

# snippets

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## EDITORIAL STATEMENT

### 1. Purpose.

The aim of *Snippets* is to publish specific remarks that motivate research or that make theoretical points germane to current work. The ideal contribution is the ideal footnote: a side remark that taken on its own is not worth lengthy development but that needs to be said. One encounters many short comments of this kind in the literature of the seventies. We feel that there no longer is a forum for them. We want *Snippets* to help fill that gap.

### 2. Content.

We will publish notes that contribute to the study of syntax and semantics in generative grammar. The notes are to be brief, self-contained and explicit. They may do any of the following things:

- point out an empirical phenomenon that goes against accepted generalizations or that shows that some aspect of a theory is problematic;
- point out unnoticed minimal pairs that fall outside the scope of any existing theory;
- point out an empirical phenomenon that confirms the predictions of a theory in an area where the theory has not been tested;
- explicitly describe technical inconsistencies in a theory or in a set of frequently adopted assumptions;
- explicitly describe unnoticed assumptions that underlie a theory or assumptions that a theory needs to be supplemented with in order to make desired predictions;
- call attention to little-known or forgotten literature in which issues of immediate relevance are discussed.

We also encourage submissions that connect psycholinguistic data to theoretical issues. A proposal for a pilot experiment in language acquisition or language processing could make for an excellent snippet.

The earliest Linguistic Inquiry squibs exemplify the kind of note we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in LI 1:1 ("A Problem of Adverb Preposing") noted that whether or not we can construe a sentence-initial temporal adverb with an embedded verb depends on the tense of the matrix verb. A squib by Perlmutter and Ross in LI 1:3 ("Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents"), challenging the prevailing analyses of coordination and extraposition, noted that conjoined clauses neither of which contain a plural noun phrase can appear next to an "extraposed" relative that can only describe groups. Other squibs drew attention to particular theoretical assumptions. For instance, a squib by Bresnan in LI 1:2 ("A Grammatical Fiction") outlined an alternative account of the derivation of sentences containing believe and force, and asked whether there were principled reasons for dismissing any of the underlying assumptions (among them that semantic interpretation is sensitive to details of a syntactic derivation). A squib by Zwicky in LI 1:2 ("Class Complements in Phonology") asked to what extent phonological rules refer to complements of classes. None of these squibs was more than a couple of paragraphs; all of them limited themselves to a precise question or observation.

### **3. Submission details.**

*Snippets* is an electronic journal. We will solicit submissions twice a year: the submission deadlines are April 1 and October 1. The submissions that we accept will be posted on the journal website approximately 3 months after each deadline, and all accepted submissions will remain permanently on the website.

*Snippets* is intended as a service to the linguistics community. Consequently, authors are advised that, when they submit to *Snippets*, we understand them as allowing their submission to be reproduced if published. At the same time, the rights for the notes themselves will remain with the authors. As a result, citation of *Snippets* material will have to indicate the author's name and the specific source of the material.

We will accept electronic submissions at the address [snippets@unimi.it](mailto:snippets@unimi.it). Electronic submissions may take the form of (a) the text of an e-mail message, or (b) an attached file. The attached file should be a simple text file, a Word file (Mac or Windows), or a Rich Text Format (RTF) file. All submissions must state the name and affiliation of the author(s), and a (postal or electronic) return address.

Submissions are to be a maximum of 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables and references. Given that we envision the submissions themselves as footnotes, the submissions may not contain footnotes of their own. The ideal submission is one paragraph; a submission of five lines is perfectly acceptable. We will not consider abstracts.

### **4. Editorial policy.**

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of the submission deadline, we will only provide a yes/no response to the submitter. We will not request revisions (barring exceptional cases). We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

# 1.

## **Daniel Altshuler - University of California, Los Angeles** ***A simultaneous perception of things: SOT in Russian***

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Previous research on the interpretation of embedded tense in Russian has investigated the complements of verbs like “say” and “believe”. In this snippet, I present data showing that the complements of perception verbs may behave differently. I point out a fact that has not received attention in the literature: in Russian, the Sequence of Tense (SOT) phenomenon is found specifically with perception verbs.

It is generally accepted in the literature that the embedded Russian Present provides simultaneous readings while the embedded Russian Past provides past shifted readings when the matrix is Past. For example, consider the following from Kondrashova (1998: 8):

- (1) Maša skazala, što Vova spit.  
Masha say-past that Vova sleep-present  
“Masha said that Vova was sleeping.”
- (2) Maša skazala, što Vova spal.  
Masha say-past that Vova sleep-past  
“Masha said that Vova had been sleeping.”

In (1), only a simultaneous reading is available and in (2), only a past shifted reading is available. Kondrashova claims that this shows that Russian complement clauses do not exhibit SOT effects. However, consider the following:

- (3) Dina videla, što/kak voda l’etsja iz vedra.  
Dina see-past that/how water pour-present from bucket  
“Dina saw that/how the water was pouring from the bucket.”
- (4) Dina videla, što/kak voda lilas’ iz vedra.  
Dina see-past that/how water pour-past from bucket  
“Dina saw that/how the water was pouring from the bucket.”

