Ineffable narratives in Spanish
Another case of overgeneration by *e*-GIVENness

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Abstract
In this paper, I present a new case of overgeneration to the semantic view on identity in ellipsis. Concretely, I show that a radical version of the semantic approach to the identity condition on ellipsis, in particular, one with the notion of mutual entailment at its heart, wrongly predicts as grammatical cases of TP-ellipsis in Spanish where a (formal) present tense feature on T in the antecedent undoubtedly entails a (formal) past tense feature in the elliptical constituent and vice versa. However, this is not attested: present tense cannot serve as a suitable antecedent for formal past tense in TP-ellipsis contexts, regardless of pragmatic entailment. On the basis of this and other new observations in the realm of tense and ellipsis, several consequences for the theory of identity in ellipsis, on the one hand, and the proper representation of tense in natural languages, on the other, are also discussed.

Key words: mutual entailment, syntactic identity, historical present, Spanish, ellipsis

1. Introduction

One of the main questions for the theory of ellipsis is whether ellipsis resolution is syntactically or semantically determined. In Merchant's (2008) words:

Two general approaches to this question have been pursued: one, that the elided XP must be syntactically (LF-structurally, in current formulations) isomorphic to an antecedent, and two, that the elided XP must be semantically equivalent to an antecedent. *Both views have weaknesses: generally, the syntactic isomorphism approach undergenerates, while the semantic identity approach overgenerates.* [Merchant 2008: 134, emphasis mine]

For semantic identity, Merchant refers to the e-GIVENness theory of ellipsis. Simplifying somewhat, for a syntactic constituent C in the complement of an [E] feature, C can be elided only if there is a mutual entailment relation between C and some antecedent A in the linguistic (sometimes, also discursive) context. The semantics for the [E] feature is the following:

(1) $[[E]] = \lambda p$: e-GIVEN(p) [p]
(2) An expression E counts as e-GIVEN iff E has a salient antecedent A and, modulo ∃-type shifting,
   i. A entails F-clo(E), and
   ii. E entails F-clo(A)
(3) The F-closure of α, written F-clo(α), is the result of replacing F-marked parts of α with ∃-bound variables.

The notion of *entailment* in (2) is defined in Schwarzschild's sense as a type of pragmatic entailment, where the rules underlying F-marking depends "on what the speaker *presents* as

GIVEN" (Schwarzschild 1999: 151). It is, then, this particular conception of semantic-pragmatic identity what will be under inspection here.[1]

As for the syntactic approach to identity, several implementations of the identity condition have been proposed either as complementary of some semantic dimension or as the main, maybe unique, aspect of the theory of identity (see Tancredi 1992, Rooth 1992, Fiengo and May 1994, Saab 2003, 2009, Merchant 2008, 2013, Chung 2006, 2013, Tanaka 2011, Johnson 2012, and Thoms 2014, among many others). For the purposes of the argument to be made here, I adopt a simple version of the syntactic identity condition, according to which antecedent and elided must be formally identical in the sense that every syntactic-semantic feature present in the elliptical constituent must have an identical feature in the antecedent in the syntax/LF, although see Section 4 for some crucial refinements.[2]

(4)   Ellipsis: A constituent C can be elided if there is a constituent C' identical to C in the syntax/LF.

Merchant's observation on the predictive power of different conceptions on the identity condition is somewhat expected when comparing (1) and (4): *e*-GIVENness does not require formal identity to the extent that even radically different forms can feed ellipsis whenever mutual entailment is met. The opposite is not true: semantics cannot feed syntactic identity.[3]

As rightly pointed out by Merchant in the above quote, both approaches find empirical challenges in one or the other direction (over vs. undergeneration, as already mentioned)[4], although recent research seems to favor the syntactic approach over the semantic one (see in particular Merchant 2013, for recent discussion and references, and Chung 2013 for a mixed approach). Indeed, in Section 4.1, we will specifically address some of the putative examples

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[1] Other semantic approaches to semantic identity, such as Romero (1998), Elbourne (2008), or Takahashi and Fox (2005) will not be particularly evaluated, although some of them could be considered as variants of Merchant's semantic-pragmatic approach (Romero 1998, for instance). Again, the main point under consideration here is whether or not the theory of ellipsis makes uses of pragmatic entailment as a crucial ingredient. Of course, even laxer proposals like Culicover and Jackendoff's (2005) inferential mechanism of recoverability will face the same problems to be discussed below.

[2] The reference to syntax (or LF, I will remain neutral on this aspect) is crucial here. In a model in which morphophonology comes after syntax (e.g., Distributed Morphology) the locus of identity, syntax or PF/LF, makes crucially different predictions as far as identity effects in ellipsis are concerned. Whenever identity is abstractly defined in the syntax or LF, we can avoid the problem of the so-called partial identity effects which usually refers to morphophonological differences between the antecedent and the elliptical constituent (e.g., agreement differences). See Section 4 for more discussion on this type of mismatches and its implications for the proper syntactic implementation of the identity condition.

[3] The semantic view meets its more radical version in the claim that ellipsis can operate even across languages (see, especially, Merchant 2004 who also quotes Stainton 1997):

(i) A: *Evales   to   potiraki   sti   tsanda?*   [Greek]
       put.PAST.2sg   the   cup   in.the   bag
    'Did you put the cup in the bag?'
    B: *No, I didn't.*
    (Merchant 2004: 700, footnote 12)

Recent works on ellipsis and code-switching by Merchant and others show, however, that code-switching under ellipsis must obey some sort of syntactic identity (see Merchant 2014 and the references therein). The basic assumption, of course, is that identity refers to abstract morphemes in the syntax and not to actual exponents at PF, as in Saab's (2009) approach. If this assumption is made, then cases like (i) are treated on a par with other putative cases of syntactic mismatches (see Section 4).

[4] Well-known arguments against syntactic isomorphism are found in Merchant (2001). For arguments against *e*-GIVENness as originally formulated by Merchant, we refer mainly to Saab (2009), Hartman (2009), Tanaka (2011), Chung (2006, 2013) and Merchant (2013).

of undergeneration for the syntactic approach and show that they can be conceived as illusory in most cases.

In this paper, I present a new case of overgeneration to the semantic view on identity in ellipsis. Concretely, I show that a radical version of the semantic approach to the identity condition on ellipsis, in particular, one with the notion of *mutual entailment* at its heart, wrongly predicts as grammatical cases of TP-ellipsis in Spanish where a formal present tense feature on T in the antecedent undoubtedly entails (in the above sense) a formal past tense feature in the elliptical constituent and vice versa. However, this is not attested: present tense cannot serve as a suitable antecedent for formal past tense in TP-ellipsis contexts, regardless of mutual entailment.

On the basis of this fact, a main conclusion that I advance here is that syntactic identity not only cannot be dispensed with, as in the radical semantic approach, but it should be regarded as a crucial ingredient of the theory of ellipsis resolution, *pace* the recent conclusion reached by Chung (2013) for whom, although necessary, syntactic identity is reduced to play a very limited role in ellipsis. On the basis of the new observations to be made here in connection to some set of complex interactions between tense and ellipsis other important consequences are also discussed.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, I briefly describe TP-ellipsis in Spanish, showing that the tense node in this kind of ellipsis is part of the silent site. In Section 3, I show that a form of the historical present cannot serve as an antecedent of a formal past node, even when *e*-GIVENness seems to be respected. In Section 4, I further explore the consequences of this fact for the theory of identity in ellipsis, first, showing how a radical syntactic approach to the identity condition can handle the putative cases of undergeneration and, second, discussing an alternative syntactic analysis in terms of parallelism and accommodation, namely, the recent analysis in Thoms (2014). In the same section, it is shown, on the basis of new evidence, that both syntactic views on ellipsis should assume a bound variable representation for the historical present in order to capture the entire set of data to be discussed here. As we will see, the behavior of tense under ellipsis parallels the behavior of referential and bound pronouns, a conclusion in full consonance with Partee's (1973) classical findings.

2. Spanish TP-Ellipsis
I will focus on the structure of a specific kind of TP-ellipsis in Spanish, which involves at least a remnant and a polarity particle preceding the elliptical gap (see, among others, López 1999, Depiante 2004 and Saab 2009, 2010):

(5) a. *Juan desaprobó a María pero a Ana no.*
       Juan failed   ACC María but   ACC Ana not
       'Juan failed MARÍA, but not Ana.'
     b. *Juan no desaprobó a María pero a Ana sí.*
       Juan not failed   ACC María but ACC Ana yes
       'Juan did not fail María, but he did fail Ana.'
     c. *Juan desaprobó a María y a Ana también.*
       Juan failed   ACC María and ACC Ana too
       'Juan failed MARÍA and Ana too.'
     d. *Juan no desaprobó a María y a Ana tampoco.*
       Juan not failed   ACC María and ACC Ana neither
       'Juan did not fail MARÍA and Ana neither.'

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Let us assume that the correct analysis for TP-ellipsis corresponds essentially to the analysis sketched in (6), where the remnant is analyzed as clitic left dislocated constituent (see Depiante 2004, and Saab 2009, 2010):

(6) $[_{TopP}$ remnant$_i$ Top $[_{\Sigma P}$ $\Sigma_{[E]}$ $[_{TP}$ ... CL$_i$ + T ...

