**Conditions on Sprouting**          **Bradley Larson**          **University of Maryland**

**Aim:** I argue that sprouting instances of sluicing are crucially conditioned by their inner antecedents being Given (Schwarzschild 1999). This contrasts with current analyses of sprouting which hold that it is conditioned by either syntactic or phonological absence of an antecedent. Further, this condition on sprouting spurs local movement in the form of extraposition or scrambling of the sluiced element and constraints on these movements constrain sprouting.

**Background:** The importance of sluicing constructions like in (1) has been well established dating back to Ross 1969 and sprouting instances of sluicing like in (2) have been pivotal in the analysis of them (see Chung et al. 1995, 2010). The superficial difference between these two being that regular sluicing involves an overt 'inner antecedent' *something* in the antecedent clause whereas sprouting does not.

**(1)** Amy was eating something, but I don't know what.

**(2)** Amy was eating, but I don't know what.

Chung et al. and Barker 2012 claim that the sluiced *what* in (2) has no syntactic inner antecedent. Chung et al. crucially rely on there being no syntactic inner antecedent. They argue for a copying operation that substitutes the antecedent IP into the lower clause in covert syntax (3-4). This is followed by covert downward movement of the wh-word (trace here) into an empty position (5):

**(3)** [[$_{IP}$ He was singing]] but I don't know [$_{CP}$ {why/what} [$_{IP}$ e ]]

**(4)** [[$_{IP}$ He was singing]$_j$] but I don't know [$_{CP}$ {why/what} [$_{IP}$ He was singing]$_j$]

**(5)** [[$_{IP}$ He was singing]] but I don't know [$_{CP}$ {why/what$_i$} [$_{IP}$ He was singing t$_i$]]

Larson 2012 argues against this analysis by showing that sprouting also occurs when there is a syntactically existent yet phonologically *non*-existent inner antecedent. That is, the wh-sluicing in (6) is shown to have the same profile as sprouting. Larson argues that the inner antecedent is syntactically there in the elided portion of the fragment answer (in the sense of Merchant 2004) (7). He concludes that that the relevant condition for sprouting is phonological non-existence of the inner antecedent.

**(6)** Q: Who ate something? A: Bill, but I don't know what.

**(7)** Bill [$_{IP}$ ~~ate something~~], but I don't know what.

**Problems:** The phonological non-existence account is however insufficient to capture the range of data. For example, given current theory syntactic movement results in an unpronounced version of the moved element either as a copy in the copy theory of movement or as an occurrence in re-merge theories of movement. If mere lack of pronunciation of the syntactically extant inner antecedent were sufficient to license sprouting in these cases, we would expect the following discourse to be an instance of sprouting. The VP-fronting leaves behind a copy or occurrence of unpronounced syntactic material much like in (6).

**(8)** Amy said that she wanted to sell something. And sell something she did [~~sell something~~], I just can't remember what.

There are a few diagnostics for sprouting; here I use swiping (following Rosen 1976 and Merchant 2002) for simplicity's sake. In the examples in (9,10) the inner antecedent could be found in the un-pronounced base-position of the moved elements on analogy with the elided content in (6). The fact that swiping is not licit in these cases shows that sprouting is not possible here. Also, Chung et al. (2010) show that it is impossible to sprout the object of a preposition, which further militates against a sprouting analysis of this construction.

**(9)** Amy said that she wanted to talk to someone. And talk to someone she did [~~talk to someone~~], I just can't remember who (*to).

**(10)** (It was) A book about something Amy read, but I don't know what (*about).

However when the VP (or IP) is *elided* sprouting is available (11,12). Unlike in the movement examples in (9,10) swiping is possible and sprouting the object of the preposition alone is not.

(11) Amy talked to someone. Jim did [~~talk to someone~~] too, but I don't know who *(to)

(12) Someone was waiting for something. I remember who, but I can't remember what *(for).

**New Account:** Descriptively, we see that sprouting is conditioned on the inner antecedent being both indefinite (*something* or null) and implicit (elided or null). This rules in null indefinite and elided indefinite antecedents. On the other hand this rules out traces of movement and un-elided *something* which are respectively not indefinite and not implicit. Why is it that sprouting occurs under these conditions? An important commonality is that in both environments the inner antecedent becomes Given in the sense of Schwarzschild (1999). Merchant (2001) argues that ellipsis is licensed by Given-ness and eliding the overt indefinite inner antecedent *something* in (11,12) ensures that it is Given. The null indefinite complement qua inner antecedent in (2) also becomes Given when the optionally transitive verb is uttered without an internal argument.

**A Repercussion:** The set of things 'Given' in a discourse is necessarily updated with each new utterance. In the dialogue in (6), the fragment answer utterance updates that which is Given so as to include the elided inner antecedent. The fact that the inner antecedent is thereby made Given explains why it is irrelevant that there is an overt counterpart (*something*) previously in the discourse: In light of the new utterance, the overt version is now Given. The irrelevance of previous overt instances of the inner antecedent is unexplained in Larson's formulation.

**Constraints on Sprouting:** In the null indefinite and ellipsis instances above, the inner antecedent is Given because it is not pronounced. Asking a content question of the inner antecedent trivially requires that the corresponding wh-word be pronounced and thus contrast with the implicit inner antecedent. I posit that this wh-word must then be contrastively focused and in turn have moved to a local focus position before moving to spec,CP. This local focus movement will differ cross-linguistically. In English sprouting, the option for local focus movement is extraposition and only elements that can extrapose can sprout. This makes the correct predictions in ruling out objects of prepositions (13) among others. In languages like Dutch without extraposition, scrambling is the option and constraints thereon limit sprouting. In Dutch indirect objects can neither scramble (Neeleman 1994) nor sprout (14).

(13) *J. talked to yesterday a tall man   *J. talked, but I don't know who ~~Amy talked to~~

(14) *J. heeft M. niet boeken uitgedeeld     *J. heeft boeken uitgedeeld, maar ik weet  niet  wie
      J.  has  M. not books  out-handed     J. has  books  out-handed but  I  know not who
      'Jan has not handed out books to Marie' 'Jan handed out books, but I don't know who to'

**In Sum:** Determining the conditions on sprouting allows for a unified account of its constraints. Sprouting relies on the relevant sluiced element being contextually Given. It falls out from this condition that the Given element is unpronounced and its corresponding wh-word contrastive. Licensing this contrast is not always possible and thus effects constraints on sprouting.

Barker. 2012. How to Sprout. SALT 22. ・ Chung, Ladusaw, & McCloskey. 1995. Sluicing and logical form. Natural Lang. Sem. ・ Chung, Ladusaw, & McCloskey. 2010. Sluicing(:) Between Structure & Inference. In *Representing Language*. ・ Larson. 2012. Sprouting Anew. CLS 48. ・ Merchant. 2001. The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, & identity in ellipsis. ・ Merchant. 2002. Swiping in Germanic. In *Studies in Comparative Germanic Syntax*. ・ Merchant. 2004. Fragments & Ellipsis. Ling. & Phil. ・ Neeleman. 1994. Complex Predicates. Diss. Utrecht U. ・ Rosen. 1976. Guess what about? NELS 6. ・ Ross. 1969. Guess who? CLS 5. ・ Schwarzschild. 1999. Givenness, Avoid F, & other constraints on the placement of accent. Natural Lang. Sem.