



Title	A Note on Dialectal Variation in the Embedded Main Clause Phenomena in English
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Citation	OUPEL(Osaka University Papers in English Linguistics). 2017, 18, p. 67-81
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/67783
rights	
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A NOTE ON DIALECTAL VARIATION IN THE EMBEDDED MAIN CLAUSE PHENOMENA IN ENGLISH

1 INTRODUCTION

The Embedded Main Clause Phenomena (MCP) have been a very popular topic of research among researchers seeking the exact mechanism that underlies them. Many such attempts have been made by earlier researchers, but no decisive conclusion has yet been reached. Still, a common understanding has been reached regarding the MCP-permissible environment: the so-called non-factive environment. Non-factive environments are mostly constituted by matrix verbs belonging to one of the most classic classifications of main verbs, that of Hooper and Thompson (H&T) (1973). According to their view and that of their supporters, embedded MCP are observable with Class A, B, and E verbs.¹ What remains are Class C and D verbs, which are associated with factivity or non-assertiveness. These two classes have been ruled out as MCP-permissible environments in general cases cross-linguistically.

Of course, the subject of H&T's study was English, but other researchers, such as Maki et al. (1999), Miyagawa (2011), and Jiménez-Fernández & Miyagawa (2014) for Japanese and Viklund et al. (2010) and Hrafnbjargarson (2008) for Scandinavian languages, have shown that the basic trends are also observable in their respective languages, in terms of V2 phenomena, in particular.²

Recently, researchers have noticed that this is not the end of the story. There are cases that are incompatible with the simple factivity-based groupings, as explicitly stated by Hrafnbjargarson (2008) regarding Icelandic V2 phenomena and by Haegeman (2010, 2012) on English instances involving apparently factive verbs.

¹ I adopt the classifications of verbs that appeared in Hooper and Thompson (1973). Classes A and B are non-factive verbs, Classes C and D are factive verbs, and Class E includes semi-factive verbs. Traditionally, topicalizations can occur in embedded clauses when the matrix predicate belongs to Class A, B, or E.

² V2 or Verb second is frequently discussed in the literature. It is considered as an embedded MCP in Scandinavian languages.

Nonetheless, as I do not intend to pursue this specific phenomenon in other languages, this paper will be limited to topicalizations within embedded clauses in English, so no further mention of this phenomenon will be made in this paper.

Haegeman (2010, 2012) considered the usage of a factive verb in disguise, namely, *regret*. Earlier researchers, such as Kuno (1973), Miyagawa (2011), and Jiménez-Fernández & Miyagawa (2014), have often considered that Japanese also depends on the factivity of the complement clauses and C-head of complement clause types. I term their analyses correlation analyses. However, my previous studies of Japanese, Yamaguchi (2015a, b), revealed that this is not necessarily the case.³ There, it was pointed out that the problematic cases for the correlation analyses that rely solely on the factivity-based notion cannot sufficiently account for the data I have presented. Although their analyses are appealing, I proposed an alternative solution to the problems.

From still another perspective, problematic cases for the correlation analyses can also be found in features of English dialectal variation introduced in Maki et al. (1999). Putting aside their theoretical framework, Maki et al. introduce some simple token sentences as judged by their informants to make a very interesting suggestion. According to them, British English speakers (British English dialect) and American English speakers (American English dialect) react quite differently when it comes to the embedded MCP operation of topicalization.⁴ In fact, I would like to dig a bit deeper here along these lines. The next section will examine whether a viewpoint holding the existence of certain stark differences in the MCP operation between these broad dialects actually holds. Is it merely a trend only substantiated among their informants or can it be applied universally? As an initial approach to these questions, I conducted a study on the embedded MCP in British English, after which I also collected data from American English speakers to compare their similarities and differences, if any.

