On an undocumented type of predicate ellipsis in Spanish and its consequences for the theory of ellipsis licensing*

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Abstract

In this paper, we introduce and discuss a type of ellipsis in Spanish, undocumented in the previous literature, which we will refer to as *Predicate Phrase Ellipsis* (PredP-Ellipsis), and its consequences for the theory of ellipsis licensing. PredP-Ellipsis is a type of ellipsis in which the complement of a copular verb undergoes deletion, whenever there is contrastive focus (typically encoded in Polarity) involved in the sentence. We provide

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an account for why this type of ellipsis is allowed in a language that lacks lower ellipses in the verbal domain (such as vP-Ellipsis), and implement our proposal by introducing an [E]-feature which is typically licensed when it enters into an Agree relation with a Polarity head higher in the structure.

Keywords: ellipsis; verbal ellipsis; PredP-Ellipsis; focus; polarity; Spanish

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1   Introduction

In this paper, we will discuss a type of ellipsis in Spanish, undocumented in the previous literature, which we will refer to as *Predicate Phrase Ellipsis* (PredP-Ellipsis), and its consequences for the theory of ellipsis licensing. In short, PredP-Ellipsis, exemplified in (1), is a type of ellipsis in which the complement of a copular verb undergoes deletion, whenever there is (typically, polarity) focus in the sentence (indicated with SMALL CAPS in the examples throughout these pages):

(1) A: ¿Estás   feliz?
        are.2SG happy
        'Are you happy?'

    B: Sí, ESTOY.
        yes am
        'Yes, I am.'

As the following example shows, when there is no (polarity) focus, PredP-Ellipsis becomes ungrammatical:[1]

(2) *Sonia está feliz   y   Paula también está.
       Sonia is   happy and Paula also   is
     Intended: 'Sonia is happy and Paula is, too.'

Importantly, the ellipsis illustrated in (1) is not an instance of vP-Ellipsis. As it is well-known, Spanish, as most Romance languages, lacks this latter type of ellipsis (see Zagona 1982, 1988, Lobeck 1995 and, more recently, Saab 2021, 2022):

(3) A: ¿Habías   estado feliz?
          had.2SG been   happy?
        'Had you been happy?'

    B: *Sí, HABÍA.
          yes had.1SG
        Intended: 'Yes, I had.'

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[1] The role of polarity focus in the licensing of ellipsis has been acknowledged for other languages and other types of sentential ellipsis (see liptak2012, liptak2013; martins1994, martins2013, martins2016; costaetal2012; Gribanova2013, Gribanova2017; and vicente2006; among others). As we will show, polarity focus is the typical trigger of PredP-Ellipsis, but there are also other contrastive elements that are able to trigger PredP-Ellipsis, some of which will be discussed below.
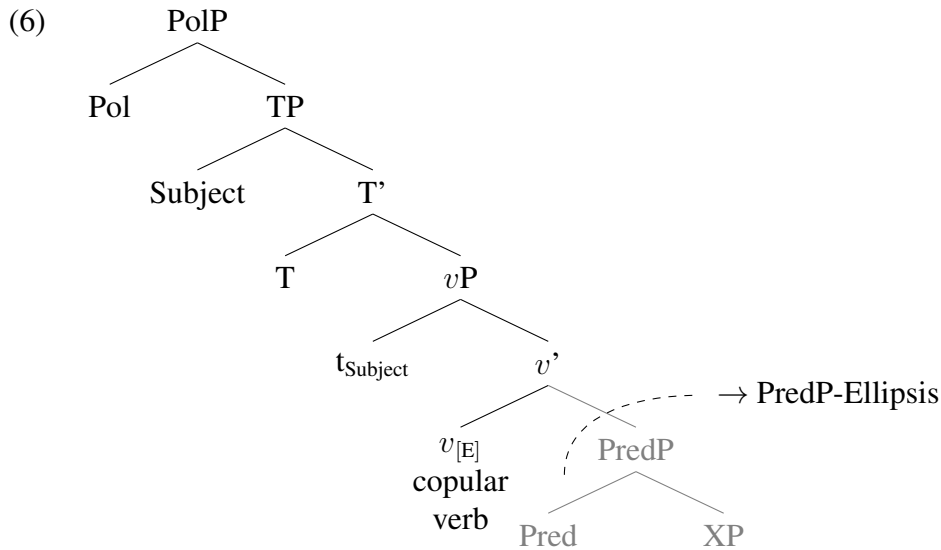
More generally, Spanish lacks Aux-Stranding or V-Stranding VP-Ellipsis, as the examples (4) and (5) demonstrate:

(4)   A: ¿Habías   comprado el   libro?
            had.2SG bought   the book
            'Had you bought the book?'

      B: *Sí, HABÍA.
            yes had.1SG
            Intended: 'Yes, I had.'

(5)   A: ¿Le   diste   el   libro?
            CL.3SG.DAT gave.you the book
            'Did you gave her/him the book?'

      B: *Sí, DÍ.
            yes gave.1SG
            Intended: 'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I gave.')

In this respect, we will argue that PredP-Ellipsis targets a constituent below vP, namely, a Predicate Phrase (PredP).[2] More concretely, a sentence containing an elided PredP would look as follows, where the [E]-feature on v is Merchant's (2001) licensing feature (more on this below):[3]

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[2]As far as we know, the term *PredP* is first introduced by Bowers (1993) in his extensive study on the syntax of predication. The use of PredP we make here slightly differs from Bowers, for whom PredP is selected both by main I(nflection) and by some Vs. Here, we take a more restricted stance according to which only a subclass of verbs takes PredP as their complement. It seems that this selection is mainly syntactic and cannot be entirely reduced to semantic factors, since, as we will show below, while true copular verbs select PredP, the so-called pseudo-copular ones do not. In any case, the assumption that there is a Pred head mediating the relation between subjects and APs/NPs in copular constructions is not decisive. On our analysis, the copular verb and its interaction with the Polarity head are the triggers of ellipsis. In this regard, our assumption of PredP is mainly motivated by *lo*-replacement (see Section 2.1), not by ellipsis *per se*. Put differently, if Matushansky (2019) is right, and all PredP can (and must) be dispensed with, our analysis would remain essentially unaltered. For instance, our analysis is compatible with the hypothesis that copular verbs take AP and NP complements directly or with having a VP complement, the true target of *lo*-replacement, instead of a Pred head. We thanks an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this question.

[3]We follow Laka (1990) in that PolP (ΣP, in her account) is generated above the TP (IP, in her account) in Spanish. We also follow Holmberg (2016) and others in the idea that there is more than one Polarity head in the functional spine. It seems clear that in Spanish, for instance, emphatic affirmation is located above sentential polarity, as shown by their co-occurrence in cases like *sí que no voy* (lit. 'yes that not go.1SG'). Here, we posit that the Pol head that licenses PredP-Ellipsis is the emphatic one, which dominates Tense and, also, the sentential Polarity head (not represented in our trees for simplification).

(6)

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              PolP
            /      \
          Pol       TP
                  /     \
             Subject     T'
                       /    \
                      T      vP
                           /    \
                     t_Subject    v'
                                /    \
                            v_[E]     PredP  ----  → PredP-Ellipsis
                           copular    /    \
                            verb    Pred     XP
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If this analysis is on the right track, we will have demonstrated the need for enriching the taxonomy of Spanish ellipses in the verbal domain, but more importantly, for answering a set of relevant questions mainly regarding the nature of ellipsis licensing. Particularly important for our main goals here is the question of why this sort of lower ellipsis is allowed in a language that, generally, does not allow lower ellipses in the verbal domain. As most languages (even beyond Romance), Spanish typically licenses ellipsis in the inflectional domain, namely, TP-Ellipses of different sorts. In the following examples, we illustrate this with cases of TP-Ellipsis with left dislocated remnants, sluicing, and fragment answers respectively (see Saab 2008 and Stigliano 2022 for more detailed studies of sentential ellipsis in Spanish):

(7) A   Sonia la   vi,   pero a   Paula no.
     DOM Sonia CL.FEM.SG.ACC saw.1SG but DOM Paula not
     'Sonia, I saw her but not Paula.'

(8) Sonia vio a   alguien, pero no sé   a   quién.
     Sonia saw DOM someone but   not know.1SG DOM who
     'Sonia saw someone but I don't know who.'

(9) A: ¿A   quién viste?
         DOM who   saw.2SG
         'Who did you see?'

     B: A   Paula.
         DOM Paula
         'Paula.'

