Varieties of English

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1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe how certain ellipsis phenomena differ across varieties of English. The discussion here is mainly focussed on VP-ellipsis[1] because, insofar as I know, there is little to no description in the literature of dialectal variation in the domain of clausal ellipsis, nominal ellipsis or other such elliptical constructions.

2 The licensing of VP-ellipsis

To begin with, let us consider dialectal variation in which verbs may occur as the sole surviving verbal head in the context of VP-ellipsis. The retained verb is typically described as the "licensor" of VP-ellipsis (Lobeck 1995, Johnson 2001), since it is clearly required for ellipsis to work.[2] and the standard description of English VP-ellipsis is that it is only possible if at least one auxiliary verb is retained as a licensor. This auxiliary may be *be*, *have*, a modal, and if none of these options is available, the dummy verb *do* must appear.

(1) a. John has sang, and Bill has too.

b. John is singing, and Bill is too.

[1]Throughout I use the term "VP-ellipsis" following tradition, with no strong commitment to whether or not each case involves deletion of a node identifiable as a VP. Miller and Pullum (2013) argue that Sag's (1976) term "post-auxiliary ellipsis" is more accurate, but it is not clear that that would apply to all the cases discussed here.

[2]For different theories of ellipsis licensing, see Lobeck (1995), Merchant (2001), Aelbrecht (2009), Thoms (2010) among many others.

c. John should sing, and Bill should too.

d. John sang, and Bill *(did) too.

Dialect data is useful for making this description more precise because there is substantial dialectal variation in English in the domain of auxiliary verbs. In what follows I describe a few different sources of variation and how they interact with VP-ellipsis licensing, and I discuss how this allows us to make our generalizations about licensors more precise.

2.1 VP-ellipsis and auxiliary-like verbs

First let us consider variation in whether or not a given verb shows the morphosyntax behaviour of an auxiliary verb. One case of interest is 'main verb' *have* used to express possession: this may survive VP-ellipsis in at least British and Australian varieties of English, whereas this is impossible in all[3] standard English varieties in the USA (thus requiring *do*-support). (I henceforth refer to these varieties as US English, USE).

(2) John has a copy of that book, and Mary has too. BrE OK, *USE

The difference between the dialects shown by (2) is perhaps unsurprising, since it is known that *have* retains the last vestiges of auxiliary verb syntax in the British and Australian ones but behaves fully like a lexical verb in the American ones. The auxiliary-like status of *have* in these dialects is indicated by cliticization to the subject, raising to C in questions and raising past negation. These tests do not all pattern together uniformly though, as many standard British varieties (i.e. from southeast England) only allow (3a), in others inversion is possible in questions but not with negation, and in some varieties (northern England) raising past negation in declaratives is either impossible or restricted only to cases where the possessum is indefinite (dialects in the southwest of Scotland). Broadly, the tendency in the UK seems to

[3]A note on the contextual restriction of quantification: throughout this paper I will often make claims about "all dialects" of some kind or another having one characteristic or another. Obviously this is overstating things, as there is still a lot that is not known about just how much some of the phenomena in question vary within dialect communities: for instance, I know little about whether or not *have*-raising is possible in the southern American English dialects which share a number of relic features with the British dialects which they are closely related to historically. Thus throughout, the set of dialects in question should be understood as those which I have been able to access data on directly or indirectly.

be that *have* tends to retain more raising properties the further north you go, and the dialects which allow raising past negation also allow raising to C (but not vice versa). All these dialects contrast with North American dialects, in which all of (3) are unacceptable (just like with (2)).

(3) a. I've a copy of that book with me. BrE OK
b. Have you any money? OK in most British varieties
c. I haven't any money. OK in many northern British varieties
d. I haven't that book with me. OK in e.g. northeast Scotland

The correlation between auxiliary-like behaviour and the ability to survive ellipsis can also be observed with other uses of *have*. Consumption *have* (as in *have steak*) shows a much more lexical verb-like syntax in most British varieties, failing all the raising tests, and it also fails to license ellipsis (much like possessive *have* for American dialects). The same pattern shows up when we consider other main verb uses of *have*, such as its causative use.

(4) a. *I haven't steak for dinner every night.
b. *John has steak for dinner every night, and Mary has too.

(5) a. *I haven't my engine checked by a mechanic regularly.
b. *I have my engine checked by a mechanic regularly, and Mary has too.

The same correlation between raising and ellipsis even seems to be attested across different instantiations of possessive *have* in single dialects. For many speakers of *have*-raising dialects, raising is much better with present tense forms of *have*; for instance, in my own dialect the examples in (6) are degraded, even though (3a)-(3b) are wholly acceptable.[4] Quite why this would be is not clear, but what's of interest is that these judgments are again tracked by ellipsis judgments, in that possessive *have* is not a good VP-ellipsis licensor in its past form.

(6) a. ??I'd a copy of that book when I was younger.
b. ??Had you any idea what you were getting yourself in for?
c. ??I hadn't any money with me at the time.

[4]Preliminary results in fieldwork for the *Scots Syntax Atlas* indicates that this is a general pattern, in that in all 83 locations sampled at the time of writing the present tense forms of *have* are rated higher than the past tense forms.

(7) ??John had a copy of that book when he was younger, and Mary had too.

This indicates that it is not some idiosyncratic property of British dialects that they allow all uses of *have* to be conflated with auxiliary *have*; rather, it is the syntax of the verb which determines whether or not a given *have* may survive ellipsis, and it seems there is a correlation between whether a verb displays auxiliary-like properties and whether it can survive ellipsis.

