On the syntax of multiple sluicing
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Three properties of multiple sluicing emerge in a cross linguistic perspective: The remnants of multiple sluicing are clause-mates (1a–b); the correlates of the sluicing remnants can be inside of an island (1c); there is a surfeit of superiority-like effects compared to non-elliptical questions (2).

(1) German
a. Jeder Student hat ein Buch gelesen, aber ich weiss nicht mehr wer every student has a book read, but I know no longer who welches.
which
Every student read a book, but I can remember which student which book.
b. *Vor jedem Vorfall hat ein Student behauptet, dass Maria mit einem before each incident had a student claimed that Maria with a Professor geredet hatte, aber ich weiss nicht welcher Student mit welchem professor talked had but I know not which student with which Professor professor

Ich kenne einen Lehrer, der jedem Kind ein Geschenk gegeben hat, I know a teacher who every.DAT child a.ACC present given has aber ich weiss nicht genau welchem Kind welches Geschenk. but I know not exactly which.DAT child which.ACC present. I know a teacher who gave a present to each child, but I can't remember which present to which child.

(2) Dutch (A. Neeleman, P. Ackema, p.c.)
Ik weet dat een paar meisjes je een paar boeken gegeven hebben, maar I know that a few girls you a few books given have, but ik vraag me af welk meisje welk boek welk boek I ask me which girl which book which book gegeven heeft welk boek welk meisje je welk boek gegeven heeft which book which girl which book gegeven heeft welk boek welk meisje je welk boek gegeven heeft)
given has

These properties do not fall out from the two simplest theories of ellipsis, namely those positing no syntactic structure at the ellipsis site and those positing syntactic structure at the ellipsis site which is identical to the antecedent, as the latter requires ellipsis to repair locality violations.

The generalizations find their place under an approach to ellipsis where the ellipsis site is structurally occupied by a semantically suitable antecedent which may be a paraphrase of the antecedent (Merchant 2001). (Such approaches are plagued by the too-many-paraphrases problem (see Abels to appear), an issue that will not be resolved here.) Under such an approach, an account of the clausemateness condition and the superiority-like effects becomes possible but requires the additional assumption that multiple questions may involve a covert, clause-bound movement step at LF which is, furthermore, sensitive to superiority configurations, dubbed P(air)L(ist) movement here. Such an ap-
proach is mandated independently by results reported in Pesetsky 2000 for the superiority sensitivity of PL movement, and Cheng and Demirdache 2010; Elliott 2015; Kotek 2015 for the clause-boundedness of PL movement.

It follows then that the only viable structure for multiple sluicing is the one given in (3), where both wh-traces originate in the same clause. All other configurations either violate the clausemateness condition on PL movement or give rise to a superiority configuration.

(3)

Interestingly, this approach to multiple sluicing restricts the space of analysis for the interpretation of multiple questions, putting tight constraints, in particular, on the role of covert movement and alternative percolation in the system.

References


