

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

Department of English

A Construction Grammar Approach to the Phrase *Why Don't You*

Jonny Berglund

Bachelor Degree Project

English Linguistics

Autumn 2008

Supervisor: Alan Mcmillon

Abstract

This essay adopts a construction grammar approach to the linguistic pattern *why don't you*. It argues that the pattern can have two different senses: an interrogative sense and a suggestive sense. Further it argues that the suggestive sense is a construction similar to the definition of a construction described by construction grammar theory. In other words, the linguistic pattern *why don't you* can have a specific underlying semantics that cannot be reached by an examination of its formal pattern.

Keywords: Construct, Construction, Construction Grammar, Idiom, Interpretation, Linguistic Pattern, Marker, Underlying Semantics

Contents

1. Introduction	
1.1 An Overview of Construction Grammar	4
1.2 A Presentation of the Construction Why Don't You X	5
1.3 Aim	6
2. Material	6
3. Method	7
4. Syntax Analysis	
4.1 The Formal Composition of the WDYX Construction	8
4.2 Syntactical Restraints	10
4.3 A Compositional Approach to WDYX	14
5. Semantic Analysis	
5.1 The Overall Semantic Pattern of the Construction WDYX	17
5.2 The Lexical Parts of the Why Don't You X Construction	19
5.3 Different Semantic Functions of WDYX Within the Clause	22
5.4 An Overview of the Different Markers	25
6. Conclusion	27

1. Introduction

This essay will adopt a constructional approach to investigate a specific linguistic pattern. This will be done by a detailed analysis of its syntactic and semantic features. Sentences containing the phrase *why don't you* (WDY) have been selected for the study and the purpose of the essay is to argue that this specific linguistic pattern can have an underlying construction of the type discussed in Construction Grammar (CxG). This linguistic pattern seems to have the semantics of a suggestion.

1.1 An overview of Construction Grammar

Construction Grammar (CxG) is a linguistic approach which has the basic perspective that “meanings can be associated with any units of language” (McMillion: 2006,143) and that a construction is a basic unit of language learned by pairing form with function.

Construction Grammar, unlike traditionally generative grammar, does not regard some linguistic patterns as exceptional or odd. Instead CxG regards all constructions of a language as of equal importance. Fried defines a grammatical construction as a symbolic sign that represents the basic building block of linguistic analysis (Fried and Östman: 2004, 24). These abstract signs are linguistic patterns, which have different abstract representations or meanings attached to them and which can vary in complexity - from morpheme to sentences. A grammatical construction can, for example, consist of a word like *sorry* or larger word clusters such as *What is this fly doing in my soup*. It can also have some fixed lexical items and some variables like *proposition1-butatleast-proposition2* (Bellarian: 2007).

What the constructions have in common is that they have a specific syntax and a specific meaning attached to them that cannot be composed from the lexical items alone.

The aim of Construction Grammar is to build on existing traditional linguistic models of syntax and semantics and also be able to include and analyze, for example, fixed expressions or idioms, which may not adhere to basic grammatical rules. In other words, the aim of CxG is to give “a uniform representation of *all* grammatical knowledge”(Fried and Östman: 2004, 18).

1.2 A Presentation of the Construction *Why Don't You X*

The majority of the sentences containing the linguistic pattern *why don't you* seem to have a specific meaning attached to them as well as a syntactic similarity. The examples listed below all contain the phrase *why don't you*. As can be seen, the sentences also contain a verb phrase (X) that follows the phrase *why don't you* (WDYX). When the phrase *why don't you* is combined with verb phrase X it seems to convey suggestion or advice of some sort. In other words, the speaker suggests that the addressee do X.

(1) Examples of sentences containing the phrase *why don't you* found in the BNC

[(XXX) Refers to the reference of the example in BNC.]

- a) *Why don't you* go and fit the scrambler before you forget what that is? (CJA)
- b) *Why don't you* come into the drawing-room? (FB9)
- c) *Why don't you* read Tales for Innocents? (APL)
- d) *Why don't you* be content and wait for the trial? (ANL)
- e) *Why don't you* take one for a test drive? (KM5)

There is reason to regard the linguistic pattern WDYX as constructs of the type discussed in CxG because the specific semantics of a suggestion seems to be linked to the pattern as a whole. The purpose of this essay is to argue that the specific semantics of sentences containing the WDYX construction is not automatically created by combining the lexical items *Why*, *don't* and *you* with a VP. Instead, the semantic interpretation is linked to the phrase *why don't you* with a following VP. The syntax of this construction can be described as *why don't you* + VP. The result of combining the phrase WDY with X is a sentence that conveys suggestion or advice of some sort and not necessarily a literal negative wh-question. Sentence (2a) clearly has a suggestive interpretation while (2b) can probably only be interpreted as a negative wh-question. This suggests that there is an underlying semantics behind sentence (2a).

- 2 a) *Why don't you* come over and have a snack?
- b) *Why don't you* like it?

Finally, it should be mentioned that the *why don't you X* construction is not to be confused with the much discussed *what's X doing Y* construction investigated by Kay & Fillmore (1999) because of the similarities between their abbreviations WDYX and WXDY.

1.3 Aim

The aim of this essay is to argue that the linguistic pattern WDYX can be regarded to be a construction as defined by Goldberg:

“A distinct construction is defined to exist if one or more of its properties are not strictly predictable from knowledge of other constructions existing in the grammar (1995,4).

This will be done by analyzing and classifying the syntactic and semantic components of the pattern WDYX in order to describe its formal features and possible underlying semantics. Investigating topics such as this is of relevance and importance for grammatical theory in general and CxG more specifically.

2. Material

The primary material that is used in the analysis is a set of examples of the construction *why don't you X* that have been obtained by a search in the British National Corpus (BNC). The BNC is a collection of both spoken and written samples of contemporary British English. The corpus was chosen because its 100 million-word collection of samples can provide a good overview of expressions and constructions used in modern British English. Furthermore, due to limitations in time and space, a search of the construction WDYX in other corpora did not seem necessary.

The total number of examples found in the BNC that matched the query, was 1168. Of these, 170 examples were gathered to represent the construction and are listed in the Appendix. 75 of these examples are taken from the spoken corpora and were sometimes found to be unclear or incomplete. Additionally, it should be mentioned that these examples are transcribed and therefore intonation and stress patterns are absent.

The books *Analysing sentences, an introduction to English syntax* by Burton-Roberts (1997) and *A comprehensive grammar to English language* by Quirk et al.

(1985) are used as secondary material in the syntactic and semantic analyses of the pattern WDYX. Other material on construction grammar will also serve as secondary material.

3. Method

Of 1168 examples of the construction WDYX, 170 examples were chosen for the investigation. These examples were picked out randomly by using the sample function in the BNC. After the use of the sample function every 4th example was removed from the 2 first searches in the spoken and the fiction section and then every 5th example was obtained from the search in the remaining three sections to get a broad perspective of the linguistic pattern. The distribution of the examples is shown in the table below.

Corpora	Number of examples found in the BNC	Number of examples randomly chosen	Percentage
Spoken	406 <i>40,75 Per Million</i>	75	18%
Fiction	595 <i>37,4 PM</i>	75	13%
Newspaper Academic Miscellaneous	167 <i>2,37 PM</i>	20	12%
Total	1168 <i>12,13 PM</i>	170	15%

The percentage taken from the spoken section was higher because a number of these examples were incomplete or inconclusive and could therefore not be analyzed. The ratio of occurrence per million in the spoken section was also slightly higher. A higher number was gathered from the three last sections to give a sufficient representation due to their low number of examples.

The analysis of the linguistic pattern WDYX will consist of two parts.

Firstly, the sentences gathered from the BNC will be syntactically analyzed to determine their internal syntactic pattern and to see if there exists a special formal pattern that relates them. Possible grammatical constraints within the pattern will be examined by a syntactic study. An analysis of the traditional generative grammar type will be done in order to be able to argue that there indeed exists specific semantics attached to the WDYX pattern and that a traditional syntactic analysis produces a different result.

Secondly, the semantic analysis includes a broad investigation of WDYX sentences followed by a comparison of WDYX sentences to be able to shed light on the interplay of the syntactic and semantic features in the clause. A classification of different subtypes of WDYX constructs will also be done.

4. Syntax Analysis

The linguistic pattern WDYX will be analyzed in order to examine its internal syntactic structure and to categorize its function within the clause. By analyzing the different examples of the pattern and categorizing them it will be possible to describe the constituents, structure, syntactical constraints and possible grammatical variation.

4.1 The Formal Composition of the WDYX construction

The majority of the examples found in the BNC have the same formal pattern in common. They begin with the phrase *why don't you* and are followed by a verb phrase, *X*. However, in some of the BNC examples the phrase *why don't you* appears after the verb phrase *X* as the examples (14), (15), (16) and (17) will show below.

