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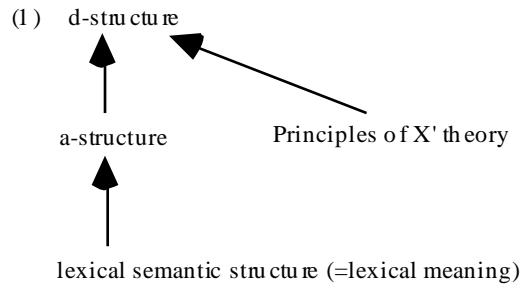
COMPLEX EVENT NOMINALS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

**MARIA DEL PILAR GARCIA MAYO
UNIVERSIDAD DEL PAIS VASCO**

0. INTRODUCTION

ARGUMENT structure (henceforth, a-structure) has been studied extensively during the last ten years due to the importance that the concept has developed within the Government and Binding framework. The a-structure of a lexical item contains a complex of information critical to its syntactic behavior. Grimshaw (1990) claims that the a-structure of a predicate should be derivable from key characteristics of its meaning. As a consequence, a-structure cannot be freely altered by syntactic rules.

The fundamental goal of Grimshaw's proposal is to project a-structure from lexical semantic structure and d-structure from a-structure and principles of X' theory. This could be represented as in (1):



Grimshaw claims that "in the strongest possible theory, the a-structure of a lexical item is predictable from its meaning and the d-structure the item appears in is predictable from its a-structure in interaction with independent parametric characteristics of the language" (1990: 1-2). She also proposes to study a-structure as a "structured representation over which relations of prominence are defined" (1990: 3). The prominence theory of a-structure assumes that the a-structure of a predicate has its own internal structure, which affects the behavior of the predicate in many ways. A-structure is now defined as a representation which shows prominence relations among arguments. The prominence relations are determined by the thematic and the aspectual properties of the predicate. Grimshaw provides the structure for a verb like *announce* with an external Agent and an internal Theme and Goal. The a-structure prominence relations are those indicated in (2):

(2) announce (Agent (Goal (Theme)))

The Agent is more prominent than the other arguments which are more embedded in the representation. Other arguments also bear relations of relative prominence to each other; the Goal is more prominent than the Theme, for example. In the prominence theory, "the internal organization of a-structure results from the thematic hierarchy, so the prominence relations reflect thematic information of a very limited kind, namely, whether a given argument is higher or lower on the thematic hierarchy than another" (1990: 5).

1. NOUNS, VERBS AND A-STRUCTURE

1.1. Complex Event Nouns vs. Simple Events and Result Nominals

Grimshaw analyzes the question of the relationship between nouns and verbs. Although it has been asserted that nouns take arguments only optionally, she argues that this is not correct. Her claim is that only nouns that refer to what she calls **complex events**—nouns that have an internal aspectual analysis—have obligatory grammatical arguments of the kind that verbs have. The a-structure of such nouns must be satisfied, hence the obligatory character of their arguments. Other nouns, **simple events** and **result** nominals, have no a-structure.¹ Grimshaw uses various techniques of disambiguation to distinguish between complex event nominals and other NPs:

(i) certain modifiers occur only with the event interpretation of particular nouns. For example, *constant* and *frequent*, when modifying singular count nouns must be licensed by event structure:²

- (3) a. The expression is desirable.
 b. *The frequent expression is desirable.
 c. The frequent expression of one's feelings is desirable.³

The addition of *frequent* in (3b) rules out the result reading since *frequent* cannot be construed as a modifier of *expression* on its result reading and forces the complex event reading of the noun. Hence, its a-structure must be satisfied as in (3c).

(ii) the presence of the subject argument, particularly with agent-oriented adjectives (*intentional, deliberate ...*):

- (4) a. The instructor's deliberate examination of the papers took a long time.
 b.*The instructor's deliberate examination took a long time.

The presence of the modifier *frequent* in (3) and the subject argument *the instructor* in (4) entails that the a-structure of the noun is projected to the syntax. Therefore, (3b) and (4b) are theta-criterion violations (the theta-role

corresponding to the complement cannot be assigned because there is no complement present).

(iii) when a nominal is associated with an a-structure, as in (5b, c), it admits only the definite determiner:

- (5) a. They observed the/*an/*one/*that assignment of the problem.
b. They studied the/an/one/that assignment.