The [E] feature on Σ^0 is the same proposed by Merchant (2001), and much subsequent work (see van Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006 for an attempt to parameterize the [E] feature). A functional projection with an [E] feature triggers the deletion or non-pronunciation of its complement: which, in the case at hand, is the TP. For the time being, the main point to stress is the fact that the category affected for ellipsis is really a TP and not, for instance, a *v*P. I will follow here the arguments given by Zagona (1988), among others.

First, as is well known, Spanish TP-ellipsis does not allow stranded auxiliaries. In this regard, compare the ungrammaticality of (7a) with the translation of the same example in English in (7b), which is fully grammatical:

(7)   a. *Juan ha salido y Pablo ha también.*
       b. *Juan has left and Pablo has too.*
       (Zagona 1988: 95)

Second, as claimed in Brucart (1987), Murguia (2004) and Saab (2009), Spanish TP-ellipsis does not tolerate differences in tense features between the antecedent and the elliptical gap, although see Section 4 for a crucial refinement:

(8)   *En el   pasado, María   ha   leído mucho   y*
       in   the   past   María has   read a-lot   and
       Elena   en el futuro   ~~habrá   leído mucho~~   también.
       Elena   the   future   will-have   read a-lot   also
       'María has read a lot in the past and Elena in the future will have too.'
       (adapted from Murguia 2004: 86)

These two facts follow straightforwardly if the category affected by ellipsis in Spanish is at least TP as in (6) and not *v*P.

Now, the semantic and the syntactic approach to ellipsis differ in how the identity of the complement is calculated. As an illustration, consider a simple sentence like (9):

(9)   *[Yo]$_F$ [$_{TP}$ fui   al   cine] y   [María]$_F$ también*
       I   went   to.the   cinema and M.   also
       [$_{TP}$ ~~fue   al   cine~~]*.
       went to.the   cinema

As for the mutual entailment approach, it is easy to see that the antecedent A entails E and vice versa once the F-marked parts both in the antecedent and in the second conjunct are replaced with ∃-bound variables (and *modulo* agreement values).

(10)   A: ∃x [x fui al cine]
        E: ∃x [x fue al cine]

Now, A entails E and E entails A and, as a consequence, E is subject to deletion at PF.

As for the syntactic approach, let us assume that the complement of [E] has to match all the syntactic and semantic features present in the antecedent including the value of lexical Roots (*modulo* inflectional agreement and other morpho-phonological properties; see footnote 2). Other LF condition (e.g., parallelism) may play a role under this conception of the identity condition. At any rate, in the case at hand, both the antecedent and the elided constituent are formally identical under any approach of the identity condition on ellipsis.

Let us return for a moment to the example in (8). How is tense calculated for the purpose of ellipsis in this particular case? On an approach *e*-GIVENness based, it seems necessary to assume that formal tense has to be given regardless of temporal adjuncts, maybe a controversial assumption taking into consideration the informative contribution of these kinds of modifiers. On the other hand, under the syntactic approach, (8) is trivially derived as a failure on the identity condition (i.e., [perfect past] ≠ [perfect future]). However, since both approaches may explain in some way the attested pattern, cases like these do not allow us to evaluate the theories in competition. Let us see, then, whether concise experiments can be constructed in the domain of tense.

3. Narratives and ellipsis
In this section, I first try to demonstrate that there is a way to distinguishing the two approaches to the identity condition introduced in Section 1 in the realm of ellipsis in narratives. As we will see, the basic fact to be discussed in what follows constitutes an important challenge to the mutual entailment approach to the identity condition on ellipsis (see Section 3.1). Secondly, I show that the phenomenon of ineffable narratives is not restricted to Spanish, but is also attested in Glasgow Scots, a dialect that distinguishes the historical present from the present on morphological basis. This, as we will show, is crucial to understand some possible counter-arguments to the radical syntactic approach to the identity condition. In virtue of the Glasgow Scots facts, we conclude that the two uses of the present tense under consideration in this section have to be seen as forming a pattern of systematic syncretism. The same point is also made with respect to some especial uses of the *pretérito imperfecto* ['imperfect past'] in Spanish (see Section 3.2).

3.1. The basic fact: Ineffable narratives under ellipsis
A good case to explore the consequences of the two approaches in the domain of tense is the historical present in Spanish, which entails - in the sense of entailment we have already discussed - a past meaning, once the proper contextual conditions for this are met. The discourse in (11), where a present form is used for a narrative, is just a translation of the same discourse in (12) where the past forms are used:

(11) *¡Adiviná   qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
      guess   what me   happened   yesterday
      Estoy tomando *una   cervecita   en el   bar   y   entonces   **veo***
      am.I   drinking   a   beer   in the   bar   and   then   see.I
      a   mi   mujer   besándose con   mi   mejor   amigo.
      ACC my   wife   kissing   with my   best   friend
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday! I am drinking a beer in the bar and then I see my wife kissing my best friend.'
(12) *¡Adiviná   qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
      guess   what me   happened   yesterday
      Estaba tomando *una   cervecita   en el bar   y   entonces   **vi***
      was.I   drinking   a   beer   in the bar   and   then   saw.I
      a   mi   mujer   besándose con   mi   mejor   amigo.

ACC my   wife   kissing   with my   best   friend
'Guess what happened to me yesterday! I was drinking a beer in the bar and then I saw my wife kissing my best friend.'

The so-called historical present has been in the focus of different disciplines from narratology to sociolinguistics (see Fludernik 2012 for a recent overview). Here I will be concerned only with oral narratives typically attested in every day conversations and not with written texts (literary or not). I will assume that, although related, oral and written narratives might be distinguished at least in functional terms (see Wolfson 1978 for a first approach to the problem, and Fludernik 1991 for an important reconsideration). Oral narratives have been a prominent area of study in sociolinguistics at least from Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972). Among other aspects, the debate centers on: (i) the internal organization of narratives in general, and (ii) the function of the verbal forms in such structures. As for (i), the consensus is that narratives are structured in a set of well-distinguished subparts in which verbal meanings combines in complex ways with (con)textual properties to produce different narrative effects. As for (ii), and only with reference to the historical present, the debate is whether or not the classic view on the historical present as a subjective way of evaluating facts in the past (by doing they more vivid) is correct or not. Thus, in his classic studies on the use of the historical present in narratives, Wolfson (1978, 1979) challenged the traditional view by pointing out that the historical present does not have a meaning by itself: what matters, instead, is the shifting between formal past tenses and historical uses of the present. According to him, the function that this tense shifting performs is basically separating one event from another. Wolfson's approach, however, has been questioned by Schiffrin (1981) on the basis of English narratives and, also, by Silva-Corvalán (1983) on the basis of Spanish corpora. In this respect, studies from narratology have contributed to this debate by adding a more complex picture on the structure and function of narratives, in general, and on the historical present, in particular (among many others, see Fleischman 1985, 1990 and Fludernik 1991, 1992 and the references therein). Here, I will follow, at least in part, Fludernik's 1991 characterization of narratives in terms of a double tier structure (a plot line and an off-plot line schema, as explained in footnote 7 and below).

In generative grammar, the historical present has received little attention. An important exception is Kiparsky (1968), who proposes a syntactic transformational approach for this particular use of the present in early Indo-European languages. His basic claim is that in such languages the historical present is just a syntactically past tense which is transformed into present by maybe a rule of conjunction reduction. As we will see, if this approach were correct for modern Indo-European languages, the ellipsis facts to be discussed here would imply more than a challenge to the mutual entailment approach to the identity condition on ellipsis and, at the same time, it would also falsify the syntactic approach. The point is that at some relevant stage of the syntactic derivation the historical present should be represented as [past], producing a strict identity effect between the antecedent and the elided phrase and, by extension, also a mutual entailment relation (i.e., strict syntactic identity → mutual entailment). In any case, Kiparsky also rejected the transformational analysis for modern Indo-European languages on the basis of the different patterns of distribution in each type of languages. My findings in this paper corroborate Kiparski's claim on modern Indo-European languages; concretely, although the entire set of new empirical observations to be made here asks for a syntactic analysis of the historical present, such an analysis is incompatible with an

underlying representation of a [past] feature for this especial use of the present.[5] I postpone this alternative analysis until Section 4.2.

Finally, other important observations and analysis of the historical present in the generative tradition are Hornstein (1990), Nunes (1994) and, recently, Schlenker (2004). However, these analyses are more semantically-based with little reference to the underlying syntax of the historical present.

At any rate, the fact that the speaker in (11) presents the past meaning as given is out of debate in each of the (sub)-disciplines briefly mentioned above. This follows in part from the substitutability assumption. In Wolfson's (1979) words: "HP [historical present] contrasts with other uses of the present in narrative by virtue of substitutability with the past tense." (Wolfson 1979: 172)

This stylistic operation of substitution can be done to the extent a temporal anchor is present in the discourse, among other relevant conditions. In the case in (11), the temporal adverb *ayer* 'yesterday' performs this anchoring function. Regardless of the fact that stylistic substitution is functionally restricted within the narrative (see, among others, Schiffrin 1981), substitution in whatever direction (from past to present or vice versa) does not affect the truth conditions of the underlying propositions in any relevant sense. Crucially, it also does not affect GIVENness in Schwarzschild's (1999) sense, which is at the heart of the mutual entailment approach.

