

A Study of Ellipsis in Informal English

by

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0. Linguistics has undergone rapid change. The goal of linguistics, however, is to write an adequate grammar of languages, revealing their underlying rules.¹ At least we have observed the following conspicuous change of things that influenced the state of affairs in linguistics (Cf. Shuy 1977 : 73) :

- 1) the general broadening of interest which began to develop in the 1960's, leading to new kinds of interdisciplinary studies ;
- 2) development of interest in problems of minority peoples, especially in the schools ; and
- 3) general discomfort with separating the study of formal grammar from the semantic aspects of language.

Linguistics began to take an interest in language in social contexts, in which both REGISTER, 'varieties according to use', and DIALECTS, 'varieties according to user', have been points of discussion (Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens 1964 ; Crystal & Davy 1969 ; Gregory & Carroll 1978). A tentative picture of the varieties will be shown like :²

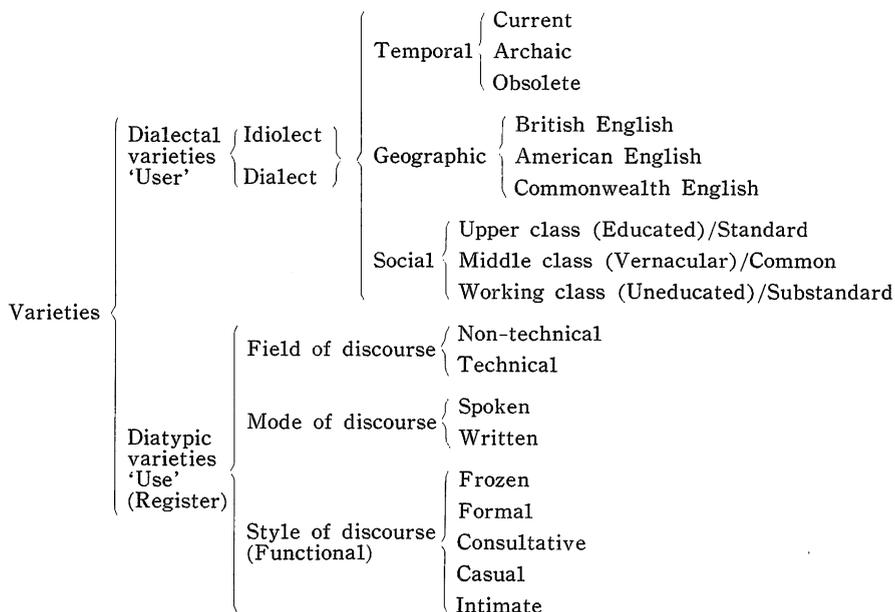


Figure 1 Subcategories of varieties

At the risk of slight oversimplification, we may say that one's dialect shows who (or what) you *are*, whilst one's register shows what you are *doing* (Hudson 1980 : 49). It may be helpful to observe an example of the non-linguistic and linguistic marking devices in

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order to provide a better understanding of the register conception.

	non-linguistic	linguistic
Formal	tuxedo	good morning
Casual	suit	hello
Informal	slacks	hi
Intimate	nothing	(gacha) ³

Table 1 Register

Nevertheless, language is by far the primary structure-marking device used by humans, partly because of its flexibility and partly because of its inflexibility. The use of dress to mark the formality of an occasion is probably a cultural universal. Yet the use of dress has some serious limitations. It lacks flexibility. While it may be possible to shed a jacket, loosen a tie, reduce the number of buttons on a blouse to show increased informality, we are generally not required to take several sets of clothing with us wherever we go. The necessity of changing the formality of an occasion frequently arises in human culture, frequently during a conversation. The limitations of dress are such that it is wholly inadequate for this kind of job. Language, however, has the capacity for changing the level of formality practically instantaneously.

