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**Author**

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Context in Constructions

by

Russell Rafael Lee-Goldman

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Committee in charge:

Professor Eve E. Sweetser, Chair  
Professor Yoko Hasegawa  
Professor Line Mikkelsen

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The dissertation of Russell Rafael Lee-Goldman, titled Context in Constructions,  
is approved:

Chair Eve S. Austin Date 8 Dec 2011

[Signature] Date Dec 9 2011

[Signature] Date Dec. 9, 2011

University of California, Berkeley

Context in Constructions

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## Abstract

## Context in Constructions

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Russell Rafael Lee-Goldman

Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Eve E. Sweetser, Chair

Traditional associations between syntax and grammar include the notions of anaphora, deixis, ellipsis, speech acts, and information structure. However, there exist numerous other layers of communicative organization, including the structure of conversation and turn-taking, quasi-ritualized interactions, and genre and register. Long recognized as analytically important categories in the fields of Conversation Analysis, contrastive pragmatics, Interactional Sociolinguistics, and others, they have been largely ignored in linguistic and especially syntactic theory. This study aims to begin an integration of formal and social/interactional approaches to linguistics from the perspective of a flexible and precise grammatical framework: Sign-based Construction Grammar.

Through a series of close studies of grammatical constructions in English and Japanese, it is shown that grammatical structure and the interactional contexts in which language is used have a far closer and more integrated relationship than is usually assumed. I introduce the *script* as a way to capture the fact that not only can language reflect context, but context can exert a significance force on speakers' linguistic choices. The case studies proceed from relatively low-level contextual features to higher levels of organization, showing at each point the necessity to recognize grammatical constructions sensitive to that level of interaction.

Chapter 1 introduces the question of the syntax-context interface. Chapters 2 and 3 present a syntactic representation for lexically- and constructionally-licensed argument omission (null instantiation). Aside from contextual features normally associated with ellipsis, it is seen that to fully account for argument omission it is necessary to incorporate into grammatical constructions references to a fine-grained categorization of speech acts and attitudinal and epistemic stances. Chapters 4 and 5 show that broader regions of conversational context are crucial to licensing constructions. Chapter 4 examines means of providing identification in situations where there is no visual contact (on the phone, at the front door). Chapter 5 illustrates the existence of Japanese and English constructions which function to project future linguistic actions. Chapter 6 extends the framework to consideration of persistent contextual features, namely kinship relations, and how these determine or influence linguistic choices in referring to other family members. Chapter 7 concludes and discusses directions for future work.

To the memory of my mother.

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## Typographic conventions

### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	HON	honorific
COND	conditional	HORT	hortative
COP/CP	copula	N/NMLZ	nominalizer
DAT	dative	NOM	nominative
DESID	desiderative	Q	question
DIM	diminutive	PT	particle
EVID	evidential	SFP	sentence-final particle
GEN	genitive	TOP	topic

### Transcript notation

[ ] / [ ] / [ ]	beginning and end of overlapping speech
[1 ]1	corresponding numbers indicate which speech is overlapped
=	latched speech (no pause)
(.)	micro-pause
(0.0)	pause (in tenths of a second)
.//?	falling/continuing/rising intonation
underlining	high intensity
::	lengthened
((...))	transcriber's notes
hh / ex	audible outbreath
.hh / in	audible inbreath
>...<	increased tempo
°...°	quieter speech
[MN]	mouth noise
xx(x)	unintelligible
&=	transcriber's annotation (SBCSAE)

The speech corpora I cite each have slightly different conventions. I have retained those conventions in all cases, but added annotation of overlapped speech if it was not present (i.e., in the Fisher and Switchboard corpora) and the audio was available. See citations for specific corpora for detailed discussion of transcription practice and conventions.

### Japanese

I present Japanese with the modified Hepburn romanization system (see the Library of Congress *ALA-LC Romanization Tables* at <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html>), with the exception that I represent phonologically long vowels with a doubled vowel sym-

bol, rather than a macron (*aa* rather than *a*). I retain the use of a colon to indicate (non-phonologically) long vowels when the original transcriber did so.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Can grammar can encode features of the contexts in which language is used? In particular, are there syntactic constructions that are tied to contextual features? To answer these questions, two subquestions must be asked: What does it mean for something to be encoded by a construction? What constitutes context? This chapter lays out the details of these questions and my general approach to answering them.

What I ultimately show is that there are in fact constructions which crucially make reference to aspects of the speech context, and that by examining constructions like these a picture emerges of what context is, viewed through the lens of grammar.

### 1.1 Pragmatics and grammatically-encoded information

The topic of my dissertation is, in a broad sense, the intersection of grammar and pragmatics. Yet, the limits of pragmatics are ill-defined, making it unclear exactly what it means to examine the syntax-pragmatics or grammar-pragmatics interface. Commonly grouped under pragmatics are speech acts and performativity, indirect speech acts, Gricean implicature, presupposition, conversational structure, politeness, information structure, and deixis and anaphora (Levinson, 1983). Some of these are “closer” to syntax than others, insofar as there are clearly syntactic structures and lexical items which reference them (conventional implicature, information structure, speech acts). Others, like conversational implicatures, arguably have little direct relation to grammatical structure.

Pragmatics has yet another interpretation, here contrasting with Semantics. In this interpretation, Semantics is taken to be the study of the truth-conditional aspects of meaning, while Pragmatics tackles all other aspects. Or, semantics is linguistic, whereas Pragmatics is concerned with language but operates separately from it. As useful as this distinction is, it is not clear that this particular division in sentence or utterance interpretation is one that should be given priority over all others. For the present project I do not adopt this definition of Pragmatics, as the question under discussion is precisely which dimensions of interpretation are significant to grammatical description.

I take the (or at least a) primary goal of grammatical description to be the determination of what is *encoded* in linguistic structure. What a word, sentence, or utterance will irrevocably commit a speaker to constitutes the grammar. What might be inferred, or conveyed defeasibly, by a particular utterance is pragmatics (Ariel, 2008). The distinction between truth-conditional and other types of meanings is maintained, but it is orthogonal to encodedness. That is, grammar does not have a monopoly on truth-conditional meaning, which is sometimes computed on the basis of inferential, context-sensitive processes. Along these lines, Hanks (1990) notes that the task of describing deixis (to which nearly any “pragmatic” category could be added) requires asking the question, “[H]ow can one decide which aspects of situationally conveyed meaning are encoded in the language and which ones are due to the circumstances in which utterances are made?” (51). He maintains that the division between the encoded and circumstantial contributions is “mainly a matter of the relative consistency or constancy of association between form and meaning, not of the *kind* of information” (53, emphasis original; see also Hanks, 2000:70).

Importantly, however, the *fact* that some aspect of meaning must be found extra-grammatically may itself be encoded. Ellipsis constructions encode different ways to locate the antecedent (must it be linguistic, or is it sufficient to be perceptually salient?). The precise location of the antecedent is not dictated by the grammar (e.g., “it is the third clause back”), but the general constraints are. On the other end of the are implicatures based on, say, the Maxim of Relevance. These are in all likelihood never dictated or constrained grammatically. They are governed in large part by communicative or cultural constraints that may make reference *to* grammar, but are not encoded *in* grammar.

The notion of encodedness should be a familiar one. A typical lexical entry for a noun like *mat* includes at least the following information (I use capitals as a stand-in for semantic representation):

- (1) a. Phonology: /mæt/
- b. Syntax: common count noun
- c. Semantics: MAT

This information is encoded in the lexical entry. No parts of it are cancelable, and if any parts of the specification are violated, the result is ungrammatical or uninterpretable. Put another way, use of this lexical entry commits the speaker to following its phonological, syntactic, and semantic constraints.

We can similarly describe the same classes of information for sentences:

- (2) a. Phonology: /ðə kæt ɪz ɔn ðə mæt/
- b. Syntax: sentence
- c. Semantics: THE CAT IS ON THE MAT



Consider what aspects of meaning are encoded. The core of sentence meaning is generally understood to be its propositional content, or the state of affairs depicted by the sentence—in this case, a certain identifiable cat being on a certain identifiable mat. Tense information is also encoded: the state of affairs is coextensive with the deictic center, i.e., “now.” At this point contextual information is necessary: the tense demands attention to the time the sentence is uttered (in the simplest case). If we take the view that certain sentential forms are relatable directly to classes of speech acts (Searle, 1969; Austin, 1975), then the illocutionary force of *statement* is also encoded. And all this is true in pretty much any context in which the sentence is uttered. Yet there may be a great deal of information which is conveyed by its utterance which is not encoded.

Non-encoded information falls under categories such as indirect speech acts and conversational implicature. In response to a request to move the mat, *The cat is on the mat* may be taken as a rejection. Or, if the scene depicted constitutes the end-state of a game, then the utterance may be a way to signal the end of the game. None of this information, which arises in particular situations as a result of the interaction of the encoded meaning of the sentence and the innumerate facts about the context of speech events, is encoded in the grammar. A speaker is not committed—certainly not in general, and possibly not even in specific scenarios—to any of it. While a study of the relationship between syntax, semantics, and inferred meaning (“pragmatics” in one sense) would take these conveyed meanings as central, they are not the target of the present investigation.

Now consider *good-bye*, uttered as an entire conversational turn. This word (along with others, such as *hello*, *damn*, *ouch*) does not depict any state of affairs and arguably carries no propositional or truth-conditional content (Searle 1965, Recanati 1980). Rather, it simply performs a farewell, and it is this speech-act information which is encoded by the lexical entry for *good-bye*. This is illustrated in (3). By *interjection* I mean a word or phrase which can be used, on its own, as a full conversational turn and which does not typically integrate with other syntactic structures.

- (3) a. Phonology: /gʊdbaɪ/  
 b. Syntax: Interjection  
 c. Semantics: none  
 d. Speech-act: Farewell

Despite being non-truth-conditional, the farewell speech act is encoded by *good-bye*, and if used in contravention of this constraint, will be taken as unacceptable. Strictly speaking, it will be taken as *grammatically* unacceptable, as grammar is all that is encoded. Nonetheless, I reserve the term *ungrammatical* for syntactic and other form-level anomalies, and use *unacceptable* to indicate violation of contextual constraints, as when using *goodbye* as an opening greeting. A primary goal of this dissertation is to show that to account for all aspects of grammatical unacceptability, reference must be made to a variety of contextual features. It is to these features that I now turn.

## 1.2 What is context?

The context of a speech event can be viewed as an ever-expanding ring, beginning with the utterance itself (Austin's locution), from there the speaker and any recipients of the utterance, and then the surrounding environment, along with the (perceptually-accessible) individuals, objects, and events in those environs. The ring expands in time as well, encompassing the experiences of the participants in the speech event, including their linguistic experiences up to and including the speech event itself. The context includes not only spatial but also social and cognitive orientations: stances, beliefs, relationships, and goals. Parts of the context may be (known to be) shared, i.e., in common ground (Clark, 1996), or may be believed to be unique to one of the participants.

This vast collection has been shown to be intimately connected to language. The physical surrounds are the topic of deixis, the linguistic experience of the speakers is the domain of anaphora. Social deixis (politeness, deference), stance-taking, and the negotiation of shared goals have all been studied with respect of linguistic forms (Levinson, 1983). The connection between language and context is, in the end, nothing new or surprising. Yet this connection is often either studied with sole regard to the lexicon (e.g., *good-bye*) or is undertaken from the perspective of discourse rather than the other way around (Fox & Thompson, 1990, 2007; Ochs et al., 1996). My present goal is not to supplant or critique these approaches (and in fact there is remarkable synergy between my and discourse- and conversation-oriented methods; see especially Chapter 5). Rather, I wish to see just how far we can get into understanding the grammar-context relationship while working within the confines of a generative grammar that accounts for all and only the acceptable sentences of a language.

Taking this approach means that, as an analyst, I cannot set out in advance the the elements of context and then try to find the constructions that reference exactly those elements. Neither, however, can every aspect of context be taken to be equally relevant or likely to be syntactically encoded, lest the search for relevant constructions be extended indefinitely. I therefore, as a first step, delimit what counts as context by approaching it from two directions. First, context can be defined from the outside in: the system within which language operates.<sup>1</sup> This is represented by two somewhat overlapping approaches: the Ethnography of Speaking (Hymes, 1974) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Hymes' ethnography of communication encouraged the study of speech as contextualized in particular speech communities, and further within specific situations within those communities in which speech occurs. His SPEAKING mnemonic taxonomizes several key components of a *speech event*, "activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes, 1974:52).

(S) Setting including the time and place, physical aspects of the situation such

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<sup>1</sup>I do not intend this characterization (or it's converse, inside-out (see below)) to have formal significance. It is simply one way I have found useful in understanding how language can be related to context.

as arrangement of furniture in the classroom; (P) participant identity including personal characteristics such as age and sex, social status, relationship with each other; (E) ends including the purpose of the event itself as well as the individual goals of the participants; (A) act, sequence or how speech acts are organized within a speech event and what topic/s are addressed; (K) key or the tone and manner in which something is said or written; (I) instrumentalities or the linguistic code i.e. language, dialect, variety and channel i.e. speech or writing; (N) norm or the standard socio-cultural rules of interaction and interpretation; and (G) genre or type of event such as lecture, poem, letter. (Farah, 1998: 126)

One or more speech acts (utterance tokens) make up a speech event, and in turn a speech event takes place within a larger *speech situation*, a state of affairs “associated with (or marked by the absence of) speech” (51), such as a party, a meal, or a hunt. This approach allow the researcher to examine the context-language relationship from both directions: from the situation down to the act, or vice versa. The recognition of the importance of larger situations which may not even involve speech does, however, emphasize the outside-in perspective.

Halliday & Hasan (1985) saw language as a social semiotic system, and examined it from the perspective that there is a relationship between language and social structure. They introduce the *context of situation*, which includes not only what is being said but also the activities carried out in, by, and during speech, and the relationships between the participants in the speech event. They identify three aspects of the context of situation (12):

- (4) a. Field of discourse: What is happening, what is the nature of the social action? What are people doing in which language is essential?
- b. Tenor of discourse: The social roles and relationships between the discourse participants: both temporary and permanent, both for the current purpose and in general.
- c. Mode of discourse: The role of language: what function it has, and what the participants want it to be doing for them.

From these we can identify the following as features of the interactional context that syntactic constructions might engage with:

- (5) a. Speech situation: the time and place of the speech act and speech event, including the physical arrangement of individuals and referents
- b. Discourse participants: the personal and social identities of the participants (e.g., the speaker and the addressee), their relationships to each other and to the elements of the speech situation and to linguistic referents, and their goals in the

interaction

- c. Text: the prior and ongoing linguistic interaction, including its content, structure, topic
- d. Genre and register: a relationship between a constellation of linguistic and textual features associated with particular situations (Leckie-Tarry, 1995)

These categories are interdependent. The structure of a text is influenced by its genre, and by the social identities possessed or portrayed by the discourse participants. The relationship of the participants to each other may vary depending on genre or register, and the time and place of utterance. We should expect that any mapping between a linguistic form and one of these will inevitably be connected to other aspects of context.

The second approach starts from language and works its way towards context. This approach yields the familiar categories of deixis and anaphora, whereby a linguistic form indexes some aspect of textual or extra-linguistic context. Performativity and speech acts also fall by and large into this approach. A speech act must meet certain conditions to be felicitous: to execute successfully and with certain conventional effects (Austin, 1955). These conditions are contextual: there must be the right social convention for the speech act to be performed, the speaker must be qualified to perform it, certain attitudes or beliefs must hold of the speaker, and the actions of the speaker must be recognized by the addressee or audience of the act. The details of the criteria depend on the type of speech act (statement, question, command, etc.), which is in turn determined by (among others) the linguistic form of the utterance. The felicity conditions belong to the utterance; in this way, we start from the language and look out to the context.

Another language-to-context approach is defined by the question *What functions does language have?* Given a certain word, sentence, or utterance, what can it do? How can it affect the context? Alongside the context of situation, Halliday & Hasan (1985) identify four types of linguistic meaning:

- (6) a. Experiential: The depictive content of language.
- b. Interpersonal: A sentence's function "in the process of social interaction," e.g. commanding, requesting, promising, telling.
- c. Logical: Connections between parts of text, e.g., conditional, coordinative.
- d. Textual: The cohesion relations within a text. A text's form and meter, thematic organization, and information packaging.

These can be interpreted as four functions: the experiential and logical connections correspond to propositional, truth-conditional meaning and thereby to the function of depiction. Interpersonal meaning addresses Austin's performativity as well as phatic communication, i.e., language use that primarily addresses the discourse participants and their interrelations (Jakobson, 1960). Textual meaning functions to relate parts of a text to one

another and to the genre and register. By taking language to have these kinds of meanings (or functions), we understand language to reflect and affect a semi-independently existing context.

There is of course a real danger in taking context to be ontologically independent of language, of reifying context. As sociolinguistic work over the past decades has shown, context is created, altered, and negotiated as an interaction unfolds. In other words, language not only reflects or even affects context—it is part of what constitutes context (Schiffrin, 1987; Ochs, 1992; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; see Bender, 2007 for connections to generative grammar). By taking a two-way approach (context-to-language and language-to-context) as outlined in the following section, I hope to avoid or at least minimize the ill effects of this misstep.

### 1.3 Present goals and past approaches

The goal of the dissertation is to identify grammatically-encoded information about context. The two directions of relationship between grammar and context described in the previous section relate to two directions of prediction:

- (7) a. Given a construction, what can be predicted about the context?
- b. Given a contextual specification, what can be predicted about the linguistic forms used in that context, or to bring about that context?

I adopt predictivity as a working method for ascertaining if and how a given construction encodes contextual information. Most of the dissertation addresses the first question. If something can be predicted about the context from a unit of language, then that information must be encoded in the grammar. Chapter 6, for example, examines the referential possibilities of determinerless kinship expressions as in (8). A person overhearing such an utterance would be able to conclude (at least for many speakers of English) that the speaker and addressee are in the same nuclear family as the mother, and that at least one of the two is the mother's child. This information, predictable from the language, must be encoded in the construction that licenses determinerless kinship NPs.<sup>2</sup>

- (8) Have you seen mom?

Because this information is grammatically encoded, we expect that languages will map syntactically analogous constructions onto rather different discourse functions. In Chapter 4, I examine sentences like *This is Kim*, which are usable to identify one's self on the telephone. Though the words with comparable meanings produce a grammatical sentence in Japanese (9a) or in Mandarin (9b), neither be used as the English sentence can. Japanese

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<sup>2</sup>The complete account, presented in Chapter 6, is actually a bit more complicated, involving interactions between grammatical constructions and non-grammatical conventions on language use.

does have a directional deictic, *kochira* ‘this way’, which is usable for self-reference on the telephone (and in other situations) (9c). It is not usable in queries about the other party (9d), unlike *this* in English (*Who is this?*).

- (9) a. *kore/koitsu/kono hito wa Tanaka da*  
 this/this.person/this person TOP Tanaka COP  
 ‘This is Tanaka.’ (≠ ‘I am Tanaka’)
- b. *zhè shì Lǐ*  
 this COP Li  
 ‘This is Li.’ (≠ ‘I am Li’)
- c. *kochira wa Tanaka desu*  
 this.way TOP Tanaka COP.HON  
 ‘This is Tanaka.’ (‘I am Tanaka.’)
- d. *kochira wa donata desu ka*  
 this.way TOP who COP Q  
 ‘Who is this?’ (≠ ‘Who are you?’)

Instead, a Japanese speaker will simply give an identifying expression followed by the copula (*Tanaka desu*). Mandarin (and English) syntax rules out an formal equivalent to the Japanese. Mandarin prefers a copular clause with a pronominal subject: *wǒ shì Lǐ* ‘I am Li.’ The English equivalent to the Mandarin expression is possible, but only as a self introduction (it is usable on the phone, but not to an acquaintance: I could call my father and say, *This is Russell* but not *#I’m Russell*). Absent compelling arguments that semantic differences between the three language’s pronouns or copulas could explain this pattern, one can conclude that at least some of these three constructions’ contextual applications are available by dint of a special construction that ties the form to its function. To ascertain which are so-licensed, it must be shown that the construction’s use in this particular context is not predictable based on what is independently known about its parts. This is the case for English, as I show in Chapter 4. The Japanese NP+copula pattern is of such general use that one would indeed be able to predict its distribution and function on the telephone without recourse to a special construction that specifically licenses it as a way to provide identification. (I show in Chapter 4 that *It’s Russell* is similarly of more general application than just telephone conversations).

Cross-linguistic examination is crucial for study of the grammar-context interface. It is possible to argue purely within English that *This is Kim* instantiates a special construction, but there is always the question: could its use not simply be a matter of non-linguistic reasoning and inference, such as from Gricean maxims? Cross-linguistic comparison can defeat (or support) this objection: if another language has similar linguistic parts at its disposal but nonetheless cannot combine them in the same way, with the same interpretation

or function, then it is doubtful that inference alone will account for the data.<sup>3</sup>

The second question, what can be predicted about language given the context, is of a very different nature from the first. It is difficult to imagine a situation that deterministically compels a speaker to make use of a particular linguistic form in the same way that a grammatical choice might commit the speaker to certain beliefs about the context. I therefore will ask a modified question:

- (10) Given a contextual specification, what are the idiomatic ways of speaking available to the speaker? What are the ways a speaker is expected to (linguistically) behave?

The question still places us on dangerous footing: What constitutes an expectation? What counts as idiomatic? What are the limits of linguistic behavior? I cannot attempt to answer these questions to the extent that they deserve. Instead, I will use (10) as a means to talk about *alternatives* to context-encoding constructions. On the telephone, *This is Kim* has a special status. Compared to sentences composed completely compositionally, such as *You're talking to Kim*, *My name is Kim*, *I am Kim*, and so on, it is idiomatic, natural, and unmarked. One way to talk about this is that it is a feature of the telephone context that *This is so-and-so* is idiomatic—it is expected. The other ways are possible, but marked.

To give a further example, consider again a daughter speaking with her father about her mother. (8) is a natural, idiomatic means of doing so, but (11), while it would be referentially successful, is decidedly odd. The same sentence could be used entirely naturally when addressing a member of her extended family (her Aunt, say). We would want to say that, in certain kinship reference scenarios, a bare kinship expression is idiomatic and unmarked with respect to a possessed kinship expression.

- (11) Have you seen my mom?

The same determinerless kinship construction is fully described only by addressing both (7a) and (10). The dual relevance is highlighted by the fact that it has two types of “strategic” uses: uses that contravene the constraints on the construction for particular interactive purposes. In situations where in some strict sense the proper kinship relations do not hold—such as a daughter speaking to her mother’s new significant other—use of the construction may serve to indicate a closeness between the two interactants. Conversely, use of *my mom* where *mom* is possible could give rise to implicatures regarding the relative closeness of the two discourse participants to the referent, and thus to each other. Recognizing the bidirectionality of language-context connections provides a better understanding of what the kinship construction means, where it is expected to be used, and how it is interpreted when these expectations are not met. I discuss the context-to-language direction of relation primarily in Chapters 4 and 6.

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<sup>3</sup>This assumes that principles of pragmatic reasoning, such as those postulated by Grice (1975), are mostly constant across languages and linguistic communities. This was called into question as early as Keenan 1976. Nevertheless, the methodology is still sound in principle, and I will (cautiously) proceed assuming that the principles of pragmatic reasoning are comparable across languages in most cases.

The dissertation builds on work in several research paradigms. Austin (1975) introduced the idea that an utterance might not simply state or describe a state of affairs, but might effect a change in the world. These performative speech acts were not true or false but felicitous or not. The conditions of felicity were stated in terms of both linguistic and non-linguistic (contextual) terms, for instance his rules A.1 and A.2 (p. 14–15):

- (A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,  
 (A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

Searle's (1969,1975) theory of speech acts too posited a series of felicity conditions on each speech act which include reference to the speaker's and/or hearer's goals, intentions, and beliefs. The conditions on a promise, for instance, are (1975:71):

- (12) a. Preparatory condition: S[peaker] is able to perform A[ct].  
 b. Sincerity condition: H[earer] wants S to perform A.  
 c. Propositional content: S predicates a future act of A.  
 d. Essential condition: Counts as the undertaking by S of an obligation to do A.

Austin identified three components to a speech act: the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary acts. The first two are most closely tied to linguistic form: "A judge should be able to decide, by hearing what was said, what locutionary and illocutionary acts were performed, but not what perlocutionary acts were achieved" (Austin, 1975:122). I take this as indicating that there is a conventional relationship between the form of an utterance and its (locutionary and) illocutionary force (else how could one be predicted from the other?).

Indeed, the argument that there is such a grammatical relation is made quite often. J. R. Ross (1970) argued (though not without controversy: see Gazdar 1979) that the deep structure of sentences contain a verb that indicate its illocutionary force (say, ask, command, etc.). A similar position has been taken up in recent GB and Minimalist approaches, in terms of functional heads or features on those heads (Rizzi, 1997; Cinque, 1999; Speas & Tenny, 2003). This approach (or at least, the earlier incarnations of it) has been criticized: Levinson (1983:279) calls it the Literal Force Hypothesis, in which illocutionary force receives direct linguistic encoding. He argues that in actual interaction, the force that discourse participants take an utterance to have is also highly dependent on how and when it appears in an unfolding interaction.

It seems that neither of these two extremes is exactly right. Certain sentence types may be more connected to a speech act, and other types less so. Scholars working within Construction Grammatical approaches have taken the grammar-speech act connection on



a case-by-case basis. Kay & Fillmore (1999:20) claim that the *What's X Doing Y?* construction is associated with a speech act of *incongruity judgment*. Lambrecht & Michaelis (1996) argue that while declaratives may not uniformly map to statements, other sentence types may be more limited in speech-act potential. They posit a connection between the exclamative speech act and several purpose-built constructions (Lambrecht & Michaelis, 1996:236) (small capitals indicate prosodic focus):

- (13) a. You wouldn't believe the BICKERING that goes on.  
[For Better or Worse, 8/15/94]
- b. GOD my feet hurt.
- c. What a DAY (I had).
- d. It's pretty REMARKABLE the people they GET there.

My analysis too proceeds case-by-case, and in this I follow the Construction Grammar literature. I take it that establishing that a connection between a construction and some aspect of the context requires examining, among others, how consistently a particular contextual meaning and form are copresent, whether the syntactic pattern is unexpected for any reason, and how idiomatic a particular construction is in a situation, given all the other ways a speaker could have expressed the same or similar meanings (see Hanks (2000:70) for more discussion along these lines).

However, I am not solely concerned with performatives and speech acts, and the majority of the phenomena I examine are not best understood in these terms. The telephone-limited *This is X* does not represent a new class of speech act: it can be a statement or a question. The conditions on its use may be called felicity conditions, insofar as in order to come off successfully, certain extra-grammatical conditions must be satisfied. But these conditions operate in dimensions of context that only partially overlap with those identified by Austin and Searle. In effect, my argument throughout is that felicity conditions on speech acts are a subclass of the ways that contextual features affect the acceptability of sentences or utterances.

The dissertation is also close in spirit to the idea that certain forms can become so closely associated with pragmatic (inferred) meaning that the process of implicature short-circuits and the form becomes conventionally associated with the discourse function. J. L. Morgan (1978) makes this case for indirect speech acts such as *Can you pass the salt?* and Horn & Bayer (1984) do so for neg-raising (*I don't think she'll leave*). J. L. Morgan (1978) calls this, taking a term from Searle, a *convention of usage*, as opposed to a *convention of language*. These conventions govern "the use of meaning-bearing expressions on certain occasions, for certain purposes" (279). Both types of conventions are "involved in a full understanding by the hearer of what is intended by the use of the expression" (274). Yet while J. L. Morgan clearly treats these as two types of knowledge of convention, it is not entirely clear whether both would be considered part of the grammar, i.e., part of what a (non-pragmaticist) linguist must be concerned with. I take it that it *is* the concern of a

linguist and of a grammarian, as “it is the grammar of a language that is the repository of the conventional aspects of language use” (Sadock, 1978:284).<sup>4</sup>

The present work departs from this line of research, in part, in that the constructions of interest are not necessarily understandable in terms of Gricean reasoning from literal to non-literal meanings. Thus, while a short-circuited implicature means what it does “precisely *because* of its literal meaning” (J. L. Morgan, 1978:270), the constructions I am interested in sometimes do not even have a “literal meaning,” i.e., a meaning or function outside of the one it is limited to. Or, if they do, it is not possible to reason one’s way from that literal meaning to the contextually-limited meaning. My work is not a complete departure, however: the connection from context to language is of central concern to J. L. Morgan (1978). He identifies three aspects to conventions of usage: occasion, purpose, and means (269). Given a particular purpose on a particular occasion, there might be conventional means of fulfilling that purpose. In his example it might be “expressing a concern for the welfare of the other person” upon departing their company (270). As the means specification becomes more and more specific for a given occasion, detailing the form more than the meaning, we “[approach] a convention of the language, a statement about literal meaning” (269). This has already happened in the case of *goodbye* from *God be with you*. Although the constructions I examine mostly exhibit a language-to-context relationship, some display degrees of the reverse (cf. J. L. Morgan, 1978:273), where there is a strong connection between the occasion/purpose and the appropriate means.<sup>5</sup>

Fillmore (1984) identified pragmatic competence as the ability to “make judgments on questions of the following form: In such-and-such a setting, what could a speaker say which would produce such-and-such an effect?” or, in other words, “on the fittingness of particular expression types...to particular situations” (126). Among the types of judgments include “the degree of specialization of the utterance form to the activity” (ibid). In this vein, he identifies *listable pragmatic practices*. For example, English negative *why* questions can be used as suggestions (*Why don’t we stay in tonight?*), whereas the equivalent formulation in German would be offensive (127). Conversely, a Japanese speaker can politely request permission with a negated verb (*Can’t we receive some more rice?*), whereas in English this would be rude (ibid). He additionally identifies several formulaic expressions (such as

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<sup>4</sup>Quoting Sadock in this manner is perhaps a bit misleading, as he goes on to argue that it is in fact not possible, given Grice’s (1975) criteria, to distinguish conventional (thus encoded) implicature from conversational implicature, except in the clearest of cases. I maintain that, however difficult it may be in general, if in particular cases it is possible to reasonably-well convince ourselves that we are dealing with conventional implicature, then this is grounds for treating the implicature as grammatically encoded. Sadock (1978:290) recognizes, at least, that the principle of detachability (which is applied, cross-linguistically, above) is enough to strongly suggest conventionality.

<sup>5</sup>Morgan says of *God be with you* that “it is a matter of convention that one says it (and means it, or at least purports to mean it) under certain circumstances, for certain purposes” (271). This seems to be ambiguous between a statement about the occasion (when doing X, one conventionally says Y) or about the statement (when one says Y, one is doing X), though the former seems the more idiomatic interpretation of his phrasing. How to reconcile this with what counts as convention of language versus a convention of usage is not clear (as he notes himself, p. 279).

*It's not what it seems!*) that make reference to contextual factors. He concludes that

[I]t seems that with the 'small' pragmatic principles and practices that language learners need to know [i.e., the listable pragmatic practices -RLG], the elements of their description require one to pay attention to essentially all the ingredients of...context: speaker's attitude, speaker/hearer relationships, discourse purposes, institutional setting, events in the surround world, position in an ongoing discourse, mutual knowledge assumptions, and all the rest. (134)

Yet, as it happens, the expressions Fillmore identifies mostly fall into the category of short-circuited implicature (though this requires that English and Japanese speakers do or did have slightly different paths towards conventionally-polite expressions) or completely fixed idioms, such as *it takes one to know one*. As such, they fall under the hypothesis described by Toosarvandani (2009): "a lexical item—a piece of form—cannot impose specific pragmatic requirements on the sentence in which it occurs *independently of the interpretation of that sentence*" (106, emphasis original). By "pragmatic," Toosarvandani likely has in mind Gricean pragmatics. We can nevertheless ask whether the hypothesis extends to other types of non-truth-conditional information. Over the next several chapters I will argue that pieces of form—constructions—which do not simply constitute the entire sentence, can in fact impose specific pragmatic (non-truth-conditional, contextual) requirements on the sentences in which they appear.

Working in Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier, 1994), Sanders et al. (2009) develop an analysis of causal connectives that makes crucial use of a *Basic Communicative Spaces Network*. A central claim of theirs is that any (linguistic, communicative) interaction between people always, from the beginning, involves the setting up of mental models of not only the descriptive content expressed by linguistic forms, but also the epistemic stances of the participants, their speech acts, and metalinguistic information about the interaction (see also Sweetser 1990, 1996, Dancygier 1998, and Dancygier & Sweetser 2005 for similar arguments for modals and conditional constructions). The dissertation's connection to this work will come up as I introduce my representation for contextual features in Chapter 3.

Finally, I point out that my use of prediction as a way of ascertaining contextual relevance is not without precedent. Gumperz (1982) identified what he called *contextualization cues*: "constellations of features of message form...by which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood, and *how* each sentence relates to what precedes or follows" (131, emphasis original). Among the sorts of cues that speakers may attend to are "code, dialect and style switching processes...prosodic phenomena...*lexical and syntactic options, formulaic expressions*, conversational openings, closings and sequencing strategies" (ibid, emphasis mine). Contextualization cues are ways of letting other discourse participants (or innocent overhearers or linguistic analysts) know what is going on and predict what is to come. In a similar vein, Halliday & Hasan (1985) observed that speakers are constantly looking for ways to anticipate what is coming next.

The context of situation helps this: “the situation in which linguistic interaction takes place gives the participants a great deal of information about the meanings that are being exchanged, and the meanings that are likely to be exchanged” (9–10).

Anticipating what comes next is a key part of conversational structure as studied in Conversation Analysis. CA posits the *adjacency pair* as a foundational component of conversational structure (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). It consists of two parts, the first of which “makes relevant” the second (Fox 1987, 12). A question is followed by an answer, a request by an acceptance, a statement by agreement, and so forth. Some of the argument omission constructions I illustrate in Chapter 3 will make reference to the adjacency pair.

Adjacency pairs are one part of the more general concept of *action projection*, in which an earlier part of a conversation makes predictable a later part (Hayashi, 2004 and citations therein). A speaker might indicate an upcoming question by asking a preliminary to that question (e.g., *Can I ask you a question?*). Conversation analysts have discovered a great many ways that speakers can project upcoming actions, though not with specific attention to whether these ways specifically encode a projection function, or their semantic or information-structural properties are well-suited to projection. In Chapter 6, I examine a two constructions, one in English and one in Japanese, which I argue encode projection functions.

The present task, the identification of grammatically-encoded contextual information, builds on most if not all of these disparate approaches to linguistic pragmatics. Each has their own focus, and different methodological advantages and pitfalls. What I bring to the discussion is hopefully a combination of the best features of them all:

- (14) a. A formal framework for representing grammatical generalizations.
- b. Recognition of the complex and distinct relationships between linguistic forms and discourse functions
- c. Strict criteria (based on the rubric of predictability) for inclusion into the grammar, as opposed to the principles of pragmatic inference

In addition, wherever possible I use attested data from large corpora of spoken and written, planned and unplanned discourse. The end result is a more firmly grounded and formally expressed statement of when and how grammatical structure encodes information about the context—and, conversely, a clearer picture of what the context of a speech event looks like from the perspective of the grammar.

## 1.4 Outline

The overall structure of the dissertation proceeds from narrower to wider rings of context. At each point I present a case study of a construction or group of constructions which exhibit similar relations to a part of the speech context. Chapter 2 begins with the narrowest context one can imagine for a particular expression: its neighboring expressions.

I start with the category of predicates. A predicate, like a verb, exerts influence on its immediate linguistic context, at least probabilistically. A verb which has obligatorily expressed arguments is likely to appear in a sentence with expressions that realize those arguments. Constructions that manipulate combinatorial potential (such as causative, passive, *wh*-movement) are analyzable as modifying the contextual requirements of predicates, and additionally requiring something of their own context. Of course this is not usually what is meant by “context” in discussion of the syntactic/semantic/pragmatic properties of language. Instead, we have developed a refined vocabulary for speaking of this type of phenomenon, including selection, complementation, valence, and so on. My concern in Chapter 2 is not with this more mundane variety of context, but with constructions which allow arguments to be omitted. These anaphoric and deictic constructions represent one of the most basic ways in which both linguistic and extra-linguistic context is referenced by grammatical constructions.

Chapter 3 proceeds to examine a specialized group of argument omission constructions surrounding the verb *say*. These patterns exhibit unexpected syntactic behaviors, motivating a constructional approach. They simultaneously are dedicated to several discourse related functions. Thus, a full treatment of argument realization is confronted with the necessity of including contextual information within the grammar. Chapters 4 and 5 depart from argument structure to examine several types of copular clause which are deployed in specific conversational scenarios. I argue that speakers who need to identify themselves when they do not have visual contact with their addressee (e.g., on the telephone) have access to constructions which perform just that action. These constructions are not available elsewhere, and so encode register information in addition to discourse-functional information. In Chapter 4 I also introduce the notion of a *script*: a way of addressing the context-to-language connection by introducing language-specific preferences for certain constructions when they are applicable. The English constructions are contrasted with functionally similar constructions in other languages. Chapter 5 examines copular clauses in English and Japanese that project upcoming multi-turn actions. Chapter 6 explores kinship terms as mentioned above, again making bidirectional connections between language and context. Chapter 7 summarizes the significance of the findings of the dissertation for syntactic theory, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and their integration.

**A note on data** I make use of several linguistic corpora, including written text and transcribed audio conversations. Examples from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008-) are indicated with (COCA). The speech corpora I cite are: Switchboard (Godfrey & Holliman, 1997), Fisher English Training Corpus (Cieri et al., 2005, 2004), ICSI Meeting Corpus (Janin, Edwards, et al., 2004; N. Morgan et al., 2001; Janin et al., 2003; Janin, Ang, et al., 2004), Santa Barbara corpus of spoken American English (SBCSAE; Du Bois et al., 2000, 2003; Du Bois & Englebretson, 2004, 2005), and CALL-FRIEND American English-Southern Dialect and Non-Southern Dialect (Canavan & Zipperlen, 1996a,b). Citations to these sources indicate the corpus, filename, and (when avail-

able) approximate time of the beginning of the transcription extract.

## Chapter 2

# Null instantiation

### 2.1 Argument realization

A major component to calculating the meaning of a clause is determining how and where the arguments of a predicator are realized.<sup>1</sup> Typically, lexical entries for argument-taking words specify *local realizations*: the grammatical function and syntactic phrase type of each argument in a plain, declarative clause. There are then a number of ways in which this basic argument structure can be altered. Constructions may dislocate arguments while keeping the original phrase type specification, such as *wh*-questions, fronting, and right-dislocation. Some constructions modify the grammatical function of the arguments, as with voice alternations. Raising, control, and *tough*-class predicates can be analyzed as disrupting the argument structures (specifically, the (non-)external arguments) of subordinate verbs. Each of these constructions in essence provides instructions as to how to locate the arguments of a word when the basic (lexical) expectations of realization are not met.

One thing that can happen to an argument is that it does not appear at all. Following Ruppenhofer (2004) and Fillmore, Petruck, et al. (2003:320), I refer to this phenomenon as *null instantiation*, or NI. Though it is not crucial to the present research, I consider NI to include only cases where an argument of a word (usually but not exclusively a verb) or construction is omitted by means of argument-structure manipulation. NI most closely resembles what Hankamer & Sag (1976) call null complement anaphora, but also includes detransitivization without anaphoric interpretation (as in *I am eating*) and demotion of the external argument in passives and middles. It does not cover gapping, right-node raising, or non-constituent coordination insofar as those are analyzable as involving operations on a non-syntactic (e.g., phonological) level (Beavers & Sag, 2004). Focal ellipsis (Ruppenhofer, 2004:367) is also excluded, as are sluicing and bare argument ellipsis, in which what is left out is not (straightforwardly) an argument of anything (Ginzburg & Sag, 2000; Culicover & Jackendoff, 2005). It is unclear whether “unarticulated constituents” (Stanley,

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<sup>1</sup>By *predicator* I refer to any word or multi-word expression which heads a predicate or which introduces further arguments to a clause. In FrameNet terms (see section 2.2), predicators are frame-evoking elements.

	Indefinite	Definite
Lexical	I was <b>baking</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Food}}$ last night. These two are <b>similar</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Dimension}}$ .	I quickly <b>approached</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Goal}}$ . This one is <b>similar</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Entity}_2}$ .  The police have a <b>witness</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Crime}}$ . Okay, we're <b>in</b> $\emptyset_{\text{Goal}}$ !
Constructional	Smoking kills $\emptyset_{\text{Victim}}$ .  The car was destroyed $\emptyset_{\text{Agent}}$	Add wet ingredients to dry, then mix $\emptyset_{\text{Parts}}$ thoroughly. $\emptyset_{\text{Agent}}$ Take out the trash.

Table 2.1: The licensors and interpretations of null instantiated arguments

2000; Recanati, 2002) should count as NI, but for present purposes I assume they do not.

NI is not a monolithic phenomenon: it can be licensed in many ways, each resulting in subtly different syntactic and semantic structures. Two main and cross-cutting features of argument omission are the *interpretation* of the omitted argument and the *licensor* of omission (Ruppenhofer 2004:368). Fillmore (1986) recognizes two interpretations of NI (*null complementation* in his terms): definite and indefinite. Definite null instantiation (DNI) requires the context (linguistic or otherwise) to provide a referent. Indefinite null instantiation (INI) gives rise to no expectation that discourse participants will be able to retrieve the identity of the argument—including, in some cases, the speaker. Omission is *lexically licensed* if the basic lexical entry of an argument-taking word admits non-realization of one of its arguments. *Constructionally licensed* omission is due to a non-lexical construction that affects a word's argument structure. Each combination is possible, as illustrated in Table 2.1. The lexical licensor, if any, is in boldface. The typical syntactic location of the argument is indicated by  $\emptyset$ , which is subscripted with a description of the missing argument's semantic role.<sup>2</sup>

A DNI argument is recoverable from the prior discourse or from salient entities in the (physical) context. Where the antecedent happens to be linguistic, it does not have to be in a form that would be expected of an overt argument, nor even a constituent. In (1), the first

<sup>2</sup>I adopt FrameNet (see section 2.2) terminology for predicate-specific semantic roles. The scene of similarity is described by FrameNet as follows (roles in capitals):

Two or more distinct entities, which may be concrete or abstract objects or types, are characterized as being similar to each other. Depending on figure/ground relations, the entities may be expressed in two distinct frame elements and constituents, ENTITY\_1 and ENTITY\_2, or jointly as a single frame element and constituent, ENTITIES. The similarity may be based on appearance, physical properties, or other characteristics of the two entities. However, no such DIMENSION has to be specified explicitly. (Retrieved from the FrameNet website, November 20, 2011)



two sentences describe a static state of affairs, but the missing argument of *witness* would have described the events that lead to the state (*witness to someone stealing valuables*), or a characterization of those events (*witness to the crime*). In Hankamer & Sag's (1976) terms, it is a type of deep anaphora.

- (1) We saw broken glass and a door in several pieces. Several expensive items were missing from the safe. Thankfully, the police have a witness  $\emptyset_{\text{Crime}}$ .

INI arguments are understood existentially. *I'm baking/sewing/reading* means roughly "I'm baking/sewing/reading stuff" (or "something"). The identity of the argument is either unknown or not taken as important enough to mention. Fillmore (1986:97) describes it as "markedly indefinite...obligatorily disjoint in reference with anything saliently present in the pragmatic context." As a consequence, INI arguments cannot have antecedents, nor can they serve as antecedents for later pronominal reference (2). Koenig & Mauener (1999) observe this pattern for the omitted arguments of passives in English and also for the pronouns *man* in German and *on* in French, which also do not establish discourse referents. They assign such arguments a separate discourse status and term them *a-definites*.

- (2) a. A: Where's that book you bought?  
B: #I'm reading.
- b. A: I have some free time this morning, so I'm reading.  
B: #Did you buy it at that library sale?

In some cases, especially with omitted direct objects, the possible interpretations are limited to a subtype of what the verb normally selects (Ruppenhofer 2004:409; Lambrecht & Lemoine 2005:24). The unmentioned object in *I'm reading now* is generally taken to be a book, magazine, or something of more than minimal length. Well-known are the interpretations of *I don't drink* (alcohol) and *I'm eating* (a meal). For many predicators, however, no such narrowing is observed. *These two are similar* entails that there is at least one dimension along which the two items are compared, with the range of possibilities just as wide as if the DIMENSION element were expressed.

The categories of DNI and INI have been carried over from Fillmore 1986 to FrameNet and related work (Ruppenhofer, 2004; Recanati, 2004; Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005; Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010). A third category, *free null instantiation*, was first defined in unpublished work by Fillmore and Kay. In FNI, the omitted arguments may be either definite or indefinite, depending on the situation (Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005:33). Omitted subjects of infinitival clauses, for instance, may be interpreted in either way (3). For most purposes, these constructionally-licensed FNI arguments are equivalent to *arbitrary* interpretations of empty categories like PRO in Government and Binding approaches.

- (3) It is a good idea/necessary  $\emptyset_{\text{me/you/someone/...}}$  to inform the bank of your international travel plans.

The optionally omitted arguments of passive clauses are also compatible with either definite or indefinite interpretation. Lambrecht & Lemoine (2005) treat them as FNI as well. Koenig & Mauner (1999), by contrast, consider them to be a-definites, i.e., referentially inert. The two analyses may be reconciled by noticing that an a-definite can be identified with a prior referent via bridging inference (Koenig & Mauner, 1999:231), giving rise to a “definite” interpretation. And, if there are later references to that same entity, they would form a coreference chain with prior mentions to that entity, skipping past the passive-omitted argument.

Lambrecht & Lemoine (2005) provide several examples of lexically-licensed FNI from French (the glosses of the omitted arguments are “chosen more or less randomly” (35)):

- (4) Ça fait du bien. / Ça fait mal. / Ça gêne. / Arrête d’embêter. / Ça surprend.  
 ‘It does (me/one) good. / It hurts. / It bothers (us/people). / Stop annoying (me/everyone). / That surprises (us/people).’ (Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005:(21a))

A plausible case of lexically-licensed FNI in English are recipient arguments of verbs of telling. In contexts where a specific recipient is plausible, a definite interpretation is licensed (5a). Otherwise, a generic (5b) or arbitrary (5c) interpretation is sufficient.

- (5) a. He<sub>i</sub> swallows. “Ever since my kids found out about it, they’ve been after me to eat more healthy.” Again she thinks she should ask  $\emptyset_i$  about these children, but the prospect makes her feel paralyzed (COCA)
- b. And while it is true that children don’t tend to spontaneously tell  $\emptyset$  of their abuse, data show that the vast majority do tell, in full detail, when explicitly asked. (COCA)
- c. “...I understand that the judge and Mr. Paul Howard said  $\emptyset$  to try all the old cases first,” Brewster said. (COCA)

FNI is a separate grammatical category from DNI and INI, in that a particular argument of a lexical item may be specified as DNI, INI, or FNI-omissible. It is not, however, a separate class of interpretation. Though a full accounting of NI must incorporate FNI, for the remainder of this chapter I will focus on DNI and INI. Moreover, I will concentrate more heavily on DNI: as its antecedent must be salient in the context, it is of particular interest to the current project of connecting grammar to context.

Both DNI and INI may be licensed by either lexical or constructional means, but the two licensors diverge syntactically and pragmatically. The next two sections outline the basics of each type of licenser. Discussion and analysis follows closely that of Fillmore (1986), Ruppenhofer (2004), and Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010), unless otherwise indicated. Because my primary concern is motivating a formal representation of NI, I do not go into full detail on each issue. The formalism I adopt should be flexible enough to handle all the phenomena discussed by those authors, but testing this must wait for future research.

### 2.1.1 Lexically-licensed null instantiation

Whether a word allows one or more of its arguments to be omitted, either indefinitely or definitely, is in large part a matter of lexical idiosyncrasy. Verbs with very similar meanings may differ in argument realization possibilities. Fillmore (1986) reports that (6a) has an INI Addressee, while (6b) (in British English) has a DNI Addressee. While the motion verbs in (7a) allow the goal of motion to be DNI, those in (7b) do not. Moreover, verbs with multiple senses may specify that NI is possible for one sense but not another (7c). Even more finicky is *say*: it allows DNI of its complement clause only when it would be understood as an indirect question, rather than declarative (see Chapter 3). Similarly, *in* without an object must mean ‘into,’ not ‘within’.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Fillmore (1986) concluded (as did Shopen (1973), Grimshaw (1979), Napoli (1985), and Depiante (2000)) that DNI is lexically specific, with some identifiable tendencies but no possibility to predict which verbs allow it (but see Ruppenhofer & Michaelis 2011 for discussion of limited predictability based on semantic frames).

- (6) a. He’s telephoning  $\emptyset$ . (INI)  
 b. He’s ringing up  $\emptyset$ . (DNI)
- (7) a. She’s arriving/approaching/entering/coming  $\emptyset$ .  
 b. \*She’s reaching/getting  $\emptyset$ .  
 c. She was quickly approaching \*(the solution).

Verbs are the most common and familiar licensors of NI, but nouns, adjectives, and prepositions allow it as well. Adjectives and nouns typically do not require any syntactic dependents, so diagnosing NI is not a simple task. Identifying DNI is easier than INI because the presupposition of a contextually given entity is detectable. *There are no witnesses*, despite the indefinite *no witnesses*, presupposes a crime which the discourse participants can recover. So we know that *witness* allows DNI of its “crime” semantic role. Contrast this with *portrait*. Conceptually, a portrait must be of someone, but who that person is need not be known in order to say something like *I see the portrait over there*. It is thus concluded that *portrait* does not allow for a DNI complement.

Lexically licensed null arguments are syntactically inert. Constructions which are sensitive to the presence of arguments with certain grammatical functions, such as resultatives or depictives, are ungrammatical with NI arguments. (8) is from Ruppenhofer 2004:406–407. See also Bhatt & Pancheva (2007), who point out the syntactic inertness of null objects by means of adjectival adjuncts (569).

<sup>3</sup>Fillmore (1986) argues that in cases like *We’re in*, or *We walked through*, it is the verb+preposition combination which licenses NI. No verb, however, is necessary: *Once in  $\emptyset$ , disable the alarm system*. The limitation seems to be that *in* must indicate the goal of motion (*Don’t just stand in \*(the room)!*). With this meaning, *in* is limited to certain lexico-syntactic contexts anyway, with or without an overt argument. I thus see no reason to deny *in* itself as an NI licensor.

- (8) a. \*I like to eat  $\emptyset$  raw/hot.  
 b. \*You promised me  $\emptyset$  as a reward.  
 c. \*We attacked  $\emptyset$  in their homes.  
 d. \*Bill cleaned  $\emptyset$  spotless.  
 e. \*I think today I ironed  $\emptyset$  to perfection.

Lexically-licensed DNI is basically identical to null complement anaphora (NCA) as defined by Hankamer & Sag (1976), with the exception that work on DNI has allowed for non-verbs, such as nouns, to have DNI arguments. This seems to me mostly a matter of the range of interests of the particular researchers, and not a built-in limitation to the work in the literature on NCA. As such, questions of the syntax and semantics of NCA apply more or less directly to lexically-licensed DNI.

Napoli (1985) identifies three basic strategies to understand DNI: a syntactically atomic anaphoric element that stands in place of the omitted argument (Hankamer & Sag, 1976); a deletion rule; base-generation, which involves no syntactic complement (phonologically null or otherwise) at any level of representation. Hankamer & Sag (1976) and more recently Depiante (2000) favor the null anaphor analysis; Shopen (1973), Grimshaw (1979), and Napoli (1985) favor base generation (Shopen refers to the phenomenon as “definite ellipsis”). The data in (8) argue strongly against a deletion analysis, which presumably would operate at a phonological level, leaving argument structure constructions to operate as normal. Napoli (1985) presents several arguments, both syntactic and semantic, against both deletion and the null-anaphor analyses in Italian. Choice between base-generation and a null anaphor relies heavily on the assumed principles of pragmatics and anaphor resolution. For instance, Napoli assumes that the null anaphor would have to be associated with the same distribution and set of interpretive principles as overt anaphors (83–86). While this is a reasonable assumption, the complications that arise make the null anaphor analysis more complex, but not outright impossible. I return to the question later when I present an SBCG treatment of lexical and constructional DNI.

The same verb may license multiple NI arguments. *Similar* is associated with three main semantic roles: the two items being compared, and the parameter of comparison. When only one item is mentioned, the other is DNI, and when the parameter is not mentioned, it is INI:

- (9) My proposal is similar (to yours)<sub>DNI</sub> (in some way)<sub>INI</sub>.

Whether a particular argument receives definite or indefinite interpretation is not completely random, though the exact mechanism of prediction remains unsettled. Resnik (1996) argues that the predicting factor is the informational content of the predicator. Those predicators that register more information about their arguments are more likely to allow NI of (of either kind), with those that have the most information allowing INI. Rappaport Hovav & Levin (1998) propose that event-structural facts determine omissibility. More

recently, Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2011) argue that the larger question of which words allow omission is not predictable (at least by any features discussed in the literature), but that a more limited generalization can be made on the basis of semantic frames: two words which are associated with the same semantic frame and which allow NI of the same argument will specify the same type of interpretation for that argument. Regardless of which is most accurate, it seems that all lexically-licensed omissions have the same characteristics. The representation I lay out in section 2.3 is flexible enough to handle whichever level of generalization turns out to best capture the data.

### 2.1.2 Constructionally-licensed null instantiation

Certain constructions license null instantiation of a predicator regardless of its lexical identity. Ruppenhofer (2004) identifies three main classes: linking constructions, generic/habitual omission, and genre-based omission. These have syntactic and semantic properties distinct from each other and from lexically licensed NI. Strictly speaking, it is not a self-standing analytical category, encompassing distinct phenomena that have effects similar to that of lexical NI but by means of separate constructions. Nevertheless, I will continue to refer to “constructionally-licensed NI” as it is useful for exposition purposes.

Passive and middle constructions are linking constructions that license NI. Passivization allows non-mention of an original external argument, optionally present in a *by*-phrase. The middle construction, exemplified by *This bread cuts easily*, similarly promotes a direct object to subject, but disallows the expression of the demoted argument. The targeted arguments are FNI and INI, respectively. They differ in syntactic activeness: depictives and resultatives can target a passive agent but not a middle agent (*It was eaten naked*, \**The bread cuts (easily) fully-clothed*). Passives also permit adjuncts that require the presence of an agent, such as agent-oriented adverbs (*deliberately*), manner or instrument expressions (*by placing it just so*), and purpose clauses. As I argue later, the difference in syntactic activeness between lexical and constructional NI is analyzable as a distinction between a complete absence of a syntactic entity corresponding to the agent argument, as opposed to such an element being present at a level of representation that can interact with modifiers and secondary predicates. Bhatt & Pancheva (2007:558–561) present similar arguments for treating passives and middles as lacking implicit (phonologically-null) syntactic arguments.

Generic or habitual clauses permit omission of verbal complements, with existential (INI) interpretation (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:159,164). Goldberg (2005) generalizes these to a category of low discourse prominence, positing a *deprofiled object construction*. This construction licenses NI of Patient or Theme arguments in one of several contexts (specific to English but likely repeated in similar ways crosslinguistically) enumerated in (10) (Goldberg, 2005:30). Resultatives and depictives are better here than for lexically-licensed NI, but the acceptability is marginal at best (11).

- (10) a. Pat gave and gave but Chris just took and took. [repeated action]  
 b. Tigers only kill at night. [generic action]  
 c. She picked up her carving knife and began to chop. [narrow focus]  
 d. Why would they give this creep a light prison term!? He murdered! [strong affective stance]  
 e. “She could steal but she could not rob.” [contrastive vfocus]  
 (Beatles: She came in through the Bathroom Window)
- (11) a.?\*Tigers only kill  $\emptyset_i$  in their<sub>i</sub> sleep.  
 b.?\*She picked up her carving knife and began to chop  $\emptyset$  to pieces.

Genre-based omissions are a heterogeneous collection of constructions which allow NI of arguments which normally are not omissible. These constructions are acceptable only in certain genres. The examples below exemplify instructional imperatives (12a), personal diaries (12b), labelese (12c), match reports (12d), and quotative clauses with judgment predicators (12e). The last two are from Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010:(6,7)).

- (12) a. Pour whites into bowl. Whip  $\emptyset$  to stiff peaks.  
 b.  $\emptyset$  Finally managed to mow the lawn today.  
 c.  $\emptyset$  Contains nuts.  
 d. He hammered  $\emptyset$  wide of Gary Walsh’s exposed net.  
 e. Nice work, boys, she praised  $\emptyset$  with a light smile.

The possible targets differ in each. Instructional imperatives, as reported in Culy 1996 and Bender 1999, allow omission of direct objects but not objects of prepositions. Match reports and quotative constructions omit non-subject arguments, while diary clauses and labelese target only subjects.

Unlike all other types of NI seen above, genre-based omissions are a type of DNI. In three of the five cases above, (instructions, labels, and match reports), the omitted referent must not only be given, but globally prominent: the ingredients or important parts of the instructions, the item the label is associated with, and the ball in play (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:167).<sup>4</sup> The other two (diary subject omission and omission of the object of judgment-expressing quotative verbs) do not have this restriction. Common to all is that the omitted arguments are syntactically active (Haegeman, 1997:237, Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:172). They license resultatives and depictives (12a, 12b, 12d), and can participate in control/raising constructions (13a) and license reflexives (13b). See the above cited works for detailed discussion.

<sup>4</sup>One might expect the diary style to allow only the author, a globally prominent referent, to be omitted, but Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010:167) show that non-author subjects are also omissible.

- (13) a. Allow  $\emptyset$  to set.  
 b.  $\emptyset_i$  Tried to convince myself<sub>i</sub> to go to the reunion.

It is possible for the same argument to be targetable by either lexical or constructional NI. *Eat* allows its object to be INI. That object could, however, be omitted with definite interpretation if it participates in an instructional imperative. In the former, a depictive expression is ungrammatical, but in the latter, it is grammatical (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:164):

- (14) a. It's lunchtime, but I have no means to heat anything up. \*So, I will eat  $\emptyset$  raw.  
 b. Place food on chilled platter. Eat  $\emptyset$  raw.

Further, the semantic narrowing that sometimes occurs with INI arguments applies only when the argument is omitted as specified by the verb. Above, the imperative *eat* appears with a null argument that is interpreted as a particular food item, even though *eat* normally specifies that the INI-omitted argument must be interpreted as a meal.

In sum, constructionally-licensed NI is not a single phenomenon nor an analytic category, but a high-level characterization about a group of constructions with similar surface effects. These constructions allow arguments of verbs (and possibly of other syntactic categories) to go unmentioned under certain semantic (generic, habitual, deprofiled object) or genre-based conditions. They apply freely to any verb that meets the general semantic and argument-structure requirements of the construction. Beyond this description, the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic effects of each NI-licensing construction are potentially different, necessitating a separate constructional specification for each. Table 2.2 presents a summary of the observations from this section (the column labels refer to the omitted FE, e.g., whether the omitted argument must be globally prominent).

	Target	Interpretations	Globally prominent	Syntactically active
Lexically-licensed	FE of lexeme	def, indef	no	no
Passive	External argument	def, indef	no	yes
Middle	External argument	indef	no	no
Generic/habitual	(In)direct object	indef	no	no
Instructions	Direct object	def	yes	yes
Labels	External argument	def	yes	yes
Match reports	The ball-in-play	def	yes	yes
Diary style	External argument	def	no	yes
Quotative	Addressee FE	def	no	yes

Table 2.2: Properties of several types of null instantiation

Before presenting a formal representation of NI that captures the observations made thus far, I introduce the semantic framework I will adopt.

## 2.2 Frame Semantics

The primary semantic framework I make use of in this dissertation is Frame Semantics (Fillmore, 1982, 1985a; Fillmore & Atkins, 1992). Fillmore draws on several approaches to the idea of *frame* as an understanding of cognitive organization (Goffman, 1974; Minsky, 1975; Tannen, 1979), as well as notions like *script* (Schank & Abelson, 1977) and *idealized cognitive model* (G. Lakoff, 1987). I will in particular adopt the approach to frames as developed by FrameNet, a lexicographic resource based on principles of Frame Semantics (Fillmore, Johnson, & Petruck, 2003; Ruppenhofer et al., 2006; Fillmore & Baker, 2009).

A *frame* is a structured understanding of a situation, relation, event, or entity. Frames represent a type of categorization system, as language users (or cognizers of any sort) construe and describe observed situations in terms of a body of experience and generalizations over that experience. A frame might center around an object, such as a chair, or a complex scenario with a rich history, such as revenge. Each part of a frame is called a Frame Element (FE). Revenge has at least the following FEs: an AVENGER, who inflicts a PUNISHMENT upon an OFFENDER, under the belief that the OFFENDER is responsible in some way for a past INJURY that affected an INJURED PARTY (I indicate FEs with small capitals). Whenever we understand some situation as being an instance of revenge, we can reason that there are fillers of these roles, some of whom may be present in the scene at hand and some of whom may not be. Likewise, if the frame of revenge is needed to understand a linguistic description of an event, we expect that some or all of these FEs will be mentioned.

A frame is not inherently linguistic, but it can be connected tightly with language. Linguistic expressions, insofar as they depict an individual, a situation, etc., can be said to *evolve* one or more frames: call these semantic frames. When a frame-evoking element (word, multi-word expression, or construction) appears in a sentence, it specifies which of the frame's FEs it can appear with and by what morphosyntactic means those FEs can be realized. To give a short example, consider (15).

(15) Jill responded by leaving Atlanta.

Let us make the simplifying assumption that *Jill* and *Atlanta* simply pick out certain individuals in the world and are not associated with complex frames of their own (in reality, they are). The verb *responded* evokes the Response frame, defined as: one entity, the RESPONDER, performs some ACTION as a result of a TRIGGER. In this sentence, *Jill* is the RESPONDER and the event expressed by *by leaving Atlanta* is the ACTION. The TRIGGER is presupposed to exist but is unexpressed (and, in fact, is DNI). *Leaving* evokes a frame of departure, with a THEME and SOURCE. The former is *Jill* and the latter is *Atlanta*. This is



represented in FrameNet as two sets of FE annotation. The two frame-evoking verbs are labeled with their frames.<sup>5</sup>

- (16) a. [<sub>RESPONDER</sub> Jill] responded<sub>Response</sub> [<sub>ACTION</sub> by leaving Atlanta]. [<sub>TRIGGER</sub> DNI]  
 b. [<sub>THEME</sub> Jill] responded by leaving<sub>Departure</sub> [<sub>SOURCE</sub> Atlanta].

In principle, each word evokes its own unique semantic frame. *Respond* evokes the Respond frame, *react* evokes the React frame, and so on. This way, even minute differences in the meaning of words can be captured. Generalizations across frame-evoking expressions are made by placing every frame within a multiple-inheritance hierarchy (Koenig, 1999; Davis & Koenig, 2000; Koenig & Davis, 2000), a strategy FrameNet also employs. Thus, most distinctive characteristics of *leave*, *depart*, *exit*, *set off*, and *skedaddle* are handled at a general frame of Departing, with individual words inheriting from Departing and adding specifications of their own.

The same type of hierarchical relationship can be used to specify common argument structures, though words which share a common general frame do not always have the same argument structures. Most words which inherit from Departing can express SOURCE as a direct object or as a PP[*from*]. *Set off* only allows the latter, and *skedaddle* generally does not appear with an overt indication of that FE. The Arriving frame is similar. Many words that inherit from Arriving allow GOAL to be expressed as an NP, but not all: *arrive at*, *return to*, *make it to*. Despite a great deal of similarity across words and frames, there is no simple and consistent mapping between similar FEs and morphosyntactic expression. Multiple-inheritance hierarchies allow all possible generalizations to be made while maintaining individual differences in specific words and frames.

Specifying the morphosyntactic realization of *frame elements* is similar to, but broader than, principles of linking syntactic arguments to semantic or thematic relations. There is no prespecified list thematic relations: each frame is associated with its own roles (most of which are, nonetheless, ultimately inherited from more general frames). Further, FEs include all logically necessary relations, and thus encompass arguments and (some) adjuncts. All events, for instance, take place at a time and a place, for a certain duration. None of these are typically considered arguments of a predicate, but they are FEs.<sup>6</sup>

Some FEs are unexpressible for a given word. Consider *spend* as an evoker of a commercial transaction frame. The verb allows expression of the BUYER, MONEY, and GOODS, but not the SELLER, even though there must be such a party.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>A note on notation: FN annotation does not adhere to a particular theory of control and raising, and annotates non-local phrases as instantiating FEs of embedded verbs in such constructions (e.g., *Jill* as the THEME of *leaving*). NI arguments are indicated after the sentence rather than where an overt argument might have been expected.

<sup>6</sup>The FrameNet project considers these non-distinctive FEs to be *peripheral*, in contrast to *core* FEs such as those mentioned for *respond*. I address issues mostly surrounding core FEs, and so do not reference the distinction.

<sup>7</sup>A locative expression (*at Macy's*) strongly implies the identity of the seller, but I argue this is an infer-

(17) I spent \$20 on this mug (\*to/for/with a street vendor).

Null instantiation can now be defined in terms of frame elements. It is the non-expression of a potentially-expressible frame element. If the non-expression is permitted in the “off-the-shelf” lexical entry of a frame-evoking word, it is lexically-licensed NI. If the NI is acceptable only due to some manipulation by another construction, that is constructionally-licensed NI. Under this definition, NI is applicable to all words that evoke frames, including all parts of speech, and to all possible syntactic dependents, including those not normally called arguments.

### 2.3 Sign-based Construction Grammar

This dissertation uses Sign-based Construction Grammar (SBCG; Sag, 2010b), a framework incorporating ideas from Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) and the Construction Grammar of Fillmore and colleagues. HPSG is a generative grammar, with the goal of accounting for all and only the grammatical sentences of a language. It is model-theoretic: it states the constraints on well-formed expressions, rather than providing a set of rules or instructions to derive them. It is also monostratal in that it does not posit multiple representations of the same linguistic object related by, e.g., derivational rules. HPSG does include multiples levels of representation, however, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and contextual constraints on linguistic objects. HPSG, in various versions and revisions, is described in Pollard & Sag 1987, Pollard & Sag 1994, and Ginzburg & Sag 2000.

Contemporaneous with HPSG was the development of Construction Grammar by Fillmore, Kay, and colleagues (Fillmore, 1985b; G. Lakoff, 1987; Fillmore et al., 1988; Kay & Fillmore, 1999). Central to this view is the idea that linguistic (especially syntactic and semantic) theory is accountable to all aspects of grammar, from the most regular to the most idiosyncratic, including aspects of language sometimes considered pragmatic and metaphorical. Construction-based theories of grammar developed in several strands, including one sharing many formal underpinnings with HPSG. This is exemplified in works such as Fillmore et al. 1988, Fillmore & Kay 1996, Lambrecht & Michaelis 1996, Kay & Fillmore 1999, and Kay 2002. For a recent collection of works that develops this line of research as well as other strands of Construction Grammar, see Fried & Boas 2005 and Östman & Fried 2005.

Sign-based Construction Grammar (SBCG) blends ideas from the two lines of research, broadening the coverage of HPSG-like frameworks by incorporating the intuitions and empirical goals of Construction Grammar, while also providing Construction Grammar with

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ence, and not a lexically-specified coding of the SELLER. Note that vendor-implying locative expressions are possible alongside SELLER-denoting expressions for other commerce words: *This was sold at Macy's by a junior sales associate, I bought girl scout cookies at Macy's from three scouts who set up by the elevator.*

a more rigorous theoretical foundation. Sag (2010b) lays out in detail the formal machinery of SBCG. Here, I provide a thumbnail sketch of the parts that feature prominently throughout dissertation. Additions to these features are described as needed in subsequent chapters.

All linguistic expressions, from lexemes to phrases and sentences, are taken to be *signs*. The SBCG notion of sign originates with Saussure, but is expanded to include associations between phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and contextual information. All linguistic objects in SBCG, including signs, are modeled as feature structures (FSs). An FS is either *atomic* (*accusative*, +, *finite*) or *functional*. A functional FS maps a set of attributes to an appropriate value, where values can be either atomic or functional FS (e.g., SYN → CAT → VERB-FORM → *finite*).

The features relevant for signs in the present work are displayed in the following FS. FS types, when given, are in the first line. Features are in small capitals, and atomic values or other specifications in italics.

(18) 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{ll} \textit{sign} & \\ \text{PHON} & \textit{list(phon-obj)} \\ \text{FORM} & \textit{list(morph-obj)} \\ \text{ARG-ST} & \textit{list(sign)} \\ \text{SYN} & \textit{syntactic-obj} \\ \text{SEM} & \textit{semantic-obj} \\ \text{CNTXT} & \textit{context-obj} \end{array} \right]$$

Of interest in this chapter are ARG-ST, SYN(TAX), and SEM(ANTICS). The SYNTAX attribute registers information about the syntactic category and immediate combinatory requirements of a sign. For a verb, the category information might include tense, aspect, and agreement features. Combinatory requirements are indicated in two syntactic features: VALENCE and SELECT. VALENCE is a running list of which sign(s) the sign is prepared to combine with. Thus, a transitive verb in the lexicon might be [VALENCE <NP, NP>], while VP (with or without a direct object) will be [VALENCE <NP>], because it only needs to combine with the subject NP (I am speaking here in procedural terms, but in actual fact the grammar is a set of static constraints). One effect of null instantiation is to remove elements from a lexeme's or word's VALENCE, making it unexpressible.

ARG-ST (argument structure) is similar to VALENCE but it is defined only for lexical (not phrasal) signs. It indicates the combinatorial possibility of a lexical entry. Thus, for instance, *put* licenses an NP subject, and NP object, and a directional or locative expression. As ARG-ST lists the *inherent* combinatorics of an entry, it can potentially differ from VALENCE. The analysis of non-local arguments developed by Bouma et al. (2001) places non-locally-realized and covert arguments off of VALENCE and onto other lists that regulate those arguments' realization. All of these arguments are, however, retained on ARG-ST. As

I show shortly, the fact that VALENCE and ARG-ST can have different elements is key in representing the syntactic activeness of null-instantiated arguments.

The SEM attribute contains information about the meaning of a sign. For now, the key parts of semantic objects are INDEX and FRAMES. INDEX is an index-valued attribute: every sign denotes some object in the universe of discourse, such as an individual or situation. FRAMES is a list-valued attribute, where the elements of the list are the frames evoked by the sign. In SBCG as described by Sag (2010b), each frame is a predication, consisting of a label for the predication as a whole, along with a list of frame elements. Semantic compositionality is accomplished by specifying that, for any local subtree (*construct*, see below), all the frames evoked by each of the daughters are also evoked by their mother. Semantic embedding (i.e., frames which are arguments of other frames) is accomplished by coindexation via frame labels (the version described here is a basic version of Minimal Recursion Semantics, Copestake et al., 2005). For instance, the set of frames in (19) is one way to represent the meaning of *try to leave Boston*. The Try frame (*try-fr*) has as its GOAL argument the frame label  $l_2$ , namely an instance of the *leave-fr*.

$$(19) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{sem-obj} \\ \\ \text{FRAMES} \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{try-fr} \\ \text{LABEL} \quad l_1 \\ \text{AGENT} \quad i \\ \text{GOAL} \quad l_2 \end{array} \right] , \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{leave-fr} \\ \text{LABEL} \quad l_2 \\ \text{DEPARTER} \quad i \\ \text{SOURCE} \quad \textit{Boston} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

A word's FRAMES specification contains all of its possible FEs (in practice, I will only list ones relevant to the discussion), whether they are expressed or not. Null instantiation, and in fact any sort of argument ellipsis (i.e., excluding such constructions as sluicing and gapping) make use of the listed FEs as a way to specify what interpretation omitted arguments are to be given.

