Ellipsis, identity, and accommodation:
The case of case

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Highlights

• main topic: constraints on identity in ellipsis
• central data: the complex interaction between morphological case marking on a sluiced wh-phrase and the degree of isomorphism between ellipsis site and antecedent
• main conclusions:
  – ellipsis identity has to allow for accommodation
  – ellipsis licensing in sluicing requires that the sluiced wh-phrase be morphologically anchored to the antecedent clause

Contents

1 Introduction: ellipsis identity

1. Billy-Bob ate something, but I don’t know what _.

ellipsis identity: it is clear that the sluicing site in (1) gets its meaning by virtue of being isomorphic/identical to the antecedent clause at some level and to some extent, but at what level and to what extent?

some history:

1. ellipsis identity is structural/syntactic: Ross (1969); Rooth (1992); Fiengo and May (1994); Chung et al. (1995)
2. ellipsis identity is semantic: Dalrymple et al. (1991); Hardt (1993); Merchant (2001)

in this talk I argue:

• that none of the existing accounts adequately accounts for the interaction between sluicing and morphological case
• that the case facts necessitate the introduction of a new licensing condition on sluicing
2 The basic data: non-isomorphic ellipsis sites

2.1 Introduction: antecedent–ellipsis isomorphism

(2) Billy-Bob ate something, but I don’t know what _.

→ in order to determine the nature of the antecedent–ellipsis identity relation, we first need to know what exactly the ellipsis site looks like:

(3) Billy-Bob ate something, but I don’t know what Billy-Bob ate.

(4) Billy-Bob ate something, but I don’t know what it was.

→ the ellipsis site in (3) is syntactically and semantically isomorphic to the antecedent clause, while the ellipsis site in (4) is (arguably) semantically isomorphic, but not syntactically ⇒ if structures like (4) can be argued to exist, they constitute a problem for syntactic identity approaches

next sections: they do in fact exist!

2.2 Optionally non-isomorphic ellipsis sites

observation: sluicing is often ambiguous depending on the size of the antecedent that is elided

(5) John said that Mary left, but I don’t know why.

a. but I don’t know why John said that Mary left.

b. but I don’t know why Mary left.

note: in some cases differences in size of the antecedent correlate with the difference between having the ellipsis site be isomorphic to the antecedent vs. using a non-isomorphic copular structure (typically, depending on whether ellipsis takes a clausal or a nominal antecedent)

(6) John was given a book, but I don’t know who by.

a. but I don’t know who John was given a book by.

b. but I don’t know who the book was by.

2.3 Necessarily non-isomorphic ellipsis sites

2.3.1 Exclusively nominal antecedents

Beecher (2006): in some contexts the only available antecedent for sluicing is a nominal and as a result the only possible underlying structure is a non-isomorphic copular clause

(7) John received a book, but I don’t know from which author.

a. but I don’t know from which author John received a book.

b. but I don’t know from which author the book was.

(8) They were arguing over a collaboration, but I don’t know with who.

a. but I don’t know with who they were arguing over a collaboration.

b. but I don’t know with who the collaboration was.

(9) I remember the presentation at the Climatic Committee meeting, but do not remember who by.

a. #who I remember the presentation by.

b. who the presentation was by.

(10) The only thing I can come up with is contamination but I do not know what from.

a. *what the only thing I can come up with is contamination from.

b. what the contamination is from.

(11) It strongly reminds me of some European comic I read once, but I can’t remember who by.

a. *who it strongly reminds me of some European comic by.

b. who it was by.

(12) My parents have some gifts from Santa waiting at their house and I’ll put one out for Christmas morning that has their name on it but doesn’t say who from.

a. *who I’ll put one out from.

b. who it is from.
2.3.2 Fragments with dependent tag questions

Dependent tag questions (DTQs) are yes/no questions following assertions (= the host clause), which question the content of that assertion:\footnote{This section is based on joint work with Matt Barros.}

(13) Jack left, didn’t he?

\textit{Sailor} (2011): the elided DTQ-clause and its host are subject to stringent identity requirements:

(14) a. Jack is sleeping, isn’t he?
    b. *Jack is sleeping, isn’t it?

(15) a. *It is Jack, isn’t he?
    b. It is Jack, isn’t it?

\(\rightarrow\) we can use this property of DTQs as a window into the internal syntactic structure of clausal ellipsis sites, in particular \textit{fragment answers} (\textit{Merchant} (2004))

(16) A: Someone left.
    B: Yes, Jack.

\textbf{note:} since fragment answers are themselves assertions, we should be able to tag them with DTQs:

(17) A: Someone left.
    B: Yes, Jack, DTQ?

