

Perspectives under Ellipsis

Rong Yin and Jeremy Hartman

1. Introduction

We make a new observation that there is a contrast in felicity between (1a) and (1b), under a context where Macron is in Paris but Obama is not; and crucially, neither A nor B is in Paris.

- A: (1) *Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris.*
B: (1a) *#I also think that he will come to Paris.*
(1b) *I also do.*

The contrast still holds when *go* is used in the antecedent, under a context where Macron and Merkel are not in the U.S; but both A and B are in the U.S. This is shown by (2a) and (2b).

- A: (2) *Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.*
B: (2a) *#I also think that she will go to the U.S.*
(2b) *I also do.*

The infelicity of (1a)/(2a) has been addressed by previous work (see section 2 and 3). The question is why the elided versions (1b)/(2b) are felicitous, given that the unelided versions (1a)/(2a) are not.

In this paper, we show that this felicity contrast can be explained under a PF-deletion analysis (Merchant 2001) that incorporates von Stechow's (1999) *Strawson Entailment* and Sudo's (2018) analysis of *come* and *go*.

2. The semantics of *come* and *go*

The assertive meaning of *come* and *go* are essentially the same (cf. Fillmore 1997; Oshima 2006 and Sudo 2018). Both *come* and *go* denote movement of THEME to GOAL, which is shown in (3).

- (3) the assertive meaning of *come* and *go*
[[*come/go*]] = $\lambda x.\lambda y.\lambda e.$ MOVE (e) \wedge GOAL (e, x) \wedge THEME (e, y).

However, *come* and *go* have different non-assertive meanings (cf. Fillmore 1975, Oshima 2006, Barlew 2017, Sudo 2018). A simplified version of the non-assertive meaning of *come* from Barlew (2017) is shown in (4).

- (4) The non-assertive meaning of *come* (Barlew 2017)
[[*come*]] is defined iff there is some contextually supplied anchor $d \in \{\text{speaker, addressee, attitude holder, \dots}\}$ towards which movement of THEME happens, and d is in the GOAL of [[*come*]].²

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The non-assertive meaning of *come* in (4) passes standard presupposition tests (cf. Oshima 2007; Sudo 2018). In the following, we show such tests adapted from Sudo (2018) with slight modifications.

One traditional test for diagnosing presuppositions is the ‘Hey, wait a minute’ test from von Stechow (2004): the content of presuppositions can be legitimately complained about by X when it has not been previously established. In (5b), *Klaus* can legitimately complain about the non-assertive content *you were in New Jersey* when it was not established prior to A’s utterance. This shows that *you were in New Jersey* passes the ‘Hey, wait a minute’ test.

(5) [Context: A is talking to Klaus on Skype. Klaus is in Berlin.]

(5a) A: *Juan should come to New Jersey.*

(5b) Klaus: *Wait a minute! I did not know that you were in New Jersey.*

[adapted from Sudo 2018: (10)]

Another property that traditionally characterizes presuppositions is that presuppositions cannot be cancelled under negation, question or conditional. The non-assertive meaning of *come* shows this property: after replacing (5a) with examples (6-8), (5b) is still a felicitous continuous.

(6) A: *I don’t think Juan is coming to New Jersey.* [negation]

(7) A: *Is Juan coming to New Jersey?* [question]

(8) A: *If Juan comes to New Jersey, we’ll get wasted.* [conditional]

[adapted from Sudo 2018: (12)]

However, there are two different views about the non-assertive meaning for *go*. One view is that *go* has a non-assertive meaning in addition to its assertive meaning (cf. Fillmore 1975; Oshima 2006). The lexical entry of *go* in (9) is a version combining Fillmore’s (1975) and Barlew’s (2017) analysis.

(9) [[*go*]] is defined iff there is some contextually supplied anchor $d \in \{\text{speaker, addressee, attitude holder, \dots}\}$ away from which movement of THEME happens, and d is not in the GOAL of [[*go*]].

The other view is from Sudo (2018) that *go* does not have any presupposition; the usage of *come* and *go* is regulated by Maximize Presupposition (Heim 1991): *go* is used when *come* cannot be used.

We adopt Sudo’s (2018) view that *go* lacks a presupposition and only has an assertive meaning in (3); the usage of *come* and *go* is determined by Maximize Presupposition (Heim 1991). We leave the justification for choosing Sudo’s (2018) analysis of *go* over the analysis in (9) for future research. In addition, we adopt the assertive meaning of *come* in (3), and the non-assertive meaning of *come* in (4).

