Creativity and routine in proposition reconstruction under ellipsis

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Elliptical utterances can fulfill propositional functions in discourse. As such, they can, e.g., be used to answer questions and be rejected as untrue (e.g., by B and A2. respectively, in 1)

(1)　　A1: How many burgers did you eat?
　　　　B: Twelve.
　　　　A2: No, no, no, that can't be true!

In our workshop, we ask how variable the encoding and interpretation of elliptical utterances can be – and how creative our theories will thus have to become. We are specifically interested, therefore, in data that have hitherto not been centrally discussed, and approaches to ellipsis resolution that challenge established theories.

While syntactic, discourse, information-theoretic and other explanations (e.g., Merchant 2004, Reich 2007, Lemke 2020) have been proposed, ellipsis research is still limited empirically in other ways. We ask whether (or where) ellipsis phenomena exist which would force our theories to become even more creative:

I. Most theories of ellipsis are based on a restricted sample of (mostly Indo-European) languages. Would a typologically more diverse range of languages lead us to discover structures which are unexpected, given the ellipsis literature so far? Would ellipsis data from signed languages do so?

II. What can structurally diverse environments reveal about options for creative uses of ellipsis? Do ellipsis options differ between semantically different clause types (independently of or in addition to syntactic factors)? Can embedded environments (e.g., complement or relative clauses) shed new lights on how ellipsis works in a way that the standard main clause cannot? Do comparatively under-researched clause types (e.g., exclamatives, optatives) allow for different ellipsis options?Does ellipsis work differently depending on the truth, falsity or contingency of the utterance that (partially) elides – or of antecedent utterances from the discourse?

III. Ellipsis theories often presuppose a 'normally functioning discourse', examples of which are provided by linguists. Can quantitative data from corpus/production studies (e.g., on challenging performance conditions) force us to allow for more (or less) creativity in ellipsis options? How differently from fully competent

speakers do (L1 or L2) learners use ellipsis? Conversely, could ellipsis be 'easier' (more creative?) in writing, where, e.g., memory retrieval is less of an issue?

IV. Last, but not least, we invite new theoretical analyses that make interesting predictions regarding (im-) possible elliptical forms, and/or the interpretation of elliptical utterances, given a discourse context.

We hope to attract researchers interested in challenging ellipsis theories by showing the creative uses, diverse contexts and complex conditions of ellipsis.

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Feature mismatches under ellipsis: The case of El-Sayyid Bedouin Arabic

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Syntactic identity and admissible feature mismatches under ellipsis have been actively explored in the literature. Facts from better-studied, primarily Indo-European languages led to proposals that deleted heads must match with their correlates in the antecedent (Merchant 2013), or that features must match for elided heads up to the highest vP in the ellipsis site that is associated with an event-introducing predicate (Rudin 2019). To accomodate the broader typological picture these conditions need to be modified. Ranero (2021) demonstrated that Kaqchikel (Mayan) allows *voice* mismatches under sluicing. To account for this, he effectively proposed that mismatches between a valued interpretable feature (such as voice) and its default value can be disregarded. Erschler (2018) showed that Georgian and Ossetic allow certain *tense* mismatches under gapping.

In this talk, I will address voice mismatches in sluicing (1) and gapping (2), which are possible in El-Sayyid Bedouin Arabic (ESBA). In this language, morphological passive exists for a large class of transitive verbs.

(1) fi wa:ħad katal bila:l bas ma: bniʕrif ʕa-ʔi:d mi:n
     someone killed Bilal but NEG we.know by who
     'Someone killed Bilal, but we don't know by whom (he was killed).'

(2) ʔala:ʔ   xabazat il-kaʕkeh   isˤ-sˤɣajreh w il-kaʕkeh
     Alaa   baked   the-cake   the-small   & the-cake

     il-kibi:rɛh ʕa-ʔi:d ʔamm-i   in xabazat
     the-big   by-hand mom-1SG   PASS-baked
     'Alaa baked the small cake, and the big cake was baked by my mom.'

I will show that voice mismatches under **gapping,** while a typological rarity, are amenable to the standard move-and-delete analysis, under the assumption that in ESBA, what deleted under gapping is the complement of Voice^0. This is compatible with the proposals of Merchant (2013) and Ranero (2021), but not of Rudin (2019). Voice mismatches under **sluicing**, however, constitute a challenge to all the proposals mentioned above. I will explore theoretical implications of this property of sluicing in ESBA.

