

You, like other people, can sometimes understand chunks of language which have been suppressed, can't you sometimes understand chunks of language which have been suppressed? The type of suppression which is the focus of this project is not just any omission of words, but omission with an underlying structure in the mental representation, which linguists call ellipsis. Interestingly, we can't omit just any part of the linguistic structure and hope that others will somehow understand what we mean, can we? There is strong evidence that such suppressed chunks of language (for example, the words which are crossed-out in the first sentence) are associated with complex syntactic structure in the mind. The evidence comes from what is a possible elliptical sentence in a language and what isn't. For example, any English native speaker will say that the sentence *Some people think there are no such rules, but there ~~are such rules~~* is fine, but if I try to end this sentence with ..., *but there is*, they will assume that I can't speak English well (simply put, the second version is ungrammatical). What we can see here is that the overt parts of the structure (such as the form of *be*: ..., *but there are*, not ..., *but there is*, in the example at hand) can depend on the parts which have been suppressed (the plural noun phrase ~~*such rules*~~ at the end). Ellipsis is thus not just about ending the sentence wherever and however we like, and hoping for others to somehow guess what we mean, but it is constrained by precise rules, allowing us to omit only certain parts of specific syntactic representations. Once we accept that there is syntax in the suppressed parts, we are faced with the challenge of specifying the identity conditions which dictate what type of matching is required between the omitted material and the equivalent overt part of the structure which helps us recover its meaning (our example above shows us that the suppressed part must match the overt *such rules* in number: if we could switch the number of the omitted noun to singular, the second version of the sentence should be fine too (the sentence *There is such a rule* is perfectly fine)).

A splendid opportunity to investigate the identity conditions determining which chunks of language can be suppressed and which cannot is provided by some specific features of the grammars of Brazilian Portuguese and Polish, as both of them have been claimed to allow for an intriguing mismatch in non-elliptical and elliptical structures involving prepositional phrases (that is, phrases with prepositions such as *with Ann* or *in the park*). In particular, when we form a question with a prepositional phrase in Brazilian Portuguese and Polish, it typically starts with the preposition and the question word, unlike what we observe in English, where the preposition can be stranded at the end of the sentence. This results in a contrast between English sentences such as *Which guy did you dance with?* and Brazilian Portuguese and Polish equivalents such as *Com qual cara você dançou?* and *Z którym facetem tańczyłaś?*, which would be ungrammatical if we left the preposition at the end (that is, *Qual cara você dançou com?* and *Którym facetem tańczyłaś z?* are ungrammatical). However, when parts of such questions are suppressed, the preposition can sometimes surprisingly disappear, just as in English, where this is expected. The sentences in (1)–(3), where the prepositions preceding the question words can be omitted, illustrate this for each of the three languages.

(1) *English*

Ann danced with one guy, but I don't know (**with**) which. [the second *with* can be omitted]

(2) *Brazilian Portuguese*

A Ana dançou com um cara, mas eu não sei (**com**) qual.
 the Ana danced with one guy but I not know with which
 'Ana danced with one guy, but I don't know which.' [the second *com* can be omitted]

(3) *Polish*

Anna tańczyła z jednym facetem, ale nie wiem (**z**) którym.
 Anna danced with one guy but not know with which
 'Anna danced with one guy, but I don't know which.' [the second *z* can be omitted]

Combining theoretical insights with rich empirical data sets obtained with a variety of research methods (including linguistic experiments with speakers of Brazilian Portuguese, standard Polish, and Paraná Heritage Polish, a variety of Polish spoken by the descendants of the 19th century Polish immigrants to the Brazilian state of Paraná), within this project we set out to investigate these intriguing patterns and their theoretical consequences, with the aim of contributing to the debates about the identity conditions on ellipsis and the mechanisms which require prepositions to be expressed before question words in sentences such as *Com qual cara você dançou?* and *Z którym facetem tańczyłaś?*, but not in sentences such as (1)–(3). These are some necessary steps on the way to deepening our understanding of the properties and interactions of operations involved in generating linguistic structures, and linking them to the interfaces with language-external systems of the human mind.