

## **Rapport de mission : Participation au colloque *43rd Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea*, Vilnius (Lituanie), du 2 au 5 septembre 2010.**

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### **1. Description du colloque**

Ce colloque annuel est organisé par la SLE (Societas Linguistica Europaea), une association de linguistes européenne, que publie aussi la revue internationale (notée 'B') *Folia Linguistica* (Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin). Ce colloque réunit des linguistes (surtout européens) qui travaillent sur une grande variété de sujets (toutes les domaines de la linguistique, y compris l'enseignement des langues). Il s'agissait cette année d'un grand colloque, avec des sessions parallèles, mais également un grand nombre de 'workshops' (séminaires thématiques).

### **2. Ma communication**

Ma communication, pour laquelle j'ai collaboré avec Liesbet Heyvaert de l'Université de Leuven/Courtrai, faisait partie du 'workshop' autour de la *phrase binominale* (intitulé complet : *Binominal syntagms as a neglected locus of synchronic variation and diachronic change: Towards a unified approach* ; description complète en annexe).

Dans notre communication, nous avons présenté une analyse de données de corpus (extraites du COCA, Corpus of Contemporary American English) sur les différences entre les nominalisations type 'événement complexe' (*complex event*, Grimshaw 1990) et les nominalisations type 'événement simple' (*simple event*, Grimshaw 1990). Cette distinction n'avait pas été suffisamment éclairée dans la littérature, et les critères qui avaient été proposés n'étaient pas suffisants pour pouvoir analyser correctement les cas attestés dans un corpus. Dans notre communication, nous proposons une analyse cognitive et référentielle du problème, attirant l'attention sur le fait que seuls les nominalisations 'événement complexe', qui évoquent la structure argumentative du verbe 'racine', réalisent un type de référence qu'on appelle 'esphorique' (Willemse 2005, 2006) et identifient soit un type de situation, soit un 'exemplaire' (*instance*) de situation par le rapport avec un participant dans la situation en question (p.ex. le sujet ou l'objet du verbe racine). Nous proposons également une taxonomie des types de référence possibles et attestés dans notre corpus. L'abstract complet de la communication (en anglais) se trouve en annexe.

### **3. Bilan personnel**

Il était très intéressant de faire cette communication dans le cadre d'un workshop sur le syntagme binominal, car on se retrouvait entourés de spécialistes dans le même sous-domaine, et on a donc reçu beaucoup de remarques et de questions très utiles pour nos futurs recherches. On a l'intention de travailler davantage sur notre analyse et de la publier sous forme d'article dans une publication internationale de qualité.

### **4. Programme**

Le programme est disponible sur le site web du colloque : <http://www.flf.vu.lt/sle2010/programme>.

### **ANNEXE 1 : Abstract de la communication, en anglais**

More than any other type of binominal NP, NPs containing a deverbal NP are semantically determined by the presence or absence of other NPs within the nominalized NP. The well-known semantic

distinction between '(complex) event' and 'product/result' nominalizations (NOMs) (e.g. Grimshaw 1990), for instance, prototypically corresponds to the presence vs. absence of periphrastically realized clausal participants (e.g. (...) *permit the acquisition of pictures at least thirty years old* (CB) vs. *Click left to learn more about the highlight acquisitions of 2007* (CB)). Even within the 'event' category of derived NOMs, however, there is no automatic transfer of the base verb's clausal participants to NP level: the "actual valency" (or "the number of arguments that receive overt expression in attested discourse", Mackenzie 1985: 29) can differ substantially from the related clausal valency (e.g. *The 12- or 13-year old is assimilating an enormous amount of new (...) experiences. While all this absorption is going on (...) the young person is in a more or less perpetual state of disequilibrium.* (CB)). Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1993: 15) points out that "all of the semantic arguments of an action nominal are seldom present in ANCs [action nominalizations]" because "they are either clear from the context or irrelevant" (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993: 15). Following Mackenzie (1985), Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1993: 261) further argues that the argument reduction that is found among nominalizations is closely tied up with their main function "to be a constituent part in the backgrounded portions of discourses".

