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A Cross–Germanic Perspective on Simulative Clauses

Some thoughts and questions

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NWO

Mind your Manner Adverbials! (MiMA)

- Norbert Corver (Project Leader); Lex Tavenier (PhD candidate); Tess Wensink (former student assistant)

- Investigation of the internal syntax and external distribution of clausal and non-clausal MAs in a comparative fashion (micro-, meso- and macro-perspective);
- Development of a database of MA-constructions

Decomposing clausal Manner Adverbials

(Norbert Corver, Denis Delfitto, Marijana Marelj)

- Focus on (Germanic) clausal MAs, specifically on similative (1a) and simulative clauses (1b) (following Haspelmath&Buchholz's 1998 and Treis&Vanhove's 2017 terminology, respectively)

(1) a. *John walked as his father always walked.*
     b. *John walked as if he were drunk.*

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Defining simulative clauses

Simulative clauses (Treis&Vanhove 2017) are manner adverbial clauses expressing a hypothetical similarity between two ways of doing something.

(2) *Your boss behaves [as if he were king of the world.]*

For the sentence to be felicitous, your boss does not necessarily have to be the king of the world at the moment of the utterance.

Outline of the talk

1. A typology of Germanic simulative clauses
   - Transparency vs. opacity
   - Richness of the left periphery
   - Presence vs. absence of irrealis morphology

2. Previous analyses of simulative clauses
   - Compositional approach
   - Non-compositional approach

3. The proposal
   - Some thoughts
   - Some questions

A typology of simulative clauses in Germanic

Three main parameters of variation in Germanic SCs:

- Transparency vs. opacity;

- Richness of the left periphery;

- Presence vs. absence of irrealis morphology on the finite verb.

Transparency vs. opacity

Transparent simulative clauses «can be viewed as a combination of two clauses [...], where the first clause is regularly elided except for the complementizer» (Bacskai-Atkari 2018: 92).

The elements that introduce transparent simulative clauses are the **default similative standard marker** (EN *as*) and the **default conditional marker** (EN *if*).

Transparent simulative clauses in English and German

(3) a. John walks [as his father always walks.] (Similative clause)
    b. John would walk straight [if he could.] (Conditional clause)
    c. John walks [as if he were drunk.] (Simulative clause)

(4) a. Ben   fährt   Rad,   [wie   sein   Vater ihm   beigebracht   hat.]
    Ben   rides   bike   how   his   father him   taught   has
    "Ben is cycling as his father taught him to do." (Similative clause)

    b. Ben würde Radfahren,   [wenn   er   könnte.]
    Ben would ride.bike   if   he   could
    "Ben would cycle if he knew how to do it." (Conditional clause)

    c. Ben   fährt   Rad,   [wie wenn   er   betrunken   wäre.]
    Ben   rides   bike   as if   he   drunk   were
    "Ben is cycling as if he were drunk." (Simulative clause)
     (German. Bücking 2017: 986)

Transparent simulative clauses in Swedish

(5) a. Allt   gick   [som   vi   räknat ut.]
      All went   as   we   calculated
      "All went as we planned." (Similative clause)
      (Thorell 1973: 253. English glosses and translation are mine.)

     b. [Om   du kommer,]   så   går   jag.
        If   you come   so   go   I
        "If you come then I'll go." (Conditonal clause)

     c. Han   betedde sig   [som om   allt   vore   i sin ordning.]
        He   behaved   as if   all   were   in his order
        "He behaved as if everything were in order." (Simulative clause)
        (Thorell 1973: 254. English glosses and translation are mine.)

Transparent simulative clauses in Norwegian

(6) a. Ho spring   [**som**   Wilma   spring.]
       She runs   as   Wilma   runs
       "She runs as Wilma (runs)." (Similative clause)
       (Faarlund et al. 2006: 1084. English glosses and translation are mine.)

   b. [**Om**   været   blir   bra,]   går vi   på tur.
       If   weather.the   becomes   good   go we   on hike
       "If the weather is good, we go on a hike." (Conditional clause)

   c. Han   løp   [**som om**han hadde   den onde   sjøl   i hælene.]
       He   ran   as if   he had   the evil   sea.the   on heels.the
       "He ran as if he had the stormy sea at his heels." (Simulative clause)
        (Faarlund et al. 2006: 1084. English glosses and translation are mine.)

Transparency vs. opacity

A simulative clause is defined as **opaque** if at least one of the two layers is not introduced by its default marker and hence it is not possible to reconstruct one or both layers as a similative and/or a conditional clause, respectively.

