
Do fragments behave differently depending on their antecedent type? Results from an acceptability judgment study on German

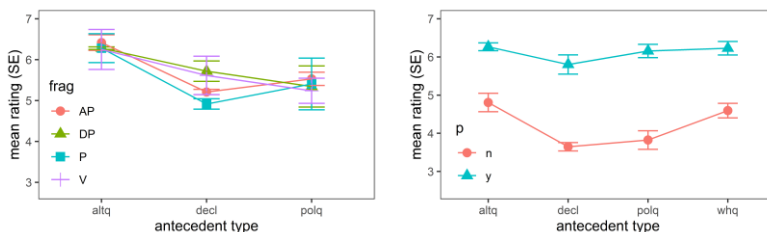
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This paper focuses on whether clausal ellipsis works differently depending on the clause-type of the antecedent. The prevailing view is that fragments must be A'-movable phrases and that P-omission is licit in a language L only if L ordinarily permits P-stranding A'-movement.^[1] [2] and [3] contend that this view is correct only for fragments whose antecedents are declarative assertions and wh-questions. [2] and [3] report informally collected acceptability judgments from English and Dutch that suggest that neither A'-movability nor the P-stranding restrictions are obeyed by fragments anteceded by alternative questions.

I conducted two formal acceptability judgment experiments on German fragment answers (both had 2x2 designs, with 32 native German speakers). Exp1 tested whether varying the antecedent type (between *altq*, *decl*, and *polq*) affects the acceptability of fragments that are A'-movable constituents (AP, DP) or not (bare Ps and bare transitive Vs). Exp2 tested whether changing the antecedent type (between *altq*, *decl*, *polq*, and *whq*) affects the acceptability of P-omission. Exp1 found that $altq_{ANT}$ fragments are judged as significantly more acceptable than both $decl_{ANT}$ and $polq_{ANT}$ fragments. The A'-movability constituent had no significant effect on acceptability for any antecedent clause-type condition. Exp2 found that, regardless of the clause-type of the antecedent, P-omission significantly lowers judgments. When P-omission occurs, differences in acceptability between fragments (as grouped by ant. clause-type) become more significantly pronounced. I compare these results with other recent findings on German fragments,^[4] and discuss their theoretical import, particularly with regards to [2] and [3]'s claims.



References: [1] Merchant, J. 2004. Fragments & ellipsis. *Ling. & Phil* 27. [2] Griffiths, J. 2019. A Q-based approach to clausal ellipsis. *Glossa* 4. [3] Griffiths J., G. Güneş & A. Lipták. 2022. Reprise fragments in English & Hungarian. To appear, *Language*. [4] Lemke, R. 2021. *Experimental investigations on the syntax & usage of fragments*. Lang. Sci. Press.