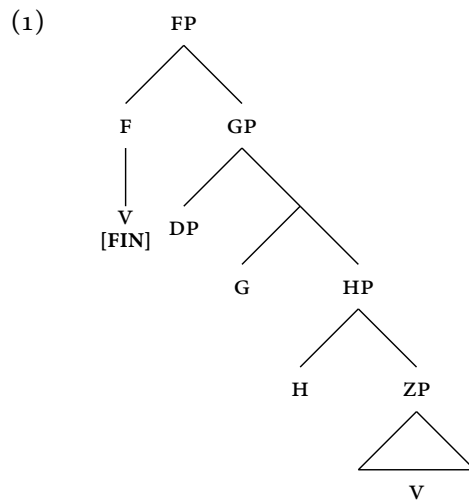# The Shape of Irish Clauses

James McCloskey

Virtually all work on Irish clause structure in recent years[1] has assumed a structure along the lines of (1) for the vso structures found in finite clauses of the language.

(1)

In (1), there is a v which heads a vp, that vp in turn the complement of one of the inflectional heads which define the inflectional layer. v is assumed to have undergone head movement to one of the higher heads of the inflectional layer (usually taken to be t) and the subject occupies a left-peripheral position within GP, yielding vso order of the type exemplfied in (2), and schematized in (3):

(2)   a.   Bhéarfaidh mé an t-airgead do Chaoimhín i   nDoire inniu
             give [FUT]   I   the money   to Kevin   in Derry today
             'I'll give Kevin the money in Derry today.'

---

[1] An important exception being Carnie (2006).

    b.   Sciob an cat an t-eireaball den   luch.
         cut   the cat the tail   off-the mouse
         'The cat cut the tail off the mouse.'

(3)   Verb < Subject < Object < Oblique Arguments < Adverbials

This general line of analysis has many important variants. Its simplest form is probably (4):

(4)
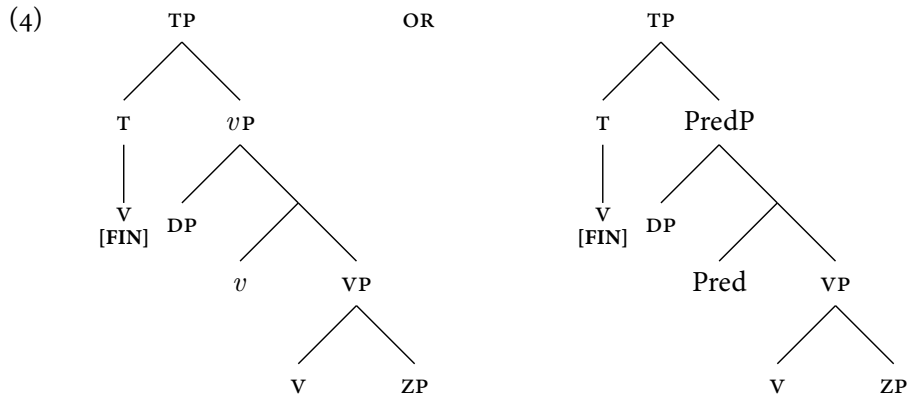
in which the subject remains in its base position throughout the derivation and the verb raises to amalgamate with the Tense element, thus appearing in the pre-subject position. If we assume a more articulated inflectional layer (represented by F and G in (1)) and raising of the subject (McCloskey (1996a, 2001a)), then the verb must be assumed to raise to a yet higher inflectional head position (F in (1)).

Analyses of this general sort are driven by some fairly fundamental theoretical commitments—the commitment to binary branching in phrase structure, the commitment to the internal subject hypothesis, the availability of head-movement as a legitimate descriptive device, the commitment to phrase structural interpretations of prominence relations in syntax, and more generally to a view of clausal architecture which holds that the basic structures do not differ a great deal from language to language. The analytic challenge (on this view) is to derive the patterns found in individual languages from applications of phrasal movement and head movement and ultimately from properties of the functional heads which drive those movements. The attempt to find such an analysis for Irish has been an absorbing enterprise, which has resulted in some new insights about the language, but (as far as I know) no definitively satisying answer as yet.

The search for such an analysis will hopefully continue, but in this chapter I want to address a different set of issues. Specifically, I want to ask the following question:

is there any reason to believe that the general line of analysis represented by (1) represents any real deepening of understanding? For at just this point the sceptic might well charge that all we are doing is playing out the moves of a predictable and self-validating game. We believe that grammatical relations are defined in terms of phrase structure so we say what we have to say to make that work out in a vso clause. We believe that the prominence relations relevant to syntax are structurally defined, so we say what we need to say to make that work out as well. At no point, it might be argued, have we managed to escape from the loop of our own assumptions, or provided evidence that (1) reflects something real about how this language actually works.

It is probably not possible to answer such scepticism fully, but I would like to go at least part of the way. I believe that the general line of analysis encapsulated in (4) does in fact represent a deepening of understanding, and I want to try to say why that could be a reasonable thing to believe. At its core, the argument is that there are idiosyncracies of Irish that are expected and understandable given (4) and its variants, which are not expected and are not so understandable given other ways of understanding how vso clauses are built. In particular, they are not understable given an understanding of vso orders like the three-way branching 'flat' structure in (5), which was widely assumed in the earliest work on Irish (McCloskey (1979) or Stenson (1981) for example) and is still assumed in many frameworks which eschew a certain kind of abstractness in syntactic analysis and which do not share the theoretical commitments laid out above.

(5)

```
              S
           ╱  │  ╲
          V   NP   NP
```
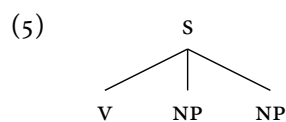
Put another way, what I want to argue is that in this case the drive to achieve theoretical symmetry and seek crosslinguistic commonalities has enriched, rather than diminished, understanding of the idiosyncracies of Irish. To argue this case, I will focus on two implications of the line of analysis schematized in (1).

FIRST IMPLICATION: The first is an implicit claim about constituency. The host to which the verb raises in (1) is a head which has a single complement, represented in (1) by GP. The fact that the verb, along with other elements, raises out of that complement has no effect on its integrity as a constituent, and it follows then that all of the material following the inflected verb in a finite clause must form a syntactic constituent[2], one which corresponds to the boxed sequence in (6):

---

[2]Setting aside for the moment material that might attach higher than FP in (4).

(6)   [Verb Subject   Object   Oblique]

If there really is such a major constituent in VSO clauses in Irish, its presence ought
to be detectable.

SECOND IMPLICATION: In (1) a single morphophonological word (the future
tense verb *bhéarfaidh* of (2a) for example) is syntactically complex. According to
(4), it is in fact assembled out of material located in three distinct positions in syn-
tactic representation and it contains within itself at least three distinct atoms of the
syntactic system. The presence in syntactic representations of those heads in their
pre-movement positions ought also to be detectable.

My purpose in this chapter is to argue that these two consequences of (1) are
in fact correct, and correspondingly that certain otherwise puzzling aspects of Irish
grammar fall within the range of understanding given (1).

The First Implication

As it turns out, every way that I know of to detect the presence of syntactic con-
stituents in Irish suggests that the constituent indicated in (6) is real. The purpose of
this section is to draw together the evidence for that conclusion[3]. The discussion will
touch on many puzzles and on many un-resolved issues, but the general conclusion
emerges, it seems to me, with some clarity and force.

Right Node Raising

Explored initially by Ross (1967a) and by Hankamer (1971) and named by Postal
(1974, 125), Right Node Raising (RNR) has a venerable, if controversial, history as
a probe for constituency. The question for us here is the following: in a schematic
RNR-structure such as (7):

(7)   [α], *and* [β], [γ]

where the second conjunct β is set off by strong intonational boundaries and the
material of γ is in some sense shared with both α and β, is it a requirement that γ
form a syntactic constituent? In routine examples of RNR, such as (8), the condition
is clearly met:

(8)   It's not against the law to read, or to make copies of, [confidential military
         documents].

---

[3]I expand here on some material presented initially and briefly in McCloskey (1991).

If there is a general requirement that γ of (7) be a syntactic constituent, then we have a useful probe to use. However, sceptical voices have been raised from time to time over the years about whether or not the requirement of constituency is general for RNR (see Abbot (1976) especially). As far as I am aware, though, the force of these objections dissolves in contemporary contexts. The examples in (9) are typical of those brought to the table by Abbot (1976):

(9)   a.   Smith loaned, and his widow later donated, a valuable collection of manuscripts to the library.
        b.   Mary baked, and George frosted, 20 cakes in less than an hour.