Interestingly, it is not the case that auxiliary-like verbs always survive as ellipsis remnants. First, consider the *need* passive, a nonstandard passive construction which is available in various east coast American dialects[5] and in all Scottish English dialects (see Edelstein 2014 and references cited therein). In this construction, a passive VP is embedded under the verb *need*, which functions as a passive auxiliary of sorts; however *need* does not show auxiliary-like properties like verb-raising to T or precluding *do*-support. (9) shows that *need* does not license ellipsis (Thoms and Walkden 2015), thus indicating that not all auxiliary-like verbal elements license ellipsis.

(8) a. This car needs washed. Scottish English
b. He needs spoken to.
c. He doesn't need spoken to.
d. *He needs not spoken to.
e. Does he need spoken to?
f. *Needs he spoken to?

(9) a. *This doesn't need washed, but that needs. Scottish English
b. A: So your car needs washed?
B: *Yeah it needs.

The same thing is seen with habitual *be* in African American English (AAE).[6] In this construction, an uninflected form of *be* encodes a habitual interpretation of the predicate it takes as its complement (see e.g. Green 2000, 2002). In terms of our diagnostics habitual *be* does not behave like an auxiliary verb, in that it does not raise and it triggers *do*-support in various raising contexts (Green 2000). Like passive *need*,

[5]For details see the Yale Grammatical Diversity Project's page on this phenomenon: http://microsyntax.sites.yale.edu/needs-washed.

[6]Thanks to Tracy Conner for bringing these facts to my attention.

habitual *be* is also unable to license ellipsis (Green 2002).[7]

(10) You know John be at the mall on Wednesdays.
'You know John is usually at the mall on Wednesdays' AAE

(11) a. Becky be watching the basketball games.
b. Do Becky be watching the basketball games?
c. *Be Becky watching the basketball games?
d. Becky don't be watching the basketball games?
e. *Becky be not/ben't watching the basketball games. AAE

(12) *Bruce be singing, and I be, too. AAE

These facts allow us to narrow our VP-ellipsis generalisation further: only those auxiliaries which can occur in T can serve as licensors.

2.2 Null verbs

Another aspect of VP-ellipsis which emerges from looking at dialect data is that the surviving auxiliary-like element must be overt. For instance, finite nonpast instances of auxiliary and copular *be* may optionally be null in African American English (AAE), as (13a) shows. Conner (2014) observes (following up on observations in Labov 1969) that this optionality disappears when the auxiliary is the licensor of VP-ellipsis.

(13) a. Joe (is) so fast he (is) gonna get a ticket. AAE
b. If Vikki (is) sipping vino on the porch, then I'm sure uncle Marco *(is). AAE

One further relevant observation to add is that VP-ellipsis is possible with the null auxiliary construction in AAE when an uncontracted *not* is present at the ellipsis site.

(14) Errbody on instagram lookin like they mad rich but they not.[8]

One might speculate that the same effect is seen in infinitives in standard English. In a discussion of

[7]A similar pattern holds for the aspect marker *BIN*, as discussed in Green (2002).

[8]This example is taken from the song 'Errbody' by Yo Gotti. Tracy Conner (p.c.) has confirmed for me that it is grammatical in AAE.

VP-ellipsis in infinitives Johnson (2001) notes that while VP-ellipsis is impossible in all of the environments in (15) (data from Zwicky 1982, and Zagona 1988b,a)), in all cases VP-ellipsis is ameliorated inserting *not* into the field to the left of the nonfinite auxiliary *to*. I add here the observation that the same effect is not seen when negation follows *to*.

(15) a. *Mag Wildwood came to introduce the barkeep, and I came to as well.
b. *You should play with rifles because to is dangerous.
c. ??Ron wanted to wear a tuxedo to the party, but Caspar couldn't decide whether to.

(16) a. Mag Wildwood came to introduce the barkeep but I came (precisely) not to.
b. You should unload rifles because not to is dangerous.
c. If Ron knows whether to wear a tuxedo, and Caspar knows whether not to, do they know different things?

(17) a. *Mag Wildwood came to introduce the barkeep but I came (precisely) to not.
b. *You should unload rifles because to not is dangerous.
c. *?If Ron knows whether to wear a tuxedo, and Caspar knows whether to not, do they know different things?

Zwicky (1982) and Zagona (1988b,a) argue that the problem with (15) is that nonfinite *to* is a clitic which must attach to a host to its left, and they submit that this cliticisation process is impossible when *to* is separated from its potential host by an island boundary. Assuming this is correct, the effect of adding negation in (16) and the absence of any such effect in (17) would then follow if it were the case that a preceding *not* may provide a host for encliticisation of *to*. In both (14) and (16), then, licensing becomes possible when some additional prosodic constraint on the licensing element is satisfied.

Similar effects can be seen in English varieties in some parts of Scotland. Smith (2000) reports that Buckie English optionally allows for null forms of finite nonpast *do* and auxiliary *have* when the inflection would be zero (e.g. first person), so long as they co-occur with negation, as shown in (18).[9] The elicited data in (19) shows that VP-ellipsis is unacceptable when the null auxiliary is the licensor.

(18) a. I {na/dinna} mine fa come in.

[9]These are based upon naturally occurring examples. Further examples of these have been found in data from other communities in the northeast of Scotland as well.

