Ellipsis in the Romance Languages 🔓

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Summary

Linguistic expressions are complex objects that consist of sound and meaning. However, it is well known that certain linguistic expressions that convey meaning may lack sound, given the appropriate context. Consider the string *John a book*: Without a previous context, the sequence cannot be interpreted as propositional; however, when such string constitutes the second conjunct in a coordination structure as in *Mary read a paper and John a book*, it then receives full propositional content. More specifically, the second conjunct is unequivocally interpreted as *John read a book*, not as *John wrote a book* or *John will read a book*, for example.

These phenomena, which involve meaning without sound, fall within the domain of ellipsis. Ellipsis is pervasive across languages, although its existence poses an obvious challenge to the dual nature of linguistic expressions as pairs of sound and meaning (note that, in a sense, ellipsis phenomena are the flipside of expletive elements like the pronoun *it* in *it snows*, which involve sound without meaning). Precisely because of its theoretical relevance, it has always occupied a privileged position in the linguistic literature. Although English has played a crucial role in the inquiry on ellipsis, more languages, including Romance languages, have been increasingly considered to strengthen the empirical validity of the various theories available. The goal of this article is twofold: first, to show how Romance languages can contribute to our theoretical understanding of ellipsis and, second, to discuss the various issues regarding parametric variation within Romance in the domain of nominal, verbal, and clausal ellipsis.

Keywords: ellipsis, syntax, Romance, sluicing, gapping, stripping, fragments, VP-ellipsis, N-ellipsis

Subjects: Syntax

1. Approaches to Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a phenomenon whereby a chunk of an utterance that appears to be syntactically incomplete is nevertheless interpreted as if it was complete. Thus, in a sentence like (1), the second clause contains a *wh*–expression ('how many') that is actually interpreted as 'how many silver coins John received':

(1)

Juan recibió   monedas de plata,   pero no recuerdo   cuántas. (Sp.)

Juan received   coins   of silver but   not remember how many

'Juan received pieces of silver, but I don't remember how many.'

The literature on ellipsis over the last decades is vast (Brucart & MacDonald, 2012; Gallego, 2011; van Craenenbroeck & Merchant, 2013; van Craenenbroeck & Temmerman, 2019; and references therein). Ellipsis raises, at least, three crucial questions: (a) Under what recoverability conditions does ellipsis operate? (b) What mechanism (operation) is responsible for the deletion of phonetic material? and (c) What parameters regulate the cross-linguistic variation of ellipsis?[1] The answer to this last question is a complex one, and it is addressed throughout the article, where it is shown that Romance languages exhibit important differences when it comes to the availability, licensing, or structural configurations of the various elliptical phenomena.

As for question (a), the interpretation of the ellipsis site hinges on the presence of a linguistic antecedent. In other words, in (1), the propositional interpretation of the *wh*-word as 'how many silver coins Juan received' depends on the leftmost sentence. Given a different linguistic antecedent, as in (2), the same string *pero no recuerdo cuántas* would receive a different interpretation:

(2)

Ayer   Juan bebió muchas cervezas, pero no recuerdo   cuántas. (Sp.)

yesterday Juan drank many   beers   but   not remember how many

'Yesterday Juan drank many beers, but I don't remember how many.'

While it is generally assumed therefore that the ellipsis site must have a discourse antecedent, there is no consensus on whether this antecedent must be semantically or syntactically identical to the ellipsis site. Proponents of the semantic view defend that sometimes it is possible for syntactic mismatches to occur between the ellipsis site and the antecedent. In this respect, voice mismatches as in *This problem was to have been looked into, but nobody did* have been extensively discussed in the literature (Kehler, 2000; Lasnik, 2005; Merchant, 2013, 2019). If identity must be understood syntactically, then such mismatches should not occur—and if they do, they should be explained independently (see Arregui et al., 2006, for an attempt to derive voice mismatches from a processing perspective).

With respect to question (b), various answers have been pursued.[2] A first, nonstructural, approach to ellipsis assumes that "what you see is what you get," phonetically or syntactically, in stark contrast with structural approaches, which are based on the idea that there is invisible syntactic or semantic material (cf. Merchant, 2019, for references endorsing each option and relevant discussion). These two opposite views can be illustrated in (3) (cf. (1)), where "*e*" stands for some empty category that is syntactically, and thus semantically, active.

(3)

a. Juan recibió monedas de plata, pero no recuerdo cuántas. (Sp.)

b. Juan recibió monedas de plata, pero no recuerdo cuántas *e*. (Sp.)

There are nontrivial problems with (3a), as has been noted in the literature (Merchant, 2001, for discussion, among many others). As for (3b), it can be implemented in various ways. One option takes the *e* formative to be a *bona fide* proform (cf. Brucart, 1987; Lobeck, 1995), which nicely captures the connection between ellipsis and anaphoric dependencies. A second structural approach, built on Tancredi's (1992) and Chomsky and Lasnik's (1993) work, claims that ellipsis involves phonological reduction, more accurately, a radical form of deaccenting (see Ott & Struckmeier, 2016, for a similar approach). From this perspective, cases like those in (1) involve a fully fledged syntactic structure that is left unpronounced. This is the view adopted in this article (see Note 1). The unpronounced structure is marked with strikethrough text throughout:

(4)

… no recuerdo cuántas ~~monedas de plata recibió Juan~~.

Within the generative literature, the analysis in (4) is typically implemented with the assumption that ellipsis (i.e., phonological reduction) can only apply to syntactic constituents, which means that often the remnant (i.e., the element that survive ellipsis) needs to undergo syntactic movement to a position peripheral to the ellipsis site. That ellipsis needs to affect constituents is a consequence of the fact that for many authors, ellipsis is taken to be licensed syntactically, by means of a construction-specific feature, the so-called E-feature (Merchant, 2001; see Brunetti, 2003; Fernández-Sánchez, 2020; Ortega-Santos et al., 2014; Weir, 2014, for discussion on specific cases).

2. Nominal Ellipsis

2.1 Two Types of Nominal Ellipsis

There are two possible definitions of nominal ellipsis. In a broad sense, the term encompasses both argument ellipsis (i.e., ellipsis of an entire nominal argument; see also Abeillé, Coordination in Syntax in the Romance Languages) and partial nominal ellipsis (i.e., ellipsis of the head of a NP). In a narrow sense, only the latter is properly labeled a nominal ellipsis (henceforth, N-ellipsis). The latter option is prevalent in the literature (Saab, 2019; van Craenenbroeck & Merchant, 2013) and is the one followed here.[3] However, it is useful to consider, albeit briefly, the differences between argument and N-ellipsis.

