

RESOLUTION OF ELLIPSIS: EVIDENCE FROM OLD ENGLISH  
SLUICING<sup>1</sup>

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ABSTRACT

English sluicing presents some puzzling patterns: as expected, it operates over syntactically related antecedents and orphans, but it also operates over those that show a less direct relationship. It is not immediately obvious how much syntax there is in the relationship. This paper reports on the Old English (henceforth OE) data that can serve a practical purpose by providing the key to this puzzle: syntax is not the only option, though originally it is the default one. My analysis documents the distribution of sluicing in the extant resources according to temporal and textual criteria, suggesting furthermore how its past motivates its present behavior. Briefly put, it shows that a successful theoretical framework needs to accommodate the early and the later developments alike.

1. Introduction

It has been demonstrated that ellipsis sites (orphans) are interpreted relative to their antecedents (cf. Rooth 1992; Fox 2000; Hardt 2004, 2005; Culicover and Jackendoff 2005; Chung et al. 2006; Sag 2006). It has also been demonstrated that although antecedent structure has (or may have) a relevance to interpretation of ellipsis sites, the relation is not one of overt syntactic identity, identity at LF or otherwise (cf. Sag 2006). This view could leave sluicing ((1)-(3)) to be explained in analogous terms.

1) They've been at it for a while, but I don't know *how long*.

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my thanks to Ivan Sag for information and discussions about sluicing, and to Matti Kilpiö and Matti Rissanen for comments and guidance on my research.

- 2) A: Would you like a cookie?  
B: *What kind?*

(Culicover and Jackendoff 2005: 243).

- 3) A: Did Mary phone you?  
B: *When?*

(Ginzburg and Sag 2000: 298).

Sluicing is an anaphoric rule licensed by some relationship between a stranded *wh*-phrase and its antecedent in another clause/sentence. When it was first envisaged by Ross (1969) it was taken to derive from deletion of an interrogative clause that follows the *wh*-phrase. The logic of this intuition is that the *wh*-phrase has the same distribution as an embedded question (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff 2005), a fact straightforwardly captured on a theory that projects syntactic reconstruction of a sluice. There are good reasons for linguists to carry this idea if syntactic effects along the lines of (4)-(7) are to be taken care of.

- 4) A: Who did Bo insult yesterday?  
B: *Mo/#I/Me/#He/Him/#She/Her.*

- 5) A: Which cabinet minister did Toni replace?  
B: *Mo/#I/Me/#He/Him/#She/Her*

(Ginzburg and Sag 2000: 299).

- 6) A: They didn't produce any conclusive evidence, though.  
B: *For what?*

- 7) A: I'd really love to stay and have a soda, but I have an early lunch date.  
B: *Who with?*

Note that such effects as those in (4)-(5) can more readily be reflected in terms of case in OE than any other period in English, just as they are easily reconciled with any case-marking language, e.g. German, Greek, Finnish, Dutch, Russian, Czech, Polish, Slovene, Hungarian, Hindi, Basque, Turkish or Korean listed in Merchant (2006). The passages in (6)-(7) are licensed by yet another link with the antecedents: the prepositions that head the ellipsis sites are derived from the antecedent structure. Both case and preposition choice require that a treatment of sluicing not be suspended away from syntax. Most analyses in fact connect sluicing to syntactic operations under structural identity with an antecedent (cf. Merchant 2001, 2004, 2006) even if they also accommodate an acknowledgment of possible structural mismatches, which do surface in (6)-(7). The mismatches are due to an option called sprouting, with an orphan's reference

picked up from implied arguments or adjuncts in the antecedent (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff 2005; Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey 2006). The exact issue that sprouting engages is that the orphans in (6) and (7) do not refer back to any arguments or adjuncts visible in the antecedent structure. Instead, the *wh*-phrases are licensed by covert elements.<sup>2</sup> However carefully crafted the account, positing syntactic reconstruction of any matching clauses will not hold. The relationship between the corresponding antecedents and orphans is indirect, semantic or pragmatic at best, with a puzzling syntactic connection. This and even weaker links are naturally more relevant to sluicing when it is operative over sentence boundaries (inter-sentential ellipsis), which Ginzburg and Sag (2000) take care to emphasize. In consequence of such cross-sentential operation, the guiding principle is a "conversational context".

