



Not-fragments and negative expansion

Bert Cappelle

► To cite this version:

Bert Cappelle. Not-fragments and negative expansion. *Constructions and Frames*, 2021, 13 (1), pp.55-81. 10.1075/cf.00047.cap . hal-03637459

HAL Id: hal-03637459

<https://hal.science/hal-03637459>

Submitted on 21 Feb 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

***Not*-fragments and negative expansion**

Bert Cappelle

Author version, before proofs

Abstract

This paper focuses on emphatic sentence fragments of the type *Not in a million years!*. While such fragments can be partially accounted for by a known elliptical mechanism, namely ‘stripping’, it is argued here that this type is best treated as a construction in its own right, with formal, semantic and pragmatic properties specific to it. One useful concept is what could be called ‘negative expansion’. This is a discourse-level construction whereby an already negative clause is followed by one or more negative clause fragments, whose negation is a repetition, rather than cancellation, of the negation in the preceding clause, as in *You’re not getting in, Wagner. Not today. Not ever.*

Keywords

constructions; ellipsis; negative expansion; *not*-fragment; stripping

1. Introduction

Actual discourse does not uniquely consist of ‘complete’, canonical sentences of the type *John loves Mary*, *The cat is on the mat* or *I believe the dog is hungry* – ones that consist of at least a clause made up of a constituent functioning as subject and a constituent functioning as predicate. Very often, utterances are sentence fragments, such as the second utterance in (1):

- (1) Syrio Forel: What do we say to the God of Death?
Arya Stark: Not today.
(*Game of Thrones*, season 1, episode 8)

The fragment answer in (1) exemplifies but one type of *not*-fragment, namely the type that has as one of the common exemplars those in (2a). Other types of *not*-fragments are illustrated in (2b-f):¹

- (2) a. Not on my watch!; Not if I can help it!; Not in a million years!
(Cappelle forthcoming)
- b. Not bad; Not what I was expecting; Not just a pretty face, that girl
- c. Not that I know of; Not that I can remember; Not that I can think of
(Schmid 2013)
- d. Not that it matters; Not that I care; Not that it's any of my business
(Schmid 2013; Delahunty 2001, 2006)
- e. Not so for me; Not so this time; Not so in this case

Some of the form of each of these constructions may be predictable from more general grammatical mechanisms. Thus, *Not today!* in (1) can be accounted for – but only partially so, as we'll see – by the elliptical pattern known as 'stripping' (Ross 1969), illustrated in (3):²

- (3) Speaker A: You were scared of him.
Speaker B: (Yeah, but) not at first.

¹ The list of *not*-fragment types listed in (2) is based partly on the available linguistic literature and partly on a small sample of utterances starting with *not*, extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA, Davies 2008-). While restricted in size (100 tokens), the sample contained such a wide variety of patterns that the list in (2) is not even exhaustive. Among the patterns in the sample that may not require a special constructionist analysis, however, are *not*-fragments that exhibit 'stripping' (see also (3) in the main text) without further noteworthy properties (e.g. (i)), as well as *not*-fragments that, due to the punctuation used, look like fragment sentences but are in fact syntactically part of the preceding clause (e.g. (ii)):

- (i) (Talking on the phone) Hey, Joe. Not much. How you doing? (COCA)
- (ii) The word "unfortunate" comes to mind. Not "tragic." (COCA)

In (i), the fragment *Not much* is probably an answer to a question like "What have you been up to?". It can therefore be seen as an anaphorically reduced version, via stripping, of *I have not been up to much*. The only interesting fact here is that the preposition doesn't need to be repeated in the answer, although it could be (*Not to much*); see Nykiel and Hawkins (2020) for an account of what governs preposition-drop in ellipsis. In (ii), *Not "tragic"* is presented as a separate sentence fragment, but note that a comma could have been used and that this string could be integrated as part of the Subject of the 'previous' sentence: *The word "unfortunate", not "tragic", comes to mind*. The fragment in (ii) therefore doesn't qualify as a separate utterance.

² As stated by Hankamer and Sags (1976: 409), 'stripping', also known as 'bare argument ellipsis' (Culicover and Jackendoff 2005), is a type of ellipsis that (apparently) allows all material in a clause to be omitted if it is identical to material in the previous (e.g. conjoined) clause, leaving expressed just one constituent (cf. (i)) and sometimes also an item like *too* (cf. (ii)), the negator (cf. (iii)) or an adverbial element (cf. (iv)):

- (i) Perkins couldn't fault the preparation, nor ~~could Perkins fault~~ the expertise. (COCA, strikethrough of 'reconstructed' material added by the author)
- (ii) All those people died. And the cats ~~died~~, too. (COCA, idem)
- (iii) The establishment protected itself, but ~~the establishment did~~ not protect the citizens of our country. (COCA, idem)
- (iv) This flash of awareness has been described by many, but rarely ~~has this flash of awareness been described~~ in a comprehensible way. (COCA, idem)

Observe that 'bare argument ellipsis' is not, in fact, an appropriate term for the case of stripping in (iv), as the single remaining constituent after *rarely* is not an argument of the verb but an adjunct (expressing manner).

From a constructionist perspective, claiming that elliptical utterances such as *Not today!* can be explained as following from general mechanisms requires two important nuances. First, stripping is not a purely *syntactic* mechanism or operation. It can itself be conceived of as a construction of sorts, whose function, as argued by Culicover and Jackendoff (2019), comprises the instruction that the meanings of *not* and *at first* in the fragment utterance have to be integrated into the meaning of a salient statement, conveyed by Speaker A's utterance, by means of a 'SAME-EXCEPT' relation – hence the interpretation that speaker B agrees that speaker A's statement is generally true, apart from the fact that at first speaker B *wasn't* scared of the person referred to. Similarly, in (4) below, Arya Stark may agree she's going to die some day, except that this will not happen on the day on which she produces her utterance.

- (4) God of Death: You're going to die.
Arya Stark: (Yeah, but) not today.

(Of course, if Arya Stark *always* says “Not today” whenever she faces the God of Death, this means that she *doesn't* accept her inescapably mortal status, but this is beside the point here.)

Establishing a SAME-EXCEPT relation is not a typically linguistic operation but a domain-general cognitive mechanism. We invoke this mechanism when we compare two or more similar-looking entities and identify differences among them. It enables us to spot, for instance, that two near-identical birds have differently-shaped or -coloured crests, or that one bird lacks and the other birds sports a crest. Going back to the nineteenth-century psychologist William James (1890), Culicover and Jackendoff (2012, 2019) call these two cases ‘contrast’ and ‘elaboration’, respectively. As we are dealing with a very general mechanism, people also cannot help experiencing SAME-EXCEPT relations, consciously or not, with physical actions, musical motives, foods, and so on.

A second point (which, as it happens, is an application of the SAME-EXCEPT mechanism at the level of linguistic research) is that two superficially similar constructions can have properties that set them apart from each other and from the more general construction they are subcategories of. For instance, the interpretation of Arya Stark's reply in (4) goes beyond what can be obtained from the SAME-EXCEPT semantics informally described here. It also contains a non-truth-functional element of defiance which I will argue is not pragmatically derived; rather, this functional aspect is part of a special *not*-fragment construction, which has to be entered as a unit in a full grammatical description of English. Observe that the replies in (3) and (4), while seemingly using the same kind of *Not X* pattern, have different contextual requirements. The reply in (3) is only acceptable in the context of a linguistically present antecedent onto which the meanings of *not* and *at first* can be grafted. This reply therefore makes use of ellipsis in the strict sense; *not* it is a ‘surface anaphor’ in Hankamer and Sag's (1976) sense, as it anaphorically reduces a sentence used in the prior context. In (4), by contrast, the speaker's reply *can* be treated in the same way – as involving deletion of copied material – but it does not have to be. Remember that in (1), *Not today* was uttered as a reply to the question *What do we say to the God of Death?*, which demonstrates that this fragment can be used as a reply to a salient proposition that is merely evoked by the situational context without being actually uttered. *Not* is then exophoric, just like the utterance *Don't!* uttered when the addressee is about to perform an action one hopes to prevent (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff 2012, 2019; Miller and Pullum 2014); it is what Hankamer and Sag (1976) termed a ‘deep anaphor’, whereby the hearer (or, perhaps more appropriately, the ‘understander’) constructs a model of the larger discourse situation – which

is why Sag and Hankamer (1984) renamed this type of seeming ‘ellipsis’ a ‘model-interpretive anaphor’.

