

Squibs and Discussion

A NEW ARGUMENT FOR VERB-
STRANDING VERB PHRASE
ELLIPSIS

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In Gribanova, to appear, I develop an analysis of Russian constructions like (1), in which the verb moves to an Asp head just below T, in conjunction with the ellipsis of a vP-sized constituent (verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis, or VVPE); a general schema is provided in (2).

(1) A: Èto daže esli ja vody v rot naberu?
that even if I water.GEN in mouth collect.1SG.FUT
'Is that even if I fill my mouth with water?'
(Idiomatically: 'Is that even if I keep silent?')

B: Daže esli i naberëte. Da ved' ne naberëte,
even if and collect yes but NEG collect
ne naberëte že!

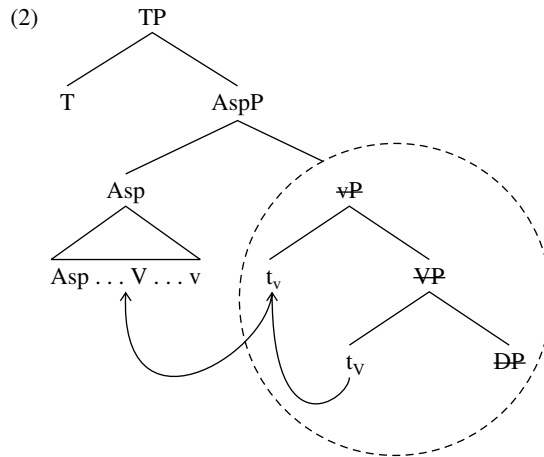
NEG collect EMPH

'Even if you fill (it with water). But you won't fill (it with water), you won't fill (it with water)!'

(Idiomatically: 'Even if you keep silent! But you won't, you won't!')

(Ju. O. Dombrovskij, *Fakul'tet nenužnyx veščej*, part 2, 1978)

The core data in support of Russian verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis cited in this squib came from my father, Alexander Gribanov, whom I thank for his thoughtful examples and for our numerous discussions of the construction. For their constructive and helpful comments, I thank John Bailyn, Elena Ibn-Bari, Sandy Chung, Beth Levin, Jim McCloskey, Jason Merchant, David Pesetsky, Maria Polinsky, Dasha Popova, Christopher Potts, Omer Preminger, Craig Sailor, Erik Schoorlemmer, and two anonymous *LI* reviewers. I take responsibility for all errors.



This analysis provides a natural testing ground for several difficult issues in Russian syntax, one of which is clausal structure. Using VVPE to probe this issue is especially promising for Russian, which makes use of complex verbal forms that are also potentially syntactically complex, but inseparable. In Gribanova, to appear, I follow explorations of Irish (McCloskey 2011) and Hebrew (Goldberg 2005a,b) in leveraging data from VVPE to shed light on this complexity: identity conditions on the stranded verb in VVPE can be understood to indicate which parts of the verbal complex originate inside the ellipsis site, and which parts originate outside the ellipsis site (i.e., above vP).

This proposal is controversial largely because Russian, like Hebrew, is also an object drop language, which means that examples like (1) may also be successfully analyzed as instances of object drop (and perhaps PP drop). In Gribanova, to appear, I maintain that both operations—VVPE and object drop—are active in Russian and that they can be distinguished by probing the syntactic environments in which they appear: object drop is restricted inside islands, as demonstrated by the degraded nature of object drop inside islands when there is no linguistic antecedent; VVPE, like most forms of constituent ellipsis, is permitted inside islands, as long as a linguistic antecedent is available.

Opponents of this approach (see Bailyn 2011, Erteschik-Shir, Ibn-Bari, and Taube 2011, 2012) correctly point out that judgments of such contrasts are gradient, subject to pragmatic effects, and difficult to obtain. In part, this is because the syntactic conditions under which the claimed contrast between object drop and VVPE is supposed to emerge are already quite complex. Bailyn's (2011) and Erteschik-Shir, Ibn-Bari, and Taube's (2011, 2012) proposals differ: the former takes (1) to be an instance of NP/PP-ellipsis—surface anaphora, requiring a linguistic antecedent—and the latter claims that argument drop (deep anaphora) is involved. But both proposals take the position that VVPE is not possible in Russian.

