

ECBAE 2020 (University of Paris)

Reduced Subordinate Clauses in German

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15.07.2020

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Reduced Subordinate Clauses (RCs) in German

- (1) a Sandy spielt FUSSball, [weil VOLKSsport].
Sandy plays soccer [because popular sport]
- b Sandy spielt Golf, [obwohl kein VOLKSsport].
Sandy plays golf [although not a popular sport]
- (2) Sandy spielt FUSSball, [weil /wenn nicht TENnis].
Sandy plays soccer [because /if not tennis]

The meaning differs:

P(1a): Sandy plays soccer because it is a popular sport.

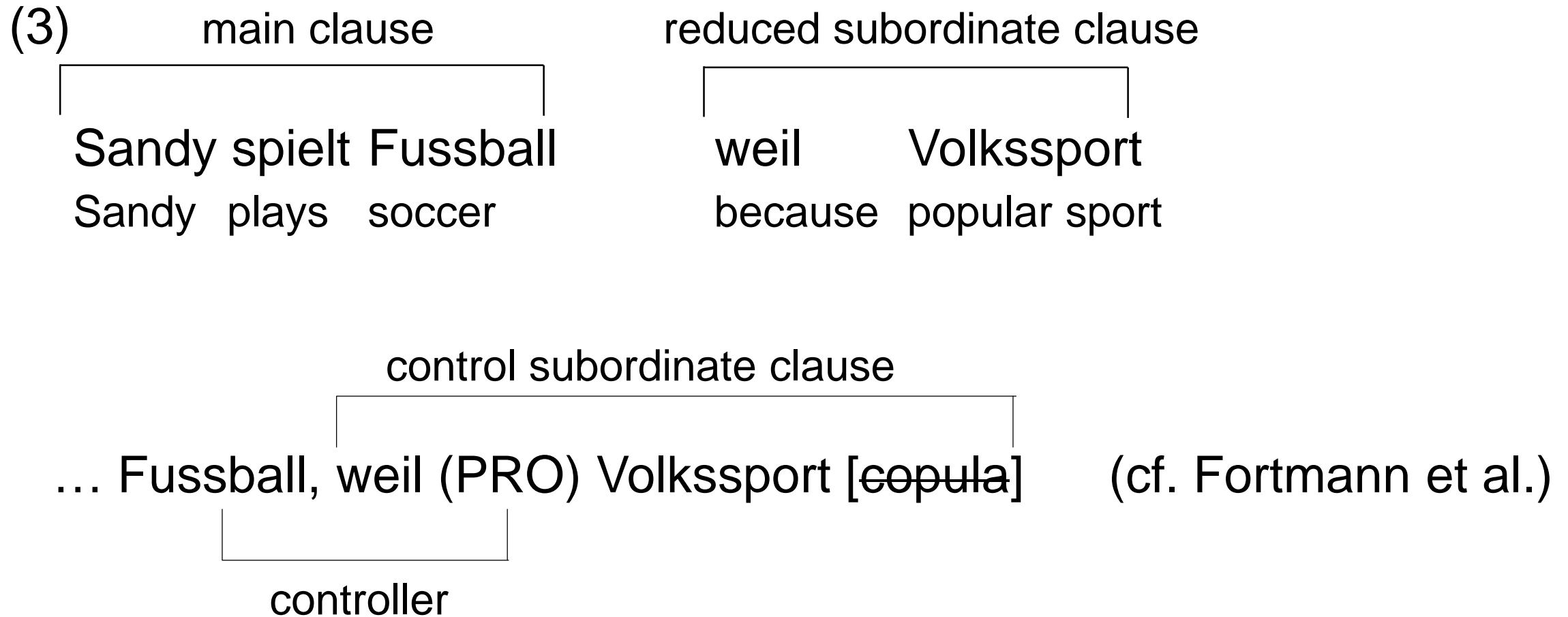
P(1b): Sandy plays golf although it is not a popular sport.

P(2): Sandy plays soccer because / if she does not play tennis.

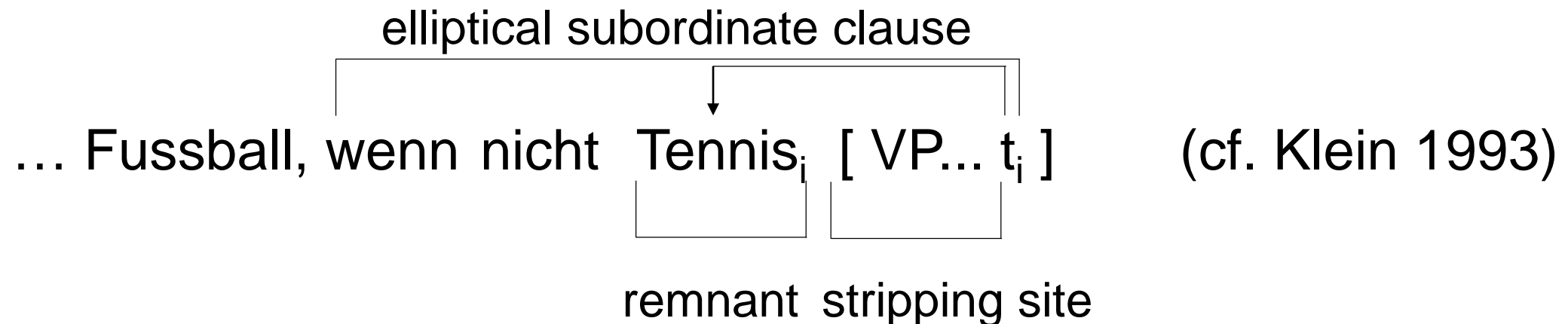
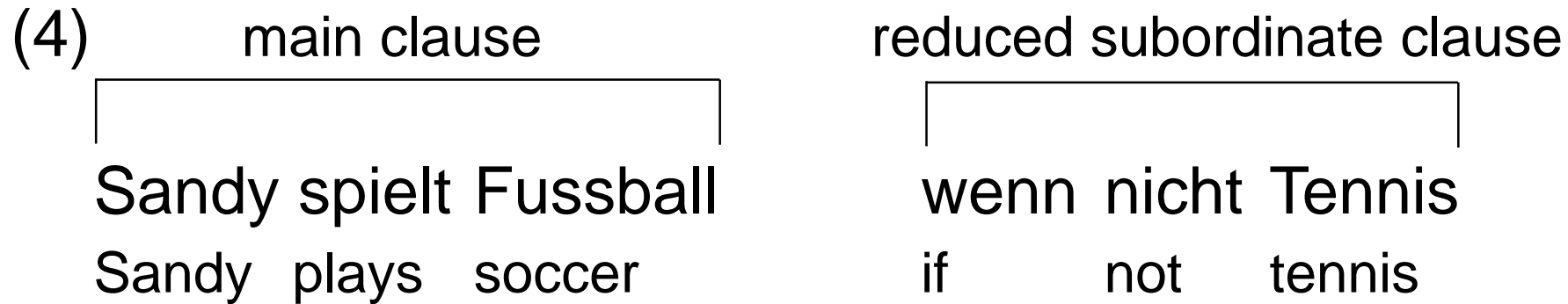
Research Questions

