6\textsuperscript{th} Biennial International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English - Abstracts -

Aug. 19-23, 2015
Contents
(in alphabetical order of authors)

Plenary Addresses (p. 3)
- Goldberg, Adele
- Hall, Joan
- Hinrichs, Lars
- Kortmann, Bernd
- Llamas, Carmen
- Seidenberg, Mark

Individual Presentations (p.7)
- Alsharani, Ali Ayed
- Beaver, Benjamin
- Bohmann, Axel
- Chitrakara, Nirada
- Ciraud-Lanoue, Perrine
- Dorgeloh, Heidrun
- Duncan, Daniel, Renee Blake, Isaac Bleaman, Marie-Eve Bouchard, and Zachary Jaggers
- Fernandez-Pena, Yolanda
- Iwata, Seizi
- Kanetani, Masaru
- Kim, Jong-Bok and Mark Davies
- Leary, Erin
- Lin, Yu-Han
- Malik, Ayesah
- Nakamura, Fuminori
- Perez-Guerra, Javier
- Raclaw, Joshua
- Sahay, Poonam
- Sumiyoshi, Makoto

Poster Presentations (p. 29)
- Gao, Yingxin
- Perlman, Marcus, Lynn K. Perry, & Gary Lupyan
- Zhang, Difei
- Zhang, Xiaoyu
Adele Goldberg  
Princeton University  
adele@princeton.edu  

**Explain me this: How we learn what not to say**  
(Aug. 22)

Although many constraints are motivated by general semantic or syntactic facts, in certain cases, formulations are semantically sensible and syntactically well-formed, and yet noticeably dispreferred (e.g., ??She explained me something; ??the afraid boy). I will argue that competition in context—statistical preemption—plays a key role in learning what not to say in these cases. I will also suggest a domain-general mechanism that may underlie this process, and offer a speculative proposal as to why L2 learners may have more trouble avoiding these dispreferred utterances.

Joan Hall  
Dictionary of American Regional English, UW-Madison  
jdhall@wisc.edu  

**American Dialects: No they aren’t melting like butter on a stove**  
(Aug. 19)

Despite the popular notion that our language has become “homogenized” as a result of the media and the mobility of our population, the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)* continues to demonstrate that regional varieties are alive and well. Certainly, language changes; but it doesn’t change in the same ways or at the same rates in all places.

I will illustrate how a knowledge of regional differences has proved valuable not only to linguists, teachers, and librarians, but also to people in professions as varied as law, history, oral history, family medicine, psychiatry, forensics, and theater.

Language change over the last half-century has been investigated through *DARE’s* recent online pilot project in Wisconsin. Data from this survey will be added, along with entirely new and significantly revised entries, to the digital version of *DARE* (www.daredictionary.com). The new material will be freely available through quarterly updates on the *DARE* website (http://www.dare.wisc.edu/words/updated-entries), and they will be made available to subscribers through annual updates published by Harvard University.
Lars Hinrichs
The University of Texas at Austin
larshinrichs@utexas.edu

**Mobility and language:**
What varieties-of-English studies has learned so far, and a look ahead
(Aug. 21)

The issue of language and mobility has received intense discussion in recent years. Among the participating linguistic fields are linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, language variation and change, language contact, corpus linguistics, and varieties of English studies. Within these areas, many of which overlap, such topical foci have developed as language and space, multietnolect studies, diaspora sociolinguistics, and others. For students of, specifically, the English language, dialect and language contact involving varieties of English is of particular interest. Using my data from fieldwork in the Toronto-Jamaican community, I first demonstrate the considerable challenges, of both theoretical and methodological nature, that one faces in conducting work on language and mobility: the subject matter is of enormous complexity. I then review some of the proposals that have been made in pertinent subdisciplines as to how we should address this complexity, providing a critique and my own proposal. Overall, I caution against most forms of theoretical radicalization, and advocate for rigorous empiricism in the study of language and mobility.
Morphosyntactic variation across the English-speaking world: The strength of the geographical signal  
(Aug. 20)

Background and central point of reference of this talk will be the data sets in the WAVE project (*World Atlas of Variation in English*). So far this project has resulted in one print atlas (Kortmann and Lunkenheimer 2012) and the interactive online atlas eWAVE (version 2.0, Kortmann and Lunkenheimer 2013), which in turn belongs to the Leipzig family of open-access online atlases (along with WALS, *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, and APiCS, *The Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Structures*). Besides presenting some of the major results of WAVE, the talk will focus on what can be learnt about (a) the strength of the geographical vis-à-vis the typological signal in the Anglophone world and, in a further step, (b) eWAVE's contribution to continent-wide typology. In doing so eWAVE's 11 varieties of English and 12 English-based Creoles spoken in North America and the Caribbean will take centre stage. Given the inclusion of the Caribbean as THE major creole region in the Anglophone world, the talk will conclude with a comparison of eWAVE with APiCS and, more generally, an outline of the current possibilities and limitations of cross-survey comparability concerning these two typology-driven electronic surveys of morphosyntactic variation.

References


Abstracts: Plenary Addresses

Carmen Llamas
University of York, UK
carmen.llamas@york.ac.uk

Lines on maps: Borders, isoglosses, and sound changes
(Aug. 20)

Lines on maps usually indicate a discontinuity of some sort. Whether where one nation stops and the other starts, or where one linguistic feature is or is not used, these lines usually indicate difference.

In the British context, the north of England is separated from the south of Scotland by ‘the most numerous bundle of isoglosses in the English-speaking world’, according to Aitken (1992: 895). The geographical placement of this divide may be aided by the existence of the political border between the two nations. The extent to which the linguistic divide follows the border in contemporary accents of English is considered in this paper through examination of production, perception and attitudinal data from inhabitants of four border localities, Gretna and Eyemouth in Scotland, and Carlisle and Berwick in England. Such examination allows us to evaluate the effects of political borders on the progression of sound change and the placement of isoglosses.

