Ellipsis and Negative Polarity

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Abstract

This paper examines cases of VP ellipsis where the ellided VP contains a negative polarity item. The data involve the so-called *some-any* alternation, which we show extends to other types of NPIs. The main question is how to account for the existential interpretation of the NPI in the elided VP given that there is no appropriate licensor for it. We investigate the consequences of such data for the theory of ellipsis and negative polarity licensing. We propose that ellipsis resolution in these cases should be conceived of as LF-copying which takes place after the NPI has been licensed via AGREE by negation. We formalize this by assuming the presence of a [$uPol$] feature on the NPI.

1 Introduction

Despite a great deal of work on negative polarity and ellipsis the interaction of these two phenomena has seldom been the focus of attention in the relatively recent generative literature. Negative polarity items are, as Hoeksema (2000) defines them, *"expressions (either words or idiomatic phrases) with limited distribution, part of which always includes negative sentences"*. There are many theories of the phenomenon but the general consensus in the literature seems to be that NPIs are licensed when they are in the scope of a suitable operator.[1] A question that has been raised in the past, most notably by Klima (1964), concerns the behavior of NPIs under ellipsis. This question became first known as the so called *some-any* alternation, where NPI *any* is understood as *some*, and vice-versa, in contexts of VP ellipsis:[2]

(1) a. Polly didn't interview any candidate, but Sherry did `<interview some candidate>`.
    b. Polly interviewed some candidate, but Sherry didn't `<interview any candidate>`.

It has been suggested that in such cases there is a *some* which is not pronounced (McCawley 1988) and that these sentences do not pose any particular problem. However, this account does not explain why only *some*, but not other quantifiers, can be left unpronounced in these cases. Thus, in whatever context, it is impossible to give to the elided part of (1-a) an interpretation like (2):

[1] The exact characterization of the set of operators that license NPIs is a matter of debate. See Ladusaw (1977, 1996), Giannakidou (1997), Zwarts (1998), Horn (1989) for closely connected yet subtly different views.

[2] We will use the following typographical convention in this paper: Elided parts of sentences are `<shown like this, between angle brackets and in this typeface>`.

(2) . . . interview more than half the female candidates

Indeed, it seems that only an existential interpretation is available. This type of sentence raises questions regarding the precise nature of the process of ellipsis involved in (1).

Elliptical constructions fall under various categories. So far as the generative tradition is concerned two broad types of approach have been advocated:

(3) a. PF-deletion (Merchant 2001)
  b. LF-copying (Chung *et al.* 1995)

According to (3-a) (almost) all there is to ellipsis is the fact that at PF the relevant portion of the sentence is not pronounced. For (3-b) on the other hand, non-pronunciation results from nonexistence of anything to pronounce. Rather, ellipsis resolution is a copying process at LF which restores the antecedent LF into the ellipsis site.[3] In general, research has attempted to uncover how much of ellipsis results from PF-deletion and how much from LF-copying. It is this question that we will address here using the behavior of NPIs in elliptical contexts as our tool. More specifically we investigate the question of the origin of *some* in elliptical contexts involving NPI *any*.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 is an overview of the data, where we examine the interaction of NPI licensing and interpretation in various ellipsis constructions (VP-ellipsis, Antecedent Contained Deletion, Sluicing). In section 3 we broaden and strengthen the empirical basis of the problem by considering similar data in Japanese, Korean, and Greek. We present our proposal and analysis in section 4. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 Formulating the problem

The basic piece of data was introduced in (1), i.e. the *some* - *any* alternation. In a nutshell, the problem posed by this pair of sentences is twofold. First, the origin of the existential interpretation: What is the element in the ellipsis site that gets interpreted in this way? Second, if VP-ellipsis involves the non-pronunciation of some fully articulated syntactic structure, then what licenses *any* which must, by definition, be there and not pronounced? First of all, notice that this alternation has counterparts in other polarity items,[4] adverbial (4), (5) or idiomatic NPIs (6), which do not have positive counterparts and yet receive some sort of *corresponding* positive interpretation:

(4) a. *Still-Ever* alternation

  I don't think I could ever trust you but Bo could $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \texttt{<*ever trust you>.} \\ \texttt{<still trust you>.} \end{array} \right\}$

  b. *Yet-Already* alternation
  Polly has already read the report but Sherry hasn't <read the report yet>.

(5) Sue doesn't speak at all but Liz does <speak somewhat/a little>.

(6) Idiomatic NPIs

  a. Polly didn't lift a finger, but Sherry did <*lift a finger>.

[3] To be sure, there are other approaches to ellipsis which we will not discuss here.

[4] Obviously the alternation does not involve obligatorily a positive element but to the extent that one can be reconstructed, it is the one that is not polarity sensitive.

b. Polly didn't give a damn, but Sherry did `<*give a damn>`.
c. Joe didn't sleep a wink, but Sarah did `<*sleep a wink>`.

