"Sloppy" identity reading and sluicing-like constructions in Mandarin, Uyghur and Mongolian

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Introduction

- In this talk, we focus on an interpretive phenomenon found in ellipsis contexts.
- Sentences with ellipsis can be ambiguous between two readings if their antecedents contain an anaphoric expression.
 - "Sloppy" identity reading
 - Strict identity reading
- For example, VP-ellipsis in English:
- (1) John <u>scratched his arm</u> and Mary **did so**, too. (Ross 1967, p.348)
 - a. "Sloppy" identity reading: Mary scratched her arms.
 - b. Strict identity reading: Mary scratched John's arms.



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- Rather than deriving "sloppy" identity reading can be derived, we survey the distribution of "sloppy" identity reading.
- Precisely, we look at a type of constructions that involves deletion, namely, sluicing-like constructions (SCs).
- (2) Ralph is going to invite somebody to the party, but they don't know [**who**]. (Ross 1969, p.252)
 - SCs involve a radically reduced embedded clausal structures, whose interpretation depends on materials in the antecedent clause.

- SCs are found across languages, including Mandarin, Mongolian, and Uyghur.
- A Mandarin example:

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- (3) 張三看到某人,但是我不知道 [是誰] 。
 Zhangsan kandao mouren, danshi wo bu zhidao [**shi shei**].
 Zhangsan saw someone but I not know be who 'Zhangsan saw somebody, but I dont know who.'
- (4) [Zhangsan kandao mouren], [danshi wo bu zhidao shi shei.]



antecedent clause

hosting clause



- An on-going debate surrounding Mandarin SCs concerns what types of **silent elements** are responsible for the clausal interpretation.
- Existing proposals boil down to the debate over
 - **surface anaphor** (with elided structures) vs.
 - **deep anaphora** (without elided structures)
- The main difference concerns whether SCs involve syntactically accessible internal structures (Hankamer and Sag 1976).

• Illustrations of the two prominent families of proposals:

(5) Surface anaphora

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(Wang and Wu 2006; Wei 2009; Song and Yoshida 2017)

- a. SCs involve **an elided structure**, and [shei] is fronted before ellipsis.
- b. Step 1: ... shi shei [ta kandao de] (movement)
 Step 2: ... shi shei [ta kandao de] (clausal ellipsis)

(6) **Deep anaphora**

(Wei 2004; Adams and Tomioka 2012; Y.-H. A. Li 2014; Li and Wei 2017, 2023)

- a. SCs involve a non-elided structure, whose subject is a null pronoun.
- b. ... *pro* **shi shei** ... Cf. ta/na shi shei

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- This talk contributes to the debate by examining the "sloppy" identity reading in Mandarin, Mongolian, and Uyghur.
 - Through a comparative perspective, we provide new evidence for a deep anaphora account of Mandarin SCs.
 - We also uncover that Uyghur SCs pattern with Mandarin, in contrast with Mongolian.
- The road map/argumentation
 - **①** "Sloppy" reading is likewise attested in SCs in these languages.
 - 2 But the availability of "sloppy" reading does not resolve the surface vs. deep anaphora issue.
 - 3 It is the distribution of "sloppy" reading that is informative.



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- Sloppy reading in SCs



- "Sloppy" reading in SCs
- (7) I know how to say I'm sorry, and Bill knows **how**, too. (Ross 1969, p.274) "Sloppy" reading: Bill knows how to say he's sorry.
 - Also in Mandarin, taken from Wei (2009, (6)):
- (8) 張三;知道誰在批評他;,但李四不知道 [是誰] 。
 Zhangsan; zhidao [shei zai piping tai], dan Lisi bu zhidao **shi shei**.
 Zhangsan know who PROG criticize him but Lisi not know be who
 "Sloppy" reading: 'Zhangsan knows who is criticizing him, but Lisi doesn't know who (is criticizing Lisi).'

Bai (2023) reports similar patterns in Mongolian and Uyghur.

(9) Mongolian (p.144)

- a. Batu-Ø [öber-tegen yayun-du oyčura-yda-ysan]-iyan
 Batu-NOM self-DAT.REF.POSS what-DAT fire-PASS-PERF-REF.POSS mede-xü ügei,
 know-INF not
 (Lit.) 'Batu doesn't know why self was fired,'
- b. getele Tana-Ø [yaγun-du bol-χu]-yi ni mede-ne.
 but Tana-NOM what-DAT COP-INF-ACC PPC know-NPST
 "Sloppy" reading: 'but Tana knows why (Tana was fired).'
- Note: Case markers can be omitted in some cases in Mongolian. We set aside these cases for simplicity.

