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A PROBLEM FOR THE PREPOSITION  
STRANDING GENERALIZATION

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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 [<sub>CP</sub> *who*<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ~~John was dancing with *t*<sub>i</sub>~~]].

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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Germanic languages (such as English), but not elsewhere. The same pattern holds for sluicing.

(2) *English*

John was dancing *with* someone, but I don't remember  
(*with*) who<sub>i</sub> ~~John was dancing~~ t<sub>i</sub>.

(3) *French*

Jean dançait *avec* quelqu'un, mais je ne me  
Jean danced with someone but I not myself  
souviens pas \*(*avec*) qui ~~Jean dançait~~.  
remember not (with) who ~~Jean danced~~  
'Jean was dancing with someone, but I don't remember with  
who.'

Merchant (2001), drawing on a sample of 18 languages, shows that this pattern is crosslinguistically robust and proposes the PSG.

(4) *Preposition Stranding Generalization*

'A language *L* will allow preposition stranding under Sluicing iff *L* allows preposition stranding under regular *wh*-movement.' (pp. 92, 107)

## 2 A Problem for the Preposition Stranding Generalization

However, BP offers a direct counterexample to (4), since BP is a non-P-stranding language that allows P-stranding under sluicing. (5a) and (5b) show that *wh*-movement requires pied-piping of the preposition *com* 'with', and (6b) illustrates that despite this fact, BP allows P-stranding under sluicing.

(5) a. *Com* quem<sub>i</sub> que a Maria dançou t<sub>i</sub>?

with who<sub>i</sub> that the Maria danced t<sub>i</sub>  
'With whom did Maria dance?'

b. \**Quem*<sub>i</sub> que a Maria dançou *com* t<sub>i</sub>?

who<sub>i</sub> that the Maria danced with t<sub>i</sub>  
'Who did Maria dance with?'

(6) a. A Maria dançou *com* alguém, mas eu não lembro  
the Maria danced with someone but I not remember  
*com* quem<sub>i</sub> a ~~Maria dançou~~ t<sub>i</sub>.

with who<sub>i</sub> ~~the Maria danced~~ t<sub>i</sub>  
'Maria danced with someone, but I don't remember with  
who.'

b. A Maria dançou *com* alguém, mas eu não lembro  
the Maria danced with someone but I not remember  
quem<sub>i</sub> a ~~Maria dançou~~ *com* t<sub>i</sub>.

who<sub>i</sub> ~~the Maria danced with~~ t<sub>i</sub>  
'Maria danced with someone, but I don't remember  
who.'

It is important to note that all the several native speakers consulted judged the variants in (6) to be entirely acceptable and mutually interchangeable.<sup>1</sup> Similar judgments were likewise reported for a number of prepositions.<sup>2</sup>

This is clearly distinct from what Merchant (2001:98–102) reports for related Romance languages with no overt case marking, such as French and Spanish. Although some speakers judged the equivalent of (6b) as marginally acceptable in these languages, these seemingly problematic judgments varied widely across speakers and seemed to be elicited only with a small set of prepositions.

In the same vein, fronting the sluiced question, which has been reported to make PSG effects reemerge in Mexican Spanish, as shown in (7a),<sup>3</sup> does not have parallel or similar effects in BP (see (7b)). Both variants of (7b) were deemed acceptable by our informants.

- (7) a. Ana habló con alguien, pero \*(con) *quien*, no sé.  
 Ana talked with someone but (with) who not know  
 ‘Ana talked to someone, but (to) *who* I don’t know.’
- b. A Ana falou com alguém, mas (com) *quem* eu não  
 the Ana spoke with someone but (with) who I not  
 sei.  
 know  
 ‘Ana spoke with someone, but (with) *who* I don’t know.’

Finally, the BP data are also fundamentally distinct from recently described data from Serbo-Croatian (SC; Stjepanović 2006), according to which SC would be another example of a non-P-stranding language that allows P-stranding under sluicing. Stjepanović (2006) argues that these sluices in SC do not in fact involve movement of the complement out of the PP (i.e., they are not due to P-stranding)—that they have an independent origin not motivated by sluicing and therefore do not constitute a counterexample to the PSG, despite appearing to do so.

In summary, this new set of data from BP is simple and straightforward enough, and it differs in fundamental ways from data coming

<sup>1</sup> All the judgments reported in this squib refer to an educated middle-class dialect from Rio de Janeiro, which is relatively close to what is considered to be the standard BP dialect; they may not hold for all regional dialects.

