

Constituency in *if and when* conditional constructions

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Constituency in cognitive grammar

“...constituents are emergent in character...constituency is sometimes fluid and variable.” (Langacker 1997:3)

“...the probability that two items will be contiguous...determines their degree of fusion into constituents.” (Bybee and Scheibman 1999:593)

- Emergent
- Variable
- Subject to change

The structure of conditional and temporal constructions

P-Q clause order

Element:	Conditional/ temporal subordinator	P-clause / subordinate clause/ protasis	Q-clause / main clause/ apodosis
Example:	<i>If/when</i>	<i>they get here,</i>	<i>we'll have dinner.</i>

Q-P clause order

Element:	Q-clause / main clause/ apodosis	Conditional/ temporal subordinator	P-clause / subordinate clause/ protasis
Example:	<i>We'll have dinner</i>	<i>If/when</i>	<i>they get here.</i>

Temporals:

- Positive stance
(presupposed P/ speaker identification with P)
- Temporal reference
(establishes specific temporal relationship between P and Q)

Conditionals:

- Non-positive stance
- Conditional reference
(conditional prediction of Q based on knowledge about P)

The structure of *if and when* conditionals

P-Q clause order

Element:	conditional subordinator	coordinator	temporal subordinator	P-clause / protasis	Q-clause / apodosis
Example:	<i>if</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>they get here,</i>	<i>we'll have dinner.</i>

Q-P clause order

Element:	Q-clause / apodosis	conditional subordinator	coordinator	temporal subordinator	P-clause / protasis
Example:	<i>We'll have dinner</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>they get here.</i>

The structure of *if and when* conditionals

An open set of subordinators and coordinators

Element:

Examples:

conditional subordinator	coordinator	temporal subordinator
<i>if</i> <i>unless</i>	<i>and</i> <i>or</i>	<i>when</i> <i>until</i> <i>whenever</i> <i>as</i> <i>as soon as</i> <i>as long as</i> <i>while</i> <i>after</i>

Most likely, interns will be selected from our volunteer pool, **if and whenever** possible.

www.gorilla-haven.org/ghjobs.htm

I won't agree to do anything **unless and until** our deal points are put in writing... www.nwu.org/docs/email.htm

Transmission of data is only possible **unless and as long as** it has not been expressly prohibited by the data-subject.

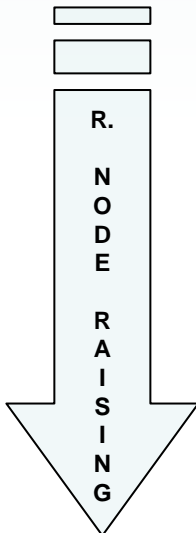
www.dmvoe.at/EnglishLaw

In fact, side effects that you experience with a drug at one time may not occur again **if or when** you try that drug again in the future.

www.thebody.com/pinf/nausea.html

If and when as 'right node raising'

If P and when P, (then) Q



"The president hasn't indicated he plans to make any changes. **If he does and when he does**, I'm sure he'll announce it," Mr. Cheney said.

www.washingtontimes.com/national/20060320-122349-4084r.htm

"if he does and when he does" :

5 (4 of which are this particular quote)

"if and when he does" :

14,700

If and when P, (then) Q

1745-1799: Oats, or Summer barley, at the discretion of the Tenant, with Clover, **if and when** the ground is in condition to bear it.

The writings of George Washington from the original manuscript sources, Volume 29

Constituency/grouping in *if and when* constructions

- Noncompositional meaning demonstrates that *if and when* constructions are not synchronically ellipsis:
 - *until and if*
 - construction-specific interpretation of temporal and conditional subordinators
- Indivisibility:
 - Modification of P-clause (*even, only, and except*)
 - Sentence fragments
 - Derived NPs and APs
- Coordination:
 - *If and when* groupings coordinate with simplex temporal subordinators
- The construction arose rapidly (<250 years) and has spread at an exponential rate in the last 3 years.
 - Frequency of acceptable vs. unacceptable usages

Noncompositional meaning in *if and when* constructions

Until and if:

The Major is presumed innocent **until and if** proven guilty in a court of law.

www.afmc.wpafb.af.mil/HQ-AFMC/PA/news/archive/2004/July/0739-04.htm

...the descendents of a slave were also slaves **until and if** freed by the master.

