Meaning without form? Verbal ellipsis within Semiotactics

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Introduction

One of the fundamental starting points of Semiotactics as put forward by Carl Ebeling (1978, 2006) is that language consists of form-meaning units, and that syntax concerns the interrelations between the meanings of the constituent forms. The goal of this paper is to investigate how one can deal within Semiotactics with constructions where the relation between form and meaning is less straightforward. More specifically I will deal with the phenomenon of verbal 'ellipsis'.[1] What ellipsis is, and whether it exists at all, has been a topic of discussion for more than a century, but as a starting point I will adopt the following definition of ellipsis given by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Matthews 1997:111): "The omission of one or more elements from a construction, especially when they are supplied by the context."

In this paper I will give an analysis of various verbal elliptical phenomena known from the literature within the semiotactic framework set forth by Ebeling (1978, 2006). In Ebeling's main work, *Syntax and Semantics* (1978), the term 'ellipsis' is used only once with respect to Dutch sentences like *ziek is een geldige reden voor verzuim* (literally, 'sick is a valid reason for absence') (Ebeling 1978:282). Ebeling probably uses the term 'ellipsis' for this construction because his semantic-syntactic presupposes a participant (the person that is sick), which is not expressed by a form. The same construction is, however, analyzed somewhat differently by Ebeling in *Semiotaxis* (2006:199-200), and the term 'ellipsis' is not used anymore, probably because the idea of an omitted linguistic element, which is usually associated with the term 'ellipsis', does not suit the theory of Semiotactics very well. It should be

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[1] Within (Chomskian) generative approaches to language, ellipsis is analyzed in terms of unpronounced linguistic structures (see e.g. Merchant 2001). It should be noted that whether or not presumed elliptical utterances are in fact instances of omission has been a matter of heated debates within linguistics already for more than a century. In Dutch linguistics, for example, Van Ginneken (1910) took a stance against nineteenth century linguists that explained elliptical phenomena in terms of unpronounced structure in his article Ellipsomanie (Ellipsomania). Present day linguists have put forward similar ideas for all or some types of ellipsis (e.g. Stainton 2006, Elguardo & Stainton 2005, Culicover and Jackendoff 2005; Dalrymple et al. 1991).

noted that I use the term 'ellipsis' merely for the sake of convenience, without adhering to the theoretical point of view that it requires a linguistic form that is omitted. In the same vein, I will stick to the labels for different elliptical constructions commonly accepted in the general linguistic literature.

1   Types of verbal ellipsis

1.1 Semantic-syntactically-dependent verbal ellipsis: gapping & pseudo-gapping

Consider the following sentences from English, Russian, and Dutch respectively:

(1)   But he ... he wants to marry her, and she him. (*British National Corpus*; BNC)

(2)   *Proverjaj   ty   škaf,   a ja   – vešalku.*
         check-IMP.2SG you-NOM   closet   and I-NOM   hatstand
         'You search the closet, I will check the hatstand' (V. Belousova, *Vtoroj vystrel*)

(3)   *Vandaag ga ik om vijf uur naar huis, maar morgen om zeven uur.*
         'Today I go home at five o'clock, but tomorrow at seven o'clock.'

In the general linguistic literature this construction is known under the label "gapping", and for matters of convenience I will stick to this terminology. The construction consists of two sentences (clauses); the first with a verb – analyzable as the 'antecedent' – the second without verb.[2] In the elliptical clause, two other constituents are present, either the valences of the verb as in (1) and (2) or two other constituents, as in (3), where we find temporal expressions. The construction requires coordinating contexts or non-coordinating contexts that convey semantic parallelism or contrast (e.g. Culicover and Jackendoff 2005:277; Kehler 2002:81, 85). As is observed in the literature, this relation of parallelism is mirrored in the specific information structure (sentence stress and intonation) of gapping constructions, more specifically in the presence of two contrastive foci (see e.g. Padučeva & Ljaščenko 1973; Culicover and Jackendoff 2005).