‘I don’t remember who came in.’ Buckie English (Smith 2000, 232)

b. I {na/havena} been there in a while.

‘I haven’t been there in a while.’ Buckie English

(19) a. She likes bobbies but I {*na/dinna}.

‘She likes policemen but I don’t. Buckie English

b. You’ve been tae France but I {*na/havena}

‘You’ve been to France but I haven’t.’ Buckie English

One point to note regarding the Buckie case is that the negation which occurs with the null auxiliary is the contracted for *-na* (*-nae* in western Scottish varieties), which is similar but not equivalent to StE *-n’t* (see Smith 2000, Weir 2007 and Thoms et al. 2013 for discussion). This contracted negation forms a phonological word with the preceding subject, which is typically pronominal, so it is likely that ellipsis in this context is not possible for the same reason that contracted auxiliaries may not occur adjacent to ellipsis sites or gap sites.

(20) John’s waiting, and {*I’m / I am} too.

(21) I wonder who {*that’s / that is}.

Going further, it could be the case that the overtness requirement for ellipsis licensors is due to some general prosodic property of structures of this kind too, whereby auxiliary verbs at the edge of a gap must be stressed and hence cannot be null or reduced. Interestingly, there is another corner of Scots dialects which indicates that this might not be adequate either. Thoms et al. (2016) note that in certain Scots dialects from the central belt of Scotland, contraction is possible in constructions like the following, which are typically used in contexts where the speaker has discovered something.

(22) a. Here it’s!

b. There it’s!

Speakers who accept and produce examples like these nevertheless reject (20)-(21) just like other English speakers. What these examples suggest is that a fully prosodic account of auxiliary contraction is not viable, and that there must be some irreducible syntactic component to the contraction restriction. A complete analysis of these facts should prove instructive when it comes to assessing the extent to which restrictions on ellipsis licensing can be reduced to prosodic constraints.

3 VP-ellipsis and nonfinite auxiliaries

3.1 Optionality in ellipsis of nonfinite auxiliaries

The preceding discussion of ellipsis licensors focusses on simple cases where there is just one auxiliary. However an interesting property of English VP-ellipsis is that there is often optionality in the size of the ellipsis site in clauses with multiple verbal heads, with some heads having the option of either being included or excluded in the ellipsis site. This is most widely available with nonfinite form of auxiliary *be*. In (23)-(24), we see that nonfinite *be* may optionally be included in the ellipsis site when the auxiliary immediately above is a finite modal or finite *have*. In (25), we see that the same optionality is attested when *be* occurs under nonfinite *have* in clauses with three auxiliaries.

(23) a. Molly could be sent home today, and Astrid could (be) ~~sent home today~~, too.
b. Molly might be chasing cats, and Astrid might (be) ~~chasing cats~~, too.

(24) a. Molly has been sent home, and Astrid has (been) ~~sent home today~~, too.
b. Molly has been chasing cats, and Astrid has (been) ~~chasing cats~~, too.

(25) a. Molly could have been sent home today, and Astrid could have (been) ~~sent home today~~, too.
b. Molly might have been chasing cats, and Astrid might have (been) ~~chasing cats~~, too.

The same pattern is observed with *be* used as the copula, even though this is often analysed as being the "main verb" of copular clauses.

(26) a. Brian has been a student for two years, and Caitlin has (been) ~~a student for two years~~, too.
b. Brian might be a student just now, and Caitlin might (be) ~~a student just now~~, too.
c. Brian might have been a student for two years, and Caitlin might have (been) ~~a student for two years~~, too.

However this optionality is not always observed with all auxiliaries, and much discussion of the nature of VP-ellipsis licensing has focussed on cases where this optionality fails (e.g. Akmajian and Wasow 1975, Sag 1976, Thoms 2010, Sailor 2012, 2014, Aelbrecht and Harwood 2015). One such case is the failure of VP-ellipsis licensing when the auxiliary adjacent to the ellipsis site is in the *-ing* form (Sag 1976, Johnson 2001); I'll call this the *-ing* constraint.

(27) a. *John isn't being spied on, but Mary is being.

b. *John isn't being spied on now, but he will have been being in the 80s.

We see the opposite kind of failure of optionality with non-finite forms of *have*. As noted by Sailor (2012, 2014), Harwood (2013) and Aelbrecht and Harwood (2015), even though nonfinite *be* may be optionally elided when it follows a modal auxiliary, the same does not hold with nonfinite *have*: for many speakers, ellipsis of nonfinite *have* is completely impossible.

(28) a. *Molly could have been sent home today, and Astrid could ~~have been sent home today~~, too.
b. *Molly might have been chasing cats, and Astrid might ~~have been chasing cats~~, too.

These patterns seem to show that it is not just the feature specification of T which is relevant to whether or not ellipsis is licensed, but rather nonfinite auxiliaries have a role to play as well.
These facts are relevant in the present context because there is substantial dialectal variation with respect to the ability of nonfinite auxiliaries to be retained in ellipsis contexts. We turn to this next.