Roots of Violence: A History of War in Chad, Mario J. Azevedo 1998

...the African Union must somehow manage the volatile situation **if and until** the United Nations arrives. www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa/ads/1594.html

- The full coordinated clause structure ***until P and if P, Q*** would mean that Q holds regardless of P
- ***Until and if P, Q*** means ***until (uncertain) P, Q***

Noncompositional meaning in *if and when* constructions

- Temporal subordinator contributes temporal reference; positive-stance properties (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005) are ignored
- Conditional subordinator contributes non-positive epistemic stance

Result: a complex conditional subordinator with temporal reference and non-positive epistemic stance

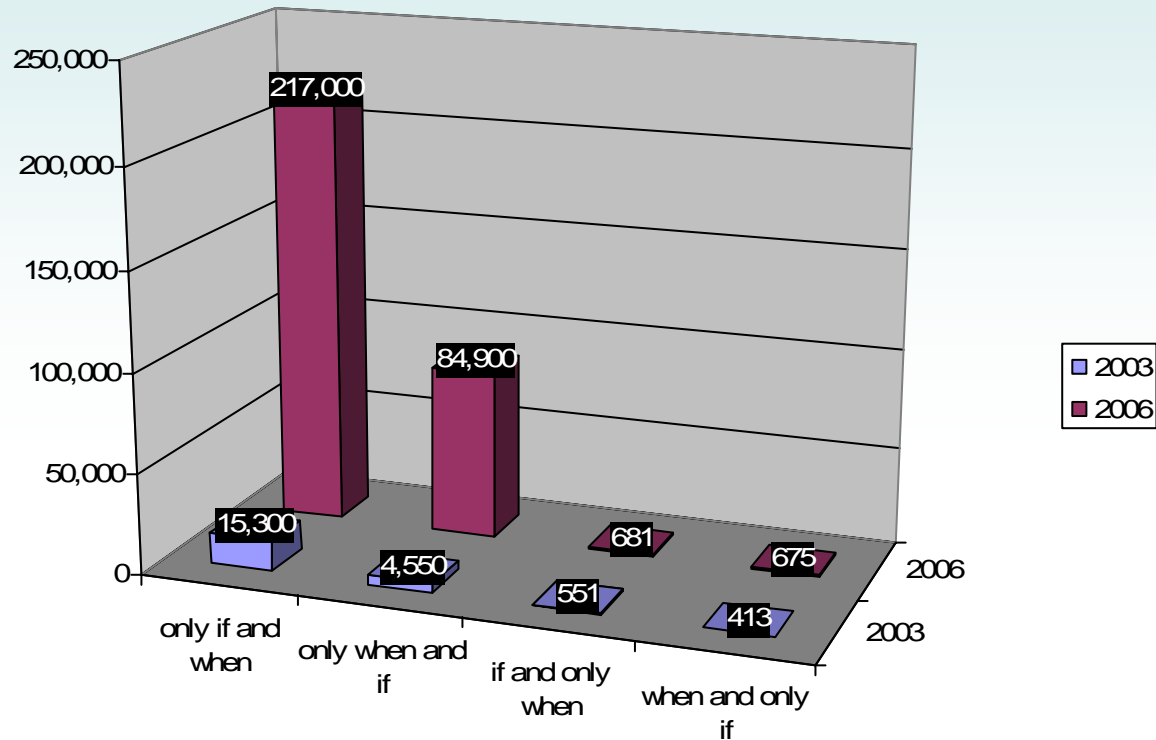
Indivisibility and modification

- *Only*

Only has to precede a constituent that contains the focused phrase. In conditionals, the focused phrase is the P-clause (McCawley 1996); here, *if and when P*.

- *Even*

if and when constructions modified by *only*



Examples:

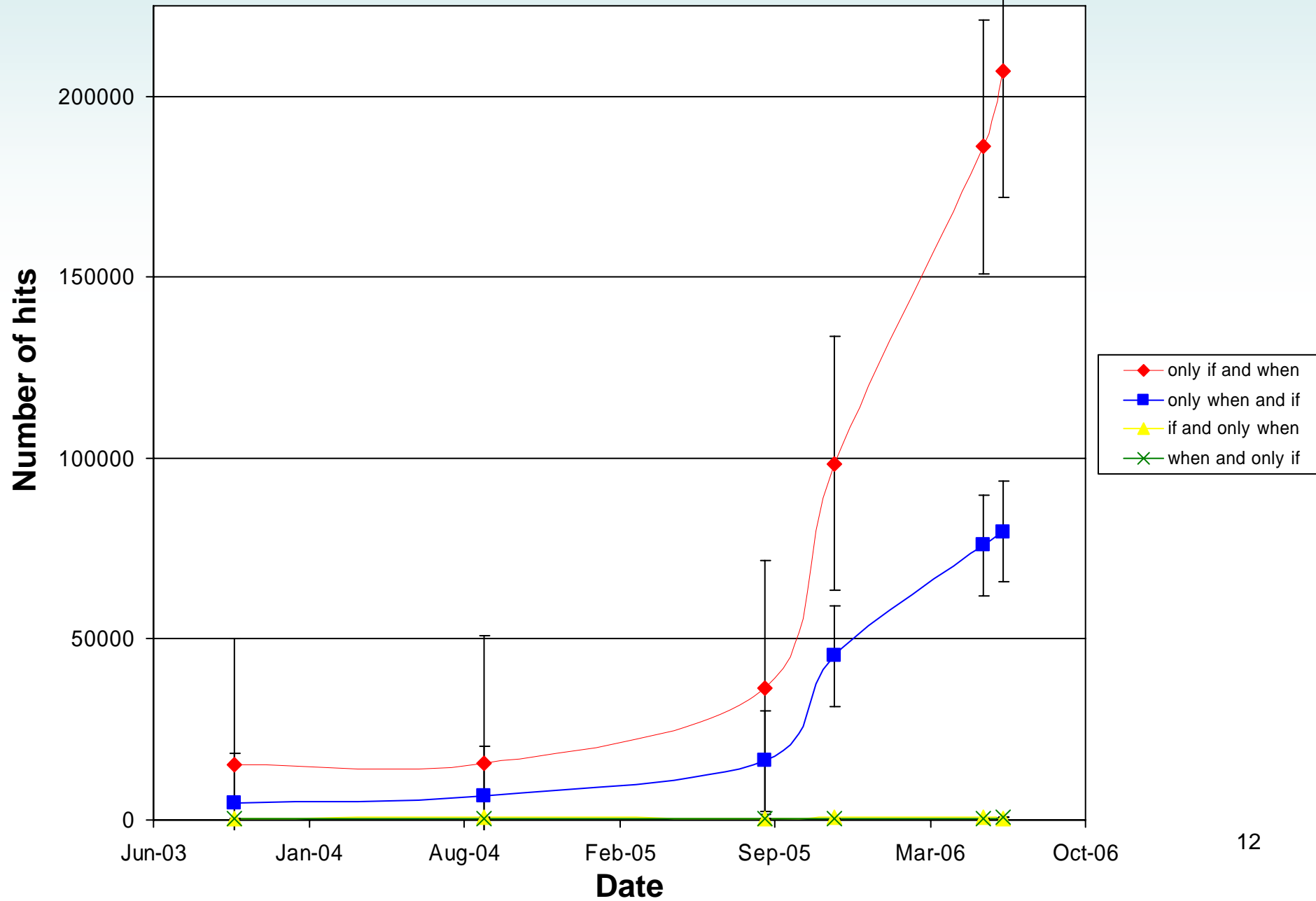
Patients can be considered candidates for donation **only if and when** they are declared legally dead. www.ordonorprogram.org/q&a.html

Customs duties are paid **only when and if** merchandise is transferred into US Customs territory. www.dothan.com/business/economicdev/internationalpresence.shtml

