

### ***Pathways to insubordination***

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#### Description

This workshop focuses on the diachrony of insubordination, a phenomenon defined by Evans (2007: 377) as “the conventionalized independent use of a formally subordinate clause”. An example is a clause introduced by the complementizer *que* (‘that’) that is used to express a wish in Spanish, as in (1).

- (1) Nati: *Bueno, chicos, me voy a acostar.*  
Rafael: *Chau, **que** **descans-e-s.***  
COMP rest-PRS.SBJV-2SG

‘Nati: OK, guys, I’m going to bed.

Rafael: Bye, have a good rest.’

[CREA Teatro, El hijo de la novia, Argentina, example from Sansiñena 2015]

Over the past two decades insubordination has witnessed an increase in scholarly attention (e.g. Verstraete et al. 2012; Elvira-García et al. 2017; Gras & Sansiñena 2017; D’Hertefelt 2018, and the articles in Evans & Watanabe (2016) and Beijering et al. (2019)), mostly from a synchronic perspective, while the diachronic perspective has so far “received comparatively less attention” (Cristofaro 2016: 395), and few studies have been carried out on the basis of historical corpus data (see e.g. Gras & Estellés 2012; Van linden & Van de Velde 2014; Narrog 2016; la Roi 2021, 2022). This workshop seeks to investigate the developmental pathways leading to independent clauses that are structurally similar to subordinate ones, like the *que*-clause in (1).

It has been argued that so-called ‘insubordinate’ constructions develop along multiple pathways of change, of which the pathway proposed by Evans (2007) is *one* plausible candidate. Insubordinate constructions are likely to originate from various sources (in the spirit of Van de Velde, De Smet & Ghesquière 2013). The variety in diachronic hypotheses can partly be explained by the variety in envisaged endpoints of the developmental pathways proposed, and hence ultimately relates to what phenomena are subsumed under the label of insubordination. In the narrowest definition, insubordinate constructions combine syntactic independence with discursive independence (e.g. Mithun 2008; D’Hertefelt & Verstraete 2014). That is, when subordinate clauses shift their dependency scope from the syntactic level to the discourse level, as Mithun (2008) documented for Navajo (Na-Dené) and Yup’ik (Eskimo–Aleut), this rates as extension (Mithun 2008) or dependency shift (D’Hertefelt &

Verstraete 2014) but not as insubordination. Broader definitions allow for discursive dependence, and even the presence of a main clause to which the subclause bears a pragmatic function, e.g. in what Sweetser (1990) termed speech act conditionals (e.g. Kaltenböck 2016). In this workshop, we want to focus on the first set of phenomena, viz. insubordination *stricto sensu* and extension/dependency shift without an accompanying main clause.

The hypotheses on the diachronic origins of insubordination put forward so far are not always compatible. In his seminal paper, Evans (2007) postulates a diachronic model of insubordination involving ellipsis of the main clause that becomes conventionalized in discourse use. Using historical Dutch corpus data, Van linden & Van de Velde (2014) in turn invoke Croft's (2000) concept of 'hypoanalysis'. The idea is that in specific contexts subordinate complement clauses happened to express interpersonal meaning, and that language users came to reinterpret this meaning as an inherent semantic property of the construction with the subordinating conjunction, which paved the way for the emergence of fully insubordinate structures. While this account is still compatible with Evans's (2007) hypothesis of diachronic ellipsis, other proposals have argued against an ellipsis account. The Discourse Grammar approach (Heine et al. 2016), for example, invokes the process of co-optation, i.e. an instantaneous operation in which a chunk of what they call Sentence Grammar is recruited to be used as a thetical, i.e. a unit that is syntactically independent and prosodically distinct from the surrounding discourse whose function is determined by the situation of discourse. Much in the same vein, Semiotic Grammar (McGregor 2017) argues that insubordination can be explained in terms of marked sign usage, i.e. "the use of a sign for something other than its coded meaning" (2017: 208); a subordinate clause is used as a main (free) clause rather than a non-main (bound) clause, expressing interpersonal meaning.

In this line, it has been argued that "patterns that are superficially identical on the level of contemporary languages, may turn out as the results of radically different diachronic processes" (Wiemer 2019: 157) and that insubordinate constructions "can emerge from a variety of sources via a variety of mechanisms" (Mithun 2019: 31; see also Cristofaro 2016), such as the already mentioned ellipsis of a main clause (Evans 2007), extension of dependency beyond the sentence (Mithun 2008, 2016), dependency shift (D'Hertefelt & Verstraete 2014), hypoanalysis (Van linden & Van de Velde 2014), cooptation (Heine, Kaltenböck & Kuteva 2016), and clausal disengagement (Cristofaro 2016). The available evidence thus imposes the need to study the development of such clause structures on a case-by-case basis. Against this backdrop, this workshop seeks to look deeper into the diachrony of insubordinate constructions along multiple pathways of change.

On the methodological side, the observation that insubordinate constructions are typical of spoken language makes the use of historical data no less than challenging. But the study of historical documents that mimic spontaneous interactions – such as drama, lyric, epic poems, or villancicos – can shed light on the distributional frequency of the various construction types at different moments in the history of a language (see for instance, Iglesias Recuero 2002 for Spanish *que*-constructions or la Roi 2022 for insubordination in Archaic Latin comedy).

### Aims of the workshop

The workshop will bring together linguists working on insubordinate clause patterns, their sources, and the mechanisms by which they developed, either on the basis of historical corpus data for languages with written records or based on first-hand data collected in the field for

those languages that do not have historical data. We invite language-specific contributions, as well as cross-linguistic or areal studies. More specifically, the questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Considering the wide range of functions of in subordinate constructions, how can we relate them to their respective sources and developmental pathways?
- What are the methodological challenges in tracing the diachrony of in subordinate structures in historical data?
- What can interactional approaches to in subordination and the study of prosody contribute to diachronic hypotheses?
- In the absence of spoken data, what information on the diachrony of in subordination can be gleaned from dialogical text types? What proxies can be used for prosodic information?
- What (advanced) statistical methods are more relevant and appropriate to discover and explore complex relationships between different variables in the diachrony of in subordination?

Invited speakers: Marianne Mithun (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Björn Wiemer (Mainz University)

Discussant: Sonia Cristofaro (Sorbonne University)

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