

Squibs and Discussion

CONCESSIVE EXPRESSIONS AND
COMPLEMENTIZER SELECTION
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In this squib I will argue that complementizer selection by the ‘‘fixed’’ concessive expressions *irrespective of*, *no matter*, and *never mind* is completely the same as that by the normal lexical heads P, N, and V, respectively, and that the concessives, though syntactically inflexible, have articulated constituent structures at some level of syntactic representation.

1 Complementizer Selection by Concessive Expressions

The three English concessive expressions *irrespective of*, *no matter*, and *never mind* are all syntactically ‘‘fixed’’ and inert to most syntactic operations. Take, for example, *irrespective of*. The preposition *of* cannot be replaced by any other preposition (1a), and the two words cannot be separated by movement operations such as extraposition (1b) or by insertion of short adverbials (1c). *Irrespective* cannot be conjoined with another adjective that is also accompanied by *of*-PP (1d).

- (1) a. **Irrespective {from/in/with} cost*, . . .
- b. **Irrespective*, in this matter, of age or sex, . . .
- c. **Irrespective* today of expense, . . .
- d. **Irrespective* and regardless of the consequence, . . .

Similarly, *no matter* does not allow replacement of *no* by any other negative element (**little matter how* . . .) or modification by any adjective (**no important matter how* . . .). *Never mind* behaves similarly, *mutatis mutandis*.

The three concessives, though equally inflexible, show differences in complementizer selection (i.e., in selection of a complementizer in the embedded clause) when they are followed by embedded clauses. Although all three concessive expressions can be followed by the interrogative complementizer *whether*, the concessives *irrespective*

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of and *no matter* cannot precede the other interrogative complementizer *if*; only *never mind* can be followed by *if*. Examples (2)–(4) demonstrate these differences in selection.

- (2) a. Irrespective of whether he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.
 b. *Irrespective of if he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.
- (3) a. No matter whether he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.¹
 b. *No matter if he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.
- (4) a. Never mind whether he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.
 b. Never mind if he wins the lottery or not, he will certainly donate money to us.

Of the three concessives, *irrespective of* can be followed neither by the declarative complementizer *that* nor by its null counterpart (henceforth, null-*that*). *No matter* and *never mind* can precede the complementizer *that*, at least in some dialects of English.² The complementizer *that* cannot alternate with null-*that* after *no matter*, but (marginally) can after *never mind*. Examples (5)–(7) illustrate these differences in selection.

- (5) a. *Irrespective of that he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.
 b. *Irrespective of \emptyset he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.
- (6) a. No matter that he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.
 b. *No matter \emptyset he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.
- (7) a. Never mind that he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.
 b. ?Never mind \emptyset he is a millionaire, he will not donate money to us.

2 Complementizer Selection by Lexical Heads

The idiosyncrasies of the complementizer selection by the concessive expressions in (2)–(7) can be subsumed under a much wider range of

¹ Some speakers do not accept sentences like (3a). Those speakers are likely to reject *whether*-clauses immediately following the head N as in (9a) also, as pointed out by Terry Langendoen (personal communication).

² The dialectal variation depends on whether or not *no matter* and *never mind* allow for the interpretation of ‘‘simple conditional’’ concession rather than of alternative or universal conditional concession, in the sense of *even if* or *even though*.

phenomena that can be accounted for in principled ways. In Nakajima 1996 I observed that the distribution of the interrogative complementizers *whether* and *if* basically parallels that of the declarative complementizers *that* and null-*that*, respectively, and that the distribution of *if* and null-*that* is far more restricted than that of *whether* and *that*. In head-complement relations, for example, the interrogative complementizer *whether* can occur after the heads P, N, and V, and *if* can appear only after V (see (8)–(10)). The declarative complementizer *that* can occur after N and V, but not after P,³ and null-*that* can appear after V (see (11)–(13)).⁴

- (8) a. His donation depends upon whether he will win the lottery or not.
 b. *His donation depends upon if he will win the lottery or not.
- (9) a. The question whether he will donate money to us or not is important.
 b. *The question if he will donate money to us or not is important.
- (10) a. I don't know whether he will donate money to us or not.
 b. I don't know if he will donate money to us or not.
- (11) a. *Our success depends upon that he will donate money to us.
 b. *Our success depends upon \emptyset he will donate money to us.
- (12) a. I don't believe the rumor that he will donate money to us.
 b. *I don't believe the rumor \emptyset he will donate money to us.
- (13) a. I think that he will donate money to us.
 b. I think \emptyset he will donate money to us.

For the distributional parallelism between the two interrogative and the two declarative complementizers in structural environments other than the complement positions, see Nakajima 1996.

Worthy of mention is the fact (not noticed in Nakajima 1996) that the distributions of the interrogatives *whether* and *if* after the lexical heads in (8)–(10) and of the declaratives *that* and null-*that* in (11)–(13) are totally parallel to their distributions after the concessives in (2)–(4) and in (5)–(7), respectively.

³ The complementizer *that* can occur after such prepositions as *in* and *except*. The combination of such a preposition and *that* is parallel to that of a preposition and *whether* in (8a), and renders the distribution of *that* parallel to that of *whether*.

⁴ Although the other lexical head, A, can be followed by all of the four complementizers, I do not refer to it here because the head A is not directly relevant to complementizer selection by the concessives in (2)–(7).

