

# **IN SEARCH OF A NOMINAL COMP**

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## Abstract

Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) proposed that complement clauses can have two different syntactic functions. Those with the external syntactic properties of noun phrase objects are OBJs, while other complement clauses are COMPs. The idea of a COMP function has been criticized. One argument against it is that COMP differs from other syntactic functions in that it can only be filled by a clause. This paper attempts to show, on the basis of Norwegian, that there might also be nominal COMPs.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

It is well known that complement clauses differ concerning their external syntactic behavior (Stowell 1981, Webelhuth 1992, Bošković 1995, Dalrymple and Lødrup 2000, Lødrup 2004). Some complement clauses have the external syntactic properties of nominal objects. They can topicalize, and correspond to a subject in the passive. One example is the complement of *believe*, as in 1-2.

- (1) That the earth is round, everybody believed.
- (2) That the earth is round was not believed.

Other complement clauses lack these properties. An example is the complement of *hope*, as in 3-4.

- (3) \*That it would rain, everybody hoped.
- (4) \*That it would rain was hoped.

Traditional LFG assumed that all clausal complements have the syntactic function COMP. Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) proposed that a clausal complement is an object if it behaves syntactically like a nominal object, and a COMP if it does not. This idea has been discussed and criticized (Berman 2003, Alsina et al. 2005, Forst 2006; see also Börjars and Vincent 2008). The critics do not deny the need to distinguish between complement clauses with different syntactic behavior. However, they do not accept the need for a separate syntactic function COMP, preferring an analysis in which a COMP

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<sup>1</sup> For input and discussion, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for LFG12, members of the conference, and colleagues at the Oslo theoretical linguistics seminar. Thanks are also due to the Proceedings editors.

is really an OBL $\emptyset$  (see also Zaenen and Engdahl 1994, Bresnan 2001:309, 317).<sup>2</sup>

This paper approaches the question of COMP from a new angle. Both in traditional LFG and in Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000), COMP differs from other syntactic functions in that it can only be filled by a clause. It is not clear, however, why this should be the case (see Alsina et al. 2005). If only clauses can be considered COMPs, this constitutes an important argument against the COMP function. This paper suggests that noun phrases can also be COMPs. COMP is then a syntactic function that can be realized by a noun phrase or a clause, in the same way as the OBJ function.

It will be shown, on the basis of Norwegian, that some verbs that take a clausal COMP alternatively take a noun phrase complement that could be argued to be a nominal COMP. Possible cases of nominal COMPs that do not alternate with clausal COMPs are also discussed.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Part 2 discusses properties that distinguish objects and COMPs. Part 3 gives examples of verbs that seem to take clausal and nominal COMPs, while part 4 gives examples of verbs that seem to take nominal COMPs without taking clausal COMPs. Some general properties of nominal COMPs are discussed in part 5, while part 6 takes up the important question of how COMP behaves in unbounded dependency constructions.

## 2. Object properties

A nominal COMP could be compared to the 'new' complement function proposed in Postal (2010). Postal suggests, mainly on the basis of English, a function that he calls an 'array 1 object' (and also a '4 object'); see Postal (2010:56-64, 2004:264-75). Postal assumes that both nominal and clausal arguments can have this function.

Postal (2010) describes a group of properties for array 1 objects. A central property is that they "are not passivizable" (Postal 2010:56). This wording reveals a problem in his reasoning (which maybe follows from exceptions to the passive being his point of departure; see Postal (2004:264-75)). If an object can be a subject in a passive, the precondition is that the verb can passivize. Most verbs passivize, but there are exceptions that vary

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<sup>2</sup> Other frameworks have also assumed analyses that could be seen as equivalent to considering COMP an OBL $\emptyset$ . In the German descriptive grammar tradition, a COMP has the same syntactic function as OBL $\emptyset$ , namely *Präpositionalobjekt* 'prepositional object', (Breindl 1989, Zifonun et al. 1997:1097). A different implementation of this intuition is to assume that COMP is really a PP with a deleted preposition (see Rosenbaum 1967:83 on English, Ralph 1975 on Swedish).

between languages. Exceptions involve partly idiosyncrasies, and partly semantic properties of the verbs (Jackendoff 1972:43-46, Lødrup 2000). The question of passivizability arises for all verbs, independently of what complements they take. It cannot in general be connected to the nature of complements; this is especially clear in a language with impersonal passives such as Norwegian. In Norwegian, there is no requirement that an object become the subject of a passive verb, as shown by 5. (To be more exact, this is only true of an indefinite object, because of the definiteness restriction in impersonal sentences.)

