

INTONATION AND CLAUSE COMBINING IN DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF *BECAUSE*

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Recent years have seen extensive discussion of clause combining in synchronic and diachronic perspective (Haiman & Thompson 1988; Traugott & König 1991; Hopper & Traugott 1993). The thrust of much of this research - implicit in the term 'clause combining' itself - has been to cast doubt upon the traditional dichotomy of coordination vs. subordination (Lehmann 1988; also Haiman & Thompson 1984). New models have been proposed for describing text-semantic, or rhetorical, links between clauses at the level of discourse rather than at the level of sentence (Mann 1984; Matthiessen & Thompson 1988; Mann 1992). And empirical studies have begun to appear showing what lexical and grammatical resources real speakers and writers rely on for particular kinds of clause linkage in spoken and written discourse (for causal linkage, see e.g. Altenberg 1984, 1987; Ford 1993, 1994). Yet with only one or two notable exceptions, the *intonation* of clause combining has not figured centrally in these investigations.

The present study, aligned in the empirical tradition, sets out to examine specifically how English speakers deploy pitch, loudness and timing in the configuration of lexically marked causal clause combining in discourse.¹ The study is based on close analysis of the use of *because* as a clause connector in approximately four hours of British and American spoken discourse, including face-to-face family chat, radio phone-in programs and televised public debate. Approximately 200 tokens of *because* underwent auditory and instrumental phonetic analysis in the course of the study. It will be argued that there is evidence for two distinct intonational patterns associated with causal clause combining in English. These patterns are found in different sequential environments and can be shown to have different sequential implications for subsequent talk. Moreover, they appear to be used prototypically for two different types of semantic causality and can thus be said to contribute to the constitution of distinct constructional schemas for causal linkage. However, the two constructions differ in terms of markedness. This markedness relation together with a preference for 'degrammaticizing' constructional schemas for causal clause combining in conversation conspire to favor only one of the intonational and sequential patterns with *because*, thus accounting for its prevalence in the data corpus.

¹ I am grateful to Peter Auer, Susanne Günthner and Harrie Mazeland as well as to the editors of this special issue for helpful comments on this paper.

1. Background: Past work on intonation and causal linkage

Among those exceptional scholars who have heeded intonational configuration in the study of adverbial clauses, Chafe (1984, 1988) deserves pride of place. His position is that two intonational features interact with the use of adverbial clauses in initial and end position:

(i) 'integrated' vs. 'separate' intonation contour: Main and adverbial clause can be included under a single holistic pitch contour, or each can form a separate contour (1984: 438). This corresponds to presence or absence of an intonation-phrase boundary between the two clauses.

(ii) 'comma' vs. 'period' intonation. The first clause can have final or non-final pitch movement (1988: 6ff). Final pitch movement, or period intonation, is present when the voice drops to a low point in the speaker's voice range at the end of a contour. Non-final pitch movement is present in all other cases, i.e. when the speaker's voice rises, remains level or drops only partially at the end of a contour. With initial adverbial clauses, Chafe argues, period intonation between the two clauses is not an option. Adverbial clauses in end position, however, may follow comma or period intonation, in the latter case functioning as afterthoughts.

Ford (1993) adopts Chafe's taxonomy of adverbial clause use for her study of temporal, causal and conditional clauses in American English conversation. She distinguishes (a) preposed clauses, (b) postposed clauses with continuing intonation, and (c) postposed clauses with final intonation. The latter category includes not only period but also 'question' intonation, cases in which the pitch of the voice reaches a highpoint in the speaker's voice range at the end of a contour. Continuing intonation is otherwise equivalent to Chafe's comma intonation. Ford argues on empirical grounds that causal clauses following continuing intonation operate to introduce new information (1993: 93ff); those following final intonation function as post-completion extensions, adding material to first pair-part turns where a preferred response is not immediately forthcoming or to second pair-part turns when an account is required for a non-agreeing response (1993: 116).

The work of Ford and Chafe thus implies that one of the criterial features in distinguishing different kinds of adverbial clause use is the nature of the pitch movement at the end of the first of two clauses in combination with one another. Yet although comma vs. period intonation is undeniably a prosodic feature which analysts can identify with relative ease in spoken discourse, there is as yet no proof that this is indeed the relevant feature for conversationalists, who are the ones operating with different types of adverbial clause in actual interaction. Such proof can only be provided by showing that participants in real conversations orient in observably different ways to the prosodic feature in question (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996). In fact, a close examination of prosody in causal linkage with *because* suggests that continuing vs. final intonation may not be the relevant parameter for differentiating adverbial use in discourse.

To see this, consider first the following sequence:

(1) ("First time")

- 1 Ann: well how did you get into this marathon running.
 Eve: awww-
 I don't know-
 heh heh
- 5 Mary: heh heh
 Eve: I lost sense of what was going on.
 it's something I guess that if you run long enough you
 eventually- think about it and think
 well heck I've run ten miles,
 10 why not twenty-six; (.)
 so then you do. (.)
 -> and then you do it again;
 -> because you can't believe you did it the (h) fi(h)rst t(h)i(h)me.
 (.)
- 15 Eve: I don't know-
 Ann: but you always have run.

Eve's *because you can't believe you did it the first time* (line 13) - in end position with respect to its main clause *and then you do it again* (line 12) - forms a new intonation phrase, as do the overwhelming majority of *because*-clauses examined in this study. Since the pitch of Eve's voice does not fall to low on *again* but stops at mid level, this is a case of continuing or comma intonation.² Interactionally, notice that although the clause in line 12 *and then you do it again* forms a potential syntactic completion point, this is not treated by speaker or recipient as a potential transition relevance place (TRP): No space is provided for recipient response here³ nor does Eve's addressee make any noticeable attempt to respond at this point. It is not until after the *because*-clause that a TRP is reached (witness the pause in line 14). Moreover, the *because*-clause itself *you can't believe you did it the first time* does not appear to make a separate recipient response relevant: None is forthcoming nor does Eve pursue a response to this part of her utterance. (If one were to come, we would expect it to be fitted to the whole structure main clause+*because*-clause rather than only to the *because*-clause.) Instead, following the pause, Eve uses a generic filler to expand her turn (line 15) but yields the floor immediately when Ann shifts the topic to running in general (line 16).

In contrast to this sequential pattern, compare now the following excerpt:

(2) ("Second largest")

- 1 Eve: is that the- um
 Adam: hhm
 Eve: that's just th- is that the New York City Marathon?
 Barb: (.) I don't- I don't know=

² For greater phonetic precision I represent final falling pitch to non-low (as here - cf. diagram (1) below) with a semi-colon in transcription, although it would qualify as comma intonation in Chafe and Ford's use of the term.

³ In other words, despite the intonation phrase boundary, there is no pause.

- 5 Eve: =I think it might be [(????)=
 {
 ?Barb: [there are two of them
 Eve: =it's the second largest.
 Barb: yeah.
 -> I think it's the second larg- [est -
 {
 10 Eve: [yeah
 -> Barb: 'cause (0.2) they have like-(0.3) uh twelve thousand applicants; and they only take
eight thousand.
 Eve: mhm.
 it's the same thing in the Boston marathon

Barb's 'cause they have like uh twelve thousand applicants; and they only take eight thousand (lines 11-12) is in end position with respect to its main clause *I think it's the second largest* (line 9). The latter clause is syntactically complete or potentially so and forms an intonation phrase of its own, which ends in level pitch, i.e. continuing intonation. Yet, despite the intonation, it can be argued that a potential TRP has been reached, since Eve comes in with *yeah* as soon as its terminal trajectory is recognizable (line 10). Barb's *because*-clause - *they have like twelve thousand applicants; and they only take eight thousand* - is now treated by her interlocutor Eve as a separate turn-constructive unit (TCU): It receives acknowledgement in next position (*mhm*, line 13) and its content is subsequently exploited by Eve for the construction of a new contribution to topical talk: *It's the same thing in the Boston marathon* (line 14).

A comparison of these two sequential patterns thus yields differences with respect to the status of the *because*-clause as a TCU and to what, if any, implications it has for subsequent talk. In the first pattern the *because*-clause is not a separate TCU nor does it appear to make a separate response expectable. In the second pattern the *because*-clause does form a separate TCU and it is followed by a recipient reaction specifically adapted to it. The different interactional patterning thus suggests that speakers and addressees are orienting differently to *because* in the two situations. Yet this difference does not correlate with a difference in type of pitch movement at the end of the first contour: In both (1) and (2) the prior contour has continuing intonation.

A similar contrast in sequential patterning is observable in the following two excerpts:

(3) ("Heat on")

- 1 Nora: you don't feel cold,
 do you.
 Sue: no.
 ??: ha ha
 5 Ron: ((clears throat))
 Billy: no I can feel the wind coming in [from there.
 {
 Nora: [er (.) yeah
 -> I feel the difference,
 -> because we haven't got the heat on.
 10 Billy: that's where the door is.

Nora: but we got-

(4) ("Bathwater")

- 1 Nora: and at seven o'clock in the evening we'd go down.
 the sun was just going down and, (0.7)
 but that water was- wasss- i -
 -> to say it was tepid is- is ridiculous,
 -> because it was really like bathwater. (1.0)
 6 Sue: really?
 Nora: it was so warm. (0.7)
 Sue: yeah.

In (3) Nora, at whose home Sue and her husband Ron are guests, inquires at one point during the evening whether her guests feel cold. When they deny this, she provides a reason for why she 'feels the difference', *we haven't got the heat on*. Although this information may be new to her interlocutors, they do not treat it as a separate TCU requiring uptake. The next turn by Billy, Nora's husband, is occupied with expanding on his earlier observation *I can feel the wind coming in from there*. Thereafter, talk moves on to a different topic.⁴

In (4), by contrast, Nora is telling her guests about swimming at the hotel pool during her recent trip to Australia. In describing the temperature of the water, she considers using the word *tepid* but rejects it, giving as her reason for this *it was really like bathwater*. Sue responds in the next turn with a display of disbelief, *really?* (line 6). This is a different sequential pattern from that in (3): Speaker and recipient treat the *because*-clause here as a separate TCU and orient subsequent talk to it, as is evident from Sue's *really* (line 6). It is hearable as a reaction to the *because*-clause alone rather than to the main-clause+*because* clause as a unit.

Here too then - although both main clauses end in comma intonation - the interactive treatment of *because* is quite distinct: In the one case the clause it introduces is not singled out for separate acknowledgement by recipient, in the other it is. Moreover, these same two interactional patterns can be found with final intonation at the end of the first contour. Compare, for instance, the following two excerpts:

(5) ("Fast runner")

- 1 Ann: do you run eh with speed;
 or is that wh- is that- your purpose.
 is your purpose just to cover the distance?
 or is your purpose to cover the distance in the shortest amount of time.
 5 ? : the distance
 -> Eve: well the time I wasn't that concerned about.=
 -> =because I'm not a fast runner at all.
 Ann: mm
 Eve: it's just thinking
 10 well I'm very poor at setting goals
 I rarely set goals for myself and so (.)

⁴ Cf. example (16) below.

- the few times I've set them
 Mary: ((cough))
 Eve: I've tried to- make them
 15 Ann: mhm

(6) ("Fumbling")

- 1 Nora: I'd I- like to keep one side of my handbag for only those articles.
 (0.6)
 Sue: mm
 Nora: so and then,
 5 hopefully if Billy's got a pocket,
 a - a breast pocket in his shirt,
 you just slip the boarding cards into,
 then they're easily pulled out. (.)
 9 Billy: yeah
 -> Nora: otherwise I just have to hold them in my hand. (1.1)
 -> because er (0.8) you don't want to go fumbling for those when you're going through.
 (0.9)
 Sue: °no°
 15 Nora: but anyway,
 you'll find it's as easy as pie, (1.1)
 easy as pie dear.

