

# Squibs and Discussion

A NONARGUMENT FOR SMALL  
CLAUSES AS CONSTITUENTS  
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There are some extremely compelling arguments—most notably those adduced by Chung and McCloskey (1987)—that small clauses are constituents, made up of a subject and a nonverbal predicate (Stowell 1981, 1983). Although I find these arguments convincing, another argument is occasionally cited, that of Safir (1983), and it is this argument that I examine here. I believe that Safir's data do not diagnose small clausehood along the lines he proposes; rather, they suggest a problem with viewing agreement as a purely formal, feature-checking phenomenon, as in Chomsky 1993.

Safir's argument concerns the existence of sentences with apparently plural subjects but singular verb agreement, as in (1a) and (1b) (Safir's (12a) and (12b), respectively).

- (1) a. Workers angry about the pay is just the sort of situation that the ad campaign was designed to avoid.
- b. Workers angry about the pay does indeed seem to be just the sort of situation that the ad campaign was designed to avoid.

As Safir notes, the acceptable disparity between apparently plural subjects and singular verb agreement is restricted to sentences in which the predicate takes a subject that is interpreted as a situation. When the predicate takes a subject that is interpreted as an individual or a set of individuals, normal subject-verb agreement is required. ((2) is Safir's (12c).)

- (2) \*Workers angry about the pay pleases Maybelle immensely.

Safir further notes that, as is well known, non-NPs (or DPs) can occur as subjects. ((3a–b) are Safir's (8a–b), respectively.)

- (3) a. Under the bed seemed to be a cozy spot.
- b. Angry/Unwanted seems to be a terrible way to feel.

Safir's argument thus runs as follows: since nonnominals can occur as subjects, we can account for the failure of verb agreement in such sentences as (1) by positing that the subject of (1) is not an NP or a DP, but a small clause, as in (4).

- (4) He found [<sub>SC</sub> workers [<sub>AP</sub> angry about the pay]].

Given that the verb agrees with the head of its subject, and given that the head of a small clause is its predicate, rather than its subject, the verb in (1) will not agree with the noun *workers*, which does not head the subject. Hence, the apparent agreement mismatch in (1) is claimed to provide an argument for small clause constituency.

However, Safir's small clause analysis fails when we examine a wider range of sentences in which the same agreement pattern obtains with subjects that cannot plausibly be analyzed as anything other than standard NPs or DPs.

- (5) a. Several angry workers is just the sort of situation that the ad campaign was designed to avoid.  
 b. Workers who are angry about the pay is just the sort of situation that the ad campaign was designed to avoid.

The subject in (5a) cannot plausibly be anything other than a garden-variety nominal with a prenominal adjective, and the subject in (5b) cannot plausibly be anything other than a nominal modified by a relative clause. They obviously are not small clauses. (5b) is, however, a paraphrase of (1a), which contains what has usually been called a reduced relative clause; compare (6).

- (6) Workers angry about the pay talk(\*s) to me on a regular basis.

To sum up, the apparent agreement mismatch that Safir adduces as evidence for small clause constituency in fact does not constitute such evidence. Although the precopular material is obviously a constituent, it does not seem to be anything other than a DP. The actual analysis of this mismatching pattern is of interest because it poses problems for a purely syntactic view of agreement, in which agreement is a purely formal checking relation between a head and an element in its specifier position, as in Chomsky 1993. It seems that agreement must be at least partly semantic in nature, as in Dowty and Jacobson 1989.

### References

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A-TEMPLATIC REDUPLICATION  
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In this squib I discuss an unusual type of reduplication in which the reduplicant varies not only in terms of its phonemic composition but also in terms of its prosodic shape. The variability in the shape of the reduplicant results from a grammar that does not impose any constraint particular to the shape of the reduplicant per se. Further, I demonstrate that even in cases where the reduplicant is shape invariant, this shape may also arise from a grammar that does not impose a constraint on the form of the reduplicant. In both cases all relevant aspects of the reduplicant's realization arise from constraints that apply to the language in general.

### 1 Templatic Reduplication

In the theory of word formation, the program of Prosodic Morphology (McCarthy and Prince 1986) has established that grammatical categories, usually in the domain of root-and-pattern and reduplicative morphology, are often expressed by invariant prosodic shapes or *templates*. The central claim of the program, known as the Prosodic Morphology Hypothesis, is that these “[t]emplates are defined in terms of the authentic units of prosody: mora ( $\mu$ ), syllable ( $\sigma$ ), foot (F), prosodic word (PrWd)” (McCarthy and Prince 1995b:318).

There are two well-documented species of templatic specification: templatic specification of the affix and templatic specification of the base. Templatic specification of the affix is found in ordinary reduplication, where the morphology imposes an invariant shape on the reduplicative affix (Marantz 1982). In Ilokano, for example, the morphological category carrying the meaning ‘covered/filled with a *Noun*’ is expressed by prefixing a reduplicant specified to be a light syllable, as in (1a). Compare this with the heavy syllable template of the reduplicant in the plural, as in (1b). Data are drawn from McCarthy and Prince 1995b; McCarthy and Prince cite Hayes and Abad 1989 as their source.

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