Mark Seidenberg
University of Wisconsin-Madison
seidenberg@wisc.edu

Poverty, dialect, and the “Achievement Gap”:
Linguistic research meets educational policy, again
(Aug. 23)

The persistent “achievement gap” in reading between African American and white children has enormous consequences for individuals and society. Extensive multidisciplinary research has identified many factors that contribute to the gap, including characteristics of the child, parents, home environment, schools, and culture. Research and educational policy have focused on the impact of disparities in socioeconomic status and, more recently, in language experience associated with SES that affect school achievement, especially reading. I consider the need to re-examine a familiar but neglected issue, dialect. Many African Americans speak a linguistically valid lower status dialect that differs substantially from the mainstream dialect used in school. Use of the minority dialect is an additional risk factor for poor educational and literacy outcomes. It makes learning to read a more complex task than for speakers of the mainstream dialect, but children are assessed against the same achievement milestones. Dialect differences make it harder for African American children to benefit from classroom experiences and harder for educators to assess the African American students’ progress, or identify developmental reading or language impairments.
Thus, the reading gap has been difficult to eliminate because it stems in part from sociocultural conditions involving language and education that could be ameliorated. I will describe several potential strategies for doing so.

— Abstracts: Individual Presentations —

Ali Ayed Alshahrani
University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia
alalshhrani@kku.edu.sa

Interactive Metadiscourse devices employment in Arab ESL Academic Writing

This study presents a qualitative, comparative study of interactive metadiscourse in the academic writing of two groups of Native speakers of English and Native speakers of Arabic doctorate students working in the field of linguistics. It investigates the writer’s capability to deploy the propositional discourse and interpretations in a coherent and convincing way appropriate to projected readers’ comprehensive abilities. A small small-size sample of 80 discussion and conclusion chapters constitutes this corpus. This small-size corpus align with the contemporary trends in corpus based work in the fields of English where smaller, more focused corpora, which have been set up for a specific research or pedagogical purpose, are much more likely to yield insights that are directly relevant for teaching and learning for specific purposes. Using Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, the discussion and conclusions chapters were compared to examine the influence of intercultural and local institute academic culture contexts on writer's use of interactive metadiscoure devices. The findings revealed a significant influence of the local institute culture on the Arab academic writing in most of the interactive subcategories.

Benjamin Beaver
University of South Carolina
beaverbr@email.sc.edu

A split account of Contemporary English mandative subjunctive clauses
(Aug. 21)

This study intends to offer a formal syntactic account of mandative subjunctive clauses in Contemporary English, as exemplified below:

(1) It is imperative that you be/*are on time.

Assuming Sportiche’s (1988) VP-internal subject hypothesis, I bring in new examples with quantifier float like the following:
I said that (all) the children (all) are (all) patient.

(indicative)

It is imperative that (all) the children (all) be (*all) patient.

(subjunctive)

Since a post-verbal quantifier is not possible in (3), but is in (2), the underlying structures of these clauses must be different. I follow Haegeman & Guéron (1999) in that there must be some element present in subjunctive clauses serving as the head of IP. Consequently, be does not raise to I and is therefore non-finite, a definite change from the inflected subjunctive of Old English.

Haegeman & Guéron suggest that this element is represented by an unpronounced modal alternate [M]:

(4) It is important that he [M]/should not be forgotten.

Radford (2009), however, notes that many English speakers do not allow for a modal, and instead posits the head of IP as a null element ØSUBJ:

(5) I’d rather that she ØSUBJ/*should be there with you.

Given the discrepancy between the two accounts, I turn to dialectal research from Övergaard (1995). This research shows that, overwhelmingly, speakers of American English do not utilize a modal in mandative constructions, while speakers of British English tend to alternate more freely between a bare verb, a modal construction, or even an indicative inflection.

Thus, I posit a split account. In American English, the head of IP is ØSUBJ, and in British English, it is similar to, though a little freer than, the [M] described above. In both cases, the clause itself is finite, though the verb within is non-finite.

References


Axel Bohmann  
The University of Texas at Austin  
axel@bohmann.de

**Enquoting voices on Twitter:**  
*A multi-local study of quotative be + like in computer-mediated discourse*  
(Aug. 20)

One of the most rapidly diffusing features across varieties of English is quotative *be + like*. While the variant is increasing in frequency in several geographically disjunct varieties, different constraints are at work depending on the local socio-linguistic systems (Buchstaller & D'Arcy 2009). Jones and Schieffelin (2009) consider the interactional affordances of *be + like* in terms of achieving a “polyphonic style” with rich opportunities for stance-taking, specifically in the context of newly developing communicative norms in computer-mediated discourse (CMD). However, to date there is no comparative study of *be + like* in CMD in different English-speaking countries.

This paper presents a multivariate analysis of over 1000 quotative tokens, extracted from a randomly sampled corpus of Twitter messages from the USA, the UK, and New Zealand. The binary dependent variable consists of *be + like* compared to all other alternative quotatives. The predictors are tense and time reference, grammatical person, content (thought or speech) and mimetic animation of the enquoted material (Buchstaller & D'Arcy 2009) as well as geographic origin of the tweet. In addition, text-linguistic characteristics of each tweet are considered: the frequency of typical CMD features (e.g. non-standard spellings, emoticons), the tweet's contextuality (Heylighen and DeWaele 2002), and the presence of Twitter-specific strategies for organizing polyphonic discourse (“rt”, hyperlinks).