In (3) and (4), there is a simultaneous reading available; (3) has an optional double access interpretation (i.e. the water is also spilling at the utterance time) whereas (4) does not. The available interpretation in (3) is not surprising, but the fact that (4) exemplifies a vacuous past tense morpheme in a complement clause suggests that the position taken in Stowell 1995, Kondrashova 1998, Kusumoto 1999, Schlenker 2003, among many others who conclude that there is no SOT in Russian, is empirically inadequate. That is, (4) suggests that (unlike in English) the SOT phe-

nomenon in Russian depends on semantic properties of the embedding verb. The question, then, is: what is so special about the semantic properties of perception verbs?

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## 2.

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### ***\*So weird a baffling construction***

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Although English determiners typically precede adjectives, as in (1), the determiner may follow the sequence ‘degree-word + adjective,’ as in (2).

- (1) a. a (less) fancy car  
b. a (less) shabby house  
c. a (less) beautiful day
- (2) a. so fancy a car  
b. too shabby a house  
c. as beautiful a day

Kennedy and Merchant (2000) offer an analysis of this unusual word order in which the degree word and adjective form a degree phrase adjoined to NP, which raises to a projection above the DP.

- (3) [FP [DegP so fancy]<sub>i</sub> (of) [DP a [NP t<sub>i</sub> [NP car]]]]

Adjective phrases can be iterative, all being individually adjoined to NP:

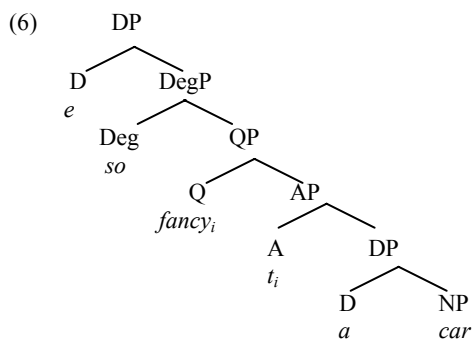
- (4) a. a (less) fancy American car  
b. a (less) shabby expensive house  
c. a (less) beautiful sunny day

Without any additional assumptions, the ungrammaticality of (5), with a second adjective, is unexpected under this analysis.

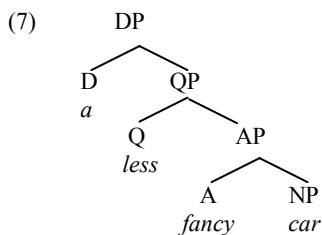
- (5) a. \*so fancy an American car  
b. \*too shabby an expensive house  
c. \*as beautiful a sunny day

Lilley 2001 proposes an analysis which, at first, seems to account for these data. Lilley assigns to the phrase *so fancy a car* the structure in (6), which he attributes to Delsing 1993, and Bresnan’s (1973) and Corver’s (1997) insight concerning the distinction between the categories Deg and Q.

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Lilley requires, based on Higginbotham 1985, that every N be theta-bound by a D and every D theta-bind an N. According to his analysis, Deg, but not Q, blocks this theta-binding. So in (6), A can take a DP complement to house *a* in a position from which it can theta-bind *car*. In a DP without Deg, like (1a), the determiner appears in the higher DP, and the lower one is not projected, as shown in (7).



Taken at face value, the analysis seems to correctly predict the ungrammaticality of (5), since the only positions for D are above all modifiers and below all modifiers, but not between modifiers. But, given that A can take a DP complement, as in (6), and D can take an AP complement, as in (7), nothing prevents the structure in (8).

(8) [DP e [DegP so [AP fancy [DP an [AP American [NP car]]]]]]

Furthermore, as we have seen in (4), adjective phrases can be iterative. Besides general issues of scope of Deg and Q in (6) (Julien 2002: 269), nothing syntactic can prevent the iteration of a second adjective phrase above the lower DP in (8), which is ungrammatical in English:

(9) \* so fancy American a car

Although the first type of analysis can account for the ungrammaticality of (9), neither of the two analyses we have seen for the constructions in (2) correctly accounts for the ungrammaticality of (5).



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### 3.

#### **Stefan Müller - University of Bremen** **Complex NPs, subjacency, and extraposition**

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Chomsky (1986, p. 40) argues that *t* in (1) cannot be the source of the extraposition and explains this by the principle of subjacency which says that only one barrier may be crossed by extraposition. See also Baltin 1981 on extraposition and subjacency.

- (1) a. [<sub>NP</sub> Many books [<sub>PP</sub> with [stories *t*]] *t'*] were sold [that I wanted to read].  
b. [<sub>NP</sub> Many proofs [<sub>PP</sub> of [the theorem *t*]] *t'*] appeared [that I wanted to think about].

Grewendorf (1988, p. 281), Haider (1996, p.261) and Rohrer (1996, p.103) assumed that subjacency also plays a role for extraposition in German, but if one substitutes the head noun in (1) in a way that reduces attachment ambiguities these examples can be translated to German without resulting in unacceptable sentences:

- (2) weil viele Schallplatten mit Geschichten verkauft wurden, die ich noch lesen wollte.  
because many records with stories sold were that I yet read wanted  
'because many records with stories that I wanted to read were sold.'

