

Subject Ellipsis in English:
The Perception Verbs *Feel*, *Look*, *Sound*, *Smell*, and *Taste*

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Appendix

PART I Subject Ellipsis in English

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. The Scope of the Study

This study discusses subject ellipsis that occurs in sentences with perception verbs in English. Particularly it focuses on inanimate subjects, including the subject *it*, which have received little attention, and attempts to identify the factors contributing to subject ellipsis. In general, it is recognized that English is a language which requires a grammatical subject. (Fillmore 1986).¹ Nevertheless, it is observed that the subject is omitted in certain contexts in various places, not only in spoken utterances but also in written language. Some examples are shown below.

(1) a. *Like* your new car.

b. A: That was lovely.

B: *Hope* you've got a little bit of room left for afters.² (= (9bB) in Chapter 2)

c. A: Can you make those changes to the list?

B: Yeah. *Think* so, yeah. (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183)

In (1a), (1b) B, and (1c) B, the grammatical subject is omitted. When the implicit subject is retrieved in each sentence, it is assumed that the omitted subject is either *I* or *you*. Even though we encounter such elliptical sentences, we normally retrieve the implicit subject without much effort. The question, here, is how we can retrieve the omitted subject and what

¹ Fillmore (1986: 95) suggests that languages such as Spanish and Japanese “allow the subject of essentially any sentence to be missing”, however, “in English, except in certain kinds of highly restricted mini-genres, suggested by such directives as STORE IN A COOL PLACE, SHAKE BEFORE USING, KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF THE CHILDREN, conditions for the omission of non-subject complements are limited to particular lexically defined environments”.

² “*Afters* is an informal word for dessert” (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183).

factors are concerned in cases of subject ellipsis. With regard to the factors contributing to subject ellipsis, especially with the subjects *I* and *you*, much research has mainly provided pragmatic factors such as (i) retrievability (Kuno 1981, Carter and McCarthy 1995, Nariyama 2004), that is, being able to restore the implicit subject to the original state, (ii) the immediate context (Kuno 1981, Thomas 1987, Carter and McCarthy 1995, Biber et al. 1999), (iii) correlation with fixed expressions (Carter and McCarthy 1995, Mackenzie 1998, Nariyama 2004), and (iv) conversation style (Carter and McCarthy 1995, Nariyama 2004). In this way, research on subject ellipsis in terms of the subjects *I* and *you* has received much attention in previous studies.

Meanwhile, subject ellipsis concerning third person subjects, especially the subject *it*, has been investigated far less often compared to ellipsis of the subjects *I* or *you*. An explanation of factors contributing to subject ellipsis for the subject *it* has not been sufficiently given in previous research. Considering such a situation, this study focuses on inanimate subjects, including the subject *it*. Subject ellipsis occurs in sentences with the implicit subject *it*, as shown in example (2).

(2) a. A: That's a long way.

B: Yeah, *feels* like it.

b. *Feels* good to have them on again, doesn't it? (COHA)

In (2a) B, the subject *it* is eliminated before the sentence *feels like it* and similarly in (2b), the subject *it* is omitted before the sentence *Feels good to have them on again, doesn't it?*. As for the implicit subject *it* in the elliptical sentence, Nariyama (2004) merely suggests that “with regard to the subject *it* used in conventional expressions, such as in examples ([It] doesn't matter. [It] looks good.), the meaning of the utterances is, in fact, [based on] the speaker's

subjective view; that is, the subjectless sentences are understood as expressing the view of the speaker and not of the subject ‘it’” (Nariyama 2004: 255).

Moreover, concerning the subject *it* in the case of subject ellipsis, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 185) just mention that the “subject pronoun *it* and demonstrative pronoun are often not needed” or an “initial *it* and copular verb *be* may both be unnecessary when the referent is obvious”. Thus, as mentioned earlier, traditional studies have failed to provide sufficient explanations to answer the question of why the subject *it* has a tendency to be eliminated. Even though we try to pursue an answer from the perspective of pragmatics, it is difficult to find one. It is also difficult to answer the question of why subject ellipsis occurs with experience verbs and percept verbs and not with activity verbs (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999). Reflecting on these circumstances, this study seeks to solve three major problems based on a semantic view.

First, as mentioned above, this study focuses on why subject ellipsis tends to occur with inanimate subjects or the subject *it*, and tends to occur especially with experience verbs and percept verbs in the perception verbs.

Second, with regard to the inanimate subject including *it*, for example, in (2a) B, prior to the sentence *feels like it*, the implicit subject *it* is recovered. However, in such a grammatical pattern, it is assumed that the subject *it* implies the existence of an experiencer in the background. In order to pursue that implication, this study tries to reveal who is in the background of the subject *it* and why such a phenomenon occurs. To that end, the investigations of the grammatical patterns of subject ellipsis are conducted synchronically and chronologically on large corpora.

Furthermore, focusing on inanimate subjects including *it*, this study pursues the relation between subject ellipsis and the referent of the subject. That is, by examining whether subject referents imply situations or physical entities in elliptical sentences, it attempts to analyze the

relationship between subject ellipsis and the type of subject referent.

Third, as for the amount of information in the elliptical sentence, previous studies have paid less attention to the informativeness of the sentence. Nariyama (2006: 4) suggests that “informativeness in terms of amount of information (number of phrases) governs the acceptability of subject ellipsis” and that restriction has been seen more in the case of the “non-first person subject”.³ Nariyama (2006: 4) uses the term “non-first person subject”; therefore, it is not clear whether “non-first person subject” includes the subject *it* or not. In any event, the following examples are found.

(3) Feels like days since you’ve been home but it has probably only been two or three hours.
(COHA)

(4) Looks as if being a bachelor will pay off for him on all fronts. (COHA)⁴

In the elliptical sentences in examples (3) and (4), the subject *it* can be retrieved for each one. In addition, in (3) and (4), it is observed that subject ellipsis occurs in sentences with perception verbs even though the amount of information in the complement is relatively larger. If the term “non-first person subject” noted by Nariyama (2006: 4) includes the subject *it* or other inanimate subjects, those examples (3) and (4) would be counterexamples for Nariyama (2006: 4). In order to pursue the relation between subject ellipsis and informativeness, the present study investigates whether the amount of information in the complement has a relationship with the factor of subject ellipsis with inanimate subjects, including the subject *it*.

Furthermore, in the case of subject ellipsis in compound sentences, as in examples (3) and (4), this study attempts to find whether the information of sentences with subject ellipsis

³ Regarding the subject *I*, Nariyama (2006: 4) suggests that the subject *I* has a different condition saying that “it [amount of information] is less restricted for sentences with first person subject”.

⁴ Examples (3) and (4) are also used in (5c) and (7), respectively, in Chapter 7.

should be understood separately from the main sentence and the subordinate sentence or grasped from the whole sentence.

1.2. Subject Ellipsis

1.2.1. Types of Ellipsis

According to Biber et al. (1999), ellipsis is classified into two types: textual ellipsis and situational ellipsis. This study focuses on the latter, situational ellipsis. Concerning the definition of the textual ellipsis, Biber et al. (1999: 156) says that “omission of elements which are recoverable from the linguistic context may be called textual ellipsis”. Moreover, the Biber et al. (1999: 156) notes that textual ellipsis (a) “occurs in coordinated clauses”, (b) “comparative clauses”, (c) “question-answer sequences”, and (d) “other contexts where adjacent clauses are related in form and meaning”. The following are some examples:

- (5) This gay guy who came into the pub completely fell in love with Ben and <he> was like declaring his undying love. - (a) Occurs in coordinated clauses

(Biber et al. 1999: 156)

- (6) She looks older than my mother <does>. - (b) Occurs in comparative clauses

(Ibid.)

- (7) A: Have you got an exam on Monday?

B: <I've got> two exams on Mondays. (c) - Occurs in question-answer sequences

(Biber et al. 1999: 157)

- (8) What was the mileage when we got there? <Was it> A hundred and eleven? - (d) Other types of textual ellipsis).

(Biber et al. 1999: 157)

In (5), subject ellipsis “occurs in coordinated clauses”. Coordinated clauses are “clauses that share elements with a preceding clause” (Biber et al. 1999: 156). In (6), the ellipsis appears in a “comparative clause”; in comparative clauses, the “clauses characteristically mirror the structure of a preceding clause” (Biber et al. 1999: 156). Example (7B) shows an example of ellipsis in a “question-answer sequence”. Example (8) belongs to “other types” where “a full interrogative clause is sometimes followed by a more specific question” (Biber et al. 1999: 157). When the second question follows the preceding question, the second question is expressed in an elliptical form.

In contrast to these examples of textual ellipsis, the second type of ellipsis, “situational ellipsis” is referred to as the one “where the omission and interpretation are dependent upon the situational context” (Biber et al. 1999: 156). The following is an example of situational ellipses:

- (9) a. <I> Saw Suzan and her boyfriend in Alder weeks ago. (Situational ellipsis omission)
b. <I> Suppose I ought to tell you that shouldn't I? (Situational ellipsis omission)

(Biber et al. 1999: 158)

In (9a) and (9b), the implicit subject *I* can be retrieved judging from the situation where the speaker *I* is talking to the listener.

Elsewhere, other researchers, Carter and McCarthy (1995) and Quirk et al. (1985), categorize ellipsis into three kinds: situational ellipsis, textual ellipsis, and structural ellipsis. According to the mini-corpus by Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145), situational ellipsis often occurs in the service-encounter data, casual data, and language-in-action data, “where not

only the participants but the objects and entities and processes talked about, are typically prominent in the immediate environment”. For example, the expression *Hope so* with the elimination of the subject *I* is categorized as situational ellipsis.

Another type, textual ellipsis, is recognized as follows: “textual ellipsis is characterized by retrievability from the text itself” (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 145). The following is an example of textual ellipsis:

(10) A: Can you hear the sound?

B: Yes, I think I can.

In (10) B, in the discourse *Yes, I think I can*, the item which follows *can* is *hear the sound*. It is retrievable from the previous text.

Concerning structural ellipsis, it is noted that “structural ellipsis occurs when a purely structural element is omitted” (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 145). For instance, in the expression *I’m surprised (that) you visited me*, it can be understood that the conjunction “that” is omitted.⁵ Thus, although we have observed that there are mainly three kinds of ellipsis, textual ellipsis, situational ellipsis, and structural ellipsis, this study focuses on situational ellipsis.

1.2.2. The Definition of Subject Ellipsis and Fixed Expressions

1.2.2.1. The Definition of Subject Ellipsis

To begin with, it is essential to confirm the definition of subject ellipsis, though the definition differs among researchers. For instance, according to Biber et al. (1999: 156), “ellipsis is the omission of elements which are precisely recoverable from the linguistic or

⁵ This kind of ellipsis is not mentioned in Biber et al. (1999).

situational context”. With regard to the definition of ellipsis by Thomas (1987: 1), “ellipsis is the omission from the overt manifestation of the sentence of meanings that are syntagmatically required by what is overtly manifested and which are available in the context of the sentence in question”.

Elsewhere, Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145) define ellipsis as “the omission of elements otherwise considered required in a structure”. Furthermore, in addition to the definition, Carter and McCarthy (1995: 146) also recognize situational ellipsis in the following way. That is, it is possible to retrieve the implicit subject from “the immediate situation”, which implies a situational context including an immediate context⁶.

This research defines subject ellipsis as the phenomenon where the omission of the subject occurs when certain conditions – a combination of pragmatic and semantic factors – are met.

1.2.2.2. The Definition of Fixed Expressions

The co-occurrence of subject ellipsis and fixed expressions is discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, fixed expressions should first be defined here, since the definition varies depending on researchers. For example, Carter and McCarthy (1997: 15) describe fixed expressions as “language forms which are routinized and patterned”. They divide fixed expressions into four groups as shown in (11) in terms of “varying degrees of fixity” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 15).

⁶ In addition to that recognition, concerning the conditions of the ellipsis, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 183) indicate that “Initial *I* is often unnecessary in declaratives in informal speech with lexical verbs (especially mental process verbs like *think*, *reckon*, *guess*, *hope*, *like*, *love*, *wonder* and *suppose*)”.

- (11) a. Collocationally fixed (e.g. *a fat salary*)
- b. Within frozen syntactic patterns (e.g. *have forty winks*)
- c. Quite fixed in discourse position or are semantically indecipherable
(e.g. *carry the can*)
- d. Open forms syntactically, lexically and discursively (e.g. *take a chance* - it could occur as *I took the first chance I got*) (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 15)

The expressions from (11a) to (11c) are more fixed than that of (11d). Example (11a) indicates expressions that are used in daily conversation in a fixed form. In (11b), the expressions are those within frozen syntactic patterns. This means that they cannot be understood from the meanings of their components. Expressions such as those in (11c) are used in the discourse and similarly cannot be understood from the meanings of their components. Expressions such as those in example (11d) “allow greater internal modification” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 15), that is, the order of the expressions or the words of expression can be changed.

As another example, Alexander (1984: 129) categorizes fixed expressions into eight types: “catchphrases and greetings, proverbial idioms and proverbs, tournure idioms [idioms that people can generally recognize], irreversible binomial idioms, phrasal compound idioms, phrasal verb idioms, metaphorical and allusive idioms and idiomatic similes”.

Among several definitions, this study follows the definition by Carter and McCarthy (1997: 15). In other words, the term “fixed expressions” implies verb phrases which are collocationally used, verb phrases “within frozen syntactic patterns”, verb phrases which are “quite fixed in discourse positions or semantically indecipherable”, and verb phrases which are “open forms syntactically, lexically and discursively” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 15) as shown in (11).

1.2.3. The Effects of Subject Ellipsis

1.2.3.1. The Effects of Subject Ellipsis Suggested by Previous Studies

To date, previous studies have suggested that there are a variety of effects of subject ellipsis. Some of them include: “request for information in which affirmative or negative response is being specified (yes/no questions)” (Ricento 1987: 764) (see (12)); “elaboration or commentary on a proximal utterance” (Ricento 1987: 765) (see (13)); “echoic responses” (Ricento 1987: 766; Mackenzie 1998: 280) (see (14) and (15)); “ending a conversation or changing a topic” (Nariyama 2004: 248); “soften[ing] the implicatures by creating an indirect request/suggestion, even when the intended referent is perfectly clear” (Nariyama 2004: 249) (see (16)), which is related to the politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987); and “conventions of use”, which “guides the addressee directly to the desired interpretation” (Mackenzie 1998). The following are examples of those. The letter (i.e. *C, L, S...*) before each utterance shows the initials of each speaker’s respective name.

- (12) Request for information in which affirmative or negative response is being specified (yes/no questions) (From the ‘Pear Film’ conversation).

C: Which one helped dust off the pants, and the-

L: I think the third boy//, the (one in blue)

C: The one with the paddle?

L: Yeah. The one with the paddle?

S: Yeah. The one with the paddle? (Ricento 1987: 764)

In (12), the second utterance by C, *The one with the puddle?* is requesting an answer from speaker L.

(13) Elaboration or commentary on a proximal utterance (From 'Party for the Teacher').

B: Guess what it is.

C: Water. Does it have water in it? (Opening the present)

B: Formaldehyde.

M: Oh dear!

T: Oh no!

M: Barbara, where do you get these?

B: Those are Japanese.

C: That's really great.

T: Pocket-in-formaldehyde Tunafish!

C: Must be.

(Ricento 1987: 765-766)

In (13), the utterance by C in the last sentence *Must be* is a commentary on the previous one by T.

(14) Echoic responses (From 'Party for the Teacher')

C: No, I'd rather have it that way. I hated the first 4 weeks of class because— I feel very uneasy when I just know that people don't want to talk to each other, they don't want to talk to me... they're ... you know...

B: I thought the first 4 weeks were really interesting.

I mean, I was fascinated by the language.

C: I just didn't like it people-wise.

Well. There are limits, there are days when I don't want to be disturbed.

E: Oh sure. Like Friday.

C: Like Friday.

M: Like Friday.

(Ricento 1987: 766)

In (14), in the last utterances by C and M, the same expression is repeated as subject ellipsis occurs in the sentence.

(15) Echoic responses

A: You know, the strike.

B: Strike?

A: The provincial reporters' strike.

(Mackenzie 1998: 280)

In (15), similarly to (14), the utterance by A is repeated by B as subject ellipsis occurs.

(16) Soften[ing] the implicatures by creating an indirect request/suggestion

A: *Gotta have a coffee*.

(Nariyama 2004: 248)

In (16), concerning the utterance *Gotta have a coffee*, Nariyama (2004: 249) mentions that “this implicit referent, by under-specifying the subject, allows one to avoid the use of a direct speech act and downplays one’s responsibility/accusation/self-centeredness; it softens the implicatures by creating an indirect request/suggestion to pick up on the implicature”.

Thus, various effects which subject ellipsis has on discourse have been discussed. Judging from those effects, we can understand that subject ellipsis in English is not just the omission of the words but a way to express what a speaker wants to say using implicature.

1.2.3.2. The Effects of Subject Ellipsis Suggested in this Research

So far, we have observed the effects of subject ellipsis suggested by previous research. In addition to those effects, the present study suggests that subject ellipsis also has the effect of emphasis in discourse. This study itself has attempted to prove whether subject ellipsis has the effect of emphasis in discourse, by conducting some brief experiments. I hypothesized that emphasis could be seen among four types of discourse patterns when subject ellipsis occurs; specifically, (a) giving a list of phrases, (b) suspiciously repeating what the previous speaker said, (c) providing new information,⁷ and (d) responding to questions. In this section, small-scale experiments were conducted using five series of scripts from an American TV program in the 80s called *Families Ties* and a children's story book with a CD called *Peter Pan*.

The following are some of the example sentences from the experiments. They are examples of pattern (a), giving a list of phrases, when subject ellipsis occurred. It can be observed that the same types of phrases were spoken repeatedly.

- (17) What is it now Mal? Clashing outfit? Sweater out of style? Headband too tight?

(Family Ties, D is For Date, Episode 122)

- (18) How would you rate that? Great? Incredible? Unbelievably touching?

What?

(Family Ties, My Name is Alex, Episode 119)

- (19) A little persuasion might be in order. Now, let me see. Boiling in oil? Keelhauling? Marooning?

(Peter Pan 2008: 58)

⁷ Ricento (1987: 771) also notes that the functions of elliptical clauses are to give new information, however, he fails to make further suggestions about it. Therefore, this study has made another attempt and analyzed its effects.

- (20) I did the things that all kids do. Liked to color. Liked to fingerprint. Play the stock market.
(Family Ties, My Name is Alex, Episode 119)

- (21) I like to know what I know. See it. Be able to prove it on a test. (Ibid.)

In examples (17) to (21), when these utterances are more closely observed, it is revealed that the elliptical sentences respond to their previous respective sentences. At the same time, it seems that a list of phrases makes the structure stand out. In other words, listing three phrases in sentences with subject ellipsis has an effect on emphasis in the discourse as a whole.

Next, examples (22) to (27) are examined in order to investigate whether (b) suspiciously repeating what the previous speaker said in the elliptical sentences has an effect on emphasis in the discourse.

- (22) A: I don't notice any difference.
B: No difference? (Family Ties, Speed Trap, Episode 25)

- (23) A: Alex you've been taking them all week and you've been acting very weird.
B: Weird? Weird? (Ibid.)

- (24) A: Nick you might have to go to jail.
B: What? Jail? (Family Ties, D is For Date, Episode 122)

- (25) A: Me no spoof'em. Where you hide princess Tiger Lily?
B: Tiger Lily? (Peter Pan 2008: 58)

(26) A: I came to listen to the stories.

B: My stories?

(Peter Pan 2008: 30)

(27) A: Because I have to grow up tomorrow.

B: Grow up?

(Ibid.)

In examples (22) to (27), it is observed that the utterance in part B of each one is suspiciously repeated in response to what the previous speaker said. That is, it is expected that repeating what the previous speaker said in the elliptical sentence, leads listeners to concentrate on the only focal point. Therefore, it can be said that this type also has the effect of emphasis on the discourse. Furthermore, the following examples, from (28) to (31), are shown in order to demonstrate that the elliptical sentence provides new information.

(28) A: Alex! Glad you could make it down to the final thirty seconds of dinner.

(Family Ties, Speed Trap, Episode 25)

(29) A: Do you mind? Were trying to study.

B: Oh sorry.

(Family Ties, D is For Date, Episode 122)

(30) A: Are you kidding me? Dad, people loved that.

B: Maybe so, but I thought you could have stopped there. No need to get into projected earnings.

(Family Ties, My Name is Alex, Episode 119)

(31) A: Over there, Tink, in its den. Is it there? Must be here somewhere. (Peter Pan: 28)

In examples (28) to (31), it is observed that in the second utterance of each, the elliptical sentence provides new information. In other words, the elimination of the subject makes what speakers really want to say more emphasized. That way, listeners are forced to concentrate on the beginning of the elliptical sentence, that is, what the speaker wants to emphasize. For example, in (29), the phrase *Were trying* in the elliptical sentence is emphasized, as if the speaker is trying to express his or her feeling that “I was trying and I want to study now, so please don’t disturb me”. The following examples, from (32) to (36), show type (d), responding to previous questions.

(32) A: Are you feeling all right?

B: Never better.

(Family Ties, Speed Trap, Episode 25)

(33) A: Is “The Miracle of Life” on yet?

B: Just started.

(Ibid.)

(34) A: How do I look?

B: Great, go!

(Ibid.)

(35) A: Hey, Jen, what’s new in the annoying little world of teen love?

B: Nothing good.

(Family Ties, D is For Date, Episode 122)

(36) A: Is he gone, Smee?

B: Aye, Captain, all clear. Nothing to worry about.

(Peter Pan: 46)

In examples (32) to (36), the utterance in part B of each one offers a response to the previous

question. All of the elliptical sentences from (32) to (36) start with adjectives or adverbs, and are emotional expressions with a nuance of the emphasis, for example, “never”, “just”, and “great”.

To sum up, this experiment suggests that subject ellipsis has an effect of emphasis in discourse. That effect of emphasis could be observed by analyzing the expressions of: (a) giving a list of phrases, (b) suspiciously repeating what the previous speaker said, (c) providing new information, and (d) responding to questions. That tendency is observed not only in the utterances among the adult speakers in the TV program but also in the conversations among children in the children’s story *Peter Pan*.

Therefore, as an effect of subject ellipsis, “emphasis” should be added to the following effects such as “request for information in which affirmative or negative response is being specified (yes/no questions)” (Ricento 1987: 764), “elaboration or commentary on a proximal utterance” (Ricento 1987: 765), “echoic responses” (Ricento 1987: 766), “ending a conversation or changing a topic” (Nariyama 2004: 248), “softening the implicatures by creating an indirect request/suggestion (Nariyama 2004: 249), and “conventions of use”, which “guides the addressee directly to the desired interpretation” (Mackenzie 1998: 278).

1.3. The Goals of this Study

The main goal of the present study is to pursue the mechanism of how subject ellipsis occurs in sentences with a third person subject, especially inanimate subjects including *it*. To date, various factors concerned with subject ellipsis have been proposed on the basis of pragmatics. However, with regard to inanimate subjects including *it*, when I pursue that mechanism only from a pragmatic point of view, there are limitations on comprehending it. Hence, the present study also attempts to discuss it from a semantic perspective, in addition to considering the pragmatic factors.

To that end, three major investigations are conducted: “Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* and Subject Ellipsis” (Chapter 5), “Subject Ellipsis and the Referentiality of the Subject: Perception Verbs *Feel*, *Look*, *Sound*, *Smell*, and *Taste*” (Chapter 6), and “Complement Structures of Verbs of Perception in Cases of Subject Ellipsis” (Chapter 7). Throughout this study, all of the investigations presented are supported by quantitative data derived from a large-scale corpus such as the *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*, which is new and valuable, compared with previous studies where some of the suggestions are not supported enough by authentic data.

There are three concrete goals to be attained in the present study. The first goal is to solve the problem of why subject ellipsis tends to occur more with percept verbs or experience verbs than with activity verbs (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999) among the perception verbs. The reason why such a phenomenon occurs is not sufficiently explained by any previous research. In order to solve that problem, the present study focuses on one of the perception verbs, *feel*, which has a distinct behavior from the other four perception verbs.⁸ To begin with, it examines changes in patterns with the verb *feel* chronologically and analyzes how the patterns have changed with the passage of time. This study then tries to identify the relationship between subject ellipsis and changes in grammatical patterns with the verb *feel*. The result of the investigations suggests an association with the process of “subjectification” (Langacker 1999: 297) (see Chapter 5) where the conceptualizer is not explicitly described in the expressions.

The second goal is to reveal the reason why there is a tendency for subject ellipsis to occur with inanimate subjects including *it*. As mentioned several times above, previous research on subject ellipsis has tended to focus on the subjects *I* and *you*. Previously, ellipsis of third person subjects, such as *it*, or inanimate subjects has rarely been discussed by

⁸ The verb *feel* has “emotional states” (Biber et al. 1999) (see §5.1.1).

researchers. It is only mentioned that subject ellipsis tends to occur with the subject *it* without any persuasive explanations (Nariyama 2004, Carter and McCarthy 2006). The second goal of this study is to reveal whether inanimate subjects including *it* in sentences with perception verbs imply physical entities or abstract situations in elliptical sentences. Paying attention to the referent of the subject, this study focuses on the “referentiality” (Payne 2011) (see Chapter 6) of the subject.

The third goal is to examine the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information in the complement. As suggested earlier, it has been noted that subject ellipsis tends to occur more in sentences with lower information “with a non-first person subject” (Nariyama 2006). In order to pursue the relation between subject ellipsis and informativeness of the sentence, another investigation concerning the amount of information in the complement following each perception verb, *sound*, *feel*, and *look*, is conducted on *COHA* (see Chapter 7). Since results of the investigations in Chapter 6 reveal that subject ellipsis occurs more when the subject is less informative, it is hypothesized that a similar tendency can be observed.

1.4. Outline of the Study

This study consists of two parts. Part 1 is made up of four chapters, one of which (Chapter 4) provides theoretical framework. This part mainly provides and discusses the phenomena of subject ellipsis based on analysis from a pragmatic point of view. Part II is made up of four chapters, proposing a semantic approach to subject ellipsis in English. Five main case studies are conducted in this part on the *Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)* and the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. Subsequently, in Chapter 8, a summary of this study and the theoretical implications are discussed. In what follows, a summary of each chapter is presented.

In Chapter 1, first, the scope of the study is presented. Here, it is suggested that subject ellipsis occurs in English, despite the general view that English is a language which requires a grammatical subject (Fillmore 1986). To date, previous studies on subject ellipsis have mainly focused on the subjects *I* or *you*. In contrast to those previous studies, in this study, third person subjects, especially, *it* or inanimate subjects, are focused on; these types of subjects have received relatively little attention in the past. After introducing the scope of the study at the beginning, this chapter describes the types of subject ellipsis, the definition of subject ellipsis, and the effects of subject ellipsis on the sentence as a whole. §1.3 describes “The Goals of this Study” and this section, §1.4, gives the “Outline of the Study”.

Chapter 2 introduces previous studies on the factors that contribute to ellipsis, including those of subject ellipsis. In those studies, researchers indicate the main factors of ellipsis as the context, cohesion, a conversation style, “the law of least effort (Zipf 1949)”, co-occurrence with fixed expressions, variation of verbs, variation of subjects, informativeness of the sentences and turn-taking. These are mostly discussed from a pragmatic point of view. After reviewing those factors, the items of epistemic phrases and the inversion of clauses are introduced. They are not directly related to the factors contributing to subject ellipsis but to the phenomenon of subject ellipsis which occurs during the inversion of clauses.

In Chapter 3, this study itself presents further studies on subject ellipsis in addition to previous studies presented in Chapter 2. By using corpora in this study, the further studies are done in order to confirm the studies previously presented. To that end, this chapter conducts four case studies on conversation style, co-occurrence with fixed expressions, variation of verbs and variation of subjects. This chapter then mentions some problems that cannot be solved only from a pragmatic point of view.

Chapter 4 presents two major theoretical frameworks of this study: “subjectification”

(1999: 297) and “referentiality” (Payne 2011: 365). By the theory of the process of subjectification, this chapter explains the relationship between subject ellipsis and a “change in *focus*” (Langacker 1999: 301), which is one of the parameters in attenuation that can be observed in the process of subjectification. The theory of referentiality is then introduced, because this study considers that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and the type of subject referent. As for the definition of referentiality, the present study adopts the definition that a referential entity should be bounded and individuated, following the explanation by Payne (2011) that “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage” (Payne 2011: 365).

In Chapter 5, three case studies are done on corpora. In Case Study 1, an investigation is conducted to examine how patterns with the perception verb *feel* have changed from the 800s to the 1800s using the *OED*. As a result, the process of subjectification is observed with the passage of time. Moreover, it is investigated whether analogical expressions have an influence on these changes in patterns. Case Study 2 investigates changes in patterns with the verb *feel* from the 1800s to the 2000s using *COHA*. The results show that grammatical patterns with *feel* have mainly changed from SVO to SVC patterns chronologically. In Case Study 3, it is found that there is a tendency for subject ellipsis to occur with inanimate subjects, including the subject *it*. Furthermore, it is observed that the subject *it*, especially “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011: 204) is recognized in the case of subject ellipsis.

Following the results of the case studies in Chapter 5, in Chapter 6, the relationship between subject ellipsis and the referentiality of the subject is pursued, by conducting some investigations concerning the perception verbs *feel*, *look*, *sound*, *smell*, and *taste*. The findings of these case studies suggest that subject ellipsis tends to occur more with subjects that imply abstract situations or events than with subjects that show real entities, among inanimate subjects. That is, it can be implied that the referentiality of subjects is one of the factors of

subject ellipsis.

Chapter 7 examines the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information in the complement which is located after the verb. According to previous studies, subject ellipsis tends to occur more when the amount of information in a sentence as a whole is lower in the case of a “non-first person subject” (Nariyama 2006). In order to confirm the suggestion, Chapter 7 examines sentences with the perception verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look* which appear in the 2000s in *COHA*. As a result, contrary to that argument from previous studies, it reveals that subject ellipsis occurs more when the complement that is located after the verb, has a larger amount of information. These phenomena are grammatically explained by the inversion between the main clause and the subordinate clause. Afterward, the relation between subject ellipsis and subjectification is discussed from a cognitive perspective.

Lastly, Chapter 8 presents a summary of this study and the theoretical implications. In terms of theoretical implications, the present study suggests that the SVC (Subject + Verb + Complement) type of percept verbs among perception verbs should be classified into two groups. The two different types of patterns are then classified into the same category in terms of percept verbs (see Table 2 in Chapter 8). That is, instead of the classification provided by “the basic paradigm of the verbs of perception” (Viberg 1984: 125, Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999:45), this study provides a “classification of *feel* in SVC type” (see Figure 1 in Chapter 8).

Chapter 2. Previous Pragmatics Studies of Ellipsis

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 presents various previous studies that are related to subject ellipsis. They are mainly discussed from a pragmatic point of view. The earlier sections discuss recoverability of the subject, the previous context, the situational context, cohesion, conversation style, “the law of least effort” (Zipf 1949),¹ fixed expressions, variations of the verbs, variations of the subjects, informativeness, and turn-taking. Although the context and recoverability of the subjects are considered separately here, the factor of recoverability is discussed in the section on context in §2.2.1. This is because the context in an immediate situation and the recoverability of a subject in a sentence are inseparable from each other² when the subject is omitted and recovered. Therefore, the notion of the recoverability of the subject as a factor in subject ellipsis is discussed along with the “context” in §2.2.1.

In §2.2.9 and §2.2.10, the notions of epistemic phrases and postpositional sentences are discussed as related factors that contribute to subject ellipsis. Unlike the factors mentioned in the earlier sections, these are not directly related to the factors contributing to subject ellipsis, but to the phenomenon of subject ellipsis which occurs during³ the reversal of clauses, between the main clause and the subordinate clause.

¹ “The law of least effort” is explained in §2.2.4.

² Nariyama (2004: 239) indicates that “subject ellipsis occurs when the subject is recoverable by virtue of information contained elsewhere in the context. In other words, recoverability is the key to the application of subject ellipsis”. Furthermore, Kuno (1981: 8) suggests that “the element which can be eliminated should be recoverable from the linguistic or the nonlinguistic context”.

³ There is a possibility that the phenomenon of subject ellipsis occurs simultaneously or after the reversal of clauses.

2.2. Summary of Previous Pragmatics Studies of Ellipsis

2.2.1. Context

2.2.1.1. Previous Context

When we have a conversation with others, we cannot understand what the other speakers have said without thinking about the context. For example, if a speaker says “she’s coming home soon” after the speaker mentions a topic about “her”, the listener can understand who “she” is. In other words, in this case, when the topic of the person – that is, *she* – is already mentioned prior to that part of the conversation, the listener can understand whom the speaker is talking about. That is, the information which is mentioned prior to the current part of the conversation is recognized as the previous context. That previous context is an essential factor for understanding conversation and also for the occurrence of ellipsis.

When we talk about the context, it is necessary to consider Grice’s (1975) “Maxims of Conversation”.⁴ Grice’s “Maxims of Conversation” consists of four elements. One of them, the “Maxim of Relevance” (or “Maxim of Relation”) notes that “an utterance does not exist in isolation from other utterances [or the] discourse environment” (Nariyama 2004: 239). This means that people normally do not talk about things which are not related to the previous context. Therefore, when we follow the rule of the “Maxim of Relevance”, it is assumed that we are able to retrieve an implicit subject judging from the previous context, even though the subject is not expressed.

Concerning the relationship between ellipsis in general and the previous context, Kuno (1981:10) mentions that “it is possible to bring in ellipsis when listeners are able to retrieve the full form of the sentence from the previous context [Translated by Shibata]”. Kuno (1981: 12)

⁴ Grice (1975: 45) suggests that conversation takes place under the rule of the “co-operative principle”. The intuitive principle which guides exchanges of conversation is called the “Maxims of Conversation”. (Verschueren 1999: 32). The “Maxims of Conversation” consists of four elements; these include: “The Maxim of Quantity”, “The Maxim of Quality”, “The Maxim of Relation”, and “The Maxim of Manner”.

also provides some examples in order to show how the subject is retrieved from the previous context in the following way.

(1) A: What surprised Mary?

B: \emptyset Realizing that John was a spy surprised Mary/her. Kuno (1981: 12)

(The eliminated subject is represented with the \emptyset symbol.)

(2) A: What surprised who?

B: * \emptyset Realizing that John was a spy surprised Mary.

(The eliminated subject is represented with the \emptyset symbol.) (Ibid.)

Kuno (1981: 12) explains why the sentence in (1B) is an appropriate one even though the subject is eliminated. It suggests that “the eliminated subject \emptyset , that is, *Mary*, can be retrieved from the previous context in the sentence of [(1A)] [Translated by Shibata]”. Therefore, it can be determined that sentence (1B) is appropriate.

In contrast to (1), Kuno (1981: 12) suggests a reason why the sentence in (2B) is an inappropriate answer to the question in (2A). In (2B), the eliminated subject \emptyset – that is, *Mary* – can be predicted only with the following context. Therefore, the listener does not have a clue for retrieving the implicit subject in the sentence (2B). Thus, it is determined that sentence (2B) is unacceptable. Thus, these example sentences indicate that the context, that is, “the previous context” not “the following context”, is an essential factor when retrieving an omitted subject in the case of subject ellipsis.

2.2.1.2. Situational Context

I have talked about the previous context⁵ as an essential factor of subject ellipsis in Section 2.2.1.1. In addition to this, in terms of subject ellipsis, it has been suggested that situational context⁶ is especially relevant when retrieving an implicit subject (Thomas 1979; Nariyama 2004). Nariyama (2004) argues that the omitted subjects “I” and “you” are identified by the situational context. To be more precise, the situational context means “knowledge and understanding derived from the environment which the speaker and the addressee share” and this includes “any perception at the site of the discourse, mutual/background knowledge, social setting, register and relationship between speech participants” (Nariyama 2004: 240).

Likewise, in the case of the implicit subjects “I” and “you” in elliptical sentences, Thomas (1979: 48) claims that omitted subjects can be retrieved from the situational context, which includes knowledge and some perception, as mentioned above. Thomas (1979) and Nariyama (2004) suggests that the situational context is one of the main factors for retrieving eliminated subjects.

Elsewhere, Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145) mention that “situational ellipsis”⁷ differs from textual and structural ellipsis in the following way. Regarding situational ellipsis, they suggest that “the unrealized items of the conventional account of structure are retrievable from the immediate situation”. On the other hand, as for the other two types of ellipses, “structural

⁵ The previous context is included in situational ellipsis or in the linguistic context.

⁶ Nariyama (2004) suggests that the linguistic context is also important, saying that “linguistic context provides knowledge and understanding created by the combination of the linguistic coding of the grammaticality of a sentence and reference to previous utterances”.

(i) A: How’s Nancy?

B: Doesn’t look well.

In this case, it is possible to identify that the omitted subject would be ‘it’, because, from linguistic knowledge, people know that the subject which is placed prior to the word ‘doesn’t’ indicates the third person.

⁷ Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145) use the term “situational ellipsis”, however, it can be recognized that “situational ellipsis” is a case where subject ellipsis occurs and the subject can be retrieved based on “the situational context”.

ellipsis occurs when a purely structural element is omitted” and “textual ellipsis is retrieved from the text itself” (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 146). Thus, situational ellipsis is the only case where the immediate situation or the immediate context is concerned.

Furthermore, Carter and McCarthy (1995: 146) suggest that the context is a more important factor contributing to subject ellipsis, as well as genre, compared to formality or familiarity problems. Thus, several researchers studying subject ellipsis point out that the context, especially the situational context, is one of the most important factors contributing to subject ellipsis. In this respect, their view is different from that of Quirk et al. (1985), who suggest that the occurrence of subject ellipsis is only related to formality and familiarity problems in the conversation style.

2.2.2. Cohesion

When some kind of ellipsis occurs in discourse, the phenomenon of the ellipsis has a certain effect on the text. One of the effects is the cohesion of the text (Halliday and Hasan 1976). According to the definition of “cohesion” in *Eigo Kyoiku Yogo Jiten* or *A Guide to English Language Teaching Terminology* (2009: 55), “cohesion is to constitute a text by explicitly connecting a word and a word or a sentence and a sentence [Translated by Shibata]”. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) suggest that the concept of cohesion exists in the text and the functions constituting the concept of cohesion is reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. First, I will touch upon what the “text” means before moving on to discuss cohesion. Then, we will observe how ellipsis is related to the cohesion of the text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 1) mention that “the word TEXT is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken and written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole”. It is difficult to distinguish a text from a sentence. However, a significant difference between a text and a sentence is that “a text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a

clause or a sentence” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 1). “A text is best regarded as a SEMANTIC unit: a unit not of form but of meaning” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2). As another characteristic of the text, it is suggested that “a text has texture” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2). The text gains TEXTURE “from the fact that it [the text] functions as a unity” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2). The following example shows how TEXTURE works. Then it also describes that this “texture is provided by the cohesive RELATION” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2) of the words.

(3) Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fireproof dish.

(Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2)

In example (3), it is apparent that *them* in the second sentence indicates *six cooking apples* in the first sentence. We call such a situation anaphora.⁸ “This ANAPHORIC function of *them* gives cohesion to the two sentences” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 2). In this way, texture is provided by the cohesiveness “that exists between *them* and *six cooking apples*” (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 2). In other words, the cohesiveness between *them* and *six cooking apples* generates the texture. Here, it is helpful to define *cohesion*. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) define *cohesion* as follows:

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text. Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of

⁸ When a word or a phrase refers to another word or phrase indicating a certain object and it indicates the object, it is called *anaphora*. Pronoun, reflexive, demonstrative, and definite description have a function of *anaphora*. If something is *anaphoric*, it is in the state of anaphora (Allot 2014). The followings are examples of anaphora.

- (i) John admires himself.
- (ii) John loves his mother.
- (iii) A man walks in the park. He whistles.

(Allot 2014: 33)

some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

(Halliday and Hasan 1976: 4)

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 5) state that “cohesion is expressed through the stratal organization of language”. “The stratal organization” (see Figure 1) consists of three levels of coding: meaning, wording, and sounding/writing. Meaning has the semantic system; wording has the lexicogrammatical system and grammar and vocabulary and sounding/writing has the phonological and orthographic systems. The following are the “strata” and “the stratal organization”, as described by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 5).

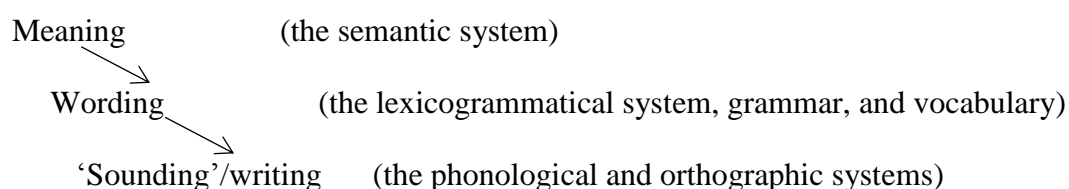


Figure 1. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 5)

Figure 1 can be explained more easily as follows. Meaning is changed into wording and wording is changed into sound or writing (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 5). At the level of wording, “the more general meaning is expressed through the grammar” and the more specific meanings are done through the vocabulary (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 5). Therefore, Halliday and Hasan (1976:6) mention that there are two types of cohesion: grammatical cohesion and lexical

cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction,⁹ while lexical cohesion includes two types: reiteration and collocation (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 288). The following are examples.

- (4) a. This is a fine hall you have here. I'm proud to be lecturing in it. (Reference)
b. This is a fine hall you have here. I've never lectured in a finer one. (Substitution)
c. This is a fine hall you have here. I've never lectured in a finer. (Ellipsis)

(Halliday and Hasan 1976: 146)

Examples (4a), (4b), and (4c) illustrate reference, substitution, and ellipsis, respectively. What is common among these three examples is that they are “forms of presupposition, devices for identifying something by referring to something that is already there” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 144).

For instance, example (4a) shows “reference”. The reference item *it* in the second sentence refers to the word *hall* in the first sentence. In such a way, a reference is replaced by what it presupposes.¹⁰ For an additional explanation, “reference is presupposition at the semantic level” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145) (see Figure 1). Also, “a reference item signals that the meaning is recoverable” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145). “It is regularly used in textual (endophoric) presupposition, pointing backwards (anaphoric) or sometimes forwards (cataphoric)” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145)¹¹.

⁹ Halliday and Hasan (1976: 6) indicate that “conjunction is on the borderline of the two; mainly grammatical”. This study does not talk about ‘conjunction’.

¹⁰ The reference item is not always the actual word form. For example, “a form of situational (exophoric presupposition)” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145) is included.

¹¹ The word *anaphoric* or *anaphora* is explained in Footnote 8. *Cataphoric* is the opposite of *anaphoric*. When a pronoun, demonstrative, or definite description precedes something in the following way (see (i) below), it is called *cataphora*. To be *cataphoric* means to be in the state of *cataphora*. In the example (i) below, the word *his*, which depends on *John*, precedes *John*. Such a situation is *cataphoric*.

“Substitution” is “presupposition at the level of words and structures” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145). Example (4b) is an example of “substitution”. The word *one* in the second sentence refers to the word *hall* in the first sentence. “Unlike reference, substitution is essentially a textual relation; it exists primarily as an anaphoric (or occasionally cataphoric) device” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145).

Example (4c) illustrates the phenomenon of “ellipsis”. The word following *finer* in the second sentence is eliminated through ellipsis because the presupposed word, that is, *hall*, exists in the first sentence. This means that the implicit word (“hall”) is recoverable. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that substitution and ellipsis belong to the same category, as Table 1 (See next page) shows. What is different between the two is that “a substitution counter occurs in the slot, and this must therefore be deleted if the presupposed item is replaced, whereas in the latter the slot is empty” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145). In other word, the ellipsis is a kind of substitution and it is called “substitution by zero” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 89).

To sum up, we have observed that reference, substitution, and ellipsis are types of grammatical cohesion. In other words, they are “forms of presupposition, devices for identifying something by referring to something that is already there” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 144). Since the presupposed item is in a preceding sentence, these devices such as reference, substitution, and ellipsis have a cohesive effect (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145). Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of reference, substitution, and ellipsis, respectively; ellipsis is situated along with substitution as one of the types of grammatical cohesion.

(i) His mother loves John.

(Allot 2014: 33)

Table 1. Characteristics of Reference, Substitution and Ellipsis
(Halliday and Hasan 1976: 145)

| | <i>Reference</i> | <i>Substitution and ellipsis</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Level of abstraction</i> | semantic | lexicogrammatical |
| <i>Primary source of presupposition</i> | situation | text |
| <i>What is presupposed?</i> | meanings | Items (i.e. words, groups, clauses) |
| <i>Is class preserved?</i> | not necessarily | yes |
| <i>Is replacement possible?</i> | not necessarily | yes |
| <i>Use as a cohesive device</i> | yes; anaphoric and cataphoric | Yes; anaphoric (occasionally cataphoric) |

2.2.3. Conversation style

It is generally suggested a conversation style is a factor that contributes to subject ellipsis (Carter and McCarthy 1995, Nariyama 2004). Carter and McCarthy (1995: 144) use the phrase “genre-classification” to classify conversation styles. These consist of “casual conversation”, “narratives”, “service encounters”, and “language-in-action”.¹² Based on corpus research, Carter and McCarthy (1995: 145) report that “situational ellipsis is particularly apparent in casual data” and that “it is also notably present in language-in-action data”. Furthermore, they note that situational ellipsis can be seen in service-encounter examples, while situational ellipsis cannot be seen in narrative data “where the participants and processes of the story are

¹² Carter and McCarthy (1995: 144) categorize talk or conversation style into four kinds: “casual conversation, narratives, service encounters, and language-in-action”. Casual conversation is defined as “bi-and multi-party informal talk with frequent turn-changes, no pre-set topics, equally distributed or shifting conversational roles”. Narratives are “stretches of talk amenable to narrative-structure analysis according to accepted models of narrative”. Service encounters are “talk between server and served parties in shops, restaurants, etc.” language-in-action is “talk which accompanies some real-world task for example, talk while preparing food, moving furniture, etc.”

usually separated in time and place from the moment of telling” (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 145). To sum up their ideas, genre is one of the important elements that contributes to subject ellipsis. The following is an example sentence whose style belongs to language-in-action in informal service encounters and casual talk; subject ellipsis can be observed.

