

# Pom Pom Dialogues: A metalinguistic or discourse reference?

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Talk 4: Ellipsis and Response Systems: A Usage and Experimental-based approach

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# Introduction

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## Fragment answers

- Fragment answers are non-sentential utterances (NSU) that function as a reply to a *wh*-question:
  - (1) A: What do they want now?  
B: Freedom.
- The fragment answer here is an incomplete sentence but receives a propositional meaning such that they want freedom now.

## Two main directions: Deletion-based and direct interpretation

- The deletion-based approaches assume that fragments are derived from full-sentential source together with move-and-delete operations (see, among others, Hankamer 1979, Morgan 1989, Merchant 2005, Weir 2014).

(2) [<sub>FP</sub> Freedom [~~they want~~ — now]].

- The nonsentential DI approaches assume that the complete syntax of a fragment is just the categorial phrase projection of the fragment itself (see, among others, Barton 1990, Ginzburg & Sag 2000, Culicover & Jackendoff 2005, Jacobson 2016, and Kim & Abeillé 2019):

(3) [<sub>S</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> Freedom]].

(4) Bare Argument Ellipsis

Syntax: [<sub>U</sub> XP<sub>i</sub><sup>ORPH</sup>]<sup>IL</sup>

Semantics:  $\mathcal{F}(X_i)$

## Challenges to both directions: Pom Pom dialogues

- Fragment answers with correction or Pom Pom dialogues: dialogues with question-pair styles and often used in the Hungarian cartoon series based on the short stories of István Csukás:
- some examples
  - (5) A: Where are you running to?  
B: To school, but I am not running.
  - (6) A: Who are you shouting at?  
B: My sister, but I'm not shouting.

## Who is he?

István Csukás was a legendary children story writer and poet at Hungary.



# Pom Pom story books

- Pom Pom Story books:



**Figure 1:** A Pom Pom storybook

- This type of dialogue also occurs across languages including Korean:  
(7) A: Nwu-ka hakkyo-lo ttali-e ka-ko iss-ni?  
who-NOM to.school run-CONN go-CONN exist-QUE  
'Who is running to school?'  
B: Mimi, kulentey talli-nun kes ani-ya.  
Mimi, but run-MOD kes not-DECL  
'Mimi, but she is not running.'



## Challenging issues

- Example again:
  - (8) A: Where are you running to?
  - B: To school, but I am not running.
- Ellipsis-based sentential approaches: the putative clausal source for the fragment contradicts with the following denying sentence:
  - (9) #<sub>[FP]</sub> To school [I am running \_ ]], but I am not running.
- direct-interpretation nonsentential approaches: how to get the proper semantic resolution?

## **Basic properties of Pom Pom dialogues**

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## Typical example

- Pom Pom dialogues typically consist of a *wh*-question, a fragment answer, and a correcting statement:  
(10) A: Who is crying there?  
B: Mimi, but she is not crying.
- The responder first replies to the *wh*-question with a fragment answer, and then points out with a correction that the speaker identifies the situation in a wrong way.

## Predicate types

- As noted by Lipták (2020), the predicate of the *wh*-question in general contains a manner component. The typical predicates occurring in such dialogues include:
  - (11) a. manner-of-motion verbs: run, jog, rush, trot, stroll, march, hop
  - b. manner-of-speaking verbs: shout, cry, mumble, mutter, yell
  - c. verbs of ingesting: devour, gobble, gulp, munch, nibble, gorge
- However, verbs with no manner component can also be used in such Pom Pom dialogues (Lipták 2020):
  - (12) Context: Speaker A hears speaker B talking negatively about some people.

A: Who do you hate most?

B: Jane. But I don't hate her, I find her irritating.

## Correcting a non-predicative expression

- The correction can be even for a non-predicate expression or even an embedded expression:

(13) A: Who received the luxury bag as a **bribe**?

B: Mimi, but she didn't receive it as a bribe. She received it as a gift.

(14) A: Nwu-ka myengpwhum kapang-ul **noymwul-lo** pat-ass-ni?

who-NOM luxury bag-ACC bribe-as receive-PST-QUE

'Who received the luxury bag as a bribe?'

B: Mimi, hajiman **senmwul-lo** pat-ass-tey.