3 Transparent Structures for the Concessives

The concessives are similar to idioms in that they are syntactically fixed and therefore “frozen” in the sense of Fraser (1970). It has been widely assumed since the early days of generative grammar (see, e.g., Katz and Postal 1963, Weinreich 1969, Fraser 1970) that idioms, even highly inflexible ones, have full-fledged constituent structures. Chomsky (1981:146) also assumes that “idioms in general have the formal properties of non-idiomatic structures. . . .” In the same vein, it can be reasonably hypothesized that the concessives have, at a certain syntactic level, constituent structures referring to syntactic categories of terminal symbols. On this view, the fixed concessive *irrespective of*, for example, has a structure like (14), where the head A takes as its complement the PP with the head P, which in turn takes the embedded clause CP as its complement.⁵

(14) [_{AP}[_A *irrespective*] [_{PP}[_P *of*] [_{CP} . . .]]]

(15) [_{NP} *no* [_N *matter*] [_{CP} . . .]]

(16) [_{VP} *never* [_V *mind*] [_{CP} . . .]]

Given such articulated structures, *irrespective of* in (2) and (5) ends with the head P (see (14)), *no matter* in (3) and (6) with N (see (15)), and *never mind* in (4) and (7) with V (see (16)). It follows that the heads that select the CP complement in (2) and (5) as well as in (8) and (11) are P; those in (3) and (6) as well as in (9) and (12) are N; and those in (4) and (7) as well as in (10) and (13) are V. Thus, the similarity between the complementizer selections by the concessives in (2)–(7) and by the ordinary lexical heads in (8)–(13) follows. The apparently idiosyncratic complementizer selections by the concessives can be accounted for by the same analysis proposed in Nakajima 1996 to account for complementizer selection by normal lexical heads, which, for brevity, I will not repeat here.

The assumption that the concessives have articulated structures like (14)–(16) seems to contradict their having syntactically frozen properties as demonstrated in (1); despite having transparent syntactic structures, the concessives are syntactically inflexible. Notice, however, that the syntactic operations in (1) are those pertinent to overt syntax; the syntactic frozenness pertains to overt syntax. In contrast,

⁵ Quirk et al. (1985:669) take *irrespective of* as a “complex” preposition. Some dictionaries such as the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* regard the word *irrespective* as an adverb, though it is obviously an adjective because the prefix *ir-* attaches only to adjectives. This treatment in the dictionaries suggests that *irrespective* is so closely connected with *of* that the combination of the two words is taken to be a single complex expression used always as an adverb. Now the question to ask is how the LF representation in (14) is associated with this adverbial use. One possibility will be suggested in section 4. Another possibility is to make recourse to a “double tree,” as in Sadock’s (1991) syntax, one tree representing something like (14) and the other showing that the two words constitute a single adverbial subordinator.

articulated structures like (14)–(16) are necessary for checking complementizer selection (i.e., for checking whether an appropriate complementizer is selected by the matrix head). In Nakajima 1996 I have argued that complementizer selection is checked at the level of LF. Structures like (14)–(16) are thus the LF representations on which the checking is to be done. Although the concessives are fixed in overt syntax, they have full-fledged structures in covert or LF syntax; therefore, the ostensible contradiction between their being syntactically frozen and their having articulated structures disappears.⁶ The checking of complementizer selection using LF representations like (14)–(16) offers additional, independent evidence for the conclusion in Nakajima 1996 that checking of complementizer selection is done at LF, a conclusion based on completely different facts than those of the concessives discussed here. Note, in passing, that Chomsky (1995:206ff.) maintains that semantic interpretations of idioms are determined on the basis of LF syntactic representations. This claim leads to the generalization that fixed expressions, including both concessives and idioms, have articulated syntactic representations at the level of LF.

4 Conclusion

Since the three concessive expressions discussed here have almost the same meaning, their differences in complementizer selection cannot be handled by “cognitive” or semantics-based theories. The differences can be accounted for on the assumption that the concessives or fixed expressions in general have transparent syntactic structures at LF. To put it conversely, the assumption that fixed expressions have transparent structures is motivated by the issue of the concessives’ complementizer selection, which has, to my knowledge, not been discussed in the literature. These transparent LF structures undergo checking of complementizer selection. The checking of complementizer selection by the concessives thus provides other corroborating evidence for the conclusion in Nakajima 1996 that complementizer selection is checked at LF.

Although the three fixed concessives have been concluded to have the diverse LF representations shown in (14)–(16), it is still the case that they have almost the same meaning and are all understood as adverbial subordinators with the same function (i.e., concessive conjunctions). The identity of their meaning despite the diversity of their LF representations suggests that there is a level of meaning other than LF in which the three distinct LF structures are to be provided with the same semantic interpretation. A likely candidate is the level of conceptual structure, which is connected with syntactic structure (including LF representation) through interface correspondence rules

⁶ This reconciliation, however, gives rise to the interesting but serious problem of how transparent structures are produced at LF from structures frozen in overt syntax, as pointed out by Chris Tancredi (personal communication). I leave the problem open.

(see, e.g., Jackendoff 1990, 1992, 1997). If this is the case, the levels of LF and conceptual structure, both of which are independently necessary, are not mere notational variants, but are separate linguistic levels in which different aspects of meaning are determined and different types of grammatical operations are carried out.

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VERBS OF INHERENTLY DIRECTED MOTION ARE COMPATIBLE WITH RESULTATIVE PHRASES

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Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) (henceforth L&RH) show that resultative predication serves as a diagnostic for unaccusativity in English: if a resultative can be predicated of the single argument of a monadic verb, that verb is unaccusative. However, they point out that if a monadic verb cannot occur with a resultative, it does not necessarily follow that the verb in question is not unaccusative. For example, they conclude on the basis of (1) that the subclass of unaccusatives they call *verbs of inherently directed motion* (henceforth VIDMs) are incompatible with resultatives for independent reasons.

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