Language ... can be used not only to mark levels of formality, but to mark levels of social rank which are, for the most part, fixed. (Dwyer 1976 : 91-92)

Joos (1962) has postulated five degrees of formality in English ; however, it is open to doubt whether the scale of formality can be categorized as neatly as Joos (Crystal & Davy 1969 : 74). Rather, we may sometimes find it more reasonable to categorize rather roughly into two subcategories : formal and informal styles. Formal speech occurs typically in formal social contexts, where the speaker must watch his or her language. The language often insists on greater preciseness. Informal speech, in contrast, occurs in casual, relaxed social settings, in which speech is spontaneous, often emotive and rapid.

- (1) May I offer you some coffee ?/Would you care for some coffee? [formal]
 (2) D'yuh want some coffee? [informal]
 (3) Want some coffee ?/Coffee? [informal]

Typical studies are Labov's study of /r/ in New York (Labov 1966, 1972), Trudgill's study of alternative pronunciations of the *-ing* suffix (/ɪ/ and /ɪŋ/), and James and Lesley Milroy's study in Belfast, Northern Island (Milroy, J. 1978 ; Milroy, L. 1976 ; etc.).

In the following sections, I will concentrate on the rules of the informal style, especially focusing on the elliptical phenomena.⁴

There are a number of good reasons for choosing relatively informal conversation between educated people as the opening variety for linguistic analysis. Conversation ... is without doubt the most commonly used kind of English, and consequently a variety which will be more familiar to the vast majority of English-speaking people than any other.

(Crystal & Davy 1969 : 95)

1. *Ellipsis : Its Nature*

One of the typical differences between formal and informal language styles in English is that the latter has a greater amount of abbreviation, shortening, contraction, and deletion (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 536 ff).⁵

Ellipsis is purely a surface phenomenon, which reduces redundancy, especially in

informal speech style. The speaker and the hearer are distinctively dyad in a given context. Words are ellipted easily since they are recoverable either from their linguistic or non-linguistic contexts.

- (4) “^Coffee, Starsky?” “Uh-huh?” She looked at Hutch. “^Carrot juice,” he said. “Or whatever he’s got, if he’s out of that.” “Why would he be out of that?” Starsky inquired, “Who the hell else would order it?” Dianne went to get their beverages. (S & H, 67)

Here the ellipted words may be easily recovered from the context. They are part of the shared information between the speaker and the hearer (Cf. Yamada 1980). Thus,

- (5) “(Do you want) Coffee, Starsky?”/“(I want) Carrot juice,” he said.

And,

- (6) “I live in the General Dorm. ^Know where it is?” He nodded. “^Room number?” (S & H, 5)

Thus,

- (7) “(Do you) Know where it is?”/“(What is the) Room number?”

Some types of ellipsis are not dependent on the adjacent context for their interpretation, as we have seen so far. We have other types of ellipsis which are dependent on linguistic context. In adverbial finite clauses the whole of the predication or part of it can be omitted, except that we cannot ellipt merely object (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 538 -39) :

- (8) Because Alice won’t (dust the furniture), Mary is dusting the furniture.
 (9) *He took the money because she wouldn’t take (the money).

2. Ellipsis : Tag-Controlled

The rules for forming the most common type of tag question are (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 390 -1) :

- 1) The tag question consists of operator+subject : *is he? isn’t he? can’t I? would you not?* etc.
- 2) The operator is the same as the operator of the preceding statement : I haven’t met you, *have I?*
- 3) The subject of the tag is a pronoun which either repeats, or appropriately substitutes for, the subject of the statement.
- 4) If the statement is positive, the tag is negative, and vice versa.
- 5) The nuclear tone of the tag occurs on the auxiliary, and is either rising or falling.

If the tag normally mirrors the subject and operator of the preceding statement, they are still recoverable information even when ellipted ; thus, the subject and operator in the main sentence are often dropped out.

- (10) ^Pretty, isn’t it? (S & H, 82)
 (11) I assume you will report this conference to your immediate superior. ^Captain Dobby, isn’t it? (S & H, 84)
 (12) ^Little late, isn’t it? (S & H, 91)
 (13) ^Picturesque old place, isn’t it? (S & H, 138)
 (14) ^Sort of black Shriners’ outfit, isn’t it? (S & H, 66)
 (15) What was that stuff about being entertainers? ^Huggy Bear and Company, wasn’t it? (S & H, 73)

The examples are unique in that the subjects are all *it*, but theoretically the types of subjects do not seem to alter the rule (Akmajian *et al.* 1979 : 185) :

- (16) a. Been hitting the bottle again, haven’t you?
 b. Wants me to pay the bill, does he?
 c. Likes her new house, does she?