A plausible context for (2) would be a situation where the speaker goes to a record shop and certain records remind him that he wanted to buy the respective books to read the stories. In general, there seems to be no upper limit for the number of phrase nodes that may be crossed by dislocation to the right:

- (3) Karl hat mir [eine Kopie [einer Fälschung [des Bildes [einer Frau *t*<sub>i</sub>]]]] gegeben,  
[die schon lange tot ist]<sub>i</sub>.  
'Karl gave me a copy of a forgery of the picture of a woman who has been dead for a long time.'

As (3) shows, relative clauses can be extraposed from an arbitrarily deeply embedded NP. Note that the examples are constructed in a way that excludes all other attachments. For semantic reasons the relative clause can only refer to Frau ('woman'). Similarly, complement clauses can be extraposed from an arbitrarily deeply embedded NP:

- (4) Ich habe [von [dem Versuch [eines Beweises [der Vermutung *t*<sub>i</sub>]]]] gehört, [daß es Zahlen gibt, die die folgenden Bedingungen erfüllen]<sub>i</sub>.  
I have of the attempt of a proof of the assumption heard that it numbers gives that the following conditions satisfy  
'I have heard of the attempt to prove the assumption that there are numbers for which the following conditions hold.'

The example in (5) is a corpus example where a sentential complement is extraposed over two NP borders:

- (5) Für das Volk der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik ist dabei [die einmütige Bekräftigung [der Auffassung  $t_i$ ]] wichtig, [daß es die Interessen des Friedens und der Sicherheit erfordern, daß [...]]<sub>i</sub>. (Neues Deutschland, 06.12.1969, p.1)  
'...the unanimous confirmation of the opinion ... that the interests of peace and security require that [...]

The data seem to show that Ross' Complex NP Constraint (Ross 1967) does not universally hold for movement to the right and that subjacency is not universally relevant for this type of movement either. Movement to the right differs from movement to the left in that it is clause bounded, i.e., extraposed material may not leave finite clauses or projections of *zu* infinitives in so-called incoherent constructions in German (Haider 1991, p.4), but this boundedness can not be explained by the Subjacency Principle with reference to maximal projections of arbitrary syntactic categories.

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#### 4.

**Mark Volpe** *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

#### *Affected object unergatives*

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In this snippet à la Eminem, I try cleaning out a skeleton-containing closet, this one from late 20th century linguistic theory. The issue that still lingers is the lexical semantics of the verbs *eat*, *drink*, *read*, *write* and *smoke*. Although generally regarded as transitive verbs, unlike true transitives they optionally appear without their “sub-categorized arguments”, e.g., *I eat sashimi* vs. *I eat*.

I argue that such verbs are unergatives belonging to Perlmutter 1978’s volitional acts subclass, e.g., *dance* and *run*. Note that unlike recognized unergatives, *eat* and several of its kin do not have cognate objects. One can say *to dance a dance*, but there is no equivalent for *eat*. Cross-linguistically, however, one often finds *eat-class* unergatives with cognate objects, e.g., Turkish:

- (1) Yazi yazmak.  
written-thing write.  
‘To write.’
- (2) Yemek yemek.  
edible-thing eat  
‘To eat.’ (Thomas, 1967: 129)

In their intransitive forms, there is a typically a cultural dimension to their interpretation; *to dance* means to move the body in a manner recognized as a dance; *to eat* means to consume something recognized as food. Naturally, interpretations of what constitutes a dance or food are culturally determined.

Transitive versions of the verbs *dance* and *eat* are analogous. *To dance the tango* and *to eat sashimi* have post-verbal NPs that are just more specific examples of a dance and food, respectively. Submission of *eat-class* unergatives to two resultative diagnostics that discriminate transitives from unergatives supports my case.

The DIRECT OBJECT RESTRICTION (Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995: 33) requires all resultatives to be predicated of immediately post-verbal NPs in English. Despite the terminology, not all are Direct Objects:

#### Transitive Resultatives

- (3) The boxer punched his opponent senseless.

Unergatives require a “dummy reflexive” to syntactically save the construction:

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#### Unergative Resultatives

- (4) They danced themselves unconscious.
- (5) They laughed themselves sober.

*Eat-class* unergatives also require such a reflexive. With its “subcategorized argument”, *eat* is unacceptable, a paradox for the view that it is transitive. Only an unaffected object such as *bowl*, below, saves it, similar to the role of the reflexive:

#### Eat-Class Resultatives

- (6) He ate himself comatose
- (7) She read herself blind.
- (8) She ate the bowl/\*rice empty.

Examples 9, 10, and 11 again show *eat-class* verbs conforming to unergatives:

#### Transitive Nominalizations

- (9) The watering of tulips flat is a criminal offense in Holland.  
(Carrier and Randall, 1992: 201).

#### Unergative Nominalizations

- (10) \*The dancing of oneself unconscious is highly admired by denizens of Manhattan’s discos.

#### Eat-Class Nominalizations

- (11) \*The drinking of oneself stupefied is a popular pastime among linguists.