On a descriptive level, it would seem then that the requirement that NPIs must be c-commanded by negation or another suitable operator can be canceled under ellipsis. We take "Canceled under ellipsis" to be similar to another well known repair mechanism associated with (some types) of elliptical constructions, i.e. Island Repair (Merchant 2001; Fox and Lasnik 2003).

(7) They are looking for a candidate who speaks a Slavic language, but I am not sure which (Slavic language) `<*they are looking for a candidate who speaks>`.

The two views on ellipsis differ sharply here. According to LF-copying, island repair is an illusion coming from the fact that there is no extraction from an island in the derivation and hence, no violation (Chung *et al.* 1995). On the other hand, according to PF deletion, this type of data suggests that island constraints are in fact PF constraints (Merchant 2000). Correspondingly,the requirement that NPI be c-commanded can be phrased in two different ways. One possibility is that it is a derivational constraint, which can be canceled under LF-copying. The other is that it is a PF-constraint, canceled under deletion at PF. We will argue that the former, that the requirement on the NPI is derivational, is the correct approach. The basic characteristic of the examples above is that the NPI could *not* possibly be licensed in the ellipsis site due to the absence of a suitable operator. An important insight into the nature of the ellipsis processes can be gained by looking at cases where in principle it *could* even in the absence of an operator. The question here is whether the polarity sensitive element would show its independently available interpretation, as a PF-deletion approach would predict, or inherit an interpretation from the antecedent. Some light in this question can be shed by looking at the behavior of free choice *any*.

2.1 Free choice *any*

It is well known that free choice *any* has somewhat different licensing requirements than NPI *any*.[5] For our purposes, as is well known since LeGrand (1975), free choice *any* can be licensed in any environment, even in episodic affirmative sentences, if it is modified by a restrictive relative clause. This is what LeGrand (1975) named *subtrigging* (8):

(8) Max talked to any woman who approached his burger stall.

Now, given this peculiar licensing mechanism, it follows that a subtrigged free choice *any* should be elidable with no problems and should retain its universal/FC interpretation. Consider (9)

(9) Tom talked to any man who approached his table and $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Bill did too} \\ \textit{so did Bill} \end{array} \right\}$

Clearly, things are exactly as predicted with both *any* phrases receiving the free-choice interpretation.[6] However, an example like (9) is not particularly telling since it does not help

[5] See Giannakidou (2001) for extensive discussion of the licensing environments of FCI *any*.

[6] However one wishes to characterize that interpretation. For the sake of clarity let us assume that it is close to universal.

us decide whether the meaning is derived by independently interpreting *any man who approached his table* or by interpreting the ellipsis site with reference to the antecedent. In other words, this example does not help tease apart the predictions of the PF-deletion and the LF-copying approach. Both approaches would succeed equally in this case. In order to circumvent this problem consider (10), where the two phrases headed by *any*, i.e. the one in the overt VP and the one in the elided one are not the same. The first one is an instance of the NPI-*any*, licensed by the overt negation whereas the only interpretation that could be available to the second one would be the only interpretation available to a subtrigged *any*, i.e. a universal/free choice interpretation.

(10) Jim didn't interview any candidates who applied late, but Sue did.

If we restore the elided VP in the form that appears in the antecedent we do not get an ungrammatical sentence, the sentence is extremely inelegant but not ungrammatical:

(11) Jim didn't interview any candidates who applied late, but Sue did interview/interviewed any candidates who applied late.

Contrary to expectations, however, the universal interpretation that the second occurrence of *any candidates who applied late* in (11), is absent in (10) which again receives an interpretation similar to the one in (12).

(12) Jim didn't interview any candidate(s) who applied late, but Sue did interview/interviewed **SOME** candidates who applied late.

This type of data seem to suggest that indeed what is involved in the process of ellipsis resolution here is some kind of LF-copying rather than PF-deletion.

To complete now the empirical picture let us turn to the behavior of negative polarity items in other ellipsis contexts.

2.2 The Nature of Elided any

In the following sections we will examine the behavior of NPIs focusing on *any* in other ellipsis contexts. These contexts raise separate issues.

2.2.1 Antecedent Contained Deletion

Merchant (2000) observes that NPI *any*, just like determiners/quantifiers like *each*, *most*, and *the*, and unlike *many*, *few*, numerals and bare plurals, can host antecedent contained deletion as shown by (13).

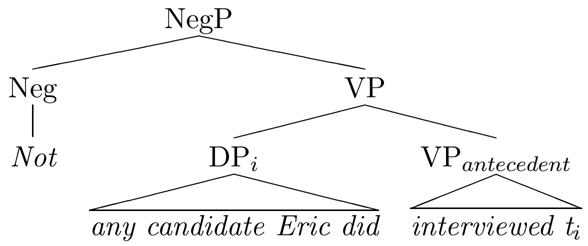
(13) Polly didn't interview any candidate Eric did `<interview>`.

On the other hand, as observed by Carlson (1977), *some* cannot host ACD as shown in (14).

(14) *Polly interviewed some candidate Eric did.

