snippets

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Contents

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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 brief, self-contained and explicit. One encounters short comments of this kind in earlier literature in linguistics. 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 challenges accepted generalizations or influential theoretical proposals;

- 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 remark we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in *Linguistic Inquiry* 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 contains 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 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 published snippets 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 snippetsjournal@gmail.com. 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), a Rich Text Format (RTF) file, or a PDF. The files must be anonymous, but must be accompanied with information about the authors: name, affiliation, and (postal or electronic) address. Submissions can be of any length below 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables, and references. The submissions may not contain footnotes or general acknowledgments, except acknowledgements of funding sources, which must be credited in a line following the references. Authors who wish to acknowledge language consultants are allowed but not required to do so. We will not consider abstracts.

4. Editorial policy

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

This statement reproduces with minor modifications the editorial statement in Issue 1 of Snippets (January 2000), edited by Carlo Cecchetto, Caterina Donati and Orin Percus.

Subject-Auxiliary inversion in interrogative complex NPs

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Subject-auxiliary inversion in English has canonically been taken to be possible only in main clauses (Emonds 1970). A growing body of more recent literature, however, documents inversion in a variety of non-main clause contexts (McCloskey 2006; see also Green 1996, Goldberg and Del Giudice 2005, Dayal and Grimshaw 2009, Woods 2016). For example, McCloskey (2006) documents attested examples like (1), where inversion occurs in a clause embedded under *wonder*. The occurrence of inversion here depends on the embedding verb: interrogative verbs like *wonder* and *ask* can permit inversion in embedded clauses, while non-interrogative counterparts like *discover* and *find out* do not (McCloskey 2006).

(1)   I wondered [**was he** literate].

This snippet identifies another context where embedded inversion can occur: complex NPs.

(2)   It's really [a question of [$_{CP}$ **what should** we do]].

The example in (2) shows inversion in an embedded clause contained within a nominal headed by *question*. Judgements about these structures vary, but they commonly occur in natural contexts. The examples in (3-5) below were produced spontaneously by native American English speakers in text or speech. (3) shows inversion of *are* in an embedded wh-question; (4) shows inversion of *have* in a yes/no question; (5) shows *do*-support.

(3)   It's really a question of [**what are** the rules].

(4)   It really is a question of [**have they** put in place the institutional mechanisms to control it].

(5)   They never resolved the problem of [**do you** allow friends and next of kin].

Some speakers intuit that examples like (3-5) are quotations, but they do not have the properties of direct quotations. Pronoun reference illustrates this clearly. First-person pronouns in direct quotations refer to the speaker of the quoted utterance – the quotee, not the quoter. But the pronoun in the embedded clause of (6) must refer to the speaker, not the person who asked the question. This embedded clause does not behave like a quotation.

(6)   Let me$_j$ now respond to Leslie's question of [how did I$_{j/*k}$ collect the data].

The availability of inversion in complex NPs parallels the asymmetry between verbs like *wonder* vs. *discover*. Inversion is possible in clauses embedded after *question* (cf. Woods 2016:424), and other nouns that have a similarly interrogative flavor (7). Inversion is unacceptable with nouns that are definitively non-interrogative (8). (Many speakers find both (7) and (8) bad; all English speakers I have consulted find forms like (8) discernably worse.)

(7)   The {**question/query/problem/puzzle**} of [how does an MRI work] is quite complicated.

(8) The {***discovery**/***answer**/***explanation**/***result**} of [how does an MRI work] is quite complicated.

The generalization that only interrogative nouns allow for inversion in complex NPs is problematic for selection-based analyses of embedded inversion. For example, McCloskey (2006) analyzes inversion as T-to-C raising to check a [Q] feature; inversion happens in embedded clauses because verbs like *ask* select for a [Q] C head. But in complex NPs like (7), there is no selectional relationship between *question* and the embedded clause: the embedded CP is not the complement of *question*, being contained inside of a PP. The availability of inversion in these cases cannot be attributed to some quirk of *of* as the P head (e.g. it is not sufficient to say that selection can happen across *of*). The examples in (9) and (10) show that nouns permit inversion in clauses embedded under other P heads, and even other non-P expressions.

