

## Taxonomic Disputes over the Categorical Nature of *BECAUSE* and Subordinators

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Hong, Sungshim, and Joo Hyun Chun. 2018. Taxonomic disputes over the categorical nature of *BECAUSE* and subordinators. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 18–3, 260–281. This paper aims to clarify the taxonomic confusion regarding a word like *because* and other subordinators, including or excluding complementizers, and to present additional empirical and structural evidence for Pullum (2009a, 2009b, 2014), Huddleston & Pullum (hereafter H & P, 2005, 2018) in that *because* is a Preposition, contra all the dictionaries, on-or-off line, and usage books such as Garner (2016), and Fowler's (2015), and reference and prescriptive grammar books. Gelderen (2013, 2017), on the other hand, has maintained that *because*, along with all other subordinators, is a complementizer. Furthermore, Haumann (2011) has proposed another functional projection (SubconP), differently from both P and C. If *because* plus other subordinators belong to a category P as Pullum (2009a: 255–273), and H & P (2005: 129–130, 2018) have argued for, and if subordinators including *because* are complementizers, as Gelderen (*ibid*) has argued for, which party is right in this dispute and what are the consequences? This paper, while defending Pullum, and H & P, on the basis of the recapitulation over the grammatical category distinction, clarifies this controversy by (i) providing additional empirical evidences and (ii) presenting the structural details of the subordinate clauses as PP, which Pullum, and H & P have missed out.

**Keywords:** taxonomy, conjunction, subordinator, word-class, subconP, TopP

### 1. Introduction

As prescriptive or school grammar of the English has presented to ESL/EFL students in English creative writing classes of colleges, *because* is unanimously classified as subordinating conjunction, or simply conjunction. Lexical items like prepositions, on the other hand, are relational in that a preposition takes an NP argument as its complement.

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On the basis of the comparison between *because* as a subordinating conjunction and *that* as complementizer, Pullum (2009a: 255–273, 2014, 2017), and Huddleston and Pullum (2018)(hereafter H & P 2018) have argued that *because* cannot and should not be categorized as the same type as *that*. Unlike *that*, *because* has its own semantic import, and it can be preposed to the sentence-initial position. Therefore, they argue that *because* and other subordinators should be classified as some other category, and that some other category is preposition, P, rather than (subordinating) conjunction. Gelderen (2013: 48–49, 2017: 26–27), on the other hand, has presented that *(al)though*, *as*, *before*, *because*, *for*, *how*, *if*, *in case that*, *since*, *whether*, *while*, *why*, *yet* are all complementizers<sup>1</sup>:

(1) a. Rigobertha and Pablo left because Isabella was about to arrive.

(Gelderen 2017: 57)

As the English grammar in the generative syntax framework has maintained, the grammatical category ‘complementizer’ is a special subset of subordinating conjunctions; *that*, *for*, *if*, and/or *whether* (Aarts 2008, Radford 2004, Sportiche, Koopman and Stabler 2014, among many others). Incidentally, Hudson (1995: 40) challenged this and discussed another possibility; *whether* is an interrogative pronoun, whereas the rest, *that*, *for*, *if* belong either to no word-class or subordinators. He has called those complementizers ‘linkers’, since they link the higher verb with the following complements.

Therefore, this confusing situation with respect to the grammatical category of a word like *because* and a special subset of subordinators, i.e., C’s, demand more accurate, taxonomically consistent, and yet highly viable classification. One may simply ignore the categorial status of *because*. But we would take this matter seriously,<sup>2</sup> since both the internal and external structural details would have to be argued for as having different configuration and different labels, which provide the quintessential or paradigmatic part of our syntactic knowledge. The purpose of this paper is to clarify categories such as complementizers, subordinators, and prepositions. Furthermore, the *because*-clause as a representative of subordinating conjunction clauses is a Topic

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<sup>1</sup> The exact wording from Gelderen is the following (ibidem): “...Complementizers such as *that*, *because*, *whether*, *if*, and *since* join two clauses where one clause is subordinate to the other.”

<sup>2</sup> In Pullum (*ibid*), has put that ‘Up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whales were categorized as fish. If this matters, then the grammatical category of *because* matters.’

when inverted to the sentence-initial position.

The overall organization of this paper is as follows: In Section 2, Gelderen's analysis is laid out and discussed. Under her approach, practically all subordinators including *because* in English are Cs. On the other hand, Pullum (2009, 2014, among many others), and H & P's (*ibid*) approach is discussed. In Section 3, based on the problems and conceptual controversy over the categorial confusion, we defend Pullum's approach by providing some additional evidences and by extending the notion of a preposition. Moreover, structural details of the *because*-phrase as Topic phrase will be demonstrated. The consequences having so said follow in the Section 4 along with conclusions.

