Syntactic Projections and the Lexicon
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Is the human linguistic capacity primarily a rule-governed, computational one, or is it, to the contrary, based primarily on our fundamental ability to acquire a complex lexicon informed at least partially by a complex conceptual system? This question has informed much debate within linguistics. I will take here a strong computational position, suggesting that many, if not all syntactic properties typically associated with listed items, notably argument structure and category type, are, in fact, properties of structures and not properties of the listed items themselves. While listed items may still convey an idea (e.g., *potato* is distinct from *book*), aspects of listed items which are formal in nature come either from the syntactic structure or from the morphological structure within which such a listed item is embedded, and not from the listed item itself.

The empirical subject matter of this investigation is de-verbal nominals in English. My starting point would be the properties of de-verbal nominals in (1) (see Grimshaw, 1990 for some related discussion):

1. a. *-ing* and *–ation* nominals have both an argument structure and a referential reading
    b. ∅-derived nominals only have a referential reading
    c. While (i) is possible for all *–ation* nominals, (ii) is impossible for all *–ing* nominals
        i.   The city's destruction (by the enemy)
        ii. *The city's bombing (by the enemy)

I will suggest that a detailed analysis of the respective properties of so-called ∅-nominals (*form, construct, (a) run*), *-ation* nominals (*formation, construction*) and *–ing* nominals (*forming, constructing, running*) leads to the following conclusions:

2. a. So-called ∅-affixation, mapping, in English, nouns to verbs and verbs to nouns is, in fact a case of a category neutral root inserted in distinct syntactic structure (cf. (i) and (ii)). The absence of argument structure for (the bulk of) nouns ∅-derived from verbs follows.
        i. $[_{DP}\ [_{root}\ form]]$ (nominalizing structure)
        ii. $[_{Asp"}\ [_{root}\ form]]$ (verbalizing structure)
    b. The study of (1a) is based on the conclusion in (2a). Argument structure nominals are roots embedded under a 'verbalizing' structure, in turn embedded under a 'nominalizing' structures (cf. (i)). Referential nominals are roots embedded under 'nominalization' structure, only (cf. (ii)):
        i. $[_{DP}\ [_{NP}\ –ation/\text{-}ing\ [_{Asp"}\ \dots\ [_{root}\ form\ ]]]]$
        ii. $[_{DP}\ [_{NP}\ –ation/\text{-}ing\ [_{root}\ form\ ]]]$
    c. Differences between *–ing* nominals and *–ation* nominals (cf. (i) and (ii)) are the result of the differing 'verbalizing' structure within which they are embedded.

The picture that emerges is that of a lexicon containing, in the overwhelming number of cases, roots which are neither marked for category, nor associated with argument structure. Rather, it is the morphological and/or syntactic structures into which such roots are inserted which 'categorize' them, and which associated them with argument structure.