

## Morphological identity in ellipsis

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This paper argues that Lasnik's (1999) analysis of VP ellipsis involving lack of morphological identity between the antecedent and the elided material cannot account for similar constructions in languages such as Portuguese. We propose that a unified account of the data can however be achieved if Lasnik's proposal is reinterpreted under Chomsky's (2001) valuation approach to feature checking.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, we discuss cases of ellipsis resolution where lack of morphological identity may or may not yield a good result, as illustrated in (1) with English (see Warner 1986, Lasnik 1999, and Lightfoot 1999, among others) and (2) with Brazilian Portuguese (see Zocca 2003).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. John slept and Mary will too. [sleep]  
b. \*John was here and Mary will too. [be here]
- (2) *Brazilian Portuguese:*  
a. A Maria estudou muito, mas o João não vai. [estudar]  
the Maria studied a-lot but the João not goes study-INF  
'Maria studied a lot, but João won't.'  
b. \*O João era famoso e o filho dele também vai. [ser famoso]  
the João was famous and the son of-his also goes be-INF famous  
'João was famous and his son will [be famous] too.'

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the text, elided material will be presented inside brackets. So far as we can see, the proposal to be advocated here can be implemented in terms of both PF deletion and LF copying and we will not take sides on this issue here. Thus, *elision* or *ellipsis resolution*, for instance, are used in the text as merely descriptive terms, with no specific commitment to either of these approaches to ellipsis.

We show that the similarities between English and Brazilian Portuguese present problems for Lasnik's (1999) proposal that Infl can be freely an affix or a set of features. We argue that this proposal needs a few adjustments and that the crucial aspect for (lack of) identity in ellipsis resolution concerns the way in which lexical information is stored, something that is independently resorted to in Lasnik's analysis.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we review Lasnik's (1999) proposal to account for contrasts such as the one in (1) and in section 3, we point out some problems that it faces when VP ellipsis in Portuguese is taken into consideration. In section 4, we propose an account of the data in terms of Chomsky's (2001) operation Agree and in section 5 we extend the analysis to (lack of) morphological identity in ellipsis constructions involving nominal predicates. Some concluding remarks are then presented in section 6.

## *2. Verbal morphology and ellipsis resolution under Lasnik's (1999) hybrid lexicalist approach*

The traditional analysis of verbal morphology within GB (see Chomsky 1981, Emonds 1978, and Pollock 1989, among others) was essentially a development of Chomsky's (1957) original proposal that verbs and their corresponding affixes were generated in separate positions. Within minimalism, Chomsky (1993) proposes an alternative lexicalist approach, according to which verbs enter the derivation fully inflected and check their features against Infl heads. Lasnik (1999) notes that the strictly lexicalist approach advocated by Chomsky (1993) does not capture the *do*-support facts of English, which the earlier analysis so nicely handled. He then proposes a hybrid approach according to which Infl is freely an affix or a set of abstract features. In case Infl is affixal, it must merge with the verb in the phonological component; on the other hand, if Infl is featural, it must check its features against the corresponding features of the verb.

To account for the difference between English and French with respect to verb movement, Lasnik also makes the assumptions in (3) (see Lasnik 1999:105).

- (3) a. French verbs are fully inflected in the lexicon (possibly correlating with the fact that there are no bare forms; even the infinitive has an ending).
- b. *Have* and *be* are totally inflected in the lexicon (possibly correlating with the fact that they are highly suppletive (...)).
- c. All other English verbs are bare in the lexicon.
- d. Finite featural Infl is strong in both French and English.