In argument ellipsis, the unpronounced material corresponds to an entire nominal argument (5a). In partial ellipsis, the phonetic gap involves the head of a NP that has some other constituent overtly realized, as shown in (5b, 5c), where the underscore represents the ellipsis site and the lexical material in italics stands for the remnants of the N-elliptical projection:

(5)

a. __ ha telefonato ieri. (It.)

    has phoned yesterday

'He/she phoned yesterday.'

b. Tu madre y la __ de María son íntimas amigas. (Sp.)

    your mother and the of Maria are close friends

'Your mother and Mary's are close friends.'

c. Os edifícios antigos a serem recuperados são em número muito inferior a

    the buildings old to be refurbished are in number much inferior to

    os __ a serem demolidos. (Pt.)

    the to be demolished

'The old buildings to be refurbished are much lower in number than the ones to be

demolished.' (Matos, 2003, p. 871)

In Italian, pronominal subjects can be elliptical, as opposed to French. Thus, the French equivalent of (5a) must include an overt pronominal subject (*Il/elle a téléphoné hier*). The possibility to allow for elliptical subjects opposes null-subject, or pro-drop, languages (NSL), such as Italian and most Romance varieties, to non-pro-drop languages, such as French or English. The contrast arises even when the subject does not denote any discourse entity, as in meteorological verbs (see also Pesacrini's Pronoun Systems in the Romance Languages) (6), or in subject inversion (7). In these cases, NSLs preclude the presence of an overt pronoun, whereas French requires it:

(6)

  a. Plòu e   solelha. (Occ.)

       rains and is sunny

       'It rains and it is sunny.'

  b. Plou i   fa   sol. (Cat.)

       rains and makes sun

       'It rains and it is sunny.'

  c. Il pleut et   il fait (du)   soleil. (Fr.)

       it rains and it makes of the sun

       'It rains and it is sunny.'

(7)

  a. Sono arrivati subito   la polizia e i   vigili del   fuoco. (It.)

       are arrived suddenly the police and the guard of the fire

       'There suddenly arrived the local police and the firefighters.'

  b. Il est arrivé le printemps. (Fr.)

       it is arrived the spring

       'The spring has arrived.'

2.2 N-Ellipsis

Examples (5b) and (5c) instantiate N-ellipsis. In (5b), the head of the NP is left unpronounced, as opposed to the determiner and the complement, which are phonetically realized. In turn, the elliptical material in (5c) includes the head noun plus the adjectival complement and the overt elements are the definite article *os*, which appears agglutinated with the previous preposition, and the passive infinitival clause introduced by *a*.

N-ellipsis is subject to a high range of interlinguistic variation, as it is not available in the same specific configurations across Romance. This subsection focuses on the different remnants that can occur in N-ellipsis.[4]

Among definite determiners, demonstratives generally license N-ellipsis:[5]

(8)

a. Este asunto es más importante que aquel __. (Sp.)

   this matter is more important than that

   'This matter is more important than that one.'

b. Je préfère cette voiture- ci à celle __- là. (Fr.)

   I prefer this car here to this there

   'I prefer this car to that one.'

c. Vreau creionul acesta. – Pe __ acesta? – Nu, pe __ acela! (Ro.)

   want pencil this for this no for that

   'I want this pencil. – This one? – No, that one!' (Cojacaru, 2003, p. 80)

Possessives, in turn, require the combination with the article:

(9)

a. Els nostres drets   són   tan importants com els vostres ___. (Cat.)

   the our   rights are   as important as   the yours

   'Our rights are as important as yours.'

b. Chiedi   in biblioteca un altro libro, se non vuoi prendere il   mio ___. (It.)

   request in library   an other book if not   want to take   the mine

   'Request another (copy of the) book from the library if you don't want to take mine.'

   (Renzi, 1988, p. 608)

c. Sua   própria   história não é   menos apaixonante que   a   minha ___. (Pt.)

   his/her own   story   not is less   thrilling   than the mine

   'His/her own story isn't less thrilling than mine.'

Due to its clitic nature, the behavior of the definite article as a licenser of N-ellipsis is more complex. In Iberian languages, it can head an elliptical noun but only when combined with some other remnant (a possessive, a numeral, some quantifiers, an adjective, a PP complement headed by *de* or a restrictive relative clause):[6]

(10)

a. Las {mías/ cuatro/ otras/nuevas/de María/ que vinieron} son   buenas. (Sp.)

   the   mine four   other new   of María that came   are   good

   '{Mine/the four/the other} are good.'; 'The new ones/The ones {from Mary/that came} are good.'

b. Les {meves/quatre/altres/noves/de la Maria/que van arribar} són bones. (Cat.)

c. As {minhas/quatro/outras/novas/de Maria/que chegaram} são boas. (Pt.)

In French and Italian, the combinatorial possibilities of the article in these constructions are more constrained. When the remnant includes a complement of the noun that is not an adjective, the demonstrative is required:

(11)

a. Le {mie/quattro/altre/nuove} sono buone. (It.)

b. Quelle __ {di Maria/che siano venute} sono buone. (It.)

(12)

a. Les {miennes/quatre/autres} sont bonnes. (Fr.)

b. Celles __ {de Marie/qui sont venues} sont bonnes. (Fr.)

As for quantifiers, their behavior is not unitary. Numerals (including the indefinite article when its form is homophonous with the first cardinal) can license the elliptical site by themselves or in combination with some complement:[7]

(13)

a. Um estudante de direito e   um __ de medicina. (Pt.)

    one student   of law   and one   of medicine

    'One student of law and one of medicine.'

b. Hablando de entradas, necesito tres __ que no sean __ muy caras. (Sp.)

    speaking of tickets   need   three   that not be   very expensive

    'Speaking of tickets, I need three which aren't very expensive.'

c. Uite, sunt acolo   doŭa __. (Ro.)

    look are   there   two

    'Look, there are two.' (Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea, 2013, p. 275)

The availability of indefinite quantifiers as heads of N-ellipsis constructions crucially depends on the notion of partitivity (Lobeck, 1995; López, 2000). Only those that can function as heads of a partitive phrase can license the nominal gap (Carlier & Lamiroy, Partitive Articles in the Romance Languages; Pozas-Loyo, Indefinite Articles in the Romance Languages):

(14)

a. He   invitado a   todos   mis   familiares, pero algunos __ no vendrán. (Sp.)

    have invited   to all   my   relatives   but   some   not will come

    'I've invited all my relatives, but some won't come.'

b. Parmi ces   associations, certains __ ont   eté   plus formellement

    among these associations some   have been more formally

    constituées. (Fr.)

    constituted

    'Among these associations, some have been more formally constituted.'

c. Il   nostro ordinamento garantisce la possibilità di instituire   scuole

    the our   legal order   guarantees the possibility of to establish schools

    private e   molte __ ne   sono state aperte   recentemente. (It.)

    private and   many   of them are   been opened   recently

    'Our laws guarantee the possibility of establishing private schools, and many have

    been recently opened.'

As Eguren (2010) points out, some cases of interlinguistic variation suggest a link between partitivity and N-ellipsis. Thus, French *quelques*, as opposed to Spanish *algunos*, cannot head a N-elliptical construction except when followed by the plural forms of *un* (*mais {quelques-uns/ *quelques} ne viendront pas* 'but some will not come'). This contrast is reproduced in partitive NPs (*algunos de mis11amiliarss* vs. *{quelques-uns/*quelques} de mes parents*, 'some of my relatives'). Conversely, Spanish *ciertos*, the cognate of French *certaines*, could not be used in the translation corresponding to (14b; **ciertos han sido abiertos*), as it cannot head a partitive construction (*certaines des mesures/*ciertas de las medidas* 'certain of the measures'). The same parallelism predicts the unavailability of French *chaque* or Spanish *cada*, since both forms require the amalgamation with the indefinite *one* in partitive phrases (Sp. *{cada uno/*cada} de los niños*; Fr. *{chacun/*chaque} des enfants* 'each of the children').

It is worth noting that in languages that have a partitive clitic (such as French, Catalan, or Sardinian), N-ellipsis of an indefinite internal argument triggers the presence of this pronominal form, as opposed to N-ellipsis of indefinite external arguments:[8]

(15)

a. J'en   ai   vues certaines __ au   théatre. (Fr.)

