

Kashmiri and the verb-stranding verb-phrase ellipsis debate

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One of the more intriguing debates concerning ellipsis in recent work centers on so-called verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis (VVPE). First identified in languages as diverse as Irish (McCloskey 1991), Hebrew (Doron 1991, Goldberg 2005), Portuguese (Martins 1994), Russian (Gribanova 2013a, b), and Hindi-Urdu (Manetta 2018), VVPE is argued to occur when an inflected verb moves outside of a VP-sized category which is then elided, resulted in the stranding of the verb in the absence of associated VP-internal material. Recently Landau (2018, to appear) argues against the existence of VVPE at all, claiming that what might at first appear to be VVPE is a more targeted ellipsis process more familiar from accounts of East Asian languages (Oku 1998; Kim 1999; Takahashi 2008), called Argument Ellipsis. Landau suggests that larger, clause-sized ellipsis processes that strand main verbs, such as Polarity Ellipsis (e.g. Gribanova 2017) may also be at work. We will consider these claims through an investigation of verb movement and ellipsis in Kashmiri.

The Indic language Kashmiri (relatively under-represented in theoretical literature) appears to exhibit both English-style auxiliary-stranding VPE (in (1)) and verb-stranding VPE, in (2).

(1) a. Təm cha ciTh' liich-mlts ganT-as.
 3SG.ERG.M AUX.PST.F letter.F write-PSP.F hour-for
 'He has written a letter for an hour.'

b. tami ti **cha** ____.
 3SG.ERG.F also AUX.PST.F
 'She also has (written a letter for an hour).'

(2) a. tsl di-kh pagaah təmis kitaab
 2SG.NOM give-FUT.2SG tomorrow 3SG.DAT book
 'You will give him a book tomorrow'

b. Kabir ti **di-yi** ____.
 Kabir also give-FUT.3SG
 'Kabir will also (give him a book tomorrow)' (lit. 'Kabir will also give.')

Landau (to appear) establishes a new account of the licensing conditions for ellipsis, with a particular focus on excluding, both empirically and theoretically, VVPE. Underlying Landau's proposal is the old question of why auxiliary fronting (Aux-to-C) is incompatible with sluicing as in (4), though required in a full wh-question, as in (5):

(3) Pete appointed someone.

(4) Who?/*Who did?

(5) Who did he appoint?/*Who he did appoint?

Landau's analysis in essence is that headless ellipsis is controlled and constrained by the head of the elided category, and that it is licensed only if the stranded head has not crossed a spellout domain. In the ungrammatical version of (2), the auxiliary has crossed the TP spellout domain, meaning ellipsis of TP will not be licensed in this case. Similarly, in a canonical approach to VVPE, the verb will cross the VP spellout domain, thereby failing to license ellipsis of vP. Thus, in this view, head movement bleeds ellipsis.

This account of head movement and ellipsis faces an important test in the case of Kashmiri; Kashmiri finite clauses are strictly verb-second. The verb bearing tense and agreement, whether auxiliary or main, is widely understood to be located in C, while the preverbal XP is located in Spec, CP (Wali and Koul 1998; Manetta 2011; c.f. Munshi and Bhatt 2009). In this way, Kashmiri thus completes the typology proposed in Sailor 2018 for V2 languages and constituent ellipsis: it is a language with obligatory verb movement out of vP that exhibits both Aux-stranding and V-stranding ellipsis forms (Manetta, to appear). As the language is often overlooked in research on V2, it is unsurprising that previous work had assumed that V-stranding ellipsis did not occur in V2 languages. Landau's account

would predict that Kashmiri would have neither Aux-stranding nor V-stranding ellipsis (whether VP-sized or TP-sized), counter to our apparent understanding of (1)-(2).

There are (at least) three distinct possibilities to consider seriously in resolving this puzzle: first, it is of course possible that VVPE exists as analyzed over the past decades and that Landau's new approach is off the mark – we will set this notion aside for now. Second, we could assume that Kashmiri has Aux-stranding ellipsis and AE, but no VVPE. The upshot of this would be that we must then posit distinct landing positions for second position auxiliaries and second position main verbs in V2 clauses. A third possibility is that second position verbs in Kashmiri do not target C, but some lower projection (or set of lower projections), perhaps following proposals in Munshi and Bhatt (2009). The question is whether, in this scenario, the stranded heads would not cross a spellout domain, and thus remain capable of licensing the relevant ellipsis. This paper will investigate the second and third possibilities mentioned here in detail, examining whether either alternative is supported by the facts in Kashmiri. Of course, if neither of these explanations pan out, we are then forced to reconsider the first alternative presented above, and establish how Kashmiri has particular characteristics that support the existence of Verb-stranding ellipsis in the grammar.

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