By using the approach of Burton-Roberts it is possible to identify the WDYX pattern as a negative fronted wh-question, but according to Quirk et al (1985, 821), the WDYX pattern is more commonly used as a suggestion, which Quirk calls a directive, and can be compared with the abbreviated *why not* (WNX) phrase. Quirk also states that the suggestive WDYX pattern can be used as an instruction or an invitation.

(3) *Why not* ignore them (ECG)

WN +Verb Phrase

As can be seen in the examples (4) and (5) the *why don't you X* pattern as well as the *why not* pattern have the formal appearance of an interrogative. However, both are used as suggestions. They have a similar pattern in common; they both consist of a fronted wh-word followed by a negative particle, which is further followed by a verb phrase.

(4) *Why don't you* buy a new one? (C8T)

WDY +Verb Phrase

(5) *Why not* give the flowers to the survivors? (A0R)

WN +Verb Phrase

A change of the VPs in the examples above shows that there is no significant loss of meaning and that they both still can be interpreted as before.

(6) *Why not* buy a new one?

(7) *Why don't you* give the flowers to the survivors?

Nevertheless, the WDYX pattern can, unlike the WNX pattern, be used as an interrogative (Quirk et al: 1985, 821). While both sentences convey advice or suggestion of some sort, the WDYX pattern can be used both as a suggestion and as an interrogative in which the lexical items are to be interpreted compositionally. For example, if the *why don't you* phrase in the sentence *why don't you like him?* were replaced with *why not*, the resulting sentence would be semantically odd. This will be discussed more in detail in the following sections.

The WDYX pattern can and does occur with different types of verbs. The examples below are all from the BNC and demonstrate that the WDYX construction is allowed in all main subcategories of the verb group as described by Burton-Roberts (1997, 81).

- (8) *Why don't you* relax? –Intransitive (HA6)
- (9) *Why don't you* read Tales for Innocents? – Monotransitive (APR)
- (10) *Why don't you* show Terry the good job you made of the cellar? –
Ditransitive (G16)
- (11) *Why don't you* be content and wait for the trial? – Intensive (ANL)
- (12) *Why don't you* call her Fantasma? – Complex (CA0)
- (13) *Why don't you* look at the notes? – Prepositional (JY0)

Apart from the prototypical *why don't you* + X, the phrase *why don't you* sometimes appear on its own after the verb phrase X. This may seem odd considering that an auxiliary verb must occur with a lexical verb and a movement of the auxiliary to the end of the phrase should not occur in English. Nevertheless, it supports the argument that the linguistic pattern *why don't you* X is a construction and it shows that the fixed phrase *why don't you* can move to either side of X. Of 170 examples scrutinized, four have this pattern.

- (14) And you go ahead and take the rest of these cigarettes, *why don't you*?
(H0F)
- (15) Unwind, *why don't you*? (HWA)
- (16) Just tell everybody our ages *why don't you*? (KBG)
- (17) Relegate those few kisses to ridicule, *why don't you*? (A0L)

As stated above these types of patterns where the phrase *why don't you* is moved to the end of X represents a minority of the examples found in the BNC. Although the pattern in the examples above have a different structure they still convey similar semantics to the other examples of the constructional WDYX and can be rewritten and interpreted in a similar way if *why don't you* is moved to the beginning of the clause.

- Why don't you* [go ahead and take the rest of these cigarettes]?
- Why don't you* [unwind]?
- Why don't you* [just tell everybody our ages]?
- Why don't you* [relegate those few kisses to ridicule]?

4.2 Syntactic Constraints on WDYX

One of the main purposes with this essay is to show that the lexical units of the phrase *why don't you* together with the verb phrase X convey a meaning which is not possible to interpret from the lexical units alone. That is to say that the WDYX construction has the functions of an idiom where the meaning cannot be understood if each lexical item is taken into consideration separately.

However, the linguistic pattern *why don't you X* can also be used as an interrogative. When the WDYX clause is used as an interrogative each lexical part is viewed compositionally and the WDYX clause can no longer be regarded as the same construction.

Consequently, it is possible to interpret many WDYX constructs in two different ways. It can both be interpreted as a an idiom in which the lexical parts are regarded as a single unit or it can be divided into four different lexical items:

[Why don't you] X?

[Why don't you] come in and see our palace? (EV1)

[Why][do][n't][you] X?

[Why][do][n't][you] like her? (KDE)

The latter example can semantically be classified as a question and is not to be regarded as a construction of the type that this investigation is directed towards.

As mentioned earlier in this essay the WDYX pattern is not limited to a particular verb group but occurs with all of them. Both the constructional and the interrogative sense of the WDYX pattern allow adverbial modifiers but only the interrogative allows nonassertive forms, which is shown in the following examples.

(18) *Why don't you **just** try dishing it up out of the thing?* (KC4)

(19) *Why don't you **ever** pick up the freebie papers?* (KD0)

According to Quirk et al (1985, 821), it is impossible for the WDYX and the WNX construction to occur in the past tense. The formal pattern of WDYX is only allowed to occur in a past tense when it is to be interpreted compositionally. In other words, the WDYX pattern has the meaning of an interrogative when it occurs in the past tense. In the following examples the auxiliary verb *do* in the WDYX clause and X in the WNX clause are changed to past tenses. The change in the WDYX constructs is not just a grammatical change but also a semantic one.

(20)

a) *Why don't you take another one?* (KP5)

b) *Why didn't you take another one?*

Example (20a) is ambiguous and can have the interpretation that the speaker is suggesting to the addressee to take *another one* while example (20b) only has the interpretation that the speaker is asking for the reason why the addressee didn't take another one. The semantics of these two sentences can change from a suggestion to a question when changing the tense from present to past. The suggestive WNX clause has a non-finite verb, so this test does not apply to it. In conclusion, the WDYX pattern used as a suggestion, does not allow a past tense form.

Furthermore, the WDYX pattern occurs with the negative particle *not* separated from the auxiliary verb *do*.

(21) *Why don't you go to bed?* (KCV)

Why do you not go to bed?

Nevertheless, there were only 22 examples of the *Why do you not X* clause compared to 1158 examples of *Why don't you X* found in the BNC.

Examples of particle separation in WDYX clauses found in the BNC

- (22) *Why do you not go to bed?* (AD1)
Why do you not close your business and come to London? (HP0)
Why do you not just knife your wife and have done with it? (FET)

There also exist constraints and possibilities of alternations of the pronoun in the WDYX construction. The constructional WDYX clause can be used in both the first person singular and the first person plural form. Both these first person forms convey some sort of suggestion or offer and can therefore be categorized as constructions similar to the WDYX construction.

- (23) *Why don't I put that on the bird-table next door?* (KBA)
(24) *Why don't we go to Venice on the Orient Express?* (C8A)

The examples above show that it is reasonable to regard these types of constructs as similar to the WDYX construction. The meaning commonly conveyed is to offer a suggestion or invitation and not to ask a question. Considering the similar underlying semantics of these sentences and the constructional WDYX sentences it seems that these are constructs based on the same underlying construction.

However, when an alteration of the phrase into third person singular or plural is made, the semantic meaning is changed from a suggestion to a wh-question and the lexical items should be interpreted compositionally. The scope of this study does not allow a deeper analysis of the third person alternation but when we examine an altered WDYX clause with an original WDYX construct, it seems that the third person alternation should be classified as an interrogative rather than a suggestion.

- (25) *Why don't you give that one to Beverly?* (KBF)
Why don't they give that one to Beverly?
(26) *Why don't you take another one?* (KP5)
Why don't they take another one?

