Ellipsis of SAY, THINK, and DO in Japanese subordinate clauses: A constructional analysis

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Abstract

This paper addresses some Japanese constructions where the predicate heading a subordinate clause – specifically, a suspensive form of IU ‘say’, OMOU ‘think’, or SURU ‘do’ – appears to be elided. I will discuss that these elliptic constructions are subject to certain syntactic and interpretative constraints which do not apply to their non-elliptic counterparts, and develop an SBCG-analysis that aims to model these constraints without postulating a covert element in the place of the missing verb.

1 Introduction

This paper discusses the Japanese constructions exemplified with (1a), (2a), and (3a), which appear to involve “omission” of the predicate heading a subordinate clause. The missing predicate can be “recovered” as a suspensive form (i.e., the gerund or infinitive form) of the lexemes: IU ‘say’, OMOU ‘think’, or SURU ‘do’, as in (1b,c), (2b,c), and (3b).1

1) SAY-ellipsis construction
Ken-ga [‘Ohayoo’ to {a. ∅ / b. itte / c. ii}] haitte kita.
K.-Nom good.morning Quot {∅ / say.Ger / say.Inf} enter.Ger come.Pst
‘Ken came in, (saying) “Good morning”.’

2) THINK-ellipsis construction
Ken-wa [‘Masaka’ to {a. ∅ / b. omotte / c. omoi}] furikaetta.
K.-Top no.way Quot {∅ / think.Ger / think.Inf} look.back.Pst
‘Ken looked back, (thinking to himself) “No way”.’

3) DO-ellipsis construction
Ken-wa [akanboo-o se-ni {a. ∅ / b. shite}] atari-o shibaraku
K.-Top baby-Acc back-Dat {∅ / do.Ger} vicinity-Acc for.a.while
stroll.Pst
‘Ken strolled around for a while, (carrying) the baby on his back.’

The existence of these constructions has long been acknowledged. Previous studies of the SAY- and THINK-ellipsis constructions, which I group as the QV-ellipsis construction (QV = quotative verb), include Fujita (2000), Oshima and Sano (2012), Oshima (2013), and Kim (2013). Previous studies of the DO-ellipsis construction include Muraki (1983), Teramura (1983), and Dubinsky and Hamano (2003).

1The abbreviations used in glosses are: Acc = accusative, Adv = adverb marker, Asp = aspectual auxiliary, Ben = benefactive auxiliary, Caus = causative, Dat = dative, DP = discourse particle, Gen = genitive, Ger = gerund, Inf = infinitive, Ipfv = imperfective auxiliary, Loc = location, Neg = negation, Nom = nominative, Plt = polite, Psv = passive, Prs = present, Pst = past, Quot = quotative particle, Top = topic.
The constructions in question do not involve the canonical kind of ellipsis, such as the English VP-ellipsis illustrated in (4), where (i) the missing element is semantically recovered with the aid of contextual cues, and (ii) the elliptic and non-elliptic versions are semantically equivalent.

(4)  A: Has John left?
    B: No, he hasn’t {left/∅}.

Rather, they are reminiscent of the English construction which Fillmore et al. (2012) refer to as the adjective-as-nominal Human construction:

(5)  The rich exploit the poor, and the poor exploit the poorer.

Even without contextual information, the “nounless” NPs in (5) can be interpreted as referring to humans. Furthermore, they are not semantically equivalent to their “headed” counterparts, in that they receive the generic interpretation; note that (5) is more properly paraphrased as “Rich people exploit poor people, . . .”, than as “The rich people exploit the poor people, . . .”.

My analysis to be proposed below is similar to the one proposed by Lyons (1991) for the nounless NP construction, which in spirit is “constructionalist”, as well as to those proposed by Fillmore et al. (2012: 357–360) and Arnold and Spencer (2015 (this volume)), which are explicitly so. (6) illustrates the interpretative rule proposed by Lyons (1991).

(6)  Lyons’ (1991) “Adjective Head Rule” (with some adaptations)
    a. The sequence of the form: [the + Adj.] may constitute a plural NP referring to humans.
    b. If the adjective is [−nationality], then the NP obligatorily receives the generic interpretation. If the adjective is [+nationality], then the NP optionally receives the generic interpretation.

2 Background: Basic facts about the infinitive and gerund clause constructions

The suspensive clause construction (Susp-Cx), which subsumes the infinitive and gerund clause constructions (Inf-Cx and Ger-Cx), refers to a hypotactic structure where the subordinate clause is headed by a predicate in its infinitive form (ren’yoo form) or gerund form (te-form).