1. What types of RCs are there in German?
Are there elliptical cases among them?
2. How can the syntactic derivation and the recoverability of meaning be grasped?
3. What does the corpus driven research show?
Are some of the RCs elliptical?
4. How are RCs licensed? What is the role of Information Structure?
What is the discourse functional difference between the different types ?

Example (1a): Control Reduced Subordinate Clause (C)



Example (2): Elliptical Reduced Subordinate Clause (E)



Hypotheses

H1: There are two core cases of RCs:

Elliptical RCs (Es), analyzed as embedded stripping and
Control RCs (Cs), analyzed as reduced *verbless* control
structures.

H2: Es and Cs differ with respect to their syntax and interpretation.

H3: Es and Cs differ with respect to their information structure and
their licensing mechanisms.

Es are contrastive ellipses and licensed by E-GIVENness.

Cs are topic continuity constructions.

Structure of the Talk

1. The syntax and semantics of the Elliptical RCs in German.
2. The characteristic features of the Control RCs.
3. What does the DeReKo Study show?
4. What are the licensing conditions of Elliptical and Control RCs?
And what role does the information structural difference between the Elliptical and the Control RCs play.

RC-Ellipsis is Embedded Stripping

- Research Questions:
 - 1 What are the characteristic features of Main Clause Stripping vs Embedded Stripping?**
 - 2 Does stripping obey the no embedding constraint?**

(Main Clause) Stripping

“Stripping is a rule that deletes everything under identity with corresponding parts of a preceding clause except for one constituent (and sometimes a clause initial adverb or negative)”. (H&S 1976:409)

Main Clause stripping with Focus marking added:

- (5) a. *Alan* likes to play volleyball, but not SANDY.
b. Gwendolyn smokes marijuana, but seldom in her own aPARTment.
(Hankamer and Sag 1976: 409)

- (6) a. *Abby* speaks passable Dutch, and BEN, *tóo*. (Merchant 2003: 1)
b. Jane loves to study *rocks*, and GEOgraphy *tóo*.
c. Jane gave presents to *John*, but not to GEOFF. (Lobeck 1995:27)

Stripping: an Instance of Contrastive Ellipsis

(7) **Contrast Requirement:**

The remnant must occur in a contrastive Focus relationship with its correlate.

(8) **Definition of Contrastive Focus:**

Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions. (Krifka 2008: 247)

(9) **Parallelism Requirement:**

The elliptical clause receives the same semantic and information structural interpretation as its antecedent clause differing only in the constituents bearing contrast inside the focus phrase. (cf. Winkler 2005, 2016)

No Embedding Constraint for Stripping - Johnson (2019)

(10) The No Embedding Constraint (NEC)

Let A and B be conjoined or disjoined phrases, and β be the string elided in B whose antecedent is α in A. Then α and β must contain the highest verb in A and B. (Johnson 2009: 412)

- The NEC explains ungrammaticality of embedded stripping in (11):

(11) a. *Jane loves to study rocks, and John says that GEOgraphy too. (Lobeck 1995:27, (72b))

b. *Abby wanted to take Dutch, because BEN. (Merchant 2003:3, (20))

