Two Rules in Ellipsis Strategy

The state of affairs. The licensing head of ellipsis, e.g., the one bearing the [E]-feature (Merchant 2001), is pronounced at PF (1a), but sometimes unpronounced (1b).

(1) a. John ate caviars, and [$_{TP}$ Mary$_i$ [$_{T'}$ **T^o**$_{[E]}$ ~~[$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ eat caviars]]~~] too] (*VPE*)
"did"

b. John ate something, but I don't know [$_{CP}$ what$_i$ [$_{C'}$ **C^o**$_{[E]}$ ~~[$_{TP}$ John ate t$_i$]~~]] (*Sluicing*)
"Ø"

(1a) is claimed to be due to to the alleged "Stranded Affix Filter" (SAF) (cf. Lasnik 1981). This PF-condition is made precisely based on the assumption that in English, tense affixes are already realized morphologically in T^o, along the lines of the Lexicalist Hypothesis (since Chomsky 1957) on verbal morphology. Hence, for example, T^o lowers to V^o in English (2).

(2) [$_{TP}$ John$_i$ [$_{T'}$ T^o-*ed* [often [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ kiss Mary]]]]] (*Affix-Hopping*)
"John often kissed Mary"

Lasnik (1999) suggests that this also happens in the context of ellipsis, where the vP/VP containing the lexical verb is elided and thus T^o is stranded at PF. The strategy to rescue the stranded T^o is "*do*-support" in the case of VPE (cf. (1a)). But the problem is that this strategy does not extend to the case of sluicing (cf. (1b)), Specifically, the question to be asked is why in the context of ellipsis, only tense affix (and not complementizer, which is also an affix) cannot be stranded at PF. The so-called SAF does not seem to work in this respect. Merchant (2001) proposes the so-called "Sluicing-COMP Generalization" in explaining why C^o is also absent in this ellipsis construction. But there are languages showing overt C^o in sluicing.

Goal. In this paper I will propose a new way to accommodate the stranded status of licensing head of ellipsis, adapting Merchant's [E]-feature encoded in the functional categories.

Proposal. The idea is the following. When a functional category (e.g., v^o, T^o or C^o) bears the [E]-feature, it licenses VP-, vP- and TP-deletion, respectively, but that licensing head has two options inasmuch as concerns how it can be realized at PF. To be more concrete, in one, it is pronounced by a rescuing strategy like "*do*-support". In the other, it is deleted along with its complement clause (cf. Bruening 2015), surfacing as "Ø" at PF. Applying this idea to C$^o_{[E]}$ in sluicing, only "zero"-realization of C^o is allowable in languages like English (3a), but others languages like Hindi (Bhattacharya & Simpson 2012) and Dutch (van Craenenbroeck 2005) allows "overt"-realization of C^o (3b)

(3) a. … [$_{CP}$ what$_i$ [$_{C'}$ ~~**C^o**$_{[E]}$ [$_{TP}$ … t$_i$ …]~~]]
"Ø" at PF "John ate something, but I don't know what"

b. … [$_{CP}$ what$_i$ [$_{C'}$ **C^o**$_{[E]}$ ~~[$_{TP}$ … t$_i$ …]~~]]
"that" at PF "John ate something, but I don't know what that"

As regards T$^o_{[E]}$, English allows two options, and each option produces a different elliptical construction at PF. If T$^o_{[E]}$ is rescued by a strategy like "*do*-support", we get an instance of VPE (4a), whereas if T$^o_{[E]}$ is realized as "zero", then, we obtain an instance of stripping (4b).

(4) a. … [$_{TP}$ John$_i$ [$_{T'}$ **T^o**$_{[E]}$ ~~[$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ eat caviars]]~~]]
"do" at PF "John ate caviars, and Mary did too"

b. … [$_{TP}$ John$_i$ [$_{T'}$ ~~**T^o**$_{[E]}$ [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ eat caviars]]~~]]
"Ø" at PF "John ate caviars, and Mary too"

The same can be applied to the derivations of pseudogapping (5a) and gapping (5b).

