

Ellipsis in Japanese

Anne Sofie Vollan



JAP4691 Master's Thesis - Modern Japan (60 credits)
Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS)

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

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SUMMARY

This thesis is about nominal ellipsis in Japanese, and the goal of this study is to find some «rules» that can help future second language learners of Japanese understand this phenomenon. After going through the general theories of ellipsis cross linguistically and previous research done by other scholars on nominal ellipsis in Japanese, I narrowed down nominal ellipsis to subject ellipsis to investigate and understand it in depth. In the end I was able to find some rules and factors for subject ellipsis or the lack of it in Japanese, which then have been supported by my corpus analysis.

The first rule is that first person subjects are easier to omit than second and third person subject, as well as non-human subjects. In addition, the surrounding context is an important factor when it comes to subject ellipsis in Japanese, and is largely what decides whether a subject can be ellipted or if it needs to be overt. The semantics of predicates can also make it easier for us retrieve the identity of a missing subject, but still largely depend on the surrounding context. Another rule is that when a subject in some way conveys new information, it needs to stay overt, and is marked with particles that are topicalizing, contrastive or emphasizing.

It has been claimed that Japanese is a situation-focus language where there is more focus on the situation, rather than the person doing an action. English is said to be a person-focus language, and Japanese is often used as a contrastive language to English in this matter. By examining the sentences in the corpus analysis as to whether they are transitive and intransitive sentences, we have been able to find that transitive sentences are far more common than intransitive sentences. Also, the transitive sentences in this corpus only take human subjects, and the non-human subjects are found only in intransitive sentence structures. This provides more insight into the discussion of whether Japanese is to be considered a pure situation-focus language, or if it does indeed have person-focus properties as well. Given that Japanese prefers to have human subjects, especially in transitive constructions, and that the identity of human subjects are so easy to retrieve that they can be removed so often, Japanese can be considered as having some person-focus properties in addition to situation-focus properties.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

< >	Subordinate clause	LK	Linking particle
1	First person	LOC	Locative
2	Second person	NOM	Nominative
3	Third person	PAST	Past
ABL	Ablative	PLU	Plural
ACC	Accusative	HON	Honorific
CONT	Contrast	SFP	Sentence final particle
COP	Copula	SG	Singularis
DAT	Dative	TOP	Topic
GEN	Genitive	QP	Question
HON	Honorific	Ø	Ellipted entity

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PREFACE

I started studying Japanese because of my interest in learning new languages, which I've had for as long as I can remember. One of the reasons that I chose to study Japanese was because I wanted the challenge of learning a language that was as different from Norwegian as possible, and did indeed discover some challenges underway. One of the biggest challenges for me was when we came back from our first exchange semester in Japan, and were put on the task of translating a number of Japanese texts into Norwegian. In each and every class someone would have made a mistake in their translation, and our professor, Tomoko, would repeat the same sentences every time, the sentences that were to be her signature quote: "Try again. What is the subject of this sentence?" In a word you can say that this thesis has sprung out from a lot of frustration regarding this matter, and I am so pleased to be able to understand this aspect of the Japanese language better.

First of all, I want to give a great thank you to my advisor at UiO, Tomoko Okazaki Hansen. She is the kind of advisor that every student dreams of getting; she initiated frequent meetings with me and made sure that I got things done in time. With lots of patience and a great eye for detail, she has helped me finish this thesis, something that would not have been possible without her.

I would also like to thank my parents for the constant support in my schooling over the years, and I wish to dedicate this to my dearly missed mother whom I know would have been so very proud to see me finish my Master's degree in Japanese.

1 INTRODUCTION

For my master thesis I decided to write about ellipsis in Japanese. I chose this topic due to my own difficulties in studying the language, in particular the difficulties of identifying the missing nominals. This was a continuing problem for me in my studies, which is why I became interested to learn more about this matter. My main research question for this thesis is therefore: “what factors are at play when nominals undergo ellipsis and what factors are at play when they do not undergo ellipsis?” The goal of this thesis is therefore to be able to find some “rules” for nominal ellipsis in Japanese, which could help me and future second language learners of Japanese in studying the language.

1.1 ELLIPSIS AND PRO-DROPPING

The word *ellipsis* itself comes from Greek, and means “omission”. According to The Linguistics Encyclopaedia; “ellipsis works anaphorically¹ by leaving out something mentioned earlier” (1991: 463). In other words, ellipsis is the *omission* of an element or elements which would normally be used to refer to a textual item mentioned earlier, or an element that is already contextually known to the conversation participants. There are numerous types of ellipsis in theoretical syntax, the most common being verb phrase ellipsis and noun phrase ellipsis. *Verb phrase ellipsis* involves removing a verb in order to avoid repetition, like in the example sentence below:

- (1) *John can play the guitar, and **Mary can too.***

We avoid mentioning the verb ‘play’ twice, since the verb is not necessary to mention twice to convey the correct meaning of the utterance. Thus although you can correctly say ‘*John can play the guitar, and Mary can play the guitar too*’, it is unnecessary and makes the sentence longer.

In this thesis, I will be focusing my attention on noun phrase ellipsis, which is very common in Japanese, but also very difficult to master for second language learners both in understanding

¹ Anaphora is explained in chapter 2.

and producing utterances. *Noun phrase ellipsis* involves removing arguments (subject, object etc.) from an utterance. Here is an example:

- (2) *Kinō aisukurīmu katta yo.*
 Yesterday ice.cream buy.PAST SFP
 “(I) bought ice cream yesterday”

In this example, the first person subject is missing from the sentence. Yet it will be clear to the listener who performed the action of buying ice cream, because of contextual information.

Omission of arguments (which are often pronouns), makes Japanese fit into a category of *pro-drop languages*. Pro-drop comes from “pronoun-dropping”, which means that a pro-drop language is a language that has frequent omission of arguments (which are pronouns). This means that the verb of a sentence does not need to have, or can’t have, for example, an overt subject (Brown and Miller 2013: 360). Since ellipsis of both subject, object and other nominals is quite common in Japanese, it is considered to be a pro-drop language. Pro-dropping is far from a universal language trait, however all languages are categorized as to being either pro-drop (e.g. Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Arabic etc.) or non-pro-drop languages (English, French, German, Norwegian etc.). In non-pro-drop languages like English and Norwegian, null subject within a finite clause is not grammatical. Let’s compare these two sentences:

- (3) *Watashi-ni-wa ane-ga ite, Ø Tōkyō-de shigoto-o shiteimasu.*
 I-DAT-TOP big.sister-NOM exist Ø Tokyo-LOC work-OBJ doing
 “I have an older sister, and (she) is working in Tokyo”

- (4) *I have an older sister, and **she** is working in Tokyo*

We see in sentence (4) that English needs to have a subject in both clauses. ‘She’ in the main clause cannot be removed if the sentence is to be grammatical. In the Japanese example however, the subject has been omitted from the main clause.

Many pro-drop languages such as Portuguese and Spanish have rich inflection on person and number. There the inflection of the verbs gives us help in retrieving the missing nominals even when pro-dropping occurs. Japanese, on the other hand, does not have such inflection at

all, and that makes it more difficult to retrieve the missing nominals.² We will look more closely at this in chapter 2.

1.2 TOPIC-PROMINENT LANGUAGES

In linguistics it is common to make a distinction between subject-prominent languages (i.e. subject-predicate languages) and topic-prominent languages (i.e. topic-comment languages). English is a typical subject-prominent language, whilst Japanese is typical topic-prominent. The topic of a sentence is what is being talked about, and the comment is what is being said about that topic. (Brown and Miller 2013: 423) Here is an example from Japanese:

(5) *Zō-wa hana-ga nagai desu.*

Elephant-TOP nose-NOM long COP

“When it comes to elephants, their noses are long”

In this example, there is both a topic and a subject. The topic is ‘elephant’, which is what is being talked about, and the comment to that topic is that ‘their noses are long’.

In a subject-prominent language, the basic syntactic elements of a sentence are a subject and a predicate (verb/adjective). In prototypical cases the subject is the agent of the action predicated by the verb as in (6a), but it is not always so, as in (6b). In any case, the subject is usually placed first as the most prominent argument in a sentence.

(6) a. *She broke a vase.*

b. *The vase was broken by her.*

The notion of subject is very close to the notion of topic. Li and Thompson even claim that “subjects are essentially grammaticalized topics” (Li 1976: 484). It is common for topic-prominent languages to have use of both topic and subject, and they can be in the same sentence, like in example (5) above. Here’s another example:

² Some verbs in Japanese, such as honorifics, verbs for giving and receiving (e.g. ‘ageru’, ‘kureru’, ‘morau’) and a few other expressions (e.g. ‘-tai’ or ‘omou’) may help us detect the missing nominals.

(7) *Haru-wa hana-ga kirei desu.*

Spring-TOP flower-NOM beautiful COP

“When it comes to spring, the flowers are beautiful”

In this example, it is ‘spring’ that is the topic of the sentence, and the subject is ‘flowers’. Everything that comes after the topic is a comment about that topic. Let’s compare this to an equivalent English sentence:

(8) *Spring flowers are beautiful.*

The English sentence only contains a subject, the subject being ‘spring flowers’. In Japanese you could translate this directly into something like sentence (9), but it is more natural in Japanese to make ‘spring’ the topic of the sentence as in (7) above.

(9) *Haru-no hana-wa kirei desu.*

Spring-LK flower-TOP beautiful COP

Lit.: “Spring flowers are beautiful”

In topic-prominent languages, topic-comment sentences are basic. That is, there is usually one topic nominal in a sentence. Another characteristic of topic-prominent languages is that there are no restrictions on what kind of argument may be the topic. Here are some examples (taken from Ogawa 2009: 779-788):

(10) *Watashi-wa kinō Tōkyō-ni ikimashita.*

I-TOP yesterday Tokyo-DAT go.PAST

“I went to Tokyo yesterday”

(Topicalized subject)

(11) *Obentō-wa Tōkyō eki-de kaimashita.*

Lunch.box-TOP Tokyo station-LOC buy.PAST

“(I) bought a lunch box at Tokyo station”

(Topicalized object)

(12) *Kinō-wa Tōkyō-ni ryokō-ni ikimashita.*

Yesterday-TOP Tokyo-DAT travel-DAT go.PAST

“Yesterday (I) went travelling to Tokyo”

(Topicalized adverb)

Thus topic and subject are two different notions. However, the subjects in topic prominent languages are often topicalized and in Japanese they are marked with the topic marker ‘wa’ instead of the subject marker ‘ga’. This is because the subject is more often than not the most prominent/topical argument in a sentence.

1.3 PARTICLES FOR SUBJECTS

Japanese makes use of what we call ‘particles’, which are suffixes or short words that follow a noun and indicate various meanings. We will look at some of the common particles for subjects here, since subject nominals with these particles will be investigated in my corpus analysis.

As mentioned above, the subject is often marked with the topic marker ‘wa’ in Japanese instead of the subject marker ‘ga’. ‘Wa’ with subject nominals indicate different meanings and functions in addition to the topic function. Let us first look at an example sentence of a subject marked with topic marker ‘wa’ (from Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 516):

(13) *Watashi-wa gakusei desu.*

I-TOP student COP

“I am a student”

When topic marker ‘wa’ is used, that topic is what the rest of the sentence is about, and the focus of the sentence falls on the comment of that topic. ‘Wa’ is thus used when you want to emphasize what comes after the topicalized subject, and what comes after ‘wa’ is signified as new information. Also, topic marker is never used in subordinate clauses.

‘Wa’ also has a function as a contrastive marker. Here’s a typical example of the use of contrastive ‘wa’ (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 518):

(14) *Watashi-wa bīru-wa nomimasu ga, sake-wa nomimasen.*

I-TOP beer-CONT drink but sake-CONT drink.NEG

“I drink beer, but I don’t drink sake”

When there is more than one ‘wa’ in a sentence, the first one is usually understood to be a topic marker, and the second ‘wa’ is more contrastive than the first one, and the third is more contrastive than the second, and so on. Here is an example (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 518):

(15) *Boku-wa kyō-wa tennis-wa shinai.*

I-TOP today-CONT tennis-CONT do.NEG

“I won’t play tennis today”

Sentence (15) thus says that I won’t be playing tennis today, but maybe I’ll play something else, and perhaps I will play tennis some other day, but not today. The use of ‘wa’ is also contrastive when it is pronounced with stress (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 518):

(16) *Bīru-wa nomimasu.*

Beer-CONT drink

“(I don’t drink other drinks, but) I drink beer”

Another special use of ‘wa’ as a contrastive marker is in negative sentences. Let’s compare these sentences from Makino and Tsutsui (2006: 518):

(17) a. *Watashi-wa kinō Boston-e ikanakatta.*

I-TOP yesterday Boston-to go.NEG.PAST

“I didn’t go to Boston yesterday”

b. *Watashi-wa kinō-wa Boston-e ikanakatta.*

I-TOP yesterday-CONT Boston-to go.NEG.PAST

“I didn’t go to Boston **yesterday**”

c. *Watashi-wa kinō Boston-e-wa ikanakatta.*

I-TOP yesterday Boston-to-CONT go.NEG.PAST

“I didn’t go to **Boston** yesterday”

Sentence (17a) merely states that the speaker didn’t go to Boston yesterday. (17b) says that the speaker didn’t go to Boston yesterday, but went there on other days. (17c) implies that the speaker didn’t go to Boston yesterday, but went somewhere else that was not Boston.

Both topic marker ‘wa’ and contrastive ‘wa’ can be looked upon as being contrastive. This is because choosing a topic among many possible topics is in essence to contrast the topic with other possible topics. Topic and contrast are thus quite the same in nature and it can be sometimes difficult to distinguish them. However, I follow the definition of topic ‘wa’ and contrastive ‘wa’ by Lee and Yonezawa (2008): the distinction between them lies in whether other nouns in contrast are specified implicitly (topic) or explicitly (contrast) within the discourse (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 739).

‘Wa’ in general is used to mark information that the speaker assumes is part of the listener’s register. When the information is unknown to the listener, the subject is marked with ‘ga’. Let’s look at an example (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 517):

(18) a. *Mukashi mukashi, hitori-no ojīsan-ga sundeimashita.*

Olden-days olden-days one-person LK old-man-NOM live.PAST

“Once upon a time there lived an old man.”

b. *Ojīsan-wa totemo binbō deshita.*

Old-man-TOP very poor COP.PAST

“The old man was very poor.”

In this example, the old man is introduced to the story with the particle ‘ga’, because he is until now unknown to the listener. When he has been introduced with the particle ‘ga’, he can then be referred to by topic marker ‘wa’ in later sentences. We will look at the use of ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ more thoroughly in chapter 3, section 3.2.

The main difference between ‘wa’ and subject marker ‘ga’ is that what comes before ‘ga’ is emphasized and provides new information, in contrast to ‘wa’, where what comes after is emphasized. Here’s an example of another function of ‘ga’, which is often called exhaustive listing as in (19). (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 740):

(19) *Watashi-wa Tanaka desu.*

I-TOP Tanaka COP

“When it comes to me, it is Tanaka”

(20) *Watashi-ga Tanaka desu.*

I-NOM Tanaka COP

“It is I (not someone else) who is Tanaka”

(Nariyama 2009: 36)

We see that the use of ‘ga’ in sentence (20) provides information saying that it is what comes before it that is important information. It is ‘I’ that is Tanaka, not someone else. Example (19) shows that a topic marked with ‘wa’ can at the same time be the subject of a sentence. ‘Ga’ is a particle that is used to mark the subject of a sentence, when it is newly introduced in a discourse. After it has been introduced, ‘ga’ can be replaced with ‘wa’ when the subject is a topic or contrastive element. ‘Ga’ is also used in subordinate clauses³, like here (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 119):

(21) *Watashi-ga kinō mita eiga-wa doitsu-no eiga datta.*

I-NOM yesterday see.PAST movie-TOP german-LK movie COP.PAST

“The movie I saw yesterday was a German film”

Let us look at different kinds of particles that can replace ‘wa’ and ‘ga’. The default marking of a subject is by use of ‘wa’, but there are several other particles that carry more of an

³ A sentence can contain several clauses. A clause always has only one predicate, and thus any sentence that contain more than one predicate has more than one clause. In a sentence with several clauses, there is one main clause, which in Japanese always is the last one, and one or several subordinate clauses, which come before the main clause.

emphasizing meaning to them and that can replace the use of ‘wa’ and ‘ga’. Here are some examples (taken from Yamaguchi 2007: 161):

(22) *Yoshino-sensei-koso, rippa-na gakusha da.*

Yoshino-teacher-emphasis great scholar COP

“It is Professor Yoshino who’s a great scholar”

(23) *Bōrupen-nara, koko-ni arimasu yo.*

Ballpoint.pen-if, here-DAT be SFP

“If you mean a ballpoint pen, it is right here”

(24) *Watashi-mo sankashimasu.*

I-also participate

“I will also participate”

‘Koso’ in example (22) gives a notion of exclusiveness to Professor Yoshino that we wouldn’t get if marked with regular topic marker ‘wa’. ‘Nara’ in example (23) gives spotlight to the ballpoint pen, and excludes any other kinds of pens that exist. Finally, the particle ‘mo’ in example (24) provides information that someone else than the subject is also present in the conversation. In cases where these particles and others like them are used (like ‘sae’, ‘nante’ etc.), the subject of that sentence cannot be removed because of its semantic significance. If removed, important information about the intended meaning would be lost to the listener.

In Japanese, it is fairly common in casual conversation for *particle ellipsis* to happen. This means that grammatical particles that mark syntactic roles such as subject and object are left unexpressed in a sentence. This phenomenon is common and acceptable in conversation, even if these particles normally are obligatory in written Japanese. Here is an example sentence on particle ellipsis in Japanese, where the subject marker ‘ga’ or the topic marker ‘wa’ and direct object marker ‘o’ are missing:

(25) *Watashi Ø sensei kara tegami Ø moratta.*

1SG Ø teacher ABL letter Ø receive.PAST

“I received a letter from the teacher”

1.4 SUBJECTS

In my corpus study I have looked at the use of first, second and third person subjects and their rate of ellipsis. There are a number of first person pronouns in Japanese⁴, which are used differently depending on social status and politeness. Some of these include the standard ‘watashi’, male casual ‘boku’, female casual ‘atashi’ and formal ‘watakushi’.