In example (5) Eve reaches a low point in her voice range in *the time I wasn't that concerned about* (line 6). Yet rather than yielding the floor here, she 'rushes through' to the *because*-clause, retroactively extending the TCU so that it is now composed of main clause+*because*-clause. Although Ann responds with *mm* (line 8), this response is not tailored as a repique to the *because*-clause alone, nor is the content of the *because*-clause taken up and made the topic of further talk, although it contains new and unfamiliar material for its recipients.

In (6), by contrast, there is a TRP and a lengthy pause after Nora's main clause *otherwise I just have to hold them in my hand* (line 10). Her interlocutor opts not to come in, whereupon Nora continues with a *because*-clause. Notice that Sue's subsequent response *no* (line 14) is tailored to fit the content of the *because*-clause only and not the 'main' clause+*because*-clause structure as a whole. Were it a response to Nora's *otherwise I just have to hold them in my hand+because*-clause, an affirmative agreement token (e.g. *yeah*) would be called for.

Thus with final intonation too, we can distinguish one sequential pattern in which the *because*-clause does not form a separate TCU and another in which it does. Notice now that a recipient turn, or space for a recipient turn, following the first clause is not crucial for the second interactional pattern. This is evident from cases such as the following:

(7) ("Squirrels")

- 1 Fran: y(ou know) I've still got Bootsie; (.)
 you know she's [seventeen and a half.
 {
 Zoe: [yeah?
 Pam: heh heh

- 5 Zoe: I didn't know cats got that old
 Fran: yes;
 -> and sh-she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half.
 -> 'cause she still chases the squirrels and-
 Pam: ha ha
 10 Zoe: wow
 Fran: and uh she's so healthy;
 but uh (.)
 she's still alive! (.)
 she's a(s) very senior citizen.
 15 I call her OI' La:dy.
 All: ha ha ha ha
 Fran: o- OI Lady Bootsie!

Here Fran's clause *she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half* (line 7) with final falling intonation constitutes a point of potential syntactic and prosodic completion. Yet although there is no recipient response at this time, there is evidence in subsequent talk that Fran's addressees orient to her next clause *'cause she still chases the squirrels* (line 8) as a separate TCU: Zoe exclaims *wow* (line 10), clearly a reaction to the assertion in the *because*-clause and not to an assertion constituted by *she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half*+*because*-clause.

The fact that the same two interactional patterns found with continuing intonation appear with final intonation as well suggests that the contrast between continuing vs. final intonation is not necessarily the relevant one for distinguishing different types of adverbial clause usage with *because*.⁵ Nor is there a systematic difference in thematic/rhematic structure of the clause complexes which might explain the distinct sequential patterns. Both (1), (3) and (5), which belong to one sequential pattern, have main clauses with partially new material⁶ (marked in the following by underlining): *You do it again, I feel the difference and the time I wasn't that concerned about*. But so too do (2), (4), (6) and (7), which belong to the other sequential pattern: *I think it's the second largest, to say it was tepid is ridiculous, I just have to hold them in my hand, she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half*. And in all seven cases the material in the *because*-clause is partially or wholly new: *You can't believe you did it the first time, they have like twelve thousand applicants and they only take eight thousand, we haven't got the heat on, it was really like bathwater, I'm not a fast runner at all, you don't want to go fumbling for those, she still chases the squirrels*. Therefore some other feature must be identified with respect to which the sequential patterns differ consistently. This feature we maintain is declination reset.

⁵ One problem may lie in the (often unspoken) assumption that continuing intonation signals incompleteness in turn-unit construction while final intonation signals completeness (Chafe 1988; Schiffrin 1987; Ford 1993: 63). In fact, pitch contrasts such as continuous vs. final intonation are also exploited in the service of affect signalling (e.g. confidence vs. doubt or uncertainty), so that reliance on pitch alone (or even on, pitch and syntax alone) as signals of turn completion may lead to faulty predictions.

⁶ I use the term 'new' here in the sense of a referent not having prior mention or being recoverable in context.

2. Declination and clause combining

Declination is an acoustic phenomenon and even as such, a relatively recent discovery (Cohen & 't Hart 1965; Cooper & Sorensen 1981; Cohen & Collier & 't Hart 1982; Ladd 1984, 1988; 't Hart et al 1990). The term refers to the fact that the fundamental frequency (f_0) values of comparable phonological events in an intonation phrase gradually decrease over the course of time. This produces a decline in the linear configuration of f_0 , a decline which is partially of physiological origin: The gradual decrease in subglottal pressure as air is expelled from the lungs creates a natural declination in pitch. But it has also been shown that speakers can exercise control over the setting and resetting of natural declination and thus exploit it for linguistic purposes (Ladd 1988; 't Hart et al 1990).

It is usual to distinguish top-line from bottom-line declination. The former is constituted by f_0 maxima or peaks, the latter by f_0 minima or valleys in an intonation phrase. In ideal cases, a declination line can be fitted visually over the f_0 values of an utterance plotted over time, as shown for instance with bottom-line declination in Fig. 1.

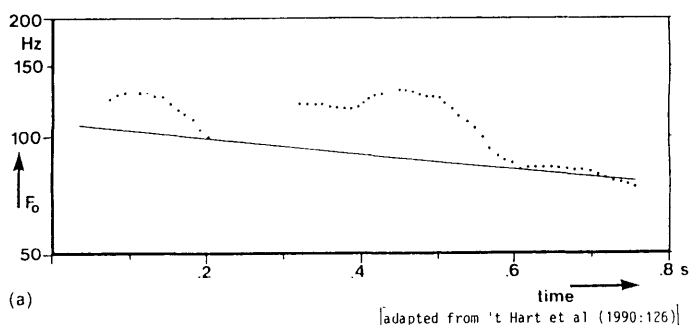
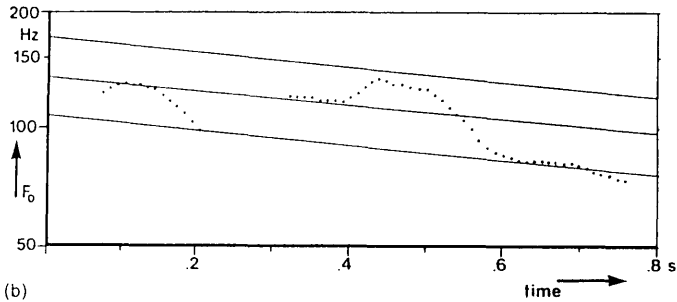


Fig. 1

However, problems may arise in visually determining bottom-line declination if, for instance, the intonation phrase has final rising intonation. And it is difficult to determine top-line declination visually if, for instance, emphatic peaks are present. Therefore, acoustic phoneticians usually postulate two or more abstract gridlines, parallel and tilted slightly downwards, which are thought of as reference lines for the actual phonological (intonational) events in an intonation phrase (see Fig. 2).⁷

Declination appears to be relatively constant across speakers and languages, although there is some evidence for Danish that it is not as pronounced in questioning utterances (Thorsen 1978; cf. also Cruttenden 1986: 163f).

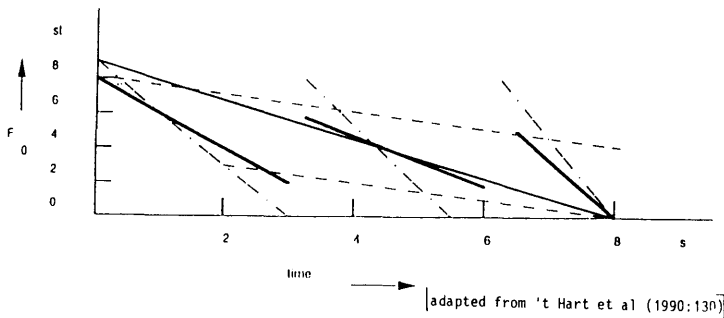
⁷ Cf. 't Hart et al (1990) for a formula which accounts for baseline declination as a function of starting height and length of utterance and Willems (1982) for empirically derived generalizations about declination in British RP.



[adapted from 't Hart et al (1990:126)]

Fig. 2

In connected speech, speakers will often be observed to 'reset' the declination line between adjacent or neighboring intonation phrases ('t Hart et al 1990). This can be done in full, by shifting the gridlines up to the height they had at the outset, or partially, by shifting them up only part way. In cases of partial declination reset, the beginning and ending points of successive intonation phrases may themselves form an overall 'grand' declination line, as shown by the dashed lines in Fig. 3.



[adapted from 't Hart et al (1990:130)]

Fig. 3

Declination is not only an acoustic phenomenon but also has perceptual relevance: Sentences whose intonation is synthesized without it sound unnatural. Exactly what cues listeners use in detecting declination in natural speech, however, has yet to be determined. Bottom-line declination, related to the height of unstressed syllables, is presumably harder to monitor auditorily than is top-line declination, related to the height of syllables with equal degrees of stress. On the assumption that listeners tune in more readily to the pitch of syllables with stress rather than without it, we shall assume in this study that listeners' perception of declination is tied to the relative height of non-emphatically stressed syllables. Identifying declination for listeners thus involves making two comparative judgments:

- * judging the height of the first stressed syllable (onset) of one intonation phrase compared to the height of the last stressed syllable in a prior intonation phrase. A judgment of 'higher than' means that declination has been reset. Judgments of 'as low as' or 'lower than' mean that declination has not been reset. In this case the two intonation phrases share one set of gridlines and, in the terminology of Schuetze-Coburn et al (1991), form one single declination unit.
- * judging the height of one onset compared to that of prior onsets. If it is maximally high, the reset is full. If it is less than maximally high, the reset is partial. In the event that there is no prior base for comparison or one which is too far away, the judgment is presumably made relative to the speaker's voice range: High onset for full reset, mid onset for partial reset.

Examining now the two interactional patterns described above in this light, it will be seen that it is precisely declination reset or lack of it which distinguishes the realization of the *because*-clauses. Compare, for instance, the plots of fundamental frequency in examples (1) vs. (2). (These graphs have been obtained by taking f_0 readings every one-tenth of a second in the acoustic signal, converting them to a logarithmic scale based on the individual speaker's lowest f_0 value and plotting them over time.⁸ The boxed divisions on the horizontal axis give a rough indication of syllable/word duration.⁹ Note that the graphs are identified by means of the labels given to the corresponding examples; thus the graph entitled "First time" corresponds to example (1), and so on.)

In (1) the pitches at the beginning of the *because*-clause, including those on the stressed syllables *can't*, *believe* and *did*, are lower than the pitch on *again*, the last stressed syllable of the prior intonation phrase. In (2), by contrast, the pitch of the first stressed syllable in the (*be*)*cause*-clause, *they* - and that of the next stressed syllable following the hesitation, *twelve* - are higher than the pitch of *largest*, the last stressed syllable in the preceding intonation phrase. In other words, there has been a declination reset in (2) but not in (1).

Likewise in (3), the pitch on *we* is lower than that on *difference*: No declination reset has occurred, whereas in (4) the pitch on *really* is just as high, if not higher, than that on *ridiculous*. In this case there has been a reset.

