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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 Ø and its linguistic antecedent in the clause is underlined.

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

Cross-linguistically, the use of VP-ellipsis seems to depend upon languages’ auxiliaries. In English, for instance, VP-Ellipsis occurs after all auxiliary verbs\(^1\), 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 Ø aussi.
   John has met Mary and Peter has Ø too
b. Jean pourra rendre visite à son père, mais Pierre ne pourra pas Ø.
   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.

    1 FUT1sg read aloud and you AUX.FUT2sg too
    ‘I will read aloud and you will too.’
    b. Vždy *spolu existovaly* a vždy také Ø *budou*.2 (ČNK3)
        always together existed1sg and always too AUX.FUT3sg
        ‘They always existed together and they always will.’

(4) Past: *Já jsem četl knihu*, a ty *jsi* Ø také.
    1 AUX1sg read1sg book and you AUX2sg too
    (intended: ‘I read the book, and you did too.’)

(5) Cond.: a. *Já bych četl knihu* a ty *bys* Ø také.
    1 COND1sg read1sg book and you COND2sg too
    (intended: ‘I would read the book, and you would too.’)
    b. *Já bych byl četl knihu* a ty *bys* byl Ø také.
    1 COND1sg been1sg read1sg book and you COND2sg been1sg 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:

a) forms used in the past tense: *jsem*, *jsi*, *a*, *jsme*, *jste*, *a*5
b) forms used in the future tense: *budu*, *budeš*, *bude*, *budeme*, *budete*, *budou*

c) the conditional form *by*, to which attaches a person-number agreement marker:
   *by-čh, by-s, by-α*, *by-chom, by-ste, by-α*
d) the past participle *byl* used in past conditional tense, to which attaches a number-gender agreement marker: *byl-α* (m.sg), *byl-α* (f.sg), *byl-α* (n.sg), *byl-ι* (m.pl), *byl-ι* (f.pl), *byl-ι* (n.pl).

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

3 Examples anoted 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/neuter, 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, jsí, je, jsme, jste, jsou*. See Veselovská (2004) for other differences between lexical and auxiliary *být*.

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To form a complex verbal form, past and conditional auxiliary \( být \) 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) / \-ly (f.pl) / \-lo (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              | já bych pracoval             |
|                        | I work\(_1\)sg         | I COND\(_1\)sg worked\(_m\)sg |
|                        | ‘I work’               | ‘I would work’              |
| Past tense             | já jsem pracoval        | já bych byl pracoval         |
|                        | I AUX\(_1\)sg worked\(_m\)sg |
|                        | ‘I (have) worked.’      | I COND\(_1\)sg been\(_n\)sg worked\(_m\)sg |
| Future tense           | já budu pracovat        | já bych byl pracovat         |
|                        | I AUX.FUT\(_1\)sg work  | I COND\(_1\)sg been\(_n\)sg worked\(_m\)sg |
|                        | ‘I will work’           | ‘I would have worked’        |

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\(_1\)pl he\(_d\)at it\(_acc\) already AUX\(_1\)pl sent\(_m\)pl
      ‘We have already sent it to him.’

(7) Present cond.: My (\( bychom \)) mu to určítě (*\( bychom \)) poslali.
      we COND\(_1\)pl he\(_d\)at it\(_acc\) certainly COND\(_1\)pl 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 určítě (budeme) posilat (budeme).
       we he\(_d\)at it\(_acc\) certainly AUX.FUT\(_1\)pl send-IMPF AUX.FUT\(_1\)pl
       ‘We will be certainly sending it to him.’

(9) Past cond.: My bychom mu to určítě (byli) poslali (*byli).
       we COND\(_1\)pl he\(_d\)at it\(_acc\) certainly been\(_n\)pl sent\(_m\)pl been\(_n\)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 byt. 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 / o + šel / chodí
AUX1sg / AUX2sg / (3sg) go.PERF.PASTm.sg / go.IMPERF.PASTm.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 / byš / by + šel / chodí
COND1sg / COND2sg / COND3sg go.PERF.PASTm.sg / go.IMPERF.PASTm.sg
‘I / you / he would go’

b. bych / byš / by byl / býval + šel / chodí
COND1sg / COND2sg / COND3sg been.PASTm.sg go.PERF.PASTm.sg / go.IMPERF.PASTm.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 / chodí
AUX1sg / AUX2sg / AUX3sg *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 byt concerns negation. Sentential negation in Czech is carried by the
prefix \textit{ne}- 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: \( \text{Já tu knihu NEčtu.} \)
\( \text{I this book NEG-read.PRES} \)
\('I do not read this book.'

