

## A Short Note on Pseudo Partial Sluicing

OGURO, Takeshi

### 0. The Ban on Partial Sluicing

Sluicing (Ross 1969) refers to an operation which deletes everything in the sentential structure with the exception of the WH-phrases located in sentence initial position, which is shown in (1b). ((1a) is necessary for recoverability related reasons.)

- (1) a. Someone left.  
b. Guess who?

The structure for (1b) is generally assumed to be like (2).

- (2) [<sub>CP</sub> who [~~<sub>IP</sub> t left~~]]

One restriction concerning sluicing observed by Merchant (2001) is that while full sluicing is allowed, partial sluicing is not, as illustrated in (3).

- (3) I know someone likes Mary, but  
a. \* who do you think [~~<sub>CP</sub> t' [~~<sub>IP</sub> t likes Mary~~]]]?  
b. who do you think [<sub>CP</sub> t' [<sub>IP</sub> t likes her]]?~~

(3a) involves partial sluicing, where only the embedded clause is elided, and it is bad, while (3b), which does not involve sluicing, is perfect.

The aim of this squib is three-fold: to observe that there are fine examples which look like (3a), to show that those examples do not involve partial sluicing but instead full sluicing in interrogative slifting (=sentence-lifting) (Haddican *et al.* 2014), and to argue that they constitute evidence for the necessity of the parallelism requirement (Fox & Lasnik 2003).

## 1. Apparent Partial Sluicing Cases

Interestingly, the exact same sequence of words as in (3a) is allowed in a certain context, as shown in (4).

- (4) a. A: So, who's your favorite team?  
b. B: Who do you think? The Dallas Cowboys!  
(Rohde 2006: 135) <sup>(1)</sup>

Though the identical string of words is employed in (4b), this does not cause ungrammaticality.<sup>(2)</sup> Note that (4) is not an isolated case. Conversations like (4) are frequently observed in TV shows, as provided below.

- (5) Fusco: The file's been frozen.  
Carter: What? Why?  
Fusco: Why do you think? Probably too many prying eyes.  
(*Person of Interest* Season 03, Episode 02 "Nothing to Hide").
- (6) Emily: Where are you going?  
Tommy: Where do you think? Home, to pack and leave like we always do.  
(*Heroes Reborn* Season 01, Episode 01 "Awakening")
- (7) Vaun: How'd that work out for 'em?  
Gus: How do you think?  
(*The Strain* Season 02, Episode 03 "Fort Defiance")
- (8) Sergio: (to a nurse) How'd you get in here?  
Daniel: (to Sergio) How do you think?  
(*Helix* Season 01, Episode 08 "Bloodline")

---

(1) Since Rohde (2006) is not focused on the analysis of sluicing, she does not discuss the relevance that (4b) bears to the study of sluicing.

(2) One issue that I have to set aside is the treatment of first person and second person pronouns. Consider (i).

(i) John: Someone hit me.

Mary: Tell me who.

The structure of the sluiced clause must be (iia), not (iib).

(ii) a. Tell me [<sub>CP</sub> who ~~it~~ hit you]

b. Tell me [<sub>CP</sub> who ~~it~~ hit me]

The object in the sluiced clause must be *you*, which refers to John, the addressee, but not *me*, Mary, the speaker. This is problematic under the simple assumption that a sluiced clause is an exact copy of its antecedent clause. Some mechanism is necessary to capture this shift of pronouns.

- (9) Vogel: Suppose you do find him, Dexter. What are you going to do?  
 Dexter: What do you think?  
 (*Dexter* Season 08, Episode 09 “Make Your Own Kind of Music”)
- (10) Deb: Why aren’t you in Argentina?  
 Dexter: Why do you think?  
 (*Dexter* Season 08, Episode 12 “Remember the Monsters?”)
- (11) Cop: So why are you here?  
 Mozzie: Why do you think?  
 Cop: Because somebody hurt you.  
 Mozzie: Let’s go with that. Okay, bye.  
 (*White Collar* Season 05, Episode 01 “At What Price”)

