What's up with 'verbal' morphology in BCS agent nominals?

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Introduction

https://www.masabeslin.com/assets/pdf/beslin_fdsl_nominals.pdf

Introduction

Main claim:

'Verbal' morphology in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian agentive nouns is not verbal.

Introduction

- I'll be looking at a sample of BCS agentive nominals, which contain what is traditionally analyzed as verbal morphology

(1) a. pozn-av-á-telj
know-AV-TH-N
'expert'

b. prouč-av-á-telj
study-AV-TH-N
'researcher'

c. reš-av-á-telj
solve-AV-TH-N
'solver'

(2) a. predsed-av-a-áč
chair-AV-TH-N
'chair'

b. pred-av-a-áč
lecture-AV-TH-N
'lecturer'

c. ugnjet-av-a-áč
oppress-AV-TH-N
'oppressor'

(3) a. prod-av-a-ác
sell-AV-TH-N
'seller'

b. dar-o-d-av-a-ác
gift-L-give-AV-TH-N
'giftgiver'

c. posl-o-d-av-a-ác
job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'employer'

- A noun like *proučavatelj* is often segmented as *pro-uč-a-va-telj* 'LP-learn-V-SI-N', because of the similar verbs *proučavati* 'be researching', *proučiti*, and *učiti*

⋆ We'll see reasons to doubt that these nouns have verbal structure

Introduction

(4) a. pozn-av-á-telj
know-AV-TH-N
'expert'

b. prouč-av-á-telj
study-AV-TH-N
'researcher'

c. reš-av-á-telj
solve-AV-TH-N
'solver'

(5) a. predsed-av-a-áč
chair-AV-TH-N
'chair'

b. pred-av-a-áč
lecture-AV-TH-N
'lecturer'

c. ugnjet-av-a-áč
oppress-AV-TH-N
'oppressor'

(6) a. prod-av-a-ác
sell-AV-TH-N
'seller'

b. dar-o-d-av-a-ác
gift-L-give-AV-TH-N
'giftgiver'

c. posl-o-d-av-a-ác
job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'employer'

- Notice: (I) different *n*-allomorphs, and (II) the accent of *-áč* and *-ác* surfaces
- I'll show BCS root-conditioned allomorphy and accent placement are limited to the **first spellout domain, including only one categorizing morpheme**

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- Notice: (I) different *n*-allomorphs, and (II) the accent of *-áč* and *-ác* surfaces
- I'll show BCS root-conditioned allomorphy and accent placement are limited to the **first spellout domain, including only one categorizing morpheme**

⋆ Then, the 'verbal' morphology in these agent nominals may not be verbal after all

Roadmap

§1 Some background on Distributed Morphology (DM), cyclic domains, the role of categorizers, and allomorphy

§2 Data from root-derived* vs. deadjectival agent nominals (Bešlin forthcoming)

- **(I) Root-conditioned allomorphy** and **(II) accent placement** determined in the first spellout domain, centered around the first-merged categorizer

→ Second-merged categorizer can't 'see' the root and can't realize its accent

→ This follows from a DM conception of cyclic domains

§3 Back to 'deverbal' agentive nouns...

- A general note about verbal structure in agentive nouns
- They pattern in (I) and (II) with root-derived nouns (one categorizer)
- An alternative analysis for 'verbal' morphemes (≠ verbal extended projection)

→ The morpheme *av* as a root (also Quaglia et al. 2022);

→ Theme vowels as morphemes that attach to (certain) roots more generally;

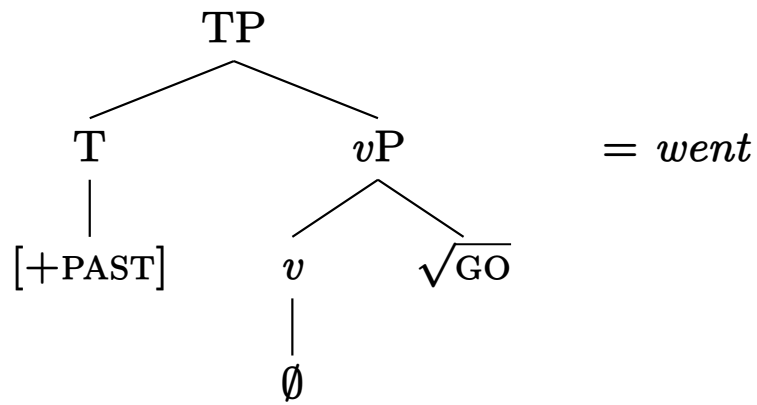
→ 'Lexical prefixes' observed in contexts in which a deverbal analysis is dubious