References: • Erschler, D. (2018). *Typology of bizarre ellipsis varieties*. PhD dissertation, UMass Amherst. • Merchant, J. (2013). Voice and ellipsis. *LI* 44(1): 77–108. • Ranero, R. (2021). *Identity Conditions on Ellipsis*. PhD dissertation, UMd, College Park. • Rudin, D. (2019). Head-Based Syntactic Identity in Sluicing. *LI* 50(2): 253-283.

Creativity in antecedent-target mismatches in German sluicing.
A corpus study

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Even though sluicing is often assumed to require identity between antecedent and target (see e.g. Merchant 2001, Barros 2014), acceptable mismatches have been reported in the literature (e.g. finiteness, polarity and tense mismatches, Kroll and Rudin 2017). Currently, this research is mostly based on introspective judgments (but see e.g. Anand et al. 2021 for English corpus data). This raises two questions: First, how frequently are sluicing mismatches actually attested? And, second, are there mismatches which have not yet been discussed in the literature?

We addressed this with a corpus study by extracting sluices from the POS-tagged section of the German reference corpus DeReKo (Kupietz and Keibel 2009). In total, we found 131 instances of sluicing, only 54 of which had an identical antecedent. While some of the mismatches can be explained by current theories of sluicing, there are 23 utterances like (1), which cannot be accounted for by any syntactic identity condition proposed in the literature.

(1) Niederlagen schmerzen immer, egal gegen wen. (a13/aug.13661)
    defeats   hurt   always no.matter against who

Utterances like (1) do not only lack an explicit antecedent, but their resolution is ambiguous, too. For instance, the sluice in (1) can be resolved as a*gainst whom we played/the match was*/etc.. The frequent usage of sluicing in such utterances indicates that it does not matter how exactly a sluice is resolved, as long as the message intended by the speaker is transmitted.

This suggests that an empirically appropriate sluicing theory requires a pragmatic component. However, purely pragmatic accounts probably overgenerate: For instance, like Anand et al. (2021), we did not find any voice mismatches (2), even though figuring out the intended message is intuitively easy.

(2) *John was murdered, but I don't know who ⟨murdered John⟩. (Merchant 2013)

The aim of our talk is to discuss these findings against the background of current theories of sluicing and thus to get closer to an approach that explains the attested variation, but also the limits of such mismatches.

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The impact of memory load on the processing of ellipsis: three experiments on gapping and right node raising in spoken and written German

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We present 3 experiments that investigate whether memory limitations negatively impact the acceptability of ellipsis in coordination. We contrast right node raising (RNR) with gapping (1) in spoken vs. written modality, building on Harbusch's (2011) corpus results which indicate that RNR is less frequent in spoken language.

(1)   Ich habe vergessen, dass ich Eric vom   Bahnhof (abholen
        I   have   forgotten   that I   Eric from.the   station   pick.up
        muss)$_{RNR}$ und Mia von der Kita   (abholen muss)$_{gapping}$.
        must   and Mia from the daycare pick.up   must

We propose a memory-based explanation: The addressee can reread an utterance (backtracking) in written, but not in oral modality. Thus, we expect that ellipsis is more difficult to process (and less acceptable) in oral modality, in particular RNR (interaction), since RNR requires keeping the incomplete first conjunct in memory in order to complete its structure after having parsed the second conjunct.

Experiment 1a crosses FORM (full form/gapping/RNR) and MODALITY (oral/written). MODALITY will be varied between subjects, i.e., half of the participants *hear* the stimuli exactly once (without the possibility to rehear), the other half can *read* them for an unlimited time. Our prediction is that ellipsis and specifically RNR is preferred more strongly in written modality. In experiment 1b, we aim to show that it is the possibility of backtracking, rather than the written modality per se, that relieves working memory and improves ellipsis. Therefore, we approximate the auditory presentation by presenting the items written, but word-by-word with fixed presentation times. We predict that ellipsis will be degraded to a similar extent as when presented auditorily. To confirm that the expected acceptability differences are indeed caused by differences in memory load, we explicitly manipulate this load in experiment 2, by letting half of the participants solve arithmetic problems between trials (see Repp and Drenhaus, 2015). We expect that participants whose working memory is partially used for the additional task have greater difficulties in processing ellipsis and perceive it as more severely degraded than the full forms.

