Prosody preservation and borrowing verbs as nouns in three systems with lexical prosody
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The claim by Moravcsik (1975) that “if verbs are borrowed, they seem to be borrowed as if they were nouns” generated a long-standing discussion within language contact research (see e.g. Wohlgemuth 2009 for a recent summary). More precisely, the claim was that “the borrowing language employs its own means of denominal verbalization to turn the borrowed forms into verbs”. This can be interpreted either as a statement about the integration pattern (which may not be mentally represented in monolinguals) or as a claim about the syntactic representation of borrowed verbs in general, whereby borrowed verbs contain an nP embedded under the vP. Both interpretations constitute important hypotheses, which can serve as useful windows into the relation between morphology and phonology. The first interpretation is compatible with the claim by Simonović (2015) that the integration pattern essentially gets selected by Lexical Conservatism (Steriade 1997): the pattern with most preservation of the properties of the base and least stem allomorphy integrates loanwords. The second interpretation makes important predictions whose implementation is highly dependent on the theory of morphology employed. In this presentation I use a recent elaboration of Distributed Morphology in which the separation between roots and categorial heads is extended to derivational suffixes (Lowenstamm 2015) and put it to use in accounting for verb borrowing and denominal verbalisation in three Western South Slavic varieties: Slovenian, Western Serbo-Croatian (henceforth Croatian) and Eastern Serbo-Croatian (henceforth Serbian). All three varieties have lexical prosody. Slovenian has lexically determined stress. In Serbo-Croatian each word has a lexically determined H, and stress assignment follows from its distribution: if the syllable with a H is initial, it also gets stress; if the syllable with a H is non-initial, the stress goes to the preceding syllable, forming a disyllabic rising accent (Zsiga & Zec 2013).

Simonović (2018) discusses exceptional preservation of base prosody in Western South Slavic verbs, showing that WSS verbs allow only two prosodic shapes: stress/H stem-finally (1a) and stress/H on the theme vowel (1b), analysed as the contrast betweenaccented and accentless roots. The only verbs which ever display more contrast are borrowed and denominal verbs (2). Since nouns generally allow more prosodic contrast than verbs (Smith 2011), Simonović (2018) argues that verb prosody should be viewed as the regular WSS prosody, whereas all the cases of additional contrast should be analysed as a consequence of special Faithfulness, and, at least for the classes discussed by Simonović (2018), a single type of special Faithfulness seems to be sufficient: NOUNFAITH (Smith 2001).

Against the sketched background, variation within WSS is analysed. All three varieties have two patterns for denominal verbs which both allow for exceptional preservation of the base prosody: -a-ti and -ov-a-ti (illustrated in 2a; a is a theme vowel in both cases, ti is the infinitive ending). Tellingly, each variety now has a stabilised borrowing pattern in which one of the two suffixes is used for English verbs (illustrated in 2b). The necessity of a denominal verbalisation analysis is relatively limited for Slovenian and Croatian, where a large majority of verbs (but not all) become reanalysable as verbalised accented roots (all the verbs in 3 have a stem-final stress/H). For Serbian, however, virtually all borrowed verbs from the modern contact with English display the intermediate root -ov-, which makes the denominal verbalisation analysis very attractive. Completing the picture for all three varieties, we turn to older borrowed verbs, especially those from the contact preceding the one with English, in which a large class of international verbs were integrated and in which no prosodic contrast is instantiated (4).

In sum, the deverbal nominalisation analysis seems to be a strong cross-linguistic tendency rather than an absolute rule and its availability depends both on the phonological makeup of the available denominal verbalisation patterns and on the amount of prosodic contrast in the source language.
(1) Slovenian  Croatian  Serbian
a. Accented √  gléd-a-ti ‘to look’  gléč-ta-d-a-ti ‘to look’  gléč-ta-d-a-ti ‘to look’
b. Unaccented √  kóp-á-ti ‘to dig’  kóp-a-ti ‘to dig’  kóp-a-ti ‘to dig’

(2) Slovenian  Croatian  Serbian
da. Denominal verbs  málic-a-ti ‘to snack’  úžin-a-ti ‘to snack’  úžin-a-ti ‘to snack’
  (cf. málica ‘snack’)  (cf. úžin-a ‘snack’)  (cf. úžin-a ‘snack’)
  vér-ov-a-ti ‘to believe’  vjé-ov-a-ti ‘to believe’  vjé-ov-a-ti ‘to believe’
  (cf. véra ‘faith’)  (cf. vjéra ‘faith’)  (cf. vjéra ‘faith’)  
b. Borrowed verbs  édit-a-ti ‘to edit’  rikvé-st-a-ti ‘to request’  rikvé-st-a-ti ‘to request’  
  tríger-a-ti ‘to trigger’  invájt-a-ti ‘to invite’  invájt-a-ti ‘to invite’

(3) Borrowed verbs which can be reanalysed as verbalised accented root
Slovenian  Croatian  Serbian
  sénd-a-ti ‘to send’  sénd-a-ti ‘to send’  sénd-a-ti ‘to send’
  submit-a-ti ‘to submit’  éč-ti-díta-ti ‘to edit’

(4) International verbs
Slovenian  Croatian  Serbian
Infinitive  asist-ir-a-ti  asist-ir-a-ti-ti  asist-ir-a-ti-ti
  asist-ir-a-ti-mo  asist-ir-a-ti-ti-mo  asist-ir-a-ti-ti-mo
Present.1Pl  fotograf-ir-a-ti  fotograf-ir-a-ti-ti  fotograf-ir-a-ti-ti
  fotograf-ir-a-ti-mo  fotograf-ir-a-ti-ti-mo  fotograf-ir-a-ti-ti-mo
Infinitive  protest-ir-a-ti  protest-ir-a-ti-ti  protest-ir-a-ti-ti
  protest-ir-a-ti-mo  protest-ir-a-ti-ti-mo  protest-ir-a-ti-ti-mo
Present.1Pl

References