Conversation is a medium that requires a different approach to context than does text or monologue. The biggest differences emerge from the fact that conversation involves multiple agents, with distinct information states, who are prone to disagreements and misunderstandings. This forms the background for sluices such as [8] – B's sluice is felicitous even if she does not accept A's assertion – and [9] – B's sluice communicates that she has failed to fully understand A's utterance.

- 8) A: I can find someone to do the job.  
B: *Who?*

- 9) A: Did Jill phone?  
B: *Who?*

(Ginzburg and Sag 2000: 296-297).

Separation of inter-sentential (non-embedded) sluices from intra-sentential (embedded) ones reflects an intuition that the latter are more straightforwardly accounted for when all one has are syntactic tools. It is indeed a reasonable assumption that rules operating within sentential bounds can be easily reconciled with syntactic effects, if for no other reason than the overarching theme of sentential integrity, to the point of positing structural identity with an antecedent and even syntactic reconstruction of the ellipsis. In principle, there are no good grounds for so separating sluices, however, inasmuch as embedding or lack thereof does not seem to alter the mechanism itself. Rather, recognition of the differences can lead to a unified account of how sluicing is resolved. If, on some uses of sluicing there is no straightforward syntax linking up an antecedent with an ellipsis, the strategy of treating sluices as products of syntactic operations has little justification. Which strategy is to be adopted instead? One that allows

<sup>2</sup> Sprouting is a very special type of syntactic mismatch in sluicing; Section 2 lists another.

enough flexibility that instances of sprouting, with or without potential syntactic effects, alongside other non-syntactic licensing can be taken care of. Thus multi-level solutions are clearly preferable to strictly syntactic or semantic ones.

It is indeed the choice of strategy that falls squarely within the scope of my inquiry. Among the specific questions asked are: (i) Whether there is any statistical evidence for maintaining – as Merchant (2001, 2006) does – or rejecting, as Ginzburg and Sag (2000) and Culicover and Jackendoff (2005) do – syntactic reconstruction, (ii) Whether any patterns emerge from locating English sluicing within an empirical landscape.

In the sections that follow, I first address the problems with analyzing historical data. Next, I turn to the interaction of Old English sluicing and the level of representation involved in its resolution, all intended to verify how much insight there is in multi-level approaches along the lines of Ginzburg and Sag (2000) and Culicover and Jackendoff (2005). I give a statement of the factors that likely affect the distribution of sluicing and patterns that emerge from the analysis. Importantly, my analysis provides coverage of both embedded and non-embedded sluices in the Old English corpus in the hope of clarifying similarities and dissimilarities between them. Finally, I propose that sluicing has seen a relaxation of the predominantly syntactic constraints placed on the relationship between antecedent and orphan.

## 2. Handling the data

The present analysis is based on the evidence from the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus and the Old English part of the Helsinki corpus. It turned up a total of 165 sluices<sup>3</sup> identified by computerized means but not so categorized. Some means of automatic categorization of ellipsis in the OE texts is in fact what I hope to develop in the future. In the present study, categorization of sluices is in line with recent work in the field, which basically articulates an overlap in the structures of antecedent and ellipsis or lack thereof. The latter is divisible into sprouting, *how* mismatch, inference and pragmatic (situational) control, the last three never attested in the corpora under investigation. For illustration, consider Present-day English instances of syntactic mismatch (10), inference (11) and pragmatic control (12)-(14) operative in sluices.

- 10) Decorating for the holidays is easy if you know *how*  
(Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey 2006: 3).

<sup>3</sup> The search itself determined sluices by applying the category of a stranded *wh*-phrase.

- 11) (=m LAWRENCE.) Well, the first thing will be money.  
(=m ALLENBY.) *How much?*  
(=m LAWRENCE.) The Turks are lavish spenders and we shall  
have to outbid them. Say two hundred thousand.

(1960ratt.d8b, 2189 words, was 1960Ratt.d9>><Rattigan,  
Terence. 1960. Ross: *A dramatic portrait*).

- 12) [Someone stands before the scene of some awful event and exclaims:]  
'*Why, oh why? I dunno*'  
(Ivan Sag, personal communication).
- 13) A: I need some sugar for the cake.  
B: I think I bought some yesterday.  
A: [Searching through cupboards] Well, I'm skeptical. If you're so sure,  
come show me *where*  
(Ginzburg and Sag 2000: 298).