One approach to this contrast defended by Diesing (1992) suggests that weak quantifiers, including *some*, do not undergo QR out of the antecedent VP. As a result, structures involving *some*, like (14), cannot escape the infinite regress problem associated with ACD. Following this general line of approach Merchant (2000) proposes that QR can be adjunction to VP, which produces, for (13), the structure in (15).

(15)



The elliptical VP is not contained in its antecedent and ACD is correctly licensed for (13). This account runs into problems when we consider cases in which ACD occurs inside the deleted VP. Consider (16). The first clause in (16) contains a NPI and the interpretation given to the DP inside the elided VP in the second clause is existential. The corresponding phrase in the second clause cannot contain *some*, however, since, as we saw earlier, *some* cannot host ACD.[7]

(16) Polly didn't interview any candidate Eric did, but Sherry did `<interview` $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} *\textit{some} \\ \textit{any} \end{array} \right\}$ `candidate Eric did <interview> >`.

Now, this raises the issue of parallelism, namely, is the elided VP in the second clause parallel to its antecedent? Parallelism between elided constituents and their antecedents is vital in current accounts of ellipsis. Fox (2000: p. 32) defines parallelism as follows (17):

(17) Parallelism
In an ellipsis/phonological reduction construction the scopal relationship among the elements in $\beta_{A(ntecedent)}$ must be identical to the scopal relationship among the parallel elements in $\beta_{E(llipsis).}$

(17) can be seen at work in the following pair of examples, (18)- (19) where the wide scope reading for the universal is precluded in (19).

(18) Some boy admires every teacher. (∃>∀, ∀>∃)

(19) Some boy admires every teacher. Mary does, too. (∃>∀, *∀>∃)

According to Fox (2000) scope shifting operations that are not forced for type considerations must have a semantic effect. QR must move a QP, $<< e, t >, t >$, to the closest position in which it is interpretable (sister of $< e, t >$). Thus the universal quantifier only adjoins to vP in the second clause of (19), as in (20).

(20) Mary$_j$ [every teacher]$_i$ [t$_j$ admires t$_i$].

The first clause of (19) under the inverse (∀>∃) scope interpretation (unavailable in (20)) requires (21) in which the universal quantifier occupies a higher position than the existential. The universal quantifier can move across the subject existential quantifier because such movement has semantic effect.

[7]Assuming it did contain *some* would leave this account open to the same criticism that we mentioned against McCawley's view in section 1.

(21) [every teacher $]_i$ some boy admires t_i.

Parallelism bars ellipsis in the second clause of (19). If the universal quantifier in the first clause is to have wide scope, the two scope relationships are not identical as shown in (22).

(22) [every teacher $]_i$ some boy $[_{VPantecedent}$ admires t_i]
Mary [every teacher $]_i[_{VPellipsis}$ admires t_i], too.

This is why, Fox argues, (19) does not allow a wide scope interpretation.

Consider now the two VPs in (16) repeated in (23). The two VPs cannot be parallel to each other, unless *any* is really *any* (*some* does not undergo QR).

(23) Polly didn't interview any candidate Eric did, but Sherry did `<interview` $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} *\textit{some} \\ \textit{any} \end{array} \right\}$ `candidate Eric did <interview > >`.

This leads us to the conclusion that (24) is not the LF of (16)/(23), but (25) is.

(24) Polly didn't [any candidate Eric did <interview t_i >$]_i$ interview t_i
Sherry interviewed some candidate Eric did <interview>.

(25) Polly didn't [any candidate Eric did <interview t_i >$]_i$ interview t_i Sherry [any candidate Eric did <interview t_i>$]_i$ interviewed t_i

This suggests that *any* within ellipsis behaves like a *strong* quantifier in the sense that it does undergo QR in order to avoid the infinite regress problem.

2.2.2 Sluicing

Example (26) shows that the elided *any* can be a correlate for a remnant in sluicing. This indicates that *any* behaves like a weak quantifier since, as example (27) shows, only weak quantifiers license sluicing. Following Merchant (2001), we refer to *some candidate* in (27), which corresponds to the remnant *wh*-phrase in sluicing, *a correlate*.

(26) I hear Polly didn't interview any candidate, but Sherry did, but I am not sure which (candidate).

(27) I hear Sherry interviewed $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \textit{some} \\ *\textit{every} \end{array} \right\}$ candidate. I am not sure which.

(26) seems to indicate that the constituent corresponding to *some candidate* in the VP ellipsis site serves as a correlate which makes available a variable that the *wh* quantifier can bind.

3 Crosslinguistic evidence

In this section we provide some crosslinguistic evidence that the observations made above for English are in fact in no way exceptional but can be replicated in other languages typologically distinct from English. The facts that we present here come from Japanese, Korean, and Greek. As Japanese and Korean pattern in general similarly, we present this data together.