§4 Conclusions

Theoretical background & assumptions

- DM is a piece-based, realizational approach to morphology
- Words are built up syntactically out of (discrete) abstract morphemes which receive form (and meaning) at the interfaces
- Morphemes: roots and functional heads (including categorizers)
- The form (and meaning) of a morpheme may be contextually determined, (7)
- Allomorphs are in competition with each other ('Elsewhere principle')

(7)



= *went*

Theoretical background & assumptions

- Transfer to the interfaces happens cyclically, at certain points of the derivation
- Categorizers (v, n, a) are the relevant cyclic heads

(8) Schematization of cyclic domains (Embick 2014):

a. Cyclic y merged in [y [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ ...]]]

b. Cyclic domain centered on x = [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$]]] sent to interfaces

→ Intended outcome: The root is accessible to the first cyclic head x and any intervening non-cyclic heads (X, Y) (think *go–went*)

→ $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ and y cannot interact for the purposes of allomorph selection because they are in separate spell-out domains

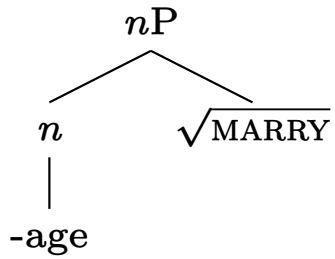
Theoretical background & assumptions

- Cyclic spellout is thought to explain many patterns of (im)possible morphophonological interactions, including (im)possible allomorphy
- The root-conditioned *n*-allomorphy in (9) compared to (10) is thought to arise due to a structural difference: root-derived versus deverbal nouns

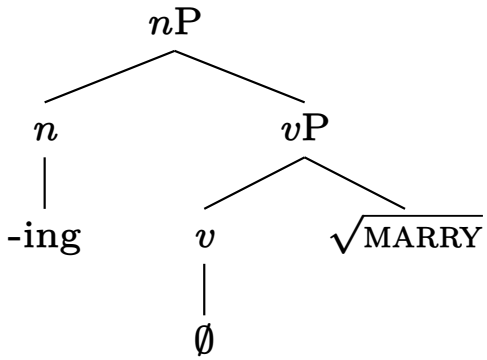
(9) marri-**age**, grow-**th**, remov-**al**, free-**dom**, divers-**ity**, strateg-**y**, ...

(10) marry-**ing**, grow-**ing**, remov-**ing**, free-**ing**, divers-ify-**ing**, strateg-iz-**ing**,...

(11) a.



b.



→ Categorization has the same effect on allomorphy and accent placement in BCS

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals

- I'll demonstrate that BCS *a* is a cyclic head–it imposes a locality boundary for morphophonological processes (Bešlin forthcoming):

→ Root-conditioned allomorphy

→ Accent placement

- I'll contrast the behavior of deadjectival and root-derived (agentive) nouns
- In §3, we'll see that 'deverbal' agentive nouns pattern with root-derived nouns

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

- Looking again at agent nominals, the broadly agentive *n*-suffixes in BCS are at least *-ar, -aš, -er, -(a)c, -ač, -ic(a), -ik,* and *-džij(a)*
- Root-derived nouns (**ROOT-*n***) may take any of the *n*-allomorphs on offer; the choice of *n* is determined by the root ('lexically-conditioned allomorphy')

(12)

a.	kormil-***ar***	'helmsman'	e.	voz-***ač***	'driver'
b.	batin-***aš***	'beater'	f.	izdaj-***ica***	'traitor'
c.	poz-***er***	'poser'	g.	proza-***ik***	'prose writer'
d.	pis-***ac***	'writer'	h.	bureg-***džija***	'börek maker'

- **NB:** I clearly do not subscribe to the view that all agentive nouns contain verbal structure, even if they seem to correspond to the external argument of a verb

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

- A root may determine the choice of *n* only if *n* is the first-merged categorizer
- If *a* intervenes between the root and *n* (**ROOT-*a*-*n***), the root can no longer determine the form of *n* (13)-(16)

(13)
a. prlj-*av*-*ac* 'dirty one'
b. mrš-*av*-*ac* 'skinny one'
c. mut-*av*-*ac* 'mute one'
d. peg-*av*-*ac* 'freckled one'
e. prg-*av*-*ac* 'grumpy one'
f. hvalis-*av*-*ac* 'boastful one'

(14)
a. plaš-*ljiv*-*ac* 'scared one'
b. smrd-*ljiv*-*ac* 'stinky one'
c. grab-*ljiv*-*ac* 'predatory one'
d. povod-*ljiv*-*ac* 'gullible one'
e. var-*ljiv*-*ac* 'cheating one'
f. vaš-*ljiv*-*ac* 'lousy one'