\textbf{moreover:} given the identity requirements in (14)-(15) the choice of DTQ (cleft or non-cleft) should provide direct insight into the structure of the ellipsis site:

(18) A: Bill met a member of the Linguistics Department.
    B: Yes, Ken Safir, {*wasn’t it/didn’t he}?\footnote{This section is based on joint work with Matt Barros.}

(19) A: Who can Bill talk to?
    B: He can talk to Ken Safir, {*isn’t it/can’t he}?\footnote{This section is based on joint work with Matt Barros.}

\textbf{note:} informal acceptability judgements from linguists surprisingly show that the DTQ consistent with an isomorphic ellipsis site is degraded, and that the cleft DTQ is preferred \(\rightarrow\) this is unexpected from the point of view of Last Resort, because the non-elliptical isomorphic structures are perfectly well-formed:

(20) A: Bill met a member of the Linguistics Department.
    B: Yes, he met Ken Safir, {*wasn’t it/didn’t he}?\footnote{This section is based on joint work with Matt Barros.}

(21) A: Who can Bill talk to?
    B: He can talk to Ken Safir, {*isn’t it/can’t he}?\footnote{This section is based on joint work with Matt Barros.}

\textbf{experimental support:} in an attempt to confirm or disconfirm these initial findings, we ran an online acceptability judgement task:

\begin{itemize}
    \item one independent variable (‘tag type’) - two levels (cleft and non-cleft tags)
    \item 6 items per condition split into two questionnaires
    \item each subject was asked to judge three experimental items per condition on a five point Likert scale (1 = very unnatural, 5 = very natural)
    \item filler to test item ration 2:1 (fillers from two other experiments), pseudorandomized
    \item administered online through the Sakai software platform
    \item advertised on Facebook and psychological research on the net (\url{http://psych.hanover.edu/research/expmonet.html})
    \item judgements were collected from 46 native Standard American English speakers
\end{itemize}

\textbf{results:}

\begin{itemize}
    \item a two tailed t-test for dependent samples revealed a statistically significant difference between acceptability ratings for cleft tags (Mean = 3.75) and non-cleft tags (Mean = 2.92), \(t(137) = -6.883, p < 0.01\) in favor of cleft tags
\end{itemize}
2.3.3 Preposition stranding

(22) P-stranding generalization (PSG) (Merchant, 2001, 92)
A language $L$ will allow preposition stranding under sluicing iff $L$ allows preposition stranding under regular wh-movement.

English: P-stranding

(23) Peter was talking with someone, but I don’t know (with) who.
(24) Who was Peter talking with?

Greek: no P-stranding (Merchant, 2001, 94)

(25) *$I$ Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhen kse$ro$ *(me) pjon.
the Anna spoke with someone but not I know with who
‘Anna spoke with someone, but I don’t know with who.’

(26) *$Pjon milise me?$
who she.speake with
INTENDED: ‘Who did she speak with?’

→ at first sight, Spanish appears to be an exception for the PSG (Nevins et al. (2007); Vicente (2008)).

no P-stranding in regular wh-questions:

(27) *¿Qué chica rubia ha hablado Juan con?
what girl blonde has talked Juan with
INTENDED: ‘What blonde girl did Juan talk to?’

P-stranding under sluicing:

(28) Juan ha hablado con una chica rubia, pero no sé cuál es pro.
Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it
‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which it was.’

(29) Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cuál es $pro$.
Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it
‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which which it was.’

supporting evidence: sluicing and else-modification:
short clefts are incompatible with else-modification

(30) *Juan ha hablado con una chica rubia, pero no sé qué chica
Juan has talked with a girl blonde but not know what girl
más es $pro$.
else is it
*‘Juan talked to a blonde girl, but I don’t know to what other girl
it was.’

no P-stranding under sluicing with else-modification

(31) *Juan ha hablado con una chica rubia, pero no sé qué chica
Juan has talked with a girl blonde but not know what girl
más.
else
‘Juan talked to a blonde girl, but I don’t know to what other girl.’

control: else-modification is allowed in regular (= non-P-stranding) sluicing

(32) Juan ha hablado con una chica rubia, pero no sé con qué
Juan has talked with a girl blonde but not know with what
chica más.
girl else
‘Juan talked to a blonde girl, but I don’t know to what other girl.’

2.4 Conclusion
in general, non-isomorphic (in this case: cleft and copular) ellipsis sites in
sluicing/fragments are difficult to detect, but when they differ sufficiently in
meaning from the isomorphic one, when in the presence of tags, or when the
isomorphic ellipsis site is illicit, they can be shown to exist
3 Morphological case vs. (lack of) isomorphism

3.1 Introduction: case matching

note: one way of getting a fairly direct window into an ellipsis site is by looking at the morphology of elements that have been extracted out of it → e.g. sluicing remnants are known to display case matching (Ross (1969), Merchant (2001)):

(33) Hans hat jemandem gedroht, aber ich weiß nicht {*wer / 
Hans has someone.DAT threatened but I know not who.NOM 
*wen / *wem} 
who.ACC who.DAT
‘Hans threatened someone, but I don’t know who.’

(34) Hans hat jemanden gesehen, aber ich weiß nicht {*wer / 
Hans has someone.ACC seen but I know not who.NOM 
wen / *wem} 
who.ACC who.DAT
‘Hans threatened someone, but I don’t know who.’