A comparison between English, Dutch and Russian shows that even though the construction requires semantic parallelism, there are differences between languages

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[2] In Russian, but not in Dutch or English, the construction is possible (albeit infrequent) in contexts where the first clause is verbless, and the second clause contains a verb:
    Ja naučnuju stat'ju, a on detektiv čitaet. (van Oirsouw 1987:122)
        Lit. 'I a scientific article, and he a detective novel reads.'

as to what constitutes a sufficient context of semantic parallelism. In English the second clause is usually introduced by *and* or other coordinative forms such as *or, rather than, instead of*:

(4)   Now I was ready to take on the guards and he was calming me, rather than me him. (BNC)

(5)   Yet fear it I did, so greatly did the idea come to me that if I took her up to the cave to meet Elsbeth, she would somehow have trapped me instead of I her. (BNC)

In contrast to English and Dutch, for example, in Russian the construction may, if specific semantic conditions of parallelism and contrast are met, also be introduced by forms such as *esli* ('if'), and *prežde čem* ('before'):

(6)   *[E]sli   bolit   želudok   – primi   Imodium,*
        if   hurts   stomach-NOM – take   Imodium-ACC

        esli   golova   – šipučij   ėfferalgan   "Upsa"
        if   head-NOM   – sparkling-ACC tablet-ACC   Upsa
        'If your stomach hurts – take Imodium, if your head aches, a sparkling tablet Upsa.' (A. Zykova, *Slušaj svoe telo*)

(7)   *Ona   uvidala   ego,   prežde čem   on   ee (...).*
        she-NOM   saw   he-ACC before   he-NOM   she-ACC
        'She saw him, before he saw her.' (L. Tolstoj, *Anna Karenina*)

I will now turn to the way the gapping construction can be analyzed within the theory of Semiotactics. Ebeling (1978:163-164, 222-225) discusses a similar construction in terms of so-called 'doubled meanings', and the same analysis is given by Ebeling in *Semiotaxis* (2006:283). The analysis in terms of 'doubled meanings' means that the (semantic) correlate of the verb is repeated in the semantic-syntactic representation of the sentence, where it occupies a syntactic position. The meaning of the verb and the meaning of the doubled verb are divergent. This means that it is not part of the meaning of the construction but part of the interpretation of the construction whether or not the meaning of the verb and the doubled meaning share the same referent.[3]

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[3] It should be stressed that this analysis differs from generative Chomskian analyses of the construction because such approaches postulate unpronounced linguistic forms.

Below a semantic-syntactic representation is given of a gapping-construction. The numbered 'D' repeats an element given earlier, and all the elements which are dominated by this element with the exception of the IC's that are explicitly replaced in the representation (cf. Ebeling 1978:244, and 2006:284).

(8)   He wants to marry her and she him.

$$\Sigma \ / \ PR$$
$$^a\text{he} = [x; x = y + z]$$
$$[y; x = y + z] ; \quad \Sigma$$
$$^a\text{X} = [\text{wishing}] \ ^1$$
$$\Sigma = [\text{wished} \ ]$$
$$^a\text{X} = [\text{marrying}] \ ^2$$
$$[\text{married} \ ] ; \text{her}$$
$$[z; x = y + z] ; \quad \Sigma$$
$$\text{she} = [\text{D} \ ] \ ^1$$
$$[\ `` \ ] ; \ \Sigma$$
$$\text{X} = [\text{D} \ ] \ ^2$$
$$[\ `` \ ] ; \text{him}$$

The most natural interpretation is that the subject of the first clause is coreferent with the object of the second clause, and that the object of the second clause is coreferent with the subject of the first clause, but this is not part of the meaning of the construction itself; hence it is not part of the semantic-syntactic representation.[4] In the representation I have not indicated the four contrastive foci, which are an inherent part of the construction, but this can be added to the representation (see e.g. Ebeling (1978:405-407) for an analysis of topicalization and emphasis).

