

snippets

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

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http://be8.com/profiles/comment/list?attachedToType=User&attachedTo=395m2xcf4zze5&commentId=4617490%3AComment%3A85212&yg_source=activity [example now gone]
<http://duckinunfriendlywaters.blogspot.com/2011/09/halftime-heads-up.html>
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<http://barbarahj.tumblr.com/post/3510995146/jasmynewilliams-damn-with-your-fucking-fly-ass>
<http://phorums.com.au/archive/index.php/t-49663.html> [example now gone]
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