

Nominalizations and Functional Heads



Workshop on Clausal and Nominal parallels

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‘It’s turtles all the way down...’



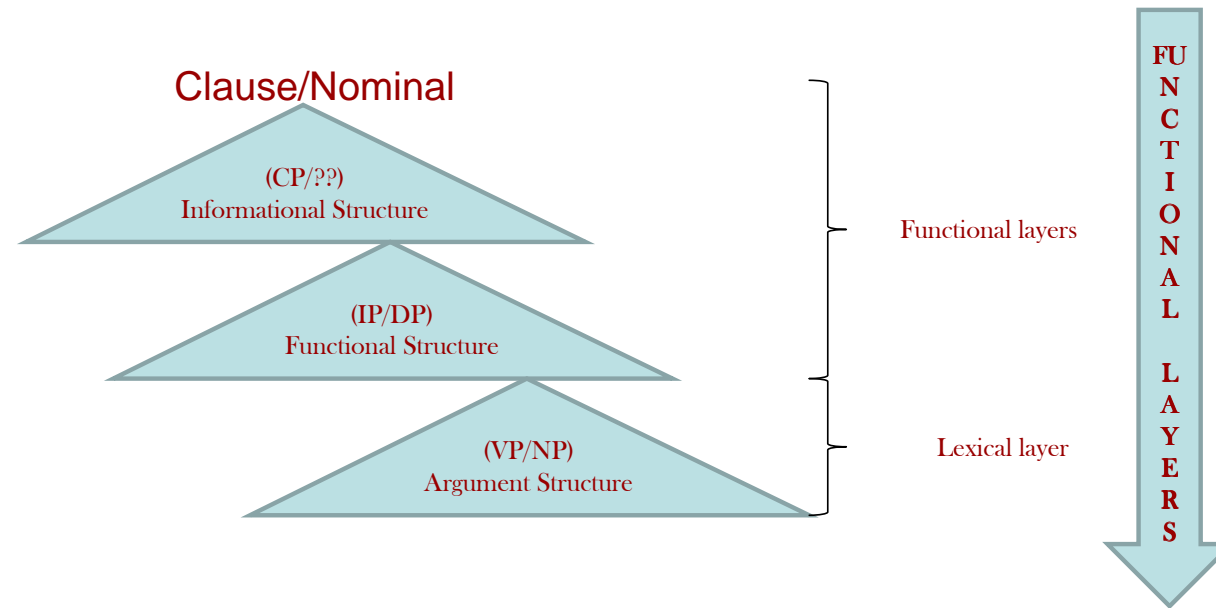
“I have been unable to find any published reference to it, so it may be that I have attributed it to the wrong man, or that it is apocryphal. Be that as it may, because of its bull's-eye relevance to the study of syntax, I have retold it here.”

J. R. Ross, *Constraints on Variables in Syntax* (1967), attributing the anecdote to William James

Menu

- General outline
- Startdata
 - why clauses are different from nominals
- From 2⁰ grammatical categories to Functional Heads
- Issues of Lexical Specification
- θ -role assignment
 - Voice as Functional Head?
- Predicate Type Phrases

General Outline



The level of Functional Structure is relevant to Clause/Nominal *differences*, whereas the level of Argument Structure is potentially relevant to Clause/Nominal *similarities*. The level of Information Structure is irrelevant to either (*pace* Giuliana)

The argument will be that also the Argument Structure layer is a *functional* one
- *it is functional layers all the way down!*

