

Imperfect Parallels between Nominal Expressions and clauses

In this paper I reconsider a number of phenomena distinguishing nominal expressions from clauses against the many parallels that have been uncovered in the course of the last decades. I will call these partial parallelisms “imperfect parallels”:

- a. Both nominal expressions and clauses project an argument structure BUT in nominal expressions argument structure appears “less” obligatory or even optional.
- b. Both nominal expressions and clauses have a “subject” which must respect the hierarchy of the theta grid BUT in nominal expressions the subject can be missing *tout court*.
- c. Both nominal expressions and clauses can be claimed to have three layers all of which are split according to a universal hierarchy BUT nominal expressions display a simpler structure.
- d. In both nominal expressions and clauses, we find structural Case BUT in sentences we typically find two (nominative and accusative) in nominals we typically find one (genitive) if any.
- e. In both nominal expressions and clauses, we find discourse driven displacements BUT the left periphery of nominal expressions is much more difficult to detect.

I want to reduce these differences to a unique property that distinguishes nominal expressions from clauses, namely nominal individual reference against clausal temporal reference.

I assume the structure of extended projections (among which nominal and clausal ones) to display three layers: a lexical layer in which the argument structure is projected, an inflectional layer in which the modifiers undergo concord for formal features, and a complementation layer which closes the extended projection and checks its semantic/thematic role and all the formal features related to it. All the heads of the extended projection are coindexed and share features (à la Grimshaw). Against this perfect parallelism the following crucial differences can be observed:

- a. Clauses typically have Force or Truth value. Noun phrases typically have (object /individual) reference.
- b. Truth value or Force requires settings for temporal reference intersected with the individual reference of the subject. Individual reference *per se* requires settings for Person.
- c. Finiteness, Mood, Aspect are features related to temporal reference and are typically found in clauses. Phi-features are related to person and typically found in nominal expressions.
- d. Argument nominals typically need Case. Argument clauses typically escape Case (Stowell 1982). Case is therefore a formal property of individual reference and can only be combined with phi-features and Person features.

I conclude that each layer complies with different requirements. The vP singles out a subject for Truth value or Force to be checked while the nP may but does not have to. The clausal intermediate layer projects Finiteness, Mood and Aspect to intersect with the person features of the subject, while the nominal intermediate layer deletes the uninterpretable phi-features of adjectival modifiers if present, and/or licences possessors phrases if present. The clausal complementation layer closes the clausal phase and sends the semantic features of Force and Truth value to the interpretive component, while the nominal complementation layer closes the nominal phase and sends the individual reference and its semantic/thematic role to the interpretive component.