A Research on Elliptical Phenomena in Spoken Japanese
A Perspective from dialogue corpus

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1. Introduction

Colloquial language often differs from what it is assumed to be in a grammar book. People talk in their daily life using many types of ellipsis; in this report I am going to focus on elliptical phenomena of postpositional particles in Japanese, especially o, to see how ellipsis works in the language of Japan.

In Japanese, postpositional particles determine the case of each preceding noun. Shibatani (1990) argues "[…] the case-marking system, realized in terms of postpositional particles, follows the nominative-accusative pattern, with the subjects of both transitive and intransitive clauses being marked by the particle ga, and the object of a transitive clause by o" (Shibatani 1990:258). Examples will be as follows:

(1) Watashi-ga ringo-o tabeta.
    I-NOM   apple-AKK ate.
    "I ate an apple."
(2) Watashi-no ringo-ha akai.
    I-GEN   apple-NOM red
    "My apple is red"

In this term paper I am going refer to the particle o. This particle only represents accusative case, whereas others often have multipul uses of cases. In this sense, choosing the particle o will lead to a lower possibility of confusing the independent variable with the dependent variable. For example, the particle wa is semantically used as topicalisation, thus it can indicate nominative as well as accusative case. Concerning wa Iwasaki (2013) argues "When the topic overlaps with a nominative or accusative noun phrase (and sometimes a dative noun phrase), the topic marking particle replaces these case particles. The most typical particle in this group is (typical/thematic) wa" (Iwasaki 2013:66-67).

Given the accusative usage of syntax, the particle o is semantically provided with a couple of senses in dictionaries written in Japanese. One dictionary defines it as a postpositional particle affecting following objects: (1) object of an action, (2) place or time a subject passes, (3) starting point, and (4) result of an action (Sakakura 2004, "wo", p. 1307).

2. Preceding studies

In his paper aiming for arguing for the relativisation of the uses in spoken Japanese, Ono (2011) proposes two theses: (1) postpositional particles ga and o do not exist underlyingly in modern spoken Japanese, and (2) these particles are added for pragmatic reasons. Similarly, Maruyama (1996) presupposes that the inexistence of particles in Japanese has its sense, and a speaker (or writer) uses it trying to communicate effectively. In fact, she argues that any two of the following sentences are not semantically interchangeable:

(3) Hasami aru?
    Scissors exist
    "Do you have (a pair of) scissors?"
(4) Hasami-ha aru?
    Scissors-NOM exist
    "Do you have (a pair of) scissors?"
(5) Hasami-ga aru?
    Scissors-NOM exist
    "Do you have (a pair of) scissors?"

Both studies assume that the existence and absence of Japanese particles are two different things and each of them has its pragmatic meaning.

Unlike these studies, Kariyado (2012) differentiates two types of omission, namely (1) sentences with ellipsis of particles and (2) non-particle sentences (or mujoshi-bun expressed in Japanese). According to this author, in the former type of sentences the existence/absence do not affect the meaning of the sentence. However, in the latter type of sentences the existence/absence make different meanings of it. After defining this, she viewed discourse data from small talks in Japanese and checked o-omitted instances. She draws a conclusion that the non-particle sentences occur only when all the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) The target noun (phrase) appears in a group equivalent to a main clause.
(2) The target noun (phrase) appears at the head of the sentence.
(3) The target noun (phrase) is a definite noun.

3. Data

In this section, we are going to see some instances in which a the speaker utters the postpositional particle o, or in which he or she doesn't pronounce it even if they are supposed to in terms of prescriptive grammar model. The 41 following cases are all the instances under these conditions found in Keio Corpus 2015, which consists of files named "baito copy," "chuukagai," "dinner_w_friends," "daughnut_half," "Kyushoku copy," and "Shingeki no

kyojin short copy." Each number after the sentences indicates the line in each file, and the underlines are added by the author.

The settings and genres of each discourse datum are, as far as I can access, as follow: (1) baito copy: unknown, (2) Chukagai: SETTING: They are eating ice cream after dinner. GENRE: Casual conversation between husband and wife, (3) dinner_w_friends: SETTING: We were having dinner in Sunday evening. GENRE: Casual conversation between old university friends. SPEAKERS: H(22F: Student), N(22F:company employee), R(22F:company employee), Y(F22: company employee), (4) doughnut_half: SETTING: At the beginning of the conversation, they are choosing a doughnut to eat. In the large part ofthis interaction, F explains his wife Y to D. GENRE: Casual conversation among 4 people SPEAKERS: F(30M: lecturer, Y's husband), Y(30F: company employee, F's wife), H(30M: lecturer), D(27F: graduate student), (5) Kyushoku: SETTING: They are having snacks in the evening, GENRE: Casual conversation between mother and children, SPEAKERS: K(51F: school nutritionist), R(23F: student), S(21M: student), (6) shingeki no kyojin short copy: SETTING: sipping coffee after dinner GENRE: casual conversation between mother and son. They are talking about a movie titled "shingeki no kyojin" and actors in the work. SPEAKERS: Y(22M: graduate student), C(55F: housewife).