In the literature, the Susp-Cx has often been considered to semantically convey only the logical conjunction of the two component clauses, on a par with the English and-coordination structure (e.g., Fukushima 1999; Lee and Tonhauser 2010). This view, however, does not hold scrutiny; if the Inf-Cx and Ger-Cx merely represent logical conjunction, then (7b) is expected not to be pragmatically odd, like
the English sentence provided to illustrate its intended interpretation.²

(7)  

a. Hiroshi-wa man’nenhitsu-o Ginza-no depaato-de
    H.-Top fountain.pen-Acc G.-Gen department.store-Loc
    {kai/katte}, sono man’nenhitsu-o chichioya-ni purezento-shita.
    buy.Inf/buy.Ger that fountain.pen-Acc father-Dat present.Pst
    ‘Hiroshi bought a fountain pen at a department store in Ginza, and he
gave it to his father.’

b. #Hiroshi-wa chichioya-ni man’nenhitsu-o purezento-shi(te), sono
    H.-Top father-Dat fountain.pen-Acc present.Inf(Ger) that
    man’nenhitsu-o Ginza-no depaato-de katta.
    fountain.pen-Acc G.-Gen department.store-Loc buy.Pst
    (Hiroshi {gave/will give} his father a fountain pen, and he bought it at a
department store in Ginza.)

Based on such observations, in Oshima (2012) I argued that the Inf-Cx and Ger-Cx have multiple meanings, all of which are more specific than mere logical
conjunction, and accordingly postulated three constructs in the SBCG (Sign-Based
Construction Grammar) sense.

The Inf-Cx and Ger-Cx may convey either (i) that the eventuality described
in the subordinate clause (E₁) temporally precedes or coincides with the one
described in the main clause (E₂), or (ii) that the propositions described by the two
clauses stand in the rhetorical relation of contrast. Furthermore, the Ger-Cx, but
not the Inf-Cx, has a third interpretation where the resulting state
of E₁ temporally subsumes E₂; this interpretation is available only when the subordinate predicate
belongs to a limited class of telic verbs that includes TATSU ‘stand up’, KIRU ‘put
on (clothes)’, and MOTSU ‘grab, take in one’s hand’. The three interpretations are
schematically illustrated in (8).

(8) (Eventuality E₁ and proposition P₁ correspond to the subordinate clause, and
E₂ and P₂ to the main clause.)
   i. “non-subsequence” interpretation: E₁ ≤ E₂
   ii. “contrast” interpretation: Contrast(P₁, P₂)
   iii. “resulting state” interpretation: ResultingState(E₁) ⊇ E₂ (available
only with the Ger-Cx)

The “non-subsequence” interpretation is exemplified in (7a) above and (9) be-
low.³

²In Oshima (2012), it is reported that out of the 22 native-speaker consultants, 15 evaluated (7b)
as ‘contradictory’, two ‘not sure’, and five ‘not contradictory’.

³The “non-subsequence” variety of the Susp-Cx can be used to describe a situation where E₁ is a
state, E₂ is an event, and E₁ temporally subsumes E₂ (E₁ ⊇ E₂)

(i)  
a. (Kesa) niwa-ni risu-ga ite, sono koto-o kaisha-de
  this.morning garden-Dat squirrel-Nom exist.Ger that matter-Acc company-Loc
9) Kyuu-ni kion-ga sagatte, kaze-mo tsuyoku natta.
      suddenly temperature-Nom fall.Ger wind-also strong.Inf become.Pst
      ‘All of sudden, the temperature dropped and the wind became stronger, too.’

The “contrast” interpretation is illustrated in (10).

10) Akira-wa kinoo toochaku-shi(te), Hiroshi-wa
      A.-Top yesterday arrive.Inf(Ger) H.-Top
      the.day.before.yesterday arrive.Pst
      ‘Akira arrived yesterday, and (on the other hand) Hiroshi arrived the day
      before yesterday.’