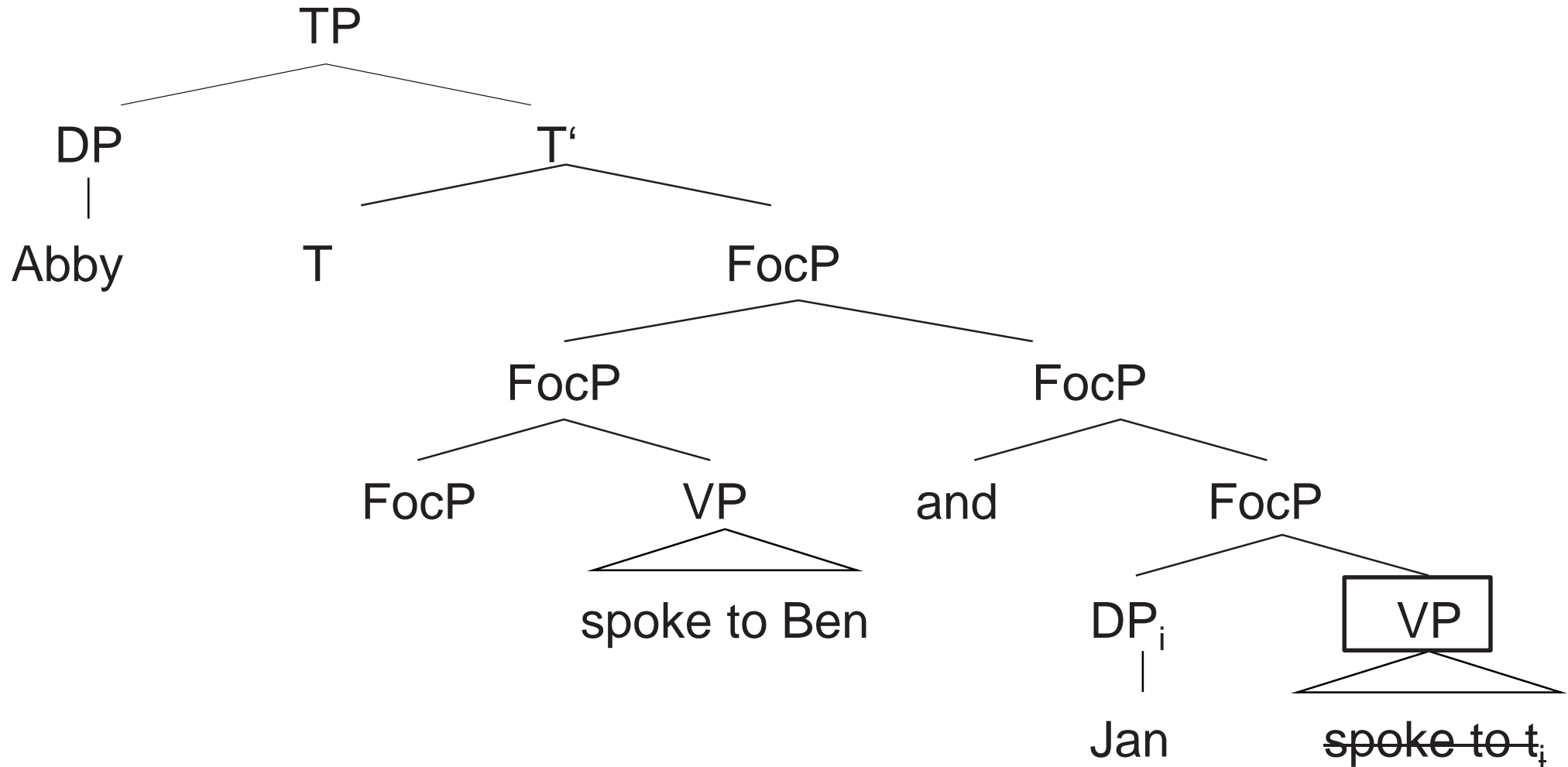
c. *Abby claimed BEN would ask her out, but she didn't think that BILL too. (Merchant 2003:4, (21))

Embedded Stripping Generalization - Wurmbrand (2017)

- (12) a. Abby claimed (that) *Ben* would ask her out,
but she didn't think (*that) *BILL*, *tóo*.
b. Jane loves to study *rocks*,
and John says (*that) *GEO*graphy *tóo*.
- (13) a. First, they thought it would be done last year,
then they thought (*that) *THIS* year.
b. When I get asked who's the biggest diva on the set, I say (*that) *YOU*.
- (14) *Embedded Stripping Generalization*
Stripping of embedded clauses is only possible when the embedded clause lacks a CP. (Wurmbrand 2017: 345)

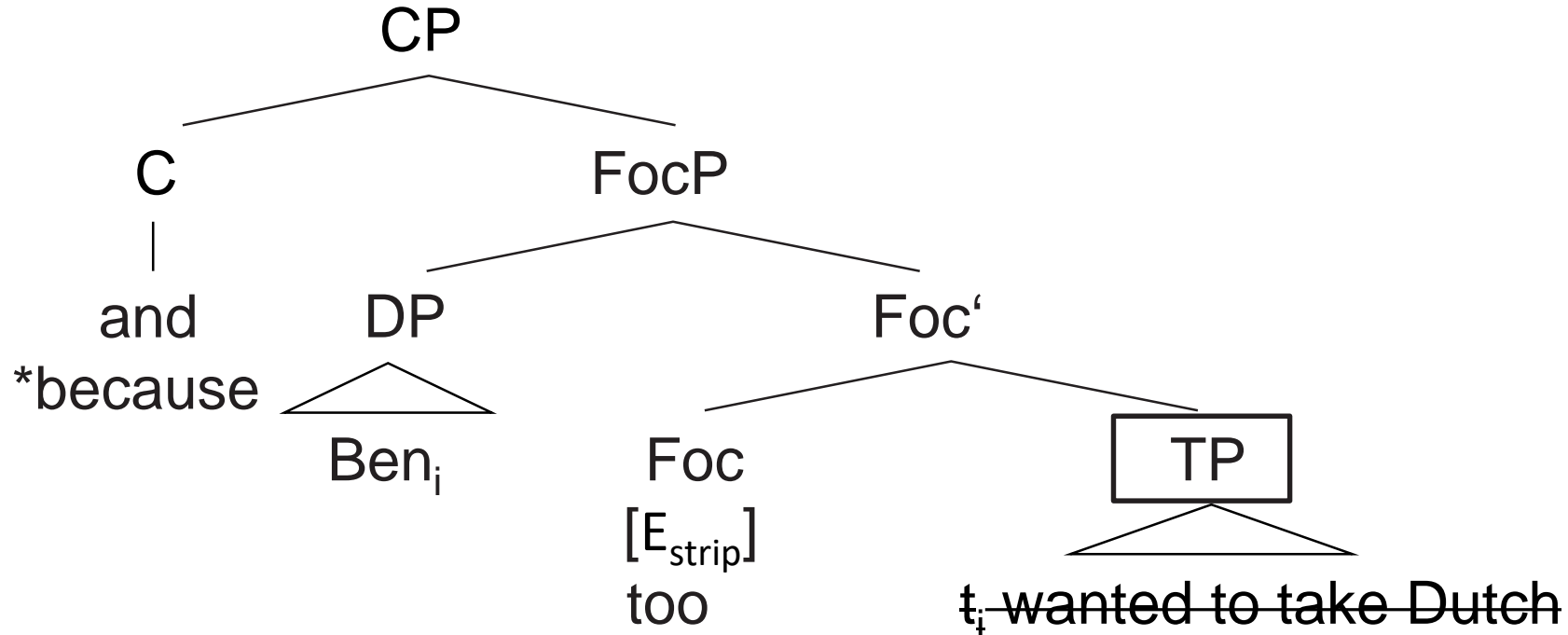
Johnson (2019) Across the board movement approach

(15) Abby spoke to Ben, and ~~Abby spoke to~~ Jan, too.



