

## Subject ellipsis: Clausal architecture and phi-feature valuing

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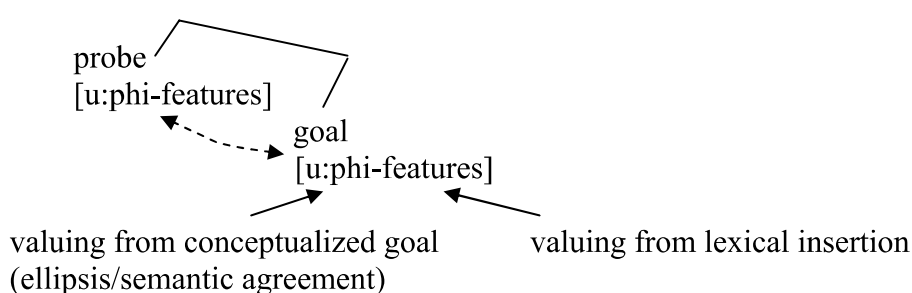
In spoken Norwegian, subjects in topicalized position are often omitted: *Ø tjente rått på telefonhealing* ('Ø earned plenty on telephone healing'). One issue to be addressed is whether it is plausible to assume a full sentence structure for these cases, and if so, what this structure contains? I propose an analysis where syntactic structure is present independently of lexical insertion, and where the structure contains abstract formal features (Harley & Noyer 1999, Josefsen 2006). Focussing on agreement, I argue that phi-features are present in syntax also when no lexical item is inserted. Support for this is found in ellipses where anaphors, verbs and predicatives show agreement with null subjects.

The operation Agree presupposes that certain items enter the derivation with some features already valued, and others as yet unvalued (Chomsky 2001, Adger 2003):

$$X (F:val) \dots Y (uF:) \rightarrow X (F:val) \dots Y (uF: val)$$

However, data displaying so called semantic agreement, such as *The police are a bunch of monkeys* (Den Dikken 2001, Sauerland & Elbourne 2002, Josefsen 2006), then turn out to be problematic. It appears here that the agreement process is sensitive to semantic information about the plurality of the subject DP. Hence, in a parallel manner to the ellipses, such examples point to a separation between visible morphology and abstract grammatical features. I therefore propose a unified analysis for the two groups of data, where phi-features are not directly tied to lexical items. Instead, there are unvalued phi-feature matrixes linked to syntactic positions. These matrixes are valued from inserted lexical items, or more specifically depending on how these items are semantically conceived of. The unvalued phi-features in the subject position are valued from information in the inserted lexical subject. Further, Agree holds between the probe in [T] and the goal in [spec,vP]. Crucially though, contextual or semantic information can influence on the features of the subject, as is the case for the semantic agreement data. This triggers a different value on the phi-features, and consequently also a different feature specification on T.

Importantly, the suggested analysis also accounts for agreement in subject ellipses. If phi-features are present independently of lexical insertion, they can be valued by information from the C-I interface. Consequently, if the contextual information is sufficiently prominent, there's no need to insert a concrete lexical item. The alternatives are illustrated in the figure below:



In non-elliptical sentences, features are valued by lexical insertion, whereas in subject ellipses they are valued from the phi-features of a conceptualized elided element. However, given that inherently valued features can also be conceptually conceived, as in the semantic agreement data, this turns out to be two sides of the same coin. This entails that there are no inherently valued features. Phi-features can be valued either externally, from lexical items or the mental construal of these items, or internally, via Agree.

In conclusion, I will emphasize the consequences that my analysis has for the overarching perspective on clausal architecture, in particular that syntactic structure is present independently of lexical insertion, and contains unvalued feature matrixes which need to be specified.