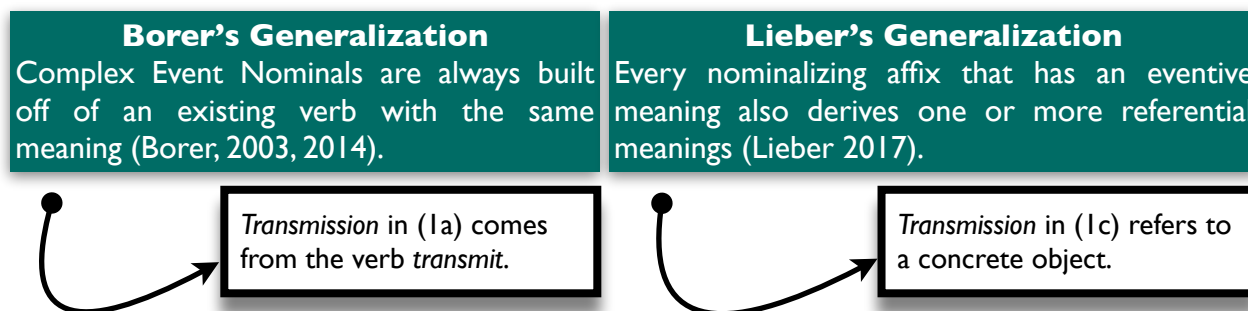# Allomorphy and Allosemy in Nominalizations

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There is a broad consensus across a variety of otherwise-distinct frameworks that morphology is realizational (Siddiqi & Harley 2016:540): morphosyntactic features have a layer of analysis that is distinct from, and systemically prior to, the way they are expressed. When a single morphosyntactic feature gets more than one form, we call it **allomorphy**. Recent work has embraced the idea that something similar or identical happens in the semantics, sometimes referred to as **allosemy**:[1] a single morphosyntactic feature can get more than one meaning. In the first part of this talk, I show how allosemy resolves a long-standing tension in the analysis of action nominalizations, which have been understood since Grimshaw 1990 to be systematically ambiguous. The tension stems from the two generalizations below.
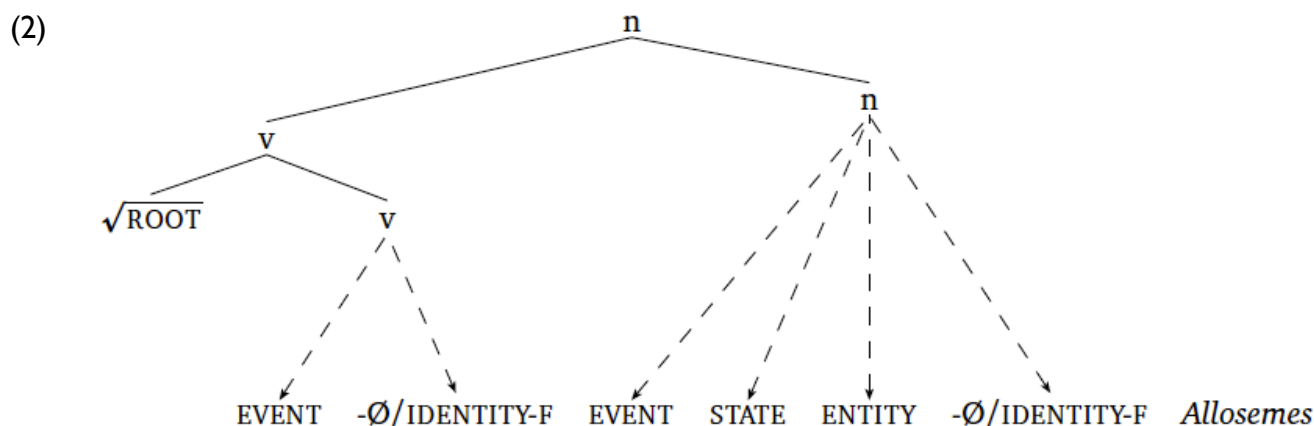
(1) Grimshaw's Three Readings of Nominalizations
      a. Jyn Erso's transmission of the Death Star plans   Complex Event Nominal (CEN)
      b. The transmission was almost interrupted   Simple Event Nominal (SEN)
      c. The transmission is just lying there on the floor   Result/Referring Nominal (RN)

Borer's Generalization	Lieber's Generalization
Complex Event Nominals are always built off of an existing verb with the same meaning (Borer, 2003, 2014).	Every nominalizing affix that has an eventive meaning also derives one or more referential meanings (Lieber 2017).

Transmission in (1a) comes from the verb *transmit*.

Transmission in (1c) refers to a concrete object.