(5) [At a dry cleaner’s (02) is leaving a pair of trousers for cleaning]

(01) Wednesday at four be okay

(02) Er yeah that’s fine. ***Just check the pockets a minute.***

(Carter and McCarthy 1995: 147)

According to Carter and McCarthy (1995: 147), in example (5) (02), the word *I’ll* is not realized prior to the sentence ***Just check the pockets a minute*** in this conversation where the talk style is language-in-action in informal service encounters and also casual talk.

Nariyama (2004: 258) mentions that “subject ellipsis requires casualness of utterances both in register and meaning” and that “it is found in casual conversation among speech participants with a close relationship and a casual topic of conversation”. In addition, Nariyama (2004: 243) implies that subject ellipsis occurs in places “where the atmosphere of the scenes is casual”. Nariyama (2004) defines the term “casual” as when “speech participants have a close relationship”; in most of the cases the “content of the conversation and the feelings of the speech participants” are casual. Moreover, Nariyama (2004) finds a correlation between subject ellipsis and “particular scenes and topics” in films, after investigating the results of case studies.

Quirk et al. (1985: 896) indicate that subject ellipsis occurs only in familiar English. In other words, Quirk et al. (1985) claim that informality is the only condition which leads to subject ellipsis. This view is quite different from that of Carter and McCarthy (1995: 146), who suggest that “genre and context are the two key factors” leading to subject ellipsis.

2.2.4. The Law of Least Effort

Thomas (1979: 48) states that “the economy - frequency explanation may also, along with the other explanations, apply to the conventional elision of first and second subject”. “The economy frequency explanation” is derived from the theory of the “law of least effort” (Zipf 1949) by Martinet (1964: 167). The theory of the “law of least effort” (Zipf 1949) was originally laid out in the following way. People try to make an effort to minimize the labor when they do something (Zipf 1949). Moreover, Martinet (1962: 139) refers to “least effort” in “the principle of least effort”: according to that principle, least effort “makes him restrict his output of energy, both mental and physical, to the minimum compatible with achieving his ends”. Thus, referring to the “law of least effort” (Zipf 1949), Thomas (1979) argues that ellipsis is related to the phenomenon of the economic efficiency of the language.

Mackenzie (1998: 267) suggests that ellipsis has a relationship with the principle of Functional Grammar. In the theory of the Functional Grammar, language is recognized “as an efficient tool of communication” (Mackenzie 1998: 267). Furthermore, it is assumed that “a speaker will in principle invest a linguistic expression with no more information than is needed for satisfactory interpretation” (Mackenzie 1998: 267). Although Mackenzie (1998) and Thomas (1979) use different expressions concerning the efficiency of language use, both of them suggest that the phenomenon of ellipsis has a certain relationship with the economic efficiency of language.

2.2.5. Fixed Expressions

Carter and McCarthy (2006: 187) suggest that subject ellipsis tends to occur in sentences with fixed expressions, because “these can be assumed to be known by all participants”. Carter and McCarthy (1997: 15) define fixed expressions as “language forms which are routinized and patterned”. They mention that “fixed expressions play an important part in spoken language in

particular in maintaining and establishing relationships and in reinforcing shared knowledge and social conventions, and referring to common cultural understandings” (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 15). Analyzing some data from “a mini-corpus of conversational English which forms part of a larger spoken corpus” (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 143), Carter and McCarthy (1995: 147) find a correlation between subject ellipsis and fixed expressions. Carter and McCarthy (1995: 147) also report that “in the mini-corpus, it is noticeable that, on many occasions, items are ellipted from what are often termed lexical phrases”. The following are example sentences with fixed expressions.

(6) A: We did quite well out of it actually.

B: great.

A: Mm *saved a fortune*. (Carter and McCarthy 1995: 147)

In example (6A), a fixed expression, *saved a fortune*, is used and the implicit subject *we* prior to the sentence *saved a fortune* is eliminated.

(7) *Good thing* I remembered the umbrella. (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 187)

In example (7), a fixed expression, *good thing*, appears at the beginning of the sentence. When the implicit subject is retrieved, the sentence can be realized as *It is/was a good thing....*

(8) Oh, *good job* I’ve left a little hole, then. (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 187)

In example (8), *good job* is also a fixed expression. We can retrieve *it’s a* prior to the fixed expression *good job*.

With regard to fixed expressions or conventional expressions without subjects, Nariyama (2004: 252) suggests that “conventional expressions such as *Gotta go/Dunno/Could be/Sorry/See you later/Not a problem* seem to occur anywhere and are interpreted without reference to their linguistic context”. For a reason why ellipsis occurs in sentences with fixed expressions, Nariyama (2004: 256) explains that conventional expressions, or fixed expressions “are set in many ways not allowing variations of content, which make the identity of an ellipted subject recoverable”.

Mackenzie (1998: 278) defines fixed expressions as “knowledge of the conventions of use, combined with awareness of the situation type in which speaker and hearer find themselves, that guides the addressee directly to the desired interpretation”. Furthermore, Mackenzie (1998: 278) notes that “this category covers *Thank you, How do you do?, Cheers!* as well as “(possibly abbreviated reference to) proverbs, aphorisms, slogans, etc.”. To sum up, the traditional studies mentioned above suggest that the fixedness of fixed expressions, that is, the fact that they have no variations or additions, leads hearers or addressees to recover omitted subjects.

2.2.6. Variations of Verbs and Variations of Subjects

Carter and McCarthy (2006: 183) mention that the subject *I* is “unnecessary in declaratives in informal speech” or in those “with lexical verbs (especially mental process verbs such as *think, reckon, guess, hope, like, love, wonder, suppose.*)”. The following are example sentences with the elimination of the initial *I*.

- (9) a. ***Like*** your new car (Understood: I like your new car.)
b. A: That was lovely.

B: **Hope** you've got a little bit of room left for afters.¹³ (= (1bB) in Chapter 1)

c. A: They used to wake us up in the night didn't they, scurrying up the walls.

B: Yeah. **Wonder** how they got up walls. (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183)

Example (9) shows that the subject *I* is eliminated with mental process verbs such as *like*, *hope*, and *wonder*. Likewise, Nariyama (2004: 254) suggests that first person subject ellipsis occurs “with privy verbs, such as ‘hate’, ‘love’, and ‘thought’”. Nariyama (2004) further points out that the subject *I* is often eliminated in declarative sentences with the verb “love”, while the subject *you* tends to be omitted in the interrogative ones with the verb “like”, referring to the “special status of first person”¹⁴ (Nariyama 2004: 255). Nariyama (2004: 255) explains the “the special status of first person” as follows. With regard to the subject *I*, “‘love’ conveys a request as well as degree of preference which is privy to the speaker” and “the speaker can state his or her own feeling, as well as make a request, but cannot do for others’ feeling” (Nariyama 2004: 254). Thus, Nariyama (2004) suggests a relationship between a specific subject and a specific verb in elliptical sentences.

Concerning the subjects *I* and *you*, Thomas (1979: 46) also describes the special characteristics which those subjects have, referring to ‘internal feeling’ (Kuno 1973: 83-84). Regarding internal feeling, Thomas (1979: 46) suggests that “only the person concerned is aware of his own internal feelings” and that “verbs of internal feeling”,¹⁵ then, provide us with one explanation of the unmarked nature of ‘I’ and ‘you’ subjects” (Thomas 1979: 47). Thus, Thomas (1979: 47) also suggests that the subjects *I* and *you* are recoverable in elliptical

¹³ As mentioned earlier, “*afters* is an informal word for dessert” (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183).

¹⁴ The idea of the “special status of the first person” was originally suggested by Kuno (1973), who calls this special status “internal feeling”. Kuno (1973: 83-84) explains ‘internal feeling’ as follows: “The speaker has no basis for making an affirmative judgement on the second or third person’s internal feeling. He can express only his own internal feeling”.

¹⁵ According to Kuno (1973: 83-84), the verbs of ‘internal feeling’ include the verb *want*.

sentences since the subjects *I* and *you* have a special status, different from that of other subjects.

Regarding the ellipsis of the subject *it*, Nariyama (2004) suggests that sentences with the implicit subject *it* are not expressed from the perspective of the subject *it* but from another perspective. The following are some examples of this.

(10) (It) doesn't matter.

(11) (It) looks/sounds good.

(12) (It) would be nice.

(13) (It's) been a long time. (Nariyama 2004: 255)

Although Nariyama (2004) suggests that sentences with the implicit subject *it* are not expressed from the perspective of the subject *it*, she fails to explain this further. Elsewhere, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 185) note that the subject *it* is “often not needed”, however, no more explanation is offered. Regarding the subject *it* in the case of the subject ellipsis, a lot of researchers have pointed out subject ellipsis with the implicit subject *it*, however, they have not fully discussed the reason(s) this subject ellipsis frequently occurs.

2.2.7. Information

Regarding the relationship between ellipsis in English and the information in the sentence, Kuno (1981:15) argues that “ellipsis occurs in order from the older and less important information to the newer and more important information. In other words, “the factors of the older and less important information cannot be left behind, eliminating the newer and more important information”. Here are some examples provided by Kuno (1981) to confirm whether this assertion is reliable.

(14) A: Were you still a small boy in 1960?

B: Yes, I was still a small boy ∅

(15) A: Were you born in 1960?

B: *Yes, I was born ∅.

(Kuno 1981: 16)

In examples (14A) and (15A), the adverb phrases “in 1960” appear at the end of the sentences and, seemingly, the function of the adverb in each case is not different from the other (Kuno (1981: 16). Nevertheless, ellipsis is allowed to occur in example (14), but not in (15). Kuno (1981: 16-19) explains this phenomenon in the following manner. In example (14B), “still a small boy” is newer and more important information than “in 1960”, which is older and less important information. Therefore, the ellipsis makes sense, as explained in the statement above about (14). However, in example (15), the phrase “born” is older and lower information than “in 1960”. This means that the newer information, that is, “in 1960”, cannot be eliminated. That is, examples (14) and (15) successfully demonstrate that “ellipsis occurs in order from the older and less important information to the newer and more important information, which is suggested by Kuno (1981: 15).

2.2.7.1. Informativeness

In §2.2.7, we observed which phrase should be eliminated first in the case of ellipsis. This section turns to the amount of information in elliptical sentences. Traditional studies have paid less attention to the amount of the information in elliptical sentences. As for informativeness, Nariyama (2006) suggests that subject ellipsis is more restricted in sentences with “non-first

person subject”¹⁶ than those with “first person subject”. That is, Nariyama (2004) argues that “first person ellipted sentences can express multiple pieces of information in one sentence, whereas second person ellipted sentences can only include a small or minimal amount of information”. The following are examples of ellipted sentences with the implicit subjects ‘I’ and ‘you’.

(16) (You’ve) gotta bike?

(17) (*) (You’ve) gotta red mountain bike in the garage?

(18) (I’ve) gotta bike.

(19) (I’ve) gotta red mountain bike in the garage. (Nariyama 2004: 253)

In examples (16) and (17), the implicit subject is “you”. The amount of information increases in example (17) compared to (16). When it increases in (17), it is observed that an elliptical sentence with the implicit subject “you” is not accepted. This suggests that elliptical sentences with the implicit subject “you” rarely exist when the sentences are informative.

In examples (18) and (19), the implicit subject is “I”. Similar to the case of (16) and (17), example (19) has more information than (18). However, unlike example (17), the sentence in example (19) is accepted even though the amount of information increases in the ellipted sentence.

In summary, Nariyama (2004: 253) argues that in terms of the subject ‘you’, “when more information is added, sentences with a second person subject¹⁷ becomes less acceptable” in the

¹⁶ In 2006 Nariyama (2006) used the term “non-first person subject” instead of “you” or “a second person subject (2004)”, when giving a similar explanation.

¹⁷ As mentioned in Footnote 16, Nariyama uses the term “you” or “a second person subject” in 2004 but “non-first person subject” in 2006.

subjectless sentence. In contrast, this rule does not apply to sentences with the subject ‘I’ (Nariyama 2004: 253).

2.2.8. Turn-taking

Conversational turn-taking occurs every time the turn of the speaker changes. It might sound strange that there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and turn-taking. However, judging from the theory of “cohesion” in Section 2.2.2, where ellipsis has a role in the cohesiveness of the text, it is understandable that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and turn-taking, in that the conversation occurs between the preceding sentence and the sentence being spoken.

Ricento (1987: 768)¹⁸ proposes that “there is a strong positive correlation between turn-taking patterns and the precise degree to which clausal ellipsis occurs”. That is, Ricento (1987) suggests that there is a relationship between turn-taking and ellipsis on the condition that the interlocutors can retrieve an implicit word from the previous context. The following (20) is an example of discourse exchanged among friends. In the discourse in (20), Ricento (1987) focuses on the relationship between turn-taking and ellipsis, showing how the conversation takes place. The interlocutors are talking about “the setting for a film they have just seen (the *Pear Film*) for the benefit of Carol, who has not seen the film”. (Ricento 1987: 752) (A=Anne, C=Carol, S=Suzan, L=Lynn)

(20) Discourse collected from the *Pear Film*

1. A: Oh, maybe we should mention that it’s really, it looks like a warm day, too, an’ clear

¹⁸ Ricento (1987: 751) also suggests that there is less need “in English conversation to use subject pronouns, complete predicates, and complete clauses, since the information necessary for a coherent interpretation of such elliptical or reduced utterances is easily retrievable from prior discourse”. To put it more simply, it is suggested that complete sentences (e.g. subject + verb) are not always necessary in English conversation if the implicit words are retrievable.

2. blue skies an' the sun is out an' the- both the man and the boy are wearing wide-brimmed hats, y'
3. know // sort of
4. C: // like cowboy hats
5. S: No.
6. L: No, sort of like, they are made sort of like, um-
7. S: like a //farmer hat
8. L: straw
9. C: Um, big brim // or-
10. S: straw, big
11. S: big, like real // big brim
12. S: // Yeah, but it-it curves
13. A: Not real big, no
14. S: it curves, though.
15. C: So, it's like more like a peasant's hat than a sombrero, for instance?
16. A: Yeah
17. S: Yeah
18. L: Yeah (Ricento 1987: 752)

In the discourse in (20), we can observe that a lot of ellipses occur in the conversation. Based on (20), Ricento (1987: 752) reports that out of 16 conversational turns, “11 turns contain no verbs or subject, yet communication is not hampered”. These 11 turns include those in lines 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, and 18. Concerning those results, Ricento (1987: 753) proposes that “the sharing of consciousness” occurs among the multi-party conversation in turn-taking places. That “sharing of consciousness” (Ricento 1987: 753) produces “units of discourse within

individual conversational turns, which, if analyzed in isolation, would appear to violate notions of discourse unit”¹⁹ (Ricento 1987: 753). In other words, ellipsis, which does not usually occur grammatically based on the rule of the discourse unit, occurs in turn-taking in multi-party conversations where “sharing of consciousness” is produced.

Furthermore, Ricento (1987: 753) describes another result of the data²⁰ from the case study, saying that “the more ‘monologic’ a conversation becomes, the less likely it is that clausal ellipsis will occur”. The following discourse excerpts in (21) and (22) are examples from that data. Examples (21) and (22) show how conversation is exchanged in a two-party conversation, illustrating “collaborative construction”.²¹

(21) C: What does it sound like, basically?

Snap?

S: *Like a pear with a microphone in it.*

(22) C: How does he get the basket on his bicycle?

S: There’s, he has a, um, uh, like a,

A: a rack

S: *a rack, yeah, for carrying things.*

C: *on the rack?*

¹⁹ According to the traditional way of thinking about the notion of the discourse unit, a discourse unit consists of subject, verb, and argument (Givon 1979, Pawley and Syder 1977). However, Ricento (1987: 753) considers the discourse unit to be a “conversational turn”.

²⁰ “The data for the study consist of four sets of transcripts of English conversation. One set, consisting of 5500 words”, while the “other three sets contain fewer words (924, 1134 and 1280)” (Ricento 1987: 757). All of them are films, from the *Pear Stories*, *Party for the Teacher*, *Family Dinner*, and *Going to a Race*.

²¹ Falk (1980, as cited in Ricento 1987: 762) “labels ‘conversational duet in which 2 interlocutors may act as one, resulting in interactional patterns which are not typical in speaker-auditor transactions. However, in collaborative constructions, one speaker begins and another speaker finishes a complete thought with minimal overlapping”.

S: *on the front.*

C: *a rack, // not a basket?*

Ricento (1987: 762)

We can observe the instances of ellipsis (written in italics) in examples (21) and (22), where subjects and verbs are missing. However, the implicit words are easily recoverable. For instance, in example (21), the sentence *Like a pear with a microphone in it* can be understood as *It sounds like a pear with a microphone in it*. In example (22), the sentence *a rack, yeah, for carrying things* can be understood as *He has a rack, yeah, for carrying things*. These discourse excerpts show that “this sort of two-party construction across conversational turns” is “a structure not encountered in monologic data” (Ricento 1987: 762).

As another result of the data from the film, Ricento (1987) also mentions that more ellipsis occurs when the number of turns among the interlocutors is larger, even though the number of interlocutors is about the same. Thus, Ricento (1987: 768) suggests that there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and “turn-taking patterns”. At the same time, he also implies that that relationship is one example of “how particular social behavior influences the grammar of a particular type of speech genre, conversation”.

2.2.9. Epistemic Phrases

In this study in Chapter 7, an investigation is conducted regarding *complement structures of the verbs of perception in the case of subject ellipsis*. In that chapter, the phenomenon of the reversion of main clauses and subordinate clauses with *look like* is observed. In relation to this reversion of clauses, “epistemic phrases” or “epistemic parentheticals” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313), which are considered to become discourse markers after the reversion of clauses, are discussed here.

In (23), (24), and (25) below, it is commonly considered that the transition from example

(23) to example (25) illustrates the “process of ‘*that*-deletion’, i.e. an alteration between constructions” like (23) and (24). Or it has been recognized as the transition of the constructions “with and without *that*” between (23) and (24) (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). However, Thompson and Mulac (1991: 313) argue that the following change of patterns is the grammaticalization of “epistemic phrases” rather than “a process of *that*-deletion”.

(23) I think that we’re definitely moving towards being more technological.

(24) I think *O* exercises is really beneficial, to anybody.

(25) It’s just your point of view you know what you like to do in your spare time *I think*.

(Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313)

In other words, according to Thompson and Mulac (1991: 313), the transition from (23) to (25) is not “*that*-deletion”, but “an alternation between constructions” like (23), “in which *I* and *think* are main subject and verb, with *that* introducing a complement clause”. In examples (24) and (25), *I think* is an epistemic phrase; it expresses “the degree of speaker commitment, functioning roughly as an epistemic adverb such as *maybe* with respect to the clause it is associated with” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). Likewise, this study considers that the phenomena of the reversal of sentences with *looks like* in Chapter 7 behaves similarly to the “epistemic phrases” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313) discussed here.

Moreover, Quirk et al. (1985) have an idea similar to that of Thompson and Mulac (1991), which is that epistemic phrases such as *I think* are considered discourse markers, which “express the speaker’s certainty (or concession), [and] express an emotional attitude toward the content of the adjoined clause” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1114-1115).

Elsewhere, Brinton and Traugott (2005: 137) also consider clauses such as *I think* as one of the phenomena of grammaticalization that has a change in the original meaning. They

classify phrasal discourse markers including *I think* into four kinds. That is, “subject + verb (+object) matrix clauses [see (26a)], imperative + subject (+object) matrix clauses [(26b)], adjunct adverbial/relative clauses [(26c)], or adverbial prepositional phrases [(26c)]” (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 137). They are shown as follows.

(26)

- a. first-person: *I say* (>*say*), *I mean*, *I think*, *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I reckon*, *I pray* you (>*pray*), *I pray thee* (> *priethe*), *I thank you* (> *thank you*, *thanks*). *I’m afraid*, *I’m sorry*, etc. as well as impersonal ME *me thinks/thinketh/thinketh* (> *methinks/methinketh*)
second-person: *you see*, *you know* (> *y’know*), *you realize*
third-person: *God forbid*, ME *God woot* (> *Goddot*, *Goddoth*, *Godote*)
- b. *look ye* (> *look’ee*; also *lookahere*), *look to it* (*look to’t*, *lookit*), *hark ye* (*hark’ee*), *mind you*, *mark you*, *say to me/us* (> *say*)
- c. *if you please* (> *please*), *as it seems*, *as far as*, *insofar as* (*concerns/touches*, *regards*)
- d. *indeed*, *in fact*, *instead*, *besides*, *after all*, ME *for the nones*, OE *on an(e)* (ME *anon*), *anyway* (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 137)

In this study, the first two types, (26a) and (26b), are focused on. As for *I think* and *I guess* in (26a), Brinton and Traugott (2005: 137) assert that “the change from matrix clause (*I think that S*, *I guess that S*) to epistemic parenthetical (*I think*, *I guess*) involves changes conforming to Hopper’s (1991) principles of grammaticalization”. Hopper and Traugott (2003) identify some

characteristics of grammaticalization, including divergence, persistence, and layering.²² Regarding phrases such as *look you* in (26b), Brinton and Traugott (2005: 138) suggest that they exhibit “Hopper’s (1991) principles of divergence, persistence and laying”, as do the phrases in (26a). In addition, they are “decategorized from a full complement-taking verb construction to an invariable particle-like form (i.e. a shift from major (open) > minor (closed) class)” (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 138). During that transition, they also lose their original meaning and they come to “encode features of speaker attitude” (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 138). Example (27) illustrates how the word *look* has historically changed its use and meaning.

(27) a. But **lok** thous dele nought withl

‘but look you deal not therewith’

‘see to it that you do not deal with it’

(c.1386 Gower, *Confessio Amantis* 1. 1225 [Brinton 2001: 182])

b. **Look you**, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,/And so did I

(1594-1596 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* III, iv.3-4 [Brinton 2001: 184])

c. **Look’ee** Serjeant, no Coaxing, no Wheeding, d’ye see

(1706 Farquhar, *Recruiting Officer* i.i [OED] [Brinton 2001: 185])

(Brinton and Traugott 2005: 138)

In (27a), “*lok* in the first sentence is an imperative matrix clause” (Brinton and Traugott 2005:

²² Hopper (1991: 22) as cited in Hopper and Traugott (2003: 118) describes “divergence” as follows: “when a lexical form undergoes grammaticalization to a clitic or affix, the original lexical form may remain as an autonomous element and undergo the same changes as an ordinary lexical item”. Hopper (1991) as cited in Hopper and Traugott (2003: 96) suggests “persistence” (1991) of the phenomenon is described as follows: “When a form undergoes grammaticalization from a lexical to a grammatical item, some traces of its original lexical meanings tend to adhere to it, and details of its lexical history may be reflected in constraints on its grammatical distribution. This phenomenon has been called ‘persistence’ (Hopper 1991)”. Layering (Hopper and Traugott 2003) means that when a newer layer appears, the older layer does not disappear but coexists.

138), which has a meaning of attend to. In (27b), “*look you* is syntactically parenthetical and desemanticized” (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 138). This means that *look you* does not have its original meaning any more. In (27c), *look’ee* “shows further fusion and conveys the speaker attitude and impatience” (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 138). Although some researchers oppose the idea that phrasal discourse markers undergo grammaticalization, Brinton and Traugott (2005: 139) argue that the way the word *look* has changed its use and meaning is through the process of grammaticalization.

Thus, in some cases, it is recognized that clauses such as *I mean, I think, I guess, look ye*, etc. have become a kind of discourse markers, changing their original meanings in the process of grammaticalization.

2.2.10. Inversion of Clauses

In this section, inversion of clauses is touched upon, in relation to the theory of epistemic phrases in §2.2.9. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of English*, the term “inversion” implies the “reversal of the normal order of words, typically for rhetorical effect but also found in the regular formation of questions in English”. Inversion in this study indicates the phenomena where the order of a main clause and a subordinate clause is reversed (see Example (28)). Kuno (1981: 68) calls this kind of clause inversion a “postpositional sentence”; it is frequently observed in the spoken Japanese.²³ The following are some examples in Japanese.

(28) a. *Hontoni Damedane, Kimi wa*

b. *Yondakotoga Arimasuka, Kimi wa Kono hon o.*

(Kuno 1981: 67)

²³ Kuno (1981: 67) suggests that “Japanese is a language where the main verb in a sentence or a clause must be positioned at the end of the sentence or the clause”, however, in reality, he suggests that this “rule can be applied to written Japanese but not to spoken Japanese”. Therefore, it is suggested that “postpositional sentence[s]” occur in daily Japanese conversation.

Kuno (1981: 68) proposes that the sentences in (28a) and (28b) are not just inversions of the clauses but sentences with the main clause appearing as “elliptical sentences” plus repetition. Kuno (1981: 78) terms this an “elliptical sentence + repetitious sentence”. That is, in the case of (28a), *Hontoni Damedane* in the main clause is the elliptical sentence and the clause *Kimi wa* in the subordinated sentence is represented as the repetition at the end of the sentences in order to clarify that the eliminated clause is *Kimi wa*, which is originally located in the main clause. Likewise, in example (28b), it is noted that the same phenomenon occurs (Kuno 1981: 67). Kuno (1981: 68) suggests that “postpositional sentences” have at least one of the following functions for communication below.

(29) The repetition at the end of the sentence appears so as to confirm that the ellipsis occurs after judging that the eliminated word is recoverable from the previous context or situational context by the listeners. [Translated by Shibata] (Kuno 1981: 68)

(30) The role of additional information [Translated by Shibata] (Ibid.)

According to the functions for the postpositional sentences above, “postpositional sentences can be used only at the time when the sentence makes sense without the element of the postposition” (Kuno 1981: 69). Next, I turn to discussing examples of “postpositional sentences”, consisting of an “elliptical sentence + repetitious sentence” (Kuno 1981: 78), in English. The following are some examples.

(31) a. John’s a good man, he certainly is.

b. John went to see a pornographic movie, and with his own daughter at that.

(Kuno 1981: 79)

In example (31a), the sentence *John's a good man* in the main clause is considered the “elliptical sentence”. In addition, the sentence *he certainly is* is located at the end of the sentence as the “repetitious sentence”. In particular, the adverb *certainly* is added as additional information, which is consistent with the function described above in (30). Likewise for example (31b), the sentence *John went to see a pornographic movie* in the main clause is thought to be the “elliptical sentence” and the sentence *with his own daughter at that* is placed at the end as the “repetitious sentence” containing additional information.

Seemingly, in the case of examples (31a) and (31b), the main clauses *John's a good man* and *John went to see a pornographic movie* are not the elliptical sentences. However, Kuno (1981: 80) argues that this can be attributed to the different grammatical structures between Japanese and English. That is, Kuno (1981: 80) suggests that “Japanese allows subject and object ellipsis, while English does not, therefore, the difference only lies in the difference of the grammatical structures [Translated by Shibata]” between the two languages. Judging from the phenomena from examples (28) and (31), Kuno (1981: 79) determines that “postpositional sentences” occur having either function of (29) or (30). That is, as already suggested, one of the functions for communication in postpositional sentences is the repetition at the end of the sentence “so as to confirm that the ellipsis occurs after judging that the subject is recoverable from the previous context or situational context by the listeners [Translated by Shibata]” (Kuno 1981: 68). The other function is “the role of additional information [Translated by Shibata]” (Kuno 1981: 68).

2.3. Summary

Chapter 2 presented previous studies that are related to subject ellipsis. In earlier sections, factors contributing to subject ellipsis including context, cohesion, conversation style, the law of least effort, fixed expressions, variations of verbs, variations of subjects, informativeness,

and turn-taking, all of which are mainly analyzed from a pragmatic point of view.

The latter sections introduced the phenomena of epistemic phrases and clause inversion, including the postpositional sentences. These are not directly related to the factors contributing to subject ellipsis but to the phenomenon of subject ellipsis which occurs during²⁴ the reversal of the main clause and the subordinate clause. These previous studies are valuable, in particular for the discussion in Chapter 7 of the relationship between subject ellipsis and clause inversion.

²⁴ As mentioned earlier, the phenomenon of the subject ellipsis might occur simultaneously or after the reversal of the clauses.

Chapter 3 Further Studies on Subject Ellipsis from a Pragmatic Perspective

In Chapter 3, three major case studies are conducted in order to examine the credibility of previous studies, some of which were introduced in Chapter 2. §3.1, §3.2, and §3.3 present results of the three case studies respectively. §3.1 focuses on subject ellipsis with stative verbs, after a brief introduction of the relationship between subject ellipsis and non-stative verbs. More concretely, the relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of verbs and variations of subjects are discussed. Then, it focuses on what is co-occurring with fixed expressions. §3.2 discusses the relationship between subject ellipsis and perception verbs, especially experience and percept verbs. §3.3 examines the relationship between subject ellipsis and the conversation style, analyzing the corpus data based on the style scale (see Table 12) (Konishi 1972, Joos 1967). §3.4 points out fundamental problems or limitations of the analysis from a pragmatic point of view.

3.1. Case Study 1: Non-Stative Verbs and Stative Verbs

In this section, some of the factors contributing to subject ellipsis mentioned in the review of previous studies in Chapter 2 will be examined, using data collected from a corpus. Items which are to be reviewed in §3.1 include factors such as variations of verbs, variations of subjects, and what co-occurs with fixed expressions.

3.1.1 Method

In this research, one of the corpora, *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*, is utilized in order to investigate spoken and written English in America. *COCA* contains as many as 450 million words and its data was recorded from 1990 to 2012. It is derived from *CNN*, *ABC*, *Fox*, *NBC*, *CBS*, *NPR*, *MSNBC*, *PBS*, and Independence in spoken

English. The written English in the corpus comes from: sources of news (international, national, local, money, life, sports, and editorial), magazines (news/opinions, financial, science/technology, social/arts, religion, sports, entertainment, home/health, women/men, African-American, and children), and academic articles or books (education, history, geography/social science, law/politics, humanities, philosophy/religion, science/technology, medicine, and miscellaneous).

In each case study 200 example sentences are collected and subsequently the figures derived from the data are calculated in terms of how many examples appeared within one million words. These figures are shown in brackets. In Tables 5 and 9, the abbreviation “con.” stands for “conversation”. It indicates the frequency of subject ellipsis which occurs in the conversation.

The utterances investigated in this chapter are those with affirmative and interrogative sentences in subject elliptical sentences. The example sentences data for fixed expressions and the data illustrated in other tables do not overlap. For example, the data for the examples in Table 5 are not overlapped with those of Table 2.

In §3.1.2, verbs are categorized into two groups: non-stative verbs and stative verbs¹ in order to observe the verbs subject ellipsis occurs with. First, ellipsis with non-stative verbs is examined and its data is shown in Table 1. Second, the stative verbs including “mental process verbs such as *think, reckon, guess, hope, love, wonder, suppose*” (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 183) are investigated in Table 2. Third, in Tables 3 and 4, data are presented on the variation of subjects for stative verbs in spoken and written English in the cases of subject ellipsis. Fourth, in Table 5, data are shown on subject ellipsis for stative verbs which appeared in fixed expressions in spoken and written English. Lastly, data are introduced on

¹ Bach (1986: 6) further categorized “states” into “dynamic” (e.g. *sit, stand*) and “static” (e.g. *be drunk, love*), however, in this research further categorization is not conducted.

subject ellipsis for perception verbs (e.g. *feel*, *hear*, *smell*, *see*, and *sound*) in spoken and written English in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11.

3.1.2. Data and Discussion

3.1.2.1. Variations of Verbs – Subject Ellipsis with Non-Static Verbs

In §3.1.2.1 and §3.1.2.2, investigations are conducted in order to observe the relationship between subject ellipsis and verbs. In other words, they are conducted to identify which verbs subject ellipsis tends to occur with. Table 1 presents the data on subject ellipsis with non-static verbs in spoken and written English.

Table 1. Subject ellipsis with non-static verbs

| | Spoken | Written |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| take | 0 | 0 |
| drive | 1 (0.34) | 0 |
| give | 0 | 1 (1.3) |
| make | 0 | 0 |
| put | 0 | 0 |
| eat | 0 | 0 |
| get | 0 | 0 |
| pick | 1 (0.49) | 0 |

The verbs chosen in Table 1 (e.g. *take*, *give*, *make*, and *get*) are listed among the top 100 words in the *British National Corpus Frequency List* (1986) about the *BNC*, which consists of a total of 100 million words of spoken and written English together. This means that those verbs have a very high frequency of usage. Nevertheless, as far as we observe the data, it shows that subject ellipsis rarely occurs in sentences with non-static verbs, both in spoken and written English.

3.1.2.2. Variations of Verbs – Subject Ellipsis with Stative Verbs

In 3.1.2.2, a survey was conducted in order to observe the relationship between subject ellipsis and stative verbs. The data for subject ellipsis which occurs in the sentence with stative verbs in spoken and written English are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Subject ellipsis with stative verbs in spoken and written English

| | Spoken | Written |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| hope | 8 (10.85) | 3 (1.89) |
| like | 0 | 0 |
| dislike | 1 (0.02) | 0 |
| suppose | 4 (0.68) | 2 (0.40) |
| think | 0 | 0 |
| love | 1(2.02) | 0 |
| hate | 3 (0.91) | 1 (0.13) |
| wonder | 1 (0.35) | 1 (0.26) |
| reckon | 1 (0.0036) | 0 |
| believe | 1 (2.80) | 0 |
| assume | 1 (0.20) | 0 |
| guess | 0 | 0 |
| doubt | 0 | 1 |
| expect | 2 (1.14) | 0 |
| have | 4 (133.32) | 0 |
| want | 79 (603.49) | 2 (4.56) |
| possess | 0 | 0 |
| desire | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 107 (755.90) | 10 (7.24) |

According to Table 2, the frequency of subject ellipsis with the verbs *dislike*, *love*, *wonder*, *reckon*, *believe*, *assume*, *expect*, and *desire* is low and there is not much difference compared to that of non-stative verbs in Table 1. However, comparing the results of the data in Tables 1 and 2 as a whole, ellipsis seems to occur more with stative verbs than with non-stative ones.

Moreover, judging from the result that the verb *want* in spoken English has a high frequency (603.49 per million words), the frequency of subject ellipsis is quite different depending on the verb, even within stative verbs. In addition, based on the data in Table 2, the frequency of subject ellipsis differs between spoken and written English. For instance, subject ellipsis occurs remarkably frequently with the verb *have* (133.32 per million words) and *want* (603.49 per million words) in spoken English, but not (e.g. none for *have*) in written English. This means that there is a possibility that subject ellipsis has a relationship both with the variation of verbs and with the difference between spoken English and written English.

As noted earlier, the data in Table 2 show that the verb *want* occurs with a high frequency of ellipsis. In this case, it is supposed that there is a relationship between ellipsis and “the internal feeling” (Kuno 1973) suggested by Thomas (1979) and Nariyama (2004). As already explained in the discussion about previous studies in Chapter 2, Thomas (1979: 47) suggests that the subjects *I* and *you* are recoverable in elliptical sentences, since the subjects *I* and *you* have a special status of “internal feeling”. Moreover, Kuno (1973: 83) mentions that the verb *want* is one of the verbs which represents an “internal feeling”. Taking an account of the theory of the “internal feeling”, it makes sense that subject ellipsis occurs with the verb *want*.

In summary, considering the results in Tables 1 and 2, subject ellipsis tends to occur more with stative verbs than with non-stative verbs; it especially occurs more with specific stative verbs. Therefore, it is possible to say that subject ellipsis occurs partially depending on what verb is used in a sentence. Furthermore, subject ellipsis tends to occur more in spoken English than in written English.

3.1.2.3. Variations of Subjects – Subject Ellipsis with Stative Verbs in Spoken English

This section investigates the question of whether there is a correlation between subject

ellipsis and variations of subjects in terms of stative verbs in spoken English. Table 3 shows the result of the investigation of the effect on ellipsis of variations of subjects with stative verbs in spoken English. The data show that ellipsis occurs with the subjects *I*, *you*, and *they*. Among them, the frequency of subject ellipsis is remarkably high with the subjects *I* and *you*. This phenomenon is consistent with assertions by Nariyama (2004: 254) and by Carter and McCarthy (2006: 183).

Table 3. Variations of subjects with stative verbs in spoken English

| | I | we | you | he/she | it | they |
|--------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----|----------|
| hope | 8 (10.85) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| like | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| dislike | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.02) |
| suppose | 3 (0.51) | 0 | 1 (0.17) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| think | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| love | 0 | 0 | 1 (2.02) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hate | 3 (0.91) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| wonder | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.35) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| reckon | 1 (0.0036) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| believe | 1 (2.80) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| assume | 1 (0.20) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| guess | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| doubt | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| expect | 1 (0.57) | 0 | 1 (0.57) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| have | 0 | 0 | 4 (133.32) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| want | 25 (190.98) | 0 | 53 (404.87) | 0 | 0 | 1 (7.64) |
| possess | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| desire | 1 (0.12) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 44 (206.94) | 0 | 61(541.3) | 0 | 0 | 2 (7.66) |

What is interesting in Table 3 is that two cases of ellipsis with the subject *they* (i.e. with

dislike and *want*) occur; this phenomenon is contrary to the theory of Thomas (1979) and Nariyama (2004). As mentioned in the review of previous studies in Chapter 2, Thomas (1979) and Nariyama (2004) suggest that implicit subjects *I* and *you* are recoverable in elliptical sentences, while the implicit third person subject is not. In other words, there is little possibility of the occurrence of subject ellipsis with a third person subject. However, closely examining the example sentence where the verb *dislike* was used, it was found that subject ellipsis with the verb *dislike* and the implicit subject *they* occurred when a newscaster announced the results of an election poll in the sentence: “Dislike him: 25%” (COCA). This example shows that ellipsis with the subject *they* occurs in the context of a special occasion like an announcement.

In the other case of an elliptical sentence with the implicit subject *they*, where the verb *want* appears, the ellipsis took place when one speaker talked about another person who was not present in the conversation, after another speaker mentioned a rumor about that person.

In sum, considering the phenomenon where subject ellipsis occurs with specific subjects such as *I*, *you*, and *they*, it is possible to say that there is a correlation between subject ellipsis and what type of subject is used.

3.1.2.4. Variations of Subjects – Subject Ellipsis with Stative Verbs in Written English

Table 4 shows correlation between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects of stative verbs in written English. Although the total number of subject ellipsis is very small, ellipsis can be observed with the subjects *I*, *we*, and *you*. This tendency is mostly similar to that of spoken English in Table 3. In the case of subject ellipsis with the subject *you*, according to corpus data from COCA, it is found that mostly it occurs in interrogative sentences, as shown both in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 4. Variations of subjects with stative verbs in written English

| | I | we | you | he/she | it | they |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|--------|----|------|
| hope | 1 (0.63) | 1 (0.63) | 1 (0.63) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| like | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| dislike | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| suppose | 2 (0.40) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| think | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| love | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hate | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.13) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| wonder | 0 | 1 (0.26) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| reckon | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| believe | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| assume | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| guess | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| doubt | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| expect | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| have | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| want | 0 | 0 | 2 (4.56) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| possess | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| desire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3 (1.03) | 2 (0.89) | 5 (5.32) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In summary, the data in Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that subject ellipsis occurs with specific types of subjects. These phenomena allow us to say that there is a correlation between subject ellipsis and what type of subject is used, similarly to the case in spoken English.

3.1.2.5. Fixed Expressions

Research including Carter and McCarthy (2006) and Lewis (1993) has suggested that ellipsis often occurs in sentences with fixed expressions. Table 5 shows the frequency of subject ellipsis in fixed expressions in spoken and written English. The verbs used in the expressions in Table 5 are derived from the verbs in Tables 3 and 4. The expressions in Table

5 are commonly used in daily conversation.

Table 5. Subject ellipsis in fixed expressions

| | Spoken | Written |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| hope for the best | 6 (0.06) | 0 |
| love it | 6 (0.65) | 4 (0.14) |
| hate it | 7 (0.11) | 1 (0.007) (con.0.014) |
| wonder why | 4 (0.02) | 8 (0.13) |
| wonder how | 6 (0.14) | 5 (0.09) |
| doubt it | 2 (0.04) | 1 (0.007) |
| think twice | 2 (0.03) | 0 |
| guess so | 1 (0.01) | 0 |
| guess what | 82 (6.47) | 60 (0.66) (con. 0.50) |
| want some | 14 (0.27) | 4 (0.02) (con. 0.04) |
| Total | 130 (7.80) | 83 (1.05) (con. 0.55) |

When I compare the frequency of the verbs *guess* and *doubt* in Table 3 and that of *doubt it*, *guess so*, and *guess what* in Table 5, respectively, those verbs do not occur with any ellipsis in Table 3 but we can see that the frequency of subject ellipsis in fixed expressions has increased in Table 5. The data in this study are very limited, therefore, it is still too early to make a generalization. However, as traditional studies suggest, observing the results of the small amount of data in Table 5, it can be hypothesized that there is some correlation between subject ellipsis and fixed expressions. Regarding the reasons for this relationship, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 187) indicate that “many everyday fixed expressions are prone to ellipsis of initial elements, since these can be assumed to be known by all participants”. In other words, it is assumed that the knowledge of fixed expressions by listeners or readers helps lead to the recoverability of the subject, allowing for subject ellipsis.

3.1.2.6. Retrieving Implicit Subjects

In §3.1.2.6, in order to confirm the relationship between subject ellipsis and factors contributing to subject ellipsis, it is shown that the omitted subject in some examples is practically retrieved by analyzing factors such as immediate context, situational context, and co-occurrence with fixed expressions.

Example (1) is a sentence where subject ellipsis occurs with the verb *hope*, which is one of the stative verbs derived from the data in spoken and written English in Tables 3 and 4. In (1), I would like to confirm how the context, one of the factors contributing to subject ellipsis, works in retrieving the implicit subject.

(1) A: This is a technical question, but it interests me, *hope* it interests some of the viewers.

(COCA)

In example (1) from spoken English, the subject *I* is unspoken and omitted before the word *hope*. The subject *I* can be retrieved from factors related to the situational context and the immediate context from a pragmatics perspective. A speaker, A, and another speaker are talking with each other, therefore, the relationship between *I* and *you* exists in this conversation. In addition to that, the word *me* is mentioned before the sentence beginning with *hope*. This means that there is no other option but to eliminate the word *I*. In this way, an unspoken word can be retrieved from the situational context and the immediate context, which is noted earlier.

Judging from example (1), the immediate context seems to be an essential factor for communication, both in spoken and written English. Similarly, it is important in retrieving the implicit subject. The reason is that speakers or writers do not talk or write about things which are not relevant, according to the Maxim of Relation (Grice 1975). Also, “Relevance theory” (Sperber and Wilson 1986) proposes a similar idea. Concerning “Relevance theory”, Sperber

and Wilson (1986) indicate that the principle of relevance suggests that “every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance” (quoted in Groefsema 1995: 148). Accordingly, these theories suggest that immediate context, which plays an important role in the flow of communication, is a necessary factor in retrieving the implicit subject.

Malinowski (1923: 307) suggests that situational context is necessary for understanding especially in spoken English, however, this study suggests that situational context is also necessary in understanding written English. Therefore, the situational context, along with the immediate context, is an essential factor in retrieving the omitted subject. The following is an example of subject ellipsis in written English.

(2) A: Join us for a chance to participate and win in our 13th annual scholarship events.

Hope to see you there! (COCA)

In (2), the subject *we* can be retrieved from the situational context and the immediate context as well. The words *us* and *our* before the sentence *Hope to see you there* indicate that the implicit subject is *we*. Thus, in written English, as well as in spoken English (as in example (1)), we can retrieve the implicit subject from the situational context and the immediate context. Example (3) illustrates the co-occurrence of subject ellipsis with the fixed expression, *Hope for the best*, with the verb *hope*, in spoken English.

(3) A: It's still the United States that plays the chief role. And...and *hope for the best* in that situation, ... (COCA)

As in (3), when another factor contributing to subject ellipsis, that is, the factor of a fixed

expression, is added to that of the immediate context and situational context in retrieving the implicit subject, the retrievable subject can be more easily limited. In other words, the addition of the factor of fixed expressions leads the interlocutors to retrieve the unspoken item more easily. Thus, the factor of fixed expressions also plays a role of restriction by narrowing the candidates of the implicit items when the subject is retrieved. The conversation in (4) is another example of a fixed expression, *Wonder why*.

(4) A: And business has been picking up then?

B: It's really good.

A: *Wonder why* people are buying more vacuum cleaners?

B: I don't know, but I love it. (COCA)

In (4), before the sentence *Wonder why*, it can be predicted that there are two candidates to be slotted at the beginning of the sentence, that is '*Do you*' and '*I*' based on the factors of the situational context, immediate context, and fixed expressions. And in this case, the question mark as a discourse marker is also one of the factors. Regrettably, in (4), there is no way to recover the intonation, since this example is not online. Finally, it is determined that the subject *I* is a retrieved subject based on the situational context, immediate context, and co-occurrence with fixed expressions.²

² Usually the expression *Wonder why* is used, in order to "ask yourself a question or express a wish to know about something" (*Cambridge University Press* online). However, judging from the intuitive knowledge of the native speakers and some information by the *Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* about the usage of *Wonder why*, it seems that the subject *I* in an interrogative sentence (but with a meaning similar to that of an affirmative sentence) is eliminated at the beginning of the sentence in this discourse. The *Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* explains that "I wonder why he gave a false name". = "Why did he give a false name, I wonder?" That is, although the meaning of the sentence seems affirmative, the question mark is added at the end of the sentence.