A small subset of the speakers did report a preference for (6b) over (6a), but their preferences were stylistic in nature: since the preposition was seen as optional in that environment, these speakers thought it was either redundant or slightly affected to use it. When asked whether the sentences were well formed and whether their meanings were the same or different, all speakers concurred that both variants were equally well formed and that their meaning was the same.

<sup>2</sup> But not all prepositions, as has also been reported for English (Culicover 1999). A small list of prepositions for which the relevant judgments were elicited: *com* ‘with’, *para* ‘to’, *de* ‘of, from’, *entre* ‘between’, *em cima de* ‘on top of, above’, *debaixo de* ‘under’.

<sup>3</sup> Data attributed to R. Gutierrez in Merchant 2001.

from other languages that only contradict the PSG at a superficial level. Given the implications for the sluicing account laid down in Merchant 2001, however, we need to make sure that these new pieces of data from BP indeed directly contradict the PSG.

In sections 2.1–2.3, we show that sluicing in BP has all the signature properties of sluicing in English: (a) it is not pseudosluicing, (b) it ameliorates island violations, and (c) it contrasts with VP-ellipsis (VPE) in this regard.

### 2.1 *Is BP Sluicing Really Pseudosluicing?*

It has been proposed for other languages, such as Japanese (Merchant 1998), that what seems to be a sluicing construction is actually an elliptical cleft. This phenomenon has been dubbed *pseudosluicing* (Merchant 1998).

Merchant (2001) considers two alternative sources for the English sluicing construction, one involving sluicing (8) and the other pseudosluicing (9).

- (8) John was dancing with someone, but I don't remember who;  
~~John was dancing with t<sub>i</sub>.~~
- (9) John was dancing with someone, but I don't remember who  
 it        was.

The first argument against a pseudosluicing account of this kind for the BP data is that there is no well-formed equivalent of (9) in BP. As the contrast between sentences (10b) and (10d) shows, the only well-formed cleft alternative in BP requires pied-piping of the preposition.

- (10) A Maria dançou com alguém, mas . . .  
 the Maria danced with someone but  
 'Maria danced with someone, but . . .'
- a. eu não sei com quem.  
 I not know with who  
 'I don't know with who.'
- b. eu não sei com quem foi.  
 I not know with who was  
 'I don't know with who (it) was.'
- c. eu não sei quem.  
 I not know who  
 'I don't know who.'
- d. ??eu não sei quem foi.  
 I not know who was  
 'I don't know who (it) was.'

The reason (10d) (= (11)) is unacceptable is directly connected to the constraint on P-stranding in BP. Sentences (12) and (13) show that when P-stranding is not an issue, the same string (*mas eu não sei quem foi*) becomes acceptable.

- (11) ??A Maria dançou com alguém, mas eu não sei quem foi.  
 the Maria danced with someone but I not know who was  
 'Maria danced with someone, but I don't know who it was.'
- (12) A Maria viu alguém, mas eu não sei quem foi.  
 the Maria saw someone but I not know who was  
 'Maria saw someone, but I don't know who it was.'
- (13) Alguém dançou com a Maria, mas eu não sei quem foi.  
 someone danced with the Maria but I not know who was  
 'Someone danced with Maria, but I don't know who it was.'

Merchant (2001:120–129) nonetheless uses a number of diagnostics to argue empirically against a pseudosluicing account of English sluicing, and we will apply these to the BP data. Of the 10 diagnostics he puts forth, only 6 are applicable to BP, and of these, only those that can be applied to *wh*-words that allow P-stranding are directly relevant to the question at hand,<sup>4</sup> reducing the number of available diagnostics to 4.

*2.1.1 Prosody* Merchant (2001) argues that the intonational contours associated with sluicing and clefting are different. The normal contour in English sluicing requires that the pitch accent fall on the *wh*-phrase, whereas in the cleft case, the accent must fall on the copula. Sentences (14c) and (14f) show that in this respect BP patterns with English.

- (14) A Maria dançou com alguém, mas ...  
 the Maria danced with someone but  
 'Maria danced with someone, but ...'
- a. eu não sei com QUEM.  
 I not know with who  
 'I don't know with WHO.'
- b. eu não sei com quem FOI.  
 I not know with who was  
 'I don't know with who (it) WAS.'
- c. \*eu não sei com QUEM foi.  
 I not know with who was  
 'I don't know with WHO (it) was.'
- d. eu não sei QUEM.  
 I not know who  
 'I don't know WHO.'