This is how the rest of the paper is organised. In Section 2, I will briefly review the literature on ellipsis and fragments, paying special attention to the way constructionist treatments depart from the standard generative account. In Section 3, a constructional treatment will be offered of the *Not X!* construction, instantiated by *Not today!*, *Not him again!* or *Not if I can help it!*. Section 4 will focus on a particular discourse pattern that this construction often plays a part in. This pattern can be called ‘negative expansion’, as the negator repeats the negation already present in the previous sentence, thereby strengthening rather than cancelling it. Concluding remarks and suggestions for further research are made in Section 4.

2. Some theoretical considerations on fragments and ellipsis

One might naively expect mainstream (generative) linguistic theory to treat fragments as a kind of performance errors, that is, as incorrect and irrelevant speech-related phenomena that do not reflect, or only in a distorted way, linguistic competence, along with false starts, hesitations, unfinished sentences, involuntary repetitions, slips of the tongues and faulty word choices (Chomsky 1962: 531; 1965: 4). This expectation is clearly wrong. Far from relegating fragments to the irrelevant periphery of grammar, mainstream linguistics in the Chomskyan tradition has centrally concerned itself with fragments, which it typically views as resulting from an ellipsis operation performed on full clauses (cf. Merchant 2004, 2019; Merchant et al. 2009; Hall 2019). More specifically, speaker B’s fragment answer in (5) is thought to be derived from two operations: first movement of the focus constituent to the beginning of the clause, then deletion of the rest of the clause (Merchant 2004), as indicated by the subscript index *i* (linking the fronted material with the gap) and the cross-out:

- (5) Speaker A: What did John deny?
Speaker B: [That he had lied]_{*i*} ~~John denied~~ —;

Strong evidence for the ‘strict ellipsis’ view, in which unpronounced or deleted syntactic structure is posited, comes from languages with case, like German, where a fragment such as {*Einen*_{Accusative}/**Ein*_{Nominative}} *Kaffee* ‘A coffee’ can be used to order a coffee. The obligatory accusative case on the determiner suggests that it is licensed by inaudible structure such as *Ich hätte gerne...* ‘I would like...’, in which the fragment constituent functions as an object complement. Likewise, a question such as *Wem folgt Hans?* ‘Who is following Hans’ triggers a fragment answer with a dative case (e.g. *Dem*_{Dative} *Lehrer*), the same case as one would find in a full answer (e.g. *Hans folgt dem*_{Dative} *Lehrer*). A full sentence, part of which is elided, is thus assumed to lie at the basis of the fragment. This strict ellipsis view is therefore also known as the ‘sententialist’ account. Merchant (2004: 675) formulates the evidence for strict ellipsis of fragments in the following general terms: “the fragment shows grammatical dependencies – also known as connectivity effects – on missing linguistic material which are non-trivially similar to those exhibited by the fragment’s correlate in a non-elliptical sentential structure.” That there was first movement of the fragment constituent out of its canonical position prior to deletion is evidenced from the fact that in speaker’s B answer in (5), the complementizer *that* has to be present in the fragment, just like it has to be present

when it is preposed in a full sentence (compare *John denied (that) he had lied*, where *that* is optional, with the preposing version **(That) he had lied John denied*, where *that* is obligatory).

The standard movement-and-deletion analysis does not sit comfortably with mono-stratal and non-derivational linguistic theories such as Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2003) or Simpler Syntax (Culicover and Jackendoff 2005, 2006), which eschew positing an underlying level of syntactic representation containing copied and subsequently deleted material. Culicover and Jackendoff (2005, 2012, 2019) argue extensively for an alternative to the standard account of elliptical phenomena. There is no need, they show, for assuming that elliptical sentences are in all cases, or even ever, generated by deleting syntactic structure that is copied from an antecedent. Instead, as was announced in Section 1, they allow the interpretation of elliptical utterances to be taken care of by a domain-general cognitive mechanism by which people establish a SAME-EXCEPT relation. Culicover and Jackendoff (2012, 2019) describe this mechanism in terms of simple operations, namely finding two (or more) objects that have to be compared and that are broadly the same, such as two coordinated clauses, next aligning the relevant parts by noticing parallelism in, for instance, thematic roles, and then identifying the different or missing/extra parts.

Culicover and Jackendoff (2012, 2019) show how this cognitive mechanism plays out in a variety of elliptical phenomena, such as ‘stripping’, both of the contrast and elaboration kind (e.g. (6) and (7), respectively), ‘sluicing’, where a *wh*-constituent is used in the position of an indirect question (e.g. (8)), post-auxiliary ellipsis, better known as ‘VP ellipsis’ (e.g. (9)), gapping, which overtly expresses just arguments (and adjuncts) (e.g. (10)) and pseudogapping, which combines post-auxiliary ellipsis and gapping (e.g. (11)):

- (6) Speaker A: Does Juul play the piano?
Speaker B: No, the cello.
- (7) Speaker A: Does Juul play the cello?
Speaker B: Yes, and the piano a little, too.
- (8) Ella was playing something on the piano but I don’t know what.
- (9) Ella doesn’t play the cello but Juul does.
- (10) Ella plays the piano (in the morning), and Juul the cello (in the afternoon).
- (11) Juul plays the cello more like a virtuoso than he does the piano.

Culicover and Jackendoff (2012, 2019) further argue that the SAME-EXCEPT relation is independently needed to account for non-elliptical phenomena, such as different sorts of anaphora and lexical items such as *vice versa* and, obviously perhaps, *the same* and *except*. Culicover and Jackendoff’s approach to ellipsis is largely adopted by Goldberg and Perek (2019), who provide a constructionist analysis to gapping and pseudogapping and touch upon a variety of less well-known patterns involving ellipsis, including those illustrated in (12):

- (12) a. Hachi, this is Michael. Michael, Hachi.
(COCA)
- b. Shay: Oh, you just don’t like it that you’re single and I’m not.
Lola (scoffs): Please, as if.
(The TV Corpus, Davies 2019-)
- c. We couldn’t look after ourselves, let alone a child.
(COCA)

Goldberg and Perek (2019) link the SAME-EXCEPT mechanism with a psychological ‘pointer’ function, which connects the fragment to either an overt linguistic expression or an implicit salient statement recoverable from the extra-linguistic situation. Neither Culicover and Jackendoff (2012, 2019) nor Goldberg and Perek (2019) deny that there is such a thing as ellipsis. After all, as the latter authors argue, ellipsis is motivated by economy of expression and is therefore probably a universal phenomenon. What they do argue against is the idea that elliptical phenomena necessarily involve deleted material copied from another utterance. This is because not all elliptical utterances are characterized by connectivity effects. In some cases, a fragment is entirely acceptable even if the ellipsis site (i.e., where one assumes the deleted material to have been) cannot hold material that one would expect to be there under a strict movement-and-deletion analysis. The following is an example from Culicover and Jackendoff (2005: 244):

- (13) How many pounds does that pumpkin weigh?
 — Over a thousand.
 (cp. *[Over a thousand]_i, that pumpkin weighs [_i pounds].)

