

SOME NOTES ON VP ELLIPSIS LICENSING CONDITIONS*

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ABSTRACT

Previous scholarship offers two different analyses of the variable acceptability of VP ellipsis. According to one of them (pioneered by Lobeck 1995), an ellipsis site must be licensed by a governing head, so that it should appear in an environment with an appropriate licensor; in the other one (advocated in Johnson 2001), the possibility of VP ellipsis is linked to the possibility of VP topicalization. This paper focuses on the impossibility of VP ellipsis in examples featuring locative inversion and shows that such unnoticed VPE patterns are compatible only with the latter VP topicalization approach.

Keywords: VP ellipsis, VP ellipsis licensing, locative inversion, government, VP topicalization

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1. LICENSING VP ELLIPSIS

One persistent problem (among others) in studies of VP Ellipsis (VPE) is the proper formulation of the licensing conditions on VPE. The pair in (1) is a simple demonstration, where Δ marks the missing constituent.

- (1) I don't think John will criticize his friends;
a. I don't think Bill will Δ as well.
b. *I don't think Bill Δ as well.

The contrast shows that VPE is sensitive to the environment in which it occurs; in particular, there are apparently certain restrictions on the elements to the left of the elided site. The existence of such licensing conditions for VPE can be further illustrated by the patterns listed in (2) (adapted from Johnson 2001).

- (2) a. John should have eaten rutabagas, and Bill should have Δ too.
b. John is eating rutabagas, and Bill is Δ too.
c. John has been eating rutabagas, and Bill has been Δ too.
d. Mag Wildwood wants to read Fred's story, and I also want to Δ .
e. *Mag Wildwood came to read Fred's story, and I also came to Δ .

(2a)-(2c) suggest that the ellipsis site must be the complement of an overt auxiliary; on the other hand, (2d)-(2e) show that when the elided VP is in construction with the infinitival *to*, apparently the licensing conditions must be further specified.

There are two main approaches which attempt to capture the VPE patterns witnessed above¹. The first one is essentially government-based; as Lobeck (1995) argues, the elliptical site, just like movement traces, must be head-governed according to the Empty Category Principle (ECP; Chomsky 1981). However, since infinitival *to*, by definition, fails to be a

¹ The discussion in the current paper relates to and focuses only on VPE but not ellipsis of other categories such as sluicing (IP ellipsis) and deletion within DPs (DP ellipsis). Also see footnote 14.

head governor in its own right, it is supposed to look for another potential governor on its left and incorporate into that head by the Government Transparency Corollary (Baker 1988)². This is how the contrast of (2d) and (2e) is captured: *to* in (2d) is able to covertly incorporate into another tensed head; however, the possibility of incorporation is blocked in (2e) because the infinitival clause is an adjunct.

On the other hand, Johnson (2001) suggests another alternative account, which contends that the possibility of VPE is linked to the possibility of VP topicalization (VPT). More precisely, VPE is preceded by and thus licensed by VPT; therefore, VPE is possible whenever the elided VP in question can undergo a prior VPT operation. As a result, the reason why (2a)-(2e) exhibit the associated (un)grammaticality is because they have the (un)grammatical counterparts in (3).

- (3) a. John should have eaten rutabagas and, eaten rutabagas_i, Bill should have *t_i* too.
b. John is eating rutabagas and, eating rutabagas_i, Bill is *t_i* too.
c. John has been eating rutabagas and, eating rutabagas_i, Bill has been *t_i* too.
d. Mag Wildwood wants to read Fred's story and, read Fred's story_i, I also want to *t_i*.
e. *Mag Wildwood came to read Fred's story and, read Fred's story_i, I also came to *t_i*.

² In the spirit of an ECP account, Zagana (1988) makes a proposal which differs minimally from Lobeck's in that, for Zagana, all that is necessary is that *to* can move close to some phrase by the phonological bracketing rules for the incorporation process in question to occur.

A major merit of this account is that it captures the long-held observation (Rizzi 1990) that the conditions on VPE and VPT are rather similar³.

At this point, the data discussed in the previous literature do not seem to provide unequivocal evidence in support of either account; therefore in this squib I would like to present and discuss the unnoticed VPE patterns in English locative inversion construction, giving support to the VPT licensing approach.