In the examples discussed by Ebeling (both 1978 and 2006) the same meaning is represented twice, but as the Russian example (2) shows, the information about person or even mood may differ. The gapping construction requires, however, that the lexical meaning is identical. This explains why sentences like the following are not acceptable: *I ate a sandwich and she a glass of milk.* Restrictions such as these sustain an analysis in terms of semantic doubling. English also has a construction that is quite similar to the gapping construction, but which contains an auxiliary

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[4] In Semiotactics such cases differ from sentences where the syntactic-semantic representation contains a participant that is not formally expressed as in the following Dutch sentence: *Jan gaf Guus een duurder cadeau dan Gerrit* (Lit. 'Jan gave Guus a more expensive gift than Gerrit'). In this sentence 'Jan' can be the first participant and 'Gerrit' the second, or 'Gerrit' the first participant and 'Guus' the second. In his syntactic-semantic notation Ebeling (2006:286) indicates these semantic relations with superscripts.

such as *would, can, have* in the elliptical part of the construction. This construction, which is not discussed by Ebeling, is labeled 'pseudo-gapping' in the general linguistic literature (allegedly introduced by Stump 1977).

This construction is often triggered by comparative and comparative-like contexts with *as, like, the way, as…as* (all expressing similarity), *more than* (expressing the comparative), etc.:

(9)   Do you think women feel that they can approach you more easily than they would a male director? (BNC)

(10)   You can't house-train it as you can a cat. (BNC)

(11)   Why, sir, she is a poor, innocent, young creature and I believe has so much confidence in me that she would take my advice as soon as she would her mother's. (BNC)

In these sentences only the second valence of the verb is accented (*You can't house-train it as you can a cât)*, and the structure of parallelism and contrast typical of the gapping construction is absent.[5]

Sentences with a contrastive structure and two focused elements do, however, occur, for example in (12), where the elliptical clause is introduced by *and,* and the use of the auxiliary is triggered by the use of *have* in the first clause:

(12)   I have emailed him and he has me on several occasions over the years.[i] [6]

Again, we also find this construction with a modal auxiliary and *too,* expressing parallelism:

(13)   This man scares me to death and he should the rest of the country too.[i]

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[5] In Culicover and Jackendoff's (2006:295) syntactic representation of the pseudo-gapping construction the expressed non-verbal elements of the elliptical construction (so-called 'orphans' in their terminology) are NP's (and as such, part of the valence of the non-expressed verb). This probably explains why they analyze the following sentence as an instance of VP-ellipsis (Culicover & Jackendoff 2006:291): Sue sneezed on Thursday, and Sam will on Friday. In my view, this is a rather counterintuitive analysis because of the presence of the two contrastive foci in this sentence. Also note that in the case of the gapping construction, they do not have the requirement that the 'orphans' are NP's (Culicover & Jackendoff 2006:276).

[6] The example sentences marked with the superscript i are quoted from the Internet; the websites used are listed in the References.

The 'pseudo-gapping construction' can also occur as a separate intonational unit (formal sentence), especially in informal language (the accents are added by me):

(14)   The wife has never been up here. In a normal relationship wouldn't she travel to see him too? I would mŷ husband. [message to be conveyed: 'I (know I) would travel to see my husband']. [i]

(15)   'Can you put a collar on a rabbit?' 'Yes, you can a cât collar.' [i]

Even though the pseudo-gapping construction does not necessarily require two foci, the information structure and semantics of such sentences is similar to those without auxiliary (gapping) because of the focus on the second valence. This could be taken as an indication that the pseudo-gapping construction should be analyzed essentially in the same way – i.e. in terms of semantic doubling – as the gapping construction discussed earlier.[7] An additional argument for an analysis in terms of semantic doubling is that the (last) focused element in the elliptical part of the construction is part of the valency structure of the non-expressed (doubled) verb (e.g. *You can't house-train it as you can a cat*).

Below a semantic-syntactic representation is given of an instance of the pseudogapping construction in terms of semantic doubling.

(16)   You can house-train it as you can a cat.

$$\Sigma \,/\, \text{PR}$$
$$^a\text{you} = [x;\, x\ \text{can}\ y]$$
$$[y;\, x\ \text{can}\ y]\,;\ \ \Sigma$$
$$^a\text{X} = [\text{housetraining}]\ ^1 > [z;\, z\ \text{AS}\ u]$$
$$[\text{housetrained}]\,;\ \text{it}$$
$$[u;\, z\ \text{AS}\ u]\,;\ \ \Sigma$$
$$\text{you} = [v;\, v\ \text{can}\ w]$$
$$[w;\, v\ \text{can}\ w]\,;\ \Sigma$$
$$\text{X} = [\text{D}]\ ^1$$
$$[\,\text{"}\,]\,;\ \text{cat}$$

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[7] In Dutch the use of an auxiliary without verb is possible – at least for most speakers of Dutch – in sentences where the first clause does not contain a main verb:

Jan   heeft   rozen,   en   Pieter   [heeft] lelies   aan   Marie gegeven.
John has   roses,   and Peter   has   lilies to   Mary given
'John has [given] roses, and Peter has given lilies to Mary.'