Mimi but gift-as receive-PST-DECL

'Mimi, but she got it as a gift.'

B': Mimi, hajiman **myengpwhum** ani-ya.

Mimi but luxury not-DECL

'Mimi, but it isn't a luxury one.'

- The speaker's misconception need not be expressed as a response to a *wh*-question. It can be a **polar question** as long as it contains a contrastive non-predicative element (Lipták 2020):
  - (15) A: Are you running to SCHOOL?  
B: No, to the PLAYGROUND. But I'm not running.
  - (16) A: Are you shouting at your SISTER?  
B: No, at YOU! But I'm not shouting.

## Pom Pom dialogues in declaratives

- Korean also behaves alike in correcting a non-predicative expression of the given polar question:

(17) A: Mimi-ka HAKKYO-LO talli-e ka-ko iss-ney.  
Mimi-NOM school-to run-CONN go-CONN exist-DECL  
'Mimi is running to school.'

B: ani, CIP-ULO. kulentey talli-e ka-ko iss-ci-nun ani-ya.  
no home-to but run-CONN go-CONN exist-CONN-TOP not-DECL  
'no, to home, but she is not running to home.'

## **Three possible approaches**

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- As suggested by Craenenbroeck (2010) and Barros (2014), fragment answers could be linked to a cleft pseudo-cleft clause.

(18) A: What is she eating?

B: A pizza.

B1: A pizza ~~it is that she is eating~~.

- Pom Pom dialogue again:
  - (19) A: What is she devouring?
  - B: A pizza, but she is not devouring.
- The possible cleft sources would be something like the following with the correction statement:
  - (20) a. #It is a pizza that she is devouring, but she is not devouring it.
  - b. #What she is devouring is a pizza, but she is not devouring it.

- Another possible direction, as suggested by Lipták (2020), is to assume that there is an accommodated antecedent for the fragment answer:  
(21) A: Who are you shouting at?  
B: My sister, but I am not shouting. (I am just speaking to her loudly).
- As hinted by the expression in the parentheses, the responder's fragment answer is not for the situation of shouting, but for that of **[speaking]**, which can be a supertype of shouting. In this sense, the responder accommodates the situation.

- In this direction, the accommodated meaning can be taken as the **at-issue** meaning while the **manner** component as non-at-issue one (Lipták 2020):  
(22) a. At-issue:  $\lambda x \exists e \text{ speak}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{you}) \wedge \text{GOAL}(e, x)$   
b. Non-at-issue:  $\text{manner-of-shouting}(e)$

## Non-supporting fact for accommodation process

- This kind of two dimensional approach may be supported from the observation that an adjunct material is typically ignored in ellipsis, as noted by Thoms (2015):  
(23) a. I saw your damn dog in the park, but you couldn't.  
b. Children always learn a language without knowing how.  
c. John is probably running late, although I don't know why.
- The proper interpretation of the elided part does not include the adjective *damn* or the adverb *always* or *probably*. However, note that the manner adverb is in general included in Sluicing:  
(24) a. The dog quickly ran after the ball, although I don't know why.  
b. They ate the food in a hurry, and she wondered why.

- Not all predicates have a manner component. Predicates like *sleep* or *hate* do not have a manner component, but can occur in Pom Pom dialogues. Further, it is not easy to find the predicate whose meaning is subsumed by a more general predicate (Lipták 2020):

(25) Context: Speaker A sees someone lying on the mat.

A: Who is sleeping there?

B: Frank, but he's not sleeping, he's just taking a rest.

## a quotation-based approach by Lipták (2020)

- The approach, adopting the analyses of mixed quotation by Davidson (1979) and Maier (2014), assumes that the fragment answer with correction involves a mixed quotation of the corrected predicate in the putative clausal source.
- Three different types of quotation (Maier 2014):
  - (26) a. The word ‘anomalous’ has nine letters. [pure quotation]
  - b. “Really, I could care less about that,” said Ann. [direct discourse]
  - c. Ann said that she “could care less” about spelling. [mixed quotation = direct plus indirect quotation]

## An example of mixed quotation

- another example with mixed quotation (Maier 2014)  
(27) Perry said climate change is a “contrived phony mess”.
- A subsequent utterance that pick up a new accommodated form-meaning connection with the help of the mixed quote as in *Well, this “contrived phony mess” is going to be the death of us!*.
- The quotation here has the same internal structure as the constituent without it, and it semantically introduces a two dimensional paraphrase:  
(28) a. At-issue: climate change is X.  
b. Presupposition: there is an X such that an individual uttered the words ‘contrived phony mess’ to refer to X.