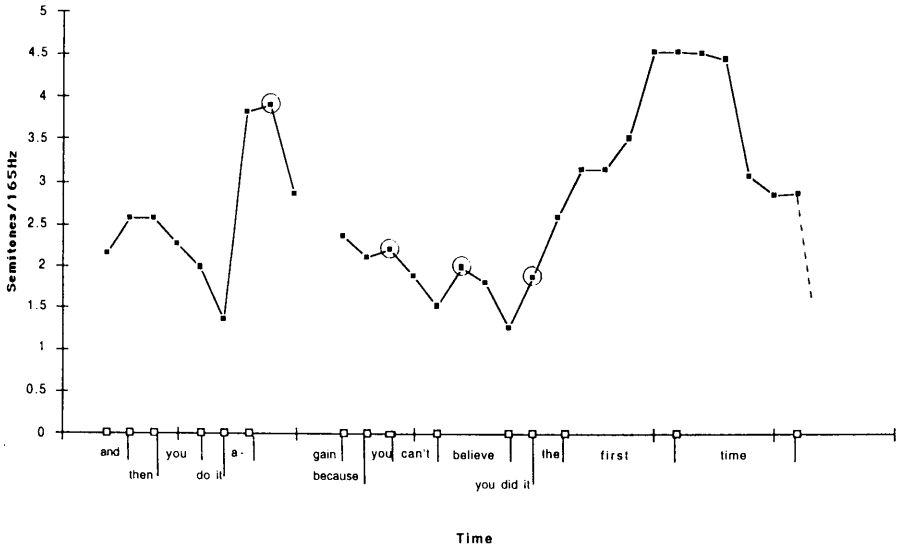
In (5) the pitch of *not* in the *because*-clause is as low as that on *concerned*, the last stressed syllable of the prior intonation phrase, i.e. declination has not been reset. In (6), on the other hand, the first stressed syllable of the *because*-clause *don't* is much higher in pitch than *hand*, indicating that a reset has occurred:

Finally in (7) all the pitches in the *because*-clause are higher than those on *seventeen and a half* at the end of the prior intonation phrase.

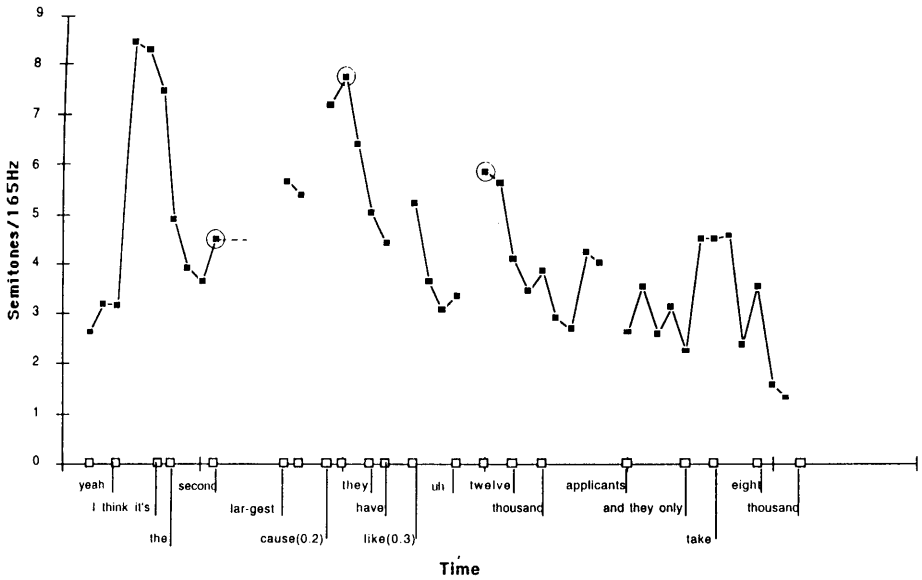
⁸ Cf. Schuetze-Coburn et al (1991) for a related approach to the study of declination in natural conversation.

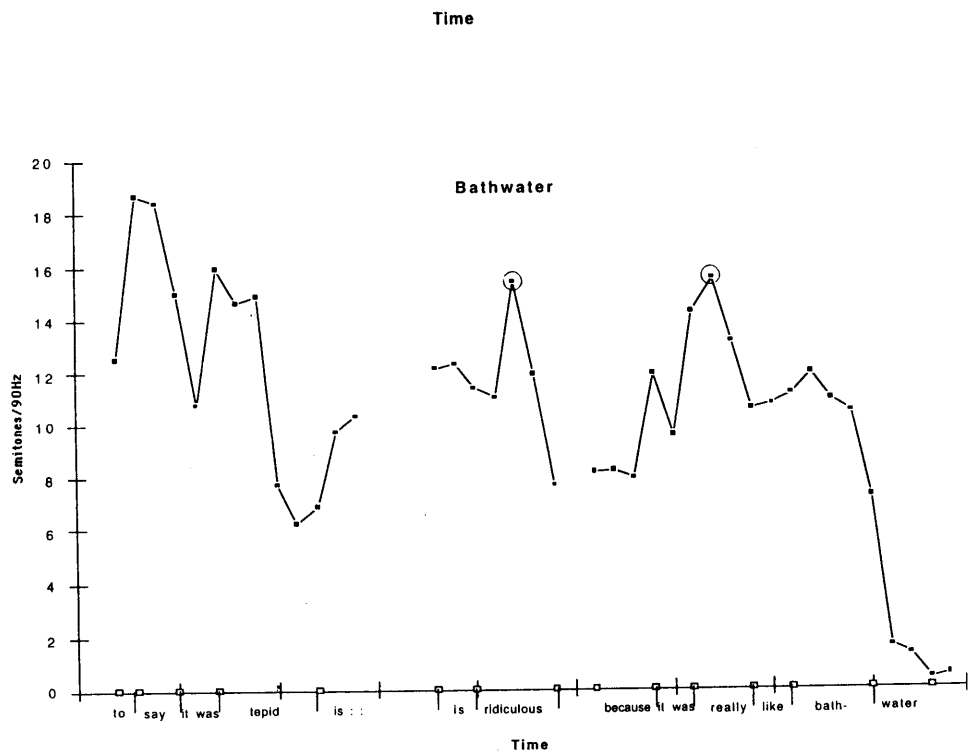
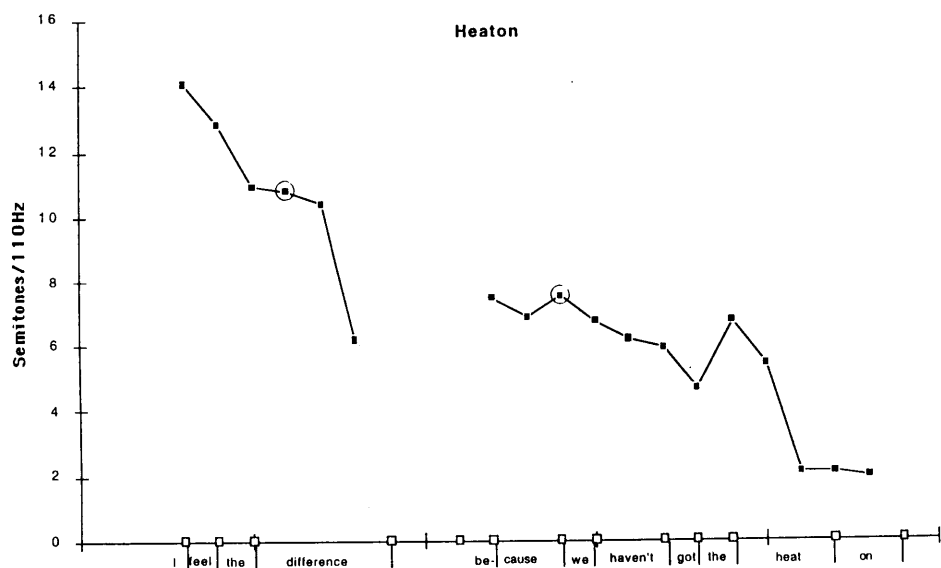
⁹ Dashed lines sketch in auditory perceptions for which no f_0 readings were obtainable (due e.g. to voicelessness, lack of amplitude, perturbations in the signal).