Subject ellipsis occurs remarkably frequently with the verb *want* (see Table 3); therefore, we next observe some examples concerning the verb *want*, in examples (5) to (8). Example (5) is from spoken English.

(5) A: I sing one, plus you and I doing one.

B: *Want* to do one.

A: Yes.

B: I do “Blue Skies.” (COCA)

In (5), the subject *I* can be retrieved based on the situational context and immediate context. Example (6) is from written English.

(6) A: Commerce Business Daily, the U.S. government’s list of projects open to private bidders, also is online. *Want* Siskel & Ebert’s list of all-time best movies? (COCA)

In (6), *Do you* before the word *Want* is eliminated; it is possible to understand the implicit item from the immediate context. In this case, the writer is asking a question to readers with the question mark as a discourse marker. Example (7), from spoken English, contains the fixed expression *Want some*.

(7) A: So we’ve got a couple of other things.

B: *Want some wine?*

A: Just stop.

B: I’m kidding. I’m kidding. It’s a joke. (COCA)

In (7), the unspoken subject *Do you* before the sentence *Want some wine?* can be realized based on the factors of the situational context, immediate context, and fixed expressions just like in the case of *hope for the best*. Considering speakers' knowledge that it includes a fixed expression, it is easier to retrieve an implicit item as well. Example (8) below is another case from written English.

(8) A: Serve it on a whole-wheat roll and top it with romaine lettuce and tomato. *Want some*
fries with the burger? (COCA)

In (8), judging from the usage of the imperative *serve it* at the beginning of the sentence, it is possible to say that the writer is talking to his or her readers, that is, *you*. Therefore, *Do you* prior to the sentence *Want some* can be recovered on the basis of factors of the immediate context and fixed expressions.

In summary, the implicit subject can be retrieved mainly based on the situational context, immediate context, and the knowledge of fixed expressions as several scholars have suggested in previous studies.

3.2. Case Study 2: Perception Verbs

3.2.1. Method

In this section, an investigation of subject ellipsis with perception verbs is conducted, as an extension of §3.1.2.1 and §3.1.2.2, in order to further observe the relationship between subject ellipsis and the variation of verbs. Case study 2 was conducted using the same procedure as that of Case study 1, where 200 examples sentences were collected for each phrase from *COCA*. With regard to the data, “verbs + noun” (SVO) and “verbs + adjective” (SVC), especially “verbs + it” and “verbs + good” were collected in spoken and written

English. The reason why the adjective *good* was chosen is that the frequency of the co-occurrence of perception verbs and the adjective *good* is very high, as shown in Table 6. In this section, the relationship between subject ellipsis and perception verbs is discussed, and this study introduces the following classification method (in Table 7).

Table 6. The ranking of occurrence of perception verbs and adjective (*COCA*)

| | Feel (s) | Look (s) | Sound (s) | Smell (s) | Taste (s) |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | good (1164) | good (860) | familiar (102) | good (45) | good (62) |
| 2 | comfortable (585) | great (441) | good (72) | bad (11) | great (17) |
| 3 | bad (486) | bad (196) | like (55) | great (8) | different (9) |

Table 7. The basic paradigm of verbs of perception based on semantic roles of subjects in English (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999: 42).

| Sense modality | EXPERIENCE (SVO) | ACTIVITY (SVO) | PERCEPT (SVC) |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| VISION | see | look | look |
| HEARING | hear | listen | sound |
| TOUCH | feel/touch | touch/feel | feel |
| SMELL | smell | smell/sniff | smell |
| TASTE | taste | taste | taste |

Perception verbs are categorized into three groups (see Table 7) (i.e. experience, activity, and percept) based on “the semantic role of their subjects” (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999: 42), which has also been supported by various other researchers (e.g. Palmer 1966, Lehrer 1990, Gisborne 1996, Rogers 1971, and Viberg 1984). This classification is used in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11. In those tables, (E) stands for experience verbs, (A) for activity verbs, and (P) for percept verbs. Both (E) and (A) have SVO (SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT) patterns. (P) has SVC (SUBJECT, VERB, COMPLEMENT) patterns. The judgment of whether a verb is (E) or (A) was determined based on Viberg (1984), since (E) and (A) both have SVO patterns. For

instance, in the case of the verb *taste*, when the phrase “to see if he could eat it” is added at the end of the sentence and it makes sense, it is determined that the phrase belongs to (A), that is, activity verbs, rather than (E).

3.2.2. Data and Discussion

3.2.2.1. Subject Ellipsis with Perception Verbs

As mentioned earlier, in this section, an investigation was conducted in order to discuss the relationship between subject ellipsis and perception verbs. Table 8 shows the results of the investigation, concerning the frequency of subject ellipsis with perception verbs of the types (E) (experience) and (A) (activity) in spoken and written English.

Table 8. Subject ellipsis with perception verbs in spoken and written English (1)

| | | Spoken | Written |
|----------------|-----|------------|-------------------------|
| see + noun | (E) | 1 (0.003) | 0 |
| hear + noun | (E) | 0 | 0 |
| hear you | (E) | 2 (0.12) | 1 (0.0048) |
| feel + noun | (E) | 2 (0.08) | 0 |
| feel it | (E) | 1 (0.06) | 0 |
| smell + noun | (E) | 0 | 2 (0.0086) (con.0.0043) |
| smell it | (E) | 1 (0.0078) | 0 (con.0.0023) |
| taste + noun | (E) | 0 | 0 |
| taste it | (E) | 0 | 0 |
| Average | | (0.03) | (0.001) |
| look at | (A) | 0 | 0 |
| listen to | (A) | 0 | 0 |
| feel | (A) | 0 | 0 |
| smell | (A) | 0 | 0 |
| taste | (A) | 0 | 0 |
| Average | | 0 | 0 |

Table 9 gives the frequency of subject ellipsis with perception verbs (P) (percept) in spoken and written English.

Table 9. Subject ellipsis with perception verbs in spoken and written English (2)

| | | Spoken | Written |
|-----------------|-----|-------------|------------------------|
| look(s) + adj. | (P) | 4 (0.84) | 1 (0.12) |
| look good | (P) | 0 | 0 |
| looks good | (P) | 56 (1.12) | 6 (0.042) (con. 0.014) |
| sound(s) + adj. | (P) | 16 (0.32) | 14 (0.7) |
| sound good | (P) | 3 (0.012) | 5 (0.01) |
| sounds good | (P) | 85 (1.70) | 37 (0.15) (con. 0.06) |
| feel(s) + adj. | (P) | 10 (3.90) | 4 (1.08) |
| feel good | (P) | 4 (0.24) | 0 |
| feels good | (P) | 23 (0.27) | 5 (0.04) (con. 0.008) |
| smell(s) + adj. | (P) | 20 (0.11) | 2 (0.008) (con. 0.012) |
| smell good | (P) | 2 (0.0046) | 0 |
| smells good | (P) | 17 (0.0058) | 0 (con.0.0016) |
| taste(s) + adj. | (P) | 0 | 0 |
| taste good | (P) | 0 | 0 |
| tastes good | (P) | 8 (0.0024) | 6 (0.03) |
| Average | | (0.57) | (0.15) |

Analyzing the data for the three groups of verbs, (E), (A), and (P), in Tables 8 and 9, it seems that subject ellipsis occurs with verbs in groups (E) and (P) but not with verbs in group (A). Furthermore, comparing the average figures between (E) and (P), subject ellipsis occurs more with verbs in group (P) than with those in group (E). Moreover, the frequency of the phrases such as *looks good* (1.12), *sounds good* (1.70), and *feel adj.* (3.90) is remarkably high. This means that subject ellipsis occurs depending on what verbs appear. Furthermore, comparing the average figures³ between spoken and written English in Table 9, the frequency of ellipsis

³ With regard to the average figure at the bottom of Table 9 for written English, the frequency of the conversation, that is, “con.”, is not included. The reason why “average” is used, rather than “total”, in §3.2 is that it is easier to compare with the other data within the perception verbs.

with perception verbs is higher in spoken English than in written English.

3.2.2.2. Variations of Subjects in Cases of Subject Ellipsis with Perception Verbs

This section will examine the question of whether there is a correlation between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects with perception verbs.

Table. 10. Variations of subjects with perception verbs in spoken English

| | I | you | we | he/she | it | they |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|----|----------|-------------|------------|
| see + noun (E) | 0 | 1 (0.003) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hear + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hear you (E) | 2 (0.12) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feel + noun (E) | 2 (0.08) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feel it (E) | 0 | 1 (0.06) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smell + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smell it (E) | 1 (0.0078) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| taste + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| taste it (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| look(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 2 (0.42) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2(0.42) |
| look good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| looks good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 (0.08) | 52 (1.04) | 0 |
| sound(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 (0.32) | 0 |
| sound good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 (0.012) | 0 |
| sounds good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 (1.7) | 0 |
| feel(s) + adj. (P) | 2 (0.78) | 8 (3.12) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feel good (P) | 3 (0.18) | 1 (0.06) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feels good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 (0.27) | 0 |
| smell(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 (0.11) | 0 |
| smell good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.0023) | 1 (0.0023) |
| smells good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 (0.0058) | 0 |
| taste(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| taste good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| tastes good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 (0.024) | 0 |
| Total | 10 (1.17) | 13 (3.66) | 0 | 4 (0.08) | 224 (3.45) | 3 (0.42) |

Since the data in Table 8 show that subject ellipsis with activity verbs did not occur, the investigation in this section is only limited to the experience and percept verbs shown in Table 10. Observing the data in Table 10, with experience verbs, subject ellipsis occurs with the subjects *I* and *you*, while with percept verbs, it occurs with all of the subject types except for *we*. With percept verbs, the subject *it* has a higher frequency of subject ellipsis. This phenomenon is one of the issues focused on in this study, therefore, the phenomenon in terms of the subject *it* is discussed in later chapters. The following are some utterances where subject ellipsis occurs with the phrase *feels good*. Example (9) is from spoken English.

(9) A: I like Charlie's chair.

B: *Feels good, right?* > Charlie's chair *feels good to you*, right? (COCA)

Example (9) illustrates the procedure of retrieving the subject. In this case, *Charlie's chair* or the subject *it* can be retrieved based on three factors. As is the case with the examples with stative verbs in §3.1.2.3, the unspoken items in perception verbs can be retrieved on the basis of the following three factors: the situational context, the immediate context, and the co-occurrence with a fixed expression, which helps the listeners restrict the candidates of the implicit items as well. Example (10) is another instance of *feels good* in written English.

(10) A: If you've been carrying 40 pounds for weekend trip, start by trimming five pounds of excess gear. *Feels good, right?* (COCA)

Likewise, in example (10), the subject *it* can be retrieved mainly from the situational context, immediate context, and the co-occurrence with a fixed expression. Thus, the way the implicit subject is retrieved is similar to the case of stative verbs. Table 11 illustrates the results of the

investigation of variations of the subject for perception verbs in written English.

Table. 11. Variations of the subject with perception verbs in written English

| | I | you | we | he/she | it | they |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|----|-----------|---------------------|----------|
| see + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hear + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hear you (E) | 1 (0.0048) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feel + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feel it (E) | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smell + noun (E) | 0 | 2 (0.0086) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smell it (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| taste + noun (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| taste it (E) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| look(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.12) |
| look good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| looks good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.007) | 5(0.035)(con.0.014) | 0 |
| sound(s) + adj.(P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 (0.7) | 0 |
| sound good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 (0.01) | 0 |
| sounds good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 37(0.15)(con.0.06) | 0 |
| feel (s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 (1.08) | 0 |
| feel good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| feels good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5(0.04)(con.0.008) | 0 |
| smell(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2(0.008)(con.0.012) | 0 |
| smell good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smells good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 (con.0.0016) | 0 |
| taste(s) + adj. (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| taste good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| tastes good (P) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 (0.03) | 0 |
| Total | 1 (0.0048) | 2 (0.0086) | 0 | 1 (0.007) | 55 (0.26) | 1 (0.12) |

The data in Tables 10 and 11 for spoken and written English have a nearly similar trend, i.e. subject ellipsis occurs with specific subjects. Ellipsis occurs with the subjects *I*, *you* *he/she*, *it*, and *they* in both tables. Among those subjects, the amount of times that ellipsis occurs with the subject *it* is remarkably high with percept verbs in both tables.

The reason why subject ellipsis occurs with the subjects *I* and *You* can be explained in terms of “internal feeling” (Kuno 1973), as suggested earlier. It is also possible to explain it with the theory of “given” and “old” information (Chafe 1972: 50-51). That is, the subjects *I* and *you* are assumed to be recognized as “given” or “old information”, rather than “new” information (Chafe 1972: 50-51). Chafe (1974: 123) mentions that “the identity of speaker and addressee is typically GIVEN, as are those concepts having to do with the particular time and location of the act of speech”. Moreover, Chafe (1974: 111) proposes that “given information is suggested to be that which the speaker assumes to be already present in the addressee’s consciousness at the time of an utterance”. In other words, concerning subject ellipsis with subjects *I* and *you*, since the subjects *I* and *you* are already present in the speaker’s and the listener’s mind, it is not necessary to utter words that are already known among the interlocutors. If the theory by Chafe (1974) is true, it seems natural that subject ellipsis tends to occur with the subjects *I* and *you*.

Previous research has only seldom investigated subject ellipsis with the subject *it*. Only Nariyama (2004: 255) mentions that “subjectless sentences are understood as expressing the view of the speaker and not of the subject ‘it’”.

In summary, the investigations in §3.2.2.2 suggest that there is a correlation between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects in terms of perception verbs

3.2.2.3. Semantic Roles of Perception Verbs

So far, in Case study 2, an investigation of perception verbs was conducted based on

“the semantic role of their subjects” (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999: 42). This section further explains the idea of “the basic paradigm of verbs of perception based on semantic roles of subjects in English” (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999). As mentioned earlier, perception verbs “can be classified into three different groups according to the semantic role of their subjects” (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999: 42), that is, experience, activity, and percept. This method of classification is also supported by other researchers including Gisborne (1996) and Viberg (1984).

To start with, let us focus on group E or Experience verbs. The verbs in group E are called “passive perception” (Palmer 1966: 99) or “stative with experience subject” (Lehrer 1990: 223). They are also described as “the receiving of an expression by the senses independently of the will of the person concerned” (Poutsma 1926: 341). Regarding the subjects in this group, Ibarretxe-Antunano (1999:43) suggests that “the subject does not consciously control the stimuli; it refers to a state or inchoative achievement”. The following are examples of experience verbs.

(11) (I) smell it.

(12) (I) hear you.

In this study, the results of the investigation of the frequency of subject ellipsis with experience verbs (i.e. group E) were presented in Table 8 in §3.2.2.1. Those results show that the phenomena of ellipsis can be seen to some degree in group E, although the number of verbs that ellipsis occurred with was small. The relationship between subject ellipsis and experience verbs is discussed in a later section.

The next verb group examined was that of “active perception verbs” (Poutsma, 1926: 341), which have “active experience subject[s]” (Lehrer, 1990: 223). In this study, this group

is represented by “A” in Table 8. Viberg (1984: 123) argues that activity verbs have an “unbounded process that is consciously controlled by a human agent”. No ellipsis is observed in this group, according to the data in Table 8. The following are some examples with verbs in this group.

(13) Peter looked at the birds. (Viberg 1984: 125)

(14) Peter listened to the birds. (Ibid.)

Last, the verb group P or percept verbs shows a high frequency of ellipsis in Table 9. These have been called “flip verbs” (Rogers 1971: 206). Lehrer (1990: 223) calls their subjects “stimulus subjects”. Ibarretxe-Antunano (1999: 44-45) notes that their “subjects are the stimuli of the perception” and that “the verbs takes the experienced entity as a subject”. Moreover, Viberg (1984: 123) calls them “copulative”, as they are generally called now. The following are some examples.

(15) (It) tastes good.

(16) (It) sounds good.

In summary, considering that subject ellipsis occurs more often with percept verbs than with experience verbs and more often with experience verbs than with activity verbs (see Tables 8 and 9), in this study, it is assumed that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and those types of verbs. These problems are discussed in later chapters.

3.3. Case Study 3: Conversation Style

3.3.1. Method

In this section, the relationship between subject ellipsis and conversation style in elliptical sentences is examined using *COCA*. First, the purpose of the investigation is to quantify the number of patterns with *it feels good*, *it feels good to*, and *it looks good* that appear in each conversation style⁴ in *COCA*. These patterns are chosen from 200 examples in spoken English. The results of the investigation are illustrated in Table 13. Second, another aim of the investigation is to identify the frequency of subject ellipsis in utterances with patterns such as *feels good* and *looks good*, as shown in Table 14. In Tables 13 and 14, the figure on the left side in each column gives the frequency collected from 200 example sentences. The figure in parentheses to the right side in each column gives the frequency at which each example sentence occurs within one million sentences.

Styles are categorized into five style types, frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate, based on Joos (1967: 3) and Konishi (1972: 38-39) (see Table 12). Table 12 is a combined version of the tables by Joos (1967: 3) and Konishi (1972: 38-39). In Table 12, the kinds of styles are described in the top row. The interlocutors, the size of the group (listeners), topics, pronunciation, and vocabulary are shown on the vertical axis. For example, when a doctor talks about symptoms with a patient using basic pronunciation and normal words, this type of discourse is categorized as “consultative”. The following table gives the style scale.

⁴ The conversation styles include frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate, based on Joos (1967: 3) and Konishi (1972: 38-39) (See Table 12).

Table 12. The style scale

| | I | II | III | IV | V |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| | intimate | casual | consultative | formal | frozen |
| Interlocutors | Wives and husbands, lovers | Neighbors, kin, best friends | People who are not so close | People who are seniors, first encounters | People who are close to the speakers and who are not |
| Size of the group | Regularly one person | From one to three people | One person or a small group | One person or a medium group | A large group |
| Topics | Daily conversation | Small talk | A slightly serious topic | A serious topic, prepared to some extent beforehand | A topic requiring some specialized knowledge, prepared beforehand |
| Pronunciation | Pronunciation of one word is not clear | Many unclear words | Basic pronunciation, clear but does not chatter | Pronounced carefully | Stress and intonation are effectively used |
| Vocabulary | Dialect and jargon are frequently used | Slang and unstable list of words with in-group meanings | Normal words | Technical meanings of words | A lexicon rich and strictly organized |

Based on Konishi (1972) [Translated by Shibata] and Joos (1967)

3.3.2. Data and Discussion

3.3.2.1. Conversation Style for *It Feels Good (to)* and *it Looks Good*

As indicated earlier, this section investigates how many patterns of *it feels good*, *it feels good to*, and *it looks good* appear in each conversation style in *COCA*. Table 13 shows the frequency of the patterns *it feels good* or *it feels good to* and *it looks good* in each conversation style: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate

Table 13. Conversation style for *it feels good (to)* and *it looks good*

| Styles | <i>It feels good, it feels good to</i> | <i>It looks good</i> |
|--------------|--|----------------------|
| frozen | 1 (0.01) | 0 |
| formal | 23 (0.23) | 10 (0.2) |
| consultative | 47 (0.47) | 6 (0.12) |
| casual | 3 (0.03) | 1 (0.02) |
| intimate | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 74 (0.74) | 17 (0.34) |

The data on the frequency of *if feels good*, *it feels good to* and *it looks good* in Table 13 illustrate that those patterns tend to appear in the formal and consultative styles, especially the consultative style. In contrast, their frequency in the casual style, 0.03 and 0.02, shows that the expressions are seldom spoken in that style of conversation. The expressions do not occur in the intimate style. The examples from (17) to (19) are from *COCA*.

(17) A: So if he can get the grass roots going, it looks good for him. (COCA)

In (17), a man is talking about a candidate in the election. The topic is rather serious. The term “grass roots” is one of the political words used. The conversation is therefore categorized as “formal”.

(18) A: It looks good, but I really like your long hair. (COCA)

In example (18), a speaker is talking about a hair style with his or her friend (or somebody who is close). The topic is a type of small talk. Therefore, the conversation is classified as “casual”.

(19) A: Well for math, if felt really good because I stink at math. AVID gives me that Help. It felt good. I went home and I was cheering. It feels good to succeed like 3.6. I feel like I’m a genius. (COCA)

In example (19), a speaker is talking about a school test score. The topic of the conversation is casual. Seemingly, he or she is talking with his or her close friend, considering the tone of the utterance, consequently, it is categorized as “casual”. Examples (18) and (19) illustrate that these expressions occur in casual conversation.

In summary, the data in Table 13 show that the patterns *it feels good*, *it feels good to*, and *it looks good* mainly appear in the formal and consultative styles of conversation.

3.3.2.2. Conversation Style for *Feels Good* and *Looks Good* in Cases of Subject Ellipsis

This section investigates the relationship between elliptical sentences and the conversation style. To be more precise, the aim of the investigation is to reveal in which conversation style(s) the patterns *feels good* and *looks good*, in cases of subject ellipsis, tend to appear. Table 14 gives the results of the investigation.

Table 14. Conversation style for *feels good* and *looks good* in cases of subject ellipsis

| Styles | <i>Feels good</i> | <i>Looks good</i> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| frozen | 0 | 0 |
| formal | 0 | 1 (0.02) |
| consultative | 13 (0.62) | 11 (0.22) |
| casual | 6 (0.28) | 7 (0.14) |
| intimate | 2 (0.10) | 0 |
| Total | 21 (1.00) | 19 (0.38) |

In Table 14, the data suggest that the *feels good* pattern occurs in the consultative style (0.62), casual style (0.28), and intimate style (0.10). Similarly, the *looks good* pattern occurs in the formal style (0.02), consultative style (0.22), and casual style (0.14). These results suggest that the patterns *feels good* and *looks good*, that is, the patterns with subject ellipsis, mainly occur in the consultative and casual styles. The conversation excerpts from (20) to (22) are examples of discourse with sentences with omitted subjects.

(20) A: Well, that's why you have the vanilla.

B: Turn around, hon (honey), let me see. OK. How does it feel?

A: Feels good. Can you smell it? It smells good. (COCA)

In (20), the conversation is taking place in a kitchen where a spa treatment is held. The size of the group is two to three people. A casual conversation is taking place with clipped words such as "hon" instead of "honey". Considering these factors, this discourse was categorized as "casual".

(21) A: Hey, buddy.

B: Welcome home, honey.

A: Thanks, Mom...

A: Feel good to be home.

B: Yeah.

(COCA)

Example (21) is a conversation where a family member has come home from the hospital. Several friendly terms, that is, *buddy*, *honey*, and *yeah* are used among family members. This implies that the discourse is “intimate”.

(22) A: if you want to crunch on celery or carrot sticks...

B: Yeah, this is fresh?

A: Looks good?

(COCA)

In (22), two interlocutors are talking about vegetables. The topic of the conversation is about food; in addition, the word “yeah”, which is a kind of slang, is used. Therefore, the discourse was categorized as “casual”. Thus, the examples from (20) to (22) demonstrate that patterns with omitted subjects occur in the intimate or casual styles of conversation.

In summary, in §3.3.2.1 and §3.3.2.2, the data in Table 13 have shown that the patterns *it feels good*, *it feels good to*, and *it looks good*, that is, sentences with the subject ‘it’, mostly appear in the formal and consultative conversational styles. On the other hand, the results in Table 14 have shown that the patterns *feels good* and *looks good*, that is, cases of subject ellipsis, appear in the consultative and causal conversational styles. Thus, judging from the data in terms of the *feels good* and *looks good* patterns shown in Tables 13 and 14, it is fair to say that the patterns with subject ellipsis tend to appear mainly in the casual or intimate styles

of conversation. This tendency is consistent with what traditional research has suggested.

3.4. Problems with Previous Studies

Reflecting upon the previous studies on subject ellipsis discussed in Chapter 2 and the three case studies offered in Chapter 3, which are discussed only from a pragmatic perspective, I have identified that there are limitations to solving the following three problems: (i) The relationship between subject ellipsis and specific verbs, especially percept verbs (see Chapter 5), (ii) the relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects, especially the subject *it* (see Chapter 6), and (iii) the relationship between subject ellipsis and complement structures (see Chapter 7).

To put it more concretely, first, the data in Chapter 3 suggest that the frequency of subject ellipsis is different depending on the verbs. Carter and McCarthy (2006: 183) point out that subject ellipsis tends to occur with mental process verbs such as *think*, *reckon*, *guess*, *hope*, *like*, *love*, *wonder*, *suppose*. However, traditional studies have failed to sufficiently explain the reason why subject ellipsis occurs more frequently with those verbs. For example, Nariyama (2004: 255) merely notes that verbs such as *hate*, *love*, *think*, and *hope* are mental process verbs and does not provide further explanation. Furthermore, I have observed that the verb *have* has a high frequency of subject ellipsis, that is, 133.32 cases occur within one million words in spoken English (see Table 2). However, the reason why such a phenomenon occurs has not been sufficiently explained by traditional studies.

Moreover, Case study 2 in Chapter 3 shows that subject ellipsis occurs with specific verbs such as experience and percept verbs, among perception verbs, as in Tables 8 and 9. However, few studies have analyzed why subject ellipsis tends to occur with experience and percept verbs. Previous studies have only suggested that subject ellipsis occurs with stimulus subjects. Considering the limitations to solving the problems concerning the relationship

between subject ellipsis and verbs from a pragmatic view, I have also realized that it is essential to deal with those problems from the perspective of cognitive linguistics.

Second, several researchers including Carter and McCarthy (2006), Nariyama (2004, 2006), and Thomas (1979) have mentioned that there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects, especially regarding the subjects *I* and *you*. Nariyama (2004) and Thomas (1979) offer some explanations about the subject *I*, i.e. that it has a special status of “internal feeling”, referring to Kuno (1973). However, research about the subject *it* has rarely been conducted, compared to the amount of research on the subjects *I* and *you*, even though the subject *it*⁵ has a high frequency of subject ellipsis, as shown in Tables 10 and 11. Nariyama (2004: 255) has suggested that “subjectless sentences are understood as expressing the view of the speaker and not of the subject ‘it’”, while Carter and McCarthy (2006: 185) just mention that the “subject pronoun *it* and demonstrative pronoun are often not needed”. In light of the fact that there has been so little research on the subject *it*, this study proposes that it is essential to investigate the relationship between subject ellipsis and the subject *it*.

The subject *it* has two grammatical usages: a demonstrative pronoun and “the impersonal *it*”,⁶ as it is called by Langacker (2011: 179). When investigating the relationship between subject ellipsis and the subject *it*, it is significant to recognize which role the subject *it* is playing. This study focuses on the degree of referentiality⁷ by considering the referent of the subject *it*.

Third, it is commonly said that subject ellipsis occurs less in informative sentences (Nariyama 2006). As for subject ellipsis with the subject *you* or a “non-first person subject”,

⁵ When subject ellipsis occurs with percept and experience verbs, there is a possibility that the omitted subjects are assumed to be inanimate subjects or *it*. However, here, these cases are just described as cases with the subject *it*.

⁶ Langacker (2011) notes that *it* has an abstract meaning and “*it* is always meaningful and always referential in the linguistically relevant sense of that term” (Langacker 2011:203).

⁷ The definition of referentiality that is used here follows Payne’s (2011: 365). ‘Referentiality’ implies that “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage”.

Nariyama (2004, 2006) has suggested that “when more information is added, sentences with a second person subject becomes less acceptable” (Nariyama 2004: 253). Likewise, previous research has hardly touched upon the relationship between subject ellipsis and the informativeness of sentences. In order to understand the relationship between subject ellipsis and the informativeness of the sentence, this study investigates the complement structure following perception verbs, that is, grammatical structures after verbs.

3.5. Summary

So far, previous studies of subject ellipsis have mainly discussed it based on theories without practical data backed up by numbers. In contrast, this study is valuable in that I present the frequency of the occurrence of subject ellipsis supported by actual numbers using corpus data. In fact, the three case studies on *COCA*, in §3.1, §3.2, and §3.3, included results of the data.

In §3.1, it was found that there was a relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects and variations of verbs. Moreover, a certain relationship with the co-occurrence with fixed expressions was also assumed. Furthermore, §3.2 discussed the relationship between subject ellipsis and perception verbs. Among perception verbs, the data showed that subject ellipsis occurred with experience and percept verbs. In this respect, it was hypothesized that subject ellipsis had some relationship with perception. Subsequently, §3.3 dealt with the relationship between subject ellipsis and the conversation style. The data suggested that subject ellipsis tended to occur in casual and intimate styles.

Nevertheless, there are some points which cannot be solved by discussing them only from a pragmatic perspective. First, pragmatics alone cannot explain why subject ellipsis frequently occurs with percept verbs among perception verbs. Second, it cannot explain why subject ellipsis frequently occurs with the subject *it*. Third, the question remains as to whether

subject ellipsis tends to occur less with informative sentences. Keeping these remaining issues in mind, the following chapters discuss them mainly from a semantic point of view.

Chapter 4 Theoretical Framework

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, I discussed subject ellipsis mainly from a pragmatic point of view. However, I have found that there are some problems that cannot be resolved by discussing subject ellipsis only from the perspective of pragmatics. Therefore, in order to discuss subject ellipsis in more detail, Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework for the present study of subjectification and referentiality. §4.2 mainly describes studies of subjectification by Langacker and by Traugott. §4.2.1 introduces the basic idea of subjectification. Particularly this study focuses on Langacker's view of subjectification (1991, 1999, 2002, 2009, etc.)

In §4.2.2, two types of subjectification are shown in figures (Langacker 1991: 216). Subsequently, two kinds of expressions using *across* are compared (Langacker 1991: 217). One of them has a physical meaning indicating that something moves, whereas the other one does not include a physical motion but only the 'mental scanning' by the conceptualizer. They illustrate the difference between objective construal and subjective construal. §4.2.3 provides figures which show the increasing subjectivity of G (Ground) describing the degree of subjectification (Langacker 1991: 94).

§4.2.4 focuses on studies about subjectification in grammaticalization. Regarding changes in meanings of words, in her earlier studies, Traugott (1982: 256) suggested that words change unidirectionally, "from propositional through textual to expressive". However, in her later studies, this idea was revised in the following way: "there are separate processes involving correlated diachronic continua" (Traugott 1995: 48). §4.2.5 discusses the differences between Langacker and Traugott's views of subjectification, which are sometimes misunderstood.

In §4.2.6, the characteristics of subject ellipsis in Japanese, which frequently occurs in Japanese daily conversation, are compared with those of subject ellipsis in English. It is suggested that “I mode” (interactional mode of cognition) (Nakamura 2004: 40) is reflected in Japanese and “D mode” (displaced mode of cognition) (Nakamura 2004: 40) is observed in English. Although English typically displays “D mode” (where “a conceptualizer goes out of the interactive cognitive place and takes a perspective just like looking at something objectively from outside [Translated by Shibata]” (Nakamura 2004: 37), in elliptical sentences English has a similar tendency to that of Japanese, i.e. “I mode”.

In §4.3.1, considering that in English “we use different expressions to identify the same referent, and even use two expressions without being aware that they share the same referent” (Saeed 2009: 32), it is shown that the meaning and the referent do not always correspond. This section explains how we recognize the referents of a word from a semantic point of view.

§4.3.2 introduces the definition of referentiality by Payne (2011: 365). This study adopts one of the two types of referentiality, that is, objective referentiality. Payne (2011: 365) suggests that “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage”; this type of referentiality is sometimes referred to as specificity.

4. 2. Subjectification

4.2.1. The Basic Idea of the Subjectification Process

Langacker (1991: 215) defines subjectification as “a semantic shift or extension in which an entity originally construed objectively comes to receive a more subjective construal”. To put it another way, “subjectification is a shift from a relatively objective construal of some entity to a more subjective one” (Langacker 1999: 297). Let us consider the basic idea of the subjectification process. Understanding the concept of an “egocentric viewing arrangement”, suggested by Langacker (2002: 317), is essential in considering the subjectification process.

The notion of an ‘egocentric viewing arrangement’ is illustrated in the figure below.

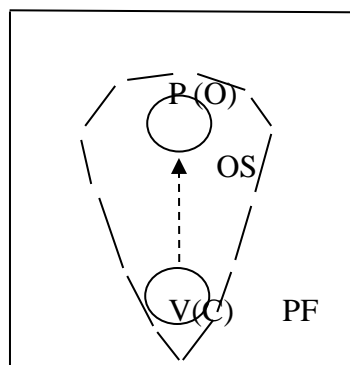


Figure 1. Langacker (2002: 317)

(V=viewer, P=perceived object, PF=viewer’s perceptive field, OS=onstage region)

Figure 1 shows that the V (C=conceptualizer) is onstage and construes P (O =object). Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 14) explain this figure’s importance in terms of subjectification in the following way. That is, an “egocentric viewing arrangement is essential for the subjectification process because the phenomenon of subjectification accompanies the cognitive process that the conceptualizer objectifies and positions itself onstage region [Translated by Shibata]” (Hamada and Tsushima 2012: 14). This means that the conceptualizer itself has to recognize the conceptual operations. In other words, the process of “self-aware[ness]” (Langacker (2002: 317) is needed for subjectification. However, “although the subject is involved in the event that is the object of the conceptualization, the subject cannot involve himself or herself into the object of the conceptualization [Translated by Shibata]” (Fukada and Nakamoto 2008: 94).

Langacker (2002) explains the phenomenon of subjectification, citing an example from daily life involving a pair of glasses¹ in the following manner. If we see a pair of glasses on

¹ Langacker (2002: 316) notes that “If I take my glasses off, hold them in front of me, and examine them, their construal is maximally objective, as I will understand the term: they function solely and prominently as the OBJECT OF PERCEPTION, and not at all as part of the perceptual apparatus itself. By contrast, my

the table, we recognize the existence of the glasses. On the other hand, when we wear them, we are not conscious of their existence anymore. Such a phenomenon is called subjectification. To take another example, when we look at a certain object, we cannot see our whole body or our face itself, which is looking at the object. Those experiences are reflected in language. Therefore, when the subjectification process occurs, the conceptualizer is not usually expressed explicitly. For example, we do not usually express ourselves by encoding ourselves as the conceptualizer, such as with *to me* or *to us*, in such a context.

4.2.2. Subjectification Types 1 and 2

In §4.2.2, the subjectification process will be explored in more detail through theories by Langacker (1991, 2002, 2009, etc.). As cited earlier, Langacker (1991: 215) suggests that “subjectification is a semantic shift or extension in which an entity originally construed objectively comes to receive a more subjective construal”. Langacker (1999: 301-302) suggests that in subjectification process there are considered to be at least four kinds of attenuation: “change in *status*”, “change in *focus*”, “shift in *domain*” and “change in the *locus of activity or potency*”. This study mainly focuses on “change in *focus*”. Langacker (1991: 216) describes two types of subjectification processes, (b) and (c), as shown in Figure 2. The term G in Figure 2 means “*ground* for the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances” (Langacker 2002: 318).

construal of the glasses is maximally subjective when I am wearing them and examining another object, so that they fade from my conscious awareness despite their role in determining the nature of my perceptual experience. The glasses then function exclusively as part of the SUBJECT OF PERCEPTION—they are one component of the perceiving apparatus, but are not themselves perceived”.

(a) Objectively - construed relation (b) Subjectification - Type 1 (c) Subjectification - Type 2

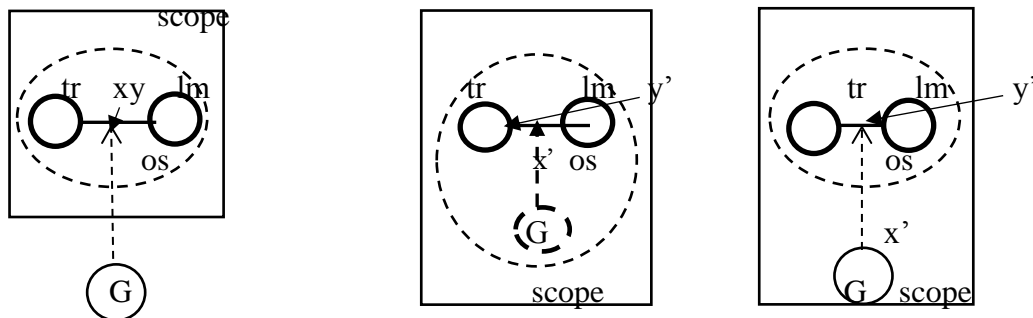


Figure 2. (Langacker 1991: 216) (tr=trajector, lm= landmark, os=onstage, G=ground)

In Figure (2a), G (Ground) construes the object from outside the scope. Figure (2a) shows that “construal is wholly objective” and “x and y are used here as labels for certain facets of the profiled relation” (Langacker 1991: 215). Figure (2b), that is, Subjectification Type 1, shows that G goes into the onstage region and construes the object subjectively. Langacker (1991: 216) explains it as follows: “part of the profiled relationship loses its objective manifestation, but some vestige of it is preserved subjectively as one aspect of how the remaining situation is construed”. In Figure (2c), Subjectification Type 2, G goes out from the onstage region and the physical motion disappears, and mental scanning occurs.

With regard to Figure (2b), Subjectification Type 1, Langacker (1991: 217) shows how the subjectification process occurs by contrasting “two senses of *across*” in the following manner. Figures (3a) and (3b) can be applied to example sentences (1) and (2) below respectively.

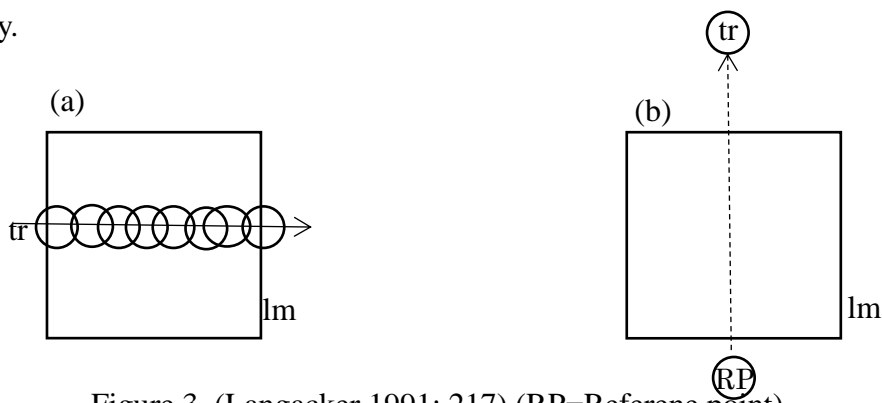


Figure 3. (Langacker 1991: 217) (RP=Referene point)

(1) Harvey crawled across the table. (Langacker 1991: 217)

(2) A famous movie star is sitting across the table. (Ibid.)

In Figure (3a) and example (1), the expression indicates the path of actual physical motion of the trajector *Harvey* with respect to the landmark *the table*. It is “purely objective and makes no reference to the ground” (Langacker 1991: 217). On the other hand, in Figure (3b) and example (2), the trajector *a famous movie star* does not actually move “but occupies a single, static position with respect to the landmark”, *the table* (Langacker 1991: 217). The conceptualizer mentally “traces along the path to compute the trajector’s fixed location” (Langacker 1991: 217). Thus, in example (1), *across* has a physical meaning which indicates that something moves, whereas in example (2), *across* does not indicate physical motion but only ‘mental scanning’ by the subject. These two examples contrast objective construal with subjective construal. Langacker (1999: 300) also describes the process of subjectification with *across* using the following figures.

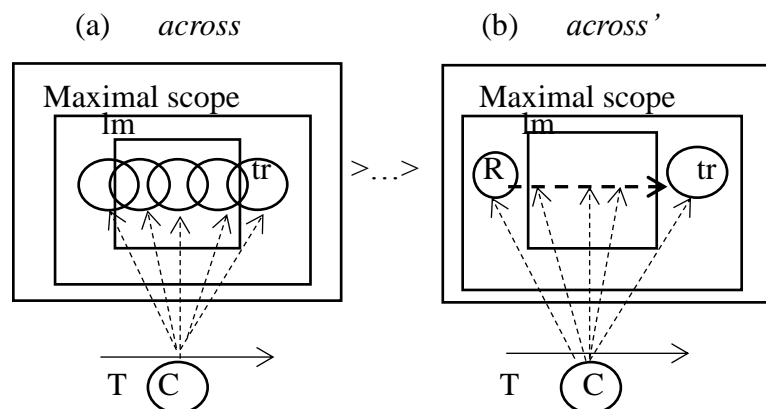


Figure 4. Subjectification process for *across* (Langacker 1999: 300)

Figure (4a) shows that the meaning of *across* is the most objectified, while Figure (4b) shows that the meaning becomes subjectified. What is different between the two figures is that they

have a different reference point. In Figure (4a), the reference point is the place where the trajector was situated first. As for the reference point in Figure (4b), “it is a place that the subject [*Shutai*] choses subjectively [Translated by Shibata]” (Matsumoto 2003: 111).² Example (1) corresponds to the left side of the figure, Figure (4a). This figure shows that the conceptualizer grasps the meaning in the following way: the trajector *Harvey* was crawling continuously on the landmark, that is, the whole table. In contrast, in Figure (4b), the conceptualizer grasps the meaning by objectifying himself or herself, and the conceptualizer itself becomes a reference- point.³

The process of subjectification is also discussed from the viewpoint of the change in meaning of a word. In the case of *across*, Fukada (2001: 65) has argued that “the process of subjectification is concerned with an extension of the meaning of *across* [Translated by Shibata]”. Furthermore, Langacker (1991: 216) has argued that “the full procession (a)> (b)> (c) [in Figure 2] represents a possible course of historical evolution”. This means that the extension of the meaning of *across* has occurred with the passage of time.

Concerning Subjectification Type 1 in Figure (2b), it seems that one important feature of subjectification relates to whether or not the existence of the speaker is explicitly expressed. Fukada (2001: 65) mentions that “in order to judge the degree of subjectification, observing whether the speaker is expressed or not is one yardstick for subjectification [Translated by Shibata]”. The following are some examples.

- (3) A famous movie star is sitting across the table from Sylvester. (Langacker 1991: 218)

² Matsumoto (2003: 112) suggests that the subjectification process for *across* also has other aspects of attenuation, that is, the kind of movement.

³ Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 16) explain the “reference point construction” suggested by Langacker (1995) in the following way. “People have an ability to find something by a marker [Translated by Shibata]” (Hamada and Tsushima 2012: 16). For example, when people want to find the *Big Dipper*, they try to find it using *Venus* as a reference- point.

(4) A famous movie star is sitting across the table from me. (Ibid.)

(5) A famous movie star is sitting across the table. (Ibid.)

In (3), the reference point for *a famous star* is *Sylvester*, not the speaker. Thus, the subject [*Shutai*] objectively observes both the *famous star* and *Sylvester*. In (4), the entity of the subject [*Shutai*] as a reference point is expressed explicitly. In this situation the speaker has a double role. “A conceptualizer looks at his or her own entity objectively from outside the event”, that is, speakers play the role of the subject [*Shutai*] and at the same time that of the object [Translated by Shibata] (Fukada and Nakamoto 2008: 171). In (5), the subject [*Shutai*] functions as a reference point which positions *a famous movie star*. It is expressed implicitly and understood subjectively in the highest degree. Thus, the implicitness of the subject [*Shutai*] is one basis for assessing the degree of the subjectification.

With regard to the characteristics of Subjectification Type 2 in Figure (2c), Langacker (1991: 218) suggests that Type 2 is lacking in the following way: “First, its referent point is not always identified with the ground, even though this represents default-case value”. “Second, there is a conventionalized grammatical device” (e.g. *from*, *to*) (Langacker 1991: 218). “Third, the subjectified relationship is pivotal to determining the configuration of the objective relationship” (Langacker 1991: 218). Example (7) is an example of Subjectification Type 2, illustrated in Figure (2c).

(6) The balloon rose slowly. (Langacker 1991: 218)

(7) The hill gently rises from the bank of the river. (Ibid.)

In (6), “the trajector [*the balloon*] moves objectively through physical space”, while in (7), the conceptualizer “moves subjectively through the scene, mentally tracing an upward path along

the hill's expanse" (Langacker 1991: 218). Fukada (2001: 85) suggests that this illustrates "not the trajector's act but its state" and that "the subjectification of the object occurs, in that, the mental scanning or the physical feeling of the speaker is projected into the object [Translated by Shibata]". Thus, Subjectification Type 2 in Figure (2c) exhibits phenomena such as "the disappearance of the physical motion by the trajector" and "surfacing or actualizing of mental scanning [Translated by Shibata]" (Fukada 2001: 70).

4.2.3. Increasing Subjectivity of G

It is important to understand how the degree of subjectification increases, as illustrated by some figures in this section. Before examining the change of *feel* patterns or the subjectification process of *feel* in §5.4, Figure 5 briefly explains how the subjectification process increases. Figure 5 shows the degree of subjectification.

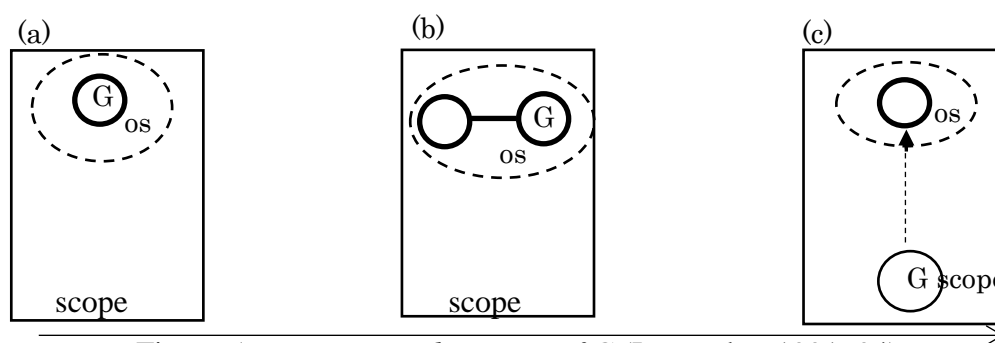


Figure 5. *Increasing subjectivity of G* (Langacker 1991: 94)

First, let us briefly confirm how Langacker (2002) has described each of the figures, (5a), (5b) and (5c). Langacker (2002: 318) uses the term G for "ground for the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances (such as the time and the place when speaking)", as already mentioned earlier. In Figure (5a), "the structure profiles an element of the ground, thus making it the focal point within the objective scene" (Langacker 1991: 94). In this case, G indicates "expressions such as *I*, *you* and *now*" (Langacker 2002: 319). G is objectified and

profiled on stage.

