

As-ing
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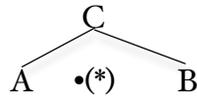
I. External syntax – Part I. Niching.

This paper concerns the syntax of tensed *as*-clauses of the type shown in (1):

- (1) •(ok) Many •(*) drivers •(??) can •(ok) afford •(?) a •(*) Buick, *as we can a Jeep*.

Externally, this clause behaves like a type of sentence adverb (others are *possibly, perhaps, allegedly, I think, etc.*; and *you know, said Ed, not to put too fine a point on it, how can I explain it to you, worse luck, etc.*), and can be inserted (between commas) at those places in (1) marked by ‘•’, the resulting grammaticality being shown by the following parenthesized symbol. This characterization is criminally overgeneral; the first four of these adverbs can be sandwiched between commas or not, while the last five, which are underlined, require surrounding commas, as do *as*-clauses themselves. And there are many differences in distribution, but if we say that Niching, the rule that inserts sentence adverbs in various places in a clause, can only insert them in *niches*, then we might begin to characterize the distribution of these niches as in (2).

- (2) Niches do not appear between any left branch of a constituent and a following branch of that constituent. Graphically,



This restriction blocks sentence adverbs from appearing in any of the environments in (3a), exemplified in (3b-i).

- (3) *Nichabilities*
- a. Determiner •(*) N, Article •(*) N, Adjective •(*) N, P •(*) NP, Adverb •(*) Adjective, Adverb •(*) V, Adverb •(*) PP
 - b. *many, worse luck, hotels
 - c. *the, worse luck, hotels
 - d. *grubby, worse luck, hotels
 - e. *toward, worse luck, the hotels
 - f. *rather, worse luck, dingy
 - g. *many, worse luck, hotels
 - h. *often, worse luck, yodel
 - i. *right, worse luck, behind the bed

Further, there are no niches in NP's, though there are niches between verbs and (some of) the objects of these verbs. This rough characterization of the distribution of *as*-clauses *in their own clauses* will have to do for the moment.

II. External syntax – Part II. The originating clauses of *as*-clauses. Parallels with and differences from *Gapping*.

I postulate the existence of an optional deletion rule, called *As-ing*, which operates to delete the main verb of a finite *as*-clause, under identity with the main verb of the clause immediately to the left of the clause (which I will refer to as “the originating clause of the *as*-clause,” for reasons which will become clear below). Thus (4a) becomes (4b), and (4c) becomes (4d).

- (4) a. I have played **chess**, as Harry has played **checkers**.
 b. I have played **chess**, as Harry has, ——— **checkers**.
 c. I am playing **chess**, as Harry is playing **checkers**.
 d. I am playing **chess**, as Harry is, ——— **checkers**.

Note the contrastive direct objects, which must receive emphatic stress (indicated by boldfacing them). The subjects receive contrastive stress too, but I will leave them unmarked, for I am more interested in what happens after the verb. Note also the comma after the tensed verbs in (4b) and (4d): for me, there must be a rising intonation just before the pause which, signified by the “—”, marks the site of the deleted main verb.

In the case of a simple present, (5a), we might assume a remote structure containing the classic empty verb *do*. I do not wish to enter the lists about how the appearance and disappearance of this little verb is to be orchestrated; (5a) optionally becomes (5b).

- (5) a. I do play **chess**, as Harry does play **checkers**.
 b. I do play [$>$ play] **chess**, as Harry does (,) ——— **checkers**.

In the case of sequences of auxiliary verbs, the following possibilities are manifested.