In (5a) only *the* is possible as a specifier, since the noun projects an a-structure. In (5b), however, *assignment* is a resultative, projecting no a-structure and the entire range of pronominal specifiers is allowed.

(iv) complex event nominals never pluralize:

- (6) *The assignments of the problem took a long time.

(v) complex event nominals show a failure in predication:

- (7) a. That was the /an assignment.
b.*That was the / an assignment of the problem.

What all these disambiguation techniques show is that nominals with an event structure have an obligatory a-structure. The hypothesis argued for by Grimshaw is that result nominals have no a-structure at all (versus the usually assumed idea of having an optional a-structure).

1. 2. Nouns as Defective Theta-Assigners

Grimshaw also proposes (following Emonds (1985)) that nouns have no direct theta marking capacity. Therefore, argument-taking nouns cannot directly accept arguments because they are defective theta markers. They will only take arguments when they combine with prepositions. However, this property that both Grimshaw and Emonds attribute to the lack of theta marking capacity of nouns, can also be explained from a Case theory perspective. Following Aoun (1982) let us assume that an element is visible for theta-marking only if it is assigned Case. According to this Visibility Condition, stated in (8), a noun phrase or a clausal complement can receive a

theta-role only if it is in a position to which Case is assigned or is linked to such a position.

- (8) Theta-roles can only be assigned to A-chains that are headed by a position occupied by Pro or Case. (In Stowell 1981: 34)

That is, if a noun cannot assign Case or if the inherent Case assigned by the noun is 'realized' with a preposition, this prevents it from assigning a theta-role to a clausal complement.

In English, when a noun occurs with a complement that is not introduced by a preposition, the complement cannot be a syntactic argument and the NP cannot be a complex event nominal. The fact that in English a configuration such as P CP is not possible leads to the conclusion that if a CP appears within an NP then the CP cannot be a true complement, i.e. a syntactic argument, and so the NP cannot be a complex event nominal. NPs with CPs in the absence of a preposition never behave like arguments; they act as result nominals or simple event nominals. This is shown in (9) - (12):

(i) CPs within NPs are always *optional* even when the corresponding verb takes an obligatory complement:

- (9) a. The announcement/conclusion (that an investigation has been initiated) was inaccurate.
b. *They announced/*They concluded

(ii) Nouns with sentential complements do not have the meaning of process nouns, as pointed out by Stowell (1981):

- (10) The/their observation that the position had been filled surprised everyone.

The noun *observation* refers not to the fact/event of observing but to the content of the observation. According to Stowell (1981: 199-200), this can be unambiguously shown by looking at the relation between a derived nominal and its 'complement'. This relation is actually one of apposition rather than of theta-role assignment. This intuition is confirmed by the fact that the identity relation holds between the pair (derived nominal/tensed clause complement) as shown in (11):

- (11) a. Andrea's guess that Bill was lying.
b. Andrea's guess was that Bill was lying.

(iii) A CP within NP cannot co-occur with the modifiers *frequent* and *constant* (cf. (12a)) or with a subject argument (cf. (12b)); it may appear, however, within a NP headed by the full range of prenominal specifiers (cf. (12c)):

- (12) a.*The frequent/constant statement that he was about to resign was intended to mislead.
b.*I listened in awe to their constant announcement that the game had been cancelled.
c. She did not want to listen to the/an/that announcement that she could not park her car there.

In summary, English sentential complements to nouns are never arguments. The evidence is that they are never obligatory, which suggests that they are not related to a-structure positions and that the nouns they are associated with do not behave as complex event nominals.

2. COMPLEX EVENT NOMINALS IN SPANISH

Once all the differences between complex event nominals and other types of nominals, and the non-argumental nature of complements to NP without a preposition have been spelled out for English, one should ask whether the same facts hold for a language like Spanish. Some of the tests used for English can be applied to Spanish to see whether there are syntactic differences between complex event nominals and simple event and result nominals.

2.1. Complex Event Nominals vs. Result Nominals

As in English, the aspectual modifier *constante* and, with some variation, *frecuente* have the effect of forcing the argument structure of the noun:⁴

- (13) a. Su explicación empezaba a aburrir a la gente.
Her explanation started to make people bored.
- b. Su frecuente explicación *(del problema) empezaba a aburrir a la gente.
Her frequent explanation *(of the problem) started to make people bored.
- c. Explicamos *(los problemas).
We explained *(the problems).