The findings contribute to our understanding of the role of CMD, and specifically Twitter, in perpetuating linguistic change. The paper examines empirically whether and to what extent new communication technologies exert a leveling effect on varieties of English and, conversely, to what extent locally specific norms prevail. In addition, the interactional deployment of *be + like* is considered in the context of a newly emerging communicative genre of CMD with strict formal constraints (e.g. Twitter's 140 character limit) and specific social functions.

**References**


What is happening to *what was happened? (Aug. 23)

Unaccusative verbs such as happen, occur, and appear are intransitive verbs that have theme subjects and are particularly prone to passivization by EFL learners. Some scholars attribute this error to L1 influence, some attribute it to learners not distinguishing between transitive and unaccusative verbs, and still others attribute it to the absence of an agent or the presence of a theme subject. Unlike previous research, this study provides several analyses to explain why Thai students produce passive unaccusative constructions. It was found that passive unaccusatives, as in *the accident was happened and *the shadow was appeared can occur for four reasons. First, the construction may derive from students’ attempt to signal that the sentence subject is a theme and that the event requires an agent. Second, it may stem from the inability of Thai learners to distinguish between a transitive frame and the unaccusative. Third, sentences on the observed pattern of a predicative adjective complement derived from a past participle such as the milk is expired, may be analogized. Finally, students may misinterpret pronunciation input from contractions of the present perfect for example, in sentences such as what’s happened, misconstrued as *…was happened. These findings imply that classroom instruction has been less than successful in aiding the acquisition of unaccusative constructions. The current study shows that, despite the fact that students have taken all required English courses in a bachelor’s degree, most are still unable to construct grammatical unaccusative sentences. It is hoped that the findings of this study will raise awareness of unaccusatives in order to lead to greater focus on acquisition of the correct use of the unaccusative in English instruction.
Among the many phrasal verbs (PVs) with out, a number can be paraphrased as ‘understand’ or ‘solve’, e.g.:
She tried to **puzzle out** what was happening. (COCA)
Harris' attitude was that any problem could be **reasoned out**. (COCA)
Interestingly, dictionaries often use **work out** as a synonym in their definitions of these PVs, whose meaning has already received attention from scholars, with Lindner (1981) analysing them as an example of what she calls “OUT-1 as change from hiddenness to accessibility” – an analysis refined by Morgan 1997 and adopted in Lindstromberg 2010 – and Tyler & Evans (2003) positing a “Knowing Sense” of out acquired through pragmatic strengthening.

This paper focuses on two such PVs, **puzzle out** and **reason out**, as well as **work out** itself, with the purpose of proposing an alternative approach to the role played by out using the conceptual tools provided by the Theory of Enunciative Operations. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the occurrences found in the BNC and the COCA makes it possible, first, to map, and thus, compare the contexts in which those PVs and the corresponding simple verbs appear respectively, and, in turn, to identify the specific parameters activated by out, providing answers to such questions as:

a) How does out enable **puzzle** to shift from its ‘confusion meaning’ to an ‘understanding’ one?

b) Why combine **reason** with out when **reason** already means ‘to understand’?

With results showing the construction by out of a resulting state (as defined by De Vogüé 1989) for all three PVs, it is argued that the meaning of such combinations is best accounted for in terms of aspectualisation of the process through the particle, and that the meaning of PVs in general can be dealt with more unitarily if viewed as the product of the organisation of operation markers.

References
DAVIES, Mark, 2004-: *BYU-BNC*, Based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/
What do conditionals have to do with questions? Some corpus-based evidence
(Aug. 20)

Conditional clauses typically have the function of providing a semantic or
discourse-pragmatic frame of reference for the upcoming clause or utterance (e.g.
Haiman 1978, Ford & Thompson 1986, Ford 1997). In consequence, they show a strong
tendency to occur sentence-initially, rather than -finally - a preference that proves robust
across registers and genres (e.g. Diessel 2005, Nall & Nall 2011).

In contrast to this general picture, corpus-linguistic work on semantic and/or
pragmatic types of conditionals is scarce and generally not quantitative (e.g., Declerck &
Reed 2001); the same applies to an effect of whether the main clause is declarative,
interrogative, or imperative. I will close this gap by investigating the significance of 1)
open versus contra-factual conditional meaning, and 2) of the type of main clause for the
positioning of the if-clause across registers. Statistical methods will help to see if the two
factors interact.

Corpus-based evidence comes from six textual categories of the COCA corpus.
Apart from register and genre, the variables to predict and explain adjunct position are
semantic (open versus remote) and syntactic (three different sentence types). While the
semantic type of conditional by itself does not involve a preference for position, sentence
type turns out to be a relevant factor. This is in line with the position that if- adjuncts
have something “in common, semantically and syntactically, with interrogatives”
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 745) and moves the focus of interest on the discourse work
of conditionals from topic to non-affirmative speech act.
References

Daniel Duncan, Renee Blake, Isaac Bleaman, Marie-Eve Bouchard, and Zachary Jaggers
New York University
dad463@nyu.edu

Some New Kind of Ish in American English
(Aug. 20)

Introduction: In Standard English, ish is an affix which suggests likeness to the root (boyish, reddish). One understudied innovation in American English is an expanded use of ish, which for some speakers can occur following a VP (1) or PP (2) when there is no adjective present:

1. I finished my homework ish.
2. I live in Chicago ish.

Previous studies concerning ish assume that use is prevalent among young speakers, rather focusing on its formal structure (Norde 2009, Bochnak and Csipak 2014). In this paper, we utilize a survey to show that a) expanded use of ish represents a change in progress, and b) grammatical constraints influence the use of ish.

