On the Syntax of Dutch and English Fragment Answers

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A. Outline The chief aim of this paper is to investigate fragment answers (FAs) in Dutch in comparison to their English counterparts. While the former can in general be embedded and are insensitive to islands, the latter only occur in main clause contexts and are island-sensitive. I argue that the difference follows naturally if Dutch FAs are given an account parallel to that of sluicing, i.e. fronting to Spec, CP and TP-ellipsis. I also show that there is variation among the Dutch embedded FAs: one type of embedded FA, which is – unlike the other Dutch FAs – island-sensitive, moves from Spec, CP to matrix Spec, vP (prior to the TP-ellipsis). The analysis provides support for (a version of) the PF-theory of islands, according to which island-sensitivity is due to non-deletion of PF-uninterpretable traces/copies.

B. Fragment answers in Dutch & English: basic properties

B.1. Definition Fragment answers, both in English and Dutch, are answers consisting of a non-sentential XP with the same propositional content as a fully sentential answer (cf. Merchant 2004).

(1) Q: Wie gaat de wedstrijd winnen?
 A: Diana. (= Diana gaat de wedstrijd winnen.)
 'Diana.' (= 'Diana is going to win the contest.')

B.2. Ellipsis Merchant (2004) shows that English FAs are derived from full sentential structures by ellipsis (PF-deletion). This is suggested by the fact that the FA shows connectivity effects identical to those exhibited by the FA's correlate in a non-elliptical sentence. This is also true for Dutch FAs (embedded and non-embedded), as illustrated in (2) with Variable Binding.

(2) Q: Wat vindt elke politicus, uiterst belangrijk? 'What does every politician, hold in high regard?'
 A: Zijn, imago. / Elke politicus, vindt zijn, imago uiterst belangrijk.

'Hisi image.' / 'Every politiciani holds hisi image in high regard.'

B.3. Movement Merchant (2004) also provides several diagnostics to show that the fragments have been A'-moved prior to the ellipsis (i.e. the elided clausal structure hosts the trace/copy of the movement operation). One of these diagnostics is Preposition Stranding: whereas P-stranding languages like English allow both 'bare' DP and PP answers to WH-questions containing a preposition, in non-P-stranding languages like Dutch only PP answers are possible. This contrast is shown in (3).

(3) Q: <Naar> wie was Peter <* naar> aan het kijken? 'Who was Peter looking at?' A: a. Naar Marie. b. * Marie. '(At) Mary.'

Some Dutch speakers do not entirely exclude P-stranding in A'-movement. For them, the non-pied-piped variant of the question in (3), with stranding of [*p naar*], is not unacceptable. These speakers allow for the DP answer in (3b) as well. This correlation also corroborates Merchant's diagnostic.

C. Fragment answers in Dutch & English: main differences

C.1. Dutch, but not English, FAs are island-insensitive While English FAs obey island constraints – as expected if they involve A'-movement – Dutch FAs do not. Testing for FA-island sensitivity is not unproblematic, as the questions which the FAs would have to answer are themselves locality-violating. Therefore, Merchant (2004) uses *implicit salient questions* (yes-no questions with an intonation rise on an XP *in situ*) as a diagnostic. Example (4) shows that Dutch, but not English, FAs can violate a Relative Clause island.

Q: Willen ze iemand aannemen die GRIEKS spreekt? 'Do they want to hire someone who speaks GREEK?'
 A: Nee, ALBANEES. *'No, ALBANIAN.'

Sluicing, i.e. clausal ellipsis with a WH-remnant, is island-insensitive as well (Ross 1969; Merchant 2001).

- (5) Ze willen iemand inhuren die een Balkantaal spreekt. Welke?
 - 'They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language. Which one?'

C.2. Dutch, but not English, FAs are embeddable The question in (6) allows for a number of different embedded FAs in Dutch (cf. also Barbiers 2002). However, their English counterparts are ungrammatical (Morgan 1973:732; Merchant 2004:695).

(6)	Q:	Wie dacht je dat zou winnen?				'Who did you think would win?'		
	A_1 :	Ik dacht	Eva.	A2: Ik had gedachi	Eva. 1	A3: Ik had	Eva gedacht.	* 'I thought Eva.'
		I thoug	ht Eva	I had though	nt Eva	I had	Eva thought	* 'I had thought Eva.'
Like non-embedded FAs in Dutch, embedded fragments of type (A1) and (A2) are not sensitive to islands,								
as illustrated in (7a) with an Adjunct island. However, FAs like (A ₃) do obey locality constraints, cf. (7b).								
This crucial difference indicates that this type of FA should be given a different analysis.								

(7) Is Jan gekomen omdat hij MARIE wil versieren?
a. Nee, ik dacht / had gedacht / zou denken EVA.

'Has John come because he wants to seduce Mary?' * 'No, I thought / had thought / would think Eva.' * 'No I had Eva thought / would Eva think.'

b. * Nee, ik had EVA gedacht / ik zou EVA denken.

