Distinguishing types of ellipsis in polar answers:
The view from Javanese

Jozina Vander Klok | j.v.klok@iln.uio.no

UiO : University of Oslo

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Background: Repetition-type polar answers

- 'Repetition-type' polar answers:
  answers repeat same lexical content (e.g. verb or auxiliary) as the polar question[1]

- Two types of 'repetition' affirmative polar answers with a TAM auxiliary in **Javanese**:

(1) Q: Kuna'ah   **iso**   ngelangi   toh?
       Kuna'ah   CIRC.POS   AV.swim   FOC
        'Can Kuna'ah swim?'

A1: **Iso**.   **'aux-only'**   **A2**: **Kuna'ah iso**.   **'subj+aux'**
       CIRC.POS   Kuna'ah CIRC.POS
       'Yes.' (Lit. 'Can.')   'Kuna'ah can.'

Other possibilities are a clause with basic word order S-Aux-V-O, or with a yes/no particle

1 – Sadock & Zwicky 1985, Enfield et al. 2018

Background: Types of ellipsis in polar answers

- Assuming 'repetition-type' polar answers have a full syntactic clause structure[2]

Two main strategies for verb or aux-only answers (cf. Holmberg 2016)

I.   IP-DOMAIN ELLIPSIS $[_{Foc[+Pol]}$ Foc^0 **Aux** $[_{\overline{PolP}}$ $\overline{Pol^0_{[+Pol]}}$ $[_{\overline{TP}}$ $\overline{SUBJ}$ $[$ $\overline{AUX}$ $[_{\overline{vP}}$ $\overline{VERB}]]]]$

II. VP-ELLIPSIS
    (+ SUBJECT ELLIPSIS) $[_{PolP}$ Pol$^0_{[+Pol]}$ $[_{TP}$ $[\overline{SUBJ}]$ T^0 $[$ **Aux** $[_{\overline{vP}}$ $\overline{VERB}]]$

Cross-linguistic Variation   → Does the verb or auxiliary move? If so, where to?
                              → Does the language have pro-drop/arg. ellipsis?

2 – Jones 1999; Martins 1994, 2006, 2013; Kramer & Rawlins 2008, Vennemann 2009;
Farkas & Bruce 2010:86; Lipták 2013; Holmberg 2001, 2003, 2016   3

The puzzle: Which derivation strategy is used?

- Two types of 'repetition' affirmative polar answers with a TAM auxiliary:

(2)   Q: 'Can Kuna'ah swim?'
      A1: **Iso**.   'aux-only'   **A2**:   Kuna'ah **iso**.   'subj+aux'
           CIRC.POS   Kuna'ah CIRC.POS
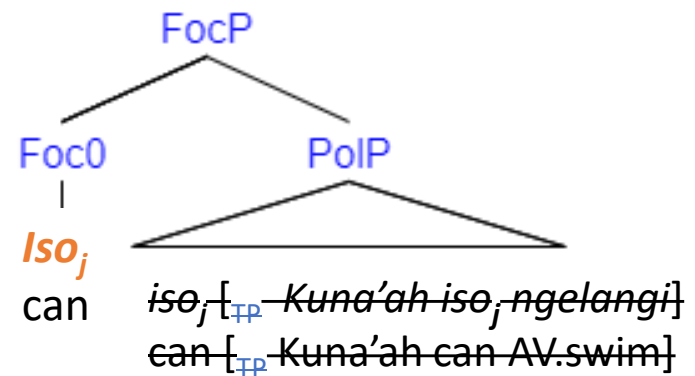   'Yes.' (Lit. 'Can.')   'Kuna'ah can.'

- In principle, **either derivation is possible for both A1 and A2 answers** since Javanese independently has aux-movement[3], VP-ellipsis[4], and argument ellipsis[5]

Derivational strategies	A1. Aux-only answer	A2. Subj+aux answer
IP-domain ellipsis	Compatible	Compatible (plus subject-movement)
VP-ellipsis	Compatible (plus subject ellipsis)	Compatible

Table 1.

