



HAL
open science

VP-ellipsis and the Czech auxiliary být ('to be')

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova

► **To cite this version:**

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova. VP-ellipsis and the Czech auxiliary být ('to be'). *XLinguae*, 2012, 5 (4), pp.3-15. hal-00807296

HAL Id: hal-00807296

<https://hal.science/hal-00807296>

Submitted on 3 Apr 2013

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

VP-ellipsis and the Czech auxiliary *být* ('to be')

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova

Résumé

Cet article porte sur l'ellipse du SV après le verbe auxiliaire *být* ('être') en tchèque. Nous nous demandons en particulier pourquoi l'ellipse du SV n'est possible qu'au futur et à la voix passive. Nous montrons que les différentes formes de l'auxiliaire *být* diffèrent en ce qui concerne leur statut morphologique, le temps, l'aspect et la négation. Par conséquent, nous proposons que ces formes occupent des positions syntaxiques différentes. Seules les formes du futur et du passif sont générées au-dessous de la négation, dans la tête qui domine immédiatement le SV et autorise l'ellipse de son complément SV.

Mots-clé: syntaxe, ellipse, verbe auxiliaire, syntagme verbal (SV), tchèque

1. The phenomenon of Verb Phrase Ellipsis

By ellipsis, one usually refers to the process responsible for the omission in the clause of a string (word, constituent), whose meaning can be recovered from the context. Verb Phrase Ellipsis (henceforth VP-ellipsis) targets the lexical verb and any objects and modifiers it might take. It is licensed by the immediately preceding auxiliary that takes a Verb Phrase (VP) as a complement (Ross 1970, Hankamer 1971, Sag 1976). VP-ellipsis occurs in different types of sentences (coordinate and subordinate clauses, independent utterances related to a previous discourse) and it always has a linguistic antecedent. In examples in (1), the elliptical string is indicated by \emptyset and its linguistic antecedent in the clause is underlined.

- (1)
- a. John does not love Mary, but Peter does \emptyset .
 - b. Jane has called her friend, and Kitty has \emptyset too.
 - c. John won't go to the store, but Bill will \emptyset .
 - d. The fact that Jane said she didn't break the window made me wonder who did \emptyset .
 - e. Q: Who is coming tomorrow? A: Jane is \emptyset .

Cross-linguistically, the use of VP-ellipsis seems to depend upon languages' auxiliaries. In English, for instance, VP-Ellipsis occurs after all auxiliary verbs¹, including modal verbs. In French, on the contrary, VP-ellipsis seems only licensed by modal verbs (Bousquet & Denis 2001), as shown in (2):

- (2)
- a. *Jean a rencontré Marie, et Pierre a \emptyset aussi.
John has met Mary and Peter has too
 - b. Jean pourra rendre visite à son père, mais Pierre ne pourra pas \emptyset .
John can-FUT visit his father but Peter NEG can-FUT NEG
'John will be able to visit his father, but Peter will not.'

This paper deals with VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary verb *být* ('to be') in Czech, which is the only Czech auxiliary, leaving aside modal verbs. Interestingly, the

¹ VP-ellipsis is not allowed after the auxiliary in gerund and in progressive tense and after the infinitival *have* (Sag 1976).

verb *být* allows for VP-ellipsis in future tense, as shown in (3), but not in past tense and in conditional mood, as shown in (4) and (5) respectively.

- (3) Future: a. Já **budu** číst nahlas, a ty **budeš** Ø taky.
 I FUT_{1sg} read aloud and you AUX.FUT_{2sg} too
 ‘I will read aloud and you will too.’
 b. Vždy spolu existovaly a vždy také Ø budou.² (ČNK³)
 always together existed_{f.pl} and always too AUX.FUT_{3pl}
 ‘They always existed together and they always will.’
- (4) Past: *Já **jsem** četl knihu, a ty **jsi** Ø také.
 I AUX_{1sg} read_{m.sg} book and you AUX_{2sg} too⁴
 (intended: ‘I read the book, and you did too.’)
- (5) Cond.: a. *Já **bych** četl knihu a ty **bys** Ø také.
 I COND_{1sg} read_{m.sg} book and you COND_{2sg} too
 (intended: ‘I would read the book, and you would too.’)
 b. *Já **bych byl** četl knihu a ty **bys byl** Ø také.
 I COND_{1sg} been_{m.sg} read_{m.sg} book and you COND_{2sg} been_{m.sg} too
 (intended: ‘I would have read the book, and you would have too.’)

The aim of this paper is to investigate why VP-ellipsis may only occur after the auxiliary *být* in future forms. In section 2, I will show that future and past/conditional forms of the auxiliary verb *být* have different morpho-syntactic properties. I will claim that there is a correlation between these properties and availability of VP-ellipsis. In section 3, I show that the correlation observed for verbal forms in active voice makes correct predictions for VP-ellipsis in passive voice. In section 4, I propose a syntactic explanation of VP-ellipsis in Czech. In particular, I will claim that only future auxiliaries occupy the verbal head immediately above the lexical VP, where they license VP-ellipsis of their VP complement. Section 5 contains concluding remarks.