Such examples, however, are expected given the architecture of VP assumed in much recent and current work (deriving ultimately from Larson (1988)). Both involve RNR of the VP-complement of v, from which V (the verbal root) has been extracted and both are possible for the same reason that the corresponding coordinations are possible:

(10)   a.   Smith donated a valuable collection of manuscripts to the library and a substantial collection of paintings to the museum.
        b.   George baked 2 cakes in an hour and 120 cookies in the course of the afternoon.

Partly for this reason, most contemporary accounts of RNR (see Wilder (1997), Hartmann (2000), Abels (2004), Sabbagh (2007), Bachrach & Katzir (2009), Ha (2008)) build in the assumption of constituency explicitly or implicitly, and the most recent and most comprehensive overview of the issue that I know of (Ha, 2008, Chap. 5) concludes (p. 190) that the constituency restriction indeed holds.

That being so, we will want to use RNR as a probe for the constituency claim implicit in (1). Even if the assessment of the previous paragraph is incorrect, the question is relevant, since everyone agrees that RNR routinely applies to constituents and so it would be an embarrassment for (1) if the postverbal material should turn out to be barred from the position γ in (7).

Fortunately, the properties of RNR in Irish are largely familiar (for brief discussion, see McCloskey (1986)), matching closely those which have been identified over the years for other languages—apart from the issue of principal concern to us here, as we will see below. And in fact it is routinely possible for the sequence of elements following the finite verb in a VSO clause to appear in the position of γ of (7). The crucial example type will be of the general form in (11):

(11)   V, CONJ V, [SUBJECT (COMPLEMENTS) (OTHER MATERIAL)]

where the material within square brackets is shared by both verbs, and where the commas indicate strong intonational breaks. Examples of this general type occur freely and frequently in texts and are judged grammatical, without hesitation, by consultants. All of the examples below ((12)–(19)) are attested, and all are of the the form in (11). As long as the rightmost element in a Right Node Raising structure is required to be a syntactic constituent, such examples give reason to believe that the structure imputed to VSO clauses by (1) captures something true and correct.

Of course, with no further elaboration, examples of the general shape in (11) permit an alternative interpretation—one in which they involve simply coordination of verbs rather than Right Node Raising. This alternative interpretation is not really consistent with the intonational properties of the clause type in (11), but in any case the examples below are selected to make such an alternative analysis implausible or impossible. This is accomplished in general by using examples in which the first V of (11) heads an embedded clause which excludes the rightmost V, and which involve coordination at the higher (matrix or root) level. Other examples include material combined either with the leftmost or with the rightmost V which makes clear again that the coordination is not at the level of V, but rather involves some larger containing constituent. [4]

(12) Ba   chóir go ndéanfadh, agus dhéanfadh, pairlimint náisiúnta
      COP[PAST] proper C would-do   and would-do   parliament national
      Éireannach dlithe a rith   nár   …
      Irish   laws   enact [–FIN] NEG C
      'A national Irish parliament should, and would, enact laws that … ODR2 297

(13) Is   é mo thuairim ná   fuil, nó gur   beag má tá, aon bochtán
      COP[PRES] it my opinion NEG C is   or C-[PAST] little if is any pauper
      sa   pharóiste ná   fuil roinnt dá   chuid   aige
      in-the parish   NEG C is   portion of-his possessions at-him
      'It is my opinion that there is not, or that there is hardly, a single pauper in
      the parish who does not have a portion of his wealth' s 111

(14) Is   annamh a bhí, má bhí ariamh, bean   amuigh ag an
      COP[PRES] seldom C was if was ever   woman   out   at the
      rialtas   ar na   hócáidí   sin
      government on those occasions

---

[4]Many of the examples used in this paper have been taken from published sources of one kind or another. When this is the case, it is indicated by way of a tag which consists of an abbreviation of the title of the publication followed by the page number on which it appears, or the date of broadcast in the case of material excerpted from radio broadcasts. The abbreviations used are explained in the Appendix.

‘Only rarely, if ever, did the government put forward any women candidates on these occasions’ CF 64

(15) Ar an 16 Iúil théadh,   agus téann   fós, go leor de phobal
      on the 16th July go [PAST-HABIT] and go [PRES] still many   of people
      na   háite   isteach chuig an séipilín   sin
      the [GEN] place [GEN] in   to   the little-chapel DEMON
      ‘On the 16th of July, many people from the local community used to go in
      to that little chapel, and many still do.’ SOH 37

(16) Níl   agus ní raibh ariamh, ar seisean, aon tír   eile   sa
      is-not and NEG was ever   said-he   any country other in-the
      domhan inchurtha   le   Sasana
      world   comparable with England
      There is not, nor had there ever been, he said, any country in the world
      comparable to England.’ T 70

(17) Níor chualas   gur   leag   nó gur   mharaigh na
      nior heard [S1] C–[PAST] knock-down or C–[PAST] kill   the
      tramanna duine   ar bith ariamh.
      trams   person any   ever
      ‘I never heard that the trams ever knocked down or killed anyone.’ CTP 49

(18) Má tá, agus ó   tá, suim   aige sa   Ghaeilge
      if is and since is interest at-him in-the Irish
      ‘If he has, and since he has, an interest in Irish’ OCF 290

(19) B’facthas dom go mbíodh,   agus go bhfuil fós, na Beanna Arda mar
      seemed   to-me that used-to-be and that are   still the cliffs   high like
      phluid mhór thart   orm.
      blanket great around on-me
      ‘It seemed to me that the Great Cliffs had been and were still like a great
   blanket around me.’ NGTTS 87

These observations provide support for the constituency claim we have focussed on here, but we can go a little further with the investigation. The structure in (1) implies other constituency breaks, and they too should be detectable with the same probe. In particular, there should be a constituent (VP of (4)) which surfaces as a sequence of complements, from which the selecting verb has been extracted. This constituent should also be detectable by way of the probe of Right Node Raising, and indeed it is:

(20)   D'iarr sé, agus fuair   sé, cead   ó   thaoiseach na
        asked he and received he permission from chief   the [GEN]
        luinge,   fleadh a thabhairt dúinn
        ship [GEN] feast   give [–FIN] for-us
        'He asked for, and received, permission from the captain of the ship to give
        a feast for us' IAE 112

(21)   is   iomaí uair a d'iarr muid agus a fuair   muid cuidiú
        COP[PRES] many time C asked we   and C received we   help
        uathu
        from-them
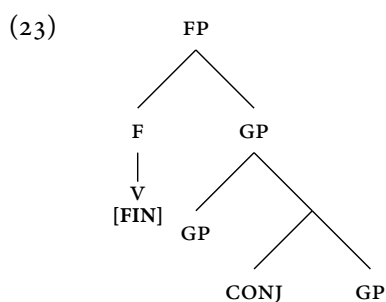   'Many's the time we asked and we received help from them.' CDC 64

The examples in (20) and (21) involve a VP which, following raising of v, consists
only of the sequence of internal arguments (the specifier and complement respec-
tively of v). In sum, the interactions between RNR and (1) are as they ought to be.

Coordination

If we are committed to the kind of analysis schematized in (1), we are thereby com-
mitted to certain expectations about what coordination patterns will we available in
VSO clauses. To better see what those expectations are, consider again the structure
in (1), repeated in (22) with annotations added.

