

Comparing lexicalist and syntactic insights on deadjectival nominalizations

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We investigate two types of deadjectival nominalizations with an argument-like genitive/prepositional phrase: suffix-based (SN, (1a)) and bare nominalizations (BN, (2) and (3)). While BNs and a comparison to SNs have often been addressed for some Romance or Germanic languages (e.g., Bécherel 1979, Bosque & Moreno 1990, Sleeman 1996, Lauwers 2008, Villalba & Bartra-Kaufmann 2010, McNally & de Swart 2011), hardly any study has a cross-linguistic focus. By looking at data mainly in French, Romanian, German, and Greek, we distinguish three morpho-syntactic patterns of deadjectival nominalizations (i.e., (1), (2), and (3)), which instantiate two kinds of semantic relationships to their adjectives: a quality (SN, BN₂), and a referential meaning (BN₁). We show that the genitive/prepositional phrase is a semantic argument in SN and BN₂, but not in BN₁, which we directly relate to the semantic distinction above. We offer two parallel analyses for the three types of nominalizations: a lexicalist account (following, e.g., Corbin 1987, Scalise 1987) and a syntactic account in Distributed Morphology (DM, Halle & Marantz 1993, Harley & Noyer 1998, Alexiadou 2001, a.o.). The aim is to investigate the advantages and the limitations that each of the two views has in accounting for the subtle differences among deadjectival nominalizations. While the lexicalist view can formulate finer semantic distinctions among BNs, the syntactic account fares better in explaining the argument taking property of SNs and BN₂s, as well as the internal syntax of French and German BN₁s.

1. Deadjectival nominalizations. The languages we examine derive two systematic types of deadjectival nominalizations illustrated in (1) for French *vulgaire*/German *vulgär* ‘vulgar’: the SN in (1) denotes the instantiation of the quality ‘vulgar’ in the story, while the BN₁ in (2) has a partitive reading and refers to ‘what is vulgar in the story’ (see Sleeman 1996, Lauwers 2008). In addition, some of our languages have BN₂s as in (2) for French *vide* ‘empty’.

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|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| (1) | la <i>vulgarité de l'histoire</i> /die <i>Vulgarität der Geschichte</i>
'the vulgarity of the story' | SN | French/German |
| (2) | le <i>vulgaire de l'histoire</i> /das <i>Vulgäre an der Geschichte</i>
'the vulgar (thing) about the story' | BN ₁ | French/German |
| (3) | le <i>vide de l'espace</i>
'the emptiness of space' | BN ₂ | French |

Our cross-linguistic investigation leads to two important observations: 1) languages are similar with respect to the (non-)argumental status of the genitive/PP and partly similar as for the interpretation of the nominals in (1)-(3), but 2) differ with respect to the productivity of the BNs, which we directly relate to their morpho-syntactic and semantic behavior.

2. The genitive/PP. Roy (2010) argues that SNs can only be derived from predicative adjectives (the ambiguity of *the poor child* – ‘unfortunate’ or ‘moneyless’ – is lost in ‘the poverty of *the child*’) and that the semantic argument of the predicative adjective is realized as an argumental genitive PP, as in (1). For Dutch BNs, McNally & de Swart (2011) take the genitive PP in *het rode van de aardbeien* ‘the red (aspect) of the strawberries’ to be a complement of the adjective. While further study is necessary to determine the differences between BNs in Dutch and our languages, we will show that the genitive/PP in (2) is crucially different from the one in (1) and (3), in that the former is not an argument. Three pieces of evidence support this claim. First, languages like German do not use a genitive with BN₁s like (2), but a modifier PP which is not selected by the adjective, while languages like Greek and Romanian use the genitive in some cases and a PP in others (4a/4b). Importantly, the corresponding SN only employs a genitive in the relevant interpretation in (4c).

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|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| (4) | a. | frumosul <i>din natură</i> /* <i>naturii</i>
beautiful.the from nature/nature.Gen | BN ₁ | Romanian |
| | b. | răul <i>acestei țări/din (această) țară</i>
evil.the this.Gen country.Gen/from (this) country | BN ₁ | |
| | c. | frumusețea <i>naturii</i> ≠ frumusețea <i>din natură</i>
beauty.the nature.Gen ≠ beauty from nature | SN | |

Second, the adjectival property is predicated of the DP in the genitive/PP with SNs (5a) and BN₂s (5c), but not in BN₁s (5b). This confirms that this DP is a semantic argument only in SNs and BN₂s. Third, we will show that genitives in some languages may be used predicatively in BN₁s, but not in SNs/BN₂s; hence they are not arguments in BN₁s (Grimshaw 1990).