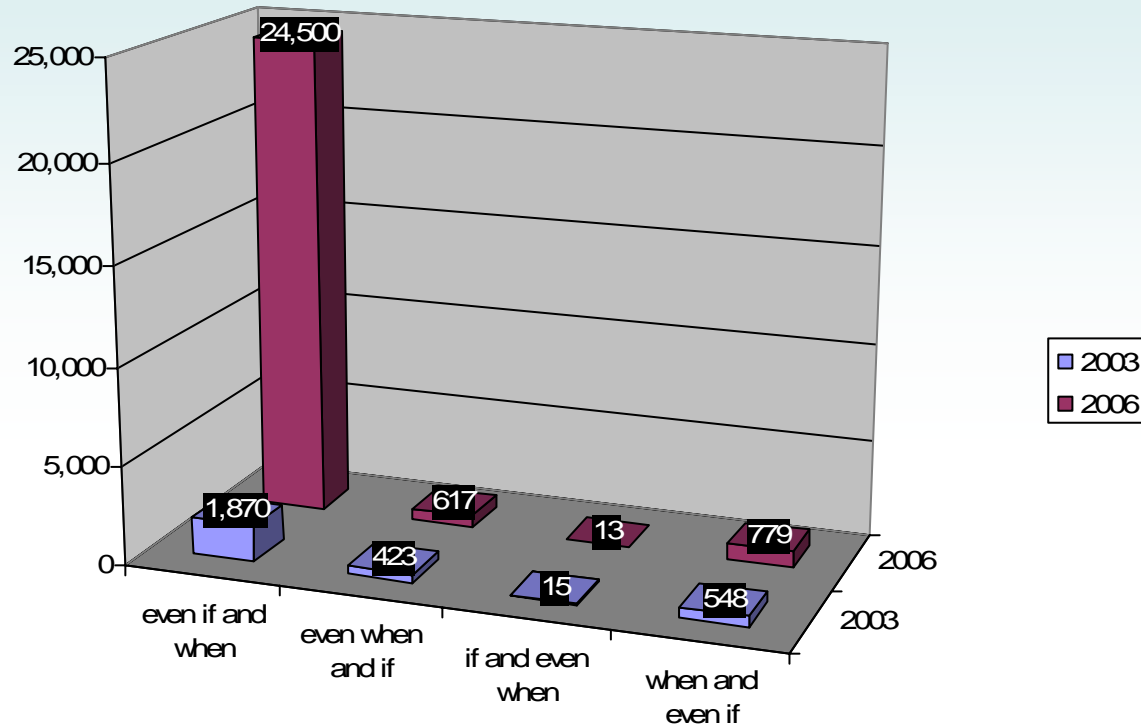
The remaining one-third (plus interest) would be granted to the students **when, and only if**, they graduate. www.nypirg.org/higher_ed/TAP/report.html

The Housing market is sensitive to interest rates **if and only when** Housing is over-valued. econlog.econlib.org/archives/2004/07/interest_rate_d.html

if and when constructions modified by only



if and when constructions modified by *even*



Examples:

That war will go on **even if and when** the Democrats get back into office.

www.renewamerica.us/columns/jon/060309

Even when and if this Flags Amendment Bill is passed, it would offer the Australian flag no real protection. www.ausflag.com.au/info/parl/flags09.html

