Different types of nouns, different types of projections

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Abstract

This paper proposes [1] for Basque nominal domain. Expanding on the ideas of Distributed Morphology, all nouns are syntactically derived from a categorically unspecified root, which is nominalized by an n-head. With deverbal nouns, this unspecified root is first dominated by a series of structure-creating nodes (V-v). Event nouns take an external and an internal argument due to their argument structure, and have an event reading, while result nouns have the option to take an adjunct-external argument and an internal argument, and have a referential reading. Thus, event nouns project the v that introduces the event reading and the external argument, while result nouns project a defective v* that has a non-active reading and does not introduce an external argument (Kratzer 1996). With common nouns, however, the √RP merges directly with the little n, making impossible for them to take arguments. Finally, with result nouns and common nouns, a possessor is possible. Hence, two types of n are proposed: n* introduces the possessor, while n does not. The possessor raises to the Spec-FP position along with the external and the internal argument.

[1]The label possessor is given to any argument that has referential relation to the following nominal constituents: the kinship noun, nouns with inherent part-whole relations, and ordinary nouns.
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(1)

Keywords: Basque, syntax, nominal domain, deverbal nouns.

1 Introduction

My hypothesis (1) is based on the proposals outlined in the Distributed Morphology (Marantz 1997), which includes the assumption that lexical categories do not have a specific categorical feature [+/-N] or [+/-V], but are originated as neutral roots and assigned a categorical feature by the syntactic structure. Thus, for the nominal structure, I propose the structure shown in (2).

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2 I gratefully acknowledge the help I obtained from Elena Benedicto, Karlos Arregi, Xabier Artiagoitia and Jon Ortiz de Urbina. All shortcomings are my own.
This syntactic structure is also based on the assumption that in some fundamental respects verbs and deverbal nouns seem to share argument properties. This idea was already presented by Chomsky (1970) with the following examples:

(3) a. The enemy destroyed the city.
   b. The enemy’s destruction of the city.

In (3a) we have the verb *destroyed* that takes two arguments: the agent *the enemy* and the theme *the city*. In (3b) there is not a verb, but a deverbal noun *destruction* that also takes the same arguments as the verb. These two examples may suggest that deverbal nouns show the same argument structure as verbs and, in fact, some researchers (e.g. Borer 1993, Hazout 1991) relate the verbal-like properties of deverbals to the presence of a verbal projection within the nominal structure. Under this assumption, the deverbal nouns are split into two subcategories (Grimshaw 1990); event nouns and result nouns (the eventive and referential reading). Examples of event nouns and result nouns are shown in (4a–c) and (4d–f) respectively (examples taken from Grimshaw 1990):

(4) a. The *felling* of the trees.
   b. The *destroying* of the town.
   c. The *development* was applauded.
   d. The *expression* is desirable.
   e. This semester’s *assignment* led to disaster.
   f. The *solution* to the problem simplified the assignment.
This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 will expand on the idea of verbal projections within the nominal structure. Section 3 will propose two types of n-heads. Section 4 will show that the possessor moves to the Spec-PossP position along with the external and the internal argument. Finally, section 5 will summarize the main points of this paper.

2 Verbal projections

Grimshaw (1990) shows some salient differences between the two types of deverbal nouns (event nouns and result nouns) that can be explained in terms of absence versus presence of argument structure. Event nouns contain an argument structure allowing them to take arguments, and have an eventive reading. Result nouns, on the other hand, lack an argument structure, therefore do not have to take arguments, and have a referential reading.

Grimshaw provides tests to identify event nouns and result nouns. Some of these tests will be applied to identify Basque event nouns and result nouns:

i. Result nouns can appear as predicates, whereas event nouns cannot.

(5)  
  a. *Hau Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketa da  
     This Franco.gen Gernika.REN destroying.D be.PRS.3s  
     ‘This is Franco’s destroying of Gernika’
  b. Hau euskalkien sailkapena da  
     This dialect.gen classification.D be.PRS.3s  
     ‘This is the classification of the dialects’

The ungrammaticality of (5a) indicates that suntsiketa is an event noun, while the grammaticality of (5b) reveals that sailkapen is a result noun.

ii. Implicit argument control is possible with event nouns, but result nouns do not permit it.