Another oft-cited problem for assuming that all elliptical sentences have a parallel non-elliptical alternative that they can be derived from is the short answer *Me!* to a question like *Who wants candy?*. Note that **Me want(s) candy!* is again not grammatical (e.g. Goldberg and Perek 2019: 201; Merchant 2019: 34; Hall 2019: 611). Sophisticated but altogether unconvincing solutions to this problem have been offered. For instance, it could be argued that there is an underlying left-dislocated structure (*Me, I want candy!*; cf. Merchant 2004: 703). However, this posited underlying structure is not exactly a standard case of movement and deletion, as pointed out by Progovac (2013: 605). Another attempt at salvaging the move-then-delete analysis is positing *It is me, I want candy!* as underlying structure (Hall 2019: 611). Yet, this solution cannot be generalized to other cases of ellipsis where there is a case mismatch with the non-elliptical version, as in the gapping example in (14a) and the non-elliptical version in (14b); the underlying structure proposed to account for a fragment answer like *Me!* cannot be used here, as shown in (14c):

- (14) a. You love me and me you.
 b. You love me and {I/*me} love you.
 c. *You love me and it is me, I love you.

Following Goldberg and Perek (2019), I do accept that connectivity effects have their role to play in facilitating the interpretation of the elliptical material. If a question involves a *wh*-constituent in the dative, as in the German example *Wem_{Dative} folgt Hans?* given above, then the Dative case used in the fragment answer may signal the semantic role that this constituent plays in the event evoked by *folgt* (see Hall 2019: 615ff for discussion). As for the requirement that a fragment answer start with *that*, this can similarly be explained as rendering easier its identification as a proposition which is dependent on the meaning of an antecedent verb. After all, it is not only in the preposing construction that the complementizer *that* is obligatory, but also in other constructions in which the dependent clause is not in its canonical position:

- (15) a. *(That) he had lied was denied. (passive)
 b. It isn't *(that) he had lied that he denied but that he had committed perjury. (cleft)
 c. What he denied was *(that) he had lied. (pseudo-cleft)
 d. *(That) he had lied is what he denied, not that he had given wrong information. (inverted pseudo-cleft)

In light of such examples, it becomes clear that a *that*-clause used as a fragment simply takes the form it generally takes when it becomes relatively hard to process its status as conceptually dependent. There is, therefore, little reason to assume that a *that*-fragment is followed by hidden syntactic material which makes the whole utterance take the form of a sentence with so-called topicalization (see also Hall 2019: 619ff for variations of this view).

Interestingly, even Merchant, who is arguably the strongest proponent of the sententialist position, excludes a number of ostensibly elliptic types as irrelevant. For instance, Merchant (2013: 3) does not treat the utterances in (16a-d) as elliptic, for the simple reason that they are “expressions with no antecedents (implicit or overt)”. The sentence types illustrated in (16a-c) have already been discussed by Shopen (1972) and the one in (16d) by Akmaijan (1984).

- (16) a. Off with his head!
 b. A good talker, your friend Bill.
 c. Books open to page 15!
 d. What, me worry?

The patterns instantiated in these examples are exactly the kinds of structures that construction grammarians treat as form-function units in their own right, that is, linguistic signs that are stored as such in what they call the ‘constructicon’ of a competent speaker (Jurafsky 1992). Thus, (16a) exemplifies a verbless directive in which a particle or a PP functions as a kind of predicate and is followed by a *with*-PP, whose NP complement is a predicand-like Theme. Some instantiations of this structure (cf. also Jackendoff 1973) are memorized as fully formed sequences, as in the case of *Out with the old, in with the new*, while others are the result of slot-filling, as in *Into the dungeon with him!* or *Down with Chomsky and modularity! Up with Cognitive Grammar and related theories!*, an attested example cited in Cappelle (2005: 242). It is also pointed out there that we can’t consistently see such utterances as shortened versions of the same kind of underlying full-sentence directive. For instance, while *On with the show!* happens to be similar in meaning to *Let’s get on with the show!*, (16a) is semantically similar to *Let’s chop his head off!*, not to *Let’s get off with his head!* (which would mean ‘Let’s run away with his head!’) and *Away with your evil plan!* does not even allow a paraphrase with *Let’s*. Goldberg and Perek (2019) also mention the *Down with X!* constructional idiom, which is semantically unrelated, and almost opposite in meaning, to the full-sentence idiom *be down with X* ‘approve of X’.

The utterance in (16b) consists of two NPs, with the first NP functioning as a predicate. Shopen (1972: 24) refers to Jespersen (1924: 121) for an earlier treatment of what the latter called “nominal sentences”. The predicate constituent, predictably, can be an adjective phrase, as in *Amazing the things that Russians will gather together and keep*, an example Jespersen cites (cf. Paul and Stainton 2006 for a more complete description). Jespersen shows that this pattern occurs in West-European languages and not just in

languages that make sparse use of the copula, such as Russian and old Greek. Note that the English translation of an example he gives for Greek, *Ouk agathon polukoiraniē*, is a fragment-like sentence starting with *not*: ‘Not a good thing, government by the many’. The pattern therefore seems relevant to one of the types of *not*-fragment, the one illustrated in (2b) above (*Not just a pretty face, that girl*).

In (16c), we again have a directive sentence type expressing predication without a copula. The NP *books* and the resultative phrase *open (to page 15)* could both be argued to be complements of an implicit light verb, which in this case could be *put* but in other examples might be *let*, as *Curtains down!*. Among the special properties of this pattern, note that the NP cannot easily have a determiner (??*Your books open to page 15!*; **The curtains down!*; yet, *All hands in the air!* is fine). This constraint is not completely idiosyncratic, though, as we also find it, albeit less strictly observed, in non-directive sentences in which the two parts make up a so-called absolute phrase (e.g. *Hugh came into the room, (his) arms crossed*).

The sentence in (16d), finally, instantiates the ‘incredulity response construction’, also known as the ‘Mad Magazine construction’, as it was made famous by a character in that popular magazine. This pattern, too, like the ones in (16a-c), can be described as a unique combination of formal and functional properties. In spite of what Merchant (2013) argues, though, note that for this construction, there *is* an antecedent, even an explicit one at that. Indeed, as Lambrecht (1990) argues, sentences of this pattern quote the Subject and (part of) the Predicate of a preceding sentence, thereby expressing the speaker’s incredulity at that sentence’s propositional contents (see also Szczésniak and Pachoł 2015).

The above brief discussion has shown that, as Goldberg and Perek (2019: 198) also view things, that “[i]f one wishes to account for all of the nuances of speakers’ knowledge of language, it is an inescapable conclusion that multiple constructions are needed.” It will not do to claim that utterances lacking an inflected verb are *in general* derived from a full sentence (via preposing and then deletion) but simultaneously exclude from this generalization a large number of patterns that evidently resist it. We might instead choose to describe all fragment-like patterns on their own terms. Connectivity effects are not to be explained as evidence of underlying, omitted material; rather, they can be seen as resulting from independently needed grammar facts in a language, for instance that case or an explicit complementizer can help hearers see what semantic role is played by a constituent.

3. The *Not X!* construction

One common type of *not*-fragment is instantiated by the increasingly popular phrase *Not on my watch!* and similar pledge-like expressions (e.g., *Not if I can help it!*, *Not as long as I’m in charge here!*; cf. Cappelle and Depraetere 2016: 21-24; Cappelle 2017: 139; forthcoming). I will first argue why such fragments should not be treated as shortened forms of full sentences. I will then provide a fairly explicit constructionist description of this type of fragment.