→ given that cleft pivots and DPs in copular clauses are often assigned a specific (typically: default) case, the morphological shape of sluicing remnants should reveal its cleft/copular-based underpinnings

3.2 The general pattern: morphological case blocks non-isomorphism

3.2.1 Greek P-stranding under sluicing

setting the scene: case, copular clauses and P-stranding in Greek

accusative case for the object of a preposition:

(35) Me pjon milise?
with who.ACC she.spoke
‘With whom did she speak?’

nominative case for the pivot of a copular clause:

(36) Dhen ksero pjos itan.
not I know who.NOM it.was
‘I don’t know who it was.’

no P-stranding in a regular wh-question:

(37) *Pjon milise me?
who.ACC she.spoke with
intended: ‘Who did she speak with?’

the test: P-stranding under sluicing in Greek

(38) *I Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhen ksero pjos.
the Anna spoke with someone but not I know who.NOM
intended: ‘Anna spoke with someone, but I don’t know who.’

(39) *I Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhen ksero pjon.
the Anna spoke with someone but not I know who.ACC
intended: ‘Anna spoke with someone, but I don’t know who.’

note: the ill-formedness of (39) is hardly surprising in light of (37) (combined with Merchant’s PSG), but the ill-formedness of (38) is puzzling, esp. given (40)

(40) I Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhen ksero pjos itan.
the Anna spoke with someone but not I know who.NOM it.was
‘Anna spoke with someone, but I don’t know who it was.’
conclusion: in precisely the context where we would be able to probe non-isomorphic ellipsis sites fairly directly (i.e. based on the morphological case of the sluiced wh-phrase), this option appears to be ruled out.

3.2.2 Code-switching under sluicing (González-Vilbazo and Ramos (2013))

→ code-switching is the use of two or more languages by highly competent bilinguals within a discourse. These speakers have intuitions about code-switching constructions, similar to monolingual speakers’ grammatical intuitions.

(41) Juan amenazó a alguien aber ich weiß nicht wen ich ich weiβ nicht wem er Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.DAT he gedroht hat.

threatened has
‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who he threatened.’

note: this example shows that we can code-switch in between a possible sluicing site (the embedded question in (41)) and its antecedent. What’s more, the Spanish and German verb differ in the case they assign to their complement (ACC in Spanish vs. DAT in German) → so what happens under sluicing?

(42) Juan amenazó a alguien aber ich weiß nicht {*wer / Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.NOM
*wem / wen}, who.DAT who.ACC
‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who.’

once again: in spite of the fact that (41) is perfectly well-formed, it cannot serve as a source for sluicing. Instead, the (equally grammatical) version in (43) is the only one that can serve as (basis for the) ellipsis site:

(43) Juan amenazó a alguien aber ich weiß nicht wen Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.ACC Juan amenazó.

threatened
‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who he threatened.’

3.3 The exceptional pattern: ambiguous case allows for non-isomorphism

3.3.1 P-stranding in (Zurich) German

observation: when the case assigned to the sluicing remnant in an isomorphic ellipsis site is underlyingly different but superficially identical to (i.e. syncretic with) the case assigned to the sluicing remnant in a non-isomorphic ellipsis site, lack of antecedent–ellipsis isomorphism is once again an option

recall: absence of P under sluicing in non-P-stranding languages can be argued to be due to a non-isomorphic (cleft or copular) ellipsis site → in (Zurich) German (and to a lesser extent Greek and Russian) this pattern only occurs when the case assigned by the ‘stranded’ preposition is syncretic with the case assigned in a cleft/copular clause

nominative and accusative are syncretic for the neuter wh-phrase was ‘what’ in German:

(44) Was ist passiert?
what.NOM is happened
‘What happened?’

(45) An was hat Rudolf dich erinnert?
to what.ACC has Rudolf you reminded
‘What has Rudolf reminded you of?’

2The Greek pattern can be replicated in German, Hungarian, Hindi, Czech, and Slovene.
and sluicing with was allows for P-stranding:

(46) Rudolf hat mich an etwas erinnert, aber ich weiß nicht
Rudolf has me to something reminded, but I know not
mehr *(an) was,
anymore to what
‘Rudolf has reminded me of something, but I don’t recall what.’

similarly, the wh-determiner welche ‘which’ is syncretic for nominative and accusative (welche), but not for genitive (welcher), and P-absence under sluicing follows suit:

(47) Rudolf wartet auf einige Freunde, aber ich weiß nicht *(auf)
Rudolf waits on some friends but I know not on
welche.
which.NOM/ACC
‘Rudolf is waiting for some friends, but I don’t know which.’

(48) Rudolf ist statt einiger Freunde aufgetreten, aber ich weiß
Rudolf is instead of some friends performed but I know
nicht *(statt) welcher,
not instead of which.Gen
‘Rudolf has performed instead of some friends, but I don’t know which.’

in Zurich German, wëër ‘who’ is syncretic for NOM/ACC, but not DAT:

(49) Wëër hätt mit em Hans geredt?
who.NOM has with the Hans spoken
‘Who talked to Hans?’

(50) Für wëër hätt de Hans kocht?
for who.ACC has the Hans cooked
‘Who did Hans cook for?’