Signs are licensed in one of two ways (Sag, 2010b:(47)). The first way is by being listed as a lexical or multi-lexeme sign. The grammar contains a set of *listemes*: basic combinations of phonology, morphology, and semantics which define the words and fixed multi-word idioms of a language.<sup>8</sup> A listeme licenses a lexical sign by satisfying the constraints of a *lexical-class construction*. For instance, a listeme for *laugh* might look like the following (Sag, 2010b:(49)).

<sup>8</sup>Despite its slightly misleading name, I will continue to use *lexical entries* to refer to the same thing as a *listeme*.

$$(20) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{siv-lexeme} \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle \textit{laugh} \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \textit{laughing-fr} \\ \text{ACTOR} \quad i \\ \text{SIT} \quad s \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The listeme specifies the form and the semantic frame it evokes. It also indicates that it is a type of *strict-intransitive-verb-lexeme* (*siv-lexeme*), itself a type of *verb-lexeme*. The following lexical-class construction places constraints on all signs of type *verb-lexeme* (Sag, 2010b:(51)):

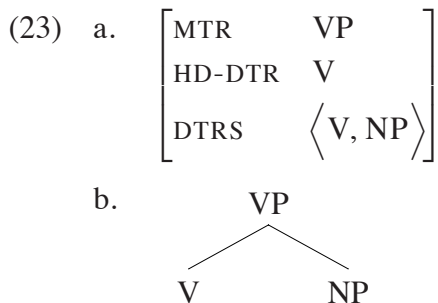
$$(21) \quad \textit{verb-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle X, \dots \rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{verb} \\ \text{SELECT} \quad \textit{none} \\ \text{XARG} \quad X \end{array} \right] \\ \text{MRGK} \quad \textit{unmarked} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad s \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \langle [\text{SIT } s] \rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The listeme for *laugh* interacts with this construction (the details of which are not for the moment significant) to license the lexeme for *laugh* in (22).

$$(22) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{siv-lexeme} \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle \textit{laugh} \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \boxed{1}\text{NP}_i \rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{verb} \\ \text{SELECT} \quad \textit{none} \\ \text{XARG} \quad \boxed{1} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{MRGK} \quad \textit{unmarked} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad s \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \textit{laughing-fr} \\ \text{ACTOR} \quad i \\ \text{SIT} \quad s \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Constructions in SBCG are conditional statements written  $A \Rightarrow B$ : all objects of type A must satisfy the constraints in the FS description B.<sup>9</sup> Because it constrains the features of lexemes, (21) is termed a lexical construction.

The second way a sign is licensed is by being the *mother* of a well-formed *construct*. Constructs are linguistic objects consisting of a mother and one or more DAUGHTERS, one of which may be the HEAD-DAUGHTER. A basic equivalence between constructs and local trees is shown in (23)



While listemes must satisfy one or more lexical constructions, constructs must satisfy one or more *combinatoric constructions*, i.e., statements on the well-formedness of local trees. There are two types of constructs: phrasal and lexical. The basic work of phrase-building is accomplished by phrasal constructs that describe configurations of head-plus-complements, modifier-plus-head, and subject-plus-predicate (among many others). Lexical constructs are of three main types: derivational, inflectional, and post-inflectional (Sag et al., 2003:Chapter 16). These constructs have as their DTRS value a list of lexical signs (though all the constructions I consider have singleton DTRS lists). The purpose of lexical constructs is to license lexeme or word signs based on morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions from one type of lexeme/word to another. Several examples will be given shortly.

The phenomenon this chapter deals with—argument omission—is can be handled almost entirely by means of lexical constructs, in particular derivational constructs. This contrasts with the line of Construction Grammar that presents argument structure constructions as phrasal entities (Goldberg, 1995, 2006; Goldberg & Jackendoff, 2004). The advantage of treating many argument structure constructions, including NI constructions, as operating on lexical signs rather than as providing syntactic templates (i.e., phrasal constructs) is that it provides for constructional interaction and combination (resultative+passive, null instantiation+*wh*-question) in a much simpler way (Müller, 2006). It is not the case that a lexical treatment is automatically preferred to a phrasal one in all cases, but the option should always be considered. As will be seen below and in Chapter 3, there are cases where a phrasal approach is the best way to capture the data.

<sup>9</sup>This differs somewhat from “Berkeley” Construction Grammar (Fillmore, 1985b, 1988; Kay, 1994), where constructions are underspecified structures which can be filled in by more specific information, resulting in fully-specified linguistic expressions. See Sag (2010b: n. 48) for discussion.

A derivational construction describes a construct whose mother is a lexeme and whose daughters are a list of lexemes: in other words, it derives lexemes from lexemes. Derivational constructions contrast with inflectional constructions, which license words based on lexemes. The definition for a derivational construct is given in (24) (*cxt* abbreviates *construct*).

$$(24) \quad \text{deriv-cxt:} \begin{bmatrix} \text{MTR} & \text{lexeme} \\ \text{DTRS} & \text{list}(\text{lex-sign}) \end{bmatrix}$$

This type of construction is responsible for, e.g., the reversive prefix *un-* (*unlock*). The construction, as presented in Sag (2010b:(59)) is shown in (25).

$$(25) \quad \text{un-verb-cxt} \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{MTR} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{FORM} & \langle \mathbf{F}_{un}(X) \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} & L_1 \\ \text{SYN} & Y \\ \text{SEM} & [\text{FRAMES} \quad L_2 \oplus \dots] \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{DTRS} & \left\langle \begin{bmatrix} \text{strans-v-lxm} \\ \text{FORM} & \langle X \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} & L_1 \\ \text{SYN} & Y \\ \text{SEM} & [\text{FRAMES} \quad L_2] \end{bmatrix} \right\rangle \end{bmatrix}$$

The effect of the derivation is to add frames (not spelled out in this diagram except by the “...”) to the meaning of the lexeme, and to alter the morphological form of the lexeme. The approach to morphology is realizational: the “addition” of morphemes is accomplished by morphological functions that alter the FORM of lexemes or words; affixes by themselves are not signs, nor are they listed in the constructicon. Though nothing crucial to my analyses hangs on the decision to represent morphological processes in this way, I adopt it for the purpose of concreteness.

The following section shows how null instantiation is licensed by means of this type of construction.

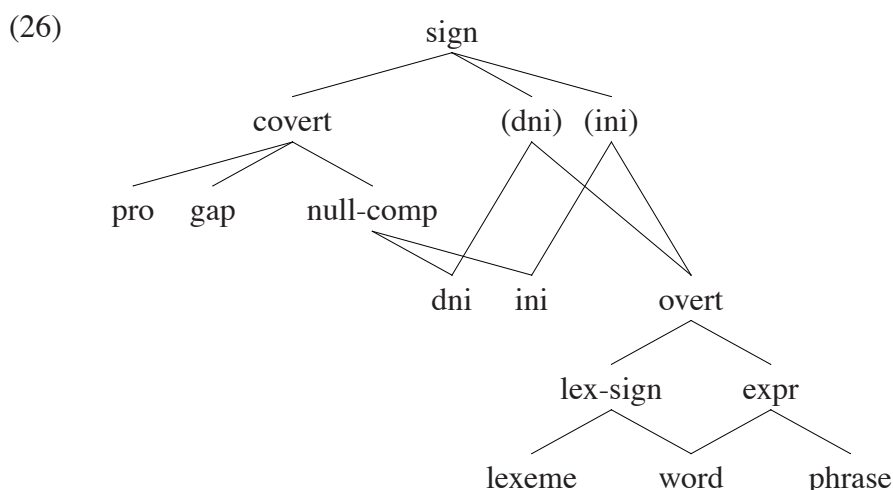
## 2.4 Null instantiation in SBCG

The treatment of NI that I present captures the unity of lexically-licensed NI with respect to (i) lexical idiosyncrasy and (ii) the syntactic inertness of the omitted argument. It is also flexible enough to incorporate a wide range of constructionally-licensed NI, recognizing that it is not a single phenomenon: some argument-omission constructions result

in a syntactic structure identical to that arising from lexical NI, while other constructions accomplish argument omission in an entirely different way. As an example I present Ruppenhofer & Michaelis's (2010) analysis of NI in instructional imperatives, which operationalizes NI in a distinctly non-lexical manner. Several further examples of constructional NI are analyzed in Chapter 3, each operating in a slightly different way.

My approach is essentially that of Kay (2006) and Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010), with some modifications from Ruppenhofer (2004) to account for contrasts in lexical and constructional NI that were not fully captured by those proposals. I treat lexical null instantiation as mediated by derivational constructions which interact with a small number of sign types. The account, in essence, is that certain lexical entries specify which of any of their arguments may be omitted. Derivational constructions license valences for those lexical entries which do not have those arguments and add the appropriate semantics to the lexeme.<sup>10</sup>

Kay (2006) posits a type hierarchy of signs which includes a division between overt and covert signs.



Covert signs have no morphology or phonology.

(27) *covert* ⇒ [FORM < >]

The sign type *null-comp* subsumes *ini* and *dni*, which are the sign types of constituents which have been omitted under INI or DNI (Kay 2006 includes identity of sense anaphora, but I set it aside in this discussion). A *null-comp* sign introduces a quantificational frame which binds the variable denoted by the sign (BV abbreviates bound variable) (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:177):

<sup>10</sup>Despite the possibility for confusion, I will continue to use the terms *lexically-licensed* and *constructionally-licensed NI*, even though in SBCG all valences with null arguments are derived constructionally. “Constructional(ly)” is understood in a slightly more traditional sense, namely special constructions like passive, imperative, recipe object-drop, and so on.



$$(28) \quad null-comp \Rightarrow \left[ SEM \left[ \begin{array}{ll} INDEX & i \\ FRAMES & \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{ll} quant-fr \\ BV & i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \right]$$

The INI and DNI subtypes of *null-comp* introduce existential (29a) and definite (29b) quantification frames, respectively (cf. Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:187). The name *def-fr* should not be taken as a claim that DNI results in an interpretation identical to that of any definite expression in English (e.g., *the*, *it*, *that*, etc.). There is rather a possibly-unique interpretation of definite NI arguments, e.g., Ruppenhofer's (2004) characterization of them as identifiable and discourse-active.

- (29) a. *ini*  $\Rightarrow$  [SEM|FRAMES <*exist-fr*>]  
 b. *dni*  $\Rightarrow$  [SEM|FRAMES <*def-fr*>]

No lexical entry specifically calls for an *ini* or *dni* argument. Instead, optionally-omitted arguments are of type (*ini*) or (*dni*), where the parentheses are intended to remind one of optionality. This is implemented formally by placing (*ini*) and (*dni*) as supertypes of both *overt* signs and of the specific covert types *ini* and *dni*. Thus any sign with an optional NI type can resolve to either an overt or a covert sign.

The lexical entry for *eat*, as defined by Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010), is shown in (30). Its object is INI-omissible.<sup>11</sup> The argument structure lists two NPs, the second of which is (*ini*). The entry shows the default situation in which a word's VALENCE and ARG-ST are equivalent. Because VALENCE cannot contain covert signs (Bouma et al., 2001), unless another construction intervenes, *eat* will take a direct object.

<sup>11</sup>NP<sub>*i*</sub> abbreviates the following FS:

$$(i) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} sign \\ SYN \left[ \begin{array}{ll} CAT & noun \\ VAL & \langle \rangle \end{array} \right] \\ SEM \left[ \begin{array}{ll} INDEX & i \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

NP[(*ini*)] abbreviates an NP whose sign type is (*ini*).

(30) Listeme for *eat* (Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2010:176)

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{trans-verb-lxm} \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle \textit{eat} \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \text{①NP}_i, \text{②NP}[(\textit{ini})]_j \rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \text{VAL} \quad \langle \text{①}, \text{②} \rangle \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{eat-fr} \\ \text{EATER} \quad i \\ \text{EATEN} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Following only the infrastructure laid out by Kay and Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, the construction that licenses an NI argument would look something like (31). It is a derivational construction (indicated by the  $\uparrow$  notation) which licenses a lexeme that is missing an argument that corresponds to an (*ini*) or (*dni*) sign.

(31) NI omission, first attempt ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxt*)

$$\begin{array}{l} \textit{ni-cxt} \Rightarrow \\ \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad X! [\text{VAL}] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad L_1 \oplus L_2 \right] \end{array} \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} \quad L_3 \circ \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \textit{null-comp} \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad L_1: \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{quant-fr} \\ \text{BV} \quad i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \end{array} \right\rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad X \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad L_2 \right] \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The construct has a single daughter (the “input”) which has an ARG-ST containing a *null-comp* sign.<sup>12</sup> Because (*ini*) can resolve to *ini*, of which *null-comp* is a supertype, the ARG-ST of *eat* satisfies this constraint. The construct’s mother (“output”) states that its SYNTAX is identical to that of the daughter with the exception of the specification for VALENCE.<sup>13</sup> Now that one of the arguments has resolved to a covert sign, the mother’s valence

<sup>12</sup>The  $\circ$  is a shuffle operator. The ARG-ST of the daughter is a list consisting of the list  $L_3$  and a *null-comp* sign, where the latter may appear interleaved with any elements of the former. This means that the construction does not care where on the ARG-ST list the omissible argument appears.

<sup>13</sup>Parts of FSs may be labeled by  $X:[\dots]$  for reference elsewhere in the FS. The notation  $[F_1 X! [F_2 D]]$

can no longer mention that argument, and this lexeme for *eat* will appear in an intransitive clause. The quantificational frame introduced by the *null-comp* sign is appended to the list of frames associated with the lexeme. The result is shown in (32).

$$(32) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FORM} \quad \langle eat \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \boxed{1}\text{NP}_i, \boxed{2}\text{NP}[ini]_j \rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \text{VAL} \quad \langle \boxed{1} \rangle \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} eat-fr \\ \text{EATER} \quad i \\ \text{EATEN} \quad j \end{array} \right], \left[ \begin{array}{l} exist-fr \\ \text{BV} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Constructional NI, when it behaves like lexical NI (e.g., with respect to syntactic activeness), can be represented in a similar way. It involves a derivational construction which changes one or more of the signs on the ARG-ST of a lexical entry from overt to (*ini*) or (*dni*). For instance, Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010) represent the diary subject omission construction as a derivational construction which changes the first element on a lexeme’s VAL to (*dni*), adding the contextual restriction to the diary genre (178). That lexeme can then interact with (31) to license a non-subject-taking verb. Note that this all takes place within the domain of lexical constructs. Phrasal constructions that provide a word with its overt dependents apply on “after” NI has been done.

This approach offers a streamlined mechanism for valence-reduction, but at a significant cost. It affords no trivial way to distinguish between constructionally and lexically-licensed NI with respect to syntactic inertness. If both operate by altering the sign type of ARG-ST or VAL elements, the resulting lexemes and phrases will be indistinguishable for purposes of combination with resultatives and depictives, binding reflexives, and so on. There would be no preventing, for instance, a lexeme licensed by *ni-cxt* to be the daughter of a resultative-adding derivational construct. This would incorrectly generate (8a). Yet we do need to license the VP [*eat*  $\emptyset$  *raw*], but only if the null element is constructionally-licensed.

I propose an update to lexical entries that captures, with minimal additions, the difference between lexical and constructional NI. For my account I assume, with Kay (2005), Müller (2006, 2010) and Sag (2010b), that constructions that add resultative and depictive modifiers are lexical and not phrasal in nature. Treating them as derivational constructions in SBCG allows them to feed other morphological processes such as passive and adjectivalization while maintaining the principle of lexical integrity, which draws a strict separation

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indicates that the value of  $F_1$  must be identical to the FS tagged as  $X$  with the exception of values for  $F_2$ , which must be  $D$ . The notation  $[X!F]$  indicates that the value of  $F$  is left to vary freely. Thus, in (31), the mother’s SYN value is identical to that of the daughter except for the value of VAL, which is free to vary as it will in order to satisfy more general constraints. The effect is similar to the interaction between ARG-ST, COMPS, and SLASH described by Bouma et al. (2001), and could be straightforwardly translated to their framework.

between morpholexical and syntactic (phrasal) processes (Bresnan & Mchombo, 1995). The phrasal approach faces several challenges in modeling these constructions' interactions with morphological processes (Müller, 2006).

Given that all the constructions of interest operate in the lexical domain, this means that the ARG-ST feature is present (phrasal signs do not have an ARG-ST: Sag, 2010b:69). NI in general involves an absence of an element from a sign's VALENCE, so this will be common for both active and inert null arguments. I propose that inert arguments are also not present on ARG-ST. NI-licensing constructions that result in syntactically active omitted arguments, such as genre-based omissions, would leave ARG-ST untouched. Constructions like resultative, which require a syntactically active argument (null or overt), are specified as sensitive to the presence of an appropriate argument on the ARG-ST of the predicator to which they are added. If that argument has already been removed by NI, the argument structure constructions cannot apply.

Referencing ARG-ST to constrain syntactic processes is not completely novel. HPSG accounts of reflexive binding state the key constraints in terms of obliqueness: a reflexive's antecedent must be less oblique than the reflexive. This is implemented on the ARG-ST list, on which arguments are stipulated to appear in order from least to most oblique. My proposal hooks up with this nicely: lexically-licensed null arguments are removed from ARG-ST, predicting correctly that they cannot be the antecedents of reflexives. Constructions like diary subject omission removes elements from VALENCE but leaves them on ARG-ST, so those subjects can antecede reflexives.

Removing an element from ARG-ST is essentially Napoli's (1985) base-generation analysis. ARG-ST represents the basic mapping possibilities between frame elements and syntactic complements. Removing an argument from that list is tantamount to stating that the FE is unexpressible. As Grimshaw (1979) noted, however, NCA is still subject to selectional (as opposed to subcategorizational) restrictions. This we capture by leaving the SEM attribute untouched. The lexeme's FEs are still present and able to place limits on the interpretation of the omitted argument.

Constructional NI, which preserves ARG-ST, most closely resembles the null anaphor analysis (Hankamer & Sag, 1976; Depiante, 2000). There is still, at some level of representation, an element that stands for the omitted argument and which is not purely semantic, thereby licensing reflexives and syntactic configurations like resultatives. The account I propose is subtly different from a null anaphor account, in that what is phonologically empty is not a specific separate lexical item, but a sign-specification. I do not, however, believe the distinction is important for present purposes.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>By not positing a separate lexical item, I predict that potentially any argument could be specified as optionally DNI. However, the examples cited by Fillmore (1986) contain very few Patientive NPs, and Haynie (2008) has argued that NCA cannot target NPs at all. Though this claim is made problematic by examples like *We won (the game)*, *The hooded figure approached (us)*, and *Will you be attending (the conference)?*, it is true that such examples are rare and often involve locative NPs. I have no ready explanation for the pattern, though I suspect that the ultimate reason will combine language-specific syntactic restrictions with general cognitive or pragmatic limits on argument omission.

This takes care of one direction: once NI has applied, these adjunct constructions are ruled out. The other direction is tricky. Because constructs are local trees, lexemes do not have a built-in registry of all the constructions they satisfy. The *ni-cxt* construct thus does not have access to whether there is a resultative or depictive expression which might block null instantiation. This difficulty can be overcome by adopting a representational mechanism for NI developed in Ruppenhofer, 2004. In that framework, NI was not mediated by sign types, but rather by a lexeme-level feature NCOMPS (null complements) which listed the arguments available for NI along with their interpretation (DNI or INI). Then a construct similar in spirit to *ni-cxt* derived a lexeme that removed from the VALENCE an argument referenced by NCOMPS. The construct specified that the reference was also removed from NCOMPS, a means of “checking off” that the NI was accomplished.

I reintroduce this feature, though with a different structure and purpose. Here it is simply a list of signs; because the signs already indicate NI potential, that information is not duplicated with separate features on NCOMPS. The complementarity of NI and resultative/deictive constructions is achieved by stating that those constructions check NCOMPS for references to the constituent they are modifying. If one exists, it is removed from NCOMPS. It is now impossible for NI to apply later. An updated lexical entry for *eat* is shown in (33).

$$(33) \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \textit{trans-verb-lxm} & \\ \text{FORM} & \langle \textit{eat} \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} & \langle \text{[1]NP}_i, \text{[2]NP}[(\textit{ini})]_j \rangle \\ \text{NCOMPS} & \langle \text{[2]} \rangle \\ \text{SYN} & \left[ \text{VAL} \quad \langle \text{[1], [2]} \rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Lexical NI omission (which must now be done separately from constructional NI) now mentions NCOMPS, such that the lexeme with the missing argument no longer lists that argument under NCOMPS.

## (34) Lexical NI omission

 $lex-ni-cxt \Rightarrow$ 

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \\ \text{DTRS} \end{array} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{ARG-ST} & L_2 \\ \text{SYN} & X! [\text{VAL}] \\ \text{SEM} & \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{FRAMES} & L_1 \oplus L_4 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{NCOMPS} & L_3 \end{array} \right] \\ \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} & L_2 \circ \langle \langle \mathbb{I} \rangle \rangle \\ \text{SEM} & \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{INDEX} & i \\ \text{FRAMES} & L_1: \langle \langle \begin{array}{l} \text{quant-fr} \\ \text{BV } i \end{array} \rangle \rangle \rangle \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SYN} & X \\ \text{SEM} & L_4 \\ \text{NCOMPS} & L_3 \circ \langle \langle \mathbb{I} \rangle \rangle \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

(35) sketches a secondary predication construction, of which resultatives and depictives are subtypes (I abstract away from the syntactic and semantic details other than the effect on null instantiation). Interaction with NI is accomplished by specifying that that the mother's NCOMPS must be identical to that of its daughter's (tagged  $L$ ), minus a (possibly empty) list of the any that are [INDEX  $i$ ]. As  $i$  is the index of the modified argument, this effectively makes that argument ineligible for NI—at least, as licensed by  $lex-ni-cxt$ .

## (35)

$$secondary-pred-cxt \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \\ \text{DTRS} \end{array} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{ARG-ST} & \langle \dots, X_i, \dots, [\text{SELECT } X_i] \rangle \\ \text{NCOMPS} & L \ominus list([\text{SEM} | \text{INDEX } i]) \end{array} \right] \\ \left\langle \begin{array}{ll} \text{ARG-ST} & \langle \dots, X_i, \dots \rangle \\ \text{NCOMPS} & L \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Once a secondary predicate is added, the modified argument no longer has a correspondent in NCOMPS. The lexeme no longer satisfies the constraints of  $lex-ni-cxt$ . The argument can still be omitted, however, if a separate construction licenses it. As seen above (14b), the instructional imperative construction allows any direct or indirect object to be omitted

along with the second-person subject and treats the omitted argument as syntactically active. In the current framework, this means that the construction does not alter the ARG-ST of any lexeme, but instead either manipulates VAL or simply bypasses the normal argument realization constructions entirely. It is the latter approach that Ruppenhofer & Michaelis (2010) take for instructional imperatives (181). Figure 2.1 shows their construction.

The head daughter (tagged *H*) is a bare-stem verb with at least two valence elements (due to horizontal space restrictions, they are vertically stacked). The first, the subject, is a second-person NP. The second is the direct object, an accusative NP. Any additional valence elements, including potential resultatives or depictives, are in  $L_2$ . The daughters of the construct are first the head daughter, followed by  $L_2$ . The subject and object are not included here, and are missing from the mother's VAL: they have been omitted. The construction, as written, licenses clauses like  $\emptyset$ bake  $\emptyset$  and  $\emptyset$ place  $\emptyset$ on dish. The mother includes a specification under CNTXT (CONTEXT, namely that the genre is instruction and the topic is *y*, the undergoer of the verb. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of how CNTXT works. The construction does not reference ARG-ST or NCOMPS, nor does it rely on sign types or anything like *lex-ni-cxt*. This leaves open the possibility that the head daughter's VAL contains a secondary predicate that modifies the about-to-be omitted direct object.

## 2.5 Context and null instantiation

The preceding section laid the foundation for representing the syntax and semantics of null instantiation. The next question is in what ways does NI interact with the context, and with what aspects of the context does it interact. Genre-based NI constructions impose constraints on rather high-level aspects of the communicative situation (such as genre), and I address that in later chapters. I begin, however, with a much narrower view of the context of a construction: the sentences in which it appears. From there, I move to the prior linguistic context and the immediate physical or perceptual context of the discourse participants. I begin to build a picture of what context is, viewed through the lens of a construction grammar. Along the way, I posit an additional type of null instantiation that interacts with that context in a way distinct from the categories outlined above.

### 2.5.1 Beyond definite and indefinite

Definiteness is not a single, nondecomposable feature of referential expressions. The referents picked out by definite descriptions vary in factors such as identifiability, uniqueness, information or activation status, and topicality (Prince, 1981; Gundel et al., 1993). Conversely, there are several ways of picking out specific entities in the discourse or surrounding context, each with its own requirements with respect to these categories. Constructions which are not primarily means of accomplishing definite reference can also be sensitive to the scales of definiteness and givenness (e.g., the word order phenomena dis-

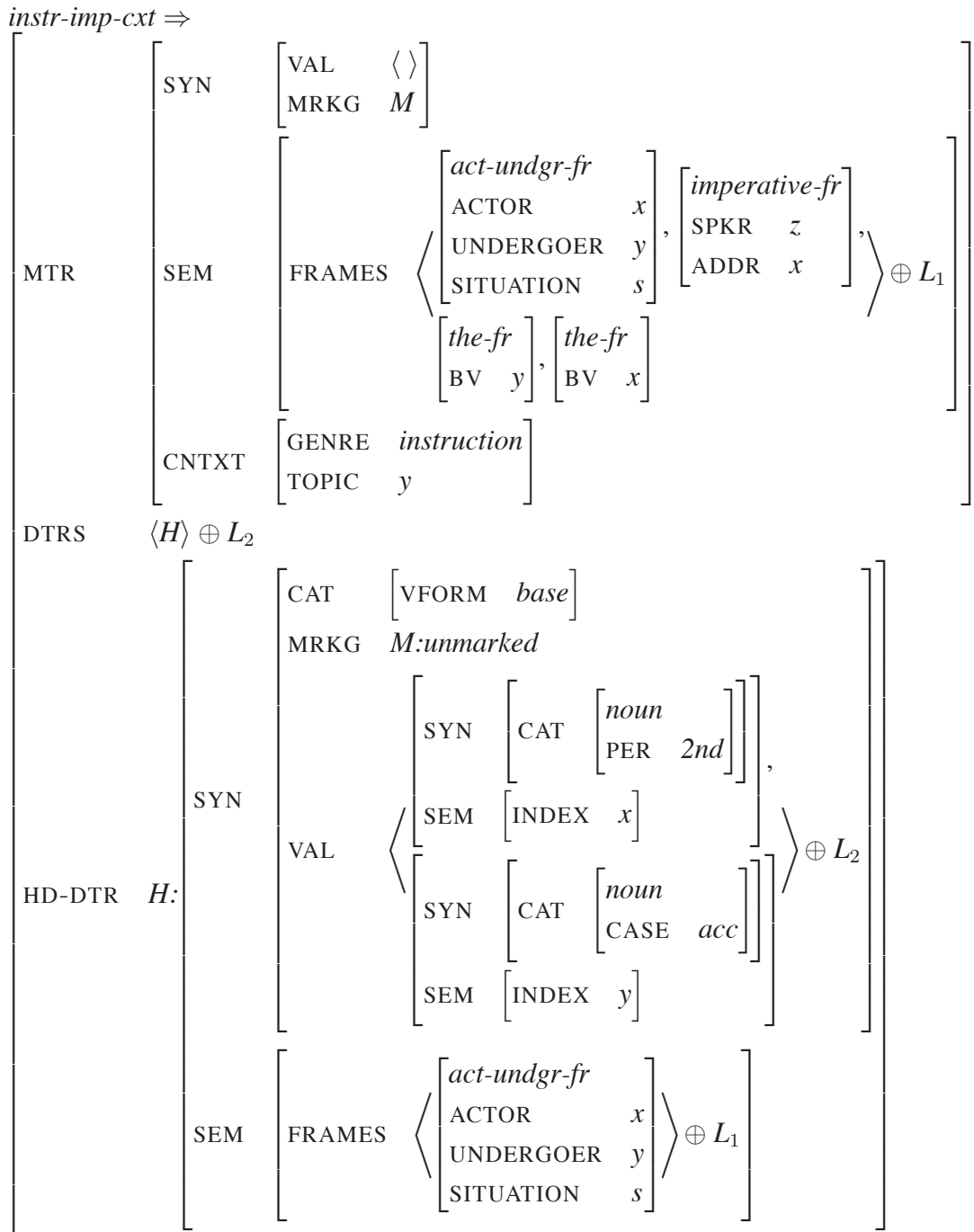


Figure 2.1: The Instructional Imperative construction, adapted from Ruppenhofer & Michaelis 2010:181

cussed by Birner (1994, 1996) and specificational copular clauses (Mikkelsen, 2005); see also Ward & Birner 2006).



Given the variety seen in overt expressions, it should not be surprising to discover varieties of DNI that interact with the (extra-)linguistic context in different ways.<sup>15</sup> One proposal is that Fillmore's single category of lexically-licensed DNI actually covers two classes of omitted arguments: topical DNI and frame-induced DNI. Lambrecht & Lemoine (2005:29–32) argue from French that the two must be distinguished based on which lexical items allow which.

Topical DNI omits a topical entity and alternates with an unstressed pronoun. Frame-induced DNI omits a non-topical entity and alternates with a lexical NP which, if uttered, would receive prosodic stress. This type is called frame-induced because the situation is construed as instantiating a frame which makes certain participants or relations highly predictable. (36) illustrates topical DNI, and (37) illustrates frame-induced DNI.

- (36) a. Elle n'a pas envie (de l'embrasser).  
 'She doesn't feel like (kissing him).' (Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005:(16b))
- b. Je vais lui demander (ce qu'il en est).  
 'I'm going to ask him (what this is about).' (16f)
- c. (Tasting a wine) J'aime.  
 'I like (it).' (31)
- (37) a. (Upon hearing the doorbell) Va ouvrir!  
 'Open up!' (Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005:(13a))
- b. A quelle heure vous fermez?  
 'What time do you close?' (13b)
- c. Est-ce qu'elle est arrivée?  
 'Has she arrived?' (15a)

Not all French verbs allow topical DNI (Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005:(17)), which motivates treating it as a lexical phenomenon. It is notable, however, that many topical DNI-licensing verbs have clausal arguments (*ibid.*, 31). If all instances of topical DNI involved clausal antecedents, it would be tempting to treat this as an accidental phenomenon: after all, it is difficult to evoke a proposition without first mentioning it, thus making it "topical." Nonetheless, there are numerous non-clausal examples like (36c), so the distinction may well be real, at least in French. French DNI constructions must therefore be more sensitive than English to topicality and to the (potentially non-linguistically-evoked) frames in a given interaction, in order to distinguish the interpretations of the two types of DNI.

For English, there is reason to believe that DNI is underspecified enough to encompass both topical and non-topical uses (Ruppenhofer (2004) takes this view). Consider *arrive*.

<sup>15</sup>There are also varieties of INI: existential, generic, and habitual, among others. See Ruppenhofer, 2004, Goldberg, 2005, and Lambrecht & Lemoine, 2005.

Suppose two friends depart from a third. One of the two, worried about the third friend's safety, wonders whether he made it to his destination safely. She could ask, *Do you think he's arrived yet?* The GOAL FE could only be overtly realized with a full lexical phrase, such as *home*. But imagine that the destination is discourse-old, having been introduced by one of the friends saying *His home is pretty far away*. Then the other could say *Do do you think he's arrived (there) yet?*, with topical DNI. At least for *arrive*, then, it is safe to say that GOAL is DNI-omissible in general, with no need to mention topicality or any other subfeatures of definiteness.

In the remainder of this section, I argue that English does contain a subvariety of DNI, specific to the argument structure construction illustrated in (38), and which does not exhibit the same sort of definiteness as seen so far. Unless otherwise noted, examples in this section were collected from the BNC in the project described by Fillmore et al. (2010).

- (38) a. Demons **broke their way into the locked church**, where priests were incanting psalms round her body and the Devil called her up from her coffin and bore her away.
- b. He crammed it into his pocket and **bludgeoned his way rudely through the first-night crowd**.
- c. The stuff was heavy, but not heavy enough to drag him down. It was smelly, acidic, like seminal fluid. [...] He **punched his way through**, tearing an opening in what must have been the thing's gut (for sinuous tubes were visible there, coils of transparent rubber that could only have been intestines).
- d. Slowly, Aenarion was drawn down into the daemon's innards. Even as **he hacked his way free** more tentacles looped around him and dragged him into the filth.
- e. The Norsemen **who battled their way into the northern uplands** (one of their leaders rejoiced in the name of Erik Bloodaxe) must have been almost as poetic as they were bloodthirsty.

This construction, called *Verb-Way*, replaces the verb's ARG-ST with one that contains the original subject, a possessed *way*-NP, and a locative expression. The derived verb now also evokes a frame of Motion, with the subject the THEME, and the verb indicating either a salient means-action or a co-extensive but not causally-related action. I am concerned here only with the means-action interpretation (see Goldberg 1995 for arguments for treating the two interpretations as separate constructions).

Both transitive and intransitive verbs may be used, but the construction obliterates any complements the verb may have had originally. Of interest is what the interpretation of that now-omitted argument is. In each sentence in (38), it is more or less clear what it is: a door, entryway, or even wall of the church, the people in the crowd, the liquidy stuff, and the demon. The context of the *Norsemen* sentence does not contain an antecedent, at least in the prior several sentences. It is nevertheless understandable to those familiar

with the history of the Norse, and it is likely to have been mentioned earlier in the text. I say that the antecedents are “more or less” clear because the precise referent is not always retrievable. The individuals bludgeoned in (38b) are not mentioned, and are possibly not ever mentioned, in the text. Moreover, under a typical understanding of what is being described, the subject is not “bludgeoning the crowd,” but only certain members who stand in his way. Similarly with (38a), it is surely some boundary or gateway which is broken, but the reader can only make guesses as to what specifically.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, it is necessary that there be some “hook” into the omitted argument. The following text provides no hint as to what the missing former direct object of *push* is, and so is unacceptable.

- (39) She got a tip that the weapon had been hidden in a supply closet in the high school cafeteria. There was no time to waste, so she drove straight to the high school and ran for the largest building she could find. #She stepped through the front door and **pushed her way to the back of the room.**

Two minor changes would rectify the discourse. First is prior mention of people in the room (40a). Second is mention of the people elsewhere in the clause, even within (40b) or (marginally) following (40c) the locative expression.

- (40) a. She stepped through the front door to find about a hundred students standing around eating lunch. She pushed her way to the back of the room.  
 b. She stepped through the front door and pushed her way through a crowd of students to the back of the room.  
 c. ?She stepped through the front door and pushed her way to the back of the room, not caring if she ruined the lunches of the students she bowled past.

Support from the prior or ongoing discourse is not always necessary, however. If the verb brings along a rich enough scenario, it is possible for the *Verb-Way* construction to appear out of the blue. In (41a), *bribe* evokes a complex scenario of actors and forces not dissimilar to the meaning encoded by the construction (i.e., accomplishing a goal despite resistance or difficulty). Further, the sorts of direct objects that *bribe* can take, and that would make sense in order to accomplish the motion depicted, are limited enough that it makes sense that no prior mention of a person who receives the payment is necessary. Note, however, that the further the we depart from well-understood scenes, the less acceptable the construction becomes without supporting context.

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<sup>16</sup>I refer to a “reader” because these sentences are from written sources, and sometimes have a literary feel. The same generalizations apply to any medium.

- (41) a. Nevertheless, he somehow bribed his way out of hospital to shoot down an impudent intruder strafing his base.  
 b. ?He somehow bribed his way into the board room.  
 c. ??He somehow bribed his way past the rose garden.

Verbs like *break*, *push*, and *bludgeon* evoke much more schematic frames: one object, perhaps human, causes damage, motion, or harm to something else with certain physical characteristics. Absent any further information, there is no way to call up a detailed enough scenario to populate the scene with the fillers of the unexpressed FEs.

In sum, *Verb-Way* manipulates a verb's ARG-ST, replacing all but the external argument with other constituents. If the verb was transitive, then the now-unexpressible direct object is interpreted as being, or being a part of, an entity which is easily inferrable given the scene being depicted; otherwise, it is either discourse-old or being mentioned in the current clause. This constellation of properties is unlike DNI or INI, though there are some elements of each in it. Like FNI, there is some flexibility in interpretation. But, while FNI means that the missing argument is either definite or indefinite, the NI of the *verb-way* construction is intermediate between the two. So far as I can tell, there is no other construction in English which references the linguistic context in exactly this way. Yet, because the interpretation of *Verb-Way* construction relies upon it, we must conclude that the grammar can reference the discourse context in this manner.

## 2.5.2 What constitutes context: first steps

The constructions examined in this chapter embody two ways in which a construction can be associated with, i.e., encode, information about, the contexts in which it is used. Consider the instructional imperative. First, it is acceptable only in the genre of "instruction." What constitutes a genre is not trivial to define, but it includes at least the the function(s) of the text, the topic(s) of the text, the relationship between the speaker/writer and addressee, and possibly the medium of communication. Second, the omitted arguments are interpreted definitely, which means that the acceptability of any utterance using the construction is dependent on the possibility for locating the antecedent. In this section I address this second type of constructional sensitivity to context.

It is no secret that deixis and anaphora are key connections between grammar and context. Anaphoric devices regularly place restrictions on the means by which antecedent is located. The distinction between surface and deep anaphora represents a major class division in anaphoric devices (Hankamer & Sag, 1976). Surface anaphora requires the antecedent to have been realized linguistically, whereas deep anaphora has no such requirement. Among surface anaphors, there may be further distinctions regarding the degree to which the antecedent must match the anaphor in structure. Verb phrase ellipsis (in certain discourse-structural contexts, Kehler 2000) requires a near-exact formal match (42a, 42b). So too do gapping and sluicing (43). Verb phrase ellipsis in other contexts, however, is

tolerant of a looser match—there still must be a linguistic antecedent, however (44).

- (42) Next door, the recycling gets taken out by the kids...
- a. At my home, the compost does  $\emptyset$ .
  - b. #At my home, me and my wife do  $\emptyset$ .
- (43) a. Ms. Fuller was shot once in the torso, and her husband  $\emptyset$  several times in the head.
- b. \*Ms. Fuller was shot once in the torso by Suspect 1, and Suspect 2  $\emptyset$  (=had shot) her husband once in the chest.
  - c. #They were attacked, but it's not clear who  $\emptyset$  (=attacked them).
- (44) The trash didn't have to be taken out this week, but I did anyway.

Deep anaphora may involve a linguistic antecedent, but needs none. Personal pronouns, for instance, are usable deictically, pointing to salient objects in the shared experience (here-and-now or past) of the discourse participants. So too is definite null instantiation, at least in principle. DNI arguments which are locations or physical entities generally permit deictic interpretation: *approach slowly, they're arrived, we won!* Propositional arguments too can be omitted, though with no linguistic antecedent the context must be rich enough to make the proposition salient enough (45). An exception to this is the argument of *say*, which can only be omitted if it is an indirect question. According to my intuition, this case of DNI must have a linguistic antecedent, though it is not obvious whether this is due to a lexical idiosyncrasy or the difficulty of non-linguistically evoking (the meaning of) an indirect question.

- (45) a. (Kim accidentally deletes several important files, then notices that a coworker saw what happened).  
Do you think the boss will find out  $\emptyset$ ? Does she already know  $\emptyset$ ? Should I tell her  $\emptyset$ ?
- b. (Kim keeps checking a web page for the results of a recent lottery. A coworker notices this.)  
# Why are you checking that now? Didn't they already say  $\emptyset$ ? (=when results would be posted).

A common feature of these constructions (NI, gapping, sluicing, etc.) is that they instruct addressees in how to find some element of meaning or form-meaning bundle that will complete a given utterance. They differ in how they fit grammatically into the sentence they

are in, and in the nature of those instructions. In all cases, however, the instructions mention some aspect of either the linguistic context (the history of expressions and expressed meaning) or the communicative context (who, when, and where the speakers are).

This feature is not unique to what are normally considered anaphors. The expressions *vice versa* and *respectively* instruct comprehenders to determine an ordering of members of some set or collective (Kay, 1989; Okada, 1999; Gawron & Kehler, 2002, 2004). The surrounding semantic content may provide such an ordering, as in *the oldest three students received the top three grades, respectively*. If it does not, or if one cannot be inferred from the referents or descriptions of them, then the order in which they were mentioned is available. As the order of mention is part of what is “pragmatically supplied” (Gawron & Kehler, 2004:173), order of mention too forms part of the context of communication.

Based on the range of linguistic phenomena examined in this chapter, it is clear that speakers keep track of at least the following sorts of information in order to determine which constructions are acceptable and how to interpret utterances that make use of them.

- (46)
- a. Perceptually accessible objects. (deixis)
  - b. Perceived (evidence of) events and states. (deixis)
  - c. Linguistically-expressed meaning. (linguistic antecedent)
  - d. Uttered linguistic expressions. (form-matched linguistic antecedent)
  - e. Salience/activity status/prominence of referred-to entities. (definite descriptions, anaphora)
  - f. Order of mention (*respective, respectively, vice versa*)
  - g. Referents mentioned in ongoing utterance (*Verb-way*)

At this point, the context of an utterance as viewed from grammar is predominantly linguistic in nature: discourse participants pay attention to what was said, what was meant by what was said, and what could be meant, i.e., what could be referred to. Some aspects of metalanguage (how and when or in what order something was said) are also present. This should come as no surprise, coming as we did from the starting point of argument realization and null instantiation.

The following chapter develops this theme. I continue with null instantiation constructions, exploring the possible ways for constructions to constrain the interpretation of missing arguments. At the same time, we will see that some NI-licensing constructions make additional references to the context that move deeper into metalinguistic constraints. The constructions to be examined are sensitive to the precise language and timing of prior utterances, as well as the purposes and stances of the speakers of those utterances.

## Chapter 3

# Null instantiation and discourse function

We saw in the previous chapter that NI constructions connect to the linguistic and extralinguistic context by virtue of their ellipsis-like function. This chapter continues the theme of null instantiation by looking at its application to the verb *say*. It is shown that, beyond argument-omission, the several NI constructions that operate on *say* have additional unpredictable syntactic properties, motivating a constructional syntactic analysis. They also exhibit connections to the context, including the attitudinal and rhetorical stance of the speaker, the sequence of surrounding turns, and epistemic stance. I first introduce *say* in its more typical or canonical uses, and then proceed to go through several NI constructions which exhibit surprising syntactic properties (above and beyond NI) in addition to associations with discourse functions.

### 3.1 Background to *say*

One sense of *say* focuses on the content of a speaker's speech, while another focuses on the nature of the speech produced. The former evokes FrameNet's Statement frame; the latter, Text\_creation. The core frame elements (FEs) of Statement are SPEAKER and MESSAGE, as in (1). In TEXT\_CREATION they are AUTHOR and TEXT, as in (2).

- (1) [<sub>Speaker</sub> Organizers] say [<sub>Message</sub> this is one of the highest rates anywhere in the nation].
- (2) When I was 12, [<sub>Author</sub> I] said [<sub>Text</sub> swear words] a lot, but only under my breath.

TEXT cannot be DNI (3), and MESSAGE is only omissible if it is interpreted as an indirect question ((4b), Huddleston & Pullum, 2002:1529). The fact that (4c) is grammatical indicates that DNI does not require a form-matched linguistic antecedent: the sentence

fragments in the preceding sentence are enough to provide the proper semantic argument.<sup>1</sup>

- (3) \*She knows I hate swear words, but continued to say  $\emptyset_{\text{Text}}$  just to make me angry.
- (4) a. Prison officers will not necessarily know how long any person will be detained and immigration officers do not seem willing to say  $\emptyset_{\text{Message}}$ .
- b. \*Her friends have advised her to tell the public that she is committed to protecting the nation, but she does not seem willing to say  $\emptyset_{\text{Message}}$ .
- c. The body was identified then, but the cause of death was not. Accident, suicide or murder? The police could not say  $\emptyset_{\text{Message}}$ .

There do exist, however, several exceptions to this generalization, in which *say* appears without an overt complement, yet the interpretation is not that of an indirect question but a statement. A complete list of these, so far as I can determine, is given in (5).

- (5) a. You don't say!
- b. I'll say!
- c. Who says? / Says who?
- d. I was going to say!
- e. I'm just saying.

These expressions convey meaning beyond what is suggested by their lexical content. For instance, *You don't say* expresses surprise at an addressee's just-made claim. *I'll say* too responds to a prior claim, and indicates an emphatic, "upgraded" agreement, paraphraseable roughly as "You're more right than you know." These meanings or functions, which I address in detail in the following sections, are accompanied by idiosyncratic syntactic behavior. *You don't say*, for instance, is completely fixed: it does not allow expression of any additional arguments of *say*, nor omission or replacement of any of its elements (6). On the other hand, *I'll say* does permit a complement clause and when it does, additional adjuncts are permitted as well (7).

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<sup>1</sup>Because MESSAGE is semantically a proposition, it cannot easily be made discourse-old without linguistic means. My intuition is that *I'm not saying!* could be used in response to a non-verbal communicative gesture if it is interpretable as a question, as in the following constructed interaction.

- (i) A: ((notices a bunch of delivered flowers on his desk, looks quizzically at B))  
 B: I'm not saying!



- (6) a. \*You don't say he did!  
 b. \*You don't just say!

(7) I'll sure say it's important!

A general issue in the description of constructions is their syntactic activeness (or inertness). In Fillmore et al.'s (1988) terms, some constructions (like *by and large* or *let alone*) are lexically-filled or substantive, while others, like *the X-er the Y-er* and *What's X doing Y*, are more schematic—and many fall somewhere between the two. In particular for verb-centered constructions like those in (5) there arise questions like the following:

- How lexically-fixed are the arguments of the verb?
- Is the resulting structure embeddable? Can it interact with other constructions such as raising, control, long-distance dependencies, and so on?
- Does the construction have a fixed tense, aspect, negation, mood, and so on?

Compared to some of the thoroughly analyzed constructions in the literature, such as *What's X doing Y* (Kay & Fillmore, 1999), the *say* constructions are relatively inert. They are all unembeddable and most show no variation in negation or tense.

Sentences illustrating the general lack of flexibility are shown in (8). More flexible is *X says*, which allows any subject and can be either declarative or interrogative. The last two, (5d) and (5e), have variants *I was about to say* and *I was just saying*.

- (8) a. \*I realize you didn't say! You haven't said!  
 b. \*I told you I'd say! He'll say!  
 c. \*Do you know who says?  
 d. \*He was going to say.  
 e. \*I'm merely saying. ??I'm sure he was just saying.

In Fillmore et al.'s (1988) typology of idiomatic expressions, these fall somewhere between “familiar pieces familiarly arranged” and “familiar pieces unfamiliarly arranged” (508–510). That is, the syntactic structures produced largely conform with our expectations about the syntactic properties of the words involved when they are used non-idiomatically. The one exception, which makes them “unfamiliar,” is the optional DNI of MESSAGE. However, the unfamiliarity is relativized to the verb *say*: optional DNI is, of course, a familiar feature elsewhere in the grammar.

Other familiar-pieces-familiar-arrangement constructions include *pull someone's leg* or *take advantage*. Rhetorical questions with negative interpretations (one class of queclaratives: Sadock, 1971) are a formal idiom in this category. The *say* constructions fall somewhere closer to the lexically-fixed end. Nevertheless, I will argue that, despite their relative

inertness, they are not simply completely fixed expressions (“words with spaces”), but the result of a derivational or combinatory construction. Even in cases of extreme inertness, none of these constructions are completely semantically opaque. That is, they are not simply cut off from the rest of the lexicon and grammar. Unlike the words in the idiom *by and large*, the semantic contributions of, *say*, *who*, *will*, negation, and so on, are identical or related to their non-idiomatic uses. It thus falls to the grammar to account for both the idiom and its relation to other lexical items and constructions.

It is not just syntactic features that make the constructions in (5) noteworthy: their semantic and pragmatic functions are remarkable as well. A person who says *I’m just saying* is doing something in addition to remarking on a prior speech act. More surprising, *I’ll say* does not commit the speaker to a future act of stating something, but rather expresses strong agreement. These constructions thus have one leg firmly planted in the domain of syntactic constructions—the licensing of optional DNI—and have another in the domain of discourse pragmatics. It is my argument that, if a grammar of English is to have an account of DNI, it must incorporate discourse functions into the description of syntactic constructions.

### 3.2 *I’ll say*

*I’ll say* indicates agreement with the addressee’s most recent claim. Typical examples are shown below. It is typically pronounced with prosodic focus on *I*.

- (9) a. Ms-TUCKER: She gets to say, See, he’s just like the rest of us. I think that will be difficult...  
 MATTHEWS: Hm.  
 Ms-TUCKER:... for him to overcome.  
 MATTHEWS: **I’ll say.** (COCA)
- b. “It must have been a shock,” I said. “Finding Watson’s body.”  
 “A shock? Jesus, **I’ll say.**” (COCA)
- c. Turtle lovers speculate that he was a pet that got too big for his aquarium. **I’ll say.** (COCA)

*I’ll say* expresses more than simple agreement, however. There are instances where *I agree* is possible but *I’ll say* is not (10). It is also similar to *You’re telling me* and *No kidding*, but is subtly different from each. *You’re telling me* indicates that the speaker has personal experience that lets them affirm the addressee’s statement, making it incompatible when no such experience is claimed (11).

- (10) A: Sue’s office light is off.  
 B: Right.  
 A: So that means she’s already gone.  
 B: I agree / #I’ll say.

- (11) A: I think it will be difficult for him to overcome.  
 B: # You're telling me. (cf. (9a))

*No kidding* has at least two broad uses as a response. It can indicate surprise at the other's claim, or it can indicate agreement along with the idea that the truth of the claim is obvious. In the former, it cannot be replaced with *I'll say* (12). In the latter it is possible, but not always (13).

- (12) a. "That worthless bum of a brother of mine is no doubt on the run again. He's holed up in the Blight Hotel with some skinny blond broa...lady."  
 "Huh! No kidding! So Uncle Flynn got married!" (COCA)  
 b. ... # I'll say! So Uncle Flynn got married!
- (13) a. CONAN: Even more dangerous in some respects.  
 Mr-QUESADA: Yeah, no kidding ! Look where I ended up. (COCA)  
 b. ... Yeah, I'll say! Look where I ended up.  
 c. Welcome Mary Martha Corinne Morrison Clayborn Boggs Roberts (ph). No wonder you go by Cokie!  
 COKIE-ROBERTS-JOU: No kidding! Absolutely right. My brother, Tommy, couldn't pronounce Corinne when I came home from the hospital, and "Cokie" it's been. (COCA)  
 d. ... # I'll say! Absolutely right.

Each of these expressions is in the business of pointing out understatement. They convey to the addressee, "Not only is what you said true, but also X," where X is what varies between the constructions. For *you're telling me*, X is the addition that the current speaker has experience that allows him or her to better or more emphatically make the same claim. *No kidding* adds a claim of general obviousness.

What *I'll say* adds is the idea that the interlocutor's claim is highly appropriate, in a way that leaves no room for doubt, and moreover is more appropriate than the interlocutor thinks. If the claim contains a scalar predicate, then this often translates into a judgment that the predicate holds to a very high degree. For instance, if Chris says, "That lecture was boring," and Kim replies, "I'll say!" this indicates that Kim believes that the lecture was much more boring than Chris implied. The heightened degree of boringness makes all the more appropriate the claim that the lecture was boring. *I'll say* thus becomes unnatural (or humorous) as a response to a highly-confident, end-of-scale claim, as in (14).

- (14) Chris: That lecture was absolutely *the* most god-damned boring lecture that has *ever* been given in linguistics.  
 Kim: ?# I'll say!

For non-scalar claims, the appropriateness is based on how well (the speaker believes) the characterization fits the world. Imagine that Chris flips a coin, and it lands in the grass such that it is tilted at an angle. The following is then well-formed, because Chris expresses some qualifications about the appropriateness of calling the result as tails, which allows Kim to “go one better” and say that it is without doubt the right call.

- (15) Chris: Well, it’s sort of tilted, but it’s tails.  
 Kim: I’ll say it is!

The strangeness of (13d) is due to the fact that the prior claim already expresses a strong judgment (*it’s no wonder*) and so is not easily made into a more appropriate claim.

The agreement-plus-X interpretation of *I’ll say* is not surprising given the meaning of the individual parts and some general pragmatic principles. By focusing *I*, the speaker contrasts his or her willingness to state *P* (whatever the prior claim was) with that of the addressee, the implication being that the speaker is more willing. A willingness to say *P* implies (e.g., via Grice’s Maxim of Quality) a belief in *P*, and so one can conclude that the speaker has a stronger belief in *P* than the addressee—or, as I characterized it above, believes that *P* is more appropriate a claim in the present context than the addressee seems to.

Yet, this chain of logic does not mean that the function of this construction is not a matter of convention, and thereby grammatical specification. Nothing guarantees that a stronger willingness to say something entails a stronger belief in it, yet this is the (putative) logic of the construction.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there is no reason why it must be *say* that accomplishes this and not another verb of statement, or of belief, none of which can be used in this syntactic frame with the same or similar function (*\*I’ll tell you, \*I’ll claim, \*I believe*). *I’ll say* is, in the end, unexpected given the rest of the grammar, and must receive separate treatment.

Turning now to its syntactic properties, *I’ll say* requires exactly the elements it contains, with no exceptions. Even the contracted *I’ll* seems obligatory, though this may be due to a complex interaction of prosody (uncontracted *will* is often stressed, while the construction requires stress on *I*) and register (the construction is relatively colloquial, while full auxiliaries, when not stressed, are not colloquial).

- (16) a. \*He’ll say!  
 b. \*I’ve said!  
 c. \*I will say!

*I’ll say* allows expression of the MESSAGE, so long as it is phrased identically with the claim being agreed with. This is accomplishable by repeating the words, or with pronouns

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<sup>2</sup>There may be other logical avenues to arrive at the special interpretation of *I’ll say*. The point is that a speaker may take advantage of one, many, or none of these—the overall interpretation is conventional and likely learned as a unit.

and predicate ellipsis. Close synonyms or alternate argument structures (e.g., active vs passive) result in degradation of acceptability.

- (17) a. A: Doing that would be difficult.  
 B: I'll say.  
 B': I'll say it'd be difficult.  
 B'': I'll say it would (be).
- b. A: The process delayed you quite a bit, I gather.  
 B: I'll say it did.  
 B': I'll say it delayed me.  
 B'': ? I'll say I was delayed.  
 B''': \* I'll say it stalled my progress.

In this discussion I will assume that the construction requires absolute semantic identity but not absolute syntactic identity between the omitted argument and the antecedent. This means that I will treat an active/passive mismatch as basically grammatical (17b.B''), but the use of a separate lexical item (17b.B''') as ungrammatical. Additional mechanisms would be required to guarantee formal (morphosyntactic) identity as well.

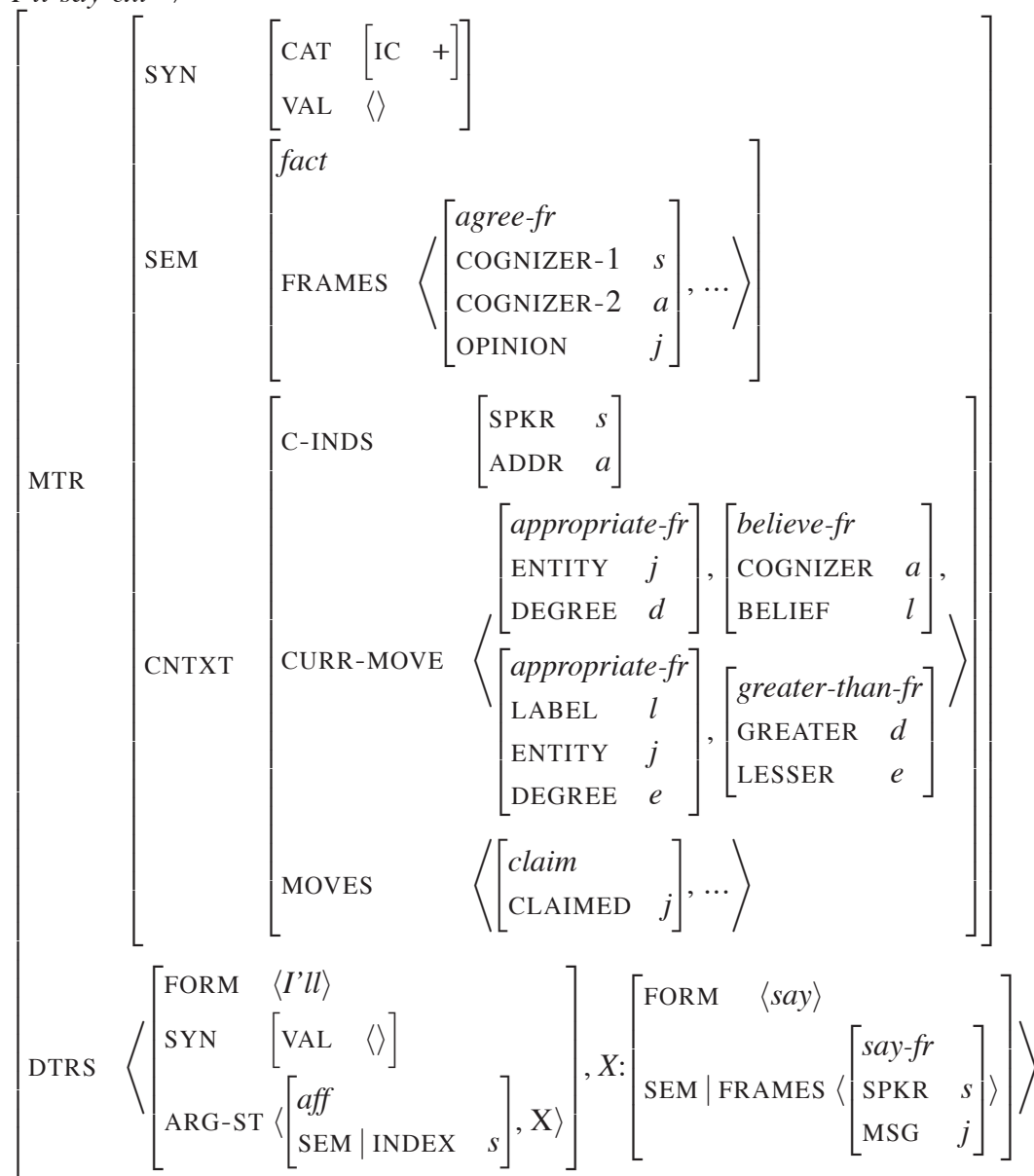
*I'll say* exhibits different degrees of syntactic inertness depending on whether the MESSAGE is overt. When it is DNI, only the string *I'll say* is permitted. A post-auxiliary adverb like *sure* or *certainly* would be unacceptable (18a). When the complement clause is present, however, these modifiers become possible (18b). Similarly, the sentence-initial exclamative *boy* is possible with or without DNI, but the exclamative auxiliary-initial structure is compatible only with an overt FE (19a).<sup>3</sup>

- (18) a. \*I'll certainly/sure say!  
 b. I'll certainly/sure say it was!
- (19) a. Boy, I'll say (it was)!  
 b. Boy, will I say \*(it was!)

What this means is that *I'll say* is actually two constructions: one requires non-expression of MESSAGE and is mostly syntactically inert; the other allows *say* to have its normal complementation pattern, i.e., it does *not* permit a DNI MESSAGE. Both constructions, however, assign the same overall interpretation to the expression, including the fact that the MESSAGE must be identified with the addressee's prior claim.

The first, lexically-fixed construction, is illustrated in (20).

<sup>3</sup>The presence of *boy* is not essential to the point about auxiliary-initial clauses, but its presence makes the inversion sound more natural.

(20) *I'll-say* Construction ( $\uparrow$  root):*I'll-say-cxt*  $\Rightarrow$ 

First, the syntactic properties. As a subtype of *root*, structures licensed by this construction are usable as utterances. This is also indicated by the feature [IC +], indicating that it is an independent clause. The concept of usable-as-utterance is identical to the Conversation Analytic category *turn-constructural unit* (TCU). TCUs are syntactically-defined “unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn” (Sacks et al., 1974:702, 720) A turn may consist of multiple TCUs, but at the end of each TCU comes a transition-relevant place (p. 703) where one speaker may take over from a previous one (without necessarily interrupting). *I'll say* thus instantiates a TCU.

Unlike the single-daughter derivational constructs of Chapter 2, *I'll-say-ctx* is a combinatory construction with two daughters, *I'll* and *say*. I treat *I'll* as a subject-incorporating auxiliary, following the analysis of Sag & Bender 2000. The “incorporated” subject is the first element of the ARG-ST list, but is not overtly realized (guaranteed by specifying an empty VALENCE). The second daughter is *say* in its Statement sense. The SPEAKER FE is filled by *s*, the utterer of the sentence (see below), and the MESSAGE is indexed *j*. There are no other daughters, and no other valence elements provided for, meaning that MESSAGE is unexpressed.

The mother specifies the speech-act and contextual properties. The asserted meaning, indicated under SEM, is that of agreement between the speaker and the addressee (*a*) with respect to the claim *j*. The semantic type *fact*, specifies *I'll say* as an exclamation, rather than a statement, question, command, etc (Ginzburg & Sag, 2000).

The remaining constructional properties are specified under the feature CNTXT. CNTXT has three attributes: CONTEXTUAL-INDICES (C-INDS), CURR(ENT)-MOVE, and MOVES. The first was introduced by Pollard & Sag (1994). C-INDS records “information about the circumstances of the utterance” that is relevant for language, such as deictic expressions (332). Here it provides indices for the speaker and addressee, but in principle could include the time and place of utterance, and possibly others. MOVES and CURR-MOVE represent a decomposition of Pollard & Sag’s (1994) BACKGROUND attribute. They define that feature as a set of parametrized states of affairs (essentially, predications) which form the “felicity conditions on the utterance context,” and represent “presuppositions or conventional implicatures” (27), or the “appropriateness conditions associated with an utterance of a given type of phrase” (332). Among the (relatively speaking) simpler applications of this feature is the restriction that the referent of *she* is female (1994:27).

BCKGRND is a sort of catch-all attribute, not easily adapted to represent the substructures and layers of conversational context. One aspect of the background of an interaction are the conversational moves made up until the present point. The attribute MOVES models this (see also Ginzburg, forthcoming: Chapter 4). This is a list of conversational moves made in the history of the interaction, ordered from most to least recent. As moves are made in the discourse, speakers add them to their record of the interaction. MOVES is a representation of that list, and its presence in the construction requires a check against that list for acceptability.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, it requires that the most recent move have been a statement, or some other means of claiming that *j* is true, where *j* is identical to the interpretation of *say*’s MESSAGE.<sup>5</sup> This results in the null instantiation having definite interpretation. It

<sup>4</sup>A psychologically-plausible model of this feature would allow for degradation over time of when moves were made, by whom, and the linguistic means by which they were made. For the current construction, it is reasonable to assume that the most recently-made move is available in the speaker’s memory.

<sup>5</sup>Here I engage in some simplification. As Green (2000) points out, most if not all speech acts rely on a variety of reflexive intention. A statement (or expositive) is an utterance “which a speaker (S) makes with the intention that the addressee (A) recognize S’s intention that A believe that S believes their content” (120). I do not claim to know to what degree this information is recorded in, e.g., MOVES, but for exposition purposes I leave it out, with the awareness that it is relevant in general for understanding how speech acts work, as well

is not definite or anaphoric in the exact same way that lexically-licensed DNI is, as the antecedent is specifically specified as the most recent claim. This is in line with discussion in Chapter 2: constructional DNI is not a single grammatical mechanism, and while some cases may involve derivational constructions akin to lexical DNI, this is not such a case. As MESSAGE-omission is obligatory, the construction does not mention any syntactic entity corresponding to the MESSAGE at all. Instead, a TCU is exceptionally licensed without all of a word's valents being realized.

Finally, there are the restrictions on the speaker's relationship to the claim  $j$ , as encoded in the construction. The contextual attribute CURRENT-MOVE (CURR-MOVE) describes what it is the speaker is doing (including what speech-act is being performed), or what additional meaning he or she is expressing, by speaking the current utterance. The attribute could indicate, for instance, that the speaker is making a statement, asking a question, complaining, or disagreeing. Via CURR-MOVE *I'll say* commits the speaker to expressing the idea that he or she believes that  $j$  is a more appropriate statement to make than the addressee believes. This is represented as a comparison of degrees: the speaker believes  $j$  is  $d$ -much appropriate, and takes the addressee as believing that  $j$  is  $e$ -much appropriate, where  $d$  is greater than  $e$ .

CURR-MOVE and MOVES are not posited solely for the constructions in this chapter. The aspects of discourse they represent—the speech acts and moves of participants—is also recognized as a crucial part of the interpretation of conditional and causal expressions (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005; Sanders et al., 2009). Sweetser and colleagues, working in Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier, 1994), posit a Basic Communicative Spaces Network, a model of unfolding discourse that includes not only the descriptive content of a discourse but speakers' epistemic stances and conversational moves or speech acts. This network of mental spaces is always available in any interaction (Sanders et al., 2009:25). One can view my introduction of these contextual attributes as a (rough) translation of part of the BCSN—needed to account for data entirely different from those considered here—into the present framework.

It would not be desirable for the assertion of agreement specified by the mother to override the compositional contribution of the daughters' frames, i.e., the “literal” meaning of ‘I'll say  $j$ ’. One reason is constructional motivation: there is a logic behind using *I'll say* for agreement, and this fact should be recognized in some way. Another reason is that predicate ellipsis of *say* is possible following *I'll say*.

- (21) a. I'll say—in fact, I think I already have \_\_\_ !  
 b. A: Our boss is a real idiot.  
 B: I'll say!  
 A: Oh yeah? I dare you to \_\_\_ .

---

as the possibility for the relevance of such information for some grammatical constructions.



(21a) means *I already have said that/so* and (21b) means *I dare you to say that/so*. That is, predicate ellipsis points back to *say* in its Statement sense, not (or not only) in its constructionally-provided agreement sense. This would be impossible if the lexical entry for *say* was not mentioned in the construction, or if a separate sense of *say* was posited which directly contributed a meaning of agreement instead of evoking Statement. It is true that these are marked, possibly humorous or ironic, follow-ups, but their acceptability means that the lexical contribution of the components cannot be simply ignored.

This is not to say that the primary interpretation or function of *I'll say* is to promise a saying event. The agreement meaning is the more salient one. This is indicated by the fact that *I'll say* is most natural after a statement, where agreement or disagreement—and not making a promise—are the most relevant second moves. This privileging of the idiomatic, constructionally-licensed interpretation is stated in (22)

(22) **Privileged constructional interpretation**

Where a construction introduces a set of semantic and pragmatic constraints without removing those expected from compositional principles, the constructionally-provided interpretation has sequential and interpretive priority.

Many of the constructions illustrated in this chapter have this property, but it may be a general property of constructions with a heavier semantic or pragmatic load. Rhetorical questions, especially what Sadock (1971) called queclaratives, have this double-meaning. While the preferred (and perhaps more common) interpretation of a queclarative like *Who (in the world) would do such a thing?* is along the lines of ‘No one would do such a thing’, it is possible for a recipient to treat it simultaneously as a proposition and as an information-seeking question in formulating a response (Caponigro & Sprouse, 2007).

One further principle is necessary to account for *I'll say*. *I'll say* is combinable with at least one larger construction, the one that adds sentence-level exclamatives like *boy!* (19a). In general, we need a way to ensure that contextual information introduced at one level is maintained throughout all the levels of a linguistic structure, up to sign that forms the entire utterance. Pollard & Sag (1994) propose (23) as a means to accomplish this (333).

(23) **PRINCIPLE OF CONTEXTUAL CONSISTENCY**

The CONTEXT | BACKGROUND value of a given phrase is the union of the CONTEXT | BACKGROUND values of the daughters.

C-INDS is left off the list because a single utterance can have multiple addresses, spacial coordinates, and so on, as in (24).

- (24) a. For this detail, I will need the assistance of you<sub>1</sub>, you<sub>2</sub>, you<sub>3</sub>, and you<sub>4</sub>.  
(Pollard & Sag, 1994:(51))
- b. I want telephone jacks installed here, here, here, and here. (Pollard & Sag, 1994:(52a))

(25) incorporates (23) into the present framework, adding CURR-MOVE and decomposing BCKGRND.

(25) Contextual Composition

$$cxt \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \left[ \text{CNTXT} \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{MOVES} & M_1 \oplus \dots \oplus M_n \\ \text{CURR-MOVE} & N_1 \oplus \dots \oplus N_n \end{array} \right] \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \left\langle \left[ \text{CNTXT} \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{MOVES} & \langle M_1 \rangle \\ \text{CURR-MOVE} & \langle N_1 \rangle \end{array} \right] \right], \dots, \left[ \text{CNTXT} \left[ \begin{array}{ll} \text{MOVES} & \langle M_n \rangle \\ \text{CURR-MOVE} & \langle N_n \rangle \end{array} \right] \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

The contextual constrains on the mother is simply the collection of the restrictions on the daughters, with respect to MOVES and CURR-MOVE. There are some problems with this approach as it stands, notably presupposition plugs such as conditionals and certain verbs of attribution (*say, believe*). These constructions and words prevent presuppositions (predications mentioned in BCKGRND) from being inherited by higher structures in a sentence. Despite this, I argue, with Pollard & Sag, that (25) is still viable. It provides the default mechanism for contextual inheritance. Perturbations to this, such as presupposition plugs, are represented as such: they are constructions or lexical items which specifically mention that signs composed using them do not follow (25) but some other principle (which may be determined on a case-by-case basis).

My overall framework for CONTEXT is inspired by that of Ginzburg (forthcoming), who proposes that conversational participants have their own *dialogue gameboards* on which they keep track of their version of the conversational actions of the participants (Section 4.2). The key result of this is that all the attributes under CNTXT represent features of the communicative act from the speaker's point of view. A construction that requires MOVES to have such-and-such a property commits the speaker to having in his or her model of the discourse an understanding of the recently-made-claims that conforms to the constructional specification. The predications that make up the CURR-MOVE in (20) are also all attributed to the speaker. The first frame is therefore understood as constraining the speaker to believe that *j* is *d*-appropriate; the second frame as constraining the speaker to believe that *a* has a certain belief, and so on. In this framework there is no single representation of common ground: each discourse participant has his or her own model, and theories about the others' models. These will often be identical or nearly so, but there is always potential for miscalculation, misunderstanding, and recalculation.

