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Deficient probes in West Circassian nominalizations

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14 April 2023



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In certain syntactic configurations,  $\varphi$ -probes are deficient:

- may not assign case
- may not expone agreement

Verbal  $\varphi$ -probes are frequently deficient in non-finite constructions.

**My proposal:** φ-probes are deficient by default.

Non-deficient probes result from licensing by the highest head in the extended projection  $-C^0$ .

 $\varphi$ -probes **must be licensed** to agree with and license nominal arguments.

- Nominal arguments must be licensed by φ-agreement (Kalin 2019)
- $\varphi$ -probes are merged as deficient  $\Rightarrow$  cannot license nominals.
- Full φ-feature probing must be licensed by the highest head in the extended projection – C<sup>0</sup>.

**Evidence:** deficient probes in West Circassian nominalizations.

# Nominalization



- verbal extended projection (=TP)
- embedded under nominalizer
- displays deficient verbal agreement
- cannot license DP arguments

# Deficiency in the absence of C<sup>0</sup>



- verbal φ-probes are deficient unless embedded under C<sup>0</sup>
- \$\phi\$-agreement and licensing are licensed by C<sup>0</sup>

## Background on West Circassian

- Functional structure of nominalizations
- $\phi$ -probe licensing by C<sup>0</sup>
- Licensing arguments in nominalizations
- Conclusion

## West Circassian (or Adyghe):

- Northwest Caucasian
- Republic of Adygea, Russia
- agglutinating, polysynthetic
- ergative case and agreement



#### Data:

- fieldwork on the Temirgoy dialect in the Shovgenovsky district of Adygea
- Adyghe Corpus by Timofey Arkhangelskiy, Irina Bagirokova, Yury Lander, and Anna Lander (http://adyghe.web-corpora.net/)

# West Circassian is polysynthetic

Head marking and pro-drop:



'He showed me to them for your sake.'

(Korotkova and Lander 2010:301)



# Case marking

## -r (ABS):

- intransitive subject
- direct object
- -m (OBL):
  - transitive subject
  - applied object

### $\mathbf{S}$

'This girl dances well.'

# Α

sabəjxe-m haxe-r qaλeв<sup>w</sup>əв children-**ов**ь dogs-**АВS** saw

'The children saw the dogs.'

### ΙΟ

mafe-qes ježa<br/>pe-m $${\rm sek}^{\rm w}{\rm e}$$ day-each school-OBL go$ 

'I go to school every day.'

# High absolutive

► DP<sub>ABS</sub> moves to Spec,TP

evidence from parasitic gaps and reciprocal binding

(Ershova 2019, 2021, to appear b)



(See also Bittner and Hale 1996; Manning 1996; Baker 1997; Aldridge 2008; Yuan 2018, 2022; Coon et al. 2021;

Royer to appear, a.o.)

Background on West Circassian

Reciprocals are covert and trigger **reciprocal agreement** on the predicate:

- correlates with syntactic position of the reciprocal
- $\blacktriangleright$  does not affect transitivity  $\Rightarrow$  not a de-transitivizing operator

Reciprocals are subject to Condition A

= must be bound by a local c-commanding antecedent

(Ershova 2019, to appear b)

# **ABS** external argument binds IO $\Rightarrow$ REC replaces IO agreement

you with us  $\hat{s}^{w} \rightarrow q \rightarrow d$ - de-  $\hat{s}^{w} e \check{s}' t$ 2PL.ABS- DIR- IPL.IO- COM- dance.FUT

BASELINE

'You(pl) will dance with us'

# **ABS** external argument binds IO $\Rightarrow$ REC replaces IO agreement

you with each other \$\vert\$ qə- ze- de- \$\vert\$ weš't 2PL.ABS- DIR- REC.IO- COM- dance.FUT

RECIPROCAL

'You(pl) will dance with each other'

#### ERG binds IO

- ▶ REC replaces IO agreement
- ▶ ERG antecedent bears OBL (=ERG) case

axe-me ?eg<sup>w</sup>əbże-r Ø- ze- r- a- təž'ə that.PL-OBL cup-ABS 3ABS- REC.IO- DAT- 3PL.ERG- give

'They pass the cup to each other.'