## 2. Category Disputes among Subordinator, Complementizer, and Preposition

The word *because* has long been assumed to be a subordinating conjunction heading a temporal adverbial clause. Under a more recent terminology, *because* is the Head taking a clausal argument as its complement. However, it has not been so clear about what the *because*-clause looks like in its P-markers. Similarly, Burton-Roberts (1997: 207) states that *after* is a kind of complementizer introducing the clause, since \**After that she left* is ungrammatical and its ungrammaticality can easily be accounted for if *after* belongs to a C; the two items, *after* and *that* in the above sentence are fighting for one position, C.

In the generative syntax, *complementizer* is a functional category that heads a complement clause or argument.<sup>3</sup> *That* in (2a), *if* in (2b), and *for* in (2c) and more controversially *whether* in (2d) below are the most accepted Cs:

### (2) Genuine Complementizers (GC)

- a. I believe *that* the world is flat.
- b. John wonders *if* his wife took the money.
- c. It is obvious *for* me to obtain the US visas.
- d. I asked John *whether* he would be interested in the corporation.

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<sup>3</sup>Note that the word *complementizer* goes much further (Gazdar et al. 1985: 112), or even further back to Rosenbaum (1967), according to Pullum (*ibid*).

(3) Traditional Subordinators (TS): *after, as, although, because, before, since, though, when, while, once etc.*

Whether *whether* is a complementizer or not seems still arguable in that *whether* satisfies the criteria of a complementizer; meaningless and purely functional by introducing the complement clause. Since it is the main point here, we tentatively consider that *whether* is one of the complementizers as Sportiche, Koopman, and Stable (2017) have stated.

Note that Hudson (1995) has strongly objected to the idea that only these four words belong to the same ‘Word-Class.’ He has tried to tease them apart, arguing that *whether* is an interrogative pronoun and *for* is a preposition. If Hudson is to be adopted, there are only two lexical items, *that*, and *if* that would belong to C. He raised a question about whether we really need those two words to be differentiated from the majority of the subordinators. We would get back to this discussion in the immediate following subsection.

For simplicity, we call the rest of the subordinators Traditional Subordinators (TS) as (3) shows and the four complementizers as Genuine Complementizers (GC) as (2) shows.<sup>4</sup> Except for the GCs, the rest of the TSs, such as, *after, although, as, because, before, since, though, when, while, etc.*, in (3) seem to have attracted less and less attention in the generative syntax field.

On one hand, GCs are the Head and thus, project to CP-node and to be the locus of Subject-Aux-Inversion (SAI), whereas it has not been clear what TS projects into and how they can be represented in terms of their P-markers, although they do have the intrinsic meanings. This is true especially when all other phrasal nodes are the projections of the Head, the projection of a N, VP of a V, PP of a P, TP of a T, and so on.

Or one may adopt another independent word-class, Subcon, using its maximal projection, SubconP as Haumann (2011) has done.<sup>5</sup> In what follows, we discuss this inconsistency over the classification and distinction of these lexical items.

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<sup>4</sup> The term *subordinators* is a much bigger class than *complementizers*, and it is dubbed as such in Quirk, et al (1985: 998). The acronyms such as TS and GC may sound ad hoc, although they are descriptively accurate and necessary. Since this paper discusses the categorial status of Subordinators including four complementizers, it is necessary to call them as such. Furthermore, a word like *though* has a usage other than a subordinating conjunction. The other usage is not our concern in this paper, though.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 8 for detail.

## 2.1 Gelderen: Subordinators are Complementizers and *vice versa*

Gelderen (*ibid*, 26–27) has maintained that subordinating conjunctions are complementizers and *vice versa*. The table she has given out is the following:

Table 1. Complementizers of Gelderen's Table

C	Example of C	Other use	Example of other use
after	After she left, it rained	Preposition	After him
as	Fair as the moon is, it ...	Degree adverb	As nice
because	Because he left, <sup>6</sup> ...	–	
before	Before it snowed, it rained	Preposition	Before me
for	I expect for you to do that	Preposition	For Santa
if	If she wins, that will be great	–	
so	He was tired, so he went to sleep	Adverb	So tired
that	I know that the earth is round	Determiner	That book
when	I wonder when it will happen	Adverb	He left when
while	She played soccer, while he slept	Noun	A short while

Without much elaboration on the categorial status of C and the structural details, Gelderen simply illustrates *because* and TSs as Cs. Note that if these elements are of the grammatical type C, then temporal adverbials, concessive adverbials, conditional adverbials, or any other adverbials would be CPs as well. Below is her rule of preposition–complementizer–adverb:

### (4) Gelderen's Preposition–Complementizer–Adverb Rule

A Preposition introduces a noun (e.g., *about the book*);

A Complementizer introduces a sentence (e.g., *because he left*);

An Adverb is on its own (e.g., *She went out, and unfortunately, she left*).