- (5) De leste en bok. - Det ble lest en bok.  
*they read a book - there was read a book*  
They read a book. - A book was read.

For these reasons, the passivizability of a verb cannot be a criterion for differentiating nominal arguments. On the other hand, corresponding to a subject in the passive is a traditional criterion for an object. The inability of a complement to correspond to a passive subject is then an argument against its being an object – but only if the verb can passivize.

The intuition behind the COMP function could be verbalized this way:<sup>3</sup> COMP differs from the other complement functions by not having their properties; it is a complement that just 'is there', and does not take part in grammatical processes.

To distinguish a nominal COMP from an object, the object properties below will be used (selected and modified from the list in Postal 2010:58-59<sup>4</sup>). The premise is that an object should have these properties, and that their absence is indicative of non-object status. A clausal COMP does not have the properties in question (to the extent that they are applicable to clauses), as shown below. Note that the list of properties below does not include syntactic behavior in unbounded dependency constructions; this is discussed in part 6.

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<sup>3</sup> This way of thinking about (clausal) COMP comes from a discussion with Joan Bresnan in 2006. There is no implication here that this is (or was) her actual view.

<sup>4</sup> Not all of the properties on the list in Postal (2010:58-59) are relevant to Norwegian. Sentences with array 1 objects have no corresponding middles, and do not allow object deletion with *too* or *enough*. Norwegian does not have these constructions. Postal also includes not allowing *tough* movement in his list. Postal (2010:59) writes that not allowing parasitic gaps is a relevant property for array 1 objects, but he puts this property aside "for simplicity".

- Object property a): The argument corresponds to the subject of a passive (of a passivizable verb). An object does, a clausal COMP does not, as shown in 6-7.

(6) Boka            ble lest.  
*book.DEF was read*  
 The book was read.

(7) \*At han var skyldig ble svart.  
*that he was guilty was answered*  
 It was answered that he was guilty. [intended]

It should be noted that the impersonal passives in 8-9 are not relevant with respect to this object property, because no subjectivization has taken place. Both 8 and 9 have an expletive subject in functional structure. The analysis assumed is that the noun phrase in 8 is an object, while the clause in 9 is syntactically ambiguous between an object and an 'extraposed' COMP (Lødrup 1999).

(8) Det ble lest en bok.  
*there was read a book*  
 A book was read.

(9) Det ble sagt at han var skyldig.  
*it was said that he was guilty*  
 It was said that he was guilty.

- Object property b): The argument corresponds to the 'subject' of an adjectival passive (of a passivizable verb), as in 10.

(10) en lest bok  
*a read book*

- Object property c): The argument can be a parasitic gap. An object can, a clausal COMP can not, cf. 11-12.<sup>5</sup> (Even if 12 is possible with *svare* 'answer' as a one-place verb, it is not acceptable when interpreted with a parasitic gap following the verb.)

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<sup>5</sup> For expository purposes, I have put in an *e* and a *t* in example sentences with parasitic gaps. No theoretical claims are implied. Using parasitic gaps as a criterion should ideally be supported by a theory that predicts that they cannot correspond to a COMP. Unfortunately, our understanding of parasitic gaps does not seem to have reached a stage where this is possible.

- (11) Denne boka vil jeg kaste *t* uten å lese *e*.  
*this book.DEF will I throw without to read*  
 This book, I want to throw away without reading.
- (12) \*At man er skyldig kan man akseptere *t* uten å svare *e*.  
*that one is guilty can one accept without to answer*  
 One can accept that one is guilty without answering that. [intended]

The properties below are also included (modified from Postal 2010:58-59), even if they are not criterial, only typical for objects.