In this squib, I present novel evidence from negation and disjunction—involving much less gradient judgments—in favor of the hypothesis that VVPE is involved in Russian (section 1). The hope is that this diagnostic will be effective for other languages in which there is debate about how to analyze such constructions (i.e., Hebrew, as well as the East Asian languages: see Saito 1985, Otani and Whitman 1991, Hoji 1998, Kim 1999). One of the interesting points made by Bailyn (2011) is that if these constructions are instances of VVPE, then they behave differently from other types of ellipsis in Russian. In section 2, I build on this discussion and contextualize it in light of the different kinds of ellipsis found in Russian and the new evidence from section 1.

1 Conjunction, Disjunction, and Negation

The reason such a complex diagnostic is used to distinguish VVPE from argument drop in Gribanova, to appear, is that many of the tests typically used to distinguish the two are either ineffective for Russian or have been shown to be faulty in other languages. For example, the availability of strict and sloppy readings is insufficient evidence for VVPE: Hoji (1998) demonstrates that sloppy readings are not definitively characteristic of VP-ellipsis (VPE) in other languages. Goldberg (2005b) makes productive use of the fact that VVPE should be able to elide more than one constituent, that is, VP-internal PPs and DPs. This seems to work well for Hebrew, because Hebrew PPs do not undergo drop or ellipsis independently and their absence must therefore be attributed to VVPE. For Russian, however, the judgments about whether PPs can drop independently of DPs are not reliable enough for this test to be useful.

Here I pursue a novel and simpler approach, which involves an antecedent with coordination or disjunction of two VP-sized constituents, each of which may contain numerous constituents. We can start with the relatively simple case in (3).¹

- (3) A: Kažetsja, čto Anja položila ručku na stol,
 seems that Anya put.PST.SG.F pen.ACC on table
i knigu na stul.
and book.ACC on chair
 ‘It seems that Anya put the pen on the table and the book
 on the chair.’

¹ Whether (3) involves across-the-board movement of the verb or gapping in the second conjunct is irrelevant to the argument pursued here; it is valid in either case. Later in the squib (i.e., (6)), I assume an across-the-board analysis for illustrative purposes.

- B: Net, ne položila.
 no NEG put.PST.SG.F
 ‘No, she didn’t put (the pen on the table and the book on the chair).’

The grammaticality of such examples points to the ability of VVPE to elide fairly large portions of the sentence, composed of multiple constituents. VVPE can also elide the coordinator, and the meaning of the elided portion in (3) can be reconstructed only as indicated.

Proponents of an NP-ellipsis (NPE)/argument drop analysis might be able to account for the missing pieces of (3), if they were willing to posit that PPs can undergo ellipsis or drop along with DPs, or alternatively that what is elided is a conjunction of nonconstituents (pen on table and book on chair). I know of no evidence that the latter may occur in Russian. On the former view, the difficulty would be that there is no way to account for the missing coordinator in the response; not surprisingly, omitting just the coordinated elements and leaving the coordinator leads to strong ungrammaticality (for which there is likely more than one explanation).

- (4) A: Kažetsja, čto Anja položila ručku na stol,
 seems that Anya put.PST.SG.F pen.ACC on table
i knigu na stul.
and book.ACC on chair
 ‘It seems that Anya put the pen on the table and the book on the chair.’
 B: *Net, ne položila *i*.
 no NEG put.PST.SG.F *and*

Proponents of an NPE/argument drop account might argue that the coordinator is simply null in (3). But this is less likely to be the case for disjunction, which tends not to have null realizations crosslinguistically (Payne 1985, Winter 1995). This makes examples like (5) even more convincing evidence in favor of a VVPE analysis.

- (5) A: Ty položil ručku na stol, ili knigu
 you put.PST.SG.M pen.ACC on table *or* book.ACC
 na stul?
 on chair
 ‘Did you put the pen on the table or the book on the chair?’
 B: Net, ne položil.
 no NEG put.PST.SG.M
 ‘No, I didn’t put (the pen on the table or the book on the chair).’

The negated verb in (5) takes scope outside the (elided) disjunction in the partially elided response, yielding only one possible reading, corresponding to the structure in (6).

- (6) \neg [put_x [[_{VP} ______x the pen on the table] \vee [_{VP} ______x the book on the chair]]]

This, by De Morgan's laws, can be converted (abstracting away from verb movement) to (7), which is in fact the only obtainable interpretation: that the person doing the responding put neither a pen on the table nor a book on the chair.

