

CASE MISMATCH IN GAPPING AND ELLIPSIS IN LAK

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Introduction. It has been noted in the literature that certain types of mismatches are found in elliptical contexts, e.g., voice mismatch (Merchant 2013). The account of these mismatches crucially relies on the assumption that ellipsis is a PF phenomenon. In this paper I present a new set of data from Lak, a Nakh-Dagestanian (ND) language, which shows a previously unattested pattern of case mismatch found on external arguments (EA) in ellipsis, as in (1). To account for this unexpected phenomenon, I propose that (i) ellipsis is not a uniform phenomenon; (ii) ellipsis is a pre-Spell-Out operation; (iii) case assignment is configurational and post-syntactic (Marantz 1991, McFadden 2004, Bobaljik 2008).

- (1) [A^ʕli-l č:atʰ šawx-un-ni], [wa amudad-gu].
Ali-ERG bread.III.SG.ABS III.SG.cook-PST-3SG and grandmother.II.ABS-and
'Ali baked bread and grandmother too.'

Lak basics. Lak is a morphologically ergative language where agreement is **always** controlled by an absolutive argument, as in (2-4). Lak verbal elements show agreement for two types of features: nominal class and person. Nominal class agreement is realized as prefixes, infixes or both on verbs (glossed with Roman numerals), whereas person agreement exponent is always suffixed on the verb (glossed with Arabic numerals). Finally, Lak is a heavily pro-drop language (Gagliardi et al 2014). Lak nominals distinguish between direct (singular absolutive) and oblique forms (all other case and number combinations), which contain an oblique stem marker, case and number suffixes.

- (2) Na Ø-izlaj Ø-ur-Ø (3) T:u-n ga k:awk:-un-di.
1SG.I.ABS I-get.up.PROG I-AUX-3SG 1.SG-DAT he.I.ABS 1.see-AOR-3SG
'I am getting up.' 'I saw him.'
(4) But:a-l ninu d-uručlaj d-ur-Ø.
father-ERG mother.II.ABS II-protect.PROG II-AUX-3SG
'Father protects/is protecting mother.'

Ellipsis facts. Like many other languages, Lak has constructions involving VP-ellipsis, (5), and gapping (6).

- (5) A^ʕli-l dikʰ šarx-un-ni wa mukunna amudad-al-gu.
Ali-ERG meat.IV.SG.ABS IV.SG.cook-PST-3SG and also.IV grandmother-ERG-and
'Ali cooked meat and grandmother too.'
(6) Patʰimat-lu-n ča^ʕj χ:irar-Ø, Aminat-lu-n tʰurča kofe.
Patimat-OS-DAT tea.IV.SG.ABS love-3SG, Aminat-OS-DAT OPPOS coffee.IV.SG.ABS
'Patimat loves tea, but Zalmu – coffee.'

Lak is, however, different in allowing case mismatch on the EA in the 2nd clause. First, consider data involving VP-ellipsis: in (7), the case on the EA is ergative, while the case on its counterpart in the 2nd clause is absolutive; in (8), the main clause EA is dative, while it is absolutive in the 2nd clause.

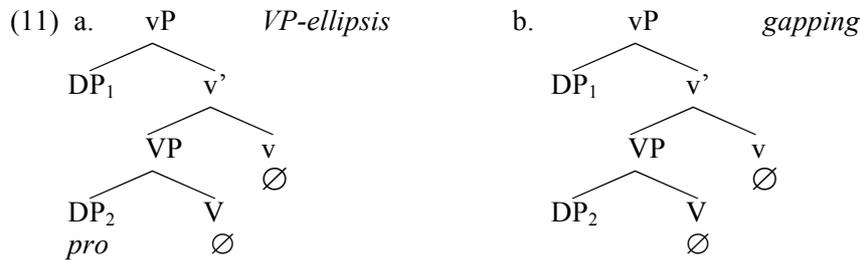
- (7) A^ʕli-l č:atʰ mašan laws-un-ni, wa mukunma Rasul-gu
Ali-ERG bread.III.SG.ABS trade.III.SG.OBL III.SG.buy-PST-3SG, and also.I Rasul.I.ABS-and
'Ali bought some bread and Rasul too.'
(8) Patʰimat-lu-n huqa b-uruxlin bah-un-ni, Aminat-gu mukunma
Patimat-OS-DAT dress.III.SG.ABS III.SG-sew-INF should-PST-3 Aminat.III.ABS-and also.III

The same situation is found in sentences with gapping: in (9), there is an ergative marked EA in the main clause and an absolutive marked one in the 2nd clause, whereas in (10) the case mismatch is found between a dative and absolutive EA.

- (9) A^ʕli-l qʰ:at:a b-uw-un-ni, Rasul tʰurča p:al.
Ali-ERG house.III.SG.ABS III.SG-III.SG.do-PST-3.SG, Rasul.I.SG.ABS OPPOS shed.III.SG.ABS
'Ali built a/the house and Rasul –a/the shed.'
(10) A^ʕl-in Patʰimat χ:irar-Ø, Rasul tʰurča Aminat.
Ali-DAT Patimat.III.SG.ABS love-3SG, Rasul.I.SG.ABS OPPOS Aminat.III.SG.ABS
'Ali loves Patimat, but Rasul – Aminat.'

