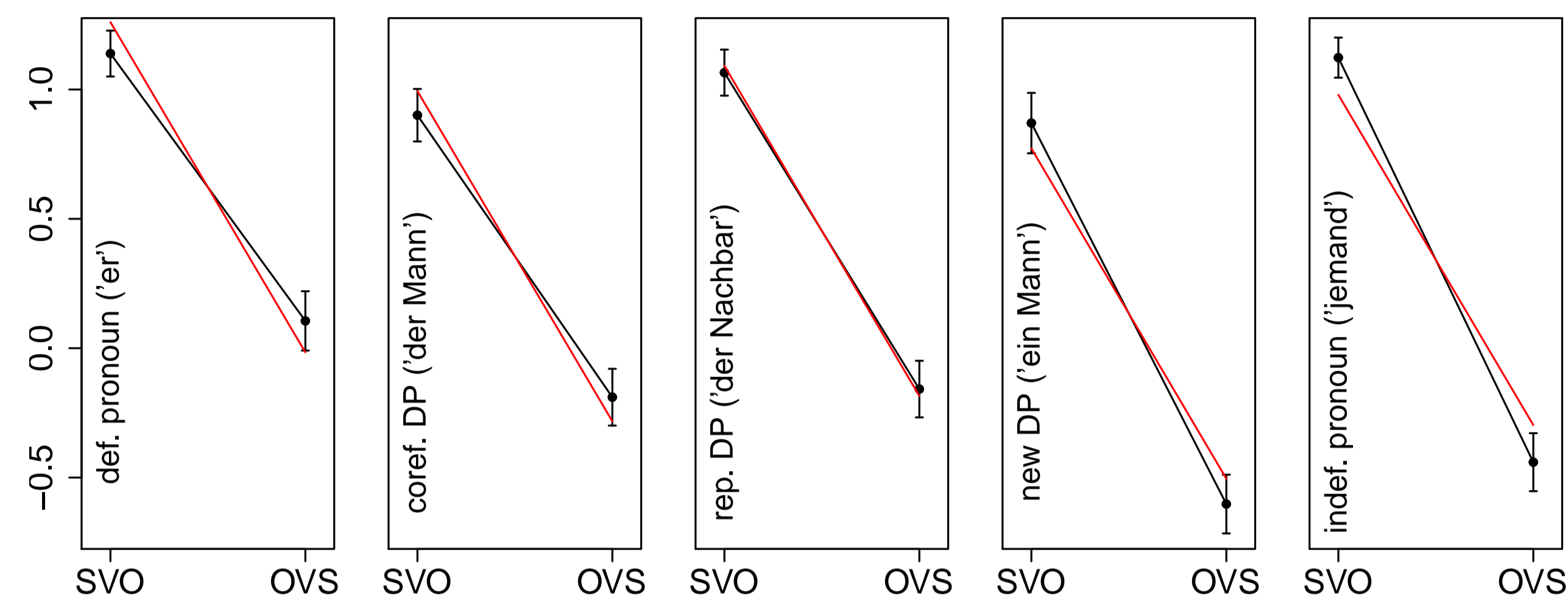


Introduction

In German, objects can be optionally fronted to the prefield. In a **series of acceptability rating studies**, we examined two kinds of factors that have been proposed to influence the **acceptability of OVS sentences**: (i) properties of the subject that is crossed by the object's movement (Frey 2004, 2010; Fanselow & Lenertová 2011), (ii) expressiveness associated with the utterance (Frey 2010).

Formal properties of crossed elements

Question: Which properties of crossed elements are relevant for the acceptability of object fronting?



(in black: results, in red: mean SVO-OVS difference across conditions for comparison)

Hypotheses:

- ▶ **Clitic-hood** of crossed elements is a crucial factor (Frey 2004, 2010): clitic-like definite pronoun subjects should show the smallest SVO-OVS difference.
- ▶ **Accentuation** of crossed elements is a crucial factor (Fanselow & Lenertová 2011): new, non-pronominal subject DPs should show the largest SVO-OVS difference.

