

Abstract

Rappaport Hovav & Levin (1992) established two major correlations concerning English *-er* nominals. (A) *-Er* nominals have complement structure (CS), irrespectively of the thematic role of the external argument, iff they are eventive. (B) An instrumental reading is possible only for the nominals derived from verbs for which the expression of an instrumental performing a 'subject' role is available; thus instrumental *-er* nominals refer only to *intermediary* instruments and not to facilitating ones. In syntactic approaches to nominalization (e.g. Borer 1993, Alexiadou 2001, van Hout & Roeper 1998), (B) isn't discussed, and (A) is captured by assuming that such *-er* nominals contain a verbalizing head signalling event structure which then licenses CS. This paper argues that *non-CS* instrumental and *CS -er* nominals both include VoiceP and vP, thus accounting for (B). This suggests a dissociation of verbalizer layers introducing events from the licensing of CS (cf. Alexiadou 2007, Harley 2007).