appear between the selector and the verb, and there adverbials may both precede and follow argument nominals, but **qo** always precedes the adverbials of both types and the argument nominals

(1) **laatí   tsaʕamto   g-a-qo   mak   baal-ii-ká**

    well   climbing   O 3 O F X   just   succeed S 3 INF NEG

    'Well, as for climbing, he does not succeed '

(2) ***ga mak qo baaliiká**

Qo never appears after the verb, as the adverbials may do In postverbal position, they are always followed by the resumptive pronoun **alé** **Qo** never follows the verb, and itself is never followed by the resumptive **alé**

(3) **aníng   kúung   u-na   atéet   malé   alé**

    I   you   O 2 SG M PAST   call 1 SG   again   RESPRO

    'I called you again'

(4) **xareemi-qáʔ bar   hee   ngw-a   mut-ír   a**

    horn PL DEM3   COND   man   O 3 PL O M PERF   beat 3 PL   COP

    i-qo   gwáaʔ   waʔá   wak-wa   alé

    S 3 X   die 3 SG M   time CON   one ABL   RESPRO

    'These horns, if they beat a man, it is that he will die at once

Thus, even if **qo** is an adverb, its positional behaviour clearly differs from that of other adverbs In actual fact, there are indications that **qo** is a clitic It depends phonologically on the preceding word, which may be either the selector, or a nominal It cannot be separated from these by a pause, nor by one of the other adverbs

If **qo** is not a fully autonomous word, it isn't a suffix either This may be concluded from the fact that it is tacked on both to the selector and to nouns, elements that are not likely to share

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[1] **hh** is a pharyngeal voiceless fricative, **hl** is a voiceless lateral fricative, **tl** is a voiceless ejective lateral affricate, **ts** is a voiceless ejective alveolar affricate **ng** is a velar nasal continuant Intervocalically, it is followed by an oral voiced velar stop The high tone is indicated by an acute accent on the vowel, for long vowels, on the first vowel symbol, low tone is not marked

one and the same suffixation process. Such an overlap would be unique in the word class system of Iraqw. Admittedly, the negative suffix **-ká** does occur both in the nominal and in the verbal paradigm, but the classes maintain their separateness even here by adding the background suffix **-o** in the case of the nouns, and the infinitive suffix **-a** in that of the verbs.

(5) **Tara   a   doohliitee-r-o-ká**

Datooga   COP   farmers-F-BGND-NEG

'Datooga are not farmers'

(6) **baal-aa-ká**

succeed-INF-NEG

'I did not win'

In accordance with its clitic status, **qo** follows the rightmost suffix that may be added to the selector, the perfect tense suffix **-a**.

(7) **biri-nd-a-qo   hardah-áan xweera-wo, daqatá**

COND-VENT-PERF-X   arrive-1.PL   night-BGND   that:time

amo-r-ós   a   kaw-áan

place-F-3.SG. POSS   O.F   go-1.PL

'If we are leaving at night, we visit his place'

2. The syntax of **qo** in other constructions.

In the preceding section we have dealt with the syntactic behaviour of **qo** in verbal clauses. The element is also used, together with the copula, in clauses with a nominal predicate, and in quantifier noun phrases. In both construction types **qo** avoids sentence-final position, as we have already seen in the verbal context. Separate subsections will now be devoted to the nominal predicates with a copula (2.1) and to the quantifier phrases (2.2).

2.1. Qo after the copula.

As we have seen, **qo** can be cliticised to the selector. The selector is in essence the verb 'to be'. It does not come as a surprise that **qo** can also occur after the copula. An example of **qo** in a copular construction with a nominal predicate is (8). The nominal predicate is **xweera** 'night'.

(8) murúu   ʕayma a-qo xweera
     things:M:CON   eating COP-X night
     'The meal is at night.'

Cleft-like constructions with a nominal predicate are very common in Iraqw. These cleft-like constructions consist of a head noun with a relative clause followed by the copula **a** and a specifying noun phrase. **Qo** is often found on the copula as is the case in (8) and (11).

(9) hée   ga   kwáahh   a   kwaʕangw
     man:CON   O.3:O.N:PERF throw:3.SG.M:PAST COP   hare
     'He who threw them was the hare.'

(10) ma laatí gá-r   ta   gáas   a   dasí-r   do-ʔín
     but well thing:CON-F IMPS kill:PAST COP girl:CON-F house-3.PL.POSS
     'But what they killed was the girl of their house.'

