

snippets

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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 publish issues roughly twice a year, and all issues will remain 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 snippetsjournal@gmail.com. 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, nor may they contain acknowledgments – though we will allow informants and funding sources to be credited in a line following the references. 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. We will provide a response within 3 months of the moment when we acknowledge receipt of a submission. At the same time, we do not guarantee more than a simple yes/no response to the submitter. We will not require revisions (barring exceptional cases). We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

1.

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Pair-list readings of conjoined singular which-phrases

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Sentences like (1) with multiple singular *which*-phrases often give rise to a *pair-list* (PL) and *single-pair* (SP) reading.

(1) Which boy likes which girl?

A complete answer to the PL reading of (1) determines for each boy which girl he likes. A complete answer to the SP reading is about a single boy-girl pair.

We observe that conjoined singular *which*-phrases allow in principle for the PL reading, but that the availability of this reading is dependent on the nature of the predicate: (2a) has a PL reading, while (2b) doesn't, although there appears to be interspeaker variation regarding the availability of the PL reading for (2a).

- (2) a. Which syntactician and which semanticist wrote a paper together?
b. Which syntactician and which semanticist wrote a paper alone?

The following generalization seems to hold: conjoined singular *which*-phrases have PL readings only if the predicate is collective: collective predicates like *live together*, *like each other*, *are married*, etc. give rise to PL readings, while distributive predicates like *are European*, *like math*, etc. do not. We further note that not all collective predicates give rise to the PL reading; the predicate *to be tennis partners* does not as readily allow a PL reading when compared with (2a). It is not clear at this moment what differentiates the two classes of collective predicates as the distinction does not seem to align with Winter's (2001, 2002) distinction between 'set' and 'atom' predicates.

Previous work on PL readings has looked at structures where the two *which*-phrases occupy distinct thematic roles, unlike in our examples. We will argue that none of the standard approaches to PL are capable of deriving the PL reading of (2a).

There are two main approaches. One approach advanced by Dayal (1996) takes the PL reading of (1) to denote a question about functions, i.e., "which function $f: \text{BOY} \rightarrow \text{GIRL}$ is such that for every x in the domain of f , x likes $f(x)$?". The other approach (cf. Hagstrom 1998, Nicolae 2013, Kotek 2014) takes the PL reading of (1) to denote a set of questions {which girl does x like? | x is a boy}. A hallmark of these approaches is the asymmetry between the two *which*-phrases: the higher *which*-phrase needs to be exhaustively answered in a complete answer. For (2a), however, such an interpretive asymmetry does not seem to be present.

Another approach might be to analyze (2a) as (3), namely as a question containing a plural *which*-phrase, albeit it is difficult to see how this could be derived compositionally.

(3) Which syntactician-semanticist pairs wrote a paper together?

The problem with such an account is that (3) has a reading that (2) doesn't, namely that the pair Norvin&Martin wrote a paper together with the pair Susi&Jon. In other words, (3) is semantically less stringent on the number requirement, as the answer can include four or more people co-authoring a paper. Thus, the PL reading of (2a) cannot be simply reduced to plurality either.

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2.

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Presuppositions of superlatives with neg-raisers
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Superlatives and presupposition.

Superlatives come with presuppositions. The sentence in (1), for instance, presupposes that John is a linguist Peter knows.

(1) John is the tallest linguist Peter knows.

Standard theories analyse the superlative morphology *-est* in (1) as expressing a ternary relation between *John*, *tall* and a set of alternatives: *the set of linguists Peter knows*. The sentence is true if John is taller than everyone in the set of alternatives (minus John himself). It moreover presupposes that John is among these particular linguists. This is based on the following schematic interpretation (cf. Heim 1999):

(2) *-est* (x)(P)(X) is true if and only if x is P-er than any other y in X

(3) *-est*(x)(P)(X) presupposes that x has property X

Modals in the set of alternatives.

Now consider:

(4) The fastest you are allowed to drive is 100km/h.

(5) The fastest you should drive is 100km/h.

There are two puzzling things about these examples: (i) they mean the same, despite the fact that the modals they include have different modal force and (ii) they have the same presupposition: both (4) and (5) indicate that 100km/h is a *permitted* speed. Crucially, (5) does not suggest that 100km/h is a speed you *should* drive at.