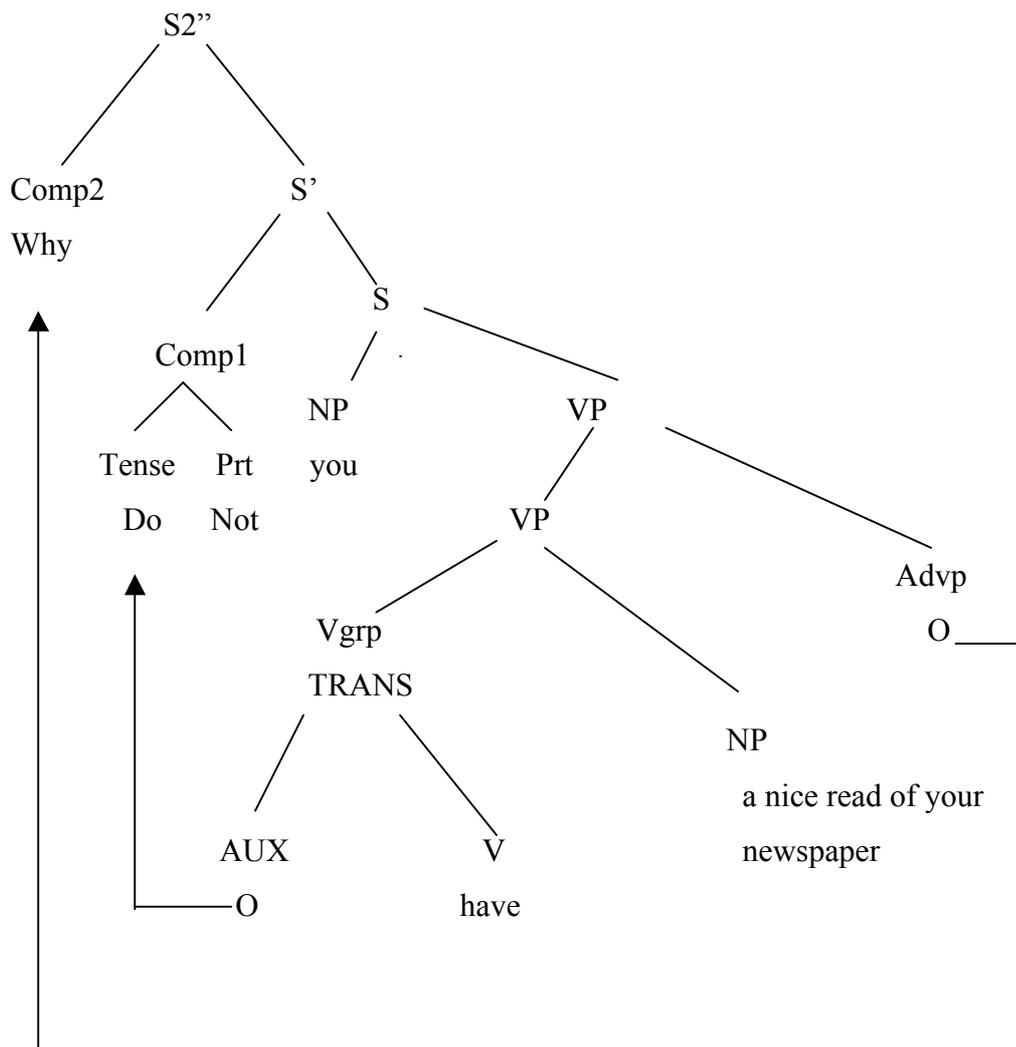
Finally, it should be mentioned that the construction WDYX is not allowed to occur as a positive. When a WDYX construct is altered to a positive, it undergoes the same change as when it is altered to a past tense or third person plural. The former suggestion becomes an interrogative.

- (27) *Why don't you give that one to Beverly?* (KP5)
 Why do you give that one to Beverly?

The examples above demonstrate that if the WDYX pattern occurs as a positive, it must be interpreted as an interrogative. An interpretation of the negative clause in (27) would be that the speaker is suggesting to the addressee to give *that one to Beverly* but in the positive clause the reason for why the addressee is giving *that one to Beverly* is asked for. Hence, the suggestive WDYX clause cannot occur as a positive in its literal sense.

4.3 A Compositional Approach to WDYX

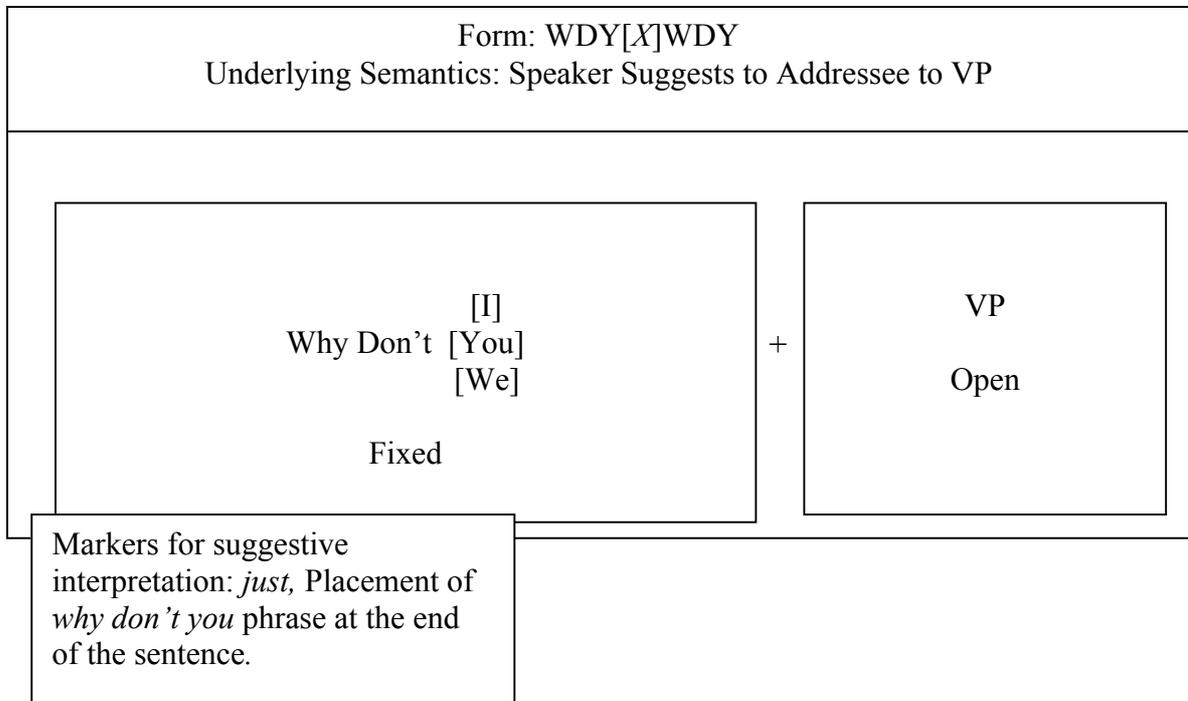
A traditional analysis of the linguistic pattern WDYX by applying the tree model used by Burton-Roberts shows that the underlying semantics cannot be extracted by analyzing the different lexical items by themselves. According to this model the linguistic pattern WDYX can be described as a negative wh-question. The auxiliary verb that carries the tense has been fronted because the lexical verb does not, in present-day English, move in front of the subject. This movement of the auxiliary is called 'AUXILIARY FRONTING' by Burton-Roberts (142). The position that the auxiliary moves to is called the complementiser position. By fronting the auxiliary, a gap (O) is left behind which can be seen in the traditional tree diagram of the sentence presented below. Furthermore, the adjunct adverbial *why* is also fronted leaving behind another gap in the sentence. This second gap that is left behind represents an adverbial phrase of reason. The tree diagram model used by Burton-Roberts analyzes the sentence *Why don't you have a nice read of your newspaper?* (FPM) as follows:



The main idea behind this analysis is, according to Burton-Roberts, that wh-clauses are introduced by a fronted wh-word occupying the Comp2 position and that it always corresponds to a gap of the same category from which it has been fronted (1997, 226). The category in this case would be an adverbial clause of reason. So according to this model, the speaker is interrogating the addressee for the reason why he or she doesn't have a nice read of the newspaper.

However, another interpretation of the semantics in this sentence would be that speaker is suggesting to the addressee that he/she has a nice read of the newspaper. This interpretation cannot be reached by an examination and classification of each lexical item alone or from their literal pattern. The observation that the sentence above seems to have underlying semantics attached to its formal features is an argument for the assumption that the WDYX pattern can have the same features as the type of

construction discussed in CxG. A more constructional approach to this particular sentence is to divide it up in boxes and if the boxes occur together, it is possible that they associate with an underlying semantics.



There are two possible interpretations of the sentence *Why don't you have a nice read of your newspaper?*. One is the suggestive interpretation and the other one is the wh-question interpretation. Even though a more reasonable interpretation of the example above would be that it is meant as a suggestion, it is possible that it could be a question. The markers in the boxes above (see section 5.4) tell us how we should interpret the meaning but without them the sentence is ambiguous.

5. Semantic Analysis

To be able to justify that the linguistic pattern *why don't you* is a construction of the type discussed in CxG an analysis of the specific relation that exists between the items will be done. This section will begin with an overview of the overall semantic pattern and then continue with a more specific study of the WDYX construction.

5.1 The Overall Semantics of the Linguistic Pattern WDYX

The linguistic pattern *why don't you* is followed by a verb phrase in approximately 98% of the examples taken from the BNC. Together with the verb phrase, the WDYX pattern can form a suggestion (Quirk et al: 1985, 821), which prototypically consists of a main clause. The possibility of moving the phrase *why don't you* to the end of the clause can also be found in the corpus, but the prototypical formal pattern of the construction consists of the lexical items *why don't you* followed by a verb phrase *X* as the examples below show.

