A Note on English *else*

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As is well-known, English *else* occurs in:

(1) something else; anything else; nothing else; everything else
(2) somebody else; anybody else; nobody else; everybody else
(3) someone else; anyone else; noone else; everyone else
(4) somewhere else; anywhere else; nowhere else; everywhere else
(5) someplace else; anyplace else; noplace else; everyplace else

Also well-known is the fact that none of these can be pluralized, e.g.:

(7) *somethings else; *anybodies else; *noones else; *someplaces else

This even holds for the following:

(8) somewheres else; anywheres else; nowheres else

These exist in a certain non-standard English as apparent equivalents of *somewhere else, anywhere else, nowhere else*, but seem clearly not to be plural.

In (1)-(5), *else* is preceded by a word containing an initial determiner (*some, any, no, every*) followed by one of the following: *thing, body, one, where, place*. Of these five, *thing, body* and *place* are readily taken to be monomorphemic nouns (that have special behavior here).

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1Payne and Huddleston (2002, 423) report that the series with -place (even without *else*) is limited to American English.
2Cf. Quirk et al. (1985, 378). If the -s of *sometimes* is the plural -s, then we expect:
   i) We go there sometimes (*else*).
3On the other hand, the following is not possible:
   i) *Wheres else did you go?
   as if this non-standard -s needs to be accompanied by an overt determiner.
4In need of explanation is the fact, noted by McCawley (1988a, 439) and Culicover and Jackendoff (2005, 400n), that alongside *somewhere else*, one does not have (and I agree):
   i) *somehow else
   despite *somehow* being possible. (Example (i) is accepted, though, by some speakers.)
   Perhaps closely related to (i) is:
   ii) *somewhat else
   despite *somewhat* being possible. Cf. perhaps:
   iii) That remains something (*else*) of a mystery.
5Leu (2005, 149) takes them not to be nouns, but rather to be indefinite-pronoun-restrictors (IPR-Rs). But it may still be that IPR-Rs are a subtype of N, necessarily so if Kayne (2008a) is on the right track in taking there to be only one basic categorial distinction, in effect that between N and V.
(wh+ere)\(^6\) and is arguably trimorphemic (wh+e+re). The trimorphemic character of 
where comes into view when one compares it with the related items here and there. 
While there rhymes with where, here does not. Plausibly, the medial -e- of here is a 
separate morpheme bearing a first person feature. If so, the medial -e- of there and 
where is itself very likely to be a separate morpheme (that does not bear a first person 
feature). (This differential decomposition of here and there can be taken to underpin 
the fact that English has expletive there, but no comparable expletive here.\(^7\))

More central to this paper are instances of else that do not have the ‘determiner-X-
else’ form of (1)-(5), e.g.: 
(9) We have little else to report.
(10) We don’t have much else to report.
On the one hand, little and much may well have a quite different status from some, any, 
no, and every. But the heart of this paper lies in a noun question. The proposal that I 
would like to make is:
(11) All instances of English else are accompanied by a noun.
For (9) and (10), the more specific proposal is:
(12) Else in little else and much else is accompanied by silent THING.\(^8\)
(I will be using capitals to indicate silence.) Thus we have:\(^9\)
(13) little/much THING else
The proposal concerning THING in (12)/(13) is supported by the following 
consideration. Examples (9) and (10) are very close in both interpretation and form to:
(14) We have nothing much else to report.
Similarly, the next two sentences are very close to each other:
(15) Not much else has been happening around here for a while.
(16) Nothing much else has been happening around here for a while.
Since (14) and (16) contain overt -thing,\(^10\) they increase the plausibility of taking silent 
THING to be present in (9), (10) and (15).

\(^6\)Cf. Chomsky (1957, sect. 7.2, note 2).
\(^7\)See Kayne (2008b, sect.9; 2010a) and Noonan (2017, note 24).
Pollock (2010).
There may well be a silent N present (in addition to pronounced thing, body) even in 
cases like something else, nobody else, as Leu (2005, 151) proposes.
\(^9\)Strictly speaking, THING may have moved up to the left of little/much - cf. Kayne 
\(^10\)An interesting challenge that remains is to understand the contrast between:

i) Not much of anything’s happening around here these days.

and

ii) *Much of nothing’s happening around here these days.

As well as the following contrasts:

iii) Nothing much/*little is happening.

iv) Nothing/*Something much is happening.

v) Nobody ?much/*many was at the party.

with (v) perhaps related to:

vi) Nobody was/*were at the party.
The proposal in (12)/(13) is in addition supported by the fact that (9), (10) and (15) have no counterparts in the plural, exactly as in (7):¹¹

(17) *We have few else to add to the list.
(18) *We don’t have many else to add to the list.¹²
(19) *Not many else have been coming to the talks.