This paper is organized as follows. In Section Two, we will examine the relevant parts of Maki et al. (1999) as well as other earlier noteworthy studies. Section Three concerns this study's initial approach to certain dialectal characteristics in British English. We will then observe a tentative result obtainable from British English speakers. The outcome of a follow-up study of an American English dialect will be illustrated in Section Four. In the course of discussion, we will compare these two dialects and make some remarks about them. Section Five presents the conclusions. Future research prospects will be mentioned at the very end of this paper.

2 BACKGROUNDS

This section is intended to illustrate the relevant data and ideas of Maki et al. (1999), which in turn will be reevaluated in the later sections. I will then provide an overview of Haegeman's work, since her work is important in indicating a shift in meaning of the factive matrix verb in relation to the availability of the embedded

³ Previously, I confirmed that the presence of factivity in the embedded clause itself does not directly entail the unavailability of topicalizations or MCP in that environment in Japanese.

⁴ Maki et al. have demonstrated that American English speakers have a more restrictive attitude toward embedded MCP than British English speakers.

2.1 Maki et al. (1999)

Here follow some of their data that are crucial to my analysis.

- (1) a. John believes that this book, Mary read.
b. ok/*John regrets that this book, Mary read.
c. ok/*John believes the rumor that this book, Mary read.

According to Maki et al. (1999), topicalizations in the embedded clauses in (1a) are fine with both their British and American informants. The informants' judgements diverged regarding the topicalization in the complement of a factive verb, as in (1b), and in the complement of an NP, as in (1c). They report that American informants reject topicalization in such environments, while British informants rule them in without problem. They attributed this discrepancy in judgements to the L-markedness of the embedded clauses. Maki et al. (1999) explain that the complements of factive verbs are L-marked in British English, whereby the head movement of the INFL is licensed felicitously. Along the same line, this amounts to considering the complement of an NP to also constitute L-marked status, which is contrary to their original assumption, at least among their British informants.⁶ It seems that their story about the L-marked status of the complement clauses works to cover their specific data in order to capture the differences between the American dialect and their British dialect.⁷

⁵ They adopt the IP adjunction approach for topicalizations in general and do not posit Topic P or relevant fine-grained CP. Their IP adjunction approach is distinct from an approach employing a fine-grained Spec CP. Still, the distinctions between the two approaches are immaterial for the purpose of this paper and thus will not be discussed further here.

⁶ Recall that they assume that Complex NPs bear adjunct status in the beginning.

⁷ So far as their presented data are concerned, their story about the embedded MCP mechanism seems to fall out beautifully. Yet, if we consider the prediction of the exact environment for the embedded MCP licensing, there is room for debate. If adjuncts need to be excluded from this licensing environment, I do

Putting aside the legitimacy of adopting L-markedness in giving an account of the dialectal variations, the next questions to explore are probably as follows: “Does the distinction between this broader kind of dialects hold universally or is it simply a matter of trends?”; and “If there is actually a distinction, then how different might they be and why?”

Having said that, let us put our questions aside for now. There are two more crucial ideas we need to cover before moving to my observations in the next section.

2.2 *Haegeman (2010, 2012) and Miyagawa (2011)*

I will introduce another crucially relevant idea indicated by Haegeman (2010), the possibility of a meaning-shift in factive verbs. Interestingly, the exactly opposite move is suggested in Miyagawa (2011): Non-factive verbs behave like factive verbs. Thus, I shall illustrate both of these ideas in this subsection.

2.2.1 *Factive Verbs and Non-Factive Verbs in Disguise*

Aside from Maki et al., I mentioned in the introduction section that there are other reported cases that do not fit with the factive correlation analysis in English. Some of the most noteworthy examples can be found in Haegeman (2010, 2012) and Miyagawa (2011). I will provide their examples for ease of exposition.⁸

- (2) We regret that due to a funding shortage there will no longer be any drinks available at the bar for non-members.
- (3) I regret that those details, I cannot reveal to non-members.
(adapted from Haegeman 2010: 29)
- (4) I reported on the fact that Mary missed the meeting.
(adapted from Miyagawa 2011: 19)

Haegeman (2010), (2012) reported that a typical factive predicate like ‘*regret*’ sometimes allows embedded MCP as in (2), (3).