What is important to know about Japanese, is that in contrast to first person pronouns, a second person pronoun or third person pronoun is rarely used at all. Japanese has several second person pronouns depending on politeness and social status, like ‘anata’, ‘kimi’ ‘omae’, etc. The Japanese tend to prefer to use names and titles when addressing each other however, because using a word like ‘you’ is much too direct. Therefore, in some sentences with second person subject, I have counted names and titles as second person. Thus instead of calling it ‘second person pronouns’, I have decided to include use of names and titles as use of second person, and thus call it ‘second person subject’ in this thesis. Furthermore, when a second person subject has been omitted from the sentence, I have registered the identity of the missing subject to be a title or name. Here is an example, where I registered the missing subject to be ‘Sensei’ in my corpus, which is the title used for this person throughout the book (Kawakami 2015:15):

(26) *Atsumeterassharun desu ka.*

Collect-HON COP QP

“Do (you) collect (them)?”

We have the same problem with third person pronouns. Japanese has third person pronouns like ‘kare’ (he) and ‘kanojo’ (her), but they are not commonly used, and are most often replaced with names or titles, just like second person pronouns. Thus I have made the decision to call them ‘third person subjects’ rather than ‘third person pronouns’, in order to include the use of names and titles in the term. I have also decided to call the use of first person ‘first person subject’, regardless of particle use after the subject.

⁴ In Japanese it is also possible to talk about oneself using a title or name, such as ‘Sensei’ or ‘mama’, for example when talking to a young child. However, the use of title or name instead of a first person pronoun is much less common compared to second and third person.

1.5 TRANSITIVITY

Transitivity is a property of a verb, and are divided into two classes; transitive and intransitive (intransitive means ‘not transitive’). Transitive sentences tend to have agentive subjects, and require a direct object for the action to be done upon. An example of a transitive sentence can be “I killed the cat”. “Kill” here is a transitive verb because an utterance like “I killed” is not a complete sentence because the direct object is missing. To compare, an intransitive situation involves only one participant, like for example this sentence: “I walked”. (Brown and Miller 2013: 449). In Japanese, transitive and intransitive verb pairs are quite common. Here are some examples (from Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 585-586):

- (27) a. *Doa-ga aku.*
Door-NOM open
“The door opens” (intransitive)
- b. *Watashi-wa doa-o akeru*
“I-TOP door-OBJ open”
“I open the door” (transitive)
- (28) a. *Fuku-ga yogoreta.*
Clothes-NOM get.dirty.PAST
«The clothes got dirty» (intransitive)
- b. *Fuku-o yogoshita.*
Clothes-OBJ make.dirty.PAST
«(I) dirtied my clothes» (transitive)

The difference between these sentences is that the transitive sentences have agentive subjects who transfer energy to the object of the sentence. In comparison, the intransitive sentences do not have agentive subjects. Note however that there are intransitive verbs that demand a human subject, like ‘hashiru’ (to run), ‘iku’ (to go) and ‘warau’ (to laugh). The first two verbs need agentive subjects (meaning that it needs a subject that does something with intention), whilst the last verb is non-agentive (it happens more or less on its own).

In my corpus study I decided to look at how often Japanese makes use of transitive and intransitive sentences, and what kind of subjects they usually take (human or non-human). This is in relation to a theory on Japanese being a so-called ‘situation-focus language’, which means that it tends to use intransitive sentences where the situation in itself is in focus, rather than the person doing the action. The opposite of a situation-focus language is called ‘person-focus language’, and Japanese and English are often illustrated as contrastive languages in this matter. Let’s compare these sentences (taken from Hinds 1986: 53):

- (29) a. *Yama-ga mieru.*
Mountain-NOM visible.
Lit.: “The mountain is visible”
- b. *I see the mountain.*

The Japanese sentence here uses an intransitive sentence structure with a non-human subject to illustrate the situation where the mountain is in focus. In contrast, the English sentence has a human subject which is in focus of the action of seeing a mountain. In Japanese it is of course possible to say ‘yama-o miru’ (I see the mountain), but it sounds very unnatural, and the sentence structure in (29a) would be preferred.

In my corpus study, I decided to exclude adjectival sentences as well as sentences with the copula ‘desu’ as predicates. This is because they don’t fit into the traditional division between transitive and intransitive sentences, which are based on verbs. Adjectives like ‘kirei’ (beautiful) or ‘suki’ (to my liking) and so on have no requirements for direct object, just like intransitive sentences, and thus absolutely cannot be transitive. I could of course have put them into the intransitive category and leave it at that, but I decided that to get more reliable data on the issue of transitivity, it was best to restrict these criteria to just verbs and exclude the categories of adjectives and the copula verb from my analysis.

1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The contents of the following chapters are as follows; chapter 2 is on linguistic theories, where I explain the different theories that I base my research on. In this chapter I explain what ellipsis is and the different kinds of ellipsis that exist in more depth. I also explain anaphoric

reference and pronoun dropping in general, using examples from both English, Japanese and other languages to illustrate. Grice's Conversational Maxims are also included in chapter 2, along with Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, which are closely related to each other. These two theories are relevant to ellipsis because they give insight on the matter of omitting information from a sentence, and how we manage to retrieve that missing information from contextual information. I also present Yoshihiko Ikegami's theory on DO-language and BECOME-language, in relation to Shigeko Nariyama's theory on situation-focus and person-focus properties in Japanese.

Chapter 3 contains previous research by other scholars who have had studies done on ellipsis in Japanese. This includes a review of John Hinds' book *Ellipsis in Japanese* (1982), where he has made some theories on when ellipsis happens and doesn't happen in Japanese. Shigeko Nariyama's books *Ellipsis and Reference-tracking in Japanese* (2003) and *How can we know who did what to whom in Japanese?* (2009) are also included in this chapter, and she gives us further points to consider when researching ellipsis in Japanese. I have included a study done by Mutsumi Yamamoto in *Agency and Impersonality* (1999), which is a comparative study about agentivity in Japanese and English and a concept called 'translationese'. We will also look at a study done by Lee and Yonezawa (2008) on when ellipsis does not happen.

Chapter 4 is my hypothesis chapter, where I present points of rules of what I expect to find regarding subject ellipsis in my corpus study. These rules are based on the linguistic theories of chapter 2 as well as the previous research presented in chapter 3. Several aspects are involved in making the rules, like politeness, in-group/out-group identity, surface frame patterns (SFP), different kinds of sentence structures, and Nariyama's animacy hierarchy of pronouns and transitivity.

Chapter 5 is the chapter about my corpus analysis results. I use the rules that I made in chapter 4 to see how many of them were supported and how many were in disagreement with my corpus study. I start by re-presenting my hypothesis rules, followed by my results, divided into sub-chapters of subjects, transitivity and new vs. old information. My results are illustrated with examples and percentage tables for each matter at hand. In the chapter summary I sum up how many of my rules were supported or not supported by my study.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter. This is where I summarize my findings on subject ellipsis in Japanese, and where I make conclusions about the different linguistic theories

presented in chapter 2 and the previous research presented in chapter 3, based on what I have found in my corpus study.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have explained what ellipsis is, and what pro-drop languages like Japanese are because ellipsis is closely related to pro-drop features of Japanese. I have explained what the difference is between topic and subject, which is related to how languages (like Japanese) that are called topic-prominent languages are compared to languages like English that are subject-prominent languages. This is because subjects in Japanese are often topicalized and marked with the topic marker ‘wa’, but topic and subject are two different notions. I have then explained the difference between topic and contrast, and the functions of different kinds of particles for subjects, specifically ‘wa’, ‘ga’ and other particles that are used for emphasis. This is because I have looked at subject nominals with these particles in my corpus analysis. After that we looked at how we can deal with different forms of nominals as subjects in Japanese, followed by a section on transitivity. In the end we have seen an overview of the chapters of this thesis.

In this thesis I have decided to use *Hepburn Romaji*, which is a way to reproduce Japanese pronunciation into the Latin alphabet.

2 LINGUISTIC THEORIES

In this chapter I will introduce some theories that are relevant for my thesis. They are first and foremost theories on *ellipsis*, *pro-drop* and *anaphora* in general, but I will also introduce *Relevance Theory* and *Grice's Conversational Maxims*, as well as Ikegami's theory on *DO-languages* and *BECOME-languages*.

2.1 ELLIPSIS / ANAPHORA / PRO-DROP

As mentioned in the introduction, the word *ellipsis* itself comes from Greek, and means "omission". According to The Linguistics Encyclopedia; "ellipsis works anaphorically by leaving out something mentioned earlier" (1991: 463). To understand better what ellipsis is, I will have to give an explanation as to what *anaphora* is (Malmkjær 1991, Hoji 2003, Fox 1987, Fromkin and Rodman 1988, Cook 1994). Anaphora can also be called *backward reference*, and is part of what we in linguistics call *endophoric reference*, meaning that it involves referring to textual items rather than out of text world items (*exophoric reference*). Let's look at a couple examples sentences of exophoric reference:

- (1) *Look at **that!***
- (2) [Observing someone put soy sauce on a hamburger]
*My brother **does the same thing.*** (Hoji 2003: 176)

In the first example sentence, "that" refers to a real world item we can in some way sense (in this case most likely visually). In the second example, the phrase 'does the same thing' refers to a thing or an action that has been observed. Anaphora (endophoric reference) on the other hand, is referential in that certain words, often personal pronouns and the like ('he', 'it', 'they' etc.), are used to refer to something mentioned earlier in a certain context or conversation. This is done in order to avoid repetition. Let us compare these next two sentences as an example:

- (3) a. *Jane got herself a new dog and **it** is very cute.*
- b. *Jane got herself a new dog and **the dog** is very cute.*

In sentence (3a), we have used the anaphoric pronoun 'it' to refer back to the dog mentioned earlier in the same sentence. Even though the word 'dog' is not mentioned again, there is no

confusion as to what the ‘it’ refers back to. In sentence (3b) we have mentioned the dog twice in the same sentence, and although this sentence of course is also a perfectly possible utterance, it sounds less natural and is unnecessarily long. One important factor in natural language is to make yourself understood as clearly as possible without using too much effort; in a way we can say that anaphora is a strategy used for economizing your speech. This is closely related to *Grice’s Conversational Maxims* which I will get back to later in this chapter. There are several kinds of anaphora; pronominal, pro-verb and pro-sentence. They all have in common that a longer expression is replaced by a pronoun or another kind of *pro-form* (one word that replaces other words or longer expressions). The example sentence (3a) above is an example of pronominal anaphora in that a single noun has been replaced with the pronoun ‘it’. Let us look at example sentences (4) and (5):

(4) *My cat chased the mouse, and the neighbour’s cat **did** too.*

(5) a. *My cat killed a mouse, **which** makes me sad.*

In example (4), the verb ‘did’ is used to replace the previous ‘chased’, and is an example of pro-verb anaphora. Example (5) is an example of pro-sentence anaphora because a whole phrase (*‘my cat killing a mouse’*) has been replaced with ‘which’. The full sentence without use of anaphora would be more like example (5b), and it sounds very strange and repetitive:

(5) b. *My cat killed a mouse, and **my cat killing a mouse** makes me sad.*

We also have a reverse kind of anaphora called *cataphora*, also called *forward reference*, where the referring pronoun refers to an item coming afterwards. Here is an example sentence of cataphora:

(6) *When **he** got home, John had an ice cold beer.*

We see from sentence (6) how cataphora works, in that the pronoun ‘he’ refers to someone that has yet to be mentioned. I hope we can see from all these examples then, that the different kinds of anaphora are common, and sometimes even necessary to achieve understanding and to keep the smooth flow of a conversation. To achieve understanding of anaphoric sentences both speaker and listener rely greatly on the understanding of both the rules of grammar as well as of the extralinguistic context in order to fill the gaps.

In linguistics we also have a phenomenon called *gapping*, which is another kind of ellipsis. Gapping happens when redundant material, often finite verbs, are completely left out of the

second clause of a sentence. The omitted item often refers back to the finite verb in the previous clause. Here is an example taken from Fromkin and Rodman (1998: 194):

(7) *Jill washed the grapes and Bill \emptyset the cherries.*

In example (7), the verb ‘washed’ is left out of the second clause of the sentence, indicated here by \emptyset . Yet the information about what Bill is doing to the cherries is not lost, because the gapping indicates a repetition of something mentioned previously, in this case ‘washing’.

Let us look at how other pro-drop languages use ellipsis. Many pro-drop languages, for example Italian and Spanish, have subject/verb agreement, and can thus remove the subject of a sentence and still express information about the subject in the verb. The subject is made identifiable by the information given in the verb. Let’s look at an example from Spanish (Wratil and Gallmann 2011: 2)

(8) *Quiere \emptyset venir conmigo?*

Want-3SG come with me

“Does s/he want to come with me?”

We see in this example that Spanish marks the verb ‘want’ as being done by a third person pronoun (he/she/it). To illustrate this further, we can look at the different agreements types in Spanish for the verb ‘dance’ (Wratil and Gallmann 2011: 4):

(9) *Bail-o* (1SG) “I dance”

Bail-as (2SG) “You dance”

Bail-a (3SG) “He/she/it dances”

This subject/verb agreement makes it easier to retrieve who or what the subject is in a null-subject sentence. This is the most common system that allows some languages to be null-subject languages, and Japanese is different from Spanish in this respect in that Japanese does not have verbal inflections for person and number. Instead, Japanese has inflections for tense, mood, aspect and negation. Japanese verbs thus carry a lot of information other than the basic semantics. Let’s look at some verb inflections in Japanese (Jaeggli and Safir 1989: 29):

(10)	<i>Yom-u</i>	Read-non-past
	<i>Yom-anai</i>	Read-neg
	<i>Yom-eba</i>	Read-conditional
	<i>Yom-itai</i>	Read-want
	<i>Yom-oo</i>	Read-volitional
	<i>Yom-areru</i>	Read-passive
	<i>Yom-aseru</i>	Read-causative

Looking at some of these examples, we can already determine what the subject of the different verbs would be, the most obvious here being ‘*yom-itai*’ which is a verb describing feelings and wants. In Japanese, the suffix *-tai* is used only when speaking about yourself, and if you want to specify that someone other than yourself wants something, you will have to add elements that convey this. These elements often carry information about the utterance being based on hear-say, or contains some element of insecurity in them. Thus if you want to say that someone else wants to read, you’ll have to add something like *-tagaru* (*-garu* implying that the subject is someone other than yourself) and say ‘*yomi-tagaru*’. With *-tai* alone the subject can be none other than first person. For most of the verbs in example (10) though, it is not immediately clear who or what the subject is, and we thus have to rely more on pragmatics and context when it comes to subject ellipsis in Japanese. I will go through this topic more thoroughly in chapter 4 (hypothesis chapter).

Let us now look more closely at pronoun dropping in Japanese. Here are some examples:

- (11) a. A: *Ashita paatii ni iku?*
 Tomorrow party-DAT go
 “(Are you) going to the party tomorrow?”
- B: *Iku yo.*
 Go SFP
 “(I am) going”

- b. *Kono kēki-wa oishii. Dare-ga tsukutta no?*
 this cake-TOP delicious. Who-NOM make.PAST SFP
 “This cake is delicious. Who made (it)?”

In the question in (11a), the target of the question is second person, meaning ‘you’, which we can know from rising intonation indicating the sentence as a question. In answering the question in (11a), the only thing uttered is a verb, yet there is no confusion as to who is going. In the English translation however, you need to include a subject (and a copula verb), in this case ‘you’, ‘I’, ‘are’ and ‘am’, in order for the sentences to make sense. Also, in the English translation of (11b), we need to add an anaphoric pronoun, ‘it’, in order for the sentence to be correct and meaningful, but we can see that this is not the case in Japanese. The cake that the ‘it’ in the English sentence refers to is understood from context and thus does not need mentioning at all in the Japanese sentence. You could of course supply the “missing” pronouns in both of the Japanese examples above, and the sentences would be grammatically correct. They would however sound very unnatural. Second language learners of Japanese, especially those whose first language is non pro-drop like English or Norwegian, often make this mistake of supplying pronouns where they are pragmatically inferable⁵ (and thus mentioning them is unnecessary), making their speech sound unnatural and clumsy.

2.2 GRICE’S CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

Paul Grice proposed a so-called *Cooperative Principle* that he used to explain how interlocutors could understand conversational implicatures. In other words, he wanted to explain how one is able to understand not only what people say, but also what people actually mean when they make use of pragmatic inferences in their speech. Not all our utterances are to be taken literally. Let us look at a couple of examples:

⁵ *Pragmatics* is a linguistic term that distinguishes itself from *semantics*. They are both studies on meaning, but whilst semantics work with the literal meaning of words and phrases, pragmatics work with the intended meaning, which is often hidden behind a semantic meaning. For example, a sentence like “What lovely weather we have this morning”, uttered whilst looking out the window only to find that it’s raining heavily, has two very opposite implications depending on the semantic or the pragmatic meaning. From a speaker’s utterance we then make *inferences* based on what is said and how it is said, achieving the intended meaning correctly. In the case of example (12) the inference is made by a common knowledge that heavy rain usually is not considered lovely weather, so the utterance is most likely to be a use of irony.

(12) [Looking out the window to find that it's raining heavily]

Wow, what beautiful weather we have today!

(13) A: *Do you think John passed his exams?*

B: *He looks very happy.*

The intended meaning of sentence (12) can be said to be quite the opposite of what is actually uttered. The answer in example (13) also involves an implicature, where John being happy might be a sign that he did indeed pass his exams. We interpret the answer to mean that John passed his exams even though it's not uttered directly. How is it that we are able to understand the sentences beyond their literal meaning? This is what Grice offered a model for. He thus made the *Cooperative Principle*, which he claims that we unconsciously follow in conversation with others. This principle consists of four maxims (Ariel 2010: 122):

(14) a. Maxim of Quantity

- i. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
- ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

b. Maxim of Quality.

