



snippets

Issue 16

December 2007

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ISSN 1590-1807

Published in *Led on Line* - Electronic Archive by
LED - Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto - Milano - Italy
<http://www.ledonline.it>

December 2007

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

1. Purpose.

The aim of *Snippets* is to publish specific remarks that motivate research or that make theoretical points germane to current work. The ideal contribution is the ideal footnote: a side remark that taken on its own is not worth lengthy development but that needs to be said. One encounters many short comments of this kind in the literature of the seventies. We feel that there no longer is a forum for them. We want *Snippets* to help fill that gap.

2. Content.

We will publish notes that contribute to the study of syntax and semantics in generative grammar. The notes are to be brief, self-contained and explicit. They may do any of the following things:

- point out an empirical phenomenon that goes against accepted generalizations or that shows that some aspect of a theory is problematic;
- point out unnoticed minimal pairs that fall outside the scope of any existing theory;
- point out an empirical phenomenon that confirms the predictions of a theory in an area where the theory has not been tested;
- explicitly describe technical inconsistencies in a theory or in a set of frequently adopted assumptions;
- explicitly describe unnoticed assumptions that underlie a theory or assumptions that a theory needs to be supplemented with in order to make desired predictions;
- call attention to little-known or forgotten literature in which issues of immediate relevance are discussed.

We also encourage submissions that connect psycholinguistic data to theoretical issues. A proposal for a pilot experiment in language acquisition or language processing could make for an excellent snippet.

The earliest Linguistic Inquiry squibs exemplify the kind of note we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in LI 1:1 ("A Problem of Adverb Preposing") noted that whether or not we can construe a sentence-initial temporal adverb with an embedded verb depends on the tense of the matrix verb. A squib by Perlmutter and Ross in LI 1:3 ("Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents"), challenging the prevailing analyses of coordination and extraposition, noted that conjoined clauses neither of which contain a plural noun phrase can appear next to an "extraposed" relative that can only describe groups. Other squibs drew attention to particular theoretical assumptions. For instance, a squib by Bresnan in LI 1:2 ("A Grammatical Fiction") outlined an alternative account of the derivation of sentences containing believe and force, and asked whether there were principled reasons for dismissing any of the underlying assumptions (among them that semantic interpretation is sensitive to details of a syntactic derivation). A squib by Zwicky in LI 1:2 ("Class Complements in Phonology") asked to what extent phonological rules refer to complements of classes. None of these squibs was more than a couple of paragraphs; all of them limited themselves to a precise question or observation.

3. Submission details.

Snippets is an electronic journal. We will solicit submissions twice a year: the submission deadlines are April 1 and October 1. The submissions that we accept will be posted on the journal website approximately 3 months after each deadline, and all accepted submissions will remain permanently on the website.

Snippets is intended as a service to the linguistics community. Consequently, authors are advised that, when they submit to *Snippets*, we understand them as allowing their submission to be reproduced if published. At the same time, the rights for the notes themselves will remain with the authors. As a result, citation of *Snippets* material will have to indicate the author's name and the specific source of the material.

We will accept electronic submissions at the address snippets@unimi.it. Electronic submissions may take the form of (a) the text of an e-mail message, or (b) an attached file. The attached file should be a simple text file, a Word file (Mac or Windows), or a Rich Text Format (RTF) file. All submissions must state the name and affiliation of the author(s), and a (postal or electronic) return address.

Submissions are to be a maximum of 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables and references. Given that we envision the submissions themselves as footnotes, the submissions may not contain footnotes of their own. The ideal submission is one paragraph; a submission of five lines is perfectly acceptable. We will not consider abstracts.

4. Editorial policy.

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of the submission deadline, we will only provide a yes/no response to the submitter. We will not request revisions (barring exceptional cases). We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

1.

Elissa Flagg – York University *Questioning innovative quotatives*

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Since Butters (1980, 1982) noted the quotative use of *go* and *be like* in American English, subsequent literature on these expressions in a variety of world Englishes has focused almost exclusively on their discourse functions, pragmatic features, and the sociolinguistic factors that affect a speaker's choice of quotatives in narratives with speech reports (see the relevant bibliography 3-13). However, Butters' original observations also noted that *wh*-interrogatives with quotative *go* are ungrammatical, a syntactic restriction (which also holds for *be like*) that has not garnered similar attention.

