**What can if-stripping tell us about ellipsis?**

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***Introduction***: This study aims to reveal what structure is elided in a type of clausal ellipsis construction called Stripping [1]: (1a). Specifically, we argue that in Stripping and other types of clausal ellipsis, e.g., Sluicing, one of the layers of CPs in an articulated CP system [2] undergoes ellipsis, [3] based on a detailed examination of Stripping in if-clauses (If-stripping: 1b). Such an analysis, we show, explains some properties of these constructions: e.g. apparent violations of the 'Embedded Stripping Generalization' [4] and the lack of overt complementizers in matrix sluicing [3].

**(1)a.** John drinks whiskey, but only scotch. **(1)b**. If whiskey, John prefers to drink scotch.

**Background:** A long-standing generalization of Stripping has been that Stripping is restricted to coordination contexts [1]. Recently, however, it has been shown that Stripping is possible in subordination contexts, but only when the subordinated clause has no overt complementizer: (2).

**(2)** They said it would be done last year, then they thought (*that) THIS year. [4]

This 'Embedded Stripping Generalization*'* (ESG), makes stripping stand out against other clausal ellipsis constructions. For example, sluicing can appear in subordination contexts as in (3). The ESG also distinguishes Stripping from Gapping, which is strictly restricted to coordination contexts.

**(3)** They said it would be done last year, but do you know when exactly?

**(4)** John said it would be done last year and (*Bill remembers (that)) Mary this year.

[4] argues that the ESG follows from a *dynamic phase* approach to ellipsis. Here, the ellipsis domain corresponds to the complement of the phase head, which undergoes null Spell-Out (ellipsis) [6]. The phases are 'dynamic', in that the trigger for Spell-Out need not be a specific head, merely the last head to merge. In (2), if *that* is present, then the complement of *that* is null-Spelled-Out/ elided. Thus, *this year* (the *remnant* of Stripping) is predicted to be within the ellipsis domain, not surviving ellipsis.

**If-stripping:** Stripping seems to be possible in subordination contexts with an overt complementizer. For example, in (1b), the remnant follows overt complementizer *if*: thus If-stripping is a potential counterexample to the ESG. One may argue that If-stripping is not an example of Stripping, instead involving copula or cleft structures, and thus not contrary to the ESG [4: footnote 14]. However, If-stripping shows signature properties of clausal ellipsis. First, If-stripping is possible over implicit correlate (5a), which is incompatible with the copula-clause analysis [6]. Second, in such a context, If-stripping shows Binding Condition C (BCC) connectivity effects. Thus in (5b), coreference between the pronoun and the name is impossible. Importantly, when the pronoun is embedded within a DP and the c-command relation is removed, coreference is possible: (5c). BCC connectivity effects suggest that the ellipsis site is associated with structure parallel to that of the antecedent clause.

**(5)a.** They were selling some pictures. If (*it was) of John, his mother will be upset.

**(5)b./c.** *$He_i$/$^{ok}His_i$ sisters was selling some pictures. If of $John_i$, his mother will be upset.

Third, as [6:690] shows, the *be ashamed of* construction allows for clausal complements only when the clausal complement is fronted. The clausal complement of the *be ashamed of* construction can be the remnant of If-stripping. Furthermore, in (6c) *that* cannot be omitted, indicating movement.

**(6)a.***John is ashamed of that he drank too much. (**6)b.** That he drank too much, John is ashamed of.

**(6)c.** John is ashamed of something. If *(that) he drank too much, then he shouldn't be.

One may argue that *if* is not a complementizer, therefore if-stripping is not problematic to the ESG. There seem to be examples that indicate that *if* is indeed a complementizer. First, transitive verbs may take an if-clause as a complement (e.g., *prefer*), standing in a selectional relation with *if*, like other complementizers. Second, *prefer* can co-occur with a DP or an if-clause, and *do-so* replacement tests suggests that if-clause is indeed a complement (7a-b). Third, *prefer* is compatible with *if* or *that*, but not with *whether*, i.e., *prefer* engages the selectional relation with c-head.

**(7)a./b.** John prefers scotch/if Mary goes and Susan does so (too) (*wine/*if Tom goes).

**(7c)** John prefers if/that/*whether Mary goes.

Finally, conditional-*if* blocks subject-Aux inversion, thus competing for a position with the inverted Aux, which is traditionally analyzed as moving to C-position [7].

(8)a. If Mary had left, John would be happy. (8)b. (*If) Had Mary left, John would be happy.

In sum, If-stripping involves clausal ellipsis like other types of stripping, and *if* in If-stripping is a complementizer. Based on these observations, we contend that If-stripping is a case of Stripping involving clausal ellipsis which is embedded in a subordinated clause 'topped' by a complementizer *if*.

