

The functional layers of DP and the morphology of Polish nominals

It has been recognized that the functional projections in DPs are parallel to those found in the verbal domain (e.g. both verbs and nouns can take complements). Functional layers such as AspP or EventP can be dominated by DP inside nominals, especially in the view of Distributed Morphology (DM) where syntax operates on abstract (non-phonetic) nodes that make up both “words” and “clauses” (in the traditional sense) (Marantz, 1997; Alexiadou, 2005, Harley and Noyer, 1999; Embick and Noyer, 2004 and others). In DM category results from the configuration a given root appears in and thus nominals are “created” by inserting a Vocabulary Item (i.e. the phonetic realization of the root-node) into a terminal node governed by D.

The presence/absence of intermediate projections such as AspP or EventP(VoiceP) can account for different types of Polish nominals as identified by Rozwadowska, 1997 – underived object-denoting nouns, underived event nominals, derived result (simple event) nominals, derived event nominals and the so-called verbal nouns “that would qualify as syntactic realizations” (Rozwadowska, 1997:69). The latter are conspicuous in that they all contain roots typically found in verbs and are all suffixed by *-nie/cie*, however nominals with such a structure can also have the result reading. Nominalizations with either *-nie/cie* or other nominalizing affixes such as *-acja* display simple event/complex event ambiguity, which is also found in English *-ing*, *-(a)tion*, *-ment*, etc. nominalizations (already observed by Grimshaw, 1990).

The Late Insertion theory can explain this event/result ambiguity – the suffixes are *f*-morphemes that are spelled-out postsyntactically by the insertion of VIs which can have the same phonological form. Suffixes can attach “low” in the syntactic structure yielding simple event/result nominals; or “high” - in complex event nominals, as presented schematically in (3) (after Alexiadou, 2001, simplified).

In the case of *-nie/-cie* nominals that do not take adverbs, the reflexive “*się*”, verbal negative particle nor display overt aspect the suffix attaches low in the structure, i.e. below VoiceP and AspP, which determines the result reading as in Alexiadou, 2001 (the suffix attachment takes place after syntax in the morphological component). In the *-nie/-cie* nominals that do take adverbs the suffix arguably attaches to AspP. The group of adverbs that can modify nominalizations is very small, though, and it cannot be a matter of “Encyclopaedic” knowledge (in DM, the final “semantic” component taking part in the Spell-Out to LF) which blocks their occurrence since in the corresponding passives all manner adverbs are perfectly acceptable. Moreover, the class of “derived event nominals” cannot take adverbs, which is not accommodated in Alexiadou's projection schema – VoiceP responsible for eventivity (as well as transitivity and manner adverbs) directly dominates the root.

Although event nominals derived with *-nie/cie* and with the affixes of the *-acja* type can often be used interchangeably, only the *-nie/cie* derivation is fully productive and even seems to be a part the “verbal paradigm” (e.g. the counterpart of certain English 'noun+infinitival complement' constructions such as “a box to type in (your request)” is a Polish construction 'noun+'do'_{PREP}+nominalization_{GEN}' as in “pole do wpisywania (życzeń)” [space to type/write requests]). The morphology of *-nie/-cie* nominals is conspicuously similar to passives – both formations contain the particle *-n(t/c)-* which seems to correspond to the absence of Agent, thus optionally allowing the “by-phrase”. Clearly, the functional layer approach cannot represent this difference between *-nie/cie* nominals and other types in terms of “heights” of suffix attachment.

The morphology of Polish nominals is yet more confusing, as many of them seemingly contain aspectual prefixes. In case of *-nie/-cie* nominalizations, the prefixes can be attached high in the structure providing aspectual interpretation or low in the tree giving “idiomatic” meaning as it has been proposed for Russian verbs by Svenonius, 2005. However, in result nominals ending in suffixes other than *-nie/-cie* prefixes seem to make a difference in meaning (*skup – zakup*, 'a buy'), though the high position for their attachment is unavailable. Given the *Locality Constraint on the Interpretation of Roots*, (Arad, 2001) those prefixes could be analyzed as attaching low in the tree and role of Encyclopedia could then be extended to take part in the negotiation of VI insertion.

Remarkably, neither low nor high attached prefixes allow a full spectrum of manner adverbs, which calls for a revision of the functions of AspP and VoiceP as defined in Alexiadou, 2001. Projections inside Polish complex event nominals do contain VoiceP and AspectP, but they are realized differently in those nominals that are passive in nature and those that are not.

In DM analysis it is preferable to assume that both complex event nominals and result nominals of the same forms contain full internal structure due to the presence of the same verbalizing morphology, namely 'little v'. Including v thus means containing its complements that somehow are not expressed (as in (2)b). Harley, 2005 proposes that what is interfering with the realization of the argument structure in nominals containing verbal stems/'little v' is the change from "mass to count event-denoting nouns" (p.11). This change presumably occurs at the abstract NumP/ClassP level (i.e. the nominalizing head). The arguments for the "count-mass hypothesis" have yet to be checked against Polish data. The hypothesis implies that the differences between complex and simple event nominals do not follow from their internal structure, which may be a suitable approach towards the issues of aspect/agentivity in Polish nominalizations.

Yet another solution may be the comparison of Polish -nie/cie nominals to the impersonal verbal constructions with -no/to endings analysed as containing a "higher Aux projection" as opposed to passives (Lavine, 2005). The three constructions include the -n(t/c)- particle, which may turn out to serve a similar function in all three.

An analysis of the problematic nature of Polish complex nominalizing morphology should shed some light on the effects of category-changing derivational affixes in general.

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