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**BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE**

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**The conjunctions *if* vs. *whether* in interrogative subordinate clauses**

Konkurence spojek *if* a *whether* v závislých větách tázacích

## **Poděkování**

Ze všeho nejvíce bych chtěla poděkovat vedoucí mé práce PhDr. Gabriele Brůhové, Ph.D., která pro mě toto téma vybrala, celou bakalářskou práci mě provedla a poskytla mi cenné rady. Za pomoc s postupy statistického ověřování dat a jejich interpretací bych také chtěla velice poděkovat Mgr. Ondřeji Tichému, Ph.D. Dále bych ráda poděkovala všem přátelům, kteří mi jakkoli při zpracování bakalářské práce pomohli. V neposlední řadě bych své díky také ráda vyjádřila všem blízkým, kteří mě v průběhu celého studia podporovali a věřili v mé schopnosti.

# **Prohlášení**

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V Praze, dne 8. srpna 2023

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## Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce se zabývá konkurencí spojek *if* a *whether* v závislých větách tázacích. Ze sémantického hlediska mezi těmito dvěma spojkami není rozdíl, jsou tedy mezi sebou zaměnitelné, proto představují konkurenční varianty, mezi kterými si mluvčí může svobodně vybrat. U konkurenčních variant se obecně předpokládá, že preference mluvčího jedné či druhé varianty je ovlivňována vnitřními a vnějšími lingvistickými faktory. Účelem této práce je prozkoumat tento konkrétní jev a přinést nové poznatky o vlivu vnitřních i vnějších faktorů, které určují, jakou ze dvou spojek si mluvčí vybere.

Práce je založena na korpusovém výzkumu. Praktická část se opírá o 200 příkladů závislých zjišťovacích otázek, uvozených spojkou *if* nebo *whether*, jejichž zdrojem je mluvená verze Britského národního korpusu, vydána v roce 2014. Shromážděná data jsou zkoumána vždy z pohledu jedné proměnné, počínaje od vnitřních lingvistických faktorů až k faktorům vnějším. Analýza se nejprve zaměřuje na zkoumání vlivu řídicích sloves a na vliv větného typu. Dále je také prozkoumán charakter věty vedlejší. Analýza je zaměřena na syntaktickou funkci, kterou vedlejší věta zastává, na to, zda je věta finitní či nefinitní, a také na to, zda má rozlučovací povahu či nikoli. Mezi analýzu vnějších lingvistických vlivů byli zahrnuti pohlaví, věk a geografická oblast. Pro ověření statistické signifikance vlivu jednotlivých faktorů byla použita logistická regrese nebo série Chi<sup>2</sup> testů.

**Klíčová slova:** závislé zjišťovací otázky, spojky *whether* a *if*, konkurenční varianty, vnitřní lingvistické faktory, vnější lingvistické faktory

## Abstract

The BA thesis focuses on the variation between the two conjunctions *if* and *whether* in subordinate closed interrogatives. Since the two subordinators are from the semantical point of view regarded as interchangeable, they represent competing variants between which the speaker can freely choose. It is believed that speakers' preference for either one or the other variant is determined by internal or external variables. The purpose of this study is to examine this phenomenon in order to provide further knowledge about the influence of variables determining speakers' choice between the two options.

The study is corpus-based; the research part is devoted to examination of 200 examples of closed dependent interrogatives introduced by the conjunction *if* or *whether*, excerpted from the spoken version of British National Corpus 2014. The collected data are examined from the point of view of a single variable, starting with the internal factors proceeding to the external. The analysis initially focuses on the examination of governing verbs and sentence type. Then, it is investigated whether the character of the subordinate clause plays an influential role; the examination is devoted to the syntactic function realised by the clause, to finite or non-finite, as well as alternative or non-alternative character. The external factors include gender, age and region. The statistical significance of the influence of the individual variables is verified either by means of logistic regression or Chi2 tests.

**Keywords:** closed dependent interrogatives, conjunctions *whether* and *if*, competing variants, internal linguistic variables, external linguistic variables

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## List of abbreviations

A+	alternative
A-	non-alternative
ibid	<i>ibidem</i> , in the same place
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
př.	příklad
Spoken BNC2014	British National Corpus 2014 (spoken version)
Yorks/Humber	Yorkshire and Humberside

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# 1 Introduction

Closed dependent interrogatives rank among subordinate content clauses which represent one of three major categories of subordinate clauses. Subordinate content clauses are specific for their nominal character and their function to realise clause elements. Along with dependent open interrogatives, closed interrogatives comprise subcategories of subordinate interrogative clauses. As opposed to open interrogatives which are introduced by the same interrogative pronouns as their direct counterparts, the introduction of closed interrogatives is limited to the conjunctions *whether* and *if*. As the two conjunctions represent linguistic variability that offers speakers an opportunity to choose between the two options, there has been an assumption that the speakers' choice might be determined either by internal or external linguistic factors (Kolbe, 2011: 201). The motivation for the study of variables influencing speakers' preference for one or the other option was aroused by a relative minimum of research engaging in this particular phenomenon, compared to for example to the choice between *that* and zero subordinator (see Rohdenburg, 1996; Kolbe-Hanna & Symrecsanyi, 2015). Therefore, the most general purpose of this paper is to contribute to the research and render base for further interest.

The theoretical background is devoted to the detailed description of relevant categories and subcategories of subordinate clauses, starting with subordinate content clauses, through subordinate interrogative clauses, to closed dependent interrogatives. The description then focuses on the diachronic development of the two conjunctions and their other uses in adverbial clauses: namely, in conditional, concessive and conditional-concessive clauses. In addition, the use of *if* in independent sentences is also included. One chapter of the theoretical part summarises recent findings on the alternation between *if* and *whether* in closed dependent interrogatives; and since the practical research is based on a spoken corpus, the last section of the theoretical background offers a brief characterization of spoken medium.

The methodical part works with 200 samples of closed dependent interrogatives derived from a spoken corpus, Spoken BNC2014, used for the analysis. The purpose of the methodical section is to find out whether the hypothesis that the difference between *if* and *whether* is primarily stylistic – *if* is a more

preferred option in informal style (see Section 2.5) – is final; or whether there are some factors that may have a further impact on the choice even in spoken language. The choice between the options is enquired from two perspectives: internal linguistic factors embrace governing verb, sentence type, syntactic function and character of the subordinate clause; external linguistic factors, on the other hand, comprise of gender, age and regional variety.

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Subordinate content clauses

Subordinate clauses are generally classified into three classes: content, relative and adverbial. The content clauses are specific for their dependency on the controlling linguistic item in the main clause of which meaning they complete (Dušková et al., 1994: 594). They typically occupy the same syntactic functions as noun phrases, most frequently subject and object but they can also serve as subject complement, object complement, modifier, or even adjectival complementation and prepositional complement. The range of syntactic functions they can occupy is dependent on the character of particular type of content clauses.

According to Dušková et al., the content clauses are divided into five categories: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative and optative (ibid.). The individual clause-types, along with some syntactic functions they realise, are demonstrated by the following examples:

- (1) The most important thing is (**that**) *we shall all be able to go together.* (ibid.)
- (2) a. I am not sure **which** *house it is.* (ibid.: 604)  
b. He expressed his doubts **whether** *such a step was justifiable.* (ibid.:602)
- (3) I suggest **that** *we should consult a lawyer.* (ibid.: 606)
- (4) Everybody was saying **how** *well she looked.* (ibid.)
- (5) I wish *young people had more sense of duty.* (ibid.: 607)

The example (1) shows a prototypical instance of subordinate content declarative clause functioning as subject complement, where it is possible to leave out the conjunction *that*. Although the interrogatives are more closely described in the following subsections, the examples demonstrating both ‘opened’ and ‘close’ interrogatives are included in the present section as well, in order to show contrast between them and the remaining clause-types; and prepare the base for the discussion about terminology. The open interrogative is depicted by the example (2a) where it occupies the function of adjectival complementation. The closed interrogative that serves as a postmodifier can be observed in (2b). The term ‘imperative’ clause applied by Dušková et al. is unique because their terminology is partly influenced by Czech language; on that account, in the English grammars this type is not adopted. In the example (3), the imperative clause consists of *that* +

*should*, but especially in the American English *should* is substituted for subjunctive (ibid.: 606). The dependent exclamative is demonstrated by (4), where the subordinate clause fulfils the function of the direct object. The subordinate clauses following the verb *wish* in the main clause (5) are by Dušková et al. separately classified as optative clauses.

All the examples above demonstrate the instances of finite clauses; nevertheless, there are other structural types (Quirk et al., 1958: 1061-1068). Namely, *to*-infinitive clauses (6), *-ing* clauses (7), bare infinitive clauses (8) – these three could be formally classified as non-finite clauses; and lastly, verbless clauses (9).

- (6) I am very eager *to meet her*. (ibid.: 1061)
- (7) I'm responsible for *drawing up the bucket*. (ibid.: 1063)
- (8) *Mow the lawn* was what I did this afternoon. (ibid.: 1067)
- (9) *Wall-to-wall carpets in every room* is their dream. (ibid.: 1068)

The finite subordinate content clauses are also specific for their temporal relations. Due to their dependency on the main clause, the tense in the subordinate clause is controlled by the tense in the superordinate clause. On that account, contrary to the relative and adverbial clauses, in the case of past tense in the main clause, the temporal backshift applies in the subordinate clause:

- (10) She always says *how cosy the room is*. – She exclaimed *how cosy the room was*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 610)
- (11) Do you know *how it turned out*? – Did you know *how it had turned out*? (ibid.)
- (12) I realize *that I have made a mistake*. – I realized *that I had made a mistake*. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, there are some exceptions: if the superordinate clause is already in past participle or the verb phrase has the form of conditional mood, there is no back shift in the subordinate clause. The same applies to modal verbs in conditional mood and the phrase *had better*. The use of verbs *would*, *could* and *might* in subordinate content clauses thus creates ambiguities because their forms look identical in both – as a conditional and as present forms of *will*, *can* and *may* (ibid.: 610-611).

## 2.2 Terminology

As far as relative and adverbial clauses are concerned, the terminology in most English grammars remains identical. However, in the case of subordinate content clauses, the terminology appears to be slightly problematic. The term content clauses, which is used in this paper, is implemented by Huddleston & Pullum (2002) who treat them as a subtype of subordinate clauses. Although Quirk et al. (1985) advocate the same subclassification as Huddleston & Pullum, they apply the term nominal clauses. Biber et al. (2021) introduce an innovative terminology which is most likely related to his different approach to classification. Since, according to Biber et al. (2021: 652), the dependent clause completes the meaning relationship of an associated linguistic item in a higher clause, the term ‘complement clauses’ is employed in this grammar.

As for the further classification of content clauses, all the three reference grammars are unanimous in their terminology: the subordinate clauses introduced by *whether/if* or by ‘*wh*-words’ are referred to as interrogative clauses. Yet, this traditional terminology has been opposed by Nordström & Boye (2016: 131) whose argumentation is based on the fact that the term “interrogative” evokes an illocutionary force which is not characteristic of subordinate clauses. The objections based on the same argument could be in fact applied on terminology concerning further classification of subordinate interrogative clauses as well. The two of the three main grammars refer to the dependent interrogatives introduced by *whether* or *if* as ‘*yes/no*’ interrogative clauses; and ‘*wh*’-interrogative clauses to those introduced by ‘*wh*-words’ (Quirk et al., 1985: 1050-1055, Biber et al., 2021: 676-686). On the contrary, Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 972) distinguish between ‘closed’ and ‘open’ interrogative clauses.

Thus, we can see that the terminology of the subordinate clauses differs in the three major grammars of the English language depending on stages of classification on two levels: on the most general level – designation for one entire class of subordinate clauses; and on the most specific one – the ultimate division of dependent interrogative clauses. The term ‘interrogative clause’ occupying the intermediate level between these two is nonetheless shared. I will follow Huddleston & Pullum’s terminology because I also consider this class as a subtype of subordinate clauses; and I believe that the term ‘content’ defines them the most accurately. Moreover, the attribute ‘nominal’ as used by Quirk et al. applies not only

to the content clauses but also to the relative clauses; an example of nominal relative clause is illustrated in (13).

(13) I took *what they offered me*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1056)

I will also follow the convention; therefore, the term ‘interrogative’ subordinate clauses or dependent interrogatives will be adopted in this paper, although I consider the reasons for rejection of this terminology, expressed by Nordström & Boye, relevant. Lastly, I find it more convenient to distinguish between ‘closed’ and ‘open’ interrogatives according to Huddleston & Pullum, rather than between ‘yes-no’ and ‘wh’-interrogatives - used by Quirk et al. and Biber et al.; since, “the fact that *whether* begins with <wh> but it is not technically a *wh*-word may cause a potential confusion”, as Kolbe-Hanna (2021: 206) rightly points out.

### 2.3 Interrogative subordinate clauses

Subordinate interrogatives appear after verbs or other types of words expressing question, lack of knowledge or a call for communication; prototypical examples of such words being: *ask, question, problem*; expressions which most likely introduce dependent interrogatives being: *I wonder, I don't know, I am not sure/certain* (Dušková et al., 1994: 601). Although they “express a question, with the same set of possible answers” as the direct questions, they differ from the direct interrogative sentences in form and in the fact that they bear no illocutionary force; hence, Huddleston & Pullum avoid the traditional term ‘indirect question’ and refer to the questions expressed by subordinate interrogative as embedded questions (2002: 972).

Concerning the form, in contrast to the direct questions, the most important distinguishing feature is the absence of the inverted word order – in the case of dependent interrogatives the subject-verb inversion is not employed:

(14) Has he read it? – I wonder *whether/if he has* read it. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 972)

(15) **What** did he do? – I know *what he* did. (ibid.)

The example (15) shows that both the direct question and the dependent interrogative are introduced by the same complementizer, the inverse word order thus represents a different character of the two sentence-types. Yet, this feature is blurred when the interrogative pronoun in a direct question has function of a subject

because the direct word order applies, the main and the subordinate clauses thus look identical:

(16) **What** happened to Kim? – It’s unclear *what happened to Kim*. (ibid.)

The direct word order and the extensive scope in the use of complementing means, except for *whether*, *if* and *who*, leads to an overlap between open subordinate interrogatives and nominal relative clauses which can also lead to ambiguities (Dušková et al., 1994: 601):

(17) I really liked *what she wrote*. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 1070)

(18) I can’t help wondering *what she wrote*. (ibid.)

(19) *What she wrote* is completely unclear. (ibid.)

The main difference between the relative clause (17) and the interrogative clause (18) is grounded in semantics. Relative clauses typically express objects or phenomena, while events, facts, states or thoughts are mediated through subordinate interrogatives (Dušková et al., 1994: 601). Furthermore, the introducing means of relative clauses can be substituted by phrases such as *the thing that*, *the time when*, *that which* etc. which cannot be done with complements that introduce dependent interrogatives (ibid.: 613). The example (19) offers two possible interpretations: the sentence can be either interpreted as “The material she wrote is completely unclear”, in that case we deal with a relative clause; or “The answer to the question ‘What did she write?’ is completely unclear”, which is an instance of interrogative clause (Huddleston & Pullum, 2022: 1070).

The modality of the subordinate interrogative is influenced by the modality in the main clause; hence, if the superordinate clause is declarative, the whole sentence bears the same characteristic (17), the same rule applies for interrogative (11) and imperative sentence-types (Dušková et al., 1994: 602). The majority of subordinate interrogatives can form alternative *to*-infinitive clauses, which according to Quirk et al., have “an obligational sense” (1985: 1052):

(20) I can’t imagine *how to arrange it to everybody’s satisfaction*. /

I can’t imagine *how it can be arranged*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 602)

But the expressions of “disbelief, surprise, dependence, or (for the most part) significance” do not permit the non-finite alternation (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 985):

(21) I don't care *whether I go or not*. – \*I don't care *whether to go or not*. (ibid.)

The alternative *to*-infinitive clauses are introduced by the same complementizer as their finite counterparts. The only interrogative adverb which cannot be used to introduce infinitive dependent interrogative is *why*:

(22) I don't know *whether to do it / what to do / [...]* / \**why to do it*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 602)

The introduction of the *to*-infinitive clause by *why* is nevertheless not considered as ungrammatical by Quirk et al., it is admitted though that the construction occurs rarely (1985: 1052).

Huddleston & Pullum also distinguish between dual character of the interrogative clauses. Both open and closed interrogatives can be “oriented either towards the question or towards the answer, depending on the context in which they are embedded” (2002: 981-983):

(23) She asked *where he lived*. (ibid.: 981)

(24) She told me *where he lived*. (ibid.)

The two characters differ in what they report; the question-oriented interrogatives (22) report “an illocutionary act of asking a question, whereas answer-oriented (23) report an act of stating” -the answer is provided regardless of whether the question was asked or not (ibid.). The orientation is influenced by the restrictions applying on the use of closed interrogatives, the inverted word order and even the use of emotive modifiers plays a role; the polar orientations is on that account in some cases not necessarily straightforward which is why some constructions display only weak answer-orientation and why close interrogatives are excluded from strong answer-orientation in some contexts (ibid.: 982-983).

### 2.3.1 Open interrogatives

The open interrogative clauses are introduced by the same *wh*-words as the direct questions; apart from this formal feature, they resemble the open questions semantically since they “leave a gap of unknown information, represented by the *wh*-element” (Quirk et al., 1985: 1051). The use of open interrogatives is however not limited just to this semantic purpose, the clauses can also express other mental states or processes, such as (un)certainty about the answer. By all means, the



additional semantic senses lead to posing a question that is focused on the *wh*-word (ibid.).

