

## Right Node Raising: Evidence from ‘Rule Interaction’

Two theoretical proposals predominate in the literature on right node raising (RNR): RNR as an instance of movement (usually across the board), or RNR as an instance of deletion or ellipsis (remaining copy of target remains in-situ). Abels 2004 presents several forms of novel evidence in favor of an in-situ account of RNR, including the paradigm in (1), which is his example (15).

In a movement account of RNR, the target moves rightward and attaches higher in the structure. Abels argues that the trace-containing  $VP_E$  can then freely elide; the movement account therefore generates the ungrammatical (1c). In an ellipsis account of RNR, however, the target in the second conjunct remains in-situ. If VPE were to occur, this only remaining copy of the target would also be deleted; therefore the ellipsis account (correctly) does not predict the generation of (1c).

I claim that what Abels 2004 calls VPE is actually a failed application of pseudogapping. The sentence in (1c) is ungrammatical not because it is syntactically incapable of being generated; rather, it is ungrammatical because it fails to satisfy certain requirements of pseudogapping. Specifically, a pseudogapping construction requires at least some material following the pseudogapped verb to contrast between the two clauses (Levin 1986). RNR, on the other hand, requires identical right peripheries. Once these dual requirements have been fulfilled, sentences similar to (1c) are grammatical. Examples include: contrasting adjectives and identical nouns (2), contrasting direct objects and identical PPs (3), and contrasting indirect objects and identical direct objects (4).

There is further evidence that the missing verb in the Abels data is not due to VPE, but rather pseudogapping. Both VPE and pseudogapping require an auxiliary to dominate the ellipsis site, but this characteristic is not shared with *gapping*. If RNR and gapping can co-occur, we have further evidence from the lack of an auxiliary that the missing verb cannot possibly be due to VPE; that they can indeed co-occur is shown in (5).

This pseudogapping analysis unfortunately renders useless the argument about RNR from Abels 2004. We adopt a common analysis of pseudogapping as ellipsis of some verbal projection preceded by leftward movement of some remnant which thus survives the ellipsis. Then, assuming an ellipsis account of RNR, ellipsis of the first instance of the target can occur freely, since both RNR targets are still right-peripheral. Assuming a movement account of RNR, the remnants from pseudogapping move leftward to allow deletion of the verbal projection containing their trace; the right-peripheral RNR targets then move rightward across-the-board as usual. Thus RNR-pseudogapping data cannot distinguish between differing accounts of RNR.

I present a new paradigm of data in which RNR and VP topicalization interact (6). This data provides evidence for a movement account of RNR and against an ellipsis account. In ellipsis accounts of RNR, the second conjunct remains whole. If this is the case, it will be difficult to rule out the generation of (6c): the fact that a word from the first conjunct has been deleted under identity with something in the second conjunct should not bear on the ability of the VP in the second conjunct to topicalize. On the other hand, if the RNR target has moved out of both conjuncts via ATB RNR, leaving traces, it is difficult to see how the VP of the second conjunct could reassemble in order to topicalize to the front of the conjunct. Thus, the movement account correctly predicts the non-occurrence of the ungrammatical (6c), whereas the ellipsis account cannot easily rule out its generation.

## Data

- (1)
  - a. RNR: Jane talked about and/but Frank didn't talk about the achievements of the syntax students.
  - b. VPE: Jane talked about the achievements of the syntax students and Frank didn't.
  - c. VPE & RNR: \*Jane talked about and/but Frank didn't the achievements of the syntax students.
  
- (2) Some would have chosen the reindeer-shaped, and others would have the Santa-shaped, cookie cutters.
  
- (3) Some should put sprinkles, and others should frosting, on their cookies.
  
- (4) Some can give the director, and others can the choir, trays of cookies.
  
- (5) Some would have chosen the reindeer-shaped, and others the Santa-shaped, cookie cutters.
  
- (6)
  - a. RNR She claimed she could speak, and she can certainly read, ancient Greek.
  - b. VPT She claimed she could speak ancient Greek, and read ancient Greek she certainly can.
  - c. VPT & RNR \*She claimed she could speak, and read ancient Greek she certainly can.

## References

- Abels, Klaus. 2004. Right Node Raising: Ellipsis or ATB movement? *North East Linguistics Society* 34: 44-59.
- Levin, N. 1986. *Main-verb ellipsis in spoken English*. Garland Publishing: New York.