
Theoretical Insight from L2: How Elliptical Inversion and Speech Act Particles Connect

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We investigated inversion and non-inversion structures under ellipsis in L2 English (Johnson 2008, Wood 2014). The basic constructions are shown in (1):

- (1) John wanted someone to do the dishes ...
a. ... and so did Bill. => want someone to do the dishes
b. ... and so Bill did. => do the dishes

(1) requires reconstruction in ellipsis either to the matrix (1a) or the embedded clause (1b). Wood (2014) argues that the inversion is triggered by the preposing of the phrase *so too* (e.g. *Bill did so too => so (too) did Bill*). *Too* can be seen as a Speech Act (SA) link that engages Common Ground Subject, or Speaker and Hearer, which Bayer et al. (2016) argue is in SpecCP and requires a Force Phrase connection which is linked to the matrix CP. This links particles (*denn, ja, wohl*, etc.) in subordinate clauses to the SA left periphery (Rizzi 1997, Krifka 2021). The SA agreement element in CP then triggers inversion. We investigated the reconstruction in L2 English by L1 speakers of various and typologically diverse backgrounds (German, Spanish, Chinese). L2 English speakers in all languages – unlike native speakers of English – reconstruct the lower VP clause for both (1a, b) despite the presence of inversion in the elliptical conjunct, and pragmatics which favored upper clause attachment. When we added an overt *too* as in (2) below for Spanish and German, then suddenly the correct matrix reconstruction was chosen:

- (2) John wanted someone to do the dishes ...
a. ... and so did Bill too.
b. ... and so Bill did too.

From these observations we propose:

- I. The ellipsis in (1) extends over a hidden *too* – triggering a connection to the matrix SA.
- II. The embedded SA marker as a Specifier of CP is not automatically projected.
- III. It must therefore be instantiated by L2.
- IV. It is only available if the particle *too* is overt for L2.
- V. Lower VP reconstruction is the default form (favored by parsing simplicity).

(Selected) References: • Johnson, K. (2010). *Topics in Ellipsis*. OUP. • Rizzi, L. (1997). The fine structure of the left periphery. In L. Haegeman (ed). *Elements of Grammar*. Berlin: Springer, 281-337.