Methodology: Our survey asked respondents to rate five sentences on a three-point scale of grammaticality. Sentences included the examples (1-2), one containing negation, and two which clefted the VP/PP object. We surveyed 104 informants, balanced for gender and age (25-, 26-49 and 50+ years) in a Manhattan park.

Results: Mixed effects logistic regression in Rbrul (Johnson 2009) found that sentence type and age were significant predictors of acceptability (p<<.0001). Informants only regularly accepted sentences (1-2) (39-49% overall), and disfavored clefts and negation (11-17% overall). Younger speakers favored ish (50-71%), with acceptance decreasing as
informants' age increased. Cross-tabulations for age (young/middle/old) and gender suggest that young females favor *ish* most. Sentence (2) was accepted more often in each age group than sentence (1).

**Discussion:** Because age is a significant predictor and young women accept *ish* more than other subgroups, acceptance of *ish* represents a change in progress. Although sentences (1-2) look alike, the data suggest that this change is occurring in stages: first expanding to modifying PPs, then VPs. Finally, the data indicate that constructions using *ish* must have a structure that rules out co-occurrence with negation and clefting.

**References**


Complexity on agreement mismatches: A corpus-based study on collective nouns in Present-day English (Aug. 21)

Collective nouns in English may take singular or plural verbs depending on the speaker’s focus either on the collectivity or on the individual members. Further complications arise when they take of-dependents which interact with verbal agreement inasmuch as they very frequently determine the number of the verb (Dekeyser 1975: 45–51) (e.g. a group of British skiers [BNC: CCK 737]).

Using data from the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), this investigation extends previous studies on the matter by considering the consequences which of-dependents have for verbal number in a set of twenty-three singular collective nouns taking of-complementation (i.e. determiner + collective + of N; lists retrieved from Biber et al. 1999: 249 and Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 503). This study analyses the (syntactic and structural) complexity of the plural of-PPs and measures the impact on verbal number of (i) the syntactic structure and the typology of the modifiers within the of-PP (i.e. syntactic complexity) and (ii) the structural design of the of-PP and its modifiers in number of words (i.e. structural complexity).

The results confirm that, although plural of-PPs favour a remarkable rate of plural agreement (‘attraction'; Bock et al. 2001), the analysis of the complexity of of-dependents reveals a remarkable decrease in plural verbal forms. The data obtained evince that, as the complexity of the prepositional dependent progressively increases, the rate of plural agreement diminishes significantly (i.e. 68.05% in local syntactic domains vs. 59.17% in the most complex structures). Thus, contrary to expectations, the influence of plural of-dependents on the verbal number weakens in the most complex collective noun-based subjects, a statistically significant correlation which points to the preference for the singular number as a resource to ease the cognitive processing of complex constructions such as the ones investigated here.

References
Resultatives and domains: The cases of fake reflexives with *eat* and *drink*  
(Aug. 22)

Generally, the range of result phrases allowed is not so wide (e.g. *wipe it {clean/dry}*  
vs. *wipe it {damp/dirty}*). In the case of *eat* and *drink*, however, a variety of result  
phrases have been reported in the literature.

(1) a. *I ate myself sick.*
    b. *He drank himself into the grave/to death.*
    c. *He drank himself senseless.*

In fact, a search of three corpora (BNC, Wordbank, and COCA) reveals that quite  
a wide range of result phrases are possible with fake reflexive resultatives of *eat* and  
*drink*. Why do *eat* and *drink* allow such a wide range of result phrases? Obviously, the  
answer lies with rich frame semantics of *eat* and *drink*.

Now Croft (2009) presents a very illuminating frame semantic analysis of eating  
verbs. According to Croft (2009), the EAT frame has (at least) three domains: the purely  
physical domain, the biological domain, and the social activity domain.

This paper analyzes the variety of corpus data by adopting and expanding Croft’s  
(2009) analysis. In order to deal with the resultatives as shown below, it is necessary to  
refer to (at least) the following domains: a healthy eating domain, a bulimia domain, and  
an obesity domain for *eat*; an inebriation domain, a healthy drinking domain (alcohol  
version), and an alcoholism domain for *drink*.

(2) a. *.. eat yourself slender …
    b. … her need to eat herself stupid took such a strong hold …
    c. “I ate myself out of the business!”

(3) a. *Drink Yourself Beautiful.*
    b. He had to drink himself *into a conversation.*
    c. …he drank himself into failure.  (all from COCA)

This confirms the need to refer to rich frame semantics in accounting for the syntax and  
semantics of resultatives.
Private expression within public expression: The case of because X
(Aug. 21)

This paper investigates a new usage of because:

(1) I can’t go out with you today because homework!

In this (i.e. because X) construction, because can be directly followed by words of various syntactic categories, such as nouns (e.g. homework; 32.02%), compressed clauses (e.g. yolo; 21.78%), adjectives (e.g. tired; 16.04%), interjections (e.g. omg; 14.71%), and agreement expressions (e.g. yeah; 12.97%) (cf. Idibon’s blog post by Schnoebelen (01/15/2014)). This talk considers why these elements may appear in the X-slot. Kanetani (2014) argues that the word in the X-slot is subsumed under the clausal equivalent, as in (2), which in turn is an elaboration of the word. Hence, X metonymically represents the proposition of the clause that contains it.

(2) ...because I have a lot of homework. (cf. (1))

Crucially, homework in (1) does not fully express the propositional content of (2), violating the Gricean Maxim of Quantity. As a result, the construction’s X-part can be taken as merely expressing a speaker’s thought, rather than aiming to communicate with the addressee(s), even if the construction as a whole conveys a communicative function at all. That is, the because X construction, which may itself be a public expression, embeds in it X as a private expression (cf. Hirose 2000 for the distinction between private vs. public expressions). It is this fact that accounts for the use of interjections in this construction: Interjections are maximally private expressions in that they merely express speaker’s emotions.