In Figure (5b), “an expression like *identified to us* or *known to us* and *near me* profiles the grounding relationship” (Langacker 2002: 323). Figure (5b) illustrates that G is objectified in the same way as in Figure (5a). Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 19) suggest that “G has a relationship with the event and has become part of the conception [Translated by Shibata]”.

In Figure (5c), “both the ground and this grounding are subjectively construed” (Langacker 1991: 94). For instance, “the corresponding grounding predication, such as *the* or *this*” (Langacker 2002: 323) is described in Figure (5c). G is implicit reference and offstage. Thus, Figure 5 illustrates how subjectification increases from (a) to (c).

4.2.4. Subjectification in Grammaticalization

A researcher, Traugott, who argues the relationship between the process of subjectification and grammaticalization, should be discussed here. In the process of researching grammaticalization in the 1990s, Traugott noted subjectification as a factor contributing to grammaticalization. In effect, nowadays, it is commonly recognized that subjectification is involved as one of factors contributing to grammaticalization, along with those of pragmatic inferencing,⁴ bleaching,⁵ generalization,⁶ and decategorization⁷ (Akimoto 2001, 2002). Traugott (1995: 31) proposes that “subjectification refers to a pragmatic-semantic process whereby meanings become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition, in other words, towards what the

⁴ Pragmatic inferencing means a process where conversation inference frequently appears in the context, by which words have become commonly used (Akimoto 2002).

⁵ Bleaching means that the meaning of the word has weakened or disappeared. In other words, it can be thought of as semantic generalization or semantic reduction (Akimoto 2002).

⁶ Generalization can be categorized into two types, that is, generalization of meaning and generalization of grammatical function. The former is concerned with polysemy (Akimoto 2002).

⁷ Decategorization implies a tendency for the morphological and syntactic properties that a noun or verb possesses to disappear, so that the word shifts to possessing the characteristics of a preposition or a conjunction.

speaker is talking about”. Traugott (1995: 32) defines “grammaticalization” as “the process whereby lexical items or phrases come through frequent use in certain highly constrained local contexts to be reanalyzed as having syntactic and morphological functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions”.

Traugott (1982) suggests that the process of change in meaning occurs in the following way. That is, “from propositional through textual to expressive” (Traugott 1982: 256). This idea is based on a proposal by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Regarding the unidirectionality of the process of change, mentioned above, Traugott (1982) suggests that the meanings change from more concrete to less concrete and “from less personal to more personal” (Traugott 1982: 253)

However, Traugott (1995: 47) later revised her view of unidirectionality, noting that [a hypothesis based on Halliday and Hasan (1976)⁸] “has also raised a number of questions about the ordering of the changes”. Traugott (1995: 47) gives a counterexample for unidirectionality, saying that “*while* does show a clear development from textual (clause-combing) to subjective (concessive) meaning”. Furthermore, Traugott (1995: 48) suggests that “there are separate processes involving correlated diachronic continua”, which are shown as follows.

(8) (Traugott 1995: 48)

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Propositional function | ⇒ | Discourse function |
| Objective meaning | ⇒ | Subjective meaning |
| Non-epistemic modality | ⇒ | Epistemic modality |
| Non-syntactic subject | ⇒ | Syntactic subject |
| Full, free form | ⇒ | Bonded form |

⁸ Halliday and Hasan (1976), as cited in Traugott (1995: 47), suggest there are three functional domains of language, that is ideational, textual and the interpersonal domains.

In other words, Traugott (1995) later denied the idea that changes in meaning are “from propositional through textual to expressive” (Traugott 1982: 256). Instead, Traugott (1995: 31) discusses the relationship with the “pragmatic - semantic process”. Moreover, Traugott (1995: 31) suggests that “subjectification refers to a pragmatic - semantic process whereby meanings become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition”. This means that there are cases where the meaning of an expression becomes more subjective than before through the process of grammaticalization.

Fukada (2001: 62) explains the change in meaning of *since* by relating it to the subjectification process suggested by Traugott (1989, 1995) in the following way.

(9) a. I have done quite a bit of writing *since* we last met.

b. *Since* you are so angry, there is no point in taking with you. (Fukada 2001: 62-63)

In Example (9a), *since*⁹ displays a relationship within the text (Fukada 2001: 63). Its meaning is “in the intervening period between the time mentioned and the time under consideration” (*ODE*). In contrast, in Example (9b), “*since* indicates the cause and effect between two situations, which is determined by the subjective judgement by the speaker [Translated by Shibata]” (Fukada 2001: 63). Thus, Fukada (2001: 62) explains “subjectification”, which is suggested by Traugott (1989), implying that “a meaning of language expressions have been subjectified when the change in meaning occurs” [Translated by Shibata].

Traugott (1995: 32) also mentions that even if a new meaning is introduced, the older meaning may still coexist with newer one. The following is a schematic figure for the “grammaticalization chain” (Heine 1992), which shows the coexistence of older meanings

⁹ Along with *since*, Traugott (1995) explains the development of subjectification by giving the examples of *be going to*, *let us*, *let alone*, *I think*, *while*, *rather than*, and *even*.

and newer ones, visualized using a chain. Figure 6 can also be applied to the change in patterns of *since* (Nakamura 2004: 24).¹⁰

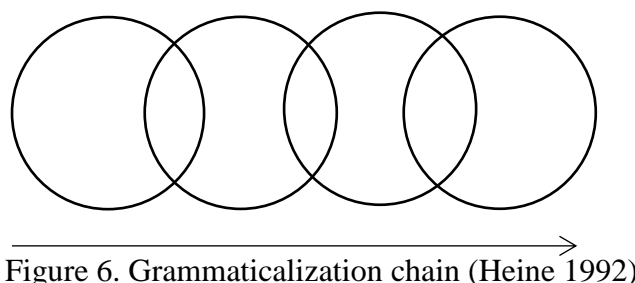


Figure 6. Grammaticalization chain (Heine 1992)

Nakamura (2004: 24) suggests that a “grammaticalization chain is a process where subjectification and bleaching repeatedly occur [Translated by Shibata]”.

4.2.5. The Differences between Langacker and Traugott’s Views of Subjectification

In §4.2.1, §4.2.2, and §4.2.3, I focused on Langacker’s view of subjectification. In §4.2.4, I discussed Traugott’s view of subjectification. Now, in this section, I will examine the differences between Langacker and Traugott’s views of subjectification. Fukada (2001: 74) compares Langacker and Traugott’s views as shown in examples (10) and (11).¹¹ Traugott’s view of subjectification is referred to as *Shukanka* rather than *Shutaika* in the following way.

(10) Traugott’s view of Subjectification

- a. *Shukanka* 1: a process where the subjectivity (*shukan*) of society, including individual speakers, comes to be shown

¹⁰ Nakamura (2004: 24) suggests, in a similar figure to Figure 6, that the first link of the chain represents the original meaning of *since* and the area of overlap between the older chain link and the newer chain link represents the original meaning of *since* and the newer meaning of “cause”. Then, the second chain link, which does not overlap with the first one, represents the meaning of “cause”.

¹¹ Langacker’s view of subjectification, as seen in example (11), is also discussed in Chapter 5.

- b. *Shukanka* 2: a process where the subjectivity (*shukan*) of an individual speaker comes to be shown. [Translated by Shibata] (Fukada 2001: 74)

Example (11) is an explanation of Langacker's view of subjectification.

(11) Langacker's view of Subjectification

- a. Subjectification of the object 1: a process where a speaker, a place where a speaker speaks, or a situation closely related to a speaker, comes into an object as a referent point.
- b. Subjectification of the object 2: a process where a speaker projects his or her psychological scanning into an object.
- c. *Shukanka* (Subjectification) (=Traugott's view of subjectification by Traugott)
A recognition of an object by the speaker, that is, subjectivity (*shukan*) comes to be revealed. (= (16) in Chapter 5) [Translated by Shibata] (Fukada 2001: 74)

As Example (11c) shows, the interpretation of *Shukanka* between the views of Langacker and Traugott is overlapped. Traugott (1995) suggests that subjectification in grammaticalization:

is, broadly speaking, the development of a grammatically identifiable expression of a speaker belief or speaker attitude to what is said. It is a gradient phenomenon, whereby forms and constructions that at first express primarily concrete, lexical, and objective meanings come through repeated use in local syntactic contexts to serve increasingly abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal, and speaker-based functions (Traugott 1995: 32).

In addition to the theory of subjectification, the term 'intersubjectification' (Traugott 2004:

551) should be mentioned here. Traugott (2004: 551) defines the term “intersubjectification” in the following way; “intersubjectification motivates the semasiological shift of meanings over time to encode or externalize implicatures regarding ‘SP/W¹²’ attention to the ‘self’ of AD/R” [=addressee/reader]. To put it more simply, “intersubjectification” implies a change in the meaning of an expression where a speaker or a writer considers something in the position of a hearer or a reader.

4.2.6. Comparing Japanese with English in Terms of Subject Ellipsis

In this last sub-section of §4.2, I compare Japanese and English in terms of subject ellipsis. Subject ellipsis in English has some characteristics in common with some typical Japanese expressions (e.g. *atsui*, *samui*, *gohan-o-tabeta*, etc). Some Japanese expressions are often used without the subject *I* in unmarked situations. Ikegami (2006), as cited in Fukada and Nakamoto (2008: 95) suggests that “Japanese tends to be expressed in an egocentric viewing arrangement [Translated by Shibata]” where C goes into an event and construes O (see Figure 1), which is the basic idea of subjectification.

In contrast, English tends to prefer an ‘optimal viewing arrangement’ (Langacker 2002: 317), where “C construes O from outside O. There, C itself is not a participant” (Fukada and Nakamoto 2008: 93). In other words, the event is understood objectively from outside (Nakamura: 2004). In that environment, the phenomena of subjectification, where an event is understood subjectively, must be a marked situation in English. In spite of this, subject ellipsis is nevertheless frequently observed. Considering that subject ellipsis commonly occurs in English and sentences without the subject commonly occur in Japanese, it seems that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and subjectification.

The different features between Japanese and English, based on the difference of

¹² SP/W = speaker/writer

perspectives which people have in each language, can be explained in several ways. For example, Nakamura (2004: 40) suggests that there are two kinds of modes for languages. Nakamura notes (2004: 40) that an “interactional mode of cognition”, called “I mode”, and a “displaced mode of cognition”, or “D mode”, are “reflected in various language phenomena”. According to Nakamura (2004: 40), “I mode is often reflected in Japanese and D mode in English [Translated by Shibata]”.

In “I mode”, “the conceptualizer inseparably fuses into the objected event and interacts with the object [Translated by Shibata]” (Nakamura 2004: 35). This implies a state of “the cognition where a speaker and an experiencer are assimilated with each other [Translated by Shibata]” (Nakamura 2004: 35). That state is exactly the same as the process of subjectification.

In “D mode”, the “conceptualizer goes out of the interactive cognitive place and takes a perspective just like looking at something objectively from outside [Translated by Shibata]” (Nakamura 2004: 37). This is similar to the concept of an “optimal viewing arrangement”, as suggested by Langacker (2002: 317). Thus, it is possible to say that, basically, Japanese and English have two different modes.

Ikegami (2006: 195) also refers to the different features between Japanese and English which come from the difference of perspectives between the two languages. Ikegami identifies subjectivity and objectivity in the famous Japanese novel *Yukiguni* by Kawabata. The following are some examples.

(12) *Kokkyo no nagai tonneru o nukeru to yukiguni de atta.* (Kawabata 1947)

(13) The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country.

(Translated by E. Seidensticker) (Ikegami 2006: 195).

Example (12) is a famous sentence written by Kawabata (1947) and Example (13) is the same sentence, translated by Seidensticker. Ikegami (2006) compares those two sentences in order to analyze the difference of perspectives between Japanese and English. Ikegami (2006: 195) suggests that in (12) “a main character becomes a zero entity as an experiencing subject together with a train which he is getting on and both of them (the speaker and the train) are not encoded [Translated by Shibata]”. In contrast, “in (13), the main character leaves a part of himself on the train. When that train as an object is coming out of the tunnel, he positions himself outside the train and is looking at the train, which is carrying the other part of himself [Translated by Shibata]” (Ikegami 2006: 195). Thus, we can see how differently those sentences are understood between the original Japanese and the English translation because of the difference of perspectives.

Concerning this difference of perspectives, Kanaya (2004: 29) has noted that “the translator intentionally changes the perspective so as to make the translation better”. Furthermore, Kanaya (2004: 60-61) suggests that in English there is another entity of *I*, having ‘perspectives of God’ and looking down at all the pronouns (*I, you, he, she, they*) (see Figure 7). In contrast, “speakers in Japanese have similar perspectives that worms have and enter a situation of conversation [Translated by Shibata]” (Kanaya 2004: 60-61) (see Figure 8). The reason why Kanaya (2004) uses metaphor *worms* is that worms live in the ground and recognize objects, being positioned in the ground and involved in the situation. In such a situation speakers or worms cannot see themselves or their own figures. This means that they cannot express themselves by encoding. Moreover, Kanaya (2004) suggests that when we talk with perspectives of worms, where we enter a situation, the context of words we use in conversation is affluently given. In an affluent context situation, it is considered that subject ellipsis tends to occur.

Considering these features of Japanese and English, even though Japanese and English

are different types of languages, perspectives in Japanese are similar to those for which subjectification occurs in English. In other words, even in English, which is considered to use “D mode”, there are cases where the subjectification process occurs.

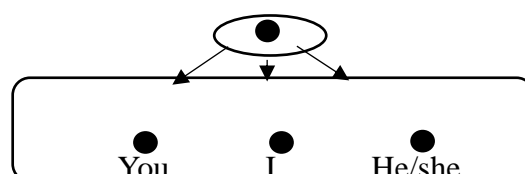


Figure 7. Perspectives of God (Kanaya 2004: 60)

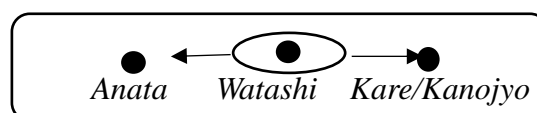


Figure 8. Perspectives of worms (Kanaya 2004: 60)

4.3. Referentiality

4.3.1. Reference

§4.3 discusses the second semantic feature that motivates subject ellipsis, namely, referentiality. This section explains how the referent of a word is recognized from a semantic point of view. First, I talk about how we describe the world in languages. Saeed (2009: 24) has suggested that there are two approaches to talk about the world based on theories of semantics, that is, the referential (or denotational) approach and the representational approach. “For semanticists adopting the first approach, this action of putting words into relationship with the world is meaning, so that to provide a semantic description for a language we need to show how the expressions of the language can ‘hook onto’ the world” (Saeed 2009: 24). The difference between the two approaches mentioned above is explained below. The following are some examples.

(14) There is a casino in Grafton Street. (Saeed 2009: 24)

(15) There isn't a casino in Grafton Street. (Ibid.)

According to Saeed (2009: 24), if the two sentences above “were spoken at the same time about the same street”, those two meanings would not make sense or would be incompatible under the former approach, that is, the referential (or denotational) approach. In contrast, under the latter approach, that is, the representational approach, “our ability to talk about the world depends on our mental model¹³ of it” (Saeed 2009: 24) and “a speaker can choose to view the same situation in different ways” (Saeed 2009: 24). Therefore, it is possible to say that the two sentences are not incompatible under the representational approach. To put it another way, in the referential approach, an entity is recognized as one of the referents, while in the representational approach, the representation is understood in each person's mind.

The kinds of reference can be classified into two types: referring and non-referring expressions (Saeed 2009). “Nouns are potentially referring expressions” (Saeed 2009: 26). In contrast, linguistic expressions such as *so*, *very*, *maybe*, *if*, *not*, *all* which “do not themselves identify entities in the world” (Saeed 2009: 26) are called “non-referring items”.

Furthermore, referring expressions can be divided into those having two types of referents, that is, constant referents and variable referents (Saeed 2009). Expressions with constant referents include expressions which “have the same referent across a range of utterances, for example, *the Eiffel Tower* or *the Pacific Ocean*” (Saeed 2009: 26). In contrast, expressions with variable referents, e.g. *I*, *you*, *she*, etc. have referents that are “totally dependent on context” (Saeed 2009: 26).

However, if we understand reference in the following way, that is “to give the meaning

¹³ Tsuji (2009: 243) defines a mental model as “a representation where the structure dealing with a situation at issue is established in one's mind in order to solve the problems of understanding discourse or inference”.

of a word one shows what it denotes” (Saeed 2009: 30) or “reference picks out elements in the real world” (Saeed 2009: 30), there are still some things that cannot be explained in this view. For example, we cannot explain expressions which do not have “a referent that exists or has ever existed” (Saeed 2009: 31). For example:

(16) In the painting, a unicorn is ignoring a maiden. (Saeed 2009: 31)

(17) World War III might be about to start. (Ibid.)

(18) Father Christmas might not visit you this year. (Ibid.)

The expressions in examples (16) to (18) are able to be understood, even if the words *unicorn*, *World War III*, and *Father Christmas* do not refer to anything in reality. This shows that referents are not always entities in the real world. Furthermore, Saeed (2009: 30) has suggested that “there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between a linguistic expression and the item we want to identify”, as shown in the examples below.

(19) Then in 1981 Anwar El Sadat was assassinated. (Saeed 2009: 31)

(20) Then in 1981 the President of Egypt was assassinated. (Ibid.)

In (19) and (20), *Anwar El Sadat* and the *President of Egypt* refer to the same person or the same referent, however, these expressions have different meanings. These examples show that “there is more to meaning than reference” (Saeed 2009: 31).

Furthermore, Frege (1980) as cited in Saeed (2009: 32) suggests that the expressions the *morning star* and the *evening star* might be understood and often used as “two apparently different celestial bodies without knowing that they both refer to sightings of Venus”. In other words, “we can use different expressions to identify the same referent, and even use two

expressions without being aware that they share the same referent, then it seems likely that meaning and referent are not exactly the same thing” (Saeed 2009: 32). In order to characterize another dimension of language, Frege (1980) has proposed the term sense along with the term reference. “Sense” is considered to be “primary in that it allows reference”¹⁴ (Saeed 2009: 32).

4.3.2. The Definition of Referentiality

As mentioned earlier, this study considers subject ellipsis and the referentiality of the subject to be related. Therefore, I define the term “referentiality” here. Payne (2011: 364) has noted that “referentiality is similar, but not identical to identifiability”. Payne (2011: 362) suggests that “identifiability is in practice always significant only in relation to the communication situation. That is something which is treated as identifiable if its referent is explicit enough for the speaker’s current purposes”. Therefore, concerning the example sentence, “I got mad at Joe for writing on the living room wall” (Payne 2011: 362), it can be said that “the living room wall” is recognized as identifiable. That is to say, “a speaker will treat a referent as identifiable if there is some reasonable expectation that the hearer can pick out a particular referent” (Payne 2011: 364). Identifiability and non-identifiability are determined based on functional words such as determiners. In contrast, objective referentiality is determined based on contextual factors. This study focuses on the latter, objective referentiality.

There are two types of referentiality: objective referentiality and discourse

¹⁴ According to Saeed (2009: 32), “We understand the expression *the President of Ireland* that we can use it to refer to a particular individual at any given time. Other ways of describing this same person will differ in sense but have the same reference”.

referentiality¹⁵ (Payne 2011: 365). Payne (2011: 365) explains objective referentiality in the following way: “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage” and “sometimes referentiality in this sense is referred to as specificity”. Following this explanation by Payne (2011: 365), this study defines “referentiality” as a state where an entity is “a bounded, individuated entity” that has “specificity”. The italicized words in the following examples, (21) and (22), are categorized as objectively referential. In (21), the words *those men* refer to a bounded and individuated entity and also to specific people. Similarly, in (22), the words *your cabin* refer to a bounded and specific entity; therefore, we can call them objectively referential. However, the expressions in examples (23) and (24) are not objectively referential.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| (21) <i>Those men</i> are ridiculous. | (Payne 2011: 365) |
| (22) Someday I’d like to buy <i>your cabin</i> by the seashore. | (Ibid.) |
| (23) <i>All men</i> are ridiculous. – Generic | (Ibid.) |
| (24) Someday I’d like to buy <i>a cabin</i> by the seashore. – Non-specific | (Ibid.) |

In example (23), “the speaker assumes the hearer can identify the genera, though there is no specific individual being referred to” (Payne 2011: 365). In the example (24), *a cabin* is not specific, therefore, it is not an example of objective referentiality.

Watanabe (2015) also has a similar view of referentiality. Watanabe (2015: 58) suggests

¹⁵ The other type of referentiality, that is, discourse referentiality “has to do with continuing presence on the discourse stage over a portion of text” (Payne 2011: 366).

a. Minimal detective work pinned him to a P.O. box in Hasstings-on-Hudson.

In the example a. “a P.O. box is treated as objectively existing on the discourse stage. However, if the box is never mentioned again, it would not be discourse referential” (Payne 2011: 366). To be discourse referential, it would need to have a continuing presence. The demonstratives *this, that, these, those* are indicators of discourse referentiality (Payne 2011).

that there are two types of language expressions: “referential linguistic expressions” and “non-referential linguistic expressions” (Watanabe 2015: 58) then categorizes “referential linguistic expressions” into “generic references” and “specific references”. “Specific references” have “non-identifiable specific referents” and “identifiable specific referents”. Furthermore, Watanabe (2015: 58) mentions that “when a referent of the expression is specific referent, a non-identifiable specific referent or an identifiable specific referent is determined depending on whether the referent is assumed to be able to be specified by the recipient or not [Translated by Shibata]”. Figure 9, from Watanabe (2015: 58), shows the relationship between linguistic expressions and referentiality.

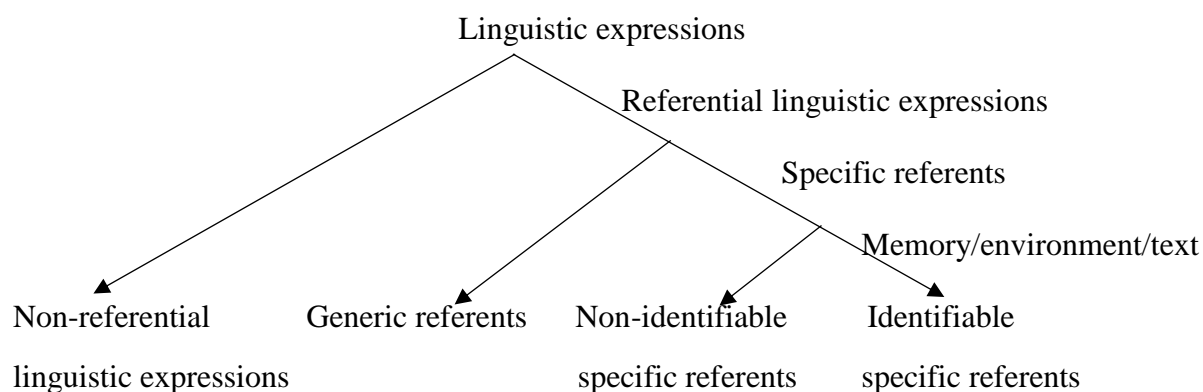


Figure 9. Linguistic expressions and referentiality (Watanabe 2015: 58)

Example (25) is a sentence which includes three nouns; this allows us to observe referentiality.

(25) The president Yamamoto is awfully fond of *Koimari*.¹⁶

(*Yamamoto Shacho wa Koimari ni Me ga nai.*)

[Translatted by Shibata] (Watanabe 2015: 59)

¹⁶ *Koimari* is a type of Japanese porcelain pottery.

In example (25), as already suggested, there are three nouns: *Yamamoto Shacho* (proper noun), *Koimari* (type of porcelain ware), and *Me* ('eyes'). Watanabe (2015: 59) suggests that the former two words, *Yamamoto Shacho* and *Koimari*, can be recognized as a specific person and a specific type of pottery, however, *Me ga nai* in this example sentence, is an idiom that means *awfully fond of*, not implying an actual eye. This means that *Yamamoto Shacho* and *Koimari* have referentiality but *Me* does not. In such a way, it can be determined whether or not a word has referentiality.

4.4. Summary

Chapter 4 described the theoretical framework of the present study, on which this study is founded. Previous research examined subject ellipsis mainly from a pragmatic point of view, while this study discusses subject ellipsis based on theories from a semantic perspective. In §4.2.1, the basic idea of the subjectification process was introduced using the concept of an “egocentric viewing arrangement” (Langacker 2002: 317). In §4.2.2, two types of subjectification processes were discussed (Langacker 1991: 216) and subsequently, two kinds of usage of *across* were compared with each other, one of which included “mental scanning” by the conceptualizer. §4.2.3 introduced “increasing subjectivity of G” [Ground] (Langacker 1991: 94), which shows the degree of subjectification by figures.

§4.2.4 introduced Traugott’s view of the theory of subjectification. Traugott studied subjectification process as it relates to grammaticalization. In recent years, Traugott (1995: 48) has suggested that “there are separate processes involving correlated diachronic continua” in terms of changes in the meanings of words.

In §4.2.5, although Langacker’s and Traugott’s views of subjectification are different,¹⁷

¹⁷ The theories of subjectification suggested by Langacker and Traugott share some characteristics in common, as mentioned above.

their theories are sometimes misunderstood as the same as each other. Therefore, I introduced the differences between their two theories.

In §4.2.6, the characteristics of Japanese and those of English were compared. Although English has been said to use “D mode” (displaced mode of cognition) “where a conceptualizer goes out of the interactive cognitive place and takes a perspective just like looking at something objectively from outside [Translated by Shibata]” (Nakamura 2004: 37), in terms of subject ellipsis, English has partly similar characteristics to Japanese, which has been said to use “I mode”.

In §4.3.1, I discussed the term *sense* (Frege 1980), which was suggested along with the term *referent* in order to explain how we grasp language. In §4.3.2, I introduced the definition of referentiality for the purposes of this study. Payne (2011: 365) defines objective referentiality as follows: “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage”.

PART II Subject Ellipsis from Semantic Perspectives

Chapter 5 Subject Ellipsis and Subjectification: The Perception Verb *Feel*

5.1. Introduction

An earlier chapter, Chapter 3, focused on subject ellipsis and factors contributing to subject ellipsis. Three case studies in Chapter 3 found that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and some factors contributing to subject ellipsis such as context, variations of verbs, variations of subjects, and co-occurrence with fixed expressions and speech style.

Nevertheless, despite factors that contribute to subject ellipsis suggested by traditional studies, as described in Chapters 2 and 3, there are still remaining problems which have yet to be solved, as indicated in Chapter 3. These remaining issues are regarding (i) the relationship between subject ellipsis and specific verbs, especially percept verbs (Chapter 5), (ii) the relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects, especially the subject *it* (Chapter 6), and (iii) the relationship between subject ellipsis and complement structures (Chapter 7).

Among the three problems above, Chapter 5 deals with the first problem, that is, why subject ellipsis tends to occur more often with specific verbs, such as percept verbs. To that end, this chapter focuses on grammatical patterns with the perception verb *feel* and investigates changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* in the *OED* (800s – 1800s) and *COHA* (1800s – 2000s). Subsequently, this chapter examines the relationship between subject ellipsis and grammatical patterns. Finally, it analyzes subject ellipsis and the factors contributing to subject ellipsis from the perspective of semantics, particularly as they relate to the process of subjectification (Langacker 1990, 1998, 1999).

5.1.1. Purpose of the Research

As mentioned earlier, Chapter 5 focuses on the verb *feel* and investigates whether there is any correlation between subject ellipsis and grammatical patterns. The verb *feel* was chosen for the investigation because, among the five perception verbs, it behaves distinctly from the other four verbs. That is to say, the verb *feel* has “emotional states”¹ (Biber et al. 1999: 363) and also the verb *feel* is presumably more related to humans’ mental perception compared to the other four.

Case Study 1 investigates how grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* have changed from the 800s to the 1800s using the *OED, Oxford English Dictionary*. Afterwards, the changes in patterns with the verbs *feel* and *look* are compared with each other.

Case Study 2 introduces how the verb *feel* has changed chronologically from the 1800s to the 2000s using *COHA, Corpus of Historical American English*. This case study examines whether the main grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* have changed from patterns with animate subjects to inanimate ones or vice versa or have had few changes.

Case Study 3 presents data on the relationship between subject ellipsis and changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel*. The discourse containing the elliptical sentences in Case Study 3 (“Changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* and subject ellipsis”) is based on the discourse found in Case Study 2 (“Changes in frequently occurring pattern with the verb *feel*”). The research in Case Study 3 reveals which grammatical patterns subject ellipsis occurs with and what factors are relevant at the time of subject ellipsis. It is postulated that a process of ‘subjectification’ (Langacker 1990, 1998, 1999) is relevant for the phenomenon.

¹ According to Biber et al. (1999: 360), verbs can be classified into “seven major semantic domains: activity verbs, communication verbs, mental verbs, causative verbs, verbs of simple occurrence, verbs of existence or relationship, and aspectual verbs”. Among them, four verbs *see*, *hear*, *smell*, and *taste* are classified as mental verbs, while the verb *feel* is also a mental verb, but is subdivided into “emotional states” (Biber et al. 1999: 363). In this respect, *feel* is distinct from the other four mental verbs.

5.2. Research Analysis

5.2.1. Perception Verbs and Subject Ellipsis

In Chapter 5, perception verbs were chosen for the object of investigation for the following reasons. First, perception verbs are divided into SVO and SVC patterns,² therefore, it is easier to observe differences in the grammatical patterns. Second, their behavior is expected to be remarkably different depending on the semantic roles of subjects. It is assumed that there is a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and the semantic roles of the subject. Third, observing the behavior of perception verbs might lead to connections with the theory of cognitive linguistics.

In an earlier chapter, Case Study 2 in Chapter 3 investigated the frequency of subject ellipsis with perception verbs. The patterns “verb + *good*” are frequently chosen for the object of the investigation throughout this chapter. The adjective *good*, in particular, was selected among others as a complement because it has a high frequency of co-occurrence with perception verbs, as shown in Table 1. Therefore, the token counts of the example sentences are higher and more precise data can be obtained.

Table 1. The co-occurrence of perception verbs and adjectives (*COCA*)

| | Feel (s) | Look (s) | Sound (s) | Smell (s) | Taste (s) |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | good (1164) | good (860) | familiar (102) | good (45) | good (62) |
| 2 | comfortable (585) | great (441) | good (72) | bad (11) | great (17) |
| 3 | bad (486) | bad (196) | like (55) | great (8) | different (9) |
| 4 | sorry (483) | beautiful (153) | asleep (42) | fresh (5) | like (6) |
| 5 | like (452) | different (96) | great (29) | wonderful (5) | better (5) |

(This differs from Table 6 in Chapter 3 in that this table shows data from the first to fifth ranking.)

As noted earlier, along with perception verbs, this study mainly focuses on the subject *it*. One

² Details are explained in §5.2.2.

reason for this is that the subject *it* has received little attention, although *it* has a high frequency of subject ellipsis as observed in Chapter 3. Table 2 below again shows the frequency of subject ellipsis depending on the subject, according to the survey in Chapter 3 (see Tables 10 and 11 in Chap. 3).³

Table 2. The frequency of subject ellipsis in percept verb group depending on the variation of subjects based on (COCA) (Based on Tables 10 and 11 in Chapter 3)

| Spoken | | Written | |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Referent of ellipsis | Count | Referent of ellipsis | Count |
| I | 5 (2.02%) | I | 0 |
| You | 11 (4.45%) | You | 0 |
| We | 0 | We | 0 |
| He/she | 4 (1.62%) | He/she | 1 (1.25%) |
| It | 224 (90.69%) | It | 78 (97.50%) |
| They | 3 (1.21%) | They | 1 (1.25%) |

As seen in Table 2, the subject *it* shows a particularly high frequency of subject ellipsis in both spoken and written English compared to other subjects. Therefore, it also seems worthwhile to focus on the subject *it* in Chapter 5.

5.2.2. Categorization of Perception Verbs

Perception verbs can be divided into three groups, experience, activity, and percept verbs, and can be categorized depending on five sense modalities or five senses: vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999). An animate being, generally a human being, is slotted in the subject position of experience and activity verbs, while an experiencer, that is, either an animate being or an inanimate being is slotted in the subject spot

³ The survey involves the results of subject ellipsis with phrases including *feels good*, *looks good*, etc. (see Tables 10 and 11 in Chapter 3). The procedure for judging what subject is omitted in the discourse was determined from the context in the discourse derived from ‘source information’ in COCA; when there was a difficulty in retrieving the implicit subject, the final judgment was left to a native speaker of English.

of percept verbs.

In cases where the same verb (e.g. either *feel* or *taste*) could belong to different groups, its categorization was determined by examining whether it was SVO or SVC. The categorization of SVO patterns which include both experience and activity verbs was decided based on the judgment method that Viberg (1984) suggests.

Table 3. The basic paradigm of verbs of perception in English (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999: 45)

| | [animate being] [SVO] | [animate being] [SVO] | [experiencer] [SVC] |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| SENSE MODALITY | EXPERIENCE | ACTIVITY | PERCEPT |
| VISION | See | Look | Look |
| HEARING | Hear | Listen | Sound |
| TOUCH | Feel/Touch | Touch/Feel | Feel |
| SMELL | Smell | Smell/Sniff | Smell |
| TASTE | Taste | Taste | Taste |

(= Table 1 in Chapter 8)

For example, if I could not judge whether the phrase should be categorized as having an experience verb or an activity verb, the phrase “*to see how soft it is*” was added to the end of the sentence, as shown in example (2) below. If the resulting sentence made sense, the phrase was categorized as having an activity verb. The following are some examples with those verbs.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| (1) I feel stone under my foot. | (Experience verbs) | (SVO) |
| (2) I feel the cloth (to see how soft it is). | (Activity verbs) | (SVO) |
| (3) It feels good. | (Percept verbs) | (SVC) |

Among the three verb groups, that is, experience, activity, and percept, Chapter 5 particularly

focuses on the percept verb group.

5.2.3. Subject Ellipsis and the Behavior of *Feel*

Before starting the case study investigations, this section conducts a simple study on the characteristics of subject ellipsis with the subject *it*, focusing on the following phrases: *looks good*, *sounds good*, *smells good*, and *feels good*, with Table 10 in Chapter 3 as the data source. The phrases that are the objects of investigation in Chapter 3 are more deeply analyzed, in order to determine how the subject ellipsis of *it* is used syntactically.

Table 4 shows characteristics of subject ellipsis with the subject *it* for percept verbs in spoken English. For example, with the phrase *feels good*, out of 200 examples collected from COCA, 23 (0.27) cases of subject ellipsis with the subject *it* are found. Out of 23 (0.27), 8 (0.09) cases are used anaphorically⁴ and 15 (0.18) cases are used cataphorically. The following examples, (4) and (5), are used anaphorically.

Table 4. Characteristics of the subject ellipsis of *it* with percept verbs in spoken English

| | It (anaphorically) | It (cataphorically) |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Looks good</i> | 52 (1.04) | 0 |
| <i>Sounds good</i> | 84 (1.7) | 0 |
| <i>Smells good</i> | 17 (0.00058) | 0 |
| <i>Tastes good</i> | 8 (0.024) | 0 |
| <i>Feels good</i> | 8 (0.09) | 15 (0.18) |

(4) a: I'm going to be ready for the tour soon.

b: *Looks good*.

(COCA)

⁴ Generally speaking, when the subject *it* refers to former content, it is said to be 'used anaphorically'. In contrast, when the subject *it* refers to subsequent content, it is generally said to be 'used cataphorically'. For example, in '*it's nice, your shirt*', the subject *it* is used cataphorically. The '*It ...to*' construction is recognized as a kind of cataphoric sentence. Examples (4) and (5) are used anaphorically.

(5) a: When we say splurge, that always makes me think of something we absolutely don't need.

b: Absolutely not.

a: *Feels good*, a luxury. (COCA)

In (4), the implicit subject *it* refers to former content, that is, someone or something being ready for the tour; in (5), the implicit subject *it* also refers to former content, that is, something being a luxury. The following is an example of a cataphoric sentence. If the subject were not eliminated in sentence (6), the original sentence would be *it feels good to be shark bait*. The implicit subject *it* refers to subsequent content.

(6) a: How does it feel to be shark bait?

b: *Feels good*. (COCA)

Table 4 shows that the phrase *feels good* is the only one which is used both anaphorically and cataphorically with subject ellipsis, while the other phrases are used only anaphorically. Considering that only *feel* behaves differently from the other verbs in cases of subject ellipsis, it was determined that the verb *feel* would be the first object of investigation of this study.

However, when the phrases *looks good to*, *sounds good to*, *smells good to*, and *tastes good to* are investigated without limit in the entire COCA, 51 (1.03) cases of the phrase, *sounds good to*⁵ are found in the entire COCA. Out of the 51 (1.03) cases, there are only 3 (0.06) cases of the *it... to...* pattern used cataphorically. The following are some examples.

(7) *It sounds good to* think that in a disaster.

⁵ The phrase '*sounds good to*' includes the two contexts *it sounds good to* + object (e.g. *me*) and *it sounds good to* + verb. Cataphoric uses of *looks good to*, *smells good to*, and *tastes good to* do not occur in the corpus.

(8) *It certainly sounds good to* hear your president saying.

(9) I think *it sounds good to* say what people are saying.

Subject ellipsis does not occur in these three cases of the phrase *sounds good to*, which are used cataphorically. Therefore, the examples from (7) to (9) are not counterexamples to the data in Table 4.

In the following sections, the relationship between subject ellipsis and the verb *feel* will be discussed from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, focusing on the behavior of the verb *feel*.

5.2.4. The Behavior of *Feel*

As noted earlier, in Chapter 5 I focus on percept verbs among perception verbs. First, I examine the meaning of the subject *it* with the percept verbs in the following examples.

(10) It looks good. \neq I look good.

(11) It sounds good. \neq I sound good.

(12) It smells good. \neq I smell good.

(13) It tastes good. \neq I taste good.

Examples (10) to (13) show that it would change the meaning of the sentences if I replace the subject *it* with *I* in the phrases *looks good*, *sounds good*, *smells good*, and *tastes good*.

In contrast, let us examine how the verb *feel* behaves with the three kinds of “*it feels...*” phrases in the following examples. It is possible to classify the phrase *it feels good* into two types.

- (14) a. It feels good. \neq I feel good. (i.e. A physical feeling. e.g. This pen feels good.)
 b. It feels good \doteq I feel good. (i.e. Mainly a mental feeling)

In (14a), *it feels good* can be paraphrased in such a manner that a person expresses a good feeling, with the sense of the physical feeling of an object. In other words, the phrase (14a) *it feels good* cannot be replaced with the phrase *I feel good* while keeping the same meaning in this case.

Example (14b) is another instance of *it feels good*. In contrast to (14a), in (14b), *it feels good* can be paraphrased in such a way that a person expresses a good feeling without making any physical contact. In this case, the subject *it* and *I* can be used interchangeably although they do not have exactly the same meanings. (15) is an example of a phrase which is used cataphorically.

- (15) It feels good to... \doteq I feel good to... (e.g. It feels good to be home \doteq I feel good to be home.)

The expression in (15) can be understood in a similar manner to *I feel good to...* In other words, in this case the subjects *it* and *I* are interchangeable with each other. Compared with examples (10) to (13), that is, the expressions with the other perception verbs – *looks good*, *sounds good*, *smells good*, and *tastes good* – the verb *feel* behaves differently from the others, as seen in examples (14b) and (15). Moreover, with *feel* the perceiver is not explicitly expressed. Judging from (14b) and (15), the subjectification process⁶ is presumably relevant. In this case, the perceiver grasps the same things from a different viewpoint.⁷ Honda (2004)⁸

⁶ The definition and details about the “subjectification process” are given in §4.2 and §5.4.

⁷ In terms of other kinds of perception verbs such as *handle*, Honda (2004) suggests that the subjectification process occurs as shown in examples below.

also discusses patterns of percept verbs among perception verbs as they relate to the process of subjectification. Considering (14b) and the suggestion by Honda (see Footnote 7), this study considers how the cognitive process is involved in determining when subject ellipsis appears in expressions with perception verbs, especially with the verb *feel*.

5.2.5. The Verb *Feel* and the Cognitive Process

In earlier sections, we have seen the unique behavior of the verb *feel* and observed that there is a possibility that expressions with percept verbs have a certain relationship with the process of subjectification. To be more precise, I assume that a cognitive process, specifically, the process of subjectification, occurs as patterns with the verb *feel* change with the passage of time. Furthermore, I suggest that subject ellipsis has a certain relationship with grammatical patterns, where the subjectification process co-occurs.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Langacker (1990, 1998, 1999) and Traugott (1989, 1999 etc.) are prominent researchers who have studied the process of subjectification, analyzing the relation between the conceptualizer and the meaning of language expressions (Fukada 2001). Fukada (2001) notes that the meaning of subjectification is described differently by those two

(i) This car handles smoothly.

(ii) We can handle this car smoothly. (Honda 2004: 131)

Honda (2004: 131) suggests that in Example (i), “how the object is seen by the agent and the agent himself or herself is not be seen in his or her viewpoint. The agent is not explicitly described. In contrast, in Example (ii), the movement of the viewpoint occurs, where the figure of the agent is seen in the viewpoint [Translated by Shibata]”.

⁸ In addition to the discussion in Footnote 7, Honda (2004: 136) also mentions that in Example (i), “The figure of the agent cannot be seen by the sight of the agent. It is called ‘ecological self’ (Neisser 1988), which is not described by the explicit figure [Translated by Shibata]”. On the other hand, Honda (2004: 136) suggests that in Example (ii), “the sentence includes the meaning that there is a movement of the viewpoint where the figure of the agent can be seen [Translated by Shibata]”. Honda (2004: 136) also suggests that in terms of Examples (i) and (ii), “that conceptualizers see the event from the different perspective means that the sensible stimuli in both cases looks different to the conceptualizers [Translated by Shibata]”.

researchers. According to Fukada (2001), as already shown in (11) in Chapter 4, there are three main types of subjectification as theorized by Langacker (1990). Let us confirm the definitions of subjectification by Langacker here. The following are Langacker's definitions of subjectification, summarized by Fukada (2001: 74):

(16) Langacker's definitions of Subjectification

- a: subjectification of the object 1: a process where a speaker, a place where a speaker speaks, or a situation closely related to a speaker, comes into an object as a referent point.
- b: subjectification of the object 2: a process where a speaker project his or her psychological scanning onto an object.
- c: subjectification (=Traugott's view of subjectification)

A recognition of an object by the speaker, that is, subjectivity becomes surface.

[Translated by Shibata] (= (11) in Chapter 4) (Fukada 2001: 74)

The subject ellipsis discussed in this study is mainly related to the definition in (16a): “subjectification of the object 1: a process where a speaker, a place where a speaker speaks, or a situation closely related to a speaker, comes into an object as a referent point [Translated by Shibata]” (Fukada 2001: 74). The mechanism of this subjectification is described more in detail in later sections in Chapter 5.

5.3. Method

Through this chapter, three kinds of corpora are used for collecting data: the *OED* (*Oxford English Dictionary*), *COCA* (*Corpus of Contemporary American English*), historical data from America, and *COHA* (*Corpus of Historical American English*). The *OED* is composed of 600,000 words and 3 million quotations, from over 1000 years of English, from

the 800s to the 1800s; the contents come from a range of genres of language, from classic literature and specialist periodicals to films scripts and cookery books. *COCA* consists of as many as 450 million words, recorded from 1990 to 2012 and derived from *CNN*, *ABC*, *Fox*, etc. in spoken English. *COCA* also covers data in written English, ranging from news sources such as international news, national news and local news, magazines about news, opinions, finance, science and technology, academic writings on education, history and geography to fiction.

COHA contains 400 million words from popular fiction, non-fiction books, and magazines in written English from 1810 to 2009. It is possible to investigate the data from 1810, however, the data from the 1810s only contain as few as 64 cases of sentences with the verb *feel*. Therefore, I determined that they were not appropriate to be used. Consequently, this study examines data from the 1820s to 1859 and from 2000 to 2009. The phrases chosen are described later. Both affirmative and interrogative sentences are targeted here.

5.4. Subject Ellipsis and Subjectification

5.4.1. Case Study 1 – Changes in Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

Case Study 1 investigates how grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* have changed from around the 800s to the 1800s with the passage of time, using the *OED*. Since the *OED*, which contains data through the 1800s, has a limited amount of data, the aim of the investigation is only to observe historical changes in patterns with the verb *feel*. That is, due to the low total frequency of example sentences, it was not possible to collect a sufficient amount of data to investigate subject ellipsis. After the results of the investigation are shown, Case Study 1 subsequently compares changes in patterns with the verb *feel* with those of the verb *look* (Fukada 2011).

I hypothesize that patterns with the verb *feel* have mainly changed from the SVO type to the SVC type, over time. The following is my assumption about how patterns with the verb

feel have changed.

- (17) a. SVO (e.g. *He feels the sand.*) > b. SVC (e.g. *I feel equality.*) > c. SVC
Objectification Backgrounding
(e.g. *He feels good.*) > d. SVC (e.g. *It feels good.*)
Subjectification

I assume here that some processes such as “objectification”, “backgrounding”, and “subjectification” of the conceptualizer⁹ occur during the changes in patterns, as shown above. These processes are thought to be factors leading to changes in patterns.