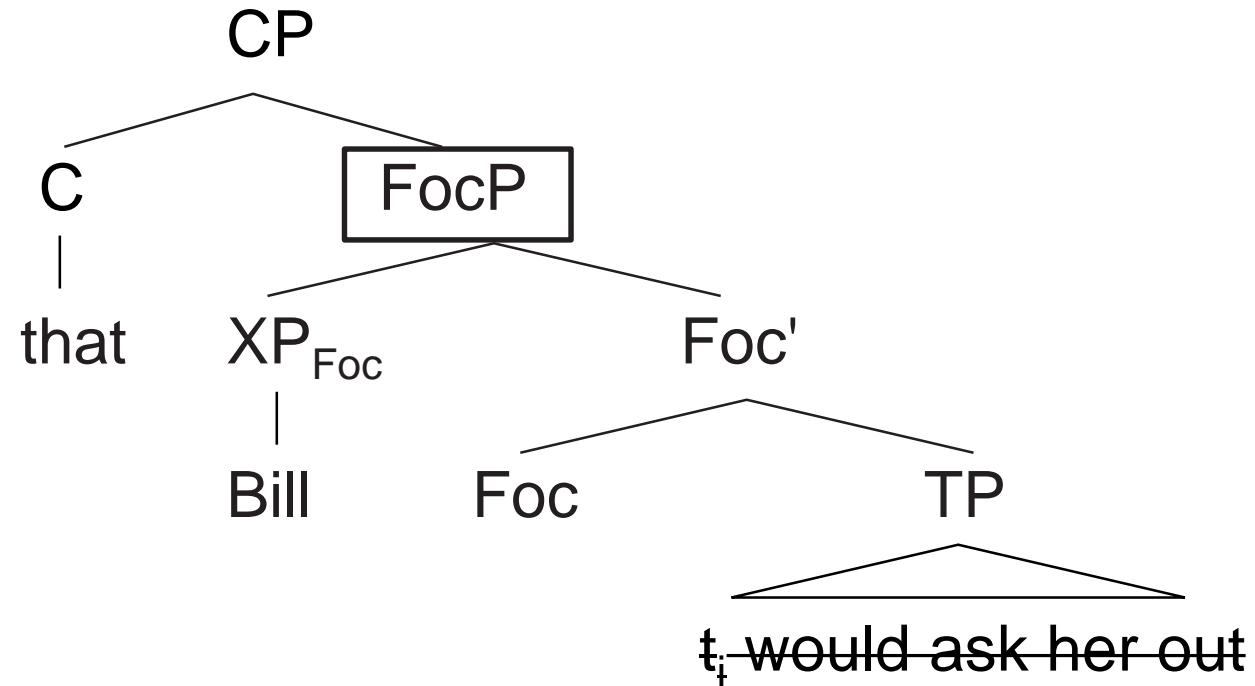
Merchant (2001/2003) E-GIVENness approach

- (16) A TP α can be deleted only if α is e-GIVEN. (Merchant 2001: 31)
- (17) An expression E counts as e-GIVEN iff E has a salient antecedent A and, modulo \exists -type shifting,
 (i) A entails F-closure (E), and (ii) E entails F-closure (A).
- (18) Abby wanted to take Dutch,



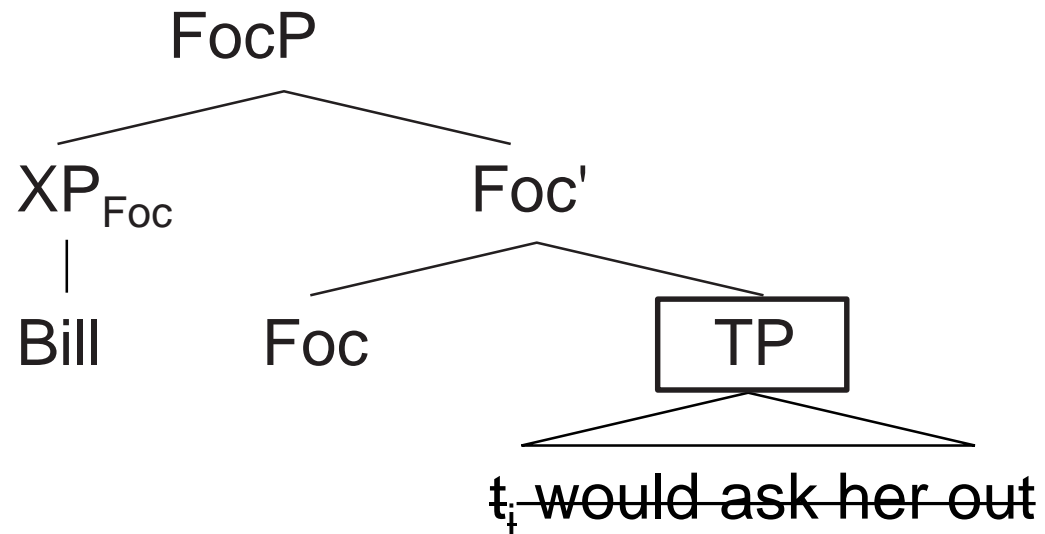
Wurmbrand (2017) Zero Spell-Out proposal

- (19) Abby claimed BEN would ask her out,
a. *but she didn't think **that** BILL too.