Thus, the general mechanism that lies behind the occurrence of X is its thought-expressing nature. This may also account for the non-use of determiners and the infrequent use of pronouns in the X-slot. Metonymy, in the sense of Kanetani (2014), still plays an important role in the cooperative addressee(s) understanding the utterance expressed.

References


English transparent free relatives: A usage-based approach
(Aug. 20)

The so-called ‘transparent’ free relatives (TFR, e.g., *I bought what seemed to be a guitar*) display quite striking properties in that its content nucleus *a guitar* is within the bracketed clause, as if the underlined expressions are transparent. The transparent properties can be attested from corpus data (COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English):

(1) a. [What appears to be a pale blue painting] turns/*turn into something else entirely. (COCA1994NEWS)
   b. [What we call coincidences] are/*is limited to the ones we happen to notice. (COCA 2008 NEWS)

The number value of SFRs (standard) is singular or determined by the wh-phrase, but that of TFRs is dependent upon the boldfaced nucleus. There have been three main approaches to the TFRs: parenthetical placement with backward deletion (Wilder 1999), shared structures (Van Riemsdijk 2001, 2006), and configurational structures with movement operations (Grosu 2003). Authentic data obtained from our corpus search, however, show that none of these previous analyses are satisfactory enough to account for the various uses of the construction.

Previous literature focuses on TFR data whose nucleus category is an NP as in (1) and shares the view that the transparent expressions are rather parenthetical. However, corpus data indicate that they are core syntactic expressions: unlike SFRs which externally act like nominal clauses in their distribution, TFRs have much wider distributional possibilities including AP, AdvP, PP, and others as well as NP:

(2) a. You’re definitely not [what anyone would describe as ecstatic]. (COCA2007MAG)
   b. In that process I begin to work [what I would call creatively]. (COCA 1992 MAG)
   c. She definitely wasn’t [what she’d call in love with Sam Butler]. (COCA 1990 FIC)
   d. You make him responsible for [what I call trumping the center]. (COCA 2007 NEWS)

Attested coordination data also show us the headedness of the nucleus in the TFRs and a transparent effect (see Kajita 1977, Van Riemsdijk 2001, 2006 also):

(3) a. Connelly is pretty excited about [[his life] and [what he considers the perfect job]]. (COCA2002NEWS)
   b. Omer Stewart counted a number of reasons for [[prehistoric] and [what he described as primitive] uses of fire]. (COCA 1999 ACAD)

Given such flexible data and nonconstituent properties of the transparent expressions, it seems hard to claim that they are parenthetical or deleted by certain movement operations.

The most viable way to account for such vibrant properties of the TFRs is to allow tight interactions between the lexicon and constructional constraints. The key property starts from the fact that *what* is ‘lexically’ underspecified for categorical and
semantic information. In terms of constructional constraints, we assume that there is a TFR construction as a primitive grammatical element. This construction is a special type of filler-gap unbounded construction with its own constructional properties. It is peculiar in that the head of the construction is what, whose category value is determined by the semantic nucleus. An additional lexical property of the construction is that it is only raising verbs (e.g., call, consider, take, assume, describe, seem, appear) that can introduce the TFR. This means that raising verbs can change its predicative argument into any nonverbal argument (NP, PP, Adv, AP) whose categorical information (including POS and number values) is shared with that of the head what. These lexical specifications can immediately explain two important constraints in the TFR: what is the only possible element in the TFR and its possibility of referring to a human being, and only raising verbs can introduce the TFR. There are other welcoming consequences of the present analysis. For example, since the predicative expression eventually determines the syntactic category of the whole clause, we can explain why the distributional possibilities of TFRs are determined by the predicative expression. It further accounts for the preposition restriction (He speaks in/*at what linguists call a Northern dialect COCA 2001 ACAD) as well as coordination facts in (3). This is possible since the property of the whole TFR in question is determined by the nucleus expression whose syntactic and semantic features are identified with the expression what functioning as the head of the clause. This Construction Grammar approach, in which constructional constraints are tightly interacting with lexical properties of what and raising verbs, can offer us a streamlined analysis for the transparent effects of the construction without resorting to movement operations.


It's not always location, location, location: Investigating adnominal where-clauses in English
(Aug. 20)

In this paper I consider non-locative adnominal where-clauses (e.g. And they have this instinct where they want to blame America first. [COCA_Spoken_2005]), a phenomenon that thus far has eluded systematic description. In addition to filling this descriptive gap, I offer insights into the structural characteristics of these innovative adnominal where-clauses, ultimately proposing that where has developed the ability to introduce adnominal complement clauses as well as adverbial relative clauses.

Using data from the BYU family of corpora (Davies 2008-), I develop a typology of nouns that can admit adnominal where-clauses, ranging from the most canonical, SPATIAL nouns (e.g. the country where I was born), to least canonical, NON-SPATIAL nouns (e.g. pens where you tip it and a ship sails across). Within these extremes are a subset of what Schmidt (2000) terms SHELL nouns (scenario, thing), as well as TEXT nouns (passage, scene), and TEMPORAL nouns (day, era). I show that the availability of various relative markers varies according to noun type, linking the inadmissibility of the full range or relativization strategies available with locative relative clauses to a structural difference between locative adnominal where-clauses and non-locative adnominal where-clauses. While the former fit a fundamental criterion of a prototypical English relative clause—the head noun occupies a syntactic position within the relative clause, realized as a “gap”—the latter do not. This distinction, I argue, encourages a comparison between non-locative adnominal where-clauses and adnominal that-complements (e.g., reports that he’d been fired). Finally, I point to written data from the Global Corpus of Web-based English (Davies 2008-) as evidence that the least canonical—and historically most innovative—construction, NON-SPATIAL noun + where, is making inroads into American English.

