On the Absence of CP Ellipsis in English and Korean

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Hee-Don Ahn, Sungeun Cho 2009. On CP Ellipsis. Korean Journal of Linguistics. This paper aims to show that CP deletion in English and Korean is not possible. We suggest that the absence of CP ellipsis results from the premise that lexical categories such as V don’t bear an E feature, hence cannot license the deletion of their CP complements. We claim that apparent CP ellipsis is equivalent to DP deletion, which is subsequently subsumed to the occurrence of Pro.

Keywords: CP ellipsis, E feature, Predicate ellipsis, Pro, DP ellipsis

1. Introduction

Chung (2009) indicates embedded predicates in Korean do not undergo ellipsis (we have slightly modified his original examples here).

  I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C believe-Pres-Dec  
  ‘I believe Yenghi loves Toli.’
B: *haci-man, na-nun [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]  
  but I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C  
  miti-anh-nun-ta  
  believe-Not-Pres-Dec  
  ‘But, I don’t believe Yenghi loves Toli.’
B': *haci-man, na-nun [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]  
  but I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C  
  miti-anh-nun-ta  
  believe-Not-Pres-Dec

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'But, I don't believe Yenghi loves Toli.'

B': haci-man, na-nun [Yenghi-ha Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]
    but  I-Top  Y.-Nom  T.-Acc  love-Pres-Dec-C
    miści-anh-nun-ta
    believe-Not-Pres-Dec

'But, I don't believe Yenghi loves Toli.'

Regarding the contrast mentioned above, Chung (2009) argues that the deviance in (1B) and (1B') is due to the fact that the elliptical parts are not constituents. More specifically, Chung (2009) assumes the following structure.

(2) [CP [MCP [TP [...salangha]-n]-ta]-ko]

The predicate and the affixes hosted by it do not form a constituent in syntax, as shown in (2) (cf. Yoon 1993, 1994, 1997 and J. Yoon 1996). Given that ellipsis only applies to constituents (Merchant 2001), the presumed predicates in (1B) and (1B') are unable to undergo ellipsis since they do not form a constituent, as schematized in (3).

(3) *

Note, however, that the size of the element that undergoes ellipsis in (1B) and (1B') can be larger than the one illustrated in (3). Suppose the subject Yenghi-ka and the object Toli-lul move out of the embedded CP, say, to the Spec-e of the matrix clause via scrambling.¹ Then, what really

¹ The wide variety of literature accepts the possibility that embedded object moves to the matrix clause. Regarding the possibility of subject scrambling in Korean, see Sohn
undergoes ellipsis in (1B) can be the whole embedded clause, as shown in (4).

(4) hací-man, na-nun Yenghi-ka, toli-lul1 [CL \textsuperscript{\(\text{\text{-}salangha-n-ta-ko}\)}
mitci-anh-nun-ta

In the same reasoning, under the assumption that both the embedded subject can undergo movement to the matrix clause, (1B') may have the following structure.

(5) hací-man, na-nun Yenghi-ka, [CL \textsuperscript{\(\text{\text{-}Toli-lul-salangha-n-ta-ko}\)}
mitci-anh-nun-ta

Ellipsis in (4-5), now in principle, applies to constituents. Then, it seems that the ill-formededness of (1B) and (1B') seems not to be solely due to the matter of constituency.\textsuperscript{2} The ill-formededness of the following sentences as replies to (1A) supports our conjecture.

(6) a. *hacíman, toli-lul1 na-nun [Yenghi-ka, \textsuperscript{\(\text{\text{-}salangha-n-ta-ko}\)}
but T.-Acc I-Top Y.-Nom love-Pres-Dec
mitci-anh-nun-ta believe-not-Pres-Dec
'I don't believe Yenghi loves Toli.'

b. *hacíman, Yenghi-ka, toli-lul1, na-nun [\textsuperscript{\(\text{\text{-}salangha-n-ta-ko}\)}
but Y.-Nom T.-Acc I-Top love-Pres-Dec
mitci-anh-nun-ta

\textsuperscript{2} (1995) and Ko (2007).
\textsuperscript{2} Subject and object may remain within the embedded clause in (1B) and (1B'). In the case, Chung's (2009) analysis based on constituency may well account for the ill-formededness of (1B) and (1B') (we thank an anonymous reviewer and Duho Chung for reminding us of this matter). However, there is a possibility that the ill-formededness may result from the impossibility of predicate deletion in embedded texts. Actually, the ill-formededness of (1B) seems to be parallel to that of gapping and stripping in embedded texts in English, as shown in (ia) and (1b), respectively.

