

Parallelism for (Negative) Indefinites under VP Ellipsis

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Park, Myung-Kwan & Choi, Sunjoo. (2017). Parallelism for (negative) indefinites under VP ellipsis. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 25(4). 125-142. Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) examine the scopal pattern of English negative indefinites in VP-ellipsis contexts. Their main argument is that negative indefinites cannot take scope out of a verbal ellipsis site. They note that negative indefinites require fusion under adjacency between the clausal polarity head and an indefinite determiner under the structural configuration of multi-dominance. However, this paper shows that these attempts are not promising, by demonstrating that English negative indefinites in ellipsis environments simply need to satisfy the syntactic identity condition on ellipsis. The arguments come from a certain scope interaction between indefinites and VP ellipsis. This paper ultimately shows that to capture the whole range of relevant data, satisfying the Identity/Parallelism condition must be a prerequisite for ellipsis.

Key Words: VP-ellipsis, negative indefinites, superset violation, the Identity/Parallelism condition

1. Introduction

The starting point of this study is the interaction between ellipsis and negative indefinites in English. Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) report the interesting contrast between (1) and (2). They note that the object negative indefinite *no help* to take scope either above or below the modal *can* in non-elliptical constructions, as shown in (1). However, in VP ellipsis constructions as in (2), the negative indefinite *no* cannot take scope above the

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modal *can*. Not the first but only the latter construal is available to the example in (2). In other words, the negative indefinite cannot take scope outside of the VP ellipsis site.

- (1) Quentin Tarantino can offer **no** help.

$\neg > \text{can}, \%1) \text{ can} > \neg$

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:41, (1))

- (2) A: Who can offer **no** help?

B: %Quentin Tarantino can ~~<offer no help>~~.

$*\neg > \text{can}, \% \text{ can} > \neg$

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:41, (2))

Furthermore, they discover the fact that whereas *any* cannot antecede the ellipsis of *no*, the reverse configuration is allowed. Let us consider the example in (3).

- (3) [Context: the Cannes Film Festival]

Who didn't like any movie?

- a. Quentin Tarantino didn't like any movie.
- b. Quentin Tarantino liked no movie.
- c. Quentin Tarantino didn't ~~<like any movie>~~.
- d. *Quentin Tarantino did ~~<like no movie>~~.

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:44, (9))

The answer with *no* in the VP ellipsis site in (3d) is unacceptable. As is well-known, a stressed auxiliary can indicate positive polarity. So, the unacceptability of (3d) may be accounted for by the presence of *did*. Considering this possibility, Craenenbroeck and Temmerman report another set of data, as in (4). Similarly, the effect is found in infinitival VP ellipsis with a focused subject.

- (4) I know PETER didn't offer any help . . .

- a. . . . and I also don't expect JOHN to offer any help.
- b. . . . and I also expect JOHN to offer no help.

1) According to Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017), speaker variation is indicated by means of a percentage sign.

- c. . . . and I also don't expect JOHN to <offer ~~any help~~>.
 d. * . . . and I also expect JOHN to <offer ~~no help~~>.
 (taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:44, (10))

Based on the interaction between negative indefinites and verbal ellipsis environments, Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) establish the following generalization:

- (5) The *Any/No* Generalization : Whereas *no* can antecede the ellipsis of *any* in verbal ellipsis, the reverse configuration is disallowed.
 (Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017:42, (3))

The organization of the subsequent discussion in this paper is as follows. First, in section 2 we will first consider the behavior of non-verbal negation *no* in details. This is worth considering since they show peculiar scope interaction, and we will then review Craenenbroeck and Temmerman's (2017) suggestion on the syntactic derivation of *no*. In section 3 we will propose the role of subset satisfaction in meeting identity in ellipsis. We will focus on the syntactic identity condition that regulates ellipsis. We will then return to scopal patterns in VP ellipsis constructions, which Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) report. In doing so, we will address some related issues in terms of the timing of ellipsis.

2. (Negative) Indefinites under VP Ellipsis

2.1. Non-verbal (sentential) negation 'no'

De Clercq (2010a) reports the distribution of the non-verbal sentential negation *no* as in (6) and (7). According to her, *on no account* in the clause-final position is unacceptable as in (6). A similar pattern has been observed for the negative analogue in the clause-final position of (7c). However, the same PPs in the clause-medial position are totally fine.