References
Yu-Han Lin  
Columbia University  
yhl2110@tc.columbia.edu

_No as a turn-initial token in the ESL classroom_  
(Aug. 22)

This study focused on how turn-initial _no_ was used by English as a second language (ESL) beginner-level learners in order to take the floor as the next speaker in a classroom setting. The motivation for this study began with noticing the frequent usage of _no_ by ESL beginners, especially in the turn-initial position. With limited second language knowledge, these learners seemed to employ _no_ to convey more than semantic negation. With little research having delineated turn-initial _no_ in classroom talk, I aimed to uncover how this small token did complicated work in a beginner-level classroom. The resulting research questions were 1. How do ESL beginner-level learners deploy turn initial _no_ pragmatically in the classroom, and 2. How is the action of getting the floor being accomplished, negotiated, and rejected through the implementation of “no” accompanied by embodied action? Using conversation analysis (CA) as an analytical framework, I closely analyzed the functions and positioning of _no_ by ESL learners for the first-stage purpose of gaining attention. Four examples were transcribed and analyzed from a beginner-level ESL class of 105 minutes. The results contribute to theoretical and pedagogical infrastructure. Theoretically, turn-initial _no_ demonstrates beginner-level ESL learners’ communicative competence beyond merely addressing their negation. The pragmatic functions of _no_ demonstrate the complicated work done by _no_. These functions include securing the floor, managing competing voices, challenging the trouble source, the primary speaker, or the authority, and being a placeholder for ensuing actions. This aligns with previous research on non-native speakers of English using turn-initial tokens such as _yeah_ (Wong, 2000; Lo, 2013). Pedagogically, the subtleties in the usage of turn-initial _no_ provide teachers with an understanding of learner messages for long term classroom interaction enhancement.
Islam, hip hop’s (un)official religion:  
Examining distinctively Muslim features and linguistic identity in HHNLx  
(Aug. 21)

Though Hip Hop emerged in the African American community in the 1970s, it has since spawned a global awakening which includes the Muslim world. The Hip Hop Nation and Islam both transgress the notion of borders while simultaneously acting as places for individual expression of self-identity.  

African American Muslims, or even African Americans who have been influenced by Islam in some way, have contributed significantly to Hip Hop, yet their incorporation of Islamic ideals and language into their music is scarcely studied. Undeniably, Islam played a role in the musical development of Hip Hop, as Islamic ideology acted as inspiration for many artists considered to be part of the Hip Hop canon.  

In this paper presentation, the elements of Hip Hop meet the Five Pillars of Islam to interrogate the intersection of religion, culture, and language. I discuss Islamic influences—primarily Sunni, Nation of Islam, and the Nation of Gods and Earths, or the Five-Percent Nation—in Hip Hop Nation Linguistics (HHNLx) by illuminating those intersections using select videos, interviews, and lyrics of various Hip Hop artists.  

Preliminary research reveals distinctively Muslim linguistic features and patterns of Islamic influence in HHNLx, presenting themselves in music and the street through word formation in (1) acronyms and backronyms like “C.R.E.A.M.” (Cash Rules Everything Around Me) and “ALLAH” (Arm, Leg, Leg, Arm, Head); (2) in-group slang use and register, such as “peace” and “wassup, G”; (3) the pragmatics of sociopolitical discourse via illocutionary speech acts in songs like Lupe Fiasco's “Muhammad Walks”; (4) the use of spoken Arabic and Arabic syntactical structure in various artists' songs; and (5) the proxemics of the cipher, a circle for performance representing sifr, the Arabic zero.  

I will conclude with a discussion of Muslim HHNLx as a form of discourse and an expression of community and identity.
Copulative perception verbs with sentential complements in American English:
A corpus-based survey
(Aug. 20)

This presentation aims at exploring copulative perception verbs, look and sound, with sentential complements in present American English, exemplified in (1), comparing them with seem and appear.

(1) He looks as if she had seen a ghost. (Quirk et al. 1985:1175)

The reason for choosing the regional variety is that the previous literature has focused on British (written) English, whether synchronic or diachronic (see Gisborne 2010 and Whitt 2010).

The data employed here are drawn mainly from the Corpus of American Soap Opera (Davies 2012) as well as other corpora compiled by Mark Davies. The methodology taken here is as follows: (i) retrieving examples with key sequences (e.g. [look].[v*] as if|though), (ii) getting rid of some irrelevant examples, (iii) putting on each example morphosyntactic and semantic tags and (iv) statistically processing them.

The survey presents two findings. First, look and sound occur much more frequently in the complementation pattern than seem and appear, although seem and appear are still frequent verbs as a whole. Another data from the Corpus of Historical American English also shows that look and sound have been increasing from the 19th century onward, while seem and appear have been decreasing. These results suggest that verbs of perception have been competing, and winning, against verbs of appearance.

Second, the matrix clause with perception verbs has been more backgrounded, more like a sentential adverb, while the subordinate clause more foregrounded, more like a main clause. A piece of evidence for it is that the subject strongly tends to be omitted (e.g. So, looks like we're both going to get what we want. (SOAP, GL)) or expletive it (e.g. It looks like she knows it (SOAP, ATWT)). Another tendency to note is that the subordinate clause tend to be expressed in the indicative rather than the subjunctive.

