Movement or ellipsis: What's the difference?!

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OUTLINE OF THE TALK

1 BACKGROUND: ONE SYNTACTIC CONDITION ON EMPTY ELEMENTS
2 JOHNSON (2001): ELLIPSIS SITES ARE (LIKE) TRACES
3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VP ELLIPSIS AND VP FRONTING
4 ANALYSIS: TRACES ARE (LIKE) ELLIPSIS SITES
5 TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION: LICENSING SILENCE VIA AGREE
6 EXTENDING THE ANALYSIS: POTENTIAL PROBLEMS
7 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER ISSUES

Main claims

❶ Both VP ellipsis and VP fronting are syntactically licensed by the same syntactic mechanism. This explains the similarities between the two phenomena.

❷ In both VP ellipsis and VP fronting the specific syntactic environment licenses the non-pronunciation at PF of a VP:
VP ellipsis involves non-pronunciation of the original VP
VP fronting involves non-pronunciation of the lower copy of VP.

→ **Movement traces are (like) ellipsis sites**.

❸ The differences between VP ellipsis and VP fronting are due to the fact that fronting involves movement and ellipsis does not.

❹ A way of capturing this syntactic licensing condition is by claiming that ellipsis (and by extension deletion of the lower copy in movement) is licensed by Agree (Aelbrecht 2010).

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1 BACKGROUND: ONE SYNTACTIC CONDITION ON EMPTY ELEMENTS

Rizzi (1986: 518) argues for a separation of the recovery condition and the formal licensing condition of empty elements.

① **Recovery condition** = how traces, PRO, ellipsis sites etc. are identified.
→ discourse structural/semantic/pragmatic

② **Formal licensing condition** = Generalized Empty Category Principle (GECP, Chomsky 1981: 274).
→ syntactic condition on ellipsis
see Lobeck (1995), Zagona (1982, 1988a) in a G&B framework

Research Questions:

→ **One single licensing condition for ellipsis and movement?**
→ **How to do this in a Minimalist framework?**

2 JOHNSON (2001): ELLIPSIS SITES ARE (LIKE) TRACES

• Main focus of this talk: VP ellipsis (VPE) and VP fronting (VPF) in English.

(1) a. Ryan said he would write a book and he did [~~write a book~~]. **[VPE]**
b. Ryan said he would write a book and [write a book] he did *t*. **[VPF]**

• VP Fronting (VPF) and VP ellipsis (VPE) exhibit parallel syntactic behaviour (Johnson 2001; see also Zagona 1982).

① They occur in the same environments: Both an elided VP and the trace left by a fronted VP must be governed by an Aux (Johnson 2001).

(2) a. * Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so [eating fish] she started *t*.
b. Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so [eating fish] she **should** be *t*.
c. * No-one suspected Drew wanted to leave, but [to leave] he wanted *t*.
d. No-one suspected Drew wanted to leave, but [leave] he wanted **to** *t*.

(3)   a.   * Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so she started [~~eating fish~~].
      b.   Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so she **should** be [~~eating fish~~].
      c.   * I told Drew he didn't have to leave, but he wanted [~~to leave~~].
      d.   I told Drew he didn't have to leave, but he wanted **to** [~~leave~~].

② They target the same chunk of the verb phrase:

(4)   a.   * Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that [have eaten fish] she should *t*.
      b.   Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that [eaten fish] she should have *t*.

(5)   a.   * Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that she should [~~have eaten fish~~].
      b.   Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that she should have [~~eaten fish~~].

→ Johnson (2001: 445): This "encourages thinking of the licensing condition on (VP) ellipsis in terms of the licensing condition on traces".

→ This has led him to the conclusion that VPE is licensed through VPF: In order for a VP to be elided, it has to be fronted first.

   (6)   **Step 1:** He said he would win the lottery, and [win the lottery]$_{VP}$ he did *t*.