It is not unlikely that the explanation for the fact that (4) and (5) are synonymous should be sought in the fact that *should* is a neg-raising verb. Note first that (2) is equivalent to (6).

(6) *-est* (x)(P)(X) is true if and only if any y that is P-er than x is such that it is not the case that y is in X

If we now assume that the relative clause provides the set of alternatives, as in Howard 2013, then this yields the following sketch for an analysis of (4) and (5), where the scope of negation in (8) is lower than what is compositionally provided, in line with the neg-raising property of *should*.

(7) 100km/h is such that any faster speed is a speed you are not allowed to drive

(8) 100km/h is such that any faster speed is a speed you should not drive at

This sketch of course lacks an explanation of how the implicit negation in *-est* can come to be involved in neg-raising, but an account along these lines does predict that other neg-raising verbs yield similar readings, which seem accurate. (Take for example *the fastest John is supposed to drive*.)

The problem, however, is that a solution along the lines of (7) and (8) cannot possibly provide any solution to the second puzzle the data presented, namely that (4) and (5) have the same presupposition. The problem is that we have assumed that a structure *-est(x)(P)(X)* presupposes that *x* has the property described by *X*. But in (4), *X* is how fast you are *allowed* to drive, whilst in (5) *X* is how fast you *should* drive. We cannot appeal to neg-raising to solve this puzzle, since, crucially, negation is not a part of the presupposition.

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3.

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Gestural presuppositions

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For Ebert and Ebert 2014, co-speech gestures contribute supplementary meanings, analyzed as ‘appositive impositions’ (AnderBois et al. 2015). Thus (1a) (with the gesture co-occurring with the bracketed part in bold) is analyzed as in (1b-c), with p corresponding to at-issue and p^* to non-at-issue proposals. We suggest that some gestural enrichments might be better analyzed as presuppositions – which makes them comparable to iconic enrichments in sign language, as in Schlenker et al. 2013.

(1) a. I brought  **[a bottle of water]** to the talk.

b. At-issue: the speaker brought a bottle of water to the talk

Non-at-issue: the bottle is big

c. $\exists z \wedge z = \lceil \text{g} \rceil \wedge \exists x \wedge \text{bottle}_p(x) \wedge \text{SIM}_{p^*}(x, z) \wedge \text{bottle}_{p^*}(z) \wedge \text{bring}_p(\text{speaker}, x)$

Appositives are highly restricted in downward-monotonic environments, but some gestural enrichments aren’t, as suggested by (2-4a), which contrast with (2-4b). Furthermore, for some speakers these gestural enrichments project like presuppositions: they ‘project out’ of conditionals/modals, and yield universal inferences under *no NP* (Chemla 2009). We suggest that for these speakers they might be presuppositions that can be justified on the basis of the clause or predicate they attach to; underlining gestural presuppositions, (2a)/(3a) have the LFs *if* $p \wedge \underline{p'}$, *q* / *unlikely* $p \wedge \underline{p'}$, and both yield the presupposition $p \Rightarrow p'$; while (4a) has the LF $[No P](Q \wedge \underline{Q'})$ and yields $[Every P](Q \Rightarrow Q')$. For other speakers, the gestural contributions seem to be assertive and do not ‘project out’ – which is also inconsistent with a standard supplementary behavior.

(2) a. If the session chairman brings  **[a bottle of beer]**, I’ll feel free to bring one too.

=> if the session chairman brings a bottle of beer, it will be a small one.

b. ? If the session chairman brings a bottle of beer, which is  **[this]** large, I’ll feel free to bring one too.

(3) a. It’s unlikely that the next speaker will bring  **[a bottle of beer]** to his talk.

=>? if the session chairman brings a bottle of beer, it will be a large one

b. #It’s unlikely that the next speaker will bring a bottle of beer, which is

[this]  large.

- (4) a. No philosopher brought  [a bottle of beer] to the workshop.
=>? when a philosopher brings a bottle of beer, it is usually a large one

b. #No philosopher brought a bottle of beer, which is  [this] large.

