

P-D-Drop and Pseudo-incorporation in London English*

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1. Introduction

For a subset of English speakers in London (and some surrounding areas), the preposition *to* and the definite article *the* on the goal of the verbs *go* and *come* can be dropped, for a certain set of goal nouns.¹

- (1) a. I went (to the) chicken shop every day last week.
- b. John didn't come (to the) pub yesterday.

In this paper I report the basic empirical facts related to P-D-drop and constraints on its availability, and propose an analysis for the phenomenon. I argue that in cases of P-D-drop there is no structurally represented P or D, and, following ?), I show that properties of P-D-drop goals suggest that they can be analysed as pseudo-incorporated nouns. If P-D-drop really does involve pseudo-incorporation of truncated nominal structure, then some nominal elements that look structurally large (viz., proper names) must actually be base generated as reduced structures, much smaller than DP (as has been suggested in much previous literature). I adopt the idea from ?) that pseudo-incorporation in this case is a last resort licensing mechanism, allowing a reduced nominal to be licensed where it would otherwise lead to a Case Filter violation.

2. Properties of P-D-drop

In this section I list the basic properties of P-D-drop in London English, with examples illustrating each property. P-D-drop is tightly constrained, and its availability depends on the nature of the goal, the verb, and other syntactic properties of the verb phrase. As for the goal noun phrase, the definite article is obligatorily dropped (2), it cannot be plural

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¹I refer to this phenomenon throughout as P-D-drop.

(3), it cannot be modified by a PP, relative clause, or an adjective (4), and it must be a familiar/institutional location or a place name (5).

- (2) We went (*the) pub last night. (3) a. **We went pubs last night.*
b. **I'm going cinemas this weekend.*
- (4) a. *Can we go park with the big swings?
b. *I'm going pub we met at last year.
c. *We went new cinema last weekend.
- (5) a. *shop, school, cinema, post office, pub, park, chicken shop.*
b. Proper nouns: *London, Stratford, Toronto, Kew Gardens*, so on.

The verb must be *go* or *come*, and no other directed motion or manner of motion verbs are allowed (6).

- (6) a. *I swam/ran/drove France.
b. *I cartwheeled/hopped/skipped shop.

Null P only has a directional goal interpretation (source, etc., must be overt), and other uses of *to* are ill-formed (7).² Furthermore, stative *at* cannot be dropped (8) unlike in Modern Greek and Northwestern Englishes (see section 2.1 below).

- (7) a. John came *(from the) / ✓(to the) shop.
b. This belongs *(to the) pub.
c. He spoke *(to the) woman.
d. They gave in *(to the) request.
- (8) a. He's *(at the) library.
b. He's staying *(at the) library today.

Finally, PP or adverbial intervenors between the verb and the goal are unacceptable (9)

- (9) a. *Come with me shop.
b. *I went quickly shop.
c. *Come with me quickly Stratford.

2.1 Other P(-D)-drop varieties

Prepositionless goals have been described in other varieties of English before (??), and in other languages too (e.g., ?, ? for Modern Greek; ? for Kiezdeutsch).³ I note the main

²Note that the examples in (7) are potentially ill-formed not because of the different meaning of *to*, but because P-D-drop is only acceptable when the verb is *go* or *come*.

³I think that a comparison with Kiezdeutsch could be very interesting, in that the sociological situation underlying the variety's development is to an extent shared by the London variety under discussion (see e.g., ?). However, I leave Kiezdeutsch aside here because the data presented in the literature is not detailed enough for me to fully compare the variety with London English, and there is no explicit syntactico-semantic analysis in the literature. I have also not had the opportunity to consult a speaker myself.

properties of P-drop in those varieties, and how they differ from London P-D-drop in the sections that follow, focusing on English and Greek varieties.

2.1.1 North West England: Myler (2013)

The definite article is obligatorily present (10a,b,c), P-drop is acceptable with a variety of motion verbs such as *go, run, drive, jog, pop, nip* (10b), and there doesn't seem to be the same restriction on "institutional" nature of the goal (10c).

- (10) a. John came the pub with me.
b. I haven't nipped the shops yet.
c. The ball went (to) the other end of the field (because I kicked it so hard).

Myler argues for a null P head TO which incorporates into *v*. Ultimately this is a case of lexical variation: there is no silent TO in other varieties of English. The object of P (the goal) moves to spec *v* where it is assigned accusative case, meaning that it behaves like a direct object.