The presence of a subject argument co-occurring with an adjective such as *deliberate* also has the effect of forcing a-structure to be present:

- (14) a. Su insistencia (en una casa a la orilla del mar) vuelve loco a cualquiera.
Her insistence on a house by the seaside makes anyone crazy.
- b. Su deliberada insistencia *(en una casa a la orilla del mar) aburre a cualquiera.
Her deliberate insistence *(on a house by the seaside) makes anyone angry.

Similarly, NPs which appear as complements to verbs such as *presenciar* 'to witness', *escuchar* 'to listen', particularly when they are in an imperfective tense, are interpreted as complex event nominals:

- (15) El público pudo presenciar la destrucción *(del edificio) en la televisión.

2. 2. Nouns with CPs Introduced by Prepositions

In Spanish we know independently that a preposition can take a CP complement (Contreras (1984), Plann (1986)). The 'a' examples in (16) and (17) show that the same preposition appears when there is an NP complement. This indicates that the preposition is part of the lexical entry of the verb:

- (16) a. Ayer soñé **con** mi pueblo.
Yesterday I dreamed of my village.
- b. Ayer soñé **con** regresar a mi pueblo.
Yesterday I dreamed of going back to my village.

- c. Ayer soñé **con** que mi hermana Ana venía a visitarme.
Yesterday I dreamed that my sister Anne came to visit me.
- (17) a. La fiesta consistió **en** un baile.
The party consisted of a dance.
- b. El concurso consistía **en** saltar charcos.
The contest consisted of jumping puddles.
- c. La actividad consistía **en** que cada alumno visitara un museo.
The activity was that each student should visit a museum.

We should investigate whether CP complements are acting like arguments and whether NPs have an event reading in these cases. As we have seen (cf. (13)) the use of aspectual modifiers like *frecuente* and *constante* forces an a-structure reading in Spanish as was the case in English. (18) - (19) show how the a-structure of the nominal is satisfied with a CP:

- (18) a. Su insistencia enfada a toda la familia.
Her insistence makes the whole family angry.
- b. *Su frecuente insistencia enfada a la familia.
*Her frequent insistence makes the family angry.
- c. Su frecuente insistencia *(en que los nietos la visiten) enfada a toda la familia.
Her frequent insistence on her grandchildren coming to visit her makes the whole family angry.
- (19) a. El anuncio llega a ser fastidioso.
The announcement becomes annoying.
- b. *El constante anuncio llega a ser fastidioso.
*The constant announcement becomes annoying.
- c. El constante anuncio *(de que no se puede aparcar allí) llega a ser fastidioso.
The constant announcement that one cannot park there becomes annoying.

The use of subject arguments together with agent-oriented adjectives (cf. (14b)) forces the a-structure of the nominal. (20) - (21) show how the addition of *deliberate* rules out the result reading and forces the complex event reading of the nouns *anuncio* e *insistencia*. Hence their a-structures have to be satisfied. As in (18) -(19), the a-structure is satisfied with a CP:

- (20) a. Su anuncio enfadó a los ayudantes de cátedra.
Her announcement made the TAs angry.
- b. *Su deliberado anuncio enfadó a los ayudantes de cátedra.

- *Her deliberate announcement made the TAs angry.
- c. Su deliberado anuncio *(de que los sueldos iban a ser reducidos) enfadó mucho a los ayudantes de cátedra.
Her deliberate announcement that salaries would be reduced made the TAs angry.
- (21) a. Mi insistencia causó un gran descontento.
My insistence caused much irritation.
- b. *Mi deliberada insistencia causó un gran enfado.
*My deliberate insistence caused much irritation.
- c. Mi deliberada insistencia *(en terminar el trabajo pronto) causó un gran enfado.
My deliberate insistence on finishing the paper soon caused much irritation.

(18) - (21) show that in Spanish sentential complements (CPs) to nouns with a complex event reading are arguments. The evidence is that they are obligatory, which suggests that they are related to a-structure positions.