(22)
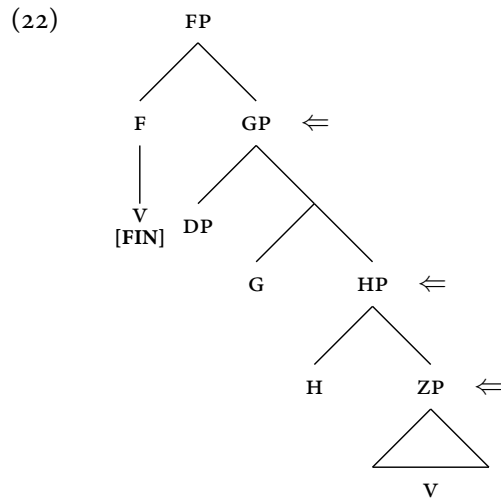
The arrows in (22) represent some of the coordination possibilities that we expect to be able to detect. For the two lower coordination points, our expectations (and the facts) are not interestingly different from those of English. In the interests of space, then, we will focus exclusively here on the highest of the three coordination points (GP) of (22). It is with respect to this possibility that we should see the pattern in (6) emerge. How would this pattern be reflected in the data? The relevant structures will be as shown schematically in (23):

(23)

```
                    FP
                   /  \
                  F    GP
                  |   /  \
                  V  GP   \
                [FIN]    / \
                    GP  CONJ  GP
                   /  \
               CONJ    GP
```

Given such a starting point, each instance of GP will contain a subject DP at its left edge and the head V of VP within GP will have undergone across the board raising from within each instance of GP as far as F. The ultimate outcome should be a structure in which a single finite verb is followed by a coordination of two phrases, each of which contains a distinct subject and a distinct set of internal arguments and modifiers, but in which the initial verb is shared by both sets of arguments. That is, we expect examples of the general form in (24):

(24)   [V   [SUBJ COMPLEMENTS] *and*/*or* [SUBJ COMPLEMENTS]]
          [FIN]

Such structures are indeed as widely and as freely attested as we would expect:

(25)   Thug Peats dhá leathchoróin dom   agus Geraldeen leathchoróin dom.
         gave   two half-crown   to-me and   half-crown   to-me
         'Pats gave me two half-crowns and Geraldeen gave me a half-crown.' ABFS
         23

(26)   nuair a thosuigh na crainnte dá leagan treasna an bhóthair agus na
         when C began   the trees   be-felled across the road   and the
         droichid dá gcur i   n-aer
         bridges be cast into air
         'when the trees began to be felled across the road and the bridges to be
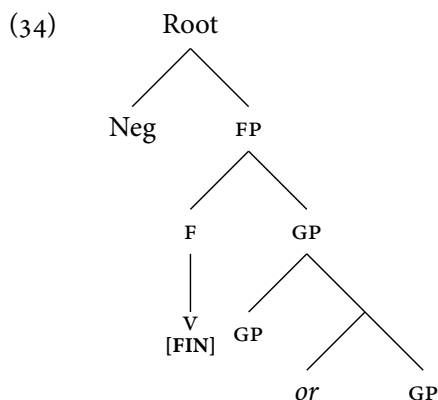   blown into the air' ONH 11

(27) ghreamaigh a lámh don chleite agus a’ gé don tábla
stick [PAST] his hand to-the feather and the goose to-the table
‘his hand stuck to the feather and the goose stuck to the table’ SAB 236

(28) i measc na muintire a raibh aithne curtha acu
among the [GEN] people [GEN] C was acquaintance put by-them
orthu agus gean tugtha acu dóibh
on-them and affection given by-them to-them
‘among the people that they had come to know and be fond of’ DAD 156

The expected outcome for disjunction is also freely available, as shown in (29)–(33):

(29) Ach cha raibh madadh ar bith againne ná muid ábalta madadh
but NEG be [PAST] dog any at-us or us able dog
a cheannach.
buy [−FIN]
‘But we didn’t have a dog, nor were we able to buy a dog.’ RMS 159

(30) nuair nach dtáinig siad ar ais ná scéala ar bith uathu
when NEG C came they back or news any from-them
‘When they did not come back and no news of them came back.’ LAOCHAS
134

(31) Ní titfimid leo nó iad linn
NEG fall [FUT] [P1] to-them or them to-us
‘We will not fall to them nor they to us.’ BOM 40

(32) Níor thug an t-Údarás aon chabhair dúinn, nó an
NEG-[PAST] gave the Authority any help to-us or the
Chomhairle Chontae aon tacaíocht dúinn.
County Council any support to-us
‘The Authority didn’t give us any help and the County Council didn’t give
us any support.’ RNG 23-2-05

(33) ní bheidh dhá bheathach bhána a choíche i bhFánaid ná Mánas
COP[NEG] be [FUT] two horse white ever in Fanad or
a choíche i dToraigh
ever in Tory
‘There will never be two white horses in Fanad and Manas will never be in
Tory.’ TD 653

The general proposal in (1) leads us to expect the existence of such examples and
lets us understand their properties. The pattern exemplified by (29)–(33) brings out

a slightly more nuanced prediction of (1). Here the structure must be as illustrated schematically in (34):

(34)

```
              Root
             /    \
          Neg      FP
                  /   \
                 F     GP
                 |    /  \
                 V  GP    GP
               [FIN] /  \
                    or   GP
```

In a structure like (34), the disjunction is in the scope of negation, and the relevant examples are therefore semantically equivalent to a conjunction of negations (by De Morgan's Law). Such examples therefore emerge again as fully expected, given (1), because it is well established that sentential negation is relatively high in Irish—expressed morphophonologically on c, with the subject always within its scope (Chung & McCloskey (1987), Duffield (1995), McCloskey (1996a, 2001b)). If this is the case, negation must be above the inflectional position to which the verb raises and the outcomes in (33) fall into place with no further stipulation.

Of course scepticism is, as always, in order, and it is important to consider alternative analyses, analyses which might not provide support for the constituency claims which are at the rhetorical heart of our discussion here. Since the relevant phenomena crucially involve coordination and apparently missing material, it is natural to seek those alternatives among the ellipsis processes known to be characteristic of coordinate structures. (35) was presented earlier as being the predicted outcome of (1) (as indeed it is):

(35)   [V [SUBJ COMPLEMENTS] *and*/*or* [SUBJ COMPLEMENTS]]
          [FIN]

But perhaps there is a way of understanding (35) as deriving from (36):

(36)   [V SUBJ COMPLEMENTS] *and*/*or* [V SUBJ COMPLEMENTS]
          [FIN]   [FIN]

with the second occurrence of the finite verb eliminated by some ellipsis process. What ellipsis proces? If we are to appeal to a process with a reasonable place in the

typology of ellipsis, then Gapping seems like the most plausible candidate. It is an ellipsis process which is widespread among languages and language-types and whose fundamental characteristic is that it ellides a verb in coordinate structures:

(37)   Some emigrated to North America and some [   ] to Australia.

Gapping is not very well understood as a process, despite the fact that a great deal of perceptive work has been devoted to it since the initial description by Ross (1970) (see, among many others, Hankamer (1971), Jackendoff (1971), Kuno (1976), Neijt (1979), Coppock (2001), Johnson (2000b,a) and for an admirably clear summary of the state of the art Johnson (2005)). The descriptive outlines are, however, reasonably well delineated. In the clearest cases, Gapping follows the pattern seen in (37), in which there are two maximal phrases in a non-initial conjunct which contrast with corresponding elements in the first conjunct and which introduce new, or focussed, material (Kuno (1976)). The stretch of given, or de-accented, material between the two foci (which must include at least the main verb) is reduced to silence. All that ultimately survives of the clause is the sequence of remnant xp's, each representing material which is at least novel, if not focussed. (see especially (Jackendoff, 1971, 26) and Kuno (1976)). It is in addition often claimed that the gapped clause may have at most two 'major constituents' as remnant foci (Hankamer (1971, 1973), Jackendoff (1971)), although the exact sense of 'major' here has proven difficult to pin down.

But this is not at all the pattern that we see in the examples we have been concerned with in this section. Setting aside the observation that in all of these examples the missing material (the finite verb) would be at the left edge of the second conjunct (and always in that position according to (5)) rather than between two foci, in many of the examples in (25) and (29) the second conjunct contains repeated or old information. (38) makes this point with particular clarity:

(38)   a.   ní   thearn sé a dhath   ar aon duine   ariamh ná aon duine   ariamh
               NEG did   he anything on any person ever   or any person ever
               a dhath   air
               anything on-him
               'He never did anything to anyone and nobody ever did anything to him.' SRNF 51
         b.   ní   bhíonn   formad ag éinne   leis   ná fuath   ag
               NEG be [PRES-HABIT] envy   at anyone with-him or hatred   at
               éinne   dó
               anyone to-him
               'Nobody envies him and nobody hates him.' AGMTS 73

In (38a) the second conjunct contains a subject, a direct object, an adverbial, and an additional complement, at least two of which are repeated from the first conjunct.[5] In (38b), only one of the three major constituents of the second conjunct (the nominal *fuath*, 'hatred') introduces novel material; the other two major constituents are given. Many of the examples cited in (25)–(28) and in (29)–(33) establish the same point, containing, as they do, more major constituents than gapped clauses are in general supposed to, and in addition containing constituents which express redundant, or given, information. This is so, in essence, because in every case they are complete, rather than gapped, clauses.