- i. Do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

c. Maxim of Relation

- i. Be relevant.

d. Maxim of Manner

- i. Avoid obscurity of expression.
- ii. Avoid ambiguity.
- iii. Be brief.
- iv. Be orderly.

In other words, conversation is largely dependent on the cooperation of the participants of those conversations, and how they choose to follow or flout these conversational maxims. Let us look at an example (from Ariel 2010: 122):

(15) *A short while ago a rocket directly hit a house in Ashdod. A few people with anxiety attacks were brought to the hospital.*

Example (15) is an example of the Maxim of Quantity. At first glance one could perhaps think that the speaker has added more than necessary, thus flouting the maxim saying that you should be as brief as possible. However, in cases like this where there is talk of a rocket being fired directly into a house, it is natural for people to want to hear whether there were any deaths or injuries. The speaker thus follows the maxims of quantity by adding this information. Example (16) is an example of flouting of the Maxim of Quality. This is from a note found on a kitchen door in living accommodations where the kitchen is shared between several tenants. At some point some items have been stolen from the kitchen, causing the management to lock the kitchen. This requires the tenants to stop by the office to get a key for the kitchen when they want to use it:

(16) *Please get key from office **due to** missing items.* (Ariel 2010: 123)

Sentence (16) is a violation of the Maxim of Quality because it cannot be true that the reason you are getting a key is that items are missing. Thus we must draw the implicature that due to items being stolen, the kitchen is kept locked, and that is why you will have to get a key from the office in order to use the kitchen. Now let us look at an example of the Maxim of Relation (Grice 1975: 51):

(17) A: *I am out of petrol.*

B: *There is a garage round the corner.*

We always assume that conversation participants are relevant when they speak. Thus in this conversation, B would be violating the Maxim of Relation unless he thinks that the garage is open and that it has petrol to sell. Here is an example of flouting the Maxim of Manner (Ariel 2010: 124):

(18) *Yuka is the sister of Mika? Or Mika is the sister of Yuka?*

This example shows flouting of the Maxim of Manner in that the speaker asks alternate questions that seemingly means the same. If Yuka is the sister of Mika, then naturally Mika is the sister of Yuka. What the speaker is after in this context however, is a reminder of which of the sisters was the first babysitter they hired (the first babysitter later on brought her sister who was hired as a new babysitter). Thus even though the maxim has been flouted, it still makes sense in its respective context. It is these choices speakers make of either following or flouting maxims that help us fill the gaps between what people say and what they mean, according to Grice. These ideas might also help me in the search of when ellipsis happens and doesn't happen in Japanese, as we might expect both linguistic and extralinguistic/contextual reasons for leaving out something from a sentence.

2.3 RELEVANCE THEORY

Relevance Theory was introduced by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson as an alternative to Grice's Conversational Maxims, saying that one principle could replace all the different maxims. The idea is simply that during conversation, we as speakers try to always be relevant, or as listeners always try to interpret an utterance as being relevant. Thus there will always be a certain expectation as to what will be said next. By initiating an intentional act of communication, the speaker expresses that the information will in some way be relevant to the addressee. This relevant communicated information then interacts with the contextual assumptions entertained by the addressee. Relevance Theory is based on three central ideas (Brown and Miller 2013: 380). The first says that much of the information conveyed by utterances is not extracted from the code of grammar, but rather is constructed inferentially by listeners. Secondly, the listeners have to recognize the speaker's intention, whether the intention is to inform about something or if it's about making the listener aware that a communication is about to take place. Thirdly, speakers assess utterances for relevance, and the listeners assume that a given utterance is relevant to what the speaker wants to communicate. The ideal is that one should be able to produce utterances with as much information as possible, in such a way that as little processing effort as possible is needed. This is often done by using both *implicatures* and *explicatures*.

Implicatures contain information about what sort of inferences a listener is supposed to draw from an utterance⁶. For example, given the example sentence (19) below one would make an inference saying that Matt is a bad cook, and that the recipe is very simple, based on the word *even*:

(19) *Even Matt can cook it.* (Brown and Miller 2013: 380)

The previous example in sentence (13), repeated here as (20), is also a good illustration on the use of implicatures:

(20) A: *Do you think John passed his exams?*

B: *He looks very happy.*

One could accuse speaker B of annoyingly changing the topic, but thanks to our assumptions that conversation interlocutors will follow the maxims of conversation (in other words, we expect that our conversation partners try to always be relevant), we identify the answer ‘he looks very happy’ as an implicature, making us draw the inference that John, by the looks of it, probably did pass his exams.

Explicature is a word coined by Sperber and Wilson, and is regarded as a linguistic concept used by Relevance Theorists. They are quite similar to implicatures, but different in the sense that an explicature is explicitly mentioned, whereas implicatures most often are implicit. Explicatures represent the complete proposition that the speaker intends to convey explicitly, even if it may contain inferred aspects (Ariel 2010: 142). The explicatures are elaborated by listeners to come to a complete understanding of the utterance. Here is an example (from Brown and Miller 2013: 162):

(21) *At Christmas my parents are buying **the tree**.*

In this example sentence, ‘the tree’ is mentioned explicitly under the assumption that the listener has an understanding of the reference, in other words under the assumption that the listener knows the culture where we place one specific kind of tree in our houses for Christmas. An expression like ‘near’ can also be an explicature in that it’s meaning is different depending on whether the context is ‘Norway is near Denmark’ or ‘I live near the train station’. The distances

⁶ The difference between implicature and inference is that implicatures are made by *speakers*, where meaning goes beyond what is literally said. Inferences, on the other hand, are cognitive processes where the *listener* tries to understand meaning beyond what is said.

are quite different, and thus ‘near’, although explicitly mentioned, also calls for us to make inferences to understand the utterance correctly. In addition, explicatures account for ellipsis and helps us fill in the blanks. Take this example:

- (22) a. A: *Could you give me a hand?*
B: *I will.*

The answer ‘I will’ is an elliptical expression which bases itself on information already mentioned. The full conversation without ellipsis would be something like this:

- (23) b. A: *Could you give me a hand?*
B: *I will give you a hand.*

Thus, I see Relevance Theory as useful for my thesis because it can account for certain elements that promote the use of ellipsis, and may perhaps help me understand the phenomenon better.

2.4 DO-LANGUAGE AND BECOME-LANGUAGE

The theory of languages belonging to groups of situation- or person-focused languages came to life in 1977, introduced by the linguists Tazuko Monane and Lawrence Rogers and has since been researched and supported by other linguists (Andō 1986, Ikegami 1981, among others). The theory is related to Yoshihiko Ikegami’s theory of DO-languages and BECOME-languages as well as BE- and HAVE-languages. English and Japanese are often used as contrasting examples to explain the difference between these language categories.

It is a commonly held view that English, being a language where having a subject is more or less mandatory, is a person-focused language. English tends to prefer subjects that are active agents of the action performed, in contrast to Japanese which frequently makes sentences intransitive in order to avoid agents. Here are some pair sentences from Monane and Rogers (1977: 135) that illustrate the distinction:

- (24) a. *Sakebigoe-ga shita.*
Shouting:voice-NOM do.PAST
“Shouting was heard”

- b. *I just heard shouting.*
- (25) a. *Hara-ga hetta.*
 Stomach-NOM empty.
 “Stomach is empty”
- b. *I am hungry.*

We see here that while English has a human subject in both sentences, Japanese uses no human subject. There is a strong tendency in Japanese to either omit subjects or use intransitive sentences to convey a situation. Japanese is thus often called a situation-focused language.

The theory of *DO- and BECOME-languages* states that there is a difference between languages that put weight on actions being done by an agent, and languages that put weight on a change of state or situation. This is closely related to the person- vs situation-focus theory in that person-focused languages naturally would prefer to express that an action has been performed by a person or agent, whilst a situation-focused language would avoid that. Thus person-focus languages are also DO-languages, and situation-focus languages are BECOME-languages.

In addition to these two similar theories, we have the theory of *BE- and HAVE-languages*. This theory points out that there is a difference in what kinds of linguistic representation there are to express the notion of possession. English is here a typical HAVE-language, and Japanese is a BE-language. Let us look at some examples:

- (26) a. *Hanako-ni-wa kodomo-ga futari iru.*
 Hanako-DAT-TOP children-NOM two:persons exist.
 “At Hanako two children exist”
- b. *Hanako has two children.*
- (27) a. *Heya-ni-wa mado-ga futatsu aru.*
 Room-DAT-TOP window-NOM two exist.
 “In the room two windows exist”.

- b. *The room **has** two windows.*

We see here that English tends to use the verb ‘to have’ to specify who owns what, whilst Japanese uses a form of the verb ‘to be’. What is important to notice here is that whilst English always uses a verb like ‘to have’ or ‘to possess’, in Japanese you can usually use either of the constructions. But whilst one can say ‘Watashi-wa kuruma-o motteiru’ (I own a car) in Japanese, it isn’t the most natural way to convey that you own a car in Japanese. Instead one would use a construction like ‘Watashi-ni-wa kuruma ga aru’ (“At me a car exists”).

It is often said that English likes to overspecify verbal content, and Japanese likes to underspecify (Hinds 1996: 26). Hinds uses an example of what you would yell out the window to the noisy neighbours, whereas in English you’d perhaps want to specify what kind of noise you’d want less of (turn down the TV!, practice the piano later!), in Japanese you would only say ‘urusai!’ (Lit.: Noisy!) (1996: 24) Likewise, the Japanese expression ‘o-negaishimasu’ (Lit.: (I) ask (you)) is used by itself in many situations, and is difficult if not impossible to translate into a comprehensible English sentence without adding more information about what you want someone to do. Coming into a hotel and saying ‘please take my luggage to my room’ is a lot more acceptable in English than just saying ‘please’ alone, even if it is possible to understand from context what you are requesting.

It is popularly stated that English is a language with high agentivity, whilst Japanese has low agentivity. This means, like mentioned above, that English prefers, and in many situations is required to have a person mentioned in a sentence. On the contrary, it is preferred to not be mentioned at all in Japanese, as we already have seen a couple of examples of. As a natural consequence of wanting to avoid agentivity, Japanese tends to prefer intransitive sentences to report events. Here are two example sentences on the event of spilling milk, taken from Hinds (ibid.: 27):

- (28) a. *Ara, miruku-ga **koboreta**.*
Oh milk-NOM get spilled.PAST
“Oh, the milk was spilled”.
b. *Oh no, **I spilled** the milk.*

We see here that a Japanese speaker would choose to make an intransitive construction saying that the milk spilled, rather than having an active agent actually spilling the milk. It is of course possible to say ‘miruku-o koboshita’ (Oh no, (I) spilled the milk), but it doesn’t feel as natural as the intransitive sentence. In the English example however, we have a clear agent-action situation. And in contrast to Japanese, if we were to state that the milk spilled itself, it could be seen as a way of avoiding responsibility, which isn’t seen as very polite⁷ from an English perspective. The transitive sentence in English is thus the more natural choice to report the event, and the intransitive sentence is more natural in Japanese.

We can see then that there is a great amount of evidence that supports the idea of Japanese being a situation-focus language, and is therefore often used as an example to make a contrast to English and other Indo-European languages. However, Shigeko Nariyama (2003) points out in her book that it might not be so black and white. In her book *Ellipsis and Reference Tracking in Japanese*, she tries to find patterns for when subject ellipsis happens in Japanese, and also tries to find rules to how we can know what has been ellipsed. For this purpose, she proposes an animacy hierarchy, where a subject higher in the animacy hierarchy is more prone to be ellipsed than subjects lower in the hierarchy⁸. This means that when a sentence has an ellipsed subject, the chances of that subject being a person, or at the least something animate, are fairly high. This assumption can also be made based on the fact that human language was made by humans, and we tend to talk about humans more than we do about other beings (Yamamoto 2006: 32). At the same time, an inanimate subject is very rarely omitted from a sentence. Ellipsis very often happens when the topic has already been introduced in an earlier sentence, but when it comes to inanimate subjects, they tend to be mentioned again in later sentences rather than be omitted. This is because an inanimate subject is low on the animacy hierarchy, and thus harder to understand from context than a human subject would be (Nariyama 2003: 274). In other words, you could say that subject ellipsis in Japanese is just another way for a language to have person-focus in that the person is so obvious from context that it doesn’t even need mentioning. But this sign of person-focus in Japanese seems to be ignored by Monane and Rogers, although they mention explicitly that “(...) the Japanese language’s resistance to using

⁷ We will return to the topic of politeness in chapter 4.

⁸ The problem might not be as much about ‘animacy’ as it is about ‘personhood’, according to Yamamoto (2006: 32). After all, a human being is strictly speaking not more *animate* than an amoeba, but clearly have both higher intelligence and performs actions with clear intentions to a larger extent than what an amoeba does. It can thus be argued that rather than having a hierarchy based on animacy, we should base our hierarchy on ‘personhood’ or ‘humanness’.

inanimate subjects versus the English language's willingness to use inanimate subjects" exists (1977: 133. Original underline). It is indeed very rare for Japanese to have an inanimate subject in a regular transitive sentence, and thus sentences tend to be made intransitive instead to avoid having inanimate subjects as active agents of a sentence (Nariyama 2003: 240). Inanimate subjects are however common in intransitive sentences in Japanese where there is no active agent, and that is where the big difference lies here. Japanese avoids having inanimate agents (because how can something with no life do an active action?), whilst there is no such restriction in English. Let us look at an example, where example (29) shows a completely acceptable sentence in English with an inanimate agent. Example (30a) is the Japanese equivalent, but although this sentence is not ungrammatical, it is very unnatural. The more natural option is (30b), where 'the product' is no longer an agent, but has been replaced with a human subject:

(29) *The product made him a rich man.*

(30) a. *Sono seihin-ga kare-o okanemochi-ni shita.*

That product-NOM he-ACC rich:person-DAT make.PAST

"The product made him rich"

b. *Sono seihin-no okage-de kare-wa okanemochi-ni natta.*

That product-LK favor-by he-NOM rich:person-DAT become.PAST

"Thanks to/because of that product, he became rich"

Seeing that Japanese indeed prefers to have animate, and even more preferably human subjects (with transitive verbs, that is), the question of whether Japanese can be looked upon as the perfect example of a situation-focus language arises. While there is evidence pointing towards Japanese as a situation-focus language, there also exists evidence of Japanese being, to a certain degree, a person-focus language. Perhaps the question of focus in languages shouldn't be made a question of either or, but a matter of degree between situation-focus and person-focus. In the research on ellipsis in Japanese, I can therefore expect to find inanimate subjects to be in intransitive sentences because Japanese has situation-focus properties on the one hand, or transitive sentences with ellipted subjects because Japanese also has person-focus properties.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter we have looked at some theories that I deem relevant for my master research. We have looked at ellipsis, along with pronoun dropping and anaphoric reference, and have seen examples of this in different languages, in addition to Japanese. I have also introduced Grice's Maxims of Conversation and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, which are closely related to each other on how we grasp the intended meaning of utterances correctly in daily conversation. We have looked at Ikegami's theory of DO-languages and BECOME-languages, giving us an idea to what we can expect to find when looking at ellipsis in Japanese. At last we have had a look at Nariyama's theory on situation-focus and person-focus properties in Japanese.

3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In this chapter I will review previous work on ellipsis in Japanese. A lot more work has been done on the topic in recent years, and I will introduce both older work from John Hinds (*Ellipsis in Japanese* from 1982), as well as newer research done by Shigeko Nariyama (*Ellipsis and Reference-tracking in Japanese* from 2003 and *Nihongo no shōryaku ga wakaru hon* from 2009). I will also make a short introduction of a study done on so-called ‘translationese’ by Mutsumi Yamamoto, from *Animacy and Reference* (1999), again cited in *Agency and Impersonality* from 2006. Although her books offer little contribution concerning the rules behind nominal ellipsis, it gives insight into differences in agentivity between Japanese and English. At last we will see a summary of a study done by Duck-Young Lee and Yoko Yonezawa about the use of overt first and second person subjects in Japanese, from *The role of the overt expression of first and second person subject in Japanese* (2008).

3.1 JOHN HINDS

Ellipsis in Japanese was written as a comprehensible book to kick-start more research on the topic. There hadn’t previously been much research on ellipsis compared to other linguistic features of Japanese grammar, and this might be because the subject of ellipsis goes under so many different categories; everything from syntax and pragmatics to social and psychological studies. It is hard to be an expert on all these areas at once, but Hinds suggests that we “plunge (...) into this study of the relationship between language and everything else” (1982: 24). His book does just this, and encourages more research on the topic. Hinds discusses different kinds of ellipsis, some of which I won’t be looking at in my research (namely particle and verb phrase ellipsis), and he devotes two chapters of his book to ellipsis of arguments (i.e. nominal ellipsis), which is my chosen topic.

In the very beginning of the book, Hinds makes a distinction between what he calls *ellipsis* and what he calls *deletion*. Ellipsis in this case is when elements are gone from the so-called “surface structure” of an utterance. Deletion is when elements are gone from the “deep structure”. What is meant by this is that sentences are said to have structures on two different levels. When something is left out from the deep structure, it won’t be noticed as if something’s missing. An example is how you in a sentence like “hon-o yomitagaru” ((He/she) looks like

(he/she) wants to read a book) leave out parts of the «deep structure», which here consists of *yomu+tai+garu*. These three parts all have their own meaning, and when put together some letters are removed or altered in order for the word to make sense. Ellipsis on the other hand, is when certain elements that give relevant meaning to a sentence are removed for any given reason. An example of this is a sentence like “*kuruma-ga aru*” (Car exists), where the owner of the sentence is understood from context. But some nuance is missing in Hinds’ book, as there exists overlaps between ellipsis and deletion, as is commented by Haig (1983: 181). This is where you could say that omitted parts from the deep structure are noticeable and make an identifiable hole on the surface. Haig gives an example of this overlap with an imperative sentence:

- (1) *Sono hon-o koko-ni motte-koi.*
 that book-ACC here-DAT take-come
 “Bring that book here”

In this example, what is missing is a second person subject to bring the book. But is this ellipsis or deletion? We can say that it has been removed from the deep structure of the sentence, but it is identifiable in the surface structure (Haig 1983: 181). Should it then qualify as ellipsis rather than deletion? This is a case of overlap that needs more discussion in Hinds’ book.