(11) gim adó-r   ki-r   hlaw-áan a-qo
     well manner:CON-F O.3:DEP.S.1/2:O.N-INSTR get-1.PL   COP-X
     u-n   gaas-áan
     O.M-EXPEC kill-1.PL
     'Well, how we will get them is to kill him.'

The head noun of the relative clause has a general meaning: **gaa** (f) 'thing', (10), **hee** (m) 'person', (9), **dii** (f) 'place', (13), **amoo** (f) 'place', **adoo** (f) 'manner', (11). The noun phrase after the copula functions as a specification. These nouns include question words, as is illustrated in (12) and (13).

(12) geesó duqa naʕaay gá-r   kw-a   ʕis   a   milá
     Geesó Duqa child   thing:CON-F O.3:DEP.S.1/2:O.M-PERF do:2.SG COP what
     'Geso Duqa, what did you do to the child?'

(13) hikwa-qáʔ dí-r   ngi-wa   hláy   a   diimá
     cattle-DEM3 place:CON-F O.3:DEP.S.3:O.N-BGND get:3.SG.M COP where
     'Where did he get those cattle?'

Qo also occurs in constructions with the copula **a** preceding a clause.

(14) **a-qo u-n   qatí   aw-áan xweera-wo**

COP-X O.M-EXPEC bed:CON:DIR go-1.PL   night-BGND

'The solution is that we go to his bed at night.'

(15) **a-qo ís   b<i>r-a   de?éengw áy,**

COP-X 3.SG COND<S.3>-PERF herding:CON go:3.SG.M

muru-w-í   ku-n   axwées.

things-M-DEM1 O.3:IMPS:O.M-EXPEC say:PAST

'It is when he goes herding that these things are said.'

2.2. Qo in quantifier noun phrases.

Qo can occur in certain noun phrases, provided that the noun phrase does not follow the verb. **Qo** shares this property with the adverbs **lówa** 'very' and **kilós** 'self, alone, only'. In Iraqw noun phrases, the modifiers follow the head noun and the head noun is in construct case. Construct case consists of a high tone on the last syllable and a suffix agreeing with the gender of the head noun. In the majority of examples, the noun phrase with **qo** involves quantification. See (16) and (48).

(16) **xarma-síng-ee baré   hée   gw-a   mút**

horn-DEM2-BGND   SURPRISE man:CON O.3:O.M-PERF beat:3.SG.F

a   u-n   wa?á-qo wák-ar   gas

COP   O.M-EXPEC time:CON-X one-INSTR kill:2.SG

'This horn, if it beats a man, it is that you kill him at once'

Qo is commonly used in noun phrases of which the head is the noun **umúu** 'every'. Such noun phrases require the background suffix **-o**. The background suffix expresses completeness in these examples.

(17) **kwa?angw umúu-qo déelo-r-o koonkomo gu**

hare   every-X   day-F-BGND   cock   O.3:O.M

ado-r-dí   ar-a?ar.

manner-F-DEM4:DIR   HAB-see:3.SG.M

'Every day the hare sees the cock like that.'

Qo also occurs in noun phrases containing modifiers such as **kilá** 'exact, just, only, alone', **yaangaariit** 'big, many', **saaw** 'far, deep'.

(18) **láa   dasí-r   kilá-r   doo-rén   a-na**
today   girl CON-F   just CON F   house M-1 PL POSSL   O F-PAST
gaas-ân-i
kill-1.PL INT-INF PAST
'Did we kill the very girl of our house today?'

(19) **geera-wo dóo-qo   yaangaríit ngu-n   kón**
before-BGND   house CON-X   big   O 3 DEP S 3 O M EXPEC   have 3 SG M
'First, he must have a really big house.'

(20) **hhalang-qo sawa-saaw-o lówa alé**
well X   RDP far BGND   very   RESPRO
'a very deep well'

In noun phrases, **qo** cliticises to the head noun. Placing **qo** after the modifier was considered ungrammatical in (19), but it was accepted in (16) and (17). In spontaneous speech **qo** never occurs on modifiers.

3. The use of **qo**.

In this paragraph we will discuss the constructions in which **qo** cannot be used and those in which **qo** is often used, in order to determine the meaning of **qo**. The meaning of **qo** is then dealt with in paragraph four.