Our core examples, then, are not to be explained in terms of gapping. If they are to be thought of in terms of ellipsis, then, there would have to be some process which targetted finite verbs exclusively and exclusively in coordinate structures, a species of Conjunction Reduction presumably, formulated carefully so as to ensure the correct scopal outcome in the case of (29). Where such an operation might find its place in the typology of syntactic operations seems unclear.

But this is a question about which we need not worry, since in (1) we already have an understanding from which all of these observations follow as expected outcomes.

Focus Constructions

Focus constructions detect the same constituency break. The sequence of elements following the finite verb can act as the focus in a variety of constructions, suggesting again that the constituency of (4) is real. We will consider two such contructions here.

The so-called 'semi-negative' construction (*an tógáil leathdhiúltach* in traditional grammars) is illustrated in (39).

(39)   Cha raibh ach ceithre phingin agam.
       NEG was but four   penny at-me
       'I had only fourpence.'

In this construction the particle *ach* ('but') attaches at the left edge of some constituent XP within the scope of negation, and the ultimate semantic effect is that of *only* in English. The Irish semi-negative is thus close kin to the nonstandard English (40a) or French (40b):

(40)   a.   I ain't got but four cents.

---

[5] The subject and object nominals of the second conjunct of (38) are also of course repeated, but one might argue that the switching of roles between first and second conjunct provides the necessary sense of contrast.

b. Je n' ai   parlé qu' avec Jean.
    I   NEG have spoken but with
    'I spoke only to Jean.'

The initial example in (39) involves attachment of *ach* to a DP, but the particle can in fact attach to a broad array of phrase-types, as along as they are maximal.[6] In the examples of (41), for example, *ach* attaches to a PP, to the small clause complement of a perception verb, to a finite CP complement, and to a nonfinite CP complement respectively.

(41)   a. Níl   cuimhne anois ach ar líne amháin de na bhéarsaí.
            is-not memory now   but on line one   of the verses
            'Only one line of the verses is now remembered.' CCC 187
        b. Níor   chuala mé go fóill acht na ballaí ag magadh   orm.
            NEG-[PAST] heard I   yet   but the walls mock [PROG] on-me
            'All I heard yet was the walls mocking me.' UMI 37
        c. ní thiocfadh   leat   a rádh   leis   acht go raibh
            NEG come [COND] with-you say [–FIN] to-him but C   was
            feasbhaidhe air
            lack   on-him
            'The only thing that you could say to him was that he was wanting (in sense).' LCS 85
        d. Ní bheadh   uait   ach í d'fhanacht   sa   mbaile
            NEG be [COND] from-you but her remain [–FIN] in-the home
            'You would want only for her to remain at home.' U 17

We have another potential test, then, for the constituency claim inherent in (4). This

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[6]It does not attach to all maximal phrases. While it attaches to PP, for example, it will never attach to the DP-complement of P:

(i)   Níor   labhair mé ach le   Seán.
        NEG–PAST speak   I   but with John
        'I spoke only to John.'

(ii)   *Níor labhair mé le ach Seán.

This is a property which *ach* shares, I believe, with its French cousin *que* and with the similar *but* of non-standard Englishes. This test, then, like all constituency tests as far as I know, takes the form of a one-way implication: if *ach* attaches to a sequence [α β], then [α β] is a constituent. If *ach* fails to attach to a given sequence, we do not immediately know if that failure reflects the fact that the sequence in question is not a constituent, or if it reflects some other condition on its distribution and functioning.

test too identifies the post-verbal sequence we are concerned with as a constituent, as shown by the examples in (42), which are representative of an extremely productive and widely attested syntactic pattern:

(42)   a.   Ní raibh ach a   bhríste tarraingte in airde air féin aige   nuair a
            NEG was   but his trousers pulled   up   on self by-him when **C**
            bhuail cloigín   an   dorais
            rang   little-bell the [GEN] door [GEN]
            'He had only just pulled up his trousers when the doorbell rang.' G 172

       b.   Ní raibh   ach mo chloigeann sa   doras agam nuair a …
            NEG be [PAST] but my head   in-the door at-me when **C**
            'I had only just put my head in the door when … STL 245

       c.   garda   óg   ná   raibh ach an Teampall Mór fágtha aige
            policeman young **NEG C** was   but Templemore   left   by-him
            'a young policeman who had only just left Templemore' AGMTS202

       d.   ní   raibh ach san déanta aige   ins an am   gur chuir an searc
            NEG was   but that done   by-him in the time **C**   cast   the shark
            farraige lastuas den   naomhóg
            sea   above of-the canoe
            'He had only just done that when the shark cast up seawater over the canoe' DNM 46

In semantic terms such examples seem to involve quantification over events. (42a), for example, expresses a claim that there was only one relevant event which had taken place (him pulling up his trousers) at the point in time at which another event (the ringing of the door-bell) took place. It is probably for this reason (that is, that they are existential sentences of a particular kind) that they are restricted to clauses built around the verb *be*; for further discussion of that topic, see McCloskey (2009).

A similar kind of probe (with similar results) is provided by another syntactic pattern which crucially involves focus, namely the pseudo-cleft construction. In general, pseudo-clefts are formed on the model of (43), introduced by an interrogative pronoun which binds a gap in the following clause, followed by a particle (either *ach*, 'but' or *ná*, 'than') which introduces the focussed element:

(43)   [*Cad* C [TP … …]] *ach/ná* XP
                                        [FOC]

(44)   a.   cad   a d'fheicfeadh sé ach giorria
            what **C** see [COND]   he but hare
            'What should he see but a hare.' AGL 84

b.   cad   a chífeadh   sé ná   an fhairrge lán de chnapáin mhóra bhána
      what C see [COND] he than the sea   full of lumps   big   white
      'What should he see only the sea full of big white lumps.' LA 55

Once more, if the claims of (1) about how vso clauses are built are broadly correct, then we should be able to detect the post-verbal constituent. That is, there should be examples of the type in (45):

(45)   [*What was* [*but* [Subject Complements]]]

with the focus particle attaching to a constituent which consists of everything following the finite verb of the clause. Once more, expectations are met. Examples of the general type in (45) are indeed widely attested, as shown in (46). Such examples are extremely difficult to render naturally in English (hence the ungrammaticality of the English translations below), but the general effect can perhaps be rendered roughly as 'What situation should hold but … '.

(46)   a.   cad   a bhí ach Coláiste úr   Gaeilge i ndiaidh a fhoscladh i
                what C was but College new Irish   after   open [–FIN] in
                gCathair Nua Eabhraigh
                City   New York
                'What should it be but a new Irish College to have just opened in New York City.' CDC 63
          b.   Cad a bhí   ach soilse na   cathrach ag lonrú
                what C be [PAST] but lights the [GEN] city [GEN] shining
                'What should it be but the lights of the city shining.' ACS 20
          c.   cad   a bheadh   ná   fear ina sheasamh i gcoinnibh an chrainn
                what C be [COND] than man standing   against   the tree
                'What should it be but a man standing against the tree.' GBR 142
          d.   Cad a bhí ach an bia   roinnte aici   agus an bainne tabhartha
                what C was but the food divided by-her and the milk   given
                dos na boicht aici
                to   the poor   by-her
                'What was it be but that she had distributed the food and given the milk to the poor' GOG 279

The final example, (46d), has the additional interest of confirming the constituency claim in two distinct ways—the sequence we are interested in appears in the focus position of a pseudo-cleft and is, in addition, coordinated.

Ellipsis

Consider finally the case of ellipsis. We examine a characteristic ellipsis construction of the language which provides evidence again for the claim about constituency that is our current focus. Certain other properties of the construction should help us move on to address the second of the two themes advertised in the introduction.

Not all languages have polarity particles (or at least particles which mean *yes* and *no*). Irish is one such language:

(47)   a.   Ar   chuir   tú   isteach ar an phost?
                INTERR-[PAST] put-[PAST] you in   on the job
                'Did you apply for the job?'
    b.   Chuir.
                put-[PAST]
                Yes.
    c.   Níor   chuir.
                NEG–PAST put-[PAST]
                No.