(51) Mit wem hätt de Hans geredt?
with who.DAT has the Hans talked
‘Who did Hans talk to?’

and again, P-absence under sluicing follows the same pattern:

(52) De Hans hätt für öppert kocht, aber ich wäiss nöd *(für)
the Hans has for someone cooked but I know not for
wëër.
who.NOM/ACC
‘Hans cooked for someone, but I don’t know who.’

(53) De Hans hätt mit öppertem gredt, aber ich wäiss nöd *(mit)
the Hans has with someone talked but I know not with
wem.
who.DAT
‘Hans talked to someone, but I don’t know who.’

conclusion: in contexts where the morphology is inconclusive (because of case syncretism), independent evidence (apparent violations of the PSG) suggest that the ellipsis site is indeed non-isomorphic

3.3.2 Spading in Waubach Dutch

spading: Shuicing Plus A Demonstrative In Non-insular Germanic

Craenenbroeck (2010):

(54) A: Ik em iemand gezien. B: Wou da?
I have someone seen who that

(a) spading derives from an underlying cleft

in other words the elliptical embedded question in (54) derives not from the ‘regular’ wh-question in (55) but from the cleft in (56)
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(55)  
Wou eije gezien?  
who have you seen  
‘Who did you see?’

(56)  
Wou is da da ge gezien etj?  
who is that that you seen have  
‘Who is it that you saw?’

**Arguments:** parallelisms between spading and clefts that set them apart from ‘regular’ sluicing, e.g. *else-modification:*

else-modification is allowed in sluicing

(57)  
A: Jef ei nie allieijn Lewie gezien. B: Nieje? Wou nog?  
Jef has not just Louis seen no who else  
‘A: Jef hasn’t just seen Louis. B: No? Who else?’

else-modification is not allowed in clefts

(58)  
*Wou <nog> was da <nog> da Jef gezien eti  
who else was that else that Jef seen has  
else-modification is not allowed in spading

(59)  
A: Jef ei nie allieijn Lewie gezien. B: Nieje? Wou <da> nog  
Jef has not just Louis seen no who that else  
<da> that

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(b) spading does not involve pseudosluicing

**Definitions:**

- pseudosluicing = a construction that resembles a sluice in having only a wh-XP as remnant, but has the structure of a cleft, not of a regular embedded question (Merchant (1998, 91)). The fact that the cleft is unpronounced is due to the combined effect of pro-drop and copula drop.

(60)  
Darekaga sono hono yonda ga, watashiwa dare ka  
someone.NOM that book.ACC read but I.TOP who Q  
know.not  
‘Someone read that book, but I don’t know who.’

(61)  
[CP [IP pro dare da | ka ]]  
it who be.PRESS Q  
‘who it is.’

- sluicing a cleft = an instance of sluicing (= clausal ellipsis) applied to an IP that contains a cleft

back to spading: dialect Dutch is neither pro-drop nor copula drop → the non-pronunciation of the verb in spading cannot be due to copula drop → instead, spading involves TP-ellipsis, just like regular sluicing → spading involves sluicing of a cleft

**Note:** the presence of the demonstrative in spading provides direct evidence in favor of a non-isomorphic ellipsis site ⇒ we can use this construction to further probe the issue of antecedent-ellipsis isomorphism. What’s more, some Dutch dialects have retained a system of morphological case in their wh-paradigm, e.g. Waubach Dutch:
subject wh-questions: only nominative

(62) \{\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}} \ kemp \ noa \ 't \ fees?
who.NOM who.ACC comes to the party
\textit{‘Who is coming to the party?’}

object wh-questions: accusative and—more markedly—nominative

(63) \{??\textit{Wea} / \textit{Wem}} \ has-te \ gezieë?
who.NOM who.ACC have.you seen
\textit{‘Who did you see?’}

subject clefts: only nominative

(64) \{\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}} \ is \ dat \ dea \ noa \ 't \ fees \ kemp?
who.NOM who.ACC is that REL to the party comes
\textit{‘Who is it that is coming to the party?’}

object clefts: only nominative

(65) \{\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}} \ is \ dat \ deaste \ gezieë \ has?
who.NOM who.ACC is that that.you seen have
\textit{‘Who is it that you saw?’}

the test: spading vs. morphological case

subject spading: only nominative

(66) \textit{A: ‘t \ Kumt inne \ noa \ 't \ fees. \ B: \{\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}}\} \ dat?
\textit{it comes someone to the party who.NOM who.ACC that}
\textit{‘A: Someone is coming to the party. B: Who?’}

object spading: only—and markedly—nominative

(67) \textit{A: \textit{Ik} han inne \ gezieë. \ B: \{??\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}}\} \ dat?
I have someone seen who.NOM who.ACC that
\textit{‘A: I saw someone. B: Who?’}

control: ‘regular’ sluicing vs. morphological case

subject sluicing: only nominative

(68) \textit{A: ‘t \ Kumt inne \ noa \ 't \ fees. \ B: \{\textit{Wea} / *\textit{Wem}}\}?
\textit{it comes someone to the party who.NOM who.ACC}
\textit{‘A: Someone is coming to the party. B: Who?’}

object spading: accusative and—more markedly—nominative

(69) \textit{A: \textit{Ik} han inne \ gezieë. \ B: \{??\textit{Wea} / \textit{Wem}}\}?
I have someone seen who.NOM who.ACC
\textit{‘A: I saw someone. B: Who?’}

once again: a non-isomorphic ellipsis site (here: spading) is allowed only when the morphology of the wh-phrase is ambiguous between an isomorphic and a non-isomorphic source

3.4 Downright quirky patterns: Hungarian, Malagasy and Dutch

3.4.1 Hungarian

\textbf{Lipták (2013) (following Barros (2012))}: certain contexts disallow isomorphic ellipsis sites by virtue of their semantics:

(70) Jack likes Sally, and he likes someone else too, but I don’t know
a. \#who.
b. \#who he likes.
c. \#who it is.