(11) illustrates a sentence that allows both “non-subsequence” and “resulting state”
      readings. On the former reading, it implies that Ken’s putting on a hat takes place
      within the topic time (in Klein’s 1994 sense); on the latter, it does not. The former
      is not, and the latter is, compatible with a situation where Ken has an unusual habit

   dooryoo-ni hanashita.
   colleague-Dat tell.Pst
   ‘There was a squirrel in the garden of my house (this morning), and I told my colleagues
   about it in the office.’ (E₁ ≤ E₂)

   b. Magarikado-ni ookina iwa-ga atte, sore-ni jitensha-ga butsukatta.
      corner-Dat big rock-Nom exist.Ger that-Dat bicycle-Nom hit.Pst
      ‘There was a big rock on a street corner, and a bicycle ran into it.’ (E₁ ⊇ E₂)

It cannot be used, on the other hand, to describe a situation where E₁ is an event, E₂ is a state, and
E₂ temporally subsumes E₁.

(ii) a. Jooshi-kara idoo-no hanashi-o kiite, ie-ni
      superior-from personnel.transfer-Gen speech-Acc hear.Ger
      kae-te-kara-mo kibun-ga omokatta.
      return.Ger-since-also feeling-Nom heavy.Pst
      ‘Having heard from my superior that I will be transferred, I felt heavy-hearted even after
      coming home.’ (E₁ ≤ E₂)

   b. #Kaichoo-ga toochaku-shite, subete-no yakuin-ga demuka-ne tume
      president-Nom arrive.Ger, all executive-Nom greeting-Gen for.purpose
      ikkai robii-ni {ita/ atsumatte ita}.
      (The president arrived, and all the executives {were/were assembling} in the ground floor
      lobby to greet him.) (E₁ ⊆ E₂)

   c. Kaicho-ga toochaku-shita toki, subete-no yakuin-ga demuka-ne
      president-Nom arrive.Pst when, all executive-Nom greeting-Gen
      tame ikkai robii-ni {ita/ atsumatte ita}.
      ‘When the president arrived, all the executives {were/were assembling} in the ground
      floor lobby to greet him.’

The analysis in (8-i) is not fully adequate in failing to account for this contrast. In this work, however,
I adopt this simplifying analysis for convenience; as I only consider cases where both E₁ and E₂ are
events, this simplification should not lead to any practical problem.

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of wearing a hat all the time, and has not taken it off for years.

(11) Ken-wa booshi-o kabutte e-o kaita.
   K.-Top hat-Acc put.on.Ger picture-Acc paint.Pst
   i. ‘Ken put on a hat and painted a picture.’ (the “non-subsequence” interpretation)
   ii. ‘Ken painted a picture wearing a hat.’ (the “resulting state” interpretation)

Logical representations of the two readings of (11) are given in (12), where TT stands for topic time and \( \tau \) represents the temporal trace function (a function from eventualities to their temporal locations; Krifka 1998).

(12) a. (“non-subsequence” interpretation of (11))
   \[\exists e_2 [\exists e_1 [\text{put.on.hat}(e_1, \text{hiroshi}) \land \tau(e_1) \subseteq TT \land \tau(e_1) \leq \tau(e_2) \land \text{draw.picture}(e_2, \text{hiroshi}) \land \tau(e_2) \subseteq TT \land \tau(e_2) < \text{now}]]\]

   b. (“resulting state” interpretation of (11))
   \[\exists e_2 [\exists e_1 [\exists e_3 [\text{put.on.hat}(e_1, \text{hiroshi}) \land RS(e_3, e_1) \land \tau(e_3) \supseteq TT \land \tau(e_3) \supseteq \tau(e_2) \land \text{draw.picture}(e_2, \text{hiroshi}) \land \tau(e_2) \subseteq TT \land \tau(e_2) < \text{now}]]\]

For the ease of exposition, in the following I will leave out reference to the topic time in semantic representations.

Below I will argue that the QV-ellipsis construction is a special subtype of the suspensive clause construction with the “non-subsequence” meaning, and that the DO-ellipsis construction is a special subtype of the gerund clause construction with the “resulting state” meaning.

3 Constraints on the QV-ellipsis construction

QV-ellipsis constructions generally can be paraphrased using the gerund or infinitive form of IU ‘say’ or OMOU ‘think’. It is not always possible, however, to elide a form of IU/OMOU heading a suspensive clause. The possibility of ellipsis depends on both syntactic and semantic factors.

On the syntactic side, the subordinate clause in the QV-ellipsis construction must consist solely of the (direct or indirect) quotative phrase, and cannot contain any other (explicit) dependent.

   knock.Pst
   ‘He knocked on the door, saying “Is anybody here?” in a loud voice.’
b. [Boku-ni “Jaa-na” to *(itte)] dete itta.
   I-Dat bye Quot say.Ger exit.Ger go.Pst
   ‘He left the room, saying “Bye” to me.’