Functionally speaking, subordinators and complementizers are the same in that they relate or introduce the following clauses. As mentioned earlier, however, the question still remains: is it justifiable to collapse those four GCs with TSs as the Table 1 shows? Those four GCs in (2) and the TSs in (3) do not share a lot in common

<sup>6</sup> In her table on p. 27, there is no actual example. Instead, there was a number (43). I have searched for an exact example numbered (43) and for an example on page 43 of the same reference. There was none, however. This example was taken from outside the table on the same page (27) of the book. This must be a typo of the author.

except their grammatical function of introducing a clausal argument. GCs are meaningless and TSs are meaningful, although they are Cs under Gelderen. Purely functional approach to the taxonomy of English words, it seems.

Gelderen (2017: 26–27), nonetheless, has left room for future discussions and development by saying that “*These categories are often ambiguous in Modern English because prepositions and adverbs can change to complementizers.*” Gelderen’s classification of both complementizers and subordinators as one type, C, does not justify legitimate grounds for ‘putting the two or three different things into one basket’ only because they carry out the same function. Their syntactic behavior is also very different.

Her analysis violates ‘the unity’ of preposition, adopting Pullum’s (2015a, 2015b) terminology, which in turn from Otto Jespersen (1924) and John Hunter’s *Grammatical Essay in Nature, Import, and Effect of Certain Conjunctions* (1784).<sup>7</sup> In other words, so long as GCs and TSs are grouped together as one type of category, regardless of whatever that is, it would fall into the same fallacy; some members of the category are meaningless, immovable, and purely functional, whereas the others are meaningful, movable, and lexical. In what follows, Pullum and some other scholars’ objections to this approach are revisited.

## 2.2 Pullum (2009) and H & P (2018): *because* as Preposition

Pullum (2009), and H & P (2018), each, have argued, both strenuously and fervently, that *because* cannot be categorized as a (subordinating) conjunction, or must not be classified as subordinators. They compare *because*, with one of the GCs, *that*: *because* is so different from *that* that it is simply wrong to classify them as one category, (subordinating) Conjunction. The following reasons are provided in Pullum (2009a).

First, as already mentioned above, one of the GCs, *that* is meaningless, but *because* is meaningful, one of whose most salient features is [+reason]. Thus, *because* has some lexical meanings whereas the GCs like *that* does not. Therefore, *because* cannot be omitted, whereas *that* is quite freely omissible.

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<sup>7</sup> This reference is taken from Pullum (2015a: 2) in Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh 1: 113–134)

- (5) a. Ted is ridiculed {*because*/\* $\emptyset$ } he holds ridiculous beliefs.  
 b. {*Because*/\* $\emptyset$ } he holds ridiculous beliefs, Ted is ridiculed.

Secondly, GCs like *that*-clause cannot be easily displaced or fronted to the sentence-initial position, whereas TSs like *because*-clause freely can without affecting its meaning.

- (6) a. Tom says that the world is flat.  
 b. Tom says { $\emptyset$ } the world is flat.  
 c. ??That the world is flat, Tom says.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, *that* receives no primary stress or prosodic stress, but, *because* may. Therefore, *because* may appear as an answer fragment in many pragmatic situations. *That*, on the other hand, may neither appear in the same context with the same pragmatic force, nor receive the primary stress in the prosody.

- (7) Speaker A: “Why do I have to wear my mittens, mommy?”  
 Speaker B: “Because!”

- (8) Speaker A: Johnny, why didn’t you do your homework?  
 Speaker B: “Because!” (or ‘Cause!’)<sup>9</sup>

(Pullum 2009)

Furthermore, the position C is a functional position. If the TSs situate under the C, it is counter-intuitive since C’s are normally less in meaning and mostly functional. Thus, it is against the X-bar theoretic intuition.

Hudson (1995: 43–45) points out that C is a name of a functional category, and

<sup>8</sup> An anonymous reviewer #3 points out that *that*-clause can be fronted in some context:

(i) *That he will not stop his challenge, I firmly believe.*

(i) is considered to be grammatical, although the *that*-clause is preposed. What Pullum (2009a) has presented is a neutral context in which *that*-clause is fronted. Thus, we predict that the case such as (i) would be a Topicalized or Focalized example. This speculation is confirmed if we consider first the meaning of the sentence and a presence of a word like ‘firmly’. Therefore, we would continue to argue that under a neutral situation, (6c) is ungrammatical or highly marginal.

<sup>9</sup> According to Foster, et al (2000), this usage of *because*, especially in spoken language, is a discourse marker rather than a subordinating conjunction.

also it is the name of the structural position, yielding ‘the dual identity.’ Therefore, any category other than C can also occupy this position, and an auxiliary verb [+V] is one of them when Subject–Auxiliary–Inversion (SAI) takes place. Pullum states that other categories such as V do not have sub–types, depending on the valency. Whether Transitive, Intransitive, Ditransitive, or the verb taking an NP, CP, TP, or Small Clauses, they all are classified as Verbs.