5.4.1.1. Changes in Patterns with the Verb *Look*

Before results of the investigation are revealed, this section observes changes in patterns with the verb *look*. According to Fukada (2001: 77), patterns with the verb *look* have changed in the following manner.

- (18) a. John looked at the boy. (The original meaning of *look*) SVO
 “*Subjectification* [now called objectification of the speaker]¹⁰”
 ↓
 b. I looked at John. (The original meaning of *look*) SVO
 “*Backgrounding* of the conceptualizer”
 ↓
 c. John looked smart. (The meaning of *seem*) SVC
 “*The explicitness of the speaker’s subjectivity*”
 ↓
 d. John looked smart *to me*. (The meaning of *seem...to a person*) SVC
 “*The explicitness of the subjectivity by the third person*”
 ↓

⁹ The definitions of these three processes (i.e. objectification, backgrounding, and subjectification) are explained in a later section.

¹⁰ According to personal communication with Ms. Fukada, she suggests that, rather, this should be called “objectification of the speaker” (Fukada, p.c. 2014).

- | | |
|---|---|
| e. John looked smart to Mary (The meaning of <i>seem...to</i> a person) | SVC |
| ↓ | [Translated by Shibata] (Fukada 2001: 77) |
| f. It looks + (adjective) + to + (verb) | (OED) |

As shown in (18), the verb *look* appeared in a SVO pattern with the original meaning of *look* as shown in (18a). In the transition from (18a) to (18b), the subjectification of the conceptualizer, now called objectification, occurs. Between (18b) and (18c), the subject changes from the first person to the third person. This is called the “backgrounding of the conceptualizer” (Fukada 2001: 77). This use of *look* has the meaning of the verb “seem” and at the same time the pattern changes from SVO to SVC. In (18d), the conceptualizer is linguistically expressed using “to a person” (e.g. *to me*). This is called “the explicitness of the speaker’s subjectivity” (Fukada 2001: 77). In (18e), the conceptualizer changes from the first person to the third person (i.e. “to Mary”). Last, the pattern “*it looks* + (adjective) + *to* + (verb)” appears in the 1700s as shown in (18f) (OED).

5.4.1.2. The Difference between *I (a person) Feel(s) Good* and *It Feels Good*

Patterns with the verb *feel* have a variety of expressions with subjects such as “I”, “he”, or “it”. Among them, it is important to clearly understand the difference of meanings between *I (a person) feel(s) good* and *it feels good*, since this study mainly focuses on these two patterns.

The verb *feel* emerged around 893 with the SVO pattern (e.g. *feel the cloth, feel your pulse*) (OED). The original meaning was “to handle (an object) in order to experience a tactual sensation” or “to examine by touching with the hand or finger” (OED). According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDCE)*, the expression “a person + *feel(s)* + adjective” (e.g. *I feel good*) means “to experience a particular physical feeling or emotion”. The following are some examples.

- | | |
|---|---------|
| (19) Do you still feel hungry? (physical feeling) | (LDCE) |
| (20) Stop exercising if you feel any pain. (physical feeling) | (Ibid.) |
| (21) I'm feeling a little better today. (emotion) | (Ibid.) |
| (22) Maria immediately felt guilty. (emotion) | (Ibid.) |

Examples (19) to (22) show that the pattern “a person + *feel(s)* + adjective” (e.g. *I feel good*) is used to express a physical feeling or emotion. In contrast, the pattern “*it* (or a real entity) + *feels* + adjective” (e.g. *It feels good*) has a different usage, as illustrated below in examples (23) to (25). The patterns in Examples (23) and (24) have the meanings of “giving you a particular physical feeling, especially when you touch or hold something” (*LDCE*). The meaning of the pattern in (25) is described as “referring to a situation or an event, expressing the emotion or feeling that gives you” (*LDCE*).

- | |
|---|
| (23) Her hand felt rough. (Physical feeling) (a real entity) |
| (24) The house felt hot and stuffy. (Physical feeling) (a real entity) |
| (25) After twenty years, seeing him again felt very strange. (Situation) (an event) (<i>LDCE</i>) |

In summary, it is possible to say that the pattern “a person + *feel(s)* + adjective” (e.g. *I feel good*) conveys a physical feeling or emotion and that the emphasis is on the subject. On the other hand, in examples (23) to (25), the pattern “*it* (or a real entity) + *feels* + adjective” (e.g. *It feels good*) is used in a different way. That is, according to *LDCE*, that pattern conveys (a) a physical feeling, via touching or holding or (b) a feeling or emotion, referring to a situation, an event, or an experience. The subject *it* used in the case of (b) is often referred to as “ambient *it*” (Bolinger 1977) or “impersonal *it*”¹¹ (Langacker 2011).

¹¹ “Ambient *it*” (Bolinger 1977) and “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011) are not exactly the same; however, there is a commonality between two in terms of vagueness. According to Langacker, impersonal *it*

5.4.1.3. Data and Discussion of Changes in Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

The following are data from the *OED* on how grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* have changed over time. As noted earlier, there were an insufficient number of example sentences with the verb *feel* in the *OED* to obtain data on these patterns.

(26) Changes in patterns with the verb *feel*

- a. ***He feels* + noun** (original meaning = to examine by touching with the hand or finger) (a conceptualizer \neq a speaker) (e.g. *He feels the cloth.*) (c. 893) (cf. *John looked at the boy.*) (Fukada 2011: 77)



- a'. ***He feels* + noun** (to express one's mental feeling) (e.g. *He feels calm.*) (c. 1000)
“Objectification of the speaker” ↓

- b. ***I feel* + noun** (to express one's mental feeling) (a conceptualizer = a speaker)
(e.g. *I feel a curiosity.*) (1377) (cf. *I looked at John.*) (Fukada 2011: 77)
“Backgrounding of the speaker” ↓



- c. ***He feels* + adjective** (\doteq *seem*) (a conceptualizer = a speaker)
(e.g. *He feels good.*) (1393) (cf. *John looked smart.*) (\doteq *seem*)
[Not found – e.g. *He feels good to me (Mary).*]
(cf. *John looked smart to me.*) (Fukada 2001: 77)
“Subjectification of the conceptualizer”



- d. ***It (or a real entity) feels* + adjective** (\doteq *seem*) (e.g. *It feels good.*) (1581)
“Explicitness of the conceptualizer” ↓



- e. ***It feels* + adjective + *to us*** (\doteq *seem*) (e.g. *It feels good to us.*) (1768)



- f. ***It feels* + adjective + *to* + verb + (*to me* or *to him*)** (e.g. *It feels good to be home*
(*to me* .) (1885) (See Appendix A) (OED)

As mentioned earlier, the verb *feel* appeared around 893, with the original meaning of

“represents the extreme case of vagueness and non-delimitation” and is “maximally vague and all-encompassing” (Langacker 2011: 204).

examining by physically touching with the hand or finger as shown in (26a). This is an SVO pattern, and the conceptualizer and the speaker are not the same. The pattern in (26a) is similar to “John looked at the boy”¹² (Fukada 2001: 77), which also appeared as the earliest among the patterns with the verb *look*. The pattern in (26a’) appeared first around 1000. This pattern is different from that of (26a) in that the pattern in (26a’) conveys a mental feeling, while the pattern in (26a) conveys a physical feeling. The pattern in (26b), *I feel* + noun, subsequently appeared in 1377. In this pattern, the subject has changed from the third person to the first person. During the transition from the patterns in (26a’) to (26b), the “objectification of the speaker” occurs; this is an essential process in order for subjectification to occur. In this case, the conceptualizer and the speaker are the same.

From the patterns in (26b) to (26c), the “backgrounding of the speaker” (Fukada 2001: 77) occurs. In (26c), the subject has changed from the first person to the third person, and the meaning of the verb *feel* in this pattern is nearly equal to that of the verb “seem”. In this pattern, the conceptualizer and the speaker are the same. The expression in (26c) has the same pattern as in *John looked smart*. The verbs *feel* and *look* exhibit different behavior. The verb *look* can be used in the expression “a person + *look* + adjective + to + a person”, for example, *John looked smart to me* or *John looked smart to Mary*. In contrast, this kind of pattern does not occur with the verb *feel*.

During the transition from the pattern in (26c) to (26d), it can be said that the “subjectification of the conceptualizer” has occurred, because the conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed in the pattern (26d). The pattern (26d), that is “*it* (or a real entity) *feels* + adjective”, appeared in 1581 and the meaning of the verb *feel* in this pattern is also nearly equal to that of the verb “seem”. Subsequently, the “explicitness of the conceptualizer” (Fukada 2001: 77) takes place in the transition from the pattern in (26d) to (26e), “*it feels* +

¹² John looked at the boy” is not exactly the SVO pattern. However, it is called a SVO type in this paper in that the verb phrase is followed by the noun phrase.

adjective + *to* + a person”, because “*to* + a person” is added to the end of the sentence. The conceptualizer is expressed in the form of “*to* + a person”. The pattern (26f) “*it feels* + adjective + *to* + verb + *to* (e.g. *to me* or *to him*)” occurs beginning in 1885.

In summary, first, the verb *feel* appeared with the meaning of a physical feeling. Later, with the passage of time, its usage expanded to the meaning of a mental feeling and to the meaning of “seem”. In addition, during the 800s and 1800s, three kinds of processes took place in the following way. When the pattern “*he feels* + noun” (c. 893, c. 1000) changed to “*I feel* + noun” (1377), (e.g. from *He feels the cloth* to *I feel the curiosity*), it can be said that the process of “speaker objectification” (Langacker 1987: 131) occurred. The “objectification of the speaker” is the first step in the process of subjectification (Hamada and Tsushima 2012). When the pattern changed from “*I feel* + noun” to “*he feels* + adjective”, (e.g. from *I feel a curiosity* to *he feels good*), the “backgrounding of the conceptualizer” (Fukada 2001: 77) occurred. The speaker goes offstage as a subject who speaks. In this case, the conceptualizer and the speaker are the same person. Last, it can be said that the “subjectification of the conceptualizer” occurred when the pattern changed from “*he feels* + adjective” to “*it feels* + adjective” (e.g. from *He feels good* to *It feels good*), because the object of the conception is placed in the subject slot and the conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed.

5.4.1.4. Comparison between the Verbs *Feel* and *Look*

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate changes in the patterns with verbs *feel* and *look*, respectively. Comparing these two verb patterns will uncover whether the verb *feel* is influenced by analogical expressions such as expressions with the verb *look*.

Table 5. Changes in patterns with the verb *feel* (OED)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>He feels the cloth.</i> > | 2. <i>I feel a curiosity.</i> > | 3. <i>He feels good.</i> > | 4. <i>It feels good.</i> > |
| 5. <i>It feels good... to me</i> > | 6. <i>It feels good to</i> verb | | |

Table 6. Changes in patterns with the verb *look* (Fukada 2001)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>He looks at</i> > | 2. <i>I look at</i> > | 3. <i>He looks good</i> > | 4. <i>He looks good...to me</i> > |
| 5. <i>He looks good to Mary</i> > | 6. <i>It looks good</i> | | |

There is a common tendency between the verbs *feel* and *look*. Patterns for both verbs began with SVO types.¹³ Later, they occurred as SVC types with a meaning of “seem”. Last, patterns with the subject *it*, such as *it feels good*, *it feels good to* + verb, and *it looks good to* + verb have been observed in the modern era. The process of changing from a third person subject to the subject *it* seems to be related to subjectification. In the case of the verb *feel*, subjectification can be seen in the transition from 3 (*He feels good*) to 4 (*It feels good*) in Table 5. Subjectification with the verb *look* can be seen in the transition from 5 (*He looks good to Mary*) to 6 (*It looks good to verb*) in Table 6.

The difference is that for the verb *feel*, the meaning has changed from a physical to a mental feeling and to the meaning of *seem* (i.e. from patterns 1 to 3 in Table 5). In contrast, for the verb *look*, the meaning has changed from a physical feeling directly to the meaning of *seem*¹⁴. The difference seems to be because of the verbs’ properties. The verb *feel* gained two meanings – those of physical feelings and mental feelings (e.g. “to perceive mentally” (OED)) – from around the 800s to the 1000s, while the verb *look* seems to have gained a mental meaning in later years¹⁵. The properties of *feel* that *feel* has a tendency of mental meaning

¹³ The “He looks at” pattern can be classified as the SVO type.

¹⁴ In fact, I admit that other factors leading to changes in patterns are involved.

¹⁵ The meaning of “To take care” and “make sure” (OED online) appeared in 800s, however, meaning of

from the early era might have affected a difference in terms of the order of changes in patterns between two verbs. Another difference is that, as mentioned earlier, the verb *feel* does not occur in the pattern *He feels good to me*, while the verb *look* can occur in the expression *He looks good to me*, as shown in pattern 4 in Table 6. This phenomenon could perhaps be attributed to a particular characteristic of the verb *feel*. To be more precise, Kuno (1973) has suggested that when a person feels his or her own feelings, another person cannot feel his or her (i.e. the object's) feelings. Therefore, the sentence *He feels good to me* sounds strange. Although there are a few differences in terms of processes between both verbs, it is nevertheless possible to say that the verbs *feel* and *look* have a partly similar changes in patterns. Thus, I assume that patterns with the verb *feel* are partly influenced by changes in patterns with the verb *look*.

5.4.1.5. Comparing “Seem” Patterns with Two Verbs

Tables 7 and 8 summarize the data derived from the *OED* with “seem” patterns for *feel* and for *look* (Fukada 2001), respectively. The data are compared in order to identify similar or different behavior between the two verbs. Table 9 summarizes this comparison between the verbs *feel* and *look*.

Table 7. Change in patterns with *feel* for “seem” meaning (*OED*)

| | |
|---|--------|
| 1. The hande feeling to bee rough. | (1581) |
| 2. The substance of it feels exactly like a very fine piece of Chamois leather. | (1665) |
| 3. If it feels heavy... | (1694) |
| 4. The weather was extremely cold, and felt particular so to us. | (1768) |
| 5. It felt to me as if the air had grown lighter. | (1844) |
| 6. Not then could she understand how it felt to lie wakeful at nights. | (1885) |

“to provide, appoint, ordain, decree and decide” was found in 1175.

Table 8. Changes in patterns with *look* for “*seem*” meaning (Fukada 2001)

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | The car looks so nice and white. |
| 2. | It looks like snow. He looks like winning. |
| 3. | It looks as if it might snow. |
| 4. | This flower looks a kind of rose. |
| 5. | He looks to be in a good health. |
| 6. | It looks like Warner Brother’s gamble is paying off. |

Table 9. Comparison between the verbs *feel* and *look*: patterns, meanings, and processes

| | <i>feel</i> | <i>look</i> |
|-----------|--|--|
| patterns | SVO (<i>feel</i> + noun) > SVC (<i>feel</i> + adjective) | SVO (<i>look</i> + noun) > SVC (<i>look</i> + adjective) |
| meanings | physical > mental > “seem” | physical > “seem” |
| processes | subjectification, backgrounding, explicitness | subjectification, backgrounding, explicitness |

The two verbs have a partly similar tendency in terms of the order of their change in patterns. For the verb *feel*, patterns first appeared with *feels good* (1581), then *feels like* (1665), *feels as if* (1844), and last *it feels good to + verb...* (1885). For the verb *look*, patterns first appeared with *looks good* (1400), then *looks like* (1440), *looks as if* (1500), and last *it looks good to + verb* (1775).¹⁶ Judging from partly the similarity of the order of patterns between the two verbs, it is possible to say that changes in patterns with the verb *feel* might have been partly influenced by an “analogical expression” (Taniguchi 1997), such as an expression with the verb *look*.

In summary, patterns with *feel* have changed from those with a person as the subject or an animate subject to patterns with the subject *it* or an inanimate subject, and have shifted from SVO type to SVC type. This case study suggests that expressions with the verb *feel* in a certain patterns have a tendency toward subjectification over time.

¹⁶ The era that was investigated for Case Study 1 was based on the data contained in the *OED*. The original data Ms, Fukada investigated did not show the era. Therefore I added the era.

5.4.2. Case Study 2 — Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

5.4.2.1. Sources of Data

In 5.4.1, Case Study 1 examined changes in patterns with the verb *feel* using the *OED*, which contains data from the 800s to 1800s; patterns with the verb *feel* were found to have a tendency toward subjectification. There were two weak points in Case Study 1 because of its use of the *OED*. As noted earlier, the number of examples contained in the *OED* was small and it only contained data until the 1800s. In order to supplement these weaknesses, in this section, Case Study 2 investigates changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* using a larger corpus, *COHA* (*Corpus of Historical American English*), which contains data from 1810-2009.

Figure 1 presents data on the frequency of the verb *feel* from 1810 to 2009 in *COHA*. Figure 2 gives the frequency of the verb *feel*, calculated based on the data in Figure 1, in terms of its frequency per one million words. Representing the data in terms of the frequency per million words is useful for displaying the same denominator among tables. Figure 2 gives the frequency of the verb *feel* per million, depending on the decade. The frequency of the patterns with the verb *feel* in the 1810s was only 64 (see Figure 1); this number was too small to be analyzed in Tables 10 and 11. Therefore, I decided to eliminate the data in 1810 in Case Studies 2 and 3.

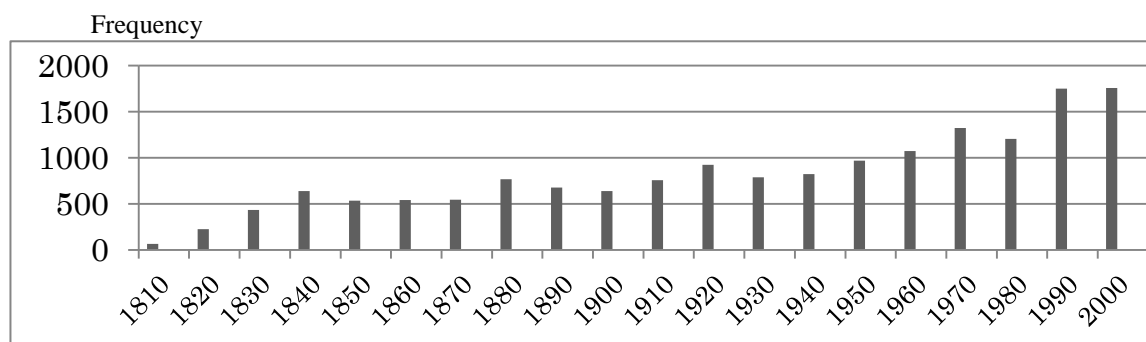


Figure 1. The frequency of *feel* depending on the decade (*COHA*)

Frequency

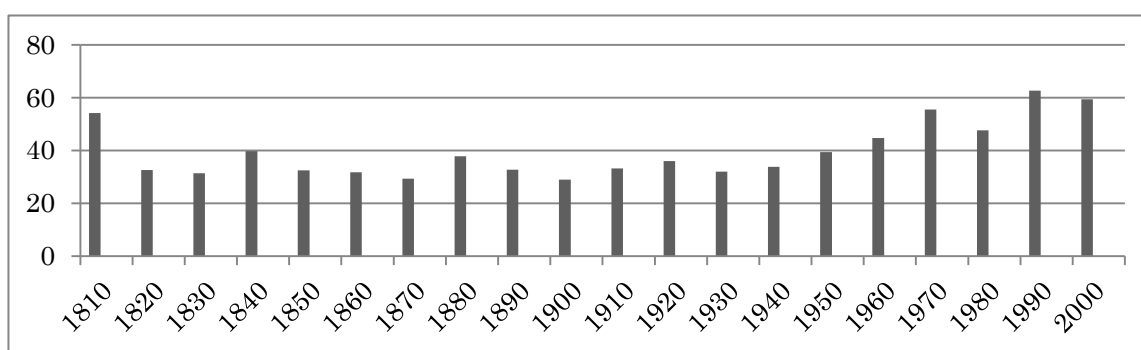


Figure 2. The frequency of *feel* per million depending on the decade (COHA)

Figure 3 gives data on the frequency of the *It feels...* pattern; I searched the entire COHA for *feels* + adjective in the percept verb group.

Frequency

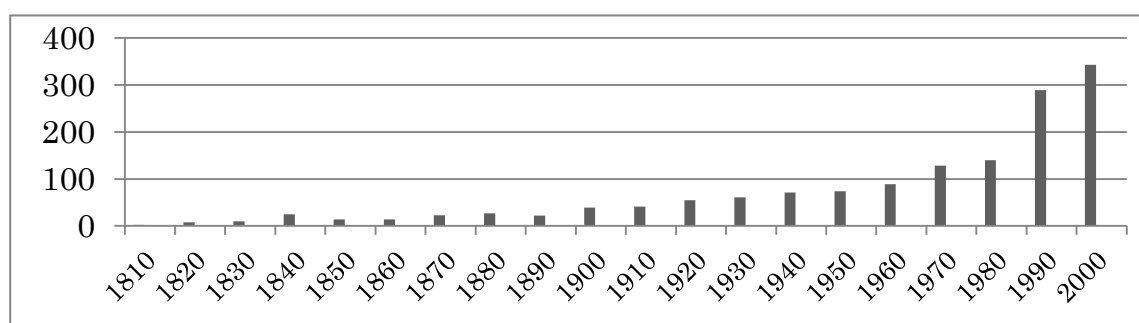


Figure 3. The frequency of *It feels...* depending on the decade (COHA)

Figure 4 gives the frequency of *It feels...* pattern per million, depending on the decade.

Frequency

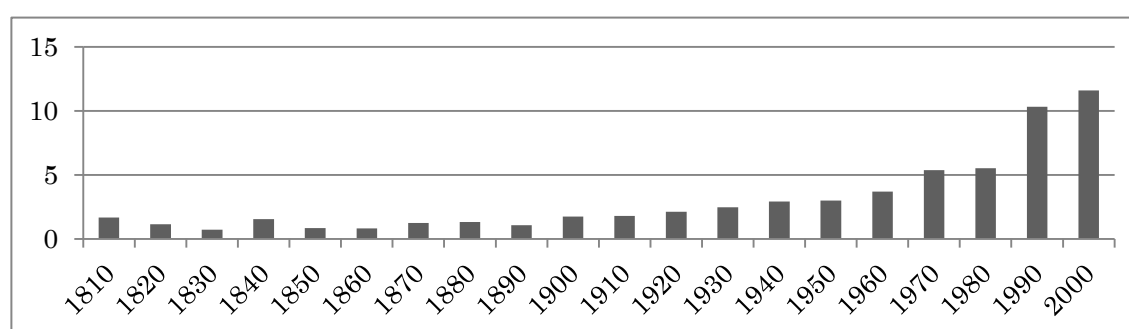


Figure 4. The frequency of *It feels ...* per million depending on the decade (COHA)

5.4.2.2. Data on Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* through the Past Two Centuries

Case Studies 2 and 3 investigate discourse examples from *COHA*, from the 1820s to the 1850s, and in the 2000s. Ten types of patterns with the verb *feel*, used in the decades from the 1820s to 1850s and in the 2000s, were identified as follows: 1. *A + feels + noun*, 2. *A + feels + adj.*, 3. *A + feels + adj. phrase*, 4. *A + feels like*, 5. *A + feels as if ...*, 6. *It feels + adj.*, 7. *It feels like...*, 8. *It feels as if...*, 9. *It feels adj. to (It...to)*, and 10. other (*feels + adv.*). (A = Animate subject; adj. = adjective; adv. = adverb.) The numbers in parentheses in Tables 10 and 11 are the frequency of occurrence per million words. The numbers in Figures 5 and 6 are also the frequencies of occurrence per million.

Table 10. Changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* (1)

| decade pattern | 1820s | 1830s | 1840s | 1850s | 2000s |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. <i>A + feels + noun</i> | 181 (26.06) | 340 (24.48) | 209 (29.67) | 398 (23.88) | 338 (20.08) |
| 2. <i>A + feels + adj.</i> | 12 (1.72) | 42 (3.02) | 31 (4.40) | 69(4.14) | 165 (9.80) |
| 3. <i>A + feels + adj. phrase</i> | 19 (2.73) | 27 (1.94) | 14 (1.98) | 36(2.16) | 33 (1.96) |
| 4. <i>A + feels like</i> | 2 (0.28) | 1 (0.07) | 4 (0.56) | 9(0.54) | 48 (2.85) |
| 5. <i>A + feels as if</i> | 3 (0.42) | 7 (0.50) | 3 (0.42) | 5(0.3) | 16 (0.95) |
| 6. <i>It feels adj.</i> | 6 (0.86) | 10 (0.72) | 11(1.56) | 6(0.36) | 222 (13.19) |
| 7. <i>It feels like</i> | 1 (0.14) | 1 (0.07) | 2(0.26) | 2(0.12) | 132 (7.84) |
| 8. <i>It feels as if</i> | 2 (0.28) | 1 (0.07) | 0 | 2(0.12) | 16 (0.95) |
| 9. <i>It feels adj. to</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.14) | 1(0.06) | 20 (1.18) |
| 10. Other (<i>feels + adv.</i>) | 0 | 3 (0.21) | 3 (0.42) | 4(0.24) | 10 (0.59) |
| Total | 226 (32.53) | 432 (31.10) | 278 (39.4) | 532 (31.92) | 1,000 (59.39) |

The following are some example sentences illustrating the data in Table 10:

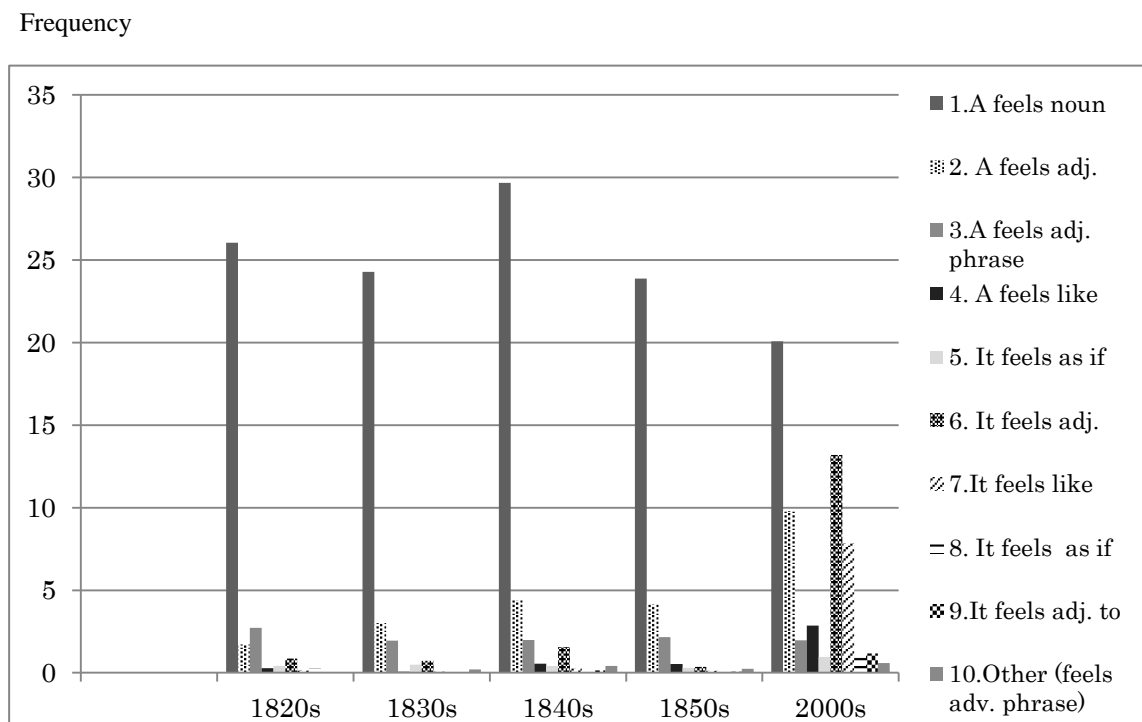
(27) 1. *A + feels noun* – *He feels its hot impress. (COHA)*

(28) 2. *A + feels adj.* – *She feels good.*

- (29) 3. A + *feels* + adj. phrase – *He feels good about...*
- (30) 4. A + *feels like* ... – *She feels like she can do it by herself.*
- (31) 5. A + *feels as if* ... – *He feels as if he is a king (COHA)*
- (32) 6. *It feels* + adj. – *It feels good.*
- (33) 7. *It feels like* ...
- (34) 8. *It feels as if* ...
- (35) 9. *It feels adj. to...* – *It feels good to be home. (COHA)*
- (36) 10. Other (*feels* + adv. phrase) – *He feels under...*

(A = Animate subject), (adj. = adjective), (adv. = adverb)

The data in Table 10 is graphically represented in Figure 5 below.



(A = Animate subject)

Figure 5. Changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* (2)

The data in Figure 5 show that all of the patterns from 1 to 10, with the exception of 1 and 3, increased in frequency of usage from the 1820s to the 1850s and in the 2000s. Three main

features of this data can be observed:

- i. Expressions using the verb *feel* have been diversified in the 2000s compared with those in the early 1800s.
- ii. The animate subject + *feels* + noun type (pattern 1) and animate subject + *feels* + adjective phrase type (pattern 3) have slightly decreased in frequency of usage over time, however, their frequency of usage seems to be leveling off. In contrast, the other expressions are increasing in frequency, especially *it feels* + adjective type (pattern 6) and *it feels like* (pattern 7).
- iii. Phrases starting with the subject *it* in shorter phrases were more frequently used in the 2000s. For example, shorter phrase types, such as *it feels* adjective (pattern 6) and *it feels like...* (pattern 7) are used more often compared to those with longer phrases such as *it feels as if ...*(pattern 8) or *it feels good to...*(pattern 9).

These features are discussed further in the next section.

5.4.2.3. Discussion on Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* through the Past Two Centuries

As suggested in (i) in the previous section, patterns with the verb *feel* have been diversified into several expressions, such as *it feels like...*, *it feels as if...*, and animate subject + *feels* + adjective phrases, among others, in the 2000s, compared to the usage of such expressions from the 1820s to 1850s. From the 1820s to 1850s as a whole, the animate subject + *feels* + noun type was the *feel* phrase mainly used in each decade. However, focusing on the distribution in the 2000s, the kinds of phrases that occur have diversified.

The ten patterns with the verb *feel*, distinguished based on the kind of subject and the complement structure, can further be roughly categorized into four types. To be more specific,

these four types are: (A) *it feels* adjective type (e.g. *it feels good*), (B) animate subject + *feels* + noun type (e.g. *He feels it*), (C) animate subject + *feels* adjective type (e.g. *He feels safe*), and (D) other patterns. An example of one such “other” pattern in Table 10 is shown in (D) below, however this category is not a focus of this investigation because the complement structure following the verb *feel* is an adverb phrase, which is beyond the scope of this research. The following phrases are examples of the (A) to (D) types found in *COHA*.

(A) *It feels* adjective type

(37) ... *I'll try how it feels, (sits down.)* by the saints, but't is monstrous comfortable... but
zounds! [*It feels good* type (1)]¹⁷ (Fiction 1814, COHA)

(38) *It feels as if* a link were stricken. (Fiction 1818, COHA)

[*It feels as if...*]

(39) In my forlornness and abandonment, *my heart feels warm* again; ...
[*It feels good* type (2)]¹⁸ (Fiction 1823, COHA)

(40) In the natural world we find nothing which answers to them, or *feels like* them.

[*It feels like*] (Magazine 1827, COHA)

(41) There are offences against the proud heart which *it feels shame to* declare, even as
 thou sayest, ...
 [*It feels good to...*]¹⁹ (Fiction 1845, COHA)

¹⁷ The *It feels good* type (1) in (37) shows that the subject refers to a physical entity, while the *It feels good* type (2) in (39) refers to mental or physical entities.

¹⁸ The meaning of *It feels good* type (2) is explained in Footnote 17.

¹⁹ The *it feels good* pattern has also been treated as a variation of the perception verb here, because it is similar to the pattern of the *it feels good* type (2) in terms of subjectification.

In Examples (37) to (41), patterns have diachronically changed from the simple type of pattern *it feels* + adjective or *it feels good* (type (1)), which appeared in 1814, to patterns of the type *it feels* + conjunction, such as *it feels as if* in 1818, *it feels good* (type (2)) in 1823, *it feels like* in 1827, and *it feels good to* in 1845.

In (B), an example of an animate subject + *feels* + noun type is given and in (C), some examples of animate subject + *feels* + adjective type are given.

(B) Animate subject + *feels* noun type

(42) The author *feels an honest pride*, while reviewing his play. (Fiction 1810, COHA)

(C) Animate subject + *feels* + adjective type

(43) You have a good and faithful servant, *who feels happy* in your service.

[*feels* + adjective] (NF 1820, COHA)

(44) When *he feels himself thoroughly possessed of* the substance of our author's

[*feels* + adjective phrases] (Magazine 1821, COHA)

(45) *He feels as if* against all men he is the first ...

[*feels as if*] (Fiction 1827, COHA)

(46) *He feels like* a man of honor. [*feels like*] (Magazine 1829, COHA)

In Examples (43) to (46), the earlier pattern of animate subject + *feels* + adjective in 1820 has changed to a pattern of animate subject + *feels* + adjective phrases in 1821, animate subject + *feels as if* in 1827, and animate subject + *feels like* in 1829, just like the (A) type in terms of the complement structure. The following is an example of the (D) type, “other” patterns.

(D) Other patterns [animate subject + *feels* + adverb phrase]

(47) Unless *he feels within* some source of consolation... (Fiction 1835, COHA)

As indicated earlier, the (D) type is not focused on in this investigation. Thus, the changes in patterns of (A) and (C),²⁰ demonstrate that expressions with the verb *feel* have diversified over time. However, it is not clear at this moment whether the diversification of patterns with the verb *feel* accompanies changes in meanings of the words, for example, a change in meaning of the verb *feel* from a lower dimension to a higher one.²¹ Further investigation is necessary for making a generalization.

As suggested in (ii) in §5.4.2.2, the animate subject + *feels* + noun pattern is one of the patterns whose usage has been slightly decreasing or leveling off since the 1820s to the modern era (see Table 10). This pattern (SVO) is assumed to be the basic structure for the verb *feel*,²² therefore, it seems that there have not been any drastic changes over the past 200 years. Similarly, the frequency of the pattern *it feels good* does not display a large change during the period of 30 years from the 1820s to 1850s. However, the frequency for this pattern has remarkably increased during the period of time between the 1850s and 2000s.

It seems, based on the transition from animate subject + *feels* + noun to *it feels* + adjective type, that there is a tendency of subjectification among all *feel* patterns. That is, that such a transition corresponds to the theory of a “change in *focus*” (Langacker 1999: 301-302), one of the types of attenuation of subjectification²³.

As suggested in (iii) in §5.4.2.2, in the 2000s short phrases with the subject *it*, for

²⁰ Type (B) has only one example; therefore, this type cannot be used in this analysis.

²¹ Yamanashi (2012: 109) suggests that the verb *feel* has expanded its meaning from a physical feeling to thoughts and judgments. In this research, it seems that patterns with the verb *feel* do indeed have this tendency over time. However, it is too early to say for certain because of insufficient evidence.

²² According to *OED*, the *feel(s)* + noun pattern first emerged c. 893 as shown later, in Chapter 5.3. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999: 97) also suggests that the verb *feel* “comes from ME *felen* <OE *felan* ‘to examine by touch’ <Ger **folian* ‘to feel’”.

²³ There are at least four types of “attenuation” (Langacker 1999: 301) in subjectification such as “change in *status*”, “change in *focus*”, “shift in *domain*”, and “change in the *locus of activity or potency*”.

example, the *it feels* + adjective pattern (13.19) and the *it feels like* pattern (7.84), are more frequently used than longer phrases with the subject *it*, e.g. *it feels* + adjective *to* (1.18) or *it feels as if* (0.95) (refer back to Table 10). This phenomenon can be explained by the theory of ‘The law of least effort’ (Martinet 1962: 139).

5.4.3. Case Study 3 – Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* and Subject Ellipsis

5.4.3.1. Data on Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* and Subject Ellipsis

Table 11 gives the results of the investigation of the relationship between changes in patterns with the verb *feel* and subject ellipsis. The patterns with the verb *feel* presented in Tables 10 are again the object of the investigation in Table 11. Moreover, the analysis is conducted based on the data from *COHA* that was used for Table 10.

Table 11. Subject ellipsis for the verb *feel* over time (1)

| era \ pattern | 1820s | 1830s | 1840s | 1850s | 2000s |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. A + <i>feels</i> + noun | 3 (0.42) | 11 (0.79) | 1 (0.14) | 6 (0.36) | 3 (0.17) |
| 2. A + <i>feels</i> + adj. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (0.12) | 0 |
| 3. A + <i>feels</i> + adj. phrase | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.14) | 0 | 0 |
| 4. A + <i>feels like</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. A + <i>feels as if</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. <i>It feels</i> adj. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 (0.37) |
| 7. <i>It feels like</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 (0.14) | 0 | 10 (0.59) |
| 8. <i>It feels as if</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. <i>It feels</i> adj. <i>to</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3/226 (0.42) | 11/432 (0.79) | 3/278 (0.42) | 8/532 (0.48) | 20/1.000 (1.13) |

This section, again, analyzes whether there is any correlation between changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* and subject ellipsis. Through this analysis, it will be possible to determine if there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and grammatical patterns. Moreover, I will investigate whether grammatical factors influence subject ellipsis, along with pragmatic and semantic factors, as mentioned earlier. Figure 6 presents a graphical representation of the data in Table 11.

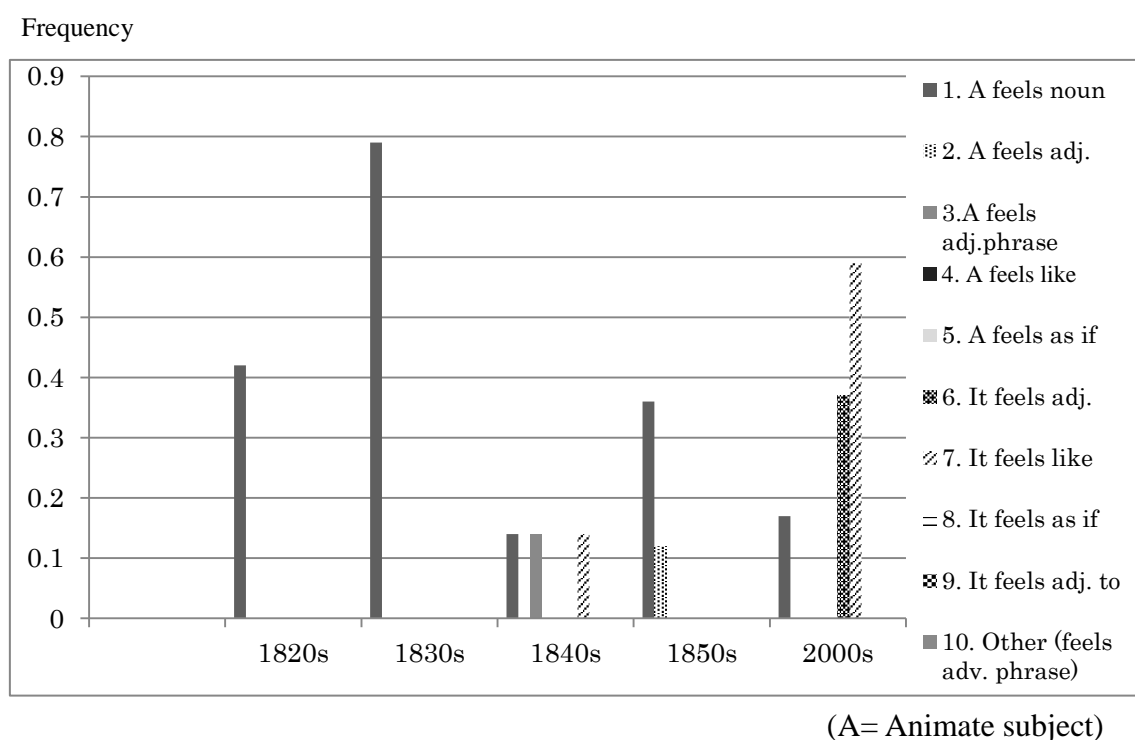


Figure 6. Subject ellipsis for the verb *feel* over time (2)

5.4.3.2. Discussion on Changes in Frequently Occurring Patterns with the Verb *Feel* and Subject Ellipsis

According to Tables 11 and Figure 6, ellipsis occurred only with animate subject + *feels* + noun (experience or activity verb groups) during the period from the 1820s to 1830s. However, from the 1840s to 1850s and in the 2000s the types of phrases with which ellipsis occurs have diversified.

The frequency of subject ellipsis with the animate subject + *feels* + noun pattern has been decreasing over the 2000s compared with the early 1800s. What is remarkable is that the frequency of subject ellipsis with the patterns *it feels* + adjective and *it feels like* has dramatically increased in the 2000s. The frequency of subject ellipsis with *It feels* + adjective (0.37) in the 2000s in Table 11 outnumbers the other pattern of animate subject + *feels* + noun (0.17), despite the fact that the frequency with animate subject + *feels* + noun (20.08) in Table 10 is higher than that of its counterpart (13.19). Therefore, the ratio of the occurrence of subject ellipsis with *it feels* + adjective is higher than that with animate subject + *feels* + noun in the 2000s.

Moreover, a low frequency of subject ellipsis is observed with the other phrases, with diversified expressions appearing since the 1820s. Subject ellipsis with the expression *it feels like* in the 2000s occurs at a frequency of 0.59 (see Table 11), which is the highest frequency compared with others in the 2000s. One possible reason for this may be that it is influenced by the higher occurrence of this pattern (7.84) shown in Table 10. Yet it is not always the case that a frequency of subject ellipsis increases when the number of the pattern increases. No ellipsis occurred in the 2000s for “animate subject + *feels* adjective” (e.g. *She feels good*) in Table 11, even though that pattern had a higher frequency (9.80) in Table 10. This fact suggests that there is not a direct correlation between the frequency of a pattern and subject ellipsis. Therefore, subject ellipsis tends to occur in specific phrases, e.g. with the *it feels like* pattern, but not with other expressions such as animate subject + *feels* + adjective (e.g. *She feels good*).

These results indicate that subject ellipsis is related to grammatical patterns. Furthermore, subject ellipsis has been occurring more in patterns with the subject *it* than in those with the animate subject + *feels* + adj. over time. This transition suggests that subject ellipsis tends to occur in patterns where the subjectification process is occurring

5.5. Comparing Data

5.5.1. Comparing the Data in Case Studies 1 and 2

Based on results from Case Study 1 (800s – 1800s) and Case Study 2 (1820 – 2009), the usage of patterns with the verb *feel* has changed mainly from the SVO to SVC type from the 800s to the 2000s. In other words, the results demonstrate that patterns with inanimate subjects including the subject *it* (e.g. *This pen feels good*, *It feels good*) have increased in recent years. In these patterns, the object of conception is placed in the subject slot and the conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed. As already mentioned, the results of these case studies suggest that the subjectification process has occurred in patterns with the verb *feel*.

5.5.2. Comparing SVO Patterns with SVC Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

This section presents a more detailed analysis of the investigation in Case Study 2 concerning the transition of the verb *feel* from the SVO to SVC type. According to the results of Case Study 2 (see Table 10) on changes in grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* from the 1820s to the 2000s, the SVO patterns (e.g. A + *feels* + noun) occurred with a frequency of 181 tokens (or 26.06 per million words)²⁴ in the 1820s and 338 tokens (20.08 per million words) in the 2000s. These results imply that the frequency of SVO patterns has remained almost the same or has slightly decreased over time.

In contrast, the frequency of the SVC pattern *it [that, etc.] feels* + adj. has increased remarkably from 6 tokens (0.86 per million words) in the 1820s to 222 tokens (13.19 per million words) in the 2000s. Furthermore, the frequency of another SVC pattern (*it [that, etc.] feels like*) has increased from 1 token (0.14 per million words) in the 1820s to 132 tokens (7.84 per million words) in the 2000s. As a result of these frequencies, the findings suggest that the verb *feel* patterns have changed mainly from SVO to SVC during the 1820s and the

²⁴ Numbers in parentheses have been calculated to present the frequency per one million words.

2000s. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that any of the patterns with the verb *feel* have undergone the subjectification process in that the conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed. Based on a comparison of these results with those shown in §5.4.3, it seems that the frequency of patterns that have undergone subjectification has increased over time. Moreover, the patterns with the verb *feel* have had a tendency toward subjectification from the late 800s to the 2000s.

5.6. Illustrating the Verb *Feel* in Figures

Changes in patterns with the verb *feel*, as examined in Case Study 1, can be analyzed using Figure 7 by Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20), who illustrate the subjectification process suggested by Langacker (1991, 2002, 2009).