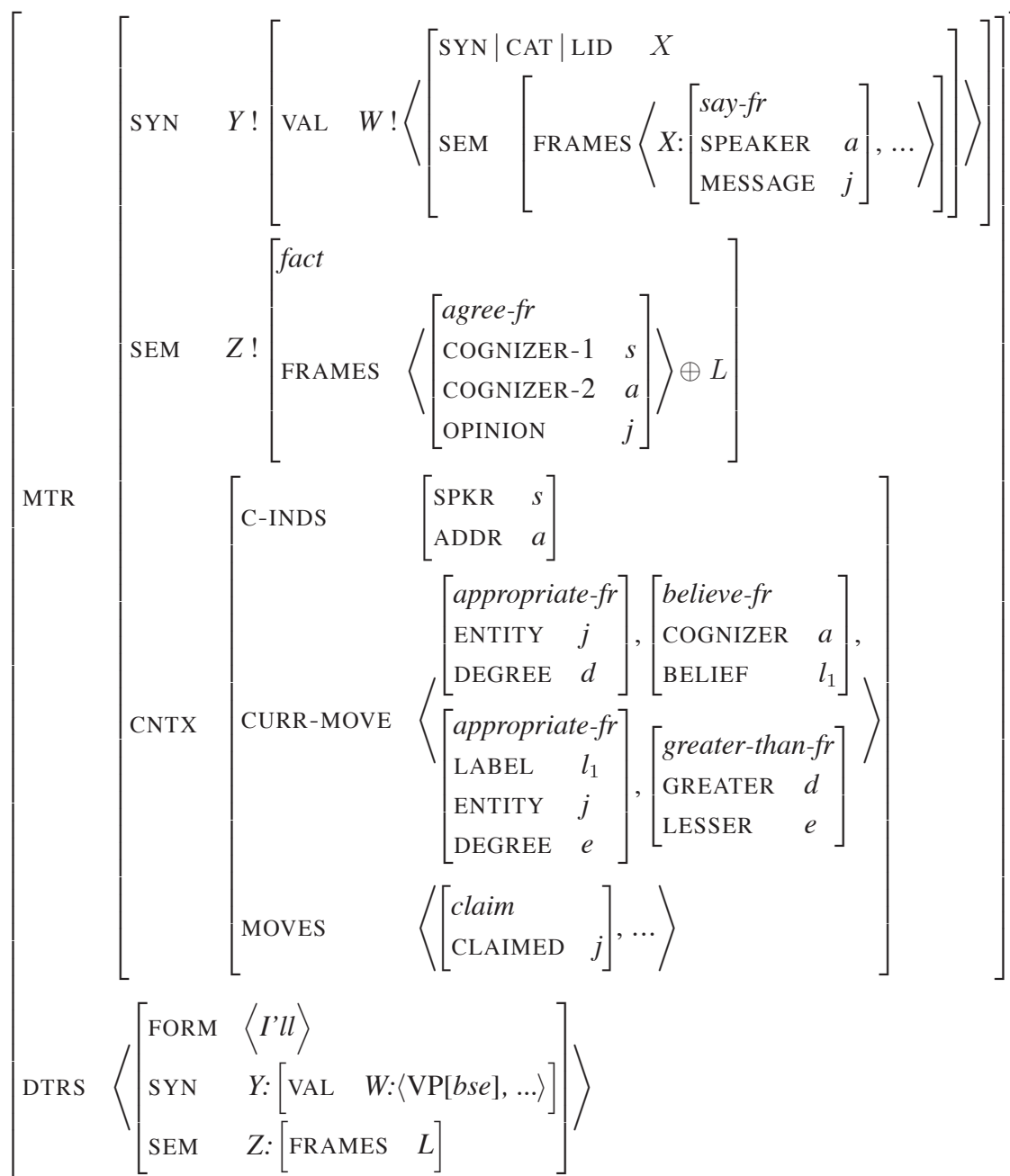
This division of labor between SEM and CONTEXT in (20) is motivated by the fact that follow-up questions that address the truth conditions of *I'll say* are understood as addressing the assertion of agreement, not the appropriateness-related stance. *A's really*, below, is only interpretable as surprise at B's concurring with A's assessment, not at B's enhanced judgment of Logan. Conversely, responses that attempt to get at the enhanced judgment (*A'*) are incoherent.

- (26) A: Some people like Logan, but not me. He's really annoying.  
 B: I'll say he is!  
 A: Really?  
 A': # I don't know about that. / # Why? / # Well, that's not true.

This division resembles the semantic partition introduced in Potts 2005 between *at-issue* meaning and *conventional implicature*. The former corresponds to my SEM, and represents the familiar notion of truth-conditional, or scene-descriptive, meaning. Potts' conventional implicature is a meaning class which is conventional (i.e., encoded in particular grammatical elements), speaker-oriented, and “logically and compositionally INDEPENDENT of what is said (in [Grice's] favored sense), i.e., independent of the at-issue entailments” (11, emphasis original). Our two frameworks are in fact quite similar, though mine is more oriented towards modeling the conversational context and structures contextual information in different ways. Nevertheless, many of the analysis here and in other chapters could probably be reformulated in part or in whole as Pottsian conventional implicatures (and vice versa). I take this as a positive sign: we are converging on similar understandings of the relationship between grammar and conversational context, though we are looking at completely different data from rather different perspectives.

I now turn to *I'll say* as it appears with an overt MESSAGE, argued earlier to be a separate construction on syntactic grounds. That construction is illustrated in (27). Rather than combining two daughters in a multi-part syntactic structure, the construction operates purely on the semantic and contextual levels. It assigns an idiomatic interpretation to a clause headed by *I'll* when it takes a *say*-headed VP complement, and unless some other construction intervenes, *say*'s complement will be realized overtly, per *say*'s off-the-shelf argument realization properties.

- (27) *I'll say X Construction* ( $\uparrow$  *pinfl-cxt*):  
*I'll-say-x-cxt*  $\Rightarrow$



(27) is a type of *post-inflectional* construction, a category introduced by Sag et al. (2003) to provide a treatment of negation-taking auxiliaries. Daughters and mothers of a *pinfl-cxt* are both words—in this case, finite subject-incorporating auxiliaries—rather than lexemes. The sign licensed by (27) is an *I'll*-word syntactically identical to the normal *I'll* except that its valence includes a *say*-headed complement. This is guaranteed by specifying that the mother's valence has a single element, a sign whose LEXICAL-IDENTIFIER (LID) is the *say-fr*, i.e., the verb *say*. LID is a way of allowing the syntax to identify the lexical

identity of a word or a phrase's head; in most cases a word's LID is identified with the frame it evokes.

The construction adds the same semantic and contextual restrictions seen in (20). Specification at the level of the word results in a syntactically active construction, compatible with adverbial expressions (recall (19)) and anything else which does not violate the specific constraints mentioned (for instance, the semantic content is still a *fact*, limiting the pattern to exclamatives).

Having set up a framework for recording the associations between syntactic structures and (some) features of context, I now apply it to several other *say* constructions.

### 3.3 *X says*

*Says* can combine with an NP, either before or after, to form a TCU. Both interrogative and declarative sentences are possible.

- (28) a. Who says?  
 b. Says who?  
 c. My mother says.  
 d. Says my mother.

#### 3.3.1 Interrogative *x says*

*Who says* and *Says who* primarily function as challenges. In response to a claim, they request justification in the form of a believable or authoritative source of the claim. COCA contains 43 instances of *Who says?*, all but three of which have this function. They are preceded by some claim made by another speaker, and are generally followed by a statement from that speaker that provides an authority.<sup>6</sup> In some cases the response is ironic, as may be the case in (29a)), where the interlocutors have a poor opinion of Ms. Sherman's dietary advice.

- (29) a. "Do I have to eat those?" M.J. asked, a slight whine in his voice.  
 "Yeah" Mike told him. "At least some of them. Okay? Blueberries are good for you."

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<sup>6</sup>The number of tokens is as found on October 11, 2010, with the search [who] says ?. It is notable that the majority of tokens in COCA are from fiction (26 of 43), with a scant eight from spoken discourse. No instances could be located in the ICSI Meeting Corpus, the Fisher and Switchboard corpora, or SBCSAE. This is surely indicative of either interaction-pragmatic facts or register facts about the construction, as it is by no means an obscure locution, as is made evident by internet searches of the phrase.

**“Who says?”**

“I’ll bet it was Ms. Sherman,” Hannah said. (COCA)

- b. The house dismayed Lindsay, too, but when she saw Amesley was also hesitating, she said, “I’ll knock. Betty’s not so bad.”

“Yeah?” Amesley said. **“Who says?”**

**“Who says?”** Garth echoed, his chin on Amesley’s head.

“Mr. Prior,” Lindsay told them. Amesley wrinkled his nose in doubt. (COCA)

- c. Mr. BENNETT: Why? What are the moral grounds for it?  
 Mr. SULLIVAN: Because they’re immoral. Because they’re about...  
 Mr. BENNETT: How do you – **who says?**  
 Mr. SULLIVAN: I say. (COCA)

While present tense is by far the most common, *who said* is attested. I will continue to refer to the construction as *who says*.

(30) “That’s not a good idea.”

I laughed at him. “What you talking about?”

“Going to the Forty-ninth Street beach is not a good idea.”

**“Who said?”**

“My parents. You could get killed over there.” (COCA)

MESSAGE is optionally expressed. It can appear as a pronominal *that* or *so*, or a finite clause:

(31) a. “...They say if a crime isn’t solved in the first twentyfour hours, it probably won’t be.”

**“Who says that?”**

“I don’t know. Somebody.” (COCA)

b. “It’s a great honor to be chosen by a shaman,” I said.

**“Who says so?”**

“They do.”

“They would....” (COCA)

c. “It’s a community that’s exerting undue pressure on her to conform,” Lucinda said.

**“Who says it’s undue? Her? We don’t know her standards, or how extreme her views may be. Her request could spring from a false sense of persecution, of a piece with her maladaptation.”** (COCA)

Although *who says* is not a typical information-seeking question, and could be asked even when one has already decided not to accept any possible answer, it is not a “rhetorical question,” as that category has been defined by Sadock (1971), Han (2002), Schaffer

(2005), Rohde (2006), and Caponigro & Sprouse (2007). Most of these studies address what Sadock called *queclaratives*, or syntactic questions which function like declaratives. One major class of these are questions express statements of the opposite polarity, as in (32).

(32) Who thinks that? (= ‘No one thinks that’)

If *Who says* were this type of rhetorical question, its interpretation would be ‘No one says (that)’. The further implication from this is that the claim might be false or in need of justification. At this point, however, *who says* and *queclaratives* part ways. The two types of utterance are treated quite differently by addressees. In Conversation Analytic terms, they project very different next turns from addressees. Rhetorical questions pattern sequentially with statements in that they make relevant for the next turn either agreement or denial. Rohde (2006) found that rhetorical questions in the Switchboard corpus tend to be followed by backchannels or agreement tokens. In contrast, *who says* does not give the recipient the option to simply agree. It is a challenge, and as such the expected second moves are either justification or backing off from the claim.

The difference between *who says* and other rhetorical questions is highlighted by comparing it to *who cares*. The latter (i) is not inherently a challenge, and (ii) can integrate itself into a sentence as though it were a declarative sentence, as can be seen by tokens where it is used turn-internally to dismiss concerns raised by the speaker him- or herself.

(33) a. Switchboard, sw2564, 8:41

B: So I, I believe that it should be, you know, widespread, and that everyone should be tested. What do you think?

A: [Breathing] I don’t know. Some jobs it seems like it would just maybe be a waste of money, because **who cares**, you know –

b. ICSI, Bro023, 11:08

me013: So, um, if - if your second pass takes a millisecond **who cares?**

*Who says* has no comparable use, in which a single speaker brings up some proposition and then dismisses it by saying that no one asserts that proposition:

(34) a. #Yes, in principle our theory should not predict that earth is flat, but who says?

b. #Nowadays we don’t have to worry about flat-earthers, because who says?

In fact, where *who says* is used in monologue, it retains its challenging use: the speaker sets up a fictive dialogue where he or she enacts both the challenger and the challenged (35).

- (35) Let's be more precise- St. Luke's Hospital of Kansas City is now one of the top hospitals in the country, maybe even the world. Who says? Well, the AARP, for one. ([http://www.nurseuniverse.com/articles/St.Lukes\\_Hospital.htm](http://www.nurseuniverse.com/articles/St.Lukes_Hospital.htm), December 10 2011)

*Who says* is not the only way a speaker can issue a challenge to a claim. Any *wh*-phrase can be so used, with the effect made more pronounced by appearing with other challenging expressions (36a). Yet such expressions are not conventionally associated with challenges, and can be genuine questions (36b).

- (36) a. He grabbed and rocked my legs, trying to topple me over.  
 "I said, Stop!"  
 "Oh yeah, who's gonna make me, weirdo?" he said.  
 (Ad Hurdler, 2004. *Househusband*. Random House, p. 101)
- b. "They done picked the new Drama director," Fleeta announces.  
 "Oh yeah? Who?"  
 "Sarah Dunleavy, that new English teacher up to the high school."  
 "No!" This really makes me mad. (COCA)

What makes *who says* notable is the fact that it encodes the challenging function, rather than simply providing an option to be challenging. In this respect, it is analogous to *why*+infinitive sentences, which cannot have an information-seeking interpretation and are usable only to issue a challenge (37a) or make a suggestion (37b) (Gordon & Lakoff, 1975).

- (37) a. Why help him?  
 b. Why not help him?

Both *why*+infinitive and *who says* are syntactically similar to canonical *wh*-interrogatives, but their use is limited in ways that regular interrogatives are not. While most any *wh*-question *can* be used to challenge an opinion or offer a suggestion, these two constructions must do so. This, along with their idiosyncratic syntax, calls for constructional treatment. It is to the syntax of *who says* that I now turn.

*Who says* is for the most part syntactically inert. The only degree of flexibility is that MESSAGE is optionally expressed. Other than the SPEAKER FE (*who*), no other FEs can be mentioned, including ADDRESSEE (38). The structure is not embeddable, except as a direct quotation (39). The verb must be *say*: *know* and *tell*, for instance, do allow DNI complement clauses, but do not necessarily convey the challenging function of *who says* (40).

- (38) #Who says to you?



- (39) a. #Tell me who says!  
 b. Tell me: Who says?

- (40) A: The earth is flat.  
 B: Who told you? / Who knows?

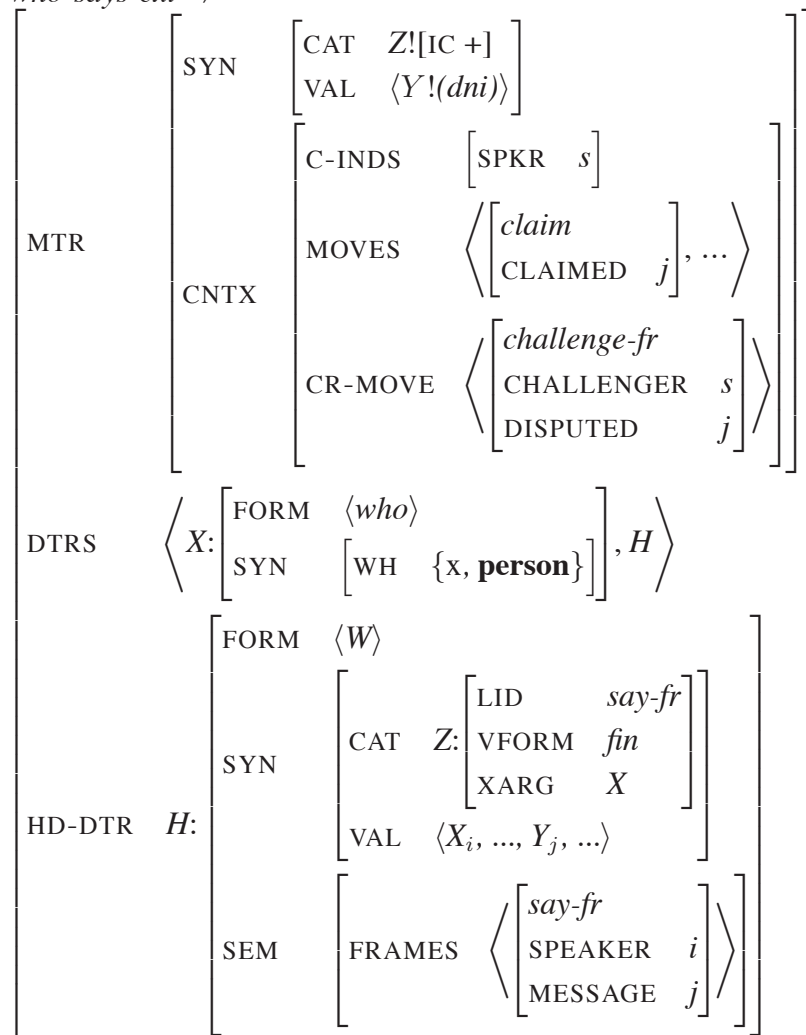
*Says* is not coordinatable with another VP, though this is ordinarily possible with other uses of *say* in rhetorical questions (41). Coordination at the sentence level is possible (42). This suggests that the construction does not exhibit typical subject-predicate structure.

- (41) a. A: She said that I wasn't qualified and shouldn't have been hired.  
 B: Wow. Who says that and doesn't realize it's rude? (= 'No one say that and...')  
 b. A: You don't have the qualifications for the job.  
 B: \* Who says and convinced you?

- (42) Who says, and do you really believe them?

In whole, *who says* exhibits a mix of lexical and phrasal syntactic constraints. The optionality of MESSAGE and the limitation of the subject to *who* are best understood as argument structural constraints that would operate at the lexemic or word level. At the same time, the syntactic inertness (the impossibility of other FEs or adjuncts, of VP coordination, and of embedding) better fit a fixed-expression licensed by a combinatory construction.

I propose the construction in (43) as one way to resolve this conflict. The construct has two daughters, *who* and a finite form of *say*. The resulting sign is an independent clause ([IC +]), i.e., it cannot be embedded.

(43) *Who says?* construction ( $\uparrow$  *interrogative-cl*)*who-says-cxt*  $\Rightarrow$ 

It has the basic shape of a subject *wh*-question, the canonical version of which inherits both from *interrogative-cl* and *subject-head* (Sag, 2010a:536).<sup>7</sup> However, *who-says-cxt* inherits only from *interrogative-cl*. It differs from typical subject-head combinations in that the mother is unembeddable and the head daughter is a single word, its inherent valence requirements not having been met. Subject-verb agreement is mediated via the XARG feature (for *external argument*), which is regulated by more general constructions that need not be repeated specifically for *who says*. The tense is unspecified, but must be *finite*, resolving to either *says* or *said*. The idea is that as much of the syntax of the construction is as regular as possible, with only deviations from general patterns being listed.

The construct's the mother has a non-empty valence. The valent, Y, originated as an

<sup>7</sup>In Sag's (2010a) terminology, *subj-head-cxt* combines a subject with a phrasal head that has the subject as its sole valent. *Subj-pred-cl* inherits from *subj-head-cxt* and *declarative-cl*.

obligatory valent of *say*. It is pulled up intact from the lexical item's valence, with the expectation of the type-specification (*dni*), which makes it optionally DNI. Unlike *I'll say*, this construction interacts with the lexical NI omission construction to license a valence with an omitted MESSAGE. All the other potential valents (the '...') except for the subject go unrealized. This is an unconventional parse—*who says it is* has the constituency [[who says] [it is]] rather than [who [says [it is]]]—but it does permit a useful partial generalization over *who says* and *says who*, a point which I address after analyzing *says who*.

The construct is a type of *interrogative-cl*; it is still an information-seeking question—for one thing, it expects a meaningful answer to the question—even if it must also function as a challenge. As with *I'll say*, the pragmatic force of the construction is in the CURRENT-MOVE. *Who says* conveys a challenge to the content of the most recent claim. In most cases this claim is attributed to the addressee, but as seen in (35), it can be also be the speaker's most recent claim.

As it happens, the expression *who says* is attested outside of a challenge context. It can be said in response to a statement which attributes a claim to another individual. Examples are shown in (44).

- (44) a. “Well, that’s what everybody says about you.”  
 Back and forth the ball went over the net. He continued the game.  
 “**Who says?** Who’s ‘everybody’?”  
 “My bosses. People. Everybody.” (COCA)
- b. “Yes, nothing different about it, is there? Yet, Suu, all of a sudden they’re trying to shut me down. They say I’m spoiling the countryside.”  
 “**Who says?**”  
 “Them,” he said, waving his hand in the direction of the ranch house on the shady road curving past our houses. (COCA)

I will call these wondering-*who says* (WWS), opposed to challenge-*who says* (CWS). These are not simply two interpretations of a single construction: they diverge in several respects. First, WWS requires that *who* be stressed and *says* destressed. This places focus is on the set of individuals who might have made the claim; the fact that someone has said it is, at least for the moment, presupposed and not up for debate. CWS is a challenge to an interlocutor's entire claim, so the sentential stress is neutral, with slight final emphasis on *says*. Any overt message is obligatorily destressed, as the proposition (though not its truthfulness) is given.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>A sentence like *Who says it WAS?* with stress on an embedded auxiliary, is not an example of either CWS or WWS. I do not attempt an analysis of it here, but simply point out the differences with *who says*. It frames the most recent claim as being unlikely, and indicates surprise that the interlocutor was entertaining its possibility.

- (i) A: It won't be easy.  
 B: Who says it WOULD be?

The second major difference is that WWS must be in response to a claim specifically phrased with the verb *say*. In the following example, a CWS pronunciation with stress on *says*, is easy to imagine. The interpretation is “I’m not in trouble—I challenge you to come up with someone who thinks so.” A WWS reading, with stress on *who*, is unnatural. Even though *I hear you’re in trouble* entails *Someone communicated that you’re in trouble*. Despite the short leap to *Someone said that you’re in trouble*, WWS remains unacceptable.

- (45) She went upstairs and came back.  
 “I hear you’re in trouble,” she said.  
 “**Who says?**”  
 “A big bird.”  
 Wayne swore. “It’s not like the old days,” he said. (COCA)

Even quite close synonyms like *tell* are unable to license WWS (46a). CWS lacks any formal constraint on the prior utterance, so it is acceptable.

- (46) a. A: Someone told me you’re not cut out for the job.  
 B: Who SAYS? [CWS]  
 B’: #WHO says? [WWS]

Treating CWS and WWS as separate constructions, despite being syntactically identical, is further supported by the existence of *says who?* This verb-initial pattern only has the challenge use. Looking again at the COCA, we find 60 tokens of *says who*, a sample of which are shown in (47).

- (47) a. Ms. NATHAN: Well, one of the- I’ll tell you. The Sabbath is a day of rest, and the Sabbath is also the day - Friday night is the night that a Jewish man is supposed to make love to his wife  
 ZWERDLING: **Says who?**  
 Ms. NATHAN: Says, well- It says it in the code of Jewish law, and so there’s a- (COCA)
- b. “Do you have any idea how improbable all of this sounds?” she asked when Jilly finished.  
 “Life’s not like your paintings.”  
 “**Says who?**”  
 “How about common sense?” (COCA)
- c. CHIEF Archer, you’re a broken record. Fact is Gunderson did design it – apparently he’s some kind of prodigy –

---

B’: Who SAYS (it won’t be easy)?

B expresses the idea that it won’t be easy, indicating surprise that A (or anyone) would think that it would be. B’ expresses the idea that it *will* be easy, and challenges A to come up with someone who thinks otherwise.

AMY **Says who?!**

SMITTY You're not the only one with sources, Amy (COCA)

- d. MATT Apparently, Denver wanted to deal with him instead of you.

JERRY (quickly) **Said who?** Sugar?

MATT Hey, I'm learning as I go. (COCA)

The majority (all but five) of tokens had a clear challenge interpretation. Three of those involve the same speaker using the phrase as a way to introduce an authority on the topic:

- (48) a. You know, Lou, those pipeline stocks really sizzled last year. But, you know what? They were up more than 48 percent. But, this year, they could be on the skids. **Says who?** A very sharp fella who caught them early, and has been a bull for well over a year. (COCA)
- b. For those travelers who want to follow their palates around the U.S. this summer, the most delectable roads lead to New York City. **Says who?** None less than the country's leading restaurant critics who participated in MONEY'S second ranking of the greatest eating-out cities. (COCA)
- c. But here in America tomatoes are not fruit. **Says who?** Says no less an august authority than the Supreme Court of the United States. (COCA)

While we might not literally attribute doubt to the single speaker in these cases, we nonetheless understand the point of *says who* to be to act skeptical of the claim, and request citation of an authority—and then to provide it one's self. Among all the tokens in the COCA, the only one which could potentially have a WWS reading is (49). I will, however, treat this as a CWS reading because it is sequentially appropriate, and it is not preceded by a *say*-phrased attribution.

- (49) "I thought there was a club meeting tonight," he said, helping himself to my chips.

**"Says who?"**

"I saw May this afternoon."

"Yeah, well, I'm not going." (COCA)

Like *who says*, *says who* acts as a full utterance and is relatively inert syntactically. It is not easily conjoined with a VP, in contrast to quotative inversion structures (50a). Coordination with another with another sentence or TCU is possible, though again likely due to its specific pragmatics, the other conjunct can only be another interrogative.

- (50) a. "Fine," said Robert and led the way to the elevator.
- b. \*Says who(.) and convinced you of it?
- c. ?Says who(.) and you agree with them?
- d. Says who, and do you really believe them?

- e. Says who, and when?

An overt MESSAGE is possible. Tellingly, when it does appear it comes after *who* (51). Only a clausal complement is possible (52a), and placement anywhere else is ungrammatical (52b,52c). (53) shows the construction licensing *says who*. It differs from *who says* in only in the order of the daughters and the clause-only constraint on the MESSAGE.

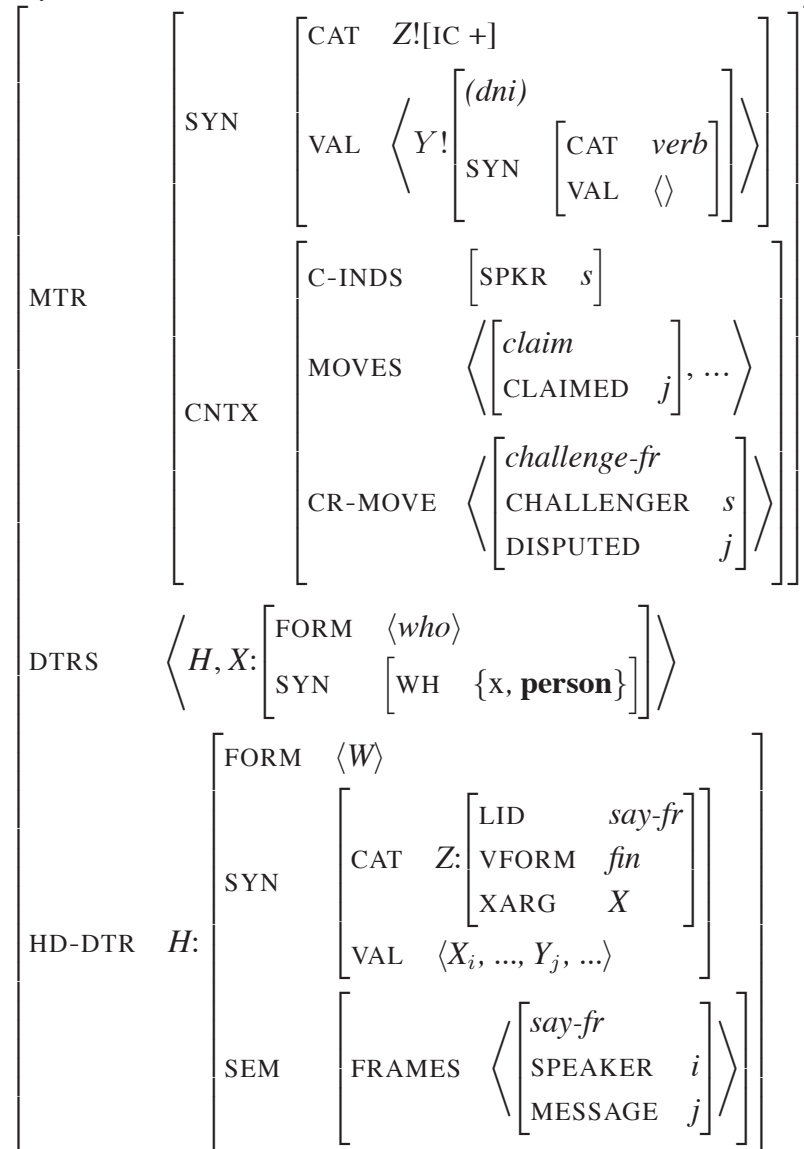
- (51) a. Says who you can't walk on water?  
([http://www.flickr.com/photos/eucharisto\\_deo/4297643326](http://www.flickr.com/photos/eucharisto_deo/4297643326))
- b. I know that a quartet most commonly refers to a musical group. But says who you can't use it for sleds?  
(<http://www.thefrugalgirl.com/joshuas365/?p=206>)
- c. Says who it's not safe?  
(<http://www.realjock.com/gayforums/960879>)
- d. And says who that the ring is symbolic of marriage?  
(<http://blackandmarriedwithkids.com/2011/03/28/money-monday-is-love-defined-by-the-size-of-the-ring>)
- (52) a. \*Says who that/so?  
b. \*Says you can't walk on water who?  
c. \*You can't walk on water(,) says who?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The same string, with final stress and rising intonation on *who*, is acceptable as a *wh-in-situ* question with quotative inversion (50a), but not as a challenge.

(53) *Says who?* construction ( $\uparrow$  *interrogative-cl*)

*says-who-cxt*  $\Rightarrow$



We see now the benefit of the MESSAGE FE being passed up to the mother as one of its arguments. If it is present, it must necessarily appear after all the elements that compose the mother, including *who*. The result is similar constituency for both *who says* and *says who*. The two could in principle be collapsed into a single construction with unspecified order among the daughters, were it not for the ungrammaticality of *\*says who solthat*. As it stands, the analysis must posit two extremely similar constructions.

### 3.3.2 Declarative *x says*

While the interrogative versions of *x says* and *says x* serve to challenge a claim, the declarative versions function as rejoinders to challenges issued by *who says*. Following other types of moves, such as challenges issued using *say* but not *who says* or *says who*, it is degraded (54b); following a challenge without *say* at all results in unacceptability (54c).

- (54) a. A: Who says? / Who says that? / Says who?  
       B: Says my father! / My father says!
- b. A: No one says that!  
       B: ?Says my father! / ?My father says!
- c. A: Who believes that?! / No one thinks that!  
       B: #Says my father! / #My father says!

With these limitations, declarative and interrogative *x says* cannot be modeled as compositionally-derived versions of a single construction. Collapsing the two would either ignore the acceptability pattern in (54), or incorrectly claim that *who says* could only challenge statements made by *X says*....

Just as with interrogative *x says*, the two declarative orders diverge syntactically in two ways. First, an overt MESSAGE is possible only with *x says*, not *says x* (55).

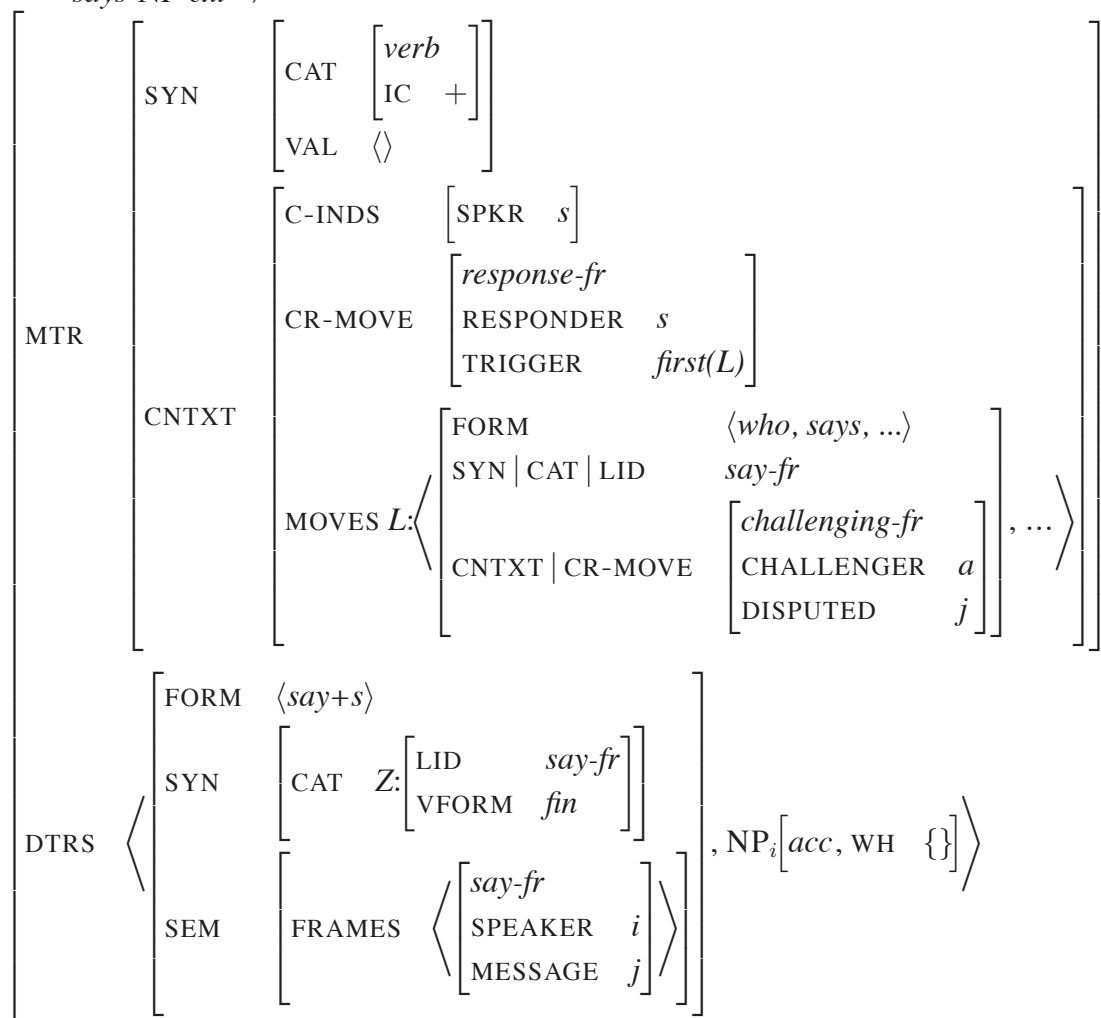
- (55) A: Who says you can do that?  
       B: My mom says (so / I can).  
       B': Says my mom (\*so / \*I can).

Second, *x says* has normal subject-verb agreement, but *says x* is limited specifically to *says* regardless of the person or number of the SPEAKER (56,57). The SPEAKER is also obligatorily accusative. This suggests an account of the NP-initial declarative construction that parallels (43), with agreement and case handled by general principles. The verb-initial version stipulates the morphological forms of the two daughters.

- (56) a. I say!  
       b. My father says!  
       c. \*I says!
- (57) a. Says me!  
       b. Says my father!  
       c. \*Say me!  
       d. \*Say/says I!

The construction licensing *says X* is given in (58).



(58) *says*-NP ( $\uparrow$  *declarative-clause*):*says*-NP-*cxt*  $\Rightarrow$ 

The syntactic description differs from that of *says who* by not including a valent in the mother sign for MESSAGE, and by omitting all mention of the valence of *say*. It is not clear that the NP is in any sense the subject of *say*. The constructional description makes this clear: the combination of the two daughters is not mediated by any feature-structure sharing or identification, other than the fact that the NP is (i) an FE of the frame evoked by *says*, (ii) accusative, and (iii) not a *wh*-phrase. The construct inherits only from a very general *declarative-clause* construct, the only constraints on which are that the verb be either finite or infinitival, the clause not be modificational (e.g., not be a relative clause), and have *austinean* (propositional) meaning (Sag, 2010a:503,535).

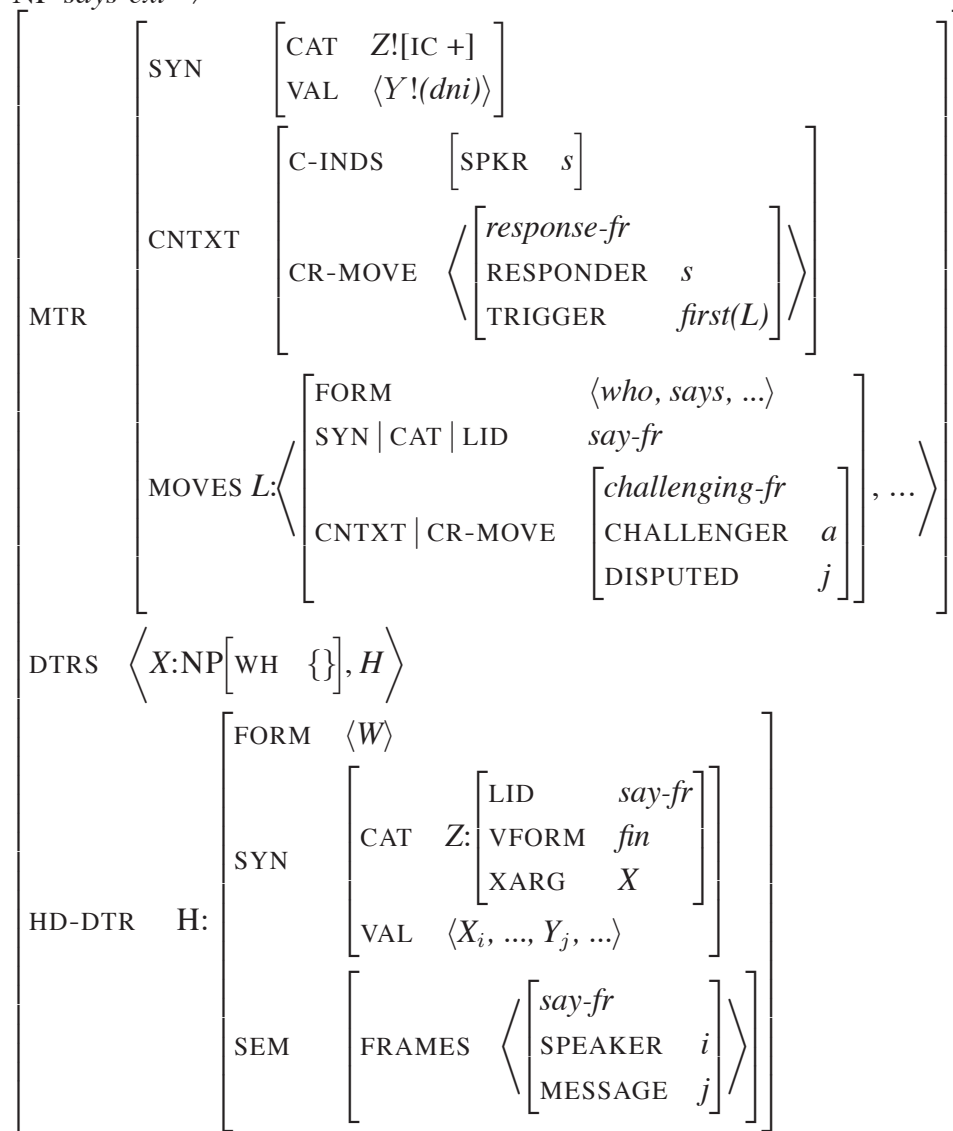
The move that *says x* enacts is a response to the most recent move. That move is here specified not just as a claim, but a specification of a sign. The most recent move must have been a challenge of the proposition *j*, issued by means of an sentence beginning *who says*, and headed by *say*. This accounts for (54). The semantics of *says x* need not be specified

in the construction, as it is the result of regular semantic composition: *i* says *j*.

(59) shows the construction for *X* says. The structure parallels that of *who* says, while the function is identical to that of *says* *x*.

(59) NP-says (↑ *declarative-clause*):

NP-says-*cxt* ⇒



My discussion of these four constructions reveals the extremely detailed syntactic and contextual/functional complexity that arises even among a small number of closely-related structures. At first blush, one might have thought that all four constructions were governed by basically the same principles, namely that *say* can appear with its subject and nothing else, with a sort of “challenge” function. Close examination revealed that in fact four separate constructions are needed to account for all of the syntactic and discourse-functional

details.

### 3.4 *Just saying*

*I'm just saying*, or *I was just saying* also allows declaratively-interpreted MESSAGES to be DNI. Most elements of this construction are fixed. *Just* must be present, and cannot be replaced by any other element: *\*I'm saying!* and *\*I'm simply saying!*, if grammatical, do not have the same interpretation. There may be some variability in the external argument: *He's just saying* is marginal for me, but I have not found any attested cases. Also conceivable but as yet unattested are embedded tokens: *You didn't realize I was just saying?* I will consider both to be unacceptable. What is variable is choice of tense (*is* vs. *was*) and whether MESSAGE is expressed or DNI.

The semantic and pragmatic function of *just saying* is illustrated by the following constructed interaction (based on interactions I have participated in):

- (60) A: My boss always approaches me at the end of the day with work for me to do. It's very frustrating.  
 B: That's too bad. But maybe she's been really busy lately and other stuff has distracted her.  
 A: Well, that's no excuse!  
 B: I know, I'm just saying.

By saying *I'm just saying*, B attempts to distance himself from the implications of his prior claims, while at the same time stand behind the truth of what was said. The missing MESSAGE is semantically recovered as his prior statement that “maybe she's been really busy lately and other stuff has distracted her.” B reaffirms that statement, but denies the implications of having made that statement, which is what A is objecting to by saying, “that's no excuse.” This may be described as a sort of “rhetorical backoff,” in which the speaker reaffirms his or her commitment to the truth of what was just said, but not to the implications that could be drawn from having made those claims.

The interaction in (61) further illustrates this use:

- (61) Fisher, fsh\_91091, 1:41
- L: But, um, I guess a company has to protect itself 'cause, you know, if you're doing it on their job and, like you say, if something happened they're liable and not – you don't wanna look at it that way of course but **I'm just saying**.  
 R: Right.

The two participants are discussing employee drug testing. Previously, L had described his opinions (and R had concurred with them) on drug testing—that private drug use is

“one thing,” but while on the job mandatory testing does not constitute undue violation of privacy. He continues to provide rationale from the employer’s point of view. At the end of the turn, he concedes that for the employee (“you”), this argument might be distasteful, but he is “just saying,” i.e., saying that “a company has to protect itself...” and no more.

As in (60), the function of *just saying* is to simultaneously confirm one’s stated stance, while denying further, undesirable implications. His explanation of why drug testing is necessary could be taken as expressing full support for an employer, or of taking a hostile view towards employees. *Just saying* denies these implications (or others like them; there is no way of knowing precisely) while not backing away from what he has stated explicitly.

(62) presents another, similar, example.

(62) Fisher, fsh\_70184, 4:09

R: I hate them. My brother looks like Brad Pitt.

L: Sweet. [LAUGH].

R: Yeah, for him.

L: Yeah, for him, exactly.

R: Actually, he’s pretty pissed off. My brother’s older. He’s in his thirties and he’s married with kids and all. And he’s like, yeah, Jay, where was this Brad Pitt kid when I was in high school?

L: [LAUGH].

R: ‘Cause my brother looks like Brad Pitt from Legends of the Fall to long hair down to his waist or whatever. Rides a horse, like he’s got a horse and stuff. So we call him “Legends”.

L: So I’m sure that the girls are all over him, then.

R: Doesn’t matter. He’s married with children.

L: I know. But **I’m just saying**.

R: He lives in Florida now.

L: Okay.

After a comparison with Brad Pitt, L remarks jokingly that “the girls are all over him, then.” To this, R reminds L that his brother is married, so all the attention he gets now (which he didn’t get in high school) isn’t enough to redeem whatever grief he may have received in high school. L’s response is “I know. But I’m just saying.” The implication made seems clear: L is aware that his “girls” comment implied that getting attention now makes up for not getting attention in high school. Further, he made the comment despite knowing that R’s brother was married. After being reminded of this fact, L simply sticks to the bare truth of his statement, “the girls are all over him,” backing off from the stronger (implied) claim that the attention R’s brother is getting somehow makes up for any lack of attention in high school.

In the above examples the antecedent of the omitted complement is resolved to the propositional content of some or all the speaker's prior utterance(s). Overt expression is also possible, as in (63):<sup>10</sup>

(63) Fisher, fsh\_98590, 3:20

L: Well it was like if you get an office job, you won't – you – you don't want to be there and if you get the opportunity to go somewhere else you would take that.

R: [NOISE] Yeah, well maybe that's how he was feeling, you know?

L: Yeah.

R: [NOISE] He wanted to get out.

L: I'm not saying that – saying that your place is horrible.

R: [NOISE] Yeah.

L: **I'm just saying maybe he found something better.**

Here, *maybe he found something better* recalls the earlier *get the opportunity to go somewhere else*, but is propositionally distinct. *Just saying* retains the same discourse function as when the MESSAGE is omitted. L remains committed to his claim but not anything else.<sup>11</sup>

On the surface, the syntax of *I'm just saying* is similar to that of *I'll say*. Both require a first person subject and an auxiliary, and both have an optionally DNI MESSAGE. However, *I'll say* exhibited different syntax depending on expression of that FE, while *just saying* is the same regardless of its overtness. *Just saying* also exhibits some of the hybrid lexical/phrasal properties of *x says*. It has a very specific argument structure, not permitting any FEs or adjuncts other than MESSAGE (64). On the other hand, it must be modified by *just*, which looks like a phrasal property.

(64) a. #I'm just saying to you.

b. #I'm just saying now.

This mixture of properties is seen elsewhere, namely in partially decomposable idioms. *Keep tabs* has lexical-level restrictions and an idiom-specific argument structure, but it also represents a fixed unit: *tabs* must be the “underlying” direct object of *keep*. A current approach in Constructional/HPSG literature to capture these idioms with maximal generality (and without violating principles of local selection; see Sag 2007) is to posit separate senses of the relevant lexical items which are constrained to appear only within certain special constructions (Riehemann, 2001). These *idiomatic lexemes* are specially marked via

<sup>10</sup>I read L's “I'm not saying that – saying that your place is horrible” as a repair. The first *that* is not the demonstrative pronoun, but a complementizer.

<sup>11</sup>In principle, the complement clause should be omissible in (63), but it does sound awkward to do so. I believe that this is due to repetition of *saying* from two turns back. A slightly different sequence makes omission completely acceptable: *Not that your place is horrible, obviously. I'm just saying.*

their semantic specification and will only appear when licensed to do so by the particular governors (e.g., *keep*) that select them.

The approach is not without disadvantages. Positing separate senses sometimes is intuitive, especially for words that have metaphorical interpretations within the idiom (Nunberg et al., 1994). In other cases, however, the proliferation of senses yields some potential oddities: a separate sense of *tell* for *A little bird told me* (see discussion of this in Chapter 5) or of *lose* in *lose ground* as opposed to *lose face*. Despite these shortcomings (or what one might view as shortcomings), the approach is flexible and captures much of what is mysterious about constructions that straddle the lexical/phrasal divide.

I adopt Riehemann's (2001) general framework as incorporated into SBCG by Sag 2010b. The idea, roughly, is that distributionally-limited words with special constructional or idiomatic interpretations evoke non-canonical, *idiomatic frames*. These frames are notated with the prefix *i-*, as in *i-say-fr*. Words which evoke idiomatic frames cannot be selected except by those specific verbs which are recorded in the lexicon as requiring them. For *just saying*, the idiomatic *say* has only two expressible FE, SPEAKER and MESSAGE, the latter of which is optionally DNI. See (65).

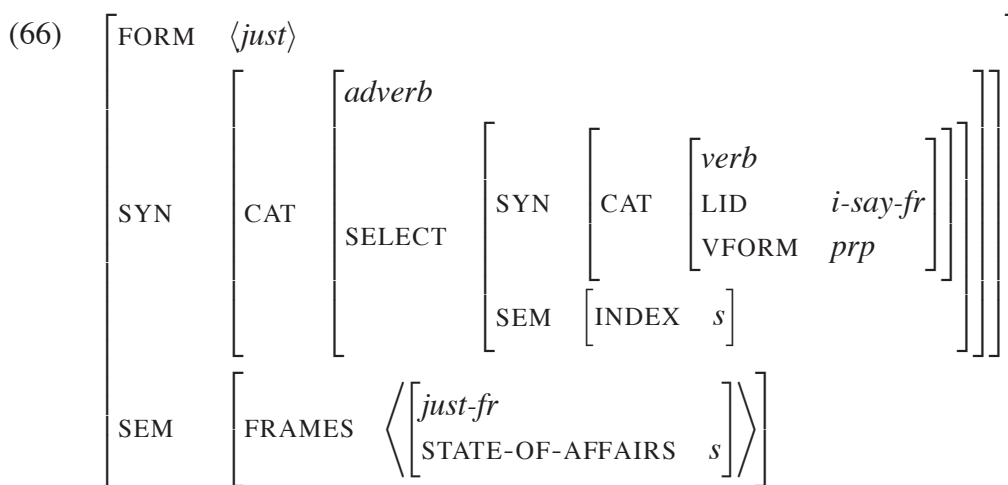
(65)

FORM	$\langle say \rangle$
SYN	$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} verb \\ \text{LID} \quad i\text{-say-fr} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$
ARG-ST	$\langle NP_s, XP[(dni)]_j \rangle$
SEM	$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} i\text{-say-fr} \\ \text{SPEAKER} \quad s \\ \text{MESSAGE} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$
CNTXT	$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{C-INDS} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SPKR} \quad s \end{array} \right] \\ \text{MOVES} \quad L \circ \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{imply-fr} \\ \text{IMPLIER} \quad s \\ \text{STATED} \quad j \\ \text{IMPLIED} \quad k \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{CURR-MOVE} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{deny-fr} \\ \text{DENIER} \quad s \\ \text{DENIED} \quad k \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$

The frame *i-say-fr* is in this case identical to the meaning of *say-fr*, with the addition that the SPEAKER is the current utterance's speaker, i.e., *I*. Among the prior moves (possibly the

most recent but not necessarily) was one in which the current speaker implied *k* by saying *j*. The speaker's current move is to deny that implication.

This lexeme must be modified by *just*, specified in (66). This separate sense of *just* specifically modifies (or SELECTS, using the feature geometry of Sag (2010b)) a VP headed by the special sense of *say* in (65). The verb must be a present participial (*prp*), thus predicting that it will be selected by *be*. The semantic portions of the lexeme are typical for modifiers: the situation or state-of-affairs denoted by the modified phrase (indexed *s*) is the semantic argument of *just*.



The combination of these two lexical entries will generate all the attested variations of *just saying*, including present or past tense, and presence or absence of MESSAGE, without generating unacceptable sentences.

### 3.5 Interim summary

These three sets of constructions—*I'll say*, *says X*, and *just saying*—illustrate the need to incorporate very specific contextual information into grammatical constructions. The two main contextual attributes that model this information represent two types of relationships that constructions have to the contexts in which they are used.

The first, CURRENT-MOVE, characterizes the function that a construction has in the utterance it appears in. These specifications result in a very fine-grained specification of speech acts. *I'll say* is not just a statement, but agreement—and not just agreement, but “enhanced” agreement. *Who says* is not just a question, but a challenge, and so on. The sorts of functions we have seen are familiar from discourse markers. *Well*, for instance, can indicate that the current utterance is incompatible in some respect with a prior utterance, in terms of semantic content, cohesion, or expected next-moves (Jucker, 1993; Fuller, 2003). *Oh*, *so*, and *no* can each introduce a new discourse topic (Bolden, 2006; Lee-Goldman,

2011a), but each brings along with it additional contextual constraints. What the *say* data show is that constructions too be associated with such discourse-functional information.

The other type of information, recorded in MOVES, places constructions within the larger texture of an interaction. It captures the idea that each utterance is shaped in part by the utterance or utterances that came before. Or, in the terms laid out in Chapter 1, constructions whose acceptability are contingent on the prior discourse having unfolded in a certain way allow observers to *predict*, based on the constructions' appearance, what is likely to have come before. This is not unexpected given the body of Conversation Analytic research that shows the crucial role prior turns have on the construction of each new turn, the most basic manifestation being adjacency pairs. Pairs of turn-types like question-answer and request-acceptance or request-denial are a major structural force in interaction (Schegloff, 2007), so it should come as no surprise that there exist at least some grammatical constructions that sensitive to them. This was most apparent with declarative *x says*, which is the second pair part to the challenge *who says*. *Who says*, in turn, is the second pair part of a statement-challenge adjacency pair. The account of these constructions presented above recognizes that these categories of social action and organization can and should be incorporated into the grammar proper.

### 3.6 *Going to say*

In this section I undertake a much more extensive case study of the sentence pattern *I was going to say*, with and without a following clause. More so than the other constructions in this chapter, *going to say* presents a challenge for constructional analysis. It is unclear from a very small number of examples exactly what its function is, and if it is predictable from its literal meaning. To help deal with these issues, I randomly extracted instances of *going to say*, *gonna say*, and *about to say* from the Fisher, CALLFRIEND, and SBSCAE corpora. The sampling was done by taking the first several transcripts with the relevant string, ordered by file name, from each sub-directory of the corpus, resulting in 59 tokens.<sup>12</sup> These were then examined for patterns in semantic and pragmatic contribution, in a manner similar to that described in Lee-Goldman, 2011a. In what follows I present the results of that study, concluding with a representation in SBCG.

*I was going to say*, either accompanied by an overt MESSAGE or not, has several functions in discourse, indicating among other possibilities the beginning or resumption of statement, agreement with a prior statement, or resolution of a confusion (in some ways similar to *oh*; Heritage, 1984).

A typical example with omitted MESSAGE is (67).

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<sup>12</sup>All the extracts presented in this section are from this original sample, with a few additional transcripts selected separately to illustrate particular properties.



(67) Fisher, fsh\_84151, 2:01

L: So where are you located right now?

R: Ah, I'm in Indianapolis.

L: Okay, I'm in Los Angeles. [So there's a lot of –]

R: [Oh, you are?]

L: Yeah, so there's a lot of Mexican [food out here].

R: [Oh, **I was going to say**].

Oh, absolutely.

L: Yeah.

R: Um, I used to live out in Arizona and, you know, that was just second nature.

L and R have been talking about their food preferences, including Mexican food. L's question, "So where are you located right now?" comes right after a momentary lapse in the conversation. In this situation, *I was going to say* is understood as *I was going to say* {*that/what you just said/there's a lot of Mexican food out there*}, or something similar. In effect, the omitted MESSAGE is semantically identified with the interlocutor's prior utterance.

When *going/about to say* has an overt MESSAGE it is rarely exactly what the prior speaker just said (below, I use *gonna say* to cover both *going* and *about* variants, unless the contrast becomes relevant). More often, the complement of *say* is a compatible characterization of the same or a similar scenario. For instance, in (68), L (a businessman) and R (a college student) are discussing R's majors, Business and History. L noted that this was a "nice interesting combination" and is now in the middle of explaining how he thinks study of history is a good supplement for business. (The quote marks in L's utterance are from the original transcript; [MN] indicates mouth noise.)

(68) Fisher, fsh\_73413, 8:25

L: – that's why quite often in business, if nothing else, a research into the business's history will help you along the way.

R: [MN] Plus, I think, a lot of, uh, especially the – sort of, my classmates, I think, they've been sort of fo- focussed on their business degrees, they really haven't developed any writing skills, which I think you get in the –

L: [Sure.]

R: [– uh,] liberal arts education that necessarily don't get in a business education.

L: Yeah. **I was going to say, "A good balance is important"**.

R: [MN]

L: Well now, I'm waiting for the beep. [MN]

R: [LAUGH]

L: We're about – well I'm ten minutes into the call, so, we'll see what happens from here.

L's utterance does not repeat R's rationale for studying history, but reformulates it in more general terms of balance between business training on the one hand, and writing skills on the other.

In (67) and (68) the turn that contains *gonna say* performs what I will temporarily call "agreement." This characterization will be revised in light of additional tokens and additional contexts of use, but it is a useful starting point. Taken literally, the speaker claims that he or she had been in a position to say what the interlocutor has just said. If what came before was a statement, then given the felicity conditions on statements, this is tantamount to believing that P: thus, agreement. The speaker further implicates that he or she had been in a similar position to the interlocutor: had access to the same facts, had the same feelings, and so on, that would have led him or her to say P at just that time.

This chain of reasoning much like that of *I'll say*, but the rhetorical effect is very different. *I'll say* tells the addressee that he or she understated some state of affairs; *gonna say*, as we will see, is not about understatement but about the speaker and the hearer holding similar opinions. It is deployed in far more contexts than *I'll say* is, and consequently has many more in-context interpretations. The contrast between the two provides more support for a constructional analysis. Taken literally, to say *I was gonna say (P)* is to claim that even before the addressee had said P, the speaker could have done so. However, even though someone who says *I'll say (P)* would (I contend) have been able to say P before the prior speaker did, *I'll say* cannot be replaced with *I was gonna say* and carry the same enhanced agreement meaning. It thus cannot be that the discourse functions of these constructions is derivable from their "literal" meanings, or even from their literal meanings augmented with pragmatic inference. They are grammatically-encoded and carry their functions by convention.

To return to the interpretation of *gonna say*, in (67), the agreement is lexically cued with *absolutely*. In (68) there is no unambiguous lexical indication (*yeah* could simply mark uptake), but the turns following *gonna say* suggest such an interpretation. In the next turn he changes the topic completely: the "beep" referred to is the notification that their ten-minute phone call is about to end. Had his *going to say* turn been taken as adding an additional or separate claim, his interlocutor would likely have addressed it as such, e.g., by agreeing or indicating uptake, rather than not saying anything.

The agreement interpretation of *gonna say* in the above two examples rested largely on the ability to locate in the interlocutor's prior utterance an appropriate antecedent. In some cases, however, this is not possible. In (69), though it is roughly clear what L conveys by *I was gonna say*, it is difficult if not impossible to pin down exactly what he is claiming to have been "going to say."

(69) Fisher, fsh\_92195, 0:30

- L: New York City. Wow. Bike there you get hit by a car or something doing that=  
 R: =I got hit by a car once. It [was, uh]  
 L: [Really?]  
 R: Yeah. I was in the bike lane going down Broadway and Forty Seventh and a car was pulling out and in New York when you're gonna pull into traffic you gotta pull in really quick. He [didn't] even see me.  
 L: [Yeah.]  
 R: He clipped me. I flew over the car in front of him and landed on my head.  
 L: Ouch.  
 R: Fortunately I was wearing a helmet.  
 L: Yeah. **I was gonna say.**  
 R: I didn't bike for two years just—  
 L: Yeah.  
 R: —because I was nervous but now I bike again.  
 L: Good.

Filling in the MESSAGE with exactly what R just said would be out, as it would result in a highly unlikely claim, namely that L had been planning on saying that R was wearing a helmet. But because this information was not available until R mentioned it, it seems an unlikely claim for L to make. Nevertheless his utterance is interpreted as closely related to R wearing a helmet. A rough approximation might be 'I hope you were wearing a helmet.' But how does *gonna say* come to be able to convey this?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine the range of uses *about/going to say* has both with and without an overt argument. I initially present these as “uses,” rough categories based on the semantic and pragmatic interpretation of particular tokens, as well as their sequential position. The categories mainly provide a useful way to see the patterns in the data and are not intended as strict sense divisions. Any given token may have properties of multiple “uses.”

### 3.6.1 Some excluded examples

Before proceeding, there is one class of tokens which I will exclude from discussion: non-first-person subjects. This is not merely to simplify the discussion—there seems to be a great divide in the contexts in which *I was gonna say* is used, and the contexts in which *you/he/she/they were gonna say* is used. In my sample of 59 tokens of “gonna/going/about to say” there were no second-person subjects. Searching the Fisher corpus for “you were going to / gonna say” reveals 32 tokens; “were you going to say” occurs 12 times. To get

a rough idea of the infrequency of second-person subjects, “I was going to / gonna say” occurs 793 times in the same corpus.<sup>13</sup>

Most second-person subject tokens fall into a few categories: prompting the interlocutor to begin to speak or continue what he or she was saying, expressing prior predictions about what the interlocutor just said, or using “you” as a generic person reference (often in conditional clauses).

- (70) a. What were you gonna say?  
 b. Go ahead. No. Finish what you were going to say. Please.  
 c. Oh, I thought you were going to say, “Great buns”, [LAUGH] no, I’m kidding.  
 d. Yes. I knew you were going to say that! [LAUGH]  
 e. I think, you know, if you were – if you were gonna say like, well, shit like every building have, foods or like, you know like, chemical, er, showers and stuff, I think that would be going too far.

Except with the generic pronoun use, these all straightforwardly denote situations in which one’s interlocutor was or seemed to be planning on saying something. There are some parallels with the more literal first-person examples. For instance, *I was gonna say* is possible as a way to resume an unfinished statement, just as *You were going to say?* is a way to prompt a continuation. As will be seen below, however, the range of first-person uses is quite a bit broader than what is possible with a second-person subject.

In my sample there were only four third-person subjects, and they were all quite similar in that they characterized someone else’s speech or potential speech:

- (71) a. So, they’re going to say, oh, you stupid Americans, that’s what you found out, it’s not true.  
 b. I mean, not too many people were going to say that “Oh, no, there’s no terrorism going on in...”  
 c. No- not that so much as trying to guess what the – what the humans are going to say.  
 d. Like, lots of Americans are going to say, “Hey, be careful that day, something is going to happen”.

The issue of the pragmatics of reported speech (or potential speech) is not at all trivial. But the pragmatics of these expressions is of a rather different character than when a first person subject is involved. This is, I believe, because with *I was going to say*, the speech act becomes meta-discursive: the speaker is commenting on how he or she is participating in the current interaction. This gives rise to contexts of use that are not relevant for

<sup>13</sup>The transcripts over which these searches were run often represent *gonna* as “going to,” so I do not report the relative frequencies of the two variants.

third-person *gonna say*. Second-person *gonna say* is also meta-discursive, but the fact that one does not have direct access to the thoughts and intentions of other people limits the pragmatic contexts in which the expression appears.

### 3.6.2 Planned speech and resumed speech

One function of *I was gonna say* is to indicate that one is resuming an interrupted or otherwise halted statement, or beginning a statement which was already projected to happen. These situations arise, for instance, when a speaker pauses after losing his or her train of thought, or after a period when there is competition for the floor and one participant lets the other speak, or when a speaker is reminded of what they were going to say. In these contexts it is fairly clear that the speaker is in fact asserting that they were planning on saying something.

These were not very common in my sample. The examples provided below exhaust all but one of this type of usage. One example, involving the resumption of abandoned speech, is illustrated in (72). F1 attempts to say something (it is unfortunately mostly unintelligible due to surrounding noise, and is represented by “xxx”), but abandons it as F2 takes a turn. F1 then picks up her utterance, noting this by starting with *I was going to say*.

- (72) CALLFRIEND American English, Non-Southern Dialect, 4889, 21:49  
 F1: .hhh xxx  
 F2: I mean I'll buy I mean I'll find what to bu:y, but  
 F1: .hhh **I was going to sa:y**  
 F1: .hhh you'll fi:nd something

*I was going to say X* is equally applicable when a speaker has not been interrupted, but yielded the floor after two people both begin to speak at the same time (in Sacks et al.'s (1974) terms, simultaneously self-select as next speaker (706–707)). This is schematically represented in (73), where A yields the floor to B, and B prompts A to resume her turn after B has finished.

- (73) A and B begin to speak at the same time.  
 A: Go ahead.  
 B: ((B completes his/her turn)) What did you want to say?  
 A: **I was going to say ...**

Another context for this function is where an interlocutor says something that the *gonna say*-speaker was about to say. In (74), L provides a characterization that R was attempting to come up with.

- (74) Fisher, fsh\_100990, 4:11

R: It's probably like, kind of like really hot, or ... I don't know.

L: Hot and muggy.

R: Yeah, that's **what I was going to say**. [LAUGH]

L: Quite.

In (75) L says that what R has just said applies to her own situation, but prefaces it with *that's what I was going to say*.

(75) Fisher, fsh\_70421, 4:39

R: Well, I know. They also think, um, like, the viruses and stuff may have to do with the heart problems and things like that, too, so who knows [LAUGH]?

L: [NOISE] Yeah.

R: But so far as seasons, I don't have that much. I guess a lot of people also have like allergies.

L: Well, **that's what I was going to say**. Like a- I mean, I don't have any problems with allergies, but I know like, a lot of people I work with have 'em and like, right now, it's like, really bad from – our pollen's really bad here, um –

The examples so far illustrate a meta-discursive functions of *gonna say* that follow quite closely from the literal meaning of the expression. They also do not permit MESSAGE to be omitted. In (72), the TCU following *say* is the MESSAGE, and in (74) and (75), *what* instantiates the FE in a pseudo-cleft construction.

The next sections explore several other uses of the expression which have a diverse range of applications in different contexts, and which all permit omission of MESSAGE. One item of methodology should be mentioned first, however. The Mexican food and history major examples (67, 68) are reasonably interpreted as claims of planned speech, but in many if not most cases, it is simply not possible to know whether a speaker is actually claiming to have had a plan to say such-and-such. I therefore do not address that issue in the following sections. What *can* be examined is (i) the semantic and pragmatic relation between what the MESSAGE is and what was just said, (ii) the interpretation of any omitted MESSAGE and how it relates to the prior linguistic context ((and extralinguistic context, where available), and (iii) the discourse function of the turn containing *gonna say*, based on its semantic and pragmatic interpretation and also its sequential placement and the surrounding context.

### 3.6.3 Agreement

In what ways can *gonna say*, with or without an overt MESSAGE, express agreement? As seen above, one way is by making a claim related to what one's interlocutor just said

(68), or by simply omitting any complement of *say*. It is possible, though by no means common, for an overt MESSAGE to mostly duplicate the prior utterance. The only such example in my sample is in (76). L and R are discussing the venture capital market and whether it will ever be as strong as it was several years prior.

(76) Fisher, fsh\_94597, 8:47

L: [It's like, people were just like]

R: [in our lifetime, but]

L: – really high on this whole internet concept, and –

R: Well, [something will come] along –

L: [then they crashed.]

R: – that we haven't even thought of that will revolutionize – or, will either revolutionize the world, or will make us think that it will.

L: Exact- – [LAUGH]. **I was about to say. It'll=**

R: [NOISE]

L: =**make us think it'll revolutionize [the world.]**

R: [Yeah.] Well, the internet –

L: [NOISE]

R: – has inte- – has revolutionized the wo- – the world. It's just that it – it hasn't revolutionized [NOISE] – I don't think it's created [NOISE] as many new businesses as people thought. I think it's –

L's utterance duplicates a portion of R's prior turn, and indicates his agreement. It is notable that R repairs his own utterance to stress *think*, to contrast the claim with one in which something actually does revolutionize the world. This may have motivated L to repeat R's utterance nearly verbatim so as to include the same contrastive stress. This token and that in (68) exhaust the cases from the sample of speakers performing a simple agreement with *going/about to say X* (i.e., with an overt complement clause). It is more common for a speaker to follow *gonna say* with a move that takes agreement for granted and proceeds to a next, related move.

In the following interaction A and B are talking about medication. A mentions a non-drowsy allergy pill that “the doctor knows”. B's response that she needs to talk to her doctor is not an agreement with the fact that “the doctor” knows the name of the pill, but presupposes it and builds off it by relating it to her own situation.

(77) Fisher, fsh\_96681, 4:32

B: yeah the only thing i hate about those pills where they keep you drowsy

A: yes

A: yes

A: well i think they have a new pill out i know for hay fever they do

A: they have a new pill out that does not make you drowsy  
 B: really  
 A: i can't remember the name of it but the doctor knows  
 B: yeah **i was about to say i need to talk to him cause he hasn't told me about [that]**  
 A: [right]  
 A: and uh it  
 A: it really works

(78) further illustrates this style of agreement. The participants are discussing the novel *Howard's End* and the character Margaret's marriage to Henry.

(78) SBCSAE, cha.23, 4:15

LINDA: (.) I guess that's what kept &=in kinda &s bringing me up short  
 on +...  
 DIANE: &=laugh .  
 LINDA: (..) believing this marriage .  
 EVELY: (..) after all +/.  
 EVELY: &{l=X or &}l=X  
 and the times too:  
 you know nineteen ten +...  
 DIANE: Mhm +...  
 EVELY: (.) there wasn't a (.) great deal of opportunity  
 for a: uh +...  
 DIANE: (..) **I was gonna say  
 didn't she think she really had to be married?**  
 EVELY: (..) I don't know: +...  
 JANIC: [&=in] .  
 EVELY: [but she]  
 JANIC: [<sup>2</sup> well &the]<sup>2</sup> +...  
 LINDA: [<sup>2</sup> I don't ]<sup>2</sup> know: .  
 JANIC: The thing [<sup>3</sup>didn't under]<sup>3</sup>stand is +...  
 LINDA: [<sup>3</sup> I don't know]<sup>3</sup> .

Evelyn (EVELY) remarks, with respect to Linda's troubles with believing in the marriage, that Margaret may have felt that there "wasn't a lot of opportunity for" someone in her position. The implication is that she may have felt obligated to marry for social or economic reasons. Diane picks this up, explicit asking whether perhaps Margaret did think she had to be married. Her utterance is not an agreement with Evelyn's (implicit) claim *per se*, but presents roughly the same idea with the same implied claim about Margaret's choice.



The *I was gonna say* frames her claim as both in line with and as having been built off of Evelyn's suggestion. Using *gonna say* is not necessary for such a cohesion relation to arise between speakers (she could have said *yeah*, or even potentially not uttered any discourse markers at all), but it does highlight it.

At this point it is useful to remark on the prosodic properties of *I was going to say*. In nearly all the examples of the expression, in any usage, *I was going/about to say* forms a phonological phrase, to the exclusion of the complement clause (if any). Coming at the end of a phonological phrase, *say* is relatively stressed. The rest of the phrase is relatively unstressed. In (78), the prosody supports the interpretation of Diane's utterance as a suggestion along the same lines as Evelyn's. Her *I was* is barely audible, indicating agreement. Were Diane to present a competing suggestion prefaced with *I was gonna say*, *I* would have to receive contrastive focus: *I was gonna say she really truly loved him and that's why they married*.<sup>14</sup>

The full-on agreement use is possible without an overt MESSAGE, as in (67) (and (79), below). These are parallel to the *gonna-say* tokens in in the "revolution" and "history-major" interactions, which did have overt complement clauses. On the other hand, omission is impossible in the "touched-off" variety of agreement: because DNI arguments must be retrievable from the discourse, it is impossible to omit a MESSAGE which is similar to yet separate from an interlocutor's prior utterance. An overt argument is the only way to convey the new proposition. This is not a fact about this particular construction, but is predictable based on properties of anaphoric constructions in general.

In sum, *gonna say* either with or without an overt complement can convey agreement with an interlocutor's immediately prior utterance. With an overt complement, it is also possible to convey agreement by expressing an opinion related to what one's interlocutor was just saying. In both cases, the prior utterance is always a declaration, rather than a question, at least in my sample. That is, there is no instance of a question like *Is John cooking dinner tonight?* being responded to with *I was gonna say*. Conceivably, an interrogative with the illocutionary force of a declaration would be an acceptable trigger (e.g., a rhetorical question like *Who would think of having a pet cobra?*). Alternatively, if *Is John cooking dinner tonight?* is construed as providing an explanation for something (e.g., it is uttered after smelling aromas of foods cooking that John is known to cook), *gonna say* may also be possible. The point is that it is not the form of the prior utterance that conditions acceptability, but the fact that it presents a claim. I predict that *gonna say* could pick up on exclamation as well, as they contain presupposed claims; imperatives too should be possible triggers, insofar as among their felicity conditions is the belief that the addressee should do something. Future work with a larger data set should be able to resolve this issue.

<sup>14</sup>It may be noted that *I'll say* requires stress on *I'll*. This makes sense, as the construction expresses a contrast between the speaker and the addressee.

### 3.6.4 Difficult topics

Another interactional function of *gonna-say* is to express an opinion about one's interlocutor after it has been made clear that it is acceptable to express an opinion on the topic. This can come up when the topic is controversial, but also simply when the information discussed is personal. (79) illustrates this with the topic of body weight.

(79) Fisher, fsh\_73403, 8:06

R: – and you will attract someone who is – who – who i- – who is going to like you just the way you are because that's all he knows.

L: Right.

R: You know, that's all he knows because when [we're dating we put on all these] –

L: [And that's, like, a fantastic] foundation to start, [you know.]