          Step 2: He said he would win the lottery, and [~~win the lottery~~]$_{VP}$ he did *t*.

 = **Ellipsis sites are (like) traces (Johnson 2001).**

Prediction: Whenever VPF is disallowed, VPE should be equally impossible.

3   DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VP ELLIPSIS AND VP FRONTING

• This prediction is not borne out: there are environments disallowing VPF, but VPE is still possible (see also Aelbrecht & Haegeman 2011).

① VPF is a main clause phenomenon: It cannot occur with factive main predicates, sentential subjects or temporal clauses (Hooper & Thompson 1973; Green 1976; Haegeman to appear; see also Emonds 1969).

(7)   a.   * Christina plans for Tim to marry her and it bothers me that [marry her] he will *t*.   **[factive main predicate]**
      b.   * Jonathan said he'd win that girl's heart and that [win her heart] he did *t* amazed me.   **[sentential subject]**
      c.   * Jeneen went to the supermarket after [go to the supermarket] I did *t*.   **[temporal clause]**

VPE is fine in such contexts.

(8)   a.   Christina plans for Tim to marry her and it bothers me that he will [~~marry her~~].   **[factive main predicate]**
      b.   Jonathan said he'd win that girl's heart and that he did [~~win her heart~~] amazed me.   **[sentential subject]**
      c.   Jeneen went to the supermarket after I did [~~go to the supermarket~~].   **[temporal clause]**

② VPF is island-sensitive, whereas VPE is not:

(9)   a.   * Gerald didn't travel to Denmark, but [travel to Denmark]$_i$ I know a [guy [who did *t*$_i$]].
      b.   Gerald didn't travel to Denmark, but I know a [guy [who did [~~travel to Denmark~~]]].

→ **VPE cannot be licensed through VPF. Ellipsis sites are not the result of movement, i.e. they are not (like) traces.**

→ **But what about the similarities?**

4   ANALYSIS: TRACES ARE (LIKE) ELLIPSIS SITES

4.1   *Movement as ellipsis of the lower copy*

Main hypothesis

Both VPE and VPF are syntactically licensed by the same syntactic mechanism. This explains the similarities between the two phenomena.

In both VPE and VPF the specific syntactic environment licenses the non-pronunciation at PF of a VP:
     VPE involves non-pronunciation of the original VP
     VPF involves non-pronunciation of the lower copy of the VP.

→ **Movement traces are (like) ellipsis sites**.

4.2   *Explaining the differences between VPE and VPF*

①   VPF is impossible in complement clauses of factive predicates, sentential subjects and temporal adjuncts, unlike VPE.

     → Emonds (1970, 1976), Hooper & Thompson (1973) and Green (1976) classify VP fronting as a main clause phenomenon (MCP).

Other cases of MCP (examples taken from Hooper & Thompson 1973: 467):

(10)   a.   [Never in my life] have I seen such a crowd.
                                 [Negative Constituent Preposing]
       b.   [This book], you should read.   **[Argument Fronting]**
       c.   [On the wall] hangs a portrait of Mao.   **[Locative Inversion]**

     → MCP are restricted to main clauses (see (10)) and certain embedded clauses:

(11)   a.   I exclaimed that [never in my life] had I seen such a crowd.
       b.   The inspector explained that [each part] he had examined carefully.
       c.   The scout reported that [beyond the next hill] stood a large fortress.

(12)   a.   * He was surprised that [never in my life] had I seen a hippopotamus
       b.   * I regret that [each part] he had to examine carefully.
       c.   * The guide regretted that [beyond the next hill] stood a large fortress.

• Haegeman & Ürögdi (2010) explain this restriction in the following way:

The environments that disallow MCP involve operator movement in the embedded clause. Since MCP involves movement, they are excluded from these contexts because of intervention effects.

②   VPF is island-sensitive, unlike VPE.