Lieber's Generalization suggests that all readings of nominalizations should stem from a single structure, while **Borer's Generalization** suggests that the structure of nominalization should contain a verbal, eventive meaning that is missing in the RN reading.
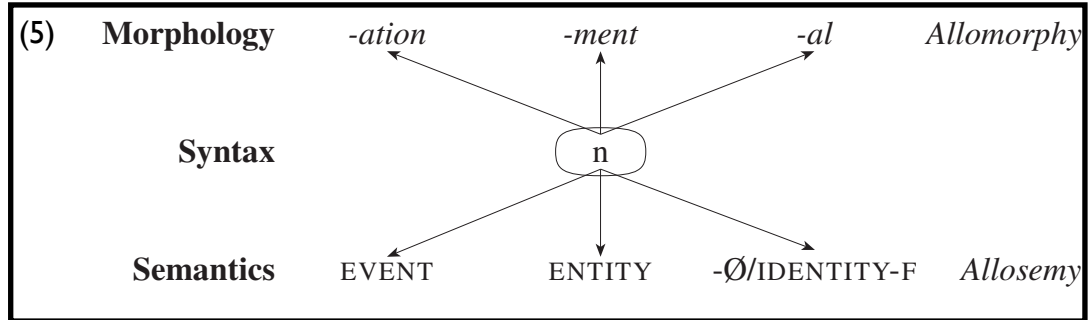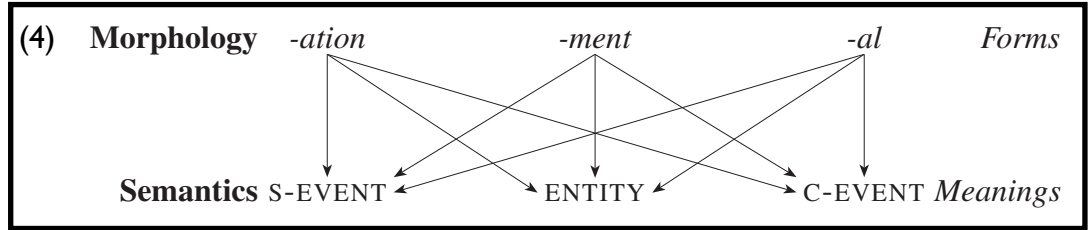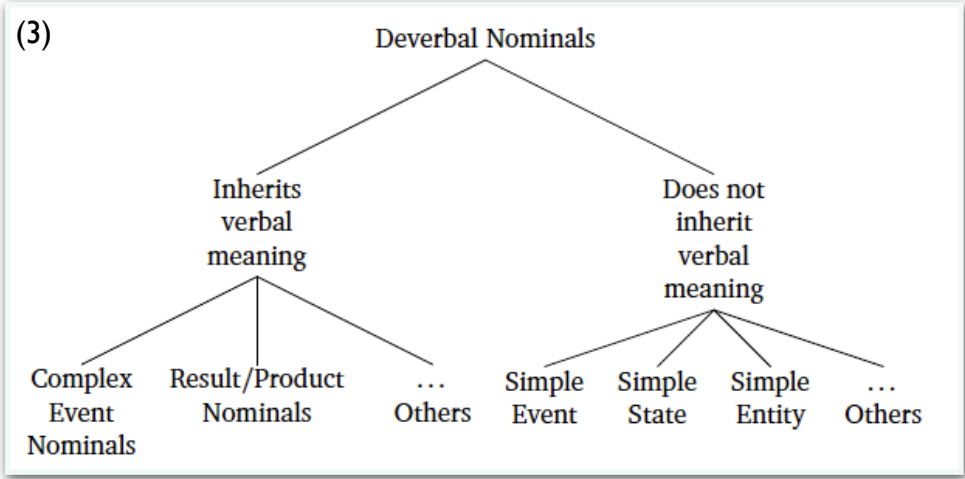
To resolve this tension, I review arguments based on Icelandic data that all readings of nominalizations can be derived from the structure in (2), with the post-syntactic insertion of different allosemes at LF.

(2)

This analysis generates a novel formal typology of the ambiguity of nominalizations, distinct from Grimshaw's, which is built on a fundamental distinction between readings that do and do not inherit verbal

[1] Wood 2012, 2023; Anagnostopoulou & Samioti 2013; Marantz 2013; Myler 2014, 2016; Ingason 2016; Kastner 2016; Schäfer 2017; Saab & Lo Guercio 2020; Tyler 2020; Harðarson 2021; Schwarzschild 2022; a.o.

meaning. Borer's Generalization follows because the CEN reading is built off of an alloseme selection that leads to inheritance of verbal meaning. Lieber's Generalization follows because the syntax is underspecified for the PF realization of the structure in (2) as well. Instead of assuming that different affixes happen to have the same three (or more) meanings, as in (4), we have one syntactic n head, which can be realize by different forms, on the one hand, and different meanings, on the other, as illustrated in (5).

(3)

Deverbal Nominals

- Inherits verbal meaning
  - Complex Event Nominals
  - Result/Product Nominals
  - ...Others
- Does not inherit verbal meaning
  - Simple Event
  - Simple State
  - Simple Entity
  - ...Others

(4) **Morphology**   *-ation*   *-ment*   *-al*   *Forms*

Semantics S-EVENT   ENTITY   C-EVENT *Meanings*

(5) **Morphology**   *-ation*   *-ment*   *-al*   *Allomorphy*

Syntax   n

Semantics   EVENT   ENTITY   -Ø/IDENTITY-F   *Allosemy*

Therefore, once an affix has an eventive meaning, and is realizing the structure in (2), the other allosemes for (2) become available.

In the final part of the talk, I compare allosemy and allomorphy more broadly and discuss two apparent differences between them. First, there is at least one case conditioning environment that is extremely common for allosemy but rare for allomorphy: the complement of a verb frequently conditions allosemy on that verb. For example, the meaning of *pick* is conditioned by the presence or absence of the preposition *on*.

(6) a. Sue picked Sarah. (='chose')   b. Sue picked on Sarah. (='teased')

Second, apparent "free variation" seems to be much more common in allosemy than in allomorphy. For example, the word *transmission* can get an eventive meaning or a concrete entity reading, and nothing in the grammar forces one choice over the other. I will argue that in both cases, these are differences in quantity, not in kind. Cross-complement allomorphy does exist in the case of number-conditioned root suppletion, and free variation in allomorphs does occur, for example in pairs like *dreamed/dreamt*. I suggest that the fact that these are more common in allosemy stem from the nature of the interface in question and the way language is acquired and used, rather than some difference in the mechanisms or locality conditions themselves. However, this suggestion is in fact a call for future research aimed understanding how the same mechanisms are used in different interfaces (including, for example, the PF of sign languages), with the constraints on *how* they are used stemming from the intrinsic properties of those modules, giving us a way to understand the modules themselves and the way that they are wired together.

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