- Adopting this theory of mixed quotation, Lipták (2020) proposes that the fragment answer with correction involves a clausal source with mixed quotation:  
(29) A: What are you devouring?  
B: A pizza <I'm "devouring">, but I'm not devouring it.
- As given here, the ellipsis site of the fragment contains the corrected element as a mixed quotation with metalinguistic reference. Since the quoted one has no at-issue meaning, according to Lipták (2020), there is thus no semantic contradiction between the first conjunct and the second one here.

- Lipták (2020) suggests that the quotation in (29B) triggers the presupposition of a two-place relation  $R$  while the *wh*-question induces an at-issue meaning with this  $R$  relation.  
(30)            At-issue: What are you  $R$ -ing?  
                  Presupposition: The interlocutor used the word *devour* to express  $R$ .
- This quotation-based account in a sense makes the meaning of the predicate denote just a basic relation ( $R$ ), thus avoiding the contradiction issue.

## Questions and issues

- The first question is what mechanism allows us to introduce a quoted expression from a typical *wh*-question or others.
- There are also important differences between the expression with a mixed quotation and the one without.
  - (31) a. John said that he wants to buy all of it.  
b.  $\approx$  John said that he wants to purchase all of it.
  - (32) a. John said that he wants to "buy all of it".  
b.  $\neq$  John said that he wants to "purchase all of it".

- Another question arises with examples where the correction is not for a preceding predicate but for a non-predicate:  
(33) A: Who is running to school?  
B: Mimi, but she is not running to SCHOOL, but to HOME.
- As given here, the correctum is not for the predicate, but for the PP argument. The mixed quotation analysis would assign the following putative source:  
(34) Mimi is running to “school”, but she is not running to school.
- If the ellipsis does not include the direction or the QUD for the responder refers to is a more general QUD, the fragment would mean something like:  
(35) Mimi is running, but she is not running to SCHOOL, but running to HOME.

- A similar situation happens when the correction is for an manner adverb:  
(36) A: Who was running to school so fast?  
B: Mimi, but she was not running FAST.
- Given that the fragment answer requires a clausal source that is syntactically identical to the preceding antecedent, we would have a contradiction as given in (37a). However, an intuitive interpretation given in (37b) would not lead to a contradiction if it excludes the manner adverb:  
(37) a. #Mimi was running to school fast, but she was not running FAST.  
b. Mimi was running to school, but she was not running FAST.

- Main arguments for the sentential analysis hinge on connectivity and island effects (Merchant 2005). However, note that it is quite natural to have an allegedly quoted expression in an island and a correction can refer to this expression:  
(38) A: Which company hired a person who can speak Spanish?  
B: Samsung, but it is French, not Spanish.

- What these examples imply is that correction does not force us to introduce a mixed quotation but it asks the fragment answer to refer to a proper semantic or discourse antecedent, but not a syntactic one.

## **A direct interpretation approach**

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- The resolution of fragments is achieved by discourse-based machinery. Ever since the pioneering work of Rooth (1992), it is widely acknowledged that ellipsis involves a focus assignment to an expression and further that ellipsis resolution requires certain ‘parallelism’ between the clause including the ellipsis and its antecedent clause (see, among others, Sag 1976; Kehler 2000; Hardt & Romero 2004; Hartman 2011; Thoms 2016; Griffiths & Lipták 2014; Merchant 2016; Stockwell 2018).

(39) Parallelism condition (Hardt & Romero 2004):  
Ellipsis requires that there be some phrase E containing the ellipsis and some antecedent phrase A in the discourse, such that  $\llbracket A \rrbracket$  is or contextually implies a member of  $F(E)$ .