- (1) a. Howard said "Good morning, everybody."
b. What did Howard say?
- (2) a. Howard went "Good morning, everybody."
b. *What did Howard go?
- (3) a. Howard was like "Good morning, everybody."
b. *What was Howard like? (with (1b) interpretation)

Butters (1980) speculated that interrogatives with these innovative quotatives "may come in due time," but almost 30 years later, their grammaticality status has not changed. Schourup (1982) proposed a functional explanation for the absence of *wh*-interrogatives with *go*, according to which "*go* is not needed in those interrogatives, and other sentences, where it does not introduce directly quoted material." Schourup reasoned that the meaning of *go* stands in opposition to that of *say* – since *say* is often potentially ambiguous between direct and indirect speech report readings when the complementizer *that* is absent (5-6), *go* functions for speakers/hearers as an unambiguous introducer of direct speech (6) that thus cannot introduce indirect speech (7). While Schourup did not address *be like*, the facts mirror those for *go*.

- (4) John said "I was responsible for Lauren's failure."
- (5) John said (that) I was responsible for Lauren's failure.
- (6) John went/was like "I was responsible for Lauren's failure."
- (7) *John went/was like that I was responsible for Lauren's failure.

Schourup suggested that the ungrammaticality of (2b) is related to (7); in *wh*-interrogatives, *go* is associated not with an actual direct speech complement, but a *wh*-word. However, this approach makes incorrect predictions for the behavior of *go/be like* in quotative contexts where direct speech (or inner monologue/reaction) *is* present (cf Suñer 2000).

- (8) a. Howard said, "Hey now."
 b. "Hey now," Howard said/said Howard.
- (9) a. Howard went/was like, "Hey now"
 b. "Hey now," Howard *was like/?went.
- (10) a. Howard went/was like, "Hey now."
 b. "Hey now," *was like/?went Howard.

Both (9b) and (10b) are highly degraded, yet this cannot be due to the absence of actual dialogue. By Schourup's reasoning, (9-10b) should parallel (8b), in which the quoted material is fronted (with or without quotative inversion).

Once we consider (9-10) alongside (2-3) and (7), it is clear that *go* and *be like* are not simply innovative near-equivalents of the canonical quotative *say*. Schourup himself noted that simple substitutions of *go* for *say* fail.

- (11) I felt that I had nothing to say/*go/(*be like).
 (12) Please say/*go/(*be like) your name.

Given the differences we have seen in their syntactic behavior, it is insufficient simply to assume that *go* and *be like* share the quotative status of *say*.

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2.

Thomas Graf – University of Vienna *Agreement with hybrid nouns in Icelandic*

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The special gender agreement properties of conjoined phrases have been discussed numerous times (see Corbett 1991, 2006, Wechsler and Zlatić 2003). When the gender specifications of two coordinated DPs conflict, gender agreement of a predicate with both conjuncts requires a special resolution mechanism. In Icelandic, the predicate is specified for neuter in those cases.

- (1) Mamma og pabbi eru glöð
Mum.f and dad.m are happy.n.pl

Certain complications arise with hybrid nouns, i.e. nouns whose grammatical and semantic gender mismatch. In Icelandic, the neuter noun *skáld* 'poet' and the feminine noun *hetja* 'hero' are two such hybrid nouns. If the predicate agrees only with the hybrid noun, the outcome is determined by the noun's grammatical gender. However, when a hybrid noun is coordinated with another DP, it is its semantic gender that matters for agreement. This contrast is illustrated in (2) and (3), taken from Wechsler (2002:11).

- (2) Skáldið er ??frægur / frægt.
Poet.the.n is famous.m.sg / famous.n.sg
'The poet is famous.' (assume the poet is male)
- (3) Skáldið og Jón eru frægir /*fræg.
Poet.the.n and John are famous.m.pl / famous.n.pl
'The poet and John are famous.' (assume the poet is male)

These judgments are shared by my own informants. However, in the tests I conducted they didn't carry over to cases where mismatch is induced by semantic gender.