The two complementizers introducing opaque simulative constructions do <u>not</u> allow any **insertion of linguistic material in between them.**

Opaque simulative clauses in English, Dutch and German

(7) a. The bird was careening from side to side [as though there were waves.]
   (Lopez-Couso & Mendez-Naya 2012: 173)
   b. The bird was careening from side to side [*as he would do though there were waves.]

(8) a. Jan liep   [alsof   hij   dronken was.]
      Jan walked   as.whether   he   drunk   was
      "John walked as if he were drunk." (Dutch)

   b. Jan liep [*als hij zou lopen of hij drunken was.]
      Jan walked as he would walk whether he drunk was

(9) a. Mein   Bruder   tanzt,   [als wenn   er   betrunken   wäre.]
      My   brother dances   than if   he   drunk   were
      "My brother dances as if he were drunk."

   b. Mein Bruder tanzt, [*als er tanzen würde, wenn er betrunken wäre.]
      My brother dances than he dance would   if   he drunk   were

Extremely opaque simulative clauses in German and Icelandic

(10) Mein   Bruder   tanzt,   [als ob   er   betrunken   wäre.]
     My   brother dances than whether   he   drunk   were
     "My brother dances as if he were drunk."

(11) Hún lætur   [eins og hún   sjái   okkur   ekki.]
     She behaves one and she   saw   us   not
     "She behaves as if she didn't see us."
     (Neijmann 2022: 409)

> Icelandic *eins og* is also used to introduce similative clauses and this is noteworthy because, whereas it is possible to find simulative clauses superficially identical to similatives, it is usually never the case that a language makes use of the marker found in simulatives to build similative clauses.
>
> (18) a. John dances **like** he's drunk.
>   (Simulative clause identical to similative clause)
>   b. *John dances **as if** his father always dances.
>   (Similative clause identical to simulative clause)

Richness of the left periphery

Simulative clauses can occasionally display a **rich/complex left periphery**, even more so when one looks at substandard varieties

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Richness of the left periphery

(12) We were saying [like as how we'd been there long enough.]   EN
      (British English. Kayne 2005: 311)

(13) Jan   leep   [geliek as of   he   zat   was.]   NL
      Jan   walked   like   as if   he   drunk   was
      "Jan walked as if he were drunk."
      (Lower Saxon. Preliminary data MiMa questionnaire)

(14) Er   locht,   [als wia wenn   er   nimmr   aufhearn kannt.] DE
      He   laughs   as how if   he   not.anymore   stop   can
      "He smiles as if he couldn't stop anymore."
      (Bavarian. Jäger 2018: 348)

Richness of the left periphery

- Complementizer insertion -

(15) Jan   liep   [**alsof**   **dat**   hij   dronken was.]   NL*
     Jan   walked   as.if   that   he   drunk   was
     "Jan walked as if he were drunk."

(16) Það var   [**eins og að** hann væri   að fara í þessa aðgerð   en ekki   hundurinn.]   IS
     It was   as if   that he   were   to go to this operation   but not   dog.the
     "It was like he was going to have this operation but not the dog."
      (Angantýsson 2011: 131)

*As far as Dutch dialects are concerned, the situation is actually more complex than that: in some varieties complementizer insertion is obligatory, whereas in others it is completely ruled out. Moreover, not only is it possible to find different elements introducing simulative clauses, but it is also possible to find different combinations of these very same elements both cross-dialectally and within the same variety

Richness of the left periphery

Dutch dialects are the only Germanic languages in my sample that allow a silent/covert similative standard marker paired with an overt conditional marker

- Sometimes it is possible to find "simplex" elements introducing simulatives;
- These elements are the very same elements that introduce similative clauses (i.e. manner *as*-clauses), namely <mark>similative standard markers</mark>;
- Though there is no (overt) conditional marker, the presence of the hypothetical layer can be still detectable by the (irrealis) mood of the verb and/or the V1-order reminiscent of the conditional inversion

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Simplex/monomorphemic simulative subordinators

(17) They look at me **like** I'm dirt.   EN
    (Lopez-Couso & Mendez-Naya 2012: 174)

(18) Mein Bruder   tanzt,   **als**   <u>wäre</u>   er   betrunken.   DE
     My   brother   dances   as   were   he   drunk
     "My brother dances as if he were drunk."

(19) Jan   liep   **als**   <u>was</u>   hij   dronken.   NL
     Jan   walked   as   was   he   drunk
     "Jan walked as if he were drunk."

(20) Det   var   **som**   de   hade   funnit   varandra.   SE
     It   was   as   they   had   found   each.other
     "It was as if they had found each other."
     (Thorell 1975: 254. English glosses and translation are mine.)

