

# On the morphological make-up of nominalizations in Serbian

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This paper discusses implications that the morphological make-up of nominalizations in Serbian (and Slavic more generally) has for structural analyses of nominalizations. It has been argued that various properties distinguishing Grimshaw's (1990) Complex Event (CENs) and Result nominals (RNs) (e.g. licensing of argument structure and adverbial modifiers, event interpretation, etc.) can be captured by assuming that CENs contain verbal structure, whereas RNs are formed by attaching the nominal suffix directly to the root (e.g. Alexiadou 2001). The fact that verbal morphology can often be found inside nominals seems to support this kind of approach, but gives rise to the following puzzle: if the presence of verbal morphology is taken as evidence for presence of verbal projections, then considering that CENs and RNs often have the same morphological shape, we are led to conclude that they contain the same functional structure, although the differences in their syntactic behaviour suggest the opposite. One of the goals of this paper is to propose a possible way of resolving this puzzle.

I argue that the nominal suffix *-je* in Serbian cannot be assumed to attach directly to the root even in RNs, suggesting that some functional structure must be present inside RNs. The evidence relates to the presence of participial morphology and so called *theme vowels*. That nominalizations contain the participial morpheme is strongly suggested by allomorphy patterns, as shown in (1) and (2). Relying on various diagnostics for distinguishing CENs and RNs, it can be shown that participial morphology occurs inside RNs, as in (3), showing thus that the nominalizer does not attach directly to the root in RN, and that RNs contain at least the projection hosting participial morphology. The need to accommodate theme vowels poses further challenges. I follow Jabłońska (2007) in assuming that theme vowels (TVs, as in (1) and (2)) in Slavic are exponents of  $\nu$ . In this respect it is interesting to note that nominals which lack TVs (e.g. *potpis* 'signature') in general pattern like RNs. If TVs are indeed verbalizers, this raises problems for current structural analyses of nominalizations, at least those endorsing the assumptions of Distributed Morphology (DM). In DM, whenever there is a morpheme, there must be a terminal node present into which this morpheme is inserted. If TVs are instantiations of  $\nu$ , and the same piece of morphology occurs inside RNs as well (see (3)), then  $\nu$  is present in the structure of RNs after all. Harley (to appear) reaches the same conclusion by exploring nominalization patterns in English. Since verbalizers such as *-ify* can occur inside RNs in English, Harley (to appear) concludes that both types of nominals must contain eventive  $\nu$  and the differences in their syntactic properties cannot be made to fall out from syntactic structure.

I argue however that we can maintain distinct structural representations for CENs and RNs, despite the shared morphology. I will adopt the verbal decomposition into Init(iation)P, Proc(ess)P, and Res(ult)P, along the lines of Ramchand (2008). I will also assume that lexical items need not be inserted under terminal nodes, and can lexicalize a number of syntactic heads (Ramchand 2008, Caha 2007). The spell-out of syntactic structure is regulated by the Superset Principle which allows a lexical item to be inserted if it contains all or a superset of features present in the structure (Starke 2006, Caha 2007). Thus, if a lexical entry of a particular verbalizer is specified for features [Init, Proc, Res], it will be able to lexicalize all three projections or a subset of these. We might then view different types of nominalizations as corresponding to different chunks of syntactic structure in (4). The structure of CEN would correspond to (4). The presence of Init allows for an 'Initiator', capable of surfacing in the form of a *by*-phrase. RNs have the structure in (5). The absence of the dynamic

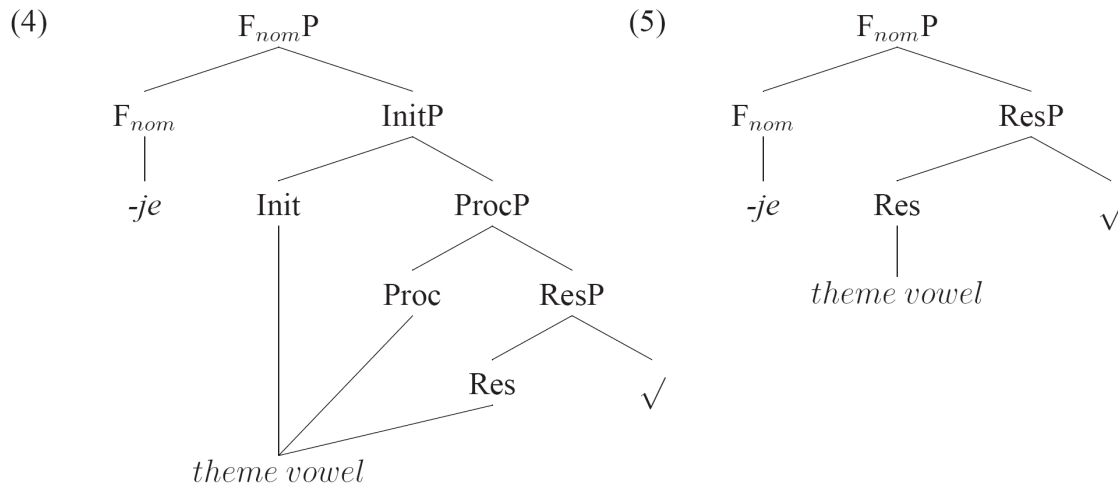
component Proc, accounts for the lack of eventivity. Finally, the structure with only Proc and Res corresponds to so called Simple Event (SE) nominals. The availability of event reading for SE nominals is due to the presence of Proc, while their inability to license *by*-phrases is attributable to the lack of InitP. The analysis thus predicts there to be at least three different types of nominals, correlating with three different structural representations. Depending on how fine-grained a functional sequence we assume, CENs could potentially correspond to several structural types. I also briefly discuss the implications that the proposed analysis has for licensing of argument structure. Importantly, however, the analysis shows that we are not forced to give up an explanation in terms of distinct structural representations for CENs and RNs, despite their morphological identity.

## Examples

(1) a. obeća-ti → obeća-n (2) a. napuknu-ti → napuknu-t  
 promise-INF promise-PART crack-INF crack-PART

b. obeć-a-n-je b. napuk-nu-t-je  
 promise-TV-PART-NOM crack-TV-PART-NOM  
 ‘a promise’ ‘a crack’

(3) Česta napuknuća cevi izazivaju velike probleme. (RN)  
 frequent cracks pipes cause big problems  
 ‘Frequent cracks in the pipes cause big problems’



## References

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