

# SCALING THE VARIATION IN ROMANCE AND GERMANIC NOMINALIZATIONS

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## ***Abstract***

We investigate the distribution of verbal and nominal layers in Romance and Germanic nominalizations. Specifically, we examine pairs of ‘verbal’ vs. ‘nominal’ nominalizations in two Romance (Spanish & Romanian) and two Germanic (English & German) languages. Our study proposes a large spectrum of nominal and verbal properties. While these are differently instantiated among languages, the variation we find cannot be attributed to a Germanic vs. Romance parameter; instead, we find micro-variation constrained by the compatibility between the general building blocks of verbal and nominal categories. Besides the vP-layers responsible for argument structure and Aktionsart and the DP-layer responsible for the nominal external syntax, we make a case for further functional verbal and nominal layers in nominalizations: Asp(ect)P, Class(ifier)P, and Num(ber)P. These projections are in complementary distribution in some languages and co-occur in others.

## ***1. Introduction***

Nominalizations exhibit well-known mixed categorial properties, combining both *nominal* and *verbal* features (Grimshaw 1990, Borer 1993, Reuland & Kosmeijer 1993). Recently, this behavior has been related to their internal structure and is taken to reflect the amount of verbal structure embedded under a varied amount of nominal structure (cf. Harley & Noyer 1999, Borsley and Kornfilt 2000, Alexiadou 2001, van Hout & Roeper 1998, Borer 1993, 2001 among others).

In this article we address the following questions: How many and what kind of verbal and nominal layers are allowed in nominalizations and

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what are the possible or impossible combinations thereof? Furthermore, how are these layers distributed across Germanic and Romance languages?

In order to provide an answer to these questions, we examine pairs of a ‘verbal’ and a ‘nominal’ nominalization in two Romance (Spanish & Romanian) and two Germanic (English & German) languages. The pairs to be discussed are listed below:<sup>2</sup>

- Romanian: *supines* (RS with participial morphology) vs. *infinitives* (RI) (Cornilescu 2001, Iordăchioaia & Soare 2008).  
 Spanish: *verbal* vs. *nominal infinitives* (SVI vs. SNI) (Plann 1981, Miguel 1996)  
 English: *verbal* vs. *nominal gerunds* (VG vs. NG) (Abney 1987, Borer 1993, Kratzer 1994, Alexiadou 2005).  
 German: *verbal* vs. *nominal infinitives* (GVI vs. GNI) (Esau 1973, Ehrich 1977, 1991).

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we introduce the four nominalization pairs. Section 3 is a summary of the general properties of nominalizations which we organize into two scales: a verbal and a nominal scale. In section 4, we take a closer look at the aspectual information present in nominalizations and make a case for including the inner aspect information under ClassifierP, while AspectP hosts the outer aspect contribution. In section 5, we discuss the cross-linguistic variation in the structure of nominalizations in view of the general constraints on the compatibility between verbal and nominal categories. The varying distribution of these nominal and verbal layers explains the gradual properties in nominalizations across languages (cf. Ross 1972).

## ***2. The verbal vs. nominal nominalization patterns: a first approximation***

As explicitly stated in Borer (1993), two main properties are suggestive of the verbal nature of nominalizations: the presence of *case patterns* similar to those of verbal clauses (NOM/ACC) and the licensing of *adverbials*. In this section we make use of these criteria in order to provide a first classification of nominalization types.

### ***2.1 The Romance languages (Spanish vs. Romanian)***

Spanish has two types of nominalized infinitives, which we label here *verbal infinitives* and *nominal infinitives* (VI vs. NI). Miguel (1996) takes the distribution of the nominative vs. PP-subject in (1) to be the main distinction between them.

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<sup>2</sup> Here we have nothing to say about further combinations of these two extremes.

- (1) a. el murmurar la gente  
the murmur.INF the people.NOM  
b. el murmurar de las fuentes  
the murmur.INF of the fountains

Only VIs license accusative case (2a). NIs appear with bare Ns (2c), but not with accusative DPs (2b, see also Pérez Vázquez 2002). This suggests that the bare N is incorporated (see Bosque 1989 for details).