- (4) a. Hetjan og systirin voru báðar glaðar.
Hero.the.f and sister.the.f were both.f.pl happy.f.pl
b. ??/*Hetjan og systirin voru bæði glöð.
Hero.the.f. and sister.the.f wereboth.n.pl happy.n.pl
'The hero and the sister were both happy.' (assume the hero is male)

Surprisingly though, the construction in (4b) becomes grammatical if one adds a possessive pronoun that is coreferent with the hybrid noun, as indicated in (5). In those cases, semantic gender resolution even is the preferred option.

- (5) a. Hetjan og systir hans voru bæði glöð.
 Hero.the.f and sister.f his were both.n.pl happy.n.pl
- b. Hetjan og systir hennar voru báðar glaðar.
 Hero.the.f and sister.f her were both.f.pl happy.f.pl
- c. *Hetjan og systir hans voru báðar glaðar.
 Hero.the.f and sister.f his were both.f.pl happy.f.pl
- d. *Hetjan og systir hennar voru bæði glöð.
 Hero.the.f and sister.f her were both.n.pl happy.n.pl
- 'The hero and his sister were both happy.' (assume the hero is male)

According to the agreement hierarchy of Corbett 1991, pronouns are most likely to morphologically express semantic gender. Apparently, the possessive pronoun in (5) may agree with grammatical or semantic gender, but whatever agreement pattern is chosen is then obligatory for the rest of the sentence. It remains to be seen how the facts in (4) and (5) can be explained more formally.

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3.

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Are there really two different classes of instrumental denominal verbs in English?

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Kiparsky (1982) proposes two different classes of instrumental denominal verbs in English: the *hammer*-type (1) and the *tape*-type (2). These are distinguished by whether an adjunct PP can introduce a distinct instrument argument, different from that named by the verb, to the clause:

- (1) Lola hammered the metal / hammered the metal with her shoes.
- (2) Lola taped pictures to the wall / *taped pictures to the wall with pushpins.

Kiparsky's analysis of these purported classes is that *tape*-type verbs derive from nouns in the lexicon, with resulting meanings based on the meaning of the underlying nouns. *Hammer*-type verbs are not derived from underlying nouns so their meanings are not tied to specific noun roots. Arad (2003) integrates this idea into a non-lexicalist analysis, wherein *hammer*-type roots become verbs by merging directly with *v* (hence denoting actions which need not involve actual hammers), whereas *tape*-type roots acquire a nominal interpretation by merging with the functional head *n* prior to merging with *v* (hence denoting actions requiring actual tape).

We suggest that no account of this distinction is necessary, as the distinction is spurious. Verbs of the *tape*-type do not necessarily entail use of the conflated root:

- (3) Lola taped the poster to the wall with band-aids / mailing-labels.

(3) suggests that it is the manner of use associated with the conflated root, rather than the specifically “nominal” character of the verb derived from that root, that is at issue. In (2), the characteristic manner of use of pushpins is quite distinct from the characteristic manner of use of tape. Similarly, Kiparsky (1982) presents the following as ungrammatical:

- (4) ?Screw the fixture on the wall with nails. (Kiparsky 1982: 12 [16])

We find this example to be perfectly acceptable, *iff* the action of affixing the fixture onto the wall involves twisting nails into the wall, in the manner associated with driving in screws.

Further, both classes of instrumental denominal verbs uniformly impose a particular constraint on instrumental PPs co-occurring with them. When a cognate nominal is

used in the PP, it is much more felicitous with additional specificational modifiers than without:

- (5) Lola hammered the metal with a ball-peen hammer / ? with a hammer.
- (6) Lola taped pictures to the wall with duct-tape / ? with tape.

The identical redundancy of (5) and (6) would be surprising if *tape*-type verbs are derived from “nominals” but *hammer*-type verbs are not. We resolve the issue by rejecting any syntactic distinction between the two classes. English instrumental denominal verbs always involve roots conflating directly with *v*, indicating *manner* (Harley 2005). The apparent distinction between *hammer*-type and *tape*-type denominal verbs involves the level of semantic/encyclopedic generality associated with the different roots. The semantic neighborhood for *tape*-type roots is sparse: there are few distinctly named items usable in the manner specified by these roots. When such items can be identified (cf. 3), there is no syntactic difference between the *hammer*-type and the *tape*-type. We conclude that the ill-formedness in (2) is pragmatic rather than syntactic.

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4.