As we have seen, if the nominal we are dealing with has an a-structure, only the definite determiner occurs with it. This is what (22) and (23) show:

- (22) a. La constante advertencia de que esa medicina era peligrosa llegó demasiado tarde.
*The constant warning that that medicine was dangerous arrived too late. (vs. The constant warning of the dangers of the medicine arrived too late.)
- b. *Una/*Alguna constante advertencia de que esa medicina era peligrosa llegó demasiado tarde.
*A/*Some constant warning that that medicine was dangerous arrived too late.⁵
- (23) a. El frecuente anuncio de que la gasolina subiría no influyó en el número de personas que se fueron de vacaciones.
*The frequent announcement that gas prices would go up did not affect the number of people that went on vacation.
- b. *Un/Algún frecuente anuncio de que la gasolina subiría no influyó en el número de personas que se fueron de vacaciones.
*A/*Some frequent announcement that gas prices would go up did not affect the number of people that went on vacation.

When a nominal is associated with a complex event reading it never pluralizes:

- (24) a. El anuncio de que la sequía iba a continuar causó pánico entre los habitantes de California.
The announcement that the drought would continue caused panic among California residents.
- b. *Los anuncios de que la sequía iba a continuar causaron pánico entre los habitantes de California.
*The announcements that the drought would continue caused panic among California residents.
- c. Los anuncios de que la sequía iba a continuar y que el terremoto estaba cerca causaron pánico entre los habitantes de California.
The announcements that the drought would continue and the earthquake was near caused panic among California residents.

Whereas (24a) can have both an event and a complement reading (i.e. announcement of which the CP specifies the content) if the nominal is pluralized (24b) the event reading is lost. (24c) shows that pluralization is grammatical with an appositive reading.

From the data in (18) - (24), it can be concluded that in Spanish nouns with sentential complements introduced by a preposition show the following characteristics:

- (25) (i) They can have an event reading.
(ii) They have the possibility of appearing with aspectual modifiers or with agent-oriented adjectives that have the effect of forcing the a-structure of the nominals.
(iii) When the nominals have an event reading, the CPs are not optional. Rather, they behave like arguments.

2. 3. Event Control into Purpose Clauses

Grimshaw argues, following work by Williams (1985) and Lasnik (1988), that complex event nominals allow control into an infinitival purpose clause (cf. (26a)) because the controller in such cases is the 'event' denoted by the clause or the nominal rather than an implicit argument, as proposed in Roeper (1987). No event or implicit argument control is possible with result nominals (cf. (26b)):

- (26) a. [The translation of the book]_i; (in order) PRO_i to make it available to a wider readership was a success.

- b. [Their statement that the president_j intends to retire]_i in order PRO*_{ij} to mislead the public was absurd.

When arguing against the NP PRO analysis (the idea that an NP has a 'controllable' PRO subject in specifier position), Williams (1985) offers an account of result clause control in which he proposes that the matrix S itself is available as a controller of the result clause:

- (27) a. [John_i went to New York] [PRO_i to annoy Mary]
 b. [John went to New York]_i [PRO_i to annoy Mary]

(27) has two possible interpretations: (27a) offers the intentional purposive interpretation by means of the index on *John*, the agent that controls PRO. (27b) shows the reading in which it is the event itself of John's going to New York that annoys Mary. This is shown by placing the index on the whole S (IP). This kind of control is called S-control by Williams. He extends S-control to N' control. Thus, he does not need to posit NP PRO or implicit argument control to account for (28):

- (28) The destruction of the city to impress the general.

Williams argues that in (28) the result clause is controlled by the N' *destruction of the city* in the sense that it is the destruction of the city that will impress the general, not the destroyer. The same explanation will apply to (29) where the result clause is controlled by the S *the ship was sunk* in the sense again that it is the fact that the ship was sunk that will impress the general:

- (29) The ship was sunk to impress the general.

In both the English and the Spanish sentences that follow, the purpose clause can be associated with both the higher and the lower clauses:

- (30) a. They_i stated that the president_j intends to retire in order PRO_{ij} to mislead the public.
 b. [They stated that the president_j intends to retire]_i in order PRO_{ij} to mislead the public.

(Grimshaw 1990: 76 (68b))

- (31) a. Los generales_i anunciaron que las tropas_j se habían retirado para PRO_i_j confundir al enemigo.
The generals_i announced that the troops_j had withdrawn in order to PRO_i_j to confuse the enemy.
- b. [Los generales anunciaron que las tropas_j se habían retirado]_i para PRO_i_j confundir al enemigo.
[The generals announced that the troops_j had withdrawn]_i in order PRO_i_j to confuse the enemy.