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

(15) a. hajduk-*ov*-*ac* 'H. supporter'
b. dinam-*ov*-*ac* 'D. supporter'
c. isus-*ov*-*ac* 'Jesuit'
d. maček-*ov*-*ac* 'Maček follower'
e. nobel-*ov*-*ac* 'Nobel winner'
f. oskar-*ov*-*ac* 'Oscar winner'

(16) a. smrt-*n*-*ik* 'mortal one'
b. put-*n*-*ik* 'traveler'
c. boles-*n*-*ik* 'sick one'
d. bestid-*n*-*ik* 'shameless one'
e. duž-*n*-*ik* 'debtor'
f. gubit-*n*-*ik* 'loser'

- Only *a* can now influence the form of *n*, which is uniform regardless of the root in question (either due to *a*-conditioned allomorphy or *elsewhere*)

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

- The locality effect is best observed when the same root can produce both a root-nominal and a deadjectival nominal (cf. **gubit-n-aš*, **gubit-ik*)
- Same root, same meaning, different nominalizer due to the presence of *a*

(17) a. gubit-*aš*
lose-N
'loser'

b. gubit-*n-ik*
lose-A-N
'loser'

- Even though the root $\sqrt{gubit}$ clearly picks out the nominalizer -*aš*, it can no longer do so if an adjectivizer intervenes between the two
- This can be accounted for if *a* and *n* are cyclic heads

→ In a **ROOT-*a*-*n*** configuration, the root is spelled out when *n* is merged, hence the root (*qua* morpheme) can no longer be identified when *n* undergoes VI

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ACCENT

- **Exponents** of BCS morphemes are idiosyncratically (un)marked for accent*
- Bešlin (forthcoming): Pitch-prominence in BCS is realized on the **structurally highest accent-marked element in the first spellout domain**
- The nominalizer *-(á)c* is underlyingly accent-marked, but only realizes that accent if it is in **ROOT-*n***, not in e.g., **ROOT-*a*-*n***

(18) a. pis → pis-ác
$\sqrt{write}$ 'writer'

b. alžír → alžir-ác
$\sqrt{algeria}$ 'Algerian(N)'

(19) a. prlj-av → prlj-av-ac
'dirty' 'dirty one'

b. smrd-ljív → smrd-ljív-ac
'stinky' 'stinky one'

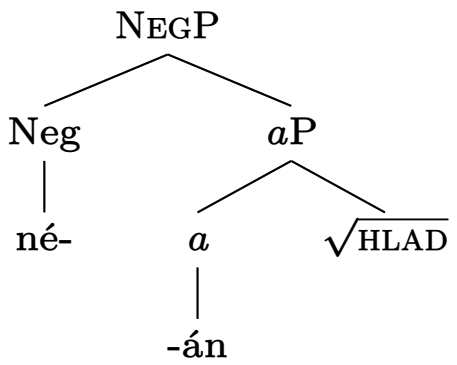
Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ACCENT

- If the extended projection of the first categorizer contains non-cyclic heads (e.g., DEG, NEG, DIM) and their exponents are accented, the accent surfaces on them

(20) a. hlad-án
cold-A
'cold'

b. né-hlad-an
NEG-cold-A
'non-cold'

c.



- Accent placement is determined within the first spellout domain, as in (8)/(21)

(21) Schematization of cyclic domains (Embick 2014):

a. Cyclic y merged in [y [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ ...]]]

b. Cyclic domain centered on x = [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$]]] sent to interfaces

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ACCENT

- Root-root compounds behave as expected; the accent placement is still 'frozen' in the spellout domain of the first **categorizer**

(22) a. dub-o-rez-ác
deep-L-cut-N
'woodcarver'

b. pad-o-bran-ác
fall-L-defend-N
'parachuter'

c. led-o-lom-ác
ice-L-break-N
'ice-breaker'

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals

Interim summary I:

Root-conditioned allomorphy and accent placement in BCS are limited to the first spellout domain, including *one* categorizer

'Deverbal' nouns

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- They pattern in (I) and (II) with root-derived nouns (one categorizer)
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→ 'Lexical prefixes' observed in contexts in which a deverbal analysis is dubious

§4 Conclusions

A note on deriving meaning from syntax

- Any 'syntax-first' model of grammar predicts that syntactic operations can and will have an effect at both interfaces
- This does not mean that all semantics/phonology 'comes from' the syntax
- For starters, there are syntactic operations that only have an effect on one interface (Quantifier Raising, Agreement)
- We also don't think that phonological phenomena exist *because* of syntax, though they can be constrained by it
- So why should we think that meaning differences necessarily arise from differences in syntactic structure?