Even with non-trivial differences among each of these elliptical sentences, all involve the same portion of elided structure, that is, the TP:

(10)

```
                    CP
              ┌──────┴──────┐
         XP_REMNANT         C'
                      ┌──────┴──────┐
                   C_[E]           TP  ----→ TP-Ellipsis
                            ┌────────┴────────┐
                            T                vP
                                     ┌────────┴────────┐
                                  Subject             v'
                                              ┌────────┴────────┐
                                              v                 VP
                                                         ┌───────┴───────┐
                                                         V              t_XP
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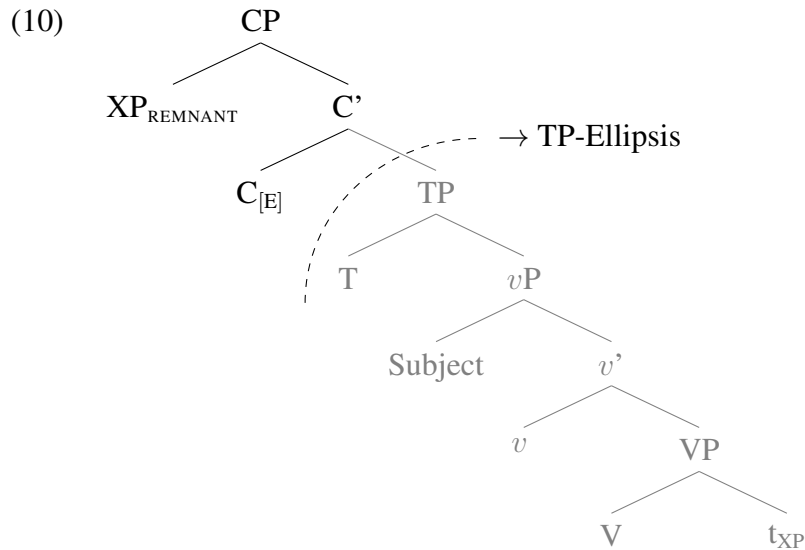
Under Merchant's approach to ellipsis licensing, the absence of vP-ellipsis in Spanish would correlate with the absence of a v head with the relevant licensing feature. In contrast, as illustrated in the trees in (6) and (10), both TP-Ellipsis and PredP-Ellipsis would be licensed by the active presence of such a licensing feature on T and on the copular verb, respectively. However, as we will see, PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish correlates with the possibility of PredP-fronting, whereas absence of vP-Ellipsis correlates with absence of vP-fronting. The [E]-feature approach simply misses this generalization. In this regard, we will suggest that the active presence of an [E] feature is not a sufficient condition and, consequently, we will adopt the recent approach in Saab (2022), according to which the availability of ellipsis in a given language is also constrained by morphological factors.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, we describe the main properties and the syntactic distribution of PredP-Ellipsis. As we will see, among the predicates that select small clauses in Spanish, true copular verbs are unique in their availability to license PredP-Ellipsis. We argue that this correlates with another relevant property of copular verbs: *lo*-replacement. In addition, classical tests for detecting ellipsis help us to conclusively prove the elliptical nature of examples like (1). In Section 3, we introduce PredP-Ellipsis into the debate regarding the verbal ellipsis parameter and show that an implementation of the observed intra and cross-linguistic distribution of ellipsis in the sentential domain in terms of the [E]-feature domain misses the important generalization that there is a correlation between the availability to elide any XP and the availability to move it. Crucially, in Spanish, vPs cannot elide and cannot move either, but PredPs can. We then argue that the [E]-feature is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for ellipsis licensing; there are also well-formedness conditions playing a crucial role in ellipsis licensing at PF. In Section 4, we implement a concrete analysis to derive and license PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish, based on the presence of an [E]-feature on v which must enter into an Agree relation with a Pol head (or other functional heads) higher in the structure. Finally, in Section 5, we close this study by summarizing our main results and briefly discussing some general empirical and theoretical consequences within and beyond Spanish.

2   Properties of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish

In this section, we describe the properties of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. First, we distinguish between true copular verbs and pseudo-copular verbs, showing that PredP-Ellipsis is only available with the former, not the latter. Second, we show that PredP-Ellipsis can target any complement of a (true) copular verb, such as Adjetival Phrases (APs) or Noun Phrases (NPs). Third, we provide evidence for our claim that PredP-Ellipsis is typically licensed when some type of polarity focus is present in the sentence. Fourth, we provide evidence that PredP-Ellipsis is indeed an elliptical construction; this evidence mainly comes from extraction tests and missing antecedents. Finally, we demonstrate that PredP-Ellipsis doesn't require verbal identity with its verbal copular correlate in the antecedent, supporting our claim that this type of elliptical construction targets a very low portion of verbal structure.

2.1   Copular vs. pseudo-copular verbs

As we mentioned above, PredP-Ellipsis is a type of ellipsis in which the complement of a copular verb undergoes deletion, whenever there is (polarity) focus involved in the structure. PredP-Ellipsis targets the complements of *true copular verbs*, and the three true copular verbs in Spanish indeed allow for PredP-Ellipsis, as shown in (11B) for the verb *ser* ('to be$_{\text{individual level}}$'), in (12B) for the verb *estar* ('to be$_{\text{stage level}}$'), and in (13B) for the verb *parecer* ('to seem/look like'):

(11) A: ¿Sos   feliz?
          are.2SG happy
          'Are you happy?'

      B: Sí, SOY.
          yes am
          'Yes, I am.'

(12) A: ¿Estás   feliz?
          are.2SG happy
          'Are you happy?'

      B: Sí, ESTOY.
          yes am
          'Yes, I am.'

(13) A: ¿Parezco   feliz?
          seem.1SG happy
          'Do I seem happy?'

      B: Sí, PARECÉS.
          yes seem.2SG
          'Yes, you do.' (lit. 'Yes, you seem.')

Importantly, true copular predicates are those that allow *lo*-replacement ('it'), as the following examples illustrate:

(14) A: ¿Sos   feliz?
           are.2SG happy
           'Are you happy?'

      B: Sí, lo SOY.
           yes it am
           'Yes, I am.'

(15) A: ¿Estás   feliz?
           are.2SG happy
           'Are you happy?'

      B: Sí, lo ESTOY.
           yes it am
           'Yes, I am.'

(16) A: ¿Parezco   feliz?
           seem.1SG happy
           'Do I seem happy?'

      B: Sí, lo PARECÉS.
           yes it seem.2SG
           'Yes, you do.' (lit. 'Yes, you seem it.')

The availability of *lo*-replacement distinguishes true copular verbs from pseudo-copular verbs such as *ponerse colorado* ('to blush') or *volverse loco* ('to go mad'), which don't allow *lo*-replacement:

(17) A: ¿Te   pusiste   colorado?
           CL.2SG became.2SG red
           'Did you blush?'

      B: *Sí, me   lo PUSE.
            yes CL.1SG it became.1SG
           Intended:'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I became it.')

(18) A: ¿Te   volviste   loco?
           CL.2SG became.2SG crazy
           'Did you go mad?'

      B: *Sí, me   lo VOLVÍ.
            yes CL.1SG it became.1SG
           Intended: 'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I became it.')

If PredP-Ellipsis is only possible with true copular verbs, and true copular verbs are those that allow *lo*-replacement, we predict that PredP-Ellipsis won't be possible with pseudo-copular verbs. This prediction is borne out:

(19) A: ¿Te   pusiste   colorado?
           CL.2SG became.2SG red
           'Did you blush?'

      B: *Sí, me   PUSE.
            yes CL.1SG became.1SG
           Intended: 'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I became.')

(20)   A: ¿Te   volviste   loco?
              CL.2SG became.2SG crazy
              'Did you go mad?'
       B: *Sí, me   VOLVÍ.
              yes CL.1SG became.1SG
              Intended: 'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I became.')

Furthermore, other verbs that also select small clauses of the adjectival type, like *considerar* ('to consider') cannot license ellipsis of their small clause complements, regardless of the presence or absence of an ECM subject:

(21)   A: ¿Considerás   a   Sonia inteligente?
              consider.2SG DOM Sonia intelligent
              'Do you consider Sonia intelligent?'
       B: *Sí, (la)   considero.
              yes CL.FEM.3SG.ACC consider.1SG
              Intended: 'Yes, I do.' (lit. 'Yes, I consider (her).')

Not surprisingly, like pseudocopular predicates, this type of ECM clauses does not allow *lo*-replacement:

(22)   A: ¿Considerás   a   Sonia inteligente?
              consider.2SG DOM Sonia intelligent
              'Do you consider Sonia intelligent?'
       B: *Sí, lo considero.
              yes it consider.1SG
              Intended: 'Yes, I do.' (lit. 'Yes, I consider (it).')

Further evidence that this type of ellipsis involves a true copular verb selecting a PredP comes from the fact that not all copulas or related auxiliaries license this construction. As the following example shows, a passive auxiliary cannot occur as a remnant:

(23)   A: ¿Fuiste   reprimido por la policía?
              were.2SG repressed by the police
              'Were you repressed by the police?'
       B: *Sí, FUI
              yes was.1SG
              Intended: 'Yes, I was.'

As expected, passives in Spanish are also incompatible with *lo*-replacement:

(24)   A: ¿Fuiste   reprimido por la policía?
              were.2SG repressed by the police
              'Were you repressed by the police?'
       B: *Sí, lo fui.
              yes it was.1SG
              Intended: 'Yes, I was.'

Finally, it is also worth-mentioning that the facts discussed in this section are clearly different from what Authier (2023) calls *l'être* anaphora (LEA) in French, in which a predicate variable *le* and copular *être* co-occur with PredP-Ellipsis:

(25) Mon compte a été activé, mais [le tien]$_i$ ne l'a pas encore été
    my account has been activated but the yours NEG CL-has not yet been
    ⟨$_{VP}$ ~~activé~~ ~~t$_i$~~⟩.
        activated
    'My account has been activated, but yours hasn't yet.'

                                            (adapted from authier23, ex. (25))

Authier convincingly shows that LEA cannot be modeled as a deep anaphora, since, among other crucial facts, it allows for extraction out of it:

(26) a. Ce livre a été prêté à quelqu'un, mais je ne peux pas vous dire à
        this book has been loaned to someone but I NEG can not you tell to
        qui il l'a été.
        whom it CL-has been
        'This book was loaned to someone, but I can't tell you who to.'
    b. La Légion d'honneur sera accordée à ceux à qui le prix Nobel
        the legion of-honor will-be awarded to those to whom the prize Nobel
        l'a été.
        CL-has been
        'The Legion of Honor will be awarded to those to whom the Nobel Prize was.'
