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Interjections select and project

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Although interjections are often considered syntactically uninteresting (Sapir 1921:5, Baker 2003: 24), this consensus may be changing. Corver (2015) shows that Dutch interjections can enter into larger structures, including phrase-structurally regular “clusters”. This suggests that interjections may be syntactically regular generally—governed largely or entirely by the same syntactic principles as everything else. This squib pushes that view further, arguing that interjections take complements and project, like Ns/Vs/As/Ps.

The claim that interjections can take complements is also made by Rodríguez Ramalle (2007). However, she focuses on the semantics and pragmatics of the relevant structures, and does not provide syntactic evidence that the relevant post-interjection XPs are actually complements. This squib will do just that.

In some English idiolects, an Interj(ection) can colloquially be followed by a with-PP or that-CP (attested examples below; URLs at end):

(1) a. . . . wow [with the level of idiocy the Angel baserunners have shown] . . .
   b. . . . wow [that they already have copies] . . .

(2) a. A: . . . really should be ‘Tristan’ . . . I advise you to edit that.
   B: . . . yea whoops [with that] . . .
   b. whoops [that I don’t have anything fun to say].

(3) a. oops [with my Republic/Purge mix-up].
   b. oops [that I only just found your friend request. . . ]!

(4) a. So . . . whoop-de-do [with this rule]?
   b. . . . whoop-de-doo [that you got tickets] . . .

   b. Also, damn [that I missed it].

(6) a. . . . yuck [with the Amber Rose pictures] . . .
   b. Cool that you have deer, yuck [that they poop].

Are these with-PPs/that-CPs complements or adjuncts? The former hypothesis makes several correct predictions.

First, their category should be selected. It is; other categories are out:

(7) *Wow/*Whoops {{NP club president}/
                   [AP fond of Debbie]/
                   [AdvP carelessly]/
                   [vP/VP {eat/eats/ate/eating/eaten pie}]!}
Secondly, their heads should be selected. They are:

(8) Wow {with/*for/*from/*in/*by/*of} her opinions!
(9) Wow {that she left/*for her to leave/*whether she left}!

Mexican Spanish interjections can also select the head of a following PP:

(10) Ay [de/*en/*por/*para/*sobre ti]!
    oh [of/*in/*for/*for/*on.top.of you]
    ‘Woe unto you!’

(11) Caramba [contigo/*de/*en/*por/*para/*sobre ti]!
    goddammit [with.you/*of/*in/*for/*for/*on.top.of you]
    ‘Goddammit with you!’

Third, the with-PPs/that-CPs should, unlike adjuncts, be un-iterable. They are:

(12) a. *Wow [with her political views] [with her opinions about Obama]!
b. *Wow [that she left] [that she stormed out]!
(13) a. *Wow [with her departure] [that she left]!
b. *Wow [that she left] [with her departure]!

Interj, then, selects a with-PP/that-CP as its complement. We therefore expect it, not the with-PP/that-CP, to project. If [Interj PP_{with}/CP_{that}] is an InterjP (not a larger PP_{with}/CP_{that}), it should pattern distributionally like an intransitive interjection. This is correct:

(14) a. (If she did THAT, then) wow (with her bravery/that she’s so brave)!
b. Whoops (with my slip-up/that I did that)!

By contrast, [Interj PP_{with}/CP_{that}] should not pattern distributionally like a with-PP/that-CP. This is correct:

(15) a. I {spoke/ate} (*wow) [with that astrophysicist].
b. He took issue (*whoops) [with my carelessness].
(16) a. He said (*wow) [that he was leaving].
b. I concluded (*whoops) [that he’d tripped].

Examples (15-16) also show that, in [Interj PP_{with}/CP_{that}], Interj is not left-adjointed to PP_{with}/CP_{that}.

Interjections, then, select complements and project InterjPs, further supporting the hypothesis that they are syntactically regular (Corver 2015).

Sources of attested examples

http://www.sarahjio.com/2011/07/05/advanced-copies-of-the-bungalow-are-here/
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