

PHASES AND ELLIPSIS

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1. Aim of the Paper.

In this paper, I propose that various instances of ellipsis, i.e. VP ellipsis (1), Pseudogapping (2), Gapping (3), and Sluicing (4), can be explained and given a unified account with a phase-based theory of deletion.

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| (1) | Claire read a book, and Heather did too. | <i>(VP ellipsis)</i> |
| (2) | Claire read more books than Heather did magazines. | <i>(Pseudogapping)</i> |
| (3) | Claire read a book and Heather a magazine. | <i>(Gapping)</i> |
| (4) | Claire read a book but I don't know which. | <i>(Sluicing)</i> |

In principle, there are two alternatives: deletion the domain of the phase, or deletion of full phases. I will argue that the domain of the phase is the part that is deleted, since then, a direct relation between Spell-Out and ellipsis obtains, by which ellipsis would simply be a case of non-Spell-Out. For expository reasons, I will limit the discussion to the derivation of Pseudogapping and Gapping.

2. Movement of the remnant in Pseudogapping.

It has standardly been assumed (Lasnik 1995, 1999, a.o.) that Pseudogapping involves movement of the remnant (*magazines* in (2)) to a position above VP, SpecAgr_O in Lasnik's terms, and that the VP is subsequently deleted. This movement process is triggered by an EPP feature in Agr - the remnant in SpecAgr_O checks this EPP feature. This approach, however, cannot account for the obligatory contrastiveness of the Pseudogapping remnant. Hence, I propose an approach that incorporates this property, using a [contrastive] feature that (i) captures the impossibility of deleting focused or new material, and (ii) triggers movement of contrasted elements out of the phrase marked for deletion. Following ideas in Chomsky (2005), whereby the outer specifier of ν P is an A-bar position, derived by A-bar movement, the remnant in Pseudogapping moves to this specifier position to check its A-bar properties, namely, contrastiveness and focus.

3. The Deletion Process: The E-feature.

The E-feature (Merchant 2001) instructs the grammar to delete everything below the head on which it is placed. If the E-feature is placed on material that is redundant with respect to the antecedent, we can assume that in Pseudogapping, it is to be found on the head V. However, I suggest that the mechanism of the E-feature be modified to target maximal projections, instead of complements, a modification that becomes particularly important in Gapping.

4. Gapping.

In Gapping, the E-feature is also placed on "redundant" elements, namely, T and V. Then, the derivation could proceed as in Pseudogapping, with the remnant moving up to the outer specifier of ν P. However, if the full TP is deleted, the E-feature on T would prohibit the presence of focused material in its complement position. Hence, the complement needs to move higher up in the clause, via A-bar movement. As the subject in SpecTP would also be part of the TP, I suggest that the subject needs to move as well, to the specifier of a Topic phrase in a split CP structure (modelled on Rizzi 1997). The contrastive object remnant moves higher up into the specifier of a Focus phrase below the Topic phrase, thus deriving the surface order. This accounts for (a) the general contrastivity of the

subject in Gapping, and (b) the non-coreferential reading if the subject pronoun is focused, as in (5). If the E-feature targets maximal projections, Gapping could be treated as TP deletion, as shown in (6).

- (5) a. Claire read a book, and Heather a magazine.
 b. *Claire read a book, and she a magazine.
 c. Claire_i read a book, and SHE_k a magazine.
- (6) ... and [_{TOPP} Heather_i [_{FocP} a magazine_k [_{TP} t_i [_{T[E]} [_{vP} t_k [_{vP} [_{VP} [_{V[E]} read [_{NP} t_k]]]]]]]]]]]

5. Phase-based Deletion.

Since Sluicing is generally conceived to be TP-Deletion, and if Pseudogapping is treated as a variant of VP ellipsis, there are two places in the clause where deletion takes place, i.e. the VP (VP ellipsis, Pseudogapping), and the TP (Gapping, Sluicing). Hence, the possibility emerges to delete full phases, if we adhere to a principle like MaxElide (Merchant to appear). If Gapping and Sluicing constitute TP deletion, the question arises whether TP constitutes a phase or not. If it were a phase (contra Chomsky 2005) then the full phase could be deleted. If we follow Chomsky (2005) and others in assuming that TP is not a phase, though, and only vP and CP are treated as phases, this leaves the TP as deletion site unaccounted for. Whilst this is debatable, deletion should not target full CPs. Hence, I assume that ellipsis targets the *domain* of the phase, which I take to be the VP for the vP phase, and the TP for the CP. This fits in with the Pseudogapping analysis outlined above, in that the remnant does not leave the vP, and would be subject to deletion if the full vP were deleted. The advantages of an analysis in these terms are the following. Firstly, we can derive a general choice between Spell-Out and non-Spell-Out, i.e. ellipsis could be treated as the choice to not spell out parts of the clause. Secondly, it adds another motivation for elements to go to the phase edge – to escape deletion in the phasal domain. Thirdly, the account outlined above unifies diverse ellipsis phenomena in that the remnants have a common denominator, the [+contrastive] feature, and are subject to the same deletion mechanism.

References.

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