2. The properties of the auxiliary verb *být*

Czech is a language with rich verbal morphology. As for the auxiliary verb *být* (‘to be’), we can distinguish the following forms used in complex verbal forms in active voice:

- forms used in the past tense: *jsem, jsi, ø, jsme, jste, ø⁵*,
- forms used in the future tense: *budu, budeš, bude, budeme, budete, budou*,
- the conditional form *by*, to which attaches a person-number agreement marker: *by-ch, by-s, by-ø, by-chom, by-ste, by-ø*,
- the past participle *byl* used in past conditional tense, to which attaches a number-gender agreement marker: *byl-ø* (m.sg), *byl-a* (f.sg), *byl-o* (n.sg), *byl-i* (m.pl), *byl-y* (f.pl), *byl-a* (n.pl).

² Czech is a *pro-drop* language; an overt subject may thus be omitted.

³ Examples noted by ČNK are taken from *The Czech National Corpus* (Český národní korpus, see references).

⁴ The following abbreviations are used in glosses: 1/2/3 = person, acc = accusative, dat = dative, m/f/n = masculine/feminine/neutre, sg/pl = singular/plural, AUX = auxiliary, ASP = aspect, CL = clitic, COND = conditional, FUT = future, (IM)PERF = (im)perfective, NEG = negation, PASS = passive, PAST = past, T = tense.

⁵ The auxiliary verb *být* is null in the third person, while the lexical verb *být* is not: *jsem, jsi, je, jsme, jste, jsou*. See Veselovská (2004) for other differences between lexical and auxiliary *být*.

To form a complex verbal form, past and conditional auxiliary *byť* combines with the past participle of a lexical verb. This participle is marked in active voice by the suffix *-l*, to which attaches number-gender agreement marker: *-l* (m.sg) / *-la* (f.sg) / *-lo* (n.sg) / *-li* (m.pl) / *-ly* (f.pl) / *-la* (n.pl). Future auxiliary combines with the infinitive of a lexical verb. The table 1 below shows different forms of the verb *pracovat* ('to work'). The auxiliary forms are in bold.

Table 1: *Present, past and future verbal forms of the verb pracovat ('to work')*

| | Indicative mood | Conditional mood |
|---------------|--|---|
| Present tense | já pracuji I work _{1sg} 'I work' | já bych pracoval I COND _{1sg} worked _{m.sg} 'I would work' |
| Past tense | já jsem pracoval I AUX _{1sg} worked _{m.sg} 'I (have) worked.' | já bych byl pracoval I COND _{1sg} been _{m.sg} worked _{sg} 'I would have worked' |
| Future tense | já budu pracovat I AUX.FUT _{1sg} work 'I will work' | — |

In next sections, we will see that future auxiliary forms differ from the past and conditional ones with respect to morphology, tense, aspect, and negation. I will claim that there is a correlation between these properties and availability of VP-ellipsis.

2.1 Clitic auxiliary forms

The first difference between the forms under discussion relates to their morphological status. Past forms and the conditional marker are verbal clitics that attach to the first constituent in the clause; they are called 'second position clitics' (Franks & King 2000). They obligatorily precede pronominal clitics, with which they form a clitic cluster, as shown in (6) and (7a), where all clitic forms are in italics.

- (6) Past: My (*jsme*) *mu to* už (**jsme*) poslali.
we AUX_{1pl} he_{dat} it_{acc} already AUX_{1pl} sent_{m.pl}
'We have already sent it to him.'
- (7) Present My (*bychom*) *mu to* určitě (**bychom*) poslali.
cond.: we COND_{1pl} he_{dat} it_{acc} certainly COND_{1pl} sent_{m.pl}
'We would certainly sent it to him.'

On the contrary, future auxiliary forms and the participle *byl* are free morphemes, as can be seen in (8) in (9) respectively. The position of the auxiliary participle *byl* in the clause is however not completely free, since it must always precede the lexical participle.

- (8) Future: My *mu to* určitě (**budeme**) posílat (**budeme**).
we he_{dat} it_{acc} certainly AUX.FUT_{1pl} send-IMPF AUX.FUT_{1pl}
'We will be certainly sending it to him.'
- (9) Past My *bychom mu to* určitě (**byli**) poslali (***byli**).
cond.: we COND_{1pl} he_{dat} it_{acc} certainly been_{m.pl} sent_{m.pl} been_{m.pl}
'We would (have) certainly sent it to him.'

With respect to ellipsis, we can conclude that clitic auxiliary forms do not allow VP-ellipsis, as shown in (3) and (4a) above. This does not however explain why the non clitic auxiliary participle *byl* in (4b) does not allow VP-ellipsis either.

2.2 Tense and aspect

Another difference between our auxiliary forms concerns tense and aspect. Veselovská (1995: chap. 4) claims that auxiliary verb in the periphrastic past tense does bear person-number agreement features, since it agrees with the subject, but not the tense feature, since it corresponds to present forms of the lexical verb *být*. According to her, it is the lexical past participle that shows interpretable tense feature and allows the past interpretation of the whole verbal form. Moreover, auxiliary verb does not bear aspect feature either, since it is compatible with both perfective and imperfective lexical verbs, as shown in (10).