(13)   a.   * Gerald didn't travel to Denmark, but [travel to Denmark] I know a [guy [who did *t*]].
       b.   Gerald didn't travel to Denmark, but I know a [guy [who did [~~travel to Denmark~~]]].

Explanation for the differences with VPE: VPF involves movement of the VP, whereas VPE does not.

5   TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION: LICENSING SILENCE VIA AGREE

Overview
   5.1   Licensing VPE via Agree (Aelbrecht 2010)
       5.1.1   Licensing ellipsis: Merchant (2001)
       5.1.2   Why Agree? Material between the licensor and the ellipsis site
       5.1.3   How Agree?
       5.1.4   VP ellipsis and Agree
   5.2   Licensing VP fronting via Agree

5.1   Licensing ellipsis via Agree

5.1.1   Licensing ellipsis: Merchant (2001)
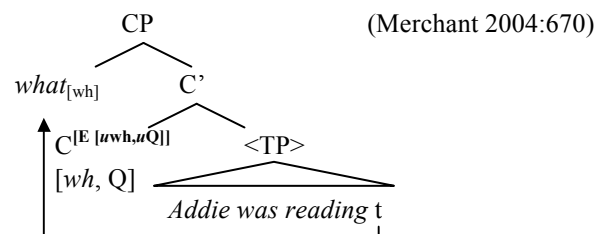
• Sluicing:

(14)   Addie was reading something, but I don't know what [~~she was reading~~].

Sluicing =   licensed by an ellipsis-feature [E] that occurs on the licensing head and triggers deletion at PF of its complement.

(15)   a.   The syntax of E_S: E_S [$u$wh*, uQ*] → Interrogative C head
     b.   The phonology of E_S: φTP → Ø/$E_{S\_}$
     c.   The semantics of E_S: $[\![E_S]\!]$ = λp : e-GIVEN (p) [p]

• Example: CP   (Merchant 2004:670)

→ licensor and ellipsis site in head-complement relation

5.1.2   Why Agree? Material between the licensor and the ellipsis site

• VP ellipsis: licensed by finite T (Sag 1976; Williams 1977; Zagona 1982, 1988a, 1988b; Martin 1992, 1996; Lobeck 1995), not by nonfinite auxiliaries

(16)   a.   He said he wouldn't buy me a coffee, but he **did**.
     b.   I'm going to take Italian classes and she **should**, too.
     c.   * I hadn't been thinking about it, but I recall Diana **having been**.
     d.   * Kim having shown up at the game and Alice not **having** was a surprise to everyone.

• The finite auxiliary and the VP ellipsis site are not always adjacent:

(17)   I hadn't been thinking about it, but I **should** <u>have been</u> [~~thinking about it~~].

→ Ellipsis cannot be licensed via a head-complement relation.

> **Claim**: ellipsis is licensed via Agree (Aelbrecht 2010)

3.1.3   How Agree?

• Merchant's [E]-feature: Both ellipsis site and licensor are identified at once because they are adjacent.

→ Because this is impossible if they are not adjacent, I propose a more complex [E]-feature.

• I propose heads are feature bundles with the following feature structure:

(18) $\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} [\ldots] \\ \text{INFL} [\ldots] \\ \text{SEL} [\ldots] \end{bmatrix}$ → specifies the category of the head
                    → uninterpretable INFL-features have to be checked
                    → specifies the selectional criteria of the head

(19)   a.   Ryan is smart.
     b.
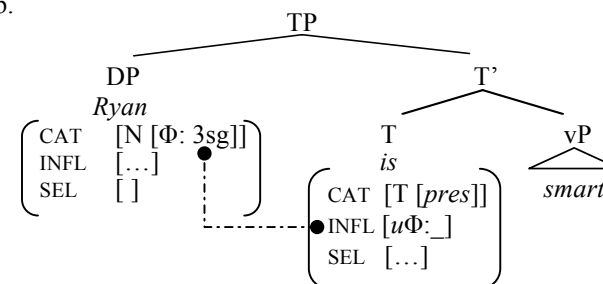
• The syntax of [E] (in general):