Mikko Kupula – University of Stockholm *A visible trace of movement?*

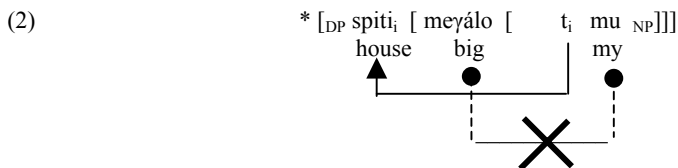
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In Modern Greek, adnominal possessors are realized either as genitive DPs, as in *to fustáni tis Mariás* ‘the dress Mary.GEN’ or as possessive pronouns, as in *to fustáni tis* ‘the dress her.CI’. The possessive pronouns are enclitic and, accordingly, usually post-nominal. However, the possessive pronouns can also surface pre-nominally when the possessum is modified by an adjective. In these cases the possessive pronoun is sandwiched in a pre-nominal position between the adjective and the noun where it takes the preceding adjective as its phonological host.

Now, given that also adjectives can occur either pre- or post-nominally in Greek, the co-occurrence of possessive clitics and adjectives potentially gives rise to the possibilities in (1). Observe the ungrammaticality of (1d). Given that this construction in fact becomes well-formed when the possessive clitic is absent (as in *éna spíti meýálo* ‘a big house’), the ungrammaticality of (1d) seems to be linked to the presence of this clitic.

- | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|---------|--|
| (1) a. | éna meýálo spíti mu | (1') a. | éna [meýálo [spíti mu _{NP}]] |
| | a big house my | | |
| b. | éna meýálo mu spíti | b. | éna [meýálo mu _i [spíti t _i NP]] |
| | a big my house | | |
| c. | éna spíti mu meýálo | c. | éna [[spíti mu _{NP}] _i meýálo t _i] |
| | a house my | | |
| d. | *éna spíti meýálo mu | d. | *éna [spíti _i meýálo [t _i mu _{NP}]] |
| | a house big my | | |

I assume for the purposes of this snippet that possessors in Greek are complements to the possessum (Horrocks and Stavrou 1987) -- or alternatively complements to a functional relator projecting a Small Clause structure between the possessor and the possessum (cf. den Dikken 1998, 2006). As the structures I give in (1') make clear, (1d) is arguably the only case where an extraction site precedes the possessive clitic. I thus propose the following hypothesis: (1d) is ungrammatical because the possessive clitic fails to be properly licensed due to N-movement (the landing site of which is possibly D). Movement of the noun *spíti* ‘house’ leaves behind a trace that blocks the enclitic *mu* ‘my’ from cliticizing to the adjective *meýálo* ‘big’ in the post-movement configuration:



If my proposal is on the right track, ill-formed constructions like (1d)/(2) should be remedied with an XP-level possessor. After all, XPs are phonologically independent and therefore do not require a phonological host. The trace produced by N-movement as in (2) should therefore not be an offending one; in fact, as illustrated in (3), this prediction is borne out:

- (3) a. éna [spíti_i [meγálo [t_i tu proθipuryú_{NP}]]]
 a house big Prime Minister.GEN
 b. *éna [spíti_i [meγálo [t_i tu_{NP}]]]
 a house big his.CL

In sum, the facts presented above are compatible with the following assumptions: (i) DP-internal N-movement occurs in Greek and, in particular, the N>A sequence can be derived by movement, contrary to some recent proposals (Alexiadou 2001, 2003); (ii) traces have phonetic content (cf. Lightfoot 1976 and Jaeggli 1980) for wanna-contraction in English).

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5.

Go Mizumoto – *Kyushu University*

On the relationship between children's working memory capacity and their use of contextual information in sentence comprehension.

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Otsu (1994) argues that Japanese children can correctly comprehend scrambling sentences only when stimulus sentences are presented with information that expresses the previous discourse. Without such information, children cannot obtain the correct interpretation. A sample stimulus in Otsu's (1994) experiment is represented in (1) (contextual information provided is underlined).

- (1) Kooen-ni ahiru-san-ga imasita.
 park in duck Nom be-Polite-Past
 'There was a duck in a park.'
 Sono-ahiru-san-o kame-san-ga osimasita. (scrambling)
 that duck Acc turtle Nom push-Polite-Past
 'A turtle pushed that duck.'

A prediction of Otsu's approach is that children with lower memory capacity, who therefore cannot retain information about context, should experience difficulty with scrambling sentences. In this snippet, I report experimental results that support this prediction.

