

What's LF got to do with it?

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1 Introduction

- (1) A Standard View of Ellipsis (as summarized by Elbourne 2005):
 - a. The strict-sloppy ambiguity is to be dealt with in terms of referential versus bound pronouns.
 - b. Ellipsis requires a linguistic antecedent.
 - c. The relationship between antecedent and elided phrase is one of identity of LF.

On Sloppiness [See, especially, Elbourne 2005]

- (2) a. Kim visited his mother but Bo didn't __ .
b. [**visit(his,-mother)**](**Kim_i**) vs. [$\lambda x.$ **visit(x's-mother)**](**Kim_i**)
Keenan 1971, Sag 1976, Williams 1977
- (3) a. The policeman who arrested John read him his rights, but the policeman who arrested Bill didn't __ . (Wescoast 1989)
b. John's coach thinks he has a chance, and Bill's coach does __ too. (Rooth 1992b)
c. If John has trouble at school, I'll help him, but if Bill does __ , I won't. (Hardt 1999)
d. (John and Bill both have cats.) When I met John, I talked to his cat, but when I met Bill, I didn't __ .
- (4) When John had to cook, he didn't want to. When he had to clean, he didn't either __ . (Hardt 1999)

Pragmatic Control

- (5) a. [Pat attempts to kiss Chris while driving.] Pat, you mustn't __ .
b. [A piece of chocolate cake is offered.] I really shouldn't __ .
c. [As an invitation to dance.] Shall we? __
d. [Bo gets Lee an expensive present] Bo, you shouldn't have __ !
- (6) See Schachter 1977, Hankamer 1978, Schachter 1978, Pullum 2000, Merchant 2001.

Active-Passive Mismatches:

- (7) a. It should be noted, as Dummett does __ , that... (Lust, ms.)
b. Botanist: That can all be explained.
Mr. Spock: Please do __ (Star Trek rerun)
[Sag 1976: 75, footnote 2]
- (8) a. This information could have been released by Gorbachov, but he chose not to.
b. A lot of this material can be presented in a fairly informal and accessible fashion, and often I do.
[Hardt (1993); (131), (134): 37]
- (9) ?John fired Max, although it was Bill who should have been. [Fiengo & May (1994), p. 203 note 10]
- (10) [Prison guards deserve their good salaries] Proposing to reduce their numbers to save money would be endangering them even more than they are __ . [Letter to editor, SJMN, June 24, 2004]

Rebinding

- (11) a. Kim was easy to talk to __ ; Sandy wasn't __ .
b. ??Kim was easy to talk to __ ; Sandy was hard to __ . [__ = talk to]
- (12) a. A: I know what everyone was talking about __ .
b. B: *What was Pat __ ? [__ = talking about]
- (13) a. *What Sandy carried was the baseball bat, and what Betsy did __ was the catcher's mitt.

- b. What Sandy wanted to buy ___ but couldn't ___ was the catcher's mitt.
- (14) My brother Al, who John liked, but who Harry didn't ___, was a nice guy. [Sag 1976: 84, footnote 26, attributed to Larry Horn]
- (15) a. *We wanted to invite someone, but we couldn't decide who to ___ .
 b. *Mary was told to bring something to the party, so she asked Sue what to ___ .
 [Lobeck 1995 (26): 175]
- (16) What VP-Ellipsis can do and What it can't ___. [Johnson 2001]
- (17) We know that Abby DOES speak [Greek, Albanian, and Serbian] – we need to find out which languages she DOESN'T __! [Merchant 2001:115 fn 5 (ii)]
- (18) If it contains some stuff you like and other stuff you don't ___, delete the parts you don't like and forward only the parts you really want to share. [http://www.breakthechain.org/libopenltr.html8/31/05]