(20)
$$E \begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} & [\text{E/X}] \\ \text{INFL} & [u\text{F}] \\ \text{SEL} & [\text{X}] \end{bmatrix}$$
→ [uF]-feature, to be checked against the licensor
→ specifies the head on which [E] can occur

(21)
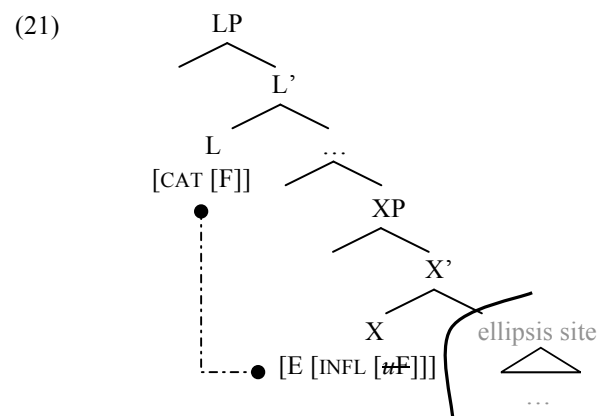
→ L = licensor of category F
  [E] has an uninterpretable [F]-feature that has to be checked against L via Agree

→ **Ellipsis: licensed via Agree**
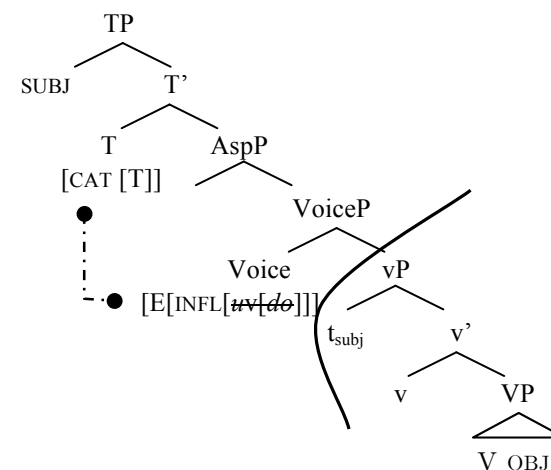
5.1.4   VP ellipsis and Agree

• The licensing head of VPE is T and the ellipsis site is vP (Aelbrecht 2010; see also Johnson 2004, Merchant 2007, 2008a,b).

  → An [E]-feature for VPE:

(22)
$$E_{\text{VPE}} \begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} & [\text{E/Voice}] \\ \text{INFL} & [u\text{T}] \\ \text{SEL} & [\text{Voice}] \end{bmatrix}$$

(23)

5.2   Licensing VP Fronting via Agree

• In the same discourse structure only certain VPs can be fronted:

(24)   a. * Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so [eating fish] she started *t*.
       b.   Alice told Julia to be eating fish, so [eating fish] she should be *t*.
       c. * No-one suspected Drew wanted to leave, but [to leave] he wanted *t*.
       d.   No-one suspected Drew wanted to leave, but [leave] he wanted to *t*.

(25)   a. * Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that [have eaten fish] she should *t*.
       b.   Julia hadn't eaten fish, but Alice claimed that [eaten fish] she should have *t*.

→ The movement trace or copy has to be syntactically licensed in the same way as VPE.

• VP ellipsis is licensed by an Agree relation between T and an [E]-feature on Voice.

→ I claim that VPF is licensed by an Agree relation with the T head as well.

VPF is only possible in clauses with a finite auxiliary or infinitival *to*, not with non-finite auxiliaries:

(26) a. He feared that he wouldn't make enough progress, and indeed, his main problem was [having [made less progress than was expected]].
      b. * He feared that he wouldn't make enough progress, and indeed, [made less progress than was expected] his main problem was **having** *t*.
      c. I do not see it having made a difference.
      d. * … [made a difference] I could not see it **having** *t*.

