

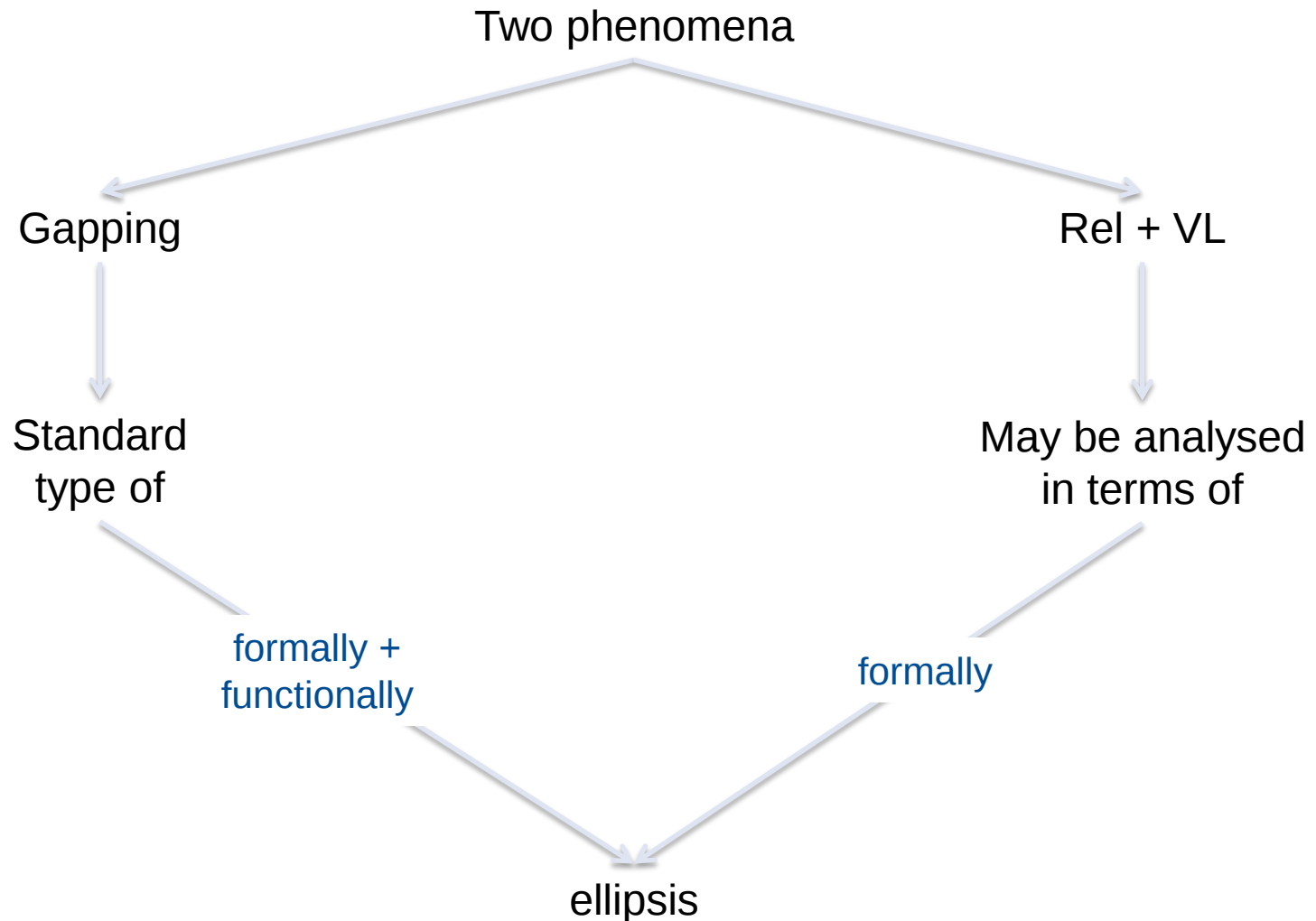
Looking at (potential) ellipsis phenomena from a “formal” and from a “functional” angle

