

Two Kinds of Event Plurals: Evidence from Romanian Nominalizations

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The Problem. Recent studies in Romance (Roodenburg (2006), on Italian and French) provide evidence against the well-known generalization in Grimshaw (1990) according to which event nominalizations are unable to pluralize. Romance languages contrast with Germanic in exhibiting plural nominalizations:

- (1) a. les destructions fréquentes de quartiers populaires pour élever des tours staliniennes (French)
the destructions frequent of quarters popular for raise towers Stalinist
b. *the destructions of the city by the enemies

However, this observation is still unexplained, and it is not known why and when plural may appear in event nominalizations. On the basis of the differences between the two paradigms of (event) nominalizations in Romanian, we argue that the nominalizations which pluralize project a Num(ber) P(hrase), while the ones that do not pluralize lack such a projection. The behavior of the two Romanian nominalizations allows us to complete and explain Roodenburg's observation, and to propose two models of event plurality (nominal vs. verbal plural).

The Data. In Romanian, there are two types of deverbal nominalizations, both of them productive, deriving from the stem of the infinitive and that of past participle (supine). They exhibit both the "Romance" and the "Germanic" pattern with respect to the plural:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (2) Infinitive: | (3) Supine: |
| cânta – cânta-r-e / cântă-r-i | cânta – cânta-t/ *cânta-t-uri |
| sing – sing-Inf-Fem.Sg/ sing-Inf-Pl | sing – sing-Sup/ sing-Sup-Pl |
| iubi – iubi-r-e / iubi-r-i | iubi – iubi-t/ *iubi-t-uri |
| love – love-Inf-Fem.Sg/ love-Inf-Pl | love – love-Sup/ love-Sup-Pl |

As the examples show, only the infinitive nominalization allows (nominal) plural. This appears with two types of readings: the result (4a) and the event reading (4b) – the latter contradicting Grimshaw's generalization:

- (4) a. interpretările acestui actor sînt memorabile
interpret-Inf-Pl this-Gen actor are memorable
b. interpretările frecvente ale acestui rol de către diverși actori i-au schimbat stilul
interpret-Inf-Pl frequent of this role by different actors Cl-have changed style

Supine nominals do not get a result reading (cf. Cornilescu (1999)) and since supine is plural defective (cf. 3), the event reading cannot pluralize.

The supine nominalization will be shown to express a (verbal) plurality which is appropriately described by the feature [-b(ounded)] in Jackendoff (1991). It opposes to infinitive which is [+b], and can only become [-b] in its plural form. In (5) below, "until" - a function which turns a [-b] event into a [+b] one - is indicated to be fine with supine and plural infinitive, but unavailable in this interpretation with singular infinitive:

- (5) a. cititul benzilor desenate (de către Ion) pînă la vîrsta de 16 ani
read-Sup-the comics-Gen by John until at age of 16 years
b. arestările/ #arestarea lui Miron Cozma pînă la schimbarea guvernării
arrest-Inf-Pl/ arrest-Inf-the M. C. -Gen until at changing government-Gen

A fact that correlates with the boundedness feature specification of the two nominalizations is the possibility to be interpreted as a single event, located in space/ time: infinitive can be located, while supine cannot:

- (6) Citirea/ *cititul cărții a avut loc ieri/ în sala de lectură.
read-Inf-the/ read-Sup-the book-Gen has taken place yesterday/ in the reading room.

The plurality of supine is also indicated by the habitual reading usually associated with this nominalization pattern (e.g. (5a) and (8)- (10) below). Supporting evidence for the generalization that supine is [-b] will be provided on the basis of the (in)compatibility between verb classes and the supine form. States and activities, characterized as [-b] can only form supine if they become [+b] by means of a function like "until". Then, supine can turn them into [-b]. Accomplishments, achievements, punctual events which are [+b] can easily form supine. A special case of state verbs which cannot become [+b] are i-level predicates. Not surprisingly, they are excluded with supine:

- (7) *știutul/ *cunoscutul limbilor străine/ *descinsul omului din maimuță
know-Sup-the languages-Gen foreign/ descend-Sup-the man-Gen from monkey

The Proposal. We will provide an account for the differences between infinitive and supine nominalizations by tracking the origins in the way they are derived. We will propose a two-step analysis.

The first step is morphological. The infinitive nominalization is affixal: the corresponding affix (RE) is a nominalizer, and is inflected for Fem(inine) Gender. The supine is a stem nominalization (from the participial stem) that contains an Asp(ect) layer. We assume that nominal features are carried by the nominalizing affix within the NumP in the case of infinitive. Since nominal features are absent, supine does not contain a NumP. In traditional grammar, supine is considered to have Neuter Gender, but according to Bateman & Polinski (2006), Romanian Neuter does not qualify as a class, so we will show that supine has a default Gender. According to Picallo (2006), features of Gender feed (nominal) Number. Thus, the lack of Gender in the case of supine correlates with the absence of NumP.

The second step of our analysis is syntactico-semantic. Depending on the status of its internal argument and the possibility to obtain a plural event reading, supine displays aspectual shift between telic and atelic. We explain this particularity by means of an Asp projection which we take to be responsible for the "semantic plurality" of supine. The presence of AspP is also supported by adverbial modification and scope effects with indefinites.

We argue that unlike supine, infinitive does not host Asp. An important difference between the two nominalizations is the fact that the supine encodes habitual/ iterative readings, whereas infinitive only gets a generic or a unique event reading:

- (8) Spălatul/ ??spălarea mâinilor înainte de masă e un obicei bun
 wash-Sup-the/ wash-Inf-the hands-Gen before meal is a habit good

The habitual reading of the supine is confirmed by the compatibility with adverbs like "rarely", "constantly", "x times a day":

- (9) mersul (constant/ rar) la cinema (de trei ori pe zi)
 go-Sup-the (constantly/ rarely) to cinema (three times a day)

As an indicator of the presence of AspP in the structure of the supine, and its absence in the case of infinitive, notice that due to the Hab(itual) operator it carries, supine displays scope interaction with aspectual modifiers, while infinitive does not:

- (10) a. plantatul de copaci timp de 3 ore/ 3 ani (e un obicei din tinerețe) (plant > 3 hours; 3 years > plant)
 plant-Sup-the of trees for 3 hours/ 3 years (is a habit from youth)
 b. plantarea de copaci timp de 3 ore/ #3 ani (plant > 3 hours; #plant > 3 years; *3 years > plant)
 plant-Inf-the of trees for 3 hours/ 3 years

We assume that a Hab operator (cf. Boneh & Doron (2006)) is involved in the supine nominalization. We take this operator to select verbal roots that are plural in the sense of Kratzer (2005). Supine roots are lexically plural, and thus compatible with Hab, unlike the infinitive ones which denote episodic, singular events. On the other hand, infinitive, and not supine, has (fully specified) Gender which acts as a classifier further allowing it to get nominal Number. This is why we have morphological, nominal plural in infinitives, and semantic, (habitual-) aspectual plural in the supine.

Conclusion. In this paper, we provided evidence for two patterns of event nominalizations in Romanian, with respect to their ability to express plurality: infinitival nominals with a Num projection, undergoing morphologically-marked nominal plural, and supine nominals with an Asp projection and a semantic verbal plural. Concerning Roodenburg's distinction between Romance and Germanic nominalizations, our analysis turns particularly enlightening, since the two kinds of plural expressed in Romanian nominalizations offer a path for further crosslinguistic investigations.

References

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