References
Patterning verbal absolutes and free adjuncts in contemporary English, with a grain of history
(Aug. 20)

This paper focuses on two extra-clausal verbal constructions: free adjuncts (FAs) and absolute constructions (ACs), in (1) and (2), respectively:

(1) Having read the report, Max was sure he had nothing to worry about. (Huddleston and Pullum et al 2002: 1360)
(2) All things considered, the result was reasonably satisfactory. (from Huddleston and Pullum et al 2002: 1360)

FAs and ACs comply with the defining characteristics of extra-clausal constructions (Haspelmath 1995; Huddleston and Pullum et al 2002: 1356ff; Kaltenböck et al 2011): (i) ‘bracketed-off’ status, (ii) lack of (full) integration in the syntactic structure of the clause, (iii) mobility, (iv) relatedness to the clause by coreference, and (v) expression of some kind of adverbial subordination.

Our standpoint is strictly synchronic and based on (Modern and) Present-Day English (PDE) data, and this allows us to treat FAs and ACs as patternings or constructions, more specifically, as two options of a (meso-)construction which we call ‘nonfinite-periphery construction’, defined as follows:

- Syntax:
  [(Introducer) Subject/ NP/pronominal/O V nonfinite ] nonfinite periphery [,] [...] x[ ... ] (orthodox) clause (and reversed version)

- Semantics:
  [nonfinite periphery] R [clause], where R implies (specialised, unorthodox or even multiple) adverbial subordination

In this paper we have retrieved data from the Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English and from ICE-GB and have hypothesised that FAs and ACs deserve unitary constructional treatment in PDE, on the basis of: (i) the range of verbal predicates entering the nonfinite periphery (Kortmann 1995: 195; van de Pol and Cuyckens 2013: 342-350), (ii) the set of so-called introducers, (iii) the proportions of ACs and FAs semantically ‘related’ to the clause, (iv) their position and (v) the set of semantic relations.

This paper also tackles the distribution of FAs and ACs per text type or register, and focuses on their productivity in spoken and speech-based text types (Thompson 1983; Bäcklund 1984; Kortmann 1991; Ljung 1996; van de Pol and Cuyckens 2013).
References


When speakers *literally can't even*:

*literally* as a negative stance marker in English conversation

(Aug. 22)

The word *literally* is a regular target of negative language attitudes toward its perceived misuse as marking figurative rather than literal meaning. Responding to these vernacular understandings of the word, linguistic scholarship (Israel, 2002; Liberman, 2011) has examined how modern uses of *literally* may be more accurately understood as serving the pragmatic function of intensifying the force of an utterance, as in Excerpt 1 below:

(1) Switchboard Corpus (Israel, 2002)
Thai cuisine, I never been really fond of that stuff. You talk about spicy, that'll, that'll *literally* blow your head off, it’s so hot.

Building on this research, the present study addresses the heretofore unexamined use of *literally* as a negative stance marker. Specifically, I focus on the use of *literally* to display the speaker's understanding of an utterance as "complainable" (Schegloff, 2005). One such case can be seen in Excerpt 2 below. Here, the speaker complains about a dangerous job duty that requires her to reach inside an oft-malfunctioning printer:

(2) MOK
01 C: I work in the office and, it’s our job to go fix it like people always break it
02 and I *literally* have to go over there like, stick my hand in the thi- like
03 like like maybe like lose a finger like try to unjam it.

Using Conversation Analysis (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984), the study examines a collection of complaints taken from naturally-occurring spoken language data. The analysis shows that, in contrast to the metaphorical use of *literally* seen in Excerpt 1, in complaint sequences *literally* does not intensify the force of what was said. Rather, *literally* functions to highlight epistemic stance, specifically the relative unbelievability of what is being said. In this function, *literally* marks the utterance as entailing some form of socially or morally accountable action, and thus helps guide the hearer’s understanding of the utterance as entailing a complainable matter.
Poonam Sahay  
Ranchi University, India  
poonam.n.sahay@gmail.com  

Indian English amidst the transcultural flow  
(Developing identities, bonding cultures)  
(Aug. 21)  

In the current age of globalization, there are heightened demands for English throughout India and the world leading to transcultural flows that often dictate what happens in the classrooms and other related transcultural spaces (Pennycook, 2007). India has a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural environment where a large number of people speak one or the other of the major Indian languages, besides English; yet other languages exist side by side, symbolizing a cultural tradition and an importance of their own. The role of English within the complex multilingual society of India is far from straightforward; it is used across the country by speakers with various degrees of proficiency, the grammar and phraseology may mimic that of the speaker’s first language and the grammar itself tends to be quite close to that of Standard English. The dominant registers in these languages increasingly resemble translations from English. Not just the sprinkling of English words in every spoken sentence, but idioms, phrases, proverbs, even patterns of thought are faithfully adopted from English into these languages.

This paper seeks to analyse such interactions as may result between the global and the local languages, how they boost each other, while employing appropriate strategies to delineate firmly their respective identities. Languages around the world are experiencing a great pressure, on account of various factors like global commerce, tourism, technology as well as the inescapable influence of a language like English in particular. With this in mind, a study was done on 101 postgraduate students to investigate upon the impact of English and its importance in relation to their mother-tongues as well as to discover how the languages complement each other while carrying forward the meaning smoothly, leading to valuable intercultural competence. Feedback was solicited through informal interviews, questionnaires and observing subject behavior.