Example:

Q: 'What's that smell? (What did the neighbor do?)'
 A: Würstchen hat {er | der Mann | der Nachbar | ein Mann | jemand} gegrillt.
 'Sausages, {he | the man | the neighbor | a man | somebody } has grilled.'

Method: 40 subjects, 24/16 items (def./indef.); acceptability ratings on 7-point scale, transformed to z-scores for analysis; offline questionnaire.

Results: According to a linear mixed model with effect coding, the **SVO-OVS difference in comparison to the mean across all conditions** is... (reported values: t, p for interaction of the levels of subject type with word order; δ = SVO-OVS difference on the original 7-point scale)

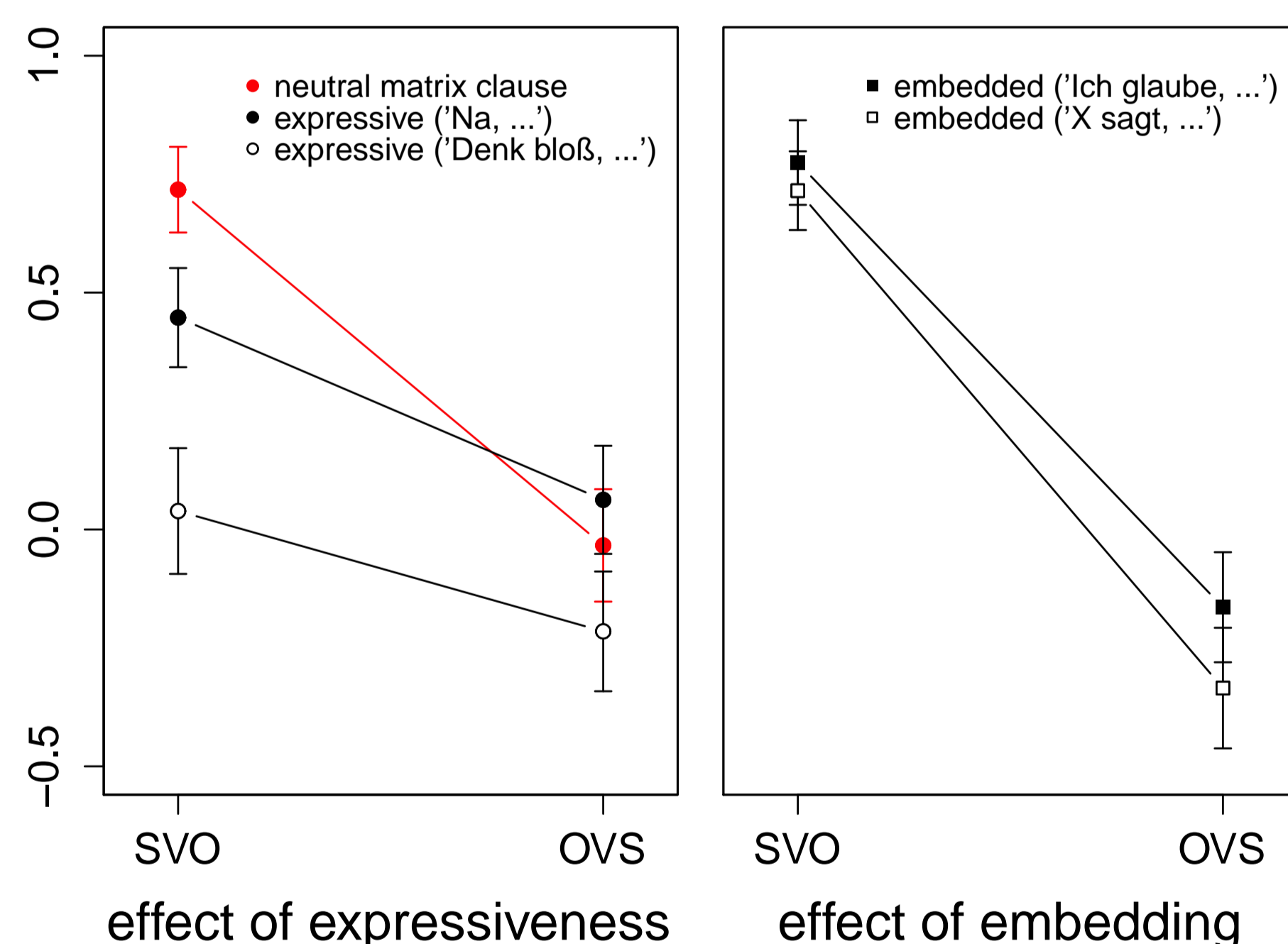
- ▶ ... **significantly smaller** for clitical 'definite pronoun' ($t = 3.85$, $p < 0.001$; $\delta = 1.9$) and for 'coreferent DP' ($t = 3.07$, $p < 0.002$; $\delta = 2.0$).
- ▶ ... **not significantly different** for the 'repeated DP' ($t = 0.79$, $p = 0.43$; $\delta = 2.3$).
- ▶ ... **significantly larger** for the accented 'new DP' ($t = -3.11$, $p = 0.002$; $\delta = 2.8$) and for the **indefinite pronoun** ($t = -4.60$, $p < 0.001$; $\delta = 2.9$).