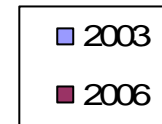
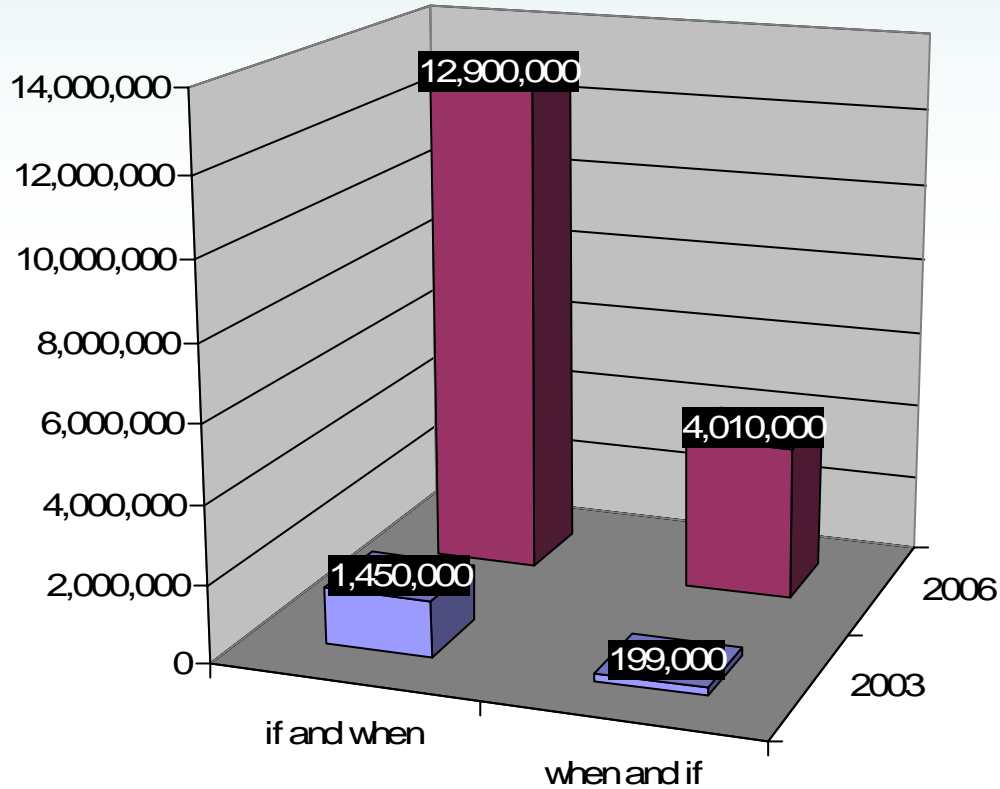
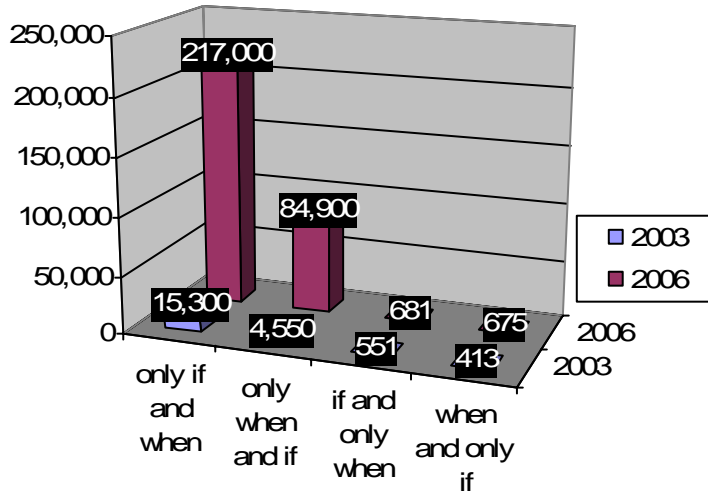
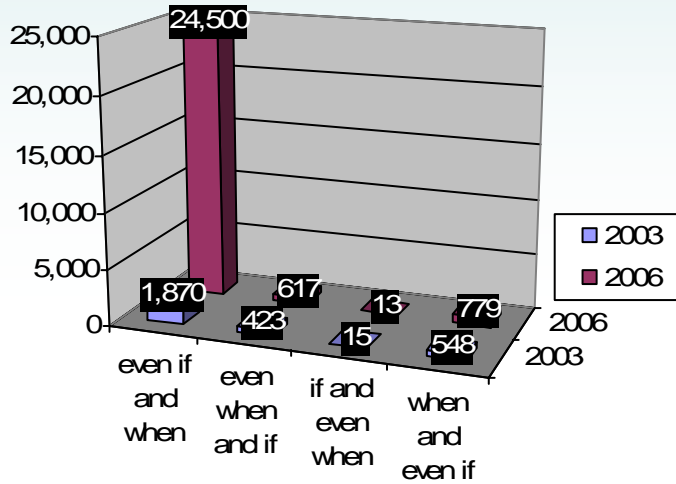
You have no way of knowing **when, and even if**, your job search will be successful.

careerplanning.about.com/od/jobsearch/a/job_search_emp.htm

The nation became a time puzzle as states and communities were able to pick **if, and even when**, they would switch their clocks.

http://ifiwereking.spaces.msn.com/PersonalSpace.aspx?_c11_blogpart_blogpart=blogview&_c=blogpart&partqs=amonth%3D4%26ayear%3D2006

Modified vs. total *if and when*



Indivisibility and sentence fragments

“Freestanding” P-clauses (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005:263-66):

- “Trail-off” P-clause:

If and when Daddy gets home... www.mothershock.com/weblog2/archives/00000131.htm

- P-clause specifying background for previous discourse material:

Jeebus Murgatroid, what's next, floods?

