

--“What do you think of ellipsis?” --“Adore!”:
Russian verb-stranding, VP ellipsis, and predication

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In Russian it is possible for (transitive) verbs to appear without their obligatory object(s) in certain discourse contexts. An example is given in (1) (from Gribanova 2009, 2010):

- 1) A. --Ty poznakomil Mašu s Petej?
you [introduced Masha with Petya]
“Did you introduce Masha to Petya?”
- B. --Konečno, **poznakomil** Ø
Of course **introduced** Ø
“Of course, (I) introduced [Masha to Petya]”

Gribanova (2009, 2010) analyzes such Russian constructions as “Verb-stranding *v*P ellipsis” (VSVE), following similar analyses of Hebrew, Irish and other languages (Goldberg 2006). On Gribanova’s account, the Russian verb (indicated in bold) raises to an AspP head located above *v*P, after which the entire *v*P elides, stranding V as the only survivor of *v*P. (Ø indicates the claimed *v*P ellipsis site)

In this talk, I argue against the specific claim that Russian has VSVE, while maintaining the *spirit* of Gribanova’s analysis that there are two distinct processes available in Russian to allow for missing objects, one an entirely discourse-licensed process (a form of discourse-licensed Argument Drop), and the other a true syntactic process of ellipsis (requiring a linguistic antecedent). Crucially, however, I show that the ellipsis in V-stranding constructions is not full *v*P-ellipsis, as argued by Gribanova, (which Kazenin 2006 shows Russian does allow in other contexts), but ellipsis of something smaller than *v*P. In particular, I contrast 2 possibilities, siding with the latter: (i) that these cases instantiate NP/DP ellipsis within VP and (ii) that these cases instantiate ellipsis of the (lexical) complement of Pred⁰ (Bowers 1993), here VP (and crucially not *v*P), but in other instances AP, PP, or NP/DP.

References:

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