(Note that even though the most natural interpretation is that the *you* in the elliptical sentence is coreferent with the *you* in the first part of the sentence (in both cases they refer to a generic *you*), this is not necessarily the case. Because of this the coreference is not indicated with a superscript.)

1.2 Context dependent verbal ellipsis: VP-ellipsis

Within the (formal) syntactic literature the term "verbal phrase ellipsis" (VPE) is used for various types of sentences, which all have in common that the verbal phrase is omitted.[8] I will divide this construction into three types, which, as I will explain later, all have in common that the main verb of the sentence is part of the construction. First consider the following English sentences:

(17)   He toyed with the idea of telling her she wasn't woman enough for him, but decided not to. (BNC)

(18)   British fishermen are beginning to use lines rather than nets, but they are selling to the Continent because they'd be daft not to. (BNC)

(19)   I don't know her, but I would like to. (BNC)

(20)   If you want to, you can expand it to fill the complete display by using a suitable expansion algorithm. (BNC)

In these sentences we find a verb that is always associated with a second participant (second valence). The first participant (subject) of the verb is either explicitly given, or given by the preceding context as in (17). This second participant, however, is not expressed, but only hinted at by the infinitival *to* form, which does nothing more than to express that the valence associated with the verb is a situation (cf. Ebeling 2006:426). Note, however, as is underscored by (17), that the semantic antecedent of the *to*-phrase does not need to be an infinitive. Because of the presence of *to*, sentences like these differ from cases with valency reduction (see Ebeling 2006 for this term):

(21)   Have you decided yet?

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[8] I will not go into the question what a verbal phrase exactly is, since this is not relevant for the semiotactic analysis, which does not make use of this syntactic category. For the sake of convenience, I will, however, use the term verbal phrase ellipsis.

Such constructions less clearly suggest the idea of a situation. As such, such constructions are comparable to sentences with verbs like *to start*, which cannot occur with *to* if the verb is not expressed, and which can easily occur with nominal (gerund) complements:

(22)   When I first started to smoke a cigarette, I felt ill but I kept on because everyone else was doing it, but with sniffing glue when I first tried it I enjoyed it, it's something I did enjoy, that's the reason I started anyway. (BNC)

A full analysis of this construction should explain the difference in use between the elliptical construction and the corresponding non-elliptical construction. Such an analysis falls beyond the scope of this paper, but I will make a few observations. In the first three sentences (17, 18 and 19), the use of the construction seems to be triggered by a contrast between the first part of the construction and the second part of the construction. Note for example that (17) can only occur in the context of negation, or if the idea that a decision not to do something is denied: *Wasn't going to head out today, cold and grey, but decided to anyway.* Similarly, in (19) there is a contrast between the first part (the speaker does not know her) and the second part (but would like to know her). Obviously, the notion of contrast is absent in (20), where the elliptical clause occurs as the first part of the sentence. In this sentence, there is no real corresponding full counterpart of the construction, and the main information of the subordinate clause is that the speaker expresses that there are no boundaries against the realization of the situation mentioned in the main clause. The occurrence of such sentences clearly suggests that an analysis in terms of the copying of unpronounced linguistic structures is not valid for this construction.

There is a second type of VP-ellipsis where the verbs *have*, *will*, or *do* are emphasized (see Ebeling 1978:406; for analysis of the phenomenon of emphasis):

(23)   I'll read to him to make him laugh and he will. (BNC)

(24)   Has that happened? Yes, it has.