3.1 Why *Not X!* is not produced by deletion

As shown by Cappelle (forthcoming), frequently used fragments of this type can function as adverbial chunks triggering subject-auxiliary inversion:

- (17) a. Not on my watch is this going to happen to me. (COCA)

- b. Not if I can help it are you seeing me unmasked.³
- c. Not in this lifetime. Not in a million years will I take you back. Oh no, it ain't gonna happen.⁴

Examples like these make it very implausible to treat *not on my watch* and similar fragments as derived from a full clause at the time of production. This would mean that the speaker first starts out with, for instance, *This is not going to happen to me on my watch*, then deletes parts of this sentence to retain *not on my watch*, and finally treats this remainder as a single adverbial in a new full clause, the one in (17a). Why would one delete something and then add it again? It is much more likely that speakers have mentally stored *Not on my watch!* and a few other similar fragments and that these are felt to be similar enough in meaning to *Never!*, so that they can be integrated as the first element of negative clauses with subject-auxiliary inversion.

Of course, one could try to adduce examples such as those in (17a-c) as evidence for the standard move-then-delete analysis of elliptical phenomena (cf. Section 2). That is, these sentences could be argued to illustrate the middle step, where the negative adverb and the adverbial adjunct have been fronted but where the rest of the sentence hasn't yet been deleted. Yet, there are two problems with that view. First, the examples in (17a-c) do not exhibit simple preposing without subject-auxiliary inversion (e.g. **Not on my watch this is going to happen to me*), which *could* be evidence of an underlying full-sentence version. Second, this analysis doesn't seem plausible in the absence of diachronic evidence that the use of sentences like (17a-c) – or even of their non-inversion 'mere preposing' counterparts – predates the use of *Not on my watch* or *Not if I can help it* as fragments. As far as I can see, the expression *not on my watch* found its origin as two separate clause elements (*not* and *on my watch*), as in the following example, from the 1995 film *Apollo 13*:

- (18) We've never lost an American in space, we're sure as hell not gonna lose one on my watch!⁵

If *not* and *on my watch* can together occur as a contiguous fragment, then this is thanks to the same grammatical mechanism by which we can give short fragment answers such as the one illustrated in (19):

- (19) Speaker A: Does she drink Scotch?
Speaker B: Not before 7 p.m.

Technically speaking, speaker B's reply in (19) is a case of stripping. In Section 1, we saw that stripping should not be seen as a purely syntactic operation whereby sentential material is deleted (e.g. *She does not drink Scotch before 7 p.m.*) but, rather, as involving a SAME-EXCEPT relation. There is no reason to assume that speaker B's reply actually involves deletion of sentence material copied from speaker A's utterance. Emphatically negative fragments of the type *Not X!* lend extra support to this claim, as these can be uttered in contexts in which there is no utterance that could be a candidate for their full-sentence 'reconstruction'. We have

³ <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/6082396/5/Stealing-More-Than-Money>, last accessed 3 October 2018.

⁴ <https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/3530822107859392341/>, last accessed 30 May 2019.

⁵ [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Apollo_13_\(film\)](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Apollo_13_(film)), last accessed 27 September 2018.

already seen an example in (1) (*Not today!*), but many other examples could be given. Suppose someone starts venting their frustration about something and you don't feel like listening to their moaning because you're having problems of your own; you can then stop them with *Not now!*. This fragment invites the other speaker to look in the situational context for a suitable proposition that the meaning of the fragment can play a part in, even if that proposition is something like 'It's okay to complain about my day'. In another situation, this proposition might be 'It's okay to give speaker B a hug'.

3.2 A constructional treatment of *Not X!*

In (20), a specification of the *Not X!* construction is given, with some explanation further below. Following Goldberg and Perek (2019), I use underlining in the constructional specification to indicate the form and not the interpretation of elements.

(20) The *Not X!* construction

Syntax/Phonology:

Not + X (+ {again / too / as well})!

- The expression is of the category Utterance
- X is an NP, a PP, an AdjP, an AdvP or a subclause
- The enunciation tends to be emphatic
- The stress falls on (an element in) X, following normal stress patterns for a phrase or clause

Semantics:

Identify a proposition P(A, B*) in the situational context, with A an argument and B* any number (including zero) of arguments and/or adjuncts, such that the fragment can be interpreted as

- not-P(A, B*, X) [X elaborates the proposition]
or
- not-P(A, X, (B*)) [X replaces B, either entirely or just part of it]
or
- not-P(X, B*) [X replaces A]

This substitute proposition involves the same verb as in the relevant proposition, used with the same meaning and the same tense, modality, aspect and voice.

Pragmatics:

Illocutionary force:

- strong denial of a relevant proposition P
or
- vow not to let the situation denoted by a relevant proposition P happen
or
- expression of being outraged/shocked/saddened... at the situation denoted by a relevant proposition P'

Register: informal

Discourse organization: often after a negative utterance by the same speaker.

Speaker emotionality: heightened

As for the form (syntax and phonology) of the construction, note that we often have an adverb such as *again* or *too* (e.g. *Not him again!; Oh no, not the eyebrows too!*).⁶ If the slot X is filled, however, by the adverb *again* itself (*Not again!*), then there is no such further adverb possible, for obvious reasons that need not be specified in the construction. The fragment has the category Utterance (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff 2005: 237), but as it is not an ordinary clause (an S, syntactically, which is a specific type of utterance pattern), embedding is not possible (e.g. **I told him (that) not on my watch*). The fact that the fragment is not an S may also explain why we cannot easily start the utterance with a sentence adverb such as *however* (e.g. *??However, not on my watch!*). Intriguingly, it is possible to add *however* and especially *though* utterance-finally (e.g. *Not here, though*). The free element is either an NP (e.g. *Not the face!*), a PP (e.g. *Not on my watch!*), an AdjP (e.g. *No, not pink!*), an AdvP (e.g. *Not so loud!*) or a finite or non-finite subclause (e.g. *Not as long as I'm in charge!; Not after having seen the video!*). Regarding the way the fragment is pronounced, the diction is rather emphatic (louder and/or more slowly and/or with more tenseness than usual) and the stress falls on or within X. All normal stress rules apply here, which also means that within the X constituent, the speaker can put contrastive stress on any element (e.g. *Not in MY car!*), if the situational context calls for this.

The semantics of the construction can be described as an instruction to the hearer to search the linguistic context or the speech situation for a proposition, usually a salient one, in which the meaning of the constituent can be integrated. This integration may be of the elaboration kind, as in (21), or of the contrast kind, as in (22-24):

- (21) Speaker A: Jesus has taught us to forgive.
Speaker B: Yeah, but not those guys!
(The Movie Corpus)
- (22) Speaker A: She has drunk from the poisoned well.
Speaker B: Oh no, not from the poisoned well!
- (23) Speaker A: She kissed John last night.
Speaker B: Oh no, not John!
- (24) Speaker A: Fifi is gone y'all. Gone.
Speaker B: Oh no! Not Fifi!!!⁷

It may be hard to see any contrast in (24-26), as the element used for X in speaker B's reply does not actually contrast with one in speaker A's statement (unlike in, e.g. A: *She kissed John last night*. – B: *Yeah, and not Bill!*). Remember, though, that stripping-like fragments do not necessarily refer back anaphorically to the statement explicitly made in the preceding utterance. The fragments in (22), (23) and (24) contrast with 'background entailments'

⁶ In this pattern, *again* adds an element of exasperation to the meaning of the construction. There can also be some material preceding *not*, such as an interjection (*geez, oh no, well*), a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or*), or a combination of these (*yeah, but*). Not all types of introductions work equally well with all uses of the *Not X!* construction. For instance, *oh no* but not *yeah, but* is possible if the interpretation is one of exasperation (e.g. *Hey, look, there's that guy with the hat*. – {*Oh no, / *Yeah, but*} *not him again!*). The reverse situation holds when the interpretation involves elaboration (e.g. *Did you make love with Carol?* – {*??Oh no, / Yeah but*} *not often*. (COCA)).