- (10) Uyghur (Bai 2023, p.275)
 - a. Tursun-Ø [öz-i-ni nemä üčün iš-tin bošat-il-Tursun-NOM self-3SG.POSS-GEN what POSTP thing-ABL fire-PASS-ğan-liq]-i-ni bil-mä-ydu-Ø, PERF.NOML-COMP-3SG.POSS-ACC know-NEG-NPST-3SG (Lit.) 'Tursun doesn't know for what self was fired,'
 - b. lekin Aygül-Ø [nemä üčün ikän lik]-i-ni but Aygül-NOM what POSTP COP COMP-3SG.POSS-ACC bil-idu-Ø. know-NPST-3SG
 - "Sloppy" reading: 'but Aygül knows for what (Aygül was fired)."
 - Note: Case markers (but not postpositions) are forbidden in SCs in Uyghur, in contrast with Mongolian.

- Some have taken the availability of "sloppy" reading as evidence for surface anaphora in SCs (e.g., Wang and Wu (2006); cf. Hankamer and Sag (1976)).
 - ... since it follows naturally from a movement+ellipsis analysis (where the pronoun is interpreted as a bound variable).
- A schematic illustration (Williams 1977):
- (11)a. "Sloppy" reading x knows who is criticizing x, but y doesn't know who is criticizing y.
 - Strict reading b. x knows who is criticizing x, but y doesn't know who is criticizing x.

- This also appears to receive support from the observation that recovering a demonstrative in the SCs blocks "sloppy" reading.
 - ... since there is no "hidden" structure.
- (12) 張三_i不知道他_i為什麼被罵,但李四知道 [那是為什麼] 。 (Wei 2004, p.266)

Zhangsan_i bu-zhidao [ta_i weishenme bei ma], dan Lisi zhidao Zhangsan not-know he why PASS scold but Lisi know

[na shi weishenme]. that be why

Strict reading only: 'Zhangsan didn't know why he was scolded, but Lisi knows why Zhangsan was scolded.'

- We observe the same in Mongolian and Uyghur.
- (13) SCs with demonstratives lose "sloppy" reading
 - a. getele Tana-Ø [tere yayun-du bol-u]-yi ni but Tana-NOM that what-DAT COP-INF-ACC PPC mede-ne.
 know-PST

Strict reading only: (Lit.) 'but Tana knows that is why.'

- b. lekin Aygül-Ø [u-niŋ nemä üčün ikän lik]
 but Aygül-NOM that what POSTP COP COMP
 -i-ni bil-idu-Ø.
 -3SG.POSS-ACC know-NPST-3SG
 - Strict reading only: 'but Aygül knows that is for what.'



- However, this does not necessitate a surface anaphora analysis of SCs.
- If we go beyond demonstratives, it is well known that there are deep anaphora that also allows "sloppy" reading (Fiengo and May 1994; Hoji 1998, 2003; Culicover and Jackendoff 2005; Merchant 2013).

(14) Deep anaphora in English

- a. John touches his finger to his nose. [To Bill:] Now you **do it**.
- b. John washed his car on that rainy day. Bill **did the same thing**.
- c. Ralph ate his ice-cream with a spoon, and Seymour **did the same thing**.
- Thus, the availability of "sloppy" reading is *not* correlated with the presense of elided structures.



- In Mandarin, "sloppy" reading is retained with the counterpart of *do so*.
- (15) 張三帶了他的朋友,李四也這麼做了。 (Wei and Li 2016, (33))
 Zhangsan dailai-le ta-de pengyou; Lisi ye **zheme zuo**-le.
 Zhangsan bring-LE he-DE friend Lisi also so do-LE
 "Sloppy" reading: 'Zhangsan brought his friend; Lisi did so (brought Lisi's friend) as well.'

• Again, the same is observed in Mongolian (16a) and Uyghur (16b).