(7) $[\neg \text{ put the pen on the table}] \wedge [\neg \text{ put the book on the chair}]$

(5) may not be interpreted as in (8a–c), which suggests that those structures are not possible models of (5).

(8) a. $[\neg \text{ put the pen on the table}] \vee [\neg \text{ put the book on the chair}]$ (illicit for (5))

b. $[\neg \text{ put the pen on the table}] \vee [\text{put the book on the chair}]$ (illicit for (5))

c. $[\text{put the pen on the table}] \vee [\neg \text{ put the book on the chair}]$ (illicit for (5))

The same ellipsis process can also apply to the negative concord items, '(n)either/(n)or'.

(9) A: On ne položil *ni* ručku na stol,
 he NEG put.PST.SG.M NEG pen.ACC on table
ni knigu na stul.
 NEG book.ACC on chair
 'He put neither the pen on the table nor the book on the chair.'

B: Ty prav; ne položil.
 you right NEG put.PST.SG.M
 'You're right; he didn't put (either the book on the table or the book on the chair).'

Proponents of an NPE/argument drop analysis will have difficulty accounting for such examples. Since there is no known operation that could independently elide or make silent the coordination, the disjunction, or the negations corresponding to '(n)either/(n)or' in (3), (5), and (9), respectively, the only available analytical alternative would be to claim that what is argument-dropped/elided is a conjunction of nonconstituents.² VVPE is a much more natural analysis of (3), (5),

² The relevant readings in (3), (5), and (9) could alternatively arise from dropped plural pronouns and adverbials quantifying over pluralities (e.g., 'No, I didn't put (those things) (there)'). Crucially, though, this analysis wouldn't capture all the attested data. It is possible to put negative polarity items (i) or noun phrases from the Russian nonspecific *-nibud'* series (ii) in the antecedent of the relevant VVPE examples, neither of which is an appropriate referent for pronouns.

(i) A: On ne položil *nikakix* ruček na stol,
 he NEG put.PST.SG.M N-which.GEN.PL pen.GEN.PL on table
 i *nikakix* flomasterov na stul.
 and N-which.GEN.PL marker.GEN.PL on chair
 'He didn't put any pens on the table or any markers on the chair.'

and (9): the antecedent for the ellipsis is one large VP, composed of two coordinated/disjoined VPs out of which the verb has escaped.

2 Subjects

An important point made by Bailyn (2011) is that constructions like (1) do not behave like other instances of Russian clause-level constituent ellipsis with respect to a few key properties, one of which—the behavior of subjects—I will discuss in this section. Bailyn takes this set of observations as a sign that constructions like (1) should not be analyzed as VVPE; but the evidence presented in section 1 seems to contradict such a conclusion. Given this, I pursue an alternative approach here, taking VVPE to be a legitimate operation and attempting to view VVPE in the context of other types of Russian constituent ellipsis. Russian makes prolific use of clause-level constituent ellipsis; a comparison among the different types, including VVPE, sheds light on what might otherwise look like a mystifying or unusual pattern.

The empirical point at issue, originally observed by McShane (2005), is that uttering the subject in constructions like (1) is degraded (10), unless the subject is in some way contrastive (11).

- (10) *Vasja dolžen byl poslat' knigi*
 Vasya supposed.M be.PST.SG.M send.INF books.ACC
v Moskvu i pis'mo v Piter, no (#on) ne
 to Moscow and letter.ACC to Piter but (#he) NEG
poslal.
 send.PST.SG.M
 'Vasya was supposed to send books to Moscow and a letter to St. Petersburg, but he didn't send (books to Moscow and a letter to St. Petersburg).'

B: *Net, ne položil. / *Net, on ix tuda ne*
 no NEG put.PST.SG.M / *no he them.ACC there NEG
položil.
 put.PST.SG.M

'No, he didn't put (any pens on the table or any markers on the chair).'

- (ii) A: *Ty položil čto-nibud' na stol, ili kakuju-nibud'*
 you put.PST.SG.M what-NONSPEC on table or which-NONSPEC
edu v xolodil'nik?
 food.ACC in refrigerator

'Did you put anything on the table, or any food in the refrigerator?'

B: *Net, ne položil. / *Net, ja ix tuda ne položil.*
 no NEG put.PST.SG.M / *no I them.ACC there NEG put.PST.SG.M
 'No, I didn't put (anything on the table or any food in the refrigerator).'

