Maliseet VP-ellipsis and the syntax of polysynthesis*

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1. Introduction

Among the pieces of evidence that English has a VP constituent is the existence of processes like VP-ellipsis (1b) and VP-pronominalization (1c), which target the VP, and not simply random strings of words (1d):

(1) a. John can speak Maliseet, and Mary can speak Maliseet too.

b. John can speak Maliseet, and Mary can [__] too.

c. John can speak Maliseet, and Mary can [*do so/it*] too.

d.* John can speak Maliseet, and Mary [__] Maliseet too.

In this paper I will try to demonstrate the existence of VP-ellipsis and (for some speakers) VP-pronominalization in Maliseet-Passamaquoddy (henceforth simply Maliseet), an Algonquian language which is spoken in New Brunswick and Maine. We will see that Maliseet VPs are just like VPs in any other language, consisting of the verb, the direct object (if any), and certain adverbs. This result is of interest, since Maliseet is polysynthetic, and hence of a type which has

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Abbreviations used in this paper are:

1>2	1st person subject, 2nd person object	INV	Inverse (object outranks subject)
AI	Animate subject, Intransitive verb	OBV	Obviative
AN	Animate	PERF	Perfect
CONJ	Conjunct order (used in relative clauses)	PL	Plural
DIR	Direct (subject outranks object on animacy hierarchy)	SG	Singular
EMPH	Emphatic	TA	Transitive verb, Animate object
INAN	Inanimate	TI	Transitive verb, Inanimate object

sometimes been argued to lack VPs entirely, or to have VPs that do not contain any of the arguments of the clause.

2. Maliseet Background

Maliseet verbs agree with their subjects, and with objects and indirect objects if these are present:

(2) a. Nt- ewep **-ess**

1 up go_{AI}

'I rise, go up'

b. Nt- ewep **-ehtu** -n -ol

1 up TI INAN INANPL

'I lift them (inanimate)'

c. Nt- ewep **-ehl** -a -k

1 up TA DIR ANPL

'I lift them (animate)'

A full discussion of Algonquian agreement is well beyond the scope of this paper; see Halle and Marantz 1993, Bruening 2001a, Valentine 2001, Béjar 2003 for further discussion. But there is a morpheme on each of these verbs (boldfaced in these examples) which will be of interest to us, known in the Algonquian literature as the *final*. It indicates the transitivity of the verb, and also the animacy of the absolutive argument (that is, of the object, if there is an object, and of the subject otherwise). The major classes of final (cf. Bloomfield 1946) are listed below:

(3) a. TA= "**T**ransitive verb with an **A**nimate object"

b. TI= "**T**ransitive verb with an **I**nanimate object"

c. AI= "**A**nimate subject, **I**ntransitive verb"

d. II= "**I**nanimate subject, **I**ntransitive verb"

The final often, though not always, has an additional semantic contribution; for instance, the finals below are TI finals like the one in (2b), but contribute further semantics of their own:

(4) a. Nt- ewep **-onom** -on -ol

1 up by.hand$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL

'I lift them (inanimate) by hand'

b. Nt- ewep **-tehm** -on -ol

1 up hit$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL

'I hit them (inanimate) upwards'

Such finals are called *concrete finals* in the Algonquian literature (as opposed to the finals in (2) above, which are *abstract finals*)

'Animacy' in this language family is not unlike grammatical gender in many Indo-European languages; people and animals are reliably animate, but for many nouns the distinction is arbitrary, or at least not straightforwardly predictable. Thus, *pskihqimins* 'strawberry' is animate, while *saht* 'blueberry' is inanimate; *nitq* 'my eyebrow' is animate, while *nsisoq* 'my eye' is inanimate, and so forth.

Arguments with which the verb agrees may be freely dropped in this language, and pronouns are used mainly for emphasis:

(5) (nil) k- tokom -ol (kil)

I 2 hit 1>2 you

'I hit you'

And finally, word order in Maliseet is quite free (Bruening 2001a, 21):

(6) a. N- siwehs n- kisi- mil -a -n -ol psi =te oqitonu -l

1 brother 1 PERF give DIR INAN INANPL all EMPH canoe INANPL

'I gave my brother all the canoes'

b. Nkisimilanol nsiwehs psite oqitonul.

c. Psite oqitonul nsiwehs nkisimilanol.

d. Nsiwehs psite oqitonul nkisimilanol.

e. Nkisimilanol psite oqitonul nsiwehs.

f. Psite oqitonul nkisimilanol nsiwehs.

Maliseet, then, is a polysynthetic language. One classic treatment of languages of this type is that of Hale (1983), who suggests that such languages have 'flat' structures. Jelinek (1984) and Baker (1996) argue for a different type of structure, in which the apparent arguments are typically generated as adjuncts high in the clause, while the real argument positions are occupied by agreement morphemes (in Jelinek's approach) or by null pronominals (in Baker's). In the next section I will begin to argue against these approaches to the Maliseet clause. We will see that Maliseet has VP-ellipsis, which shows that it has a VP[1]. Moreover, the contents of that VP are entirely ordinary; the VP includes, for example, the direct object, though not the subject.