The bare finite verb seen in (47b) is known in the Irish grammatical tradition as the 'responsive form,' because of its characteristic use in answering Yes/No questions of the type in (47a). To answer 'no' one precedes the verb with the negative particle. Virtually every descriptive or pedagogic grammar of Irish contains a paragraph like the one below:

> In replying to questions, (1) the verb and tense used in the question must be repeated in the reply, (2) the subject (except when it is contained in the verb) must be omitted.
> *Modern Irish Grammar*, J. P. Craig, Sealy, Briers & Walker, Dublin 1900: p. 144

As we will see shortly, this quotation is in fact only partially accurate, but to begin with our focus here will be first on the question of what grammatical device or devices give rise to the fragment clauses seen in (47b) and (47c), and second on what we can learn about the architecture of vso clauses from these structures,

The availability of (47) in Irish has had an effect, frequently noted, on the kinds of English spoken in Ireland, in which dialogues such as (48) are commonplace:

(48)   a.   Did you apply for the job?
    b.   I did.
    c.   I didn't.

In answering Yes/No questions, polarity particles are avoided; what we have in (48b) and (48c), instead, are two instances of VP Ellipsis. In the language contact situations in which Irish varieties of English emerge, in other words, the reduced sentences illustrated in (47) are identified with VP Ellipsis in English.

That this identification was made is not an accident; when one looks more closely at the single word sentences illustrated in (47), it turns out that the structures are not in fact restricted to the responsive function, and that in their distribution and range of functions they mirror point for point those of VP Ellipsis in English.

These matters have been discussed before (McCloskey (1991)), so I will be relatively brief in this presentation. *Responsive Ellipsis* (as I will continue to call it in deference to previous descriptive work) occurs freely in coordinate structures and in Tag Questions, as seen in (49):

(49)   a.   Dúirt   siad go dtiocfadh   siad, ach ní   tháinig   ariamh.
              say [PAST] they C   come [COND]   they but NEG come [PAST] ever
              'They said that they would come but they never did.'

        b.   Beidh   muid connáilte, nach   mbeidh?
              be [FUT] we   frozen   NEG INTERR C be [FUT]
              'We'll be frozen, won't we?'

The formal properties of Responsive Ellipsis also closely parallel the formal properties of VP Ellipsis in English. A discourse antecedent is required. I cannot, for instance, walk into a room in which the floor is filthy and clearly needs to be cleaned and announce:

(50)   Glanfaidh.
        clean [FUT]
        'I will (clean it).'

Responsive ellipsis also supports the strict-sloppy ambiguities, as seen in (51):

(51)   Shíl   an Taoiseach   go raibh an toghachán buaite aige   agus
        thought the Prime Minister C   was   the election   won   by-him and
        shíl   an tUachtarán fosta go raibh
        thought the President   also C   was
        'The Prime Minister thought that he had won the election and the President
        also thought that he had.'

(51) is ambiguous in the familiar way. If we fix the interpretation of the pronoun in the first conjunct as refering to the Prime Miniser, the second conjunct can mean either that the President thought that the President had won the election or that the

President thought that the Prime Minister had won the election.

Responsive Ellipsis may also apply 'backwards,' as seen in (52), as long as the ellipsis-site itself is sufficiently deeply embedded (i.e. as long as it meets the so-called 'Backwards Anaphora Condition' of Langacker (1969) and Ross (1967b)).[7]

(52) le heagla go gceapfá   go bhfuil, níl   aon cheann de leabhra
      for fear   C you-would-think C is   is-not any one   of books
      an Oileáin léite agam
      the Island   read by-me
      'Lest you think I have, I haven't read any of the Island books.'   GLL 61

Responsive Ellipsis also supports the pattern known as 'antecedent contained dele-tion' (ACD) in which the ellipsis site is properly contained within the antecedent phrase which supplies its content. Given that Responsive Ellipsis involves ellision of the subject, the examples which illustrate this property are necessarily somewhat different in form from ACD examples in English but the essential point is the same. The relevant examples are as in (53):

(53) a. ná   beadh   an fonn   céanna air   a bhí _
          NEG C would-be the eagerness same   on-him C was
          'that there wouldn't be the same eagerness on him that there was'   LDS
          71
      b. ag smaointiú dá mbeadh   bean   aige   nach mbeadh an
          think [PROG] if be [COND] woman at-him NEG C be [COND] the
          leasainm air   a bhí _
          nickname on-him C was
          'thinking that if he had a wife he wouldn't have the nickname that he
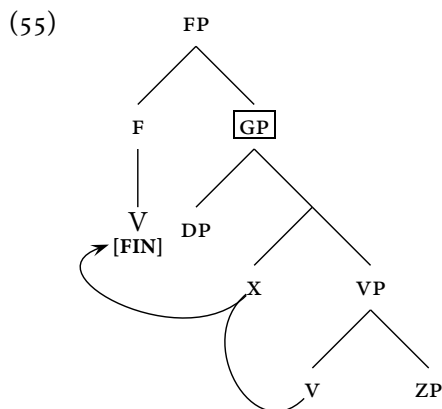   (in fact) had'   SRNF 594

In (53), the elided material is within a relative clause which is adjoined to the subject. But the antecedent for the elided material consists of the combination of that subject and its predicate. That is, the structure is as schematized in (54):

(54)   [V [[$_{DP}$ D [$_{NP}$ NP [$_{CP}$ C V ...]]] PP]]

It is for these kinds of reasons that Responsive Ellipsis has standardly been analyzed as being a close analogue of VP Ellipsis in English. More particularly, it seems to involve elision of the complement of the head to which the verbal complex raises (the boxed constituent of (55)). The verb (having raised) survives; the subject (being

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[7]I correct here a mis-statement in McCloskey (1991).

trapped within the ellipsis site) does not (McCloskey (1991)):

(55)

```
                    FP
                  /    \
                F      GP
                |      / \
                V    DP   \
              [FIN]  / \    \
                   X   VP
                  /   /  \
                 V       ZP
```

This type of ellipsis has been named 'Verb Stranding VP Ellipsis' by Lotus Goldberg (2002; 2005) and has now been documented for a fairly broad range of languages (Doron (1991, 1999), Martins (1994, 2000), Ngonyani (1996), Sherman-Ussishkin (1998), Goldberg (2002, 2005), Gribanova (2010)). The process raises many interesting and important questions (some of which we will address shortly), but for the moment our concern is with what it reveals about the issue of current concern—the constituency claim implicit in (1). Once again, the conclusion is surely that that claim is supported. All current treatments of ellipsis of the VP ELLIPSIS type build in the assumption that ellipsis (of this type at least) targets constituents. The kinds of observations standardly used to argue that non-constituent ellipsis is impossible include such cases as (56) (cited in Ha (2008) and attributed to Kyle Johnson):

(56)   a.   *John considers Mary smart, but Bill doesn't [ ] happy.
        b.   *John didn't stand near Sally, but Fred did [ ] Mary.

which are analogous to pseudo-gapping but in which non-constituent sequences of elements are elided. That being so, these observations too suggest that the commitments implicit in (1) are reasonable ones.

Interim Summary

Obviously there are many phenomena among those surveyed above that we would like to understand better, but to the extent that we do understand them, the observations (from Right Node Raising, from coordination, from focus constructions and from ellipsis) point straightforwardly and consistently to the same conclusion—that the constituent whose existence is implied by the analysis (or family of analyses) rep-

resented by (1) is real. The observations have, in particular, a certain cumulative and collective force; it would surely be very strange if all of the processes we have examined here should turn out to be exotic enough not to make use of the core syntactic notion of constituent or syntactic object.

The larger, and probably more important, conclusion is that Irish is not at all exotic in the way that one might have expected if (5) were even roughly correct. Rather Irish seems to have just the kind of finely articulated phrase structure usually attributed to svo languages and attributed also to Irish by analyses along the line of (1).

There remains a question, of course. If the post-verbal sequence is in fact a constituent, why can it not undergo movement? Given that, as we have seen, the postverbal constituent in a vso clause can be focussed (in the semi-negative construction and in the pseudo-cleft), one might expect that, all else being equal, that constituent should be movable. We might expect, for instance, that it should undergo clefting, since one of the core uses of the cleft construction is exactly to focus some constituent. Phrases with verbal heads can indeed be fronted (see (57)), but the constituent labelled GP in (1) is absolutely immovable (as seen in (58)):

(57)   Ag magadh   orm   a bheadh   siad.
        mock [**PROG**] on-me **C** be [**COND**] they
        'It's mocking me that they'd be.'

