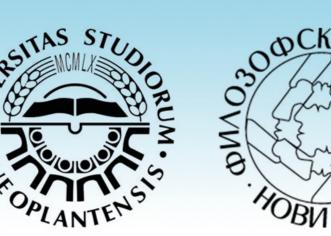# On the internal structure of Serbian *-nje* nominalizations

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1. Introduction

• Aim:
• to apply the tests from the licensing of event participants/modifiers and inspect the internal (syntactic) structure of *–nje* nominalizations in Serbian (Kratzer 1994; Alexiadou et al. 2014; Bruening 2014, *inter alia*)
• The predictions of previous accounts of *–nje* nominalizations are confronted with the data from these tests
• Background:
• Grimshaw (1990) divides eventive nominals into Complex Event Nominals (CENs), which involve richer verbal structure, and Result Nominals (RNs).
• Simonović and Arsenijević (2014):
• nominals derived from imperfectives → phonologically faithful and semantically compositional → full verbal structure (~CENs)
• nominals derived from perfectives → phonologically unfaithful and opaque → flat(tened) structure (~RNs)
• Bašić (2010):
• CENs combine with expressions measuring out the runtime of the event → verbal structure
• RNs can't combine with such expressions → only ResP
• Observations:
• Serbian CENs license instrumental NPs and *by*-phrases suggesting the presence of full VoiceP structure
• RNs can license instrumental NPs and *by*-phrase but **only when these items are not fully referential**
+ There are phonologically unfaithful & opaque CENs – these are derived from stative verbs
+ RNs can have degrees of opaqueness: some denote events; some don't
• Analysis:
• Event denoting RNs do project verbal structure involving compositional semantics
• Non-event denoting RNs do not project verbal structure
• Phonological unfaithfulness of RNs is due to the lack of event instantiation (the event variable being existentially bound by the stativizing PassP – cf. Alexiadou et al. 2014) undoing the phasal status of vP.
• Phonologically unfaitfhul and non compositional CENs involve the same kind of *v*.

2. Nominalized participles

Marvin (2002):
• *-nje/-tje* nominalizations in Slovene built by adding a nominalizing suffix *-je* to two kinds of verbal passive participles (*-n* or *-t*)
(1) a. mešanje ('mixing') = mešan ('mixed') + je
   b. odprtje ('opening')= odprt ('opened') + je (Marvin 2002)
• Assuming that *-nje* and *-tje* are two different atomic suffixes misses the generalization that *-nje* correlates with *-n* participles and *-tje* correlates with *-t* participles
• The structure of *-nje* nominals: [nP ….. [PassP …. [vP …. [√P …]]]]
• Serbian exhibits the same pattern
(2) a. mešanje ('mixing') = mešan ('mixed') + je
   b. napuknuće /napuknutje/ ('crack') = napuknut ('cracked') + je

3. Syntactic evidence

• Bašić (2010):
• Following Grimshaw (1990), divides Serbian eventive nominalizations, regardless of the suffix, into CENs and RNs (3)
• CENs involve complete verbal structure:
   [DP …. [NumP … [PartP … [AspP …. [vP …. [√P]]]]]]
• RNs lack AspP and vP: [DP … [NumP … [PartP … [ResP [√P]]]]]
• Evidence: CENs license measure phrases measuring out the event runtime but RNs do not (3)
(3) a. Potpisivanje dokumenata   je   dugo trajalo
      signing   documents.gen AUX long lasted
      'Signing the documents lasted long'
   b. *Potpis   je   dugo trajao
      signature AUX long lasted
      'The signature lasted long'   (Bašić 2010 p. 42)

4. Phonological evidence

Simonović and Arsenijević (2014):
• Focus on *-nje/će* nominals only;
 • *-nje* nominals derived from imperfectives (~CENs) have full verbal structure
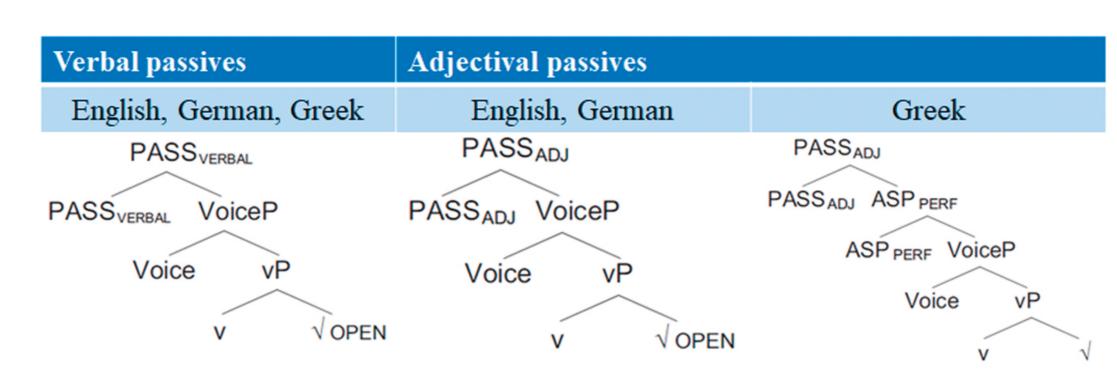 • *-nje* nominals (~RNs) involve flat(tened) structure
Evidence:
 • nominals built from imperfective stems, retain the prosodic shape of the stem & compositional semantics (4a)
 • nominals built from perfective stems, prosodically unfaithful & semantically opaque (4b)
(4) a. /priznávati/ ('admit.impf') – /priznãnje/ ('admitting')
   b. /priznati/ ('admit.pf')- /priznãnje/ ('admittance') (Simonović and Arsenijević 2014)
• The presence of verbal structure (phasal head) induces semantic compositionality and prosodic faithfulness

