

## Contrastive Focus: Licensor for Right Node Raising

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**RNR as ellipsis:** In this paper, we propose that Right Node Raising (RNR) is an ellipsis phenomenon and licensed by specific semantic constraints. RNR has been argued to be a purely PF phenomenon (Wexler & Culicover 1980, Hartmann 2000, Abels 2004 for strict phonological deletion; Wilder 1999 for Multiple Dominance). However, the PF-phenomenon accounts face conceptual and empirical problems: i) Fiengo & May's (1994) Vehicle Change effects hold for RNR in (1), ii) Lack of morphological identity holds in (2), and iii) Sloppy Identity is available in (3). If the RNR portion were deleted under strict PF-identity, no antecedent for RNR would be found in (1-2). Under the Multiple Dominance account, (3) is mysterious since there is only one occurrence of the pronoun *his*, yet simultaneously bound by the two different DPs. Note, however, that the phenomena (i-iii) have been argued to be properties of forward ellipsis in literature.

- (1) Mary heard that John<sub>i</sub> submitted ~~<the article about himself<sub>i</sub> for the magazine>~~, but Sue said that Bill actually wrote <the article about **John<sub>i</sub>** for the magazine>.  
(Vehicle Change from Proper name *John<sub>i</sub>* to the reflexive *himself*)
- (2) John COULDN'T ~~<have his hair cut>~~, so I **HAD** his hair cut.
- (3) John<sub>i</sub> likes, but Bill<sub>j</sub> hates his<sub>s<sub>ij</sub></sub> father.  
a. John likes John's father, but Bill hates Bill's father (Sloppy reading)  
b. John likes Bill's father, but Bill hates Bill's father (Strict reading)

**Licensing conditions for RNR:** To our knowledge, only Hartmann (2000) has discussed licensing conditions for RNR, based on an alternative semantics for focus (Rooth 1992). According to Hartmann, for RNR to be licensed, i) both conjuncts must be structurally identical, ii) the pre-RNR elements in the first conjunct and the elements with which they contrast in the second must be focused, iii) the focused elements create sets of alternatives, and iv) the sets of alternatives for both conjuncts must be identical. If all the conditions are met, Hartmann claims that RNR is licensed. Consider (4), where the subject and the verb in each conjunct are focused and generate sets of alternatives in (5). Since TP<sub>1</sub> and TP<sub>2</sub> are identical, RNR is licensed, so PF-deletion follows the focused verb in the first conjunct.

- (4) [<sub>TP1</sub>[JOHN]<sub>F</sub> [SOLD]<sub>F</sub> <the car>], and [<sub>TP2</sub>[MARY]<sub>F</sub> [BOUGHT]<sub>F</sub> the car].  
(5) a.  $\llbracket \text{TP1} \rrbracket^f = \lambda p [\exists z \in \text{ALT}(\text{John}') \ \& \ \exists Q \in \text{ALT}(\text{sold}') \ \& \ p = Q(\text{tx.car}(x))(z)]$   
b.  $\llbracket \text{TP2} \rrbracket^f = \lambda p [\exists z \in \text{ALT}(\text{Mary}') \ \& \ \exists Q \in \text{ALT}(\text{bought}') \ \& \ p = Q(\text{tx.car}(x))(z)]$

**Problems for the previous research:** There are two problems for Hartmann's licensing conditions. i) Hartmann predicts (6) to be ungrammatical, contrary to fact, since both conjuncts are not syntactically identical, and consequently, the antecedent (A) and the elided part (E) are not identical. The focused pre-RNR element is an auxiliary *had* in the first conjunct, so E is vP *driven a car*. The focus in the second is assigned on a copular *isn't*, so A must be DP *a car that he has driven*. ii) Hartmann's approach predicts ungrammaticality when the set of alternatives that each conjunct generates differs. In (7), the focus is assigned on the verb in the first conjunct, and the negated dummy *do* in the second. Apart from the structural mismatch between A and E, the alternative sets do not appear to match either. The focused main verb in the first conjunct generates an alternative set - {Mary met her husband, Mary called her husband, Mary found her husband...}, while the focused *do* in the second conjunct generates only {Mary did meet her husband, Mary didn't meet her husband}. The alternative sets are not identical between the two.

- (6) Bill might wish he **HAD** ~~<driven a car>~~, but this **ISN'T** a car he has driven.  
(7) Cathy **MET**, but Mary **DIDN'T** meet her husband at the train station.