Now, notice that in (11) the hearer has the option of interrupting the discourse of the speaker but only if the answer is in the formal past, not in the historical present form, a fact not previously noted, as far as I know:

(13) A: *¡Adiviná   qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
          guess   what me   happened   yesterday
          Estoy   tomando   una   cervecita   en el   bar...
          am.1   drinking   a   beer   in the   bar
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday. I am drinking a beer in the bar…'
      B: *¡Qué casualidad!   ayer   yo también* **estaba   tomando**   *una   cervecita*
          what coincidence   yesterday   I also   was   drinking   a   beer
          en el   bar
          in the   bar
        'What a coincidence! Yesterday, I was also drinking a beer in the bar.'
      B'*¡Qué   casualidad!   #Ayer   yo también* **estoy   tomando**
          what coincidence   yesterday   I also   am   drinking
          una   cervecita   en el   bar...
          a   beer   in the   bar
        '#What a coincidence! Yesterday, I am also drinking a beer in the bar...'

It seems that a pragmatic condition is at work here: The reintroduction of the historical present into the hearer discourse is somehow prevented.[6] I think that such a restriction can be

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[5] Kiparski's analysis makes different predictions for early Indo-European languages, but this is, obviously, impossible to test. Yet, an allomorphic analysis for some uses of the historical present in other modern languages could be proven as correct, in which case the relevant experiments could be constructed.

[6] As noticed by an anonymous reviewer, the pragmatic condition that blocks the reintroduction of the historical present in (13B') is not operative in contexts of coordination within the narrative. The reviewer provides the following data, where, as expected, ellipsis is possible in (ib).

(i) a. *Oye,   ayer   salgo del   bar   y   veo   que   Luis   está   fumando…*
       listen yesterday leave of.the bar   and   see   that L.   is   smoking
       y   que   su novia   también   está   fumando! Yo creía   que   lo habían dejado!

captured under the double tier structure of narratives proposed by Fludernik (1991, 1992), according to which the historical present can only occur within the plot line of the narrative, but not within the off-plot lines that are abundantly attested in conversational narratives.[7] Clearly, the interruption made by the hearer in (13B') is not part of the plot line of the speaker's discourse and, consequently, the present has to be analyzed as indicating present tense, what is impossible because of the presence of the adverb *ayer* 'yesterday'. Indeed, if such a past adverb were absent in (13B'), then the present interpretation would be perfectly possible (although unnatural in this case in particular because of the presence of the locative adjunct). I think that this basic fact provides, indeed, new evidence for the observations made by Fludernik and, especially, for the following one:

The distinction between plotline and off-plotline levels of oral narrative correlates with tense usage. In the off-plotline sections, that is to say in embedded orientation and commentary, *the tenses relates deictically to the narrators's [sic] present moment of discourse*. The present tense refers to the *present,* even in the embedded orientation, when there is an explanation of some general states of affairs which may still be valid at the time of the telling […]
[Fludernink 1991: 373, emphasis mine]

At any rate, whatever is the right explanation of this restriction (see footnote 8 for more discussion and data), it is clear that it allows us to control an experiment for testing the mutual entailment theory of ellipsis. What this approach to ellipsis predicts is that an elliptical answer to the speaker discourse should be fine even if the antecedent is in the historical present and the elided constituent contains a verb in the formal past, because there is mutual entailment between them. However, this prediction is not borne out:

(14)   A: *¡Adiviná   qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
           guess   what me   happened yesterday

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     and   that   his girlfriend also   is   smoking I   believe   that   it   had   left
'Listen, yesterday I leave the bar and see that Luis is smoking… and that his girlfriend is also smoking. I believed that they had stopped smoking!'
   b. *Oye,   ayer   salgo del   bar   y   veo   que   Luis   está   fumando...*
       listen   yesterday leave   of.the bar   and   see   that   L.   is   smoking
       y   que   su novia   también! Yo creía   que   lo habían dejado!
       and   that   his girlfriend also   I   believe   that   it   had   left
'Listen, yesterday I leave the bar and see that Luis is smoking… and that his girlfriend is too. I believed that they had stopped smoking!'

As shown in the main text, these examples respect Fludernik's (1991) observation that the historical present is part of the plot line of the narrative.
[7] In Fludernik's own words:

What I will call the *plotline* includes the following elements: the initial abstract and orientation sections; the *incipit* (the clause defining the onset of action by means of a temporal specifier: *one day*, *on Monday* etc.); the narrative clauses which are temporally ordered as well as high-tone background units within the complicating action span […]; and the sections entitled *resolution, final evaluation,* and *coda. Off-plotline* are all parenthetical remarks — clearly marked off by pauses, lower volume and pitch as well as by increased or slow-down tempo. The off-plotline basically includes two kinds of elements — embedded orientation and commentary.
[Fludernik 1991: 370, her emphasis]

The examples in Fludernik only refer to situations in which both the plot and the off-plot lines co-exist in a unique speaker. The type of examples we are exploring here, instead, supposes that the hearer can contribute to both lines in different ways. In this respect, (13B') has to be part of the off-plot line, because it is just a parenthetical remark which is not part of the episodic structure of the speaker's story. See footnote 8 for illustrations of possible listeners' interruptions which must be regarded as within the plot line.

          Estoy   tomando   *una cervecita en el   bar...*
          am.1sg drinking   a   beer   in the   bar
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday. I am drinking a beer in the bar…'
    B: *¡Qué casualidad! *Yo también* ~~***estaba/#estoy tomando   una   cervecita***~~
        what coincidence I   also   was/am   drinking   a   beer
        ~~*en el   bar.*~~
        in the   bar
      '#What a coincidence! Me too.'

The answer is fine if the antecedent is in the formal past:

(15) A: *¡Adiviná qué me   pasó   ayer!*
            guess   what me   happened   yesterday
            Estaba tomando   *una cervecita en el   bar*
            was.I   drinking   a   beer   in the   bar
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday. I was drinking a beer in the bar…'
    B: *¡Qué casualidad! Yo también*   ~~***estaba tomando   una   cervecita***~~
        what coincidence I   also   was   drinking a   beer
        ~~*en el   bar...*~~
        in the   bar
      'What a coincidence! Me too.'

As already noticed, there is no ban against a narrative serving as suitable antecedent *per se*. In this respect, consider the following fragment:

(16) A: *¡Adiviná qué me   pasó   ayer!*
            guess   what me   happened yesterday
            Estoy   tomando una cervecita en el   bar
            am.I   drinking   a   beer   in the   bar
            *y   de repente [$_{IP}$ **aparece cierta   persona que conocés**]*
            and   suddenly   appears certain person that know.you
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday! I am drinking a beer at the bar and suddenly certain person you know appears.'

The boldfaced IP may be a suitable antecedent for a sluicing fragment like (17B) just because a non-elliptical answer can be given using the present tense as a narrative (17B'). The pragmatic restriction previously discussed is not at play; i.e., the hearer question is about an episode of the plot line. Of course, a full answer in the formal past is also felicitous here (17B'') although it cannot be a target for deletion, as it would violate the syntactic identity condition on ellipsis:[8]

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[8] As noticed by an anonymous reviewer, the contrast between (13)-(14) and (16)-(17) is crucial to understand the correct nature of the pragmatic restriction observed in this paper. One can legitimately wonder, as the reviewer does, whether the restriction is about the 1st vs. 3rd person distinction or about the force of the utterance (declarative vs. interrogative). However, I think that none of these two factors is what accounts for the aforementioned contrast. As for the first possibility, the following example shows that changing the 1st person for the 3rd person in a context similar to (13) makes no difference.

(i) A: *¡Adiviná qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
    guess   what me   happened   yesterday
   Estoy tomando *una   cervecita en el bar...*
   am.I drinking a   beer   in the bar

(17) B: *¿Quién* ~~*aparece?*~~
      B': *¿Quién   aparece?*
           who   appears
      B'': *¿Quién apareció?*
           who   appeared

Thus, the new fact presented in this paper goes in favor of the syntactic approach to ellipsis resolution. In effect, a mutual entailment-based theory predicts that the answer (14B) should have an elliptical alternative because "yesterday *x* **is** drinking a beer" entails "yesterday *y* **was** drinking a beer" and vice versa. As for the syntactic approach, the oddness of (14B) follows, instead, for exactly the same reason as the oddness of (13B'). Under this view, (13B), i.e., the case where the tense node in the elliptical gap is formally different to its correlate in the antecedent cannot be a suitable target for deletion because of the identity condition on ellipsis. (13B') can, but then the pragmatic restriction on narrative just presented applies. Thus, the syntactic approach rightly predicts this case of grammatical ineffability.