(To clarify some details of the above description: P denotes $\lambda x. x$ is a philosopher, Q denotes $\lambda x. x$ brought a bottle of beer, and Q' denotes $\lambda x. \underline{[1y: y \text{ is a bottle of beer and } x \text{ brought } y]}$ is large. To avoid technical complications, we can take ι to be a non-presuppositional maximality operator. Alternatively, we can take the underlined expression to correspond to an E-type pronoun whose presupposition is satisfied by the first conjunct. This is thus a presupposition within a presupposition, since Q' is itself presuppositional; a similar case can be seen in *Did [every student]_x bring a bottle of champagne and pop its cork?*, where *its cork* goes proxy for *the cork of the bottle of champagne that x brought.*)

Potts 2005 argues that supplements cannot contain bound elements. But we believe that gestural enrichments can – just like presupposition triggers: in (5), the ‘high glasses’ gesture interacts with a quantifier binding a pronominal variable (it is somewhat similar to sign language agreement verbs or pronouns pointing upwards, which trigger presuppositions that interact with quantifiers, as in Schlenker et al. 2013).

- (5) *Context:* The speaker uses body-oriented psychotherapy to help people who are self-conscious about their height deal with their emotions. He usually encourages participants to remove non-essential accessories.

I had five guys standing in front of me, and not a single one allowed me to remove



[his glasses].

A supplementary approach could deal with (2)-(4) by taking the gestures to behave like the appositives in b., but with *which would be* replacing *which is*; the question is why this option should be available. Alternatively, it could analyze the gesture in (5) as a supplement modifying the verb (with unsaturated argument slots), but the interaction with quantification would need to be worked out.

Finally, the analogy with sign language iconic enrichments is further highlighted by the behavior of gestural enrichments under *only* and ellipsis: in both cases, the gesture can be ignored in the focus dimension, just as iconic enrichments in Schlenker 2014.

- (6) I had two guys standing in front of me, one of them very short and the other one very tall.



a. The tall one allowed me to remove  [his glasses], but the short one didn't.

- b. The tall one allowed me to remove  [his glasses], but the short one didn't
allow me to remove #  [his glasses]/ ok  [his glasses]
- c. Only the tall one allowed me to remove  [his glasses].

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NP conjunction in English is ambiguous between a *joint* and *split* reading (Link 1983, Krifka 1990, Winter 2001, Heycock & Zamparelli 2005, Champollion to appear), e.g. *my colleague and friend* may denote one person who is both my colleague and my friend (the ‘joint reading’), (1a), or a pair consisting of my colleague and my friend (the ‘split reading’), (1b).

- (1) a. My colleague and friend married John.
 b. My colleague and friend are in love.

Heycock & Zamparelli (2005) observe that the split reading is absent in many languages with conjunction of singular NPs like (1b), while a joint reading like (1a) is possible in every language they looked at. They also remark that conjoined plural NPs often have split readings cross-linguistically.

I observe that the Japanese nominal conjunctive connective *-to* only has the split reading, and disallows the joint reading (which is expressible with VP-level conjunction):

- (2) a. # boku-no dooryoo-to yuujin-ga John-to kekkonshita.
 1sg-gen colleague-and friend-nom John-with married
 ‘#My colleague and friend married John.’
 b. boku-no dooryoo-to yuujin-ga aishi-at-tei-ru.
 1sg-gen colleague-and friend-nom love-recip-prog-pres
 ‘My colleague and friend love each other.’

Since DP-conjunction is arguably possible with *-to* (e.g. *John-to Mary* ‘John and Mary’), it is important to show that (2a) can have an NP-conjunction reading. That *-to* allows NP-conjunction is shown by (3).

- (3) boku-no roku-nin-no dooryoo-to yuujin-ga aishi-at-tei-ru.
 1sg-gen 6-cl-gen colleague-and friend-nom love-recip-prog-pres
 ‘Six colleagues and friends of mine love each other.’

(3) is multiply ambiguous, but crucially, it has a reading involving a group of six people that consists of colleagues and friends such that each of them loves someone else in the group. This requires NP-conjunction below the numeral. Then, NP-conjunction should be possible in (2a), even if DP-conjunction might also be available. Nonetheless, it does not have a joint reading.