R: [Right.] So, you know, when we're dating we put on these airs and we get all dressed up and the jewelry and the makeup and the girdles and this – I mean, this man met me, everything was hanging out.

L: [Yeah.]

R: [And] it was funny because when he met me I was pretty heavy. (1.5) [LIPSMACK] And he married me anyway and he – and it was the reverse 'cause usually men marry these young women and then they wind up getting fat afterwards. With us it was the other way around: I wind up losing weight [LAUGH] hand over fist after we were married. He goes, "Boy, everybody should have it this good".

L: Yeah, **I was going to say**.

R: Yeah, and I look better now than when he married me. He's – he's like, "I don't believe it". He goes, you know, "I – I – it was for better or for worse and it's gotten better".

L: Wow.

This instance has basically the same properties as the Mexican food interaction (67) with a slight twist. First, the omitted argument picks up on the reported speech in the prior turn, rather than the entire sentence—i.e., the missing MESSAGE is not *your husband went....* Second, the fact that the antecedent is direct speech does not mean that L is claiming that believes, exactly, "Everybody should have it that good." Rather, L is saying that she agrees with the *sentiment* expressed by R's husband.

This interaction has an additional property, namely that the topic being discussed (here, weight) is potentially uncomfortable, especially for L. Note that she says nothing during the 1.5-second pause after R's first sentence in her extended turn, indicating a hesitancy to

say anything on the topic until more of the story comes out.<sup>15</sup> It seems to be one function of *going to say* that it allows one to voice agreements on topics that one could not have raised on one's own but which are fair game if the addressee brings them up.

In (80), the controversial claim is that part of the more exciting parts of auto races is when there is a crash.

(80) Fisher, sh\_72476, 5:10

L: Now see, my family's a, um, my dad's really heavily into auto races,  
which kinda makes me totally against [watching auto races! [LAUGH]]=

R: [[LAUGH]

L: =[Because they were] like, every single weekend he was watching one  
and – and – or then – he even went to some of them, and it's incredibly  
boring when you're like, ten years old and watching the cars go round  
the track tim- – you know, hundreds of times.

R: [LAUGH]

L: [LAUGH]

R: And it is hundreds of [times!] [LAUGH]

L: [Mhm.] Yeah, we went to like, the Indy Five  
Hundred [and – ]

R: [.hh Did] you really?

L: Mhm. Yeah. I mean, you'd think that'd be exciting but it, uh – the only  
parts that ex- – that are exciting are the very beginning, the very ending,  
and if there's ever a crash. [LAUGH]

R: **I was gonna say, you know, you sort of live for the crashes  
because that's the exciting part.**

L: Mhm.

R: [And –]

L: [Yeah,] I mean, it's – it's kind of sad to [say, but yeah].

R: [It's gruesome].

L: Yeah. [LAUGH] That's true, yeah. And, um, both my parents are into  
baseball and my dad watches all the basketball and football –

L has set up her experience of watching auto races as having been incredibly bored, except for the beginning, ending, and when there is a crash. When she mentions this, R agrees with L's sentiment, picking out in particular crashes as the parts of the races that "you sort of live for." Following this they both acknowledge that fact as "sad" and "gruesome." The fact that both participants follow the claim that car crashes are exciting with acknowledgments of the generally negative nature of the event indicates the potentially

<sup>15</sup>She hesitates despite the fact that one could at that point anticipate from the "when he met me" that R will be telling a story about weight loss, and despite the fact that a backchannel *was* given after the just-prior "everything was hanging out."

problematic nature of the claims (note also L's laughs at the first mention of clashes, and then several turns later, a potential indication of a difficult topic). The upshot here is that *I was gonna say X* is a way of marking agreement with a claim that is made less problematic or awkward by one's interlocutor (here, R) bringing it up first.

The participants in (81) face a similarly difficult topic, namely one of them having been bullied as a child. The context is that R and L are discussing what they would do if they could go back in time to fix something.

(81) Fisher, fsh\_99593, 1:37<sup>16</sup>

- R: – well, okay then, I'll – I'll – I'll say something, like. Er, when I was young, like, I used to get bullied pretty bad, and –
- L: Yeah. [NOISE].
- R: – if there was some way I could kinda help my young – th- – the young person that I was, if I could help him kind of avoid those kinds of situations, [I think].
- L: [Right].
- R: It's like=
- L: =Yeah. [SIGH]
- R: But, in a way, like, they're kind of a – I guess they're character building.
- L: Oh ye[ah, **I was gonna say ((it can kinda be a good thing))**]
- R: [See, because, like, I I learned a lot] from it, like, it was painful but I –
- L: [MN] [Yeah].
- R: – [I didn't], like, leave with – without some new knowledge that I didn't have before, you know, so...
- L: R- right, no [NOISE].

After R mentions the idea that being bullied can have a positive outcome for the victim (“character building”), L agrees, saying *I was gonna say it can kinda be a good thing*. It would probably have been surprising if L had simply suggested that being bullied builds character without any hint that R thought it might be the case, and so once again *I was gonna say* functions to enact an agreement with an opinion that it would be uncomfortable to mention without evidence that one's interlocutor feels the same way.

(82) presents a similarly difficult topic: age. One of the participants (L) reveals her age and says that she knows she sounds young, at which point her interlocutor agrees, followed by *I was going to say that*. Though not strictly about age (commonly, though not universally, held to be a topic one stays away from with strangers), the issue of how young or old one sounds is potentially sensitive. R only brings it up after L says she sounds younger than she is.

<sup>16</sup>A transcription note: L's “Oh yeah” in the crucial turn sounds to me more like “Naw, yeah.”

(82) Fisher, fsh\_71763, 2:40

- L: No. You know, act- – well, now, I’m actually – I’m twenty seven so I’m too – I think you have to be, like, under twenty [four now or some-]  
 R: [I know. You have to be like] twelve. You know. [LAUGH]  
 L: [LAUGH] I mean they’re all like twenty, twenty one and ...  
 R: Yeah.  
 L: I’m just like, okay. But it’s – I don’t know. I know I sound young but, um –  
 R: [You do.]  
 L: [which is (((unclear)))]. I know. [Everybody thinks –]  
 R: [I was about to] say that.  
 L: I know, I sound – I look young which is really good for when I’m forty I’m sure, so ...

This extract is a good example of two features of *gonna say*. First is the added value that *gonna say* can have over simple agreement. Before R says *I was about to say that*, he explicitly agrees with L’s statement by saying *You do*. With his added statement, R conveys that he recognizes the difficulty of bringing up the topic while simultaneously expressing that he is willing to address the topic, once it is made available. This token illustrates the application of *gonna say* to build a sense of togetherness and closeness.<sup>17</sup> Second is the association with topics that are difficult for the *addressee*, and not the speaker, of *gonna say*. This can be seen by constructing a conversation where R (as politely as possible) brings up L’s voice first:

- (83) L: Don’t take this the wrong way, but to me your voice sounds really young.  
 R: # Yeah, I was about to say.

R could express that she has the same opinion by saying, *I know* or *It does*. *Gonna say* is odd because its function is to indicate that one is entering a topic which was only made available by the addressee. Intuitively, one’s personal traits as a discourse topic are under one’s own control, so using *gonna say* to talk about one’s own youth is anomalous.

Finally, in (84), the potentially uncomfortable area is the degree to which the speakers are drifting from the assigned conversational topic.

<sup>17</sup>The significance of *you do*, and the double-indication of agreement was pointed out to me by Line Mikkelsen.

(84) Fisher, fsh\_72430, 9:22<sup>18</sup>

- L: But I did, actually grew up knowing him, and he was around all the time.  
And then my biological mother, I hardly ever see her, and, which I don't really care really, to tell you the [truth. [LAUGH]]
- R: [Yeah], [yeah.]
- L: [This] this is, that's a whole 'nother story. [LAUGH]
- R: Yeah, yeah, **I was gonna say, [I don't] think that has anything to do with sports.** [LAUGH]
- L: [But um]
- L: No. [LAUGH] Oh well.
- R: Well, well it's your mother, so ...
- L: Yeah, you can't talk too much about them. [LAUGH]
- R: No. –
- L: But anyhow.

The topic assigned to the participants is sports on television, but the two callers end up discussing the sports their children play, and then their children's experiences in school, and finally their families in general. At this point, L has been discussing her adoption (the "him" in the first line is her biological father). After mentioning a possibly strained relationship with her biological mother, she says, "that's a whole 'nother story." R apparently takes this as a comment on how far they have moved from the original topic, because she first agrees ("yeah, yeah"), and makes more explicit what she takes to have been the intent behind "a whole 'nother story." Without L having alluded to their drifting from the topic, it would have been inappropriate for R to simply declare that L's talk, which is highly personal, is off-topic. In this case the *I was gonna say* serves the additional purpose of softening the force of the embedded clause: without the *I was gonna say*, the remainder of R's utterance would probably have been perceived as rude, even though the uncomfortable topic has already been broached.

Other potentially awkward or difficult topics during which *going/about to say X* appeared in my sample are: which participant is having better weather (fsh\_60632), whether attempts to develop a habit of waking up early to exercise are working (fsh\_104146), and the exorbitant price of a particular hobby-related item (fsh\_77298).

This use is also possible with an omitted MESSAGE, though not nearly as common in the sample. (79), (85), and (90) are the only clear cases (out of 14 examples of agreement in "awkward" situations)

<sup>18</sup>The transcript here, based on my own listening to the audio, departs significantly from the one provided with the corpus. In particular, the crucial line was originally transcribed as "Yeah, yeah, I was gonna say. How does this have anything to do with sports?"

(85) Fisher, fsh\_77225, 7:00

- R: I don't know – I – I – I think Virginia would be very high on my list to choose for [places] to live.  
 L: [Mhm].  
 R: And, um, partly just because it's [MN] – I'm an outdoors person, you [know I love doing out]door things.  
 L: [I was just gonna say].  
 R: I love hiking and cam[ping] and boating and  
 L: [Mhm].  
 R: .hh and we're close to the beach and we're close to the mountains – or at least not the real mountains but –

R currently lives in Virginia, and L in Chicago. Earlier in the interaction R had mentioned the positive characteristics of the places she has lived in, most of them features of the natural surroundings (mountains, greenery, landscape). Nothing about the topic at hand is obviously problematic. Rather, the characterization of R as an “outdoors person” is something expected to be done by R herself rather than by her interlocutor. This is reflected by the nature of the antecedent: L's utterance becomes rather presumptuous if exactly what R said is simply inserted: *I was just gonna say you're an outdoors person*. However, when R characterizes herself that way, L can take this opportunity to express her agreement.

In the above extracts, one speaker happened to mention, for the most part of their own accord, a fact or opinion that their interlocutor wanted to agree with. If this does not happen, a speaker will sometimes ask their interlocutor a question and then respond to the answer with *I was going to say*, either with or without a following MESSAGE. At the beginning of (86), R is talking about his pet piranha.

(86) Fihser, fsh\_72952, 6:43

- R: Oh, yeah, they – they'll live for a long time. I got him when he was a half inch long.  
 L: Hm.  
 R: And now he's about ni- – eight and a half inches long. Beautiful.  
 L: I'll be darned.  
 R: Looks like ah – looks like liquid mercury when he swims through the water.  
 L: Wow.  
 R: Yeah.  
 L: Does he – he doesn't eat your other fish?  
 R: Well, I have him in his own tank.  
 L: Oh, okay.  
 R: Yeah, I don't put him with anything else.

L: [COUGH] **I was going to [say, you'd think] he'd get hungry and**

R: [((unclear)) Yeah.]

L: **make a meal for himself.**

R: And he would. And he most definitely would. And the kids like him as well and the fish –

By initiating the topic by means of a question, L opens up a space for him to make a comment that he might not otherwise be able to make. After an adjacency pair, such as question-answer, has closed, there is potential for a post-expansion Schegloff (2007), in which the producer of the first pair part (here, L) might comment or expand on either the question or the answer. Schegloff divides post-expansions into minimal, containing just *oh, okay*, or something similar, and non-minimal. The non-minimal expansions he looks at are nearly all oriented to a dispreferred second pair part. For instance, after a proposal is rejected, the proposal might be reworked, or after a question is answered, the quality of the answer might be disputed.

Nothing like this is happening in (86), but there is reason for L to do a post-expansion. By the time he asks, “he doesn’t eat your other fish?” all prior talk has reached a potential closing point. R’s description of the piranha is appreciated by “wow,” and the sequence is closed off by “yeah.” By reopening (perhaps more accurately, keeping open) the topic, L makes himself accountable to justifying the reopening. After R gives his answer, L takes advantage of the slot available for giving an account by explaining that he had a suspicion about the fish. The fact that L’s original question started out as a simple interrogative and was then reformulated into having declarative syntax indicates that R already had a suspicion about the piranha (Gunlogson, 2003), and so even in his question he is foreshadowing the post-expansion.

Framing his account with *gonna say* rather than, e.g., “I ask because...” lets L show off his reasoning skills. Not only is he agreeing, he is saying, “that makes sense to me.” While it has the potential to be arrogant, it could also function as an expression of positive politeness (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987), by saying that both L and R are aligned in their opinions and reasoning. (87) and (88) exhibit the same question-response-“agreement” pattern, where the *gonna say*-speaker takes the opportunity to expand upon the addressee’s answer in a display of their knowledge or expertise.

(87) Fisher, fsh\_77298, 8:17

L: Are they very expensive? (.) They a[re] aren’t they?

R: [((unclear))]

Yeah. That one was like almost two hundred dollars and, [um]

L: [Yeah],

**I was gonna say.** I thought I remembered somebody telling me that [they were at least over a] hundred.



R: [Yeah. I was thinking I wish he'd get a] (..) Wish he'd get a cheaper hobby. [LAUGH]

(88) Fisher, fsh\_76593, 0:49

L: Do you play video games?

R: Yeah, you know, I've got an X Box, um, you know, I do some, like, casino games on the computer if I'm really bored. Ah –

L: Oh, yeah? Y- do you – you don't do the real betting, do you?

R: No, no, not online. [LAUGH]

L: **I was gonna say**, 'cause my – my brother was telling me, like, the online consi- casino games are, like, rigged.

R: Oh, I'm sure they are. I mean –

In both of these extracts we can note that *gonna say* conveys something over and above explicit agreement. Each speaker asks a question which already all but says what they were “gonna say”: *They are aren't they?*, *You don't do the real betting, do you?* The formulation as a statement+tag also biases the response in favor of the proposition expressed in the declarative clause (Ladd, 1981; Reese, 2007), foreshadowing the speaker's post-expansion.

The question set-up is not only an effective way to lead into a *gonna say* utterance, it can potentially double-up on polite activity. Rather than launch into an evaluation of online gambling, speaker L in (88) edges into the topic by asking R about it. He keeps away from saying anything directly about L, a form of negative politeness. When he gets the response he expected, he can move on to the positive politeness strategy of talking about their shared experience with casino games. Moreover, L can take advantage of the fact that *gonna say* allows a DNI MESSAGE, so he need not even vocalize the opinion he holds: something like *I hope you don't bet online*.<sup>19</sup>

Note that the claim is not that the question-response-*gonna say* pattern is limited to setting agreement or pseudo-agreement. In at least one case it is simply a way to set up an additional claim:

(89) Fisher, fsh\_62009, 0:46

R: If they use it to their advantage then it's not very good.

L: Yeah. Where – um, what part of the country are you from?

R: Um, Tampa, Florida.

<sup>19</sup>L could, in principle, express the FE. Because he has already said *you don't do the real betting, do you?*, it would be most natural for the MESSAGE to contain ellipsis: *I was gonna say I hope didn't*. As before, the unexpressed FE is not identical to any prior statement, but is closely related.

L: Yeah, **I was going to say, that probably has a – um, a – you know, probably depends a little bit on – on what you think about it, so.**

R: Do – ah, where are you from?

L: From Alabama.

The participants in (89) are discussing affirmative action, and both have basically agreed at this early point that it has positive and negative aspects. L then asks where R is from, evidently in service of opening up a new point, namely that one's opinion depends on where they live. There is no sense of agreement, sympathy, or any similar stance; L's question was a preliminary to making a claim whose relevance or strength might depend on her interlocutor's response.

The following is a final example of setting up a *gonna say* with the argument of *say* omitted.

(90) Fisher, fsh\_77111, 1:38

R: Do you have a special kind of tent?

L: Um, just – no, nothing special just a – like a regular, you know, like a dome tent made out of nylon or whatever.

R: Uh-hum.

L: So, we don't camp – you know, we camp in the summer so it's always warm [so we] don't need any cold weather tent or anything like that so.

R: [Uh-hum.]

So, do you have s- separate tents for – since there's four – ha- – four children – that'd be six people – do you ha- – all sleep in the same tent or [is] –

L: [Oh], God, no! [LAUGH]

R: [LAUGH] **I was going to say.** [SIGH]

L: No, we put the – [SIGH] ah, we put the kids in one tent and – well we have three boys and an infant girl.

R: Oh!

L and R are discussing their hobbies. L has previously revealed that he has four children, and that his family goes camping together. When R asks about the kind of tent that R uses, he explains the shape and material of the tent, after which R asks another question (possibly a clarification of her original question), this time about size. When R responds with denial, R says *I was going to say*. What she conveys by this is that she had a suspicion that L did something special to make it possible for a six-person family to go camping together. When L reveals that the family splits into two tents, rather than having a large tent (something he views as rather unlikely, given his *Oh, God, no!*), R expresses her satisfaction, or even relief, that there is a reasonable solution to her suspicion.

The missing MESSAGE here is once again quite close to the prior utterance, but cannot be identical to it (otherwise R would be claiming to have been about to make a statement which she had been unaware of at the time). Any number of paraphrases could fit into the MESSAGE role, such as *I would be really surprised if you all fit in the same tent* or *I hope you split up because a six-person tent would be huge/uncomfortable/expensive*, and so on. At the same time, it seems odd to claim that there is precisely one such proposition which is omitted, and which must be determined before R's utterance can be evaluated for truth. What is going on is R wanted to get at a certain piece of information, but perhaps felt it would be interactionally awkward to ask right out, let alone baldly assert, "You must not all sleep in one tent" (particularly given the fact that of the two of them it is L who is the camping expert, as revealed earlier in the interaction.) This is one way to understand why she rephrases her first, more general question. The *gonna say* construction allows her to convey the notion that she had an earlier suspicion which is now confirmed.

### 3.6.5 Resolving suspicions

The tent example bleeds into another category of *gonna say* use, in which a speaker is momentarily confused or has a suspicion, and when he or she receives an explanation that clarifies the confusion, says *I was gonna say*. (90) fits this category, as could (86), though the setup question in those interactions need not be understood as attempts to *clarify* anything. This use is compatible with either overt (91) or covert MESSAGE.

(91) Switchboard, sw3746

A: Do you, uh, do you ride or do you pull a cart when you play golf?

B: Uh, both [laughter].

A: Oh.

B: Not at the same time.

A: **I was going to say, that could be difficult [laughter].**

B: [Laughter] No, sometimes we ride and sometimes, uh, we, pull, we like to, to, uh, a lot of the times just walk, uh, for the exercise. #But# –

Just prior to this, B had been talking about where he likes to play golf. When A brings up the topic of riding or walking around the course, B gives a possibly ambiguous response. A's minimal response, *oh* indicating uptake of potentially unexpected information (Heritage, 1984), prompts further explanation by B. A can then express both her satisfaction at the resolution of her confusion (which was only implicated by her *oh*) along with the reason she was confused, namely that using both methods at once would be difficult.

The following extract is similar, but in this case the confusion is more explicitly conveyed by a repair-requesting utterance, namely Alice's "Her wisdom teeth and her voice?"

(92) SBCSAE 43.cha, 13:29

ANNET: Well Tony wasn't there today  
 cause Amy had her wisdom teeth taken out .  
 ALICE: (.) Oo: .  
 ANNET: (.) She's doing o:kay .  
 ANNET: They said her voice probably won't (.) be back to normal  
 ever I mean  
 but  
 she called Jenny +/ .  
 ANNET: For Jenny this afternoon +...  
 ALICE: (.) Her wisdom teeth and her [voi:ce] +...  
 ANNET: [I mean not her] wisdom teeth  
 her tonsils .  
 ALICE: (.) Oh .  
 ALICE: **I was gonna say**  
**man**  
**I never [% laugh] knew [% laugh] the [% laugh] wisdom**  
**teeth +...**

After Annette's clarification utterance (*I mean not her wisdom teeth her tonsils*), Alice's utterance conveys that her confusion is resolved; the MESSAGE further specifies the background assumptions that clashed with what Annette was saying.

The following extracts follow essentially the same pattern. Schematically, one person (A) says something that the other (B) finds confusing for some reason (not necessarily due to speech/understanding error). When A gives new information, possibly prompted by B to do so, B responds with *I was gonna say*. In (93), Paige is confused by Kristin's *twelve*, which Paige initially understands as 12 grams, but which Kristin intended as 12 percent.

(93) SBCSAE 41.cha, 5:37

KRIST: &=in Now at breakfast  
 (.) we often keep that down around twe:lve  
 &=in be[cau:se] +...  
 PAIGE: [Twe:lve]?  
 PAIGE: Wow: .  
 KRIST: Uh  
 percent .  
 KRIST: Uh[: +...  
 PAIGE: [ Oh  
 &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=in .  
 KRIST: (.) point one two (.) ti:mes ] +...  
 PAIGE: &{l=@ I thought you ] meant gra:ms &}l=@ .  
 PAIGE: **I was gonna say &h**

**where do you find &=in foo:d**

&{l=@ **that's that low** &}l=@ .

KRIST: &=in [ Well +...

PAIGE: [ &=laugh &=in &=laugh &=laugh &=in ] .

KRIST: some people actually &=ex ] &{l=@ end up &}l=@ having to do that .

The next extract, from the same interaction as (92), is rather more involved, but again contains a repair-requesting utterance, *What kind of present?*

(94) SBSCSAE 43.cha, 11:30

ALICE: &=laugh &=laugh (.) &{l=@ That'll be [ &=your +...

ANNET: [&=SNIFF .

ALICE: One of your presents then &}l=@ ] ?

ANNET: 1 &{l=@ That's my &=present &}l=@ .

ANNET: 2a &=in ] Wedding [ <sup>2</sup> present ]<sup>2</sup> ?

ALICE: [ <sup>2</sup> &=in ]<sup>2</sup>

2b (..) What kinda present ?

ANNET: 3a What did you say ?

ALICE: 3b (..) That'll be your &=pre[sent] .

ANNET: 4a [I thought you said] that'll be your wedding present .

ANNET: 4a And I'm [ <sup>2</sup> like ]<sup>2</sup> +...

ALICE: 4b [ <sup>2</sup> No ]<sup>2</sup>: .

ANNET: (..) X[ <sup>3</sup>: .

ALICE: 4b [ <sup>3</sup> **I was gonna say** +...

ANNET: &=in (.) &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=tsk &=laugh ]<sup>3</sup> .

ALICE: is it +/-.

ALICE: ? **&=Wha ? what are you: saying** .

ALICE: &=in ]<sup>3</sup> .

ANNET: &=in Nothing .

The extract requires some detailed explanation to understand what is going on. In the turn marked 1, Annette says something which Alice mishears as “wedding present,” prompting her to ask for clarification with an echo question (2a). Alice, who had not had weddings in mind at all, reacts to this with her own request for clarification (2b). The next two turns (3a,b) constitute a separate adjacency pair in which Alice and Annette resolve what Alice said. Annette then indicates why she was confused (4a), which reveals to Alice why “wedding” got into the conversation at all, namely by a hearing error. When this

is resolved, Alice expresses her realization with *oh*. The MESSAGE is filled by a direct quotation which explicitly encodes her confusion, namely that she had no idea the reason for why Annette brought up wedding presents.

The next two examples show that the clarification need not be explicitly prompted by a request. In (95), R is already in the middle of saying he was “just kidding” when L starts his clarification request (“Are you”), so we must understand R’s clarification as not prompted by anything L has said.

(95) Fisher, fsh\_98752, 5:08

R: [NOISE] Yeah. Oh, I don’t know. [NOISE] See, I may sound young, but I’m actually fifty eight. No, [I’m just] kidding.

L: [Are you]

L: [LAUGH]

R: [LAUGH] [NOISE]

L: [LAUGH] **I was gonna say, yeah, man, your voice, it does – that is a very young sounding fifty eight year old man.**

R: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. No, I’m not.

Post-clarification *gonna say* is possible with omitted MESSAGE, with no apparent difference in function or sequential position. It conveys the fact that the speaker now understands something which was previously confusing or incomplete, and comes after an interlocutor has provided that clarification (which often but not always is prompted by a request for clarification).

(96) Fisher, fsh\_109179, 2:12

L: You ever been married?

R: [LIPSMACK] Yeah, I was married for thirteen years. I [got two]

L: [Really?]

R: – yeah I got two boys.

L: Oh [that’s great.]

R: [And I’m, er,] I’m best friends with my ex-wife to this day.

L: Oh that’s great.

R: She’s in California but I mean, we write, you know, and talk to each other and stuff. [NOISE]

L: Okay, so you have been divorced?

R: Yes.

L: Okay. How long have you been divorced?

R: Um, ninety one, ninety two.

L: Wow.

R: [NOISE]

L: [But you guys are still]  
 R: [Did you ask me that] earlier? [NOISE]  
 L: H[uh?]  
 R: [You] didn't ask me that did you?  
 L: I'm sorry?  
 R: Did – you didn't ask me if I was divorced earlier [did you?]  
 L: [No,] I don't think  
     I did.  
 R: No, okay. **I was gonna say.**  
 L: But you guys are still friends?  
 R: Yeah.

Based on L's line of questioning, R wonders whether L had previously asked him if he had been divorced. His phrasing of the question (i.e., negative question with positive polarity tag) indicates that his assumption is that L had not asked him. When she confirms this suspicion, he indicates uptake and resolution of his suspicion with *I was gonna say*, with no overt complement.

The next example is similar. Near the beginning of the extract L mistakes R's *two* for *ten*, and her following turns indicate that she believes the person in question has ten boys. When this is cleared up, she says *I was gonna say*. In this case it is not quite "confusion" that L is likely feeling, but rather she is confronted with a situation she finds unexpected and surprising. *Gonna say* comes into play when the situation is revealed to be not unexpected or surprising at all.

(97) Fisher, fsh\_88954, 3:32

R: Yeah, my sister has two boys and my  
 L: Oh, [my god.]  
 R: [brother] [NOISE] has two girls. [LAUGH]  
 L: Oh, my goodness. Oh, my god, god love them is all I can –  
 R: [LAUGH]  
 L: – say. [LAUGH] No, 'cause I found it hard enough, you know, raising  
     the three, never mind ten.  
 R: There are two girls, not ten.  
 L: Oh, [okay.]  
 R: [Ah, no] way, I mean. [LAUGH]  
 L: Oh, my goodness, **I [was gonna say.]**  
 R: [We'd all run] from him if we seen him coming if he  
     had ten, no way. [LAUGH]  
 L: Oh, that's what I thought you said, **I was going to say, oh my goodness,**  
     **exactly, exactly.** So is it real hot down there now?

The confusion source need not be one's interlocutor, but the larger situation. Below, R seems to be concerned with any expenses associated with the call (earlier it was established that L is in Ohio and R is in Mississippi), and asks for clarification from her interlocutor. In a now familiar pattern, after receiving the clarification, the indication of new understanding is expressed with *I was gonna say*.

(98) Fisher, fsh\_77220, 6:16

R: [SIGH] [NOISE] I wonder how long we're supposed to stay on line?

[NOISE]

L: [several inaudible words].

(4.5)

R: [NOISE] Are th- – are they paying for this call?

L: Yes. [LAUGH]

R: Okay. [LAUGH] **I was gonna say.**

L: [LAUGH]

R: I mean, it don't cost me anything but [NOISE] ...

(3.5)

L: Good thing too.

### 3.6.6 From “use” to construction

These overlapping, yet not homogeneous, functional groupings of the pattern *I was gonna say* are a challenge to a constructional approach which requires, essentially, strict divisions between clusters of form-meaning mappings. Syntactically, there is nothing to distinguish the uses. They all involve the pattern *I was going to say* or *I was about to say*, with the possibility of a following clause. They all trade on the reasoning that by portraying one's self as having had a plan to say something, one conveys a belief in that something, even if there never was any such plan.

If there are no syntactic or semantic means by which the uses can be divided, can they be grouped by pragmatic function? I argue that they can. The two main uses of *gonna say* are to signal agreement and to signal that a confusion has been resolved. In the former, the speaker displays that he or she has the same views as those the addressee has just expressed. This is done by repeating, rephrasing, or building off of what the addressee has said, or by leaving the MESSAGE unexpressed, in which case it is interpreted as being identical or related to the prior move(s). These are exemplified by (67), (68), (77)–(82), (84), and (85). This use is characterized largely by the agreed-to statement not having been prompted by a question from the speaker, but simply a part of a larger narrative. *Gonna say* in this case is a second pair part to the other's assertion, exclamation, etc.

The latter, indicating the resolution of confusion, also involves a concurrence of opinion, but the opinion being agreed or sympathized with was given specifically as a result of a



prior question or statement made by the *gonna say*-speaker. This use is exemplified in (69) and (90)–(98). They are characterized as being preceded by a question or statement by one speaker who in doing so expresses doubt, concern, or confusion about something the other has said. When an explanation is given, the first speaker engages in a post-expansion sequence. He or she displays the resolution of their confusion with *gonna say*, possibly continuing on in a non-minimal post-expansion. Two tokens, (76) and (95), I argue are also resolution uses even though they do not fit the exact sequential profile. In these two interactions, one speaker said or began to say something but later corrected himself. What these two and the other resolution uses have in common is that *gonna say* comes after a *repair*: a turn that addresses a problem with a prior utterance and is discovered by, for instance, someone asking a clarification question like *do you all sleep in the same tent?* (Schegloff et al., 1977). The difference is whether the repair was self-initiated, as in (76) and (95), or other-initiated, as in all the rest. We can say, then, that this use of *gonna say* is a way to acknowledge (and possibly expand on) a repair.

Finally, there are instances that have the sequential property of the resolution use but intuitively do not involve much confusion on the part of the *gonna say*-speaker. These are (86)–(89). Here, the repair-initiating questions reveal suspicions on the part of the asker, indicating that they are positioning themselves to make an agreement and launch into their own turn. These speakers are strategically using the sequential formula of the resolution use in order to arrive at a place in the interaction where they can agree with their interlocutor on some topic. The only other major dimension discussed above is difficult topics. This seems to be not so much a distinct use or sense, but a circumstance under which either the agreement or resolution senses can be used. As argument-omission constructions, *gonna say* is uniquely suited to such a task, as the speaker can agree with a proposition without having to say it.

In sum, though these two uses of *gonna say* are syntactically identical, they commit the speaker to performing subtly different speech acts. Moreover, they predict different facts about the surrounding discourse, namely whether there has just been a repair made which clarifies some confusion on the part of the *gonna say*-speaker. As such, they must be treated as separate constructions. As with *just saying*, the syntax of the construction blends lexical and phrasal properties. *Say* must be the dependent of either *going (to)* or *about (to)*, analogous to *say* being obligatorily modified by *just*. The representational solution is the same. I posit for the agreement use an idiomatic sense of *say* which evokes the (somewhat inelegantly named) *i-say<sup>gonna</sup>* frame (99).

(99)

FORM	⟨say⟩																														
ARG-ST	⟨X, Y⟩																														
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The action taken by uttering *gonna say* is to agree with an earlier claim from the addressee, *j*. The verb requires its subject to be the speaker, but notice that the complement of *say* is indexed *i*, not *j*. I borrow the notion of referential dependence (notated  $\approx$ ) from Arnold (2004) and Arnold & Borsley (2010). They apply it to the reference of relativizers in non-restrictive relative clauses, which are not always identical to meaning of the syntactic head, but which are always similar to, or dependent on it. The same is true of the complement of *say*: it can be, but is often not, identical to what the addressee just said.

The resolution sense (100) is syntactically and semantically almost identical, differing in contextual properties. The most recent move specified by the construction is a repair. The Repair move has at least three elements: the REPAIRER, who provides an explanation, restatement, or other way of reformulating a problematic utterance; the REPAIR, which is the explanation or restatement itself; and the TROUBLE-SOURCE, the original statement which gave rise to confusion. The TROUBLE-SOURCE is identified with some prior claim of the addressee (which need not have come immediately before, as when a clarification question intervenes between the claim and the repair). By saying *gonna say* in this sense, a speaker acknowledges the newly-rephrased state-of-affairs (*j*) by saying that he or she was “going to say” *i*, a semantically-related proposition.

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Finally, I posit a separate lexeme class (101), consisting only of *going* and *about* in their aspectual or planning senses. This class, *going-about-lxm*, takes as its second argument a phrase headed by our special sense of *say*. As a raising predicate, its own subject is equated with the subject of *say* (both are tagged X). Just like canonical *going* and *about*, phrases headed by either of these words will be selected by *be*. Unlike *just saying*, which allows *am just saying* and *was just saying*, *gonna say* requires *was*. However, I believe this is explained by the Gricean motivation and discourse functions of *gonna say*. The construction is, at its core, a way to show the addressee that both parties are on the same page and hold similar opinions. Its meaning is also motivated by the connection between saying and believing: by expressing an intent to say, one implies a belief. The construction is thus most effective when that belief can be asserted to have already been in existence, as this would only bolster the togetherness that the construction evokes (“Not only do I understand what you have just said, I already had the same belief even before you said

it”). *I’m gonna say* would express a current intention and imply nothing about past beliefs, contrary to the function of the construction.

$$(101) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{going-about-lxm} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \left\langle X, \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \left[ \text{LID } i\text{-say}^{\textit{going\_fr}} \right] \right] \right. \\ \left. \text{VAL} \left\langle X:\text{NP}, \dots \right\rangle \right. \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

### 3.7 Summary

Verb argument structure, including null instantiation, is uncontroversially a core part of grammatical description. To adequately cover the the argument structure of *say*, it is necessary to account for (i) the fact that under most circumstances, the complement clause can only be omitted if interpreted as a discourse-given indirect question, and (ii) the possibility for DNI with declarative interpretation in several limited discourse contexts. While one could side-step the question of argument structure by listing all these constructions as fixed expressions, this would miss the detailed syntactic properties that the constructions have and also fail to account for the syntactic and semantic connections that these constructions have to the typical behavior of *say*. More significantly, the expressions would still need to be assigned meanings and functions even if they are handled as completely fixed expressions. In the end, no matter what syntactic approach is taken, the conventional links between these constructions and discourse function must be recognized.

Chapter 2 pointed out several features of context to which DNI constructions can be sensitive. These mostly surround how to resolve the missing argument: whether it must be linguistically-given, and if so, how closely in form it must match the location of the omitted argument. The constructions in these chapter allow us to significantly widen our view of context. I proposed three main categories of contextual features that constructions are sensitive to. The first, contextual indices, are no surprise, as all deictic constructions will need to know about the identities of the discourse participnats and the spacio-temporal coordinates of the speech act. The second, CURRENT-MOVE, characterizes the action a speaker takes in using a particular construction. It is a more articulated view of speech acts, which takes into account the fact that very specific communicative goals can be accomplished with purpose-built constructions. Finally, I argued that the acceptability of constructions can be sensitive to the prior discourse. While this could be viewed as a development of the notion of felicity conditions, it goes much beyond the more well-understood conditions, which surround mostly the (presmued) beliefs and intentions of the interlocutors. Some of the *say* constructions simply place constraints on the most recent move in the interaction. Others, such as declarative *says X*, require that the most recent move was instantiated with

a specific construction. *Gonna say* makes reference to repairs, a feature of conversational organization recognized in Conversation Analysis.

Our picture of context has now expanded beyond purely linguistic concerns and entered into the realm of turns and sequences of turns—in other words, into linguistic communicative actions. These constructions show us that grammar is not limited to looking at deictic reference points or whether or not some predication was linguistically given or not. It requires participants to keep a (possibly minimal, but still quite detailed) record of conversational moves, and their linguistic realization, semantics, and discourse functions. In terms of methodology, the study on *gonna say* made clear the importance of undertaking in-depth analysis of constructions, as they are deployed in everyday conversation. The need to do so is more apparent for pragmatically active constructions, but it may be the case that many “purely” syntactic constructions could benefit from reappraisal following a similar check against conversational data.

The following chapter steps away from argument omission constructions and looks at another sentence type, copular clauses. It takes a closer look at a topic of considerable interest in the Conversation Analytic literature—telephone greetings—and shows that there too, it is crucial to recognize the existence of constructions with dedicated discourse functions which are only appropriate in particular social or interactional situations.

## Chapter 4

# Constructions and scripts for identification

There are circumstances when individuals interacting with one another do so (or begin to do so) without knowing the other's identity. When the interactants' identities become relevant, there are several ways a speaker has of providing his or her own identity, or getting the interlocutor to reveal his or hers. This chapter examines two such circumstances: talking on the telephone and responding to a summons at an entrance, such as a residential front door. At the onset of these situations, because there is no visual contact (and for current purposes I assume that no technology provides it) neither participant can be certain of the other's identity. Strikingly, not all ways of providing or requesting identification are available in both circumstances. In what follows I set out the grammatical and lexical resources available to speakers of English in these situations, identifying which are used under what circumstances, and to what extent any are specifically associated with the function of identification.

A product of this analysis is a preliminary typology of identification-relevant situations, as viewed through the lens of (mostly, but not exclusively) English grammar. In order to fully capture the distribution of these constructions, it is necessary to recognize a conventional—but not strictly grammatical—relationship between the context of a speech event and a range of linguistic choices. This relationship, which I refer to as a *script*, embodies knowledge a speaker of a language has about which types of syntactic resources are expected and idiomatic in particular circumstances.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I first examine the interactional properties of the telephone context, focusing on the opening moves. I go through the constructions available for identificational purposes, establishing their syntactic and functional properties. This is followed by a formal account that integrates these observations. I then turn to identification at the front door of a residence, taking the same pragmatic and syntactic approach. I then take a step back and consider the bi-directional relationships between language and context, introducing the concept of scripts. Finally, I take a deeper look at what the grammar can tell us about the more fine-grained details of the telephone and front-door

contexts.

The constructions examined overlap syntactically and functionally in a way that makes their presentation complex. I believe that they are more easily understood by presenting them first in terms of their situations of use and then by lexico-syntactic features. However, the SBCG analyses I propose are grounded in constructional types, rather than situational features. This means that there will be several times in the chapter where a full analysis is delayed until the full range of situations has been taken into account. The hope is that, by the end, the complexity which arose due to the linearity of the presentation is significantly simplified.

## 4.1 On the telephone: data and observations

A telephone interaction typically has a two-step beginning. First, a caller causes a phone to ring, thereby issuing a summons. The recipient responds by opening the connection and providing an utterance that at the very least gives an indication that the phone has been answered (Schegloff, 1979). At this point (and possibly even earlier), the identities of the two callers becomes relevant: who is calling, and who has picked up?<sup>1</sup> Between those who can recognize each other's voices, the preferred way to establish identity is entirely by voice samples transmitted as greetings such as *hello* or *hi* (Schegloff, 1979:35):

- (1) (ring)  
 A: Hello?  
 B: Hi.  
 A: Hi.

This implicit and intimate means of mutual identification is not always available, nor is it always used even when available. In these cases, the discourse participants explicitly provide identification. Schegloff (1979) identifies a wide variety of means for doing so, several of which are illustrated in (2) and (3).

- (2) Requesting identification
- a. Plain referring expression: *Kim?*
  - b. Interrogative copular clause with *this* subject: *Is this Kim?, Who is this?*

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<sup>1</sup>I assume the interactants have no independent knowledge of each other's identities. The question of what happens to openings and identificational statements when speakers have (sometimes asymmetric) access to technologies such as call waiting, caller ID, and video phone calls, while interesting, is a large topic and beyond the scope of the present investigation. I do not exclude, however, suspicions that participants may have based on earlier-scheduled interactions, typical calling behavior, and so on.

- (3) Providing identification
- a. Plain referring expression: *Kim*.
  - b. Referring expression with addition: *Kim here, Kim speaking*.
  - c. Declarative copular clause with *this* subject: *This is Kim*.
  - d. Declarative copular clause with *it* subject: *It's Kim, It's me*.

Notably absent are *Are you Kim?*, *Who are you?* and *I'm Kim*. On the phone, these would be unidiomatic, misleading, or rude, though in other languages, such as Mandarin, their equivalents are the idiomatic means of identification on the phone. I return to this later in the chapter.

Of interest in this chapter are the copular clauses with *this* and *it* subjects. I will refer to these patterns as *this-be-X* and *it-be-X*—TBX and IBX—respectively. The X can be instantiated as almost any phrase that counts as providing identification: the person's name, the organization they represent, or possibly a description of who he or she is (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979:17–20, Schegloff, 1996:74–82). Combined with three sentence types—declarative, polar interrogative, content interrogative—there are potentially six types of identification sentences. However, not all of them are available on the telephone: see (4) and (5).

- (4) a. This is Chris.  
 b. Is this Chris?  
 c. Who is this?

- (5) a. It's Chris.  
 b. #Is it Chris?  
 c. #Who is it?

Anticipating discussion in the following sections, I note briefly that the pattern of acceptability is different for speakers on opposite sides of a front door. Namely, *this* is not possible (or at least hardly idiomatic), and *who is it* becomes available. I point out, though will not pursue further, the fact that a *wh*-question with *there* is also possible here, but not on the phone.

- (6) a. #Who is this?  
 b. #Is this Chris?  
 c. ??This is Chris.



- (7) a. Who is it?  
 b. It's Chris.  
 c. #Is it Chris?
- (8) a. Who's there?  
 b. #Is Chris there?  
 c. #Here's Chris.  
 d. #Chris is here.

A note concerning the boundaries of the present analysis: I am concerned only with cases where the identity of the two parties is stated or questioned among the participants in contact with one another: the two callers, or the hailer and the resident. The judgments given above reflect only this situation. This limitation serves to delimit a certain class of interactions, namely those in which the speakers are concerned with establishing each others' identities, and not reporting their knowledge to other individuals. Supporting this decision is the fact that utterances involving a third party, as either speaker or addressee, have a different pattern of acceptability. For example, a person in the same room as a telephoner could ask, *Who is it?* but not *Who is this?* This is exactly the reverse of what is possible for the caller.

The next three sections lay out the semantic, discourse-functional, and syntactic properties of TBX on the telephone.

#### 4.1.1 *This-be-X*: meaning and function

The meaning and function of TBX, and any means of identification, center on three questions:

- Whose identity can TBX address?
- Who can use TBX?
- At what stage in an interaction is TBX possible?

The relevance of first two questions are suggested by the patterns of acceptability of TBX and IBX across different speech acts and in different scenarios (4–7). The third question comes about from the observation that opening moves in telephone conversations—what people do and how they do them—are at least partially ritualized and highly predictable (Schegloff, 1968). We might expect that identification sentences are sensitive to this level of conversational organization.

TBX can address either the speaker or the addressee's identity, and can be used by either the caller or the recipient of the call. (Unless otherwise noted, references to “TBX”

are exclusively to the sentence pattern as used for identification on the telephone.) This is evident in the grammaticality of either declarative or interrogative forms by both caller and recipient (9). Examples are from COCA.<sup>2</sup>

- (9) a. Answerer self-identifies  
Montgomery County Crisis Center. This is Jim. May I help you? (COCA)
- b. Answerer confirms identification  
JOY picks up the phone. #  
JOY # Hello? #  
VOICE # Hi! How are you? #  
JOY # Is this Damien ? (COCA)
- c. Answerer requests identification  
KING: Let's take some calls. I understand we have a police officer who was involved. New York City, hello?  
1st CALLER: New York, New York Yes  
KING: Hi, who is this? (COCA)
- d. Caller self-identifies  
This is Venus Duncan. I'm calling ab – for Oprah Winfrey. (COCA)
- e. Caller confirms identity of answerer  
The phone rings and he picks it up.  
ED Hello.  
GEORGE Is this Ed ? (COCA)

In fact, it is possible for a single speaker, in the same turn, to both self-identify and request identification, by means of a TBX clause:

- (10) a. NICKY (V.O.) Hello.  
VOSEN Who is this?  
NICKY (V.O.) This is Nicky Parsons. Who's this? (COCA)
- b. "Who is this?" she demanded in the most intimidating voice she could muster.  
"This is Dr. Roberts. Who is this?" (COCA)

The identity provided may indicate the institution represented rather than the individual:

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<sup>2</sup>The decision to use COCA for this chapter rather than another is based on several reasons. First, it has been observed that there are subtle differences among varieties of English with respect to these constructions, and I want to initially limit discussion to a single variety. Second, there is no widely-available corpus that includes telephone openings. One result of this is that many of the tokens are from fictional sources, which may represent perceived behavioral norms rather than what "actually" happens. Despite this limitation, it is still possible to make valid generalizations about the meaning and function of the constructions in question, which must be further confirmed with alternative data sets.

- (11) a. Unidentified Man 8: Hello, this is the Sara Wood Rescue Center. (COCA)  
 b. ANNIE Hello?  
 OPERATOR (V.O.) Hello, this is ATT Conference Service.  
 Is this Annie MacLean? (COCA)  
 c. Hello, is this the Eastham Unit? Is Warden Morton there? (COCA)

TBX is not simply a unstructured string of words: the subparts appear to have meanings, and in particular *this* seems, at first glance, to refer to the participant whose identity is in question. The first question above might be rephrased as “What can *this* refer to?” If *this* does refer to one of the participants, then it would be coreferential with the post-copula NP. In Higgins’s (1973) typology of copular clauses, this makes them identificational clauses, parallel to *This person is Kim*.<sup>3</sup> Determining just what *this* refers to, including whether it can directly refer to a person, can only be answered by examining in detail the syntactic properties of TBX (see sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3).

Though not strictly related to the referent of *this*, it is worth noting that the post-copular NP is preferentially the name of the individual or organization represented. Free relatives are also attested, though not nearly as commonly. Indefinite NPs, though usually predicative, are also possible in TBX (and in identificational clauses in general: Higgins 1973:226–228) in limited contexts, e.g., if the speaker is being intentionally obscure or mysterious, or if the NP provides enough information to be informative enough (Higgins, 1973:227). This cline of typicality accords with the general tendency for reference to people to be accomplished as much as possible by “recognitionals,” expressions like proper names that will as quickly as possible cause the addressee to figure out the referent (Schegloff, 1996:75). (12) illustrates some of these alternatives (all constructed, except for (12b)).

- (12) a. This is the woman from the baseball card store.  
 b. “Uh, is this — who I called —”  
 “Yes, this is who you called.”  
 (Tim Powers, 2001. *Declare*. Harper Collins, p. 32)  
 c. This is a representative from your bank.  
 d. This is someone who cares about what you decide to do.

As a means of identification, TBX is part of what Schegloff (1979) referred to as an identification/recognition sieve: “Whatever a telephone conversation is going to be occupied with ... it and its parties will have to pass through the identification/recognition sieve as the first thing they do” (71). TBX is limited to this initial “sieve,” which has consequences for the precise discourse contexts in which it is used. First, it does not appear at

<sup>3</sup>*Identificational* will always refer to a type of copular clause with certain syntactic and semantic characteristics, such as *That woman is the woman who I saw yesterday*. I reserve *identification* as a way of describing what speakers are doing by saying *This is Kim*: they are providing their identification.

more than one stage in a single conversation, barring forgetfulness or suspicion on the part of the interactants. And TBX is barred as a means of “re-introduction” (13), as a way to re-identify one’s self after mutual recognition has occurred.

- (13) [Kim calls Chris, a coworker]  
 Chris: Hello?  
 Kim: Hi. This is Kim.  
 Chris: Oh, hi, Kim.  
 (...)  
 Kim: Hey, guess what? I just read an email that says I got promoted. {I am / # This is} your boss!

The same sentence, *this is your boss*, is acceptable as the initial means of self-identifying, but not as a way of “re-identifying.” Moreover, TBX is only applicable during the call itself, not after, even between the parties to the call (14). Once the call is over, *that* (unacceptable during the phone call) becomes acceptable (15)

- (14) Chris: Were you the one who called me last night?  
 Kim: # Yeah, this was me/Kim.

- (15) (Who were you just talking with?) That was Chris.

Consider next a business call between two representatives of different organizations. Initial identification might include the names of the organizations. Later on, individual identities might become relevant, e.g., to facilitate further contact between the two representatives. Despite the fact that these are different types of identities, TBX seems, to me, impossible, though I imagine there is variation in this area (16).

- (16) (ring)  
 A: Electronics Wholesale.  
 B: Hello, I’m calling on behalf of Shippers Plus.  
 (...)  
 A: It looks like we might have to contact each other later to finish this up. You can reach my office directly at 555-1234. # This is Kim Stanley.

There is one set of circumstances under which TBX can appear at a later stage of the interaction, namely when the question of one of the participants’ identities (re-)arises. This could be the result of a failure to pass through the recognitional sieve, a fact which participants can and do attend to in their conversational moves (Schegloff, 1979:39–45). One linguistic consequence of going through the sieve later than usual (not among Schegloff’s

(1979) examples) is the use of past tense (17). The past tense does not (only) perform temporal reference, but indexes the prior relevance of the question.<sup>4</sup>

(17) “Hi Kim. This is Tara Cole. I just got your email and I decided to call rather than email you back.”

Dead silence. I double clicked the time on the computer task bar so I could watch the second hand tic around the dial and keep track of how long it takes her to say something. Forty-two seconds.

“I’m sorry. Who was this again?”

(Cindy Cruciger, 2005. *Revenge Gifts*. Tor Paranormal Romance, p. 138–139)

In sum, TBX’s specification should account for its flexibility in reference to either party to the call, and its use by either party. It must also account for the fact that it is devoted to identifications that occur as part of the initial identification/recognition sieve, with recognition that speakers may negotiate, in the course of the interaction, whether or not they have in fact passed through it.

#### 4.1.2 *This-be-X*: lexicon and syntax

Given that *this* is proximal and *that* is distal, one might expect *this* to refer to the speaker, and *that* to the addressee. As seen in the previous section, for telephone identification purposes this is not the case. Moreover, not only is *this* usable for both parties, *that* is nearly completely unavailable (18,19) (though see Section 4.3.2 for limited exceptions).

(18) a. #That (=I/you) is Kim.

b. #Who is that? / Is that Kim? (≠ who are you/are you Kim?)

NPs with demonstrative determiners (either *this* or *that*) are also unacceptable (19).

(19) a. Who is this/that person? (≠ Who are you?)

b. Is this/that person Kim? (≠ Are you Kim?)

c. This/that person is Kim. (≠ I am Kim.)

This contrasts with *here* and *there*, for which the proximal/distal distinction is upheld. The two locatives must refer to the speaker’s and the addressee’s locations, respectively (20).

---

<sup>4</sup>This is not limited to TBX. *What did you want to say?* can be asked of someone whose attempt to say something was momentarily interrupted, but to which the speaker wishes to return. Alternatively, use of the past tense may simply be a general way to index negative politeness, without even oblique reference to past relevance, as when a student, having secured just the attention of a teacher, says, “I wanted to ask a question.” I leave open the question of whether (17) is better understood in this way.

- (20) a. Is your mother there? (= where you are)  
 b. She isn't here. (= where I am)

This set of data is a good indication that any attempt to characterize the properties of TBX are unlikely to get much traction by understanding it as part of the spacial-deictic paradigms containing *this*, *that*, *here*, and *there*.

The syntax of TBX is largely inherited from the syntactic properties of copular clauses, and in particular copular clauses with (apparently) human-referring demonstrative subjects. The impact of these properties on the syntactic, semantic, and information-structural analysis of copular clauses has been a topic of recent debate (Mikkelsen, 2005, 2007; Birner et al., 2007; Heller & Wolter, 2007; Ward, 2008; Moltmann, 2010). In this chapter I draw on many of these authors' insights, ultimately showing that some proposals fare better in explaining TBX than others. For convenience, I will use DBX (demonstrative-*be-X*) to refer to copular clause with a demonstrative subject, with a human referent or not. TBX continues to refer to a DBX clause with *this* as subject, and as used on the telephone.

Below, I walk through the key syntactic properties of DBX and TBX (sometimes these bleed into semantics and pragmatics). The aim in the end is to arrive at a picture of which properties of TBX are derived from DBX and which, if any, are idiosyncratic. To do so, it is necessary as well to pin down exactly what sort of copular clause DBX is, and especially how it behaves when the subject seems to refer to a human.

### Subject of copular clause

The use of a demonstrative pronoun to refer to a person, in TBX and in general, is limited to subject position in copular clauses (21, 22). This is true regardless of whether the demonstrative is used deictically or anaphorically.<sup>5</sup>

- (21) a. #I've been trying to reach this for a while.  
 b. #This needs to talk to your boss.  
 c. #Kim is this.  
 d. #Is Kim this?
- (22) a. This/that broke the window. [referring to, e.g., a rock]  
 b. #That/this broke the window. [referring to, e.g., a child]

---

<sup>5</sup>I annotate these sentences with # because my intuition is that referring to a person or other animate entity with a demonstrative pronoun is not ungrammatical or uninterpretable. In fact, it can be quite communicative—and insulting—as the overall effect is to portray the referent as not being (worthy of being understood as) animate.

Not all classes of copular clauses support a human-referential demonstrative subject. Higgins (1973) recognized four classes: predicational, specificational, identity, and identificational. Examples of these sentences without demonstratives are given in (23), from Mikkelsen (2005:48).

- (23) a. Susan is a doctor. [predicational]  
 b. The winner is Susan. [specificational]  
 c. She is Susan. [identity/equative]  
 d. That (woman) is Susan. [identificational]

Mikkelsen (2005) revises the four-way division by reanalyzing identificational sentences as either identity or specificational, depending on the semantic type of the subject (p. 49). To avoid confusion with *identification* (as what someone does by giving a name), I refer to Mikkelsen's *identity* category as *equative*. With this in mind, we can see in (24) that human-referential demonstrative subjects are ruled out in predicational clauses.<sup>6</sup>

- (24) a. #That is a doctor. [predicational]  
 b. (Who's the winner?) That's Susan. [specificational]  
 c. [pointing] That's Susan. [equative]

The non-predicative clause constraint holds of TBX as well:

- (25) #This is tired, so let's make the call quick. [predicational]

The question of whether *This is Kim* is specificational or equative is not immediately clear, but the remaining syntactic (and semantic) properties of TBX sentences suggest that it is equative.

### Reference and coreference

DBX and TBX sentences may have a tag question, in which case the tag subject is always *it*, even when the complement NP identifies a person (26). As the tag subject is coreferential with the main clause subject, the demonstrative cannot be referring directly to a human (Mikkelsen, 2005:64ff., 121).

<sup>6</sup>*That is a doctor* is possible in certain, limited contexts where *that* refers not so much to a person but to a collection of attributes or behaviors associated with a person. Imagine someone teaching a child what *doctor* means. She can point to a person in recognizable doctor garb or doing things a doctor typically does and say, *That's a doctor*. She could not do the same while pointing to someone who happens to be a doctor but does not exhibit any of the characteristic traits. See (Higgins, 1973:237) for a similar observation.

- (26) a. This is Sue, isn't it/#she?  
 b. #This is Sue, aren't you?

Mikkelsen also points out (2005:122) that DBX subjects cannot be modified by non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRs) (27a). In fact, it is only human demonstrative subjects which are so constrained. Non-demonstrative pronouns (whether subjects or not, denoting humans or not) can be modified by a non-restrictive relative (27b), as can demonstrative subjects which do not pick out people (27c). Mikkelsen argues that this shows that DBX human subjects do not actually denote individuals (i.e., type *e* expressions; see also Potts 2002:83) but properties. I address this claim in the following section. At the very least, we may say that if the relative pronouns in non-restrictive relative clauses are coreferential with their antecedents (Jackendoff, 1977; Sag, 1997; Del Gobbo, 2003; Arnold, 2007; Arnold & Borsley, 2010), then the unacceptability of (27a) points away from demonstrative pronouns referring to people.

- (27) a. \*This, who you met yesterday, is Kim.  
 b. In interviews with me, he essentially complained that the cops had played him dirty – he, who as a street fighter from way back, had always fought as dirty as necessary. (COCA)  
 c. This, which I built yesterday, is the birdhouse in the photograph I sent you.

A human-denoting DBX subject cannot be coordinated with a clearly human-denoting expression, and in fact coordination is difficult even with another demonstrative (28) (Moltmann, 2010:4). The constraint on coordination that the two conjuncts share a semantic type (Sag et al., 1985; Munn, 2000) once again suggests a non-human referent for all DBX subjects. Note that the restriction goes away if the subject is inanimate (29).

- (28) a. \*That and {Bob/that woman} are my grandparents.  
 b. \*?That and that are my grandparents.
- (29) a. This and this are the first (and probably the last) instances of an art form I invented: invertible 'poetry'.  
 (http://www.accesscom.com/~darius/, Jan 1 2011)<sup>7</sup>  
 b. This and this gadget are what you can use in your assignment.

While coordination may be out for (apparent) human subjects, the demonstrative can be plural. In fact, even when singular it can correspond to either a singular or a plural complement NP (30) (see Birner et al. (2007:(22)) and surrounding discussion).

<sup>7</sup>Each *this* was a link to a poem.



(30) That's/those're my parents (over there).

The coordination constraint is seen on the phone as well (31a). TBX is even more stringent regarding plural subjects: they are impossible (31b). A singular *this* with a plural complement is, as with DBX in general, acceptable (31c). Once again, the data point towards *this* not actually picking out a human referent in TBX: this would explain the fact that it cannot be coordinated with a human-referring expression and its inability to be plural. It also suggests an explanation for the number mismatch in (31c): Somehow whatever non-human singular entity it does refer to can correspond to a plural object.

- (31) a. #Thanks for taking the call. This and this are your contacts to our organization.  
 b. #Hi, son. These are your parents.  
 c. Hi, son. This is your parents.

### Interaction with other constructions

DBX is compatible with predicate ellipsis (verb phrase ellipsis) and gapping, as pointed out by Heller & Wolter (2007:228) and illustrated in (32,33). Predicate ellipsis can apply to TBX, but it is difficult to test TBX for gapping, as the situation does not easily allow contrast between two speakers on the same side of the call. The test sentence, *This is your father, and this, your mother* could be shared by two speakers (i.e., the first clause would be spoken by the father, and the conjunction and second clause by the mother), but given the highly constructed nature of the scenario I withhold any judgment about its possibility.

- (32) a. [Pointing at two individuals] That's not Kim. *That* is.  
 b. [On the telephone]  
 A: Is this Chris?  
 B: This is, indeed.

(33) That's my uncle, and that, my father.

These facts are notable because while predicative clauses are also compatible with ellipsis and gapping, non-controversially specificational clauses are not (Mikkelsen 2005:101, Heller & Wolter 2007:228):

## (34) Ellipsis

- a. Rosa is a doctor and Matilda is too. (Heller & Wolter, 2007:(6a))
- b. \*My next-door neighbor is Rosa and your next-door neighbor is too.  
(Heller & Wolter, 2007:(6b))
- c. \*Some people think that the smartest person in the department is Betty, but they  
are wrong; the luckiest person is. (Mikkelsen, 2005:101)

## (35) Gapping

- \*My next-door neighbor is Rosa, and your next-door neighbor, Matilda.

Though not noted by Heller & Wolter, equative clauses pattern with predicational clauses in compatibility with ellipsis and gapping (36). The two also pattern together with respect to extraction from the post-copular NP (37, from Heller & Wolter 2007:(10–12)).

- (36) a. That woman isn't Chief Harley, that woman is.
- b. The woman over there is Chief Harley, and the woman by the door, Attorney General Smith.
- (37) a. ?What did John say that what Mary was looking at appeared to be a picture of?  
[predicational]
- b. \*Who did they say that what Mary was going to do was give the dog to? [specificational]
- c. Who did Rosa say that that was a friend of? [equative]

DBX's patterning with predicational and equative clauses is surprising. The data from the previous two sections indicated that a human-denoting DBX subject does not in fact refer to a person but to something else. Yet, with respect to ellipsis, gapping, and extraction, DBX groups with clause types that almost certainly do allow human subjects.

Several proposals have been made in the literature that deal with some or most of these data. The following section outlines these proposals, showing the strong and weak points of each regarding DBX. As I show, it is the equative-based account of Birner et al. (2007) that fares best—and has the benefit of extending nicely to handle the further idiosyncrasies of TBX.

### 4.1.3 The clause type of DBX

Having seen the data that an analysis of DBX and TBX must contend with, we are prepared to position them with respect to a typology of copular clauses. In this section I address their syntactic and semantic features, rather than their discourse functions. The

ideal account will be able to handle both aspects of the constructions, so this section serves as an initial stage to evaluate potential approaches.

One possibility is to group DBX with similar sentences with *it* subjects under the category of reduced or truncated clefts (Büring, 1998; Hedberg, 2000). A truncated cleft corresponds formally and functionally to a full cleft, but with the cleft clause omitted and taken to be salient in the prior discourse. (38a) illustrates a truncated *it*-cleft, and (38b) illustrates one with *this*.

- (38) a. A couple of generations ago, wealth was measured in material like indoor plumbing or a matching set of silverware. When I was a kid, **it was a television set or a single-family home**.  
(Ellen Goodman, *Keeping in Touch*, p. 40, cited by Hedberg 2000)
- b. I wasn't surprised by the massacre in China. [pause] **This is not Iowa**—This is a different society. (based on Hedberg 2000:(17))

The *it*-cleft is interpreted as missing *by which wealth was measured*, and the *this*-cleft as missing *we're talking about*.<sup>8</sup> The cleft clause can be evoked situationally (non-linguistically), as when a DBX clause appears to have deictic reference, a natural interpretation of many of the sentences in (24–36): see (39).

- (39) That's the French flag (you see flying over there), Pierre Dufour, a former legionnaire, pointed out. (based on Hedberg 2000:(20))

Hedberg (2000) argues that the cleft pronoun (*it*, *this*, or *that*) in both full and truncated clefts has semantic and pragmatic properties akin to that of determiners in NPs (898).<sup>9</sup> In NPs, the determiner encodes the cognitive status, or givenness, of the NP's referent. In clefts, the cleft pronoun encodes the givenness of the situation denoted by the cleft clause and, like NP-internal determiners, is arguably a type of generalized quantifier. As such, cleft pronouns do not refer to individuals. This explains why some DBX subjects do not exhibit the properties of referential expressions, namely modification by NRRs and coordination with referential expressions. Likewise, tag question subjects would only be *it*, corresponding to the main clause non-human subject. Of course, not all DBX clauses need be truncated clefts under this analysis: some could simply be equative clauses, as long as the subject has non-human reference.

Compatibility with ellipsis and gapping are potentially problematic. According to Hedberg, the copula in a truncated cleft can be predicational or identificational (2000:907). The

<sup>8</sup>In fact, this sentence is presented by Hedberg as an acceptable version of the attested utterance, which was *This is not Iowa we're talking about*.

<sup>9</sup>Hedberg adopts a DP analysis, which highlights the claimed parallels between the function and structural position of determiners and pronouns. Because I am primarily concerned only with demonstrative pronouns, I maintain the NP-based terminology.

former is diagnosed only when the cleft pronoun is plural, as in *Those are real eyeglasses that Mickey is wearing* (917). All other clefts are “identificational,” which for her corresponds to Higgins’s (1973) identificational, identity, and specificational types (907, n. 22). Under the modified Mikkelsenian terminology I have adopted, her category collapses specificational and equative clauses. Her description of the semantic type of the cleft pronoun as a predicate ( $\langle e, t \rangle$ ) or generalized quantifier ( $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ ), and the clefted constituent as an individual, fits the description of a specificational clause. This, however, incorrectly rules out the possibility of ellipsis and gapping.

Even granting a way around this issue, another mystery remains. DBX subjects can receive contrastive stress, or information focus (40), as when there are competing individuals who could match the complement, such as in a group photo or when picking out people in a crowd.

(40) No, THAT isn’t Kim. THAT is.

While it is possible for demonstrative determiners to receive contrastive focus stress, this is not possible in full clefts:

(41) a. THAT person isn’t Kim, THAT person is.  
 b. #THAT’s not John who wrote the song, THAT is.

This calls into question the treatment of truncated clefts as derived from full cleft sentences. The alternatives to which I now turn attempt to derive all the relevant properties without reference to cleft clauses.

Rather than deriving apparent truncated clefts from full cleft clauses, Mikkelsen (2005, 2007) proposes that they are specificational clauses. A specificational copular clause is one in which some description appears in subject position, and the individuals who meet that description are post-copula (42). In Mikkelsen’s (2005) specific proposal, the subject denotes in  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , and the complement NP denotes in  $e$ . In this framework, truncated clefts are not clefts at all. Rather, the subject pronoun is anaphoric to a property salient in the discourse context. The similarity to clefts is derived not syntactically, but semantically. Cleft clauses (with *this* or *that*) require the cleft clause to be discourse-old (or in Hedberg’s (2000) terms, at least ACTIVATED). As specificational clauses require a discourse-old subject (Mikkelsen, 2005:135ff.), the information-structural properties of truncated clefts are predicted with no further assumptions.

(42) a. My teacher is Kim.  
 b. The winner was Pat.  
 c. Who he was talking about was my uncle.

The specificational analysis accounts for most of the syntactic and semantic properties of DBX and TBX. As with Hedberg’s (2000) truncated clefts, the subject refers to a

non-human, accounting for non-human tag question subjects and the various modification and coordination constraints. Reference to multiple individuals is possible by referring to a property which happens to hold of multiple individuals. Finally, if we understand contrastive focus stress and co-speech gestures as aiding the identification of the particular property the speaker has in mind, then the data in (40) are also explained.

There are some difficulties, however. The ability for *it*, *this*, and *that* to refer to properties is limited to particular syntactic frames. For instance, while subject position is possible (43a), other positions are not: (43b) and (43c). At the same time, as I point out shortly, the subject-only requirement is troublesome for almost any analysis, and cannot serve to chose between them.

- (43) a. They said Joan was skilled, and she is that.  
 b. #That basketball player is really tall. I wish I were that.  
 c. #I have no hope of becoming that.

What makes the specificational treatment less than ideal is that, as noted above, non-controversially specificational clauses do not permit predicate ellipsis, gapping, and extraction from the complement. Mikkelsen thus incorrectly predicts that DBX disallows them.

Another alternative to truncated clefts comes from Heller & Wolter (2007). The authors treat DBX as a predicative copular clause, in many ways the inverse of a specificational clause. In a predicational clause, the subject is individual-denoting and the complement is property-denoting. Heller & Wolter argue that the complement NP—even when a name—denotes a property, in particular a *sort*, a function from worlds to sets of individual concepts. They point out the ellipsis, gapping, and extraction data in their favor, as DBX patterns with predicative copular clauses in this respect. Yet there are numerous problems associated with an individual-denoting subject for DBX which ultimately, in my view, make it unappealing. I reserve specific comments until the discussion of Birner et al.’s (2007) equative clause analysis, as they both encounter the same difficulties.

A rather different approach to *this* and *that* is to treat them not as referring directly to certain individuals, but as referring to an object of direct perception. Moltmann (2010) draws on the concept of a *trope*, or a particularized property, to understand the function of demonstrative pronoun subjects. A trope is a specific feature held by some perceived entity, such as its visual appearance, voice, or in some cases a result of its actions. Tropes are not inherently tied to linguistic phenomena, but Moltmann argues that associating them with demonstratives helps to make sense of their interpretation. She posits separate senses for *this* and *that* which include reference to tropes in their semantics. These senses are also limited (by stipulation) to presentational uses. Moltmann does not define “presentational” precisely, but it has the effect of limiting their presence to the subject position of (what Moltmann identifies as) identificational clauses. In her analysis, these pronouns each denote a function from “any conceivable world *w*’ compatible with what is known [in the actual world] to the sum of entities that according to *w*’ are bearers of” the trope (18). This



However well-motivated Moltmann's framework is for interpreting DBX sentences, it faces severe problems when applied to the telephone context. Articulation of these problems must await a more detailed examination of the features of TBX and the components of the telephone situation. Before doing so, I outline one final proposed analysis of DBX, the one which I adopt for the remainder of the chapter.

There is a strong intuition that the subjects of DBX do pick out individuals, just like the subject in *That teacher is Kim*. Birner et al. 2007 (henceforth BWK) argue exactly this: truncated clefts are in fact equative clauses in which both NPs refer to individuals. On their analysis, there are actually two types of equative clauses with a demonstrative pronoun subject: those where the subject refers deictically to a salient entity in the speech context, and those where the subject refers to a variable in a salient open proposition (OP). An open proposition is "a proposition that contains one or more unspecified elements, which are represented as variables" (BWK:320). (48) illustrates the former, deictic subject, and (49) illustrates the latter, OP-mediated reference.

(48) [A notices someone across the room and says to B, who has been absorbed in a newspaper:]

A: Hey, that's Kim!

(49) A: I wonder who ate all the pizza.

B: That's my friends.

OP: X ATE ALL THE PIZZA.

Assertion: X = my friends.

When the demonstrative pronoun refers to a variable in an OP, the by-now familiar traits of human DBX subjects are accounted for. Number mismatches result from the singular nature of the variable, which can nonetheless have a plurality as its filler. As equative clauses, they are correctly predicted to allow ellipsis and gapping.

Problematic for BKW is their admission of human-referring demonstrative pronouns. When no OP is present, they treat the demonstrative subject and the complement NP as coreferential. This requires the stipulation that, as subjects of equative copular clauses, demonstrative pronouns can (for unexplained reasons) refer to humans. This fails to account for the impossibility for personal pronouns in tag questions, NRRs, and coordination (27,28).

Ward (2008) addresses the tag question and relative clause issue in a further defense of the equative analysis. He notes that when there is a question of identity, even when the subject is clearly a referential expression, a tag with *it* is possible ((50), from Ward's (2008) (23)).

- (50) a. I think that guy over there is Bill, isn't it?  
 b. That guy on the couch isn't your brother, is it?  
 c. This woman who keeps walking by is your boss, isn't it?

This suggests that the pronoun in the tag is determined in part by the function of the main clause. If it is a copular clause that addresses the identity of an individual, then *it* is possible, regardless of the “natural” gender of the subject.

Ward then points out that there seems to be a general restriction on relative clauses on demonstrative subjects, even when they are plural and thus more clearly individual- (rather than property-) denoting:

- (51) a. Those are the Smiths. (Ward, 2008:(27a))  
 b. Those \*(people), who I can't stand, are the Smiths (Ward, 2008:(27b,c))

Because the prohibition is more general, he argues, it cannot be used as an argument against a individual-denoting account of demonstrative subject pronouns. However, Ward's general restriction fails to recognize that NRRs are possible with inanimate subjects (27c). This particular pattern remains problematic for his view, and any view that treats demonstrative subject pronouns as human-denoting. One would have to say that *this* and *that* can denote humans, but only as subjects in equative clauses, yet they cannot be modified by NRRs, even though any other individual-denoting subject, including pronouns, can be.

The shortcomings of this part of BKW's account does not take away from the appeal of the equative clause analysis. In fact, I see no great need to recognize (48) as having a human subject rather than an OP variable-denoting subject. What needs to be done is demonstrate that any time such a sentence is uttered, the appropriate OP is salient in the interactional context. Co-speech gestures or other physical indexes of the referent would no doubt be sufficient, but they need not be present. It is sufficient for the complement NP to contain information that draws attention to intended referent (52) (recall also (39)). The OP, X IS OVER BY THE ENTRANCE, is not salient at the onset of the utterance, which is what BKW assume is necessary, but it is made salient in the course of its production. A similar phenomenon was observed with the verb-*way* construction (Chapter 2).