This proposal predicts the results in (4) below. (4a) illustrates the case of English main verbs. An affixal Infl and a bare verb must be merged in the phonological component under adjacency; otherwise, *do*-support is triggered. Since no strong feature is involved, no overt movement takes place. In turn, if

(4) a. Infl<sub>affixal</sub> V<sub>bare</sub>  
 b. \*Infl<sub>featural</sub> V<sub>bare</sub>  
 c. \*Infl<sub>affixal</sub> V<sub>inflected</sub>  
 d. Infl<sub>featural</sub> V<sub>inflected</sub>

(5) a. John slept, and Mary will too. [sleep]  
 b. John sleeps every afternoon, and Mary should too. [sleep every  
 afternoon]  
 c. \*John was here, and Mary will too. [be here]  
 d. \*John has left, but Mary shouldn't. [have left]

(6) a. [ John -ED sleep ] and [ Mary will ~~sleep~~ ] too  
 b. [ John -S sleep every afternoon ] and [ Mary should ~~sleep every afternoon~~ ] too  
 c. \*[ John was+Infl<sub>featural</sub> here ] and [ Mary will ~~was~~ here ] too  
 d. \*[ John has+Infl<sub>featural</sub> left ] and [ Mary will ~~has left~~ ] too

We will see in the next section that, although elegant, this account of the contrasts in (5) faces problems when we consider languages with verb movement that also allow VP ellipsis, such as Portuguese.

### 3. One problem: VP-ellipsis in Portuguese

Lasnik's proposal reviewed in section 2 makes the prediction that in languages with fully inflected verbs, VP ellipsis should not admit any lack of isomorphism, for the relevant features of the elided verb would fail to be checked. This prediction cannot be tested in French or in languages such as Spanish or Italian, for instance, whose verbs are arguably fully inflected as well, for they do not allow for VP ellipsis even under strict identity, as illustrated in (7) (see Zagana 1988, Depiante, 2000, and Lightfoot forthcoming, among others, for relevant discussion).

(7) a. *French*:

\*Jean peut travailler et Marie peut aussi. [travailler]  
 Jean can work and Marie can too work  
 'Jean can work and Marie can too.'

b. *Spanish*:

\*Juan había leído este libro y Pedro también había. [leído]  
 Juan had read this book and Pedro also had read  
 'Juan had read this book and Pedro had too.'

c. *Italian*:

\*Gianni ha letto questo libro e anche Piero ha. [letto]  
 Gianni has read this book and also Peter has read  
 'Gianni read this book and Piero did too.'

By contrast, Portuguese seems to be the exact type of language to test this prediction: it has a rich paradigm of verbal inflection, it has verb movement, and it allows VP ellipsis, as illustrated in (8).<sup>2</sup>

(8) *Brazilian Portuguese*:

- a. Eu dei um livro pra Maria e o Pedro também deu;  
 I gave-1SG a book to-the Maria and the Pedro also gave-3SG  
 [ti um livro pra Maria]  
 a book to-the Maria  
 'I gave a book to Maria, and Pedro did, too.'
- b. O João já tinha lido este livro, mas a Maria não tinha.  
 the João already had read this book but the Maria not had  
 [lido este livro]  
 read this book  
 'João had already read this book, but Maria hadn't.'

<sup>2</sup>There are some differences between Brazilian and European Portuguese (BP and EP, respectively) with respect to agreement morphology and verb movement. Thus, verbal agreement in BP is considerably weaker than EP (see Duarte 1995) and verb movement only goes as far as Infl in BP (see Figueiredo Silva 1996). However, to our knowledge, there is no substantial difference between the two dialects in the licensing of VP ellipsis (see, among others, Kato & Tarallo 1992, Kato 2003, and Zocca 2003 for BP and Matos 1992 and Martins 1994 for EP). For presentational purposes, we will only discuss BP data.

Contrary to what Lasnik's proposal would lead us to expect, Portuguese patterns pretty much like English in tolerating lack of isomorphism in ellipsis involving main verbs, as shown in (9), but not when *ser* 'be', *estar* 'be', and the auxiliary *ter* 'have' are involved, as exemplified in (10).