This observation has implications for theories of conjunction. Champollion (to appear) classifies the existing accounts of *and* into three types: (i) the intersective theory (Winter 2001, Champollion to appear), (ii) the collective theory (Krifka 1990, Heycock & Zamparelli 2005), (iii) the ambiguity theory (Link 1983, 1984, Hoeksema 1988). According to (i), *and* is generalised intersection, which yields the joint reading,

while the split reading requires additional mechanisms. For (ii), the main function of *and* is to form plural entities, and derives the split reading without further ado. (iii) posits two versions of *and* in the lexicon for the two readings.

The Japanese facts seem to favour the ambiguity view (iii), at least in light of the analyses currently available in the literature.

Firstly, (2) poses a serious challenge to Heycock & Zamparelli's (2005) implementation of (ii). According to them, the joint reading is derived as a subcase of the split reading when the two nouns have overlapping extensions. Thus, they predict that whenever the split reading is possible, so is the joint reading.

The data in (2) are also problematic for Winter's (2001) and Champollion's (to appear) versions of (i). Since the split reading is possible, *-to* needs to be able to have an intersective meaning under this view. To save the analysis, one could stipulate that *-to* is marked in the lexicon as always requiring the additional mechanisms that derive the split reading. However, this essentially amounts to the same view as (iii), which postulates two types of conjunction in the lexicon.

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A common assumption is that formal or grammatical gender is an uninterpretable property of nouns (the masculine gender of *Tisch* ‘table’ in German has no effect on interpretation), whereas natural or semantic gender is interpretable (the feminine gender of ‘lioness’ has an effect on interpretation). Formal gender features then are the prime candidate for features that are uninterpretable (they have no relevance for the semantic computation) and lexically specified (i.e., valued in current feature systems). Such a feature combination is impossible in Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) feature system, but it is possible in a feature system as proposed in Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), Bošković (2009, 2011), or Wurmbrand (2012, 2014). If formal gender features on nouns are uninterpretable and valued, a question arising is what happens to those features—do they simply delete freely (Bošković 2009, 2011) or are there any formal requirements even on those features (Pesetsky and Torrego 2007)? If the latter is correct, given that there is no interpretable counterpart to formal gender features, the licensing element cannot be gender but must be another property of the nominal domain. While there are many factors to consider, the following generalization may point towards a dependency between gender features and an interpretable feature, namely number: formal gender is only possible in languages that also show number marking in the nominal domain.

Using WALS, a typological search shows that there is a correlation between languages involving formal gender and plural marking. The two relevant features coded in WALS are ‘Systems of gender assignment’ (Feature 32A) and ‘Coding of nominal plurality’ (Feature 33A). There are three types of languages regarding gender assignments: languages with no gender, semantic gender, and semantic and formal gender. The latter is the relevant one for the current purpose. As for nominal plural marking, there are 8 types of languages. Combining these two features yields 46 languages that display semantic and formal gender (see Figure 1 below). Of these languages, 10 mark the plural via a prefix, 27 via a suffix, 6 via mixed morphological plural, and two via a clitic. There is only 1 language that is listed as involving formal gender and no plural marking—Oromo. In Table 1 it is shown that, even assuming that Oromo is indeed to be classified as lacking plural (but see below), the ratio of languages that do not have any plural marking is significantly lower in the class of languages that involve formal gender.

Although the different ratios of ‘no plural’ languages in Table 1 are already suggestive that the combination of formal gender and lack of plural is cross-linguistically highly marked, it may, in fact, be possible to make a stronger claim if the following facts are taken into consideration. Citing from the grammar below, it appears that plural marking does exist in Oromo, but for some reason, it is not always used.

Owens (1985): “5. 6.2 Nouns. Noun plurals are quite rare. Most nouns lack them altogether. Human nouns are the most likely to have them, though even where they

exist they are not always used (5.3.2). The two most common given are -óotá and -ání. [...]. These may be added to noun roots, as in the above examples or may combine with a stem alternate [...]. There may be other plural suffixes -- ‘-lée was one given, jaalá ‘friend’, jaaláa-lée, magaláa-lée ‘markets’. In general, however, morphological plurals are perhaps even less used in Harar Oroma than in Booran (Andrzejewski, 1960). A few nouns have suppletive plurals.”

