

Squibs and Discussion

PRONOUNS POSTPOSE AT PF

David Adger

*Queen Mary, University of
London*

1 Introducing Pronoun Postposing

The phenomenon of weak pronoun postposing in Irish (1) and Scottish Gaelic (2) (Chung and McCloskey 1987, Duffield 1995, Adger 1997, Doyle 1998, 2002, McCloskey 1999) is unusual in that it involves the rightward placement of a prosodically and informationally light element.

- (1) a. Bhris sé an chathaoir leis an ord aréir.
broke he the chair with the hammer last night
'He broke the chair with the hammer last night.'
b. Bhris sé leis an ord aréir í.
broke he with the hammer last night it-FEM
'He broke it with the hammer last night.'
- (2) a. Chunnaic mi an t-each anns a' gharradh an dè.
saw I the horse in the garden yesterday
'I saw the horse in the garden yesterday.'
b. Chunnaic mi anns a' gharradh an dè e.
saw I in the garden yesterday it-MASC
'I saw it in the garden yesterday.'

Treating this movement at face value, as a rightward and syntactic movement (as do Chung and McCloskey (1987)), makes it theoretically extremely unusual. Most of the authors mentioned above have instead queried either the rightwardness of the movement (Duffield 1995, Kayne 2000) or its syntactic nature (Adger 1997, McCloskey 1999). In this squib, I offer a new argument for the latter position.

The argument comes from the interaction of pronoun postposing with ellipsis. I show that the derivational point at which ellipsis takes place must precede pronoun postposing (within any local domain) and further that ellipsis has the character of a PF deletion operation. On the assumption that syntactic and PF processes cannot interleave within a single local domain, it follows that pronoun postposing is postsyntactic. I focus on examples from Scottish Gaelic in this squib.

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2 Scottish Gaelic Is Not Pro-Drop

Since we are going to look at operations that delete pronouns, we must first be sure that Scottish Gaelic is not, for the relevant cases, pro-drop. This can easily be seen from the following examples:

- (3) Chunnaic *(mi) an t-each.
 saw I the horse
 'I saw the horse.'
- (4) Chunnaic an t-each *(mi).
 saw the horse I
 'The horse saw me.'

The same pattern is replicated with the other pronouns, with one exception. The only cases where a pronoun can be dropped in a simple finite clause are the first person singular and plural conditional. In these cases, pronouns are obligatorily dropped (see Hale and McCloskey 1984 for Irish and Adger 2000 for Gaelic).

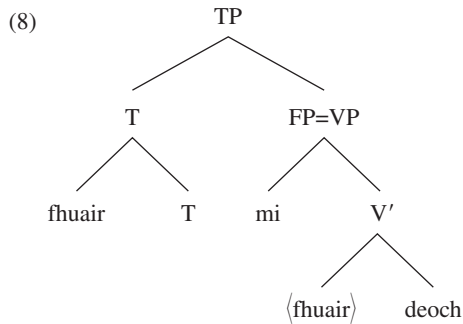
- (5) a. Bhuailinn (*mi) an t-each.
 hit-1SG.COND I the horse
 'I would hit the horse.'
- b. Bhuaileamaid (*sinn) an t-each.
 hit-1PL.COND we the horse
 'We would hit the horse.'

3 The Target of Ellipsis

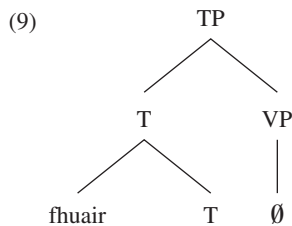
As shown by McCloskey (1991), Irish has a process that targets the complement of the position where the finite verb is situated. This is found in responses to questions. The same phenomenon is found in Gaelic.

- (6) An d'fhuair thu deoch fhathast?
 Q got you drink yet
 'Have you had a drink yet?'
- (7) a. Fhuair.
 got
 'Yes.'
- b. Cha d'fhuair.
 NEG got
 'No.'

Specifically, McCloskey shows that these constructions involve *ellipsis* of the category that is complement to the position of the finite verb. That is, on the assumption that the verb is in T, the responses are formed by eliding the FP complement of T, whose specifier the subject fills. (McCloskey (2001) argues that FP is not VP or vP in Irish, but this is irrelevant for our purposes here. I will assume it is VP with a VP-internal subject, for concreteness.)



There are two broad approaches to the analysis of ellipsis. One idea is that ellipsis is a simple PF deletion process (see, e.g., Merchant 2001); the other is that it involves a null pronominal element in the syntax, with semantic procedures to allow resolution of the ellipsis (see, e.g., Lobeck 1995). As noted by Merchant (2001:71), the latter approach cannot be correct for the structures under investigation here. If it were, the structure would look as follows, where \emptyset represents a null pronominal VP:



However, now the raised verb in T has no trace to bind (or, derivationally speaking, no source). I therefore adopt the idea that ellipsis in these constructions is a PF deletion process.¹

The same kind of ellipsis phenomenon is found in answers to *wh*-questions and in locally licensed ellipsis in declaratives (examples from Mark 1986).

¹ A reviewer suggests that if ellipsis is resolved at LF by copying the syntactic tree of the antecedent, then the verb would indeed have a trace to bind. However, in these responsive constructions, the antecedent tree is a question; copying this to the ellipsis site would give the wrong meanings, since the answer to a question like *Have you had a drink yet?* is certainly not *You have had a drink yet*; it is *I have had a drink (already)*. This means that copying the whole tree is not an option. We could attempt to rescue such a theory by positing that the information in the tree is selectively copied, omitting various features and structures, which will have to be specially syntactically tagged (since this is, by hypothesis, a syntactic operation). In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, we should reject such a theory of ellipsis as overly stipulative.