Well, **if and when** it rains out here again ... probably.
www.theleftcoaster.com/archives/000711.php

- Q-clause:

"I said yes. But Margaret, what if-"

Her friend shook her head. "Worry about that **if and when.**"
www.fanffiction.net/s/1582813/3/

Indivisibility and derivations

'Tis but a mirror, shows one image forth, And leaves the future dark with endless 'ifs'. **1868** *George Eliot, The Spanish Gipsy*

NP *if and when*:

Of course some sf writers reproduce the here and now in the **if and when**, while some mainstream writers create a strange new world in the suburbs.

www.unbsj.ca/arts/english/jones/mt/archives/2004/04/politics_and_art_and_sf.html

The *key* point he makes concerns the **if-and-when** of dollar devaluation, and what that means for us in America.

www.unknownnews.net/00scrawled041014.html

As for the **if and when** of marriage, Ben isn't too concerned with that dilemma now. www.asjcollection.com/current/movielife672.html

AP *if and when*:

It was the beginning of the **if-and-when** planning that would bedevil the program for five years. www.hq.nasa.gov/pao/History/SP-4204/ch1-5.html

Coordination

Certain temporal subordinators can be coordinated:

1546: Meddle they may with some spirituall thinges and causes, but **when and as** they shall bee required by the Priest. *The true difference betweene Christian subiection and unchristian rebellion, Thomas Bilson*

Learning materials are prepared **as and when** necessary...
www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/596/significantaspectslearn.pdf

If and when constructions coordinate with simplex temporal subordinators:

I'd be able to keep him posted on any weak points, **if and as and when** they developed. *Action Front, Boyd Cable 2004*

If you're willing to pay **as, if and when** you need my services, we'll be able to work well together. www.divorceinfo.com/aflcreasonsnotouse.htm

When, if, and as all people have adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and decent latitude, then we will resume deploring the evils of materialism. www.radicalpositivism.org/article-001.htm

Conclusions

- The *if and when* construction developed construction-specific form and meaning over a relatively short time span.
- This form and meaning extends to indivisibility and coordination behavior traditionally associated with constituency.
- Evidence from *if and when* constructions supports Langacker (1997), and Bybee and Scheibman (1999) in challenging the traditional view of constituency, and in treating it as a phenomenon that is emergent, variable and subject to change.

Selected References

- Bybee, Joan and Joanne Scheibman 1999. "The effect of usage on degrees of constituency: the reduction of *don't* in English". *Linguistics* 37-4: 575-96.
- Dancygier, Barbara and Eve Sweetser 2005. *Mental Spaces in Grammar: Conditional Constructions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fillmore, Charles 1990. "Epistemic stance and grammatical form in English conditional sentences". *CLS* 26: 137-62.
- Goldberg, Adele E. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1997. "Constituency, dependency, and conceptual grouping". *Cognitive Linguistics* 8-1: 1-32.
- McCawley, James D. 1996. "Conversational Scorekeeping and the Interpretation of Conditional Sentences". In Shibatani, M. and S. A. Thompson (eds.), *Grammatical Constructions*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

APPENDIX A:

Further evidence of subordinator roles in *if* and *when* constructions

- Temporal subordinator contributes temporal reference; positive-stance properties (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005) are ignored
- Conditional subordinator contributes non-positive epistemic stance

Result: a complex conditional subordinator with temporal reference and non-positive epistemic stance

Temporal subordinator contributes temporal reference

Modifiers describing temporal exactitude are acceptable:

Michael Azzerad's *Our Band Could Be Your Life* ... makes the polemical decision to cut each chapter off **at the moment if and when** each band signed to a major label.

www.pitchforkmedia.com/article/record_review/31220/Dinosaur_Jr_Green_Mind_Where_You_Been_J_Mascis_Live_at_CBG

Obviously I'll address any future opportunity **at the time if and when** it arises. www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1356821.htm

Opera should be open source **exactly if and when** its developers decide to make it so. my.opera.com/community/forums/topic.dml?id=110086

After the beautiful moments of prayer last evening, I came away renewed with peaceful assurance that each of these *possible* troubles will have a solution **exactly at the moment if and when** needed.

sarabikesusa.tripod.com/Page3_PreTripNotes.htm

Conditional subordinator contributes non-positive epistemic stance

Evidence:

- Future-reference examples with negative stance:

They're shown on paper all the amenities to which they **would become** heir, if and when they **bought** a house from a particular builder or developer. *historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0224/D.0224.196610040032.html*