If the existence of plural as stated in the above grammar is sufficient justification for assuming that Oromo has number marking in the syntax, the only case of a language with formal gender and no plural marking disappears.

The cross-linguistic generalization that languages with formal gender always also involve number marking is unexpected if formal gender features (dis)appear freely (note that this is a typological generalization about languages and not necessarily about specific constructions). It is expected, on the other hand, if uninterpretable gender features (even when they are valued) require a formal dependency with another interpretable nominal feature, namely number. The nature of this dependency is yet to be determined.

Figure 1: WALS Combined Feature 32A and Feature 33A

Systems of Gender Assignment / Coding of Nominal Plurality		Number of languages
	Semantic and formal / Plural word	0
	Semantic and formal / Plural tone	0
+	Semantic and formal / Plural suffix	27
	Semantic and formal / Plural stem change	0
+	Semantic and formal / Plural prefix	10
	Semantic and formal / Plural complete reduplication	0
+	Semantic and formal / Plural clitic	2
+	Semantic and formal / No plural	1
+	Semantic and formal / Mixed morphological plural	6

Table 1: WALS Ratios of “No plural” languages

	No plural	%
All languages	98/1066	9.19%
Total of languages coded for 32A & 33A	18/203	8.87%
Only ‘No gender’ languages	11/117	9.4%
Only ‘Semantic gender’ languages	6/40	15%
Semantic and formal gender	1/47	2.17%

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6.

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Stripping, deletion and insubordinators

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The phenomenon known as Stripping has received a fair amount of attention in the syntactic literature of late. Stripping apparently deletes non-contrastive elements from a conjoined clause construction, leaving a single contrasting remnant. The following exemplify this (parentheses enclosed “deleted” material):

- (1) Dana will read *King Lear* tomorrow, and Kim (will read *KL* tomorrow) too
- (2) Gaby gave the president a gift, but (Gaby) not (gave) the vice-president (a gift)
- (3) I should buy a pencil soon, and (I should buy) a pen (soon)

Merchant (2003, 2004) presents what has become a standard analysis for Stripping. In his view, Stripping involves a conjunction of clauses. Within the second clause, the contrasting element raises to a Focus position external to its TP. The TP, which then contains only non-contrastive elements, then deletes. Under this analysis, (3) above would have the following derivation:

- (4) [[_{CP}[[_{TP} I should buy a pen soon]]] and [_{CP}[_{FocP} [_{DP} a pen]] [_{TP} ~~I should buy a pen soon~~]]]

However, this analysis appears to face a problem when it comes to elements containing insubordinators (as discussed, e.g., in de Vries (2009)) such as *as well as*, *in addition to*, *except (for)* and *instead of*. These insubordinators can apparently conjoin any subclausal phrase, as the following show:

- (5) She is [extremely bright *as well as* very athletic] conjoined APs
- (6) She enjoys [mystery movies *in addition to* courtroom dramas] conjoined DPs
- (7) She looked for the keys [everywhere *except (for)* in the bowl] conjoined PPs
- (8) She was [writing poems *instead of* singing songs] conjoined VPs

Interestingly, however, these insubordinators may not conjoin full clauses:

- (9) *Gaby gave the president a gift, *as well as* she gave the vice-president a gift
- (10) *I should buy a pencil soon, *in addition to* I should buy a pen soon
- (11) *Everyone will attend the party, *except for* Sam will attend the party
- (12) *Dana will read *King Lear* tomorrow instead of Kim will read *King Lear* tomorrow

Crucially, we do find natural Stripping-type sentences involving these insubordinators:

- (13) Gaby gave the president a gift, *as well as* the vice-president
- (14) I should buy a pencil soon, *in addition to* a pen
- (15) Everyone will attend the party, *except for* Sam
- (16) Dana will read *King Lear* tomorrow, *instead of* Kim

The analysis of Stripping as deletion from conjoined clauses, then, appears problematic; the insubordinators cannot conjoin clauses but do license Stripping. Either the analysis of Stripping as involving deletion from conjoined TPs errs, or the Stripping-type examples of (13)-(16) differ from standard Stripping as in (1)-(3) and require a separate analysis. Either way, we find ourselves faced with a puzzle.

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