

**Maintaining syntactic identity under sluicing: Pseudoclefts and voice (mis)matches**

**1. Ellipsis identity.** After 50 years, there is still debate over the identity condition on ellipsis, with recent work promoting a primarily syntactic mechanism (e.g. Merchant 2013; Rudin 2019). Recently, non-European languages have begun to inform the debate, with some evidence pointing toward non-syntactic identity: Potsdam (2007) argues for semantic identity based on Malagasy, in which a pseudocleft *wh*-question can undergo sluicing with a clausal antecedent, and grammatical voice mismatches under sluicing in Chamorro and Kaqchikel present a *prima facie* challenge to a syntactic identity condition (Ranero in prep).

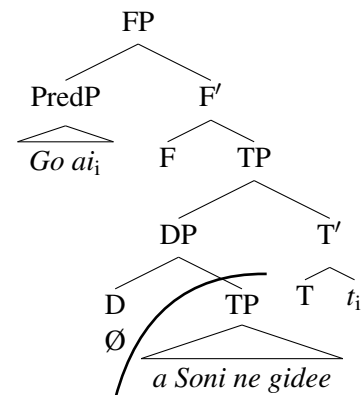
Novel sluicing data from Nukuoro (Polynesian-Outlier) shows that these two challenges can be understood while maintaining syntactic identity. Contra Potsdam (2007), I show that pseudocleft sluices comply with syntactic identity by eliding only the relative clause TP, leaving the null relative head unelided. Furthermore, a syntactic identity condition is compatible with apparent voice (mis)matches in Nukuoro, which arise when passive voice is implied by an ergative extraction restriction. I analyze apparent mismatches as island repair under ellipsis, as predicted by a phase-based analysis of syntactic ergativity (Coon et al. 2014); syntactic identity also correctly predicts Nukuoro sluices where ergative extraction passives match with true passives in the antecedent.

**2. Pseudocleft sluicing.** Nukuoro is an SVO Polynesian language with unmarked alignment and very little inflection. *Wh*-questions in Nukuoro are pseudoclefts, which consist of a predicate *wh*-phrase with a headless relative clause as its subject (1). There are four pieces of evidence for this analysis: i) the *wh*-element behaves like a predicate, ii) the remainder behaves like a relative clause, iii) headless relatives exist elsewhere in the language, and finally, iv) the relative head, typically a null operator, can be overt as a demonstrative or a dummy head like *tangada* ‘person’ (2).

- (1) [<sub>Pred</sub> Go ai] [<sub>DP</sub> OP<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> a Soni ne gidee t<sub>i</sub> ]]?  
 FOC who GEN Johnny PFV see  
 ‘Who did Johnny see?’

- (2) Go ai {deelaa / tangada} aau ne gidee?  
 FOC who DEM.SG / person 2SG.GEN PFV see  
 ‘Who is that one / the person that you saw?’

(3)



Potsdam (2007) assumes that pseudocleft sluices elide the matrix TP, violating syntactic identity with a non-pseudocleft antecedent. However, I argue that ellipsis only targets the relative clause TP and strands the (null) relative head, as shown in (3), based on the fact that Nukuoro sluices can leave the relative head overt (4). Since these sluices involve ellipsis of just the relative clause TP, rather than the full TP with a relative clause subject, the elided constituent is syntactically identical to the antecedent TP (barring genitive case, which I suggest is morphological). In this way, pseudocleft sluices can be captured by a syntactic identity condition.

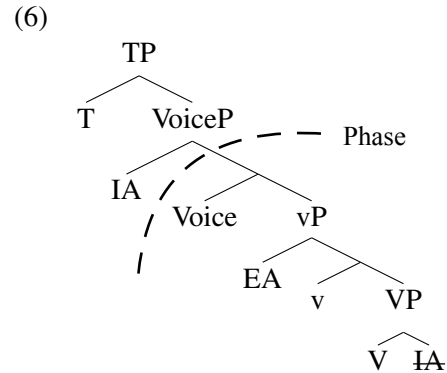
- (4) Soni ne gidee dahi dangada, gai au e dee iloo be go ai (deelaa)  
 Johnny PFV see one person but I NPST NEG know C FOC who DEM.SG  
 <a Soni ne gidee>.  
 GEN Johnny PFV see  
 ‘Johnny saw someone, but I don’t know who.’