(25)   I'm going to look after you — it's time someone did — and we'll think of some ways and means. (BNC)

Finally, verbal phrase ellipsis occurs with modal verbs such as *should* with *too*:

(26)   Events like that would help convince charitable trusts with thousands of pounds at their disposal that the people of Darlington are backing the appeal and they should too. (BNC)

(27)   Others stood, so she could too, it would not be for long. (BNC)

Now, let's turn to the analysis of the construction. Ebeling (1978) provides two examples of this construction: *He wanted to do it but he couldn't* (1978:409), and *He did it because he wanted to* (Ebeling 1978:246). In his analysis (Ebeling 1978:164-167), the interpretation of the non-expressed valence of the auxiliary is explained in terms of the notion of deixis, more specifically in terms of the semantic particle 'SPEC' (specimen), which he defines as 'belonging to THE set'.[9] Ebeling argues that a semantic particle is deictic if: (i) it contains, as one of its constituents, a projection of a feature which cannot be defined without mentioning the frame of reference; and (ii) if the required information from the frame of reference is not supplied by the utterance to which the occurrence of the deictic element belongs.

If we apply this to VP-ellipsis, this means that the verb can *only* be interpreted correctly if we know the frame of reference (usually given by the preceding sentence, or clause), because the necessary information is not part of the construction itself (cf. the analysis of VP-ellipsis in terms of anaphor such as the one given by Dalrymple et al. 1991, or Prüst et al. 1994). At the same time though, Ebeling's analysis underscores that the verb in the construction is not conceptually 'incomplete' or 'elliptical', in the same way as a deictic element like *it* is not conceptually incomplete, but just has an abstract deictic meaning. With respect to *He wanted to do it but he couldn't*, Ebeling also remarks that this sentence consists of two separate semantic sentences, that is, two independent semantic-syntactic units. As such, this clearly differs from the gapping construction that is analyzed in terms of one semantic-syntactic sentence.

Below a semantic-syntactic representation is given of an instance of the construction:

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[9] For a definition of 'THE', see Ebeling (1978: 165-166). Also note Ebeling's semantic notations 'KNOWN' (shorthand for 'THE . SPEC') (Ebeling 1978: 216, 284). In Ebeling (2006), these notions are not discussed. Ebeling must however, be aware of sentences like these since he provides the following Dutch sentence (without giving a semantic representation): *Heb je dat genoteerd? Ja dat heb ik* [Lit.'Have you noted that down? Yes, that I have'] (Ebeling 2006: 390). Note that in informal spoken Dutch in such cases the object can also be omitted: *Ja, heb ik.* ['Yes, I have'] Ebeling (2006: 222) also discusses similar sentences such as *Weet ik* ['I know'], and argues that the object of the verb must be part of the semantic representation of the sentence. This suggests that he would probably give a representation in terms of the notion of valency reduction (2006: 245).

(28)   I don't know her, but I would like to.

        '... ∑ / NPR
          ^{a}I = [wishing]
              [wished] ;   ∑
                        ^{a}X = [liking]
                        ∑ = [liked]
                ^{a}X = SPEC ...'

1.3   Semantic doubling, deixis and verbal ellipsis with a WH-element (sluicing)

As I have shown, Semiotactics provides us with two types of approaches to verbal ellipsis. First, some types of ellipsis are analyzed in terms of semantic doubling. This means that the semantic correlate of a verbal form is repeated in the same semantic-syntactic structure. Second, the elliptical sentence can function as a fully independent (semantic-syntactic) clause, and the information necessary to interpret the elliptical sentence is provided by the larger context in much the same way as anaphoric forms like *it* need context in order to be interpreted correctly. This raises the question whether it is possible to distinguish between these two approaches. Are there clear criteria to decide in which case one can analyze an 'elliptical' construction in terms of deixis, and in which case one can give an analysis in terms of semantic doubling?

