Determiner sharing as an instance of dependent ellipsis

1. McCawley (1993) notes that in coordinations which involve gapping in the second conjunct it is possible to omit the determiner of the subject DP in the second conjunct and ‘share’ this with the D of the subject of the first conjunct (1). These cases are not easily analyzable as gapping a bigger constituent than just the verbal head, a constituent including V and D, but not the NP part of the subject. Lin (1999) argues that D sharing involves real sharing of one D node (see also Johnson 2000), which is generated separate from its NP above a coordinated vP, below the T node which is consequently also shared (‘gapped’ in the second conjunct). The NP part of the subject in the first vP conjunct moves out of vP to D, the NP subject in the second conjunct remains in situ (contra the Coordinate Structure Constraint). This means that, in cases of D sharing where only T is missing from the second conjunct, but V is retained (2a) there is no gapping at all. However, all instances of D sharing show the hallmark of gapping: overt remnants in the second conjunct must contrast with the corresponding constituent in the first conjunct (2b). No such requirement exists if there is no ellipsis (2c).

2. We will argue that D sharing involves a two step process instead, on a par with what Williams (1997) proposes for other cases of apparent nonconstituent gapping. A coordination in Williams’ view is the projection of a bivalent lexical item: [X,X]P = XP and XP. Gapping then is merely a special instance of coordination in which the second head of the bivalent lexical item is null, in the radical sense that it does not just have no phonological content, but contains no semantic features either (its interpretation being derived by identifying it with the first head). Thus, the second conjunct in cases of gapping consists of a 0P: [X,0]P = XP and 0P. The 0 head that occurs in coordinate ellipsis itself licenses further ellipsis. For instance, the whole complement of the 0 head can be null (3a’). Crucially, there is not one process of gapping that elides smaller (3a) or bigger (3a’) units, but a two step process. In both (3a) and (3a’) there is coordinate ellipsis, meaning that the second conjunct consists of a 0P. In (3a’) a second ellipsis process takes place which is parasitic on the coordinate ellipsis. This dependent ellipsis licenses the head of a dependent of a coordinate 0 head to be 0 itself. Thus the dependent phrase can be a 0P as well. This 0P can be entirely empty as in (3a’), but it may also contain overt material besides its 0 head. This accounts for cases of apparent ‘nonconstituent gapping’ like (4). Given the DP hypothesis, D sharing can simply be seen as another instance of dependent ellipsis: in case there is a coordinate 0 head it licenses a DP dependent to be headed by 0, see (5) (which gives the structure of the second conjunct of (1)).

3. This assumption, simple as it is, accounts for properties of D sharing constructions noted by McCawley and others, and some more, namely the following. (a) D sharing is only possible in coordinations (6): dependent ellipsis is dependent on there being a coordinate 0 head (b) for D sharing between subjects T-gapping, rather than V-gapping, is necessary (Lin 1999) (7): the subject is a dependent of T, not V, hence only if T is 0 by coordinate ellipsis can dependent ellipsis target the subject (c) there is a disanaphora requirement on the overt remnants (see above) (d) D sharing between objects is possible (Lin 1999, Johnson 2000) when there is coordinate V-ellipsis (8a), rather than coordinate T-ellipsis (8b-c): the object is a dependent of V, not T. Note that it must be assumed that a head which is null as a result of dependent ellipsis does not itself license further dependent ellipsis (contra Williams 1997), or a sentence like (8c) could still be derived (by having a chain of licensing relations, between 0-T and 0-V, and between 0-V and 0-D). This ‘nontransitivity of dependent ellipsis’ hypothesis also explains that (e) D sharing into PP complements is impossible, as Dutch (9a) shows; instead, what is possible here (as expected) is P sharing (9b); likewise, dependent D ellipsis does not license further dependent N ellipsis (9c). (f) If both objects in a double object construction are dependents of V (rather than there being a VP-shell structure), as is presumably the case in an OV language like Dutch (Neeleman & Weerman 1999), D sharing is possible in both (10) (showing that McCawley’s generalization that the shared D must always be conjunct-initial is not entirely correct) (g) T gapping turns out to not always be necessary after all (contra Lin 1999), namely in case the DP, whether it is a subject or an object, has undergone wh-movement: in this case the 0 head in a [C,0]P coordination can license dependent D ellipsis (11a-b). Especially revealing in this light is (colloquial) Dutch, which allows for violation of the doubly filled COMP filter. It turns out that D ellipsis in the wh-moved DP is only possible when C is empty (11c-d).
(1) Too many Irish setters are named Kelly, too many German shepherds are named Fritz, and too many huskies are named Nanook.

(2) a. While any trumpet was blowing or drum beating...
b. *While any trumpet was blowing or trumpet sounding...
c. While any trumpet was blowing or any trumpet was sounding...

(3) a. John gave Mary a book today and Sue a record yesterday
   a'. John gave Mary a book today and 00 a record yesterday

(4) John saw pictures of Mary on Tuesday and 01 [0N of Sue] on Wednesday

(5) ... [0D German shepherds] 0f 0v Fritz

(6) *Henry VIII gave too many wives too many presents.

(7) The girls will drink whiskey and boys drink wine (... [0D boys] 0f drink wine)

(8) a. Bob will [[TP give the magazines to Jessica] and [[op give the newspapers to Joanne]]
b. *Bob [[TP will give the magazines to Jessica] and [[op will hand the newspapers to Joanne]]
c. *Bob [[TP gave the magazines to Jessica] and [[op Harry gave the newspapers to Joanne]]

(9) a. *dat de kandidaat op de kiezers rekende en op de rechters rekende
   that the candidate on the voters counted and on the judges
   b. dat de kandidaat op de kiezers rekende en op de rechters rekende
   c. *The boys with long hair drank beer and the boys with short hair drank wine

(10) dat Jan teveel meisjes teveel cadeautjes gaf en teveel jongens teveel fopsigaren
    that John too many girls too many presents gave and (too many) boys (too many) fake cigars

(11) a. I began to wonder how many paintings will never be seen, songs will never be heard, and books will never be read because of wars yet to come (McCawley 1993:245)
b. I began to wonder how many paintings I would never see, songs I would never hear and books I would never read because of wars yet to come
c. ik vroeg me af hoeveel schilderijen (of) ik ooit zou zien, hoeveel liedjes (of) ik ooit zou horen en hoeveel boeken (of) ik ooit zou lezen
   I wondered how many paintings (if) I ever would see, how many songs (if) I ever would hear and how many books (if) I ever would read
d. ik vroeg me af hoeveel schilderijen (of) ik ooit zou zien, liedjes (?*of) ik ooit zou horen en boeken (?*of) ik ooit zou lezen

References