- (2) a. [El cantar yo la Traviata]  
the sing.INF I.NOM the.ACC Traviata  
b. [\*El cantar estas coplas de Lola] nos emociona  
the sing.INF these.ACC songs of Lola us moves  
c. [El cantar coplas de Lola] nos emociona.  
the sing.INF songs.ACC of Lola us moves

Furthermore, Spanish VIs allow *adverbial* modification (3a, b), while NIs (3c, d) can only be modified by adjectives (Miguel 1996, Ramirez 2003):

- (3) a. El andar errabundamente/\*errabundo Juan  
the go-about.INF aimlessly/ aimless Juan  
b. El (\*constante) escribir ella novelas constantemente  
the constant write.INF she novels constantly  
c. El andar errabundo/\*errabundamente de Juan  
the go-about.INF aimless/ aimlessly of Juan  
d. El constante temer (\*constantamente) de Juan  
the constant fear.INF constantly of Juan

Romanian has two types of nominalizations licensing argument structure: the *infinitive* (RI) and the *supine* (RS). Although neither of them licenses verbal case (their object or subject carries genitive), the two differ in that aspectual *adverbs* modify only the supine (4a). Infinitives combine with the corresponding adjectives (4b) (see Iordăchioaia & Soare 2008).<sup>3</sup>

- (4) a. (\*constantul) citit(ul) (constant) al ziarelor  
(constant) read.SUP-the constantly of journals.GEN  
b. (constanta) omitere(a) (\*constant) a unor informații  
constant omit.INF-the constantly of some infos

To conclude, while both Romance languages have a verbal nominalization licensing adverbs, only the Spanish one assigns verbal case to its arguments.

<sup>3</sup> The ungrammaticality of the pre-nominal position for *constant* indicates that the homonymous masculine-neuter adjective is excluded in (4a).

## 2.2 The Germanic languages (*English vs. German*)

The *English verbal gerund* (VG) licenses accusative objects (5a), while the *nominal gerund* (NG) takes PP-objects (6a). Furthermore, VGs take adverbial modifiers (5a) and disallow adjectival ones (6b), while NGs display the opposite behavior (5b vs. 6a).

- (5) a. Pat disapproved of John's *quietly* leaving *the room*  
 b. \*The *carefully* restoring *of the painting* took months
- (6) a. His/John's *prompt* answering *of the question*  
 b. \*His *prompt* answering *the question*

*German verbal infinitives* (GVI) license accusative case and can be modified by adverbs (7). *Nominal infinitives* (GNI) take genitive (or PP-) objects and are modified by adjectives (8).

- (7) [*häufig die Sterne* Beobachten] macht Spass  
 frequently the.ACC stars observe.INF makes fun
- (8) [*das häufige* Beobachten *der Sterne*] macht Spass  
 the frequent observe.INF the.GEN stars makes fun

A difference between German VIs and English VGs (5a) is that the former cannot realize an overt subject, as (9) illustrates.<sup>4</sup>

- (9) (\*Peters) die Sterne Beobachten  
 Peters.GEN the.ACC stars observe.INF

## 3. The verbal vs. nominal scale

In this section, we put forth a set of finer-grained distinctions for the nominal and verbal properties of nominalizations. We propose two 'categorical' scales that interact with one another: a *verbal* and a *nominal* one. Each scale contains a number of properties (cf. Sleeman 2009). As we will point out, languages differ as to the cut-off points they choose within these scales (cf. Ackema & Neeleman 2004). On this view, the distinction between Vs and Ns is not absolute, but gradual in nature: the V/N cut-off point of a nominalization can be located at various points in these scales

<sup>4</sup> In this sense German VIs seem similar to PRO-ing gerunds, Siegel (1998):

(i) PRO smoking cigars is fun

(contra Panagiotidis & Grohmann 2006).<sup>5</sup>

### 3.1 *The verbal scale*

i) *Subject with nominative case*: this is found only in Spanish VIs (see 1a, 2a).

ii) *Occurrence of modal or auxiliary verbs* is found in Spanish VIs (10a), German VIs (10b) and the English verbal gerund (10c).

- (10) a. [El *haber* él escrito novelas] explica su fama  
the have.INF he written novels explains his fame  
b. [Dauernd Kuchen Essen *Wollen*] nervt  
permanently cake eat.INF want.INF is-annoying  
c. His *having* read War and Peace

iii) *Accusative case on objects*: this is possible with the verbal patterns in Spanish, English and German; see (2a), (5a) and (7).

iv) *Projection of outer Aspect*: this is evidenced by aspect shift and aspectual adverbs; see section 4 for a detailed discussion.

v) *Argument Structure realization*: this holds for all nominalizations considered here.

### 3.2 *The nominal scale*

I) *Genitive/PP subject*: it is possible in both types of English gerunds (5a/6a), in German (11) and Spanish (1b) NIs and in both Romanian nominalizations (11b); it is excluded in German and Spanish VIs (12a, b).