2.1.2 Liverpool: Biggs (2015)

Biggs identifies a slightly different version of P-drop among speakers in Liverpool, and shows that this variety of P-drop is related to the availability of full DP theme-goal ditransitives, and theme passives of apparent double object constructions (11).

- (11) a. Mary gave the book the teacher.
b. The book was given the teacher.

For prepositionless goals: the definite article is obligatorily present, (as above), manner of motion verbs are possible (12), stative *at* can also be dropped (8), P-drop is possible in nominals (14), adjacency to the verb is not required (15):

- (12) a. Swim the end and back. (13) She'll be (at) the office late tonight.
b. He's flying Germany tomorrow.
- (14) a. He was on his way the library when... (15) Come with me the pub.
b. A trip the pub is required!

Biggs proposes that both full DP theme passives and prepositionless goals in this variety are licensed by a semantically bleached null case head κ . Again, the locus of variation here is lexical: the set of phenomena that we see in Liverpool English can be tied to the availability of case licensing by a silent head.

2.1.3 Modern Greek: Terzi (2010), Gehrke and Lekakou (2013)

P-D-drop in Modern Greek is very similar to that of London English. The definite article (which forms a portmanteau with the preposition) is obligatorily absent (16); some directed motion verbs are acceptable such as *paolpijeno* ‘go’, *erxome* ‘come’, *beno* ‘enter’, *ftano* ‘arrive’ (but not manner of motion verbs); the preposition *se* goal ‘to’/stative ‘at’ is dropped (16); modifiers including adjectives and relative clauses are not acceptable (17). Examples below taken from ?).

- (16) a. Pame (stin) paralia?
 go.1PL at.the beach.ACC
 ‘Shall we go to the beach?’
 b. Tha mino (sto) spiti.
 FUT stay.1SG at.the house.ACC
 ‘I will stay (at) home.’
- (17) a. *Pigame kondini paralia / kenurjo jimnastirio / omorfi eklisia
 went.1PL nearby beach.ACC / new gym.ACC / beautiful church.ACC
 Intended: ‘We went to the nearby beach/new gym/beautiful church.’
 b. *Exun pai taxidromio to opio apexi elaxista apo do
 have.3PL gone post-office.ACC which is.away least from here
 Intended: ‘They have gone to the post office which is very close to here.’

It is safe to say that London P-D-drop has most in common with Greek prepositionless goals (e.g., obligatory dropping of definite article, familiarity/institutional restriction on goal, no manner of motion verbs, no correlation with distribution of theme passives/theme-goal ditransitives), and differs quite significantly from Northwestern English varieties (which have an overt definite article, fewer constraints on the verb and interpretation of the goal, allow intervenors between verb and goal, and allow stative *at* to drop). I therefore assume that both London P-D-drop and the Greek can be analysed in a similar fashion. The literature on P-D-drop in Modern Greek has identified two different strands of analysis for the phenomenon:

- Radical absence of PP structure (?);
- a null P and D (??).

Here I broadly follow the same line of analysis as ?), and suggest that the first approach (radical absence of PP structure) is the right one for London P-D-drop. In the next subsection I apply some diagnostics for PP-hood to P-D-drop goals, and argue that there is no silent P+D present.

3. Absence of P-D structure

Unfortunately the restricted nature of P-D-drop goals means that some diagnostics for PP-hood are not particularly revealing (e.g. extraction and subextraction possibilities, clefts, etc.; see (???)). One robust diagnostic of PP-hood which can be applied is modification by *straight/right* (?). Modification by *straight/right* is judged as unacceptable in P-D-drop cases.

- (18) a. I'm going straight/right *(to the) pub after work.
b. She said she's coming right/straight *(to the) cinema after school.

Another diagnostic is the PP-*with-us* construction (?). This diagnostic again comes up negative.

- (19) a. To the pub with us!
b. *Pub with us!

If P-D-drop involves just silent *to* and *the*, then we also might expect the distribution of those silent elements to be a little broader (i.e., appearing in other cases where *to the* is possible). However, nothing other than goal of *go* and *come* can be “deleted”.

- (20) a. *I cartwheeled shop.
b. *I jumped top.
c. *I went teacher for advice.

Having said that, it is not unusual for verbs to select for particular PPs, and there would be nothing particularly unusual in only *go* and *come* selecting for this supposed special silent P.