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out. We therefore decided to leave out the diagnostic from left-branch extractions (because it deals with DegPs and not DPs) and the diagnostic from arguments/implicit adjuncts (for reasons presented in Chung, to appear).

- e. ??eu não sei quem FOI.  
I not know who was  
'I don't know who (it) WAS.'
- f. \*eu não sei QUEM foi.  
I not know who was  
'I don't know WHO (it) was.'

Sentence (14e) contrasts with sentence (14b), but notice that this is due to the independent constraint on P-stranding in BP clefts (cf. the paradigm in (10)–(13)). The sentences in (15) show that when clefts with no PPs are taken into consideration, the relevant judgments regarding prosody, like the one elicited in (14c), are reproduced.

- (15) Alguém dançou com a Maria, mas . . .  
someone danced with the Maria but  
'Someone danced with Maria, but . . .'
- a. eu não sei QUEM.  
I not know who  
'I don't know WHO.'
- b. eu não sei quem FOI.  
I not know who was  
'I don't know who (it) WAS.'
- c. \*eu não sei QUEM foi.  
I not know who was  
'I don't know WHO (it) was.'

*2.1.2 Aggressively Non-D-Linked Wh-Phrases* In English, aggressively non-D-linked *wh*-phrases cannot occur in sluicing, but they are perfect in clefts. The following data show that the same pattern holds for BP:

- (16) A Maria dançou com um outro cara ontem à  
the Maria danced with one other guy yesterday at  
noite . . .  
night  
'Maria danced with another guy last night . . .'
- a. eu só queria saber (com) quem!  
I only wanted know (with) who  
'I wish I knew (with) who!'
- b. eu só queria saber \*(com) quem diabos foi!  
I only wanted know (with) who devils was  
'I wish I knew (with) who the hell it was!'
- c. \*eu só queria saber (com) quem diabos!  
I only wanted know (with) who devils  
'I wish I knew (with) who the hell!'

The reason why (16b) is ill formed when the preposition is omitted once again has to do with the constraint against P-stranding in clefts operating in BP. The following sentences show that once no PPs are involved, the relevant judgments are reproduced:

- (17) Alguém dançou com a Maria ontem à noite . . .  
 someone danced with the Maria yesterday at night  
 ‘Someone danced with Maria last night . . .’
- eu só queria saber quem!  
 I only wanted know who  
 ‘I wish I knew who!’
  - eu só queria saber quem diabos foi!  
 I only wanted know who devils was  
 ‘I wish I knew who the hell it was!’
  - \*eu só queria saber quem diabos!  
 I only wanted know who devils  
 ‘I wish I knew who the hell!’

Moreover, as in English, the problem with (16c) and (17c) cannot be just that emphasis on *diabos* ‘the hell’ (lit. ‘devils’) is banned; this emphasis is fine in (18).

- (18) Quem DIABOS você acha que é?  
 who devils you think that is  
 ‘Who the HELL do you think you are?’

2.1.3 ‘Mention-Some’ Modification In English, the pivot of clefts enforces a ‘mention-all’ interpretation and thus is incompatible with modifiers that require ‘mention-some’ interpretation, like *for example*. (19) and (20) show that the same pattern is found in BP.

- (19) Alguém deveria falar com você sobre esse assunto.  
 someone should speak with you about this issue  
 ‘Someone should speak with you about this issue.’
- Você pode me dizer quem (\*é), por exemplo?  
 you can me tell who (is) for example  
 ‘Can you tell me who (\*it is), for example?’
  - Quem (\*é), por exemplo?  
 who (is) for example  
 ‘Who (\*is it), for example?’
- (20) Você deveria falar com alguém na diretoria  
 you should speak with someone in.the administration  
 sobre esse assunto.  
 about this issue  
 ‘You should speak with someone in the administration of-  
 fice about this issue.’
- Você pode me dizer (com) quem (\*é), por exemplo?  
 you can me tell (with) who (is) for example  
 ‘Can you tell me (with) who (\*it is), for example?’
  - (Com) quem (\*é), por exemplo?  
 (with) who (is) for example  
 ‘(With) who (\*is it), for example?’

2.1.4 ‘Else’ Modification Because of the same constraints that enforce a ‘mention-all’ interpretation in clefts, the modifier ‘else’ is

applied with poor results to clefts, but not sluices. This is true in English, and it seems to be true in BP as well.