5. The licensing of event participants/modifiers

• If *-nje* nominals include pass. participles, syntactic tests should confirm it. **Alexiadou et al. (2014):** the distribution of *by*-phrases in English, German and Greek:

	verbal passives	adjectival passives
English, German	✔	✘
Greek	✔	✔

• BUT: *by*-phrases with non-referential DPs are fine in English and German
• Alexiadou et al's (2014) analysis of English, German and Greek passive participles:

Verbal passives	Adjectival passives	
English, German, Greek	English, German	Greek

• **English and German:**
 • adjectival passives denote event kinds and consequently allow (non-referential) kind modification only (Gehrke 2013); the event variable introduced by v^0 is existentially bound by the stativizing Pass_{adj} head
 • the *by*-phrase pseudo-incorporates into the participle
 • Verbal passives refer to events, the event variable introduced by v^0 is assigned reference by T^0.
• **Greek:**
 • Adjectival passives instantiate the event due to the presence of an additional aspectual layer on top of VoiceP.

6. Applying the licensing tests to *-nje* nominals

• In Serbian, CENs allow *by*-phrases across the board, while RNs allow only non-referential ones (5)
(5) a. Prošao   je **saslušavanje** od   strane nadležnih lica / inspektora Ilića   **CEN**
      (he) passed was interrogating from side authorized.gen persons.gen inspector Ilića
      'He passed the authorized persons' / inspector Ilic's interrogation'
   b. Prošao   je **saslušanje**   od strane nadležnih   lica   /??inspektora Ilića **RN**
      (he) passed was interrogation from side authorized.gen persons.gen inspector.gen Ilić.gen
      'He passed the authorized persons' / inspector Ilic's interrogation'
Proposal:
 • Both CENs and RNs involve VoiceP structure as both can in principle license *by*-phrases
 • NOTE: (5b) with referential modificaiton improves greatly if inspector Ilić's interrogation is construed as a special kind of interrogation
 • Unlike CENs, RNs do not refer to an event, they denote an event kind → they allow only non-referential, kind modification; (5b)
 • Structurally, CENs involve the extra aspectual layer, which instantiates the event (following Alexiadou et al. 2014)
• In many cases, the additional aspectual layer of CENs is morphologically visible (6)
(6) a. sasluša-**va**-nje   b. sasluša - nje
    interrogate-asp-nje   interrogate - nje
    'interrogation'   'interogation'

7. Semantic compositionality

• Simonović and Arsenijević (2014):
 • nominals from imperfectives (~CENs) are compositional; nominals from perfectives (~ RNs) are opaque
• There are varying degrees of opaqueness with RNs
 • As shown in (5), some RNs have event implications and show evidence of argument structure, others do not denote events at all and show no sign of argument structure (7)
(7) uzemlje**nje** strujnog kola (*od strane električara)
   ground   electric circuit   from side electrician.gen
   Literally: 'the ground of the electric circuit by the electrician'

Not all RNs should be analyzed as semantically non-compositional, but they easily obtain more opaque meanings

8. What about phonological faithfulness?

• Simonović and Arsenijević (2014): the phonological faithfulness of CENs, as opposed to RNs, is due to the presence of verbal structure with CENs
• The data from *by*-phrase licensing suggests that verbal structure is present with RNs as well
• Q: Why are RNs phonologically unfaithful?
• A: The lack of event instantiation due to the absence of AspP with RNs undoes the phasal status of vP disabling the faithfulness requirement
• Evidence:
 • Non-eventive (stative) CENs also have phonologically unfaithful and semantically non-compositional variants (8).
Other examples include (/bolóvati/ 'suffer from an illness' → /bolóvanje/ 'sick leave' v. /bolõvanje/ 'suffering from an illness'; /ĩmati/ 'have' → /imãnje/ 'property' v. /ĩmanje/ 'having')
 • Phonologically unfaithful CENs also exhibit signs of the lack of richer argument structure → inability to license genitive case in the complement position (8b)

(8) a. Njegovo pŏštovanje oca/*prema ocu → faithful   (base: pŏštovati 'respect')
      his   respecting father.gen/*towards father
      'Him respecting (his) father'
   b. Njegovo poštovanje *oca / prema ocu →unfaithful (base: pŏştovati 'respect')
      his respect father.gen / towards father.dat
      'His respect for his father'

The presence of a „defective" *v* that does not refer to an event opens up the possibility of non-compositional semantics and prosodic unfaithfulness with all *-nje* nominals

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