3. VP-ellipsis

Compare the continuations of (7) given in (a) and (b):

[1] For similar types of arguments based on other polysynthetic languages, see also Davis 2007 on St'át'imcets, and Compton and Pittman 2007 on Inuit.

(7) N-ikuwoss ‘t-apqote -htu -n khakon,

1 mother 3 open TI INAN door

‘My mother opened the door...’

a. ... kenuk nil nt- aluw- apqote -htu -n

but I 1 unable open TI INAN

‘...but I couldn’t open it’

b. ... kenuk nil nt-aluw -ehtu -n

but I 1 unable TI INAN

‘...but I couldn’t (~~open the door~~).’

Speakers describe these sentences as meaning roughly the same thing. The noun *khakon* ‘door’ is missing from both of the continuations in (7), but in (7b), the verb stem *apqote-* ‘open’ is missing as well. I will argue that (7b) represents VP-ellipsis, while (7a) is simply pro-drop of the object. In general, I will represent VP-ellipsis in translations as I have in (7b), with ~~strikethrough~~.

3.1 VP-ellipsis, argument 1: adverbs

We can contrast (7) with (8), in which the adverb *menakaciw* ‘quietly’ has been added:

(8) N-ikuwoss **menakaciw** ‘t-apqote -htu -n khakon,

1 mother quietly 3 open TI INAN door

‘My mother opened the door **quietly**...’

a. ... kenuk nil nt-aluw- apqote -htu -n

but I 1 unable open TI INAN

‘...but I couldn’t open it’

b. ... kenuk nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n

but I 1 unable TI INAN

‘...but I couldn’t (~~open the door **quietly**~~).’

Adding the adverb causes the meanings of the (a) and (b) continuations to diverge; (8a) means that I could not open the door at all, while (8b) means that I opened it, but made noise in doing so. We find similar contrasts in (9) and (10):

(9) N-siwehs **nihikehs** miyaw -telom -on,

1 brother three.times (3) well shoot_{TI} INAN

‘My brother hit it (a target) **three times**...’

a....kenuk nil nt- aluwi- miyaw -telom -on

but I 1 unable well shoot_{TI} INAN

‘...but I couldn’t hit it’

b....kenuk nil nt-aluw -ehtu -n

but I 1 unable TI INAN

...but I couldn’t (~~hit it three times~~)’

(10) '- Kisi- pqa -nom -on -ol **'kekiw**,

3 PERF lift by.hand$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL all.day

'He lifted them (weights) **all day**...'

a....kenuk nil nt- aluwi- pqa -nom -on -ol

but I 1 unable lift by.hand$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL

'...but I couldn't lift them'

b....kenuk nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n -ol

but I 1 unable TI INAN INANPL

'...but I couldn't (~~lift them **all day**~~)'

In (9) and (10) we see again that the (b) sentences, in which the verb stem as well as the direct object is missing, are interpreted as containing a missing adverb; (9b) means that I could not hit the target three times (and is consistent with my having hit it once or twice), and (10b) means that I could not lift the weights all day (though perhaps I lifted them for a shorter time). (9a) and (10a), by contrast, are not interpreted as containing adverbs in the second conjunct; (9a) means that I could not hit the target at all, and (10a) that I could not lift the weights at all.[2]

I will claim that these Maliseet facts ought to be given the same explanation as their English counterparts (cf. Goldberg 2005). The Maliseet examples in (8) above can be compared with their English translations in (11):

(11) a. My mother opened the door quietly, but I couldn't open it.

b. My mother opened the door quietly, but I couldn't [~~open the door **quietly**~~]

[2] The examples in (9-10) also illustrate another property of VP-ellipsis; the concrete finals *–telom* 'shoot$_{TI}$' and *–nom* 'by.hand$_{TI}$' are replaced by the abstract final *–ehtu* 'TI' when VP-ellipsis takes place. Perhaps these concrete finals consist of multiple syntactic heads, some of which are deleted by VP-ellipsis (though these syntactic heads would have to be realized as a single morpheme), or perhaps we can understand them as allomorphs of a general TI final, conditioned by the presence of pronounced verbal stems.

Just as in Maliseet, an adverb like *quietly* is understood as part of the elided VP in (11b). The standard account of this fact in English is that ellipsis in (11b) is of a VP, which must be identical to the VP of the preceding clause; in other words, the interpretation of (11b) is affected by the fact that the VP of the preceding clause contains not only the verb and its object, but also the adverb. We can give the same account for the Maliseet facts in (8-10); in the (b) examples, in which VP-ellipsis takes place, the elided VP must be identical to that of the preceding clause, and these preceding VPs contain adverbs.