Thanks to Omer Preminger, Jason Merchant, and Chris Potts for discussion of this point.

- (11) A: Vasja poslal knigi v Moskvu i
 Vasya send.PST.SG.M books.ACC to Moscow and
 pis'mo v Piter?
 letter.ACC to Piter
 'Did Vasya send books to Moscow and a letter to St.
 Petersburg?'
- B: Net, no Anja poslala.
 no but Anya send.PST.SG.F
 'No, but Anya sent (books to Moscow and a letter to St.
 Petersburg).'

This pattern is troubling, since it diverges from what is found in Aux-stranding VPE (AVPE), which is taken to be ellipsis of the complement of T (Kazenin 2006).

- (12) Ja segodnja zanimal'sja lingvistikoj,
 I today study.PST.SG.M.REFL linguistics.INSTR
 a zavtra (ja) ne budu.
 but tomorrow (I) NEG will.1SG
 'Today I studied linguistics, but tomorrow I won't.'
 (Bailyn 2011:9)

Under the uncontroversial assumption that subjects raise to the specifier of TP (or higher) in Russian, this behavior seems strange: why may a noncontrastive subject appear in AVPE, but not in VVPE? Both operations should be able to leave behind a subject, since both operations elide a constituent—either the sister of T or the sister of Asp—that is smaller than the whole TP.

It is worth noting that neither an NPE nor an argument drop approach to these data provides an obvious solution to the puzzle, in the sense that something special must be said if a dropped or elided object is to condition the appearance of a subject. Thus, the question of what explains the pattern in (10)–(12) is unanswered for *any* of the available accounts of these phenomena. I do not attempt to answer this question here; instead, I attempt to contextualize the contrast between VVPE and AVPE by considering how they compare with other types of clause-level constituent ellipsis in Russian.

If the argument from section 1 holds up, then Russian makes use of at least three different types of clause-level constituent ellipsis processes: polarity ellipsis (13) (ellipsis of the complement of a polarity head (Σ), which itself is merged above T); 'traditional' VPE, with a stranded auxiliary (14); and VVPE (15).³

³ I ignore a fourth form of ellipsis, sluicing; it elides a constituent that would clearly subsume any potential landing site for the subject and is therefore irrelevant to the present discussion.

- (13) Maša ego vstretila, a ja net.
Masha him.ACC meet.PST.SG.F but I not
'Masha met him, but I didn't.'
- (14) Maša budet ego vstrečat', a ja ne budu.
Masha will him.ACC meet.INF but I NEG will.1SG
'Masha will meet him, but I won't.'
- (15) A: Ty položil ručku na stol, ili knigu
you put.PST.SG.M pen.ACC on table or book.ACC
na stul?
on chair
'Did you put the pen on the table or the book on the chair?'
- B: Net, ne položil.
no NEG put.PST.SG.M
'No, I didn't put (the pen on the table or the book on the chair).'

Kazenin (2006) demonstrates that AVPE and polarity ellipsis exhibit all the true characteristics of surface anaphora. He also makes a number of crucial empirical observations about the discourse structure of these types of ellipsis; when we bring these observations together with evidence from VVPE, a previously unnoticed pattern emerges.

Kazenin notes that polarity ellipsis is inherently contrastive, in that it requires the phrasal remnant to be interpreted as a contrastive topic, whether or not it is the subject (16B–B'). Presentational or backgrounded readings of the phrasal remnants in (16B–B') are not available, and neither is a contrastive focus reading, when forced by *tol'ko* 'only' (17).

- (16) A: Poedet li Maša v Moskvu?
go.FUT.3SG Q Masha to Moscow
'Will Masha go to Moscow?'
- B: Maša da, a Petja net.
Masha yes but Peter no
'Masha yes, but Peter no.'
- B': V Moskvu da, a v Piter net.
to Moscow yes but to Piter no
'To Moscow, yes, but to St. Petersburg, no.'
- (17) A: Kto (iz vas) budet ezdit' v Moskvu?
who (of you) will.3SG travel.INF to Moscow
- B: #Tol'ko Maša da.
only Masha yes

By contrast, AVPE is more permissive, in that the phrasal remnant may be interpreted as a contrastive topic (18), as a contrastive focus (19), or as a backgrounded (20) or presentational (21) focus (though see Kazenin 2006:28–29 for some important qualifications).