I do not see how the mutual-entailment condition on ellipsis can deal with this issue without loosing one of its fundamental premises: that something may count as *given* from information contextually salient in the discourse. Notice that pragmatic entailment is the crucial notion here. For a purely LF-approach to ellipsis, where ellipsis resolution takes place on pure LF structures, you can get the right result trivially: the semantic denotation of [[past]]

'Guess what happened to me yesterday. I am drinking a beer in the bar…'
B: *¡Qué casualidad! Ayer   Juan también **estaba tomando** una   cervecita en el   bar*
   what coincidence yesterday J.   also   was drinking a   beer   in the   bar
   'What a coincidence! Yesterday, Juan was also drinking a beer in the bar.'
B'*¡Qué casualidad! #Ayer   Juan también **está   tomando** una   cervecita en el bar*
   what coincidence yesterday J.   also   is   drinking *a   beer   in the* bar
   '#What a coincidence! Yesterday, Juan is also drinking a beer in the bar.'

Similarly, the hearer has the option of using the first person in an historical present discourse whenever the speaker first introduced the hearer as a character of his own narrative.

(ii) A: *Ayer,   vos   entrás y   apagás   la luz   en medio   de la fiesta.*
         yesterday you   enter and   turn.off the light in middle   of the party.
         ¡Estabas tan   borracho!
         were.you so   drunk
      'Yesterday, you enter and turn off the light in the middle of the party. You were so drunk! '
      B: *No, yo   no   hago eso   ayer.   ¡Y   no   estaba   borracho!*
         no I   not   do   that yesterday and   not   was.I   drunk
         'No, I do not do that yesterday. And I was not drunk! '

This example, then, also shows that the force of the sentence (affirmative vs. interrogative) is not what makes the difference. The difference seems to be in the fact that those examples in which the hearer is allowed to use the historical present are cases where there is some sort of continuation or correction of the speaker original discourse. What the hearer cannot do is using the historical present to introduce a new narrative, which includes, for instance, new characters and situations. In other words, as observed in the main text, these facts seem to be consistent with Fludernik's (1991) observation that the use of the historical present is restricted to the plot line of the narrative. In effect, (iB') and (iiB) may be distinguished in virtue of the fact that in the correct use of the historical present in (iiB), the interruption made by the hearer is a correction of an episode of the plot line, whereas in (iB') the new episode introduced by the hearer is seen as part of the off-plotline of the speaker's discourse. I am aware that this intuition requires further refinements and an explicit formalization. But, in view of the lack of any explicit theory and debate about the historical present in the current literature on formal grammar (although see Schlenker 2004 for an interesting recent proposal), I have to leave the issue unresolved here. For the purposes of this paper it is enough to note that ellipsis is allowed exactly in those cases where the pragmatic restriction is not at play, like in (17).

≠ [[present]], even if [[present]] is semantically vacuous (Fintel and Heim 2002) or a variable, as I will propose in section 4.2.[9],[10] Therefore, a LF approach is extensionally equivalent to the syntactic approach at least in this respect.[11] For the pragmatic approach, instead, ellipsis resolution takes place on pragmatic structures. In the case at hand, identity should be calculated after present is translated into past by some rule of narratives (see Hornstein 1990 and, especially, Nunes 1994 for concrete implementations). Whenever [[present]] is converted into past by the presence of some anchor like *yesterday* mutual entailment with a formal past form is automatically triggered. Of course, additional assumptions could be made in order to avoid mutual entailment in this case, although it should be noticed that the ineffable narrative problem is even more severe for the mutual entailment approach than other arguments against it, such as, for instance, the impossibility of some voice mismatches under ellipsis (see, in particular, Merchant 2013). In effect, at least for some well-known voice alternation phenomena (active-passive, for instance), truth conditions can vary in one or the other form (see Merchant 2001). But the past-historical present shift, as already observed, cannot alter the truth conditions of the underlying propositions in any relevant sense. At any rate, I will leave the task of implementing and defending such additional assumptions to the proponents of the mutual entailment theory, which is where the burden of the proof is.

3.2. Morphological effects in narratives and their consequences for the theory of identity

Before concluding this section, I would like to stress that the new phenomenon discussed here is by no way restricted to some particularity of the Spanish grammar. In languages with *v*P and TP-ellipsis such as English, for instance, an interesting contrast is found, one that strongly corroborates the findings of this paper: ineffable narratives are only attested in contexts of TP-ellipsis; *v*P-ellipsis, instead, can leave a past tense morpheme stranded out of the elliptical site.[12] I will illustrate this with a dialect of English, Glasgow Scots, which, in addition to display the aforementioned contrast, also presents another interesting property.[13] Concretely, in this dialect, the historical present has its own morphological paradigm, which is [-s] for any person of the verbal paradigm.

(18) *So a goes up the   shoaps tae   get   some beer...*
      so I   go-**s** to the   shop   to   get   some beer
      'So I go to the shop to get some beer...'

The fact that the historical present has a special morphological realization indicates that it cannot be reduced to purely semantic-pragmatic factors and that there is, indeed, some syntactic dimension of the phenomenon.[14] Now it seems that the same pragmatic constraint operative in Spanish is at play in the historical present of Glasgow Scots, as well:

(19) A: *Ye   widnae   believe wit happened tae   me   yesterday!*
        you   wouldn't believe what happened to   me   yesterday
      So a goes up the   shoaps...

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[9] Although under the variable analysis, additional assumption should be made in order to capture the entire set of facts. We will return to this issue in Section 4.

[10] As already noticed, each of these analyses could not be distinguished if the historical present were an allomorph of a [past] tense morpheme, as in Kiparski (1968) for early Indo-European.

[11] This follows only if there is indeed a difference between LF and narrow syntax in the first place.

[12] Thanks to David Embick and Gary Thoms for pointing out this contrast to me.

[13] Thanks to Gary Thoms for the courtesy of the Glasgow Scots data and extensive discussion on the issue.

[14] Similar observations were made with respect to some American dialects of English, where, among other facts, the historical present can be realized as a zero morpheme in the third person (see Fludernik 1991: 374 for examples and references).

so I   go-**s**   to the   shop
'You wouldn't believe what happened to me yesterday! So I go to the shop...'
B: #*A*   *goes   up there yesterday anaw!   Didnae   see   ye   there mind....*
   I   go-**s**   to there yesterday as.well   didn't   see   you   there though
'I go there yesterday as well! Didn't see you there though.'

In exactly this same context, stripping, a case of TP-ellipsis, is also ineffable by the two reasons adduced for Spanish, namely: (i) because of the syntactic identity condition on ellipsis (if the elliptical T were [past]), and (ii) because of the pragmatic restriction discussed in the previous section (if the elliptical T were historical present).

(20) A: *Ye   widnae   believe   wit   happened   tae   me   yesterday!*
        you   wouldn't   believe   what   happened   to   me   yesterday
   So a   goes   up the   shoaps...
   so I   go-**s**   to the   shop
   'You wouldn't believe what happened to me yesterday!" So I go to the shop...'
   B: *#Me tae!*
      'Me too!'

Like in Spanish, if A is in the simple past, (21A), stripping is fine, as expected.

(21) A: *Ye   widnae   believe   wit   happened   tae   me   yesterday!*
        you   wouldn't   believe   what   happened   to   me   yesterday
   So a   went   up the   shoaps...
   so I   went   to the   shop
   'You wouldn't believe what happened to me yesterday!" So I went to the shop...'
   B: *Me tae!*
      'Me too!'

Now, in *v*P-ellipsis contexts, instead, where a T$_{[past]}$ node can be left stranded, the output is grammatical:

(22) A: *Ye   widnae   believe   wit   happened   tae   me   yesterday!*
        you   wouldn't   believe   what   happened   to   me   yesterday
   So a   goes   up the   shoaps...
   so I   go-**s**   to the   shop
   B: *So did a!*
   'So did I'   (preferred version, Gary Thoms p.c.)
   B': *Tam did anaw!*
   'Tam did as well!'

This contrast strongly suggests that the problem has to be found in the calculus of the T node. As already mentioned, the fact that this dialect of English makes use of a special form for the historical present could be taken as an indication that the feature specification for the tense node is different from the present morpheme. If this is correct, an additional prediction arises, namely: we would not expect that a historical present can serve as an antecedent for a normal present and vice versa. My intuition is that this is correct for cases like (14B), where the interpretation that the hearer is drinking a beer at the point of the speech act is very unnatural. This is a welcome conclusion for the radical syntactic approach to the identity condition, because if the feature content of the historical and the normal present were the

same, then we would predict that the historical present would indeed be a legitimate antecedent for a deictic, elliptical form of the present. In this respect, this basic fact obeys the general observation that syncretism between abstract configurations does not rescue strict identity effect, as expected under the assumption that identity is not a PF condition, but a syntactic/LF one (see Saab 2009 for more discussion about the relation between syncretism an ellipsis). Therefore, next to confirm that the contrast found in (14) and (15) is not a particularity of the Spanish grammar, the Glasgow Scots facts briefly discussed here can also be considered as independent evidence for the claim that the historical present and the deictic present should be represented in a different way in the syntax, an issue to which I will return in Section 4.2.

