

1. Sluicing in clarification

Sluicing is an ellipsis construction where only a stand-alone *wh*-phrase (a remnant) receives **sentential interpretation** (i.a., Chung et al. 1995):

- (1) A: John hates **someone**. B: *Who?* (= ‘*Who* does John hate?’)

In **Clarification request sluicing (CR-sluicing)**, a responder **fails to understand** some aspects of the correlate (the expression the remnant refers back to), **presumed to be shared** among speakers in the given context (a.k.a. reprise sluicing in Ginzburg and Sag 2000).

In this regard, CR-sluicing receives **idiosyncratic interpretations**:

- (2) A: You know **she** came back.
B: *Who?* (‘*Who/Which woman* do you mean by ‘**she**’?’)
A: Your girlfriend. (COCA 2018 FIC)

Previous analyses of canonical sluicing cannot fully account for the characteristics of CR-sluicing. As an alternative, this study claims that **the Table model** by Farkas and Bruce (2010) can improve the existing analyses.

2. Key observations

2.1. On correlates

Canonical sluicing requires an indefinite correlate that may be covert (i.a., Merchant 2001), whereas **CR-sluicing** demands a definite, overt antecedent.

- (3) a. A: John was talking (**to someone**). B: *(To) who?* [canonical]
b. A: John was talking ***(to Mary)**. B: *(To) who?* [CR-sluicing]

2.2. Two possible readings

There are two possible readings for CR-sluicing which arises from the interlocutors’ background knowledge (data from COCA 2018 MOV).

- (4) a. **No corresponding referents** (‘*Who* do you mean by *x*?’)
A: I should talk to **Dr. Johns** about it. B: *Who?* A: Dr. Harold Johns.
b. **Multiple possible referents** (‘*Which x* do you mean?’)
A: Did you know **the kid**? B: *Who?* Which kid? A: The Beech kid.

2.3. Correlate-echoing CR-sluicing

In CR-sluicing, a remnant can be preceded by an NP:

- (5) a. A: Yo, who that? B: “She was **Apollo**’s sister.”
B: It’s **me**? “Apollo? *Apollo who?*”
A: *Me who?* Oh, wait. Apollo.” (COCA FIC 2004)
B: It’s Ali! (COCA 2018 MOV)

2.4. Island insensitivity

Just like canonical sluicing ((6); Merchant 2001), CR-sluicing is island-insensitive – a remnant can refer to a correlate inside a syntactic island.

- (6) a. They want to hire [_{NP} someone who speaks a **Balkan** language], but I don’t remember *which*. (Merchant 2001: 6)
b. A: So, you mad about [_{NP} the **Jason** thing]?
B: *Who?* (COCA 2018 MOV)

2.5. No SWIPING

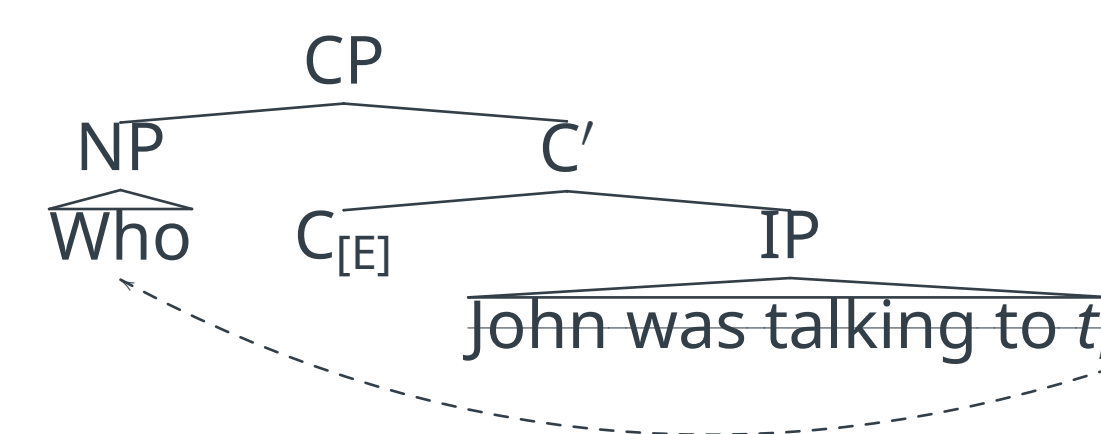
Unlike canonical sluicing, CR-sluicing is subject to an additional phonological identity condition that affects its syntax:

- (7) a. A: John was talking (**to someone**). B: *Who to?* (Merchant 2001: 88)
b. A: John was talking **to Mary**. B: *#Who to?*

3. Previous analysis & Discussion

The mainstream approach of sluicing, called **the PF-deletion approach** (i.a., Merchant 2001) assumes that sluicing derives from underlying source:

- (8) A: John was talking to **someone**. B: *(To) who?*
a. [_{CP} C_[E] [_{IP} John was talking to *who*]]
b. [_{CP} *who*_{*i*} C_[E] [_{IP} John was talking to *t_i*]]
c. [_{CP} *who*_{*i*} C_[E] [_{IP} John was talking to *t_i*]]



Empirical issues

Q1. The PF-deletion approach cannot fully account for the idiosyncratic, context-dependent meaning of CR-sluicing:

- (9) A: John was talking to **Mary**. B: *(To) who?*
[_{CP} *who*_{*i*} C_[E] [_{IP} John was taking-to-*t_i*]] [Underlying source]
≠ ‘Who do you mean by ‘**Mary**?’ [No corresponding ref.]
≠ ‘Which **Mary** do you mean?’ [Multiple possible ref.]

Q2. Since the derivation accompanies movement, it needs additional explanation for the island insensitivity (i.e., island repair).

- (10) A: You mad about [_{NP} the **Jason** thing]? B: *Who?*
⇒ ***Who** [_{CP} ⟨am I mad about [_{NP} the *t_i* thing]⟩]? [Underlying source]

Q3. What is the structure and meaning of correlate-echoing CR-sluicing?

4. An alternative approach

4.1. Pragmatics and semantics: The Table model

This study proposes a discourse-based analysis using **the Table model** (cf., Farkas and Bruce 2010; Jeong 2018: 329).

- (11) Key notions
a. **CG (Common Ground)**: set of propositions mutually and publicly agreed among interlocutors; shared background knowledge
b. **Table**: stack of issues (propositions; QUD) raised
c. **PS (Projected Set, *ps*)**: possible future common grounds

Additionally, this analysis takes the **Personal Background Knowledge** into account, based on the definition of CG:

- (12) **PB_{Sp} (Personal Background Knowledge)**: set of propositions that individual *Sp*(eaker)s believe/know and may or may not be shared

How it works: No corresponding referents CR-sluicing

- (13) A: I met **John** yesterday. $p = meet(A, j); K_1: s_1$
B: *Who?* (‘Who do you mean by *John*?’) $K_2: s_2$
A: He is a linguist. $q = linguist(j); K_3: s_3$
(K: context state; s: situation)

• PB condition for speaker’s ignorance CR-sluicing:

$$\{p \cap q\} \in PB_A; q \notin PB_B$$

• Initial CG condition for speaker’s ignorance CR-sluicing (K₁):

$$CG_1: q \notin s_1; ps_1 = s_1$$

The meaning of *Who?* is captured as a set of propositions where the antecedent *p* intersecting with all the correlate’s possible properties:

- (14) $\llbracket Who? \rrbracket = \{p \cap linguist(j), p \cap novelist(j), p \cap teacher(j), \dots\}$ (K₂)
 $= \lambda P.meet(A, j) \ \& \ P(j)$

Finally, the corresponding answer expands the CG and PS.

- (15) **CG repaired by an answer to *Who?* on K₃:**

$$CG_3: s_3 \oplus \{p \cap q\}; ps_3 = \{s_3 \cup \{p \cap q\}\}$$

4.2. Syntax: A non-derivational approach

This analysis assumes that there is **no hidden linguistic units** in the sluiced site. Instead, a simple XP directly projects to a sentential-level expression.

The projection is based on the following key concepts (i.a., Ginzburg and Sag 2000; Goldberg 2006):