- (52) Hey, that's Kim over by the entrance!

The limitation of demonstratives to subject position is still mysterious, though now it is stated in terms of reference to variables in certain types of OPs (i.e., those which concern the identities of people) rather than direct reference to people. This disadvantage is common to all the approaches outlined herein; future work will hopefully shed some light on the issue.

Having now seen several approaches to DBX—truncated clefts, specificational, predicational, open propositions and tropes—we can see several commonalities between them. Each is concerned with accounting for at least the following observations:



- (53) a. The overall function of DBX is to identify individuals in the world with respect to current (or just-obtained) information (a percept, an open proposition or question-under-discussion).
- b. Some DBX clauses function by reference to extralinguistic context (e.g., what appears to be spacial deixis).
- c. Some DBX clauses function by reference to a salient state-of-affairs which is related to a to-be-identified individual (an unsaturated property, an OP, or an object of perception).

The difficulty is that the syntactic and profile of the parts of DBX, and of the clause as a whole, cannot be equated with any other identifiable copula clause type. The most troublesome fact is the limitation of (seemingly) human-denoting demonstratives to subject position. As yet, no account has made sense of this within a framework that also captures the remaining features of the construction, and the account I present in the following section is no different (the two equative clause proposals, from Birner et al. and Moltmann, however, come closest).

The next section returns to the original question: how can we characterize TBX as a construction, especially in light of what is known about DBX clauses in general? As hinted above, though Moltmann and BKW provide compelling account of the data, only BKW's has the capability to incorporate the idiosyncrasies of TBX's application on the telephone.

## 4.2 On the telephone: analysis

The major questions that TBX poses are: Why is *this* possible on the phone but not *that*, or any other means? How it is that *this* is applicable to either the speaker or the addressee? I address them below, in turn.

### 4.2.1 *This and that*

*That* is in general not substitutable for *this* in telephone openings.<sup>11</sup>

- (54) a. #Hello, that is Sam.
- b. Is that you, Sam?
- c. %Is that Sam?
- d. %Who is that?

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<sup>11</sup>Things seem to be different in British English. Searching Google for "hello is that" results in some instances of (sometimes fictional) telephone greetings, most of which are of UK origin. Thus, even within varieties of a language there may be differences, supporting the treatment of these expressions as conventionalized, i.e., encoded in constructions.

Compared to *this*-BX, the sentences in (54), except (54b), are highly marked, and unacceptable in most situations. However, they are not completely out. The % annotation indicates a certain affect which is difficult to characterize. The impression it gives is that the speaker is soliloquizing: the utterances are not directly addressed to the addressee. Of course they may be intended to be heard and acted upon, but the force of the utterance is not so direct as it is with *Who is this?* or *Is that you, Sam?* Hasegawa (2005) argues that soliloquial utterances may be used strategically by speakers who wish to communicate thoughts or sentiments which might otherwise be difficult or impossible to express directly to an addressee. In the two %-marked sentences, there is a feeling of playfulness and problem-solving. It is as though the speaker were trying to work out on his or her own who the addressee is. By (acting as though) revealing one's inner thoughts to one's addressee, a sort of intimacy is achieved. What is important for present purposes is that *this* is the core demonstrative for telephone identifications, while *that* is, if not anomalous, a special case. The acceptability of (54b) must be dealt with, but notice that the complement NP must be *you*, and it must appear with an appositive NP, neither of which is true for *this*. I set it aside for now; in section 4.3.3 I argue that it is licensed by a separate construction.

A naive application of the proximal/distal distinction between *this* and *that* would lead one to expect that *this* would refer to the speaker, and *that* to the addressee. Yet as we have seen, because in DXB clauses the demonstrative does not ever directly refer to a human, clearly some other factor is at work. Of the studies on DBX summarized in the previous section, only the givenness hierarchy of Gundel et al. (1993), as expanded upon by Hedberg (2000), lays out a way to differentiate *this* from *that* outside of spacial-deictic reference. According to the hierarchy, both demonstratives require that the (omitted) cleft clause be at least activated in the discourse. Let us say for now that the cleft clauses are something like *who is talking* or *who I am talking to*, as in *This is Kim (who is talking)* or *Who is this (who I am talking to)?* As the interlocutor's identities are relevant at the moment the conversation begins, it is safe to say that these cleft clauses are active in the discourse. However, *this* additionally requires the cleft clause semantics to "be not only activated, but speaker-activated, by virtue of having been introduced by the speaker or otherwise included in the speaker's context space" (Gundel et al., 1993:279). Because neither of these clauses is activated linguistically at all, let alone by the speaker specifically, *this* is predicted to be ungrammatical, and *that*, grammatical—the reverse of what is observed. Even if it could be argued that the licensing conditions for *this* are in fact met, the hierarchy incorrectly predicts that *that* should be acceptable as well. Simple application of the givenness hierarchy is insufficient to account for *this* and *that* on the telephone.

Could there be something unique to telephone interactions that predicts or motivates *this* instead of *that*? Telephones do provide a special sort of context, where people not co-present are able to hold a real-time conversation with one another. Because of the nature of the technology, only the parties to the call are privy to the entire state of the interaction. There are no "bystanders," as there could be when two people are holding a face-to-face conversation. They are brought together by the telephone, and separated from whoever might happen to be physically nearby. Given this, it is not (as) surprising that *this* has been

recruited to perform telephone-specific identifications: both speakers are “here,” separate from all others (Knuf, 2003:176). At the same time, the converse argument could be made. The speakers may be communicating, but are not co-present. The communication is “remote,” “not spontaneous, but rather arranged” (ibid.), and the connection between the two is for the specific purpose of communication. This interactional distancing could be argued to motivate *that* over *this*, contrary to what is observed.

Of course, *this/that* is not the only contrast to be considered. Why, for instance, is *this* used at all? A direct answer to this question is beyond the scope of this chapter, but indirect evidence for its non-predictability is the fact that in other languages, *this* or a close equivalent is not available for telephone identification. As noted in Chapter 1, Japanese speakers can identify themselves (on the telephone and elsewhere) with *kochira* ‘this way’. However, it is not generally available for the addressee, as *this* is in English, and other proximal deictics are simply not possible in Japanese or Mandarin.

- (55) a. *kochira wa Tanaka desu*  
 this.way TOP Tanaka COP.HON  
 ‘This is Tanaka.’ (‘I am Tanaka.’) (Japanese)
- b. *kore/koitsu/kono hito wa Tanaka desu*  
 this/this.person/this person TOP Tanaka COP.HON  
 ‘This is Tanaka.’ (≠ ‘I am Tanaka’) (Japanese)
- c. *zhè shì Lǐ*  
 this COP Li  
 ‘This is Li.’ (≠ ‘I am Li’) (Mandarin)

R. Hopper & Chen (1996) describe telephone openings in Mandarin as spoken in Taiwan. Asking for the addressee’s identity is accomplishable by means of a bare name with a sentence-final particle (56a), or by asking after the presence of the intended recipient (56b). No instances of demonstratives are indicated (data and glosses are from R. Hopper & Chen, 1996:302,308).

- (56) a. *Wei<sup>2</sup>, Ta<sup>4</sup> Kuang<sup>1</sup> Hsüeh<sup>2</sup> Chang<sup>3</sup> ma<sup>5</sup>*  
 Hello Ta Küang Big Brother is.this  
 ‘Hello is this Big Brother’ (lit. ‘Is (it) Küang Big Brother?’)
- b. *Wei<sup>2</sup> Wei<sup>4</sup> Chi<sup>4</sup> Liang<sup>2</sup> tsai<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>5</sup>*  
 Hello Wei Chi Liang at is  
 ‘Hello is this Wei Chi Liang?’ (lit. ‘Is Wei Chi Liang located (there)?)’

Stating one’s identity is done with one’s name or organization followed by a sentence-final particle (often *a* among intimates). Identity confirmation is of the form *I am*, with an optional adverb meaning roughly ‘exactly’:

(57) Is this Wei Chi Liang?

Wo<sup>3</sup> chiu<sup>4</sup> shih<sup>4</sup>

I exactly am

‘This is he.’

Greek similarly allows *I am X* as a means of self-identification (Sifianou, 1989:533). *I am X* is dedicated in English to introducing one’s self, as to a person one has never met before. It is possible on the telephone, but not with acquaintances. Dutch speakers use yet another formula: *met* ‘with’ followed by the identifying expression (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991), an abbreviation of *U spreek met X* ‘You are speaking with X’.

In short, it seems to be language-specific (or variety-specific: recall note 11) whether *this* or some other demonstrative form is used in identification expressions. Its appearance in English is, perhaps, motivated to some degree, but it cannot be predicted. Nor can one argue from first principles that *this* and not *that* should be the demonstrative used. I thus conclude that TBX, while functionally motivated, is not predictable and so must be included in the grammar.

#### 4.2.2 Speaker/addressee flexibility

The referential flexibility of *this* was pointed out by Fillmore (1973:14), who observed that when *this* is in a statement, it refers to the speaker, and when it is in a question, it refers to the addressee (9, 58). This is a recurring pattern in indirect or implicit local person indices: those in statements are resolved to (something relevant to) the speaker, and those in questions are resolved to (something relevant to) the addressee. This is evident in modals and verbs of appearance, as noted by Fillmore, and also for colloquial subject-auxiliary deletion.

(58) a. This is Kim. (≈ I am Kim)

b. Who is this? (≈ Who are you?)

(59) a. John may come in. (I give permission.)

b. May John come in? (Do you give permission?)

(60) a. John seemed happy. (I thought so.)

b. Did John seem happy? (Did you think so?)

- (61) a. Heading out. (I am heading out.)  
 b. Heading out? (Are you heading out?)

Statements are generally not about addressees, and questions are generally not about speakers. Especially in the presentational context of identifying one's self, it is unlikely that one would ask an interlocutor about one's own identity, or inform the other of his or her identity. We can understand this flexibility as a result of communicative—rather than strictly grammatical—principles guiding resolution of indices.<sup>12</sup>

This principle can explain straightforwardly the flexible reference of *this* in TBX. *This* could mean something like “a participant in the telephone call,” which is resolved to one or the other participant. The difficulty is, as seen in great detail above, all of the evidence indicates that demonstrative pronouns cannot refer directly to animate entities. So another option must be considered.

*This* could instead denote “the voice of one of the participants,” following Moltmann (2010), with the same communicative principles guiding resolution of “one of the participants.” Two problems arise from such an account. The first is that it predicts that *this* should only be licensed when there is a percept available, i.e., one of the speakers' voices. Thus, an answerer could utter (62a) immediately after picking up the phone, with their own voice providing the percept as they utter the sentence. However, if the caller has not yet said anything when the answerer first talks (which is conventional), then the prediction is that the second *this* in (62b) will be illicit: yet, it is acceptable.

- (62) a. Hello, this is Kim.  
 b. DETECTIVE: Hello, this is Detective Jamie speaking. Who is this, please?  
 (<http://users.soe.ucsc.edu/~karplus/abe/theater/shotgun.radioplay.pdf>,  
 Dec 10 2011)

One way around this is to allow the telephone ring to count as a trope of the caller. Theoretically this makes sense. The ring is a summons (Schegloff, 1968), an index of an individual who wishes to begin a conversation. As such, demonstratives can refer to the (supposed) summoner (63). However, after the phone is answered, it is not clear that the summons-trope can continue to be referred to with *this* (64a). *That* is more acceptable (64b), but it probably does not directly refer to the trope either: it can more generally refer to the event of being summoned (64c), and can metonymically refer to a salient part of the summons, such as the ring itself.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Labov (1972a) made the observation that statements about addressee-related events (so-called “B-events”) are generally interpreted as requests for confirmation (303). *Your kids help out at home* is most readily understood as a question, even without question intonation.

<sup>13</sup>(64b) is acceptable if the addressee is not the person on the other end of the phone call. The sentence is degraded when directed at one's telephone interlocutor.

(63) [A phone rings] That/this is probably Kim.

- (64) a. \*This was my new ring tone.  
 b. ?That [i.e., the ring] was my new ring tone.  
 c. That was scary.

To deal with the unacceptability of (64a), a trope-based account would require that the referent of *this* is the ring (as an index of the caller) on turns before the caller says anything, and then the voice of the caller itself on subsequent turns. All else equal, an account that does not require this complication is to be preferred.<sup>14</sup>

The second problem surrounds the technology of call waiting, by which one party (the “subscriber”) can switch between two separate interactants (who cannot hear or speak to each other). When an individual attempts to switch to the other line (usually announced to the current addressee, R. Hopper, 1991), it may happen that the switch is unsuccessful and the subscriber begins to speak as though to the new addressee even though he or she is still connected to the old addressee. The addressee may inform the subscriber of this mistake with a sentence like (65).

(65) This is still Chris.

This sentence would be difficult to comprehend if *this* denoted a voice trope. The speaker would be stating something about the (unexpected) persistence of him or herself being the bearer of the voice. There may be occasions where such a meaning is intended (e.g., when someone’s voice suddenly changes due to an irritated throat or a difference in signal quality), but there is another meaning, not predicted by a trope analysis. Namely, *the person you are talking to is still Chris*. Call waiting makes it possible for values of “the person you are talking to” to change in the course of a telephone call, and so it makes sense to talk about the value of that variable persisting beyond expectations. I take this to be a strong indication that the trope view of demonstratives, while intuitive in certain ways, is not yet capable of handling the full set of data.

Birner et al.’s (2007) open proposition framework presents an alternative: TBX is licensed by the existence of an open proposition that addresses the identity of the caller or the recipient of the call. At the beginning of a telephone call, there is no linguistic realization

<sup>14</sup>*Who is this?* is acceptable in the absence of a percept, as when the answerer picks up the phone (and says hello or provides identification) but the caller does not respond. It is not clear if silence would qualify as a trope, as all silences sound the same and cannot on purely perceptual grounds be distinctive properties of objects. On the other hand, it is the case that, interactionally, not all silences are equivalent. If the turn-taking scheme has led to the expectation of someone saying something (as is certainly the case when an answerer responds to a telephone summons) and that person says nothing, then that silence is “noticeable” or “official” and speakers can attribute it to that person (Schegloff, 1968:1083, Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:294, Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998:45). So this observation does not totally rule out a trope analysis, but it does require an understanding of tropes that is not purely perceptual.

of this, or any other question, yet the identities of the caller and the answerer are immediately made relevant and oriented to by the call participants—the identification/recognition sieve (Schegloff, 1979). This relevance can be understood as making available two open propositions.<sup>15</sup>

- (66) a. THE CALLER IS X.  
 b. THE ANSWERER IS X.

These OPs interact with the general pragmatic principles governing implicit local-person indices. Note, however, that *this* will not pick out the speaker or addressee directly. Imagine an utterance like *This is Tim*, spoken by the caller. The interpretation is calculated as follows: because this is an equative clause with a demonstrative subject, the sentence is addressing an OP. The only ones available are *the caller is X* or *the answerer is X*. Because the utterance is a statement, we know the speaker is providing his own identity. In this interaction, the current speaker is the caller. Therefore, the utterance indicates that *the caller is X*,  $X=Tim$ . An analogous procedure occurs for *Who is this?* and *Is this Kim?*, which aim to resolve one or the other of the OPs, again depending on who asks the question.

This formulation makes use of speaker-independent labels “caller” and “answerer,” taking a more-or-less outsider’s stance on the roles of the interactants. It is thus relevant to ask whether these specific categories are relevant (i) for the interactants themselves, and (ii) for the licensing of TBX. It does seem that these categories are attended to by telephone interactants. It is conventional for the answerer to speak first. There also exist resources for closing up a telephone call typically available only to the caller or to the called party (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:310). It has also been reported that it is the caller who typically initiates the closing of a conversation (Sacks, 1992). So people do, in some circumstances, orient themselves to these roles. Despite this, it is not clear that TBX is among these circumstances. If so, then it should be the case that if a speaker, for whatever reason, forgets who called whom, or of the speakers disagree about who called whom, or if the telephone has been passed around to multiple parties (at one or both ends), then TBX should become unavailable or subject to misinterpretation. This does not seem to be the case. If A calls B, and later on A gives the phone to C and B gives the phone to D, they may introduce themselves with *this*, despite the roles of “caller” and “answerer” not being applicable.

Furthermore, there are cases where attention to these roles is important, and they differ in their behavior from TBX. These are what Schegloff & Sacks (1973) call caller-specific resources for closing a call. In (67a), cited by Schegloff & Sacks (1973:310) the caller makes use of the fact that, in general, it is the caller who has a purpose in making the call. It only makes sense for a caller to describe staying on the line as “tying up your phone”. Contrast this with (67b), which could be spoken by either party even if it has been forgotten who initiated the call. Alternatively, two individuals may come into telephone

<sup>15</sup>There is a distinction between *answerer* and *called*, where the intended recipient of a call may not be the one to initially pick up the phone (Sacks, 1992). Here I intend *answerer* to cover both categories, as TBX seems not to be sensitive to the difference.

contact without either having called the other: the “C” and “D” parties described above, or any Switchboard-style arranged interaction, where neither interactant is a caller (68).

- (67) a. Well I’ll letchu go. I don’t wanna tie up your phone. [caller-specific move]  
 b. Sorry, who is this (again)? [available to either party]

(68) Fisher, fsh\_66561, 0:00

L: Hello.

R: Hello.

L: Hi. This is Darshna.

R: This is Sharon.

L: Hi, Sharon. Uh, I guess our topic for today is professional athletes.

These complications are avoided by positing an OP with an indexical element:

(69) MY INTERLOCUTOR IS X.

This OP is relevant for each discourse participant: each person wants to know who he or she is talking to. Crucially, each participant is aware that, in all likelihood, the interlocutor also has a similar interest, and is oriented to a separate instance of the same OP. This is different from most of the OPs mentioned by BKW, which either do not contain an indexical element (THE PERSON WHO FAILED TO ANTE IS X, BKW:327) or do contain one but with an interpretation fixed across all participants. The latter is exemplified by I HEARD THE NAMES OF X, which licenses the copular clause in (70). *I* must be understood as referring to just the speaker, not to “whoever the current speaker is” (I thus take it that the formulations of OPs with indexicals in BKW are a sort of short-hand for semantic formulae without person indexicals).

(70) By the way, I heard your names (**that would be you and Andy**) on NPR yesterday...happy anniversary!

OP: I HEARD THE NAMES OF X

(Birner et al., 2007:(22c))

The idea that each discourse participant can be associated with his or her own set of OPs is a straightforward extension of the speaker-based split of the common ground proposed by Gunlogson (2003) (cf. Ginzburg’s (forthcoming) dialogue gameboards). She associated with each discourse participant a set of propositions to which he or she was publically committed. The result is that only one person might believe *p*, while it is mutual knowledge that *A* believes *p*.<sup>16</sup> (69) is not a belief, but it is a question that, by participating in a telephone call, a person becomes publically associated with.

<sup>16</sup>Gunlogson’s semantics are implemented in terms of worlds, but for the present discussion that aspect of her framework is not pertinent. To simplify matters, I refer to speakers and propositions.



Put in more casual terms, a participant to a call is committed to wanting to know who he or she is talking to. That means that each participant attributes the same desire to the other. This set-up is in line with Schegloff (1979), who includes among a list of “systematically ordered features which seem to underlie many [phenomena relating to telephone identification]” the observation that “Identification of other by each party is relevant” and that it is “relevant at first opportunity” (63). “Identification of other” is exactly captured by MY INTERLOCUTOR IS X. Schegloff’s observation thus provides additional support for understanding the OP indexically, rather than in terms of “caller” and “answerer,” at least so far as the licensing of TBX is concerned.

A cooperative speaker will also be aware that he or she is in the best position to satisfy the interlocutor’s desire, and vice versa. Given this, we can consider again *This is Tim*, as spoken by Tim. The lexico-syntactic pattern indicates that it addresses an OP, and as a statement, it is taken to state something about the Tim. The speaker-associated OP MY<sub>Tim</sub> INTERLOCUTOR IS X concerns the identity of his addressee, and so *This is Tim* cannot be answering that OP. It must be answering the OP MY<sub>Jane</sub> INTERLOCUTOR IS X, to which Jane is publically committed. Jane can thus calculate that her OP is filled out by  $X = Tim$ . The question *Who is this?* as asked by Tim is interpreted similarly. As a question, its topic is the addressee. The addressee’s identity figures only in the questioner’s instance of (69), namely MY<sub>Tim</sub> INTERLOCUTOR IS X, so the question is understood as asking for the addressee’s identity.

Though somewhat roundabout, there is an intuitive connection with the circumstances under which TBX is used. One self-identifies on the phone because one believes that it is important to the addressee. Similarly, one asks for identification because it is relevant to one’s self. The above calculations could be simplified by positing a pair of OPs for each individual: MY IDENTITY IS X alongside MY INTERLOCUTOR’S IDENTITY IS X. But why would an individual have reason to accept into the common ground or into their private commitment set an OP to which they already know the answer? If we allow speakers to be sensitive to the (perceived or assumed) informational gaps and needs of an addressee, even in cases where those gaps are not linguistically indicated, we can avoid the need to posit that telephone participants wonder who they are. In fact, in the event that a telephone interactant becomes unaware of who they are, addressing the question with *this* seems impossible.

(71) Tim: Oh my goodness! I’ve suddenly forgotten who I am. # I know I’m talking to Jill, but who is this?

By saying that he has forgotten who he is, Tim makes available the OP MY IDENTITY IS X. If an OP like this were behind a typical TBX clause, we would expect him to be able to ask *Who is this?* to ask about his own identity. That this is impossible (at least so far as one can speculate about how language would work in a situation like (71)) suggests that individuals on the telephone only basically worry about their interlocutor’s identity, but are able to provide their own if they believe that their interlocutor wants to know.

The flexibility of reference is, thus, primarily a matter of the interaction of two aspects of interaction. The first is the immediate relevance of the identity of one's interlocutor at the very beginning of a telephone call, which becomes relevant to the linguistic system as a licenser of identificational copular clauses. The second is the general relationship between speakers and statements, and questions and addressees, and inferences that discourse participants make based on the assumption that speakers act cooperatively.

### 4.2.3 Bringing it together: Sign-based Construction Grammar

All the above analysis indicates that *this-be-X* must be specifically licensed as a means for providing identification on the telephone. Nothing about the rest of the language will predict that it can be used in this way. It is not, however, wholly separate from the rest of the grammar. It is a type of equative clause with a demonstrative subject, and inherits properties that hold of this general pattern. Its idiosyncrasies are that it is associated with a very particular open proposition, its subject must be *this*, and it is limited to telephone conversations.

The base of TBX is the plain equative copula. It has two arguments, the subject NP and the complement NP, whose referents are equated. Its lexical entry is as in (72). The *be-equ-lxm* is a subtype of the *be-lxm*, and is via that link related to other senses of *be* (predicative, progressive, passive, and so on).

$$(72) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{be-equ-lxm} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \left\langle \text{NP}_i, \text{NP}_j \right\rangle \\ \text{SEM} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FRAMES} \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{equation-fr} \\ \text{ENTITY-1} \quad i \\ \text{ENTITY-2} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Although so far the only identificational construction we have examined is TBX, it shares discourse-functional properties with several other constructions on the phone and at the front door (3–7). I propose a generalization of these constructions, a subtype of equative *be* which is devoted to equating unknown identifications (i.e., variables in certain types of contextually-provided OPs) with labels or names of discourse participants. This subtype, *be-equ-id-lxm*, is provided in (73). The argument structure and frames are inherited from equative *be* but are repeated here for ease of reading the coindexation.

$$(73) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} \langle \text{NP}_i, \text{NP}_j \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \left[ \text{FRAMES} \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{equation-fr} \\ \text{ENTITY-1} \quad i \\ \text{ENTITY-2} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \\ \text{CNTXT} \left[ \text{O-PROPS} \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{op} \\ \text{VAR} \quad i \\ \text{RESTR} \quad l_1 \end{array} \right], \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{identity-fr} \\ \text{LABEL} \quad l_1 \\ \text{IDENTIFIED} \quad k \\ \text{ID} \quad i \end{array} \right], \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{local-person-fr} \\ \text{PERSON} \quad k \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The major addition here is the contextual feature O(PEN)-PROP(OSITION)S. O-PROPS is a list-valued attribute that indicates the open propositions that must be available in the context for the construction to be acceptable. An OP can be understood as a frame with the fillers of one or more roles indicated as unknown. To represent this in a manner parallel to the descriptive semantics of signs (i.e., the FRAMES attribute), I associate each OP with an *op* frame, which has two roles: a variable (VAR) and a restriction (RESTR) on that variable, which is picked out via the LABEL of the relevant frame(s) (see Sag, 2010b:section 2.3.4 on labels; a similar function is carried out by HANDLE in Copestake et al., 2005). An OP expressed in prose as *the red envelope is X* (cf. Birner et al., 2007:321) would in this system be indicated by three predications (“boxes” in the O-PROPS list): one which provided an index for the unknown entity, *i*, and two which provide for the restrictions on the entity: *envelope(i)* and *red(i)*.

The OP in (73) indicates an unknown role-filler *i*. *i* is also the filler of the role IDENTIFICATION (ID) in the *identity-fr*, which is the restriction upon the variable in the OP. By coindexation, the subject (e.g., *this*) refers to that identity. The frame of equation evoked by the copula equates that identity with the referent of the complement NP, indexed *j*. The identified individual, indicated as *k*, has an additional constraint placed upon it: it must be a local person, i.e., either the speaker or addressee. Note that neither of the arguments of the copula is in fact the identified person, i.e., the speaker or addressee. The subject refers to the variable in the OP, and the complement is only an identification, label, or name for the individual.<sup>17</sup>

Given this lexical entry, TBX may be licensed by the derivational construction in (74).

<sup>17</sup>The non-coindexation between the subject and complement makes sense of the fact that *This is Kim* is not a Principle C violation and that *It's me* (Section 4.2.5) is not a Principle B violation. The same effect is seen in naming predicates: *I call her<sub>i</sub> Sue<sub>j</sub>*, where *Sue* is a label, not an individual

(74) TBX Construction ( $\uparrow$ *deriv-cxt*)

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tbx-phone-cxt} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \text{MTR} \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \text{ARG-ST} \langle \text{NP}[this], \text{NP} \rangle \\
 \text{C-INDS} \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \text{SPKR} \quad s \\
 \text{ADDR} \quad a
 \end{array} \right] \\
 \text{CNTXT} \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \text{SCENARIO} \langle \begin{array}{l}
 \textit{telephone} \\
 \text{PARTY-1} \quad s \\
 \text{PARTY-2} \quad a
 \end{array} \rangle \oplus L_1
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right] \\
 \text{DTRS} \langle \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \textit{be-equ-id-lxm} \\
 \text{CNTX} \left[ \begin{array}{l}
 \text{SCENARIO} \quad L_1
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right] \rangle
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array}$$

Why a derivational construction? In comparison with the *say* constructions of Chapter 3, TBX is syntactically active. This formulation leaves open the possibility for combination not only with both matrix declarative and interrogative constructions, but also adverbial modification, auxiliary verbs, and various embedding constructions:

- (75) a. This is definitely not your sister.  
 b. Would this (happen to) be Kim?  
 c. I can't help but wonder who this is / if this (really is) Kim.  
 d. I bet this is Kim!

The only syntactic constraint beyond those of the daughter is that the subject is *this*. It need not be stated here that *that* is unacceptable—I show in discussion of front-door interactions that the markedness of *that* surfaces in any context where a speaker is attempting to ascertain the identity of his or her addressee.

The lexeme licensed by the construction places a restriction on the context. The SCENARIO is specified as *telephone*, with two parties: the speaker and addressee (note coindexation with the contextual indices).<sup>18</sup> The SCENARIO attribute is valued with a list of characterizations of the framework within which the participants are interacting (or in which the speaker assumes them to be interacting). The *telephone* scenario can for now be understood as shorthand for a complex set of roles and relations that make a particular interaction count as “on the phone”. SCENARIO takes a list of descriptions, providing for simultaneous description of a given situation in many ways (institutional interaction on the telephone, social call on the telephone, social call at the door, etc.).

<sup>18</sup>For the purposes of this construction the two participants are not differentiated into caller and answerer, as discussed above. Thus, no sense of ranking is intended in the labels PARTY-1 and PARTY-2. A more accurate representation might simply contain an unstructured set of participants, but this would require some additional representational changes that I will not undertake.

As a result, *This is Kim* equates either the identity of the speaker or the identity of the addressee with the identification “Kim”. Which interactant is chosen will be moderated by general principles of the sort discussed above for speaker/addressee alternations in statements as opposed to questions, and inferences about who controls what information. Because the same construction is used for either type of speech act, those details need not be mentioned.

The constructional representation affords great flexibility and power in relating grammatical structures to contextual features, but in reality a not insignificant part of the work is done “outside” the grammar. TBX specifies, essentially, that it is a construction usable on the telephone to resolve a specific OP that relates to the identities of the discourse participants. The Conversation Analytic work that determined that such OPs (or however one wishes to formulate them) are made salient at the opening (and only the opening) of a phone conversation is not (and need not be) part of the grammar. Rather, it is part of the mutually-recognized practices that members of a community carry out and which motivate the use of certain constructions, like TBX.

A point of comparison with BKW’s analysis of copular clauses is in order. They present a compositional account of sentences like (76), abbreviated TBWX, for *that would be X*.

- (76) a. (Who ordered the garlic bread?) That would be me.  
 b. (Drawing attention to an envelope) This would be my new Visa card.  
 (BKW: 321)

In their analysis, the fact that TWBX requires an open proposition to be felicitous is due to the presence of *would* (319–322). This sense of *would* is epistemic, indicating a “high level of confidence in the truth of the proposition” (320). TBX also requires an OP, but I argue it is due to a sense of the copula that appears in a few identification constructions (itself a generalization over several constructions that are used in identification contexts). In BKW’s typology of copular clauses, TBX is a *th*-equative, a sentence type that does not require an OP to be felicitous, but does require one to be interpreted as a truncated cleft. My analysis treats TBX as a subtype of *th*-equative that (even without *would*) requires an OP, resulting in a cleft-like interpretation (e.g., *This is Kim who you are talking to/who your interlocutor is*). More accurately, the TBX construction specifically calls for a *this*-equative, as *that* is either impossible or highly marked as a telephone identification clause (54). BKW do not indicate that there is any difference between the two demonstratives beyond proximal/distal, and so as it stands their account leaves the asymmetry between the two a mystery.

BKW do note (321, note 3) that *that* is far more common than *this* in TWBX, though they do not speculate on why this might be. Their assessment matches my intuition for the telephone context: *This would be Kim* sounds very odd as a means to identify one’s self. BKW do, however, provide an instance of TWBX on the phone: a voicemail message, *Hello, Mr. Gregory. This would be Bradley* (BKW:321). I find the interrogative forms, *Would this be Kim/the caterer?* or *Who would this be?* to be somewhat better. A possible

reason for this is that it is unusual for a speaker to have to express a high degree of confidence in the truth of his or her own identity. In interrogatives, perhaps *would* can indicate that the speaker has a strong suspicion as to the identity of the interlocutor.

Returning to the present analysis, we can now make additions to our picture of how the grammar construes, or constructs, context. For TBX, what is important is the telephone scenario: who called and who picked up are not important. Neither is the social relationship between the two parties. While close acquaintances are unlikely to use TBX, preferring more minimal and implicit recognitional means, they are not systematically barred from it. I do not deny that these features are important in an interaction, and that they could be made reference to by other constructions. It is simply that TBX has nothing to say about them. As we see shortly, however, an alternative to TBX, *it-be-X*, does.

#### 4.2.4 An alternative: *it*

In many contexts where TBX is possible, so is *it-be-X* (IBX). All of the syntactic properties and constraints associated with TBX hold of IBX. Some of these are illustrated below.

- (77) a. Hello, Kim. It's Chris.  
 b. #It wants to talk to Kim. (cf. (21))  
 c. #It, which called yesterday, is Chris. (cf. (27))  
 d. A: Is this Chris?  
 B: Yes, it is. (cf. (32))

On the telephone, IBX is only possible in statements:

- (78) a. It's Chris.  
 b. #Is it Chris?  
 c. #Who is it?

In this respect IBX diverges from TBX, which permits all three sentence types. It also distinguishes IBX on the phone from IBX at the front door, where *Who is it?* is possible. In this section I consider properties of its use on the phone, where it diverges functionally from TBX. I focus on three aspects of its use: an expectation-based tendency, a caller/answerer asymmetry, and the pragmatics of *it's me*.

#### Expectation

IBX is most acceptable when the answerer could reasonably expect to receive a call from the caller. This situation comes about in two basic ways: either the two are acquainted with one another, giving rise to a general expectation of contact, or there is a prior

arrangement for one to call the other. Typical examples of the former are provided in (79), from the COCA (except for 79f).

- (79) a. Melanie turned around and plucked the phone from the cradle behind her. “The Platinum Society, Melanie Harte speaking.”  
 “Mel, **it ’s Alan.**”  
 “Alan!” she said over a blossoming smile. (COCA)
- b. The transcript from the first call still survives:  
 trish: Hello?  
 phil: Hi, Trish. **It ’s Phil.**  
 trish: Yeah, what? (COCA)
- c. The second she hit fresh air – and cell service – her phone beeped, full of messages. The first was from her mother. ” Penelope, **it ’s your mother...you** haven’t called me or your father back in a week. (COCA)
- d. When the phone interrupts my post-hike breakfast of a half-grapefruit sweetened with honey, I am sitting cross-legged on my bed [...]  
 “Hello?” “Dani, **it’s Aunt Roz,** darling.”  
 “Hi, Roz,” I respond, confused. (COCA)
- e. It was after dinner when I picked up the phone to call Mary. [...]  
 “Hello?”  
 “Hi, Mary. **It’s me.** How you doing?” (COCA)
- f. She tried Peter’s apartment, where the telephone kept ringing. Then she called his office, and he answered instantly. “Hi, **it’s Marie from the restaurant,**” she said, hoping he would recognize her voice.  
 (Diana Diamond, 2006. *The Other Woman*, St. Martin’s Press, p. 236–237)

Most of the examples above are interpretable as involving two acquaintances. (79f) is explicitly not (the very fact that the means of acquaintance, *from the restaurant*, is made explicit indicates a lack of familiarity between the callers), but the author’s description implies a strategic use of *it*: Marie hopes to gain recognition by multiple means, and had she used *this*, it might have implied that the two are complete strangers.

While the above examples all deal with expectations arising due to friendship or acquaintanceship, it is expectation, rather than familiarity, which is key. If two people know each other well, but have only been in contact via email, it would be very odd for one to suddenly call the other and identify with IBX.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, IBX is possible between strangers if there is an expectation that contact will be made. For instance, a customer who places a delivery order with a restaurant may be informed that they will receive a call back when an estimated time of delivery is determined. The caller could then identify as in (80a), with X filled by some indication of the institution or task. Despite the call being expected,

<sup>19</sup>This was pointed out to me by Eve Sweetser.

the deliverer cannot use his or her name, because it is not some particular individual which is expected, but a representative of the institution (80b).

- (80) a. Hi, it's Fancy Italian about your delivery order.  
 b. #Hi, it's Tony Moretti, calling about your order.

(81) shows attested examples of IBX licensed not by personal acquaintance but by a scheduled or planned contact.

- (81) a. DON. Oh, I forgot. Your lung guy called.  
*(Ginger stops cold. She takes a moment.)*  
 GINGER. What did he want?  
 DON. He wants you to stop by his office this afternoon.  
 [...]  
 GINGER. *(on the phone)* Yes, hi. **It's Ginger Andrews.** Doctor Harmon wants me to come by this afternoon.  
 (Marsha Norman, 1996. *Trudy Blue*. Samuel French Inc., p. 42)
- b. Marion: Hello, is Mrs. Patron in please? (Marion asks to the pleasant voice on the other end of the line.)  
 Mrs. Patron: Yes, this is she.  
 Marion: Hello, **It's Marion from XYZ Library.** I'm returning your call about a book donation.  
 (Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah, ed. 2002. *Helping the Difficult Library Patron*. The Haworth Information Press, p. 228)
- c. Later that day, Ben was in his office, putting together an exhibit list for the upcoming *Circuit Dynamics* trial. The phone rang.  
 "Hello, Ben Corbin."  
 "Hello, Ben. **It's Agent Ignatev with the CIA.** We need your help with a small matter."  
 (Rick Acker, 2005. *Dead Man's Rule*. Kregel Publications, p. 234–235)

The association between IBX and the contact being expected is strong, but is not absolute. There are cases of IBX where the speaker most likely does not believe that the contact is unsurprising. Nevertheless, the contrast between IBX and TBX is striking. Of the 96 tokens of *Hi, this is X* (as telephone greetings) in the COCA, none are between acquaintances. Many are callers to radio or television programs. In contrast, of the 40 telephone tokens of *Hi, it's X*, 29 are between acquaintances, one depicts a planned call between strangers (82), and 10 are between (likely) strangers with no great prior expectation for one to call the other (83). Beyond those 41, there are 28 instances of *It's me*, which are necessarily between intimates—but because *#this is me* is unacceptable, direct comparison with TBX may be inappropriate.



- (82) Hi, it's the dry cleaner. Having trouble getting caribou blood out of your Prada jacket. (COCA)
- (83) a. ANSWERING MACHINE # Hi, it's Len's Auto Body Shop. We'd love to show you our body work, but it's invisible. Leave it at the beep. (COCA)
- b. We will include some of your phone calls. Cambridge, Ontario. Hello?  
1st CALLER, Cambridge, Ontario: Hi, it's Chris from Cambridge, Ontario. (COCA)
- c. The forty-strong splinter group of malcontents ranges from the stylish Sue Myrick of North Carolina, with her curled hair and rose-sherbet suits, to Mark Souder of Indiana, former Hill staffer with goggle-eyed glasses who announces himself in a phone call to a reporter: "Uh, hi, it's Mark." (COCA)

Does anything explain the source of the expectation tendency? Knuf (2003) suggests that *it is* is an "attenuated version of the fuller form 'this is' " (192). This means that the social-indexical functions of TBX are not as strongly (or not at all) indicated by *it is*. He argues that *this is* functions as a "precedence claimer" that positions the TBX user as the initiator and setter of topics (191). It also indicates that the speaker is making relevant not only their personal identity but their social role. Knuf compares the third-person self-reference to *this* to such utterances as *Didn't Mummy [i.e., I] tell you not to...* (192)). When *it is* is used instead, these functions are not present, or at least not strongly attended to. It can be said to index a more informal or abbreviated type of interaction, perhaps more focused on personal identity than social role. This in turn indexes a more personal, intimate, or familiar interaction. This prosodic contrast between *it* and *this*—the former is always destressed, the latter typically not—further highlights the abbreviation of formality. The specific preference for expected callers is a reflex of this attenuation of social-indexical function: it is those who are expected to call with whom it is most possible to engage in an informal, attenuated telephone interaction.

In sum, despite several cases of strangers using IBX, there is a real connection between IBX and the notion of an expected call. This comes out both quantitatively, as above, and qualitatively, as the very intimate *it's me* is possible, while *this is me* is nearly uninterpretable as an identification.

### Caller/answerer asymmetry

IBX is, in most cases, restricted to the caller:

- (84) T1 A: Hello, this/#it's Kim Bradley.

I indicate the first turn in a telephone call with T1, the second with T2, and so on. The answerer may use IBX if their identity becomes especially relevant, as it might if the caller reveals that he or she is (unexpectedly) unable to identify who the answerer is:

- (85) T1 A: Hello  
 T2 C: Hi, it's Chris.  
 T3 A: Hi.  
 T4 C: Sorry, you're...  
 T5 A: It's Kim.

The preference for the call to be expected still holds in such a case. Consider a scenario where Tom attempts to make a company-internal call to Bill, but instead dials the number for Jill, with whom he is not acquainted. The turn where Jill informs Tom of his mistake cannot use *it is X*, even though her identity has become relevant.

- (86) T1 A: Hello.  
 T2 C: Hi Bill, I had a question about tomorrow.  
 T2 A: I'm sorry, this is/#it's Jill Smith. Who are you trying to reach?

Finally, if the answerer can anticipate that his or her identity will be relevant before speaking with the caller—for instance, if the answerer is answering someone else's phone—then IBX is again acceptable.

- (87) T1 A: Hi, it's Chris  
 T2 C: Oh, hi Chris. I'm calling for...

When combined with the restriction to expected callers, this means that IBX in T1 is only possible with a technology like Caller ID, or with some other means of guessing the identity of the caller before picking up the phone.<sup>20</sup>

The caller/answerer asymmetry can be understood as in interaction between the givenness hierarchy and a more general asymmetry in telephone identifications. Gundel et al. (1993) show that truncated *it*-clefts (of which IBX would be a type) are associated with propositions of the highest givenness status, IN FOCUS. That is, the cleft clause, or its understood content, must be the most topical, or most relevant issue for the interactants. It has already been observed that both parties' identities are immediately relevant at the beginning of a call (Schegloff, 1979). Could it be that somehow the caller's identity is more topical or relevant by default?

I contend that this is so. While both identities are relevant, the identity of the caller is the more central concern. The caller is the one who dialed, and by picking a particular number to dial already knows something about who is likely to answer. The answerer, however, has no information about the caller, resulting in an uneven distribution in information (Schegloff, 1968:1076). As a result, securing the caller's identity is given more prominence and attention at the onset of a call. Reflecting this is the fact that, following the answerer's first turn, the first task to which the participants attend is identification (or

<sup>20</sup>Many fictional depictions of telephone calls omit the answerer's first *hello*, especially if the point of view character is the caller. Thus, the examples in (83) seem to be T1s, but in fact T1 was simply not depicted.

recognition) of the caller (Schegloff, 1979:33, 65). Thus, while the relevance of both parties' identities licenses *this* (corresponding to ACTIVATED on the givenness hierarchy), the additional, heightened salience of the caller's identity places it in focus, licensing IBX. If some other factor places the answerer's identity in question (85–87), the answerer can then use IBX.

TBX is not as contextually constrained as IBX, and using it when IBX is possible can give rise to conversational implicature. While no systematic corpus data is available to bear on the matter, some prediction is possible. Given that IBX is associated with caller expectedness, then if TBX is chosen over IBX, the implication is that the types of social relationship associated with IBX are not present. The ultimate effect this implicature will depend on the specific situation and the history of the participants. One possibility is that using TBX with a close acquaintance indicates that the topic will be “business”. This is illustrated in (88), where the second boldface section indicates the potentially non-personal nature of the call (Schegloff, 1986:115). Further investigation into corpora of telephone openings is required to determine what the boundaries of interpretation are, if any.

- (88) (ring)  
 R: Hello  
 C: Hi Ida?  
 R: Yeah  
 C: Hi, = **This is Carla**  
 R: Hi Carla.  
 C: How are you.  
 R: Okay:.  
 C: Good. =  
 R: = How about you.  
 C: Fine. **Don wants to know ...**

I propose that the basic mechanisms behind its interpretation are identical to that of TBX. The OP MY INTERLOCUTOR IS X is relevant for both parties, and *it* refers to that variable. The two differ in three respects: IBX has a tendency to be used between acquaintances and those who otherwise expect the contact to occur, it is predominantly limited to the caller, and it is only usable as a statement. The first, as a tendency and not a hard constraint, is best handled separately from the hard-and-fast grammatical principles of an SBCG representation. The second has been explained as arising from IBX's constraint that the identity in question be the most salient. This can be translated into a property of the OP that IBX presupposes. The last seems to be a hard grammatical constraint, a listed property.<sup>21</sup> I do not present an SBCG representation of this quite yet—it must wait until IBX at

<sup>21</sup>It is tempting to account for the badness of interrogative IBX in terms of the expectation preference. Asking *Who is it* would simultaneously indicate that the addressee's identity is unknown, but that whoever it is, he or she is expected. While implausible, this is not impossible: expectation does not entail recognition. Moreover, both declarative and interrogative IBX are possible at the front door (see section 4.3). This means that the restriction to declarative sentences on the phone must be stipulated.

the front door is examined.

#### 4.2.5 *It's me*

The expectation preference of IBX, which is absent from TBX, is not only a matter of implicature and inference: there are grammatical consequences. In particular, if the two participants are familiar with each other, and if the caller believes he or she can be identified solely by voice, then it is possible to say (89a). (89b), by contrast, is unacceptable.

- (89) a. It's me.  
 b. #This is me.

Placing *me* in the X slot provides little information beyond what IBX already conveys. The caller believes the two interactants are familiar enough with each other to use IBX in the first place. The speaker, by identifying as “me,” provides no descriptive cues to his or her identity, but it is exactly this lack of information which conveys meaning. The recipient of an *it's me* is expected to be able to identify the speaker simply by their voice. *It's me* is thus an amplified version of IBX: not only does the speaker believe the two parties are in a familiar enough relationship to use IBX, but they are familiar enough with each other's voices that names or descriptions need not be mentioned. TBX, insofar as its use among close intimates is blocked due to the availability of IBX, makes it incompatible with the high-familiarity method of providing only a voice sample for recognition.

*It's me* is not only usable as a way to supply a voice sample, it seems that, as means for self-identification on the phone, it is *only* usable as a voice sample. Consider a caller who announces the intended recipient as in (90T2). This brings into being a separate OP: THE CALLER IS CALLING FOR X, or YOU ARE X. This OP licenses the (generally-available) truncated *that*-cleft construction, and so the answerer may respond with *that's me*. Despite the fact that this OP is surely in focus, however, *it's me* is unacceptable.

- (90) T1 A: Hello.  
 T2 C: Hi, { I'm calling for Chris. / are you Chris?}  
 T3 A: That's me.  
 T3' A: # It's me.

*It's me* in position T3 could only be understood as the provision of a voice sample for C to identify who A is. It may turn out that A is in fact Chris, but *it's me* cannot not encode that information. Questions that do not surround the resolution of the interactants' identities do license *it's me*, without the constraint that the speaker is providing a voice sample (91). It is only in the specific context of establishing who is who that *it's me* is limited to the “I am an expected caller and you know my voice” function.

- (91) Fisher, fsh\_106238, 0:12  
 R: Cool. Yeah, er, you're sorting fading out there, are you on a cell? [NOISE]  
 L: Ah no, I'm on the – on a ear bud.  
 R: On a what?  
 L: On a ear bud, those little microphone things?  
 R: Oh, okay, it keeps dropping out, I wonder if that's you or me.  
 L: Oh, hang on a second, let me go to the, er –  
 R: [NOISE]  
 L: – I'll take it on a regular phone.  
 R: Okay.  
 L: [NOISE] Hello?  
 R: Yeah, hey.  
 L: Is that any better?  
 R: Um, I guess **it's me** [NOISE].  
 L: Oh, okay. So how you're doing? What was the, er, topic?

This limitation to voice sample provision is not unique to telephone contexts. A stranger entering a room who asks, “Is there a Chris here?” may receive *that's me* as a response, but not *it's me*. It is no surprise, then, that *it's me* is usable at the front door, and so I treat it, along with IBX in general, in the following section.

The telephone creates a unique context with a mix of variables not normally contended with in the rest of everyday communication. This section has shown how an array of lexical and constructional resources are brought to bear on at least one aspect of this situation: identifying one's interlocutor. At the same time, the situation itself—or perhaps the speakers, having apprehended being in such a situation—places constraints on these resources, specifically preferring or ruling out otherwise-available means for identification.

## 4.3 A visitor at the door

### 4.3.1 The basic patterns

Interaction at the entrance to a building that takes place before visual contact is another situation in which communication happens prior to mutual identification of the participants. I will consider here the the specific situation of a person indicating their presence at an entrance (the hailer) and the individual who responds to it (the resident). At issue are the means by which these two parties can identify themselves or ask the other's identity before visual contact is made.

#### *There*

A resource unavailable to telephone interactants but possible for a person responding to a visitor is the use of *there*, as in *Who's there?* (92). The declarative and polar interrogative

sentence types, however, are not acceptable. They can be used to ask about companions of a hailer ((92b) could mean “Is Chris among you?”), but not directly about the addressee.

- (92) a. Who’s there?  
 b. Is Chris there? ( $\neq$  Are you Chris?)  
 c. Here’s Chris / Chris is here. ( $\neq$  I am Chris)

### ***That***

As with the telephone, *that-be-X* is a highly marked choice at the door (93). Note that these utterances are to be understood as being spoken after only a knock or similar summons. If the hailer introduces an open proposition, e.g., by saying, “Guess who I am!” then the oddity goes away.

- (93) a. % Who is that?  
 b. % Is that Chris?  
 c. Is that you, Chris?  
 d. % (I bet) that’s Chris!

The effect here, indicated with %, is exactly the same as on the telephone. The speaker conveys some notion of playfulness and problem-solving, possibly pretending to not be sure who the hailer is while already being certain.

### ***This***

At the door, *this-BX* is highly unidiomatic, perhaps completely unacceptable for certain speakers or groups of speakers (94). For present purposes, I will consider these sentences to be unacceptable. There is at least one well-attested exception to this: *This is the police/fire department/FBI!* Yet this sentence type is not generally available. A person collecting donations for the LSA could not respond to *Who is it?* with *This is the Linguistic Society of America, do you have a moment?* It is more likely that *This is the* [authority] is a partially-fixed expression, not part of a more general *this-BX* pattern at the door.

- (94) a. #Who is this?  
 b. #Is this Chris?  
 c. #Is this you, Chris?  
 d. #This is Chris.

***It***

The expression that most easily moves between the telephone and front door contexts is IBX. Both hailers and residents can use declarative IBX to identify themselves, including *it's me* as a voice sample. Residents additionally can request identification with a *wh*-interrogative (95b), a sentence type unavailable on the phone. Polar questions remain anomalous in both situations.

- (95) a. It's Chris  
 b. Who is it?  
 c. #Is it Chris?

The expectation preference of IBX remains in the declarative sentences, but not the interrogatives. A hailer who is not familiar to the resident, or who is not expected, would not normally self-identify with IBX (96), or would be portraying him- or herself as being familiar or “chummy”. As with telephone calls (recall (80)), if the hailer expects that the resident is expecting a visit from his or her institution, then IBX is acceptable, with X filled by some indication of the institution or its task. In (96b), the resident has ordered pizza to be delivered, and so is expecting a hailer to come in that capacity.

- (96) a. R: Who's there?  
 H: # It's Kim Banks, with the Reptile Preservation Society.  
 b. R: Who's there?  
 H: It's {Bargain Pizza / your pizza}.

In contrast, the question *Who is it* places no constraints on the beliefs or presuppositions of the resident regarding their (non)familiarity with the hailer.

### **4.3.2 Explaining the patterns**

At first glance, a visitor and a host on opposite sides of the front door of a residence face a very similar problem to that of two parties to a telephone call. There is no visual contact, yet it is (or may be) relevant to the individuals to determine who the other is. At the same time, some clear differences exist. A telephone brings people together who are at a distance, for the specific purpose of communication. There is no expectation of visual contact or some further development of the nature of the interaction during the duration of the call.

The front door, in contrast, represents not a connection but a separation. It is a gateway to a different sort of social interaction. The resident controls this gateway, and can allow or deny further, possibly face-to-face, interaction. The first consequence of this is that *Who's there?* with a distal deictic locative, is possible at the door, though it is not possible on the phone (92a). Proximal deictic reference (to locations, but in other dimensions as

well) is inclusive: it extends from the deictic center outward with no necessary ending point. The bringing-together accomplished by a telephone motivates the proximal *this* as the deictic pronoun of choice. The physical and social separation embodied by the front door understandably leads to the unacceptability of *this*. Distal deictics, on the other hand, are exclusive. Reference to *that* or *there* necessarily requires the conception of a boundary around the deictic center. *There* is thus a better fit for a visitor to a home, who is (for the moment) outside the domain of the resident. For the same reasons, it is unavailable on the phone, which creates a common “hereness” for the two speakers.<sup>22</sup>

The strangeness of *that* at the door and on the phone is part of a larger pattern of limits on *that*. Consider two individuals, Pat and Logan, walking together, and Pat hears a sound from the bushes. The sentences in (93) (excepting (93c)), as uttered by Pat to Logan, are all perfectly acceptable, with no special interpretation. This makes sense in a framework in which DBX is governed by and large by OPs and the givenness hierarchy: the speaker can legitimately assume that their companion heard the noise, and treat the OP X CAUSED THE NOISE as activated for both speakers. This is in contrast to the scenario where there is only Pat and the source of the noise. The question of who caused the noise may well be activated in the common ground of both Pat and the mystery person, but the task of figuring out who the mystery person is is only relevant to Pat. By asking of the noise-source *Who is that?*, Pat is collapsing into the addressee two interactional roles: (i) an equally inquisitive companion, and (ii) the person who can provide the answer to the question. This is the cause of the soliloquy-like interpretation and associated “playful” affect, in this scenario, on the telephone, and at the front door.

Continuing briefly with Pat and the mystery noise-maker, notice that *who’s there* is also acceptable, no matter what the activation level of the noise is. This is because it is a predicational copular clause, with no OP or givenness constraints on the constituents. *This*, too, is out, except on the phone. The acceptability of *this* on the phone was argued to be exceptionally (constructionally) licensed, as it does not conform to the predictions of givenness hierarchy of Gundel et al. (1993). In other contexts, it is to be expected that the hierarchy will be in force. The front door and “mysterious noise” contexts do, in fact, follow Gundel et al.’s (1993) and Hedberg’s (2000) predictions. *This* is like *that*, but with an additional speaker activation restriction. As *that* is already highly restricted in these contexts, and the relevant OP is certainly not speaker-activated, *this* is correctly ruled out.

What remains unaccounted for is the perfect normalcy (or, at least, completely different sort of rhetorical effect) of *Is that you, Chris?* So long as the speaker has reason to expect that the addressee truly is Chris, this sentence is perfectly acceptable not only at the door or on a dark road, but also on the phone. Despite its similarity to *Is that Chris?* it completely lacks the affect of the latter. Barring a more systematic explanation of its acceptability and

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<sup>22</sup>*There* appears on the phone in such questions as *Is Sue there?* This indexes the physical separation between the two parties in that it concerns a third party expected to be in the perceptual reach of the addressee but not the speaker. When the conversation turns to the meta-topic of the connection itself, *there* surfaces as well: *Are you still there?* This is distinct from utterances like *Is this Kim?*, which are indexical of a telephone-based conversation but are not *about* the telephonic connection.



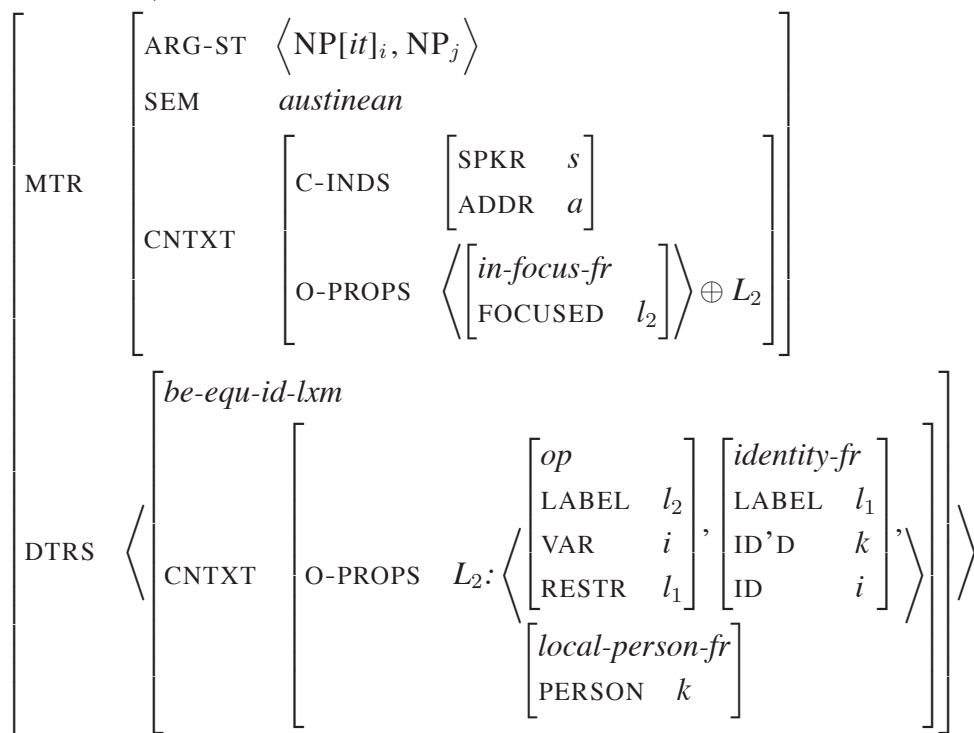
Construct	Examples	Scenario	Constraints
<i>tbx-phone-cxt</i>	<i>This is Chris,</i> <i>Is this Chris?,</i> <i>Who is this?</i>	telephone	Either party, any sentence type
<i>ibx-decl-cxt</i>	<i>It's Chris.</i>	(any)	Declarative only. Generally for expected initiators of contact (by calling, knocking, etc.).
<i>It's me-cxt</i>	<i>It's me.</i>	(any)	Declarative only. For providing a voice sample.
<i>ibx-wh-cxt</i>	<i>Who is it?</i>	front door	For residents only. No expectation constraint.
<i>that-be-you-cxt</i>	<i>Is that you,</i> <i>Chris?</i>	(any)	Polar question only. Appositive name (or other guess) required.

Table 4.1: The construct types examined in this chapter

interpretation, it must simply be considered a separate construction.

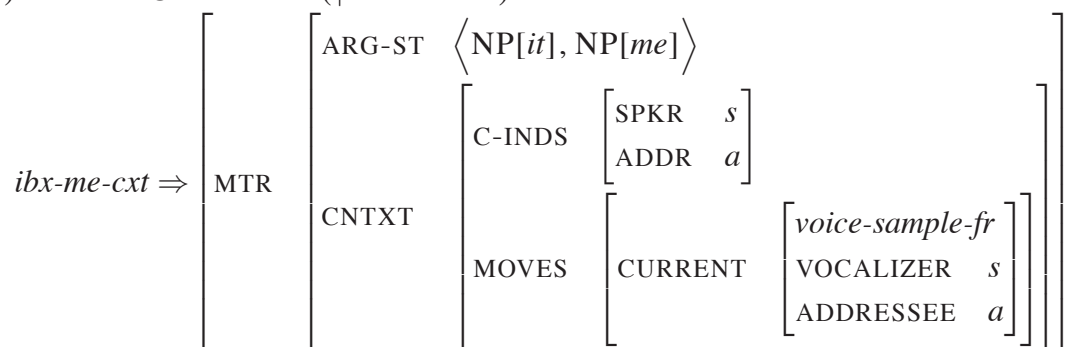
### 4.3.3 Bringing it together (again)

We are now in a position to see which linguistic patterns are to be described, what their characteristics are, and what sorts of connections they have to the context. These are outlined in Table 4.1. TBX, limited to the phone as it is, has already been treated. Declarative IBX and *it's me* are usable in any context—phone, door, or “mystery sound”. It is licensed by the construction in (97).

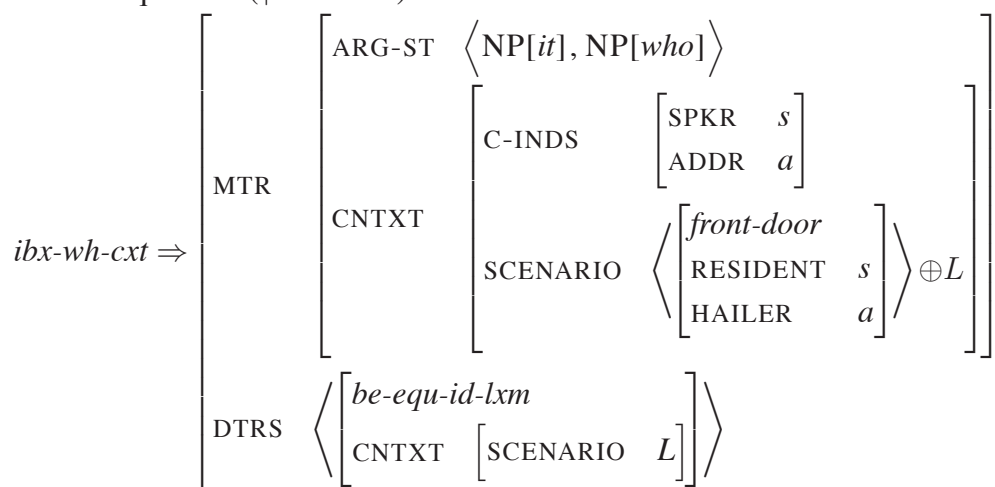
(97) Declarative IBX Construction ( $\uparrow deriv\text{-}cxt$ ) $ibx\text{-}decl\text{-}cxt \Rightarrow$ 

The limitation to declaratives is captured by the semantic type *austinean*. Following Ginzburg & Sag (2000), declarative clauses are of semantic type *austinean*, which resolves to either *proposition* or *outcome*. The latter is relevant for imperatives and subjunctives, but I assume that the unacceptability of, e.g., *Be Kim!* is not a grammatical fact. (It may even be possible in certain scenarios, e.g., *Please, please be Kim!*, said before answering the phone.) The only other difference is the addition of an in-focus requirement of the OP, which in most instances will limit IBX to identifying the caller.

*It's me* is handled by a subtype of *ibx-decl-cxt*. It inherits all the constraints of that construction and adds another: the utterance of any IBX sentence as the “current move” must function as a voice sample. As noted above, in contexts where the identity of the speaker has come into focus, *it's me* is infelicitous unless it is provided as a means for identification via the speaker's voice (90).

(98) *It's me* Construction ( $\uparrow$  *ibx-decl-cxt*)

Interrogative IBX is not simply a question version of IBX. It is only licensed at the front door, not on the phone or in person. It also lacks the expectation constraint. It is, in sum, dedicated to requesting the identity of a hailer. The construction licensing it is based on *be-equ-id-lxm*, with the addition that the subject is *it*, the complement *who*, and the speaker and addressee must be the resident and hailer, respectively.

(99) IBX *wh*-question ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxt*)

Finally, we turn to *Is that you, Chris?* I analyze the appositive name as a vocative: it can appear initially or finally, and so is not nominal apposition (*I'd like you to meet my physician, Doctor Smith*), which requires the apposed NP to follow its anchor (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Its presence is required for felicity, but I argue that this is not itself constructionally mandated. If we take it that *is that you* is licensed (somehow), it cannot stand alone. *It's me* can stand alone because the voice of the utterer provides the additional information about the identity of “me.” Nothing like this is possible with a question both directed towards and concerning “you”: the addressee cannot recover the speaker’s guess about who “you” is by the *speaker’s* voice, so the utterance must be supplemented in some way: in this case, by a vocative which indicates the speaker’s guess about the addressee.

Non-interrogative *that*-BX sentences in phone, door, and mystery-noise contexts all have marked interpretations, but *is that you* does not. It must be licensed by a separate construction. Once it is licensed as a means to resolve an identity-related OP, however, its interpretation is, unsurprisingly, similar to *it's me*. Just as *it's me* is in a semantic sense necessarily true, so would *is that you* necessarily always to be responded to with *yes*. Of course this is not the point of the question. Rather, by asking it the speaker indicates a belief that the two are familiar enough with each other that the addressee could respond with *It's me* (assuming the guess is correct).

The syntax is not strictly required to be interrogative, but it does need to convey a request. Thus, a declarative with tag question is also acceptable: *Chris, that's you, right/isn't it?* (cf. #*That's Chris, isn't it?*). *That-be-you* is represented as a valence construction for identification-equative *be*, with lexically-specified subject and complement. The current move is specified as *request*. Interrogatives and tag-licensing constructions will be compatible with the current move being a request, but simple declaratives will in most cases not be. There is no scenario constraint, as the construction is available across many situations.<sup>23</sup>

$$(100) \quad \textit{that-be-you-cxt} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} \langle \text{NP}[\textit{that}], \text{NP}[\textit{you}] \rangle \\ \text{CNTXT} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MOVES} \left[ \text{CURRENT} \textit{request} \right] \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \langle [\textit{be-equ-id-lxm}] \rangle \end{array} \right]$$

#### 4.3.4 Constructions and scripts

A notable commonality between these constructions is the impersonal subject pronoun: *this*, *that*, and *it*. One might expect the neutral or unmarked pattern for identification involved *I* and *you*, but as already pointed out these are not felicitous in the contexts under consideration. *I am Chris* is a self-introduction to someone met for the first time. In contrast, *Who are you?* is a request for justification rather than simple identification. A suspicious person entering an office might be challenged with *Who are you?*, and must respond with an identification that justifies their presence: *I'm the plumber you called* is fine, but *I'm Chris* is inappropriate (assuming the name *Chris* is unknown to the original challenger).

A part of the account which is missing is the special status that the constructions in Table 4.1 have. They are not merely possible but are the preferred means of identification. That is, of the many ways in which a caller known to the answerer could identify him or

<sup>23</sup>It is true that the construction may be most at home when the speaker cannot see the addressee, this is not always the case. Someone who sees a person who might be an old acquaintance could call out, *Is that you, Chris?* In this case it is simply the identity of the addressee which is at issue, not the particular reason for the lack of recognition.

herself (101), IBX is the most canonical—and *it's me* is better, if it is licensed. When the background conditions of IBX are not met, TBX is preferred.

- (101) a. You're speaking with Chris.  
 b. This is Chris who's calling you.  
 c. It's Chris you're talking to.

The availability of a resource to a speaker—in this case, a construction—does not guarantee that a speaker will use it in any given situation, and this is to the good. Constructions do not absolutely dictate the linguistic choices of a speaker. Yet, it is the case that given two semantically-equivalent or near-equivalent constructions or lexical items, sometimes one is more typical. The distinction between satellite-framing and verb-framing of motion events provides one large-scale example. English and most other Indo-European languages generally prefer satellite-framing, with the manner of motion incorporated in the verb semantics and the directional component of motion expressed in PPs and other extra-verbal phrases, while (on the whole) Romance languages prefer verb-framing, with the directional component incorporated into the verb of motion and manner (if any) expressed peripherally (Talmy, 2000:221–232). The two typical framings are illustrated with English and Spanish in (102) (Croft, 2003:221).

- (102) a. He ran into the cave  
 b. *Entró corriendo a la cueva*  
 enter.3SG.PAST run.PART to the cave

Both languages have the requisite lexical items and constructions to, in some cases, describe a motion event with either framing (103) (Aske, 1989:3). The differences between the languages, then, must be stated at another level.

- (103) a. John entered the room running.  
 b. *Juan balió hacia la puerta*  
 Juan dance.3SG.PAST towards the door  
 'Juan danced towards the door.'

I propose for this the notion of a *script*. A script is a set of preferences stated at one or more linguistic levels: syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and socio-cultural. These preferences capture part of what it means to speak idiomatic English, Spanish, Japanese, and so on. They are not prescriptive or absolute, though some speakers may infer the existence of certain scripts as a result of explicit instruction. The script in (104) is an approximation of English's preference for satellite-framing of motion events.

- (104) Motion description script  
 Scenario: speaker describes an event of motion  
 Preferred means: Frame: *manner-of-motion-fr*

The first line is the script's name. The next line indicates the scenario in which the script operates (I define scenario below). The following line (or lines) display the statements about idiomatic behavior in the indicated scenario. If necessary, additional constraints could be added to either the scenario or the means of expression in (104). For instance, the preference may be only present in "neutral" descriptive contexts, where the speaker does not wish to highlight aspects of motion central to path/direction. This may be entered as a constraint under the script's Scenario. In general, however, a script may be overridden by any number of concerns which cannot in principle be listed. A script is simply a generalization about what is more typical, expected, or idiomatic in particular contexts.

The notion is not a new one. The term *script* is well known from Schank & Abelson 1977 as a way to structure events and their subparts, and the roles and activities of the actors in a particular situation. Closely related is Minsky's (1975) *frame* and its subsequent adoption (of the term if not the specifics) into linguistics and sociolinguistics by, among others, Tannen (1979) and Fillmore (1982). Tannen (1979), citing R. N. Ross (1975), captures the basic idea behind these ideas. They all get at Ross' concept of "structures of expectations." She summarizes, "on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures), one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences" (Tannen, 1979:16).

The connection between scripts (frames, etc.) and specific language forms has also come up from time to time over the past decades. What Levinson (1983:279) dubs the literal force hypothesis states that there is a direct coding by grammatical forms of illocutionary force. The converse of this is that certain illocutionary forces—and thus the situations in which one can felicitously employ them—constrain the linguistic choices of the speaker. That is, the script for commanding specifies the syntactic resources idiomatically used to do the commanding.

J. L. Morgan (1978), looking at short-circuited implicatures (utterances whose conversational implicatures have become codified and conventionalized), notes that they can arise when there is a "natural connective chain between the (most general) purpose ... of the convention and the specification of the means in terms of a particular English sentence" (271) He goes on to say that "the language learner's task is to discover or reconstruct the details of the connection between occasion and purpose, on the one hand, and linguistic means—the sentence used—on the other" (272). These form the *conventions of usage* (261) that a speaker has as part of his or her competence in the language (their "pragmatic competence," though that presupposes a definition of pragmatics that is slightly at odds with mine). These conventions of usage are interpretable as little scripts that speakers fol-

low. To borrow Morgan's examples, English speakers are aware of scripts to the effect of, "when one bids farewell, one says *good-bye*" (or, earlier, *God be with you*); "when one wishes good luck to a stage performer, one says *break a leg*."<sup>24</sup>

Closer to the current project are Fillmore's (1975) frames and scenes. His frames are a "system of linguistic choices...including choices of grammatical rules or linguistic categories...that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes" (124). A scene can be a visual scene, or "familiar kinds of interpersonal transactions, standard scenarios defined by the culture, institutional structures...any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences, or imaginings" (ibid). His linguistic frames would clearly include the grammatical construction, and his scenes correspond to the scenarios mentioned in my SBCG representations and scripts.

In a similar vein, Levinson (1979) proposes the *activity type*, similar to Hymes's (1974) speech situation but broader. It "refers to any culturally recognized activity, whether or not that activity is coextensive with a period of speech or indeed whether any talk takes place in it at all" (368). Among the activity types he has in mind are dinner parties, job interviews, and football games. Importantly for the study of language, activity types can place "*constraints* on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions" (ibid., emphasis original). He asks in particular, "in what ways do the structural properties of an activity constrain (especially the functions of) the verbal contributions that can be made towards it" (370). As an example he mentions *sounding*, an insult activity described by Labov (1972b). It involves the formula [T(B) is so X that P], where T(B) represents the target of the insult, a relative of the addressee, B. Along with the formula are several other constraints on the activity: X must be pejorative, P must be obviously false, the target should not directly be the addressee, and a sound should be responded to by another sound that "tops" the first (Levinson, 1979:370).

Levinson (2000) summarizes additional arguments in favor of a "third, intermediate layer in a theory of communication." He agrees with J. L. Morgan (1978) and the need for conventions of use in addition to conventions of language (i.e., grammar). He also points to the existence of situations which call for a certain type of expression even though another could, in principle, do the job:

Why is it that I can introduce myself with *My name is Steve*, but not *I was given the name Steve*; that I can express sympathy with you with *I am sorry* but not conventionally with *That saddens me*; that I express outrage with *Really!* but not with *In truth!*; that I can say *I am delighted to meet you* but not *I am gratified to meet you*; ... and so on. (23)

<sup>24</sup>As it happens, J. L. Morgan (1978) lists *this is X* among his short-circuited implicatures. While this aligns with what I claim about the scripted nature of TBX, I disagree with his claim that TBX is the result of a short-circuited implicature. An SCI must result from repeated applications of conversational principles (such as those laid out by Grice (1975)) to an utterance with a (still synchronically-active) literal meaning. However, it is anything but clear what the "literal" meaning of TBX is, from which the identification function would emerge. TBX is a linguistic convention, and it is associated with telephone-related scripts, but it is not the result of SCI.