→ in a language with morphological case marking like Hungarian, this means we would expect the sluiced wh-phrase in (70) not to show up in the case assigned by the verb like → false prediction:
3.4.2 Malagasy

Potsdam (2007): two properties of Malagasy syntax conspire to ensure that this language only has non-isomorphic ellipsis sites in sluicing:

1. subjects must be specific

(72) *mamaky boky olona
   read.ACT book person
   INTENDED: ‘Someone is reading a book.’

2. only subjects can be extracted

(73) *inona no mividy i Soa?
   what PRT buy.ACT Soa
   INTENDED: ‘What is Soa buying?’

This means we cannot create a sluice of the type in (74) (indefinite subject in the antecedent clause), nor of the type in (75) (extraction of a non-subject in the ellipsis clause):

(74) Someone left, but we don’t know who <left>.

(75) John saw someone, but we don’t know who <John saw>.

Nevertheless Malagasy does have sluicing:

(76) nandoko zavatra i Bao fa adnoko hoe inona
   paint.ACT think Bao but forget.PASS.1SG COMP what
   ‘Bao painted something, but I forget what.’

Potsdam (2007): the structure underlying the ellipsis site in (76) is the pseudocleft in (77), not the (ill-formed) wh-question in (78)

(77) nandoko zavatra i Bao fa adnoko no inona
   paint.ACT think Bao but forget.PASS.1SG COMP what PRT
   nolokoin’ i Bao
   paint.ACT Bao
   INTENDED: ‘Bao painted something, but I forget what (it was that) was painted by Bao.’

(78) *nandoko zavatra i Bao fa adnoko no inona
   paint.ACT think Bao but forget.PASS.1SG COMP what PRT
   nandoko i Bao
   paint.ACT Bao
   INTENDED: ‘Bao painted something, but I forget what Bao painted.’

In other words a sluicing site in Malagasy is always non-isomorphic to its antecedent. What’s more, Malagasy has a limited amount of morphological case marking in its wh-paradigm:

(79) mijery {*iza / *an’iza} ianao?
    see.ACT who.NOM who.ACC you
    ‘Who are you looking at?’

(80) {iza / *an’iza} no mijery anao
    who.NOM who.ACC PRT see.ACT you?
    ‘Who is looking at you?’

and unlike in Greek, Malagasy sluicing always and only uses the form corresponding to the non-isomorphic ellipsis site (i.e. the nominative).
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(81) mijery olona i Bao fa tsy fantatro hoe {iza / look.ACT person Bao but not know.I COMP who.NOM *an'iza} who.ACC

‘Bao is looking at someone, but I don’t know who.’

Conclusion: Malagasy is a language that goes against the general pattern by using in sluicing a morphologically case-marked wh-phrase that is only compatible with a non-isomorphic ellipsis site

3.4.3 Dutch

*Riemsdijk (1982): while Dutch in general doesn’t allow for preposition stranding, so-called R-pronouns (= pronouns taken from the locative paradigm) do allow for P-stranding:

(82) Waar spreek je over?

where speak you over

‘What are you speaking about?’

However, under sluicing R-pronouns cannot strand their preposition *Merchant (2001), cf. (83), in spite of the fact that the non-elliptical counterpart is perfectly well-formed (cf. (84))

(83) *Dany spreekt morgen ergens over, maar ik weet niet wat.

Dany speaks tomorrow somewhere about but I know not what

where

INTENDED: ‘Dany is speaking about something tomorrow, but I don’t know what.’

(84) Dany spreekt morgen ergens over, maar ik weet niet wat.

Dany speaks tomorrow somewhere about but I know not what

waar hij morgen over spreekt.

where he tomorrow over speaks

‘Dany is speaking about something tomorrow, but I don’t know what he’s speaking about tomorrow.’

Instead, a non-R-pronoun can be used in the sluicing context in (83):

(85) *Dany spreekt morgen ergens over, maar ik weet niet wat Dany

Dany speaks tomorrow somewhere about but I know not what Dany

over spreekt.

over

INTENDED: ‘Dany is speaking about something tomorrow, but I don’t know what he’s speaking about.’

(86) *Dany spreekt ergens over, maar ik weet niet wat het is.

Dany speaks somewhere about but I know not what it is

Dany speaks somewhere about but I know not what it is

‘Dany is speaking about something, but I don’t know what it is.’