- (14) [Cab driver to passenger on their way to the airport:]  
'*Which airline?*'

In (10) the antecedent cannot quite serve as the source in syntactic terms inasmuch as an infinitive preceded by *to* that is interpreted as following *how* is not to be read off of the surface structure. This is a frequent case of syntactic mismatch today; it was not so until 1300 (cf. *OED*), when the structure entered English. Examples along the lines of (11)-(14) have always been problematic for, and even somewhat ignored by those who side with syntactic solutions. It is downright impossible to propose any kind of identity with a non-existent antecedent. Compared with the OE data, all the passages cited in (10)-(14) make it appear that relaxation of syntax affecting the relationship between antecedent and ellipsis is a development by degrees. There is of course considerable controversy surrounding this statement, as is the case whenever conclusions based on diachronic studies are at stake. The picture of sluicing that emerges from my analysis is that it does not allow much recalcitrance in its licensing: syntactic identity is mostly preserved; where it is not, the departure is due to sprouting alone. To make this picture more comprehensive I follow the standard practice of applying temporal and textual criteria. And so I take it the mid-tenth century marks the end of Early OE, the texts themselves classified, the Helsinki way, based on the relevant manuscript dates. The analysis further documents differences, if any, between the OE texts translated from Latin and the authentic ones,

all couched in terms of separating native developments from external influences. How far this can be taken is a difficult question, but even if empirical evidence forced us to conclude that OE was modeled on Latin to a large extent, we could still argue that a Latin structure that was a complete stranger to OE was not very likely to be carried over into the target text totally unaltered. The question of how sensitive OE was to Latin influence has of course engaged much of the literature on OE. Brown (1970) and Allen (1980), for example, dismiss Latin as a negligible factor in syntax. Even the dative absolute, a construction typically believed to be fashioned out of the Latin ablative absolute, may not have been so (cf. Lass 1994). Some clearer influence of Latin possibly shows up where OE lacks the same elegance of expression, though, and so attempts to straightforwardly replicate it (cf. Mitchell and Robinson 1986).

In the textual vein, there is yet another difficult question. Can we state anything with much penetration if we have no way of knowing how much the spoken variety departed from the written one? Allen (1980: 263) suggests that the strategy to adopt is one of reasonable reliance on the texts reflecting more of the spoken language than could be expected. With some texts addressed to the uneducated, others intended to be “read aloud to illiterate parishioners”, the written style could not be far removed from speech, she claims. This largely reduces the risk, without removing it altogether, that ellipsis may have been a feature of spoken language before it surfaced in writing.

Obviously, there will always be some points about the balance of interests in the corpus, not least of which is the genre. Poetic texts are hardly ever encountered, therefore, any data turned up by an analysis will be underrepresented. In search for potential patterns, I do address this aspect here, though I do so without much hope for proving anything conclusive. Rather, it is still instructive to know that the same patterns show in what little evidence from poetry we have. This notwithstanding, no legitimate comparison can be instituted between prose and poetry in the circumstances.

### 3. What licenses OE sluices

This section draws much of its motivation from current work on ellipsis, as discussed in Section 1. One of its central aims is to close the gap in empirical research on the behavior of sluicing. A possible scenario largely ignored in the literature is that the recalcitrance of modern sluicing may not have been as pronounced in the past. To verify this assumption, I proceed incrementally, first noting the number of violations of structural identity (sprouting) against the total number of sluices in my corpus. Table 1 has the distribution.

Table 1. Sprouting as a subtype of sluicing in the OE texts

	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early OE	33	6	18.18
Late OE	132	25	18.94
Total	165	31	18.79

15) Ac an þing þu scealt nede þæran witan: forhwy God is gehaten sio hehste ecenes.

þa cwæð ic: *Hwy?*

‘But one thing you must necessarily know: why God is called the highest eternity then I said: why?’

(*Boethius, The consolation of philosophy*, Headings: Sedgefield 1899: 3-6).

16) ælce dæde sceal gescadwis dema wislice toscadan, hu heo gedon si and hwar oððe hwænne

‘A reasonable judge shall wisely distinguish every deed, how it is done, and where or when.’

(*Handbook for the use of a Confessor*: Fowler 1965: 17-34).