I of them have seen some   at the theatre

'I've seen some at the theatre.'

b. N'   he   llegit quatre __ de molt interessants. (Cat.)

of it have read four   of very interesting

'I've read four that were very interesting.'

c. Nde appo   bitu   meta __, de vinu. (Srd.)

of it have   drunk a lot   of wine

'I drank a lot of wine.' (Jones, 1993, p. 76)

In (15c), the prepositional coda of the partitive construction is right-dislocated, which triggers the presence of the partitive clitic affixed to the verbal form. The examples in (15) show that in these cases, the gap is licensed by means of a pronominal strategy rather than a properly elliptical one.

So far we have focused on which determiners and quantifiers license a N-elliptical site. But, as in many of the previous examples, lexical modifiers can also cooccur with them: mainly, APs, PPs, and restrictive relatives. Romance languages differ with respect to how productive N-ellipsis is with such modifiers: Sleeman (1996) notes that N-ellipsis with adjectives is more constrained in French than in Spanish and that in Italian, it is even less productive.[9] In Catalan, when the remnant includes an AP and the empty nominal receives indefinite interpretation, the preposition *de* must precede the adjective, even though it is not dislocated:

(16)

En   tinc quatre __ de noves. (Cat.)

of them have four   of new

'I have four new ones.'

A currently much-debated issue regarding N-ellipsis is the possibility that, at least in some Romance languages, the remnant can consist exclusively of a nominal complement (AP, PP, or a restrictive relative clause), without the presence of any determiner or quantifier. Although this possibility is not reported in most of the literature, Eguren (2010, p. 437) and Cornilescu and Nicolae (2012) argue in favor of it on the basis of data from Spanish and Romanian, respectively:[10]

(17)

a. Antes bebía cerveza alemana y ahora solo bebo __ española. (Sp.)

before drank beer German and now only drink Spanish

'I used to drink German beer and I only drink Spanish [beer] now.'

b. Ion vrea maşină de curse, iar Petre îşi doreşte __ de teren. (Ro.)

Ion wants car of race but Petre REFL.DAT desires of terrain

'Ion wants a racing car, and Petre wants a terrain one.'

The analysis of the constructions in (17) as cases of N-ellipsis is controversial; see Saab (2008, pp. 513–516) for a discussion.

2.3 The Interpretation of N-Ellipsis Gaps

The semantic content of the N-ellipsis gap can be construed using three different mechanisms: (a) anaphorically, by means of its connection to a discourse antecedent; (b) deictically, via the information provided by the situational context; or (c) internally, from the features that can be associated to the remnant. The examples in (18) represent these three variants:

(18)

a. Sur les 11 candidats, quatre __sont venus dans les Alpes du Sud

out of the 11 candidates four are come in the Alpes of the South

récemment. (Fr.)

recently

'Out of the 11 candidates, four have recently come to the Southern Alps.'

b. [An offer at the supermarket]

Prendi tre __ e paghi due. (It.)

take three and pay two

'Take three and pay two.'

c. Los __ que dicen eso mienten. (Sp.)

the that say that lie

'Those who say so, lie.'

By far, the most frequent mechanism is the discourse anaphoric one. Conversely, the most restrictive is the third one, which is limited to the denotation of the class of human beings, so (18c) must refer to people in general, not, for instance, to reports or journalists. Example (18c) also admits an anaphoric interpretation of the elliptical site in the appropriate context (*Tengo excelente opinión de los periodistas, pero los que dicen eso mienten* 'I have a good opinion of journalists in general, but the ones that say so lie').[11] Empty nominals that receive internal interpretation of the gap frequently give rise to semi-lexicalized phrases, as in Sp. *los de al lado* ('the neighbors'), *los de casa* ('the family members'), *los que mandan* ('the powers that be'; cf. Saab, 2019), Sard. *sos meos* ('my family'), *sos de Juanne* ('John's family; cf. Jones, 1993). In some cases, the process of lexicalization can give rise to an NP with a gapless structure obtained by categorial conversion (Fr. *les pauvres* 'the poor', It. *i ricchi* 'the rich', Fr. *les sans-abri*, It. *i senzatetto*). Nonetheless, the elliptical construction remains available sometimes, as shows the possibility of including a degree quantifier (*les très pauvres* 'the very poor'). See Borer and Roy (2010) for a detailed study of these cases.

Interestingly, Spanish and Italian distinguish deadjectival nouns and adjectives when the determiner is an indefinite article in masculine singular, since the noun takes the apocopic form (*un*) and the adjective the complete one (*uno*):

(19)

a. Un rico siempre quiere más   dinero. (Sp.)

   a   rich   always   wants more   money

   'A rich man always wants more money.'

b. Prefiero un marido culto   a uno __ rico. (Sp.)

   prefer   a   husband learned to one   rich

   'I prefer a learned husband to a rich one.'

(20)

a. Un povero non sarà   mai   uguale a un ricco. (It.)

   a   poor   not will be never equal   to a   rich

   'A poor will never be the same as a rich.'

b. Che parità   di opportunità   ci=potrà   mai essere tra   un

   what equality of opportunities cl=will be able ever be   between a

   bambino disabile povero   ed   uno ricco? (It.)

   child   disabled poor   and   one rich

   'How can a poor child with disabilities have the same opportunities as one rich?'

The ungrammaticality of *un muy rico/*un molto ricco*, as opposed to the well-formedness of *uno muy rico/uno molto ricco*, shows that *rico/ricco* retains its adjectival nature when preceded by a degree quantifier. Expectedly, if a noun is added to the former sequences, the result is grammatical: *un desayuno muy rico* (Sp.) 'a very rich breakfast'/*un aroma molto ricco* (It.) 'a very rich flavor').

The existence of N-elliptical constructions without anaphoric or deictic interpretation poses the problem of deciding whether the pattern of (18c) is identical to the one of (18a) and (18b). Saab (2019) contends that (18c) exemplifies a different structure, which he terms "empty noun constructions." The contrast would derive from the fact that the latter construction is formed by direct insertion of an empty noun from the lexicon, whereas in the former the gap is the result of

a mechanism that deletes a lexical noun under conditions of identity with an antecedent. Consequently, the interpretation of (18c) cannot be anaphoric because it does not arise as the result of a deletion process under identity. For a proposal on different grounds, see Panagiotidis (2003).

A crucial difference between N-ellipsis and argument ellipsis is the opposite nature of the relation between the gap and the antecedent. In argument ellipsis the relation is established between two arguments that are co-referent, that is, that represent the same entity in the universe of discourse. On the contrary, in N-ellipsis the gap does not represent an entity but a class of entities, and the relation between the NP that the elliptical noun heads and the antecedent is not of co-reference but of identity of sense (Grinder & Postal, 1971). Consequently, the NPs linked by the anaphoric relation refer to two different entities that have in common the fact that they are members of the same class. Thus, in (18a) the NPs *les onze candidats* ('the eleven candidates') and *quatre__* ('four___') denote individuals that are members of the same class (that of the candidates). Moreover, in this case, the relation between both NPs is partitive so that the second is a subset of the first. But this is not necessary: In (17b), *maşină de curse* 'a racing car' and *___ de teren* 'a car of terrain' establish a partitive relation with the class 'car', as long as both denote subclasses of cars, but there is not a partitive relation between both NPs.