(58)   *Eoghan an duais do Chiarán a bhéarfaidh [   ].
              the prize to   **C** give [**FUT**] [   ]
        'It's Eoghan the prize to Ciarán that will give.

To address this puzzle, it will be helpful first to focus on the the second implication of (1). That done, we can return to the question raised by the impossibility of (58).
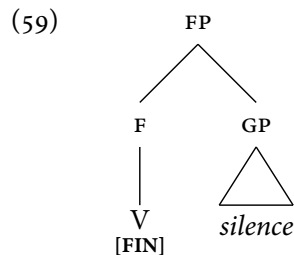
The Second Implication

The analysis of (1) depends on the assumption of a certain mis-match between syntax and morphophonology: the pieces which together determine the single phonological form that we know as the inflected verb are distributed across at least three different positions in syntactic space. The lexical item which determines the interpretation, argument structure, and selectional properties of the verb (call this the verbal stem) heads vp, while the syntactic expression of tense, of modality and of agreement properties is localized in a functional head, or series of functional heads, external to vp. The verbal stem raises to, and amalgamates with, the highest of these heads to yield an inflected verb and vso order. On many current conceptions, of

course, the verbal stem is not itself a single syntactic object but rather an amalgamation of a 'light verb' v with a perhaps acategorial root. Nothing that I have to say here will depend on, or shed light on, this additional decompositional step; for ease in exposition, then, I will speak simply of the 'verbal stem' v. Think of this as the combination of v with the verbal root.

Once again, if there is an unpronounced verbal stem within GP of (1), its presence should be detectable. Responsive ellipsis provides us with exactly the probe that will allow us to detect it.

As we have seen, Responsive Ellipsis has the general form in (59)

(59)

```
              FP
             /  \
            /    \
           F      GP
           |     /\
           |    /  \
           V   silence
        [FIN]
```

where GP is the constituent whose existence and form we have been concerned with. In (59), of course, the inflected verb is pronounced in a position external to the ellipsis site. It is a strange observation, then, that Responsive Ellipsis is subject to a verbal identity condition. Specifically, as all descriptive grammars note, the verb which precedes the ellipsis site must be identical to the verb of the antecedent clause. The examples in (60) are all thoroughly ungrammatical because they fail to meet this condition:

(60)   a.   *Níor cheannaigh mé teach ariamh, ach dhíol.
           nior buy   I   house ever   but sold
           'I never bought a house, but I sold one.'

      b.   *Cé   gur   mhol an bainisteoir na himreoirí inné,
           although C-[PAST] praise the manager   the players   yesterday,
           cháin   inniu.
           criticized today
           'Although the manager praised the players yesterday, he criticized them today.'

      c.   *Níor   éist   sí   le-n-a   cuid   daltái ach labhair.
           NEG-PAST listen she with-her portion pupils but spoke
           'She didn't listen to her pupils but she spoke to them'

      d.   *Cháin   sé é   féin,   ach ag an am   chéanna chosain.
           criticized he him [REFL] but at the time same   defended

'He criticized himself, but at the same time he defended himself.'

It is important to note that speakers have no difficulty whatever in calculating what these ungrammatical ellipses ought to mean. In all of the examples of (60), the relevant inferential steps are straightforward and salient. Despite that fact, the examples remain firmly and clearly ill-formed.

Similar effects have been documented for Hebrew (Goldberg (2002, 2005)) and for Russian (Gribanova (2010)). There is an important confound, however, in the case of Hebrew and Russian, which does not have to be dealt with in Irish. Hebrew and Russian both allow object-drop fairly freely, which means that in assessing the relevant examples (a subject, followed by an inflected verb, followed by silence where that verb's argument ought to be), considerable care has to be taken to make sure that the relevant examples are correctly analyzed as involving ellipsis of a fairly large constituent, rather than simply object drop. The needed precautions can be taken, and Goldberg and Gribanova are scupulous about taking them, but the arguments can be subtle. By way of contrast, Irish does not tolerate object drop at all, and so that alternative is simply not available. In Irish we are very clearly dealing with true ellipsis when we deal with 'responsive forms' of the verb.

Why should the verb, then, although apparently outside the ellipsis site, play a central role in the computation of the identity condition on Responsive Ellipsis? Of course we have an answer to this question when we consider the more articulated structure in (61), which we have assumed for this kind of ellipsis:

(61)
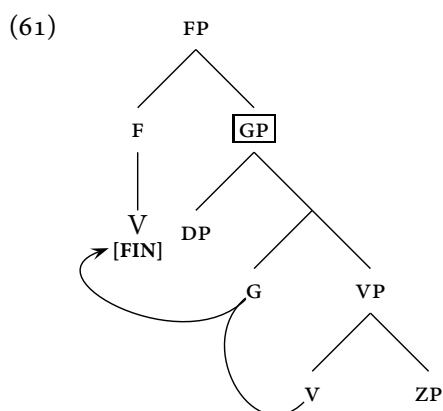
In (61), the verbal stem is in fact within the ellipsis-site. Given this, it is unsurprising that there should be a verbal identity condition. The verbal stem cannot differ from the verb of the antecedent anymore than it could in the case of English VP ellipsis. We thus have strong evidence for another of the central empirical claims of (1)—the

claim that the verb, despite being outside GP for purposes of pronunciation, heads a VP in syntactic representation, the representation relevant for calculating identity for ellipsis.

We can go further. It is also a consequence of (1) that other subparts of the inflected verb (notably the specification of Tense and finiteness) must be outside the ellipsis site at all levels of representation. Since these elements are never within the ellipsis site, our expectation will be that the verbal identity condition will not extend to them. Our expectation, in other words, will be that the requirement of identity will hold only for the verbal stem, not for other properties of the inflected verb such as tense, finiteness, or agreement features. This expectation is correct, as illustrated in the examples of (62), which indicate that while identity of the verbal stem is required, the two verbs (in the antecedent and in the ellipsis site) may differ in numerous other ways:

(62) a. Chuireadh   sé as do Bhreandán dul   ar cuairt chuici
          put [**PAST-HABIT**] it out to   go [–**FIN**] on visit to-her
          agus is   annamh a théadh.
          and **COP[PRES]** rare   **C** go [**PAST-HABIT**]
          'It bothered Breandán to go to visit her and he would seldom go.'   **IA**
          333
      b. ní   theastaíonn sin uaim.   Cén fáth   a dteastódh?
          NEG wants   that from-me what reason **C** want [**COND**]
          'I won't want that. Why would I?'   **FF** 7
      c. Ní labharfaidh mé focal amháin agus má labhrann   is orm
          NEG speak [**FUT**] I   word one   and if   speak [**PRES**] is on-me
          féin   a bheas   an locht
          [**REFL**] **C** be [**FUT**] the fault
           'I won't speak a word, and if I do, the fault is mine.'   **OTA** 159
      d. Gabh   ar mo dhroim anseo. Chuaigh.
          go [**IMPV**] on my back   here go [**PAST**]
          'Get up here on my back. He did.'   **CD** 242

Nonfinite forms may antecede finite forms ((62a)); present tense forms may antecede conditional forms ((62b)); future tense forms may antecede present tense forms ((62c)); imperative forms may antecede finite past tense forms ((62d)) and so on. As far as I know, every combination of tense, mood, force and finiteness is possible on the verb of the antecedent clause and the verb of the ellipsis site, as long as the requirement is observed that the two stems be identical.

The split one sees in Responsive Ellipsis between which features count or do not

count for establishing identity (and therefore deletability) is exactly the split between what features are expressed syntactically in the inflectional layer and what features are expressed on the verbal stem. This is a striking result, it seems to me, and offers striking confirmation for the overall view of clausal structure provided by (1) and the distributed view of verbal syntax that is an important part of it. There is no reason why the verbal identity requirement should hold if the verb were entirely external to the ellipsis site.