³ The observation that VPE and VPT seem to share certain similar conditions on licensing has been widely noted in the literature. For instance, VPE and VPT exhibit parallel syntactic behavior in that 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).

- (i) a. *John told Mary to be eating fish, so [eating fish]_i she started t_i.
b. John told Mary to be eating fish, so [eating fish]_i she should be t_i.
c. *No one suspected John wanted to leave, but [to leave]_i he wanted t_i.
d. No one suspected John wanted to leave, but [leave]_i he wanted to t_i.
- (ii) a. *John told Mary to be eating fish, so she started ~~[eating fish]~~.
b. John told Mary to be eating fish, so she should be ~~[eating fish]~~.
c. *I told John he didn't have to leave, but he wanted ~~[to leave]~~.
d. I told John he didn't have to leave, but he wanted to ~~[leave]~~.

Besides, VPE and VPT target at the same chunk or string of the verb phrase:

- (iii) a. *John hadn't eaten fish, but Mary claimed that [have eaten fish]_i he should t_i.
b. John hadn't eaten fish, but Mary claimed that [eaten fish]_i he should have t_i.
- (iv) a. *John hadn't eaten fish, but Mary claimed that he should ~~[have eaten fish]~~.
b. John hadn't eaten fish, but Mary claimed that he should have ~~[eaten fish]~~.

This range of facts led Johnson to the conclusion that VPE is licensed through a prior fronting operation such as VPT: In order for a VP to be elided, it has to be fronted first. Under this view, VPE can favorably be reduced to the general syntax of movement.

2. VP ELLIPSIS IN LOCATIVE INVERSION CONSTRUCTION

The examples in (4) illustrate the locative inversion construction (LIC) in English.

- (4) a. On the table sits a cat.
b. Under the bed was hidden a pile of jewels.

The status of the preverbal locative PP in English LIC has been the locus of heated debate regarding whether it is the real subject occupying [Spec, TP]. For the former view see Bresnan (1994), Collins (1997), Levin & Rappaport (1995), Doggett (2004); for the latter see Stowell (1981), Branigan (1992), Kuno (1971), Postal (1977, 2004), Coopmans (1989). With this in mind, consider the following VPE sentences.

- (5) A: I wonder where is a nice place for the cat to sleep.
B: *Under the bed is Δ .
- (6) a. *On the table sits a cat, and under the chair does Δ too.
b. *Under the bed was hidden a pile of jewels, and inside the safe was Δ too.

As clearly shown in (5) and (6), VPE is not permissible in LIC. Thus the next legitimate question to ask is how such grammaticality patterns may be properly captured under the two licensing approaches. Before we proceed to compare the ECP and VPT accounts, however, it should be noted that the reason for the impossibility of having VPE in LIC cannot be simply reduced to reasons involving information structure and cannot be explained independently of the two syntactic approaches under comparison. Admittedly, LIC is known to exhibit certain discourse restrictions, with the post-verbal nominal constituent functioning as a focus (Bresnan 1994). Therefore, a plausible alternative for capturing the ungrammaticality in (5) and (6) would be to say that since a focused constituent must be phonetically realized and therefore cannot be elided (i.e., the ellipsis site must correspond to the given part of the antecedent, cf. Tancredi 1992), thus the reason why VPE is unfeasible in LIC is that

the elliptical site cannot contain the focused post-verbal nominal and, if such indeed turns out to be the case, there would be no point in comparing the ECP and VPT accounts. Nevertheless, this line of reasoning cannot be sustained. In the previous studies on information structure, it is argued that other constructions such as *wh*-clefts and sentential subject constructions display fixed information structure as well, just like LIC. In particular, it has been shown that the preverbal constituent has to be topic or given information in *wh*-clefts and sentential subject constructions, while the postverbal (or post-copular) complement necessarily carries focus interpretation or new information (Erteschik-Shir 1973, 2007, Prince 1978, Lambrecht 2001). Given this view, the data in (7) and (8) demonstrate that, even when the ellipsis site presumably contains a focused phrase, the resulting VPE sentences are nonetheless acceptable:

- (7) a. What I'd like you to do is put the garbage away, but what I'd like John to do is not Δ .
b. What they did was very important and what you are going to do will be Δ too.
- (8) a. That we work harder would impress the boss, but that we are always late would not Δ .
b. That you're engaged to his daughter will not impress John, but that you're rich might Δ .