- (10) Past: jsem / jsi / ø + šel / chodil
AUX_{1sg} / AUX_{2sg} / (3sg) go.PERF.PAST_{m.sg} / go.IMPERF.PAST_{m.sg}
 'I / you / he went / was going'

In conditional mood, see (11), the clitic auxiliary *by* also bears only person-number agreement features, since it appears in both present and past conditional, and combines with a lexical past participle. The whole verbal form is interpreted as past only in the presence of the auxiliary past participle *byl*. I assume that as long as the whole form is interpreted as conditional, the tense feature on the lexical participle itself is irrelevant. Moreover, the auxiliary participle *byl* can be replaced by the participle *býval* issued from the imperfective verb *bývat* ('to be'). However, both *byl* and *býval* are compatible with perfective as well as imperfective verbs. I assume thus that the auxiliary past participle does not reflect aspect feature.

- (11) Conditional:
 a. bych / bys / by + šel / chodil
COND_{1sg} / COND_{2sg} / COND_{3sg} go.PERF.PAST_{m.sg} / go.IMPERF.PAST_{m.sg}
 'I / you / he would go'
 b. bych / bys / by byl / býval + šel / chodil
COND_{1sg} / COND_{2sg} / COND_{3sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} go.PERF.PAST_{m.sg} / go.IMPERF.PAST_{m.sg}
 'I / you / he would have gone'

As for future auxiliary forms, they bear both tense and aspect features of the whole verbal form, since they only combine with an infinitival verb and are only compatible with imperfective lexical verbs, as shown in (12).

- (12) Future: budu / budeš / bude + *jít / chodit
AUX.FUT_{1sg} / AUX.FUT_{2sg} / AUX.FUT_{3sg} go.PERF / go.IMPERF
 'I / you / he will go'

With respect to ellipsis, we can conclude that only auxiliary forms carrying tense and aspect features, thus combining with a non-finite lexical verb license VP-ellipsis.

2.3 Sentential negation

Another important difference between future and other forms of the auxiliary verb *být* concerns negation. Sentential negation in Czech is carried by the

prefix *ne*⁶ that must attach to (Kosta 2001): (i) lexical verb in present tense, see (13), (ii) lexical participle in past tense and in conditional mood, see (14) and (15) respectively, and (iii) to auxiliary verb in future tense, see (16):

- (13) Present: Já tu knihu **NEčtu**.
I this book NEG-read.PRES_{1sg}
'I do not read this book.'
- (14) Past: Já **jsem** tu knihu **NEčetl**. / *Já **NEjsem** tu knihu **četl**.
I AUX_{1sg} this book NEG-read.PAST_{m.sg}
'I did not read this book.'
- (15) Cond.: a. Já **bych** tu knihu **NEčetl**. / *Já **NEbych** tu knihu **četl**.
I COND_{1sg} this book NEG-read.PAST_{m.sg}
'I would not read this book.'
b. Já **bych byl** tu knihu **NEčetl**. / *Já **bych NEbyl** tu knihu **četl**.
I COND_{1sg}been this book NEG-read.PAST_{m.sg}
'I would not have read this book.'
- (16) Future: Já tu knihu **číst NEbudu**.
I this book read NEG-AUX.FUT_{1sg}
'I will not read this book.'

In other words, auxiliary forms that combine with a tensed lexical verb (ie. past participle) may not carry sentential negation. On the contrary, future auxiliaries combine with an infinitival lexical verb and carry sentential negation. The same correlation is true for VP-ellipsis, since only auxiliaries that carry negation may license VP-ellipsis, as shown in (17).

- (17) a. * Já **jsem tu knihu četl**, ale ty **jsi ne**. / **nejsi**.
I AUX_{1sg} this book read.PAST but you AUX_{2sg} NEG / NEG-AUX_{2sg}
b. * Já **bych tu knihu četl**, ale ty **bys ne** / **nebys**.
I COND_{1sg} this book read.PAST but you COND_{2sg} NEG / NEG-COND_{2sg}
c. * Já **bych byl tu knihu četl**, ale ty **bys byl ne** / **nebyl**.
I COND_{1sg} been this book read.PAST but you COND_{2sg} been NEG / NEG-COND_{2sg}
d. Já **tu knihu číst budu**, a ty **nebudeš**.
I this book read AUX.FUT_{1sg} and you NEG-AUX.FUT_{2sg}
'I will read this book, and you will not.'

Agrammaticality of the elliptical strings in (17abc) is well due to the auxiliary status of the verb *být*. Indeed, the negative prefix *ne*- normally attaches to the lexical/attributive verb *být*. The forms *nejsi* in (17a) and *nebyl* in (17c) are thus possible as lexical/attributive verbs that allow for ellipsis of their nominal or adjectival complement, as shown in (18).