(i) a. *Allonse stole the emeralds, and I think that Magasy the pearls.
(Hankamer 1979:19)

b. *The critics praised your book, and someone told me that the poem too.
As shown in (i), predicate deletion doesn't occur in the embedded texts. In this case, the ill-formededness may not be the matter of constituency. We leave the further issue on predicate deletion for future research.
believe-not-Pres-Dec
'I don’t believe Yenghi loves Toli.’

Again, in (6), although ellipsis applies to constituents, the sentences are still ill-formed.

Another question arises as to why the ellipsis in (1B’) is not ruled out like (1B) and (1B’). Although Chung (2009) argues that the ill-formed examples in (1B) and (1B’) result from ellipsis of non-constituents (while (1B’) is not), we will show that when the subject and object undergo movement from the embedded clause, the ill-formedness results from another factor. Specifically, we suggest that the contrast in (1) is due to the absence of CP ellipsis in Korean.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly introduces the absence of CP ellipsis in English, and resolves the puzzle related to the CP ellipsis in Korean. Concluding remarks are provided in Section 3.

2. Absence of Missing CPs in English and Korean

It is generally known that English doesn’t have an operation of CP ellipsis (Merchant 2001:119).

(7) a. I regret/asserted *(that we bought the charcoal grill).
b. I proposed/demanded *(that we buy the charcoal grill).

Nonetheless, there are examples that seem to involve missing CPs, as shown in (8) (Kennedy & Merchant 2000:1).

(8) John published more papers than Smith said/thought _.

Kennedy & Merchant (2000) show that the missing parts in (8) are not CPs but DFs.

One piece of crucial evidence that supports the concomitant Case requirement on putative missing DFs in (8) comes from the fact that in contrast to Case-assigning verbs like say/think (e.g. He said/thought the answer), non-Case-assigning verbs such as bet/wager cannot licence comparative deletion (Kennedy & Merchant 2000:3).

(9) a. *Smith bet/wagered the race.
b. John published more papers than Smith bet/wagered *(she
would).

There is another piece of evidence that is related to the fact that DPs, but not CPs, need Case. If the verbs in (8) are passivized, the examples become ungrammatical (cf. Kennedy & Merchant 2000:2, Merchant 2001:118).

(10) *John published more papers than it was said/thought __.

In addition, when a CP is present, the examples in (10) become grammatical, as shown in (11) (cf. Kennedy & Merchant 2000:2-3, Merchant 2001:118).

(11) John published more papers than it was said/thought that he would.

If the example like (10) is an elliptical version of the one like (11), the contrast mentioned above is a puzzle. Hence, Kennedy & Merchant (2000) propose that what is missing is a DP and that this DP, like all argument DPs, require Case.²

A non-trivial question arises as to DP-ellipsis (or null DP) analysis of (8) since both CP ellipsis (e.g. (7)) and DP ellipsis are in general impossible in English. This is confirmed in the following dialogue examples (cf. Kennedy & Merchant 2000:2).

(12) A: I said/thought that John would come tomorrow.
   B: *I also said/thought that John would come tomorrow.

(13) A: I saw/meet John’s brother.
   B: *I also saw/meet John’s brother.

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² Kennedy and Merchant (2000:3) also indicate that if the expletive subject it is absent in (10), the resulting sentence becomes grammatical:

(i) John published more papers than was said/thought.

They suggest that (i) is grammatical since unlike (10) as shown in (ii-a), (i) yields licit derivation as shown (ii-b).