Nonfinite auxiliaries can intervene between the licensor and the moved copy:

(27) They told us that Lou had left early, and [left early] he **might** have *t*.

➔ This leads to the structure in (28): An Agree relation is established between T and Voice, licensing the empty element (trace or deleted copy of the VP) in Voice's complement.

(28)
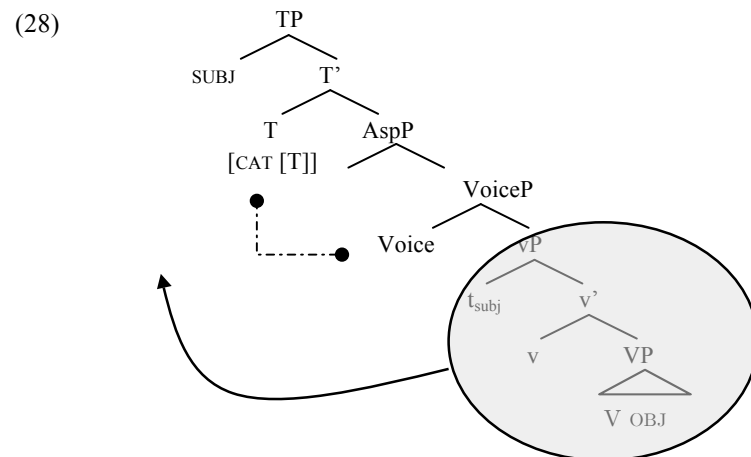
6 EXTENDING THE ANALYSIS: POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Overview
    6.1 *Beyond the verb phrase*
    6.2 *Beyond English*

6.1 *Beyond the verb phrase*

① TP/NP ellipsis, but no TP/NP fronting

• TPs and NPs can be elided as well as VPs:

(29) a. Miffy bought something, but I don't know what [TP ~~Miffy bought~~ ~~t~~what].   (sluicing)
      b. Miffy didn't like Aggie's shoes, but she liked Melanie's [NP ~~shoes~~].

Like VPE, sluicing and NP ellipsis are restricted to certain syntactic environments:

(30) a. * Miffy said she had bought a present, but I don't know whether [TP ~~Miffy bought a present~~], actually.
      b. * Miffy likes the shoes and I liked the [NP ~~shoes~~], as well.

➔ **Sluicing** requires the presence of an interrogative C head [+wh, +Q] (see Merchant 2001).
    = Explanation for why (30)a is ungrammatical

    NP ellipsis (NPE) requires the presence of a possessive D head (or a D that agrees with its specifier, see Lobeck 1995; Saito & Murasugi 1999) **(oversimplification!)**
    = Explanation for why (30)b is ungrammatical.

➔ These restrictions can be captured by an Agree relation with these licensing heads as well (see also Merchant 2001, Aelbrecht 2010)

• **Potential problem**: TP fronting and NP fronting are not allowed at all (Saito and Murasugi 1999; Johnson 2001):

(31)   a.   * [Miffy bought]$_i$ I don't know what t_i.
       b.   * [Miffy bought something]$_i$ I didn't know that t_i
       c.   * [Shoes]$_i$ Miffy likes Melanie's t_i.
       d.   * [Shoes]$_i$ Miffy likes the t_i.

> **Solution** (Saito and Murasugi 1999):
>
> The ban on TP fronting/NP fronting in contexts that allow sluicing/NP ellipsis is due to Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990).

• **TP fronting**:

(32)   a.   * [Miffy bought]$_i$ I don't know what t_i.
       b.   * [Miffy bought something]$_i$ I didn't know that t_i

In (32)a the moved TP has to skip a potential A' landing site [Spec, CP] because it is occupied by the *wh*-element:

(33)   * [$_{TP}$ Miffy bought t$_{what}$] I don't know [$_{CP}$ what [$_{C'}$ C t_{TP}]].