In this paper we reconsider the so-called 'event' type of derived NOM and zoom in on the semantic impact of the periphrastic (non-)inclusion of clausal participants in it. On the basis of the analysis of a sample of 2000 instances of *-ion* and *-ing* NOMs from the COCA corpus (the Corpus of Contemporary American English), we argue that the language user's choice for an 'event' type of derived NOM that either includes or does not include secondary NPs (complements or modifiers) is not merely discursively motivated ("is it clear from the context who the participants of the derived noun are?"), but the result of a complex interplay of factors, such as the *aspectual* properties of the nominalized verb ('Aktionsart') and of the nominalized situation ('actualization aspect', cf. Declerck 2006: Ch.1), the *type of situation* that is referred to by the nominalized NP (an 'abstract situation type' or 'the actualization of a situation', cf. Declerck 2006: Ch.1), and the various lexicogrammatical options that are available within the NP (e.g. possessive, *-of* or *by*-phrase). In addition, we argue that a referential analysis of 'event' derived NOMs has to cover both their internal and external referential status. NP-internally, binominal NPs with 'event' derived NOMs may set up a complex referential mechanism in which an event is identified in relation to a clausal participant. On the other hand, the referents of these NPs may be 'externally' given or inferable in the discourse to a greater or lesser extent, due to their interaction with other referents or information in the preceding context (cf. Willemse, Davidse & Heyvaert 2009).

DECLERCK, R. 2006. *The grammar of the English verb phrase. Volume 1: The grammar of the English tense system. A comprehensive analysis.* Berlin/NY: Mouton de Gruyter — GRIMSHAW, J. 1990. *Argument structure.* Cambridge, MA: MIT — KOPTJEVSKAJA-TAMM, M. 1993. *Nominalization.* London: Routledge — MACKENZIE, L.J. 1985. Nominalization and valency reduction. In *Predicates and terms in Functional Grammar*, M.Bolkestein, C.de Groot, L.J.Mackenzie (eds.), 29-47. Dordrecht: Foris. — WILLEMSE, P., DAVIDSE, K., HEYVAERT, L. 2009. English possessives as reference-point constructions and their function in the discourse. In *The Expression of Possession*, W.B. McGregor (ed.), 13-51. Berlin/NY: Mouton de Gruyter.

## ANNEXE 2 : Description du workshop, en anglais

### 14. Binominal syntagms as a neglected locus of synchronic variation and diachronic change: Towards a unified approach

Convenors: Lieselotte Brems (K.U.Leuven – Research Foundation Flanders), Bernard De Clerck (Ghent University) & Katrien Verveckken (K.U.Leuven – Research Foundation Flanders)

In recent years various theoretical frameworks have shown an increasing interest in the semantico-syntactic organization of noun phrases in general and that of binominal syntagms in particular. Binominal syntagms are a type of complex noun phrase attested in many European languages (e.g. Akmajian, Adrian & Lehrer 1976, Everaert 1992, Aarts 1998, Keizer 2001, Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001, Denison 2002, Joosten 2003, Brems 2003, Foolen 2004, Willemse 2005, Verveckken 2007, Traugott 2008, Rijkhoff 2009, Langacker forth.) that involves two nominal elements, possibly linked by means of a linking element (prepositions, case markers, etc.), e.g. *a lot<sub>N1</sub> of peopl<sub>N2</sub>, that swin<sub>N1</sub> of a professor<sub>N2</sub>, in front<sub>N1</sub> of the building<sub>N2</sub>*. Despite the recent attention, this

construction still poses many descriptive-theoretical challenges to both formal and cognitive-functional frameworks.

A key problem in the literature has been that of identifying the head of binominal syntagms. Some authors or reference grammars argue for one analysis that covers all instances of the binominal construction (Quirk *et al.* 1985); others consider a distinction between a syntactic and a semantic head of the construction a useful way out (Halliday 1994); yet others allow head status to shift between NP<sub>1</sub> and NP<sub>2</sub> (e.g. Brems 2003, Traugott 2008). Different semantic and syntactic tests for determining head status have been proposed in the literature (e.g. Hudson 1987, Aarts 1998). It would be interesting to address their reliability and conclusiveness in the workshop.