3.2 VP-ellipsis, argument 2: direct objects

A second argument for VP-ellipsis in Maliseet comes from the interpretation of sentences like the ones in (12):

(12) Skinuhsis ‘- kisi- sunhom -on ponapsq;
boy 3 PERF paint$_{TI}$ INAN rock
‘The boy painted a rock,...’

a. nil -ote -na n- kisi -sunhom -on
I EMPH also 1 PERF paint$_{TI}$ INAN
‘...and I painted it too.’

b. nil- ote -na n- kis -ehtu -n
I EMPH also 1 PERF TI INAN
‘...and I did (~~paint a rock~~) too’

In (12a), the boy and I must have painted the same rock, while in (12b) it is possible that we have painted different rocks. Here, again, the Maliseet sentences receive interpretations that resemble those of their English counterparts. In (12a), the object of the verb is a (null) pronoun, which must have a specific referent and hence is interpreted as referring to the previously mentioned

rock. In (12b), by contrast, the object is missing because it has been eliminated by VP-ellipsis, and it may therefore have a nonspecific reading.[3]

3.3 VP-ellipsis and sloppy identity: a non-difference

Given its importance in the literature on VP-ellipsis (e.g., Otani and Whitman 1991, Hoji 1998, Kim 1999), a note on sloppy identity is probably in order. In fact, I have so far failed to find any speakers who draw a distinction between the (a) and (b) examples below, with respect to sloppy identity:

(13) John ‘-kisi- sunhom -on w-ik,
John 3 PERF paint$_{TI}$ INAN 3 house
‘John painted his house…’

a. kenuk Bill ‘t- aluwi- sunhom -on.
but Bill 3 unable paint$_{TI}$ INAN
‘…but Bill couldn’t paint it’

b. kenuk Bill ‘t -aluw -ehtu -n
but Bill 3 unable TI INAN
‘…but Bill couldn’t ~~paint his house~~’

All the speakers I have talked with can get a strict reading for both of the continuations in (13). Some can also get a sloppy reading for both, while others cannot get a sloppy reading for either. I conclude that more work on sloppy readings is in order; as the existing literature shows, interpreting sloppy reading data is not at all straightforward.

[3] It is possible that (12b) can also have the reading of (12a). These sentences were presented in a context that favored the reading in (12b) (a story about someone who wants me and the boy to paint a number of rocks), and in that context the sentence in (12a) was judged as ‘funny’; speakers commented that the boy and I should work harder, each of us painting our own rocks. Since Maliseet lacks articles, it is entirely possible that (12b) can also have this ‘funny’ reading (that is, that the sentence can mean essentially what *The boy painted <u>the</u> rock, and I did too* means in English). More work would have to be done to establish this, however; all that has been shown here is that (12b) has a reading that (12a) lacks, which is all that is necessary for the point being made here.

3.4 VP-ellipsis: finding the missing phrases

As in English, we can find evidence in Maliseet that the direct object is in fact present in the elided VP, though it is not pronounced. We have already seen that Maliseet verbs agree with their objects, and this is true of the verbs in VP-ellipsis clauses as well:

(14) a. N- ikuwoss ‘t- apqote -htu -n khakon,

1 mother 3 open TI INAN door

kenuk nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n

but I 1 unable TI INAN

‘My mother opened the door, but I couldn’t (~~open the door~~).’

b. N- ikuwoss ‘t- apqote -htu -n **-ol** khakon **-ol**,

1 mother 3 open TI INAN INANPL door- INANPL

kenuk nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n **-ol**

but I 1 unable TI INAN INANPL

‘My mother opened the door**s**, but I couldn’t (~~open the door~~**s**).’

(14a) is a familiar type of example, with VP-ellipsis in the second conjunct. In (14b), the direct object of the first clause has been made plural, and this triggers agreement (the inanimate plural suffix *–ol*) not only on the verb of the first clause, but on the verb of the second clause; apparently the elided direct object is plural as well, and controls agreement on the verb as usual.

Moreover, as in English, the direct object may be extracted from the elided VP, via relativization, for example:

(15) ‘- Kisi- miyaw -telom -on -ol psi =te aluw -ehtu -wan -il

3 PERF well shoot_{TI} INAN INANPL all EMPH unable TI 1SGCONJINANPLCONJ

‘He hit everything that I couldn’t ~~hit~~ (in target shooting)’

On the other hand, short of this type of extraction, the direct object is obligatorily missing in VP-ellipsis clauses, regardless of the word order:

(16) a.*'- Kisi- kpote -htu -n khakon, kenuk 't- aluw -ehtu -n possiyantesk
3 PERF close TI INAN door but 3 unable TI INAN window
'She closed the door, but she couldn't ~~close~~ the window'

b.*Khakon -ote '-kisi- kpote -htu -n,
door EMPH 3 PERF close TI INAN
kenuk possiyantesk -ote 't- aluw -ehtu -n
but window EMPH 3 unable TI INAN
'The door, she closed, but the window, she couldn't ~~close~~'

