

For Liliane:
Friend, muse, linguist extraordinaire, and
world's second most famous Belgian

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Liliane's academic career and mine have been intertwined for decades. We both have a common obsession with collecting 'real' data on English usage. I must admit, however, that Liliane's method of collecting data is far more rigorous than mine: she collects examples of interesting structures in written English while reading the Guardian (etc.) on her exercise bike; I collect data on unusual structures in spoken English while lying prostrate on a sofa (sporadically dipping into a pot of Ben and Jerry's Chocolate ice-cream) and listening to live commentary on the latest football or cricket matches on radio or TV. We exchange data regularly, as you'll see from numerous footnotes in her excellent (2012) monograph *Adverbial Clauses, Main Clause Phenomena, and Composition of the Left Periphery* citing weird structures that I'd collected (or dreamed up), and from the frequent mentions of her in my forthcoming CUP monograph on *Colloquial English: Structure and Variation*.

Liliane once told me that her interest in generative syntax had been sparked by reading my 1981 *Transformational Syntax* book as a student, and that she'd always wanted to write a joint article with me. Together with a Spanish colleague (Ángel Jiménez-Fernández from Sevilla), we worked on a paper on extraction out of subjects in English and Spanish, which was eventually published with the title 'Deconstructing the Subject Condition in terms of cumulative constraint violation' in *The Linguistic Review* (2014, vol. 31, pp. 73–150). The paper combines Minimalist, Cartographic and processing perspectives, and was well received: Chomsky is reported to have liked it, and (at the time of writing) it is the tenth most frequently downloaded article on LR's website.

*The most famous being ... no, not Poirot but rather Kevin de Bruyne. After all, he has his own wallpaper!

Over the years, each of us has provided inspiration for the other. For example, in my 2004 *Minimalist Syntax* book (p. 429), I reported the sentence ‘What is thought has happened to him?’ to have been produced by a reporter on BBC Radio 5. This observation prompted Liliane to take a deeper look at this type of structure (in which a *wh*-subject is raised out of a finite clause), culminating in the publication in 2017 of her article on ‘Syntacticizing blends: the case of English *wh*-raising’, written jointly with Lieven Danckaert.

Conversely, Liliane has made numerous insightful remarks which have guided and inspired my own research. For example, my forthcoming CUP monograph on *Colloquial English* has a lengthy chapter on non-canonical uses of the complementiser *that* in spoken English, and includes an appendix on the use of *that* in adverbial clauses in present-day English in structures such as the following (1b-h being taken from recordings I have made of live, unscripted radio broadcasts):¹

- (1)
- a. They got wet [because **that** it was raining] (Alison Henry, pc)
 - b. The reason that England won’t win the world cup is [because **that** the younger players coming through are too spoiled] (Andy Goldstein, Talksport Radio)
 - c. Some people were talking about it as some sort of race riot, [as if **that** the Dutch team was split along racial lines] (Andy Brassell, BBC Radio 5)
 - d. [Although **that** they won the title], they finished on something of a low (John Cross, Talksport Radio)
 - e. [Even though **that** we lost], I’d still put that down as one of my favourite games (Brett Lee, BBC Radio 5)
 - f. And [when **that** we were 71 for none], there was a chance to sort of close the game out (Peter Moores, BBC Radio 5)
 - g. For many it was inevitable, [once **that** David Hay walked into the room] (Mike Costello, BBC Radio 5)
 - h. That’s been the dominant philosophy in Brazil, [ever since **that** they lost to Holland] (Tim Vickery, Talksport Radio)

Such structures were found in Chaucer, and thus may well be an archaic feature which has gradually been dying out over the centuries, but which has survived in a minority of speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds: Andy Brassell, John

¹I’m grateful to Cambridge University Press for allowing me to present this short summary of part of the discussion of adverbial clauses in §3.8 of my forthcoming monograph on *Colloquial English*.

Cross, Andy Goldstein, Matt Scott and Tim Vickery are Londoners, Mike Costello was born in Bromley, Peter Moores was born in Macclesfield, Graham Beecroft comes from Merseyside, Brett Lee was born in Wollongong (Australia), and Alison Henry comes from Belfast.