- For an illustration, consider the Stripping example:

(40) Kim comes from Seoul, and Lee, too. (Abeillé & Kim 2022)

- The first conjunct *Kim comes from Seoul* can be a member of  $F(E)$ , as in (41a), since its focus value is the set of propositions as in (41b):

- (41) a.  $\llbracket \text{[Kim comes from Seoul]} \rrbracket \in F(\llbracket \text{[Lee comes from Seoul]} \rrbracket)$  (Stripping:  
Lee too)
- b.  $\{P \mid \exists x. P = x \text{ comes from Seoul too}\}$

- The Stripping example thus satisfies the condition in (39).

- Following Kehler (2000) and Hardt & Romero (2004), we also assume that the parallelism condition for ellipsis is a condition on discourse structure. This means that the Ellipsis Construction (*elliptical-cxt*) bears the following constructional constraints, which are inherited by its sub-constructions including fragment answers (Kim & Runner 2022):

(42) Elliptical Construction:

$$\textit{elliptical-cxt} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SEM } E \\ \text{FOC } \textit{nelist} \\ \text{CNTXT} \mid \text{PRESUP } \textit{parallel-rel}(A, E) \end{array} \right]$$

- The construction reflects the observed generalization that ellipsis clause (E) has at least one FOC expression, and its meaning E is in a parallel-relation with its antecedent A.

- In addition to the Parallelism Condition in the discourse, the interpretation of a fragment answer depends on the notion of ‘question-under-discussion’ (QUD) in the context.
- DGB is thus part of the contextual information and has at least the attributes SAL-UTT (focus establishing constituent) and MAX-QUD (maximal-question-under-discussion):

$$(43) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{DGB} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MAX-QUD ...} \\ \text{SAL-UTT ...} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

## An example

- Consider the following dialogue exchange:

(44) Q: Who were you with tonight?

A: Friends.

- Two different approaches to the meaning of a *wh*-question:

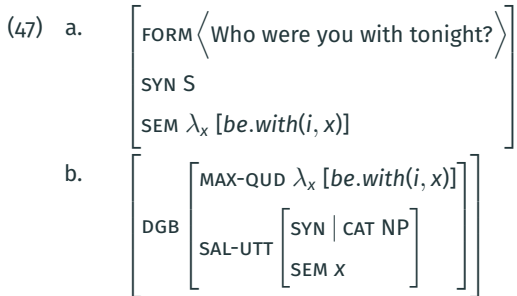
1. propositional set approach: the meaning of questions denotes sets of propositions that are possible answers to the question (see Hamblin 1973; Karttunen 1977; Groenendijk & Stokhof 1984)

(45)  $\llbracket Q \rrbracket = \{ \text{I am with Kim tonight, I am with Lee tonight, I am with friends tonight, ...} \}$

2. Structured-meaning approach: the meaning of a question is a function that yields a proposition when applied to the meaning of the answer (Krifka 2001; Ginzburg & Sag 2000; Jacobson 2016)

(46)  $\llbracket Q \rrbracket = \lambda_x [\text{be.with}(i, x, \text{tonight})]$

- In addition to its own syntax and semantics, a *wh*-question evokes a QUD (question-under discussion) but also introduces a FEC (focus establishing constituent) in the given context:

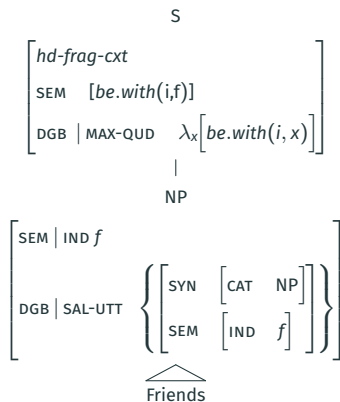


- The question *Who were you with tonight?*, which introduces a QUD questioning a value for the individual with whom the hearer was tonight ( $\lambda_x[be.with(i,x)]$ ). The fragment *friends*, functioning as a salient utterance, then provides a value for this variable.
- This structured meaning approach would yield the following semantic resolution for the FA in (44):

(48) a. Meaning of the Q and QUD:  $\lambda_x [be.with(i, x)]$   
b. Meaning of the fragment:  $f$   
c. Question applied to the answer:  $\lambda_x[be.with(i, x)](f) = [be.with(i, f)]$

# Structure of the fragment answer

(49)





## Some advantages

- Prevalent examples with no overt sentential source. What is the putative clausal source here?

(50) Why are you so nervous? Coffee. (COCA 2007 MOV)

- Possible sentential source?