Wurmbrand (2017) Zero Spell-Out proposal

- (19) Abby claimed BEN would ask her out,
b. but she didn't think BILL too.



Does Wurmbrand's Generalization apply to German?

- (20) Abby claimed BEN would ask her out,
- a. E: *but she didn't think that BILL too.
 - a.' G: *aber she glaubt nicht, dass Bill auch
 - b. E: but she didn't think BILL too.
 - b.' G: ??aber sie glaubt nicht, Bill auch.
 - c. G: ✓ aber sie glaubt, Bill nicht.
but she thinks Bill not
 - d. G: ✓ und sie glaubt, Bill auch.
and she thinks Bill too

Observation:

1. Wurmbrand's Generalization also applies to German.
2. But: German allows embedded stripping with other subordinators, see Konietzko 2016 for ob (whether) in German.

Embedded Stripping in German: Characteristic features

QUD01: A: What's Sandy's favorite sport?

B: Oh, she likes most ball games. Let's see,

(21) **FUSSball** spielt sie gern, **wenn/falls** nicht sogar auch **TENNis**.
soccer_{acc} plays she with pleasure if not even also tennis_{acc}

QUD02: A: What is Sandy's most favorite ball game?

B: Let me think about it.

(22) Sie spielt am liebsten **FUSSball**; **ob** auch **TENNis**, ist nicht bekannt.
she plays preferably soccer whether also tennis is not known

P(22) She prefers to play soccer. Whether she also likes to play tennis, is not known.

Summary: Contrastive Focus Requirement on E

1. Embedded Stripping is an instance of Contrastive Ellipsis.
2. Contrastive Focus Requirement on Embedded Stripping:
Stripping of embedded clauses is (only) possible when the remnant in the embedded clause is contrastively focused. (Parallelism requirement)
3. Focus Sensitive Particles or negation as Licensors:
An affirmative focus sensitive particle or the negator that is associated with the focused remnant licenses embedded ellipsis.
4. There is a restriction on the types of subordinators that are possible.

RC-Control in German

QUD01: A: Why does Sandy play soccer?

(23) Sandy spielt FUSSball, [weil **es** VOLKSsport] **ist**.
Sandy plays soccer [because **it** popular sport] **is**

P(23): Sandy plays soccer because it is a popular sport.

RC-Control in German

QUD01: A: Why does Sandy play soccer?

(23) Sandy spielt FUSSball, [weil **es** VOLKSsport] **ist**.
Sandy plays soccer [because **it** popular sport] **is**

P(23): Sandy plays soccer because it is a popular sport.

QUD02: A: Sandy prefers a modest lifestyle, isn't it?

B: Hm, but she plays golf...

(24) Sandy spielt Golf, [obwohl **es** kein VOLKSsport] **ist**.
Sandy plays golf [although **it** not a popular sport] **is**

P(24) Sandy plays golf although it is not a popular sport.

RC-Control in German

QuD: A: What about Sandy and her career?

(25) Sandy spielt weiter Fussball, obwohl kein Star mehr.
Sandy plays further soccer although no star anymore

P(25): Sandy plays soccer although no longer a star.

(26) a. Obwohl kein Star mehr, spielt Sandy weiter Fussball.
although no longer a star plays Sandy further soccer

P(26a): Although she is no longer a star, Sandy plays soccer.

(26) b. Obwohl kein bißchen stolz auf sich, ist Sandy ein Star.
although not a bit proud of herself is Sandy a star

P(26b): Although not a bit proud of herself, Sandy is a star.

The Predicate in Control Structures

(27) a. Sandy wird [weil freundlich und unaufdringlich] von allen geschätzt. **AP**
Sandy is [because friendly and decent] by everybody esteemed

P(27a) Sandy is respected because she is friendly and decent.

b. Sandy schießt [weil kein Angsthase] alle Strafstöße. **NP**
Sandy shoots [because not a scaredy-cat] all penalties

P(27b) Sandy shoots all penalties because she isn't a scaredy-cat.

c. Sandy hält [weil ohne Furcht] alle Strafstöße. **PP**
Sandy saves [because without fear] all penalties

P(27c) Sandy saves all penalties because she is fearless.

d. Sandy wird [weil vertraglich gebunden] beim VfB bleiben. **VP_{PerfP}**
Sandy will [because contractually bound] with VfB remain

P(27d) Sandy will remain with the VfB because she is contractually bound.

Corpus Study: DeReKo

Research Questions and Hypotheses

➤ **Research Questions**

1. Are there Es in the class of Reduced Subordinate clauses (RCs)?
2. What is the role of the subordinator and the predicate?
3. What is the role of the focus sensitive particle?

➤ **Hypotheses**

1. There are Es in RCs, next to Cs structures.
2. The frequency of Es and Cs differs with respect to the type of subordinator and the type of predicate.
3. Es require a fsp, auch (also) or the negator nicht (not).

Collecting the Data

DeReKo - German reference corpus

- Corpus-driven research based on the German reference corpus DeReKo.
- The DeReKo is the largest archive of German language texts designed for linguistic research (Kupietz et al., 2010).
- It contains 46,9 billion tokens (as of January 2020).
- It is tagged for parts of speech, but not parsed.

