

**Workshop proposal for the 51st Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea
(SLE), Tallinn, 29 Aug – 1 Sept 2018**
<http://sle2018.eu>

Convenors:

Anikó Lipták (Leiden U.)

Güliz Güneş (Leiden U.)

THE TIMING OF ELLIPSIS

Call for papers

Ellipsis is a frequently used sentence-shortening device. It allows us to leave out material that is evident from the (linguistic) context. Even though the elliptical material is not pronounced, elliptical sentences are not perceived as incomplete. The following sentence, with ellipsis represented with strikethrough, can only be interpreted as containing the predicate *understand ellipsis*.

(1) John has understood ellipsis. Others have ~~understood ellipsis~~, too.

Ellipsis is an interface phenomenon par excellence, exerting an influence on all kinds of linguistic representations, pragmatic/semantic, morpho-syntactic and prosodic/phonological at the same.

Research on ellipsis has greatly expanded in recent years, covering more empirical areas and languages than ever before. While there is more data available, and there are more refined proposals on the market concerning syntactic and pragmatic/semantic licensing ellipsis, structural accounts of ellipsis (subscribing to the view that ellipsis sites have structural representation) often have conflicting views on *when* ellipsis happens and whether it is a uniform phenomenon to begin with.

Regarding ‘timing’ as a relevant notion in understanding elliptical constructions, may help us to open our horizon in understanding certain unexpected behaviour. For instance, in (2a), when ‘to’ is followed by predicate ellipsis, it is contained in the same phonological phrase as the lexical verb (the relevant phonological boundaries are marked with brackets). However, when it is part of an adjunct phrase as in (2b), then such phonological phrasing is disallowed.

- (2) a. Mary wants to hear Fred's story and I also (want to ~~hear Fred's story~~.)
b. * Mary wants to hear Fred's story and I also (came) (to ~~hear Fred's story~~.)

Could we then hypothesize that elliptical gaps are silenced syntactic constituents (e.g. phrases), which are sieved through phonological and morphological filters for well-formedness (e.g. 2b is syntactically well-formed but violates some phonological well-formedness condition on the phonological phrasing of function words)?

There are several other proposals concerning the 'timing' of ellipsis:

What we can call the syntactic approach holds that deletion is 'induced' in the syntactic computation, either via elimination of some features/portions of syntactic structures (Baltin 2012), or via the presence of an ellipsis feature such as [E], which triggers PF non-realization (Merchant 2001, Müller 2011). Since these features participate in syntactic operations,

accounts of this sort predict that one can find syntactic constraints on ellipsis and ellipsis feeds/bleeds other syntactic processes, such as movement (van Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2008, Aelbrecht 2010, Merchant 2010, Bošković 2014, Lipták and Saab 2014, Bennett et al. 2017, Sailor to appear).

On the other hand ellipsis is also considered as an operation that takes place in the postsyntactic component only. Accordingly, ellipsis (also referred to as PF-deletion) is interpreted as the non-insertion of Vocabulary Items defined as in Distributed Morphology (cf. Wilder 1997, Bartos 2001, Kornfeld & Saab 2004, Saab 2009, Aelbrecht 2009, van Craenenbroeck 2010, Schoorlemmer & Temmerman 2012, Merchant 2016, Murphy 2017, Ionova 2017).

It is also argued that there are ellipsis operations that are prosodically driven, as such operations arguably take place at the post-syntactic component and are constrained by prosodic/phonological structural well-formedness and not necessarily e.g. syntactic constituency (Napoli 1982, Weir 2012, Murphy 2016, Thoms and Sailor 2017).

As Bennet et al. (2017) concludes, it may also be the case that “ellipsis is a very complex phenomenon whose effects are distributed over all aspects of linguistic representation (pragmatics, semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, the lexicon)” (ibid. 29), such that ellipsis may interact not only with syntactic dependencies, but also with morphological and phonological well-formedness requirements.

The aim of this workshop is to bring together scholars from different subfields of linguistics and working within a variety of theoretical frameworks, to shed light on the timing of ellipsis in various constructions in English and other languages. By doing this, we aim to expand the commonly held syntax-only accounts of the silent structure approach of ellipsis, to the areas of morphology, and phonology, which allows us to explicate different types of ellipses in terms of its timing (late (morphologically/phonologically derived/licensed) ellipsis, early (syntactically derived/licensed) ellipsis).