(28) Different examples found in the BNC

- a) *Why don't you* go and fit your scrambler before you forget what that is?
(CJA)
- b) *Why don't you* go home and have a nice rest, Pat? (FAB)
- c) *Why don't you* come into the drawing-room? (FB9)
- d) *Why don't you* have a nice read of your newspaper? (FPM)
- e) *Why don't you* ask me to tell your fortune? (FR6)
- f) *Why don't you* get out of the way? (KCT)

[*Why don't you*]

WDY Phrase

[get out of the way?]

Verb Phrase

There exists a special semantic relationship between the phrase *why don't you* and the suggestion expressed by the VP. The *Why don't you* phrase introduces a suggestion and the VP expresses what this suggestion should or could be. To illustrate further, sentence (29a) will be used as an example.

(29a) *Why don't you* sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas? (KC9)

The suggestion in (29a) is for the addressee to sit down and tell the speaker what the addressee wants for Christmas. The introduction to this suggestion is the phrase *why don't you*. The question is how this introduction is linked to the VP and what the

functions of this introduction are. In (29a) the VP, on its own, conveys the semantics of an imperative with the propositional content that the addressee sit down and tell the speaker what the addressee wants for Christmas. In other words, the speaker is commanding the addressee to perform an action. It is possible to affect this command by simply adding a positive adverb such as *please* before the beginning of the clause. As a result, the degree of command is altered and speaker is requesting that the addressee sits down and tells the speaker what the addressee wants for Christmas.

(29b) *Please* sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas.

However, the meaning expressed in the sentence does not change and the speaker still tells the addressee to perform an action even though the degree of demand is less. So the function of the adverbial *please* is to lower the degree of demand or simply to request it more politely. Sentence (29a) as well as the sentence in (29b) seems to resemble each other in the way that the speaker wants an action to be performed by the addressee. Consequently, the WDYX pattern appears to resemble an imperative. The speaker is requesting or suggesting that the addressee sit down and tell what he/she wants for Christmas. The semantics conveyed in this particular sentence is not to ask what the reasons are that the addressee does not sit down to tell his or hers Christmas wishes.

The phrase *Why don't you* seems to have the same function as *please* and that is to modify how the addressee should interpret the VP and to interpret the VP as a suggestion rather than a command. In other words, both *please* and the phrase *why don't you* can be viewed as an adverbial modifier to the VP. The modifiers are moveable and its possible to place them before or after the VP in both cases as the example below shows.

(29b) *Please* sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas.

Sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas *please*.

As it has been shown earlier in the syntax section of this essay it is possible to move the whole WDY clause to the end of the sentence as well as *please* above. It seems that both modify how the addressee should interpret the VP.

Furthermore, a comparison can be made between sentence (29c) below and the WDYX pattern. Both (29a) and (29c) have the syntactic appearance of a question but a reasonable interpretation of (29c) is not that the speaker wonders whether the addressee is physically capable of sitting down and telling what he/she wants for Christmas but that the speaker is telling or requesting the addressee to sit down and tell what he/she wants for Christmas.

(29c) Can you sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas?

Both sentence (29a) and (29c) convey a similar underlying semantics, both have the syntactical appearance of a question. The VPs in both these sentences are the same and are delivering the message of what the speaker wants or suggests addressee to do.

5.2 The Lexical Parts of the *Why Don't You X* Construction

The main argument in this essay is that the linguistic pattern *why don't you X* is commonly interpreted as a construction. The meaning conveyed when the adverbial *why* is combined with the negative auxiliary verb *don't* and the personal pronoun *you*, cannot always be extracted by looking at these lexical items alone. The WDY phrase can be interpreted as one lexical unit.

However, it is possible for these lexical items to occur on their own and in the same order as the WDYX construction in the form of a negative wh-question. In this case the linguistic pattern is interpreted as an interrogative and does not have the same independent idiomatic meaning as the WDYX construction has. In consequence, there are two different ways to interpret the linguistic pattern *why don't you X*: either as one lexical unit functioning as a modifier of some sort or as a negative wh-question.

[I]
[why don't you] + X
[We]
[why][do[n't] [you]X]

The following two examples illustrate the argument further.

(30) [*Why don't you two*] just go to Bulgaria then? (KDV)

(31) [*Why*] [*do[n't]*] [*you*] *wanna*] go to Bulgaria? (KDV)

There exists a significant difference in the interpretation of sentence (30) and (31). In (30) the suggestion *to go to Bulgaria* is made while in (31) the reason why the addressee doesn't want to go to Bulgaria is asked for. It would be semantically odd to interpret (31) as a WDYX construct because it would mean that the speaker suggests that the addressee should want to go Bulgaria. A rewriting of sentence (30) and (31) replacing *why don't you* with *why not* makes this clearer.

Why not just go to Bulgaria then?

?. *Why not* wanna go to Bulgaria?

As can be seen in these examples, the rewriting of sentence (30) makes sense while the rewriting of (31) appears to be wrong. As has been shown in the syntax section, the WDYX construction and the WNX construction have similar suggestive functions and linguistic patterning. However, the WNX pattern, unlike WDYX, cannot appear as an interrogative. Thus, sentence (30) unlike (31) should be regarded as a WDYX construct. Furthermore, it should be mentioned once again that the WDYX construction does not appear in a past tense. So if (31) is changed into past tense, the idiomatic sense disappears and the lexical items get a compositional interpretation. In the example below the reason they did not go to Bulgaria is asked for and the sentence doesn't have the suggestive interpretation that it had in (30).

(32) *Why didn't you* two just go to Bulgaria then?

In conclusion, the discussion above demonstrates that the linguistic pattern *why don't you* can be interpreted in two different ways. It can be interpreted combinatorially as a negative wh-question or more commonly as a construction with specific semantics attached to it. There are a number of examples in the BNC that are ambiguous where it is possible to either interpret them as interrogatives or WDYX constructs. Context will often aid interpretation, but some cases remain unclear, e.g. (33e).

List of some of the ambiguous examples found in the BNC:

- (33) a) Why don't you use that? (KBF)
- b) Why don't you bring down the case we bought you? (KCA)
- c) Why don't you go? (H8N)
- d) Why don't you get a bike? (KD7)
- e) Why don't you sell it? (G06)

All these sentences can be interpreted as either WDYX constructs or interrogatives. It is possible in all these examples to replace *why don't you* with *why not* which cannot function as an interrogative. This indicates that they can be interpreted as suggestions, but they can still also function as interrogatives. One way of deciding how they should be interpreted could be to look at the context but if we put (33e) into its context we clearly see that it has both the function of an interrogative and a suggestion.

- (33e) "It's much too big for you. **Why don't you sell it?**"
 "It's my home," said my mother stiffly.

The example above shows that it is possible to interpret (33e) in either way or perhaps in both ways at the same time. Even though (33e) is interpreted as an interrogative it still conveys a suggestive sense.

In addition, it has to be taken into consideration that all of the examples are from dialogs and the interpretation can vary depending on stress and intonation. Intuitively, it seems that if the stress is focused on *why* or *don't* it can be interpreted as a question but if the stress is more neutral it should be interpreted as suggestion. However, without the possibility to investigate the stress pattern it is impossible to say for sure.

Even though it is easier to classify many of the ambiguous examples when they are put into context, there are still some that are unclear like (33e). On the one hand it is possible to show that the linguistic pattern WDYX is used as a construction like in example (30) and on the other side of the scale there is the compositional interrogative use such as (31), but the boundary between these two seems to be unclear.

Another unclear boundary is the one between the instructional use of WDYX and an imperative. If we are told to get some coffee to our boss with the words *Why don't you run down and get me some coffee?* we are likely to interpret the WDYX construction as an imperative and not as a suggestion. So the continuum of the interpretation of WDYX seems to range from an imperative, passing a suggestive use to an interrogative. There exists a grey zone between these senses of WDYX where it is possible to go either way.



There are markers that can determine how the WDYX pattern should be interpreted and these are discussed in section 5.4. These markers make it possible to determine if the example should be regarded as a suggestion or an interrogative. However, without the markers, the WDYX pattern is often ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways.

5.3 Different Semantic Functions of WDYX Within the Clause

According to Quirk et al. (1985, 821) the phrase *why don't you X* can be used in two different ways: either as a suggestion or as an interrogative. It has been argued that the linguistic pattern *why don't you X* used as an interrogative has a compositional interpretation. Therefore it is not to be regarded as a WDYX construction and will therefore not be analyzed in detail. However, the suggestive use of WDYX can function either as a suggestion, invitation or instruction (Quirk et al: 1985, 821). Furthermore, the WDYX construction can have an irritated or critical tone and even convey sarcasm.