As a result, we can conclude that the information structure account, as specified above, cannot independently capture the incompatibility of VPE with LIC; thus a further examination and evaluation of the two syntactic accounts is indeed imperative.

3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Let us start with the ECP account. First, suppose the locative subject is the true structural subject in [Spec, TP]. With this working hypothesis, the observed VPE facts cannot be accounted for under the ECP approach because, if the locative subject is in [Spec, TP], the ECP approach would

wrongly predict (5) and (6) to be acceptable since both the Spec and Aux requirements are satisfied in this scenario. On the other hand, if we suppose that the locative subject is actually located in the left-peripheral topic position, the VPE facts in (5) and (6) are nevertheless not readily accounted for by the ECP approach. To begin with, there does not seem to be any problem with the Aux requirement in (5) and (6) since they have tensed auxiliaries that are supposed to serve as the licensors. Moreover, if we want to further resort to the Spec-Head relation, as assumed in certain versions of the ECP approach, we cannot properly characterize the facts for the following reason. Particularly, according to Saito & Murasugi (1990) and Lobeck (1995), the deletion of the complement is allowed only when the Spec position is filled; this claim is supported by the pairs in (9) and (10):

- (9) a. Mary said that she had invited John to the party, and I wondered why Δ .
b. *Mary wonders if John loves her, though she hopes that Δ .
- (10) a. Although John's friends were late to the class, Mary's Δ came on time.
b. *John was looking at a shirt in the shop, but he didn't buy the Δ after all.

The ellipsis in (9b) and (10b) cannot be licensed, thus being ruled out, because the Spec position of the relevant auxiliary is not filled. Now, turning back to our case, one thing that we can say to save the ECP approach, therefore, is that since the [Spec, TP] position in the locative/sentential subject cases is not overtly filled, the ellipsis in question is disallowed. However, if the necessity of having an *overt* specifier of the licensing head is incorporated into this theory, the ECP account turns out to be unable to capture the VPE patterns in control and

raising⁴ sentences as in (11) and (12)⁵ (from Martin 2001). Consider (11) and (12).

- (11) a. John wasn't sure he'd win the race, but he tried to Δ .
b. Mary wanted John to join the team, so Bill persuaded him to Δ .
- (12) a. John isn't likely to win the race, but Sally is likely to Δ .
b. We don't think that John will win the race, but Sally is certain to Δ .

As can be clearly seen, VPE is possible in both (11) and (12); importantly, note that the Spec positions of the licensing head *to* in these cases are all occupied by the phonologically null elements: PRO (or NP-trace⁶) in the control infinitives of (11) and NP-trace in the raising infinitives of (12); thus it appears that when an empty category in the Spec position works in tandem with an appropriate functional head, this empty category is eligible to license VPE⁷. However, recall that, in face

⁴ There are some controversies over judgments of VPE in raising constructions. Martin (2001) pointed out that VPE is impossible in infinitival complements of certain raising predicates:

- (i) *John does not like math but Mary seems to Δ .
(ii) *Harry may not be as happy as he appears to Δ .

However, as noted in Baltin & Barrett (2002) and other works, English native speakers vary in their judgment on the above sentences. In particular, some speakers find (i) to be completely acceptable and some find (ii) at best marginal. In any case, this issue does not significantly concern us here, as I will explain later.

⁵ However, the VPT account can still capture such contrasts due to the parallel grammaticality patterns illustrated in the following sentences (see the discussion later):

- (i) John wasn't sure he'd win the race, but, win the race, he tried to. (cf. (9a))
(ii) Mary wanted John to join the team, so, join the team, Bill persuaded him to. (cf. (9b))
(iii) John isn't likely to win the race, but, win the race, Sally is likely to. (cf. (10a))
(iv) We don't think that John will win the race, but, win the race, Sally is certain to. (cf. (10b))

⁶ If one assumes obligatory control is raising (Hornstein 1999).