⁷ <http://talefromthecoopkeeper.blogspot.com/2010/10/diary-of-mad-white-woman.html>, accessed 31 August 2020.

(Wilson and Sperber 1979) of speaker A's utterances, given in (25), (26) and (27), respectively:⁸

- (25) She has drunk from something.
- (26) She kissed someone last night.
- (27) Someone is gone.

So, *from the poisoned well* in speaker B's reply in (22) contrasts with, and replaces, the constituent *from something* in (25), which is the only argument, apart from the subject – it is what is represented by the symbol B in the constructional specification in (20).⁹ The implication is that speaker B would have found it okay if the subject referent had drunk from (almost) *anything*, as long as it was not from the poisoned well. In (23), *John* contrasts with only part of conceptual material representing B: it replaces the argument *someone*, but the adjunct *last night* (represented by B' in the constructional specification) is retained in the proposition. In (24), *Fifi* also replaces *someone*, which in this case is the A-argument.¹⁰ Note, furthermore, that the meaning and the inflectional values of the verb in the salient proposition are retained, so that, for instance, a speaker cannot use *Not Fifi!* in response to *Fifi is gone* with a different meaning of the verb *go* than the one she believes the other speaker has in mind (e.g. '(literally) leave a place' instead of 'die') or with a different specification of the tense, modality, etc. for that verb compared to the that in the relevant proposition (e.g. *might be gone* instead of *is gone*).

Turning to the pragmatics of the construction, here we find functional information that is not purely truth-propositional in nature (cf. Cappelle 2017). The *Not X!* construction can be used with a variety of effects. If it is used to deny a proposition, as in (28), the pragmatics of the construction ensure that the denial is a strong one. It is the strength of denial that is treated here as a pragmatic aspect of meaning, not the denial itself, which is a semantic (truth-functional) matter.

- (28) I never could have imagined that this was how Mizzou's championship dream would end. Not in a million years. (COCA)

⁸ Even in the elaboration case illustrated in (21), there is arguably also a contrast, namely between the (negated) proposition 'Jesus has taught us to forgive those guys' and the implicit proposition 'Jesus has taught us to forgive anyone/people', or even 'Jesus has taught us to forgive anyone/people their sins'. Note that, because we're dealing with a generic situation, the complements of *forgive* are omitted but they are implicitly present (cf. *Cats like to kill for fun*). That is, elaboration also involves a contrast between X and an element that saturates the relevant proposition (see Depraetere and Salkie 2017 for discussion of this concept).

⁹ There is reason, indeed, to consider the *from*-PP as an argument and not an adjunct, as is clear from (i) and (ii):

- (i) **She drank, which happened from the poisoned well.* (cp. *She drank from the poisoned well, which happened last night.*)
- (ii) **She drank and she did so from the poisoned well.* (cp. *She drank from the poisoned well and she did so last night.*)

¹⁰ Cappelle (forthcoming) mainly discusses cases of the *Not X!* construction in which X functions as an adjunct in the related proposition (e.g. *Not on my watch*; *Not if I have anything to say about it*) but notes that *Not likely!*, though it has similar pragmatic properties, requires a different semantic specification of how it connects with the relevant context proposition, as it can be paraphrased as 'It is not likely that P' (while *Not today!* cannot appropriately be paraphrased as 'It is not today that P'). *Not likely!*, then, may be a stored exemplar of the *Not X!* construction with 'deviant' semantic specification – not completely deviant, though, as it patterns with other 'modal' fragment constructions such as *No chance!* and *No way!* (cp. 'There is no chance/way that P'), discussed by Brems and Van Linden (2018).

It is up to the hearer to know what the relevant proposition is that is being strongly denied. The relevant proposition denied in (28) is ‘I could (at some point) have imagined that this was how Mizzou’s championship dream would end’. In (21), it is something like ‘Jesus has taught us to forgive anyone’. Example (29) illustrates another pragmatic function, that of vowing not to let something happen:

- (29) Speaker A: Gary, they’re going to bury the truth.
Speaker B (Gary): Not if I can help it. I’ll try to put a call in to Ed Sampson at the Justice Department, but until then, lay low. (COCA)

A third pragmatic function has also already been encountered, in (22), (23) and (24). In these examples, the speaker expresses a strong emotional feeling – for instance, being shocked, dismayed, disgusted, etc. – at the situation expressed by a relevant proposition. Here, the relevant proposition is the one uttered by speaker A and repeated, in denied and elliptical form, by speaker B. This means that the relevant proposition to take care of the construction’s semantics may be different from the relevant proposition that the speaker expresses a strong negative emotion towards (hence the symbols P and P’ in the constructional specification). Consider again (24), repeated here as (30):

- (30) Speaker A: Fifi is gone y’all. Gone.
Speaker B: Oh no! Not Fifi!!!

Semantically, *Fifi* in speaker B’s response contrasts with *someone* in the relevant proposition ‘Someone / some animal is gone’ (which is a background entailment of what speaker A just said), so that, purely truth-functionally speaking, speaker B conveys something like, ‘It’s not the case that Fifi, rather than just anybody (or any animal), died’. Naturally, if speaker A just informed speaker B that Fifi died, and if speaker A has no reason to assume that speaker B doesn’t believe her or has information to the contrary, speaker B’s reply blatantly violates Grice’s (1975) Maxim of Quality – that is, speaker B ostentatiously tells a falsehood. Speaker A is thereby invited not to reject speaker B’s utterance as an outright lie but to make sense of it in the communicative context. Speaker A will understand that speaker B expresses her strong grief at Fifi’s death by (seemingly) not accepting the truth of it. Of course, this kind of pragmatic reasoning does not need to proceed from the semantic information as explicitly as is sketched here. The pragmatic interpretation of shock/outrage/anger/... is ‘shortcircuited’, in Morgan’s (1977) sense, by the construction: the expression of such an emotion is conventionalized by *Not X!*, as it is one of the typical uses.¹¹

Finally, note that the pragmatic information about the construction also specifies that the construction often appears after an already negative utterance by the same speaker. Example (28) already provided an illustration of this. In the following section we will take a closer look at this discourse pattern.

¹¹ The semantics is not entirely bleached, though. For instance, we also get a sense that speaker B would have been *less* shocked or saddened to hear that another animal had died. This is by virtue of *Fifi* being contrasted with any other entity in the background entailment (‘someone / some animal is gone’). Note that this extra interpretation would not be implied if speaker B replied with the exclamation “Oh no! Fifi!!!”.

4. Negative expansion

Negative expansion is a discourse pattern in which a negative sentence is followed by one or more *not*-fragments. Some authentic examples are given in (31a-d):

- (31) a. Even's first thought was, Well, he ain't from around here. Not dressed like that. (COCA)
b. I hadn't seen him standing there, but it stood to reason that I couldn't be all alone in Captain Paradox's lab. Not after what had evidently happened here so very recently. (COCA)
c. The woman will never find the old house behind the hedge of towering hibiscus at the bend of the dirt road. Not a gringa dominicana in a rented car with a road map asking for street names! (COCA)
d. We didn't have a choice, Jim. Not a real one. Not one that was right. (COCA)

Constructionists have long proposed that discourse patterns (i.e., typical, recurring sequences of more than one utterance-level construction) may lend themselves to being described as constructions, in the Construction Grammar sense of the term (Östman 1999, 2000, 2005; Bergs 2008; Hoffmann and Bergs 2012). Treating discourse patterns as constructions is easier said than done, however, and the constructionist community may as yet converge on how best to approach this. For now, I will merely offer an informal sketch of what I term the 'negative expansion construction', attempting nonetheless to provide a detailed specification of it at the end of this section, the way this was done above for the *Not X!* construction.