We invite abstracts that bear on the *timing of ellipsis* from theoretical and experimental angles, addressing the issue in any language and in any elliptical phenomena. In particular, questions that the workshop seeks to address include – but are not limited to – the following:

- Is ellipsis induced in the syntax or only in the postsyntactic component?
- If ellipsis is induced in the syntax, is it phase-based?
- Is ellipsis a uniform phenomenon, or are there different types of ellipsis? If there are distinct types, what are their properties and how can they be identified?
- Are there cross-linguistic differences in the timing of ellipsis?
- What can ellipsis tell us about the ordering of operations in the (post)syntactic component?
- What do prosodic/morphological constraints reveal about the timing of ellipsis?

- To what extent are ellipsis remnants constrained by prosodic phrasing/ cliticisation/ incorporation?
- In what way does the timing of ellipsis interact with the timing of (head) movement? What are the consequences of movement (out of the ellipsis site) before ellipsis and after ellipsis?

References

- Aelbrecht, Lobke. 2009. You have the right to remain silent: The syntactic licensing of ellipsis. Doctoral Dissertation, Catholic University of Brussels, Brussels.
- Aelbrecht, Lobke. 2010. *The syntactic licensing of ellipsis*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Baltin, Mark. 2012. Deletion versus pro-forms: an overly simple dichotomy? *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 30: 381-423.
- Bartos, Huba. 2001. Sound-Form Non-Insertion and the Direction of Ellipsis. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 48: 3–24.
- Bennett, Ryan, Emily Elfner and Jim McCloskey. 2017. Prosody, focus and ellipsis in Irish. Ms. University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Bošković, Željko. 2014. Now I am a phase, now I am not a phase. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45: 1, 27-89.
- van Craenenbroeck, Jeroen. 2010. *The syntax of ellipsis: Evidence from Dutch dialects*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- van Craenenbroeck, Jeroen & Anikó Lipták. 2008. On the interaction between verb movement and ellipsis: New evidence from Hungarian. *Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*. Charles B. Chang and Hannah J. Haynie (ed.), 138–146. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Ionova, Anastasiia. 2017. The interaction of ellipsis and clitic movement in Serbo-Croatian. Paper presented at NELS. University of Iceland.
- Kornfeld, Laura & Andrés Saab. 2004. Nominal ellipsis and morphological structure in Spanish. In Reineke Bok-Bennema, Bart Hollebrandse, Brigitte Campers-Manhe & Petra Sleeman (eds.), *Romance languages and linguistic theory*, 183–198. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lipták, Anikó, and Andrés L. Saab. 2014. No N-raising out of NPs in Spanish: ellipsis as a diagnostic of head movement. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 32:1247–1271.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merchant, Jason. 2010. Three kinds of ellipsis. In *Context-dependence, perspective, and relativity*, (ed.) Francois Recanati, Isidora Stojanovic, and Neftalí Villanueva, 1–52. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Merchant, Jason. 2016. Ellipsis: A survey of analytical approaches. To appear in Jeroen van Craenenbroeck and Tanja Temmerman (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis*.
- Müller, Gereon. 2011. *Constraints on displacement*. A phase-based account. John Benjamins.
- Murphy, Andrew. 2016. Subset relations in ellipsis licensing. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 1(1), 44. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.61>
- Murphy, Andrew. 2017. Pronominal inflection and NP ellipsis in German. Ms. Universität Leipzig.
- Napoli, Donna Jo. 1982. Initial Material Deletion in English. *Glossa* 16, 85-111.

- Saab, Andrés. 2009. *Hacia una teoría de la identidad parcial en la ellipsis*. Phd Dissertation, University of Buenos Aires.
- Saab, Andrés & Anikó Lipták. Movement and deletion after syntax. Licensing by inflection reconsidered. *Studia Linguistica*.
- Sailor, Craig. to appear. The typology of head movement and ellipsis. *Natural language and linguistic theory*.
- Schoorlemmer, Erik & Tanja Temmerman. 2012. Head movement as a PF- phenomenon: Evidence from identity under ellipsis. In Jaehoon Choi, E. Alan Hogue, Jeffrey Punske, Deniz Tat, Jessamyn Schertz & Alex Trueman (eds.), *Proceedings of 29th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 232–240. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla.
- Thoms, Gary, and Craig Sailor. 2017. When silence gets in the way: Extraction from *do*-ellipsis in British dialects. Paper presented at LSA Annual Meeting. Austin. Texas.
- Weir, Andrew. 2012. Left-edge deletion in English and subject omission in diaries. *English Language and Linguistics* 16(1). 105–29.
- Wilder, Chris. 1997. Some properties of ellipsis in coordination. In A. Alexiadou and T. A. Hall (Eds.), *Studies on Universal Grammar and Typological Variation*, Studies on Universal Grammar and Typological Variation, pp. 59–107. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.