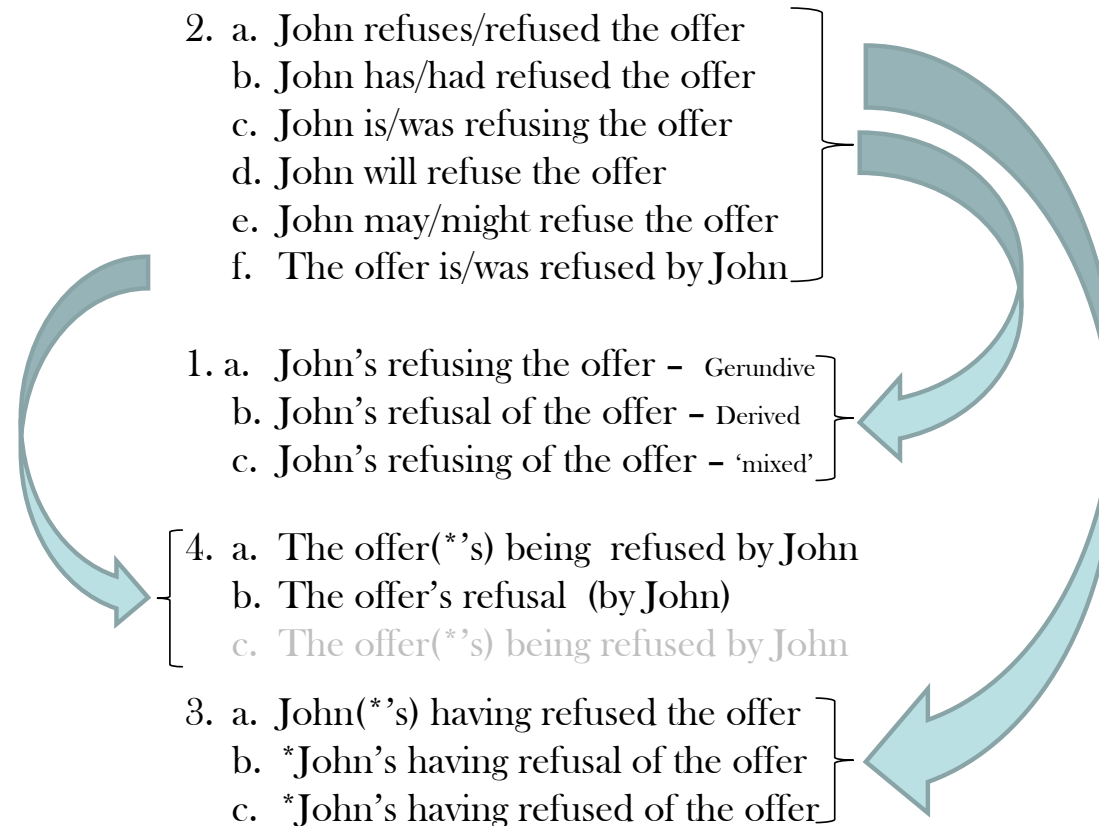
The Beginnings

“I noted earlier that the lexicalist position was not formulable within the framework of syntactic theory available at the time of Lees’s work on nominalizations.There was no other way to express the fact that the contexts in which *refuse* appears as a verb and *refusal* as a noun are closely related.”

Chomsky (1970: 23 – bold italics added)

The Beginnings

(Chomsky 1970)



Commonalities

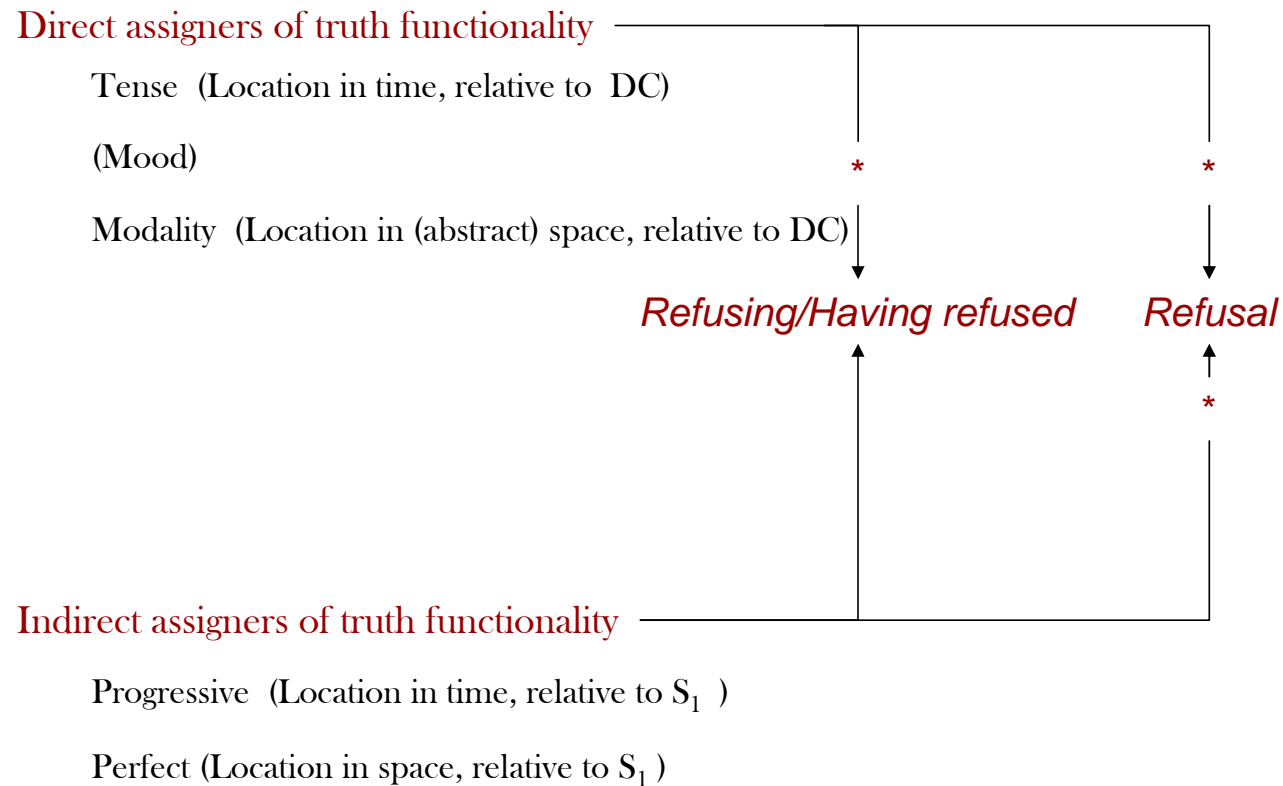
- 2. a. John refuses/refused the offer
- b. John has/had refused the offer
- c. John is/was refusing the offer
- d. John will/would refuse the offer
- e. John may/might refuse the offer
- f. The offer is/was refused by John

Common property: *Present* a particular type of situation as having *factual* (or (d,e) potential) occurrence
= Having a truth value

- 1. a. John's refusing the offer - Gerundive
- b. John's refusal of the offer - Derived
- c. John's refusing of the offer - 'mixed'
- 4. a. The offer(*'s) being refused by John
- b. The offer's refusal (by John)
- c. The offer(*'s) being refused by John
- 3. a. John(*'s) having refused the offer
- b. *John's having refusal of the offer
- c. *John's having refused of the offer