An event control reading is neither possible in the corresponding English sentence with a result nominal (cf. (32)) nor in the corresponding Spanish sentence with a complex event nominal (cf. (33)):

- (32) [Their statement that the president_j intends to retire]_i in order PRO*_i_j to mislead the public was absurd.
- (33) [Su anuncio de que las tropas_j se habían retirado]_i para PRO*_i_j confundir al enemigo se transmitió en la radio.
Their announcement that the troops had withdrawn to confuse the enemy was transmitted on the radio.

The event control in (33) does not hold and the purpose clause can only be understood to refer to *las tropas* not to the *anuncio*. Similar examples are those in (34) and (35):

- (34) [Los generales anunciaron [que el edificio se había bombardeado]]_i para PRO_i_j confundir al enemigo.
[The generals announced [that the building had been bombed]]_i in order PRO_i_j to confuse the enemy.
- (35) [El anuncio de los generales de [que el edificio se había bombardeado]]_i para PRO*_i_j confundir al enemigo se transmitió por la radio.
[The generals' announcement [that the building had been bombed]]_i in order PRO*_i_j to confuse the enemy was transmitted on the radio.

Again, (34) shows that the sentence can be interpreted as meaning that the generals made the announcement in order to confuse the enemies or that the building was bombed in order to confuse the enemy. However, (35) can only have the second interpretation.

As we have already mentioned, complex event nominals in English allow event control into an infinitival purpose clause (cf. (26a)). From the examples in Spanish given above (cf. (33), (35)) one could conclude that complex event nominals in this language do not allow this type of control. Actually, that will be a test for argument structure which Spanish NPs with clausal complements fail to meet (assuming, with Grimshaw, that 'N' control = event control). However, this is not exactly what happens in Spanish. As the data show, event control is possible when the complex event nominal has an NP complement (cf. (36a)), as in English, or when the NP has a CP complement with an inchoative type of verb, in contrast with English (cf. (38) where control is not ambiguous in S). No event control is possible with NPs with sentential complements (cf. (35b)).

- (36) a. [El anuncio [del bombardeo del edificio]_i]_j para PRO_i_j confundir al enemigo se transmitió por la radio.
The announcement of the bombardment of the building in order PRO to confuse the enemy was transmitted on the radio.
- b. *[El anuncio de los generales de [que el edificio se había bombardeado]_i para PRO*_i_j confundir al enemigo se transmitió por la radio.
The generals' announcement that the building had been bombed in order to confuse the enemy was transmitted on the radio.

If the verb in the lower clause is an inchoative that cannot participate in event control the version with an NP and a sentential complement is ungrammatical in English:

- (37) a. They_i stated that the gun misfired in order PRO_i to mislead the public.
- b. *Their statement that the gun misfired in order to mislead the public was absurd.

(Grimshaw 1990: 77 (70a, b))

In Spanish when an inchoative type verb appears in the lower clause, there is still control into an infinitival purpose clause by the Agent of the main clause:

- (38) a. [La insistencia del abogado_i en las pruebas balísticas]_j para PRO_i_j demostrar la inocencia de su cliente fue en vano.

The lawyer's insistence on ballistic evidence in order to prove his client's innocence was in vain.

- b. [Su_i insistencia en que la pistola había fallado]_j para PRO_i_j convencer al jurado fue absurda.

*His insistence that the gun had misfired in order to convince the jury was absurd.

- c. El abogado_i insistía en que la pistola había fallado para PRO_i convencer al jurado.

The lawyer insisted that the gun had misfired in order to convince the jury.

In (38b) *su* controls PRO in the infinitival purpose clause; in that sentence, there is agent control when *su* = PRO and event control when PRO = *j*. (38b) should be contrasted with (36b). There, it was shown that event control into the infinitival purpose clause was not possible. The same examples can be used to show that Agent control is not possible either. Here, we will just repeat (36b) with an Agent control interpretation:

- (39) *[El anuncio de los generales_i / Su_i anuncio de [que el edificio se había bombardeado]_j] para PRO*_i_j confundir al enemigo se transmitió en la radio.

The generals' announcement / Their announcement that the building had been bombed in order to confuse the enemy was transmitted on the radio.