- (18) a. On **je lhář**, ale ty **nejsi**.
he is liar but you NEG-are_{2sg}
'He is a liar, but you are not.'
b. Já **bych byl spokojený**, i kdyby on **nebyl**.
I COND_{1sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} happy_{m.sg} even if he NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg}
'I would have been happy, even if he would not.'

⁶ The negative prefix *ne*- is homonymous with the independent negative adverb *ne* ('no'), see (19).

Moreover, the independent negative adverb *ne* may be used in elliptical strings when both the VP and the auxiliary verb are omitted. This strategy is possible in all tenses, as shown in (19).

- (19) a. Já **jsem** / **bych** tu knihu četl, ale ty **ne**.
 I AUX_{1sg} / COND_{1sg} this book read.PAST but you not
 ‘I read / would read this book, but you did / would not.’
 b. Já tu knihu číst **budu**, a ty **ne**.
 I this book read.AUX.FUT_{1sg} and you not
 ‘I will read this book, and you will not.’

2.4 Distribution in question-answer pairs

Veselovská (1995: ch.4) shows that only future auxiliary may appear in answers to polar questions, as in (20), and in *tag questions*, as in (21). This is not surprising, because these contexts are interpreted in relation with the predicate in the preceding question and thus plausibly contain some elided material. I argue however elsewhere (Gruet-Skrabalova 2012) that answers to polar questions do not contain VP-ellipsis, but rather ellipsis of the whole clause after left extraction of the auxiliary verb. Contrary to contexts with VP-ellipsis, the auxiliary in (20) and in (21) cannot be actually preceded by a subject. Moreover, the answer to questions in past tense or in conditional mood will use the lexical participle, as can be seen in (21a). We may nevertheless conclude that auxiliary forms that do not allow VP-ellipsis do not appear in other contexts involving ellipsis either.

- (20) a. Vy jste / byste ho pravidelně navštěvovali, že?/*že **jste?**/*že **byste?**
 you AUX_{2pl} / COND_{2pl} he_{acc} regularly called-on that that AUX_{2pl} that COND_{pl}
 ‘You have called on him regularly, haven’t you?’
 b. Budeme ho pravidelně navštěvovat, že? / že **budeme?**
 AUX.FUT_{1pl} he_{acc} regularly call-on that that AUX.FUT_{1pl}
 ‘We will call on him regularly, won’t we?’
- (21) a. Q: Zavolali **jste** / **byste** mu?
 called.PAST_{m,pl} AUX_{2pl} COND_{2pl} he_{dat}
 ‘Did / Would you call him?’
 A: Ano, zavolali. / ***jsme** / ***bychom**.
 yes called.PAST_{m,pl} AUX_{1pl} COND_{1pl}
 ‘Yes, we did.’
 b. Q: **Budete** mu volat?
 AUX.FUT_{2pl} he_{dat} call
 ‘Will you call him?’
 A: Ano, **budeme**.
 yes FUT.AUX_{1pl}
 ‘Yes, we will.’

2.5 Conclusion: VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary *být* in active voice

To sum up, we have seen that future forms of the auxiliary verb *být* differ from its past and conditional forms with respect to the following properties:

- they are not clitics (Cl),
- they bear tense (T) and aspect (Asp) features and combine with an infinitival lexical verb,
- they carry the negative prefix *ne-* expressing sentential negation (Neg).

Although it is not a clitic, the past participle *byl* shares most of the clitics’ properties: it does not carry aspect nor negation and it combines with a lexical past participle. Therefore, it seems possible to establish a correlation between the

properties discussed above and availability of VP-ellipsis. This is summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: *Correlation between properties of the auxiliary být and VP-ellipsis in active voice*

| Tense | Verbal form (1p.sg.m) | Auxiliary's properties | | | | V-tense | VP-ellipsis |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|-----|-----|---------|-------------|
| | | Cl | T | Asp | Neg | | |
| Past | jsem V | + | - | - | - | + | - |
| Present cond. | bych V | + | - | - | - | + | - |
| Past cond. | bych byl V | - | + | - | - | + | - |
| Future | буду V | - | + | + | + | - | + |

3. VP-ellipsis in passive voice

In this section, I will show that the correlation established in the previous section makes correct predictions for VP-ellipsis in passive voice.

Passive voice is also formed by using the auxiliary verb *být*, which combines with the passive participle of a lexical verb. The passive participle differs from the active past participle on several points (Veselovská & Karlík 2004):

(i) it is formed from the infinitival stem with the suffix *-n*, to which attaches gender-number agreement marker: *-n* (m.sg), *-na* (f.sg), *-no* (n.sg), *-ni* (m.pl), *-ny* (m.sg), *-na* (n.pl),

(ii) it does not bear sentential negation, see (22a), and

(iii) it may not function as answer to polar questions, see (22b).

These properties indicate that passive participle does not bear tense feature.

- (22) a. Ten dům **ne**byl (***ne**)**postaven** před dvěma lety.
 this house NEG-was NEG-built.PASS before two years
 'This house was built two years ago.'
- b. Q: Byl ten dům **postaven** před dvěma lety? A: Ano, byl / ***postaven**.
 was this house built. PASS before two years yes was built.PASS
 'Was this house built two years ago?' 'Yes, it was.'