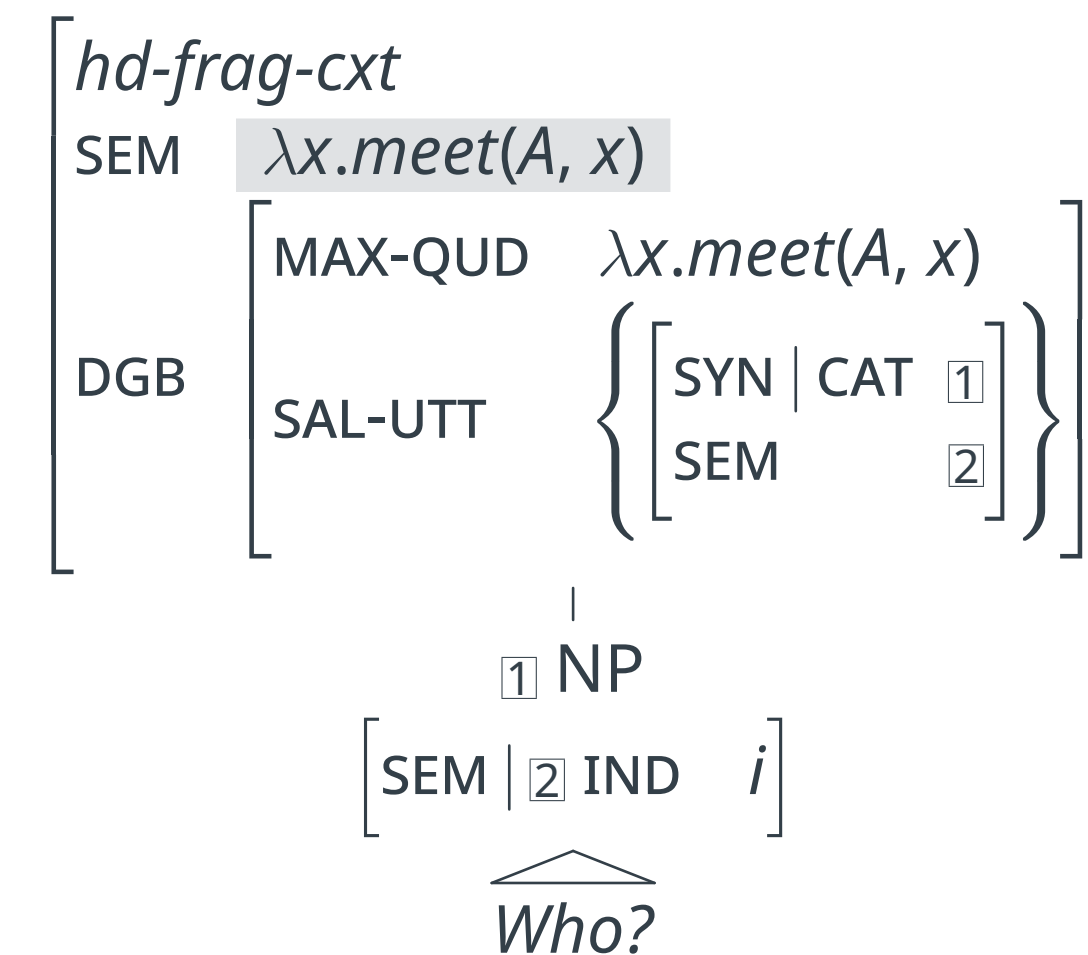
- (16) Key notions
a. **MAX-QUD (MAXimal question-under-discussion)**: the most salient discussable question in the given context (i.e., current discourse topic)
b. **SAL-UTT (SALient-UTTERance)**: the (sub)utterance which receives the widest scope within MAX-QUD (i.e., focused material)
c. **DGB (Dialogue Game Board)**: a set of attributes recording contextual parameters in the ongoing discourse (similar to the Table)

The sentential meaning (MAX-QUD) of the remnant (SAL-UTT) is retrieved by the given context fed by the Table (cf., (13)-(15)):

- (17) **Sluicing: Structure and meaning** (c.f., Ginzburg and Sag 2000)