There is one apparent problem, however. Chomsky (1986: 9) notes the contrast between *a dancing bear* and *\*an eating man*. This pinpoints a significant distinction. The *eat-class*, in contrast with recognized unergatives, takes internal arguments that are concrete. I suggest that, as is the case with true transitives, these objects are affected in some relevant sense, and therefore, like transitive verbs, need to specify an internal argument in participial adjective constructions, e.g., *a flesh-eating man* (cf. transitive: *a bunker-destroying missile/\*a destroying missile*).

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## 5.

### Roberto Zamparelli - *Università di Bergamo* *On the thickness of plurals*

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Theories on the denotation of plural noun phrases come in two shapes: “flat” and “nesting”. The two theories assign the same denotations to relatively simple plural NPs such as *the boys* or *John and Mary*, but differ in more complex cases where plural NPs are syntactically embedded under a coordination. For instance, assuming that simple plurals denote sets and that the model contains 3 pigs, P1, P2 and P3, and 3 cows, C1, C2, C3 ((1a)), a flat theory always returns (1b), while the nesting theory returns a set of (sets of ...) sets which semantically mimics the level of syntactic embedding ((1c)):

- (1) a. [the cows] = {C1, C2, C3}, [the pigs] = {P1, P2, P3} (flat or nested)  
b. [[the cows] and [the pigs]] = {C1, C2, C3, P1, P2, P3} (flat)  
c. [[the cows] and [the pigs]] = {{C1, C2, C3}, {P1, P2, P3}} (nested)

If binary branching and strict compositionality are assumed, the gap between the two denotations widens, since (2a) with structure (2b) (marking the comma as “&”, an empty conjunction head) receives the nesting meaning (2c). Since we want to be able to deduce from (2a) that Sue, Mary, Bill and John (or any other order of conjuncts) left, it follows that in the nesting theory plural predicates need to be true of all the possible “nestings” of a plurality whenever they are true of its flat representation (i.e. {j, b, m, s}) (see Lasersohn 1995).

- (2) a. John, Bill, Mary and Sue left.  
b. [John & [Bill & [Mary and Sue]]] left  
c. left ( {j, {b, {m, s}}} )

Nested representations are cumbersome and, as such, undesirable. One well-known argument in favour of their existence comes from examples like (3), where the nested structure appears to model linguistic intuitions better than the flat one: the verb *separate* can directly apply to the distinct sets of pigs and cows contained in the outer conjunction; in a flat structure, the structure itself does not make clear that the separation is according to species.

- (3) The pigs and the cows were separated.  
separated ( { {...pigs...}, {...cows...} } )

However, Schwarzschild (1992,1996) points out that the effect in (3) may easily be overridden by means of additional modifiers (cf. (4)). This strongly suggests that a

flat structure might after all be sufficient, provided we have a pragmatic system to impose partitions – or covers – “on the fly” over a flat plurality. A similar point is made by (5) (modified from Gillon 1987), one possible meaning of which could not reflect syntactic nesting.

- (4) The pigs and the cows were separated BY AGE.  
(young animals on one side, old animals on the other)
- (5) Rodgers, Hammerstein and Hart wrote whole musicals.  
possible meaning: write-w-m'(Rod,Ham) AND write-w-m'(Rod,Har)

The goal of this squib is to draw attention to another case, where a nested representation seems unavoidable. Consider (6a).

- (6) a. Serena and [Serena and Venus] will play on Tuesday and Wednesday.  
b. Serena and Venus will play on Tuesday and Wednesday.

If semantic representations feed pragmatic ones (as seems desirable in a modular system), and if we have a flat plural structure, (6a) ends up having the semantics for plurals expected for (6b) under any account, i.e.  $\{s, v\}$ . Yet no amount of pragmatic accommodation can make (6b) mean (6a) (a single and a double match), despite the fact that  $\{s\}, \{s, v\}$  is indeed a possible cover for [Serena and Venus] in (6b). A nested structure gets the right result here (i.e.  $\{s, \{s, v\}\}$ ). In addition, a nesting account can explain why (7) is worse than (6b) (despite their syntactic similarity), since here the two  $\{s, v\}$  sets do collapse:

- (7) ??[Serena and Venus] and [Venus and Serena] will play on Tuesday  
and Wednesday.  
=  $\text{play\_on\_T/W}(\{\{v, s\}, \{s, v\}\}) = \text{play\_on\_T/W}(\{\{s, v\}\})$

Should we then go back to nested meanings with all their complexities? Not in all cases. One possibility is to assume that syntactically nested pluralities do have nested denotations, but that human languages have a type-shifting operator which flattens nested pluralities when necessary. This operator might be a last-resource device to cure predicate / argument mismatches in cases like (5), but it might also be obligatorily associated with ‘comma conjunctions’ like those in (2b), given the fact that cases like (6a) are impossible without a phonological spell-out of the first “and”.

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## 6.