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Wenn-memes and the role of recipients in ellipsis reconstruction

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German *wenn*-memes consist of a picture and a verbal part only consisting of a *wenn*-sentence which can be analyzed as an adverbial clause representing the protasis of a conditional relation. The second relatum, the matrix clause, realizing the apodosis, is omitted. According to Osterroth (2015), memes are language-image texts and thus complete textual units. From this it can be concluded that memes must contain all necessary information for recipients to be able to deduce the non-verbalized sequence themselves. Such *wenn*-sentences are not limited to memes, but are also used in tweets, headlines and emphatic exclamations. In my presentation, however, I will focus on the analysis of German *wenn*-memes.

Memes are characterized by the fact that they are mainly used in Internet-language contexts such as social media which put specific constraints on communication. These include that the communication partners do not necessarily have to know each other and therefore do not need to have any information about the context in which a meme is realized. As a consequence, a well-alligned common ground between all communication participants cannot be assumed when processing memes, and recipients of memes may differ significantly in the stocks of knowledge available to them, which they use to reconstruct the omitted relatum. Despite these challenging conditions, memes are usually easily understood. The question thus arises as to how this is possible.

In my presentation, I will argue in favor of an analysis that focuses on the recipients of memes. In line with Kehler (2002: 46), I will assume that this form of ellipsis is not about the omission and reconstruction of specific lexical material, but rather of a relatum of a discourse relation. This assumption is supported by the observation that in any case there are only a handful of potential reconstructions of the omitted relatum such as *So sieht es aus, wenn* ('This is what it looks like when'). However, these reconstructions share the property that they contain an indexical element such as *so*, which refers to content in the corresponding image. With reference to the question posed above, I will argue that when processing memes, recipients draw on all stocks of knowledge available to them, in order to be able to establish a coherent relationship between the information in the image and in the text.

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Not under (re-)construction:
Proposition integration of inclusory appositions

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Appositions are commonly either assumed to contain elided material (cf. Ott 2016), or to involve some sort of coordination with their anchor or host (cf. Heringa 2011, Griffiths 2015). In German sentences like (1), what looks like an appositive headed by the additive particle *auch* ('too, also') is puzzling with regard to its syntactic status as well as its semantic derivation.

(1) Viele Kinder, auch Hans, haben nicht geschlafen.
     many   children   too   Hans   have   NEG   *slept*
     ≈ Many children didn't sleep. This includes Hans.

On the one hand, additive particles are generally treated as operating on a propositional level (cf. Heim 1992 and subsequent research); wherefore we would have to assume that the apposition in (1) contains an elided copy of the antecedent VP. But given that negation from an antecedent usually reflects in the respective ellipsis' remnant, the absence of negation in *auch Hans* would then be left unexplained. On the other hand, this problem disappears if we assume that the anchor *viele Kinder* and the apposition share syntactic material qua coordination. But then, the propositional part of the story remains unclear.

The situation is further complicated by sentences with multiple instances of such appositives headed by *auch*, since they give rise to weak interpretations. I claim that what is at stake in (1) and more complex examples is actually not proposition reconstruction via elided or coordinatively shared material, but rather integration of the appositive's content into the host's proposition. Syntactically speaking, that is to say that *auch*-headed appositives are indeed fragmental. Semantically speaking, I assume that *auch* is not additive in the commonsense understanding of additivity, but rather establishes a subset relation between its direct argument (e.g. *Hans* in (1)) and an antecedent expression (e.g. *viele Kinder*); or, more precisely, a pronominal discourse referent derived in the spirit of Schmitt et al. (2017).

(2) a. (1): [[$_{QNP}$ many children]$_1$ [1 [t_1 [*auch* Hans]] [NEG [slept]]]]

     b. (1) ≈ There is a sum individual$_i$ (with a cardinality greater k) of children which Hans is a part of. They$_i$ did not sleep.

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Wh-in-situ and sluicing like constructions in English

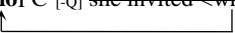**Jason Overfelt**

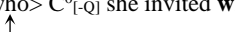*Oakland University*

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Although considered to be a canonical *wh*-fronting language, English has semantico-pragmatically and prosodically distinguished *wh*-in-situ constructions (e.g., Pires & Taylor 2009, Sobin 2010, Beck & Reis 2018, Biezma 2020):

(1)   a.   Wendy invited Dracula.
         b.   Wendy invited ↗**WHO**?

(2)   a.   Wendy is having a party this weekend.
         b.   And she invited ↘**who**?