- (6) a. *?You should move to Paris on no account.
 b. You should on no account move to Paris.
 c. On no account should you move to Paris.

(De Clercq 2010a:234)

- (7) a. The police had at that time interviewed the witnesses.
 b. The police had interviewed the witnesses at that time.
 c. */??The police had talked to the witnesses at no time.
 d. The police had at no time talked to the witnesses.

(De Clercq et al. 2011:15)

As noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), non-verbal negators marking clausal negation can, in principle, appear in any position in the clause. However, as the position gets further from the beginning of the clause and/or more deeply embedded, the acceptability of the construction decreases simply because more and more of the clause is available to be misinterpreted as a positive before the negator is finally encountered at a late stage in the processing of the sentence.

In what follows, verbal negation expressed by *not* in combination with an adjunct PP containing an NPI in the clause-final position is felt to be more marked, as shown in (8).

- (8) a. I am not satisfied with the proposal you have put to me any way.
 b. ?I am satisfied with the proposal you have put to me in no way.
 c. As far as I can recall, I have not purchased food at the drive-through window of a fast-food restaurant on any street in this city.
 d. ?As far as I can recall, I have purchased food at the drive-through window of a fast-food restaurant on no street in this city.

(Huddleston and Pullum 2002:814, (24ii))

Furthermore, De Clercq (2010b) captures an interesting asymmetry between PP adjuncts and PP arguments, as below:

- (9) a. Mary has read no papers.
 b. Mary has talked to no one.
 c. *Mary has to no one talked.

As in (6a) and (7c), negative PP adjuncts resist the clause-final position, but this is not the case for negative arguments in (9a). The negative PP complement as in (9b) appears in the postverbal, clause-final position. There is less material intervening between the canonical position for encoding sentential negation and the negative complement of the verb (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

Another pattern of the scope interaction can be observed. Let us consider the example in (10). This example is construed with two different meanings (cf. Jakendoff 1972, Rochemont 1978), which they refer to as "the unfortunate-dresser reading" and "the nudity reading." Haegman (1995) and Svenonius (2002) claim that the two different readings reflect the two different scope positions for the negative indefinite. Under the unfortunate-dresser reading in (10a), the negative indefinite takes wide scope, thus the negation bearing on the entire clause. Under the nudity reading in (10b), the negative indefinites takes only the narrow scope.

- (10) Mary looks good with no clothes.
 a. = Mary doesn't look good with any clothes. Unfortunate-dresser reading
 b. = Mary looks good naked. Nudity reading

Given what we have seen so far, only with the nudity reading the negative PP adjunct remains inside VP ellipsis, as illustrated in (11). As we pointed out above, the negative indefinite inside the VP-ellipsis site cannot take scope outside that ellipsis site, as in (2). The PP *with no clothes* is contained within the VP-ellipsis site and cannot take wide scope above the ellipsis site.

- (11) You say MARY looks good with no clothes, but I say JULIE does . . .
 . . . <look good with no clothes>.
 *Unfortunate dresser, ^{OK}nudity

We conclude from these data that the negative indefinite inside the VP ellipsis site can take only low scope. Based on these examples discussed in this section, Craenenbroek and Temmerman (2017) present another empirical generalization in terms of scope interpretation:

- (12) The Scope Generalization: A negative indefinite in object position cannot take scope outside of a VP-ellipsis site.

(Craenenbroek and Temmerman 2017:42, (4))

In the next section, we will show how they account for these two generalizations. They assume that negative indefinites are formed through a morphological process. This is termed ‘fusion under adjacency’, and this operation is bled by VP-ellipsis.