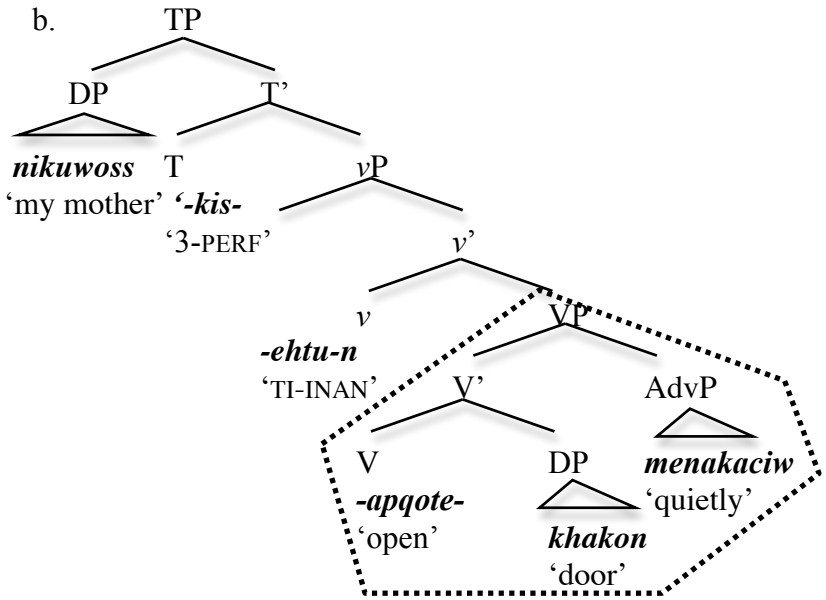
Although both of the word orders in (16) would ordinarily be possible, VP-ellipsis apparently rules them out.

3.4 VP-ellipsis: summary

We have seen evidence that in Maliseet, as in English, the sentence contains a VP constituent which consists of the verb, the direct object, and certain adverbs. Ellipsis of this constituent apparently obligatorily deletes all of these elements. In other words, we have evidence that a sentence like the one in (17a) ought to have a tree something like the one in (17b) (here I have placed the TI final *–ehtu* under *v*, since it indicates the transitivity of the verb[4]):

(17) a. N-ikuwoss menakaciw '-kis- apqote -htu -n khakon
1 mother quietly 3 PERF open TI INAN door
'My mother opened the door quietly'

[4] See Merchant (2007) for arguments that VP-ellipsis truly is VP-ellipsis and not *v*P-ellipsis.



Moreover, we have seen that for the most part, deletion of all of the elements in the VP is obligatory under VP-ellipsis. We saw in the last section that the direct object may be extracted via relativization, but that in general the direct object cannot survive VP-ellipsis. Similarly, the verb stem in the tree in (17b) must ordinarily combine with the other morphemes generated higher in the tree, but this process of morphological combination does not bleed VP-ellipsis, which obligatorily deletes the verb stem.

These conclusions are of interest partly because we know that they are not universally true of VP-ellipsis. There are processes that can extract a direct object from an elided VP, such as relativization, or topicalization in English:

(18) a. Fiddleheads, I like, but frybread, I don't like __

b. Fiddleheads, I like, but frybread, I don't [~~like __~~]

Similarly, we find languages, such as Irish (McCloskey 1991, Goldberg 2005) in which the verb can escape VP-ellipsis:

(19) a. Dúirt mé go gceannóinn é agus cheannaigh mé é

said I that would.buy-1Sg it and bought I it

'I said that I would buy it, and I bought it.'

b. Dúirt mé go gceannóinn é agus cheannaigh

said I that would.buy-1Sg it and bought

'I said that I would buy it, and bought ~~I it~~'

Whatever processes are responsible for Maliseet's free word order, and for attaching the Maliseet V to the functional morphemes generated higher in the tree, are apparently unlike the processes in (18-19), in that VP-ellipsis is unaffected by them. One possibility is that these processes in Maliseet are in fact postsyntactic (cf. Adger 2007 for a proposal along these lines for pronoun postposing in Scottish Gaelic, and Davis 2007 and Compton and Pittman 2007 for similar conclusions about St'át'imcets and Inuit).

Whatever the right account may be of the interaction between ellipsis and word order freedom in Maliseet, it seems clear that previous proposals about free word order in polysynthetic languages will have difficulty accounting for these data. The existence of VP-ellipsis is an argument against a 'flat' structure for this language; Maliseet clearly has at least a VP.

Accounts in which polysynthetic languages adjoin their arguments in high positions seem not to fare much better. On Jelinek's (1984) version of this type of account, the apparent direct object in this language ought to be in a high position in the clause, with the object agreement morphology actually receiving the direct object's theta-role. But we have seen that VP-ellipsis yields a clause in which direct object agreement is present, while the direct object itself is obligatorily absent.

Baker's (1993) version of this approach also has the overt direct object in a high structural position; on his account, the actual direct object position is occupied by a null pronominal, which is linked to the adjoined nominal via something like CLLD. We have seen that in Maliseet, VP-ellipsis generally prevents the direct object from surfacing. While Baker could not attribute this fact to actual ellipsis of the direct object, he might claim that the CLLD relation between the adjoined direct object and the null pronominal in object position is somehow disrupted by VP-ellipsis. To see what his theory would predict about VP-ellipsis, then, we need to know how CLLD interacts with VP-ellipsis. It has been claimed that ellipsis does not interfere with CLLD, at least in Spanish (Ordóñez and Trevino 1999, 42):

(20) A ti te admitirán en Harvard

to you you.CL admit-3PL to Harvard

pero es probable que a tu amiga no [~~la admitirán en Harvard~~]

but is probable that to your friend not her.CL admit-3PL to Harvard

'You, they will admit to Harvard,

but it is probable that your friend, not [~~they will admit to Harvard~~]

If VP-ellipsis generally fails to interfere with CLLD, then it is difficult to see how Baker could account for the Maliseet data.