Tabea Reiner ■ 28.05.2021 ■ Combining functional with formal approaches (UZH)

Introduction

1. Gapping in Generative Grammar vs. Construction Grammar
 - Examples from English, German, and French
2. Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause
 - Examples from German

Conclusion



Gapping: Basics

- Standard type of ellipsis in the generative literature
- Ellipsis: phenomenon that a clause...
 - is not complete syntactically but complete semantically
 - grammatical
 - without prosodic indication of omission
- Gapping: finite verb (+ X) is elided ~ **gap** between/close to remaining constituents (cf. Repp 2009a:5, Aelbrecht 2015:569)
- Examples (Aelbrecht 2015:569)
 - (1) Lola gave her brother strawberries and ___ her sister cherries.
 - (2) Lola wants to study in the garden, but Jen ___ in the library.
- Gapping restricted to 2nd conjunct of **coordination**

Gapping: Analysis (formal)

- Three general approaches to the void in ellipsis
 - There is nothing there; remaining constituents are indirectly licensed (e.g., Culicover & Jackendoff 2005).
 - There is nothing there phonologically – but there is a null element, interpreted either pronoun-like or by LF-copy (e.g., Lobeck 1995, [Repp 2009a, b]).
 - There is nothing there phonologically – but underlyingly, the syntactic structure is complete (e.g., Merchant 2001)
- Example: Repp (2009a, b) on Gapping
 - Obligatory material, including the finite verb, is (silently) copied from the first conjunct to the second.
 - Basic prediction: if the second part is a subordinate clause, the copying is blocked since the (new) finite verb competes with the (old) complementizer for anchoring the situation in time and space.

Gapping: Analysis (formal)

Examples showing the basic prediction + additional correct predictions

(3) *Peter went to the theatre before Max to the cinema.

(Repp 2009b:245)

- No gapping in subordination: complementizer and copy of finite verb compete for anchoring

(4)

a. Max didn't read the book and Martha the magazine. ($\neg A \wedge \neg B$)

b. Max hat das Buch nicht gelesen und Martha die Zeitschrift.?($\neg A \wedge \neg B$)

(Repp 2009a:42)

- Distributed reading only in English: Engl. negation (= head) copied into second conjunct since heads are required, Germ. negation (= adjunct) not copied into second conjunct since adjuncts are not required

Gapping: Analysis (formal)

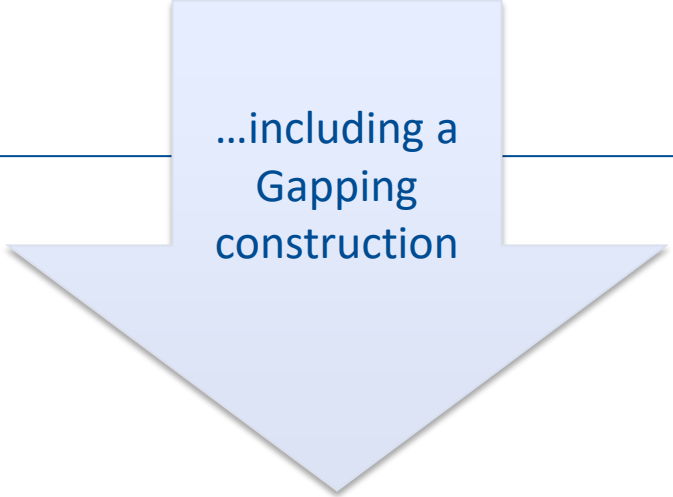
Examples showing the basic prediction + additional correct predictions

(5)

- a. I believe that Peter will travel with his wife to India and (*that) Martin with his colleagues to Switzerland.
(Repp 2009a:210)
 - b. Ich glaube, dass Peter mit seiner Frau nach Indien reist und (*dass) mit seinen Kollegen in die Schweiz.
(Repp 2009a:209)
 - c. Je crois que Jean voyagera à Strasbourg et (*que) Maria a Paris.
(Repp 2009a:226)
- No repetition of complementizer: the second complementizer is blocked since it would compete with the copy of finite verb from the first conjunct.