With respect to the problematic examples explored in Haegeman (2010), namely, (2) and (3), she resorts to focusing on the actual meaning delivered by these constructions. As she remarked, MCP is acceptable under a factive predicate when it is interpreted as delivering the meaning of a reporting verb or a speech act verb, which belongs to Class A, which is compatible with MCP.

In contrast, Miyagawa (2011) mentions the case in which a complement clause

not know how to explain the fact that MCP is reportedly sanctioned in the circumstantial concessive clauses.

Since I do not adopt their specific analysis, I will refrain from discussing this matter here.

⁸ Inspired by Miyagawa’s original example, I partially changed it and applied embedded topicalization to it.

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selected by a non-factive predicate apparently exhibits factivity. Note that a correlation approach does not predict the presence of factivity in the embedded clauses if they are selected by a non-factive predicate. If so, the factivity of the complement clause should not be decided by the non-factivity of the selecting predicate.

In this way, previous researchers' work leads us to conclude that contrary to the correlation approach, the factivity in the embedded clause and factivity of the selecting matrix predicate cannot be directly related, and thus the correlation approach is not sufficient in English.

If we pursue Haegeman's idea about this usage of the factive verb, we can predict that factive verbs should assume non-factivity in order to sanction MCP. In other words, all factive verbs are interpreted as non-factive verbs when they accept MCP. This leads to the aims of the next section's research on embedded MCP in British English. In the following section, I will demonstrate my preliminary observations concerning embedded MCP in British English. I intend to focus on the problematic aspects of analyses based solely on factivity by referring to several earlier researchers' notable contributions to this end.

3 A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE EMBEDDED MCP IN BRITISH ENGLISH

My preliminary study had two purposes. The first was to confirm or disconfirm the presence of the special behavior suggested in Maki et al. (1999), and the second was to test the above-mentioned prediction drawn from Haegeman's idea of special factive-verb use. To do so, I consulted four British English speakers as informants, most of them having a substantial background in linguistics. My informants are associated with the University of York and include one professor of linguistics, a graduate student and his wife, and another graduate student. The questionnaire-based consultations were conducted via e-mail correspondence.

As a consequence of this study, neither the prediction of Maki et al. about British dialects nor the prediction deduced from Haegeman's examples concerning the "reporting sense of a factive verb" was borne out perfectly, although they seem partially correct.

First, although my informants judged the sentences as somewhat acceptable, one of them mentioned that he would not use embedded topicalization outside of the linguistics testing environment. This means that embedded topicalization is a marked operation. The following examples, (5)–(9), are partial examples from this research.

3.1 Partial Testing Examples from My Token Sets

(Class A)

- (5) ✓ A John didn't report that this theory, Mary proposed
 ✓ B Actually, Mary did not propose this theory.

(Class B)

- (6) ✓ A John didn't believe that this theory, Mary proposed.
 ✓ B Actually, Mary did not propose this theory.

(Class D)

- (7) ✓ A John didn't regret that this theory, Mary proposed.
 # B Actually, Mary did not propose this theory.
 (8) ✓ A John didn't resent that this theory, Mary proposed.
 # B Actually, Mary did not propose this theory.

(Class E)

- (9) ✓ A John didn't find out that this theory, Mary proposed
 # B Actually, Mary did not propose this theory.

Each instance consists of A and B parts. A sentences are topicalized sentences. B sentences are continuing context sentences provided to measure the factivity of the previous sentences. When the continuation with a B sentence was perceived as deviant or contradictory with respect to the preceding sentence, speakers were asked to give a pound sign to B.