   baito copy
1. "baito o shinakereba naranai" (7)
2. "ippon no biiru o nondaea sonomama nete" (70)
   chuukagai
3. "nanika o kanjiru" (4)
4. "michi   machigae chatta" (14)
5. "kakushin o motte" (18)
6. "magatta no   oboeteru no" (31)
7. "chuukagai no hanashi   shite n no?" (67)
    dinner_w_friends
8. "tomodaore   shichau jan" (3)
9. "seeron   iwareru to" (52)
   daughnut_half
10. "gizajuu   mukashi motteta" (13)
11. "ana no aite nai goen dama   kureta ja nai" (26)
12. "betsuni suki na no   erabe ba" (82)
13. "junban o tsukeru nde" (89)
14. "nanban ga ii ka   itte kudasai" (90)
15. "denshi   motteru rashii" (158)   *"denchi" assumably
16. "chotto matte kono futa   sagashi teru" (168)
17. "nani   shiten no?" (198)

18. "nani   shiten no?" (199)

19. "kore   tabenai to ne" (227)

20. "azabujuuban   tootte kuru kara" (245)

21. "abura de ageteru mono o sara ni rasuku ni suru tte yuu" (278)

22. "mochotto shiin o ioo?" (381)

23. "shiin o" (382)

24. "kuramotosan tsykemen   tabeta ko desho?" (475-476)

25. "hajimete kiita sore   " (516)

26. "hamanokun ni yoyaku o torinasai tte boku wa zu=tto iitsuzuketeru wake." (578)

27. "yoyaku o torinasai tte yuu kedo" (582)

28. "kimochi o datte soko ni mukete ikanai to ikenai" (613)

29. "yotee   irerare nai ja nai desu ka" (632)

30. "iya iya chanto shirabeta kara kore   " (678)

31. "monosugoi kubi o tateni futte te" (744)

32. "kaomoji dake   tsukau tte koto wa nai yo ne? tte yuu" (798)

33. "dare datta ka   oboete nai kedo" (803)

34. "shuukun wa sore o yatte mai" (808-809)

35. "yoshihara ni tsumerareru tte yu koto o mo nando ka mokugeki shite n da kedo" (811)
    Kyushoku copy

36. "dono sara ni nani   mottara ii no ka wakannai kara" (22)

37. "dono sara   tsukau ka toka sugoi mome- momeru=" (28-29)

38. "doko ni nani   irete kure temo" (36)

39. "doko ni nani   irete mo ii to omou n da kedo ma" (38)

40. "chuutohanpa na koto   yuu to mata are nanja nai no" (45)
    Shingeki no kyojin short copy

41. "sono kiree= dokoro o dase ba= ninki ga deru yo mitaina" (50-51)

4. **Discussions**

In this section I am going to argue two theses considering the data presented above. First, I will argue that in many cases, as far as I can see, elliptical phenomena caused by firm motivations are rather rare, implying that Ono (2011) and Maruyama (1996) have some definition problems. Second, I will propose a new condition that causes an o-ellipsis. For the purpose of this paper I will follow the distinction suggested by Kariyado (2012), between (1) sentences with ellipsis of particles and (2) non-particle sentences.

      The two studies that I cited above, Ono (2011) and Maruyama (1996), both unconditionally assume that the existence and absence of Japanese particles are two different things and do have pragmatic meanings. In this sense, the definition by Kariyado (2012) will be convenient. According to it, I classified 28 out of the whole 41 instances as (1) sentences with ellipsis of particles, and the other 13 instances as (2) non-particle sentences.

Examples of (1) sentences with ellipsis of particles are as follows:

(6) 11. "ana no aite nai goen dama   kureta ja nai" (26)
        "You gave me a coin of 5 yen without a hole on it, you know.
    (7) 13. "junban o tsukeru nde" (89)
          "I'll give them an order."

In this type of sentences, the choice of the particle o is up to the speaker, and the two possible sentences make no difference (All the entries of this type are: No.1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 of the data.). They require no or little motivation for particle choice.
On the other hand, examples of (2) non-particle sentences are these:

(8) 17. "nani   shiten no?" (198)
    "What are you doing?"
(9) 21. "abura de ageteru mono o sara ni rasuku ni suru tte yuu" (278)
    "Making rusk out of something that is already fried with oil,"

If (8) was accompanied with an o then it would sound strange because the sentence as a whole is highly conventionalaized in colloquial expressions. Actually the sentence is pronounced in a sequence. These examples show that some elliptical sentences are motivated. (All the entries of this type are: No. 4, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 30, 31, and 33 of the data.) In sum, as we can see, there are some conditions for a sentence to be motivated non-particle sentences, and in addition, one cannot say that these type of senteces are typical in number.
As a second characteristic we can see these examples:

25. "hajimete kiita sore   " (516)
    "I never heard that."
30. "iya iya chanto shirabeta kara kore   " (678)
        "No, no, I checked this out myself."

These are classified as (2) the non-particle sentences. The important feture here is that the direct objects (namely sore and kore) are inverted with the subjects. The direct objects in this structure have to come at the end of the sentence, and it seems reasonable to infer that if the direct object which was otherwise accompanied with an o postparticle comes at the end of the sentence, it is omitted. This last implication argues against the conclusion drawn by Kariyado (2012), in that the target noun doesn't have to appear at the head of the sentence.

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