Note his caveat regarding sympathy: of course one can say *That saddens me*, but it is not the conventional way of expressing sympathy in the way that *I am sorry* is. The relationship of *that saddens me* to the “express sympathy” scenario is analogous to the relationship between the sentences in (101) to the “identify one’s self on the telephone” scenario. They both get the job done, but not in way recognized as idiomatic.

Culy (1996) introduces what he calls a *user’s manual* into the grammatical competence of speakers. He places into the English user’s manual the fact that direct objects can be omitted in instructions. For him, the user’s manual is separate from grammar; for me, the fact that the instructional imperative exists crucially *is* a part of grammar, i.e., what is conventional and encoded. On the other hand, I would say that the convention of using argument omission to write recipes is separate from grammar, though it must *mention* parts of the grammar. Likewise, the availability of verb-framing of motion events is part of English grammar; the preference for them is not. It is these preferences (what I would call scripts) that I would put in a user’s manual.

More recently, Merchant (2010) brings in scripts to account for a wide class of sentences that contain otherwise-mysterious ellipsis. These include single-phrase utterances like those in (105) (=Merchant’s (67)), where the NP receives case from an unspoken verb; or the PPs in (106) (=Merchant’s (69)), which are interpreted as though arguments of a motion verb. He also mentions the Dutch practice of identifying one’s self on the telephone with *met* ‘with’, noted above.

- (105) a. *(Enan) kafe (parakalo)!*  
 a coffee.ACC please  
 ‘(A) coffee (please)!’ (Greek)
- b. *Vody (požalujsta)!*  
 water.GEN please  
 ‘(Some) water (please)!’ (Russian)
- (106) a. Marco gets into the taxi and says, ‘To Segovia. To the jail.’  
 b. A passenger gets into a cab and the driver turns and asks, ‘Where to?’

Scripts, Merchant argues, allow participants to

anticipate the actions (including the utterances) of the others following the same script, and ... plan accordingly.... In such a context, certain particular linguistic phrases can be expected: they are ‘given’, though not by the immediate actually spoken linguistic precedents, but rather by mutual knowledge of the script being followed. (180)

His particular concern is ellipsis and the “givenness” of certain linguistic expressions which are elided in shorthand utterances like *To the jail*. Nevertheless it can be generalized



to my approach. Indeed, his notion of script is very close to Fillmore's (1975) frame, though with a narrower application in mind.

The incorporation of scripts into an account of a speaker's behavior thus has strong precedent within linguistics and allied fields. My definition of script, provided in (107), draws most heavily on the work of Fillmore, Morgan, Levinson, and Merchant. I operationalize it in terms of a scenario and a series of constraints. The latter are statements about what sorts of behaviors are preferred or idiomatic in a given scenario. As my interest is linguistic behavior, the constraints are stated at syntactic and semantic levels, but I do not exclude the possibility that scripts as currently defined could be applied to non-linguistic behavior.

- (107) A script is an association of a scenario—a structured set of behaviors, expectations, goals mutually recognized by members of a society or culture—with a set of preferred or idiomatic means of acting within that scenario.

In discussion of IBX on the telephone, I noted that it was predominantly used where the caller or hailer could be reasonably expected to be in contact with their addressee. Outside of situations of expected contact, IBX was possible, but TBX was more common, more idiomatic. In other words, speakers' behavior in establishing one another's identities is influenced by a set of scripts. Following Fillmore, a script can reference any level of linguistic choice that a speaker can make, including specific grammatical constructions like *ibx-decl-cxt*. This is done in (108).

- (108) Telephone identification script  
 Scenario: Speaker and addressee establish each other's identities. Contact between the two is expected.  
 Preferred means: *ibx-decl-cxt*

If the conditions for IBX are not met, it is not simply the case that any means a speaker uses to address mutual identification is equally idiomatic. It is more likely that TBX will be chosen before any sentence in (101). All else being equal, a speaker will prefer to use specialized identificational constructions to purely compositional means. This is stated in (109).

- (109) Identification script  
 Scenario: Speaker and addressee establish each other's identities.  
 Preferred means: specialized construction (TXB, IBX, *that-be-you*)  
 Constraints: the most pragmatically-specific construction is preferred

The final line is a constraint on the preferred means. It is a way to select among the listed constructions, namely by choosing the most pragmatically specific.<sup>25</sup> IBX, because it encodes information about the relationship between the caller and the answerer (the latter expects a call from the former), is more specific (or constrained) and thus preferred when licensed. *It's me*, as a subtype of general IBX, is more specific still. The construction itself must still be appropriate to the speech act. IBX is limited to declarative clauses, so it will not be in competition with interrogative TBX.

The notion that the most specific construction is preferred is intuitively a more general constraint on constructional choice. It is, in essence, an elsewhere condition (Merchant, 2010). If a more specialized construction is available, it should in general be preferred: otherwise, why would the construction exist in the first place? Yet there are contexts that show the opposite trend. Consider opening greetings: alongside *hello* and *hi* are *good morning* and *morning*. The latter two have a time-of-day constraint, making them more specific. Yet it is not the case, in my intuition, that any two colleagues would prefer to greet each other with *morning* rather than *hello* whenever possible. As such, it is not entirely superfluous to include the specificity constraint in (109).

Scripts are a powerful notion, but something like them seems necessary to capture differences across languages and contexts that are not reducible to grammatical constraints and not derivable from general communicative principles. Their utility is in describing the non-deterministic influence that context can have on constructional choices. A speaker in scenario (108) is not compelled to choose IBX, but it is conventional to do so. However, once the choice to use IBX is made, the speaker is more or less completely committed to its associated contextual constraints.

Scripts will come in again in the following chapters in rather different situations, showing that they are essential to arriving at full accounts and clean generalizations of constructions and the situations in which they are used.

## 4.4 Deconstructing the situations

I conclude this chapter by calling into question the grouping of scenarios such categories as *telephone* and *front door*. Should these categories be decomposed into more basic features of interaction? And, crucially, does the grammar of English demand their decomposition?

While it is intuitively obvious what makes a particular situation a telephone scenario or a front door scenario, it is worth asking exactly which features combine to make up these situations. These two scenarios have both physical/technological and social/interactional

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<sup>25</sup>From an outsider's view, pragmatic specificity may be understood as pragmatic informativity. IBX tells us more about the speakers than TBX does. Yet, from the interactants' perspective, it can hardly be said that *it's me* "informs" the addressee that the two have a close relationship. They have it, or are presumed to have it, and this licenses the expression. Similarly, the distinction between *hello* and *good morning* is only informative from the viewpoint of a displaced overhearer, not the interlocutors themselves.

aspects which seem equally important in their definitions:

- (110) Telephone scenario: A caller initiates a conversation with an answerer with whom there is (typically) no visual or auditory contact. The two communicate solely vocally, by means of a technology designed to enable this communication at a distance. A large variety of social/interactional goals are possible (business, social, emergency, etc.).
- (111) Front door scenario: A hailer, outside a residence (or other building) requests to a resident to enter into a conversation. Typically the outcome of the conversation is that resident allows or forbids face-to-face communication and, in some cases, the hailer entering the residence. Typically, the two are not in visual contact and are speaking on opposite sides of a physical barrier.

These descriptions do not come close to the social and physical details of these two scenarios, and they ignore many recent developments in long-distance communication and differences across communities in the English speaking world, but they suffice for present purposes. I will not attempt to fully explicate the details of the scenarios beyond has been necessary for constructional descriptions, but will point out one important complication regarding the supposed *technological* differences between the two.

The difference between telephone and front-door interactions cannot simply be about the technology involved: a phone as opposed to a door. Consider the fact that a residence might be set up so as to allow a hailer to get the attention of the resident not by knocking or ringing a doorbell, but by using an intercom. The intercom might even have an associated dial, much like a telephone. The resident, in turn, may interact with the hailer by a specialized intercom, or (as is the case for the author's current residence) simply by a general-purpose telephone. In purely physical terms, this is not distinguishable from what might otherwise be identified as a telephone conversation. Photographs of the two participants may be ambiguous between caller/hailer and answerer/resident.

What happens when an individual, at their residence, receives a summons on a telephone, and is able to ascertain (either because it is a specialized device, or Caller ID) that the summoner is ringing from the front door? My intuition is that both *Who's there?* and *Who is it?* are possible, despite being unacceptable "on the telephone." It thus cannot be that these identification constructions are tied to a precise set of physical details of an interaction, because these details will vary across instances of the same scenario type and will overlap across instances of different scenario types.

So far as the constructions are concerned, the crucial contextual factors are social, cultural, and interactional. This includes the cultural frames for different interactional scenarios. The frame of understanding for a "front door" interaction comes along with suppositions about the range of actions that are available to the participants and the expected outcomes of these actions. At the door, for instance, the hailer is attempting to negotiate a visit to a residence, or to enable some specific action that requires co-presence (e.g.,

delivering pizza). On the telephone, the interactants are making use of technology to communicate as though they were co-present. The topics or goals of the telephone interaction are probably without constraint, but the contact afforded them is not a gateway to face-to-face interaction.

Identification constructions are most likely to occur in the first few seconds of either scenario (Schegloff, 1968). Because the constructions are tied to certain types of interactions, this means that the interactants face decision at the very outset as to what scenario they are faced with. Or, looked at another way, by choosing certain constructions over others, the participants display their construal of the situation, which may have developed prior to any linguistic communication. Because these constructions lose their relevance very shortly after the onset of the interaction, there is little chance for the nature of the interaction to be revisited. Further, because in many situations there will in fact be quite salient physical manifestations of the scenario (e.g., the participants are indeed at opposite sides of a front door, and speaking without technological aid), there is little chance for disagreement or negotiation surrounding what scenario or cultural frame should be invoked. Yet, as pointed out by Bender (1999), the context of linguistic acts is, at times, more constructed by those acts than reflected in them.

I present two brief examples of this. First, the intercom-based front door interaction, as a sort of hybrid between two scenarios, licenses *who is this* alongside *who's there* and *who is it*. The selection of one over the other reveals subtly different stances toward the unfolding interaction, which may influence the hailer/caller's orientation to the conversation. Second, consider what happens at a (physical) front door if several turns-at-talk pass without mutual recognition: perhaps the interactants get caught up in a short debate surrounding door-knocking etiquette. In this case, the sentences in (94) become more acceptable, while the *there*-sentences become less acceptable. In other words, the grammatical resources come to resemble what is possible on the telephone. This can be understood as a reinterpretation of the sort of scenario the interactants are orienting themselves to. While the physical aspects of the scenario remain unchanged, the individuals have become "connected" in a way that a hailer and resident are not at the very beginning of their interaction. Such a collection of physical and social factors yields a situation that could be interpreted in multiple ways by the participants, and which is subject to determination via linguistic choices. Once the door is opened, however, the physical distance that was an important cue to a front-door scenario is removed, and *this-BX* is again unavailable, just as it is in everyday face-to-face interactions.

This chapter has explored the many ways in which speakers of English negotiate the task of achieving mutual recognition or identification in contexts where they cannot do so by visual examination. We saw that there are two scenario-specific constructions, *this be X* and *who is it*, and several other constructions which are not scenario-limited but which are particularly idiomatic on the telephone or at the front door. This idiomaticity was captured through a combination of constructional specification and scripts, or connections between interactional scenarios and prototypical linguistic choices. Chapter 5 continues our passage into wider and wider contexts, moving from constructions limited to the beginning stage

of a conversation to constructions that may appear throughout an interaction to project upcoming extended talk.

## Chapter 5

# Grammar and projection

### 5.1 Projection: an introduction

One of the primary tasks of a discourse participant is to manage the taking of turns. Speakers by and large manage smooth transitions between participants, avoiding noticeable gaps and overlaps, and so it has been a major concern of Conversation Analysis, since its inception, to understand how this is accomplished (Sacks et al., 1974:708). Because utterance planning takes time, speakers must be able, to a great degree, to predict when an interlocutor will end the current turn, so that the next turn can begin without pause in between. This requires a great deal of coordination of action (Hayashi, 2004:1341 and citations therein). Part of how this is done is by the recognition of transition-relevance places (TRPs), places where a speaker could potentially end his or her turn. In general, discourse participants anticipate TRPs by identifying the immanent end of *turn-construction units* (TCUs), the lexical and syntactic constituents from which a turn is built up (Sacks et al., 1974:703,720–723). This, along with intonational cues, allow relatively accurate predictions of the potential end of the each conversational turn.

A major part of what allows for the management of turntaking is *projection* (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Ford et al., 2002; Auer, 2005; Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007; P. J. Hopper & Thompson, 2008). Defined by Auer (2005) as “the fact that an individual action or part of it foreshadows another” (8), projection is a key resource for discourse participants in creating and co-creating cohesive interactions, rather than strings of independent events (*ibid.*, 9). Projection is not determination; nothing is set in stone. The idea is that a speaker’s choice at one moment has consequences for the likely (and unlikely) following events. Participants, drawing on “massive experience in social interactions,” posit tentative hypotheses about “the courses of social action a given stretch of talk is heading towards performing” P. J. Hopper & Thompson (2008:114). Projection is also not simply what a speaker intends to do next. A particular linguistic choice sets the speaker on one of several (but not indefinitely many) trajectories which are open to negotiation and even complete reversal as all discourse participants work to jointly achieve interactional goals.

Projection is possible at any level of conversational organization, from lexical and syn-

tactic structure up to speech acts or even larger activities like apologizing or storytelling. Projection within a TCU is made possible because the grammar of a language—its lexical, syntactic, semantic, and prosodic—places constraints on the possible completions of a linguistic unit based on how it begins (Goodwin, 1996:372; Auer, 2005:10). This ability to predict the immanent end of a turn based on grammar features heavily in Sacks et al.'s (1974) turn-taking system and makes possible the anticipatory completion of another's turn (Lerner, 1991). It has also been observed at lexical and sub-lexical (morphological and phonological) levels in eye-tracking experiments (Tanenhaus et al., 1996). Take, for instance, the conditional marker *if*. Schegloff (1987) describes its projection properties as follows (see also Lerner, 1991:443).

One important feature of turn construction...and the units that turn construction employs...is that they project, from their beginnings, aspects of their planned shape and type... A turn which begins with 'If...' may initially project something like a 4–5 word 'contingency clause' and a similarly sized 'consequence clause' ... This projection may be revised when the next work is produced; for example, if it is 'If so, ...' the end of the 'consequence clause' is projected to be earlier than before, with the open possibility that it itself will be foreshortened as its parts are produced. (71)

English clauses have been observed to be highly projective (Schegloff, 1987). Initial complementizers, for example, strongly prefigure the overall shape of the upcoming turn. A turn-initial auxiliary is likely to be the beginning of a subject-auxiliary inversion structure, which in turn limits the sentence-type (interrogative, exclamative, but not imperative). A verb-initial TCU is likely to be an imperative and not a question or exclamation. As we will see shortly, English contrasts with Japanese, the typological features of which conspire against within-sentence projection (Fox et al., 1996), but not against across-turn projection.

Moving beyond the lexicon and syntax, Auer (2005) identifies *action projection* as the foreshadowing of upcoming (speech) actions or larger activities, with or without regard to how those actions will be accomplished linguistically (9). For instance, a speaker who says *Listen to this* projects an upcoming turn or series of turns which will convey some news. However, it says nothing about the words or sentence types that the speaker will use. Likewise, *Can I ask you a question?* displays an intention to ask another question, and *You busy tonight?* prefaces an invitation, but exactly how the question or invitation will be executed is not projected. Of course, one can make reasonable guesses based on typical mappings between sentence types and speech acts, and between speech acts and discourse function, but the existence of indirect speech acts and other non-trivial mappings between form and function make such guesses unreliable (Levinson 1983, Sadock & Zwicky 1985:155,191–193).

There is no clear line dividing grammar-based projection and action projection. Consider again the formula *If X, Y*. *If* has certain syntactic and semantic properties that determine the shape of X. X must be declarative and will have certain interpretations depending

on the tense, aspect, and modality of the clause. Additionally, as Lerner (1991:443) points out, it indicates to the recipient that after the first TRP, namely the end of the X component, there will be a Y component (the consequent clause), and that without Y, the turn will not have come to completion. Is this grammar or action projection? It seems to be both: the linguistic (especially semantic) properties of *if* lead to the expectation of a Y clause. However, this Y clause is not necessarily temporally contiguous with X (another speaker could interrupt), and furthermore its speech act type is not determined by *if* or by the content of X. Y could be a statement, a question, a threat, and so on. *If* projects both grammatically and actionally. I believe it is still worthwhile to recognize a difference between the two levels of projection, but they must be understood as the two extremes of a scale.

Projection can take place over varied amounts of time. Auer (2005) describes the *trajectory* of a projection as “the time-course over which [the projected action] develops.” We have already seen that *if* involves two layers of projection, one of which crosses over a TRP. In what Schegloff (1980) termed *preliminaries to preliminaries* (pre-pres), the action ultimately projected from a single turn may arise after another sequence begins and comes to a close. This is illustrated in (1), excerpted from Schegloff 1980:(2).

(1) [BC, Red: 190]

**B: I wanna ask you something**

B: I wrote a letter.

(pause)

A: Mh hm,

B: T’the governor.

A: Mh hm::,

B: -telling ’im what I thought about i(hh)m!

(A): (Sh:::!)

**B: Will I get an answer d’you think,**

A: Ye:s/

The initial question ultimately projects *Will I get an answer d’you think* (not that particular question, but *some* question), but before that, a further preliminary intervenes in which the speaker sets up the question. This dialogue exhibits compactly how grammatical and turn-sequential structures are projected. At the purely lexico-syntactic level, each linguistic choice B makes projects a range of possible completions. *I wanna* will be followed by a VP, which is also a description of what he wants to do. Moreover, he draws out the description across several units, each punctuated by backchanneling from A. Alone, these constituents do not constitute individual acts (“self-contained actions,” as Auer (2005:10) puts it) but incrementally build up his turn, each increment projecting the next. Finally, the TCU-initial *will* simultaneously presages an aux-initial clause (a grammar-level projection) and the long-awaited question (an action-level projection). The notion of trajectory will come



in handy in understanding some of the differences between the constructions examined in this chapter.

While projection is a property present in all aspects of language, there are also what have been called *projector constructions*: “grammatical structures which serve for anticipatory framing of upcoming discursive action” (P. J. Hopper & Thompson, 2008:439) (see also Ford et al. 2002; P. J. Hopper 2004; Auer 2005; Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007; Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2008). P. J. Hopper & Thompson (2008) describe three for English: *wh*-clefts, *it*-extraposition, and *there*-clauses. In the case of cleft sentences, grammar projection is at work, but in all cases the presence of these introductory elements foreshadows an upcoming action, be it a narrative, a complaint, or a joke.

- (2) a. What will happen is...  
 b. It turns out that...  
 c. There was a dog in my yard yesterday.

While these constructions are arguably more tailored to doing action projection than, say, aux-initial clauses, that is not their sole function. Cleft and presentation sentences can be deployed for more mundane means, such as giving a brief answer to a question with nothing further implied. In other words, they do not allow one to predict with absolute or near-absolute confidence that the speaker is committed to performing in the near future a specific kind of action. As such, it cannot be that cleft constructions *encode* action projection, even though they may be a frequent way of doing so.

Given the importance that projection has for the coordination of speech and action, it should not be too surprising to find conventionalized ways of “doing” projection. There do exist some lexically-fixed expressions which have this function: *once upon a time* introduces a certain type of narrative, and *(I’ll) tell you what* prefaces a suggestion. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the existence of not just fixed expressions but constructions that are specifically dedicated to action projection. In particular, because Japanese syntax makes lexico-grammatical projection difficult, one would expect techniques to have developed to do projection in other ways. Hayashi (2004) presents just such a technique: what he argues is a construction involving the distal demonstrative *are* that accomplishes projection across turns. In the following section I present his analysis and show how it benefits from treatment within a full construction grammar framework. I then show that English too has a construction that encodes projection: an unexpected cataphoric function of *it* in adjectival copular clauses. At the chapter’s conclusion I examine the findings of Heritage & Sorjonen (1994). Their work as well as the constructional data presented below show that projection brings together concerns of Construction Grammar and Conversation Analysis.

## 5.2 Japanese

Typological features of Japanese syntax do not lend themselves to projection of the end of a turn given its beginning. Japanese is strictly head-final, so the verb, along with verbal suffixes and sentence-final particles that indicate sentence type (declarative, interrogative) and interactional features (politeness, honorifics) appear towards the end of a turn. The highly interactional sentence-final particles (*ne*, *yo*, *daroo*, and many others), which indicate a variety of meanings related especially to epistemic and affective stance (see Hasegawa (2010: Chapter 2) for a summary of the vast literature) are similarly available to recipients only at the very end of a turn.

On the other hand, projection on higher and not strictly grammatical levels is possible. Hayashi (2004) demonstrated that one way speakers accomplish this is with the distal demonstrative *are*. *Are* can be placed within a mostly semantically-empty copular clause which serves as the syntactic glue for sentence-final suffixes and particles which carry interactional and speech act information. This information foreshadows the speaker's next utterance(s). Consider (3), which literally means 'Recently, it's that'. The nominalization structure (*na n desu*) is a conventional way to provide an explanation, but the only thing being "explained" is *are*, which at this point in the interaction cannot be resolved to any discourse-old referent (see (5) for the full context). The function of the utterance is to project an explanation. The speaker proceeds after this TCU to give an explanation of his recent activities, concluding with another nominalization structure that echoes the one in (3).

- (3) Hayashi (2004:1352)  
*saikin are na n desu yo*  
 recently that COP NMLZ COP.HON SFP  
 (lit.) 'Recently it's that.'

The significance of these *are* sentences for construction grammar is that their lexical and syntactic structure does not straightforwardly predict that it should have projection function, or that it should do projection in the peculiar way that it does (which I describe below). In this section I summarize Hayashi's findings and react to them in the light of Hasegawa's (2010) analysis of demonstratives. For the most part, Hayashi's account stands, with some modification required due to facts about *are* that he did not consider. My main goal is to illustrate how a Conversation Analytic approach can be married to a construction grammatical one, especially one like SBCG, with a commitment to integrating each construction into the rest of the grammar to the degree possible. In order to do this *are* must be placed within the larger demonstrative system of Japanese.

### 5.2.1 Cataphoric *are*: background and data

Japanese has a three-part demonstrative system, typically understood as proximal, medial, and distal: *ko-*, *so-*, and *a-*, respectively. See Table 5.1. These labels are convenient for referring to the three series of demonstratives, though as discussed below, they do not accurately capture the range of uses and contrasts between the series. The demonstratives are capable of anaphoric as well as deictic reference. Arguments have been made in several directions regarding which series are usable in which ways. Kuno (1973:282–290) argues that all can be used deictically, but only *so-* and *a-* can be used anaphorically. Mikami (1970/1992) argues that *a-* must always be deictic. Kuroda (1972/1992) claims that the distinction between deixis and anaphora (at least for these data) is itself problematic, and instead posits two types of knowledge, *conceptual* and *experiential*, which underlie the differences between the series. Hasegawa (2010) argues from soliloquy (speech without an addressee other than the speaker him/herself) that *ko-* and *a-* are always deictic, with the distinction between the two based on Chafe’s (1994) notions of peripheral and focal consciousness.

	proximal ( <i>ko-</i> )	medial ( <i>so-</i> )	distal ( <i>a-</i> )
object	<i>kore</i>	<i>sore</i>	<i>are</i>
locative	<i>koko</i>	<i>soko</i>	<i>asoko</i>
direction	<i>kochira</i>	<i>sochira</i>	<i>achira</i>

Table 5.1: Japanese demonstrative pronouns

One point which most authors have agreed upon is that only the *ko-* series is usable cataphorically (Hayashi 2004:1348, Hasegawa 2010:83). In this it is comparable to English, where cataphoric or presentational uses are by and large limited to *this* and *here*.<sup>1</sup>

- (4) a. *kore/#sore/#are*                      *wa doo desu ka? kachoo ga*  
 this/that.medial/that.distal TOP how COP.HON Q section.chief NOM  
*kaet-tara...*  
 return-WHEN  
 ‘How about this/#that? When the chief returns, ...’
- b. *kyabetsu o koo/#soo/#aa*                      *kiri-mashoo.*  
 cabbage ACC this.way/that.medial.way/that.distal.way cut-HON.HORT  
 ‘Cut the cabbage like this/#that.’ (followed by demonstration)

<sup>1</sup>*There*-existential sentences are usable presentationally, i.e., as a way to project talk on a certain topic, as in *There’s something I want to tell you*. However, they usually contain a separate indication of this, such as the indefinite *something*.

This generalization is challenged by Hayashi's observation that *are* has cataphoric functions. The two most common functions in his data set are:

- (i) making a bid for additional turn-space to deal with preliminaries to performing the projected action, and (ii) soliciting others' alignment as recipients early in the progress of a turn in the context of (a) competing for speakership or (b) deploying gesture-accompanied action that requires recipients' gaze. (1350)

I will return to the question of how and whether these functions can be predicted by the general properties of *are*. First, I present several of Hayashi's examples to illustrate how these functions are accomplished in conversation.

The first function—making a bid for turn-space—is illustrated below. Akira uses *are* to make space for an expansion on his prior talk, in which he attempted to explain his job. I replicate the transcript from Hayashi (2004), but omit morpheme glosses except in the crucial turns.<sup>2</sup> Items in double parentheses indicate Hayashi's interpretations of omitted arguments.

(5) Hayashi 2004:1352–1354

1 Yoshi: Akira ima nani yatten no:.

“What are ((you)) doing now, Akira?”

:

: ((33 lines omitted where the participants discuss others' research at Akira's lab.))

:

2 Akira: >boku- boku-< boku ga:: an:: PUrasuchikku no

3 kenkyuu yatterun desu.= [purasuchikku]

“>I- I-< I'm doing research on uhm plastics.”

4 Yoshi: [ e Akira ] ima PUrasuchikku

5 yatten no.=

“e Are ((you)) working on plastics now?”

6 Akira: =ee. (0.9) nazeka: =

“Yes. (0.9) For some reason.”

7 Yoshi: =oo(h)o [OHH!] HEH HEH heh heh [heh heh heh .hhh]=

“O(h)hhh! HEH HEH heh heh heh heh heh .hhh”

<sup>2</sup>Hayashi uses the following abbreviations: CP copula, FP final particle, MIM mimetic, N nominalizer, PT particle.

- 8 Akira: [ee.] [purasuchikku no]=  
 “Yes.” “Plastics”
- 9 Yoshi: =[.hhh] purasuchikku- [hh hh hh hh hh] .HH  
 “.hhh plastics- hh hh hh hh hh .HH”
- 10 Fumio:=[e!] [doo: sun no sore.]  
 “e!” “What do ((you)) do with that?”
- 11 Akira: purasuchikku:[:]  
 “Plastics...”
- 12 Fumio: [oo]saka gasu kankee nai no.  
 “Is ((it)) unrelated to Osaka Gas?”
- 13 Akira: iya! kankee naku mo nai desu kedo [ne:=ma]=  
 “Well, ((it))’s not unrelated, but uhm...”
- 14 Yoshi: [o:~::~]=  
 “Oh:~::~”
- 15 Akira: =iroiro: purasuchikku tsukatteru toko arimasu kara ne::.  
 “...There are various places where ((we)) use plastics, so...”
- 16 Yoshi: a honma:.  
 “Oh really.”
- 17 Akira: u:n. KIgu toka: °maa sono[::~°]  
 “Yeah. Like appliances,°and uh::~:m°”
- 18 Yoshi: [kigu] toka de::.  
 “Like appliances”
- 19 (0.9)
- 20 Akira: sono: saikin **are** na **n desu yo**  
 uhm recently that CPNCP FP  
 “Uh:m, recently, ((it))’s been *are* (=that thing).”
- 21 °ano::~° (0.7) GAsu kan aru ja nai desu ka:.  
 uhm gas pipe exist CP not CP Q  
 “°Uh::~:m° (0.7) You know there are gas pipes, right?”

- 22           (.) >are zenbu ima< purasuchikku ni naritsutsu aru  
              that all now plastic PT is.becoming  
              “(.) They’ve all been changing to plastic pipes now=”
- 23           **n desu yo.**=DONdon.= TEtsu kara.  
              N CP FP MIM(steadily)metal from  
              “=one after another=from metal.”
- 24 Fumio:honMA::.  
              “REAlly.”
- 25 (0.4)
- 26 Akira: poriechiren:: [ni natterun desu yo.]  
              “((They)) are becoming polyethylene.”
- 27 Fumio:                   [hu:.....]:.....n.=  
                              “I:..... see:.....”
- 28 Yoshi: =ho:::  
              “I see.”

The utterance of interest is Akira’s *saikin are na n desu yo* ‘Recently it’s been that thing’, line 20. This is followed by an extended account of why Akira is working on plastics despite being a chemist at a gas company. At line 20, there has been no reference to any entity that *are* could refer to, nor is there any entity in the shared experience of the interlocutors which could serve as antecedent. Rather, as Hayashi claims, it foreshadows an upcoming action. The sentence is semantically light, containing only a temporal adverb, *are*, the copula, a nominalization particle with a second copula, and a sentence-final particle. Nominalization-plus-copula, *n desu*, is a typical way to indicate that the speaker is giving an explanation or account (Kuno 1973:224, Maynard 2002:344 Hayashi 2004:1355). *Yo* indicates that the speaker is informing the addressee of a new fact. With the utterance, Akira is explaining something, but the object of explanation is simply *are*, a yet-to-be-articulated variable. The utterance is followed by a multi-unit turn: first an understanding check (line 21), and then the explanation proper (lines 22–23, 26). Note that the explanation bears the same pragmatic marker as the original utterance, *naritsutsu aru n desu yo*. The linguistic parallelism indicates that the speaker has now made good on the initial promise to give an explanation, revealing the original *saikin are na n desu yo* as a forward-looking signpost (see Wong (2000:412) on repetitions as a way to link to prior discourse).

The sentence takes the form of an account, but instead of providing it, it puts the recipients on notice: the speaker is about to perform an account. This gives Akira the space

he needs to extend his explanation, which was initially taken up with some skepticism (see Hayashi 2004:1354–1356 for a detailed analysis of how and why Akira’s explanation arose). The projection, as with pre-pres, is multi-layered. It projects an ultimate TCU that mirrors the interactional markers of the current TCU (*n desu*). First, however, it provides the speaker with additional space to set up that final account-giving TCU by providing background information (line 21). Just as *I wrote a letter* is not taken as the question the speaker in (1) requests permission to ask, so is *gasu kan aru ja nai desu ka* not the account which is projected by *saikin are na n desu yo*.

*Are*’s second projection function is to gain the attention of one’s addressees. The context of (6) (a portion of Hayashi’s (8)) is that three people, Kyoko, Chika, and Asami, are interacting, and Kyoko’s gaze is on Asami as she comments on a recent wedding. She states that she was seated at the front of a reception hall for a wedding, but was still quite far from the bride and groom. At this point Chika wishes to make a comment on that, but requires the others’ joint gaze so that she can perform a gesture. She says (6) while depicting a pair of binoculars with her hands over her eyes. The move is ideally executed after gaining the others’ attention, but Japanese syntax conspires to place attention-getters (e.g., particles that ask for confirmation) clause-finally. Chika manages to secure her friends’ gazes by prefacing her utterance with a short sentence that has an attention-getter (*chau n*, ‘isn’t it’), allowing her to execute the crucial move successfully. The projected utterance does not duplicate *chau n*, but the final *ne yaro* (standard Japanese *n daroo*) is another evidentiality marker that invites confirmatory remarks.

(6) *are chau n, moo baado wotchingu mitaini konnan shiten ne yaro*  
 that isn’t CP EMP bird watching like like.this is.doing N CP

Isn’t ((it)) *are* (that thing)? Like bird watching, ((they)) are doing this, right?

(Hayashi, 2004:(8))

Another of Hayashi’s examples of attention-getting *are* comes from a television interview program with two hosts. Immediately after the guests have thanked the hosts for inviting them, one of the hosts starts out with (7). He asks for (and gets) the others to align to roles as recipients, rather than speakers. He now has space where he can set the topic and take the first few turns in the interview.

- (7) *maa maa ano: are desu yo ne?* ((several turns, mostly backchannels, omitted))  
 now now uhm that CP FP FP  
*kooyuu ii kata suru to mi mo futa mo nai no kamo: shirenai desu*  
 like.this say way do if too.frank N maybe not.know CP  
*kedomo, ee maa! kikakumon desu wa na.*  
 but uh well one-shot.scheme CP FP FP

Now, uh:m, ((it)'s *are* (=that thing), isn't (it)? I guess this may be too frank, but uh well, ((you guys)) are a one-shot scheme, right?

(Hayashi, 2004:(7))

Data like these suggest that *are*, when in a certain type of semantically light sentence, lets a speaker project an upcoming action. In order to integrate this into a construction grammar of Japanese, as Hayashi suggests might be worthwhile (1365), it is necessary to determine whether the projection function of *are* is straightforwardly relatable to its other functions. Additionally, because *are* is part of a demonstrative system, it must also be asked how or whether the cataphora is manifested within that system. Once these issues have been settled satisfactorily it can be determined what parts of a sentence like (3) are to be handled by a special construction.

## 5.2.2 Anaphora and deixis in Japanese demonstratives: explaining cataphoric *are*

The first step is to establish the deictic and anaphoric (and cataphoric) properties of the three demonstrative series. The spatial deictic properties of the demonstratives, while not without interest, are not of central relevance to the present discussion, so I limit discussion to non-spatial deictic and anaphoric uses. The key questions are which series are usable deictically and which anaphorically/cataphorically, and under what circumstances. Several competing accounts of the semantics and pragmatics of the demonstratives exist. I outline two major ones, those of Kuno (1973) and Kuroda (1972/1992), followed by a recent reexamination from Hasegawa (2010). It turns out that Hasegawa's account of the demonstrative system makes the projection function of *are* much less mysterious, paving the way to a streamlined account in SBCG.

Kuno (1973) argues that the *so*-series anaphorically refers to an entity familiar to just one of the interlocutors, or possibly familiar to neither (familiarity involves some degree of awareness and interaction with the entity, i.e., it is not the same as discourse-old). In contrast, the *a*-series refers to entities familiar to both. Kuroda (1972/1992) provides counterexamples to the claim for *a*-, such as (8), where the speaker refers to a person as *ano sensei* 'that teacher' despite the fact that only the speaker is familiar with the referent. To distinguish between *so* and *a*, Kuroda posits two types of knowledge: direct experience and indirect experience. The *a*-series is used for entities with which the speaker has direct experience, e.g., has interacted with them, seen them, met them. The *so*-series can refer



to entities with which the speaker has indirect—conceptual, linguistic—experience. This is illustrated in (9), where *so* is unacceptable when it is clear that the speaker knows the referent well. (These three sentences are from Hasegawa 2010:79.)

- (8) *Boku wa oosaka de Yamada Taroo to iu sensei ni oowattan da kedo,*  
 I TOP in called teacher DAT learned-from but  
*kimi mo ano sensei ni tsuku to ii yo.*  
 you too that teacher DAT study.under if good SFP  
 ‘I studied in Osaka with a professor named Taro Yamada. You should study with him [that professor], too.’

- (9) a. *Yamada-san o matte iru no desu. Ano/Sono hito wa kitto*  
 ACC am-waiting NMLZ COP person TOP surely  
*okurete kuru deshoo.*  
 late come will

‘I’m waiting for Yamada. I’m sure that he [that person] will be late.’

- b. *Yamada-san o matte iru no desu. Ano/#Sono hito*  
 ACC am-waiting NMLZ COP person  
*no koto da kara, kitto okurete kuru deshoo.*  
 considering.one’s.nature surely late come will

‘I’m waiting for Yamada. Considering his habits, I’m sure that he [that person] will be late.’

*Ko-* occupies a middle ground. While it is never truly anaphoric, generally referring to entities visible to the interlocutors, it can refer to non-visible entities to impart a sense of “vividness” (Kuno, 1973:288), “as if it were visible to both the speaker and the hearer” (ibid), i.e., it is “semi-demonstrative” (290). An example from Kuno (1973:288) is given in (10).

- (10) *Boku no tomodachi ni Yamada to yuu hito ga iru n desu ga, kono*  
 I ’s friend among named person exists but, this  
*otoko wa nakanaka no rironka de, ...*  
 man considerable theoretician is

‘I have a friend by the name of Yamada. **This** man is a theoretician of some caliber, and ...’

Hasegawa’s (2010) investigation into demonstratives bolstered Kuno’s claim that *ko-* is never anaphoric; she goes further to claim that both *ko-* and *a-* can always be deictic (83, 89, 96). She follows Lyons (1977), who saw deictic reference as the more general category, of which anaphora is a variety. From Cornish (1996) she adopts the theory that deixis and

anaphora are at two ends of a single scale, with prototypical deixis drawing attention to a new (typically, but not always, situationally-provided) referent, and prototypical anaphora maintaining focus on an already-established referent. *Ko-* and *a-* can be used anaphorically, as in (9) or (10), but they are also compatible with deictic uses like (11).

- (11) *Kono/ano kado o magatte kudasai*  
 this/that corner ACC turn please-do

‘Please turn at this corner/that corner much further down there’

(Hasegawa, 2010:74)

So far, nothing seems to indicate that *are* could be used to refer to as-yet unsaid discourse, whether it be accomplished deictically or anaphorically. Hasegawa (2010) provides a key piece to the puzzle in her analysis of *are* as it appears in soliloquial speech (in her data, speakers are alone in a room with a voice recorder and instructed not to address anyone in particular). Both *ko-* and *a-* occur in her data without linguistic antecedents. In order to account for this, and for the differences between the two demonstratives, she draws on Chafe’s (1994) notion of consciousness. Consciousness can be focused on certain *active* entities while other entities are in a *semiactive*, accessible state. *Ko-* words refer either to a copresent entity close to the speaker, or to some mental object that the speaker’s consciousness is actively focused on during the act of speaking. This accounts for the feeling of vividness in dialogue: a speaker who communicates acute attention to a referent invites the addressee to do the same as much as is possible.

*A-*, on the other hand, picks out “an entity if it is in one’s peripheral consciousness and thus in a semiactive state” (Hasegawa, 2010:90). Two examples of this are given below. In the first, the demonstrative appears to be anaphoric with a prior NP; in the second, there is no potential antecedent, and *ano* deictically refers to a semiactive referent.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Hasegawa (2010:96) provides evidence that *a-* is in fact always deictic, based on its (and *ko-*’s) inability to function as a bound variable in quantificational contexts (Hasegawa’s (25)):

- (i) *Watashi ga umareta machi de wa, dono kooen ni mo sakura no ki ga ari,*  
 I NOM was-born town in every-park in also cherry GEN tree NOM exist,  
 \**kono/sono/\*ano iriguchi wa, torii no katachi o shiteita*  
 entrance TOP archway GEN shape ACC was

‘In my hometown, every park had cherry trees, and its entrance was like an archway to a Shinto shrine.’

Even seemingly-anaphoric uses would be analyzed as discourse deixis (Levinson, 1983) or textual anaphora (Lyons, 1977). For present purposes, it is sufficient for *a-* to at least potentially be deictic, rather than always deictic. When no antecedent is available, as in (12b) or in the projection data, the deictic option is the only possibility.

- (12) a. *Okaasan rekusasu ki ni itteru yoo datta kedo, demo are wa*  
 mother Lexus like seem COP.PAST however but that TOP  
*okkii kuruma da shi nee.*  
 big car COP PT SFP

‘Mother seemed to like the Lexus, but **it**’s a big car.’

(Hasegawa, 2010:87)

- b. *Aaa, kyoo mo hare. ashita mo hare, ashita mo hare hen*  
 ah today also clear tomorrow also clear tomorrow also clear not  
*kana. Ashita hare-tara, ano sandaru hako.*  
 SFP tomorrow clear-COND that sandal wear

‘Well, it’s a beautiful day today. Tomorrow, I hope the weather will be fine again tomorrow. If it’s fine, I’ll wear **those** sandals.’

(Hasegawa, 2010:88)

Hayashi’s (2004) data are partially explained by the semiactive reference analysis of the *a*-series. Let us first compare the cataphoricity of *a*- and *ko*-. Hasegawa (2010) describes the latter as a fictive deictic process: “the speaker places an imaginary package in front of the addressee and refers to it with demonstrative *ko*-. Then the package is opened” (83). The fact that *ko*- picks out an entity in the center of a speaker’s consciousness highlights the fact that it will be expanded upon: otherwise why indicate its central position in one’s thoughts? *A*- is different. It picks out an entity in the speaker’s semiactive consciousness, i.e., one which is always accessible from permanent memory and which can be focussed at will (Hasegawa, 2010:91). If a speaker refers to a hearer-new entity with *are*, it creates an expectation that the entity will shortly thereafter be a topic of discussion, and that at that point both interlocutors will have some knowledge about it. It differs from *ko*- in that the entity is portrayed as semiactive: perhaps the speaker was just reminded of it, or it will take time to retrieve from memory and formulate linguistically. Indeed, *are* is used to indicate trouble with lexical retrieval (Hayashi, 2004:1638–1639). Like *ko*-, it is not specifically cataphoric, but in the proper contexts, its indexical properties can give rise to cataphora-like expectations.

The two projection functions Hayashi (2004) identifies are derivable from *are*’s deictic properties. The first function is creating conversational space to perform an action which is projected by the *are*-containing turn. When Akira says *saikin are nan desu yo* ‘Lately it’s been that thing’, he is in fact giving an explanation. It is simply that the content of the explanation is just *are*, which causes the other discourse participants to orient to Akira’s resolving the referent of *are*. Additional turn space is made available because (a) an explanation is a multi-unit endeavor, especially an explanation after the initial try was not received well, and (b) *are* indicates that the referent is not currently in focus, and the speaker is taking time to retrieve it and put it in words. In essence, by combining *are* with a minimal speech act, the speaker is saying that they want to perform some speech act, but haven’t brought together all the lexical and/or constructional resources yet to ex-

ecute it. *Are* picks out that yet-to-be formulated, semiactive state-of-affairs, indicating to the addressee that the fully-formed speech act is yet to come. Whether this line of reasoning extends to other actions a speaker could project (Hayashi provides only instances of explanation-giving) must remain for future research, but unless the data look remarkably different, there is no reason that they could not be explained by *are*'s deictic properties.

The other function, securing the role of speaker and the attention of others in the interaction, is also predicted. The TV host in (7) uses a semantically light sentence with *are* to orient the others to being recipients of a confirmation request (Hayashi, 2004:1361). As cooperative speakers, they must relinquish any rights to speakership until the fully-specified request has been made (i.e., the referent of *are* is revealed). Even if the speaker's consciousness was already focused on the ultimate referent (which ends up being a nominal description, 'one-shot scheme'), he displayed himself as currently retrieving it from memory, drawing attention to himself and creating suspense. The use in (6) illustrates a strategic deployment of *are*. So far as the analyst can discern, she has already prepared an utterance and accompanying gesture. Nevertheless, by using *are* as though she required space to formulate her turn, the speaker gets the desired effect of drawing her interlocutors' attention.

It seems, then, that the inherent properties of *are* are compatible with certain cataphoric functions, despite the general tendency for cataphora to be associated with proximal demonstratives (Hayashi 2004:1339, Dixon 2003:83–84). Yet, as a projector, *are* has two associated constraints that do not follow from more general principles. The first is syntactic. Hayashi notes that action projection is accomplished with a semantically light sentence, specifically "the distal demonstrative *are*...followed by some type of copula (e.g., *ja*, *deshoo*, *da*, *desu*, *na*), auxiliaries (e.g., *nakatta*), and/or final particles (e.g., *yo*, *ne*, *n*)" (1348). It is reasonable that a move intended exclusively to project upcoming action would be as semantically and syntactically minimal as possible. Yet there are other means of being minimal. One is the verb *aru* 'exist', which is frequently called for as a light or support verb in constructions that are not predominantly about existence.<sup>4</sup> Yet, Hayashi reports no examples of *are ga aru no desu* 'It/that exists', 'There's it/that'.

The minimal sentences that house *are* do not convey much beyond what is contained in the pragmatic particles. As such, they almost demand the addressee to wait for the rest of the content to arrive. All else being equal, we should expect that a sentence that *explicitly* instructs the addressee to wait for more information to be acceptable with *are*—yet, it is impossible (13). The more canonical means to do cataphora—*kore* 'this'—is acceptable, just as in English.

- (13) *kore/#are o kiite.*  
 this/#that ACC listen  
 'Listen to this.'

<sup>4</sup>For example, *-ta koto ga aru* [-PAST NMLZ NOM exist], as an expression of past experience.

The limitation to simple declarative copular clauses—motivated by functional considerations though it may be—is a grammatical fact not derivable from any facts about the particular lexical items involved, or by the pragmatic function the sentences have. Hasegawa's (2010) conclusion that *are* can refer to a semiactive referent was based on data from non-copular clauses, and *are* is not confined to a single clause type when used spatial-deictically or to refer to an entity familiar to both speaker and addressee.<sup>5</sup> It applies only to *are* as it is used to project future actions.

The second unexpected constraint is that, as a projector, *are* must be used in a sentence that does projection in a particular way. The projector sentences Hayashi examines all foreshadow the ultimate action by carrying the appropriate pragmatic markers (*no da*, *chau n*, etc.). These markers, or those with comparable effect, appear on the clause that carries out the main part of that projected action. This is not the case with projection in general. Consider the following cataphoric uses of *this* in English. The sentence that introduces the referent with *this* need not resemble the sentence that reveals what *this* refers to, syntactically, semantically, or pragmatically.

- (14) a. You'll never believe this. A stranger keeps calling me. [statement → statement]  
 b. How about this? If you don't stop calling me, I'll call the police. [question → threat]  
 c. Listen to this. They're canceling the picnic because of poor air quality. [command → statement]

With all this in mind, the grammatical construction that describes the *are* sentences must specify the following:

- (15) a. A declarative copular clause with single obligatory argument, *are*.  
 b. *Are* refers to a hearer-new entity which is accessible to the speaker.  
 c. The clause is designed to enact—and has the grammatical form of—the speech act which the speaker ultimately plans to perform, and (the propositional content of) which is referred to by *are*.

In its off-the-shelf specification, *are* differs from *kore* in being able to refer to a hearer-new entity. The account must allow for *are* to override this fact while maintaining its

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<sup>5</sup>Hasegawa (2010) does not explicitly state one way or the other whether references to commonly-known referents should be subsumed within the semiactive referent function of *are*. It does not seem out of the question for a highly-topical referent to be picked out by *are*. On the other hand, if the hierarchy of Gundel et al. (1993) is applied, a referent with active status would also have, by implication, at least semiactive status, and so would be referable to by *are* or *kore*, with the choice potentially giving rise to conversational implicature. Hasegawa (2010:86, 87, 91) discusses some situations in which either demonstrative is possible in soliloquy. Systematic study of dialogue is necessary in this domain.

remaining syntactic and semantic (deictic) properties. One way to do this is by the Riehemann/Sag treatment of idiomatic expressions introduced for *just saying* in Chapter 3. Recall that in this framework, the frames of a language are classed as either idiomatic or canonical. Each lexeme is associated with a frame, and can thus be classed as one of the two categories. The syntactic relevance of a word's idiom/canonical status is registered by the feature LID (lexical identifier), which identifies lexeme-level meaning and which in nearly all cases cross-references the frame evoked by the word (Sag, 2010b:55).<sup>6</sup> By default, a verb or other predicator's argument structure only contains canonical signs, with only certain verbs selecting idiomatic arguments.

As an example, consider *pull strings* meaning 'use influence'. The lexicon contains (16) as an entry for the idiomatic sense of *strings* (Sag, 2010b:(73)).

(16)	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">FORM</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">⟨<i>strings</i>⟩</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">ARG-ST</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">⟨⟩</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">SYN</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">[CAT [LID X]]</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">SEM</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">INDEX</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">FRAMES</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">⟨X: [i-strings-fr] [ENTITY <i>i</i>]⟩</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>	FORM	⟨ <i>strings</i> ⟩	ARG-ST	⟨⟩	SYN	[CAT [LID X]]	SEM	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">INDEX</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">FRAMES</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">⟨X: [i-strings-fr] [ENTITY <i>i</i>]⟩</td> </tr> </table>	INDEX	<i>s</i>	FRAMES	⟨X: [i-strings-fr] [ENTITY <i>i</i> ]⟩
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The lexeme is prespecified as *strings* (i.e., there is no singular form), takes no arguments, and its unique lexical identifier (LID) is *X*, i.e., identical to the frame it evokes, *i-strings-fr*. The meaning of *i-strings-fr* need not be specified in the grammar (i.e., in the portion of the grammar where the fine-grained details of frame semantics are registered—these are not normally spelled out as parts of feature structures, and could in principle take any form, e.g., logical formulae, image schemas (Bergen & Chang, 2005), etc.). For certain speakers, the meaning may be identical to that of *influence*, but others may associate the word's contribution to the idiom with different meanings. Phrases headed by this word will be [LID *i-strings-fr*], and thus be unselectable except by the following entry for *pull* (Sag, 2010b:(17)).

<sup>6</sup>Exceptions to this include syntactically-independent but semantically vacuous elements of multi-word idioms, such as *bucket* in *kick the bucket* 'die'. Since none of the constructions I examine are of this type, I assume that LID is identical to the word's evoked frame.

$$(17) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{strans-v-lxm} \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle \textit{pull} \rangle \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad \text{NP} \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right], \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad \text{NP} \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{LID} \quad \textit{i-strings-fr} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{LID} \quad X \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle X: \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{pulling}^{\textit{strings-fr}} \\ \text{AGENT} \quad i \\ \text{ENTITY} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

This entry for *pull* denotes the *pulling*<sup>*strings-fr*</sup>, which has a meaning approximately like that of *use*. Its LID is canonical, as phrases headed by *pull strings* combine freely with higher canonical structures: *I think they pulled some strings*, *They seem to have pulled some strings*.

I posit in (19) the lexical entry for cataphoric *are*, a type of demonstrative pronoun lexeme (18), alongside non-cataphoric *are*, *kore*, and *sore*.

(18) Demonstrative pronoun lexical class

$$\textit{dem-pron-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{noun} \\ \text{SELECT} \quad \textit{none} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \langle \rangle \\ \text{C-INDS} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SPKR} \quad s \end{array} \right] \\ \text{CNTXT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CR-MOVE} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{demonstrating-fr} \\ \text{DEMONSTRATOR} \quad s \\ \text{DEMONSTRATUM} \quad i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

As a class, demonstrative pronouns are nouns that do not modify (SELECT) anything or take any complements. I represent their meaning contribution as purely on the contextual domain, i.e., they evoke no semantic frames but constrain the speaker to be “demonstrating” the referent of the demonstrative. For the sake of concreteness, I assume that demonstrating is ultimately a type of referential intent (Kaplan, 1989a,b; Bach, 1992), but this is not crucial for my argument.

(19) Cataphoric *are*

FORM	⟨ <i>are</i> ⟩																			
SYN	[CAT [LID <i>i-are-fr</i> ]]																			
SEM	[INDEX <i>i</i> ]																			
CNTXT	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding-right: 10px; vertical-align: top;">INFO-STATUS</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">⟨ <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>activation-status</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">REFERENT</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>i</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">SPKR</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>semiactive</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">ADDR</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>new</i></td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding-right: 10px; vertical-align: top;">CR-MOVE</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">⟨ <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>speech-act</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">ACT-TYPE</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> </table> , <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>projection-fr</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">PROJECTED-ACT</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> </table> ⟩ </td> </tr> </table>	INFO-STATUS	⟨ <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>activation-status</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">REFERENT</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>i</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">SPKR</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>semiactive</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">ADDR</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>new</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>activation-status</i>	REFERENT	<i>i</i>		SPKR	<i>semiactive</i>		ADDR	<i>new</i>	CR-MOVE	⟨ <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>speech-act</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">ACT-TYPE</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> </table> , <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"><i>projection-fr</i></td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">PROJECTED-ACT</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;"><i>s</i></td> </tr> </table> ⟩	<i>speech-act</i>	ACT-TYPE	<i>s</i>	<i>projection-fr</i>	PROJECTED-ACT	<i>s</i>
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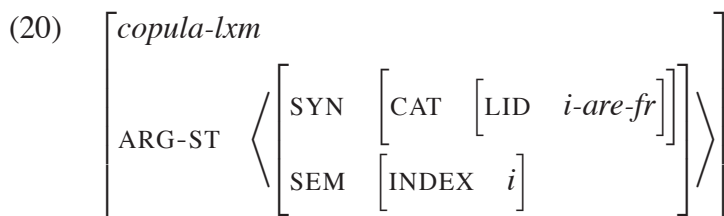
*Are*, as the distributionally limited expression in the projection construction, has an idiomatic LID. I introduce the contextual feature INFO(RMATON)-STATUS as a way to track the given/newness of referring expressions. The feature is motivated not only here but in several studies showing that lexical items and grammatical constructions are sensitive to information-structural status (Prince, 1981; Gundel et al., 1993; Ward & Birner, 2006; Birner et al., 2007). It is a list-valued attribute, allowing easy combination with other signs that have their own information-status specifications.

Action-projection information is registered as part of the current-move of which *are* is a part. The current move is specified as enacting a speech act of type *s*, and that type same type of act is projected in a future action. Following the CA literature, I take projection to be a basic element of interaction, represented here as a frame. The single FE is the projected action. The fact that the speaker is the one doing the projecting is built into the frame, as it is impossible to project a future action of the addressee (influence, yes, but not project as described in this chapter). This type of projection does not include projection on the lexical or grammatical levels. Grammatical projection is captured in the inherent properties of the lexical and grammatical constructions, which contain certain parts linearly arranged with respect to others. No semantic frame is necessary to specify, for example, that an initial auxiliary portends an upcoming subject, followed by the remainder of the predicate. I would even claim that *I have something to tell you* does not need to contextually evoke *projection-fr*. Its (literal) lexical content is enough to instruct the addressee to await news. It is for constructions which would not otherwise be expected to project an upcoming action that explicit mention of projection is necessary.

*Are* as a projector is limited to copular clauses. The copula in (20) selects specifically for cataphoric *are*. Its parent class, *copula-lxm*, covers both the standard Japanese copula *da* (and its inflected and negated forms) and the Kansai dialect form *chau*, etymologically



related to *chigau* ‘wrong, different’ but functionally similar to the copula in certain contexts (Hayashi, 2004:1348, Palter & Slotsve, 2006:24–25).<sup>7</sup>



Because CONTEXT information travels unrestrictedly up the tree, the contextual information specified in *are* could just as well be recorded as part of the copula’s lexical entry. There are two reasons, however, that slightly favor the current set-up. First, the semantic heavy-lifter (to the extent that there is one), and the reason that this pattern accomplishes action-projection, is *are*. Its peculiar deictic properties have lent themselves to development into this pragmatic function. The copula simply provides a convenient way to present *are* with minimal added semantics. Second, if the construction were to later extend to other syntactic contexts or to perform more functions, it would likely be centered around *are*, rather than the copula.

Unlike *spill*—the lexical entry dedicated to selecting the idiomatic noun *beans*—the special copula does not have an idiomatic meaning: it is identical to the copula that appears in completely ordinary Japanese clauses. It is still necessary to posit this lexical entry, however, in order to guarantee that (i) cataphoric *are* is selected by at least one governor, and (ii) it is selected only by a copula. This situation, where an idiomatic argument (e.g., a noun) must appear with only one verb, where that verb nevertheless retains its canonical

<sup>7</sup>Yoko Hasegawa pointed out to me that in some cases the light verb *suru* ‘do’ may be possible with *are*:

- (i) A: *Shooganai yo. Nee, are, shinai?*  
 nothing.to.be.done SFP PT that not.do

‘There’s nothing to be done about it. Hey, do you want to do that thing?’

B: *Nani?*  
 What

‘What?’

A: *Suupaa Mario*  
 Super Mario

‘Super Mario’

B: *Moo akita*  
 already grown.tired

‘I’ve had enough of it.’

Though I cannot address such data in full, I raise the possibility that it is better understood as a word search (Hayashi, 2004:1368), a potentially different construction. Word searches and speech-act projection are clearly related, however. I leave the topic for future research.

meaning, seems to be very rare. It has not to my knowledge been discussed as a category in the idiom literature, and I have only identified a few clear cases in English (21). *A little bird* is an idiomatic way of referring to an unnamed informant, but the phrase can only be interpreted this way as the agent of *tell*. *Tell* seems to have exactly the same meaning as it normally does. Less clear but equally idiomatic (see Fillmore et al. 1988) is *answer the door*, where *the door* refers to a summons at an entrance, but only as the object of *answer* (*\*respond to/scared of the door*), which retains its canonical meaning.<sup>8</sup>

- (21) a. **A little bird** told me what was going on.  
 b. I'll answer **the door**.

For these idioms, the Riehemann/Sag approach requires an additional lexical entry for the verb, equivalent in all ways to the canonical verb except for the specification of an idiomatic expression as one of its arguments. In the case of Japanese, this means a copular lexeme with the same syntax and semantics as the regular copula, but requiring cataphoric *are*.

No other constraints are placed on the parts of the idiom. Adverbial modification and the numerous sentence-final pragmatic strategies that Japanese has for indicating speaker stance and speech act type combine freely with *are* and the copula, as they would in any sentence. *Are* states that whatever action is formulated by the speaker in the *are*-utterance foreshadows, nearly exactly, a future speech act in which the referent is resolved. This mostly-lexical approach to the pattern may not be what Hayashi (2004) intended when he suggested that *are*+copula was a grammatical construction (1365). This analysis does not posit a partially-fixed phrasal template, but rather two tightly constrained lexical items whose cooccurrence results in an idiomatic interpretation that in all other ways exhibits unremarkable syntactic behavior.

### 5.3 English

English possesses a construction remarkably similar to *are*+copula in both form and function. The pattern [*it be* AdjP] is used to introduce a narrative by means of an evaluative statement, as Marie does in (22). I will refer to the pattern as IBE, for *it-be*-[evaluation]. I argue that *it* in IBE, like Japanese *are*, is unexpectedly cataphoric, in this case referring to the entire upcoming narrative. The evaluation characterizes the narrative before it is told,

<sup>8</sup>Web searches will yield other lexico-syntactic contexts for these idioms, including *I heard it from a little bird* and *ignore the door*. In defense of treating them as lexically limited is the fact that these other contexts constitute a significant minority. The cited verbs are the center of the category and the others extensions from them. Moreover, the extensions are within a coherent semantic domain: *?\*inform a little bird* is almost impossible (informing and telling describe the same type of scene, but typically “little birds” do the telling, not the learning), and *\*A hitman shot a/my little bird* is worse. *\*Tape-record the door* ‘tape-record the summons’ is similarly out.

preparing the recipients to locate the climax of the narrative and to react in an appropriate way.

(22) SBCSAE: 36.cha, 18:30

LISA: (.) So whatever .

LISA: (..) I was just like +...

KEVIN: Oh: 「 boy: 』 .

MARIE: 〴 Oh

**it was s:o funny one day .**

MARIE: Um

&=in (.) &=ex

uh Kent was (..) at the (.) store &=ex .

MARIE: And me and Cassie were talking

and I was just like

(..) that's before he fired Barry.

To better characterize the construction, I first introduce the analytic categories of narrative and evaluation from the perspectives of Labovian narrative analysis and Conversation Analysis. These two categories, I contend, are the key elements of IBE. I then propose a SBCG analysis of IBE, much in the manner done for Japanese, by comparing IBE with several syntactically-similar English constructions.

### 5.3.1 Narratives, evaluations, and reportability

Narratives have been approached from two directions. On the one hand is the sociolinguistic approach of Labov (Labov, 1972c, 1981, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1967), a primary concern of which is to understand the internal structure of a narrative and the social motivations for that structure. Labov's work is almost entirely based on narratives of personal experience, as elicited and told in sociolinguistic interviews. On the other hand is the Conversation Analytic approach to narratives (or story-telling, as it is sometimes called in that literature), as exemplified by Sacks (1974), Jefferson (1978), Schegloff (1997), and Norrick (2005). That branch of research is interested in the structure of stories as well, but also attends more closely to the ways in which stories arise, are told, and are exited, in the course of larger stretches of talk.

Both approaches to narratives have arrived at similar concepts surrounding the notions of *evaluation* and *reportability* or *tellability*. Evaluation is one aspect of a narrative that Labov identifies, among the following narrative parts:

- (23)
- a. Abstract: a clause appearing near the beginning of a narrative that summarizes the events of the narrative.
  - b. Orientation: a clause that gives information on the time, place, and players of the narrative.
  - c. Complicating action: a clause that reports a next event in the narrative.
  - d. Evaluation: Information about or characterization of the consequences of the event for human needs and desires.
  - e. Resolution: Any complicating actions that follow the most reportable event.
  - f. Coda: The final clause(s) in the narrative, returning the story to the time of speaking.

Statements that evaluate the content of a narrative (from two examples below, *it was insane!* and *And then, like the **very same day, like, later that day, I started feeling sick***) convey why what the speaker is saying is so important, so worth talking about. It is in service of what Labov (1972c:370) calls *reportability*: the quality a narrative must have to defend the teller against claims of irrelevance or lack of interest. Sacks (1992) arrived at a notion much like reportability, which he called *tellability*. For Sacks, a remarkable fact about narratives is that they seem to circumvent the normal rules of turn-taking (described in detail by Sacks et al. 1974), in which the end of every TCU becomes a place where transition to a new speaker is possible. In order to guarantee that a story comes completion in an orderly fashion, a speaker is motivated to orient the recipients to hearing a story and yielding the floor (Sacks, 1974; Schegloff, 1980:146; Schegloff, 1982). Without a “tellable” story to tell, this is much more difficult.

As an aside, both Labov (1972c) and Sacks view tellability as an “inherent property of the (detached) content of a story” (Norricks, 2005:324). This view has come under criticism (Norricks, 2005:325–326), but there must be some kernel of it that is true. The fact that IBE pre-evaluates the story suggests that the intending storyteller has conceived of the story as a packaged whole, with properties that can be mentioned even before it is told. Even if its tellability is renegotiated in the course of the telling, the speaker has predicted its tellability in advance.

A short example of some of these properties at work is shown in (24). The narrative in question is in boldface.

(24) Fisher: fsh\_60088, 8:35

- 1 L: Are you from, um, around there or ...?
- 2 R: No, I, um – I grew up mostly in –
- 3 L: [NOISE]
- 4 R: – Oklahoma but I actually went to –
- 5 L: [NOISE]
- 6 R: – college in Philadelphia so –

- 7 L: Mhm. [NOISE] So, you had to deal with the snow a lot then. [MN]  
 8 R: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, it was so frigging cold and you had to, like, walk to class –  
 9 L: [NOISE]  
 10 R: – you know [LAUGH]. It was like – [LAUGH]  
 11 L: Mhm.  
 12 R: Yeah.  
 13 L: Yeah. That’s what makes people sick. [LAUGH]  
 14 R: **Yeah. Oh, I remember this one time I was in lecture and there was**  
 15 **this guy behind me who was just really sick and, like, he sneezed all**  
 16 **over my back.**  
 17 L: Oh.  
 18 R: **And then, like, the very same day, like, later that day, I started feeling**  
 19 **sick. [LAUGH]**  
 20 L: Oh.  
 21 R: **It was not fun and, yeah. [LAUGH]**  
 22 L: [MN] You just want to tell those people to stay home –  
 23 R: I know.

Line 14 and the first half of 15 are orientation clauses. The remainder of line 15, and line 16 contain complicating actions: temporally and causally-linked events. The most reportable event (see below for discussion) is reported in *he sneezed all over my back*. The description of the event continues through several lines (the resolution), and finally ends with the coda in line 21, which provides a summary evaluation from the speaker in the here-and-now.

Throughout lines 16–19 are several evaluative elements. These include the intensifier *all over, very same*, and the repetition of *very same day* and *later that day*. These serve to display the narrator’s stance towards the event: surprise and disappointment at the negative outcome of the sneezing encounter.

Similar to Labov’s notion of evaluation is *assessment* (Goodwin, 1986, 1996; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Pomerantz, 1984; Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008). Unlike evaluation as a term of art in narrative analysis, any speaker can give an assessment of anyone else’s depicted object, person, or situation. A formulaic method of doing assesment is with the syntactic frame *it was X*, where X is an AdjP or NP (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:446). An example of this is shown in (25). The assessment, *it’s insane*, targets the situation described by Abbie surrounding her family.

(25) Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008:446)

**Insane** (Game Night, 8)

(Abbie is explaining how her mother has been getting anxious about Abbie’s sister and her husband’s plans for Christmas.)

Abbie: a:nd in- (0.9) <where they spend most of their time>, is like this major

- bone of contention about whether they spend time at my parent's house or his parent's house? (.) six bl[ocks,
- Maureen: [six blocks away?
- Abbie: °yes.° (1.0) °it's insane.° (.) so, (1.5) I already wa:rned my sister I said look Mo:m's out there and she's CRANky so (.) whate:ver you DO, just be careful.=

Here, the assessment also functions as an evaluation, framing the series of events just mentioned as important to “human needs and desires.”

Evaluations and assessments need not come after the main part of a story. One place they can appear is along with the narrative abstract. The abstract indicates to the recipient in advance what the most significant part of the narrative is. When accompanied by an evaluation, it prefigures the stance the speaker will take to the upcoming narrative. Why would an intending story-teller do such a thing? It is in service of reportability. Reportability centers around a *most reportable event*: “the event that is less common than any other in the narrative and has the greatest effect upon the needs and desires of the participants in the narrative” (Labov, 1997:page). Getting to that event and its evaluation, and getting a good reaction from the recipients, is the point of the narrative. A speaker who provides at the onset an evaluation that spells out the significance of the story is attempting to ensure that the narrative will be received as reportable (Labov, 1972c:366).

Sacks (1974) too recognized the significance of what happens before the main narrative is launched into. He noticed that intending tellers and intended recipients engage in a *story preface sequence* before a story is begun in full. A typical story preface sequence takes at minimum two turns, one in which the intending teller indicates that there is a story to tell, and one in which recipient accepts the role of story recipient or declines to hear the story. The first turn may contain one or more of the following (Sacks, 1974:340):

- (26) a. an offer to tell the story, or a request for a chance to tell it  
 b. a characterization or evaluation of the story  
 c. an indication of the source of the story (particularly common with joke-tellings)

We see again here the provision for “evaluation of the story,” even before the narrative has begun. As with evaluations that appear with abstracts, the function is to draw the attention of the intended recipients and hint at what sort of “punch line” to expect and how to react to it.

The written example in (27) contains an the abstract *I had an epiphany* alongside an evaluation *it was horrible*. The evaluative description of the emotional reaction to the central event of the story serves to establish its reportability/tellability (as a written text, it cannot contain a sequence as described by Sacks, but we can understand the first line of text as roughly equivalent to the first turn that contains one or more of the elements in (26)).

- (27) While (tee-)totally sober last night, I had an epiphany (Oh **it was horrible**. Whoever it was that said enlightenment would set you free must have been totally coked up or shot up)...

First, some background: Flooded to the gills with antibiotics and some insanely powerful flu meds [...]

(<http://khaitzer.blogspot.com/2008/02/lush-kaki-botol-alcoholic-bar-fly.html>,  
Dec 10 2011)

Like *it was insane* and *it was horrible*, *it was so funny* in (22) is an evaluative statement. What is puzzling about *it was so funny* is that it is an evaluation of a situation which has not been mentioned. It provides the speaker's opinion about the key event of a story, but appears at the very outset of the story, with no accompanying abstract, and so the referent of *it* is, initially, not resolvable. The next section takes the tools of narrative analysis we have introduced—especially evaluation and assessment, reportability, and story prefaces—and turns them toward understanding IBE's function and how it should be captured within SBCG.

### 5.3.2 Prefacing a story in English

The extract below adds further context to (22). Lisa is coming to the end of her telling of an encounter with someone not present in the current interaction. In the course of Lisa's story, Marie has not said much, and when the talk dies down, she initiates a turn with *it was so funny*. From there she launches into an extended story which begins with orientation clauses that establish the location and coparticipants in the story. The central part of the story is quite long and is delayed by other participants multiple times, so I do not reproduce it here. It surrounds Marie having a conversation with a coworker about judgmental attitudes towards those with drug addictions, a topic which their boss, Kent, is evidently sensitive to. Marie incited the conversation in an attempt to get a rise out of Kent, who was within earshot but in a back room. The crux of the story comes when Kent calls the two back to talk. Marie is worried that he will be angry and fire them, but it turns out that he simply wants to ask about a coworker.

- (28) SBCSAE: 36.cha, 18:30

LISA: ʘ It's ʘ just like  
well  
you know  
you just proved that you absolutely know nothing about the Catholic  
religion .  
KEVIN: ʘ &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʘ &=laugh ʘ2 &=laugh ʘ2 .

MARIE: ʼ xx xx xx xx ʼ .

LISA: ʼ2 You know what I mean ʼ2  
&=laugh  
That [% laugh] ʼ was [% laugh] never [% laugh] the ʼ point +...

MARIE: ʼ &=ex ʼ .

KEVIN: ʼ &=laugh &=laugh ʼ .

MARIE: ʼ2 &=in ʼ2 .

KEVIN: ʼ2 &=in ʼ2 .

LISA: ʼ2 you know ʼ2 ?

KEVIN: &=laugh .

MARIE: &=in .

LISA: (.) So whatever .

LISA: (..) I was just like +...

KEVIN: Oh: ʼ boy: ʼ .

MARIE: ʼ Oh  
**it was s:ʼo funny one day .**

MARIE: Um  
&=in (.) &=ex  
uh Kent was (..) at the (..) store &=ex .

MARIE: And me and Cassie were talking  
and I was just like  
(..) that's before he fired Barry .

MARIE: (.) I guess .

LISA: (..) Hm ?

MARIE: He &y that's the day he asked us about Barry .

MARIE: &=in .

LISA: (..) Asked you about Barry .

MARIE: ʼ Yeah ʼ .

LISA: ʼ xx xx ʼ .

MARIE: Cause that was the day he said he was gonna fire +/.

MARIE: Well he had told us that he probably was gonna let him go +...  
(many lines omitted)

MARIE: (..) And I was just going off and off  
ʼ and you could just ʼ +...

KEVIN: ʼ Did he react ʼ ?

MARIE: &=in He did .

MARIE: He just did really quiet .

MARIE: And then he's all  
uh Marie\_A and Cassie  
can I talk to you for a minute ?

MARIE: And I was all  
&l=VOX oh my God ʼ he's gonna ʼ f-2ire us &l=VOX ʼ2 .