3.2 Nonfinite auxiliaries and raising

An important fact about VP-ellipsis licensing in English is that, for the most part, a verbal element's ability to function as a licensor of ellipsis in its finite form tracks its ability to survive ellipsis as an additional nonfinite auxiliary in multiple auxiliary constructions of the kind seen in section 3.1. Thus the patterns of successful and failed VP-ellipsis licensing demonstrated in section 2 can be recreated with their nonfinite counterparts. The dialectal variation seen with possessive *have* can be replicated for cases where it's nonfinite, while nonfinite versions of the other main verb *have*s still fail to survive ellipsis

(29) a. John will have a copy of that book, and Keir might have too. OK BrE, *USE
b. A: Do you think Newton had a copy of Copernicus' *De revolutionibus*?
A: I think he must have had. OK BrE, *USE

(30) a. John might have steak for dinner every night, and Mary might (*have) too. BrE, USE
b. Mr Burns would have The Rolling Stones killed, and Smithers would (*have) too. BrE, USE

Habitual *be* and the *need* of the *need*-passive fail to be retained in VP-ellipsis contexts even when there's a licensor in T:

(31) A: You know John be at the mall on Wednesdays.

B: No he don't (*be). AAE

(32) John's car needs washed, and his bike might (*need) too. e.g. Standard Scottish English

The generalisation, then, is that only verbs which show the morphosyntactic properties of auxiliary verbs may survive ellipsis, be it the licensor or a nonfinite hanger-on.

3.3 *Have*-deletion

Let's go back now to the *have* and *-ing* restrictions mentioned at the outset of section. First, consider *have*: while it is reported by Sailor (2012) and Harwood (2013) that *have*-deletion is unacceptable, the data in (28) are somewhat controversial, since many speakers accept such examples readily. Examples where *have* is deleted are given by authors from various different dialect regions: see Lasnik (1995) for USE, Thoms (2010) for a Scottish variety,[10] and Aelbrecht and Harwood (2015) report that a significant proportion of their northern England-based informants accept these examples. It seems likely, then, that this is a matter of interspeaker variation, rather than regional variation. Harwood (2013, 119) (picking up on suggestions in Kayne 1997) offers an intriguing speculation regarding this variability. He proposes that in general *have* cannot be deleted by VP-ellipsis and that when *have* does go missing this is due to some independent rule which allows modals to embed a participial phrase with a perfect interpretation but without the perfect head *have*; in other words, there is an independent means for removing *have* for these speakers. As Harwood notes, such rules seem to be available for some Scandinavian languages, and his speculation is lend further plausibility by the fact that *have*-deletion is possible in a number of environments in some Scottish dialects. For instance, Macafee (1980) has noted naturally occurring examples like (33) in Scottish varieties, and fieldwork in the SCOSYA project has found that such examples are rated as acceptable quite widely in Scotland (see also the discussion of Smith 2000 above).

(33) a. I would only Δ been about two at the time.

b. I would rather Δ made dinner myself.

What seems to be crucial for such structures is the presence of some other non-verbal element in the area which would normally host *have* (or indeed the phonologically reduced enclitic schwa which it is often

[10]Sailor introduces a number of controls for ensuring that what is elided in these cases really is a larger constituent rather than some smaller VP, as he claims that ambiguities muddy the waters somewhat. My own judgment for a Scottish variety is that *have*-ellipsis is still possible when these controls are put in place.

realised as), so it is viable that this is a phonologically conditioned deletion rule which may also apply adjacent to an ellipsis site. This kind of analysis also makes it easier to understand the variability of the data, since a phonological rule for deleting *have* (or indeed its highly reduced schwa form) seems more likely to be acquired variably by speakers with broadly similar grammars than a syntactic rule which allows for ellipsis of different sizes of constituent in a limited set of syntactic contexts (i.e. those where *have* is dominated by a modal). Indeed it is relevant that very few other ellipsis-related rules which are normally analysed syntactically are as subject to "in the room variation"[11] across varieties as this one; for instance, I have never encountered any such variability in accepting modals as licensors of VP-ellipsis, nor have I encountered variability with British speakers with respect to judgments like (2) for ellipsis licensing with possessive *have*. This kind of argument is somewhat indirect, and unlikely to prove convincing in the absence of further supporting evidence, but nevertheless it shows another way in which microcomparative evidence may be brought to bear on the analysis of ellipsis and other such grammatical phenomena. A full assessment of Harwood's *have*-deletion analysis would require us to give greater consideration to the other factors which condition its availability. For instance, *have*-deletion is typically only acceptable when the preceding modal auxiliary is *might* or *should*, and examples with *must* are typically rejected even by the most liberal speakers.

3.4 The anti-*ing* constraint

Now consider the *anti -ing* constraint, which was identified by Sailor (2012) and Harwood (2013) as a strong constraint which is not subject to the same kind of variation which we see with *have*. It turns out that there are in fact very many English speakers who allow VP-ellipsis in the presence of nonfinite *being*, as the following examples from google searches indicate:

(34) a. I've tried to be really gentle but he said I was egotistical. I really don't think I am being but I'm starting to feel crazy myself.[12]

b. A: Rory, be careful with her.
B: I am being though![13]

[11]This term is due to Jim Wood. Wood identifies transitive control *promise* as an example of a grammatical phenomenon in English which is subject to unpredictable in-the-room variation.

[12]http://www.starseeds.net/forum/topics/help-my-bf-thinks-i-m-full-of-crap. Accessed on 14/03/2015.

[13]https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7333393/26/You-Got-To-Raise-Me-After-All. Accessed on 14/03/2015.

c. A: Hey Joe, please be patient. [...]