(5) a. … [$_{TP}$ John$_i$ [$_{T'}$ **T$^o_{[E]}$** ~~[$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ eat t$_j$]]~~] apples$_j$]
"do" at PF "John ate caviars, and Mary did beans"
b. … [$_{TP}$ John$_i$ [$_{T'}$ ~~**T$^o_{[E]}$**~~ ~~[$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ eat t$_j$]]~~] apples$_j$]
"Ø" at PF "John ate caviars, and Mary, beans"

Importantly, this idea is based on the "non-Lexicalist Hypothesis" on verbal morphology (cf. Halle & Marantz 1993, Bobaljik 1997, Embick & Noyer 2001); i.e., there is no such a fully realized form of tense affix(es) in T^o. Instead, what we see is a PF-realization of features in T^o.
Consequences. The major outcome of my analysis is that the same derivation can produce two different outputs at PF, depending on whether the licensing head is overtly realized or not. The possibility of realizing a licensing head overtly (or not) crucially hinges on the existence of an independent mechanism like "*do*-support" in a given language. That is, the availability of (a)-option in (4-5) is "language specific". In English, two options are available, whereas language like Spanish has only (b)-option. As a result, this language shows only stripping and gapping, as expected. The other consequence of two rules of ellipsis strategy I have proposed is the following. What is common among the constructions (4-5) is that the vP (rather than TP) is deleted at PF. They differ (only) in how T^o is spelled-out in each construction (6).

(6) a. English VPE by v$^o_{[E]}$: T$^o_{[E]}$ is realized as "do" (or other auxiliaries).
b. English stripping by T$^o_{[E]}$: T$^o_{[E]}$ is realized as "Ø.
c. English pseudogapping by v$^o_{[E]}$: T$^o_{[E]}$ is realized as "do" (or other auxiliaries).
d. English gapping by T$^o_{[E]}$: T$^o_{[E]}$ is realized as "Ø"

In (6), I slightly modify the licensing head of VPE and pseudogapping: v^o rather than T^o bears the [E]-feature and "do" is inserted into v$^o_{[E]}$ and then this moves to T^0 (Embick 2001). But nothing substantially changes, as far as concerns the unification of those ellipsis constructions. One of the motivations for this grouping is that ellipsis constructions in (6) are sensitive to island violations, contrary to sluicing. In addition, if gapping or stripping is an instance of TP-deletion, it remains unclear why it cannot be repaired by ellipsis (Reinhart 1991), as it does in sluicing (Ross 1967, Chung *et al* 1995, Merchant 2001). This may be due to the fact that the ellipsis sites of those constructions are smaller than that of sluicing (cf. Lasnik & Fox 2003). The present analysis will go in this direction. Finally, languages like European Portuguese (Cyrino & Matos 2005), Hebrew (Doron 1990, 1999) and Irish (McCloskey 1991) display "disguised" VPE, also known as "V-Stranded VPE" (cf. Goldberg 2005), But what is important to notice is that those aforementioned languages do not display any pseudogapping. Such a "disguised" VPE is claimed to be an instance of TP-deletion by C$^o_{[E]}$, assuming V^o-to-T^o movement. Notably, what we perceive from those languages is not VPE *á la* English (i.e. there is no "*do*-support" or something similar to that). Even so, it is not so clear whether instances of "disguised" VPE are *bona fide* VPE or "null objects". In fact, all the languages above-mentioned have also independent instances of "null object", contrary to languages like Spanish, which does not have any instance of "null objects", even though the language show verb-raising to T^o. In short, verb-movement does not have to do with VPE or lack thereof.
Selected references. Bruening, B. 2010. "Language-Particular Syntactic Rules and Constraints: English Locative Inversion and *Do*-Support". *Language* 86: 43-84; Bruening, B. 2015. "Non-Constituent Coordination: Prosody, Not Movement", to appear in *U. Penn Working Papers in Linguistics* vol. 21.1; Lasnik, H. 1999. "Pseudogapping puzzles". In S. Lappin & E. Benmamoun (eds.) Fragments: *Studies in Ellipsis and Gapping*. OUP, 141-174; Merchant, J. 2001. *The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*. OUP.