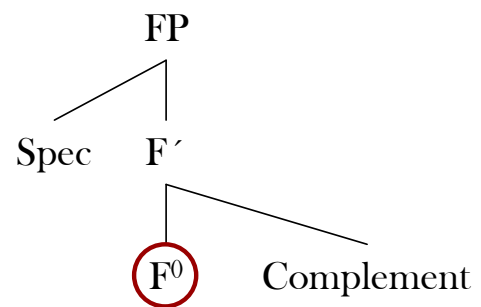
Common property: *Presuppose* the *factual* occurrence (at some time, at some place) of a particular type of situation
= Denoting a situation *type*

Traditional V-Functional categories

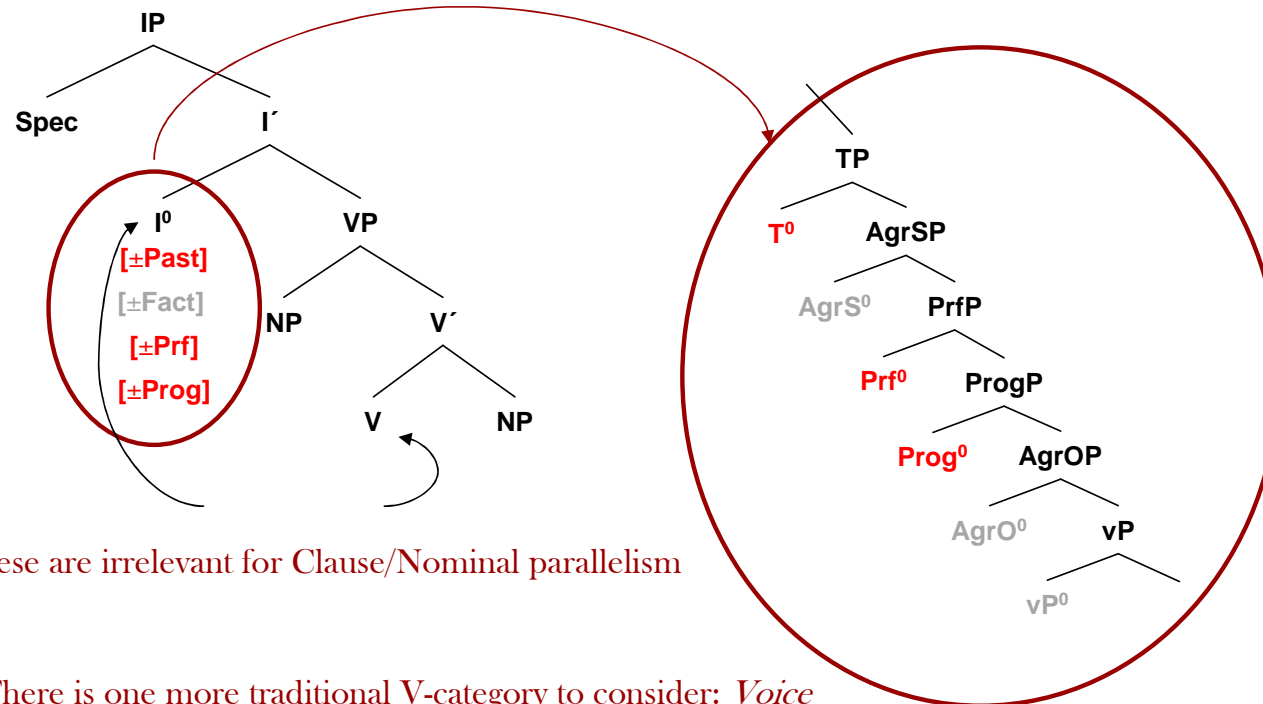


Some of these traditional V-category have been translated into Functional Heads

General Structure of Functional Heads



V-functional Heads

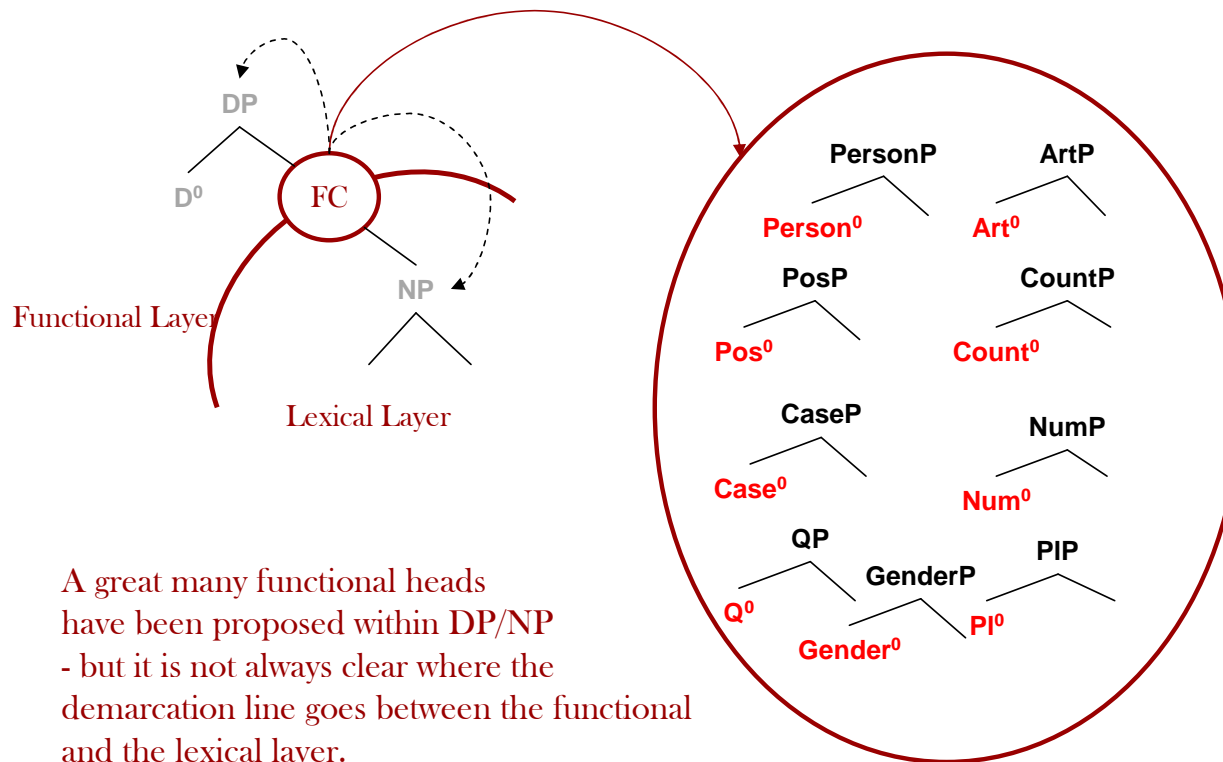


These are irrelevant for Clause/Nominal parallelism

There is one more traditional V-category to consider: *Voice*

- but no one - to my knowledge - has suggested a Functional Head based on Voice

N-functional Heads

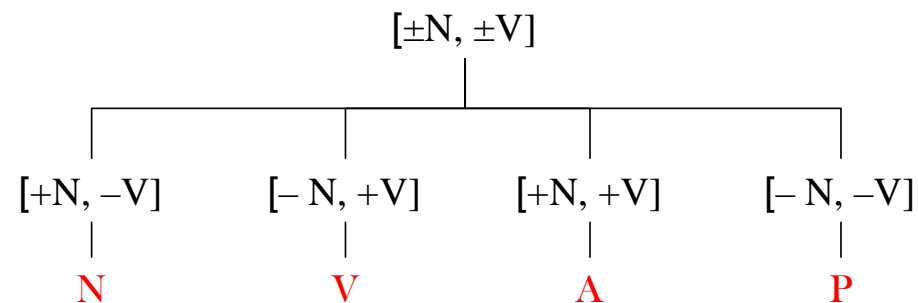


A great many functional heads have been proposed within DP/NP - but it is not always clear where the demarcation line goes between the functional and the lexical layer.

The Lexicon

“Let us propose, then, as a tentative hypothesis, that a great many items appear in the lexicon with *fixed selectional and strict subcategorization* features, *but with a choice as to the features associated with the lexical categories noun, verb, adjective.*”

Chomsky (1970: 22 – bold italics added)



Information in Lexical Entries, in selected frameworks

| | | ST | GB | MP | O'Grady (2005) | Hawkins (1994) (2004) | Bohrer (2005) |