By the same token, if *because* and other subordinators are classified as P, and if the P is allowed to have diverse valency with an NP argument, a clausal argument (TP/CP), or zero( $\emptyset$ ) argument, then there is no such conceptual fallacy or inconsistency in the theory. They all are Ps, with different argument structures, just like verbs do. Consider the following examples:

- (9) a. He moved here *after* the end of the war  
 b. Entry is free *after* 5 pm in the evening  
 c. I went to the cinema *after* I had eaten my dinner  
 d. I went to the cinema *after* dinner  
 f. They lived happily ever *after* [<sub>zero</sub> $\emptyset$ ]

- (10) Emonds (1976: 172–173)  
 a. John arrived *before* the last speech  
 b. John arrived *before* the last speech ended  
 c. John arrived *before* [<sub>zero</sub> $\emptyset$ ]

- (11) a. I haven’t seen him since the party  
 b. I haven’t seen him since the party began  
 c. I haven’t seen him since [<sub>zero</sub> $\emptyset$ ]

Under the allegedly standard taxonomy, the above examples in (9)–(11) show that *after* may be a P, a Conj, and an Adverb, without much difference in its meaning. This is definitely undesirable and redundant. Therefore, comparing *because* with *that* is like ‘whale with fish’ (Pullum 2015a), since they are very different. Following Otto Jespersen (1924), Pullum has proposed that TSs like *because* be a P, while GCs like *that* remain subordinators or something else, suggested in Hudson (1995)<sup>10</sup>. He

<sup>10</sup> Hudson’s (1995) terminology, ‘syncategorematic’ which means that the words belong to no general word–class. The next question, then, is whether or not all the words need to belong to



eliminated *whether* and *for* from the list of complementizers; *whether* as an interrogative pronoun, *for* a preposition.

Table 2. Summary of Previous Research

Analysis	Proposals	Remaining issues
Gelderen (2013, 2017)	Functional approach: All subordinators are Cs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structural details as CP are missing</li> <li>TSs &amp; GCs belong to the same category?</li> </ul>
Pullum (2009) H & P (2018)	X-bar Theoretic approach: All subordinators except GCs are Ps, taking XP as its complement where X=N, C, A, P, $\emptyset$ etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structural details as PP are missing.</li> <li>The consequence of his proposal is missing; Which category do the GCs such as <i>that</i>, <i>if</i>, <i>for</i>, <i>whether</i> belong to?</li> </ul>
Hudson (1995)	<i>That</i> , <i>if</i> as syncategorematic (i.e., no category label) <i>for</i> is a P, <i>whether</i> is an interrogative pronoun. Cartographic approach: More	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a choice over having or not having a category in a lexical item?</li> <li>Are <i>that</i> &amp; <i>if</i> Cs?</li> </ul>
Haumann (2011)	word-class categories, SubconP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Parts-of-Speech? Costly?</li> </ul>

Gelderen's approach can be said to be purely functional since she grouped GCs and TSs as one type, C, only on the basis of the grammatical function of the two elements.<sup>11</sup> Pullum, and H & P's approach is more or less X-bar theoretic since they treat TSs like *because* and *after* as P; under their approach, P is allowed to take an NP, CP, or  $\emptyset$  argument as its complement. Under Hudson, four GCs are teased apart and only two of them, *that* and *if*<sub>interrogative</sub> are Cs or with no category name.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Haumann's approach is close to Cartographic approach since he allows more parts of speech by adding Subordinating conjunction as an independent functional word-class, which will project into a maximal projection, SubconP. All of the past research are not without problems. In what follows, we propose that *because* is a P, and that *because*-phrase is a Topic when the phrase is fronted to the sentence initial position.

a particular word-class.

<sup>11</sup> Although we haven't put it in the table, Burton-Roberts (1995: 194, 206–207) takes a similar stance, so that subordinators are functioning as a kind of complementizer.

<sup>12</sup> Note that there is conditional *if*. This is a subordinator, *if*<sub>cond</sub>. If all subordinators are Ps, then there is no need to differentiate the conditional *if* from complementizer *if*.

### 3. Proposing Subordinate Clauses as PP

In what follows, Pullum's *because*-as-P is to be defended on (i) the conceptual bases and by (ii) some empirical evidences that would work better.