As shown in (7-10), gapping and ellipsis behave identically with respect to case mismatch on EAs, which may be indicative of their being the same phenomenon, VP-ellipsis (cf., Ross 1970, Hankamer 1979, Wilder 1994, Merchant 2003, Toosarvandani 2012, a.o.) rather than a coordination of two syntactic constituents (Lin 2002, Johnson 2009).

Proposal. My analysis relies on the idea that ellipsis is not a uniform phenomenon, i.e., what looks like an instance of ellipsis may be a result of two distinct operations. In particular, I assume that VP-ellipsis in Lak can either involve a non-elliptic structure with verbal pro-forms (VP-ellipsis_{PRO}) or a deletion of VP (VP-ellipsis_{DELETION}). The structure for VP-ellipsis_{PRO} is given in (11), where null verbal elements are realized as \emptyset (cf., Haddican 2007: 544).



The next crucial assumption is about the timing of VP-ellipsis_{DELETION}: I assume that it is a narrow syntactic, pre-Spell-Out operation, which results in the deletion of the syntactic structure. The final assumption is that the case distribution in Lak is configurational and post-syntactic. Given these assumptions, I propose that the cases with matching case on the EAs should be analyzed as instances of VP-ellipsis_{PRO}, where both clauses have a full syntactic structure, as in (11), and where case calculations apply after the Spell-Out. The sentences with case mismatch on EAs in elliptical context should be analyzed as instances of VP-ellipsis_{DELETION}, where EAs in (7-8) or both the external and internal arguments in (9-10) move out of vP to a higher projection hosting focalized XPs, then the deletion operation applies, which results in the destruction of the syntactic structure. Then, under the configurational approach of case distribution, case is calculated based on c-command relationships between arguments (cf., Marantz 1991, Bobaljik 2008, Preminger 2014, Baker 2015, a.o.). Since the VP-ellipsis_{DELETION} results in the absence of structure, dependent (=ergative) and lexical/inherent, (=dative) cases cannot be assigned since there is no c-command relationship between the arguments, which results in both arguments bearing a default case.

Testing the analysis. Like other ND languages, Lak has several adverbs and particles, which obligatorily bear agreement markers controlled by an absolutive marked argument. Consider the following data: Lak has an emphatic agreeing particle *mukunma* ‘also’, which is found in contexts of VP-ellipsis. The analysis proposed in this paper makes predictions regarding the possible agreement controller of *mukunma*. The VP-ellipsis_{DELETION} approach predicts case mismatch between two EAs and that the agreement on *mukunma* is controlled by an absolutive marked EA, while the VP-ellipsis_{PRO} approach predicts case matching on EAs and agreement control by a pro internal argument. Consider the data in (12-14). The sentence in (12) has EAs with case mismatch, which under the analysis presented in the paper means that there is no structure left after VP-ellipsis and no internal argument. At the point of case assignment, the EA in the 2nd clause can only get a default case, absolutive. Then, the agreeing particle ‘also’ can only agree with the only surviving DP. (13) shows that the internal argument is indeed absent, hence it is impossible for the particle ‘also’ to agree with it. Finally, (14) is a construction with EAs with matching cases, i.e., it has a structure as in (11a). Case assignment then proceeds the usual way: the dependent case, ergative, is assigned to the EA, while the default case, absolutive, is assigned to the internal argument. Since agreement is **always** controlled by an absolutive argument, it is predicted that the agreeing emphatic particle ‘also’ agrees with the internal argument.

(12) [A^sli-l dik’ mašan lars-un-ni], wa mukunma Rasul-gu
 Ali-ERG meat.IV.SG.ABS trade.IV.OBL IV.buy-PST-3SG and also.I Rasul.I.ABS-and
 ‘Ali bought meat and Rasul too.’

(13) *[A^sli-l dik’ mašan lars-un-ni], wa mukunna Rasul-gu
 Ali-ERG meat.IV.SG.ABS trade.IV.OBL IV.buy-PST-3SG and also.IV Rasul.I.ABS-and

(14) [A^sli-l dik’ mašan lars-un-ni], wa mukunna Rasul-lu-l-gu
 Ali-ERG meat.IV.SG.ABS trade.IV.OBL IV.buy-PST-3SG and also.IV Rasul.I-OBL-ERG-and

Conclusion. In this paper I present and discuss data with case mismatch on EAs in ellipsis in Lak. I suggest that it can be explained if we assume that (i) ellipsis is either VP-ellipsis_{PRO} or VP-ellipsis_{DELETION}, with the latter being a narrow syntactic phenomenon, (ii) case is assigned configurationally at PF.

Selected References. Bobaljik, J.D. 2008. Where’s Phi? Agreement as a Post-Syntactic Operation. *Linguistics* 46: 1-47.
 Gagliardi, A. et al. 2014. The biabsolutive construction in Lak and Tsez. *Lingua* 150: 137-170.
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