Similar considerations about the syncretism problem can be made with the so-called *imperfecto de fantasía* ['fantasy imperfect'] in Spanish, a special use of the *pretérito imperfecto* particularly attested in children games, when it comes to the creation of alternative worlds.[15] So in a context in which two children are playing to be special characters in a possible world, the following dialogue is allowed:

(23) A: *¿Jugamos a que yo era un ladrón de bancos?*
       play.we   to that I was.IMP a robber of banks
    'Let's pretend that I am a bank robber.'
    B: *¡Sí!   Y   yo también era   un   ladrón de bancos.*
       yes   and I also   was.IMP a   robber of banks
    'Yeah! And I also am a bank robber.'

One property of the fantasy imperfect is that the hearer must be part of the alternative world which is being created. In others words, this a social game in which the plot line is produced in an interactive fashion by the participants of the speech act. For this reason, the hearer can answer with the imperfect as in (23B). This resembles the cases analyzed in footnote 8 with respect to legitimate answers in the historical present. Of course, like the examples in (17), TP-ellipsis is fully grammatical, as expected:

(24) B':   *¡Sí! Y   yo también ~~era~~   ~~un ladrón de bancos.~~*
         yes and I also   was.IMP   a robber of banks
        'Yeah! And me too.'

What is impossible is a case in which this especial use of the imperfect is a legitimate antecedent for a temporal use of the imperfect. Consider the following scenario:

(25) A: *¿Jugamos a que éramos ladrones de bancos?*
       play.we   to that were.IMP robbers   of banks
    'Let's pretend that we are bank robbers!'
    B: *No, mejor   no,   mi papa también era ladrón de bancos antes.*
       no better   not   my dad also   was robber of banks   before
       Mejor   juguemos a otra   cosa.
       better   play.we to another thing
    'No, we better not, my dad was a bank robber before. Let´s play another thing!'

13

Here, the hearer ends the game by introducing a temporal use of the imperfect. Even when it seems to be some pragmatic deviation here, maybe related to the use of *también* (the sentence is perfect without it), TP-ellipsis is strongly ungrammatical in the same context:

(26) B': *No, mejor   no,   mi   papa también ~~era   un ladrón   de bancos   antes.~~
          no   better   not   my   dad also   was a robber   of banks   before
       'No, we better not, my dad also was a bank robber before.'

The fact that (26B') is even worst that (14B) is explained because in the former there is no entailment about both discourses taking place in the same reference time. Evidently, this directly follows from a purely semantic approach to ellipsis. For the syntactic approach to correctly rule out (26B'), it has to be the case that the syntactic content of both tense nodes in (25A) and in (25B) were different, a plausible assumption if this is an instance of syncretism (i.e., different semantic-syntactic representations for the same form).

4. Consequences and further predictions
In this section, we discuss first how is that a radical syntactic approach to the identity condition on ellipsis can handle the putative cases of undergeneration that seems to challenge such an approach (Section 4.1) and, second, we discuss another syntactic theory of the identity condition, which, although weaker than the radical one, is also able to derive the basic facts (Section 4.2). As we will see in this section, the basic patterns discussed here have clear consequences not only for the proper formulation of the identity condition on ellipsis, but also for the proper representation of tense in natural languages. Finally, in section 4.3, I make some conjectures in connection to some puzzling facts involving the adverb *now* in Spanish and Hungarian, which could be taken as additional evidence in favor of the variable-nonvariable distinction to be suggested in what follows.

4.1. Tolerable mismatches in a radical syntactic approach to identity
As it stands, the problem of grammatical ineffability in narratives posses a novel challenge for the mutual entailment approach to the identity condition on ellipsis. By the same token, it seems that syntactic identity (even if calculated at LF, assuming the syntax/LF division makes any sense in the first place) is much more than a very limited ingredient of the theory of ellipsis (*pace* Chung 2013). This of course leaves open the issue of accounting for the adduced cases of undergeneration that the syntactic identity condition on ellipsis seems to produce (see Merchant's observation in the introduction). Several strategies have been proposed in the recent literature (see Saab 2003, 2009, Tanaka 2011, Chung 2013, Merchant 2013, 2014, and Thoms 2014, among others). Alleged cases of undergeneration have the form of what Thoms (2014) calls *tolerable mismatches*. Well-known examples of such mismatches are the following (see Merchant 2001 for these and more examples of tolerable mismatches):

(27)   a. *I remember meeting him, but I don't remember when [_{TP} ~~I met him]~~.*
       b. *Decorating for holidays is easy, if you know how [_{TP} ~~to decorate for holidays]~~.*

Through a previous study on tolerable mismatches in Spanish (see Saab 2003, 2009), I have tried to demonstrate that they are illusory, namely, the result of two factors: (i) the syntactic licensing of ellipsis, which determines different elliptical sizes (TP-ellipsis vs. *v*P-ellipsis or *n*P-ellipsis vs. NumP-ellipsis), and (ii) the lack of isomorphism between syntax and morphology. The first factor accounts for well-known cases of tense mismatches in English *v*P-ellipsis (e.g., *John works here and Mary will ~~work here~~ too*) and the lack of them in TP-ellipsis examples of the sort discussed in this paper (although see below). As argued in the

aforementioned work, the second factor, much less explored in the literature, is at the heart of most cases of tolerable mismatches. The general idea, framed in some version of Distributed Morphology (see, in particular, Embick and Noyer 2001), is that the conditions that regulate the identity between a given antecedent and an elliptical phrase is entirely calculated in the narrow syntax, before lexical insertion rules and other morphological operations - whose surface effect obscures the form of abstract syntax - apply. Therefore, it has to be the case that the antecedents and the elliptical phrases involved in the examples in (27) have an identical syntax but a different surface realization. In other words, these have to be seen as cases of allomorphy in a general sense. Let me illustrate this point with a case of tolerable mismatch in the realm of grammatical mood in Spanish. As shown in detail in Saab (2003, 2009), Spanish stripping can tolerate differences between imperative and subjunctive mood (Buenos Aires Spanish data):[16]

(28) a. ***Ahorrá***   plata,   no   palabras *[~~TP~~   **ahorres**   ~~t]~~.*
        save.IMP   money   not   words   **save.SUBJ**
        'Save money, not words.'
   (from an Argentine commercial)
     b. *No   **ahorres**   plata,   pero sí   palabras [~~TP~~   **ahorrá**   ~~t]~~.*
       not   **save.SUBJ**   money   but   yes   words   **save.IMP**
       'Don't save money. Save words!'

As is well-known, Spanish, like other Romance languages, has a special form of the imperative mood in affirmative sentences, but only for the morphological second person (see Harris 1998 for extensive discussion). Thus when the pronoun involved is *usted* 'you', which conjugates as a third person - even when it refers to the hearer -, the verbal form occurs always in the subjunctive, regardless of the polarity of the sentence (e.g., *venga* 'come' vs. *no venga* 'don't come'). As shown in (29), identity under ellipsis is trivially satisfied in this case:

(29)   *Ahorre   plata,   pero   no   palabras [~~TP~~   ahorre   ~~t]~~.*
     save.SUBJ   money   but   not   words   **save.SUBJ**
     'Save money, but not words.'

On the basis of this particular behavior of the imperative mood, Harris (1998) has convincingly argued in favor of a purely morphological analysis for the imperative. Concretely, he proposes that the form of the imperative is the result of an impoverishment rule that deletes the subjunctive feature on the verb under the presence of a morphological second person:

(30)   *[+subjunctive] → Ø / ___ [2pers]]$_C$*
     (Harris 1998: 40)

This rule only applies under a structural condition that requires that the feature affected by deletion is located on C, which is precisely what happens in affirmative imperatives. In effect, clitic position in affirmative imperative sentences (i.e., V-CL ordering, *hacé-lo* 'do it' vs. *no lo-hagas* 'don't do it'), among other facts (see Laka 1990), shows that there is V-to-C movement in such environments. As discussed at length in Saab (2009), Harris' morphological analysis plus a strict identity condition on ellipsis applying in the narrow syntax leads to the conclusion that the tolerable mismatches in (28) are illusions: as far as

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[16] I am assuming that stripping is TP-ellipsis with movement of the remnant out of the elliptical site (see Depiante 2000 for an analysis of Spanish stripping).

syntax is concerned the verbal form in the antecedent and the elided verb is strictly identical:[17]

(31) *[√AHORR+subjuntive plata], no palabras [√AHORR+subjuntive t]*

Even when in most cases there are clear basis to decide if a given tolerable mismatch should be derived as matter of elliptical size or as syntax-morphology mismatch, there are however situations where both possibilities might overlap. Indeed, the case in (27) seems to be, in principle, amenable to both solutions. Tanaka (2011), for instance, has proposed that the alternation between nonfinite *–ing* forms and *to* infinitives in cases like (27) are explained by the fact that sluicing here deletes a VP and not a TP and, in consequence, the tense node is simply not evaluated for the purposes of the identity condition on ellipsis. A similar analysis has been suggested by Saab (2003) for cases in which a finite form in Spanish can be a suitable antecedent for a nonfinite form or vice versa:

(32) *Recuerdo [FinP [TP haber   arreglado el   auto]], pero no   recuerdo*
          remember.I   to.have   fixed   the   car   but   not   remember.I
     [FinP cuándo [TP arreglé el   auto]]
          when   fixed.I   the   car
'I remember having fixed the car, but I do not remember when.'