The most frequent use of the WDYX constructs found in the BNC is that of a suggestion. It seems that the *why don't you* phrase has the function of introducing a suggestion to someone as the following examples demonstrate.

(34) a) *Why don't you go home and have a nice rest Pat?* (FAB)

- b) *Why don't you* have a nice read of your newspaper? (FPM)
- c) *Why don't you* just try dishing it up out of the thing? (KC4)
- d) Hey well, *why don't you* sell them at the car boot sale? (KCL)
- e) *Why don't you* go to the army cadet for a week? (KDN)

All of the examples above can convey suggestion or advice of some sort. The fixed phrase *why don't you* has an introductory function for what the speaker suggests that the addressee should do.

Examples found in the BNC

- (35) a) *Why don't you* let yourself go for once? [Any one else would] (G03)
- b) *Why don't you* get out of the way? (KCT)
- c) *Why don't you* just put the blame on her then? (KNY)
- d) *Why don't you* watch where you're going? (FRS)

As mentioned above, the WDYX construction can have a critical or irritated tone but that does not necessarily have to be the case. For example, sentence (34a), (34b) and (34e) do not have a critical tone but merely suggest that addressee does X. It seems that the constructs convey a critical or irritated tone when the addressee is doing something wrong or not doing what is expected or obvious.

Furthermore, the WDYX construction is often used as an invitation. This does not contradict the suggestive use of WDYX since an invitation falls within the scope of a suggestion. However, the frequent use of the WDYX construction as an invitation stands out slightly as a special type of suggestion and is therefore mentioned separately.

Some examples of WDYX of invitations are:

- (36) a) *Why don't you* come with us? (FRX)
- b) In fact, *why don't you* stay to eat? (H8N)
- c) *Why don't you* stay Sunday as well? (HTR)
- d) So *why don't you* come along? (JXW)

In the examples above the phrase *why don't you* functions as an introducing phrase to the request of the addressee's participation or presence in something. Even though the sentence has the functional sense of a suggestion it seems to differ slightly. In the examples above, the speaker is not suggesting that the hearer should perform an action but merely requesting the presence or participation of the addressee. Hence, the invitational use of WDYX can be classified as a special type within the scope of the suggestive use. Further, it seems that the phrase *why don't you* modifies the message of the VP to make it more familiar and less formal. So in these types of sentences the WDY phrase has an informal function.

Another type of use of the WDYX construction is the instructional use. This type of use, as well as the invitational one differs slightly from the suggestive use. Here the instruction resembles more an imperative than a suggestion.

(37) a) Folly, *why don't you* go and undress now, and join the others back here?
(H85)

b) *Why don't you* take that wet anorak off and get the fire going again?
(CKF)

The WDYX construction also functions in these examples as an introducer that modifies what the speaker wants the addressee to do. A difference in these examples is that the speaker is no longer suggesting what the addressee should do but giving an instruction to the addressee. When using the WDYX pattern in these types of sentences the instruction is given a more informal and friendly tone similar to what has been discussed above. It can be described as a way to mask the imperative as a suggestion instead of just telling the addressee to *take that wet anorak off and get the fire going again*.

Finally, the WDYX construction can be used to convey sarcasm. If the message delivered from addresser to the addressee appears to be unreasonable the pattern *why don't you X* has a sarcastic interpretation. The sarcasm can be enhanced with the adverbial *just*. A way to mark the sarcasm seems to be to place the phrase *why don't you* at the end of the imperative clause. In the 4 examples of such occurrence found in the BNC at least two seem sarcastic (38c, 38d) and one (38a) ambiguous. As can be

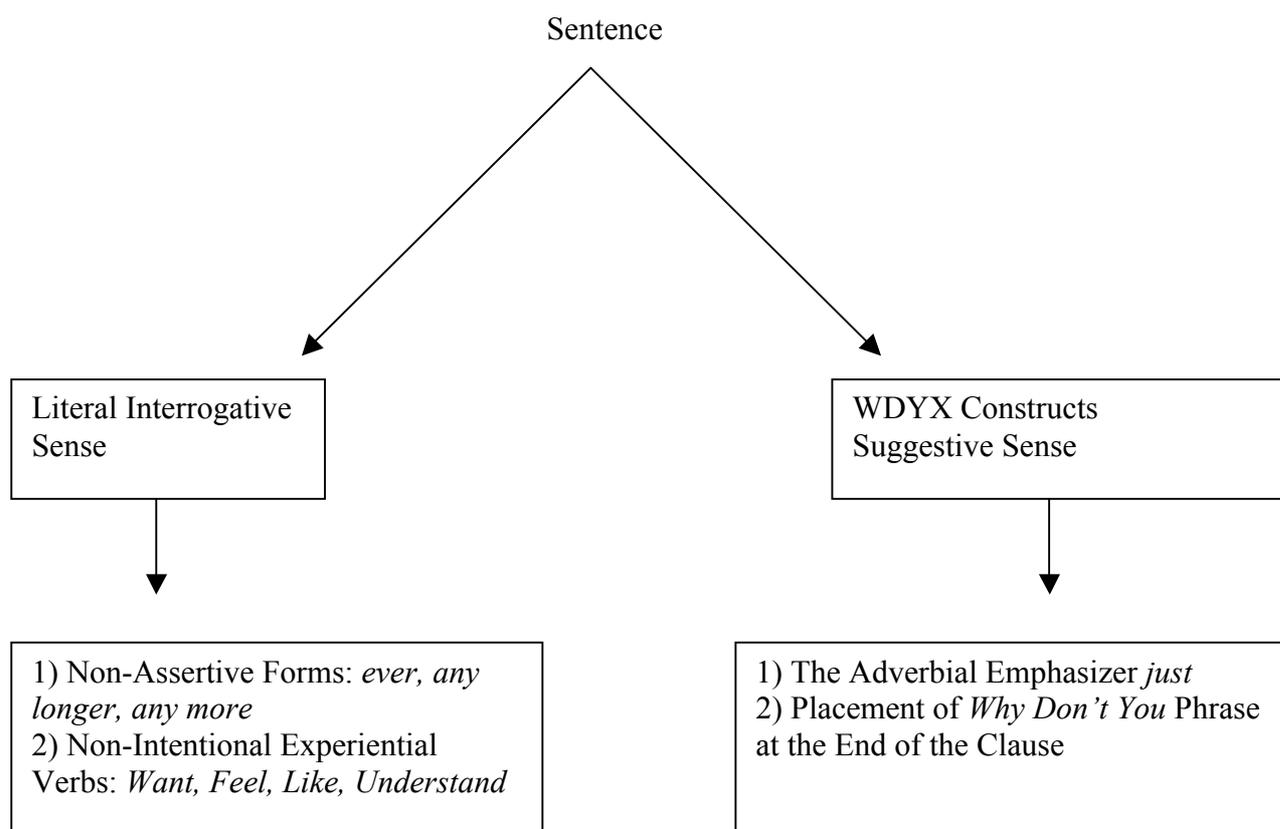
seen in (38c) the adverbial *just* is used together with the placement of the phrase *why don't you* to emphasize the sarcastic interpretation.

- (38) a) And go ahead and take the rest of these cigarettes, *why don't you?* (H0F)
- b) Unwind, *why don't you?* (HWA)
- c) Just tell everybody our ages, *why don't you?* (KBG)
- d) Relegate those few kisses to ridicule, *why don't you?* (A0L)

The placement of the WDY phrase at the end of the clause does not necessarily convey sarcasm. The suggestion itself must seem unreasonable to perform which suggests that it is pragmatically created. The use of the WDY phrase appears also here to have an adverbial function that modifies the imperative clause. Whether it has a sarcastic undertone or not, these sentences are still intended and interpreted to be suggestions or instructions and not negative wh-question. It is unreasonable to argue that the reason why someone does something is asked for in these types of sentences. The WDYX pattern has here, as well as it can in the other cases, an underlying semantic attached to its formal pattern.

5.4 An overview of the markers of WDYX

The border between the interrogative use of the WDYX pattern and the suggestive use seems unclear but there are markers that create a syntactic/semantic clash if they are used in the wrong sense. The constructional use of WDYX cannot occur with verbs that do not allow an imperative form like *want* or *like*. In addition, the interrogative use of the WDYX pattern does not occur with placement of the phrase *why don't you* at the end of the clause for example. The following markers are based on a general study of the examples.