(http://adyghe.web-corpora.net/)

#### ABS binds IO

- REC replaces IO agreement
- ▶ ABS antecedent bears ABS case

sabəjxe-r Ø- z- e- pλəž'əx child.pl-ABS 3ABS- REC.IO- DAT- look.pl

'The children are looking at each other.'

ABS/ERG external argument binds IO:



Reciprocals provide evidence for high absolutive syntax:

- reciprocals are bound by a c-commanding antecedent
- ▶ ABS theme binds ERG agent and applied object (IO)

ABS c-commands both ERG and IO.



'S/he brought us to you.'

BASELINE



'S/he brought us together (= to each other).' **RECIPROCAL** 





#### BASELINE

'We saw you(pl).'



RECIPROCAL

'We saw each other.'



#### RECIPROCAL

Intended: 'We saw each other.'

# Reciprocals and high absolutive

ABS binds reciprocals in ERG and IO positions:



## West Circassian finite clauses:

- $\checkmark\,$  ergative, oblique and absolutive case assignment on DPs
- $\checkmark$  φ-agreement with multiple arguments
- ✓ high absolutive syntax: ABS raises to Spec, TP

(evidence from reciprocals)

## Next: nominalizations

- X arguments licensed as possessor or pseudo-incorporated
- × full φ-agreement unavailable
  - $\checkmark$  deficient  $\varphi$ -agreement still possible!
- high absolutive syntax

Nominalizations include structure up to TP, but are deficient in  $\varphi$ -agreement and licensing without C<sup>0</sup>.

- Background on West Circassian
- Functional structure of nominalizations
- φ-probe licensing by C<sup>0</sup>
- Licensing arguments in nominalizations
- Conclusion



complements and modifiers incorporated

tjə- <u>še-n-</u> xebze <u>-daxe</u> -xe -r <u>1PL.POSS-</u> <u>lead-NML</u>- rule <u>-beautiful</u> -PL -ABS 'our beautiful rules of conduct' (Ershova 2020:431)

# Nominalizations: deficient verbal extended projection

Ershova (2020)

arguments as possessors or incorporated  $\Rightarrow$ no verbal licensing/case no verbal \u03c6-agreement  $\rightarrow$  possessor  $\phi$ -agreement lage-xe-r Ø-Sethač'ə FINITE dish-PL-ABS 3ABS- 1SG.ERG- DYN- wash 'I am washing dishes.' wiəle**ue** thač'a -č'e NOMINALIZATION **2sg.poss- dish-** wash -NML 'your manner of washing dishes'

- X no verbal case/licensing
- X no full φ-agreement
- ✓ BUT includes structure up to TP

## **Evidence:**

- 1. morphological reflexes of  $v^0$  and Appl<sup>0</sup>
- 2. temporal adverbs
- 3. deficient φ-agreement with anaphors
- 4. high absolutive

# v and Appl are present in nominalizations

## nominalizations include causatives

jə- xebze- **Be-** k<sup>w</sup>edə -č'e
3SG.POSS- rule- **CAUS-** perish -NML
'its destruction (= causing to perish) of traditions'

nominalizations include applicatives

ja- ha $\hat{z}^w$ ə- **de-**  $\check{z}eg^w$ ə -  $\check{c}$ 'e 3PL.POSS- puppy- **COM-** play -NML 'their way of playing with puppies'  $\begin{bmatrix} \textbf{mafe-qes} & wj \textbf{a} \textbf{b} \textbf{c} & t^w \textbf{a} \textbf{c} \textbf{a} \textbf{h} & k^w \textbf{e} \textbf{-n} \end{bmatrix} \quad sjeze \breve{s}' \textbf{a} \textbf{b} \\ day-each & 2sg.poss- store- go -nml I am tired \\ \end{bmatrix}$ 

'I'm tired of your going to the store every day.'

Compare with non-derived nouns:

\* mafe-qes pjerjedač day-each broadcast

Intended: 'everyday program'

## reciprocal agreement with applicative

axer Ø- **ze-f** e- g<sup>w</sup>ə?ež'ə -x they.ABS 3ABS- **REC.IO-BEN-** DYN- endeavor -PL

'They work hard for each other.'