- (18) Ja budu pomogat' Pete, a Kolja ne budet.
I will.1SG help.INF Peter.DAT but Kolya NEG will.3SG
'I will help Peter, but Kolya won't.'
(Kazenin 2006:24)
- (19) A: Kto budet ezdit' v Moskvu?
who will.3SG travel.INF to Moscow
B: Tol'ko Petja budet.
only Peter will.3SG
'Who will go to Moscow? Only Peter will.'
(Kazenin 2006:25)
- (20) A: Petja budet pomogat' Kole?
Peter will.3SG help.INF Kolya.DAT
B: Petja/On budet.
Peter/he will.3SG
'Will Peter help Kolya? Peter/He will.'
(adapted from Kazenin 2006:29)
- (21) A: Kogda ty budeš' čitat' kurs tipologii?
when you will.2SG read.INF course typology.GEN
B: (Ja) v ètom godu (budu).
(I) in this year (will.1SG)
'When will you give the course in typology? (I) (will) this year.'
(Kazenin 2006:25)

Overall, then, polarity ellipsis is much more restrictive in the potential interpretations available for the phrasal remnant (contrastive topic only) than is AVPE.

Kazenin (2006) does not consider VVPE in his discussion, but it is worth asking how VVPE patterns with respect to the discourse conditions that clearly are involved in other types of clausal constituent ellipsis processes. As it turns out, VVPE seems to pattern exactly like polarity ellipsis: if there is a remnant, it must be interpreted as a contrastive topic (22B–B'). Backgrounded or presentational focus readings are not licensed, and a focus reading forced by *tol'ko* 'only' is marked, just as in the case of polarity ellipsis (23).

- (22) A: Maša poslala pis'mo v Moskvu,
Masha send.PST.SG.F letter.ACC to Moscow
i banderol' v Piter?
and package.ACC to Piter
'Did Masha send the letter to Moscow, and the package to St. Petersburg?'
- B: Maša ne poslala, a Vasja poslal.
Masha NEG send.PST.SG.F but Vasya send.PST.SG.M
'Masha didn't send (the letter to Moscow, and the package to St. Petersburg), but Vasya did send (the letter to Moscow, and the package to St. Petersburg).'

B': Včera ne poslala, no zavtra
 yesterday NEG send.PST.SG.F but tomorrow
 pošlēt.
 send.FUT.3SG
 'She didn't send (the letter to Moscow and the package
 to St. Petersburg) yesterday, but she will send (the letter
 to Moscow and the package to St. Petersburg) to-
 morrow.'

(23) A: Kto (iz vas) poslal pis'mo v Moskvu,
 who.NOM (of you) send.PST.SG.M letter to Moscow
 i banderol' v Piter?
 and package to Piter
 'Who (among you) sent a letter to Moscow and a pack-
 age to St. Petersburg?'

B: #Tol'ko Maša poslala.
 only Masha send.PST.SG.F

Importantly, *Maša ne poslala*, with no overt continuation in (22B), is acceptable only on a contrastive reading for the phrasal remnant that invokes an implicit continuation. So a backgrounded reading of *Maša* is unacceptable even without the continuation *a Vasja poslal*. Similarly, a backgrounded pronominal subject in (22B') is also unacceptable.

A reviewer brings up the interesting question of whether NPE/object drop, when we can isolate it, may impose different discourse conditions on the subject than VVPE. Much more serious investigation is needed to address this question properly, but preliminarily, I would note that the discourse conditions on subjects in NPE/object drop versus VVPE seem to be partially overlapping, but not identical. They are partially overlapping in that backgrounded subjects are degraded even in NPE/object drop, if there is a linguistic antecedent.

(24) A: Kuda Saša del tu knigu?
 where Sasha put.PST.3SG that.ACC book.ACC
 'Where did Sasha put that book (i.e., what did he do
 with it?)'

B: Možet, (#on) ostavil ____ v kabinete?
 maybe (#he) left.3SG ____ in office
 'Maybe, (he) left (it) in the office?'

Because (24) involves dropping or elision of only the object in the VP of the response, leaving behind a PP argument, we can be reasonably sure that it is *not* a case of VVPE (which would have had to elide the PP argument as well as the direct object). Yet, uttering a pronominal subject in the response to (24A) is still degraded for many speakers. Despite this similarity, the discourse licensing conditions for subjects in VVPE and NPE/object drop cannot be said to be entirely identical: in argument drop with a *situational* antecedent (25)—which cannot

be *VVPE* for lack of a linguistic antecedent—subjects are permitted, with either a backgrounded or perhaps a presentational focus interpretation.