Syntactically, open interrogatives can realise subject (25a) that can be also extraposed (25b), in which case the anticipatory *it* is used; direct object (26), subject complement (27), adjectival complementation (28), prepositional complement (29); and postmodifier (30):

- (25) a. **What** *the result will be* cannot be predicted.  
b. It cannot be predicted **what** *the result will be*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 604)
- (26) I can't imagine **what** *they want with your address*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1050)
- (27) The problem is **who** *will water my plants when I am away*. (ibid.: 1051)
- (28) I am not sure **which** *she prefers*. (ibid.)
- (29) They did not consult us on **whose** *names should be put forward*. (ibid.)
- (30) a. Your original question, **why** *he did not report it to the police earlier*, has not yet been answered. (ibid.)  
b. He gave an explanation of **how** *it could have happened*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 604)

It is important to note that grammars diverge in the opinions concerning realization of postmodifier and prepositional complement. Quirk et al. regard the example (30a) as an apposition (1985: 1051) while (30b) is viewed by Dušková et al. as a noun modifier (1994: 604); but in fact, both examples modify a noun. Therefore, I have decided to call these instances postmodification. Also, Dušková et al. do not mention the realization of prepositional complement but it is convenient to do so, since the preposition can be in some cases omitted (31) but elsewhere, its omission results in two different meanings (32):

- (31) I'm not certain (about/as to/of) **what** *she's asking for*. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 979)
- (32) a. She asked **what** *changes they were planning to introduce*.  
b. She asked about **what** *changes they were planning to introduce*. (ibid.)

It is clear that even after the omission of the preposition in (31) the meaning remains the same. Contrarily, (32a) "reports the content of the question she asked, whereas (32b) reports the topics of her question" (ibid.).

The syntactic functions are also related to some grammatical similarities with the direct questions. If the *wh*-element introducing the dependant interrogative

is bound to a preposition, the prepositions' position is governed by the same rules as in the direct questions:

- (33) I don't remember *from whom* I got it. / I don't remember *who(m)* I got it *from*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 604)

In Section 2.3 the word order has been described as the distinguishing feature between the dependent and independent interrogatives. Quirk et al. however point out that in cases of some syntactic positions the subject-verb inversion may occur in open dependent interrogatives as well:

- (34) The problem is *who can we get to replace her*. (1985: 1051)

The subject-verb inversion in the dependent clause can be found particularly after the verb *be*, i.e., the clause realises subject complement, or when the clause functions as postmodification (ibid.).

### 2.3.2 Closed interrogatives

Contrary to open interrogatives, there is a more perceptible degree of formal distinction between closed dependent interrogatives and their independent counterparts, i.e., direct *yes-no* questions, for the two sentence-types are not introduced by the same elements. Closed dependent interrogatives are introduced by the conjunctions *whether* and *if*, whereas direct *yes-no* questions typically start with a verb. The initial position of an operator is caused by the subject-verb inversion, but also by the absence of interrogative pronouns since they are not incorporated by closed interrogative sentences; therefore, a *yes-no* question can be introduced by modal verbs but more frequently by auxiliaries: *be*, *do* or *have*, depending on the temporal meaning which the question expresses. As was already discussed, the direct word order is applied in subordinate interrogatives; hence, closed dependent interrogatives take the form of declarative sentences, introduced by *whether/if* (14).

Subordinate interrogatives that are introduced by *whether/if* and contain the coordinating conjunction *or* in the second part of the clause are called alternative interrogatives; they can either consist of two full clauses, when the repetition of the subordinator is compulsory (35a), or the second unit can have an abbreviated form (35b):

- (35) a. I can't find out *whether/if the flight has been delayed or whether/if it has been cancelled.*  
 b. They didn't say *whether it will rain or be sunny.* (Quirk et al., 1985: 1053)

The alternative interrogative clauses are in some grammars treated as a subtype of dependent interrogatives (Dušková et al., 1994: 604), whereas in the English grammars they are viewed as a subcategory of closed interrogatives. Since the alternative interrogatives display the same formal features as closed interrogatives, mainly they are introduced by the same subordinators, in the present paper the approach of the English grammarians is followed. The coordinative *or* is frequently directly followed by the negative particle *not*, in which case a dual word order is possible:

- (36) a. I don't know *whether/if this factor plays a role or not.*  
 b. I don't know *whether or not this factor plays a role.* (ibid.)

Closed interrogatives typically occur after nouns, verbs and adjectives which express a lack of knowledge. The syntactic function that closed interrogatives realise depends on the part of speech they complement. Except for adjectival complementation, closed interrogatives realise the same syntactic functions as open interrogatives:

- (37) a. *Whether we do it now or later* is immaterial.  
 b. It is immaterial *whether we do it now or later.* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 977)
- (38) The main question is *whether we have sufficient evidence to secure a conviction.* (ibid.)
- (39) a. I doubt *whether/if it is wise.* (Dušková et al., 1994: 602)  
 b. I consider it immaterial *whether we do it now or later.* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 978)
- (40) a. He expressed his doubts *whether such a step was justifiable.* (Dušková et al., 1994: 602)  
 b. The question may be raised *whether or not we are dealing with a common factor in anxiety and compulsivity.* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 980)
- (41) He is preoccupied with *whether people find his behaviour socially acceptable.* (ibid.: 978)

Again, the examples (37) show the two sentence constructions when the subordinate clause serves as a subject; realization of a subject complement can be observed in (38); closed interrogatives very often function as objects which is demonstrated in (39), just as the subject, object can be also sometimes extraposed (39b); in the examples (40) each dependent clause complements a noun; therefore, both clauses function as postmodification, the postmodifying clause being however in (40b) discontinuous – it does not follow the head directly. The last syntactic position that can be realised by closed interrogatives is prepositional complementation, as shown in the example (41).

### 2.3.2.1 Syntactic restrictions applying on *if*

The alternation between *if* and *whether* in closed interrogatives is not always permitted, as *if* is to some extent syntactically restricted. This section illustrates contexts from which the subordinator *if* is excluded:

- *if* cannot introduce a subject clause (42a), it is possible only in case of extraposition (42b):

(42) a. ***Whether/\*If*** *she likes the present* is not clear to me.

b. It's not clear to me ***whether/if*** *she likes the present*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1054)

- similarly, *if* is excluded from all contexts “when the interrogative clause precedes the superordinate predicator”:

(43) ***Whether/\*If*** *it will work* we shall soon find out. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 973)

- a subject complement clause also cannot be introduced by *if*:

(44) My main problem right now is ***whether/\*if*** *I should ask for another loan*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1054)

- the *if*-clause cannot function as prepositional complementation:

(45) It all depends on ***whether/\*if*** *they will support us*. (ibid.)

- it is not possible to introduce a postmodifying clause by *if*:

(46) This question, *whether/\*if* the commissioner exceeded the terms of reference, will need to be carefully investigated. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 974)

- *to*-infinitive clauses do not permit being introduced by *if*:

(47) I don't know *whether/\*if* to see my doctor today. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1054)

- lastly, *if* cannot be directly followed by the phrase *or not* (47a), it can introduce the alternative interrogative provided only that *or not* is postposed (47b):

(48) a. He didn't say *whether/\*if* or not he'll be staying here.

b. He didn't say *if* he'll be staying here or not. (ibid.)

## 2.4 Historical development of *if* and *whether*

As the previous section shows, due to the syntactic restrictions applying to *if*, the use of the two conjunctions in subordinate content clauses is not equivalent. Moreover, the distribution of both conjunctions extends beyond the scope of content clauses. In order to better understand the different characters of the two conjunctions, it is useful to investigate them from the diachronic point of view. Although both conjunctions derive from various forms, the reason why both of them are suitable for introducing content interrogative clauses is most likely rooted in semantics because they both “indicate uncertainty about the complement proposition” (Nordström & Boye, 2016: 133, 145). It seems that in case of content interrogative clauses, the shared meaning of “uncertainty” led during the implementation into the English language to an overlap between the two conjunctions; however, under the influence of language development, *if* has acquired another usage.

According to Oxford English Dictionary, *whether* derived from interrogative pronouns meaning “which of two” or “one of two”: Old English *hwæþer* and *hweþer*, which corresponded to Old Frisian *hwed(d)er*, *h(w)oder*, *ho(e)r*; Old Saxon *hweðar*; Old High German *hwedar*, *wedar*; Old Norse *hvaðarr*; and Gothic *hwapar*. As far as present-day Germanic languages are concerned, we can find related words in Scandinavian languages: Faroese *hvørt* and Icelandic *hvort* also derive from the same forms as *whether*; Danish and Norwegian *hvorvidt* or Swedish *huruvida* are words of similar origin, both come from “Old Norse

interrogative pronoun *hwār* ‘which of two’ or *hwār* ‘which’ (of many) + *viðer* ‘far’” (Nordström & Boye, 2016: 135).

The origin of *if* can be traced back to Pro-Germanic subjunction *eþa* or *ef*, which originates in “a dative form of a noun meaning ‘doubt’” (ibid.: 134-135). Etymologically related words according to OED are: Old Frisian *jef*, *jof*, *ef*; Old Saxon *ef*, *af*, *of*; Old High German *ibu*, *ibi*, *ubi*, *oba*; Old Icelandic *if*, *ef*; Old Danish *æf*, *of*; and probably Gothic *ibai*, *iba*. There are two possible scenarios concerning the function of *eþa*, *ef*: on one hand, it has been suggested that the word at first functioned as a question word; on the second hand, it could have served as a dubitative predicate with the following clause as its complement, but over time it underwent a process of grammaticalization resulting in a complementizer (Nordström & Boye, 2016: 135).

No matter which of these two opinions is more plausible, it is undeniable that the original forms of *if* were in English used to introduce both content interrogative clauses and adverbial conditional clauses, just as its German cognates. It is interesting though that the use of these cognates in the two languages has developed in the opposite ways. In the modern period, especially in the written medium, there was a tendency to distinguish the conjunctions so that each category is marked by a unique connective (Zieglschmid, 1929: 50). Under these circumstances the use of *if* became more peculiar to conditional clauses, whereas the use of German *ob* in conditional clauses was eclipsed by its use in content clauses. (ibid.) There is evidence which suggests that this phenomenon could begin to manifest already in the Middle English period (see Toy, 1931). Nevertheless, while the use of *if* in content interrogatives has not completely disappeared from English, the conjunction *ob* is in present-day German restricted exclusively to content clauses and the conditional clauses are introduced by the conjunction *wenn*.

#### **2.4.1 Other uses of *if* and *whether***

The discussion about the diachronic evolution of the two conjunctions outlines that their distribution has expanded in the course of language development. Both conjunctions also serve as subordinators introducing adverbial clauses which in general realize adverbials; therefore, they also have the same syntactic function (Dušková et al., 1994: 627). Although the usage of *whether* is primarily focused on closed interrogatives, it also introduces adverbial conditional-concessive clauses. The use of *if*, on the other hand, is mainly associated with the adverbial conditional

clauses. Nevertheless, since *if* has the ability to be combined with other elements, its use is in comparison to *whether* much more widespread; it occurs also in adverbial concessive clauses and in a special type of independent sentences.

#### 2.4.1.1 The use of *if* in adverbial conditional clauses

Apart from *if*, which embodies the most common conditional subordinator, conditional clauses can be also introduced by *unless*, *provided (that)*, *as long as*, *given (that)* etc. As the name suggests, semantically, conditional clauses express condition. The condition can be either direct (49): the main and subordinate adverbial clauses are dependent on each other, for the content of the main clause can be implemented provided only that the condition expressed by the subordinate clause is satisfied (Dušková et al., 1994: 638); or indirect (50): when “the condition is not related to the situation in the matrix clause and it is rather dependent on the implicit speech act of the utterance” (Quirk et al., 1985: 1089).

(49) *If you put the baby down*, she'll scream. (ibid.: 1088)

(50) She's far too considerate *if I may say so*. (ibid.: 1089)

The direct conditions correspond to the realization of adjuncts while the indirect conditions represent rather peripheral use; therefore, they correspond to style disjuncts.

Based on the character of the condition and its temporal reference, the direct conditions are further classified into four categories:

(51) *If anything occurs to me later*, I'll let you know. (Dušková et al., 1994: 639)

(52) *If he changed his opinions*, he'd be a more likeable person. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1091)

(53) They would be here with us *if they had the time*. (ibid.)

(54) *If you had listened to me*, you wouldn't have made so many mistakes. (ibid.)

The example (51) is recognized as open condition (also called ‘real’) since it is neutral, it “leaves unresolved the question of the fulfilment or nonfulfilment of the condition, and hence also the truth of the proposition expressed by the matrix clause” (ibid.). The examples 52-54 represent hypothetical conditions (also called ‘unreal’) which specify that the condition was not fulfilled, each of them however differs in temporal relation. In (52) the condition will not be fulfilled (reference to the future), in (53) it is not fulfilled (reference to the present), and in (54) it was not

fulfilled (reference to the past). It is also possible to combine two temporal references in one sentence; sometimes the condition refers to the past but the action in the matrix clause is related to the present:

(55) I should be happy to accept your invitation *if only I hadn't made other arrangements*. (Dušková et al., 1994: 641)

The example (55) also shows that *if* does not necessarily occur alone but can be combined with other words. *If only*, for instance, embodies an intensifying equivalent which is used for expressing a hypothetical wish (Quirk et al., 1985: 1092-1093). In addition, combinations such as *if so*, or *if not* can be also found. Moreover, *if* is very frequently used in set phrases as: *if I were/was you*, [...], *if it had not been for* [...] etc. *If* can also introduce a conditional clause in an elliptical form:

(56) *If in doubt*, consult a dictionary. (Dušková et al., 1994: 639)

This privilege is however not limited just to *if*, elliptical conditional clauses can be also introduced by *unless* and *given* (ibid.).

#### 2.4.1.2 The use of *if* in independent sentences

There are several sentence constructions which due to their specific form do not fit in the scheme of major sentence types. From the formal point of view, they represent subordinate clauses; but since they lack a matrix clause, they become independent sentences. Quirk et al. refer to them as subordinate clauses as irregular sentences (1985: 841-842), while by Huddleston & Pullum they are treated as minor clause types, and specifically those introduced by *if* as conditional fragments (2002: 944-945). Another important distinguishing feature is that they bear an illocutionary force; hence, they are often uttered in exclamative contexts:

(57) Well, **if** it isn't the manager himself! (Quirk et al., 1985: 842)

(58) **If only** he were not so timid! (ibid.)

(59) **If only** you'd told me earlier! (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 945)

The example (57) contains a negative *if*-clause that is usually accompanied by *well* or *why* (Quirk et al., 1985: 842) and expresses surprise at seeing anyone. The combination of *if* and *only* is often used to express a wish (58) but speakers can also pronounce regret (59). The exclamative context is however not obligatory, *if*-



sentence can be also used for expressing an indirect directive which has a mitigating function:

(60) **If** you'd like to move your head a little. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 945)

As the character of the examples above indicates, this type of clauses is mostly found in conversation; however, they can sometimes appear in dialogue in fiction and in very informal news texts (Biber et al., 2021: 224).

#### 2.4.1.3 The use of *if* in adverbial clauses of concession

Adverbial clauses of concession are primarily introduced by *although* or “its more informal variant” *though* (Quirk et al., 1985: 1097). Other subordinators introducing clauses of concession are: *when*, *whereas*, *if*, *even if*, *even though*; and especially in British English we can find also *while* and *whilst*, or *as* and *that* (ibid.). “Concessive clauses indicate that the situation in the matrix clause is contrary to expectation in the light of what is said in the concessive clause” (ibid.: 1098) which means that there is no causal relationship between the two clauses (Dušková et al., 1994: 642):

(61) I'll do it (**even**) *if it takes me all the afternoon*. (ibid.)

According to Quirk et al., the connection of *even* and *if* combines the concessive force (represented by *even*) with the conditional one (represented by *if*), while in combination with other subordinators such as *when* or *though*, *even* only has an emphatic function (1985: 1099):

- (62) a. **Even if** you dislike ancient monuments, Warwick Castle is worth a visit.  
b. **Even though** you dislike ancient monuments, Warwick Castle is worth a visit. (ibid.)

There is a notable semantic difference between the two sentences since in (62a) the speaker leaves open whether the addressee dislikes ancient monuments or not, while in the example (62b) the addressee's dislike of ancient monuments is presupposed by the speaker. The presupposition can be however annulled by the means of epistemic modality (ibid.). In cases where *if* is used alone, the synonymous paraphrase by *even if* or *even though* depends on the meaning of the sentence:

(63) a. **If** he's poor, he's (at least) honest.

b. *If he's poor*, he's (also) honest. (ibid.)

The example (63a) bears the meaning of 'He may be poor, yet he's at least honest.'; hence, *if* alternates with *even if*. On the contrary, (63b) can be paraphrased as 'He is poor, yet he's also honest.' which implies the synonymous alternation with *even though*. These two uses of concessive *if* are also realised in abbreviated verbless clauses:

(64) It's possible, *if difficult*. ['It may be difficult.'] (ibid.)

(65) They were in good health, *if somewhat fatter than desirable*. ['They were somewhat fatter than desirable.'] (ibid.)

#### 2.4.1.4 The use of *whether* in adverbial conditional-concessive clauses

The use of *whether ...or (whether)* in adverbial clauses represents an overlap between concessive and conditional meanings, which has already been outlined in the use of *even if*. The correlative structure combines "the conditional meaning of *if* with the disjunctive meaning of *either ...or*" (Quirk et al., 1985: 1100); therefore, from the semantic point of view this type of conditional-concessive clause expresses two alternatives which allow the realization of an action contained in the matrix clause (Dušková et al., 1994: 643). They differ from the closed alternative interrogatives in the realization of syntactic function: they realise only adjuncts which are always facultative. Closed interrogatives, on the other hand, realise syntactic positions of non-adverbial character that are obligatory because the main clause is not complete without them.