Hinds then introduces what he calls *SFP* (Surface Frame Patterns). The idea is that every predicate (verb or adjective) contains certain types of information, visible in the surface frame patterns. For example, the verb “*yomu*” (read) needs to have an NP (noun phrase) which is a sentient being, and an NP that must be some sort of decodable material (book, newspaper etc.). Because of these required NPs, we can often know what the subject of the sentence is even when it is omitted, because the information is already in the verb. However, there are also instances where verbs undergo ellipsis in Japanese. Here’s an example (Haig 1983: 183):

- (2) *Hoshi-ni inori-o.*
 Star-DAT prayer-ACC
 “(I) (offer) a prayer to the stars”

According to Hinds, the way an interpreter knows what verb fits into a context like this, is by finding the surface frame pattern of the sentence, and choose among the possible verbs that have the same pattern (1982: 234). The reason that the verb ‘*sasageru*’ (offer) would be chosen,

is that this verb is highly cohesive with the phrase ‘inori-o sasageru’. This is something called *collocation*, which are sequences of words that occur together more often than would be predicted by chance. Collocations are not always the same across languages, and thus a collocation in one language is often untranslatable or different in another language. Let’s look at examples from French to English (Seretan 2011: 2):

- (3) a. French: *Gagner argent* (lit.: “Win money”)
 b. English: *Make money*
- (4) a. French: *Poser question* (lit.: “Put down question”)
 b. English: *Ask question*

We can see then, that collocations in different languages can be rather unpredictable to non-native speakers, and it is thus an important part of my study to be aware of collocations in Japanese in order to understand certain types of ellipsis better, and to understand exactly what has been omitted.

When it comes to the question of when ellipsis happens, the answer from Hinds is very simple: ellipsis happens when “the speaker assumes that the addressee will be able to reconstruct the ellipted item successfully” (1982: 47). The reconstructing of the ellipted forms happens either depending on the context and topic of the conversation, or by using the surface frame patterns introduced in the previous paragraph. Hinds works with three different kinds of ellipsis: verbal ellipsis (chapter 3), nominal ellipsis (chapter 4 and 5) and particle ellipsis (chapter 6). He uses a qualitative analysis of recorded conversations, dialogue from television as well as news articles. Although it gives a good overview of what types of ellipsis that exist, his study is not a quantitative analysis. Thus the frequency of certain types of ellipsis in the different genres remains rather unclear.

Chapter 3 deals with verbal ellipsis. The most common kind of verbal ellipsis is what is called *gapping*. Here is an example sentence using gapping (Haig 1983: 181):

- (5) *Watashi-wa sakana-o, Yoshiko-wa gohan-o tabeta.*
 I-TOP fish-ACC Yoshiko-TOP rice-ACC eat.PAST
 “I ate fish and Yoshiko \emptyset rice”

In this sentence, the verb 'taberu' (eat) is omitted from the first clause, and only mentioned in the second clause. Because the verb for both clauses is the same, it can be omitted in one clause. While these are mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, Hinds spends more time on verbal ellipsis where there is no identical verbal in preceding or following sentence. In these circumstances, the most common verbs to be ellipated are 'suru' (to do), 'da' (to be), 'aru' and 'iru' (to exist). This is because these have less semantic content than many other verbs (Hinds 1982: 54), but verbs with more semantic content can also be ellipated if there is sufficient information in the surrounding context.

Chapter 4 and 5 are about nominal ellipsis. Hinds states three conditions for nominal ellipsis, where the first is that it may occur "when the noun phrase is specified through a grammatical construction" (1982: 80). For example, ellipsis can happen in sentences with 'rashī' (looks like), which demands a third person subject, or in sentences with 'tsumori da' (plan to) which requires a first person subject. The second condition says that ellipsis may happen when the verb is in an appropriate honorific mode. For example, the verb 'irassharu' (honorific for 'to go/come' or 'to exist') demands that the subject is someone other than the speaker. The opposite holds for humble verbs. The third and last condition is that ellipsis may occur when the ellipated noun phrase refers to the paragraph topic. Only when the topic changes will a new noun phrase be introduced, and after that most likely be ellipated again in later sentences. These three conditions are perhaps the biggest strength of Hinds' book, and is widely agreed upon in the literature on nominal ellipsis in Japanese.

The sixth chapter in the book is about particle ellipsis. There are three different kinds of particles: primary, secondary and topicalizing, the primary ones being 'ga', 'o' and 'ni'. These primary particles mark subject (nominative), direct object and indirect object. Secondary particles are 'kara' (from), 'de' (by), 'made' (until) and 'ni' (directional, 'towards'). Topicalizing particles are 'wa' (topic marker) and 'mo' (also). Hinds states that all kinds of particles can be ellipated, but some with more frequency than others. For example, 'wa' is easily ellipated from a sentence. 'Mo' is difficult to omit because it carries a certain semantic interpretation that can't be easily picked up by a listener if omitted.

The strategies proposed by Hinds are not enough to fully explain how ellipsis works, which becomes clear when we see just how many of the instances presented are very dependent on the context of the conversation. It is also very uncertain whether the strategies explained in the book are actually used by speakers of Japanese or not, and the book can thus not be looked

upon as a guide to how Japanese speakers use ellipsis in their speech. But at the very least these strategies can be good tools for students of Japanese to try and understand how ellipsis works and what happens when something is omitted from a sentence. We can see a certain tendency for verbs and particles that those with less semantic content are more easily ellipted, and for nominal ellipsis it largely depends on the semantic information available in the surrounding parts of the sentence. The more information available in for example a verb, the easier it is to omit an argument.

3.2 SHIGEKO NARIYAMA

The book *Nihongo no shōryaku ga wakaru hon / How can we know who did what to whom in Japanese?* is meant to be a comprehensive guide for teachers and second language learners of Japanese, trying to make ellipsis easier to understand. It is written in both Japanese and English for the reader's convenience, and is largely based on Nariyama's book *Ellipsis and Reference-tracking in Japanese*, whose target readers are linguists and academics. They both contain a lot of the same information, the main difference being that *How can we know who did what to whom in Japanese?* has a simpler language to better suit its target readers.

According to Nariyama, one of the big mistakes done when teaching second learners of Japanese, is to teach the students that you can almost always omit first person pronoun when speaking Japanese. Lacking specific rules for when one can drop or not drop a subject or object, second language learners of Japanese often make up their own rules, and thus often make mistakes. This can result in rather disastrous mistakes, as example (6) illustrates (taken from Nariyama 2009: 15):

(6) ?? *Chiisai koro kara, watashi no obasan-wa nihonjin-to kekkon-shite (...)*

?? Small time from, I LK aunt-TOP Japanese-with marry.PAST

“My aunt has been married to a Japanese man since she was a child”

The meaning intended by this sentence is of course that the aunt married a Japanese man when the speaker, ‘I’, was a child. Omitting the first person pronoun here is clearly wrong, and the correct sentence should be something like example (7):

(7) *Watashi-ga chiisai koro kara, oba-wa nihonjin-to kekkon-shite (...)*

I-NOM small time from, aunt-TOP Japanese-with marry.PAST

“Since I was little, my aunt has been married to a Japanese man”

It is in order to avoid mistakes such as these that Nariyama has tried to make the first comprehensible teaching tool, for second language learners of Japanese to understand ellipsis better. After giving examples of how both learners of Japanese as well as native Japanese speakers have made mistakes, she comes up with three basic rules to begin with (Nariyama 2009: 18):

- (8) 1. You can omit the first person pronoun in declarative sentences.
2. You can omit the second person pronoun in question sentences.
3. You can omit the topic referents.

Declarative sentences are simply sentences that declare a fact to someone. Thus in Japanese, if you for example want to declare that you like cats, it's enough to say it as in example (9) below.

(9) \emptyset *neko-ga suki desu.*

\emptyset cat-NOM like COP

“(I) like cats”

If the fact that you like cats is expressed to show a contrast to, say, John who likes dogs, only then would you add the first person pronoun with the contrasting particle ‘wa’⁹:

(10) John: \emptyset *inu-ga suki desu.*

\emptyset dog-NOM like COP

“(I) like dogs”

⁹ As a general rule, you will only have to use the particle ‘wa’ either if there is a change of topic, or if you want to make a contrast to something. Thus point 3 in Nariyama’s basic rules: ‘omit the topic referents’, means that after a topic has been introduced with ‘wa’, this topic may in later sentences be omitted, until the point in time where the topic changes to something else.

Mary: *Watashi-wa neko-ga suki desu.*

I-TOP cat-NOM like COP

“(but) *I* like cats”

I suppose the first rule is meant to hold for subjects of simple sentences first of all, and perhaps of main clauses in complex sentences, and not of subordinate clauses. What has essentially been done wrong in example (6), is that the subject has been removed from the subordinate clause (*∅ chiisai koro kara*), but it needs to be there for the sentence to achieve its intended meaning. Thus the first rule has its limitations.

Nariyama points to the extensive use of ellipsis in Japanese to be a form of politeness, where being indirect has great value in Japanese culture. She also points out that it isn't as polite to omit things from sentences in other languages like Vietnamese or Russian (2009: 21), but that for the Japanese, 'less is more', and thus prefer to omit things that can be understood from context, giving the listener room for interpretation. Here is an example of an incomplete sentence, uttered by a guest in a house:

(11) *Sorosoro jikan nanode ...*

Soon time because ...

Lit.: “Because it's about time ...” (Nariyama 2009: 21)

The speaker in (11) has avoided saying directly what it is time for, but the situation calls for an interpretation that the guest is getting ready to go home. This works perfectly fine in Japanese, but it would sound very strange if this unfinished sentence was uttered in English. According to Nariyama, it is because the Japanese value indirectness that makes this phenomenon especially common in Japanese. We will return to the topic of politeness in chapter 4 (hypothesis chapter).

Nariyama then goes on to give more contextual reasons to omit or not to omit. For instance, if the topic you are speaking of is something that the listener is somewhat unfamiliar with, you would choose not to omit anything. Also, with several arguments competing in the same context, it is better not to omit anything to avoid confusion. By this I mean that there are several people in the given context. Take this example:

(12) *Tanaka-san-ga Yamada-san-ni atta toki,*

Tanaka-mr-NOM Yamada-mr-DAT meet.PAST time

amari tanoshisō dewanakatta.

particularly fun:looking be.NEG.PAST

“When Tanaka met Yamada, it didn’t look like he had much fun.”

We do not know in this Japanese sentence which one of the two, Tanaka or Yamada, looked like he didn’t have much fun. It might be better in this context therefore, to mention who didn’t seem to have fun, to avoid confusion. The last point on Nariyama’s list has been translated into English in such a way to make it a little confusing. The original Japanese sentence in Nariyama’s book (2009: 18) says that what has been mentioned before, can be removed in later sentences. So arguments that have been mentioned in an earlier sentence, can be removed from following sentences when it’s about the same topic as before. If the topic in question has not been mentioned in a while, it might be better to mention it explicitly again to remind the listener what the topic of conversation is. Also, it is more common to omit parts of a sentence if your conversation partner is someone close to you, a friend or a family member, rather than with strangers or in formal conversation about technical matters (Nariyama 2006: 33).

Perhaps the biggest point Nariyama makes in her book, is how much the distinction between the particles ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ mean when trying to correctly identify the ellipted referent. These particles are very similar, and their different usages can be very difficult to understand, making it one of the most demanding language traits for second-language learners of Japanese to master. Nariyama explains the differences between ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ as follows. The main difference between these two particles is that ‘wa’ is used mainly for introducing topics as well as making contrasts to other utterances or things. ‘Ga’ on the other hand, is the subject marker¹⁰. ‘Wa’ and ‘ga’ have other functions as well. For example, what comes *before* ‘ga’ is emphasized and provides new information, and with ‘wa’, what comes *after* it is emphasized. Here’s an example of this distinction (Nariyama 2009: 36):

¹⁰ In default cases, the subject is marked with ‘wa’ rather than ‘ga’, but ‘ga’ can never be used to mark a topic. The difference between topic and subject is explained in the introduction.

(13) *Watashi-wa Tanaka desu.*

I-TOP Tanaka COP

“I am Tanaka”

(14) *Watashi-ga Tanaka desu.*

I-NOM Tanaka COP

“It is I who is Tanaka (not someone else)”

‘Wa’ is also used for general statements and facts, like “*nihon-wa chiisai kuni da*” (Japan is a small country) and “*kuruma-wa benri da*” (cars are useful”). In some cases, like the last example here, it is also possible to use the particle ‘ga’, but ‘wa’ is more natural and common. In general, we can say that ‘wa’ is used when presenting old or already known information, whilst ‘ga’ is used when presenting new or unknown information. Here are some examples:

(15) *Watashi-wa mainichi shigotoba-made aruku.*

I-TOP every.day work-to walk

“I walk to work every day”

(16) *Asoko-de kodomo-ga asondeimasu.*

Over.there Child-NOM playing

“A child is playing over there”

According to Nariyama, a first and second person subject will always be “old” information in any given context, so it is marked by ‘wa’. She also says that the use of ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ can be compared to English’s use of ‘the’ and ‘a’, respectively (2009: 37-40). However, you will have to use ‘ga’ when you want to give focus to the subject, even if the subject is first or second person. Let’s look at an example:

(17) a. *Dare-ga sankashimasu ka*

Who-NOM participate QP

“Who will participate?”

b. *Watashi-ga sankashimasu.*

I-NOM participate

«It is I who will participate»

‘Wa’ is also used in sentences where the predicate (most often a verb or an adjective), is in its negative form (example (18)), even when ‘ga’ would generally be used in answers to Wh-questions (example (19)). Here are some examples:

(18) *Haha-wa sono eiga-o mi-masen deshita.*

Mother-TOP that movie-OBJ watch.NEG COP.PAST.

“My mother didn’t watch that movie”.

(19) a. *Dare-ga ikimasu ka.*

Who-NOM go QP

“Who is going?”

b. *Watashi-ga ikimasu.*

I-NOM go.

“It is I who will go”

c. *Watashi-wa ikimasen.*

I-TOP go.NEG

“I will not go”

Looking at example (19b), we see that the correct way to answer the Wh-question when answered positive, you use the particle ‘ga’. On the other hand, if you answer the question negatively, you have to use the particle ‘wa’ as in (19c).

‘Ga’ has several specific instances where it is used. The first is to convey unexpected events or surprise, as in “*doa-ga akanai*” (“the door won’t open” (even though it should)) or “*tokei no oto-ga shinai*” (“the watch doesn’t make a sound” (even though I recently changed the battery)). This holds both if the sentence is negative or positive, so if the previously closed door suddenly

decides to let itself be opened anyway, you say “*doa-ga aita*” (“the door opened” (even though it wouldn’t just a second ago)). The second is in set phrases, like “*shikata-ga nai*” (“There’s nothing to be done about it”) and “*ki-ga shinai*” (“I don’t feel like (doing something)”). The third instance is within subordinate clauses¹¹. Here is an example:

(20) < *Sono nihongo-ga wakari-nikui* > *no-wa, gaikokujin-ga*

That Japanese-NOM understand-difficult LK-TOP foreigner-NOM

kaita kara da.

write.PAST because COP

“That Japanese is difficult to understand, because it was written by a foreigner”

In Japanese, in a sentence where there are several clauses¹², the last clause is always the main clause, and all the other clauses before it are subordinate clauses. Thus all clauses that come before subordinations like ‘-*tara*’ (if X happens), ‘-*toki*’ (when), ‘-*temo*’ (even if) or the nominalizer ‘*no*’ as in example (20), are subordinate clauses, and will always take ‘*ga*’ instead of ‘*wa*’¹³.

Perhaps the most important distinction Nariyama makes about the difference between ‘*wa*’ and ‘*ga*’, a point which is perhaps a little contradictive to the previous rule about subordinate clauses (i.e. that their subjects should be marked with ‘*ga*’), are how the particles mark if the subject of a sentence is the same or different in sentences with several clauses. Here is an example (Nariyama 2009: 79):

(21) a. *Hanako-wa haitte-kara, doa-o shimeta.*

Hanako-TOP enter-from door-OBJ close.PAST

“As soon as Hanako came in, she (Hanako) closed the door”

¹¹ Subordinate clauses are marked with < >.

¹² A clause is recognized by having one predicate (verbs or adjectives). Longer sentences that have more than one predicate thus consists of several *clauses*.

¹³ There is more nuance when it comes to the rules on the use of ‘*wa*’ and ‘*ga*’ in subordinate clauses, but you can always use ‘*ga*’, whilst ‘*wa*’ can sometimes be voluntary. For a beginning language learner of Japanese, it might be more useful to teach them to use ‘*ga*’ in all subordinate clauses.

- b. *Hanako-ga haitte-kara, doa-o shimeta.*

Hanako-NOM enter-from door-OBJ close.PAST

“As soon as Hanako came in, (someone else) closed the door”

In other words, the usage of ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ in subordinate clauses can make big differences in the meaning of the entire sentence, and makes very different implications as to who is the subject. These rules about subordinate clauses and the use of the different particles is something one would wish to have been explained a little more in depth in Nariyama’s book. I found information about this in Noda’s book (2006: 174). She says that the ‘Hanako-wa’ in (21a) is not the subject of the subordinate clause, but rather of the main clause. What is missing in that sentence is the subject for the subordinate clause, which would be marked with ‘ga’. The full sentence would thus be: “*Hanako-wa Hanako-ga haitte-kara, doa-o shimeta*”. So in a sentence where the subject of the main clause and subordinate clause are the same, the subject of the subordinate clause should be removed. Although Nariyama’s book doesn’t explain this to us, it offers more insight to how ellipsis works in Japanese than what has been presented before. It is also positive that the book is presented in a simple manner for second-language learners to better understand the complicated process of how ellipsis works.

