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Subject Ellipsis in Japanese and Clues for Non-Native Learners

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Mississippi

Akiko Murakami

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether learners of Japanese are less accurate in selecting appropriate reference of omitted subjects than native speakers and in which environment the learners have the most difficulties. Also, it looked into whether there is a correlation between the accuracy of the selecting and knowledge of the clue grammar. The survey had a subject selecting test and a knowledge test. The subject selecting test included two different environments: Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs. The knowledge test also covered these two environments. Giving/Receiving verbs have three types: *ageru* (give), *kureru* (give), and *morau* (receive); and Honorific verbs has two types: *non-keigo* (non-honorifics) and *keigo* (honorifics). Two groups participated in the study: native Japanese speakers (L1) and non-native Japanese speakers (L2) learning Japanese or have learned Japanese in the universities in the United States.

The results showed that the L2 group was less accurate than the L1 group in the subject selecting test. The extent of the difference varied in types. For L2 speakers, selecting a subject with the environment of Giving/Receiving verbs was less accurate than with the environment of Honorific verbs. Also, the accuracy with *kureru* (give) type was the lowest. Finally, there was no correlation between accuracy in the selecting test and the knowledge test in L2 speakers. The results indicate that there is a difficulty for L2 speakers in understanding Giving/Receiving verbs and that a deep understanding of Giving/Receiving verbs is needed to retrieve the omitted subject properly.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
DO	direct object
GEN	genitive case
IDO	indirect object
OBJ	object
POSS	possessive
SBJ	subject

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Japanese speakers tend to omit subjects whenever they think it is clear to the listener what or who they are referring to. *Genki* (Banno et al., 2020), a two-volume textbook series for learners of Japanese which is used in classes at universities in the United States, explains that sentences without subjects are very common in Japanese. It is easy to imagine that the omissions may cause misunderstandings and confusion for learners in conversation. Since omission is not frequent in English, English speakers learning Japanese have a hard time with this (Nariyama, 2009). As omission of the subject in Japanese is very common, it is necessary for learners to know how to find what the omitted subject refers to. Thus, while it is important to make learners aware that Japanese has subject omission, the *Genki* textbook does not mention how to find the subject.

Omitted subjects are pervasive in Japanese and the focus of this paper is on the subject ellipsis. Lee (1980) states that there are two likely candidates for the referent for subject ellipsis, both in information giving and information seeking sentences. They are first person and third person in information giving sentences and second person and third person in information seeking sentences. In other words, in a question, an omitted subject refers to second or third person, and in a statement, an omitted subject refers to first or third person. These two candidates are unambiguous for native speakers of Japanese but can be ambiguous for learners of Japanese especially for English speakers who almost always use a subject. Therefore, to better understand

how non-native speakers interpret sentences with omitted subjects, this study analyzes the answers to an omitted subject selecting test, examining the performance of native and non-native speakers of Japanese. The results should provide learners with clues for retrieving omitted subjects.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

2.1 Subject ellipsis

Deletion of a subject is called subject ellipsis. Subject ellipsis is common in Japanese. This tendency to omit human subjects in Japanese, especially in conversational speech data, has been reported by many researchers (Fry, 2002). In terms of the spoken vs. written distinction, according to Pardeshi & Nagasaki (2022), the frequency of subject omitted forms per 100 forms is higher in the spoken language than in the written language. They found that more than 80% of omissions are made in daily conversation. Subject ellipsis is common because it is efficient and there is no misunderstanding among native speakers. Saying less is viewed as polite. The speaker is communicating that he/she respects the hearer's intelligence and allows for the hearer to draw their own conclusion and gives them space to respond. Good listeners are expected to be attentive and connect the missing words in their minds and still understand the intention of the speaker (Nariyama, 2009). Communication in Japanese tends to place the burden of semantic interpretation of speech on the hearer's side (Yamaguchi, 2003). Yamaguchi indicates that due to the high degree of context-dependence, there is a significant difference between Japanese and English in terms of the role played by context in the omission of words and the recovery of the omitted target/content. Compared to English, which is extremely limited in its scope of abbreviation due to syntactic constraints, Japanese allows an extremely wide range of omission based on context-dependence. This can be a communication problem for English-speaking learners of Japanese. Miyajima (2015) also points out the problem of instruction of Japanese.

Japanese language instructors need to explain and teach the rules of subject usage: subject omission and non-omission. However, not all instructors fully understand these rules and only provide guidance based on the intuition of Japanese speakers as to whether or not to omit the subject of a sentence. In her study, Miyajima found learners' confusion in subject omission and non-omission in their writings. In spoken language, where there are many omissions, it is likely to be even more difficult for learners.

The omitted references in Japanese conversation are often easy for native Japanese speakers to identify in context. When context does not indicate which subject is elided, there are some grammatical clues that can be used to identify the referent of the subject. Although Japanese lacks explicit grammatical agreement features, potential ambiguities are often reduced by particular pragmatic and grammatical forms (i.e., polite forms, honorific forms, question forms, modals, and sentence-final particles) that are strongly associated with either first-person, second person, or third-person reference (Fry, 2002). These pragmatic and grammatical forms play a role and provide clues for listeners or readers to identify the referent properly.

Nariyama (2002) defines the mechanism for ellipsis resolution. It consists of three tiers of linguistic devices, as presented in the following subsections:

- [1] Japanese sentences are structured in such a way to anchor the topic, which is predominantly the subject (by Sentence devices),
- [2] with argument inferring cues on the verbal predicate (by Predicate devices), and
- [3] are cohesively sequenced with the topic as a pivot (by Discourse devices).

Okamoto (1985) also discusses the use of the following syntactic clues to determine the omitted subject of a sentence:

- [1] Giving and receiving verbs,

- [2] Honorific verbs,
- [3] Subjective verbs,
- [4] Conjunctive particles,
- [5] Generality.

In this study, we focus on two types of grammatical clues. One clue is pragmatic and semantic: Giving/Receiving verbs. The other clue is pragmatic: Honorific verbs. These clues help listeners and readers interpret the elided subject. These two clues were chosen because they differ from English and are considered difficult for English spoken learners to master.

2.2 Two clues to recovering elided subjects

2.2.1 Giving/Receiving verbs

In English, “give” and “receive” can be used regardless of who gives and who speaks. That is, *I can give you something or you can give me something* without any pragmatic constraints. By contrast, in Japanese, the two verbs for “give” are *ageru* and *kureru*, while the verb for “receive” is *morau*. The usage of these verbs is constrained by the speaker’s point of view. The choice of the verbs depends on the direction of the transaction, and the *Genki* textbook explains the usage of the giving and receiving verbs as follows:

When a thing moves toward the center(speaker), the verb we use is kureru. Otherwise, when a thing moves away from the center or when a thing stays away from the center, the transaction is described in terms of ageru. With morau, it is the recipient that is the subject of the sentence. (Banno et al, 2020, p.52).

In short, the giving verb *ageru* is used when the speaker describes the event from the point of view of the subject-referent, that is, the giver, whereas the giving verb *kureru* is used when the

speaker describes the event from the point of view of the indirect-object-referent, that is, the receiver. The receiving verb *morau* is used when the event is described from the position of the subject-referent, that is, the receiver (Okamoto, 1985).

Here are the examples of *ageru*, *kureru*, and *morau*. Unacceptable sentences are marked by an asterisk:

Ageru (give): from the giver's point of view

Watashi wa kimi ni purezento wo ageta.
I SBJ you IDO present DO *ageru* (give)-past
I gave you a present.

**Kimi wa watashi ni purezento wo ageta.*
you SBJ I IDO present DO give-past
You gave me a present.

In the sentence with *ageru*, the transaction is moving away, or outward. The latter sentence is not allowed because the transaction is moving in, or inward (from second person to first person).

Kureru (give): from the receiver's point of view

Kimi wa watashi ni purezento wo kureta.
you SBJ I IDO present DO *kureru* (give)-past
You gave me a present.