There are some examples illustrating the variety of structures that the conditional-concessive clauses introduced by *whether* permit:

(66) *Whether* Martin pays for the broken vase *or (whether)* he replaces it with a new vase, I'm not inviting him again. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1100)

(67) They will attend the meeting, *whether* it is in Paris *or* in Bonn. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 990)

(68) *Whether or not* he finds a job, he's getting married. (Quirk et al., 1985: 1100)

In all instances we can see coordination of two subordinate clauses. In case that second unit is represented by a full clause, *whether* may be repeated (ibid.), as demonstrated in (66). When the second coordinated clause has the same structure

as the preceding one, it is often reduced to the new alternative piece of information (67). The concessive meaning of the structure *whether ...or not* derives from “the unexpected implication that the same situation applies under two contrasting conditions”; the example (68) thus can be paraphrased as ‘Even if he finds a job or even if he doesn’t find a job, he’s getting married.’ (ibid.).

The use of *whether* in adverbial clauses is not limited to introducing of finite clauses only, it can also introduce non-finite and verbless clauses:

(69) ***Whether hunting or being hunted***, the fox is renowned for its cunning.

(Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 990)

(70) ***Whether taken neat or with water***, the mixture can be quite lethal. (ibid.)

(71) ***Whether historically a fact or not***, the legend has a certain symbolic value.

(ibid.)

The example (69) shows a combination of coordinated gerund and participial, while in (70) we can see past-participial construction; lastly, the verbless clause is introduced in the example (71). Concerning both the finite and non-finite conditional-concessive clauses, on one hand, there are several constructions which also permit the omission of *whether*; on the other hand, *whether* may be accompanied by expressions as *regardless of* or *no matter*: (*Regardless of whether or not he finds a job*, he’s getting married.).

## **2.5 Previous research on the alternation between *if* and *whether* in closed interrogative clauses**

The phenomenon of two or more competing forms in the same linguistic environment can be observed across all linguistic levels; regardless of the environment there is a general assumption that the choice between the competing forms is influenced by both internal and external factors (Kolbe, 2011: 201) which determine the speakers’ choice of the particular option. All the referential grammars share the opinion that the main difference between *whether* and *if* is primarily stylistic; *if* is used more frequently in informal style while *whether* embodies the formal variant. Biber et al., whose arguments on the competition between the two conjunctions are based on corpus data, state that overall closed interrogatives introduced by *if* prevail. It is interesting though that *if*-interrogatives are found with fewer verbs (of any frequency) (2020: 684). *Whether*-interrogatives, on the other hand, are linked to matrix clauses displaying greater variability of governing verbs.

This phenomenon is most likely caused by the high frequency of verbs *know*, *wonder* and *see* which especially in conversation prefer the *if*-subordinator (ibid.; Steinbach, 1929: 165). The subordinator *whether* is on the contrary preferred by verbs such as: *explain*, *investigate*, *judge*, *ponder*, *study*, etc. which do not accept the complementation by closed interrogatives frequently (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 975).

Since *whether*-clauses are more neutral in their stylistic range, they are fairly evenly distributed across registers. The situation in the case of *if*-variant is nonetheless different: *if*-clauses are very much favoured in conversation or in the more colloquial style of fiction and rare in academic prose (Biber et al., 2020: 684). Moreover, it has been suggested that reports of questions used as indirect speech acts favour *if*, which may also be one of the reasons supporting the higher occurrence of *if*-clauses in colloquial style:

(72) I asked them *if they'd like to stay to dinner*. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 974)

(73) He wants to know *if you'd mind moving your car*. (ibid.)

Although these examples formally seem to be reported questions, in fact they are statements used as indirect speech acts ('Would you like to stay to dinner?'), ('Would you mind moving your car?'); (72) thus represents an invitation and (73) a request. The choice of *whether* in the subordinate clause would give more prominence to the question rather than to the indirect speech act (ibid.) that is in these cases crucial for the communicative function.

Recent findings have also proved that the choice between *if* and *whether* might be influenced by cognitive complexity, the theory based on the complexity principle, which has been investigated in a series of studies by Günter Rohdenburg. The principle states that "more explicit grammatical alternatives tend to be preferred in cognitively more complex environments" (Rohdenburg, 1996: 149; see also Rohdenburg, 2003). The complexity principle is related to the predictability of items in certain contexts: "more frequent and predictable items and structures are more accessible to the speaker; hence, they imply an easier time winning the competition for what to say next" (Menn & Duffield, 2014: 285). Since the use of *whether* is almost exclusively bound to closed interrogative clauses, it is believed to be the more explicit option. *If*, on the other hand, is used much more frequently

in the English language – it is more accessible to the speaker; therefore, it is considered to be the less explicit variant (Kolbe-Hanna, 2021: 210). Based on research by Kolbe-Hanna, it has been confirmed that *whether* is used in more complex environments; namely, it is preferred in longer, therefore more complex structures (ibid.: 216-218). In addition, the research has shown that *whether* occurs less when the subject of the content clause is realised by a pronoun. The referent in such clauses is treated as known which makes the structure less complex; hence, in favour of *if* (ibid.).

As far as the extralinguistic factors such as age, gender or regional variation are concerned, much research has not yet been done. According to Kolbe, *whether* as subordinator of closed interrogatives is used less frequently by women in general, especially in Southwest England and Wales which also applies to younger speakers (2008: 131-136). The preference of *if* by males as well as younger speakers is also confirmed by Lastres-López's research (2018: 173-176). In comparison to the southern parts of England, *whether* is more frequent in the data from Northern England and Northern Ireland (Kolbe, 2008: 131-136). Also, the subsequent research has shown that compared to the British and New Zealand data, *if* is a preferred option in the data from the Irish environment (Kolbe-Hanna, 2021: 228).

## **2.6 Characteristics of spoken medium**

Traditionally it has been distinguished between two varieties according to medium, spoken and written. Since the data for the empirical part are derived from a spoken corpus, this chapter deals with a brief general description of the spoken discourse, partially based on the comparison with its graphic counterpart. Speech is regarded as “the primary or natural medium for linguistic communication” (Quirk et al., 1985: 24); also, in comparison to the written variety, the oral culture has a longer tradition. One of the most important factors which influence the differences between the two media is the situational context. Participants of a conversation share the same spatial and temporal environment; moreover, often they also display a certain degree of personal background knowledge about each other; as a consequence, in conversation, it may be presumed that the speakers will share the same social and regional dialects (Biber et al., 2021: 16).

Conversations are directly interactive; participants frequently talk about themselves or each other which naturally results in high occurrence of “the first

person pronouns *I* and *we* (referring directly to the speaker) and the second person pronoun *you* (referring directly to the listener)” (ibid.: 15). Contrary to the written medium, where the author has enough time to reread and revise the content in order to achieve correctness in language, speech is defined by the rapid production. Due to the small amount of time for reflection on construction choices or planning of sentence structure, speech evinces higher error rate – instances of such errors being: high incidence of hesitation noises, false starts, self-corrections, repetitions, and other dysfluencies (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 12).

Quirk et al. also point out to the problem of transmission of spoken language; in fact, there is relatively limited repertoire of conventional orthography; hence, it is impossible to record the devices used for transmitting language by speech such as stress, rhythm, intonation, tempo etc. perfectly. This also results in differences between the two media, as authors may be forced to reformulate their sentences in order to convey fully and successfully what needs to be expressed within the orthographic system (1985: 25). In addition, from the phonetic point of view, the acoustic signal of speech for example does not contain analogical spaces between words, as the visual effect of the written (graphic) medium makes people assume; connected speech is for instance also defined by assimilations across word boundaries or linking phenomena (see Volín, 2003: 62-69).

## 3 Material and Method

### 3.1 Material

Due to the interest in variability between the conjunctions *if* and *whether* in spoken language, the material for the analysis was excerpted from the spoken version of British National Corpus 2014<sup>1</sup> which contains data gathered in the years 2012 to 2016. The corpus provides its users with speakers' extralinguistic metadata, which proves convenient in search for the impact of external factors on speakers' choice for one or the other option. Since it is not possible to restrict the query on certain contexts, only the whole corpus can be searched; and the occurrence of both conjunctions, especially *if*, is very frequent in the corpus, the whole quantity of concordances resulting from the query was not used.

The query was restricted to the instances when the conjunction follows a lexical verb or the verb *be*. The analysis is based on 200 examples which were manually selected from 478 concordances, 58% of concordances retrieved represent false positives. The final sample consists of 161 closed dependent interrogatives introduced by *if* and 39 instances of introduction by the conjunction *whether*.

### 3.2 Data extraction

As was already stated in Chapter 2.3.2, the conjunctions *if* and *whether* introducing closed interrogatives typically follow nouns, verbs and adjectives. Since the query covering instances when the two conjunctions follow all the three types of parts of speech would be too broad for the purpose of BA thesis, it has been decided to restrict the query to instances when the two conjunctions follow a verb. Moreover, the actual research was preceded by a brief exploration focused on which types of verbs would be the most relevant for the purpose of the study. The online version of the corpus uses C6 tagset, according to which tags representing verbs are divided into five groups: tags referring to the forms of the verbs *be*, *have*, *do*, modal verbs, and lexical verbs. At first, a separate query for each group of verb tags was conducted. The results showed that the vast majority of the instances when the conjunction *if* followed modal verbs or the forms of verbs *have* and *do* were

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<sup>1</sup> Available publicly via Lancaster University's CQPweb server: <https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/>.

examples of adverbial conditional clauses. There were just a few instances when these three groups of verb types were followed by the conjunction *whether*, and just a fraction of them represented examples of closed dependent interrogatives.

Therefore, in order to minimise the occurrence of undesirable data, the query was narrowed on instances when the conjunctions are preceded by lexical verbs, along with the verb *be* because it is regarded as the main (and the most abundant) copular verb. The research is thus aimed at two syntactic functions of subordinate clauses – object and subject complement. Another reason why the query was not deprived of the forms of the verb *be* was an interest in exploring whether there are some instances of deviation from the correct usage of grammar in spoken language; namely, whether there is an evidence of subordinate clauses functioning as subject complement, governed by the verb *be* in the main clause, being introduced by the conjunction *if* (see Section 2.3.2.1, example (44)).

The final CQP query thus consists of tagsets referring to the forms of lexical verbs and the verb *be*, and a single tag denoting negative:

```
[pos="VB0|VBDR|VBDZ|VBG|VBI|VBM|VBN|VBR|VBZ|VV0|VVD|VVG|VVGK|VVI|VVN|VVNK|VVZ|XX"] [word="whether|if"]2
```

The query searches for all the instances when a form of a lexical verb or the verb *be* is directly followed by the conjunction *if* or *whether*. It is possible though, that there may be some instances of occurrence of another word between the verb and the conjunction (such as in the case of prepositional complementation, as in the example (41) in Section 2.3.2). Nevertheless, since the research focuses on the syntactic positions of object and subject complement when the verb is more likely to be followed directly, it is probable that inserting the option of another word between the verb and the conjunction may lead to higher occurrence of conditional clauses, or the occurrence of subordinate declarative clauses introduced by *that* containing conditional clause starting with *if*, and the occurrence of subordinator

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<sup>2</sup> The query uses tagsets for both the verb *be*, as with the lexical verbs. Nonetheless, there is an alternative pattern which generates identical results: [pos="VV0|VVD|VVG|VVGK|VVI|VVN|VVNK|VVZ|XX"] [lemma="be"] [word="whether|if"].

The C6 tagset was used because the query works with pos-attribute (i.e., part-of-speech tag); for the complete list of explanations of the tags included in the query, see <https://ucl.ac.uk/claws6tags.html>.



*even if*. Hence, this option is not permitted. The query returned 12, 524 matches whose order was randomised.

Since the corpus is not tagged syntactically and there are no formal features distinguishing content clauses from other types of clauses introduced by conjunctions *if* and *whether*, it was necessary to go through the results manually and excerpt the examples of closed dependent interrogatives; and contrarily, exclude the instances of undesirable character. After showing the results in the random order, the initial 478 concordances were used for the purpose of collection of 200 samples.

### 3.2.1 Character of eliminated data

Since compared to *whether* the distribution of *if* is in the English language much more widespread, it was not surprising that even in the case of eliminated data, the number of *if*-subordinations significantly prevailed. As was expected, the majority of filtered data were adverbial conditional clauses:

- (1) so the hosts can't **host** *if they 're gone*

Contrary to the previous example, where the conditional clause is preceded by the main clause by which it is governed, the query also frequently generated instances of conditional *if*-subordination that was however not related to the preceding verb. Such results were caused by colloquial insertions characteristic for spoken language such as: “you know” or “I mean”:

- (2) yeah nothing exciting which is why it's harder to convince him like you **know** *if we 're doing something cool like he 'll probably be up for it*
- (3) I mean it's like one pound for a bottle about this big and it's with everything I **mean** *if you buy it in a restaurant maybe it's two pound fifty but in a shop it's like a pound*

Many conditional clauses were embedded in content declarative clauses, the conjunction *if* followed the verb directly because of the omission of the subordinator *that*:

- (4) she **knows** *if she gets on there and disturbs the cat the cat'll get off and go over and see you*

Surprisingly, there was a minimum of concessive clauses introduced by *if* (5) and only one conditional-concessive clause introduced by *whether* (6):

- (5) you **know** *if he didn't feel the right way about her any longer* he was doing her a favour
- (6) so it 's a game of risk really it 's **whether** *you want to play strategically or risk it*

Also, there were few instances when the query generated results when one speaker ended an utterance with a verb while the addressee's reaction began with the conjunction *if*; hence, there is no relation between the two linguistic elements:

- (7) SPEAKER 1: diets don't count on the weekend I 'm just **saying**  
SPEAKER 2: **if** that if that was true that would explain why I 'm so fat

In the course of the data excerption several problems with classification emerged; namely, there were many ambiguous sentences which were difficult to classify. The difficulties concerning classification were partially caused by characteristic features of connected speech (see Chapter 2.6), and the fact that during the data processing, in order to create the corpus, spoken language was not transcribed phonetically but converted into a written form. Moreover, there was an overall tendency not to use most punctuation marks so any potential misleading of analysts is avoided<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, several samples had to be excluded: some utterances were incomplete (8), either naturally or interrupted by other speaker's utterance, some offered more possibilities concerning their interpretation (9); or on the contrary, in some cases it was not possible to determine the syntactic character of a sentence (10):

- (8) yeah I I **think** *if they*
- (9) I was **wondering** *if there's any way I tried to do it but didn't have time to do it properly*
- (10) so like you **know** *if erm simple basic exercises you know*

In addition, the interaction between the participants of a conversation, often leading to mutual interruptions, caused that the character of clauses could not be easily defined just by focusing on a clause itself, in order to understand its semantic character, it was often necessary to go through most of the conversation to comprehend its context.

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<sup>3</sup> See The British National Corpus 2014: User manual and reference guide. Available at <http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/bnc2014/documentation.php>.

### 3.2.2 Problems in analysis

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, during the data extraction it was inevitable to come across some difficulties concerning the classification. There are some clauses that were retained as a ground for the analysis; yet, due to the nature of spoken language, they cannot be regarded as prototypical examples and their nominal quality of closed interrogative origin is estimated based on the context or the assumption of their semantic meaning.

One of the most frequent features was incompleteness of a subordinate clause. There is usually a missing clause element required by valency of a verb in the subordinate clause:

(11) I just **wonder** *if he'll feel* you know once you 're gone (IF6)

Or in some cases the speaker seems to be interrupted by another participant of a conversation which causes that the previous utterance is not completed and the speaker does not come back to it. Nonetheless, in the case of all samples of such nature which were kept, the subordinate clause contains a subject and a verb which indicate its content origin. On the other hand, there are several examples when the speaker's utterance was also interrupted by another participant; yet it was further completed:

(12) SPEAKER 1: I don't **know** *if there were*  
SPEAKER 2: I think Jordan was much later  
SPEAKER 1: *such borders at that time* (IF26)

Such instances were also classified as closed dependent interrogatives but their meaning was estimated from the context.

The minimum number of deviations from grammatical rules represent the omissions of a subject in a main clause, in all cases it is expected that the omitted subject is the personal pronoun, mostly first person singular:

(13) Don't **know** *if it's necessary* (.) er I think I 'm (IF67)

Also, there are few instances of rather discontinuous subordination when the conjunction or the governing verb is not followed directly by the subordinate clause because of a repetition, insertion or interjection:

(14) it's like sends a message like in some ways you **know** if it if it *if people in other countries are moved to* (IF41)

Lastly, there are some examples containing a piece of anonymous information:

- (15) I don't **know** *whether* --ANONnameM mentioned it to you  
(WHETHER37)

The user is nevertheless acquainted with the character of a missing word (place, name etc.) which makes it possible to substitute the character of a missing word for any kind of concrete piece of information and the character of closed interrogative remains even under these circumstances; hence, sentences of such character were also retained.

### 3.3 Method

The analysis will deal with internal and external variables which may have an impact on the speaker's choice between the two options. At first, the general tendencies of preference in spoken language will be summarised. The data will be examined from the point of view of a single variable in order to get general motives of preferences for one or the other conjunction. For the purpose of determining whether the findings can be considered relevant, the general tendencies concerning a single variable will be provided with the verification of statistical significance.

Concerning the internal factors, the range of verbs linked to the use of particular conjunction will be initially enquired, the character of governing verbs will be further examined because it is possible that some verbs will govern the introduction by one or the other option but the use of *if* and *whether* is likely to coincide with some verbs. Also, it will be examined whether the type of a matrix clause has an impact on the choice of subordinator. Further, the analysis will focus on the character of subordinate clauses - their syntactic function, whether they are finite or non-finite, alternative or non-alternative. For the study of external factors, the following parameters were chosen: gender, age category, and regional variety.