B: I am being but its not that nice being ignored [...] [14]

Although NAmE speakers consistently reject these kinds of examples,[15] I have found that they are readily accepted by British English speakers from all around the country, although not all speakers accept them. In general this seems to only occur when there is no progressive auxiliary in the antecedent, and it may be relevant that many speakers reject ellipsis of *-ing* forms when there is no progressive aspect in the antecedent, as Lasnik (1995) reports that examples like the following are unacceptable:[16]

(35) *John won't enter the competition, but Peter is ~~entering the competition~~.

It is possible, then, that the pressure to retain *being* to avoid violation of the constraint exemplified by (35) may thus force *being* to survive ellipsis exceptionally in cases like (34). This option also seems to be

[14]http://limelightgaming.net/forums/showthread.php?tid=7148. Accessed on 14/03/2015.

[15]One point of potential relevance is that examples of VP-preposing which strand auxiliary *being* are reported as only marginal by Kyle Johnson in his 2001 survey article, even though he finds basic VP-ellipsis examples like (27) unacceptable.

(i) ?Madame Spanella claimed that discussed widely, Holly is being.

Given that the licensing conditions on VP-fronting track those on VP-ellipsis consistently otherwise, this could be taken as a further indication that some NAmE speakers may marginally allow licensing with retention of *being* in the right discourse conditions.

[16]Again this judgment seems to be subject to some variation, with some speakers accepting other examples with similar configurations. Bronwyn Bjorkman (p.c.) reports the following example (attributed to David Pesetsky) is relatively acceptable for some speakers:

(i) In the past, Mary hasn't taken medication for her condition, but she is now.

And while examples like (i) are not always perfect for all speakers, Rooryck and Schoorlemmer have noted that there is even less objection to examples like (ii), where the antecedent is an infinitive. Rooryck and Schoorlemmer argue that the important difference between the good cases and the bad cases is that the bad ones involve mismatches in Mood specification, but this would leave examples like (ii) unaccounted for.

(ii) Emma intends to write a novel, and Anna already is ~~writing a novel~~.

conditioned by prosody to some extent, as those speakers who do accept examples like (34) acknowledge that this requires stressing the preceding finite auxiliary. Clearly, the anti *-ing* condition is not a hard constraint on English VP-ellipsis. But if examples like (34) are exceptional, in that they are wholly unacceptable for many speakers, they should prove useful in identifying the general rule for retaining additional auxiliaries, and perhaps for VP-ellipsis licensing generally.

3.5 Additional auxiliaries in tag questions and retorts

Most of the variation discussed so far has concerned differences between British and North American dialects, with USE and Canadian English patterning together against the British varieties. However there is at least one case that I know of where the judgments of Canadian English speakers pattern with British dialects and contrast with those of USE speakers, in Sailor's (2014) discussion of the retention of additional auxiliaries in instances of 'high VPE.' The starting point for this is the observation that voice mismatches under VP-ellipsis are typically only acceptable when the elided VP is in a subordinate clause, for instance an adverbial; in most other configurations, such as coordinate structures, emphatic retorts or tag questions, voice mismatches are impossible.

(36) The janitor must remove the trash whenever it is apparent that it should be. (Merchant, 2013)

(37) a. *The janitor removed the trash, but the recycling wasn't.

b. Your car should have been fixed by the mechanic last week{, / .}

(i) *shouldn't he have?

(ii) *No he shouldn't have!

(iii) *He should NOT have!

Sailor shows that the latter class of VP-ellipsis environments behave differently from subordinate clause structures with respect to a number of diagnostics, and he explains these asymmetries in terms of the size of the antecedent for ellipsis: with subordinate clauses the antecedent may be a small chunk of the lower part of the inflectional domain, one that excludes VoiceP, whereas with the other environments the antecedent must be a higher constituent which includes VoiceP.

Sailor dubs the environments in (37) 'high VPE environments' and the point of relevance here is that he describes intriguing dialectal variation with respect to the retention of additional auxiliaries in high VPE contexts. In outline, the dialectal difference is that in USE, VP-ellipsis in clauses with multiple auxiliaries

strongly favours retention of all additional auxiliaries, whereas in Canadian, British and Australian Englishes (clubbed together as "Commonwealth English", CE), ellipsis of as many auxiliaries as possible is favoured. This manifests itself in some quite sharp differences in judgments when it comes to clauses with several auxiliaries. First, consider cases where *been* can be elided: USE speakers find retaining all auxiliaries (other than *being*) acceptable, whereas for CE speakers this is highly marked or worse; rather, the preference is to delete at least *been*. Sailor notes that this difference is minimal in the case of coordination, although for some CE speakers there is still a markedness to retaining *been* in this case.

(38) The paper should have been accepted, shouldn't it have been? ✓USE, ??/*CE

(39) A: It should have been accepted.
B: No it shouldn't have been! ✓USE, ??/*CE

(40) A: It should have been accepted.
B: It should NOT have been! ✓USE, ??/*CE

(41) This paper should have been accepted, and that one should have been. ✓USE, ?/??CE

The following examples show the other side of this variation: in the same high VPE environments, eliding a much larger chunk of the clause, including nonfinite *have*, is typically acceptable for CE speakers but reported as unacceptable for USE speakers. Note that for coordination Sailor uses an idiom which requires a perfect auxiliary in order to ensure the ellipsis site contains *have*, although as before the contrasts here are still quite slight.