First time

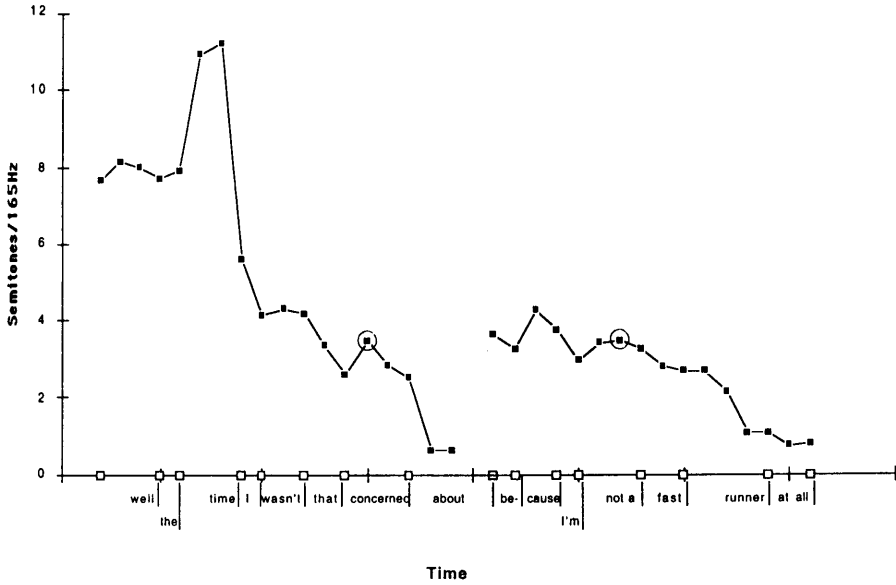


Second largest

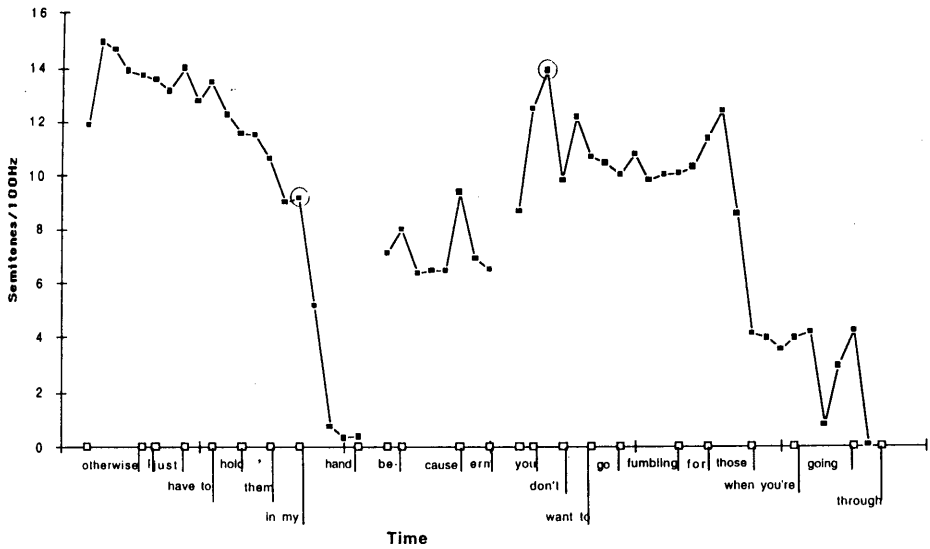


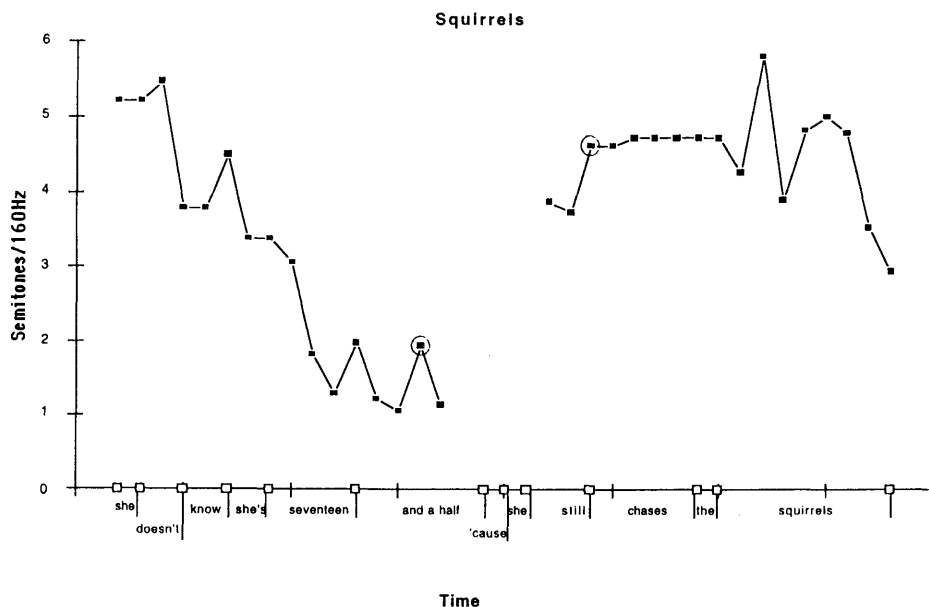


Fast runner



Fumbling





The argument so far then is that speakers have two ways of configuring postposed *because*-clauses which form new intonation phrases: With or without declination reset. Moreover, these configurations are typically found in different sequential environments, which suggests that conversationalists orient to them differently. With declination reset, the *because*-clause is typically treated as a turn-constructional unit of its own; recipient responses, if present, will acknowledge it as a separate unit. Without declination reset, the *because*-clause is treated as belonging to the prior clause, forming an extended turn-constructional unit with it. In this case the material in the *because*-clause is not highlighted separately by speakers (although it may contain new and unfamiliar information), nor do recipients single it out for acknowledgement.

Metaphorically one might describe the contrast between these two prosodic configurations as intonational 'subordination' vs. intonational 'coordination'. In the case of intonational subordination, the second intonation phrase is subordinate to the first in the sense that its reference grids form a prolongation of those for the first intonation phrase. In the case of intonational coordination, the gridlines of the second intonation phrase are partially independent of those in the first. As will now be seen, this syntactic metaphor for the intonational configuration of *because* is not as far-fetched as it may sound.

3. Intonation configuration and the semantics of clause linkage with *because*

The two intonationally distinct types of *because*-linkage described so far often correspond rather strikingly to two different semantic readings of *because*. In the one case, *because* may be understood as marking a **direct** causal relation between two events or states of affairs. To illustrate with the material examined so far:

- (1) *You do it again, because you can't believe you did it the first time*
- (3) *I feel the difference, because we haven't got the heat on*
- (5) *I wasn't that concerned about the time, because I'm not a fast runner*

The situations described in these *because*-clauses are conceptualized as being located in the real world, and they are related causally to two other real-world situations in the prior clauses (cf. also Sweetser 1990: 77f). The semantic property of direct cause or reason is reflected in the potential of the *because*-clause for certain syntactic transformations: Viz., the order of the clauses can be reversed without radically altering meaning (*Because I'm not a fast runner, I wasn't that concerned about the time*), the cause or reason can be questioned with a *wh*-word (*Why were you not that concerned about the time? - Because I'm not a fast runner*), and it can be focussed with *it*-clefting (*It's because I'm not a fast runner that I wasn't that concerned about the time*).¹⁰ These features in fact generalize to most clauses traditionally called 'subordinate' in English.¹¹ Significantly it is a direct causal relation which is typically involved when *because* clauses are configured without declination reset in the data at hand.

On the other hand, *because* may mark an indirect cause or reason: In this case the clause it introduces accounts for why a speaker knows or believes what is expressed in a prior clause (causal linkage in the epistemic domain) or it accounts for why a speaker has carried out some particular speech act in the prior clause (causal linkage in the speech-act domain) (cf. also Ducrot et al 1975; Halliday & Hasan 1976; Sweetser 1990). To illustrate with clause combinations from the examples above:

- (2) *It's the second largest, [and I believe this] because they have like twelve thousand applicants and they only take eight thousand*
- (4) *To say it was tepid is ridiculous, [and I believe this] because it was really like bathwater*
- (6) *I just have to hold them in my hand, [and I believe this] because you don't want to go fumbling for those when you're going through*
- (7) *She doesn't know she's seventeen and a half, [and I know this] because she still chases the squirrels*

In these examples the situation in the *because*-clause is conceptualized as knowledge

¹⁰ For further syntactic tests of direct cause or reason, cf. Heinämäki (1975).

¹¹ They hold, for instance, for locative, temporal and conditional clauses as well, but not uniformly for concessive clauses.

which 'causes' the speaker to infer the information expressed in the prior clause: in other words, the causal link has been transferred to the epistemic domain (Sweetser 1990: 77f).¹² Clauses of indirect cause or reason do not have the same transformational potential as those of direct reason: The order of clauses cannot be meaningfully reversed (**Because she still chases the squirrels, she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half*), nor can the cause or reason be questioned with a *wh*-word (*Why does she not know she's seventeen and a half? - *Because she still chases the squirrels*) or focussed with *it*-clefting (**It's because she still chases the squirrels that she doesn't know she's seventeen and a half*). Clauses of indirect reason have been compared to paratactic or 'coordinative' structures (Schlepppegrell 1991). And in the data at hand, clearly epistemic and speech-act causal clauses tend to be configured systematically with declination reset.

There appears then to be a regular correspondence between *because*-clauses of direct reason and absence of declination reset, as well as between clauses of indirect reason and presence of declination reset. In the latter case, the reset of the reference grids may serve as an iconic marker, so to speak, of the logical shift involved in the indirect relation. In this sense the metaphors of intonational subordination vs. intonational coordination take on added meaning: They correspond to differing degrees of taxis between adjacent clauses in discourse, intonational subordination accompanying hypotactic clause complexes, intonational coordination accompanying paratactic clause complexes. One way of capturing this correspondence is to hypothesize that the differing patterns for prosodic configuration together with the concomitant semantic relations of direct and indirect reason establish two distinct constructional schemas for clause linkage with *because*. In the following we shall pursue this idea hypothetically and explore some of the consequences which ensue when a larger set of (often less clear) empirical data is taken into consideration.¹³

4. Constructional schemas for clause linkage with *because*

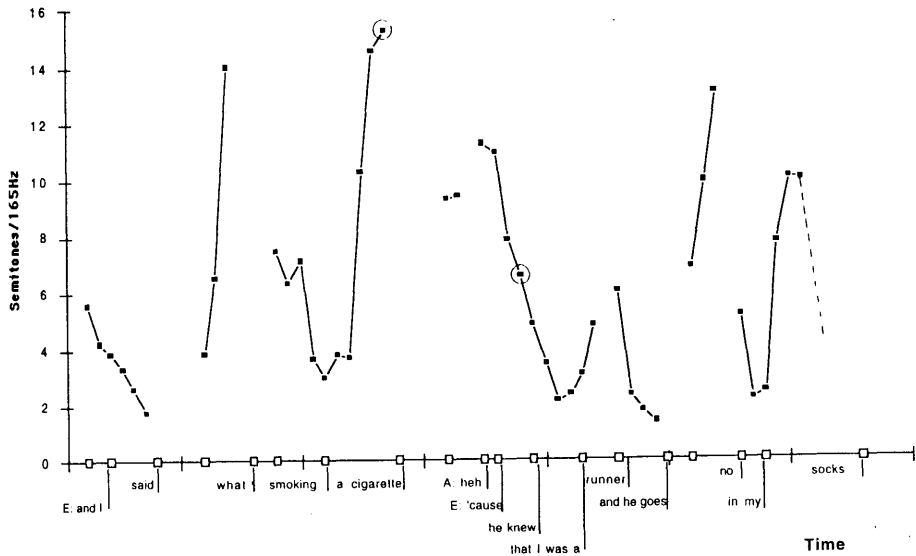
In employing the term constructional schema we allude to recent work within the framework of construction grammar (Fillmore 1988; Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988; Fillmore & Kay 1995). In this non-compositional approach to grammar, constructions are viewed as holistic entities which embody varying degrees of lexical and syntactic 'idiomaticity'. They have semantic and to a certain extent pragmatic information specified for them and, it will be argued here, a schematic prosodic configuration. In horizontal representation, the constructional schemas for causal linkage with *because* might look as follows (declination is understood to be continuous, i.e. not reset, barring indication to the

¹² For examples of indirect causal linkage in the speech-act domain, see (10), (11) and (19) below.

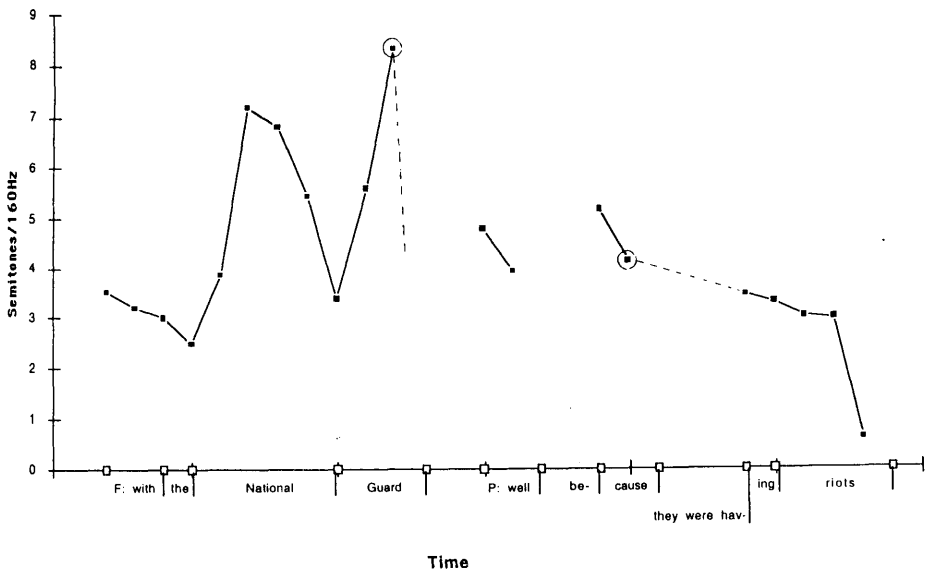
¹³ Clearly, there are alternatives to postulating a link between a constructional schema and its intonational configuration. At the moment, however, the hypothesis under consideration appears plausible enough to make a consideration of its ramifications seem worthwhile.