### 3.4 Hypothesis

Since *if* is a more frequent variant in spoken discourse, it is expected that it will prevail. Also, it will most likely be preferred by verbs *know*, *wonder* and *see* (Biber et al., 2020: 684; Steinbach, 1929: 165). *Whether*, on the other hand, will introduce subordinate clauses governed by verbs that do not accept closed interrogatives frequently. Due to the high occurrence of verbs preferring *if* in spoken language, the use of *if* will be more frequent but bound to smaller scope of verbs whereas the

situation concerning *whether* will be probably reversed: there will be fewer instances of introduction by *whether*; yet, connected to broader range of governing verbs in the matrix clause. Based on Kolbe's (2008: 131-136) and Lastres-López's (2018: 173-176) findings, it may be anticipated that *whether* will be used less by women and younger speakers. Research conducted by Kolbe-Hanna also refers to lower rates of subordination by *whether* in southern parts of England. All information on which the hypothesis is based is described in more detail in Chapter 2.5.

## 4 Analysis

In the following sections, the data consisting of 200 samples is examined in detail. As was indicated in Chapter 3.3 the data is examined from the point of view of a single variable starting with internal factors, proceeding to external factors. At first, general tendencies referring to particular variables are discussed; and the quantitative results are summarised in the tables. In addition, special attention is devoted to some anomalous cases along with an explanation of how such instances were treated for the purpose of quantitative analysis. The analysis is supported only by some selected examples illustrating either general tendencies or atypical character; the complete enumeration of the material is provided in the Appendix.

The data consists of 161 closed dependent interrogatives introduced by *if* which represents 80.5% of the collected material. There are 39 instances when the subordinate clause was introduced by *whether*, percentagewise 19.5%. Approximately one quarter of the data consists of the samples of problematic character caused by the attributes of spoken language, which are described in greater detail in Chapter 3.2.2.

### 4.1 Internal factors

#### 4.1.1 Character of a matrix clause

##### 4.1.1.1 Governing verbs

As was already discussed in the theoretical part, all content clauses are distinguished by their dependency on the matrix clause since they often realise an obligatory clause element. The number and character of clause elements is directed by valency of a governing verb in the main clause; therefore, it is useful to examine the character of verbs which require clause elements that are frequently realised by dependent interrogatives. In Chapter 2.3 the semantic character of such verbs was discussed; it was pointed out that interrogative subordinate clauses are bound to verbs and generally words expressing question or lack of knowledge, additionally also call for communication.

The matrix clauses accepting closed dependent interrogatives in the data contain twelve verbs in total: *ask, care, decide, depend, doubt, guess, check, know, remember, see, tell* and *wonder*, out of which *know, see* and *wonder* are the most frequent and mostly introduced by the conjunction *if*. This piece of evidence

coincides with the opinions concerning reasons of high frequency of subordination by *if* in conversation, expressed by Biber et al. (2020: 684) and Steinbach (1929: 165), see Chapter 2.5; and it further supports the precondition of preference of the three verbs in favour of *if*. Table 1 includes absolute frequency and percentage of governing verbs, and number of subordinations by either *if* or *whether* governed by them; verbs in the table are listed in descending order from the most frequent to the rarest:

Table 1 Governing verbs

Verb	Number of subordinations by:		Total
	<i>if</i>	<i>whether</i>	
<i>know</i>	82 (51%)	25 (64.0%)	107 (53.5%)
<i>see</i>	35 (21.7%)	6 (15.4%)	41 (20.5%)
<i>wonder</i>	25 (15.5%)	2 (5.1%)	27 (13.5%)
<i>ask</i>	5 (3.1%)	1 (2.6%)	6 (3%)
<i>depend</i>	6 (3.7%)	0	6 (3%)
<i>remember</i>	3 (2%)	3 (7.7%)	6 (3%)
<i>tell</i>	2 (1.2%)	0	2 (1%)
<i>care</i>	1 (0.6%)	0	1 (0.5%)
<i>decide</i>	1 (0.6%)	0	1 (0.5%)
<i>doubt</i>	0	1 (2.6%)	1 (0.5%)
<i>guess</i>	0	1 (2.6%)	1 (0.5%)
<i>check</i>	1 (0.6%)	0	1 (0.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

The table shows that the introduction by *if* is bound to ten verbs while the introduction by *whether* only to seven which does not correspond with the assumption of greater variability of verbs accepting *whether*-subordinator as an introducing element of closed dependent interrogatives. The question is whether the number of governing verbs would increase with more data. In Figure 1 we can see that the two curves demonstrating the frequencies of subordinations by both conjunctions linked to individual verbs do not differ from each other significantly. In my opinion, to predict that *whether*-subordination will be associated with greater variability of governing verbs than *if*-subordination, for the individual verbs there

would have to be a larger percentage difference in the number of subordinations between the two conjunctions. Especially for verbs whose use overlaps with both conjunctions, subordinations by *if* would have to prevail more significantly.

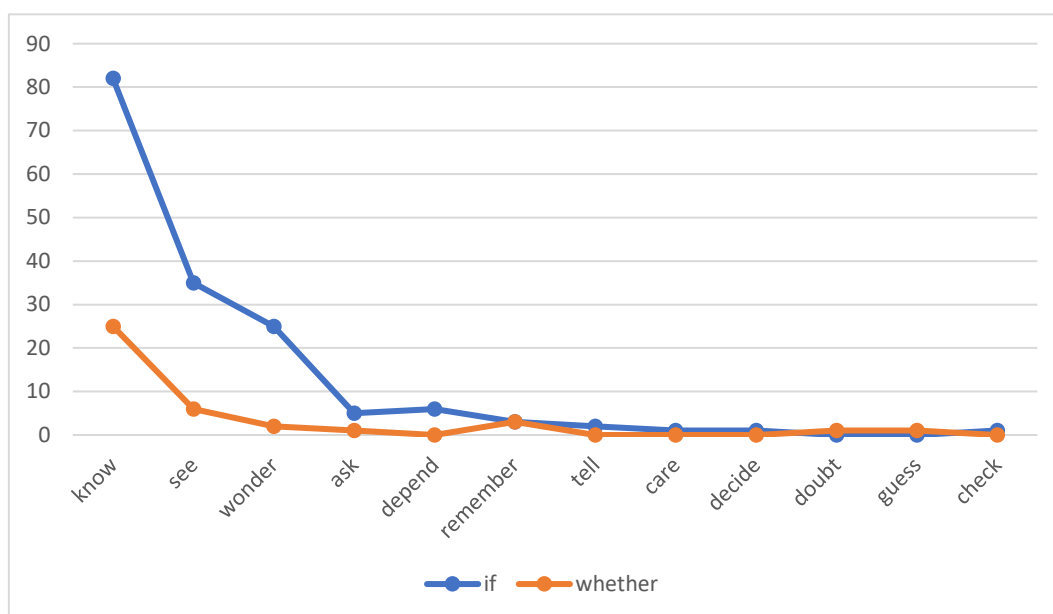


Figure 1 Comparison of frequency of subordinations between *if* and *whether* for individual verbs

From the semantic point of view, it is also noteworthy that the verbs introduced only by *if*; namely, *care*, *decide*, *depend*, *check* and *tell*, do not primarily express question or the lack of knowledge, while *doubt* and *guess* in the present data bound only to *whether* are closer to this meaning. In order to verify whether the contribution of these verbs linked to either *if* or *whether* can be considered as significant, and moreover, to examine the influence of individual verbs on the choice between the two subordinators, I took the test of logistic regression.<sup>4</sup> In comparison to linear regression which works on the basis of “more x, the more y”, logistic regression transfers this procedure to nominal variables by calculating probabilities ( Kolbe-Hanna, 2021: 217).

The results of the logistic regression focused on the influence of verbs can be observed in Figure 2. The value 0 represents *whether* whereas *if* is represented by the value 1. The verbs are ordered from left to right depending on the number of subordinations by the two conjunctions – from those associated only with *whether* to verbs linked exclusively to *if*. The confidential intervals show the measure of (un)certainty. From the Figure we can see that although the verbs associated with

<sup>4</sup> All tests of logistic regression were performed in R. Available at: <https://posit.cloud/>.



either *if* or *whether* contribute to the higher frequency of subordinations by particular conjunction, their influence is least significant since they display the greatest measure of uncertainty. On the contrary, the highest measure of certainty is connected with the verb *know*. Yet, the confidential intervals for every verb overlap; therefore, even with the dispersion parameter 1 it cannot be stated that one effect prevails the other. Namely, that the higher frequency of subordinations by *if* or *whether* for individual verbs can be considered as a significant variable.

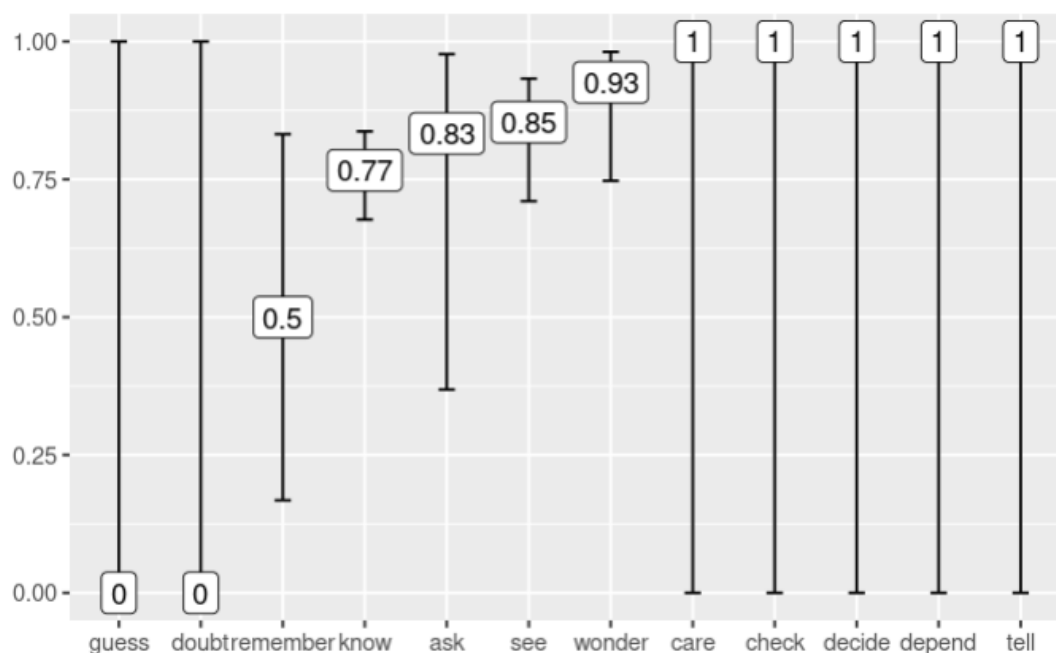


Figure 2 Statistical significance of the influence of the individual verbs

#### 4.1.1.2 Sentence type<sup>5</sup>

In the previous chapter we could see that closed dependent interrogatives are not strictly governed only by verbs expressing question or the lack of knowledge; therefore, when being governed by such verbs the suitable meaning is substituted either by negative or different sentence type. The subject of this chapter is to find out whether a sentence type may have an impact on the choice of particular conjunction.

The data contains both affirmative and negative declarative sentences, which represent 88%, imperative sentences fill 8%, and the remaining 4% are

<sup>5</sup> Although this section is classified as a subtype of *Character of a matrix clause*, I intentionally apply the term “sentence type” here, because, as was mentioned in Chapter 2.3 on *Interrogative subordinate clauses*, the type of the main clause determines the type of the entire sentence which means that if the superordinate clause is for example imperative, the subordinate clause also bears its quality. Also “sentence type” represents a more established form of terminology in this sense, rather than “clause type”. The classification is however caused by the fact that the examined feature is determined by the main clause.

interrogative sentences. For example, the verb *know* occurs in 95% in a negative form (16). Also, the negative expression: “I don’t know” frequently appears in its colloquial form *dunno*, which is typically used in informal conversation (OED) (17):

(16) I don't **know** *if it's got any protection on it* (IF2)

(17) at my work I **dunno** *if it's everywhere* (IF10)

The verb *remember* is found only in negative and *wonder*, on the other hand, exclusively in affirmative declarative sentences:

(18) again I can't **remember** *if I found I* (IF5)

(19) you **wonder** *whether they 're kind of holding back from saying that*  
(WHETHER10)

*See* (in the meaning of “find out”) is the most frequent representative of imperative (20) and when being used in declarative sentences, it usually has a form of *to*-infinitive, functioning as adverbial of purpose; in that case, the closed dependent interrogative is a part of the adverbial (21). In the present data, there are overall 15 cases of subordinate interrogative clause being part of the adverbial.

(20) do you want a crisp --ANONnameM? **see** *if dad wants one* (IF47)

(21) I just come round to s- **see** *whether you 'd be okay with me cutting your bit of grass* (WHETHER8)

The use of both subordinators intervenes with all three sentence types, in case of declarative sentences with both negative and affirmative. Whether the sentence type might have an impact on the choice of subordinator was enquired especially with the five verbs which allow introduction by both conjunctions in the present data (i.e., *know*, *see*, *wonder*, *ask* and *remember*). Nevertheless, except for the verb *remember* which is used only in negative declarative sentences with identical number of subordinations by both conjunctions, *if* prevails with every verb in all sentence types; hence, it seems that there are no sentence types preferring subordination by *whether*. In terms of quantity, declarative negative sentences are the most frequent which is most likely caused by the high occurrence of the verb *know* in negative form and the occurrence of *remember* exclusively in negative. What is however noteworthy is the fact that in the case of declarative affirmative sentences the use of both conjunctions is connected to the biggest range of verbs.

Especially *whether* introduces only one imperative and one interrogative clause, in both cases these main clauses are governed by the verb *see*, in declarative negative it is found only with two verbs (*know, remember*), whereas in connection to declarative affirmative clauses its use is associated with six verbs; see Table 2.

Table 2 Sentence types

Verb	Imperative		Declarative negative		Declarative affirmative		Interrogative		Total
	if	whether	if	whether	if	whether	if	whether	
<i>ask</i>	1				4	1			6
<i>care</i>			1						1
<i>decide</i>					1				1
<i>depend</i>					6				6
<i>doubt</i>						1			1
<i>guess</i>						1			1
<i>check</i>					1				1
<i>know</i>			78	24	2	1	2		107
<i>remember</i>			3	3					6
<i>see</i>	14	1			17	4	4	1	41
<i>tell</i>			1				1		2
<i>wonder</i>					25	2			27
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>200</b>
	<b>16 (8%)</b>		<b>110 (55%)</b>		<b>66 (33%)</b>		<b>8 (4%)</b>		<b>(100%)</b>

For the purpose of verification of the statistical significance, the test of logistic regression was used again, its results are drawn in the Figure 3:

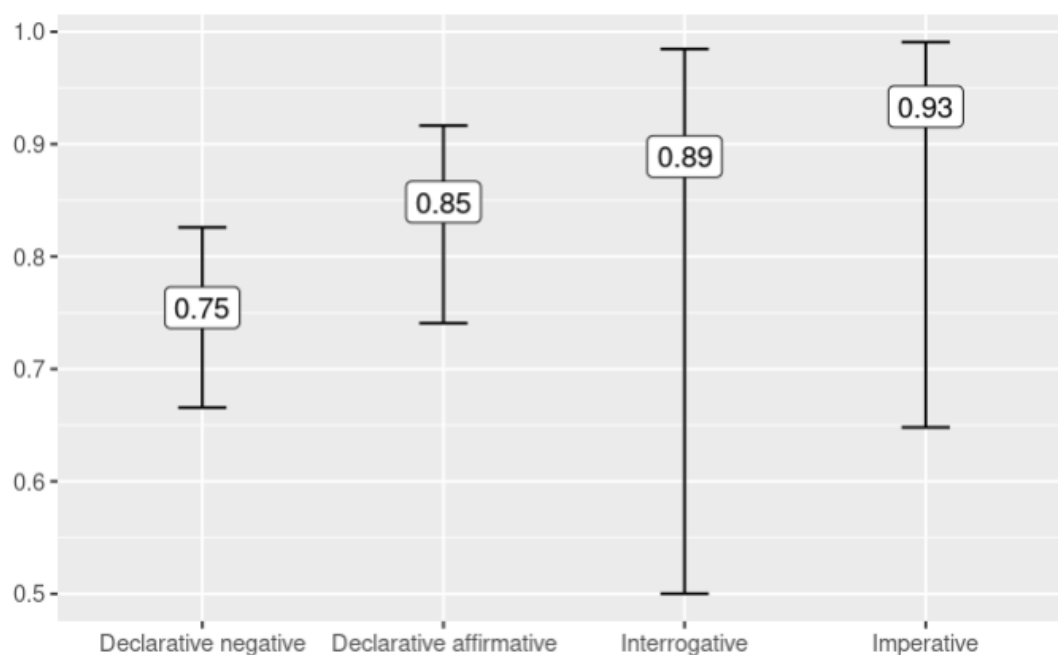


Figure 3 Statistical significance of the influence of sentence types

As with the Figure 2, the variables are ordered from left to right depending on their quantitative contribution to either *whether* or *if*. From the confidential intervals we can deduce that the measure of uncertainty is the most prominent in interrogative sentences, most likely because of the very small amount of their occurrence in the data. In case of imperative sentences, whose contribution to higher incidence of *if* is the most significant, the measure of uncertainty is also relatively high; therefore, their contribution cannot be considered as relevant. Contrary to these two sentence types, the confidential intervals in declarative sentences are smaller – it seems that negative declarative sentences in the present data tend to introduce the subordinate interrogative clauses by *whether* whereas affirmative declaratives display tendency to *if*. Nevertheless, we can also see that the confidential intervals of the declarative sentences overlap. Hence, it cannot be stated with sufficient certainty that either negative or affirmative declaratives have a relevant impact on the choice between the two subordinators. The influence of polarity of the declarative matrix clauses was also examined by Lastres-López whose results correspond to my findings – the polarity of the main clause does not influence speakers’ choice of subordinator (2018: 167-168).