FINITE

ja- **ze-fe-** g<sup>w</sup>ə?ež'ə -č'e 3PL.POSS- **REC.IO-BEN-** endeavor -NML

'their manner of working hard for each other' NOMINALIZATION

reciprocal agreement with ergative

 $\Rightarrow \mathsf{DP}_{ABS} \text{ binds } \mathsf{DP}_{ERG}$  $\Rightarrow \mathbf{high \ absolutive}$ 

Ø- qe- zer- e- ke-  $\hat{s}^{w}e$  - $\check{z}'\partial$ -x 3ABS- dir- rec.erg- dyn- caus- dance -re -pl

'They are making each other dance.' FINITE

ja- **qe- zere-** ве- ŝ<sup>w</sup>a -č'е ЗPL.POSS- **DIR- REC.ERG-** CAUS- dance -NML

'their manner of making each other dance' NOMINALIZATION

## ✓ Nominalizations include a full TP:

- high ABS binds ERG reciprocal
- v<sup>0</sup> and Appl<sup>0</sup> morphology
- temporal adverbs
- anaphor agreement

## BUT:

- X no full φ-agreement
- X no licensing of DP arguments

#### The puzzle

If nominalizations contain a full TP, why is the verbal syntax so diminished?

- no full φ-agreement, only anaphor agreement
- no verbal case or licensing

#### The solution:

Verbal  $\varphi$ -probes are present in nominalizations, but **they are deficient** in the absence of C<sup>0</sup>.

- Background on West Circassian
- Functional structure of nominalizations
- $\phi$ -probe licensing by  $C^0$
- Licensing arguments in nominalizations
- Conclusion
$\phi\text{-probes}$  must be licensed to agree with and license nominal arguments.

- $\varphi$ -probes are merged as deficient  $\Rightarrow$  cannot expone full agreement and cannot license nominals.
- Full φ-feature probing must be licensed by the highest head in the extended projection – C<sup>0</sup>.

#### West Circassian nominalizations:

Contain structure up to TP, including verbal φ-probes

(Appl<sup>0</sup>,  $v^0$ , and T<sup>0</sup>).

• The  $\varphi$ -probes are **deficient** in the absence of C<sup>0</sup>.

## Licensing polysynthetic $\phi$ -probes

- West Circassian polysynthetic φ-agreement involves multiple φ-probes: T<sup>0</sup>, v<sup>0</sup>, and Appl<sup>0</sup>.
  - exponed as distinct morphemes
  - separated by morphology which is retained in absence of φ-agreement
- lf c-commanded by C<sup>0</sup>, they are licensed as full  $\varphi$ -probes.
  - $\Rightarrow$  may expone agreement
  - ⇒ may license DPs
- ▶ If they are not c-commanded by C<sup>0</sup>, they are deficient.

(e.g. in nominalizations)

Agreement prefixes expone separate  $\varphi$ -probes:

- transparent agglutinating morphology
- prefixes may be separated by non-agreement morphology which is retained in nominalizations

tə- q- jə- ве-č'ә-ž' 1PL.ABS- DIR- ЗSG.ERG- CAUS-rise-again

```
's/he raised us again'
```

FINITE

jə- **qe-** ве-č'ә-n ЗSG.POSS- **DIR-** CAUS-rise-NML

'its raising' (http://adyghe.web-corpora.net/)

NOMINALIZATION

Agreement prefixes expone separate  $\varphi$ -probes:

- transparent agglutinating morphology
- prefixes may be separated by non-agreement morphology which is retained in nominalizations

ŝheč'afeØ-a-f-jə-ŝə-š'tərrespect3ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-3SG.ERG-do-IPF.PST

'He was showing respect for them.' FINITE

pš'ə- ŝheč'efe- **fe-** ŝə-č'e prince- respect- **BEN-** do-NML

```
'showing respect for princes'
```

```
(http://adyghe.web-corpora.net/)
```

NOMINALIZATION

### Verbal $\phi$ -agreement



'I brought you with them.'



