The role of *heaviness* in the acceptability of multiple sluicing constructions in English

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Multiple Sluicing (MS) is a kind of elliptical question with two or more remnants (Abels & Dayal 2016). Bolinger (1978) was the first to mention constructions of this kind in English. Not only did he provide some relevant instances of MS as in (1), but he also hinted at a crucial difference between *bare wh-expressions* and *PP wh-expressions*, suggesting that the latter are indeed more acceptable.

(1) a. *? I know that in each instance one of the girls chose one of the boys. But which which?

  b. ? I know that in each instance one of the girls got something for one of the boys. But which for which? (Bolinger 1978: 109)

The observation that a <PP,DP> combination of remnants is more acceptable than the <DP,DP> one is also reported in Lasnik (2014) and Kotek & Barros (2018). Therefore, in this paper it will be assumed that the prepositionhood of the non-initial remnant yields a more acceptable MS sentence.

On the other hand, Lasnik (2014) claims that the combination of <DP,DP> because more acceptable when the second wh-remnant is a heavy DP. Lasnik, however, does not provide further detail of what exactly constitutes a heavy DP, and he only provides the example in (2) to show the contrast between a bare wh-expression ('what') and a heavy wh-nominal expression ('which paper about sluicing') in the second remnant position, not alluding to intermediate stages such as a bare wh-element contrasting to a nominal wh-phrase ('which paper').

(2) a. *? Someone bought [yesterday] something, but I don't know who what.

  b. ? Some linguist criticized (yesterday) some paper about sluicing, but I don't know which linguist which paper about sluicing. (Lasnik 2014: 9)

Furthermore, Lasnik does not comment on the differences that could arise from the combination of *bare wh-phrases* and *d-linked wh-phrases* in the two remnant positions.

Assuming the argument that MS constructions improve when the non-initial wh-expression is a PP wh-phrase, yet the following question remains: is there a difference between bare wh-phrases and heavy nominal wh-phrases? I will report on a series of acceptability judgment experiments which examine the factors of weight (bare vs. explicit vs. heavy) and prepositionhood ($\pm$P) of the second wh-remnant. The results of two experiments reveal that there is indeed a main effect of PREPOSITION ($p<0.001$) that improves significantly MS structures with a prepositional second wh-remnant. Moreover, there is significant main effect of WEIGHT ($p<0.001$). However, this effect contra theory makes MS construction less acceptable.

REFERENCES ●Abels, Klaus & Veneeta Dayal. 2016. On the Syntax of Multiple Sluicing. In *NELS 47*, 1–20. GLSA publications. ● Bolinger, Dwight. 1978. Asking more than one thing at a time. In Henry Hiz (ed.), *Questions*, 107–150. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. ● Kotek, Hadas & Matthew Barros. 2018. Multiple Sluicing, Scope, and Superiority: Consequences for Ellipsis Identity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 49(4). 781–812. ● Lasnik, Howard. 2014. Multiple sluicing in English? *Syntax* 17(1). 1–20.