(51) a. Because of coffee, I am so nervous.

b. It is because of coffee.

c. Coffee makes me nervous.

d. The reason is coffee.

e. ...

- Semantic resolution referring to the QUD evoked from the context:

(52) a. Meaning of the Q and the evoked QUD:  $\lambda_x [be.nervous(i, reason(x))]$

b. Meaning of the fragment:  $c$

c. QUD applied to the answer:  $\lambda_x [make(x, i, nervous(i))](c) = [make(c, i, nervous(i))]$

## Resolving fragment answers with correction

- Let's consider a typical context with a correction:  
(53) A: The press is interviewing Clinton.  
B: No, it is interviewing Hilary.
- The speaker A offers a statement to share with the dialogue participant B, but B's utterance serves to correct the statement made by A.

## Conditions for correction

- The function of a correction in dialogues is to reject the given contextual information and offer an alternative for the rejected one.
- For a correction to be felicitous, there must be a discourse antecedent that provides the contextual information that is corrected.
- There also needs to be a semantic parallelism between a correction and its associated correctum (Parallelism Condition in (42))

(54) a. A's statement: *interview(p, c)*

b. B's correction: *interview(p, h)*

## Conditions for correction: no syntactic identity

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- Syntactic identity is not a necessary and sufficient condition (Leusen 1994):  
(55) A: Mom gave Mimi a new laptop.  
B: No, her bother has it.
- The resolution process refers to the previous discourse concerning A's statement about Mom's giving Mimi a new computer (*give(mom, mimi, c)*), but the responder B corrects this statement by replacing the value of the second argument. But this repair process happens by B's referring to a newly accommodated QUD:  
(56) Referring QUD: Who has the laptop?
- Interpreting a correction in this way again implies that a correction is an anaphor that refers to the antecedent provided by the discourse structure.

## Account for Pom Pom dialogues

- Back to Pom Pom dialogues with fragments:  
(57) A: Who is sleeping on the bed?  
B: Mimi, but she is not sleeping; she is just lying on the bed.
- The following would be a resolution process for the fragment answer:  
(58) a. QUD from the *wh*-question:  $\lambda x[\textit{sleep.on}(x, b)]$   
b. meaning of the fragment *Mimi*:  $m$   
c. fragment answer applied to the Q:  $\lambda x[\textit{sleep.on}(x, b)](m) = [\textit{sleep.on}(m, b)]$
- The responder at first completes the QUD value evoked by the questioner with the fragment answer. In the due course, the responder then corrects this completed statement by referring to the evoked antecedent statement:  
(59) a. antecedent DGB: **sleep.on**( $m, b$ )  
b. correction DGB: **lie.on**( $m, b$ )

## Correcting a non-predicate

- As noted, correction can be not only for a predicate but also for any non-predicate argument evoked in the discourse:
  - (60) A: What did Mimi buy from the teacher yesterday?  
B: A book, but she didn't buy it. (She got it for free.)
  - (61) A: What did Mimi buy from the teacher yesterday?  
B: A book, but she didn't buy it from the teacher. (She bought it from a friend.)
  - (62) A: What did Mimi buy from the teacher yesterday?  
B: A book, but she didn't buy it yesterday. (She bought it from the teacher long time ago.)

## Resolution process

- The resolution process of this fragment answer within the DI approach would evoke the QUD in (63a) from the *wh*-question, and the fragment provides a value for it:
  - (63) a. QUD from the *wh*-question:  $\lambda x[buy(m, x, t, y)]$
  - b. meaning of the fragment *A book*:  $b$
  - c. fragment answer applied to the Q:  $\lambda_x[buy(m, x, t, y)](b) = [buy(m, b, t, y)]$
- After the utterance of this fragment, the responder makes a correction, trying to update the DGB. This correction first refers to the existing, updated DGB in (63b), and applies to one of the elements:
  - (64) a. B's correction for (60): **get.free**( $m, b, t, y$ ) ( $\leftarrow$  buy)
  - b. B's correction for (61):  $buy(m, b, f, y)$  ( $\leftarrow$  from a friend)
  - c. B's correction for (62):  $buy(m, b, t, l)$  ( $\leftarrow$  long time ago)

- Note that the corrected predicate need not be in a subsumption or hyponym relation:
  - (65) a. Mimi, but she is not sleeping; she is in fact sitting on it.
  - b. Mimi, but she is not sleeping; she is awake.



