

A remnant-correlate identity condition on TP deletion

Matthew Barros (Rutgers; mattbarros@gmail.com) & Luis Vicente (Potsdam; vicente@uni-potsdam.de)

1. STATE OF THE ART AND PROPOSAL

State of the art: Chung (2006, 2013) and Merchant (2013) propose to supplement standard semantic identity conditions on ellipsis with a morphosyntactic identity condition (1).

- (1) *Argument Structure Condition (ASC):* the antecedent and the E-site must have matching sets of argument-introducing functional heads.

The ASC is there to account for the ungrammaticality of voice and argument structure mismatches under TP deletion (elided material rendered in a grey font).

- (2) Someone assassinated JFK, but I don't know ✓ who [assassinated him].
* who by [he was assassinated].
- (3) Something worries Jack, but he won't tell us ✓ what [worries him].
* what about [he's worried].

Proposal: replace the ASC with the *Remnant Condition* (1), so that identity conditions are uniformly defined in semantic terms.

- (4) *The Remnant Condition (RC):* the ellipsis remnant must have a correlate such that the alternative sets of the remnant and the correlate are identical.

Caveat: the Remnant Condition is a *supplement* to (not a *replacement of*) conditions that require semantic identity between the antecedent and the E-site (e.g., Merchant 2001). A successful ellipsis requires satisfying both the Remnant Condition and E-site semantic identity.

2. LIMITATIONS OF THE ARGUMENT STRUCTURE CONDITION

It is too strong: pseudosluices should be ungrammatical, but they aren't.

- (5) Sally has a new boyfriend, but she won't tell us ✓ who [it is].
✓ who it is.
who she has.

[cleft sources for TP deletion also attested in: (i) resolution of ellipsis with disjointed clausal antecedents (AnderBois 2014); (ii) circumvention of movement violations (Barros et al 2014 and refs); (iii) only available strategy in certain languages (Potsdam 2007)]

And it is also too weak: some other sluices should be grammatical, but they aren't.

- (6) *Symmetric predicates: both arguments are equal participants in the event...*
Jack was making out with Sally → Jack was making out
→ Sally was making out
- (7) ...so one can't appeal to an argument structure mismatch (Barros 2014)
Someone was making out with Jack, but I don't know * who with [he was making out].
✓ who he was making out with.
- (8) *Reverse pseudosluicing (Vicente 2008): invariably ungrammatical even though it satisfies semantic identity in the same way as regular pseudosluicing*
The guy that Sally was talking to was someone from Accounting, but I don't know...
* ...who to (exactly) [Sally was talking].
✓ ...who (exactly) Sally was talking to.

[(14) and (15) demonstrably satisfy existing semantic identity conditions]

3. DETAILS OF THE REMNANT CONDITION

As a visual aid, from now on we are going to color-code correlates in blue and remnants in red.

Why are you defining the RC semantically? The remnant and the correlate can exhibit the kinds of mismatches that contraindicate a morphosyntactic or categorial.

- (9) A: Did Jack eat natto [_{ADV} reluctantly]? B: No, [_{PP} with relish]. [Weir 2014]
- (10) Either [_{TP} the kitchen is on fire or Sally is baking again]. It's hard to tell [_{DP} which]. [AnderBois 2014]

Why is "alternative sets" the relevant notion, rather than something else? We can't appeal to the ordinary semantic values of both the correlate and the remnant, because wh- phrases (which are both licit remnants and correlates), have undefined ordinary semantic values (Beck 2007).

- (11) I don't want to know [which students] failed the exam, I just want to know [how many].

We can't appeal to focus semantic values across the board either, given that some non-*F*-marked phrases (indefinites and disjunctions) are licit correlates.

- (12) A: Someone here has [_F the key to the liquor cabinet]. B: Yeah, Mary.
[Weir 2014] B': Who?
- (13) A: Either Ryan or Dexter will play [_F center field]. B: Probably Ryan
[adapted from AnderBois 2014] B': Which one?

We can get around these limitations with a disjunctive definition of the RC (8), but this misses the generalization that we only care about the ordinary semantic value of the correlate if it is an inquisitive expression. We propose that we can capture this much by appealing to alternative sets rather than ordinary/focus semantic values.

- (14) Either $\llbracket \text{corr} \rrbracket^f = \llbracket \text{remn} \rrbracket^f$, or $\llbracket \text{corr} \rrbracket^o = \llbracket \text{remn} \rrbracket^f$

So how do you calculate alternative sets? Admittedly, with a bit of a hack. It works for our current purposes, but clearly we need a better formulation.

- (15) if the remnant/correlate has a defined focus semantic value
then its alternative set is equal to its focus semantic value (a set of contextually restricted, type-theoretically identical expressions, as per Rooth 1992)
else, if the remnant/correlate is not *F*-marked but it is an inquisitive expression,
then pretend it is *F*-marked and has a defined focus semantic value.
else, if the remnant/correlate is not *F*-marked and it is not an inquisitive expression,
then it is not a licit remnant/correlate and ellipsis will fail.

4. APPLICATIONS OF THE REMNANT CONDITION

Anything else before starting? We need to say that there are no semantically vacuous prepositions. The difficult ones are *of* and *by*, but we will go with the idea that, even if they lack an obvious lexical meaning, they still have well-defined semantic contribution.