The fact that N-ellipsis denotes classes and not individuals is at the basis of the different grammatical features that can have the antecedent and the gap:

(21)

a. Van   entrar   dos   trens de rodalies i   un __ de mercaderies. (Cat.)

    PST   to enter two   commuter trains and one   of goods

    'There entered two commuter trains and a freight one.'

b. Un indicateur de niveau composé de quatre LEDs, trois __vertes et   une

    a indicator   of level   made   of four   LEDs three green   and   one

    __ jaune. (Fr.)

    yellow

    'A level indicator made of four LEDs, three green and one yellow.'

Although the sentences in (21) contain number mismatches in the relation between the gap and the antecedent, they are well formed. Note that both the antecedent and the gap can be independently singular or plural. The number of the latter is obtained by the information provided by the determiners or quantifiers that constitute the remnant of the elliptical NP.

Contrary to number features, gender must be identical in the antecedent and the gap (Brucart & Gràcia, 1986):

> (22)
>
> a. * Il   figlio di Maria e   quella __ di Patrizia. (It.)
>
>   the-M son   of Maria and that-F   of Patrizia
>
>   '(Int.) Maria's son and Patrizia's daughter.'
>
> b. * O   gato do vizinho   e   a __ minha. (Pt.)
>
>   the-M cat   of neighbour and the-F mine
>
>   '(Int.) The neighbour's male cat and my female cat.'

Although the pairs *figlio/figlia* and *gato/gata* share the same root, they cannot be linked in an N-ellipsis relation. The asymmetry of the identity conditions of gender and number in N-ellipsis seems to be the result of their contraposed syntactic nature: Whereas number is a purely syntactic category, gender is an inherent feature of the noun lexeme (Bernstein, 1993; Ritter, 1991). The greater proximity of gender to the noun is reflected in morphology: The number projection is external to the lexical layer and remains unavailable for the mechanisms of deletion. Therefore, the determiners and quantifiers that form the remnant receive the number information from inside the elliptical NP. Conversely, the information of gender must replicate the one contained in the antecedent.

2.4   The Analysis of N-Ellipsis

Although some steps have been taken toward the unification of argument ellipsis and N-ellipsis (see Duguine, 2014, 2017, and Lobeck, 1995, for a general theory of ellipsis), the mainstream view is that argument ellipsis and N-ellipsis are distinct phenomena. Consequently, both phenomena are often analyzed following opposite strategies: Argument ellipsis is generally represented by means of empty categories directly taken from the lexicon and entering the derivation by external merge, whereas N-ellipsis is addressed as implying mechanisms of deletion (or phonetic de-accentuation) that affect the lexical material contained in the elliptical site.

Ronat's (1977) seminal work on N-ellipsis in French, framed in the extended standard theory of generative grammar (see Pescarini, The Reception of Generativism in Romance Linguistics in this volume), proposes an analysis that aims at explaining why only a subset of adjectives accepts N-ellipsis in this language (examples from Valois et al., 2009):

(23)

a. J'ai   entendu {la plus interessante/ les deux/le   premier/ la   verte foncé. (Fr.)

    I have heard   the more interesting   the two   the first   the greendark

    'I have heard {the most interesting/the two/the first/the dark green one}.'

b.* J'ai   entendu l'   important. (Fr.)

    I have heard   the important

    '(Int.) I've heard the important one.'

Ronat established different levels of dependency for adjectives inside the NP and posited that only the classifying ones (superlatives, color and measure adjectives, and the ones expressing cardinality or ordinality) can license the deletion of the noun.

With the emergence of the Government and Binding model (Chomsky, 1981), the interest shifted to determining the licensing conditions of the gap. The first attempts tried to establish a link between the richer inflectional morphology of most Romance languages and the less constrained behavior of N-ellipsis with respect to English. Building on Harris (1991), Bernstein (1993) claimed that the crucial element that legitimates nominal gaps in Spanish is a word marker, which is syncretic with the exponent of gender, one that heads its own syntactic functional projection. The affixation of the word marker to the determiner allows the empty noun to be governed and license the ellipsis. Bernstein tried to apply the same analysis to French and concludes that it also has word markers, even though they are phonologically null. For a critical assessment of Bernstein's theory, see Bouchard (2002), and see Alexiadou and Gengel (2012) for an updated theory focusing on the syntactic projection of morphological affixes.

Another influential line of research tries to connect N-ellipsis with the system of empty categories developed by Chomsky (1981) onward to account for argument ellipsis. Lobeck (1995) assumed that the gap of N-ellipsis is an empty pronominal category (*pro*) directly inserted in the derivation and interpreted as a logical form by means of rules of lexical reconstruction. Just as the empty null subject of pro-drop languages is licensed by a rich inflection, N-elliptical *pro* must be properly governed by a c-commanding functional head that is specified for strong agreement. The notion of strong agreement implies the necessity of morphological realization of the agreement traits in a productive number of cases whether in the same governing head or in some element that agrees with it.

The following contrast, from Kornfeld and Saab (2004), shows that the inflection in the *wh*-determiner is the element that is responsible of the asymmetry:

(24)

{Cuáles/ qué} libros de Borges y   { cuáles/* qué} __ de Bioy…? (Sp.)

which   what books of Borges and which   what   of Bioy

'Which books by Borges and which ones by Bioy…?'

Other formal accounts tend to avoid empty categories and interpretive rules of reconstruction for N-ellipsis in favor of mechanisms of deletion or de-accentuation, as in Merchant's (2001) theory of ellipsis, where a specific feature [E], merged in the derivation, is responsible for deletion as a specific case of selection by a functional head.

Finally, other theories concentrate on the semantic conditions that characterize the relation between the gap and the antecedent. Two semantic concepts that seem to play an important role from this perspective are partitivity (Sleeman, 1996) and focus (Eguren, 2010; Giannakidou & Stavrou, 1999).

3. Verbal Ellipsis

The previous section examined cases in which an NP was deleted. In this section, the focus shifts to cases in which ellipsis affects a VP. Technically speaking, what is commonly referred to in the literature as VP-ellipsis is not attested generally across Romance languages.[12] As seen in (25), the Romance equivalents of VP-ellipsis are ungrammatical (contrast them with the literal translation into English in (25a), which is a grammatical sentence in which a VP selected by an auxiliary is deleted):

(25)

a. * En Joan no ha llegit   aquest llibre, però en Pere ha __.

   the Joan not has read   this   book   but   the Pere has

   'John hasn't read this book, but Peter has.'

b. * Jean n'a pas lu ce livre, mais Pierre a __.

c. * Juan no ha leído este libro, pero Pedro ha __.

d. * Gianni non ha letto questo libro, ma Pietro ha __.

The lack of VP-ellipsis in Romance has been discussed by, among others, Brucart (1987), Zagona (1988), Lobeck (1995), López (1999), and Depiante (2000). A notable exception is Portuguese, which allows VP-ellipsis after auxiliaries, just like English:[13]

(26)

Ontem	ele não	tinha aida	lido	esse	artigo,	mas	hoje,	quando	telefonei,
yesterday	she not	had yet	read	this	article	but	today	when	phoned

telefonei,	já	tinha. (Pt.)
phoned	already	had

'Yesterday she hadn't read the paper, but today, when I phoned, she already had.' (Cyrino & Matos, 2002, p. 181)

Portuguese also differs from other Romance languages in that main verbs, which also move to T in this language (see Note 12), license ellipsis of the VP complement:

(27)

A	Joana	não	deu	o	presente	à	mãe	mas	a	prima	deu ___. (Pt.)
the	Joana	not	gave	the	gift		to mother	but	to	cousin	gave

'Joana didn't give the present to her mother, but to her cousin.'