This talk investigates understudied Sluicing-Like Constructions (SLCs) in English that arise in the context of particular embedded *wh*-in-situ configurations, including the complement clause of non-factive predicates (3a)/(3b).

		(a.)	[she invited **who**] ?
(3)	Wendy invited someone and Susie thinks	(b.)	[**who**] ?
		(c.)	*[**who** she invited] ?

Standard connectivity diagnostics converge on a Move-and-Delete analysis (Ross 1969, Merchant 2001, et seq.) in which the bare *wh*-remnant of an SLC (3b) is extracted from elided clausal structure; see (4a).

(4)   a.   … and [$_{CP}$ $C^0_{[-Q]}$ Susie thinks [$_{CP}$ **who₁** $C^0_{[-Q]}$ ~~she invited <who>~~]]

         b.   … and [$_{CP}$ $C^0_{[-Q]}$ Susie thinks [$_{CP}$ <who> $C^0_{[-Q]}$ she invited **who**]]

A salient concern with a Move-and-Delete analysis is the apparently obligatory *wh*-in-situ nature of this environment (3c). We will see, however, that intricate intervention effects suggest that the in-situ *wh*-constituent undergoes what is otherwise covert partial *wh*-scrambling (4b) (Kotek 2019, Abels & Dayal 2022). This observation forms part of the motivation for an analysis in which the displacement in (4a), contrary to genuine sluicing, is movement that is rendered exceptionally overt in the content of ellipsis (e.g., Richards 1997, Temmerman 2013, Gribanova & Manetta 2016; cf. Abe 2015, among others).

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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).

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Do fragments behave differently depending on their antecedent type? Results from an acceptability judgment study on German
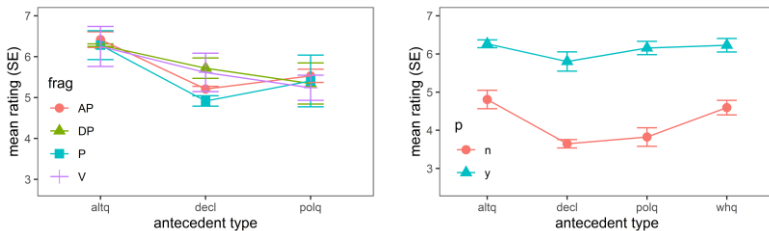
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This paper focuses on whether clausal ellipsis works differently depending on the clause-type of the antecedent. The prevailing view is that fragments must be A′-movable phrases and that P-omission is licit in a language *L* only if *L* ordinarily permits P-stranding A′-movement.[1] [2] and [3] contend that this view is correct only for fragments whose antecedents are declarative assertions and wh-questions. [2] and [3] report informally collected acceptability judgments from English and Dutch that suggest that neither A′-movability nor the P-stranding restrictions are obeyed by fragments anteceded by alternative questions.

I conducted two formal acceptability judgment experiments on German fragment answers (both had 2x2 designs, with 32 native German speakers). Exp1 tested whether varying the antecedent type (between *altq*, *decl*, and *polq*) affects the acceptability of fragments that are A′-movable constituents (AP, DP) or not (bare Ps and bare transitive Vs). Exp2 tested whether changing the antecedent type (between *altq*, *decl*, *polq*, and *whq*) affects the acceptability of P-omission. Exp1 found that $altq_{ANT}$ fragments are judged as significantly more acceptable than both $decl_{ANT}$ and $polq_{ANT}$ fragments. The A′-movability constituent had no significant effect on acceptability for any antecedent clause-type condition. Exp2 found that, regardless of the clause-type of the antecedent, P-omission significantly lowers judgments. When P-omission occurs, differences in acceptability between fragments (as grouped by ant. clause-type) become more significantly pronounced. I compare these results with other recent findings on German fragments,[4] and discuss their theoretical import, particularly with regards to [2] and [3]'s claims.

References: • [1] Merchant, J. 2004. Fragments & ellipsis. *Ling. & Phil* 27. • [2] Griffiths, J. 2019. A Q-based approach to clausal ellipsis. *Glossa* 4. • [3] Griffiths J., G. Güneş & A. Lipták. 2022. Reprise fragments in English & Hungarian. To appear, *Language*. • [4] Lemke, R. 2021. *Experimental investigations on the syntax & usage of fragments*. Lang. Sci. Press.