4. VP-Pronominalization, and Agreement with VP

All of the examples of VP-ellipsis given thus far have involved TI verbs—that is, transitive verbs with inanimate objects. In fact, these appear to be the only verbs that can undergo true VP-ellipsis.

Consider again example (12) above, repeated here as (21):

(21) Skinuhsis '- kisi- sunhom -on ponapsq;

boy 3 PERF paint$_{TI}$ INAN rock

'The boy painted a rock,...'

a. nil -ote -na n- kisi -sunhom -on

I EMPH also 1 PERF paint$_{TI}$ INAN

'...and I painted it too.'

b. nil- ote -na n- kis -ehtu -n

I EMPH also 1 PERF TI INAN

'...and I did (~~paint a rock~~) too'

As in all of our VP-ellipsis examples, the verb in (21b) contains the abstract TI final *–ehtu*. The corresponding abstract TA final is *–ehl*; the online Maliseet-Passamaquoddy dictionary (at http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/Maliseet/dictionary/) offers a large number of TI/TA pairs ending in these finals, of which a few randomly chosen ones are listed below:

(22) '*tacehtun* 'change (TI)' '*tacehlal* 'change (TA)'

'*ciqolatokehtun* 'tangle (TI)' '*ciqolatokehlal* 'tangle (TA)'

'*colokehtun* 'squeeze (TI)' '*colokehlal* 'squeeze (TA)'

'*pisacqehtun* 'bake (TI)' '*pisacqehlal* 'bake (TA)'

Thus, it is clear how we would expect VP-ellipsis to operate on TA verbs. We should be able to take the example in (21), change the object to an animate noun like *amsqocehkan* 'doll', and change the verbs appropriately; in particular, we should choose a verb in the VP-ellipsis version in (21b) with the abstract TA final *–ehl*, rather than the abstract TI final *–ehtu*. In other words, we would expect the TA version of (21) to be (23):

(23) Skinuhsis ‘- kisi- sunh -a -l amsqocehkan -ol;

boy 3 PERF paint$_{TA}$ DIR OBV doll OBV

‘The boy painted a doll,...’

a. nil- ote -na n- kisi- sunh -a

I EMPH also 1 PERF paint$_{TA}$ DIR

‘...and I painted it too.’

b.* nil -ote -na n- kis- ehl -a

I EMPH also 1 PERF TA DIR

‘...and I did (~~paint a doll~~) too’

In fact, however, speakers universally reject (23b), at least in this context. The verb *nkisehla* which appears in (23b) does exist; speakers offer meanings for it like ‘I was able to reach him’, and they say that comparable readings are also available for its TI counterpart *nkisehtun*. But unlike the TI version, the TA version cannot be used in VP ellipsis.

Here we come to a difference between two classes of Maliseet speakers. All the speakers I have talked with so far agree on the data in (23). They disagree, however, on whether (24) is acceptable:

(24) %Skinuhsis ‘- kisi- sunh -a -l amsqocehkan -ol;

boy 3 PERF paint$_{TA}$ DIR OBV doll OBV

‘The boy painted a doll,...’

nil -ote -na n- kis- ehtu -n

I EMPH also 1 PERF TI INAN

‘...and I did (~~paint a doll~~) too’

That is, some speakers will allow what looks like VP-ellipsis in this context, but they require the verb of the clause with apparent VP-ellipsis to bear TI morphology, even though the verb of the first clause is TA. Other speakers reject (24); for them, there is no way to drop the verb stem in this kind of example.

We find the same split between speakers in examples involving intransitive verbs. All speakers accept (25a), in which no ellipsis takes place, and reject (25b), in which the verb stem has been deleted and the verb final retained. Speakers disagree with each other about examples like (25c), in which the verb of the second clause bears TI morphology; the speakers who accept (24) above find (25c) well-formed as well, while the speakers who reject (24) also reject (25c):

(25) Skinuhsis kisahqe -he,
boy uphill go_{AI}(3)
'The boy went up the hill,

a. kenuk nil nt- aluwi- kisahqa -ha
but I 1 unable uphill go_{AI}(1)
'...but I couldn't go up the hill'

b.* kenuk nil nt-aluwi -Ø
but I 1 unable go_{AI} (1)
'...but I couldn't (~~go up the hill~~)'

c.%kenuk nil nt-aluw -ehtu -n
but I 1 unable TI INAN
'...but I couldn't (~~go up the hill~~)'

To describe the same facts in a different way, speakers generally agree that the verb in a clause in which the verb stem has been dropped must bear TI morphology. For some speakers, this

means that the 'model' verb must be TI as well; for others, the 'model' verb may be of any type, but the verb of the 'ellipsis' clause must be TI.

