

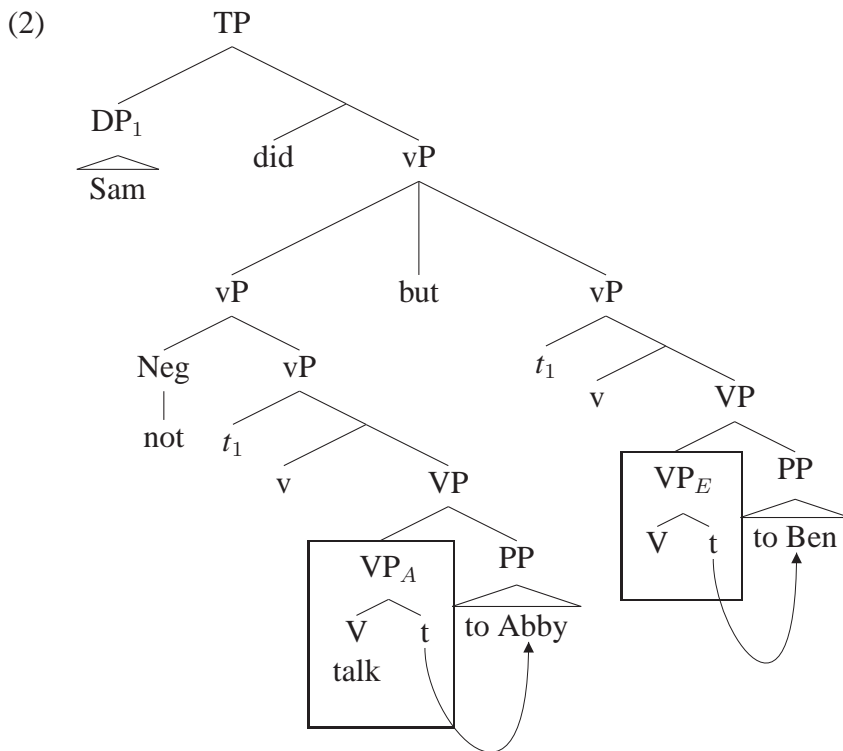
## A remark on P-stranding with corrective *sondern* ‘but’ in German

Jason Merchant, UChicago, 23 February 2013

Toosarvandani 2012 presents a cogent alternative to Johnson 2009, following Coppock 2001, based on Toosarvandani 2011’s analysis of constituent negation.<sup>1</sup> On this analysis, low gapping involves movement of remnants out of and ellipsis of a predicate node. This makes the right predictions in combination with corrective *but*; as Toosarvandani 2011 shows, corrective *but* requires negation in the first conjunct and this negation takes scope only over that first conjunct.

For examples like (1), then, the analysis is that given (2), where the argument PP *to Ben* moves out of its VP to a VP-external position overtly, and its correlate PP *to Abby* in VP<sub>A</sub> undergoes an equivalent movement covertly to generate the identical VP antecedent that allows for the ellipsis of VP<sub>E</sub>. The subject *Sam* moves in an Across-The-Board manner from both vP conjuncts.

(1) Sam did not talk to Abby, but to Ben.



In this note, I take it as established that Toosarvandani is right both about the nature of corrective *but* and in his resuscitation of Coppock’s low VP-ellipsis analysis of gapping. This note presents an additional piece of evidence for this set of analyses, from the behavior of corrective *sondern* ‘but, rather’ in German.

Consider the sentence in (3a), taken from the text of Sternefeld 2006:35: the phrase following the conjunction *sondern* ‘but’ repeats the selected preposition *um* ‘about’ (as part of the expression *sich handeln um* ‘be involved, treat (of), be about’). The variant in (3b), in which the preposition is omitted, is not possible. The pair in (3) illustrates this fact for a selected

<sup>1</sup>Thanks to Dorothea Hoffmann, Anastasia Giannakidou, and Joanna Pietraszko for judgments on German, Greek, and Polish, respectively.

preposition, and the pair in (4) shows the same for an adjunct one. (Though I don't illustrate the facts here, the contrast holds for all prepositions, and does not depend on *um* or *mit*.)