Agentive noun ≠ verbal structure

- Originally, eventive (episodic) interpretation = complement structure = verbal syntax (23a) (e.g., Alexiadou 2001), but cf. (23b-c)

(23) a. a frequent consumer *(of tobacco)

b. a frequent visitor

c. a frequent subject *(of Monet's paintings)

- Then, Alexiadou & Schäfer 2010 propose that both episodic and dispositional agent nominals have an articulated verbal structure, including v, Voice, and Asp
- Why no accusative case on complements or adverbial modification?
- Completely divorced from the syntax, accounting for the fact that the *-er* nominals denote the (external) argument of the corresponding verb
- But we know agent entailments ≠ Voice, cf. *hastily* in (24)

(24) The rock rolled down the hill quickly/#hastily.

Agentive noun ≠ verbal structure

- Moreover, if *painter* needs Voice, does *thief* too?
- Event entailments also don't implicate the presence of v; cf. (25a)/(25b-c), (26)

(25) a. a beautiful dancer

b. a beautiful violinist

c. an elegant midfielder

(26) a. a just ruler

b. a just king

- At the broadest level, entailments ≠ the presence of hidden structure

(27) a. an illegitimate blond child

'Deverbal' nouns: ALLOMORPHY

- As we saw in the beginning, there are different *n*-allomorphs in 'deverbal' nouns

(28)

a.	b.	c.
pozn-av-a-**telj**	prouč-av-a-**telj**	reš-av-a-**telj**
know-AV-TH-N	study-AV-TH-N	solve-AV-TH-N
'expert'	'researcher'	'solver'

(29)

a.	b.	c.
predsed-av-a-**ač**	pred-av-a-**ač**	ugnjet-av-a-**ač**
chair-AV-TH-N	lecture-AV-TH-N	oppress-AV-TH-N
'chair'	'lecturer'	'oppressor'

(30)

a.	b.	c.
prod-av-a-**ac**	dar-o-d-av-a-**ac**	posl-o-d-av-a-**ac**
sell-AV-TH-N	gift-L-give-AV-TH-N	job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'seller'	'giftgiver'	'employer'

→ The material in intervening between the root and *n* is the same

→ No syntactic difference correlates with different *n*s (e.g., argument structure)

→ No semantic or phonological factors that condition the allomorphy

⋆ Allomorphy of *n* in (28)-(30) is lexically conditioned by the root

'Deverbal' nouns: ACCENT

- As we also saw in the beginning, accent in our 'deverbal' nouns can surface on *n*-exponents that underlyingly have it (*-áč* and *-ác*):

(31)

a.	b.	c.
pozn-av-á-telj	prouč-av-á-telj	reš-av-á-telj
know-AV-TH-N	study-AV-TH-N	solve-AV-TH-N
'expert'	'researcher'	'solver'

(32)

a.	b.	c.
predsed-av-a-áč	pred-av-a-áč	ugnjet-av-a-áč
chair-AV-TH-N	lecture-AV-TH-N	oppress-AV-TH-N
'chair'	'lecturer'	'oppressor'

(33)

a.	b.	c.
prod-av-a-ác	dar-o-d-av-a-ác	posl-o-d-av-a-ác
sell-AV-TH-N	gift-L-give-AV-TH-N	job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'seller'	'giftgiver'	'employer'

- Recall, accent can only surface in the first spellout domain (one categorizer)

‘Deverbal’ nouns

Interim summary II:

Allomorphy and accent placement patterns suggest that the n in BCS ‘deverbal’ agentive nouns is the first-merged categorizer.

Corollary:

‘Verbal’ morphology inside these agentive nouns is not verbal.

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? THE STATUS OF *AV*

- The morphemes exponed by *-av* and *-iv* appear in so-called secondary imperfective verbs and signal a shift in aspect (34)-(35)

(34) a. prouč-i-ti
study-TH-INF
'research'

b. prouč-av-a-ti
study-AV-TH-INF
'be researching'

(35) a. zatašk-a-ti
coverup-TH-INF
'cover up'

b. zatašk-iv-a-ti
coverup-IV-TH-INF
'be covering up'

- They also appear in *some* agent nominals; same meaning in (36a-b) vs. (36c-d)

(36) a. prouč-av-a-telj
study-AV-TH-N
'researcher'

b. zatašk-iv-a-ač
coverup-IV-TH-N
'cover up agent'

c. uruč-i-telj
serve-TH-N
'process server'

d. istovar-a-ač
unload-TH-N
'unloader'

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of *AV*

- They can appear in the context of so-called verbs of creation (cf. Kratzer 2000, Embick 2004)

(37) 3D štampač je pokvaren pa je maketa izašla
3D printer is broken so is model came_out
iz-u-ništ-av-a-n-a / is-pre-sav-ij-a-n-a.
SP-LP-destroy-AV-TH-PTCP-F.SG SP-LP-bend-IJ-TH-PTCP-F.SG
'The 3D printer is broken so the model came out destroyed/crumpled.'

