

## Research Article

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# Insubordinate *if*-clauses in FDG: Degrees of independence

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**Abstract:** The so-called insubordinate clauses have received an increasing amount of attention in recent years in a wide variety of typologically different languages and from different analytical perspectives. This article concerns itself with one particular type of insubordination, namely insubordinate *if*-clauses (e.g. *If you'll just come next door, if you hadn't noticed, if I may ask*). So far, the extensive literature on these clauses has concentrated mainly on their discourse-pragmatic functions, their degree of autonomy, and their degree of conventionalization. Relatively little work has been done on the formal (syntactic and prosodic) features of these clauses, nor on the relationship between these formal features and the functions they perform. The aim of this article is to investigate insubordinate *if*-clauses from the perspective of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG) in order to establish a taxonomy reflecting (and linking) their functional and formal properties. It is argued that FDG is ideally suited for this task as (i) it takes a function-to-form approach; (ii) it does not take the clause or sentence as its basic unit of analysis, but rather the (independent or subsidiary) Discourse Act; and (iii) it recognizes a range of interpersonal and representational modifiers. The basis for the classification proposed is corpus data from a range of corpora of spoken and written English and Dutch.

**Keywords:** insubordination, *if*-clauses, interpersonal modifiers, degrees of autonomy, formulaic expressions

## 1 Introduction

The past decade or so has witnessed an increasing interest in so-called insubordinate clauses in a wide variety of typologically different languages and from different analytical perspectives (e.g. Evans 2007, Evans and Watanabe 2016, Beijering et al. 2019). What makes insubordination so intriguing is its ambivalent appearance, which combines subordinate structure with main clause function. This dual nature is aptly summarized in the generally adopted definition by Evans: “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007, 367). Insubordinate clauses are thus subordinate in terms of their structure, but akin to independent main clauses in terms of their use, as illustrated by the following examples:

- (1) *If you'll just come next door.* (ICE-GB:s1a-089-159)
- (2) Uhm and this is actually quite a good quality tent <,> *if you hadn't noticed* <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-047-024)
- (3) A: Uh uh it's obligatory is it to have something in a company report  
B: *If you've got more than a hundred in the uh workforce* (ICE-GB:s1b-062-138)

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Various types of autonomous and semi-autonomous insubordinate clauses have been identified in the literature. The insubordinate constructions originally discussed by Evans (2007, 380) are typically fully autonomous or self-contained, as illustrated by the example in (1). In addition, a pragmatic dependency has been noted by D’Hertefelt and Verstraete (2014), who distinguish two types of Swedish and Danish *at(t)* constructions: (i) expressives, which can stand alone, and (ii) elaboratives, which elaborate on something that was said before. This latter type, illustrated with an English *if*-clause in (2), is thus pragmatically dependent on the preceding co-text. A further type of dependency has been identified in dyadically dependent clauses, *i.e.* clauses in spontaneous interaction which can be construed as projections of a complement-taking predicate in a previous turn (Gras 2016, Sansiñena 2015, Sansiñena et al. 2015, Gras and Sansiñena 2015). A typical example of such a co-constructed complex sentence in interactive discourse is given in (3), which we do not consider a case of insubordination, but subsume under subordinate conditional clauses (Section 4.2).

The aim of this article is to investigate insubordinate *if*-clauses from the perspective of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG) with a view to establishing a taxonomy of their formal and functional subtypes. It will be argued that whereas traditional, sentence-based grammar frameworks are ill-equipped to deal with the ambivalent nature of these clauses, FDG is ideally suited for this task, given that it does not take the clause or sentence as its basic unit of analysis and aims to capture the whole range of formal and functional distinctions (and their interactions) in a single model. The classification proposed here is based on data from a number of corpora of English and Dutch, namely the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB, Nelson et al. 2002), the British National Corpus (BYU-BNC, Davies 2004-), the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA, Davies 2008-), the Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands (CHN; corpus of contemporary Dutch), and the Corpus Gesproken Nederlands (CGN; corpus of spoken Dutch).

The article is structured in the following way. Section 2 first provides a brief introduction to some of the pertinent issues discussed in connection with insubordination more generally, while Section 3 offers an overview of previous studies of insubordinate *if*-clauses. Section 4 explains some basic concepts of FDG relevant to the analysis. Section 5, then, presents the taxonomy of insubordinate *if*-clauses. Here, two types of insubordinate *if*-clauses are identified *viz.* Independent Discourse Acts (Section 5.1) and Subsidiary Discourse Acts (Section 5.2), as well as an intermediate category between complete insubordination and subordination, that of interpersonal modifiers (Section 5.3). Section 6 offers a brief conclusion.

## 2 Main issues in the treatment of insubordination

### 2.1 How to account for an “unruly” category?

As mentioned before, insubordinate clauses present a challenge for grammatical representation. Their formal features (*e.g.* presence of a subordinator, subordinate-clause word order) signal subordination, while their syntactic independence suggests main clause status. It is this Janus-like nature that makes them live up to the double-meaning of the term “insubordination” as “unruly” constructions which are difficult to account for in grammar.

Not surprisingly, therefore, insubordinate clauses were either ignored in earlier linguistic work or marginalized as anomalies. Quirk et al. (1985, 841–3), for instance, classify insubordinate clauses as so-called “irregular sentences” on account of their “not conform[ing] to the regular patterns of clause structures” (Quirk et al. 1985, 838). Similarly, Huddleston (2002, 944) includes them in the category of “minor clause types,” which comprises “a number of main clause constructions that do not belong to any of the major clause types.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a similar vein Stirling (1998, 289) identifies insubordinate *if*-clauses as “minor sentence types.”

Another way of dealing with insubordinate clauses in the grammatical literature is to treat them simply as performance features which involve ellipsis. The problem with ellipsis-based accounts is, however, that the missing matrix clause is not always fully and unambiguously recoverable from the context (as shown, e.g. for *if*-clauses by Stirling 1998, Lombardi Vallauri 2004, Mato-Míguez 2014a,b). Moreover, an ellipsis approach fails to account for cases where the subordinate clause has a complete (*i.e.* terminal) prosodic contour (e.g. Schwenter 2016, Elvira-García et al. 2017), has its own illocutionary force, and shows structural signs typical of the main clause, such as the ability to coordinate with another main clause or the ability to take a subordinate clause as its dependent (e.g. Mato-Míguez 2014a,b). Features such as these suggest that we are not dealing with incomplete structures which are the result of performance “accidents,” but rather with deliberately produced and complete constructions.

## 2.2 Distinguishing types of insubordination

As a typologically widespread phenomenon which potentially involves the whole range of subordinate clause types, insubordination encompasses a number of different forms and functions. In terms of form, it is possible to distinguish different types of subordinate features, such as infinitive, participial, or subjunctive inflections of the verb, subordinate word order, as well as different types of subordinators. In terms of function, Evans (2007), for instance, has identified a wide range of options which include interpersonal control (e.g. warnings and requests), modal meaning (e.g. epistemic, evidential, deontic, exclamation, and evaluation), and signalling presupposed material (e.g. negation, contrast, and reiteration). Despite the range of pragmatic possibilities offered by this form, the functions of insubordination are still relatively constrained in that they typically involve the expression of interpersonal relations such as conveying speaker attitudes and the management of speaker–hearer interactions (e.g. Van linden and Van de Velde 2014, 228, Sansiñena et al. 2015, 16, Heine et al. 2016, Martínez Caro and Alba-Juez 2021).

Another parameter for distinguishing different types of insubordination is an expression’s degree of autonomy or independence from the co-text. The possibilities here range from completely autonomous to semi-autonomous insubordinate clauses (cf., e.g. Kaltenböck 2019). D’Hertefelt and Verstraete (2014), for instance, distinguish two types of Swedish and Danish *at(t)* constructions: (i) expressives, which are fairly autonomous, and (ii) elaboratives, which elaborate on something that was said before by the same speaker or a different one and as such are pragmatically dependent. They argue that only the former are cases of insubordination proper, while the latter are identified as cases of dependency shift. Similarly, Verstraete et al. (2012) identify the type of “discursive insubordination,” which is used to expand on an utterance from the preceding discourse. An even wider scope of dependency has been observed by Mithun (2008) in her study of Navajo and Yup’ik markers, which operate over larger stretches of discourse. Yet another type of pragmatic dependency can be found in dyadically dependent insubordinations (Gras 2016, Sansiñena 2015, Sansiñena et al. 2015, Gras and Sansiñena 2015), which can be analysed as subordinate clauses which relate to the main clause in a previous turn (cf. Kaltenböck 2019). These cases have also been referred to as “collaborative insubordinations” (Hilpert 2015).