- (9) a. Eu já comi, mas a Maria ainda vai. [comer]  
 I already ate-1SG but the Maria still goes eat-INF  
 'I've already eaten, but Maria's still going to eat.'  
 Nós não convidamos o João, mas você deveria. [convidar o João]  
 we not invited-1PL the João but you should invite-INF the João  
 'We didn't invite João, but you should.'  
 c. Ontem eles assistiram este filme, e amanhã eu vou.  
 yesterday they watched-3PL this movie and tomorrow I go  
 [assistir este filme]  
 watch-INF this movie  
 'Yesterday, they watched this movie, and tomorrow I will.'
- (10) a. \*O João era famoso e o filho dele também vai. [ser famoso]  
 the João was famous and the son of-his also goes be-INF famous  
 'João was famous and his son will [be famous] too.'  
 b. \*Ontem o João esteve aqui e amanhã a Maria vai. [estar aqui]  
 yesterday the João was here and tomorrow the Maria goes be-INF here  
 'Yesterday João was here and tomorrow Maria will [be here] too'  
 c. \*Até ontem ele ainda não tinha chegado, mas até terça  
 until yesterday he still not had arrived, but until Tuesday  
 já vai. [ter chegado]  
 already goes [have-INF arrived]  
 'Until yesterday, he hadn't arrived yet, but until Tuesday will already  
 [have arrived]'

In fact, Brazilian Portuguese behaves like English even in ellipsis involving main verbs where lack of isomorphism is not allowed. This is the case when the elided verb is in the continuous form, as illustrated in (11).

- (11) a. \*John will sleep. Mary is now. [sleeping]  
 b. *Brazilian Portuguese:*  
 \*O João dormiu e agora a Maria está. [dormindo]  
 the João slept and now the Maria is sleeping  
 'John slept and now Mary is [sleeping]'

Let us consider why exactly the sentences in (9) present problems for Lasnik's account, by examining in some detail the structure of (9a), for instance, given in (12).

- (12) \*[eu já comi+Infl<sub>feat</sub>[<sub>VP</sub> comi]] mas [a Maria ainda vai ~~comi~~]  
 I already ate-1SG ate-1SG but the Maria still goes ate-1SG

Assuming the copy theory of movement, the trace of the verb in VP of the first conjunct is a copy of the verb adjoined to Infl and, as such, it is fully inflected. If ellipsis resolution must involve identity, the main verb in the second conjunct should then be identical to the one in the first conjunct. That being so, the verb in the second conjunct cannot check its features even if Infl is featural, for it is specified as first person, and Infl is specified as third person. Similar observations apply to the tense mismatch between *comi* (past) and *vai* (present). Hence, sentences such as the ones in (9) should be as unacceptable as the ones in (10) if we assume Lasnik's system, contrary to fact. This in turn could call into question Lasnik's original account of VP ellipsis in English. However, we show in the next section that it is possible to maintain the essentials of Lasnik's hybrid lexicalist analysis and still account for the Portuguese ellipsis data.

#### 4. Lexical specification and VP ellipsis

To account for the data discussed thus far, all we need to assume is that neither in English nor in Portuguese are verbs lexically inflected, unless they are idiosyncratically specified as being so. To make the proposal concrete, let us assume Chomsky's (2001) Agree-based system of checking relations, according to which T probes into vP in search of a DP to value its uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features. To make things simpler, let us consider a derivation involving an unaccusative structure, as illustrated in (13).

- (13) a. [TP T <sub>$\phi$ ?</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> ]]  
 b. [TP T <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> ]]  
 c. [TP DP <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> [T' T <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP <sub>$\phi$ :1SG</sub> ]]

In (13a), T enters into an agreeing relation with the DP within VP and gets its features specified as first person singular (cf. (13b)); the DP then moves to check the EPP, yielding the structure in (13c). What is relevant for our current discussion is the relation between T and V in (13c). If T does not have a strong feature, Lasnik's proposal can be adopted in full. That is, V and T will merge in the phonological component (see Halle & Marantz 1993 and Bobaljik 1994, among others) and before such merger takes place, ellipsis resolution may apply, allowing VP ellipsis like the one found in English involving main verbs, as illustrated in (14).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For presentational purposes we ignore the trace of the subject in Spec of vP.