- d. Failing his courses, isn't he ?
- e. Steal my money, will they ?
- f. Getting pretty excited, aren't you ?
- g. Not ready to swim fifty laps, are you ?

It is noteworthy that these sentences show another regularity : both the subject and the operator must be deleted together.

- (17) a. *Have been hitting the bottle again, haven't you ?
- b. *Is failing his courses, isn't he ?
- c. *Will steal my money, will you ?

We will reasonably ask why the sentences (17) are impossible. We may conclude that the original subject + operator structure is composed of its contracted form like : *you've*, *he's* and *you'll* instead of *you have*, *he is* and *you will* respectively (Cf. Labov 1969). However, if the operator itself has already a contracted negative particle *n't*, then we do not have any form like **you'ven't* ; instead we have *you haven't*.

- (18) Haven't been hitting the bottle again, have you ?
- Akmajian *et al.* (1979 : 187) postulate the rule :

Given a sentence with a tag question, the subject of the main sentence may be deleted, under the following conditions :

- i) the subject must be identical with the pronoun in the tag, and
- ii) if the main sentence contain an auxiliary, it *must* be contracted onto the subject if it *can* be contracted onto the subject.

3. Ellipsis : Questions

Let us discuss abbreviated questions. One of the former examples was :

- (3) Coffee, starsky ?

The process of ellipsis may be traced as :

- (19) a. Do you want coffee, Starsky ?
- b. You want coffee, Starsky ?
- c. Want coffee, Starsky ?

However, we have to examine if the type (19 b) is really an abbreviated question. It might be a declarative sentence with a rising question intonation placed on it.⁶ Akmajian *et al.* (1979 : 189 ff) discuss the following example.

- (20) Last night's party go well ?

The declarative sentence should be

- (21) Last night's party went well.

and the question in statement form should be

- (22) Last night's party went well ?

Therefore, we may safely trace the ellipsis process :

- (23) Did last night's party go well ? \implies Last night's party go well ?

However, we will find it rather difficult to determine that (19 b) will be an abbreviated question or a simple declarative question since we cannot detect any such morphological feature as we have seen in (23).

3.1 Do-ellipsis

- (24) “ \wedge You plan to clean your gun when you get home ?” “Of course.” (S & H, 108)

- (25) Huggy Bear asked, “ \wedge You want another beer ?” (S & H8, 5)

- (26) Glancing at his watch, he said, “ \wedge You know it's three o'clock ?” “So ?” (S & H, 91)

Do-ellipsis in wh-question :

(27) "Gee, that's lucky for me," the truck driver said in a tone of relief. "What \wedge you want me to do?" (S & H8, 120)

(28) He halted just short of the stairway when she asked commandingly, "Hey, mister, where \wedge you think you're going?" (S & H8, 75)

3.2 Does-ellipsis

(29) " \wedge This bocor have a name?" Starsky asked. (S & H8, 69)

Does-ellipsis in wh-question :

(30) "How much \wedge it cost you?" "Twenty bucks." (S & H8, 76)

3.3 Did-ellipsis

The interpretation of tense in abbreviated questions, where the tense carrier auxiliary has been ellipted, illustrates some kind of difficulty in recovering deleted information without an overt element of time-when adverbials, or some kind of ambiguity out of context.