Core Cases of RCs

The following sequences were systematically checked:

- ▶ subordinators (dass (that), ob (whether), obwohl (although), weil (because), wenn (if))
- followed by the focus sensitive particle auch (also) or the negator nicht (not)
- followed by a predicate phrase (PastPCP, A, N, PP)
- followed by punctuation (here, a comma)

Search Patterns

(28)

1. x (y) /+w2,s0 MORPH(V PCP PERF) /+w0 ,
2. x (y) /+w2,s0 MORPH(A) /+w0 ,
3. x (y) /+w2,s0 MORPH(N) /+w0 ,
4. x (y) /+w2,s0 MORPH(Prep) /+w1 MORPH(N) /+w0 ,

x = variable for different types of subordinators

y = variable for different types of fsp

, = comma provides medial subordinate clauses

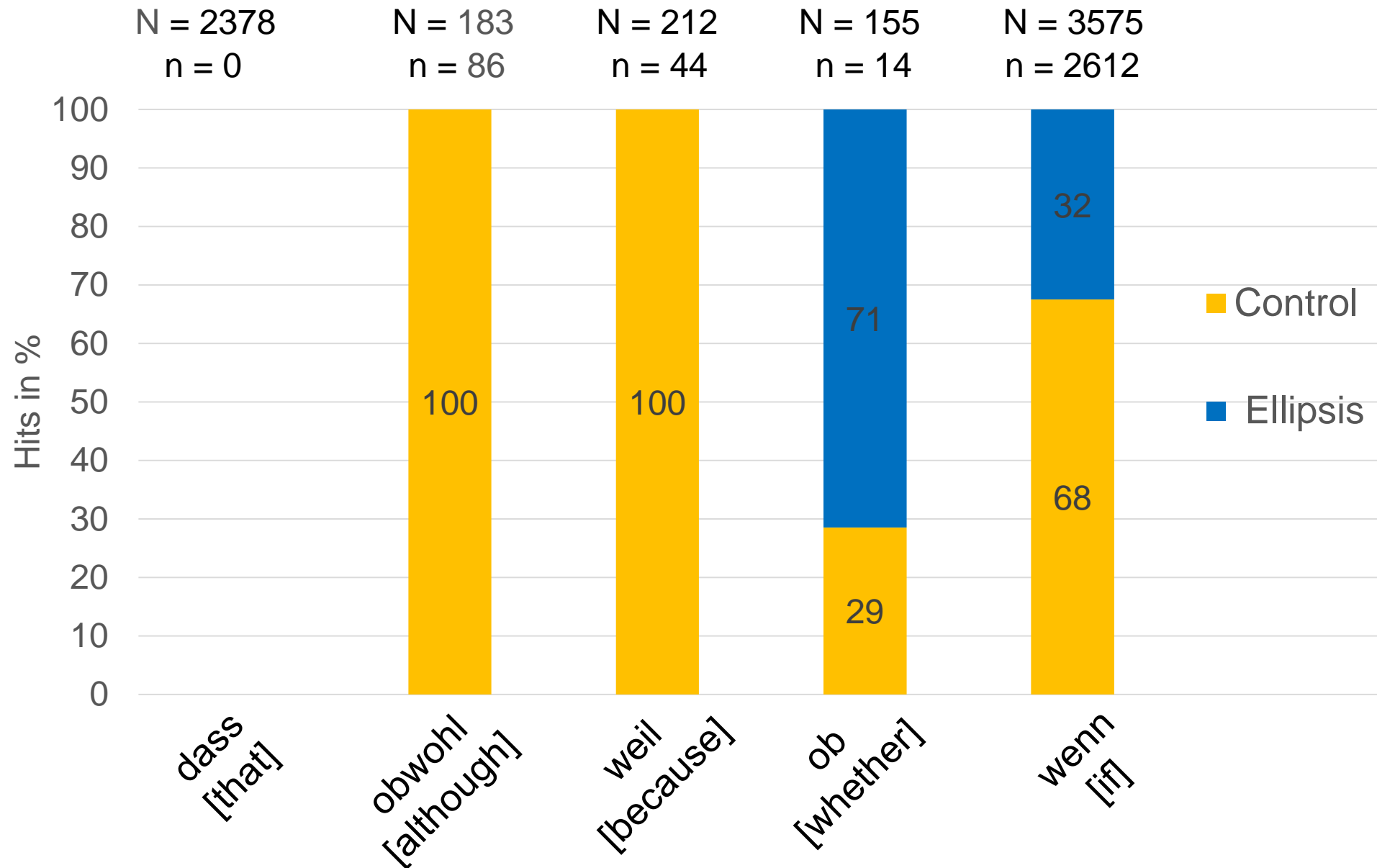


Figure 1: Cs vs. Es in RCs with subordinators +auch (also) and +nicht (not)

General Discussion (Results)

1. ➤ Subordinate clauses with *dass* (that) cannot be reduced in German.
 - The No Embedding Constraint (Johnson/Wurmbrand) is right with respect to the complementizer *that*.
2. ➤ RCs with German *weil+fsp* (because+also/not) and *obwohl+fsp* (although + also/not) contain Cs, but no Es.
3. ➤ RCs with German *ob+fsp* (whether+also/not) contain Cs, and Es.
4. ➤ RCs with German *wenn +fsp* (if+also/not) contain roughly 2/3s Cs and 1/3 Es.