(33) *[FinP Juan finalmente [TP arregló el   auto]]   aunque   parecía*
          J.   finally   fixed   the   car   although   seemed.he
     no   saber [FinP cómo [TP arreglarlo]]
      not   to.know   how   to.fix-it
     'John finally fixed the car, although he seemed not to know how.'

In cases like these, we can assume that the syntactic difference between the antecedent and the elided phrase is in the finiteness property that, under reasonable assumptions, is not a property of the tense node by itself but of another higher functional category (labeled FinP in Rizzi 1997, for instance). If this is on track, the tolerable mismatches in (32) and (33) are derived from the licensing of ellipsis, in the sense that the feature triggering the difference is not part of the elided phrase and, consequently, not computed for identity. The fact that finite and nonfinite forms are also distinguished by the analytical-synthetic distinction is a surface effect that arises because of the way in which PF realizes the abstract syntactic nodes. Both the English mismatches in (27), on the one hand, and the Spanish ones in (32) and (33), on the other, are amenable to an analysis under which this kind of tolerable mismatches follows from the syntax-morphology connection, as well. For instance, it is perfectly conceivable an analysis for Spanish in which the nonfinite form arises, not as the result of a syntactically relevant feature, but as the PF reflex of particular syntactic configuration. Abstractly, this should be thought as a case of allomorphy conditioned by syntax. Given that my point here is just to illustrate how a radical syntactic approach to tolerable mismatches should proceed, I will try no specific analysis for these cases here. The interested reader is referred to Saab (2009) for a detailed study of tolerable mismatches in Spanish.

4.2. Structural accommodation and the representation of tense

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[17] Although the sentences are not structurally isomorphic because of the effects that head movement produces in the affirmative form.

Tolerable mismatches can also be addressed by a weaker version of the syntactic identity condition on ellipsis, one that does not refer to the feature content of the abstract nodes provided by the syntactic derivation, but to some LF structural condition requiring that antecedents and elided phrases respect some sort of parallelism condition at LF (for different implementations and references, see, among many others, Tancredi 1992, Fox 2000, Fox and Lasnik 2003, Griffiths and Lipták to appear, and, especially, Thoms 2014). In addition to that, such theories also use to allow deviations of strict syntactic identity as a last resort under well-defined conditions (see Fox 2000, van Craenenbroeck 2013 and Thoms 2014 for recent proposals). Depending on particular versions of such an approach, these conditions are determined by some type of syntactic/semantics interactions or, under more liberal assumptions, under pragmatics conditions. Given the current understanding on the issue, it is not clear that parallelism and feature identity are mutually exclusive or just different dimensions of the theory of ellipsis. I will not address this problem here, because my point is just to make some remarks on the second aspect of this type of approach, namely, on the theory of accommodation and its implications for the theory of tense representation.

A recent version of the approach just sketched is defended in Thoms (2014), whose main purpose is to put forward a syntactic theory of identity in ellipsis capable to solve both the putative cases of undergeneration for the radical syntactic identity condition and the overgeneration problem for the radical semantic approach (see Section 1). Following the gist of Fox (2000), his main hypothesis is that identity is syntactic in nature and requires some sort of structural parallelism at LF. However, the theory is constructed in a way such that alternative antecedents are allowed under well-defined semantic and syntactic conditions. Concretely, Thoms proposes to formulate the identity condition on ellipsis in the following way:

(34) *Syntactic identity in ellipsis: an ellipsis constituent E must be identical (at LF) to an antecedent constituent A or an accommodated additional antecedent A'.*
      [Thoms 2014: 20]

The need of accommodated antecedents seems to be empirically forced, as noticed by Fox (2000) and others, although the nature of accommodation, as mentioned above, is a matter of current debate. A crucial problem is that once accommodation is permitted in the theory, we have to avoid the reintroduction of the overgeneration problem. Following the structural approach to alternatives in Katzir (2007) and Fox and Katzir (2011), Thoms claims that this can be done if a given accommodated antecedent is structurally defined. In other words, alternative antecedents can be obtained by a set of structural operations such as deletion, contraction and substitution applying to the original antecedent. A crucial assumption is that the new antecedent can be at most complex as the original one, where complexity is formally defined. I will not enter into the details of Katzir's theory and the adaptations made by Thoms; for us, it will be enough to be clear with respect to two assumptions: (i) addition of material is prohibited because it produces an increase of complexity, and (ii) the operation of substitution is also constrained by complexity. The first assumption prevents the adding of new structure to the original one. The second assumption says that substitution is possible only if the substitution of an element E for another element E' does not introduce a complexity increase. As noticed by Thoms, this second assumption is crucial when it comes to possible substitutions of the feature content of a given head. By assumption, changing a specified feature for another specified feature is allowed; for instance, one can change [past] for [present] and vice versa (the same for a binary representation of features), although additional semantic conditions will restrict such an option. At any rate, such a substitution operation does not affect complexity. What Thoms's system does prevent is substitution of an

unspecified syntactic node for a specified one because in this case complexity is clearly affected. At the heart of his theory, it is the fact that a syntactic node interpreted as a variable (i.e., a sort of unspecified head in the syntax) cannot be replaced by a nonvariable under any circumstance. This is formulated by Thoms as a strong empirical generalization:[18]

(35) *A variable cannot provide an antecedent for ellipsis of a nonvariable.*
      [Thoms 2014: 16]

The theory derives such a generalization, then, as a matter of complexity in the generation of alternative antecedents. That (35) is on track is indicated by several empirical domains. An important set of facts that, according to Thoms, corroborates (35) in particular is provided by well-known contrasts in the possibilities of VP ellipses involving auxiliaries in English. As noticed by Warner (1993), Lasnik (1995) and, especially, Postdam (1997), English auxiliaries, like *be*, can be part of an elliptical VP under stricter identity dependencies than the ones observed for main verbs (e.g., *John went to the cinema and I will too*), so, for instance, the sentence in (36) is perfect because there is strict identity. In turn, as stressed by Postdam (1997), (37) is acceptable, but somewhat deviant when compared with (36) (all data quoted from Thoms).

(36) *John has been fired, and Mary has ~~been fired~~, too.*
      A: *[$_{TP}$ John T+has$_i$ [$_{PerfP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VoiceP}$ been [$_{VP}$ fired]]]*
      E: *[$_{TP}$ Mary T+has$_j$ [$_{PerfP}$ t$_j$ [$_{VoiceP}$ been [$_{VP}$ fired]]]*
(37) *John is being examined, but Jack really should ~~be examined~~, also.*
      A: *[$_{TP}$ John T+be$_i$ [$_{AspP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VoiceP}$ being [$_{VP}$ examined]]]]*
      E: *[$_{TP}$ Jack T+should [$_{VoiceP}$ be [$_{VP}$ examined]]]*

According to Thoms's analysis, this contrast derives from the assumptions made above. The first point to note is that only (37) requires accommodation: (36) satisfy syntactic identity in a straightforward fashion and, consequently, accommodation is not triggered. Accommodation in (37) requires an application of substitution, which changes the form *being* for the bare form *be*. This operation does not produce any additional complexity and the new antecedent is then created. The fact that the sentence is not perfectly natural as (36) follows because accommodation requires some sort of costly procedure (i.e., computing alternatives), one that would not arise if ellipsis targeted the smaller VP containing the participle but excluding the *being* form.

Compare now (37) with (38), which is fully ungrammatical:

(38) **John was fired, and Mary will ~~be fired~~, too.*
      A: *[$_{TP}$ John T+be$_i$ [$_{VoiceP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ fired]]]*
      E: *[$_{TP}$ Mary T+will [$_{VoiceP}$ be [$_{VP}$ fired]]]*

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[18] A similar observation is made in Oku's (1998) approach to vehicle change. According to Oku, what some subtypes of vehicle change phenomena show is that a given elliptical constituent can contain proper subsets of the features present in a given antecedent, but not vice versa: elided phrases cannot be superset of their corresponding antecedents. In Oku's system this subset condition is accounted for in terms of LF reconstruction. Concretely, LF copy can take an entire syntactic object as a target or just a proper subset of it under different conditions. The fact that supersets cannot be obtained by LF-copy follows straightforwardly in this system. A refined analysis is proposed in Aoun and Nunes (2007), in which the subset principle is an epiphenomenon derived from the covert operation of Formal Feature Movement at LF (see Chomsky 1995). See Saab (2009) for an alternative analysis which makes no use of any LF-copy procedure.

Here head movement from V to T in the antecedent leaves a chain of traces which are interpreted as variables at LF (see Hartman 2011). The elliptical phrase, in turn, contains a bare form of *be*. Syntactic identity is then violated. Accommodation should be semantically possible (see Thoms 2014 for details) but it is prevented because it would imply changing the variable in the head of VoiceP for *be*. By hypothesis, this would suppose an increase of complexity, as already explained. The English examples briefly discussed here nicely illustrate how Thoms' theory addresses (in)tolerable mismatches under ellipsis. I refer to his work for detailed discussion of this and other cases of (in)tolerable mismatches.