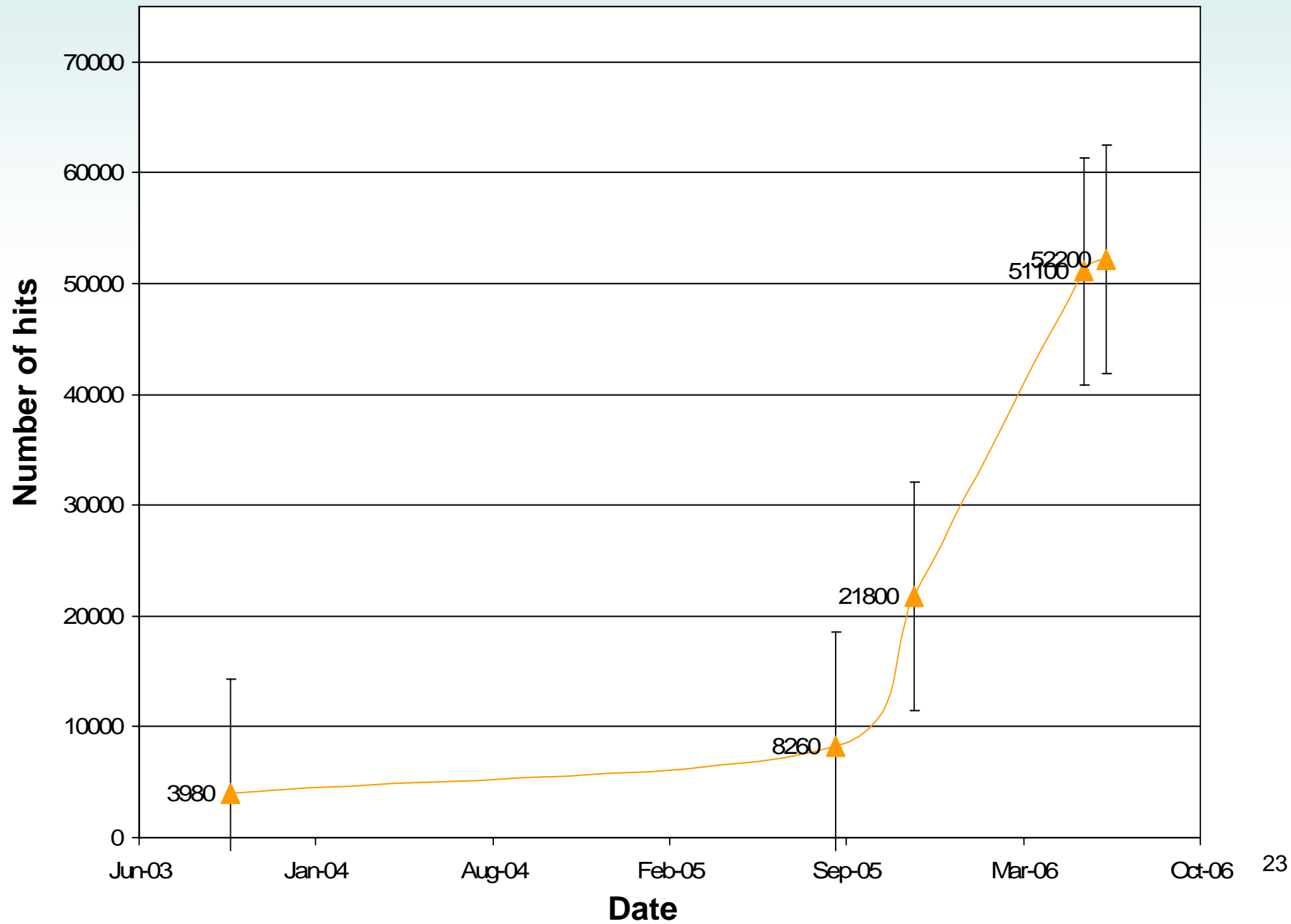
I need ... to know exactly what I **would do** if and when I **did win**. (an upcoming political race) *gideon-macleish.joeuser.com/index.asp?AID=118971*

- Acceptable with non-emphatic *then* (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005):

Belle says **if and when** Jan wakes up **then** she will identify her real attacker. *www.soapoperafan.com/days/2005summaries/april2.html*

Well **if and when** Bush attacks Iran, or North Korea if he really loses his mind, **then** the price for gasoline at the pumps might exceed 5 bucks a gallon... *thinkprogress.org/2006/07/07/7578/*

APPENDIX B: *until and if*



until and if

