

# Licensing ellipsis:

## Under which conditions can ellipsis take place?

### Key words:

Ellipsis, licensing, syntax, Generative Grammar

### Main research question:

Ellipsis is subject to two major conditions: recoverability and licensing.

- 1 Recoverability: An elided phrase needs a salient antecedent.

- (1) a. Jasmin is [<sub>antecedent</sub> drinking tea], but Ryan isn't [<sub>elided phrase</sub> drinking tea].  
b. \*Jasmin is drinking tea and Ryan is [<sub>elided phrase</sub> eating a apple].

- 2 Licensing: Not just any phrase with a salient antecedent can be deleted.

- (2) \* Morgan is drawing a giraffe, but Alice isn't drawing a [giraffe].

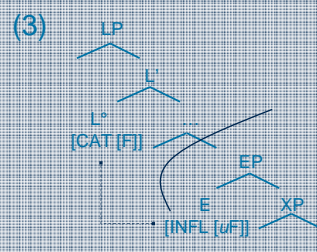
**Goal of this thesis:** Exploring and formulating the licensing conditions on ellipsis.

### Approach:

Examining different elliptical constructions, starting from Dutch and English and comparing them to other (mostly Indo-European) languages.

### Results:

**Main claim:** Ellipsis is licensed through an Agree-relation between a licensing head and an E-head selecting the elided phrase (E for ellipsis).



L° = head licensing ellipsis  
EP = ellipsis site

→ The ellipsis site is sent off to Spell-out not to be pronounced from the moment L° is merged and the uninterpretable feature on E is checked against the category feature on L°.

**Restrictions:** 1 Agree is a local relation: no interveners, not too much distance.  
2 Which head is the licensor differs across languages and from construction to construction, as does the size of the ellipsis site.

**Innovation:** Ellipsis licensing is not subject to adjacency (head-complement).

Lobke Aelbrecht – CRISSP – promotores: Guido Vanden Wyngaerd  
Jeroen van Craenenbroeck

lobke.aelbrecht@hubrussel.be