17) Ic wiste þæt þu ut afaren wære, ac ic nysste *hu feor*

‘I knew that you had departed, but I didn’t know how far.’

(*Boethius, The consolation of philosophy*: Sedgefield 1899: 7-149).

18) Gea, butan nettum huntian

ic mæg.

*Hu?*

‘Yes, I can hunt without a net. How? – sprouting.’

(*Ælfric, Colloquy*: Garmonsway 1939: 18-49).

- 19) Augustinus: þa answarode me sum ðing, ic nat *hwæt*  
 ‘Augustinus: then (he) answered me something, I dont know what.’

(St. Augustine, *Soliloquies, Book 1*: Endter 1922, 2-55;  
 corrections by Carnicelli 1969, and by MS).

- 20) Ða cwæd he, Hwæt axast þu me be gode; An God ys god; Soþlice gyf þu  
 wylt on lif becuman heald þa beboda.  
 Ða cwæd he, *hwylce*; þa cwæd se Hælend, ne do þu mannslyht, ne do þu  
 unrihtæmed, ne stel þu, ne sege þu lease and gewitnysee

‘Then he said: Why do you ask me about God? God is good. Truly, if you  
 wish to live, keep the commandments.  
 Then he said: Which?’

Then the Lord said: ‘Thou shalt not murder.’  
 ‘Thou shall not commit adultery.’  
 ‘You shall not steal.’

‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor’

(*Matthew* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 140):  
 Skeat 1871-87: 24-244).

Clearly, OE already witnesses integration of the syntactic side of sluicing with a non-syntactic one inasmuch as syntactic reconstruction is not a viable option in passages like (16)-(18), though it could be posited for (15) and (19)-(20). Stated somewhat differently, syntactic reconstruction will be ruled out where syntactic identity between antecedent and ellipsis is not satisfied – due to sprouting in all these cases; where it is satisfied, nothing in principle blocks off syntactic reconstruction. This fact speaks against unifying sluicing with syntactic deletion, and thereby points to a syntactic-semantic explanation instead.

To be honest, initially it was my intuition that sluicing, at some point, had only been constrained by syntactic effects, with sprouting arising later on and gaining ground step by step.<sup>4</sup> Table 1 shows that sprouting is not restricted to Late OE, though, nor does it show any steep increase in its frequency relative to that of sluicing as it moves from Early to Late OE (around 18% in both peri-

<sup>4</sup> This line of argument had a basis in the diachronic patterns shown by Verb Phrase ellipsis, which I discuss in Nykiel (2006), and the paper presented at the Georgetown University Roundtable 2007.

ods). Is this indication that sprouting has persisted in English sluicing all along? Apparently, this seems to be the case. What change there is at the passage signals a marked rise in the number of the instances of both sluicing and sprouting, the participation of sprouting in sluicing roughly the same throughout OE.

To add a greater degree of precision to these statistics, I build on the data offered in Tables 2 and 3 below.<sup>5</sup>

Table 2. Authentic texts: Sprouting as a subtype of sluicing

Authentic texts	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early OE	6	2	33.33
Late OE	52	9	17.31
Total	58	11	18.97

Table 3. Translated texts: Sprouting as a subtype of sluicing

Translated texts	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early OE	23	4	17.39
Late OE	52	10	19.23
Total	75	14	18.67

While it is essential that one appeal to the authentic/translated distinction, the distinction itself fails to shed new light on how sluicing and sprouting came about. The tables do not explicitly rule out the possibility that the rules are native developments, since the numbers for Late OE prove almost the same. It is in fact in Early OE that some puzzling discrepancy lies giving an empirical basis for a position that assumes that sluicing is rooted in Latin rather than OE. Given that sluices occur almost four times as often in the translated texts as in the authentic ones, the Latin option seems more plausible. This conclusion is yet further strengthened by comparing the Latin text of *Boethius* with its OE version: the English sluices are very much replicas of the original. On the other hand, as much as a third of the sluices in the authentic texts is due to sprouting, a fact that indicates that the rule is already well-established – or considerably better than it is in the translated texts. With the evidence that is so meager, how-

<sup>5</sup> Tables 2-3 and 5-8 below only show the numbers for those texts whose origin is categorizable as either authentic or translated. A few texts, with instances of sluicing in them, are left unidentified, thus excluded from the statistics.

ever, it is impossible to offer a conclusive statement of the origin of sluicing; what it is possible to offer is a prediction that even if OE sluicing is modeled on a Latin rule, it is accompanied by sprouting as a legitimate, if infrequent, subtype. Also, there is a lot of insight in Ross's argument that sluicing is licensed by syntax. Indeed it is – overwhelmingly so.