- (10) a. Cò bhuaithe a fhuair thu an sgeul seo?
 who from that got you the story this
 'Who did you get this story from?'
 b. Fhuair bho Fhergas.
 got from Fergus
 'From Fergus.'
- (11) a. Càit an do dh'fhàg thu do leabhar?
 where PRT PAST left you your book
 'Where did you leave your book?'
 b. Dh'fhàg anns an sgoil.
 left in the school
 'In school.'
- (12) Chan eil fios agam am faca e an tubaist, ach
 NEG be knowledge at-me if saw he the accident but
 ma chunnaic, cha d'thuirt e smid.
 if saw NEG said he word
 'I don't know if he saw the accident, but if he did, he didn't
 say anything.'
- (13) Smaoinich mi gun do dh'fhàg mi mo leabhar agus
 thought I that PAST left I my book and
 dh'fhàg aig an sgoil.
 left at the school
 'I thought I left my book and I had left it at school.'

4 Pronouns in Ellipsis

Let us assume that there is a syntactic account of weak pronoun postposing along the lines proposed by Duffield (1995). Under such an account, the pronoun first moves leftward to a high position (Duffield's W position), and then the remainder of the clause moves around it, as shown in (14) using English words for convenience.

- (14) [_{TP} saw I it yesterday]
 ↓
 [it] [_{TP} saw I t yesterday]
 ↓
 [_{TP} saw I t yesterday] [it] t

Given that ellipsis is a PF process, we should now be able to elide the VP constituent containing the trace.

- (15) [_{TP} saw I-~~t~~ yesterday] [it] t

This predicts the response (16b) to question (16a).

- (16) a. Am faca tu an tubaist?
 Q saw you the accident
 'Did you see the accident?'
 b. *Chunnaic an dè i.
 saw yesterday it-FEM
 'I saw it yesterday.'

The required response is instead (17).

- (17) Chunnai an dè.
 saw yesterday
 'I saw it yesterday.'

We find the same pattern in *wh*-answers and in declarative ellipsis.

- (18) a. Cò bhuaith a fhuair thu an sgeul seo?
 who from that got you the story this
 'Who did you get this story from?'
 b. Fhuair bho Fhergas (*e).
 got from Fergus (*it-MASC)
 'I got it from Fergus.'
- (19) Smaoinich mi gun do dh'fhàg mi mo leabhar agus
 thought I that PAST left I my book and
 dh'fhàg aig an sgoil (*e).
 left at the school (*it-MASC)
 'I thought I left my book and I had left it at school.'

To rule out such examples, an extra assumption needs to be made. For example, one could argue that XP-traces cannot be elided. However, this seems unlikely, given the existence of sluicing in the language.

- (20) Smaoinich mi gun do dh'fhàg mi mo leabhar ach chan
 thought I that PAST left I my book but NEG
 eil fhios agam càit.
 be knowledge at-me where
 'I thought I left my book but I don't know where.'

Defending this kind of assumption ends up simply stipulating the ill-formedness of the structures.

These conclusions also hold for an analysis that adopts a low movement of the weak pronoun, followed by remnant movement of the VP, as in (21) (see Kayne 1994 for a similar approach to heavy NP shift, and McCloskey 1999 for a different argument against this derivation for pronoun postposing).

- (21) [_{VP} I saw it]
 ↓
 [saw [_{VP} I t it]]
 ↓
 [it] [saw [_{VP} I t t]]
 ↓
 yesterday [it] [saw [_{VP} I t t]]
 ↓
 [saw [_{VP} I t t]] yesterday [it] t

Once again, there is nothing to stop us from eliding the VP, giving (22) and thereby predicting the wrong pattern of well-formedness.

- (22) [saw [_{VP} ~~I t t~~] yesterday [it] t

I should also note here that a simple rightward movement in the syntax gives the wrong results (Chung and McCloskey 1987).

- (23) [TP saw I it yesterday]
 ↓
 [TP saw I t yesterday] [it]
 ↓
 [TP saw ~~I~~t yesterday] [it]

However, if pronoun postposing is a process that can only occur after the derivational point at which ellipsis takes place, then the object pronoun will undergo ellipsis in situ.

- (24) [TP saw ~~I~~t yesterday]
 ↓
 *pronoun postposing

Once the pronoun is elided, there is nothing to move, predicting the correct distribution of the data.

Since a null pronoun theory of ellipsis for the construction under consideration is incompatible with a derivational view of VSO order in Scottish Gaelic, ellipsis is a PF deletion process. The arguments above mean that the point in the structure of the grammar at which pronoun postposing takes place is after the point at which PF deletion takes place. Hence, pronouns postpose in the PF component.

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A PROBLEM FOR THE PREPOSITION
STRANDING GENERALIZATION

Diogo A. de A. Almeida
University of Maryland,
College Park
Masaya Yoshida
University of Maryland,
College Park

Following the original proposal by Ross (1969), Merchant (2001) has convincingly argued that sluicing (Ross 1969, Chung, Ladusaw, and McCloskey 1995, Merchant 2001, Chung, to appear) results from the deletion of an IP following *wh*-movement, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) John was dancing with someone, but I don't know [_{CP} *who*_i [_{IP} ~~John was dancing with *t*_i~~]].

From this kind of analysis, two of the most striking features of sluicing follow straightforwardly: the case-matching phenomena in languages that display case in the *wh*-element (see Merchant 2001 for details) and the Preposition Stranding Generalization (PSG). This squib offers new data from Brazilian Portuguese (BP) that question the robustness of the latter.

1 The Preposition Stranding Generalization

Languages differ with regard to the licensing of preposition stranding (P-stranding) in overt *wh*-constructions: it is allowed only in some

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