Discussion:

- ▶ **Clitic-hood** captures the relatively small SVO-OVS difference in the definite pronoun condition; however, object fronting across a coreferent DP is similarly acceptable.
- ▶ **Accentuation** captures the over-average acceptability of crossing a def. pronoun and a coreferent DP, and the below-average acceptability of crossing a new DP; but the repeated DP and indefinite pronoun (both deaccentable, but not easily crossable) fall out of that pattern.

Expressiveness

Question: How do expressive particles and embedding influence the acceptability of object fronting?



Hypotheses:

- ▶ Object fronting is linked to **expressiveness** (cf. Frey 2010).
- ▶ Certain **particles** make an utterance expressive. They should thus reduce the SVO-OVS difference.
- ▶ When **reporting** somebody else's utterance using an embedded sentence, the degree of expressiveness (linked to the speaker) is low. The SVO-OVS difference should thus be increased.

Example:

Q: 'What did the student do?'
 A: { \emptyset | Na | Denk bloß | Ich glaube | Peter sagt,} eine schwierige Gleichung hat die Frau gelöst.
 '{ \emptyset | Well | Just imagine | I believe | Peter says,} a difficult equation, the woman solved.'

Method: 40 subjects, 40 items; acceptability ratings on 7-points scale, transformed to z-scores for analysis; offline questionnaire.

Results: According to a linear mixed model with treatment coding, the **SVO-OVS difference in comparison to a neutral matrix clause** ($\delta = 1.5$) is...
 ▶ ... **significantly smaller** when an expressive element is present ('Na, ...': $t = 4.65$, $p < 0.001$; $\delta = 0.5$; 'Denk bloß, ...': $t = 3.43$, $p < 0.001$; $\delta = 0.7$).
 ▶ ... **marginally larger** when the clause is embedded under 'Ich glaube, ...' ($t = -1.76$, $p = 0.08$; $\delta = 1.8$).
 ▶ ... **significantly larger** when the clause is embedded under 'X sagt, ...' ($t = -2.80$, $p = 0.005$; $\delta = 2.0$).

Discussion:

- ▶ The results **support** the view that **expressiveness facilitates object fronting**.
- ▶ Open questions: (i) Does the expressiveness need to be associated specifically with the fronted object as assumed by Frey (2010), or is it a **more general** effect?
 (ii) Particles indicate an **informal register**, and OVS is more common in informal speech. Could the observed effect be reduced to that confounding factor? Both issues are currently investigated in follow-up studies.

References: Frey (2004): The grammar-pragmatics interface and the German prefield. *Sprache und Pragmatik* 52. // Frey (2010): \bar{A} -movement and conventional implicatures: About the grammatical encoding of emphasis in German. *Lingua* 120. // Fanselow & Lenertová (2011): Left peripheral focus: Mismatches between syntax and information structure. *NLLT* 29.