The subject of the subordinate clause is not necessarily co-referential with the one of the main clause; however, conforming to the aforementioned constraint, it cannot be explicitly expressed (Fujita 2000).

(14) a. [(*Shujin-ga) “Omachidoosama” to] soba-ga
   manager-Nom sorry.to.have.kept.you.waiting Quot soba.noodle-Nom
   put.Psv.Pst
   ‘(The restaurant manager) said “Sorry to have kept you waiting”, and a
   bowl of soba noodles was put in front of me.’

b. [(Shujin-ga) “Omachidoosama” to itte]
   manager-Nom sorry.for.having.you.wait Quot say.Ger
   soba-ga okareta.
   soba.noodle-Nom put.Psv.Pst
   ‘idem’

On the semantic side, the interpretation of the QV-ellipsis construction is more restricted than that of the “non-subsequence” variety of the suspensive clause construction (Oshima and Sano 2011).

As mentioned above, the suspensive clause construction on the “non-subsequence” interpretation entails that $P_1$ and $P_2$ both hold, and that $E_1$ is not temporally subsequent to $E_2$. Due to pragmatic enrichment, oftentimes it further conversationally implicates a more specific relation between $P_1$ and $P_2$ or $E_1$ and $E_2$, in a way similar to how the English and-coordination construction might implicate a causal relation, manner relation, etc. (e.g., “Hans pressed the spring and the drawer opened” may conversationally implicate that the drawer opened because Hans pressed the spring in order to open the drawer, that Hans pressed the spring in order to open the drawer, etc.; Levinson 2000).

(15) a. Ha-o migaitte, hige-o sotta.
   tooth-Acc brush.Ger beard-Acc shave.Pst
   ‘He brushed his teeth and (then) shaved.’ (temporal precedence)

b. Kyuu-ni kion-ga sagatte, kaze-mo tsuyoku natta.
   suddenly temperature-Nom fall.Ger wind-also strong.Inf become.Pst
   ‘All of sudden, the temperature dropped and the wind became stronger.’
   (temporal coincidence)

   bus-Dat ride.Ger company-Dat go.Pst
   ‘He went to work, taking a bus.’ (manner relation)
Interestingly, the SAY-ellipsis construction cannot be used to describe a situation where $P_1$ is (naturally inferred to be) the cause/reason of $P_2$; in other words, it entails that $P_1$ is not the reason of $P_2$.

(16)  
\begin{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

The THINK-ellipsis construction, on the other hand, requires that either the causal relation hold between $P_1$ and $P_2$, as in (17a), or the manner relation hold between $E_1$ and $E_2$, as in (17b).

(17)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. [“Moo doose maniawanai” to (omotte)] already anyway be.on.time.Neg.Prs Quot think.Ger hashiru-no-o yameta. run.Prs-Nominalizer-Acc stop.Pst ‘He stopped running, (thinking) “I won’t make it anyway”.’ (causal relation present)
\item b. [“Dare-ni-demo shippai-wa aru” to (omotte)] jibun-o who-Dat-even mistake-Top exist.Prs Quot think.Ger self-Acc nagusameta. console.Pst ‘He consoled himself, (thinking) “Anyone can make a mistake”.’ (manner relation present)
\end{enumerate}

(18a) illustrates that, when neither the causal nor manner relation holds, the THINK-ellipsis construction cannot be felicitously used.

(18) (‘I was watching a baseball game. The team I was supporting had a big lead, but at the ninth inning the opponent team closed to within two runs . . . ’)
a. [“Nandaka kumoyuki-ga ayashiku natte kita-na” to somehow weather-Nom strange become.Ger Asp.Pst-DP Quot #(omotte)] kansen-shite iru-to, kekkyoku surii-ran think.Ger watch.game.Ger Ipfv.Prs-after eventually three-run hoomuran-ga tobidashite gyakuten-make-o kishite shimatta. home.run-Nom pop.Ger reversal-loss-Acc receive.Ger end.up.Pst ‘I was watching the game, thinking to myself “Darn, the tide is turning”, and then a three-run home run of the opponent team turned around the game and we ended up losing.’ (neither causal nor manner relation present)

b. [“Nandaka kumoyuki-ga ayashiku natte kita-na” to somehow weather-Nom strange become.Ger Asp.Pst-DP Quot (omotte)] yakimoki-shite iru-to, kekkyoku suriiran think.Ger chafe.Ger Ipfv.Prs-after eventually three-run hoomuran-ga tobidashite gyakuten-make-o kishite shimatta. home.run-Nom pop.Ger reversal-loss-Acc receive.Ger end.up.Pst ‘I was being restless, thinking to myself “Darn, the tide is turning”, and then a three-run home run of the opponent team turned around the game and we ended up losing.’ (causal relation present)