3.1 Japanese and Korean

Despite much attention paid to the "object drop" phenomena in Japanese and Korean, its exact nature remains controversial. Kim (1999) and Oku (1998) argue that Japanese and Korean have argument ellipsis, whereby arguments delete under identity with their antecedents (see Hoji 1998; Otani and Whitman 1991). For instance, the object of the second sentence is elided in (28).[8]

(28) a. John-ga kuruma-o unten-sita. Mary-mo `<kuruma-o>` unten-sita.
John-nom car-acc drove Mary-also `car-acc` drove
'John drove the car, and Mary also drove.'

b. John-i cha-lul wuncenhayssta. Mary-to `<cha-lul>` wuncenhayssta
John-nom car-acc drove Mary-also car-acc drove
'John drove the car, and Mary also drove'

(29) and (30) show that the expressions *nani-mo* and *mwues-to* (anything) must be c-commanded by negation.

(29) a. Sherry-wa nani-mo yoma-nai.
Sherry-top anything read-neg
'Sherry does not read anything.'

b. Younghi-nun mwues-to mekci-anhassta
Younghi-top anything ate-neg
'Younghi didn't eat anything'

(30) a. *Sherry-wa nani-mo yonda.
Sherry-top anything read
'Sherry read anything.'

b. *Younghi-nun mwues-to mekessta
Younghi-top anything ate
'Yonghi ate anything'

The argument ellipsis can also target NPIs, as shown by (31). The first clause contains the NPI *nani-mo/mwues-to*:

(31) a. Polly-wa nani-mo yoma-nakatta-kedo, Sherry-wa `<nani-mo>` yonda.
Polly-top anything read-neg-past-but Sherry-top `<anything>` read
'Polly didn't read anything, but Sherry did.'

b. Chelswu-nun mwues-to mekci-anh-ass-ciman, Younghi-nun `<mwues-to>`
Chelswu-top anything eat-neg-past-but Younghi-top `<anything>`
mekessta
ate
'Chelswu didn't eat anything, but Younghi did'

(31) gets an interpretation similar to English VP-ellipsis: the elided NPIs are understood as existential quantifiers. The parallel between English VP-ellipsis and Japanese/Korean argument ellipsis suggests that they should be treated similarly.

The parallel between English VP-ellipsis and Japanese/Korean argument deletion goes even deeper. We have seen above that idiomatic NPIs in English do not have to be c-

[8] In this section, unless otherwise indicated the (a) examples are Japanese and the (b) ones Korean.

commanded by Neg under ellipsis. The same is true for Japanese and Korean.

(32) a. Polly-wa bita-itimon dasa-nakatta-kedo, Sherry-wa `<bita-itimon>` dasita.
Polly-top anything pay-neg-past-but Sherry-top `<anything>` paid
'Polly didn't pay a red cent, but Sherry did.'

b. Chelswu-nun han-pwun-to nayci-anh-ass-ciman, Yonghi-nun `<han-puwn-to>`
Chelswu-top anything pay-neg-past-but Younghi-top `<anything>`
nayssta
paid
'Chelswu didn't pay a penny, but Younghi did'

Japanese and Korean have sluicing constructions (see Takahashi 1994 for Japanese, Park 2005 for Korean). Examples are given in (33).

(33) a. John-ga nani-ka-o katta-kedo, boku-wa nani-ka sira-nai.
John-nom something-acc bought-but I-top what know-not.
'John bought something, but I don't know what.'

b. Chelswu-ka mwues-inka-lul sass-ciman, na-nun mwues-i-nci morunta
Chelswu-nom what-q-acc bought-but I-top what-be-comp know-not
'Chelswu bought something, but I don't know what'

Because the elided NPI is understood as existential, it can be a correlate for sluicing, just like in English, witness (34).

(34) a. Polly-wa nani-mo yoma-nakatta-kedo, Sherry-wa `<nani-mo>` yonda-rasii.
Polly-top anything read-neg-past-but Sherry-top `<anything>` read-looks-like
Kedo boku-wa nani-o-ka wakara-nai
But I-top what-acc-Q know-neg
'It looks like Polly didn't read anything, but Sherry did, but I am not sure what.'

b. Chelswu-nun mwues-to ilkci-anh-ass-ciman, Younghi-nun `<mwues-to>`
Chelswu-top anything read-neg-past-but Younghi-top `<anything>`
ilknun-ceskatassta. Haciman, na-nun mwues-i-nci morunta
read-seems. but I-top what-cop-comp know-not
'It seems Chelswu didn't read anything, but Younghi did. But I don't know what'

Thus, *nani-mo* in Japanese, *mwues-to* in Korean, and idiomatic NPIs in both languages, when elided, do not have to be c-commanded by a negation, and are understood as existential, It thus seems reasonable to suppose that *nani-mo* in Japanese and *mwues-to* in Korean are treated in the same way as English NPIs.

3.2 Negative concord

Watanabe (2004) argues that *nani-mo* in Japanese is a negative concord item, in the sense that they are inherently negative. His argument is based on examples like (35), in which nani-mo is used as a short answer to a wh-question.