A well-known analysis for these cases is developed by Goldberg (2005), who defends that these sequences involve ellipsis of a VP containing the trace of the V which has moved to T. The fundamental question that needs to be addressed is what is there in the syntax of Portuguese that enables it to display VP-ellipsis altogether to derive the cases in (26) and (27).

To answer this, a final set of data needs consideration. It is a well-known fact that the availability of VP ellipsis in Romance correlates with the possibility to answer a yes/no question with a bare verb, a grammatical option in Portuguese (28b) but an ungrammatical one in other Romance languages like Spanish (28b′), where a polarity adverb must be used instead:[14]

(28)

a: Did you give him the book?

b: Dei (lit. 'I gave.') (Pt.)

b': * Di (lit. 'I gave.') / Sí (lit. 'yes') (Sp.)

Interestingly, the grammatical counterparts of (25) all feature a polarity adverb instead of the auxiliary verb, as shown in (29) for Catalan; compare to (25a):

(29)

En Joan no ha llegit   aquest llibre,   però   en Pere sí __.

the Joan not has read   this   book   but   the Pere yes

'John hasn't read this book, but Peter has.'

For this reason, many authors have defended that the variation regarding the availability of VP-ellipsis in Romance should be rooted in the functional category Σ, which encodes polarity (Laka, 1990). A more detailed link between VP-ellipsis and polarity cannot be developed here for space constraints, but see Martins (1994, 2016), López (1999), or Depiante (2000) for various implementations.

There is a slight variation from (25), which involves ellipsis of a verb after a modal, which is grammatical in all Romance languages:

(30)

Dovrei mangiare   la   pizza   e   anche   Gianni divrebbe __. (It.)

should to eat   the   pizza   and   also   Gianni should

'I must eat the pizza, and Gianni must too.' (Cecchetto & Percus 2006)

Especially in the literature on Spanish, such cases are typically considered a subset of a more general phenomenon referred to as Null Complement Anaphora (NCA), which is defined as a case in which the complement of some infinitive-taking verbs is elided (Brucart, 1999; Depiante, 2000, 2001; Saab, 2008):

(31)

a. Yo ya   he   terminado de trabajar, pero ellos ni siquiera han

   I   already have finished   of to work but they not even   have

   empezado ___. (Sp.)

   'I already finished working, but they haven't even started (working).'

b. Teníamos que   comprar el regalo, pero nos   olvidamos ___. (Sp.)

   had   that to buy   the gift   but   us   forgot

   'We had to buy the gift, but we forgot.'

The various analyses proposed in the literature reveal the classic distinction between those who view the ellipsis site as containing an atomic pronominal form and those who view it as containing unpronounced, fully fledged syntactic structure (see Section 2). While the former has traditionally been the mainstream view, several authors (Authier, 2011; Dagnac, 2010; Fernández-Sánchez, to appear) have defended (a) that (30) cannot be considered a case of NCA despite the surface similarities between (30) and (31) and (b) that the silent complement of the examples in (30) involves deletion of syntactically present material. More in particular, Dagnac (2010) and Fernández-Sánchez, to appear) have defended that modals in Romance are subject-raising verbs that select a TP (Wurmbrand, 2001) and that therefore (31) actually involves deletion of a TP, not a VP (see Note 12).

4. Clausal Ellipsis

Clausal ellipsis involves deletion of, minimally, a TP, "including the canonical subject position and the agreement domain, but often to the exclusion of one or more clause-internal constituents" (van Craenenbroek & Merchant, 2013, p. 718). Various phenomena belong in this category; the most important ones are reviewed here: sluicing (Section 4.1), fragment answers (Section 4.2), gapping (Section 4.3), and stripping (Section 4.4). As mentioned in the introduction, we assume that these phenomena involve hidden syntactic structure unpronounced at PF.

4.1 Sluicing

Sluicing, (32a), is a phenomenon whereby a full question is unpronounced to the exception of a *wh*-operator. It is commonly assumed that sluicing involves a two-step derivation (32b): (a) *wh*-movement of the *wh*-operator and (b) PF-deletion of the TP; see Ross (1969), Merchant (2001, 2019), and Vicente (2019):

(32)

a. Ana estuvo en un sitio interesante, pero ahora no recuerdo dónde. (Sp.)

   Ana was in a place interesting but now not remember where

   'Ana was in an interesting place, but now I can't recall where.'

b. … pero ahora no recuerdo [dónde$_i$ [~~Catalina estuvo~~ t$_i$]].

Although typical examples of sluicing involve a subordinate question, like (32a), sluicing can target matrix environments:

(33)

A: Catalina ha pasado el verano en un sitio muy interesante.

   Catalina has spent the summer in a place very interesting

   'Catalina has spent the summer in a very interesting place.'

B: ¿De verdad? [$_{CP}$ Dónde [$_{TP}$ ~~ha pasado el verano Catalina~~ t$_i$]]?

   of truth where

   'Really? Where?'

Most of the debates concerning the internal syntax of sluicing have to do with the movement operation that the *wh*-operator undergoes. Given the nature of the remnant, *wh*-movement appears to be independently motivated. However, can we show, empirically, that the *wh*-remnant reaches a clause-peripheral position? In this sense, one important corollary of the move-and-delete view is that it predicts that the regular effects created by movement ought to be observed in sluicing. Surprisingly, however, this prediction is not always borne out. Many authors have noted that the movement operation that feeds TP-ellipsis unexpectedly creates discrepancies between the elided and non-elided forms. Interestingly, these asymmetries have been argued to reveal important properties about the nature of the ellipsis site or about the ellipsis operation itself (Merchant, 2001).

In what follows, we discuss some of these discrepancies focusing on Romance languages. We use these asymmetries as an excuse to address some of the debates that are currently going on in the domain of sluicing and briefly present the modifications that have been proposed to the basic scheme in (32b) to accommodate these problematic cases.

4.1.1 The P(reposition)-Stranding Generalization

One of the strongest arguments in favor of the analysis in (32b) comes from Merchant's (2001, p. 92) P(reposition)-stranding generalization (PSG). P-stranding refers to the possibility to move the nominal complement of a PP independently of the P, which ends up stranded. English is a P-stranding language (34), but German is not (34b):

(34)

   a.   Who$_i$ did you speak [$_{PP}$ with [$_{NP}$ t$_i$]]?

   b. *Wem$_i$ hat John [$_{PP}$ mit [$_{NP}$ t$_i$]] gesprochen?

If sluicing involves movement of the *wh*-operator, we expect P-stranding to be possible only in P-stranding languages. The contrast in (35) suggests this is correct:

(35)

   a.   John was speaking with someone, but I don't remember (with) who.

   b.   John hat mit jemandem gesprochen, aber ich weiß nicht *(mit) wem.

The PSG has been challenged by several languages. Rodrigues et al. (2008) show that in Spanish (36a) and Brazilian Portuguese (36b), PP remnants may appear preposition-less in sluicing contexts:

(36)

   a. Juan ha hablado con una chica, pero no sé (con) cuál. (Sp.)