(31) "What's your handicaps?" Phil asked. "He's mine," Hutch said, pointing to a thumb at Starsky. That set off a gale of laughter from Jerry and Phil again. " \wedge You hear that?" Jerry said to the redhead Candy when he stopped laughing. (S & H8, 53)

3.4 Do-you-ellipsis (20 exx)

[+want] (6 exx)

(32) "I got coffee and Danish. \wedge Want to share?" (S & H, 18)

(33) The plump man giggled as he pushed a large lapel flower toward Starsky. " \wedge Wanna smell my flower?" he asked. (S & H8, 27)

[+think] (5 exx)

(34) "Oh, sorry. What do you think I ought to do about the pool, Officer Starsky? \wedge Think the officer can handle it all?" (S & H, 108)

(35) "See that guy?" Hutch asked over the radio. "Yeah," Starsky said. " \wedge Think it was Dallaway?" "Too dark, but it was his build." (S & H, 99)

[+remember] (2 exx)

(36) You said you'd never work our district while we were here. \wedge Remember? (S & H, 24)

[+know] (2 exx)

(37) I live in the General Dorm. \wedge Know where it is? (S & H, 5)

Other examples are : [+see] (2 exx), [+feel like] (1 ex), [+mind] (1 ex), [+have] (1 ex).

Do-you-ellipsis in wh-question :

(38) "Well now, that's a shame, I'm sure. But why \wedge tell us?" (S & H8, 49)

3.5 Did-you-ellipsis

(39) " \wedge Ever hear of Magic Minnie?" "The witch woman? Sure, everybody has." (S & H8, 49)⁷

Notice the subject only ellipsis in *wh-question* :

(40) "And if Henderson's capable of having a kid wiped out just on the off chance he might be a blackmail threat sometime in the dim future, how do \wedge think he's going to react to what he probably figures is going to be an open attempt to blackmail him?" (S & H, 161)

We do not have ellipsis of the negative auxiliary. Thus,

(19 b) You want coffee, Starsky?

is never interpreted as the negative question like

(41) Don't you want coffee, Starsky?

However,

(42) Don't want coffee, Starsky?

is possible.

(43) Hutch said, "Didn't get much of a take today, huh, Lijan?" (S & H, 69)

So far, stylistic ellipsis for the abbreviated style can take place only if the particular sentence or context provides clues that allow us to properly infer what was ellipted (Cf. Akmajian *et al.* 1979 : 195).

4. *Have-ellipsis*

The auxiliary verb *have* can be ellipted as well.

- (44) a. Have you seen John lately?
 b. You seen John lately?
 c. Seen John lately?

Again, it is possible to ellipit *you* without also ellipiting *have*. In this respect, recall the behavior of *do*.

- (45) *Have seen John lately?

It is quite noteworthy that *have got* type of expression easily yields an ellipsis, leaving *got* behind (5 exx).

- (46) You got any fun stuff like conventioners use? (S & H8, 21)
 (47) You guys got any evening clothes? (S & H8, 71)
 (48) You got any vodka? (S & H8, 77)

Have-ellipsis in wh-question :

- (49) Where \wedge you been? (S & H8, 77)
 (50) How long \wedge you been with the D. A.'s office, Counselor? (S & H, 32)

Subject+have-ellipsis (7 exx) :

- (51) "You haven't told him?" " \wedge Told me what?" (S & H8, 152)
 (52) "Where's Huggy Bear?" Starsky asked Dianne. " \wedge Gone upstairs." (S & H, 59)
 (53) "When you expect him back?" "Not till morning. \wedge Gone to Catalina." (S & H, 59)
 (54) \wedge Got a quart around here somewhere. (S & H8, 77)
 (55) \wedge Got a message for you, is all. (S & H, 73)

Here, the sequence *have you* can be 'vyou/vyuw/, or 'vya /vyə/.⁸

- (56) a. 'vyou got a bowtie?
 b. Got a bowtie? (S & H8, 71)

In case of the negative contraction of *have*, we do not have any form like **you'ven't*; instead we have *you've not* or *you haven't*. Thus, the following ellipsis type is possible :

- (57) a. You haven't told me what?
 b. Haven't told me what?
 c. *Told me what?