That little else and much else are not paralleled by *few else or *many else is due, from the perspective of (12)/(13), to the fact that the silent THING of (12)/(13) shares the non-pluralizable property of its overt counterpart -thing seen in *somethings else et al.

We can note in passing the contrast between (17)-(19) and the following, without else:

(20) Of the many candidates, few will be put on the long shortlist.
(21) Unfortunately, they can’t put very many on the long shortlist.
(22) For some reason, not many have been coming to those talks.

In (20)-(22), few and many are accompanied by a silent noun that is plural. This silent plural noun is understood to have an antecedent, which in (20) is overt. A silent plural noun is impossible in (17)-(19) because the presence of else in (17)-(19) brings into play (12), which imposes THING, which is not pluralizable, as seen in (7).¹³ Since (20)-(22) lack else, they are not subject to (12) and hence not limited to THING.

Also covered by (11) are cases like:¹⁴

(23) You’d better sign the report. Or else they will.

Here there is no (overt) determiner-like element at all, nor any visible noun accompanying else. The presence, then, of a silent noun (though not of a silent determiner) is implied by (11). As to what that silent noun might be a counterpart of, we can bring into the picture:

(24) You’d better sign the report. Otherwise they will.

with otherwise in (24) feeling extremely close in interpretation to (or) else in (23).¹⁵ Since else and other are themselves quite close to each other (in ways that I won’t be

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¹¹Cf. also:

i) *Some else are worth reading.
ii) *If any else show up....
iii) *None else are worth reading.
iv) *Numerous else showed up.
v) *Three else are on the table.

¹²The impossibility of *many else was noted by Culicover and Jackendoff (2005, 401n).

¹³Note that (the limited) all else in:

i) When all else seems/*seem hopeless,...

is singular, thus with an analysis like:

ii) all THING else.

relevant to which is the fact that Danish has alting (cf. Allan et al. (2000, 70)), and Swedish and Norwegian have alting (cf. Holmes and Hinchliffe (2013, sect. 3.9.8.4) and Strandskogen and Strandskogen (1989, 129)).

¹⁴Some English allows else here without or.

¹⁵Some English allows elsewise.
the natural proposal is that (23) contains a silent counterpart of the -wise of (24):

(25) You’d better sign the report. Or else WISE they will.

(To be compatible with (11), WISE must either be a (silent) noun or contain one.\(^\text{17}\))

The cooccurrence of *else with where* in (4) (and (6) and (8)) requires, given (11), that *else* in all those cases be accompanied by a noun, which might be the -re subpart of *where*. Alternatively, if no subpart of *where* is a noun, there might, in (4) (and (6) and (8)) be a silent noun present. That silent noun might be PLACE, as in:*\(^\text{18}\)

(26) somewhere PLACE else

The same reasoning applies to (3), with *one* rather than *where*. That is, in *someone* *else* et al. there must, by virtue of (11), be a noun present. Since I have argued elsewhere\(^\text{19}\) that *one* is, in all its occurrences in English, a (complex) determiner rather than a noun, it must now be the case that *one* contains a noun as a subpart, or more likely that we have something like:

(27) someone PERSON else

Also falling under (11) are the wh-word cases of (6), each of which must now contain a noun, either an overt noun or a silent one. Take for example, *why* *else*. Either *why* itself must be a noun (extremely unlikely given its *wh-* subpart), or its -*y* subpart must be a noun, or (most likely) there must be a silent noun, as in:*\(^\text{20}\)

(28) *why* REASON else

\(^{16}\)Also set aside here is the anaphoric character associated with *else*, on which see McCawley (1988a, 374) and Culicover and Jackendoff (2005, chap. 11); as well as the question of the relation between *something* *else* and *something* *heavy*, for indirectly relevant discussion of which, see Larson and Marušič (2004), Marušič and Žaucer (2009) and Cinque (2010, sect. 5.5).

The fact that *else* is found with interrogative wh-words (and with wh-words in ever-type free relatives), but not in non-ever free relatives (as pointed out by C.L. Baker (1970, 199)):

i) We didn’t eat what (*else*) they cooked for us.

or in ordinary headed relatives (as noted by McCawley (1988a, 456)):

ii) We like the people who (*else*) you introduced us to.

might be due to THING being incompatible with the latter two, in the relevant cases. (On the link between interrogatives and ever-type free relatives, cf. Lin (1996).) (On the appearance of THING in some headed relatives, cf. Kayne (2021).)

