



Philosophische Fakultät



CCLS: Volker Struckmeier (Ruhr University Bochum)

A discourse prominence merry go-round: Ellipsis is not controlled by syntax

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In clausal ellipsis, one well-established approach (proposed by Jason Merchant and elaborated by many others) assumes that ellipsis fragments must be 'syntactically moveable', since syntactic mobility and fragment suitability indeed seem to correlate in languages. In my talk, I will compile the (manifold) problems that this approach causes. Also, I will present some new observations that are problematic for syntactic approaches to ellipsis. These issues, in turn, point towards another solution for ellipsis interpretation: The question seems to be which propositions in a discourse are so prominent that listeners will preferably reconstruct these propositions for fragment interpretations, rather than others. The proposed solution also tentatively links up the phenomenon of ellipsis to processing matters, and tries to argue that some (partial, limited) correlations between syntactic mobility and fragment formation are to be expected cross-linguistically, even if the two phenomena are not causally linked.