

Event nominalisation and nominal argument linking

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The talk analyses the grammar of event nominalisations, specifically problems attending the realisation of DP arguments of nominalised verbs (*the reading of books*). We focus mainly on English *of*-phrases, with side glances at German genitives.

I begin by trying to sort out what is right and wrong about the two main approaches used in lexicalist and syntactic circles. Most current syntactic approaches assume that affixes select (extended) verbal projections which contain (traces of) the *of*-marked DP and that the nominalised verb unites with the affix using head movement; (1) is a simple example.

(1) [NP *read-ing* [VP ~~*read*~~ [DP (*of*) *the book*]] (syntactic head movement)

Lexicalist approaches assume that *of*-marked DPs are inserted *after* affixation, cf. (2). This entails that *of*-phrases are *arguments of nouns* and that affixes combine with verbs with open arguments. I argue that this form of long-distance argument realisation is correct, but also provide arguments that some nominalisations are formed by syntactic head movement.

(2) [NP [N° [*V° read*] *-ing*] [DP/PP *of the book*]] (lexicalist-style structure)

I then give a syntactic analysis of *of*-phrases which reflects the following points:

- *Of*-phrases realising arguments of nominalised verbs are introduced by a device whose primary function is to introduce arguments of nouns. Argument-realising and possessive *of* are given a unified treatment, a conclusion supported by the fact that both are unique in displaying a previously unstudied expletive/weak use of *the* which displays no uniqueness or familiarity effects.
- (Non-extraposed) *of*-phrases appear to the left of other dependents in nominalisations, which, coupled with other facts, suggests that N moves in front of *of*.
- The possibilities for realising arguments as pre- or postnominal genitives (e.g. *John's_{Agent} shooting of Bill_{Patient}*) is derived from principles affecting the interpretation of simplex nominals (e.g. *John's_{Creator/Owner} picture of Bill_{Depictee}*).

I then turn to nominalisations without arguments. I suggest a preliminary analysis for a little-known kind of exception to Grimshaw's claim that obligatory patient/themes arguments of V remain obligatory in eventive nominalisations (*the device was faulty despite frequent maintenance/checking by experts* vs. **they maintain/check*). The behaviour of so-called 'result' nominals (*the examination is on the table*) and simple event nominals (*the trials lasted two hours*) is analysed in parallel to similarly interpreted compounds.

Finally I turn to the consequences of my proposal for secondary predicate constructions. My approach explains the absence of *of*-marking in ECM and small clause contexts straightforwardly (**the believing of John (to be) untrustworthy*). It commits me to a complex predicate analysis of resultatives, particle and prefix verbs that undergo such nominalisation (*the pressing of metal flat, the voting out of the party*). I present empirical evidence for this from non-argument-supporting complex verbs (*a rework/bailout would be a good idea*).