

Adversative ‘but’ involves gapping not in Farsi but in English

Gapping—deletion of everything in the second half of a coordination structure except for one or more focussed constituents—has long interested researchers in the generative tradition (starting with Ross 1967), though most have concentrated on coordination structures with *and* and *or*. More recently, gapping has been argued also to derive the fragments in correlative coordinations, e.g. *either...or* (Schwarz 1999), and phrasal comparatives (Lechner 2004). In this paper, I explore whether gapping is active in structures with adversative *but* (Horn 1989:402–413, McCawley 1991):

- (1) Max plays **not** CHESS **but** (*he plays) CHECKERS. *basic form*
 (2) Max doesn’t play CHESS **but** (*he plays) CHECKERS. *anchored form*

I argue that, in English, the fragment following *but* in the anchored form is produced by gapping.

McCawley distinguishes the BASIC FORM of adversative *but*, where negation immediately precedes the first focussed constituent (the CORRELATE), from its ANCHORED FORM, where negation (optionally cliticized) appears in canonical sentential position. As Horn observes, in both forms, the second focussed constituent (the REMNANT) must be realized as a fragment; neither (1) nor (2) can be expanded while maintaining an adversative interpretation. The null hypothesis is the most concrete one: the remnant in (1–2) is the second DP of a subclausal coordination structure. More abstractly, McCawley proposes that the remnant in both basic and anchored forms is derived from a clausal coordination structure to which a reduction operation has applied.

I show that, like more prototypical coordinators, adversative *but* combines any two constituents of the same type. Subclausal coordination produces the basic form; clausal coordination plus obligatory gapping produces the anchored form. I offer three pieces of evidence: First, the anchored form—but not the basic form—allows multiple remnants (e.g. *MCCAIN isn’t going to beat OBAMA but OBAMA MCCAIN*). Second, the remnant of the anchored form only, like the remnant in gapping, obeys a number of island constraints (data not shown). Finally, in the anchored form, *but* and the remnant occur only sentence-finally (4), as expected if the remnant derives from the second half of a clausal coordination. In the basic form, they must occur adjacent to the correlate (3).

- (3) a. John put not **GIN but VODKA** in the punch.
 b. ?? John put not **GIN** in the punch **but VODKA**. *basic form*
 (4) a. * John didn’t put **GIN but VODKA** in the punch.
 b. John didn’t put **GIN** in the punch **but VODKA**. *anchored form*

Additional evidence comes from Farsi *balke*, an expression that only has an adversative interpretation (a contrastive interpretation is conveyed by *vali* or *amma*):

- (5) majid **na** farānsavi **balke** ālmāni midune.
 Majid NEG French but German know.3SG
 ‘Majid knows not French, but German.’ *basic form*
 (6) a. majid farānsavi **ne**-midune **balke** ālmāni midune.
 Majid French NEG-know.3SG but German know.3SG
 ‘Majid doesn’t know French, but German.’
 b. * majid farānsavi **ne**-midune **balke** ālmāni.
 Majid French NEG-know.3SG but German *anchored form*

Farsi transparently shows the variable size of the coordinations in these two forms, since gapping is not allowed with the anchored form (6b). Instead, the constituent following *balke* must be a clause containing an overt finite verb (6a). In contrast, with the basic form, the remnant is subclausal (5).

In sum, adversative *but* in English constitutes another environment where gapping occurs.