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## The puzzle from VP proforms in comparative clauses

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The starting point for our talk is a puzzling contrast between English and German when it comes to the acceptability of VP proforms in comparative clauses: While German (1) is grammatical (see also Bentzen, Merchant & Svenovius 2013), English \**Louise swam faster than Johann did so* is not.

- (1) Louise ist schneller geschwommen  
*Louise is faster swam*  
[<d,t> als (wie) Johann es ist].  
*than how Johann pro(VP) is*  
'Louise swam faster than Johann did.'

Superficially, German (1) thus seems to be a case of extraction out of a proform, as comparative clauses are syntactically characterized by *wh*-movement of a covert degree head (Bresnan 1973), as sketched in (2). Semantically, this movement triggers the required abstraction over degrees.

- (2) [<d,t> than (how<sub>t</sub>) Johann [VP [swam [<sub>t<sub>1,d</sub></sub> fast]]]]

Yet, movement out of or binding into proforms is not possible under standard assumptions about their syntax and semantics (Hankamer & Sag 1976 and subsequent research). We therefore suggest that German (1) is a case of pseudo-extraction from a proform: Extraction is not from the proform but from an elided constituent, which is adjoined to the pronominalized verb phrase. In English, the internal make up of the proform blocks this operation.

**References:** • Hankamer, J. & Sag, I. (1976): Deep and Surface Anaphora. *Linguistic Inquiry* 7(3), 391-428. • Bresnan., J. (1973): Syntax of the Comparative Clause Construction in English. *Linguistic Inquiry* 4(3), 275-343. • Bentzen K., Merchant, J. & Svenovius, P. (2013): Deep properties of surface pronouns: pronominal predicate anaphors in Norwegian and German. *J Comp German Linguistics* 16(2), 97-125.