Gapping (functionally, here: constructionist)

- Basically: no notion of syntactic incompleteness
- But: one construction may be incomplete as compared to another one, which is activated at the same time
- In fact: recent handbook entry on ellipsis in Construction Grammar (CxG) = Goldberg & Perek (2019)...



...including a
Gapping
construction

Gapping (functionally, here: constructionist)

GAPPING (+ argument cluster conjunction) construction
(Goldberg & Perek 2019:195)

Register: formal

Form: overtly expressed: [P(X, Y, Z*)], [<conjunction> **[X', Y']**]

Function: $P(X, Y, Z^*) <\text{conjunction}> P(X'_{\text{focus}}, Y'_{\text{focus}}, Z'^*)$

$X' \neq X; Y' \neq Y; Z' \approx Z$

Determine second use of P using POINTER function to a recently uttered simple or compound verb including tense, aspect, and voice.

X, Y, Z: arguments or adjuncts

Underlining is used to indicate form as opposed to interpretation.

Boldface indicates lexical stress (here, on X' and Y')

Constituents are indicated by brackets.

*: 0 or more.

Gapping (functionally, here: constructionist)

Examples showing some correct predictions

(6) A: You made me what I am today. B: And YOU me.
(Goldberg & Perek 2019:189)

➤ **Sloppy** identity between [*what I am today*] and [*what I am today*]:
 $Z' \approx Z$

(7) Elle conduisait la voiture et TOI la moto.
(Goldberg & Perek 2019:200)

➤ **No person agreement** necessary: pointer only to tense, aspect, voice

(8) ??She ate ice cream, and string beans ~~were eaten~~ by him.
(Goldberg & Perek 2019:195)

➤ **Voice mismatches not possible**: pointer to voice

Gapping (functionally, here: constructionist)

- New: emphasis on predictions
 - But: predictions differ fundamentally from (usual) formal predictions
 - Predictions derive from single construction (description), not from language model as a whole (descriptive tool)
 - Comes close to Haspelmath's (2008:93) ideal of a strict division between description and explanation (incl. prediction)
 - Potential problem: set of predictions is not complete as long as our description of a given language is not complete
 - ← Maybe another construction makes different predictions
 - Ironically: problem shared by Realistic Theories (Reis 1979, 2017)
- Convergence of theories for the worse?

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Introductory example (Der Spiegel, Nr. 5/2013, p. 109)

- (9) Der Grund war ein Luxus an Wasser,
the reason was a wealth of water
den allerdings auch die Tsetsefliegen genossen
REL however also the tse tse flies enjoyed
und dadurch ihre tödlichen Infektionen verbreiten konnten.
and thus their deadly infections spread.INF could

The reason was a wealth of water, which, however, also the tsetse flies enjoyed so that they were able to spread their deadly infections.

The reason was a wealth of water, which, however, also the tsetse flies enjoyed and were thus able to spread their deadly infections.

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Generalization

- Structure: main clause REL VL clause₁ CONJ VL clause₂
- Easiest analysis: main clause REL [VL clause₁ CONJ VL clause₂]
- Excluded semantically
- Excluded syntactically:
 - Syntactic function of relative pronoun beyond argument frame of verb₂
 - Clause₂ lacks subject (obligatorily!)

