

Grimshaw (1990) notes an interesting fact about she calls complex event nominals, namely that they do not license sentential complements, as can be seen from examples like (1a), in contrast to result nominals, as in (1b).

- (1a) *Their frequent announcement that they were the greatest eventually became tiresome.
 (1b) ?Their frequent announcements that they were the greatest eventually became tiresome.

The explanation she proposes for the contrast in (1) is the following. First, she argues that derived nominals fall into two major classes. Complex event nominals, on the one hand, and simple event nominals and result nominals, on the other. What distinguishes the two is that only the members of the former class have argument structure in the sense of projecting syntactic arguments. What looks like arguments of the latter class is actually *complements*, which correspond to arguments in the lexical conceptual structure of the lexical item but are not syntactic arguments. The crucial difference between *complements* and syntactic arguments is that only the latter are subject to theta-role assignment. Second, she assumes that nouns have no direct theta-marking capacity and hence require prepositions to transmit their theta-role to the argument. Thus, in (2a), *money* can only get its Theme role via the preposition *of* while in (2b), it gets its role directly from the verb.

- (2a) donation *(of) money to hospitals
 (2b) They donated money to hospitals.

Unacceptability of (1a), then, follows from the fact the CP being an argument of a complex event nominal has to get a theta-role but fails to do so due to nominals' inability to (directly) theta-mark.

I believe, however, that this account cannot be correct.

Consider the data on Russian nominalizations in *-nie/-tie* (henceforth, nouns in *-nie*), which are usually taken to be able to project argument structure (see, e.g., Tatevosov 2012 and references therein). These nominalizations routinely allow their internal arguments to be marked with genitive case, as in (3). Given Grimshaw's assumptions, 'the letter' has to be theta-marked but since there is supposedly no preposition in the structure, we may conclude that nouns in *-nie* have direct theta-marking capacity.

- (3) na-pisa-n-ij-e pis'm-a
 prf-write-n/t-noun-nom letter-gen
 'writing (of) a letter'

Now let's look at nouns in *-nie* derived from verbs taking sentential complements. A case in point would be *opoveščat* 'notify', which takes both an internal accusative argument and a sentential complement (4).

- (4) Ona opoveščala znakomyx, čto vyyodit zamuž.
 she notified acquaintances that goes.out married
 'She notified her acquaintances that she is going to get married'.

In the corresponding nominalization the internal argument can be realized and marked with genitive case, which shows that argument structure is indeed projected. The crucial thing, however, is that the sentential complement cannot be realized unless embedded in an *about-PP* (5).

- (5a) Administracijej provoditsja opovešče-nie naselenija o tom,
 authorities.INS is.organized notify-NIE population.GEN about it
 što iz zooparka sbežal tigr.
 that from zoo escaped tiger
 'Notification of the population is being made by the authorities about the fact that a
 tiger escaped from the zoo'.
- (5b) *Administracijej provoditsja opovešče-nie naselenija,
 authorities.INS is.organized notify-NIE population.GEN
 što iz zooparka sbežal tigr.
 that from zoo escaped tiger

The contrast in (5) is striking because there is evidence that nouns in *-nie* do have ability to directly theta-mark their arguments so the sentential complement in (5b) should be able to get its theta-role. This suggests that something else is wrong with (5b) and presumably with the English (1b) as well since it would be implausible if the same fact received different accounts in two different languages.

I would like to argue that the source of unacceptability of (1b)-(5b) is the lack of structural (accusative) Case. This possibility was considered but rejected by Grimshaw based on the assumption that clauses do not need Case. This assumption, however, has been questioned most notably by Bošković (1995), who argued that clauses optionally do have Case features. In his story, what forced clauses to have a Case feature was their need to move. Clearly, in the cases under discussion it must be something else.

I would like to propose that clauses that function as syntactic arguments are DPs and hence have to be licensed by a Case-assigning head. This account leads to an interesting prediction that appears to be confirmed, namely, that when verbs like 'notify' are passivized with their internal argument moved to the subject position the sentential complement becomes degraded (since there is no Case-licensor for them).

This account also has the strong consequence that clauses in Case-less positions (and here I depart from Bošković in assuming that clauses co-occurring with an accusative internal argument do receive Case, although it cannot be realized on another DP with a nominal head) are not syntactic arguments but rather modifiers or *complements* in Grimshaw's sense. This might be true for sentential complements to adjectives, which also do not assign accusative Case, under the assumption that adjectives do not project syntactic arguments. Further consequences have to be empirically testified.

What might the proposed requirement on argumental clauses follow from? It might be the case that syntactic argumenthood is intrinsically linked to DP/NP-hood, which is perhaps an interesting hypothesis to explore.

References

- Bošković, Ž. 1995. 'Case Properties of Clauses and the Greed Principle', *Studia Linguistica* 49, 32-53.
- Grimshaw, Jane. 1990. *Argument structure*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Tatevosov, Sergei. 2011. Severing perfectivity from the verb. *Scando-Slavica* 57(2).