⁷ Note that another kind of empty category, \bar{A} -trace, would create a dilemma identical to the one described here. Particularly, one might assume that the covert subject in LIC is an \bar{A} -trace and that somehow it is a peculiar property of \bar{A} -trace that prevents licensing condition from being satisfied; nevertheless, such a speculation would encounter a similar difficulty in face of examples as (i) below. That is, when a phonologically null \bar{A} -trace in the Spec position works together with an appropriate functional head, this \bar{A} -trace is eligible to license VPE, leading to the same impasse we depict here. Therefore,

of the earlier LIC cases, we have to force the overt specifier requirement into the ECP account so as to explain the impossibility of VPE in such constructions. Consequently, it is safe for us to conclude that the ECP account is mired in a dilemma in that the amendment made for one set of data runs into difficulties when trying to account for the other set of data. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that the ECP account cannot provide a satisfactory account for the VPE data in English LIC.

Next, let us examine how the VPT account deals with the VPE data. Recall that, under the VPT account, one significant implication that ensues is that the VPE constructions in question cannot be properly licensed as long as the relevant VPs can not be topicalized. In other words, there is a strong connection between the possibility of having VPT and VPE. Given this correlation, consider (13) and (14)⁸.

- (13) a. *On the table might sit a cat, and under the chair might Δ too.
 b. *Under the bed was hidden a pile of jewels, and inside the safe was Δ too.
- (14) a. *[Sit a cat]_i, under the chair might t_i .
 b. *[Hidden a pile of jewels]_i, inside the safe was t_i .

Now, under the VPT account, the grammaticality patterns witnessed above follow: the impossibility of ellipsis in (13) is related to the impossibility of topicalization in (14); in other words, since VPT out of locative inversion sentences is unacceptable, their corresponding VPE sentences are likewise ill-formed. In other words, the VPT account can work to capture (13) since, following this account, what matters for VPE

all empty categories would create such a problem under the ECP account.

- (i) John said that he wanted me to move the trunk, but he didn't specify how_i he wanted me t_i to Δ .

(cf. $CP[How_i \text{ did he specify}[t_i \text{ he wanted me } CP[t_i \text{ to move the trunk } t_i]]?$)

⁸ Note that there is no *a priori* reason to assume that ellipsis in LIC is fundamentally different from other ellipsis cases. For instance, just as in the case in (i), the supporting auxiliaries can sometimes be missing in LIC cases in a parallel fashion to (ii). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they are subject to an identical licensing mechanism.

- (i) On the table sits a car, and under the chair too.
 (ii) John wants to eat a hamburger, and Bill too.

licensing is whether VPT is allowed to take place for the sentence under investigation, whatever the proper account for that process is⁹.

Before concluding this paper, I would like to discuss a question, raised by an anonymous reviewer, that might arise in assuming VPE is derived and licensed by a prior VPT operation: in English, there seem to be some cases, particularly those involving adverbial clauses such as the contrasts shown in (15)-(16), where VPT is impossible but VPE is acceptable. Therefore, the existence of such discrepancies appears to call into question the VPT account of VPE in that certain ungrammatical VPT cases may still generate legitimate VPE outputs. However, for reasons laid out in the following, I show that these contrasts do not constitute *bona fide* counter-examples to the VPT approach to VPE; instead, the discrepancies exist because VPT is generally not allowed to occur within adverbial clauses (Heycock 2006, Haegeman 2010), which violation can be remedied later by the intrinsic repair property generally assumed to exhibit with the operation of ellipsis (Merchant 2001, Fox & Lasnik 2003).

- (15) a. John left before Mary did.
b. *John left before, leave, Mary did.

⁹ One might object to such an approach based on the following contrasts in (i) and (ii):

- (i)
a. I think Bill should sign the blue papers, and the green ones, I think he should Δ too.
b. I think Bill might not have signed the blue papers, but the green ones, he most definitely did Δ .
(ii)
a. *I think Bill should sign the blue papers, and sign_i, the green ones, I think he should t_i too.
b. *I think Bill might not have signed the blue papers, but sign_i, the green ones, he most definitely did t_i .

