

Selectional split across speech verbs: non bridge islands revisited

Bridge phenomena, as described in Erteschik-Shir 1973, are contrasts in extraction found between similar syntactic structures, that seem to be related to the choice of predicate. It is studied extensively along the axis of factivity (Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1970, Moulton 2015, Kastner 2015, Kratzer 2016 a.o.), but less so *within* the domain of (non-factive) speech verbs. Our work wishes to enter this gap, suggesting that reported speech constructions differ syntactically according to a semantic split across speech verbs, which determines whether they would be CP- or DP-selecting. The two subsets are presented below.

Group I: *say, announce, claim, convey, declare, mention, note, observe, propose, remark*

Group II: *whisper, cry, groan, growl, hiss, holler, moan, mumble, murmur, roar, shout, yell*

Group I verbs (*say* verbs) are the so called “bridge verbs”, which systematically enable extraction from CPs, from both adjunct (1b) and complement (2b) positions. Meanwhile, Group II verbs (*whisper* verbs) never allow extraction from CPs (3-4b).

- (1) (a) *She said/claimed/repeated/explained that he died of pneumonia.*
(b) *What did she say/claim/repeat/explain that he died of?*
- (2) (a) *She mentioned/announced/stated that John stole the cake.*
(b) *What did she mention/announce/state that John stole?*
- (3) (a) *She whispered/ shouted/ murmured/ cried that he died of pneumonia.*
(b) **What did she whisper/shout/murmur/cry that he died of?*
- (4) (a) *She squeaked/mumbled/hissed that John stole the cake.*
(b) **What did she squeak/mumble/hiss that John stole?*

We argue that while *say* verbs have a content component as part of their basic meaning, and select CPs of speech reports that provide the specification of this content (5a), *whisper* verbs lack this component and merge with either an overt or covert content DP (5a,b, respectively) to generate a speech event construction. If this analysis is on the right track, the ban on extraction from CPs of *whisper* verbs follows from the Complex NP constraint (Ross 1967).

- (5) (a) *She said [_{CP} that he died of pneumonia].*
(b) *She whispered [_{DP} the news/rumour [_{CP} that he died of pneumonia]].*
(c) *She whispered [_{DP} _ [_{CP} that he died of pneumonia]].*

Further, we show that certain meaning components of *say* and *whisper* verbs are in complementary distribution: *say*-CP constructions systematically yield the meaning of a result state in which a saying is attributed to an individual, without entailing an actual event of speaking. In contrast, *whisper* verbs refer to events of oral sound emission (including speech events) but lack a result state component. In that, the two classes of speech verbs follow the manner/result complementarity constraint on verb meaning suggested by Rappaport Hovav & Levin (1998 and subsequent work).

We provide four types of arguments in favor of this analysis. First, there are several syntactic indications that *say* verbs select CPs, while *whisper* verbs select DPs

- CPs cannot be omitted with *say* verbs (contrary to *whisper* verbs and content DPs):
 - (6) (a) *She said/claimed/argued *(that he died).*
(b) *She whispered/shouted/cried (that he died).*
(c) *The news/idea/story/rumor (that he died) was surprising.*
- *Say* verbs, but not *whisper* verbs, take the CP pro-form *so* (Stowell 1987, Moulton 2015). Content DPs are known to block *so*, supporting the analysis that *whisper* takes an overt/covert content DP.
 - (7) (a) *She said/claimed/argued so.*
(b) **She whispered/shouted/cried so.*
(c) **The news/idea/story/rumor so.*

- Omission of *that* is possible with say verbs, but not whisper verbs and content DPs:
 - (8) (a) *She said/claimed/reported (that) he died.*
 - (b) *She whispered/shouted/cried *(that) he died.*
 - (c) *The news/idea/story *(that) there's no place like home*

Second, it can be shown that *say* nominals, unlike *whisper* nominals, are *content nominals*, indicating that, only for the former, a content component is evident in the base verbs (in lexicalist approaches) or in the corresponding roots (in Distributed Morphology framework).

- Say nominals but not whisper nominals can take a speech report CP:
 - (9) (a) *The claim/complaint/announcement that the queen is coming.*
 - (b) **The shout/whisper/cry that the queen is coming.*
- Say nominals but not whisper nominals can stand in identity relations with speech report CPs, as in copular construction:
 - (10) (a) *The claim/observation/report is that she's using the pub for money laundering.*
 - (b) **The shout/hoot/grumble is that she's using the pub for money laundering.*
- Only Say nominals can take modifiers that relate to the truth value of a content:
 - (11) (a) *false claim, unfounded report*
 - (b) **false shout, *unfounded whisper*

Third, entailment tests reveal a contrast between say verbs and whisper verbs, such that the former entail a conveyed message without entailing an event of speaking, while the latter entail an event of sound emission without entailing a conveyed message:

- (12) (a) *She whispered/shouted/murmured incoherent sounds.*
- (b) *#She whispered it in a letter.*
- (13) (a) *#She said/reported/claimed incoherent sounds.*
- (b) *She said/reported/claimed it in a letter.*

Fourth, only say verbs code the result state of the message being attributed to the agent, while whisper verbs, again, encode only the event.

- Temporal *with* can relate to the result state of a saying event, but only to the process of a whispering event.
 - (14) (a) *With that being said... meaning: after x was said*
 - (b) *With that being whispered... meaning: while x was whispered*
- In the progressive, say verbs are ambiguous between an iterative event meaning and a result state meaning, while whisper verbs have only the former.
 - (15) (a) *Yesterday you were claiming that ... but today you changed your mind.*
 - (b) *Yesterday you were whispering that ... ?but today you changed your mind.*

In terms of truth value, (25a) is true if the event of speaking occurred more than one time, or if there was only one speaking event after which the state of the message being attributed to the speaker holds. In contrast, (25b) is true only if there was more than one *whispering that x* event.

To conclude, an analysis of say verbs, but not whisper verbs, as heads that (a) contain a content component in their semantics; and (b) select CPs that provide a specification for this component, provides a natural account for the extraction facts. Meanwhile, the patterns shared by whisper-CP configurations and content DPs reinforce the assumption that the former select the latter, either overtly or covertly, yielding island effects in the CPs that go with them.

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