       Juan has talked with a girl but not know with which

       'Juan talked to a girl, but I don't know which.'

   b. A Maria dançou com alguém, mas eu não sei (com) quem. (BrPt.)

       the Maria danced with someone but I not know with whom

       'Maria danced with someone, but I don't know with who.'

This is striking, given that neither of the two languages allow P-stranding under regular *wh*-movement:

(37)

a. *Qué   chica ha hablado Juan con? (Sp.)

   which girl has spoken   Juan with

   'Which girl has Juan spoken with?'

b. *Quem que   a   Maria dançou   com? (BrPt.)

   which that the Maria danced   with

   'Who has Maria danced with?'

Rodrigues et al. (2008) argue, however, that these languages do not constitute counterexamples to the PSG. Their claim is that the apparent P-stranding strings are derived from an underlying cleft based on a specificational copular sentence:

(38)

Juan ha hablado con   una chica, pero no sé   cuál   es la chica con la

Juan has spoken   with a   girl   but   not know which is the girl   with the

que   ha   hablado Juan. (Sp.)

which has   spoken   Juan

'Juan has spoken to a girl, but I don't know which is the girl that Juan has spoken to.'

Their claim is based on the observation that the alleged cases of P-stranding under sluicing in these languages pattern like clefts, and unlike regular interrogatives, with respect to a list of properties. One such property is *else*-modification. Building on a test by Merchant (2001), they show that *else*-modification is possible with regular interrogatives (41a) but disallowed with clefts (39b):

(39)

a. Harry was there, but I don't know who else was there.

b. *Harry was there, but I don't know who else it was that was there.

These authors show that *else*-modification is impossible in Spanish sluices that exhibit P-stranding (40). This confirms that they cannot be derived from an interrogative source:

(40)

Juan ha hablado con una chica rubia, pero no sé *(con) qué chica más. (cf.38)

The facts are less clear for Brazilian Portuguese, however.[15] This language allows *else*-modification with P-stranding sluices. However, as shown by Rodrigues et al., in this language *else*-modification is possible with clefts as well (see also Rodrigues, 2017). Similar data are reported by Dagnac (2019) for sluicing in French, who argues against a cleft analysis of preposition-less sluices in this language.[16]

Romanian poses a similar problem and, again, an analysis in terms of clefts does not appear to be well suited. In Romanian, P-stranding under regular interrogatives is not allowed (41a), but preposition-less remnants might appear under sluicing (41b):

(41)

Romanian (Nicolae 2012)

a. *Cui a reușit   în viață datorită? (Ro.)

    who has succeeded in life thanks to

    'Who has he succeeded in life thanks to?' (Nicolae 2012)

b. *A reușit   în viață datorită   cuiva,   si   un mă abțin. (Ro.)

    has succeeded in life thanks to someone.DAT and not me refrain

    'He succeeded in life thanks to someone, and I can't help myself asking who.'

    (Nicolae, 2012)

Importantly, when the preposition is missing, the *wh*-remnant maintains the case required by the preposition (dative in (41b)). This is unexpected if the putative source for the preposition-less sluice is a cleft, as in Romanian, pivots of clefts invariably show up in the nominative case. To address this, Nicolae (2012) proposes that P-less strings in Romanian sluices derive from a kind of relative clause where the P-less *wh*-operator is linked to a resumptive pronoun headed by the corresponding preposition. If this is on the right track, then Romanian sluicing does not constitute a counterexample to Merchant's PSG.

4.1.2 French Quoi

Another empirical challenge that the move-and-delete view has to face concerns languages that do not employ *wh*-movement to Spec,CP to form questions. This is because under this approach ellipsis is contingent on *wh*-movement, and it is therefore predicted that sluicing will be unattested in *wh*-in situ languages like Japanese or Chinese. For some discussion in this topic, see Gribanova and Manetta (2016). A related challenge is found in the syntax of French. This language has two words that are equivalent to English *what*: *que* and *quoi*. They have a different distribution, however: *quoi* is an *in situ wh*-word (44b); that is, it can never undergo *wh*-movement (42c), as opposed to *que* (42a):

(42)

a. Qu' a acheté Pierre? (Fr.)

   what has bought Pierre

   'What did Pierre buy?'

b. Pierre a acheté quoi?

c. *Quoi a acheté Pierre?

Merchant's (2001) analysis predicts that *quoi* can never be a remnant in this language. However, the prediction is not borne out (43). The grammaticality of this example is striking, given that the putative source for this sluice is impossible in French (43a); compare (42c). An analysis in terms of clefts is impossible as well, given that *quoi* cannot undergo any sort of movement (43b).

(43)

Pierre a acheté quelque chose, mais je ne sais   pas   quoi. (Fr.)

Pierre has bought something   but I   not know not   what

'Pierre bought something, but I don't know what.'

a.* … je ne sais pas quoi$_i$ Pierre a acheté t$_i$.

b.* … je ne sais pas quoi$_i$ est la chose que Pierre a acheté t$_i$.

One way to tackle this issue is to extend Kimura (2010)'s analysis of sluicing in Japanese. For this author, *wh*-remnants are not required to undergo movement to Spec,CP in sluicing contexts. Under this system, movement is not a sine qua non condition for sluicing, and *quoi* sluices in French are thus expected to be possible.[17] Dagnac (2019) entertains a different solution, which has to do with the phonological properties of the two French *wh*-elements. She builds on Sportiche (2008)'s claim that the *que/quoi* alternation is a PF-phenomenon: *que* is a clitic and that it needs to attach somewhere. When the TP is elided, however, *que* has nothing to cliticize onto, and *quoi* is used otherwise.

4.1.3 Multiple Sluicing

Multiple sluicing refers to the sluicing construction which features two *wh*-words. If movement of the *wh*-operator feeds TP ellipsis in sluicing, it follows that the two *wh*-phrases must undergo movement to the CP. The prediction is that multiple sluicing will only be available in languages that independently allow multiple *wh*-fronting. Romanian is the only Romance language that displays such a configuration (44; but see Gallego, 2017, for the claim that multiple *wh*-fronting is possible in Spanish under certain discourse conditions). Multiple sluicing (see Munaro's Interrogatives in the Romance Languages) in this language is thus expectedly possible (45):

(44)

Cine cu   ce   merge? (Ro.)

who with what goes

'Who goes by what?' (Rudin, 1988, p. 449)

(45)

Ion a	dat	cuiva	ceva,	și	vreau să	știu	cui	ce. (Ro.)
Ion PST	given	someone	something	and	want SBJV	know	whom	what

'John gave something to someone, and I want to know what to whom.' (Hoyt & Teodorescu, 2004, p. 1999)

Surprisingly, multiple sluicing is attested in languages that disallow multiple *wh*-movement, like Spanish (46; from Ortega-Santos, 2016, p. 138).[18] It is important to emphasize that without TP-ellipsis, the example would be ungrammatical (47):

(46)

Alguno	de	estos catedráticos	me	recomendó	una	revista de	filosofía,
some	of	these full professors	me	recommended	a	journal of	philosophy

pero	no	recuerdo	cuál	de	ellos	qué	revista. (Sp.)
but	not	recall	which	of	them	which	journal

'One of these full professors recommended me a philosophy journal, but I do not remember which of them which journal.'

(47)

* … pero no recuerdo cuál de ellos qué revista me recomendó. (Sp.)