(21) Han   løp   **som**   <u>hadde</u>   han   den onde sjøl   i hælene.   NO
     He   ran   as   had   he   the evil   sea.the   on heels.the
     "He ran as if he had the stormy sea at his heels."
     (Faarlund et al. 2006: 1084. English glosses and translation are mine.)

(22) Hann fór   hratt   **sem**   fugl   flygi.   IS
     He   went   fast   as   bird   would.fly
     "He went fast as if he were a bird (flying)."

     (Neijmann 2022: 409. English glosses are mine)

Presence vs. absence of irrealis morphology

Simulative clauses tend to be X-marked (following Iatridou & von Fintel's (2023) terminology); however, this is not always the case.

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Presence vs. absence of irrealis morphology

(23) He talks **as if** he *has* a potato in his mouth.　　　　　EN
　　(Lopez-Couso & Mendez-Naya 2012: 173)

(24) Manche　empfinden　es so,　**als ob**　jetzt　der Verlust　*eintritt.*　　DE
　　Some　　feel　　　　it so　as if　now　the loss　　kicks.in
　　"Some are now feeling as if the loss is kicking in."
　　(Pfeffer 1985: 30. English glosses and translation are mine.)

(25) Hij gedraagt zich　**alsof**　hij　　ziek　*is.*　　　　　NL
　　He behaves REFL　as.if　he　　sick　is
　　"He behaves as if he is sick."

Language	Introductory elements				Mood of the verb	
	Polymorphemic	Monomorphemic	Transparent	Opaque	Irrealis	Realis
EN - English						
as if	X		X		X	X
as though	X			X	X	X
like		X	X			X
NL - Dutch						
alsof	X			X	X	X
als		X	X		X	X
DE - German						
als ob	X			X	X	X
als wenn	X			X	X	X
wie wenn	X		X		X	X
als		X		X	X	
SE - Swedish						
som om	X		X		X	?
som		X	X		X	?
NO - Norwegian						
som om	X		X		X	?
som		X	X		X	?
IS - Icelandic						
eins og	X			X	X	
sem		X	X		X	

The syntax of simulatives: previous analyses

Very little is known about the <u>syntax</u> of simulative clauses; most of the work has been done in the domain of typological linguistics (see Treis & Vanhove 2017) and formal semantics (see Bücking 2015; 2017 for German; Bledin & Srinivas 2019; 2020; 2023; Rett & Starr 2022)

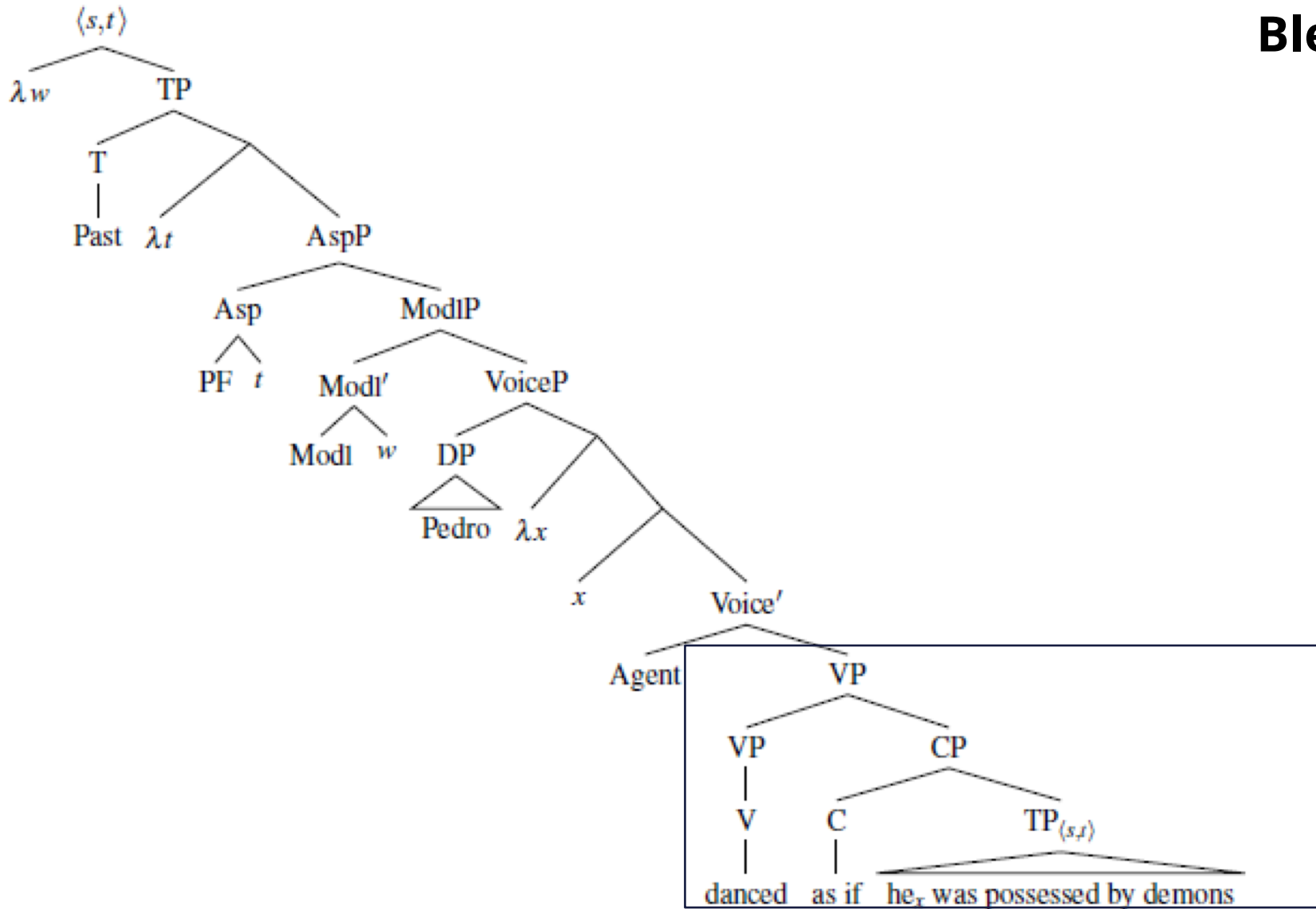> based on the semantic analyses available in the literature it is possible to derive two different approaches to the syntax of simulative clauses