Finally, insubordinate structures can also be distinguished in terms of their degree of conventionalization and fixation (e.g. Heine et al. 2016; Section 3). While most insubordinations can be considered as constructionalized at least to some extent (*i.e.* being compositional but having schematic structure and function with some degree of fixation of morphosyntax and prosody; e.g. *If you come over here, If only he wouldn’t say that*), some have developed into even more formulaic structures (*i.e.* non-compositional and fairly invariable units; e.g. *if you will, if I may, if you don’t mind*). At the other end of the spectrum we find what has been called “instantaneous insubordination” (Heine et al. 2016), that is, instances that are felt to be elliptic with their meaning deriving only from their link to the context.

Insubordination thus does not represent a uniform, monolithic category but is marked by considerable variation in its structure, discourse function as well as degree of autonomy and conventionalization.

Section 3 gives an overview of the different taxonomies proposed for insubordinate *if*-clauses in the literature.

### 3 Previous studies of insubordinate *if*-clauses

Conditional clauses are among the formal types of insubordination that have received most attention in the literature. This is probably due to their fairly ubiquitous nature, being attested in a range of different languages. They have been discussed, for instance, for Spanish (independent *si*-clauses; e.g. Schwenter (1996, 1999); also Almela Pérez (1985), Montolío (1999), Gras (2011)), for Italian (“ipotetiche sospese” and “free conditionals”; e.g. Lombardi Vallauri (2003, 2004, 2010)), for German (“isolierte *wenn*-Sätze,” Buscha (1976); “selbstständige Verb-Letzt-Sätze,” Oppenrieder (1989)), for Finnish (*jos* “if”-conditional clauses, Laury (2012), also Lindström et al. (2016, 2019)), for Swedish (e.g. Laury et al. 2013), and for Dutch (e.g. Boogaart and Verheij 2013). A detailed overview of their use in Germanic languages is provided by D’Hertefelt (2018), who investigates the functions of “independent conditional clauses” in English, Dutch, German, Swedish, Danish, and Icelandic.

English insubordinate *if*-clauses are discussed in several studies and taxonomies of conditionals, although not always under the heading of insubordination. One of the first to draw attention to the clause-external status of some uses of subordinate clauses, including conditionals, was Rutherford (1970), who juxtaposes the following two sentences: (4) an ordinary *if*-clause with the meaning “if I interfere in the wedding plans” and (5) an extra-clausal (i.e. insubordinate) clause, suggesting that the speaker is determined to block the marriage (cf. also Hooper and Thompson 1973).

- (4) Mary won’t marry John if I have anything to say about it.
- (5) Mary won’t marry John, if I have anything to say about it.

Probably the first in-depth analysis of insubordinate conditional clauses is the one by Haegeman (1984), who refers to them variously as “pragmatic conditionals,” “peripheral *if*-clauses,” “speech-act conditionals,” or “utterance-conditionals.” Typical examples of this type, where “the *if*-clause provides some motivation for the utterance” (Haegeman 1984, 487), are given in (6)–(9).

- (6) They thought there was something structurally wrong with it, the rear wall, *if you remember* (SEU<sup>2</sup>; Haegeman 1984, 486)
- (7) They only live in a quite small semidetached house, but they’ve got a lot of nice things, *if you know what I mean* (SEU; Haegeman 1984, 486)
- (8) *If you like the country so much*, why do you work in London? (E.J. Howard, *After Julius*; Haegeman 1984, 486)
- (9) *If you’re hungry*, there’s food in the fridge. (Haegeman 1984, 486)

Examples such as these are identified as S”-complements (i.e. complements attached to S-double-bar level rather than S-level as in the case of central *if*-clauses) with the function of providing “explicit guidance as to how the main proposition should be processed,” more specifically expressing “conditions on the relevance of the main proposition” (Haegeman 1984, 500). In a later publication, Haegeman (2003) expands on the topic, this time under the label of “premise-conditionals.” These are analysed as containing a complete Complementizer Phrase similar to that of independent root clauses (Haegeman 2003, 330–1), with the associated “matrix clause” being appropriately renamed as “associated clause” (Haegeman 2003, 318). Functionally, premise conditionals have their own independent illocutionary force and structure

<sup>2</sup> SEU refers to the Survey of English Usage corpus.

discourse in the sense that they make “manifest a context for the proposition in the associated clause” (Haegeman 2003, 336).

In their text-based study of spoken conditionals, Ford and Thompson (1986, 365) identify a total of 7% of so-called “polite directives,” which typically occur without a corresponding consequent clause. Similarly, Ford (1993, 49–50) recognizes the existence of *if*-clauses without a main clause expressing an offer that is contingent on the hearer’s choice, as in (10).

- (10) Well *if you want me (to) give you a ring tomorrow morning*. (Ford 1993, 50)

In a later study, Ford (1997, 401–5) identifies the function of these independent *if*-clauses as “proposing some action on the part of the addressee” (Ford 1997, 401) in the form of directives and offers.

Eilfort (1987, 56–8) discusses “peripheral conditionals” such as the ones in (11)–(14).

- (11) *If you need me*, I’ll be at Finster’s house.  
 (12) *If it’s not too much trouble*, please scratch a little lower and to the right.  
 (13) *If you’re so smart*, who was Chester A. Arthur’s vice-president?  
 (14) *If I don’t see you before you leave*, have a nice vacation!

Drawing on Geis and Zhang (1986), he argues that such “peripheral conditionals” differ from “central” ones in being metalinguistic. As such they are outside the scope of the speech act of the consequent (apodosis/main clause) but, instead, state felicity conditions for that speech act.

One of the first detailed corpus-based studies is Stirling (1998), who investigates what she calls “isolated *if*-clauses” in conversational Australian English and Scottish English. Two distinct functions are identified, namely directives, as in (15), and optatives, as in (16).

- (15) *If you’d like to move your head a little*. (Stirling 1998, 278)  
 (16) *If only Miss Hawkins would get a job[...]* (Stirling 1998, 286)

Dancygier (1998, 86–109; Dancygier and Sweetser 2005), investigating the relations between the clauses in conditional constructions, identifies in addition to sequentiality and causality also three types that qualify as extra-clausal, insubordinate uses, namely, epistemic/inferential relations (as in (17)), speech act relations (as in (18)), and metatextual relations (as in (19)). The latter two are grouped together under “conversational conditionals,” with speech act conditionals typically occurring sentence-initially and metatextual conditionals typically sentence-finally (Dancygier 1998, 105–6).

- (17) *If they left at nine*, they have arrived home by now. (Dancygier 1998, 87)  
 (18) *If I may ask*, where were you last night? (Dancygier 1998, 89)  
 (19) Grandma is feeling lousy, *if I may put it that way*. (Dancygier 1998, 104)

Insubordinate *if*-clauses also figure in Declerck and Reed’s (2001) elaborate taxonomy of conditional clauses, particularly under the category of “Covert-Q conditional” (where Q stands for the main clause [apodosis] and P for the *if*-clause [protasis]). Typical examples belonging to this type are the following (Declerck and Reed 2001, 383–9):

- (20) “Does your dog bite?” – “*If you tease her*.”  
 [Q-clause deleted to avoid repetition]  
 (21) “Each of the attendants has a key to the wall-safe where we keep, the keys to all the cabinets and drawers and so on.” – So, *if he took a fancy to one of your shrunken heads?*  
 [Case-specifying-P type; cf. *what if...*]

- (22) *If only she would listen to me!*  
[Expressing a wish with *if only*]
- (23) “I will be happy when she comes.” – “*IF she comes.*”  
[Presupposition-evaluation Q-less P-clause, signalling doubt or reservation]
- (24) Christ, *if you add up what she gets an hour.*  
[Q-less conditions as indignant exclamations]
- (25) *If the gentleman would move to the smoking-room now?*  
[Q-less *if*-clauses used for weak manipulation: polite directive or suggestion]
- (26) “She’ll be here by ten.” – “*If you say so.*”  
[*If you say so*]
- (27) *If you have a lump sum to invest?*  
[Q-less *if*-clauses as independent questions]
- (28) Well *if it isn’t the manager himself!*  
[Exclamations of surprise]
- (29) *If the lights go out*, I have candles in the cupboard.  
[Pseudo-Q conditionals, where the real Q-clause is covert, e.g. ...*that won’t be a problem because I have candles in this cupboard*]

Another relevant category is Declerck and Reed’s (2001, 389) “Reduced-P conditionals” (i.e. elliptic *if*-clauses) such as *If any, if necessary, if true*.

Panther and Thornburg (2003) approach independent *if*-clauses from a cognitive perspective of metonymic inferencing and identify the following uses: (i) deontic function (i.e. directives, offers, and wishes), (ii) expressive function, which conveys “a strong emotional attitude with regard to some state of affairs” (Panther and Thornburg 2003, 139), and (iii) epistemic function. The latter two functions are illustrated in (30) and (31), respectively.