(35) a. Q: Polly-wa nani-o katta-no?
Polly-top what-acc bought-Q

'What did Polly buy?'

b. A: Nani-mo.
anything
'Nothing.'

Idiomatic NPIs can also appear in the same context. Under Watanabe's analysis, it follows that *bita-itimon* is also a negative concord item, bearing a [*neg*] feature.

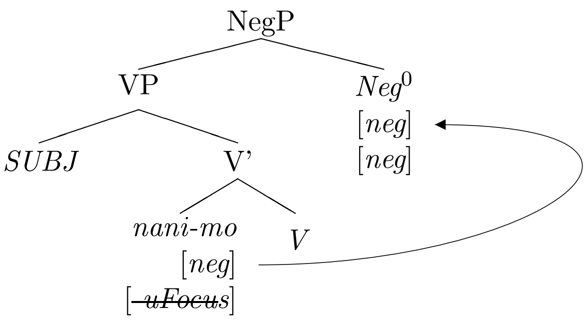
(36) a. Polly-wa ikura dasita-no?
Polly-top how-much pay-Q
'How much did Polly pay?'
b. bita-itimon.
a-red-cent
'not a red cent'

This contrasts with English where *anything* and idiomatic NPIs cannot serve as short answers (37):

(37) a. Q: What did Polly buy ?
A: *Anything
b. Q: How much did she pay ?
A: *A red cent

Watanabe's account is that *nani-mo*, for instance, has a [*neg*] feature, which gets copied on the negative head, which also bears a [*neg*] feature, and the two [*neg*] features cancel each other out, as depicted in (38).[9]

(38)



Since the two [neg] features are not in a hierarchical relationship, Watanabe argues, they cancel each other out. As a result, the VP is understood as positive. This is why it can delete under (semantic) identity with the positive question in (35-a). However, if *nani-mo* was inherently negative, we would expect that the second, elided, clause in the example (31-a), repeated in (39), is understood as negative, since the clause does not carry another [*neg*], which cancels the [*neg*] feature copied from *nani-mo*.

(39) Polly-wa nani-mo yoma-nakatta-kedo, Sherry-wa `<nani-mo>` yonda.
Polly-top anything read-neg-past-but Sherry-top `<anything>` read

[9]In Watanabe's system the concord item becomes visible as a goal for `agree` and checking operations by virtue of the [*uFocus*] feature for which it is inherently specified.

'Polly didn't read anything, but Sherry did.'

This expectation runs contrary to fact. In Watanabe's system (30-a)/(39) would be ruled out by virtue of the inability of *nani-mo* to check its [$uFocus$] feature. This, however, can hardly be the reason for its ungrammaticality as the sentence's focus structure cannot be made dependent on the presence of negation.

Korean behaves differently from Japanese with respect to the availability of *mwues-to* and idiomatic NPIs in short answers. As the examples in (40) and (41) show using *mwues-to*/idiomatic NPI in a fragmentary answer yields ungrammatical results.

(40) a. Q: Chelswu-nun mwues-ul sass-ni?
Chelswu-top what-acc bought-q
'What did Chelswu buy?'
b. A: *Mwues-to
anything
'Nothing'

(41) a. Q: Chelswu-nun elma nayss-ni?
Chelswu-top how.much paid-q?
'How much did Chelswu pay?'
b. A: *Han-pwun-to
one-penny-also
'Not a penny'

On the face of it this would indicate that these elements in Korean are not negative concord items contrary to some claims in the literature (Kim 2001). This is further evidence that treating these elements on a par with English *any* phrases is on the right track.

3.3 Greek

Roughly the same array of data is found in Greek. As is commonly assumed for languages with verb movement, pure VP ellipsis is not found in Greek:[10]

(42) *Kapios prepi na magirepsi simera alla ego den tha ∅
someone must SM cook today but I not will
'Someone must cook today but I will not'

(43) *O Giannis efage ke o Kostas ∅
The Giannis ate and Kostas
'Giannis ate and Kostas did too'

(44) *O Giannis efage alla o Kostas den
The Giannis ate but Kostas not
Giannis ate but Kostas did not

[10]SM stands for *Subjunctive Marker*

Just like in Japanese and Korean, however, Greek displays cases of argument ellipsis (45).[11][12]

(47) Agorase i Maria (ena) aftokinito, agorase ke o Kostas
Bought the Maria a car, bought and the Kostas
Maria bought a car and Kostas did too.

Concerning the data of primary importance in this paper, Greek behaves in the same way as the other languages that we looked at. So, when argument ellipsis targets an NPI what we saw in the previous section for Japanese and Korean also obtains in Greek, i.e. whatever fills the ellipsis site is interpreted existentially and, of course, there is no need for licensing by negation or other operator:

(48) I Maria den milise se kanenan, milise `<se kapion>` eftichos o Kostas
The Maria neg talked to anyone, talked `<to someone>` fortunately the Kostas
Maria didn't speak to anyone, fortunately Kostas did.