Given that much of Liliane's (2012) monograph was devoted to adverbial clauses, I discussed the data with her. She drew my attention to Lieven Danckaert's excellent book on *Latin Embedded Clauses: The Left Periphery* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2012), and he kindly sent me a copy of the book, and discussed the data with me. Danckaert argues that in adverbial clauses, there is parametric variation in respect of the position of subordinating conjunctions, with some occupying a high position in the periphery, and others a low position. This raises the possibility that the subordinating conjunction/SUB in the adverbial clause in a sentence like (1a) above could occupy a high position in the periphery in minority varieties which allow the use of *that* in adverbial clauses, along the lines shown below:

- (2) They got wet [_{SUBP} [_{SUB} because] [_{FORCEP} [_{FORCE} that] [_{FINP} [_{FIN} \emptyset] it was raining]]]

By contrast, in majority varieties which don't allow *that* in adverbial clauses, the conjunction may occupy a lower position in the periphery — perhaps FIN, as below:

- (3) They got wet [_{SUBP} [_{SUB} \emptyset] [_{FORCEP} [_{FORCE} \emptyset] [_{FINP} [_{FIN} because] it was raining]]]

This would mean that there is no peripheral head position after *because* for *that* to occupy in (3), so accounting for why mainstream varieties don't allow *that* after conjunctions.

However, there is evidence against analysing conjunctions like *because* as FIN heads. For one thing, a key defining property of low subordinating conjunctions identified by Danckaert (2012) is that they allow fronted constituents to precede them within the periphery of the adverbial clause containing them. However, *as* and *though* seem to be the only two subordinating conjunctions which potentially allow this kind of fronting in English, e.g. in structures such as the following:

- (4) a. [*Hard though* he tried —], he could not open the door
 b. [*Try as* he might —], he could not open the door

By contrast, other subordinating conjunctions don't allow periphery-internal fronting

— as we see from the ungrammaticality of the adverbial clauses bracketed below:

- (5) a. **[His passport because he had forgotten —], he had to return home*
- b. **[Harder if you try —], you will surely succeed*
- c. **[Hot when you feel —], you should take off your jacket*

Thus it seems clear that while (some variant of) the analysis in (3) might be appropriate for *though/as*, it would not be appropriate for other subordinating conjunctions (like *because*, for example), since they do not allow this kind of fronting.

Still, one way of modifying the analysis in (3) in such a way as to account for *because*-type conjunctions not allowing fronting might be to suppose that they have a reduced periphery which contains only FINP. On this alternative view, in place of (3) above we would have (6) below:

- (6) They got wet [_{FINP} [_{FIN} because] it was raining]

An analysis along the lines of (6) would account both for the absence of fronting in *because*-clauses (since there is no position in the periphery above *because* to house the fronted constituent), and for absence of that in mainstream varieties (since there is no position in the periphery below FIN to accommodate that).

However, the claim embodied in analyses like (3), (6) that the subordinating conjunction is positioned in FIN in adverbial clauses which don't contain that is undermined by the observation that subordinating conjunctions used without that can be followed by a range of peripheral constituents which are typically found in clauses containing FORCEP, including (as in the examples below) peripheral exclamative, interrogative, imperative, negative and topical constituents:

- (7) a. It's easy to forget about Everton, [because what a good run they're having!] (John Cross, Talksport Radio)
- b. We puzzle over it a bit, and then brush it off and go on with our daily lives [because what can we do?] (steamcommunity.com)
- c. I'm telling you [because please don't let the rain deter you] (tripadvisor.com)
- d. That is why I want a united Europe [because never again should we have wars amongst ourselves ...] (otib.co.uk)
- e. I've gotta see what I can do moving forward, [because the past, I can't change] (Paul Stewart, Talksport Radio)
- f. That's [because Smalling and Jones, neither of them have made it for

this match]

(John Murray, BBC Radio 5)

Given the assumption that only FORCEP constituents can contain topicalised, focused or fronted constituents, it follows that adverbial clauses without that must contain a FORCEP projection. This conclusion is reinforced by the observation that the bracketed adverbial clause can have its own force, and hence be exclamative in (7a), interrogative in (7b), imperative in (7c), and declarative in (7d)-(7f).