- (30) Why *if it isn’t Susan!* (Panther and Thornburg 2003, 139)
- (31) So it had been chance that saved the organisation. *If Rickie Oppenheimer hadn’t picked up the wrong valise.* (Panther and Thornburg 2003, 142)

In his discussion of constructional and categorical mismatch in syntax and semantics, Yuasa (2005) focuses on the so-called performative adverbial clauses, which include performative *if*-clauses such as *There’s some water, if you’re thirsty*. They are identified as performing their own speech act and displaying a number of further independent clause properties (Yuasa 2005, 112–6).

More recently, Mato-Míguez (2014a,b) has investigated “isolated *if*-clauses” in a corpus of contemporary spoken British English and spoken American English. Functionally they are identified as having the illocutionary force of polite requests, directives, or wishes. Similarly, Kaltenböck (2016), based on a corpus analysis of spoken British English data, shows that insubordinate *if*-clauses have highly specialized functions and fall into two main categories: performatives and elaboratives. The former include directives, optatives, and exclamatives, while the latter express some elaboration of a previous utterance and as such are pragmatically linked to the preceding context.

Taking a somewhat wider view, Lastres-López (2019, 2020) discusses *if*-constructions more generally, distinguishing between ideational, interpersonal, and textual uses and identifying a number of specific pragmatic functions for interpersonal *if*-constructions (e.g. epistemic, evaluation, politeness).



Diachronically, a path of pragmaticalization is suggested from “ideational” to “interpersonal/textual” to insubordination and pragmatic marker as the final stage.

D’Hertefelt (2018), finally, provides a detailed typology of independent conditional clauses in a number of Germanic languages, including English. The functional categories identified are deontic, evaluative, assertive, argumentative, reasoning, and post-modifying constructions. Deontic constructions are subdivided into “uncontrolled” (*i.e.* wishes), as in (32), and “controlled” (*i.e.* requests, threats; offers, suggestions), as in (33).

(32) Oh, *if I could only make him understand!* (D’Hertefelt 2018, 75)

(33) *If you could shut the door please?* (D’Hertefelt 2018, 88)

Evaluative constructions evaluate a particular state of affairs as remarkable, negative, or absurd. In (34), for instance, the *if*-clause is used “to evaluate a given fact (‘apparently one can’t even pass an opinion’) as absurd” (D’Hertefelt 2018, 107).

(34) I was only tellin’ you how the whole thing looked to me. *If a person can’t pass an opinion[...]*  
(D’Hertefelt 2018, 106)

Assertive constructions are used to assert that something is the case, as in (35).

(35) Well well, *if it isn’t the first lady of the American Theatre* (D’Hertefelt 2018, 119).

Argumentative constructions serve to justify something that was said in the preceding discourse (D’Hertefelt 2018, 129), as in (36).

(36) [Forum post: received the wrong watch] Thanks guys for all the kind words. I knew you’d understand. *If at least it had been an interesting model or one that I wanted.* (D’Hertefelt 2018, 126)

Reasoning constructions form the starting point for an invited line of reasoning (D’Hertefelt 2018, 140), as illustrated in (37).

(37) Farland summed up. Quite fair to hold out on Winter. It seems he’s keeping things back. *If he knows about the knife... And if he knows that Wally did attack the girl[...]* (Panther and Thornburg 2003, 143)

From this overview, we can see that, although the individual studies vary in their terminology or focus of interest, there is considerable consensus on a number of points: Syntactically, insubordinate *if*-clauses are either stand-alone (*i.e.* lacking an explicit matrix clause) or syntactically independent from an associated clause (*i.e.* extra-clausal). They may, however, be pragmatically linked to the associated clause in a number of ways, expressing for instance elaborative, evaluative, epistemic, speech act, or metatextual relations. Functionally, they are identified as having their own illocution, with a wide range of functions having been identified: *e.g.* directive, optative, request, offer, elaborative, evaluative, expressive, and assertive.

It should be noted that not all previous studies of “independent” *if*-clauses necessarily subsume them under the category of insubordination. D’Hertefelt (2018, 175–9, cf. also D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014), for instance, adopts a narrow definition of insubordination and argues for a classification of pragmatically dependent *if*-clauses (“post-modifying *if*-clauses”) as cases of “dependency shift” (cf. Günthner 1996) rather than insubordination, which is thought to reflect their probable diachronic development. In the present study, which leaves aside historical considerations, such pragmatically dependent *if*-clauses are still included under insubordination in an attempt to provide comprehensive coverage of the phenomenon while at the same time acknowledging degrees of gradience from prototypical to less prototypical.

In the next section, we will build on and expand the classifications from previous studies outlined earlier, using the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar. The most central case of insubordination identified is that of an Independent Discourse Act, which is syntactically, semantically, prosodically, and pragmatically independent, and may be formulaic (lexical) or non-formulaic, each with its own illocution. Another type identified is that of a pragmatically dependent *if*-clause, the Subsidiary Discourse Act, which can have various functions with regard to the associated Nuclear Discourse Act, such as expressing an Orientation, Motivation, Clarification, or Afterthought. Finally, we also identify a borderline case of insubordination, which so far has gone unnoticed: a semantically independent but syntactically and prosodically integrated *if*-clause functioning as an interpersonal modifier.

## 4 Relevant features of FDG

### 4.1 Some general features

FDG is a functional theory in that it views language first and foremost as a means of communication and regards linguistic form as emerging from communicative function. More specifically, FDG takes a “form-oriented ‘function-to-form’ approach” to language analysis (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 39). It is “function-to-form” in that it takes as its input a speaker’s communicative intentions, which the grammar subsequently translates into the appropriate linguistic form. It is “form-oriented” in the sense that it only considers those aspects of meaning that are systematically reflected in the morphosyntactic and/or phonological form of an utterance.

One of the distinctive features of FDG is that it does not take the clause or the sentence (*i.e.* a formal category) as its basic unit of analysis, but the Discourse Act, a functional category (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 3–4). Discourse Acts, defined as the “smallest identifiable units of communicative behaviour” (Kroon 1995, 65), consist of (maximally) four other interpersonal units: an Illocution (F), the Speech Participants ( $P_1$  and  $P_2$ , representing the Speaker and the Addressee), and a Communicated Content (C), which “contains the totality of what the Speaker wishes to evoke in his/her communication with the Addressee” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 87). This Communicated Content is made up of one or more Subacts evoking either referents (Subacts of Reference, R) or properties (Subacts of Ascription, T). Each of these units (or layers) is provided with a slot for operators and modifiers, providing additional grammatical and lexical information, respectively, about the unit in question. Some examples are given in the following, where examples (38b) and (39b) provide (simplified) representations of the sentences in (38a) and (39a), respectively:

- (38) a. Holiday accommodation understandably experiences considerable wear and tear (BYU-BNC, advert)  
 b. ( $A_I$ : [ $(F_I$ : DECL ( $F_I$ )) ( $P_I$ )<sub>S</sub> ( $P_I$ )<sub>A</sub> ( $C_I$ : [ $(T_I$ ) ( $R_I$ ) ( $R_I$ )] ( $C_I$ ): understandably ( $C_I$ ))] ( $A_I$ ))
- (39) a. I frankly don’t care what these scientists are out to prove (BYU-BNC, religion)  
 b. ( $A_I$ : [ $(F_I$ : DECL ( $F_I$ ): frankly ( $F_I$ )) ( $P_I$ )<sub>S</sub> ( $P_I$ )<sub>A</sub> ( $C_I$ : [ $(T_I$ ) ( $R_I$ ) ( $R_I$ )] ( $C_I$ ))] ( $A_I$ ))

In (38b), we find a declarative Discourse Act ( $A_I$ ) containing a Communicated Content ( $C_I$ ) which, in turn, consists of two Subacts of Reference (evoking the entities described as *holiday accommodation* ( $R_I$ ) and *considerable wear and tear* ( $R_I$ )), and a Subact of Ascription ( $T_I$ ) (evoking the property “experience”). The Communicated Content as a whole is modified by the attitudinal adverb *understandably*. In (39b), we likewise have a Communicated Content consisting of two Subacts of Reference and a Subact of Ascription (expressed as *I, what these scientists are out to prove* and *care*, respectively). In addition, the adverb *frankly*



is analysed as a modifier of the Illocution (indicating that the Speaker is *frank* in presenting the Communicated Content as a declarative).