|-------------------------------|---|----|----|----|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Lexical specifications | | | | | | | |
| | Lexico-semantic ('Meaning') | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| | Phonological | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| | Categorical membership | + | + | + | + | + | ÷ |
| | Agreement features (> ϕ - features) | + | + | + | + | + | ÷ |
| | Case Features | ÷ | ÷ | + | ÷ | ÷ | ÷ |
| | (Strict) subcategorization | + | + | + | + | + | ÷ |
| | Selection restriction | + | ÷ | ÷ | ÷ | + | ÷ |
| | Theta-Grid | ÷ | + | + | ÷ | ? | ÷ |
| | 'Directionality' | ÷ | ÷ | ÷ | + | ÷ | ÷ |

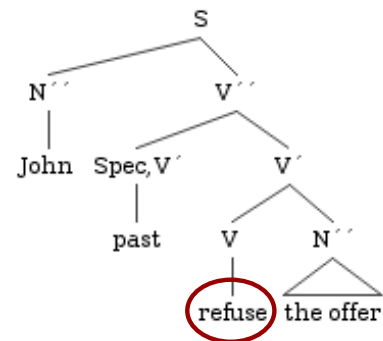
Key questions

Ramchand (2008)

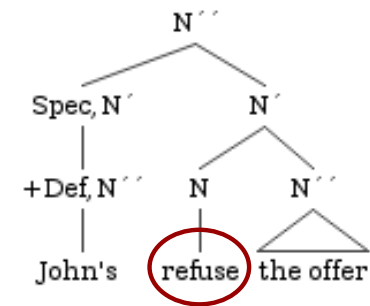
- (1) Is the lexicon a ‘module’ of the grammatical system, with its own dedicated primitives and operations?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is ‘yes’, what is the division of labour between ‘lexical’ operations and the recursive/generative syntactic computation (which must exist, by hypothesis) ?
- (3) What is the relationship between lexical information and non-language dedicate parts of the mind/brain?

Active-Passive

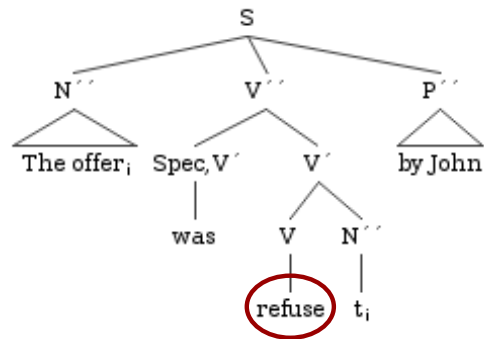
(Adapted from Chomsky (1970): *John proved the theorem* vs. *Several of John's proofs of the theorem*)