(14) Past: \( \text{Já jsem tu knihu NEčetl. / *Já NEjsem tu knihu četl.} \)
\( \text{I AUX this book NEG-read.PAST} \)
\('I did not read this book.'

(15) Cond.: a. \( \text{Já bych tu knihu NEčetl. / *Já NEbych tu knihu četl.} \)
\( \text{I COND this book NEG-read.PAST} \)
\('I would not read this book.'

b. \( \text{Já bych byl tu knihu NEčetl. / *Já NEbych byl tu knihu četl.} \)
\( \text{I COND been this book NEG-PAST} \)
\('I would not have read this book.'

(16) Future: \( \text{Já tu knihu číst NEduďu.} \)
\( \text{I this book read NEG-AUX.FUT} \)
\('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. \( \text{Já \_jsem tu knihu četl, ale ty jsi ne. / nejsi.} \)
\( \text{I AUX this book read.PAST but you AUX NEG / NEG} \)
\('He is a liar, but you are not.'

b. \( \text{Já bych \_byl tu knihu četl, ale ty bys ne / nebyls.} \)
\( \text{I COND been this book read.PAST but you COND been NEG / NEG} \)
\('I would have been happy, even if he would not.

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

(18) a. \( \text{On je lhář, ale ty nejsi.} \)
\( \text{he is liar but you NEG-are} \)
\('He is a liar, but you are not.'

b. \( \text{Já bych \_byl spokojený, i kdyby on nebyl.} \)
\( \text{I COND been.PAST happy even if he NEG-been.PAST} \)
\('I would have been happy, even if he would not.

\textit{6} The negative prefix \textit{ne}- is homonymous with the independent negative adverb \textit{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 *jem* / *bych* tu knihu četl, ale ty *ne.*  
   *AUX* / *COND* this book read,PAST but you not
   ‘I read / would read this book, but you did / would not.’

b. Já tu knihu *čist* budu, a ty *ne.*  
   *AUX* / *COND* this book read,AUX,FUT 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* / *COND* he,acc regularly called-on that that AUX3pl that COND3pl
   ‘You have called on him regularly, haven’t you?’

b. Budeme ho pravidelně navštěvovat, že? / *že* budeme?  
   *AUX* / *COND* he,acc regularly call-on that AUX,FUT1pl
   ‘We will call on him regularly, won’t we?’

(21)  
a. Q: Zavolali jste / *byste* mu?  
   called,PASTm pl AUX3pl COND3pl he,dat  
   ‘Did / Would you call him?’

A: Ano, zavolali. / *jsem* / *byste*.  
   yes called,PASTm pl AUX1pl COND1pl
   ‘Yes, we did.’

b. Q: Budete mu volat?  
   AUX,FUT1pl he,dat call
   ‘Will you call him?’

A: Ano, **budeme**.  
   yes FUT,AUX1pl
   ‘Yes, we will.’

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

To sum up, we have seen that future forms of the auxiliary verb *byt* 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 byť and VP-ellipsis in active voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Verbal form</th>
<th>Auxiliary’s properties</th>
<th>V-tense</th>
<th>VP-ellipsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1p.sg.m)</td>
<td>Cl T Asp Neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem V</td>
<td>+ – – –</td>
<td>+ –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present cond.</td>
<td>bych V</td>
<td>+ – – –</td>
<td>+ –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych byl V</td>
<td>– + – –</td>
<td>+ –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>budu V</td>
<td>– + + –</td>
<td>+ –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 byť, 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),
(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 nebyl (*nev)postaven před dvěma lety.
    this house NEG-was NEG-built.PASS before two years
    ‘This house was not 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 byť in present passive constructions

In present passive constructions, the passive participle combines with present forms of the verb byť. Although these forms are identical to the forms of the auxiliary byť 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 person’, (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 byť. Moreover, they are sensitive to aspect, since they commute with the forms of the iterative verb byvát (’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).

    I invited.PASSm.sg NEG-AUX.PRESm.sg but you AUX.PRESzsg
    ’I am not invited, but you are.’

b. Já pozván jsem, ale ty NEjsi.
    I invited.PASSm.sg AUX.PRESm.sg but you NEG-AUX.PRESzsg
    ’I am invited, and you are not.’