(16) "Sloppy" reading in *do-so* cases

- a. Mergen-Ø öber-ün joxiyal-iyan üje-be, bi-Ø basa Mergen-NOM self-GEN article-RELF.POSS read-PST I-NOM also tege-jei. do.that-PST
 - "Sloppy" reading: 'Mergen read his article, I also did so (= read my article)."
- b. Murat-Ø öz-i-ni maqalä-si-ni kör-di-Ø, Murat-NOM self-3SG.POSS-GEN article-3SG.POSS-ACC see-PST-3SG, män-mu šundaq qil-di-m. I-also so do-PST-1SG
 - "Sloppy" reading: 'Murat read his article. I also did so (= read my article).'

- These observations neutralize the argument for surface anaphora.
- It might be that SCs involve a silent deep anaphora, i.e., a pro.
 - Recall:
- (17)... pro shi weishenme.
 - And the blocking effects induced by demonstratives are due to independent constraints.
 - The mere *availability* of "sloppy" reading is indecisive for determining the nature of anaphoric elements in these languages.
 - We have to look elsewhere.



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- Ross (1967) observes a condition on the availability of "sloppy" reading.
 - For an elliptic expression to have a "sloppy" reading, a pronoun relevant for the reading must be c-commanded by its antecedent.

(18) English VP ellipsis

- a. Sloppy John scratched his arm, and Mary **did** Δ too.
- b. *Sloppy[John 's mother] scratched his arm, and Mary's mother **did** Δ too.

(19) English sluicing

- a. Sloppy John knows why he was scolded, and Mary knows why Δ , too.
- b. *Sloppy[John's mother] knows why he was scolded, and Mary's mother knows why Δ , too.
- The parallels suggest a uniform, ellipsis analysis (hence surface anaphora).

• In this regard, Wei (2009) makes a critical observation that a similar condition is in effect in Mandarin SCs.

- (20) a. [張三; 的母親] 不知道 他; 為什麼被罵, ((3b))

 [Zhangsan -de muqin] bu zhidao [ta weishenme bei ma],

 Zhangsan-POSS mother not know he why PASS scold

 'Zhangsan's mother doesn't know why he was scolded,'
 - b. 但李四的母親知道 [是為什麼] 。
 dan [Lisi-de muqin] zhidao [**shi weishenme**].
 but Lisi-POSS mother know be why

 Strict reading only: 'but Lisi's mother knows why (Zhangsan was scolded).'
 - That "sloppy" reading is sensitive to structural relations receives a natural explanation from a surface anaphora account.
 - This seems to offer substantial support to an ellipsis analysis (but see Li and Wei (2023) for a defense).

• However, if we extend the test to Mongolian and Uyghur, we find that the "sloppy" reading in the same configuration is not strictly ruled out.

(21) Mongolian

- a. [Mergen-ü eği ni] [tere yayun-du χariya-γda-γsan]-i
 Mergen-GEN mother 3SG.POSS 3SG what-DAT scold-PASS-PERF-ACC (ni) mede-xü ügei,
 3SG.POSS know-INF not
 - 'Mergen's mother doesn't know why he was scolded,'

4 D > 4 P > 4 E > 4 E >

• Similarly, some Uyghur speakers also accept the "sloppy" reading.

(22) Uyghur

- a. [Murat-nin ana-si] [u-nin nemišqa til Murat-GEN mother-3SG.POSS 3SG-GEN why language išit-qan-liq]-i-ni bil-mä-ydu-Ø, hear-PERF.NOML-COMP-3SG.POSS-ACC know-NEG-NPST-3SG 'Murat's mother doesn't know why he got scolded,'
- b. lekin Adil-nin ana-si [nemišqa ikän-lik]-i-ni
 but Adil-GEN mother-3SG.POSS why COP-COMP-3SG.POSS-ACC
 bil-idu-Ø.
 know-NPST-3SG
 - "Sloppy" reading 6/9: 'but Adil's mother knows why (Adil got scolded)."



- Furthermore, the structural conditions are voided in non-genitive embedded contexts, e.g., **relative clauses**.
 - This holds true for all three languages.
- (23) a. 認識張三的人都不知道他為什麼辭職,
 [Renshi Zhangsan de ren] dou bu-zhidao [ta weishenme cizhi],
 know Zhangsan DE person all not-know he why resign
 'Those who know Zhangsan didn't know why he resigned,'
 - b. 但認識李四的人都知道 [是為什麼] 。
 dan renshi Lisi de ren dou zhidao [**shi weishenme**].
 but know Lisi DE person all know be why
 "Sloppy" reading: 'but those who know Lisi know why (Lisi resigned).'