                                            (adapted from Authier 2023, ex. (28))

As the example (24) illustrates, *lo*-replacement is impossible in analytical passive environments, and, as we will show in Section 2.4, sub-extraction out of *lo* is banned in Spanish, clearly indicating that there are non-trivial differences between PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish and French.[4]

To sum up, PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish is only possible with true copular verbs (such as *ser* 'to be', *estar* 'to be', and *parecer* 'to seem'), but not with pseudo-copular verbs (such as *ponerse colorado* 'to blush', or *volverse loco* 'to go mad') or ECM predicates that select adjectival small clauses (such as *considerar* 'to consider').

2.2 PredP-Ellipsis targets the complement of a copular verb

PredP-Ellipsis targets the complement of a copular verb; in our analysis, this would be a Predicate Phrase (PredP), which includes a Pred head and any complement of it. Put differently, Adjectival Phrases (APs) and Noun Phrases (NPs) are targeted by this elliptical operation, as they are complements of the Pred head, as shown in (27)-(28):

(27) A: ¿Es [$_{PredP}$ Pred [$_{AP}$ confiable]]?
        is   trustworthy
    'Is (s)he trustworthy?'

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[4]Further differences between the two languages are attested when it comes to evaluating the distribution of Spanish *hacerlo* ('to do it') and French *le-faire* ('to do it'). It seems that whereas in Spanish *hacerlo* behaves as a deep anaphora, it has an elliptical nature in French (see Saab 2010 for Spanish, and Authier 2023 for French).

B: Sí, ES.
    yes is
    'Yes, (s)he is.'

(28) A: ¿Sos   [PredP Pred [NP un buen amigo]]?
          are.2SG   a   good friend
          'Are you a good friend?'

     B: Sí, SOY.
         yes am
         'Yes, I am.'

In other words, this means that any category contained within a PredP gets deleted when PredP-Ellipsis applies, which in turn dispenses with the need for independent AP or NP-deletion operations.

   It should be pointed out that the verb *estar* ('to be') can also take PP complements, mainly, locative or commitative PPs, as shown below:

(29) a. Ana está en su casa.
          Ana is   in her home
          'Ana is at home.'

     b. Ana está con Sonia.
         Ana is   with Sonia
         'Ana is with Sonia.'

These uses of *estar* do not behave like true copular verbs regarding *lo*-replacement; indeed, they strongly reject it:

(30) a. *Ana está en su casa y   Paula también *lo* está.
           Ana is   in her home and Paula also   it is.
          Intended: 'Ana is at home and Paula is, too.'

     b. *Ana está con Sonia y   yo también *lo* estoy.
          Ana is   with Sonia and I   also   it am.
         Intended: 'Ana is with Sonia and I am, too.'

Yet, unlike pseudo-copular predicates, these PPs can remain implicit under the right conditions, as shown in (31) and (32):

(31) A: ¿Estás   [PP en tu   casa]?
          are.2SG   in your home
          'Are you at home?'

     B: Sí, ESTOY.
         yes am
         'Yes, I am.'

(32) A: ¿Estás   [PP con Sonia]?
          are.2SG   with Sonia
          'Are you with Sonia?'

     B: ?Sí, ESTOY.
          yes am
          'Yes, I am.'

The example in (31) with an implicit locative is more broadly accepted than the omission of the commitative PP in (32), which some speakers consider quite marginal. This is not too surprising in view of the fact that some locative complements can remain implicit even with non-copular predicates:

(33) A: ¿Fuiste   [_PP a tu   casa]?
          went.2SG   to your home
          'Did you go to your home?'

      B: Sí, FUI.
          yes went.1SG
          'Yes, I did.'

Therefore, it is not entirely clear that the implicit PPs in the examples above must be treated as cases of PredP-Ellipsis in the sense favored in this study. Absence of *lo*-replacement, the controversy around grammatical judgments, and the particular behavior of locative PPs with other type of predicates seem to indicate an alternative analysis, but we will leave the issue open for future research.

2.3   Polarity focus and emphatic polarity

Typically, PredP-Ellipsis requires some kind of polarity focus in the sentence, usually realized by stressing the copular verb. For instance, the following examples in (34)-(36) involve PredP-Ellipsis as response to a *yes/no* question:

(34) A: ¿Sos   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
          are.2SG happy   a good friend
          'Are you {happy | a good friend}?'

      B: Sí, SOY.
          yes am
          'Yes, I am.'

(35) A: ¿Estás   feliz?
          are.2SG happy
          'Are you happy?'

      B: Sí, ESTOY.
          yes am
          'Yes, I am.'

(36) A: ¿Parezco   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
          seem.1SG   happy   a good friend
          'Do I seem {happy | (like) a good friend}?'

      B: Sí, PARECÉS.
          yes seem.2SG
          'Yes, you do.' (lit. 'Yes, you seem.')

Importantly, PredP-Ellipsis is not restricted to affirmative answers. As the following examples show, negative replies are also possible. In these cases, the addition of a final negative particle *no* is strongly preferred by some speakers:[5]

(37)   A: ¿Sos   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
           are.2SG happy a   good friend
           'Are you {happy | a good friend}?'

       B: No, no SOY(, no).
           no not am   no
           'No, I am not.'

(38)   A: ¿Estás   feliz?
           are.2SG happy
           'Are you happy?'

       B: No, no ESTOY(, no).
           no not am
           'No, I am not.'

(39)   A: ¿Parezco   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
           seem.1SG happy a   good friend
           'Do I seem {happy | (like) a good friend}?'

       B: No, no PARECÉS(, no).
           no not seem.2SG
           'No, you do not.' (lit. 'No, you do not seem.')

Furthermore, any context that involves polarity focus licenses PredP-Ellipsis, not only *yes/no* polar questions. For instance, the examples below show that PredP-Ellipsis is possible as an answer to a negative polar question:

(40)   A: ¿No sos   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
           not are.2SG happy a   good friend
           'Aren't you {happy | a good friend}?'

       B: ¡Sí, SOY!
           yes am
           'I am indeed!'

(41)   A: ¿No estás   feliz?
           not are.2SG happy
           'Aren't you happy?'

       B: ¡Sí, ESTOY!
           yes am
           'I am indeed!'

(42)   A: ¿No parezco   {feliz | un buen amigo}?
           not seem.1SG happy a   good friend
           'Don't I seem {happy | a good friend}?'

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[5]This patterns with what has been reported for other Romance languages such as European and Brazilian Portuguese (see, e.g., martins2013), in which the adding of a post-verbal negative marker is one of the favored strategies to signal emphatic negation.

B: ¡Sí, PARECÉS!
   yes seem
'You do, indeed!' (lit. 'You seem!')

In all of the examples above, focus is marked by stressing the main verb (illustrated with the use of SMALL CAPS). However, it's important to note that emphatic polarity, realized through the particle *sí* in Spanish, also licenses PredP-Ellipsis, as shown in examples (43)-(45); in these cases, stress falls on the particle, not on the verb:[6]

(43)   Sonia no es feliz, pero Bruno SÍ es.
      Sonia not is happy but   Bruno yes is
      'Sonia is not happy, but Bruno is indeed.'

(44)   Sonia no está feliz, pero Bruno SÍ está.
      Sonia not is   happy but   Bruno yes is
      'Sonia is not happy, but Bruno is indeed.'

(45)   Sonia no parece feliz, pero Bruno SÍ parece.
      Sonia not seems happy but   Bruno yes seems
      'Sonia doesn't seem happy, but Bruno does indeed.' (lit. '...Bruno seems indeed.')

Finally, as predicted, in the absence of polarity focus or emphatic polarity, PredP-Ellipsis is not licensed. First, compare the examples in (46)-(48) below with the examples (34)-(36) above:

(46)   A: Soy {feliz | un buen amigo}.
         am   happy a   good friend
         'I am {happy | a good friend}.'
     B: *Yo también soy.
         I   also   am
         Intended: 'I also am.'

(47)   A: Estoy feliz.
         am   happy
         'I am happy.'
     B: *Yo también estoy.
         I   also   am
         Intended: 'I also am.'

(48)   A: Parezco   {feliz | un buen amigo}.
         seem.1SG happy a   good friend
         'I seem {happy | a good friend}.'
     B: *Yo también parezco.
         I   also   seem
         Intended: 'I also seem.'

In the same line, compare the examples in (49)-(51) below with (43)-(45) above:

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[6]The use of the emphatic particle *sí* can be optionally accompanied by the complementizer *que*, showing that the emphatic Pol head is really high in the structure (see also footnote 3).

(49)   *Sonia es feliz   y   Bruno también es.
        Sonia is happy and Bruno also   is
        Intended: 'Sonia is happy and Bruno is, too.'

(50)   *Sonia está feliz y   Bruno también está.
        Sonia is   happy and Bruno also   is
        Intended: 'Sonia is happy and Bruno is, too.'

(51)   *Sonia parece feliz y   Bruno también parece.
        Sonia seems happy and Bruno also   seems
        Intended: 'Sonia seems happy and Bruno does, too.' (lit. '...Bruno seems too.')

Before moving on to the next section, it should be noted that there are more complex cases, in which there is a contrast in polarity but the focus feature is encoded in another constrative constituent. That is, other legitimate instances of PredP-Ellipsis would involve contrastive focus in some lower functional category, like tense or modality, like in the following examples:[7]

(52)   A: Deberías   estar feliz.
            should.2SG to.be happy
            'You should be happy.'

        B: ESTOY.
            am
            'I am indeed.' (lit. 'I am.')

(53)   A: ¿Sos   rico?
            are.2SG rich
            'Are you rich?'

        B: No, ERA,   pero ya   no.
            no, was.1SG but already not
            'No, I was, but I am not anymore.'

To sum up, it seems then that there are two different scenarios: the paradigmatic one in which emphatic polarity focus is encoded in the Pol head, and another one in which there is a discourse contrast in polarity but another category in the left periphery or the inflectional domain of the clause is the grammatical bearer of contrastive focus.