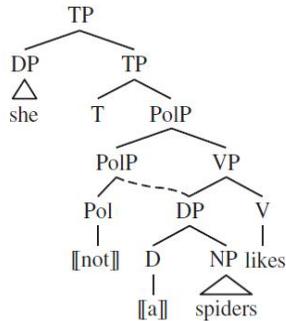
2.2. Fusion under adjacency

The interpretation of a negative indefinite does not always reflect its surface position. There are three approaches to negative indefinites in general:

- (i) a generalized quantifier-plus-QR analysis (see, among others, Zanuttini 1991 and others)
- (ii) a decomposition analysis that involves Agree or feature checking (see, among others, Jacobs 1980)
- (iii) a decomposition analysis based on PF amalgamation or incorporation (see, among others, Bech (1955-1957))

Craenenbroek and Temmerman (2017) pursue a morphological analysis in terms of fusion (incorporation/amalgamation). They propose that the locality/adjacency required for the fusion of the negation with the indefinite is established under multi-dominance. Along the line of analysis by Johnson (2010), they assume that the negative indefinite is spelled out as a single word after it is spread across two distinct syntactic positions: sentential negation (Pol) and indefinite determiner (D). More specifically, the negative indefinite is derived via multi-dominance: the indefinite determiner first merges with the verb, and later re-merges with sentential negation, as in (13).

(13) She likes no spiders.



(attributed to Johnson 2010, as cited in Craenenbroek and Temmerman 2017)

They examine how effectively this derivation of the negative indefinite accounts for its distribution in VP ellipsis constructions. Let us consider the example in (2), repeated as (14).

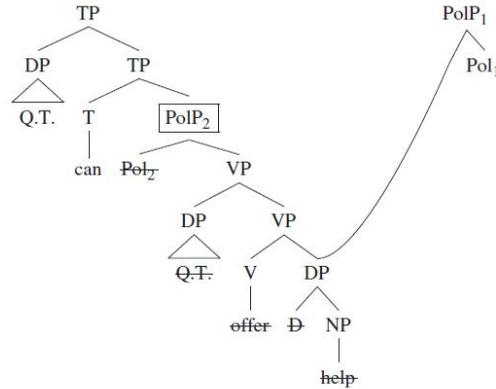
(14) Q: Who can offer no help?

A: %Quentin Tarantino can <offer no help>.

* \square > can, % can > \square

As mentioned before, two syntactic terminals undergo the morphological process of 'fusion under adjacency' to be spelled out as a single lexical item, provided that they are adjacent at the point when the syntactic structure is linearized. They adopt the clause structure as below with the two PolPs, one of them being dominated by TP. After PolP₂ and T are merged, T attracts the subject to its specifier and triggers deletion of its complement. All linearization statements referring to terminal elements dominated by PolP₂ are removed from the ordering table. Then, PolP₁ merges with DP:

(15)



(Craenenbroek and Temmerman 2017:63, (65))

What is crucial to this case is the timing of the derivation where Pol₁ and D would undergo fusion to form the lexical item *no*. If D has already been elided, then there is nothing for Pol₁ to fuse with. This is what blocks the inclusion of the high-scoping negative indefinite inside the VP ellipsis site. In other words, when VP-ellipsis precedes the operation of fusion, it can bleed it. In doing so, not the first but only the second construal can be available, as given in (14). That is, under this analysis, the timing of ellipsis plays an important role in the scopal pattern of negative indefinites inside VP-ellipsis sites. Though Craenenbroek and Temmerman's (2017) analysis is well articulated, their proposal seems to be more complicating than what is in need, relying on the construction-specific machinery like fusion under adjacency. The goal of this paper is to provide a simpler, general account for this issue, using the Identity/Parallelism condition ellipsis.

3. Towards an Analysis

3.1. Restrictions on (negative) indefinites under VP ellipsis

According to the previous studies, indefinites and polarity items are

interchangeable under ellipsis (see Sag 1976, Ladusaw 1979, Hardt 1993, Fiengo & May 1994, Ginnakidou 1998, Johnson 2001, Merchant 2013). First, as noted by Merchant (2013), the elided VP cannot contain *any*, but the antecedent clause contains a polarity item, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) John didn't see anyone, but Mary did.
 a. * . . . but Mary did <see ~~any~~one>.
 b. . . . but Mary did <see ~~some~~one>.

(Merchant 2013: 449, (15))

Second, the negative polarity item *any* can antecede the ellipsis of the indefinite *some*, and vice versa.