Let us first take a closer look at the conditions for semantic doubling. Ebeling (1978) provides examples of semantic doubling in coordinated sentences and in sentences with a comparative, similar to the gapping and pseudo-gapping constructions discussed here. Note, however, that Ebeling (2006) also uses semantic doubling in contexts without coordination. This is for example the case in the Dutch construction *Wat ik in Amerika gedaan heb is Engels gestudeerd* [Lit. 'What I did in America is studied English'; *gestudeerd* is a perfect participle]. Ebeling (2006:420) argues that in the semantic representation of this sentence the referent of the auxiliary (*heb*) has to be doubled because otherwise an important link is missing between the parts of the sentence. This is probably the case because the perfective participle is part of the valence of 'hebben' and cannot occur on its own, at least not in formal written Dutch.[10] This suggests that the condition for semantic doubling is

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[10] Sentences with so-called 'auxiliary drop', however, do occur in informal spoken Dutch: *Lekker gegeten?* ['Eaten well?']

that the elliptical sentence cannot occur on its own, and that one needs to double the meaning in order to account for the syntactic status of the constituents of the elliptical part of the sentence.[11] Apparently, this differs from a sentence with VP-ellipsis such as *I would like to*, where the main elements of the sentence are expressed (auxiliary, infinitive) and which can be seen as a 'fully fledged' semantic sentence. Also note that in this respect, VP-ellipsis differs from pseudo-gapping because in the case of pseudo-gapping such as *You can't house-train it as you can a cat*, one needs to double the meaning of the verb in order to account for *a cat*.

I will now turn to yet another type of ellipsis which shows that the question of whether one can analyze a construction in terms of semantic doubling or not is not easy to answer after all. Consider the following sentences from English, Dutch and Russian, respectively:

(29)   She said something, I no longer remember what. (BNC)

(30)   (...) *er moet één persoon per dienst weg. En* (...) *'t hoofd van de dienst moet maar beslissen wie.* (CGN)
        'at every department one person has to leave. And it's up to the head of the department to decide who.'

(31)   *Vy   podoslany,   i ja znaju   kem.* (RNC)
        you   send-PST.PART.PASS.NOM.PL,   and I   know   who-INS
        'You are sent, and I know by whom.'

This type of ellipsis, which is not discussed by Ebeling, has been analyzed extensively by generative (Chomskian) syntacticians who call it 'sluicing' (see e.g. Ross 1969; the term 'sluicing' implicitly refers to the idea of movement, part of Chomskian syntactic frameworks). The instances of the construction given above have the following semantic-syntactic structure: (i) an independent semantic-syntactic sentence, (ii) another sentence (often introduced by a coordinative element) which contains a bivalent verb. This verb requires a second valence that is associated with a situation. In the construction, the second valence of this verb is a WH-element with a relative function (in Ebeling's terms 'bivalent use of WH'). The second valence of the WH-element (the 'situational' part) is not formally expressed, even though with the WH-element *how*, it is possible to use the infinitival marker *to*:

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[11] Even in the case of gapping, it is not entirely true that the elliptical part cannot occur on its own. If the frame of reference provides enough information, a sentence like the following is perfectly fine: *Ok, you the red rose, and you the white rose.* [a red and a white rose are for example divided amongst two people, or one person has to cut the red rose and the other the white rose].

(32)   She wanted to make amends but didn't know how to. (BNC)

The semantic role (first participant, second participant, etc.) or the case of the WH-element is determined by the first clause. The two sentences can have their own intonational contour (i.e. they can be two formal sentences), and in spoken language there may be a relatively large amount of linguistic material in-between them (see for example Alcántara & Bertomeu 2005). Note, that there are also sentences where the elliptical part does not contain a verb and where it is difficult – if not impossible – for the elliptical part to be a separate formal sentence. This is for example the case in the following sentence, where the WH-element *who* is part of the valency structure of the verb *know* in the first part of the following sentence (the accents are added by me):

(33)   [I]t's not whât you know that counts, but whô. (BNC)

In order to decide whether the sluicing construction can be analyzed in terms of semantic doubling the question needs to be answered whether the two sentences (e.g. (i) *She said something*, (ii) *I no longer remember what*) constitute two separate semantic-syntactic sentences or not, and whether the elliptical part of the sentence can occur as an independent sentence. In my view, there are arguments for as well as against this analysis.