Now we can examine sprouting in more detail. Where the rule is operative, it involves violation of structural identity between antecedent and ellipsis site. Correct as the prediction is, it would fail to capture, if left unaltered, the syntactic effects discussed in Section 1 and already recorded in the DOE corpus. Table 4 has the distribution of these effects across temporal and textual variants.

Table 4. Syntactic effects in sprouting

Syntax-dependent sprouting	Authentic texts	Translated texts
Early OE	1	1
Late OE	3	3
Total	4	4

Note how the translated texts mirror the record found in the authentic ones, which means that sprouting, independently of text type, can still repair some of the structural violation. Among the eight instances, one orphan picks up its case from an argument implied by the antecedent (21), the rest housing prepositions whose presence is again regulated by the corresponding antecedents' implied arguments, as in (22)–(23).

- 21) *Da befran Iohannes færllice, and cwæð: Hu ys he la dead oððe hwilcum deaþe?*  
 ‘Then John asked quickly and said: How, is he dead and by what kind of death?’

(Ælfric: *Letter to Sigeward* [“On the Old and New Testament”] (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 509 fols. 120v-141v: Crawford 1922, 15-75).

- 22) *Stranguilio cwæð: Hwa forðemde þe?*  
*Apollonius cwæð: Antiochus se cyngc.*  
*Stranguilio cwæð: For hwilcum intingum?*  
 ‘Stranguilio said: Who condemned you?’  
*Apollonius said: King Antiochus.*  
 Stranguilio said: For what reasons?’

(*Vision of Leofric*: Napier 1907-10: 182-186).

- 23) *Æfter þisum hæfde se cyng mycel geþeah and swide deope spæce wid his witan ymbe þis land hu hit wære gesett odde mid hwylcon mannon*

‘After this the king had much counsel and talked very solemnly about this land with his wise men. How it was established and by what people/whom.’

(*ChronE* Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 636: Earle and Plummer 1892-9, as E.).

To capture how exactly the repairing is done seemingly requires that a deeper level of syntactic structure be maintained. Seemingly – because we have already established that proposing a syntactically recoverable structure for an ellipsis would leave a great many cases unexplained. This is not to say that the syntax of an antecedent cannot interact with an ellipsis in another fashion. The proposal by Culicover and Jackendoff (2005) avoids syntactic reconstruction by introducing the notion of indirect licensing, where some potential syntactic features of an orphan may derive from an antecedent. Just as a predicate is made available as a licenser, so are its implied arguments by means of a covert realization in the speaker/hearer's mind, their syntactic features “indirectly” inherited from such realizations. To stretch this point to its logical conclusion, an approach along these lines could also explain and interpret inference-based and situationally-controlled sluicing, recorded in PDE, as driven by mental images/notes evoked by overt antecedents. This would give a convenient way of incorporating pragmatics into the set of the licensers of ellipsis.

Overall, it is essential that linguists not lose sight of syntax, since the *DOE* corpus sees sluicing controlled by syntax in 142 (entire or partial syntactic control) out of 165 instances. A syntactic solution alone, however, can never give the desired result. For OE sluices, we do have to alternate between syntactic and semantic solutions, be it only to capture a minority of cases. If we so cast ellipsis into diachronic mode, the PDE facts fall into place; there is a lot of syntax in sluicing, there is some semantics, and finally there is pragmatics.<sup>6</sup>

Below, I consider another point frequently made about sluicing – namely, that embedded sluices typically trigger less violation of structural identity than do non-embedded ones.

<sup>6</sup> Although semantics has only a marginal presence, and pragmatics does none at all in the corpus examined here, the integrity of this claim lies in my work on Shakespearean English that indicates that sluicing and Verb Phrase ellipsis have both generalized to semantic and pragmatic licensers over the centuries (cf. Nykiel 2006).

