Abstract:
Verbal Ellipsis in the Nominal Domain

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LINGUISTICS AT SANTA CRUZ
13 March 2010

Verb Phrase Ellipsis, or VPE, typically results in the non-pronunciation of a VP under identity with another elsewhere in the discourse. This generalization extends to many domains, including the poss-ing (gerundive) DP as exemplified in (1) (antecedents underlined; elided VPs struckout):

(1) a. Harvey's buying a pig surprised me, and Mary's \[buying a pig\] astounded me.
    b. Marie's playing guitar inspired me, and Zach's \[playing guitar\] depressed me.

While not particularly common, such examples as those above are typically judged grammatical by speakers. However, VPE in poss-ing phrases is not always possible. Surprisingly, ellipsis in this position cannot find VP antecedents that in syntactic positions outside other poss-ing phrases.

(2) a. * Harvey bought a pig, but Mary's \[buying a pig\] astounded me.
    b. * Marie plays guitar, and Zach's \[playing guitar\] depressed me.

This talk investigates the nature of the observations above, as they cannot be explained by other restrictions on VPE observed elsewhere in the literature. I approach the problem from the point of view of syntax and morphology, investigating possible mismatches of form and structure in these domains. The conclusion is that the ungrammaticality of examples such as those in (2) is not attributable to any of the material in the ellipsis site. Rather, the problem seems to stem from the possessive determiner that heads the poss-ing phrase, suggesting that ellipsis may be more sensitive to material outside the ellipsis site than previously assumed.