And, just as before, the elided element being interpreted as an existential, it can serve as a correlate for sluicing (49):

(49) Mu fenete oti i Maria den milise se kanenan, milise eftichos o Kostas
1st-gen seems that the Maria neg talked to anyone, talked fortunately the Kostas
ala den ksero se pion
but neg know-1st to whom
It seems to me that Maria didn't talk to anyone, fortunately Kostas did but I don't know to whom.

Overall then, the same kind of patterns is observed in Greek too. This strengthens the case for a unified analysis of the so-called *alternation* phenomena across languages.

3.4 Intermediate summary

We are thus led to a paradox. On the one hand, the behavior of *any* in ACD suggests that *any* must be analyzed as a strong quantifier. On the other hand, *any* in sluicing cases must be analyzed as a weak quantifier. This is directly connected to the *some* - *any* alternation since under VP deletion and in the absence of overt negation *any* in the ellipsis site is always

[11] Some variation in the judgments exists with respect to the availability of argument ellipsis with definite DPs. Thus, some but not all speakers accept (45):

(45) Odigise i Maria to aftokinito, odigise ke o Kostas
drove the Maria the car, drove and the Kostas
'Mary drove the car, and Kostas did too'

The variation is probably due to the availability of the clitic-doubled version of (45), and therefore probably irrelevant to our concerns:

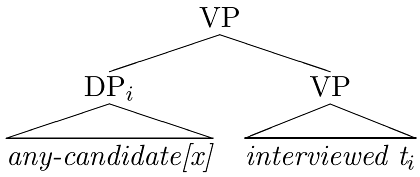
(46) Odigise i Maria to aftokinito, to odigise ke o Kostas
drove the Maria the car, it drove and the Kostas
'Mary drove the car, and Kostas did too'

[12] A different analysis that might be put forward for these examples involves V-raising followed by VP ellipsis. We will not discuss this alternative here as it does impact in any significant way to the main points made in the paper.

interpreted as a weak quantifier. The same is true for idiomatic NPIs. Essentially then, and following also Merchant (2000), the *any* phrase must be adjoined to VP. Furthermore the *any* phrase, which binds a variable in the thematic position, must provide an unbound variable which will be bound in the adjoined position by the *wh* operator in the sluicing examples in (48). The basic structure of the elided VP in (1-a), repeated in (50) is shown in (51).

(50) Polly didn't interview any candidate, but Sherry did `<interview some candidate>`.

(51)

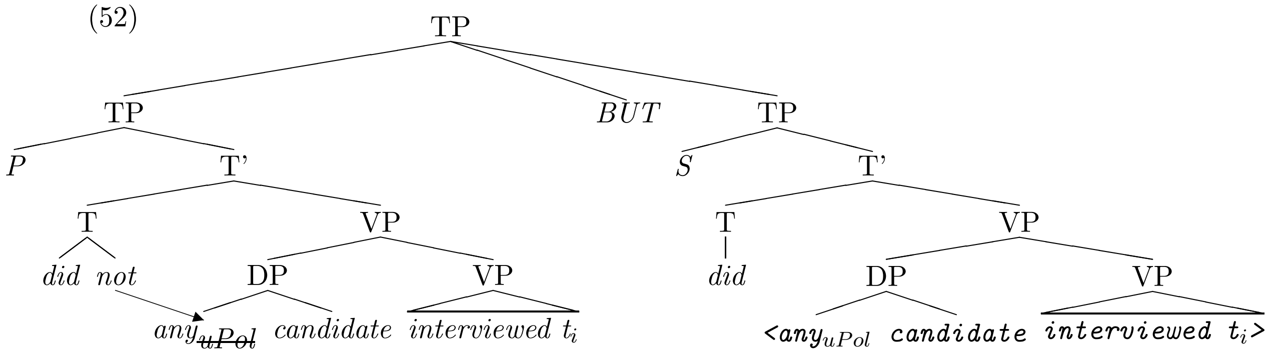


How does the ellipsis site get this structure? The next section is concerned with this question.

4 Analysis

Most authors would agree that the best characterization of the set of operators licensing NPIs is semantic, be it downward entailment, non-veridicality or what have you. However, this does preclude a syntactic implementation of the licensing mechanism. We will assume here that at least part of the licensing is a matter of syntax and more specifically a matter of *agree*. For concreteness let us assume that NPIs have a [*uPol*] feature which gets deleted under agree with various heads including negative heads. Second, we will take *any NP* to be a simple indefinite providing a restricted variable (x) (Heim 1982; Chung *et al.* 1995). We should note here that under this approach *any* is not an operator binding a variable within its NP complement like standard determiners do. In a sense *any* is just the indefinite determiner *'a'* plus a [*uPol*] feature. Now, if we put Merchant's (2000) proposal in (15) and (51) together with the assumptions outlined above, under a PF-deletion approach to ellipsis, the resulting structure for (1-a)/(50) is (52) (*P*=Polly, *S*=Sherry):

