Reciprocal Questions and the Pragmatics of Argument Reversing Verb Phrase Ellipsis
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The dominant view of VPE assumes syntactic and/or semantic identity between antecedents and ellipsis sites. **Argument Reversals** (ARs), where subject and non-subject roles intuitively reverse (1-4), have cast dramatic doubt on this (Chung 2000; Charnavel 2019; Stockwell 2017, 2020). ARs are said to involve a *salient other* relation between participants and to be especially available in situations of love (1), conflict (2), and negotiation (3) (Ch 2000; Ch 2019).

(1) **A:** I_1 love you_2. **B:** I_2 do <love you_1>, *too*. *love*
(2) **A:** I would be reluctant to criticize you. **B:** Well, I_F wouldn't be. *conflict*
(3) **A:** I'll negotiate with you. **B:** Okay, I will, *too*. *negotiation*
(4) Ossie wanted to dance with Ayla, but SHE didn't. *love/conflict?*

Existing proposals find ways of enforcing identity but do not tackle the puzzling situational restrictions on ARs (consider (1'): A: *I saw you.* B: ?*I did, too.*) or the source of the *salient other* relation. I propose that ARs are licensed by *reciprocal* Questions Under Discussion (rQUDs; e.g. *Do A and B love each other?*), which can be answered by argument reversing subquestions. I model the emergence and resolution of these implicit rQUDs via a feature-based account of response polarity within *the Table* (Farkas & Bruce 2010, Roelofson & Farkas, 2015). Given this model of the pragmatics of ARs and peculiarities of their syntactic distribution, I suggest that it is possible to view ARs as an instance of pragmatic rescue rather than grammatical VPE.
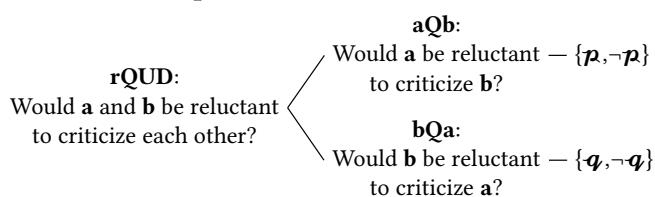
Reciprocity. Ellipsis resolution for ARs requires reference to an rQUD structure (7) (Roberts 1996/2012), which is evoked in situations governed by the **Norm of Reciprocity** (NoR; Gouldner, 1960), a long-established principle in behavioral psychology. Following observations that humans and social animals have evolved to instinctively engage in reciprocal and retaliatory behaviors (Perugini et al., 2003), the NoR identifies the disposition to respond in equal measure given a reciprocal/retaliatory initiating act (e.g., favors/injuries). Extending the NoR to speech acts such as compliments and insults, AR-licensing (reciprocal) situations can be recast in terms of those that conform with or violate the NoR, signaled via matching (1,3) or mismatching (2,4) polarity, respectively. I propose that one goal in reciprocal situations is *reciprocal commitment* with one's interlocutor, driven by the NoR-induced pressure for a "matching" response. Note that absent additional context, (1') is not licensed under the NoR. Additionally, this requirement for reciprocity results in a strong preference for pairwise interactions in AR (5) (S 2017), as expressed in the *salient other* relation.

(5) ?Ossie introduced Ayla to Mara, and {Mara, Ayla} did, too.

Reciprocal responses. Initiating assertions in reciprocal situations have two non-canonical effects: they (i) evoke and add rQUD structures (7) to *the Table* (sans syntactic objects) via the principle in (6) and (ii) reflect these additions in the projected set (*ps*) of the initiating context state (8) (F&B 2010).

(6) ***Discourse Reciprocity Principle:*** If a discourse move m raises whether $\mathscr{R}(a,b)$, where $\mathscr{R}$ is any relation expressing a reciprocal situation (i.e. a situation governed by the NoR), then m concurrently raises the reciprocal question, whether $\mathscr{R}(a,b)$ & $\mathscr{R}(b,a)$.

(7) Reciprocal QUD structure for (2):

rQUD:
Would **a** and **b** be reluctant to criticize each other?

aQb:
Would **a** be reluctant — $\{p, \neg p\}$
to criticize **b**?

bQa:
Would **b** be reluctant — $\{q, \neg q\}$
to criticize **a**?

(8) (Non-)reciprocal responses (2):

Table	
K_1: (p, rQUD, ~~aQb~~, bQa)	ASSERT.
K_2: (q, ~~rQUD~~, ~~bQa~~)	[AGREE]
K_2': ($\neg q$, ~~rQUD~~, ~~bQa~~)	[REVERSE]
Projected set	
$ps_1 = \{\{p\}, \{p\} \cup \{q\}, \{p\} \cup \{\neg q\}\}$	

Concretely, participant A's contribution in K_1 (8) has three consequences: it (i) gives rise to the QUD structure in (7), (ii) simultaneously raises and ~~resolves~~ subquestion aQb by asserting

p, and (iii) leaves superquestion rQUD and subquestion bQa on the Table. In response to bQa, participant B may either conform with the NoR via a confirming move (*I would, too*), marked with relative polarity feature [AGREE] in K_2, or violate the NoR via a reversing move (2), marked with [REVERSE] in K_2' (F&B 2010; R&F 2015). Similarly, a negative initiating assertion (A: *I wouldn't be reluctant to criticize you.*) allows for confirming (B: *I wouldn't either*) or reversing (B: *Well, I_F would*) responses. This suggests a pragmatic distinction between two different classes of "conflict": retaliatory/NoR-complying (A: *I hate you.* B: *I do, too!*) versus reversing/NoR-violating (2) ARs, which may have further consequences in the discourse.