Resolution of Indexicals

- (19) A: Do you think they'll like me?
 B: Of course they will ___. [___ = like you/*me]
 [Sag and Hankamer 1984]
- (20) Are you telling me I simply have to gut it out for the rest of my life? God doesn't want me to be miserable, does He?
 I stammered. "No, He doesn't ___. But surely you two can work things out. I know you must love each other." [http://www.family.org/married/comm/a0017719.cfm as retrieved on Sep 10, 2005 07:07:12 GMT.]
 [___ = want you/*me to be miserable]
- (21) **Sag and Hankamer (1984: 332)**
 Delete VP_b in S_b only if:
1. c_b is the Kaplan-context of S_b ,
 2. c_a is the Kaplan-context of some sentence S_a not subsequent to S_b in discourse, and
 3. there is some VP_a in S_a such that for all t, w , and assignment functions f ,
 $[[VP_b]]^{c_b w f} = [[VP_a]]^{c_a w f}$.
- (22) A: Do you think they'll like me?

B: Of course they will ___. [___ = like you/*me]

for all t, w, f , $[[\text{like you}]]^{c_b w f} = [[\text{like me}]]^{c_a w f}$.

- (23) I lost my wallet before he did ___ [___ = lost his/my wallet]
- (24) Forwarding a message leaves the headers in place, revealing the e-mail addresses of everyone who has received and/or sent the message in the past. I don't really want to know who got it before I did ___ and I don't want my e-mail address distributed in this manner. I'm sure you don't ___, either. [http://www.breakthechain.org/libopenltr.html 8/31/05]
 [___ = want your/my e-mail address distributed in this manner]
- (25) Conclusions:
- (1) VPE is based on meaning.
 - (2) VPE is not based on a 'syntactic level of LF'.
 - (3) Nor is VPE based on a 'serious' LF (i.e. one that receives a model-theoretic interpretation).

2 Inference-Based VPE

- (26) a. Irv and Mary wanted to dance together, but Mary couldn't ___, because her husband was there. (Webber 1978)
 b. Irv and Mary wanted to dance together \vdash
 Mary wanted to dance with Irv.
- (27) Webber: Inference is involved in the resolution of at least some instances of VPE.
- (28) Martha and Irv had planned to nominate each other, but Martha couldn't ___, because of her political obligations.
- (29) Here, the reading is 'Martha couldn't nominate Irv'. Unlike *dance*, the verb *nominate* cannot appear without its object. Webber notes that there seem to be no hard and fast rules delimiting the class of productive inferences relative to verb phrase ellipsis. (p. 4-38) However, there is a crucial factor in example [(26)] which is not noted by Webber: the interpretation without inference is unacceptable, involving, as it does, an agreement violation between the singular subject *Mary* and the VP *dance together*. This fact is the key to solving the problem posed by Webber, about how to delimit the class of available inferences in ellipsis: only inferences triggered by violations are possible. [Hardt 2005]

- (30) a. Bob wants to sail round the world and Alice wants to climb Kilimanjaro, but neither of them can, because money is too tight. (Webber 1978)
- b. I did everything Mary did. Mary swam the English Channel and Mary climbed Kilimanjaro, and I did too. (Fiengo and May 1994)
- c. Whenever Max uses the fax or Oscar uses the Xerox, I can't. (Fiengo and May 1994)
- (31) a. Bob wants to sail round the world and Alice wants to climb Kilimanjaro \vdash Bob and Alice want to [realize their desires].
- b. Mary swam the English Channel and Mary climbed Kilimanjaro \vdash Mary [swam the English Channel and climbed Kilimanjaro]
- c. Whenever Max uses the fax or Oscar uses the Xerox... \vdash ? Max and Oscar [use the Xerox]
- (32) Atheists approach every discussion WITH prejudice: there is NO god, they say - end of discussion for them. Agnostics, on the other hand, say maybe there is __ maybe there isn't __ - don't really know - no prejudice. [<http://groups.google.com/group/alt.atheism/> Posting April 6, 2003]
- There is no god \vdash There isn't [a god]
- (33) You can't prove there is no Krishna, so how do you know there isn't __ ?
 You can't prove there is no Allah/Muhammed, so how do you know there isn't __ ?
 You can't prove there is no Zeus so how do you know there isn't __ ?
 You can't prove there's no Santa Claus so how do you know there isn't __ ?
 [<http://groups.google.com/group/alt.atheism/>.PostingApril6,2003]
- There's no Santa Claus \vdash There isn't a Santa Claus
- (34) A: I just need the impetus of someone to collaborate with.
 B: I'd love to __ .
 A's utterance conversationally implicates that A would like B to [collaborate with A]
 [SW: Dec. 2005]
- (35) A: Boy, some of these things really have steep price tags on 'em...
 B: ...They sure are. [RM. 10/1/05]
 Xs have steep price tags on 'em \vdash Xs are [expensive]