**Watashi wa kimi ni purezento wo kureta.*
I SBJ you IDO present DO give-past
I gave you a present.

The transaction is moving in, or inward in the sentence with *kureru*. Therefore, the latter sentence (from first person to second person) is not allowed.

Morau (receive): from the receiver's point of view

Watashi wa kimi ni purezento wo moratta.
I SBJ you IDO present DO *morau* (receive)-past
I got/received a present from you.

**Kimi wa watashi ni purezento wo moratta.*
you SBJ I IDO present DO *morau* (receive)-past
You got/received a present from me.

Morau is used from the point of view of the receiver, so the latter sentence is not allowed.

Next, let's look at examples where the giving and receiving verbs are used in combination with other verbs. In this case, giving and receiving verbs are helping verbs and they describe the giving and receiving of services (Banno et al., 2020). We call this *te*-form. In English, this giving and receiving action can be translated “for you” and “for me”.

First examples are *te-ageru*. (※ → is the direction of transaction)

First person → Second/Third person

Watashi wa imōto wo hagemashite ageta.
I SBJ my sister OBJ encourage-te give-past
I gave my younger sister some encouragement.
(I encouraged my younger sister.)

Second/Third person → First person

**Imōto wa watashi wo hagemashite ageta.*
my younger sister SBJ I OBJ encourage-te give-past
My younger sister gave me some encouragement.
(My younger sister encouraged me.)

The latter sentence is not allowed because the verb *hagemasu* (encourage) becomes *hagemashite ageru* when *I* give something to *you* (or *someone*). The direction of transaction is outward. In other words, in the use of *ageru*, the priority of the subject is first person > second or third person.

Second person → Third person

Kimi wa tomodachi wo hagemashite ageta?
you SBJ your friend OBJ encourage-te give-past
Did you give your friend some encouragement?
(Did you encourage your friend?)

Third person → Second person

**Tomodachi wa kimi wo hagemashite ageta?*
your friend SBJ you OBJ encourage-te give-past
Did your friend give you some encouragement?
(Did your friend encourage you?)

The latter sentence is not allowed because the second person (you) is closer to the first person's view compared to the third person (your friend). Therefore, this transaction (your friend → you) is considered inward, and the verb *ageru* is used when the transaction is outward. In other words, in the use of *ageru*, the priority of the subject is second person > third person.

Third person → Third person

Imōto wa ane wo hagemashite ageta.
younger sister SBJ older sister OBJ encourage-te give-past
A younger sister gave an older sister some encouragement.
(A younger sister encouraged an older sister.)

Ane wa imōto wo hagemashite ageta.
older sister SBJ younger sister OBJ encourage-te give-past
An older sister gave a younger sister some encouragement.
(An older sister encouraged a younger sister.)

Ageru is used between others, so these two sentences are both correct. The point of view does not matter between third person and third person.

Next, there are some examples of *te-kureru*.

First person → Second /Third person

**Watashi wa imōto wo hagemashite kureta.*
I SBJ my younger sister OBJ encourage-te give-past
I gave my younger sister some encouragement.
(I encouraged my younger sister.)

Second /Third person → First person

Imōto wa watashi wo hagemashite kureta.
my younger sister SBJ I OBJ encourage-te give-past
My younger sister gave me some encouragement.
(My younger sister encouraged me.)

The former sentence is not accepted because the verb *hagemasu* (encourage) becomes *hagemashite kureru* when you (or someone) give encouragement to me. The direction of transaction is inward. In other words, in the use of *kureru*, the priority of the subject is second or third person > first person.

Second person → Third person

**Kimi wa tomodachi wo hagemashite kureta?*
you SBJ your friend OBJ encourage-te give-past
Did you give your friend some encouragement?
(Did you encourage your friend?)

Third person → Second person

Tomodachi wa kimi wo hagemashite kureta?
your friend SBJ you OBJ encourage-te give-past
Did your friend give you some encouragement?
(Did your friend encourage you?)

The former sentence is not accepted because the second person (you) is closer to the first person's view compared to the third person (your friend). Therefore, this transaction (you→your friend) is considered outward, and the verb *kureru* is used when the transaction is inward. In other words, in the use of *kureru*, the priority of the subject is third person > second person. There is an exception of usage of *kureru*. The psychological distance dictates when your in-group members such as your family get benefit. For example,

Second person → Third person

Kimi wa watashino imōto wo hagemashite kureta?
you SBJ my younger sister OBJ encourage-te give-past
Did you give my younger sister some encouragement?
(Did you encourage my younger sister?)

This sentence is acceptable because transaction is considered inward. In this study, however, to control for conditions, the speaker, listener, and the third party are all college friends, meaning they are equal. In this case, the listener does not need to consider psychological

distance such as family or close relationships; physical distance, or presence, is dominant.

First person → Second/Third person

**Imōto wa watashi ni hagemashite moratta.*
my younger sister SBJ I -from encourage-te receive-past
My younger sister got/received encouragement from me.

Second/Third person → First person

Watashi wa imōto ni hagemashite moratta.
I SBJ my younger sister -from encourage-te receive-past
I got/received encouragement from my sister.

The former sentence is not allowed because the verb *hagemasu* (encourage) becomes *hagemashite morau* when *I* receive something from *you* (or *someone*).

Second person → Third person

**Tomodachi wa kimi ni hagemashite moratta?*
your friend SBJ you -from encourage-te receive-past
Did your friend get/receive some encouragement from you?

Third person → Second person

Kimi wa tomodachi ni hagemashite moratta?
you SBJ your friend -from encourage-te receive-past
Did you get/receive some encouragement from your friend?

The former sentence is not allowed because the speaker takes the point of view of *you* but not *your friend*. The verb *morau* is used from the point of view of recipient.

Please see the Table 1 below for a summary of transaction directions for the use of *ageru*, *kureru*, and *morau*.

In sum, these clear verb rules allow listeners to know who is the subject even when the subject is omitted. Giving/Receiving verbs, *ageru*, *kureru*, and *morau* are the clues to retrieve the omitted subject, and they are used as one of the two environments in my study.

Table 1
The Direction of Transaction

	subject		object
<i>ageru</i>	1	→	2
	1	→	3
	2	→	3
	3	→	3
<i>kureru</i>	2	→	1
	3	→	1
	3	→	2
<i>morau</i>	1	←	2
	1	←	3
	2	←	3

Note. 1 is first person, 2 is second person, 3 is third person.

In this study, the survey test includes only the highlighted transactions.

2.2.2 Honorific verbs

Japanese people place importance on the seniority of people and the language reflects seniority in the use of honorifics marked in verbs, nouns, and adjectives. This seniority marking provides enough cues to identify the omitted arguments (Nariyama, 2009). Ide (1992) explains that Japanese politeness is achieved when predicate form is observed in accord with subject, which often appears in deleted forms and can be traced from honorific forms, referring to the referent. Honorification explicitly reveals the speaker's relations to the hearer, to the person being talked about. These relations are expressed directly through the use or non-use of honorifics attached to the verb, which in turn indirectly but unmistakably signals information about the subject (Hori, 1995).

We call honorific expressions *keigo* in Japanese. *Keigo* has three different ways of expressing honorifics: polite language (*teineigo*), respectful language (*sonkeigo*), humble language (*kenjōgo*). Among Japanese honorific verbs, so-called respectful words are used for

subject-referents that are to be elevated, and so-called humble words for subject-referents that are to be lowered (Okamoto, 1985). Polite language is not an expression that changes depending on the relationship, but a direct expression of respect by the speaker to the person to whom he or she is speaking, and can be used by anyone. It can be used to refer to one's own actions or those of other people. The polite language and the humble language are outside the scope of this paper and will not be discussed here. One of the common forms of respectful verb (*sonkeigo*) is “o + verb stem + *ni naru*.” For example, normal form “*kaeru* (go home)” becomes “*o-kaeri-ni naru*”, and “*yomu* (read)” becomes “*o-yomi-ni naru*.” However, some of the verbs have irregular forms for the honorifics. For example, “*iku* (go)” becomes “*irassharu*,” and “*miru* (see)” becomes “*goran-ni naru*.”