#### 3.1 American Dialect Society (2014): 'Words of the Year', *because* + XP

More recently, American Dialect Society (hereafter ADS, 2014) has released an official document that introduces *because* as one of the 'Words of the Year.' The reason why *because* has been selected as the Word of the Year is because the word nowadays is shifting only from clause-taking to phrase-taking. The most dramatic case is the emergence of *because* + Noun and Noun Phrase as below:

- (12) a. '*because my homework*'  
 b. '*because reasons*'  
 c. '*because awesome*'

- (13) Carey (2013), Garber (2013) from on-line resources  
 a. Dow closes at record high for 35<sup>th</sup> time this year *because* Obama  
 b. *Because* has become a preposition *because* grammar  
 c. No wrok tomorrow *because* holidays!  
 d. Of course evolution is true, *because* science  
 e. ?I can never get to bed at a reasonable hour *because* interesting people on the internet!  
 f. English has a new preposition, *because* Internet

- (14) McCulloch (from Carey 2013)<sup>13</sup>  
 e. I can't come out tonight because homework/essays  
 f.\*I can't come out tonight because lots of homework/this essay

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<sup>13</sup> According to Carey (2013), McCulloch speculates that *because* + N construction should consist of a bare noun, not a noun with a determiner or an adjective. But, the example (13e) may be a counter-example, as the marginal status of the example shows?'. Furthermore, (13a) has a proper noun, *Obama*, after *because* as P. It seems premature to generalize the nature of the following complement. Anonymous reviewer #3, too, has pointed out this. We leave this issue for future research simply by suggesting that a corpus dealing with colloquial American English would be a good place to look for.

The occurrence of *because* is exceptional since it is followed by a Noun or Noun Phrase (NP), or even an Adjective or an AP. Consider the following:

- (15) a. You might not go to a party *because tired*  
 b. John overslept this morning *because reasons*  
 c. *Because* should be the Word of the Year *because useful*  
 d. Everyone wants to buy the car *because awesome*
- (ADS 2014)

The above examples would have been considered ungrammatical under the traditional or prescriptive grammar since the subordinating conjunction *because* takes a noun (NP), adjective (AP) and other parts of speech. As a matter of fact, the ADS presents that this usage is so interesting, useful, and explosive with new grammatical possibilities in online or colloquial use that it has made its way to ‘Word of the Year’ with the highest votes. The change that has caught the attention of the American Dialect Society is simply that *because* has picked up the extra usage privilege already possessed by prepositions like *of*: it now allows an NP as its complement.

How can this grammatical shift be accounted for or how can this usage change be accommodated if *because* is a subordinating conjunction? The traditional grammarians panicked on the basis of all the unanimous definition of *because* as subordinating conjunction, while this usage of *because* becomes exponentially increasing. The language has simply added to its stock of grammatical possibilities an extra (colloquial) usage.

Pullum (*ibid*), and H & P (2018) point out that if the word *because* is a P, not a subordinating conjunction, the new trends in the usage of *because* is nothing to be quirky about; a P allows not only a clause, but any parts-of-speech XP including Nouns (NP), Adjectives (AP).

Furthermore, Pullum points out that if *because* is a subordinator, then it would be difficult to explain what *because+of* is. In the dictionaries, *because +of*, too, is a P. Nonetheless, there is no other case with ‘two words’ being in a word class. *Because of* is not a compound word, nor is a hyphenated word. That is, a subordinator *because* cannot take another [PP of + DP/NP] as its complement. Besides, *because of* may be separated by an adverbial parenthetical expressions. In that case no one can say the entire expression with *because,...(parentheticals).... of* is a P.

- (16) a. If among the intellectual beliefs of Latin America the idea of democracy itself is so denigrated, it is [*because, in great part, of*] our public universities.
- b. Higher-priced goods were the best sellers in lines ranging from toys to apparel, partly [*because, some retailers thought, of*] the new tax law, which will eliminate deductions for sales taxes beginning next year.
- c. Chavez was more restrained this time [*because, he later revealed, of*] a rib injury suffered sparring at promoter Don King's famous, \$1,000-a-day Cleveland training lair six weeks ago.
- d. "I want to avoid saying Europe is a role model for North America," says Robert C. Stempel, who won the president's job at GM last May [*because, it is widely believed, of*] the company's improvement overseas.
- (Pullum 2009)

Therefore, Pullum argues that *because of* cannot possibly be one word, since the first word *because* and the second word *of* have intervening parenthetical expressions. According to Burton-Roberts (1997: 207), some complex expressions such as the following as *Phrasal Complementizer*:

- (17) Phrasal Complementizers:

*now that, so that, except that, as if, in case, in order that, as soon as*

Furthermore, Burton-Roberts (1997:207) consider *before, after, until, since* are Ps, whereas *although, unless, if, because, once, as, now, so* are subordinating conjunctions.

### 3.2 Supporting Evidence for Subordinators as P

In this subsection, we present some additional evidence which has been regarded as 'fixed expressions' or 'idiomatic expressions', without any principled explanation. Through this account, if a P can take any XPs or a zero XP, then these data will receive a uniform and viable treatment.