General Discussion: C

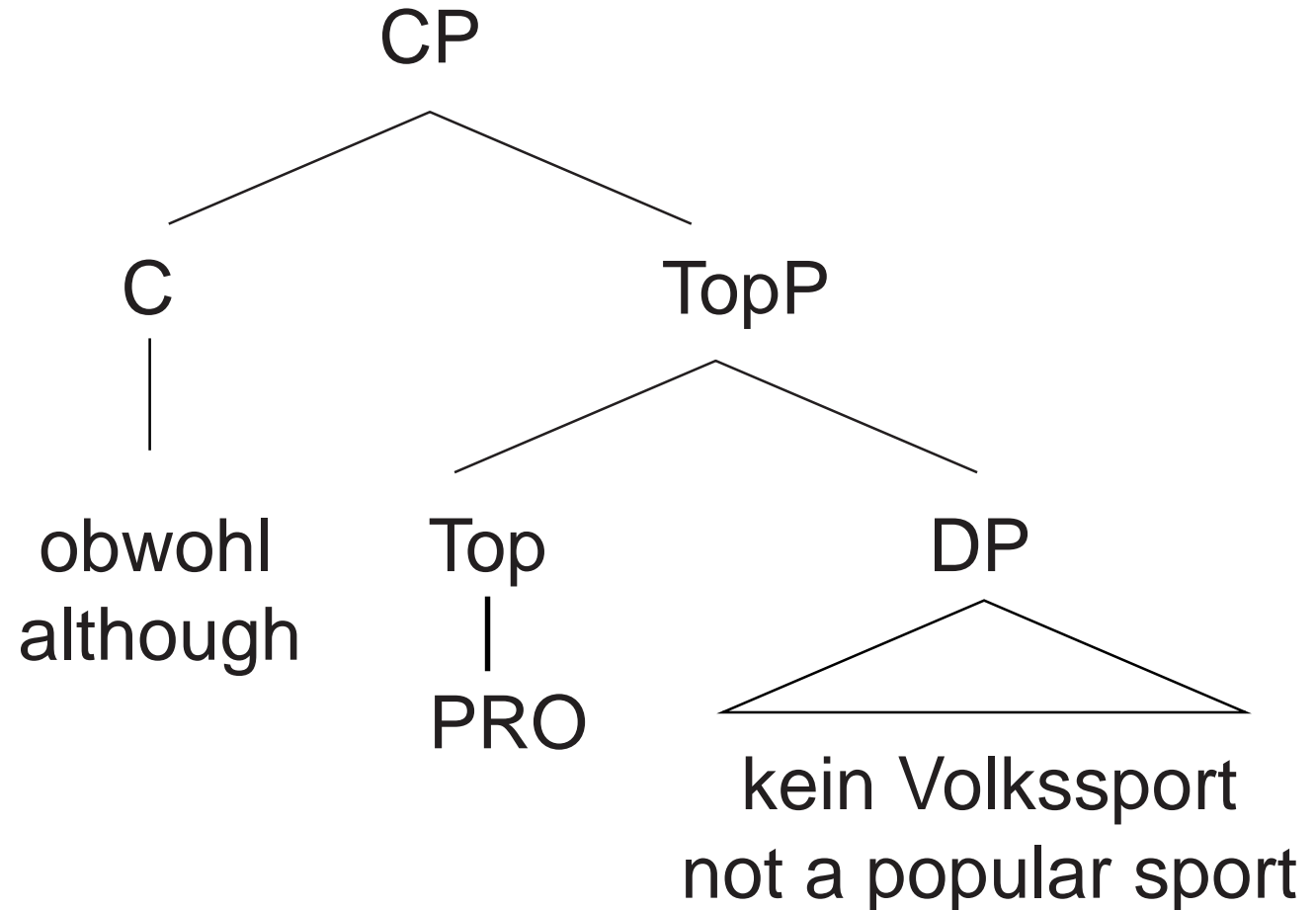
What are the **characteristics of the Cs?**

1. It is always the subject and the copula that are missing.
2. The focus is typically realized on the predicate (remaining constituent). But it does not need to be contrastively focused. If the predicate is given, focus can be realized on the adverb.
3. Cs do not introduce new topics. It is a topic continuity construction.
4. There is a discourse initial usage and a medial usage. In both of these cases, the interpretation of PRO is delayed.

General structural pattern of C (Topic Continuity)

(29) $[_{CP} C [_{XP} \dots PRO \dots [_{XP} \dots X]]]$ $X = \{N, A, P, V_{\{PresP, PastP, PassP\}}\}$

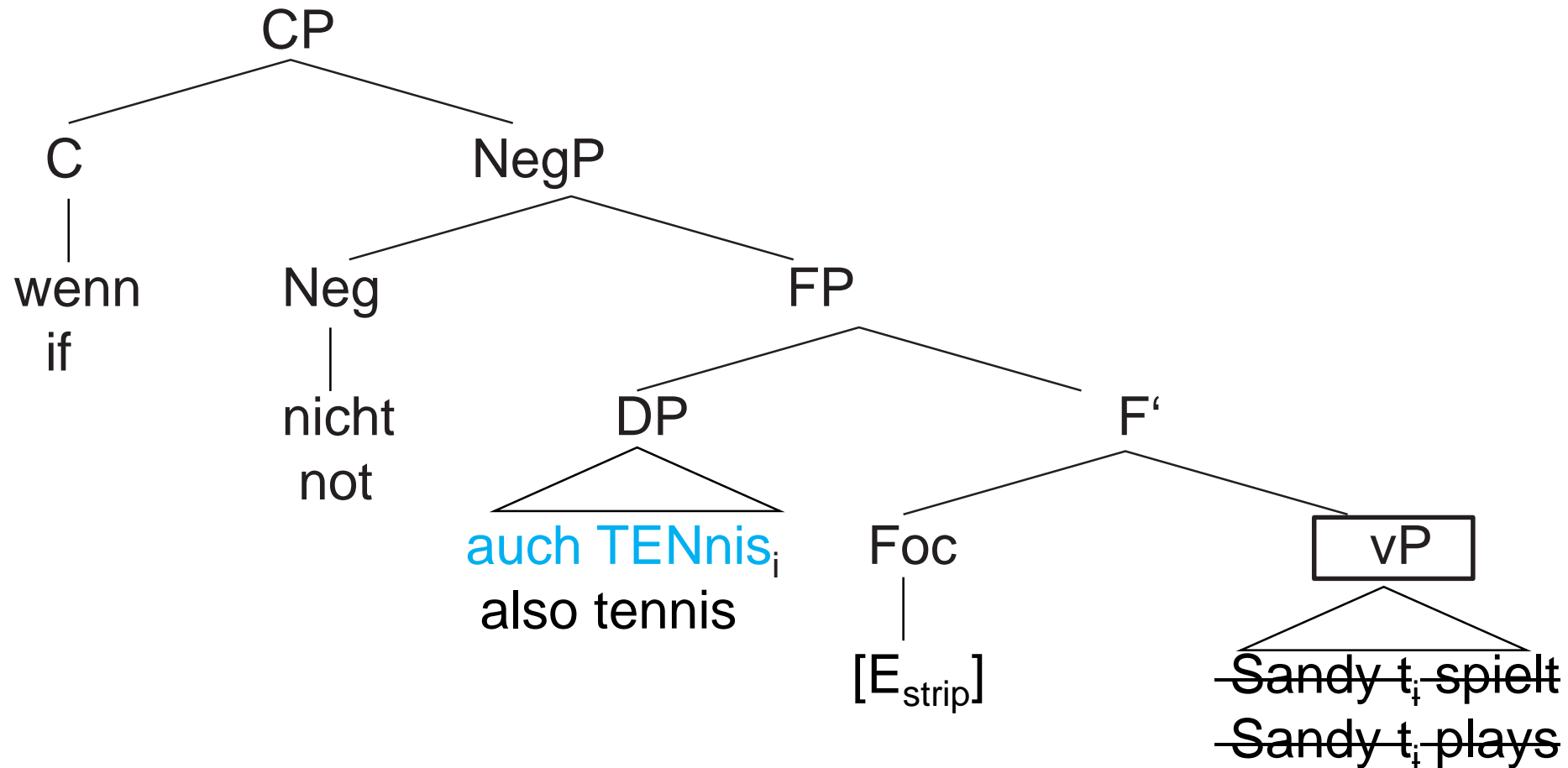
(30) Sandy spielt Golf,
Sandy plays golf