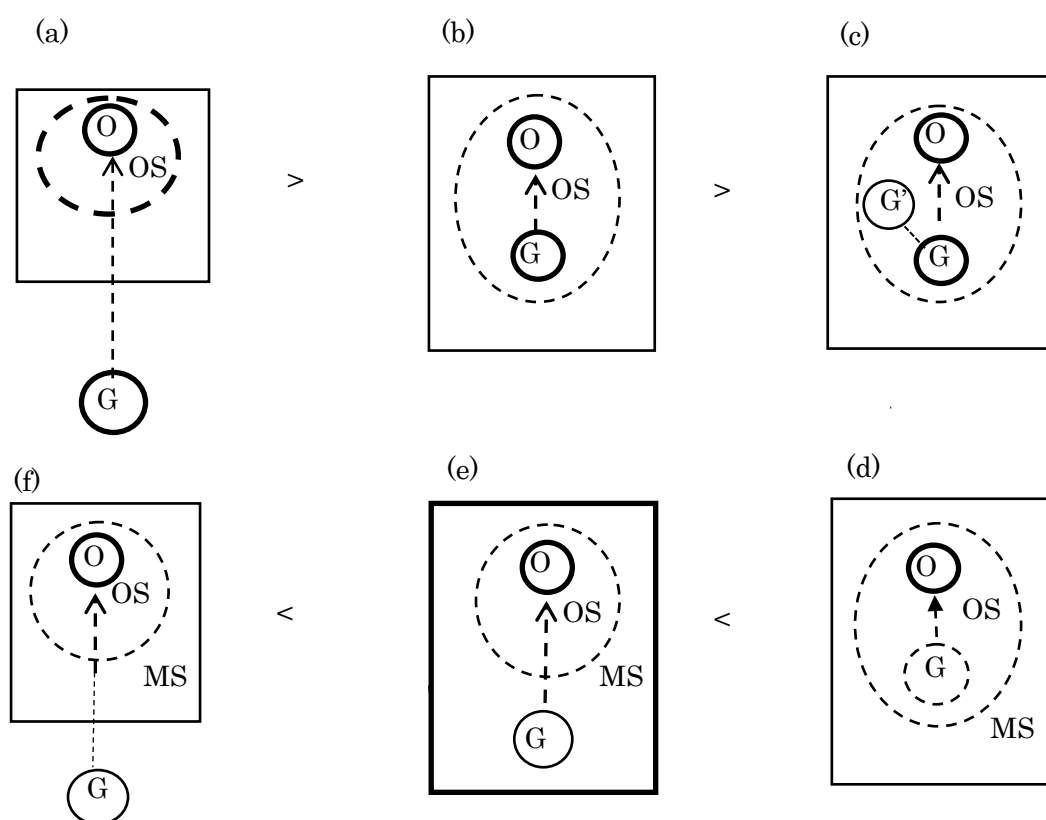


Figure 7. Langacker (1991, 2002, etc.) as summarized by Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20)

According to the data from the *OED* used in Case Study 1, patterns have changed from “*He or she feels...*”, “*I feel...*”, “*It feels adjective...*”, “*He or she feels + adjective...*” “*It feels... to + a person*” to “*It feels good to...*”. They can be analyzed using Figure 7 summarized by Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20) in the following manner. *He or she feels* patterns,²⁵ that is, examples (26a) from the *OED*, have emerged around 893, can be visualized using Figure (7a), “where G (=ground) objectively construes O (=object) outside the MS (=maximal scope) at the maximal level and G is maximally construed to be subjective [Translated by Shibata]” (Hamada and Tsushima 2012: 20).

As mentioned earlier, Langacker (2002: 323) has argued that “an expression like *identified to us*, *known to us* and *near me* profiles the grounding relationship”. The pattern *I feel...*, *I feel ...to me* can therefore be visualized using Figure (7b). In other words, this process is called “speaker objectification” (Langacker 1987: 131).

Figures (7c) and (7d) show the process changing from “explicit mention” to “implicit mention” (Langacker 1985: 143). Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20) explain the double roles of G (Ground) and G’ in the following way: “in Figure (7c) there is displaced G’, which recognizes the process of conception by G”. In contrast, they suggest that “in Figure (7d), G and G’ are fused into one [Translated by Shibata]” (Hamada and Tsushima 2012: 20). Regarding these double roles, Fukada (2001: 77) mentions the following:

One is a position for a conceptualizer and the other is one for the subject which is conceptualized and lexicalized. When the former position is taken, a phrase like *I looked at John* is spoken. On the other hand, when the latter case is taken, a speaker comes out of the object not as a person who is spoken about but as one who speaks.

[Translated by Shibata] (Fukada 2001: 77)

²⁵ The verb *feel* in the data has the meaning of “handling in order to experience a tactual sensation” (*OED*).

He or she feels + adjective patterns can be visualized using Figure (7d). However, patterns with *feel* and with an experiencer subject do not occur in the *OED* data until 1581.

It feels good... or It feels good to... can be visualized using Figure (7e) (Subjectification – Type 2) (Langacker 1991: 216), where G construes C from its own standpoint (Hamada and Tsushima 2012). Concerning Figure (7f), Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20) suggest that “O (Object) is objectively construed at the maximal level and the conceptualizer is subjectively construed at the maximal level [Translated by Shibata]”. In this figure the “conceptual operations by G have become part of the meaning of O [Translate by Shibata]” (Hamada and Tsushima 2012: 20). Thus, the specific patterns collected from the *OED* can mostly be visualized by the figures by Langacker (1991, 2002, etc.), as summarized by Hamada and Tsushima (2012: 20).

5.7. The Role of *It*

Last, this section analyzes what is conveyed by the subject *it*. Case Study 1 found that the frequency of patterns starting with the subject *it* increased in the 2000s. This indicates the tendency toward subjectification for those patterns. Although the discussion of the mechanisms of the subjectification process for patterns with *it* was already presented in an earlier chapter, in this section, I take a deeper look at the meaning that the subject *it* is conveying.

Langacker (2011: 203) suggests that “*it* is always meaningful and always referential in the linguistically relevant sense of that term”. Langacker (2011: 179) calls this *it*, which is not used as a demonstrative pronoun, “impersonal *it*”, while other linguists often call *it* “expletive *it*” or even “dummy *it*”. Here are some examples of “impersonal *it*”.

(48) a. It is obvious that my novel will never be published.

b. It seems that the fire started in the attic.

c. It's embarrassing when you can't remember someone's name.

d. It's in April that we go to Japan.

e. It rained last night. (Langacker 2011: 179)

Fukada and Nakamoto (2008: 222) point out that “Bolinger (1977) includes even expressions such as *it is hard to say* or *it is hot down here* in impersonal *it* [Translated by Shibata]”. Fukada and Nakamoto (2008: 222) also note that “according to Bolinger (1977), impersonal *it* has a meaning of referring something even in expressions that describe the weather or time [Translated by Shibata]”. Moreover, Langacker (2011: 204) mentions that *it* has an abstract meaning, explaining that “the pronoun *it* has numerous non-anaphoric uses where *it* clearly refers to something but it is hard to say just what”. *It* is sometimes replaced with “things or everything” (Langacker 2011: 204). The following are some examples.

(49) a. How's *it* going? [cf. How are *things* going?]

b. It's all finished between us [cf. **Everything** is finished between us.]

c. I don't want to be rude – it's just that I have to go cook dinner.

d. Look, it's Harry! (Langacker 2011: 204)

Langacker (2011: 204) indicates that the *it* in example (49a) refers to “the course of one's life, recent experience, or progress toward some goal”. In (49b), the *it* seems to indicate the “particular social relationship, but may go beyond this to include any potential for association or interaction” (Langacker 2011: 204). In (49c), *it* appears to have the role of finishing a conversation but “it is hardly certain that anything so specific is intended” (Langacker 2011: 204). As for (49d), Langacker (2011: 204) argues that “*it* alludes to some unidentified entity appearing on the scene, referring to either this entity itself (which turns out to be Harry) or else”. Langacker (2011: 180) stipulates that in some cases, in English the reference of *it* is “an

abstract setting”. Moreover, Langacker (2011: 204) suggests that “impersonal *it* represents the extreme case of vagueness and non-delimitation and the end point of the scale”. Furthermore, he proposes that “within the situation evoked, impersonal *it* is maximally vague and all-encompassing” (Langacker 2011: 204).

In contrast, Bolinger²⁶ (1977) considers *it* to show ambience²⁷. In addition, Bolinger (1977: 85) states that *it* “embraces weather, time, circumstances, whatever is obvious by the nature of reality or the implications of context”.

Although there are certain differences between two linguists’ analyses of *it*, what is common between them is that *it* indicates certain common information which is shared by the speaker and the listener (Fukada and Nakamoto 2008). In other words, Langacker (2011) and Bolinger (1977) have a similar idea: that “*it* is an expression that shows common information for the interlocutors [Translated by Shibata]” (Fukada and Nakamoto 2008: 223). What is important is that impersonal *it* “does not refer to a single kind of entity, even if all its instantiations are susceptible to schematic characterization based on maximal non-delimitation within a situation” (Langacker 2011: 205). Langacker (2011) concludes that we can talk about many kinds of physical and abstract situations, therefore, the referent of *it* is different depending on each situation.

Among the following three patterns, the second and third patterns have impersonal *it*: (i) *it* (e.g. *that, this pen...*) *feels good...* (ii) *it feels good...* and (iii) *it feels good...* In other words, the subjectification process tends to occur in patterns like (ii) and (iii), with impersonal *it*.

²⁶ Regarding Bolinger’s account about *it*, Langacker (2011: 207) suggested that Bolinger should add in the following way: “(i) more extensive discussion of nominal reference, including the notion of delimitation; (ii) more explicit invocation of a conceptualizer and the conceptualizer’s scope of awareness; and (iii) identification of *it*’s referent with a specific construct (the filed) central to a basic cognitive model (the control cycle) shown to be important for semantic and grammatical description”.

²⁷ It is called “ambient *it*” (Bolinger 1977: 77).

5.8. Conclusion

In this Chapter, three case studies were conducted on two corpora, the *OED* and *COHA*. Case Study 1 revealed that patterns with the verb *feel* have changed mainly from patterns with animate subjects to patterns with inanimate subjects including *it* from the 800s to the 1800s. Case Study 2 also found that patterns with the verb *feel* have changed from patterns with animate subjects to patterns with inanimate subjects including *it* from the 1800s to the 2000s. Case Study 3 demonstrated that there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and grammatical patterns with the verb *feel*.

To be more concrete, in Case Study 1, which identified changes in patterns with the verb *feel* during the 800s and 1800s, the following processes were observed: objectification (e.g. *He feels the cloth.* > *I feel the curiosity.*), subjectification (e.g. *He feels good.* > *It feels good.*), the backgrounding of the conceptualizer (e.g. *I feel a curiosity.* > *He feels good.*) and the explicitness of the conceptualizer (e.g. *It feels good.* > *It feels good to us.*). I proposed that changes in grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* have a relationship with various processes, including subjectification, when the patterns change.

Case Study 2 investigated how patterns with the perception verb *feel* have changed with the passage of time from the 1800s to 2000s; this investigation was essential for conducting Case Study 3. Case Study 2 identified the transition from the animate subject + *feels* + noun pattern to the *it feels good* pattern, where the conceptualizer is not expressed. This suggests that presumably there is a tendency of subjectification among all of the *feel* patterns.

Case Study 3 examined whether there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb in the 1800s and the 2000s based on the data collected in Case Study 2. The findings revealed that subject ellipsis tended to occur in specific grammatical patterns, where the subjectification process occurred. This study also suggested that the subject *it*, which is recognized as “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011: 17), is a factor that leads to subject ellipsis.

Last, concerning the question of why subject ellipsis tends to occur more with specific verbs, especially with the percept verbs, this chapter has suggested that subject ellipsis tends to occur in expressions where the subjectification process occurs, for example, in expressions with percept verbs.

Chapter 6 Subject Ellipsis and the Referentiality of the Subject: Perception Verbs *Feel*, *Look*, *Sound*, *Smell*, and *Taste*

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I observed the relationship between subject ellipsis and grammatical patterns. Chapter 6 deals with the second problem in this study (as noted in Chapter 3), that is, the relationship between subject ellipsis and variations of subjects, especially inanimate subjects including *it*. The following are some examples where inanimate subjects can be retrieved in elliptical sentences.

- (1) a. “That’s a long way.” “Yeah, looks like it.”
b. Sounds a little silly now. (COHA)

In the second sentence in (1a), *looks like it*, the implicit subject *it* can be retrieved. In this case, I assume that the referent of the subject *it* is a situation, not a physical object or entity. In (1b), prior to the *sounds a little silly now*, the implicit subject *it* can be retrieved. In this example, the referent of the subject is also a situation not a physical object.

Chapter 6 investigates whether subject ellipsis tends to occur more in cases where the referent of the subject is an abstract situation. In the present study, I assume that when the referent of the subject shows the situation, referentiality of the subject is considered to be lower. In other words, this study hypothesizes that when the referentiality of the subject is lower, subject ellipsis tends to occur more¹.

In order to support the hypothesis, three kinds of investigations for each perception verb are conducted in the following way: (i) I investigate the frequency of the SVC type with

¹ The relationship between subject ellipsis and referentiality is discussed in §6.5.

perception verbs in the 2000s, (ii) I investigate the frequency of subject ellipsis with perception verbs in the same era, and (iii) I focus on patterns with inanimate subjects in elliptical sentences and investigate the referents of the subjects.

6.2. Characteristics of Referentiality

With regard to characteristics of “referentiality”, this study follows the definition by Payne (2011: 365), that is, “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage”. “Referentiality” has also been referred to as “specificity” (Payne 2011: 365). According to Payne (2011: 365), the subject “this pen” in example (2) below is recognized as an “objectively referential participant”. In this study, I consider the referentiality of that type of subject to be high. In contrast, in example (3), I consider the referentiality of the subject to be low.

(2) This pen feels good.

(3) He gave a shy smile. It sounds ridiculous.

In (2), the entity *pen* is bounded and individuated as a physical entity and the determiner *this* determines the entity. Therefore, it is possible to say that the referentiality of the subject is higher. In contrast, in (3), the subject *it* refers to the prior phrase, *a shy smile*. *A shy smile* is not a bounded and individuated entity but refers to a situation. In this case, I suggest that the referentiality of the subject is lower.

There are two kinds of referentiality, “objective referentiality” and “discourse referentiality”, according to Payne (2011: 365). The term “referentiality” which I use in this study implies the former: “objective referentiality”. In Examples (2) and (3), the characteristics of higher and lower referentiality were illustrated. Example (4) below provides

further illustration of referentiality. The utterances in example (4) do not share all of the characteristics of referentiality suggested by Payne (2011).

(4) a. All men are ridiculous. – Generic

b. Someday I'd like to buy a cabin by the seashore. - Non-specific

(= (23), (24) Chapter 4) (Payne 2011: 365)

In (4a), the referents of the underlined words *All men* are recognized as bounded and individuated entities. However, even though they are bounded and individuated entities, *all men* are not specific men but generic men.

In (4b), *a cabin* is a bounded and individuated entity as well; however, it is not specified since the speaker does not have a particular cabin in mind at the time of speaking. In this case, I suggest that these subjects have lower referentiality.

Later in this chapter, the words “situation” and “object” are used to determine the referents of subjects. I propose that when the referent of the subject is a “situation”, that subject has “lower referentiality” because the situation is not a bounded and individuated entity nor a specific one.

6.3. Method

In this chapter, the data come from *COHA* (*Corpus of Historical American English*). *COHA* is a historical corpus and its data consist of as many as 400 million words, from 1810 to 2009. They come from popular fiction, non-fiction books, magazines, and poems in written American English. Three kinds of investigations for each perception verb (*feel*, *look*, *sound*, *smell*, and *taste*) are conducted as follows:

- a. An investigation of what grammatical patterns with perception verbs in SVC-type constructions occur in the 2000s (e.g. *He feels good. It feels good.*) and their frequency of occurrence.
- b. An investigation of the frequency of occurrence of subject ellipsis for perception verbs in SVC-type constructions in the 2000s (e.g. *Feels good.*)
- c. Focusing on patterns with inanimate subjects at the time of subject ellipsis, an investigation of which type of referent (i.e. situation or object) the implicit subject refers to.

To begin the investigation, 1,000 example sentences for each perception verb (e.g. *feel*, *look*, and *sound*) were collected from *COHA*. However, the amount of targeted example sentences collected from *COHA* for the verbs *smell* and *taste* fell short of 1,000. Therefore, every appearance of those two verbs in the corpus was used in the investigation.

The patterns investigated are listed as follows: A *feels* adj. (e.g. *He feels good.*), A *feels like* (e.g. *She feels like she can't focus*), A *feels as if* (e.g. *She feels as if he is a king.*), A *feels* Inf. (e.g. *He feels good to...*), In-A *feels* adj. (e.g. *It feels good.*), In-A *feels like* (e.g. *It feels like an hour.*), In-A *feels as if* (e.g. *It feels as if they are dabbling.*), and In-A *feels* Inf. (e.g. *It feels good to be home.*). “A” stands for “animate subject” and “In-A” for “inanimate subject”. “Inf.” stands for Infinitive. “Adj.” means Adjective. What is common among those patterns is that they are all SVC types – sentences whose subject is located at the beginning of the sentence; they include both affirmative sentences and interrogative sentences.

The following sentences were excluded: SVO types, negated sentences, imperative sentences, sentences with subjects after a subordinating conjunction (e.g. *If he feels...*), and sentences with subject ellipsis that occurs after a coordinating conjunction (e.g. “and” or “but”), used in order not to repeat the same subject (e.g. *She eats breakfast and leaves for*

school.). In all of the tables throughout the investigations in Chapter 6, the numbers on the left side of the Frequency column give the frequency of occurrence. To their right, the numbers in parentheses indicate the frequencies per one million words. In this way, the frequencies per one million words act as a common denominator for comparison among different verbs.

6.4. Case Studies on Perception Verbs: Data and Discussion

6.4.1. Case Study on the Verb *Feel*

6.4.1.1. SVC Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the SVC-type grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* that occurred in the 2000s (e.g. *He feels good. It feels good.*) and their frequency of occurrence in *COHA*. Table 1 shows how often grammatical patterns with the verb *feel* occur; these frequencies are presented after a search for 1,000 examples that included the verb *feel*. After the sentence types that were excluded from the investigation were removed, a total of 652 sentences including the verb *feel* remained.

Table 1. SVC patterns with the verb *feel* in the 2000s (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|---|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A feels</i> adj. (e.g. <i>He feels good.</i>) | 198 (16.04) |
| 2) <i>A feels like</i> (e.g. <i>She feels like she can't focus.</i>) | 48 (4.00) |
| 3) <i>A feels as if</i> (e.g. <i>She feels as if he is a king.</i>) | 16 (1.30) |
| 4) <i>A feels</i> Inf. (e.g. <i>He feels good to...</i>) | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A feels</i> adj. (e.g. <i>It feels good.</i>) | 222 (18.00) |
| 6) <i>In-A feels like</i> (e.g. <i>It feels like an hour.</i>) | 132 (10.70) |
| 7) <i>In-A feels as if</i> (e.g. <i>It feels as if they are dabbling.</i>) | 16 (1.30) |
| 8) <i>In-A feels</i> Inf. (e.g. <i>It feels good to be home.</i>) | 20 (1.62) |
| Total | 652 (52.96) |

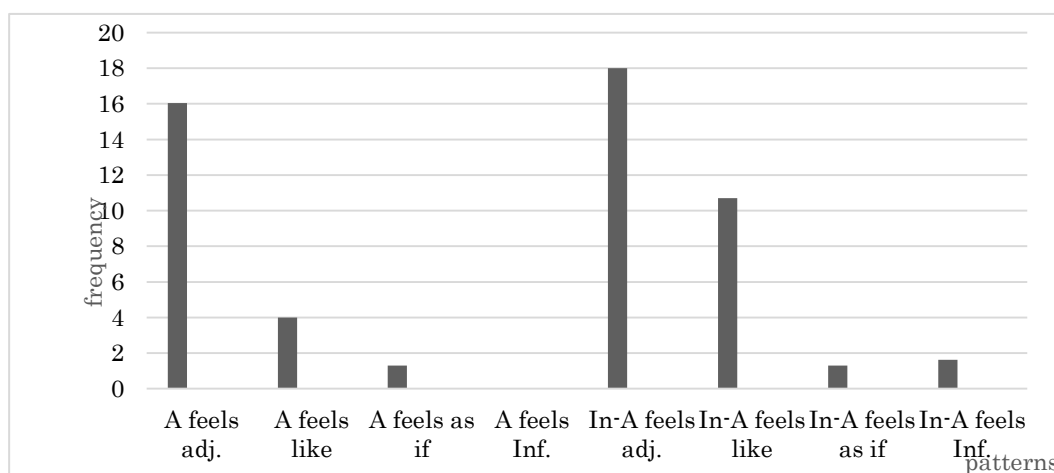


Figure 1. SVC patterns with *feel* in the 2000s: count per million (*COHA*)

The subjects in patterns (1) to (4) in Table 1 are animate subjects and those in (5) to (8) are inanimate ones. Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of each pattern per one million words, that is, the numbers given in parentheses in Table 1. The following are some example sentences elicited from *COHA*.

- (5) She feels safe. - Animate subject
- (6) Dad feels responsible. - Animate subject
- (7) Something feels wrong. - Inanimate subject
- (8) It feels fine. - Inanimate subject (COHA)²

In (5) and (6), the subjects are animate; in contrast, the subjects in (7) and (8) are inanimate and they indicate the stimulus.

Table 1 and Figure 1 suggest that the patterns 1) *A feels adj.* (e.g. *He feels good.*), 5) *In-A feels adj.* (e.g. *It feels good.*) and 6) *In-A feels like* (e.g. *It feels like an hour.*) are

² All of the examples from (5) to (53) are from *COHA*.

frequently used compared to others. In particular, patterns with inanimate subjects, including those with the subject *it*, are used more frequently than those with animate subjects. However, among the patterns with inanimate subjects, including those with the subject *it*, relatively longer and more complicated patterns such as 7) In-A *feels as if*... (e.g. *It feels as if they are dabbling.*) and 8) (e.g. *It feels good to be home.*) are used less often. This implies that simpler and shorter patterns tend to be used more often in recent decades.

6.4.1.2. Subject Ellipsis with the Verb *Feel*

The case study in Table 2 investigates the frequency of subject ellipsis with the verb *feel* in the 2000s. The numbers in parentheses on the right side give the frequencies per million words, just as in Table 1, and Figure 2 illustrates these frequencies in a graph. Implicit subjects are retrieved based on the immediate context and the situational context from the discourse in *COHA*. The frequencies in Table 2 and Figure 2 suggest that subject ellipsis mainly occurs in patterns with inanimate subjects, including those with *it* such as 5) In-A *feels* adj. (e.g. *It feels good.*) and 6) In-A *feels like* (e.g. *It feels like an hour.*).

Table 2. Subject ellipsis with the verb *feel* in the 2000s (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) A <i>feels</i> adj. | 2 (0.16) |
| 2) A <i>feels like</i> | 0 |
| 3) A <i>feels as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) A <i>feels</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) In-A <i>feels</i> adj. | 10 (0.81) |
| 6) In-A <i>feels like</i> | 8 (0.65) |
| 7) In-A <i>feels as if</i> | 0 |
| 8) In-A <i>feels</i> Inf. | 0 |
| Total | 20 (1.62) |

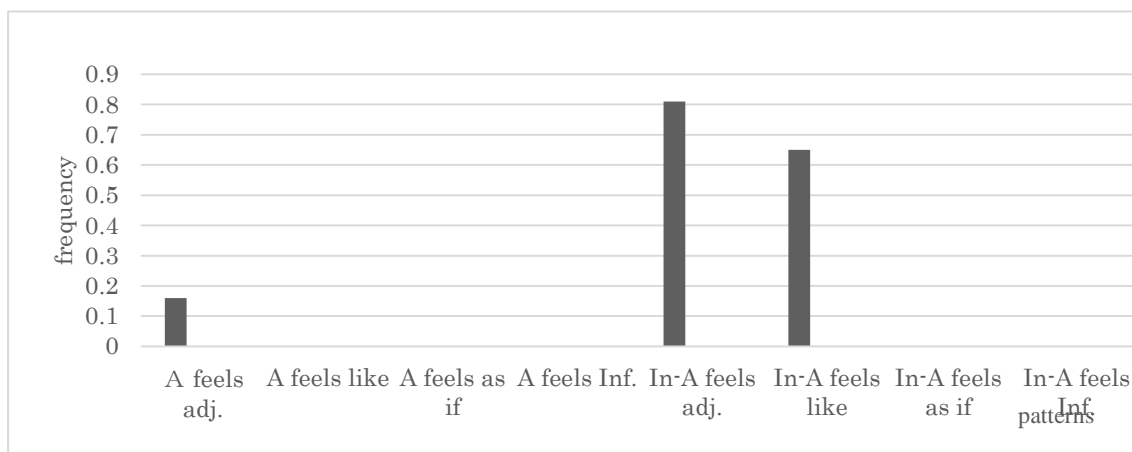


Figure 2. Subject ellipsis with the verb *feel* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)

In other words, it is possible to say that subject ellipsis tends to occur in patterns that are highly subjective, where the object of the perception is located in the subject slot and the conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed,³ as in the examples from (9) to (11) that follow.

- (9) Usually feels great, while we’re doing it. > (It, etc.) usually feels great (to us).
- (10) Feels fine. What’s your name? > (It, etc.) feels fine (to me).
- (11) Feels like my arm’s about to fall off. > (It, etc.) feels like my arm’s about to fall off (to me).

In each example from (9) to (11), the subject *it* is omitted from the subject slot and the conceptualizer can be retrieved using a form of “to me” or “to us”. However, since the subjects and the conceptualizers are not actually expressed in (9) to (11), these patterns can be described as highly subjective.

Furthermore, in the next investigation in §6.4.1.3, this study focuses on patterns with inanimate subjects (i.e. the patterns (5) – (8) in Table 2). It investigates which type of referent

³ This paper follows the definition of subjectification by Langacker (1991, 1999). I therefore call those patterns from (9) to (11) “highly subjective” because an experiencer is not linguistically expressed.

(e.g. either a situation or an object) retrieved subjects refer to. I hypothesize that most retrieved subjects refer to an ambiguous situation described in the discourse or to a speaker's experience. That is to say, they are not physical entities. These types of retrieved subjects also include "impersonal *it*".⁴ The findings of the case study in this section suggest that subject ellipsis tends to occur more in patterns with subjects that refer to a situation rather than physical objects.

6.4.1.3. The Referents of Inanimate Subjects in Patterns with the Verb *Feel*

As mentioned above, Table 3 presents the referents (i.e. either situations or objects) that omitted inanimate subjects in verb *feel* patterns refer to, based on the data in Table 2. Figure 3 illustrates the frequencies of the referents per million words.

Table 3. Types of referents of ellipsed inanimate subjects in *feel* patterns (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency (situation) | Frequency (object) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) In-A <i>feels</i> adj. | 10 (0.81) | 0 |
| 2) In-A <i>feels like</i> | 7 (0.57) | 1 (0.08) |
| 3) In-A <i>feels as if</i> | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 17 (1.38) | 1 (0.08) |

⁴ "Impersonal *it*" is defined as follows: "Impersonal *it* represents the extreme case of vagueness and non-delimitation" and "is maximally vague and all-encompassing" (Langacker 2011: 204). In this paper, I suggest that subject ellipsis frequently occurs with subjects that refer to entities expressing an "experienced event or ... situation". In this respect, subjects that refer to events or situations and "impersonal *it*" have in common the quality of not referring to physical entities. Although "impersonal *it*" and "ambient *it*" (Bolinger 1977) are not the exactly same, Bolinger (1977: 77-87) uses the term "ambient *it*". Nevertheless, this paper adopts the term "impersonal *it*" by Langacker (2011: 204), since this study analyzes subject ellipsis by subjectification as theorized by Langacker (2011).

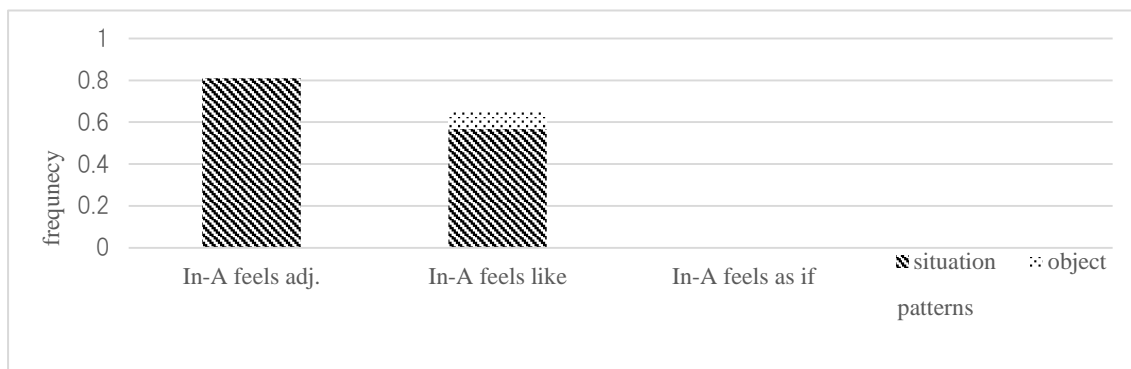


Figure 3. Types of referents of ellipsed inanimate subjects in *feel* patterns: count per million

According to the data in Table 3 and Figure 3, ellipsed inanimate subjects refer to “situation” referents at a frequency of 17 (or 1.38 per million words) in total and “object” referents at a frequency of 1 (or 0.08 per million words) in total. These figures suggest that most referents of inanimate subjects with the verb *feel* refer to “situations” not physical “objects”. The following is an example from *COHA*.

- (12) Street breathing up your legs. Can’t get no breeze from them big church fans at St. Jack’s. Feels like a dog’s licking you. (=§7.3.3 (6a))

In (12), the underlined sentence refers to the situation of a street that is crowded with a lot of people, squeezed in close to each other. That situation makes them feel like they are being licked by a dog. In this example sentence, the subject *it* is not linguistically expressed. In this context, the omitted subject *it* refers to an abstract situation. Furthermore, the conceptualizer is not expressed in that sentence. Similarly, in the following examples, (13) and (14), the referent of the subject is a situation.

- (13) Once I found her lying on the grass in a random-looking sprawl, the palms of her

hands turned up to the drizzle. “The Corpse,” she explained later. “Feels wonderful”.

(14) Robert heaved a sigh and sat down beside me. “Looks bad”. “Feels worse”.

In (13), in the prior context, a speaker has said that yoga’s poses have a lot of strange names. After that, the speaker (“I”) “found [a woman] lying on the grass”. The woman later explained that the pose was called “the corpse” and described how wonderful the pose felt to her. This means that the implicit subject is not a physical entity but the yoga’s pose.

In (14), in the prior context, Robert and the speaker have been conversing. Robert then expresses his opinion about that conversation, saying “Looks bad” and “Feels worse”. In this example sentence, Robert is not talking about a physical entity but is expressing his own feelings about a story that was told. Nor is the conceptualizer linguistically expressed.

Judging from the fact that the retrieved subjects refer to abstract situations or feelings rather than physical entities, subject ellipsis tends to occur more in patterns with subjects that refer to situations. Furthermore, it can be said that there is a relationship between subject ellipsis and the lower referentiality of a subject because ellipsis of subjects that refers to situation have lower referentiality.

The following case studies, in §6.4.2, §6.4.3, §6.4.4, and §6.4.5, use the same procedure as in §6.4.1 in terms of collecting and analyzing the data.

6.4.2. Case Study on the Verb *Look*

6.4.2.1. SVC Patterns with the Verb *look*

Table 4 presents the SVC-type grammatical patterns with the verb *look* that occurred in the 2000s (e.g. *She looks nice. It looks nice.*) and their frequency of occurrence in *COHA*. Table 4 and Figure 4 reveal a trend similar to that in Table 3 and Figure 3 in that the frequencies of the patterns 1) *A looks adj.*, 2) *A looks like*, 5) *In-A looks adj.*, and 6) *In-A*

looks like are all remarkably high. The difference is that the frequency of the pattern In-A *looks like* is higher than that of In-A *looks* adj., while this is not true of the patterns with the verb *feel*. One possible reason for this is that the verb *look* has a meaning similar to that of the word *seem*. For this reason, it seems that the verb *look* might be taking the place of the verb *seem* in that pattern.

Table 4. SVC patterns with the verb *look* in the 2000s (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) A <i>looks</i> adj. | 87 (51.00) |
| 2) A <i>looks like</i> | 45 (26.41) |
| 3) A <i>looks as if</i> | 7 (4.10) |
| 4) A <i>looks</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) In-A <i>looks</i> adj. | 55 (32.30) |
| 6) In-A <i>looks like</i> | 123 (72.21) |
| 7) In-A <i>looks as if</i> | 8 (4.70) |
| 8) In-A <i>looks</i> Inf. | 4 (2.35) |
| Total | 329 (193.07) |

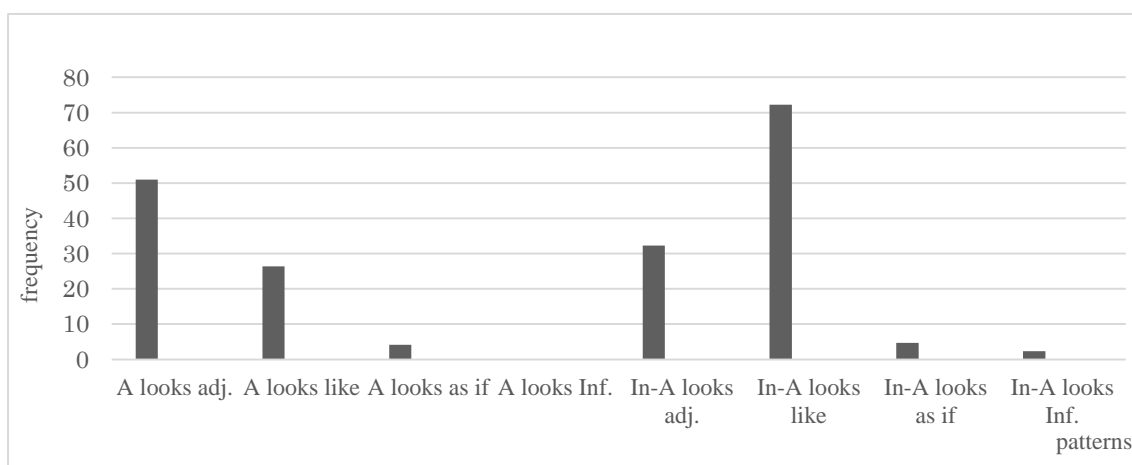


Figure 4. SVC patterns with the verb *look*: count per million (COHA)

Examples (15) and (16) are patterns with animate subjects that each refer to a person's

situation and (17) and (18) have inanimate subjects. In (17), the subject refers to a payment system, which does not exist as a visual entity. In (18), the speaker is talking about a written character, similar to a kind of object.

- (15) She looked annoyed. – Animate subject
- (16) She looks nice. – Animate subject
- (17) This looks a lot like VPP (=value payment post) – Inanimate subject
- (18) It looks like a Chinese character. – Inanimate subject

6.4.2.2. Subject Ellipsis with the Verb *Look*

Table 5 and Figure 5 present the patterns in which subject ellipsis occurred in the 2000s.

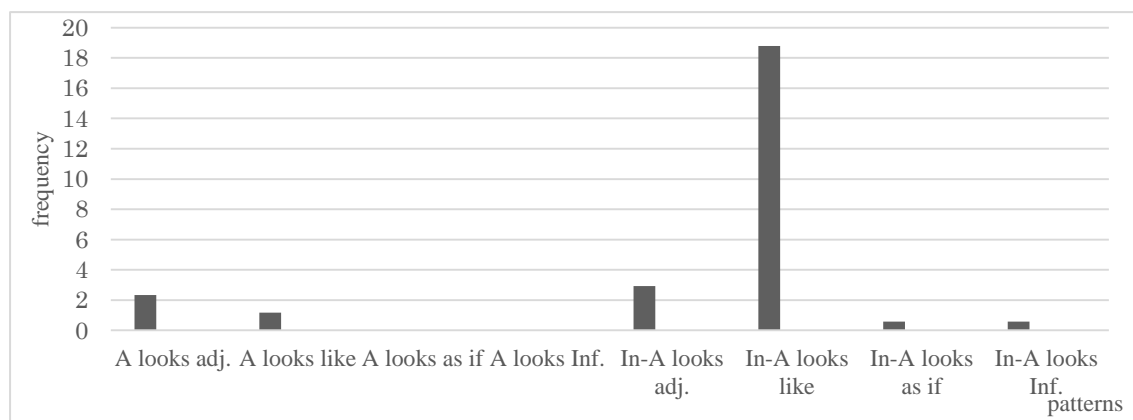
Table 5. Subject ellipsis with the verb *look* in the 2000s (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A looks adj.</i> | 3 (2.34) |
| 2) <i>A looks like</i> | 2 (1.17) |
| 3) <i>A looks as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) <i>A looks Inf.</i> | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A looks adj.</i> | 5 (2.93) |
| 6) <i>In-A looks like</i> | 32 (18.79) |
| 7) <i>In-A looks as if</i> | 1 (0.59) |
| 8) <i>In-A looks Inf.</i> | 1 (0.59) |
| Total | 45 (26.41) |

Subject ellipsis mainly occurs in the patterns 5) *In-A looks adj.* and 6) *In-A looks like*, but also in the patterns 1) *A looks adj.* and 2) *A looks like*. Among these, the frequency of the pattern 6) *In-A looks like* is remarkably high. This suggests that subject ellipsis with the verb *look*

tends to occur more in patterns that are highly subjective, just like the case of the verb *feel*.

Figure 5. Subject ellipsis with the verb *look* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)



The following are some examples. The sentences on the left side in examples (19) to (21) show that the conceptualizers are not linguistically expressed. Although conceptualizers can be retrieved either in the exact place of the grammatical subject or in the form of “to me” or “to us”, in reality the sentences on the left side, as shown in the examples below, do not have those expressions. Therefore, they can be called “highly subjective” in that the conceptualizer is not explicitly expressed.

- (19) Looks like your watch must be a little slow today, Mr. Fortlow. > (It, etc.) looks like... (to me).
- (20) Looks even worse. > (It, etc.) looks even worse (to me).
- (21) Looks like you learned the hard way. > (It, etc.) looks like you learned the hard way (to me).

6.4.2.3. The Referents of Inanimate Subjects in Patterns with the Verb *Look*

Table 6 and Figure 6 present the referents (i.e. situations or objects) of ellipated

inanimate subjects with the verb *look*. Omitted inanimate subjects that refer to situations account for 31 cases (or 18.20 per million words) in total, while those that refer to objects account for 7 cases (or 4.11 per million words) in total.

Table 6. Types of referents of ellipsed inanimate subjects in *look* patterns (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency (situation) | Frequency (object) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1)In-A <i>looks</i> adj. | 3 (1.76) | 2 (1.17) |
| 2) In-A <i>looks like</i> | 27 (15.85) | 5 (2.94) |
| 3) In-A <i>looks as if</i> | 1 (0.59) | 0 |
| Total | 31 (18.20) | 7 (4.11) |

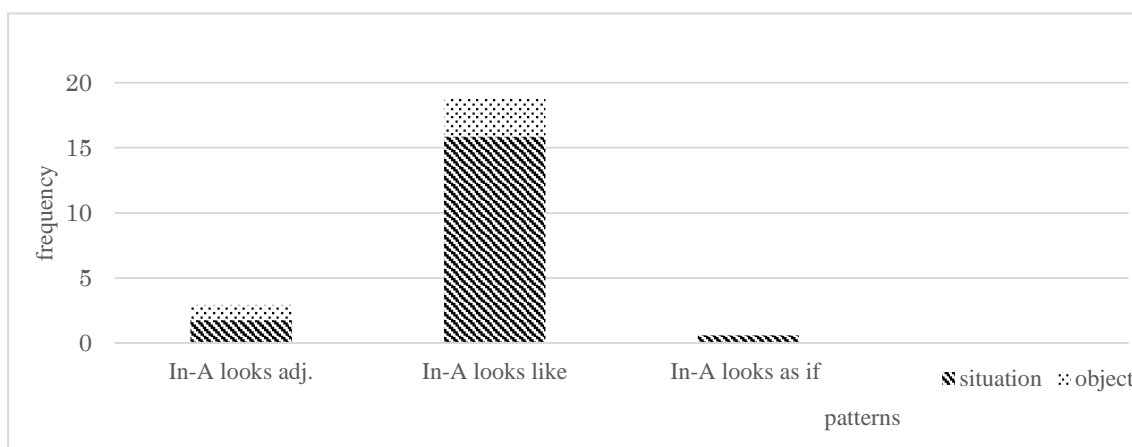


Figure 6. Types of referents of ellipsed inanimate subjects in *look* patterns: count per million (*COHA*)

The data in Table 6 and Figure 6 suggest that the majority of omitted inanimate subjects refer to situations. The following are some examples.

(22) The bed is unmade, clothes are strewn on the floor. Looks like a storm swept through it.

(23) “What’ve got here?” He asked as they walked over to the two bodies. “Looks like a

hit-and-run".

(24) Harry kept his pistol gripped in his hand and approached the remnants of the snake.

Looks like an imported viper.

In (22), the narrative discourse suggests that the room is untidy. The speaker mentions that it looks like "a storm swept through" the room; the implicit subject refers to this situation. In (23), after the man ("he") finds two bodies on the street, he does not talk about the bodies themselves but the situation. In (24), the subject refers to a physical object: "the snake".

6.4.3. Case Study on the Verb *Sound*

6.4.3.1. SVC Patterns with the Verb *Sound*

Table 7 presents the patterns with the verb *sound* that occurred in the 2000s in *COHA*, while Figure 7 illustrates the frequencies of the verb *sound* per one million words.

Table 7. SVC patterns with the verb *sound* in the 2000s (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A sounds</i> adj. | 55 (4.37) |
| 2) <i>A sounds like</i> | 19 (1.51) |
| 3) <i>A sounds as if</i> | 4 (0.4) |
| 4) <i>A sounds</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A sounds</i> adj. | 293 (23.29) |
| 6) <i>In-A sounds like</i> | 230 (18.29) |
| 7) <i>In-A sounds as if</i> | 13 (1.03) |
| 8) <i>In-A sounds</i> Inf. | 0 |
| Total | 615 (48.89) |

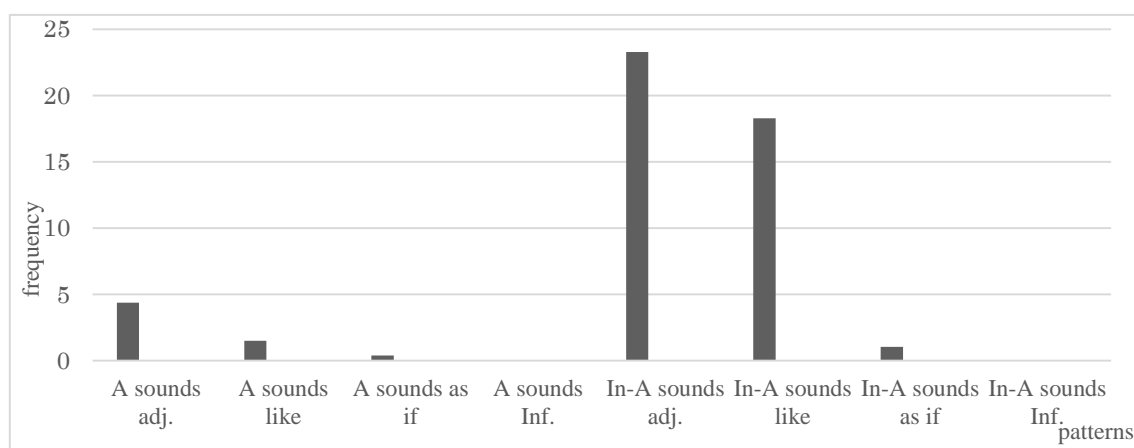


Figure 7. SVC patterns with the verb *sound*: count per million (COHA)

Among patterns with the verb *sound*, the frequencies of the patterns 5) *In-A sounds adj.* and 6) *In-A sounds like* are particularly high. This is presumably because the verb *sound* is related to physical sound rather than to the meaning of *seem*. The following are some example sentences with the verb *sound*. The subjects in examples (25) to (27) refer to animate entities, while the subjects in examples (28) and (29) refer to inanimate entities.

- (25) She sounds kind of strange. - Animate
- (26) He sounds a lot like Al Gore. - Animate
- (27) He sounds calmer than he feels. – Animate
- (28) A giggle sounds childish. – Inanimate
- (29) That sounds dangerous. – Inanimate

The animate subjects in the patterns in examples (25) to (27) refer to the voice or the tone of people who are talking. The inanimate subjects in examples (28) and (29) refer to a physical sound and what the speaker is talking about, respectively.

6.4.3.2. Subject Ellipsis with the Verb *Sound*

Table 8 and Figure 8 present the patterns in which subject ellipsis occurs with the verb *sound*. There are no patterns with ellipted animate subjects. However, subject ellipsis occurs in patterns with inanimate subjects.

Table 8. Subject ellipsis with the verb *sound* in the 2000s (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A sounds</i> adj. | 0 |
| 2) <i>A sounds like</i> | 0 |
| 3) <i>A sounds as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) <i>A sounds</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A sounds</i> adj. | 82 (6.52) |
| 6) <i>In-A sounds like</i> | 91 (7.23) |
| 7) <i>In-A sounds as if</i> | 2 (0.16) |
| 8) <i>In-A sounds</i> Inf. | 0 |
| Total | 175 (13.91) |

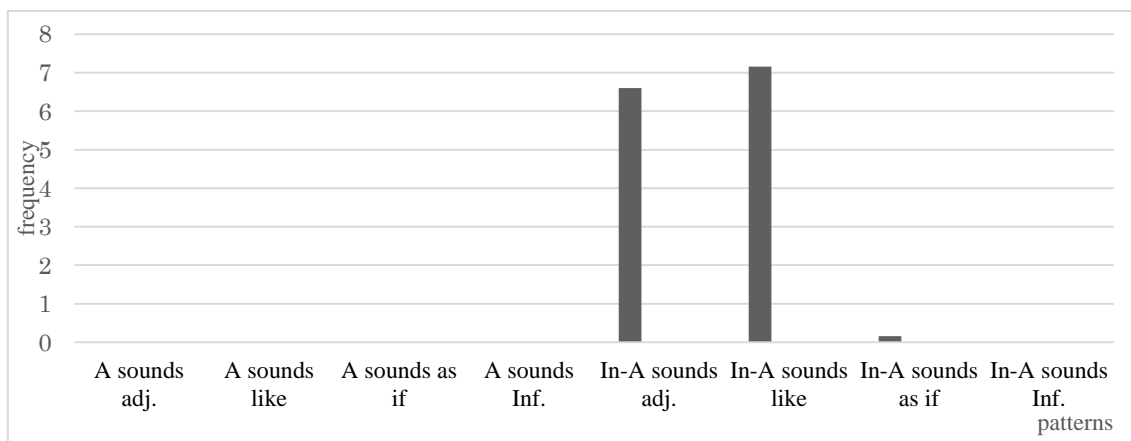


Figure 8. Subject ellipsis with the verb *sound* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)

The following are some examples. The examples from (30) to (32) illustrate that subject ellipsis tends to occur with highly subjective patterns, similar to the cases of other perception verbs, in that conceptualizers are not linguistically expressed.