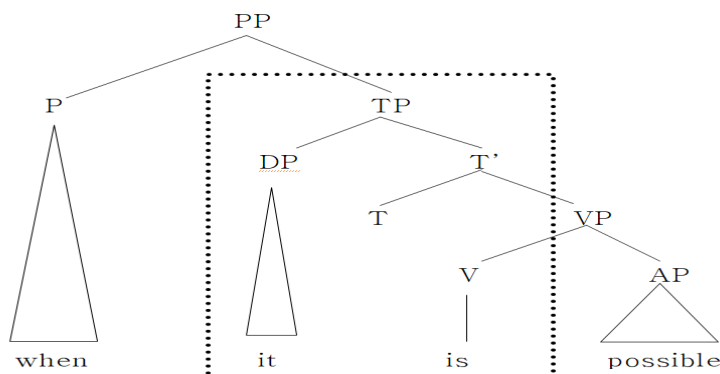
Following Pullum, we are capable of accounting for 'idiomatic or fixed expressions', without causing inconsistency in the classification of the words. Consider the following, some of which are from Pullum and some are from the online idiom dictionary of English:

- (18) Diverse idiomatic expressions [P+AP],[P+AdvP],[P+TP],[P+CP]
- a. for sure, for certain, for free, for real, in short
  - b. if agreeable, if necessary, if possible, if reachable, when necessary, when possible, when allowable, while hot, as necessary
  - c. except that [TP...], in that [TP...], now that [TP...]
  - d. except cautiously
- (Pullum 2009a, 2014)
- (19) Structures of P+AP, P+AdvP, P+TP, P+CP, *etc*
- a. for [AP sure], for [AP certain], for [AP free],
  - b. as [AP necessary], if [AP necessary], when [AP necessary]  
if [AP possible], as [AP possible] as [TP you can], by [AP?far]
  - c. in [CP that [TP...]], except [CP that [TP...]]
  - d. except [AdvP cautiously]
- (20) From On-line-dictionary
- a. *If necessary*, we can always change the dates of our trip.
  - b. *If possible*, the patient can then visit his doctor for further advice.
  - c. Mary was fortunate *in that* she had close friends nearby to help her.
  - d. There is no way to do this except cautiously.

One may argue that an expression like *when necessary* or *if possible* is the result of ellipsis or omission from *when it is necessary* or *if it is possible*. We argue that they are not the result of the ellipsis or omission of the subject+copula *be* for the following reason.

Suppose that these expressions like (19b)–(20a)–(20b) are the result of an omission. What are the elements that are elided? They are the subject, *it* and the copula *be*. See the following tree diagram (21).

(21)



This omission, however, is costly and not simple, since the subject *it* and *be* do not form a constituent. Therefore, if *when* and *possible* are to remain in the final outcome, and *it* and *be* are to be deleted, then *when* and the XP (in this case, *possible*) have to move out of the TP to the higher position sequentially so that the remaining TP can be elided, as TP-ellipsis, yielding [ $XP?$  *when possible* [ $TP$  ~~*it is t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub>*~~]].

This is how Kayne’s (1994) Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA) would have worked, if adopted. Nonetheless this process is more ‘costly’ than simply following an extended version of X-bar theory that a P is allowed to take any XP as its complement. For that reason, we argue that extending X-bar theoretic phrase structures and categorization as a P would work in a more principled manner.

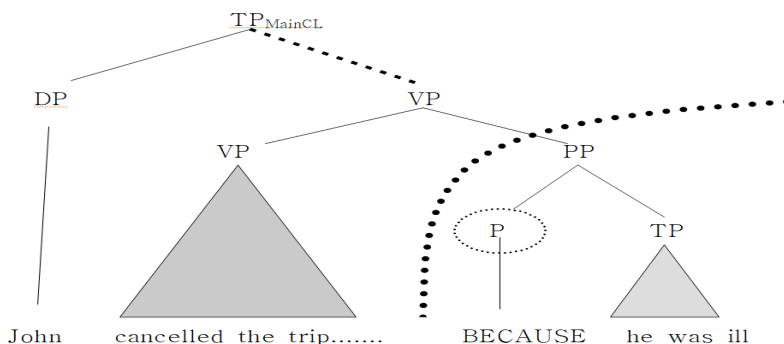
Furthermore, the AP, *possible* has no landing site within the phrase so that the entire TP gets deleted. Thus, when extending this to the subordinators such as *if*, *when*, as P taking XP, the classification is under control.

### 3.3 Structure of *because* as P

In what follows, we propose the structures of *because*-clause as an example of subordinate phrases in English. Consider the following:

(22) a. John cancelled the trip to Arizona *because* he was ill.