3. A PF-deletion Analysis for the felicity contrast

Based on the analysis of *come/go* in Section 2, a preliminary analysis of the infelicity of (1a) and (2a) proceeds as follows. Given the context in (1), there are two possible anchors for (1a): A and B. In this case, the local attitude holder of (1a) is B, who is also an interlocutor. (1a) is thus correctly predicted to be infelicitous, since neither A nor B is in the destination, namely Paris. Crucially, *come* in (1a) cannot take the perspective from *Macron*, the attitude holder of the antecedent sentence. Since none of the possible anchors is in Paris, the presupposition of *come* in (1a) is not satisfied. Given the context in (2), A and B are still the only possible anchors. Since they are both in the U.S., using *go* in (2a) violates Maximize Presupposition: one could have used *come* in (2a) since the presupposition of *come* can be satisfied. Again, *Macron*, the attitude holder of the antecedent sentence, cannot serve as the anchor for (2a). Thus, (2a) is correctly predicted to be infelicitous.

² According to Barlew (2017), not every individual in the context can serve as an anchor. The contextually supplied anchor d is restricted: speaker, addressee, local attitude holder, etc. We put aside the question of what characterizes an anchor, which is irrelevant to the central discussion of this paper, focusing only on the speaker, the addressee, and attitude holders as possible anchors.

Having discussed the infelicity of (1a) and (2a), in the following sections 3.1 and 3.2, we show that a PF-deletion analysis with syntactic identity cannot explain the felicity of (1b) and (2b), but a PF-deletion analysis with semantic identity incorporating von Fintel's (1999) *Strawson Entailment* can.

3.1. A PF-deletion analysis with syntactic identity

Under a PF-deletion analysis with a syntactic identity condition on ellipsis, (1b) and (2b) are analyzed as (10) and (11). <X> indicates the material X is generated in syntax but deleted at PF.

- (10) I also do <~~think that he will come to Paris~~>. (cf. 1b)
 (11) I also do <~~think that she will go to the U.S.~~>. (cf. 2b)

With a syntactic identity condition on ellipsis, (10) and (11) have the same syntactic structures as (1a) and (2a), respectively. Thus, (10) is identical to (1a) both in syntax and semantics, except that <think that he will come to Paris> is pronounced in (1a) but not pronounced in (10); and similarly for (11) and (2a). Since (10) and (1a) only differ in what is pronounced, (10) is predicted to be as felicitous as (1a): despite *come* being unpronounced in (10), it is generated in syntax; and its presupposition cannot be satisfied since none of the possible anchors are in Paris. The same logic can also apply to (11).

Of course, one can stipulate that for some reason under ellipsis a non-local attitude holder is allowed to serve as the anchor and thus *Macron*, who is not a possible anchor for (1a), becomes a possible anchor for (1b) satisfying the presupposition of *come* in the ellipsis clause. However, this stipulation is not explanatory and has a lack of independent evidence to support it. Thus, a PF-deletion analysis with syntactic identity makes a wrong prediction about the felicity of (1b) and (2b) and fails to explain the felicity contrast.

In the next section, we show that a PF-deletion analysis with semantic identity can explain the felicity contrast if von Fintel's (1999) *Strawson Entailment* is incorporated into the analysis.

3.2. A PF-deletion analysis with semantic identity

There are different theories of semantic identity. Here, we employ the idea of semantic identity from Rooth's Parallelism (1992) with the formalism adopted from Takahashi & Fox (2005). This is stated in (12). Following Rooth (1992) and Takahashi & Fox (2005), we assume that elided material counts as deaccented for the purposes of the parallelism requirement.

(12) Rooth's Parallelism (1992)

Let S contain some deaccented XP and S' contain XP's antecedent. For every assignment function, g, $[[S']^g$ must entail one of the focus alternatives of $[[S]]^g$. If $[[S]]^g$ does not contain focused material, the focus alternative of $[[S]]^g$ is itself.

The focus alternative of $[[S]]^g$ is exactly like $[[S]]^g$, except, possibly, for the value of a focus marked item in S, which can be replaced with an alternative.

To illustrate how Rooth's Parallelism can explain (1b)'s felicity, we propose what is elided in (1b) is not <~~think that he will come to Paris~~>, but <~~think that he will go to Paris~~>, as shown in (13).

