Verb Phrase Ellipsis and \( v \): Evidence from Hocąk*

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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) a. Cecilga ważtirehižą ruwij anąga (nee) šge hi’uwywi.
   Cecil.PROP car.INDEF 3s.buy and we also 1s.do.1/2PL
   ‘Cecil bought a car, and we did too.’

   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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†The 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.
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 Hocąk

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

   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 xjanre waśi] anąga Bryanga šge [yụ].
   Cecil.PROP yesterday 3S.dance and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do
   ‘Cecil danced yesterday, and Bryan did too.’

c. Cecilga [VP ciinąk eja ważtirehiżą ruwu] anąga Bryanga
   Cecil.PROP city there car.INDEF 3S.buy and Bryan.PROP
   šge [yụ].
   also 3S.do
   ‘Cecil bought a car in the city, and Bryan did too.’

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

(4) a. mąąnąąpeja
   ‘warrior’

b. mąąnąąpeja yu
   ‘be in the military’

(5) a. nąąwąˇgoˇgo
   ‘fiddle’

b. nąąwąˇgoˇgo yu
   ‘play the fiddle’

(6) a. hooxiwi
   ‘cough’ (verb)

b. hooxiwi yu
   ‘have a cold’

(Examples 4–6:Hartmann 2012)
Constructions with \( \psi \psi \) cannot be analyzed as a pro-form, as object extraction (7a) and antecedent-contained deletion (7b) are permitted.

(7) a. *Jaagu \( \text{Bryanga ruwira \( \psi \psi \) yaapers\( \psi \psi \)q, } \) \( \text{nyjge jaagu} \)
\( \text{what } \text{Bryan.PROP 3S.buy.COMP 1S.know.DECL but what} \)
\( \text{Hunterga \( \psi \psi \) hq\( \psi \psi \)ke yaapere\( \psi \psi \)n.} \)
\( \text{Hunter.PROP 3S.do.COMP NEG 1S.know.NEG} \)
‘I know what Bryan bought, but not what Hunter did.’

b. *Bryanga ruw\( \psi \psi \), jaagu \( \text{Meredithga \( \psi \psi \)}. \)
\( \text{Bryan.PROP 3S.buy what Meredith.PROP 3S.do.COMP} \)
‘Bryan bought what(ever) Meredith did.’

I argue that VPE in Hoc\( \psi \)k 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 wažqirehižq ruw\( \psi \psi \) kjane an\( \psi \psi \)g\( \psi \psi \)a nee \( \psi \psi \) h\( \psi \psi \)e hay\( \psi \psi \) kjane.
\( \text{Cecil.PROP car.indef 3S.buy fut and I also 1S.do fut} \)
‘Cecil will buy a car, and I will too.’

b. *Meredithga h\( \psi \psi \)q\( \psi \psi \)e wažqirera pi\( \psi \psi \)j\( \psi \psi \)y ruxurukn\( \psi \psi \)j \( \text{nyjge } \) Matejaga
\( \text{Meredith.PROP neg car.def 3S.fix.NEG but Mateja.PROP} \)
\( \psi \psi \) ny \( \psi \psi \) n\( \psi \psi \).
\( \text{3S.do can} \)
‘Meredith can’t fix the car, but Mateja can.’

(9) *Cecilga xjan\( \psi \psi \)re waši an\( \psi \psi \)g\( \psi \psi \)a Bryanga \( \psi \psi \) h\( \psi \psi \)e \( \psi \psi \).
\( \text{Cecil.PROP yesterday 3S.dance and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do} \)
‘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 Hoc\( \psi \)k. However, VPE in Hoc\( \psi \)k 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 k\( \psi \psi \)e gip\( \psi \psi \) an\( \psi \psi \)g\( \psi \psi \)a Bryanga \( \psi \psi \) h\( \psi \psi \)e \( \psi \psi \).
\( \text{Meredith.PROP apple 3S.like and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do} \)
‘Meredith likes apples, and Bryan does too.’

b. *Cecilga wîj\( \psi \psi \)ra waja an\( \psi \psi \)g\( \psi \psi \)a Meredithga \( \psi \psi \) h\( \psi \psi \)e \( \psi \psi \).
\( \text{Cecil.PROP duck.def 3O.see and Meredith.PROP also 3S.do} \)
‘Cecil saw the ducks, and Meredith did too.’

c. *Meredithga hoi\( \psi \psi \)q\( \psi \psi \) an\( \psi \psi \)g\( \psi \psi \)a Bryanga \( \psi \psi \) h\( \psi \psi \)e \( \psi \psi \).
\( \text{Meredith.PROP 3S.busy.stat and Bryan.PROP also 3S.do} \)
‘Meredith is busy, and Bryan is too.’
d. *Cecilga hijige nyŋje Bryanga haqke ụnị.  
CecilPROP 3s.tired.STAT but BryanPROP NEG 3s.do.NEG  
‘Cecil is tired, but Bryan isn’t.’

To formalize this restriction on VPE in Hoćak, 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 Hoćak, 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 Hoćak. 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 Hoćak is more restricted: only agentive v functions as a licenser. The fact that T/Infl cannot be the licenser of VPE in Hoćak should be taken as strong evidence that v is cross-linguistically responsible for VPE licensing.

References