In the next section, I will offer some arguments that for the speakers who accept examples like (24) and (25c), these examples actually involve VP-pronominalization, rather than VP-ellipsis. In other words, the best English correlate of (25c) is actually something like *I couldn't do it* or *I couldn't do so*.

4.1 Pronominalization Versus Ellipsis

One difference between VP-ellipsis and VP-pronominalization has to do with extraction. We have already seen (in section 3.3) that VP-ellipsis allows relativization of the direct object. (26) offers another example of this:

(26) Psiw =ote nokka- sunhom -on -ol

all EMPH totally paint$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL

[tan nil aluw -ehtu -wan -il]

WH I unable TI 1SGCONJ INANPLCONJ

'He painted all the (inanimate) things [that I couldn't ~~paint~~]'

On the other hand, even for those speakers who allow VP-pronominalization, relativization of the direct object of a pronominalized VP is impossible:

(27) * Psiw =ote nokka- sunh -a

all EMPH totally paint DIR (OBVPL)

[tan nil aluw -ehtu -wan (-il/ -ik)]

WH I unable TI 1SGCONJ INANPLCONJ ANPLCONJ

'He painted all the (animate) things that I couldn't'

We find similar facts in English, where the object of an elided VP, but not the object of a pronominalized VP, may be relativized:

(28) a. He painted everything [that I couldn't ~~paint~~]

b.*He painted everything [that I couldn't do so]

We can offer the same account for the Maliseet and English facts; VP-ellipsis involves a VP with complex internal structure, from which a direct object may in principle be extracted, while VP-pronominalization reduces the VP to something without the full structure of its antecedent.

We saw in section 3.3 that the verb agrees with the direct object in Maliseet, even if that direct object has been dropped via VP-ellipsis. (29) is another example of this:

(29) Nokka- sunhom -on **-<u>ol</u>** =ote ponapsk-**<u>ul</u>**,

(3-)totally paint$_{TI}$ INAN INANPL EMPH rock INANPL

'He painted all the rocks,'

ipocol nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n **-<u>ol</u>**

because I 1 unable TI INAN INANPL

'…because I couldn't [~~paint all the rocks~~]'

In (29), the object of the first clause is inanimate and plural, and object agreement obligatorily appears on the verbs of both clauses; this was one of the pieces of evidence that the second clause, like the first one, actually does contain a plural direct object.

VP-pronominalization behaves differently; for speakers who accept it, it crucially does not allow agreement with the missing direct object[5]:

[5] Because the subject and object of the first clause of (30) are both third person, the object is obviative, and hence bears the (null) obviative plural suffix, rather than the proximate animate plural suffix *–ok*. Since the subject of the second clause is first person, the object ought to be able to be proximate, and hence to trigger an agreement suffix *–ok* on the verb.

(30) %Nokka- sunh -a =te amsqocehkan,

(3-)totally $paint_{TA}$ DIR (OBVPL) EMPH doll (OBVPL)

'He painted all the dolls'

ipocol nil nt- aluw -ehtu -n (***-ol** / ***-ok**)

because I 1 unable TI INAN INANPL ANPL

'…because I couldn't [do so].'

For speakers who allow examples like (30), in other words, the verb of the second clause must bear morphology indicating that its object is not only inanimate but singular; even though the object in this case is animate and plural, no type of plural morphology (neither animate plural nor inanimate plural) is appropriate in the second clause. By contrast, if the verb stem of the second clause were not missing, animate plural agreement would be required:

(31) Nokka- sunh -a =te amsqocehkan,

(3-)totally $paint_{TA}$ DIR (OBVPL) EMPH doll (OBVPL)

'He painted all the dolls'

ipocol nil nt- aluwi- sunh -a **-k**

because I 1 unable $paint_{TA}$ DIR ANPL

'…because I couldn't paint them.'

VP-pronominalization differs from VP-ellipsis, then, in that it lacks the properties that convince us that the internal structure of the elided VP is actually syntactically present. The direct object of a pronominalized VP cannot be extracted, and the verb may not agree with it.

4.2 Conditions on Ellipsis

In the previous sections I have argued that there are two groups of Maliseet speakers. All Maliseet speakers appear to have a process of VP-ellipsis, which can only affect TI verbs (that is,

transitive verbs with inanimate objects). Some Maliseet speakers also allow VP-pronominalization, which can affect VPs containing verbs of any type. The verb in a pronominalized VP bears TI morphology, regardless of the form of the 'model' verb; more specifically, it bears morphology indicating that its object is both inanimate and singular.

The behavior of pronominalized VPs is reminiscent of the behavior of verbs with clausal complements. These are also often TI, and bear inanimate singular agreement with their clausal complements:

(32) '- kocici **-htu -n** [eli kisi- wapol- oluhke -t]

3 know TI INAN C PERF wrong do 3SGCONJ

'He knows that he did wrong'

We might conclude, then, that the final in a VP-pronominalized clause is agreeing with the pronominalized VP itself. In the last section we saw evidence that a pronominalized VP has no syntactically available internal structure, so it is not particularly surprising that the agreement on the verb is insensitive to anything that the VP might contain.