The subquestions in (7) serve as a strategy to resolve the rQUD on a clause-by-clause basis (R 1996/2012). Naturally occurring instances of AR often contain indexical arguments, as in (1-3), though it is possible to construct examples with third person elements as well (4). Charnavel (2019) reports name ARs to be less acceptable than indexical ARs. This may be due to the kinds of pragmatic principles that license rQUDs in interpersonal interactions versus in reports about third parties' mental states: the NoR is argued to actively constrain agents' actions, including their speech acts in conversation. In (1-3), B is compelled by the NoR to reciprocate in kind (or, at least, respond to the relevant rQUD). In (4), on the other hand, the rQUD is likely raised not by the NoR directly, but by another pragmatic principle about reports on joint actions.

Structural & pragmatic properties. Charnavel (2019) assimilates AR to sloppy-identity VPE LFs (A: I_i *love you* (=my$_i$ INTER). B: I_k *do <love you* (=my$_k$ INTER)>, *too*.), requiring E-type construal of indexicals under the relation INTER, which picks out interlocutors in a speech context. Leaving aside the fact that AR requires pragmatic licensing beyond INTER alone (1'), it also does not evince properties often attributed to sloppy-identity VPE. **First**, AR does not require c-command between the reversing DPs (9); I show that previous arguments for c-command (Ch 2019) are based on examples that don't trigger the NoR.

(9) Context: *Two parents discussing their children.*

A: The things Ossie said made Ayla feel excluded. **B:** Well, the things Ayla said did, too.

Second, while antecedent-ellipsis distance can usually be quite far, (10-11) show that ARs require hyper-local antecedents, highlighting the fleeting nature of rQUDs and supporting the connection to confirming/reversing moves, which target the top of the stack.

(10) Ossie danced with Ayla, Finny danced with Mara, and Ayla did, too.   [✓*Mara*, ✗*Ossie*]

(11) Ossie wanted to go to the dance with Ayla but also needed to finish a huge assignment due today. It turns out that she did, too.   [✓*finish assignment*, ✗ *dance with Ossie*]

Third, sentence-internal ARs require syntactic parallelism (?*Ossie wanted to dance with Ayla, and so did she.*). This suggests divergence from canonical sloppy ellipsis, which allows such configurations (*Ayla loves her cat, and so does Mara*). **Fourth**, NoR-complying ARs require presupposition triggers (1,3; ?*Ossie loves Ayla, and Ayla does.*), whereas NoR-violating ARs bear contrastive focus (2,4); neither of these are mandated for VPE in general.

Accommodation. I have argued that ARs arise from the NoR, a general behavioral principle that creates an expectation for reciprocal responses. However, rQUDs are not solely responsible for licensing ARs. I suggest that verum focus, which licenses lower-clause ARs (12a; S 2020), evokes QUDs concerning *actuality* (aQUDs) (Clifton & Frazier 2018).

(12) Ossie *wanted* to dance *with Ayla*...

　　a. ...so she DID / DIDN'T <dance with him>.　b. ...and she did, too. /...but SHE didn't.

　　⤳ aQUD: *Did they actually dance?*　　　⤳rQUD: *Did she want to dance with him?*

Notably, aQUDs are argued to ameliorate the unacceptability of passive-active mismatches; whether a similar process is at work for ARs remains an open question, but if so, focus-marking (verum (12a), contrastive (b)) and presupposition triggers (12b) can be viewed as signals to accommodate the relevant QUDs. Thus, while the present analysis may be seen as a pragmatic supplement to LF-matching licensing, I tentatively propose that ARs are not syntactically well-

formed. Instead, in the right situational context, they are interpretable via accommodation of (a/r)QUDs, leading to increased acceptability. Such an approach allows us to capture the pragmatic, structural, and distributional contrasts with VPE outlined above, as well as the anecdotal heterogeneity of acceptability of ARs in the population.

Selected references: Charnavel, I. (2019). *Journal of Sem.* ∘ Chung, S. (2000). *Hankamer Webfest.* ∘ Clifton, C. & Frazier, L. (2018). *Discourse Processes.* ∘ Farkas, D. & Bruce, K. (2010). *J of Sem.* ∘ Gouldner, A. (1960). *Amer. Sociological Review.* ∘ Perugini et al. (2003). *Euro. Journal of Personality.* ∘ Roberts, C. (1996/2012). *Sem. & Prag.* ∘ Roelofson, F. & Farkas, D. (2015). *J of Sem.* ∘ Stockwell, R. (2017). *NELS47.* ∘ Stockwell, R. (2020). *UCLA Dissertation.*