2.4   Extraction

The main evidence in favor of an ellipsis analysis of this construction (and against a non-sententialist analysis) comes from extraction tests: ellipsis sites can be extracted out

---

[7]We are assuming a standard semantic alternative approach to verum focus, according to which a semantic feature encoded in grammar triggers the denotation {p, ¬p} as the focus value of the verum focus feature (see goodhue22). This approach predicts that verum focus and other foci cannot co-occur in the same sentence, an observation that seems to be correct in Spanish. However, the alternative semantic theory of verum focus is challenged in Gutzmann, Hartmann, and Matthewson (2020), where it is shown that verum focus and and other foci can indeed co-occur in some languages.

of. As the examples in (54B) and (55B) show, the PPs *por robo* ('for robbery') and *de lingüística* ('of linguistics') have been extracted out of the ellipsis site:[8]

(54) A: Sonia está presa   por robo   y   asesinato.
          Sonia is   in.prison for robbery and murder
          'Sonia is in jail for robbery and murder.'

      B: Bueno, por robo,   sí   está, pero por asesinato, no.
          well   for robbery yes is   but for murder   not
          'Well, she is in jail for robbery, but not for murder.'

(55) A: ¿Sonia es profesora de física?
          Sonia is professor of physics
          'Is Sonia a physics professor?'

      B: ¡No! DE LINGÜÍSTICA es.
          no of linguistics   is
          'No! She's a professor of LINGUISTICS.'

In other words, we claim that the underlying structures of examples (54B) and (55B) are (56) and (57) respectively, where the PPs have been extracted out of the ellipsis site (indicated with ~~strikethrough gray text~~ in the examples above), surviving deletion:

(56) B: [Por robo], sí   está ⟨~~presa~~   __⟩.
          for robbery yes is   ~~in.prision~~

(57) B: [DE LINGÜÍSTCA] es ⟨~~profesora~~ __⟩.
          of linguistics   is ~~professor~~

Crucially, extraction fails whenever *lo*-replacement applies, a fact that points to the indubitable conclusion that the combination $v_{copular}$ + *lo* behaves as a deep anaphora in Spanish (but not in French, as shown in Authier 2023; see Section 2.1 above):

(58) A: ¿Sonia es profesora de física?
          Sonia is professor of physics
          'Is Sonia a physics professor?'

      B: ¡No! DE LINGUÍSTICA lo es.
          no of linguistics   it is
          Intended: 'No! She's a professor of LINGUISTICS.'

---

[8]We use two types of extractions: contrastive topic extraction as in (54B) and contrastive focus extraction as in (55B). Both give grammatical results, but present a difference with respect to their compatibility with polarity focus. As is well-known, whereas contrastive topics are compatible with polarity focus, contrastive focus is not. In this respect, examples like (55B) instance another case of PredP-Ellipsis licensed by a functional category distinct from Pol, similar to the ones discussed at the end of the previous section (see (52) and (53)).

2.5   Missing antecedents

Another test to distinguish between deep and surface anaphora comes from missing antecedents. The main idea is that only surface anaphora (i.e., elliptical structures), but not deep anaphora, can licence pronouns with missing antecedents (see Grinder and Postal 1971, Bresnan 1971, Hankamer and Sag 1976, among others). As the examples below show, this is indeed the case in contexts of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. First, as shown in (59), the clitic *la* ('it') cannot refer to *una banda* ('a band') given that it's under the scope of negation, and an 'indefinite NP under scope of negation cannot serve as an antecedent for coreferent anaphors' (grinder1971, p. 276):

(59)   *Sonia no está en una banda$_i$, y   la$_i$ odio.
         Sonia not is   in a   band   and CL.FEM.3SG.ACC hate
         Intended: 'Sonia is not in a band$_i$, and I hate it$_i$.'

In contrast, (60) is grammatical because *la* ('it') refers to the second occurrence of *una banda* ('a band'), which is not under the scope of negation and hence it's a legitimate antecedent:

(60)   Sonia no está en una banda, pero yo sí   estoy en una banda$_i$ y
         Sonia not is   in a   band but I yes am   in a   band   and
         la$_i$ odio.
         CL.FEM.3SG.ACC hate
         'Sonia is not in a band, but I am in a band$_i$, and I hate it$_i$.'

Finally, what the grammaticality of (61) shows is that there is indeed an appropriate antecedent for *la* ('it'), which cannot be the occurrence of *una banda* ('a band') under the scope of negation, as discussed above:

(61)   Sonia no está en una banda, pero yo sí   estoy y   la   odio.
         Sonia not is   in a   band but I yes am   and CL.FEM.ACC.3SG hate
         'Sonia is not in a band, but I am, and I hate it.'

In consequence, the underlying structure for (61) must be as in (62), where the ellipsis site contains the DP *una banda* ('a band'), which is a legitimate antecedent for *la* ('it'):

(62)   Sonia no está en una banda, pero yo sí   estoy ⟨~~en una banda$_i$~~⟩ y
         Sonia not is   in a   band but I yes am   in a   band   and
         la$_i$ odio.
         CL.FEM.3SG.ACC hate
         'Sonia is not in a band, but I am ⟨~~in a band$_i$~~⟩, and I hate it$_i$.'

2.6   No Verb Identity Requirement

Evidence that PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish shouldn't be analyzed as V-Stranding VP-Ellipsis comes from the fact that it does not require an identical verb as correlate, as shown in (63) and (64):

(63)   No *sos*   feliz, pero *parecés*.
         not are.2SG happy but   seem.2SG
         'You *are not* happy, but you *seem* happy.' (lit. 'You *are not* happy, but you *seem*.')

(64)   A: Estás   lindo.
           are.2SG pretty
           'You are pretty.' (stage level reading)

       B: No *estoy*,   SOY.
           not am~stage level~ am~individual level~
           'I don't look pretty, I am pretty.' (individual level reading)

That is, the Verb Identity Requirement (VIR, see goldberg2005, saab2008, schoorlemmer2012, among many others), which is typical of some V-Stranding languages (and has been assumed as a defining property of this construction), is not at play in PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. This sharply contrasts with other languages that also has predicate ellipsis with copular verbs. For instance, Gribanova (2020) shows that Uzbek has a type of predicate ellipsis with certain verbs selecting small clauses:

(65)   Farhod men-ga   hursand ko'rin-d-i   Zamira-ga   esa,
       Farhod 1SG-DAT happy   seem.PST-3SG Zamira-DAT EMPH
       ko'rin-ma-d-i.
       seem-NEG-PST-3SG
       'Farhod seemed happy to me. And to Zamira, [he] didn't seem [happy].'

(66)   A: Hasan tez   tayyor bo'l-d-i-mi?
           Hasan quickly ready become-PST-3-Q
           'Did Hasan become ready quickly?'

       B: Ha, bo'l-d-i.
           yes become-PST-3
           'Yes, [he] became [ready quickly].'

                              (adapted from Gribanova 2020, exs. (49a)-(49b))

Now, unlike Spanish, predicate ellipsis in Uzbek obeys the VIR:

(67)   a. Men tarvuz   shirin chiq-a-di deb o'yla-d-im.   Lekin u   faqat
           1SG watermelon sweet exit-PRS-3 C   think-PRS-1SG but   3SG only
           shirin ko'rin-gan e-kan   xolos.
           sweet seem-PTCP E-EVID only
           'I thought the watermelon would be sweet but it only appeared sweet.'

       b. *Men tarvuz   shirin chiq-a-di deb o'yla-d-im.   Lekin (u) (faqat)
           1SG watermelon sweet exit-PRS-3 C   think-PRS-1SG but   3SG only
           ko'rin-gan e-kan   xolos.
           seem-PTCP E-EVID only
           Intended: 'I thought the watermelon would be sweet but it only appeared [sweet].'

                              (adapted from Gribanova 2020, ex. (59))

This different behavior regarding the VIR between Spanish and Uzbek points to the conclusion that in Spanish the size of the elided phrase is even lower than in Uzbek, perhaps, as argued here, only of the PredP size.

2.7   Interim summary

In this section, we discussed the basic properties of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. First, we showed that PredP-Ellipsis is only available with true copular verbs (i.e., those that admit *lo*-replacement, such as *ser* ('to be'), *estar* ('to be') and *parecer* ('to seem')), but not with pseudo-copular verbs (i.e., those that do not allow *lo*-replacement, like *ponerse colorado* ('to blush') or *volverse loco* ('to go mad')). Then, we provided evidence for our claim that polarity focus (or some contrastive focus above vP) is needed for PredP-Ellipsis to be licensed. Furthermore, we showed that the ellipsis site in this construction can include predicates of any category type (that is, APs and NPs), dispensing with the need for proposing independent deletion operations. In addition, we employed the sub-extraction test and the missing antecedent test to favor an ellipsis analysis of this construction. Finally, we demonstrated that PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish does not obey the Verbal Identity Requirement, adding further support to the hypothesis that this construction is indeed different from other types of verbal ellipses. In the following section, we discuss PredP-Ellipsis in the context of vP-Ellipsis in Spanish and other Romance languages.

3   PredP-Ellipsis and the vP-Ellipsis parameter in Romance

Spanish is a language without Aux-Stranding XP-Ellipsis (68a), or V-Stranding XP-Ellipsis (68b), like Catalan (69), French (70), or Italian (71), and unlike other Romance languages like Portuguese (72) or Galician (73):[9]

(68)   Spanish:

    a.   A: ¿Habías   comprado el libro?   = (4)
              had.2SG bought   the book?
              'Had you bought the book?'

         B: *Sí, HABÍA.
             yes had.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I had.'

    b.   A: ¿Le   diste   el libro?   = (5)
              CL.DAT.3SG gave.2SG the book
              'Did you gave her/him the book?'

         B: *Sí, DI.
             yes gave.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I gave.')

                           (adapted from martins1994, ex. (3))

---

[9]Lobeck (1995) illustrates the absence of VP-Ellipsis in French with examples like the following:

  i.   *On a   demandé si ils ont déjà   mangè et ils ont.
      we have asked   if they have already eaten and they have