Next, let us turn to the conditions on VP-ellipsis. We have seen that for all speakers, true VP-ellipsis is restricted to TI verbs. Why should this be? We can eliminate one possible answer at the outset: the difference between TI verbs and, for example, TA verbs is not that TA verbs are raising higher in the structure, exiting the elided VP and being pronounced as full verbs (as is possible, for example, in Irish; cf. example (19) above). We can see this by reconsidering example (23), repeated here as (33):

(33) Skinuhsis ‘- kisi- sunh -a -l amsqocehkan -ol;

boy 3 PERF paint$_{TA}$ DIR OBV doll OBV

‘The boy painted a doll,...’

a. nil=ote -na n- kisi- sunh -a

I EMPH also 1 PERF paint$_{TA}$ DIR

‘...and I painted it too.’

b.* nil=ote -na n- kis- ehl -a

I EMPH also 1 PERF TA DIR

‘...and I did (~~paint a doll~~) too’

If (33b) were ill-formed because TA verbs always raise out of the VP, then we would expect that (33a) would be interpretable as a VP-ellipsis example. But speakers unanimously declare that it is not; (33a) can only mean that I painted the same doll that the boy did. In other words, the object of (33a) is really a null pronoun, not an elided instance of an indefinite object.

We have seen that in Maliseet, as in English, VP-ellipsis deletes the phonological content of the VP while leaving that content syntactically active in certain respects; it may be extracted, for example, and the verb agrees with elided direct objects as though they were still present. As far as verbal agreement is concerned, then, the contents of the VP are unaffected by VP-ellipsis. On the other hand, we have just seen that when the verb final agrees with a pronominalized VP, agreement treats that VP as inanimate and singular. We might describe the restriction on VP-ellipsis, then, by adding the following stipulation:

(34) If VP undergoes VP-ellipsis, then *v* must Agree with VP.

In Maliseet, the Agree relation forced by (34) takes the form of a condition on the final (a plausible candidate for an overt instance of *v*, since it indicates the transitivity of the verb); the

final must be a TI final for VP-ellipsis to take place, since the VP is inanimate. On this account, the ban on VP-ellipsis with, for example, TA verbs comes down to a condition on morphology. The verb final for a TA verb in a VP-ellipsis context would have to satisfy contradictory conditions; the condition in (34) requires this final to be TI, while the contents of the VP require the final to be TA[6]. One can imagine a variety of consequences that such a morphological clash could have had—the conflict could be decided in favor of the first Agree relation, or the last, or a default form could have been used. But none of these are in fact the case: apparently the consequence of the morphological clash is ungrammaticality, since true VP ellipsis is in fact impossible in this case.[7]

Another logically possible theory must, I think, be rejected. We could imagine saying that the TI final is actually some type of default, signaling lack of any agreement at all with the complement of the verb. On this theory, we could say that ellipsis blocks agreement (crucially only agreement with the final, since, as we have seen, other morphemes on the verb can indeed agree with elided nominals). The final in an ellipsis context would then be in the TI form because it has nothing to agree with. But it is hard to see how such a theory could capture the facts in section 4.1; if TI is a default, non-agreeing form, then why can it not be freely used with ellipsis of any type of verb? We have seen that true VP-ellipsis is only possible with TI verbs; even for speakers who appear to allow VP-ellipsis with non-TI verbs, I have argued, the process is actually VP-pronominalization rather than VP-ellipsis. I conclude that TI finals are indeed a

[6] For this approach to generalize to the ban on VP-ellipsis with intransitive verbs, we must imagine that the TI specification on *v* is incompatible with the absence of an inanimate object in the VP. In other words, we cannot simply check to see whether there is anything in VP which contradicts the features on *v*.

[7] It is perhaps relevant that all speakers, including ones who do not allow VP-pronominalization, appear to allow VP-ellipsis with ditransitive verbs:

(i) N- kotuwi- sunhom -u -wa -n David w -ik, kenuk nt- aluw -ehtu -wa -n
1 want paint$_{TI}$ APPL DIR INAN David 3 -house but 1 unable TI DIR INAN
'I want to paint David's house for him, but I can't [~~paint it for him~~]

Assessing the relevance of (i) is difficult, however, since ditransitive verbs in this language quite generally contain TI finals, regardless of whether ellipsis is involved.

form of agreement, since they crucially require the presence of an inanimate object in VP-ellipsis contexts.

However the conditions on Maliseet VP-ellipsis are to be explained, a question arises; why do these conditions not appear in other languages? Here I have only speculations to offer. It is possible, of course, that (34) is a parameter, holding in Maliseet but not (for example) in English. A more promising possibility, I think, is to try to link the difference between these languages to the differences in their morphology. In Maliseet, the features on *v* are morphologically realized, while in English they are not; perhaps this means that English is more tolerant of inconsistent sets of features on *v* than Maliseet is, since these bundles of features will never have to be translated into actual morphemes.