## 4.1.2 Character of a subordinate interrogative clause

### 4.1.2.1 Syntactic function

In the methodological part we have explained the motivation behind the choice of lexical verbs for the query, as well as the exclusion of modal and auxiliary verbs.<sup>6</sup> With the intention to examine whether there are some grammatical deviations in the spoken language concerning the introduction of closed dependent interrogatives serving as subject complement, the verb *be* was retained in the query. After the manual selection of the query results, it was revealed that there are no closed dependent interrogatives in the function of subject complement; the query generated some examples when the verb *be* was directly followed by the conjunction *if* though. Nonetheless, the instances were in most cases caused by the insertions of “the thing is” (22), by incompleteness of a sentence (23), or by repetitions (24) when the conjunction *if* most frequently introduced a conditional clause:

- (22) I mean the thing is *if you go* I mean if you 're staying in a hostel or a bed and breakfast at least they got drying rooms and stuff
- (23) so if he's *if they then decide that he's not guilty* presumably he gets all that back?
- (24) I think personally if I **were** *if I were in in that field*

Hence, due to the elimination of such sentences, the selected data for the analysis consists only of lexical verbs, as shown in the previous chapters.

Although some verbs permit more clause patterns, in connection with closed dependent interrogatives in the present data they are used monotonically – they require a direct object. In 97% the subordinate interrogative clause syntactically functions as the direct object. The remaining 3% are composed of six instances of the verb *depend*, in which case the subordinate clause notionally but not formally functions as prepositional complementation. The occurrence of this verb however represents an interesting and unusual form of use which will be given special attention in this chapter. All quantitative data on syntactic function is summarised in Table 3:

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<sup>6</sup> Detailed explanation can be found in Section 3.2.

Table 3 Syntactic function

Syntactic function	<i>if</i>	<i>whether</i>	Total
Prepositional complementation	6 (4%)	0	6 (3%)
Object	155 (96%)	39 (100%)	194 (97%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

In terms of quantity, there are 155 subordinate clauses functioning as the direct object which are introduced by *if* (that is 77.5% from the total number of the data):

- (25) I **wonder** *if it's just the fact* that your parents think that the heating can only come on for four hours and then it goes off again by itself (IF123)

All 39 (19.5%) clauses introduced by *whether* also serve as the direct object (26), two of which (approximately 5% from the total number of *whether*-subordinations, and 1% from the total number of the data) are specific for the emphatic fronting of the subordinate clause functioning as an object (27), (28).

- (26) I don't **know** *whether it's from a book* (WHETHER33)

- (27) you know *whether that counts* I don't **know** (WHETHER18)

- (28) it's *whether they 're hunting or whether they 're doing that for fun* I **dunno** (WHETHER20)

Biber et al. explains fronting as “the initial placement of core elements which are normally found in post-verbal position” (2021: 892). Fronting is used for creation of an emphasis, expressing contrast, or achieving cohesion (ibid.). In terms of functional sentence perspective, this kind of initial placement represents a means of achieving a marked theme (Quirk et al., 1985: 1377). Since both examples contain negative matrix clause, according to Biber et al., the object fronting brings about a kind of double focus: on the issue reported in the subordinate clause, as well as on the negation in the matrix clause. Both clauses thus receive equal emphasis and are contrasted which would not be achieved when the subordinate clause would be placed in post-verbal position (Biber et al., 2021: 893). Based on the grammatical rule that *if* cannot be used as a subordinator of dependent interrogative clause that precedes the matrix clause by which it is governed (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002:

973)<sup>7</sup>, most likely this syntactic restriction played a crucial role in speakers' choice of *whether* in examples (27) and (28).

The occurrence of the verb *depend* presents an unexpected result. Since the use of this verb is bound to the preposition *on*, the subordinate clause thus represents prepositional complementation which in the case of closed dependent interrogatives permits only subordination by *whether*.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, in all six samples with the verb *depend* in the matrix clause speakers omitted the preposition and the dependent clause was introduced by *if*:

(29) do you think we would? It **depends if** *my hips and my knees last* (IF66)

In one of these examples, it seems that the speaker was more aware of the use of preposition in connection to this verb; yet her first attempt to utter the sentence, where the preposition was retained, was not completed and led to repetition of the main clause along with the omission of the preposition and subordination by *if*:

(30) it depends on it **depends if** *'s a binding contract if the mortgage is a binding mortgage* (IF125)

This phenomenon might be influenced by regional variety. Although the dialect of all six speakers during the data processing was regarded as unspecified, except for one, all speakers defined their dialect as Southern. Moreover, two of the speakers reported Cambridge as the city of their living while towns close to Norfolk were reported by three speakers. Hence, it can be concluded that the phenomenon may be grounded in the speech of people from the East of England.

Two separate Chi<sup>2</sup><sup>9</sup> tests were conducted in order to find out whether the syntactic position can be considered as a relevant variable for speaker's choice. Since the fronting of an object represents a grammatical rule, it is expected to be a pertinent factor. The test revealed P-value 0.003879 and test statistics 8.3398; the assumption that the two instances of occurrence of *whether*-subordination were motivated by the fronting of the subordinate clause is thus statistically significant at the 0.05 error level. I was further interested whether the introduction by *if* in case of clauses functioning as prepositional complements is also relevant. Nonetheless, contrary to the previous test, the probability that the six occurrences of *if*-

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<sup>7</sup> See Section 2.3.2.1, example (43).

<sup>8</sup> See Section 2.3.2.1, example (45).

<sup>9</sup> All Chi<sup>2</sup> tests were conducted on the website of Czech National Corpus; app Calc - 2 words in 2 corpora: <https://www.korpus.cz/calc/>.

subordination were influenced by this particular type of syntactic function does not appear to be statistically significant on the 0.05 level of significance.

#### 4.1.2.2 Finite vs. non-finite character of the subordinate clause

In the first chapter of the theoretical part describing subordinate content clauses other structural types apart from finite were introduced. Further, it was pointed out that subordinate interrogative clauses often alternate with *to*-infinitive which is a non-finite form that represents one of the syntactic restrictions applying to *if*-subordination of closed dependent interrogatives. In the data there are only 3 instances of subordinate clauses realised by *to*-infinitive, all of which are introduced by *whether*, see also Table 4:

- (31) I don't **know** *whether* to put it in the fridge actually (WHETHER4)  
 (32) I don't **know** *whether* to put the washing out or not now (WHETHER28)  
 (33) cos I didn't **know** *whether* to feed it back to --ANONnameF (.)  
 (WHETHER39)

*To*-infinitive clauses by which subordination by *whether* is required thus represent only 1.5% of the data, the vast majority of 197 samples 98.5% is constituted by clauses of finite character:

- (34) I didn't **know** *whether* she'd gone into something else (WHETHER35)  
 (35) but I don't **know** *if* I can be bothered (IF160)

Table 4 Finite vs. non-finite character of the subordinate clause

Character	<i>if</i>	<i>whether</i>	Total
<b>finite</b>	161 (100%)	36 (92.3%)	197 (98.5%)
<b>non-finite (<i>to</i>-infinitive)</b>	0	3 (7.7%)	3 (1.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

I would like to pay attention to some examples which were also classified as finite but they are not regarded as prototypical. There were few instances when the finite subordinate clause was semantically dependent on the matrix clause since it contains only a subject and auxiliary verb functioning as a proform (36), there was also one example of an ellipsis (37), and in example (38) the subordinate clause is postposed due to the presence of a comment clause, the dependent interrogative



is thus not governed by the verb *think*, which precedes *whether* directly, but by the verb *see*:

- (36) he said that's what he's gonna do with that fiver but I don't **know** *whether* he will (WHETHER7)
- (37) I've lost the fucking log-book (.) bollocks (.) right (.) can't get that replaced (.) don't know how er I don't even **know** *if* legally (IF39)
- (38) but we just have to **see** what management think *whether* they think long term it's something that'll work or not (WHETHER15)

Chi2 test focused on the influence of *to*-infinitive clauses returned P-value 0.0003913, test statistic equals 12.5732. Hence, the assumed motivation of non-finite clauses on the preference of *whether* is considered to be extremely statistically significant on the 0.05 level of significance.

#### 4.1.2.3 Alternative vs. non-alternative character of the subordinate clause

The characteristic feature of alternative dependent interrogatives, as discussed in Chapter 2.3.2, is the presence of coordinating conjunction *or*. When determining whether the subordinate interrogative is alternative or not, I based the classification on this assertion; therefore, all subordinate clauses that contain *or* in the second part of the clause are regarded as alternative. However, it may be objected that some examples are not prototypically alternative and we rather deal with colloquial expressions (39); or that in the case when the subordinate clause is not completed, it cannot be considered alternative (40). Again, these problems concerning classification are caused by the character of spoken discourse. And since it would be difficult to define criteria which would unequivocally adjust the border between alternative dependent interrogatives and features of colloquial nature, I have decided to base my classification on this elementary assumption (presence of *or*).

- (39) I mean I do n't **know** *if* er it 's edited out now or what (.) I dunno (IF92)
- (40) oh yeah well I think we think I don't **know** *if* this is just because I 'm getting old or (IF57)

In the data there were 166 non-alternative clauses which possess 83% of the collected material:

- (41) I don't **know** *if* you know much about Reagan and the Contra Wars (IF34)
- (42) I **wonder** *whether* it's a bit em Ganglike (WHETHER12)

Only 17% of the data, 34 samples, were classified as alternative clauses. According to Lastres-López (2018: 168), since the closed interrogatives are direct counterparts of *yes/no* questions, the speaker considers two possible scenarios; but whereas when using alternative interrogatives the speaker mentions the choice between the two alternatives explicitly, in the case of non-alternative interrogatives it is inferred from the context. The alternative interrogatives have several forms but they frequently contain expression *or not* which can be placed clause-finally, in which case the variation between the two subordinators is permitted (43), (44); when following the conjunction directly, the use of *if* is syntactically restricted (45)<sup>10</sup>:

(43) I am right how do you know how can you **tell *if I'm sorry or not*** ? (IF27)

(44) I don't **know *whether to put the washing out or not*** now (WHETHER28)

(45) I looked online (.) to **see *whether or not they had billed us***  
(WHETHER25)

In the present data, the example (45) represents the only case when *or not* followed the subordinator immediately.

When the two alternatives do not represent the opposite polarity which is signalled by *or not*, the speaker can also propose alternativity between two different situations. Especially in colloquial speech, the second part of the subordinate clause is usually abbreviated:

(46) you know good friends don't **care *if I'm drunk or sober*** (IF17)

(47) I'll give you ten points if you **guess *whether that was sarcastic or serious***  
(WHETHER9)

Nevertheless, there is also the possibility of repeating the subordinate conjunction in the second part of the clause and continuing with another full clause. Such coordination of two dependent interrogative clauses can be observed in the example (28)<sup>11</sup>. There were also three instances of a noteworthy variation – speakers introduced the first closed interrogative with *if* while the second subordinate clause after *or* was introduced by *whether*:

(48) I really want to Google to **see *if the Navy Seals are actually our version of the Marines or whether they 're better than our Marines*** (IF14)

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<sup>10</sup> See Section 2.3.2.1, example (48).

<sup>11</sup> Section 4.1.2.1.

Since *if* was chosen as the first variant, for the purpose of the analysis, all three instances are classified as *if*-subordination. In all cases Cambridge was reported as a city of living; hence, this variation might be an effect of the regional variable.

Due to the etymology of *whether* and its frequent use with the coordinating conjunction *or* in conditional-concessive clauses<sup>12</sup>, it was assumed that alternative dependent interrogatives will also prefer being introduced by *whether*. Moreover, this assumption was affirmed by research conducted by Lastres-López (2018: 168-169). The quantitative data on alternative and non-alternative subordinate interrogatives are included in Table 5. The Chi2 test was used to verify the statistical significance of the data; its results however showed statistical insignificance (<0.05). But with regard to the previous statistically significant tests focused on the environments from which *if*-subordination is excluded, another Chi2 test was taken in order to verify the influence of the only instance when *or not* followed the conjunction directly. Even in this case, it was proved that the syntactic restriction applying on *if* is statistically significant at the 0.05 error level, (P-value: 0.04166; test statistic: 4.1489).

Table 5 Alternative vs. non-alternative character of the subordinate clause

Alternativity	<i>if</i>	Total	<i>whether</i>	Total	Total	
<b>A-</b>	137	137 (85.1%)	29	29 (74.4%)	166 (83%)	
<b>A+</b>	13	24 (14.9%)	6	10 (25.6%)	19	34 (17%)
<b>A+</b> ( <i>or not</i> : following conjunction)	0		1		1	
<b>A+</b> ( <i>or not</i> : clause-finally)	8		2		10	
<b>A+</b> (two coordinated clauses)	3		1		4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>		<b>39 (100%)</b>		<b>200 (100%)</b>	

<sup>12</sup> The etymology of *whether* is discussed in detail in Section 2.4; for the use of *whether* in conditional-concessive clauses see Chapter 2.4.1.2.

## 4.2 External factors

### 4.2.1 Gender

Gender is the first sociolinguistic variable which has been considered. Based on the previous research (Kolbe, 2008: 131-136; Lastres-López, 2018: 173-174), it is expected that the *if*-subordination is more widespread among women while *whether* is more likely to be used by men. Table 6 summarises the number of subordinations by both genders. Comparing the percentage of subordinations for both genders, we can see that they are almost identical. The results of the chi-squared test showed that the probability that the preference of one subordinator over the other might be motivated by speakers' gender is not statistically significant (<0.05).

Table 6 Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>if</i></b>	<b><i>whether</i></b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Female</b>	107 (66.5%)	24 (61.5%)	131 (65.5%)
<b>Male</b>	54 (33.5%)	15 (38.5%)	69 (34.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

### 4.2.2 Age

To determine whether speakers' age plays a role in preference for one or the other variant, speakers were divided into six categories (see Table 7). The previous research showed that *if* is more preferred by younger speakers whereas *whether* appears more frequently in speech of older users. Lastres-López claims that this division of usage between younger and older generations is associated with stylistics of *if*, since language of younger generations is often informal and colloquial (2018: 174).

Table 7 Age

Age category	<i>if</i>	<i>whether</i>	Total
0-14	7 (4.3%)	0	7 (3.5%)
15-24	42 (26.1%)	8 (20.5%)	50 (25%)
25-34	27 (16.8%)	3 (7.7%)	30 (15%)
35-44	21 (13%)	4 (10.3%)	25 (12.5%)
45-59	19 (11.8%)	13 (33.3%)	32 (16%)
60+	19 (11.8%)	6 (15.4%)	25 (12.5%)
unknown	26 (16.2%)	5 (12.8%)	31 (15.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

The table clearly shows that from 15.5% the age of the speakers remains unknown. This is most likely caused by the fact that in early years of creation of the corpus the respondents were not enquired about their exact age. For the purpose of verification of statistical significance, the data of unknown age are naturally excluded from the computation; the absolute values for the statistical verification are thus 135 (for *if*) and 34 (for *whether*). Since the hypothesis is in this case grounded on the assumption of two opposite categories preferring one variant over the other, in order to verify the statistical significance, the age categories were further divided into two groups: younger and older. The values of the first three categories, that is 0-34, were added and in the computation regarded as “younger”. The results of the Chi2 test showed P-value 0.01254 and the test statistic equals 6.2336. Thus, the assumption of higher preference for *if* among younger speakers is at the 0.05 error level statistically significant.

### 4.2.3 Region

The last sociolinguistic variable which has been taken into account throughout the research is regional variety. It is important to mention that this variable is based on the reported city of living. Although speakers were also enquired about their dialect, their statement cannot be considered as reliable determination. Hence, regardless of their opinion, the respondents’ dialects were determined in the course of data processing but the majority of them were defined as “unspecified”. For these reasons I decided to conduct this part of my research on a geographical basis; to be more precise, on the reported cities of living. Overall, 44 cities of living were

reported which were further categorised into twelve groups – nine regions situated in the United Kingdom, Ireland, one group of respondents living in a non-English speaking country, which is marked as non-UK in the Table 8, and the last group named as “unspecified” represents respondents who did not reported on their place of living or, on the other hand, reported more than one.