### Ed Zoerner - California State University – Dominguez Hills *Gapping of copular be and [Spec, CP]*

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Compared to other verbs of English, copular *be* has a rich inflectional paradigm. This creates possible morphological “mismatches” in Gapping constructions. Note that (1), with morphologically identical Gapped verbs, improves on (2):

- (1) a. Kim is a syntactician, and Dana ~~is~~ a phonologist
- b. You<sub>1</sub> are incredibly inconsiderate, and you<sub>2</sub> ~~are~~ incredibly vain
- c. I was unhappy, and Terry ~~was~~ distraught
  
- (2) a. ?The teacher is stern, and the students ~~are~~ frightened
- b. ?I am a good syntactician, and Kim ~~is~~ a famous phonologist
- c. ?You were unhappy, and Sandy ~~was~~ distraught

The above contrast strengthens if the form of *be* undergoes I-to-C movement in question formation (apparently, for some speakers, the contrast is not equally strong in all the examples in (4)):

- (3) a. Is Kim a syntactician, and Dana a phonologist?
- b. Are you<sub>1</sub> really so inconsiderate and you<sub>2</sub> really so vain?
- c. Was I really so unhappy, and Sandy so distraught?
  
- (4) a. \*Is the teacher so stern, and the students so frightened?
- b. \*Am I a good syntactician, and Kim a famous phonologist?
- c. \*Were you unhappy, and Sandy distraught?

Interestingly, though, (for many speakers) forms such as in (4) improve if a *wh*-phrase occupies the [Spec, CP] of the first clause:

- (5) a. Why is the teacher so stern, and the students so frightened?
- b. How/In what way am I a good syntactician, and Kim a famous phonologist?
- c. Where/why were you unhappy, and Sandy distraught?

I-to-C movement of a “mismatched” Gapped copular *be* also proves successful in constructions involving preposed negative adverbials (which we assume occupy [Spec, CP]):

- (6) a. Never is the teacher stern, (n)or the students frightened
- b. In no way am I a good syntactician, or Kim a famous phonologist
- c. Very rarely were you unhappy, or Sandy distraught



In addition, presence of a phrase in [Spec, CP] in what Radford 1989 calls “resultative preposing” constructions seems to enable successful I-to-C movement of a mismatched Gapped copular *be*. So the following all sound better than the forms in (4) do:

- (7) a. So stern is the teacher, and so frightened the students, that the principal had to intervene
- b. Such a good syntactician am I, and so good a phonologist Kim, that we will both be promoted
- c. So unhappy were you, and so distraught Sandy, that no clown could brighten the day

So we have the following puzzle: a Gapped form of *be* that does not match its non-Gapped counterpart morphologically proves slightly degraded (as in (2)), and matters become worse if the non-Gapped instance of *be* undergoes I-to-C movement (as in (4)). However, the presence of an element -- apparently any element -- in [Spec, CP] ameliorates the problem of such I-to-C movement. Just why a filled [Spec, CP] position should have such an interaction with Gapping constructions merits further investigation.

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## EDITORIAL STATEMENT

### 1. Purpose.

The aim of *Snippets* is to publish specific remarks that motivate research or that make theoretical points germane to current work. The ideal contribution is the ideal footnote: a side remark that taken on its own is not worth lengthy development but that needs to be said.

The best examples of what we have in mind are the earliest *Linguistic Inquiry* squibs. Some of these posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in LI 1:1 (“A Problem of Adverb Preposing”) noted that whether or not we can construe a sentence-initial temporal adverb with an embedded verb depends on the tense of the matrix verb. A squib by Perlmutter and Ross in LI 1:3 (“Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents”), challenging the prevailing analyses of coordination and extraposition, noted that conjoined clauses neither of which contain a plural noun phrase can appear next to an “extraposed” relative that can only describe by Bresnan in LI 1:2 (“A Grammatical Fiction”) outlined an alternative account of the derivation of sentences containing *believe* and *force*, and asked whether there were principled reasons for groups. Other squibs drew attention to particular theoretical assumptions. For instance, a squib dismissing any of the underlying assumptions (among them that semantic interpretation is sensitive to details of a syntactic derivation). A squib by Zwicky in LI 1:2 (“Class Complements in Phonology”) asked to what extent phonological rules refer to complements of classes. None of these squibs was more than a couple of paragraphs; all of them limited themselves to a precise question or observation.

One encounters many short comments of this kind in the literature of the seventies. We feel that there no longer is a forum for them. We want *Snippets* to help fill that gap.

### 2. Content.

We will publish notes that contribute to the study of **syntax and semantics in generative grammar**. The notes are to be brief, self-contained and explicit. They may do any of the following things:

- point out an empirical phenomenon that goes against accepted generalizations or that shows that some aspect of a theory is problematic;
- point out unnoticed minimal pairs that fall outside the scope of any existing theory;
- point out an empirical phenomenon that confirms the predictions of a theory in an area where the theory has not been tested;
- explicitly describe technical inconsistencies in a theory or in a set of frequently adopted assumptions;
- explicitly describe unnoticed assumptions that underlie a theory or assumptions that a theory needs to be supplemented with in order to make desired predictions;
- propose an idea for a pilot experiment in language acquisition or language processing that directly bears on theoretical issues;
- call attention to little-known or forgotten literature in which issues of immediate relevance are discussed.

### 3. Submission details.

We will solicit submissions issue by issue. A new submission deadline will be announced for each issue, and the submissions that we receive we will consider only for that issue. The submissions that we accept will be printed in the upcoming issue; none will be scheduled for a later issue.