Conclusion: the Dutch facts turn the data patterns from the preceding sections completely on their head: on the one hand there is no reason why the isomorphic pattern with waar should be disallowed, while on the other it goes against the general pattern that a morphologically marked non-isomorphic form (wat ‘what’) does yield a grammatical result
3.5 Data summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sluiced wh</th>
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4 Previous accounts

In a nutshell: none of the existing proposals of ellipsis identity can account for the full range of case facts unearthed in the previous sections (even disregarding the quirky cases)

4.1 Syntactic identity

(88) Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cual ↔.
Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it ‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which.’

(89) A: Ik em iemand gezien. B: Wou in da die gezien chi?
I have someone seen who is that that you seen have ‘A: I saw someone. B: Who?’

→ given that a cleft or copular clause is in no obvious sense syntactically or structurally identical to the non-cleft antecedent in (88)/(89), a recoverability condition based solely on syntactic identity would incorrectly predict these examples to be ill-formed

4.2 Semantic identity

(90) *Juan amenazó a alguien ab ich weiß nicht wem ↔ Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.DAT he threatened has ‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who he threatened.’

→ it is hard to see a semantic theory in which the Spanish and German version of the same sentence would not have the same semantics → a recoverability condition based solely on semantic identity would incorrectly predict this example to be well-formed

(91) Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cual ↔.Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it ‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which.’

(92) *I astinomia anekrine enan apo tous Kiprious prota, the police interrogated one.ACC from the Cypriots first ala dhen ksero pjos ↔.
but not I know who.NOM it was ‘The police interrogated one of the Cypriots first, but I don’t know who.’

→ either the elided cleft/copular clause has the same semantics as the antecedent clause or it doesn’t → either way, a recoverability condition based solely on semantic identity would incorrectly predict these examples to pattern alike in terms of their acceptability
4.3 Chung (2006)’s No New Words

(93) **No New Words**
Every lexical item in the numeration of the sluice that ends up (only)
in the elided IP must be identical to an item in the numeration of
the antecedent CP.

(94) a. John is jealous of someone, but I don’t know who *John is jealous of.*

b. *John is jealous, but I don’t know who John is jealous of.*

→ the b-example is out because the ellipsis site contains a lexical item (of)
that the antecedent does not contain.

(95) *Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cuál.*
Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it
‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which.’

(96) A: *Ik *em iemand gezien.* B: *Wou *da ge gezien *obj?
I have someone seen who is that you seen have

→ in both (95) and (96) the ellipsis site contains lexical items that are absent
from the antecedent (es, is, da, possibly pro) → NNW incorrectly predicts
these examples to be ill-formed.

4.4 Chung (2013)’s Case condition

(97) **Case Condition** (Chung (2013, 30))
If the interrogative [i.e. sluiced jvc] phrase is a DP, it must be Case-
licensed in the ellipsis site by a head identical to the corresponding
head in the antecedent clause.

→ this condition has potential, in that it correctly distinguishes the grammatical code-switching examples from the ungrammatical ones:

(98) *Juan amenazó a alguien *aber ich weiß nicht *wem.*
Juan threatened someone ACC but I know not who DAT he
threatened has
‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who he threatened.’

→ *wem* is not case-licensed by a head identical to the corresponding head
in the antecedent clause (the Spanish and German verb crucially assign
different cases). Where (97) fails is in cases of copular or cleft repair of
P-stranding:

(99) *Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cuál.*
Juan has talked with a girl but not know which is it
‘Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which.’

(100) *Rudolf hat mich an etwas erinnert,* aber ich weiß nicht
Rudolf has me to something reminded, but I know not
‘Rudolf has reminded me of something, but I don’t recall what.’

→ here, the case licenser in the antecedent clause is a preposition, while
the case of the sluiced wh-phrase is assigned by whatever head assigns
nominative to a cleft or copula pivot → the Case Condition incorrectly
predicts these examples to be ruled out.
5 The analysis: accommodation and anchoring

5.1 Introduction: two central questions

The data presented thus far raise two central questions:

1. what is the theory of ellipsis identity such that an elided cleft or copular clause counts as identical to a non-cleft or non-copular antecedent? → section 5.2

2. what accounts for the role morphological case plays in further restricting this identity relation? → section 5.3

5.2 Accommodating the cleft

central idea: ellipsis identity is syntactic/structural, but possible ellipsis antecedents are not only sentences that are actually part of the linguistic context, but also sentences that can be accommodated based on that linguistic context (cf. Rooth (1992))

Johnson (2012) (adopting and adapting Fox (1999)): An accommodated antecedent can only be built up from non-F-marked overt material present in the discourse.

my modification: An accommodated antecedent can only be built up from non-F-marked overt material present in the discourse or from elements that are freely available in any discourse.

question: how do we know/determine which elements are “freely available in any discourse”?

→ by looking at (ellipsis in) discourse-initial contexts: in these situations, the linguistic context provides us with no material to construct an ellipsis antecedent, so all elements making up the ellipsis site must come from elsewhere

Merchant (2004): when used without an explicit linguistic antecedent (i.e. in D_{lang}-contexts = Hankamer and Sag (1976)’s pragmatic control), fragments are derived from short clefts/copular clauses

(101) [Abby and Ben are at a party. Abby sees an unfamiliar man with Beth, a mutual friend of theirs, and turns to Ben with a puzzled look on her face. Ben says:
Some guy she met at the park.