92 monolingual Japanese children (mean age = 5;6 [years;months], range = 4;4-6;3) participated in two experiments: a listening span test (for measuring their working memory capacity; see Daneman and Carpenter 1980, Ishio and Osaka 1994) and a picture-selection task (for investigating their scrambling comprehension; see Gerken and Shady 1996). (For details of the experiments, see Mizumoto 2006.) Regarding the presence of the contextual information, two conditions (with/without context) were treated as a between-subject variable. Listening span scores were calculated using the scoring procedure described by Daneman and Carpenter 1980. On the basis of this score, children were divided into three groups: low span ($0.0 \leq 0.5$), mid span ($1.0 \leq 1.5$), and high span ($2.0 \leq$).

Results of the picture-selection task in each memory span group are shown in Table 1. A 2-sample test for equality of proportions revealed that the difference of the correct percentage between the 'without context' and 'with context' conditions was not statistically significant in the low span group ($p = .65$), whereas it was significant in the mid and high span groups ($p < .0001$). This result shows that an increase in the percentage of correct answers along with the availability of contextual information is observed in children with relatively high working memory span, but not observed in

low span children. Low capacity of working memory means little information is retained in the working memory. It is plausible to consider that for children with low span, contextual information that is previously provided can no longer be retained in their working memory when they engage in comprehending the second stimulus sentence (scrambling).

Table 1. Results of the picture-selection task

	Stimulus type (4 tokens in each type)			
	Without context		With context	
Low span	21 / 40	(52.50%)	24 / 40	(60.00%)
Mid span	47 / 108	(43.52%)	100 / 108	(92.59%)
High span	16 / 36	(44.44%)	34 / 36	(94.44%)

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6.

Eva Monrós – *Universitat de Barcelona*

A neglected foundation for the distinction between inherent and structural case: ergative as an inherent case.

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In the linguistic literature, ergative has been considered either as a structural or an inherent case. In this squib I provide empirical evidence that ergative is an inherent case.

As is well known, the difference between inherent and structural case has to do with θ -relatedness: an inherent case is always θ -related in the sense that it can only correspond to a given and unique θ -role, whereas a structural case is not θ -related. According to this basic characterization, an instance of structural case can realize both an agent θ -role and a patient θ -role; this is true for nominative, absolutive and accusative.

- (1) Nominative as
 - a. True agent: in transitive and unergative constructions
 - b. Patient: in passive and unaccusative constructions
- (2) Accusative as
 - a. True agent: in causative constructions
 - b. Patient: in transitive constructions
- (3) Absolutive as
 - a. True agent: in intransitive and antipassive constructions
 - b. Patient: in transitive constructions

In contrast, an ergative DP can never correspond to a patient, but only to true agent or agent-like (see below for details) θ -roles.

- (4) Ergative as
 - a. True agent: in transitive constructions
 - b. Patient: never

To be more precise, as exemplified in the data below, ergative can realize agent (5), cause (6) and instrument (7) θ -roles:

- (5) Caxinaua (Pano, Brazil)
Madia inun sunia-n disi wa-mis-bu-ki
Madia and Sunia-erg hammock.nom make-hab-pl-ass
'Mary and Sonia make hammocks'

- (6) Kuikuro (Karib, Brazil)
ukasü heke u-tehuhesu-kjü
 work erg 1-worry-tr
 ‘Work worries me’
- (7) Basque
Giltza-k atea ireki zuen
 key-erg door.nom open aux
 ‘The key opened the door’

The – short – distance among these roles has led some linguists to question the inherent nature of ergative case, because ergative does not correspond strictly to a *unique* θ -role. However, rethinking this matter in terms of thematic features, we obtain an interesting new account. Following Reinhart’s (2002) proposal, we can claim that ergative case realizes only [+cause] arguments. In Reinhart’s framework, the primary θ -feature [cause] characterizes those roles which include the notion of ‘cause change’, mainly agent, cause and instrument — but crucially neither experiencer nor patient. The following implication is then true:

- (8) Ergative \rightarrow [+cause]

Ergative is, to summarize, restricted to a certain kind of θ -roles, contrasting with structural cases. This proposal is clearly falsifiable if any ergative language is found to exhibit ergative case on [-cause] arguments, like patients. As far as I know, such a language does not exist.