Table 2
Verb Forms for the Honorifics

	dictionary form	polite word	respectful word	humble word	
read	<i>yomu</i>	<i>yomimasu</i>	<i>o-yomi-ni naru</i>	<i>o-yomi suru</i>	regular
eat	<i>taberu</i>	<i>tabemasu</i>	<i>meshiagaru</i>	<i>itadaku</i>	irregular

Here are some examples of *keigo* and non-*keigo*.

Sensei wa hon wo o-yomi-ni-naru.
teacher SBJ book OBJ read (honorifics)
The teacher reads a book.

Imōto wa hon wo yomu.
younger sister SBJ book OBJ read
My younger sister reads a book.

Sensei wa gohan wo meshiagatta.
teacher SBJ food OBJ eat-past (honorifics)
The teacher ate food.

Imōto wa gohan wo tabeta.
younger sister SBJ food OBJ eat-past
My younger sister ate food.

If native Japanese speakers hear or see these honorific verbs, they can tell who the subject of the action is even when it is not mentioned as long as they understand the relationship between speaker (first person), listener (second person), and third person. In the *Genki* textbook, respectful words are called honorific verbs and we call respectful verbs honorific verbs in this paper too. Using or not using honorific verbs, *keigo* is the clues for retrieving omitted subject. Honorific verbs are the second environment examined by my study.

2.3 Research Questions

With the aim to the difficulty of L2 learners of Japanese to recover elided subjects in their interpretation of sentences with elided subjects using the two above-mentioned clues, the current study asks the following research questions:

1. Are non-native Japanese speakers less accurate in selecting referents of omitted subjects than native Japanese speakers?
2. In which of the environments are non-native Japanese speakers less or the least accurate in their choice?
3. Is the knowledge on how to use Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs helping non-native speakers know how to track omitted subject?

2.4 Hypotheses

The current study expected the following results for the above research questions.

1. Non-native Japanese speakers are less accurate than native Japanese speakers in

selecting the referent of omitted subjects.

2. Non-native Japanese speakers are less accurate in their choice in the environment of Giving/Receiving verbs as compared to Honorific verbs.

3. Having the knowledge on how to use Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs helps non-native speakers know the appropriate referent of omitted subject.

For the first hypothesis, it was easy to imagine that L2 learners are not used to saying or hearing the elided subjects, especially in conversation, and their scores can be lower than native speakers who are always processing the omission.

For the second hypotheses, it was not easy to assume which environment can be more difficult for L2 speakers because both environments are different from English. However, it was considered that the two giving verbs: *ageru* and *kureru* can be more confusing because listeners have to consider many patterns of points of views. Instead, the listener only has to consider the relationship between the two, high or low, in Honorific verbs.

For the third hypothesis, there should be a correlation between the selecting the referent of omitted subject test and the grammar knowledge test among L2 speakers. On the other hand, since L1 speakers should all have knowledge, it is likely that there is no correlation.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study participants were two groups. The first group was native Japanese speakers who are studying at a public university in the Southeastern United States. The second group was non-native Japanese speakers who are learning or have learned Japanese at public universities in the Southeastern United States and in the Midwestern United States. A total of 32 students participated in the survey, with 17 in the native speaker group and 15 in the non-native speaker group.

3.2 Task/Data Collection Method

The data was collected through a one-time survey that participants were asked to complete. The survey included two tasks: language background questions and grammatical judgment tests. Native Japanese speakers and non-native Japanese speakers took the same grammatical judgment tests, but the survey for non-native speakers had romanization, Latin alphabet. These surveys were administered online using *Google form*. Each person could complete the online survey whenever and wherever they want. In the selecting test, they were asked to read the conversations and sentences in Japanese and were asked to identify the omitted subject in each sentence from the choices given directly underneath the question (See Appendix B). The title of the survey was “Subject Ellipsis in Japanese.” There were some language background questions and 40 grammatical judgment questions in total. There was no time limitation. On average, it

took approximately ten minutes for native speakers and 22 minutes for non-native speakers to complete according to self-measurements.

3.2.1 Language Background Questions

The study asked some background questions to each group first. The questions to native speakers were: 1) their school name, 2) major, 3) email, 4) first language, 5) other languages they can speak besides English, 6) the length they stayed in Japan and whether it was from birth or not, 7) the length they stayed in the U.S., and 8) dialect of Japanese. These questions were asked to confirm whether they could be perceived as native speakers or not. The questions to non-native speakers concerned: 1) their school name, 2) major, 3) email, 4) first language, 5) other languages they can speak besides English and Japanese, 6) the length they stayed in Japan, 7) the length they stayed in non-English speaking countries, 8) the Japanese course they are currently taking or the last course they took, and 9) self-assessed Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level. These questions were asked to analyze whether there is a correlation between the test scores and language background.

3.2.2 Grammatical Judgement Test

Grammatical judgment tests had two categories. First category was the selecting test. The questions here tested whether the participants can track the appropriate referent of the omitted subject. One question followed each conversation or sentence. All the conversations were between university friends (Taro, Hanako, John, and Rachel). This condition was set and shown to the participants to make it clear that they are reading informal conversations and so the friends would not use honorifics with each other. Every question had an omitted subject, and they were all human subjects. A single verb was underlined in a written conversation, and the question was to select the omitted subject of that verb from multiple choices. There were two environments of

questions in this selecting test: 1) Giving/Receiving verbs, 2) Honorific verbs. As we discussed in the early chapters, these environments provided clues in determining the referent of the omitted subject. For Giving/Receiving verbs, there were three types of questions in one set: one type of giving verb (*ageru*), the other type of giving verb (*kureru*), and the receiving verb (*morau*) in the same context. Each type had five questions to ensure validity. Below is a set of examples.

Ageru

Hanako: *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.
Taro : *Ogotte -ageta no?*
treat give-past
(Did you) treat him?

Kureru

Hanako: *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.
Taro : *Ogotte -kureta no?*
treat give-past
(Did he) treat you?

Morau

Hanako: *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.
Taro : *Ogotte -moratta no?*
treat receive-past
(Did you) get/receive treat?

For Honorific verbs, there were two types of questions in one set: an honorific verb (*keigo*), and the same meaning but using a regular form verb, a non-honorific verb (*non-keigo*) in the same context.

Non-keigo

Hanako: *kinō, sensei to bā ni itta yo.*
yesterday, teacher -with bar -to go-past emphasis
Yesterday, (I) went to a bar with the teacher.

Taro : *e iina. nani, nonda?*
ah jealous what drink-past
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did you/he/she) drink?

Hanako: *bīru wo sukoshi.*
Beer -ob a little
(I/He/She) had a few beers.

Keigo

Hanako: *kinō, sensei to bā ni itta yo.*
yesterday, teacher -with bar -to went emphasis
Yesterday, (I) went to a bar with the teacher.

Taro : *e iina. nani, o-nomi-ni natta?*
ah jealous what drink-past (honorifics)
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did he/she) drink?

Hanako: *bīru wo sukoshi.*
Beer -ob a little
(He/She) had a few beers.

The participants were also asked their confidence level after answering the question in each type.

The second category was the knowledge test. It tested whether the participants know when to use Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs. This was conducted to test the participants' knowledge of these two kinds of verbs which are used as clues in the selecting test. One verb in a written conversation or sentence was left blank, and participants chose from multiple choices the most appropriate verb as you can see below. These questions were used to see the correlation between their knowledge of all five types of grammar and accuracy of the subject identification test. Please refer to the appendix for details on the knowledge test.

Keigo (honorifics)

Hanako: *sono hon, sensei wa mō () ka ?*
that book teacher SBJ yet question
Have you (read) that book yet?

Sensei : hai.
yes
Yes.