References  
How great is the Great Complementation Shift?
In cases of phrase complementation
(Aug. 21)

Rohdenburg (2006) advocates the Great Complementation Shift, a massive restructuring of the sentential complementation system in the history of the English language. He identifies five changes observed in the English complementation system (e.g., the rise of gerund at the expense of to-infinitives and that-clauses). In my presentation, I will investigate how great the Great Complementation Shift is, with special attention to the complementation system of English phrasal expressions (e.g., cannot bear to V/V-ing/that-clause, lend X a hand to V/in V-ing, etc.). They are called “phrase complementation” here. In previous research of the English complementation system, verbs, adjectives and nouns mainly have been focused upon, but phrases have not been so thoroughly dealt with except Vosberg (2009). My presentation will be a chance to shed light upon such uncultivated areas of the English complementation system, based on data collected from online corpora such as COHA.

In the 18th century, lend X a hand is attested as a to-infinitive taking phrase (e.g., Jem and Garry lend me a hand to lift this fine chap into the wagon), while later the phrase starts to occur with the “in V-ing” complementation (e.g., Vincent Astor lent a hand in promoting Mr. Dowling's new $250,000 show). This shows the Great Complementation Shift is also observed in cases of phrase complementation.

However, although Quirk et al. (1985: 1189f.) give cannot bear as a representative expression taking a gerund, corpora search results clarify that in the last three hundred years, cannot bear has “unwaveringly” stayed as a to-infinitive taking phrase, rejecting the complete shift to a gerund-taking phrase. Vosberg (2009) argues that its synonymous phrase cannot stand shows the reversal of the Great Complementation Shift. Discussing these complexities, I will try to investigate to what extent the shift is great in cases of phrase complementation.

References
— Abstracts: Poster Presentations —

Yingxin (Cathy) Gao
UW-Madison
gao67@wisc.edu

**Princesses as agents in folk tales and literary fairy tales**
(Aug. 22)

This poster presents a register analysis comparing the linguistic features of the Grimm brothers' folktales and Andersen’s literary fairy tales. Intent on genuine and faithful record of oral folktales though, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm edited the texts before publishing the stories. I will investigate linguistic features characteristic of conversation addressing the female characters in both the Grimms’ and Andersen’s collections, exploring their relationship with the spoken register. The analysis is based on a corpus consisting of 5 Grimm tales (Rapunzel, Snow White, The Twelve Dancing Princesses, Briar Rose/Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella) and 5 Andersen tales (The Princess and the Pea, The Wild Swans, The Snow Queen, The Marsh King’s Daughter, The Little Mermaid) and several linguistic variables, including the occurrence of pronouns, noun phrases, and type of verb phrases.

Marcus Perlman, Lynn K. Perry, and Gary Lupyan
UW-Madison
mperlman@wisc.edu

**Iconicity across English vocabulary**
(Aug. 22)

Signed languages exhibit iconicity (resemblance between form and meaning) across their vocabulary, and many non-Indo-European spoken languages feature sizable classes of iconic words known as ideophones. In comparison, Indo-European languages like English are believed to be arbitrary outside of a small number of onomatopoeic words. In three experiments, we asked native speakers to rate the iconicity of ~600 words from the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Developmental Inventories. We found that iconicity in the words varied in a theoretically meaningful way with lexical category. Adjectives and verbs were rated as more iconic than nouns and function words. We also found a negative relationship between iconicity ratings and age of acquisition. Words learned earlier tended to be more iconic, suggesting that iconicity in early vocabulary may aid word learning. Altogether these findings show that iconicity is a graded quality that pervades vocabularies of even the most “arbitrary” spoken languages. Thus they provide compelling evidence that iconicity is an important property of all languages, signed and spoken, including Indo-European languages.
The transformation of VP adverbs into sentence adverbs
in American written English
(Aug. 22)

The study will focus on the transformation of VP adverbs into sentence adverbs in written registers, aiming to explore the influence of prescriptivism on this shift. The linguistic phenomenon was recently noted by Curzan (2014), who points out that the function of hopefully used as a sentence adverb to show stance (‘I hope, it is hoped’) is becoming increasingly commonly used in spoken English, however it is still condemned as an “ambiguous and bad usage” by prescriptive language commentators.

In line with Curzan’s findings, I will examine the use of five VP/sentence adverbs in written English (hopefully, seriously, clearly, happily, sadly). I will look at their frequency of use in written registers, contexts where they occur the most, and the changes through different historical periods (based on COCA1 and COHA2).

Furthermore, the prescriptive grammar rules and advice on how we should use the five tokens will also be collected as qualitative data from dictionaries and other writing guides and manuals. I hope to find out the changes of VP-sentence adverbs use in written registers through time and the possible reasons behind it. In addition, by looking at the quantitative usage data and the qualitative meta-data, we may further discuss on how prescriptivism influences American written English, and correspondingly how the actual use of the language could influence prescriptive grammar rules.
Determine the subject of active voice in news writings: Animate or inanimate?
(Aug. 22)

This project aims to determine the subjects of active voice sentences in news writings as animated or inanimate, due to the hypothesis that newspaper is a highly edited register that focuses on delivering facts regarding events and incidents instead of personal participations, therefore if there is a decline of passive use in sentences in newspapers (Anderwald, 2014) then it should be resulting in the increase of inanimate active voice usage in order to keep the focus of this particular register on delivering facts. The research is based on a small corpus that was analyzed manually, with a corpus of 300 abstracts from the New York Times database that has a time range of 1851 to 2011. It is shown that along with a decline of passive use in newspaper since 1940, the use of inanimate active has also faced a decline in contemporary news writing, though not as drastic. Instead of sentences such as “The Balkan Entente conference opened today with a three-and-one-half-hour discussion among the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey and Rumania,” there is a preference for sentences like “A handful of outspoken teachers helped persuade state lawmakers this spring to eliminate seniority-based layoff policies.” I will conclude that news writing is shifting towards more involved animate subjects.