- KEVIN: ʌ &=laugh &=laugh ʌ  
 ʌ2 &=laugh &=laugh ʌ2 ʌ3 &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʌ3 .
- LISA: ʌ3 &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʌ3 &=laugh &=laugh ʌ4  
 &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʌ4 .
- MARIE: ʌ4 &=SCREECHING ʌ4 ʌ5 &=in ʌ5 .
- LISA: ʌ5 &=in He wouldn't ʌ5 fire you .
- LISA: &=in I could just see this  
 (.) &y &k +/.
- LISA: ʌ You're going to unemploy<sup>ment</sup> +...
- KEVIN: ʌ You could s:ue ʌ .
- LISA: and the reason for &=in unemployment  
 uh well I said something about drug addiction .
- LISA: ʌ You know what I mean [% laugh] ʌ ?
- KEVIN: ʌ &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʌ ʌ2 &=laugh &=laugh  
 &=laugh &=in ʌ2 ʌ3 ʌ3 .
- MARIE: ʌ &=laugh ʌ ʌ2 &=laugh &=laugh ʌ2 .
- LISA: ʌ2 &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh ʌ2 .
- MARIE: ʌ3 But ʌ3 you know  
 I was just  
 ʌ thought he was +...
- KEVIN: ʌ Sue: ʌ .
- MARIE: I ʌ thought he was gonna preach something like to me like  
 &{l=VOX well I was one  
 and I don't consider myself &}l=VOX +/.
- MARIE: You know I thought he was gonna ʌ bring ʌ +...
- LISA: ʌ And he was ʌ gonna tell you something about the boiler .
- LISA: ʌ2 Or he'll X ʌ2 ʌ3 X X ʌ3 ʌ4 X ʌ4 .
- MARIE: ʌ2 No ʌ2  
 ʌ3 and he ʌ3 ʌ4 xx xx ʌ4 +...
- KEVIN: ʌ4 Hu:nh ʌ4 ?
- MARIE: No .
- MARIE: And he (.) ʌ ended up asking ʌ us +...
- LISA: ʌ Cause at the store ʌ +...
- MARIE: &=in well  
 (.) what  
 how would you &s +/.
- MARIE: How would you (.) describe (..) Barry .
- MARIE: (..) And his work .
- MARIE: (.) And I was like  
 (.) &=in he's all  
 and be careful when you answer this question  
 and I'm like

- (..) so I was all  
 (.) &l=VOX well I don't know &l=VOX .
- MARIE: I said  
 「 because 〚 &l=VOX I don't work with him in the morning anymore  
 &=laugh & }l=VOX .
- LISA: 〚 &=laugh 〚 .
- MARIE: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh  
 &=in I was all  
 but when I did  
 you know  
 I didn't think he was a good worker .
- MARIE: He's all  
 &{l=VOX very good answer .
- MARIE: Very good answer &}l=VOX .
- MARIE: &=in But it was just Barry .
- MARIE: It just had +/.
- MARIE: (.) You know  
 and 「 he +...
- KEVIN: 〚 &l=@ Nothing then to do with what you were &l=@ 〚 +...
- MARIE: &=in Not anything 〚 to do with what I said  
 「2 but you could tell that 〚2 +...

Marie's *it was so funny one day* simultaneously accomplishes several tasks. It establishes tellability: funny stories are worth listening to. It helps recipients identify how the story will end and how to react to it. At a key point, where Marie reports a potentially traumatic event, Kevin and Lisa respond with laughter: *And I was all, oh my God he's gonna fire us*. Their orientation throughout the interaction is also towards the humorous: the several times Lisa interrupts the story are to introduce a humorous observation or question about the players in Marie's story. Finally, the referent of *it* is not resolvable in the prior discourse, forcing the addressees to either wait for it to be revealed—thus aligning to recipientship of a story—or to immediately confront the speaker as to the referent.<sup>9</sup> I argue that, as with Japanese *are*, Marie's utterance encodes an action projection function. In particular, IBE is a story preface, an utterance type that appears as the very first part

<sup>9</sup>Marie's telling is interrupted multiple times by commentary from Lisa. Lisa and Marie are, however, oriented to the fact that there is an ongoing story. At Lisa's first interruption, she says, *I'm gonna get you off subject right here*. The transition back to Marie's story is also sensitive to her role as narrator (*anyway* and *but* indicate a shift in topic):

- (i) LISA: (..) Okay anyways s<sup>〚</sup>o 〚 +...  
 MARIE: 〚 &=in 〚 But he +/.

Similar exchanges occur repeatedly throughout Marie's attempt to get her story out.

of a (incipient) narrative, which expresses an evaluation of the story which the speaker immediately thereafter begins to tell.

The presence of IBE in this particular sequential pattern was noticed by Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008). They examined expressions which provide assessments of a situation or event involving the pattern in (29),<sup>10</sup> finding four categories based on the sequential position between the assessing phrase (X) and the assessable (Y): *Retrospective X*, *Incremental Y*, *Prospective X*, and *Integrated Y*. These are illustrated in (30), with the X part in boldface (descriptions and transcripts reproduced from the indicated source).

(29) it/that + BE + evaluative adjective/noun (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:446)

(30) a. Retrospective X (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(9))

Beth: we're= we're proposing ourselves as uh prospective homebuyers to see what they're [gonna (do).  
Ann: [oh (h)ho ho:::..  
Don: °() - **that's a good idea.**

b. Incremental Y (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(12))

(Much earlier in this conversation, John announced to his friends Don and Ann that he recently gave up smoking.)

John: so that- that was really=  
=**that was really nice.** hh  
(0.5)  
**(I mean- to be able to do that)=**

Ann: =and you don't have any bad feelings.

c. Prospective X (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(17))

(Nan, who is middle-aged, is telling her friend Emma about the other students in her night-school psychology class.)

Nan: they are so cute ↓yeah they really.  
they were just (.) ve:ry.hhhhh very very sweet with me:  
and **it was so funny**  
in fact one of the kids came up to me;  
(.) one of the young.hhhh fellas that (.)  
Ra:lph's about twenty two:

Emm: mm h[hm:ç]

Nan: [a:]nd he had been,h in. (.)

one of my mi:cro groups right at the very beginning.

<sup>10</sup>By *pattern*, Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson mean “a recurrent interactional practice which has not become sedimented as a *grammatical* format, but is instead a *pragmatic* routine for assessing a situation or event in social interaction” (445).

- d. Integrated Y (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(23))  
 (Teresa has been telling about recently going to a cheap-rate movie theater and not having to show her ticket.)
- T: I hate myself mentally for go(h)ing there=  
 J: =I know.  
 (2.0)
- T: .hhh **it is great that we got in for free though.**=  
 J: =mhmm.

These categories would probably receive rather different treatments from the perspective of traditional linguistic categories. Retrospective X has an anaphoric subject: the pronoun *it* or *that* refers back to some chunk of prior discourse, which is assessed. Incremental Y is not a clear analytic category from a syntactic or semantic point of view. It is defined as having an initial Y which is “often implicit” (449), then an assessment (X) which, in the absence of uptake, is followed by an elaboration of Y. This would be categorized in a couple different ways: as an extraposition with the extraposed clause delayed or parceled out across several intonational units, or as an initial attempt at anaphoric reference which fails, upon which the speaker supplies an elaboration of the anaphoric reference. Prospective X is our IBE construction. Integrated Y is canonical extraposition.

Their description (453) of Prospective X meshes nicely with my claim that IBE is a projector construction. They identify the assessment phrase (*funny*) as what Goodwin (1996:384) calls a *prospective indexical*, a description of something that will be revealed in subsequent discourse and to which other discourse participants orient to finding out. The Y component they describe as syntactically independent from X and potentially lasting several turns, “sometimes involving a whole set of events or an entire story” (2008:453).

The analytic payoff for Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson is that it becomes possible to describe traditional, syntactically-integrated extraposition as part of a larger set of assessment resources:

[T]he syntactic CONSTRUCTION known as ‘extraposition’ can be revealingly understood as a syntacticized version of the Prospective X and the Incremental Y patterns in amalgamation, where the prospective assessment and the dependently formatted assessable are bundled together and tied to one another grammatically and prosodically (460). (emphasis original)

Their rather neat analysis arises from the crossing of one recurrent syntactic feature—*it/that be* [adj/noun]—with one parameter of sequentiality—X-then-Y or Y-then-X. The analytic gains made by juxtaposing extraposition with other patterns of assessment are not to be ignored, and the description of Prospective X as including a prospective indexical and standing syntactically independently from the assessed story is a promising beginning. On the other hand, it leaves much unsaid. It is still useful, even essential, to ask to what

degree the patterns they observe are *expected*, given what else we know about how those same patterns are used in the language in general. For instance, how does the subject pronoun work together with the prospective indexical to achieve a proposition? Is the pronoun referential or an expletive? Are the same pronouns available in Prospective X as in the other patterns? Without asking such questions, we are in danger of not fully grasping what is surprising about the construction. My SBCG analysis will take Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson's (2008) description as the starting point of a full-fledged accounting of IBE that address these questions.

### **IBE: the basic data**

The construction is host to a wide range of adjective and noun phrases. For reasons not immediately apparent, it is comparatively rare among the spoken corpora consulted, with only a few clear tokens identified. Its absence from the Fisher and ICSI corpora may be due to the fact that IBE seems most natural in informal settings and between close friends, neither of which holds in these two corpora. I therefore supplement my data with tokens from Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2008 and web searches. Of the latter, most results come informal discourse such as blog entries and message boards. These media are in an important sense monologic, and one might question the relevance of a *conversation-analytic* approach. While such texts are not subject to moment-by-moment feedback, they are presented in arenas where interaction with the reader is possible and even sought after. While a writer may have a "captive audience" (though on the web this is questionable) he or she must still engage the reader and presumably hopes to generate reactions. All of the considerations set out above for intending storytellers should apply to the online writer.

Several examples of IBE follow, with brief commentary.

(31) Fisher, fsh\_63801, 4:30

L: Well, I pretty much agree with you.

R: Yeah. I think most people are kinda like that. Just, uh, I think it would be interesting to talk to someone who really felt, really one way or the other. Most people are pretty middle of the road.

L: Yeah.

R: I would wonder what it would be [MN] so, it'd be interesting to see what people would think. But at the same time, I don't even have children, so I don't know how that would affect, you know, my point of view.

L: Yeah, we don't have children either, so it hasn't been a problem for us.

R: Right. And I wonder **it's – it's funny**, I talked to a lady earlier that had children and – but she – she pretty much felt the same way. She said that one time her kids in high school came home with a permission slip to watch an R-rated movie and she didn't think that that was appropriate for them.

In this case, *funny* has the sense of “curious” as in *How funny that we both get here at the same time!* The story that follows is thus quite brief and self-contained, without a great call for a specific response from the recipient. The speaker moves on to a slightly different topic immediately after completion. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008) note that 16 of their Prospective X tokens were *it is/was funny* (they do not report what proportion this is, but one can infer from their mention of the number that it is high). In each case, it prefaced a story, consistent with my claim that IBE projects a narrative.

The following example is a blog entry in its entirety, except for a poem appearing at the beginning. The assessment as *awesome* is borne out by the continuous positive characterizations throughout the text.

- (32) **So it was really awesome today.** My Dad, brother Pat, Mom, and I went to my Aunts place where her, my Uncle Jim, Cousin Karen, Cousin Akayla and her husband Michael, my grandmother Nesbit, and another granny Cecila, were all waiting.

I talked to my Uncle Jim for a bit about camera's.. and he had one my dad sold him eons ago, a Nikonos ( underwater Nikon camea from a past era ). He said it needed repair, but that I could have it ! \*WOOT\* But, It's going to be my fathers, as it was his years back, and he's going to take it in and have it factory re-furbished. And then I can use it , and should I choose, buy it from him later down the road. How cool.

We all visited for a while, dined heavily on thanksgiving turkey and homemade napkin rolls, stuffing, sweet potatoes, etc. After a few hours of visiting, more visiting, and chatting. Eventually we came home and fell prey to turkey coma's. I napped on the floor for a while and woke up to find that a kitten was sleeping happily in the middle of my back. \*heh\* I love my kitties.

\*yawns, stretches out feebly\* The only thing I kept thinking of , was that my dear friend Joe was home all day by him self. He says he is ok with that, but he didn't sound convinced. That won't happen next year, no sir. : / If I could have gotten him here from MN I would have. He's a wonderful man : )

Ok, off to yahoo to chat with friends for a bit, and aol. I'll be poking around for a while if anyone wants to chat :)

(<http://teambearcub.livejournal.com/1461.html>, Sept 12 2011)

Negative evaluations are possible as well:

- (33) **Oh it was so frustrating today at market,** the computer network would NOT come up. But we managed. Primitivo is wonderful, he can put up with all these changes and it doesn't faze him. Me on the other hand...

([http://www.peterkortroses.com/index.php?p=blog&month=June&year=2010, Sept 12 2011](http://www.peterkortroses.com/index.php?p=blog&month=June&year=2010,Sept%2012%202011))

The following example involves a story within a story. The larger discussion here is about the grades of M2's son. She mentions his grades as recently sent to her by the school, and talks about his academic behavior at school (the omitted portion). She then begins a mini-story within this topic, prefacing it with *Hey, it was so funny*. This mini-story concerns how she received the envelope and attempted to see inside it before contacting her son that she had received it. It is in fact unclear where or if this mini-story ends. Both she and M1 laugh after M2 says *I couldn't*, so this may signal one type of end. However, the succeeding clauses continue the story in temporal order as she calls her son, her son comes home with his friend, and they all learn the results at the same time. This too is delivered and received as funny, and may fall under the original story preface.

(34) CALLFRIEND American English, Southern Dialect, 6419, 0:55

M2: (0.7) 「well, we」 got our grades today

M1: 「xxx」

M1: got your what

M2: (0.4) got our grades today

M1: oh, what did you get

M2: hm

M2: (1.1) hey, we made three Bs and a C

M1: you're kidding

M2: n:o

((27 lines omitted))

M2: hey, I was tickled I was so hoping it wasn't going to be no  
D on his report card

M2: (0.7) **hey, it was so funny hhh hhh hhh hhh**

M2: ·hhh (0.4) I went got the mail this morning and I saw an old, I  
mean I tried everything to, to see what they were 「and I」, I  
couldn't

M1: 「&=laugh」

M1: hhh hhh 「 hhh ·hh」

M2: and 「so, he called」 about eleven o'clock he said

M2: +」 man, Michael's going to, Micheal and I is going to

M1: (0.5) hhh

M2: (0.5) 「xxx xxx」

M1: 「going to hhh」

M2: (0.5) hhh hhh

M1: hhh hhh

M2: going to the Big Pea to eat

M1: hhh

M2: and I said

M2: +” ok, that’s fine but

M2: I said

M2: +” you’ve got your grades and I’m going to see what’s, I’m going to open (th)em uh uh

M2: he said

M2: +” I’ll come back

Noun phrases are also possible. The predicate NPs *a nightmare* and *a disaster* indicate how the speaker assesses the events of the upcoming story.

- (35) a. Fellas **it was a nightmare today** lol. Firstly the 32Amp C breaker kept tripping so I rang the manufacturer and they said I needed at type D! By this time it was 4 o’clock and I was giving up hope. Luckily a wholesaler came through and I quickly connected it up to my horror I found that the compressor was running the wrong way! ... All sorted now thank god!  
(<http://www.electriciansforums.co.uk/commercial-industrial-electrical/15673-15-kw-motor-connect-2.html#post111997>, accessed Sept 12 2011)
- b. There is never a way to put this nicely. We sucked today and we sucked for the past three games. The Bad News Bears is the model were subscribing too...clearly. Strikeouts in big spots, throwing errors and injuries leading to the DL. I dont even know where to begin, **it was a disaster today**.

AJ Burnett pitched well, pitching a no-hitter into the 6th inning but by the 7th, it was clear that Detroit was about to score and runs started piling on due to errors. More on that in a moment. [rest of site omitted]

([http://bleedingyankeeblue.blogspot.com/2011/05/why-losing-is-cancer\\_05.html](http://bleedingyankeeblue.blogspot.com/2011/05/why-losing-is-cancer_05.html), Sept 12 2011)

I now turn to the analysis of IBE. Of specific interest is whether it can be treated as instantiating an independently-needed construction of English, or whether it requires special treatment.

### **IBE: analysis**

The most salient aspect of IBE is the fact that there is no antecedent for *it*. This raises the possibility that *it* is an expletive. English has at least three types of constructions with a null *it* subject: environmental condition predicates (e.g., weather verbs), *it*-clefts, and extraposition (36).



- (36) a. It's like ... like seventy degrees and sunny. (SBCSAE, 28.cha)  
 b. But it's always the federal workers that should take the cut. (SBCSAE, 69.cha)  
 c. It's unusual that they don't require em to. (SBCSAE, 14.cha)

We can first rule out a treatment based on environmental condition predicates. It is true that these predicates take no direct arguments and so are syntactically compatible with IBE. Their deictic anchoring, however, clashes with that of IBE. Environmental condition predicates in the present tense describe an ongoing situation at the time and place of the deictic center (usually the speaker). IBE, however, is limited to reporting past events. For instance, while *it was embarrassing* can preface a story about embarrassment, *it's embarrassing* cannot constitute a claim about a current emotional experience. It can, however, express a present judgment about a past event, as in (37) (per Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, only the opening of the lengthy story, *Bud played at San Mar-* is given).

(37) San Marcos (NB 017, 7)

- Mar: =and uh-.h-.h it' sjust stuff I have to do for [° Larry,]  
 Edn: [°ye::ah.]  
 Edn: I [know and y[ou're do- ]ing real good are[nt you. ]  
 Mar: [.t.hhh [a: nd ] [I: ' ]m just  
 so delighted I can do it E[dna cuz]  
 Edn: [.hhhhh ]  
 if: I didn't do it we'd have [to hire it] do:ne,  
 Mar: [well y'know]  
 Edn: **y-youknow it's funny** uh:: uh  
 Bud played at San Mar-  
 have you gotta minute?=  
 Mar: =su[:re] °mm h m,  
 Edn: [I'm] not gonna take too long .. hhhh

(Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(19))

Verbs like *rain* or *snow*, or adjectives like *hot* and *windy* have no such function. Nor is it clear how such syntactic properties could give rise to the pragmatic functions of IBE. Positing that IBE is derived from an environmental condition predicate would benefit only from the inherited argument structure, leaving the pragmatic properties of the construction unexplained.

Also ruled out is an *it*-cleft analysis of IBE. Most problematic is the lack of a cleft clause (38a). As a cleft, IBE would have to instantiate a truncated cleft. Truncated clefts with adjectival pivots are in principle possible, though not without considerable set-up involving a contrasting set of descriptions (38b). See also Heggie (1993:49–51) for arguments that adjectival clefts (to the extent that they are possible) are metalinguistic and diverge from typical clefts in several ways.

- (38) a. #It was so funny that I was/felt one day! Kent was at the store...  
 b. He always gets emotional. Last time he was angry. This time it's happy.

Information-structurally, truncated clefts and IBE are not compatible. An *it*-cleft is one of two types: stressed-focus and information-presupposition (Prince, 1978). In the former, the cleft clause contains discourse-old information, and what is newly asserted is the pivot. This does not fit the IBE, where all parts of the construction are new information. In the latter type, the cleft clause contains new information. These are readily seen in news articles, textbooks, and other written informative texts. (39) is the first sentence in an article with the headline, "Thousands expected in Rantoul for farm show."

- (39) RANTOUL – It was 10 years ago that a group from the I & I Antique Tractor and Small Engine Club decided to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Farm Progress Show by staging a show of their own.

(<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/agriculture/2011-08-22/thousands-expected-rantoul-farm-show.html>, Sept 8 2011)

This type of cleft is at least presuppositionally compatible with IBE, but it is a full, not a truncated cleft. Truncation is incompatible with the information-presupposition use. A newspaper story could hardly begin with, "It was 10 years ago." This is only possible with a novel that begins *in medias res*, which specifically exploits the stressed-focus use to draw the reader into the midst of an ongoing chain of events. This is consistent with the claims of Mikkelsen (2005) and Birner et al. (2007) that truncated clefts always involve a discourse-old property that is predicated of the pivot. In contrast, IBE presents "brand-new" (Prince, 1981) information: the evaluation is new, and the entity it predicates of (the story, perhaps) is also new. It can hardly be an instance of a construction that requires the communication of given information.<sup>11</sup>

Extraposition can also be ruled out as the ultimate licenser of IBE, though as I show, several good arguments can be made in its favor. Extraposition places a clausal or nominal constituent that would normally be the external argument into a post-predicator position. An expletive takes the structural position of subject. Several varieties are illustrated in (40). Several of these sentence types are also potentially (b) or necessarily (d, e) exclamative (Lambrecht & Michaelis, 1996:244).

<sup>11</sup>Delin (1992) reconciles the two cleft clause functions by treating all *it*-clefts as presenting information which is marked as *not* originating with the current speaker at the current time. That is, it is anaphoric to some prior source (who may or may not be the speaker), and is treated as a non-negotiable fact. This too is incompatible with IBE, as the evaluation is precisely understood as deictically anchored to the current speaker at the time of utterance, and not to a prior source of knowledge.

- (40) a. It was shocking that no pollutants were detected.  
 b. It was shocking how many pollutants were detected.  
 c. It was shocking (for us) to learn about detecting pollutants.  
 d. It was shocking finding all those pollutants.  
 e. It was shocking the pollutants they found here.

The predicates permitted in IBE are, so far as can be ascertained, a subset of those that license extraposition. Each expresses an emotion or judgment and has as its external argument (in its inherent argument structure) the stimulus of the emotion or object of judgment, rather than the experiencer or judge. Thus, IBE permits *amazing*, *scary*, *irritating*, and *embarrassing*, but not *amazed*, *fearful*, *upset*, and *embarrassed*. As it happens, these adjectives are also the ones compatible with clausal extraposition patterns:

- (41) a. It was amazing/scary/irritating/embarrassing how many people showed up.  
 b. \*It was amazed/fearful/upset/embarrassed how many people showed up.

IBE is also completely compatible information-structurally with extraposition, which need not present presupposed information. In fact, where the clause would present new information, extraposition is not only possible but sometimes preferred to the basic word order (Ward & Birner 2006:168–169, Miller 2001:689). Kaltenböck (2005:129) found that in a corpus of written and spoken English (ICE-GB), 71.5% of *it*-extraposition clauses presented new information (either brand-new or anchored, according to Prince's (1981) taxonomy), with the remaining 28.5% presenting given information (subsuming inferrable, situationally evoked, or textually evoked).

Despite this, there is one glaring problem: IBE has no extraposed clause. If the sentence-final constituents are omitted from the sentences in (40), *it* is interpreted referentially, and the extraposition disappears. Could there be a novel category, the truncated extraposition, which accounted for IBE?<sup>12</sup> Among the exclamative extraposition types mentioned by Lambrecht & Michaelis (1996), the extraposed indirect exclamative (40b) does present an intriguing possibility. The account would posit that the *wh*-clause could be elided under certain discourse conditions, and be interpreted as *what happened to me*. Marie's story preface would be understood as *it was so funny what happened to me one day*, which is compatible with an utterance which is about to explain what did happen that one day.

Extraposed indirect exclamatives, as a type of exclamative, require the following: a presupposed open proposition, a scalar extent, the assertion of expectation contravention, identifiability of the described referent, and deictic anchoring (Lambrecht & Michaelis, 1996:239). *It was so funny* satisfies these conditions if the understood argument of *funny*

<sup>12</sup>Kaltenböck (2005) does posit a category of extraposition in which "the informational value of the complement clause is so low that it is no longer required for successful communication and is therefore omitted altogether" (133), but this is information-structurally inconsistent with IBE.

is *what happened to me*. The open proposition X HAPPENED TO ME TODAY is potentially available at all times: it is always relevant, and one is not usually surprised to receive such news from one's interlocutors. Their discussion of which entity exactly must be "identifiable" is unfortunately vague, but in this case because the predication is centrally about the speaker, I take the requisite identifiable entity to be the speaker. Expectation contravention is closely related to the notion of tellability, so to the extent that the report of something as funny, embarrassing, etc., is tellable, it also defeats expectations. The scalar notion is not straightforwardly applicable, but Lambrecht & Michaelis note that it is not always necessary for exclamations (229, note 9). The construction's deictic properties have already been discussed.

Formally and pragmatically, the approach is promising. What ultimately defeats the proposal is prosody. Exclamative extraposition constructions require prosodic prominence, including stress and a higher pitch on the main predicate (Lambrecht & Michaelis, 1996: 241). If degree modification is present, it may be stressed as well. Unacceptable is placing stress on the adverb but not the adjective.<sup>13</sup>

- (42) a. It's AMAZING how much he's GROWN.  
 b. It's so/SO AMAZING the things children SAY.  
 c. #It's SO amazing the things children SAY.

Contrast this with IBE prosody. In (34) the adjective is stressed. In (31) it is neutral, or at least not obviously more stressed than the following material. In (28), the speaker places heavy stress on *so*, and pronounces *funny* without any stress. This would be impossible for a full extraposed clause. Barring any expectation that elision of the postpredicate material would affect the need for prosodic focus on the predicate, the prosodic requirements of IBE are in conflict with exclamatives.

The three sentence types in (36) now ruled out, we return to the question of the referentiality of *it*. If *it* is not expletive, at least in a way represented by already-understood constructions, it must be referential. Because IBE is usable at the beginning of a conversation, without allusion to any prior interactions, it must be the case that *it* refers to something yet to come in the discourse. As the predicate evaluates the story, *it* most plausibly refers to that story: what happened was funny, horrible, embarrassing, and so on. The problem is that, intuitively, *it* cannot be cataphoric.<sup>14</sup> Gundel et al.'s (1993) characterization of *it* as requiring an *in focus* entity reflects this intuition: something yet to be identified can hardly be considered in focus (to all parties). Thus, "It's a good book" is possible after presenting an object to the addressee, but not before any object is made salient. If the referent is a por-

<sup>13</sup>This stress pattern improves if there is a context proposition (Fillmore et al., 1988:514) to the effect of *It's amazing the things children say*. The speaker then augments the claim with *so*.

<sup>14</sup>In subordinate clauses preceding the main clause, *it* may refer to an element in the main clause: *Because it<sub>i</sub> had been left on all weekend, the phone<sub>i</sub>'s battery was nearly entirely depleted*. This is distinct from IBE, where *it* is a main clause argument and (apparently) refers cross-sententially.

tion of the discourse, it too must be the most salient prior portion. For cataphoric reference *this* is preferred over *it* (43).

- (43) a. This/#it is something I've been meaning to give you.  
 b. Pay close attention to this/#it: it'll be on the exam later.

Despite these intuitions in isolated contexts, *it* is attested referring to as-yet-unsaid portions of discourse. It is limited to certain genres or styles and to certain more-or-less fixed expressions. It also has a marked effect on the discourse. Because *it* is normally only resolvable to the most salient or activated discourse entity, its appearance when no such entity is available creates a sense of anticipation.

The examples in (44) involve the writer or speaker preemptively confessing to something, as a way of introducing the main topic under discussion. In the first sentence the speaker admits to "it", and proceeds to reveal what "it" is. The other two examples show the writer announcing that he will *say it*, framed additionally as a confession by the expressions *come clean* and *come right out*. Other ways of using *it* in this way (e.g., *It's time I said it*) are not hard to locate, at least in large corpora like the web as indexed by Google.<sup>15</sup>

- (44) a. CAROL LIN, CNN ANCHOR: **OK, I admit it.** I'm a little intrigued by that "Bachelorette" reality show. (COCA)
- b. **I'll come clean and say it straightaway**...originally I baked this pie (mostly) just so I could tell you about how much fun it is biking up Mt.Evans, but with a legitimate food tie-in, healthy (and healthy-ish) food being the ultimate reason for this blog.  
 (<http://www.wendymcmillanwriter.com/blog/?p=1539>, Aug 16 2011)
- c. **Goalkeeper Tim Howard has come right out and said it:** he and his USA teammates are out for revenge.  
 (<http://www.socceramerica.com/article/43228/its-going-to-take-all-hands-on-deck.html>, Aug 16 2011)

*It's* use in pre-confessions is not always available. The sentences in (45) are awkward or possibly ungrammatical. Interestingly, they are improved by removing *it* (and removing *to* in (45a)). I suspect this is because *tell* and *know* allow DNI of their complement clauses,

<sup>15</sup>The possibility that *it* in these sentences is an expletive in object position is greatly diminished by the fact that adding a clausal complement after *it* is awkward or ungrammatical, at least when contrasting *say* with *mention*, for which an object expletive is unexceptional (Postal & Pullum, 1988).

- (i) a. I'll mention it to the students that they don't have to attend class tomorrow.  
 b. ?\* I'll say it in lecture that there's no class tomorrow.

Sentence b. is improved by adding an addressee (*to the students*), but such expressions are not present in (44) and would be of marginal acceptability if included.

and that omission is usable cataphorically as *it* is in (44). *Say* and *admit* do not allow DNI of their complements (in the relevant senses), and so *it*, or any overt complement, is obligatory.

- (45) a. ?I'll just come right out and tell it to you: I haven't read the article yet.  
 b. ?You should know it: I haven't read the article yet.

I do not claim that cataphoric *it* is available generally, simply that there is at least one other construction that calls for it. The following section details the constructional entries that license IBE and compares the pattern to others that have similar projection functions.

### 5.3.3 IBE as a projector construction

Japanese *are*-sentences are licensed by two lexical entries, which combine with enough syntactic flexibility to accommodate the attested examples and enough constraints to rule out the two parts appearing in other patterns. I take a similar tack here. (46) is the lexical entry for cataphoric *it*, a type of pronoun. The entry, identified by the idiomatic *i-it-fr*, picks out a referent that is in-focus to the speaker and addressee-new. The current move is specified as a projection of some content which *it* refers to, and which is constrained to be a story (or, equivalently, a narrative). The combination of addressee-new status and the fact that *it*'s referent is projected in upcoming discourse results in *it* being a cataphor.

- (46) Cataphoric *it*
- |  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
| <p><i>pronoun-lxm</i></p> <p>FORM <math>\langle it \rangle</math></p> <p>SYN <math>\left[ \text{CAT} \left[ \text{LID } i\text{-it-fr} \right] \right]</math></p> <p>SEM <math>\left[ \text{INDEX } i \right]</math></p> | <p>CNTX</p> | <p><math>\left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{activation-status} \\ \text{REFERENT } i \\ \text{SPKR } in\text{-focus} \\ \text{ADDR } new \end{array} \right] \right\rangle</math></p> <p><math>\left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{projection-fr} \\ \text{PROJECTED-CONTENT } i \end{array} \right], \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{story-fr} \\ \text{STORY } i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle</math></p> |
|--|-------------|--|

The information status, *in-focus*, is shared with canonical *it* (Gundel et al., 1993) but differs from Japanese *are*. The Japanese projector construction is designed to allow a speaker to do a speech act before it is fully formulated, to buy time to get it out. IBE

indicates an intent to tell a story that the speaker formulated enough to be able to characterize it as funny, horrible, and so on.

(47) is the lexical entry for the *be* that selects cataphoric *it*.

(47) Story-projecting *be*

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} be-lxm \\ ARG-ST \left\langle NP[LID \ i-it-fr]_i, [SEM | INDEX \ j] \right\rangle \\ CNTXT \left[ \begin{array}{l} CR-MOVE \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} story-evaluation-fr \\ STORY \quad i \\ EVALUATION \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The copula's two arguments are *it* and an XP that (via CR-MOVE) counts as an assessment, or an evaluation in Labov's sense. The evaluation restriction is registered here, rather than on *it* because the copula is the piece that syntactically connects *it* with the evaluation. This was not necessary for Japanese because the clause-level pragmatic markers that appear with *are* do not characterize *are*'s referent, but the speech act as a whole.

As evaluations are tied to tellability, this restricts the evaluative XP to those which (the speaker believes) will make the story worth listening to. This rules out orientational phrases such as *#it was yesterday/at the school*). This constraint, taken together with the fact that *it* is cataphoric to a story, means that we have described a set of resources from which a speaker can build a story preface (Sacks, 1974), though without the need to specify that "story preface" *per se* is a category relevant to the grammar (at least for this construction).

Dow does this analysis of IBE compare with Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson's (2008) description of the Prospective X assessment pattern? The two analyses are not trivial to compare, as it is not clear how Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson view the contribution of *it* across the four patterns. One point of potential similarity is that for them, Prospective X is not a construction but a pattern, "a recurrent interactional practice...a *pragmatic routine*" (445). In my account as well IBE is not a single construction but two lexical entries designed to interact closely with each other.

I require IBE to preface a story, whereas Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson say only that Prospective X assesses something. They do say that the Y element "can be quite diffuse, extending over several turn-units and sometimes involving a whole set of events or an entire story" (453), and the four examples they provide all seem to involve a multi-TCU story following IBE. In contrast, at least Retrospective X allows the Y element to be very minimal:

(48) (Beth's husband John has just announced to their friends Don and An that they are looking at houses.)

Beth: we're= we're proposing ourselves as uh

prospective homebuyers to see what they're [gonna (do).  
 Ann: [oh (h)ho ho:::  
 Don: °( ) - **that's a good idea**

(Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2008:(9))

It would be revealing if their data contained instances of Prospective X with a minimal Y part, but barring more data, the story-projection property seems to be a point of agreement between the two analyses.

Finally, there is the question of the X element. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson provide examples with *it* and *that* for Retrospective X and Incremental Y. None are given for Integrated Y, i.e., canonical extraposition, but both *it* and *that* are possible (see also Montgomery 1989):

- (49) a. "That's wonderful that you kept up your playing, Aunt Louise." (COCA)  
 b. Thanks so much for the letter. I think it's wonderful that you're learning to type! (COCA)

In contrast, none of their examples of Prospective X have *that*, nor did I find any instances a *that-be*-evaluation pattern parallel to IBE. Replacing any *it* with *that* in the examples of IBE cited above would result in an anomalous discourse. The speaker would be interpreted as evaluating some situation that is either discourse-old or apparent in the physical context, neither of which is the case. This is not a problem for me, because I do not claim that IBE is syntactically related to any other construction that has an *it/that* alternation. Moreover, the existence of a special cataphoric *it* highlights how IBE differs from anaphoric *it* and from extraposition. By contrast, Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson's story becomes a bit more complicated. First, it makes one question the closeness of the four patterns if one of them mysteriously only allows one subject option. Second, it would have to be explained why extraposition—as an amalgam of Incremental Y and Prospective X—should take the more permissive subject specification.

The two approaches to IBE are, I believe complementary. The approach from the more strictly grammatical side forces one to ask questions about compositionality and connections to other constructions. The approach from discourse analysis and emergent grammar reveals functional connections between (potentially-)syntactically-related constructions and (something I have ignored in the above discussion) the fine-grained interactional details that lead speakers to choose one pattern over another. While each research program could proceed independently of the other, combining the two has the potential to yield more compelling and robust results. My examination of IBE represents an initial step towards preparing SBCG for this kind of integration and cooperation. In the summary section I consider another field where tight integration of Construction Grammar and Conversation Analysis would be advantageous.



### 5.3.4 Extensions and summary

With action projection, our picture of the context grows wider by one step. Cataphoric *are* and IBE do not place constraints on the stance of the speaker, or the medium of communication. Their effect is on how the discourse unfolds after they are uttered. Rather than reflect the context (e.g., the speaker is agreeing, the conversation is on the telephone), a projector construction reshapes the context, instructing the discourse participants to orient to a change in the trajectory of the interaction. That such reorientations happen has been demonstrated many times in the CA literature, but now it is clear that grammatical constructions can have action projection as a conventional function.

Projection is only one way that a speaker can attempt to reshape or reconstrue the present context by linguistic means. Related to projection is the notion of activity maintenance. Discourse participants might be involved in multiple threads of interaction over the course of a conversation, with different attitudes, styles, and goals associated with each type. It might be useful for speakers to indicate which thread of the conversation they are in, or to mark switches from one thread to another. This is not projection, strictly speaking, as projection is uni-directional: an utterance at one time implies a future utterance at a later time. Activity maintenance involves indicating that the current move coheres topically and interactionally with other non-adjacent moves that came before and will come after. I close the chapter by pointing out just such a construction: *and*-prefaced questions.

Heritage & Sorjonen (1994) examined numerous interactions between first-time mothers and British community health nurses,<sup>16</sup> and found a consistent division of the interaction into two modes: the official, bureaucratic information-gathering mode, and the less official, friendly advice-giving mode. During the former type of interaction, the nurse would ask questions of the mother regarding her and her family's demographic information, and general questions about her pregnancy (how long did it last, were there any complications, how was the delivery, etc.) and her health status as well as that of her child: what Heritage & Sorjonen call *agenda questions*. The goal of these questions, ultimately, is to complete a form that must be submitted to the hospital for all first-time mothers (in most or all cases the mother is made aware of this goal, and can usually see the nurse fill out the form as responses come in). The latter sort of interaction could arise if any out-of-the-ordinary responses were given to the routine questions. This would trigger a *contingent question* to get at the details of the mother's situation, and potentially lead to advice-giving.

Heritage & Sorjonen (1994) noticed that any question prefaced by *and* (*And how old is the father?*) was invariably placed within the bureaucratic mode of interaction, not in the more casual advice-giving mode. This is not to say that every official question had this marker, but it was in some way characteristic of that interaction style, and appeared not only within a sequence of adjacent agenda questions, but also after a series of contingent

<sup>16</sup>According to Heritage & Sorjonen, "Within the context of the British health care system, the nurse arrives in the mother's home as an official with a statutory obligation to visit all newborns and their mothers" (p 3). But in addition to this official, institutional role, the nurses "normally attempt to establish a 'befriending' relationship with the mothers" (ibid).

questions to signal a return to the official information-gathering mode.

Even more interestingly, they noticed that the nurses were at some level aware of the marking value of *and*-prefacing, and so used it strategically to manipulate the conversation. For instance, one mother was living with her boyfriend in her parents' home, and at a point in the interaction just before discussion of the possibility that the mother will find a different place to live, the nurse asks, "And you're happy living here?" (1994:20). Heritage & Sorjonen characterize this as a way to "invoke a routine quality of, and hence detoxify, an inquiry into a potentially delicate matter between the mother and the grandmother, by constituting it as one in a series" (21). In a different scenario, a routine question "Is the cord dry now?" was not responded to in a no-problem manner: "Yes it's, it weeps a little bit." The nurse responds with, "And what do you do?" i.e., with the form of a routine question. The authors analyze this as "normaliz[ing] a contingent question by constituting it as a routine inquiry" (19). This invites the mother to interpret the question as run-of-the-mill, and not indicative of anything unexpected.

Heritage & Sorjonen have, in sum, discovered a construction, *and*+interrogative, which marks the current question as part of a sequence of checklist questions. *And*-prefacing for them is an aspect of question design, which is no doubt part of the more general notion of *recipient design*, defined by Sacks et al. (1974) as: "a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (727). Question design includes the most general of parameters: polar or constituent question, positive or negative, and so on. *And*-prefacing is fascinating because it encodes extremely specific information and moreover seems to do so consistently.

*And*-prefaced questions, cataphoric *are*, and IBE were all initially noticed by scholars concerned with how people perform types of social action during talk-in-interaction. Beginning with a framework that recognizes the importance of sequentiality and the interconnectedness of turns within a discourse, they located certain partially-fixed linguistic resources that speakers have to accomplish particular interactional goals. Without this framework, the phenomena they noticed might well have been passed over someone interested only in the licensing of grammatical sentences.

What SBCG and construction grammar in general contribute to the discussion is a set of tools and methods for investigating the linguistic properties of sentences—what properties of utterances remain constant across contexts and speakers. The linguistic approach demands attention to the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of sentences and their parts, and the system in which linguistic signs are constructed. By applying these methods to *are*, it was seen that its cataphoric nature was in fact supported by its use in other contexts and existed in a well-defined relationship to other deictic elements of the demonstrative system. When we turned to IBE, we saw that the presence of *it* in a projector construction was in fact surprising, not indicative of its normal pattern of usage. This by no means invalidates the conclusions of Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008). It supplements them and suggests future avenues of research to get deeper into how assessments, extraposition, and anaphora are interrelated, both grammatically and interactionally.

As pointed out by Fried & Östman (2005:1754–1756), CA and Construction Grammar have much in common that makes them a natural pairing. Both recognize the importance of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic or functional aspects of linguistic units, and posit no division between core and peripheral sentence- or utterance-types. Both allow for non-trivial mappings between linguistic form and function (cf. Kay & Michaelis (to appear)). At the same time, they point out several points of divergence reminiscent of those just mentioned. Construction Grammar is more interested in “language” as something shared across speakers and contexts, as opposed to the ethnographic and interactional focus of CA. CA takes context to crucially involve “the effect [an] utterance has on the addressee/audience...in addition to activity types, topical context, interactive context, and sequential structure” (1755). Construction Grammar does not in principle ignore these facets of context, but has traditionally placed much more emphasis on “that which is relevant for grammar” (1755).

What the present chapter (and the dissertation as a whole) shows is that Construction Grammar can, and should, pay attention to exactly these aspects of context. However, it is not simply a matter of taking wholesale a CA analysis of a recurring pattern and associating it with a construction description. In order to marry the two perspectives, there must be some give and take, including the acknowledgement that conversation analytic generalizations may need to be tempered with observations originating from grammatical analysis.

## Chapter 6

### From micro to macro

The previous four chapters gradually built up a picture of context from the perspective of lexical and grammatical constructions. Beginning with ellipsis and proceeding outward we saw that constructions encode information about ongoing and prior speech acts, sequential organization, the medium of interaction, and intentions about future moves. By and large, these contextual features pertain to the here-and-now of interaction, along with the recent past and near future. The features are also mostly contingent upon the event of interaction in the first place. Without conversation, there would be no ellipsis, no sequences of moves, no and technological medium to facilitate the exchange of speech. This chapter takes represents a first step into the macro-contextual arena, through the domain of kinship terminology.

The judgments I present in this chapter, more than in any other part of the dissertation, rely upon my intuition and the intuitions of the authors I cite. Where possible I defer to anthropological and ethnographic work on kinship reference systems, but these studies are often inadequate to the present task, for which a large body of recordings of family interactions would be the ideal source of data. They are also seemingly contradicted by anecdotal reports from individuals I have spoken with. This is not too unsurprising. As will be seen shortly, there are many constructions and scripts which are active only when two family members refer to a third. By their very nature utterances containing these expressions are not made in public, where individual idiosyncracies are exposed and (potentially) come to be shared across families. As a result, there is a fair amount of individual idiosyncrasy, even within a single nuclear family.

What a study such as this can accomplish is akin to a proof of concept. Given a speaker or group of speakers with very similar linguistic behavior surrounding kinship reference, it should be discoverable what parts of the system are due to lexical items, to constructions, to scripts, and to pragmatic and world knowledge. Individual people, families, and larger linguistic communities will make active use of a sub-portion of the lexical and constructional resources that I set out (and possibly others I do not describe: I make no claims of presenting an exhaustive list of kinship reference strategies), and probably recognize but not use other portions. However, as there is a surprising amount of convergence across the

ethnographic literature and the speakers with whom I have consulted, I expect that the generalizations put forth here will remain mostly intact once a larger data set can be assembled. And, even if not, the framework I build to capture the parts of a kinship system should be flexible and descriptively powerful enough to handle additional data.

## 6.1 References to kin

Attributes like *speaker* or *addressee* exist only during the time of a single utterance. The fact that two people are talking on the telephone can persist for a longer stretch of time, but is irrelevant once the interaction is concluded. One's kinship relation with an interlocutor, on the other hand, persists across many interactions, and is not contingent upon the occurrence of an interaction.<sup>1</sup> Given this relation, we can ask two familiar questions: What means does the grammar (and lexicon) provide speakers of a language for referring to kinfolk? Under what circumstances can each of those means be used?

Descriptions of kinship systems typically do not ask questions exactly like these. Some descriptions are concerned with the overall structure of the kinship system, how various individuals in a geneological tree are grouped together, and what features (gender, age, etc.) are relevant for classification (O'Neil, 2008). Yet they do not always ask how (or whether) these terms are used in everyday speech, and under what circumstances. Parsons (1943) looked at how contemporary US residents conceived of family relations, touching on a variety of interpersonal and social issues, rarely touching on linguistic features. On the other end of the scale are mini-studies of linguistic constructions such as Fillmore et al.'s (1988) treatment of extended cousin terminology (*third cousin twice removed*). They pointed out the syntactic idiosyncrasies of the construction and the fact that its denotation requires reference to geneological trees, but did not address (and in fairness it was not really their stated goal to do so) how or whether such phrases would be deployed in a sentence or conversation.

Closer to my approach is that of Schneider & Homans (1955), who attend to the detailed linguistic resources available to English speakers in different contexts. They note:

The variety of alternate terms is increased by two other devices: the use of possessive pronouns – mother, for instance, may be “my mother” or just “mother” – and variations in specifying whom the relationship is to. We believe the latter mechanism has not been given enough attention in the literature on terminology. There are always at least three persons involved in the use of a term of reference: the speaker, the person spoken to, and the person referred to. (1195)

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<sup>1</sup>While based on the process of procreation, kinship is not entirely biological. It is constructed and understood through social interaction, including linguistic communication (see Yanagisako & Delaney (1995) and citations therein). Nevertheless, the family relationship between two individuals is persistent, compared with the ephemeral nature of a conversational turns and the sequential structure of particular interactions.

I devote a significant portion of my discussion of English kinship constructions to the mechanism they mention. Though they do not spell it out in detail, it can be observed that *mother* can be used as a referential expression (an NP) only if the speaker and addressee are directly (lineally) related to the referent. In contrast, *brother* has no such use. Just to describe this one construction it is necessary to make reference to the “three persons” that Schneider & Homans mention, a fact that is repeated for nearly every referential strategy I consider.<sup>2</sup> Studies in the same spirit for Japanese are Befu & Norbeck 1958 and Fischer 1964. I discuss their observations in the section on Japanese. Within the linguistic literature, there again is little discussion of this sort of phenomenon. One exception is Zwicky 1974, which details the constraints on vocative expressions, including the construction of complex kinship vocatives (*hey, Aunt Sue!*). I will return to this in Section 6.1.3.

The remainder of this section lays out the lexical items and constructions in English that relate to reference to kin. These constructions interact with a series of scripts that specify default or idiomatic means of reference to kin. The second part of the chapter gives the same treatment to Japanese, adding the question of how speakers accomplish self- and addressee-reference.

### 6.1.1 Bare kin terms

Consider a family with a mother and father, a daughter, and a son.<sup>3</sup> What are the ways that each member of this family could refer to the others? Any of them could use *mom* to refer to the mother, but none could use *my mom* or *your mom*. While the parents could refer to their children with *your brother* or *your sister*, just *brother* or *sister* are impossible as referring expressions. In this section I lay out the constructions that license kinship-referring expressions among relatives. In the following section I examine vocative uses of kinship terms.

First, some terminology and distinctions in types of kinship and kin terms will be useful. Kinship terms can be characterized understood in terms of an ego and alter. The ego is the individual from whose perspective the kinship relation is reckoned. The person to whom ego is related is called alter (Parkin, 1997:8–9). Alter corresponds to the linguistic notion of referent (of a kinship expression), and I will use the two interchangeably. The semantic frame for kinship that I adopt has two FEs, EGO and ALTER. In *your grandmother*, the addressee is EGO, and the grandmother is ALTER. EGO is necessary to understand any kinship expression, but need not be expressed, as in *we interviewed all the grandmothers*.

Next, there is the distinction between affinal and consanguinal kin. Affinal kin are

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<sup>2</sup>Schneider & Homans (1955) do not, unfortunately, proceed to conduct a systematic study of this particular domain, instead focusing on the social and cultural influences on the choice between words that point to “the same” referent (*mother, mom, ma*, etc.) or between alternative strategies of reference (*Uncle John* or *John* or *your father*).

<sup>3</sup>I will occasionally refer to the parents as a wife and husband. This is mostly for ease of exposition. The data I examine do not depend crucially on the parents’ marital status, except where I specifically address the terms *wife* and *husband*.

those related to one by marriage or similar institution. Consanguinal kin are related by blood. This chapter primarily addresses consanguinal kinship terms. Among consanguinal kin there are direct and indirect lines of descent. An individual's parents (and their parents, etc.) and children (and their children, etc.) are directly related, and constitute one's lineal, or lineally related, kin. Collateral kin are those related by blood but beyond the main line of descent, e.g., siblings, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Within each type, there a kinship system may distinguish between ascending (*mother, uncle*), descending (*son, niece*), and horizontal (*sister, cousin*) kin.

Finally, we can distinguish *in-family* and *out-of-family* uses of kinship expressions (Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2001). In *in-family* uses, all the interlocutors are related to the individual referred to. In *out-of-family* uses, at least one interlocutors is not related to the referent, as when someone says *my mother* when speaking to a friend, or when two people refer to the relatives of a third person. Most of what is considered here are *in-family* uses. Note that I am most concerned with the syntactic patterns in which kinship terms appear, and not with the finer grained distinction between lexical items that (potentially) refer to the same individual, such as *mother, mom, mommy*, etc. These are not trivial, and possibly interact crucially with the constructions considered here, but for present purposes I abstract away from any differences.

Terms for lineal kin in ascending generations, i.e., ancestors, (*mom, father, grandmother*, and so on) are usable as proper nouns. That is, the bare kin term functions as a definite, referential NP, even without a determiner (1). This is only possible in *in-family* contexts (Allen & Burrige, 2006:140), in particularly among individuals lineally related to the referent: children, their parents, their parents' parents, and so on. Which kin term is used, i.e., who is EGO, is determined based on the youngest person involved in the interaction, where "younger" is defined with respect to generations rather than age. Consider a family with Kim, Kim's parents, and Kim's grandparents. If Kim is either the speaker or the addressee, then *mom* or *dad* will refer to one of Kim's parents. The same is true of *grandma* and *grandpa*: Kim is EGO (1). In contrast, if Kim's father is speaking to his own father, references to *mom* are generally taken to mean 'my mom' rather than 'Kim's mom'. Conversely if Kim's grandfather is speaking to Kim's father, references to *mom* will mean 'your mom', and not 'Kim's mom' (2).

(1) Let's go find mom/dad/grandma/grandpa.

- (2) a. Kim's grandfather to to Kim:  
Let's go find mom. (=Kim's mom)
- b. Kim's grandfather to Kim's father:  
Let's go find mom (=Kim's father's mom).

In this way, each generation in a line of descent can be identified, because there is a single means for determining EGO. An individual who is both a mother and a grandmother

will be referrable to as *grandma* if a grandchild is a participant in the interaction, and as *mom* if not. The matter is made complicated by the fact that the participation structure of a conversation includes more than just a speaker and hearer (Goffman, 1979). The interlocutors themselves are *ratified* participants of the interaction. Other ratified participants include *unaddressed recipients*, who are intended to perceive the communication but are not addressed, such as audience members to an interview. Among non-ratified participants (or *bystanders*) are *overhearers*, who accidentally become party to an encounter, and *eavesdroppers*, who do so surreptitiously. When a grandchild is an unaddressed recipient, this may license use of kin terms from the grandchild's point of view. A speaker might also become aware of, or suspect the presence of a younger bystander, and make use of a kin term that picks the bystander as EGO. This could be strategic, as a way to make the bystander aware of that he or she has been noticed. It could simply be done as a matter of habit, as when a mother calls out *Dad, come over here* in a way that any children are likely to hear. In my personal experience, there are families where this convention persists even when the children have moved out. On the other hand, in other families, a mother calling out to *dad* (rather than his name), even in the presence of children, is highly marked or unlikely (Michael Ellsworth, p.c.). The point is that the acceptability of bare kin terms is influenced in part by an individual's (non-grammatical) understanding of who is participating in an interaction.

Finally, a speaker could also make strategic use of a bare kin term to highlight the relationship, even if the implicit EGO is not present at all. This may be especially effective when used vocatively (3) (see section 6.1.3 for further discussion).

- (3) a. A man to his mother who is reluctant to go on an outing:  
Come on, grandma, let's go see how your grandkids are doing. (=my child's grandmother)
- b. A man to his mother, attempting to convince her and her husband to babysit:  
I'm sure *grandpa* would want to take care of the kids tonight. (=my child's grandfather)

In sum, then, choice of kinship term depends on whose perspective is taken. One's own perspective, or that of an interlocutor, is generally always available. To the extent to which a non-interlocutor individual can be taken as the perspective, it is possible to choose a kin term based on that person as EGO.

Recall that the ability to use a kin term as a proper name requires that the interlocutors be lineally related to the referent. They need not be in a lineal relationship with each other, however. Thus, a nephew may ask his uncle, *Have you seen grandma?*, meaning 'my grandmother and your mother'. He could ask the same question of a cousin, referring to 'our grandmother'. The same question would be unacceptable asked of second cousin, as the closest common ancestor is a great-grandparent. An exception to this is the possibility for a child to use *mom* or *dad* when speaking to an aunt or uncle—a collateral relation to the referent. In my experience this is not possible in all contexts and in all families,



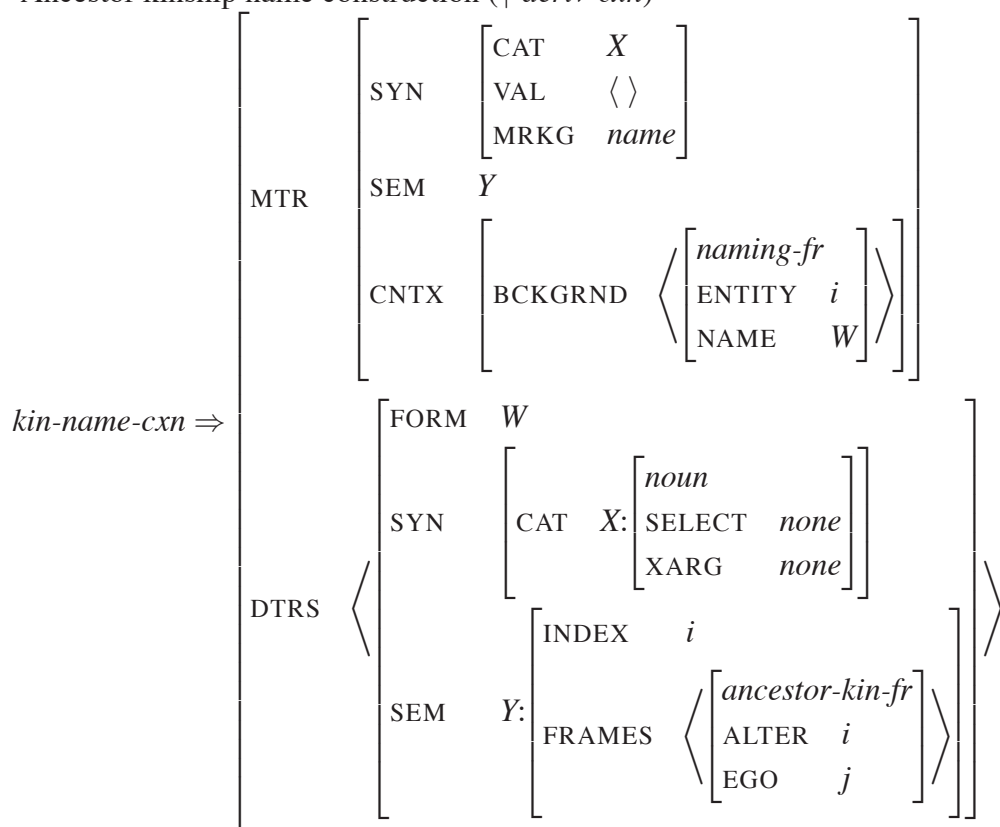
and may depend, for example, on how close the aunt or uncle is to the nuclear family. It would be incorrect to conclude from this, however, that only one of the interlocutors must have a lineal relation to the referent: *Have you seen mom?* cannot be asked of a cousin. I conclude that the basic requirement is for the speaker and addressee to be lineally related to the referent (though not necessarily to each other), with a possible exception for parent kin terms when one discourse participant is a child, and the other a sibling, of the referent.

The kin terms which can be used referentially without determination are analyzed as derived proper nouns. They have definite reference so long as the interlocutors recognize the unique (in the discourse context) referent that is appropriate to the semantic specification. For off-the-shelf proper nouns like *Kim*, the only specification is that the referent be named Kim. How individuals come to be named is a complex issue—the relevant lexical and derivational constructions do not encode *how* the naming process is achieved, they only presuppose *that* it is achieved. This is illustrated in the lexical-class construction for proper nouns (*pn-wd*) in (4) (cf. Sag (2010b:80)).<sup>4</sup>

$$(4) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FORM} \quad L \\ \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{noun} \\ \text{SELECT} \quad \textit{none} \\ \text{XARG} \quad \textit{none} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{VAL} \quad \langle \rangle \\ \text{MRKG} \quad \textit{def} \end{array} \right] \\ \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \langle \rangle \end{array} \right] \\ \\ \text{CNTX} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{BCKGRND} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{naming-fr} \\ \text{ENTITY} \quad i \\ \text{NAME} \quad L \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

*Mom* and *Dad* are names available to parents with at least one child. Unlike *Kim*, these are not public names, by which an individual can identify themselves to any other member of their society; they are private names, usable only within the family. The derivational construction in (5) licenses these uses of kinship terms.

<sup>4</sup>I use the attribute BCKGRND (background) here as a place to put presuppositions that apply to the participants in general, not contingent on the precise interactional details and sequence of conversational moves.

(5) Ancestor kinship name construction ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxn*)

The daughter is a single lexeme that evokes a frame I call *ancestor-kin-fr*. This frame is a supertype of the more specific frames for ancestors: parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, and so on. The construction derives a noun with MARKING value *name*, a subtype of *definite* (see the section on vocatives for the motivation behind this value). A non-*none* MARKING value, combined with an empty valence, fit the constraints for an NP.<sup>5</sup>

The only added contextual constraint is that the referent is “named” *W*. By tying the name to the wordform, the construction allows for idiosyncratic choices, such as *mommy* instead of *mom*, or *gramps* instead of *grandpa*. Within any particular family, certain people will be referable to by certain kin terms and not others, even though those other terms may be denotationally appropriate. Thus, like proper nouns, the construction does not specify how it comes to be that a referent comes to be so-named, or what exactly constitutes a naming relationship. That is determined by the social and cultural conventions of the speaking community, and by the interlocutors. Just as part of two speakers’ common ground is the fact that some individual is named *Kim*, so it can be that some individual is named (or perhaps “nick-named”) *mom*. In the English-speaking communities (that I am aware of), it is understood that parent terms are only names among lineally-related kin.

<sup>5</sup>Non-count nouns and plurals with no determiners are [MRKG *indef*]. Determined nouns have marking values that indicate their determiner (*a*, *the*, etc.). All XPs are [VAL  $\langle \rangle$ ].

Pragmatic underspecification allows the construction to be used in less canonical or prototypical family contexts, such as collateral kin who come to take on parent-like roles, or are very close to the nuclear family. For instance, it may be possible for an uncle to refer to *mom* when speaking with a nephew if, e.g., that uncle is close enough with the nuclear family to make that private name available to him. There is also a huge range of “strategic” uses of kinship terms. For instance, a parent might refer to a child’s step-parent by a bare kinship term as a means of suggesting or reinforcing a close relationship between the child and the step-parent, even if (or specifically because) the addressee does not accept it. There are no doubt countless other ways in which the use or non-use of a bare kinship term has pragmatic consequences. By underspecifying, the grammar simply provides a general means by which speakers can express a variety of social-interactional meanings.

An underspecification account must also be supplemented by a convention that the kin term chosen in any given interaction is dependent on the generation membership of the interlocutors. As noted above, the youngest discourse participant is always the point of view, or EGO of the kinship relation. Hard-coding this into the construction would counteract any gains from underspecification. A father talking to his daughter about her step-mother would be forced to choose a kin term based on the daughter’s point of view, precluding *mom* and thus any strategic use. Recording the observation as a script, as in (6), better captures the idea that this is a default, idiomatic strategy, but not the only one.

(6) Kinship reference script

Scenario: Speaker refers to an referent. Speaker and addressee are related to the referent.

Preferred means: Kinship frame.

Constraints: EGO is the youngest participant in the interaction or depicted in the current speech-act.

In principle, the effect of the script could be encoded in the construction, as a grammatical principle. The following constraints could be added to the construction’s background, where  $e$  is the EGO,  $p$  the ALTER, and  $C$  and  $D$  are respectively the set those involved in the discourse and the set of referents in the current utterance. The function *lowest-gen* takes set of individuals and returns the individual in the lowest generation. In case all individuals are in the same generation, all are returned. That is, when a brother refers to *mom* when speaking his sister, he is basically referring to *our mother*.

(7) a.  $e = (\text{lowest-gen}(C, D))$

b.  $\text{lineal-rel}(s, p), \text{lineal-rel}(a, p)$

Under such an account, the strategic uses involving a step-parent would play off of the constraint that the child is lineally-related to the referent. Taken literally (biologically), it would be untrue, and an expression that used the construction would be technically ungrammatical (and/or result in a presupposition failure). The strategic interpretation would

be that perhaps the child should reevaluate what it means to be lineally-related to someone, or reconsider exactly his or her relationship with the step parent. While this is one possible interpretation, there may be many others which tie into the specific situation of the interactants. This makes hard coding of the contextual constraints less desirable, at least for this construction.

The constructon/script division of labor also better captures some differences between languages, or even speakers. (6) seems to be in force in Spanish, yet the construction licensing the bare kin terms is different: parents can be referred to as *mamá* and *papá*, and aunts or uncles as *tío/tía*, but grandparents and higher kin are referred to with the definite article: *la abuela/el abuelo*. Northern (Genoese) Italian is similar, but only *papà* ‘dad’ among direct ancestors can be referred to without an article:<sup>6</sup>

- (8) (A son speaking to his mother or father)
- a. Dov’è papà? ‘Where’s dad?’
  - b. Dov’è \*(la) mamma/nonna? ‘Where’s mom/grandma?’

These differences are reasonably modeled as differences in kinship term constructions, with the scripts shared across the languages.

In other cases the point of difference is in the script. Yoko Hasegawa tells me that she always refers to her mother by *okaasan* ‘mother’, even when speaking to her nieces and nephews. Her linguistic choices seem to be guided by a script that specifies EGO as one’s self. I could not rule out such a pattern for a speaker of English, though I have not yet encountered evidence for it. However, a person who has a self-as-ego principle instead of a youngest-as-ego principle would undoubtedly still agree on which lexical items were available as referential expressions. The two types of speakers would have the same resources available to them, but would deploy them in different contexts to have different interpretations.

### 6.1.2 Possessed kin terms

References to family members can also be accomplished by kinship terms with possessive phrases: *my mother*. The lexical entry for any kinship term will look like the one for *mother*, in (9). It is specified as a type of common noun lexeme (*cn-lxm*), the constraints on which are laid out in (10), based on Sag (2010b:62) (a marking value of *none* precludes the word from having the distribution of an NP, most of which have a non-*none* value).

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<sup>6</sup>Thanks to Alex Bratkievich, Sergio Guadarrama, and Luca Gilardi for describing their kinship reference practices in Spanish and Italian.

$$(9) \left[ \begin{array}{l} cn-lxm \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle mother \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} mother-fr \\ \text{ALTER} \quad i \\ \text{EGO} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

$$(10) \quad cn-lxm \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \quad noun \\ \text{MRKG} \quad none \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} frame \\ \text{ENTITY} \quad i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Kinship lexical entries interact with lexical-class constructions that provide for expression of the EGO. One construction specifies realization as a possessive NP, and another as a PP[*of*]. The first possibility, which is the focus of this discussion, is provided below.<sup>7</sup>

$$(11) \quad kin-poss-lxm \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-ST} \quad \langle \text{NP}[\text{poss}]_j \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} kinship-fr \\ \text{ALTER} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

This construction licenses noun phrases like those in (12)

- (12) a. [<sub>Ego</sub> my] [<sub>Alter</sub> mother]  
 b. [<sub>Ego</sub> the manager's] [<sub>Alter</sub> great-grandfather]  
 c. [<sub>Ego</sub> her son's] [<sub>Alter</sub> son]

Given an in-family reference scenario, there are several ways to refer to a family member by means of a possessive expression, based on selection of EGO. EGO can be the speaker, the addressee, or a third person, either another family member or an outsider. If both interlocutors bear the same relation to the referent, then *our* is also possible. Keeping in mind the three relevant persons noted by Schneider & Homans (1955), a table could be created for each possible referent, with specifications of how that person is referred to

		Addressee's relation to woman		
		<b>parent</b>	<b>child</b>	<b>sibling</b>
Speaker's relation to woman	<b>parent</b>	our daughter	your mom	your sister
	<b>child</b>	my mom	our mom	my mom
	<b>sibling</b>	my sister	your mom	our sister

Table 6.1: Possessive expressions to refer to a mother (in-family)

based on who is speaking to whom. Table 6.1 displays this for a woman with (at least) two siblings and two children.

This table contains the most idiomatic means of referring to the referent by means of a possessive expression. Along the side are the different relations the speaker could have with the referent, and along the top are the same relations for the addressee. For instance, the upper-left box indicates how the two parents of the woman would refer to their daughter. The next cell to the right indicates how the woman's parent would refer to her when speaking to her child (i.e., the speaker's grandchild). The table does not incorporate a key piece of information, which is whether the possessive expression is the neutral or idiomatic means of accomplishing reference, or whether another strategy is preferred. Rather than saying *our daughter*, a parent could simply use the woman's given name. Likewise, a child talking to her parent could say *my mom*, but just *mom* the more neutral choice. While I admit that the idea of a "neutral" choice is subject to a variety of criticisms, there are intuitively more and less marked ways of kinship reference. Using the possessive when a shorter alternative is available highlights the specific relationship between ego and alter. Even when both alternatives contain a kinship term, such as *our mom* and *mom*, use of the overt possessive highlights the relationship in a way that the bare noun does not.

The set of expressions in such a table represent a non-trivial linguistic generalization. Any other choice of possessor will result in a marked expression, ranging from pragmatically loaded to outright anomalous. Consider the following table, with choice of EGO the reverse of that in Table 6.1 (except for the diagonal, where I show a singular possessor).

		Addressee's relation to woman		
		<b>parent</b>	<b>child</b>	<b>sibling</b>
Speaker's relation to woman	<b>parent</b>	my/your daughter	my daughter	my daughter
	<b>child</b>	your daughter	my/your mom	your sister
	<b>sibling</b>	your daughter	my sister	my/your sister

Table 6.2: Anomalous possessive expressions to refer to a mother (in-family)

Choice of *my* or *your* instead of *our* (or a bare name or kin term) is certainly possible,

<sup>7</sup>If possessors with 's are analyzed as DPs (Sag et al., 2003), the argument is specified as XP[poss].

but is pragmatically loaded. A mother who refers to *your daughter* when speaking to her husband has some rhetorical goal in mind that is bolstered by pointing out the relationship. Other choices in the table are much stranger. It is difficult to imagine a situation where a child speaking to his mother refers to his sister with *your daughter*, or conversely, where the mother speaking to her son asks about *my daughter* rather than *your sister* or *Jill*. Note that these judgments do not apply to predicative uses of these NPs. *I have to take care of her—she’s my daughter!* is fine. It is referential uses, as in *Give this to my daughter* which are anomalous.<sup>8</sup>

Rather than constructing tables like these for each possible referent, we can collapse them by abstracting away from the specific relations and lexical items involved. Table 6.3 does this with respect to proper name expressions, including derived kinship names. As before, the left column indicates the speaker’s relation to the referent, R, and the top row indicates the addressee’s relation to R. The most natural means of referring to R given a particular pairing is sometimes indicated with “R”, a bare kinship name (*grandma*). The choice of kin term is made in accordance with script (6). In other cases, the natural choice is a non-kin name of the referent (*Jill*), indicated by [name]. A “?” indicates a (potentially) marked choice. My stated domain of interest is consanguinal relations, but I include *spouse* as way to talk about how reference to one (grand-)parent is accomplished when the other (grand-)parent is the speaker or addressee. Other pairings involving the spouse are omitted.

		A’s rel to R				
		<b>grandchild</b>	<b>child</b>	<b>sibling</b>	<b>parent</b>	<b>spouse</b>
S’s rel to R	<b>grandchild</b>	R	R	?R	R	R
	<b>child</b>	R	R	?R	R	R
	<b>sibling</b>	?R	?R	[name]	[name]	–
	<b>parent</b>	R	R	[name]	[name]	–
	<b>spouse</b>	R	R	–	–	–

Table 6.3: Kinship reference with names (in-family)

The table is most easily read by row, imagining one’s self as the speaker. In the second row, I am the child of the referent. From left to right, my first addressee is the referent’s grandchild, i.e., my child. To refer to the referent, I could use a bare kin term, choosing the youngest discourse participant (my child) as EGO: *grandma* or *grandpa*. Moving to the third row, I imagine I am the referent’s brother. When referring to my sister while speaking to my parent (fourth column), I would use her name.

The overall pattern is not surprising, given the construction in 5, which licenses only ancestor terms as names. The places where [name] is the default choice are where the interlocutors are siblings and/or parents of the referent, i.e., where the names for the relations

<sup>8</sup>Certain contexts may support this sort of reference, such as discussions of inheritance or geneology. But in these cases the participants are looking at the family relations from a more-or-less outsider’s point of view, and so the pragmatic consequences of choosing marked expressions are not (necessarily) present.

are *daughter/son* and *sister/brother*, which cannot be used as names. In the other cells involving a sibling of the referent, there is a ?, reflecting the discussion above with respect to the applicability of (5) to aunts and uncles. In some families, or in some situations, an uncle might use *mom* to refer to his sister, and in others he might not.

Table 6.4 displays the same set of circumstances, but for possessed kin terms.

		A's rel to R				
		<b>grandchild</b>	<b>child</b>	<b>sibling</b>	<b>parent</b>	<b>spouse</b>
S's rel to R	<b>grandchild</b>	our R	?my R	my R	?my R	?my R
	<b>child</b>	your R	our R	my R	my R	?my R
	<b>sibling</b>	your R	your R	our R	?my R	–
	<b>parent</b>	your R	your R	your R	our R	–
	<b>spouse</b>	your R	your R	–	–	–

Table 6.4: Kinship reference with possessive expressions (in-family)

Possessive expressions are generally disfavored with respect to names, due to their over-explicitness (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). They are nonetheless possible, and differences in acceptability can be discerned among them. The expressions indicated with “?” in this table are, to my judgment, not just over-explicit but anomalous. As an example, it is very hard to imagine someone speaking to his or her parent and referring to a grandmother with *my grandma*. The preferred choice is a derived name: *grandma*. If the two tables are compared, each speaker-addressee pairing has at least one natural means of referring to R, and some have more. For instance, a child referring to his father when speaking to his grandparent (child-of to parent-of) can equally well use *dad* or *my dad*. Someone referring to her sister when speaking to her (sister's) parent (sibling-of to parent-of) will most naturally use the sibling's name, but alternatively can say *my sister*.

The youngest-EGO principle of (6) applies to possessed kin terms. The top two rows contain the youngest speakers, and the possessor is always *our* or *my*, except when the child and grandchild are co-interlocutors. Likewise, the first two columns have the youngest addressees, and now the possessor is always *our* or *your* (with the same exception). For instance, a child of R will use *my mother/father*, and speakers addressing the child will use *your mother/father*. Reversing this results in anomaly. (13) illustrates the use of the an EGO different from that indicated in the table for the *child* column of Table 6.4. (14) illustrates the same for the *child* row, in which the referent's child is addressing various family members.

- (13) a. (A child refers to his grandparent, speaking to his parent)  
# Have you seen your dad/mom?
- b. (A child refers to his parent, speaking to his sibling)  
# Have you seen my/your dad/mom?



- c. (An uncle refers to his sibling, speaking to his nephew)  
# Have you seen my brother/sister?
  - d. (A man refers to his child, speaking to his grandchild)  
# Have you seen my son/daughter?
  - e. (One parent refers to the other, speaking to his child)  
# Have you seen my wife/husband?
- (14) A child refers to his parent...
- a. (...speaking to his child) # Have you seen my mom/dad?
  - b. (...speaking to a sibling) # Have you seen my/your mom/dad?
  - c. (...speaking to an uncle or aunt) # Have you seen your sister/brother?
  - d. (...speaking to his grandparent) # Have you seen your daughter/son?
  - e. (...speaking to his other parent) # Have you seen your wife/husband?