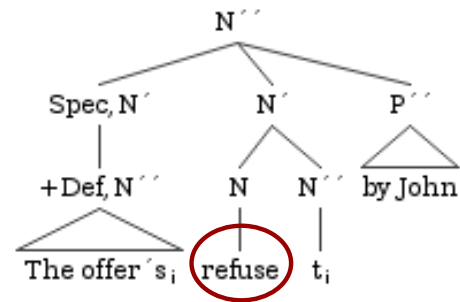
John refused the offer



John's refusal of the offer



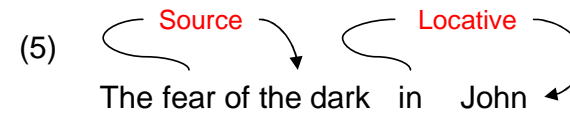
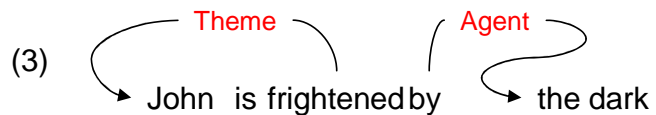
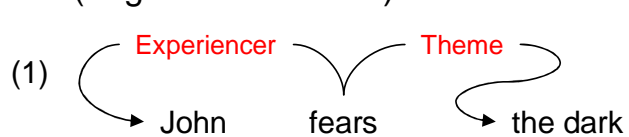
The offer was refused by John



The offer's refusal by John

Theta-role assigners

V's, A's and (P's) are theta-role *assigners*,
N's are theta-role *receivers*
(e.g. Williams 1994) :

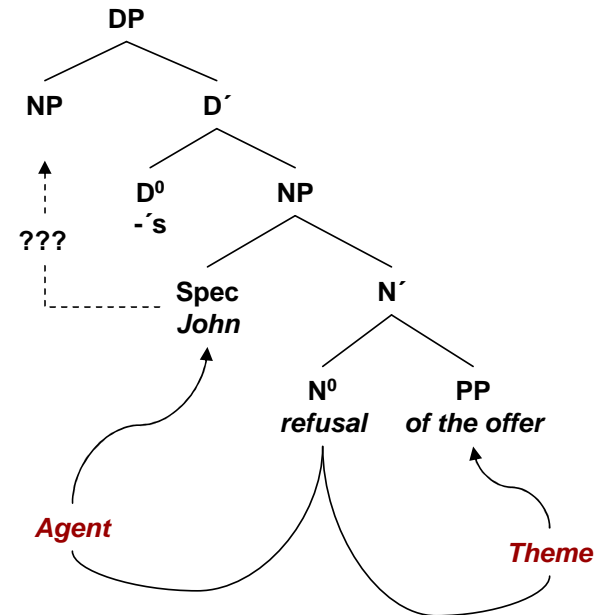
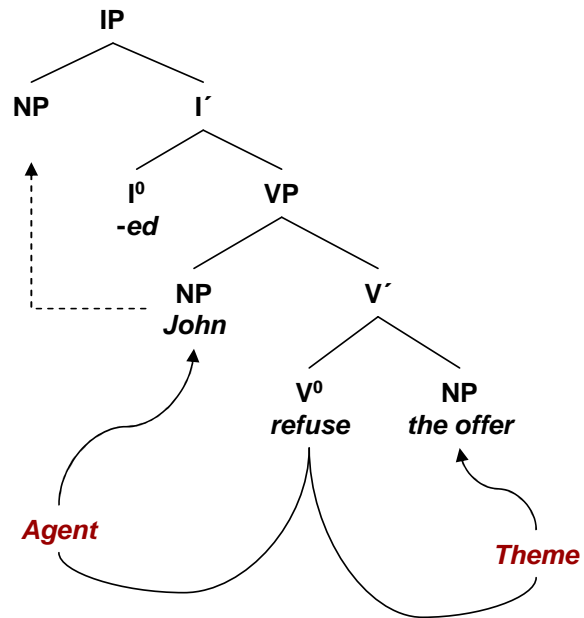


In (3) and (5), the Agent and the Locative relations are not assigned by the verb or the noun, but by the prepositions; being adjuncts, they do not carry theta-roles (only thematic roles, if you care to distinguish between them).

It's similarities like (1) and (4) that lie behind the search for structural parallelisms.