To sum up, we can say that arguments marked with ‘wa’ are more easily ellipted than arguments marked with ‘ga’. This of course holds only for ‘wa’ as a topic marker, and not for ‘wa’ as a contrast marker. The particle ‘ga’ is often used to convey new information, and it is thus more difficult to retrieve if removed from a sentence.

3.3 MUTSUMI YAMAMOTO

In her book *Agency and Impersonality*, Mutsumi Yamamoto introduces a study done by looking at a corpus of texts in Japanese and English. There is often, if not always, a certain deviance in translated texts (called *translationese*), and this study was done in order to determine whether there is more or less ellipsis of personal pronouns in translated works. Six different genres were used for this purpose, as the kind of written language can be very different depending on the genre (a romantic novel will have a language based more on spoken language, and thus does not have the same language as a journalistic or academic article, for example). These genres then include English originals and their Japanese translations, and others are

Japanese originals with their English translations¹⁴. These have been compared to see if translation has an impact on the degree of agency found in both languages (that is, if one would find less use of personal pronouns in English translations or more uses in Japanese translations), and also to see how much of a difference there is between use of agency in the two languages.

When looking at an Agatha Christie novel and its Japanese translation, she found that there were more personal pronouns used than what is usually found in other types of written and spoken Japanese. She points to this found being a typical example of ‘translationese’, and states that a more frequent use of personal pronouns is fairly common in Japanese translations from Western literature, compared to Japanese original works. English in general has a lot more use of agency, one notable exception being scientific work, which has a tendency to contain more “agentless” passives without reference to human/animate entities (Yamamoto 2006: 58).

Summarizing the study, Yamamoto found that English has more agentivity than Japanese. The number of cases where the Japanese texts have no agentive entities corresponding to the agentive noun phrases in the English texts is at 12,67% (152 of total 1200 items). Inversely, the number of cases where Japanese agentive entities have no agentive equivalents in the English text occurred only 5 times, or 0,42% (Yamamoto 2006: 60). Also, one eighth of the entire list of potential human or animate referents were occupied by ‘missing slots’ in Japanese (i.e. ellipsis). However, in this case we do not know how Yamamoto has counted the different sentences. For example, we do not know whether the numbers of non-agentive sentences in Japanese are intransitive sentences or if they are transitive sentences with ellipsis. If we want to base ourselves on Nariyama’s theory that we looked at in chapter 2, namely that Japanese has person-focus properties because it so often omits human subjects, can we then say that a transitive sentence with an ellipsed agent is “non-agentive”? Because Yamamoto only mentions that she has counted sentences that are ‘non-agentive’, and we cannot know if these sentences were transitive with ellipsis or intransitive, the numbers presented appear somewhat unreliable. This is something that I will look at in my corpus analysis. However, let us look at examples from the study (Yamamoto 2006: 61):

¹⁴ For a complete list of the works used in this study, see Yamamoto’s book *Agency and Impersonality*, 2006: pp. 57-58.

- (22) a. \emptyset *Kore-made ni 83-nin no inochi-o ubatta*
 (He) until-this to 83-people GEN life-ACC rob.PAST
to sare-teiru ga...
 that suppose.PASS-ing but
 “Until now (he) allegedly killed 83 people, but...”
- b. *He allegedly killed 83 people, but ...*
- (23) a. ... \emptyset *Sangai no ongaku kissa-o* \emptyset *oshie-toita no*
 ... \emptyset third:floor LK music café-ACC \emptyset tell.PAST SFP
 “... (I) told (her) about the music coffee shop on the third floor”
- b. ... *and I told her about the music coffee shop on the third floor instead*

The first example is from *Newsweek*, where the original is in Japanese and translated into English. We see here that the Japanese version has avoided having an explicitly mentioned agent, in contrast to the English translation which has the personal pronoun ‘he’. The same goes for the second example, which is from Yukio Mishima’s *Hyaku-man Yen Sembei* and the English translation. The English version has added personal pronouns to a sentence that originally has none. This study confirms what has been said earlier by Hinds, Nariyama and Ikegami among many others, namely that Japanese commonly tends to avoid expressing agentive subjects, whether that is by making intransitive sentences or by making use of ellipsis in transitive sentences. English on the other hand seems to prefer to have agent-action sentences.

3.4 LEE AND YONEZAWA

In 2008, Duck-Young Lee and Yoko Yonezawa published their corpus study on the use of overt first person and second person subjects in Japanese. The study intends to show us that because ellipsis of first and second person subjects is so common in Japanese, it might be more interesting to look at the reasons for *not* omitting an argument, and to see what the function is of the various overt subjects. They used face-to-face conversations where the participants varied in social status to each other, to see what impact power relationships would have on the overt

use of subjects. While it previously has been stated that overt subjects are there mainly for contrastive or emphasizing purposes, Lee and Yonezawa found several other reasons for leaving a first or second person subject overt. For example, the notion of ‘giving and taking floor’ proved to be one of them. A ‘floor holder’ is the person who is the focus of attention of the ongoing topic, and that floor holder might choose to give the floor to his or her conversation partner by for example asking questions, agreeing or disagreeing, initiating a new topic and so on (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 742). They provide examples from discourse, where the first or second person subject has been used explicitly in order to shift the attention over to oneself or the conversation partner:

(24) A: *Mananderu hito ōi desu ne, nanka, Nihongo.*

Learning people many COP SFP nanka Japanese

“There are many people who are studying Japanese”

B: *Un, ōi desu ne.*

Yeah many COP SFP

«Yeah, many»

A: ***B-san** shōrai-wa nokorun desu ka, pīichidyī toka.*

B-mr future-TOP remain COP QP Ph.D for.example

“Will **you** [=**Mr. B**] stay here in the future. Doing a Ph.D?”

(Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 744-745)

Overt use of first and second person subject was also used in a discourse topic change¹⁵, especially when the new topic moved on to a more personal level. For example, in one discourse the two participants were discussing how they perhaps would be more conspicuous if they went to a more rural area of Australia, where Japanese immigrants aren’t as common as in the cities. The discourse topic then changes to one of the participants’ personal experience going to a small town, and is marked with the use of first person subject ‘boku’ (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 747):

¹⁵ Discourse topic is different from sentence topic. Discourse topic is the topic of a conversation.

- (25) A: (...) *Mā, demo inakamachi-ni ittemiru-to chotto*
 (...) Well but country.town-DAT go.try.if a.bit
uiteshimau-tteiu-noga wakaru to omou kedo.
 stand.out understand think but
 “Well, but if (one) goes to a country town, (one) will know that (he/she)
 stands out.”
- B: *Un. Boku-ga Meruborun-ni iku tochū-ni (...)*
 Yeah I-SUB Melbourne-DAT go on.the.way
chotto ginkō-de kane oroshite kurutte komonwerusu-ni
 a.bit bank-LOC money draw come Commonwealth.Bank-DAT
haittara minna mirun desu ne.
 enter everyone look COP SFP
 “Yeah, when I was on my way to Melbourne (...) (I) went to the
 Commonwealth Bank to get some money, and when (I) entered the bank,
 all the people there looked at me”

In addition to giving and taking floor and in discourse topic changes, overt use of first and second person subject happened when the speaker wanted to intensify his or her feelings and emotions. As I have explained earlier, Japanese has predicates that indicate feelings that can only belong to a first person subject. However, first person subject can still be overt when wanting to reinforce the speaker’s evaluative attitude. Here’s an example (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 749):

- (26) *Atashi merīgōraundo mita toki sugoi kandōshita no.*
 I merry-go-round see.PAST time very excited SFP
 “I was really excited when (I) saw a merry-go-round”

This sentence would be perfectly grammatical even without the use of first person subject, but it has been made overt to intensify the speaker's excitement for the merry-go-round.

Social status had a big impact on how often the participants used overt subjects. For example, in a conversation where one participant was a teacher, he/she was addressed with 'sensei' throughout the conversation by the other participant. This is to acknowledge the teacher's social status. Thus the use of overt second person subjects was a lot more common in politer conversations than in casual conversations where the social status between the two participants was equal.

In summary, Lee and Yonezawa's study found that contrastive functions and emphasizing functions certainly were important when it comes to the use of overt first and second person subject. However, there were other extralinguistic factors to consider, and their study showed that things like social status and politeness also are important factors in this matter.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter we have first looked at an introductory study on ellipsis in Japanese by John Hinds, that promoted more studies on the topic. After that we looked at Nariyama's books which offer more insight into the different reasons behind why ellipsis happens, and she explains how these processes work in detail. In the end we have looked at Yamamoto's study on agentivity in translated works, showing that 'translationese' is a distinctive feature when looking at translations between Western languages and Japanese. In the end we have looked at Lee and Yonezawa's study on the overt use of first and second person subjects.

4 HYPOTHESIS

In chapter 2 and 3 we have looked at different kinds of ellipsis; verbal, nominal and particle ellipsis. Due to restrictions in its size, this thesis will focus only on nominal ellipsis. In this chapter I will present my hypothesis on when nominal ellipsis happens and doesn't happen, based on a few "rules" that I have made based on previous research by Hinds, Nariyama, Ikegami, Yamamoto, Lee and Yonezawa and others. These are rules based on several different linguistic and extralinguistic factors, from conversation strategies and context dependency to syntax and semantics. See chapter 2 and 3 for details on these matters. The hypotheses will be used in the corpus analysis in chapter 5.

4.1. THEORIES ON THE RULES OF ELLIPSIS

Compared to many other pro-drop languages, Japanese has a very open sentence structure (syntax), which means that the sentence constituents can be shuffled around in a sentence and still be grammatical (unlike for example Norwegian, where the verb is always placed in the second position). This open syntax certainly does not make it any easier for second language speakers of Japanese to understand who or what is missing from a sentence. On top of this, Japanese does not have subject-predicate agreement (Japanese does not conjugate verbs according to gender or number), so you cannot find any information about the "missing" element by looking at the other syntactic components. Taking these facts into account, Japanese can for a second-language learner seem like a language where understanding the circumstances for ellipsis are difficult. For this reason, I will try to make a comprehensive explanation of the rules surrounding ellipsis in Japanese. To do this, I have first looked at other scholars' theories on this matter, and have gotten certain expectations as to what I will find in this study. I have thus made a list of what I expect to find on how nominal ellipsis works in Japanese (further explanation on some of the points will follow below):

- A. When the subject of a declarative sentence is first person, it may often be omitted.
- B. There is a lesser chance of second and third person, and non-human subjects being omitted because of their hierarchical standing below a first person pronoun.¹⁶
- C. Targets of question sentences are mostly second person, and can thus often be omitted as subjects.
- D. When an NP has been introduced in earlier sentences, whether it is a topic, subject or direct object, if it is known from the context, it can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.
- E. Because the particle ‘ga’ usually conveys new information, we can expect most non-ellipted subjects to be marked with ‘ga’ rather than ‘wa’.
- F. The predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and other nominals, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments.

These are general rules that I have formulated based on other academic studies on ellipsis in Japanese (Hinds 1982, Nariyama 2009, Nariyama 2003 and others), and they serve as guidelines to what I expect to find in my own corpus when looking for the rules governing the use of nominal ellipsis in Japanese. I will explain each point and its surrounding theories in detail, starting with point A: *when the subject of a declarative sentence is first person, it may be omitted*. A declarative sentence is a sentence where the speaker announces a simple fact or statement to the listener. These are the most common sentences, because it is a simple statement of a fact. Other sentence types are imperative sentences (command, ‘give me that’), interrogative sentences (questions, ‘do you like cats?’) and exclamatory sentences (involves emotion, ends with exclamation marks, ‘you broke my umbrella!’). Sentences like “I went shopping yesterday” and “I like pudding” are examples of declarative sentences in English. In Japanese the equivalent sentences would in most cases have no subject, the only exception being when you want to create a contrast, for example as in sentence (1), where ‘wa’ would be pronounced with emphasis:

¹⁶ See chapter 2, at the end of section 2.4 for information about this.

- (1) *Watashi-wa kinō kaimono-ni itta.*
 I-TOP yesterday shopping-DAT go.PAST
 “I went shopping yesterday (unlike someone else)”

Further explanation is needed to understand rule B: *there is a lesser chance of second and third person pronouns being omitted because of their hierarchical standing below a first person pronoun.* This notion is explained well by Shigeko Nariyama (2003: 205) in relation to discourse salience (values of arguments in terms of topicality and prior mention), as we have looked at in chapter 3. The idea is that there is a person/animacy hierarchy at work, where the arguments higher in the hierarchy are more prone to be omitted than arguments lower in the hierarchy. This is because higher arguments are more likely to have the highest discourse salience, which means that it is more likely to be the topic of a sentence, or has been mentioned before and is therefore active in the mind of the participants of the conversation. In the hierarchy, first person pronoun is on top. First person is therefore the argument which has more discourse salience, and thus is most likely to be omitted as subject or agent of a sentence, rather than second or third person which are lower in the hierarchy. We can illustrate the correlation between the hierarchy and discourse salience like this (taken from Nariyama 2003: 205):

Person/animacy hierarchy: 1 > 2 > 3 > animate > inanimate
 Discourse Salience: high > > > low

This hierarchy is also visible in that sentences with a third person agent will be made intransitive in order to have a first person subject in Japanese. Here is an example:

- (2) a. *Tarō-ga watashi-o mitsuketa.*
 Tarō-NOM me-OBJ find.PAST
 “Tarō found me”
- b. *Watashi-wa Tarō-ni mitsukatta.*
 I-TOP Tarō-DAT be.found.PAST
 “I was found by Tarō”

Both these sentences are possible constructions in both Japanese and English. However, in Japanese sentence (2b) is the more natural sounding alternative, and sentence (2a) sounds very strange. According to Nariyama, this is because the person/animacy hierarchy prevents lower arguments from acting on the higher arguments. In other words, having a third person work as an agent toward a first person goes against the rules of the hierarchy (2003: 223). This habit of making sentences with lower discourse salience agents into intransitive sentences, of course makes it easier to interpret any omitted subjects because we can expect them to be higher in the hierarchy than any other marked sentence arguments. We can thus expect that most of the omitted subjects or agents will be first person. As was also discussed in chapter 3, this rule about declarative sentences can be expected to hold particularly for subjects of simple sentences, and perhaps of main clauses in complex sentences, and not of subordinate clauses.

Let's move on to point C: *targets of question sentences and imperative sentences are mostly second person, and can thus often be omitted as subjects*. Question sentences are often recognized by their switched word order (e.g. “you are happy” vs “are you happy?”) as well as rising intonation. In Japanese, it is recognized by rising intonation and often the sentence final particle ‘ka’ or ‘no’. Question sentences can of course be directed towards the listener and be about a third person, and that is why I have formulated point B with ‘mostly’ and ‘often’ rather than ‘always’. However, if a question sentence in Japanese is missing a subject, this subject will always be second person ‘you’. If you wanted to ask about someone else not present in the conversation, you would have to specify this by using names. Compare these two sentences:

(3) *Pātī-ni itta?*

Party-DAT go.PAST

“Did (you) do to the party?”

(4) *Tarō-san-wa pātī-ni itta?*

Tarō-mr-TOP party-DAT go.PAST

“Did Tarō go to the party?”

In sentence (4), Tarō could of course also be the person that the speaker is talking to, i.e. same person as in (3), given that the Japanese prefer to address each other using names rather than the second person pronoun ‘anata’. However, the point of these example sentences is to illustrate that the omitted subject of example sentence (3) cannot be third person.

Let's move on to point D: *when an NP has been introduced in earlier sentences, the topic or subject, if known from the context, can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.* We've seen in the introductory chapter that topic and subject are two different things. A Japanese sentence can have both a topic and a subject at the same time. Here's an example:

(5) *Watashi-wa haha-ga nyūinshiteiru.*

I-TOP my.mother-NOM hospitalized

“When it comes to me, my mother has been hospitalized”

Let's say this is an introductory sentence about my family. Any later sentences about my family can thus have the topic removed, but any new subjects must be explicitly mentioned:

(6) *Chichi-mo gan da.*

My.father-also cancer COP

“Also, (my) father has cancer.”

Then, if the subject is me, which is identical to the topic, both topic and subject can be removed from the sentence:

(7) *Totemo taihen desu.*

Very have.hard.time COP

“(When it comes to me), (I am) having a hard time”

We can expect that first person is more likely to be the subject of a sentence (as humans we have a tendency to talk more about ourselves than we do about others), and thus first persons are more likely to be omitted than others. In the case of first person pronouns then, point D should work fine. However, the situation is not quite the same for inanimate subjects. They tend to be marked in both first and following sentences because of its low standing in the person/animacy hierarchy (Nariyama 2003), which we have already looked at in chapter 2 and 3. If we follow Nariyama's theory on Japanese being a language with a mix of person-focus and situation-focus properties, because of an inanimate subject's low standing in the hierarchy, it is more difficult for a listener to retrieve it if it has been omitted, and will thus in most cases be marked in every sentence. We can thus expect that only the arguments higher on the

person/animacy hierarchy will follow the rule of point D, and that the arguments lower in the hierarchy will be overt more often than not.

Point E says that: *because the particle 'ga' conveys new information, we can expect most overt subjects to be marked with 'ga' rather than 'wa'*. As I explained in the previous chapter, based on Nariyama's detailed description of the functions of each of the particles, 'wa' is probably more easily removed than 'ga'. This is because 'wa' often introduces topics, and when a topic has been introduced it is more easily removed in later sentences. When it comes to 'wa' as a contrast marker however, it is not easily removed because of its semantic meaning which is difficult to retrieve if removed. Particle 'ga' is not easily omitted because it is often used to convey new information. We can thus expect that when a subject is explicitly mentioned in a sentence, it will most often be marked with 'ga'.