The negative expansion construction may ultimately prove to license what Brems and Van Linden (2018) refer to as an 'emphatic negative parenthetical', which they do not explicitly see as a construction but simply as one of the *uses* they identify for *no chance* and *no way*:

- (32) a. Didn't see the thief too clearly – dark in there when the lights went out – but he was short, quick, and hairy. Really short – like four feet. Not a performing animal, no chance. Moved like a person.
b. I'm not a gambler, no way.
(Brems and Van Linden 2018: 12)

As Brems and Van Linden (2018) point out, *no chance* and *no way* are not used here as negative response items following a question by another speaker but as 'emphatic negative markers' after a negative statement made by the same speaker.¹² These emphatic negative markers do not negate the preceding negative statement, turning it into a positive one, but somehow reinforce the negation.

To get a grip on the negative expansion construction, let us consider a constructed example of what looks like a case of negative expansion, provided by Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2002) in their treatment of elliptical *not*-clauses:

¹² In (32a), *no chance* follows a *not*-fragment (*Not a performing animal*), which is an elliptical utterance of a different type, involving omission of light elements (here: *he was*); cf. (2b) for similar examples. So, the negative statement preceding *no chance* is (*He was*) *not a performing animal*.

- (33) There aren't many wild rhinoceroses left, not in Africa or in Asia. (Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 849)

This example has the *form* of negative expansion – we can disregard the fact that a comma is used rather than a full stop, as in the examples above – but misses its typical *function*. The sentence could be made more natural by adapting it (for example) as follows:

- (34) There aren't many wild rhinoceroses left. Not in African countries whose governments let trophy hunters roam free. Not in Vietnam and other Asian countries, where an average-sized rhino horn fetches a quarter of a million dollars on the black market.

In this modified version, the speaker first makes a claim and then provides some justification for making it. The modification is also meant to infuse the example with a heightened level speaker expressivity, which is a discourse-functional aspect that goes hand in hand with providing a justification: the more a speaker wants to convey the idea that she has a strong conviction that the statement is correct, the more an utterance tends to be laden with emotion, as one typically does not bother justifying a statement that one is indifferent about.

Indeed, in authentic uses of negative expansion, the speaker usually feels strongly about the preceding proposition being true. This is clear in (31a-c) above, where the first clause is an epistemic judgement. While in (31a), there is no explicit marker of epistemicity, (31b) and (31c) contain the modal expressions *couldn't* and *will never* as markers of epistemic (im)possibility and necessity/prediction. The *not*-fragment then provides further justification for making that statement: it typically gives a reason for why the speaker believes the claim made in the previous clause is correct. For example, (31a) allows a paraphrase such as 'Because he is dressed like that, I am confident that he isn't from around here'. Likewise, *after what evidently happened...* in (31b) can easily be paraphrased as 'given what had evidently happened...'. A similar reason-giving function holds for the *not*-fragment in (31c).

In (31d), repeated as (35), the *not*-fragment rephrases a constituent in the focus domain by making it more specific:

- (35) We didn't have a choice, Jim. Not a real one. Not one that was right. (COCA)

The *not*-fragment thus excludes a possible but irrelevant objection to the previous clause (namely that we did have a choice, albeit not an ideal one). This, too, is a way of justifying why the previous clause was uttered. By saying that we didn't have a real choice or one that was right, the speaker justifies making the claim that "we didn't have a choice", which, without the extra information might have been felt not to be entirely true. In (36), the *not*-fragment makes the previous clause not more specific but more explicit:

- (36) The Orioles couldn't comprehend April, or this season, without Smith. Because there's never been anyone quite like him. Not in 1994. Nor ever before. (COCA)

By giving what might perhaps seem to be superfluous information, the speaker here also justifies making the statement just uttered. It is as if the speaker scans a timeline, including

the current year (i.e., the year 1994, in which the text was written) and any previous year for counterexamples, and by doing so, she demonstrates that she was not mistaken about the claim made in the preceding clause.

Just how extensively negative expansion is made use of is an open empirical question. It is undoubtedly more frequent in informal (spontaneous and/or spoken) than in formal (controlled and/or written) discourse. In any case, even in the small sample of hundred *not*-fragments mentioned in Section 1, there are three *not*-fragments displaying negative expansion, though their source was not spoken discourse. Two of them involve the idiom *not by a long shot*. All three *not*-fragments seem to be instances of the *Not X!* construction, even if no exclamation mark is used. The first two have the function of emphatic denial; the third example, with *not in this lifetime*, has an unmistakable pledge-like illocutionary force, with the (fictional) speaker vowing not to do something:

- (37) a. And, by now, it's safe to say that nothing resembling an award will be handed to any of them this year. Not by a long shot. (COCA, Magazines)
- b. This wasn't some harebrained operation dreamed up in a forgotten corner of the Pentagon. Not by a long shot. (COCA, Fiction)
- c. "I may be blood kin but I'll not carry his weight and smell into my dreams. Not in this lifetime, I won't," she said to no one in particular. (COCA, Fiction)

In (37a) and (37b), the language user expresses that she feels strongly about the truth of the negative proposition, as we have seen in previously presented examples. *Not by a long shot* indicates that the positive proposition is 'far removed' from being true. In (37c), the speaker obviously stands by her refusal ("but I'll not..."), because by stating that she will not perform the action in her lifetime, any possibility that she might perform it, if not now, then later, is excluded. These *not*-fragments (*Not by a long shot*, *Not in this lifetime*) thus also provide a justification. For instance, in (37a), the claim that no award will be won by any of them leaves open the possibility that they might nonetheless come close to winning one. Adding *Not by a long shot* rules out this possibility and thereby makes it clear that making the claim was justified. Similarly, in (37b), *not by a long shot* more firmly denies a suggestion already rejected by the preceding claim (namely, the suggestion that the military operation that is referred to was ill-thought-out). By virtue of the heightened degree of confidence provided by *Not by a long shot*, this rejection thus becomes more justified. In (37c), *I'll not carry...* has vague temporal reference and so leaves open the possibility that the speaker will perform the action not in the near future but at a more distant time in the future. The addition of *Not in this lifetime* again rules out this contingency, and in so doing justifies making a simple claim about an action not holding in the future. In short, these *not*-fragments remove any doubt as to the whether the claim to which they are added was made with a sufficiently high degree of certainty. This special functional property of negative expansion, namely providing a justification, taps into what Mercier and Sperber (2011) argue is the primary function of reasoning (and thus language; cf. Carruthers 1998), which is argumentative: providing reasons for why our actions are justified and for why our claims are true.

The undeniable argumentative, justificatory use of negative expansion is thus compatible with the use of a *not*-fragment used as a pledge. It may even be why these fragments, to the extent that they are frequently found as part of the negative expansion

construction, are often interpreted as pledges in the first place. Indeed, if *not on my watch* is to be understood as a justification in *No harm will come to you, not on my watch*, it cannot be taken as merely involving an open conditional ('No harm will come to you in case I keep watch on it') or a temporal specification ('No harm will come to you during the time that I keep watch on it'). Rather, it must be strengthened as a statement about a situation whose fulfilment is virtually guaranteed: 'This will not happen if/when I keep watch on it, and I *will* keep watch on it, so that is why I can confidently claim this will not happen.' This strengthening is very clear for members of the *Not on my watch!* family of constructions (Cappelle forthcoming) that contain an *if*-clause, such as *Not if I can help it!*, where the conditional receives a (near-)closed interpretation. Compare the authentic example in (38), in which *and I do* (superfluously) underscores the closed-conditional interpretation, with (39), where the addition of *which, however, I might not do* clashes with this standard interpretation (hence the hashtag, indicating incoherence):

- (38) I support our police force and the importance of their job, but they won't be training in our town. Not if I have anything to say about it, and I do.¹³
- (39) I support our police force and the importance of their job, but they won't be training in our town. #Not if I have anything to say about it, which, however, I might not.