In 2.1. we have seen that **qo** can occur in questions. It occurs in sentences with the question words "which?", "what time?", and "where?". It does not occur, however, in questions asking "what?" or "who?" The addition of **qo** to a question asking "what?" or "who?" renders the sentence ungrammatical.

(21) **daqamá kár   ngaa-qo   fáak**
what time   well O 3 DEP   S 3 O 3 PERF-X   finish 3 SG M
'When on earth did he finish it?'

(22) **loohí-r ki-r   hayoh-aan   a-qo gaalá**
path CON F   O 3 DEP S 1/2 O N-INSTR   carry off 1 PL SBJV   COP-X   which
'How do we carry them off?'

(23) *hee-qá láa ga gurbúu? a-qo heemá

man-DEM3 today O 3 O F inform 3 SG M COP-X who

'Who informed you today?'

(24) *geeso duqa naʕaay gá-r kw-a ʕis a-qo milá

geeso duqa child thing CON F O 3 DEP S 1/2 O M-PERF do 2 SG M COP X what

'Geso Duqa what did you do to the child?'

(25) *i-n óʔ: láa kʊ́ m-a-qo xʊ́ʔ

S 3-EXPEC say 3 SG F today 2 SG M WHAT O F-X know 2 SG M

'She says: "Today, what do you know?"'

In fact, in a sentence with the question word "what?", the addition of qo is possible but it changes the meaning of the sentence. The sentence is no longer a neutral question asking "what?", but rather a rhetorical question expressing a negative statement.

(26)a. hám gá-r ku-r gaas-aan a milá

now thing CON-F O 3 IMPS O M-INSTR kill-1 PL COP what

'How shall we kill him?'

  b. hám gár kur gaasaan aqo milá

'Why should we kill him? (implying we should not)'

(27)a. naʕay kutsuhha-r-o b<u>r-a hheʔées,

child pinching ⁿ BGND COND<M> PERF finish 3 SG M

án daqa-dáʔ a-qo óoʔ naʕay-sîng-ee

1 SG moment DEM4 S 1/2-X say 1 SG child DEM2 INT BGND

m-i ʔaaʕaam-ín.

WHAT S ? cry DUR 3 SG M

'When you finished pinching the child, at that moment I'll say· That child, what is it crying for?'

  b. naʕay kutsuhharo bura hheʔées, án daqadáʔ aqo óoʔ
  naʕaysîngee miqo ʕaaʕaamín

'When you finished pinching the child, at that moment
I'll say. That child, what is it crying for? (implying that it should stop)'

The fact that **qo** is perfectly possible with a question word such as **gaalá** 'which?', but not with a question asking "what?", indicates that **qo** has something to do with partitioning Further evidence is the predominance of quantifiers in noun phrases with **qo**

Qo cannot be combined with the indefinite nominal suffix Nouns with the indefinite suffix refer to a specific, indefinite referent, "a certain", (28) We conclude that **qo** is definite

(28)a   *loo²a-r-ka-qo wak-ee   baha   i-na   ló²wa   hî²<iim-aam>iit
          sun F INDEF X   one BNGD   hyena   S 3 PAST   very   go out<DUR HAB>
          'One day the hyena has walked a lot'

   b   *loo²arka wakeeqo baha ina ló²wa hi²iimaamíit

   c   *loo²arka wakee baha inaqo ló²wa hi²iimaamíit

Qo is often found with verbs meaning "to say", (29,30)

(29)   **i-na-qo   óo²   heemá laa   ga   ádbay**
        S 3 PAST X   say 3 SG M PAST   who   today   O 3 O 2 SG F PERF   call 3 SG M
        'He said "Who has told it to you today?"'

(30)   **ta-qo   kay   xáy   dási   hám   a   adoomá**
        IMPS X   say PRES   really?   girl VOC   now   COP   how
        'They say "Well, girl, what now?"'