Ageru (give)

Watashi wa imōto ni purezento wo ().
I SBJ my younger sister IDO present DO
I (gave) my younger sister a present.

imōto wa yorokonda.
my younger sister SBJ happy-past
My younger sister was happy.

Finally, some filler questions were used to disguise the purpose of the study and reduce the likelihood that participants would understand its objectives and change their behavior.

3.3 Stimuli

There were two environments and five types of questions: three types of Giving/Receiving verbs and two types of Honorific verbs. These two environments were chosen because these verbs are different from English, and can be difficult for learners. Also, compared to other clues such as particles, these two environments do not create much ambiguity for native speakers in tracking omitted subjects. In other words, native speakers are expected to score almost perfectly in the survey test. Therefore, these two environments were considered suitable for comparison with native speakers.

3.4 Procedure

In the spring semester of 2023, the researcher visited some Japanese classes and one of the weekly English-Japanese language exchange meetings at a university in the Southeastern U.S., explained the purpose of the study, and asked for volunteers to participate in the survey. The

researcher also sent an email to the Japanese program at a university in the Midwestern U.S. to explain the study and recruit participants. Students in the beginner-level Japanese class (i.e., first- and second-year Japanese in the Southeastern university and first year in the Midwestern university) were excluded because they have not learned Honorific verbs, at the time the survey was conducted. To ensure a sufficient number of participants, there were prizes for participation. The researcher gave away \$20 Amazon E-Gift Cards as prizes to three out of each group of participants, for a total of six participants. The participants were informed of the prize during the recruiting process. The researcher also announced that she would provide the results of this survey to the participants if they wish. The volunteers received the *Google form* link and accessed to the online survey individually. At the end, 17 native Japanese speakers and 15 non-native Japanese speakers completed the survey. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and followed the appropriate guidelines (See Appendix A).

3.5 Data Analysis

In the grammatical judgment test, the first category was a question to select a referent of an omitted subject, and it was a multiple-choice question with four options. The researcher determined which were correct and which were incorrect to give them a score. In the Giving/Receiving verb questions, only one option was given as the correct answer and the other three were given as incorrect, since there was little ambiguity in the native speakers. On the other hand, in the questions of Honorific verbs, many native speakers' answers were in agreement, but there was a certain number who chose option three (both) or option four (ambiguous). Because of the relatively high level of ambiguity among native speakers with Honorific verbs, all three options were considered correct, except for one option that was rarely chosen by native speakers.

The researcher gave one point for correct answers and zero points for incorrect answers. Each type had five questions, and each participant were scored their average for each type.

The second category, the knowledge test of two kinds of environments, gave one point for correct answers and zero points for incorrect answers. Each type had two questions, and each participant received their average score for each type.

CHAPTER IV

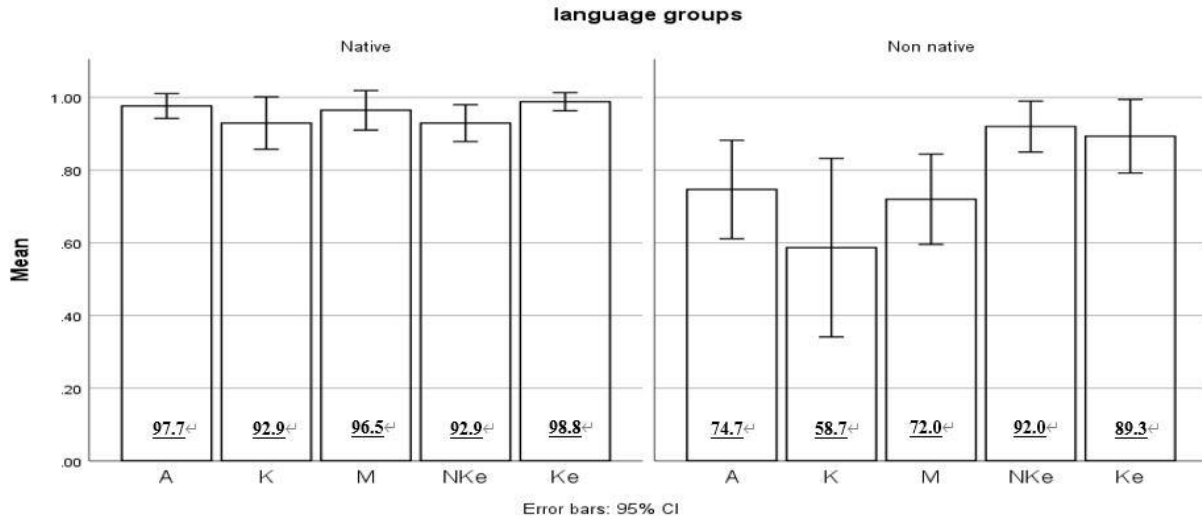
Results

4.1 The difference between native speakers and non-native speakers

A repeated measures ANOVA was performed to compare the average scores in selecting the referent of omitted subjects with all five types: *ageru*, *kureru*, *morau*, *non-keigo*, and *keigo* between native speakers (L1 speakers) and non-native speakers (L2 speakers). The participant's performance across the five types of questions as the dependent variable and the language group as the independent variable. The between-subjects analysis yielded a statistically significant difference across the two groups $F(1,30) = 18.6, p < .001, \eta^2 = .383$. The overall means and standard deviations for accuracy in selecting the referent of omitted subjects between two groups are shown in Graph 1. As evident from the means shows, L1 speakers' scores were higher across all types. The difference in accuracy between the two groups was significant especially in Giving/Receiving verbs (*ageru*, *kureru*, *morau*), but not as great in Honorific verbs (*non-keigo*, *keigo*). Specifically, *kureru* (give) had the largest difference between two groups and also it was the lowest accuracy for both L1 and L2 speakers. On the other hand, *non-keigo* (non-honorifics) had the smallest difference between two groups. It was the highest accuracy for L2 speakers and it was nearly as accurate as for L1 speakers. We can also see that there was a statistically significant difference between *kureru* and *keigo* ($p = .038$) and between *morau* and *keigo* ($p = .038$) in both groups (see Table 3). There was no statistically significant difference across other pairs.

Graph 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Five Types between Both Groups



Note. A for *ageru*, K for *kureru*, M for *morau*, NKe for *non-keigo*, Ke for *keigo*

Table 3

Pairwise Comparison between Types

(I) Types	(J) Types	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
5	1	.079	.035	.326	-.028	.186
	2	.183	.058	.038	.006	.359
	3	.098	.031	.038	.003	.193
	4	.016	.025	1.000	-.060	.093

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Note. 1 for *ageru*, 2 for *kureru*, 3 for *morau*, 4 for *non-keigo*, 5 for *keigo*