## Full $\varphi$ -agreement is licensed by C<sup>0</sup>



- Appl<sup>0</sup>, v<sup>0</sup> and T<sup>0</sup> are merged deficient:
  - ✓ number X person
- Appl<sup>0</sup> agrees with  $DP_{IO}$ .
- $\triangleright$   $v^0$  agrees with  $\mathsf{DP}_{\mathrm{ERG}}$ .
- T<sup>0</sup> agrees with and attracts DP<sub>ABS</sub>.
- [π] on DP arguments is unchecked.

## Full $\varphi$ -agreement is licensed by C<sup>0</sup>



- C<sup>0</sup> is merged and agrees with T<sup>0</sup>, v<sup>0</sup> and Appl<sup>0</sup>.
- Licenses [π] on lower probes.
- Probes check [π] on DPs and license them.
- Probes are spelled out with fully specified φ-features.

# Deficient $\varphi$ -agreement without C<sup>0</sup>



### TP is embedded under $n^0$ :

- Verbal probes remain deficient.
- ▶ [π] on DPs remains unchecked ⇒ DPs remain unlicensed.
- No exponent for deficient [#] agreement
  - $\Rightarrow$  probes are not spelled out overtly.

Compare with C-to-T feature inheritance!

### Compare with feature inheritance: T licensed by C

Chomsky (2000, 2001) on English:





# $T^0$ is a defective EPP probe

No  $C^0 \Rightarrow$  infinitival  $T^0$  is a **defective probe**:



Deficient [#] probes in nominalizations cannot license full DPs.

**Prediction:**  $\varphi$ -deficient nominals should be possible in nominalizations.

#### **Confirmed by:**

1. anaphors: specified only for [#]

(Kratzer 2009; Reuland 2011; Sundaresan 2020, a.o.)

- 2. PRO: unspecified for φ-features (e.g. Chomsky and Lasnik 1993; Landau 2015)
- 3. structurally deficient NPs: not specified for  $\varphi$ -features

ja- žene- **ze-fe-** dəž'ə -n 3PL.POSS- dress- **REC.IO-BEN-** sew -NML

'their sewing of dresses for each other'

- ► Anaphor is specified only for [#].
- ▶ Deficient probe can license anaphor by checking [#] feature.

### φ-deficient anaphors are licensed



- Deficient φ-probes cannot license full DPs.
- ▶ Reciprocal only has [#]
   ⇒ may be licensed by Appl<sup>0</sup>.
- Appl<sup>0</sup> expones φ-deficient anaphor agreement.

- PRO is unspecified for φ-features
   ⇒ does not require licensing by φ-agreement.
   Nominalizations may contain PRO.
- $\begin{bmatrix} \mathsf{PRO}_{\mathsf{PL}} & \mathsf{q}\mathsf{e}\text{-} & \mathsf{z}e\text{-} & \mathsf{d}e\text{-} & \hat{\mathsf{s}}^\mathsf{w}e\text{-}\mathsf{n}\mathsf{e}\text{-}\mathsf{r} \end{bmatrix} \qquad pro_{\mathsf{s}\mathsf{G}} \quad \mathsf{s}\mathsf{e}\mathsf{g}^\mathsf{w}\mathsf{r}\mathsf{j}\mathsf{e}\mathsf{h}\mathsf{e}$ DIR- **REC-** COM- dance-NML-ABS I like
- lit. 'I<sub>SG</sub> like [ PRO<sub>PL</sub> dancing with each other ].' (Ershova 2020:457)

### $\phi$ -deficient PRO is licensed



- PRO is unspecified for φ-features
  - $\Rightarrow$  does not need  $\phi\text{-licensing}$
- no φ-agreement
   ⇒ no exponence on T<sup>0</sup>
- reciprocal triggers deficient φ-agreement
  - $\Rightarrow$  spelled out on Appl<sup>0</sup>

## Licensing of NPs without $\varphi$ -features

- Structurally deficient NPs are not specified for number or person ~ generic interpretation
- They do not require φ-licensing

 $\Rightarrow$  may appear in nominalizations.

NPs are pseudo-incorporated = licensed by adjacency (next section)

jə-  $\hat{s}^w$ əhaftən-  $\check{s}'$ ə-  $g^w$ ə $B^w$ ə - $\check{c}'e$ 3SG.POSS- **gift-** LOC- hope -NML

'her anticipating of presents'

- Nominalizations include a **full TP**.
- The verbal  $\varphi$ -probes are **deficient** without licensing by C<sup>0</sup>.
- Presence of deficient φ-probes is confirmed by licensing of φ-deficient nominals: anaphors, PRO and bare NPs.