To summarize the section:

(19) i. The SAY-ellipsis construction can be paraphrased with itte (gerund) or ii (infinitive); the THINK-ellipsis construction can be paraphrased with omotte (gerund) or omoi (infinitive).

ii. In both SAY- and THINK-ellipsis constructions, the subordinate clause must consist solely of the quotative phrase accompanied by to, and must not contain an explicit subject or an adverbial modifier.

iii. The SAY-ellipsis construction implies that there is no causal relation between P1 and P2.

iv. The THINK-ellipsis construction implies that there is a causal relation between P1 and P2, or a manner relation between E1 and E2.

4 Constraints on the DO-ellipsis construction

The DO-ellipsis construction can be classified into two major types (Teramura 1983), which I refer to as the HOLD-type and the “accompanying circumstance”-type. In the HOLD-type, elided shite can be regarded as a predicate of possession.
The HOLD-type

a. Watashi-wa [saifu-o katate-ni {a. ∅/b. shite}] heya-o
I-Top wallet-Acc one.hand-Dat {∅/do.Ger} room-Acc
dash.out.Pst
‘I dashed out of the room, (holding) my wallet in my hand.’

b. Ken-wa [akanboo-o se-ni {a. ∅/b. shite}] atari-o shibaraku
K.-Top baby-Acc back-Dat {∅/do.Ger} vicinity-Acc for.a.while
sansaku-shita.
stroll.Pst
‘Ken strolled around for a while, (carrying) the baby on his back.’

In the “accompanying circumstance”-type, on the other hand, the semantic contribution of shite is unclear and possibly absent.

The “accompanying circumstance”-type

a. Sono senshu-wa [tairyoku-no otoroe-o riyuu-ni
that athlete-Top strength-Gen decline-Acc reason-Dat
{a. ∅/b. shite}] sakunen intai-shita.
{∅/do.Ger} last.year retire.Pst
‘That athlete retired last year, the reason being the decline of his physical strength.’

b. Keisatsu-wa [hisseki-o tegakari-ni {a. ∅/b. shite}] memo-o
police-Top handwriting-Acc clue-Dat {∅/do.Ger} note-Acc
kaita jinbutsu-o tokutei-shita.
write.Pst person-Acc identify.Pst
‘The police identified the person who wrote the note, using the traits of the handwriting as a clue.’

This work focuses on the HOLD-type, leaving the formal treatment of the “accompanying circumstance”-type to future research.

SURU as a verb of possession refers to a telic, punctual process (i.e., an achievement), rather than a state.

The gerund clause headed by possessive shite is ambiguous between the “non-subsequence” and “resulting state” interpretations (or, between the “take” and “hold” interpretations); the infinitive clause headed by possessive shi, on the other hand, allows only the “non-subsequence” interpretation.
(23) Ken-wa [kan-biiru-o te-ni shite], uta-o utatta.
K.-Top can-beer-Acc hand-Dat do.Ger song-Acc sing.Pst
i. ‘Ken took a can of beer in his hand, and sang a song.’ (non-subsequence reading); OR
ii. ‘Ken sang a song, holding a can of beer in his hand.’ (resulting state reading)

(24) Ken-wa [kan-biiru-o te-ni shi], uta-o utatta.
K.-Top can-beer-Acc hand-Dat do.Inf song-Acc sing.Pst
‘Ken took a can of beer in his hand, and sang a song.’ (non-subsequence reading only)

The DO-ellipsis construction allows only the “resulting state” interpretation.

(25) Ken-wa [kan-biiru-o te-ni .EMPTY], uta-o utatta.
K.-Top can-beer-Acc hand-Dat song-Acc sing.Pst
‘Ken sang a song, holding a can of beer in his hand.’ (resulting state reading only)

The subject of the subordinate clause of the DO-ellipsis construction must (i) not be explicitly expressed and (ii) be coreferential with the matrix subject. This property is shared by gerund clauses on the resulting state reading in general; to illustrate, (26), where the subjects of the subordinate and main clauses are referentially disjoint, does not allow the resulting state interpretation.