However, the context allows the apparently impossible ellipsis possible like :

- (58) Starsky said to Chief Godfrey, "You haven't told him?" " \wedge Told me what?"
 Hutch asked, "Well, you see —" the chief hedged, letting it trail off. (S & H8, 152)

Have-ellipsis in statement :

- (59) I \wedge been doing it for years. (S & H8, 18)
 (60) You \wedge been doing that every morning for years. (S & H8, 14)
 (61) I \wedge been worrying about you. (S & H8, 98)

There does not seem to be any unanimous agreement as to the ellipsis of *have* in statements; however, the above examples illustrate that it is quite natural when *have* is followed by *been*. The following cases seem to be unacceptable in General American English; however some dialects accept them :⁹

- (62) a. *I *gone* there many times. (= I have gone there many times.)
 b. *I *seen* that film. (= I have seen that film.)

5. *Be-ellipsis*

The verb *be* can be ellipted.

5.1 *(Are)+you+C* $\begin{cases} \text{NP} \\ \text{Adj} \end{cases}$

- (63) \wedge You Mark Henderson ? (S & H, 31)
 (64) \wedge You close friends with Miss Talbot ? (S & H, 130)
 (65) \wedge You the manager ? (S & H, 106)
 (66) \wedge You a snark ? (S & H, 5)
 (67) \wedge You all right, Hutch ? (S & H, 88)
 (68) \wedge You okay, buddy ? (S & H, 131)
 (69) \wedge You sure ? (S & H, 139) (2 exx)
 (70) \wedge You ready to go into action ? (S & H, 175)
 (71) \wedge You afraid of heights ? (S & H, 65)

5.2 *(Are)+you+V-ing*

- (72) \wedge You kiddin' (S & H, 63)
 (73) \wedge You coming along ? (S & H, 91)
 (74) \wedge You having the same thoughts I am about our next move ? (S & H, 134)
 (75) \wedge You going to the panel discussion on metal versus plastic cans in the Rose Room tonight ? (S & H, 63)
 (76) \wedge You feeling something ? (S & H, 75)

5.3 *Wh-+(are)+you+V-ing* (4 exx)

- (77) Where \wedge you guys going on your vacation ? (S & H, 3)
 (78) Starsk, how \wedge you doing ? (S & H, 130)

5.4 *Wh-+(are)+we+V-ing* (1 ex)

- (79) What the hell \wedge we doing here ? (S & H, 133)

5.5 *(Are) you going to/gonna +V*

- (80) \wedge You guys really going to go through with this ? (S & H, 49)
 (81) \wedge You just going to stand there and watch ? (S & H, 80)
 (82) \wedge You going to eat or drink ? (S & H, 66)

5.6 *Wh-+(are) you going to/gonna+V*

- (83) How \wedge you gonna get upstairs ? (S & H, 74)

5.7 *(Are)+you+V-ed*

- (84) \wedge You guys heeled ? (S & H, 76)
 (85) Testing. \wedge You set, Hutch ? (S & H, 97)
 (86) \wedge You supposed to tell the girl ? (S & H, 75)

5.8 *(Are)+you+Prepositional Phrase*

- (87) \wedge You in a hurry to get back to the restaurant ? (S & H, 23)

5.9 *Is-ellipsis*

- (88) a. \wedge Booth going to be available any time soon ? (S & H, 184)
 b. \wedge That going to stop you ? (S & H, 121)
 (89) a. \wedge This a business or a social call ? (S & H, 2)
 b. \wedge Anything going on ? (S & H, 96)
 c. \wedge Your watch waterproof ? (S & H, 107)
 (90) a. Rear window \wedge missing, too. (S & H, 48)
 b. And blood \wedge all over the front seat. (S & H, 48)
 c. Fat Rolly \wedge over there. (S & H, 34)

Once again the subject *you* cannot be ellipted unless the auxiliary verb is ellipted too :

(91) a. *Are coming along? [=73]

b. *Are the manager? [=65]

Again, the verbs should be contractible like :

am I	= 'my [may]	is it	= 's it [zIt]
are you	= 'ryou [əryúw]	is John	= 's John [zjan]
is he	= 's he [ziy] ¹⁰	are we	= 'r we [ərwíy]
is she	= 's she [žšiy]	are they	= 'r they [ərdéy]