A question that could be raised is whether what we find in (36a) is event control of control by an implicit argument. Roper (1983) cites the following examples as support for the control-by-implicit argument view:

- (40) a. *The boat sank to impress the king.
b. The boat was sunk to impress the king.

His idea is that it is the availability of an implicit agent in the passive construction in (40b) which is responsible for the difference; such an implicit argument is lacking in the 'ergative' construction of (40a). Williams (1985: 310), on the other hand, considers that it is wrong to say that when the S is the controller, the S must denote an event which involves an Agent. He claims that there is evidence that agenthood has nothing to do with the difference between the two examples mentioned above or with control of

result clauses in general. The example he provides to support his claim is given in (41):

- (41) Grass is green to promote photosynthesis.

In this example it cannot be said that *is* or *green* has an implicit agent argument. "We must simply suppose that there is some purposeful agent (evolution, God) under whose control is the circumstance 'grass is green'. This is quite different from saying that God or evolution is an Agent in the theta-theoretic sense" (1985: 311). For Williams, where the implicit argument can control, the controlled clause is an argument and where it cannot control, the controlled clause is an adjunct, as (42) shows:

- (42) a. the desire to leave
(implicit argument is controller)
b. the destruction of the city to prove a point
(implicit argument is not controller, N' is)

According to Williams, we have to assume that adjuncts are always generated outside of VP or outside of the first projection of V, as in Jackendoff (1977), while arguments (subjects being an exception) are always generated within the first projection. Besides, we need to assume that implicit arguments are only 'visible' to rules applying within the first projection of V. Thus, it follows that implicit arguments will be visible as antecedents only for control of complements, never for control of adjuncts. Therefore, for Williams, (36a) will have event control, not implicit argument control. However, that type of example can also be understood as having an implicit argument behaving as an Agent. In the end the distinction between event control or implicit argument control is not going to be of much help in trying to figure out why control is not possible in (36b). Complex event nominals in Spanish theta-mark their sentential complements and project an a-structure. However, when it comes to control into infinitival purpose clauses, complex event nominals with CP complements behave as if they were not theta-marking their complements (if Grimshaw is correct in assuming that event control is a diagnostic of a-structure).

3. CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the behavior of complex event nominals in Spanish. The techniques of disambiguation that Grimshaw uses to distinguish complex event nominals from simple events and result nominals in English were applied to Spanish and the conclusions arrived at were similar to the ones obtained for English. The use of certain aspectual modifiers and the presence of a subject argument co-occurring with adjectives such as *deliberate* have the effect of forcing the a-structure of the noun and, hence, its arguments must be projected.

However, the results varied when the behavior of CPs within NPs was analyzed. In English if a CP appears within an NP then the CP cannot be a true complement (cf. 1.2.). In Spanish sentential complements to nouns are introduced by prepositions and when the nominal has an event reading its a-structure is satisfied with a CP that behaves as a true argument.

Event control into infinitival purpose clauses was also analyzed. Grimshaw shows that complex event nominals in English allow this type of control (cf. (26a)). At first blush, it seemed that complex event nominals in Spanish did not behave in a similar way (cf. (33), (35)). However, the data showed that control (event or implicit argument) is possible when the complex event nominal has an NP complement (cf. (36a)) or when the NP has a CP complement with an inchoative verb (cf. (38b)). No control is possible with NPs with non-inchoative sentential complements. The reason why this lack of control exists in the latter case is not clear. It seems that it has to do with the 'complexity' of the NP structure but at this point no answer is provided.

The analysis of complex event nominals and control into infinitival purpose clauses proves, however, that the relationship between event control and a-structure is not as simple as one could infer from Grimshaw's account of the phenomenon. The concept of 'event control' itself needs to be further refined. We leave this topic for future research. a

NOTES

1. It is not clear if this means that elements which appear with these nouns are all modifiers of some type even when they 'look like' objects.
2. Ungrammatical sentences and interpretations are indicated by the use of an asterisk.
3. If the addition of *frequent* forces the a-structure of the noun to be projected one could ask whether a subject would not be necessary here.
4. *() is used to indicate that the sentence is ungrammatical if the material within the parenthesis is not used.
(*) is used to indicate that the sentence is ungrammatical if the material within the parenthesis is used.
5. Sentence (22b) is grammatical without *constant*, as is to be expected.

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