Table 8 Region

<b>Region</b>	<b><i>if</i></b>	<b><i>whether</i></b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>East Anglia</b>	58 (36%)	8 (21%)	66 (33%)
<b>East Midlands</b>	1 (0.6%)	1 (2.5%)	2 (1%)
<b>Ireland</b>	4 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	5 (2.5%)
<b>London</b>	15 (9.3%)	0	15 (7.5%)
<b>North West</b>	13 (8.1%)	4 (10%)	17 (8.5%)
<b>South East</b>	9 (5.6%)	0	9 (4.5%)
<b>South West</b>	9 (5.6%)	2 (5%)	11 (5.5%)
<b>Wales</b>	2 (1.3%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (1.5%)
<b>West Midlands</b>	11 (6.8%)	9 (23%)	20 (10%)
<b>Yorkshire and Humberside</b>	9 (5.6%)	1 (2.5%)	10 (5%)
<b>non-UK</b>	6 (3.7%)	2 (5%)	8 (4%)
<b>unspecified</b>	24 (14.9%)	10 (26%)	34 (17%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161 (100%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>200 (100%)</b>

Figure 4 demonstrates the results of logistic regression on the influence of individual regions. Once again, we can see that the data from regions mostly contributing to the higher occurrence of *if*, London and South East, are the least relevant since there is no occurrence of *whether*-subordination in these areas. There is the identically low number of subordinations for *if* and *whether* in the East Midlands; therefore, the confidential interval of this variable is also relatively wide – uncertain. The data from Wales and Ireland also display quite a substantial level of uncertainty. Except for two, East Anglia and West Midlands, the confidential intervals of all other regions overlap. Thus, it seems that only the contribution of these two regions may be considered relevant – speakers living in East Anglia incline more to *if*-subordination whereas *whether*-subordination is more widespread in the West Midlands. Yet, in order to decrease the measure of uncertainty for

prediction of choice between the two conjunctions in the individual regions, most likely more data would have to be collected.

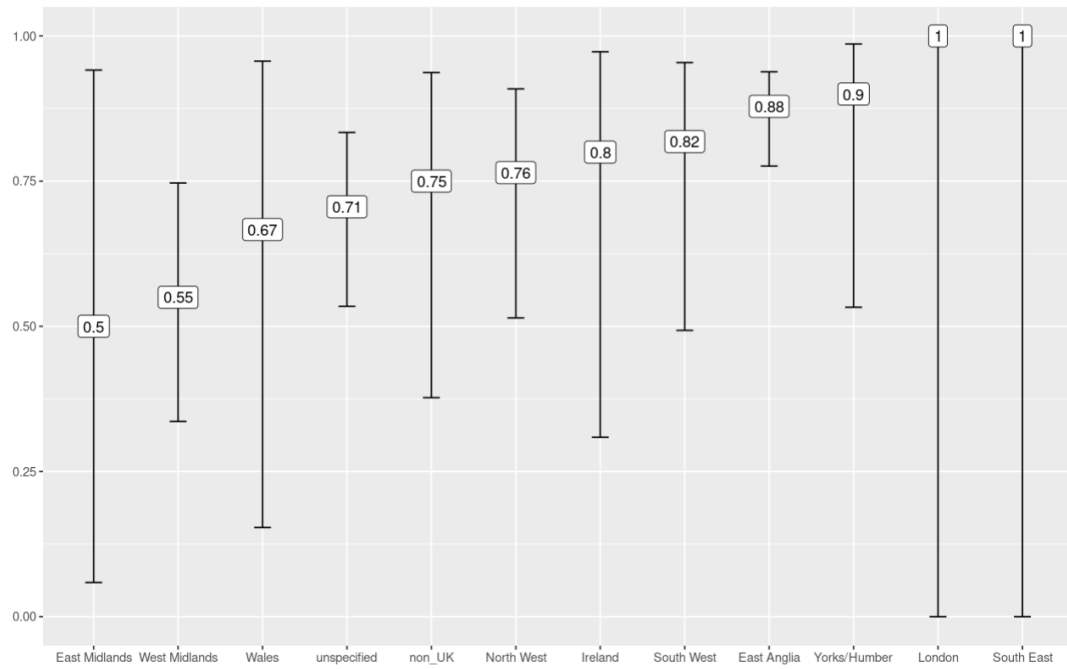


Figure 4 Statistical significance of the influence of regions

## 5 Conclusion

The study focuses on the occurrence of subordinators *whether* and *if* in subordinate content interrogative clauses in spoken English, and on the types of influence which may determine speakers' preference for one or the other variant. The collected material was excerpted from Spoken BNC2014. The analysis was based on 200 examples of closed dependent interrogatives which were manually filtered from 478 randomised concordances returned by the query. The samples were examined from the point of view of internal and external linguistic factors. The internal factors included examination of the governing verbs, sentence types, syntactic function of the subordinate clause, and character of the subordinate clauses: finite vs. non-finite, alternative vs. non-alternative. The variables defined as the external factors were gender, age category and region.

Our initial hypothetical assumption was the overall prevalence of *if* (Biber et al., 2020: 684). Subordinate clauses introduced by *if* represents 80.5% of the data while *whether*-subordination represents merely 19.5%. As expected, the higher frequency of *if*-subordination was influenced by the preference of verbs *know*, *see* and *wonder* (ibid.; Steinbach, 1929: 165). As far as governing verbs are concerned, it was also presupposed that the use of *whether* will be associated with more verbs than *if*, although less frequent, and vice versa. Nonetheless, this assumption was not confirmed; and since there is relatively low percentage difference between the number of subordinations by both conjunctions with the majority of verbs, it is not very probable that this situation would change with more data (see Figure 1). The test of logistic regression showed that none of the governing verbs can be regarded as a relevant factor determining the choice between *if* or *whether*. The measure of uncertainty is however lowest with the three verbs preferring *if*; and the greatest with the verbs of which use is in the present data linked to one conjunction only.

The matrix clauses were also examined depending on their type. Here the analysis showed that the occurrence of both conjunctions in closed dependent interrogatives is the most frequent in declarative negative sentences, which is most likely caused by the numerous incidences of the verbs *know* and *remember* in negative, but the use of both subordinators is associated with the greatest number of different verbs in declarative affirmative sentences. Again, logistic regression was used for verification of statistical significance of the influence of sentence types. The situation in the present data indicated that declarative affirmative



sentences contribute to the higher occurrence of *if*-subordination, while declarative negative sentences may be more frequently associated with *whether*. Yet, as with the influence of the governing verbs, this statement was not supported by the sufficient measure of certainty. Hence, it cannot be said that the opposite polarity of declarative sentences has a sufficient impact on the choice between the two variants, which corresponds with Lastres-López's research (2018: 167-168).

In order to statistically verify the influence of the variables characteristic of subordinate clauses, a series of Chi2 tests was taken. Two syntactic functions realised by the subordinate clause appear in the present data: object and prepositional complementation, the latter being associated exclusively with the verb *depend*. The occurrence of subordinate clauses realising prepositional complementation connected to the introduction by *if* seems to be an effect of regional variety which is however, based on the results of Chi2 test, not statistically significant. On the contrary, the results of another test aimed on the influence of emphatic fronting of an object, realised by the dependent interrogative, showed statistical significance in favour of *whether*. The same was proved with the influence of non-finite character of the subordinate clause: 7.7% of *whether*-occurrence was motivated by *to*-infinitive character of the dependent interrogative. Concerning alternativity and non-alternativity of the subordinate clause, although it was assumed that a certain number of introductions by *whether* would be influenced by the alternative character of the subordinate clause, the values resulting from Chi2 test showed statistical insignificance. Only one instance of *whether* introducing an alternative clause – *or not* followed the conjunction directly – was considered as statistically significant. In summary, the tests revealed statistical significance in favour of *whether* in all syntactic environments from which *if* is excluded.

According to the previous research, it was discovered that *if* is more preferred by female speakers and *whether* is on the contrary used more frequently by men. The statistical significance of the influence of gender was in relation to our data also verified by Chi2 test whose results showed that the distribution of subordinations by *if* and *whether* with regard to gender is not statistically significant. The examination of another external variable however offered statistically significant results. In the case of age, the analysis was once again based on the hypothetical assumption that *if*-subordination is a more preferred variant

among younger speakers whereas *whether* is more widespread among older generations. Therefore, for the purpose of verification of statistical significance, the six age categories were divided into two groups. The data revealed that the higher number of *if*-subordination among respondents in the age range 0-34 is statistically relevant; and *whether* is more likely to be used by respondents over 35 years old.

The analysis focused on the influence of regional variety was based on the cities of living which were reported by the respondents. The cities were divided into groups depending on the regional district where they geographically belong. The influence of the regional variable was again investigated by means of logistic regression. Similarly to verbs whose use was connected with only one conjunction in the present data, the greatest measure of uncertainty is in the case of regional variety bound to those districts where no *whether*-subordination was recorded. The logistic regression with the sufficient measure of certainty revealed that *if* tends to be preferred in East Anglia and *whether*, on the other hand, in West Midlands. The data from other regions does not comply with the sufficient level of certainty to assume their influence on the preference of one or the other variant.

To summarise, the analysis proved that the syntactic restrictions applying on *if* represent motivation for the speakers' choice of *whether*. Among the external factors, age seems to be a relevant variable determining speakers' preference for one or the other variant in the present data. Also, *if* seems to be preferred in East Anglia whereas *whether* in the West Midlands. To be able to determine the influence of other factors whose test of statistical significance resulted as negative, i.e., governing verbs, syntactic function and the alternative/non-alternative character of the subordinate clause, gender, and partially also region, more data would have to be collected. In the case of examination of sentence types, it would be also useful to collect more material for further study in order to increase the measure of statistical certainty. However, according to the small occurrence of closed dependent interrogatives in interrogative and imperative sentences, and to the previous research on the influence of polarity of declarative sentences, it is not very likely that sentence type would emerge as an influential factor determining choice between the two subordinators.

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*British National Corpus* (Spoken BNC2014): The British National Corpus Data cited herein have been extracted from the spoken version of British National Corpus (Spoken BNC2014), distributed by Lancaster University’s CQPweb server. Available at <<https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/>> (last accessed: 20 July 2023).

## Resumé

Bakalářská práce se zabývá konkurencí spojek *if* vs. *whether* v závislých tázacích větách, které se řadí mezi vedlejší věty obsahové. Vedlejší věty obsahové se od vedlejších vět vztažných a příslovečných vymezují svou závislostí na větě hlavní. Často totiž realizují větný člen, který je vyžadován valenční strukturou řídicího slovesa v hlavní větě. Distribuce těchto dvou spojek se u obsahových vět vymezuje konkrétně na závislé zjišťovací otázky, jejichž nezávislé protějšky jsou charakteristické především invertovaným slovosledem a často také užitím pomocného slovesa. Na rozdíl od otázek doplňovacích, které jsou jak v závislé, tak i nezávislé formě uvozeny stejnými tázacími zájmeny, tzv. *wh*-words, nezávislé zjišťovací otázky podobný prostředek uvození postrádají, proto jsou ve formě vedlejší věty uvozeny pomocí *if* nebo *whether*, jejich slovosled ve větě závislé je po spojce ale naopak přímý.

Jelikož z hlediska sémantiky mezi *if* a *whether* není žádný rozdíl, ve většině případů jsou spojky mezi sebou zaměnitelné, což z nich dělá konkurenční protějšky. Záleží tedy zcela na konkrétním mluvčím, pro jakou spojku se v dané situaci rozhodne. U dvou či více konkurenčních variant se obecně předpokládá, že preference mluvčích pro jednu nebo druhou variantu je ovlivňována vnitřními či vnějšími lingvistickými faktory. Ačkoli jiným prostředím konkurenční variant, jako např. ponechání či opomenutí spojky *that* (viz. Kolbe-Hanna & Szmrecsanyi, 2015), již byla věnována pozornost, konkurenci mezi *if* a *whether* zatím velký prostor při výzkumu věnován nebyl, což bylo hlavní motivací při výběru tématu bakalářské práce. Jedním z cílů této studie je tedy poskytnout širší povědomí o tomto jevu, stejně jako motivovat k rozsáhlejšímu výzkumu. Primárním cílem analýzy je ale prozkoumat, zda některé z vnitřních i vnějších faktorů ovlivňují preferenci mluvčího ve prospěch jednoho či druhého jevu.

Teoretická část se věnuje detailnímu popisu vedlejších obsahových vět, a především jejich tázacím podkategoriím. U celé třídy obsahových vět se popis věnuje jejich odlišnostem od vět vztažných a příslovečných a stručně shrnuje jejich další podtypy. Jelikož v případě obsahových vět se v referenčních gramatikách mnohdy setkáme s odlišnou terminologií, jedna z kapitol je věnována i tomuto tématu. Největší pozornost je v teoretické části věnována závislým otázkám, hlavně závislým otázkám zjišťovacím, které jsou primárním předmětem této práce. Popis je zaměřený na jejich formální, významové i syntaktické stránky. Jedna

z podkapitol závislých zjišťovacích otázek je záměrně vyhrazena pro popis syntaktických restrikcí, které jsou gramaticky uplatňovány na spojku *if*, jelikož tyto restrikce hrají významnou roli v praktické části.

Distribuce obou spojek je v anglickém jazyce do určité míry také ovlivňována jejich etymologií, proto se obsah teoretické části přesouvá k popisu diachronního vývoje obou spojek a jejich dalšímu užití v jiných typech vět. V případě *if* se jedná o popis vedlejších adverbálních vět podmínkových a přípustkových, dále také i samostatných vět nezávislých. Užití spojky *whether* v jiných typech vět je poněkud užší, kromě závislých zjišťovacích otázek se užívá pouze v jednom typu vedlejších adverbálních vět, konkrétně podmínkově-přípustkových. Předposlední kapitola teoretické části je zaměřena na dosavadní poznatky o konkurenci mezi těmito dvěma spojkami, na kterých se později v metodologické sekci zakládá většina hypotézy pro samotný výzkum. Protože je praktický výzkum založen na práci s mluveným jazykovým korpusem, závěr teoretické části stručně popisuje charakteristiky mluveného jazyka.

Nejpodstatnější část bakalářské práce je analýza získaných vzorků závislých zjišťovacích otázek. Za účelem praktického výzkumu bylo z mluvené verze *Britského národního korpusu* vybráno 200 příkladů závislých zjišťovacích otázek, uvozených spojkami *if* a *whether*. Analýza se zaměřuje na případy, kdy spojka uvozovací vedlejší větu přímo následuje sloveso, na tomto principu byl tedy i založen korpusový dotaz, jehož výsledky byly dále seřazeny do náhodného pořadí. Jelikož korpus není syntakticky „otagován,“ získání dat vyžadovalo manuální vytrídění cílových položek. Z vygenerovaných výsledků byly vyřazeny příklady nežádoucího charakteru, převážně příslovečné podmínkové věty. Detailní popis postupu získávání dat, stejně jako povaha nežádoucích výsledků a problémy, které se během sběru dat naskytly, jsou vylíčeny v metodologické části (Kapitola 3).

Čtvrtá část bakalářské práce se zabývá samotnou analýzou získaných vzorků, které jsou vždy zkoumány z hlediska jedné proměnné. Data jsou nejprve analyzována z pohledu vnitřních faktorů, počínaje povahou řídicích sloves. Nejobecnějším předpokladem byla převaha *if*. Protože se uvození touto spojkou v mnohých případech objevuje ve spojení se slovesy *know*, *see* a *wonder*, jejichž výskyt je především v mluvené podobě jazyka frekventovaný (Biber et al., 2020: 684), na základě tohoto poznatku jsme v případě těchto tří sloves očekávali větší počet uvození prostřednictvím spojky *if*, stejně jako její celkovou převahu. Tento

předpoklad se potvrdil: slovesa *know*, *see* a *wonder* se v datech objevují nejčastěji, ve větší míře ve spojení se spojkou *if*, což vede k její celkové početní převaze nad *whether*. Dalším očekáváním bylo, že ačkoli výskyt spojky *whether* bude méně frekventovaný, její použití se ale bude pojit s větší variabilitou řídicích sloves a naopak, navzdory častějšímu výskytu, se *if* bude pojit s méně slovesy než *whether*. V tomto případě se očekávání nenaplnilo, zatímco spojka *if* se v datech pojí s deseti slovesy, *whether* pouze se sedmi. Z tohoto důvodu jsme si kladli otázku, zda by se situace změnila s větším počtem nasbíraných dat. Z Grafu 1 je ale patrné, že kromě tří sloves tíhnoucích významněji k *if* rozdíl mezi křivkami není dostatečně velký na to, aby se s jistotou mohla očekávat opačná situace.

Za účelem zjištění jak velký vliv mají jednotlivá slovesa na preferenci jedné či druhé spojky, byla použita metoda logistické regrese. Metoda ukázala, že výskyt sloves, které se v datech objevují ve spojení pouze s *if* nebo *whether*, tedy přispívají k četnějšímu výskytu jedné spojky oproti druhé, je z hlediska statistiky nejméně signifikantní – vykazuje nejvyšší míru nejistoty. Největší míra jistoty ve prospěch *if* je naopak spojována se třemi nejfrekventovanějšími slovesy, bohužel ale ani v jejich případě není natolik dostatečná, aby mohla prokázat jejich preferenci k *if*. Co se tedy týká řídicích sloves, jejich vliv se ze získaných dat nejeví jako dostatečný.

Další zkoumanou proměnou byl větný typ, v získaném materiálu se objevují věty tázací, rozkazovací a oznamovací, kladné i záporné. Obě spojky se nejčastěji vyskytují v záporných oznamovacích větách, což je pravděpodobně způsobené výskytem slovesa *remember* výhradně v záporu, a taktéž častým výskytem slovesa *know* v záporu. V oznamovacích větách kladných se ale spojky vyskytují s největším počtem různých sloves. Test logistické regrese opět prokázal největší míru nejistoty u oznamovacích a rozkazovacích vět, kde je výskyt *whether* téměř mizivý. Co se ale týká vět oznamovacích, zdá se, že kladné věty tíhnou spíše k uvození prostřednictvím *if*, zatímco záporné věty k *whether*. Bohužel, konfidenční intervaly zobrazující opačnou polaritu oznamovacích vět (viz Graf 3) se překrývají, což znamená, že vliv větného typu opět nedisponuje dostatečnou jistotou, aby mohl být považován za relevantní. Navíc předchozí výzkum již prokázal, že opačná polarita oznamovacích vět nemá na volbu mezi dvěma spojkami vliv (Lastres-López, 2018: 167-168).