If no context is given, the difference between sentences with or without **qo** is often interpreted as one of tense or mood The sentences with **qo** are translated as future

(31)a   **ta-na   óo²   ʕagmo-rén   b<i>r-qo**
         IMPS PAST   say PAST   cannibal M 1 PL POSS   COND<S 3> X
         di-r-qá²,   hikwa   i-n   hayoh-áan
         place F DEM3   cattle   O.N EXPEC   take 1 PL
         'They said "If our cannibal will be there, let us take
         the cattle " '

   b   tana óo² ʕagmorén bir dirqá², hikwa in hayoháan
       'They said "If our cannibal is there, let us take the cattle " '

(32)a. **hee-qá?**   **laa**   **ga**   **gurbuu?**   **ga**   **ar**

     man-DEM3   today   O.3:O.F   inform:3.SG.M   O.3:O.F   see:3.SG.M

     'The man who has informed you today will be punished'

     (lit. the man who has informed you today will see it)

   b. **heeqá?**   **laa**   **ga**   **gurbuu?**   **ga***qo* **ar**

     'The man who has informed you today will be punished (sometime in the future)'

(33)a. **umúu**   **hee-wo**   **chumba-r-os**   **a**   **tsat-aan**

     every   man-BGND   room-F-3.SG.POSS   O.F   cut-1.PL

     'Let everybody divide his room.'

   b. **umúu heewo chumbarós aqo tsatáan.**

     'Everybody will divide his room.'

(34)   **hikwa**   **i-qo**   **ti?iit-iyá?.**

     cattle   S.3-X   go:out-3.PL

     'The cattle will come out.'

Qo is rare after selectors with the expectational marker **-n**, but quite common in clauses immediately following one with such an expectational marker.

(35)   ***adó-r**   **ta**   **láq**   **a**   **i-n-qo**   **gáas**

     manner:CON-F   DEP.S.1/2   do:2.SG   COP   O.2.SG.F-EXPEC-X   kill:1.SG

     'Your next step (lit.what you do) is that I will kill you!'

(36)   **gim adó-r**   **ki-r**   **hlaw-áan yâ**

     well   manner:CON-F   O.3:DEP.S.1/2:O.N-INSTR   get-1.PL   yâ

     a-qo   **u-n**   **gaas-áan.**

     COP-X   O.M-EXPEC   kill-1.PL

     'Well, how we will get them (the cattle) is to kill him.'

Qo is rare with the imperfective past marker **-na**. This may be due to the fact that the imperfective past marker is historically derived from the expectational marker **-n** followed by the perfect marker **-a**.

(37)   ***bál**   **tsár**   **i-na-qo**   **kii?**

     day:CON   two   S.3-PAST-X   return:3.SG.M

     'The second day he returned.'

4. The meaning of **qo**

In a number of sentences **qo** indicates that the state of affairs expressed by the sentence is the only possible one. The function of **qo** is to exclude other possibilities and thereby to make the statement stonger. English equivalents are "only, for sure, really", and in negative statements "at all, anyway". We can illustrate this with a few sentences from the story "The buffalo and Gesó Duqa". The buffalo has urged Gesó Duqa not to eat her meat after her death but instead to bury her bones and her skin apart. Gesó Duqa agrees and says:

(38) **an-á-qo   infoĺiit.**
   1.SG-S 1/2-X   bury MIDDLE.1 SG
   'I will only bury (them).'

Later on in the story, the cannibals try to kill Gesó Duqa. After the failure of several more subtle ways, they conclude that the only possibility remaining is to kill him while he is asleep:

(39) **a-qo   u-n   qatí   aw-áan xweera-wo**
   COP-X   O M EXPEC   bed CON DIR   go-1 PL   night-BGND
   'It is that we go to his bed at night.'

Afterwards, Gesó Duqa becomes an old man. Very old indeed because "his children's children had already died, and they died a natural death, nothing else":

(40) **a-qo   dimay   gi-na   tsúuˁ.**
   COP-X   old age   O 3 O N-PAST   kill 3 SG M
   'It was old age that killed them.'

The fact that **qo** excludes comparable situations can also be deduced from the following minimal pair:

(41)a. **umúu-qo hee-wo   i-*qo* hare-r-ós   kón**
   every-X   man-BGND   S 3-X   wife F-3 SG POSS   have 3 SG M
   'Every single man has his wife.'

   b. **umúu héewo i harerós kón**
   'Every single man has his wife (at a certain occasion)'

The second sentence, the one without **qo**, is not a general truth, but restricted to a particular occasion.

Due to its sense of exclusiveness, **qo** easily combines with words such as **kilá** 'exactly, truly' in (18), **kilós** 'alone, only' in (42), and **umúu** 'every' in (17) and (41).

(42)　**ís　a-qo　kilós**
　　　3.SG　COP-X　alone
　　　'He was all alone.'

Qo is only compatible with question words such as "which?", "what time?" and not with "who?" or "what" because "this and no other" presupposes the possibility of seeing the questioned variable as broken down into comparable parts.