- (21) O Pedro estava aqui, mas eu não sei quem mais (\*é).  
 the Pedro was here but I not know who plus (is)  
 ‘Pedro was here, but I don’t know who else (\*it was).’
- (22) O Pedro falou com o repórter, mas eu não sei  
 the Pedro spoke with the reporter but I not know  
 (com) quem mais (\*é).  
 (with) who plus (is)  
 ‘Pedro spoke to the reporter, but I don’t know (with) who  
 else (\*it was).’

Finally, Merchant (2001) makes an important general observation regarding the reducibility of sluicing to clefting: if sluicing were indeed reducible to clefting, then we should expect that languages that lack the latter would also lack the former. This, however, is not correct, since there are languages with no attested cleft construction (e.g., Romanian; see Dobrovie-Sorin 1993, Grosu 1994) that still display sluicing (Merchant 2001).

## 2.2 Brazilian Portuguese Sluicing Ameliorates Island Violations

One interesting fact about sluicing is that it seems to ameliorate what would constitute island violations in the nonelided version of the sentence (Ross 1969, Lasnik 2001; see Merchant 2001 for comprehensive data on island-ameliorating effects in English). If both cases in (6) involve sluicing, then this fact is true in BP sluices as well. (23) and (24) show that the Coordinate Structure Constraint is operative in BP, and the contrast between (26) and (27) shows that sluicing has the same island-ameliorating effect in BP that it has in English.

- (23) O Pedro estava dançando com a Maria e com mais  
 the Pedro was dancing with the Maria and with plus  
 alguém.  
 someone  
 ‘Pedro was dancing with Maria and someone else.’
- (24) \**Quem<sub>i</sub>* que o Pedro estava dançando com a Maria  
 who that the Pedro was dancing with the Maria  
 e com *t<sub>i</sub>*?  
 and with *t<sub>i</sub>*  
 ‘Who was Pedro dancing with Maria and with?’
- (25) \**Com quem<sub>i</sub>* que o Pedro estava dançando com a  
 with who that the Pedro was dancing with the  
 Maria e *t<sub>i</sub>*?  
 Maria and *t<sub>i</sub>*  
 ‘Who was Pedro dancing with Maria and?’
- (26) \*O Pedro estava dançando com a Maria e com mais  
 the Pedro was dancing with the Maria and with plus

alguém, mas eu não lembro *quem<sub>i</sub>* que o Pedro  
 someone but I not remember who that the Pedro  
 estava dançando com a Maria e com *t<sub>i</sub>*.  
 was dancing with the Maria and with *t<sub>i</sub>*  
 ‘Pedro was dancing with Maria and someone else, but I  
 don’t remember who Pedro was dancing with Maria and  
 with.’

- (27) O Pedro estava dançando com a Maria e com mais  
 the Pedro was dancing with the Maria and with plus  
 alguém, mas eu não lembro *quem<sub>i</sub>* ~~que o~~ Pedro  
 someone but I not remember who ~~that the Pedro~~  
 estava dançando com a Maria e com *t<sub>i</sub>*.  
 was ~~dancing with the Maria and with~~ *t<sub>i</sub>*  
 ‘Pedro was dancing with Maria and someone else, but I  
 don’t remember who.’

The same kind of ameliorating effect is found with other islands as well, showing that BP sluicing parallels English sluicing in this regard.

### 2.3 Brazilian Portuguese Sluicing Contrasts with VP-Ellipsis regarding Amelioration of Island Violations

Unlike sluicing, other kinds of ellipsis, such as VP-ellipsis (VPE), do not ameliorate violations of island constraints (Merchant 2001; but see Fox and Lasnik 2003). BP also has VPE, as shown in (28) and (29).

- (28) O Pedro vai reclamar com o professor, e a Maria  
 the Pedro will complain with the professor and the Maria  
 também vai reclamar ~~com o~~ professor.  
 also will ~~complain with the~~ professor  
 ‘Pedro will complain to the professor, and Maria will too.’
- (29) O Pedro tinha lido todos os livros da biblioteca, e  
 the Pedro had read all the books of the library and  
 a Maria também tinha lido ~~todos os~~ livros da  
 the Maria also had read ~~all~~ the books of the  
 biblioteca.  
 library  
 ‘Pedro had read every book in the library, and Maria had  
 too.’