3.1 Properties of the auxiliary být in present passive constructions

In present passive constructions, the passive participle combines with present forms of the verb *být*. Although these forms are identical to the forms of the auxiliary *být* in the past tense in active voice, they have distinct morpho-syntactic properties (Veselovská & Karlík 2004): (i) they are free morphemes and are thus overt in the third person⁷, (ii) they indicate present tense interpretation, and (iii) they carry sentential negation. According to Veselovská & Karlík (2004: 170), these auxiliary forms behave exactly as the forms of the lexical/attributive verb *bývat* ('to be'), as shown in (23c). We expect thus VP-ellipsis to be possible here and this expectation is carried out, as shown in (23ab).

- (23) Present: a. Já pozván **NE**jsem, ale ty **jsi**.
 I invited.PASS_{m.sg} NEG-AUX.PRES_{1sg} but you AUX.PRES_{2sg}
 'I am not invited, but you are.'
- b. Já pozván **jsem**, ale ty **NE**jsi.
 I invited.PASS_{m.sg} AUX.PRES_{1sg} but you NEG-AUX.PRES_{2sg}
 'I am invited, and you are not.'

⁷ See note 5.

- c. Petr **je** / **bývá** přepracován.
Peter is / is-ITER over-worked
'Peter is / often is overworked.'

3.2 Properties of the auxiliary *být* in future passive constructions

In future passive constructions, the forms of the auxiliary verb are also identical to those in active voice and behave similarly with respect to tense and negation. We predict thus that VP-ellipsis in passive future tense will be possible as well, as shown in (24ab). Contrary to future auxiliary in active voice, however, passive future auxiliary is compatible with both perfective and imperfective passive participles, see (24c). This suggests that aspect feature is not necessary for licensing VP-ellipsis.

- (24) Future:
- a. Já pozván **NEbudu**, ale ty **budeš**.
I invited.PASS_{m.sg} NEG-AUX.FUT_{1sg} but you AUX.FUT_{2sg}
'I will not be invited, but you will (be).'
- b. Já pozván **budu**, ale ty **NEbudeš**.
I invited.PASS_{m.sg} AUX.FUT_{1sg} but you NEG-AUX.FUT_{2sg}
'I will be invited, and you won't (be).'
- c. (i) **Budu** *ošetřit / ošetřovat Petra. (active)
AUX.FUT_{1sg} take-care-PERF / take-care-IMPF Peter_{acc}
'I will take care of Peter.'
- (ii) Petr **bude** ošetřen / ošetřován pravidelně. (passive)
Peter AUX.FUT_{3sg} taken-care-PERF taken-care-IMPERF regularly
'Peter will be taken care of (regularly).'

3.3 Properties of the auxiliary *být* in past and conditional passive constructions

In the past tense, passive constructions are formed by using present forms of the auxiliary *být* and the auxiliary participle *byl*. Contrary to present passive constructions, the present forms of the auxiliary *být* are clitics, exactly as those used in past tense in active constructions. Consequently, they do not bear tense nor negation. It is the auxiliary past participle *byl* that carries the past tense feature and hosts the negative prefix *ne-*. The participle *byl* in passive voice behaves thus differently from the participle *byl* in conditional mood in active voice; it actually behaves as the participle of the lexical/attributive verb *být*, see (25c). Since only auxiliaries with interpretable tense feature allow for VP-ellipsis, we predict that VP-ellipsis in past passive constructions only occur after the participle *byl*, as we can see in (25ab). The same is true for present passive constructions in present conditional, which consists of clitic auxiliary *by* and the passive auxiliary participle *byl*, see (26).

- (25) Past:
- a. Já **jsem NEbyl** pozván, ale ty **jsi byl**.
I AUX_{1sg} NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg} invited.PASS_{m.sg} but you AUX_{2sg} been.PAST_{m.sg}
'I have not been invited, but you have been.'
- b. Já **jsem byl** pozván, ale ty **jsi NEbyl**.
I AUX_{1sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} invited.PASS_{m.sg} but you AUX_{2sg} NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg}
'I have been invited, and you have not been.'
- c. Já **jsem byl** doma, když ty **jsi NEbyl**.
I AUX_{1sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} home_{loc} when you AUX_{2sg} NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg}
'I was at home, when you were not.'

- (26) Present conditional:
- a. **Kdybych NEbyl** pozván, ty **bys NEbyl** také.
 if-COND_{1sg} NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg} invited.PASS_{m.sg} you COND_{2sg} NEG-been.PAST_{m.sg} too
 ‘If I were not invited, you wouldn’t been either.’
- b. **Kdybych byl** pozván, ty **bys byl** také.
 if-COND_{1sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} invited.PASS_{m.sg} you COND_{2sg} been.PAST_{m.sg} too
 ‘If I were invited, you would be too.’

