

## 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

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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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