(Akmajian *et al.* 1979 : 199)

(92) “^Steak sandwich?” Starsky said, looking at his partner’s plate in surprise.
(S & H, 67)

(93) a. “^Mad?” “Yes.” (S & H, 17)

b. “^Happy now?” (S & H, 11)

c. “You know it’s after twelve?” “Uh-huh. ^ Hungry?” (S & H, 65)

d. “^Sure you’ve got a house guest?” (S & H, 111)

Also in statements :

(94) a. Slowing, Starsky said wryly, “^Sorry about that.” (S & H, 151)

b. Handing the fat man a napkin, he said, “^Sorry, Rolly. ^Out of pencils.”
(S & H, 41)

c. “^Surprised to see you, Dianne,” Hutch said. (S & H, 66)

d. Hutch said dourly, “^Glad you found a parking place close by.” (S & H, 105)

(95) “Steak sandwich?” Starsky said, looking at his partner’s plate in surprise. “^Made out of soybeans,” Dianne explained. (S & H, 67) [*It’s*]

(96) Gonna be dark in another couple hours. (S & H, 64) [*It’s*]¹¹

(97) You gonna back to Vinnie’s and get the Torino. ^Nice to have met you, Mr. Henderson. (S & H, 57) [*It’s*]

(98) ^No wonder he never comes along with his partner when Dallaway makes a bug.
(S & H, 101) [*It’s*]

(99) “He ain’t gonna like that,” Angie said doubtfully. “^Gonna need his beauty sleep.” (S & H, 60) [*He’s*]

6. Akmajian *et al.* (1979 : 201) argue that :

One can delete the contractible forms of the verbs *do*, *have*, and *be*, and these are the only verbs that can delete. Other auxiliary verbs may not.

$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Will} \\ \text{Must} \\ \text{Would} \\ \text{Can} \\ \text{Could} \\ \text{Should} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\}$	you leave tomorrow?
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We generally cannot delete any of these verbs. For example, if we are asked *You leave tomorrow?* we interpret this strictly as *Do you leave tomorrow?* and never as *Will you leave tomorrow?* Conversely, if we were able to delete a verb such as *will*, we would expect to delete it in a question such as *Will you be leaving tomorrow?* But deleting *will* would produce the unacceptable question **You be leaving tomorrow?*

However, we can easily find some instances in which modals are most suitable to supply, either in questions or in statements. Thus, the ellipsis is highly context-oriented.

(100) a. (Won’t you) Have a smoke?

- b. (Will you) Have 'nother? (Murata 1972 : 548)
- (101) Over his shoulder Starsky said. “^Tell you something, Hutch. When I was in high school, I played defensive back on the football team.” (S & H, 122) [*I'll*]
- (102) But I wouldn't count on him being up and about. Little bomb he took with him, looked like he ain't gonna get much sleep. ^Probably hit the sack as soon as he gets home. (S & H, 59) [*He'll*]
- (103) “^Buy you a refill?” he asked, nodding toward her glass. “If you'd like.” (S & H, 3) [*Shall I*]
- (104) The door closed behind Starsky and Hutch, and the two detectives walked over to the bar... “^See you in private?” Hutch asked. “Sure,” the black man said agreeably. (S & H, 115) [*Can I/C'n I*]
- (105) “You're almost as bad as Phil. ^You tell Ed?” “I will.” “Okay, I'll tell Phil.” He moved over to whisper to his partner. (S & H, 54) [*Will*]
- (106) Starsky turned onto Hope Avenue. “How about Huggy Bear's bar? ^Kill two birds with one stone?” “Only one bird today. He took the boat over to Catalina.” (S & H, 65) [*Shall we*]

7. *Ellipsis of personal pronouns*

The elements ellipsed can be :

7.1 *1st person pronoun, normally I* (31 exx)

Most of the verbs in such an ellipsed construction can take a clause complement (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 545).

