

Deletion versus pro-forms: an overly simple dichotomy?

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Abstract This paper examines an anaphoric construction, British English *do*, and locates it within the dichotomy in the ellipsis literature between deleted phrases and null pro-forms, concluding that the choice is a false one, in that pro-forms involve deletion as well; the question, then, is how to account for the differential permeability to dependencies that require external licensing of the various deleted constituents. British English *do* has some characteristics of a fully deleted phrase, and some of a pro-form. The paper proposes that deletion is involved in this construction, but of a smaller constituent than can host wh-movement or long quantifier-raising. Therefore, deletion must occur within the syntax, in order to bleed syntactic processes. It is further shown that, within a phase-based syntax, Voice must be a phase rather than v, but that both functional heads must exist, and offers a new explanation for the incompatibility of passive and British English *do*, as well as an account of why some languages, like English, lack impersonal passives, while others, such as Dutch, allow them.

Keywords Deletion · Ellipsis · Anaphora · Pro-forms · Phases

1 Introduction

A common distinction in the literature on ellipsis is the distinction between null phrasal elements whose contents have been deleted, and null elements that have the

In the course of writing this paper, I learned that C.L. Baker had written on this topic (he is in the bibliography). Baker, known to his friends as “Lee”, of which I am proud to have counted myself as one, passed away tragically in April of 1997. He was an exceptionally fine human being and a fine syntactician, and I would like to dedicate this paper to his memory.

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