- (3) a. In der Tat müssen wir davon ausgehen, ... dass es sich somit nicht  
*in the deed must we therefrom go.out that it REFL therefore not*  
 um zwei verschiedene Merkmale handelt, sondern nur um ein einziges.  
*around two different features treat but.rather only about one single*  
 'In fact we must assume ... that not two different features are involved, but rather only one.'
- b. \* ... dass es sich somit nicht um zwei verschiedene Merkmale handelt,  
*that it REFL therefore not around two different features treat*  
 sondern nur ein einziges.  
*but.rather only about one single*  
 ('... that not two different features are involved, but rather only one.')
- (4) a. Ich spreche nicht mit dem Mund, sondern mit meinen Augen.  
*I speak not with my mouth but with my eyes*  
 'I don't speak with my mouth, but with my eyes.'
- b. \*Ich spreche nicht mit dem Mund, sondern meinen Augen.  
*I speak not with my mouth but my eyes*  
 ('I don't speak with my mouth, but my eyes.')

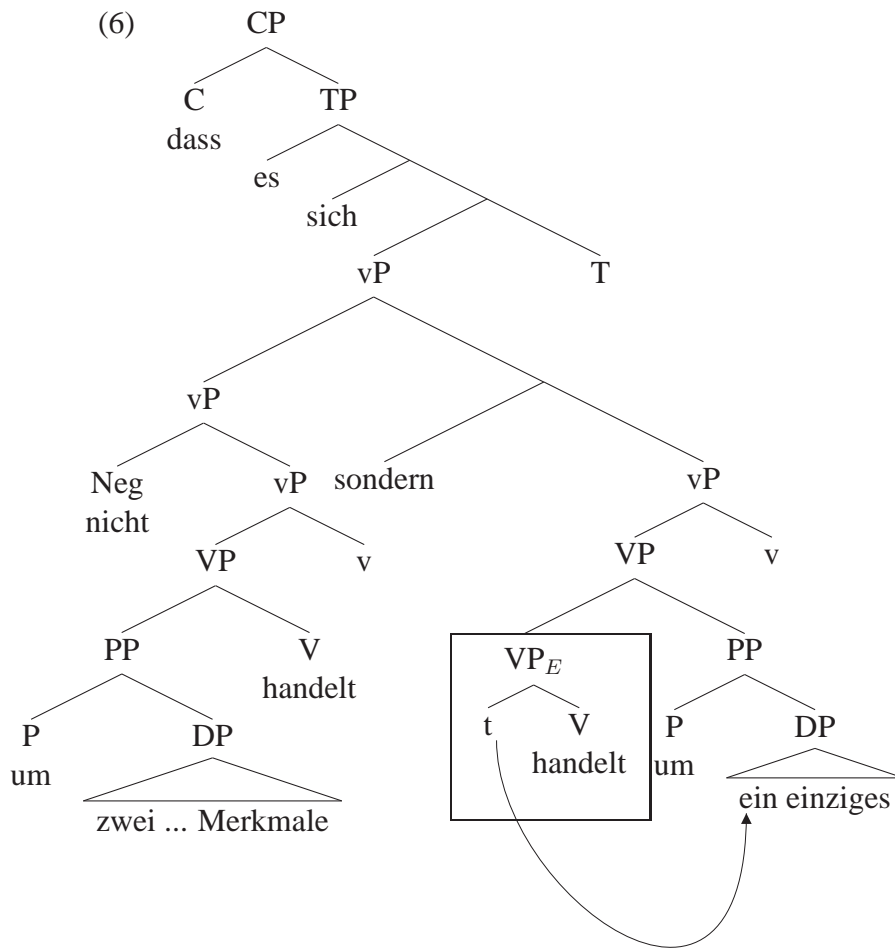
This obligatory retention of the preposition parallels the facts in Merchant 2001 for sluicing and in Merchant 2004 and Frazier et al. 2013 for fragment answers.<sup>3</sup> The contrast between (3a) and (3b) cannot be due to a ban on using *sondern* with immediately following nominal phrases; as long as the correlate is also a nominal phrase not selected by a preposition, such a use is licit:

- (5) a. Sie liest nicht Romane in ihrer Freizeit, sondern Schauspiele.  
*she reads not novels in her free-time but plays*  
 'She doesn't read novels in her free-time, but plays.'
- b. Trans ist keine Krankheit, sondern ein Menschenrecht.  
*trans is no illness but a human.right*  
 'Transsexuality is not an illness but a human right.'

The difference between (3a) and (3b), therefore, is most reasonably taken as diagnostic of movement, as in (6), just as in the low-coordination analysis of Toosarvandani. The phrase following the conjunction must have moved to a position external to the node targeted by ellipsis, and this movement obeys the constraint in German that prohibits the stranding of prepositions. (I represent the coordinator as taking its two arguments in a binary branching structure here purely for typographical convenience; I assume that the vacuous reflexive *sich* has moved across-the board from both conjuncts, but leave the resulting traces unrepresented here. The expletive subject *es* may be base-generated outside the coordination.)

<sup>2</sup>The slight oddness of the English translation appears to track the similar status of P-stranding remnants with gapping and pseudogapping, as expected; see Johnson 1996, Hartmann 2000 for discussion.

<sup>3</sup>A related pattern was documented for focus-associates in Bayer 1996 (see also the appendix of Merchant 2000 for corpus evidence from German, and Bouma et al. 2007 for evidence from Dutch and English as well as from German).



So while (6) is well-formed, a corresponding derivation for (3b) or (4b) would not be, as it would require stranding the preposition. This pattern finds a straightforward explanation under the approach to corrective *but* proposed in Toosarvandani 2012. I end by noting that parallel facts are found in Greek and Polish, and leave for further investigation the questions that remain, in particular how to restrict the apparent VP-ellipsis in these languages to gapping or gapping-like structures.

## References

- Bayer, Josef. 1996. *Directionality and Logical Form: On the scope of focussing particles and wh-in-situ*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Bouma, Gosse, Petra Hendriks, and Jack Hoeksema. 2007. Focus particles inside prepositional phrases: A comparison of Dutch, English, and German. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 10:1–24.
- Coppock, Elizabeth. 2001. Gapping: in defense of deletion. In *Chicago Linguistics Society*, ed. Mary Andronis, Christopher Ball, Heidi Elston, and Sylvain Neuvel, volume 37, 133–148. University of Chicago.
- Frazier, Lyn, Jason Merchant, Thomas Weskott, and Jr. Clifton, Charles. 2013. Fragment answers to questions: A case of inaudible syntax. In *Brevity*, ed. Laurence Goldstein. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Hartmann, Katharina. 2000. *Right Node Raising and gapping: Interface conditions on prosodic deletion*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Johnson, Kyle. 1996. In search of the English middle field. Ms., University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Johnson, Kyle. 2009. Gapping is not (VP) ellipsis. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40:289–328.
- Merchant, Jason. 2000. Islands and LF-movement in Greek sluicing. *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 1:39–62.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merchant, Jason. 2004. Fragments and ellipsis. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27:661–738.
- Sternefeld, Wolfgang. 2006. *Syntax: Eine morphologisch motivierte generative Beschreibung des Deutschen*, volume 1. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Toosarvandani, Maziar. 2011. Corrective *but* coordinates clauses not always but sometimes. To appear in NLLT.
- Toosarvandani, Maziar. 2012. Gapping is VP-ellipsis: A reply to Johnson. Ms., MIT.