The syntax of simulatives: previous analyses

Two ways in which simulative clauses have been (<u>semantically</u>) analysed in the literature:

- Fully compositional approach (Bücking 2015; 2017)
  (*as if*-clause = *as*-clause + *if*-clause → bi-clausal)

- Non-compositional approach (Bledin&Srinivas 2019; 2020; 2023)
  (*as if* as a fixed idiomatic unit)

b.

CP
├── PP_i — *wie*
└── C'
    ├── C — ∅
    └── VP
        ├── ...t_i V
        └── CP
            └── C'
                ├── C — *wenn*
                └── VP — *er betrunken ist*
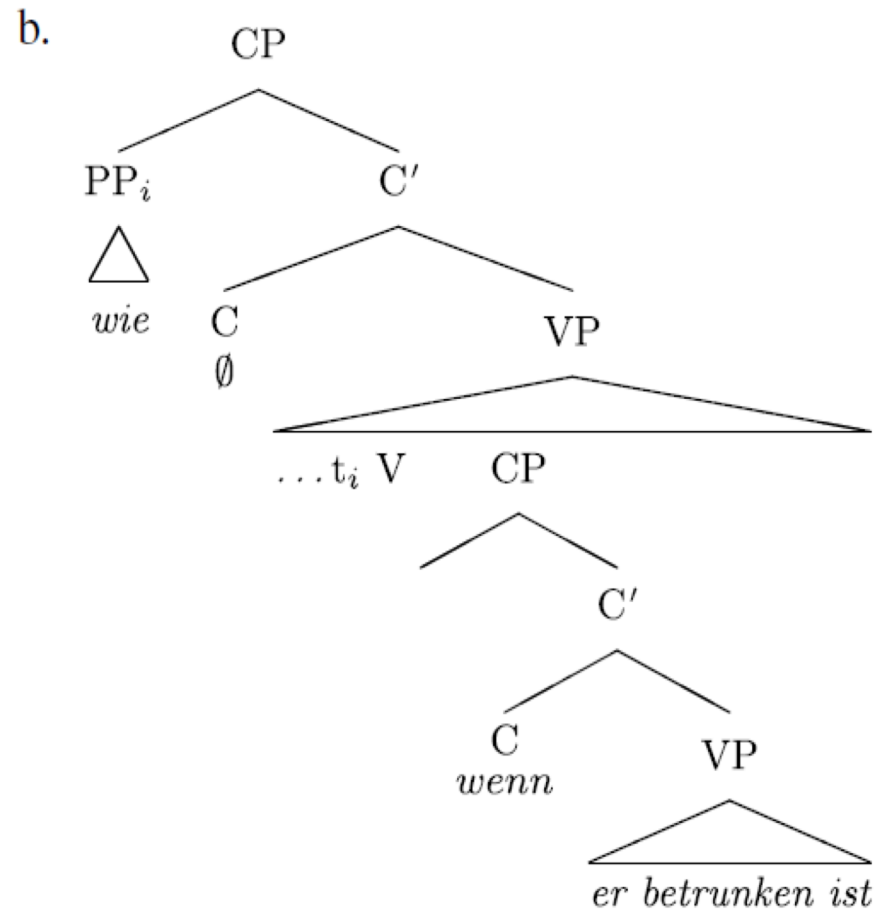
(see Bücking 2015: ex. (41))

