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Clefting PPs in German: dass-clefts

Sluiced structures like the example in (1) present cases of "significatio ex nihilo", i.e., speakers seem to interpret more than what is actually pronounced. It has been claimed that a pseudocleft as indicated in brackets in (1) cannot be the proper source for a sluice because clefting of PPs is illicit in German (2).

- 1) Er hat mit jemandem gesprochen, aber ich weiß nicht mit wem [es war].
he has with somebody spoken but I know not with whom it was

- 2) * Mit wem war es, daß er gesprochen hat?
with whom was it that he spoken has Merchant 1999:167, (46b)

I suggest, however, that dass-clefts in (at least some varieties of) German allow clefting of PPs and some adverbs. I give an initial survey of their properties and propose two types of dass-clefts that should be distinguished.

References:

Merchant, Jason (1999). The syntax of silence: sluicing, islands, and identity in ellipsis. Ph.D. thesis, University of California Santa Cruz.