Exceptional movement is unexceptionally local

**The issue**  ‘Exceptional movement’ - syntactic movement only found in elliptical sentences - is at the center of attention in ellipsis research (e.g. Lasnik 1999, Takahashi 1994). It rears its head in many constructions: Pseudogapping, (Multiple) Slicing, (Multiple) Fragments, (why-)Stripping and Gapping. Consider the case of Pseudogapping in (1), in which the PP to India can only prepose if the predicate is unpronounced (via VP ellipsis under most analyses).

(1) John has travelled to Spain and Bill has to India (*travelled).

A lot of questions still pertain to exceptional movement, such as whether it involves A- or Â-movement, what locality conditions apply to it and why it is parasitic on ellipsis.

In this paper, I address these issues. I assume that no feature checking is involved with exceptional movement. As such, exceptional movement can only involve local, superficial reordering and, crucially, cannot involve cyclic (long distance) movement (cf. Chomsky 2001; Bošković 2007). Exceptional movement is thus strictly finite clause bound (contra Thoms to appear, as well as Griffiths & Lipták to appear). Exceptional movement can only take place in ellipsis contexts, since the resulting ‘illegal’ word order is nullified by ellipsis (see Fox & Pesetsky 2005).

**Unbounded exceptional movement?** Thoms (to appear) (following Fox & Lasnik 2003 and many others) argues that exceptional movement can proceed long distance, even across islands, and is subject to an LF parallelism constraint: variables in the antecedent A and the elliptical clause E must be bound from parallel positions. To illustrate Thoms’ argumentation, consider the cases in (2a) and (2b). In non-contrastive fragments in island contexts (2a), the fragment takes matrix scope parallel to the indefinite in its antecedent. Contrastive Fragments (2b), on the other hand, are ruled out in the same context due to lack of parallelism: the contrastive correlate only has embedded scope (cf. Griffiths & Lipták to appear).

   b. A: I heard they hired someone who speaks **BULGARIAN** fluently. B: *No, SERBO-CROATIAN.

Thoms argues that LF parallelism also captures the Clause Mate Condition (CMC, Lasnik 2013) found in Multiple Slicing and Multiple Fragments. LF parallelism derives the clause-mate condition in (3b) with reference to the embedded scope of the in-situ wh-phrase what (Dayal 2002).

(3) a. A: Who bought what? B: John a bike, and Mary a bicycle. ✓ LF parallelism
   LF_A [[who], λx. [what]_j λy.[x bought y]]
   LF_E [[John], λx. [a bike]_j λy.[x bought y]]
   LF_A [[who], λx. [what]_j λy.[you bought y]]
   LF_E [[John], λx. [a book]_j λy.[x said you bought y]]

Thoms concludes that exceptional movement is not constrained in the syntax, i.e. it is unbounded, but its application has to comply with the independent requirement of LF parallelism.

**Problems with LF parallelism** A conceptual problem for LF parallelism in general is that it leaves open the question why the spell-out position of a remnant determines its LF scope position. Since May (1977), it is well-known that PF spell-out position and LF scope position don’t always coincide.

More importantly, LF parallelism fails to account for simple fragments like (4), where the fact that no LF parallelism obtains (the focused Greek has clause-bound scope), predicts the example to be ungrammatical, contrary to fact.

(4) A: Did Abby claim she speaks **GREEK** fluently? B: No, **ALBANIAN.** # LF parallelism, yet grammatical
   LF_A [Did Abby claim [Greek], λx.[she speaks x fluently]
   LF_E [[Albanian], λx.[Abby claimed she speaks x fluently]]

I submit that examples like (4) remain out of reach for an LF parallelism theory, due to the fact that there is an insurmountable clash between the strict locality of exceptional movement of second remnants in non-island environments like (3) and the non-locality of exceptional movement in island contexts like (2).
**The solution: exceptional movement is local** As a first step towards a theory of exceptional movement, I take it that extraction from islands is impossible (cf. Abels 2011; Barros 2012; Blümel 2013). Consequently, (2) falls out of consideration. We are thus in need of an account that distinguishes (4), where a single remnant can cross a finite clause boundary, from (3b), where a second remnant cannot do so.

Building on the literature on cyclic movement (Chomsky 2001; Boskovitch 2007, a.o.), I assume that exceptional movement can’t take place cyclically, since there is no feature checking involved. Given that, its locality should be that of other non-cyclic movement types. To account for why exceptional movement only occurs under ellipsis, I adopt Fox & Pesetsky’s (2005) theory of phases. In this theory, ordering statements are added to an ordering table at the end of each phase. If a movement results in a conflicting ordering statement, as happens with exceptional movement, the derivation will crash. Crucially, ellipsis saves the derivation by eliminating the conflicting ordering statement from the ordering table (Fox & Pesetsky 2005).

This account predicts that regular syntactic movement (including both cyclic and non-cyclic movement) should feed into exceptional movement. This, I argue, is precisely what explains the difference between (4) and (3b). In (4), Albanian A-moves into the matrix clause, after which ellipsis applies to the matrix TP.

(5) A: Did Abby claim she speaks Greek fluently? B: No, Albanian.

   [Albanian], i.e. t, Abby claimed she speaks t, fluently) long fronting plus ellipsis

In (3b), on the other hand, there is no cyclic movement of either John or the book. Since exceptional movement does not take place cyclically, it can only move a book to a position inside the embedded finite clause, cf. (6). Consequently, a book is ‘caught’ by ellipsis applying to the matrix TP.


   B = [CP [John, [t, said [- [a book], [I bought t]]]]

**Cross-linguistic variation explained** If exceptional movement is strictly local, a clear prediction of my account is that only languages that allow long movement in non-elliptical contexts allow for long movement under ellipsis. This prediction is borne out. Spanish, for example, allows for long extraction under TP ellipsis, as it also allows for long extraction in Cllitic Left Dislocation (cf. 7, Saab 2010). In Dutch, on the other hand, which lacks CLLD, the equivalent of (7) is ungrammatical, see (8). The contrast between (7) and (8) is expected under the present account, but not under accounts that allow for unbounded exceptional movement.

(7) A: Yo no dije que desaprobó a Ana

   I not said that failed-3PL ACC A.

B: Y a María tampoco [t, dijiste que [a, desaprobó]] and ACC M. neither said-2SG that CL-ACC-3SG-F failed-3PL

(8) *Ik heb niet gezegd dat ze Anna lieten zakken, noch Marie [t, zei ik dat [ze lieten zakken]]

   I have not said that they A. let fail neither M. said I that they let fail.

**Conclusion** If exceptional movement does not involve feature checking, but merely superficial reordering of phrases, we can explain why exceptional movement must be local (it cannot apply cyclically), but also why this generally unavailable reordering is only possible under ellipsis. Vacuous syntactic movement is generally not allowed, since it results in contradictory ordering statements. Ellipsis, however, eliminates the contradictory ordering statements.