3 – Cole et al. 2008, Vander Klok 2017;   **4** – Vander Klok 2016;   **5** – Sato 2015

Proposal: Javanese A1 'aux-only' and A2 'subj-aux' answers use two distinct strategies
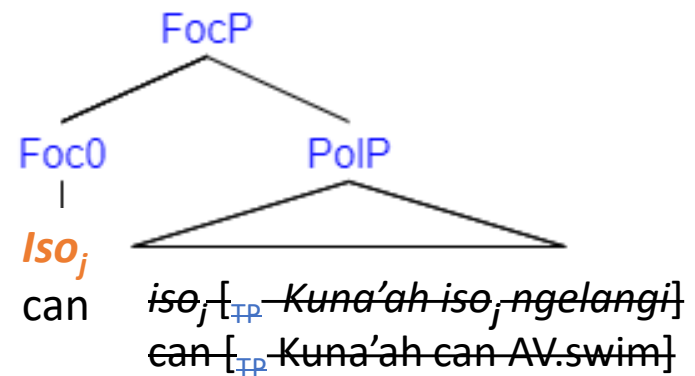
A1. aux-only answers
use 'IP-domain ellipsis'
(à la Holmberg 2016)

- Auxiliary has moved to Focus^0
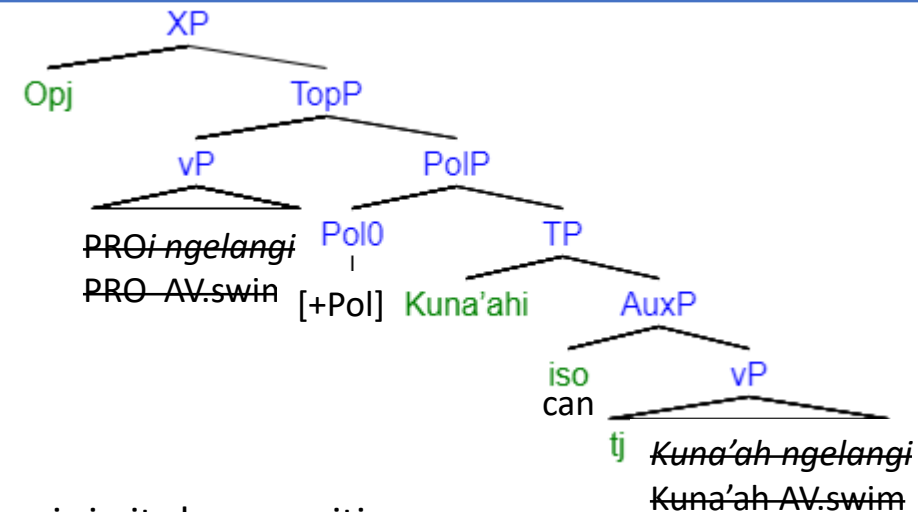- PolP is elided (under identity with the PolP of the polar question)

Proposal: Javanese A1 'aux-only' and A2 'subj-aux' answers use two distinct strategies

A1. aux-only answers
use 'IP-domain ellipsis'
(à la Holmberg 2016)

FocP
- Foc0
  - Iso$_j$
  - can
- PolP
  - iso$_j$ [$_{TP}$ ~~Kuna'ah iso$_j$ ngelangi~~]
  - ~~can [$_{TP}$ Kuna'ah can AV.swim]~~

- Auxiliary has moved to Focus^0
- PolP is elided (under identity with the PolP of the polar question)

A2. subj+aux answers
use 'vP-topic-drop' via a Matching Analysis
(à la Thoms & Walkden 2019)

XP
- Op$_j$
- TopP
  - vP
    - ~~PRO$_i$ ngelangi~~
    - ~~PRO AV.swim~~
  - PolP
    - Pol0
      - [+Pol]
    - TP
      - Kuna'ah$_i$
      - AuxP
        - iso
        - can
        - vP
          - t$_j$
          - ~~Kuna'ah ngelangi~~
          - ~~Kuna'ah AV.swim~~