At first sight, it seems that our basic fact in (14) is not easily derived under Thoms's approach. To see why this is the case, consider (14) again, repeated as (39):

(39) A: *¡Adiviná   qué   me   pasó   ayer!*
          guess   what me   happened yesterday
          Estoy   tomando *una cervecita en el   bar*
          am.I   drinking   a   beer   in the   bar
      'Guess what happened to me yesterday. I am drinking a beer in the bar…'
      B: *¡Qué casualidad! *Yo   también* ~~*estaba   tomando   una   cervecita*~~
          what coincidence I   also   was   drinking   a   beer
          ~~*en el   bar...*~~
          in the   bar
      'What a coincidence! *Me too.'

Here, given such an evident failure of syntactic identity, accommodation should be activated. The question is, then, why the antecedent is not able to generate an alternative antecedent by substituting the historical present for the formal past (assuming, of course, that there is an entailment relation between both). A possible answer is to assume that the historical present is represented as a variable bound by an operator in the left periphery of the clause, but formal past is represented by a specified tense node, whose interpretation is determined at LF by mechanisms similar to those applying to referential pronouns in general. In other words, simple tenses, like past or present, are not logical operators (Partee 1973). If this correct, a simplified syntactic representation for (39) should be as follows:

(40) A: *OP$_x$ [$_{TP}$ T_x tomando una cervecita en el bar...*
      E: * ~~*[$_{TP}$ $T_{[past]}$ tomando una cervecita en el bar...*~~

Now, because of the complexity reasons already discussed, $T_{[past]}$ cannot replace T_x for creating an accommodated antecedent and, therefore, the elliptical sentence is correctly ruled out.[19] Interestingly, this analysis also rules out a present interpretation for (39B), in which the hearer is drinking a beer at the moment of the speech act (see Section 3).[20] Under the representation of (40), the ungrammaticality of (39B) should be seen as another concrete instance of the generalization in (35). More importantly, it seems that our basic case forms a natural class with other types of similar mismatches in the realm of pronominal binding. Let us explore this in more detail.

Thus, we are lead to conclude that a syntactic analysis is needed for the historical present, in consonance with Kiparski's observation. But this analysis is incompatible with his analysis for early Indo-European, according to which the historical present is an allomorph of the past

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[19] The inverse situation, in which formal past precedes the historical present, should be available, but this is hard to evaluate.

[20] A similar analysis should be then extended to the strict identity effects discussed in Section 3.2 with respect to the patterns of syncretism in the imperfect tense.

x

tense morpheme. More importantly, such an analysis is directly falsified by the empirical scenarios discussed here. Recall that allomorphy in the imperative clearly triggers mood mismatches in stripping contexts. If the historical present were amenable to an analysis in terms of allomorphy, then we would wrongly predict that (39B) should de grammatical.

So far, we can safely conclude that Thoms's analysis predicts that a tense node represented by a bound variable only can serve as antecedent of another tense node which is also a bound variable, in consonance with (35). This cannot be tested in the domain of the historical present for the pragmatic restriction already discussed in section 3, but relevant examples can be constructed in other empirical domains. In this respect, habitual/generics readings seem to be an excellent domain to evaluate the set of predictions under consideration. As we already observed, tense differences are not allowed in Spanish TP ellipsis. Let us to illustrate this point again with the following example:

(41) *Juan fue   al   cine   ayer,   pero hoy   no.*
      J.   went   to.the cinema yesterday but   today   not
      'Juan went to the cinema yesterday but not today.'

This sentence can only be read as that today Juan did not go to the cinema and not that he won't go to the cinema in the future or that he is not going to the cinema in the near future and so on, even when these are possible continuations in nonelliptical sentences.

(42) a. *pero hoy   no   fue   al   cine.*   [OK also as elliptical]
         but   today   not   went   to.the cinema
      b. *pero hoy   no   va   al   cine.*   [*, if elliptical]
         but   today   not   goes   to.the cinema
      c. *pero hoy   no   va   a   ir   al   cine.* [*, if elliptical]
         but   today   not   goes to   to.go   to.the   cinema

The fact that only (42a) can be the underlying structure for the elliptical TP in (41) clearly indicates that the feature content of the tense node is calculated for the identity condition on ellipsis. Yet, tense asymmetries are found in the domain of tense when it comes to habitual or generic readings. Consider the following examples:[21]

(43) a. ¡*Qué feliz   coincidencia! Antes   mi   padre   trabajaba   acá*
         what happy   coincidence   before   my   father   worked.IMP   here
         y   ahora   yo   también [TP *trabajo   acá*].
         and   now   I   also   work.PRES.I   here
         'What a nice coincidence! My father worked here before and now I do, too.'
      b. ¡*Qué feliz   coincidencia! Hoy en día   yo   trabajo   acá*

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[21] The (a) sentences in both (43) and (44) are preferred to the examples in (b) where the present tense precedes the elliptical past tense. This subtle difference seems to follow from the causal logic imposed by the sequence of tenses. This is evidenced by cases like the following, in which the introduction of the first sentence makes clear that there is a permanent habit. So the events can be ordered in a more random fashion here (see Section 4.3 for more discussion):

(i) *Entreno   desde que   era   chico. Ahora entreno   en el   gimnasio de Juan*
     train.I   since that   was   kid   now   train.I   in the gym   of J.
     y   antes en el de Pedro.
     and   before in the of P.
     'I train since I was a kid. Now, I train at Juan's gym and before at Peter's gym.'

what happy coincidence nowadays I work.PRES.I here
y antes mi padre también [TP ~~trabajaba acá]~~.
and before my father also ~~worked here~~
'What a nice coincidence! Nowadays, I work here and before my father used to, as well.'

(44) a. *Antes leía a Cortázar y ahora a Borges ~~[TP leo t]~~*
before read.IMP ACC C. and now ACC B. [read.PRES.I]
'I used to read Cortázar before and now I use to read Borges.'
b. *Ahora leo a Cortázar y antes a Borges ~~[TP leía t]~~*
now read.PRES.I ACC C. and before ACC B. [read.IMP.I]
'Now, I use to read Cortázar and before I used to read Borges.'

As is well-known, most analyses of generic/habitual sentences postulate the presence of some sort of habitual operator (see Krifka et al. 1995 for a detailed overview and a proposal, and Boneh and Doron 2008, 2010 for a recent analysis and references). The proper implementation of this approach is a matter of current debate and, of course, the consequences of such a debate for the theory of identity in ellipsis are crucial. For the radical syntactic approach, it has to be the case that the tense node in habitual and generic sentences is represented as a syntactic variable without feature content. Under this view, the forms realizing the imperfect and the present in the above sentences are dissociated forms (in Embick & Noyer's 2001 sense) occurring only at morphology. This would amount to derive these cases in a similar way to well-known cases of agreement mismatches in pronominal binding environments:

(45) *I turned in **my** assignment, but most of the other students didn't [~~turn in their assignment~~]*
(Fiengo and May 1994: 218)

Following previous ideas by Murguia (2004) and Bobaljik (2008), in Saab (2009), I elaborate this hypothesis in detail and show that most cases of agreement mismatches in variable binding scenarios can be accounted for if such features are not present in the syntax, but added post-syntactically. The reasoning also extends to some other asymmetries, in particular, indicative-subjunctive mismatches in Spanish TP-ellipsis contexts. With reference to the cases at hand in (43) and (44) the proper syntactic representation of T should be an unspecified T node whose temporal value is obtained by PF agreement with a controller, namely, the adverbs *antes* and *ahora* or some other syntactic source (maybe, a covert operator).

(46) A: *Antes mi padre [TP T_x trabajaba acá ...*
E: *Ahora yo [TP ~~T_y trabajo acá ...~~*

A weaker version of the identity condition, one that allows for certain types of feature mismatches in the syntax, would also derive the cases in (43) and (44) by some version of the parallelism condition. Nevertheless, it is not obvious to me whether, for instance, Thoms's approach is forced or not to adopt the assumption that the tense nodes in the antecedent and the elliptical phrase have to be syntactically unspecified. If this is the case, the sentences at hand satisfy syntactic identity without the need of resorting to accommodation. Otherwise, accommodation should be triggered and the system would ensure that substitution of the tense node in the antecedent does not introduce more complexity into the original structure. I think that, in one or the other analysis of the tense node, Thoms would predict the correct result.

Replacing [past] for a variable in the examples in (43) and (44) does not introduce complexity and the accommodated antecedent would satisfy the identity condition on ellipsis, under the assumption that the [present] tense node in the elided phrase is also interpreted as a variable at LF.