This interpretation of the facts is given additional force when the ellipsis type found in Irish, Hebrew, and Russian is contrasted with an apparently similar ellipsis pattern found in a number of East Asian languages, including at least Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. The Japanese facts have been the focus of particularly close and productive study in recent years (Otani & Whitman (1991), Hoji (1998), Oku (1998), Kim (1999), Saito (2004, 2007), Takahashi (2006, 2008a,b, 2009)). A case like (63) is superficially very similar to Verb Standing VP Ellipsis as found in Hebrew or Russian:

(63)   a.   Taroo-wa   zibun-no hahaooya-no sonkeisiteiru.
            Taroo-TOP self-GEN   mother-ACC   respect
            'Taroo respects self's mother.'
       b.   Ken-mo   [   ] sonkeisiteiru
            Ken-also   respect
            'Ken also respects (self's mother).'

This was in fact the interpretation offered by Otani & Whitman (1991). However as work on the topic has proceeded, it has become clear that this ellipsis process targets a smaller domain than VP in such cases. The current consensus is rather that the missing object argument of (63b) reflects ellipsis of the internal argument of the verb *sonkeisiteiru*.[8] This kind of ellipsis has as a consequence come to be known as 'Argument Ellipsis' and the important point for our purposes here is that it very clearly involves ellipsis of selected arguments of v, rather than ellipsis of some larger constituent including the verb. It is significant, then, that Argument Ellipsis in Japanese imposes no verbal identity condition, as shown, for example, by (64) (from Takahashi (2009)):

(64)   Taroo-wa zibun-o semete-ga   Ken-wa [   ]   kabatta.
       Taroo-TOP self-ACC blamed-while Ken-TOP   defended
       'While Taroo blamed self, Ken defended (self).'

We can compare (64) with the impossible Irish example in (65) (repeated from

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[8]On the so-called 'sloppy' interpretation of the reflexive possessor at least.

(60d)):

(65)   *Cháin   sé é   féin, ach ag an am   chéanna chosain.
         criticized he him [REFL] but at the time same   defended
         'He criticized himself, but at the same time he defended himself.'

Note the correlation: when the domain of ellipsis is clearly smaller than VP (including only phrases selected by v) and therefore excludes v, there is no verbal identity requirement; when the domain of ellipsis includes VP (as in Irish, Hebrew, and Russian) a verbal identity requirement is observed. But it is not a requirement of absolute identity. In these languages, elements of the inflectional layer (though expressed morphologically on the finite verb) are not subject to any identity requirement. Given (1) and the larger network of assumptions of which it is a part, these patterns fall into place, since in syntactic terms the material irrelevant for the computation of identity is outside the syntactic object targeted for elision.

These observations, especially in typological perspective, provide strong confirmation for the 'second implication' of (1), since it is exactly the claim that the post-verbal constituent in (6) contains an instance of v that lets us understand both the verbal identity condition and the limits on that condition.

Immovability Redux

These observations will also help us resolve the un-answered question of the previous section, which was this: if the post-verbal constituent of (6) is real, why should it be immovable? The example which illustrated that immovability was the cleft example in (58). But there is an important sense in which that example, as it was presented in (58), is inaccurate. The discussion of the previous section has provided us with reason to believe that the real representation for this and similar examples should be rather (66):

(66)   *Eoghan beir an duais do Chiarán a bhéarfaidh [   ].
         $\sqrt{\text{give}}$ the prize to   C give [FUT]   [   ]
         'It's Eoghan the prize to Ciarán that will give.

That is, the fronted constituent of (58) in fact will contain an occurrence of the bare verbal stem (represented in (66) as *beir*) out of which the inflected form *bhéarfaidh* is constructed. So given the general framework defined by (1), our actual task is to understand why (66) should be impossible. Obvious possibilities arise at this point, but as an important preliminary I want to explore certain facts which lead to the conclusion that the constituent which fails to move in (66) may in fact be moved

under the right circumstances.

Parenthetical as-clauses

Potts (2002) explores the syntax of parenthetical *as*–clauses in English, of the type seen in (67):

(67) a. I am, as I'm sure ⏑ is all too obvious, very nervous.
      b. We should resign right away, as I'm sure you'll agree ⏑ .

The examples in (67) involve a CP gap, but cases in which there is a VP-sized gap also occur freely:

(68) a. He arrived on time, as I had said he would [VP ⏑].
      b. I believe, as do all my friends [VP ⏑], that war is now inevitable.
      c. As you predicted we might [⏑], we have had some trouble with the drain.

The examples in (68) superficially resemble cases of VP Ellipsis, but Potts shows clearly that both types of parenthetical in fact involve movement rather than ellipsis. The type in (67) involves Ā-movement of a CP-constituent, while the type in (68) involves Ā-movement of a VP or VP-like constituent. What they have in common, according to Potts (2002), is the binding of a variable of propositional type in the position of the gap. The analysis is thus as roughly sketched in (69) for the VP-gap cases of (68):

(69) [PP *as* [CP OP$_j$ [TP DP Aux [VP ⏑$_j$]]]]

Potts shows that such constructions are very widely attested among languages of the world, and, unsurprisingly therefore, they also appear in Irish. In fact, both sub-cases are found in Irish. They are introduced by the preposition *mar* ('like', 'as') or in some dialects, by the complex preposition *fé mar*. The analog of the VP-cases is illustrated in (70):

(70) a. Chuaidh se 'un an aonaigh mar a dubhairt sé a rachadh
          go [**PAST**] he to the fair   as C said   he C go [**COND**]
          'He went to the fair as he had said he would.'   OS 29
      b. thainig sí fé mar a duirt sí   a thiocfadh
          came   she as   C said she C come [**COND**]
          'she came, as she had said she would'   LG 185

    c.   Bhí lá galánta ann mar a thuar   Proinnsíos a bheadh.
        was day beautiful in-it as   C predicted   C be [COND]
        'It was a beautiful day, as Proinnsíos had predicted it would be.'   ST
        89

The general form of such examples is that seen in (71):

(71) $[_{PP}$ *mar* $[_{CP}$ OP$_j$ aL $[_{TP}$ $\underset{[\text{FIN}]}{\text{V}}$ $[$ $_{-j}$ $]]]]$

There are two things that we can be certain of with respect to the construction ex-emplified in (70):

1. The missing constituent in (70) is the same constituent which is missing in the Responsive Ellipsis construction discussed earlier. In both cases, the clause is reduced to a single finite verb. Furthermore, the material that can be 'stranded' in both cases (high attaching adverbs for the most part) is the same:

    (72)   Bhí   cuid   mhór fidiléirí   ann, mar a bhíonn
            be [PAST] portion big   fiddle-players in-it as   C be [PRES-HABIT]
            i gcónaí.
            always
            'There were a lot of fiddle-players there, as there always are.'

    (73)   Bhí   cuid   mhór fidiléirí   ann. Nach
            be [PAST] portion big   fiddle-players in-it NEG INTERR C
            mbíonn   i gcónaí?
            be [PRES-HABIT] always
            'There were a lot of fiddle-players there. Aren't there always?'

2. But the gap in (70) is created by movement. Notice the characteristic mor-phosyntactic signature of WH-movement in Irish in (70)—the complemen-tizer *aL*, with the associated and much-studied successive-cyclic effect (see McCloskey (2001b, 2002) and references cited there). Each clause which con-tains the gap but not its ultimate binder must be introduced by *aL*, as seen in all three examples of (70). That is, the preposition *mar* in this use l-selects CP headed by the complementizer which is in Irish the unambiguous and con-stant marker of an application of Ā-movement—the element conventionally represented as *aL*.

But the constituent which is elided in Responsive Ellipsis is just the immovable con-stituent of (58) and (66). It follows, then, that the examples of (70) must be un-derstood as being derived by way of movement of the post-verbal constituent with

which we have been concerned throughout—the boxed constituent of (6), GP of (1).

This conclusion is important for our discussion in two ways. First, it provides further support for the general claim that the line of analysis schematized in (1) is telling us something real about the way that this language works.

But it also imposes an intellectual obligation—we need to understand why movement of the post-verbal constituent succeeds in (70) but fails in (58)/(66).

The only apparent difference between (58) and (70) is that the fronted phrase is pronounced in the ungrammatical case (58), but unpronounced in the grammatical case (70). The difference between them, then, must turn on whether or not the fronted phrase can be processed by the morphophonological system of the language.