(102) [some guy she met at the park]

(103) [Abby and Ben are arguing about the origin of products in a new store on their block, with Ben maintaining that the store carries only German products. To settle their debate they walk into the store together. Ben picks up a lamp at random, upends it, examines the label (which reads Lampenwelt GmbH, Stuttgart), holds the lamp out towards Abby, and proudly proclaims to her:]
From Germany! See, I told you!

(104) [from Germany]

(105) “The contexts are rich enough to make a certain entity salient (a guy and a lamp, respectively), and to make a certain question manifest, namely the question as to the identity or the country of origin of the entity. (..) this is enough to license anaphoric devices like he and this. Further we can be sure that these contexts also make the existence predicate be manifest (..) In short, I’m proposing a kind of ‘limited ellipsis’ analysis, one in which a demonstrative (such as this/that or a pronoun in a demonstrative use) or expletive subject and the copula are elided – given the appropriate discourse context, which will be almost any context where the speaker can make a deictic gesture, and where the existence predicate can be taken for granted (and it’s hard to imagine a context where this wouldn’t be the case)” (Merchant, 2004, 724–725)

rephrasing: pronouns and copulas (and by extension short clefts) come for free and hence can serve as internal structure for an ellipsis site in any context
supporting evidence for the cleft analysis comes from morphological case and from DTQs

case: in discourse-initial contexts, the case marking on the fragment is the same as that which we find in clefts:

(106)  \{Kapjos / *Kapjon\} pu gnorisi sto parko.
      someone.NOM / someone.ACC that she.met in.the park
      ‘Someone she met in the park.’

(107)  Aftos ine {kapjos / *kapjon} pu gnorisi sto
      he is someone.NOM / someone.ACC that she.met in.the
      park
      ‘He is someone she met in the park.’

DTQs: DI\textsubscript{lang}-fragments can be combined with cleft-based DTQs:

(108)  [Upon meeting someone in the park:] Nice weather, isn’t it?

(109)  [While shaking the hand of a business associate one is meeting in
      person for the first time:] How do you do? John Smith, is it?

(110)  It\textsubscript{is} nice weather, isn’t it?

(111)  It\textsubscript{is} John Smith, is it?

conclusion: given that short clefts/copular clauses are available even in the absence of any linguistic antecedent, they can be accommodated for free and are always available when an ellipsis antecedent needs to be constructed

more generally the occurrence of clefts or copular clauses in ellipsis sites anteceded by non-clefts or non-copular clauses can be made to follow from a syntactic/structural theory of ellipsis identity provided it is augmented by the notion of accommodation: an ellipsis site needs to be structurally identical to either the actual or the accommodated antecedent

5.3 Anchoring the wh-phrase

note: even when augmented by accommodation, the theory of ellipsis identity cannot account for the interaction between sluicing and morphological case laid out above → additional machinery is needed

intuition behind the proposal: regardless of what the ellipsis site looks like, a sluiced wh-phrase always has to be formally compatible with the antecedent clause

(112)  Anchor Condition
      A sluiced wh-phrase has to be a member of the Licensing Potential
      of the antecedent clause.

(113)  Licensing Potential
      For a syntactic object A, its Licensing Potential is the set of categories B such that if A and [a member of, jvc] B merge, the resulting structure will meet the legibility conditions at the interfaces (the resulting structure is convergent)

note the subtle difference between the Anchor Condition in (112) and Chung’s Case Condition in (97): the latter is about identity (the case licensers in ellipsis site and antecedent clause have to be identical), whereas the former is about compatibility (a sluiced wh-phrase has to be compatible with the antecedent clause) → this raises the question of whether the Anchor Condition is about recoverability or about licensing

→ data from Icelandic subject deletion (Rögnvaldsson (1982), Bresnan and Thrafnsson (1990)) suggest that ellipsis identity doesn’t care about morphological case and hence that the Anchor Condition is more about licensing than it is about recoverability

3The inspiration for this notion comes from Chung et al. (1995, 249–250): “sprouting is not an unconstrained operation. Rather, it is limited by the requirement that the new material added to the copy of the antecedent IP respect the licensing potential of that IP, as regards both arguments and adjuncts, and in all its fine detail” (emphasis added, jvc).
Icelandic has nominative subjects that display regular subject-verb agreement

(114) Við {hlökkum / *hlakkar} til jólanna.
we.NOM look.forward.1PL look.forward.3SG to Christmas
‘We look forward to Christmas.’

and it has quirky subjects that display default 3SG agreement

(115) Mér {*finn / finnur} til.
I.DAT feel.1SG feel.3SG PRT
‘I feel pain.’

a quirky subject can antecede the ellipsis of a nominative one and vice versa

(116) þeir sjá stúlkuna og þeim finnst hún álitleg.
they.NOM see.3PL the.girl and they.DAT find.3SG her attractive
‘they see the girl and find her attractive.’