      'We asked if they had already eaten, and they had.'

                          (adapted from Lobeck 1995, p. 158)

Here, we try to avoid examples in non-contrastive coordinate structures, since, as we argue, there are languages licensing ellipsis only under (polarity) focus. In contradistinction, it seems that the opposite does not hold: if a language has VP-Ellipsis in coordinate structures, then it also has it under (polarity) focus.

(69) Catalan:

    a. A: Li   has   donat el   llibre?
             him have.2SG given the book?
             'Did you give him the book?'

        B: *Sí, he
             yes have.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I have'

    b. A: Li   has   donat el   llibre?
             him have.2SG given the book?
             'Did you give him the book?'

        B: *Sí, he   donat.
             yes have.1SG given
             'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I have given.')

                                   (adapted from Martins 1994, ex. (4))

(70) French:

    a. A: Lui as-tu   donné le   livre?
             him have.2SG given the book
             'Did you give him the book?'

        B: *Oui, j' ai.
             yes I have.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I did.'

    b. A: Lui as-tu   donné le   livre?
             him have.2SG given the book
             'Did you give him the book?'

        B: *Oui, j' ai   donné.
             yes I have.1SG given
             'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I have given.')

                                   (adapted from Martins 1994, ex. (5))

(71) Italian:

    a. A: Gli hai   dato il   libro?
             him have.2SG given the book
             'Have you given him the book?'

        B: *Si, ho.
             yes have.1SG
             'Yes, I have.'

    b. A: Gli hai   dato il   libro?
             him have.2SG given the book
             'Did you give him the book?'

        B: *Si, ho   dato.
             yes have.1SG given
             'Yes, I have.' (lit. 'Yes, I have given.')

                                   (adapted from Martins 1994, ex. (6))

(72)   Portuguese:

   a.   A: Você tinha   dado o livro pra   Sonia?
          you   had.2SG given the book to.the Sonia
          'Had you given the book to Sonia?'

        B: Sim, tinha.
           yes, had.1SG
           'Yes, I had.'

   b.   A: Deste-lhe   o   livro?
          gave.2SG-him the book?
          'Did you give him the book?'

        B: Sim, dei.
           yes   gave.1SG
           'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I gave.')

                                   (adapted from Martins1994, ex. (1))

(73)   Galician:

   a.   A: Vostede tíñalle   dado o libro a Ana?
          you   had.2SG-him given the book to Ana
          Did you give the book to Ana?

        B: Si, tiña.
           yes had
           'Yes, I had.'

   b.   A: Décheslle   o   livro?
          gave.2SG-him the book?
          'Did you give him the book?'

        B: Si, din.
           yes gave.1SG
           'Yes, I did.' (lit. 'Yes, I gave.')

                                 (adapted from martins1994, ex. (2))

As argued in Saab (2022), Romance languages without vP-Ellipsis are correlated with (i) *uniform proclisis in finite tenses* (see also Martins 1994), and (ii) *absence of vP-fronting*. The following pair from Saab (2022) shows that vP-fronting is possible in Brazilian Portuguese (74a) but not in Spanish (74b):

(74)   a.   ... e   estudado, eu tinha ⟨estudado⟩.
          and studied   I   had   studied
        Literal: '... and studied, I had.'

   b.   *... y   estudiado, yo había ⟨estudiado⟩.
          and studied   I   had   studied
         Intended: '... and studied, I had.'

Below, we provide evidence from Italian, where most of the speakers consulted find vP-fronting also deviated, confirming our prediction:

(75)   *... e   comprato il   libro, aveva.
          and bought   the book had.3SG
      Intended: '... and bought the book, I had.'

According to Saab, this set of correlations follows from the fact that Spanish (and Italian) does not have V-to-T movement, but a post-syntactic rule of restructuring that requires strict locality between T and the vP. As in Rizzi's (1982) original theory, restructuring triggers proclisis, but it also triggers *vP-frozenness* in general, i.e., the ban of deleting or moving vPs. In this respect, PredP-Ellipsis presents a paradoxical behavior, since it does not seem to present vP-frozenness effects, as shown by the deletion facts above, and the putative possibility of vP-fronting in (76a), but it triggers proclisis, as shown in (76b):

(76)   a.   Contento, estoy.
           happy   am
           'Happy, I am.'

        b.   Lo   estoy.
           CL.NEUTER am
           'I am (happy).'

The puzzle vanishes if PredP-Ellipsis is not a type of vP-Ellipsis, but it arises as the result of deletion of a lower phrase: a Predicate Phrase (PredP), as we propose here. Such operation leaves the copular verb stranded. This lower ellipsis is consistent with the proclisis facts like those in (76b) (i.e., T and v are still subject to restructuring) and with the existence PredP-fronting like in (76a). On this analysis, the prediction is that the category that must be frozen is the vP, since what is deleted or fronted is always the PredP, not the vP. The contrast regarding vP-fronting in (77b) and (77a) and the contrast regarding vP-ellipsis in (78) and (79) clearly demonstrate that the prediction is correct:

(77)   a.   Lindo, hubiera   sido.
           nice,   had.SUBJ been
           'Nice, it would have been.'

        b.   *Sido lindo, hubiera.
            been nice,   had.SUBJ
           'Been nice, it would have.'

(78)   A: No hubiera   sido lindo.
           not had.SUBJ been nice
           'It doesn't would have been nice.'

        B: Sí   que hubiera   SIDO.
           yes that had.SUBJ been
           'Yes, it would have been.'

(79)   A: No hubiera   sido lindo.
           not had.SUBJ been nice
           'It doesn't would have been nice.'

        B: *Sí   que HUBIERA.
            yes that had.SUBJ
           'Yes, it would have.'

To sum up, the PredP-Ellipsis analysis we propose is schematically illustrated in (80), which contrasts with a vP analysis, provided in (81):

(80)   PredP-Ellipsis: [$_{\text{TP}}$ T [$_{v\text{P}}$ v-copular$_{[E]}$ ⟨[$_{\text{PredP}}$ ~~Pred XP~~]⟩]]
       → available in Spanish

(81) vP-Ellipsis: [$_{\text{TP}}$ T$_{[E]}$ ⟨[$_{v\text{P}}$ ~~v ...~~]⟩]
       → <u>not</u> available in Spanish

Our analysis, then, accounts for why Spanish allows for some sort of lower ellipsis with verbs selecting PredPs, despite not being a vP-Ellipsis language. Yet, we still need to account for the fact that PredP-Ellipsis is exclusively restricted to (polarity) focus contexts and gives ungrammatical results in other contexts such as coordinated structures, in which (polarity) focus is not at play, as shown in Section 2.3.

4   An implementation of PredP-Ellipsis licensing

In this section we put forth a formal proposal to derive and license PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. The two main ingredients of this proposal are: (i) v_{copular} bears an [E]-feature, which triggers ellipsis of its complement (i.e., a PredP), and (ii) the [E]-feature on v_{copular} is only licensed if it enters into an Agree relation with a focus head (typically, Pol) higher in the structure. In the rest of this section, we spell out the specifics of our proposal.

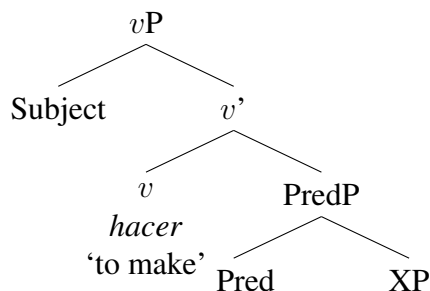## 4.1   The syntax of true copular verbs

First, we assume a syntax of true copular verbs, as schematically shown in the tree in (82), where the v_{copular} head is the stative, nonagentive counterpart of the nonstative, agentive pro-verb *hacer* ('to make') (83) (see, e.g., Saab 2010 and Authier 2023):

(82)   Syntax of true copular verbs:
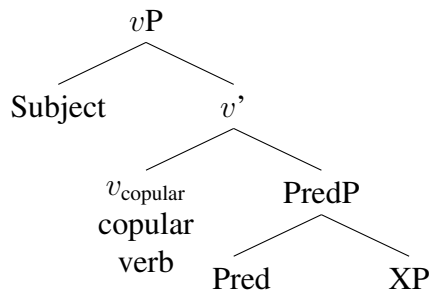
(83)   Syntax of the proform *hacerlo*:

More specifically, we assume a structure where v selects a PredP, interpreted as an event predicate or a stative predicate depending on the selector head, as shown above.[10]

Note that, unlike Bowers (1993), we assume that the Pred head does not introduce the subject, only the predicate. The main reason to conceive the structure of PredP in this way connects to an already discussed particularity of this construction—*lo*-replacement, which replaces the predicate head and its complement with exclusion of any subject:

(84)   Sonia lo es.
       Sonia it is
       'Sonia is that.' (lit. 'Sonia is it.')

If the replacement affected a PredP with a subject in its specifier, then subject extraction would be blocked, as we observed with other constituents inside PredP in Section 2.4. Compare with the illicit extraction of the AP complement of the Pred head under *lo*-replacement, which conclusively shows that the putative internal constituents of a given PredP cannot be extracted when *lo*-replacement applies:

(85)   *Inteligente, lo es.
        intelligent   it is
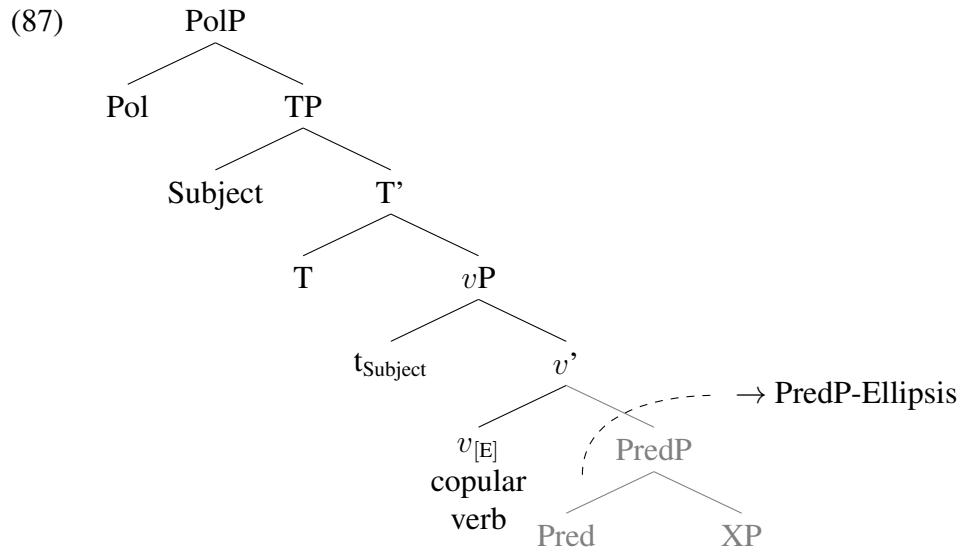   Intended: 'Intelligent, she is.'

As we have already shown above, PredP can indeed be extracted whenever *lo*-replacement does not apply:

(86)   Inteligente, es.
       intelligent   is
       'Intelligent, she is.'

4.2   The size of the elided category

As we argued above, PredP-Ellipsis is not a type of vP-Ellipsis. As already advanced, we claim that PredP-Ellipsis arises as the result of deletion of a lower phrase—a PredP. Such elliptical operation leaves the copular verb 'stranded'. This is schematically shown in the tree in (87). Here, we assume that ellipsis is triggered by an [E]-feature merchant2001. In PredP-Ellipsis, it's this v_{copular} head that bears the [E]-feature. Furthermore, following Merchant's proposal (and subsequent work), we argue that [E] triggers deletion of the complement of the head that bears it, in this case, the PredP:

---

[10]Beyond the semantic nature of the selector head, there are other nontrivial differences between *serlo* and *hacerlo* regarding the obligatory nature of *lo* in the latter. Such obligatoriness comes in two forms: (i) *hacer* always selects *lo*, and (ii) *lo* cannot be dropped. We left a full comparison between *serlo* and *hacerlo* for future research, but refer to Authier (2023) for a recent study on the contrast between *le fair* and *l'être* in French, which, as noticed in Section 2.1, have a different distribution when compared to Spanish.

(87)