**Proposals:** Like Hartmann, we argue that focus plays a crucial role for licensing RNR, but unlike Hartmann, we propose that structural isomorphism between A and E does not need to hold. We claim that at LF, a mutual entailment relationship between A and E must be established for RNR to be licensed (e.g. Sauerland (1998), Fox (1999, 2000), Merchant (2001)). With semantic licensing conditions, we can easily account for the differences between deaccented RNR and elided RNR in (8), and for examples like (6), where the structure of the antecedent mismatches with that of the ellipsis. Regarding (6), we claim that focus triggers accommodation (cf. Fox 2000), and that one of the LFs, entailed by the antecedent, matches with the LF of the RNRred clause shown in (9c). Then, the sets of alternatives that both conjuncts generate mutually entail each other, so RNR is licensed in (10). We claim that focus has an E(llipsis)-feature, which instructs PF not to pronounce the RNRred element, following the focused word in the first conjunct (cf. Merchant 2001). Let us consider (11-14). Given that (11-13) are acceptable, but (14) is not, a certain type of contrast between the two conjuncts is required to license RNR, but not necessarily forward ellipsis (13). To account for the contrast, we propose that only *contrastive* focus contains an E-feature and licenses RNR. In (14), RNR is not licensed because the focus on the pre-RNR element is not contrastive. Regarding (7), we argue that it is the null T that is focused, not the verb in the first conjunct. Inspired by Chomsky (2005) and Miyagawa (2005), where they claim that agreement and focus originates from the same head C, and that either agreement or focus can percolate down to T, we claim that T may be valued as  $\varnothing$  **and** focus inherited from C when T merges with C. Since focus features must be phonetically realized but cannot be realized on the null T, the verb picks up the focus pronunciation, in the same way that main verbs pick up tense-morphemes (Distributed Morphology, Halle & Marantz 1993). The focus feature in T generates the same sets of alternatives that the focused dummy *do* does. Therefore, at LF, both conjuncts in (7) yield the same sets of alternatives. We further assume that all the modals and auxiliaries create the same sets of alternatives, and that prediction is borne out in (15-18).

- (8) a. Mary COULDN'T ~~<eat the snail at the French restaurant>~~, but John COULD eat the snail at the French restaurant. ( $\checkmark$  Elided RNR: Antecedent & Ellipsis mutually entail each other)  
 b. \* Mary COULDN'T ~~<eat a French dish>~~, but John COULD eat the snail at the French restaurant. (\*Elided RNR:  $A \rightarrow E$ , but \* $E \rightarrow A$ )  
 c. Mary COULDN'T <sup>eat a French dish</sup>, but John COULD eat the snail at the French restaurant. ( $\checkmark$  Deaccented RNR:  $A \rightarrow E$ )
- (9) Bill might wish <sub>[TP(E)]</sub> he HAD ~~<driven this car>~~, but <sub>[TP(A)]</sub> this ISN'T a car he has driven].  
Logically equivalent possibilities for TP(A) by accommodation:  
 a. This isn't a car he has driven  $t_{a \text{ car}}$ .  
 b. It's not the case that this is a car he has driven  $t_{a \text{ car}}$ .  
 c.  $\checkmark$  It's not the case that he has **driven this car**.  
 → (c) is chosen and taken to be an antecedent for ellipsis in the first conjunct.
- (10)  $TP_{(A)} = \{\exists x[\text{Id}(\text{this}, x) \ \& \ \text{car}(x) \ \& \ \text{Bill has driven}(x)], \neg \exists x[\text{Id}(\text{this}, x) \ \& \ \text{car}(x) \ \& \ \text{Bill has driven}(x)]\}$   
 $= \{\text{It's the case that Bill has driven this car, It isn't the case that Bill has driven this car.}\}$   
 $TP_{(E)} = \{\text{It's the case that Bill had driven this car, It isn't the case that Bill had driven this car.}\}$   
 $TP_{(A)} = TP_{(E)}$   
 → RNR is licensed, so PF-deletion follows the focused pre-RNR element in the first conjunct.
- (11) John likes Mary, but Bill doesn't. (Ellipsis – contrast in polarity)  
 (12) John DOES, but Bill DOESN'T like Mary. (RNR – contrast in polarity)  
 (13) John likes Mary, and Bill does, too. (Ellipsis – no contrast)  
 (14) \*John DOES, and Bill LIKES Mary. (RNR – no contrast)  
 (15) Jane LOVES, but she SHOULDN'T love her friend's husband.  
 (16) Jane DOES, but she SHOULDN'T love her friend's husband.  
 (17) Joe GAVE, but Mary COULDN'T give a present to her teacher.  
 (18) Joe DID, but Mary COULDN'T give a present to her teacher.