

# Condition C Reconstruction and the Structure Underlying the Ellipsis Site

## 1 Abstract

One of the long-standing controversies surrounding the study of ellipsis (constructions involving omission) is what structure is associated with the ellipsis site (the omitted portion of sentence). This study aims to support the view that ellipsis site is associated with the same grammatical structures as those we can see in non-ellipsis constructions.

An instance of ellipsis constructions that this study will examine, looks like (1), which is called *Stripping Ellipsis Construction* (*Stripping* in short). For example Bill's utterance in (1), involves ellipsis, where the portion corresponds to the subject *Mary* and verb *talked* are omitted.

- (1) Elizabeth: Mary talked to David.  
Bill: No, ~~Mary~~ talked to Susan.

We can easily understand Bill's utterance is equivalent to "*No, Mary talked to Susan*". The question is how we can achieve the interpretation of the sentence involving ellipsis. There are roughly two major approaches. An obvious and most straightforward approach is that there is basically nothing in the ellipsis site. We can just refer to the context (Elizabeth's utterance) and we can infer the meaning of the sentence, much like we interpret pronouns in an example like (2), where we refer to Elizabeth's utterance and identify who the pronoun *him* should refer to.

- (2) Elizabeth: Mary talked to David.  
Bill: yeah, she talked to him.

There is another possibility, namely, the ellipsis site is associated with a full-fledged grammatical structure that allows us to achieve the interpretation of the ellipsis site. Thus, in this approach, the sentence in Bill's utterance involves grammatical structures as in (3).

- (3) Bill: No, [Sentence [Subject *Mary*] [Verb Phrase [Verb talked [Object to Susan]]].

This latter approach says, we achieve a particular interpretation of the ellipsis site just because the ellipsis site is a regular sentence with regular grammatical structures, which is not pronounced.

The first approach predicts that the ellipsis site should not show grammatical structural properties that we see in regular non-ellipsis sentences. On the other hand the latter approach predicts that ellipsis sentences should behave much like regular non-ellipsis sentences.

Through two experimental studies, I will try to show that the ellipsis site in *Stripping* show grammatical structural properties that we see in non-ellipsis sentences. Thus, I will conclude that the ellipsis site in *Stripping* is associated with regular grammatical structures of sentence.