```
              PolP
             /    \
          Pol      TP
                  /   \
            Subject    T'
                      /   \
                     T     vP
                          /  \
                  t_Subject    v'
                              /  \          - - - → PredP-Ellipsis
                          v_[E]   PredP
                         copular  /    \
                          verb  Pred    XP
```

4.3   Formal licensing through Agree

In order to explain the distribution of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish, we offer a concrete implementation of ellipsis licensing, which uses both the idea of formal licensing through a designated licensing feature—the [E]-feature mentioned above—and the operation Agree. Concretely, we follow Aelbrecht (2010) (see also Stigliano 2022 for a recent implementation of this proposal) in that each type of ellipsis is triggered by a specific [E]-feature, and that [E]-features are made of *category*, *inflectional* and *selectional* features. According to this author, the inflectional feature corresponds to the category feature of the ellipsis licensor. This means that the [E]-feature, endowed with an inflectional feature, will only be licensed if it establishes an Agree relation with its licensor. In the case under analysis here, we claim that PredP-Ellipsis will only be licensed if it establishes a checking relation with its licensor, a Pol head with a focus feature, which we represent as Pol_{PFOC}.[11,12] Finally, the selectional feature corresponds to the head that each [E]-feature is compatible with—in this case, only a v_{copular} head, given that this type of ellipsis is found only with true copular verbs, as described in Section 2.1:

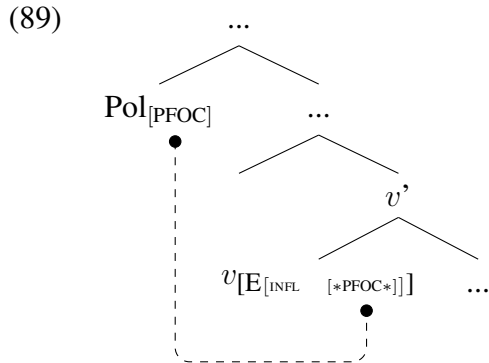(88)   Formal composition of [E]:

$$
\text{E} \begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} & [\text{E}] \\ \text{INFL} & [*\text{PFOC}*] \\ \text{SEL} & [v_{\text{copular}}] \end{bmatrix}
$$

An [E]-feature with such a specification requires, then, licensing through Agree with a proper valued polarity feature present in the Pol head, in the left periphery of the clause. The Agree dependency between [E] and Pol ensures that the distribution of PredP-Ellipsis

---

[11] Some inflectional features discussed by Aelbrecht include Mod[root] for Modal Complement Ellipsis in Dutch, C[*wh*,Q] for sluicing in English and Dutch, and T for VP-Ellipsis in English. See Aelbrecht (2010) for more details. An anonymous reviewer asks whether these inflectional features form a natural class, and whether Pol—the inflectional feature we propose here—forms a natural class with them. We think the answer to this question is negative, but we leave this issue open to further research.
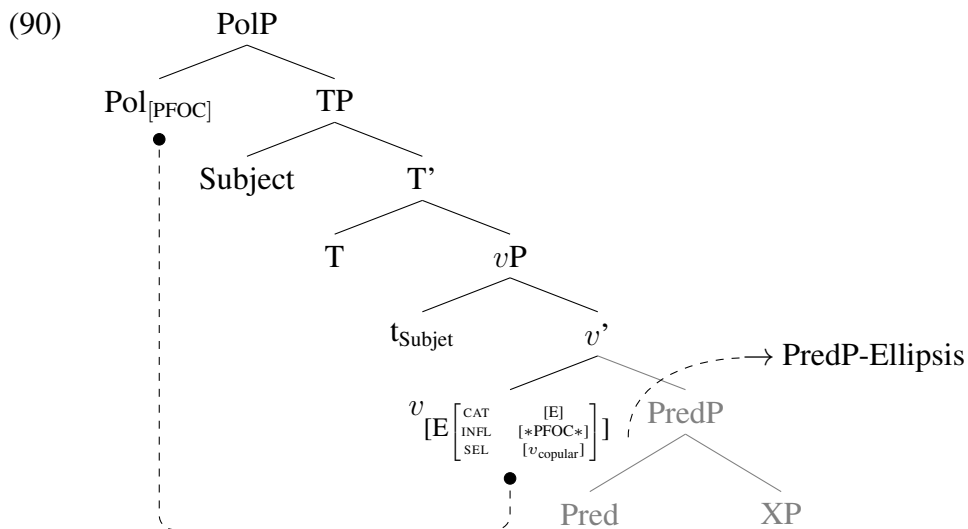
[12] We also follow Aelbrecht in that the directionality of the Agree relation in ellipsis applies in a 'non-standard direction'; that is, the inflectional feature on [E] probes upwards to establish the Agree relation. We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this point.

will be restricted to those syntactic environments in which polarity focus is syntactically active. This is illustrated in the tree in (89), where the dotted line represents the Agree operation, and where we simplify the feature matrix proposed in (88), including only the relevant features:

(89)

