

Verb Phrase Ellipsis and *v*: Evidence from Hocąk*

Meredith Johnson
University of Wisconsin–Madison

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present data from Hocąk (Siouan) that contribute to the debate on the licensing conditions of verb phrase ellipsis (VPE). Previous research has argued that T/Infl licenses VPE (Bresnan 1976, Sag 1976, Zagona 1988, Lobeck 1995), while more recent research argues that *v* is the licenser (Gengel 2007, Yoshida & Gallego 2008, Gallego 2009, Rouveret 2012).

I argue that Hocąk VPE is licensed by agentive *v* rather than T/Infl. In Hocąk, an overt tense morpheme is not required for VPE to be licit (1a). However, ellipsis is constrained by the type of verb: VPE is only possible with agentive verbs, as evidenced by the ungrammaticality of (1b).¹

- (1) a. *Cecilga wažq̄t̄irehižq̄ ruw̄j̄ anąga (nee) šge hi'ȳȳwi.*
Cecil.PROP car.INDEF 3S.buy and we also 1S.do.1/2PL
'Cecil bought a car, and we did too.'
- b. **Meredithga kšee gip̄j̄ anąga Bryanga šge ȳȳ.*
Meredith.PROP apple 3S.like and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
'Meredith likes apples, and Bryan does too.'

2 Previous analyses

Bresnan (1976), Sag (1976), Zagona (1988) and Lobeck (1995) all argue that VPE is licensed when T/Infl is headed by an overt auxiliary element. When T/Infl is headed by a modal, *do*, or, in certain circumstances, infinitival *to*, VPE is licensed, as shown in (2).

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¹The following abbreviations are used throughout this paper: 1 – first person; 2 – second person; 3 – third person; ACT – active intransitive verb; COMP – complementizer; DECL – declarative; DEF – definite; FUT – future; INDEF – indefinite; NEG – negative; O – object agreement; PL – plural; PROP – proper name; S – subject agreement; STAT – stative intransitive verb.

- (2) a. Mary will leave tomorrow and Ellen may [e] too.
 b. Phyllis discovered the answer, but the others didn't [e].
 c. John wants to leave, but he doesn't know when to [e]. (Zagona 1988:98–99)

Many more recent approaches to ellipsis, such as Holmberg (2001), van Craenenbroeck (2004), Gengel (2007), Yoshida & Gallego (2008), and Gallego (2009), propose that ellipsis results when a phasal head (e.g. *v*, C, D) licenses deletion of its complement. Rouveret (2012) adopts the phasal analysis of ellipsis, and puts forward a theory to predict which languages permit VPE. He argues that *v* always has an uninterpretable [tense] feature, and that, in languages with VPE, the [tense] feature is valued on *v* phase-internally. The result is that verbal forms are complete at the end of the *vP* phase. In the case of English, Rouveret proposes that the elements that license VPE in English – modals, *do* and infinitival *to* – are all merged in *v*, and subsequently move to Infl. This analysis thus unifies earlier analyses of English VPE with phasal approaches to ellipsis.

3 VPE in Hocak

Hocak exhibits a form of VPE in which the light verb *ɣɣ* “replaces” the verb, object and certain adjuncts to the exclusion of the subject, as shown in (3) below.

- (3) a. *Cecilga* [VP *waʒq̄t̄irehiʒq̄ ruwɿ*] *kjane anaga nee ŝge* [*haɣɣ*] *kjane*.
 Cecil.PROP car.INDEF 3S.buy FUT and I also 1S.do FUT
 ‘Cecil will buy a car, and I will too.’
- b. *Cecilga* [VP *xjanare waʒi*] *anaga Bryanga ŝge* [*ɣɣ*].
 Cecil.PROP yesterday 3S.dance and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
 ‘Cecil danced yesterday, and Bryan did too.’
- c. *Cecilga* [VP *ciinək eja waʒq̄t̄irehiʒq̄ ruwɿ*] *anaga Bryanga*
 Cecil.PROP city there car.INDEF 3S.buy and Bryan.PROP
ŝge [*ɣɣ*].
 also 3S.do
 ‘Cecil bought a car in the city, and Bryan did too.’