- Object property d): The argument corresponds to a PP with the preposition *av* 'of' in a nominalization, as in 13.

- (13) lesing av bøker  
*reading of books*

- Object property e): The argument corresponds to the first part of a synthetic compound with the nominalized verb as a head, as in 14.

- (14) boklesing  
*book.reading*

- Object property f): The argument corresponds to the subject of an adjective that is derived from the verb with the suffix *-bar* '-able', as in 15.

- (15) Teksten er ikke lesbar.  
*text.DEF is not readable*  
 The text is not readable.

The last properties d)-f) are not decisive for object status, because there are clear cases of objects that do not have them. (An example is the object of *se* 'see'.) Even so, they could be seen as typical properties of typical objects.

Some cases of verbs that might be argued to take a nominal COMP will now be discussed. Verbs that do not passivize are left out, for the reasons mentioned above.

### 3. Examples

#### 3.1 The verb *stønne* 'moan'

A good place to start could be one of the groups of verbs considered by Postal (2010:61) to take array 1 objects, namely verbs of manner of speaking (Zwicky 1971). Some of these verbs take a clausal COMP (Lødrup 2004). An example is the verb *stønne* 'moan', as in 16; example 17 shows that the

clausal complement does not correspond to a passive subject. As an alternative to the clausal COMP, the verb can take a nominal argument that could be a nominal COMP, cf. 18. The verb can passivize, as shown by the impersonal passive in 19, but the nominal argument cannot be a passive subject, cf. 20. There is also no adjectival passive, cf. 21.

- (16) Han stønnet at alt var slutt.  
*he moaned that everything was over*  
 He moaned that everything was over.
- (17) \*At alt var slutt ble stønnet.  
*that everything was over was moaned*
- (18) Han stønnet noen uforståelige ord.  
*he moaned some incomprehensible words*  
 He moaned some incomprehensible words
- (19) Det ble stønnet noen uforståelige ord.  
*there were moaned some incomprehensible words*  
 Some incomprehensible words were moaned.
- (20) \*Noen uforståelige ord ble stønnet.  
*some incomprehensible words were moaned*
- (21) \*stønnede ord  
*moaned words*

A parasitic gap is unacceptable, cf. 22.

- (22) \*Bannord kan man like *t* uten å måtte stønne *e*.  
*swearwords can one like without to have.to moan*  
 One may like swearwords without having to moan them. [intended]

It might be objected that the status of 22 follows from general requirements on the referentiality or specificity of parasitic gaps. However, Engdahl (2001) shows that parasitic gaps do not have this kind of requirements in Scandinavian.

The nominalization and the synthetic compound are marginal, cf. 23-24, while the derived adjective is unacceptable, cf. 25.

- (23) ??stønning av bannord  
*moaning of swearwords*
- (24) ??bannordstønning  
*swearword.moaning*
- (25) \*Ordene er ikke stønnbare.  
*words.DEF are not moanable*  
 The words cannot be moaned. [intended]

Manner of speaking verbs sharing properties with *stønne* 'moan' include those in 26.<sup>6</sup>

- (26) *hvese* 'hiss', *hyle* 'howl', *brøle* 'roar', *bjeffe* 'bark', *grynte* 'grunt',  
*kvitre* 'tweet'

Manner of speaking verbs often take a resultative particle, such as *frem* 'forward' or *ut* 'out'. A nominal complement then behaves like an ordinary object. It corresponds to a passive subject, cf. 27, there is an adjectival passive, cf. 28, and a parasitic gap is possible, cf. 29.

- (27) Noen uforståelige ord ble stønnet frem.  
*some incomprehensible words were moaned forward*  
Somebody moaned some incomprehensible words.
- (28) ?fremstønnede ord  
*forward.moaned words*
- (29) Bannord kan man like *t* uten å måtte stønne *e* frem.  
*swearwords can one like without to have.to moan forward*  
One may like swearword without having to moan them.