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P-stranding generalization and Bahasa Indonesia: a myth?

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Merchant 2001 analyzes examples of sluicing as in (1a) in English as the result of *wh*-movement of the remnant followed by TP deletion, as shown in (1b).

- (1) a. I heard that Jack bought something, but I don't know what.
 b. ... but I don't know [_{CP} what [_{TP} Jack bought *t*_{what}]]

According to this analysis, regular *wh*-movement underlies the derivation of the sluicing phenomenon. Merchant argues that this analysis receives strong crosslinguistic support from the generalization in (2).

- (2) A language L will allow preposition stranding under sluicing iff L allows preposition stranding under regular *wh*-movement. (Merchant 2001: 92)

This generalization correctly accounts for the presence/absence of P-stranding under sluicing and *wh*-movement in a wide variety of P-stranding and non-P-stranding languages. English allows P-stranding under *wh*-movement, as in (3a). Thus, the preposition *with* can be elided by deleting the TP that contains the stranded preposition, as in (3b). By contrast, Greek does not allow P-stranding under *wh*-movement, as in (4a). Thus, the preposition cannot be elided by TP deletion, as in (4b). (Examples are from Merchant 2001: 92, 94.)

- (3) a. Who was he talking with?
 b. Peter was talking with someone, but I don't know (with) who.
 (4) a. * Pjon milise me?
 who she.spoke with
 'Who did she speak with?'
 b. * I Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhe ksero *(me) pjon
 the Anna spoke with someone but not I.know (with) who
 'Anna spoke with someone, but I don't know with who.'

The generalization in (2), however, is called into question by Bahasa Indonesia because it is a non-P-stranding language under regular *wh*-movement like Greek that nonetheless permits P-stranding under sluicing like English. To illustrate, consider examples in (5a-e).

- (5) a. * Apa yang kamu bicara tentang?
 what that you talk about
 'What did you talk about?'

- b. Tentang apa kamu bicara?
about what you talk
'What did you talk about?'
- c. Saya ingat dia bicara (tentang) sesuatu, tapi saya tidak tahu
I remember he talk about something but I Neg know
(tentang) apa.
about what
'I remember he talked about something, but I don't know (about) what.'
- d. Kamu bicara (tentang) apa?
you talk about what
'What did you talk about?'
- e. * Apa kamu bicara?
what you talk
'What did you talk about?'

The contrast between (5a) and (5b) shows that the preposition *tentang* 'about' cannot be stranded under regular *wh*-movement in Bahasa Indonesia. The grammaticality of the sluicing example in (5c) without the preposition shows that the same preposition can apparently be stranded and elided under sluicing. Note that while Bahasa Indonesia characteristically allows P-drop, as shown in the first clause in (5c) and in situ *wh*-questions as in (5d), the P-drop option is unavailable under regular overt *wh*-movement ((5e)). Therefore, we can exclude the possibility that the sluicing example in (5c) instantiates a pied-piped PP sluice whose preposition is simply dropped after *wh*-movement.

The contrast between (5a) and (5c) poses a serious problem for the P-Stranding Generalization, hence significantly undermines Merchant's theory. Note that Merchant's sample of 24 languages to motivate the P-Stranding Generalization does not include a single language from the Austronesian family, whose sheer number far exceeds that of families like Indo-European, to which most of his sample languages belong. Potsdam 2003 observes that Malagasy provides another counterexample -- it is a non-P-stranding language that nonetheless allows the preposition to be deleted/stranded under sluicing. Some other Austronesian languages such as Javanese show the same pattern. A broader examination of the robustness of the P-Stranding Generalization, as well as a theoretical explanation of why (some) languages of the Austronesian family are special in this regard, is an important task to undertake.

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Editors' note

After this snippet was accepted for publication, a dissertation appeared on precisely this topic: Catherine Rose Fortin, *Indonesian Sluicing and Verb Phrase Ellipsis*, PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2007. See the announcement at <http://linguistlist.org/issues/18/18-3446.html>.

8.

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A note on stress in intransitives in English.