The examples in (4)–(6) illustrate that *ɣɣ* is indeed a light verb: it productively combines with both nouns and verbs to create a complex predicate.

- (4) a. *maʒnaʒapeja*
 ‘warrior’
 b. *maʒnaʒapeja ɣɣ*
 ‘be in the military’
- (5) a. *naʒwaʒoʒo*
 ‘fiddle’
 b. *naʒwaʒoʒo ɣɣ*
 ‘play the fiddle’
- (6) a. *hooxiwi*
 ‘cough’ (verb)
 b. *hooxiwi ɣɣ*
 ‘have a cold’
 (Examples 4–6: Hartmann 2012)

Constructions with *yy* cannot be analyzed as a *pro*-form, as object extraction (7a) and antecedent-contained deletion (7b) are permitted.

- (7) a. *Jaagu Bryanga ruwira yaapersšanq, nynige jaagu*
 what Bryan.PROP 3S.buy.COMP 1S.know.DECL but what
Hunterga yyra haqke yaaperesni.
 Hunter.PROP 3S.do.COMP NEG 1S.know.NEG
 ‘I know what Bryan bought, but not what Hunter did.’
- b. *Bryanga ruwi, jaagu Meredithga yyra.*
 Bryan.PROP 3S.buy what Meredith.PROP 3S.do.COMP
 ‘Bryan bought what(ever) Meredith did.’

I argue that VPE in Hocak is licensed by *v*. The distribution of VPE cannot be adequately accounted for if T/Infl is the licenser: while tense and modals can be present, as in (8), they are not obligatory (9):

- (8) a. *Cecilga wažatirehižq ruwi kjane anaga nee šge hayy kjane.*
 Cecil.PROP car.INDEF 3S.buy FUT and I also 1S.do FUT
 ‘Cecil will buy a car, and I will too.’
- b. *Meredithga haqke wažatirera pji’y ruxurukni nynige Matejaga*
 Meredith.PROP NEG car.DEF 3S.fix.NEG but Mateja.PROP
yy na.
 3S.do can
 ‘Meredith can’t fix the car, but Mateja can.’
- (9) *Cecilga xjanqre waši anaga Bryanga šge yy.*
 Cecil.PROP yesterday 3S.dance and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
 ‘Cecil danced yesterday, and Bryan did too.’

An appeal to a null tense morpheme as the ellipsis licenser is also not tenable: all of the analyses discussed in §2 explicitly state that VPE must be licensed by an *overt* tense morpheme. Thus, we see that T/Infl does not play a role in VPE licensing in Hocak. However, VPE in Hocak is constrained by the type of *v*. As the examples in (10) show, VPE is not licensed with a non-agentive verb:

- (10) a. **Meredithga kšee gipi anaga Bryanga šge yy.*
 Meredith.PROP apple 3S.like and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
 ‘Meredith likes apples, and Bryan does too.’
- b. **Cecilga wijra waja anaga Meredithga šge yy.*
 Cecil.PROP duck.DEF 3O.see and Meredith.PROP also 3S.do
 ‘Cecil saw the ducks, and Meredith did too.’
- c. **Meredithga hoišq anaga Bryanga šge yy*
 Meredith.PROP 3S.busy.STAT and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
 ‘Meredith is busy, and Bryan is too.’

- d. **Cecilga hijcge nunige Bryanga haqke yunı.*
 Cecil.PROP 3S.tired.STAT but Bryan.PROP NEG 3S.do.NEG
 ‘Cecil is tired, but Bryan isn’t.’

To formalize this restriction on VPE in Hocak, I adopt Merchant’s (2001) proposal that ellipsis takes place when a so-called ‘[E]-feature’ is present on the relevant licensing head. In the case of Hocak, I propose that an [E]-feature is present only on the agentive *v* head.

4 Conclusion

This paper argues that *v*, not T, licenses VPE in Hocak. To account for the data presented here, I adopt the theories of VPE licensing in Gengel 2007, Yoshida & Gallego 2008, Gallego 2009 and Rouveret 2012, with the caveat that VPE licensing in Hocak is more restricted: only agentive *v* functions as a licenser. The fact that T/Infl cannot be the licenser of VPE in Hocak should be taken as strong evidence that *v* is cross-linguistically responsible for VPE licensing.

References

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