This behavior is expected in LFG. The resultative particle is an XCOMP whose subject is controlled by an object. It has been established that a resultative can only be controlled by an object, or to be more exact, by an 'underlying' object (see Simpson 1983, Bresnan and Zaenen 1990).

### 3.2 The verb *leke* 'play'

The verb *leke* 'play' is used of children's play (not of for example chess, music or theatre). It can take a clausal COMP, cf. 30 (which does not correspond to a passive subject, cf. 31), or a nominal argument that denotes what the subject pretends to be, cf. 32.

- (30) De lekte at de var lingvister.  
*they played that they were linguists*  
They played that they were linguists.

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<sup>6</sup> There are also manner of speaking verbs that do not behave this way, such as *hviske* 'whisper', cf. (i)-(ii).

- (i) Tre ord ble hvasket i øret mitt.  
*three words were whispered in ear.DEF my*  
Three words were whispered in my ear.
- (ii) *hviskede* ord  
*whispered words*



- (31) \*At de var lingvister, ble lekt.  
*that they were linguists was played*
- (32) De lekte lingvist / lingvister.  
*they played linguist / linguists*  
 They played linguists.

This nominal complement might look like a nominal predicate, i.e. an XCOMP. First, it seems to denote a property. Second, the optional plural in 32 might be seen as agreement. There is, however, a decisive argument against predicate status: These sentences have impersonal passives, cf. 33.

- (33) Det ble lekt lingvist hele dagen.  
*there was played linguist all day*  
 They played linguists all day.

The nominal argument seems to be a nominal COMP. It cannot be a passive subject, and there is no adjectival passive, cf. 34-35.

- (34) \*Lingvist ble lekt.  
*linguist was played*
- (35) \*en lekt lingvist  
*a played linguist*

Parasitic gaps are unacceptable, cf. 36.

- (36) \*Lingvist(er) kan vi like *t* uten å måtte leke *e*.  
*linguist(s) can we like without to have.to play*  
 We may like linguists without having to play linguists. [intended]

The nominalization and the synthetic compound are unacceptable, cf. 37-38. This is also true of the derived adjective, cf. 39.

- (37) \*leking av lingvist  
*playing of linguist*
- (38) \*lingvistleking  
*linguist.playing*
- (39) \*Lingvist er ikke lekbart.  
*linguist is not playable*  
 Linguist cannot be played. [intended]

The verb *leke* 'play' can alternatively take an argument that denotes an established game. This argument behaves like a regular object; for example, it can be a subject in the passive, as in 40.

- (40) Sisten lekes            med stor entusiasme. (www)  
       tag    play.PASS with great enthusiasm  
       Tag is played with great enthusiasm.

The verb *agere* 'act' behaves like *leke* 'play'. The verb *spille* 'act' also behaves this way when what is played is not 'established' in advance, as in *spille idiot* 'play idiot' (differing from *spille Hamlet* 'play Hamlet').

### 3.3 The verb *svare* 'answer'

The verb *svare* 'answer' can take an object that denotes the person who is answered. In addition, or instead, it can take an argument denoting the answer. This argument can be an OBLØ or a clausal COMP, cf. 41 (which does not correspond to a passive subject, cf. 42), or an argument that could be a nominal COMP, cf. 43. The verb can passivize, as shown by the impersonal passive in 44, but the nominal argument cannot be a passive subject, and there is no adjectival passive, cf. 45-46.

- (41) Jeg svarte        (ham) at    de var hjemme.  
       I    answered (him) that they were home  
       I answered (him) that they were at home.
- (42) \*At de    var    hjemme ble svart    (ham).  
       that they were home    was answered (him)  
       It was answered him that they were home. [intended]
- (43) De    svarte        noe tull.  
       they answered some nonsense  
       They answered some nonsense.
- (44) Det ble svart        noe tull.  
       there was answered some nonsense  
       Some nonsense was answered.
- (45) \*Noe tull            ble svart.  
       some nonsense was answered  
       Some nonsense was answered. [intended]
- (46) \*noe svart        tull  
       some answered nonsense

Parasitic gaps are unacceptable, cf. 47.