(24) Mongolian

- Mergen-i tani-day xümün bür [tere yayun-du a. Mergen-ACC know-HAB.ADN all 3SG what-DAT person ajil-iyan χaya-ysan]-i (ni) mede-xü ügei, job-REF.POSS throw.away-PERF-ACC 3SG.POSS know-INF not 'People who know Mergen do not know why he quitted his job,'
- h. getele Bayatur-i tani-day xümün(-üd) bür but Bayatur-ACC know-HAB.ADN person-PL 3SG.POSS all [yayun-du bol-yu]-yi mede-ne. (ni) what-DAT COP-INF-ACC 3SG POSS know-NPST "Sloppy" reading 6/9: 'but people who know Bayatur know why (Bayatur quitted his job).'

The c-command conditions

(25) Uyghur

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Murat-ni
               tonu-ydiğan
                                kiši-lär-nin]
                                               hämmä-si
                                                             u-nin
a.
    Murat-ACC know-NPST.ADN person-PL-GEN all-3SG.POSS 3SG-GEN
      nemišga
                      bär-idiğan-liq]
               istepa
                                                 -i-ni
               resign AUX-NPST.NOML-COMP
                                                -3SG.POSS-ACC
      why
      bil-mä-ydu-Ø
      know-NEG-NPST-3SG
    'People who know Murat all do not know why he resigned,'
h.
    lekin Adil-ni
                    tonu-ydiğan
                                     kiši-lär-nin
                                                      hämmä-si
```

b. lekin Adil-ni tonu-ydigan kisi-lar-nin hamma-si but Adil-ACC know-NPST.ADN person-PL-GEN all-3SG.POSS [nemišqa ikän-lik] -i-ni bil-idu-Ø. why COP-COMP -3SG.POSS-ACC know-NPST-3SG

"Sloppy" reading 6/9: 'but people who know Adil all know why (Adil

resigned).'

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Interim summary

- In certain languages, the "sloppy" reading in SCs is sensitive to a c-command condition (e.g., English, and Japanese, see Takahashi (1994)).
- However, the condition does not hold consistently (i) **across languages**, and (ii) **across embedded contexts**.
 - This weakens the strength of the argument for a surface anaphora account (contra Wei (2009)).
- In contrast, the variations of the availability of the "sloppy" reading seem
 to suggest that the reading is pragmatically controlled, rather than
 syntactically controlled.
 - ... and thus may not be a reliable diagnostic for surface vs. deep anaphora.



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- 4 The mix sloppy reading



- Another distinction between surface and deep anaphora concerns a more specific type of "sloppy" reading.
 - This reading arises in elliptical contexts (surface anaphora) when there are more than one pronoun in the antecedent clause (Fiengo and May 1994).
- (26) Max said his mother saw him; Oscar did Δ too.
 - In addition to (i) the strict reading and (ii) the "sloppy" reading, there is (iii) a **mix identity reading**.
 - Importantly, such a reading does not appear in cases with deep anaphora.
 - This also holds true in Japanese (Hoji 1998, 2003).



- Surface anaphora allow the mix "sloppy" reading.
- (27) Max said his mother saw him; Oscar did Δ too.
 - a. Strict:

```
Max1 said his1 mother saw him1;

Oscar2 said his1 mother saw him1.
```

b. Sloppy:

```
Max1 said his1 mother saw him1;
Oscar2 said his2 mother saw him2.
```

c. Mix:

```
Max1 said his1 mother saw him1;