Additional evidence shows that Nukuoro sluices (with and without overt relative heads) cannot be analyzed as pseudosluices: they can have adjunct and implicit argument *wh*-remnants (Merchant 2001:121), they can take *else*-modifiers (Merchant 2001:122), and they cannot host TP adjuncts (Potsdam 2007:608).

**3. Sluicing and voice.** Voice (mis)matches in Nukuoro can also fall under syntactic identity: i) apparent voice mismatches can be understood as island repair, and ii) matched voice constructions in Nukuoro, whose English counterparts are ungrammatical, are predicted by syntactic identity.

In Nukuoro, voice in the elided constituent is dictated by syntactic ergativity. Relativizing a transitive subject requires passive voice, which involves a suppletive verb form plus the optional particle *ina* (5b); relativizing an oblique requires the resumptive pronoun *ai* (5c). I adopt an island approach to syntactic ergativity (Coon et al. 2014), where the internal argument shifts to Spec, VoiceP and prevents any other constituent from escaping the VoiceP phase (6).

- (5) a. Go ai adaau ne tugi laa?  
 FOC who 1DU.GEN PFV hit DIST  
 ‘Who did we hit?’  
 b. Go ai ne \*tugi / **duugia ina** Soni?  
 FOC who PFV hit / hit.PASS PASS Johnny  
 ‘Who hit Johnny?’  
 c. Go hee aana ne tugi \*(ai) Soni?  
 FOC where 3SG.GEN PFV hit OBL.PRO Johnny  
 ‘Where did s/he hit Johnny?’



Voice can “mismatch” if there is an active antecedent and ergative extraction occurs in the sluice, implying passive voice. However, it is well known that ellipsis repairs islands (e.g. Ross 1969); thus, ergative extraction islands will be repaired by sluicing as well (as noted by Ranero in prep). This provides an analysis of (7) with no voice mismatch: if the sluice contains active voice, ergative extraction yields an island violation (notated here using \*), which is then repaired by non-pronunciation.

- (7) Dahi dangada ne **tugi** au, gai au e dee iloo be go ai <ne **tugi\*** au>.  
 one person PFV hit me but I NPST NEG know C FOC who PFV hit me  
 ‘Somebody hit me, but I don’t know who <hit me>.’

Meanwhile, a passive antecedent is also grammatical with ergative extraction in the sluice (8), suggesting that the voice of this sluice is truly passive. In this way, there are two derivations for a single ergative extraction sluice: one with active voice and island repair, and one with passive voice. This allows ergative extraction to match with both active and passive antecedents. Note that the elided constituent in (8) must be an ergative extraction passive, because a true passive would require an oblique pronoun *ai* which would find no syntactic (or semantic) correlate in the antecedent.

- (8) Dahi mee gu **gaiaadia**, gai au e dee iloo be go ai <ne **gaiaadia**>.  
 one thing INC steal.PASS but I NPST NEG know C FOC who PFV steal.PASS  
 ‘Something was stolen, but I don’t know who <stole (it)>.’

The utterance in (8) is ungrammatical in English, where it constitutes a passive-active mismatch. Syntactic identity best captures the difference between Nukuoro and English: Nukuoro can use the passive for ergative extraction, which rules in (8) as a voice match, while English does not.

**4. Conclusions.** The implications of this work are threefold: 1) a syntactic identity condition can be maintained for pseudocleft sluices, 2) an island analysis of syntactic ergativity allows apparent voice mismatches under sluicing to be attributed to island repair, and 3) syntactic identity predicts a difference between English passive-active mismatches and their Nukuoro equivalents, which is borne out. These facts are consistent with phase-based analyses of syntactic ergativity, as well as an analysis of islands as PF-phenomena which can be repaired by non-pronunciation.

**5. References.** Coon et al. 2014. The role of case in A-bar extraction asymmetries. *LV* 14. • Merchant 2001. *The Syntax of Silence*. OUP. • Merchant 2013. Voice and ellipsis. *LI* 44. • Potsdam 2007. Malagasy sluicing and its consequences for the identity requirement on ellipsis. *NLLT* 25. • Ranero in prep. Voice mismatches in Kaqchikel (Mayan) sluicing. Ms. • Ross 1969. Guess who? *CLS* 5. Rudin 2019. Head-based syntactic identity in sluicing. *LI* 50.