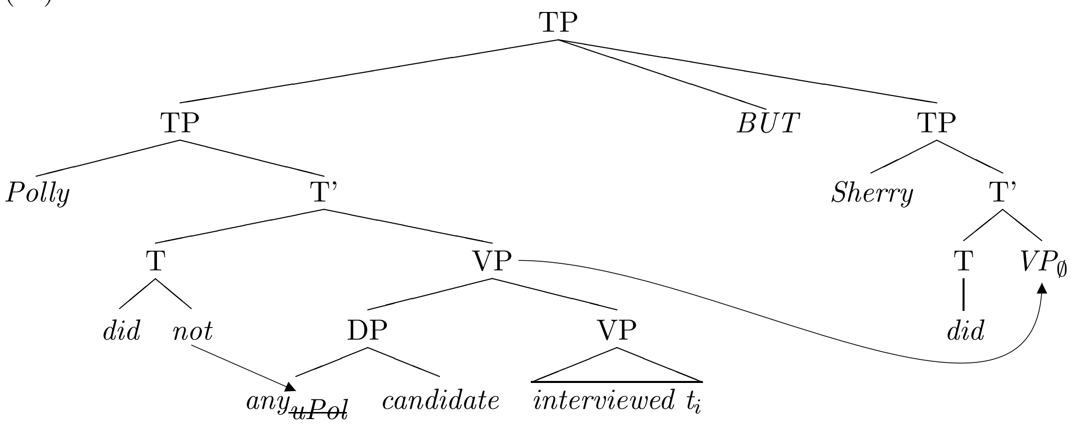
(52)



The trouble with this structure is obvious. The [*uPol*] feature of *any* in the elided portion of the sentence (the VP in the righthand side TP) has no way of being deleted since it is not within the scope of any appropriate operator and therefore cannot be checked. As a result, the derivation would crash at a relatively early stage and (1-a)/(50) would be ruled out, contrary to fact. A PF-deletion view would require us to fall back on a statement like *deletion removes* *the requirements for NPI licensing* which, if anything, is a fact to be explained rather than an explanatory principle.

Alternatively, under an LF-copying view, given that syntactic licensing takes place at some pre-spellout point it follows that ellipsis resolution in the cases at hand, being LF copying, will *necessarily* follow NPI licensing. As a result the material copied onto the ellipsis site will include the *licensed **any*** which will be a simple indefinite devoid of its [*uPol*] feature, as in (51). More specifically the operations in question are shown in the diagram in (53) where the straight lines represent the AGREE operation and the curved line the copying operation.

(53)



This approach allows to derive straightforwardly the central fact that emerges from the discussion of the data above, i.e. (54):

(54) Under Ellipsis *ANY* (and NPIs in general) retains their *interpretation* in the antecedent rather than their form.

As a result, the *some* - *any* alternation, as well as any other alternation between an NPI and its positive counterpart, under ellipsis is exactly what one would expect since *any NP* would be interpreted as a simple indefinite. Consider now some more complex examples that support this conclusion. In the following examples, we use modification by *almost* in order to force the free choice/universal reading of the NP headed by *any.* We then use the elided *any phrase* as the correlate of a remnant in sluicing. If we are right that what is copied is a universal then it should not be able to function as such a correlate since universals in general cannot do this. This prediction is fully borne out.

(55) *I hear Polly didn't interview almost any candidate Eric did, but Sherry did, but I am not sure which (candidate).

(56) *I hear Polly didn't eat almost any dish Eric did, although Sherry did. But, I am not sure which dish.

(57) *I hear Polly ate any dish Eric did, and Sherry didn't. But I am not sure which.

(58) *After their talk, Sue talked to any astrologist who approached the podium and Bo didn't `<talk to any astrologist who approached the podium >` but I am not sure which `< astrologist did Bo not talk to >`

The further implication of these examples, together with the LF copying approach to ellipsis, is that the inability to function as a correlate in sluicing is not a property of individual determiners but of their meanings. This also seems to be correct. We will now turn to idiomatic NPIs.

4.1 Idiomatic NPIs

We believe that the same mechanism is at play here. We should note that a general limitation on any structural account of the behavior of these expressions is that they are, ultimately, idiomatic. Our proposal goes some way towards an understanding of their behavior up to idiomatic interpretation. The question that arises with respect to idiomatic NPIs is how their interpretation is retrieved since expressions like the following do not have a well formed interpretation in non-negative contexts:

(59) a. To sleep a wink
b. To give a damn
c. To pay/contribute a red cent
d. etc ...

In languages other than English we find that even with entirely opaque idioms we can obtain an interpretation even when part of the idiom is missing. Consider Greek where, as we mentioned already, there is no real VP ellipsis but you often need to repeat the verb (60).

(60) O Giannis den theli na figi ala o Kostas theli
The Giannis neg wants to leave but the Kostas wants
Giannis doesn't want to leave but Kostas does.

If the VP is an idiomatic NPI an appropriate interpretation can be constructed if the object, which is responsible for the idiomaticity and the polarity sensitivity, is deleted (61).