An argument in favor of an analysis in terms of one semantic-syntactic sentence is that the WH-element is syntactically linked to the non-elliptical antecedent. Note for example that in (31) the instrumental case of the WH-element can only be explained with reference to the passive past participle in the antecedent. However, in comparison to the gapping and the pseudo-gapping construction an elliptical sentence like (29) (*I no longer remember what*) is less 'incomplete', and it is the frame of reference which should supply the hearer with information to interpret *what* correctly here in a similar way as the interpretation of the interrogative in the complete utterance *('I met someone yesterday.')* *'Who?'* is dependent on the frame of reference. Furthermore, in contrast to the gapping construction, the verbal meaning that would be doubled is not always very straightforward. Consider for example the following sentence:

(34)   It was obvious that someone had robbed the company of a great deal of
        money and Craig was trusting her to find out who. (BNC)

Even though one could argue that in this sentence, the information 'someone had robbed the company of a great deal of money' is doubled, one could also argue that the information that is implied is more fuzzy and might as well be 'what the identity

was of that person' or 'who has done that'.[12]

In sum: there do not seem to be clear criteria to decide when one has to analyze this elliptical construction in terms of semantic doubling or in terms of deixis. To illustrate the possibility of analyzing the construction in terms of semantic doubling, below a representation is given of the construction notated as semantic doubling (cf. the full construction as given by Ebeling 1978:329-333; 2006:307):

(35)   She said something, I remember what.

$$\Sigma \,/\, \text{NPR} \qquad\qquad :: \quad \Sigma \,/\, \text{NPR}$$

<div>

^{a}she = [saying] ^{1} | I = [remembering]

[said   ] ; something | [remembered] ; [x; x WHAT y]

[y; x WHAT y] ; Σ

^{a}X = [D] ^{1}

</div>

2   Conclusion, further remarks and voice switch

In my view, in the case of verbal ellipsis it is possible to make a distinction between an analysis in terms of semantic doubling and an analysis in terms of deixis. However, this distinction is not clear-cut, and in the case of some constructions it is difficult to determine fully objectively which analysis applies. In the end, the main difference is to which extent the elliptical part functions as a separate sentence, and to which degree it is syntactically integrated with the non-elliptical part of the sentence (the antecedent) (see Smessaert et al. 2005 for this term). On the one side of the spectrum we find the gapping construction and the pseudo-gapping construction, and on the other side VP-ellipsis. The sluicing construction seems to be an intermediate case. In order for the specific syntactic analysis to make sense, it would be good if the semantic-syntactic representation would have predicative power with respect to the use of the construction. Interestingly, this can be illustrated with respect to the phenomenon of 'voice switch'. As has been observed in the literature, the different types of verbal ellipsis behave differently with respect to voice switch (see for example Merchant 2007, 2008, for an overview). The so-called gapping, pseudo-gapping and sluicing constructions do not allow for voice switch. The following examples are from Merchant (2007):

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[12] Also note that Ebeling (1978:154) argues with respect to one-word sentences such as 'John's', that they have to be analyzed in terms of SPEC or KNOWN.

Gapping:

(36)   *Some bring roses and lilies by others.

(37)   *Lilies are brought by some and others roses.

Pseudo-gapping:

(38)   *Some brought roses, but lilies were by others.

Sluicing:

(39)   *Joe was murdered but we don't know who.

(40)   *Someone murdered Joe, but we don't know who by.

In all these cases voice mismatch only occurs in the context of ellipsis, and the full counterparts of (36-40) are fully acceptable. This differs from the VP-ellipsis-construction, which allows for voice switch, at least in many contexts:[13]

(41)   This information could have been released by Gorbachev, but he chose not to. (Hardt 1993:131)

(42)   The system can be used by anyone who wants to. (Merchant 2008:169)

(43)   This problem was to have been looked into, but obviously nobody did. (Kehler 2002:5)

(44)   'Slippery slope' arguments can be framed by consequentialist (though I wouldn't in this case). (Merchant 2007:5)

(45)   To be frank, all those programs in startup can be disabled, but it is advised not to…

The restrictions mentioned here could be explained using the insights from Semiotactics in the following way. In the gapping and pseudo-gapping construction, voice switch is not possible because of the doubled meanings, which require

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[13] As is observed in the literature (e.g. Kehler 2000, 2002, Arragerui et al 2006, Kertz 2008) voice switch is not acceptable in all VPE-contexts with *do*-support. It is for example infelicitous in sentences like the following with *too*:

  *The material was skipped by the instructors and the TA's did too. (Kertz 2008: 283)

  *This problem was looked into by John, and Bob did too. (Kehler 2000:34)

There are different approaches to such restrictions. Kehler argues that whether a parallel linguistic antecedent is required or not depends on particular discourse coherence relations. More specifically, he argues that in the case of so-called Resemblance relations – exemplified among others by a so-called parallel-relation (*too*) – voice switch is not possible. Arragerui et al (2006) defend a syntactic and processing approach, which means that they assign internal structure to the elliptical construction. Finally, Kertz (2008) tries to account for the restriction on voice switch in

identical voice. This requirement has to do with the different presentational arrangements ('assemblage' in terms of Semiotactics) of the active and passive voice, which are correlated with different syntactic-semantic structures. Furthermore, the information structure of the construction, especially in the case of the gapping construction, shows that the antecedent and the elliptical part of the construction are strongly syntactically integrated (see Smessaert et al. 2005 for this term).[14] In the case of VP-ellipsis, voice switch is possible – at least in some contexts – because the elliptical clause functions as an independent semantic sentence. Also note that in a VP-ellipsis construction, voice is expressed by the finite verb, which is part of the construction.

In the case of ellipsis with a WH-element the WH-element is syntactically dependent on the other clause, and as such, it is to be expected that the voice must be the same. However, as I have indicated, sluicing also shows features that would make an analysis in terms of deixis possible. The point I want to make is that it is interesting to note that the theoretically intermediate status of sluicing is also reflected in its behavior with respect to voice switch, at least in Dutch. There are in fact instances with sluicing where voice switch is possible, especially in non-formal language. The following sentence is from an Internet forum.

The discourse topic is whether a particular television program/channel will start broadcasting again, and if so, on what cable company/television provider. The point is that it is not yet known which cable company will broadcast a particular program:[15]

(46) *Je ziet alleen maar dat ze vanaf 29 oktober willen uitzenden via digitale tv, maar ze zeggen niet door wie.*[i][16]

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terms of information structure (topic focus division).

[14] This probably explains why some sentences with pseudo-gapping and voice switch seem to be more acceptable than similar instances with gapping. According to the native speakers I consulted, the following sentence was quite acceptable: *My article would be published by them sooner than they would someone else's.* Perhaps this is due to the repetition of *would* here.

[15] Sentences where the elliptical clause is passive and the full clause (antecedent) is active also seem to occur in English, for example: *I don't know by whom, or how, but someone has been using my debit card number at gas stations in another state on the opposite coast from where I live.*

[16] It should be noted that in Dutch the passive marker *door* ('by') can also be applied to a noun, e.g.:
  – *Hè nee nou d'r zou een gewone bloemschikcursus komen.*
  – *Nee liturgisch bloemschikken.*
  – *Oh. Door wie? (CGN)*
['Well, no there was going to be a normal flower arrangement course.' 'No, flower arrangement for the church.' 'O. By whom?']
In (47), however, no such noun is available. Also note that in (46), the form itself does not express that *wie* ('who') is the actor. One could, for example, also paraphrase the sentence with '*door wie ze zullen laten uitzenden*' [Lit. 'by whom they will let (them) broadcast'].

(Lit.) 'You only see that they want to start broadcasting from October the 29-th via digital television, but they do not say by whom.'

Similarly, there are also sentences where the voice is switched from passive to active:

(47)   *Hij gaf aan beschoten te zijn door een persoon maar wist niet wie.*[i]
         (Lit.) 'He indicated that he had been shot by a person, but didn't know who.'

In this sentence the phrase *wist niet wie* functions as a separate marker to question to identity of someone similar to *didn't know who that was.* (cf. pseudo-sluicing in generative grammar). Whether or not one accepts such sentences, they do occur, and a linguistic analysis should account for that, as well as for the fact that no such sentences occur with gapping. A semiotactic analysis along the lines given here may provide further insight into this. I leave the specific details of the analysis for further research. Finally, the above discussion has shown that one of the basic starting points of Semiotactics – the difference between meaning and interpretation – it not always easy to make in the case of individual sentences. In my view, this is a topic that deserves more attention.