Case encoding in Romanian elliptical comparatives: the role of animacy and differential object marking

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Our main goal is to experimentally assess the case marking alternation (nominative vs. accusative) on the subject remnant in Romanian gapped comparatives (1), to illustrate the limits of introspective informal judgments as the sole source of data and to show the importance of experimental methods. The contradictory data obtained from informal introspective judgments make opposite predictions with respect to the syntactic analysis of gapped comparatives (a deletion-based analysis, if only nominative is allowed, cf. Van Peteghem 2009 *vs.* a fragment-based analysis, if there is indeed a case alternation, cf. Zafiu 2013).

(1) a. Ana iubește <u>geografia</u> mai mult **decât** {tu$_{NOM}$ / tine$_{ACC}$} <u>istoria</u>.
 'Ana likes geography more than you history.'
  b. Ion adoră <u>fetele</u> mai mult **decât** {eu$_{NOM}$ / mine$_{ACC}$} <u>băieții</u>.
 'Ion adores girls more than you boys
  c. Ion o admiră <u>pe$_{DOM}$ asistentă</u> mai mult **decât** {eu$_{NOM}$ / mine$_{ACC}$} <u>pe$_{DOM}$ anestezistă</u>.
 'Ion admires the nurse more than I the anaesthetist.'

We conducted an acceptability judgment task, that allowed us to tease apart the previous conflicting judgments. The results show that there is indeed a case alternation (*pace* Van Peteghem 2009), which is not free (*pace* Zafiu 2013), but rather conditioned by the animacy of the second remnant (significant interaction between ellipsis, case, and animacy: p<.001). We did a post-hoc analysis by taking into account the marking of the animate object (simple NPs (1b) *vs.* differentially object marked NPs (1c)), and we observed that the marking of the second remnant plays a role too (at the conference, we will present the results of a second acceptability judgment task dealing with the marking of the animate object).

We propose an explanation in terms of processing (cf. Sag et al. 1985): gapping is more acceptable if both remnants are clearly dissociated by a linguistic mean, e.g. case marking or different semantic type. From a theoretical perspective, the case alternation on the subject remnant challenges the deletion-based syntactic analysis and argues for a constructionist approach in terms of fragments.

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Article omission as non-projection of D

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Theories of omission are often based on standard normative language varieties, and pay less attention to situationally defined registers of languages (e.g. headlines, diaries, recipes) in which more elements can be omitted. We present a case-study of article omission in the *headline* register in Dutch and German, and argue that article omission is not due to PF-deletion or null article insertion but rather to the non-generation of the DP-layer. This adds to the family of proposals that accounts for missing material in terms of reduced structure (e.g. Haegeman 2017). The argument is based on a novel generalisation about the inflection we find on attributive adjectives and considerations about the interpretation of NPs.

Definite and indefinite articleless noun phrases in Dutch and German headlines show inflectional endings on the adjective that are different from the endings in the corresponding standard language NPs with articles. In headlines, both languages spell out the *strong* agreement form on the adjective in the absence of an article (and only in that context), consider example (1) from www.eltern.de.

(1)　　Mit　　klein-**em**　　　Kind　　　nach　　Übersee?
　　　　with　small-AGRstr　child.NEUT　to　　　overseas　　(date: 21-01-2022)

Such facts disqualify the PF-deletion account of article omission (the surface-deleted article should participate in agreement/concord and yield the unattested form *mit ~~einem~~ klein-en Kind*). We also show that postulating a *null article* for the data (as proposed in Weir 2017, Reich 2017) face some problems, too. Instead of these accounts, we propose that noun phrases like (1) lack a DP layer and correspond to NP (or NumP) only in the syntax. Aspects of interpretation normally signaled by determiners are due to type-shifting operations that turn a property-denoting noun into a kind, entity or existential expression. Since it is lacking, D is not a factor in determining the form of other elements in the NP and as a result, the adjective shows strong agreement, similarly to mass nouns (*kalt-es Wasser*). Time allowing, we identify proposals on adjectival inflection that are compatible with our data (e.g. Ackema and Neeleman 2020).