- Quaglia et al. (2022): They also appear in the derivation of (seemingly) simple nouns and adjectives–they are **bound roots**

(38) a. ruk-av-∅
arm-AV-N.M.SG.NOM
'sleeve'

b. bles-av-∅
silly-AV-A.M.SG.NOM
'silly'

c. maz-iv-o
daub-IV-N.NEUT.SG.NOM
'grease'

d. jez-iv-o
shudder-IV-A.NEUT.SG.NOM
'creepy'

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of *AV*

Status of *av*

I tentatively conclude with Quaglia et al. (2022) that *av* is a root.

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of th

- Theme vowels (THs) do not seem to be a uniquely verbal phenomenon
- Slavic nouns have also been claimed to have theme vowels (Halle 1994, Bailyn & Nevins 2008, Halle & Nevins 2009, a.o.)
- Slavic adjectives have been claimed to share the THs of nouns (Halle & Matushansky 2006)

  If all major word classes have THs, THs could then equally well be attributed to roots, as in (39) (with contextual allomorphy able to work in the familiar way)

(39) a. ROOT-TH-n

b. ROOT-TH-a

c. ROOT-TH-v

d. ROOT-TH-ROOT

→ If this is correct, then the appearance of a TH does not necessarily indicate the presence of a verbal categorizing morpheme

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of LPs

- Is the decomposition always synchronic? Experimental work needed:

(40)

a.	b.	c.
d-a-ti	**pro**-d-a-ti	**pro**-d-a-av-ac
give-TH-INF	LP?-give-TH-INF	LP?-give-TH-AV-N
'give'	'sell'	'seller'

- LPs appear in all sorts of words for which a deverbal analysis is dubious (41)

(41)

a.	b.	c.
na-uč-i-ti	**na**-uk-a	**na**-uk-∅
LP?-study-TH-INF	LP?-learn-N.NOM.SG	LP?-learn-N.NOM.SG
'learn/teach'	'science'	'lesson'

→ Also *pred-stava* 'play', *pre-preka* 'barrier', *o-stava* 'pantry', *iz-reka* 'proverb', etc.

Wrapping up

- I argued, based on data from ROOT-*n* vs. ROOT-*a*-*n*, that root-conditioned allomorphy and accent placement are limited to the first spellout domain
- The first spellout domain may include multiple morphemes (roots, non-categorizing morphemes), but **only one categorizer**
- I showed that 'deverbal' agentive nouns containing morphology analyzed as verbal behave for these morphophonological processes like root-derived nouns
- No syntactic evidence for verbal structure in agentive nouns; event/agent entailments do not provide evidence either
- I argued that *av* should be analyzed as a root, and suggested that THs and LPs may not necessarily signal the presence of verbal structure either

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Thank you!

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Appendix A: Post-accenting elements

- There is a group of examples that form a systematic exception to the accent generalizations made here–so-called "post-accenting" elements (Halle 1997)
- Have an underlying accent, but realize it on the syllable following them
- Assuming the existence of such elements allows us to avoid having a list of pairs of suffixes that are segmentally identical and only differ in presence/absence of accent (uniform for two kinds of roots); root in (a)-(g) is post-accenting

(42)

a.	loz-á	'grape-N.NOM.SG.F'	h.	dúnj-a	'quince-N.NOM.SG.F'
b.	loz-é	'grape-N.GEN.SG.FEM'	i.	dúnj-e	'quince-N.GEN.SG.F'
c.	loz-í	'grape-N.DAT.SG.F'	j.	dúnj-i	'quince-N.DAT.SG.F'
d.	loz-ú	'grape-N.ACC.SG.F'	k.	dúnj-u	'quince-N.ACC.SG.F'
e.	loz-óm	'grape-N.INST.SG.F'	l.	dúnj-om	'quince-N.INST.SG.F'
f.	loz-í.ca	'grape-N.DIM-F'	m.	dúnj-ic-a	'quince-N.DIM-F'
g.	loz-óv	'grape-A.POSS'	n.	dúnj-ev	'quince-A.POSS