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Nominalizing Clause-takers and Relativizing Clauses

Recent typological investigation has shown that complement clauses have more in common with nominal-modifying relative clauses than is often assumed (Caponigro and Polinsky 2008, Kayne 2009, Arsenijevic 2009). I show that the nominalization patterns of clause-taking verbs offer more support for this view. The central evidence revolves around an old puzzle (Stowell 1981): clause-taking predicates only form non-event nominalizations (in the sense of Grimshaw 1990). While this generalization is sometimes called into question (e.g. Pesetsky and Torrego 2001), I'll show that it holds once we refine the diagnostics for distinguishing between event vs. non-event nominalizations. I then argue that the explanation for this puzzle entails that CPs are not saturators, but like relative clauses in their combinatoric options. In the process, we offer compositional analyses of Grimshaw's simple event, complex event, and result nominalizations.