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Gussenhoven (1983, 2007) notes that while intransitive predications often (but not always, cf. *ibid.* and Selkirk 1995, i.a.) carry the last accent (or ‘nuclear stress’) on their subject (1a), this does not seem to hold if an adverb separates the subject from the predicate (1b), unless the adverb itself is ‘stressless’ (1c):

- (1) a. Our dóg’s disappeared.
b. Our dog’s mysteriously disappeared.
c. Our dóg’s just disappeared.

Gussenhoven interprets this observation as evidence that [+focus] adverbs (such as ‘mysteriously’) block the formation of accent domains, while [-focus] adverbs such as ‘just’ do not. The precise definition of the class of [+/-focus] adverbs was left open. A similar explanation that draws a distinction between two different adverb types (phasal/non-phasal) was offered recently in Kahnemuyipour 2004 and Kratzer and Selkirk 2007. Other authors have interpreted the observation as evidence for the role of branchingness in nuclear stress assignment (e.g., Zubizarreta 1998). However, a rendition of (1b) with stress on the subject is evidently possible, including in out of the blue contexts:

- (2) Our dóg’s mysteriously disappeared.

The choice between (1b) and (2) is subtle. All authors agree that *one* of the two requires accommodation of some information as given or discourse related, and have assumed that it is (1b) that has the less marked prosody. A strong argument that, contrary to received wisdom, it is (1b) that requires accommodation, and that (2) is the less information-structurally loaded rendition can be based on verbs of coming into existence. Consider:

- (3) a. Why are you late? A tráffic jam emerged. #A traffic jam emérged.
b. What happened after you ate it? A rásh formed. #A rash fórméd.

It is hard to construct the traffic jam in (3a) or the rash in (3b) as discourse related, i.e. as either being given in the discourse or as picking out an individual from a discourse given set, two typical conditions that allow shift of nuclear stress to the predicate. The obvious reason is that they didn’t exist before the described event (cf. Eckardt 2003). Now, the preference for subject-stress persists when adverbs are

inserted, showing that the subject is marked as discourse related when stress is shifted to the predicate even in those cases:

- (4) a. Why are you late?
A tráffic jam suddenly emerged. #A traffic jam suddenly emérged.
b. What happened after you ate it?
A rásh mysteriously formed. #A rash mysteriously fórméd.

The apparent preference for (2) over (1b) perceived by earlier authors may be due to the fact that it is easy construct a context in which ‘our dog’ is discourse-related, and that adding certain modifiers to the predicate may make this accommodation more likely. Changing the possessive determiner to an indefinite one (as in ‘a dog’) already tips the balance more toward subject stress.

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9.

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Zero licensors

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Negative Polarity Items (NPI's) are elements that can only occur in contexts that are negative or in some other way "affective". According to the standard theory of NPI licensing, these contexts are Downward Entailing (DE) (cf. Fauconnier 1975, Ladusaw 1980). In (1) *no student* is downward entailing, as it allows reasoning from sets to subsets, and *no students* is clearly able to license *any car*.

- (1) a. No student bought a car → No student bought a red car
b. No student bought any car

The notion of DE has been criticized as the proper notion for NPI-licensing as it may be too restrictive. Giannakidou (1998), amongst others, has proposed to replace DE-ness by the notion of non-veridicality, which allows for more contexts (such as imperatives). On the other hand Linebarger (1987) observed that NPI licensing requires that no non-DE operator may intervene between the licensor and the licensee. But adopting these amendments to the standard theory of NPI licensing still entails that if an NPI, such as English *any*, is immediately outscoped by a DE operator, it is properly licensed.

This conclusion is at odds with the following observation, new to the best of my knowledge. Expressions with the cardinality of zero should be able to license NPI's, as they are typically DE (see (2) and (3)):

- (2) Zero students bought a car → Zero students bought a red car
(3) Less than one student bought a car → Less than one student bought a red car

However, these DP's are unable to license NPI's as is demonstrated in (4) and (5) below.

- (4) *Zero students bought any car
(5) *Less than one student bought any car

These effects not only hold for English, but also for other languages such as Dutch:

- (6) *Nul studenten kochten enige auto Dutch
Zero students bought any car
-

- (7) *Minder dan één student kocht enige auto Dutch
Less than one student bought any car

Apparently DE-ness is not a sufficient condition for NPI licensing. This forms a challenge for current theories of NPI licensing and suggests that the negative strength of an expression alone is not responsible for the licensing of NPI's.

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