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## IP vs VP Ellipsis in Brazilian Portuguese: An experimental study

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Ellipsis phenomena are usually understood as resulting from one of two conflicting hypotheses: the semantic hypothesis, which argues that ellipsis-antecedent identification is semantic in nature (Hardt & Romero, 2004; Lobeck, 1995); and the syntactic hypothesis, which argues for the existence of structural identification between the ellipsis and the antecedent (Tancredi, 1992). A third hypothesis combines these two positions. According to Winkler (2005), the ellipsis is an interface phenomenon that results from complex interactions between core grammatical components and information structure.

Brazilian Portuguese (BP) seems to provide interesting data regarding the role of the information structure in ellipsis licensing. Unlike stripping, verb phrase ellipsis (VPE) in BP does not seem to involve a contrastive topic. This difference suggests that VPE and stripping involve different kinds of licensing; thus, this study was performed to determine the different kinds of ellipsis phenomena and information structure.

In the experiment, the participants had to describe 28 images containing two scenes that differed by one item (action, complement, or subject). The results showed an interesting pattern. In all cases, the participants produced stripping or gapping, but not VPE. The given information was generally de-accentuated, while the contrasted information (action, complement, or subject) was marked intonationally by High (H) or Low-High (LH) contour, even in non-elliptical sentences. The data also suggests that, unlike IP ellipsis, VPE in BP is not related to contrast or information structure, but instead to the morphosyntactic properties of the verbs in this language.

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