(ii) a. John published more papers than [cp what [w it was said/thought f]].
   b. John published more papers than [cp what [w t was said/thought f]].

Note that (nominal) null operator what must receive Case. Since expletive it occupies the Case-checking Spec-1 in (ii-a), what fails to get (Nom) Case there, whereas what in (ii-b) can get (Nom) Case via moving through Case-checking Spec-1. Hence the contrast between (i) and (10) follows.
Kennedy & Merchant (2000) propose that the gap in (8) is the trace of a phonologically null nominal expression (say, null operator) that has moved into Spec-C within comparative clause, as schematized in (13).

(14) John published more papers than [CP what [IP Smith said/thought]]

They further suggest that the semantic value of null operator what in (14) must be a propositional expression that contains a free variable over degrees (see Kennedy and Merchant (2000) for further details). Here we simply note the fact that seemingly missing CPs in English comparative constructions can be treated as null DPs in syntax with the semantics of a proposition which is usually instantiated as syntactic category CP.

Along the similar lines, we assume that Korean doesn’t have an independent operation of CP ellipsis. Under the assumption, the ill-formed examples in (1B) and (1B’), repeated here (15B) and (15B’) respectively, can be accounted for even when the arguments in the embedded clause undergo movement to the matrix clause.4

   I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C believe-Pres-Dec
   ’I believe Yenghi loves Toli.’
B: *haci-man, na-nun [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]
   but I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C
   mitci-anh-nun-ta
   believe-Not-Pres-Dec
   ’But, I don’t believe Yenghi loves Toli.’
B’: *haci-man, na-nun [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]
   but I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C
   mitci-anh-nun-ta
   believe-Not-Pres-Dec
   ’But, I don’t believe Yenghi loves Toli.’

(15B) and (15B’), then, may have the structure like (16a) and (16b), respectively, if embedded scrambling takes place.

(16) a. na-nun Yenghi-ka; Toli-lul [CP t-t-salangha-n-ta-ko]

4 Recall that (15B) and (15B’) are also illicit if the subject and object arguments remain in situ since predicate deletion is barred in embedded contexts.
mitci-anh-nun-ta
b. na-nun Yenghi-ka [cp Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko]
mitci-anh-nun-ta

We suggest that the ill-formedness of the examples in (15) simply results from impossibility of CP ellipsis. Parallel to (15), the ill-formedness of (6), repeated here as (17), can now be accounted for in terms of ban on CP ellipsis.

(17) a. *Toli-lul, na-nun [cp Yenghi-ka t. salangha-n-ta-ko]
S-Acc I-Top Y.-Nom love-Pres-Dec-C
mitci-anh-nun-ta
believe-Pres-Dec
'I don't believe Yenghi loves Toli.'

b. *Yenghi-ka, Toli-lul, na-nun [cp t. t salangha-n-ta-ko]
Y.-Nom S-Acc I-Top love-Pres-Dec-C
mitci-anh-nun-ta
believe-Pres-Dec
'I don't believe Yenghi loves Toli.'

At this point, a non-trivial question may arise: Why is CP ellipsis impossible (in English and Korean)? We assume that only functional heads such as C, T, and D can bear the [E] feature (Merchant 2001) which enables to license the ellipsis of their complements (cf. Lobeck 1995). Since CP is the complement of V (or v which we may count as a lexical head for our purposes here), the absence of CP deletion results from the absence of the feature [E] on lexical categories (here V or v), as illustrated in (18).5

(18) *VP/cP
    V/v
    [E]
    t t salangha-n-ta-ko Ellipsis

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5 An anonymous reviewer raises the following question: In what aspect is our analysis different from the analysis advanced by Lobeck (1995)? The analysis advanced by Lobeck (1995) solely focuses on the nature of functional categories that license ellipsis. Unlike her analysis, the analysis advanced here focuses on the difference between functional and lexical categories in licensing ellipsis.

