

## Between verbs and nouns: aspect and countability in Finnish and Estonian action nominalizations

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We will examine Finnish and Estonian action nominalizations, concentrating on their event-readings (but excluding result-readings, abstract readings etc.), with the aim of testing the hypothesis that the countability of nominalizations correlates with the aspectual class of their base verbs.

Both Finnish and Estonian, two closely related Balto-Finnic languages, have a productive word formation system, where two or more action nominalizations with different semantic and grammatical properties can often be derived from the same verb. In addition to a regular nominalization (derived with the affix FI *-minen* / EST *-mine*, which can be attached to practically any verb), a verb may give rise to one or more less regular derivations, produced with different affixes whose range of application depends on the semantic and morphophonological features of the verb. The regular *mine(n)*-nominalizations are described as denoting an unbounded event and as being incompatible with pluralization, whereas the less regular nominalizations tend to denote an individual bounded event and to be countable (Kasik 1996:85-102; ISK 235, 237). The two types of nominalizations also tend to differ with respect to other properties like object genitive vs. subject genitive or compatibility with the oblique complements of the base verb

However, the correspondence between these semantic properties and the nominalization types is not complete, and the meaning of the nominalizations appears in various ways to be affected by the aspectual class of the base verb: e.g. *mine(n)*-nominalizations of punctual verbs may have a bounded reading in addition to the unbounded reading, especially if there exist no other nominalizations of this verb (Kasik 1996:86), and conversely, irregular nominalizations of activity verbs may be uncountable or polysemous between the two meanings. Moreover, the irregular nominalizing constructions show different degrees of compatibility with aspectual classes, e.g. punctual verbs are more likely than state verbs to have irregular nominalizations besides the regular *mine(n)*-nominalization. Also, countable and uncountable nominalizations of verbs of different aspectual classes may give rise to different semantic effects, e.g. the *mine(n)*-nominalization of a punctual verb may invite an iterative reading. Further effects of the aspectual class of the base verb may be observed in the coerced uses of the nominalizations (in the sense of Michaelis 2004, 2005).

We will take a closer look at the combinations of different types of nominalizing constructions with different aspectual classes and pay attention to the resulting semantic and grammatical effects. To test the countability of nominalizations we examine their behavior with respect to various more general or more language-specific constructions that are sensitive to countability: pluralization, partitive subject constructions, nominative vs. partitive predicative complement in Finnish copulative constructions (cf. Huumo 2009).

## References:

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