contrary).¹⁴

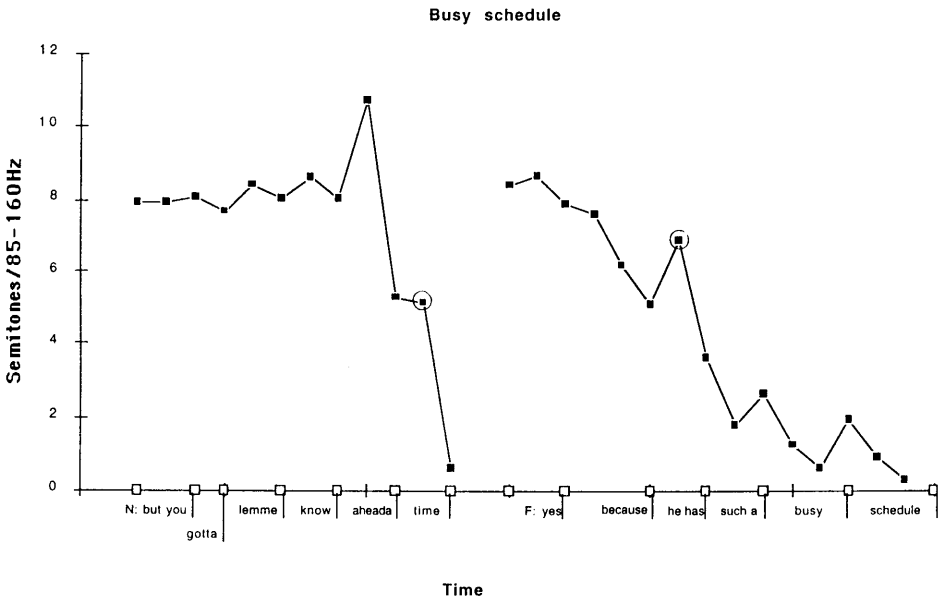
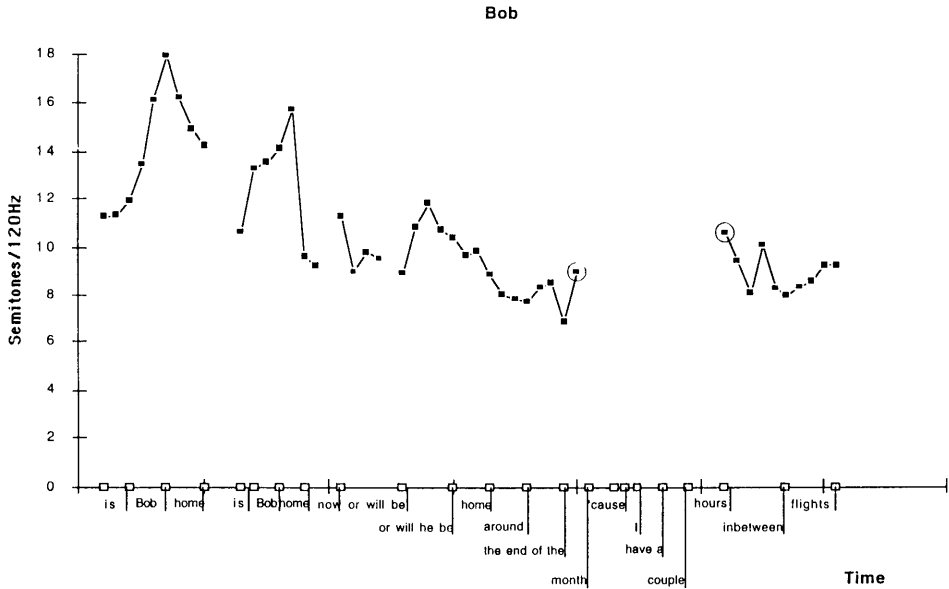
Runner



Riots



¹⁴ In a sequence of clauses in which the second has full reset, the *because*-clause will be heard as in construction with some following clause. Schematically: $//\text{Clause}_1//_{<_{t.r.}} \text{because Clause}_2> //$ will be understood as $//<_{t.r.} \text{Because Clause}_2> //\text{Clause}_3//$ with clauses 2 and 3 with one another.



CSI // Clause₁ // *because* Clause₂ //

CSII // Clause₁ // <_{p.r.} *because* Clause₂> // <partial reset>

Such constructional schemas can be thought of as abstract templates for the construal of semantic/pragmatic relations of cause and reason between clauses. They belong to the set of grammatical resources which speakers have at their disposal for the articulation of clausal relations in discourse.

As the work of Givón (1979), Dubois (1985) and others has shown, 'horizontal' constructions like the above can be thought of as sedimentations, or grammaticizations of frequently occurring 'vertical' sequences in discourse. Thus CSI can be related to question-answer sequences with *why*:

A: *Why were you not that concerned about the time?*

B: *(I wasn't that concerned about the time) because I'm not a fast runner.*

CSII, on the other hand, can be related to interactional sequences in which a justification for a prior assessment or for a prior question/request is given, often in order to address (expressed or projected) objections and/or disagreements from recipient:

A: *I think it's the second largest.*

B: *Are you sure?*

A: *Because they have like twelve thousand applicants, and they only take eight thousand.*

CSI thus emerges naturally from its discourse origin grammaticized as a single turn-constructional unit with integrated declination, CSII as an augmented two-unit structure for turn expansion with declination reset.

Following Ono & Thompson (1995), two types of empirical proof can be adduced for constructional schemas. In the following we consider first the evidence for CSI:

(i) Speakers can be observed to pursue the completion of CSI despite interruptions and/or intervening turns:

(8) ("Runner")

- 1 Eve: and so I was walking through,
and Bob was in the kitchen,
(.) in his bathrobe?
and socks?
5 and (.) smoking a cigarette,
and he just (.) (?s- looked=at)=the=sink=and=went,
.hhh
oh I'm (.) I'm rather embarrassed to have you catch me like this.
9 and I said (.) what?
-> smoking a cigarette?
Adam: heh
-> Eve: 'cause he knew that I was a runner,
and he goes no,
in my socks.

15 All: ha ha ha

Eve is telling a story about a mutual acquaintance Bob who is embarrassed when she unexpectedly meets him in the kitchen of her boyfriend's apartment. Her *because*-clause *he knew that I was a runner* provides a direct reason for her saying to Bob *what? smoking a cigarette?* (i.e. for her suspicion that the reason for his embarrassment was that he was smoking). Although the construction as a whole is interrupted by intervening laughter from Adam (line 11), it is completed in Eve's turn continuation (line 12f) with intonational subordination of the *because*-clause.¹⁵

(ii) Interactants can be observed to produce instantiations of CSI collaboratively. Following is a case where CSI, despite its prototypical nature as a single TCU, is jointly constructed by two speakers:

(9) ("Riots")

- 1 Fran: but uhm (-)
when they were having all those riots out there?
in in eh Los Angeles?
after that King? (.)
- 5 you know came down;
sh- they had tanks going up and down the street.
they called out the National Guard.
and [they were told that they didn't-
[
- 9 Zoe: [(???)
- > Fran: yes
with with the National Guard.
with troops!
- > Pam: well [be-]cause [they were hav-]ing riots.
[
- Fran: [with] [guns!]
- 15 when they were having all those riots.
when they burnt down
the section of Los Angeles there?
- Zoe: [was Bobby working?
[
- Fran: [and people were told
- 20 Nick: [oh yeah
[
- Fran: [that they could not be on the streets after six o'clock.

Zoe, an American who lives abroad, reacts with an expression of disbelief (line 10) to Fran's *they called out the National Guard* (line 7). Zoe's mother Pam now collaborates with Fran by augmenting this construction with *because they were having riots* (line 13). In doing so, she subordinates it intonationally to Fran's *with the National Guard* (line 11).

¹⁵ Note that the *because*-clause is intonationally subordinate to the immediately prior intonation phrase containing *smoking a cigarette*, although it is syntactically subordinate to the (more distant) main clause *and I said*. The intonational subordination cues a direct-reason linkage between Bob's knowing that Eve is a runner and her saying the words reported.

A similar line of argumentation can be adopted for CSII:

(i) It is attested in sequences across intervening turns:

(10) ("Bob")

- 1 Eve: is Bob home-
 -> is Bob home now,
 or will be-
 -> will he be home;
 -> around the end of the month?
 6 Adam: uhm yeah he's there,
 but he's at work part of the day.
 I mean [(I don't know what ???)
 |
 -> Eve: ['cause I have a couple hours inbetween flights,
 10 that I have to fly,
 from (.) Omaha to Chicago to get back to Boston
 (??? and so)

Following Adam's answer (lines 6-8) to Eve's question (lines 1-5), she appends a reason for asking in her next turn: *'Cause I have a couple hours inbetween flights* (lines 9ff). This turn is heard as an extension of the prior sequence in part because the reason clause is configured prosodically as being in construction with the initiating turn of the question-answer sequence. That is, it is partially (but not fully) reset with respect to the question is *Bob home now or will he be home around the end of the month*:

(ii) CSII is on occasion produced collaboratively (with appropriate deictic shifts):

(11) ("Busy schedule")

- 1 Nick: otherwise I was gonna say: uhm: (.)
 I could meet ya;
 some place and uh (.)
 (we c'd) go there together.
 5 Zoe: ya know (make sure you're)
 or we could stop by here;
 we're going-
 we=have to go to West St Paul.
 Nick: oh ok
 10 yeah
 then stop here.
 °and we'll go°
 Zoe: mm mm
 -> Nick: but you gotta lemme know ahead of time.
 15 Zoe: ok [yeah
 |
 Fran: [yes
 -> because he has such a busy schedule.
 Nick: yeah I know.

Following Nick's admonition to Zoe to let him know in advance whether she will be stopping by (line 14), his wife Fran teasingly adds a putative reason for his admonition:

because he has such a busy schedule (line 17). (Actually Nick is retired.) Here too a single constructional schema is produced jointly - this time by speakers with quite different natural voice ranges.¹⁶ Although Fran's pitch on he is in absolute terms higher than Nick's pitch on ahead (215 Hz vs. 158 Hz, respectively), it is nevertheless lower with respect to the base of her voice than Nick's is with respect to the base of his. For this reason we can say that Fran's intonation phrase is construed prosodically as being in construction with Nick's prior phrase: It has a partial (but not full) reset:

Thus the argument is that the two prosodic configurations routinely found accompanying direct vs. indirect cause or reason relations marked with *because* contribute to the constitution of two distinct constructional schemas for the construal of clausal relations in discourse. CSI is prototypically a single TCU, planned and executed 'in one go', whereas CSII prototypically involves two TCUs, the second constituting an augmentation (volunteered or elicited) of the first. CSII qualifies as a construction despite its augmented or two-stage character because the clause or reason clause is configured lexically and prosodically as being in construction with a prior clause: It has a lexical marker of cohesion and its declination is partially reset with respect to this prior clause. Were the two TCUs not in construction with one another, we would expect no lexical marker and full resetting.

5. Pragmatic exploitation of the constructional schemas

Yet the relation between direct/indirect reason and absence/presence of declination reset is not a deterministic one. For one, many causal clause combinations are open to either interpretation. In these cases, speakers must choose whether to construe the causal relation as direct or indirect reason and they enact this choice prosodically. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt, where a potentially direct reason is construed prosodically as an indirect one:

(12) ("Packing up")

- 1 Nora: anyway,
 in the end,
 Billy,
 Claire- (1.0)
 5 <h did Susanna go,>
 -> no she didn't go.
 -> [because she was packing up.
 [
 Billy: [no (1.0)
 Nora: [she went over to the house
 [
 10 Billy: [Beth and Robert
 (1.5)
 Nora: erm Beth and Robert (.) went to the b-

¹⁶ In fact, Nick's highest f_0 value here (158 Hz) does not quite reach Fran's lowest value (160 Hz).

