

# [ADNOMINAL COMPLETIVE CLAUSES]

[Propositional value, modality, grammaticalization]

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## [The completive clause]

- › Nominal subordinate clause ('that-clause')
  - › Different functions of *That* / *Que*
  - › Relativity (Antecedent)
- › Adnominal use
  - › Structure of the nominal group
    - › No nucleus
    - › Determiner, substantive group, consisting of nucleus and adnominals
  - › The idea that this New York team might be the best ever
  - › The fact that President Bush conquered Iraq
  - › The belief that Jeb will someday be President of the United States
  - › Few studies of the subject

## [The issues]

- › **When can a nominal group have an adnominal complete clause?**
  - › \*The baker that President Bush conquered Iraq
  - › \*The meeting that Jeb will someday be President of the United States
  - › ??The joke that the Bush family will return to the White House
- › **What is the value of it when it is there?**
  - › The idea that Peter is elegant vs. The idea of Peter's elegance
- › **Compound conjunction and adnominal complete clause**
  - › **The fact that** the Yankees won made me very happy
  - › **That** the Yankees won made me very happy

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## [Theoretical framework]

- › **Modular approach (Nølle 1994)**
  - › Description of theoretical aspects in mutually independent *modules* (separate 'miniature theories')
  - › Link the linguistic *form* to the linguistic *meaning*
- › **Assures value of explanation/prediction of results**
  - › Links between modules (*meta-rules*): None assumed beforehand
  - › A series of methodological principles governing the application of the approach
    - › Most notably the mutual independence of the modules, and principle of global accessibility
    - › Modules evolve, target the solution of a specific problem

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## [*Syntagmatic structure*]

- › **Grammaticality, order of elements, constituent structure**
  - › Possible and impossible structures
- › **Starting module in every analysis**
  - › Does not assume privileged status, nor that syntax is primordial!
  - › Observable data, study of linguistic form
- › Overall syntagmatic structure of the nominal group
  - › **(DET) Adjectives – Nucleus – Prepositional group – Subordinate clauses**
    - › The quick brown fox from the forest that I saw yesterday
    - › The incredible fact that Angelina Jolie has been signed to star in a movie about her
    - › Not really this level of the syntagmatic structure that is interesting here

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## [*Syntagmatic structure*] Possible structures

- › **Avoid support verb constructions**
- › **Nouns that can be combined with a completive clause**
  - › Possibility/probability, fact, idea, thought, belief, conclusion, argument, opinion, impression
  - › Adapted from a list of nouns of this property in French (Chevalier & Léard 1996, Jønsson forthc.)
    - › Frequency (*Fact, Idea* by far the most frequent)
- › **Alternative constructions**
  - › Support verbs (with marginal members of the class of nouns with completives)
    - › I have the impression that P / came to the conclusion that P / \*have the fact that P
    - › I put out the word that you were lookin' / ??The word that you're looking seems wrong
  - › Adnominal prepositional group
    - › The idea that Peter is elegant / The idea of Peter's elegance

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## [*Predicational structure*]

- › Overall description of adnominals' relation to the noun
  - › Noun as predicate
- › Arguments vs. modifiers
  - › The conquest of Iraq by President Bush (in 2003)
    - › Correspondance to members of the phrase (Valency in derived nouns)
  - › The roof of the house was on fire
  - › Peter's sister is pregnant again
    - › Inherent valency in primary nominal predicates
  - › The two big black dogs on the table
    - › Classes of modifiers; Quantity, quality, location (Rijkhoff 2002)

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## [*Predicational structure*] Adnominal completeive

- › Valency?
  - › I conclude that Iraq has been conquered
  - › I've come to the conclusion that Iraq has been conquered
  - › The fact that P / The idea that P ??
    - › No direct derivation, inheritance of arguments
    - › Criteria: Possibility of a possessive pronoun as determiner (His idea that P?)
- › Co-reference
  - › The fact that P > P is a fact
    - › Apposition (Muller 1996, 2002) – completeive clause with a nominal antecedent
    - › Modus/dictum (Ballier 2008): The completeive clause is the *dictum*, and the noun is the *modus* (commentary to content of completeive).
  - › How many nouns? P is an idea?

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## [*Grammaticalization*]

- › Gradual change (through use) from lexical item to grammatical item
  - › Less exact meaning, *Fact* as a semantically bleached noun
- › Grammaticalized conjunction
  - › [The fact that] Peter won surprised me / [That] Peter won surprised me
  - › *Fact* instead of conjunction
    - › I hate the fact women like Luke Walton
    - › I hate the fact D.J. Mbenga has a publicist

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## [*Grammaticalization*]

- › Co-existence (Hopper & Traugott 2003)
  - › Lexical form continues to exist alongside grammatical form
    - › E.g. *Go* in English is both auxiliary verb and lexical verb.
- › Only *fact*?
  - › Semantically very weak (more so than e.g. *Idea*, *Thought*)
  - › Requires context that does not refer to the denotation of the noun
    - › Shows where there has not been grammaticalization
      - › The mere fact that something is true doesn't mean you should say it
      - › People's response to the fact that I am a computer

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## [*Reference and determination*]

- › Special connection between the determiner and the adnominal completive?
  - › Almost exclusively a definite article as determiner (in French examples, at least)
- › Adnominal on another level: Nominal group/determiner
  - › **The idea of Peter's elegance / The idea that Peter is elegant**
  - › Coherent with theory that the noun is subordinated
- › Indefinite determiners possible?
  - › French: *Une affirmation que P*
  - › Support verb constructions

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## [*Entity order*]

- › Lyons (1977), Dik (1997)
  - › **First order: *Things* ; Second order: *Events* ; Third order: *Propositions***
- › A nominal group with adnominal completive clause denotes an entity of the third order
  - › Same value as proposition, from the completive clause
  - › Inspired by Hengeveld (2008), who classifies *Fact* as a noun of the third order
- › Prominent hypothesis in Jønsson (forthc. [written in 2008])
  - › Too many counterexamples to maintain as a general hypothesis
    - › *J'ai passé tout l'après-midi dans l'attente que P* (French, 2nd order)
  - › Might be relevant for *Fact*
    - › Determined by noun, not group structure nor presence of completive clause

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## [Expansion of the analysis?]

- › Other, and more, modules could be dictated by the data
  - › **Modality?**
    - › Mood is a big question in dealing with completive clauses in French
  - › **Textual structure**
    - › How nominal groups with adnominal completives are used
      - › Genre: Primarily in journalism (French)
- › **Cross-linguistic perspective**
  - › Compare results from French, English, etc.

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## [Final remarks]

- › **Work in progress**
  - › Builds on general study of the nominal group's structure in a modular approach
  - › Not really cross-linguistic (as yet)
  - › No conclusions, exact rules
- › **Formulate meta-rules**
  - › Starts with *Syntagmatic structure* (observations, grammatical rules)
  - › Extremely difficult to formulate (depend on precise local rules)
  - › Will constitute the actual result of this analysis (sometime in 2011)

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