- (11) a. (*Toms*) Beobachten des Kindes (*durch Tom*)  
Tom.GEN observe.INF the.GEN child by Tom  
b. sosirea/sositul *lui Ion* la timp  
arrive.INF-the/arrive.SUP-the John.GEN in time
- (12) a. \**Toms* häufig das Kind Beobachten  
Tom.GEN frequently the.ACC child observe.INF  
b. el escribir constantemente novelas (*\*de ella*)  
the write.INF constantly novels (of) she

II) *Genitive/PP-object* is compatible with both Romanian nominalizations (4a-b), and the nominal pattern in Spanish, English and German (2b, 6a, 8);

<sup>5</sup> In this paper we are concerned with the criteria that help us identify the functional projections in nominalizations. A further point that needs to be clarified and which we hope to address in future research is what constraints are at work in a hierarchy of projections. We expect this to follow from a cartographic approach like in Cinque (1999) and subsequent work.

excluded with the verbal pattern in Spanish, English and German (2a, 5a, 7).  
 III) *gender features*: we follow Picallo's (2006) insight on the presence of a Class(ifier)P in nouns that introduces information about declension (Gender, Case-inflection). If such features are present, an nP projection is present too, creating a nominal internal structure; on this view,  $n^0$  moves to  $\text{Class}^0$  to check its nominal features (Picallo 2006).<sup>6</sup>

Spanish NIs carry gender features which – although not visible in the suffix *-r* – become obvious in anaphoric contexts, where an NI can be referred to only by the masculine pronoun *él* and not by the default neuter pronoun *ello* usually employed with CPs (Miguel 1996).

- (13) *Accostumbrado al dulce mirar de su amada,*  
 used-to the sweet gaze.INF of his beloved,  
*ya no podía vivir sin él /\*ello.*  
 now not could live without him/it  
 'Used to the sweet gaze of his loved one, he could no longer live without it.'

In Romanian the infinitive establishes anaphoric relations with the feminine demonstrative *aceasta* (14a), while the supine rejects the masculine-neuter *acesta* and can only be referred to by the genderless *asta* (14b), the common anaphor for CPs (14c). This suggests that infinitives are *feminine* while supines are *genderless* (default) (see details in Iordăchioaia & Soare 2008).<sup>7</sup>

- (14) a. *Am vorbit despre interpretarea lui Hamlet*  
 We spoke about the interpretation.INF of Hamlet  
*Se pare ca aceasta/??asta îi consacră pe actorii tineri*  
 Apparently, *this.F/??it* validates the young actors
- b. *Am vorbit despre interpretatul lui Hamlet*  
 We spoke about the interpretation.SUP of Hamlet  
*Se pare ca \*acesta/asta îi atrage pe toți actorii tineri.*  
 Apparently, *\*this.M/it* attracts all the young actors.'
- c. *Că Ion a venit, asta/\*aceasta/\*acesta știu*  
 that John has come, *it.N/ this.F/ this.M* I-know

This correlates with the defectiveness of the supine with respect to case declension; the supine cannot appear in the genitive-dative form.

- (15) *Alunecările de teren au apărut*

<sup>6</sup> The presence of a Classifier in the syntax and semantics of nouns in English has been independently argued for in Kratzer (2005). See also Lowenstamm (2007) for an insightful view on the interaction between *n*, gender and nominal classes.

<sup>7</sup> The 'long' infinitive (e.g. *cânta-re*) in Romanian is always a nominal. In verbal contexts the prepositional infinitive is used instead (e.g. *a cânta*). This explains the clear presence of feminine gender on the infinitive, despite its verbal properties like argument realization.

mudflows-the have occurred  
 din cauza tăierii / \*tăiatului pădurilor  
 because-of cut.INF.GEN / cut.SUP.GEN woods.GEN

In German, *dieses* is an anaphor for nouns only, while *das/dies* are anaphors for both nouns and CPs (see 16a, b).

- (16) a. *Daß Maria bereits angekommen ist,*  
 that Mary already arrived is  
*das/ dies / \*dieses weiß ich genau*  
 it/ this/ this know I well
- b. Hans hat *ein rotes Buch.*  
 Hans has a red book  
*Das/ Dies/ Dieses war sehr teuer*  
 it/ this/ this was very expensive

German NIs can be referred to by *dieses* (17a), but VIs cannot (17b). This suggests that German NIs are neuter, while VIs are genderless/default. It also correlates with the case defectiveness of VIs (18b).