Argument Structure Condition effects: voice and argument structure mismatches are ruled out because the preposition in the remnant lacks a match in the correlate.

- (16) * Someone assassinated JFK, but I don't know who by [JFK was assassinated by].
[ALT-SET(someone) ≠ ALT-SET(by who)] [= (2)]
- (17) * Something worries Jack, but he won't tell us what about [he's worried].
[ALT-SET(something) ≠ ALT-SET(about what)] [= (3)]

Compare to:

- (18) Someone assassinated JFK, but I don't know who [assassinated him].
[ALT-SET(someone) = ALT-SET(who)]
- (19) Something worries Jack, but he won't tell us what [worries him].
[ALT-SET(something) = ALT-SET(what)]

Wait a moment! Aren't you predicting (20) to be a licit parse? Indeed we do. We don't know how to test this prediction in English, but see Potsdam (2007) on Malagasy.

- (20) JFK was assassinated by someone, but I don't know who [assassinated him].
[ALT-SET(someone) = ALT-SET(who)]

Effects beyond the scope of the ASC: pseudosluicing is correctly predicted grammatical.

- (21) Sally has a new boyfriend, but she won't tell us who [it is].
[ALT-SET(a new boyfriend) = ALT-SET(who)] [= (5)]

But the presence of a preposition in the remnant makes reverse pseudosluicing ungrammatical.

- (22) * The guy that Sally was talking to was someone from Accounting, but I don't know who to (exactly) [she was talking].
[ALT-SET(someone from Accounting) ≠ ALT-SET(to who (exactly))] [= (8)]

And similarly for argument order switches with symmetric predicates.

- (23) Someone was making out with Ed, but I don't know who with [Jack was making out].
[ALT-SET(someone) = ALT-SET(with who)] [= (7)]

5. THE REMNANT CONDITION AND SPROUTING

What about sprouting? Where is the correlate here? For argument sprouts (24a), we assume that implicit arguments are syntactically present as silent indefinites (Bhatt and Pancheva 2006, Landau 2011). For modifier sprouts (24b), we need to assume that the implicit correlates are (neo)-Davidsonian event modifiers.

- (24) a. Sally was eating, but I couldn't see what. [implicit argument]
[= Sally was eating something]
- b. Jack joined the Army, but he didn't say why. [implicit modifier]
[= Sally joined the Army for some reason]

The requirement that there be a correlate (even if implicit) allows us to distinguish sprouts from ungrammatical ellipses in unaccusative-transitive alternations, where no correlate exists.

- (25) The door opened, but nobody knows * who [opened it].
✓ who opened it.

What about the ban on P-stranding under sprouting? Also known as *No New Words*.

- (26) * Jack is jealous, but I don't know who [he's jealous of]. [Chung 2006]

First off, why is P-stranding licit outside sprouting? Because we can "ignore" the preposition heading the correlate in order to satisfy the RC.

- (27) Jack is jealous of someone, but I don't know who [he's jealous of].
[ALT-SET(of someone) ≠ ALT-SET(who)], but [ALT-SET(someone) = ALT-SET(who)]

No New Words follows if sprouting doesn't allow prepositions to be ignored like this. We implement this idea by treating implicit arguments/modifiers as syntactically atomic elements (see also Landau 2011). For one, they disallow subextraction, just like deep anaphors.

- (28) a. Jack talked to someone → Someone was talked [to *t*] (by Jack).
b. * Jack talked → Someone was talked (by Jack).

This idea, applied to sprouting, gives us an RC violation.

- (29) * Jack is jealous, but I don't know who [he's jealous of].
[ALT-SET(of someone) ≠ ALT-SET(who)] available but ungrammatical parse
[ALT-SET(someone) = ALT-SET(who)] grammatical but unavailable parse

6. THE REMNANT CONDITION BEYOND TP DELETION?

One might take the deviance of (29)/(30) as an indication that the Remnant Condition applies to VP ellipsis, but maybe here we are dealing with a Kertz (2010)-type effect.

- (30) ?? I know who WANTS to teach syntax, but I don't know by who(m) it MUST be.
- (31) * I know which badges Jack WANTS to embroider on his uniform, but I don't know with which ones he MUST.

REFERENCES

AnderBois 2014. Sluicing: beyond truth conditions. *Language* 90 • Barros 2014. Sluicing and identity in ellipsis. PhD Rutgers • Barros, Elliott & Thoms 2014. There is no island repair. Ms., Rutgers, UCL & Edinburgh • Beck 2007. Intervention effects follow from focus interpretation. *NLS* 14 • Bhatt & Pancheva 2006. Implicit arguments. *Companion to Syntax* • Chung 2006. Sluicing and the lexicon. *BLS* 31 • Chung 2013. Identity in sluicing. *LI* 44 • Kertz 2010. Ellipsis reconsidered. PhD UCSD • Landau 2010. The explicit syntax of implicit arguments. *LI* 41 • Merchant 2001. *The syntax of silence*, OUP • Merchant 2013. Voice and ellipsis. *LI* 44 • Potsdam 2007. Malagasy sluicing and the identity condition on ellipsis. *NLLT* 25 • Rooth 1992. A theory of focus interpretation. *NLS* 1 • Vicente 2008. Syntactic isomorphism and non-isomorphism under ellipsis. Ms. UCSC • Weir 2014. Fragments and clausal ellipsis. PhD UMass.