Although FDG does not require there to be a one-to-one relationship between units at different levels of analysis (e.g. Hengeveld 2011, Leufkens 2015, García Velasco 2017, Contreras-García and Velasco 2021), certain default relations can be identified. Thus, Communicated Contents at the Interpersonal Level (IL) typically correspond to the highest layer at the Representational Level (RL), the Propositional Content. At the Morphosyntactic Level (ML), they are typically realized as Clauses; they may, however, also take the form of “sentence fragments” (NPs, PPs, *etc.*) or single words (*yes, ok, why*); in FDG, such expressions are not seen as communicatively or syntactically incomplete. In addition, there is a default relation between Discourse Acts at the IL and Intonational Phrases at the Phonological Level (PL; Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 432). Intonational Phrases are characterized by a combination of external and/or internal features, the most important ones being the presence of a complete intonational contour and boundary tones preceding and following the unit in question (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 432). The overall intonational contour of the Intonational Phrase is determined by the Illocution, possibly in combination with certain operators (e.g. emphasis, reinforcement, or mitigation).

In FDG, a distinction is made between abstract and lexical Illocutions. The former are conventionalized realizations of the speaker’s communicative intention, coded syntactically and/or prosodically (e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative).<sup>3</sup> In those cases where the Discourse Act is expressed as a clause, abstract Illocutions are often expressed through a combination of morphosyntactic and prosodic means (e.g. no subject-finite verb inversion and falling intonation for Declaratives, inversion and rising intonation in Yes–No questions). In some cases, however, speakers rely on one form of formal coding; thus, in (40a), the interrogative nature of the last two Discourse Acts is coded using intonation only, while the imperative nature of *sit down* in (40b) is coded only by morphosyntactic means (absence of subject, bare form of the verb):

- (40) a. Peace is in the interests of both. *You believe me? You trust me?* (BYU-BNC, fiction)  
 b. Come in John. *Sit down.* (BYU-BNC, interview)

When a Discourse Act takes the form of a unit smaller than the clause, speakers typically resort to prosodic means, as shown in (41), with the falling tone on *in the bin* in (41a) expressing a declarative Illocution, and the rising tone on *tomorrow* in (41a) being triggered by an interrogative Illocution:

- (41) a. Absolutely. *In the bin.* That’s the best place for it (BYU-BNC, conversation)  
 b. “When do you want to move in?” “I don’t know. *Tomorrow?*” (BYU-BNC, fiction)

Illocutions can, however, also be expressed lexically, as in the case of interjections (*ouch, yuck*) or fixed expressions (*good morning, congratulations, thanks*). These elements, which express very specific Illocutions, are analysed as lexical heads of the Illocution, as illustrated in (42) for the expression *Thanks*:

- (42) (A<sub>I</sub>: [(F<sub>I</sub>: thanks (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>J</sub>)<sub>A</sub>] (A<sub>I</sub>))

Two or more Discourse Acts together may form a Move, defined as “an autonomous contribution to an ongoing interaction,” which “either is, or opens up the possibility of, a reaction” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie

<sup>3</sup> Due to its form-oriented approach, FDG only captures those speaker intentions that are systematically reflected in the form of a language. As such, indirect speech is not dealt with within the grammar – these are regarded as being resolved through the interaction between the grammar and the context (i.e. the Contextual Component in FDG). As a result, FDG recognizes only a limited number (twelve) abstract illocutions cross-linguistically, with each language only systematically coding a subset of these. English, for instance, is said to use only six of these: Declarative, Interrogative, Imperative, Optative, Hortative, and Mirative (Exclamative) (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 70–3).

2008, 50). Discourse Acts within a Move can be related in two ways. If the two Discourse Acts have equal communicative status, the relationship between them is one of equipollence; both function as independent Discourse Acts. If, on the other hand, the Speaker wants to indicate that one Discourse Act (the Nucleus) is communicatively more important than some other Discourse Act (a Subsidiary Act), the relationship between them is one of dependence. In that case, a rhetorical function representing the relationship between the two Acts is assigned to the Subsidiary Act (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 52–8). In (43), for instance, the Subsidiary Discourse Act *as for London* is assigned the rhetorical function of Orientation, while in (44), the clause *the Press will be down too* has the function of Motivation (as it provides the reason for the speaker to express the following Nuclear Discourse Act).

- (43) a. *As for London*, I've no great yearning to go back there. (BYU-BNC, misc)  
 b. (M<sub>I</sub>: [(A<sub>I</sub>)<sub>Orient</sub> (A<sub>J</sub>)] (M<sub>I</sub>))
- (44) a. *The Press will be down too*, so watch out. (BYU-BNC, fiction)  
 b. (M<sub>I</sub>: [(A<sub>I</sub>)<sub>Motiv</sub> (A<sub>J</sub>)] (M<sub>I</sub>))

Other rhetorical functions include Aside (typically targeting a particular Subact), Correction, Clarification, as well as Elaboration and Specification (Keizer 2020a, Giomi and Keizer 2020). At the ML, Subsidiary Discourse Acts are positionally mobile (Dik 1997, 383, Heine et al. 2013, 159, 176): they may precede, interrupt, or follow the Nuclear Discourse Act. This means that within the Linguistic Expression, they appear in an extra-clausal position (pre-clausal, interpolated, and post-clausal), as shown in (45) for the Orientation in example (43):

- (45) p<sup>Pre</sup> | p<sup>Centre</sup>  
 As for London, I've no great yearning to go back there.

Finally, as separate Discourse Acts, Subsidiary Discourse Acts have their own Illocution and are realized as separate Intonational Phrases at the PL.

## 4.2 Conditional clauses

In their most prototypical use, *if*-clauses specify a condition (P, the protasis) under which the proposition expressed in the main clause (Q, the apodosis) is true; *i.e.* utterances with such *if*-clauses take the semantic form of “if P, then Q.” An example is given in (46a). In FDG, the relation between *if*-clause and main clause can be captured at the RL by analysing the *if*-clause as a modifier of the Propositional Contents expressed in the main clause (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2021, 36–7). Given that the *if*-clause does not seem to allow for propositional modifiers (*e.g.* *probably*, *possibly*; cf. Hengeveld 1988, 236, see also Olbertz et al. 2018, 142, Keizer 2020b, 10), we analyse this modifier as an Episode.<sup>4</sup> This modifier is assigned the semantic function Condition, triggering the use of *if* (46c). At the IL, the whole expression is represented as a single Communicated Content and, as such, a single (Independent) Discourse Act (46a). At the ML, this Discourse Act is expressed as a main Clause with an embedded subordinate Clause, taking the central position in the Linguistic Expression (46d). At the PL, the default realization will be that of a single Intonational Phrase (46e).

- (46) a. *If you pass the test*, you are a member. (COCA, movie)  
 b. IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: (F<sub>I</sub>: DECL (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>J</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (C<sub>I</sub>: [ ....] (C<sub>I</sub>)) (A<sub>I</sub>))

<sup>4</sup> A complete analysis of conditional *if*-clauses is clearly beyond the scope of this article; we will confine ourselves here to the kind of conditional illustrated in (46a).

- c. RL: (p<sub>j</sub>: –you are a member– (p<sub>i</sub>): (ep<sub>i</sub>: –you pass the test– (ep<sub>i</sub>))<sub>Cond</sub> (p<sub>i</sub>))
- d. ML: (Cl<sub>i</sub>: [... (Cl<sub>j</sub>) ...] (Cl<sub>i</sub>)) in P<sup>Centre</sup>
- e. PL: (IP<sub>i</sub>)

In addition, representational (conditional) *if*-clauses can also be used as separate (Subsidiary) Discourse Acts, as in (47), and even as complete Moves, as illustrated in (3) (repeated here for convenience). The analysis of such instances as representational, that is, as cases of subordination, is motivated by the existence of a clear matrix clause (*e.g. it's obligatory to have something in the company report*), even if it is provided by another speaker as a form of co-construction. This view differs from the one proposed by Sansiñena et al. (2015) and Gras and Sansiñena (2015), who identify such cases as dyadically dependent insubordinations.

- (47) And it worried me that these are the sort of people that would have been advised into the committee. *If our officer had not sent them away with lots of facts and information.* (BYU-BNC, meeting)
- (3) A: Uh uh it's obligatory is it to have something in a company report  
 B: *If you've got more than a hundred in the uh workforce* (ICE-GB:s1b-062-138)

After this brief section on some of the interpersonal and representational features of FDG, we can now turn our attention to the focus of this article, namely the various types of non-conditional, insubordinate *if*-clauses and their analysis in FDG.

## 5 A taxonomy of insubordinate *if*-clauses

This section discusses three different categories of non-canonical *if*-clauses, two of which qualify as cases of insubordination and one as an intermediate category between subordination and insubordination. As shown in Table 1, these three types represent different degrees of independence (Independent Discourse Act, Subsidiary Discourse Act, interpersonal modifier).