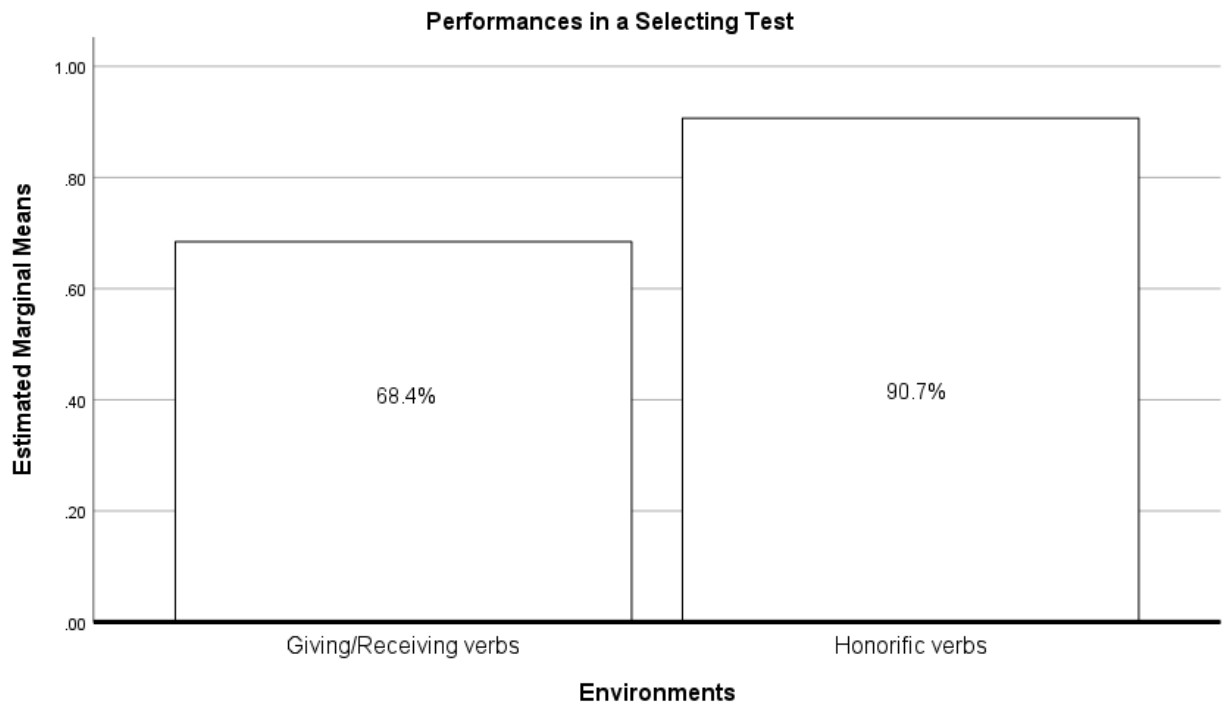
4.2 The differences across the types of environments in non-native speakers

While the difference in means of accuracy between each type (*ageru*, *kureru*, *morau*, *non-keigo*, *keigo*) was small (range = 5.9%) for L1 speakers, it was large for L2 speakers (range = 33.3%). To compare the L2 speakers' performances between the two environments Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs, a one-way ANOVA was run and it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the two environments, $F(1, 28) = 9.93$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .262$. (See Graph 2)

Additional analysis to find out more, a one-way ANOVA was conducted separately, Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs, to determine if there is a difference between types within each environment in L2 speakers. The difference between *ageru*, *kureru*, and *morau* in Giving/Receiving verbs was not statistically significant, $F(2, 42) = 1.08, p = .350$. Also, the difference between *non-keigo* and *keigo* in Honorific verbs was not statistically significant, $F(1, 28) = .215, p = .646$. However, the significance value of the Levene statistic based on a comparison of mean were significant between types in Giving/Receiving verbs ($p = .001$), but not significant between types in Honorific verbs ($p = .721$). Accuracy rates with *kureru* (give) were the lowest (means = 58.7%) and the difference from the highest *non-keigo* (non-honorifics) was large (33.3%). Among Honorific verbs, *keigo* (honorifics) was lower than *non-keigo* (non-honorifics), but the difference was slight (2.7%).

Graph 2

L2's Performances in the Selecting Test across Two Environments

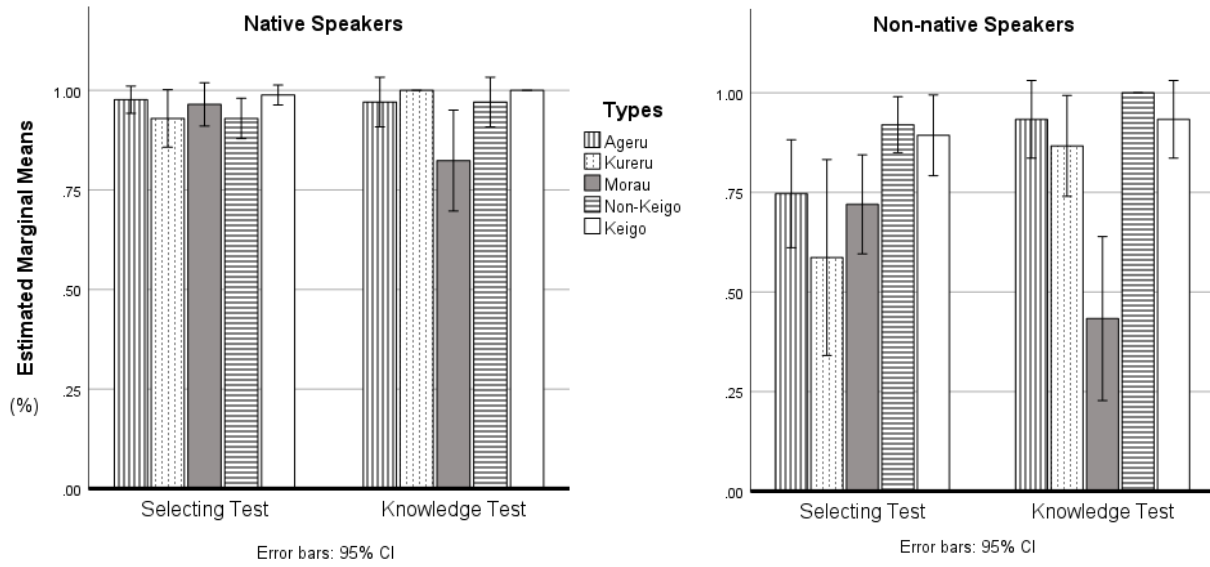


4.3 The correlation between the accuracy in the selecting test and the knowledge of the tested environments of non-native speakers

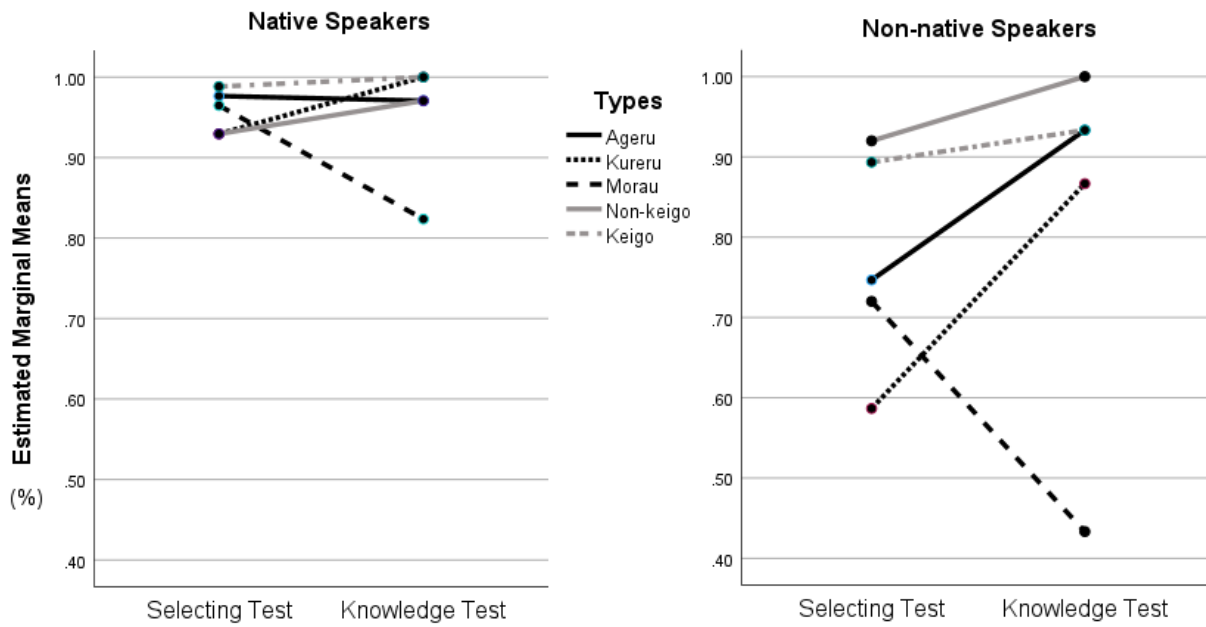
Finally, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the selecting test and the knowledge test. All five types were paired across the selecting test and the knowledge test. First, the within-subjects analysis in L1 speakers yielded no statistically significant difference between the two tests, $F(1,16) = .366$, $p = .554$. $\eta^2 = .022$. Second, the within-subjects analysis in L2 speakers yielded that the difference was trending toward a significant difference between the two tests, $F(1,14) = 4.98$, $p = .043$. $\eta^2 = .262$. Graph 3 and 4 shows means of the test results of each group. They show that the scores in the knowledge test are higher than the scores in the selecting test of non-native speakers.