\(^{17}\)A possible relation between -wise/WISE and way(s) needs to be looked into.

\(^{18}\)See Kayne (2007b, (23)).

\(^{19}\)See Kayne (2017). Payne and Huddleston (2002, 423) take -*body* and -*one* to be in general equivalent, but that is not 100% true, given:

i) He’s a real nobody/*noone.

ii) They’re just a bunch of nobodies/*noones.

The following contrast needs to be understood:

iii) *He’s a real nobody else.

iv) You should give him a little something else for his birthday.

\(^{20}\)Cf. Katz and Postal (1964, 92).
Compared to the six wh-words seen to be compatible with a following *else* in (6), *elsewhere* is the lone example of *else*+wh-word:21

29) *elsewho;  *elsewhat;  *elsewhen;  *elsehow;  *elsewhy

Despite its isolated character (which is in need of explanation), *elsewhere* falls under (11), almost certainly with a result close to (26), plausibly as in:22

30) elsewhere PLACE

*Else*, via (11), requires a noun to be present. At the same time, (11) does not imply that just any noun will do. And as is well-known, ordinary lexical nouns are incompatible with *else*, in cases like:23

31) *You should read some book else.
32) *No linguist else bothered to attend the talk.
33) *We don’t have time to go to every city else.

Of interest here is the fact that alongside the examples with *thing, body, place* given earlier in (1), (2) and (5), *else* is also found in:

34) There’s not a whole lot else left to discuss.
35) You’ve left a good deal else to do for tomorrow, haven’t you?
36) Fortunately, there’s just a little bit else left to do.
37) Fortunately, there’s lots else to do around here.

The presence of ‘indefinite article + adjective’ preceding *lot, deal and bit* in (34)-(36) is striking insofar as the indefinite article cannot appear parallel to (1)-(5), even in the clearest cases of nouns:24

38) *athing else;  *abody else;  *aplace else

Part of the answer to why (34)-(36) contrast with (38) might lie with the adjective (*whole, good, little*) found in the former set, but that can’t be the whole story (even setting aside (37)) since the addition of an adjective to (38) doesn’t make (38) acceptable:

39) *a good thing else;  *a little body else;  *a fine place else

Also relevant must be the similarity between (34)-(37) and (9)/(10). Just as *little else* and *much else* in (9)/(10) have the analysis given earlier and repeated here:

40) little/much THING else

21Older English may have been more generous here. Note also:
   i) *elseplace
   The contrast with *elsewhere* recalls *someplaces else* vs. (non-standard) *somewheres else*, perhaps due to *place* (but not *where*) being a noun.
22It remains to be seen what exactly blocks:
   i) *someelsewhere;  *anyelsewhere;  *noelsewhere;  *everyelsewhere
   and what exactly prevents:
   ii) *Elsewhere did you go?*
23The (online) *OED* (*else*, A, 1, b) has comparable examples possible in earlier English.
24Better is:
   i) ?There’s not a thing else we can do.
I have also heard *one thing else.*
so might (34)-(37) be thought of as:25

(41) a whole lot THING else; a good deal THING else; a little bit THING else; lots THING else

The proposal in (11), to the effect that all instances of English else must be accompanied by a noun, leads to the postulation of silent THING (or PLACE or REASON) in a range of cases, as discussed. It is natural to ask why (11) should hold. A possible answer is that (11) is just a subcase of a more general requirement that all arguments must be built on a noun, whether pronounced or unpronounced.26

References:

25A logically possible alternative might be to take lot(s), deal and bit to themselves meet the noun-requirement imposed on else by (11). Though if one is needed, a more likely alternative might be to replace THING in this set of examples with STUFF, thinking of examples like:
   i) There’s not a (whole) lot of stuff left to do.
   which is quite close to:
   ii) There’s nothing much left to do.
   with overt -thing.

26The case of or else, which I proposed relating to otherwise, probably then indicates that otherwise is the argument of a silent P. On silent/deleted Ps, see McCawley (1988b) and references cited there.
   Arguments that appear to be sentential must be associated then with some N.
   Note that the text statement does not imply the more specific statement that arguments are projections of N, which in fact they cannot be, if Kayne (2008a) is on the right track.
Kayne, R.S. (2007a) “Several, Few and Many”, Lingua, 117, 832-858 (reprinted in Kayne (2010)).

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McCawley, J.D. (1988b) “Adverbial NPs: Bare or Clad in See-Through Garb?,” Language, 64, 583-590.