1. Literal Interrogative Sense

Negative assertive forms, e.g. *any, ever, anymore, anything*, that follow the negative particle *not* are only used with clause negation according to Biber et al. (Biber et al: 2002, 246). While the constructional WDYX pattern is a positive clause suggesting that something should be done, the interrogative WDYX pattern is a negative clause asking for the reason why something has not been done. Biber et al. also states that assertive forms may sometimes occur in negative clauses (2002, 247). The non-assertive forms pose a syntactic/semantic clash in a positive clause but the assertive forms do not and can sometimes be found in negative clauses. The sentence *Why don't you have **any** peanuts?* can only be interpreted as a wh-question while the sentence *Why don't you have **some** peanuts* is ambiguous. Even though a suggestive interpretation of the latter is more common an interrogative is certainly possible if we put the stress on *why* for example.

Furthermore, unintentional experiential verbs also pose a syntactic/semantic clash to the suggestive interpretation because it is not possible to suggest to someone to feel or experience something that is not intentional.

2. Suggestive Sense

The adverbial emphasizer *just* occurs with the WDYX pattern in 7 per cent of all the examples of WDYX in the BNC. *Just* functions as a way to soften the command in imperative clauses (Biber et al: 2002, 255) but it seems that in the WDYX pattern *just* has a function of pointing out that the suggestion made is obvious. *Just* may occur with a wh-question but it generally occurs with the suggestive WDYX constructs. It seems to clash with the two markers above. Sentences like *Why don't you just want to go?* and *Why don't you just have any peanuts?* appear semantically odd.

To place the phrase *why don't you* at the end of the clause has the function of modifying the VP to function as a suggestion rather than an imperative. The VP here is an imperative and cannot be used to convey a question and the phrase *why don't you* has an adverbial function to modify the VP.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this essay is to argue that the linguistic pattern WDYX can have a specific semantic meaning attached to its formal pattern and should therefore be regarded as a construction of the type that is discussed within Construction Grammar. By studying a representative number of examples that was randomly chosen from the BNC it was concluded that the majority could be interpreted as WDYX constructs.

A study and analysis of the formal composition was made by a syntactical description of the pattern according to the approach used by Burton-Roberts. The linguistic pattern was here characterized either as a negative wh-question or as suggestion. The suggestion consisted of two parts: the fixed phrase *why don't you* and a verb phrase. The fixed phrase *why don't you* was commonly placed in front of the verb phrase but could also appear after the verb phrase. Also it was concluded that the fixed phrase in the WDYX construction occurs with all main verb groups described by Burton-Roberts. An exploration of WDYX showed that the constructional WDYX pattern could not occur in past tense or in the third person. An alteration into first person singular and plural showed to have similar semantic features to the constructional use of WDYX. The Burton Roberts approach, which is a traditional generative grammar approach, appears unable to give a sufficient explanation of the

underlying semantic meaning that can be conveyed by the linguistic pattern WDYX. In consequence, instead of only conveying the semantics of a wh-question the pattern could be interpreted as a suggestion and can therefore be regarded as a grammatical construction.

A semantic analysis of the formal pattern reached the conclusion that the WDYX construction is used as a type of suggestion where the fixed phrase *why don't you* resembles of an adverbial phrase that modifies the meaning of the verb phrase *X*. This argument was supported by the fact that it was possible to move the fixed part and placing it both in the beginning and at the end of the clause. A comparison made between the WDYX pattern and similar patterns and adverbials reveals similar feature to the constructional WDYX pattern. Further, a distinction between the WDYX construction and the compositional use of the linguistic pattern WDYX was illustrated. According to Quirk et al. WDYX and WNX have similar functions and it was shown that they both could be used as suggestions. However, WDYX pattern can also appear as an interrogative and without markers to distinguish the two senses the WDYX pattern has an ambiguous interpretation. The suggestive WDYX construction was also shown to have slightly different uses. It could be used both as a suggestion, invitation and an instruction and it can have a critical or irritated tone if the person addressed is not doing what is expected or is doing something incorrect. The construction also showed that it can be used to convey sarcasm if the meaning in the clause is unreasonable.

In conclusion, the evidence supports the argument that the linguistic pattern WDYX can have a specific semantic meaning attached to its formal pattern and that this meaning cannot be extracted from the lexical parts alone. However, there seems to be a continuum between the constructional and the compositional use of the WDYX pattern. Without a fixed border between the two it seems difficult to say where one use ends and another begins. A closer study of for example intonation and stress pattern could perhaps give a sharper distinction between these two different uses of the WDYX pattern if there is any. However, the evidence suggests that most of the examples could be interpreted as WDYX constructs.

References

Bellarian, A. (2007). *A Construction Grammar Approach to But At Least*. Stockholm: English Department, Stockholm University.

Biber, D., Conrad, S. and Leech, G. (2002). *Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Longman.

Burton-Roberts, N. (1997). *Analysing Sentences: An Introduction to English Syntax*. 2nd ed. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

Goldberg, A.E. (1995). *A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Fried, M. Östman, J-O. (2004). *Construction Grammar in a Cross-Language Perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

McMillion, A. (2006). *Labile Verbs in English. Their Meaning, Behavior and Structure*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Quirk, R et al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Great Britain: Longman Group Limited.