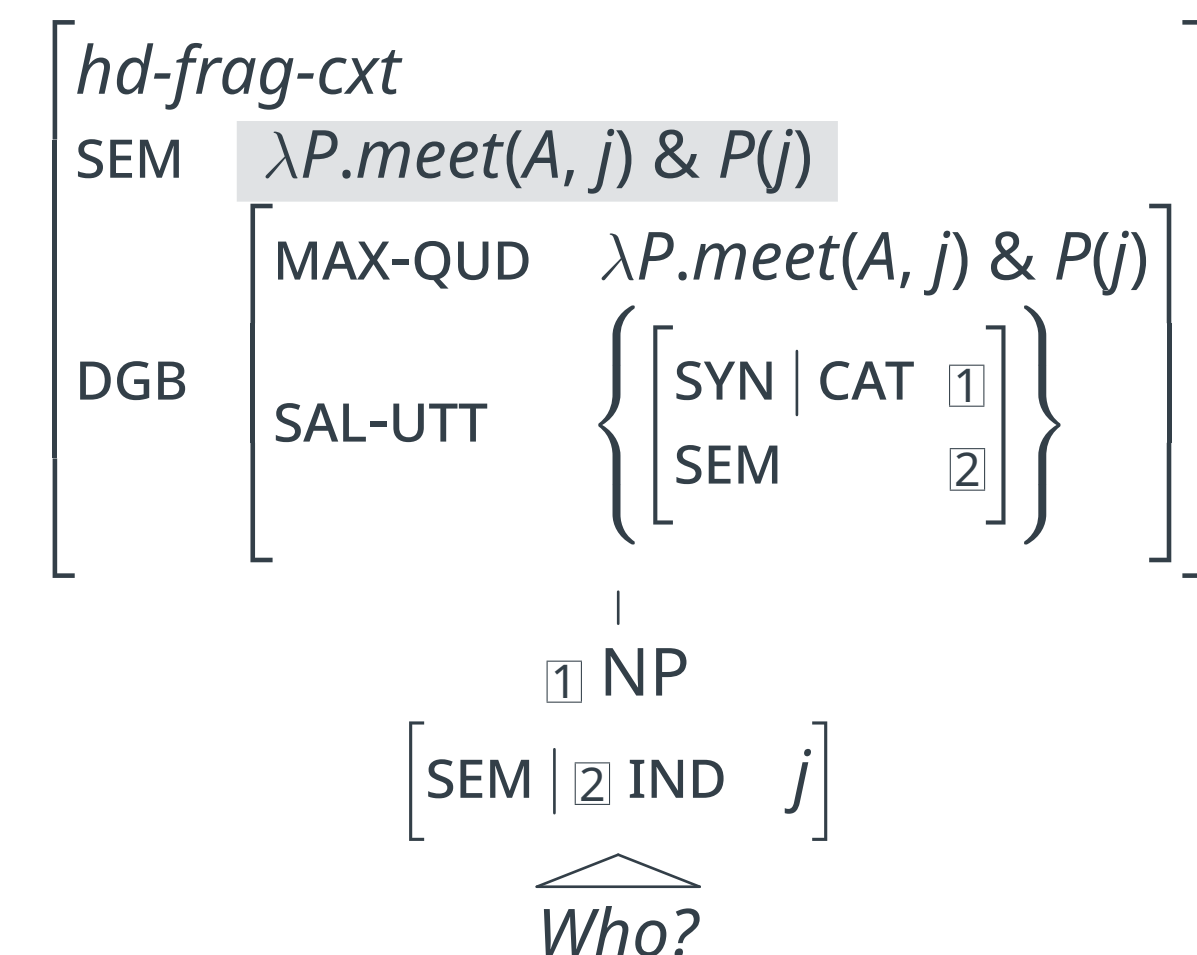
[Canonical sluicing]

- A: I met **someone**.
B: [*Who?*]_F (= $\lambda x.meet(A, x)$)
S



[CR-sluicing – No corr. ref.]

- A: I met **John**.
B: [*Who?*]_F (= $\lambda P.meet(A, j) \ \& \ P(j)$)
S

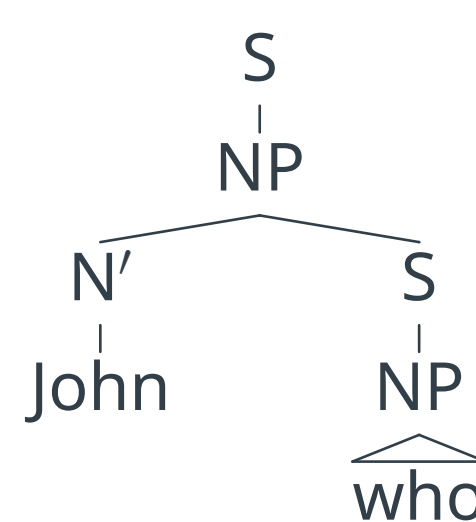


4.3. Correlate-echoing CR-sluicing

CR-sluicing queries **not-at-issue** information related to its antecedent, which is a pattern that can also be observed in **appositives** (Keizer 2005: 455):

- (18) a. A: John, *a friend of mine*, teaches Linguistics. b. A: I met **John** yesterday.
B: *John who?*
B: No, he doesn’t./#No, he isn’t. A: The linguist.

Given this, we can assume that the whole string is **an NP headed by the copied correlate**. The remnant is an appositive clause modifying the N head.



5. Theoretical implication

By using this alternative approach, we can account for the idiosyncratic meaning of CR-sluicing interacting with discourse in a streamlined manner.

Selected References

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