- (47) \*Slikt tull            kan man tenke på t uten    å måtte    svare e.  
       such nonsense can one think of without to have.to answer  
       One may think of such nonsense without having to answer that.  
       [intended]

The nominalization and the synthetic compound are unacceptable, cf. 48-49. This is also true of the derived adjective, cf. 50.

- (48) \*svaring av noe tull  
*answering of some nonsense*
- (49) \*tullesvaring  
*nonsense.answering*
- (50) \*Det tullet er ikke svarbart.  
*that nonsense is not answerable*  
One cannot answer that nonsense. [intended]

We see, then, that some verbs that take a clausal COMP can be argued to take a nominal COMP as an alternative. Other possible examples include the verbs *håpe* 'hope', *fantasere* 'fantasize', and *spørre* 'ask' (for some speakers; see note 6 below). It must be admitted, however, that it is not easy to find many clear cases of verbs that take either a clausal or a nominal COMP.

#### 4. Mismatches between clausal and nominal COMP

##### 4.1 Verbs with concealed questions

Some verbs seem to take a nominal, but not a clausal COMP.

Concealed questions are nominal complements that are interpreted as questions when they are headed by a verb that takes an embedded question (Grimshaw 1979). Typical examples are 51-52.

- (51) Ola ville ikke fortelle tidspunktet.  
*Ola would not tell time.DEF*  
Ola would not tell the time.
- (52) Jeg husker ikke hovedstaden i Sverige.  
*I remember not capital.DEF in Sweden*  
I do not remember the capital of Sweden.

Example 52 is ambiguous. If the complement is not a concealed question, it means that I cannot remember the city of Stockholm. If it is a concealed question, it means that I cannot remember which city is the capital of Sweden. In the latter case, it is possible to use the neuter pronoun *det* 'it, that' to refer to the definite masculine *hovedstaden* 'capital.DEF'. (This pronoun is used to refer to propositions and certain non-individuated nominals; see Lødrup 2012.)

The concealed questions in 51-52 behave like nominal COMPs. They show the expected properties (even if an impersonal passive is not possible because concealed questions are definite nominals): The concealed question cannot be a passive subject, and there is no adjectival passive, cf. 53-54.

Parasitic gaps are unacceptable, cf. 55, and so are the nominalization and the synthetic compound, and the derived adjective, cf. 56-58.

- (53) \*Tidspunktet ble fortalt.  
*time.DEF was told*
- (54) \*det fortalte tidspunktet  
*the told time.DEF*
- (55) \*Tidspunktet skal jeg bestemme *t* uten å fortelle *e*.  
*time.DEF shall I decide without to tell*  
I will decide the time without telling it. [intended]
- (56) \*fortelling av tidspunktet  
*telling of time.DEF*
- (57) \*tidspunktfortelling  
*time.telling*
- (58) \*Tidspunktet er ikke fortellbart.  
*time.DEF is not tellable*  
One cannot tell the time. [intended]

The verbs in 51-52, *fortelle* 'tell' and *huske* 'remember', do not take other COMPs than the concealed questions. Other nominal complements behave like objects, and this is also the case with complement clauses.

#### 4.2 *prate* 'talk'

The verbs *prate* 'talk' and *snakke* 'talk' can take an OBLØ that denotes what is being talked about, as in 59. As an alternative to this OBLØ, they can take an indefinite bare noun that might be a nominal COMP, cf. 60. They cannot take a clausal COMP, however.

- (59) *prate om dop*  
*talk about drugs*
- (60) *prate dop*  
*talk drugs*

Again, the indefinite argument shows the expected properties. The verb can passivize, as shown by the impersonal passive in 61, but the nominal argument cannot be a passive subject, cf. 62, and there is no adjectival passive, cf. 63. Parasitic gaps are unacceptable, cf. 64. So are the nominalization, and the synthetic compound, and the derived adjective, cf. 65-67.