Overall, the evidence from the two PP-hood diagnostics which are possible suggests that there is no PP structure involved in P-D-drop cases.⁴

4. P-D-drop goals are pseudo-incorporated

If there is no PP structure involved, and goals are bare reduced nominals with a close relationship with the verb, then it's safe to say that they are behaving somewhat like pseudo-incorporated noun phrases. If P-D-drop goals are pseudo-incorporated, then we expect them to have a number of properties that are generally shared by PNI objects. In this section I go through a set of common properties of pseudo-incorporated noun phrases, and show that P-D-drop goals exhibit most of the same properties.

4.1 What do we expect under a PNI approach?

The following list of common properties of PNI is identified in ?):

⁴Some possible further evidence for the lack of P and D structure comes from forced adjacency between the verb and the goal, which I discuss in section 6.

- Potentially larger than NP constituents can incorporate, but usually they are truncated somehow. They usually lack definite marking and number marking;
- Number neutral;
- Lack of modification (beyond kind modifiers);
- Well-establishedness (“institutional”/“common activity”);
- Cannot support pronominal anaphora (although this is not cross-linguistically stable, cf. ?);
- Obligatory narrow scope.

In the next subsections, I test London English P-D-drop against each of these properties.

4.1.1 Truncation: lack of definite article and number marking

As stated before, the definite article is obligatorily dropped, and plural morphology is also not possible.

(21) We went (*the) pub last night.

(22) *We went pubs last night.

However, proper names are allowed and these are presumably full DPs.

(23) I'm going New York this weekend.

4.1.2 Number neutrality

Although plural morphology is unacceptable, it is possible to interpret the bare goal as having a non-singular interpretation. *I went pub yesterday* can mean that I went to one pub, or many. Multiple different locations are also possible:

- (24) a. We all went pub yesterday.
b. *Possible continuation:*
Sam went to the Lord Tredegar, Katie went to the Morgan Arms, and I went to the Horn of Plenty.

4.1.3 Lack of modification

No modifiers to the goal are acceptable, aside from certain kind modifiers:⁵

- (25) a. *Can we go park with the big swings?
b. *I'm going pub we met at last year.
c. *We went new cinema last weekend.
d. I went {corner, chicken} shop.

4.1.4 Well-establishedness

The set of well formed goal nouns is restricted to well-established/institutional nouns.⁶

- (26) a. We went {shop, school, church, cinema, post office, pub, park, chicken shop}.
b. *We went car dealership.

4.1.5 Pronominal anaphora

For most speakers that I consulted, P-D-drop goals **can** support pronominal anaphora.

- (27) a. Tina and Radha went cinema yesterday. It had the best popcorn in the world.
b. Sam and Katie went pub yesterday. It had a great selection of beers.

4.1.6 Obligatory Narrow Scope

Although a narrow scope reading with respect to negation is forced for P-D-drop objects, it's a little difficult to tell if this is any different from cases with an overt preposition and definite article, where it's also difficult to get the wide scope reading (a weak definite-like interpretation is preferred, and this also resists wide scope). To the extent that it is possible to force a wide scope reading for the overt P+D cases, it is not possible **at all** in P-D-drop cases.

- (28) Sam didn't go to the pub yesterday. $\neg > pub; ?pub > \neg$

⁵These kind modifiers are only acceptable if the resulting "compound" is an appropriately familiar/institutional location, as with all other goals.

⁶(26b) would be acceptable if it was the case that the speaker/addressee regularly go to the car dealership, or if it has some special significance to them or the community that they live in. What precisely determines whether a particular noun is appropriate or not is not entirely clear, but it certainly depends on socio-cultural context.

- (29) Sam didn't go pub yesterday. $\neg >pub; *pub > \neg$
- (30) Context: you and your friends are planning on meeting at the Horn of Plenty in Stepney.
- a. ??Sam didn't go to the pub yesterday. He did go to some other pub in Shoreditch with a girl he's been seeing.
- b. *Sam didn't go pub yesterday. He did go to some other pub in Shoreditch with a girl he's been seeing.

4.2 Summary of diagnostics

In summary, we see that P-D-drop goals pass most of the diagnostics for PNI, but not all.

- \checkmark ? **Truncation:** D-drop and the lack of number marking shows that there is truncation, and the lack of modifiers and number marking suggest P-D-drop goals are structurally very reduced. However, proper nouns are allowed, and these seem like they should be full DPs.
- \checkmark **Number neutrality**
- \checkmark **Well-establishedness**
- \checkmark **Lack of modification**
- \times **Cannot support pronominal anaphora:** Discourse anaphoric *it* seems ok referring back to *pub*, *cinema*, etc., (but not under negation).
- \checkmark **Oblig. narrow scope:** Narrow scope is forced, but proper nouns (names of places), which are presumably referential (and therefore wide scope) are allowed.