- (6) a. I have been playing **chess**, as Harry has been playing **checkers**.
 b. ?I have been playing **chess**, as Harry has been, ——— **checkers**. \leq
 c. I have been playing **chess**, as Harry has, ————— **checkers**.
- (7) a. I may have been playing **chess**, as Harry may have been playing **checkers**.
 b. ?I may have been playing **chess**, as Harry may have been, ——— **checkers**. \leq
 c. I may have been playing **chess**, as Harry may, ————— **checkers**.
- (8) a. Al may have been being followed **by the NSA**, as I may have been being followed **by the FBI**.
 b. *Al may have been being followed **by the NSA**, as I may have been being ——— **by the FBI**.
 c. Al may have been being followed **by the NSA**, as I may have been, ——— **by the FBI**.
 d. Al may have been being followed **by the NSA**, as I may have, ——— **by the FBI**.
 e. Al may have been being followed **by the NSA**, as I may, ——— **by the FBI**.

The generalization here seems fairly clear: the rule that optionally deletes the main verb under identity can also optionally delete preceding auxiliary verbs under identity, by a process which takes first the rightmost shared auxiliary, and then moves to the left. There is one wrinkle that requires comment: if the passive past

participle is preceded by *being*, when the past participle is deleted, the deletion of *being* is not optional but rather obligatory. The sequence *being + passive past participle* is special in a number of ways, some of which are mentioned in Ross (1991).

But now let us examine what would happen in the case of an *as*-clause whose object was not in contrast with the object of the originating clause. Such a sentence is in (9a). If *As-ing* applies, the ungrammatical *(9b) results, and if the rightmost identical auxiliary is also deleted, *(9c) results.

- (9) a. I have been eating pizza, as he has been eating pizza.
 b. *I have been eating pizza, as he has been, — [pizza/it].
 c. *I have been eating pizza, as he has, — [pizza/it].

I propose that here, a mopping-up rule applies, which deletes (usually obligatorily), any non-contrastive element in the *as*-clause. There are conditions on this mopping up which I will not go into here; some of the relevant facts are displayed in (10).

- (10) a. I have sent money to **Jan**, as he has sent money to **Hella**.
 b. I have sent money to **Jan**, as he has, — ([??money/*it]) to **Hella**.
 c. I have sent **money** to Jan, as he has sent **books** to Jan.
 d. I have sent **money** to Jan, as he has, — **books** (to her).
 e. I have sent **Jan** money, as he has sent **Hella** money.
 f. ??I have sent **Jan** money, as he has, — **Hella** ([*money/*it]).
 g. I have sent Jan **money**, as he has sent Jan **books**.
 h. ?I have sent Jan **money**, as he has, — ([**Jan/**her]) **books**.

The rule of *As-ing* must be blocked in certain environments – cf. (11).

- (11) a. I will bring **the wine in**, as he will bring **the beer out**.
 b. I will bring **the wine in**, as he will, — **the beer out**.
 c. I will bring **in the wine**, as he will bring **out the beer**.
 d. *I will bring **in the wine**, as he will, — **out the beer**.

I call attention here to a striking similarity between the above analysis and the behavior of the rule of *Gapping* (cf. Hankamer (1979), Ross (1971)). This rule, which only operates in coordinate structures, elides the verb of the second clause under identity with the verb of the first clause. In (12) and (13), I have modified the *As-ing* examples of (10) and (11) to exhibit their similarities to cognate *Gapping* sentences.

- (12) a. I have taken money to **Jan**, and he has taken money to **Hella**.
 b. I have taken money to **Jan**, and he — ([??money/*it]) to **Hella**.
 b'.?I have taken money to **Jan**, and he — taken ([money/it]) to **Hella**.
 c. I have taken **money** to Jan, and he has taken **books** to Jan.
 d. I have taken **money** to Jan, and he — **books** (to her).
 d'.?*I have taken **money** to Jan, and he — taken **books** (to her).
 e. I have taken **Jan** money, and he has taken **Hella** money.
 f.??I have taken **Jan** money, and he — **Hella** ([*money/*it]).
 f'.??I have taken **Jan** money, and he — taken **Hella** ([money/*it]).
 g. I have taken Jan **money**, and he has taken Jan **books**.
 h. ?I have taken Jan **money**, and he — ([**Jan/**her]) **books**.
 h'.?*I have taken Jan **money**, and he — taken ([Jan/her]) **books**.