- (61) Det ble pratet dop.  
*there was talked drugs*  
 People talked about drugs.
- (62) \*Dop ble pratet.  
*drugs were talked*  
 People talked about drugs. [intended]
- (63) \*pratet dop  
*talked drugs*
- (64) \*Dop kan man like *t* uten å måtte prate *e*.  
*drugs can one like without to have.to talk*  
 One may like drugs without having to talk about them. [intended]
- (65) \*prating av dop  
*talking of drugs*
- (66) \*dopprating  
*drugs.talking*
- (67) \*Dop er ikke pratbart.  
*drugs are not talkable*  
 One cannot talk about drugs. [intended]

Another group of verbs that seem to take a nominal, but not a clausal COMP is verbs for emitting a substance from the body, such as *hoste* 'cough' or *spy* 'vomit'.

#### 4.3 Clausal COMP, but no nominal COMP

There are also verbs that take a clausal COMP that do not take a nominal COMP. Some of these verbs do not take a (thematic) nominal complement at all, for example *henstille* 'request', *regne* 'assume', *akte* 'intend'.

Other verbs that take a clausal COMP take a nominal argument with the properties of a regular object, such as *anslå* 'estimate', or *erklære* 'declare'.<sup>7</sup> The verb *anslå* 'estimate' takes a clausal COMP, cf. 68 (which does not correspond to a passive subject, cf. 69). As an alternative to the clausal

<sup>7</sup> Another example is *spørre* 'ask', which takes a clausal COMP. Its nominal argument has the properties of regular object — for many language users. Examples such as (i)-(ii), which show verbal and adjectival passives, are easy to find on the www. However, I and other native speakers I have consulted do not accept them; we seem to have a nominal COMP with this verb.

- (i) Alle spørsmål ble spurt på en veldig høflig og grei måte. (www)  
*all questions were asked in a very polite and nice way*  
 All questions were asked in a very polite and nice way.
- (ii) ofte spurte spørsmål (www)  
*frequently asked questions*

COMP, the verb takes a nominal argument, which seems to be an object, cf. 70. This argument can be a passive subject, cf. 71, and there is an adjectival passive, cf. 72. A parasitic gap seems to be possible, cf. 73. The nominal argument must be an object, then, even if it does not satisfy the object criteria d), e) and f).

(68) Jeg anslår at han har ti katter.

*I estimate that he has ten cats*

I estimate that he has ten cats.

(69) \*At han har ti katter ble anslått.

*that he has ten cats was estimated*

It was estimated that he has ten cats. [intended]

(70) Han anslo antallet katter.

*he estimated number.DEF cats*

He estimated the number of cats.

(71) Antallet katter ble anslått.

*number cats was estimated*

The number of cats was estimated.

(72) det anslåtte antallet

*the estimated number.DEF*

(73) (?)Utgiftene måtte han betale *t* uten å kunne anslå *e* på forhånd.

*expenses.DEF must he pay without to be.able.to estimate in advance*

He had to pay the expenses without being able to estimate them in advance.

The picture given of the selection of complements is complicated. This complexity seems to be difficult to avoid, however. A related area in which the complexity of syntactic selection is generally acknowledged concerns the selection of the formal categories of XCOMPs. It has been pointed out several times that it depends upon the individual verb, as illustrated in 74-75 (from Pollard and Sag 1987:122-23).

(74) Kim grew poetical / \*a success.

(75) Kim ended up poetical / a success.

## 5. Properties of nominal COMPs

Some possible properties of nominal COMPs will be considered, based on the background of the cases discussed above.

## 5.1 Referentiality

The cases of nominal COMPs discussed were low in referentiality. With the verbs discussed, the nominal COMP could hardly be definite. (The concealed questions are different, however.) With some of the verbs discussed, the referent of the nominal COMP does not exist in advance of the verbal action. For example, what is moaned or answered only exists through the action denoted by the verb. In these cases, the nominal COMP is what has been called an object of result (see e.g. Jespersen 1963:159-60). It is not the case, however, that objects of result are always COMPs; they often behave as regular objects. (For example, *grave en grøft* 'dig a ditch' has a regular passive.)