5. Problems and solutions

P-D-drop goals fit most of the criteria for PNI, but there are two potential problems: i) P-D-drop goals seem to support pronominal anaphora; ii) proper names, which look like full referential DPs, are allowed. In this section I suggest that these are not major stumbling blocks to the proposed pseudo-incorporation analysis, and that in fact the availability of proper names lends support to the much made claim that proper names are structurally complex, and enter the derivation as simple NPs, just like common nouns.

5.1 Discourse opacity

?) points out that the status of discourse opacity as a diagnostic is controversial, and is not a cross-linguistically stable property of PNI. Previous work on non-referential noun phrases similar to goals of P-D-drop in English has also shown that coreference with a pronoun is weakly available in those cases. ?) shows that bare singular institutional nouns in English

can be referred back to by pronouns in some contexts but not others, even though they also behave like pseudo-incorporated nouns on other diagnostics. (?) showed that people seem to accept pronominal anaphora with weak definites in English too, even though this is unexpected given the non-referential properties of weak definites. They find a slight dispreference compared to normal definites, and I found this in my data too.

Interestingly, the effect seems to completely disappear under negation, where referring back to the goal with a pronoun is completely unacceptable (compare the usual case with a normal definite DP):⁷

- (31) a. *Sam and Katie didn't go pub yesterday, even though they had heard great things about it.
b. ✓ Sam and Katie didn't go to the pub yesterday, even though they had heard great things about it.

I therefore take it that discourse opacity is not a robust diagnostic for PNI objects, and assume that the ability to refer back to a bare goal with *it* does not mean that it is not pseudo-incorporated.

5.2 Proper names

Proper names are normally assumed to be full referential DPs, so their availability in P-D-drop structures seems surprising. It is also cross-linguistically very unusual to have proper names in PNI contexts. I suggest here that, if the above approach to P-D-drop is on the right track, then proper names involved in P-D-drop are structurally reduced, just as common noun goals are, and are licensed in the same way. I follow (?), (?), (?), (?), a.o., in assuming that proper names in normal argument positions are actually definite descriptions, and that they enter the syntax as simple predicates like common nouns. Proper names in P-D-drop contexts are structurally reduced, and do not extend up to the top of the nominal extended projection: they are not DPs. They are reduced forms that name a property (or set of characteristic activities) associated with the location. An indication that this might be on the right track is that proper names that require a definite article can appear absent the article in P-D-drop contexts (32), and P-D-drop is very awkward with completely unenriched meaning (i.e., purely referential with no associated activity; 33).

(32) I'm going Bronx next week.

(33) I went ??(to) Glasgow last year, but only to change trains to go to Edinburgh.

The question then arises as to why well-establishedness/institutional quality seems to be less constraining for proper names. Why is just about any place name ok, where common nouns are from a much more tightly constrained set? I do not have a concrete explanation for why this is so, but should point out that proper name P-D-drop goals are also restricted to a certain extent. The following would be unacceptable for me to say to my friends in

⁷Thanks to an anonymous abstract reviewer for pointing this out.

London, but perhaps fine for two London natives who had lived in Ithaca, NY for some time.

(34) *I'm going Cayuga Heights next week.

It's certainly true that common nouns are more restricted, but perhaps this is because getting an "institutional" meaning from them for some reason requires more: it is easier for speakers to extract an "enriched meaning" associated with named places that are familiar to both interlocutors. Perhaps common nouns name a set of things which are too varied and multifaceted to easily take on an institutional meaning, whereas place names tend to refer to a very small set of (or perhaps unique) locations.

What about the cross-linguistic rareness of PNI objects that are direct objects of transitives (e.g., 'John-hunting')? I have found one example of what looks like it could be PNI with a proper noun, and this comes from Chol (?), where objects in VOS order are argued to be pseudo-incorporated. Proper names with a determiner *aj-* are not allowed in VOS object position, but without the determiner they are fine:

- (35) a. *Tyi y-ilä aj-Maria x-`ixik
PRFV A3-see DET-Maria CL-woman
'A woman saw Maria'
b. Tyi y-ilä Maria x-`ixik
PRFV A3-see Maria CL-woman
'A woman saw a Maria'

Coon points out that her informant suggests that it would be ok in a context when there are many possible Marias, and you see one of them. This means we are getting the property reading of the proper name, which is expected if it's in its reduced form.