Another interesting aspect of ellipsis is point F: *the predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and/or object, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments*. A predicate is described as the main part of a sentence, meaning that it conveys the most important information. Predicates are either verbs or adjectives, and are surrounded by arguments, such as the subject and object. Verbs convey a lot of information about the roles of the arguments as well. There are a lot of restrictions as to whom or what can be the subject of a sentence based on the semantics of the predicate, and I will introduce a few examples here:

(8) *Umu*
"To give birth"

(9) *Taberu*
"To eat"

(10) *Tetsudau*
"To help"

(11) *Kanashii*
"To be sad"

We have already looked at this in chapter 3, in John Hinds' book *Ellipsis in Japanese*, where he talks about *Surface Frame Patterns*, or SFP for short. I have here given some examples, where the first one is the Japanese verb for 'to give birth'. This verb contains extralinguistic information, as we know that only females can give birth, and only children (of whatever species) can be born. Thus the subject must be a mother and the object a child; the verb needs a sentient being as a subject, and a sentient being as an object. Knowing this it will be easier to identify who the subject and/or object is in a conversation where they are left out. Example (9) is the Japanese verb for eating. In this instance we also need a sentient being as a subject, but the object this time has to be something that can be devoured. This shortens the list of who and what can be subjects and objects in a sentence with 'taberu'. It is important to remember that the verb alone most likely will not be the decisive factor as to whether a subject has been ellipited or not, and that first and foremost it is the context surrounding the sentence that governs this. However, the information in the SFP of predicates can at the very least be helpful in retrieving the identity of the arguments involved.

- (12) *(Watashi-wa) (sakana-o) zenbu tabeta yo.*
 I-TOP fish-ACC all eat.PAST SFP
 “(I) ate all (the fish)”.

We see from this example that even though 'taberu' certainly has limitations as to what can be its subject and object, we cannot know that the direct object of this sentence is a fish unless it is already known from context. If it is understood from context, both the subject/topic and the object may be removed. If there is doubt as to what has been eaten, it will have to be mentioned explicitly.

Example (10) is the Japanese verb for helping, and this verb has a SFP saying that the subject needs to be a sentient being, but it's also natural that this subject is someone else than the sentient being that's getting help (Nariyama 2009: 81):

- (13) *<(Tsuma-ga) ryōri-o (suru no)> o (otto-ga) tetsudau.*
 Wife-NOM cooking-OBJ do LP ACC husband-NOM help
 “(The husband) helps (his wife) with the cooking”

We see here that the Japanese sentence doesn't require a subject, but it's still understandable from context that the subject in the two different clauses cannot be the same person, because of the SFP of 'tetsudau'. Example (11) is the Japanese adjective for 'sad'. In Japanese you can only talk plainly about your own feelings. In this example the subject has to be first person. If the subject is meant to be someone else, you would have to add morphological elements to mark uncertainty or hear-say and express it like 'kanashisō' (seems sad). Because of this, we can know that sentences containing predicates based on emotion need to have a first person subject. These examples illustrate what Hinds means with Sentence Frame Patterns.

Ellipsis in Japanese is also common in polite conversation. This is not only because ellipsis in itself is considered to be polite, but also because the honorific language in Japanese makes it very practical. There used to be more honorific systems in the Japanese language before the Edo period, and ellipsis was thus even more common back in the day than it is now in modern Japanese (Nariyama 2003: 124). A comparative study was done on the classical *Tale of Genji* from the 11th Century, comparing the original text with seven recent translations, and found that there was a smaller percentage of omitted subjects (i.e. ellipsis) in the newer translations (Fuji 1991). However, honorific language still makes ellipsis very easy to use because of a more complex verb conjugation, and different words designated to the humble speaker and the superior listener. For example, having different verb forms for 'eat' depending on the social status of the one doing the eating (humble 'itadaku' vs honorific 'meshiagaru'), makes the subject of the sentence easier to retrieve. For example, in a sentence with the honorific verb 'irashaimashita' (came/went), the subject can absolutely never be first person, and we have thus narrowed the possibilities for who the subject of the sentence can be. The same goes for verbs for giving and receiving, where Japanese has different verbs depending on whether it was given to someone in-group or out-group¹⁷. These are verbs like *kureru* (give to me/in-group) and *ageru* (give to others/out-group). There are also humble and honorific versions of these, restricting the list of possible subjects even further.

¹⁷ In Japanese, you identify yourself not only with yourself, but with a certain group of people. So for example, if you work for a certain company and you are in conversation with someone from a different company, you will identify with your own company as "in-group". Thus if for example your mother has received something from someone, you will use the verb *kureru* (give to me) to convey that notion, even if it wasn't you specifically that received something.

4.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter we have looked at a few rules that can be used as a guide to when we might expect nominal ellipsis to happen in Japanese. Several aspects are involved, like politeness and in-group/out-group identity and surface frame patterns. We have also seen that certain sentence structures are more prone to have ellipted subjects than others, like question sentences and declarative sentences. We have again looked at Nariyama's person/animacy-hierarchy and how we can use it to identify missing subjects.

5 ANALYSIS

In the previous chapters I have introduced what ellipsis is, some theories surrounding this matter, as well as what results I would expect from my own research. In this chapter I will present the findings of my corpus analysis. First I will give detailed information on my work method, with reasons for why I have chosen that method. After that I will repeat specifically what I have been looking for in my analysis. I will then present what I have found, following the hypothesis points from chapter 4.

5.1 METHOD

What I aimed to investigate in this chapter was how often nominal ellipsis of subjects happens in Japanese, as well as the reasons for why subject ellipsis happens or doesn't happen. While it certainly would be interesting to see some data regarding ellipsis of other nominals such as direct and indirect object as well, due to certain limitations to the size of this thesis and the time given to finish it, I chose to limit my study to subjects. I decided to analyse sentences in contemporary Japanese literature, and chose the novel called *Sensei no Kaban* by Hiromi Kawakami (2015). I chose to make use of literature because I first of all wanted to analyse written language. The main reason for choosing written language is because I myself during my Japanese studies have encountered some problems with identifying the omitted arguments in written texts, and haven't experienced the same kind of problems in spoken Japanese. I chose to analyse a novel over academic papers or new articles because the written language in a novel is more informal and thus expected to contain more subject ellipsis, as well as being a bit closer to the writing method of most people. Another merit of studying a novel is that I could analyse written language that is quite close to natural speech without using recordings of oral conversation. This way I could in a sense get data both on written (the narrative part) and spoken Japanese (the dialogues between the characters).

What I have done specifically was analyse one sentence at a time in a span of 9 pages, a total of 187 independent sentences. I have checked if each sentence makes use of subject ellipsis. At the same time, I have registered the identity of the missing subject, as to whether it is first, second, or third person, or non-human. I chose to categorize the last one as non-human rather than inanimate, because I would expect animals and non-human creatures to be omitted much

less than human subjects. Therefore, instead of having two categories I decided to merge ‘inanimate’ and ‘animal’ into a single category; non-human. In dividing pronouns and non-humans like this, I could count how often a first person subject is ellipted, and at the same time I could look for reasons why it is sometimes not ellipted. By registering the personhood of the subject it is also easy for me to compare ellipsis of for example first person vs. third person subjects. I have also registered the sentences with no ellipsis as to whether the subject is marked with topic marker ‘wa’ or if it is marked with ‘ga’, as one of my theories was that the subject in most sentences with no ellipsis would be marked with ‘ga’ because it conveys new information (see Chapter 4: Hypothesis). In addition, I have registered the predicate of all sentences with subject ellipsis. This is to see if the predicate has any significant role to play as to whether subject ellipsis happens or not. I have also registered if the sentences are transitive or intransitive, to see what kinds of sentences are more common and how much subject ellipsis there is in each of the sentence structures. In addition to transitive and intransitive, I have registered some sentences as “Adjective / COP”, meaning that the predicate of the sentence is an adjective or the copula verb ‘desu’, and thus the sentences don’t fit into either of the transitive or intransitive categories. I have registered these purely for the intention of excluding them, therefore they have not been further analysed in my study.

After analysing each sentence and putting them into the right categories, I started counting the factors relevant for my hypothesis. I have counted the number of transitive sentences with subject ellipsis, as well as the number of intransitive sentences with subject ellipsis. I have counted how often the first person subject is removed, and the same goes for second and third person subject. I have counted how often ellipsis doesn’t happen, and in how many instances the subject of these sentences have been registered with ‘ga’. In the end I have counted how often a non-human subject is removed from a sentence.

5.2 RESEARCH POINTS

I’ll repeat the points, which are in relation to subjects, from the hypothesis chapter here. These are the hypotheses that I will investigate in my corpus. They are reformulated based on the claims by Hinds, Nariyama, and Yamamoto (see Chapter 3):

- A. When the subject of a declarative sentence is first person, it may often be omitted.
- B. There is a lesser chance of second and third person, and non-human subjects being omitted because of their hierarchical standing below a first person pronoun.¹⁸
- C. Targets of question sentences are mostly second person, and can thus often be omitted as subjects.
- D. When an NP has been introduced in earlier sentences, whether it is a topic, subject or direct object, if it is known from the context, it can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.
- E. Because the particle ‘ga’ usually conveys new information, we can expect most non-ellipted subjects to be marked with ‘ga’ rather than ‘wa’.
- F. The predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and other nominals, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments.

In other words, I wanted to look at how often first person subject is omitted (A). The number of subject ellipsis of first person could then be compared to how often subject ellipsis happens to second person and third person subject (B). I also wanted to look at if and how often second person subjects are removed from question sentences (C). If a sentence has subject ellipsis, I wanted to register whether this subject had been mentioned in earlier sentences and if that is the reason for its removal (D). In addition, I wanted to see if subjects of sentences with no ellipsis would be marked with ‘ga’ rather than ‘wa’ because of the function of ‘ga’ as a marker of new information (E). My last hypothesis point is about checking whether the predicate of each sentence has an important role to play in when subject ellipsis happens in Japanese (F).

¹⁸ See chapter 2, at the end of section 2.4 for information about this.

5.3 RESULTS

Although this was a rather small study, I was able to find several interesting tendencies regarding subject ellipsis in Japanese; most of them in support of my hypothesis points, and just a couple in disagreement. I will be presenting my findings in the subchapters below.

5.3.1 PRONOUNS (POINT A, B AND C)

This subchapter is about the different kinds of pronouns (first, second and third), and their relation to subject ellipsis and to each other (e.g. human and non-human subjects). Let us start with a very simple finding, namely the number of subject ellipsis vs. no ellipsis in my corpus. I found a quite even distribution between the two, with subject ellipsis happening 92 times of a total of 187 (49.2%). On the other end we have the number of no ellipsis of subjects at 95 times (50.8%). There is more subject ellipsis here than expected if we compare to a corpus study done by the National Language Institute for Japanese Language in 1955 (referred to by Nariyama 2009: 11), where they found that 20% of subjects are omitted in novels in Japanese. They also found that subject ellipsis happened 74% of the time in conversation. My study thus shows a number in between these percentages, which might be because their study is now over 60 years old, and I have used a contemporary novel with more modern language. Another corpus study was done by Sachiko Ide (also referred to by Nariyama 2009: 11), where she found that subject ellipsis happened 68.7% of the time in spoken language. It is perhaps to be expected that there would be more subject ellipsis in spoken language than in a novel, because of the need of describing the surroundings in a novel. Thus a novel is likely to contain more third person subjects as well as non-human subjects in order to describe what the world looks like to the characters in the book.

Let us move on to first person pronouns. Out of a total of 187 sentences, the subject identity, missing or not, was first person 64 times. This makes for a percentage of 34.2%. While it may be surprising to see that the percentage is so low, it is important to keep in mind that this is from analysing literary work. The language in story telling is different from spoken dialogue in that a lot of the circumstances surrounding the dialogue also has to be described in a story. Thus we would expect a wider use of second and third person in literature than we would if this was an analysis of dialogue between several interlocutors. What is more interesting to look at regarding

first person however, is how often a first person subject is omitted. I found that this happened 54 times from a total of 64. Thus the frequency of ellipsis of first person subjects according to my study turns out to be 84.3%, which is a very large percentage. In the remaining cases where the first person subject was not removed, it was usually because of a change of topic from third person back to first person, so it had to be explicitly mentioned for clarity. Here is an example of this (Kawakami 2015: 10):

(1) a. (...) *sensei-wa tsuzuketa.*

teacher-TOP continue.PAST

“(...) Sensei continued.”

b. *Aimai-ni kotae, watashi-wa sensei-o sara-ni nagameta.*

Vaguely-DAT answer I-TOP teacher-OBJ further-DAT look.PAST

“I answered vaguely and looked at Sensei once again.”

We see from this example that there is an alternating order of who speaks in each sentence. In (1a), Sensei is the one who speaks, and in (1b), the speaker has switched to Watashi. Thus in order to avoid any confusion as to who is speaking, the subject is mentioned explicitly in both sentences and marked with the topic marker ‘wa’. This is what I mean by ‘topic change’.

I looked at the use of second person as well. In my study, second person pronouns were the subjects of only 12 sentences (187 total), giving us a percentage of only 6.4%. Due to the low number of instances I found, I do not have a representative number of sentences analysed to state anything about the tendencies of second person subject ellipsis. I still wanted to see how often second person was removed, both in declarative sentences and when it was the subject of a question sentence. Of the 12 total instances where second person was the subject, 8 of them were question sentences, and the remaining 4 were declarative sentences. In total, second person subject was omitted 5 times. This makes for a percentage of 41.7%. 3 of these omitted second person subjects are in declarative sentences, and the remaining 2 are in question sentences. The rate of ellipsis for second person in declarative sentences is thus at 75% here¹⁹. Let’s move on to question sentences. In my study, the second person subject was removed only 2 times of a

¹⁹ In Lee and Yokozawa’s study, they found an ellipsis rate of 88.5% for second person subjects, which is higher than my percentage. This might be because they made studies on one-to-one conversations, and it’s thus more natural that the subject will be removed more than in literary work. (2008: 738)

total of 8 question sentences. This gives us a percentage of 25% for second person subject removal in question sentences, but due to the severely low number of instances, it is impossible to say if this is correct or representative in any way²⁰. However, it is still interesting to see such low numbers when I expected, based on Nariyama's theory (see chapter 3, section 3.2), that second person subjects would be removed a lot more often when being the subject of question sentences. It would be interesting to look at what the motivation behind not omitting second person subjects in question sentences is. According to Lee and Yonezawa, there can be social reasons for this. The use of second person pronouns can be made overt in order to provide contrast or emphasis, and can be used to index the speaker's social relationship to his or her conversation partner, such as for example social difference or intimacy. For instance, having a second person subject made overt is common in sentences where the speaker wants to reinforce his or her feelings toward the listener. Here's an example (Lee and Yokozawa, 2008: 751):

(2) *Anata-wa ii okusan da kara (...)*

You-TOP good wife COP because

“You are a good wife, so (...)”

In this example, the second person subject ‘you’ is mentioned explicitly to maximize the praise given to the listener for being a good wife. Overt second person subjects can also be used for ‘giving floor’, which means to direct the focus of the conversation to the conversation partner by for example asking questions, suggesting and agreeing or disagreeing (Lee and Yokozawa, 2008: 742). Here's an example of this from my corpus analysis (Kawakami 2015: 17)

(3) *Sō ja nai n desu ka, Tsukiko-san?*

So not COP QP Tsukiko-ms

“Isn't it so, Ms. Tsukiko?”

We see from this example that the speaker, Sensei, gives his speaking turn over to Tsukiko, who is now invited to speak and answer Sensei's question. Here's another example from my

²⁰ Point C about the omission of second person in question sentences is based on a theory by Nariyama (2009: 18), but she does not present numbers from any corpus studies to support her claim, and thus I have no numbers to compare my findings to.

corpus study where second person subject was overt, for vocative reasons: (Kawakami 2015: 14):

(4) *Tsukiko-san, goran-ni-narimasu ka?*

Tsukiko-ms, look.HON QP

“Will you, Ms. Tsukiko, look (at this)?”

The reason for the second person not being omitted here might be because of a vocative function, where you use second person (in the case of Japanese, most often a name or title) to get the attention of the person you’re speaking to. It could also be an example of Sensei trying to “give the floor” to Tsukiko and let her speak. However, there were several instances where I wouldn’t characterize the use of second person to be vocative, like in this instance (Kawakami 2015: 10):

(5) *Kimi-wa onna no kuse-ni hitori-de kōiu*

You-TOP woman LK despite-DAT one.person-as this.kind.of

mise-ni kurun desu ne.

shop-DAT come COP SFP

“So you come to this kind of shop alone despite being a woman.”

In this instance, I would look upon the marking of second person with ‘wa’ as having a contrastive or emphasis function. The second person comes to a shady-looking bar alone, despite being a woman, in contrast to other women who perhaps would never think of doing such a thing. Another factor that is important to remember in my study is the difference in social status between Sensei and the narrator Watashi. Because Sensei is a teacher, and Watashi is a former student of his, it is more acceptable for Sensei to use second person pronouns like ‘kimi’, which is only used by people of higher-status toward those of lower-status. At the same time Watashi can use the title ‘sensei’ (teacher) to Sensei rather than his name, and will be overt in cases where Watashi wants to show her respect for him. Indeed, in the 7 instances of 12 in my corpus study where the second person subject was overt, there were 4 uses of ‘kimi’, and 3 instances of the use of the title ‘sensei’. We see from all these examples then, that there are specific reasons that second person subject has not been removed in the findings in my study,

but I do not have enough data to make any further conclusions on the rates of second person subject ellipsis.

