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Abstract

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The Valency Structure of Clauses and Noun phrases

Similarities and Differences between French and Danish

As lexical categories, verbs and nouns carry valency structure from the lexicon which they expand when they are realized as clauses and noun phrases, respectively.

According to the Danish Valency model developed by Michael Herslund and his colleagues, each verb brings information from lexicon concerning:

➢ How many arguments (valency complements) it takes
➢ The semantic roles attached to these arguments
➢ The syntactic roles of these arguments (when they are realized in "standard active" clauses)
➢ The form (constituent type) of these arguments

Thus, the verb *eat* carries the following information:

➢ Two arguments: *Eat (a_1, a_2)* (The verb is **divalent**)
➢ a_1 is Agent, a_2 is Patient
➢ a_1 is Subject, a_2 is Object
➢ Both arguments are realized as nominals

In principle, the same information is attached to nouns. However, due to structural differences between clauses and noun phrases the realization conditions are different. This means that, conceptually, the valency structure is the same, but there are different semantic and syntactic constraints.

In this paper I will focus on :

1. The fundamental structures of clauses and noun phrases and their formal realizations due to different constraints, also across languages.

2. The incorporation process of certain valency complements that we find in both structures but with different manifestations across languages. Thus, typically incorporation is indicated in French by loss of the otherwise obligatory article or by word class shift:

    (1) (*Des nuages passent*) ➔ *le passage des nuages* ➔ *un passage **de nuages** -->un passage **nuageux***

    [*Clouds pass* ➔ *a passing of clouds*]

whereas Danish applies morphological and/or prosodic means:

    (2) (*Han køber et hus*) ➔ *Han køber **hus*** ➔ (*Hans køben hus*) ➔ *Hans **hus**køb*

    [*He buys a house* ➔ *His buying a house*]