Ortega-Santos (2016), building on Lasnik (2013), argues that only the first *wh*-operator in sluicing undergoes regular *wh*-movement to the left edge of the clause; the second one undergoes a focus-induced rightward movement; see Ortega-Santos (2016) for details.[19]

4.2 Fragment Answers

A question like (48a) can be answered, at least, in two ways: as a complete sentence (48b) or as a single DP (48b′). This latter option is referred to as a *fragment answer* (FAs):

(48)

a: Che cos' ha vinto Gianni? (It.)

what thing has won Gianni

'What did Gianni win?'

b: Ha vinto la maglietta. (It.)

has won the T-shirt

'He won the T-shirt.'

b': La maglietta (It.)

the T-shirt

'The T-shirt.'

Merchant (2004), building on Morgan (1973), proposes that the remnant undergoes focus-induced movement to the left periphery followed by TP ellipsis, a widespread assumption (see Merchant, 2004, and Weir, 2014, for arguments):

(49)

[$_{CP}$ La maglietta$_i$ [$_{TP}$ ~~pro ha vinto~~ t$_i$]].

Like with sluicing, the most controversial issue regarding FAs has to do with the movement of the fragment. In Romance languages, focal constituents do not generally front when they constitute answers to questions (Brunetti, 2003; Santos, 2009; Valmala, 2007, for Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, respectively; see also Remberger, 2010, for evidence that in Sardinian, information focused constituents can be fronted). Focus-movement to the left periphery is typically restricted to corrective contexts (Rizzi, 1997). Therefore, just as in sluicing, the movement of the remnant creates an unexpected asymmetry between elided and non-elided forms. In other words, (49) constitutes an infelicitous answer to a question like (48a) if ellipsis does not apply. The problem is aggravated by languages like Mexican Spanish, which disallows focus fronting altogether (Gutiérrez-Bravo, 2002, p. 171).

Some authors have taken these asymmetries as evidence against a deletion account of fragments (Culicover & Jackendoff, 2005; Stainton, 2006; Valmala, 2007, among others). Others, instead, have defended that fragments do involve syntactically unpronounced structure but argue against the movement of the fragment within the elided clause, thus allowing remnants to stay in situ, in line with Kimura's (2010) account of Japanese sluicing (Section 4.1.2; see Note 17).

Fragments can appear in embedded contexts (Fernández-Sánchez, 2021; Weir, 2014). Observe the following example in Spanish, which could be a response to a question like *Who arrived late?*

(50)

No lo sé,   pero imagino que Juan. (Sp.)

not it know but   imagine that Juan

'I don't know, but I'd say Juan.'

In (50), the NP *Juan* is preceded by the finite complementizer *que* 'that'. Note, incidentally, that the existence of embedded fragments is one argument in favor of their underlying sentential structure, as complementizers do not select NPs but TPs.

The fragment analysis has been extended to other phenomena, like split questions (Arregi, 2010) (51) and dislocated constituents (52) (Fernández-Sánchez, 2020; Fernández-Sánchez & Ott, 2020):

(51)

a. ¿Dónde vas, a   Londres? (Sp.)

   Where   go   to London

   'Where are you going, to London?'

b. ¿Dónde vas, [CP a Londres$_i$ [TP ~~vas~~ t$_i$]]?

(52)

a. Hi   he   anat molts   cops,   a Londres. (Cat.)

   there have gone many   times to   London

   'I've been to London many times.'

b. Hi he anat molts cops, [_{CP} a Londres_i [_{TP} ~~he anat molts cops~~ t_i]]

4.3 Gapping

Gapping involves the non-pronunciation of a finite verb in the second conjoint of a coordinate structure (53a; see Abeillé's Coordination in Syntax in the Romance Languages). The verb might be elided along with some of its arguments (53b):

(53)

a. En Pere va llegir   una novel·la, i   en Martí __ un poema. (Cat.)

   the Pere PST to read a   novel   and the Martí   a   poem

   'Pere read a novel, and Martí, a poem.'

b. En Pere llegirà   una novel·la avui, i   en Martí __ la setmana vinent. (Cat.)

   the Pere will read a   novel   today and the Martí   the week   coming

   'Pere will read a novel today, and Martí, next week.'

Gapping is an extremely complex phenomenon and probably one of the most studied among the elliptical phenomena. Despite this, it continues to pose many empirical and theoretical challenges that are still open to debate. One of these is whether gapping actually involves an elided structure. This is discussed in Johnson (2009), who argues that the gap is the result of across-the-board (ATB) movement of the verb from the two conjuncts to a position outside the coordination structure. Inasmuch as ATB-movement is only attested in coordination structures, Johnson's account succeeds in explaining the distribution of gapping:[20]

(54)

En Pere va llegir$_i$ [t$_i$ una novela] i en Martí [t$_i$ un poema] (cf. 53a).

Another issue has to do with the structural height at which coordination holds in gapping, that is, whether clausal or non-clausal (i.e., vPs) constituents are conjoined. Determining the nature of the conjoined constituent is challenging because of the conflicting evidence that exists (see Repp, 2009, for a discussion). Precisely because of these contradictory data, Repp defends that not all gapping strings must be given a uniform analysis. Within Romance, this hybrid analysis of gapping has been extended to Spanish (Centeno, 2011; Jung, 2017) and French (Dagnac, 2016).

Yet another controversial matter regarding gapping concerns an observation made by Hankamer (1979), who noted that gapping cannot be embedded, as in *John read a novel and I've been told that Mary a poem.* Within Romance, embedded gaps have been reported in Spanish (Fernández–Sánchez, 2021) and Romanian (Abeillé et al., 2014).

Finally, some authors have defended that gapping and fragment answers should be given a unified account (Boone, 2015; Reich, 2006). Under this view, gapping is a case in which two fragments are coordinated with a full clause. The similarities between the two phenomena can be observed in the following examples in Catalan:

(55)

Gapping

La Maria ha anat a Chicago i   en Pere a Nova York. (Cat.)

the Maria has gone to Chicago andthe Pere toNew York

'Maria has gone to Chicago and Pere to New York.'

(56)

Multiple fragments

A: Where have all the students gone?

B: <u>En Pere a Nova York</u>; els demés no ho sé. (Cat.)

    the Pere to New York the rest   not it know

    'Pere went to New York, the rest I don't know.'

4.4 Stripping

Stripping (Hankamer & Sag, 1976, p. 409) sometimes also referred to as *bare argument ellipsis*, is a phenomenon in which a full clause is coordinated with, minimally, a phrase (XP), which, in turn, is frequently accompanied by an adverbial element, typically a polarity adverb.[21] The most studied cases of stripping in Romance involve those featuring sentential negation:

(57)

Juan leyó Hamlet, pero Otelo   no. (Sp.)

Juan read Hamlet but Othello not

'Juan read Hamlet, but he didn't read Othello.'