It is important to us that readers will be able to copy the newsletter and freely distribute its content. Consequently, authors are advised that, when they submit to *Snippets*, we understand them as allowing their submission to be reproduced if published. At the same time, the rights for the notes themselves will remain with the authors. As a result, citation of *Snippets* material will have to indicate the author's name and the specific source of the material.

Submissions are to be a **maximum** of 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables and references. Given that we envision the submissions themselves as footnotes, **the submissions may not contain footnotes of their own**. The ideal submission is one paragraph; a submission of five lines is perfectly acceptable. **We will not consider abstracts.**

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We strongly encourage electronic submissions. Electronic submissions may take the form of (a) the text of an e-mail message, or (b) an attached file. The attached file should be a simple text file, a Word file (Mac or Windows), or a Rich Text Format (RTF) file.

All submissions must state the name and affiliation of the author(s), and a (postal or electronic) return address.

### 4. Editorial policy.

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of submission, **we will only provide a yes/no response to the submitter**. We will not request revisions (barring exceptional cases). Space constraints mean that we may reject a large proportion of submissions, but with this in mind we allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

## 5. Distribution.

Our initial plan is to publish 2 or 3 times a year, with a maximum of 10 pages for each edition. Our goal in publishing the newsletter is to provide a service to the linguistics community, and *Snippets* will therefore be **free of charge**. There will be a limited number of copies, which we will send to institutions on request. Individuals who wish to take advantage of the newsletter should therefore ask their institutions to request a copy, and make their own copy of the institution's version. Individuals who are not affiliated with an institution and do not have access to the web version of the newsletter can request copies by writing to us at the postal address above. Further questions should be addressed to [snippets@unimi.it](mailto:snippets@unimi.it).

# 1.

**Daniel Büring - UCLA**

***2 x Singular ≠ Plural***

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It is commonly assumed that coordinated singular NPs have the same distribution as proper plural NPs, as illustrated by the following examples from German and English: Coordinated singular NPs, just like plural NPs, and unlike singular proper and singular collective nouns, trigger plural agreement, can occur with inherently collective predicates, and can antecede inherently plural anaphora:

- |        |  |  |                                       |
|--------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| (1) a. | {<br>die Kommissare<br>Schimansky und Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*Die Streife<br>} | nahmen<br>took-PLURAL                    | die Verfolgung auf.<br>the pursuit on |
| b.     | {<br>The detectives<br>Schimansky and Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*The patrol<br>}  | were in pursuit.                         |                                       |
| (2) a. | {<br>die Kommissare<br>Schimansky und Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*Die Streife<br>} | wurde(n) getrennt.<br>was/were separated |                                       |
| b.     | {<br>The detectives<br>Schimansky and Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*The patrol<br>}  | were/*was separated.                     |                                       |
| (3) a. | {<br>die Kommissare<br>Schimansky und Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*Die Streife<br>} | kannte(n) einander.<br>knew each other   |                                       |
| b.     | {<br>The detectives<br>Schimansky and Tanner<br>*Schimansky<br>*The patrol<br>}  | knew each other.                         |                                       |

Many current theories thus agree that coordinated singular NPs and inherent plural NPs are of the same syntactic category and denote semantic objects of the same type.

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It is therefore genuinely unexpected and, within the realm of such theories inexplicable, to find a construction in which one, but not the other, can occur. This, however, is the case in the *one of*, German *einer von*, construction. The complement of *one of* can be a plural NP, but not two coordinated singular NPs (it also can't be a singular NP, collective or not):

- |        |                      |  |   |
|--------|----------------------|--|---|
| (4) a. | Einer von<br>One of  | {<br>uns<br>den Kommissaren<br>}               | fing den Bösewicht.<br>caught the villain                   |
| b.     | One of               | {<br>us<br>the detectives<br>}                 | caught the villain.   |
| (5) a. | *Einer von<br>One of | {<br>dir und mir<br>Schimansky und Tanner<br>} | hat die Currywurst gegessen.<br>has the curry-sausage eaten |
| b.     | *One of              | {<br>you and me<br>Schimansky and Tanner<br>}  | ate the curry spiced sausage.                               |

Two coordinated plural NPs in this position seem to be better. While I am not sure about the proper interpretation of the conjoined NPs, the disjoint NPs sound perfect:

- (6) a. Einer von den Kommissaren oder /<sup>?</sup>und den Streifenpolizisten bestellte ein Bier.  
 b. One of the detectives or /<sup>?</sup>and the street cops ordered a beer.

The existence of this contrast appears to pose a genuine challenge to the idea that coordinated singular NPs are in all relevant respects identical to plural NPs. It also raises the question what about the *one of* construction sets it apart from contexts like (1)-(3), and whether there are other constructions where the coordinated singular/plural distinction yields grammaticality differences.

## 2.

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***A subject must scope***

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Wurmbrand (1998) proposes that the semantic contrast between subject-directed (henceforth simply **directed**) and non-subject-directed (**non-directed**) deontic modals, illustrated in (1), derives from the scope-taking position of the subject.

- (1) a. Students must submit their application forms by next week. (directed)  
b. The application forms must arrive by next week. (non-directed)

In (1a), *must* indicates obligation on the part of the students; in (1b), the modal is still deontic, but the obligation is not assigned to its syntactic subject. According to Wurmbrand (1998: 275), “if the subject is interpreted in the surface position [SpecIP] (in terms of scope), we get the directed root interpretation. If the subject is interpreted in its base position, it is in the scope of the modal verb and we get the non-directed root interpretation.” The relevant structures are in (2).