- (30) “Then don’t give them anything”. “Sounds a little easier said than done”. > “(It, etc.) sounds a little easier said than done (to me)”.
- (31) The two families had socialized last summer. Sounds as if those days are over. > (It, etc.)
- (32) ...shrewdly springing her idea on me at breakfast. Sounds good, Abuela. > (It, etc.) sounds good (to me), Abuela.

6.4.3.3. The Referents of Inanimate Subjects in Patterns with the Verb *Sound*

Table 9 and Figure 9 illustrate the referents of inanimate subjects in patterns with the verb *sound*. Subjects that refer to situations account for 156 cases (or 12.40 per million words) in total, while subjects that refer to objects account for 19 cases (or 1.51 per million words) in total. It is clear that most retrieved inanimate subjects refer to situations.

Table 9. Types of referents of ellipted inanimate subjects in *sound* patterns (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency (situation) | Frequency (object) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) In-A <i>sounds</i> adj. | 76 (6.04) | 6 (0.48) |
| 2) In-A <i>sounds like</i> | 78 (6.20) | 13 (1.03) |
| 3) In-A <i>sounds as if</i> | 2 (0.16) | 0 |
| Total | 156 (12.40) | 19 (1.51) |

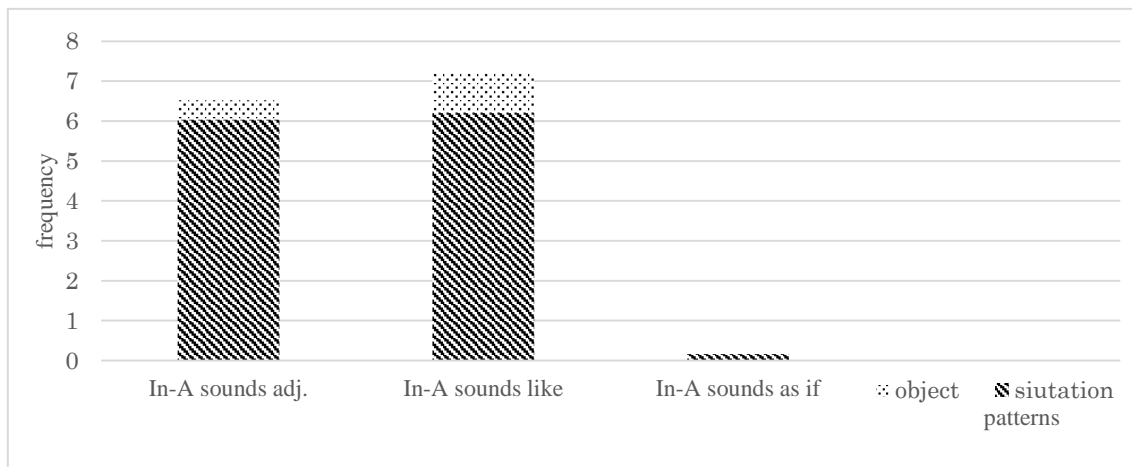


Figure 9. Types of referents of ellipsed inanimate subjects in *sound* patterns: count per million (COHA)

The implicit subjects in examples (33) and (34) refer to the situations of the previous discourse context. In Example (35), the subject implies a sound, in this case “the voice”.

(33) Doing nothing but watching movies in you pajamas? Sounds good, right? - Situation

(34) Seat them on an opposite side of the chapel. “Sounds good”. – Situation

In (33), the subject ellipsed from “sounds good, right?” refers to the situation in the previous utterance. In (34), similarly, the subject omitted from “sounds good” refers to the situation in the prior utterance.

(35) ...listen to him moaning. Her husband once overheard Tony and said to his wife.
“Sounds like Tony’s got the bellyache”. – Sound, Object

In example (35), the implicit subject (i.e. it sounds like Tony’s got...) indicates a physical sound or a voice. Although the “sound” is not visually or physically bounded, the sound has a sound wave. In this respect, the sound itself is considered to be a kind of a physical object in

this study.

6.4.4. Case Study on the Verb *Smell*

6.4.4.1. SVC Patterns with the Verb *Smell*

Table 10 and Figure10 present SVC patterns with the verb *smell* and their frequency in the 2000s in *COHA*. The frequencies of the *smell* patterns with inanimate subjects, especially 5) In-A *smells* adj. and 6) In-A *smells* *like*, are much higher than those of animate subjects, just as with *sound*. It is common sense that the verb *smell* would rarely co-occur with a human subject because it is impolite for someone to say that “a person smells” in conversation.

Table 10. SVC patterns with the verb *smell* in the 2000s (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) A <i>smells</i> adj. | 17 (0.52) |
| 2) A <i>smells</i> <i>like</i> | 11 (0.33) |
| 3) A <i>smells</i> <i>as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) A <i>smells</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) In-A <i>smells</i> adj. | 47 (1.42) |
| 6) In-A <i>smells</i> <i>like</i> | 107 (3.24) |
| 7) In-A <i>smells</i> <i>as if</i> | 2 (0.06) |
| 8) In-A <i>smells</i> Inf. | 0 |
| Total | 184 (5.57) |

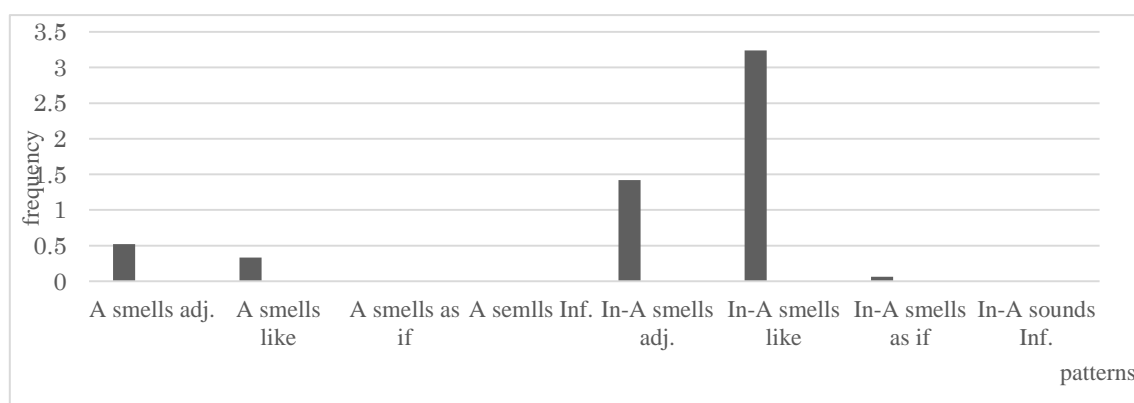


Figure 10. SVC patterns with the verb *smell* in the 2000s: count per million (*COHA*)

The patterns in examples (36) to (38) have animate subjects and those in (39) and (40) have inanimate subjects.

- (36) Kitty smells funny. – Animate subject
- (37) She smells horrible. – Animate subject
- (38) He smells like wet towel. – Animate subject
- (39) It smells like cinnamon. – Inanimate subject
- (40) It smells great. – Inanimate subject

When the subject refers to an animal, not a human, as in (36), the data show that this pattern with the verb *smell* tends to be used. When *smell* patterns are used with animate subjects, such as in examples (36) to (38), they seem to be used with a negative nuance.

6.4.4.2. Subject Ellipsis with the Verb *Smell*

Table 11 and Figure 11 present the data from *COHA* on subject ellipsis with the verb *smell* in the 2000s. Subject ellipsis occurs only in the patterns 5) In-A *smells* adj. and 6) In-A *smells like*. In Table 10 above, the main patterns that occurred were those with inanimate subjects; therefore, it is unsurprising that there were no occurrences of ellipsis of animate subjects here (Table 11), considering the low frequency of animate subjects shown in Table 10.

Table 11. Subject ellipsis with the verb *smell* in the 2000s (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A smells</i> adj. | 0 |
| 2) <i>A smells like</i> | 0 |
| 3) <i>A smells as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) <i>A smells</i> Inf. | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A smells</i> adj. | 7 (0.21) |
| 6) <i>In-A smells like</i> | 15 (0.45) |
| 7) <i>In-A smells as if</i> | 0 |
| 8) <i>In-A smells</i> Inf. | 0 |
| Total | 22 (0.66) |

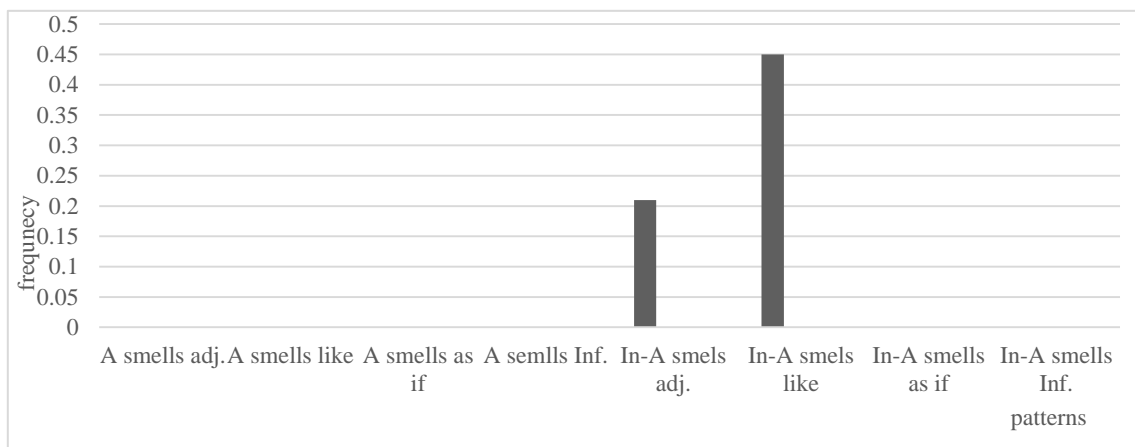


Figure 11. Subject ellipsis with the verb *smell* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)

The patterns in the sentences on the left in examples (41) and (42) are highly subjective in that the conceptualizer is not expressed. In (41), the speaker smells the scent of the air in a room, that is, a physical entity. Similarly, in (42) the speaker smells a scent of the air from a pinot in front of himself or herself. Example (42) also illustrates a case where subject ellipsis occurs with a subject that refers to the air from the physical entity.

(41) Smells in here, said Toute, wrinkling her nose.> (It, etc.) smells in here (to me).

(42) Smells like a pinot bit. > (It, etc.) smells like a pinot bit (to me).

6.4.4.3. The Referents of Inanimate Subjects in Patterns with the Verb *Smell*

Table 12 and Figure 12 give the referents of ellipped inanimate subjects in patterns with the verb *smell*. Among inanimate subject referents with the verb *smell* in the patterns 1) In-A *smells* adj., 2) In-A *smells* like, and 3) In-A *smells* as if, object-type referents account for 15 cases (or 0.45 per million words) in total, and situation-type referents account for 7 cases (or 0.21 per million words) in total. In patterns with the verb *smell*, subject ellipsis occurs more with subjects that refer to objects. This tendency is different from that of the other perception verbs, *feel*, *look*, and *sound*. Through a discussion of the examples below, I analyze why the verb *smell* exhibits a different tendency compared to other verbs.

Table 12. Types of referents of ellipped inanimate subjects in *smell* patterns (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency (situation) | Frequency (object) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) In-A <i>smells</i> adj. | 1 (0.03) | 6 (0.18) |
| 2) In-A <i>smells</i> like | 5 (0.18) | 9 (0.27) |
| 3) In-A <i>smells</i> as if | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 7 (0.21) | 15 (0.45) |

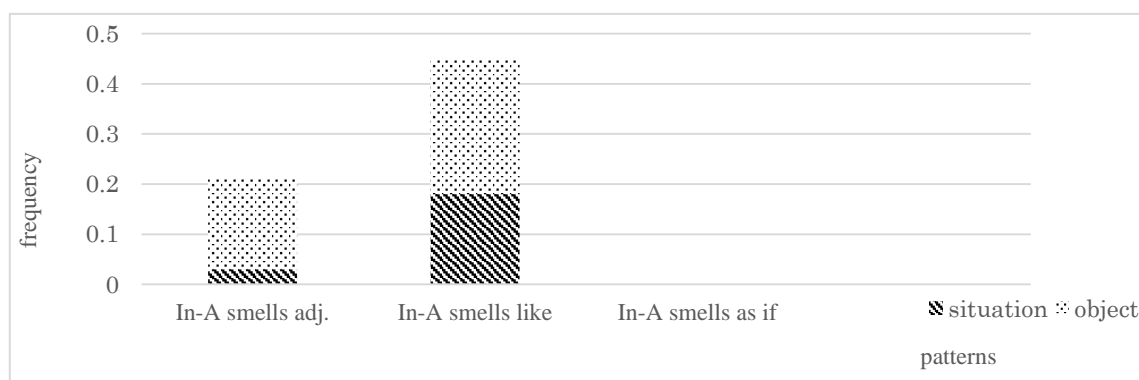


Figure 12. Types of referents of ellipated inanimate subjects in *smell* patterns:

count per million (COHA)

In examples (43) and (44), the implicit subjects refer to objects or physical entities. Example (45) includes that verb *smell* used in the title of a song and in this case study, it is categorized as a situation.

- (43) Smells nice. The soup does. – Object
- (44) “Hey! Time to go! Smells terrible in here! – Object
- (45) When I heard “Smells like Teen Spirit”⁵, I had never heard a sound like it. – Situation

In (43), the implicit subject refers to the soup, which is an object or a physical entity. In Example (44), the implicit subject refers to the smell in the place. “Smell” is not a bounded entity but consists of vapors, which consist of small particles, so it can be recognized as a kind of physical substance or an object. In (45), the underlined sentence is the title of a song, in which the *smell* is not a physical entity. Therefore, I consider it as referring to a situation.

As seen in examples (43) to (45), the subject in elliptical sentences with the verb *smell*

⁵ In Example (45), the word *smell* is used as a name of the song, however, *smells like Teen Spirit* is used as a metaphor. Therefore, it is categorized as situation in that it is not a physical entity.

can refer to a physical entity, such as soup. Or more to put it accurately, the data show that subject ellipsis occurs more often when the subject refers to an object (see Table 12 and Figure 12). The smell (of the soup, a room, etc.) is transmitted through vapors consisting of small particles. Therefore, the subject of the verb *smell* refers to an “object” in such cases. However, the verb *smell* is different from the verbs *feel*, *look*, and *sound* in that the subjects of other verbs mostly refer to “situations”. This study attributes this difference in behavior to the meanings of the verbs in terms of the closeness of the relationship between “the perceiver” (or a speaker) and “the object perceived”.

6.4.5. Case Study on the Verb *Taste*

6.4.5.1. SVC Patterns with the Verb *Taste*

Table 13 and Figure 13 present SVC patterns with the verb *taste* in the 2000s in *COHA*. The verb *taste* does not co-occur with animate subjects in SVC patterns. Presumably this is due to the fact that co-occurrence with animate subjects rarely makes sense in terms of the semantics of the verb *taste*. Moreover, SVC patterns with *taste* occurred with very low frequencies in the 2000s, as seen in Table 13 and Figure 13.

Table 13. SVC patterns with the verb *taste* in the 2000s (*COHA*)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A tastes adj.</i> | 0 |
| 2) <i>A tastes like</i> | 0 |
| 3) <i>A tastes as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) <i>A tastes Inf.</i> | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A tastes adj.</i> | 36 (1.08) |
| 6) <i>In-A tastes like</i> | 26 (0.78) |
| 7) <i>In-A tastes as if</i> | 1 (0.03) |
| 8) <i>In-A tastes Inf.</i> | 0 |
| Total | 63 (1.89) |

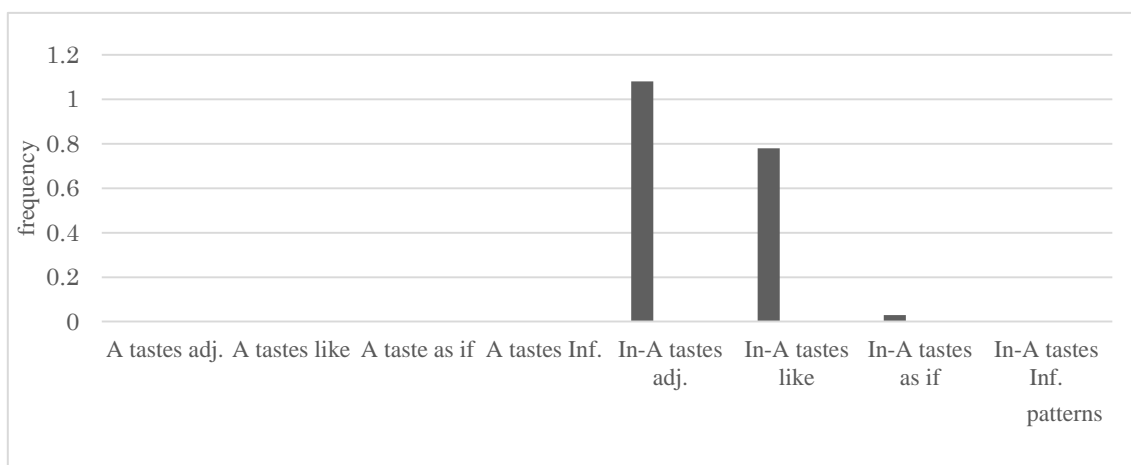


Figure 13. SVC patterns with the verb *taste* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)

The following are some examples.

- (46) It still tastes like bread. – Inanimate subject
- (47) My mouth tastes like dust and poison. – Inanimate subject
- (48) Commercially raised chicken tastes like nothing. – Inanimate subject

In example (46), the subject refers to a previously mentioned physical-object referent. In (47), “my mouth”, which is the sensory organ used to taste, becomes the subject. Example (48) is similar to (46) in that the physical object that the speaker tastes becomes the subject.

6.4.5.2. Subject Ellipsis with the Verb *Taste*

Subject ellipsis in patterns with the verb *taste* occurs only with inanimate subjects. This is unsurprising given that no patterns with animate subjects occurred, as seen in Table 13 and Figure 13. The frequencies of subject ellipsis shown in Table 14 and Figure 14 are very low. This study ascribes this low frequency to the scarcity of occurrence of the verb *taste* as a whole.

Table 14. Subject ellipsis with the verb *taste* in the 2000s (COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency in the 2000s |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>A tastes adj.</i> | 0 |
| 2) <i>A tastes like</i> | 0 |
| 3) <i>A tastes as if</i> | 0 |
| 4) <i>A tastes Inf.</i> | 0 |
| 5) <i>In-A tastes adj.</i> | 3 (0.09) |
| 6) <i>In-A tastes like</i> | 2 (0.06) |
| 7) <i>In-A tastes as if</i> | 0 |
| 8) <i>In-A tastes Inf.</i> | 0 |
| Total | 5 (0.15) |

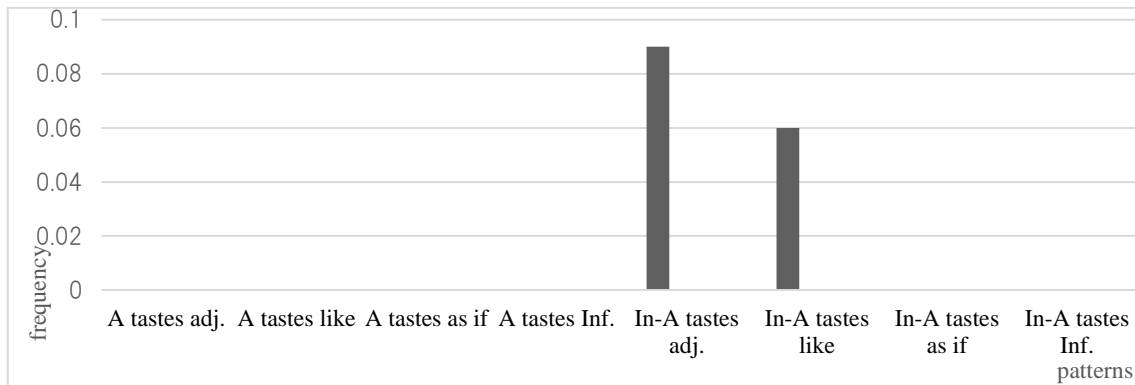


Figure 14. Subject ellipsis with the verb *taste* in the 2000s: count per million (COHA)

The following is an example.

- (49) Good and salty, and tastes great on wings. > (it, etc.) tastes great on wings (to me).

On the left side of the sentence in (49), the implicit subject refers to a previously mentioned entity. The conceptualizer is not linguistically expressed in the underlined sentence. The speaker utters his or her impression about a physical entity which he or she is eating.

6.4.5.3. The Referents of Inanimate Subjects in Patterns with the Verb *Taste*

Table 15 and Figure 15 give the referents of ellipped inanimate subjects with the verb *taste*. All of the inanimate subjects with the verb *taste* refer to physical entities or objects. *Taste* is different in that the subjects of other verbs refer to both situations and objects. This is because with the verb *taste*, there is a close distance between “the perceiver” (or a speaker) and “the object perceived”; this is also true of the verb *smell*. No subject ellipsis occurred with the pattern In-A *tastes as if*.

Table 15. Types of referents of inanimate subjects in patterns with the verb *taste*
(COHA)

| Patterns | Frequency (situation) | Frequency (object) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) In-A <i>tastes</i> adj. | 0 | 3 (0.09) |
| 2) In-A <i>tastes</i> like | 0 | 3 (0.06) |
| 3) In-A <i>tastes</i> as if | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 5 (0.15) |

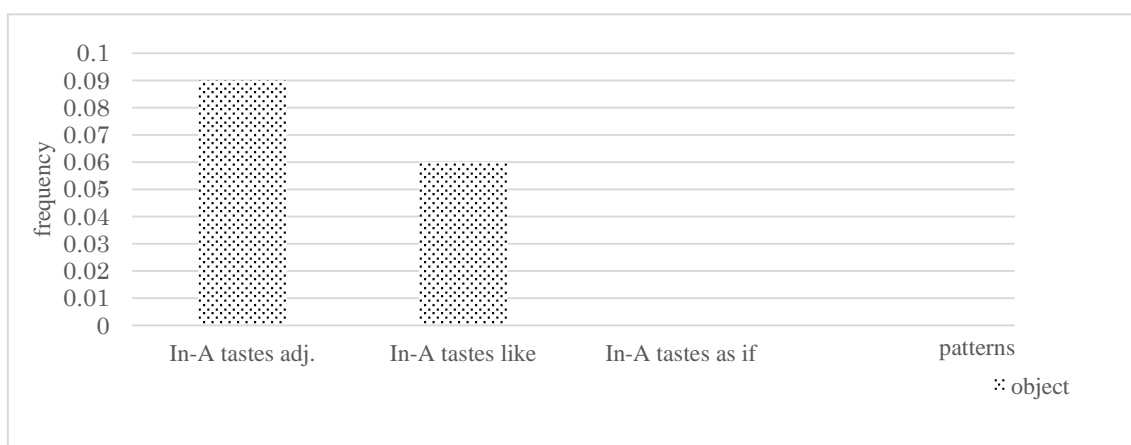


Figure 15. Types of referents of ellipped inanimate subjects in patterns with the verb *taste*: count per million (COHA)

The following are some example sentences where the implicit subjects refer to physical entities or objects.

- (50) Tastes like chicken. – Object
- (51) Tastes like anchovies. – Object
- (52) ...good texture and a nice balance of ripe grapes and oak. Tastes expensive. – Object
- (53) Let meat rest 5 to 10 minutes before digging in. Also tastes great with Homemade BBQ Sauce. – Object

In examples (50) and (51), the implicit subjects refer to physical objects or previously mentioned physical entities. The sentence in (52) is expressed in a metaphorical way but the implicit subject nevertheless refers to a previously mentioned physical entity or object. The subject in example (53) refers to a previously mentioned physical object, the meat.

6.5. Summary of Case Studies

Figure 16 illustrates the frequency (per million words) in *COHA* of perception verbs in SVC patterns in the 2000s. The frequency of patterns with subject ellipsis is shown in striped pattern and dotted pattern in each column of the graph. The verbs *feel*, *look* and *sound*, especially *look*, occurred more frequently in the 2000s compared to the verbs *smell* and *taste*.

According to the entire dataset for the case studies in §6.4, a higher proportion of the retrieved subject referents for the verbs *feel*, *look*, and *sound* refer to situations rather than objects; this can be seen in the striped and dotted areas at the top of each column in Figure 16, which indicate situation referents and object referents, respectively. This tendency is particularly striking with verbs that have a higher frequency of subject ellipsis, such as *look* and *sound*. These data suggest that subject ellipsis tends to occur in patterns with subjects that refer to situations rather than objects.

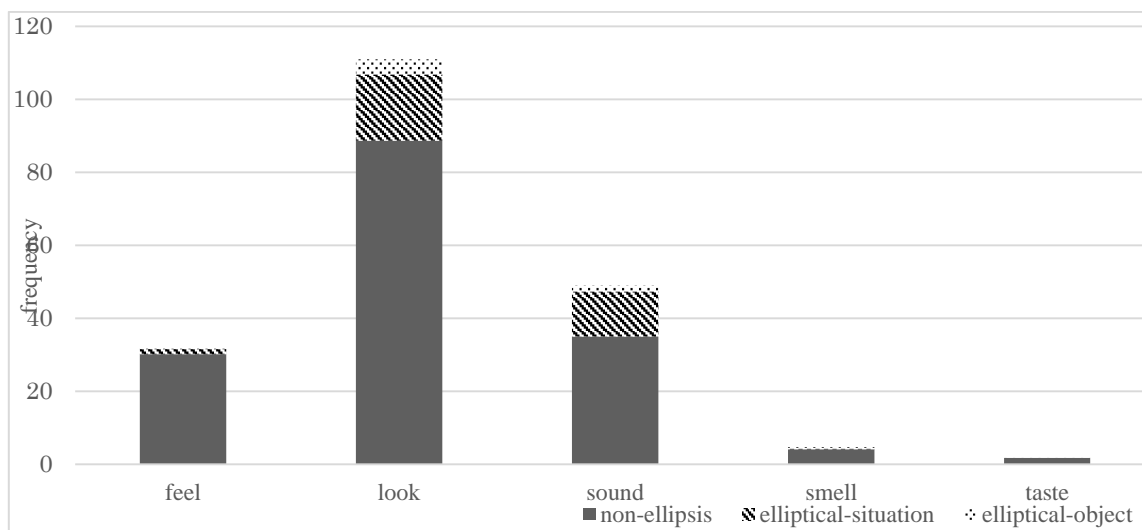


Figure 16. Frequency (per million words) of perception verbs in SVC patterns in the 2000s (COHA)

The case studies in §6.4 suggest that the lower referentiality of the subject is one of the factors that contributes to subject ellipsis. Earlier, I argued that subjects that refer to situations rather than physical objects have a lower referentiality in that the referent that the subject refers to is not a bounded or individuated entity. Similarly, “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011: 204) is not a bounded or individuated entity. It “represents non-delimitation” (Langacker 2011: 204) and also represents an “extreme case of vagueness” (Langacker 2011: 204)⁶. In other words, there is a commonality between abstract situations that subjects refer to and properties which impersonal *it* has in that both are not bounded or individuated entities or do not have concrete or physical referents. Therefore, I suggest that in such an abstract situation the amount of information that subjects have is smaller compared to cases where subjects refer to concrete or physical referents. Consequently, I consider less information to lead to an environment where subject ellipsis is more likely to occur.

The referents of the verbs *smell* and *taste* are mostly objects or physical entities, in contrast to those of the verbs *feel*, *look*, and *sound*. This study suggests that this difference is

⁶ Concerning “vagueness” (Langacker 2011: 204), see §5.7.

because of a matter of a distance between “the perceiver (PR)” and “the object perceived (OP)” (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999: 152).⁷ In patterns with the verbs *smell* and *taste*, there is a close distance between the PR and OP, while with other perception verbs, this distance is greater.

6.6. Conclusion

The results of the case studies in Chapter 6, on the verbs *feel*, *look*, and *sound*, demonstrated that the referents of ellipted inanimate subjects are mostly situations (rather than physical objects). Moreover, with the verbs *look* and *sound*, which have a higher frequency of subject ellipsis than other perception verbs, the retrieved subjects refer to a higher proportion of situations rather than objects. Judging from these tendencies, this study suggests that the lower referentiality of the subject is one of the factors contributing to subject ellipsis. In other words, when the subject does not refer to a physical entity (i.e. when it refers to an abstract situation), it can be said that referentiality of the subject is lower because the abstract situation is not a bounded or individuated entity. When a referent is an abstract situation, there is less information in the referent; this scarceness of information creates an environment where subject ellipsis is more likely to occur.

For future research, it would be valuable to analyze the relationship between subject ellipsis and the behavior of each perception verb compared to the other perception verbs (see Figure 16). For example, a higher proportion of ellipted subjects of the verb *feel* refer to situations, just as with the verbs *look* and *sound* (see Figure 3). However, the frequency of subject ellipsis (including subjects with both situation referents and object referents) is quite low compared to the total frequency of the verb *feel* (see Figure 16). In contrast, the verbs *look* and *sound* have a different tendency. These verbs have a higher ratio of subject ellipsis

⁷ The words “the perceiver (PR)” and “the object perceived (OP)” are used by Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999: 152) to classify properties of perception verbs in the “organization of 1st order properties in the sense modalities.”

compared to their entire frequency. This difference among those verbs should be investigated in future studies.

Chapter 7 Complement Structures of Verbs of Perception in Cases of Subject Ellipsis

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 7 aims to deal with the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information in a complement. The previous study suggests that subject ellipsis tends to occur less when the sentence as a whole is informative or conveys a large amount of information (Nariyama 2004, 2006). In order to verify this argument, this chapter investigates the complements of the verbs of perception *sound*, *feel*, and *look* in post-verbal position, that is, in structures of the sentence located after verbs. To gather the data, I used *COHA* and collected example sentences that occurred in the 2000s.

In the complement clauses of verbs of perception, I observe both cases where the verb of perception is followed by a phrase (e.g. *Sounds like a deal to us. (COHA)*) and where the verb is followed by a clause (e.g. *Sounds like he knows Jandy. (COHA)*). In these situations, the phrase is generally considered to convey a smaller amount of information while conversely the clause is considered to convey a larger amount of information¹ in that the former tends to have fewer words than the latter. This study subscribes to that idea. Moreover, this study attempts to reveal whether subject ellipsis occurs more often with complement clauses or complement phrases.

Results of the investigation in Chapter 6 revealed that subject ellipsis tended to occur when the referent of the subject was an abstract situation or when the subject was less informative.² Following that discussion, Chapter 7 discusses the hypothesis that subject ellipsis occurs more when a post-verbal complement is less informative.

¹ According to Carter and McCarthy (2006), the term *phrases* refer to “the constituents of clauses” (2006: 914). Therefore, clauses have more words and more information than phrases.

² See §6.5 in Chapter 6.

7.2. Data and Methods

This study discusses the type of complements of the perception verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look*. I collected 1000 examples of each verb from *COHA*. The reason I chose to use *COHA* rather than *COCA* is that the data from *COHA*³ used in Chapter 6 could also be used in Chapter 7. In this way, I would argue that more detailed information of each targeted sentence can be identified. All of the data are collected from texts that occurred in the 2000s.

Among the 1000 examples for each verb, I discuss the phrases *sounds like*, *sounds as if*, *feels like*, *feels as if*, *looks like*, *looks as if*, and *looks as though*. This study examines whether subject ellipsis tends to occur more with phrases or with clauses that are post-verbal complements. When a phrase occurs in post-verbal position, that sentence is less informative. In contrast, when a sentence has a clausal complement in post-verbal position, I categorized it as an informative sentence. Numbers in the parentheses in each table give the rates of occurrence of subject ellipsis out of the total token frequencies of each pattern.

7.3. Case Studies: Results

7.3.1. The Usage of *As If* / *As Though* and *Like*

Before I touch upon the results of the case studies, it is essential to understand characteristics of patterns with “verb + *as if/as though*” and those with “verb + *like*”, which are the focus of this investigation. To start with, I would like to see how patterns with “verb + *as if*” and “verb + *as though*” are used in cases of the perception verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look*. In perception verb patterns with “verb + *as if*” and “verb + *as though*”, the complement is usually a clause as shown in (1).

(1) a. Her head felt as if it would burst.

(Ando 2005: 49)

³ Some of the example sentences in *COHA* overlap with those in *COCA*.

- b. It felt as though they had already won the Quidditch Cup. (Ibid.)
- c. It sounds as if the government is going to fall. (Ando 2005: 50)
- d. Your cough sounds as though it's getting worse. (Ibid.)
- e. It looks as if/as though it's going to rain. (Ando 2005: 375)
- f. It looks as if you're right. (Ibid.)

In (1), a comparison of the pattern “verb + *as if*” with the pattern “verb + *as though*” does not reveal any great differences in their usage. Therefore, these two patterns are described as the same single item (i.e. “verb + *as if/as though*”), as shown in (1e), throughout this chapter. As seen in the example sentences in (1), the complements of perception verbs following the pattern “verb + *as if/as though*” consist of clauses.

Next, I turn to patterns with “verb + *like*” to observe how they are used in complement structures. For patterns with “verb + *like*”, the complements can be either phrases or clauses, as shown in Example (2).

- (2) a. It feels like rain. (Ando 2005: 49)
- b. It felt like an elephant had hit me in the guts. (Ando 2005: 50)
- c. That sounds like a great idea. (Ibid.)
- d. It sounds like you got a plenty of mileage. (COHA)
- e. It looks like simple memory. (Ibid.)
- f. It looks like he may be the victim of a hate crime. (Ibid.)

In Examples (2a), (2c), and (2e), the complement following “verb + *like*” in each sentence is a phrase. In Examples (2b), (2d), and (2f), the complement in each sentence is a clause. Judging from these example sentences, it seems that the complement of a perception verb can be either

a phrase or a clause following the pattern “verb + *like*”.

This study was originally intended to examine patterns *sounds like*, *sounds as if*, *feels like*, *feels as if*, *looks like*, *looks as if* and *looks as though*. However, this study focuses mainly on the pattern “verb + *like*” because the pattern “verb + *like*” can occur with either a phrase or a clause as the complement following the verb.

7.3.2. Case Study 1: *Sound*

Three separate case studies are conducted in §7.3.2, §7.3.3, and §7.3.4. The aim of these studies is to investigate whether the complements following “verb + *as if/as though*” and “verb + *like*” with the perception verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look* are phrases or clauses. Case Study 1 investigates *sounds as if*, *sounds as though*, *sounds just like*, and *sounds like*. Case Study 2 examines *feel as if/as though* and *feels like*. Case Study 3 focuses on *looks as if/as though* and *looks like*. In Case Study 1, the pattern *sounds just like* was observed, however, in Case Studies 2 and 3, the patterns *feels just like* and *looks just like* did not occur. Therefore, the patterns *feels just like* and *looks just like* are not described in Tables 2 and 3.

First, Case Study 1 investigates the grammatical patterns *sound as if* and *sound as though*. Table 1 illustrates the results of this investigation.

Table 1. Forms after the verb *sound* (COHA)

| | <i>sounds as if/as though</i> | <i>sounds just like, sounds like</i> |
|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| phrase | 0 | 64/211 (30.3%) |
| clause | 2/19 (11%) | 30/66 (45.4%) |

The results in Table 1 show that there are no cases where the complement following the patterns *sound as if* and *sound as though* is a phrase. In contrast, the complement was a clause

in 19 such cases in total. Out of these 19 instances, subject ellipsis occurred in 2 cases. In other words, subject ellipsis occurred in 11% of the patterns with *sounds as if* and *sounds as though* with a clause as the complement. Example (3) illustrates some of the sentences in which a clause follows *sounds as if* as the complement.

(3) a. Sounds as if those days are gone.

b. Sounds as if he was raised around people who actually used the word in everyday conversation.

(See Appendix B) (COHA)

In (3a), *sounds as if* is followed by the clause *those days are gone*. Similarly, in (3b), *sounds as if* is followed by the clause *he was raised around people who actually used the word in everyday conversation*.

Second, the following investigation in Case Study 1 examines the patterns *sound just like* and *sound like*. In Table 1, the cases of *sounds just like* and those of *sounds like* are combined together and counted as one category. The investigation found 211 cases of patterns followed by a post-verbal phrase as the complement. Out of these 211 instances, subject ellipsis occurred in 64 cases. This means that ellipsis occurred in 30.3% of the patterns with complement phrases following *sound just like* and *sound like*. The following examples illustrate both cases where the complement is a phrase, in (4a) and (4b), and cases where the complement is a clause, in (4c) and (4d).

(4) a. Sounds just like something.

b. Sounds like nonsense to me.

c. Sounds like Tony's got the bellyache.

d. Sounds like you guys are pretty friendly.

(See Appendix B) (COHA)

Third, the final investigation in Case Study 1 examines the same patterns, *sounds just like* and *sounds like*, in cases where the complement consists of a clause: 66 such cases were identified. Out of these 66 instances, subject ellipsis occurred in 30 cases. In other words, subject ellipsis occurred in 45.4% of the patterns *sounds just like* and *sounds like* with a clause as the complement.

In summary, I will compare the percentage of subject ellipsis in cases where the complements are phrases versus clauses. Needless to say, since the patterns *sound as if* and *sounds as though* did not occur with phrases as complements, their rate of subject ellipsis cannot be compared to that of the same patterns with clauses as complements. However, focusing on the rate of ellipsis among the patterns *sounds just like* and *sounds like*, ellipsis occurs at a higher relative frequency in patterns with complements that are clauses (i.e. 45.4%) than in patterns with complements that are phrases (i.e. 30.3%).

7.3.3. Case Study 2: *Feel*

Similarly to Case Study 1, 1000 instances of patterns with the verb *feel* were identified. Within the 1000 cases of the verb *feel*, the three patterns *feels as if*, *feels as though*, and *feels like* were chosen for the focus of this study. First, Case Study 2 investigates whether the complements following the patterns *feel as if* and *feel as though* are phrases or clauses. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms after the verb *feel* (COHA)

| | <i>feels as if/as though</i> | <i>feels like</i> |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| phrase | 0 | 5/80 (6%) |
| clause | 0/27 | 6/34 (18%) |

According to Table 2, there were no instances of the patterns *feels as if* and *feels as though* with a phrase as the complement. In contrast, there were 27 instances of those patterns with a clause as the complement, but no subject ellipsis occurred among them.

The pattern *feels like* occurred 80 times with a phrase as the complement. Out of these, subject ellipsis occurred in 5 cases. This means that subject ellipsis occurred in 6% of *feels like* patterns with a phrase as the complement. Some examples are shown in (5).

- (5) a. Feels like sweat slipping beneath my breast.
 b. Feels like coming home, doesn't it?
 c. Feels like it days since you've been home but it has probably only been two or three hours. (= (3) in Chapter 1) (COHA)

The pattern *feels like* occurred 34 times with a clause as the complement. Out of these, subject ellipsis occurred in 6 cases (or 18%). Thus, the findings show that subject ellipsis tends to occur at a higher relative frequency with complements that are clauses (18%) than with complements that are phrases (6%) following the pattern *feels like*. The following sentences are some examples of *feels like* with complements that are clauses.

- (6) a. Feels like a dog's lickin⁴ you. (= §6.4.1.3 (12))
 b. Feels like he misses a beat as he loads one shell into chamber.
 c. Feels like my arm's about to fall off. (COHA)

In summary, subject ellipsis with the pattern *feels like* occurred more often with complements that were clauses (18%) than with complements that were phrases (6%).

⁴ *Licking* is abbreviated as *lickin* in (6a).

7.3.4. Case Study 3: *Look*

Once again, as with the two previous case studies, 1000 patterns with the verb *look* were identified. The three patterns *looks like*, *looks as if*, and *look as though* were chosen for the focus of this study since these patterns, too, can be followed by either a phrase or a clause. First, Case Study 3 investigates whether the patterns *looks as if* or *looks as though* are followed by phrases or clauses. Table 3 gives the results.

Table 3. Forms after the verb *look* (COHA)

| | <i>looks as if/as though</i> | <i>looks like</i> |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| phrase | 0 | 15/104 (14%) |
| clause | 1/17 (6%) | 20/53 (38%) |

The results in Table 3 show that there were no instances of the patterns *look as if* or *look as though* with a phrase as the complement. In contrast, there were 17 cases of those patterns with a clause as the complement, and out of these, subject ellipsis occurred in 1 case. This means that subject ellipsis occurred in 6% of cases where a complement clause follows *looks as if* or *looks as though*. An example is given in (7).

(7) Looks as if being a bachelor will pay off for him on all fronts.

(= (4) in Chapter 1) (See Appendix B) (COHA)

In contrast the pattern *looks like* occurred 104 times with post-verbal complements that were phrases. Among these 104 instances, subject ellipsis occurred in 15 cases (or 14%). Some examples are given in (8).

(8) a. Looks like the same thing.

b. Looks like a bad dream.

c. Looks like a tunnel.

(See Appendix B) (COHA)

As seen in Table 3, the pattern *looks like* occurred 53 times with post-verbal complements that were clauses. Out of these 53 instances, subject ellipsis occurred in 20 cases (or 38%). Some examples are given in (9).

(9) a. Looks like they are soft.

b. Looks like we've got a few things to talk about.

c. Looks like I'd better get here early tomorrow for a good seat.

(See Appendix B) (COHA)

To sum up, subject ellipsis with the pattern *looks like* occurred more often with complements that were clauses (38%) than with complements that were phrases (14%).

7.3.5. Summary of Case Studies

Three case studies were conducted in order to investigate the relationship between subject ellipsis and the complement structure of perception verbs, or more specifically, the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information in the complement. To that end, the data were examined to determine whether elliptical sentences occurred more often with post-verbal complements that are phrases or with those that are clauses. Case Study 1 investigated the patterns *sounds as if*, *sounds as though*, *sounds just like*, and *sounds like*. Case Study 2 examined the patterns *feel as if*, *feels as though*, and *feels like*. Case Study 3 focused on the patterns *looks as if*, *looks as though*, and *looks like*.

The case studies found that the rate of subject ellipsis was higher when the complement was a clause (rather than a phrase) following the patterns *sounds like*, *feels like*, and *looks like*. It was not possible to compare complements that were clauses versus phrases, however, for the other patterns (*sounds as if*, *sounds as though*, *feels as if*, *feels as though*, *looks as if*, and *looks as though*), because these patterns did not occur with complements that were phrases in *COHA*.

Figure 1 presents the results of the investigation of *sounds like*, *feels like*, and *looks like*. The graph focuses on these three patterns because they have data for both complement phrases and clauses, unlike the patterns verb + *as if* or verb + *as though*, which are not shown on the graph.

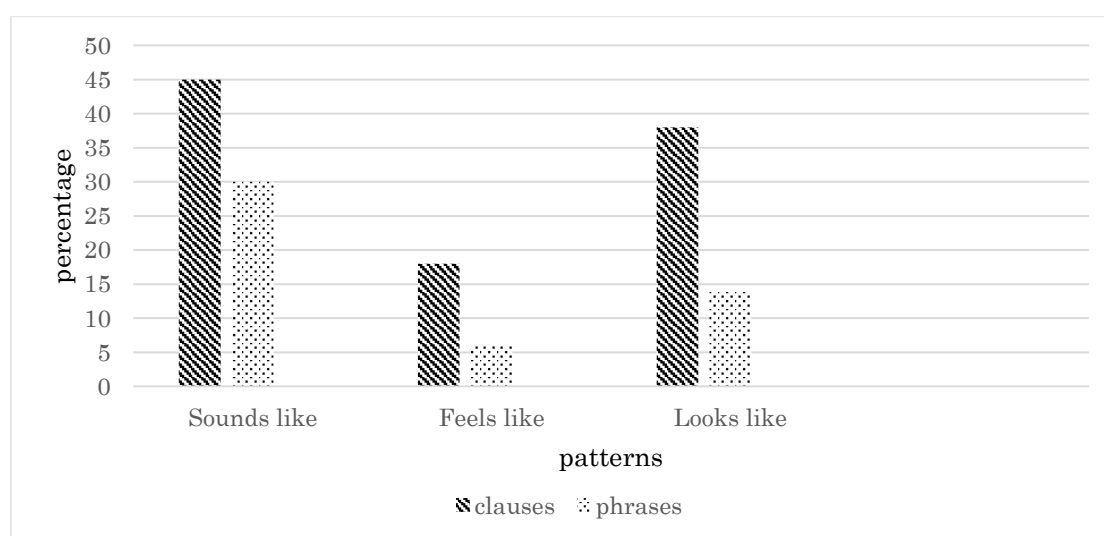


Figure 1. The relationship between subject ellipsis and patterns after the verb (*Sounds like*, *Looks like*, and *Feels like* in the 2000s, *COHA*)

Figure 1 shows that subject ellipsis occurs relatively more frequently with complement clauses than with complement phrases among the three patterns *sounds like*, *looks like*, and *feels like*. The pattern *sounds like* exhibited subject ellipsis with 45.4% of complement clauses and with 30.3% of complement phrases. The pattern *feels like* displayed subject ellipsis with

18% of clauses and 6% of phrases. Subject ellipsis occurred with the pattern *looks like* in 38% of cases with clauses and in 14% of cases with phrases. These findings demonstrate that subject ellipsis tends to occur at a relatively higher rate in patterns with complements that are clauses compared to those that are phrases. In §7.4, I discuss why this grammatical pattern occurs.