(26) Hiroshi-ga booshi-o kabutte, Yumi-ga sono sugata-o
H.-Nom hat-Acc put.on.Ger Y.-Nom that appearance-Acc
shashin-ni totta.
photograph-Dat take.Pst
‘Hiroshi put on a hat, and Yumi took a picture of him wearing it.’ (non-subsequence reading only)

As is the case with the QV-ellipsis construction, the subordinate clause of the DO-ellipsis construction appears to resist occurrence of an adverbial modifier.

(27) a. [Roopu-o te-ni (shite)] furiotosarenai yoo-ni
rope-Acc hand-Dat do.Ger shake.off.Psv.Neg.Prs in.purpose.to
funbatta.
stand.firm.Pst
‘I stood firm holding a rope in my hand so as not to fall off.’

b. [Roopu-o shikkari-to te-ni ？(shite)] furiotosarenai
rope-Acc tightly hand-Dat do.Ger shake.off.Psv.Neg.Prs
yoo-ni funbatta.
in.purpose.to stand.firm.Pst
‘I stood firm holding a rope tightly in my hand so as not to fall off.’
To summarize the section:

(28) i. The DO-ellipsis construction has two varieties: the HOLD-type and the “accompanying circumstance”-type.
ii. The subordinate clause of the DO-ellipsis construction consist solely of the dative and accusative NP’s.
iii. The DO-ellipsis construction (or at least the HOLD-type thereof) can be paraphrased with *shite* (gerund), but not by *shi* (infinitive).
iv. In the HOLD-type, the subject of the subordinate clause must be coreferential with the matrix subject. This property is shared by – or is inherited from – the non-elliptic counterpart.

5 Evidence for the bi-clausal structure

One might be tempted to consider that the QV-ellipsis and DO-ellipsis constructions are mono-clausal (QuotP = quotative phrase).

(29) (= (1a))
   a. Ken-ga [QuotP “Ohayoo” to] haitte-kita. (mono-clausal analysis)
   b. Ken-ga [S [QuotP “Ohayoo” to]] haitte-kita. (bi-clausal analysis)

(30) (= (3a))
   a. Ken-wa [AdvP akanboo-o se-ni] atari-o . . . (mono-clausal analysis)
   b. Ken-wa [S akanboo-o se-ni] atari-o . . . (bi-clausal analysis)

One piece of evidence against the mono-clausal analysis comes from the scopal interaction between the putative subordinate clause and negation in the matrix clause. When the matrix predicate is negated, the putative subordinate clause of a QV- or DO-ellipsis construction does not necessarily fall under the scope of negation, patternning the same as the suspensive subordinate clause in general.

   put.Neg,Pst
   ‘He did not even have a bite, (saying) “I’m not hungry”.’

(32) Ken-wa [yari-o te-ni (shite)] dare-mo toosanakatta.
   K.-Top spear-Acc hand-Dat do.Ger anybody let.pass.Neg,Pst
   ‘Ken did not let anyone in, (holding) a spear in his hand.’

Non-clausal adverbials, on the other hand, cannot escape from the scope of negation on the predicate (as in: *John did not sing {loudly/in the office}*), except for discourse-oriented ones (as in: *Fortunately, John did not sing*). It can thus be concluded that the quotative phrase in the QV-ellipsis constriction, and the “X-o Y-ni” phrase in the DO-ellipsis construction, are not non-clausal adverbiaals.
6 An SBCG analysis

This section provides a formal analysis of the SAY-, THINK-, and DO-ellipsis constructions in the framework of Sign-Based Construction Grammar (SBCG; Sag 2012). In the version of SBCG used in the current work, Montagovian semantics (rather than Frame Semantics or Minimal Recursion Semantics) is used as the primary means of semantic representation.

6.1 Background assumptions

I will assume the general construction (constraint) for Japanese clauses to be (33), and the one for the declarative clause to be (34).

(33) clause-construct ⇒

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{MTR} & \quad \text{HD-DTR} \\
\text{SEM}|\text{LF} & \quad \text{DEPS} \\
\text{CAT} & \quad \text{ARG-ST} \\
\text{LF} & \quad \text{DEPS} \\
\text{INDEX} & \quad \text{INDEX}
\end{align*}
\]

(34) Declarative Clause Cx

\[
\begin{align*}
declarative-clause-construct & \Rightarrow \\
\text{HD-DTR} & \quad \text{CX-CONT} \\
\text{SYN}|\text{CAT}|\text{PRDFORM} & \quad \lambda P_{(v,t)} \exists e_0[P(e_0)]
\end{align*}
\]

Some background assumptions and notational conventions are explained below:

(35) i. Type \textit{sem-obj}, the value of \textit{SEM(ANTICS)}, has two attributes: \textit{INDEX} and \textit{L(OGICAL )F(ORM)}. \textit{LF} in function corresponds to Sag’s (2012) \textit{FRAMES}, and its value is an expression of lambda calculus.

ii. Subscripted arrow symbols are meta-variables over logical expressions. The direction of arrows (upward or downward) is just for expositional ease.

iii. The value of \textit{CX-CONT} is the meaning component contributed by the construct itself (Copestake et al. 2005).
iv. “/” indicates that the constraint on the right is a default constraint. “!” indicates that the feature structure on the right is exempted from the domain of structural identity (Sag 2012: note 71).

v. Following Bouma et al. (2001), it is assumed that typically adverbials, including adverbial clauses, are dependents of a predicate, rather than adjuncts on a clause.

vi. It is assumed that Japanese clauses generally have a “flat” structure, where the subject appears on the same level as more oblique arguments and adverbials.

Declarative clauses are thus required to satisfy the constraints shown in (36), which incorporates the ones posed by declarative-clause-construct with the ones inherited from its supertype clause-construct.

\[
(36) \begin{array}{c}
\text{declarative-clause-ext} \\
\text{MTR} \\
\text{SEM}[\text{LF} \downarrow \omega(\downarrow \beta(\ldots(\downarrow \phi(\downarrow \alpha)\ldots(\downarrow 1))))] \\
\text{HD-DTR} \\
\text{SEM}[\text{LF} \uparrow 0] \\
\text{ARG-ST} \\
\text{DEPS} \\
\text{DTRS} \\
\text{CX-CONT} \\
\end{array}
\]

The meaning of a clause is generally calculated by the following steps: (i) the meaning of the heading predicate (corresponding to \(\uparrow \omega/\downarrow \omega\) in (36)) is cyclically applied to those of the arguments, from the most oblique to the least oblique (i.e., the subject), (ii) if there are any adjuncts, their meanings are cyclically applied to the result of step (i), and (iii) the “constructional meaning” (\(\uparrow \omega/\downarrow \omega\)) is applied to the result of steps (i) and (ii). In the case of the declarative clause, step (iii) is existential closure of the eventuality variable. To illustrate with a specific example, the meaning of declarative clause (37a) is calculated as in (38), via the \(\beta\)-conversion shown in (39).\(^4\)

\[
(37) \begin{array}{c}
\text{S}[	ext{NP Hiroshi-ga}][\text{NP Yumi-o}][\text{AdvP Shinjuku-de}][\text{V mita}] \\
\text{H.-Nom} \quad \text{Y.-Acc} \quad \text{S.-Loc} \quad \text{see.Pst} \\
\text{‘Hiroshi saw Yumi in Shinjuku.’} \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^4\)A box surrounding an AVM indicates that the AVM is a description of a specific linguistic entity, rather than a description of a grammatical entity (grammatical constraint, etc.); see Sag (2012).
Turning now to (regular, non-elliptic) suspensive clauses, I propose (40) as a construction that licenses the “non-subsequence” variety of the suspensive clause:

\[ \lambda P[\exists e_0[P(e_0)](\lambda Q_{(v,t)}[\lambda e_2[Q(e_2) \land \text{in}(e_1, s)]](\lambda y[\lambda x[\lambda e_1[\text{see}(e_1, x, y) \land \tau(e_1) < \text{now}]])(\lambda e_0[\exists e_0[\text{see}(e_0, h, y) \land \tau(e_0) < \text{now} \land \text{in}(e_0, s)]))] \]

6.2 Regular suspensive clauses

This will assign meaning (12a) to (11) (except that reference to the topic time is omitted). Note that here suspensive clauses are, like other adverbials (see (35v)), treated as dependents of a predicate. In this regard I depart from Oshima (2012), where they are treated as adjuncts on a clause.

The construction that licenses the “resulting state” variety of the gerund clause is given in (41):

\[ \lambda P[\lambda Q_{(v,t)}[\lambda e_2[\exists e_1[P(e_1) \land Q(e_2) \land \tau(e_1) \leq \tau(e_2)]]]] \]

This will assign meaning (12a) to (11) (except that reference to the topic time is omitted). Note that here suspensive clauses are, like other adverbials (see (35v)), treated as dependents of a predicate. In this regard I depart from Oshima (2012), where they are treated as adjuncts on a clause.
This will assign (12b) to (11) (again, except that reference to the topic time is omitted).