The contrasts above apparently pose challenges to the VPT account since, according to this account, we should expect (i) and (ii) to share the same grammaticality status, contrary to the fact. Nevertheless, I suggest these patterns are not real counter-examples; instead, the constructions in (i) are essentially pseudogapping constructions, which have been argued to involve different licensing conditions from VPE (see Jayaseelan 1990, Lasnik 1999 and Takahashi 2004). To put it differently, there is no connection between the grammaticality of (i) and (ii), despite appearances, because the licensing of pseudogapping is presumably achieved in different ways from VPE. Hence our point still holds.

(16) a. John probably was not forced to sign the statement. If he were, it would not prove that he confessed.

b. *John probably was not forced to sign the statement. If, forced to sign the letter, he were, it would not prove that he confessed.

In the ellipsis literature, it has been widely acknowledged that in elliptical constructions, such as sluicing and VPE, some syntactic dependencies can cross projections that are otherwise barriers or interveners to movement (Ross 1969, Chomsky 1972, Kennedy & Merchant 2000). That is, certain relevant barriers are somehow deactivated when phonologically deleted. (17) and (18) give representative instances demonstrating this effect with sluicing and VPE, respectively¹⁰.

(17) *Complex NP island and sluicing*

a. I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who.

b. *I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who [I believe the claim that he bit].

(18) *Left branch island and VPE* (examples from Kennedy & Merchant 2000)

a. *[How interesting] did Brio write [a *t* novel]?

b. Pico wrote a more interesting novel than Brio did.

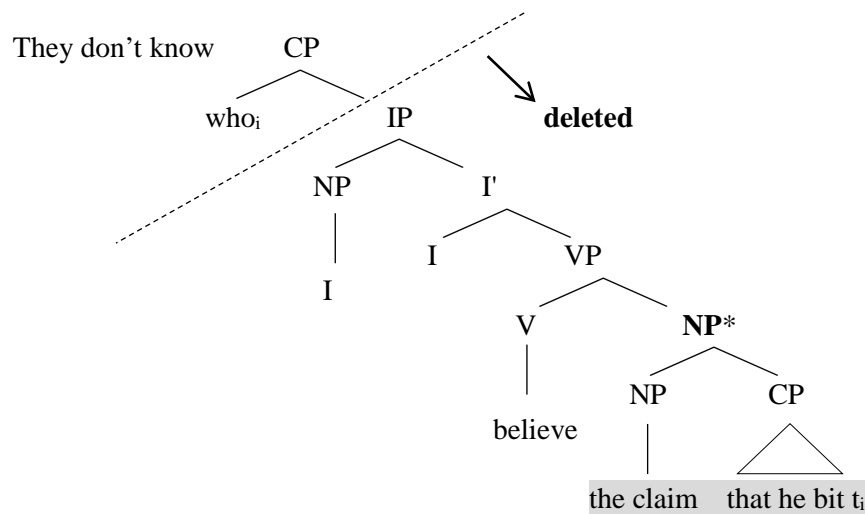
c. *Pico wrote a more interesting novel than Brio [wrote a *t* novel].

As illustrated above, under these circumstances, syntactic violations are rendered ineffectual by phonologically deleting the offending structure. One possible account to see how this works is proposed by Chomsky (1972), who suggests that when movement induces an offending structure, such as crossing an island, a diacritic * signaling

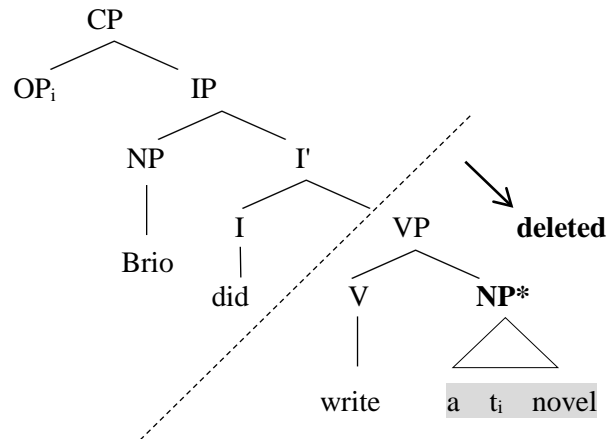
¹⁰ Crucially, the repair ability is a *commonly-shared* property of ellipsis in general, not just particular to sluicing. See the detailed discussion in Fox & Lasnik (2003) on the apparent difference between sluicing and VPE in their island repair ability and their conclusion that deletion (in all its forms) is capable of island repair. Also, readers are referred to their work on the reason why it is much easier to come up with examples of island repair that involve sluicing than with similar examples that involve VPE.