### Licensing in nominalizations:

- 1.  $\phi$ -deficient pronouns (PRO and anaphors)
  - $\rightarrow$  by  $\phi\text{-deficient}$  verbal probes
- 2. bare NPs (no φ-features)
- 3. + one full DP

 $\rightarrow$  by adjacency

 $\rightarrow$  as possessor

### Summary: Deficient $\varphi$ -probes in nominalizations

- Nominalizations include a full TP.
- The verbal φ-probes are deficient without licensing by C<sup>0</sup>.
- Presence of deficient φ-probes is confirmed by licensing of φ-deficient nominals: anaphors, PRO and bare NPs.

### Licensing in nominalizations:

1. φ-deficient pronouns (PRO and anaphors)

 $\rightarrow$  by  $\phi\text{-deficient}$  verbal probes



#### NOMINAL LICENSING

- Background on West Circassian
- Functional structure of nominalizations
- φ-probe licensing by C<sup>0</sup>
- Licensing arguments in nominalizations
- Conclusion

In nominalizations:

- ► verbal  $\varphi$ -probes are deficient  $\Rightarrow$  cannot license full DPs
- arguments may be licensed by the nominal syntax

- = DP-internal syntax-to-prosody mapping
- one full DP as possessor = by nominal φ-probe Poss<sup>0</sup>

In nominalizations:

- $\blacktriangleright \text{ verbal } \phi \text{-probes are deficient} \Rightarrow \text{cannot license full DPs}$
- arguments may be licensed by the nominal syntax

bare NPs — by adjacency
 = DP-internal syntax-to-prosody mapping

• one full DP — as possessor = by nominal  $\varphi$ -probe Poss<sup>0</sup>

Phrasal modifiers and complements in DP are pseudo-incorporated because DP phase is mapped to a single phonological word.

(Ershova 2020)

#### MATCH PHASE(-TO-WORD):

A **phase** in syntactic constituent structure must be matched by a **prosodic word** in phonological representation.

- Match Theory constraint (Selkirk 2011)
- Inspired by Compton and Pittman (2010); Barrie and Mathieu (2016)

### One word, but no syntactic noun incorporation

nominal head + modifiers = one phonological word (← pass language-specific wordhood diagnostics)

```
(Lander 2017; Ershova 2020)
```

incorporated roots:

```
    may be modified
    š'e -[?aŝə -š'e] -fabe -r
    milk -[sweet -too] -warm -ABS
    'the warm milk that is too sweet' (Lander 2017:85)
```

#### may be phrasal

[c<sup>w</sup>eqe- əč'jə-š'əʁən]- t<sup>w</sup>əč'an -xe -r [footwear- and- clothes]- shop -PL -ABS 'shops of shoes and clothes' (Lander 2017:93)

### DP phase is mapped to one phonological word



Nominals must be licensed:

- by φ-agreement
- ▶ by adjacency to the head that selects it (e.g. Levin 2015; Branan 2021)

#### In West Circassian:

An NP is licensed by adjacency if it is pronounced

- 1. in same phonological word as the head that selects it, and
- 2. adjacent to the projection of the head that selects it.

An NP is licensed by adjacency if it is pronounced

- 1. in same phonological word as the head that selects it, and
- 2. adjacent to the projection of the head that selects it.
- $\Rightarrow$  NPs are pronounced in their theta-positions.