(117) þeim líkar maturinn og þeir bóða mikið.
they.DAT like.3SG the.food and they.NOM eat.3PL much
‘They like the food and eat much.’

→ this suggests that a difference in morphological case marking does not
lead to a recoverability problem, i.e. that the case effects in sluicing
(captured by the Anchor Condition) are due to licensing

5.4 Revisiting the case data

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(118) Juan amenazó a alguien aber ich weiß nicht wen.
Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.ACC

→ here we see the Anchor Condition at work: the sluiced wh-phrase is not in
the licensing potential of the antecedent clause and sluicing is disallowed

‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who.’

(119) *I astinomia anekrine enan apo tous Kiprious prota,
the police interrogated one.ACC from the Cypriots first
ala dhen ksero pjon.
but not I know who.ACC
‘The police interrogated one of the Cypriots first, but I don’t know who.’

→ these data are not surprising or unexpected: the elliptical version gets
exactly the same grammaticality judgment as would the non-elliptical
isomorphic one → any of the current theories of ellipsis identity would
correctly predict these facts

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(120) *I astinomia anekrine enan apo tous Kiprious prota,
the police interrogated one.ACC from the Cypriots first
ala dhen ksero pjon.
but not I know who.ACC
‘The police interrogated one of the Cypriots first, but I don’t know who.’

(121) *Juan amenazó a alguien aber ich weiß nicht wen.
Juan threatened someone.ACC but I know not who.DAT
‘Juan threatened someone, but I don’t know who.’

→ here we see the Anchor Condition at work: the sluiced wh-phrase is not in
the licensing potential of the antecedent clause and sluicing is disallowed
Ellipsis, identity, and accommodation

The case of case

Jeroen van Craenenbroeck

compatible with compatible with
sluiced wh isomorphic source non-isomorphic source judgment
Spanish *cual y y ok
German *was y y ok
Z. German *wëër y y ok
Waubach *wa y/n y ??

(122) *Juan ha hablado con una chica pero no sé cuál -> Juan talked to a girl, but I don’t know which.’

(123) *Rudolf hat mich an etwas erinnert, aber ich weiß nicht -> Rudolf has me to something reminded, but I know not
mehr was -> anymore what it was
‘Rudolf has reminded me of something, but I don’t recall what.’

→ both the Anchor Condition and accommodation are at work here: the
AC is met because the sluiced wh-phrase is in the Licensing Potential
of the antecedent clause [ ] and the fact that pronouns and copulas can
be freely accommodated ensures that the ellipsis site is identical to an
accommodated antecedent, thus satisfying recoverability

compatible with compatible with
sluiced wh isomorphic source non-isomorphic source judgment
Hungarian kit y n ok
Malagasy iza n y ok
Dutch *waar y n
Dutch *wat n y ok

4 A quick note on the role of syncretism in this story: either we assume that the notion of Licensing Potential is sensitive to surface forms and so the surface identity of was\textsubscript{nom} and was\textsubscript{acc} is enough to satisfy the AC. Alternatively, we take syncretism to be a sign of pre-Spell Out application of Impoverishment (Bobaljik (2002), Müller (2004)) such that the two forms of was are underlingly (i.e. morphosyntactically) non-distinct.

(124) Mari meg hívta Jánost, és meg hívott még valakit, Mario PV invited János.ACC and PV invited also someone.ACC
de nem tudom {*ki / kit}.
but not know who.NOM who.ACC
‘Mari invited János, and she invited someone else, too, but I don’t
know who.’

→ maybe the ellipsis site is not who Mary invited, but rather who Mary
invited besides János → that would make this another case of accommo-
dation

(125) mijery olona i Bao fa tsy fantatro hoe {iza / look.ACT person Bao but not know.I COMP who.NOM
*an’iza}
who.ACC
‘Bao is looking at someone, but I don’t know who.’

→ this example seems to go directly against AC → perhaps this is a case
of pseudosluicing (Potsdam (2007, 605n16))? or nominative case is really
the absence of case in Malagasy (Pearson (2001, 43))?"

(126) Dany spreekt morgen ergens over, maar ik weet niet
Dany speaks tomorrow somewhere about but I know not
{*waar / wat}.
where what
‘Dany is speaking about something tomorrow, but I don’t know
what.’

→ it looks like the non-isomorphic ellipsis site takes precedence here →
could be an indication that P-stranding off R-pronouns in Dutch is of
a fundamentally different nature that P-stranding in English (cf. Abels
(2003)), which could make this a case of repair/Last Resort
6 Conclusions

• sluicing sites can contain structures (mostly of a cleft or copular nature) that are not structurally isomorphic to their antecedents

• to account for such mismatches within a structural theory of ellipsis identity, one has to allow for accommodation, whereby the ellipsis site is isomorphic not to the actual antecedent, but to an accommodated one

• morphological case marking can be used to detect this non-isomorphic structure only to a very limited extent

• this is because the morphosyntactic shape of a sluiced wh-phrase is subject to a stringent condition: it needs to be compatible with/anchored to the antecedent clause

• this requirement might be one of ellipsis licensing rather than ellipsis recoverability/identity

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