Evidence for a compositional analysis

Sometimes it is possible to "reconstruct" the similative layer in so-called "transparent" simulative clauses:

(26) *John walks [as (he would walk) [if he were drunk.]]*

SIMILATIVE LAYER   CONDITIONAL LAYER

> Simulative clauses as hypothetical similatives

Evidence for a compositional analysis

- Crosslinguistically, many non-Indoeuropean languages build simulative clauses that are syntactically <u>based on or identical to</u> similative clauses (cf. Treis&Vanhove 2017);

- In a similar fashion, Old Germanic simulative clauses were built in the same way as similative clauses with the difference that the verb was obligatorily marked with subjunctive/irrealis mood (Jäger 2019: 3-4)

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Simulative clauses as hypothetical similatives

(27) a. {Ánn-u-kk   kées   kaa'll-ee-hé=g-anka}
      father-mNOM-2sPOSS 2sACC help-3mPVE-2sO.REL=G-mACC<N>

      atí-i   hitt-ínta   beet-ú-kk
      2sNOM-ADD like_this-fACC<N> son-mACC-2sPOSS

      káa'll-u   has-is-áno-he
      help-mNOM want-CAUS1-3mIPV-2sO
      '{Like your father has supported you,} so you also should support your son.' (Similative clause)

  b. (…) danaam-íta   oddiishsh-áta argicc-án
      beautiful-fACC clothes-fACC   borrow.MID-3mICO

      {gag-i-sí=tann-é=g-a}   odaqq-áno
      self-mGEN-3mPOSS=NMZ2-fGEN=G-mACC/OBL wear.MID-3mIPV

  '(When he went to the girl) he borrowed fine clothes (from his friends) and wore them {as if (they were) his own (lit. like his own ones)}.' (Simulative clause. Kambaata. Treis 2017: 95-101)

Simulative clauses as hypothetical similatives

(28) a. Stundum   jarmaði   hann   **sem**   geit   eða   hrein
     sometims   bleat.PST.3SG   he.NOM as   goat.NOM   or   squeal.PST.3SG

   sem   svín.
   as   pig.NOM

   "Sometimes he [= the devil] would bleat as a goat or squeal as a pig." (Similative clause. Enger, Höder &
Vindenes 2021: 259)

   b. þá   heyrðu   þeir   brest   ok   dett   **sem**
      then   heard.3P   they.M   crash.A   and   thump.A   as

   nǫkkut   felli.
   something.NEU.N   fell.SUB

   "Then they heard a crash and a thump, as if something fell." (Simulative clause. Faarlund 2004: 267)

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis

- It is not always possible to «reconstruct» the similative layer / to insert linguistic material between the two complementizers:

(29) *Judith behaves **as** (*she would behave) **though** she were drunk.*

See also Dutch *alsof*, German *als ob/als wenn*, Icelandic *eins og*

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis

As if-clauses display different properties than *as…would…if*-constructions (i. e. *as*-clauses + *if*-clauses proper) with respect to weak NPIs licensing and coordination (Bledin&Srinivas 2023: 93-95).

- The *if*-layer in simulatives does not fully behave as a canonical conditional clause;
- The *as*-layer in simulatives does not fully pattern with canonical similative clauses either (particularly with respect to NP-modification and verb positioning)

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Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: weak NPIs licensing

As already observed by Giannakidou & Quer (2013), simulative clauses do not license weak NPIs.

(30) a. *She took a bow **as if** {someone/*anyone} was in the theater watching her perform.*
    b. *John smells as he would **if** he ever got sprayed by a skunk.*
    c. **John smells **as if** he ever got sprayed by a skunk.*
    (Bledin & Srinivas 2019: 166)

Evidence for a non compositional analysis: coordination

The *if*-layer in simulative clauses cannot be coordinated with *if*-clauses (Bledin & Srinivas 2019: 165).

