A Gap in an Ellipsis Paradigm: Some Theoretical Implications

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I. A Gap in a Paradigm

(1) John slept, and Mary will too
   b John slept, and Mary will sleep too

(3) John was sleeping, and Mary will too
   b John was sleeping, and Mary will sleep too

(5) John has slept, and Mary will too
   b John has slept, and Mary will sleep too

Hypothesis 1: Any form of a verb V can be 'deleted under identity' with any form of V.

Hypothesis 2 (merely a descriptive generalization): A form of a verb V other than be or 'auxiliary' have can be 'deleted under identity' with any form of V. A form of be or auxiliary have can only be deleted under identity with the very same form.

Hypothesis 3: A form of a verb V can only be deleted under identity with the very same form. Forms of be and auxiliary have (finite ones, at least) are introduced into syntactic structures already fully inflected. Forms of 'main' verbs are created out of lexically introduced bare forms and independent affixes.

II. Motivation for the Hybrid Morphological Account

Lasnik (1995b) proposes this morphological difference between main and auxiliary verbs in English to account for the fact that finite auxiliaries show the full range of raising effects (like all verbs in French), while main verbs in English show none of them. The proposal is that the English finite auxiliaries (and all finite verbs in French) are lexically introduced with inflectional features which must be checked against a functional head (or heads). English main verbs are lexically uninfl ected, so they don't raise.

Just as in Chomsky (1955) and Chomsky (1957), the process associating the finite affix with the bare verb ('Affix Hopping') requires adjacency.

The strictly lexicalist theory of Chomsky (1993) in which all verbs (in fact all lexical items) are introduced fully inflected does not account for (14).
(35) Q: Ar chuair tá isteach air
A: Chuair put [PAST] you in on it
"Did you apply for it?"
"Yes."

(36) [v [v [v X]] cannot anteced VP-ellipsis of [v [v V X]].

(37) "...a raised V has fewer features than a non-raised V, assuming that the features that cause raising are not copied (this has to be assumed in a minimalist framework or the raising operation would not eliminate features and so would have no motivation, and so would be impossible given the general last-resort nature of movement). Roberts (n.d.)

IV. Problems for the Alternative

(38) A candidate for a VP headed by verb trace antecedence deletion of a VP headed by a lexical verb: Pseudo-gapping as overt NP raising to Spec of Agr, followed by VP ellipsis. (Lasnik (1995a), based on the proposal of Koizumi (1993), following Johnson (1991), that 'object shift' is overt in English.)

(39a) John hired Bill and Mary will
b John [v, hired [v, Bill [v]]] and Mary will [v, Susan [v, hire]]

(40) Crucially, Pseudogapping is not just deletion of the verb:
(41) The DA proved Jones guilty and the Assistant DA will prove Smith guilty
(42) John gave Billy a lot of money, and Mary will give Susan a lot of money
(43) If (36) is correct, it should presumably generalize to all heads, not be limited to V and trace of V:
(44) [v [v [v X]] cannot anteced VP-ellipsis of [v [v Y X]].

(45) Sluicing (Ross (1969)), now standardly analyzed as IP ellipsis (Lobeck (1990) and Saito and Murasugi (1990)), provides another potential counter-example.

(46) Speaker A: Mary will see someone
Speaker B: Tell me who Mary will see
Speaker A: Mary will see someone
Speaker B: Who Mary will see

(47) Speaker A: Never will [v, Harry t go to a linguistics lecture again]
Speaker B: Tell me why [v, Harry will never go to a linguistics lecture again]
Speaker A: Never will [v, Harry t go to a linguistics lecture again]
Speaker B: Why [v, Harry will never go to a linguistics lecture again]

(48) Speaker A: Never will [v, Susan t understand some linguists]
Speaker B: Tell me which linguists [v, Susan will never understand]
Speaker A: Never will [v, Susan t understand some linguists]
Speaker B: Which linguists [v, Susan will never understand]

V. Why Isn't Roberts' Line of Reasoning Valid?

(52) Given that a raised X° has had a feature (or set of features) checked and deleted, why can it anteced the deletion of an XP with its head in situ (as in Pseudogapping and Sluicing)?

(53) An ultimately related question: Given that NP raises but V doesn't raise in the Pseudogapping construction, why must V raise in corresponding non-elliptical version?

(54) *Mary will Susan hire

(55) A parallel question: Given that Inf doesn't raise to Comp in the Sluicing construction, why must Inf raise in the corresponding matrix non-elliptical version?

