A Gap in an Ellipsis Paradigm: Theoretical Implications?

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I. A Gap in a Paradigm

(1) John slept, and Mary will too
(2) *John slept, and Mary will slept too
  a John slept, and Mary will sleep too
  b John slept, and Mary will sleep too
(3) *John was sleeping, and Mary will too
(4) *John was sleeping, and Mary will sleep too
  a John was sleeping, and Mary will sleep too
  b John was sleeping, and Mary will sleep too
(5) John has slept, and Mary will too
(6) *John has slept, and Mary will slept too
  a John has slept, and Mary will sleep too
  b John has slept, and Mary will sleep too

(7) Hypothesis 1: Any form of a verb V can be 'deleted under identity' with any form of V.
(8) *John was here, and Mary will too [See Warner (1986)]
(9) a *John was here, and Mary will was here too
  b John was here and Mary will be here too
(10) Hypothesis 2 (merely a descriptive generalization): A form of a verb V other than he 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.
(11) 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.
(12) John [Af] sleep, and Mary will sleep too

II. Motivation for the Hybrid Morphological Account

(13) 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 uninflected, so they don't raise.
(14) a *John not left
  b *John left not
(15) Just as in Chomsky (1955) and Chomsky (1957), the process associating the finite affix (Affix Hopping) requires adjacency.
(16) 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).

(17) a Strong lexicalism: verbs are pulled from the lexicon fully inflected.
  b There is no affix hopping.
  c The inflected V raises to Agr (and T) to 'check' the features it already has. This checking can, in principle, take place anywhere in a derivation on the path to LF.
  d Once a feature of Agr has done its checking work, it disappear.
(18) a In French, the V-features of Agr (i.e., those that check features of a V) are strong.
  b In English, the V-features of Agr are weak.
(19) a If V raises to Agr overtly, the V-features of Agr check the features of the V and disappear. If V delays raising until LF, the V-features of Agr survive into PF.
  b V-features are not legitimate PF objects.
  c Strong features are visible at PF; weak features are not. Surviving strong features cause the derivation to 'crash' at PF.
  d This forces overt V-raising in French.
(20) In English, delaying the raising until LF does not result in an ill-formed PF object, so such a derivation is possible. What makes it necessary is:
(21) 'Procrastinate': Whenever possible, delay an operation until LF.
(22) Why do have and be raise overtly?
(23) Have and be are semantically vacuous, hence not visible to LF operations. (Chomsky does not discuss modals.) Thus, if they have not raised overtly, they will not be able to raise at all. Their unchecked features will cause the LF to crash.
(24) *John not left
(25) *John left not
(26) One or the other of these should be allowed. If something rules out (24), then (25) should, as a consequence, be permitted, since Procrastinate crucially only chooses among convergent derivations.

III. An Alternative Treatment of the Gap?

(27) Given that finite forms of be raise, while finite forms of main verbs do not, could it be that, for some reason, a trace can't serve as (part of) an antecedent for ellipsis? This possibility was considered, and rejected, in Lasnik (1995b).
(28) a Linguistics, I like it, and you should like linguistics too
  b ?Someone will be in the office.
  c Strong features are visible at PF; weak features are not. Surviving strong features cause the derivation to 'crash' at PF.
  d This forces overt V-raising in French.
(29) b V-features are not legitimate PF objects.
(30) *a trace of verb movement cannot serve as part of a VPE antecedent." Roberts (n.d.)
(31) A number of languages with overt V raising to I nonetheless allow VP ellipsis, with the effect that everything in the VP except the V is deleted. Doron (1990) shows this for Hebrew:
(32) Q: Salaxti et ha-yeladim le-beit-ha-sefer
  you-sent the kids to school
  "Did you send the kids to school?"
  A: Salaxti
  I sent
  "I did"
(33) Martins (1994) shows the same thing for Portuguese and McCloskey (1990) does for Irish.
(34) a Martas deu um livro ao João? Sim, deu.
  the Martha gave a book to the John yes gave
  "Did Martha give a book to John? Yes, she did."
Q: Ar chair tā istic a ir
"Did you apply for it?"
A: Chair
"put [PAST]"

[V [V] X] cannot antecede VP-ellipsis of [VP [V] X].

...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

A candidate for a VP headed by verb trace antecedence deletion of a VP headed by a lexical verb: Pseudogapping 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.)

If (36) is correct, it should presumably generalize to all heads, not be limited to V and trace of V:

[V [V] X] cannot antecede VP-ellipsis of [VP [V] X].

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

Speaker A: Mary will see someone
Speaker B: Tell me who Mary will see

Speaker A: Never will [V] Harry t go to a linguistics lecture again
Speaker B: Why

Speaker A: Never will [V] Susan understand some linguists
Speaker B: Tell me which linguists

Speaker A: Never will [V] Susan understand some linguists
Speaker B: Which linguists

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

Given that a raised X0 has had a feature (or set of features) checked and deleted, why can it antecede the deletion of an Xp with its head in situ (as in Pseudogapping and SLuicing)?

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

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

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

John slept, and Mary will too

John was here, and Mary will too

John was here, and Mary will be here too

Here be does not raise at all, with or without pied-piping, whereas was obviously does raise, resulting in features being checked and deleted.

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

VI. Another Kind of Justification for (44)

[Under ellipsis] Corresponding X̃ traces [unlike XP traces] must have the same binder in both the antecedent and target clauses.

Chicken, she'll eat, but ostrich, she won't

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.

Q: dina soreset 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 soreset

no, but mother hers knits

A2: lo, ima Sela kona (lo)

no, mother hers buys (to-her)

"No, her mother buys them (for her)." Hebrew Doron (1990)

A1 is 'tcrie' or 'slightly'. A2 is only strict.

Ivan piše rad paždívko, 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

Marko gradi sebi kucu, a Marija kupuje

"Marko is building himself a house, and Maria is buying herself a house."

Q: Does Dina knit the sweaters that she wears?

A: No mother buys the sweaters that she wears

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

(81) dina soreset et ha-svederim Se-hi loveSet, be-7od ima Sela kona

Dina knits the sweaters that she wears while mother hers buys

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

(83) dina ochevet ko sveder Se-hi loveSet aval ima Sela sonet

Dina loves every sweater that she wears but mother here hates

"Dina loves every sweater that she wears but her mother hates every sweater that she wears."

Bibliography


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