ungrammaticality (# in his original presentation) structure is assigned to the offending structure. Then an output filter forbidding * in surface structure captures the deviance of standard island or intervention violations. Significantly, if a later deletion operation applies and deletes the *-marked illicit syntactic object, the deviance can be removed along with the lexical material of the clause. This is why deletion/ellipsis can circumvent or salvage structural violation. Chomsky's analysis on how the offending structure can be repaired by ellipsis is illustrated in representation (19) and (20) (cf. (17) and (18)). Note that in the following diagrams the offending structure will be shaded for explicatory purposes and also indicated with a diacritic *.

(19) *I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who ~~they believe the claim that he bit~~.*



(20) *Pico wrote a more interesting novel than Brio did ~~write a t novel~~.*



As shown above, the movement of the *wh*-phrase in (19) and the comparative operator in (20) crosses complex-NP and left-branch islands, respectively; however, owing to the subsequent deletion operation, the *-marked offending structure is thus removed, rendering the originally ungrammatical structure to be repaired and improved.

Now let us return to sentences (15)-(16), where VPT takes place within adverbial clauses. As I will show in the following, the reason why VPT in the (b) clauses of (15)-(16) is unacceptable and the VPE counterpart in (a) clauses is fine actually involves similar repair configuration as described above, where the offending structure can be removed by a subsequent VPE operation. In a nutshell, I argue that VPT within adverbial clauses is unacceptable since the topicalized VP constituent blocks the movement path of an A'-operator of the adverbial clause, or, alternatively speaking, such a configuration results in Minimality violation (Rizzi 1990) in having \bar{A} -movement cross over a filled \bar{A} -position. Furthermore, I suggest that island repair with sluicing and island repair with ellipsis involve the same configuration: when certain locality or minimality condition blocks the syntactic operation of

an element X from within or across an element Y, the locality violation under discussion can be rendered ineffectual (and thus the originally offending structure can be improved) if the element Y is phonologically deleted from the surface structure.

Starting from Geis (1970), quite a few researchers have argued for a movement analysis of adverbial clauses, including temporal clauses and conditional clauses (Larson 1990, Dubinsky & Williams 1995, Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2004, Bhatt & Pancheva 2006, Haegeman 2007, 2009, 2010 among others). Precisely, temporal and conditional adverbial clauses are derived by movement of an operator from a TP internal position to the left periphery, as represented in (21)¹¹.

(21) John will go home [_{PP} after [_{CP} OP_i the clerk finishes the job t_i]].

Assuming the operator movement analysis for adverbial clauses, now consider (15) again, repeated here as (22).

- (22) a. John left before Mary did.
b. *John left before, leave, Mary did.

¹¹ While various types of empirical evidence are provided in the literature in support of this proposal, for reasons of space I cannot go into the details. Here I only provide one most-cited argument from the previous works. This proposal stems from the observation that there is ambiguity in the interpretation of such adverbial clauses, like the one in (i), wherein it can be construed as either the recommendation letter is on time or is late.

(i) The professor wrote a recommendation letter for Mark [after he said he needed it].

a. High reading: The professor wrote the letter after being asked.

[_{PP} after [_{CP} OP_i [_{IP} he said [_{CP} [_{IP} he needed it]] t_i]]]

b. Low reading: The professor wrote the letter after the deadline.

[_{PP} after [_{CP} OP_i [_{IP} he said [_{CP} [_{IP} he needed it t_i]]]]]

As Geis (1970) and Larson (1987, 1990) pointed out, this ambiguity is expected if there is a temporal operator that moves upward in the derivation of the adverbial clause. If this moved element is extracted from the lowest clause, the reading in (ib) results; if it is extracted from the second lowest clause, we get the reading in (ia). In either case, crucially, there is an operator movement that launches from someplace within the embedded clause.