- (17) John saw someone, but Mary didn't.
 a. =/= . . . but Mary didn't <see ~~some~~one>.
 b. . . . but Mary didn't <see ~~any~~one>.

(Merchant 2013: 449, (16))

Third, we observe that *some* cannot antecede the ellipsis of *no*. The answer with *no* inside the VP-ellipsis site is ungrammatical, as in (18).

- (18) A: Who can offer some help?
 B: *Quentin Tarantino can <offer ~~no~~ help>.

Let us now consider the following examples repeated here as (19). As we have discussed so far, *any* cannot antecede the ellipsis of *no*.

- (19) [Context: the Cannes Film Festival]
 Who didn't like any movie?
 a. Quentin Tarantino didn't like any movie.
 b. Quentin Tarantino liked no movie.
 c. Quentin Tarantino didn't <like ~~any~~ movie>.
 d. *Quentin Tarantino did <like ~~no~~ movie>.

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:44, (9))

However, when the antecedent contains the negative indefinite *no*, a VP ellipsis site can include the negative polarity item *any*. This is illustrated in (20).

- (20) a. Many people there have **no** idea who he was but apparently Obama didn't <have ~~**any** idea who he was~~> either.
 b. "I have **no** idea how a hunter would have gotten his hands on it. It makes no sense."
 "No, it doesn't <make ~~**any** sense~~>."
 (taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:44, (8))

Johnson (2001) and Merchant (2013) note that the elided VP in (21) does not admit a negative meaning. But we can find that a VP ellipsis site can contain the indefinite *a* or *some*, provided that its antecedent clause contains *no*.

- (21) a. I could find **no** solution, but Holly might <find ~~*no/a solution~~>.
 (Johnson 2001: 468-469, (103)-(104))
 b. "There will be **no** Paradise for me. But if there were <~~*no/a paradise for me~~>, I wouldn't expect to see you there . . ."
 (Merchant 2013: 453, (25))
 c. Although John will trust **nobody** over 30, Bill will <trust ~~*nobody/somebody over 30~~>.
 (Sag 1976:312, (23))

We have so far examined the patterns of indefinites under VP-ellipsis constructions. We find that the behavior of negative indefinites in VP ellipsis is not coherent. The following table provides a summary of them, including the distribution of their acceptability in English, which we saw in the previous sub-section. The numbers of the relevant examples are also provided as follows:

(22)

within the antecedent VP	within the elided VP	acceptability
① [VP ... no ...] no = 'not any'	[VP ... no ...] no = 'not any' <== (23) & (24) ²	OK
② [VP ... no ...] no = 'not any'	[VP ... some/a ...] <vehicle change/parallelism satisfaction> <== (21a-c)	OK
③ [VP ... no ...] no = 'not any'	not ³) [VP ... any ...] = (20)	OK
④ [VP ... some ...]	[VP ... some ...] <== (17a)	OK
⑤ [VP ... some ...]	[VP ... no ...]; no = 'not any' <superset violation> <== (18)	not OK
⑥ [VP ... some ...]	not [VP ... any ...] <== (17b)	OK
⑦ not [VP ... any ...]	not [VP ... any ...] <== (3c)	OK
⑧ not [VP ... any ...]	[VP ... some/a ...] <== (16b) ⁴	OK
⑨ not [VP ... any ...]	[VP ... no ...]; no = 'not any' <superset violation> <== (3d)	not OK

2) Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) differ from Sag (1976), Johnson (2001), and Merchant (2013) in regard to the acceptability of VP ellipsis containing *no* when its antecedent VP also contains *no*. See the contrast between (21a-c) and (23) & (24) below. In the following

Based on this finding, we propose that the degradedness of the two cases (⑤ & ⑨ in the table) is accounted by a superset violation.⁵⁾ In other words, the presence of ‘no’ as a combination of ‘not’ and ‘any/some’ inside the antecedent VP of VP ellipsis licenses VP ellipsis (or its construal) that contains either ‘no’ or ‘any/some’. But the presence of only ‘any/some’ inside the antecedent VP of VP ellipsis cannot license VP ellipsis (or its construal) that contains ‘no’. Put

discussion of this paper we concur with the former authors on the acceptability of this type of examples. Note that there is a difference between the *no*-ellipsis versions of (21a-c) and (23) & (24) in terms of focus on a VP-external element. We assume that the focus on a VP-external element as in (23) and (24) allows for sentence negation even when *no* is included in VP ellipsis. By contrast, this focus was not controlled in the *no*-ellipsis versions of (21a-c), taken from Sag (1976), Johnson (2001), and Merchant (2013). See also the footnote 6 for the relevant point.