(42) The paper should have been accepted, shouldn't it? ??/*USE, ✓CE

(43) A: It should have been accepted.
B: No it shouldn't! ??/*USE, ✓CE

(44) A: It should have been accepted.
B: It should NOT! ??/*USE, ✓CE

(45) John will have been to Paris by then, and his wife will, too. ✓?/??USE, ✓CE

The challenge for making sense of this striking observation is to pin down other dialectal properties which unite CE varieties as distinct from USE and which might therefore be used to explain the variation we see.

3.6 Interim summary

What we've seen in this section is that there is variation across dialects with respect to the optionality of retaining additional nonfinite auxiliaries in VP-ellipsis contexts. Some of these conditions recall those discussed in the previous section on licensors and keyed to the morphosyntax of auxiliary verbs. But others, such as the *-ing* restriction, seem distinct and more likely to be the result of interface conditions (at least in part), and so it's not yet clear whether a unified account account is viable. If anything, a unified account is likely to lead us in the direction of reassessing whether the more syntactic conditions discussed in section 2 can be reduced to interface conditions, with the right model of the syntax-phonology interface, as reducing the dialectal variation seen with *-ing* to syntactic conditions seems unviable.

4 British *do*

"British *do*" is the phenomenon whereby a superfluous nonfinite form of *do* occurs at the right edge of a cluster of auxiliaries in VP-ellipsis contexts bearing the morphological ending that would normally occur on the finite verb (Haddican 2007, Baltin 2006, 2011 Aelbrecht 2010, Thoms 2011).[17] The superfluous *do* typically occurs after modals and *have*, but it may also be retained after progressive *be* in the same circumstances where *being* is retained in examples like (34) (with similar variability in judgments[18]). It cannot occur alongside passive *be*.[19]

[17]Following others, I generalise this *do* to all British dialects, as I have not identified any specific syntactic differences between dialects with respect to the properties described below. It is possible that *do* is used more commonly in southeast dialects, but this needs to be investigated more thoroughly. Note also that "British dialects" is (innocently) taken to include all dialects from the British isles, including those in Ireland, and as with a lot of British dialect phenomena it is also found in Australian English dialects too.

[18]My impression is that retention of *doing* is particularly common in southeastern dialects, although Craig Sailor (p.c.) reports that it is particularly common in the speech of Yorkshire-born *Top Gear* presenter Jeremy Clarkson.

[19]Thoms and Sailor (2017) point out that this is not some incompatibility with passivisation as such, since British *do* occurs in other passive-like structures such as the Scottish *need*-passive discussed above and in *get*-passives:

(i) a. The car doesn't need washed now, but it will do later on.

b. Rab will get fired eventually, and Tam will do too.

(46) a. A: Are you going tonight?

B: I might do.

b. I haven't brought wine but I now realise I should have done.

c. Rab has left, and Morag has done, too.

d. A: Why don't you sit quietly?

B: I AM doing. (Quirk et al., 1985, 875)

(47) *The steak was eaten by Bill, and the fish was done too.

British *do* has attracted a reasonable amount of attention in the literature in recent years, and one of the major issues is whether or not it is best analysed an elliptical structure or a verbal proform. This discussion has mainly focussed on some curious extraction asymmetries between British *do* environments and their more standard VP-ellipsis counterparts.

British *do* is analysed as a proform akin to *do so* by Haddican (2007), and it is easy to see why this is appealing: on the surface, the only difference between the two is the *so*, and these putative proforms may not co-occur with the VPs which they seem to be replacing.

(48) a. *John will do run the race.

b. *John will do so run the race.

Haddican strengthens the proform analysis on the basis of intriguing facts from extraction. Building on Baltin (2004), Haddican reports that various A′-extractions – *wh*-extraction, QR of objects for scope inversion with subjects, comparative extraction, topicalization and pseudogapping – are all incompatible with British *do*; in this respect it patterns with *do so* rather than VP-ellipsis, which is compatible with all of these extractions.

(49) a. Although I don't know which book Fred will read, I do know which book Tom will.

b. *Although I don't know which book Fred will read, I do know which book Tom will {do/do so}.

(50) a. Some man will read every book and some woman will too. $\forall > \exists$

b. Some man will read every book and some woman will {do/do so} too. $*\forall > \exists$

(51) a. Although she won't eat pasta she will pizza.

b. *Although she won't eat pasta she will {do/do so} pizza.

(52) a. Bart can eat more than Homer can.

b. *Bart can eat more than Homer can {do/do so}.

(53) a. Hazelnuts I like, peanuts I don't.

b. *Hazelnuts I like, peanuts I don't {do/do so}.

Noting that *do so* is also incompatible with passivization, Haddican therefore arrives at the generalization that both British *do* and *do so* both disallow extraction, and he proposes that this follows from an analysis where they are both verbal proforms with no internal content.

The argument from extraction for the proform analysis has since been argued against by Baltin (2007, 2011), Aelbrecht (2010), Thoms (2011) and Abels (2012), who point out that it is not quite right that all extractions from British *do* are impossible. First, Baltin notes that A-extraction is possible with unaccusative and raising predicates, seeming to pattern against *do so* which forbids these.[20] Second, Thoms shows that while QR for scope inversion of subjects and objects is not possible, QR to scope an object over negation is as acceptable with *do* as it is with VP-ellipsis, but impossible with *do so*.[21] Third,

[20]Thoms notes (citing Hallman 2004 and p.c. from Carson Schütze) that it is not quite right to say that *do so* cannot appear with raising predicates, as the effect in examples like (55b) is to be attributed to a general restriction which requires that *do* so must appear with non-stative volitional predicates. When this is controlled for, *do so* may take an unaccusative as its antecedent.