     = violation of relativized minimality

‼   This does not happen in (32)b, because there is no element in [Spec, CP], but in this case, the fronting is not syntactically licensed, parallel to sluicing:

(34)   *   [$_{TP}$ Miffy bought something] I didn't know [$_{CP}$ t_{TP} [$_{C'}$ that t_{TP}]].

→   The Agree relation is only established in *wh*-questions, parallel to sluicing, but this implies that the moved TP violates relativized minimality.

→   **We still need a syntactic licensing condition (Agree) to rule out (32)b.**

• **NP fronting**:

(35)   a.   * [Shoes]$_i$ Miffy likes Melanie's t_i.
       b.   * [Shoes]$_i$ Miffy likes the t_i.

In (35)a the moved NP has to skip a potential A' landing site [Spec, DP] because it is occupied by the possessor, violating relativized minimality:

(36)   *[$_{NP}$ Shoes] Miffy likes [$_{DP}$ Melanie [$_{D'}$'s t_{NP}]].

This does not happen in (35)b because there is no element in [Spec, DP], but in this case, the fronting is not syntactically licensed, parallel to NP ellipsis:

(37)   * [$_{NP}$ Shoes] Miffy likes [$_{DP}$ t_{NP} [$_{D'}$ the t_{NP}]].

Moreover, Cinque (2004) argues that NP **can** move DP-internally in Romanian and observes a parallel between such movement and NPE: both trigger the full form of the demonstrative.

(38)   a.   copii*i*   {aceşti**a**/*aceşti} doi   buni   **(NP movement)**
           children.the   these   two   good
           'these two good children'
       b.   {aceşti**a**/* aceşti}   doi   buni   **(NP Ellipsis)**
           these   two   good
           'these two good ones'

> →   TP fronting and NP fronting can be licensed in principle, but the movement operation would violate relativized minimality, accounting for the ungrammaticality.
> TP ellipsis and NP ellipsis do not involve movement and are allowed.
>
> →   In crossing [Spec, TP] VP fronting does not violate relativized minimality because [Spec, TP] is an A position and therefore not a potential landing site for the verb phrase.

② PP/DP movement, but no PP/DP ellipsis

• **Problem**: PP fronting and DP fronting are allowed, but PP ellipsis and DP ellipsis are not (Johnson 2001: 444).

(39) a. [PP To Mag Wildwood] Joe said that Holly can talk t_{PP}.
      b. * Joe can talk to Mag Wildwood and Holly can talk [~~to Mag Wildwood~~], too.
      c. [DP This book] I like t_{DP}.
      d. * You told me about this book, and I read [~~this book~~].

→ It is unclear to me at this point why PP/DP ellipsis is illicit and how PP/DP fronting would be licensed.

Potential solutions (to be worked out):

• **PP ellipsis/fronting**

❶ Den Dikken (2006) argues that 'real' PP topicalization does not exist.

❷ Italian might display some cases of PP ellipsis (Guglielmo Cinque, p.c.):

(40) Io ho   mandato a Carlo una lettera e   Maria ha   mandato [~~a~~
      I   have sent   to Carlo a   letter and Maria has sent   to
      ~~Carlo~~] una cartolina.
      Carlo a   postcard
      'I have sent a letter to Carlo and Maria has sent a postcard.'

• **DP ellipsis/fronting**

❶ DP ellipsis: can null subjects in prodrop languages such as Spanish and Italian be considered cases of DP ellipsis? And cases of object drop?

(41) a. (Io) vado   al   mare!   [Italian]
          I   go.1SG to.the sea
          'I'm going to the sea.'

      b. (Yo) no hablo   Español.   [Spanish]
          I   not speak.1SG Spanish
          'I don't speak Spanish.'

(42) a. He wrote that book himself. – Yes, I know (that).
      b. Je   dois travailler, tu   comprends?   [French]
          I   must work   you understand
          'I have to work, you understand?'