D. Fragment answers in Dutch & English: analysis

D.1. The analysis of non-embedded FAs (and sluicing) In recent work, ellipsis processes are often implemented in terms of the syntactic feature [E], cf. Merchant (2001, 2004, 2008) and van Craenenbroeck (2004). In sluicing, [E] is merged with the C°-head whose TP-complement is to be elided. Although it is not entirely clear *why* or *how*, it seems that the presence of this [E]-feature on C° requires that this head always remains empty, even in languages which allow doubly-filled-COMP-filter violations in non-elliptical embedded WH-questions, such as various Dutch dialects. This is illustrated in (8).

- (8) Ze willen iemand inhuren die een Balkantaal spreekt. Welke (*dat)?
- 'They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language. Which one (* that)?'

(9) is a simplified representation of the analysis of sluicing: [E] is merged with C°, the WH-phrase is moved to Spec, CP, and the TP is elided. Merchant (2004, 2008) argues for (a version of) the PF-theory of islands, in which island-violating traces/copies (marked with *) are PF-uninterpretable and must therefore be eliminated. In (9), TP-ellipsis deletes all defective traces, yielding a PF-interpretable object.

(9) $[CP WH_1 [C [E]] = [TP \dots *t_1 \dots t_1 \dots]]$

To deal with the differences in island-sensitivity between English sluices and FAs, Merchant hypothesizes that English FAs move through an additional CP-layer, cf. (10a). In (10a), one *-trace is not eliminated, causing a PF-crash. Dutch FAs, on the other hand, resemble sluicing in not being island-sensitive. Therefore, we can assume that the non-elliptical counterpart of Dutch FAs is a simple movement structure, involving only one CP-layer, resulting in the non-WH-counterpart of sluicing, cf. (10b).

(10) a. $[_{CP} XP_1 C [_{CP} *t_1 [_C [E]] [_{TP} \dots *t_1 \dots t_1 \dots]]$ b. $[_{CP} XP_1 [_C [E]] [_{TP} \dots *t_1 \dots t_1 \dots]]$ Although this analysis nicely accounts for the differences in island-sensitivity, it is not that clear what the motivation for the extra movement step in English FAs is, other than the need for a non-elidable trace. However, Dutch embedded FAs provide evidence that this PF-theory of islands is on the right track.

D.2. The analysis of Dutch embedded FAs Embedded FAs never surface with *dat* 'that', although this complementizer is obligatorily present in non-elliptical subclauses, cf. (11). If the structure of the CP-complement of *ik denk* 'I think' in (11a) resembles the structure (10b), with C° hosting an [E]-feature, the absence of *dat* is expected, on a par with the absence of an overt complementizer in Sluicing. I assume that the structure of island-insensitive FAs of type $(A_1)/(A_2)$ in (6) is indeed similar to that of matrix FAs.

(11) a. Wie heeft het gedaan? – Ik denk <* dat> Jan <* dat>. 'Who has done it? – *I think (that) John (that).'
b. Ik denk < dat> Jan <* dat> het gedaan heeft. 'I think <that> John <* that> has done it.'

Unlike the FAs of type $(A_1)/(A_2)$ in (6), the (A_3) -type fragment precedes the matrix past participle. Barbiers (2002) analyzes this type of FA as involving (A'-)Focus-movement of [DP *Eva*] to the matrix Spec,*v*P. As this fronting is also allowed in non-elliptical sentences in Dutch, it is not at all unmotivated: (12) *Ik had* [*Eva*] gedacht dat zou winnen. 'I had thought that Eva would win.'

Barbiers claims that this movement is followed by PF-deletion of the embedded CP. Merchant's account provides a diagnostic for deciding whether (A₃) involves CP-ellipsis, or TP-ellipsis like the other Dutch FAs. Compared to (A₁) and (A₂), (A₃) involves an extra movement step (targeting matrix Spec, ν P), leaving a trace in the embedded CP. While CP-ellipsis deletes this trace, TP-ellipsis does not. If the moved XP crossed an island node, a non-eliminated *-trace would cause a PF-crash. Thus, CP-ellipsis predicts (A₃) to be island-insensitive, while TP-ellipsis predicts island sensitivity. As shown in section C.2, (A₃) differs from the other Dutch FAs exactly in obeying locality, showing that the latter prediction is correct.

E. Elliptical 'repair' effects Island insensitivity and lack of an overt complementizer in Dutch FAs are examples of 'elliptical repair effects', i.e. the non-elliptical structures underlying ellipses are sometimes ungrammatical (cf. Merchant 2008). As shown in section D, these two cases follow from a Merchant-type account of ellipsis. Another 'repair' effect seems to be the fact that embedded topicalization is generally absent in Dutch. Nevertheless, it is precisely this type of movement that leads to embedded FAs. This is shown in (11): while [DP *John*] can occur in the FA, it cannot precede *dat* in the non-elliptical subclause. As embedded FAs are not allowed in English, this 'repair' strategy seems to be absent in this language. I claim that this effect can be derived from independent properties of the grammar as well. Unlike in English, embedded topicalization – with the fronted XP preceding *dat* – is *marginally* possible in Dutch (with adverbials and PPs) and some Dutch dialects also allow for embedded left dislocation, cf. (13).

(13) *Ik had gedacht* [*volgende vrijdag*] *dat Jan (dan) zon terugkeren.* 'I had thought that John would return next Friday.' It is this marginal availability of fronting strategies in subclauses that licenses embedded FAs in Dutch.

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