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

More examples

- (10) Für Mara ist so ein Text einfach das Material, das man auseinanderschraubt, anguckt und überlegt, wie man es sinnvoll wieder zusammenmontiert.
(Christian Schünemann: Die Studentin. Der dritte Fall für den Frisör. Zürich: Diogenes, 2009, S. 77)
- (11) Sie zerstampfte die Blätter in einem weißen Steinmörser so lange, bis eine grünliche Paste entstand, mit der sie Luos linkes Handgelenk einrieb und mit einem langen, weißen Leinenstreifen umwickelte.
(Dai Sijie: Balzac und die kleine chinesische Schneiderin. Translated from French by Giò Waeckerlin Induni. Munich/Zurich: Piper. German edition 2001. p. 44)
- (12) Dass in allen Schulen und öffentlichen Einrichtungen Fairteiler – also ein Kühlschrank und ein Regal – aufgestellt werden, in die alle Lebensmittel bringen und dort auch welche abholen können.
(Alexandra Achenbach: Unser grünes München. Der nachhaltige Cityguide. p. 7)

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Traditional analysis

- These are anacolutha!
 - PRO: questions on slide 13 get an immediate answer
 - CON:
 - Phenomenon occurs regularly in edited texts
 - Asymmetric coordination (Reich 2009), too, is sometimes dismissed as an anacoluthon (Plewnia 2013:232).
 - To the extent that (!)
 - relative pronouns share properties with complementizers
 - and nominative subjects participate in anchoring the situation,
- the phenomenon is predicted by Repp's (2009a, b) account of gapping.

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Potential formal analysis

- Analogous to Hartmann's (2000:43–49) account of asymmetric coordination
- Asymmetric coordination (Büring & Hartmann 1998) =
 - 1st conjunct: V2-clause with subject in base position
 - + 2nd conjunct. V1-clause with obligatorily empty subject
- Example of asymmetric coordination:

(13) Hartmann (2000:44)

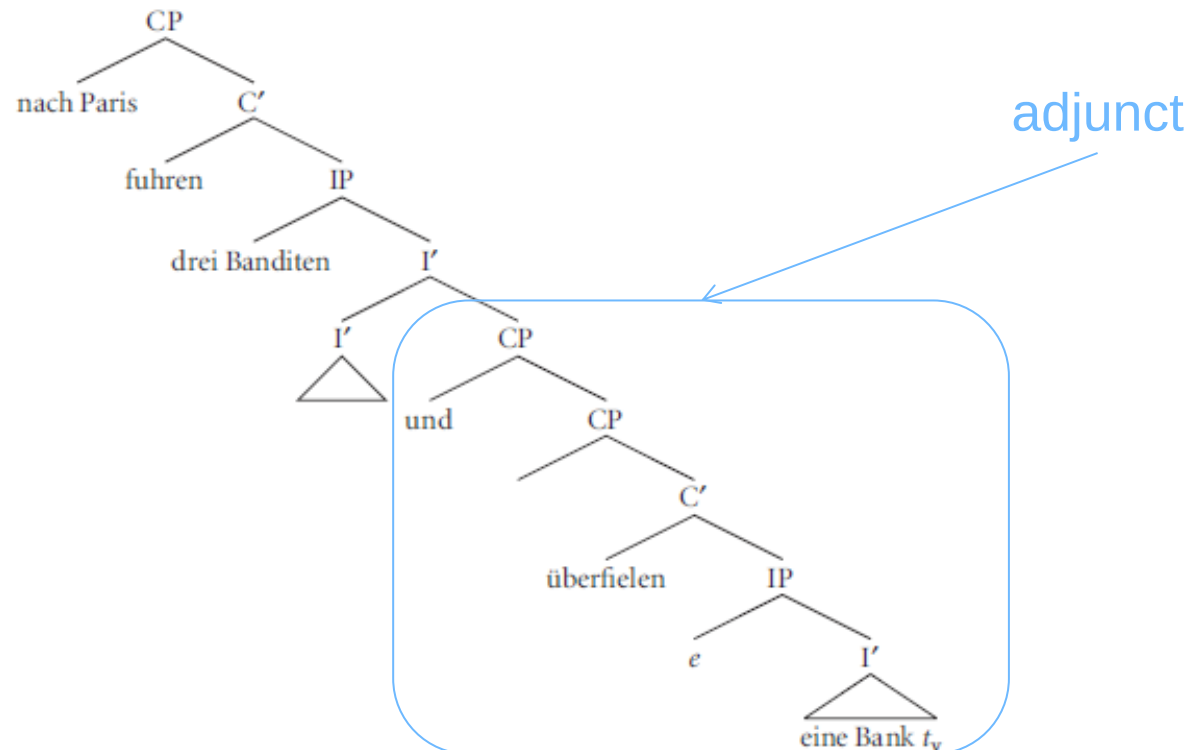
Nach Paris fuhren drei Banditen und überfielen (*sie) eine Bank.
to Paris drove three gangsters and attacked (*they) a bank

‘Three gangsters drove to Paris and attacked a bank.’