- (2) a. Directed: SUBJECT > MODAL    b. Non-directed: MODAL > SUBJECT



The predicted correlation between scope and directedness is found in sentences like (3).

- (3) Most of the students must pass the exam...  
a. ... in order to pass the course. (directed)  
b. ... or else the instructor will be disciplined. (non-directed)

(3a) can be paraphrased as ‘For most *s*, *s* a student, *s* is obliged to pass the exam.’ The subject takes wide scope and bears the obligation indicated by the modal. (3b) means ‘It is required that for most *s*, *s* a student, *s* passes the exam.’ The subject

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takes narrow scope, and the modal is non-directed.

However, counterexamples to Wurmbrand's prediction exist:

- (4)
- a. *Most of the students must pass the exam* because their parents are major donors to the university, but there are a few whom the instructor may safely flunk.
  - b. On the journey from Radom to Bialystok, *three rivers must be crossed*, namely the Vistula, the Bug, and the Narew.
  - c. *One squib in this issue can exceed the length limit* because its author has special permission.
  - d. [...] the judge has no choice, *A singer must die* for the lie in his voice. (Cohen 1974)

In (4a), *most of the students* refers to a specific set; however, the deontic *must* is non-directed: 'For most *s*, *s* a student, it is required (of the instructor) that *s* pass the exam'. In (4b), the three rivers can be listed, and in (4c), there is one specific squib whose author has permission to be verbose; in these examples, the inanimate subjects preclude directed readings. Finally, there is a reading of (4d) in which *a singer* is specific, but the obligation belongs to the judge. These data indicate that subjects must be able to take scope independently of whatever structural configuration encodes the difference between directed and non-directed modality.

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### 3.

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#### *Secondary predication in control sentences*

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Depictives are standardly assumed to be part of the verbal phrase, as right-adjunction to V' node or something similar (Larson 1989, Jackendoff 1990, Rapoport 1993, Baylin 2001). The following Slovenian data suggests that such an analysis cannot be maintained.

As seen in (1), depictives can modify the subject. They always agree with their host. There is no restriction on the grammatical case of the host or the adjective.

- (1) Vid<sub>i</sub> je sklenil kupčijo pijan<sub>i</sub>.  
Vid-NOM AUX made a deal-ACC drunk-NOM  
"Vid made a deal drunk"

Depictives also occur in control sentences. They still show agreement with their host argument. In (2), the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix predicate because of its meaning. In (3), although meaning allows it, the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix predicate.

- (2) Vid<sub>i</sub> je sklenil Petri zapustiti hišo mrtev<sub>i</sub>.  
Vid-NOM AUX decided Petra-DAT bequeath-INF house-ACC dead-NOM  
"Vid decided to leave the house to Petra after he dies."
- (3) Vid<sub>i</sub> ji je sklenil zadevo razložiti trezen<sub>i</sub>.  
Vid-NOM her-DAT AUX decided matter-ACC explain-INF sober-NOM  
"Vid decided to present the matter to her when he is sober"  
*✓present sober/ \*decide sober*

The depictive can thus only be interpreted as referring to the infinitival but not to the matrix clause. Only if the depictive comes before the infinitival verb, as in (4), can the matrix predicate be understood as having occurred while Vid was sober.

- (4) Vid<sub>i</sub> ji je trezen<sub>i</sub> sklenil azložiti zadevo.  
Vid-NOM her-DAT AUX sober-NOM decided explain-INF matter-ACC  
*✓decide sober/ ?present sober (\*with neutral intonation)*
-

A right-adjunction analysis predicts the availability of the reading where the depictive is associated with the matrix predicate, but this prediction is not borne out. This is corroborated by (5), which is bad because the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix clause, while an association with the embedded infinitival is infelicitous simply because of its duplicate meaning.

- (5) #??Vid<sub>i</sub> se ga je odločil napiti pijan;  
Vid REFL it AUX decided get-drunkINF drunk  
"Vid decided to get drunk when he is drunk"

It is worth noting that this phenomenon raises the puzzle – familiar from the literature on Icelandic control subjects (Sigurdhsson 1991) – of how the depictive adjective receives case. Specifically, how can the depictive adjective get nominative case if it is actually in agreement with the subject of the embedded infinitival clause, with a PRO in Spec TP? PRO does not have NOM case, rather it has a null-case feature checked by the defective T<sup>0</sup>. It seems reasonable that the depictive cannot get null case, but it is unclear how it gets NOM. We refer the reader to Hornstein 2001 for a promising approach to control structures that might address this problem.

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## 4.

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***The present tense is vacuous***

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This note seeks to argue that the English present tense is itself semantically vacuous and its interpretive effect is characterized entirely by pragmatic competition with other English tense morphemes, notably the past tense.

Assume for the following that I didn't eat on any Tuesday of this month so far, and I've committed not to eat on any Tuesday of this month still coming up. Consider the sentences in (1) in this scenario (Magda Scheiner first pointed out such sentences to me).