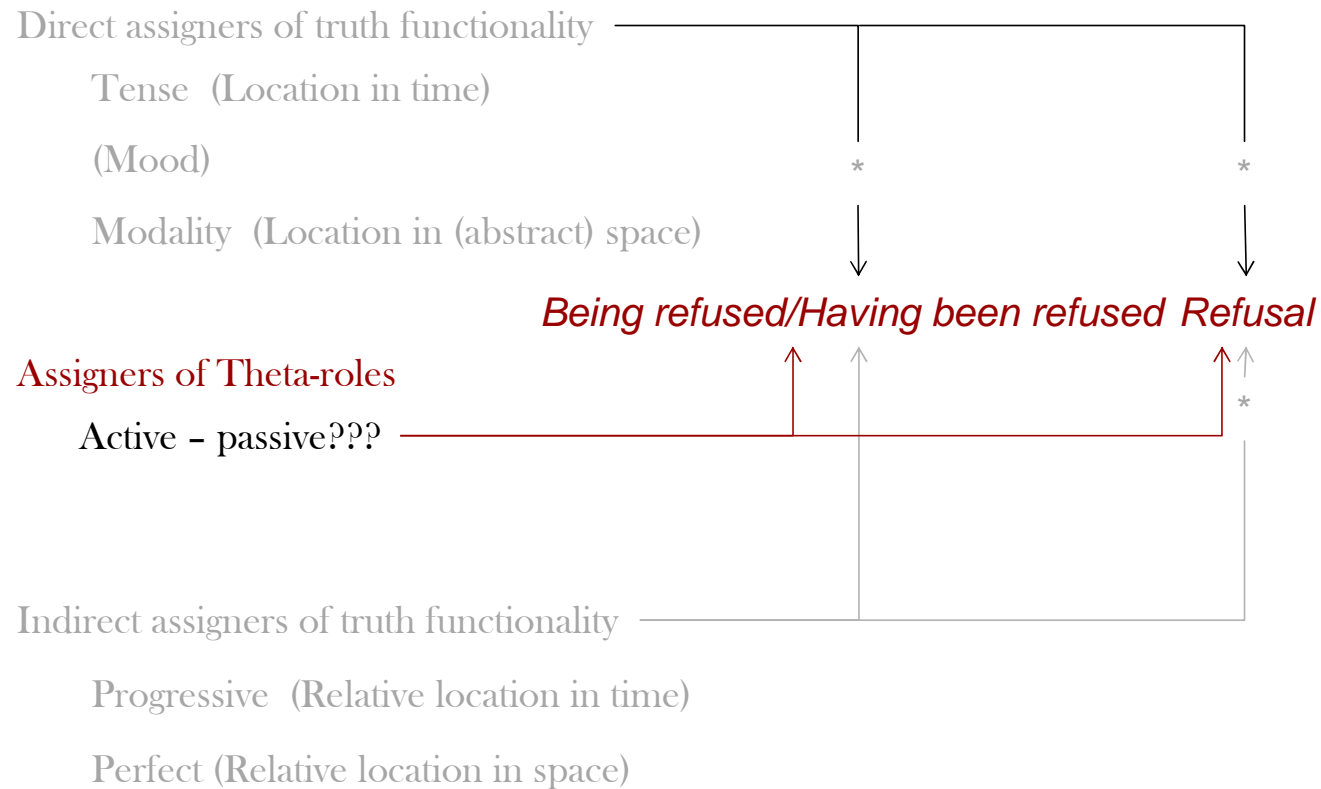
So, it's *predicates* that assign theta-roles

Theta-role assigners

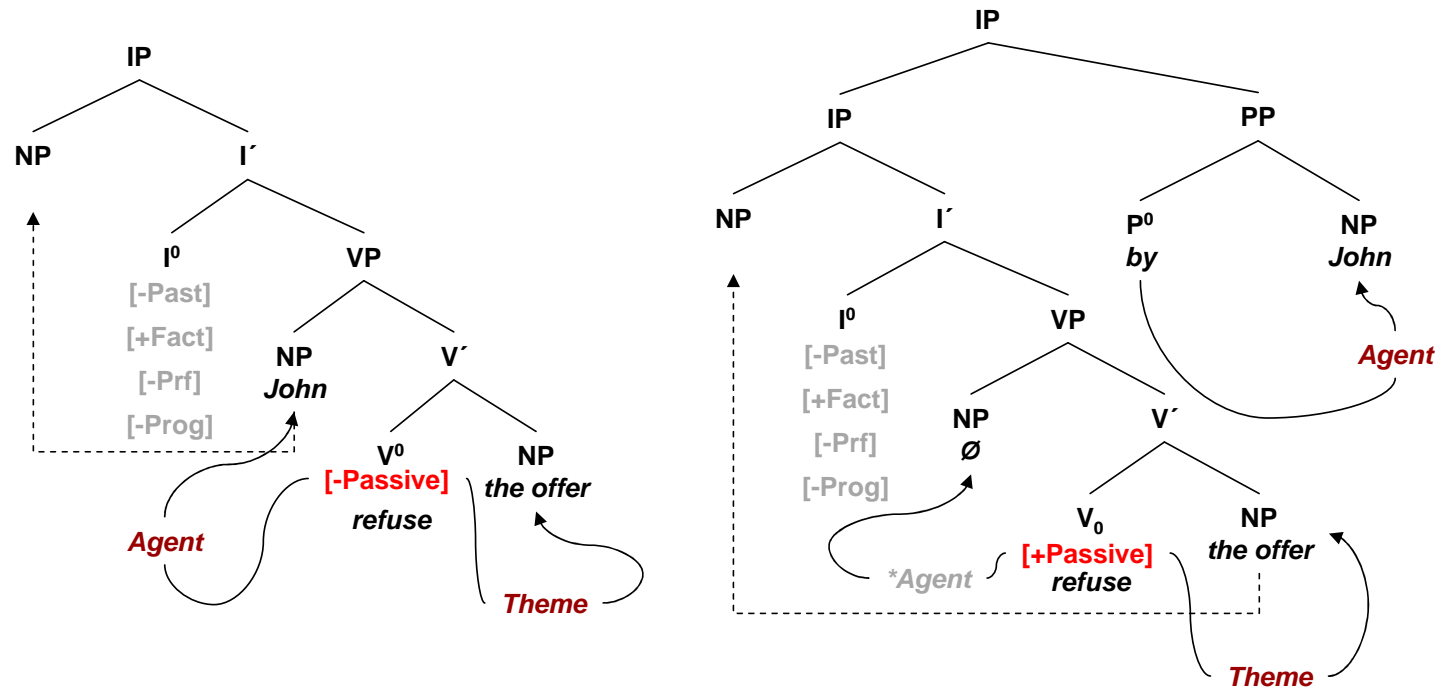


Where does the *-al* in *refusal* come from?

V-Functional categories



Theta-role assigners



This suggests that $[\pm\text{passive}]$ might be a property of Lexical Items, in contrast to the other traditional V-categories:
'Lexical passives'

Voice as Functional Head?