What this suggests is that a co-ordinating conjunction like *because* is a causal subordinator which can have as its complement a clause which is interrogative, imperative, exclamative or declarative in force.² A straightforward way of capturing this insight is to treat *because* as a SUB head which selects a FORCEP complement that can be interrogative, imperative, exclamative or declarative in type. On this view, the subordinate clause in (1a) above would have the peripheral structure shown below:

- (8) They got wet [_{SUBP} [_{SUB} *because*] [_{FORCEP} [_{FORCE} \emptyset /*%that*] [_{FINP} [_{FIN} \emptyset] *it was raining*]]]

In most varieties of English, the declarative FORCE head in a structure like (8) would receive a null spellout; but in a minority of varieties, it could be spelled out as *that*. However, this raises the question of why use of *that* in adverbial clauses should be allowed in some varieties but not in others.

One possible answer is that the use (or non-use) of *that* after a subordinating conjunction reflects a low-level difference in the PF spellout conditions for *that*. One implementation of this idea would be to suppose that minority varieties which allow SUB+*that* structures permit non-initial peripheral heads to be spelled out as *that* in appropriate kinds of embedded clause (including in clauses introduced by a subordinating conjunction/SUB) whereas mainstream varieties which don't allow SUB+*that* structures only permit a peripheral head to be spelled out as *that* when it is the highest head/first word in its containing clause. This would mean that most speakers will not allow the FORCE head in (8) to be spelled out as *that* because it is not the first word in the periphery of the adverbial clause containing it (the first word being the SUB constituent *because*), but a minority of speakers will allow such structures.

²I set aside here what Liliane (in her 2012 monograph, ch.4) calls 'central adverbial clauses', which she argues to be closely integrated into the matrix clause, and to have a reduced peripheral structure.

Speakers of the minority variety which does not require that to be clause-initial would also be expected to allow the complementiser that to be used non-initially in other types of clause, like those below:

- (9) a. I think, [as expected, so far that the Greeks are not showing any real ambition] (Danny Mills, BBC Radio 5)
 b. I think [Bayern Munich that they are a team to really watch in the final stages] (Andy Brassell, BBC Radio 5)
 c. I just think [Arsenal, honestly, that they are gonna fall behind if they don't sign a striker] (John Cross, Talk Sport Radio)
 d. The fact that he's been around for so long, I think, is testimony to [just what a good player that he is] (Tim Vickery, BBC Radio 5)
 e. It's unbelievable when you think what a big city Paris is and [what a potentially big club that PSG are] (Andy Brassell, BBC Radio 5)
 f. It'll be interesting to see [what sort of game that he puts on] (John Cross, Talk Sport Radio)
 g. We're hoping JLo will come into the studio, just so she can show us [what moves that they make] (Andy Goldstein, Talk Sport Radio)
 h. I just don't understand [why that you would present a fatted calf to sell] (John Cross, Talksport Radio)
 i. I'm aware of the speed [with which that they work] (Tim Vickery, BBC Radio 5)

Here we find non-initial that preceded within the bracketed clauses by italicised peripheral constituents which include in situ adjuncts or dislocated topics, and fronted exclamative, interrogative or relative wh-constituents. As will be apparent, there would seem to be an overlap between speakers who allow use of that in adverbial clauses like those in (1), and speakers who allow that in the types of embedded clauses bracketed in (9): for example, Andy Brassell, John Cross, Andy Goldstein, and Tim Vickery use that in both types of structure. Such speakers do not restrict that to spelling out a periphery-initial head.