- (25) [Something falls; someone wants to get it.]
 Ne vstavaj, ja podnimu ____.
 NEG get-up.2SG I pick-up.1SG.FUT ____
 ‘Don’t get up. I’ll get (it).’
 (Gordishevsky and Avrutin 2003:7)

Finally, recall that in *VVPE*, focused phrasal remnants are unacceptable (23). In *NPE* object drop, however, they appear fully acceptable.

- (26) [Application documents can be sent either to the admissions committee or to the department directly.]
 A: Kto iz vas poslal dokumenty v priëmnuju
 who of you send.PST.SG.M documents to admissions
 komissiju?
 committee
 ‘Who among you sent documents to the admissions committee?’
 B: Poëti vse. Tol’ko Dina poslala ____
 almost everyone only Dina send.PST.SG.F ____
 prjamo na kafedru.
 straight to department
 ‘Almost everyone. Only Dina sent (them) straight to the department.’

As with (24), the presence of an argument PP in the response to (26A) is meant to guarantee that the response is an instance of *NPE*/object drop, rather than *VVPE*. Thus, the preliminary conclusion is that *NPE*/object drop has fewer or different licensing conditions on subjects than does *VVPE*. *VVPE* permits only contrastive topics as phrasal remnants, whether they are subjects or not. *NPE*/object drop seems to permit focused subjects, and at least in the case of object drop, subjects with a backgrounded or presentational focus interpretation. This is not surprising if both *VVPE* and *NPE*/object drop are attested in Russian, as originally maintained in Gribanova, to appear.

Returning now to *VVPE*, we can observe that the similar patterning of polarity ellipsis and *VVPE* is not entirely surprising, since the primary informational content of both a stranded verb (with or without negation) and a stranded yes/no particle is much the same: in both types of ellipsis, some previously made statement is being confirmed or denied. That the discourse structures of these types of ellipsis should be similar is, then, expected.

In light of these patterns, what *is* unexpected is that *AVPE* behaves differently from polarity ellipsis and *VVPE*, allowing a broader array of interpretations for phrasal remnants. Kazenin (2006) provides an elegant structural account that accommodates the differences be-

tween polarity ellipsis and AVPE; it is possible that such an account may be extended to VVPE, though this is too big an endeavor to pursue here. The broader picture that emerges from this comparative discussion is that the discourse structure of ellipsis operations is an important component of any account that seeks to fully explain the structural possibilities involved in any sort of ellipsis.

3 Conclusion

This squib has presented two pieces of evidence that an argument drop or NPE analysis of constructions like (1) would have difficulty accounting for. The first comes from conjunction and disjunction of multiconstituent elements under negation, which fits nicely with a VVPE analysis but poorly with an argument drop or NPE analysis. The second comes from the discourse structure of VVPE, which, like polarity ellipsis, does not permit subjects to be uttered unless they are contrastive. That VVPE and polarity ellipsis pattern together can be seen as a reaffirmation of the idea that both operations are the same in type: that is, that both involve ellipsis at the clausal level.

From a broader perspective, once we include VVPE as a potential kind of ellipsis operation in Russian, the result is that Russian makes use of at least three distinct ellipsis operations at the clausal level, each with specific syntactic and discourse properties. As demonstrated—briefly and incompletely—in this squib, this prolific use of ellipsis within Russian provides an ideal opportunity to gain more insight into the comparative differences, discourse-related and structural, among these various kinds of ellipsis.

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RAISING FROM THE DEAD
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1 Quantification in the Clause

There's a family of proposals now suggesting that the quantificational force for noun phrases is associated with heads situated higher in the extended projection of the clause (Beghelli and Stowell 1997, Szabolcsi 1997, Hallman 2000, Sportiche 2005). While these proposals differ in their implementation,¹ all converge on the expectation that the absence of such projections limits the scope options for quantified nouns. Sportiche (2005) points out that this view may offer a way to under-

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¹ The proposals differ in whether the quantificational force itself is introduced higher (Sportiche, Hallman) or whether quantificational force is merely licensed in various high positions (Beghelli and Stowell). I will use the term *license* without committing to either implementation. Indefinites have long been treated this way (Heim 1982). I leave decisions about the compositional implementation of such approaches—alternative semantics, (un)selective binding, choice functions—for another occasion.