

VP Ellipsis in Infinitives Revisited

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In the last ten years of Generative Grammar there have been several attempts to account for the restrictions in the application of VP Ellipsis. The sentences in (1b-c) exemplify some of these restrictions in *to* infinitives.

- (1) a. Adam doesn't want to eat the apple, but Eve wants to [_{VP} e].
b. *Ann hates to cook, so she buys groceries for Bill to [_{VP} e].
c. *I consider Bill to be a liar, but I don't consider John to [_{VP} e].

Zagona (1988b), assuming that VP Ellipsis involves insertion of an empty category in the base, maintains that those empty categories are subject to the ECP. This restriction is illustrated in (1b), where, Zagona argues, the ECP is not met due to the failure of infinitival INFL to theta-mark (and thus theta-govern) the empty VP, on the assumption that only infinitivals that are complements (theta-marked) can inherit from the main verb the ability to theta-mark the elliptical VP.

Martin (1992), in his analysis of the distribution of PRO, assumes, following Stowell (1982), that control infinitives are [+Tense], whereas Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) and Raising infinitives are [-Tense]. He argues that a T which is [+Tense] has two properties. It can check the null case of PRO and license the presence of elliptical VPs, thus adopting Lobeck's (1990) and Saito and Murasugi's (1990) claim that only a constituent that is the complement of a head that agrees with its specifier may be deleted. (1a) is thus grammatical because the empty VP is licensed, given that T is [+Tense] in that case. [-Tense] ECM and Raising infinitives, on the other hand, do not check the null case of PRO and do not license elliptical VPs, given that T does not agree with its specifier, in which case the ungrammaticality of (1c) follows.

But a look at some data unnoticed so far in the literature shows that neither Zagona's nor Martin's analyses make the correct predictions. Zagona fails to predict the grammaticality of sentences like (2a,b), where the elided VP is embedded in an adjunct.

- (2) a. Mary wanted John to learn to cook, so she bought a cookery book for him to be able to.
b. Mary wanted John to learn to cook, so she bought a cookery book for him to.

Martin's analysis, on the other hand, does not account for the facts in (3) and (4). The infinitivals in (3) are all complements of ECM and Raising verbs, and ellipsis is still possible. The ungrammaticality of (4), on the other hand, is unexpected, given that the infinitival in which ellipsis has been applied is the complement of a Control verb.

- (3) a. I consider John to be the smartest, but Sally doesn't consider him to be.
b. John seems to be intelligent, but Peter doesn't seem to be.
c. I consider John to depend too much on his mother, but Andrew doesn't consider him to.
d. John seems to depend too much on his mother, but Bill doesn't seem to.

- (4) a. *I want to be rich, but Peter doesn't want to.
c. *I expected to be happy, but Peter didn't expect to.

In this paper I shall argue in favour of an alternative analysis, assuming a) that VP Ellipsis is the result of a rule that deletes material under identity at the PF level or on the way to it, as in earlier periods of Generative Grammar and in Chomsky and Lasnik (1991) and Chomsky (1993), and b) that a maximal projection is affected. Government and the temporal properties of T will be argued to play no role in licensing VP Ellipsis.

Following work by Sag (1979), the ungrammaticality of (1b) will be argued to follow from a failure to meet the LF identity requirement for deletion. As shown in (5b), the VP target of ellipsis contains a variable in object position which is not present in the antecedent VP (5a). As there is information which is not recoverable from the antecedent VP, deletion is not possible. This analysis has the advantage of giving a unitary account of (1b) and (6), with its LF representation (7), where the infinitival is a complement. Ellipsis in complex adjectival constructions and similar structures will also be discussed.

- (5) a. [_{CP} [_{IP} PRO to [_{VP} cook]]]
b. groceries_i [_{CP} O_i for [_{IP} Bill to [_{VP} cook t_i]]]
- (6) Ann: Bill, I don't want to cook today.
Bill: *Well. Where are the groceries you want me to [_{VP} e]?
- (7) a. [_{CP} [_{IP} PRO to [_{VP} cook]]]
b. groceries_i [_{CP} O_i that [_{IP} you want [_{CP} t_i [_{IP} me to [_{VP} cook t_i]]]]]

As far as (1c) is concerned, I shall maintain that its ungrammaticality is due to the fact that *be* has not been left stranded, exactly as in (4a-b). Following Chomsky's account of *have/be* raising, infinitival *be* will be argued to raise in overt syntax, adjoining to Infl(T) before Spell Out. As VP ellipsis takes place at PF, *be* is no longer in the head of VP by the time the VP is deleted. As lexical verbs in English only raise at LF, the grammaticality of (1a) and (3) follows; at PF these verbs are in the head of VP and are deleted along with the rest of the VP. I shall also show how this analysis can be extended to *have*, a verb which exhibits a mixed behaviour; sometimes it is a copula, like *be*, while at other times it behaves like a lexical verb. The prediction is that *have*, when it is a copula, should be left stranded in VP ellipsis contexts, exactly like *be*. Consequently, when it is the equivalent of a lexical verb like *own*, *eat*, etc., it should be deleted. The prediction, as shown in (8), is in part borne out, though there is not general agreement with respect to the (a) and (b) examples, something expected if we consider how *do* support and other aspects of lexical verbs have been extended to all instances of *have*.

- (8) a. *I'd like to have long hair, but Ann wouldn't like to.
b. I'd like to have long hair, but Ann wouldn't like to have.
c. I'd like to have a sandwich, but Andrew wouldn't like to.
d. *I'd like to have a sandwich, but Andrew wouldn't like to have.

These results are fully compatible with some innovations introduced in the theory of grammar in Chomsky's (1993) Minimalist approach. But they also suggest, contrary to assumptions in Chomsky's work, that (at least some) syntactic information survives at PF or at some stage on the way to it, and that after Spell Out there is some interaction between LF and PF.