### 5.1 Independent Discourse Acts

We will start with the most independent type of insubordinate *if*-clauses, those that function as fully autonomous utterances, not part of, nor dependent on, another Discourse Act (cf. Stirling's (1998) and Mato-Míguez's (2014a,b) "isolated *if*-clauses"). The clearest representatives of this category are *if*-clauses that are completely lexicalized (formulaic), and which, in FDG, are analysed as lexical Illocutions (Section 4.1). Examples would be (*if you*) *please*, as well as its Dutch and French counterparts (Du. *alstublieft/alsjeblieft*; Fr. *s'il vous plait*, lit. "if you please") when used, independently, as direct expressions of a request or appeal (the Dutch example in (48)). Note that in Dutch, the same phrase can also be used when giving or offering something to someone else (Eng. "here you are"; see example (49)), or when accepting an offer (Eng. "yes please"; example (50)). In addition, it can be used emphatically as an expression of disapproval/annoyance (Eng. "for heaven's sake!"). The FDG analysis (given in (51)) would be the same for all these uses, the exact interpretation being a matter of context. Thus, all these expressions would be represented at the IL as Discourse Acts consisting of an Illocution and the Speech Participants, but no Communicated Content: as direct expressions of the Illocution, they do not involve any Subacts of Reference or Ascription. This also means that they are not represented at the RL. Since they also lack morphosyntactic structure, they are not captured at the ML either. At the PL, they are represented as separate IPs.

Table 1: Overview of non-canonical *if*-clause categories

<b>Independent Discourse Act<sup>5</sup></b>	Fully independent (Section 5.1)
– Pragmatically, semantically, syntactically, prosodically independent	
<b>A. With a lexical Illocution (formulaic):</b>	
– Du <i>alsjeblieft</i> ; Fr. <i>s'il vous plait</i> ; Eng. <i>If you must, If only!</i>	
<b>B. With an abstract Illocution (non-formulaic):</b>	
– Directive, optative, exclamations of surprise, indignation, concern, <i>etc.</i>	
– Analysed as the Communicated Content of an Independent Discourse Act functioning as a Move or as part of a Move	
<b>Subsidiary Discourse Act (formulaic or non-formulaic)</b>	Pragmatically dependent (Section 5.2)
– Semantically, syntactically, prosodically independent;	
– Pragmatically dependent on a Nuclear Discourse Act, expressing <i>e.g.</i> Orientation, Motivation, Clarification, Afterthought	
– Position: preceding, following, or interrupting a Nuclear Discourse Act	
<b>Interpersonal modifier (formulaic or non-formulaic)</b>	Partly integrated (Section 5.3)
– Semantically independent; syntactically, prosodically integrated	
– Modifying the Illocution or Communicated Content	
– Position: within the Clause	

(48) ja, ga mee joh. *alsjeblieft*. (CGN, N01055)  
 yes, go with PART please  
 'Yes, do come along. Please.'

(49) A: (offering biscuits)  
*alsjeblieft* (CGN, N01097)  
 'Here you are/Have some.'  
 B: dankjewel  
 'Thank you.'

(50) A: cola?  
 B: *alsjeblieft*. (CGN, V80023)  
 'Yes, please.'

(51) a. IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: (F<sub>I</sub>: *alsjeblieft* (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (A<sub>I</sub>))  
 b. PL: (I<sub>P</sub><sub>I</sub>)

The examples in (48)–(50) clearly show that, even as formulaic expressions, with conventionalized meanings, the use of these expressions, and their exact interpretation, depends on the (linguistic or situational) context. This seems to hold even more for a number of other (semi-)fixed expressions, such as *If you say so* (expressing doubt; Declerck and Reed 2001, 77–8, 386–7), *If you must, If you insist* (both expressing deprecation/disapproval; Declerck and Reed 2001, 384), or *If only* (functioning as an optative; Stirling 1998, 286, Declerck and Reed 2001, 383–9). It has been argued that in these cases, there is an implicit apodosis (Declerck and Reed 2001, 383–4), in which case they would not really be insubordinate. Note, however, that in the examples in (52)–(54), it would be difficult to envisage what the implicit consequence would be; even if one could add one, it is clear that this is not what the speaker really wishes to

<sup>5</sup> In what follows, we will restrict ourselves to the status of an expression as prosodically integrated (part of Intonational Phrase) or non-integrated (separate Intonational Phrase). In the corpus data, prosodic non-integration is typically indicated by the presence of a comma following and/or preceding the *if*-clause (or in the case of ICE-GB examples by a separate intonation contour and possibly pauses separating them from the rest of the utterance). Other prosodic features (tone, intensity) were not taken into consideration. (For a detailed description of the prosodic differences between Discourse Acts and interpersonal modifiers, see Kojadinović 2011).

communicate. Thus in (50), the speaker merely wishes to express doubt, which would be lost on a subordinate reading (*If you say so, #then that must be the case*). Similarly, *if you must* in (53) serves to indicate the speaker's disapproval, not merely the sense of inevitability expressed in the subordinate form (*If you must, #then you have to go*), while in (54), *If only* expresses a sense of longing and hopelessness. Therefore, although clearly less fixed than the examples in (48)–(51), we would still propose an analysis along the same lines.

- (52) “Now, all we can do is wait for his report and get on with more work.” “*If you say so*,” Paula said dubiously. (BYU-BNC, fiction)
- (53) “I’m sorry, Frau Fegel,” Erika said. “I have to go to the gym.” “Ah, athletics.” Frau Fegel was less than enthusiastic. “*If you must*.” (BYU-BNC, fiction)
- (54) Reaching the top, Ruth looked eastward; she could see beyond the forest to purple hills and faint mountains. *If only*, she thought; but it was no good wishing, especially when she didn’t even know what she was wishing for. (BYU-BNC, fiction)

Note that the same is true for the Dutch expression *Als je het maar laat* (expressing threat or warning; lit. “If you PART leave it,” Eng. “Don’t you dare!/Don’t even think about it!”), which can only be used autonomously and without apodosis:

- (55) Gem wijst naar de ijsbox die nog op straat staat. “Daar zit meer dan genoeg in om zat van te worden.” “*Als je het maar laat*,” waarschuwt Jolanda. (CHN)  
 ‘Gem points at the icebox that is still standing in the street. “There’s more than enough in there to get drunk”. “Don’t even think about it,” Jolanda warns him.’

Finally, as shown in the Dutch example in (56a), some formulaic expressions can also be used in combination with an abstract Illocution. In this particular case, it seems more appropriate to analyse the formulaic expression as a Communicated Content, combined with an interrogative Illocution. Thus, in (56), the lexical item *alsjeblijft* adds the meaning aspect of imploration to the Interrogative Illocution:

- (56) a. “Doe je het?” zei ze. “*Alsjeblijft*?” (CHN)  
 “Will you do it?” she said. “Please?”  
 b. (A<sub>I</sub>: (F<sub>I</sub>: INTER (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (C<sub>I</sub>: -alsjeblijft- (C<sub>I</sub>)) (A<sub>I</sub>))

It is, however, not only formulaic expressions that can be used as Independent Discourse Acts. Some examples of such non-formulaic, largely compositional phrases are given in (1) (repeated here), where the *if*-clause is used either as an opening Move (its appropriateness depending on the discourse situation) or as (part of) a reactive Move, as in (57). Since we are dealing here either with a polite request (example (1)) or a directive (example (57)) (cf. e.g. Ford and Thompson 1986, 365, Ford 1993, 49–50, Ford 1997, 401–5), the particular form of the expression (the presence of the element *if*, as well as the particular prosodic patterns) may be assumed to be triggered by a mitigation operator on an imperative Discourse Act:

- (1) *If you’ll just come next door.* (ICE-GB:s1a-089-159)

- (57) A: How could I have had nineteen eighty-six’s accounts in nineteen eight-six I’m unclear on that <,>  
 B: *If you look at page seventy-seven* <,>  
 A: Yes.  
 (ICE-GB:s1b-065-158)

*If*-clauses functioning as Moves can also function as optatives, as in (58); see also examples (16) and (22) above; in this case, the formal features of the clause (use of the sequence *if only* in combination with a subjunctive) are triggered by the presence of an Optative Illocution.