The tables above indicate only which local person will be chosen as EGO. This is the default choice, but it is not the only one. If some third party is a salient topic of discussion, and if a speaker wishes to highlight the relation to that person, he or she may be selected as EGO. For instance, a wife speaking to her husband might usually refer to his father by his name, or possibly by *dad*, but she might wish highlight his relationship with their daughter Sue as in (15).

- (15) Don't you think Sue's grandfather might want to be at the graduation as well?

The tables also only consider in-family reference. Out-of-family reference is, by comparison, quite simple. If only one of the two interlocutors is related to R, then that relation is the default in identifying R:

- (16) Joe is Sue's son. Jim is Sue's old friend. Jim is addressing Joe.

Jim: Have you seen your mother?

Jim: # Have you seen Sue?

Jim: # Have you seen my friend (Sue)?

- (17) (Same relations as in (16), with Joe addressing Jim)

Joe: Have you seen my mother?

Joe: # Have you seen Sue?

Joe: # Have you seen your friend (Sue)?

The multiple constraints on how reference to kin is accomplished is governed in part by the constructions that operate on kinship lexical items, and in part by scripts. We have

already seen one script that specifies how EGO is chosen: namely, pick the youngest person involved in the interaction. A few additional scripts serve to characterize the observations summarized in Table 6.4.

Out-of-family kinship reference is relatively straightforward: the kin relation takes precedence over any other means of reference. This is spelled out in (18).

- (18) Out-of-family kinship reference script  
 Interlocutors: speaker (*s*), addressee (*a*)  
 Scenario: *s* refers to a referent (*r*); either *s* is related to *r* or *a* is related to *r* (but not both)  
 Preferred means: Frame: *kinship-fr*  
 Constraints: *kinship-fr*.EGO realized by NP[poss]  
 Alternative means: Proper noun  
 Constraints: *s* is familiar with *r*; EGO not younger than *r*

An alternative means is included. A proper noun may be used, but only if EGO is at least as old as the referent. For instance, a friend of an interlocutor's mother would not likely talk about her by her name, but could refer to the interlocutor's sibling, child, cousin, etc., by name.

Reference within the family is governed by a different set of scripts and constructions. (5) and (6) already place severe constraints on how family members are referred to. Another script, (19), outlines the general principles for in-family reference.

- (19) In-family kin reference  
 Scenario: *s* refers to a referent (*r*), *s* and *a* are related to *r*  
 Preferred means: A name associated with *r*  
 Alternative means: *kinship-fr* with possessor  
 Constraints:  
 EGO is a descendent of *r*

The preferred means of reference is by name associated with the referent. The circumlocution is simply meant to include a range of possibilities, including a given name or nickname or a name derived from a kinship term. This preference interacts with (5), which only licenses ancestor kin terms as names. For non-ancestors, a non-derived name (given name or nickname) is the neutral choice. Alternatively, a possessed kin term is available, but all else equal it is dispreferred, per Sacks & Schegloff (1979). This alternative comes with an additional constraint: EGO is a descendent of *r*. This cannot be seen from the Tables 6.3 and 6.4, but consider a person speaking to her cousin. If a possessive expression is chosen, she will refer to her mother as *my mom* rather than *your aunt*, and the cousin will refer to *your mom* rather than *my aunt*. In the next section I introduce constructions that derive titles from kin terms. This licenses *Aunt Sue*, which could be used by the cousin instead of *your mom*. Because title+name phrases count as names syntactically and semantically (the head in both cases is the name, not the title), their preference over possessive

expressions is predicted by (19). Finally, the overarching preference from (6) applies to all cases where a *kinship-fr* is used: EGO is the youngest person involved in the discourse, that is, an interlocutor or a peripherally-active person in the participation framework as described by Goffman (1979).

A few examples illustrate the interaction of constructions and scripts. Imagine a family with a mother, father, son, and daughter. One sibling referring to another will prefer to use a name. Because no construction licenses a kinship name, their given name is chosen. Each child will refer to a parent by constructionally-licensed kinship name. Now imagine that the father has a brother. The son and daughter prefer to refer to him by a name, but because an *uncle* is not a direct ancestor, it is not licensed. The title+name formula is available, however: *Uncle Joe*. If the possessive alternative is taken, the youngest person is EGO, resulting in *my uncle* rather than *your brother*. If that uncle has a daughter, she is the cousin of our family's son and daughter. When that cousin, in conversation with our son or daughter, refers to her own father, she will say *my dad* rather than *your uncle*, following the constraint in (19). The youngest-EGO script does not apply, as the cousins are in the same generation. A bare kin term, *dad*, is ruled out on the basis of private family-name conventions, which at least in my experience, limit use of derived kinship names to interactions entirely within the nuclear family plus direct ancestors.

The system I have proposed, a combination of scripts, constructions, and other cultural conventions, characterizes how speakers act in default or neutral situations. These are all learned conventions, specific to languages or linguistic communities. Some are completely grammaticalized and essentially unavoidable when doing kinship reference. Others, the scripts, lay out preferences which can have a strong effect on linguistic behavior but are not completely set in stone.

The following section lays out additional constructions that pertain to kinship reference and whose use in utterances is constrained by the scripts I have introduced.

### 6.1.3 Titles and vocatives

Many kinship terms are also usable as titles, followed by a name, and as vocatives, either alone or as a title. In this area there are a few generalizations that can be made, but also a sizeable degree of inter-family differences. I will point out mainly the aspects that are crucial for the syntax-context relationship.

Following Leech (1999), a vocative is a subtype of address term, which includes any expression which refers to the addressee. A vocative is a nominal expression, loosely integrated into the clausal structure, which refers to the addressee of an utterance. Vocatives have a number of functions, including catching the attention of the (intended) addressee, disambiguating between addressees, and maintaining the social/interactional connection between the interlocutors (Leech, 1999, Zwicky, 1974:787). A *call* is an utterance-initial vocative that catches the attention of the addressee. The sentences in (20) illustrate a non-vocative term of address, a non-call vocative, and a call, respectively.

- (20) a. They left when **you** were still asleep.  
 b. They left, **Kim**, when you were still asleep.  
 c. **Kim**, I need to tell you something!

Not all referential expressions have all three uses. *You*, for instance, is a term of address and a call, but has no non-call vocative function parallel to (20b). The patterns are not trivial and subject to a variety of exceptions: see Zwicky (1974) for extensive discussion. I do not attempt to replicate or refine his results here. Instead, I lay out the basic constructions and pinpoint the connection to kin terms.

A title, or what Huddleston & Pullum (2002:519) call an appellation, is a modifier that appears before a name and indicates the status of the person with that name. Several types of status are expressible, including military rank (*Private*, *Staff Sergeant*), political office (*Senator*, *President*), and academic status (*Dr*, *Professor*). There are also a set of titles that convey mostly gender and possibly marital status: *Mr*, *Ms*, *Miss*, *Mrs*, and *Master* (ibid). Kinship terms that indicate a senior referent (*grandma*, *uncle*) are also usable as titles: *Grandma Jill*, *Uncle Jim*.

Proper names are generally usable as vocatives, with or without titles (Zwicky, 1974: 788), but not all name-like expressions are identical. On the one hand are proper names, composed of one or more proper nouns (*Kim Jenner* is a proper name composed of two proper nouns). On the other hand are title+name expressions, like *Ms Jill Smith* or *Uncle Jim*. While in many respect syntactically similar—both are headed by proper nouns (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002:520)—there is at least one construction that distinguishes them. Embellishments, or pseudo-titles such as *mother of two Eileen Jones* and *architect Norman Foster* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002:520), consist of a nominal description of person followed by a name. The name cannot contain a title, however: *\*reknowned architect Dr/Mr/Ms/Professor Foster*. Other definite NPs are ruled out as well: *\*reknowned biologist my father/this person*.

The syntax thus recognizes at least three types of definite NPs: name, title+name, and NPs with a definite determiner. The attribute MARKING is the proper place to record these differences. Introduced by Pollard & Sag (1994) and later refined in several articles by Van Eynde (2003a,b, 2006), MARKING serves to distinguish between marked phrases, such as *that it rained* and *whether it rained*, from the unmarked *it rained*. Values of the attribute indicate how and whether some element or phrase is marked. Sag (2010b) introduces *than*, *as*, *det*, and *a* as possible MARKING values. *Unmk* indicates an unmarked phrase. Non-*unmk* values typically enter a phrase by means of specialized lexical items that have inherent marking values. Complementizer *that* has as its marking value *that*. Elements with non-*unmk* values have non-empty SELECT attributes. SELECT replaces the HPSG attributes MOD, SPR, and SPEC, which in English handle pre-head modifiers and specifiers. In the system I adopt, following Sag (2010b), determiners (and complementizers and modifiers) SELECT the element they modify. The selecting sign, the *functor*, passes its MARKING value to the mother sign, while the modified element remains the head for all

other purposes. This is illustrated in (21) (Sag's (118)).

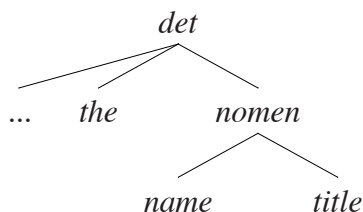
(21) Head-functor Construction:

$$hd\text{-func}\text{-}cxt \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \quad \left[ \text{SYN} \quad X! \left[ \text{MRKG} \quad M \right] \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \quad \left\langle \left[ \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \text{CAT} \quad \left[ \text{SELECT} \quad Y \right] \right] \right] \right. \\ \qquad \qquad \left. \left[ \text{MRKG} \quad M \right] \right\rangle, Y: \left[ \text{SYN} \quad X \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

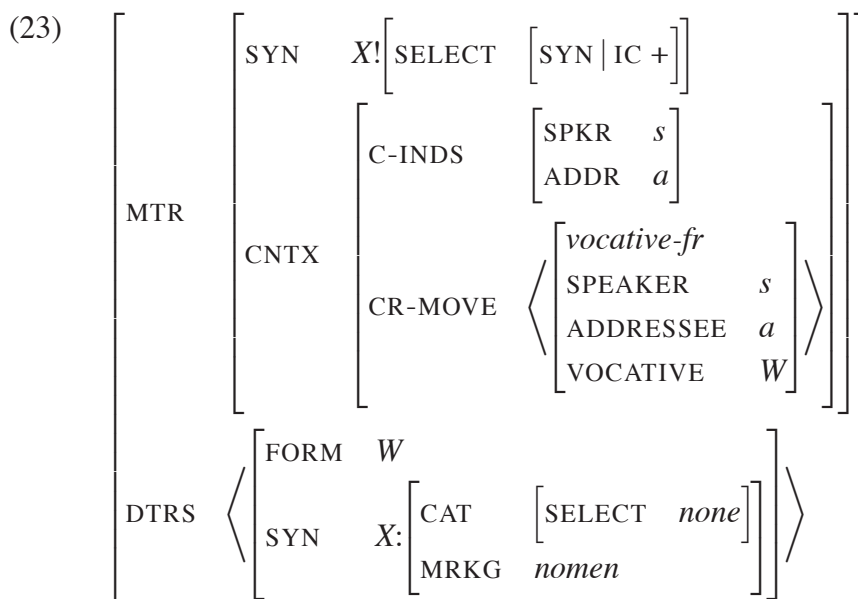
For instance, *a* is [MRKG *a*] and selects an unmarked nominal. The result of combining the two is another nominal which is also [MRKG *a*] but otherwise syntactically equivalent to the head noun. The selected nominal is unmarked, preventing recursion: \**a a cat*.

The marking value *det* can be prespecified on nouns that function as NPs, such as pronouns and proper nouns. In order to distinguish names and titled names, I propose the values *name* and *title* as subtype of *det*. *Kim*, *Rogers*, and *Kim Rogers* are [MRKG *name*]. Any title or prefix (*Doctor*, *Ms*) has the value *title*, and SELECTs a [MRKG *name*] sign. Names and title+names are equivalent for some constructions, like the vocative, motivating a single category that covers the two—call it *nomen*. *Nomen* is a subtype of *det*, alongside *the* and others (22).

(22)



With this in place, a construction licensing vocatives from name or title+name expressions is as follows. The daughter is a *nomen*. The mother is a vocative expression, constraining the current move to include a vocative frame. This frame subsumes the more specific functions of attention-getting, addressee disambiguation, and so on. The expression selects an independent clause, attaching only at the highest level. I do not include a specification for the placement of the vocative. This can be handled by a separate construction that combines vocatives with their selected heads, possibly by a linearization function that allows non-concatenative arrangements of the phonologies of the daughters (cf. Hofmeister, 2010; Lee-Goldman, 2011b).



Any kin term usable as a proper name is licensed as a vocative by this construction. However, most others can be used vocatively as well, including kin terms for individuals in descending as well as ascending generations: *uncle*, *aunt*, *cousin*, *granddaughter*, *niece*, *nephew*, *son*, and *daughter*. *Brother* and *sister* have specialized uses (e.g., *brother* for a (fellow) monk), and have been reported to be unusable as vocatives Zwicky (1974). Nevertheless, there is apparently room for individual variation in this domain. In the author's experience, terms for descending generations are ungrammatical as vocatives, yet they are attested (24).

- (24) a. "And, very important, you need a new, clean shirt. Otherwise they won't hire you. You should look smart. I know these things. Daughter, give your husband a new shirt." (COCA)
- b. "Niece, if that were true, the whole damn kingdom would be in here with us." (COCA)
- c. "Grandson, don't you recognize me?" (COCA)

The possibility for vocative uses—and variation as to which are grammatical—is not a unique to kin terms. As Zwicky (1974) points out, which common nouns can be vocatives is largely idiosyncratic and must simply be listed. Among professions, *doctor* and *officer* are acceptable, but *physician* and *dentist* are not.

Narrowing in on just kin vocatives, we notice two patterns for EGO: one for descendents and one for others. Kin terms for ancestors can be derived into proper nouns via (5). These proper nouns are then possible daughters of (23). The constraint that the EGO be the youngest interlocutor or otherwise saliently-involved individual carries over to the vocative

use. Thus, (25) may be uttered by a child to his grandmother, or by a child to his or her mother if the presence of a grandchild is relevant to the discourse.

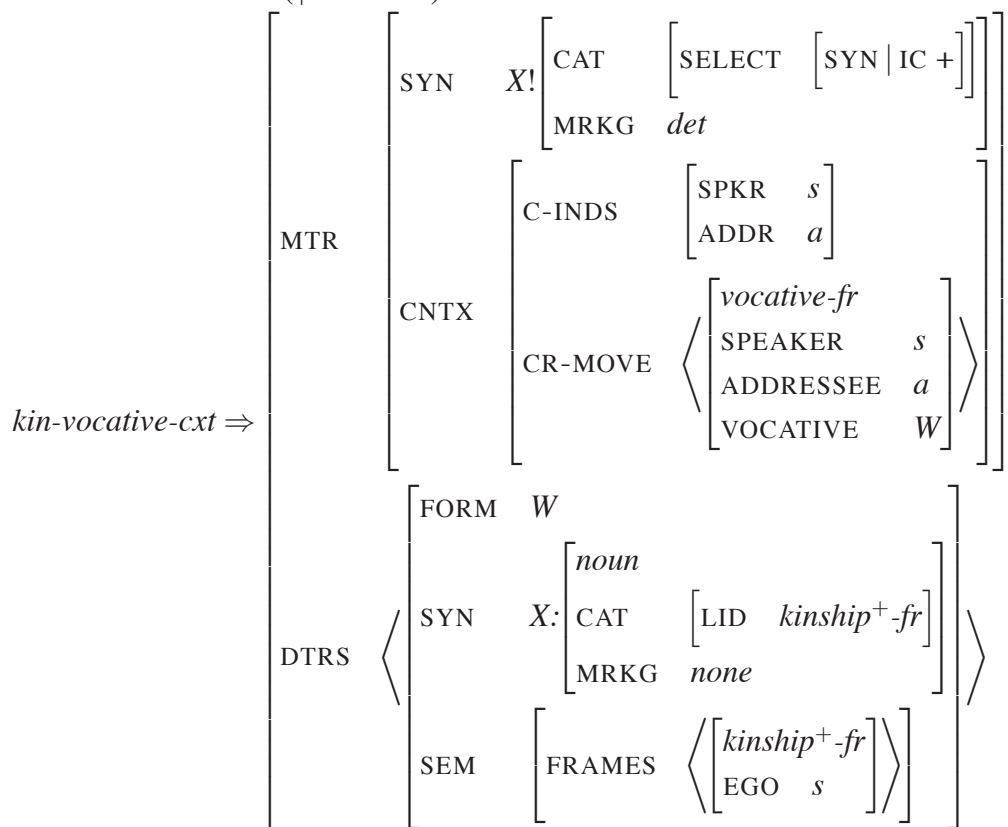
(25) Grandma, you shouldn't say such things!

For kinterms which are not covered by (5), EGO must be the speaker. That is, the addressee of (26) must be the speaker's uncle.

(26) Uncle, please believe I'm sorry. I did what he wanted. I helped him when he asked.  
(John Jakes, 1993. *Homeland*. Doubleday, p. 335)

It is not generally true of vocatives derived from relational nouns that the speaker holds a relationship with the target of the vocative. For instance, the addressee of *Doctor, come quick!* need not be the speaker's doctor specifically. This motivates a separate construction for vocative kin terms. The grammar must still list which lexical items are usable, but the semantic constraints are distinct from those of non-kin common nouns. The construction is shown in (27).

(27) Kin term as vocative ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxt*)



The daughter is a common noun which denotes a *kinship<sup>+</sup>-fr*, a category which includes exactly those kin terms which are usable as vocatives but not as proper names (e.g., *uncle*). The licensing of a vocative expression is as before, but there is the additional constraint that the EGO is the speaker.

Turning now to kinship terms used as titles, we see that any kin term which refers to a member of an ascending generation is usable as a title, except for parent terms. A sample is given in (28).

- (28) a. Where's Grandma Jones?  
 b. I need to see Uncle Joe.  
 c. I never met Great Aunt Julie.

In my personal experience, ancestor titles only introduce surnames, while *Aunt* and *Uncle* introduce given names. Zwicky (1974) reports the same pattern, but mentions that he has observed variability. In informal surveys, I have found that ancestor kin terms introduce given names in some families. As yet unattested is *Aunt* or *Uncle* with a surname, but it does not seem in principle disallowed, i.e., not strictly ungrammatical. There is also a division in common practice: one's ancestors (above one's parents) are generally always referred to by their relation, either as a plain kin term or with a title (*Grandpa* or *Grandpa Jim*), whereas some people refer to aunts and uncles only by their given names, especially later in life. On this basis I argue that there is an additional kinship reference script which states that direct ancestors are not referred to by given name.

- (29) In-family direct ancestor reference  
 Scenario: speaker refers to a direct ancestor.  
 Means: Frame: *kinship-fr*. Either a derived kin name or kin name as title may be used, but not simply a name.

As my goal is to present the crucial ways in which context is encoded in constructions, I will not attempt to justify in detail my syntactic representation of titles. There is a great deal of overlap between names of professions, vocatives, and dedicated titles (e.g., *mister*), but it is not complete. *Mister* can be a vocative or a title, while *ma'am* can only be a vocative, and *president* only a title.<sup>9</sup>

- (30) a. Okay, mister, we found it!  
 b. Where is Mister Jones?

---

<sup>9</sup>Michael Ellsworth pointed out to me that *Mr. President* is a vocative, even though other *Mr.+profession* expressions cannot be so used: *Excuse me, Mr. President/\*Governor. Secretary* is another word with the distribution of *president*.



(31) a. Okay, ma'am, we found it!

b. \*Where's Ma'am Jones?

(32) a. \*Okay, president, we found it!

b. Where's President Jones?

Based on this, three lexical classes must be distinguished. I treat titles (derived or inherent) as having a name-denoting NP as their SELECT value. They themselves are [MRKG *title*], preventing recursion: \**mister mister Jones*. The lexical entry for *mister* is given in (33), and the lexical class construction that provides *title-lxm* with its syntax as a title is (34).

(33) 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{title-vocative-lxm} \\ \text{FORM } \langle \textit{mister} \rangle \end{array} \right]$$

(34) 
$$\textit{title-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MRKG } \textit{title} \\ \text{SELECT NP} \left[ \text{MRKG } \textit{name} \right] \end{array} \right] \right]$$

The construction that derives a kin title is in (35). The daughter lexeme evokes a *non-nuclear-ancestor-fr*, which includes all ancestors other than one's parents (this rules out \**Dad Jones*).

(35) Ancestor kin term as title ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxt*)

$$\textit{kin-title-cxt} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{MTR} \left[ \text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CAT} \left[ \text{VAL } \langle \rangle \right] \\ \text{MRKG } \textit{title} \\ \text{SELECT NP} \left[ \text{MRKG } \textit{name} \right] \end{array} \right] \right] \\ \text{DTRS } \left\langle \left[ \text{SYN} \left[ \text{CAT} \left[ \text{LID } \textit{non-nucl-ancestor-fr} \right] \right] \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

For *Aunt Sue* to interact with 19 it is necessary that title+name count as a name, alongside *Mom* and *Sue*. While this could simply be part of how communities understand what counts as a name, we have already seen evidence that the two are subtypes of a single category, which we called *nomen*. Aside from participation in the vocative construction, both names and title+names are definite NPs with nearly identical syntactic distributions (pseudo-titles being the most salient exception). Additionally, both can be used to in the sentence frame *My name is...*, indicating a rough functional equivalence in domains other than kinship reference.

(36) My name is (Mr./Dr./Prof.) Robin Smith.

The type classification scheme in (22) predicts that such commonalities should exist within the grammar. I claim that the *nomen* category can also be picked up on by scripts such as (19). When it calls for a name associated with a referent, it is referring to the *nomen* category.

### 6.1.4 Summary

The English kinship system is influenced from multiple angles: grammar, scripts, and a vast array of socio-pragmatic variables that the present study cannot even begin to address. Even the current interest in the basic referential *possibilities* of kinship reference has led us to consider a great expansion to the notion of scripts and how they interact with grammatical constructions.

Abstracting away from scripts and preferences, we can ask what the basic grammatical possibilities are: which types of kinship terms (constructionally-altered or not), are compatible with which scenarios? Here I refer not to the scenarios conventionalized in English scripts, but in a more general way: who is talking to whom about whom. We can summarize the English system as in Table 6.5.

	In-family				Out-of-family		
	Self	Addr	3rd	Voc	Self's kin	Addr's kin	3rd's kin
R (anc.)	△	×	○	○	×	×	×
R (col. eld.)	△/×	×	×	?	×	×	×
R (sib.)	×	×	×	?	×	×	×
R (dec.)	×	×	×	?	×	×	×
R+Name	△	×	○	○	?	?	×
Poss+R	×	×	○	×	○	○	○
Name	×	×	○	○	○	○	○

- acceptable
- ? marginally acceptable
- ×
- △ acceptable if addressee is a child

Table 6.5: Kinship terms in several referential scenarios

Except for the particular patterns listed in the far left column, this table or a similar one could be asked of any kinship system in any language. The two basic situations are in-family and out-of-family reference. Within the former, the referred-to kin could be the speaker him/her self, the addressee, a third person, or the target of a vocative. In the latter,

the referent may be one's own relative, the addressee's relative, or a third person's relative. The left column lists the language-specific lexical classes and constructions available. R stands for a bare kinship noun. Going down the line, examples are *mom*, *uncle*, *sister*, *son*, *aunt Sue*, and *my grandfather*. I include Name (i.e., an underived name like *Kim*) as an item of comparison with Japanese (see the next section).

Possible combinations are marked by  $\circ$ , unacceptable ones by  $\times$ , and questionable ones (or perhaps ones most subject to variability) by  $?$ . The  $\triangle$  indicates acceptability if the addressee is a child (a topic I specifically excluded in the main discussion but incorporate here for the sake of completeness). The prior sections did not in fact cover all of these categories. In particular, first- and second-person reference was mostly ignored because in English, pronouns are by far the preferred means. Indeed, using any kinship term for second person reference is impossible. Self-reference is possible (for me) for any parent term, for *auntie*, and for Poss+R. In all cases, the addressee must be a child. As already noted, vocatives are best with ancestor terms and kin+name constructions, but marginally allow collateral relations and decedents 24.

For out-of-family reference, the deictic nature of most of these non-determined kinship constructions makes them unacceptable. Title+name may be possible if the interlocutors are close friends or acquaintances and can both identify the referent. Poss+title(+name) is always available.

The table is not intended to express new or different insights into the constructions and scripts. What it does is present a portion of the English system in a way that makes it more readily comparable to other languages. I show in the following section that Japanese accomplishes with lexical classes much of what English accomplishes with derivational constructions.

Much more remains to be said about kinship reference. On the pragmatic side, I have not explored in depth the circumstances under which one chooses to select a non-interlocutor as EGO, and precisely what the pragmatic or interactional effects it might have. The complexities of families with step-parents, half-siblings, and other relations deserve their own set of studies. On the syntactic side, there remains a systematic comparison between referential and vocative (or address) uses on the one hand, and predicative uses on the other.

What I have set out is a framework flexible enough that it will likely be able to describe the most important parameters in the overall kinship system. This includes a hierarchy of kinship-related frames and a parallel hierarchy of lexical entries that evoke these frames. Combined with constructions that derive various means of reference from these lexical entries, the grammatical resources of English are described. A key observation is that these constructions are relatively underspecified with respect to the contexts in which they are used. The patterns of behavior observed with kinship reference is understood not as hard constraints on grammatical constructions, but as preferences encoded in referential scripts. These scripts are conventional and acquired just as grammar is, but reflect tendencies and preferences. They are shared within local linguistic communities (especially the (nuclear) family), but also across them: I have not encountered a speaker of English who has a

radically different approach to kinship reference. These scripts are not strictly part of a generative grammar. Acting in a way contrary to these scripts is certainly non-idiomatic, but it is not ungrammatical. Yet, I argue that a full accounting for the linguistic behavior of speakers of a language must include such scripts. They are areas where speakers of different languages diverge, even if the two languages' grammatical resources are comparable.

## 6.2 Reference to people in Japanese

In this section I analyze the lexical and grammatical resources for kinship reference in Japanese. Because the referential possibilities of kin terms and proper names in Japanese differ from English, I extend the analysis to how Japanese accomplishes addressee- and self-reference, both with and without kinship terms. This section also further illustrates the utility of linguistic scripts and their interaction with lexical and grammatical constructions.<sup>10</sup> As with English, I must make the disclaimer that the territory covered here appears to be highly subject to not only idiosyncracies but to socio-pragmatic factors that I cannot address. Where possible, I rely on commentary on standards of usage in the literature, but even those studies are based on ethnographic interviews which are limited in number of speakers and types of contexts of use. The present study must be understood as demonstrating the importance of including a grammatical viewpoint in discovering the kinship system of a language.

### 6.2.1 Kinship

The lexical and grammatical resources for reference to kin in Japanese differ from those in English in several respects:

1. Several lexical classes of kinship terms sensitive to (at least) deference, intimacy, and register.
2. Separate terms for elder and younger siblings
3. Optionality of determiners and possessors for definitely-interpreted NPs
4. Relative infrequency of use of proper names for kin older than one's self, by age or by generation, (Fischer, 1964:120) even in combination with a kinship title (Alpatov, 2006:7–9)

Typical taxonomies of Japanese kinship terms (as, e.g., presented in language textbooks) posit two classes, which I will call A and B, illustrated in Table 6.6 They roughly correspond to terms of reference and terms of address, but the match is not perfect.

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<sup>10</sup>The judgments presented are largely from Benu & Norbeck (1958), Fischer (1964), and based on personal communication with Yoko Hasegawa, Shinobu Imai, Kow Kuroda, and Ikuko Okugawa.

A	B	
haha	okaasan	‘mother’
chichi	otoosan	‘father’
sobo	obaasan	‘grandmother’
sofu	ojiisan	‘grandfather’
oji	ojisan	‘uncle’
oba	obasan	‘aunt’
ane	oneesan	‘elder sister’
ani	oniisan	‘elder brother’
imooto	–	‘younger sister’
otooto	–	‘younger brother’
musume	–	‘daughter’
musuko	–	‘son’

Table 6.6: Two classes of kinship terms in Japanese

Class B consists exclusively of terms for senior kin, from elder siblings to grandparents. The prefix *o-* in the B set is an honorific; it is generally expected when referring to an addressee’s relative. It is not as common when speaking to another family member (Befu & Norbeck, 1958:77), and families likely have their own traditions regarding whether and for whom the prefix is attached. Another parameter of variation is the suffix *-san*, which for some individuals or families may be replaced with *-chan*, *-sama*, or *-chama*. As with lexical differences between English kin terms for the same relation (*mom*, *mommy*, *mother*), I treat these as interchangeable variants, largely independent of the constraints on kinship reference to be discussed.

Class A consists of all other kinship terms, both younger and older. These are the terms usually enumerated in taxonomic discussions of the Japanese kinship system (Prindle, 1972). They are, nevertheless, a heterogeneous group. For instance, *haha* and *chichi* are formal vocabulary, reported by Befu & Norbeck (1958:73) as being dispreferred by men in conversations with their close friends. Other A items, particularly the ones with no equivalent in class B, are not formal vocabulary.

The Japanese kinship system is far more complex than just two classes can represent. The more complex studies of kinship terminology (Befu & Norbeck, 1958, Fischer, 1964 and the works cited in Loveday, 1986) recognize several other lexical items, such as *oyaji* ‘dad’ and *ofukuro* ‘mom’. These primarily-sociolinguistic studies record a great deal of pragmatic influence on kinship choice as well as individual and family-level idiosyncrasies, but unfortunately do not always take into account all the lexical items or the referential scenarios in which they are used. Part of this chapter’s goal is to make a start at laying out all the contextual features involved in describing the distribution of each kin term.

I begin by constructing a table like Table 6.5. The far left column lists several pairs of kinship terms, with the female term listed first.

	In-family				Out-of-family		
	Self	Addr	3rd	Voc	Self's kin	Addr's kin	3rd's kin
<i>haha/chichi</i>	×	×	×	×	○	×	×
<i>oba/oji</i>	×	×	×	×	○	×	○
<i>ane/ani</i>	×	×	×	×	○	×	○
<i>haha-/chichioya</i>	×	×	×	×	○	○P	○P
<i>imooto/otooto</i>	×	×	×	×	○	○P	○P
<i>musume/musuko</i>	×	×	×	×	○	○P	○P
<i>ofukuro/oyaji</i>	×	○	○	○	○	○P	○P
<i>ane/ani</i>	×	○	○	○	○	○P	○P
<i>o+X+san</i>	○	○	○	○	△	○	○P
Name	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

- acceptable
- P acceptable, may require overt possessor
- ? marginally acceptable
- × unacceptable
- △ acceptable if speaker is a child

Table 6.7: Kinship terms in several referential scenarios

The lexical items are divided into six groups (the order has no analytic significance). Because Japanese NPs do not require determiners (including possessors), the distinction I made in the English table between “R” and “Poss+R” is irrelevant. A ○ represents a possible combination of lexical item plus context, with or without a possessor. ○P specifically indicates that an overt possessor might be necessary.

The first contains the Class A words *haha* and *chichi*. These are deictic words, necessarily picking out the speaker’s own mother and father.<sup>11</sup> They are non-deferential, so are only used when speaking to an outsider. The next group contains Class A collateral kin (aunt/uncle and elder sister/brother). These also pick out the speaker’s relatives, but can be used to refer to a third person’s relative:<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>More accurately, the parent of the deictic center. See note 14 below.

<sup>12</sup>*X no oji/oba* is not as common as *ane/ani*, but it is possible:

- (i) *Tsuzuki-san no shuzai-kiji ni yoru to kanchoo-san no oji ga shachoo da*  
 GEN reporting according.to director GEN uncle NOM president COP  
*sooda*  
 apparently

‘According to Tsuzuki’s reporting, the director’s uncle is the company president.’  
 (www.arakawas.sakura.ne.jp/backn015/retorosp/retoros3.html, accessed Dec 5 2011)

- (37) a. *sono hito no ane/oba*  
 that person GEN elder.sister/aunt  
 ‘That person’s elder sister/aunt.’
- b. \* *sono hito no haha/chichi*  
 that person GEN mother/father  
 ‘That person’s mother/father.’

The next group consists of neutral terms, what might be considered objective ways of talking about kin relations. These would be appropriate in saying something like *In many families, there is a father (chichioya) and a mother (hahaoya)*. But they can also be used to talk about one’s own kin, or another’s kin, in out-of-family contexts. In in-family contexts they are ruled out due to the preference for familiar terms (the next group) or deferential terms (the group after that).

The next group has terms for parents and siblings usable in colloquial settings, and primarily for reference within the family or, to an outsider, to refer to one’s own kin. These words are predominantly used by men. The notation  $\circ$ P indicates acceptability which is slightly marginal unless provided with an overt possessor (*kare no* ‘his’) or context that makes it clear who the EGO is. I will not in what follows attempt to model the difference between  $\circ$  and  $\circ$ P—it is not clear to me that the distinction is even grammatical (as opposed to pragmatic) in nature. These four lexical items have not figured heavily in the kinship literature, and when mentioned the characterization is either incorrect or outdated. Befu & Norbeck (1958:77), for instance, declare that *aneki/aniki* and *ane/ani* have the same distributions, as do *ofukuro/oyaji* and *haha/chichi*. Neither seems to be the case any longer, as the former can be used to refer to one’s own kin in in-family contexts.

- (38) a. *O-, otoosan, okaasan, aniki ga inai...*  
 father mother elder.brother NOM not.be  
 ‘D- Dad, Mom. (My) brother isn’t here.  
 (<http://ex14.vip2ch.com/test/read.cgi/news4ssnip/1308021366/>, Dec 5 2011)
- b. *Kaasan, oyaji wa ne... jibun no kazoku yori kenkyuu no*  
 mother father TOP PRT self GEN family than research GEN  
*hoo ga daiji na n da.*  
 direction NOM important COP NMLZ COP  
 ‘Mom, for Dad, research is more important than family.’  
 (<http://www2.odn.ne.jp/robomyu/alpha%202nd%2010B.htm>, Dec 5 2011)

Deferential terms are the next group. *O-X-san* stands for all the Class B items. These are usable across the board, but it is considered childish to use them to refer to one’s own

relatives when speaking to an outsider (Yoko Hasegawa, p.c.). The distinction between these terms and the deictic/neutral *haha* and *ane* are illustrated in (39).

- (39) a. A son to his father or sibling  
*Okaasan/oneesan/#haha/#ane wa doko?*  
 mother/elder.sister TOP where  
 ‘Where’s mom/my elder sister?’
- b. A son to an outsider<sup>13</sup>  
*Kore wa haha/ane/#okaasan/#oneesan ni ageru tsumori desu.*  
 this TOP mother/elder.sister DAT give plan COP  
 ‘I plan to give this to my mother.’
- c. A son to a friend  
*Sore wa okaasan/#haha ni ageru no?*  
 that TOP mother DAT give Q  
 ‘Did you get that from (your) mom?’
- d. A son to one of his relatives  
*Hanako(-chan)/#imooto wa doko?*  
 Hanako(-DIM)/younger.sister TOP where  
 ‘Where’s Hanako/(my) younger sister?’

(39a) and (39b) show that reference to one’s elder kin requires the deferential *o-X-san* lexical class in in-family contexts and the deictic or neutral lexical class in out-of-family contexts. Referring to an outsider’s kin also requires the deferential form (39c). (39d) shows that younger kin are referred to by name rather than their relation to EGO. Typically one adds a diminutive suffix like *-chan* onto the proper names of younger relatives.

(40) compares *hahaoya/chichioya* to the other terms. As a neutral term, it is usable in more contexts, but this means it may need an overt possessor to clarify who EGO is.<sup>14</sup>

- (40) a. *Taroo no hahaoya/okaasan/#haha ga shigoto o yameru soo*  
 Taroo GEN mother NOM work ACC stop EVID  
*desu*  
 COP  
 ‘I hear Taroo’s mother is going to quit work.’

<sup>13</sup>If the son is a child, *okaasan* is possible.

<sup>14</sup>*Taroo no haha* is possible if the context makes it clear that Taroo is the point-of-view of the narrative. It is thus possible in novels, where a third person can become the deictic center. Otherwise, however, the speaker is generally taken as the deictic center and *X no haha* becomes anomalous.



- b. *watashi no hahaoya/#okaasan/haha ga shigoto o yameru n*  
 1SG GEN mother NOM work ACC stop NMLZ  
*desu*  
 COP

‘My mother is going to quit work.’

- c. *anata no hahaoya/okaasan/#haha ga shigoto wo yameru n*  
 2SG GEN mother NOM work ACC stop NMLZ  
*desu ka*  
 COP Q

‘Is your mother is going to quit work.’

Much of the complexity is made coherent by incorporating notions of *uchi* and *soto*, or in-group and out-group (the discussion below agrees with that of R. Brown, 1996:46; on *uchi* and *soto* see Harada, 1976; Hinds, 1978; Sukle, 1994; Okamoto, 1999; Hasegawa & Hirose, 2005). A member of Japanese society is expected to show deference to an outsider. Thus, one uses humbling morpho-lexical strategies when referring to one’s self and one’s own actions, and honoring strategies when referring to an addressee and his or her actions. This extends to other members of the in- and out-groups: one humbles the other members of one’s own in-group and elevates those of the addressee’s in-group. This explains why honorific kin terms are used to refer to a non-family member’s relatives: they must be elevated, as out-group members. Conversely, honorific terms are not to be used to refer to one’s own kin when speaking to an outsider: to do so would improperly elevate one’s own in-group. When all the interlocutors are within the same in-group, a different hierarchy is observed, primarily based on relative rank, which for most purposes is determined by age (Suzuki, 1973b:150–151). Any older relative is to be deferred to or honored, so the honorific kin term is expected. When referring to a third party’s kin, nearly every option is in principle possible. Depending on the situation, e.g., how the discourse participants see their relationship to that third party and his/her kin, either a deferential or a neutral term can be chosen.

The *uchi/soto* framework makes sense of the lack of honorific terms for younger relatives. They are not due deference in an in-family context, and so there is no need for a separate lexical item. Instead, their given name is used, often with the diminutive suffix *-chan*. When speaking of (but not to) an outsider’s younger relatives (either siblings or descendents), it is possible to express deference by adding politeness affixes like *o-* and *-san*: *o-imooto-san* ‘(your) younger sister’, *o-musume-san* ‘(your) daughter’. These are best viewed as derived by productive honorification morphology.

These classes of lexical items can be modeled by the lexical inheritance hierarchy (Flickinger, 1987; Sag, 2010b:47) displayed in Figure 6.1. I do not represent all the leaf nodes, but use representative words to stand for the class they are in according to Table 6.7. For example, also inheriting from *colloq -kin-lxm* is *aniki*, *ofukuro*, and *oyaji*. This hierarchy is orthogonal to a hierarchy of kinship frames, which split primarily into *elder-*

*kin-fr* and *non-elder-kin-fr*. Most of the words covered by Figure 6.1 are of the former, but *imooto* ‘younger sister’ and *musume* ‘daughter’ are of the latter.

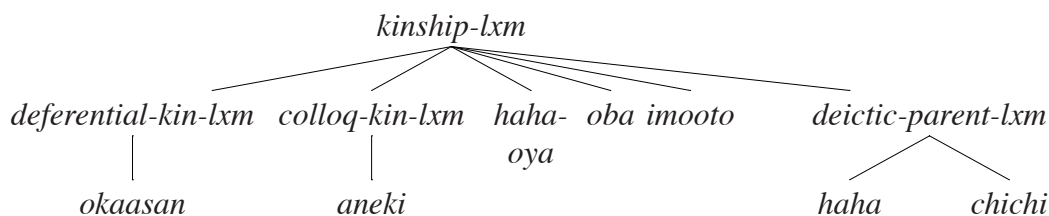


Figure 6.1: Hierarchy of Japanese Kin lexemes

(41–44) are the lexical class constructions for the lexeme types in Figure 6.1. Note that these are rough-and-ready descriptions, not intended to capture the complexities of the sociopragmatics associated with each class.

$$(41) \quad \textit{kinship-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SYN} \quad \left[ \text{CAT} \quad \textit{noun} \right] \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \left\langle \text{NP}[\text{GEN}]_j \right\rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{kinship-fr} \\ \text{ALTER} \quad i \\ \text{EGO} \quad j \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

A kinship noun evokes the kinship frame and allows for a single genitive argument instantiating EGO. In general all arguments in Japanese can be omitted under definite interpretation, so the possessor need not show up.

$$(42) \quad \textit{deferential-kin-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{INDEX} \quad i \right] \\ \text{CNTXT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{C-INDS} \quad \left[ \text{SPKR} \quad s \right] \\ \text{BCKGRND} \quad \left\langle \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{owe-deference-fr} \\ \text{DEFERER} \quad s \\ \text{DEFERED-TO} \quad i \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Deferential kin terms are *sonkeigo*, or referent-honorifics: they index a deferential relationship between the speaker and the referent. The conventions for when deference must,

should, or can be owed are complex. All I need assume is that there is an identifiable notion of owing deference which culturally and socially determined, but which is indexed by certain units of grammar. Following my analysis above, I assume it is calculable based on the in-group/out-group distinction and the relative age of the parties involved. If, on a particular occasion, a speaker believes that he or she owes deference to a referent, then the Owe-deference frame will be activated as part of the conversational background. This licenses an honorific kin term.

$$(43) \quad \textit{colloq-kin-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \end{array} \right] \\ \text{CNTXT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{REGISTER} \quad \textit{colloquial} \\ \text{STYLE} \quad \textit{masculine} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

*Aneki/aniki* and *ofukuro/oyaji* are confined to colloquial registers and a masculine style (that is, a non-male could use it, but it would be seen as an atypical style; a more detailed account might make use of “indirect indexing” of gender as in Ochs 1992).

$$(44) \quad \textit{deictic-parent-lxm} \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad i \\ \text{FRAMES} \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \textit{parent-fr} \\ \text{ALTER} \quad i \\ \text{EGO} \quad s \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \\ \text{CNTXT} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{C-INDS} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SPKR} \quad s \\ \text{ADDR} \quad a \end{array} \right] \\ \text{BCKGRND} \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \textit{out-of-family-ref} \\ \text{SPKR} \quad s \\ \text{ADDR} \quad a \\ \text{REFERENT} \quad i \end{array} \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Finally, the *deictic-parent-lxm* specifies that the current utterance is delivered to an outsider and that the referent is related to the speaker by the specific frame evoked by the word (e.g., for *haha*, *parent-fr* is further specified as *mother-fr*).

(45) shows the lexical entry for *hahaoya*. As it has no properties beyond that of *kinship-lxm*, all that need be said is that it evokes the proper frame.

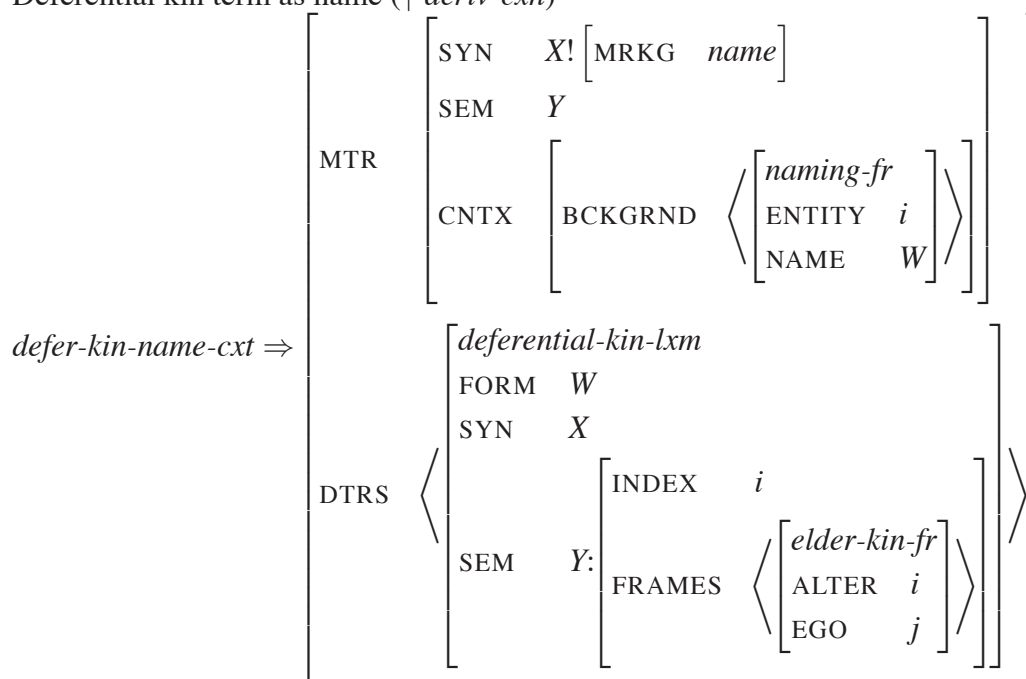
$$(45) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{kinship-lxm} \\ \text{FORM} \quad \langle \textit{hahaoya} \rangle \\ \text{SEM} \quad \left[ \text{FRAMES} \quad \langle \textit{hahaoya-fr} \rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Unlike English, where a determinerless NP is something that demands special treatment, Japanese syntax permits any argument which can be identified by the discourse participants to be omitted (Shibatani, 1990:360–363; Ono & Thompson, 1997). Thus, in an out-of-family context, (46) can have the same interpretation with or without *anata no*. (Recall that deferential kin terms cannot be used to refer to one’s own relatives in out-of-family contexts.) We can treat this as specifying that all elements of ARG-ST lists are (*dni* in Japanese (with no claim that the constraints on interpretation are the same as English DNI arguments)).

- (46) *(anata no) okaasan ni agete kudasai*  
 you GEN mother DAT give please  
 ‘Please give this to your mother.’

Despite the fact that we do not need a separate construction to license *okaasan* as an NP, I argue that we nonetheless need a construction to license it as a name. Table 6.7 shows that *o-X-san* has basically the same distribution as proper names, including the possibility for self-reference. This contrasts with the *aneki* group, which is usable in in-family contexts but not for self-reference. A construction deriving names from *deferential-kin-lxm*, (47), accounts for the difference.

- (47) Deferential kin term as name ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxn*)



Two referential scripts will take care of much of the data. First, Japanese obeys the same youngest-EGO principle as English. Additionally, proper names (non-derived) are

only used when deference is not owed, i.e., when referring to one's peers or subordinates. Using a kinship-evoking word in out-of-family reference is typical when deference is owed, but the speaker is not obligated to use a word that morphologically encodes deference. For instance, the deferential *okaasan* and the neutral *hahaoya* are usable to refer to an addressee's mother.<sup>15</sup> These constraints are present in the out-of-family reference script:

- (48) Out-of-family kinship reference script  
 Interlocutors: speaker (*s*), addressee (*a*)  
 Scenario: *s* refers to a referent (*r*); either *s* is related to *r* or *a* is related to *r* (but not both)  
 Means: Kinship frame.  
     Constraints: EGO is the youngest participant in the interaction or depicted in the current speech-act.  
 Means: Proper name.  
     Constraints:  
     The speaker does not owe the referent deference.

Most of the right side of Table 6.7 is accounted for by this. Any kinship term can in principle be used to refer to a relative of the speaker, of the addressee, or of a third party. *Haha* and *chichi* are ruled out for anyone but the speaker's mother/father by their lexical entries (which, as a grammatical constraint, overrides what the script might say). As more sophisticated or formal terms, they also tend to rule out the *okaasan* and *otoosan* as the child becomes older (thus the  $\Delta$  notation). The inability to use *oji* and *oba* for an addressee's uncle and aunt remains mysterious. I can provide no principled reason why this should be the case. It may even be that with more data, it will fall in line with one of the other patterns on the table, but this must wait for future work.

In-family kinship reference is limited to proper names and two kinship lexical classes: *colloquial-kin-lxm* and *deferential-kin-lxm*. In contrast with English, it is impossible to say that Japanese speakers always prefer to use a derived kinship name, because *colloquial-kin-lxm* does not count as, nor can it be turned into, a name.

- (49) In-family kin reference  
 Scenario: *s* refers to a referent (*r*), *s* and *a* are related to *r*  
 Means: *colloquial-kin-lxm* or *deferential-kin-lxm*  
     Constraints:  
     EGO is the youngest participant in the interaction or depicted in the current speech-act.  
 Means: Proper name.  
     Constraints: The speaker does not owe the referent deference.

<sup>15</sup>Suzuki (1973b:154) observes that there are instances of two siblings close in age referring to each other by name, rather than the younger referring to the elder by a kinterm. This is straightforwardly treated as a case where no deference is understood to be owed, and so the proper name is not anomalous.

The last part of Table 6.7 are the vocatives. Japanese vocatives are syntactically just as in English (50). The two lexeme classes that can be vocatives are the same as those that can be used in-family: *deferential-kin-lxm* and *colloquial-kin-lxm*.<sup>16</sup>

(50) Kin term as vocative ( $\uparrow$  *deriv-cxt*)

<i>kin-vocative-cxt</i> $\Rightarrow$	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">MTR</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">SYN</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">X!</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">CAT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">SELECT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">[SYN   IC +]</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">MRKG</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>def</i></td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">C-INDS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; 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## 6.2.2 Reference to speaker and addressee

In this section I take a brief step outside of reference to kin specifically and into how speakers refer to themselves and their addressees. The possibilities for local person reference are indicated in the first two columns of Table 6.7, and the possibilities are rather different from English as shown in the same two columns of Table 6.5. As this topic is not

<sup>16</sup>The fact that this particular disjunction comes up twice might be enough reason to posit a lexical class that groups the two. The reason I did not do this is that, aside from being referenced together by scripts, there are no features that the two have in common, to the exclusion of all other kinship terms. It would be a bit odd to posit a grammatical category that would only ever be mentioned by scripts. The idea behind scripts is that they provide guidelines regarding how grammatical resources are used; they don't define what those resources are.

the main subject of the chapter, my treatment of it is mostly tentative and suggestive of future areas of work.

As can be seen in Table 6.7, Japanese names and kinship terms can be used for self- and addressee-reference. Among English (adult) speakers, referencing local persons is accomplished almost entirely by pronouns (51).<sup>17</sup>

- (51) a. What do you think about my plan?  
 b. What does John/Dad ( $\neq$  you) think about my plan?  
 c. I like it.  
 d. John/Dad ( $\neq$  I) likes it.

Japanese pronouns have a much narrower distribution than in English and are generally avoided in preference for lexical nouns and names (Fischer, 1964; Suzuki, 1973b; Shibatani, 1990:371–372).<sup>18</sup> Reference to self or addressee is instead accomplished by name or kinship term (52a, 52b). Moreover, pronouns and names are generally reserved for referring to one's juniors, never one's seniors (R. Brown, 1996:44). Just as subordinate kin terms are not used for in-family reference, so are they not used for addressee reference (52c).

- (52) a. *otoosan to soodan-shi-tai koto ga aru*  
 father with discuss-do-DESID thing NOM exist  
 'There's something I'd like to discuss with father [=you].'  
 b. *Otoosan wa Mariko ni jitto suwatte-ite hoshii-nda*  
 father TOP Mariko DAT still sit-STAT want-PRT  
 'Father [=I] wants Mariko [= you] to sit still.'  
 (Hirose, 2000:(22))  
 c. # *imooto to soodan-shi-tai koto ga aru*  
 younger.sister with discuss-do-DESID thing NOM exist  
 (Intended) There's something I'd like to discuss with younger sister [=you].'

The phenomenon is not limited to kinship. A superior in a social institution is typically referred to by their title or rank ((53), Shibatani, 1990:372), e.g., *sensei* 'teacher', *senpai*

<sup>17</sup>McConnell-Ginet (2003:90) notes one exception, namely self-reference by name or rank by subordinates in military context. There may be other, similar such contexts, but in the absence of data in this area I exclude this class of reference strategies from the analysis. See also Hasegawa & Hirose (2005:245–246). It is also possible in general to refer to one's self "in the third person" (51d), especially when speaking to a young child, but this is a highly marked strategy.

<sup>18</sup>The story is slightly different for children, who have a broader range of referential strategies in both languages, though the relative frequency of each strategy, and until what age those strategies are appropriate, are major points of divergence (Fee, 1978; Ide, 1990).

‘senior colleague/student’, *buchoo* ‘manager’, *shachoo* ‘company president’, etc. Subordinate terms like *seito* ‘pupil’, *imooto* ‘younger sister’, and *musume* ‘daughter’, are only descriptive and cannot be used as terms of second-person reference or address (ibid). Peers also refer to one another by their name in casual contexts.

- (53) a. *(Yamada-)sensei-to soodan-shitai koto-ga aru n desu ga*  
 (Yamada-)teacher-with discuss-DESID thing-NOM exist NMLZ COP SFP  
 ‘There’s something I’d like to talk to you [i.e., Mr/Mrs. Yamada] about.’
- b. *Mariko-chan wa itsu kara remio suki na no?*  
 Mariko-DIM TOP when from Remio like COP NMLZ  
 ‘When did you [Mariko] start to like Remio?’  
 (<http://www.casphy.com/bbs/test/read.cgi/remioromen/1261003389/150>,  
 Nov 22 2011)

Self-reference is more complicated, and there is scant discussion in the literature on the topic. However, it seems that the possibilities for self-reference largely mirror addressee-reference. That is, if A is subordinate to B, and A refers to B by some means M, then in general B can refer to him- or herself by M when speaking to A. Thus, a mother can self-refer with *okaasan*, an elder sister by *oneesan*, a teacher with *sensei*, and so on, so long as they are speaking to their subordinate. This is most common for parents, who may continue to refer to themselves by a kinship term long into the child’s adolescence and adulthood (the practice is also observed in American families, but ending much earlier in the child’s life: Fischer, 1964; Ide, 1990). For these purposes, it is useful to consider pronouns and names to be in the same category, defined as inherently-definite non-relational nominal expressions.

The mirroring of self and addressee reference is thoroughly exhibited in the behavior of a (at the time) 40-year-old male school teacher interviewed by Suzuki (1973b:148) (partially reproduced in English in Ide 2005:49). When speaking with his wife, father, children’s school principal, elder brother, and work colleague he refers to himself by a pronoun with an appropriate degree of addressee-politeness (*ore*, *boku*, and *watakushi*, from least to most polite), just as they would refer to him (i.e., by a pronoun or his name). When speaking to his younger brother, pupils, son, or a neighbor’s son, he refers to himself by the relevant relational noun, taking the younger/subordinate person as EGO—*niisan* ‘elder brother’, *sensei* ‘teacher’, *otoosan* ‘father’, and *ojiisan* ‘grandpa’, respectively.<sup>19</sup> In turn, those people would use the same terms to refer to him.

Self-reference by profession (e.g., *omawarisan* ‘police officer’) is also possible, but almost exclusively when speaking to young children (Suzuki, 1973b). The most limited means of self-reference is by one’s given name, reported by Ide (2005:50) as limited to young girls, who would add the diminutive *-chan* to the name.

<sup>19</sup>Use of *ojiisan* with the neighbor’s son to refer to an elderly man illustrates the phenomenon of fictive kinship (Norbeck & Befu, 1958; Ibsen & Klobus, 1972).



I tentatively propose two referential scripts for self- and addressee- reference . These must be refined following sociolinguistic investigation into the details of the various combinations of discourse participants, relations between them, and occasions of use. (54) states that in general, one refers to addressees via a relational noun if the referent is superior, and by a pronoun or name otherwise.

(54) Addressee referential script

Situation: *s* refers to *a*

Means: relational noun

Constraints:

*s* is inferior to *a*

noun indicates the superior individual in the relation

Means: pronoun or name

Constraints:

*s* is equal to or superior to *a*

(55) states that self-reference mirrors addressee reference. As noted above, use of institutional role (boss, police officer) is limited and varies greatly across contexts.

(55) Self referential script

Situation: *s* refers to *s*

Means: relational noun

Constraints:

Use the relational noun that *a* would use to refer to *s*.

Limited use of professional/institutional role nouns

Means: name or pronoun

Constraints:

Self-reference via proper nouns is “childish” or “feminine”

In the next section I discuss some of the consequences and future directions of this approach to person and kinship reference.

## 6.3 Discussion and summary

The properties of kinship and person reference are unlike most of the material in the previous chapters. Starting with DNI and moving outward, the picture of conversational context gradually grew from immediate linguistic (especially semantic) content, to fine-grained speech acts and speaker stance, on to particular speech situations (e.g., at the front door), and in Chapter 5 to action projection. In each case the contextual features involved had to do quite directly with the event of speaking, and of managing and interpreting speech with respect to prior or future speech.

The grammatical resources for kinship reference are quite different. The familial relations between any pair of individuals is far more stable across time than any of the features relevant for, say, *This is Kim* on the telephone. This is not to say that which situations count as “in-family reference” never change, but they change much more slowly than features like whether the conversation is on the telephone, or whether the speaker agrees with the most recently-made claim. There is no reason that stable features shouldn’t be modeled using essentially the same representational techniques as any other feature, but it is worth noting that there is a qualitative difference between the types of contextual features.

Another break from the other constructions is that much of the description and explanation here was done by means of scripts. Especially in English, constructions provide the bare bones of possibility, and it is a combination of scripts and social convention (e.g., among whom does the “private name” *mom* or *dad* apply) that joins with the constructions to create a tapestry of linguistic possibilities. It was mentioned at the onset that this area is one seemingly rife with idiosyncracies, even within the same family (e.g., someone refers to one uncle by *Uncle Bob* and to another as just *Stanley*). The strength of using both constructions and scripts is that it is possible to make generalizations about both the hard choices that speakers have to make and the areas where there are options and preferences. For example, non-ancestor kin terms cannot be used as names (*\*Have you seen daughter?*), but there is wiggle room as to whether one says *my daughter* or *Melissa*.

In the case of English kinship, the constructions had very few references to the CONTEXT attribute, and these were not specifically related to kinship expressions but to more general expression types like vocatives. The constructions provide relatively skeletal resources, while the scripts describe the contexts in which those resources are typically deployed. (Contrast this with the telephone and front door constructions, which have quite specific contextual restrictions). Some of the Japanese lexical classes did place grammatical constraints on their contexts of use (especially the deictic terms *haha* and *chichi*, (44)). Instead, it was the equally conventional but non-grammatical scripts which carried the weight of specifying contextual conditions on idiomatic kinship reference. Based on these, we can add in-family versus out-of-family as a key contextual feature that language conventions care about. For both languages, relative rank among relatives is important, but in Japanese, rank is sometimes reckoned by age (partly due to the lexical differentiation between elder and younger siblings) while English scripts reference only generational rank. The distinction between collateral and lineal kin is also relevant. Of course these distinctions have a long history in the Anthropological literature with respect to kinship terminology, but now it is clear (or clearer) how these features relate (in)directly to grammatical constructions and other linguistic conventions.

An important point to be aware of is that in entering the sometimes-hairy domain of social relations and terms of reference and address, it is possible to get mired down in the internals of the system and not see other ways to explain the data. For instance, in characterizing the Japanese mirroring of self/addressee reference, R. Brown (1996:47) quotes Suzuki (1973a):

Other-oriented self-designation is ... the assimilation of the self, who is the observer, with the other, who is the observed, with no clear distinction made between the positions of the two. It is frequently pointed out that whereas Western culture is based on the distinction between the observer and the observed, on the opposition of the self versus the other, Japanese culture and sentiment show a strong tendency to overcome this distinction by having the self immerse itself in the other. (145)

Whether or not statements like these accurately describe the psychology of Japanese speakers, or could even adequately describe the linguistic data (see Hasegawa & Hirose, 2005 for critique of such approaches to the Japanese self), it would be imprudent to ignore such approaches. As discussion of *It's funny* in Chapter 5 showed, methodologies from grammar can usefully complement, and are usefully complemented by, methodologies from allied fields.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The view of grammar that I present is one that is thoroughly entwined with the world of social interaction and conversation. I take the position that the job of a grammarian is to account for all of the conventional aspects of language. In the domain of semantics and pragmatics, this means that a grammarian is to identify all of the aspects of meaning (lexical, clausal, sentential) that are encoded in linguistic forms, regardless of whether this meaning impacts the truth-conditions of propositions. This entails that it is at least possible that many aspects of pragmatics, as defined by, e.g., Levinson (1983), will find their way into the grammar of a language.

This point has been argued quite strongly over many years by practitioners of Conversation Analysis (Ochs et al., 1996), Interactional Sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), Mental Spaces Theory (Sanders et al., 2009), and Frame Semantics (Fillmore, 1982, 1985a), among many others. It has also found a home, focusing on a slightly more limited set of pragmatic and contextual phenomena, in the areas of (especially indirect) speech act theory (Searle, 1969, 1975; Sadock, 1971, 1978; J. L. Morgan, 1978; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985) and (research leading up to) Generative Semantics (R. Lakoff, 1969, 1971; G. Lakoff, 1971; Gordon & Lakoff, 1975). My goal has been to take a modern grammatical framework, Sign-based Construction Grammar, and see how adequately it could describe a multitude of constructional phenomena that interact with features of the interactive context.

Each of these fields of research approaches the grammar-context relationship from different perspectives and with different goals. I have approached the topic by asking the question: What can we know, or predict, about the context, based simply on the linguistic forms used by participants to an interaction? Coming away from the case studies presented in Chapters 2 through 6, we can begin to piece together an answer to this question.

#### Linguistic description and discourse referents

Chapter 2 presented a syntactic framework for representing null instantiation. A type of NI, definite null instantiation (DNI), is a type of deep anaphora. It is an argument-structure pattern, licensed a combination of by lexical specification and derivational and

combinatoric constructions, which licenses omission of an predicator's argument on the condition that its identity be retrievable to the participants. The basis of retrievability need not be purely linguistic in nature, i.e., there is no requirement for form-matching between the antecedent and the "slot" that has been null instantiated. Thus (and this is no surprise) linguistically-evoked referents are part of the conversational context to which constructions are sensitive. To give a simple example, a person eavesdropping on a conversation who overhears *There were no witnesses* can conclude, more or less definitively, that the speaker believes that the addressee(s) will be able to retrieve, from the prior interaction, a specific crime which was committed. And this is not simply due to general cooperative principles—the grammar of English specifically allows such a conclusion to be drawn for *witness*, but not, for example, for *portraits*.

Other types of ellipsis and anaphora were mentioned, including verb phrase (predicate) ellipsis and argument omission in the verb-*way* construction. Each of these has its own specifications on how to identify in the discourse record, a means to fill out the propositional content of a clause. It is also known from research on operators like *respectively* and *vice versa* (Kay, 1989; Okada, 1999; Gawron & Kehler, 2002, 2004) that order of mention is also a part of context that grammar cares about. This much about the grammar-context interface is familiar ground, but provides a useful jumping off point for other types of interrelations.

## Speech acts and stance

Several constructions were explored in Chapter 3 that make use of the verb *say* to display the stance of the speaker towards prior claims in the interaction. From these constructions we know that the grammar asks speakers to attend not only to which propositions have been expressed, but when they were introduced to the discourse and by whom. *I was gonna say* responds to an interlocutor's claim with a sympathetic agreement. *I'll say* expresses "agreement-plus," where the speaker adds on their stance towards a claim while agreeing with it. These contextual functions of these constructions amounts to a very fine-grained specification of speech-act type. Rather than simply statements, or agreements, there is "enhanced" agreement. There are challenges and there are responses to challenges. These speech act types are not definable independently of the contexts in which they appear, but are a crucial product of those contexts. In one case (*Says my dad!*) we saw that speakers must attend to the linguistic means by which a conversational move was executed. This is a tremendous amount of information to have to keep track of, and it should be no surprise that most of the constructions make reference only to the most recent move on record. The view of context that emerges from these data is a constantly-moving window of attention to the fine-grained detail of who is doing what, and how and why they are doing it.

## Speech situations and constructions with a purpose

Chapter 4 embraced an even larger domain of context, the speech situation. Two sets of copular clauses were analyzed, one set used exclusively on the telephone, and the other used (not quite exclusively) when talking across the front door of a residence. Sentences like *This is Kim* or *Who is it?* fulfill very specific functions—negotiating identities of unseen interlocutors—on very specific occasions of use. The interest in these constructions for a grammarian is highlighted by considering that in other languages, completely different syntactic and lexical formulas are. This reveals the conventionality of *This is Kim* and of *Met Jan*, literally ‘with Jan’, thus the need to account for them under the umbrella of grammar as linguistic convention.

Chapter 4 also saw the introduction (or rather, borrowing and refining) of the idea of a *script*. A *script*, as intended here, is a set of conventions for what counts as the typical or idiomatic way to accomplish a communicative task in a particular social context. Thus, while it is perfectly possible to identify one’s self on the phone by saying *My name is Kim*, it is at best unidiomatic. Instead, a limited set of constructions are preferred. Scripts are key parts of a speaker’s communicative competence and influence grammatical choices, but are not constraints like those a grammar would record. Thus, we can predict that a person who says *Who is it?* is talking to someone across a front door, we cannot predict from the latter fact that they will ask *Who is it?* (or indeed that they will ask anything at all). But we can at least say that if they ask for identification in some way not in a mutually-recognized script (e.g., *Who are you?*) that they are doing something out of the ordinary.

## Projection

The constructions up to Chapter 5 largely were related to context in a reflective way. The predictions that grammar made possible were of the general form “If Construction X is used at time *t*, then the conversation must be in such-and-such a state at *t* or in some period of time before or leading up to *t*.” The two constructions examined in Chapter 5 built up the growing picture of context to include projection, or what participants display about their plans for upcoming talk. Overhearing a speaker say *It was so funny!*, one can predict either that she is referring to a discourse-active state-of-affairs (*it* as an anaphor) or that she is about to launch into a narrative about some state-of-affairs which she deems funny (the IBE construction). Here is the first real way in which context is not only reflected in linguistic choices but actively altered by it.

The domain of projection is one place where it is tempting to posit a multi-sentence construction, one that combines *it was X* with the story itself. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008) recognize the combination of *it was X* with the assessable Y (i.e., the story) as a “pragmatic routine”, but do not go so far as to call it a part of the grammar (445, 460). However, recent work in construction grammar has proposed above-the-sentence constructions for units as local as adjacency pairs up to literary styles (Östman, 2005; Nikiforidou, 2010; Antonopoulou & Nikiforidou, 2011). Östman (2005) proposes a *construction dis-*

*course* (analogous to *construction grammar*) which includes *discourse patterns*. Discourse patterns “represent conventionalizations of specific linguistic properties, which places them on an equal footing with the conventionalized patterns known as ‘grammar’, at least with respect to capturing speakers’ knowledge of a language as a symbolic system” (121). One discourse pattern he mentions is the recipe pattern, consisting of, in order, a heading, ingredients, and instructions (133), arguing that knowledge of this pattern is part of how people make sense of a such texts as coherent wholes (and note that this format of recipes is not a given: *The Joy of Cooking* (Irma von Starkloff Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker, Simon and Schuster, 1975) presents recipes with instructions and ingredients interleaved).

This dissertation did not posit any constructions larger than single sentences. This is not due to any assumption that constructions should not extend beyond the sentence. Instead, I engaged in an exercise of seeing what is possible if one does not include larger constructions in the grammar. One of my main goals is to show that *even* in a traditional (generative) grammar which is traditionally only concerned with properties of sentences and their constituents, it is necessary to include references to context. For this (admittedly practical) reason I did not argue for larger constructions, which would arguably be an even larger break with recent linguistic tradition. Rather than making larger constructions, however, I introduced the script, which has the potential for describing above-the-sentence phenomenon. A greeting script, for instance, would mention that after a greeting is given (*hello*) a counter-greeting is given, and then the greeting exchange is done. As it happens, however, none of the scripts I posited mention linguistic units or their interactions above the sentence level. This is probably a simple accident of the data examined. I anticipate that future work in the area of constructions and discourse will have to grapple with the difficult issues that structure above the sentence present for traditional ways of understanding the domain of grammar.

## **Persistent contextual features**

Finally, Chapter 6 examined a rather different set of data: how kinship reference is accomplished in English and Japanese. Here a great deal of predictions can be made on the basis of constructions and scripts. For instance, a man talking to a woman about *mom* are almost certainly in the same nuclear family, and one (possibly both) has the referent as his or her mother. By contrast, *my mom* would indicate that the interlocutors are not in the same nuclear family. The situation is quite different in Japanese, where mention of *okaasan* means either that the interlocutors are in the same family and talking about one or both’s mother, or that the two are not related, and the speaker is talking about the addressee’s mother. These features, unlike those summarized above, are not contingent on facts about the unfolding discourse. The kin relation between two individuals persists far longer than any facts about particular conversational moves. At the same time, it is the very local facts of who is speaking to whom (especially who is older and who is younger) that determines whose perspective is taken in kin term selection.

Here again we saw the importance of cross-linguistic investigation in determining what

parts of language use are conventional and encoded, i.e., potentially differing across languages, and which parts are to be explained in terms of general communicative principles. Comparing English and Japanese also illustrated the division of labor between constructions and scripts. English kinship-related constructions specify relatively little about the contexts in which kin terms are used; the scripts that reference those constructions spell out the typical ways of using those constructions. In contrast, Japanese has a number of lexical kinship classes and constructions that refer to those classes. These lexical items and classes do some of the work that English scripts do.

## **Future directions**

This dissertation is the first step towards the reconciling of several very different approaches to the study of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. I have focused in particular on two approaches: generative grammar as spelled out in Sign-based Construction Grammar and conversation analysis. I have also drawn on insights from Speech Act Theory and Frame Semantics. Construction Grammar provides a powerful (and formally rigorous) way to express generalizations across these different frameworks of understanding. It is my hope that by framing my analysis in this way, it becomes clear to practitioners of syntax and semantics that it is both possible and necessary to take into account discourse-pragmatic functions, sociolinguistic factors, and conversational structure. In doing so we can build a more comprehensive picture of what language and knowledge of language is, in a way that is informed by many analytic methods, resulting in a body of research that is shared and contributed to by scholars from a wide array of disciplines.

The next steps for the research in this dissertation lead in several directions. First, as already noted in Chapters 4 and 6, the ideal data to examine are recordings of language as used in everyday talk, rather than fictional depictions and native speaker introspection (either as the analyst or the subject in an ethnographic interview). Another promising direction for some of the constructions would be questionnaire experiments. The advent of computer-mediated communication has forced speakers to develop strategies for talk in a medium that, like telephones, lacks visual contact, but which also has several unique properties. A combination of corpus and questionnaire research will help us arrive at a more nuanced picture of the features of interaction that speakers pay attention to when extending constructions with specific functions to new contexts.

Second, the basic methodology of looking for predictions about context from grammatical structure can be applied to any lexical or constructional unit. Of particular initial interest are constructions known to interact with linguistic context in complex ways, such as ellipsis and anaphora. It may well be that examining how these structures are employed in conversation sheds light on their syntactic and semantic properties that are missed when looking only at constructed or monologic/written texts. As core phenomena in the fields of syntax, semantics, and discourse analysis (e.g., text cohesion), they are relevant to both formal and functional approaches, and poised to benefit from an integrated analysis. In turn, in examining more types of constructions it will be possible to revise and refine the



feature geometry of constructionally-specified contextual features.

Finally, an area that I only barely began to examine, via scripts, is the way that context and social situations can influence linguistic choices. The idea of scripts as descriptions of idiomatic or preferred linguistic choices is a powerful one, with many questions yet to be asked: how broad or narrow can scripts be? What sorts of relationships can hold between the two? What constitutes an idiomatic or preferred behavior, and can it be squared with other fields' understandings of how people act in particular social contexts? Future work addressing these questions should also evaluate the influence of scripts (or similar social/cognitive constructs) in everyday linguistic behavior, through a combination of ethnographic, linguistic, and psycholinguistic research.

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