- (1)    a. Every Tuesday this month, I fast.  
      b. Every Tuesday this month, I fasted.

The choice between (1a) and (1b) would be determined by the utterance time: Assume that the 26th is the last Tuesday of this month. From the 1st until and including the 26th, I would use the present tense (1a). From the 27th until the last day of the month, I would use the past tense (1b). How can we account for this distribution?

Consider first the meaning of present and past tense in (2) which Abusch (1997) proposes.

- (2)    PRESENT(t): presupposes that t isn't before time of utterance  
      PAST(t): presupposes that t is before the time of utterance

There are two ways (2) could be applied in (1): Since the sentences in (1) involve quantification over subintervals (the Tuesdays) of a bigger interval (this month), we could apply the tense to either the subintervals or the containing interval. Neither way, however, will yield the correct result.

The latter possibility incorrectly predicts that the past tense (1b) should never be possible, and (1a) should always be used because "this month" contains the utterance time.

The former possibility, application to the subinterval, yields the correct result for (1b): (1b) presupposes that every Tuesday of this month is before the utterance time. However for (1a), application to the subinterval of the present tense predicts the presupposition that no Tuesday of this month be before the utterance time.

This incorrectly predicts that (1a) could only be used until the first Tuesday of this month.

To get the correct result, I propose the (non-)meaning of the present tense in (3), while adopting Abusch's proposal for PAST. Assuming (3), (1a) is predicted to not carry any inherent presupposition about the utterance time.

- (3)      PRESENT(t): no presupposition

So far, the new account doesn't seem to predict the presupposition observed above, that (1a) cannot be used after the 26th. However, this follows from Heim's (1991) proposal that a discourse maxim "maximize presupposition" creates scalar implicatures amongst presuppositions. More precisely, I assume the formulation in (4) (cf. Ippolito 2001).

- (4)      Implicated presupposition: If a scalar alternative Y of X has more or stronger inherent presuppositions than X, X presupposes that the inherent presuppositions of Y aren't satisfied.

For the case at hand, assume that <PRESENT, PAST> is a scale. Because (1b) is a scalar alternative of (1a) with more inherent presuppositions, (1a) is predicted to have the implicated presupposition that the inherent presupposition of (1b) be false. This precisely predicts that complementarity we observed above.

It's worth noting that analogous reasoning shows the feature plural in (5a) and the features masculine and 3rd person in (5b) to be semantically vacuous.

- (5)      a.   For each paper, all errors are blamed on its authors (vs. author).  
          b.   Every one of us should admit his (vs. her/my) errors.

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## 5.

### **Chung-chieh Shan - Harvard University** **Temporal versus non-temporal "when"**

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It has been claimed that subordinate "when"-clauses can express non-temporal relations ((1)) as well as temporal ones. In this snippet I will suggest that there is a syntactic contrast between "when"-clauses that express temporal relations and "when"-clauses that do not.

- (1) When they built the 39th Street bridge...
- a. a local architect drew up the plans.
  - b. they used the best materials.
  - c. they solved most of their traffic problems.
- (Moens and Steedman 1987)

As background, bear in mind Geis's (1970) observation that sentences such as (2) are ambiguous: Alice's arrival may coincide with either Beatrice's telling or Charlie's (suggested) leaving. In this discussion, I will assume that the latter, 'long-distance,' reading for sentences like (2) can only arise via extraction of "when" from the lower clause.

- (2) Alice arrived when Beatrice told Charlie that he should leave.

Now consider the following scenario: The speaker is a consultant for a mobile phone company that introduced several new pricing plans last month and is now re-evaluating its marketing strategy. One idea the company came up with and implemented was reducing charges for weekend calls. Poring over network usage statistics, the consultant noted that weekend call volume increased significantly since last month.

- (3) a. Customers make more calls when rates are cheaper – that is, on weekends.  
b. Customers make more calls when we decided (last month) (that) rates would be cheaper – that is, on weekends.

Another innovation of the company was to offer student discounts. The consultant noted that student call volume also increased quite a bit.

- (4) a. Customers make more calls when rates are cheaper – that is, for students.  
b. \*Customers make more calls when we decided (last month) (that) rates would be cheaper – that is, for students.

Why is (4b) bad compared to (3b)? (The judgments are robust if subtle.) I suggest that it is bad because "for students" forces us to construe "when" as non-temporal "when," but at the same time only temporal uses of "when" involve extraction. Potential support for the latter idea comes from the contrast many speakers find between the sentences in (5).

- (5) a. Alice arrived when Beatrice left at midnight.
- b. \*When did Beatrice leave at midnight?

It is interesting to note in this connection that "when"-clauses do not admit long-distance readings when preposed (Sabine Iatridou, p.c.): in (6), Alice's arrival must coincide with Beatrice's telling, and (7) is incompatible with the scenario above. Still assuming that long-distance readings arise from extraction of "when," we might conclude that temporal "when"-clauses are forbidden from preposing. It remains to be explained why.

- (6) When Beatrice told Charlie that he should leave, Alice arrived.
- (7) \* When we decided (last month) (that) rates would be cheaper -  
     that is, on weekends – customers make more calls.

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