

A Conjunction Conspiracy at the WGmc Left Periphery

This paper proposes an account of ellipsis in West Germanic (WGmc) coordinate structures, focussing primarily on those that are argued to occur at the left edge of the second and all subsequent clausal conjuncts of coordinate structures. The analysis can be extended to ellipsis in the verb-second (V2) or clause-final position. The most common types of left-edge ellipsis, exemplified in (1), are discussed by Höhle (1983) investigating German; they are also found in Dutch (cf. van Oirsouw 1987; Zwart 1991):

- (1) a. Hans_i zeigt seinem Onkel die Briefmarken und e_i verkauft sie seiner Tante
H shows his.DAT uncle the.ACC stamps and sells them his.DAT aunt
b. Die Briefmarken_i zeigt Hans seinem Onkel und e_i verkauft er seiner Tante

Höhle identifies both subject and object gaps but does not propose a theory-based account. In all other studies object gaps as in (1b) are either overlooked or considered ungrammatical. Heycock & Kroch (1994) (H&K) account for the subject-gap construction not as containing actual missing elements but as the conjunction of C'-projections that share a subject at the far left:

- (2) [_{CP} [_{C'} Hans zeigt seinem Onkel die Briefmarken] und [_{C'} verkauft sie seiner Tante]]

Büring & Hartmann (1998) modify this analysis with an adjunction account requiring an empty operator in the second CP projection:

- (3) [_{CP} Hans zeigt seinem Onkel die Briefmarken und [_{CP} OP verkauft sie seiner Tante]]

Schwarz (1998) modifies the H&K approach to account for certain types of left-edge deletions and argues for strict preservation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC, cf. Ross 1967). Johnson (2002) identifies two problems with the H&K analysis: 1) there is a CSC violation; 2) the scope of the subject *Hans* does not extend into the second conjunct, if defined syntactically, as indicated by the phrase markers. In his analysis, Johnson proposes a verb projection raising (VPR) account, argued necessary for meeting the CSC, that involves the following steps:

- (4) a. verb-raising to F in both conjuncts (but not in ATB-fashion)
b. VP-raising to Spec,FP out of first conjunct
c. verb-raising to C from the raised VP
d. DP-fronting to Spec,CP from the raised VP

As noted, Johnson's phrase structure requires the projection FP for, among other things, preventing a violation of the CSC, which could be stated as a Parallelism Requirement (cf. Chomsky 1995:203; Hornstein and Nunes 2002) applying to movements out of coordinate structures. In the generative literature this requirement has been expressed as an Across-the-Board (ATB) requirement on movement: the same element must be moved from all conjuncts. Interestingly, the movements Johnson proposes do not meet the ATB requirement, even though he aims to preserve the CSC. Johnson's VPR approach to German is also empirically weak.

In the present paper I propose an account of left-edge coordinate gaps that avoids the inherent conflict in Johnson's account between the preservation of the CSC and the derivation of coordinate structures that have undergone one or the other type of asymmetric (applying to only one of two or more conjuncts) raising or fronting operation. This account applies principles of Phase Theory, most importantly phasal Merge, Match and Copy, for the derivation of the coordinate structures. Phase Theory requires that each conjunct derive independently; conjunction is a Merge operation that is triggered when [&] is selected; Copy is also triggered by which the formal features of a preceding conjunct are transferred to matching elements in the second conjunct. Derivation by phase sets up a c-command relation between [&] and the element in the Spec position right-adjacent to it. This c-command relation licenses the "deletion" (PF non-realization) of the element in the Spec position, thus creating left-edge ellipsis:

- (5) [_{CP/TopP/TP} ... [_{CP/TopP/TP} & [_{CP/TopP/TP} DP=>e ...]]]

This form of licensing in a phase-based derivation conspires with the syntax of WGmc in three ways: 1) It always targets a DP that has raised to the left edge of the second conjunct and is thus redundant because it has a copy (trace) in its original position; 2) The left edge of CP, TopP or CP contains a Spec-position that can be the target of not only raising, but also licensing for "deletion" (the DP is not pronounced); 3) Because the finite verb must occur immediately after the DP that raises to this Spec-position to satisfy the

V2 requirement and this finite verb has properties to block this form of licensing, no licensing of an additional DP to the right of this Spec-position is possible, nor can the licensing “skip” the DP in the left-edge Spec-position and target the DP in the next lower Spec position instead. Thus it is predicted that (6a) is grammatical, but (6b) is not:

- (6) a. Die Briefmarken_i zeigt Hans seinem Onkel und e_i verkauft er seiner Tante
 b. *Die Briefmarken_i zeigt Hans seinem Onkel und er verkauft e_i seiner Tante

This account also predicts that in languages like English that meet all the requirements for licensing and have no finite verb separating two DPs at the left periphery, both DPs can be licensed for deletion:

- (7) These stamps_i John_j has shown to his uncle and e_i e_j will soon sell to his aunt

Also predicted is that in those English constructions that have a V2 requirement like German and Dutch, only the left-most DP can be deleted:

- (8) Only these stamps_i has John_j shown to his uncle and e_i would * e_j /he ever sell to his aunt

Central to this proposal is the assumption, based on work by Grohmann (2003), Grewendorf (2002: 91) and *anon* (2005), that Dutch and German (and English V2 constructions) have three possible targets of verb raising at the left periphery (evidence of the three positions given in (10a)):

- (9) [_{CP} C° [_{TopP} Top° [_{TP} T° ...]]]

The target of verb raising depends on the trigger: it can be the EPP for the target Spec,TP, or the feature [+Focus] (to satisfy pragmatic requirements) for Spec,TopP, or WH / IR / IMP (interrogative / irrealis / imperative) for Spec,CP. These features conspire with [&] and Phase Theory, which eliminates the applicability of the CSC or ATB, for licensing the deletion of redundant elements at the left edge, as outlined in (5), thereby creating left-edge ellipsis. This proposal is superior because it accounts for both subject and object gaps, and it eliminates the need for the CSC, which can be shown to be violable and, as a constraint on coordinate structures only, is construction-specific. With the elimination of the CSC, ATB movement is no longer necessary, a benefit to minimalist syntax theory because it requires look-ahead and is otherwise problematic. This proposal also accounts for other types of coordinate ellipsis, e.g. multiple left-edge gaps (cf. 10a), and it captures clause-final and clause-internal (V2) gaps under prosodic licensing when lexical licensing by [&] is blocked, as in (10b) (↗/→ = focus accent) :

- (10)a. [_{CP} Mit wem_i hat_j [_{TopP} sich_k [_{TP} Hans verlobt und [_{CP} e_i e_j [_{TopP} e_k [_{TP} Paul verkracht?]]]]]]]
 with whom has REFL H engaged and P fallen-out
 b. Hans hat_i sich gestern ↗ e_j und Paul → e_i heute verlobt_j

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