Another central issue is the question of whether different types of binominals can be distinguished and on what grounds. Syntactically speaking, binominals may differ according to the presence or absence of determiners with the second nominal element (e.g. *a wonder of a man*, *the book of John*, *heaps of people*, *un bouquet de roses* (French: *a bouquet of roses*), *la moitié du travail* (French: *half of the work*)), presence or absence of a linking element (e.g. *the poet Shakespeare*, *John's book*, *the majority of the guests*, *ogi pitin bat* (Basque: *a bit of bread*, lit.: *'bread bit a'*)) and allowing non-nominal elements in the NP<sub>2</sub>-slot, e.g. (comparative) adjectives (*loads softer*, *massa's lekker* (Dutch: lit. 'masses tasty'), De Clerck & Coleman 2009). From a semantic point of view, the nominal elements may have referential value (e.g. *city in a wonder of a city*), intensifying value (e.g. *wonder in a wonder of a city*), possessive value (*the manager's office*), quantifier value (*heaps/lots of in heaps/lots of people*), hedging meaning (*kind of in She is kind of a groupie*), (es)phoric value (*the lights of a car*), aspectual value (*un colpo di telefono* (Italian: *a ring* (lit. 'a blow of telephone') etc.

Furthermore, different types of relations between the two nominal elements have been observed (Keizer 2007): modification, complementation, predication, qualification, quantification. Typically, the traditional typology of binominal syntagms comprises possessive constructions, partitive constructions, pseudo-partitive constructions, 'predicative' binominal noun phrases, close appositions, etc. An important question is whether these constructions can be linked in a constructional network, with macro-, meso- and micro-level schemas generalizing over subsets of binominal syntagms, and if so, to what degree this taxonomic pattern holds crosslinguistically.

In addition to the attested synchronic variation, this workshop also wants to address the claim that binominals are a locus of (ongoing) grammaticalization, subjectification and decategorialization processes. In some (types) of binominals, the nominal elements seem to have lost or are losing typically nominal features such as the potential for pre- and postmodification, pluralization, etc. (e.g. *\*a nice wonder of a city*, *\*bunches of idiots*, etc.) and may be shifting to the categories of quantifier, intensifier, hedger, etc. Such issues also touch on interesting concepts such as 'categorical gradience', i.e. fuzzy boundaries between two or more categories (Denison 2006, Aarts, Denison, Keizer & Popova 2004). The current variation in binominal constructions could then be seen as a case of synchronic layering (Hopper & Traugott 2003).

This workshop aims to arrive at a better understanding of the organization and development of (different types of) binominal constructions in order to account for the rich synchronic and diachronic semantico-syntactic variety they harbour. We particularly welcome empirically based talks that contribute to the aforementioned theoretical issues. We welcome papers on English as well as on other languages and contributions may be language-internal or comparative in nature. The following list sums up possible avenues of thinking that may be addressed in the talks:

- How can the synchronic variation in binominal syntagms be analyzed syntactically, semantically, collocationally, etc. in a unified way?
- Are there (partial) syntactic and/or semantic tests to determine headedness and categorial noun status of the nominal elements in a binominal syntagm and what is their validity?

SLE 2010. Vilnius University. 2 - 5 September 2010

17

- What are possible typologies of binominal syntagms and on what grounds?
- Which kinds of tests can be used to distinguish between types of uses, and what is their validity (e.g. Rijkhoff 2009)?
- Binominal syntagms as a locus of grammaticalization, e.g. in which paths of change do binominals engage crosslinguistically?
- Which properties in the binominal as a source construction explain the wide variety of synchronic variation and potential for diachronic change it displays?
- What can specific theoretical frameworks contribute to the analysis of binominal syntagms, e.g. cognitive grammar, construction grammar, functional grammar, usage-based approaches?

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- SLE 2010. Vilnius University. 2 - 5 September 2010
- 18
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