

Mismatched Gender in Elided *self*-Pronouns and *one*-Anaphora

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The Issue Ross (1967) notes that gender mismatches are possible in English ellipsis:

- (1) Every girl accompanied her mother and every boy did too.

Johnson (2014) provides an analysis of such cases following on the minimal pronoun treatment of bound variables developed in Kratzer (2009); Johnson's proposal is that the ellipsis site in (1) contains a minimal pronoun with no ϕ -features, thus avoiding a feature clash. This paper reports on a contextual felicity task examining gender mismatches under VP ellipsis of English reflexives and *one*-anaphora. The findings and conclusions are as follows: (i) gender mismatch effects in sloppy ellipsis are absent for reflexives, providing further support for Kratzer's (2009) treatment of these as being derived as feature-rich minimal pronouns, with late lexical insertion providing the overt form; (ii) late lexical insertion can be extended to reflexive pronouns in non-argument positions; and (iii) there is evidence that some speakers do have a gender sensitivity under *one*-anaphora, motivating a different treatment of the phenomenon.

The Study Our findings are based on a contextual felicity task wherein target sentences are presented alongside a short text giving background information about the situation. Participants are then asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which the target matches the context, in this case, sentences such as those in (2), all drawn from the gender mismatch conditions:

- (2) a. Josh burned himself, and Peg did too.
b. Tom found a new job by himself, and Claire did too.
c. Hannah is afraid of spiders herself, and Arnold is too.
d. Mae wanted an expensive portrait of her kids, and Alan wanted a cheaper one.

For each target, two contexts were constructed, strict and sloppy. An equal number of (distinct) gender matched targets and contexts were also constructed. Counterbalanced experiment lists were used so that each participant only sees a given target once. Preliminary results are based on the first 20 of a planned 40 native English speaking participants.

Findings Not surprisingly, we find an overall preference for sloppy readings over strict among the three reflexive cases (2a-2c). Furthermore, there is no evidence for any effect of gender mismatch in these cases. The outlier case is *one*-anaphora, which shows no strict/sloppy distinction, except for a slight drop in ratings on the sloppy gender mismatch condition. Close examination of the data suggests that this drop is due to a small number of participants systematically rejecting those targets (i.e. giving ratings of 1-2 while most participants assign 6-7).

Conclusions Given Johnson's use of Kratzer's minimal pronoun account to account for cases like (1), the replication of the same insensitivity to gender in (2a) supports Kratzer's own claim that co-argument reflexives are derived from a minimal pronoun enriched by a [REFL] feature provided by a binder *v* (i). That the gender mismatch is also tolerated in cases such as (2b) and (2c) suggests that while there may be differences in the nature of the semantic binder, the late lexical insertion account can be extended to non-co-argument cases (ii). Notably, this would be contra the work of Gast (2006), who suggests that especially cases such as (2c) would have substantially different derivations from (2a). Turning to *one*-anaphora, it is still expected that gender mismatch should be tolerated. Describing similar mismatches in Greek, Merchant (2014) notes that gender mismatch under NP ellipsis can arise from a null pronoun similar to the English *one*. Following Merchant's account of NP ellipsis cases where gender mismatch is not tolerated, some speakers may be employing a richer semantic representation of the antecedent (e.g. encoding *her* in (2d) specifically as a mother), which in turn presupposes a gender value in the interpretation of the free variable *one* (iii).

References

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