- 3) The negation *not* outside the antecedent/ellipsis VP is excluded when deciding whether the Identity/Parallelism condition on VP ellipsis is met or not.
- 4) One of the anonymous reviewers for this journal brought up the following example, where like (16b), the (idiomatic) NPI *a red cent* antecedes the assertive indefinite *some*:
 - (i) John didn't have a red cent, but Susie did have some money>. (Sauerland 1998: 125)

In this paper we have concentrated on the relation between (negative) indefinites in ellipsis and antecedent VP, but the example in (i) points to the fact that on top of this relation, the notion of so-called focus alternative (*money* being regarded as identical to *red cent* in ellipsis) comes into play in meeting the Identity/Parallelism condition on ellipsis.

- 5) Here we use ‘superset’ or ‘subset’ in a simplistic sense. Since *no* is a combination of *not* and *any/some* in terms of syntactic feature composition, *no* is a ‘superset’ of either *any* or *some*. In a reverse way, either *any* or *some* is a ‘subset’ of *no*. One more relevant point to make is that the distinction between assertive *some* and non-assertive *any* is not made when they are initially inserted into the syntactic derivation, but in a relation with another syntactic element like the negation in a course of derivation.

This restriction on identity/parallelism can be rephrased based on the notion of *vehicle change* developed by Wyngaerd and Zwart (1991) and Fiengo and May (1994). Put simply, the superset *no* in the VP antecedent can be vehicle-changed into its subset *a/some/any* in the VP ellipsis for the sake of meeting the Identity/Parallelism condition on ellipsis, but the other way around does not hold. This mode of vehicle change is taken to be parallel to the well-known kind vehicle change through which a more referential (thus superset) R-expression changes into a less referential (thus subset) pronominal element, thereby obviating a violation of the Binding Condition (C).

simply, ‘no’ within the antecedent VP is a superset of and licenses ‘any/some’ in VP ellipsis, but ‘any/some’ within the VP antecedent is a subset of and thus cannot license ‘no’ in VP ellipsis. The latter is ruled out because of the superset violation: the latter ‘no’ as a combination of ‘not’ plus ‘any/some’ is a superset of the former ‘any/some’. Thus we suggest that satisfying the Identity/Parallelism condition in terms of sub-/super-set relation between ‘no’ and ‘any/some’ in VP ellipsis is a prerequisite for VP ellipsis.

Note here that under our approach, the non-verbal negation *no* which is absolute negation is represented as ‘not’ plus ‘any’. As in ⑤, the negative indefinite ‘no’ is a superset of the indefinite ‘some’. What is crucial here is that a violation of the Identity/Parallelism condition cannot be avoided. This is because the elided material must be syntactically either the same or smaller than its antecedent identity domain. The reverse configuration results in a violation in the size of (syntactico-semantic) identity domain, which is a so-called superset violation. The same point can be made with the instance in ⑨ of the table (22). The example, as in (3d), does not satisfy the Identity/Parallelism condition, thus being unacceptable. As we predict, the other examples are all acceptable since they satisfy the Identity condition on VP-ellipsis. This diagnostics of the subset principle is easy to verify, showing that the Identity/Parallelism condition indeed must be satisfied to license VP-ellipsis properly.

Now, we turn to examine the scopal patterns of ‘no’ under VP ellipsis. The following sub-section addresses these issues in more details.

3.2. The scope of ‘no’ under VP ellipsis

Let us again consider examples involving VP-ellipsis:

(23) Q: Who liked no movie?

A: ?Quentin Tarantino did <like no movie>.6)

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:45, (12))

6) The mild markedness of this example could be due to the fact that, in the case of question-answer pairs, some informants prefer a fragment answer over VP ellipsis.

