Salvation By Deletion
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I. Strong features, defective PF objects, and ellipsis

A. Pseudogapping and V Raising

(1)a If you don’t believe me, you will □ the weatherman
b I rolled up a newspaper, and Lynn did □ a magazine
c Kathy likes astronomy, but she doesn’t □ meteorology
Levin (1978)

(2)a The DA proved Jones guilty and the Assistant DA will
prove Smith guilty
b ?John gave Bill a lot of money, and Mary will give
Susan a lot of money

(3) You might not believe me but you will Bob

(4) NP-raising to Spec of Agrg (’Object Shift’) is overt in
English. [Koizumi (1993); Koizumi (1995), developing
ideas of Johnson (1991)]

(5) Pseudogapping as overt raising to Spec of Agrg (driven by
an EPP requirement of Agr) followed by deletion of VP.
[Lasnik (1995a)]

(6) AgrP
   /   
  □     □
T     VP
  /   
NP     Agrg
  /   
Agrg /  □
you /   □
Agrg /   □
T /   □
will /   □
V /   □
believe /   □

(7) AgrP
   /   
  □     □
Smith /   □
Agrg / VP
  /   
V /   □
prove / S.C.
  /   
NP /   □
AP /   □
t /   □
guilty

(8) *You will Bob believe
(9) *The Assistant DA will Smith prove guilty
(10) V raising is normally obligatory driven by a strong
feature of the ’shell’ V.

(11)

(12) Once the matching feature of the lower lexical V is
’attracted’, the lower V becomes phonologically
defective. A PF crash will be avoided if either pied-
piping (normal V raising) or deletion of a category
containing the lower V (VP Deletion = Pseudogapping in
the relevant instances) takes place. [Lasnik (1999),
developing an idea of Ochi (1999)]

B. Sluicing and Infl Raising

(13) Sluicing – WH-Movement followed by deletion of IP
(abstraction away from ’split Infl’ details). [Ross
(1969), Saito and Murasugi (1990), Lobeck (1990)]

(14) Speaker A: Mary will see someone.
Speaker B: I wonder who Mary will see.
(15) Speaker A: Mary will see someone.
Speaker B: Who Mary will see?

(16) Is (15) Sluicing? One very peculiar property of Sluicing suggests that it is:

(17) John was talking on the phone, but I don't know who to

(18) Speaker A: John was talking on the phone.
Speaker B: Who to?

(19) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{who} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{strong F} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{I'} \\
\text{Mary} \\
\text{will} \\
\text{[F]} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{see} \\
t
\end{array}
\]

(20)*Who Mary will see? 
Who will Mary see?

(21) In matrix WH interrogatives, Infl raising to C is normally obligatory driven by a strong feature of interrogative C.

(22) Assume that the matching feature of Infl raises overtly to check the strong feature of C. This leaves behind a phonologically defective Infl, which will cause a PF crash unless either pied-piping (Infl raising to C) or deletion of a category containing that Infl (Sluicing) takes place.

(23) II. Failure of Repair: The EPP

(24) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Agr} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{Agr} \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{will} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{she} \\
\text{sleep}
\end{array}
\]

(25) Mary said she won't sleep, although she will sleep

(26) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Agr} \\
\text{sp} \\
\text{Agr} \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{will} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{she} \\
\text{sleep}
\end{array}
\]

(27)*Mary said she won't sleep, although will she sleep

(28) Why isn't deletion of a category containing the 'defective' item a viable alternative to pied-piping in this instance?

(29) What is the EPP?

(30) A certain head high in the clause has a strong feature, demanding overt movement for checking. Chomsky (1995)


(32) Agr (or T) requires a Spec. It does not suffice to check its 'EPP feature'.

(33) A possible alternative approach to the dichotomy: Boeckx and Stjepanovic (In press) suggest that the true generalization involves head movement, where ellipsis does provide an alternative to raising, vs. XP movement, where it doesn't.

(34) The derivational decision to 'pied-pipe' involves considerable 'look-ahead' since the adverse effects of bare feature movement are not evident until PF, where deletion operates. If head movement is a PF process, the interaction is at least confined to one component. Conversely, if XP movement is syntactic, potential interaction between full movement and deletion would be across the Spell-out divide, thus involving look-ahead of a much greater degree.

(35) Alternative to the alternative: V-raising can repair the defective V left behind by feature movement because the raised features and the raised V are all amalgamated in one head. NP movement can't repair a defective NP, since the NP will raise to Spec of IP and will not amalgamate with its lost features located in I.
III. Ellipsis and island violation repair

(36) I believe that he bit someone, but they don't know who (I believe that he bit).

(37a) "I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who I believe the claim that he bit." [Complex NP Constraint, noun complement]

(37b) I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who.

(38a) "Irv and someone were dancing together, but I don't know who Irv and were dancing together." [Coordinate Structure Constraint]

(38b) Irv and someone were dancing together, but I don't know who.

(39a) "She kissed a man who bit one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends she kissed a man who bit." [Complex NP Constraint, relative clause]

(39b) She kissed a man who bit one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends.

(40a) "That he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who that he'll hire is possible." [Sentential Subject Constraint]

(40b) That he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who.