**Proposal**: The distribution of If-stripping follows straightforwardly from an analysis of clausal ellipsis in which ellipsis targets a lower CP [3,6,7] in the articulated CP-system [2] namely Finiteness Phrase (FinP) headed by *that*. The fact that an overt Aux does not appear in matrix sluicing follows from such a analysis ([3:331]): ellipsis targets FinP, and the remnant in sluicing lands in the Focus Phrase (FocP) which is generated higher than FinP.

(9) A: He visited somebody. B: [$_{FocP}$ Who [$_{FinP}$ (*~~did)~~ [$_{TP}$ ~~he visit t~~]]]?

[3]'s analysis can be extended to If-stripping. First, it is plausible that the remnant lands in FocP, because it bears focus stress, and If-stripping is most felicitous in a contrastive context, which are properties of a focused constituent. Second, the complementizer *if* precedes the remnant, thus *if* should head a higher CP than focus. Because conditional clause is related to illocutionary force [8,9], we argue that *if* is a head of Force Phrase (ForceP). Thus the structure of if-stripping should be like:

(10) [$_{ForceP}$ if [$_{FocP}$ whiskey ~~[$_{FinP}$ [$_{TP}$ … ]]~~]]

This analysis predicts that if there is a configuration where an overt Force$^{0}$ can co-occur with an overt Fin$^{0}$, then Force$^{0}$ should appear to the left of Fin$^{0}$, and in such a configuration, Force$^{0}$ and the remnant may survive clausal ellipsis, but Fin$^{0}$ must be elided. French if-clauses may involve a complementizer *que,* a cognate of *that*, (11a): in If-stripping, *que* must be elided but *si,* "if" survives ellipss: (11b).

(11) **A:** Theresa apportera un vin ou du whisky.
Theresa will-be-bringing a wine or a whisky.

(11) a. **B:** Si (qu') elle apportera un vin, je voudrais un vin rouge.
If that she will-be-bringing a wine, I want a wine red

(11)b. **B**: Si (*que) un vin, je voudrais un vin rouge.
If (*that) wine, I want a wine red

"**A:** Theresa will bring wine or whisky. **B:** If wine (she brings t), I want a red wine."

These examples suggest that complementizer *que* "that", whether it in the highest head or not, cannot survive ellipsis. This analysis also captures the absence of *that* in the embedded stripping in (2): FinP is the target of ellipsis. The dynamic phase account, however, doesn't predict if-stripping to be possible since *if* would be the highest projection, thus elliding a domain containing the remnant.

**(12)** $_{ForceP}$ if [~~$_{FocP}$ whisky~~ [~~$_{FinP}$ Fin$^{0}$ [$_{TP}$ … ]~~]]

**Embedded Topicalization:** Embedded topicalization (13) poses a potential problem for the FinP ellipsis analysis: topics seem to be above FinP, but as in (13), *that* must precede the topic. This is not predicted if *that* is generated lower than Topic. Following [11] we suggest that *that* can occupy a position higher than FinP in embedded topicalization contexts and be raised to ForceP but more research is needed to determine what constrains this possibility.

(13) John thinks that geography, Jane loves to study. [4: 352]

**Conclusion**: In sum, we argue that the unacceptability of embedded Stripping like (2) is due to the distribution of the complementizer *that,* rather than a constraint against Stripping with overt complementizers. A thorough analysis of If-stripping shows that *if* is a complementizer and that If-stripping seems to be true embedded Stripping. We use cross-linguistic observations of declarative complementizers to show that *'that'* is generated lower than 'if', and that 'that' is trapped in the ellipsis site since its host, FiniteP, is targeted by deletion.

**[1]** Hankamer, and Sag. (76) "Deep and surface anaphora." *LI.* **[2]** Rizzi, (97). "The fine structure of the left periphery." **[3]** Baltin (10) "The non-reality of doubly filled Comps." *LI.***[4]** Wurmbrand (17).

"Stripping and topless complements." *LI*. **[5]** Chomsky (01). "Minimalist inquiries". **[6]** Merchant. (04) "Fragments and Ellipsis". **[7]** Van Craenenbroeck (10) "How do you sluice when there is more than one CP?" **[8]** Iatridou and Embick (94). "Conditional Inversion". **[9]** Bhatt and Pancheva. (02). "A cross-constructional analysis of if-clauses." **[10]** Haegeman. (03). "Conditional Clauses: External and Internal Syntax". **[11]** Hagstrom. (01). "Handout for CAS LX 523 Syntax II".