As a result, most of my informants agreed that embedded MCP are acceptable as shown in (5)–(9). However, the pound signs on B sentences in (7)–(9) indicate that they do sense the factivity of the complement CP of the A sentences. Importantly, (7A)–(9A) are cases of either factive or semi-factive verbs; indeed, one of my informants clearly stated that (7A)–(9A) sound rather awkward due to the topicalization. Hence, despite the fact that the embedded MCPs do receive felicitous judgements, that does not mean they are accepted equally. Therefore, unlike what is suggested in Maki et al. (1999), the embedded topicalizations in factive complements and non-factive complements sound different to British English speakers as well. Also, as far as (5)–(9) are concerned, in accepting an embedded MCP, a complement CP does not necessarily have to cancel or lose factivity in the embedded CP of the topicalized sentence.

With that said, let us examine Haegeman's actual examples in the next subsection.

3.2 *Is a Factive Verb Always Interpreted as a Speech Act Verb When Allowing Embedded MCP?*

Our second purpose in this research was to see if such a shift in the meaning of the

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factive verb is maintained, as Haegeman suggests: that is, a shift in meaning from Class D to Class A. Haegeman's examples, given earlier as (2) and (3), are re-presented as (10A) and (11A).

In (10A), an adverbial phrase is fronted in the embedded clause; in (11A), an argument is fronted in the embedded clause. They are both embedded MCP cases. Each A sentence is followed by the continuing context sentence B or B'. The B and B' sentences are presented to evaluate the existence of factivity in the embedded clauses in the relevant A sentence. When the continuations with the B or B' sentences are judged deviant or contradictory, speakers are asked to give a pound sign to that B or B' sentence. If this is the case, the complement CPs of the relevant preceding A sentences are presuppositional; in other words, the presupposition in the complement CP survives. In contrast, if the continuing B or B' sentence is taken as natural or non-contradictory, we may take these as instances of misunderstanding. In such cases, I decided that the complement CP of the preceding A sentence does not bear factivity or the presupposition was cancelled.

3.2.1 'regret that+adverbial fronting'

- (10) ✓A: We regret that due to a funding shortage there will no longer be any drinks available at the bar for non-members.

(Haegeman 2010:29)

Continuing Context

(#-✓)B: Actually, wine is available to all.

(#-✓)B': Actually, coffee and tea are available to all.

3.2.2 'regret that +argument fronting'

- (11) ✓A: I regret that those details, I cannot reveal to non-members.

(Haegeman: 2010: 29)

Continuing Context

(#-✓)B: Actually, you are allowed to reveal them to everyone concerned.

As a result, all my informants judged the sentences to be well-formed, but quite unexpectedly one of my informants still seemed to sense factivity in the complement clauses, though all the other informants judged them in accordance with what was predicted from Haegeman's examples: the disappearance of factive meaning in the factive predicate (or that the factivity in the embedded CP has been somehow cancelled). So far as my informants were concerned, it seems that the factivity in the complement clauses need not be eliminated when the embedded topicalization applies. In other words, Haegeman's suggestion may not be on the right track.

The next subsection covers our first purpose as well. Recall that Maki et al. (1999) reported that the nominal complements (or Complex NP) in British English constitute L-marked status, whereby topicalization is permissible. I examined whether the embedded topicalization in such an environment is really acceptable for my

informants. The next examples are based on what was provided in Miyagawa (2011:19).

3.3 Does the Speech Act Verb ‘Report (on)’ Take a Factive Complement?

3.3.1 ‘report on the fact that’+ will (future tense)

- (12) (?-*) A: I reported on the fact that the meeting_i, Mary will miss t_i.
 (Topicalized)
 (adapted from Miyagawa 2011:19)

Continuing Context

((#)-✓) B: Actually, Mary will come to the meeting.

3.3.2 ‘report on the fact that’+ -ed (past tense)

- (13) (?-*) A: I reported on the fact that the meeting_i, Mary missed t_i.
 (Topicalized)
 (adapted from Miyagawa 2011:19)

Continuing Context

((#)-✓) B: Actually, Mary did not miss the meeting.