(41) Ross argues that the phenomenon of island violation repair provides "evidence of the strongest sort that the theoretical power of (global) derivational constraints is needed in linguistic theory." [p.277]

(42) If a node is moved out of its island, an ungrammatical sentence will result. If the island-forming node does not appear in surface structure, violations of lesser severity will (in general) ensue. [p.277]

(43a) "I don't know which children he has plans to send to college." [Complex NP Constraint, noun complement]

(43b) He has plans to send some of his children to college, but I don't know which ones.

(44) I don't know which children he has plans to send to college

 NP
 └── IP
    └── which children

      NP
 └── I
      └── VP
          └── has plans to send t to college

(45) Chomsky rejects global derivational constraints, and suggests [see also Baker and Braine (1972), and, for an opposing view, Lakoff (1970), Lakoff (1972)] that * (# in Chomsky's presentation) is assigned to an island when it is crossed by a movement operation (the complex NP in (44)). An output condition forbidding * in surface structures accounts for the deviance of standard island violations.

(46) If a later operation (Sluicing in this case) deletes a category containing the *-marked item, the derivation is salvaged.

(47) For Chomsky (1972), the condition banning * applies at surface structure. The results are the same if, instead, it is a PF condition, as suggested by Lasnik (1995b), Lasnik (2001).

(48) Much more recently Chung et al. (1995) argue that the amelioration of island effects with Sluicing follows from their account, in which there is no movement or deletion involved, but a type of LF copying.

(49) However, Merchant (1999), following Ross (1969), provides very strong evidence that syntactic movement (and hence deletion) is involved in Sluicing constructions. The evidence involves:

(50) 'Case matching': In overtly Case inflected languages (such as German), the Case of the remnant is just what the Case of the frontal WH expression would have been in the non-elliptical form, and this is even true in the island violation configurations.

(51) Er will jemandem schmeicheln, aber sie wissen nicht, welchen / welchem / welchem / welchem... /  *welchen / welchem / welchem... / *welcher / *wen / wen

who.NOM who.ACC who.DAT 'He wants to find someone who helped one of the prisoners, but I don't know who.'

(52) Sie will jemanden finden, der einem der Gefangenen geholfen hat, aber ich weiss nicht, wer / wen / was

who.DAT who.NOM who.ACC who.ACC who.DAT

helped has but I don't know who. 'They wanted to find someone who helped one of the prisoners, but I don't know which one.'

(53) And preposition stranding: In languages that allow P-stranding (such as English), the remnant can be the bare object of a preposition; in languages that don't (such as Greek) it can't, and this is even true in the island violation configurations.

(54) Peter was talking with someone, but I don't know who

(55) Peter's mom will get angry if he talks with someone from his class, but I don't remember who
IV. Failure of Island Violation Repair

*They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which they do [They want to hire someone who speaks [...]] Merchant (1999)

Compare (66), which also involves a relative clause island:

They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which (Balkan language) [They want to hire someone who speaks [...]] Merchant (1999)

In fact, Chung et al. (1995) had already claimed that Sluicing and VP ellipsis diverge in this way, concluding that the latter, unlike the former, is an instance of deletion. Their example involved an adjunct island:

What did you leave before they did [We left before they started playing party games.?]

Note, though, that this case, unlike Merchant's, is actually consistent with Chomsky's account (which Chung et al. (1995) do not consider), as the island is not eliminated in (65), unlike the situation in (64).

Merchant, on the other hand, takes all ellipsis to be PF deletion (as far as I can tell), and argues that only some islands represent PF effects. Others, especially including relative clause islands, do not, and their violation therefore cannot be repaired by ellipsis.

(66) is then reanalyzed as:

They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which (Balkan language) [They should speak [...]] [See also Baker and Brame (1972)]

They hired someone who speaks a Balkan language – Guess which [she speaks [...]]

No-one moved to a certain town – guess which! Merchant p.267

(74) has no island, so is unproblematic. But...

Noone had a student who worked on a certain Balkan language, but I can't remember which Balkan language

There are also cases where structure that includes the island must exist in the Sluicing site in order to license an item in the Sluicing remnant:

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There are also cases where structure that includes the island must exist in the Sluicing site in order to license an item in the Sluicing remnant:
It appears that a certain senator will resign, but which senator it does [appear that I will resign] is still a secret [that-trace].

Sally asked if somebody was going to fail Syntax One, but I can't remember who she did [ask if I was going to fail Syntax One] [if-trace].

She said that a biography of one of the Marx brothers is going to be published this year, but I don't remember which [say that a biography of I is going to be published this year] [subject condition].

And now notice that parallel 'failure of repair' obtains even when there was no violation in the first place:

They want to hear a lecture about a Balkan language, but I don't know which (Balkan language) they do [they want to hear a lecture about a Balkan language, but I don't know which (Balkan language) they want to hear a lecture about] [subject condition].

They studied a Balkan language but I don't know which (?they did)

Is VP ellipsis blocked when Sluicing is available (Sort of 'Delete as much as you can')?

Someone solved the problem. Who (?did)?

Is a VP ellipsis site precluded from containing a WH trace?

I know what I like and what I don't Merchant p.69 [See Fiengo and May (1993) for similar examples.]

The constraint seems to be specific to VP ellipsis, and seems limited specifically to circumstances where an indefinite antecedes a WH-trace. The nature of this constraint remains obscure.

References


Sluicing and Logical Form. Natural Language Semantics 3: 1-44.