Finally, to find out the relationship between paired types in the selecting test and the knowledge test for L2 speakers, Spearman's rank correlation was computed. The correlation between paired types across the selecting test and the knowledge test was seen only with the *ageru* (give) verbs, $r_s(13) = .612$, $p < .05$. If we look at the non-paired types, the score for *kureru* in the selecting test and the score for *morau* in knowledge test had a statistically significant, moderate positive correlation, $r_s(13) = .567$, $p < .05$.

Graph 3
Means of the Two Tests in Each Speaker (Bar Chart)



Graph 4
Means of the Two Tests in Each Speaker (Line Chart)



CHAPTER V

Discussion

There was a significant difference between L1 and L2 speakers in the selecting test. Non-native speakers had difficulty in selecting the omitted subject accurately. However, the difference was not substantial for Honorific verbs. Although it is difficult for L2 speakers to use honorifics—to produce honorific sentences by oneself, we can perceive that it is not difficult for them to recognize that honorifics are being used.

It is more certain to say that a difference between the two groups exists not with Honorific verbs but the Giving/Receiving verbs. When the clue was *kureru* (give), the performance of L2 speakers was the lowest across the five types. We can assume that the difficulty of selecting the appropriate referent for the omitted subject with *kureru* type comes from the difficulty of *kureru* usage. *Kureru* was actually the lowest across the five types for L1 speakers as well, but given the percentage of correct answers, it is hard to say that *kureru* confuses L1 speakers. When I asked one of the L1 participants who had made a mistake the reason for their answer in a follow-up session, they realized they had made a mistake and was able to correct their answer, so it was likely a careless mistake. As explained in the early chapters, there is a difference between give in Japanese and give in English. The two types of giving verbs in Japanese could have confused non-native learners. Naito (2016) studied what kind of misuse tendencies English-speaking learners of Japanese show in Giving/Receiving expressions (*ageru*, *kureru*, *morau*), and what they think about Giving/Receiving expressions. According to her, comparing the misuse trends of *ageru*, *kureru*, and *morau*, the correct response rate for *kureru* was the lowest. Also, she found

that the largest number of survey participants considered *kureru* to be difficult, indicating that their awareness of difficulty was reflected in the percentage of accuracy. Hagiwara (2008) also examined L2 learners' knowledge of *te-ageru*, *te-kureru*, and *te-morau* using a grammatical judgment test. The results showed that the distinction between *te-kureru* and *te-morau* was most difficult for all levels of participants. In addition, these data are consistent with my research findings. If we look at the confidence of L2 participants (Table 4), only about 13% were very confident of their answers in the selecting test when they were of the *kureru* type. Since it is highly possible that many of L2 speakers happened to answer correctly, the difference between them and L1 speakers who answered confidently is actually even larger.

Table 4
Results about Participants' Confidence in the Selecting Test

	very sure and somewhat sure		very sure	
	L1 %	L2 %	L1 %	L2 %
<i>ageru</i>	100.0	85.7	100.0	50.0
<i>kureru</i>	94.1	86.6	82.4	13.3
<i>morau</i>	94.1	80.0	88.2	53.3
<i>non-keigo</i>	82.3	66.7	52.9	26.7
<i>keigo</i>	82.4	86.7	76.5	40.0

From the results of the data analysis, we did not find a strong correlation between the selecting test and the knowledge test in both groups. The correct percentage of knowledge test was basically higher than the selecting test. Even in *kureru*, we can see that most L2 speakers showed that they know when to use as a knowledge even though their score in the selecting test was low. Only the score of *morau* in the knowledge test was by far lower compared to those of *ageru* and *kureru*. Also, *morau* had uniformity in the relationship between the selecting test and the knowledge test across both language groups. In both groups, the performance of the knowledge test was much lower than the selecting test. These seemed to be an imbalance

between the selecting test and the knowledge test, but notable responses were found in the knowledge test for *morau*. Data analysis did not reveal a correlation between the selecting test and the knowledge test for *kureru*, but 33% of L2 speakers incorrectly selected *kureru* instead of *morau* in the knowledge test. Since many L2 participants mistakenly answered *kureru* in the knowledge test of *morau*, we compared the *kureru* in the selecting test and *morau* in the knowledge test and there was a statistically significant correlation between them. This shows that their knowledge of *kureru* is also poor and there is a relationship between the accuracy in retrieving subjects and the knowledge in this type. The low L1 score was likely attributable to careless errors since all those who made mistakes made mistakes only on the same one of the two questions. That question was pragmatic, which required a proper reading of the second sentence to lead to the correct answer. However, the L2 speaker made a mistake in both questions, which cannot be said to be careless.

A follow-up interview with one of the L2 participants also revealed that it takes time to recall the use of *kureru* and reach the correct answer. Therefore, it can be said that incomplete knowledge caused the low accuracy in the selecting test. The use of Giving/Receiving verbs shows a semantic concept called deixis and requires a great deal of contextualization (Tsujiura, 1996). It means this requires us to follow the speaker's viewpoint correctly but this seemed to be the most challenging for L2 speakers.

Surprisingly, L2 speakers did better than we expected with elided subjects accompanied by Honorific verbs. Both groups did well on the Honorific verbs, showing that honorific verbs help listeners/readers to track the referent of the omitted subject correctly. From the follow up questions about the survey, it was found that L1 speakers who chose both or ambiguous options for *keigo* questions in the environment of Honorific verbs did not use the clues of verb forms

very much. One of the participants said they used their experience and intuition rather than paying attention to the form of verbs. As expected, they also pointed out that since the conversation was between friends, and the teacher was not present, the speaker may have been referring to the teacher, although they used non-honorific verbs. The reason of relatively not high score in *non-keigo* (non-honorific) type in the selecting test among L1 speakers must be caused not by difficulty or confusion, but by practical ambiguity based on their actual experience and intuition. From the data of the language background questions, no language background information was found that could have clearly influenced the scores. The only thing that was rather clear among L2 speakers was that the scores of the 400-level class participants (88.4%) were better than those of the 200-level class participants (77.2%).

The study found that for some grammars, deep understanding can be assessed once the omitted subject selecting test is administered. Instructors may want to administer an omitted subject selecting test at the end of some grammar lessons to see if their learners can really use the grammar knowledge learned to track referents of omitted subjects correctly.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

From the survey, we can first say that L2 speakers cannot track the omitted subject as accurate as L1 speakers. The Giving/Receiving verbs were the hardest environment in selecting the subject compared to the Honorific verbs mainly because one of the verbs, *kureru* (give) confuses English speakers to detect the agent and the patient in a sentence. Having deep knowledge and understanding of the usage of verbs is necessary for retrieving the omitted subject correctly.

For the learners who lack the experience using subject ellipsis or intuition in Japanese language, the most important thing to rely on when identifying the referent of omitted subjects is the surrounding environment that provides clues such as grammar and meaning. Therefore, it is critical to clarify how these identifications are made in order to provide effective instruction. When tracking omitted subjects, learners need to take three steps. First, they must understand that the subject is omitted; second, they must identify the clue; and then they must use that clue to find what the omitted subject refers to. These steps are processed unconsciously by native speakers but not by non-native speakers. Learners need to understand what grammatical information will provide clues to properly find the missing subject. Therefore, instructors need to mention which grammatical knowledge will help them find the omitted subject.