```
                    ...
              ⟋          ⟍
        Pol_[PFOC]        ...
          •            ⟋      ⟍
          ┊                    v'
          ┊                 ⟋     ⟍
          ┊      v_[E_[INFL  [∗PFOC∗]]]   ...
          ┊                •
          ┊                ┊
          └ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘
```

4.4　Interim summary

To sum up, in this section we provided a formal approach of deriving PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. Crucially, the derivation and licensing of this elliptical construction is based on the presence of an [E]-feature on $v_{copular}$, which triggers ellipsis of its complement (i.e., PredP), and the need for an Agree relation between the [E]-feature and a Pol head higher in the structure. The proposal is summarized in (90):

(90)

```
                    PolP
              ⟋            ⟍
        Pol_[PFOC]          TP
          •          ⟋           ⟍
          ┊     Subject           T'
          ┊                   ⟋        ⟍
          ┊                  T          vP
          ┊                          ⟋      ⟍
          ┊                    t_Subjet       v'
          ┊                              ⟋        ⟍ - - →  PredP-Ellipsis
          ┊               v_[E[CAT  [E]]      ⟋ PredP
          ┊                  [INFL [∗PFOC∗]] ┊   ⟋    ⟍
          ┊                  [SEL  [v_copular]] ┊ Pred     XP
          ┊                       •
          └ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘
```

This analysis is enough to capture all the properties that characterize PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish, described in Section 2. First, it accounts for the contrast between true copular verbs and pseudo-copular verbs. Recall that only the former license PredP-Ellipsis:

(91)　A:　¿Sos　　feliz?　　　　　　　= (11)
　　　　　　are.2SG happy
　　　　　　'Are you happy?'
　　　B:　Sí, SOY.
　　　　　yes am
　　　　　'Yes, I am.'

(92)   A: ¿Te   pusiste   colorado?   = (17)
           CL.2SG became.2SG red
           'Did you blush?'

       B: *Sí, me   PUSE.
           yes CL.1SG became.1SG
           Intended: 'Yes, I did.'

According to our approach, only true copular verbs can bear an [E]-feature, and, in consequence are able to elide its complement. On the contrary, pseudo-copular verbs are incompatible with the aforementioned [E]-features, which makes ellipsis of their complements impossible.

   Second, the same hypothesis also explains why, on the surface, PredP-Ellipsis seems to target both APs or NPs:

(93)   A: ¿Es [$_{PredP}$ Pred [$_{AP}$ confiable]]?   = (27)
           is   trustworthy
           'Is (s)he trustworthy?'

       B: Sí, ES.
           yes is
           'Yes, (s)he is.'

(94)   A: ¿Sos   [$_{PredP}$ Pred [$_{NP}$ un buen amigo]]?   = (28)
           are.2SG   a   good friend
           'Are you a good friend?'

       B: Sí, SOY.
           yes am
           'Yes, I am.'

In our account, these categories are complements of a Pred head. In other words, this type of ellipsis doesn't delete an AP or an NP, but it deletes the entire PredP, including any complement of the Pred head.

   Third, the Agree mechanism proposed here is able to capture—as it is particularly designed for this—why PredP-Ellipsis typically takes place under polarity focus. Recall the basic contrast below, where an example like (96) is directly ruled out because of the absence of a Pol head with the required formal makeup, namely, Pol$_{[PFOC]}$:

(95)   Sonia no es feliz, pero Bruno sí   ES.   = (43)
       Sonia not is happy but   Bruno yes is
       'Sonia is not happy, but Bruno is indeed.'

(96)   *Sonia es feliz   y   Bruno también es.   = (49)
        Sonia is happy and Bruno also   is
       Intended: 'Sonia is happy and Bruno is, too.'

In addition, note that reversing polarity in examples such as (95) is predicted to be ungrammatical, given that Spanish lacks a negative counterpart of the emphatic affirmative particle *sí* (we thank an anonymous reviewer for bring up this question). This prediction is borne out, as shown in (97):

(97) *Sonia es feliz   pero Bruno no es.
       Sonia is happy but   Bruno not is
       Intended: 'Sonia is happy but Bruno isn't.'

However, when the context is set up so that it includes emphatic polarity, PredP-Ellipsis is much more acceptable:

(98) A: Sonia y   Bruno son felices...
          Sonia and Bruno are happy
          'Sonia and Bruno are happy...'
      B: Bueno... Sonia sí   es feliz   pero Bruno no, no es.
          well   Sonia yes is happy but   Bruno no not is
          'Well... Sonia is happy, indeed, but Bruno isn't.'

At this juncture, it should be noted that, as stated, the theory could be too strong. We have already observed that there are examples in which PredP-Ellipsis is also licit through contrastive focus in other functional categories beyond Pol. In this regard, recall the example in (53), repeated below in (99), which would require slightly adjusting the analysis proposed here:

(99) A: ¿Sos   rico?
           are.2SG rich
          'Are you rich?'
      B: No, ERA,   pero ya   no.
          No, was.1SG but   already not
          'No, I was, but I am not anymore.'

It seems that, in cases like these, the crucial feature must be on T, not on Pol. Mechanically, the adjustment is easy to implement, but it is worth-exploring the empirical or theoretical consequences of such an adjustment. The observation, which needs to be checked cross-linguistically, would be that some ellipses require *some* focus grammatically encoded above the bearer of the [E]-feature. As we already commented, the paradigmatic examples of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish are those in which the relevant feature is in Pol, but it seems that some accommodation is possible. In any case, introducing corrections through focus marking in other categories beyond Pol always implies a contrast in polarity. So the theory of ellipsis licensing in this domain could still be formulated making uniform reference to properties of sentence polarity.

Fourth, as we have already noted, the possibility of sub-extraction out of PredP and the availability to refer to a missing antecedent are also directly accounted for under the hypothesis that PredP-Ellipsis has internal structure, i.e., it is a surface anaphora:

(100) A: Sonia está presa   por robo   y   asesinato.
           Sonia is   in.prison for robbery and murder
           'Sonia is in jail for robbery and murder.'
       B: Bueno, por robo,   sí   está, pero por asesinato, no.
           well   for robbery yes is   but for murder   not
           'Well, she is in jail for robbery, but not for murder.'

(101)   Sonia no está en una banda, pero yo sí   estoy y   la   odio.
         Sonia not is   in a   band but I yes am   and CL.FEM.3SG.ACC hate
         'Sonia is not in a band, but I am, and I hate it.'

Finally, the absence of verbal identity effects (102) follows from the fact that PredP-Ellipsis affects a very low portion of structure, the complement of the copular verb and nothing else:

(102)   No *sos*   feliz, pero *parecés*.   = (63)
         not are.2SG happy but   seem.2SG
         'You *are not* happy, but you *seem* happy.' (lit. 'You *are not* happy, but you *seem*.')

In a nutshell, since the copular verb is not part of the elided structure, it does not need to be in any identity relation with another copular verb contained in a putative vP antecedent.

5   Conclusions

In this paper, we have analyzed an undocumented type of ellipsis in Spanish, which we dub *Predicate Phrase Ellipsis* (PredP-Ellipsis). We argued that PredP-Ellipsis deletes a lower Predicate Phrase selected by copular verbs in the lower domain of the clause. We implement this analysis through Merchant's (2001) theory of ellipsis licensing supplemented with some further elaborations in Aelbrecht (2010), according to which the [E]-feature sometimes needs to enter into Agree dependencies with other categories in its syntactic environment. On this account, the entire set of distributional facts discussed here are correctly captured. It's worth mentioning that further research will shed light on the distribution of this type of ellipsis and determine how it fits (if it fits at all) into the taxonomy of verbal ellipses discussed in this study. Moreover, further research in Romance and beyond will inform us whether some of our particular implementations can be derived from other, more abstract, Universal Grammar principles that, at this stage of our research, we are not able to detect. In principle, the licensing mechanism of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish is not a fortuitous property of the Spanish grammar. In fact, the distribution of PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish parallels the distribution of other types of verbal ellipses in other languages that are also uniquely licensed through (polarity) focus (see footnote 1). For instance, Lipták (2019) shows that Hungarian is divided in at least two dialects regarding the licensing of vP-Ellipsis. In one dialect, verbal ellipsis (both of the auxiliary or verb-stranding type) occurs only under polarity focus (103), whereas in other dialects, vP-Ellipsis, like in English and other vP-ellipsis languages, is also licensed in coordinate or embedded structures without any indication of polarity focus (104):

(103)   A: Fel hívta   Bea a szüleit   tegnap?
             PV called.3SG Bea the parent.POSS.3SG.PL.ACC yesterday
             'Did Bea call her parents yesterday?'

         B: Fel HÍVTA.
