

Squibs and Discussion

VOICE MISMATCHES IN SLOPPY
VP-ELLIPSIS
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This squib argues against Merchant's (2008) analysis of voice mismatches in VP-deletion and pseudogapping by pointing out that it makes a false prediction when extended to sentences in which more than one VP-deletion operation applies.

1 VP-Deletion and Pseudogapping

Merchant (2008) argues that while the target of pseudogapping is VoiceP, whose head encodes the active/passive voices, VP-deletion targets VP, the complement of the Voice head.¹ The targets of (i) VP-deletion and (ii) pseudogapping are schematically represented as follows:

- (1) a. $[_{TP} \text{Subj } T [_{beP} \text{be } [_{\text{VoiceP}} \text{YP}_{EA} \text{Voice}_{[Active/Passive]} \underbrace{[_{VP} \text{V } ZP_{IA}]]}_{(i)}]]]]$
- b. $[_{TP} \text{Subj } T [_{FP} \text{XP}_{Foc} \text{F } [_{beP} \text{be } \underbrace{[_{\text{VoiceP}} \text{YP}_{EA} \text{Voice}_{[Active/Passive]} [_{VP} \text{V } ZP_{IA}]]}_{(ii)}]]]]]]$

Subj is occupied either by an external argument (YP_{EA}) in active sentences or by an internal argument (ZP_{IA}) in passive sentences. XP_{Foc} in (1b) is the position for pseudogapped remnants (see Jayaseelan 1990, Lasnik 2001, Takahashi 2004).

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¹For expository purposes, I use Voice, instead of v, to encode the morpho-syntactic distinction between active and passive (see, e.g., Kratzer 1996). Moreover, I will assume with Merchant (2001) that a feature [E] on the head licenses deletion of its complement under identity conditions.

Given that deletion is subject to morphosyntactic identity conditions as well as semantic ones (see, e.g., Sag 1976, Fiengo and May 1994, Johnson 2001, 2004, Merchant 2001), the analysis depicted in (1) predicts an asymmetry between VP-deletion and pseudogapping with respect to voice mismatches.

It is widely known that VP-deletion allows voice mismatches, that is, mismatches between the voice of the antecedent and that of the deletion site, as shown in (2).² The deletion sites are in angle brackets.

- (2) a. *Passive antecedent, active ellipsis*
The system can be used by anyone who wants to (use it).
- b. *Active antecedent, passive ellipsis*
The janitor must remove the trash whenever it is apparent that it should be (removed).
(Merchant 2008:169)

In (2a), the voice of the antecedent is passive, but that of the deletion site is active. The resulting sentence is acceptable. As shown in (2b), an active antecedent also allows the deletion of a passive VP.

On the other hand, as Merchant (2008) first pointed out, pseudogapping apparently does not permit voice mismatches, even though it seems to target the same portion of structure. Relevant examples are given in (3).

- (3) a. *Passive antecedent, active ellipsis*
*Roses were brought by some, and others did lilies (bring).
- b. *Active antecedent, passive ellipsis*
*Some brought roses, and lilies were by others (brought).
(Merchant 2008:170)