In particular, this study looked into predicates as clues: Giving/Receiving verbs and Honorific verbs. These reflect the speaker's point of view and could be said that they are a

reflection of Japanese culture, and though they are unfamiliar to learners, they are important. This survey shows that the learners are well educated in Honorific verbs, but their knowledge of Giving/Receiving verbs, which they should have already learned, is not fully established. Considering that knowledge of Giving/Receiving verbs is utilized in the tracking of omitted subjects, the need for more in-depth knowledge retention cannot be dismissed. L2 speakers can certainly benefit from knowing their usage not only for speaking but also listening and tracking the referents of omitted subjects.

6.2 Limitations

There are some limitations of this study I should point out. First, the number of the participants was small and it was conducted only in the United States. Most native participants were the same generation and all non-native participants were English speakers. Therefore, I should admit that the participant pool was relatively lacking in diversity. It was not possible to determine which first language speakers had the highest percentage of correct responses. It would be more interesting to see how diverse non-native speakers choose the referents of omitted subjects in order to determine whether differences between English and Japanese are the actual cause of subject ellipsis difficulties. Future research could reveal differences in results due to variations in learners such as first languages or gender, or learners' proficiency level in Japanese.

In terms of the survey questions, the environment of Giving/Receiving verbs did not include the questions that ask them to consider the relationship between speaker, listener, and the third person. All they had to consider was presence among equal relationships which is friend. The result would be dramatically different if the relationship was more complicated such as the third person belonging to the speaker's family. In that case, the third person will be the speaker's

in-group member and the verb to be chosen would be different because relation dictates the speaker's point of view instead of presence. This should be more challenging for L2 speakers. Therefore, the further research is needed to clarify the learners' more specific difficulties in giving and receiving verbs.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A. Informed Consent Submitted to IRB

Informed Consent

TITLE OF STUDY

Subject Ellipsis in Japanese

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

[Name] Akiko Murakami

[Department] Modern Languages

[Email] amuraka1@go.olemiss.edu

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out how to determine the omitted subject in Japanese conversations and sentences.

STUDY PROCEDURES

I will ask you to answer the questions online. There are 40 questions. It will take about 30 minutes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the purposes of this research study, your answers will be anonymous. I will preserve your confidentiality by keeping survey information in a locked file on my computer. It will be kept until the end of June 2023 and destroyed by the end of June 2023. I am the only person with access to your information.

RISKS and BENEFITS

I do not think that there are any risks. 3 winners will be drawn from the 20 participants and will receive a \$20 Amazon E-gift card as a prize. Also, I can provide you with the results of this survey if you wish.

IRB APPROVAL

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect anything.

By checking this box I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B. Survey

B-1. Language Background Questions

【native speakers】

- 1 School name
- 2 What is/was your major?
- 3 Email
- 4 What is your first language?
- 5 What languages do you speak besides Japanese?
- 6 How long have you lived in Japan? From birth?
- 7 How long have you stayed in the U.S. in total?
- 8 Which dialect do you speak in Japanese?

【non-native speakers】

- 1 School name
- 2 What is/was your major?
- 3 Email
- 4 What is your first language?
- 5 What languages do you speak besides English and Japanese?
- 6 How long have you stayed in Japan?
- 7 Have you stayed in a non-English speaking country, excluding Japan?
- 8 Which Japanese class are you currently taking / which was the last Japanese class you took?
- 9 What do you think your level is on the JLPT (Japanese-Language Proficiency Test)?

B-2. Grammatical Judgement Test

【Selecting Test】

Read the conversation or the sentence and choose the subject of the underlined verb.

The subject is the agent who is doing the action.

You can also choose one or more agents.

※Taro, Hanako, John, and Rachel are college friends.

In the actual survey to non-native speakers, there was just romanization but no English gloss-translation or translation.

Questions are arranged by category.

Ageru

21

Taro : *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.

Hanako: *ogotte-ageta no?*
treat give-past
(Did you) treat him?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

What is the grammatical subject (agent) of *ogotte-ageta*?

- Taro
 John
 Taro and John
 Ambiguous Taro or John (※Questions and choices are omitted below.)

How would you rate the confidence of your answer to 21?

- Very sure
 Somewhat sure
 Slightly not sure
 Not sure at all (※Choices are omitted below.)

7

Taro : *toshokan de Rachel to benkyō shita yo.*
library -at Rachel -with study do-past emphasis
(I) studied with Rachel at a library.

Hanako: *benkyō, oshiete-ageta no?*
study teach give-past
(Did you) teach (her)?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

18

Taro : *John to ie de hirugohan tabeta yo.*
John -with home -at lunch eat-past emphasis
(I) ate lunch with John at home.

Hanako: *gohan tsukutte-ageta no?*
food make give-past
(Did you) make food (for him)?

Taro : *un, pasuta.*
yes pasta
Yes, pasta.

28

Taro : *kinō, Rachel ni atta yo.*
yesterday, Rachel OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met Rachel yesterday.

Hanako: *tanjōbi purezento, ageta?*
birthday present, give-past
(Did you) give (her) a birthday present?

Taro : *un, hon wo.*
yes book OBJ
Yes, a book.

3

Taro : *John ni atta yo.*
John OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met John yesterday.

Hanako: *Kyoto no omiyage, ageta?*
Kyoto GEN souvenir give-past
(Did you) give (him) souvenir from Kyoto?

Taro : *un, okashi wo.*
yes snacks OBJ
Yes, snacks.

Kureru

10

Taro : *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.

Hanako: *ogotte-kureta no?*
treat give-past
(Did he) treat you?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

26

Taro : *toshokan de Rachel to benkyō shita yo.*
Library -at Rachel -with study do-past emphasis
(I) studied with Rachel at a library.

Hanako: *benkyō, oshiete-kureta no?*
study teach give-past
(Did she) teach (you)?

Taro : *un.*
yes.
Yes.

How would you rate the confidence of your answer to 26?

27

Taro : *John to ie de hirugohan tabeta yo.*
John -with home -at lunch eat-past emphasis
I ate lunch with John at home.

Hanako: *gohan tsukutte-kureta no?*
food make give-past
(Did he) make food (for you)?

Taro : *un, pasuta.*
yes pasta
Yes, pasta.

19

Taro : *kinō, Rachel ni atta yo.*
yesterday Rachel OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) saw Rachel yesterday.

Hanako: *tanjōbi purezento, kureta?*
birthday present give-past
(Did she) give (you) a birthday present?

Taro : *un, hon wo.*
yes book OBJ
Yes, a book.

16

Taro : *John ni atta yo.*
John OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) saw John yesterday.

Hanako : *Kyoto no omiyage, kureta?*
Kyoto GEN souvenir give-past
(Did he) give (you) a souvenir from Kyoto?

Taro : *un, okashi wo.*
yes snacks OBJ
Yes, snacks.

Morau

1

Taro : *John to resutoran ni itta yo.*
John -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with John.

Hanako: *ogotte-moratta no?*
treat give-past
(Did you) get him to treat you?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

24

Taro : *toshokan de Rachel to benkyō shita yo.*
library -at Rachel -with study do-past emphasis
(I) studied with Rachel at a library.

Hanako: *benkyō, oshiete-moratta no?*
study teach receive-past
(Were you) taught?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

8

Taro : *John to ie de hirugohan tabeta yo.*
John -with home -at lunch eat-past emphasis
(I) ate lunch with John at home.

Hanako: *gohan tsukutte-moratta no?*
food make receive-past
(Did you have him) cook food (for you)?

Taro : *un, pasuta.*
yes pasta
Yes, pasta.

6

Taro : *kinō, Rachel ni atta yo.*
yesterday Rachel OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met Rachel yesterday.

Hanako: *tanjōbi purezento, moratta?*
birthday present receive-past
(Did you) get/receive a birthday present?

Taro : *un, hon wo.*
yes a book OBJ
Yes, a book.

How would you rate the confidence of your answer to 6?

17

Taro : *John ni atta yo.*
John OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) saw John yesterday.