The embedded topicalization is applied to each instance of (12)–(13). The preceding A sentences are divided into two types, in line with the tenses in the embedded clauses; namely, future and past tense. As usual, each of the A sentences is followed by a series of context sentences (B sentences). B sentences are expected to gauge the presence of factivity in the A sentences. If a B sentence uttered as a continuing context for the relevant A sentence can be taken as a felicitous continuation, I judge that the complement CP of that A sentence does not bear factivity or that the presupposition, if there is any, in the embedded CP has been cancelled. Conversely, if the same continuation is perceived as deviant or contradictory, then I determined that the complement CP is presuppositional or the presupposition in the complement CP survives.

Generally, the acceptability ratings for the embedded MCP in (12A)–(13A) were not so favorable as the ones given in (10A)–(11A). The result is that embedded topicalization in the nominal complement (or the complex NP type of the complement clauses) is significantly degraded compared to the embedded MCP in the complement clauses selected by factive verbs. The ratings for the (10A)–(11A) were “felicitous” or “✓,” while the ratings for (12A)–(13A) ranged from “?” to “*.” Hence, unlike what was reported in Maki et al. (1999), there is a clear acceptability distinction between the embedded MCP in complex NP type complements and the embedded MCP in simple clausal complements. If we take the position of Maki et al., it is not clear why such a distinction existed among British informants.

It is worthy of note that the variation of future vs past tense is meaningful at least

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to some people. For some, the future tense form received significantly higher acceptability than the past tense form within the nominal complement (Complex NP type). This is probably because in the future form the events in the complement clauses are not realized yet at the time of utterance, so that the presupposition can be cancelled more freely than in the past condition.

Though the number of informants in this preliminary research is quite small, it seems that what was mentioned in earlier research is not necessarily universally maintained. Thus, we must reconsider whether what is generally reported for the American dialect also holds. The next section concerns follow-up research on this aspect of dialectal variation in English.

4 FOLLOWING-UP ON THE EMBEDDED MCP IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

This section reports on my follow-up research. For this follow-up I consulted seven American English speakers: four undergraduates at University of California, Los Angeles, Berkley, and Irvine, a professor of linguistics at Osaka University, and two Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) working in my neighborhood. They cooperated in this study either as volunteers or as compensated participants. As with the preliminary research with my British informants, the study was conducted using a printed questionnaire on which they were asked to judge each token sentence. In most cases, we undertook these tasks face to face.

What is reported in this section replicates the research conducted with my British informants, so that comparison between the two dialects becomes clear.

4.1.1 The Embedded MCP in the Simplest Case

Let us start with the simplest case: Simple past variation. In this case, we simply substitute matrix verbs from Classes A, B, C, D, and E. The verbs used in this simple past context were as follows:

- (14) Class A: report, claim;
Class B: think, believe;
Class C: deny;
Class D: resent, regret
Class E: find out

For the sake of space, I will not present the whole list of tokens here, but simply list one of them. The readers can replace the bolded main verb with each of the verbs in (15).

4.1.2 A Sample token from the Token Sets: Simple Past Context

- (15) A: John **claimed** that this book, Mary read. (ClassA)
B: But Mary did not read this book.

As before, each token set is made up of two parts. A is to evaluate the availability of topicalizations, while B is meant to gauge the presence or absence of the presupposition in the complement clause of A-sentences.

As a result, quite surprisingly, five of the seven informants judged all the token sentences given above as acceptable, regardless of the type of the main verb. The remaining informants either judged all the cases as equally awkward regardless of the verbs or regard the factive verb cases and one of the Class A verb cases as awkward. Thus, in the most basic cases, like the embedded topicalizations presented in (1a)–(1b), most of my American Informants were quite permissive in their judgements.

As to the presence or absence of factivity, four of the seven informants did not feel awkwardness from any B sentence in this condition, which means that factivity is basically cancellable to them.

With respect to the remaining three informants, two informants generally perceived no awkwardness with B sentences except the Class E (*find out*) case, which means that they do find factivity to be retained with the Class E type. The other informant consistently sensed awkwardness in B with Class C and D verbs and one of the verbs from Class A (*report*). It might be the case that this person sensed factivity with verbs from Classes C, D, and A.