- (14) a. John sleeps every afternoon, and Mary should too.  
 b. [<sub>TP</sub> John [<sub>T</sub> T<sub>3SG</sub> [ sleep every afternoon ]]] and [ Mary should [~~sleep every afternoon~~] ] too

If, differently from English, T in (13c) has a strong V-feature, triggering verb movement and yielding (15) below, nothing will essentially change with respect to ellipsis resolution. Crucially, the copy of the verb left behind within VP is *not* inflected.

- (15) [<sub>TP</sub> DP<sub>φ:1SG</sub> [<sub>T</sub> V+T<sub>φ:1SG</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP<sub>φ:1SG</sub> ]]]

Thus, VP ellipsis involving main verbs in Portuguese will pattern like their corresponding parts in English, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) a. Eu já comi, mas a Maria ainda vai.  
 I already ate-1SG but the Maria still goes  
 'I've already eaten, but Maria's still going to eat.'  
 b. [<sub>TP</sub> Eu já [<sub>T</sub> com-+T<sub>1SG</sub> [ com- ]]] mas [<sub>TP</sub> a Maria ainda [<sub>T</sub> vai<sub>3SG</sub> [~~com-~~]]]

The only relevant difference between English and Portuguese in this regard is that in the latter bare stems cannot stand by themselves and require infinitival morphology, as illustrated in (17).

- (17) Eu já comi, mas a Maria ainda vai comer.  
 I already ate-1SG but the Maria still goes eat-INF  
 'I've already eaten, but Maria's still going to eat.'

But such a requirement does not necessarily mean that we have an infinitival projection in the second conjunct of (16b) or (17). (17) may just be showing that the infinitival form is the default morphological form for Portuguese verbs. That this is indeed the case is suggested by the fact that the citation form for any verb in Portuguese is the infinitival form. Furthermore, Bastos (2001) has convincingly argued that verb topicalization as in (18a) below in Brazilian Portuguese proceeds along the lines of (18b), where the verb stem adjoins to T, leaving a copy, and then adjoins to a Top head. In the absence of specific overt topic morphology to support the highest copy of the verb in (18b), it surfaces in the default infinitival form, as seen in (18a).

- (18) a. Comprar, eu comprei o livro.  
 buy-INF I bought-1SG the book  
 'As for buying something, I bought the book.'  
 b. [<sub>TopP</sub> V+Top [<sub>TP</sub> SUBJ [<sub>T</sub> V+T<sub>φ</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V OBJ ]]]]

Let us now examine the sentences in (11), repeated below in (19). Lasnik analyzes cases like (19a) in terms of the Stranded Affix Filter (see Lasnik 1981) and such an analysis can be adequately extended to (19b), as well. More

specifically, given that the tense/aspect features of gerundive T are [+interpretable], they are lexically specified and should be present throughout the derivation. Thus, if the gerund morpheme does not combine with the verb, as sketched in (20), a violation of the Stranded Affix Filter obtains.<sup>4</sup>

- (19) a. \*John will sleep. Mary is now. [sleeping]  
 b. *Brazilian Portuguese*:  
 \*O João dormiu e agora a Maria está. [dormindo]  
 the João slept and now the Maria is sleeping  
 ‘John slept and now Mary is [sleeping]’

- (20) a. [TP Mary is [TP -ING ~~t<sub>VP</sub> sleep~~] now]  
 b. [agora [TP a Maria está [TP -NDO ~~t<sub>VP</sub> dormi~~]] ]