(i) John appeared from out of nowhere, and Mary did so too.

Similar comments may apply with passivization, as Bruening (2015) notes that many speakers seem to accept passives with *do so* as well, citing numerous examples like (ii) from google searches (most of which are perfectly acceptable to me).

(ii) And I think everyone can agree that some of the most beautiful music ever written was done so in the name of God or gods.

This may provide a further argument for providing *do so* with an ellipsis analysis, as suggested below.

[21]Baltin (2011) provides the following example as evidence against QR of objects out of British *do* sites and over negation.

(i) *John couldn't read many books, and Bill couldn't do either, but the many books that they could read

Abels (2012) reports that relativization and topicalization are both possible with British *do* for many speakers, the latter somewhat marginally. No such leeway is found with *do so*.

(54) a. John might seem to enjoy that, and Fred might (do), too.
b. ??John might seem to enjoy that, and Fred might do so, too.

(55) a. The river will freeze solid, and the lake will (do), too.
b. ??The river will freeze solid, and the lake will do so, too.

(56) a. Rab won't finish two thirds of the exam. Morag won't (do) either. $2/3 > \neg$
b. Rab won't finish two thirds of the exam. Morag won't do so either. $*2/3 > \neg$

(57) a. A man who steals does not incur the same measure of public reprobation which he would have (done) in the past. (Baker, 1984)
b. *A man who steals does not incur the same measure of public reprobation which he would have done so in the past.

(58) a. Hazelnuts, he won't eat, but almonds he might (?do).
b. *Hazelnuts, he won't eat, but almonds he might do so.

Finally,[22] Baltin (2011) notes a set of facts which seem to point to the conclusion that it might not even be

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were classics.

The contrast with VP-ellipsis is far from clear for me though, and it seems likely that the degradation of examples might be independent of scope, since *couldn't do* is somewhat marked in general (for reasons that are not clear).

[22]Thoms also notes a set of contrasts from Condition B (building on Kennedy 2004), where there is an apparent Condition B effect with VP-ellipsis and British *do* but not with *do so*.

(i) a. *Kim takes care of him$_i$ because he$_i$ won't.
b. *Kim takes care of him$_i$ because he$_i$ won't do.
c. Kim takes care of him$_i$ because he$_i$ won't do so.

These contrasts are subtle and subject to some variation, but the majority of speakers I have consulted share them. However strikes me as plausible that the contrast here is not due to some fundamental difference in the structure of the putative ellipsis sites, but rather to differences in how the three structures may realise

right to say that *do so* does not involve ellipsis, undermining a key premise of Haddican's argument. Baltin notes that while only VP-ellipsis (of the three constructions) allows scope inversion of subjects and objects when this would be derived by QR (i.e. where the object is a strong quantifier), scope inversion is possible when the object is an indefinite which would be able to scope out of the putative ellipsis site by in-situ scoping mechanisms; to this, we can add the observation that inverse scope is also possible with British *do* in these configurations as well. Crucially, this is not possible in cases with *do it*. (The following examples are adapted versions of Baltin's, which he attributes to an anonymous reviewer.)

(59) a. Many men will read five books, and many women will as well. *5> many*

b. Many men will read five books, and many women will do as well. *5> many*

c. Many men will read five books, and many women will do so as well. *5> many*

d. Many men will read five books, and many women will do it as well. **5> many*

This difference between *do it* and the other construction indicates that the former is the only true verbal proform, with the other constructions being derived by ellipsis, as it it is hard to see why *do so* and *do it* would differ in their ability to take VPs containing specific indefinites as their antecedents. This should be a welcome conclusion, as we know from Hankamer and Sag (1976) that *do it* behaves differently from *do so* and other elliptical constructions in other respects; that is, it seems to be deep anaphor, since it does not require a linguistic antecedent (see also Bentzen et al. 2013). Accepting this conclusion, the desiderata for an ellipsis analysis of *do so* is to account for the fact that it systematically blocks A′-extraction but not A-extraction, and that it requires a non-stative volitional antecedent. It seems likely that the correct analysis will be one where the *so* part of *do so* is some kind of focus-related operator which occupies a peripheral position in the *v*P and acts as an A′-intervener, but the matter warrants more attention than I can grant it here.

The challenge with British *do*, then, is to work out an analysis which will derive the extraction restrictions,

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focus on the subject: it is much more natural to put emphatic stress on the subject in the context of *do so* than with British *do*, and with VP-ellipsis focussing the subject seems to require emphatically focussing the following negation as well, whereas this isn't the case with *do* and *do so*. There may also be interactions focus and between the height of attachment of the reason adjunct which bring antecedent-containment and the problems that that poses into the picture as well. And as with many of the other phenomena discussed here, the variability of the data is highly relevant and so one might hope that a full account of these contrasts will provide the right kind of wriggle room to allow for such variation.

the ellipsis-like licensing conditions, and of course the presence of the superfluous *do* just in ellipsis contexts, and it needs to relate to some minor parameter which differs between British dialects and others. No existing account is without its problems. Baltin (2007, 2011) and Aelbrecht (2010) fail to predict that some A′-extractions are possible, and they both resort to stipulation to derive the fact that *do* occurs only in ellipsis contexts: for both, *do* is a realisation of *v* which is stipulated as only being possible in the context of ellipsis. Thoms (2011) fares better on the latter point: he also assumes that the *do* is a spellout of *v*, but he states a rule for this realisation which generalises to standard *do*-support, and the Britishness is somewhat loosely tied to the general British propensity for retaining additional auxiliaries. Thoms does not offer a fully worked-out account of the extraction pattern, although he does succeed in pinning down the concrete generalisation for when extraction is possible.

