

TILL POPPELS

**Reconsidering connectivity:  
evidence from split antecedents in sluicing and VP-ellipsis**

*Abstract*

Theories of ellipsis have been divided as to whether elliptical utterances contain a PRO-FORM that recovers the “missing” meaning anaphorically or are governed by a *sui generis* constraint that requires syntactic or semantic IDENTITY between the elided material and its antecedent. PRO-FORM accounts are supported by the fact that ellipsis, like other forms of discourse reference, can be exophoric, cataphoric, resolved inferentially, and have multiple (“split”) antecedents. Support for IDENTITY theories comes from the fact that they straightforwardly derive “connectivity” effects, including the “auxiliary choice” constraint on VP-ellipsis in (1a) and the case-matching constraint on sluicing in (1b):

- (1a) John was tired but Mary {wasn't|\*didn't}. (VP-ellipsis aux-choice constraint)  
(1b) Jemand.NOM war hier, aber ich weiß nicht, {wer.NOM|\*wen.ACC}. (sluicing case constraint)

Based on experimental evidence involving VP-ellipsis, sluicing, and regular pronouns with split antecedents, I will argue that the connectivity effects in (1) do not provide evidence for ellipsis-specific constraints, but rather reflect a general property of discourse reference. I will present pilot results that confirm the judgments in (2), show that these results cannot be explained under IDENTITY, and outline plans for an analogous experiment on case connectivity effects in German sluicing.

- (2a) Today, Jack bought a new shirt and Bill bought {# pants|a pair of pants}. Tomorrow, I'm sure they'll both want to return it.  
(2b) The judge shouldn't hold a grudge and the prosecutor shouldn't {# be out for|seek} revenge. Unfortunately for the defendant in this case, they both do.

As a whole, this project promises to reveal a novel generalization that unifies aux-choice effects in VP-ellipsis, case connectivity effects in sluicing, and antecedent selection effects associated with other forms of discourse reference, while avoiding the need to postulate *sui generis* constraints on ellipsis.