(56) *Which linguists Susan will never understand

(57) Overt movement is driven by a 'strong feature' of a head, which attracts a matching feature within the complement of that head. All movement, whether covert or overt, is fundamentally feature movement. [Chomsky (1995b)]

(58) just how broadly considerations of PF convergence might extend is unclear, pending better understanding of morphology and the internal structure of phrases. Note that such considerations could permit raising without pied-piping even overtly, depending on morphological structure..." [p.264]

(59) "For the most part - perhaps completely - it is properties of the phonological component that require pied-piping. Isolated features and other scattered parts of words may not be subject to its rules, in which case the derivation is canceled; or the derivation might proceed to PF with elements that are 'unpronounceable,' violating FL." Chomsky (1995a, p.262)

(60) "Applied to the feature F, the operation Move thus creates at least one and perhaps two "derivative chains" alongside the chain CHF=(Fh), constructed by the operation itself. One is CHF= (FF)[Fh]÷[h], consisting of the set of formal features FF[F] and its trace; the other is CHF=(Fh), a category carried along by generalized pied-piping and including at least the lexical item containing F. CHF is always constructed, CHFO only when required for convergence...As noted, CHFO should be completely dispensable, were it not for the need to accommodate to the sensorimotor apparatus." [p.265]

(62) In (58), if only the attracted features raise, but the V does not raise, a PF crash will ensue, but only if the offending item exists at that level. Deletion provides another way to salvage the derivation. When the lower VP is deleted without the V having raised, a PF crash is avoided and the result is acceptable Pseudogapping.
(63)  
\[
\text{CP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{who} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{[strong F]} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{I'} \\
\text{Mary} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{will} \\
\text{[F} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{see} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{t} \\
\]

(64) An account completely parallel to that provided for (58) is available for (63).

(65) Note that now, the major prima facie counter-examples to Roberts’ proposal (36), as generalized to (44), are completely compatible with it.

(66) So why not accept the Roberts-Potsdam account of the gap in the original ellipsis paradigm?

(67) John slept, and Mary will too

(68) *John was here, and Mary will too

(69) John was here, and Mary will be here too

(70) Here he does not raise at all, with or without pied-piping, whereas obviously does raise, resulting in features being checked and deleted.

(71) BUT what are those features? It is hard to see how they could be anything other than inflectional features. But checking and deleting the inflectional features of was makes it more like be, not less like be.

VI. Another Kind of Justification for (44)

(72) [Under ellipsis] Corresponding X^a traces [unlike XP traces] must have the same binder in both the antecedent and target clauses.

(73) Chicken, she'll eat, but ostrich, she won’t

(74) Potsdam claims that in Hebrew and Irish, both V-raising languages that have VP ellipsis, "the raised verbs in ellipsis antecedent and target clauses must be the same." He suggests that (72) is universal.

(75) Q: dina sareget et ha-svederim Se- hi loveSet
Dina knits ACC the sweaters that she wears
"Does Dina knit the sweaters that she wears?"
A1: lo, aval ima Sela soreget
no, but mother hers knits
"No, but her mother does."
A2: lo, ima Sela kona (la)
no, mother hers buys (to-her)
"No, her mother buys them (for her)."

(76) A1 is strict or "lumpy." A2 is only strict.

(77) Ivan piše rad paždivo, a njegov asistent čita
Ivan writes paper carefully and his assistant reads
"Ivan is writing a paper carefully, and his assistant is reading it carefully.”

Serbo-Croatian

(78) Marko gradi sebi kucu, a Marija kupuje
Marko builds himself house and Marija buys
"Marko is building himself a house, and Marija is buying herself a house."

(79) Q: Does Dina knit the sweaters that she wears?
A: No her mother, buy the sweaters that she, wears

(80) The putative answer (79)A is strikingly unresponsive to the question.

(81) dina soreget et ha-svederim Se- hi loveSet, be-tod ima Sela kona
Dina knits the sweaters that she wears while her mother buys them

(82) Dina knits the sweaters that she wears while her mother buys them

(83) dina ohevet ko sveder Se- hi loveSet aval ima Sela sonet
Dina loves every sweater that she wears but mother hers hates
"Dina loves every sweater that she wears but her mother hates every sweater that she wears."

Bibliography


McCluskey, James. 1990. Clause structure, ellipsis and proper government in Irish. Syntax research center, Cowell College, University of California at Santa Cruz.