- (17) a. *Nächtliches Beobachten der Sterne* gefällt ihm.  
**Dieses/Das** entspannt ihn.  
 at-night.Adj observe.INF the.GEN stars pleases him  
 this / it relaxes him
- b. *Nachts die Sterne Beobachten* gefällt ihm.  
 \***Dieses/Das** entspannt ihn.  
 at-night.Adv the.ACC stars observe.INF pleases him  
 \*this / it relaxes him
- (18) a. wegen *des Lesens* eines Buches  
 because-of the.GEN read.INF a.GEN book
- b. \*wegen ein Buch *Lesens*  
 because-of a.ACC book read.INF.GEN

*IV) Availability of plural:* Spanish and German nominalizations never pluralize. In Romanian, plural is available only with the infinitive (19). Some English NGs allow plural, if there is no competition with other affixes (see Alexiadou, Iordăchioaia & Soare to appear), but VGs do not (20). In section 4, we explore the link between the availability of plural and the aspectual properties of nominalizations.

- (19) *demolările\*demolaturile* frecvente ale cartierelor vechi  
 demolish.INF-PI/SUP-PI frequent-PI of quarters.GEN old  
 ‘the frequent demolitions of old quarters
- (20) a. the repeated killings of unarmed civilians

- b. \*Emma's readings the poem

V) *Possibility to combine with all types of determiners*: overt determiners are out in English VGs. German VIs allow definite determiners. The nominal counterparts in both languages allow all kinds of determiners.

- (21) a. \*That/\*the/\*a criticizing the book annoyed us  
 b. The/that/?a reading of the manuscript pleased us  
 c. Das/dieses/\*ein/\*kein/jedes die Marseillaise Singen  
 the/this/a/no/every the.ACC Marseillaise sing.INF  
 d. Das/dieses/ein/kein/jedes Singen der Marseillaise  
 the/this/a/no/every sing.INF the.GEN Marseillaise

The Romanian infinitive (22a) and the Spanish NI (22c) freely combine with determiners. By contrast, the Romanian supine (22b) and the Spanish VI (22d) only allow the definite determiner.

- (22) a. o/acea încalcare a drepturilor omului de către ministru  
 a/that violate.INF rights.GEN human by minister  
 b. (\*un/\*acel) spălat(ul) al rufelor  
 a/that wash.SUP(the) of laundry.GEN  
 c. Aquel/ese/este/un/el lamentar (\*desesperadamente) de  
 dos pastores  
 that/this/a/the lament.INF (desperately) of  
 two shepherds  
 d. \*Ese/\*aquel/el haber él escrito esa carta  
 this/that/the have.INF he.NOM written that letter

### 3.3 *Nominal and verbal mixed properties: summary and conclusions*

The most nominal properties involving gender and plural marking are clearly excluded in verbal nominalizations. The least nominal ones like the presence of genitive subjects are sometimes also shared by verbal nominalizations (e.g. the possessive subject in the English VG and the genitive subject in the Romanian supine). There is also an issue concerning the licensing of case: while a verbal internal structure usually involves an accusative object, this is not always so, e.g. in the Romanian supine. Moreover, only Spanish VIs license nominative case. In the next section, we focus on the aspectual properties of nominalizations, which will help us understand the interaction between nominal and verbal layers.

## 4. *Inner and outer Aspect in Nominalizations*

Following Verkuyl (1993), we differentiate between inner aspect



*The Romanian supine* can be formed from most verbs and shifts their inner aspect:<sup>9</sup> achievements (25a), accomplishments (25b) and punctual events (25c), all known as [+b]/telic, get a habitual reading in the supine:

- (25) a.    sositul            lui Ion    cu    întârziere  
           arrive.SUP-the John.GEN with delay  
           ‘John’s (habit of) arriving late’  
       b.    mîncatul    micului dejun    pe terasă  
           eat.SUP-the breakfast.GEN on terrace  
           ‘(the habit of) having breakfast on the terrace’  
       c.    Clipitul        Mariei    în acest moment e enervant  
           blink.SUP-the Mary.GEN in this moment is irritating  
           ‘Mary’s blinking in this moment is irritating.’