- (13) a. I will bring **the wine in**, and he will bring **the beer out**.

- b. I will bring **the wine in**, and he ——— **the beer out**.
 c. I will bring **in the wine**, and he will bring **out the beer**.
 d. *I will bring **in the wine**, and he ——— **out the beer**.

Perhaps the most striking parallel here is the way the contrast between (11b) and (11d) matches that between (13b) and (13d). The only differences between the ungapped sentences in (13a) and (13c) is whether the particles *in* and *out* precede or follow their direct objects. For reasons unknown to me, when the particles precede, gapping is rendered impossible. And lo and behold, in precisely this configuration, in (11c), *As-ing* is prevented from deleting the verb *bring*.

A word about how the two verb deletion transformations differ with respect to the treatment of auxiliaries. In a way, they are complementaries: as we see in (12), Gapping requires that the auxiliary bearing the tense be deleted – this has happened in (12b', d', f' and h'). I have not conducted a survey to establish what percentage of speakers accept this kind of gapping, but my impression is that it is a small minority at best. Thus for these speakers, only the gappings in (12b, d, ??f, and ?h) are acceptable, and all of these are worsened if repeated elements remain in the gapped sentences, as I have tried to indicate by the asterisks inside the parentheses in these examples. The default rule for gapping for the largest dialect of English, as far as I know, is that the gap must contain the main verb and all preceding auxiliary verbs, and that the post-gap part of a gapped clause should contain just one contrastively stressed element.

Thus (14a) is preferred to (14b),

- (14)a. I will be writing and he ——— reading. ≥
 b. I will be writing and he — be reading.

and (15a) to (15b),

- (15)a. I will be writing novels and he ——— letters. ≥
 b. I will be writing novels and he — writing letters. >>
 c. I will be writing novels and he — be writing letters.

and (16a) to (16b),

- (16)a. I wrote letters to them and she — cards. >
 b. I wrote letters to them and she — cards to them.

and (16b) to (17),

- (17) I wrote letters to him and she — cards to them.

and (17), with its post-gap sequence of a NP and a PP, is far preferable to (18), with its post-gap sequence of two NP's.

- (18) I wrote him letters and she him cards.

It would take me too far from our main topic to go into further details about gapping, or in fact to point out all of the parallels between these gapping facts and the *As-ing* facts that we see in comparing (10) and (12).

Summing up, however, what we notice in the gappings of two clauses multiple auxiliaries, while the zeroing of all auxiliaries and the main verb is what would make most speakers the happiest, there are speakers who allow progressively greater

subsequences of the auxiliaries to remain, starting from the those closest to the main verb – cf. (19).

- (19)a. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI could have been being followed by the NSA.
b. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI _____ by the NSA.
c. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI _____ followed by the NSA.
d. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI _____ being followed by the NSA.
e. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI _____ been being followed by the NSA.
f. I could have been being followed by the CIA, and
AI _____ have been being followed by the NSA.

By contrast, if we look at a parallel initial *as*-clause containing sentence, and pay attention to the variants it offers, we see a reverse pattern emerging:

- (20)a. I could have been being followed by the CIA, as
AI could have been being followed by the NSA.
b. I could have been being followed by the CIA, as
AI could have been being _____ by the NSA.
c. I could have been being followed by the CIA, as
AI could have been _____ by the NSA.
d. I could have been being followed by the CIA, as
AI could have _____ by the NSA.
e. I could have been being followed by the CIA, as
AI could _____ by the NSA.

The strange complementarity of these two processes can be highlighted by this short statement:

- (21) In Gapping, the auxiliary bearing the tense morpheme must be deleted;
in *As-ing*, this morpheme must not be deleted.