7.4. Discussion

7.4.1. The Relationship between Subject Ellipsis and the Amount of Information in a Complement

Two points were found as a result of the three case studies concerning the amount of information in the complement. First, the results showed that a lower amount of information in the complement does not seem to be a factor contributing to subject ellipsis. This result differs from the findings in Chapter 6. In Chapter 6, a correlation was identified between subjects that refer to abstract situations and subject ellipsis. Consequently, in Chapter 6 I argued that subjects with a lower amount of the information may be a factor contributing to subject ellipsis.⁵

Therefore, in Chapter 7, I hypothesized that subject ellipsis occurred more when the complement was less informative as well. However, contrary to this expectation, the opposite result was found. The case studies in §7.3 demonstrated that subject ellipsis occurred more with complements that were clauses, in which the amount of the information was higher.

This phenomenon can be explained grammatically in terms of the inversion of clauses. When the post-verbal complement is itself a clause, the sentence is then a complex sentence consisting of a main clause and a subordinate clause. Clause inversion is considered to have

⁵ See §6.5 for more detail about the relationship between the amount of information conveyed by subjects and subject ellipsis.

occur when the content of the subordinate clause is more important to a speaker or a writer than that of the main clause. Furthermore, regarding subject ellipsis, when clause reversal occurs, the original subject of the main clause can be omitted because there is a decreased need for this subject to be expressed.

This phenomenon can be explained from the perspective of cognitive linguistics by discussing it with respect to the theory of “the change in focus” (Langacker 1999: 301) which points to the attenuation included in the process of subjectification (Langacker 1999: 298-301). The clause reversal and subjectification processes are described in detail in later sections.

The second point found by the case studies was that the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information must be studied by considering the amount of information from each clause separately, i.e. by looking at the amounts of information in the main clause versus the subordinate clause. In other words, it is not useful to consider the volume of information conveyed by the entire sentence all at once; it must be recognized from each clause separately.

7.4.2. The Reversal between the Main Clause and Subordinate Clause from a Grammatical Perspective

7.4.2.1. Tag Questions

In §7.4.1, I mentioned the relationship between subject ellipsis and clause reversal. In this section, I further discuss the reason subject ellipsis occurs more with complement clauses than with complement phrases.

Earlier I suggested that clause reversal occurs when the content in the subordinate

clause becomes more important than that of the main clause.⁶ As a result, the original subordinate clause becomes the main clause and the original main clause becomes the subordinate clause. Amid this reversal of clauses, there is a diminished need for the subject in the new subordinate clause (originally the subject in the main clause) to be expressed explicitly. Under these circumstances, the original main clause seems to gain the function of a kind of adverb, such as *seemingly* or *apparently*.

In order to examine clause reversal in more detail, §7.4.2.1 focuses on examples of tag questions collected from *COHA* and §7.4.2.2 focuses on so-called ‘inverted sentences’ or cases of what I refer to as clause reversal, where the main clause and the subordinate clause reverse roles with each other.

First, focusing on the subject in tag questions, some examples of clause reversal are given, in (10) and (11).

(10) Looks like she’d be Andy with her fists, don’t she? (COHA)

(11) Looks like she’d had a day in the country, don’t she, Jem? (Ibid.)

Generally, the subject in the tag question corresponds to the subject in the main clause. However, in Examples (10) and (11), in which subject ellipsis occurs, the subjects in the tag questions correspond to the subjects in the subordinate clauses, not to the subjects in the main clauses. This irregularity can presumably be attributed to the reversal of roles of the main and subordinate clauses.

In Examples (10) and (11), the pattern *looks like* is the main clause and *she’d...* is the subordinate clause. In those examples, the omitted subject in the main clause is considered to

⁶ As for the word order change of *I think* S+V to S+V, *I think*, Thompson and Mulac (1991: 315) suggest that in such cases “where the embedded clause loses much of its embeddedness, its subject, rather than the main clause subject, tends to be the topic of the discourse, and its content, rather than that of the main clause, tends to be what the writer is endorsing”.

be *it*.⁷ Corresponding to this retrieved main clause subject *it*, the subject in the tag question should normally also be *it*. However, the subject *she* in the tag question instead seems to correspond to the subject *she* in the subordinate clause. This behavior is due to the reversal of the main and subordinate clauses: presumably the clause which was originally the subordinate clause has come to possess the role of the main clause through clause reversal.

The correspondence in Examples (10) and (11) between the subjects in the subordinate clause and the subjects in the tag question demonstrates that clause reversal occurred in those instances. I suggest here that in such cases, this may be because the importance of the subject has decreased, and that has increased the tendency for subject ellipsis to occur.

7.4.2.2. Inverted Sentences

In this section, I focus on ‘inverted’ sentences or clause reversal, with the goals of identifying evidence that clause reversal has occurred and demonstrating that the original main clause *looks like* is therefore treated as a discourse marker. The following are some examples with *looks like*.

(12) Going to be a big one, looks like. (COHA)

(13) We’re heading for a storm, looks like. (Ibid.)

In (12), the clause *looks like*, which was originally a main clause, and another clause *going to be a big one*, which should be a subordinate clause, are inverted. In this respect, it is possible to say that Example (12) is an inverted sentence. Furthermore, the subject has been eliminated from the clause *looks like*. This is presumably because the role of the subject has weakened

⁷ It is possible that the omitted subject is either *she* or *it*, because the third person -s is added to *look*. However, I have determined the omitted subject to be *it*, judging from the discourse in *COHA*, and based on advice from a native American-English-speaking teacher.

and this resulted in clause reversal or these processes might have occurred simultaneously. Subject ellipsis then occurs because of the decreased need for the subject. Last, it seems that *looks like* has come to function as a kind of adverb, such as *seemingly* or *apparently*, or as a kind of a discourse marker.

In addition, Example (13) shows a similar behavior to that of Example (12). I consider the original sentence to possibly be *(It) looks like we're heading for a storm*, and I would suggest that it changes to *We're heading for a storm, looks like (COHA)*. Similarly to Example (12), I consider that when the sentences are inverted, the subject in the clause *looks like* tends to be omitted or these processes tends to occur simultaneously.

Judging from Examples (12) and (13), the pattern *looks like* + SV seems to have the tendency for the main and subordinate clauses to be inverted.⁸ At the same time, in (12), both the subject in the main clause and the subject in the subordinate clause are omitted, while in (13), only the subject in the original main clause is omitted. Thus, these examples demonstrate that there is a correlation between subject ellipsis and inverted sentences⁹.

7.4.2.3. Epistemic Parentheticals

In §7.4.2.2, the reversal between the main and subordinate clauses that occurs with *looks like* was explored. This phenomenon is similar to the role of the verb *think* as an “epistemic parenthetical” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). Some examples that illustrate “epistemic parentheticals” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313) are given below.

(14) I think that the coup was planned by the CIA. (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 208)

(15) I think Commander Dagleish writes poetry. (Ibid.)

⁸ In this respect, the pattern *looks like* + SV might differ from the patterns *sounds like* + SV and *feels like* + SV, because these two patterns did not occur with inverted sentences in the data for this study.

⁹ Hopper and Traugott (2003: 207) use the phrase, “from main clause construction to sentential adverb”.

In (14) and (15), Comparing the sentence with the *that*-clause in (14) with the sentence with an epistemic parenthetical in (15), Hopper and Traugott (2003: 208) mention that when the verb *think* with the subject *I* or *you* is followed by a *that*- clause (as in (14)), *think* is the main verb of the entire sentence and that verb expresses the assertion of the entire sentence.

In contrast, in Example (15), Hopper and Traugott (2003: 208) propose that “the main verb is *writes*, and the sentence is a (qualified) assertion about an activity of *Commander Dalglish*, not about the state of mind of the speaker”. That is, in Example (15), the verb *think* just has the role of qualifying the assertion in the clause that follows. In other words, the assertion in the subordinate clause can be said to be more important than the one in the main clause. Hopper and Traugott (2003: 208) suggest that when the verb *think* has a function of serving to qualify an assertion, it is called a “parenthetical”.

There is a certain commonality between the behavior of epistemic parentheticals and that of *looks like* in Examples (10) and (11). That is, in the epistemic parentheticals and in the *looks like* pattern, the importance of the main and subordinate clauses are reversed without the actual syntagmatic order of the clauses being reversed. In other words, when the content of the subordinate clause becomes more important, the subject and the verb in the main clause become less important. In this respect, it can be said that the *looks like* pattern behaves similarly to an epistemic parenthetical.

Example (16), is another type of epistemic parenthetical. Example (16) is similar to Example (15) in terms of having no *that*-complementizer expressed.

(16) What’s the point of that, do you think? (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 208)

Hopper and Traugott (2003: 208) suggest that “when it is parenthetical, *I think* (or *do you*

think) [as in (16)] is less certain than when it is non-parenthetical” and *I think* functions as an adverb such as *evidently* or *apparently*. This phenomenon with *I think* is similar to that of *looks like* having gained the function of a discourse marker, as shown in Examples (12) and (13). What Examples (12) and (13) have in common with Example (16) is that after the clause reversal, the original main clause has come to function as an adverb and to play the role of a discourse marker.

7.4.2.4. Function of *Looks Like*

In addition to the points made in §7.4.2.3, this section raises another point about the adverbial function of *looks like*. In §7.4.2.3, I suggested that the original main clause (i.e. *looks like*) had come to function as an adverb. However, strictly speaking, it should be said that the original main clause (i.e. *looks like*) had come to function adverbially. The reason is that if the clause *looks like* has exactly the same function as an adverb, then the clause *looks like* should be able to appear at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence. Biber et al. (1999: 770-771) suggest that “an important characteristic of adverbials is that they can occur in a variety of positions in a clause. Four major positions can be distinguished, with some positions including more than one variant”. These four major positions are “initial”, “medial”, “final”, and “in another speaker’s main clause” (Biber et al. 1999: 771). However, *looks like* does not in fact appear in the middle of any sentences according to the data from *COHA*. That is, considering that *looks like* tends to be located at the end of a sentence along with at the beginning of the sentence, I suggest that *looks like* has an adverbial role, and especially characteristics of locating at the end of the sentence.

There are similar characteristics between *look like* being located at the end of the sentence and *shujyoshi* or sentence-final particle in Japanese. Here, I should confirm what I mean by *shujyoshi* or sentence-final particle. According to the definition of the term *shujyoshi*

or sentence-final particle in the *Meikyo Japanese Electronic Dictionary*, a sentence-final particle “is located at the end of a sentence and conveys the meanings of imperative prohibition, question, wish, emotion, emphasis, or irony [Translated by Shibata]”. For example, the Japanese word *kedo*¹⁰ plays the “roles of conjunction and sentence-final particle [Translated by Shibata]” (Odani 2003: 7) (e.g. *Watashi wa Sore o Tabetai kedo.* or *I want to eat it, though.*). This study considers the function of sentence-final *look like* to be partly similar to that of the sentence-final particle *kedo* in that both *look like* and *kedo* have come to gain an adverbial function and are located at the end of a sentence. Therefore, as I suggested earlier, I propose that the clause *looks like* also functions in an adverbial way as a discourse marker (see Appendix C), which includes the similar function to a sentence-final particle in Japanese.

¹⁰ The Japanese word *kedo* originally functions as an adversative conjunction. However, Odani (2003) observes that *kedo* can also be used in a different way besides the adversative conjunction and that usage of *kedo* is related to the process of subjectification. The following are some examples (Odani 2003: 85)

- (a) “My husband also said, though (*kedo*). You are a really good pair, you two”.
(Akagawa Jiro, “Cheers for a woman president”: 444)
- (b) “Oh, Mie, What’s the matter?”
“I have something to talk about, though (*kedo*)”. (Akagawa Jiro, “Cheers for a woman president”: 279)
[Translated by Shibata]

Odani (2003: 85) argues that *kedo* (*though*) in Example (a) does not include the meaning of an adversative conjunction, but functions to refer to the first sentence (i.e. *My husband also said*) in order to create a topical background. In Example (b), Odani suggests that *kedo* (*though*) is completely backgrounded. In other words, the functions of *kedo* in Examples (a) and (b) are extended to the introduction of the topic, unlike *kedo* with the original meaning of a contrastive relationship, when used as the adversative conjunction. Odani (2003: 85) argues that “the function of *kedo*, which was originally that of an adversative conjunction (meaning reversal), has changed to that of marking contrast or introducing the topic, and suggests that this change is related to the process of subjectification [Translated by Shibata]” (Langacker 1990, 1999).

In summary, concerning the transition of the meaning of *kedo*, Odani (2003: 85-92) suggests that *kedo* originally appeared as a conjunction with the meaning of reversal, however, as time has gone by, another function of *kedo* has appeared. It can now occur at the end of a sentence. Furthermore, Odani (2003: 91) noted that “the sentence-final particle of *kedo* possesses the element of modality” and also Odani (2003) mentions that from the viewpoint of the pragmatics, it gains a function of *hedge* that is, a kind of *politeness marker* or a kind of discourse marker.

7.4.3. The Reversal between the Main Clause and Subordinate Clause from a Conceptual Perspective

In §7.4.2, I discussed clause reversal from a grammatical perspective. However, it is also essential to analyze it from a conceptual point of view.

As mentioned earlier, in Examples (10) and (11) (e.g. *Looks like she'd be Andy with her fists, don't she?* and *Looks like she'd had a day in the country, don't she, Jem?*) the subject in the tag question is considered to be *it*, since subjects in tag questions generally correspond to subjects in main clauses. Nevertheless, in those examples, the main clause subject *she* is actually also the subject in the tag question.

In this section, I would like to consider the reversal of main and subordinate clauses conceptually. This study suggests that clause reversal can be considered from the theoretical perspective of *subjectification*. Again, let us observe how the main clause (i.e. the Figure) and the subordinate clause (i.e. the Ground¹¹) are reversed in Example (10) from §7.4.2.1. If the sentence in Example (10) were to have a tag question subject that corresponded to the main clause subject, it would look like the following.

(17) Looks like she'd be Andy with her fists, doesn't it? (COHA)

In (17), the clause *Looks like* is considered to be the main clause and *she'd be Andy with her fists* is the subordinate clause. In this case, *looks like*, that is, the main clause (i.e. Figure) is foregrounded and *she'd be Andy with her fists*, that is, the subordinate clause (i.e. Ground) is backgrounded. The subject of the tag question usually corresponds with that of the main clause (i.e., in this hypothetical case, *it*).

¹¹ According to Tsuji (2009: 128), “the main clause and the subordinate clause in complex sentences correspond to Figure and Ground respectively [Translated by Shibata]”.

Nevertheless, in Example (10), as mentioned several times, the subject of the tag question is *she* rather than *it*. In other words, clause reversal has occurred between *she'd be Andy with her fists* (i.e. the original subordinate clause) and *looks like* (i.e. the original main clause). Consequently, the clause *she'd be Andy with her fists* has become the main clause (i.e. Figure). At the same time, the clause *looks like* has become the subordinate clause (i.e. Ground). The profiled part has thus shifted from the main clause to the subordinate clause; this phenomenon is consistent with that of “the change in *focus*” (Langacker 1999: 301), one of the four types of attenuation suggested by Langacker (1999: 301-302). In other words, I suggest that one of the types of attenuation in subjectification, has occurred between the main clause¹² and the subordinate clause in the complement structure of the pattern *looks like*.

7.5. Conclusion

The present chapter discussed the complement structures of perception verbs in cases of subject ellipsis. To be more concrete, this chapter investigated whether subject ellipsis occurs less often when sentences have larger amounts of information. The investigation focused on the grammatical patterns of the verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look*. I considered the amount of information to be smaller in post-verbal complements that were phrases, and larger in those that were clauses. I then hypothesized that subject ellipsis tends to occur more often when the complement has a smaller amount of information. That hypothesis was based on the results of the investigation in Chapter 6 regarding subject referents, which showed that subject ellipsis occurred more often when the volume of the information of the subject referent was smaller. Therefore the hypothesis in Chapter 7 predicted a similar tendency to that of Chapter 6. In

¹² As for sentences where the word order change from *I think S+V* to *S+V, I think* has occurred, Thompson and Mulac (1991:315) suggest that the importance of the subject has been diminished. The pattern *looks like* at the end of the sentence (e.g. *We're heading for a storm, looks like.*) (COHA) can be considered to behave in a similar way.

fact, however, entirely different results were revealed. Three major conclusions about the pattern *looks like* were drawn as follows.

First, this study found that subject ellipsis with *looks like* was more likely to occur when the complement consisted of a clause, rather than a phrase. This result was contrary to the hypothesis described earlier. In other words, the results suggested that the amount of information in a post-verbal complement is not a factor contributing to subject ellipsis.

The finding that subject ellipsis occurred more often when the complement was a clause, rather than a phrase, can be grammatically explained as follows. The main clause and the subordinate clause in the complex sentence are reversed. With this clause reversal, there is a decreased need for the subject originally in the main clause to be overtly expressed. That process has thus led to subject ellipsis. Or subject ellipsis might occur simultaneously with this decreased need for expressing the subject.

It is possible to explain the reversal of the main clause (i.e. Figure) and the subordinate clause (i.e. Ground) by relating it to the process of “subjectification” (Langacker 1999: 301). The reversal corresponds with “the change in *focus*” (Langacker 1999: 301) one of the types of attenuation¹³ in subjectification.

Furthermore, the behavior of the clause *looks like*, which should originally function as the main clause, but which has changed to be able to occur at the end of a sentence, is similar to the behavior of an “epistemic parenthetical” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). Just like an epistemic parenthetical, the clause *looks like* seems to function as a discourse marker in elliptical sentences.

The second finding of this study was that, in ellipted sentences, the amount of information in each clause must be judged separately (in the main clause and in the

¹³ Regarding, “attenuation”, see §4.2.2 in Chapter 4. “Change in *focus*” is one of “attenuation” (Langacker 1999) in subjectification process.

subordinate clause), rather than judging the amount of information in the entire sentence at once.

Last, the investigation showed that subject ellipsis with the verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look* occurred with the patterns *sounds like*, *feels like*, and *looks like*, but rarely occurred with the patterns *as if* or *as though*, regardless of whether they were followed by phrases or clauses. This means that in general subject ellipsis may occur less often with rather formal expressions such as *as if* or *as though*.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study has been to unravel the mechanism of how subject ellipsis occurs in sentences with inanimate subjects, including the subject *it*. In previous studies, several factors that contribute to subject ellipsis have been discussed mainly from a pragmatic viewpoint. Some of the problems (see Chapter 3), especially concerning inanimate subjects including the subject *it*, remained unsolved. Therefore, this study has tried to address those problems through the theoretical framework of “subjectification” and “referentiality” from the perspectives of both semantics and pragmatics. The final goal of this study is to discover the factors contributing to subject ellipsis from both pragmatic and semantic perspectives.

To that end, I have conducted several case studies using corpora and I analyzed mainly from a semantic view. The following are the three main problems investigated by the present study; their solutions and results are also briefly mentioned.

First, although it has been suggested that there is a tendency¹ for subject ellipsis to occur with mental process verbs and perceptions verbs (Nariyama 2004, Carter and McCarthy 2006), especially with percept verbs rather than with activity verbs, the reason for this phenomenon has not been explicitly identified by previous studies.

In order to address this problem, this study chose the verb *feel* among five perception verbs as the object of investigation since the verb *feel* behaves differently from the other four perception verbs.² In Chapter 5, this study examined changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* chronologically using corpus data from *COCA*. The results showed that the patterns have changed mainly from the SVO to the SVC type. Subsequently, the chapter

¹ This tendency was also partly confirmed by case studies in this thesis.

² The peculiarities of the behavior of the verb *feel* are mentioned in Chapter 5.

investigated the relationship between subject ellipsis and changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* throughout the decades from the 1800s to the 2000s. The findings showed that subject ellipsis tended to occur more in sentences with percept verbs over time. A close examination of the data revealed that the process of subjectification, where the conceptualizer was not explicitly expressed occurred in patterns with percept verbs.

Second, the majority of previous studies on factors leading to subject ellipsis have focused on subject ellipsis occurring mainly with the subjects *I* and *you* (e.g, Nariyama 2004, Carter and McCarthy 2006), while those studies paid little attention to subject ellipsis with inanimate subjects such as *it*. For example, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 185) fell short of a clear explanation of the relationship between subject ellipsis of inanimate subjects such as *it*, suggesting only that sentence-initial *it* is “unnecessary when the referent is obvious”.

In response to this situation, this study examined the question of why subject ellipsis tends to occur with inanimate subjects such as *it*. The analysis found that there was a relationship between that phenomenon and the process of subjectification. Subsequently, this study also investigated the relationship between subject ellipsis and the type of subject referent, that is, whether the subject refers to a physical object or an abstract situation. The results showed that subject ellipsis occurred more with subjects that referred to abstract situations rather than physical objects. Subjects that refer to abstract situations rather than physical objects have a lower referentiality in that the subject referents are not bounded or individuated entities. In other words, the findings suggested that subject ellipsis tended to occur more when the referentiality of the subject was lower.

Third, to date, previous studies on factors that contribute to subject ellipsis have focused largely on subjects located in preverbal positions; they have rarely focused on what follows the verb, that is, the complements after verbs. Unlike previous studies, this study investigated the relationship between subject ellipsis and complement structures, especially in

terms of the informativeness of the complement.

Focusing on the amount of the information in post-verbal position in elliptical sentences, the present study investigated patterns in the complements of the perception verbs *sound*, *feel*, and *look* occurring in the 2000s in *COHA*. This research was based on the assumption that the amount of the information is usually lower in phrases than in clauses.³ The results showed that there was a tendency for subject ellipsis to occur more when the complement was a clause than when the complement was a phrase. This means that there was not a clear relationship between subject ellipsis and a lower amount of information conveyed by the complement. In addition to that result, this research showed that the informativeness of sentences should be observed separately, not by examining an entire sentence but by considering the main clause and the subordinate clause separately from each other.

8.1. Summary of the Study

8.1.1. Part 1: Subject Ellipsis in English

This study has been composed of two parts. Part I has consisted of the four chapters from Chapter 1 to 4 while Part II has also consisted of four chapters, from Chapter 5 to 8. Part I considered subject ellipsis in English from a pragmatic point of view.

Chapter 1 outlined the scope of the study and introduced types of subject ellipsis, the definition of subject ellipsis, and the effects of subject ellipsis, presenting the small scale of research I conducted.

In Chapter 2, previous studies on ellipsis were presented. To date, factors contributing to subject ellipsis have largely been discussed from a pragmatic perspective. To be more precise, most previous studies have proposed that factors contributing to subject ellipsis may include the context, cohesion, conversation style, the law of least effort, co-occurrence with

³ See Footnote 1 in Chapter 7.

fixed expressions, variation of verbs, variation of subjects, informativeness of the sentence, and turn-taking.

In Chapter 3, I took up some of the factors leading to subject ellipsis presented in Chapter 2 and examined whether or not those factors, suggested by previous researchers, contributed to subject ellipsis. I conducted four case studies on the following factors: conversation style, co-occurrence with fixed expressions, variation of verbs, and variation of subjects. The end of the chapter noted some problems with previous studies.

Chapter 4 presented two major theoretical frameworks in which this study was situated. This study took up the theories of the process of “subjectification” and of “referentiality”. Among the theories of the subjectification process proposed by several researchers, this study mainly focused on the theory of subjectification suggested by Langacker (1990, 1991, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2009, and 2011). Particularly, it focused on one of the types of attenuation in subjectification, that is, “change in *focus*”⁴ (Langacker 1999: 301). Subsequently, I discussed the theory of “referentiality” because I assumed a certain relationship between subject ellipsis and the type of subject referent. I adopted the explanation of “referentiality” as defined by Payne (2011: 365), that is, “an entity is objectively referential if it exists as a bounded, individuated entity on the discourse stage”.

8.1.2. Part II: A Semantic Approach to Subject Ellipsis in English

Part II investigated and discussed problems of subject ellipsis in English using a semantic approach. In Chapter 5, three case studies were conducted in order to observe the relationship between subject ellipsis and subjectification, focusing on one of the perception

⁴ Langacker (1999: 301-302) suggests that in the subjectification process, at least four kinds of attenuation can be observed: “change in *status*”, “change in *focus*”, “shift in *domain*”, and “change in the *locus of activity or potency*”. Among them, this study focused on the “change in *focus*” (see §4.2.2 in Chapter 4).

verbs, *feel*. In Case Study 1, a historical corpus, the *OED*, was used in order to investigate changes in patterns with the verb *feel*. The results of the investigation revealed that several patterns exhibited a tendency toward subjectification. Moreover, changes in patterns with the verb *feel* were compared with those with the verb *look* (Fukada 2001) to analyze whether the latter had any influence on the former. I observed that the two verbs had a relatively similar tendency of changes in their patterns. Case Study 2 investigated changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* between the 1800s and the 2000s using *COHA*. The results revealed the tendency of these patterns mainly changing from SVO types to SVC types over time. Case Study 3 examined the relationship between subject ellipsis and changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel*. The findings showed that subject ellipsis tended to occur more frequently with patterns with inanimate subjects including such as *it*. Furthermore, among those patterns, subject ellipsis especially tended to occur with “impersonal *it*”⁵ (Langacker 2011: 204).

Chapter 6 pursued the relationship between subject ellipsis and the referentiality of the subject through five case studies using *COHA*, which focused on the SVC-type perception verbs *feel*, *look*, *sound*, *smell*, and *taste*. The case studies examined whether omitted subjects referred to animate referents or inanimate referents. The results revealed that subject ellipsis tended to occur more with inanimate subjects than with animate subjects.

The case studies also looked at the omitted inanimate subjects that occurred in the data to investigate whether they referred to physical objects or abstract situations or events. The results showed that subject ellipsis tended to occur more with subjects that referred to abstract situations or events rather than physical objects. Abstract situations and events have a lower referentiality than physical objects in that the subject referent is not a bounded or individuated entity. Likewise, “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011: 204) is not a bounded or individuated

⁵ For the definition of “impersonal *it*” (Langacker 2011: 204), see Footnote 4 in Chapter 6.

entity and “represents non-delimitation” and an “extreme case of vagueness” (Langacker 2011: 204). That is to say, there is a commonality between subjects that refer to abstract situations and impersonal *it* in terms of not referring to bounded or individuated entities or not having concrete referents. The amount of information that abstract subjects convey is smaller than that of subjects with concrete referents. Therefore, I have suggested that this smaller amount of information leads to a situation in which subject ellipsis is more likely to occur.

Chapter 7 focused on the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information in the post-verbal complement. The aim of Chapter 7 was to confirm the general view that subject ellipsis is less likely to occur when there is a greater amount of information conveyed by a sentence (Nariyama 2006). This chapter investigated patterns with *sound*, *feel*, and *look* occurring in the 2000s in *COHA*. The results showed a tendency for subject ellipsis to occur often more when the complement conveyed a larger amount of information. To explain these findings grammatically, I proposed that inversion between the main clause and the subordinate clause had occurred in some cases. From a cognitive perspective, I suggested that this phenomenon corresponds to one of the types of attenuation in the process of subjectification, that is, a “change in *focus*” (Langacker 1999: 301-302).

8.2. Theoretical Implications

8.2.1. Implications for Perception Verbs

In this thesis, I conducted several case studies in order to identify factors that contribute to subject ellipsis in sentences with perception verbs. The investigations were based on two tables (Viberg 1984: 125, Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999:45) (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1. The basic paradigm of the verbs of perception in English (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999:45)

| SENSE MODALITY | EXPERIENCE | ACTIVITY | PERCEPT |
|----------------|------------|-------------|---------|
| VISION | See | Look | Look |
| HEARING | Hear | Listen | Sound |
| TOUCH | Feel/Touch | Touch/Feel | Feel |
| SMELL | Smell | Smell/Sniff | Smell |
| TASTE | Taste | Taste | Taste |

Table 2. The basic paradigm of the verbs of perception (Viberg 1984: 125)

| Dynamic System | Basic selection Activity [SV or SVO] | Experienced-based Experience [SVO] | Sourced-based Copulative Percept [SVC] |
|----------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| sight | Peter looked at the birds. | Peter saw the birds. | Peter looked happy. |
| hearing | Peter listened to the birds. | Peter heard the birds. | Peter sounded happy. |
| touch | Peter felt the cloth./to see how soft it was. | Peter felt a stone under his foot. | The cloth felt soft. |
| taste | Peter tasted the food./to see if he could eat it. | Peter tasted garlic in the food. | The food tasted good. |
| smell | Peter smelled the cigar./to see if he could smoke it. | Peter smelled cigars in the room. | Peter smelled good. |

However, I found that I disagreed with the classification in these tables, especially the percept verbs in Table 2. Table 2, suggested by Viberg (1984: 125), offers example sentences corresponding to the verbs in Table 1. In Table 2, both sentences with animate subjects and those with inanimate subjects are categorized together into one single type: that of

Source-based Copulative Percept [SVC] (Viberg 1984: 125). However, since their usage is different, I suggest that these sentences should instead be categorized separately.

For example, the following sentences from the Source-based Copulative Percept [SVC] column in Table 2 illustrate the dynamic systems of “sight” and “touch” respectively.

(1) a. Peter looked happy. (sight)

b. The cloth felt soft. (touch) (Viberg 1984: 125)

Sentences (1a) and (1b) are classified into the same PERCEPT [SVC] group in Table 2, even though the subject in (1a) represents an animate entity and the subject referent in (1b) is an inanimate entity. Moreover, in (1b), the object of perception becomes the subject of the sentence and the conceptualizer is not explicitly expressed in the sentence, while in (1a), the experiencer becomes the subject. Therefore, I consider it unnatural to group these two different kinds of sentences into the same category in terms of both grammar and meaning.

In fact, in Chapter 5, when I classified the results of my investigations based on Table 1 (Ibarretxe-Antunano 1999: 45), I found it necessary to first create another table to categorize copulative percept verbs. This was because SVC-type sentences can clearly be divided into two categories, that is, sentences with animate subjects and those with inanimate subjects. For example, the expression *He feels good* has an animate subject, where the experiencer becomes the subject. In contrast, the expression *It feels good* has an inanimate subject, where a conceptualizer is backgrounded and the object of perception becomes the subject. Thus, if I had categorized these expressions based on Tables 1 and 2, I would not have been able to identify the precise differences between the two patterns in terms of both grammar and meaning.

Furthermore, the results of my investigations, such as those shown in Table 3 in

Chapter 6, revealed that there were also two distinct types of expressions. One type of expression has a subject referring to a physical object, (e.g. *This pen feels good.*). The other type of expression has a subject that does not refer to a physical object, i.e. the subject refers to a situation or event, or the subject is impersonal *it* (e.g. *It feels good* in cases where the subject *it* does not indicate a physical object). Rather than classify them based on Tables 1 and 2 (which would have grouped these expressions into the same category, even with differing grammatical and semantic behavior depending on the subjects), I instead present the following “Classification of *feel* in SVC-type expressions”, shown in Figure 1.

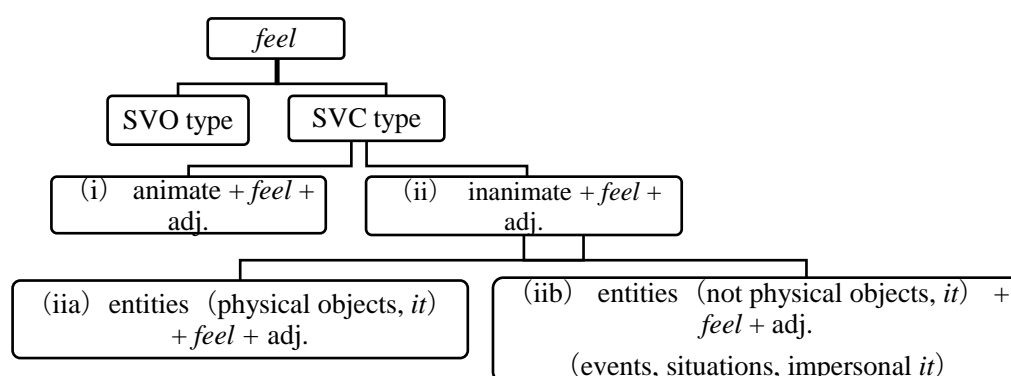


Figure 1. Classification of *feel* in SVC-type expressions (adj.= adjective)

In this new analysis (shown in Figure 1), the patterns which were conventionally classified as SVC patterns in previous studies (see Table 2), are explained in the following manner.

(2) (i) animate + *feel* + adjective

(iia) entities (physical objects, *it*) + *feel* + adjective

(iib) entities (not physical objects, *it*) + *feel* + adjective

The three kinds of patterns shown in (2) were found to have occurred in the case study of

changes in frequently occurring patterns with the verb *feel* (see Table 10 in Chapter 5). The frequency of the patterns per million words increased for all three of the patterns in (2) in the 2000s compared to their frequency in the 1800s. This tendency was particularly notable in patterns (2iia) and (2iib). In other words, the frequencies of the patterns with inanimate subjects shown in (iia) and (iib) have increased over time.

Furthermore, this classification allows for the findings of the investigation in Chapter 6 (e.g. Table 3), which suggest that subject ellipsis occurred more with the pattern (2iib), where the subject did not refer to a physical object, such as the subject “impersonal *it*”, than with the other two patterns (2i) and (2iia).

Thus, Figure 1 above makes a significant contribution in showing the differences of grammatical and semantic behavior in SVC-type patterns with the verb *feel* depending on the type of subject.

8.2.2. Implications for Subject Ellipsis

In the investigations presented in Chapter 6, I found that subject ellipsis occurred more with subjects that did not refer to physical objects, such as subjects referring to abstract situations or subjects that were impersonal *it*, i.e. instances where the subject does not have a specific physical referent. As mentioned above, subjects that refer to abstract situations have a lower referentiality compared to those that refer to physical objects in that the subject referent is not a bounded or individuated entity. Subjects that refer to abstract situations and subjects that are impersonal *it* (i.e. representing non-delimitation and an extreme vagueness) have in common that the referents of both are not bounded or individuated entities. This study has suggested that subjects with such abstract referents convey a lower amount of information and that subjects which convey less information lead to an increased likelihood of subject ellipsis. This means that the lower referentiality of the subject, which usually occurs before the verb,

can be considered one of the factors that contributes to subject ellipsis.

On the other hand, the case studies in Chapter 7 suggest different implications from those of Chapter 6. In Chapter 6 I observed that a lower amount of information seemed to be one of the factors contributing to subject ellipsis, so I therefore hypothesized that a similar result would also be found in Chapter 7, in terms of the informativeness of complement structures. However, in fact, the results of the case studies in Chapter 7 showed that subject ellipsis occurred more often with complements that conveyed more information. In other words, based on the investigations in Chapter 6, it could be said that a lower amount of information conveyed by the subject is one possible factor leading to subject ellipsis. On the other hand, the findings in Chapter 7 suggest that a lower amount of information in the post-verbal complement does not seem to be a factor contributing to subject ellipsis. The implications of this result suggest that when the amount of information in an elliptical sentence is assessed, it is not useful to consider the informativeness of the sentence as a whole but rather the informativeness of each clause (i.e. the main clause and the subordinate clause) should be considered individually.

The higher frequency of occurrence of subject ellipsis with post-verbal complement clauses that conveyed more information can be explained in the following way. When the information in a subordinate clause becomes more important than that of the main clause in a complex sentence, I suggest that clause reversal between the main clause (i.e. the Figure) and subordinate clause (i.e. the Ground)⁶ occurs. In other words, the original role of the “Figure” has changed to play a role of “Ground” and vice versa, through the reversal of the main and subordinate clauses. Under these circumstances, it seems that there is a decreased need for the subject that was originally located in the main clause to be expressed. This study suggests that

⁶ Tsuji (2009: 128) suggests that “the main clause and the subordinate clause in complex sentences correspond to Figure and Ground respectively [Translated by Shibata]”.

such a state therefore contributes to subject ellipsis. Or, another possibility is that subject ellipsis might occur simultaneously with this decreased need for the subject to be expressed.⁷

In order to confirm that clause reversal occurred between the main and subordinate clauses, Chapter 7 presented two types of grammatical patterns (i.e. tag questions and clause reversal with the clauses actually replacing each other). Furthermore, the reversal between the main and subordinate clauses was explained from a cognitive linguistic perspective by applying the process of the “change in *focus*”, one of the four types of attenuation in the process of subjectification (Langacker 1999: 301-302).

To take a specific example, the phenomenon of the expression *looks like* (originally located in the main clause) coming to be positioned at the end of the sentence can be accounted for in the following way. After the subject is omitted through subject ellipsis, I suggest that the expression *looks like* has now come to play the role of a discourse marker, in a way similar to that of an “epistemic parentheticals” (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). That is, the expression *look like*, located at the end of the sentence, functions as a kind of adverb such as *evidently* or *apparently*.

A consideration of all of the results together in the case studies presented suggests that subject ellipsis is related to semantic factors such as “subjectification” and the “referentiality” of the subject, in addition to pragmatic factors such as the “retrievability” of the subject, the context, cohesion, conversation style, “the law of least effort” (Zipf 1949), co-occurrence with fixed expressions, the variation of verbs, the variation of subjects, the informativeness of sentences, and turn-taking. Table 3 illustrates the factors that contribute to subject ellipsis which have been identified in this study.

⁷ There is a third possibility, which is that subject ellipsis might lead to clause inversion.

Table 3. The factors contributing to subject ellipsis

| Pragmatic factors |
|---|
| retrievability of the subject |
| previous context, situational context |
| cohesion |
| conversation style |
| “the law of least effort” (Zipf 1949) |
| co-occurrence with fixed expressions |
| variation of verbs, variation of subjects |
| informativeness of sentences |
| turn-taking |



| Semantic factors |
|-----------------------------------|
| subjectification |
| the referentiality of the subject |

Additional two studies of the relationship between subject ellipsis and factors contributing to it, are suggested here. First, this study focused on the verb *feel*, precisely *feels* in Chapter 5, where I discussed the relationship between subject ellipsis and specific verbs, such as percept verbs. As a result, it was found that subject ellipsis tended to occur in expressions where the process of subjectification was observed. However, in order to reach any generalization on the relationship between subject ellipsis and subjectification, in my future research, I think it necessary to investigate other perception verbs, that is, *look*, *sound*, *smell* and *taste*.

Second, in addition to the first suggestion, with regard to a correlation of subject ellipsis

with a percept verbs in perception verbs, this study focused on the verb *feels*, which leads to limit a variation of subjects appearing in the expressions with the verb *feel*. Therefore, as future research, I consider that the relationship between subject ellipsis and the verb *feel* as a whole should be studied further.

In conclusion, the results of the present study showed a tendency that subject ellipsis occurred with subjects that referred to abstract situation or subjects such as impersonal *it*. That is, I found that the frequency of subject ellipsis was different depending on the case where the referent of the subject referred to physical objects or abstract situations. This finding is significant in that it was revealed that there is a certain relationship between an implicit subject and a degree of referentiality of the subject.

Regarding the relationship between subject ellipsis and the amount of information conveyed by the sentence, especially in the complement clause, it is notable to show the result of the investigation that a lower amount of information is not always a factor contributing to subject ellipsis. It is also noteworthy that this study discovered that informativeness of the sentence should be considered from each clause (i.e. the main clause and the subordinate clause) separately in the elliptical sentence.

Thus, searching for findings mentioned above, I conducted several investigations using corpora. This study is significant in that it presented findings of the investigations on subject ellipsis by representing in figures, utilizing corpora. I believe that showing data backed by actual figures helped us understand the relationship between subject ellipsis and factors contributing to subject ellipsis.

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Appendix A. OED data

- (1) *He* or *she feels...* pattern (SVO) c=circa, a=anno => about

(c893) (c893) K. ÆLFRED *Oros.* i. vii. (Sweet) 38 *Þysnþernes..swa ...Þæt hit man ...*

(a1000) *Riddles* xxvi. 9 (Gr.) *Heo..feleð sona...*

(a1000) *Riddles* vii. 8 (Gr.) *Hi þæs felað.*

(c1200) *Trin. Coll, Hom.* 93 *Gif he feleð.*

(1393) GOWER *Conf.* II. 32 *So feleth he ful ofte guile [i.e. finds himself deceived], What that he weneth siker to stoned.*

- (2) *I feel...* patterns (SVO)

(1377) LANGL. P. Pl. B. xv. 29 *And whan ich fele þat folke telleþ my furste name is sensus.*

- (3) *It feels...* pattern (SVC)

(1581) *The hande feeling to bee rough.*

(1665) *The substance of it feels...exactly like a very fine piece of Chamois leather.*

(1711) 165 *If it feels heavy...*

- (4) *It feels... to a person* pattern (SVC)

(1768) BYRON *Narr. Patagonia* 263 *The weather was extremely cold, and felt particular so to us.*

(1844) LADY G.C. FULLERTON *Ellen Middleton* ix, *It felt to me as if the air had grown lighter.*

- (5) *It feels... to verb* pattern (SVC)

(1885) E. GARRETT *At Any Cost* iv. 66 *Not then could she under~stand how it felt to lie wakeful at nights.*

Appendix B. Examples from *COHA*

(1) *Look as if*

a. V + *as if* + clause

Looks as if being a bachelor will pay off for him on all fronts.

Looks as if we have a winner

Looks as if we both have more important things to do today.

b. SV + *as if* + clause

It looks as if she's threatening.

It looks as if the word sail is the word fail.

(2) *Looks like*

a. V + *like* + clause

Looks like your watch must be a little slow today, Mr. Fortlow.

Looks like your ride is here.

Looks like we've got a possible girlfriend.

Looks like you're starting a war.

Looks like you learned the hard way.

Looks like you had a big one here.

Looks like you got a little bit of the grog in you, Sister.

Looks like they're soft on the inside like any other animal.

Looks like we've got a few things to talk about.

Looks like we're having a psycho reunion this week.

Looks like the parting of the waters crowd.

Looks like the Cowboys and Indians have to settle for a tie.

Looks like th 'Turkey Club's missin' a gobbler this mornin'.

Looks like my collection of scarabs, he said, is going to grow by one more.

Looks like I'd better get here early tomorrow for a good seat.

Looks like I got cause, ma'am.

Looks like a storm swept through.

Looks like a mob hit, might be a robbery outa hand.

Looks like some critter chewed his neck.

b. SV + *like* + clause

It looks like he may be the victim of a hate crime.

It looks like he's going to be moderating the debates this fall.

It looks like we were going to find out.

It looks like they'll cross our wake about twenty light-hours.

It looks like you're breaking and entering.

It looks like someone vomited up Easter on that woman's head.

It looks like Bob Marley has joined a militia.

It looks like you're your room has been lived in by pigs.

It looks like you have two choices.

c. V + *like* + phrase

Looks like it.

Looks like another scorcher.

Looks like a tunnel.

Looks like a stabbing.

Looks like a mob hit.

Looks like a hit-and run.

Looks like a bad dream.

Looks like an imported viper.

Looks like a human heads!

Looks like a bug.

Looks like the north end of something wiggling her hundred legged way south.

Looks like the same thing.

Looks like a dog.

Sure looks like one.

d. SV + *like* + phrase

It looks like perfect bone.

It looks like simple memory.

It looks like an ordinary filed.

It looks like good news.

It looks like art.

It looks like fashion.

(3) *Sounds as if*

a. V + *as if* + clause

Sounds as if those days are gone.

Sounds as if he was raised around people who actually used the word in everyday conversation.

Sounds as if you probably hand out a lot of freebies.

b. SV + *as if* + clause

It sounds as if half a dozen of the Company are already there.

It sounds as if you've got a company.

It sounds as if he's reading a form.

(4) *Sound like*

a. V + *like* + clause

Sounds like some people I know-and some of the folks hung out with as well.

Sounds like the Germans were determined to hold that town.

Sounds like Tony's got the bellyache.

Sounds like he's got his act together.

Sounds like he was trying to put us together for something.

Sounds like you could use one.

Sounds like you guys are pretty friendly.

Sounds like you know this stuff.

Sounds like you know the job.

Sounds like you made the most of things.

b. SV + *like* + clause

It sounds like your¹ got plenty of mileage.

It sounds like they are here.

It sounds like it might have been private.

c. V + *like* + phrase

Sounds hard like a piece of wood.

Sounds like a barrel of laughs

Sounds like a black name.

Sounds like a country-western song, Gram.

Sounds like deal to us.

Sounds like a fair deal, but you won't have to lug the extra water weight...

Sounds like a funky dude.

Sounds like a good idea.

d. SV + *like* + phrase

That sounds like me.

That sounds like nonsense to me.

It sounds like a real good motive.

Appendix C. An example for discourse with *looks like* as a discourse marker from COHA

Date: 2006

Publication information: New York: Warner; London: Time Warner [distributor]

Title: kitty goes to Washington/

Author: Vaughn, Carrie

Even an intern, or at most a junior associate producer of some kind. He was sweating. He probably hadn't expected to handle this many calls on a talk show that ran at midnight. Most of my audience stayed up late. He handed me a phone handset. I said into it, "Hi, Matt." Matt had worked the board for the show when I was in Denver. These days he coached the local crew. I couldn't do this without him. "Hey, Kitty. **It's a wrap, looks like.**"

¹ The word "your" is thought to be mistaken for "you" in the discourse.

“Was it ok?” “Sounded great.” “You always say that, “I said with a little bit of a whine. “What can I say? You’re consistent.” “Thanks. I think.” “Tomorrow’s full moon, right? You going to be okay?” It was nice that he remembered, even nicer that he was worried about me, but I didn’t like to talk about it. He was an outsider.