(31) a. *Annie was treated by the king [*as if she were a noblewoman or if she were a commoner.]*
  b. *John walked [*as if he were drunk and if a dog chased him.]*

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: coordination

(32) a. Jan benimmt sich, [**als** wäre er ein Verbrecher] und [**als ob / als wenn / wie wenn** er verfolgt würde.]

"Jan behaves as if he were a criminal and as if he were chased."

b. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als** wäre er ein Verbrecher] und [**ob** er verfolgt würde.]
c. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als** wäre er ein Verbrecher] und [**wenn** er verfolgt würde.]
d. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als ob** er ein Verbrecher wäre] und [**ob** er verfolgt würde.]
e. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als ob** er ein Verbrecher wäre] und [**wenn** er verfolgt würde.]
f. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als wenn** er ein Verbrecher wäre] und [**wenn** er verfolgt würde.]
g. *Jan benimmt sich, [**als wenn** er ein Verbrecher wäre] und [**ob** er verfolgt würde.]
h. *Jan benimmt sich, [**wie wenn** er ein Verbrecher wäre] und [**wenn** er verfolgt würde.]

(Preliminary results MiMA questionnaires)

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: NP-modification

Simulative clauses can occasionally modify (overt) NPs (≠ similatives)

(33) a. _A sound [_**like** _someone trying not to make a sound.]_
     (Title of a children book by John Irving)
   b. _But there was a look about her mouth [_**as though** _she were tasting lemons.]_
     (Lopez-Couso & Mendez-Naya 2012: 183)
   c. _The children's looking [_**as if** _they've been fed] is a nice surprise._
     (Ross 2004: 374, fn. 35)

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: verb positioning

Simulative clauses allow V1/conditional inversion (≠ similatives)

(34) a. *Han løp [*<u>*som*</u> **hadde** *han den onde sjøl i hælene.]*　　　　　NO
　　　 He　ran　as　　had　　he　　the evil sea.the on heels.the
　　　 "He ran as if he had the stormy sea at his heels."
　　　 (Faarlund et al. 2006: 1084)
　 b. *Han løp [*<u>*som*</u> *hans pappa* **løp***.]*
　　　 He　ran　as　　his　　dad　　ran

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: verb positioning

(35) a. Jan   loopt   [**zoals**   zijn vader   altijd   *liep*.]   NL
      Jan   walks   so.as   his father   always   walked
      "Jan walks as his father always walked." (Similative clause)

     b. Jan   loopt   [**alsof**   hij dronken   *was*.]
      Jan   walks   as.if   he drunk   were
      "Jan walks as if he were drunk." (Simulative clause)

(36) a. Jan   dansar   [**som**   hans pappa   <u>antagligen</u>   *har* alltid dansat.]   SE
      Jan   dances   as   his father   presumably   has always danced
      "Jan dances as his father presumably always danced." (Similative clause)

     b. Jan   dansar   [**som om** han <u>inte</u> *vore*   fullt frisk.]
      Jan   dances   as if   he not   were   fully well
      "Jan dances as if he weren't fully well." (Simulative clause)

Evidence for a non-compositional analysis: verb positioning

(37) a. Jan danst [als *was* hij dronken.] NL
      Jan dances as were he drunk
      "Jan dances as if he were drunk."

    b. *Jan danst zoals *danst* zijn vader.
      Jan dances like dances his father

(38) a. Jan tanzt, [als *wäre* er betrunken.] DE
      Jan dances as were he drunk
      "Jan dances as if he were drunk."

    b. *Jan tanzt, wie *tanzt* sein Vater.
      Jan dances like dances his father

Intermediate recap

- Fully compositional approach: *as if*-clauses as bi-clausal structures where the first (*as*-)clause is elided

  vs.

- Non-compositional approach where *as if* is conceived as a fixed unit since both the *as*- and the *if*-layer do not fully pattern with similatives and conditionals, respectively

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Proposal: meeting halfway

- The fully compositional approach fails to account for «opaque» simulative clauses and the strange behaviour of both layers with respect to certain syntactic facts

But

- It is not desirable to set simulative clauses completely apart from similatives and conditionals

The syntax of simulatives: revised

As if-clauses are monoclausal structures consisting of:

- An *as*-element in the spec-position of a **silent noun WAY** (cf. Kayne 2005) modifying the VP in the main clause (similar in structure to the one found in similative clauses);

- A (**conditional?**) **clause** modifying the silent noun WAY

The proposal

As if-clauses are monoclausal structures consisting of:

- An *as*-element in the spec-position of a silent noun WAY (cf. Kayne 2005) modifying the VP in the main clause (similar in structure to the one found in similative clauses);