### NPs are pronounced in their theta-positions

wash-NML-ABS

'the girls' manner of dish-washing'



- NP<sub>ABS</sub> is selected by V<sup>0</sup> and moves to Spec,TP
- ▶ NP<sub>ERG</sub> is selected by  $v^0$ ⇒ licensed by adjacency to v'
- NP<sub>ABS</sub> in Spec, TP is not adjacent to V<sup>0</sup>
   ⇒ must be pronounced in base position

(\*dish-) girl- dish-

In nominalizations:

- $\blacktriangleright$  verbal  $\phi\text{-probes}$  are deficient  $\Rightarrow$  cannot license full DPs
- arguments may be licensed by the nominal syntax

= DP-internal syntax-to-prosody mapping

one full DP — as possessor = by nominal φ-probe Poss<sup>0</sup>

# φ-licensing by Poss<sup>0</sup>

pŝaŝe-m jə- heč'e- je- že -n
girl-OBL 3SG.POSS- guest- DAT- wait -NML
'the girl's waiting for guests'



- Nominalizations may contain one DP argument.
- φ-licensed by Poss<sup>0</sup>.
- Poss<sup>0</sup> is deficient

   like verbal φ-probes.
   ⇒ licensed by D<sup>0</sup>.

#### $\varphi$ -licensing

- ► in DP: by  $Poss^0$  → licensed by  $D^0$
- ▶ in CP: by T<sup>0</sup>,  $v^0$  and Appl<sup>0</sup> → licensed by C<sup>0</sup>

# In nominalizations: $D^0$ licenses $\varphi$ -probe on Poss<sup>0</sup> Question: Why can't $D^0$ license $\varphi$ -probes on $T^0$ , $v^0$ and Appl<sup>0</sup>?

# Why can't D<sup>0</sup> license verbal $\varphi$ -probes?



# Why can't D<sup>0</sup> license verbal φ-probes?



φ-probe licensing

- = Agree between
  - 1. highest head of extended projection
  - 2. heads of the same extended projection

 Agree in the category feature: in CP − [V] in DP − [N] ⇒ D<sup>0</sup> cannot license verbal φ-probes

- Background on West Circassian
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- West Circassian nominalizations display a diminished verbal syntax despite containing a full TP.
- The φ-probes in nominalizations are deficient

 $\Rightarrow$  may only license  $\varphi$ -deficient nominals and expone  $\varphi$ -deficient agreement.

 Fully specified φ-probes are counter-cyclically licensed by Agree in the category feature (V or N)

 $\Rightarrow$  verbal probes must be licensed by C<sup>0</sup> nominal probes must be licensed by D<sup>0</sup>

### Counter-cyclic nominal licensing

- Nominals are licensed by φ-feature checking.
- Deficient φ-probes agree with, but cannot license arguments until C<sup>0</sup> is merged.
- Constrained counter-cyclicity:
  - Agree and Merge apply cyclically.
  - Feature checking and licensing are delayed.

 $\sim$  Pesetsky and Torrego's (2007) feature sharing.


## Counter-cyclic nominal licensing

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 Agree between C<sup>0</sup> and lower verbal heads independently motivated by variable islandhood effects and phase unlocking (Ershova to appear a).

Possible approach for "indirect licensing" cross-linguistically:

genitive of negation in Slavic (Bailyn 2004)

- ergative case in Hindi (Legate 2008)
- augmentless nominals in Zulu (Halpert 2015)
- dative case in Georgian (Ershova 2016)
- PP selection in Semitic (Hewett to appear)
- Alternative account to mixed extended projections (Borsley and Kornfilt 2000; Kornfilt and Whitman 2011)

- West Circassian consultants: Svetlana K. Alishaeva, Saida Gisheva, Susana K. Khatkova, and Zarema Meretukova
- Karlos Arregi, Vera Gribanova, Boris Harizanov, David Pesetsky, and audiences of SMircle at Stanford, LingLunch at MIT, Syntax Reading Group at UMass, LSA 95, and the Speaker Series at UPenn.
- Funding sources:
  - Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation (BCS-1749299)
  - Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in the Humanities at Stanford University

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- ► reflexives are local subject oriented (Ershova 2019, to appear b)  $\Rightarrow$  bound by highest DP in vP
- reflexive agreement is possible in nominalizations

mə pŝaŝem **Zə- q-** jə- ʁe- ŝ<sup>w</sup>e -ž'ə -ʁ this girl(ERG) **REFL.ABS- DIR-** 3SG.ERG- CAUS- dance -RE -PST

'This girl made herself dance.'

FINITE

jə- **zə-** qə- ве- ŝ<sup>w</sup>a -č'е 3sg.poss- **REFL.ABS- DIR-** CAUS- dance -NML

'her manner of making herself dance' NOMINALIZATION