Third person pronoun was the subject of 54 of 187 sentences. This makes for a percentage of 28.9%. Thus we can say that my theory on first person subject being more common (34.2%) than second (6.4%) and third person subjects has been supported by my study. Again it is important to remember that my study has been done using literature, thus we might expect third person subjects to be even more rare in a spoken conversation. Third person subjects were removed 27 times, giving us a percentage of exactly 50% for third person subject ellipsis. In the instances where third person was removed, it was because of a previous introduction of the third person subject as a topic with the latter sentences having a continuation of that same topic. Here is an example of a sequence of sentences where the subject has been introduced as a topic, and then been removed entirely from the following sentences (Kawakami 2015: 10):

(6) a. *Sensei-wa kanarazu kokubanfuki-o mochi nagara*

Teacher-TOP always eraser-OBJ hold while

banshoshita.

write.on.board.PAST

“Sensei always wrote in the blackboard whilst holding the eraser.”

b. *∅ Chōku-de kaki, gofun mo tatanai aida-ni*

∅ Chalk-use write, five.minutes even pass.NEG while-DAT

sugusama nugutteshimau.

immediately wipe.out

“(He) wrote with his chalk, and immediately wiped it out before even

five minutes had passed.”

c. *Seito-ni mukai kōgisuru aida mo, kokubanfuki-wo*

Student-DAT face lecture while also eraser-OBJ

hanasanakatta.

let.go.of.NEG.PAST

“Even when (he) lectured facing the students, (he) did not let go of the eraser.”

We see here then, that my hypothesis point D is valid: *When an NP has been introduced in earlier sentences, whether it is a topic, subject or direct object, if it is known from the context, it can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.* Also, the percentage of third person subject ellipsis (50%) is much less than the percentage for first person subject ellipsis (84.3%), thus this is also in support of my hypothesis that third person would be removed fewer times than a first person subject would (point B).

In addition to first, second and third person I wanted to look at the use of non-human subjects. They were used more often than I first would have expected, appearing as subject in sentences as much as 57 times, which is even more than third person subjects. Non-humans subject thus appeared 30.4% of the time, compared to third person subjects at 28.8%. Again I would estimate that this is because of the descriptive nature behind the language in a literary novel. However, in support of my hypothesis, it was rarely omitted in a sentence. I counted ellipsis of a non-human subject at a total of 8 instances. This is only 14%. I looked more closely at these 8 instances where the non-human subject was removed, and found that they were removed only immediately after they had been introduced as a topic with ‘wa’, and the latter sentences were about the same item or animal in question. Usually, however, even when a non-human subject had been introduced, it still wasn’t removed from the latter sentences, just like I had expected. But this clearly wasn’t the case for the 8 sentences with ellipsis of non-human subjects. Here is an example of this (Kawakami 2015: 13):

(7) a. *Zenbu sakura desu ka?*

All cherry.blossom COP SFP

“Are all of them cherry blossoms?”

- b. (...) *Haru-wa* Ø *kirei deshō ne.*
 (...) Spring-TOP beautiful probably SFP
 “(...) (They are) probably beautiful in spring”

Thus it seems that point D (i.e. that the nominal was mentioned beforehand, and the subject can thus be omitted) has a role to play even if the subject is non-human, if the subject has been introduced as a topic or mentioned before.

To summarize, we have seen that first person subjects are omitted more often than second and third person subjects. First person is also the most common pronoun to occur as a subject in a sentence. Third person subject was omitted quite often, but followed the rules of hypothesis point D. Also, non-human subjects were more common than expected, but were rarely omitted.

Table 1. *Rates of ellipsis for different subjects*

Subject	Quantity	%	Ellipted	%
First person	64	34.2	54	84.3
Second person	12	6.4	5 ²¹	41.7
Third person	54	28.9	27	50.0
Non-human	57	30.5	8	14.0
Total	187	100	94	50.3

5.3.2 NEW VS OLD INFORMATION

This subchapter is about the contextual information that lies behind a sentence, which contributes to the question of whether a subject is easily omitted or not. The topic marker ‘wa’ has a big role to play in this. I have thus checked how often subjects have occurred as a topic marked with ‘wa’, which is not to be confused with the contrastive ‘wa’. I have also checked how often a subject has been marked with ‘ga’, because this particle stands for new information,

²¹ This number includes the total of sentences with second person subjects. The percentage for second person subject ellipsis in question sentences is 2 of 8; which is 25%.

and the subjects marked with ‘ga’ are thus not easily omitted. My expectation was that most overt subject would be marked with ‘ga’ for this very reason²².

From the number of non-ellipted subjects, which is 95, the subjects were marked with topic marker ‘wa’ 39 times (41%). This is because there was a shift in topic, usually between first person and third person, and to avoid any misunderstanding as to who the sentence is about, the subject was not removed. I found that in most of the following sentences after a subject had been introduced with the topic marker ‘wa’, the subject had been removed, which was to be expected. I made a criterion in my corpus study for sentences that contained ‘old information’, to signify that a previous topic marker had a role to play in the subject ellipsis. The only exceptions were when a new topic was introduced with ‘wa’ directly afterwards, like here²³ (Kawakami 2015: 16):

(8) a. *Sensei-wa setsumeishita.*

Teacher-TOP explain.PAST

“Sensei explained”

b. *Watashi-wa, haa, haa, to unazuku bakari datta.*

I-TOP yes yes and nod only COP.PAST

“I only nodded and said yes”

In this example we see that Sensei is the one who starts speaking, and then the speaker switches to being Watashi. There is thus a topic change, where the subject of both sentences are mentioned explicitly for clarity.

Let’s move on to my hypothesis about most overt subjects being marked with ‘ga’. I found that this happened only 25 times out of 95. This is a percentage of 26.3%. In my study, then, this hypothesis seems to have been proven wrong. 31 instances of non-ellipted subjects that were not marked with ‘ga’ or topic marker ‘wa’, were marked with contrastive ‘wa’ (7.4%) and the particle ‘mo’ (‘also’ at 12.6%). They are not easily removed from sentences because of their semantic significance, which means that by removing them, important information would be

²² In my analysis I have excluded subordinate sentences. This is because I wanted to look at the use of ‘wa’ and ‘ga’ when there is a certain element of choice in their usage, and in subordinate clauses there is no room for such choice as they are almost always marked with ‘ga’.

²³ Meaning that there was a shift in topic directly after a topic introduction.

lost to the listener. Having the subjects connected to these particles are thus have to remain overt and cannot be omitted. Here are two typical examples using these particles:

(9) *Watashi-CONT iku kedo, Tarō-wa ikanai.*

I-TOP go but Tarō-CONT go.NEG

“I am going, but Tarō is not”

(10) *Yuki-mo iku yo.*

Yuki-also go SFP

“Yuki is also going”

Example (9) makes use of contrastive marker ‘wa’ so specify who is going and who is not. Leaving any of the two arguments omitted in this sentence would make it difficult for the listener to retrieve the information conveyed by the speaker. The same principle holds for example (10).

A total of 11 times of 95 (11.6%) the particle was even left out completely, leaving the subject unmarked. The remaining 1 instance was marked with ‘koso’, which is used to emphasize the preceding word. Here’s is an example where the particle has just been replaced with a comma (Kawakami 2015: 14)

(11) *Kono kaki-no shu, Niigata-no mono desu.*

This persimmon-LK kind Niigata-LK thing COP

“This kind of persimmon is from Niigata”

However, it looks like ‘ga’ is not the only particle that conveys new information, like I expected in my hypothesis. It is true that ‘ga’ introduces a new participant in a discourse, like in this example (Makino and Tsutsui 2006: 118):

(12) a. *Mukashi mukashi hitori no ojiisan-ga sundeimashita.*

Olden-days olden-days one-person LK old-man-NOM live.PAST

“Once upon a time there lived an old man.”

b. *Ojiisan-wa totemo binbō deshita.*

Old-man-TOP very poor COP.PAST

“The old man was very poor.”

In this example, a new participant ‘ojiisan’ (an old man) is introduced in the story for the first time in (12a). When he is mentioned for the second time the subject is marked with ‘wa’ as in (12b).

My corpus data shows that it is not only ‘ga’, but also ‘wa’ (in topic change) and ‘wa’ (contrastive) and ‘mo’ (also) convey new information. Thus we need to rewrite hypothesis E to something like this:

- E. Because the particles ‘ga’, contrastive ‘wa’, topic marker ‘wa’ and ‘mo (also) usually convey new information, subjects with these particles cannot be omitted.

In this sense, my hypothesis has been right in that non-ellipted subjects are marked with particles that convey new information in some way. On the other hand, my hypothesis seems to have been proven wrong in that it is not only the particle ‘ga’ that conveys new information, but other particles convey new information as well.

Table 2. *Rates of different particle usages in non-ellipted subjects*

Non-ellipted subjects	Quantity	%
Wa (topic)	39	41.1
Ga	25	26.3
Wa (contrastive)	7	7.4
Mo (also)	12	12.6
Others ²⁴	12	12.6
Total	95	100.0

²⁴ Included in ‘others’ are subject marked with no particle at all, and one instance of the subject being marked with the word ‘koso’ (word used for emphasizing the preceding word)

5.3.3 SFP AND PREDICATES (POINT F)

In this section I will look at the predicates (verbs and adjectives) of each sentence, to see if they had a big impact on subject ellipsis due to the Surface Frame Patterns that I introduced in chapter 3 under the review of John Hinds' research (1981).²⁵ I registered what the predicate was in each sentence that underwent subject ellipsis. I'd like to give some examples:

(13) a. *Sensei no koto-wa sahodo inshō-niwa nokotteinakatta.*

Teacher LK thing-TOP much impression-DAT remain.NEG.PAST

Lit.: "Things about Sensei did not leave an impression (on me)."

b. *∅ Sotsugyōshite kara-wa zuibun nagaku awanakatta.*

∅ Graduate from-TOP fairly long meet.NEG.PAST

"After (I) graduated, (I) did not meet (him) for a fairly long time"

(Kawakami 2015: 9)

(14) *'Sakura bakkari desu yo' to-kotaeta.*

Cherry-blossom only COP SFP answer.PAST

"'It's nothing but cheery blossoms' (he) answered"

(Kawakami 2015: 13)

In example (13), the context we're already familiar with by reading the book, is that the narrator used to be the student of the character called 'Sensei' (teacher) for the length of the novel. In the case of (13b) then, using the verb 'sotsugyōsuru' (to graduate) makes it easier to omit the subject of the sentence, as we already know that the one who graduated is the narrator, and thus the missing subject has to be the first person pronoun. In (13b), both subject and direct object is missing in the entire sentence, and third person 'him' is likely removed because these two characters are the only ones that have been introduced at this point, and so the narrator could not be talking about meeting anyone else than the 'Sensei' described in earlier sentences.

²⁵ See chapter 3, section 3.1 for more information.

In example (14), it is clear to us who is uttering this sentence because of the underlying context where the narrator ‘Watashi’ (I) has already asked Sensei a question in the previous sentence. Thus when the word ‘kotaeru’ (to answer) is used in the sentence following the question sentence, it is easy to omit the subject because we know that there are only two people having a conversation. Our natural assumption is that a person would not be answering his or her own question, but rather a different person also present in the conversation. These two examples are among the clearest examples I have where the predicate has a semantic contribution that makes it easy to omit the subject. However, we can also see that interpreting these sentences without knowing the surrounding contextual information can be difficult. The conclusion here is thus the same as what I had expected in my hypothesis; that even though predicates indeed are important and contribute significantly by its semantics, the surrounding context is the most important factor, and predicates can only help to make identification of missing subjects easier.

5.3.4 TRANSITIVITY

In my study I wanted to look at how often Japanese makes use of either transitive and intransitive sentences. Although this is not a part of my hypothesis points, it is still interesting to look at to be able to make some conclusions as to whether Japanese can be regarded as a human-focus language or situation-focus language, or if it is a mix of both of them.²⁶ My corpus analysis reveals interesting findings regarding this matter. As mentioned earlier, I made an extra criterion in my corpus analysis (see Appendix) for sentences where the predicate was an adjective or the copula verb ‘desu’, because they don’t fit into the traditional division between transitive and intransitive sentences. Adjectival sentences and sentences with copula verb have not been included in the statistics from my analysis.

By registering every sentence as either transitive, intransitive or adjectival/copula I was able to find that transitive sentences were more common in my study. Transitive sentences appeared a total of 95 times, intransitive sentences appeared 66 times, and adjectival/copula constructions appeared 26 times. In the transitive sentence constructions, I found that subject ellipsis happened 64 times. This makes for a percentage of 67.4%. On the other hand, we have subject ellipsis in intransitive sentences only 22 of a total of 66 times, which makes for a percentage of

²⁶ See chapter 2, section 2.4 for more information

33.3%. We can see then that subject ellipsis is far more common in transitive sentences, and that even though Japanese makes great use of transitive sentences, subject ellipsis is very common in that kind of sentence structure. This is because transitive sentences tend to have agentive subjects, which in Japanese are easy to omit when the contextual information is sufficient. Sentences are often made intransitive when the subject is non-human or non-agentive, which makes the subjects harder to omit. Indeed, I found in my study that non-human subjects are far more common in intransitive sentence structures, with 38 instances (57.6%). Furthermore, the omitted subjects are mostly human: 19 out of 22 omitted subjects were human subjects. This also provides support to my hypothesis point B. Transitive sentences didn't have any non-human subjects at all. This confirms our expectations based on Ikegami's theory on Japanese being a BECOME-language that I presented in chapter 2. I'll repeat the conclusion I had for that subchapter here: *In the research on ellipsis in Japanese, I can therefore expect to find inanimate subjects to be in intransitive sentences because Japanese has situation-focus properties on the one hand, or transitive sentences with ellipted subjects because Japanese also has person-focus properties.* The reason that Japanese can be considered a person-focus language is because we have found that Japanese indeed prefers to have human subjects (69.6%) over non-human subjects (30.4%). The omission of these human subjects does not necessarily mean that Japanese is situation-focused, but rather that it is person-focused because the human subjects are so common and easy to retrieve for a listener that they don't even need mentioning at all. When it comes to transitivity in Japanese then, my hypothesis seems to have been correct.

Table 3. *Rates of ellipsis in transitive and intransitive sentences*

	Quantity	Ellipsis	%
Transitive	95	64	67.4
Intransitive	66	22	33.3

Table 4. *Non-human subjects in transitive and intransitive sentences*

	Quantity	With non-human subject	%
Transitive	95	0	0.0
Intransitive	66	38	57.6
Adjectival/COP	26	19	73.1
Total	187	57	30.5

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter we have looked at my chosen method for this study, and the reasons for that method. We have reviewed the hypothesis points that I introduced in chapter 4, and I have presented the findings of my corpus study on subject ellipsis of first, second and third person subjects as well as non-human subject. We have also looked at the importance of transitive vs. intransitive sentence structures and the semantic meaning of predicates. The points that were supported in my corpus study were:

- A. When the subject of a declarative sentence is first person, it may often be omitted.
- B. There is a lesser chance of second and third person, and non-human subjects being omitted because of their hierarchical standing below a first person pronoun.
- D. When an NP has been introduced in earlier sentences, whether it is a topic, subject or direct object, if it is known from the context, it can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.
- F. The predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and other nominals, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments.

First person subject was removed 84.3% of the time, and point (A) has thus been confirmed. Point B has also been confirmed in that the rate of first person subject ellipsis is far more frequent than ellipsis of second person (41.7% total, 25% for question sentences) and third person (50%) subjects. Non-human subjects were removed only 14% of the time, which is also

in support of point B. Point D was supported in that we saw that previously mentioned arguments were removed when they had been introduced as a topic in a preceding sentence. Point F has also been supported, in that predicates indeed can be helpful when retrieving information about the missing subjects, but without the necessary contextual information surrounding the sentence, the predicate can tell us very little.

The points that were not fully supported or inconclusive in my corpus study were:

- C. Targets of question sentences are mostly second person, and can thus often be omitted as subjects.
- E. Because the particle ‘ga’ usually conveys new information, we can expect most non-ellipted subjects to be marked with ‘ga’ rather than ‘wa’.

As mentioned, the number of instances with second person pronouns as subjects was so low that it was impossible for me to make any conclusions to point C. We found however, that ellipsis of second person in question sentences was only at 25%, which is lower than expected. This has however something to do with the type of corpus which in this study is literature. In the study done by Lee and Yonezawa, ellipsis of second person subjects occurred 88,5% in a corpus of purely spoken face-to-face conversation (2008: 738). In a face-to-face conversation, it is only to be expected that second person subjects are dropped more often than in written language where the narrative and surrounding context has to be explicitly described. The numbers from Lee and Yonezawa are on second person subject in general (question sentences and declarative sentences included), where my percentage was at 75% for second person subject in total.

Point E was contradicted in that non-ellipted subjects were marked with topic marker ‘wa’ more often than with ‘ga’. It seems that not only ‘ga’, but also other particles like contrastive ‘wa’, topic marker ‘wa’ and ‘mo’ (also) also convey new information, and thus a revision of point E is necessary. Point E is thus in part supported in that non-ellipted arguments were marked with particles that convey new information, but contradicted in that not only ‘ga’ conveys new information, but other particles as well.

The matter of transitivity was not a part of my hypothesis points, but we still had some interesting findings. We found that subject ellipsis was far more common in transitive sentence structures than in intransitive ones, and we also found that transitive sentences only had human

subjects in my corpus. The non-human subjects were only used in intransitive and adjectival/copula sentence structures. This means that I found in my corpus what I expected to find, and these rules for subject ellipsis (as well as rules for no ellipsis) that I found in my corpus analysis, which has shown to be in agreement with the rules in the literature, give me better knowledge to detect missing subjects in Japanese.

6 CONCLUSION

For this thesis I decided to write about ellipsis in Japanese, because of my own difficulties regarding this matter in my Japanese studies. My main research question for this thesis was: “what factors are at play when nominals undergo ellipsis and what factors are at play when they do not undergo ellipsis?” The ultimate goal was to find some “rules” for nominal ellipsis in Japanese, which could help future second language learners of Japanese in studying the language.