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Potential formal analysis (continued)

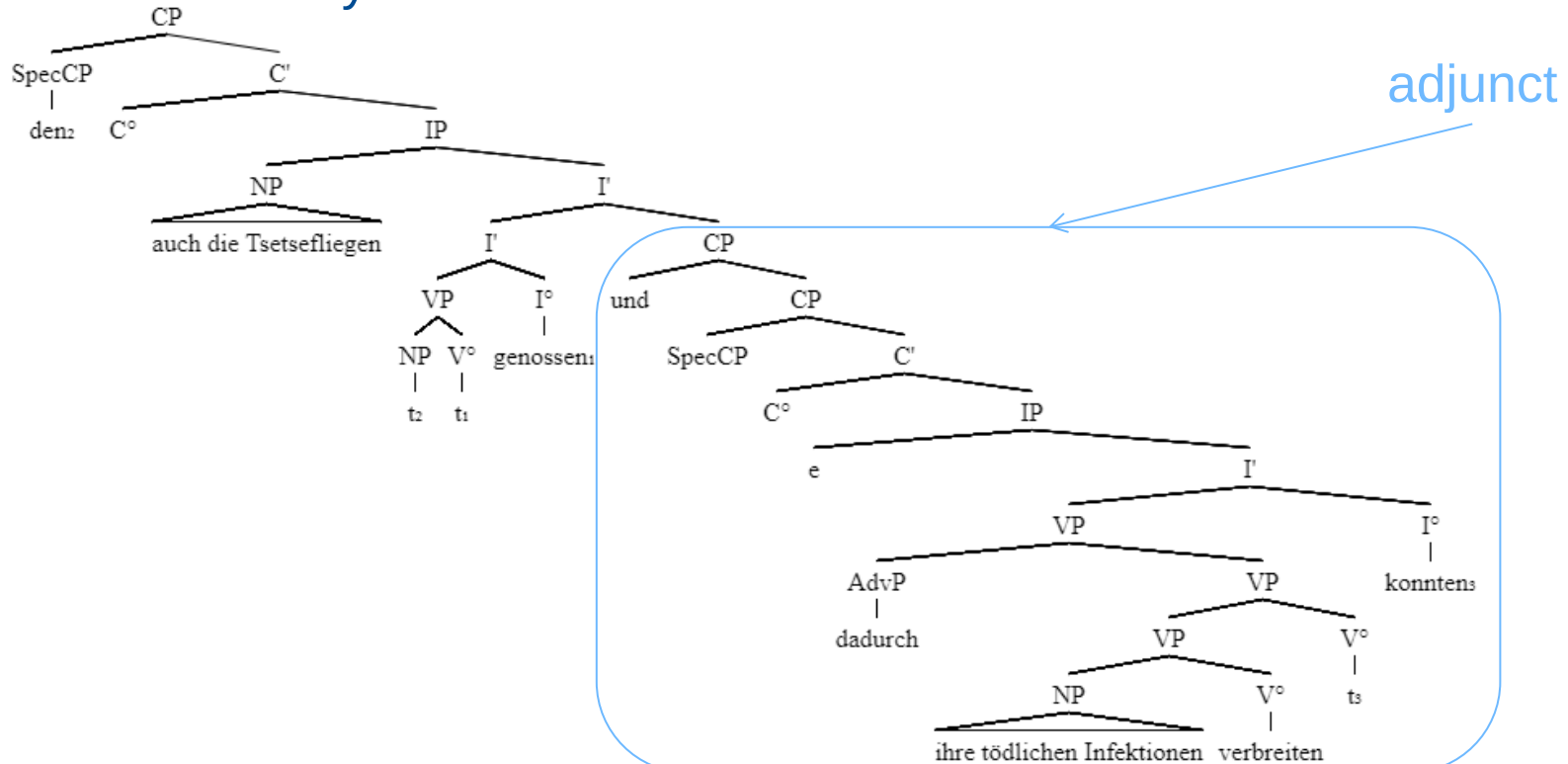
- Analysis of asymmetric coordination (Hartmann 2000:45):



Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Potential formal analysis (continued)

- Potential analysis of Rel + VL



Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Potential functional-typological analysis

- Analogous to one of Lehmann's (1984:217) types of relative clauses:
 - consisting of two coordinated structures
 - but nucleus (here: relative pronoun) has syntactic function only in 1st conjunct
- Example:

(14) (Lehmann 1984:217, glosses & translation T.R.)

Pallantis	pueri,	victum	quem	volnere	Turnus	straverat
Pallas	boy.GEN	defeated	REL.ACC	injury.ABL	Turnus	knock-to-the-ground.PLPF
atque	umeris	insigne	inimicum	gerebat.		
and	shoulder.ABL.PL	sign.ACC	enemy.ACC	wear.IMP		

'of the young Pallas, whom Turnus had defeated by wounding him and knocked to the ground, and henceforth wore on his shoulders the enemy's sign'

Relative clauses conjoined with another verb-last clause in German

Potential functional-typological analysis (continued)

- Potential analysis of Rel + VL:
 - consisting of two coordinated structures
 - but nucleus (here: relative pronoun) has syntactic function only in 1st conjunct
- Recall (the relevant parts of) example (9):

(15)

den	allerdings	auch	die	Tsetsefliegen	genossen
REL	however	also	the	tse tse flies	enjoyed

und	dadurch	ihre	tödlichen	Infektionen	verbreiten	konnten.
and	thus	their	deadly	infections	spread.INF	could

- Interesting: Lehmann's type as well as Rel + VL restricted to non-restrictive (or not distinctly restrictive) relative clauses

Two potential ellipsis phenomena

- One of the phenomena, i.e. gapping, has received various formal and, more recently, also a functional (here: constructionist) analysis.
 - Functional analysis involves different kind of prediction
- The other one might be analysed in terms of ellipsis formally, but also as a special type of relative clause functionally (here: typologically).
 - Maybe this is not ellipsis.
 - Competition for best analysis is open! Combination?

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Abbreviations & symbols (not on slides)

Abbreviation or symbol	Meaning
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
AdvP	adverbial phrase
COMPL	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
CP	complementizer phrase
e	empty category
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperfectum
INF	infinitive
IP	inflectional phrase
LF	logical form

continued	continued
NP	noun phrase
PL	plural
PLPF	pluperfect
REL	relative pronoun
Rel	relative clause
Spec	specifier
t	trace
VL	verb last clause
VP	verb phrase
¬	not
^	and

Resemblance to Repp's (2009a, b) account of gapping

No complementizer, no finite verb (Repp 2009a:209)

- (i)

dass	Peter	mit	seiner	Frau	nach	Indien	reist
COMPL	Peter	with	his	wife	to	India	travel
und	(*dass)	Martin	mit	seinen	Kollegen in die	Schweiz	reist
and	(*COMPL)	Martin	with	his	colleagues to the	Switzerland	

‘that Peter will travel with his wife to India and Martin with his colleagues to S.’

No relative pronoun, no finite verb (but ≠ Rel + VL above)

- (ii)

der	Freund,	der	mit	seiner	Frau	nach	Indien	reist
the	friend	REL	with	his	wife	to	India	travel
und		(*der)	mit	seinen	Kollegen in die	Schweiz	reist	
and		(*REL)	with	his	colleagues to the	Switzerland		

‘the friend who will travel with his wife to India and with his colleagues to S.’