- A (conditional?) clause modifying the silent noun WAY
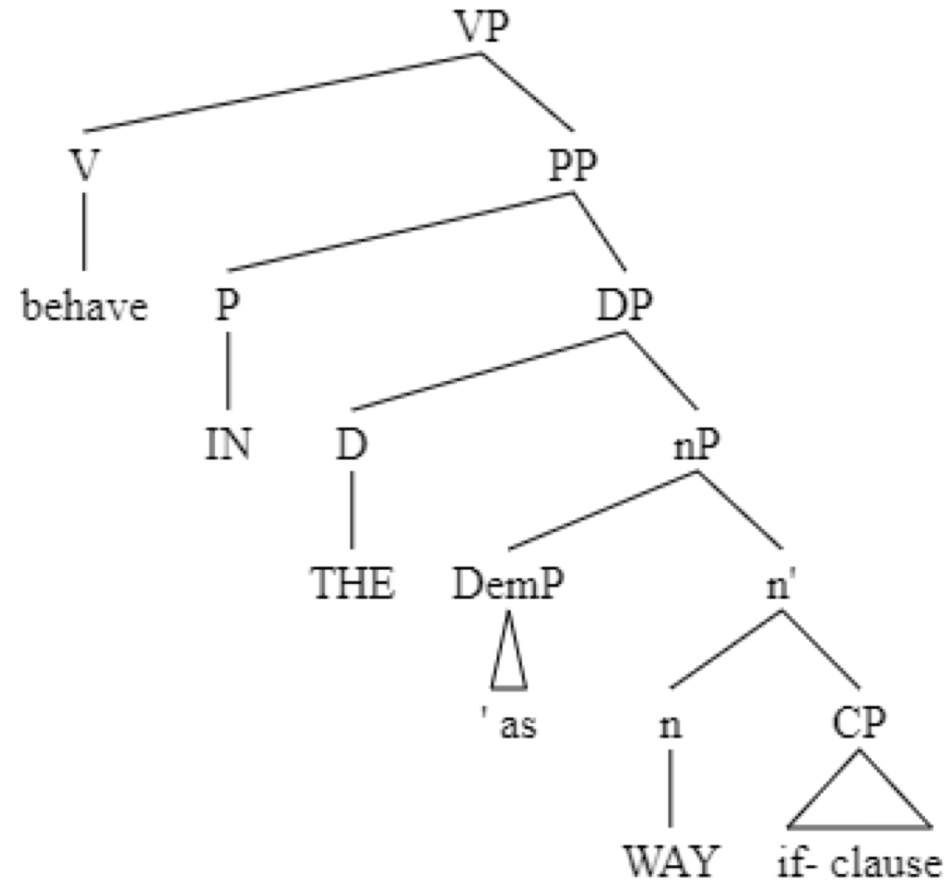
Unpacking simulative clauses: the *as*-layer

Same elements found in similative clauses (except for German *als*).

(39) *John dances [**as** his father always dances]*

English **as**, German **wie/als**, Dutch **zoals** - Swedish *som* -

They all have one thing in common..

... that is the manner demonstrative *so*

- Diachronically, *as*-elements and *so*-elements started out as **the same element** (cf. Jäger 2018);

- **German** *wie* can be considered as the *wh*-counterpart of *so* (Jäger 2018: 83);

- There are some (residual) contexts in which *so*- and *as*-elements seem to be interchangeable, hinting at the fact that they could have similar underlying structures

So-elements ≈ as-elements

(40) (John did it this way.) **So/as** did I.   EN

(41) Heb je het begrepen? **Zo** (= **als**) ja, …   NL
     Have you it understood so   yes
     "Did you understand it? If yes, .."

The fact that German simulatives display both *wie* and *als* could be another residual environment in which *als ≈ so*

The syntax of the manner demonstrative *so/zo/så*

- Translatable with «this HERE way/that THERE way» (capitalization as non-pronunciation, cf. Kayne 2005);

- In some languages, the spatial component is overt (SE: *såhär/sådär*; IT: *così/colì/colà*; Maceratese: *kkuší/ssuší/lluší* – König&Umbach 2018);

- Person-oriented like (Romance) demonstratives (Terenghi 2023)

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The syntax of the manner demonstrative *so/zo/så*

I take it to be <u>an XP </u>in line with Giusti (1994, 1997) sitting in a specifier position of a <u>silent noun WAY </u>denoting manner (in the spirit of Katz&Postal 1964, but see also Emonds 1985, Kayne 2005, Corver 2021a, 2021c)
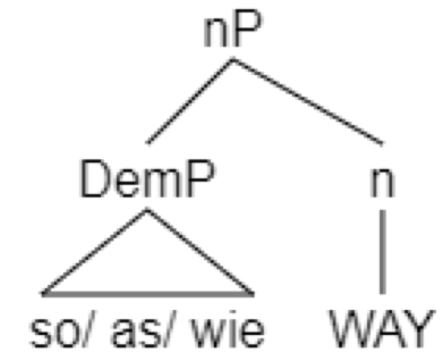
> What is the internal structure of these elements?