- (13) I also do <~~think that he will go to Paris~~>.

Given Rooth's Parallelism, what licenses ellipsis of <~~think that he will go to Paris~~> in (13) is that $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris}]]^g$ entails one focus alternative of the sentence with ellipsis, which is $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will go to Paris}]]^g$. This is shown in (14), where X_F indicates that the material X is focused.

- (14) Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris. I_F also do Δ .
 Δ = think that Obama will go to Paris.
 $\forall g : [[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris}]]^g$ entails $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will go to Paris}]]^g$, where *Macron* is a focus alternative to *I*.

As mentioned before, we assume *come* has the presupposition in (4), and *go* has no presupposition. However, *come* and *go* have the same assertive meaning, so their use is regulated by Maximize Presupposition. Thus, under all situations where $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris}]]^g$ is true, $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will go to Paris}]]^g$ is also true. Thus, $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris}]]^g$ entails $[[\text{Macron thinks that Obama will go to Paris}]]^g$.

Along the same lines, (2b) should be analyzed as (15), where what is elided is ~~<think that she will come to the U.S.>~~.

- (15) I also do ~~<think that she will come to the U.S.>~~.

In the following, we show that the mechanism we have been using so far cannot explain why ~~<think that she will come to the U.S.>~~ can be elided under Rooth's Parallelism, but incorporating von Fintel's (1999) *Strawson Entailment* makes it possible to explain why it can.

Unlike (14), it is not clear whether $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.}]]^g$ entails one focus alternative of (15), $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S.}]]^g$, where *Macron* is a focus alternative to *I*. One can imagine a situation where $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.}]]^g$ is true and in this situation *Macron* is not in the U.S. In such a scenario, $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S.}]]^g$ is undefined because the presupposition of *come* is not satisfied: in order for the presupposition of *come* to be satisfied, *Macron* has to be in the U.S. Thus, it is unclear in a situation where *Macron* is not in the U.S. whether $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.}]]^g$ entails $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S.}]]^g$. In other words, it is unclear whether A entails B if there is a situation under which A is true but B is undefined.

However, if we incorporate von Fintel's (1999) *Strawson Entailment* into Rooth's Parallelism, the felicity of (2b) can be explained. *Strawson Entailment* and the revised version of Rooth's Parallelism are defined in (16) and (17).

- (16) *Strawson Entailment* (von Fintel 1999)
 A *Strawson entails* B if the inference $A, S \therefore B$ is valid, where S is a premise stating that the presuppositions of all the statements involved are satisfied.
- (17) Rooth's Parallelism (revised)
 Let S contain some deaccented XP and S' contain XP's antecedent. For every assignment function, g, $[[S']]^g$ must **Strawson entail** one of the focus alternatives of $[[S]]^g$. If $[[S]]^g$ does not contain focused material, the focus alternative of $[[S]]^g$ is itself.
 The focus alternative of $[[S]]^g$ is exactly like $[[S]]^g$, except, possibly, for the value of a focus marked item in S, which can be replaced with an alternative.

The application of (17) to (2b) is shown in (18).

- (18) Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S. [antecedent clause]
 Macron is in the U.S. [presupposition of the ellipsis clause]

 \therefore Macron thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S. [ellipsis clause]

In this sense, $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.}]]^g$ *Strawson entails* $[[\text{Macron thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S.}]]^g$, satisfying the revised Rooth's Parallelism in (17) and thus ~~<thinks that Merkel will come to the U.S.>~~ can be elided.

To summarize, (1b) and (2b) are felicitous because *go* is elided in (1b) and *come* is elided in (2b), obeying the revised Rooth's Parallelism in (17), and satisfying the presupposition of *come* and

Maximize Presupposition in the ellipsis site. In (19b), none of the possible anchors is in Paris, so *come* cannot be used, and *go* is felicitously used due to Maximize Presupposition. In (20b), *come* is felicitously used because either the local attitude holder or the interlocutors can satisfy the presupposition of *come*.³

[Context: Macron is in Paris but Obama is not; and neither A nor B is in Paris.]

- A: (19) *Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris.*
 B: (19a) *#I also think that he will come to Paris.*
 (19b) *I also do <~~think that Obama will go to Paris~~>.*

[Macron and Merkel are not in the U.S; but both A and B are in the U.S.]