- (36) I'm gonna send them an email saying that Ling 1 is something they could take. I don't think many of them will __ , though. [DB. 9/26/05]
- Ling 1 is something they could take \vdash They could [take Ling 1]
- (37) "They can't come here to Akron or to any other place in America and talk to you about all the jobs that they created, because they haven't," [John Kerry, Sept. 4, 2004]
- they can't talk to you about all the jobs that they created \vdash they can't say they've [created a lot of jobs]
- (38) Scott: They need reassurance that I can't give them.
 Harper: Yes you can __ . [Boston Public, Dec 2, 2002]
- They need reassurance that I can't give them \vdash I can't [give them the reassurance that they need].
- (39) Though the Moldovan and Romanian organizations typically smuggle girls to Western Europe and not the United States, they are, Matei says, closely allied with Russian and Ukrainian networks that do __ . [NY Times, 1/25/04]
- X typically smuggle girls to Western Europe and not the United States \vdash X does not smuggle girls to the US.
- (40) The Ugly Side of Teen Parties
 Your parents aren't home, but suddenly the police are __ .
 How do you handle problem parties? [In Read This!, SJMN 8/30/05]
- Your parents aren't home \vdash Your parents aren't [at *l*]. (where *l* is the location of your home.)
- (41) B: I just need you to sign this to affirm my student status.
 I: [laughter]
 B: I mean I am __ , aren't I? [B.E. 8/30/05]
- X affirm my student status \vdash X affirm that I am [a student]
- (42) [Re flooding in New Orleans]
- There will be a "total evacuation of the city. We have to __ . The city will not be functional for two or three months," Nagin said. [8/31/05 AP, Guardian Unlimited]

- a. There will be a “total evacuation of the city ⊢ We will [totally evacuate the city]
- (43) I: But sliding glass doors are easier to leave open in the night, aren’t they?
 P: Yes, but would you want to __ ? [PE 9/2/05]
- sliding glass doors are easier to leave open in the night ⊢ It’s easier to [leave glass doors open in the night] (⊢ It would be easier to [leave our glass doors open in the night] ?)
- (44) a. Breakfast is usually what a place like this does best, so it was a surprise to go back and find out that it wasn’t __ - or, at least, that it wasn’t __ on that morning, when I ordered Sonny’s Breakfast Special (\$5.50), which is two eggs, potato, toast, coffee and your choice of ribeye steak or butterfly pork chop. [<http://www.pjstar.com/entertainment/restaurants/Sonnys021303.shtml> as retrieved on Aug 31, 2005 21:37:38 GMT]
- b. Breakfast is usually what a place like this does best ⊢ Breakfast is usually [good (excellent?)] at a place like this.

3 Conclusions

- (45) a. Inference-based VPE is common in language use.
- b. To provide a unified account of the available data, an interpretive theory of VPE (like that suggested by Hardt (1993) [See also Culicover and Jackendoff (2005).]), which incorporates inference, seems preferable to LF-matching, LF-copying, or LF-jiggling alternatives.
- c. Trying to explain the graded space of acceptability in terms of more general properties of discourse processing (Hardt, Kehler) seems promising.
- d. Many previous claims of ungrammaticality are better regarded as claims of reduced acceptability, parallel to recent results obtained regarding *wh*-processing (e.g. Featherston (2005), Clifton et al. (in press), Arnon et al. (2005), Sag et al. (submitted))
- e. This minimizes grammar and maximizes explanation of the relevant data.

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