             PV called.3SG
             'She did.'

(104)   Bea fel hívta   a   szüleit   tegnap. Ibi is   fel
        Bea PV called.3SG the parent.POSS.3SG.PL.ACC yesterday Ibi also PV
        hívta.
        called.3SG
        'Bea called her parents yesterday. Ibi also did.'

                                          (adapted from liptak2019, exs. (22)-(23))

As we discussed in the previous section, we propose to explain both patterns in Spanish and beyond making exclusive reference to the formal make-up of the [E]-feature. In those cases in which ellipsis is restricted to a particular polarity licensing head, we propose that [E] comes endowed with an inflectional feature that requires an instance of Agree with a designated head: Pol, in this case. This division has the important implication that now it becomes possible to provide better tools for diagnosing ellipsis in the relevant domains. For instance, a great part of the ellipsis literature has claimed that Spanish does not allow ellipsis of progressive phrases (e.g., *está cantando* '(s)he is singing'). Yet, the claim has been made only considering coordinate, non-contrastive structures, as in (105):

(105)   *Sonia está cantando y   Bruno también está.
         Sonia is   singing   and Bruno also   is
        Intended: 'Sonia is singing and Bruno is, too.'

It turns out, however, that when polarity focus is taken into consideration, some Spanish dialects at least seem to license this type of ellipsis:

(106)   ?Sonia no está cantando pero Bruno sí   ESTÁ.
         Sonia not is   singing   but Bruno yes is
        'Sonia is not singing and Bruno is, indeed.'

Furthermore, when there is a contrast in the tense of the copular verbs (i.e., *estás*, 'you are' vs. *estaba*, 'I was'), PredP-Ellipsis is perfectly possible:

(107)   A: ¿Estás   cantando?
             are.2SG singing
            'Are you singing?'
        B: No, ESTABA (pero ya   no).
            no   was.1SG (but already not)
            'No, I was (but I am not now).'

In this respect, our findings force us to refine our diagnostic tools in ways that really permit us determining whether some types of ellipsis are really licensed in a given language.

Finally, we are aware that ellipsis of (at least part of) small clauses is an almost unexplored issue in the literature. We hope, for instance, that this study brings new insights to the theory of ellipsis and small clauses in Spanish and beyond. As we have shown in Section 2.1, only true copular verbs, i.e., those that allow *lo*-replacement, license PredP-Ellipsis in Spanish. Beyond pseudo-copular verbs, which do not license it, we tentatively suggested that this behavior also includes predicates of the *considerar*-type and we provided the examples (21) and (22) that show the correlation between absence of predicate ellipsis and *lo*-replacement, respectively. Below we repeat both examples:

(108)   A: ¿Considerás   a   Sonia inteligente?
             consider.2SG DOM Sonia intelligent
             'Do you consider Sonia intelligent?'

        B: *Sí, (la)   considero.
             yes CL.FEM.3SG.ACC consider.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I did.'

(109)   A: ¿Considerás   a   Sonia inteligente?
             consider.2SG DOM Sonia intelligent
             'Do you consider Sonia intelligent?'

        B: *Sí, <u>lo</u> considero.
             yes it consider.1SG
             Intended: 'Yes, I did.'

We are left to ponder the status of other small clauses, in particular, those that select infinitival complements. At a first approximation, it seems that whereas the infinitival complements of perception verbs seem to elide, the infinitival complements of causative *hacer* ('to make') do not:[13]

(110)   A: ¿(La)   escuchaste cantar   a   Sonia?
             CL.FEM.3SG.ACC heard.2SG sing.INF DOM Sonia
             'Did you hear Sonia sing?'

        B: Sí, <u>la</u>$_i$ escuché   ⟨[$_{TP}$ t$_i$ ~~cantar~~]⟩.
             yes CL.FEM.3SG.ACC heard.1SG   sing.INF
             'Yes, I heard her (sing) '

(111)   A: ¿(La)   hiciste   cantar   a   Sonia?
             CL.FEM.3SG.ACC made.2SG sing.INF DOM Sonia
             'Did you make Sonia sing?'

        B: *Sí, <u>la</u>$_i$ hice   ⟨[$_{TP}$ t$_i$ ~~cantar~~]⟩.
             yes CL.FEM.3SG.ACC made.1SG   sing.INF
             Intended: 'Yes, I made her sing.'

Interestingly, unlike the facts observed when we compared copular verbs and pseudo-copular verbs, here *lo*-replacement is banned in both cases:

(112)   A: ¿(La)   escuchaste cantar   a   Sonia?
             CL.FEM.3SG.ACC heard.2SG sing.INF DOM Sonia
             'Did you hear Sonia sing?'

---

[13]Note that, if ECM subjects of perception verbs are generated inside the infinitival clause, we would have a clear piece of evidence in favor of an ellipsis analysis, since, as we have already mentioned, only surface anaphora admit extraction out of it. Further support in favor of this elliptical approach to examples like (110) are provided by cases of missing antecedents, like the following:

    i.   Sonia no escuchó   a   Paula cantar   una canción, pero yo sí la   escuché
         Sonia not heard.3SG DOM Paula sing.INF a   song   but I yes CL.FEM.3SG.ACC heard.1SG
         y   era hermosa.
         and was beautiful
         'Sonia didn't hear Paula sing a song, but I did, and it was beautiful.'

> B: *Sí, <u>lo</u> escuché.
>   yes it heard.1SG
>   Intended: 'Yes, I heard her sing.' (lit. 'Yes, I heard it.')

(113) A: ¿(La)   hiciste   cantar   a   Sonia?
          CL.FEM.3SG.ACC made.2SG sing.INF DOM Sonia
          'Did you make Sonia sing?'
       B: *Sí, <u>lo</u> hice.
          yes it made.1SG
          Intended: 'Yes, I made her sing.' (lit. 'Yes, I made it.')

Yet, there is another correlation that would account for the sharp contrast between (110) and (111): the size of the infinitival complement. As shown in Saab (2014, 2015), infinitival complements of causatives with *hacer* and perceptions verbs distinguish each other in their size-type. Concretely, whereas infinitival complements of perception verbs are at least of the TP size, infinitival complements of analytical causatives are of the vP size. If this correct, then the grammaticality of (110) and the ungrammaticality of (111) would follow from the productive existence of an operation of TP-Ellipsis and the absolute impossibility of vP-Ellipsis in the language. Comparative studies should inform whether or not this is a plausible line of research. A first look at Brazilian Portuguese, a Romance language that allows for v-Stranding vP-Ellipsis, gives initial support to this hypothesis. As it can be observed in the following examples, there seems to be a similar TP-Ellipsis effect with perception verbs, which, like in Spanish, also allows for the omission of the infinitival complement:[14]

(114) A: Você escutou   a   MARIA cantar?
          you heard.2SG the Maria   sing.INF
          'Did you hear Maria sing?'
       B: Não, escutei   o   PEDRO.
          no   heard.1SG the Pedro
          'No, I heard Pedro (sing).'

Omission of the infinitival complement with analytical causatives is unacceptable, just like in Spanish:

(115) A: Você fez   a   MARIA cantar?
          you made.2SG the Maria   sing.INF
          'Did you make Maria sing?'
       B: Não, fiz   o   PEDRO *(cantar).
          no   made.1SG the Pedro   sing.INF
          'No, I made Pedro sing.'

However, unlike Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese allows a v-Stranding vP-Ellipsis output, with the infinitival and causee subject both stranded, an unnoticed fact, as far as we know:

(116) A: Você fez   o   Pedro dar   o   livro pra   Sonia?
          you made.2SG the Pedro give.INF the book to.the Sonia
          'Did you make Pedro give the book to Sonia?'

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[14]Many thanks to Samara Almeida for her Brazilian Portuguese judgments.

 B: Não, fiz   o   PAULO dar.
     no   made.1SG the Paulo   give.INF
     'No, I made Pedro give the book to Sonia.' (lit. 'No, I made Paulo give.')

This is consistent with the patterns observed in finite clauses, although, in principle, sentences like (116) also seem to challenge those analyses that put too little structure inside analytical causatives in Brazilian Portuguese (see, for instance, Sheehan and Cyrino 2023). If v-Stranding vP-Ellipsis requires T as a licensor head, analytical causatives should project at least a TP:

(117)   to make $[_{TP} v+T_{[E]}\langle[_{vP} \text{...} v \text{...}]\rangle]$

An alternative analysis consistent with Sheehan and Cyrino (and related works on Romance causatives) would conclude that, in fact, Brazilian Portuguese licenses a very low type of verbal ellipsis, concretely, V-Stranding VP-Ellipsis, as schematized below:

(118)   to make $[_{vP} V+v_{[E]}\langle[_{VP} \text{...} V \text{...}]\rangle]$

The existence of such a lower ellipsis, but of the auxiliary-stranding type, was already proposed by Merchant (2008) to explain an asymmetry in voice mismatches in VP-Ellipsis vs. pseudogapping in English. Merchant's conclusion is that verbal ellipsis only targets the VP, not the vP (his VoiceP). Whether this is indeed the case in Brazilian Portuguese is an open question we leave for future research. Nevertheless, the facts discussed through this study show how useful ellipsis can be when it comes to making hypotheses on the internal structure of the verbal domains, including, the internal structure of small clauses.

Acknowledgements

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