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Two Types of Idioms

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occurs with the subordinate clause, but less clearly: reversing (26) is difficult, but possible if taken as a switch to a serious injunction to do the act; (28) sounds as if she ought to have; (33) sounds as if one meant to add "and the fun has worn off." (29), (31), and (35) can hardly be reversed without a violent shift in the point of view.

The restrictions on *do so* appear to be mainly semantic and most properly to attach to the lexical entry for *so*, not to any special subentry for *do so*. So for *say so*:

(37) \*He always said so if he was tickled

(38) He always said so if he was displeased

Though (37) is possible, (38) has better conditions for implying frankness about something that one would prefer not to disclose. *So* is somber. *It* is neutral.

### References

Zwicky, Arnold M. Jr. (1968) "Naturalness Arguments in Syntax," *Papers from the Fourth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society*.

### TWO TYPES OF IDIOMS

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Idioms like *to crane one's neck*, *to arch one's back*, *to stub one's toe*, etc. and *to hold one's breath*, *to lose one's temper* (*cool, way, etc.*) exhibit certain systematic differences.

A. Parts of the former, but not of the latter, are modifiable.

(1) He craned his spindly (long, disgusting, etc.) neck.

(2) \*He held his dank (fetid, foul, sweet, etc.) breath.

B. Parts of the former, but not of the latter, are pronominalizable.

(3) He craned his neck while the doctor examined it.

(4) \*He held his breath while the gasologist tested it.

(Actually, pronominalization is possible, but only with certain paired verbs, where these verbs must have the same subject.)

(5) a. He held his breath, and then he released it.

b. \*He held his breath, and then he froze it.

c. \*He held his breath, and then Schwarz released it.

It is as if *neck* retains more of its properties as an NP than *breath* does: the latter type of idiom is more frozen than the former type.

### IF AND WHEN

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(1) The flowers will bloom if and when spring comes.  
is not paraphrasable as (2) or (3):

(2) The flowers will bloom if spring comes and the flowers will bloom when spring comes.