The syntax of the manner demonstrative *so/zo/så*

So-elements were originally marked with Instrumental Case («Semantic Case»)

(Manner) adverbials as **adpositional** in nature (cf. a.o. Emonds 1985; Caponigro&Pearle 2008, 2009; Corver 2017, 2021)
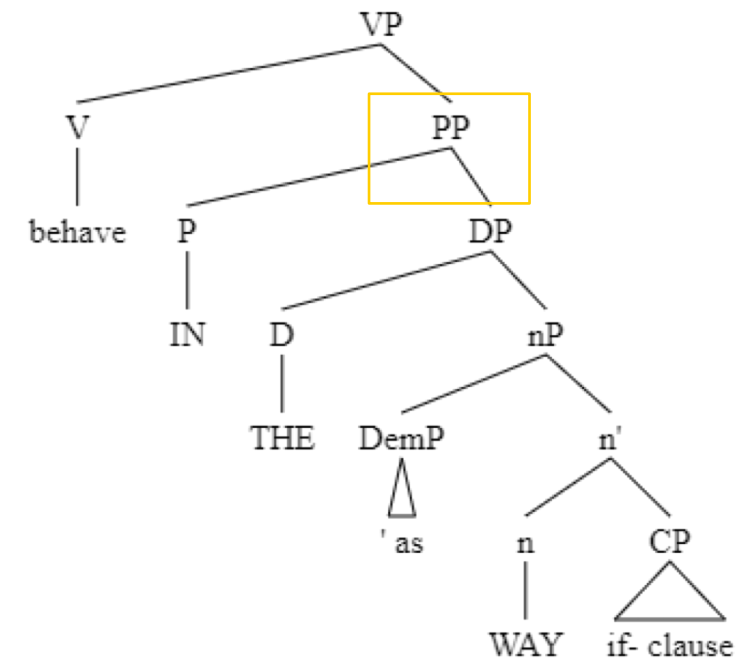
Unpacking simulative clauses: the *if*-layer

> Is it a conditional clause in the first place?

- If yes, we have to explain some things…

- If not, then what kind of clause is that?

What if the *if*-layer in simulatives is a conditional?

There are different kind of conditional clauses:

(42) a. <u>If Andrea arrives late</u>, Clara will get upset.   (Hypothetical conditional)
    b. <u>If you are thirsty</u>, there is beer in the fridge.   (Relevance conditional)
    c. <u>If Fred is (indeed) so smart</u>, why didn't he get the job? (Factual conditional)
(Bhatt&Pancheva 2006: 639)

> Do all types of conditionals behave the same wrt weak NPIs licensing? Can different types of conditionals be coordinated?

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What if the *if*-layer in simulatives is a conditional?

Conditionals can occasionally modify NPs:

(43) Similarly, what is one to make of the testimony of T. Shelling…, in which he discusses <u>the two great dangers</u> <u>**if all Asia "goes Communist"**</u>?
(Kanetani 2013: 41)

(44) <u>The outcome</u> {under those circumstances / <u>**if John refuses our offer**</u>} is unpredictable.
(McCawley 1998: 196)

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What if the *if*-layer in simulatives is a conditional?

In Italian and English conditional clauses seem to be able to modify manner NPs:

(45) Lo **sguardo** dei bambini/il modo di guardare dei bambini [**se non gli dai da mangiare**].
    «The children's **look**/the way children look [**if you don't give them food**]»

(46) La **reazione** di Chomsky/il modo di reagire di Chomsky [**se gli sollevi una critica**].
    «Chomsky's **reaction**/Chomsky's way of reacting [**if you criticize him**]»

(47) La **camminata** di Marta/il modo di camminare di Marta [**se piove**]
    «Marta's **walk**/Marta's way of walking [**if it rains**]»

This could be a nice argument in favour of an *if*-clause modifying a silent noun WAY

But then what about...

EN *as **though*** / DE *als **ob*** / NL *als**of***

though, *ob* and *of* do not typically introduce conditional clauses, so maybe the *if*-layer in simulatives is not a conditional after all

to be continued...

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