(9) Jane posed a question {**about/on/concerning**} [what does the theory actually stipulate].

(10) It's really a puzzle {**about/regarding**} [what are the rules].

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Anatomy of *what* and NUMBER in Japanese

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It has been well known that an inanimate wh-pronoun *nani* in Japanese is optionally contracted to *nan* in colloquial speech if and only if followed by a coronal consonant (Martin 1975, among many others).

(1) **Nan*(i)**-ga **nan(i)**-no jaanaru-ni notta   no?
      what-NOM what-GEN journal-on appeared C
      'What appeared in what journal?'

It has been unnoticed, however, that the same wh-pronoun is obligatorily "contracted" to *nan* in certain cases (actual forms are subject to sequential voicing and gemination).

(2) a. nan(*i)-{kai/pataan/hiki}
          what-{CL_{times}/$CL_{pattern}$/CL_{animal}}
          'how many times/patterns/animal'

      b. nan(*i)-banme
          what-order
          'which (ordinal) number'

      c. nan(*i)-{zyuu/hyaku/sen}
          what-{ten/hundred/thousand}
          '(Lit.) how many tens/hundreds/thousands'

Note that the "contraction" in (2) is not phonologically conditioned because it is obligatory even when *nan* is not followed by a coronal consonant.

This obligatory short form *nan* in (2), however, has semantics distinct from *nani*. The latter refers to a concrete thing or an abstract property/concept etc., but the former exclusively refers to number. In all the examples in (2), *nan* appears in exactly the same position as numerals: before numeral classifiers (2a), before ordinal nouns (2b), and before numerical bases (as a multiplicand) (2c). It can be replaced with a numeral (e.g. *go* 'five') or another wh-element for amount (e.g. *iku* 'how many').

The minimal pair in (3) clearly shows this semantic difference: the same noun *ken* 'prefecture' gives rise to different interpretations, depending on whether it is prefixed by *nan* or *nani*.

(3) a. nan-ken
          what-prefecture
          'how many prefectures'

      b. nani-ken
          what-prefecture
          'what prefecture'

One might hypothesize that *nan* itself is a numeral and hence a NUM head. But this is not tenable because *nan* co-occurs with a numeral classifier, which is a NUM head (Watanabe 2006). Given that numeral classifiers (in NUM) in Japanese require a number category as their specifier, *nan* cannot be a functional head higher than NUM either.

(4) a. go-hiki
          five-CL$_{animal}$
          'five (animals)'

     b. *hiki
          CL$_{animal}$
          '(animals)'

     c. *{takusan/arera}-hiki
          many/those-CL$_{animal}$
          'many/those (animals)'

It is thus reasonable to think that *nan* is combined with a silent element NUMBER (see Zweig 2005, Kayne 2005) and forms a numeral in the specifier of NUMP. This silent element NUMBER in (5) can also be overtly realized as a numerical base *zyuu/hyaku/zen* 'ten/hundred/thousand' in example (2c).

(5) [$_{NUMP}$ [$_{NUMERAL}$ {**nan/go**} NUMBER] [$_{NUM'}$ [$_{NUM}$ classifier]]]
     '{how many/five} (NP)'

If this analysis is correct, the obligatory lack of *-i* is understood as morphological evidence for the presence of the silent NUMBER. This in turn suggests that what we call numerals are more complex than they look. A number of studies have investigated the syntax of numerals (Ionin and Matushansky 2006, Cheng and Sybesma 1999, Watanabe 2006, 2010), but what kind of syntactic category a numeral is has rarely been addressed. The anatomy of *nan* shows that a numeral is a combination of a number word (e.g. *ichi* 'one', *ni* 'two', *nani* 'what') and NUMBER.