Some of the nominal COMPs are bare nominals, i.e. indefinite nominals without determiners. Bare nominals are reluctant to be subjects in Norwegian, and this might explain that they do not correspond to passive subjects. There is no absolute restriction against bare nominals as (passive) subjects, however. (Cf. the following sentence from the *www*: *Plass kan bestilles på forhånd* 'seat can order-PASS in advance'.) Furthermore, there are also nominal COMPs with quantifiers, as in examples 18 and 43 above.

## 5.2 Thematic roles

Most nominal COMPs discussed are abstract participants in the verbal event, and have a neutral, theme- or patient-like role. This role is realized as an object with many verbs that are close to COMP-taking verbs in meaning. For example, *hviske* 'whisper' takes an ordinary object, even if *stønne* 'moan' and other manner of speaking verbs take a COMP (see footnote 5).

Traditional Lexical Mapping Theory (LMT, Bresnan and Kanerva 1989) cannot account for nominal COMPs. This is not necessarily an argument against the idea, however, because traditional LMT cannot account for the traditional clausal COMP or XCOMP either. Furthermore, traditional LMT can be extended to include COMP and XCOMP; see Falk (2001:136-41).

A possible alternative to the idea of a nominal COMP is that the arguments in question could be OBJ $\theta$ s.<sup>8</sup> It is sometimes assumed that an object that does not show the core object properties is an OBJ $\theta$ , even if it does not co-occur with an OBJ (Lødrup 1995, Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011). In Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011:ch 8), OBJ $\theta$  is the unmarked, non-topical object without the properties of core grammatical functions. This

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<sup>8</sup> Postal (2010:106-11) considers the second object in ditransitive sentences to be an 'array 1 object', with English-specific arguments.

might seem to fit the nominal argument that is seen here as a nominal COMP. However, such an analysis would not capture the relation between a nominal COMP and a clausal COMP.

### 5.3 Is nominal COMP an OBLØ?

There is an affinity between nominal COMPs and OBLØs (Lødrup 2004). With some verbs, a nominal COMP alternates with an OBLØ. In those cases, however, the OBLØ does not have restrictions on definiteness or referentiality corresponding to those of a nominal COMP. An example is 76.

- (76) Vi pratet \*(om) dopen.  
*we talked about drugs.DEF*  
We talked about the drugs.

It does not seem motivated to identify a nominal COMP with an OBLØ. One argument is that there are almost no clear cases of a nominal OBLØ in Norwegian. The cases that exist are very different from nominal COMPs. Example 77 has a temporal OBLØ, while 78 has a locative OBLØ. They allow the insertion of a preposition, while this is not necessarily the case with nominal COMPs.

- (77) Konserten varer (i) tre timer.  
*concert.DEF lasts (for) three hours*  
The concert lasts for three hours.  
(78) Ola har bodd (på) mange steder.  
*Ola has lived (in) many places*  
Ola has lived in many places.

Another argument is that a nominal COMP can be pronominalized, and it is asked for with an interrogative pronoun, cf. 79-80. This is not the case with OBLØ.

- (79) Det svarte jeg.  
*that answered I*  
I answered that.  
(80) Hva svarte du?  
*what answered you*  
What did you answer?

Finally, coordination could give an argument against identifying a nominal COMP with an OBLØ. A clausal COMP can be coordinated with a nominal



COMP, as in 81. Because the ability to coordinate cannot be due to phrasal structure here, it must be due to syntactic function.

- (81) Han svarte noe tull og at han måtte rekke trikken.  
*he answered some nonsense and that he must catch tram.DEF*  
He answered some nonsense and that he had to catch the tram.