Just like the previous island cases of (17)-(18), the failure of VPT in the adverbial clause of (22b) is also a result of minimality violation. To see this, consider (23):

- (23) a. *I couldn't recall which student [this article]_i would present *t_i* in my class.
 b. *I still remember the student who [this article]_i presented *t_i* in my class.

The ungrammaticality of the argument topicalization in (23a) and (23b) is typically ascribed to the locality effect whereby the fronted topicalized constituent *this article* blocks fronting of the *wh*-constituent. This phenomenon is usually regarded as involving topic island, or more generally operator island, in the literature (see Müller 2011 for more details). Crucially note that topic island is also observed with topicalization of VP:

- (24) a. *I knew that one student presented this article in my class but I can't recall now [which of the students [present this article]_i did *t_i*].
 b. *I know that one student presented this article in my class but I can't recall the student [who [present this article]_i did *t_i*].

As shown in (24), VPT within such *wh*-clauses is unacceptable as well. Given this fact, and given the assumption that temporal/conditional adverbial clauses are derived by movement of an operator from a TP internal position, we thus expect VPT to be impossible in this context. Such expectation is met: the topicalized VP *leave* constitutes an intervening element, which prohibits the operator movement within the adverbial clause, exactly like the topic island cases of (23) and (24). The offending structure induced by VPT can be represented in (25):

- (25) *John left before OP_j, leave_i, Mary did *t_i* *t_j*.
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Similar effects are also observed in Haegeman (2007) and her subsequent works, where she shows that argument fronting in English conditionals is disallowed due to such a locality effect, as shown in (26)¹².

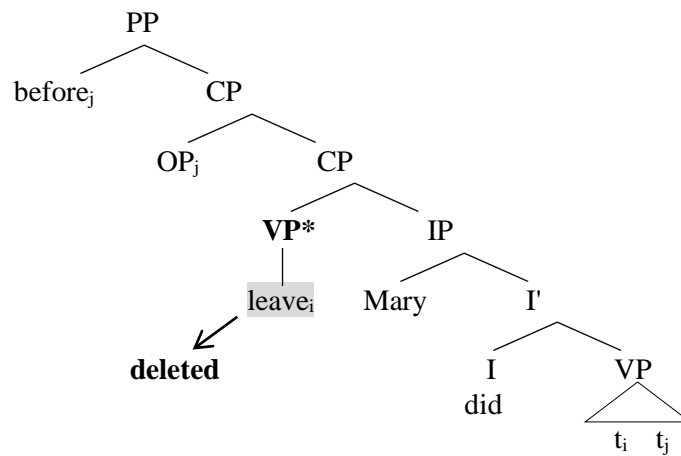
(26) *[_{CP} If [_{CP} OP_j [_{CP} that paper_i [_{IP} you find t_i helpful] t_j]], let me know.



Now, given that the ungrammaticality of (22b) is attributed to locality effect, we predict, just as in the case of what happens in the repair scenario seen earlier, the VPE counterpart of (22b), namely our (22a), can be improved as long as the subsequent phonological deletion takes the *-marked intervener away. Such prediction is indeed borne out as demonstrated in (27): the sentence is improved once the *-marked constituent is removed and taken out of the movement path.

¹² This is how Haegeman captures the long-observed fact, starting from seminal work by Emonds (1970, 1976), that in English there is a set of syntactic phenomena, including argument fronting as we demonstrated here, that is restricted to main clauses only. This range of facts is often referred to as Main Clause Phenomena in the literature.

(27) *John left before [leave] Mary did.*



To put it differently, in ellipsis, the deviance of the pre-elided counterpart might be rendered nullified by the repair property of deletion as long as the *-marked intervener is removed from the surface structure. As a result, the apparent discrepant cases where VPT is impossible but VPE is fine can be reasonably ascribed to the intrinsic repair property generally assumed to exhibit with ellipsis operation.

