
Multiple Sluicing in English

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Sluicing is linguistically uncontroversial to occur in many languages; in other words, it is “widespread cross-linguistically” Merchant (2003:1). However, it is not agreed upon how the sluice is formed or which are the processes happening inside the sluicing site (Lasnik, 2014; Vicente, to appear).

- (1) Someone talked about something; I can’t remember who about what.
(Lasnik, 2014)

Sentence (1), originally marked by Lasnik (2014) with a question mark (?), was judged as 59% acceptable in our acceptability survey. Moreover, we tested sentence (2) with three *wh*-remnants and its counterpart (3) where NP are following the *wh*-word.

- (2) One of the students spoke to one of the professors about something, but I don’t know which to which about what. (Lasnik, 2014)
- (3) One of the students spoke to one of the professors about something, but I don’t know which student to which professor about what.

Interestingly, while the acceptability of (2) was barely 12,5%, the acceptance range of (3) increases drastically to a 69% because of the presence of the NPs.

Our interpretation is that any *wh*-remnant after the first one improves in acceptability when it is a PP. Additionally, when the *wh*-word in the remnant is followed by an NP the sentence also improves its acceptance.

References: • Lasnik, H. (2014). Multiple Sluicing in English? In *Syntax* 17:1-20.
• Merchant, J. (2003). Sluicing. In *SynCom* Case 98. University of Chicago. • Vicente, L. (to appear). Sluicing and its subtypes. In *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis*, ed. Temmerman and van Craenenbroeck, 117-143. Oxford: Oxford University Press.