7 See note 5.
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.PASSm.sg NEG-AUX.FUT1sg but you AUX.FUT2sg
   ‘I will not be invited, but you will (be).’
   
   b. Já pozván budu, ale ty NEbudeš.
   I invited.PASSm.sg AUX.FUT1sg but you NEG-AUX.FUT2sg
   ‘I will be invited, and you won’t (be).’
   
   c. (i) Bude *ošetřit / ošetřovat Petra. (active)
       AUX.FUT1sg take-care-PERF / take-care-IMPF Peter
       ‘I will take care of Peter.’
       
       (ii) Petr bude ošetření / ošetřován pravidelně. (passive)
            Peter AUX.FUT1sg 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/attributional 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 AUX2sg NEG-been.PASTm.sg invited.PASSm.sg but you AUX1sg been.PASTm.sg
   ‘I have not been invited, but you have been.’
   
   b. Já jsem byl pozván, ale ty jsi NEbyl.
   I AUX2sg been.PASTm.sg invited.PASSm.sg but you AUX1sg NEG-been.PASTm.sg
   ‘I have been invited, and you have not been.’
   
   c. Já jsem byl doma, když ty jsi NEbyl.
   I AUX2sg been.PASTm.sg home when you AUX1sg NEG-been.PASTm.sg
   ‘I was at home, when you were not.’

9 XLinguae Journal, Volume 5 Issue 4, October 2012, ISSN 1337-8384
(26) Present conditional:

a. Kdybych NEbyl pozván, ty bys NEbyl také.
   if-COND1sg NEG-been.PAST you COND2sg NEG-been.PAST too
   ‘If I were not invited, you wouldn’t have been either.’

b. Kdybych byl pozván, ty byl také.
   if-COND1sg been.PAST you been.PAST 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 instead of the second occurrence of byl, as shown in (27b).

(27) Past conditional:

a. Kdybych býval NEbýval pozván, ty býval býval také NEbýval.
   if-COND1sg been NEG-been PAST been PAST undergone.PAST you been undergone.PAST been too
   ‘I had not been invited, you would not have been either.’

b. Kdybych býval býval pozván, ty býval býval také.
   if-COND1sg been undergone.PAST been undergone.PAST you been undergone.PAST undergone.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 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 býl. 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.

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8 See section 2.2.
Table 3: Correlation between auxiliary’s properties and VP-ellipsis in passive voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Verbal form (1p.sg.m)</th>
<th>Auxiliary’s properties</th>
<th>VP-ellipsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cl  T  Asp  Neg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>jsem V-PASS</td>
<td>–   +   +</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem byl V-PASS</td>
<td>+   –   –</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>bych byl V-PASS</td>
<td>+   –   –</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych byl V-PASS</td>
<td>–   +   –</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>budu V-PASS</td>
<td>–   +   –</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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). 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).

(28) ForceP

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Force}^\circ \\
\text{Fin}^\circ \\
\text{Fin} \\
\text{Agr}^\circ \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{T}^\circ \\
\text{M}^\circ \\
\text{Neg}^\circ \\
\text{vP} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array}
\]

4.2 Syntactic position of the auxiliary byt

Distinct properties of the auxiliary forms of the verb byt 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 byt is generated in the head v/V. I follow her proposal with modification indicated below.

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

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Both future and passive auxiliary should be generated in the vP domain: the future auxiliary, since it determines the atelic caracter 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 byť are summarized in table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fin°</th>
<th>Agr°</th>
<th>T°</th>
<th>M°</th>
<th>Neg°</th>
<th>v°</th>
<th>VP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active voice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I work’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem</td>
<td></td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td></td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>byl</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>byu</td>
<td>pracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passive voice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I am invited’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem</td>
<td></td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pozván</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td></td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pozván</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>byl</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>pozván</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>byu</td>
<td>pozván</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 byť 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fin°</th>
<th>Agr°</th>
<th>T°</th>
<th>M°</th>
<th>Neg°</th>
<th>v°</th>
<th>VP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active voice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I work’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>byl</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>nepracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>byu</td>
<td>nepracoval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive voice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>‘I am invited’</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>jsem</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past cond.</td>
<td>bych</td>
<td>byl</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>ne</td>
<td>byu</td>
<td>pozván</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Availability of VP-ellipsis after the auxiliary byť

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

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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 byt (‘to be’) in Czech does not occur in all complex verbal forms. I have shown that future and passive forms of the auxiliary byt differ from past and conditional forms in particular that they bear an interpretable tense feature and are able to host negative prefix ne- expressing sentential negation. This lead me to claim, following Veselovská (1995, 2008), that byt 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 byt 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
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