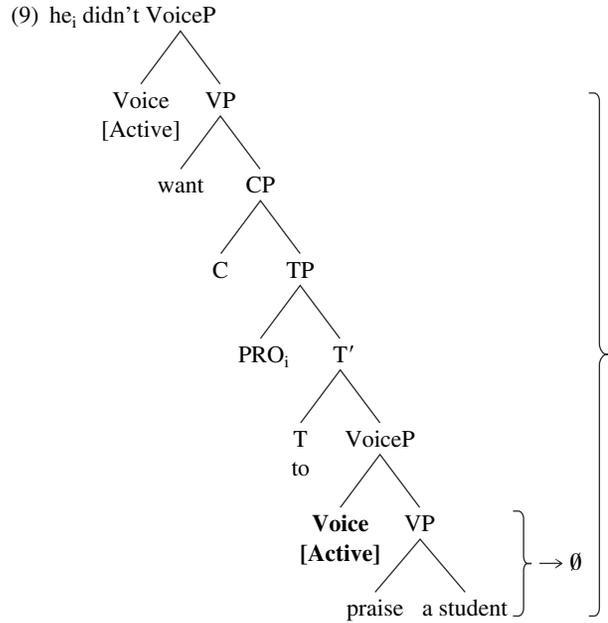
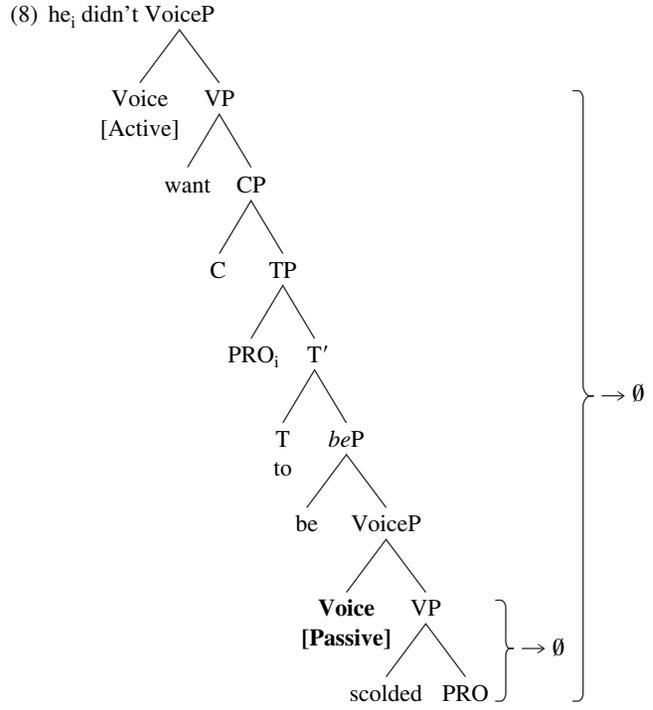
The examples in (3) show that pseudogapping requires that the voice of the antecedent correspond to that of the deletion site.

Given Merchant's analysis illustrated in (1), the asymmetry is accounted for under the copy theory of movement; the VP-deletion sentence in (2b), for example, has the following structure:

- (4) $[_{TP} \text{it T } [_{beP} \text{be } [_{VoiceP} \text{Voice}_{[Passive]} \underbrace{[_{VP} \text{remove it}]]}_{\emptyset}] \text{ (by XP}_{\text{agentive}})]$

The VP in (4) is similar enough to the antecedent in its interpretation. The VP also satisfies the morphosyntactic identity conditions, especially the identity of voice morphology with its antecedent, in a trivial manner, since the deletion site, VP, excludes the Voice head that has

² See Sag 1976, Dalrymple, Shieber, and Pereira 1991, Hardt 1993, and Kehler 2002, among others.



As indicated in boldface, the target VP contains the passive Voice head stranded by the deletion of the embedded VP *scolded by a dean* while the active Voice head is left intact by the deletion of the embedded VP *praise a student* in the antecedent VP. Thus, a voice mismatch should occur here as in the case of pseudogapping. Therefore, Merchant's analysis would wrongly predict that the example in (7) should be unacceptable.

Now, we have seen that VP-deletion is still insensitive to the identity of voice morphology even when the offending Voice head is embedded in the target VP. One might object, however, that what appears to be an otherwise problematic VP-deletion in (7) is, in fact, null complement anaphora (see, e.g., Hankamer and Sag 1976, Grimshaw 1979, Napoli 1983). Since null complement anaphora is deep anaphora (see Hankamer and Sag 1976), it tolerates voice mismatches. In (10), the null complement is enclosed in curly brackets.

- (10) The oats had to be taken down to the bin, so Sandy volunteered {to take the oats down to the bin}.
(Zohrab 1986:434)

Then, B's utterance in (7) would also be predicted to permit the voice mismatch in question. However, this account does not hold for the verb *want*, used in (7), the example in question. Consider the following examples:

- (11) a. John tried to take out the garbage, and I think that Bill also tried {to take out the garbage}.
b. *John wants to leave, but I don't think that Bill wants {to leave}.
(Jacobson 1990:439)

As the contrast in (11) shows, the verb *want*, unlike *try*, does not permit null complement anaphora. Therefore, the example in (7) is still problematic for Merchant's analysis.