Finally, passive constructions in past conditional tense contain two occurrences of the form *byl*. These two *byl* are however distinct elements: the first one indicates past interpretation of conditional mood (see section 2.2 above), the second one indicates the passive voice. Since only the second one may carry negation, we predict it to licence VP-ellipsis, as shown in (27a). Note that to avoid the string of two *byl* in affirmative clauses, we can use the form *býval*⁸ instead of the second occurrence of *byl*, as shown in (27b).

- (27) Past conditional:
- a. **Kdybych byl NEbyl** pozván, ty **bys byl také NEbyl**.
 if-COND_{1sg} been NEG-been. PAST invited.PASS you COND_{2sg} been too NEG-been.PAST
 ‘I had not been invited, you would not have been either.’
- b. **Kdybych byl býval** pozván, ty **bys byl býval také**.
 if-COND_{1sg} been been.PAST invited.PASS you COND_{2sg} been.PAST been.PAST too
 ‘I had been invited, you would have been too.’

3.4 Conclusion: VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary *být* in passive voice

We have seen that in passive voice, we may distinguish between two types of forms of the auxiliary verb *být*: those used also in active constructions, ie. clitic auxiliaries and the auxiliary participle *byl* indicating past conditional, and those used exclusively in passive constructions, ie. passive present and future auxiliaries, and the passive participle *byl*. Only the latter ones license VP-ellipsis. This follows from our correlation, since these auxiliary forms have the following properties: (i) they are not clitics, (ii) they bear tense feature and (iii) they carry sentential negation, see table 3 below.

Moreover, our correlation can be refined, since ability to combine with negation is sufficient to indicate availability of VP-ellipsis in both active and passive voice. The other properties are however necessary to account for the syntactic position of all auxiliary forms and to propose a syntactic explanation of availability of VP-ellipsis, see section 4.

⁸ See section 2.2.

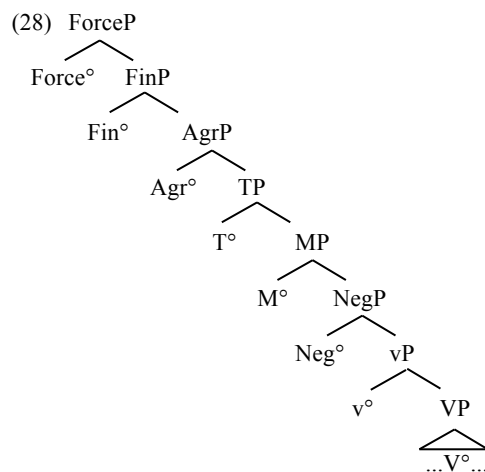
Table 3: Correlation between auxiliary's properties and VP-ellipsis in passive voice

| Tense | Verbal form (1p.sg.m) | Auxiliary's properties | | | | VP-ellipsis |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---|-----|-----|-------------|
| | | Cl | T | Asp | Neg | |
| Present | jsem V-PASS | - | + | + | + | + |
| Past | jsem byl V-PASS | + | - | - | - | - |
| | jsem byl V-PASS | - | + | + | + | + |
| Present cond. | bych byl V-PASS | + | - | - | - | - |
| | bych byl V-PASS | - | + | - | + | + |
| Past cond. | bych byl byl V-PASS | - | + | - | - | - |
| | bych byl byl V-PASS | - | + | - | + | + |
| Future | budu V-PASS | - | + | - | + | + |

4. Syntactic analysis

4.1 Clause structure in Czech

In this paper, I assume a three layers clause structure (CP-TP-vP) based on the analyses of Pollock (1989), Chomsky (1995), Larson (1988), and the cartographic approach developed in Rizzi (1997). The CP layer indicates the type of the clause (Force) and its finiteness (Fin)⁹. The TP layer is the grammatical layer and includes information related to tense (T), agreement (Agr), mood (M), and negation (Neg). The vP layer represents argument and event structure of the lexical verb (V). The structure used in this paper is schematically represented in (28).



4.2 Syntactic position of the auxiliary *být*

Distinct properties of the auxiliary forms of the verb *být* discussed in previous sections indicate that these forms do not occupy the same syntactic position in the clause structure. This has been actually argued by Veselovská (1995, 2008), who proposes that clitic auxiliaries are generated in the head Agr (ie. above T), because they only reflect agreement feature, and the future auxiliary in the head Asp (ie. above vP). The attributive and lexical verb *být* is generated in the head v/V. I follow her proposal with modification indicated below.

⁹ Th CP layer also hosts topicalized and focused elements, in particular *wh*-items.

Both future and passive auxiliary should be generated in the vP domain: the future auxiliary, since it determines the atelic character of the lexical VP, and the passive auxiliaries, since they are part of the predicate.

As for participles in complex verbal forms, we have to distinguish between:

- (i) the lexical participle generated in the lexical head V° (as the infinitival lexical verb),
- (ii) the auxiliary past participle in active voice that I propose to generate in the head M°, since it is relevant for conditional mood only,
- (iv) the passive auxiliary participle that behaves as other passive auxiliary forms and that I propose thus to generate also in the head little v.