## 6. Unbounded dependencies

An important property of COMP that was decisive for the analysis in Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) is that a clausal COMP cannot take part in an unbounded dependency. This generalization has been known as 'Higgins's Generalization' (Higgins 1973). Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) paraphrased it in the following way:

"A clausal argument can enter into an unbounded dependency only if it is in an NP position, i.e. a position in which an NP is possible as an alternative to the clausal argument."

The predicted situation is illustrated in 82-85.

- (82) That the earth is round, everybody believed.  
(83) Everybody believed it.  
(84) \*That it would rain, everybody hoped.  
(85) \*Everybody hoped it.

Higgins's Generalization has been discussed within different frameworks (Stowell 1981, Kaplan and Bresnan 1982, Kaplan and Zaenen 1989, Webelhuth 1992, Bošković 1995, Berman 1996). Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) proposed that COMP is an exception to the general option for a syntactic function to enter into an unbounded dependency (or, more technically, that COMP cannot be the 'bottom' of a functional uncertainty equation  $\uparrow DF = \uparrow GF^* GF$ ).

The question is then if a nominal COMP can take part in an unbounded dependency. The simple answer is that it can, like all other nominal arguments in Norwegian (even if some cases might sound a bit strange — the reason is probably that a nominal COMP is not a good topic). Examples are 86-87.

- (86) Lingvister tror jeg vi leker hver dag.  
*linguists think I we play every day*  
I think that we play linguists every day.

- (87) Tull tror jeg ikke det er noen som svarer.  
*nonsense think I not there is anybody that answers*  
 I don't think that there is anybody who answers nonsense.

This means that one important point of Dalrymple and Lødrup (2000) is no longer valid. Higgins's Generalization can no longer be stated as referring to syntactic function only if COMPs can be clausal or nominal. This might be considered an important argument against the idea of a nominal COMP. This is not the case, however. Postal (2004:279-282) argues that Higgins' Generalization is not empirically correct for English. It cannot be correct for Norwegian either. Part 3 discussed verbs that take either a clausal or a nominal COMP. These clausal COMPs cannot enter into an unbounded dependency, as shown by 88-89.

- (88) \*At alt var slutt stønnet han.  
*that everything was over moaned he*  
 That everything was over, he moaned. [intended]
- (89) \*At de var hjemme svarte jeg ham.  
*that they were home answered I him*  
 That they were at home, I answered him. [intended]

These clauses alternate with noun phrases, however. Given Higgins' Generalization, it is impossible to see any reason that these clauses are exceptions to the general option of taking part in an unbounded dependency. (A parallel case is verbs such as *anslå* 'estimate' in section 4.4, which take clausal COMPs that do not topicalize, even if they alternate with a nominal object.)

Given these premises, the generalization that a clausal COMP cannot take part in an unbounded dependency must be stated referring both to form and function. This generalization would seem to be unnecessarily complicated. It is difficult to see an alternative, however, and it is striking that there is another syntactic function in LFG whose ability to take part in an unbounded dependency depends upon its form (at least in some languages): An XCOMP can take part in an unbounded dependency only when it is non-verbal, as shown in 90-91.

- (90) Redd vil jeg ikke si han virker.  
*afraid will I not say he seems*  
 I would not say that he seems afraid.
- (91) \*Å være redd vil jeg ikke si han forekommer meg.  
*to be afraid will I not say he seems to.me*  
 I would not say that he seems to me to be afraid.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has presented some evidence from one language that COMP can be nominal. However, it must be admitted that there are also problems involved. First, even if possible examples of a nominal COMP can be found, it is not easy to find many clear cases of verbs that take either a clausal or a nominal COMP. Second, the differentiation of the various complement functions raises problems in general, as is well known from discussion inside and outside LFG.

It is possible that Norwegian does not give the best point of departure for investigating the grammar of COMP. Many Norwegian verbs that take clausal complements take clausal complements that show object properties (Lødrup 2004). The existence of clausal complements without object properties was not acknowledged at all by traditional Norwegian grammar.

More work on different languages is needed before it can be established if COMP should be a part of the inventory of syntactic functions in grammatical theory.

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