As for *be* and *have* in English (and *ser* ‘be’, *estar* ‘be’, and *ter* in Portuguese), we may adopt Lasnik’s proposal that they are inherently inflected, slightly adapting it under Chomsky’s (2001) valuation approach to feature checking. More specifically, we may assume that the relationship between being interpretable and being valued is not a biconditional (see also Pesetsky & Torrego 2004 for relevant discussion). In other words, whereas [+interpretable] features will always be valued, as in Chomsky’s (2001) system, [-interpretable] features will be unvalued in the general case, but may be valued in some marked cases (perhaps associated with idiosyncratic morphology). Importantly, these marked cases will also require feature checking against [+interpretable] features so that they can be deleted for LF purposes. With this reinterpretation

<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that Brazilian Portuguese is actually more well-behaved than English with respect to participial clauses, as shown in (i). If these sentences were to be analyzed like the ones in (19), as shown in (ii), both of them should give rise to a violation of the Stranded Affix Filter.

- (i) a. John may be questioning our motives, but Peter hasn’t. [questioned our motives]  
 b. *Brazilian Portuguese*:  
 \*Só ontem o João viajou. Na semana passada, a Maria já  
 only yesterday the João travel-PAST in-the last week the Mary already  
 tinha. [viajado]  
 had travel-PART  
 ‘Only yesterday did João travel. Last week Maria had already [traveled]’
- (ii) a. [TP Peter hasn’t [TP -EN ~~t<sub>VP</sub> question our motives~~]]  
 b. [TP a Maria já tinha [TP -DO ~~t<sub>VP</sub> viaja~~]]

Discussing the problem posed by the acceptability of the sentence in (ia), Lasnik (1999: fn. 8) speculates that “it is as if *en* is spelled out as zero”. As Oku (1998) observes, this idiosyncratic behavior of the participial morphology is also noticeable with respect to VP fronting, as illustrated in (iii) (see Oku 1998: 21-30 for discussion).

- (iii) Mary once predicted that John would pass an exam eventually, and pass one he now has.



of Lasnik's hybrid lexicalist approach to verbal morphology, consider the unacceptable cases of VP ellipsis in (21) and (22) below, for instance.<sup>5</sup> In both (21b) and (22b), the verb in the second conjunct cannot have its ([-interpretable]) tense features checked and the derivation crashes.

(21) a. \*John was here and Mary will too.

b. \*<sub>[TP John [<sub>T</sub> was<sub>PAST.3SG</sub>+T<sub>3SG</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> was<sub>PAST.3SG</sub> here ] and [<sub>TP</sub> Mary [<sub>T</sub> will [<sub>VP</sub> was<sub>PAST.3SG</sub> here ]]] too</sub>

(22) *Brazilian Portuguese*:

a. \*O João esteve aqui e a Maria também vai.  
the João was here and the Maria also goes  
'João was here and Maria will [be here] too'

b. \*<sub>[TP o João [<sub>T</sub> esteve<sub>PAST.3SG</sub>+T<sub>3SG</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> esteve<sub>PAST.3SG</sub> aqui ] e [<sub>TP</sub> a Maria também [<sub>T</sub> vai [<sub>VP</sub> esteve<sub>PAST.3SG</sub> aqui ]]]</sub>

The discussion above shows that what is relevant for (lack of) identity in ellipsis resolution is not whether or not the verb must move overtly, but whether or not the [-interpretable] features associated with the verb are lexically specified. Based on work by Warner (1995), Lightfoot (1999) in fact provides very compelling evidence for such a conclusion. First, he shows that different forms of *be* in Modern English may select different complements, as illustrated in (23)-(25).

(23) a. Kim was to go to Paris.

b. \*Kim will be to go to Paris.

(24) a. Kim has been to Paris.

b. \*Kim was to Paris.

(25) a. I regretted that Kim was reading that chapter.

b. \*I regretted Kim being reading that chapter.