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Gestures and nonlinguistic objects are subject to the Case Filter

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Gestures can be merged into, and moved within, syntactic structures (see Jackendoff 1984, 2011, Jouitteau 2004, Postal 2004). This squib shows further that they can appear in DP positions, and when they do, the relevant DPs need Case (Vergnaud 1977/2008). (Gestures in non-DP positions (Schlenker to appear) do not need Case.)

What does this predict?

First, a gesture **G** should complement Case-assigning Vs/Ps. In (pseudo)passives, $T_{[+FIN]}$ should Case-license **G** and raise it to [Spec,TP]. If **G** stays in [Compl,VP/PP], and $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses expletive *it* instead, **G** will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. This is correct:

(1) Speaking of gestures,
     a. we're discussing/talking about **G**.
     b. **G** is being discussed/talked about.
     c. *it's being discussed/talked about **G**.

Second, **G** should receive Case in ECM/raising-to-object structures. When the ECM/raising-to-object verb passivizes, $T_{[+FIN]}$ should Case-license **G** and raise it. If $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses *it* instead, **G** will be Caseless, yielding unacceptability. This is correct:

(2) a. People consider **G** (to be) a threatening gesture.
     b. **G** is considered (to be) a threatening gesture.
     c. *It's considered **G** (to be) a threatening gesture.

Third, a gesture **G** in [Spec,TP] in a raising infinitival should receive Case from a higher $T_{[+FIN]}$ and raise. If it doesn't, and $T_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses *it*, **G** will be Caseless, causing unacceptability. This is correct:

(3) a. **G** seems to be a threatening gesture.
     b. *It seems **G** to be a threatening gesture.

Fourth, a gesture **G** in [Spec,T_{to}P] should be Case-licensable by C-*for*. If *for* is absent, **G** will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. This is correct:

(4) a. For **G** to be considered a threatening gesture would be unsurprising.
     b. ***G** to be considered a threatening gesture would be unsurprising.

Fifth, if **G** complements an N/A with no mediating P, it will be Caseless, producing unacceptability. P-insertion should rescue it. This is correct:

(5) Speaking of gestures, {I'm a fan *(of) **G**/
                 I'm partial *(to) **G**}.

Of course, *partial* in that sense selects *to*, and *[*partial* G] violates that requirement, ruling it out independently. But G cannot complement <u>any</u> A/N without a mediating P, as predicted:

(6) {fond *(of) / reminiscent *(of) / suggestive *(of) /
      condemnatory *(of) / similar *(to) / reliant *(on)} G

(7) {discussion *(of) / condemnation *(of) / promotion *(of) /
      fondness *(for) / similarity *(to) / prohibition *(on) / reliance *(on)} G

Sixth, G should bear morphological case in relevant languages. This is correct for Japanese:

(8) Jesuchaa to ie-ba (watashi-wa) G-*(ga)   suki.
     gesture   C say-if (I-TOP)   G-*(NOM) like
     'Speaking of gestures, I like G.'
     [One speaker. For another speaker: *G-*ga*, **G (without *-ga*).]

Nonlinguistic objects in syntactic structures, like the arrow below, also need Case:

(9) ↑ is an arrow.

In (9), T$_{[+FIN]}$ Case-licenses ↑. A Caseless ↑ produces unacceptability: *It seems ↑ to be an arrow*.
In needing Case, gestures and nonlinguistic objects resemble quotes (cf. Bruening 2016:141):

(10) {Olivia/*It was} whispered, "Donuts!" (to Mike).

If needing Case is a DP property, this suggests that gestures, quotes, and nonlinguistic objects complement (possibly different) Ds (silent in English). These Ds are promiscuous: they must take a complement, but it can be almost anything.

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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 <u>generally</u>—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]…

(5) a. **Damn** [**with** your fucking fly ass]…

    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-adjoined 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

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