- and Rebecca (1.0)
 Billy: oh yes.
 15 Nora: went to the beach.
 Teddy didn't go, (0.9)

Nora is telling her interlocutors about a trip to the beach which she and her husband Billy took during their recent visit to Australia. Her question *did Susanna go* (line 5)¹⁷ is posed as much to herself as to Billy, as evidenced by the fact that both subsequently provide answers. Nora's answer comes immediately (line 6): *No she didn't go*, Billy's shortly thereafter (line 8): *No*. In overlap with Billy's response, Nora adds a reason: *She was packing up*. Now this could be the direct reason for why Susanna didn't go, or it could be the indirect reason for why Nora knows that Susanna didn't go. Yet Nora configures it with a clear reset, i.e. she treats the linkage as an epistemic one.

The epistemic construal of the causal link is attested to not only by the partial reset of declination in line 7 but also by the fact that Nora pursues the epistemic question 'How do I know?' in a subsequent separate unit: *She went over to the house* (line 9).

Not only can many direct reasons be transformed into indirect ones in this way: sometimes indirect reasons are displayed as direct ones:

(13) ("Double bed")

- 1 Billy: there was a-
Nora: the one bedroom was airconditioned-
Billy: er (1.0) the bedroom was very-
-> Nora: and that was the one that (0.7)
-> that (.) Jessie and Jack had.
-> because it was a double bed and we'd rather have the single
-> because it- one d- ordinary [sized double bed is
{
Sue: [mm
Nora: no good to Billy and I?
10 (1.3)
Sue: no,
Nora: so we had the single bedded room which didn't have
airconditioning in.
Billy: oh I'd forgotten that,
15 but it was fairly cool.

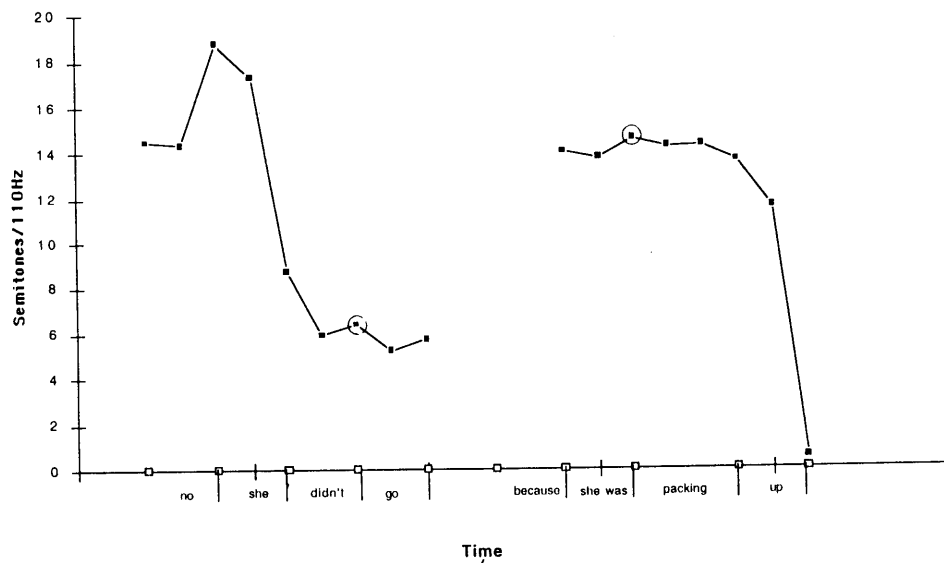
Here Nora and Billy are recounting their stay at Jessie and Jack's in Australia. Referring to the airconditioned bedroom in the latter's house, Nora says: *That was the one that Jessie and Jack had*. Now arguably if a *because*-clause is attached to this utterance, it must modify *that was the one*, i.e. it must be an indirect reason for this clause and not a direct reason for *that Jessie and Jack had*.¹⁸ Yet Nora configures the *because*-clause in line 6

¹⁷ In full form this question would be *Did Susanna go to the beach?* Nora subsequently denies the underlying proposition herself, appending two reasons: *She was packing up* (line 7) and *she went over to the house* (line 9).

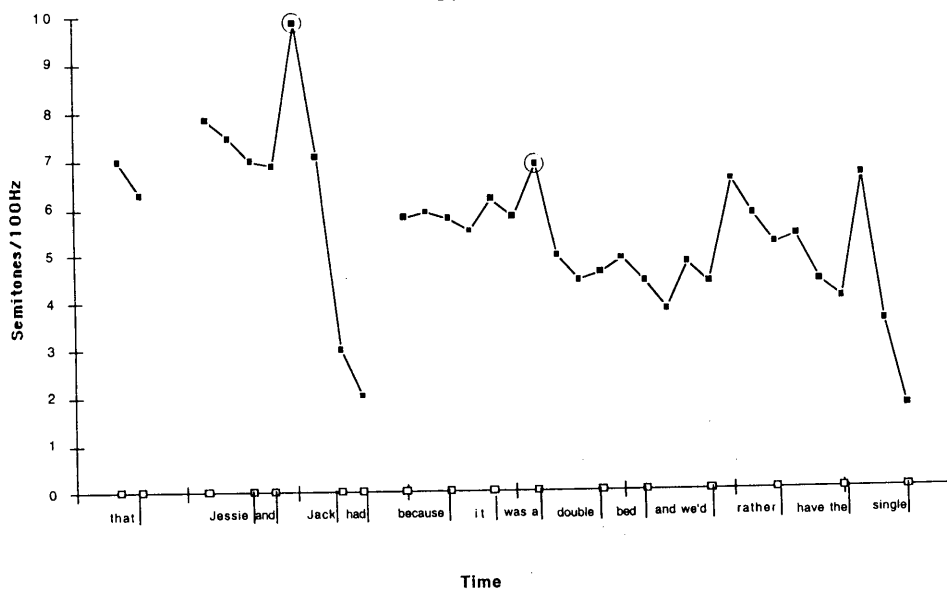
¹⁸ This is because the sentence in question is a focussing copula construction, related to *Jessie and Jack had that one* (Erdmann 1990: 196).

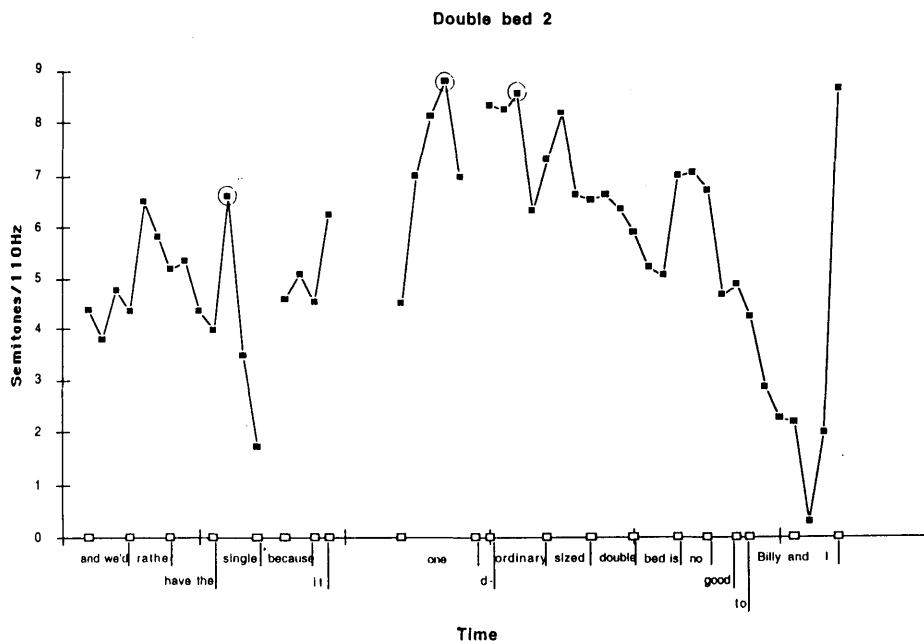
as prosodically subordinate to, i.e. modifying *that Jessie and Jack had*.

Packing up



Double bed





Lack of declination reset here gives the conjoined clauses *it was a double bed and we'd rather have the single* direct-reason status (why Jessie and Jack had the bedroom in question), not indirect-reason status (why Nora claims that the airconditioned one was the one Jessie and Jack had). Configured this way, Nora's turn appears to fuse two different constructions: A focussing-copula construction *that was the one that Jessie and Jack had* and a relative-clause construction *we didn't sleep in the one that Jessie and Jack had*. Nora subsequently repairs her reason clause to *one ordinary-sized double bed is no good to Billy and I* (line 7), and this repaired version is given a reset.

Note that the repaired reason clause now receives an appropriate acknowledgement from Sue: *No* (line 11).

Thus the prosodically distinct constructional schemas with their prototypical reason relations are 'constructional' in the sense that when transferred onto semantically indeterminate or vague material they 'construct' meanings congruent with the prototype (examples (12) and (13)). Yet the two constructional schemas are not completely on a par with one another. CSII is the unmarked member of the pair due to the fact that it is less contextually restricted: Many direct reasons can be construed as indirect ones, whereas, as example (13) demonstrates, indirect reasons do not easily convert into direct ones. This is presumably one factor contributing to the prevalence of declination resetting with *because* in conversation.

6. The preference for Constructional Schema II in conversation

For one set of cases in the data, the type of causal relation which *because* expresses is by nature indeterminate: This is the set of reasons which accompany evaluations and assessments. *Because*-clauses with assessments can in general be construed as the direct reason for the evaluative label or the indirect reason for the speaker making such an evaluation. Compare:

(14) ("Baths")

- 1 Mary: what about the bathroom.
 does it have a curd,
 °all over the pl(hh)ace°
 heh heh
- 5 Adam: no
 [the bathroom's fairly clean. yeah.
 [
- Eve: [well the bathroom isn't too bad.
 -> Adam: Bob is real good,
 -> 'cause he likes to take baths.
 10 so [he always cleans up the tub.
 [
- Mary: [I see
 oh good.
 Adam: yeah

(15) ("Bikini")

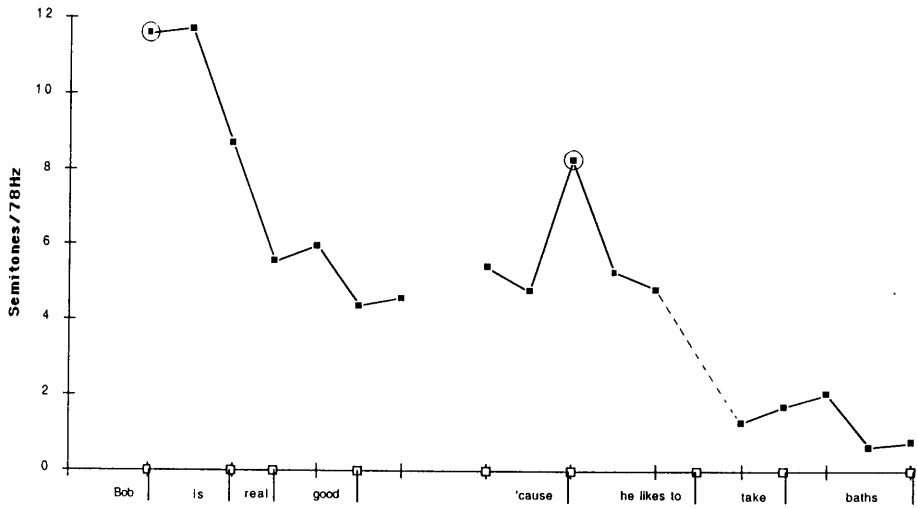
- 1 Sue: the only thing is.
 that Esther was asking me -
 whether she should pack a bikini!
- > Nora: well she'd be=
 5 Billy: oh=
 -> Nora: =silly [not to,=
 [
 Billy: [=sure!
- > Nora: = 'cause the bikini's not gonna take up any room.
 Sue no
 10 Nora: [is it
 [
 Billy [absolutely certainly.