There is another mysterious difference between these two deletion processes: *Gapping* operates only between two or more coordinate clauses; *As-ing* requires only that the clause whose main verb (and optionally, some number of preceding identical auxiliaries) are optionally deleted (I will refer to this clause as *the target clause*) be in the same island as the originating clause, as I will demonstrate in Section III of this paper.

III. How originating clause and target clause must be configured. The Island-mate Condition.

In the examples considered thus far, the *as*-clause has contained only one subordinate clause (the target clause), which, if it bore the requisite structural parallels to the originating clause (whose dominating sentence node immediately dominated the *as*-clause), could have its verb deleted by the rule of *As-ing*. This is the case for (22a); in (22b), *As-ing* has deleted the shared main verb *wash*, and the mopping up rule has deleted *the cats*.

- (22)a. [I will wash the cats [as Sally will wash the cats]_{S₂}]_{S₁} →
 b. [I will wash the cats [as Sally will _____]].

But in (23), we see that another sentence intervenes between originating clause and target clause:

- (23)a. [I will wash the cats [as Bob knows [that Sally will wash the cats]_{S₂}]_{S_a}]_{S₁} →
 b. [I will wash the cats [as Bob knows [that Sally will _____]].

And in (24), a fourth sentence has been interposed:

- (24)a. [I will wash the cats [as everybody says [that Bob knows [that Sally will wash the cats]_{S₂}]_{S_b}]_{S_a}]_{S₁} →
 b. [I will wash the cats [as everybody says [that Bob knows [that Sally will _____]].

Clearly, there is no limit to the number of such interpositions. And yet originating clause and target clause must be in the same island (for a definition of this term, cf. Ross (1986), Chapter 5). The sentences in (25) violate this *island-mate condition*, for various types of island-forming nodes; all are ungrammatical.

- (25)a. * [I will wash the cats [as Bob knows a man [who will _____]].
 b. * [I will wash the cats [as Bob likes me and knows [that Sally will _____]].
 c. * [I will wash the cats [as [that Sally will _____] might upset Tim].

Technically, of course, the sentences S₂, S_a and S_b are not in the same island as the elements dominated by the *as*-clause, because adverbial subordinate clauses are themselves islands. But for ease of exposition, I will disregard this point.

In summary, let me make one point of theoretical interest. In order for the rule of *As-ing*, as I have formulated it, to apply, it must inspect some originating clause (this is easy to find: an originating clause will have an *as*-clause adjoined to it), and then must be able to proceed indefinitely far down into this *as*-clause to find a possible target clause. If the target clause matches it in structure sufficiently, which is not the case in (26) – if *As-ing* were to apply to (26a), the ungrammatical (26b) would result)

- (26)a. [I will wash the cats [as the cats will be washed by Sally]_{S₂}]_{S₁} →
 b. * [I will wash the cats [as the cats will (be) _____ by Sally]].

then the deletion may proceed. This seems to me to be an unusual way for the notion of constraints on extraction to enter into a syntactic process. The *search for a comparable clause* is what is here subject to extraction constraints – though nothing is being extracted. And the search is catalyzed by the presence of *as*, a conjunction, a word to which nothing happens. It just sits there and sops up the milk.

It is slightly reminiscent of the way that the coordinating conjunctions *and* and *or* catalyze the operation of *Gapping*; they are part of the environment for the actual deletion, though nothing happens to them or through them.

I will end with one more parallel between *Gapping* and *As-ing*: as is well known, *as*-clauses exclude negatives (cf. (27a)) and so so does *Gapping* – cf. (27b). Hmm.

- (27)a. I am rich, as my neighbors (*don't) know.
 b. I (*don't) like pizza, and Bill ___ lasagna.