All of the examples in (4) through (11) involve what appear to be cases of partial sluicing. It might be of some interest to note that in (4), (5), and (6), they are clearly interpreted as rhetorical questions, since the speakers provide answers. This, however, is not an inherent property of shortened questions of this kind. The most suggestive case is (11). In (11), Mozzie is in a certain place for a reason which he cannot divulge to others. He is spotted by a police officer and is asked why he is there. He cannot say the real reason, so he needs to come up with a fake reason. He cannot do so in such a short time, however, so instead of giving the officer a fake answer, he invites the officer to guess why he is there, by saying “Why do you think?” This cannot be a rhetorical question but an information-seeking question. Given this, the shortened questions in (7) through (11) are employed to solicit information, or the addressee’s idea, to be more precise.

One obvious difference between (3) and these examples above is that while the former has a declarative antecedent clause, the latter examples have interrogative ones. One might claim that if the antecedent clause is interrogative, partial sluicing is possible. While admitting that the antecedent clause must be an interrogative clause for apparent partial sluicing cases to be possible, however, I would like to claim that they cannot be analyzed as involving partial sluicing. The crucial point here is that partial sluicing involves long-distance WH-movement, as shown in (3a). I show that long-distance WH-movement does not play a role in this sort of shortened questions. Note that some of the examples involve the reason adverb *why*, which is supposed to modify the hidden embedded clause, not the visible/audible main *think* clause. It is independently reported by Nakao & Yoshida (2007), who attribute it to Howard Lasnik, that in sluicing cases with *why*, the adjunct can modify the higher clause but not the lower clause. Consider (12).

- (12) ?\*Mary said that John left for some reason, but I don't know (exactly) why.  
 a. = ?\*I don't know [<sub>CP</sub> why<sub>1</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> Mary said [<sub>CP</sub> *t*<sub>1</sub>' that [<sub>IP</sub> John left *t*<sub>1</sub> ]]]].  
 b. = I don't know [<sub>CP</sub> why<sub>1</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> John left *t*<sub>1</sub>]].

As shown in the contrast above, in sluicing cases where the survivor is *why*, long-distance interpretation is disallowed and the higher clause construal is allowed. In other words, long-distance movement of *why* is impossible in sluicing cases.

Let us get back to the apparent partial sluicing cases. In questions like (13b), for example, what is asked is the reason for him being fired, not the reason for the addressee's thinking.

- (13) a. Why was he fired?  
 b. Why do you think?  
 c. Why do you think [that he was fired *t*]?  
 d. Why do you think [that he was fired] *t*?

The intended interpretation of (13b) should be (13c), but this structure cannot be the syntactic source of (13b), due to the anti-long-distance property of the adverb *why* under sluicing. Thus the adverb *why* has to modify the higher clause, namely the one where the adjunct is found, as in (13d), but this interpretation is unavailable. This paradox tells us that the apparent partial sluicing cases we have looked at in fact do not involve partial sluicing after all, which conforms to Merchant's suggestion. In the next section I would like to consider the source of these pseudo partial sluicing cases.

## 2. An Account

Haddican *et al.* (2014) examine questions like (14), which are similar to long-distance WH-questions but different in an important respect.

- (14) a. [Who did John meet] do you think?  
 b. [Why was John fired] do you think?

In each example in (14), the WH-phrase is found in sentence initial position on a par with long-distance WH-questions, but it is contained in the clause where it originates, which itself is located in sentence initial position. Haddican *et al.* refer to these fronted WH-clauses as slifted interrogatives and to the main clauses as the parenthetical main clauses.

I claim that pseudo partial sluicing cases are derived from slifted interrogatives, as illustrated in (15).

- (15) a. [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> Who ~~did John meet t~~]<sub>1</sub> do you think e<sub>1</sub>] ?  
 b. [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> Why ~~was John fired t~~]<sub>1</sub> do you think e<sub>1</sub>] ?

In (15) there is no partial sluicing involved, with full sluicing taking place in the slifted clauses, thus conforming to Merchant's idea. What is especially important is that (15b) correctly captures the interpretation in which *why* modifies John's being fired, not the addressee's thinking.