Following WH-movement in a case like (58), there will be two instances of the post-verbal constituent GP, one in the higher position (Spec,CP), one in the lower position. Both will contain an occurrence of a verbal stem. The morphophonological composition of that element will require that it merge with T by way of head-raising (to form a finite verb). This will be routinely possible for the lower instance of the verbal stem, which raises, as usual, to amalgamate with T. But it will be impossible for the higher (since there is no T within accessible reach). Thus, the impossibility of (58). It contains a syntactic object which the morphophonological system of the language has no way to process.[9] The 'ugly object' trapped within the fronted instance of GP is a morphological orphan (something which cannot be realized given the lexical and morphological resources of the language). Hence the profound ungrammaticality of (58).[10]

Why is (70) different? In this case the higher verb-stem is contained within a constituent which must, for independent reasons, be deleted (or never linearized or never realized). Since no articulation of the verbal stem is required, there is no problem for the morphophonology to solve. Hence the possibility of (70).

If these speculations are on the right track there is an important connection to be made with work by Idan Landau and others on VP-fronting, partial VP-fronting,

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[9]To be more precise: (58) is not derivable since the only structure that string could correspond to is one in which the fronted phrase contains a verb (root)—not indicated in (58), but necessarily present. Hence the string in (58) does not correspond to anything generable by the grammar—either because the fronted string is not a possible constituent of the language, or else because the verb has been deleted illegitimately.

[10]It seems to follow, then, that the constituency tests of our earlier discusssion must not involve movement to a position which would leave an orphaned verbal stem in a position inaccessible to T. This conclusion is most easily secured if Right Node Raising in particular does not involve rightward movement. That is, the considerations here seem to favor ellipsis or multi-dominance treatments of Right Node Raising rather than movement–based treatments. This is, of course, a matter of active current debate. For relevant discussion see McCloskey (1986), Wilder (1997), Hartmann (2000), Abels (2004), Sabbagh (2007), Ha (2008), Bachrach & Katzir (2009).

and the predicate cleft construction found in many languages. Landau (2006; 2007) (see also Abels (2004)) argues that languages differ one from another in whether or not they possess the means to provide a morphophonological realization for the kinds of stranded verbal roots that we have appealed to here as an explanation for the impossibility of (66). Languages which possess the means to realize such roots allow doubling of the kind seen in the Hebrew example of (74):

(74)   limsor   et   ha-mismaxim, hu masar la-memunin   alav.
        to-hand **ACC** the-documents he handed to-the-superiors on-him
        'Hand the documents to his superiors he did.'   (Landau, 2007, 127)

There are two instance of the main verb in (74)—a fully inflected form in the lower position (formed by head-movement out of vp), and a bare form within the fronted vp. The typology proposed by Landau provides a better understanding of these kinds of facts and patterns than has been available previously and let us place the observations made here in a broader typological context. If the account of (58),(66) developed here is roughly right, then we say that within the terms of the typoloogy proposed by Landau, Irish is a language which lacks the means to realize bare verbal roots. Hence the impossibility of (58), (66) and the possibility of (70).[11]

Conclusion

At this point, many important theoretical issues demand attention. Foremost among those is the status of the trace of head-movement. Our account of the contrasts discussed in the previous section depends on the view that such traces must be different from the traces left by phrasal movement. In effect, for that account to stand, traces of head-movement must not be available for 'rebinding' although the traces left by phrasal movement are. Our account of the verbal identity condition depends on this assumption. There are ways to ensure this result, of course. One could hold, with Chomsky (2000; 2001), that head movement is post-syntactic, in which case, as far as the syntax is concerned, there would be no such thing as a verbal trace and the results considered here would be secure. There are difficulties with maintaining this position, though, and one would have to also reckon with the recent arguments of Hartman (2010) that traces of all types (including traces of head-movement) receive

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[11]See Nakamura (2009) for an interesting extension of these observations and a different interpretation, based on an earlier and informal presentation of this material. I cannot undertake a full comparison here between the account developed here and the very interesting alternative developed by Nakamura.

a uniform interpretation as bound variables and so should give rise to rebinding effects.

Closely related to the latter issue is an intricate series of questions having to do with the timing of head movement in relation to processes of elision and linearization; to allow Verb Stranding VP Ellipsis and the *mar*-parentheticals of the final section, head movement must be able to take place from what will become an ellipsis site (in the case of Responsive Ellipsis) and what will be the trace of ā-movement (in the case of the *mar*-parentheticals).

Finally, a great deal of important work remains to be done in fleshing out the schematic analysis of (1). The success or failure of the analytical proposals made here will ultimately depend on the details of how we identify the projections of the inflectional layer in Irish, how they interact with the processes which fix the position of the subject and of the verb, and how they interact with ellipsis and movement processes.[12]

All of this important work must wait for another occasion. In the meantime, I hope to have done a different kind of work here. I have tried to make the case that if we stand back a little and assess where we are, then the general line of analysis being pursued in much recent work (a line largely forced by theoretical commitment), emerges as having gone beyond theoretical tail-chasing and as having yielded real insight into some of the idiosyncrasies and particulars of the language.

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[12]For what it's worth, the proposals in McCloskey (1996b) guarantee the right results, I believe.

Appendix

The following are the sources from which attested examples have been cited.

ABFS: *An Baile i bhFad Siar*, Domhnall Mac an tSithigh

ACS: *Ag Coimeád na Síochána*, Páid Ó Súilleabháin

AGL: *An Gleann agus a Raibh Ann*, Séamus Ó Maolchathaigh

AGMTS: *Ar Gach Maoilinn Tá Síocháin*, Pádraig Ó Cíobháin

BOM: *Bloghanna Ón mBlascaod*, Tomás Ó Criomhthain

CCC: *Cnuasach Céad Conlach*, Seán Bán Mac Meanman.

CD: *Cith is Dealán*, Séamus Ó Grianna

CDC: *Castar na Daoine ar a Chéile, Scríbhinní Mháire 1*, Séamus Ó Grianna, eag. Nollaig Mac Congail

CF: *Cois Fharraige Le Mo Linnse*, Seán Ó Conghaile

CTP: *Cuimhne an tSeanpháiste*, Micheál Breatnach

DAD: *Dóchas agus Duainéis*, Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin

DNM: *Dinnseanchas na mBlascaodaí*, Tomás Ó Criomhthain (eagrán 1999)

FF: *Fonn na Fola*, Beairtle Ó Conaire

G: *Greenhorn*, Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé

GBR: *Gort Broc*, ed. Pádraig Ó Murchú

GLL: *An Gealas i Lár na Léithe*, Pádraig Ó Cíobháin

GOG: *Glórtha ón Ghorta: Béaloideas na Gaeilge agus an Gorta Mór*, Cathal Póirtéir

LAOCHAS: *Laochas*, Séamas Ó Searcaigh

LA: *Lá de na Laethanta*, Micí Sheáin Néill Ó Baoill

LCS: *Le Clap-Sholus*, Séamas Ó Grianna

LDS: *Lá Dár Saol*, Seán Ó Criomhthain

LG: *Le Gealaigh*, Pádraig Ó Cíobháin

OCF: *Ó Cadhain i bhFeasta*, eag. Seán Ó Laighin

ODR2: *Ó Donnbháin Rossa, Cuid a Dó*, Seán Ó Lúing

ONH: *Ór na hAitinne*, Tomás Bairéad

OS: *Oíche Shamhraidh agus Scéalta Eile*, Séamas Ó Grianna

OTA: *Ón tSeanam Anall, Scéalta Mhicí Bháin Uí Bheirn*, ed. Mícheál Mac Giolla Easbuic

RMS: *Rotha Mór an tSaoil*, Micí Mac Gabhann

RNG: *Raidio na Gaeltachta*

S: *Séadna*, An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire

SAB: *Seanchas Annie Bhán*, ed. Gordon W. MacLennan

SOH: *Seosamh Ó hÉanaí, Nár Fhágha Mé Bás Choíche*, Liam Mac Con Iomaire

SRNF: *Seanchas Rann na Feirste*, Maelsheachlainn Mac Cionaoith

ST: *An Sean-Teach*, Séamas Ó Grianna
STL: *Seanchas Thomáis Laighléis*, ed. Tomás de Bhaldraithe
T: *Taidhgín*, Tomás Ó Duinnshléibhe
TD: *Toraigh na dTonn*, Eoghan Ó Colm
U: *Unaga*, translated by Eoghan Ó Neachtain, Galway
UMI: *Uaill-Mhian Iúdaigh*, Roy Bridges, trans Tadhg Ó Rabhartaigh

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