Oscar2 said his2 mother saw him1.
```

• The mix reading can be derived if Δ is indeed an elided structure that contains all the relevant variables.

- **Deep anaphora** disallow the mix "sloppy" reading (Hoji 1998, 2003).
- (28) John said that his roommate had hit him, and Bill **did the same thing**.
 - a. Strict:
 John1 said his1 roommate had hit him1, and
 Bill said his1 roommate had hit him1.
 - b. Sloppy:

 John1 said his1 roommate had hit him1, and

 Bill2 said his2 roommate had hit him2.
 - c. *Mix:

 John1 said his1 roommate had hit him1, and

 Bill2 said his2 roommate had hit him1.

- We apply this test to Mandarin, Mongolian and Uyghur.
- The mix reading is not possible in Mandarin SCs.
- (29) a. 張三知道 他的 母親為什麼罵 他 ,

 Zhangsan zhidao ta-de muqin weishenme ma ta ,

 Zhangsan know his mother why scold him

 'Zhangsan know why his mother scolded him,'
 - b. 但李四不知道 [是為什麼] 。
 dan Lisi bu-zhidao [**shi weishenme**].
 but Lisi not-know be why

 *Mix reading 'Lisi' doesn't know why Lisi's mother scolded Zhangsan .'
 - Note that the mix reading is reported to be possible in Mandarin VP ellipsis/*shi*-ellipsis (H.-J. G. Li 2002; Li and Wei 2014).
 - This provides initial evidence for a deep anaphora account.

Despite some variations, Uyghur SCs tend to disallow the mix reading.

- [ana- si-nin (30)Murat-Ø u-ni nemišqa a. Murat-NOM mother-3SG.POSS-GEN 3SG-ACC whv tilla-ğan-liq -i-ni bil-idu-Ø. scold-PERF.NOML-COMP 3SG.POSS-ACC know-NPST-3SG 'Murat knows why his mother scolded him,'
 - b. lekin Adil-Ø [nemišqa ikän-lik] -i-ni
 but Adil-NOM why COP-COMP -3SG.POSS-ACC
 bil-mä-ydu-Ø.
 know-NEG-NPST-3SG

Mix reading 2/9: 'but Adil doesn't know why Adil's mother scolded Murat.'

- Interestingly, Mongolian SCs display a different pattern.
- (31) a. Mergen-Ø [tegün-ü eji ni yayun-du tegün-i Mergen-NOM 3SG-GEN mother 3SG.POSS what-DAT 3SG-ACC χariya-ju bai-χu]-yi (ni) mede-ne, scold-ADVL AUX-INF-ACC 3SG.POSS know-NPST 'Mergen knows why his mother scolded him,'
 - b. getele Bayatur-Ø [yayun-du bol-χu]-yi (ni) mede-xü but Bayatur-NOM what-DAT COP-INF-ACC 3SG.POSS know-INF ügei.
 not

 Mix reading 7/9 : 'hut Bayatur doesn't know why Bayatur's mother

Mix reading 7/9: 'but Bayatur' doesn't know why Bayatur's mother scolded Mergen.'



- As such, the availability of the mix "sloppy" reading divides the SCs in the three languages into two groups.
 - */??Mix reading: Mandarin and Uyghur

→ Deep anaphora

OK Mix reading: Mongolian

- → Surface anaphora
- The validity of this test can be strengthened by a correlation with the **(anti-)case-matching effects** in Uyghur and Mongolian.

- Bai (2023) reports that Uyghur SCs consistently resist case marking on *wh*-expressions, whereas Mongolian SCs allow case marking on them.
- To see the anti-case-matching effects in Uyghur SCs:
- (32) (Ayxan is fond of a kind of fruit,) (p.267) lekin män-Ø [qaysi-xil mewä (-*gä) ikän lik] -i-ni but 1SG-NOM which-CL fruit-DAT COP COMP -3SG.POSS-ACC bil-mä-y-män.

 know-NEG-NPST-1SG 'but I don't know which kind of fruit.'
 - **Case matching effects** in SCs have been taken as evidence for a movement analysis out of an elided structure.
 - Anti-case-matching effects suggest the opposite, non-elided account.

- If this interpretation of (anti-)case-matching effects is on the right track,
 - SCs in Uyghur involve deep anaphora, supported by *Mix reading ↔ anti-case-matching effects
- Mandarin, a language that lack overt morphological case, receives no independent evidence for or against surface/deep anaohora from case marking in SCs.
- But the correlations observed in Mongolian and Uyghur substantially strengthen the validity of the mix reading diagnostic.



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Conclusions

- Sluicing-like constructions have attracted much attention in the literature.
- We tried to contribute to the debate w.r.t. the nature of the anaphoric element in SCs.
- We did so by examining "sloppy" identity reading in SCs in Mandarin, Mongolian, and Uyghur.
- From a comparative perspective, we dismiss as reliable diagnostics of surface vs. deep anaphora
 - (i) the mere availability of "sloppy" reading (contra Wang and Wu (2006));
 - (ii) the c-command condition on "sloppy" reading (contra Wei (2009)).
- However, we reveal a promising area pertaining to mix "sloppy" reading as a reliable test, and its correlation with the (anti-)case-matching effects.
 - SCs in Mandarin and Uyghur involve deep anaphora;
 - SCs in Mongolian involve surface anaphora.



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