Syntactic Derivation: Focus Movement and VP-Deletion

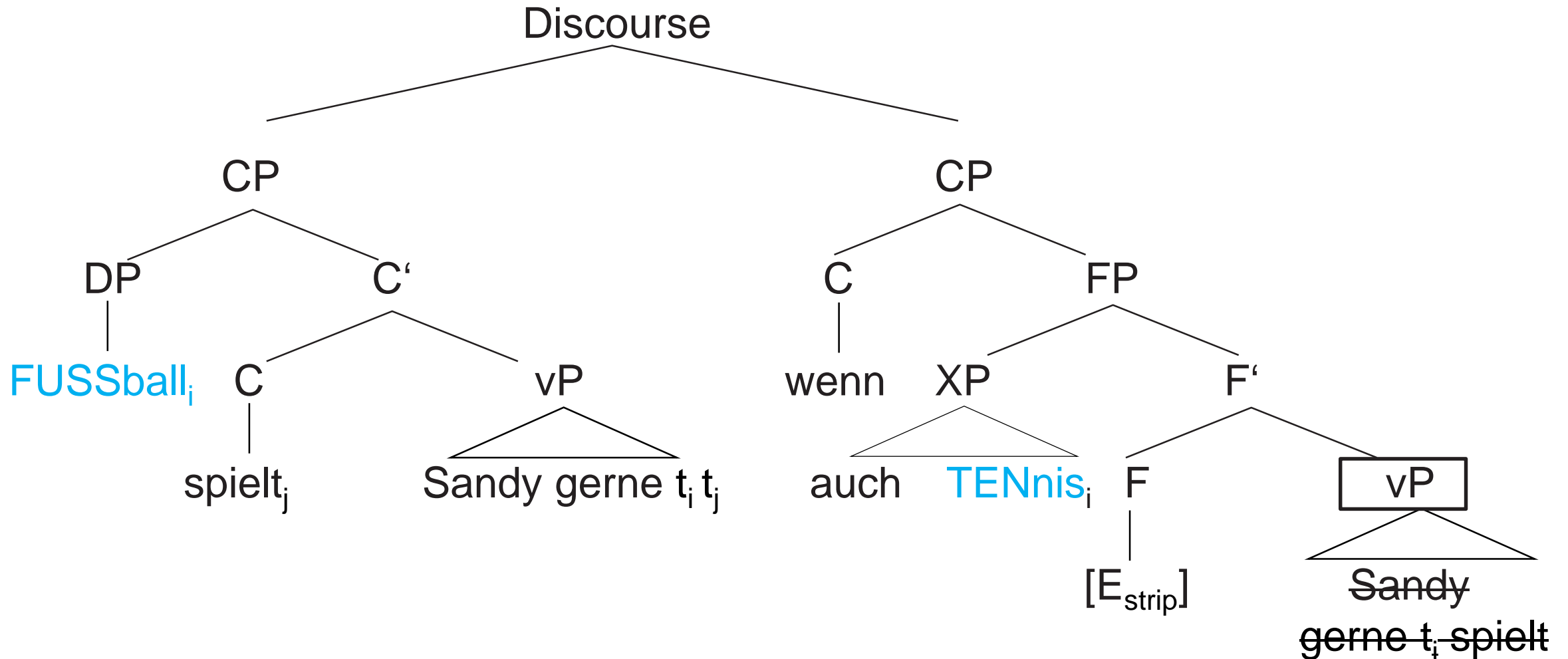
(31) Fußball spielt sie gern,

E: Soccer, she likes to play,



Discourse Tree

(32) **FUSSball** spielt Sandy gerne; wenn/falls/ob auch **TENnis**...
 soccer plays Sandy with pleasure if /in case/whether also tennis



Conclusion

- What types of constructions make up the set of Reduced Subordinate Clauses in German?
- There are at least two types: Es (embedded Stripping) and Cs.
- The DeReKo study showed that the frequency of Es and Cs differs with respect to the type of subordinator, the type of focus sensitive particle or negation, and the type of predicate or remnant.
- The E-RCs are instances of contrastive ellipsis.
- The C-RCs are topic continuity constructions.

Outlook: focused crosslinguistic studies

**Thank you
for your attention!**

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