It could also be objected that B's utterance in (7) involves IP-deletion followed by VP-deletion. It would then have the following informal representation:

- (12) B: When John had [_{IP} to be scolded by a dean], he didn't [_{VP} (want [_{IP} (to be scolded by a dean)])], either.

The deleted IP could then probe an appropriate antecedent in the *when*-clause in (12). The IP-deletion could not only satisfy the semantic and morphosyntactic identity conditions but also eliminate the offending voice mismatch context. Thus, we would correctly predict that B's utterance in (12) is acceptable. However, this alternative analysis also fails. It is well-known that IP-deletion is limited to *wh*-questions in English, resulting in what Ross (1969) calls sluicing. Consider the following examples:

- (13) a. Somebody just left—guess who (just left).
(Ross 1969:252)

- b. Bob knows how to crane his neck, but I don't know how (to crane his neck).
(Ross 1969:271)
- c. *Jim says that UConn will win the NCAA, but I don't believe that (UConn will win the NCAA).
(Takahashi 1994:274)

As shown in (13a–b), sluicing can apply to finite and nonfinite *wh*-questions. On the other hand, when the target constitutes a declarative clause as in (13c), IP-deletion yields an unacceptable result. Now let us return to the account given in (12). Since B's utterance in (12) is a nonfinite declarative clause, IP-deletion is not a viable option.⁴

An anonymous reviewer raises yet another objection. The reviewer correctly points out that the bracketing in (7B)/(12) ignores the option of *beP*-deletion. This option, if available, could also eliminate the offending voice mismatch context, as shown in (14).

- (14) B: When John had to [_{*beP*} be scolded by a dean], he didn't [_{VP} (want to [_{*beP*} (be scolded by a dean))]], either.

In this respect, note that the nature of *beP*-deletion is still unclear. First, *beP*-deletion is semantically conditioned when embedded within infinitival complements to lexical verbs as in the case at hand (see Levin 1985 for discussion). Second, and more important, *beP*-deletion, even if available, seems to be insensitive to voice mismatches in the first place, as shown in the following examples:

- (15) a. "Do I have to talk to these people?" "They will want to (be talked to by you)," Scarborough said.
b. We tried to move him to a nicer place, but *he didn't want to (be moved to nicer place)*.⁵
(*The Corpus of Contemporary American English*)

Since *beP* layers above VoiceP, Merchant's analysis would wrongly predict that the deletion of *beP* is unacceptable in (15). To avoid the problem, we could posit an ad hoc *be*-deletion. If it applied after VP-deletion and a Voice head is stranded between the two deletion sites, the examples in (15) would be accounted for. However, this analysis

⁴ An anonymous reviewer points out that stripping would be another IP-deletion operation (see Depiante 2000). However, it is widely held that stripping cannot occur inside an embedded clause, as shown in (i).

(i) *John read *El Quijote* but I think not Mary (read *El Quijote*).
(Depiante 2000:104)

Thus, stripping should not be a viable option, either (see also Culicover and Jackendoff 2005).

⁵ The deleted part might be an unaccusative vP instead. It then suggests that VP-deletion also permits what Merchant (2012) calls subject/nonsubject alternations.

cannot be extended to the example in (14), since deletion of the embedding VP includes the stranded Voice head. Thus, both *beP*- and *be*-deletion still pose a problem for Merchant's analysis. Therefore, I conclude that *beP*-deletion should also be excluded from available options.

To summarize, Merchant's syntactic analysis of voice mismatches cannot explain the voice insensitivity of sloppy VP-ellipsis in (7).

3 Discussion

Now the following question arises: What degrades pseudogapping examples involving voice mismatches? First, let us note that VP-deletion does not always permit voice mismatches (see, e.g., Kehler 2002, Kertz 2008, 2010, Tanaka 2011). VP-deletion is disallowed in (16), for example.