(61) Tu Gianni den tu kegete karfi gia tin politiki, tu Kosta omos tu kegete
the/gen G. neg his/cl burns nail for the politics, the/gen K. but his/cl burns
Giannis doesn't give a damn about politics but Kostas does.

in (61) what is missing is only the object *karfi*(nail). In a positive context (62) is as good as its translation if not actually worse:

(62) *Mu kegete karfi gia sena
to-me burns nail for you
I give a damn about you

How can the positive interpretations arise in elliptical contexts? In order to extend our account to idiomatic NPIs we first note that the polarity sensitivity of the idiom originates in the complement of the verb, i.e. *John slept, John paid* etc... are not NPIs. Second, observe with Bolinger (1972) and Horn (1989) that *'When these items [a wink ... a red cent etc...] occur in positive contexts (if they do), they denote a minimal quantity; when they occur in negative contexts, the negation denotes the absence of of a minimal quantity, and hence the presence of no quantity at all'* Horn (1989: pp.400).

Suppose now that these minimizers are the carriers of the [$uPol$]. We propose that, in a way parallel to the licensing of *any*, after the [$uPol$] feature has been checked off what remains is just a variable which fills the degree/measure argument slot of the verb. We further assume, as is natural, that in the absence of a different operator the variable gets existentially closed off. The predicted interpretation of the ellided vP then is (63).

(63) $\exists h(amount(h) \wedge slept(John, h))$

This is the natural interpretation that a sentence like (64) would receive:

(64) Sue didn't sleep a wink but John did.

There seems to be no pint in further restricting h in (63) since for all we know John may have slept only *a wink*, i.e. the minimal amount of sleep.

As we mentioned in the beginning of this section, this account will work up to fully idiomatic interpretation. This means that it is not obvious how it would apply to cases like *give a damn* since *a damn* is not necessarily a minimal amount of something one can give in the literal sense of *give*.

5 Conclusion

We have seen that the understood existential quantifier within the ellipsis in examples like (1), repeated in (65), is derived through LF-copying of the antecedent VP.

(65) Polly didn't interview any candidate, but Sherry did `<interview some candidate>`.

To summarize our proposals in this paper, the sentence is derived in the following manner. $[_{VP}\emptyset]$ is a base-generated empty node.

(66)

a. Polly didn't interview any candidate$_{[uPol]}$, but Sherry did $[_{VP}\emptyset]$ $\Longrightarrow$
b. Check [$uPol$] of *any candidate*, QR of *any candidate* $\Longrightarrow$
c. Polly didn't $[_{VPant}$ [any candidate$_{[\cancel{\text{uPol}}]}$ $]_i$ interview t$_i$], but Sherry did $[_{VP}\emptyset]$ $\Longrightarrow$
d. Spell-out & Copy VP$_{ant}$ to $[_{VP}\emptyset$] $\Longrightarrow$
e. Polly didn't $[_{VPant}$ [any candidate$_{[\cancel{\text{uPol}}]}$ $]_i$ interview t$_i$], but Sherry did $[_{VP}$ [any candidate$_{[\cancel{\text{uPol}}]}$ $]_i$ interview t$_i$]

Since *any candidate* is raised, it can host ACD. Since it is a copy of a licensed NPI, i.e. an existential quantifier, it is understood as a weak quantifier, and can be a correlate in sluicing constructions. The point here is that the [$uPol$] feature on the correlate has already been checked and deleted by the time of copying.

The account does not work if PF-deletion is adopted. Notice that under this approach, the elliptical VP is fully-fledged throughout the derivation, but gets deleted at PF as shown below.

(67) Polly didn't interview [any candidate]$_{[uPol]}$, but Sherry did interview [any candidate]$_{[uPol]}$

In order for the elliptical VP to get deleted under identity with its antecedent, it must bear a [*uPol*] feature, but there is nothing that checks this feature in the second clause. Such a derivation is automatically ruled out.

The analysis advanced in this paper therefore seems to point to the conclusion that an LF-copying approach should be adopted. At the end, we would like to comment on a potential pitfall. The choice between LF-copying and PF-deletion has been the focus of much attention. Some authors argue that elliptical construction(s) that they look at, be it sluicing, VP-ellipsis, N'-ellipsis, are better treated under PF-deletion, and others arrive at the opposite conclusion. However, to the extent that the derivational model of grammar adopted in the minimalist framework in fact allows these two different treatments of ellipsis, adopting one without giving a principled explanation why the other is not possible is nothing more than stipulation. In the cases of VP-ellipsis that we looked at, namely, those that give rise to the *some-any* and related alternations, PF-deletion is not available, since such a derivation would crash due to failure to check the [*uPol*] feature of the NPI. However, this does not exclude the possibility that PF-deletion is available for VP-ellipsis in general, but is made unavailable in the particular cases that this paper discussed. Thus, our conclusion is not that ellipsis should be treated exclusively by LF-copying, but rather that VP-ellipsis that involve *some-any* alternation should be treated by LF-copying, since PF-deletion is impossible on independent grounds.

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