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|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------|
| (5) | a. | răutatea <i>acestei țări</i> => <i>această țară</i> este rea | SN | Romanian |
|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------|

- evilness this.Gen country.Gen => this country is evil
- b. răul acestei țări ≠> această țară este rea BN₁
 evil.the this.Gen country.Gen this country is evil
- c. le vide de l'espace => l'espace est vide BN₂ *French*
 'the emptiness of space' the space is empty

3. The morpho-syntax. By comparison to SNs, BN₁s in Greek and Romanian are very few (e.g., Gr. *kalosini* 'goodness'- to *kalo* 'the good', *ilikrinia* 'honesty'- *to *ilikrines*, cf. Giannakidou & Stavrou 1999). However, in French and German, BN₁s are similarly productive to SNs. A further difference is that BN₁s only allow adjectival modification in Greek/Romanian (6a), while they only allow adverbs in French/German. Degrees of comparison are only OK in the latter languages (see (6b)).

- (6) a. (***prea**/***foarte**/***extrem de**) răul (**extrem** al) acestei țări *Romanian BN₁*
 too/very/extremely of evil.the (extreme of) this.Gen country.Gen
- b. das **sehr/extrem**/***extreme** Blöde/**Blödeste** an der Sache *German BN₁*
 the very/extremely/extreme stupid/stupidest at the thing

BN₂s in general seem to occur only if there is no semantically corresponding SN. They pattern with SNs and Greek/Romanian BN₁s as to their morpho-syntax (see (7)). We will show that both SNs and BN₂s allow only adjectival modification and disallow gradation in all languages. The difference is that SNs are productive, while BN₂s (just like Romanian/Greek BN₁s) are not.

- (7) le (***très**/***extrêmement**) vide (**angoissant**)/***le plus vide** de l'espace *French BN₂*
 the very/extremely empty scary/the most empty of the-space

4. Comparing lexicalist and syntactic predictions. From a DM perspective, Greek and Romanian BN₁s are cases of categorization of an uncategorized root by n(ominalizer), while all SNs are nominalizations of an adjective (the root is first categorized by a(djective), then by n: see (8a)-(8b) for Romanian. This straightforwardly accounts for the restricted productivity: root formations are idiosyncratic (8a), only word-formations (8b) are productive (Marantz 2001). BN₂s should also have the structure in (8b) (the adjectival property is predicated of the genitive argument like in SNs), but their restricted productivity is then unexpected and requires a more elaborate explanation.

- (8) a. [_{DP} -l [_{nP} n [_√RÄU]]] b. [_{DP} -a [_{nP} -tate [_{aP} a [_√RÄU]]]

The lexicalist view derives all these nominals in the lexicon and formulates a semantic rule that correlates the meaning of the nominal to the adjective: for Greek and Romanian BN₁s (8a) we have conversion (räu_{Adj} → räu_N 'thing that is [_□]_{Adj}'), and for SNs (8b) we have suffixation (räu_{Adj}+ tate_N → räutate_N 'quality of being [_□]_{Adj}'). The lexicalist semantic rules allow an important differentiation that DM doesn't make: they capture not only the regular meaning of Greek/Romanian BN₁s, but also the lexicalized meaning of BN₂s (3), which despite their lexicalization can still be described by a semantic rule (e.g., Corbin 1987), which in this case corresponds to the one for abstract SNs. Similar rules also account for non-abstract BN₂s as Fr. *le rouge* 'the rouge', that is only partially idiosyncratic, as its meaning is clearly related to the adjectival *rouge* 'red' (*the rouge* is typically, but not necessarily red).

DM, however, fares better in other respects: in (8b) the argument DP of the SN is hosted by Spec-aP, which is missing in (8a). This easily explains the contrast between BN₁s and SNs in (4), while the lexicalist view cannot directly account for the lack of an argument in the Adj→BN₁ cases. In addition, the lexicalist view is in need of a syntactic explanation for the productive BN₁s in French and German, whose compatibility with adverbs cannot be accounted for by a lexical rule. The syntactic DM answer to this is that French/German BN₁s embed a Deg(ree)P that comes on top of aP. Adverbs modify aP, while gradation appears under DegP. The lack of adjectival modification is accounted for by the lack of an nP layer: they are basically nominalizations by D, i.e., extended adjectival projections with nominal external syntax (cf. Alexiadou, Iordachioaia & Schäfer 2011, for deverbal nominals). (6b) receives the structure in (9), where the lack of a categorial head n accounts for the lack of a nominal internal syntax in these nominalizations (vs. (8a) & (8b)). Thus the categorial heads (n & a) play an important role in the DM approach (cf. de Belder 2011): a accounts for the adjectival semantics available in SNs (8b), but not in Gr/Ro BN₁s (8a), and n for the internal nominal syntax in SNs and Gr/Ro BN₁s, but not in French/German BN₁s (9).

- (9) [_{DP} das [_{DegP} -st- [_{aP} -e [_√BLÖD]]]

Selected references: Alexiadou, Iordachioaia & Schäfer. 2011. *Scaling the variation in Romance and Germanic nominalizations*. In *The noun phrase in Romance and Germanic*. J. Benjamins. **de Belder**. 2011. *Roots and affixes*. PhD Thesis. **McNally & de Swart**. 2011. *Inflection and derivation*. Amsterdam Colloquium. **Roy**. 2010. *Deadjectival nominalizations and the structure of the adjective*. In *The syntax of nominalizations across languages and frameworks*. Mouton de Gruyter.