John was refused the offer – The offer was refused John

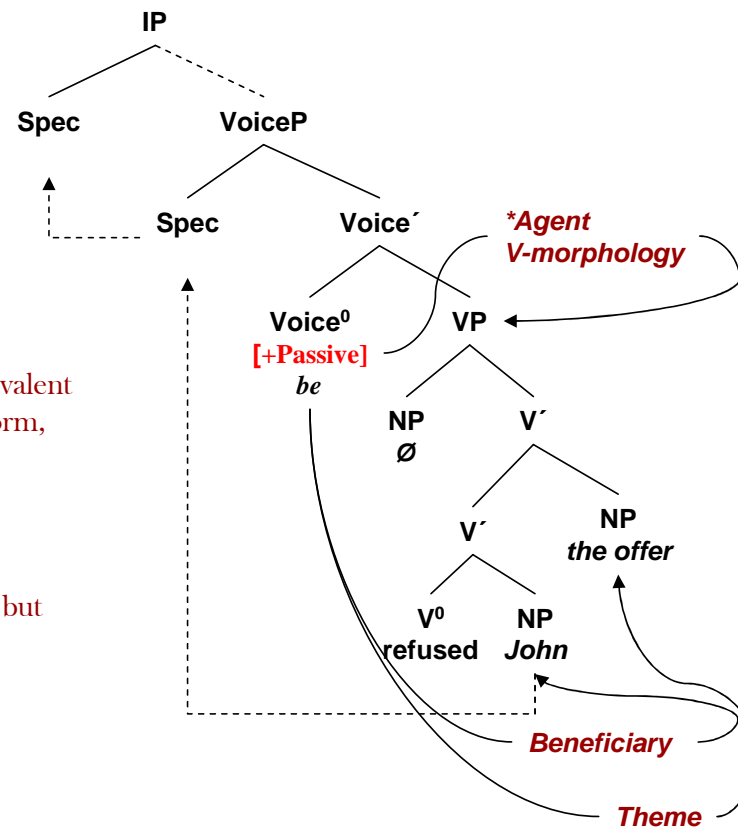
Refuse has a wobbly status as a trivalent predicate; if acceptable in active form, no argument/oblique alternation possible:

? *We refused John the offer*

**We refused the offer to John*

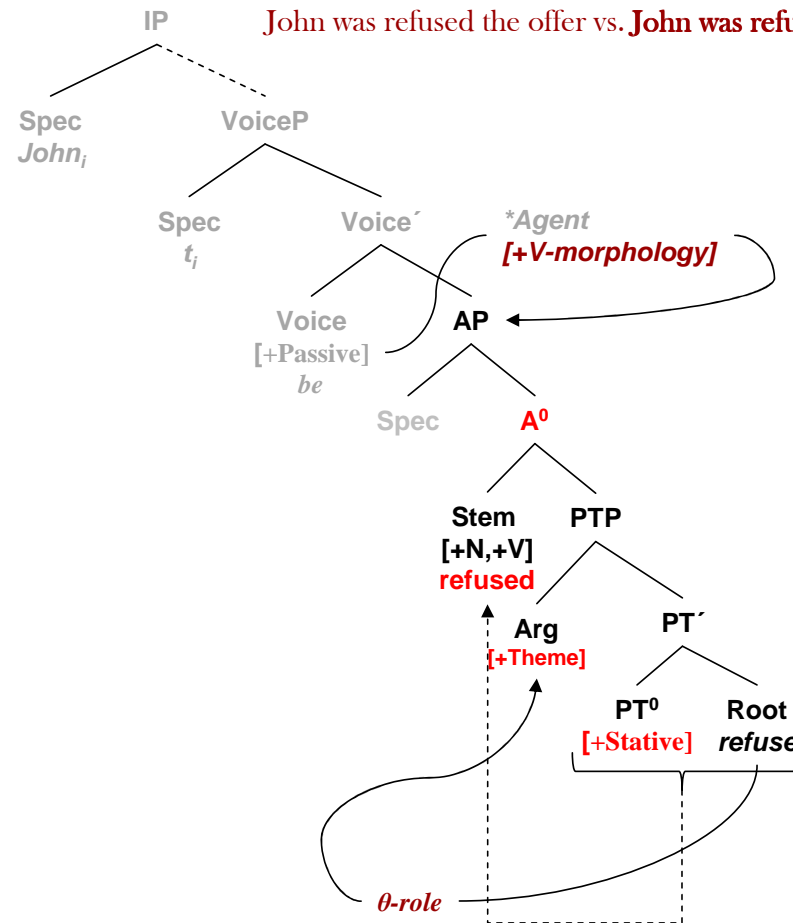
It's fully acceptable in the passive, but still no alternation:

**The offer was refused to John*



It would be unusual for *be* to assign theta-roles, let alone two of them. So something is not right.

Predicate Types (PT)



From here, normal syntactic processes take over. Merge of A⁰ as an AP into the Complement of Voice is licensed by [+Passive]

The output of PT(Root) raises to a Stem. *It is stems that we assign to word classes*, here as A⁰.

The *Root* projects relevant theta-structure in a Predicate Type Phrase (PTP).

PT is considered a function that takes a Root as argument to return a Stem of a given WC. (*Dynamic Syntax* tree formalism; cf. Kempson et al. 2001)

Passive Nominals?