4.1.3 A Summary of This Subsection

What then can be said from this survey is that my American English speakers accepted embedded topicalizations just as my British English informants did, which is contrary to the reactions reported in the literature.

This suggests a new perspective that an embedded MCP is in itself a possible operation, regardless of the classifications of the matrix verbs. This holds for both American and British English speakers. Therefore, the supposed dialectal variation does not hold, at least in the simple case described in this subsection.

4.2 Regarding the Partial Testing Examples: (5)–(9)

When we turn to more complicated tokens, the identical token sets which were partially presented in (5)–(9) are employed again. Here, six out of seven American informants judged all instances as acceptable, and like the British informants they do seem to perceive factivity with Class D and E verbs. Only one informant judged all the instances of topicalization in (5)–(9) as “ungrammatical,” notwithstanding the fact that this informant judged the B sentence in conformity with other informants. Interestingly, two informants seem to sense an awkwardness in B sentences with Class A verbs, and one informant also sensed awkwardness/deviancy in the B sentence with Class B also, but as the same informant mentioned that this was simply a matter of wording, I do not think Class B is related to factivity in this case. The awkwardness regarding Class A verbs might have occurred for a similar reason.

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Therefore, my initial observations of the responses of the American informants reveal that what is suggested in Maki et al. (1999) should not be relegated to a dialectal difference. Rather, as far as my informants are concerned, there seems to be a uniform tendency and the differences in judgements might well be related to individual variation.

4.3 Discussion of the Embedded MCP in the Complex NP-Like Case (10)–(13) in American English

Here I will briefly discuss my American informants' reactions to cases like (10)–(13). The result was that five of the seven informants judged all of them as acceptable. For them, presuppositions in the embedded clauses of A sentences are cancellable. One informant sensed deviancy with the Complex NP type, and the other informant only judged the first, (10), as acceptable and all the rest as awkward/deviant. It seems that the cancellability of presuppositions or the felicity of context sentences is one thing and the acceptability of embedded topicalizations is another for this informant, because this person judged (10) as acceptable regardless of the deviance perceived in the context.

4.3.1 A Short Summary of This Subsection

In a nutshell, at least some American informants exhibit a similar reaction to the embedded MCP in the complex NP-type as the British informants did. In other words, British and American English dialects may not be as different as earlier researchers have claimed.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions from the Preliminary Research on British English

To recapitulate, consultations with informants revealed that the embedded MCP is a marked option, but nevertheless is an acceptable operation. Moreover, what is conventionally reported about the classifications of the matrix predicates associated with the embedded MCP in terms of dialects should rather be considered a trend. A preliminary study with my British informants suggests that the degree of the felicity might vary between acceptable sentences. For instance, for some, Class B and Class A verbs are more acceptable than Class E and Class D verbs in British English, though they are all acceptable.

Note that we re-examined Haegeman's examples in the grounding section. I admit that there may be some cases in which a matrix Class D verb undergoes a shift in

meaning, and in some of these cases presuppositions are cancelled accordingly. Nevertheless, this is not a sufficient condition for the sentence to accept an embedded MCP. Recall that my British informants accept an embedded MCP despite the fact that they consistently perceived the presence of presupposition in the embedded clauses in (5)–(9).

The embedded MCP are generally permissible, notwithstanding the presence of factivity in the complement clauses. It also appears that the presence of factivity in the embedded clause negatively affects the acceptability, though moderately. In other words, the possible damage to felicity deriving from the presence of factivity is not so critical as to render the sentence ungrammatical, but it is nevertheless present, at least for some British English speakers.

Rather, contrary to earlier research, considerable damage to the felicity of the embedded MCP can be found with the Complex NP types. Thus, when it comes to disallowing MCP, this has more to do with the nominal complements than with factivity in the embedded clauses.

Thus, an embedded MCP is generally acceptable in British English, except for the relatively recalcitrant Complex NP types. Factivity of the complement clause does not constitute a fatal factor disallowing the embedded MCP in any case.