4.3 A note on null complement anaphora

Preliminary work on Maliseet null complement anaphora offers some support for the approach to the agreement facts developed in the previous section. Maliseet has a form of long-distance agreement, which is typically described as optional, that allows a verb to agree with a nominal in a complement clause (see Bruening 2001a, 2001b, 2006 for discussion):

(35) a. Ma =te n- kocici -htu -w -on tama wik -u

not EMPH 1 know TI NEG INAN where $live_{AI}$ 3

'I don't know where he lives'

b. Ma =te n- kociciy -a -w tama wik -u

not EMPH 1 $know_{TA}$ DIR NEG where $live_{AI}$ 3

'I don't know where he lives'

c. Ma =te n- kociciy -a -wiy -ik tama wik -ultuw -ok

not EMPH 1 $know_{TA}$ DIR NEG ANPL where $live_{AI}$ PL ANPL

'I don't know where they live'

As the data in (35) show, the matrix verb may optionally agree with the embedded subject, taking the TA form (as in (35b-c)) and exhibiting number and animacy agreement with the subject. The TA form of the verb is impossible, however, when the complement clause is elided:

(36) Nt- ehpite -m n- papehcim -oq [tama wik -u] ,

1 woman POSS 1 ask_{TA} INV where $live_{AI}$ 3

'My wife asked me where he lives…'

a. kenuk ma =te n- kocici -htu -w -on

but not EMPH 1 know TI NEG INAN

'…but I didn't know'

b.* kenuk ma =te n- kociciy -a -w

but not EMPH 1 $know_{TA}$ DIR NEG

This is not simply because long-distance agreement is blocked by null complement anaphora. As the examples below demonstrate, null complement anaphora does not block agreement with inanimate plural nominals:

(37) a. Nt- ehpite -m n- papehcim -oq [tama nit ote wikuwam],

1 woman POSS 1 ask_{TA} INV where that.INAN is_{II}.INANSG house

'My wife asked me where the house is,'

kenuk ma =te n- kocici -htu -w -on

but not EMPH 1 know TI NEG INAN

'…but I didn't know'

b. Nt- ehpite -m n- papehcim -oq [tama nihtol otetu **-l** sokossuhun **-ol**],

1 woman POSS 1 ask_{TA} INV where those.INAN are_{II} INANPL earring INANPL

'My wife asked me where the earrings are,'

kenuk ma =te n- kocici -htu -w -on **-ol**

but not EMPH 1 know TI NEG INAN INANPL

'…but I didn't know'

As (37) shows, a verb may agree with a nominal in a clause that has been elided, just in case the nominal is inanimate; in (37b), the last verb in the sentence bears the inanimate plural suffix *–ol*, agreeing with the inanimate plural nominal *sokossuhunol* 'earrings' in its elided clausal complement. By now, this is a familiar pattern; the preceding sections have documented the same condition on agreement with nominals in elided VPs. It seems that the theory of VP-ellipsis developed in the last section could be generalized to null complement anaphora. In both cases, ellipsis requires that the verb agree with the elided constituent, thus forcing the verb to be in the TI form. And in both cases, the verb may go on to agree with nominals contained in the elided constituent, as long as these nominals are consistent with the TI form of the verb.

The null complement anaphora facts constrain somewhat our possible analyses of this agreement pattern. Unless we analyze long-distance agreement as some type of prolepsis, in

which the agreed-with nominal in the lower clause is doubled via a null pronoun in the matrix clause (and see Bruening 2001a, 2001b, 2006 for arguments against such an analysis), then we cannot analyze the difference between TA and TI verbs as a difference in their argument structures; the conditions on agreement into an elided constituent are the same even in null complement anaphora, where the nominals being agreed with are not arguments of the agreeing verb at all. Many questions about the nature of null complement anaphora remain, which I hope to explore in future work.

5. Conclusions

I have argued in this paper that Maliseet has VP-ellipsis, and (for some speakers) VP-pronominalization. Consequently, we can see that Maliseet has VPs, and in fact VPs with all the contents we expect, including not only the verb stem but also the direct object and certain adverbs. Although the verb stem is only one part of the Maliseet verb, it appears to be a part that is treated for VP-ellipsis as though it is still in the VP, while other affixes are higher in the functional structure of the clause; in other words, the processes that assemble the inflected verb apparently occur after VP-ellipsis, not before. Similarly, we have seen that Maliseet word order is quite free, but the processes that trigger this freedom of word order apparently cannot rescue the contents of the VP from ellipsis; I have speculated that these processes may be postsyntactic. Finally, we have seen that VP-ellipsis is subject to a morphological condition; the verb final (analyzed here as an instance of *v*) must be TI. I have suggested that this condition follows from a (possibly universal) condition on VP-ellipsis which requires *v* to Agree with an elided constituent; consequently, *v* must be TI if the VP is to be elided in Maliseet, and this morphology on the verb must be consistent with the features *v* will receive when it agrees with the contents of the elided VP.

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