In (14) there is no declination reset and the causal relation is construed as direct: *it's because he likes to take baths that he's real good*.

In (15), on the other hand, the *because*-clause has a declination reset and is construed indirectly: *She'd be silly not to [and I believe this] (be)cause the bikini's not gonna take up any room*.

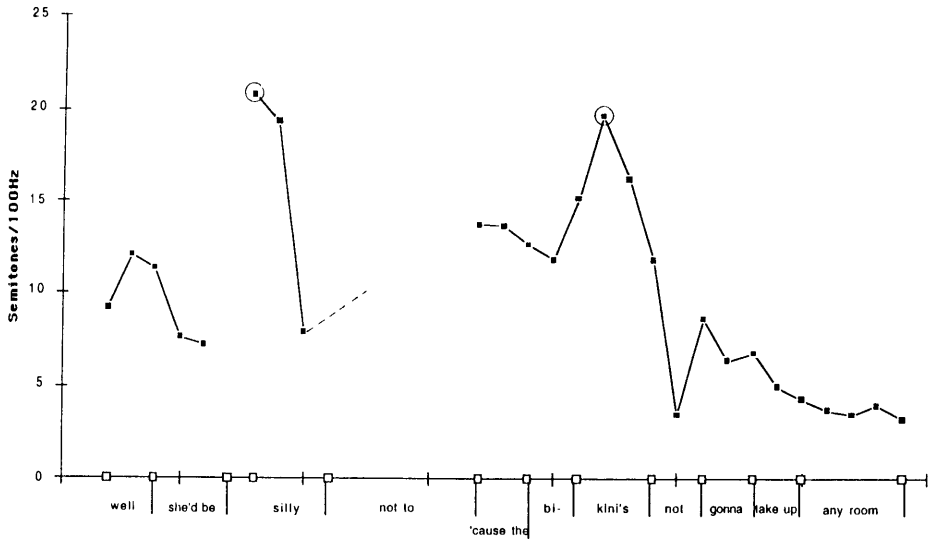
In fact, the majority of reasons following assessments and evaluations in the data at hand are configured as in (15) with CSII. Now this is rather telling: Not only does it underline once again the unmarked nature of CSII (as opposed to CSI), it also suggests that participants have something to gain from deploying CSII rather than CSI. What they gain must be seen in interactional terms. First, and quite concretely, they gain an

Baths



Time

Bikini



Time

additional TCU. Rather than packing two clauses into one TCU with CSI, they distribute them over two TCUs with CSII. In assessment sequences, this strategy has the advantage of allowing the addressee a potential response space and the speaker an opportunity to monitor how the addressee deals with this space - ultimately ensuring closer negotiation in the interactionally sensitive task of achieving a mutually agreeable evaluation. But also in other (non-assessing) activities, CSII allows for more acknowledgement opportunities for addressees and for more possibilities of emphasis for speakers. That is, it gives speakers the chance to make a (personal, often affect-laden) meta-level comment on their talk. In a very subtle way it allows them to present their turns at talk as reasoned actions - and consequently their interactional selves as rational beings: *I know this because, I ask this because, I request this because, I say this because*. Given such gains, the preference for CSII over CSI in conversation should come as no surprise.

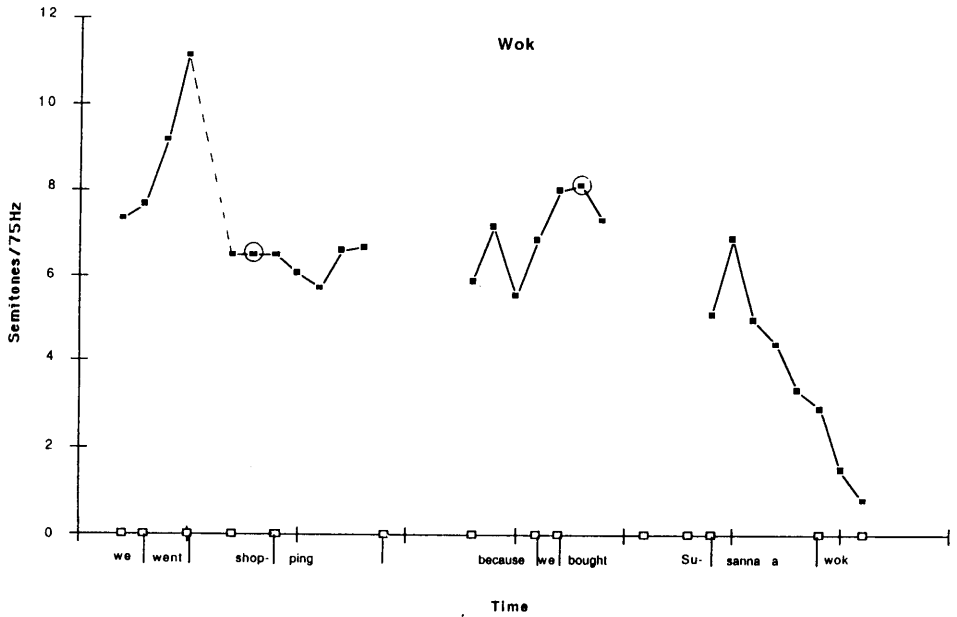
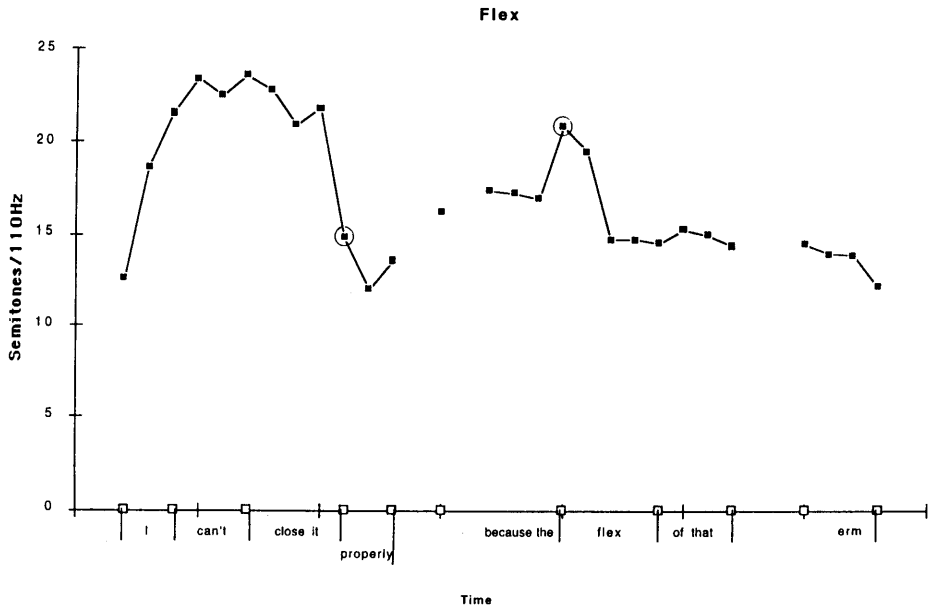
7. The degrammaticization of CSI in conversation

The discussion so far may appear to suggest that all instances of the second sequential pattern, in which the *because*-clause is a separate TCU and configured with declination reset, are instantiations of CSII, with an indirect causal linkage. This conclusion, however, would be premature. In fact, the data provides some evidence that even direct causal linkages are occasionally configured with declination reset. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt:

(16) ("Flex")

- 1 Nora: but we got-
 ohhh
 I knew
 that there was something,
5 Ron: yeah (.)
 there was some horrible little dog's nose,
 that went in [that door and (???)
 {
 Nora: [yes I know (???)
9 Sue: ((coughing)) opened it.
-> Nora: I can't close it properly,
 [be(cause)-
 {
 Sue: [some horrible little dog,
 walked up the stairs he did
-> Nora: because the flex of that erm (0.9)
15 Sue: yeah (.)
 Nora: thing's in the way you see.

Nora sets out to provide a reason in line 11 for why she can't close the door properly. Yet Sue's turn-competitive intervention (line 12f) prevents her from completing it immediately. When she does regain the floor, Nora's *because the flex of that* (line 14) is partially reset with respect to *I can't close it properly* (line 10).



Yet despite the declination reset, the causal relation here is arguably located neither in the epistemic nor in the speech-act domain. This is evident from the fact that e.g. inversion, questioning with *why* and *it*-clefting are all possible.¹⁹ Moreover, if a higher clause were to be inserted between main clause and *because*, it would be something akin to "The reason for this is" rather than "I believe this because" or "I assert this because".

The most plausible explanation for the prosodic configuration with resetting here is that it has arisen 'vertically' rather than 'horizontally'. In other words, although the *because*-clause in (16) may have been planned as a single TCU, it ends up being executed in a separate TCU. In its realization it is thus comparable to a sequence in which *because* introduces an answer to a *why*-question asked with respect to a prior clause:

- A: I can't close it properly
 B: Why?
 A: Because the flex of that thing's in the way

In interactional sequences of this sort, the reason turn typically has declination reset with respect to the prior assertion turn. By analogy, the prosodic configuration of Nora's *because*-clause in (16) can be thought of as arising from a similar incremental process in discourse. In other words, the emergent or on-line production of a CSI results in its degrammaticization.

It could of course be countered at this point that the realization of *because* instantiated in (16) is more accidental than routine and attributable in this particular case to the repair made necessary by Sue's turn-competitive incoming. However, incremental realizations of direct causal linkage are also found without turn-taking disruptions:

(17) ("Wok")

- 1 Sue: what did you do in Chinatown
 Nora: [oh lovely
 {
 Billy: [oh -
 Nora: what did we do in Chinatown.
 5 Billy: we had a Yum Chow.
 (1.0)
 Sue: what's [that.
 {
 Nora: [I bet you never had a Yum Chow.
 Sue: no what's a Yum Chow.
 10 (0.7)
 Nora: it's mar::vellous.
 (1.1)
 -> Billy: yeah we went shopping::.
 (0.4)
 -> because we bought (0.3) Susanna a wok.
 16 and she [wanted, (.)

¹⁹ Cf.: *Because the flex of that thing's in the way, I can't close it properly. Why can't you close it properly? -Because the flex of that thing's in the way; It's because the flex of that thing's in the way that I can't close it properly.*

- Sue: [mm
 Nora: oh yes.
 Billy: her Chinese stuff [as well,
 [mm
 20 Sue: [mm

Here the pitch of the first stressed syllable of the *because*-clause - *bought* - is on a par with that of the last stressed syllable of *we went shopping*: That is, the second clause is heard as partially reset with respect to the first.

Yet this is not a prototypical CSII: The causal relation between the two clauses can only be construed in the real-world domain.²⁰ However, there are indications that the *because*-clause may be a product of late planning. Billy has just acquired the floor for a 'big turn' in order to tell the story of what they did in Chinatown. But the noticeable lengthening of *shopping* and the subsequent pause of 0.4 sec. suggest that his narrative is not fully planned from the start. Crucial background information is missing, which he now provides in the form of a reason clause: *Because we bought Susanna a wok*. Thus, planning difficulties may be responsible here for the degrammaticized form of CSI.

