

The syntax of Dutch embedded fragment answers: on the PF-theory of islands and the WH/slucing correlation

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Abstract This paper presents new evidence in favour of Merchant's (2004, 2008) PF-theory of islands, which states that island-sensitivity is due to the presence of PF-uninterpretable traces at PF. This new evidence is provided by two types of Dutch embedded fragment answers: whereas one type is island-sensitive, the other one is not. The former differs from the latter in that it involves an extra movement step, leaving an extra trace. Moreover, this paper argues that the WH/slucing correlation (van Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006, 2009) makes the correct predictions regarding the (non-)embeddability of fragment answers in Dutch and English. The WH/slucing correlation states that there is a correlation between the type of WH-movement a language exhibits and the types of clausal ellipsis attested in that language. I show that it follows straightforwardly that, unlike in Dutch, embedded fragment answers are not attested in English.

Keywords Fragment answer · Slucing · Dutch · English · PF-theory of islands · WH/slucing correlation · Syntax of [E]-feature

1 Introduction

English exhibits (at least) two types of clausal ellipsis phenomena: (i) slucing, in which the sentential portion of a constituent question is elided, leaving only the WH-phrase, and (ii) fragment answers, in which a focused non-WH-remnant is found next

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