Granted this, note further that the major difference between the repair cases we just described and the locative inversion examples of (13) and (14), repeated here as (28) and (29), is that the latter cases involve only main clause structure. The derivation is demonstrated in (30), where we can see that after the topicalized VP *sit a cat* is phonologically deleted,

the *-marked offending structure¹³ still persists at the output, leading the derivation to crash.

- (28) a. *On the table might sit a cat, and under the chair might Δ too.
b. *Under the bed was hidden a pile of jewels, and inside the safe was Δ too.
- (29) a. *[Sit a cat]_i, under the chair might t_i .
b. *[Hidden a pile of jewels]_i, inside the safe was t_i .

¹³ The reason why the fronted PP in (29) is assigned a * in this case is that, like the previous examples of (23)-(24), it creates an operator island which is crossed by the topicalization of VP. This fact can be independently demonstrated and motivated in the grammar of English: the ungrammaticality of (i)-(ii) results from operator island configuration, where the A'-movement illicitly crosses a filled A'-position. Therefore, here the locative PP is marked * since it creates an offending structure for VPT. Crucially, in common locative inversion sentences without VPT or VPE, the fronted PP is not assigned a * diacritic since the * (which is a diacritic signaling certain island violation has been induced) is generated only when some syntactic operation crosses over it.

(i) *[This person]_i, [under the bed]_j t_j hid t_i .

(ii) *I wonder [who]_j [under the bed]_i t_i hid t_j .

One final related note is that, although it is generally true that English multiple fronting is prohibited in most cases, it seems that it is not categorically impossible and a few instances, under appropriate contexts, would show marginality or even acceptability:

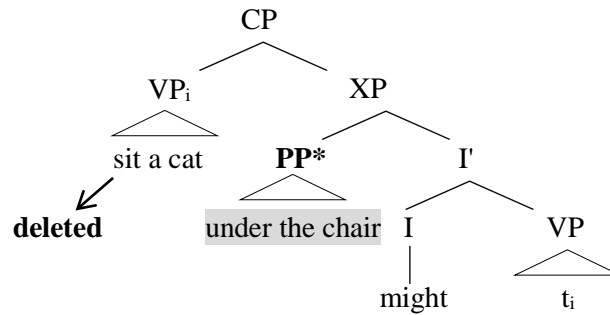
(iii) *John_i the book_j I gave t_j to t_i .

(iv) ??The man_i to whom_i that book_j I gave t_j t_i (taken from Rizzi 2004)

(v) A man_i to whom_i liberty_j we should never grant t_j t_i (taken from Baltin 1982)

As can be seen in the above examples, there are differences (e.g., displaced DP vs. PP, declarative vs. relative clauses) that might have an effect on sentence acceptability. How these differences bear on the different degrees of grammaticality is a question that so far has found no principled answer and we leave this issue for further inquiry. I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing my attention to this fact.

(30) *On the table might sit a cat, and under the chair might ~~sit a cat~~ too.*



In other words, the reason why the sentences in (28) are unacceptable is directly related to the impossibility of topicalization in (29) since there is no other implicated operation like island repair in this structure, just as we showed above.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, in this paper we pointed out the lack of ellipsis in English LIC, a phenomenon which seems to be little discussed in the literature. In addition, we further suggested that neither the information structure account nor the ECP licensing approach can provide a sufficiently adequate explanation, but, rather, this range of VPE data regarding LIC is compatible with the VPT licensing approach¹⁴.

¹⁴As Johnson (2001) correctly points out, there still remains the challenge for the VPT approach of finding the proper licensing conditions if one looks at ellipsis in categories other than VP.

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關於動詞組刪略認可條件的一些註記

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過去文獻對於動詞組刪略合法度之認可條件有兩種主要的分析法。其一認為被刪略處必須由管轄中心語所形式認可，因此刪略必須發生於具合適的認可中心語之管轄環境下；另一種分析法則認為動詞組刪略成功與否和該動詞組是否能進行主題化移位有直接相關。此文呈現語料指出動詞組刪略在處所倒裝結構均不合語法，進一步探討此現象只與第二種主題化移位分析法兼容，而在第一種分析法下則無法得到完善的解釋。

關鍵字:動詞組刪略、動詞組刪略認可、處所倒裝、管轄、動詞組主題化