- (58) “My heart has joined the Thousand, for my friend stopped running today,” he said to Blackberry, quoting a rabbit proverb. “*If only it were not Bigwig*,” said Blackberry. (BYU-BNC, fiction)

In other cases, such independent Discourse Acts are used as exclamations of surprise, or expressions of indignation or concern (cf. Quirk et al. 1985, 842, Declerck and Reed 2001, 386, Panther and Thornburg 2003, 139), as in examples (59), (60), and (61), respectively. Sometimes, the insubordinate *if*-clause is simply used in response to what has been said before, as in (62), where the utterance *If it meant anything* is a self-effacing comment on B’s own guitar playing, prompted by A’s first utterance and, in turn, prompting a response by A. The same can be said of the idiomatic expression *If the worst comes to the worst* in (63), except that here A reflects on something she/he said her/himself in the first Move.<sup>6</sup>

- (59) Well, *if it isn’t my little companion, my theatre-going pal*. (BYU-BNC, fiction)
- (60) Karen stood up, shrugging. “Suit yourself. *If you think I’m prying*. Right, I’m off to bed. See you.” (BYU-BNC, fiction)
- (61) A: That’s a job in itself then .... Yeah. Mm.  
 B: *If you think of the trauma on the people who have to deal with that*.  
 A: (unclear) aye.#  
 B: Now you never forget those sort of things.  
 (BYU-BNC, unscripted speech)
- (62) A: I’ll just say you know that your s guitar playing is so pianistic  
 B: *If it meant anything*  
 A: No It is It’s so exciting  
 (ICE-GB:s1a-045-233)
- (63) A: Or you can uhm order like a meat and three veg without the meat They should let you do that  
 B: Yeah  
 A: *If the worst comes to the worst*  
 (ICE-GB:s1a-071-366)

As shown in (64) and (65), *if*-clauses functioning as Independent Discourse Acts can also constitute Moves within a Move (a digression; Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 51–2). In (64), the speaker interrupts him/herself briefly to ask the judge for permission to continue, and in (65) to parenthetically comment on what he/she is doing at that moment. Note that after the digression the original Move continues.

- (64) Now <,> of course there is some com there is some uhm *if I’m talking too much My Lord* But say under hypnosis it is possible to get a person to have a paralysed arm under hypnosis (ICE-GB:s1b-070-079).
- (65) Well the reason is that *if I just go back one slide* the attenuation that we measure is proportional to this the extension <unclear-word> (ICE-GB:s2a-053-091).

<sup>6</sup> Note that *if the worst comes to the worst* is not used conditionally here: B can (has the possibility to) order vegetable without meat even if the situation described in the *if*-clause does not come to pass.



Finally, *if*-clauses can occur as Independent Discourse Acts within a larger Move. An example can be found in (66), where the *if*-clause starts a new Move which also includes another Discourse Act (*But he couldn't*). Although the contents of this second Discourse Act are clearly (and explicitly) related to the first, the relation is not one between a Nuclear and Subsidiary Discourse Act, but between the representational contents of the two Discourse Acts (i.e. between the two Episodes of Denis Betts being able to pick that ball up and not being able to do so). The two Discourse Acts can, therefore, be regarded as equipollent.

- (66) *If only Denis Betts could have picked that ball up and got it out to Offiah* But he couldn't <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-4-377)

In (66), *if only* clearly marks the Discourse Act as an optative (in this case indicating a wish that has not been fulfilled). In other cases, the *if*-clause functions as an exclamation (example (67)) or a directive (examples (68)–(69)):

- (67) Another great conflict in the whole all of this was to you know during those decades the sixties and the seventies to discover uh just how I I should lead my life *If you think it was a whole generation doing that a whole generation of y of young gay men and women* And that was much more important than any work that I could do that sort of that coming to terms with my sexuality and <,> (ICE-GB:s2b-045-057)

- (68) We will start again *If you'd like to engage neutral* <,> That's the way Kickstart the bike (ICE-GB:s2a-054-076)

- (69) Right now *if you'd come round here*/we have the Ottomans <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-059-001)

We'd like to propose that all the non-formulaic *if*-clauses in this section be analysed as Communicated Contents at the IL, corresponding to an Episode at the RL. The actual form of the expression (i.e. its realization as an *if*-clause, as well as any other formal features), however, may be triggered in different ways, e.g. by the presence of a particular Illocution in combination with an operator). Thus, *if*-clauses like those in (1), (57), (68), and (69) could be regarded as imperatives with a mitigating operator (at the layer of the Discourse Act), while the *if*-clause in (62) could be seen as being triggered by a declarative Illocution in combination with a mitigating operator. In the case of example (57), this would lead to the following representation (note that, since we are dealing with a non-formulaic expression, this *if*-clause, unlike the ones in (48)–(50), is represented at the RL and ML):

- (70) a. *If you look at page seventy-seven* (see (55))  
 b. IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: (mit F<sub>I</sub>: IMP (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (C<sub>I</sub>: [(T<sub>I</sub>) (R<sub>I</sub>) (R<sub>I</sub>)] (C<sub>I</sub>)) (A<sub>I</sub>))  
 c. RL: (ep<sub>i</sub>: –you look at page seventy-seven– (ep<sub>i</sub>))  
 d. ML: (C<sub>I</sub><sub>i</sub>) in P<sup>Centre</sup>  
 e. PL: (IP<sub>i</sub>)

In a similar way, the sequence *if only* in (58) and (66) can be assumed to be triggered by an optative Illocution, while the sequence “*if it isn't* + NP” in (59) could be regarded as the result of an exclamative Illocution. Finally, examples (60) and (61), which are perhaps more emphatic than exclamative, could be analysed as declarative Discourse Acts with an emphatic operator.

## 5.2 Subsidiary Discourse Acts

In this section, we will look at insubordinate *if*-clauses that are semantically, syntactically, and prosodically non-integrated, but which are pragmatically dependent on the presence of another (previous or

following) Discourse Act (cf. Eilfort's (1987, 56–8) “peripheral conditionals”; Haegeman's (1984) “pragmatic conditionals”). Such *if*-clauses will be analysed as Subsidiary Discourse Acts, relating in different ways to the Nuclear Discourse Act (functioning as comments, orientations, elaborations, specifications, motivations, *etc.*). These (broadly defined) discursive functions will be reflected in the rhetorical functions assigned to the Subsidiary Discourse Act. These functions, in turn, partly determine the position the *if*-clause takes *vis-à-vis* the host, *i.e.* which extra-clausal position it occurs in at the ML (pre-clausal, interpolated, and post-clausal; Keizer 2020a, Giomi and Keizer 2020).

Starting with *if*-clauses appearing in the pre-clausal position, we find that they can fulfil various functions. In example (71), for instance, the *if*-clause “serves to orient the Addressee to the Speaker's communicative intentions” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 55), indicating in which respect the entities discussed (doors) are flimsy. As such, the Subsidiary Discourse Act will be assigned the rhetorical function of Orientation, which automatically leads to placement in the pre-clausal position. Similarly, the *if*-clause in (72) serves to draw the hearer's attention to “the apology at page d seven” before proceeding to comment on that apology. The *if*-clause in (72) is also prosodically non-integrated, as indicated by the long pause (<,>) following it (in the previous example prosodic non-integration is suggested by the use of a comma separating it from the following clause).

(71) *And if you think of a the main fabric of them*, they're quite flimsy. (BYU-BNC, spoken-unclassified)

(72) Now My Lord *if we look at the apology at page d seven* <,> the BBC accept in the last sentence there is no truth in a number of allegations and apologies for them <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-064-083)

In (73) and (74), on the other hand, the pre-clausal *if*-clauses function as a Motivation, indicating why the speaker utters the Nuclear Discourse Act (voluntarily so in (73), reluctantly in (74)).<sup>7</sup> As pointed out by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 54), however, motivating Subsidiary Discourse Acts can also follow the Nuclear Discourse Act, as shown in (75) and (76).<sup>8</sup> Note that their prosodic non-integration is signalled by pauses (<,>) separating example (73) from the rest of the utterance and by the use of commas in the other examples.

(73) *If you are interested*, there is still time to do something about it. (BYU-BNC, misc)

(74) “*If you must know*, our Emily wasn't an only child. She had a brother, Tom.” (BYU-BNC, fiction)

(75) Uhm and this is actually quite a good quality tent <,> *if you hadn't noticed* <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-047-024) (= (3))

(76) “In fact, I sent Geoffrey away, *if you must know!*” she shrilled. (BYU-BNC, fiction)

<sup>7</sup> In the examples provided by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 53–4), given in (i) and (ii), the rhetorical function Motivation is expressed by the element *because* and *so* (depending on the position of the Motivational Subact vis-à-vis the Nuclear Subact):  
(i) Watch out, *because* there will be trick questions in the exam.  
(ii) There will be trick questions in the exam, *so* watch out.

The selection of the element *if* in (73) and (74) can be accounted for by the fact that the information presented by the motivational Discourse Acts is non-factual. In other words, the selection of *because/so* vs *if* depends on the status of the contents of these Acts in the Contextual Component (factual vs non-factual) (Kees Hengeveld, p.c.).

<sup>8</sup> Note that in the case of motivational Subsidiary Discourse Acts, the apodosis need not be a declarative, but may also take the form of an imperative (example (i); see also Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 54) or an interrogative (example (ii); see also example (8) above).

(i) *If you are not sure*, then ask. (BYU-BNC, non-academic)

(ii) *If it's so appealing* then why do you feel the need to suppress it?? (BYU-BNC, fiction).