Interestingly, as Lightfoot observes, in earlier stages of English the ungrammatical forms in (23b), (24b), and (25b) were attested, and so were ellipsis constructions that are ungrammatical nowadays, as respectively shown in the examples reproduced in (26) and (27) below. This clearly shows, as Lightfoot points out, that at a time when the forms of *be* were not listed

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<sup>5</sup> Under this approach, obligatory movement of *be* and auxiliary *have* in English must be tied to a property of these elements and not to Infl (i.e. these verbs must be associated with a strong feature; see Honstein, Nunes & Grohmann 2005 for relevant discussion). As for Portuguese sentences such as (22a), nothing special need be added in this regard, for Infl already has a strong V-feature triggering overt verb movement).

separately in the lexicon with their own selection idiosyncrasies, ellipsis resolution did not treat *be* and main verbs differently.<sup>6</sup>

- (26) a. You will be to visit me in prison with a basket of provisions; ... 1814 Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. by J. Lucas, Oxford University Press, 1970: 122.  
 b. I was this morning to buy silk. 1762 Oliver Goldsmith, *Cit W*: 158 (meaning “I went to...”, not “I had to...”)  
 c. Two large wax candles were also set on another table, the ladies being going to cards. 1762 Daniel Defoe, *The Political History of the Devil*, Talboys, Oxford: 1840: 336.
- (27) a. I wish our opinions were the same. But in time they will [sc. be the same]. 1816 Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by R. W. Chapman, London: OUP, 1933: 471)  
 b. And Lady Middleton, is she angry?  
 I cannot suppose that she should [sc. be angry]. 1811 Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. by C. Lamont, London: OUP, 1970: 237.  
 c. I think, added he, all the Charges attending it, and the Trouble you had, were defray’d by my Attorney: I ordered that they should [sc. be defrayed]. 1740-1 Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, London: 3rd edition 1741, vol. 2: 129.

Selection restrictions of the type seen in Modern English are also found in Brazilian Portuguese for the verbs *ser* ‘be’ and *estar* ‘be’, as illustrated in (28) and (29) (see Zocca 2003), which supports our claim that their features are inherently specified.

- (28) a. O João estava para sair quando a Maria chegou.  
 the João was to leave when the Maria arrived  
 ‘João was about to leave when Mary arrived..’  
 b. \*O João vai estar para sair quando a Maria chegar.  
 the João goes be to leave when the Maria arrives  
 ‘João will be about to leave when Mary arrives.’
- (29) a. Era para o João fazer isso.  
 was for the João do this  
 ‘João was supposed to do this.’

<sup>6</sup> Of relevance here is also Thompson’s (2004) study of speech errors in which the verb and its inflection are separated. She found a distinctive contrast between English and Spanish in this regard. Whereas in English all the attested errors involved a main verb (13) and none involved an auxiliary, in Spanish such errors are attested with both kinds of verbs (15 with main verbs and 5 with auxiliaries). Her conclusion, compatible with the analysis entertained here, is that auxiliaries in English enter the derivation fully inflected, whereas main verbs in English and all the verbs in Spanish enter the derivation as simple stems.

- b. \*Tinha sido para o João fazer isso.  
 had been for the João do this  
 ‘João had been supposed to do it.’

To sum up, English and Portuguese are much more similar than different in what concerns VP ellipsis constructions and this fact can be captured if the morphological inflection on the verb is to be specified in Infl under agreement as in Chomsky’s (2001) system. This is arguably the general case, which should be assumed by children acquiring either of these languages in the absence of evidence to the contrary. By contrast, marked cases where a given verb is to be lexically associated with inflectional features in addition to the features present in Infl should require positive evidence for their acquisition. The fact that the exceptional cases discussed here involve verbs that are more “functional” in nature and have very salient morphological idiosyncrasies is consistent with this view.

#### 5. Further evidence: ellipsis of adjectival and nominal predicates

The analysis outlined in the previous section also applies to apparent lack of isomorphism in ellipsis constructions involving adjectival predicates. Consider the sentences in (30), for instance.