- Auxiliary is in its base position
- lower vP is elided under identity with the higher, base-generated vP
- a null operator (base-generated with the subject of lower vP) moves to a position above TopP and links the two vPs
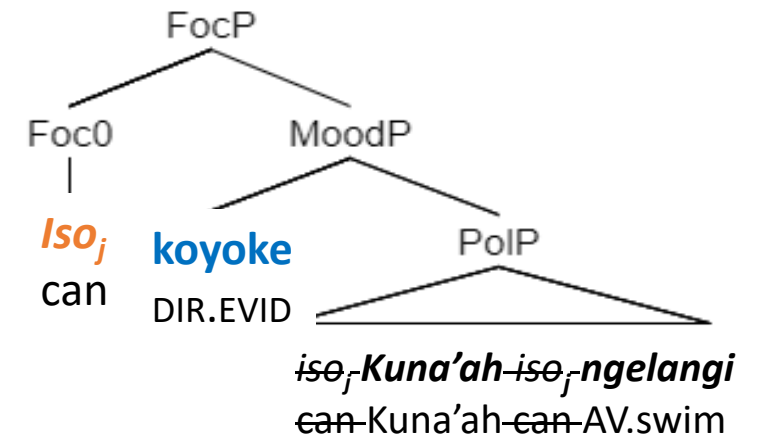- higher vP is elided (under identity with the vP of the polar question)

- **Support for auxiliary movement** to a position in the Left Periphery:
  - optional overt head-movement of any TAM auxiliary to above an epistemic/evidential adverb
  - This unexpected TAM word order is only licensed in polar answers.

(2) Q: 'Can Kuna'ah swim?'

A3: **Iso**   **koyoke**   Kuna'ah   ngelangi.
      can   DIR.EVID   Kuna'ah   AV.swim

'Kuna'ah can likely swim.'

FocP
- Foc0
  - *Iso_j*
    can
- MoodP
  - **koyoke**
    DIR.EVID
  - PoIP
    - ~~*iso_j*~~ **Kuna'ah** ~~*iso_j*~~ **ngelangi**
      ~~can~~ Kuna'ah ~~can~~ AV.swim

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Evidence for 'Subj+Aux' answers as VP-ellipsis via Matching

- A2 '**Subj+Aux**' answers share the same auxiliary restrictions as with vP-preposing, in contrast to:
  - A1. 'Aux+only' answers
  - VP-ellipsis

East Javanese auxiliaries	A1. Aux-only answer	A2. Subj+Aux answer	Overt VP-Preposing	VP-ellipsis
tau 'EXIST.PST'	✓	✓	✓	✓
iso 'CIRC.POS'	✓	✓	✓	✓
oleh 'DEON.POS'	✓	✓	✓	✓
kudu 'ROOT.NEC'	✓	✗	✗	✓
lagek 'PROG'	✓	✗	✗	✓
wes 'already'	✓	✗	✗	✓

Table 2. Distribution of auxiliaries

Wider implications of the Javanese data

- A1 '**aux-only**' and A2 '**Subj+Aux**' answers have two distinct strategies:
    - A1 as IP-domain ellipsis (cf. Holmberg 2016)
    - A2 as VP-ellipsis via Matching (cf. Sailor 2014; Thoms & Walkden 2019)
        - → **adds to a more fine-grained syntactic typology of ellipsis types in polar answers**

- But neither use VP-ellipsis plus argument ellipsis as a strategy, despite their independent availability (cf. Sato 2015; Vander Klok 2016)
    - → Why? I suggest that the information-structure mapping in Javanese is crucial to understand how the different ellipsis strategies are licensed
    (cf. Kertz 2013; Sailor 2014)

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I welcome further comments or questions via email: j.v.klok@iln.uio.no