Yet the data also suggests that speakers may opt for degrammaticization in the absence of any planning difficulty:

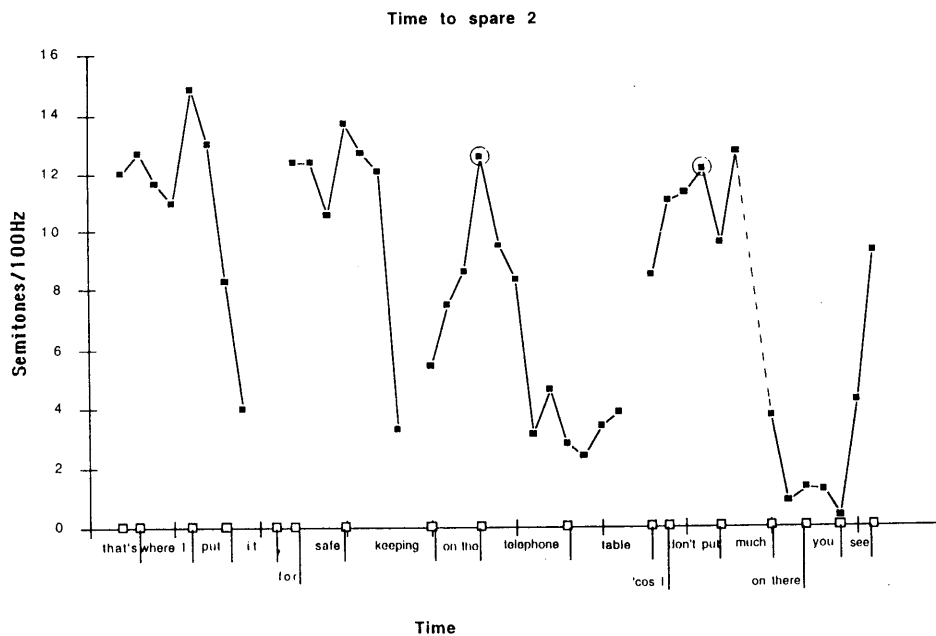
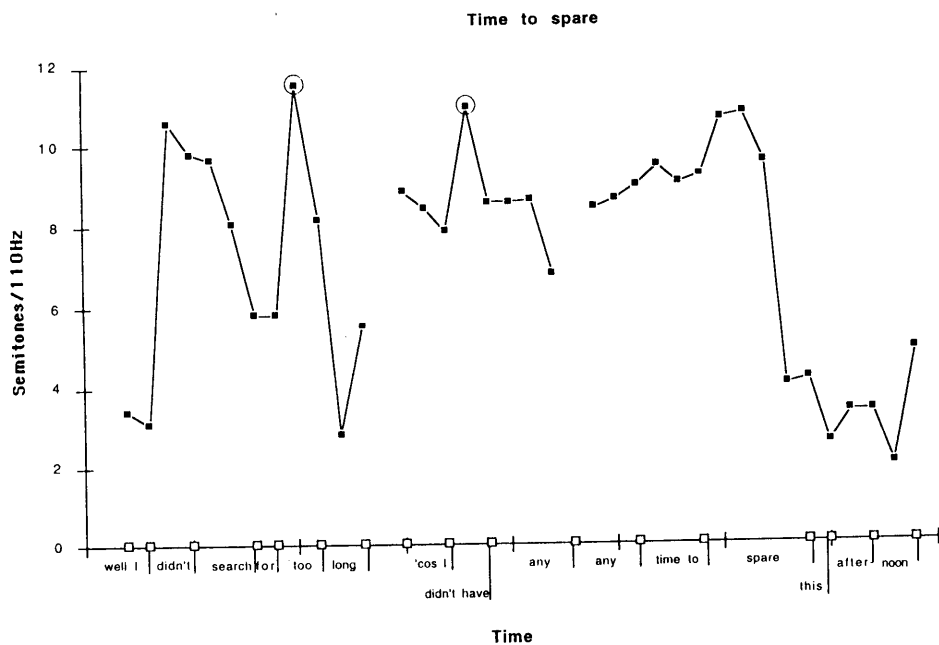
(18) ("Time to spare")

- 1 Sue: °she's not sent me a [prezzie has she,°
 [mm
 Nora: ((with mouth full)) [mmh she has
 that's where I put them (0.7)
 Sue: mm
 5 Nora: I've been searching -
 -> well I didn't search for too long,
 -> 'cos I didn't have any- any time to spare this afternoon,
 but (2.6)
 10 I thought <h what did I do with those brochures,>
 and I've got [brochures on Townsville and [Cairns;,
 [mm [mm
 Sue: [mm
 Nora: and Queensland for you, (0.8)
 and I put them all together,
 15 with Lil's present. (1.7)
and erm (3.6)
 I've got it now- now Billy's (.)
 that's where I put it.
 for safe keeping.
 -> on the telephone table.
 -> 'cos I don't put much on there you see?
 22 Sue: °no,°

In both cases here (line 7 and line 21), the *because*-clause is reset with respect to the

²⁰ Cf. e.g. *Because we bought Susanna a wok and she wanted her Chinese stuff as well, we went shopping*.

preceding intonation phrase although the causal linkage can hardly be located in the epistemic or speech-act domain.



Once again resetting with *because* appears to represent a strategy which speakers can deploy to some advantage. As with the preference for CSII over CSI, a degrammaticization of CSI provides the speaker with additional opportunities for emphasis and affect display. And at the same time it structures conversation in a maximally interactive fashion, providing for close speaker-recipient intermeshing. Thus, taken together, the preference for CSII and the degrammaticization of CSI create a conspiracy for resetting, which accounts for why it is the most frequent type of *because*-configuration in conversation.

8. An historical post-scriptum

The prevalence of resetting with *because* - in particular the preference for CSII over CSI - is noteworthy for a number of reasons, one of them being of diachronic interest. To use a modern-day analogy with biology: Constructions which prove well suited for specific communicative tasks are likely to have a high survival rate. Frequency of use is one indication of the vitality of a construction. Minor mutations in an established construction may ultimately pave the way for new and better adaptation to the environment.

There are three processes associated with CSII which suggest that it may be a harbinger of change:

(i) **Syntactic/semantic/prosodic disengagement of *because* from prior clause.** The disengagement of *because* from a prior clause is particularly evident with CSII when the causal link goes back several clauses or turns-at-talk. For example:

(19) ("Luggage")

- > Fran: well are you limited as to how much (0.2)
luggage you can-
 Zoe: oh we only came over with two p-
 uh- two (.) suitcases.
 5 Fran: mhm
 Pam: so [they can take more back.
 [
 Zoe: [so now we can take back four.
 Pam: ha ha ha
 Fran: oh are you? (.)
 10 Zoe: well you can't-
 Nick: mm
 Zoe: hm
 (1.0)
 -> Fran: <p.r. because Sandra uh (0.3)
 15 had one big suitcase
 and then she had two little carry-ons. =>
 Pam: =mhm

Fran's *because*-clause in line 14f presumably construes a causal relation in the speech-act domain with her question *are you limited as to how much luggage you can (take back)* (lines 1-2). However, the greater the distance between main clause and *because*-clause,

the more tenuous the link becomes.²¹

(ii) **Syntactic/semantic/pragmatic disengagement of *because* from following clause.** Ford (1993) notes that disfluencies are common with *because* following final intonation. In the data examined here, it is in particular with CSII that breaks, hesitations and pauses are found after *because*.²² Moreover, *because* is often intonationally disengaged from the declination of the second intonation phrase, as in (6) and (13b). In cases like these, one is tempted to speak of 'insubordination': The originally subordinate clause has freed itself both prosodically and lexically from its subordinating fetters and established itself as an independent unit.

(iii) **Semantic bleaching of *because*.** There have been isolated references in the literature to this phenomenon under the label of 'continuative' *because* (Schiffrin 1987; Schleppegrell 1991). At issue are uses of *because* in the absence of any causal relation to a clause in prior discourse. For instance:

(20) ("Rebecca")

- 1 Billy: and I took (on) Viv's-
Viv gave me fourteen hundred dollars,
 which I- (0.9)
- Sue: mm
- 5 Billy: and I went to the bank,
 and it was-
 the- the dollar was-
 if you're (1.7)
buying a dollar,
 10 it was (.) worth (0.8) sixty nine pence,
 if you were selling a dollar, (.)
 it was worth (.) seventy one pence,
 so I took (.) the inbetween price (???).
 (1.1)
- > Nora: <p.r.'cos we didn't need to change the money,>
 16 <p.r.because [Rebecca - (2.3)
- Sue: |
 [mhm
- Billy: yeah
otherwise the banks charge you,
 20 and so on.
- Nora: had some of our money in her bank account,>
 Sue: mm
- Nora: which we'd paid in before we left,
 Sue: that's right,
 25 (1.3)
- Nora: and so she gave it to us back,

²¹ The possibility of a 'return-pop' relation such as Fox (1987) proposes for anaphora in discourse should not, however, be excluded.

²² For an example among those discussed here, see line 11 of example (6).

In contrast to the *because* in line 16, which introduces a direct reason for the speaker's not having needed to change money in Australia,²³ the *because* in line 15 has no identifiable causal relation to anything in prior discourse. In cases like this, *because* has lost its semantic content and serves merely as a means of 'doing continuation'. Significantly, its semantic bleaching goes hand in hand with phonological reduction to /kz/.

Taken together, these three observations point to a possible change in progress, with *because* on its way to becoming a discourse marker.²⁴ In CSII it has already lost its strict subordinate relation to a prior clause - syntactically, semantically and prosodically it now marks a paratactic rather than a hypotactic relation. With the progressive loosening of bonds to the following clause, *because* acquires the potential to signal a relation not between clauses but between whole chunks of discourse. Its original semantic content and its prosodic configuration (partial resetting) make it an ideal marker of (loose) cohesion with what has gone before. And its phonological reduction confirms this role.²⁵ Should the trend suggested by the data discussed here persist, CSII may in retrospect have been the midwife of a new marker for English discourse.

Appendix

Transcription conventions

Typographical line	Intonation phrase
A: [Overlapping talk
B: [
=	Latched words or turns
(.)	Micro-pause
(0.3)	Measured pause
<u>word</u>	Word carrying a prominent accent
<u>word</u>	Word carrying an extra prominent accent
^o word or phrase ^o	Piano
WORD or PHRASE	Forté
phrase.	Final falling pitch (to low)

²³ The direct reason is, however, configured with declination resetting.

²⁴ Schiffrin, for example, singles out four conditions which must hold in order for an expression to be used as a discourse marker: (i) it must be syntactically detachable from the sentence, (ii) it must be commonly used in initial position, (iii) it must have specific prosodic configurations, e.g. tonic stress + subsequent pause, phonological reduction, (iv) it must operate at both local and global levels of discourse (1987: 328).

²⁵ Halliday & Hasan point out that conjunctive items serving as continuatives are phonologically reduced (1976: 268).

phrase;	Final falling pitch (to mid)
phrase!	Final rising-falling pitch (emphatic)
phrase?	Final rising pitch (to high)
phrase,	Final rising pitch (to mid)
phrase -	Final level pitch
< _b phrase>	High register
< _i phrase>	Low register
aw::	Syllable lengthening
aw-	Syllable cut-off
a(h)w	Breathiness, laugh particle
(???)	Transcriptionist doubt
because	Token in question
<p.r. phrase>	Partial declination reset
<f.r. phrase>	Full declination reset

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