### 3. The Parallelism Requirement

The account based on interrogative slifting leads to the question of why it fails to cover cases like (3), that is to say, why it works only when the antecedent clause is an interrogative as well.

Haddican *et al.* observe that slifted interrogative clauses have properties of matrix clauses, one of which is the obligatoriness of subject-aux inversion, as in (16).

- (16) a. [How old is she] do you think?  
 b. \* [How old she is] do you think?

Fox & Lasnik (2003), on independent grounds, suggest a parallelism requirement for capturing the relation between a sluiced clause and its antecedent clause.<sup>(3)</sup> I assume that it applies to the cases under consideration here. I suggest that since the slifted interrogatives have properties of direct interrogative clauses, the parallelism requirement demands the antecedent clauses to have them as well. This is why (3a), whose antecedent clause is declarative, cannot be an instance of a sluiced slifted interrogative clause.

The proposed account, which draws on the parallelism requirement, is supported by the following paradigm.

- (17) A: I have some idea about why John was fired.  
 B: \* Why do you think?

In (17), the antecedent clause is an indirect interrogative clause, not a direct one, so

---

(3) Fox & Lasnik motivate the Parallelism Condition from consideration about the presence/absence of intermediate traces and they discuss parallelism between the antecedent declarative clause involving an indefinite expression such as *someone* and the sluiced embedded interrogative clause with WH-trace of, say, *who*. The parallelism that they deal with is that of IP-level structures. On the other hand, our concern is the parallelism between the antecedent main interrogative clause and the sluiced slifted interrogative clause, that is to say, the CP-level parallelism.

the parallelism between the two questions cannot be not obtained, with slifted interrogative sluicing impossible, leading to deviance.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this squib I have discussed Merchant's observation about the impossibility of partial sluicing and shown that the apparent partial sluicing cases presented here in fact involve full sluicing in slifted interrogatives, thus supporting Merchant's view of sluicing. I have also suggested that the obligatoriness of the antecedent clause being a direct interrogative comes from the independently motivated parallelism requirement. This short article, hopefully, shows one intriguing aspect of the modern linguistic research, in which it is expected that seemingly paradoxical behavior of less studied linguistic phenomena, in this case pseudo partial sluicing, can be captured in independently motivated terms.

#### Acknowledgement

This paper could not have been written without the generous help of Warren Elliott, who has done numerous excellent jobs of crushing my half-baked ideas. I am extremely grateful to him. Remaining inadequacies are my own.

#### References

- Fox, Danny & Howard Lasnik. 2003. Successive-cyclic Movement and Island Repair: the Difference between Sluicing and VP-ellipsis. *Linguistic Inquiry* 34. 143-154.
- Haddican, Bill, Anders Holmberg, Hidekazu Tanaka, & George Tsoulas. 2014. Interrogative slifting in English. *Lingua* 138. 86-106.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The Syntax of Silence: Sluicing, Islands, and the Theory of Ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nakao, Chizuru & Masaya Yoshida. 2007. "Not-so-propositional" Islands and Their Implications for Swiping. Proceedings of WECOL 2006.
- Rohde, Hannah. 2006. Rhetorical Questions as Redundant Interrogatives. *San Diego Linguistics Papers* 2. 134-168.
- Ross, John Robert. 1969. Guess who? In R. Binnick, A. Davison, G. Green, and J. Morgan (eds.), *Papers from the 5th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society. 252-286.

(2016.1.5 受稿, 2016.1.14 受理)

## [抄 録]

スルーシングにおいては、WH句以外のすべて節要素の完全スルーシングが義務的であって部分的スルーシングは許されないという観察が Merchant (2001) においてなされている。本稿においては、この観察に対する例外と見える現象を検討し、それらの例は単に疑似部分的スルーシングとでも呼ぶべきものに過ぎず、実際には完全スルーシングを伴っていると論じた。その際、Haddican *et al.* で扱われた slifted interrogative の分析を採用し、Fox & Lasnik (2003) の平行性要件を仮定して説明を行った。