The added relative clause in (39) may not be fully unacceptable, but this kind of 'back-peddalling' is not in line with the functional specification of the negative expansion construction, for which the following formalization can now be given:

- (40) The negative expansion construction
- Syntax/Phonology:
- Negative statement + *not X!*¹⁴
- The enunciation tends to be emphatic, especially of the *no(t)*-fragment
- Semantics:
- Not-P, where P is the proposition expressed by the positive counterpart of the negative statement
- The proposition expressed by the *not*-fragment forms a justification for (stating) not-P

¹³ <http://coffeeandcrazy.blogspot.com/>, last accessed 24 October 2018.

¹⁴ The form of the construction is a simplification, as negative expansion also occurs with *no*-fragments, as in (32a-b).

Pragmatics:

Illocutionary force:

- strong denial of P
- often also: vow not to let the situation denoted by a relevant proposition P happen
- occasionally, instead of strong denial of P: expression of being outraged/shocked/saddened... at the situation denoted by a relevant proposition P¹⁵

Register: informal

Speaker emotionality: heightened

5. Conclusion and further questions

Given the right context, fragments such as *Not today!*, *Not him again!* or *Not if I can help it!* are perfectly grammatical utterances. Just like other fragments, they are far from being erratic phenomena but are licensed by the grammar system that speakers have internalized. This much is agreed upon by linguists of all stripes. What there *is* disagreement about is whether fragments, as the term suggests, are parts of larger structures that contains unexpressed material. Hall (2019) puts it like this:

“The debate about fragments used in this way [i.e., not just those that are labels, titles or items on a shopping list, for instance] is whether what you see is basically all the linguistic structure you get – that is, whether they are base-generated words or subsentential clauses – or whether they have the syntax of full sentences, part of which is subject to ellipsis.” (Hall 2019: 605)

Considering the arguments for both positions, Hall (2019: 623) concludes that “[t]he facts so far strongly support the idea that fragments require a sentential analysis”. However, the conclusion depends on which facts we look at. The fragments Hall discusses are short answers to questions, but fragments can also be uttered in the absence of a prior question. Moreover, even fragments that form part of a question-answer exchange have been argued to be perfectly analysable under a non-sentential view (Jacobson 2016). The present paper has argued in favour for this latter view. For instance, *Not so fast!* can be “used to tell someone not to be too eager to do or believe something” (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, s.v. *not so fast*). This utterance cannot easily be reconstructed as a full sentence. COCA contains 491 instances of *not so fast* as a fragment but there are no attestations of {*Don’t / Do not*} {*say / believe / conclude*} {*this / that*} *so fast*”, making it unlikely that *not so fast* is to be analysed as a shortened full sentence. This is not an isolated case. I have maintained that even in

¹⁵ An example in which the speaker expresses shock or a similar strong emotion at a relevant proposition P is provided in the constructed example in (i):

(i) She can’t be gone. Not Fifi.

Here, the relevant proposition P with respect to which the speaker expresses strong negative feeling (sadness/shock/...) is not ‘She (= Fifi) can be gone’ (i.e., the proposition that is negated semantically) but, rather, ‘She (= Fifi) is gone’. This, then, is another example of what we noted in Section 3, namely that the semantics and the pragmatics of a construction can pertain to different propositions.

general, *not*-fragments are not shortened versions of negative full sentences in which material from a previous sentence has been copied and deleted.

Here are the main points I raised in this paper: (i) *not*-fragments come in many types, only one of which, namely *Not X!* (e.g. *Not today!*; *Not on my watch!*), has been extensively dealt with here; (ii) *not*-fragments of this type can be used without reference to any previous linguistic utterance but require a situationally salient proposition to be made sense of (cf. also Cappelle forthcoming); (iii) this type of *not*-fragment, like other types of ellipsis, relies for its interpretation on a conceptually general ‘SAME-EXPECT’ relation (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff 2012), in that the X element either is added as an argument or adjunct to a salient proposition or replaces an argument or adjunct in that proposition, without affecting any other arguments or adjuncts, and respecting the meaning and inflectional specifications of the verb in that proposition; (iv) the *Not X!* construction also has pragmatic properties, including a range of possible illocutionary forces and the discourse-functional information that it may occur after an already negative utterance by the same speaker; (v) this discourse pattern, termed here ‘negative expansion’ can itself be treated as a construction, combining syntactic/phonological, semantic and pragmatic aspects.

This paper, however, has also left unanswered several questions about *not*-fragments, which I consider avenues for further research: (i) Is there just one *Not X!* construction (the one described here), or should we distinguish several types, each with a different conventionalized illocutionary force?; (ii) Do *Not X!* constructs in which X functions as an argument (e.g. *Not my son!*) tend to have a different illocutionary force from those in which X functions as an adjunct (e.g. *Not if I have something to say about it!*)?; (iii) to what extent, if at all, are the properties of the *Not X!* construction(s) shared by other types of *not*-fragment constructions, such as those licensing *not that I know (of)*, *not that it matters* and *not so with you?*; (iv) is a tag such as *I won’t*, as in *Not in this lifetime, I won’t* (cf. example (37c)), indeed just a tag or is it a remnant from a topicalization operation taking a full sentence as its departing point (??*Not in my lifetime I won’t carry his weight and smell into my dreams*)? With respect to this last question, it may be suggested that the *Not X!* construction discussed here is closely related to – or is perhaps identical to – a special pattern that Culicover (1999) has discussed under the header ‘*Not-topics (not in my car (you won’t))*’.¹⁶ If that is the case, then a final question to be answered is, (v), whether the constructional analysis provided here is explicit enough to predict all of the properties Culicover noted about that pattern, something which I will leave to others to find out. For now, let me point out that I find it remarkable that Culicover (1999: 182) appears to present an answer like *Not in my car you won’t*, uttered in reaction to an interlocutor saying *I think I will smoke a cigarette*, as a shortened version of *Not in my car you won’t smoke a cigarette*. This can be inferred from his statement that “[n]ot-topicalization is possible when there is no ellipsis”, which he illustrates with the following further examples:

- (41) a. Not with that hammer you won’t break the glass.
 - b. Not before lunch you won’t eat candy.
 - c. Not that one you won’t eat.
 - d. Not all of them you won’t eat.
 - e. Not Eddie you won’t talk to.
 - f. Not here/there/then/now you won’t smoke a cigarette.
 - g. Not that quickly you won’t fix the faucet.
- (Culicover 1999: 185)

¹⁶ I was reminded of this link by one of the reviewers.

I haven't found any attestations of this non-elliptical pattern in COCA, which strengthens my conviction that *Not X!* is not derived from a full-sentence pattern whose frequency is at best extremely low, but constitutes a pattern in its own right, one that is 'base-generated' as such. This pattern qualifies as a construction, combining specific formal and functional properties, including discourse-functional ones, such as its common appearance in the negative expansion construction. *Not X!* is therefore not to be dismissed as an instance of movement-cum-deletion, nor even as a standard case of stripping viewed in constructionist terms. It is, in short, not an uninteresting construction. Not in the least.