In (77)–(78), the clause *if you remember* seems to function as an Appeal to the hearer, irrespective of which position it takes. In (77), this phrase additionally seems to serve as a mitigating device (“I know that you probably know this”), while in (78) it has a reinforcing function; in both cases the phrase is forward-looking. In (79), on the other hand, the *if*-clause is added, as an Afterthought, to remind the hearers that they were supposed to be familiar with the information provided in the preceding Discourse Act.

(77) *if you remember* we looked at the index <,> (ICE-GB:s1b-057-103)

(78) a Labour Government would mean HIGHER rates. Higher, *if you remember*, by TWO PER CENT. (BYU-BNC, newspaper)

(79) That’s right. Also, Helen Burns isn’t an orphan (pause) *if you remember*. (BYU-BNC, classroom)

The specific interpolated position an *if*-clause appears in is often triggered by the fact that the clause targets a particular element within the Nuclear Discourse Act. In (78), for instance, the clause *if you remember* draws attention to the information that follows (*by two per cent*); in addition, it also neatly separates topical from focal information. In other cases, targeting *if*-clauses simply function as Asides, providing additional information about the preceding or following unit. In example (80), for instance, the clause *if I may respectfully say so* serves as a comment on (or to mitigate) the potentially offensive phrase *on the plump side*, while in (81), the clause *if that’s the right term* comments (meta-discursively) on the suitability of the lexical item *advertise* (cf. Dancygier’s (1998) “conversational conditionals”).

(80) She was then a stable <,> outgoing person <,> on the plump side *if I may respectfully say so* <,> fun-loving <,> sociable <,> independent <,> confident <,> happy-go-lucky <,> with a <,> good marriage <,> including <,> the sexual side <,> and in general she had very good health <,> (ICE-GB:s2a-062-011)

(81) And it was well known at that time because we advertised it *if that’s the right term* to the to the uh people at large that we were looking to acquire businesses (ICE-GB:s2b-065-078)

Finally, as in the case of *if*-clauses functioning as Independent Discourse Acts, the *if*-clauses discussed in this section can also be formulaic in nature. Some examples were already provided in (74) and (76) (*if you must know*) and (77)–(79) (*if you remember*). Some more examples can be found in (82)–(85):

(82) The other difference, Chair, *if I may*, was the cooperatives that currently put in Shropshire, (BYU-BNC, meeting)

(83) “Continue, Craig, *if you please*,” she said sternly. (BYU-BNC, fiction)

(84) He I’d say he’s uh he finds it difficult to look at himself <,> *if you see what I mean* and see his own responsibility for the marriages not working out or is it anything to do with him (ICE-GB:s1a-076-044)

(85) Very short skirt on *if you don’t mind me saying* (ICE-GB:s1a-040-089)

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, all the *if*-clauses discussed here will be analysed as Subsidiary Discourse Acts at the IL, provided with a rhetorical function specifying the relation between the Subsidiary and the Nuclear Discourse Act. This is illustrated in example (86) for the *if*-clause in (73). Note that the descriptive (designating) information contained in the *if*-clause is represented at the RL.

- (86) a. *If you are interested*, there is still time to do something about it. (BYU-BNC, misc)  
 b. IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: (F<sub>I</sub>: DECL (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>J</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (C<sub>I</sub>: [ ....] (C<sub>I</sub>)) (A<sub>I</sub>))<sub>Motiv</sub>  
 c. RL: (ep<sub>i</sub>: (e<sub>i</sub>: -you are interested- (e<sub>i</sub>)) (ep<sub>i</sub>))  
 d. ML: (Cl<sub>i</sub>) in P<sup>Pre</sup>  
 e. PL: (IP<sub>i</sub>)

In those cases, where the *if*-phrase is entirely formulaic, it will be analysed as a lexical Illocution within the Subsidiary Act, as illustrated in (87) for example (82) (compare example (51)). In examples like these, the Subsidiary Discourse Act does not contain a Communicated Content and is not represented at the RL and ML.

- (87) a. IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: (F<sub>I</sub>: if I may (F<sub>I</sub>)) (P<sub>I</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>J</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (A<sub>I</sub>))<sub>Aside</sub>  
 b. PL: (IP<sub>i</sub>)

### 5.3 Interpersonal modifiers

The *if*-clauses to be discussed in this section are also semantically non-integrated (non-truth-conditional); unlike the *if*-clauses discussed in the previous sections, however, they are syntactically and prosodically integrated; as such they are positioned between subordination and complete insubordination and can be regarded as semi-insubordinate. In example (88), for instance, the *if*-clause is prosodically integrated, *i.e.* realized as part of a larger Intonational Phrase (as can be seen from the representation given in Figure 1, produced in PRAAT (Boersma and Weenink 2019)). The same is true for the phrase *als je wil* ('if you like') in the Dutch example in (89):

- (88) Uh *if I may* I would like to add one final word to the families of those men who are engaged in this conflict in the Gulf <,> (ICE-GB:s2b:014-043)  
 (89) ge Kunt zelfs Russisch doen *als je wil* (CGN, V40186)  
 you can even Russian do *if you like*  
 'You can even do Russian if you like.'

Evidence for the syntactic integration of such clauses comes from V2-languages, where they trigger subject–verb inversion when appearing in the clause-initial position. Compare in this respect examples (90) and (91) from Dutch. In (90), the *if*-clause *als je het mij vraagt* ('if you ask me') in the first position does not trigger subject–verb inversion; as such, it is regarded as syntactically non-integrated (*i.e.* a Subsidiary Discourse Act); in (91), on the other hand, the same phrase does trigger inversion, indicating that it is syntactically integrated, *i.e.* that it forms one syntactic unit with the following main clause. A similar pair of examples is provided in (92) and (93), now with the *if*-clause *als je zin hebt* ('if you like,' 'if you feel like it'). In FDG, the former will be analysed as a Subsidiary Discourse Act (Section 5.2), the latter as an interpersonal modifier (Keizer 2018, 2020a; Giomi and Keizer 2020, see also Kojadinović 2022).

- (90) *Als je het mij vraagt: jij Hebt* het potentieel van een Lucien Van Impe. (CHN)  
 if you it me ask you have the potential of a Lucien Van Impe  
 'If you ask me: you have the potential of a Lucien Van Impe.'  
 (91) *Als je het mij vraagt, is er* meer aan de hand, (CHN)  
 if you it me ask is there more going-on  
 'If you ask me, there is more going on.'

- (92) *Maar als je zin hebt... je bent van harte welkom om te komen plukken.* (CHN)  
 but if you like you are very welcome CONJ to come pick  
 ‘But if you feel like it... you are very welcome to come and pick (some cherries)’
- (93) *Al je zin hebt kan je er zelfs zo’n toestel uitproberen.* (CGN)  
 if you like can you there even such-a machine try-out  
 ‘If you feel like it you can even try out such a machine.’

Due to the non-conditional nature of these *if*-clauses (note that in all the examples in (90)–(93) they do not specify a condition), they will be analysed as having an interpersonal function. As syntactically and prosodically integrated elements, however, they will not be analysed as separate Discourse Acts but rather as modifiers within a larger Discourse Act (Keizer 2018, 2020a, Giomi and Keizer 2020, see also Kojadinović 2022).

Analysing such clauses as interpersonal modifiers of course raises the question of which interpersonal layer they modify, *i.e.* which part of the Discourse Act do they comment on? Clearly, this depends on the modifier itself. The highly formulaic politeness marker *if I may* in (88), for instance, seems to scope over the Illocution, as it serves to mitigate the force of the declarative. The clause *if you don’t mind* in (94) seems to perform a similar function. The expression *als je het mij vraagt* in (91), on the other hand, is used to indicate the source of the information: what is expressed in the main clause is not a generally accepted truth, but merely the speaker’s opinion; as such, it functions as an evidential, modifying the Communicated Content; an English example, with the equivalent clause *if you ask me*, can be found in (95). The Dutch expression *als je zin hebt* in example (93) serves to mitigate the force of the Illocution: the declarative main clause could be perceived as face-threatening in that it may be interpreted as making a suggestion; by adding the *if*-clause the speaker explicitly indicates that the hearer is under no obligation to perform the action in question. The *if*-clause *als je wil* can be used in the same way. In example (89), however, it seems to add an element of disapproval, as though the speaker cannot imagine that anyone should want to perform the action in question.

(94) I’m just going to top up my tea again *if you don’t mind* (ICE-GB:s1a-067-169)

(95) Looks a bit lethargic *if you ask me*. (BYU-BNC, conversation)

In addition, *if*-clauses can have a meta-discursive function, as in examples (96)–(98). In that case, they are used as comments on the selection (appropriateness) of the property expressed in the preceding unit (examples (96) and (97)) or the following unit (example (98)).