As discussed in example (29), stripping is the equivalent of VP-ellipsis in the absence thereof, although this does not mean that they are mutually exclusive. Portuguese, which allows VP-ellipsis, (26), also displays stripping:

(58)

A Ana já   tinha lido o livro à irmã mas a Paula não. (Pt.)

the Ana already had read the book to sister but to Paula not

'Ana had already read the book to her sister but not to Paula.' (Cyrino & Matos, 2002)

It is fair to say that most of the literature on stripping in Romance concentrates on Spanish. Bosque (1984) noted that in this language, the relative order of polarity adverb and remnant could be reversed. The order of adverb and remnant in stripping appears to be highly determined by information structural notions like topic or focus (Depiante & Vicente, 2009, among others):

> (59)
>
> Juan leyó Hamlet, pero no Otelo. (cf. (57))

An important caveat is in order now: in Depiante's (2000) original work, only the strings where the polarity adverb precedes the remnant, that is, (59), are referred to as stripping. The strings where the polarity adverb follows the remnant (57) are referred to as pseudo-stripping. Pseudo-stripping is also referred to as yes/no ellipsis (Kolokonte, 2008). We have decided to use, for simplicity, the same term, although this does not imply that both strings are derived uniformly. In fact, whereas there is some consensus in the literature that strings like (57) are derived in terms of clausal ellipsis (see Villa-García, 2016, for references), with the remnant undergoing movement to a functional projection FP above the projection responsible for hosting negation, no such consensus exists with respect to strings where negation precedes the remnant. While some defend a clausal ellipsis analysis too (among them, Depiante, 2000), others like Bosque (1984), Brucart (1987, 1999), and Fernández-Sánchez (2019) contend that no ellipsis is involved in these cases.

5. Conclusion

Because of its vast theoretical implications and its abundant empirical challenges, ellipsis is an immense area of research. This article has aimed at providing a general overview of some of the main issues regarding the formal study of ellipsis within the domain of Romance languages, some of which, as the reader has possibly noticed, are still far from settled.

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Notes

1. We will assume that elided material is subject to a post-syntactic operation removing phonological material to the expressions generated during the computation. Although nothing crucially hinges on this, there are alternative ways to capture the outcome.

2. We are sidestepping here Hankamer and Sag's (1976) distinction between surface and deep anaphora, the former making reference to overt syntactic structures and the latter to covert (or nonlinguistic) elements in the context of utterance (see Merchant, 2013, and references therein for discussion).

3. A third class of nominal ellipsis, the so-called radical ellipsis, is not considered either given that it is not usual in Romance languages (but see Cornilescu & Nicolae, 2012, for some data on Romanian). For a comprehensive study of the characteristics of argument ellipsis, compare the articles on "Null Subjects" and "Null Objects" in this Encyclopedia.

4. The elliptical nature of these constructions depends upon the specific category assigned to the determiners and quantifiers permitting the non-realization of the noun. Traditional grammar is used to establish a categorical differentiation between adjectival determiners and pronominal determiners, a split that affected demonstratives, possessives, and quantifiers. From this point of view, constructions with a pronominal determiner are not properly elliptical, since the pronominal element counts as the head of the NP, which makes supposing the existence of a nominal gap unnecessary. However, this analysis raises the problem of a generalized categorical duplication of the paradigms of determiners and quantifiers. For a thorough analysis of the options in conflict in Spanish, see Bosque (1989). See Cabredo Hofherr (2006) for additional arguments on this topic.

5. Example (8b) shows the existence in Romance languages of reinforced demonstratives that add a second proximate or distal deictic element. In other cases, the reinforcement is introduced by a preposition, as in Spanish *este de aquí / aquel de allá* 'this from here/that from there'. Reinforced demonstratives are compatible with overt or covert nouns. See de Mulder and Carlier (2006) for a study of the development of these forms in French.

6. In (10), the gap has not been represented because it should be placed to the right of the remnants when they are exclusively formed by determiners and quantifiers (*Les quatre __ són bones*) and between the article and the nominal complement in the rest of cases (*Las __ de María son buenas*).

7. In Spanish, the masculine singular form of the indefinite article (and the first numeral) is bisyllabic in N-ellipsis contexts. Thus, there is a contrast between *un médico* (a doctor) and *uno __ médico* (a medical one), where *médico* is a noun and an adjective, respectively.

8. Cases of indefinite N-ellipsis with *certain* as an internal argument are also occasionally attested without the partitive clitic: *J'ai connu certains qui avaient changé d'université* ('I have known some that transferred to another university').

9. In view of the complex distribution of N-ellipsis in French, some authors propose analyses that do not have recourse to a nominal elliptic head, at the cost of accepting that an adjective can head an NP. See Corblin (1990) and Marandin (1997a, 1997b), who focus on the importance of contextual anaphoric dependences in explaining these constructions in French.

10. Bosque (1989) was the first to notice the existence of this pattern in Spanish.

11. The pattern of (17c) is also possible with a singular NP/DP: *El que dice eso miente* 'Who say so, lies'. It is worth noting, however, that this account of pronominal demonstratives in terms of ellipsis is somewhat problematic for Italian. Thus, whereas demonstrative *quello* (that) admits N-ellipsis with APs, PPs, and relative clauses, its plural counterpart *quei* (those) requires an overt noun, as opposed to *quelli* (those ones), which only admits pronominal use.

12. There are many elliptical phenomena that appear to target a VP in Romance, like the following strings in Catalan:

   (i)   La Maria va llegir un llibre i en Pere __ un article. (lit. Mary read a book and Peter an article)

   (ii)   Ens han dit que portarien alguna cosa, però no sé què __. (lit. They said they'd bring something, but I don't know what)

ꞌ Sequences of this sort will be discussed in the next section. The reason is that in Romance languages, the verb displays V-to-T movement (Pollock, 1989), so in these examples, it is a TP, not a VP, that is affected by ellipsis.

13. See also Costa et al. (2012) for a discussion of Capeverdean, a Portuguese-based Creole language that also displays VP-ellipsis.

14. VP-ellipsis also correlates with the possibility to have enclysis in tensed clauses. The reader is referred to Martins (1994, 2016) for a discussion and references.

15. Rodrigues and Saab (2018) and Stigliano (2018) have more recently argued that a cleft-source analysis of P-less remnants in Spanish sluicing is empirically inadequate. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting these references.

16. French is generally a non-stranding language, but it displays apparent P-stranding with so-called *orphan prepositions* like *avec* 'who' (Arregi, 2010, p. 572):

(i)

Marie, il	est	parti	avant	de	parler	avec.
Marie he	is	left	before	of	speak	with

'Mary, he left before speaking with her.'

17. Note, however, that Kimura's analysis has to assume the existence of non-constituent ellipsis. See Ott and Struckmeier (2016) and Fernández-Sánchez (2020) for discussion and references.

18. In these languages, judgments regarding multiple sluicing sometimes vary a lot across speakers. See Richards (1997) and Lasnik (2013) for discussion. The generalization is, however, that multiple sluices sound generally way better than their non-elided counterparts, and this is the striking effect.

19. This analysis is extended in Ortega-Santos et al. (2014) to a similar phenomenon called Sluice-Stripping (*One of the professors talked to Susan, but I don't know which to Mary*).

20. Other authors have suggested that gapping should be regarded as a type of VP-ellipsis (Coppock, 2001). There are various problems with this view: first, the two phenomena appear to display a different distribution (VP-ellipsis can, and gapping cannot, appear in embedded contexts, see Hankamer & Sag, 1976). Second, Romance languages (except Portuguese) disallow VP-ellipsis (see Section 3), but they nonetheless exhibit gapping structures.

21. Stripping strings may occur across speakers, without being mediated by coordination. See Servidio (2014) for a detailed study of Italian and Depiante and Vicente (2009) for Spanish. Note that this brings stripping close to fragment answers and gapping (see discussion around examples (56) and (57)), see Johnson (2019) for the claim that stripping and gapping are underlyingly the same phenomenon. Furthermore, some stripping strings can occur in embedded contexts, see Fernández-Sánchez (2019) for discussion.