The fact that **qo** focusses on "this one and no other" rules out its combination with indefinite markers which mean "a certain, it is not important which one".

As a consequence of its meaning of exclusiveness, **qo** evokes exhaustive listing focus, i.e. focus on one member out of a limited set of possible alternatives (see Kuno 1972) which Sasse calls contrast (Sasse 1981: 264). In Iraqw, constituents after the copula in cleft-like constructions are in focus. **Qo** is often added to the copula in these sentences adding contrast to the focussed constituent, see 2.1.

Exclusiveness in combination with future time reference brings "certainty". The following sentence is once again from the story about Gesó Duqa. It is uttered by Gesó Duqa when the child of the buffalo reveals how the cannibals are going to kill him. Gesó Duqa sees no way out and says:

(43)　**a-qo　gwáaʔ**
　　　S.1/2-X　die:1.SG
　　　'I will die for sure.'

On the verb, there is no distinction between present and future tense. Consequently, in isolation, the difference between sentences with and without **qo** is future tense or not, cf. (31-33a,b).

In expressing certainty, **qo** overlaps in meaning with the expectational marker **-n**, which indicates that the action is expected to happen. Therefore, **qo** is not often cliticised to a selector

with **-n**, instead, as an alternative to **-n**, it is often used in a phrase immediately preceding or following one with **- n**. See (35,36).

Qo is favoured with verbs of claiming, such as "to say". Its sense of certainty serves to take away any doubt on the side of the listener, see (29,30).

In a negative sentence, **qo** enforces the negation. It can be translated with 'at all, anyway' or "überhaupt" in German.

(44)   **i-qo   xuruumit-ii-ká**
       S 3-X   suspect-S 3 INF NEG
       'He won't suspect anything at all.'

(45)   **tsaˤam-t-o   ga-qo   mak   baal-iiká**
       climbing-F1-BGND   O 3 O F-X   just   succeed-S 3 INF NEG
       'As for climbing, he just does not succeed at all.'

The same translation can be maintained in a rhetorical question. The following sentence is uttered by the Hare at a point in the story where he is quite sure that he will not eat a child of the Pigeon again. The question is a rhetorical one.

(46)   **ga-r-qá   án   hamí   a-qo   ˤâay-a**
       thing-F DEM3   1 SG   now   S 1/2 X   eat 1 SG INT-INF
       'That thing, will I now eat it at all?'

In neutral yes/no questions **qo** expresses doubt, and can be translated by "really". The certainty is questioned.

(47)   **saga   i-qo   yaˤân-a**
       head   S 3-X   agree 3 SG M INT-INF
       'Will the head agree?' (i.e. is it really possible for the head to be cut off and then put on the body again?)

(48)   **murúu-qo   tsár   a   xareemî-wo   laqáa   iiʔaa-wo**
       things M CON-X   two   COP   horns INT-BGND   or   ears-BGND
       'Are these two things really horns, or are they ears?' (The hyena talking about the ears/horns of the donkey.)

Concluding we may say that **qo** expresses exclusiveness and contrastive focus, and as a consequence its referent is definite. The exclusiveness parameter presupposes that the relevant world is seen as being partitioned so that **qo** can put contrastive focus on one part as opposed to the others. Derived from the exclusiveness meaning **qo** can express certainty in the attitude of the speaker, for example with verbs of claiming and in the context of future time reference.

List of abbreviations:

1	first person, first deixis (for demonstratives)
2	second person, second deixis (for demonstratives)
1/2	first or second person
3	third person, third deixis (for demonstratives)
4	fourth deixis (for demonstratives)
ABL	ablative
BGND	background
CAUS	causative
COND	conditional
CON	construct case
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
DEP	dependent
DIR	directive
DUR	durative
EXPEC	expectational
F	feminine
F1	subgroup of feminine nouns
HAB	habitual
IMPS	impersonal subject
INDEF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
INT	interrogative
M	masculine

M1	subgroup of masculine nouns
MIDDLE	middle voice
N	neuter
NEG	negative
O	object
PAST	past
PERF	perfect
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRES	present
REAS	reason
RESPRO	resumptive pronoun
S	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
VOC	vocative
<>	infix boundary
-	affix boundary
.	separates abbreviations that are part of a single morpheme
:	separates abbreviations of different morphemes fused into one

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