Following Iordăchioaia & Soare (2008), we assume that the supine, but not the infinitive, projects Aspect which hosts a *pluractional* operator (see Lasersohn 1995, Van Geenhoven 2004). This explains the compatibility of atelic *for*-PPs with inherently telic verbs (26a vs. 26b):

- (26) a.    sositul            lui Ion    cu    întârziere *timp de 3 ani*  
           arrive.SUP-the John.GEN with delay for 3 years  
       b.    #sosirea        lui Ion    cu    întârziere *timp de 3 ani*  
           arrive.INF-the John.GEN with delay for 3 years

*The English VG* is also grammatical with most verbs (27) (Borer 2005) and contributes imperfective/[−b] outer aspect Pustejovsky (1995). The projection of AspP in Romanian supines and English VGs is further supported by the compatibility with aspectual adverbs (4a), (28) (Alexiadou 1997, Cinque 1999). For discussion see Alexiadou et al. (to appear).

- (27) a.    John’s arriving at 5 pm is unlikely.  
       b.    John’s eating breakfast  
       c.    Mary’s blinking is annoying  
       d.    John’s knowing the answer

- (28) John’s constantly reading the morning newspaper

*Spanish verbal infinitives* have no special aspectual contribution, but they can appear in the perfective with *haber* (10a), so they exhibit aspect shift, and they are not sensitive to the inner aspect of the root ((29) vs. (32)).

- (29) a.    el andar            el niño    tan tarde por esa zona

<sup>9</sup> Cornilescu (2001) argues that the main difference between the supine and the infinitive is aspectual: the supine is atelic, the infinitive is telic, see section 4.2.

- the go-about.INF the child so late in that district
- b. el lamentar la familia lo sucedido  
the regret.INF the family the happened  
'the family regretting what happened'
- c. el llegar tan tarde el niño  
the arrive.INF so late the child
- d. el comprar una casa Juan  
the buy.INF a house Juan

Both *German infinitives* induce *imperfectivity* (Ehrich 1991); this is shown by the fact that even NIs of telic verbs do not tolerate resultative VPs, but allow atelic process-VPs.<sup>10</sup>

- (30) Das Abholzen des Waldes  
The deforest.INF the.GEN forest
- a. \*muss bis morgen früh erreicht sein  
must till tomorrow morning achieved be
- b. wird zwei Jahre lang fortgesetzt  
is two years long continued

#### 4.2 Inner Aspect: the [ $\pm$ count] feature on ClassP

Some other nominalizations are sensitive to the inner aspect of the base. We argue that they do *not* project AspP, but accommodate the inner aspect under Class.<sup>11</sup>

*The Romanian infinitive* is not compatible with atelic bases like the unergatives in (31) (Cornilescu 2001).

- (31) \*muncirea / \*alergarea lui Ion  
work.INF-the / run.INF-the of John.GEN

*The Spanish NI* and *the English NG* are both incompatible with telic bases (Miguel 1996, Borer 2005). Spanish NIs are fine with activities (32a), but out with achievements (32b) and accomplishments (32c)-

- (32) a. el trabajar de Juan en el campo

<sup>10</sup> The difference between GNIs and GVIs is that the latter refer only to generic events.

<sup>11</sup> On this analysis, the ClassP must 'see' the features within the VP domain. This can be formalized in terms of Agree: the specification of ClassP concerning singularity, division and homogeneity (Borer 2005, vol. 1: ch. 4) has to Agree with the specification of the predicate via probing into the VP. This is possible irrespectively of whether nP is a phase, as Agree is not subject to the Phase-Impenetrability Condition and intervention effects (see Bošković 2007).

- the work.INF of John in the garden
- b. \*el intenso llegar de Pedro a la habitación  
The intense arrive.INF of Pedro to the room
- c. \*el rápido construir la casa de los albañiles  
The fast build.INF the house by the workers

Borer (2005: 239ff.) shows that English NGs are possible with non-culminating events (activities and semelfactives in (33)), but out with achievements (34), creating an *anti-telicity effect*.

- (33) a. the sinking of the ships  
b. the falling of the stock prices  
c. the jumping of the cows
- (34) a. \*the arriving of the train  
b. \*the erupting of the Vesuvius  
c. \*the exploding of the balloon

Spanish NIs, Romanian infinitives and English NGs are incompatible with aspectual adverbs, which indicates the unavailability of AspectP (35a-c).

- (35) a. El (constante) murmurar (\*constatamete) del mar  
the constant whisper.INF constantly of the sea
- b. omiterea constanta/\*constant a detaliilor  
omit.INF constant/constantly of details.GEN
- c. John's constant omitting of details/\*constantly

A correlation emerges concerning the aspectual structure of nominalizations and their ability to pluralize (Alexiadou, Iordăchioaia & Soare to appear): Plural marking is only available with *bounded* (i.e. perfective or telic) aspect and in a *nominal environment* (i.e. presence of gender, case inflection, adjectival modification). For a structure to be nominal, nP and ClassP must be projected (cf. Picallo 2006, Borer 2005). NumP can be further projected on top of a Class [+count].