After going through the general theories and previous research done by other scholars on nominal ellipsis in Japanese, I narrowed down nominal ellipsis to subject ellipsis to investigate and understand it in depth. In the end I found some rules and factors for subject ellipsis, and the lack of subject ellipsis in Japanese, which have been supported by my corpus analysis.

6.1 SUBJECT ELLIPSIS IN JAPANESE

I’ll start this chapter by presenting the rules I found. They are the final and modified rules after my corpus analysis, and are as follows:

- A. When the subject of a declarative sentence is first person, it may often be omitted.
- B. There is a lesser chance of second and third person, and non-human subjects being omitted because of their hierarchical standing below a first person subject.
- C. When a noun phrase has been introduced in earlier sentences, whether it is a topic, subject or direct object, if it is known from the context, it can undergo ellipsis in later sentences.
- D. Because the particles ‘ga’, contrastive ‘wa’, topic marker ‘wa’ and ‘mo (also) usually convey new information, subjects connected to these particles cannot be omitted.
- E. The predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and/or object, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments.

In support of my hypothesis, I found that first person subjects were frequently omitted, with an ellipsis rate of 84.3% (Point A). It was also omitted far more often than any of the other kinds of subjects (Point B). The number of instances of second person subjects was too low for me to make any conclusions on the rate of ellipsis of them, but the number of ellipsis is lower than that of first person subjects. Third person subjects were more common in my study than it perhaps would have been if this was a study on spoken language, but nonetheless it was also omitted more rarely than first person subjects. Non-human subjects were rarely removed. In the instances where third person and non-human subjects were removed, it was because they had already been mentioned in a preceding sentence with a topic marker ‘wa’, and thus it was clear to the reader what the subject of the following sentences would be (Point C). In general, a subject would only be mentioned if it in some way conveyed new information, either by being a new topic, showing a contrast to something else or having an emphasizing function, or by the use of the particle ‘mo’ (also), which contains significant meaning and thus cannot be removed (Point D).

In my hypothesis chapter, I also had a point on ellipsis of second person subjects: *Targets of question sentences are mostly second person, and can thus often be omitted as subjects.* However, in my corpus analysis I didn’t have enough instances of second person subjects to be able to make any conclusions to that point. I found that second person was removed 41,7% of the time (5 of 12 sentences), and in question sentences the percentage was at only 25% (2 of 8). Due to the low number of instances I had in my corpus analysis I decided to remove this point from my list of rules, as my numbers aren’t representative and that point was thus neither confirmed nor contradicted.

Here is the table of the rates of ellipsis for the different subjects, repeated here as Table 1:

Table 1. Rates of ellipsis for different subjects

Subject	Quantity	%	Ellipted	%
First person	64	34.2	54	84.3
Second person	12	6.4	5 ²⁷	41,7
Third person	54	28.9	27	50.0
Non-human	57	30.5	8	14.0
Total	187	100	94	50,3

6.2 SENTENCE FRAME PATTERNS

John Hinds' introduced something he calls 'surface frame patterns', or SFP for short, in his book *Ellipsis in Japanese* from 1982. He says that every verb and adjective (the predicates of sentences) contain specific information that makes it easy to make use of ellipsis in Japanese. These surface frame patterns are different for every verb and adjective, and he proposes examples like the verb 'to eat', where the subject must be a sentient being, and the direct object must be something edible. For the verb 'to read', the subject must be a sentient being, and the direct object must be some kind of decodable material, like a book or newspaper. Hinds proposes that because of the SFP of these words, Japanese can omit the subjects and sometimes direct objects of sentences where verbs like this are present, because most of the information is already in the predicate. Based on this theory, I made point E: *the predicate of the sentence often includes inferable information about the subject and/or object, and will at the very least be helpful in identifying the arguments.*

In my study, I concluded that the predicates can't control the use of ellipsis on their own, and that the surrounding context for each sentence is much more important than the SFP. I used an example in the analysis chapter, repeated here as (1) (taken from Kawakami 2015: 13):

- (1) 'Sakura bakkari desu yo' to-kotaeta.
Cherry-blossom only COP SFP answer.PAST

²⁷ This number includes the total of sentences with second person subjects. The percentage for second person subject ellipsis in question sentences is 2 of 8; which is 25%.

“‘It’s nothing but cheery blossoms’ (he) answered”

In this example, it’s not first of all the SFP of the word ‘kotaeru’ (to answer) in itself that makes it clear to us who it uttering this sentence. If we look at the SFP of ‘to answer’, it would require a sentient being doing the action, but either of the two characters present in the book could have done the answering here. It is rather because of the underlying context where the narrator ‘Watashi’ (I) has already asked Sensei a question in the previous sentence. Thus when the word ‘kotaeru’ comes up after a question sentence, it is easy to omit the subject because we know that there are only two people having a conversation, and the one answering should be someone else than the person asking the question. We can see then, that although the semantics of predicates can be important, they cannot alone decide whether a subject and/or object can be removed from a sentence.

6.3 SITUATION-FOCUS VS. PERSON-FOCUS

In chapter 2, I introduced Yoshihiko Ikegami’s theory on DO-language and BECOME-language, where he says that there is a division between languages in how they describe situations in different ways. English and Japanese are often used as contrastive languages in this matter, saying that English tends to have agentive sentences where the person is in focus of the action, whereas Japanese in contrast tend to make use of either intransitive sentences, or transitive sentences where the subject has been removed, and thus has less focus on the person doing the action, and rather more focus on the actual action and situation. Thus English is often called a person-focus language, and Japanese a situation-focus language. I illustrated the difference with example sentences which are repeated here as (3) and (4):

- (2) a. *Sakebigoe-ga shita.*
Shouting:voice-NOM do.PAST
Lit.: “Shouting was heard”
- b. *I just heard shouting.*
- (3) a. *Hara-ga hetta.*
Stomach-NOM became-empty.

Lit.: “Stomach became empty”

b. *I am hungry.*

We see from these examples that the Japanese variety has no human subject, and the focus is on the situation itself, whilst the English translation needs to have a human subject in order to have a natural sounding sentence.

Nariyama proposed a contradicting theory to this view on Japanese being a clear-cut situation-focus language. Nariyama claims that Japanese is also person-focused because it does prefer to have human subjects over non-human subjects, like in this example:

- (4) a. ?? *Sono seihin-ga kare-o okanemochi-ni shita.*
?? That product-NOM he-ACC rich:person-DAT make.PAST
“The product made him rich”
- b. *Sono seihin-no okage-de kare-wa okanemochi-ni natta.*
That product-LK favor-by he-NOM rich:person-DAT become.PAST
“Thanks to/because of that product, he became rich”

Example (3a) is a grammatical sentence, but it sounds very unnatural. The most natural sentence is (3b), where the human is the subject rather than the product.

Nariyama’s claim was supported by my corpus analysis. I found that human subjects were indeed far more common than non-human subjects, where about 70% of subjects were human in a total of 187 transitive and intransitive sentences. In addition, I found that none of the transitive sentences in my corpus analysis had non-human subjects. Instead, non-human subjects were found only in intransitive sentences although there were also human subjects in intransitive sentences.

The fact that ellipsis of human subjects or human nominals in general happens so often in Japanese is thus a characteristic of a person-focus language. As mentioned before, Nariyama proposed an animacy hierarchy, where a subject higher in the animacy hierarchy is more prone to be ellipited than subjects lower in the hierarchy. This means that when a sentence has an omitted subject, the chances of that subject being a person, or at least something animate, are very high. At the same time, an inanimate subject is very rarely omitted from a sentence. Ellipsis

very often happens when the subject has already been introduced in an earlier sentence, but when it comes to inanimate subjects, they tend to be mentioned again in later sentences rather than be omitted, because an inanimate subject is lower on the animacy hierarchy, and thus is harder to retrieve (Nariyama 2003: 274).

As a conclusion, we can say that both Ikegami and Nariyama make very valid points to this matter. Japanese can certainly be seen as a more situation-focused language than English, as is proposed by Ikegami, but it may not be as clear-cut as he proposes. Considering Nariyama's theory on Japanese also being person-focused, which was supported by my corpus analysis, we may say that Japanese is somewhere in between these two categories. This shows that it might not be so easy to place languages into two simple categories.

6.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

In my corpus analysis I have only looked at subject ellipsis in Japanese. However, it would have been interesting to use the rules I found as background to look at ellipsis of other nominals in addition to subjects. Then we could find out if these rules will hold for not only subjects, but also for direct object and indirect object and so on.

Another matter that would have been interesting to look at, would be the Norwegian or English translation of the same book. By doing so we could see the differences between the languages, like for example how many subjects or pronouns we would find in the translated work or different numbers of transitive and intransitive sentences. We could check if there are more overt subjects or pronouns in a Japanese translation compared to a Japanese original book. At the same time, we could check how many subjects/pronouns has been added in a Norwegian or English translation of a Japanese original. With studies like these, it would be interesting to see whether 'translationese' makes a big difference in the use of subject ellipsis in Japanese.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Writing this master thesis has helped me understand ellipsis, in particular subject ellipsis in Japanese better. By studying this topic, I don't only feel better able when it comes to reading and speaking Japanese, but I also feel that I have valuable information to contribute to any

future students I would have if I were to teach Japanese in a classroom. I hope that this thesis has given insight to its readers as well.

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APPENDIX

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP
Page 9(1)																
	1	わたし	1					1					教わる	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1								担任ではない	1		1
	1	わたし	1										聞く	1		
	1	センセイのこと	1		1			1					1卒業する	1		1
	1	わたし/センセイ	1										あわせる	1		1
	1	わたし	1										往來する	1		1
	1	私たち	1		1			1						1		1
	1	センセイ	1													
SUM	6	3	6	0	2	1	1	3	0	0	0	1		5	4	0

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP
Page 10(2)																
	1	わたし	1							1				1		
	1	センセイ	1		1						1		眺める	1		
	1	わたし	1		1						1		迷っている	1		1
	1	キミ	1		1			1						1		1
	1	センセイ	1		1								驚いて顔く	1		1
	1	わたし	1										見かけている	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1									1		
	1	わたし	1		1			1						1		
	1	カウンターに置いてある物	1		1				1					1		1
	1	わたし	1										聞心している	1		
	1	わたし	1										思い出す	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1			1						1		
	1	センセイ	1		1								1チョコレート書く	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1								1ぬぐってしまふ	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1								1講義する	1		
	1	センセイ	1		1								1贈す	1		
	1	黒板拭きの帚	1		1			1						1		1
	1	キミ	1		1			1						1		1
	1	センセイ	1		1								言う	1		
SUM	11	11	8	2	10	2	2	6	2	2	0	5		15	7	0

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP	
Page 11(3)																	
	1	わたし	1					1					1 思い出す		1		1
	1	わたし 名前	1				1		1				1 覚えている		1		1
	1	センセイ	1										1 関心、困惑する		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 干す		1		
	1	キミ	1				1	1					1 見覚えがある		1		1
	1	センセイ	1				1	1					1 三十七です		1		1
	1	わたし	1										1 見て確かめる		1		
	1	センセイ	1				1	1							1		1
	1	わたし	1										1 呼びかける		1		1
	1	センセイ	1				1	1							1		1
SUM	8	7	8	4	2	1	3	5	5	1	0	0	6		7	7	1

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP	
Page 12(4)																	
	1	私たち	1										1 飲む		1		
	1	センセイ	1							1			1 会って飲む		1		
	1	わたし	1							1					1		
	1	勘定書/払うの									1		1		1		
	1	往來								1					1		
	1	私たち	1								1				1		1
	1	肴の好み、人との間とりかた									1		1		1		
	1	歳									1				1		
	1	わたし	1										1 感じる		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 行ったことがある		1		
	1	私たち	1										1 はしごする		1		
	1	私たち	1										1 帰る		1		
	1	私たち	1										1 まわる		1		
	1	私たち	1										1 しめくくる		1		
	1	家											1 近い		1		
	1	キミ	1										1 お尋る		1		
	1	センセイ	1							1				1			
	1	わたし	1										1 身構える		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 聞いている		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 傳劫です		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 後を引く		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 あがりこむ		1		
	1	センセイの家	1										1 雑然としている		1		
	1	わたし	1										1 思っている		1		
	1	物											1		1		
	1	本やら・・・											1 散らばっている		1		
SUM	17	11	16	1	2	9	0	7	1	3	12	11	14	11	14	3	

Page 13(5)	Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	s w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	s w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP
	1		センセイ			1								広げる		1	
	1		センセイ			1								ひっぱり出す		1	
		1	センセイ				1		1							1	
	1		キミ		1									1 召し上がる		1	
		1	センセイ			1			1							1	
			1 八景閣			1										1	
			1 雨戸			1			1							1	
			1 木々の枝			1			1							1	
	1		わたし		1									1 わかる		1	
	1		わたし		1									1 分かるい		1	
	1		わたし		1									1 聞く		1	
			1 庭の木			1			1							1	
			1 桜			1										1	
	1		センセイ			1								1 答える		1	
			1 全部			1										1	
			1 妻			1				1				1 好き		1	
	1		桜			1			1					1 きれい		1	
	1		桜			1								1 さむざむしい		1	
			1 センセイ			1			1					1 言う		1	
			1 月			1				1				1 出ている		1	
			1 半月			1				1				1 かかっている		1	
			1 臘月			1								1 です		1	
SUM	9	13		3	1	7	11	3	5	5	0	0	10		6	8	8

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ge'	Contrastive 'wa' s w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP	
		1 センセイ														
		1 妻														
	1											1 好き、嫌い				
		1 木の種														
	1											1 辛くていい				
		1 辛味														
	1											1 つまむ				
		1 わたし														
		1 はばたくもの														
		1 鳥														
		1 音														
		1 音/声														
	1											1 静まる				
		1 鳥										1 ある				
	1											1 聞く				
		1 わたし														
		1 答え														
	1											1 振り向く				
		1 わたし														
		1 センセイ														
		1 新聞														
	1											1 ちよいと取る				
		1 センセイ										1 読んでいる				
	1											1 忘れている				
		1 センセイ										1 呼びかける				
	1															
		1 返事										1 集中している				
	1											1 呼ぶ				
		1 わたし														
		1 センセイ														
	1															
		1 ツモコさん														
	1											1 聞く				
		1 センセイ														
		1 返事をする間														
		1 センセイ														
SUM	13	17	5	1	11	13	3	5	5	6	0	4	11	16	11	3

Page 15(7)	Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject Identity	1	2	3	Non-human	QS	Topic w/ 'wa'	's w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	's w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Transitive	Adjective / COP
	1	1	センセイ	1		1							1	入っている			1
	1	1	センセイ	1		1							1	1かかえて戻った			1
	1	1	センセイ	1		1							1	1かかえている			1
		1	センセイ	1		1			1				1				1
		1	センセイ	1		1			1				1				1
		1	器	1		1							1				1
	1		キミ	1		1							1	1ご覧ください			1
	1		これ	1		1			1				1				1
	1		わたし	1		1							1	1思いながら見る			1
		1	どれ	1		1						1	1				1
		1	鳥須	1		1							1				1
		1	それ	1		1							1				1
		1	汽車土瓶	1		1							1				1
		1	センセイ	1		1							1				1
	1		センセイ	1		1							1	1買って旅をします			1
		1	お茶	1		1							1				1
		1	人	1		1							1	1入って売っていた			1
		1	汽車土瓶	1		1							1				1
		1	もの	1		1						1	1	1あった			1
		1	かたち	1		1						1	1				1
	1		センセイ	1		1							1	1集めてらっしゃる			1
	1		わたし	1		1							1	1聞く			1
		1	センセイ	1		1							1	1横にふった			1
SUM	9	14		2	2	9	10	2	7	1	0	3	14		11	7	5

Page 16(8)	Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject Identity	1	2	3	Non-human	OS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP
	1		センセイ	1										1買う	1		
		1	これ		1							1					1
		1	こちら		1							1					1
	1		センセイ	1										1買う	1		
	1		センセイ	1										1発車されてしまう			1
	1		こちら	1										1買う	1		1
	1		センセイ	1										1くるんで入る	1		
	1		1妻		1					1				1持ち歩く	1		1
	1		センセイ	1										1指しながら	1		
		1	わたし	1					1						1		1
	1		センセイ	1										聞く	1		
	1		センセイ	1					1						1		
	1		センセイ	1					1					並べてみる	1		
	1		センセイ	1		1									1		
		1	センセイ	1								1		捨てられない	1		
	1		センセイ	1					1					抱えて戻ってくる	1		
	1		センセイ	1										1ほどく	1		
	1		センセイ	1										1取り出す	1		
	1		1取り出されたの		1				1						1		1
	1		センセイ	1										1手に取る	1		
SUM	10	11		9	0	8	4	4	6	1	4	0	13		14	5	2

Ellipsis	No ellipsis	Subject identity	1	2	3	Non-human	OS	Topic w/ 'wa'	S w/ 'ga'	Contrastive 'wa'	S w/ 'mo'	Old information	Predicate	Transitive	Intransitive	Adjective / COP	
Page 17(9)																	
	1	これ				1	1			1							1
	1	台風				1	1		1								1
	1	センセイ	1										1使い切る				1
	1	こっち	1							1			1買う				1
	1	車二				1	1			1			1くわれてしまう				1
	1	センセイ	1										1聞いている				1
	1	センセイ	1		1								1使い切ってしまう				1
	1	センセイ	1										1取っておけない				1
	1	センセイ	1										1とってこよう				1
	1	センセイ	1										1遅んだ				1
	1	センセイ	1		1								1説明する				1
	1	センセイ	1										1捨てられない				1
	1	電池				1	1						1動かしたりしてくれていた				1
		捨てるとは				1	1						1情けない				1
		ツキコさん		1			1										1
		センセイ			1												1
SUM	9	8	7	1	3	6	1	2	2	2	0	10		10	3		4

TOTAL	92	95	64	12	54	57	14	39	25	7	12	82		95	66		26
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