(24) I know PETER offered no help, and I also expect JOHN to <offer no help>.

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:45, (13))

Given that the negative indefinite *no* is part of the antecedent of VP ellipsis, the ellipsis site is construed with *no* as well. We can consider another case called Neg > Mod modals⁷). These modals typically take scope below sentential negation (see Cormack & Smith 2002, Iatridou & Zeijlstra 2010, and Iatridou & Sichel 2011). As noted by Cormack and Smith (2002), some native speakers allow the deontic modal to outscope the negation.

(25) a. John can not eat vegetables.

= It is not the case that John is permitted to eat vegetables.

$\neg > \diamond$

= It is permitted that John not eat vegetables.

$\% \diamond > \neg$

(Cormack & Smith 2002:13, (29a))

b. He can not go to this party.

= It is not the case that he is permitted to go to this party.

$\neg > \diamond$

= It is permitted that he not go to this party.

$\% \diamond > \neg$

(Iatridou & Sichel 2011:598, (4b))

However, Craenenbroeck and Temmerman (2017) report that most speakers can only interpret the object negative indefinite DP in (26) as scoping over the deontic modal *can*, and a smaller set of speakers allow the inverse scope reading.

(26) John can do no homework tonight.

= It is not the case that John is permitted to do homework tonight.

$\neg > \diamond$

7) The deontic modal *can* is the one that can take the scope below the negation.

= It is permitted that John not do any homework tonight.

% \diamond > \neg

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:41, (15))

Now consider VP ellipsis in (27B). As pointed out by Craenenbroeck and Temmerman, the example does not allow for the reading where negation outscopes the modal.

(27) A: Who can offer no help?

B: %Quentin Tarantino can <offer no help>.

* \neg > can, % can > \neg

(taken from Craenenbroeck and Temmerman 2017:41, (2/16))

In short, the negative indefinite inside the VP ellipsis site cannot scope outside of it. We have examined the scopal patterns of indefinites in VP-ellipsis constructions. Now, let us consider our proposal in terms of the scopal pattern.

We concur with Craenenbroeck and Temmerman's (2017) proposal concerning the timing of ellipsis that actually refers to the derivational point. We assume that timing plays a crucial role in our analysis for the example in (27B). As exemplified in (27B), the timing of the Identity/Parallelism condition on VP ellipsis precedes that of the negative indefinite *no* that would outscope over the modal *can*. In other words, the non-verbal negation meets the Identity/Parallelism condition on ellipsis in the narrow syntax. By contrast, the modal *can* is interpreted at the conceptual-intensional (CI) interface. This discrepancy between ellipsis identity and scope-taking of a modal is relevant to the account for the absence of the wide scope reading for the modal in VP ellipsis. The non-verbal negation inside VP ellipsis is invisible or focus-insensitive, thus being unable to interact with the modal that undergoes its scope interpretation at the CI interface. This line of reasoning leads to yielding only the construal where the modal takes scope over the non-verbal negation.

In the parallel fashion, we can account for the fact that the example in (11), repeated as (28), allows for the nudity reading, but not for the unfortunate dresser reading.

- (28) You say MARY looks good with no clothes, but I say JULIE does .
 <look good with no clothes>.

*Unfortunate dresser, ^{OK}nudity

The non-verbal negative indefinite cannot interact with and take scope over the element outside VP ellipsis as mentioned above. In the parallel fashion to scope interaction, the non-verbal negative indefinite cannot outscope the silent VP, disallowing the nudity reading for (28).

4. Conclusion

What is important for purpose of the current discussion is that we need to adopt something like the syntactic Identity/Parallelism condition to account for negative indefinites in VP ellipsis constructions. Based on the findings regarding their syntactic distribution, we suggested that the Identity/Parallelism condition must be a prerequisite to capture the relation between the elided domain and its antecedent domain. If the antecedent domain is smaller than that of its elided domain in terms of syntactic-semantic features, then the superset violation arises. As a consequence, the superset violation leads to ungrammaticality of the relevant examples. Departing from Craenenbroeck & Temmerman's (2017) derivational approach, our analysis relies on the more general notion of identity relation between VP ellipsis and its antecedent.

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