However, one needs to be careful when dealing with VPE, since there is a constraint that operates on ellipsis that can be roughly stated as ‘‘The largest deletable constituent should be elided’’ (Fiengo and May 1994, Kennedy 2002, Merchant, to appear). If one does not control for this constraint, then *wh*-extraction out of a VPE site could turn out to be impossible only because sluicing could, and therefore should, be applied. In order to show that BP allows *wh*-extraction out of a

VPE site, then, we need to somehow circumvent this constraint on ellipsis. Following Takahashi and Fox (2005:4) and Nakao, Ono, and Yoshida (2006), we show using (30) that when intervening focus is present, it prevents deletion of the larger constituent (namely, IP).<sup>5</sup> This turns the VP into the largest deletable constituent, thereby satisfying the constraint. *Wh*-extraction out of a VPE site then becomes acceptable.

- (30) O João sabia que a gente tinha convidado alguns  
 the João knew that the people had invited some  
 professores, mas ele não podia revelar quais  
 professors but he not could reveal which  
 professores (que) a gente NÃO tinha.  
 professors (that) the people not had  
 ‘João knew that we had invited some professors, but he  
 could not reveal which professors we had NOT.’

Moreover, (31) shows that VPE in BP does not repair P-stranding, as sluicing does (cf. (6b)).

- (31) O João sabia que a gente tinha conversado com  
 the João knew that the people had talked to  
 alguns professores, mas ele não podia revelar \*(com)  
 some professors but he not could reveal (to)  
 quais professores (que) a gente NÃO tinha.  
 which professors (that) the people not had  
 ‘João knew that we had talked to some professors, but he  
 could not reveal (to) which professors we had NOT.’

Furthermore, when a sentence contains an island (in (32a), an adjunct island), VPE does not repair it, as sluicing does (cf. (27) and (33)).

- (32) Context: Two groups left the party, because Maria invited  
 some professors.  
 (Contrastive focal stress is marked by capitalization.)  
 \*O João sabe que A GENTE tinha saído da  
 the João knows that the people had left from.the  
 festa porque a Maria convidou aqueles professores,  
 party because the Maria invited those professors  
 mas ele não pode dizer quais (professores) os  
 but he not can say which (professors) the  
 OUTROS tinham saído da festa porque a Maria  
 others had left from.the party because the Maria  
 convidou t.  
 invited t  
 ‘João knows WE left the party because Maria invited those  
 professors, but he could not reveal which professors the  
 OTHERS had.’

<sup>5</sup> Example (30) is modeled after example (11c) from Takahashi and Fox 2005.

- (33) O João tinha saído da festa porque a Maria  
 the João had left from.the party because the Maria  
 discutiu com alguns convidados, mas eu não posso dizer  
 argued with some guests but I not can say  
 quais (convidados) o João tinha saído da festa  
 which (guests) the João had left from.the party  
 porque a Maria discutiu com t.  
 because the Maria argued with t  
 ‘João left the party because Maria argued with some of the  
 guests, but I cannot reveal which guests.’

These examples show that obviation of island effects is not a general property of ellipsis in BP; hence, they support the idea that the elliptical construction introduced in (6) is identical to its English counterpart.

#### 2.4 Preposition Drop in Relative Clauses

So far, we have shown that the elliptical construction in (6) has the same island-ameliorating properties as sluicing and that it is different from other elliptical constructions, such as VPE. Moreover, we have shown that it is highly unlikely that this elliptical construction can be reduced to pseudosluicing, as has been argued to be the case for Japanese (Merchant 1998), but not English (Merchant 1998, 2001). Hence, it seems that the P-stranding under sluicing in (6) is real.

Finally, let us consider a possible, though admittedly unlikely, objection. BP allows certain prepositions to drop in relative clauses. (34) shows that the verb *dançar* ‘dance’ subcategorizes for a PP headed by the preposition *com* ‘with’ if the object is animate. However, in relative clause environments, such as (35), *com* can be dropped, and the resulting string is still considered to be acceptable, as shown in (36).

- (34) O Pedro dançou \*(*com*) uma menina na festa.  
 the Pedro danced (with) a girl in.the party  
 ‘Pedro danced with a girl at the party.’
- (35) A menina *com* quem o Pedro dançou na festa era  
 the girl with whom the Pedro danced in.the party was  
 bonita.  
 pretty  
 ‘The girl with whom Pedro danced at the party was pretty.’
- (36) A menina *que* o Pedro dançou na festa era bonita.  
 the girl that the Pedro danced in.the party was pretty  
 ‘The girl that Pedro danced at the party was pretty.’