References

- Akmajian, A. (1984). Sentence types and the form-function fit. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 2(1): 1–23.
- Bergs, A. (2008). Can we take Construction Grammar beyond sneezing napkins off tables? In K. Stierstorfer (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Anglistentag Münster 2007* (pp. 269–276). Trier: WVT.
- Brems, L., & Van Linden, A. (2018). *No way* and *no chance* as emphatic negative response items. BAAHE (Belgian Association of Anglicists in Higher Education) conference on intensity, University of Mons, 30 November. Available online at <https://orbi.uliege.be/handle/2268/227862>.
- Cappelle, B. (2005). Particle patterns in English: A comprehensive coverage. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Leuven.
- Cappelle, B. (2017). What's pragmatics doing outside constructions? In I. Depraetere & R. Salkie (Eds.), *Semantics and Pragmatics: Drawing a Line* (pp. 345–376). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Cappelle, B. (Forthcoming). *Not on my watch* and similar *not*-fragments: Stored forms with pragmatic content. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*.
- Cappelle, B., & Depraetere, I. (2016). Short-circuited interpretations of modal verb constructions: Some evidence from *The Simpsons*. *Constructions and Frames*, 8(1), 7–39.
- Carruthers, P. (1998). Conscious thinking: Language or elimination? *Mind and Language*, 13(4): 457–476.
- Chomsky, N. (1962). Explanatory models in linguistics. In E. Nagel, P. Suppes, & A. Tarski (Eds.), *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (pp. 528–550). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Culicover, P. W. (1999). *Syntactic Nuts: Hard Cases, Syntactic Theory, and Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Culicover, P. W., & Jackendoff, R. (2005). *Simpler Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Culicover, P. W., & Jackendoff, R. (2006). The simpler syntax hypothesis. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 10(9), 413–418.
- Culicover, P. W., & Jackendoff, R. (2012). SAME-EXCEPT: A domain-general cognitive relation and how language expresses it. *Language*, 88(2), 305–340.
- Culicover, P. W., & Jackendoff, R. (2019). Ellipsis in Simpler Syntax. In J. van Craenenbroeck & T. Temmerman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis* (pp. 162–187). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Davies, M. (2008-). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): One billion words, 1990-2019*. Available online at <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>.
- Davies, M. (2019-) *The Movie Corpus: 200 million words, 1930-2018*. Available online at <https://www.english-corpora.org/movies/>.
- Davies, M. (2019-). *The TV Corpus: 325 million words, 1950-2018*. Available online at <https://www.english-corpora.org/tv/>.
- Delahunty, G. P. (2001). Discourse functions of inferential sentences. *Linguistics* 39(3), 517–545.
- Delahunty, G. P. (2006). A relevance theoretic analysis of *not that* sentences: “*Not that there is anything wrong with that*”. *Pragmatics*, 16(2/3), 213–245.
- Depraetere, I., & Salkie, R. (2017). Free pragmatic enrichment, expansion, saturation, completion: A view from linguistics. In I. Depraetere & R. Salkie (Eds.), *Semantics and Pragmatics: Drawing a Line* (pp. 1–37). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Goldberg, A. E. (1995). *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Goldberg, A. E. (2003). Constructions: A new theoretical approach to language. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 7(5), 219–224.
- Goldberg, A. E., & Perek, F. (2019). Ellipsis in Construction Grammar. In J. van Craenenbroeck & T. Temmerman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis* (pp. 188–204). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Volume 3: Speech Acts* (pp. 41–58). New York: Academic Press.
- Hall, A. (2019). Fragments. In J. van Craenenbroeck & T. Temmerman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis* (pp. 605–623). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hankamer, J., & Sag, I. (1976). Deep and surface anaphora. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 7(3), 391–426.
- Hoffmann, T., & Bergs, A. (2012). ‘Are you construction in disguise’: Investigating the role of context in football chant constructions. Paper presented at the 7th international conference on construction grammar. August 9–12, 2012. Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea.
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. (Eds.). 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackendoff, R. (1973). The base rules for prepositional phrases. In S. R. Anderson & P. Kiparsky (Eds.), *Festschrift for Morris Halle* (pp. 345–76). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jacobson, P. 2016. The short answer: implications for Direct Compositionality (and vice versa). *Language* 92, 2, 331–375.
- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*, vol. 1. New York: Henry Holt and Co. [Reprinted, Mineola, NY: Dover Books, 1950.]
- Jespersen, Otto. (1924). *The Philosophy of Grammar*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Jurafsky, D. (1992). An on-line computational model of human sentence interpretation: A theory of the representation and use of linguistic knowledge. Ph.D. dissertation. University of California at Berkeley.
- Lambrecht, K. (1990). ‘What me worry?’ Mad magazine sentences revisited. In K. Hall et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, Volume 16* (pp. 215–228). Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.

- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. s.d. *not so fast*.
<https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/not-so-fast>.
- Merchant, J. (2004). Fragments and ellipsis. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 27(6), 661–738.
- Merchant, J. (2013). Yet another look at deep and surface anaphora. Unpublished manuscript, University of Chicago.
- Merchant, J. (2019). Ellipsis: A survey of analytical approaches. In J. van Craenenbroeck & T. Temmerman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ellipsis* (pp. 19–45). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merchant, J., Frazier, L., Clifton Jr. Ch., & Weskott Th. (2009). Fragment answers to questions: A case of inaudible syntax. In L. Goldstein (Ed.), *Brevity* (pp. 21–35). Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Mercier, H., & D. Sperber. (2011). Why do humans reason? Arguments for an argumentative theory. *Behavioral and Brain Science*, 34(2), 57–111.
- Miller, Ph., & Pullum, G. K. (2014). Exophoric verb phrase ellipsis. In P. Hofmeister & E. Norcliffe (Eds.), *The Core and the Periphery: Data-driven Perspectives on Syntax Inspired by Ivan A. Sag* (pp. 5–32). Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Nykiel, J., & Hawkins, J. A. (2020). English fragments, Minimize Domains, and Minimize Forms. *Language and Cognition*, 12(3), 411–443.
- Östman, J.-O. (1999). Coherence through understanding through discourse patterns: Focus on news reports. In W. Bublitz, U. Lenk, & E. Ventola (Eds.), *Coherence in spoken and written discourse* (pp. 77–100). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Östman, J.-O. (2000). Postkortsdiskurs: med den språkliga periferin som centrum [Postcard discourse: placing the linguistic periphery at the center]. *Sphinx 1999–2000 [The Yearbook of the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters]*, 7–26.
- Östman, J.-O. (2005). Construction discourse: A prolegomenon. In J.-O. Östman & M. Fried (Eds.), *Construction grammars: Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions* (pp. 121–144). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Paul, I., & Stainton, R. (2006). Really intriguing, that Pred NP! *Philosophy Publications*, 24. Available online at <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/philosophypub/24>.
- Progovac, L. (2013). Non-sentential vs. ellipsis approaches: Review and extensions. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 7, 597–617.
- Ross, J. R. (1969). Guess who. In R. I. Binnick, A. Davison, G. M. Green & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th annual meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society* (pp. 252–286). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Sag, I. A., & Hankamer, J. (1984). Towards a theory of anaphoric processing. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 7(3), 325–345.
- Schmid, H.-J. (2013). Is usage more than usage after all? The case of English *not that*. *Linguistics*, 51(1), 75–116.
- Shopen, T. (1972). A generative theory of ellipsis. Ph.D. dissertation. University of California at Los Angeles.
- Szczésniak, K., & Pachoł, M. (2015). What? Me, lie? The form and reading of the Incredulity Response Construction. *Constructions online*. Available online at <http://www.constructions-journal.com>.
- Wilson, D., & Sperber, D. (1979). Ordered entailments: An alternative to presuppositional theories. In C. K. Oh & D. Dinneen (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Volume 11: Presupposition* (pp. 299–323). New York: Academic Press.