6 Ahn & Cho (2008) show that TP and ip ellipsis is possible in Korean. In the former, C has the [E] feature and in the latter, T has the [E] feature.
[E] instructs the post-PP phonological interpretative component not to parse its complement. Since V/v doesn’t have the [E] feature, CP ellipsis isn’t possible.

Now, let us consider (1B’), repeated here as (19).7

  I-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C believe-Pres-Dec
  ‘I believe Yenghi loves Toli.’
B: na-nun __ mitci-anh-nun-ta
  I-Top believe-Not-Pres-Dec
  ‘Lit. I don’t believe.’

At first glance, it seems that the CP complement of the verb mit-nun-ta has been elided in (19B), as indicated in (1B’). However, there is an alternative possibility that the missing constituent in (19) is in fact a DP complement, but not a CP complement. Note that (19B) can be also paraphrased as (20).8

(20) a. na-to [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-nun] kœ-su
  I-too Y.-Nom S.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C-Rel fact-Acc
  mitci-anh-nun-ta
  believe-Pres-Dec
  ‘I don’t believe the fact that Yenghi loves Toli.’

7 An anonymous reviewer points out the possibility that the elided part of (19B) may be like (i).
(i) Na-nun kule-hata-ko mitci-anh-nun-ta.
  I-Top so-do-Comp believe-Not-Pres-Dec
  ‘I don’t believe so.’

Note, however, the following grammatical contrast in English.
(ii) a. I don’t believe so.
  b. ‘I don’t believe.

(ii-a), where the proform so is used is well-formed, whereas (ii-b), where ellipsis occurs, is ill-formed. Along the similar vein, we claim that (i) cannot be the source of (19B) since the reduced CP kule-hata-ko in (i) cannot be deleted in Korean under our proposal.

8 The following example taken from Chung (2008:5) can be explained in the same way.
(i) A: Chelswu-nun Soll-ekey [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko] malha-yess-ta
  C-Top S.-Dat Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-C tell-Past-Dec
  ‘Chelswu told Soli that Yenghi loves Toli.’
B: Yengswu-to Soli-ekey malha-yess-ta
  Yengswu-too Soli-Dat tell-Past-Dec
  ‘Yengswu told Soli (that Yenghi loves Toli).’

Under the analysis advanced here, the missing element in (iB) is a DP complement, a null counterpart of ku kos-ul ‘that thing-Acc’ or ku sasih-ul ‘that fact-Acc’.
b. na-to ku kes/sasil-ul mitci-anh-nun-ta  
I-too that thing/fact-Acc believe-Not-Pres-Dec  
'I don’t believe the fact.’

Thus, the missing constituent in (19B) does not have to be the CP as indicated in (1B’), but can be the DP complements in (20). This is shown in (21).

(21) a. na-to [pe \[Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-nun\] kes-ul]  
micti-anh-nun-ta
b. na-to [pe \[ku kes/sasil-ul\] mitci-anh-nun-ta]

Since CP ellipsis is barred for theoretical reasons, (21) should be more appropriate analysis than (1B’) for (19B).

The following degraded examples further support our claim.

(22) a. *na-to [Yenghi-ka Soli-lul salangha-n-ta-nun] kes-ul  
l-too Y.-Nom S.-Acc love-Pres-Dec-REL fact-Acc  
sayngkakha-n-ta  
think-Pres-Dec  
'I think the fact that Yenghi loves Soli.’
b. *na-to ku kes-ul sayngkakha-n-ta  
l-too the fact-Acc think-Pres-Dec  
'I think the fact.’

As seen in (22), unlike the verb mitta ‘believe’, the verb sayngkakha ‘think’ in Korean does not seem to take a DP complement. In this case, ellipsis of complements also make the sentences degraded, as shown in (23B).9

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9 In English, certain verbs such as know, insist, and wonder can appear without a complement, which seems to be an idiosyncratic fact (cf. Hankamer & Sag 1976). The fact that a certain verb takes a DP complement in Korean also seems to be an idiosyncratic fact. We also need to note that in contrast to Korean sayngkakha ‘think’, the Japanese counterpart omotte ‘allow complement ellipsis, as shown in (i): (The examples are taken from Shinohara 2006).