Appendix

Fiction Section

1 (A08) that he knew I was inside. Why will you not speak to me? Why do n't you open? Are you all right? Just say if you are and
2 (A0L) over even that. Fine! Fine! Relegate those few kisses to ridicule, why do n't you ! Pardon me for thinking they were important, pardon me
for
3 (AC4) heaving trays up and down the stairs. And I bet you are too. Why do n't you just bring Tug down and we'll all eat together?"
5 (CKB) anything I can do?" she asked with deliberate ambiguity. "No. Why do n't you go and sit down? The tea won't be a minute
6 (CKF) ? I'm not stocked up with strong drink yet, I'm afraid. Why do n't you take that wet anorak off and get the fire going again while
7 (ACK) 's got a good pair of legs if they're any use to you, why do n't you slice your way over here to see them? don't think he
9 (AEB) of a clout now and then, it sort of clears me again." "Why do n't you leave?" The blue eyes looked up at him, unblinking
10 (AEB) a thought struck her. "If you're so keen on making friends, why do n't you get together with the Human Corkscrew?" "With who?"
11 (AMB) tales of far-off lands, strange facts and the adventures of exciting people. "Why do n't you come with me and we can explore the
corridors of the school
13 (APR) there was no reply. Maud came through with a drink and said, "Why do n't you read Tales for Innocents? I've got a first edition.
14 (APU) enemies . God, I wish I'd never come to this bloody school. Why do n't you just piss off and leave me alone. Go on, get 15
15 (AR2) through it and now you can fuck off out of it, fuck off out of it why do n't you you stupid bastard (and by now of course someone had
dragged Stella off
16 (KBF) mean with Lee o okay we don't I've often said to him, why do n't you get a Saturday job? And he said no and I said
17 (C86) opened the doors. And then Creed's voice soft against his back. "Why do n't you come on up with us?" Jed turned. "I
18 (C86) swaying , screaming. You want to do something about it, Jed thought, why do n't you jump? He shoved Gorelli against the Chrysler with
his gun and
19 (C86) a spy movie. She was facing away from him, down the alley. "Why do n't you go home to eat like everyone else?" he said.
21 (CA0) she didn't have a ghost of a chance," giggled Perdita. "Why do n't you call her Fantasma? It's a much prettier name than Maldita
22 (CEB) ." "Thanks, that's kind of you. I will." "Why do n't you come over now and have coffee? It's going to bucket
23 (CEX) Lilian looked at me. Then she said, very gently, "Kit, why do n't you go down now, and put the kettle on for tea?
25 (CFY) with her tongue than our Lemon." Another voice had said, "Then why do n't you have a go?" and the answer had been a bit
26 (CH4) called The Red Pony. It's by John Steinbeck, an American writer. Why do n't you try it? You'll love it." "Filth,
27 (CJA) the strange things you pick up," he said, quoting her. "Why do n't you go and fit your scrambler before you forget what that is?
29 (F9R) time , the boy laughed, "You're right there." "So why do n't you go and find a girl you really like and who likes you
30 (FAB) down quicker than free beer on a beano!" Kelly felt sick. "Why do n't you go home and have a nice rest, Pat? It's
31 (FB9) --; "we'll help with the barbecue. Be pleased to." "Why do n't you come into the drawing-room? You might meet someone." Nancy
33 (FP0) she couldn't do. "Then don't. But whatever it is, why do n't you come and not do it here." No demand, just
34 (FPK) "You have got a mammy, haven't you, and a daddy? Why do n't you ever talk about them?" Her big blue eyes swivelled upwards
35 (FPM) have a rest while you can --; you look quite washed out. Here, why do n't you have a nice read of your newspaper?" "Load of
37 (FR6) do n't you turn pale?" "I'm not ill." "Why do n't you ask me to tell your fortune?" "I'm not
38 (FRK) were at home and they started telling Oliver about their lives as thieves. "Why do n't you become one?" Charley asked him. "We all are
39 (FRS) a narrow lane into the path of the jeep. "Silly old fool! Why do n't you watch where you're going? You could have killed us all
40 (KBF) must n't, I mustn't buy any anyway. Still going to Guildford, why do n't you go to Ikea? Oh no dear, no. Oh no
41 (FRX) to me and said, "We're going to Africa to do business. Why do n't you come with us? We'll all be rich after this journey
42 (FSF) said to her once, "How can you live with him like that? Why do n't you just keep him in the clinic?" and shrugged her angry
43 (FU2) Sorry. Shouldn't have said that. I only meant you look tired. Why do n't you go out somewhere? Take the car. " " Perhaps I
44 (A0F) third-year class, and then people started asking me about my leaving party. "Why do n't you invite Paul Spence?" Anne suggested.
"Whatever for?
45 (H8S) will find it easy enough to slip into the flow of things. Folly, why do n't you go and undress now, and join the others back here?
46 (G02) I felt the bastard go down! I felt it wriggling, fuck it! Why do n't you --; Look, calm down ... And think. You were in
47 (G03) Peter, " she said with a small and surprising explosion of irritation, "why do n't you let yourself go for once?" "I don't know what
48 (A0F) suppose ." "Forgive me. I think I must be missing something. Why do n't you want to go back inside, where all the fun is?
49 (G04) pushed him back and sat up. "But you're tired, husband. Why do n't you sleep a while. And when you wake I'll have a
50 (G06) Lili, scandalizing my mother. "It's much too big for you. Why do n't you sell it?" "It's my home," said
51 (G0E) ...?" "You irritate me, Cardiff," said Duvall. "Why do n't you go outside and try to talk it to death?" &bquo;
53 (G12) Dyson. "Old John'll manage somehow," said Bill Waddy. "Why do n't you change down, John? We've almost stopped." Bob
54 (G16) . "And Terry and Stephen seemed to have such a good time there. Why do n't you try it, Joe?" The system at Victor's Dancing
55 (G16) low-voiced conversation with Terry was interrupted by Frank. Finally Anne said firmly, "Why do n't you show Terry the good job you
made of the cellar, Dad
56 (HHB) say ?" he persisted. "I told her to ask you --; so why do n't you rush after her right now? Take her in your arms and
57 (G1S) . She was really angry now, sufficiently so to lose her caution. "Why do n't you just piss off," she said curtly. "Go on
58 (G1X) a few minutes ago and said that's the third letter you've written today why do n't you put them in the same envelope and save postage? I
got
59 (GUD) ." "I'm sorry," said Edwards gently. "Next time why do n't you come down to see us, to hurry us along a bit?
61 (GV2) What if he asks where we were?" She altered her plan. "Why do n't you say you went to the Chagall museum? I can mention that
62 (GVM) of noise. "Oh, is it?" Soapy replied. "Then why do n't you call a policeman? I took it, and you say it
63 (H0F) lit . " And you go ahead and take the rest of these cigarettes, why do n't you ? We have plenty more back at the hotel, and I
64 (HHB) you will never marry Doreen. Right?" "Right." "Then why do n't you tell her so in plain language? Why do you allow her
65 (H85) out before we come in, and we won't hurt you." "Why do n't you do it?" Peter had the question ready. "It
66 (H8N) , for God's sake, if you haven't got anything better to do why do n't you help us? There's no point in cleaning that carpet,
67 (H8N) he said, "What d' you want me to do today, then? Why do n't you go and have a sleep for a couple of hours while I
68 (HJH) . The room looked uninhabited. "You all right?" Carolyn nodded. "Why do n't you unpack? D' you want some help?" Carolyn shook
her
69 (H9G) do n't know'bout that. I wouldn't want to put Ellie out. Why do n't you and me go some place, see who's out and about
70 (H9G) ever so nice. I just don't want. If you're so keen, why do n't you go?" "I'm quite happy here," and
71 (HA6) at . It was just a question of finding it. He said, "Why do n't you relax? Enjoy the day for itself." "Relax?
72 (HJH) It's nearly six." He consulted his watch. "In fact, why do n't you stay to eat, if you 're at a loose end
73 (HA9) time ." She laid down the brush and faced Shae directly. "So why do n't you give him a break? He'd far rather be with the
74 (HDC) "One of the pleasures left to an old woman like myself. Now, why do n't you see her on her way." "Time," he
75 (HDC) you 're still dependent on him. If that's the way of it, why do n't you leave the money, do something else, live like the rest

Spoken Section

1 (KB1) it kills your eyes welding. Benjy. But as he said to me, why do n't you go welding. I says, the point is I've got
2 (KB1) opposite . There's a picture of it. Your worse than Albert, but why do n't you go to front of bloody paper. You got your finger in
3 (KB2) 're all going ah yeah but you see Joyce has been saying to us Yeah why do n't you come? I said no Yeah it's for you Yeah but
4 (KSN) not do that for your favourite friend. Ain't it your best buddy. Why do n't you go home and Alright. ah ah grrr, it's shit
5 (KB2) Mm. He will, he'll go and pick her up so soft. Why do n't you tell him? Tell her! I've told her! You