Po analýze vlivů spojovaných převážně s větou hlavní, se expertiza přesunula na větu vedlejší. Jak již bylo zmíněno, jednou z hlavních charakteristik vedlejších obsahových vět je realizace syntaktické funkce. Jelikož ve zkoumaných datech dvě konkurenční spojky následují lexikální slovesa, vedlejší věty z velké části plní funkci předmětu (97%), minimálně také předložkového předmětu (3%). Výskyt vedlejších vět realizujících předložkový předmět se pojí pouze se slovesem *depend*, a zdá se, že se jedná o agramatické užití spojky *if* (viz kapitoly 2.3.2.1, př. (45) a 4.1.2.1), jehož výskyt se na základě Chi2 testu ale jeví jako statisticky nesignifikantní. Opačný výsledek ale ukázal Chi2 test zaměřený na vliv emfatické prepozice vedlejší věty realizující přímý předmět. Jelikož v takových případech je z gramatického hlediska povoleno pouze užití *whether* (viz kapitola 2.3.21, př. (43)), syntaktická restrikce uplatňovaná na *if* se projevila jako statisticky signifikantní vliv ve prospěch *whether*.

Stejná situace nastala i při výzkumu vlivu finitního a nefinitního charakteru vedlejší věty. Věty finitní tvoří 98,5% celkových dat, zbývající 1,5% tvoří věty nefinitní, konkrétně věty tvořené tzv. *to*-infinitivem. Jedná se o další syntaktické omezení spojky *if*, protože tato spojka nemůže být následována *to*-infinitivem. Chi2 test opět prokázal, že nefinitní charakter vedlejší věty měl značný vliv na výběr spojky *whether*.

Jako poslední byly vedlejší věty zkoumány z hlediska přítomnosti či absence rozlučovací povahy. Zde byla hypotéza založena na předchozím výzkumu (ibid.: 168-170), který ukázal, že věty rozlučovací povahy tíhnou spíše k uvození prostřednictvím *whether*. V případě našich dat se ale statistické ověření jeví jako nesignifikantní. Rozlučovací povaha vedlejší věty měla vliv pouze v jednom případě, kdy *or not* stálo ve větě přímo po uvozovacím prostředku, jedná se tedy o další příklad syntaktického upřednostnění *whether*, které mělo na výběr spojky vliv. Ve shrnutí, v analýze vedlejších vět měli na upřednostnění spojky *whether* vliv syntaktická omezení, gramaticky uplatňovaná na *if*.

Z hlediska vnějších lingvistických faktorů byl zkoumán vliv pohlaví, věku a zeměpisné oblasti. Předchozí výzkum ukázal, že *if* používají častěji ženy a *whether* je naopak častější volbou mezi muži (Kolbe, 2008: 131-136; Lastres-López, 2018: 173-174), na tomto výzkumu se tedy také zakládala naše hypotéza. Bohužel i v tomto případě, vyšel výsledek Chi2 testu založený na našem počtu nasbíraného materiálu jako statisticky nesignifikantní. V případě věku byla



hypotéza založena na preferenci *if* mezi mladšími mluvčími, zatímco častější uvození prostřednictvím *whether* bylo očekáváno u starších mluvčích (Kolbe, 2008: 131-136; Lastres-López, 2018: 174-176). Získaná data byla z hlediska věku rozdělena do šesti skupin (sedmou skupinu tvořily data neznámého původu). Pro účel statistického ověření ale byly tyto skupiny rozděleny na dvě – mladší vs. starší. Jako nástroj pro ověření opět posloužil Chi2 test, který prokázal statistickou signifikanci, věk má tedy na volbu mezi dvěma spojkami vliv: *if* je rozšířenější mezi mladšími generacemi, starší generace tíhnou naopak k *whether*.

O vlivu oblastního faktoru zatím nemáme mnoho informací, nedá se tedy na nich ani zcela založit hypotetické mínění. Tato oblast naší expertizy se opírá o místa, která byla respondenty nahlášena jako místa jejich bydliště. Celkem se jednalo o 44 měst, která byla dále na základě jejich zeměpisné polohy kategorizována do regionů. K účelu statistického ověření opět posloužila metoda logistické regrese, která prokázala, že *if* je upřednostňovanou variantou v oblasti Východní Anglie. V případě tohoto regionu také výsledek ukázal největší a dostatečnou míru jistoty. Spojka *whether* se zdá být užívanější v oblasti West Midlands, míra jistoty je zde ale oproti výskytu ve Východní Anglii o něco menší, nýbrž dostatečná. Data z ostatních regionů bohužel vykazují velkou míru nejistoty, nedá se z nich tedy určit jejich vliv na výběr mezi konkurenčními variantami.

Výsledky analýzy nasbíraného materiálu tedy ukázaly, že z hlediska vnitřních lingvistických faktorů je výběr spojky *whether* motivován syntaktickými omezeními, které nepovolují uvozování prostřednictvím *if*. Co se týká vnějších faktorů, data prokázala vliv věku, a také vliv dvou regionů. Pro ověření vlivu většiny faktorů, které jsou např. na základě předchozího výzkumu považovány za relevantní, ale z našeho výzkumu se jeví jako statisticky nesignifikantní, tj. vliv řídicích sloves, zčásti syntaktická funkce, dále rozlučovací povaha vedlejší věty, pohlaví a částečně také vliv zeměpisné oblasti, by bylo zapotřebí nasbírat větší množství dat. Stejný postup by mohl také posloužit k ověření vlivu větných typů. Vzhledem ale k velmi malému výskytu spojek *if* a *whether* v tázacích a rozkazovacích větách, a také k předchozímu výzkumu, který prokázal, že polarita oznamovacích vět nemá na výběr mezi konkurenčními spojkami vliv, je spíše nepravděpodobné, že by větší množství nasbíraného materiálu vedlo k opačnému výsledku, tedy že větné typy mají na volbu mezi konkurenčními prvky vliv.

## Appendix

The appendix contains 200 examples of closed dependent interrogatives: 161 clauses are introduced by *if*, 39 by *whether*. Although for the purpose of the analysis only bare examples of the examined sentences were used, in the appendix whole utterances where the investigated phenomenon occurs were retained. In all samples the target sentence is underlined, and the governing verb along with the conjunction marked in bold.

Reference number	utterance
IF1	cos it's cold no it's true you ask the students they'll say they'll say the the south west they're all small petite girl like a small petite and very and th- and have if you ask them <u>I don't <b>know if</b> it's wrong to say this</u> but they say well their diet is er like salads and stuff it's hot most of the time
IF2	er yeah and something else <u>I don't <b>know if</b> it's got any protection on it</u> -- ANONnameM <sup>13</sup> said it has but I'm not sure
IF3	<u>I don't <b>know if</b> we can blame that on the internet</u> (.) they do do ballet at the um oh look (.) matt Cardle is back (.) this Saturday
IF4	you definitely cross over the river --ANONplace <sup>14</sup> into --ANONplace <u>I don't <b>know if</b> you then go back on yourself or</u> (.) because we did the morning in --ANONplace in the registry office like two --UNCLEARWORD or whatever
IF5	yes that's let's do that --UNCLEARWORD again <u>I can't <b>remember if</b> I found I</u>
IF6	regularly yeah so as long as that and but <u>I just <b>wonder if</b> he'll feel</u> you know once you 're gone
IF7	not like you put bread in the thing but they you know the it's a German (.) <u>I don't <b>know if</b> it's just hotdogs that are from Germany</u> but during the -- UNCLEARWORD yeah it's pretty nice
IF8	<u><b>wonder if</b> they'll able to repair it</u> cos they have to mess about going -- UNCLEARWORD
IF9	no (.) anyway <u>I don't <b>know if</b> I want to do that tonight</u>
IF10	and like I've noticed right (.) at my work <u>I <b>dunno if</b> it's everywhere</u> (.) if someone does phone in sick then they just get proper slated like all day (.) like yeah they couldn't even come in (.) and I'm always like yeah but they might be ill and they're like yeah but they've dropped us in it (.) and it's like
IF11	<u>I <b>wonder if</b> I can get in there</u> don't know if I'm that good
IF12	yeah (.) did I tell you my favourite from Pride And Prejudice was I'm not inflicting the false modesty? There's a one-liner in it and she says erm <u>I don't <b>know if</b> she's talking to Mr Darcy</u> (.) I think so (.) oh no maybe her that Ca- that lady woman that's not very nice
IF13	just not very well <u>I don't <b>know if</b> I could drive a car actually or reverse</u> like pull out of that parking space and then
IF14	<u>I really want to Google to <b>see if</b> the Navy Seals are actually our version of the Marines or <b>whether</b> they 're better than our Marines</u>

<sup>13</sup> Anonymous male name.

<sup>14</sup> Anonymous place.

IF15	just you would've thought there 'd be one <u>don't know if there's one in -- ANONplace</u> but you would've thought there'd be one closer than that but maybe not
IF16	well (.) I w- as long as I get <u>I don't know if I'll get much</u> er it's no use me getting really excited
IF17	no I I kind of think now all of my friends here in this country you know <u>good friends don't care if I'm drunk or sober</u> and the ones who want me to get drunk I think if you want me to get drunk then that means that you might not like me as much so why why should I be your friend?
IF18	right <u>could you see if that (.) black olive paste is in the fridge somewhere?</u> it's in a yellow tube (.) oh it's this the
IF19	no (.) <u>I just wonder if that was that lad that keep coming past here</u> and and w- and woken up the er turkey fact- turkey place (.) he pick up --UNCLEARWORD And I ain't heard his motorbike go past lately
IF20	<u>I don't know if I like my room being called a spare room</u>
IF21	and do you know what? I was pleased we went because <u>I don't know if you remember</u> we had found out about it by accident and do you remember it was -- ANONnameF <sup>15</sup> saying that their school they were putting on a busload and taking them
IF22	<u>I don't know if I'd have liked that sort of lifestyle or not</u>
IF23	and also at the same time put something in <u>to ask if there are any other members who would like to talk at some time when I come back</u>
IF24	it would wouldn't it? yeah <u>I wonder if there is a Bristol Street in --ANONplace?</u>
IF25	<u>I wonder if there's just some kind of hold up (.)</u> it's not normally like this -- UNCLEARWORD
IF26	Speaker 1: <u>I don't know if there were</u> Speaker 2: I think Jordan was much later Speaker 1: <u>such borders at that time</u>
IF27	I am right how do you know <u>how can you tell if I'm sorry or not?</u>
IF28	Speaker 1: the Portuguese brought slavery to the country to the world Speaker 2: did they? Speaker 1: <u>actually I don't know if they did</u>
IF29	<u>I have already kind of asked if she's allergic to anything</u>
IF30	Speaker 1: <u>see if it's</u> Speaker 2: that's fine isn't it? Speaker 1: <u>it's not very loud or</u>
IF31	erm <u>I don't know if the other girl's called Lily</u> cos I've forgotten but I know the other girl's called Jessica (.) and they go into this magical land where the a- where animals are big (.) nearly big as them
IF32	Y- you want to sleep? Tough (.) <u>see if I give a shit?</u> Ten o'clock 's early (.) she might be Spanish but we live in England (.) get on the right timeframe
IF33	but they both behave really badly and then whenever I see them with their friends they're just like (.) swearing and calling --ANONnameM a gay prick and they're like swearing about ah how they how dare they effing do this you know? (.) erm (.) so (.) <u>I don't know if you remember like --ANONnameM being in the senior leadership prefect team</u>
IF34	minerals in Latin America Central America <u>I don't know if you know much about Reagan and the Contra Wars</u>

<sup>15</sup> Anonymous female name.

IF35	thought you'd wanna get out sooner cos all squashed in there you were so big (...) <u>do you <b>know if</b> we go left or right here --UNCLEARWORD? very top --UNCLEARWORD</u>
IF36	Speaker 1: well if it hasn't got a date on it you could you know you could use it at any time maybe Speaker 2: I don't know now <u>I can't <b>remember if</b> it did or not</u> but
IF37	should get --ANONnameM to do erm a segment for one of your --UNCLEARWORD products <u>we'll talk to <b>him</b> when we go to --ANONplace to <b>see if he wants to do something</b></u>
IF38	<u>I don't <b>know if</b> Apple was a very n- was a very standard choice</u>
IF39	I've lost the fucking log-book (.) bollocks (.) right (.) can't get that replaced (.) don't know how er <u>I don't even <b>know if</b> legally whether they're allowed to replace it</u>
IF40	I can actually imagine you now and <u>I'm just gonna <b>see if</b> it's correct</u>
IF41	no but it ma- it makes it's like sends a message like <u>in some ways you <b>know if</b> it if it <b>if</b> people in other countries are moved to</u>
IF42	<u>I don't <b>know if</b> they changed it now</u> because there was a big hoo-ha about it weren't there?
IF43	but no you can go colder and there's that it I don't really make any sense (.) mm my friend I've met some people now that have done some insane journeys and a friend of mine has just finished the Pacific Crest Trail <u>I don't <b>know if</b> you've ever heard of it</u> it's a five-month hike from basically California to Canada and they walk all the way from
IF44	<u>I <b>wonder if</b> we could like</u>
IF45	I'd love to learn the guitar just to like an acoustic guitar but I don't feel like you know <u>I don't <b>know if</b> I'll be very good at it</u> I tried playing --ANONnameF's but I just
IF46	Speaker 1: unpleasant (.) I'm gonna phone (.) I've got the number (.) oh it's in the room (.) I've got the number (.) <u>I must give them a ring tomorrow</u> Speaker 2: mm Speaker 1: <u>and <b>see if</b> they're open</u> (.) um but it's on the tenth of March
IF47	do you want a crisp --ANONnameM? <u><b>see if</b> dad wants one</u>
IF48	oh oh oh oh oh oh --UNCLEARWORD oh that'd be a good word <u>I <b>wonder if</b> I can do that?</u> cor that's a good one
IF49	<u><b>dunno if</b> you had a leaflet that's awful in n it?</u>
IF50	<u>Will you uh <b>see if</b> is he uh is our recorder going okay?</u>
IF51	yeah I was actually considering that I was like <u>I <b>wonder if</b> --ANONnameM would actually do it with us?</u> but he wouldn't
IF52	<u>let's <b>see if</b> we can find some more property owners</u>
IF53	UNCLEARWORD <u>I was <b>wondering if</b> he was just in the toilet</u>
IF54	<u>right let's <b>see if</b> we can get a word</u>
IF55	that's what alcohol is for me alcohol and weed are like the same I think like really natural really natural like h- erm like African <u>I <b>dunno if</b> people grow like African weed or something</u> like it's really natural and they just have that I think it's like I still don't think it's good practice but I like can understand that I do get that some people like
IF56	and er he's like we have to go to the I said we could go to The Empress for a pint (.) and then I was like oh <u>I <b>dunno if</b> I really wanna socialize with anyone</u> (.) he was like yeah you have to er you know get out of your comfort zone (.) and I'll be there with you
IF57	oh yeah well I think we think <u>I don't <b>know if</b> this is just because I'm getting old or</u>
IF58	<u>I don't <b>know if</b> it's me</u>

IF59	<u>I dunno if this is er it's at all related to what she might've been hinting at to you</u> (.) but
IF60	<u>I don't know if it's cool</u>
IF61	well I like an interesting rice so I've never had a rice with cauliflower cheese before which and <u>I don't know if that's weird to you?</u>
IF62	Speaker 1: no I hadn't actually noticed it was two-headed Speaker 2: yeah Speaker 1: <u>well you don't sort of look to see if it's two</u> because the impression of the whole is just Speaker 1: is very pretty
IF63	cos we we won't be eating six'll be too early we wouldn't wanna eat at that time (...) cos we have to prepare what we're eating so <u>I don't I don't know if we're gonna be going out anywhere by the time we arrive</u>
IF64	you don't really see him mate n- he came and spoke to me cos <u>I asked if I could shoot in the gardens</u> (.) cos I'd already did ferreting in there and he came and spoke to me
IF65	<u>makes you wonder if they find anywhere</u> doesn't it you know? these people are
IF66	and just (.) I dunno (.) do you think we would? <u>It depends if my hips and my knees last</u>
IF67	<u>Don't know if it's necessary</u> (.) er I think I'm
IF68	I had free choice and I thought <u>I haven't looked through this yet to see if it worked</u> but I thought I'll go for something that's got to go all the way round and be absolutely spo
IF69	<u>I don't know if I'd wear that short one</u> because if you are like
IF70	I do er I do sometimes <u>wonder if he's a bit of a bit of a slave to marketing</u>
IF71	yeah (.) <u>I don't know if mum and dad know</u> even I thought it was interesting
IF72	I would be I'd definitely be open to the idea of having a cat once the site work's finished I think <u>I don't really know if I'd feel comfortable having a cat</u> when there's such big
IF73	whereas --ANONnameF (.) --ANONnameF could sleep (.) I've never known anyone like it (.) she'll come home and she'll sleep in the evening then she'll sleep all night (.) she'll sleep in at the weekend you know she might sleep in at one in the afternoon (.) it's unbelievable (.) I mean <u>she did go to the doctor to see if it was a thyroid thing</u> because she was always always sleeping and she was having trouble shifting her weight like possibly from the thyroid
IF74	might er put the er updates on again and then when <u>I try to get on the internet try Chrome and see if that makes a difference</u>
IF75	oh <u>shall we see if there's any fresh milk in this shop here?</u>
IF76	D' you think so? <u>I dunno if they're British though</u>
IF77	yeah I'll do it yeah put em one on and but I reckon <u>I don't know if that will go another year</u> cos I think got the back end that's there's a bit of corrosion getting there and that's really awkward welding cos that's sort of right where the back suspension rod is
IF78	yeah (.) yeah (.) yeah (.) <u>I don't know if I actually know anyone that's there now</u> (.) I know one erm (.) girl she actually came over to --ANONplace for Erasmus and she was there or she is from (.) I think she was from Ecuador but she was living in --ANONplace for quite a while so I could ask her if she (.) I don't know if she is still I think she's in --ANONplace still but I am sure she will like (.) I'm sure she would go back for Fallas