If that is the case, then one could argue that the apparent P-stranding under sluicing is actually just another case where the preposition can be dropped.

The P-drop phenomenon is not completely general in BP, however, and some verbs, such as *falar* ‘speak’, do not allow it.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Some speakers we consulted reported inverted judgments regarding these verbs: they accepted the P-less relative clause with *falar*, but not *dançar*. It is

- (37) O Pedro falou *\*(com)* uma menina na festa.  
 the Pedro spoke (with) a girl in.the party  
 ‘Pedro spoke with a girl at the party.’
- (38) A menina *com* quem o Pedro falou na festa era  
 the girl with whom the Pedro spoke in.the party was  
 bonita.  
 pretty  
 ‘The girl with whom Pedro spoke at the party was pretty.’
- (39) \*A menina *que* o Pedro falou na festa era bonita.  
 the girl that the Pedro spoke in.the party was pretty  
 ‘The girl that Pedro spoke at the party was pretty.’

If P-stranding under sluicing is just an artifact of using verbs like these that, for one reason or another, allow the preposition to drop,<sup>7</sup> then P-stranding under sluicing should be restricted to verbs that allow this kind of P-drop. This, however, is not what we find. The only difference between the pair of sentences (40) and (41) and the pair in (6) is that the verb in the former is *dançar*, which apparently allows the preposition to drop in relative clauses, and the verb in the latter is *falar*, which does not. The acceptability judgments, however, remain constant, and the preposition seems to be stranded in the sluiced IP in (41).

- (40) A Maria falou *com* alguém, mas eu não lembro  
 the Maria spoke with someone but I not remember  
~~com quem<sub>i</sub> a Maria falou <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>.~~  
 with who<sub>i</sub> the Maria spoke with <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>  
 ‘Maria spoke with someone, but I don’t remember with who.’
- (41) A Maria falou *com* alguém, mas eu não lembro  
 the Maria spoke with someone but I not remember  
~~quem<sub>i</sub> a Maria falou *com* <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>.~~  
 who<sub>i</sub> the Maria spoke with <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>  
 ‘Maria spoke with someone, but I don’t remember who.’

These examples show that P-drop in relative clauses is an orthogonal factor to the P-stranding under sluicing in BP. Moreover, P-drop in relative clauses is a phenomenon that occurs in languages such as Greek and Hebrew (Joseph 1980;<sup>8</sup> see also Grosu 1994 for further discussion about relative clause formation) that do not license P-stranding under sluicing.

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important to note, however, that this still suggests that the processes underlying the licensing of P-less relative clauses are directly related to specific idiosyncratic lexical information, which is definitely not the case with the sluicing facts.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Jairo Nunes for pointing out this possible confound.

<sup>8</sup> Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this reference to our attention.

### 3 Conclusion

Throughout this squib, we have argued that BP sluicing constitutes a direct challenge to the PSG (4), as put forth by Merchant (2001). We have shown that BP is a non-P-stranding language that nonetheless licenses P-stranding under sluicing, and that these cases of P-stranding are entirely general, unlike in other languages with no overt case marking (Merchant 2001). Moreover, we have shown that BP sluicing possesses the same characteristics as its English counterpart; it is not pseudosluicing. Finally, we argued that the apparent P-drop in BP sluicing is not due to a general P-drop-licensing rule in the language.

Given all this, is there a way of reconciling the BP data with the considerable evidence that Merchant (2001) has gathered? The obvious suggestion is that there are two sources of P-stranding. For Merchant, languages that prohibit P-stranding must have a *derivational* restriction against *wh*-movement out of a PP. As P-stranding violates a *derivational* condition, it cannot be saved by deletion; deletion only ameliorates violations of conditions on PF representation. Concretely, if P is a phase, then P-stranding should be prohibited under sluicing (Abels 2003). But what if in some languages P-stranding was blocked by a PF condition, as suggested by Aoun et al. (1987)? Then sluicing should ameliorate it. Distinguishing these two sources within a given grammar, however, raises nontrivial learnability issues that go well beyond the scope of this squib.

Alternatively, Abels (2003:238) has suggested that one could in principle account for cases of non-P-stranding languages that nonetheless allow P-stranding under sluicing by assuming that feature identity on phase heads is irrelevant to ellipsis, but is subject to vehicle change (Fiengo and May 1994).

These suggestions seem promising to us, but must be left as topics for further investigation.

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