❷ Ban on (wider) DP ellipsis could be due to identification (recoverability condition)?

Rizzi (1986): difference between object drop and subject drop in Italian[1]
Identification of null objects: only for human, plural, generic objects
Identification of null subjects: through Phi-features (no generic!)

→ This differs in different languages!
   See also Gavarró (1992): differences between languages concerning null subjects and null objects are due to recoverability, not to syntactic licensing

→ How exactly DP ellipsis (if it exists) is constrained by identification in a stricter way than ellipsis of the lower copy of a moved DP, is unclear to me at this point. To be worked out!

6.2   Beyond English

• **Problem**: If VPE and VPF are licensed by the same Agree relation, why don't all languages that can front a verb phrase allow VP ellipsis?

→ Dutch: VPF, but no VPE

(43) a. Hij zei dat hij zou dansen, en [gedanst] heeft hij t.
          he   said that he would dance   and danced   has   he
          'He said he would dance, and dance he did.'

---

[1] Thanks to Guglielmo Cinque for pointing this out to me.

b. Hij   zei dat hij zou   dansen en   hij heeft *[~~gedanst~~].
   he   said that he would dance   and he has   danced
   INTENDED: 'He said he would dance, and he did.'

→ The distribution of VPE in other languages, as well as the conditions on VPF, need further examination.

→ Cross-linguistic research project with Irene Franco, Anikó Lipták and Andrés Saab at Leiden University:

• No (English-like)VPF nor VPE in Spanish
 No VPF nor VPE in Icelandic

• To what extent is VP Fronting the same in different languages?

Dutch: preference for presence of *dat* (resumptive pronoun of contrastive left dislocation?)

(44) Hij zei dat hij zou   dansen, en   gedanst, dat heeft hij.
      he   said that he would dance   and danced that has   he
      'He said that he would dance and danced he has.'

7   CONCLUSION AND FURTHER ISSUES

7.1   *Further issues*

① The trigger for movement

• **Important note:** Licensing is not the same as triggering movement or ellipsis.

→ A sentence with a salient antecedent in which ellipsis is syntactically licensed does not always contain an ellipsis site. Ellipsis is optional.

→ Even if fronting of a VP is licensed and in the right discourse structure, the VP is not always fronted. The fronting itself is triggered by something else, possibly a

Top(icalization) feature on the verb phrase itself (Repel movement or foot-driven movement, see Platzack 1996; van Craenenbroeck 2006).

Problem: If the fronting itself is triggered by a feature, why can't this act as syntactic licensing? Why does a movement trace/ellipsis site need to be syntactically licensed independent from the actual trigger?

② The Agree relation

• What does T agree with in VPF? What is the nature of the Agree relation?

→ In the slightly longer run, we would like to get rid of an [E]-feature for ellipsis and capture the Agree relation in VPE and VPF (and possibly other phenomena, such as VP proforms *do it* and *do so*) in a different way.

Problem: At the point when T establishes an Agree relation to license VPF, the verb phrase is not an empty element yet, so it does not need licensing yet.

Possible solution: The verb phrase has already moved to the edge of the clause-internal phase. If the empty element (or unpronounced lower copy) is not licensed by T later on, the derivation will crash.

7.2   *Conclusion*

Main claims   ❶ Both VPE and VPF are syntactically licensed by the same syntactic mechanism, explaining the similarities between the two.
   ❷ In both VPE and VPF the specific syntactic environment licenses the non-pronunciation at PF of a VP:
   VPE involves non-pronunciation of the original VP
   VPF involves non-pronunciation of the lower copy of the VP.
      → **Movement traces are like ellipsis sites**.
   ❸ The differences between VPE and VPF in English are due to the fact that VPF involves movement and VPE does not.
   ❹ A way of capturing this syntactic licensing condition is by claiming that ellipsis (and by extension deletion of the lower copy in movement) is licensed by Agree.

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