- (107) Oddly enough, your names and room number were found among the belongings in his hotel room. “How do you account for that?” “^Can't say,” Hutch said, trying to look amazed.” (S & H, 49)
- (108) “^Hope they get here pretty soon,” he said. “I want to be in the place by one o'clock.” (S & H, 10)
- (109) “You want anything?” “Yeah,” Hutch said. “What you're talking about.” “^Beg pardon?” (S & H, 18)
- (110) Eventually he said, “^Got it,” and hung up. (S & H, 63)

7.2 *2nd person pronoun*

The second person pronoun is only ellipsed in statements if a tag question is added (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 545). Also see 3.4 and 3.5.

- (111) a. Had a good time, did you?
 b. Want a drink, do you?
 c. Had a good time?
 d. Want a drink? (Quirk *et al.*)

7.3 *3rd person pronoun*

The 3rd person pronoun is recoverable easily by looking at either a contextual cue or a linguistic cue.

7.3.1 *He/She* (5 exx)

- (112) “Put Huggy Bear on.” “^Ain't here, Hutch.” (S & H, 59)
- (113) What about the guy with the bad breath? ^Walks with a limp. (S & H, 56)
- (114) He's been in his apartment. ^Hasn't budged. (S & H, 96)
- (115) “Who?” “Somebody named Molly. ^Said she'd be in on the midnight flight.” (S & H, 184)
- (116) “What happened to Carlson?” Dobby asked. “^Went into private practice, Captain.” (S & H, 29)

7.3.2 *It*

It is particularly easy to recover since the instances mostly found in idiomatically fixed type of expressions like *It sounds (like)* (5 exx), *It looks (like)* (7 exx), *It seems* (7 exx), *It doesn't matter* (1 ex). The meaningless 'prop' word *it* (2 exx), anticipatory subject *it* (4 exx), and pro-forms (10 exx) are also ellipsed since they are recoverable.

(117) That way's west. \wedge Seems to me we ought to go east. (S & H, 91)

(118) \wedge Seemed to me you were surprised to see us when we cruised by outside, Rolly.
(S & H, 37)

(119) \wedge Looks interesting. (S & H8, 108)

(120) \wedge Looks like he's waiting for somebody. (S & H, 98)

(121) \wedge Sounds like a million cops. (S & H, 177)

(122) "That stakeout may last till three A. M." " \wedge Doesn't matter. She isn't coming in until midnight." (S & H, 87)

(123) \wedge Sure was nice seeing you. (S & H8, 32)

(124) You know, \wedge still bugs me how surprised to see us Coley was. (S & H, 34)

(125) Hutch said dourly, "Glad you found a parking place close by. \wedge Makes it handy to get to the radio." (S & H, 105)

7.4 *There*

This is the existential subject *there*. The elliptical construction is likely to contain a modal other than *will*, but *won't* is common (Cf. Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 546).

(126) a. Ought to be some coffee in the pot.

b. Must be somebody waiting for you.

c. May be some children outside.

d. Appears to be a big crowd in the hall.

e. Won't be any food left for supper. (Quirk *et al.*)

(127) \wedge Must be something to that. (S & H8, 75)

(128) " \wedge Anywhere we can squeeze a little of the water out of our clothes?" "There's dryers in the laundry room," the manager said. (S & H, 106) [*Is there*]

8. *Miscellaneous*

8.1 *(as) soon as/(as) long as* (9 exx)¹²

(129) \wedge Soon as they get here, I'll let you know, and you can come down to my office to explain all this to them. (S & H, 33)

(130) They said you should have waited for them, but \wedge long as you didn't, to meet them on the golf course \wedge soon as you get settled. (S & H8, 46)

(131) \wedge Long as you wear a white shirt and a necktie with it. (S & H8, 71)

8.2 *a couple (of)*

(132) Gonna be dark in another couple \wedge hours. (S & H8, 64)

8.3 *(good) evening*

(133) " \wedge Evening, fuzzy friends," the black man said. (S & H8, 2)

8.4 *(you had) better*

(134) But when you get home, \wedge better take off the back and douse the works with mineral oil. (S & H, 108)

8.5 *Determinative*

(135) We met over at the Student Union \wedge couple of weeks ago. (S & H, 3)

(136) "Those two kids who were shotgun-blasted on the beach \wedge night before last," Hutch said. (S & H, 142)

(137) " \wedge Booth going to be available any time soon?" "Forty-five minutes," the black man said. (S & H, 184)

NOTES

A grammar of informal style English is to be part of my series of discussions of new English grammar for the teachers and students of English in Japan.