- (16) *This problem was looked into by John, and (similarly) Bob did, too.

(Tanaka 2011:478)

Second, Tanaka (2011) points out that pseudogapping also allows voice mismatches in some cases (see Miller 1991, Coppock 2001, Merchant 2008).

- (17) ?My problem will be looked into by Tom, but he won't into yours ⟨look⟩.

(Tanaka 2011:477)

Given these two facts, Kertz (2008, 2010) points out that focus marking, rather than voice mismatch per se, affects the acceptability of VP-deletion and pseudogapping.⁶ When the subject is focused and becomes a contrastive topic, as in (3) and (16), its correlate cannot be demoted via passive formation but must occupy the same subject position to form a well-formed contrastive topic discourse. Thus, subject focus disallows voice mismatches in VP-deletion and pseudogapping. On the other hand, auxiliary focus, typically signaled with a subject pronoun, does not have such a parallelism requirement and permits voice mismatches, as shown in (2), (17), and possibly also (15).⁷

⁶ I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing Kertz 2008, 2010 to my attention. I also owe the reviewer much credit for the analysis in this section. See Kertz 2010 for further details.

⁷ See Tanaka 2011, which employs Kehler's (2002) resemblance and cause-effect relations to account for the facts. However, I should note that the example in (7)/(18) forms a resemblance relation and thus would wrongly be predicted to be unacceptable.

Kertz's findings can be readily extended to the sloppy VP-deletion cases we are discussing. The example in (7), repeated in (18), involves auxiliary focus.

- (18) A: When John had to praise a student, he didn't want to
 ⟨praise a student⟩.
 B: ?When John had to be scolded by a dean, he didn't ⟨want
 to be ⟨scolded by a dean⟩⟩, either.

Thus, the example in (18B) is acceptable. On the other hand, sloppy VP-deletion does not permit voice mismatches when subject focus is involved through obligatory control, as in (19).⁸

- (19) A: John had to praise a student and Bill_i wanted PRO_i to
 ⟨praise a student⟩.
 B: *John had to be scolded by a dean, and Bill_i did ⟨want
 PRO_i to be ⟨scolded by a dean⟩⟩.

Thus, Kertz's analysis not only correctly rules in the example in (18) but also accounts for the contrast between (18) and (19).⁹

4 Conclusion

In this squib, I have shown that a VP-deletion operation can target the VP that embeds an offending Voice head stranded by another VP-deletion operation. In other words, VP-deletion is still insensitive to the identity of voice morphology between a deletion site and its antecedent even when it matters under Merchant's (2008) syntactic analysis. I have argued here that voice mismatch phenomena in VP-deletion and pseudogapping are best accounted for by Kertz's (2008, 2010) analysis based on focus marking.

⁸ The same reviewer mentioned in footnote 6 kindly offers the example in (19), but there is a caveat: in the reviewer's original example, *too* is added after B's utterance. I omit it to single out subject focus as a sole factor. I have checked the example with four of the seven informants who found the example in (7)/(18) acceptable. All of them found (19) unacceptable.

⁹ An anonymous reviewer kindly offers the following examples:

- (i) a. *An ID was required to be shown by everyone even though Bill
 wasn't ⟨required to ⟨show an ID⟩⟩.
 b. *An ID was required to be shown by everyone except for Bill, who
 wasn't ⟨required to ⟨show an ID⟩⟩.

They are simpler than the example in (7)/(18) in that no resolution of the sloppy VP-ellipsis is necessary. Moreover, we can exclude the IP/*be*P-deletion options discarded in section 2 as unavailable options to eliminate a voice mismatch context. I have checked (ia–b) with five informants who accept symmetric passive. Three found them unacceptable. Of the remaining two, one was unsure about his judgment, and the other found (ib) acceptable. Thus, I marked (ia–b) *. At first sight, the result appears to discredit the example in (7)/(18). On the contrary, the result is expected under an alternative analysis based on the subject/auxiliary focus distinction just given: in fact, both (ia) and (ib) are subject focus sentences.

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