(30) *Brazilian Portuguese:*

- a. O João é alto e a Maria também é. [alta]  
 the Joao is tall-MASC.SG and the Maria also is tall-FEM.SG  
 ‘John is tall and Mary is too.’  
 b. O João é alto e aqueles meninos também são. [altos]  
 the Joao is tall-MASC.SG and those boys also are tall-MASC.PL  
 ‘John is tall and those boys are too.’

In (30a) there is a mismatch in gender and in (30b) a mismatch in number between the two conjuncts. Assuming that there is a functional head, say Agr, dominating the adjectival predicates, and that adjectives in general enter the derivation in their bare forms as well, the derivation of the first conjunct in (30) proceeds along the lines of (31) below. Agr probes into the AP and values its [-interpretable] f-features as MASC.SG, as shown in (31a), and *o João* later moves to [Spec, TP], as shown in (31b).<sup>7</sup> Further concatenation between Agr and the adjective may take place overtly via head movement or in the phonological component via morphological merger. Be that as it may, the crucial point here is that the adjectival stem in (31) may license the ellipses in the second

<sup>7</sup> Again we will ignore the trace of the moved DP for presentational purposes.

conjuncts of (30) in virtue of being uninflected, as illustrated in (32).<sup>8</sup>

- (31) a. [<sub>AgrP</sub> Agr<sub>MASC.SG</sub> [<sub>AP</sub> alt- o João]]  
       b. [ [o João] é [<sub>AgrP</sub> Agr<sub>MASC.SG</sub> [<sub>AP</sub> alt- ]]]
- (32) a. [ [a Maria] também é [<sub>AgrP</sub> Agr<sub>FEM.SG</sub> [<sub>AP</sub> ~~alt-~~]]]  
       b. [ [aqueles meninos] também são [<sub>AgrP</sub> Agr<sub>MASC.PL</sub> [<sub>AP</sub> ~~alt-~~]]]

Interestingly, the more idiosyncratic the alternation between the masculine and the feminine forms is, the less acceptable the corresponding ellipsis becomes, as illustrated in (33).

(33) *Brazilian Portuguese:*

- a. ??O Brad Pitt é ator e a Liv Tyler também é. [atriz]  
       the Brad Pitt is actor and the Liv Tyler also is actress  
       ‘Brad Pitt is an actor and Liv Tyler is too, [an actress]’
- b. \*A Liv Tyler é atriz e o Brad Pitt também é. [ator]  
       the Liv Tyler is actress and the Brad Pitt also is actor  
       ‘Liv Tyler is an actress and Brad Pitt is an actor too.’
- (34) a.. \*O João já é pai e a Maria também já é. [mãe]  
       the Joao already is father and the Maria also already is mother  
       ‘Joao is already a father and Maria is already a mother.’
- b. \*A Maria já é mãe e o João também já é. [pai]  
       the Maria already is mother and the Joao also already is father  
       ‘Maria is already a mother and Joao is already a father.’

This can be accounted for if we make the plausible assumption that these forms have their gender specification encoded lexically. That being so, they should only license ellipsis under strict identity. In other words, these display the same behaviour as *be*, for instance.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The investigation of the behaviour of ellipsis in the absence of full identity between the antecedent and the elided elements can provide useful tools for the study of the distribution and computation of lexical features throughout the derivation. The fact that VP ellipsis works basically in the same way regardless of whether or not the language in question has verb movement to Infl, or rich verbal agreement morphology indicates that in the unmarked case, inflectional morphology is not associated with verbs as they enter the derivation. This state

<sup>8</sup> The contrast between (11b) and (ib) in fn. 4, on the one hand, and (30), on the other, seems to suggest that in languages like Portuguese, the Stranded Affix Filter only applies to morphemes that are [+interpretable]. We leave a fuller exploration of this idea to another occasion.

of affairs thus supports an approach in which [-interpretable] features are valued in the course of the derivation, as in Chomsky's (2001) system, combined with late insertion of vocabulary items, as proposed by Halle & Marantz (1993).

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