6 (KB6) doing that? No no. Not having it cut. Zoe goes to me **why do n't you** have it all chopped off Oh I said cos the perm's
7 (KB7) do n't spill the tea shouldn't make it so bloody That pale. That **Why do n't you** come? Come on Dad. No. Come on. Where
8 (KSS) ?. Ooh. What? You nearly got that all down your back. **Why do n't you** put a deck chair there? No. Better than sitting on
9 (KB8) close the other car door look. And I'll er Go! In! **Why do n't you** In you go. get in. Do you want to get
10 (KB9) ! See, her husband takes her shopping on a Saturday to Asda and and **why do n't you** go, I don't know whether they all been together or
11 (KBD) ones have gone. No, no, I use it's usually fucked. **Why do n't you** just take a case of it, one of those cases home
12 (HSJ) . You can continue on with this tape. Go on I tell you what **why do n't you** flip it over and start on the other side, even though it
13 (KBF) do things that are simple. You've got your upstairs in the bathroom, **why do n't you** use that. Oh no, I wan na do something to
14 (KBF) and Gail work together you see. Mm. Gail is her apprentice as it were. **Why do n't you** give that one to Beverley? And just give
something sma cos
15 (KBG) frightened that I might be teaching him wrong and that I'm I said well **why do n't you** pop in and have a word at the school? No I
16 (G5J) fungus could it not spread from my shoes? Erm your socks. Quite. **Why do n't you** get something to wipe them with or something. I
don't
17 (KBG) . Mhm. Mummy is three thousand three hundred. Just tell everybody our ages **why do n't you** .? Very old. You're not supposed to tell
what ladies
18 (KBH) . What you doing? I doll I'm going to put it in. **Why do n't you** bring her and put her in your dolls pram? Mm?
19 (KBK) and they were chucking sticks at it, trying to get it down again. **Why do n't you** just open the back gate so that they can come and
collect their
20 (KS2) to be. Yeah it's still running. I wonder if it's really **Why do n't you** try the earphones? No, I've got them, but
21 (KBL) used to. I said it was disgusting! I haven't seen it! **Why do n't you** take. That one! Oh I did see it! But
22 (KBM) and this other lad called Mark What you going for? To get pissed basically **Why do n't you** just do it here? Because, because you can
do it
23 (KBV) and watch the news it's just started Has it? get more portable Well **why do n't you** get a piece of paper and a pencil and jot it down
24 (J42) happy to withdraw. But, but should we deal with the first No problem **Why do n't you** take this item. Right okay, well it I don't
25 (KC4) . Not hard enough to break the dish Yes I do think you need to **why do n't you** just try dishing it up out of the thing? You're never
26 (KC9) 've told you about all I can tell you. Why don't you. **Why do n't you** sit down and tell me what you want for Christmas. I
27 (KCA) You carry it all in plastic bags! What? Your case! What? **Why do n't you** bring down your case we brought you? Is it much better
28 (JP7) good way of raising funds by asking people particularly for the Euros I think. **Why do n't you** sponsor you know, members who don't
normally come to meetings
29 (KCK) that for me? Because it keeps on coming out Miss This paper? Yeah **Why do n't you** use the other one then? it's out that's what
30 (KCL) and get er a black bag for rubbish. Oh my god! Hey well **why do n't you** sell them at the car boot sale? Well I mean they
31 (KCT) cos that was on telly the other night weren't it? Why don't **why do n't you** get out the way? You're upsetting him June. Well
32 (KM4) it says how it operates Yeah,.. Why do we need these? **Why do n't you** just. I mean it actually follows through. Doesn't it
33 (KCT) . Well didn't you just have That's what mum said, have the **Why do n't you** have the little bridesmaid and the page boy. with the page
34 (KCT) they are. What they doing? Now he said right, he said now **why do n't you** They've been trained from early age haven't they? Tai
35 (KCT) and I That's the never did get it. Yeah. I said well **why do n't you** se she said well you've got ta come and pick the
36 (FMG) and a lot of the time at school when the teacher's telling you, **Why do n't you** do it this way? they're not trying to make it
37 (KCU) 's what I made earlier Urgh fucking hell Shell Got a tip your coke, **why do n't you** tip your coffee back in there and then there's this
coke
38 (KCV) n't worry you stay Just make a tiny bit of er sugar. Yeah And **why do n't you** take your cup as well? No no take you first. Stefan
39 (KCW) many tapes has she gave you? A lot. Oh! Oh! A lot? **Why do n't you** play one now? They're taking them all back anyway.
40 (G4K) find it? Have you got any idea what you called it? Sarah. **Why do n't you** use Ferret, and find any files written today. So if
41 (KCX) n't even got shopping yet. Then Access arrived, I thought bloody hell. **Why do n't you** come to Nettos with us Kath? I didn't fetch
money
42 (KCY) send it is they're trying to send me on on that what? well **why do n't you** go? That's not on my patch like It's my
43 (KD0) , it's completely fair. But then your implying something aren't you. **Why do n't you** say if you're a child you can go in a group
44 (K6J) so simultaneous why don't you i why don't you integrate this log Or **why do n't you** erm Because I don't know what it is. What are
45 (KD0) ? It was No Po po Papa but I said Why don't you a **why do n't you** all sit on a Alright little bit of that one. Yeah
46 (KD1) , erm You go like this, see and like Helen, well Helen said **why do n't you** wait until you move, and I said well that might not
47 (KD1) stop aggravating him, he doesn't want to play or sing. Why Any **why do n't you** , why don't, why don't you want to sing
48 (KLW) now what have you got there? I don't think that's right. **Why do n't you** think that's right? Mm, what do you think Kelly
49 (KD7) I've got a licence everything mate! I'm well covered! Yeah! **Why do n't you** get a bike? If it's only Because I've got
50 (KD7) how to. No you're alright! You'll be alright. Aha. **Why do n't you** come down and see this place. Well, no not at
51 (KDS) thought oh Here you are And I'd just that very minute sat down. **Why do n't you** go and sit down again and we'll come in as soon as we
52 (JJV) my submission it will be yes, because of there's some er reference. Well **why do n't you** just adopt their verbiage as part of er won't have
to
53 (KDN) fucking con a conner, you smoke and don't be funny. Why, **why do n't you** smoke as long as, wait a minute, wait a minute son,
54 (KDN) new pair of er trainers I'd fucking walk down Road in no time. **Why do n't you** get a bike? It's two pound return from er our
55 (KDN) does. See years ago you used to Yous do your week's training, **why do n't you** go to the army cadet for a week? Well he was
56 (D91) got a captive audience there why the hell don't you do it a sheet **why do n't you** give them a programme for the next three months
exactly what is
57 (KDR) that's, that's six, and er two fifteen to four fifteen Well **why do n't you** go in late on a Friday? plus eight pardon? Why
58 (KDV) your holiday. No we're not! No. Don't! Kyle. **Why do n't you** wan na go to Bulgaria? Not your choice. I do
59 (KDV) . But he he doesn't wan na go abroad and that's it! **Why do n't you** two just go to Bulgaria then. Be cheap enough too would
60 (KM5) was great, and he showed her round and he said, well look, **why do n't you** take one for a test drive. She said, ooh,
61 (KDW) she 's she's a nice woman like, you know, I say, **why do n't you** pack the job in? She says, I can't now
62 (KNY) a late report. I've got to report every morning to Mr Cat. **Why do n't you** just put the blame on her then? He goes oh er
63 (KP3) 's up here. go up to Lee and ask him about the letter that got **Why do n't you** come why don't you come. How do we know you
64 (HUW) 'm entitled to say to the Prime Minister, alright given that I have said that **why do n't you** put me to the test? But have you not already
briefed
65 (KP3) Where 's your earring? What earrings? I've never had any earrings. **Why do n't you** wear them. Oh because I lost them and my mum wo
66 (KP5) bike . What do you want it for? I think it's excellent. **Why do n't you** take another one. Take that one. Oh God! Ca
67 (KPG) n't . Then why did he ask me out? I du n no. **Why do n't you** ask him? Cos I'm not talking to him. Oh
68 (K6V) 're relatively recent. We produced because so many customers said, you know, **why do n't you** have columns on your graph paper. So
we produced three different
69 (KPL) alright . Oh how are you then? Oh, hi Leon Oh, oh **Why do n't you** comb that down? Why did you want it up? do
70 (KPP) all bumpy. That looks like a rosette, it. Wait man wait. **why do n't you** do it by yourself? No. Do you want me to
71 (KPP) which one? Er er the whole fucking You've got my answers there, **why do n't you** look at them? Well let's see what thirteen C was.
72 (KM5) was great, and he showed her round and he said, well look, **why do n't you** take one for a test drive. She said, ooh,
73 (KPU) several of you out why didn't you say to one of the other girls **why do n't you** come? Did he have a pair of tickets? Cos it
74 (KPV) but , Emily eats it for breakfast. With jam on it. Mm. **Why do n't you** like it? Not that I'd ever tried it, but
75 (KPV) Right, off you go. At least I will. How are your wits? **Why do n't you** run for us? Oh don't be ridiculous! What to

Other Sections

1 (K37) be a show like that for young talent." Hear, hear! So **why do n't you** both get off prime time telly immediately and make way for the

2 (CEN) 're quite likely to say "There's a McDonald's down the road, why do n't you try there?"

3 (CK5) Julie Dart killing: Man for trial
 4 (C9M) how horrible it is being adored! They get on and do the job! Why do n't you just pull your socks up and smarten yourselves up? "If
 5 (CD5) &equo; "Heavy Metal" and "Old Fender Tweed". Well, why do n't you plug into an old Fender Tweed, you f***ing idiot?!"
 6 (FBM) &equo; (FACE 47). When you send a reporter to a festival, why do n't you send one who knows a little about it? If you wonder why
 7 (A6D) says Frank Skinner. "I was with a mate and he said: "Why do n't you have a go, and I'll be your manager?"
 8 (K93) &equo; and members of the "Middlesex Regiment" would not be tolerated. So why do n't you piss off back to where you come from and
 9 (HH3) leave the decent
 10 (CEF) from the emotional point of view, and will tend to avoid material such as "Why do n't you leave me alone?" or "How can I ever thank
 11 (FU1) us to death," they said. "Well we've had enough. Why do n't you just kill us outright --; right now. At least it will be
 12 (A6E) John , you see that when I do this with the mouse ... John, why do n't you have a go?" They do this to make us feel
 13 (CL2) advises me but she doesn't take over at all. She'll say, " Why do n't you try it this way? " and not, " Do it
 14 (EVN) some gigs. Alright then, he said, if you're so keen, why do n't you go and find them yourselves? I took him at his word
 15 (H9Y) afraid to tell Emlyn the truth. "And with some floozies." "Why do n't you find a nice girl?" "Du n no."
 16 (HUB) club. And to my delight and surprise, a privileged summons followed. " Why do n't you join us? Mind you, we don't have many from
 17 (AT3) my close friend Astrid --; who'd seen the show at Farnham --; said "Why do n't you ask Denis?" I was surprised and sceptical. Denis
 18 (CC8) King
 19 (G3P) your
 20 (J1L) principles than many of the other characters in the play: Eunice: Well, why do n't you just go and make yourself at home till they get
 21 (G3P) back?
 22 (J1L) you think you've had enough? We're all very proud of you. Why do n't you give up? Four hundred miles isn't bad. No one can
 23 (J1L) those people. The Lord spoke to me right there in the church and said why do n't you go? I then made another mistake. Yes I'll go
 24 (J1L) on his head. Bower-bird laughed and laughed. " Eh, great flyer! Why do n't you fly? Eaten too many berries? " Just then a man
 25 (J1L) days
 26 (J1L) 're looking at new programmes --; again to answer the needs of our audience. Why do n't you ever go back to places that were in the
 27 (J1L) news, we

Additional Examples

- 1 (ECG) Why not ignore them
- 2 (A0R) Why not give the flowers to the survivors?