(i) Hanako-wa [zibun-no teian-ga, siyoosaretu to] omotteiru ga,  
Hanako-Top self-Gen proposal-Nom accepted-be that think though  
Taroo-wa omotte inai.  
Taroo-Top think not  
‘Hanako thinks that her proposal will be accepted, but Taroo does not think that her/his proposal will be accepted.’

Again, the fact that certain verbs can take a DP complement in a language seems to
(23) A: na-nun [Yenghi-ka Toli-lul salangha-n-ta-ko] sayngkakha-n-ta
    l-Top Y.-Nom T.-Acc love-Pres-Dec C think-Pres-Dec
    'I believe Yenghi loves Toli.'
B: *na-to ___ sayngkakha-n-ta
    l-too think-Pres-Dec
    'Lit. I think too.'

The ill-formedness of (23B) hinges either on ban on CP ellipsis or the
selectional property of the verb sayngkakhata `think' which cannot
(optionally) take a DP complement. The correlation mentioned above
further strengthens our claim that the elided element in (19B) is a DP
complement.

The impossibility of predicate ellipsis in the exceptional clause (24B)
can be accounted for along the similar lines.

(24) A: na-nun Yenghi-lul papo-la-ko mit-nun-ta
    l-Top Y.-Acc fool-Dec-Acc believe-Pres-Dec
    'I believe Yenghi to be a fool.'
B: *na-to Yenghi-lul papola-ko mit-nun-ta
    l-too Y.-Acc fool-Dec-Acc believe-Pres-Dec
    'I too believe Yenghi to be a fool.'

(24B) may have the structure like (25) if scrambling/raising takes place in
embedded clause.

(25) na-to Yenghi-lul, [CP t-papo-la-ko] mit-nun-ta

The ill-formedness of (24B) results from the impossibility of CP ellipsis.

be idiosyncratic.

In Korean, there's speakers' variation on grammatical judgement of (22b) and (23b).
As pointed out by Jae-Woong Choe (p.c.), (ii) is better than (22b).
(ii) Na-to ku cem-ul sayngkakha-n-ta.
    l-too the point think-Pres-Dec
    'Lit, I also think the point.'

The meaning of the verb sayngkakha- in (ii) seems to be slightly different from the one
of sayngkakha- in (22b). It is close to consider in (ii). In this case, the elliptical counterpart
is also good, as shown in (iii).
(iii) Na-to ___ sayngkakha-n-ta.
    l-too think-Pres-Dec
    'Lit, I also think the point.'

Hence, the fact that certain verbs can take a DP complement within a language seems
to be also idiosyncratic.
The impossibility of predicate ellipsis in the small clause (26B) can be accounted for along the similar lines.

(26) A: na-nun Yenghi-lul papo-lo kancwuha-n-ta
     I-Top Y.-Acc fool-as consider-Pres-Dec
     'I consider Yenghi as a fool.'
B: *na-lo Yenghi-lul papo-lo kancwuha-n-ta
     I-too Y.-Acc fool-as consider-Pres-Dec
     'I consider Yenghi as a fool.'

At some point of derivation (26B) has the structure like (27).

(27) *  
     VP/vP  
     SC  
     V/v  
     [E]  
     tYenghi-lul papo-lo Ellipsis

Because V/v doesn't have the [E] feature, the small clause ellipsis isn't possible under our analysis.

The analysis advanced here also accounts for the following contrast in matrix and embedded fragmental constructions.

(28) A: Yenghi-ka mwuess-ul sa-ss-ni?
     Yenghi-Nom what-Acc buy-Past-Q
     'What did Yenghi buy?'
B: chayk-ul
     book-Acc
     'A book.'

     you-Nom Yenghi-Nom what-Acc buy-Past-Dec-C believe-Pres-Q
     'Lit. What do you believe Yenghi bought?'
B: *Na-nun [chayk-ul ] mit-nun-ta
     I-Top book-Acc believe-Pres-Dec
     'Intended reading. I believe (Yenghi bought) a book.'