Thoms begins with an apparent contradiction with respect to QR: while (50) seems to show that British *do* prohibits reconstruction, (56) shows that QR can sometimes escape this environment. He argues that this contradiction goes away if the effect in (50) is not due to the inability of the object to QR, but rather the subject's inability to reconstruct back into its base position in the *v*P. This would follow since it is known independently that scope inversion of the subject and the object requires subject reconstruction as well as QR (Hornstein 1995, Johnson and Tomioka 1998, Fox 2000, Nevins and Anand 2003). Thoms shows that this analysis is supported by the fact that in cases where subject reconstruction would invert the scope of the subject and some other non-argument, the scope inversion is possible with VP-ellipsis and even with *do so*, but it is substantially degraded with British *do*.

(60) a. Every boy won't finished the exam, and every girl won't, either. $\neg > \forall$

b. Every boy won't finished the exam, and every girl won't do, either. $??\neg > \forall$

c. Every boy won't finished the exam, and every girl won't do so, either. $\neg > \forall$

Thoms thus argues that in those cases where extraction from British *do* fails, what is going wrong is reconstruction of the extracted constituent, and he argues that this accounts for the distribution of extraction possibilities: for instance, *wh*-movement from British *do* sites is strictly prohibited since *wh*-movement shows obligatory reconstruction (Chomsky 1995), whereas relativisation and topicalization do not show obligatory reconstruction effects in many situations and may be analysed as being derived as null operator constructions (Lasnik and Stowell 1991). Abels (2012) shows that this account makes the right predictions when we come to consider relativization a bit more closely: when we look at structures which would require obligatory reconstruction, British *do* becomes much worse than it is with regular

relativization. This is demonstrated for amount relatives, free relatives and relatives headed by idioms, all of which are known to require reconstruction of the relativized category (Bianchi 2004).

(61) a. I put in my pocket all the money I could.

b. ??I put in my pocket all the money I could do.[23]

(62) a. He buys what he can.

b. *He buys what he can do.

(63) a. It's easy to spend your time regretting that you haven't taken advantage of every opportunity that you should have.

b. ??It's easy to spend your time regretting that you haven't taken advantage of every opportunity that you should have done.

Since the operator movement analysis is not readily available for these relative types, they are derived by raising and hence require reconstruction, in violation of this restriction against reconstructing into British *do*.

As for comparatives, subsequent work has since revealed a number of exceptions to the claim that comparative extraction from *do* is prohibited:[24]

(64) a. He ate more than he should have done. (Abels, 2012)

b. He'll eat more than he should do. (Thoms and Sailor, 2017)

c. The government are acting much more carelessly than they would do if there was an election on the horizon. (Thoms and Walkden, 2015)

It seems the main difference between these examples and Haddican's (52b) is that in the former the subjects of the comparative are pronouns, whereas in (52b) it is a focussed full DP. Haddican discusses a number of other facts about British *do* which indicate that its distribution is sensitive to prosodic properties

[23]While Abels marks this as only somewhat degraded, I and my informants find it completely impossible.

[24]The *do* in (64a) is allowed not just for British speakers, but for some North Americans as well. Tim Stowell (p.c. to Craig Sailor) reports that he finds such examples acceptable, and has found agreement among other older Canadian English speakers, although for the most part USE speakers reject (64a). It would be intriguing to explore whether this is related to the only other Canadian English/USE dialect split discussed in this chapter, namely the variation with respect to retorts and tags discussed in section 3.5.

of its host; for instance, it is impossible when the finite auxiliary is contracted.

(65) *Sarah will arrive on time, and Tom'll do too.

The generalisation seems to be that the finite verb must be sufficiently strong in its prosodic form to host the clitic *do*, so one possible analysis for (52b) is that placing strong accent on the embedded subject for focus reasons precludes giving strong enough accent to the finite auxiliary in order for it to host *do* (see also footnote 22). Putting this to one side, the acceptability of (64) requires an explanation. One possibility, explored in more detail in Thoms and Sailor (2017), is to unify comparatives with topicalization and matching relatives and treat them all as involving operator movement (Chomsky 1977; see Kennedy 2000 for an operator movement analysis of comparatives).
Thoms' reconstruction-based generalisation seems to stand up well, then. This is still far from a satisfying result, though, since it is hard to see what would actually explain a generalisation of this kind. This is the heart of the matter with British *do*: on the one hand, all that we seem to have is a superfluous little *do* which is the reflex of some prosodic property of British dialects to retain additional nonfinite auxiliaries, and yet there seems to be a hard syntactic restriction at play, one which crucially implicates an LF-phenomenon which is not expected to interact with prosody normally.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed several cases of dialectal variation with respect to VP-ellipsis phenomena in English and shown that they allow us to refine generalisations about the licensing conditions on ellipsis and other such matters. The description here is only scratching the surface, and is based on a very limited understanding of the extant variation, but hopefully the recent upsurge in microcomparative syntax research will continue apace and bring with it further advances in our understanding of ellipsis and the language faculty more generally.

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