

Corrective *but* coordinates clauses not always *but* sometimes

Maziar Toosarvandani

Received: 19 August 2010 / Accepted: 17 April 2012 / Published online: 25 June 2013
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Abstract The semantic contrast between COUNTEREXPECTATIONAL and CORRECTIVE *but* has long interested linguists (see Anscombe and Ducrot 1977 and much subsequent work). Recently, Vicente (2010) has proposed that the two types of *but* also differ in their syntax. While counterexpectational *but* coordinates constituents from a variety of different categories, corrective *but* always coordinates full clauses. These clausal coordination structures are then subject to reduction by ellipsis to derive their surface form. I argue that this CLAUSE-ONLY COORDINATION HYPOTHESIS is incorrect. Corrective *but*, like other coordinators, is able to combine both clausal and subclausal constituents. Only a crosscategorical syntax for corrective *but* accounts for the full range of contexts in which it occurs. Furthermore, when ellipsis does apply, it often must apply to subclausal coordination structures for its identity constraint to be satisfied.

Keywords Coordination · Negation · Ellipsis · Gapping

1 Introduction

Since at least the work of Anscombe and Ducrot (1977), linguists have observed that the coordinator *but* has two seemingly distinct meanings. (Other early discussions include Lang 1984:238–262 and Horn 2001:402–413.) On the one hand, there is the well-known COUNTEREXPECTATIONAL meaning of *but*, illustrated in (1), and, on the other hand, there is its CORRECTIVE meaning, illustrated in (2).¹

¹The term ‘corrective’ is a misnomer, since this *but* does not actually require the speaker to correct a previous utterance, though this is a possible use (McCawley 1991; Toosarvandani 2010:49–50, to appear, pp. 26–30).

M. Toosarvandani (✉)
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 32-D808,
Cambridge, MA 02139, USA
e-mail: toosarva@mit.edu