## An account for non-predicate correction

- Examples repeated:
  - (66) A: Who is running to school?  
B: Mimi, but she is not running to SCHOOL, but to HOME.
  - (67) A: Who was running to school so fast?  
B: Mimi, but she was not running FAST.
- Two possible interpretations within the present analysis: The fragment ‘Mimi’ provides an answer to the *wh*-question and then correct the non-predicate argument. The fragment also could serve as an answer to another manner-related QUD ‘Who is running?’.

## Some welcoming consequences

- As seen from correction is an anaphoric phenomenon referring to the antecedent, rather than introducing a mixed quotation. This direction can offer a way to account for why correction does not happen with a *wh*-expression with sentential negation:

(68) A: Who isn't running to school?

B1: Mimi.

B2: # Mimi, but she is running.

B3: Mimi, but she isn't running.

## Advantage

- Given the simple mixed quotation approach suggested by Lipták (2020), we would have the putative source in (69a):

(69) a. #Mimi isn't 'running' to school, but she is running to school.  
b. #Mimi is 'running' to school, but she isn't running to school.
- Note that if (69a) induces no contraction, then (69b) would also induce no contradiction, either. Lipták (2020) would predict both to be acceptable.
- The present account, however, can avoid such an issue, since it refers to discourse structure rather than seeking syntactic identity. Consider the QUD information and resolution process of such a dialogue:

(70) a. QUD from the *wh*-question:  $\lambda x[\neg[\textit{run.to}(x, s)]]$   
b. meaning of the fragment *Mimi*: *m*  
c. fragment answer applied to the Q:  $\lambda x[\neg[\textit{run.to}(x, s)]](m) = \lambda x[\neg[\textit{run.to}(m, s)]]$
- The fragment has the meaning that Mimi isn't running. Then, this cannot be followed by the contradiction, Mimi is running. We could correct only one variable or function, e.g.,  $[\neg[\textit{run.to}(m, h)]]$

## Advantage

- The narrow scope of the negated expression can be corrected, as seen from the following:

(71) a. Nwu-ka kyeolhon-ul mos-ha-yess-ni?

who-NOM marriage-ACC not-do-PST-QUE

'Who wasn't able to get married?'

b. Mimi, kulentey kyolhon-ul mos-ha-n kes ani-ko, an-ha-n

Mimi but marriage-ACC not-do-MOD kes not-and not-do-MOD

kes-i-ya.

kes-COP-DECL

'Mim, but it is not that she wasn't able to, but it is that she didn't get married.'

(72) a. antecedent:  $\text{unable.marry}(m,s)$

b. correction:  $\text{not.marry}(m,s)$  (different from  $[\neg[\text{marry}(m, s)]]$ )

## Island insensitivity

- Weir (2014, 203) also notes that contrastive focus marked corrective fragments can be island insensitive:
  - (73) A: Do they grant scholarships to students that study [SPANISH]?
  - B: No, French.
  - (74) a. Do you take milk and [HONEY] in your tea?
  - b. No, sugar.
- Attested data show that correction can refer to an expression within an island. An example:
  - (75) a. You and I have always worked for them. You maybe. Not me. (COCA 2002 TV)
  - b. I do eat bacon and chicken. No, not chicken. I eat fish. (2008 TV)
  - c. Lois, that is a direct quote from Molly's book. No. No, not Molly. (COCA 1994 TV)
- As noted by Merchant (2004), move-and-delete approaches require a different way of operation to license such examples (e.g., PF deletion of a larger CP). However, the present analysis, just referring to the given discourse structure, requires no additional mechanism.

## Conclusion

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## Conclusion

- We have seen that fragment answers with correction challenge the postulation of sentential sources for them since the clausal sources would contradict the correctum statement that follows.
- There are three possible directions to avoid such an issue: cleft source, lexical accommodation, and mixed quotation-based analyses.
- This talk suggests that a more viable direction is a DI (direct interpretation) approach that projects NSUs directly from fragment answers. There is no contradiction from the beginning. The paper shows that once we have structured discourse (representing information like DGB, QUD, and salient information), discourse participants can accommodate the DGB accordingly. for correction.

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