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## Structure removal in complex prefields

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In complex prefield constructions in German of the type in (1), it looks as though more than one constituent can occupy the position in front of the finite verb in declarative root clauses.

- (1) Fast alles im Sitzen bewältigte Joaquim Rodriguez auf dem  
*almost everything<sub>acc</sub> seated managed Joaquim Rodriguez on the*  
 Weg zum Gipfel  
*way to the peak*

There are two kinds of analysis: In one approach, there are multiple constituents in the (possibly split) SpecC domain (2; Lötscher (1985), Eisenberg (1999), Wurmbbrand (2004), Speyer (2008)). In the other approach, complex prefields are single VP constituents lacking an overt V head ((2b); Fanselow (1991; 1993), Müller (1998), Müller, St. (2005; 2015)).

- (2) a.  $[_{CP} XP_1 [_{C'} YP_2 [_{C'} C [_{TP} \dots t_1 \dots t_2 \dots]]]$   
 b.  $[_{CP} [_{VP_0} XP_1 [_{V'} YP_2 [_{V} - ]]] [_{C'} C [_{TP} \dots t_0 \dots ]]]]$

I argue that there is empirical evidence for both views. Well-known arguments for single constituency involve (i) a clause-mate condition; (ii) order restrictions; and (iii) lack of an upper bound of affected items. However, there is also substantial evidence for multiple constituency. In addition to existing arguments from (i) left dislocation and (ii) extraposition, I present new arguments involving (iii) freezing effects; (iv) Barss' generalization effects; (v) weak crossover effects; (vi) negative polarity items; and (vii) idioms. I develop a derivational, minimalist analysis based on an independently motivated operation Remove that is the exact counterpart of the operation Merge (Chomsky (2001)), and that I take to underlie various constructions that demand conflicting structure assignments. On this view, complex prefields involve both simple VPs (at early stages of the derivation) *and* multiple constituents (after removal of the VP projection). Finally, I suggest that the information-structural restrictions on complex prefields (Bildhauer & Cook (2010)) can trigger Re-

move operations as a last resort.