## 4. An asymmetry between embedded and non-embedded sluices

Recall that this intuition is due to Ginzburg and Sag (2000), offered as something of a complaint about the unidirectionality of the accounts available at the time. Naturally, a syntactic approach better accounts for embedded sluices, which see a reduction in the number of the recalcitrant instances; it will lose ground as soon as a linguist crosses sentential boundaries to accommodate non-embedded sluices. Hence the safe option of staying within the bounds of a sentence. The OE facts provide direct support for Ginzburg and Sag's prediction about PDE, and furthermore for positing a time-honored asymmetry between the two rules. Consider Tables (5)-(8).

Table 5. Non-embedded sprouting as a subtype of non-embedded sluicing in authentic texts

	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early	1	1	100
Late	3	3	100
Total	4	4	100

Table 6. Non-embedded sprouting as a subtype of non-embedded sluicing in translated texts

	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early	1	0	0
Late	14	5	35.71
Total	15	5	33.33

Table 7. Embedded sprouting as a subtype of embedded sluicing in authentic texts

	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early	5	1	20
Late	53	5	9.43
Total	58	6	10.34

Table 8. Embedded sprouting as a subtype of embedded sluicing in translated texts

	Sluicing	Sprouting	% of sprouting
Early	24	4	16.67
Late	32	5	15.63
Total	56	9	16.07

We have already seen that the shift from Early to Late OE interacts with an increased frequency of sluices. As shown by the tables, this has the important consequence of fueling an analogous rise in the number of ellipses that instantiate sprouting – a rise that is not parallel in embedded and non-embedded sluices. Note that both authentic and translated texts signal a similar asymmetry between the relation of the instances of sprouting to those of sluicing (but consider that non-embedded sprouting achieves the frequency rate of 100% in Table 5). Interestingly, my analysis turns up a rather high doze of embedded sprouting in Early OE which drops later on. There are, however, five more instances of embedded sprouting recorded in Late OE whose textual origin is vague.

I conclude that there is early evidence indicating that syntactic licensing is overwhelmingly more often required for embedded sluices than for non-embedded ones, and if that is so, then no syntactic accounts constrained by sentential bounds are straightforwardly wrong. But they do fail to accommodate all the data. It is a safe assumption then that a felicitous account of sluicing, and ellipsis in general, is best framed in terms of syntactic and semantic licensing with an option of admitting pragmatics, where both embedded and non-embedded orphans contribute to the analysis.

## 5. Conclusion

Recent on-going work on ellipsis signals the need for departing from structural motivation behind the relationship between ellipsis site and antecedent. The status of sluicing as a syntax-unrelated rule, however, has not been accepted. Rather, the operating principle is to acknowledge the syntactic side of sluicing to the point of positing syntactic reconstruction of the ellipsed parts. I argue that the OE facts enable a somewhat clearer perspective on the forces that now govern sluicing, and how they have derived from those that did in the past.

There are essentially two important conclusions. For one thing, sluicing requires a structurally identical antecedent (syntactic licensing) by default, even if this requirement has been subject to relaxation ever since Early OE. Whenever the requirement is relaxed, the semantics of an antecedent can trigger a sluice that results from sprouting – the only option that violates overt structural identity in

OE. This development gains ground in English in the subsequent periods although it retains a mechanism for moving closer to the syntax of an antecedent by showing connectivity effects. Sprouting itself is clearly problematic for a strictly syntactic or semantic solution, but being so, it also makes it clear that since a single rule can combine semantic and syntactic features, so should an account of it. To take this evidence a step further, I argue in this paper that sluicing initially has a strong syntactic foundation, supplemented by a bit of semantics, that later interacts with significant semantic, and even pragmatic, licensing. As observed by von Stechow (2007), interpretation of a sentence in context begins with the basic proposition, whereupon some discourse and pragmatic features are admitted. If sluicing is an anaphoric rule that binds discourse together, it could be expected to reflect the same progression in diachronic terms. Of course, the notion of syntactic reconstruction must in the circumstances be abandoned.

The other conclusion mirrors Ginzburg and Sag's argument in that it addresses the part that embedding plays in sluicing. The data suggest that many records of sprouting, because of the rule's pronounced sensitivity to non-embedded sluices, may have been missed by those linguists who have never reached beyond embedded sluicing. The numbers offered above are yet another indication that the determination of some antecedents typically does not proceed with the help of syntax.

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