References: • Ackema, P. & A. Neeleman (2020) Unifying nominal and verbal inflection. In A. Alexiadou and H. Borer (eds) *Nominalizations: 50 years on from Chomsky's remarks*. OUP, 29–52. • Haegeman, L. (2017) Unspeakable sentences. Subject omission in written registers: a cartographic analysis. *Linguistic Variation* 17:2, 229–250. • *Reich, I. (2017)* On the omission of articles and copulae in German newspaper headlines. *Linguistic Variation* 17:2, 186–204. • *Weir, A. (2017) Object drop and article drop in reduced written register. Linguistic Variation 17:2, 157–185.*

Backward deletion viewed systematically

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When it comes to backward deletion, i.e. cases of ellipsis where the gap precedes its antecedent, the existing literature appears to focus on mainly two aspects. Either it discusses Leftward Deletion (LD), traditionally known as Right Node Raising (RNR), hence an ellipsis type that is defined, amongst other things, by the very property of operating backwards, or it deals with the Backward Anaphora Constraint (BAC), stating that a gap may precede but not c-command its antecedent (for overviews cf. Reich 2011, Aelbrecht 2015). What is lacking is a systematic survey on backward deletion, varying at least the following factors:

- type of ellipsis
- type of clause linkage (coordination vs. subordination)
- in case of subordination: order of constituent clause vs. rest.

When checking all combinations of the factors listed above, the two most important initial findings are the following.

First, some sentences are potentially ungrammatical although they fulfil the BAC (and do not appear to violate any other constraint), e.g. Gapping in German (1a) and Pseudogapping in English (1b).

(1) a. *Gonzo ~~aß~~ die Erbsen und Lola aß die Karotten
    Gonzo ~~ate~~ the peas and Lola ate the carrots
    intended: 'Gonzo ate the peas and Lola ate the carrots.'
  b. *Sue will ~~have~~ the lamb, and John will have the salmon.
    (Coppock n.y.:3)
    ?Although Sue will ~~have~~ the lamb, John will have the salmon.
    ?John will ~~have~~ the salmon although Sue will have the lamb.

Second, the reverse case, i.e. grammatical backward deletion not observing the BAC, has not been observed.

The talk will present the combinations of factors more thoroughly and speculate on how the data may be accounted for. In particular, it is discussed whether the BAC has to be complemented by a second constraint along the lines of "realize some semantically rich verb in the first part".

References: • Aelbrecht, L. (2015). Ellipsis. In T. Kiss & A. Alexiadou (eds.), *Syntax: Theory and analysis/1* (HSK 42.1). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 562–594. • Coppock, E. (n.y.). Gapping: In defense of deletion. https://linguistics.northwestern.edu/documents/award-winners/linguistics-undergraduate-award-past-winner-coppock.pdf • Reich, I. (2011) Ellipsis. In C. Maienborn, K. von Heusinger & P. Portner (eds.), *Semantics/2* (HSK 33.2). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 1849–1874.

Ellipsis of relative clauses is Move-and-Delete

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The ellipsis of relative clauses (RCs) is an empirical domain where one can test the differing predictions of in-situ and Move-and-Delete approaches. I argue that only the predictions of the latter are borne out: (i) RCs can only be deleted in the context of another ellipsis, compare (1a) and (1b), and (ii) deletion of post-nominal modifiers is more acceptable than deletion of pre-nominal ones.

Collins (2015) observes that English allows what appears to be deletion of a relative clause. German has the parallel construction, (1a). (1a) is ambiguous: it is possible to interpret the RC on the second conjunct. However, interpretation of a deleted RC is impossible if no other ellipsis occurs, such as gapping in (1b).

(1) a. Ich sah drei Studenten die ich kannte und
        I saw three students that I knew and
        zwei Professoren.
        two professors
        'I saw three students who I knew and two professors (who I knew).'

     b. Ich sah drei Studenten die ich kannte und
        I saw three students that I knew and
        ich sah zwei Professoren.
        I saw two professors
        *'two professors that I knew'

I propose that (1a) should be analyzed as a type of stripping/bare argument ellipsis. In a coordination of CPs (following e.g. Depiante 2000), one remnant moves to the left periphery before TP is elided.

This analysis correctly predicts that pre-nominal modifiers cannot be deleted, since it is not possible to move the head noun and a determiner while stranding an adjective. If the head noun can move away from its modifiers, e.g., in split topicalization (e.g. Ott 2011), the structure becomes more acceptable.

References: • Collins, C. (2015). Relative clause deletion. In A.J. Gallego & D. Ott (eds.) *50 years later: Reflections on Chomsky's Aspects,* 50–70. • Depiante, M.A. (2000). The syntax of deep and surface anaphora. University of Connecticut dissertation. • Ott, D. (2011). Local Instability, Harvard University dissertation.