Conclusions from the Follow-Up Study of American English

Summarizing the follow-up study of American English, a rather startling consequence was found. Firstly, the consultations with my American informants also revealed that the embedded topicalization itself is a marked option. (Several of them mentioned that my token sentences sounded like Yoda, a character in the Star Wars movies.) Secondly, though a marked option, an embedded MCP was generally accepted throughout by most of my informants irrespective of the verb classes.

As to the perceptible deviance arising from the surviving factivity in the complement clauses of the token sentences, American informants exhibit quite an intriguing tendency. They tend to accommodate/cancel what is presupposed in the complement clauses even in a normally non-cancelling situation like those of the simple past cases. Several of them commented that they do sense presupposition in the embedded clauses in the token, but owing to the presence of “actually” in the B sentence, they do not feel the string as contradictory. Their comments indicate that they accommodate the presupposition so that the conversation goes through.

As far as the initial consultation with my American informants is concerned, it seems that, at least for some Americans, presuppositions in the test forms are cancellable or defeasible. Nevertheless, they tend to perceive factivity more often with Class C, D, and E verbs than with other classes, which is in line with conventional observations.

It is noteworthy, contrary to what is reported in Maki et al. (1999), that some of my American informants consistently exhibit more admissible reactions to the MCP operation in nominal complements (Complex NP type). Though the judgements vary from one speaker to another, some also seem to show a tendency similar to that of

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British English speakers. For this type of individual, the judgements of complex NP complements are significantly degraded or deviant compared to those elicited for simple clausal complements.

Final Conclusions

In short, as far as the very simple cases which we observed in this paper are concerned, the differences in reactions toward the embedded MCP between British and American English speakers are not so obvious as conventional researchers claim. There may be informants who are congenial to what is reported in the literature, but at least there are also informants who disagree with their patterns, like my American informants.

Thus, in my opinion, what is reported in the literature regarding the two dialects is simply a trend or tendency subject to individual variation. However, as an overall trend both American and British informants accept embedded MCP regardless of there being a possible remaining presupposition in the embedded clauses. Also, at least for some of them, it was the complex NP type of complement and not the factivity itself that inflicted a fatal blow to the acceptability judgements of the embedded MCP.

Summary of Conclusions

- Overall, the embedded MCP is possible: American English and British English are not so different. (The precursors' dialectal categorizations may not be so substantial.)
- Factivity is not a deciding factor in disallowing the embedded MCP. (Factivity-based correlation analyses do not apply.)
- The Complex NP type may constitute a fatal blow to sanctioning the embedded MCP.

Further Research Prospects

This paper revealed that the supposedly distinct dialects are not so different. Hence, a more comprehensive, cross-dialectal look at the embedded MCP should be pursued over the conventional view. My next step is to examine the embedded MCP, in a sense, across dialectal borders.

Another point that merits attention is some possible updates in the token sets and contexts. Since the scope of this study is embedded topicalization, it is inevitable that the token sentences will have an artificial flavor. Incidentally, my token sentences

seem to remind readers of Yoda. As mentioned earlier, some of my informants actually stated this during consultations.

Nevertheless, I generally elicited permissive reactions from my informants to the presented tokens. It might be the case that they became more accustomed to the tokens through repeated exposure to the almost identical token sentences. Therefore, they might have given more permissible judgements to the “familiar” token sentences than they would normally give to such an example that they encountered for the first time.

However, the context of this paper may not be natural. Hence, at the very least, tokens should be placed in a context more easily accessible for the informants so that their judgements may be made without too much effort. Of course, the familiarity of the token sentences must also be controlled so as to reduce possible noise in their judgements in general. My next paper is meant to overcome these issues in an attempt to extract informants’ linguistic intuitions more naturally. I also intend to investigate cases involving the Complex NP type in more detail in order to detect the source of the relatively strong degradation in acceptability judgements that is perceivable with some informants.

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