The base positions of the auxiliary *být* are summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Base positions of auxiliary and lexical verbs in active and passive constructions

| | | Fin° | Agr° | T° | M° | Neg° | v° | VP |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------|-------------|----|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
| Active voice 'I work' | Past | | <i>jsem</i> | | | <i>ne</i> | | <i>pracoval</i> |
| | Present cond. | | <i>bych</i> | | | <i>ne</i> | | <i>pracoval</i> |
| | Past cond. | | <i>bych</i> | | <i>byl</i> | <i>ne</i> | | <i>pracoval</i> |
| | Future | | | | | <i>ne</i> | <i>budu</i> | <i>pracovat</i> |
| Passive voice 'I am invited' | Present | | | | | <i>ne</i> | <i>jsem</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Past | | <i>jsem</i> | | | <i>ne</i> | <i>byl</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Present cond. | | <i>bych</i> | | | <i>ne</i> | <i>byl</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Past cond. | | <i>bych</i> | | <i>byl</i> | <i>ne</i> | <i>byl</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Future | | | | | <i>ne</i> | <i>budu</i> | <i>pozván</i> |

Clitic auxiliaries move then to the head Fin°, which corresponds to the second (head) position in the clause. This surface position is however not decisive for VP-ellipsis. As for finite verbs, they move out of the vP, but not so high as T or Agr, since verb complements may appear between the verb and the subject (see Veselovská 1995 for more details). I assume in this paper that a tensed verb (finite or participle) moves overtly in the head Negation, where it combines with the negative prefix *ne*¹⁰. The surface positions of the auxiliary *být* and of the lexical verb are summarized in the table 5. Base positions of the moved elements are indicated by the symbol *t* (ie. trace).

Table 5: Surface positions of auxiliary and lexical verbs in active and passive constructions

| | | Fin° | Agr° | T° | M° | Neg° | v° | VP |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|----|------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Active voice 'I work' | Past | <i>jsem</i> | <i>t</i> | | | <i>nepracoval</i> | | <i>t</i> |
| | Present cond. | <i>bych</i> | <i>t</i> | | | <i>nepracoval</i> | | <i>t</i> |
| | Past cond. | <i>bych</i> | <i>t</i> | | <i>byl</i> | <i>nepracoval</i> | | <i>t</i> |
| | Future | | | | | <i>nebudu</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pracovat</i> |
| Passive voice 'I am invited' | Present | | | | | <i>nejsem</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Past | <i>jsem</i> | <i>t</i> | | | <i>nebyl</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Present cond. | <i>bych</i> | <i>t</i> | | | <i>nebyl</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Past cond. | <i>bych</i> | <i>t</i> | | <i>byl</i> | <i>nebyl</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pozván</i> |
| | Future | | | | | <i>nebudu</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>pozván</i> |

4.3 Availability of VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary *být*

We are now able to answer the initial question why VP-ellipsis is not available after all forms of the auxiliary verb *být*. Since VP-ellipsis corresponds to non pronunciation of an overt VP, VP-ellipsis seems relevant only for future tense. In

¹⁰ Contrary to Veselovská (1995), who proposes to check Negation by *Agree*.

effect, in active constructions, there is an overt (ie. non empty) VP only in future tense, since the lexical participle moves out of the VP in past tense and in conditional mood. In passive voice, VP-ellipsis will be relevant in all constructions, since there is an overt VP in all tenses, see table 5.

Moreover, I have said that VP-ellipsis is licensed by the immediately preceding auxiliary. I propose that the immediately preceding auxiliary is the auxiliary generated in the head little *v*, that immediately dominates the lexical VP. In active voice, only future auxiliary is generated in the head little *v* and, consequently, VP-ellipsis only occurs in future tense. In passive voice, all passive auxiliaries are generated in the head little *v* and VP-ellipsis will be possible in all tenses, including conditional mood.

Finally, this proposal is compatible with the syntactic theory of ellipsis developed by Merchant (2001, 2004). Merchant introduces into derivation the feature *E*, which “serves as the locus of all relevant properties that distinguish the elliptical structure from its non elliptical counter-part” (Merchant 2004: 670). I propose that in Czech, the feature *E* specific to VP-ellipsis may appear on the head little *v*. Consequently, only the auxiliary that is generated in this head may check this feature and licence the ellipsis of the VP complement of this head.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to investigate why VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary verb *být* (‘to be’) in Czech does not occur in all complex verbal forms. I have shown that future and passive forms of the auxiliary *být* differ from past and conditional forms in particular in that they bear an interpretable tense feature and are able to host negative prefix *ne-* expressing sentential negation. This led me to claim, following Veselovská (1995, 2008), that *být* occupies distinct syntactic positions in the clause: its clitic past and conditional forms occupy a high position above Tense and Negation; its past participle occupies a intermediate position above Negation and below Tense, and its future and passive forms are generated below Negation in the highest head of the *vP* domain. Moreover, only future and passive forms of *být* combine with a non empty VP, since the lexical participle in the past and conditional tenses moves out of the *vP*. I proposed then that VP-ellipsis is by the head little *v*, immediately dominating lexical VP, that is endowed with a specific *E* feature (proposed by Merchant 2001). Consequently, only auxiliaries generated in this head, ie. future and passive auxiliaries, license ellipsis of their VP complement in Czech.