IF79	well <u>can you</u> phone him up phone him up and <b>ask if h-</b> if he received the email <u>alright?</u> and that'll remind him who you are and then you'll know if he's there or not and if he's got the email
IF80	erm throat also maybe <b>I dunno if</b> you've had a sore throat or anything like that?
IF81	erm (.) I don't know (.) <b>I don't know if</b> it's a good thing or a bad thing and I'm always suspicious of people who don't have Facebook and who don't use their phone very often (.) or like people don't like sending messages --ANONnameM hates WhatsApp and hates text messages and if I send him a text he will just immediately call me cos it is just easier for him and I think I kind of think oh that's you know that's very nice instead of very erm (.) primal I don't know like (.) back to erm
IF82	oh because when we were doing the Avon the other day erm I said to --ANONnameF <b>oh I wonder if</b> --ANONnameM's moved out now cos the board's gone we could put a book through there
IF83	and then I thought to myself oh <b>I'll just see if it shuts</b> --ANONnameM looked and he went oh for god's sake
IF84	<b>depends if</b> it's any better or not (.) it may well not be (.)?
IF85	I kind of don't <b>know if</b> I want them ever
IF86	no no I was out one night when it happened nothing happened <b>I was just there but to see if anything actually happened</b> nothing happened oh what's this?
IF87	I <b>I don't know if</b> I'm supposed to say my name or not but hey guys I'm just eating a Big Mac
IF88	oh you know --ANONnameF (.) I've I've --UNCLEARWORD <b>I don't know if</b> I've mentioned it before (.) but (.) on the second to last ever episode cos I'm streaming it from America so it's like jamming my wifi
IF89	<b>I don't know if</b> I've got one at all
IF90	I don't know (.) they've got quite a lot of bird boxes and stuff (.) <b>I wonder if</b> they're making an aviary or something?
IF91	<b>depends if</b> she's on at that moment doesn't it?
IF92	yeah (.) I mean <b>I don't know if</b> er it's edited out now or what (.) I dunno
IF93	<b>I dunno if</b> it'll work
IF94	so I'm gonna <b>see if</b> I can change my ticket
IF95	compare with your partner <b>see if</b> you're sort of similar people
IF96	I think I <b>wondered if</b> this is
IF97	<b>see if</b> it'll work
IF98	yeah and I was like are they fucking being serious? Mum's got three and a half grand in her account maybe more than that actually (.) <b>I can't remember if he said three or seven</b> (.) either way she's sat on money and he's got nothing
IF99	UNCLEARWORD (.) ah thanks though <b>I don't know if</b> you're serious but thanks
IF100	<b>I wonder if</b> he had he said he had a bomb strapped to him but he probably didn't but
IF101	only a guy mm and they're but I was at --ANONplace doing film archiving and he goes in every year <b>I dunno if</b> he still goes to do
IF102	<b>we don't know if</b> that's the truth
IF103	well yeah I'm I wish it would work out like that but I've worked I've tr- <b>I don't know if it will</b> but with the Birmingham and Helmsley one there's no point going back to --ANONplace because you're halfway up the country already it means I'm gonna have to spend two nights in a B and B which is gonna cost me but so what I was trying to do is add up the petrol money add up the B and B money and hope that it's still a lot less than just renting a place yourself do you see what I mean? but I was thinking I would like to find a

IF104	I don't know if <u>I don't know if that actually exists</u> (.) I mean
IF105	the parents just like being hung there and the whole thing is about in the family the same thing happens to these different families one child will disappear and then the rest of the family get murdered like horrifically and it all gets caught on camera erm and you find out act- I mean are you going to watch it or not? <u>I don't know if I should tell you what what</u>
IF106	even I don't know if it's <u>I don't know if it's forced or not</u> (.) maybe it is (.) maybe he feels like he should be
IF107	<u>let me see if I can find one</u>
IF108	<u>I don't know if I can afford that though</u>
IF109	<u>don't know if she'd go twice</u>
IF110	<u>how do you know if they're gonna be a celebrity?</u>
IF111	erm I think that would be see that's (.) <u>I dunno if it's right so</u>
IF112	S0144: yeah (.) it's not a bad place to crash though mind is it S0024: yeah I think it was this bend (.) <u>well it depends if you roll over</u>
IF113	yeah (.) I did potato printing with them um and we did eh collecting leaves and dipping the leaves in paint and making the leaf prints (.) things like that and different things out of the kitchen that you can make patterns with (.) um and what did we do in the sand pit? Oh I that's right (.) cos the sand was quite damp and I said oh see if you can make tunnels in the sand dig down and <u>see if you can get the tunnels to to meet in the middle and things like that</u> and just let them get on with it (.) and the response after we'd gone was that um aunty --ANONnameF and uncle - -ANONnameM were better at play than nana and grandpa (.) which I thought was a little bit difficult but no they don't develop imagination and thinking for themselves if you're always doing things with them (.) you've got to give them the idea and then let them go
IF114	over er <u>see if he's busy Saturday</u>
IF115	the clinic is yeah (.) but <u>I dunno if they would give you one or just give you a prescription</u>
IF116	<u>I don't know if they work either though</u>
IF117	the erm (.) there was erm did you tell --ANONnameF about --ANONnameF? <u>I don't know if you know actually</u> we w- erm they had a works do at erm
IF118	no (.) no (.) I think we had we had (.) we had a horse here in the fields there for some time <u>some lady asked if she could put a horse there</u> and we said yes
IF119	<u>hey I don't know if it is</u>
IF120	they didn't want to convey it (.) they didn't want to actually step in and say everyone (.) okay this is discourse this is this this is that this is reading this is thi- (.) right we're all n- novices together come on <u>let's try and see if we can sort out what it is</u> that we need to do (.) so they left it to people like myself (.) but I wouldn't have all the discipline knowledge
IF121	I wonder if I can get in there <u>don't know if I 'm that good</u>
IF122	that's I was like we were both waiting for it but I I couldn't tell if she was like <u>I couldn't tell if it was like</u> (.) what she was thinking
IF123	no (.) <u>so I wonder if it's just the fact that your parents think that the heating can only come on for four hours and then it goes off again by itself</u>
IF124	well yeah (.) I mean we d- we don't know where it's coming from do we? <u>We don't know if it's her saying I'm not that keen on the idea or whether it's him going oh well you did say you didn't wanna talk to me any more</u> (.) is the week is going away for a whole weekend gonna be a good idea for you like I think it was possibly thinking of you in the long run

IF125	it depends on it <b>depends if</b> it's a binding contract if the mortgage is a binding mortgage
IF126	can you she (.) she was good but I think I could find someone that could maybe like connect a lot better with him because like (.) she erm (.) I think she was a- (.) I <b>don't know if</b> she told me a lot of what she completely expected me to hear like she knew all this stuff to be like (.) she knew my age she knew I'd probably have a grandad that died
IF127	yeah so I don't I <b>don't know if</b> there's maybe a pang of even jealousy there
IF128	mm (.) and you <b>wonder if</b> they're doing it in a really sarcastic way
IF129	UNCLEARWORD (.) I'm going to erm <b>see if</b> like these singers called The King's Men? I think The King's Men?
IF130	mm you also become a scapegoat though I <b>don't know if</b> you heard about that boat sinking
IF131	bothering to <b>check if</b> it's okay with me and he felt really awkward and he was checking with me and you just carried on regardless but you didn't think about me (.) you thought about you you want to practise
IF132	sorry darling trying to make you perform (...) <b>see if you can get into it no</b>
IF133	no but it'll give us a better idea and I <b>don't know if</b> there's nothing on anywhere in the country that we fancy seeing is there?
IF134	yeah (.) and I mean I was <b>wondering if</b> they were gonna put the same two back in?
IF135	<b>see if</b> you can improve on the five nil
IF136	Speaker 1: long haired and this ours was long haired and theirs went missing at about the same time so I <b>wonder if</b> they were Speaker 2: stolen Speaker 1: cat cat nabbed
IF137	Speaker 1: takes quite a lot of specialised knowledge that I <b>don't know if</b> Speaker 2: I don't know if the Speaker 1: you could change I'm sure as a doctor you can change but I don't think it's that easy I don't think you could change become an oncologist and then a year later change again and become something else you'd be like no you just become an oncologist you need to spend two or three years just training in oncology
IF138	mm (.) yeah that's interesting yeah I <b>wonder if</b> they've moved where the sofa goes cos I always used to have the sofa position so I can stare out the window and wave and anybody who walked past (.) yeah not in a nosy neighbour kind of way but just in I'm sitting on my sofa reading a book doing my own thing oh there you are neighbour hello kind of a way yeah
IF139	I wonder I <b>wonder if</b> you have New if you spend New Year's Eve on a plane they tell you
IF140	I <b>don't know if</b> anybody is really (.) apart from weirdos
IF141	I was looking at the guide the one on the (.) can't leave any lights on (.) especially when we've got the oven running as well I <b>wonder if</b> cooking is going to be really expensive
IF142	um did you <u>did you manage to</u> <b>see if</b> you were having any ... is there any space left?
IF143	five years' time I'll <b>see if</b> he's available
IF144	<b>see if</b> she's working or not
IF145	she went as Wonder Woman erm (...) erm let's <b>see if</b> I can find the picture and he and he went as erm
IF146	yeah it <b>depends if</b> my foot goes again (.) no I'd definitely like to do that (.) or I'd like to go to I'd like to climb Ben Nevis



IF147	Speaker 1: but he's got I'll show you <u>I did these things</u> Speaker 2: mm Speaker 1: <u>to to see if he'd do sentences</u> but actually he's not really using them like that but it's okay
IF148	<u>so we're going to see if he can come up here</u> and
IF149	erm er I came home duh duh duh went out the next day bookmark is lying in puddle outside front door or <u>I don't know if it was a puddle</u> but it was wet through
IF150	but people who were erm waiting for offers because universities sometimes get them before erm <u>so they go onto UCAS to see if they've been accepted or not</u>
IF151	<u>I need to ring --ANONnameF as well to know if they can pick me up from the airport</u> (.) erm (.) I'm sure --ANONnameF will be able to if she's not working but (.) I've sort of booked my flight to Stansted and I've left all my stuff there and I just assumed that they could get me but
IF152	<u>I got to decide if I'm gonna</u> (.) <u>make it worthwhile</u> I suppose
IF153	<u>I do wonder if you were faced first a little bit more</u> because you didn't have any glasses on
IF154	yes there is round the side <u>I don't know if it's still there</u>
IF155	er <u>I don't know if they can really ban them</u>
IF156	that's tr- I dunno <u>I dunno if I believed him</u>
IF157	<u>I don't know if it'll worth the mon-</u> oh why does money come down to everything?
IF158	<u>we didn't know if it was --ANONplace</u> cos we saw the sign for it but he didn't recognise the name
IF159	<u>I wonder if we can get a</u>
IF160	but <u>I don't know if I can be bothered</u>
IF161	but I don't know <u>I don't know if you have to wear it or whether the boys think this is really nice</u> I'll wear this rather than buy a suit

WHETHER1	and I don't <b>know whether</b> the screwdriver 's a ratchet as well --ANONnameM I think it said it was a ratchet
WHETHER2	<u>I doubt whether</u> he'd want to (.) I know and they're nice ones aren't they so?
WHETHER3	to have it or or gone wherever you went because <u>I didn't know whether they sent it out</u> and then had to
WHETHER4	<u>I don't know whether</u> to put it in the fridge actually
WHETHER5	yeah exactly that's it so <u>I don't know whether he'll look into it</u> and he'll get the best deal anyway he spends enough time looking at cars
WHETHER6	<u>I don't know whether</u> that stands for FA number (.) so you had to register set yourself up as a user
WHETHER7	yeah he wants the reflective ones (.) he said that's what he's gonna do with that fiver but <u>I don't know whether he will</u>
WHETHER8	so I knocked on the door and said I'm your neighbour oh hi he say I'm --ANONnameM and I I'm --ANONnameM I said <u>I just come round to s- see whether you'd be okay with me cutting your bit of grass</u> oh yeah yeah we ain't got a lawn mower yet he said
WHETHER9	don't always win at those frequently don't nice catching (.) <u>I'll give you ten points if you guess whether</u> that was sarcastic or serious
WHETHER10	and everyone would be absolute hysterics and it would just not be you wouldn't be able to function or anything like this like <u>you wonder whether they're kind of holding back from saying that</u>

WHETHER11	but they erm (.) yeah when we're not gonna have it here but I'd be h- happy to cook but erm I'm n- <u>I don't know whether they're okay with it</u> but his sister and his mu- his sister and his mum both cook usually
WHETHER12	Speaker 1: but for those who they're trying to reach <u>I wonder whether it's a bit em</u> Speaker 2: Ganglike Speaker 1: <u>Ganglike yeah maybe</u>
WHETHER13	and and then in the end <u>I can't remember whether it was my mum or someone</u> (.) months and months and months later actually took it off me and said I'll sort it out and they unpicked bits and did it and they made it and but and they gave it me and I was like oh thanks and then I think I wore it once and then didn't
WHETHER14	it's somewhere between five and ten I think at the moment that is at a small level and <u>he's trying his hardest to to to cut it down to the bare bones to see whether it has some kind of traction</u>
WHETHER15	but <u>we just have to see</u> what management think <u>whether they think long term it's something that'll work or not</u>
WHETHER16	and I know a lot of these things that kind of (.) <u>I don't know whether they're necessarily erm not s- superficial's not artificial or you know things to do with appearance it's like beneath appearance but appearance-based things</u>
WHETHER17	so I suppose <u>they have to know whether you've got time</u> and whether you can fit it in
WHETHER18	you know <u>whether that counts I don't know</u> it's live so I don't bother there's nothing on I mean it a- yeah there is absolutely nothing I want to watch really
WHETHER19	yeah well <u>see whether they come with something</u>
WHETHER20	they're getting ready for erm (.) they come I think they kind of do this getting ready for to roost for the night (.) it's <u>whether they're hunting or whether they're doing that for fun I dunno</u> they might look like they're just doing it for fun didn't it?
WHETHER21	and I didn't you know so I only got half the pictures I wanted to get so what I'm er I'm thinking is let's make sure we all think to take some pictures on the night cos the ones we took at --ANONnameF's it was j- <u>I don't know whether the flash just wa- wasn't on or what</u> but it was such bad quality and I think it'd be really nice at the --UNCLEARWORD to get pictures of --ANONnameF and
WHETHER22	but we don't know (.) because ESOL are just like yeah we're going to revise it but we're not going to tell you how much (.) so <u>we don't know whether it's</u> (.) if it's twenty percent new material that's fine (.) well at least we've got the bare bones of what's going in
WHETHER23	well you would get a pay as you go (.) they're not expensive anyway (.) thing is I can always <u>ask whether I can have a second sim</u>
WHETHER24	um (.) then in part one (.) erm <u>I can't remember whether there was um</u> yeah there was maybe parts about I don't know that this two sentence paragraph here I thought maybe was
WHETHER25	no (.) <u>I looked online (.) to see whether or not they had billed us</u> and they hadn't billed us (.) so erm (.) I (.) checked and it said when it (.) it said that they were going to bill us in August and then they didn't and now it says they're going to bill us in October so I presume they will (.) and it may be that they bill us for thousands and thousands of pounds in which case we have to work out what to do about it
WHETHER26	but <u>I dunno whether they'll like that here</u>
WHETHER27	<u>I don't know whether it's cos of your rib cage --UNCLEARWORD skeleton or something</u>
WHETHER28	it is (.) <u>I don't know whether to put the washing out or not now</u>

WHETHER29	Speaker 1: so <u>I don't know whether I should</u> Speaker 2: you know? Speaker 1: <u>say something to --ANONnameF</u>
WHETHER30	actually it should be today (.) cos he sa- I'm sure he said <u>I can't remember whether</u> he said a week or two weeks? But it is itching (.) so
WHETHER31	hen I should've done it in like (.) you know the first couple of weeks or just stayed till Christmas (.) I d- I it's just seems stupid to leave in the middle of it (.) and (.) <u>I dunno whether I can stay any longer</u> if not at course cos I remember at --ANONplace like they said to me because your lease lasts until (.) christmas you could like effectively just stay (.) for as long as you wanted to pay for it
WHETHER32	oh (.) <u>is this to see whether we're good enough?</u>
WHETHER33	but <u>I don't know whether</u> it's from a book but if it is I imagine the actual the story in the book would be a lot lot better (.) the they didn't really (.) they could have you know (.) you could tell there was probably a lot more toe the story in different bits and they just sort of moved on cos the (.) the story they 're telling there wasn't a great deal to it
WHETHER34	<u>I don't know whether</u> it's them I only see ever see young people come in there
WHETHER35	yeah that's r- that's right that's what I thought <u>I didn't know whether she'd gone into something else</u> --UNCLEARWORD
WHETHER36	they've got this hu- they're that's massive that's on the airport estate <u>I don't know whether</u> it's still there
WHETHER37	and he said well actually in fact <u>I don't know whether</u> --ANONnameM <u>mentioned it to you</u> he came down the first day they were back to school and said oh mum me and --ANONnameM have got a plan I said what's that? he said we're gonna erm open a gym in our garage and charge people I said
WHETHER38	<u>I dunno whether</u> it's
WHETHER39	cos <u>I didn't know whether</u> to feed it back to --ANONnameF (.) but I thought again (.) I I don't want her think I'm