6. Licensing by pseudo-incorporations

?) admit in their PNI analysis of P-drop in Greek that "what remains unresolved is how the noun gets case in P-drop contexts". I adopt the idea recently discussed in (?) that pseudo-incorporation is last resort case licensing under adjacency. Levin proposes two relevant filters, the second of which can be subsumed under the first.

(36) **The Case Filter**

Noun Phrases must be KPs

(37) **Condition on Extended Projection**

All categories must be part of a complete extended projection

Extended projection is to be understood in the sense of Grimshaw (?, ?), where heads in a projection share a certain categorial feature F and a value, n. A complete extended projection is an XP with the maximal F-value for the categorial feature in question. The list

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of complete extended projections is (at least): CPs, PPs, KPs. Levin argues that pseudo-incorporation is a way to obviate the case filter by adjunction. The reduced noun phrase is not a complete extended projection on its own, but adjoining the reduced argument to the verb renders it part of the verbal extended projection, which can be capped off at C.⁸ Pseudo-incorporation in P-D-drop makes the “incomplete” goal part of a verbal extended projection, obviating the Case Filter and satisfying the Condition on Extended Projection. As we saw earlier, evidence in support of PNI-as-licensing comes from obligatory adjacency of the goal and verb:

- (38) a. *Come with me shop.
b. *I went quickly shop.
c. *Come with me quickly Stratford.

Furthermore, displacement operations are generally not possible with P-D-drop (39c, 40c).

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (39) <i>It-clefts</i> | (40) <i>Topicalisation</i> |
| a. It was to the cinema that we went. | a. To the cinema, we went. |
| b. *It was cinema that we went. | b. The cinema, we went to. |
| | c. *Cinema, we went. |

Wh-movement seems like a potential counter example for some speakers. However, even for those speakers that think it’s marginally acceptable, it’s not clear that these are real P-D-drop contexts with displacement. For example, it seems that goal NPs that are normally unacceptable in P-D-drop contexts are relatively acceptable in *which*-X contexts with no preposition:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| (41) a. %? Which pub did you go? | (42) a. ✓ I went pub. |
| b. %? Which gallery did you go? | b. *I went gallery. |
| c. %? Which cathedral did you go? | c. *I went cathedral. |
| d. %? Which new restaurant did you go? | d. *I went new restaurant. |

I don’t have much to say about what is going on here, but it seems that these speakers might generally allow a silent preposition in these *wh*-movement contexts. It at least looks safe to say that a separate phenomenon governs the acceptability of a dropped preposition in *wh*-movement contexts.

In summary, obligatory adjacency adds support to the position that P-D-drop involves the kind of licensing by adjacency discussed in (?). The reduced goal NP would otherwise violate the Case Filter, and has to pseudo-incorporate to be licensed. The incorporated noun phrase cannot be extracted, because doing so would prevent the reduced nominal from adhering to the Case Filter (it would not be part of a complete extended projection).

⁸Adjunction in Levin’s story is modelled as a post-syntactic morphological adjunction under head-head adjacency. For reasons of space I do not present an in depth presentation of the mechanism here, and instead leave the reader to refer to (?) for the technical details the analysis.

7. Path meaning without P

The last piece of the puzzle that remains is how we get the meaning that is normally associated with the preposition even when it is absent. I take the semantics of incorporating *go* from ?), and assume that the incorporating form of the verb *go/come* lexicalizes the path structure that is usually introduced by the preposition, and that the bare goal incorporates as a property P:

$$(43) \quad go = \lambda x \lambda y \lambda e [go(e) \ \& \ \text{THEME}(e) = y \ \& \ \text{TRACE}(e)(I) \text{ is at } x]$$

$$(44) \quad go_{inc} = \lambda P \lambda y \lambda e [P-go(e) \ \& \ \text{THEME}(e) = y], \\ \text{where } \exists e [P-go(e)] = 1 \text{ iff } \exists e_0 [go(e_0) \ \& \ \exists x [P(x) \ \& \ \text{TRACE}(e_0)(I) \text{ is at } x]]$$

A motion event described by *go* involves a theme (*y*) undergoing a change of location. At the final point of the trace of such a directed motion event, the theme is located at a location to be provided (*x*). In the incorporated case, the property associated with the goal is incorporated into the event predicate, and the second line ensures that the event of P-going terminates at a location which has the property P.

8. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the London P-D-drop construction involves pseudo-incorporation of a truncated goal NP, and that this pseudo-incorporation is to license the reduced NP, which would otherwise violate the revised Case Filter proposed in ?). If this analysis is on the right track, then it lends further support to the idea that proper names are actually complex definite descriptions, which enter the derivation as NPs.

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