Regardless of the specific analysis of these tense asymmetries in habitual environments, a bound variable analysis seems to be unavoidable if we want to capture why habitual sentences allow for tense mismatches, but episodic ones do not (although see Section 4.3). This is a welcome conclusion, in consonance with the most accepted view on habitual and generic readings in general. By the same token, as we have already seen, a bound variable analysis seems to be unavoidable for the historical present, as well. As noticed, Thoms's analysis can indeed accounts for our basic contrast, but only under the assumption that the tense node of the historical present is represented as a bound variable. At any rate, it seems that this assumption is also needed for the radical syntactic approach if we want to capture the entire paradigm discussed here. In effect, for the radical syntactic approach to work the present tense has to be distinguished from the historical present. Postulating an [historical present] feature is a mere stipulation; a bound variable analysis, instead, seems to be a more promising alternative. Some empirical evidence for such a claim is, in fact, provided by the interaction between habitual readings and the historical present. Concretely, there seems to be a generalization that prevents for a habitual reading to occur in a discourse constructed with the historical present. Put differently, as is well-known, the historical present is restricted to episodic situations. Thus, the following sentence is very unnatural, if not entirely ungrammatical:

(47) *En   el   pasado, yo suelo fumar   un cigarrillo después de la   cena...
     in   the   past   I use to.smoke a cigarette   after   of the   dinner
       '*In the past, I smoke a cigarette after dinner…'

A formal past tense with a habitual reading is, of course, perfectly natural in the same context:

(48) En   el   pasado, yo solía fumar   un cigarrillo después de la   cena.
     in   the   past   I used to.smoke a cigarette   after   of the   dinner
       'In the past, I used to smoke a cigarette after dinner.'

The ungrammaticality of (47) is directly explained under the bound variable analysis of the historical present: the fact that this use of the present seems to be restricted to episodic readings follows as a problem of overlapping among operators, namely, the same variable cannot be bound by two operators at the same time. This amounts to say that both the habitual and the historical present operators are probably of the same type and, consequently, their distribution is fully complementary.

In sum, the set of new facts connected to the identity condition on ellipsis we have explored in this paper has interesting consequences not only for the proper representation of the historical present but for the proper representation of tense in general. The argument sketched here resembles the classical argument developed by Partee (1973) who demonstrates the pronominal behavior of tense under several diagnostics. If my observations here are on the right track, (in)tolerable mismatches with respect to tense in TP-ellipsis contexts are also resolved in the same way as (in)tolerable mismatches with pronouns, for which the variable/referential distinction has been proven as essential in ellipsis resolution.

4.3. The syntax of NOW: a tense asymmetry in episodic contexts[22]

Before closing this section, I would like to further inquiry into the variable/nonvariable distinction in episodic environments. As noticed in footnote 21 in both (43) and (44), the examples in which the past tense precedes an elliptical present are preferred. I would like contend here that this subtle pragmatic contrast in (43) and (44) should not be confused with another possible source of tense asymmetry in episodic contexts, which seems to be related to the nature of the adverb *ahora* 'now'[23] across languages as a possible deictic operator (Anikó Lipták, p.c.). In Spanish, for instance, some speakers, including me, seems to accept a past-present asymmetry in nonhabituals contexts, but only when the elided present has *ahora* 'now' as a remnant. The judgments in (49a) are not exclusively mine, but it is worth noting that for other speakers the sentence in (49a) cannot be interpreted in the intended sense, but only as [past], if interpreted at all:

(49) a. ?*Ayer*   *yo estuve con los*   *chicos*   *en casa y*   *ahora*   *Juan también*
       yesterday I was with the   kids   in home and now   J.   also
       ~~*[está con los chicos en casa t]*.~~
       is   with the   kids   in home
     'Yesterday I was at home with the kids, and now Peter is, too.'
     b. **Ahora *yo estoy con los*   *chicos*   *en casa*   *y*   *ayer*   *Juan también*
       now   I   am with the   kids   in home   and yesterday J.   also
       ~~*[estuvo con los chicos en casa t]*.~~
       was   with the   kids   in home
     'Now I am at home with the kids, and yesterday Peter was, too.'

Beyond this subtle contrast between (49a) and (49b), there is another crucial difference between, for instance, (49a), on the one hand, and (43a) and (44a), on the other, namely, substituting *ahora* 'now' for *hoy* 'today' in the relevant positions makes (49a) ungrammatical under the present reading. Of course, a past reading is perfect in this case.

(50) *Ayer*   *yo estuve*   *con los*   *chicos*   *en casa*   *y*   *hoy*   *Juan también*
       yesterday I was   with the   kids   in home   and today J.   also
       ~~*[estuvo con los chicos en casa t]*.~~'
       was   with the   kids   in home
     'Yesterday I was at home with the kids, and now Peter was, too.'

In turn, changing *ahora* for *hoy* in the (43a) or (44a) leaves the habitual readings intact. Before proposing an alternative to this puzzling fact, let me introduce an additional puzzling fact from Hungarian.

Interestingly, in Hungarian, the contrast between habitual and non-habitual is further confirmed by other particularities of the language. First, the tense asymmetry noticed in (49a) between a past antecedent and an elided present tense is also allowed with some episodic sentences, and according to Anikó Lipták (p.c.) such a contrast is transparent:

(51) a. *Tegnap*   *Mari volt otthon*   *a*   *gyerekekkel,*   *most Péter.*
       yesterday Mari was at.home   the   kids.with   now Péter
       'Yesterday Mari was at home with the kids, and now Peter is.'
     b. **Mari   *most van*   *otthon*   *a*   *gyerekekkel,*   *Péter*   *tegnap.*
       Mari   now is   at.home   the   kids.with   Péter   yesterday

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[22] I am indebt to Anikó Lipták for the Hungarian data and fruitful discussion.
[23] Other possible variants of this adverb could be expressions like *en este momento* 'in this moment' and the like.

Also like in Spanish, changing *most* 'now' for another time-denoting adverb like *ma* 'today' eliminates the observed tense mismatch (51a):

(52) *Tegnap   Mari   volt otthon   a   gyerekekkel, ma   délután   Péter.*
     yesterday   Mari   was at.home the   kids.with   today afternoon Péter
     'Yesterday Mari was at home with the kids, and this afternoon Peter was.'
     '*Yesterday Mari was at home with the kids, and this afternoon Peter is.'

However, unlike Spanish, strict habitual readings are restricted to the present tense under the scope of a habitual auxiliary, which has the particularity of being formally past, but semantically present:

(53) *Borgest   szoktam   olvasni.*
     B.ACC   habit.1SG   read.inf
     'I read Borges nowadays.'

Therefore, a habitual past - habitual present reading in ellipsis can be constructed but only under an ordinary past – ordinary present pair; i.e., without the presence of any overt or covert habitual operator and, like in episodic contexts, hence, the mismatch only works with 'now':

(54) a. *Régen   Borgest   olvastam,   most Cortazart.*
         earlier B.ACC   read.PST.1SG   now   C.ACC
      b. **Most   Cortazart olvasok,   régen   Borgest.*
         now   C.ACC   read.1SG   earlier B.ACC

Assuming that NOW is a type of operator in Hungarian and Spanish (at least for those speakers that have the contrast in 49) we can make sense of this apparent puzzle.[24] First, the fact that ellipsis only works in a direction when it comes to episodic predicates in general is accounted for directly under Thoms's theory: in (51a), for example, the adverb *most* 'now' introduces a variable which has a nonvariable past tense as antecedent. For this reason, syntactic identity fails and accommodation changes the [past] feature of the antecedent for a variable, an operation that does not departs from the ban of introducing more structural complexity into the original source (see Section 4.2). The opposite in (51b) is not true: here a variable is anteceding a nonvariable; consequently, replacing the variable in the antecedent T node for a nonvariable like [past] departs from the economy restriction on alternatives. Therefore, (51b) can be correctly ruled out. As for habituals in Hungarian, given that habits in the past are not introduced by an operator, we get the same pattern than with deictic tenses.

Finally, although the Spanish data with *ahora* 'now' in episodic contexts require closer inspection (see footnote 24), a crucial difference with respect to habituals can be made when comparing Hungarian, namely, Spanish does have past habituals, as witnessed by the typical use of the imperfect in the language, which morphologically realizes habitual events as one of its basic meanings. So the fact that tense asymmetry in this language is allowed in both directions (past-present and present-past) in habitual situations is explained if the tense node is represented as a variable both in the habitual past as in the habitual present, as proposed in the previous section. Of course, further research should (dis)confirm both the empirical observations and the analysis suggested in this rather speculative section.

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[24] Given the high degree of variability in speakers' judgments in Spanish, an alternative explanation could be to appeal to pragmatic factors triggered by the particular deictic properties of *ahora*, who force to some speakers to a present reading for the elided TP in (49a).

5. Conclusion

Ineffable narratives in Spanish posses a new challenge for the mutual entailment approaches to the identity condition on ellipsis. At the same time, the set of new phenomena discussed here might be crucial when assessing: (i) different alternatives to syntactic identity and accommodation, and (ii) different theories for the representation of tense in natural languages. If the conjectures made in the last section are correct, a theory of the identity condition that allows for accommodated antecedents must be defined in structural terms, as in the approach recently put forward by Thoms (2014). As for the theory of tense, in turn, we conclude that only those tenses that are represented as bound variables may allow for tense asymmetries in the realm of ellipsis, whenever the relevant structural and identity conditions are also met. Thus, the behavior of tense under ellipsis might be fully assimilated to the behavior of pronouns, in consonance with the findings in Partee (1973).

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