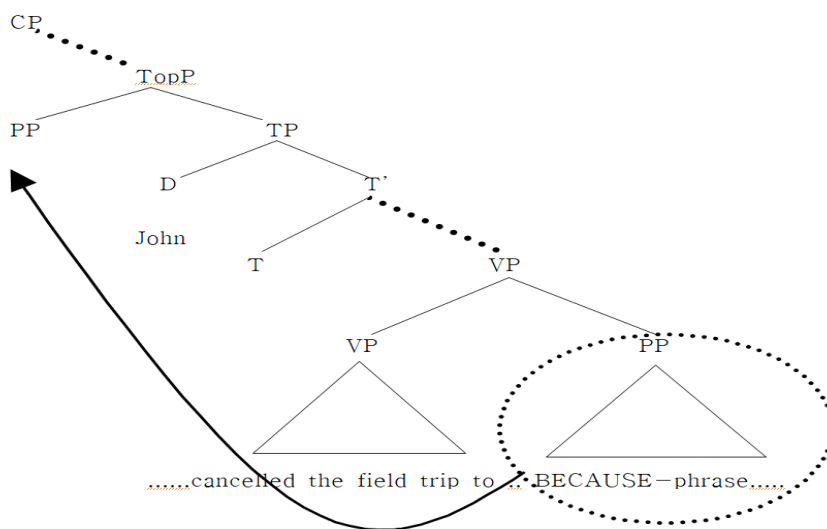
b.



*Because*-phrase as PP is right-adjoined to VP. Now, the S-initial adjunct of the same PP would be of the structure of (23b) in the above tree diagram.

(23) a. I cancelled my field trip to Arizona [*because...* ]

b.



Note that in the above tree diagram, the dotted line between VP and T-bar means that there are potentially some more projections, including vP, and the dotted line between TopP and CP also contains other left periphery projections such as FocP, which triggers the Auxiliary Inversion. Since the subordinate phrase under investigation does not trigger SAI from the main clause, the [Spec-TopP] is a feasible position.

Notice further that the *because*-phrase is right-adjoined, which means that the PP is an adjunct to the VP. The nature of the movement of PP to the [Spec-TopP], unlike movement to [Spec-FocP] does not trigger any syntactic phenomena at least in this particular process.

### 3.4 Binding Condition C and *because*-phrase as PP

In this context, we need to consider the Binding Condition C in the *because*-PP, since there are structural hierarchy issues in these tree diagrams. First consider the following:

(24) No Binding Violation

- a. Julie<sub>1</sub> will be late for the conference [unless she<sub>1</sub> hurries]
- b. John<sub>1</sub> couldn't attend the conference [because he<sub>1</sub> was ill]

(25) No Binding Condition Violation

- a. [Unless she<sub>1</sub> hurries], Julie<sub>1</sub> will be late for the conference
- b. [Because he<sub>1</sub> was ill], John<sub>1</sub> couldn't attend the conference

The examples (24)~(25) show that there is no Binding violation, since the fronted *unless-because* phrases containing *s/he* and the main clause *Julie/John*, each, have their own independent binding domains. Therefore, *Julie* can be coreferential with *she*, and *John* with *he*, respectively without violating the Binding Condition C assuming any version of the Binding Condition. However, if the *unless-because* phrases are in the final position, then the co-referentiality between *she* and *Julie* would be impossible.

(26) Binding Condition Violation

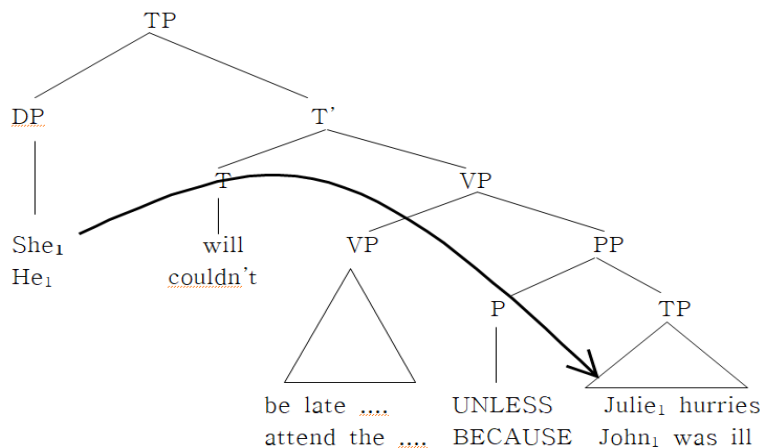
- a.\*She<sub>1</sub> will be late for the conference [unless Julie<sub>1</sub> hurries]
- b.\*She<sub>1</sub> couldn't finish the paper [because Mary<sub>1</sub> was ill]

Therefore, the referential contrasts between (24)–(25) and (26) indicate that the structural configuration of the PP clauses headed by *unless-because* at the S-final position is an adjunction to VP, whereas *unless-because* phrases are on the left periphery in the structure, the Topic Position.