References

- BUSQUETS, J. & DENIS, P.: L’ellipse modale en Français : le cas de *devoir* et *pouvoir*. In: Cahiers de Grammaire, 26, 2001, p. 55-74. ISSN 0242-1593
- ČESKÝ NÁRODNÍ KORPUS – SYN2005. Ústav Českého národního korpusu FF UK, Praha 2005. Available on WWW: <<http://www.korpus.cz>>.
- CHOMSKY, N.: The Minimalist Program. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995. ISBN 0-262-53128-3
- FRANKS, S. & T. H. KING: The Handbook of Slavic Clitics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN 978-0-19-513588-6
- GRUET-SKRABALOVA, H.: Ellipsis in answers to polar questions in Czech. Presentation at International conference Topics in the Typology of Elliptical Constructions II, Paris, 24 June 2012.
- HANKAMER, J.: Constraints on Deletion in Syntax. PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1971.
- HARDT, D.: Verb phrase ellipsis: Form, meaning and processing. PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993.

- KOMÁREK, M.: Příspěvky k české morfologii. Praha: SPN, 1978. ISBN 978-80-86624-27-3
- KOSTA, P.: Negace a větná struktura v češtině. In: Hladká, Z. & P. Karlík (eds), Čeština - univerzália a specifika, 3, 2001, Brno: Masarykova univerzita, p. 117-138. ISBN 80-210-2532-8
- LARSON, R.: On the double object construction. In: Linguistic Inquiry 19.3, 1988, p. 335-391. ISSN 0024-3892
- LOBECK, A.: Ellipsis: Functional heads, licensing and identification. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. ISBN 978-0195091816
- McCLOSKEY, J.: Clause structure, ellipsis, and proper government in Irish. In: Lingua 85, 1991, 259-302. ISSN 0024-3841
- McSHANE, M.: Verbal Ellipsis in Russian, Polish and Czech. In: Slavic and East European Journal 44, 2000, p.195-233. ISSN 0037-6752
- MERCHANT, J.: The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN 978-0199243723
- MERCHANT, J.: Fragments and Ellipsis. In: Linguistics and Philosophy 27.6, 2004, p. 661-738. ISSN 0165-0157
- POLLOCK, J.-Y.: Verb Movement, Universal Grammar and the Structure of IP. In: Linguistic Inquiry 20, 1989, p. 365-424. ISSN 0024-3892
- RIZZI, L.: The fine structure of left periphery. In: Haegeman, L. (ed.), Elements of grammar, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997, p. 281-337. ISBN 978-0792342977
- ROSS, J.R.: Gapping and the order of constituents. In: M. Bierwisch & K. Heidolph (eds), Progress in Linguistics, p. 249-259. The Hague: Mouton, 1970. ISBN 978-3110995879
- SAG, I.: Deletion and logical form. PhD Dissertation, MIT, 1976.
- TOMAN, J.: Weak and Strong: Notes on *be* in Czech. In: Brettschneider, G. & Ch. Lehmann (eds.), Wege zur Universalien Forschung: Sprachwissenschaftliche Beiträge zum 60. Geburtstag von H. Seiler. Tübingen: Narr, 1980, p. 305-310. ISBN 978-3878081456
- VESELOVSKÁ, L.: Phrasal Movement and X°Morphology: Word order parallels in Czech and English nominal and verbal projections, PhD Dissertation, University Palackého, 1995.
- VESELOVSKÁ, L.: The extended verbal projection in Czech: Three variants of the verb *být*. In: Formal Description of Slavic Linguistics, The Fifth conference, Leipzig 2003, Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2008, p. 555-569. ISBN 978-3-631-55160-8
- VESELOVSKÁ, L. & P. KARLÍK: Analytic Passives in Czech. In: Zeitschrift für Slavistik 49.2, 2004, p. 163-243. ISSN 0044-3506

Words: 5 422

Signs: 34 965

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova, Maître de conférences

Département de Linguistique & Laboratoire de recherche sur le langage (LRL, EA 999)

UFR Lettres, Langues et Sciences Humaines

Université Blaise Pascal

29 boulevard Gergovia, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France

Hana.GRUET-SKRABALOVA@univ-bpclermont.fr

ABSTRACTS

Hana Gruet-Skrabalova: VP-ellipsis and the Czech auxiliary *být* ('to be')

This paper deals with VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary verb *být* ('to be') in Czech. We ask in particular why VP-ellipsis is only possible in future tense and in passive voice. We show that distinct forms of the auxiliary *být* differ with respect to their morphological status, tense, aspect and negation. Consequently, we claim that these forms occupy distinct syntactic positions in the clause. Only future and passive forms are generated below Negation, in the head immediately dominating the VP and licencing ellipsis of its VP complement.

Key Words

syntax, ellipsis, auxiliary verb, Verb Phrase (VP), Czech