Hanako: *Kyoto no omiyage, moratta?*
Kyoto GEN souvenir receive-past
(Did you) get/receive a souvenir from Kyoto?

Taro : *un, okashi wo.*
yes snacks OBJ
Yes, snacks.

Non-Keigo

11

Taro : *kinō, sensei to bā ni ittayo.*
yesterday, teacher -with bar -to go-past
Yesterday, (I) went to a bar with the teacher.

Hanako: *e iina. nani, nonda?*
ah jealous what drink-past?
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did you/he/she) drink?

Taro : *bīru wo sukoshi.*
beer OBJ a few
(I/He/She) had a few beers.

4

Taro : *kinō, sensei to resutoran ni itta yo.*
yesterday sensei -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to a restaurant with the teacher.

Hanako: *e iina. nani, tabeta?*
ah jealous what eat-past?
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did you/he/she) eat?

Taro : *hanbāgu.*
hamburg steak
Hamburg steak.

30

Taro : *konsāto de sensei wo mikaketa yo.*
concert -at teacher OBJ see-past emphasis
(I) saw the teacher at the concert.

Hanako: *doko ni suwatta ?*
where -at sit-past
Where (did you/he/she) sit?

Taro : *mae no ho.*
front GEN area
In the front.

How would you rate the confidence of your answer to 30?

5

Taro : *sensei to karaoke ni itta yo.*
teacher -with karaoke -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to karaoke with the teacher.

Hanako: *e iina. nani, utatta?*
ah jealous what sing-past?
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did you/he/she) sing?

Taro : *hayari no uta toka.*
popular GEN song etc
Some popular songs.

22

Taro : *pāti de sensei ni atta yo.*
party -at teacher OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met the teacher at the party.

Hanako: *nanji ni kita no?*
what time -at come-past
What time (did you/he/she) come?

Taro : *yoji goro.*
four around
At around 4.

Keigo

15

Taro : *kinō sensei to bā ni itta yo.*
yesterday, teacher -with bar -to go-past emphasis
Yesterday, (I) went to a bar with the teacher.

Hanako: *he nani o-nomi-ni-natta?*
ah what drink-past (honorifics)?
Ah. What (did he/she) drink?

Taro : *bīru wo sukoshi.*
beer OBJ a few
A few beers.

How would you rate the confidence of your answer to 15?

13

Taro : *kinō, sensei to resutoran ni itta yo.*
yesterday, teacher -with restaurant -to go-past emphasis
Yesterday, (I) went to a restaurant with the teacher.

Hanako: *e iina. nani, meshiagatta?*
ah jealous what eat-past (honorifics)
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did he/she) eat?

Taro : *hanbāgu.*
hamburg steak
Hamburg steak.

12

Taro : *konsāto de sensei wo mikaketa yo.*
concert -at teacher OBJ see-past emphasis
(I) saw the teacher at the concert.

Hanako: *doko ni o-suwari-ni-natta?*
where -at sit-past (honorifics)
Where (did you/he/she) sit?

Taro : *mae no ho.*
front GEN area
In the front.

2

Taro : *sensei to karaoke ni itta yo.*
teacher -with karaoke -to go-past emphasis
(I) went to karaoke with the teacher.

Hanako: *e iina. nani, o-utai-ni-natta?*
ah jealous what sing-past (honorifics)
Oh, I'm jealous. What (did he/she) sing?

Taro : *hayari no uta toka.*
popular GEN song etc
Some popular songs.

25

Taro : *pāti de sensei ni atta yo.*
party -at teacher OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met the teacher at the party.

Hanako: *nanji ni irasshatta no?*
what time -at come-past (honorifics)
What time (did he/she) come?

Taro : *yoji goro.*
four around
At around 4.

【Knowledge Test】

Please read the sentence and choose the word that fits in the blanks.

Ageru

31

watashi wa otōto no shukudai wo tetsudatte-().

I SBJ my younger brother POSS homework OBJ help
I helped my younger brother with his homework.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

36

watashi wa imōto ni purezento wo ().

I SBJ younger sister IDO present DO
I gave my younger sister a present.

imōto wa yorokonda.
my younger sister SBJ happy-past
My younger sister was happy.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

Kureru

39

chichi ga watashi no shukudai wo tetsudatte-().
my father SBJ I POSS homework OBJ help
My father helped me with my homework.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

40

ane ga watashi ni purezento wo ().
my older sister SBJ I IDO present DO
My older sister gave me a present.

ureshi-katta.

happy-past
(I was) happy.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

Morau

37

ani ni shukudai wo tetsudatte-().
my older brother -from homework DO help
(I) had my older brother help me with my homework.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

34

watashi wa musuko ni purezento wo ().
I SBJ my son -from present DO
I got/received a present from my son.

ureshi-katta.

happy-past
(I was) happy.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *ageta/kureta/moratta* ?

Non-Keigo

35

Hanako : *Taro wa mō () ka?*
Taro SBJ yet question
Did Taro go home yet?

Sensei : *hai.*
yes
Yes.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *kaeri-mashita/o-kaeri-ni-nari-mashita* ?

38

Hanako : *sono hon, Taro wa mō* () *ka?*
that book Taro SBJ yet question
Has Taro read that book yet?

Sensei : *hai.*
yes.
Yes.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *yomi-mashita/o-yomi-ni-narimashita* ?

Keigo

32

Hanako : *sensei wa mō* () *ka?*
teacher SBJ yet question
Did you go home yet?

Sensei : *hai.*
yes
Yes.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *kaeri-mashita/o-kaeri-ni-nari-mashita*?

33

Hanako : *sono hon, sensei wa mō* () *ka ?*
that book teacher SBJ yet question
Have you read that book yet?

Sensei : *hai.*
yes
Yes.

Which is appropriate to fill in the blank? *yomi-mashita/o-yomi-ni-nari-mashita* ?

【Filler Questions】

9

Taro : *kinō, Rachel ni atta yo.*
yesterday Rachel OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met Rachel yesterday.

Hanko: *doko de atta no?*
Where -at meet-past
Where (did you) meet?

Taro : *eki de.*
station -at
At the station.

What is the grammatical subject (agent) of *atta*?

14

Taro : *kinō, sensei ni atta yo.*
yesterday teacher OBJ meet-past emphasis
(I) met the teacher yesterday.

Hanko : *doko de atta no?*
Where -at meet-past
Where (did you) meet?

Taro : *eki de.*
station -at
At the station.

What is the grammatical subject (agent) of atta?

20

Taro : *John kara manga wo katta yo.*
John -from comic book OBJ buy-past emphasis
(I) bought a comic from John.

Hanako: *John kara katta no?*
John -from buy-past
(Did you) buy a comic book from John?

Taro : *un.*
yes.
Yes.

What is the grammatical subject(agent) of katta?

23

Taro : *John ni manga wo utta yo.*
John IDO comic book DO sell-past emphasis
(I) sold John a comic book.

Hanako: *John ga katta no?*
John SBJ buy-past
Did John buy it?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

What is the grammatical subject (agent) of katta?

29

Taro : *John ni manga wo utta yo.*
John IDO comic book DO sell-past emphasis
(I) sold John a comic book.

Hanako: John ni utta no?
John OBJ sell-past
(Did you) sell it to John?

Taro : *un.*
yes
Yes.

What is the grammatical subject (agent) of utta?

VITA

Akiko Murakami was born and raised in Kumamoto, Japan. After high school, she attended Kumamoto University and received a Bachelor of Elementary School Teacher Curriculum. During her studies, she spent nine months at University of the Pacific in California.

After graduation, she worked as an English teacher at public junior high schools in Kumamoto for 6 years. Later, she taught at an English conversation school in Kumamoto and a Japanese preschool in Ohio, U.S. She also worked as an administrative staff at an English Learning Center of a private university in Kumamoto, supporting English teachers and students.

At the University of Mississippi, she majored in Applied Linguistics and TESOL. At the same time, she taught Japanese and arithmetic to elementary school students at a Japanese supplementary school.