6.3 Special suspensive clauses

I propose, finally, (42)–(44) as the constructions that license elliptic, headless suspensive clauses. Specifically, (42) and (43) respectively license the subordinate clause of the SAY-ellipsis construction and the THINK-ellipsis construction (which involve a direct quotative phrase); (44) licenses the subordinate clause the DO-ellipsis construction (of the HOLD-type). Their DTRS attributes are specified to be singleton and doubleton, which guarantees the absence of an explicit subject or an adverbial within it.

(42) **Special Suspensive Clause Cx (SAY, direct quote)**

\[
\text{elliptic-speech-temporal-suspensive-clause-construct} \Rightarrow
\]

\[
\text{MTR} \quad \text{SYN} \quad \text{CAT} \quad \text{PRDFORM} \quad \text{suspensive} \\
\quad \text{VAL} \quad \{\} \\
\text{SEM}[\text{LF}] \quad \downarrow_3(\text{say}_{\text{dir}}(\downarrow_2(\downarrow_1))) \\
\text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \text{pro:}[\text{LF} \uparrow_1], 1 \rangle \\
\text{HD-DTR} \quad \text{none} \\
\text{DTRS} \quad \langle 1 \rangle \text{QuotP:[MRKG to, LF} \uparrow_2] \rangle \\
\text{CX-CONT} \quad \uparrow_3: \lambda P[\lambda Q[\lambda e_2[\exists e_1[P(e_1) \land Q(e_2) \land \tau(e_1) \leq \tau(e_2)] \\
\quad \neg \exists(t_1, t_2)[\text{because}(\exists e_3[P(e_3) \land \tau(e_3) = t_1], \\
\quad \exists e_4[Q(e_4) \land \tau(e_4) = t_2]) \land t_1 \leq t_2]]]]]]
\]
In (42) and (43), \texttt{say} \textsubscript{dir} and \texttt{think} \textsubscript{dir} are logical predicates corresponding to IU ‘say’ and OMOU ‘think’ selecting a direct quotative phrase. To deal with QV-ellipsis constructions with an indirect quotative phrase, slightly different constructions will be required. In (44), \texttt{take.in} is a predicate that selects, besides the eventuality argument, (i) the possessor argument, (ii) the possessum argument, and (iii) the location argument.

The semantics of (42)–(44) are more specific than those of (40) and (41). In all of (42), (43), and (44), the meaning of the mother sign has one less “open slot”, the place for the predicate meaning being filled by a constant. (42) and (43), furthermore, convey a more specific meaning than their non-elliptic counterpart.
which merely conveys the temporal relation of “E₁ precedes or coincides with E₂”. These provide justification for treating the elliptic clauses as subtypes of the regular suspensive clauses. It should be noted that the absence of the causal relation encoded in the SAY-ellipsis construction, and the presence of the causal or manner (“by means of”) relation encoded in the THINK-ellipsis construction, are presumably part of the “not-at-issue” (conventionally implicated) meaning, rather than the “at-issue” (proffered) meaning. To represent them in more precise terms, a more elaborate apparatus for semantic representation, where multiple levels/dimensions of meaning can be distinguished, will be required (see, e.g., Potts 2005; McCready 2010).

The mother sign of each of these constructs (i.e., a headless clause) is specified to have the ARG-ST attribute; this is required to constrain long-distance anaphoric binding into the headless subordinate clause, as in (45a,b), as well as to express the obligatory coreference between the subjects of the main and subordinate clause in the DO-ellipsis construction.⁵


‘Hiroshi, was shedding tears, saying that you don’t care about him at all.’


‘Ken, blocked the way, holding his spear in his hand.’

7 Summary

This paper discussed the syntactic and semantic properties of three “special” hypotactic constructions in Japanese, where the heading predicate of the subordinate clause is not explicitly present. The subordinate clauses of the three constructions respectively involve “omission” of a suspensive form of IU ‘say’, OMOU ‘think’, and SURU ‘do’. It was shown that the elliptic subordinate clauses have more specific meanings than the corresponding canonical subordinate clauses (headed by a suspensive form of a verb), and thus the former can be sensibly regarded as special subtypes of the latter. Using the framework of Sign-Based Construction Grammar, a formal analysis of the three constructions was presented, which does not postulate a phonologically null element serving as the head of a subordinate clause.

⁵See Przepiórkowski (2001) for justification for allowing phrasal (non-lexical) expressions to have ARG-ST (and its extension DEPS).
References