### ***5. The building blocks of nominalizations and their cross-linguistic distribution***

In general, nominalizations come either with the *verbal internal structure* in (36a) or with the *mixed internal structure* in (36b). In our terms, a verbal internal structure is associated with verbal functional projections, while a mixed internal structure is associated with the additional presence of nominal layers (see Borsley & Kornfilt 2000):

- (36) a. [ DP [ Verbal FP ... [ ... ] ]  
 b. [ DP [ Nominal FP ... [Verbal FP ... [ ... ]]] ]

We now address this distribution with respect to our constructions. The most verbal nominalization type is *Spanish VIs* (37). The licensing of nominative Case indicates that Tense is projected. The presence of Tense is evidenced by the presence of reflexive clitics in Spanish VIs (Pesetsky & Torrego 2002), assuming that clitics in Romance attach to T<sup>o</sup> (38a vs. 38b).

- (37) [ DP [ TP [ Aspect [ VoiceP [ vP [ Root ]]]]] ]

- (38) a. el afeitarse la barba Juan  
 the shaving-clitic the beard Juan  
 b. \*el afeitarse de la barba

*Romanian supines*, *English VGs* and *German VIs* have the structure in (39). The difference between them only concerns the features under Aspect<sup>0</sup> which are distributed as in (40).<sup>12</sup>

- (39) [ DP [ AspectP [ VoiceP [ vP [ Root ]]]]] ]

- (40) Romanian supine → pluractionality  
 English verbal gerund → imperfectivity  
 German verbal infinitives → genericity

(41) represents the constructions which have a rich nominal internal structure in addition to the verbal layers. *German NIs* have the structure in (41a), *Spanish NIs* the one in (41b), *Romanian infinitives* and *English NGs* the one in (41c):

- (41) a. [ DP [ ClassP [ nP [ AspectP [VoiceP [ vP ... ] ] ] ] ]  
 b. [ DP [ ClassP<sub>[-count]</sub> [ nP [VoiceP [ vP ... ] ] ] ]  
 c. [ DP [ (NumP) [ ClassP<sub>[±count]</sub> [nP [VoiceP [ vP ... ] ] ] ] ]

Adjectival modification and genitive Case assignment are located within the nP. Plural is available under NumP, provided that ClassP is [+count]. Low adverbs will be licit if AspectP is present (Borer 1993, Alexiadou 2001). This means that German NIs will license both adjectives and adverbs:

- (42) Das *dauernde laut* Singen der Marseillaise  
 the constant loudly sing.INF the.GEN Marseillaise

<sup>12</sup> One could argue that different Aspect projections are involved in each case, following Cinque (1999).

Romanian supines constitute an odd case, as the internal argument bears genitive case, although the structure is clearly verbal. But note that the Romanian supine is the only structure introduced by a suffixed determiner. We suggest that there is a link between this and the genitive Case in this nominalization. Specifically, the affixed article in the supine creates a nominal environment, albeit a defective one, hence the case that appears is the one found in nominal environments. Following Giusti (2002), the Romanian article is nothing more than a grammatical morpheme responsible for realizing nominal features, (cf. Abney 1987). As Giusti shows, it lacks semantic import, as the co-occurrence of two definite articles in one DP does not produce a two-referent interpretation effect. This is certainly not the case for the English or the German determiners.

A further point of variation concerns elements that appear in Spec,DP. Romance languages and German VIs disallow genitive subjects in pre-nominal position. For German we would like to suggest that PRO is present and for this reason an overt DP is blocked. In Romance this relates again to the A'-status of Spec,DP in these languages as opposed to English (Abney 1987).

## 6. Conclusion

The variation found in nominalizations within and across languages cannot be attributed to a Germanic vs. Romance parameter; we find micro-variation constrained by the compatibility of the general building blocks of verbs and nouns. The layers responsible for argument structure/Aktionsart properties (VoiceP/vP) and the nominal external syntax (DP) are always present. For the fine-grained differences, we argued for the inclusion of further functional layers from the verbal and nominal domain: AspP, ClassP, NumP. The varied distribution of these nominal and verbal layers explains the gradual properties in nominalizations across languages (cf. Ross 1972).

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