...from the pedagogical viewpoint, the sort of English used in conversational situations ...would seem to be the most useful and least artificial kind to teach foreign students of English as a means of everyday communication. Such practical reasons are quite important. (Crystal & Davy 1969 : 95)

In addition, the rules I have discussed here not only give us some insight into the nature of language variation, but also they provide us with a concrete example of how different subfields of linguistics are integrated and unified at a broader level (Cf. Akmajian *et al.* 1979 : 205).

1. As to the discussion of 'adequacy', see Chomsky (1965).

2. See Murata (1972 : 287).

3. Part of the usage discussion of *gotcha* is found in Yamada (1979 : 66). Originally, the expression is a contracted form of "I have got you."

"Have Dippy pick up a panel truck somewhere. The two of you be on the airport parking lot from about two-thirty on. If Starsky and Hutch manage to get the Mello girl past Max and Jeremy, you two take her there." Nodding his bald head, Curly Dobbs said, "*Gotcha.*"—Max Franklin, *Starsky & Hutch* # 3 (Ballantine), p. 116.

4. The examples in this discussion are from :

1) Max Franklin, *Starsky & Hutch*. Ballantine, 1975 (Abbreviated as S & H, and the page).

2) Max Franklin, *Starsky & Hutch* # 8. Ballantine, 1978 (S & H8)

The dialogues between Detectives David Starsky and Kenneth Hutchinson are of particular interest in terms of informal style of English. See Crystal & Davy's discussion, "The Language of Conversation" (Crystal & Davy 1969 : 95–124). A most pioneering discussion of ellipsis in discourse grammar will be found in Kuno (1978).

5. As to the discussion of the contraction of the auxiliary verbs, see Yamada (1975).

6. "Declarative questions" (Quirk *et al.* 1972 : 392–393).

7. Notice the word *has* in the answer.

'Did you ever see a bed fastened like that before? I cannot say that I *have*.'—Here *have* is necessary in the answer, because *I did* would imply a definite point of time (Jespersen 1909–49, IV : 65).

8. However, the lexical verb *have* lacks a contracted form with *you* : **vyou* any wool? (Akmajian *et al.* 1979 : 197).

9. In some community dialects, the past forms of *do* and *see* are *done* and *seen* respectively. See Gefvert *et al.* (1975 : 59–60), Murata (1972 : 461). Atwood (1962 : 75, 120).

The man in the checked weskit said, 'Georgie's dead. Got killed with an axe. They don't know who *done* it, Fred.'—Ed McBain, *The Axe* (Pan), p. 40.

'Then anyone could have come down here this morning, is that right?' he asked. 'To use the machine?' 'That's right,' Iverson said. 'Did you see anyone come down?' 'Sure, I *seen* lots of tenants down here.'—*Ibid.*, p. 63.

10. If we continue discussing the behavior of *be* contraction, we will discover the following fact :

1. a. John *is* coming here tomorrow.

b. John's coming here tomorrow.

2. a. His hobby *is* going to parks.

b. *His hobby's going to parks.

In (2), *is* belongs to 'Equative *be*', which requires the pause in speech. Thus, the contraction seems to be impossible. See Kuno (1977 : 97–98), Yasui (1978 : 116).

11. "Prop word *it*". See Quirk *et al.* (1972 : 546).

12. Also, *soon's*.

He went to bed lookin' kinda white *soon's* we got home.—N. Algren, *The Man with the Golden Arm* [Murata]

"You wanted to see me?" she asked in a dull voice. He nodded. "Sit down. I'll be with yuh *soon's* I finish this."—Harold Robbins, *79 Park Avenue* (New English Library), p. 100.

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