(27) a. \*He<sub>1</sub> couldn't attend the conference because John<sub>1</sub> was ill

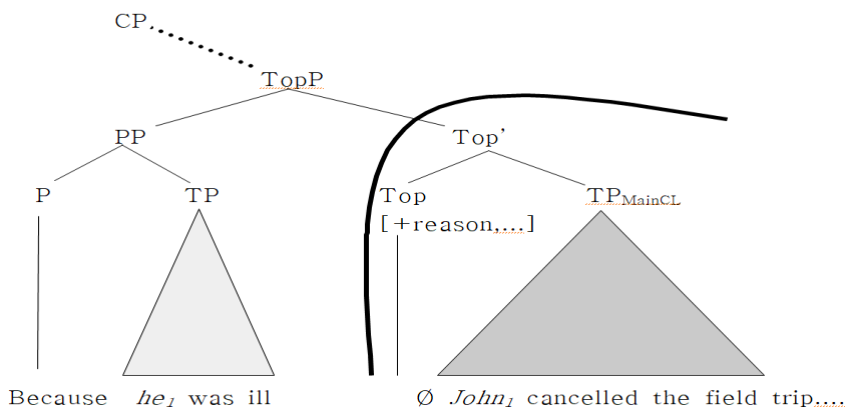
b.



The above tree diagram shows that *John*, R-exp is c-commanded and co-indexed, yielding a clean case of Binding Condition C violation. Thus, the ungrammaticality of the sentence (27a) is accounted for. On the other hand, if *because*-phrase is fronted to the S-initial position, the binding interpretation is allowed as (25a)–(25b).

(28) a. Because he<sub>1</sub> was ill, John<sub>1</sub> cancelled the field trip to Arizona.

b.

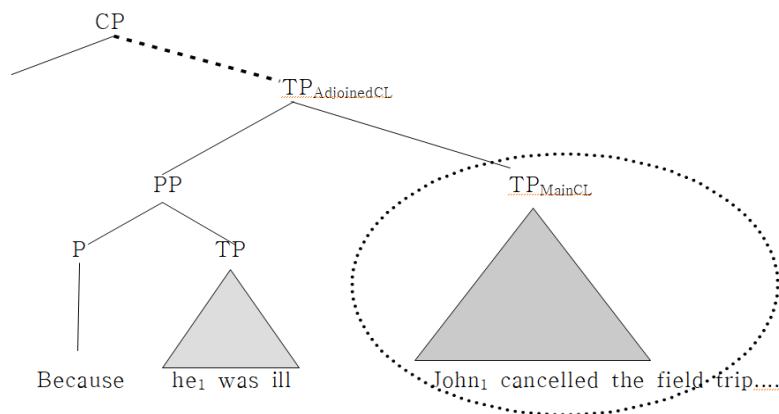


The example (28a), like (25a)–(25b), is grammatical under the coreferential interpretation between *he* and *John*. This coreferential reading can be easily captured if we allow that *because*-phrase has undergone Topicalization movement to the left

periphery of the TP.<sup>14</sup>

In passing, there is an alternative for Topicalization. Consider the following:

(29) An alternative for (28b)



Presumably, one may propose a P-marker of (28a) as an adjunction to TP as (29) shows. It is not clear whether (29) is any better or worse than (28b). Both may work fine in terms of the Binding Condition C effect in subordinate phrases as PP.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that the classifications by Pullum (2009a, 2009b, 2014) and H & P (2005, 2018) are not only viable but also less redundant and overlapping in the description of word-class grammar. In the defence of the *because*/subordinators as P, we have provided the internal and the external structures of *because*-phrase as a PP, along with some other traditional subordinators.

Many idiomatic expressions in the form of P + AP such as *for sure*, *for real*, and *as possible*, more extensively, expressions like *when necessary*, *if<sub>conditional</sub> necessary*,

<sup>14</sup> In this case, if the *because*-clause is fronted before the main clause, the *because*-clause and all other subordinate-clauses receive the same Topic interpretation. As for the relevant feature of the Topic, if the clause is concessive, headed by (*al*)*though*, or conditional, headed by *if<sub>conditional</sub>*, or temporal, headed by *while*, *when*, *as*, etc, then the Head, Topic would have the pertinent corresponding feature [+Concessive], [+Conditional], and [+Temporal], respectively etc.

*when possible, when necessary, when allowable, if possible, if reachable, if agreeable, as necessary, as much as possible, as possible as you can, as many as possible, as fast as possible, as fast as you can etc.* all receive a uniform and principled account and they are no longer idiosyncratic.<sup>15</sup>

The recent trends in the usage change of expressions like *because reasons*, *because useful*, and *because homework* reported in the American Dialect Society (2014) are easy to understand; the English language is shifting its usage towards that direction. It might be the case that these usage change or trend is just informal and colloquial. Nonetheless, if the definition of the category P is extended to allow any XP as its complement, then the present taxonomic confusion regarding subordinators, complementizers, and some adverbs is uniformly accounted for.

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<sup>15</sup> Hong & Chun (2018, in preparation) discuss the attainment of *because*-clauses in the writings of Korean learners of English.

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*Taxonomic disputes over the categorical  
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