
Testing the predictions of a game-theoretic account of fragment usage

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Abstract

Speakers can often use fragments like *To Paris?* instead of sentences like *Does this train go to Paris?*. While previous research has focused on the syntax of fragments, the question of why and when they are preferred over sentences is still underexplored. I present a game-theoretic account of fragment usage, which predicts that fragments are more acceptable when they point the hearer more clearly toward a meaning. Informed by a crowd-sourced production data set, the model makes quantitative predictions on the acceptability of fragments in specific contexts, which are empirically supported by an acceptability rating study.

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