An alternative approach to accounting for the use of that in adverbial clauses would be to treat use or non-use of that as a matter of selection, and suppose that in standard varieties, subordinating conjunctions select a FORCEP complement with a null head, whereas in some minority varieties they can select a FORCEP complement whose head can either be spelled out as that, or receive a null spellout. However, this would raise questions about the nature of the relevant

selection restrictions.³ One possible answer would be to posit that an overt complementiser like *that* has to be licensed by an immediately adjacent superordinate constituent of an appropriate kind, and that standard varieties of present-day English impose the following constraint on complementiser licensing:

- (10) Complementiser Licensing Constraint/CLC
 In standard varieties of English, the complementiser that cannot be licensed by a peripheral head.

CLC would allow superordinate lexical heads like the verb *think*, the adjective *sure* and the noun *claim* to license use of *that* in complement clauses like those bracketed below:

- (11) a. I think [that you are right]
 b. I am sure [that he will come]
 c. Your claim [that he lied] is preposterous

At the same time, CLC would rule out a structure such as that below, so preventing the interrogative complementisers *whether/if* from licensing *that*:

- (12) I wonder [_{FORCEP} [_{FORCE} \emptyset] [_{INTP} Op [_{INT} *whether/if*] [_{FINP} [_{FIN} \emptyset /**that*] it will rain]]]

More relevant to our present discussion is the observation that CLC would also rule out the use of *that* in adverbial clauses like that below (cf. (8) above) in standard varieties of English:

- (13) They got wet [_{SUBP} [_{SUB} *because*] [_{FORCEP} [_{FORCE} *that*] [_{FINP} [_{FIN} \emptyset] it was raining]]]

This is because CLC bars *that* from being licensed by a peripheral head like the SUB(ordinating conjunction) *because*. By contrast, in minority varieties in which

³We might try to derive the relevant selectional properties from independent properties of the conjunction and/or the complementiser. For example, in her 1992 CUP book *Theory and Description in Generative Grammar: A Case Study of West Flemish*, Liliame relates the obligatoriness of the complementiser *dat*_{that} in adverbial clauses (and other embedded clauses) in West Flemish to the observation that the complementiser inflects for agreement with the clause subject, and suggests that the complementiser has to be overt in order to spell out the agreement features which it carries. However, as Liliame herself notes (pc), such an analysis would be difficult to extend to English, given that the complementiser *that* in English is generally optional and does not inflect for agreement.

CLC is inoperative, structures like (13) are permitted. Indeed it would seem from examples like those below that structures like (12) are also permitted by some speakers:

- (14)
- a. I just don't know [whether that they will have the same attitude] (Mark Saggars, Talksport Radio)
 - b. It's just a question of [whether that Liverpool can get their money back] (John Cross, Talksport Radio)
 - c. I'm not sure [whether that Spurs fans will accept him] (John Cross, Talksport Radio)
 - d. I do wonder [whether that their squad lacks the depth of City's] (Dominic Fyfield, Talksport Radio)
 - e. England have enforced the follow-on. [Whether that they could have done it had it not been raining], I'm not sure (Jack Bannister, Talksport Radio)
 - f. It's not clear, though, [if that they're just infecting the microbes that make us sick] (Carl Zimmer, BBC Radio 5)

However, speakers who treat that as inherently non-interrogative would be expected to reject sentences like (14), even if they accept the use of that in adverbial clauses like that bracketed in (13).

Clearly, there is much more to be said about the use of the complementiser that in adverbial clauses, but I shall not attempt to delve further into the matter here, since the point of this brief excursus into adverbial clauses is that it illustrates many of Liliane's finest qualities. Firstly, she is an enormously productive and perceptive linguist: her book on *Adverbial Clauses* amply illustrates the depth of her scholarship, and the insights of her analysis. Secondly, she is always willing to help, whether by providing copies of articles which nobody else seemed to be able to find (including on one occasion an article by Jim McCloskey which Jim himself had lost!), or by delving into her archives of non-canonical structures in written English to find analogous structures, or by asking questions which nobody had previously thought to ask (e.g. when I was working on *how come* questions, she asked whether they allow Subject Drop, and that set me off on a new stream of thought). Enjoy your retirement, Liliane, free from the shackles of bungling bureaucrats, and from their mindless metrics which reduce evaluating the work of distinguished staff and their students to mind-numbing number-crunching.