- (96) And you know it wasn’t kind of wasn’t really stimulating me enough really after after kind of like years of of of being kind of like <,> sort of battery educated *if you like* You know what I mean uhm (ICE-GB:s1a-034-056)
- (97) Refined or classic French cookery – call it haute cuisine *if you must* – and French regional, provincial, farmhouse and peasant styles of cookery cannot arbitrarily be isolated and set apart one from the other. (BYU-BNC, misc)
- (98) Well it isn’t accountable on the basis that it merely is a group of Chief Constables who sit down together to consider the new issues and and devise *if you like* systems of policing what is best in terms of a common policy. (ICE-GB:s1b-033-079)

The examples provided so far clearly suggest that *if*-clauses functioning as modifiers tend to be quite conventionalized. It will therefore not come as a surprise that the completely lexicalized *if*-clauses mentioned in Section 5.2 can also have a modifying function, as in example (99) from Dutch:

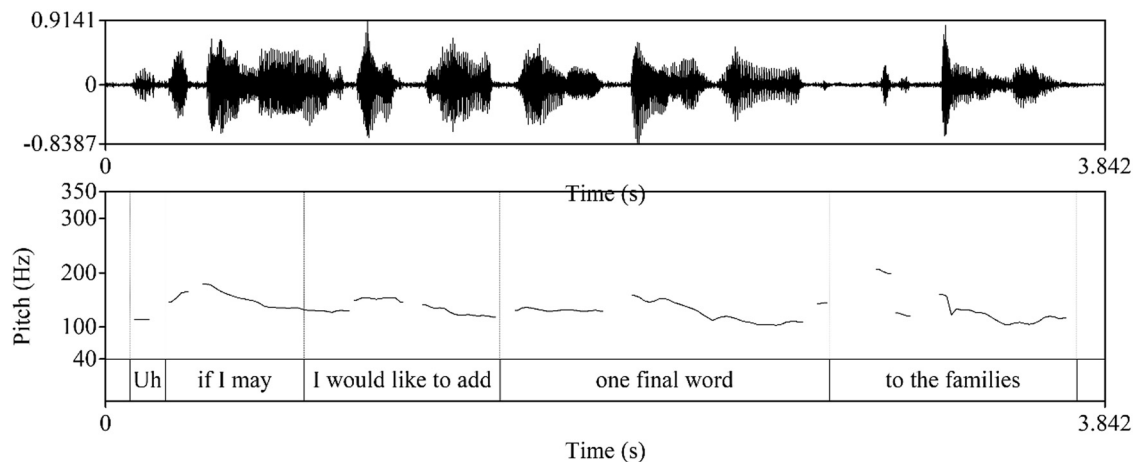


Figure 1: Prosodic representation of the first part of example (88).

- (99) Mag ik *alsjeblieft* geld voor een stuk brood? (CHN)  
 may I please money for a piece bread  
 ‘Could I please have some money for a piece of bread?’

As for the exact FDG analyses of these modifying *if*-clauses, let us consider the clause *if you ask me* in (95). Here, the main clause and the *if*-clause are both parts of the same Independent Discourse Act ( $A_I$  in (100b)). Within this Discourse Act, the *if*-clause functions as a modifier of the Communicated Content ( $C_I$ ). As an interpersonal modifier, the *if*-clause is not present at the RL (reflecting its non-truth-conditional nature); the proposition expressed in the main clause, however, is represented here (in the form of a Propositional Content,  $p_i$ ). At the ML, the *if*-clause takes a clausal position (as an embedded clause,  $Cl_i$ ), reflecting its syntactic integration. Similarly, at the PL, the *if*-clause is part of the larger Intonational Phrase ( $IP_i$ ) corresponding to the Discourse Act as a whole, indicating its prosodically integrated status.

- (100) a. Looks a bit lethargic *if you ask me*. (BYU-BNC, conversation)  
 b. IL: ( $A_I$ : ( $F_I$ : DECL ( $F_I$ )) ( $P_I$ )<sub>S</sub> ( $P_I$ )<sub>A</sub> ( $C_I$ : [ ... ] ( $C_I$ ): if-you-ask-me ( $C_I$ )) ( $A_I$ ))  
 c. RL: ( $p_i$ : -looks a bit lethargic- ( $p_i$ ))  
 d. ML: ( $Cl_i$ : [( $Vp_i$ : -looks- ( $Vp_i$ )) ( $Ap_i$ : -a bit lethargic- ( $Ap_i$ )) ( $Cl_j$ : -if you ask me- ( $Cl_j$ ))] ( $Cl_i$ ))  
 e. PL: ( $IP_i$ : -looks. if you ask me- ( $IP_i$ ))

The existence of an intermediate category between subordination and insubordination, with a close functional relation to the category of Subsidiary Discourse Acts (Section 5.2) and at the same time a close structural relation to subordinate *if*-clauses (Section 4.2), raises the question of how these interpersonal modifiers may have developed historically. While this question is clearly outside the scope of the present article, two obvious pathways suggest themselves: representational modifier *if*-clauses developing an interpersonal function (possibly leading to broader discourse uses; cf. Mithun’s (2008) functional extension), or Subsidiary Discourse Acts becoming integrated into the Nuclear Discourse Act (Discourse Act integration; e.g. Giomi 2020, 121, 213, 361–2).<sup>9</sup> Since the data presented in this article are purely synchronic, we clearly cannot provide an answer to this question. However, the fact that *if*-clauses functioning as modifiers tend to be formulaic may be taken as an indication that Discourse Act integration may have led to the current situation. Given that insubordinate clauses are generally assumed to have developed out

<sup>9</sup> Note that these two paths are not mutually exclusive: in the development of insubordinate *if*-clauses, both paths may have been followed at different points in time.



of ordinary conditionals (e.g. Evans 2007, Mithun 2008, Heine et al. 2016), i.e. representational modifiers, which subsequently gain greater pragmatic independence (i.e. Independent Discourse Act or Subsidiary Discourse Act), interpersonal modifier *if*-clauses would thus represent a case of insubordinate clauses being re-integrated at the IL.

## 6 Conclusion

Among the different types of insubordination, *if*-clauses have received more attention than most other formal types, presumably owing to their flexible use and relative frequency. When they are being referred to in the literature, the focus is usually on their function: their pragmatic use, such as illocutionary force and emphasis, or their rhetorical use, notably their relation to the host construction (Section 3). Considerably less attention has been given to formal aspects, that is, syntactic and prosodic features. The advantage of an FDG approach is that it allows us to address the whole range of formal and functional distinctions in a single model, showing how the different levels of analysis interact. A further advantage of an FDG account of insubordination is that, unlike most other approaches, it does not take the clause or the sentence, i.e. a formal category, as its basic unit of analysis, but the Discourse Act, a functional category (Section 4.1). This makes it uniquely equipped to deal with linguistic phenomena that cannot easily be captured in terms of traditional sentence-grammar categories (Section 2).

Accordingly, various subcategories have been identified in this article for non-canonical *if*-clauses along a cline from (canonical) subordination (Section 4.2) to full insubordination (Section 5). Within the group of non-canonical *if*-clauses, two categories have been established, with decreasing degree of autonomy: Independent Discourse Act (Section 5.1) and Subsidiary Discourse Act (Section 5.2). The third category of interpersonal modifier (Section 5.3.) is intermediate between subordination and insubordination. Independent Discourse Acts, as the most prototypical cases of insubordination, are semantically, syntactically, prosodically, and pragmatically independent, with their own illocution. They may take the form of highly formulaic Lexical Illocutions as well as non-formulaic Discourse Acts within Moves or even entire Moves, the latter typically functioning as directives, optatives, or exclamations. Subsidiary Discourse Acts are semantically, syntactically, and prosodically independent, but pragmatically depend on another Discourse Act. Their rhetorical functions with regard to this Discourse Act include, for instance, that of Orientation, Motivation, Appeal, or Afterthought, and their position may be that of preceding or following that Discourse Act or being interpolated within it. Interpersonal modifiers, finally, represent an intermediate category between subordination and insubordination. They are semantically independent, but syntactically and prosodically integrated within a Discourse Act; that is, they are realized as part of a larger Intonational Phrase, and in V2-languages trigger subject–verb inversion when in sentence-initial position.

The different categories of *if*-clauses inevitably raise a further question that could not be answered in this article, namely how they are related to each other diachronically and which role they play in the emergence of insubordination. This is particularly interesting with respect to the intermediate category of interpersonal modifier *if*-clauses and can obviously only be answered by analysing diachronic data. In view of the formulaic nature of many interpersonal modifier *if*-clauses, however, we speculated that they may have developed out of frequently used Subsidiary Discourse Acts which are being re-integrated into a Nuclear Discourse Act. But this is a question that requires further investigation.

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