- A: (20) *Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.*
 B: (20a) *#I also think that she will go to the U.S.*
 (20b) *I also do <~~think that Merkel will come to the U.S.~~>.*

So far, we have been assuming a PF-deletion analysis. We next discuss an LF-copying approach.

4. An LF-copying analysis

In this section, we show that it is possible to use an LF-copying analysis of ellipsis (Chung et al. 1995) to explain the felicity contrast, but the analysis suffers from some theoretical problems. The idea of explaining the felicity contrast is that the perspective of *come* in the antecedent sentence can be copied to the ellipsis site. This is shown in (21b) and (22b).

[Context: Macron is in Paris but Obama is not; and neither A nor B is in Paris.]

- A: (21) *Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris.*
 B: (21a) *#I also think that he will come to Paris.*
 (21b) *I also do <~~think that Obama will come~~^{@Macron} ~~to Paris~~>.*

[Macron and Merkel are not in the U.S; but both A and B are in the U.S.]

- A: (22) *Macron thinks that Merkel will go to the U.S.*
 B: (22a) *#I also think that she will go to the U.S.*
 (22b) *I also do <~~think that she will go~~^{@Macron} ~~to the U.S.~~>.*

This amounts to saying that for *come* in (21a), the only possible anchors are A and B; while for *come* in (21b), the possible anchors include *Macron* in addition to A and B.

A problem for this approach is that it's unclear why the copying operation can override the restriction that the only possible anchor for *come* is the local attitude holder. This approach thus runs into the same problem as the analysis in section 3.1, since the LF-copying approach must stipulate that a non-local attitude holder becomes a possible anchor only under ellipsis for some unclear reason.

5. Discussions and Conclusion

So far, we show that the felicity contrast can be explained by a PF-deletion approach with a revised Rooth's Parallelism, while a PF-deletion approach with syntactic identity and an LF-copying approach might be able to explain the felicity contrast but suffer from theoretical problems.

However, there is one potential problem for the PF-deletion approach with the revised version of Rooth's Parallelism. Consider (23).⁴ The interpretation of (23) can be (24a), but not (24b).

- (23) John went to Paris. Bill did, too.

³ [[Macron thinks that Obama will come to Paris]]^S *Strawson entails* [[Macron thinks that Obama will go to Paris]]^S, and the premise S in this case is vacuous.

⁴ Many thanks to Michael Wilson for bringing this example to our attention.

- (24a) John went to Paris. Bill went to Paris, too.
 (24b) #John went to Paris. Bill returned to Paris, too.

However, the revised version of Rooth's Parallelism predicts (24b) to be a possible interpretation: [[John went to Paris]]^g *Strawson entails* the focus alternative [[John returned to Paris]]^g, where *John* is a focus alternative to *Bill*. The entailment is shown in (25), assuming that *return* has an assertive meaning of movement and a non-assertive meaning of having previously been to the destination.

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| (25) | John went to Paris.
John has been to Paris before. | [antecedent clause]
[presupposition of the ellipsis clause] |
| ----- | | |
| | ∴ John returned to Paris. | [ellipsis clause] |

One possible solution to this problem is to revise the semantics of *come* and *go* that we adopt in section 2. One way to implement this idea is to say that *come* and *go* are pragmatically determined allomorphs. To be more specific, the linguistic meanings of *come* and *go* are the same and only include the assertive meaning in (3). The usage of *come* and *go* is determined by the context: whether the anchor is in the destination or not. If the anchor is in the destination, use *come*; otherwise, use *go*. Under this approach, it is crucial that the contextually determined information is not part of *come/go*'s linguistic meaning, so the difference between *come* and *go* does not reside in their semantics, which makes it possible that *come* and *go* are semantically identical for the purposes of ellipsis.

In contrast, *return*'s presupposition might be part of its linguistic meaning, which is part of its semantics. In this sense, under ellipsis, *go* and *return* are considered two morphemes with different meanings: *go* has the assertive meaning of movement while *return* has the assertive meaning of movement and a presupposition of having previously been to the destination.

An assumption one has to take under this approach is that the presuppositions of *come/go* and the presupposition of *return* are different in their natures: the presuppositions of *come/go* are part of their pragmatic meaning, while the presupposition of *return* is part of its semantic meaning. Thus, independent motivation for this assumption is needed to justify the approach.

For now, we leave this question open and leave a more detailed solution for future research.

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