IV. Where *as*-clauses can move to in clauses that dominate them.

If (i) is embedded as a complement,

- (i) •(ok) He •(??) can •(ok) afford •(?) a •(*) Buick, *as we can a Jeep*.

as in (28),

- (28) •(ok) **【_S** I •(*) think •(??) **【_S** that •(?) many •(*) revealed •(*) to •(**) Ann •(??) **【_S** that he •(??) can •(ok) afford •(?) a •(*) Buick, *as we can a Jeep*.**】**

we see that *as*-clauses can appear only at the left margins of higher clauses (marked by '**【_S**'). This distribution – that of a sentence adverb, which can be niched as described roughly above in (2) and (3), but when moved up and out of its clause, can only be inserted to the left of a higher subject, is like nothing that I know of. I do not know what kind of constraint to place on *as*-clauses. Until their distribution is compared with that of other sentence adverbs, when these are moved into higher clauses, I think that the matter is best left open.

V. What kinds of clauses can have *as*-clauses appended to them.

Here the requirement seems to be that an *as*-clause needs sentenciness in its originating clause. If a complement sentence, for example, is highly nouny [Cf. Ross (1973/2004)], it is shunned by *as*-clauses, as we see in (29).

(29)

Sentencier realizations of the embedded proposition



- a. That •(?) Jo •(ok) had •(ok) given •(??) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- b. For •(**) Jo •(??) to •(?) have •(??) given •(??) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- c. Whether •(?) Jo •(ok) had •(ok) given •(??) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was not revealed.
- d. •(??) Jo •(ok) having •(ok) given •(??) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- e. •(*) Jo's •(?) having •(?) given •(??) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- f. •(**) Jo's •(**) giving •(??) of •(**) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- g. •(**) Jo's •(**) giving •(??) of •(**) a cobra •(ok) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.
- h. •(**) Jo's •(**) gift •(**) of •(**) a cobra •(**) to us, *as Mal had*, was unfortunate.

Nounier realizations of the embedded proposition

VI. What kinds of constituents *As*-ing can cause the deletion of.

The following phrase types can be deleted in *as*-clauses:

- (30) a. Adverbs:
 Manny can run fast, *as I (?also) can (?walk) ____*.
 ?He goes to church [often/regularly/for hours], *as I go to the gym (often)*.
- b. AP's (after *be*, and after some, but not after all, verbs):
 Jethro [is/seems/grew] rich, *as his mom [was/seemed/*grew]*.
 She found him attractive, *as he found her ____*.
 ?*We hammered the pots flat, *as they hammered the radiators too ____*.
 ?She leaves the windows open, *as he leaves the back door ____*.
 *Sandra went out drunk, *as Michael came home ____*.
- c. All NP's after *be*, and only occasional NP's after true verbs:
 Crashley [was/will be] a punk, *as his son [was/will (be) ____]*.
 Crashley [became/will become] a punk, *as his son [did/??became/?will become] ____*.
 Grabo wore hats, *as some others in the platoon *(also) wore ____*.
 ?*Grabo invented hats, *as some others in the platoon also invented ____*.
- d. All PP's after *be* [NB: *As*-ing never strands a preposition].
 Some locative PPs after true verbs; almost no directional PPs,
 and no PP's which are not either spatial or temporal:
 We were in LA, *as they were (**in) ____*.
 The meeting was at 4, *as was the final ____*.
 They will stay in NY, *as we will (*stay) ____*.
 I have been to NY, *as he has (??been) ____*.
 I will walk to NY, *as he will (?hop) ____*.
 *I dreamt of Jeannie with the long brown tail, *as they all dreamt ____*.

VII. Negation and *as*- clauses.

Negation is always up for leading overtaxed semantacticians a new wild goose chase. *As*-ing leaps at the chance to baffle. The relevant (daringly true) generalization would seem to be that in (12):

- (31) Sometimes negative triggers can't appear in *as*-clauses.

Horrific examples (a starter kit) appear in (32)

- (32) a. Bill will run, as Tony [never will/*will never] ____.
 b. Bill ran, as Tony [did not/ *didn't] ____ . NB: *as* = *as Tony ran*.

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