The city's destruction by the enemy

?The offer's refusal by John

??Our waterways' pollution by farmers with nitrate

he was refused a license by his bishop ?his refusal of a license by his bishop

Mr Reid maintains he was refused the right to call witnesses on his behalf [by the judge]

*The refusal to Mr Reid of the right to call witnesses on his behalf by the judge

??Mr Reid's refusal of the right to call witnesses on his behalf by the judge

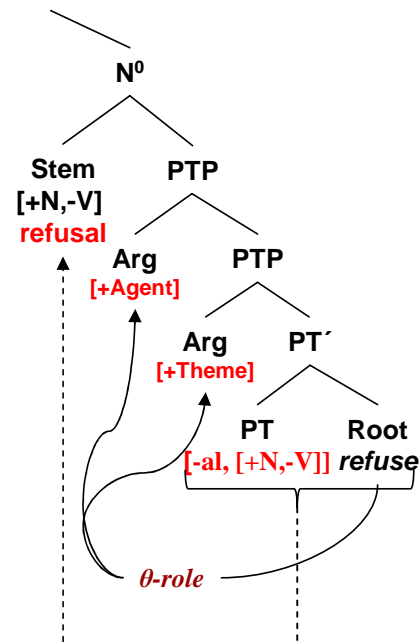
His refusal of a penalty when Allen was fouled by Curle made matters worse – [his] = [the referee]

*Their refusal of a penalty when Allen was fouled by Curle made matters worse – [Their] = [Tottenham]

The refusal of a penalty when Allen was fouled by Curle made matters worse – [The] = [?]

Predicate Types (PT)

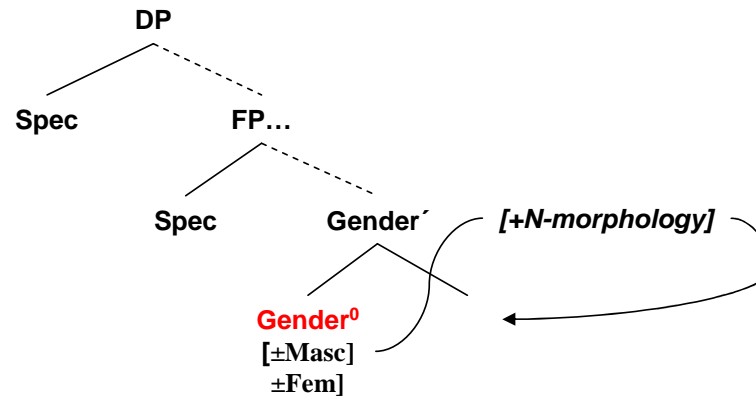
John's refusal of the offer



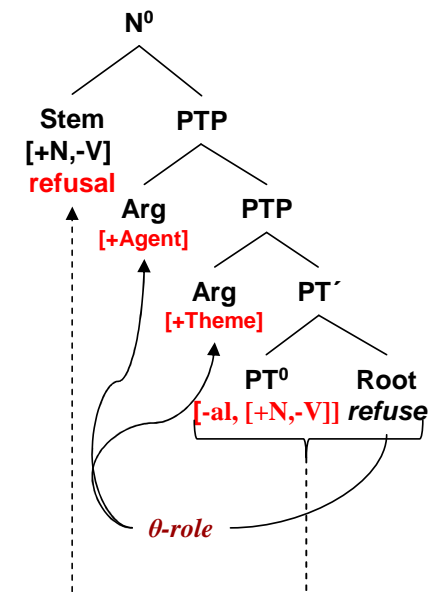
‘Lexical insertion’ is a matter of merging an X^0 as a complement of a functional category in a tree. This merger – on a radical non-categorial account like Borer’s – is totally random. I wouldn’t go that far...

Derivational morphemes are considered material realizations of Predicate Types, carrying specific instantiations of the general feature specification $[\pm N, V\pm]$.

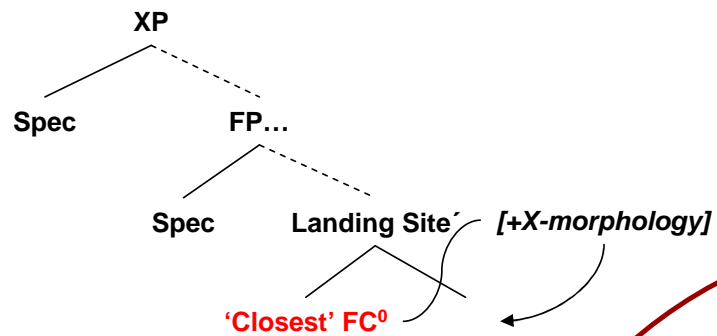
Functional Heads in DP



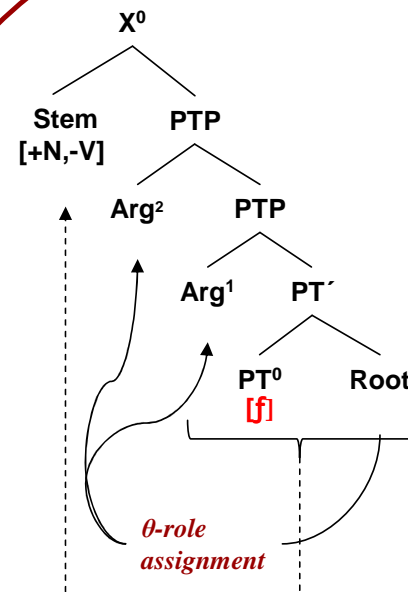
Gender (or Classifier Systems) is the 'closest' functional category to Nouns – even if it is no longer obvious in English. Even so, it is the category that determines pronominal reference. So, I take N⁰ to be merged as its complement, the same way as V⁰ is merged as the complement of Voice.



To conclude....



Functional
syntactic
layers



Functional
morpho-syntactic
layers

...it's Functional Heads all the way down!

References

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