In (28B), the object fragment undergoes movement outside TP (and perhaps into Spec-C), and TP can be the target for the ellipsis, as shown in (30).10

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10 Regarding the ellipsis analysis of fragments such as (28B), see Ahn & Cho (2006a,b).
This reminds us of Merchant's analysis of sluicing and fragment (cf. Merchant 2001, 2004) in which C has the [E] feature, and the complement of C, here TP, undergoes ellipsis.\(^{11}\) (29B), by contrast, should be ruled out, as shown in (31), since it involves CP ellipsis which is predicted to be excluded under our proposal.\(^{12}\)

(31) na-nun [VP chayk-ul, [CP Yenghi-ka ˌsa-sə ta ke]] mit-nun-la

One last question we might consider is why DP ellipsis is widely allowed in Korean, whereas it is restricted in particular constructions in English (such as comparatives). For example, as a reply to a question, English does not allow DP ellipsis, as shown in (13) repeated here as (32).

   B: *I also saw/met ___.

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\(^{11}\) One may raise a question about the locus of declarative ending -ta. We simply assume that it is related to the head of the projection lower than C. When C has the [E] feature, the projection (whatever it is) headed by the declarative ending undergoes ellipsis. Note in passing that the elided TP, however, may not include at least the functional projection representing Speech Level (SL), as indicated in the following example:

(i) A: Yenghi-ka mwoyeul sa-so-e yo?
   Yenghi-Nom what-Acc buy-Past-Q(Polite SL)
   'What did Yenghi buy?'

B: chayk-ul
   book-Acc
   'A book.'

Note that (iB) cannot indicate the "polite" speech level unlike (iA); (iB), on the other hand, indicates "plain" SL only, which is default. It implies that SL projection is not involved in the elliptical part (presumably TP) in (iB). Perhaps SL projection can be part of C-projection in Korean. We set aside further exploration of this issue here.

\(^{12}\) An anonymous reviewer points out the possibility that chayk-ul 'book' moves to Spec of C and TP undergoes ellipsis. However, such derivation isn't possible for the following reasons. First, ko occurs in C. Therefore, when TP undergoes ellipsis, ko should remain in C, which is not true in (31). Second, one may imagine the possibility that deletes C (C-bar). In this case also the elided part should also contain C. ko. Such deletion cannot occur because there is no functional projection to have an [E] feature to license C-ellipsis.
Note that the Korean counterparts of (32) is fully grammatical:

(33) A: na-nun John-uy hyeng-ul poa/manna-ss-ta
   l-Nom John-Gen brother-Acc see/meet-Past-Dec
   'I saw/met John's brother.'
B: na-to _ poa/manna-ss-ta
   l-too see/meet-Past-Dec
   'Lit. I also saw/met (him).'</n
We propose that the Korean examples of apparent DP ellipsis in this paper are all instances of Pro (null pronouns) which are absent in English (cf. Huang 1984). Hence, (33B) should be represented as

(34) na-to Pro poa/manna-ss-ta
   l-too see/meet-Past-Dec
   'Lit. I also saw/met (him).'</n
Thus, parallel to ban on CP ellipsis, there is no genuine DP ellipsis (in English and Korean), either, since its licensor cannot be a functional head (i.e. it should be V or v in (33B), for instance), and hence cannot bear ellipsis licensing feature [E] by assumption. Thus, the typology of possible appearance of Pro may explain the (un)limited distribution of seeming DP ellipsis in English and Korean, which is theoretically banned along with CP ellipsis.

3. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have shown that CP ellipsis (as well as DP ellipsis) is not possible in Korean (and English). Under the assumption that only heads that have an E feature license the ellipsis of their complement, we suggest that the absence of CP ellipsis results from the fact that lexical categories such as V or v cannot bear an E feature. We further claim that the apparent CP ellipsis cases in Korean are all instances of DP ellipsis which are further subsumed to the emergence of null pronoun Pro that is absent in English.

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