(6)  
  a. Gernikaren suntsiketak euskaldunak beldurtzeko hiru ordu  
     Town.gen destroying.D.ERG Basque.D.PL frighten.to three hour  
     iraun zuen  
     last AUX.3s3s  
     ‘The destroying of Gernika to frighten the Basques lasted three hours’

See Artiagoitia (2000: 137–41) for similar data.
b. *Euskalkien sailkapena euskaldunak goratze go prai
dialect/gen classification.D Basque/d.pl praise/to pretty
da be/prs.3s
‘The classification of the dialects to praise the Basques is pretty’

Since suntsiketa in (6a) allows the implicit argument control euskaldunak bel-
durtzeko, we know that it is an event noun. Conversely, as sailkapen in (6b) does not allow the implicit argument control, we also know that it is a result
noun.

iii. Event nominals do not pluralize, while result nominals do. Consider the fol-
lowing examples:

(7) a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketak beldurgarriak izan
Franco/gen Gerniaka gen destroying/d.pl scary/d.pl be
ziren
aux/pst.3pl
‘Franco’s destroyings of Gernika were scary’
b. Hauek euskalkien sailkapenak dira
These dialect/ren classification/d.pl be/prs.1s
‘These are the classifications of the dialects’

The fact that when we pluralize suntsiketa ‘destroying’ turns into ungram-
maticality indicates that suntsiketa in (7a) is an event noun. Nevertheless, sailkapen ‘classification’ can be pluralized in (7b), which shows that it is a result noun.

iv. Event nouns only allow the definite articles (8a–b), while result nouns can also occur with the indefinite determiner (8c–d).

(8) a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketa beldurgarria izan zen
Franco/gen Gerniaka ren destroying.D scary.D be aux.3s
‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika was scary’
b. ?Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketa bat beldurgarria izan zen
Franco/gen Gerniaka gen destroying a scary.D be aux.3s
‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika was scary’
c. Hau euskalkien sailkapena da
This dialect/gen classification.D be.1s
‘This is the classification of the dialects’
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d. Hau euskalkien sailkapen bat da
   This dialect classifica gen classification a be.1s
   ‘This is a classification of the dialects’

Suntsiketa does not allow the indefinite article (8b), while sailkapena does (8d).
Thus, this evidence indicates that suntsiketa in (8a–b) is an event noun, and sailkapen in (8c–d) a result noun.

v. Another test that can be applied is the use of temporal constituents such as ‘three days’ with deverbals. An event noun may be referred by temporal constituents whereas a result noun cannot as examples (9a–b) show.

(9) a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsikutak hiru egun iraun
    Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying. D.ERG three day last
    a.ux.pst.3s3s
    ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika lasted three days’

b. *Euskalkien sailkapenak hiru egun iraun zuen
   dialect .GEN classification. D.ERG three day last
   a.ux.pst.3s3s
   ‘The classification of the dialects lasted three days’

Event nouns, due to their eventive reading, can have a temporal constituent referring to it. However, result nouns do not allow a temporal constituent since they lack this eventive reading. Thus, we conclude that suntsiketa ‘destro ying’ in (9a) is an event noun, while sailkapen ‘classification’ in (9b) is a result noun.

The following tests that Grimshaw (1990) argues for the eventive/resultative distinction have been applied: (i) event nouns cannot appear as predicates, (ii) implicit argument control is not possible with result nouns, (iii) event nominals cannot be pluralized, (iv) event nouns cannot occur with the indefinite determiner and the numeral one, and (v) result nouns cannot be referred by temporal constituents such as three days. Based on their results, we can conclude that suntsiketa ‘destroying’ in the preceding examples is an event noun, while sailkapen ‘classification’ is a result noun.

Additionally, like verbs, event nouns have an argument structure that must be satisfied, while result nouns lack this argument structure. According to Grimshaw (1990), event nouns always need to take an external argument and an internal argument, whereas result nouns take them optionally. Hence, we would expect for suntsiketa ‘destroying’ to have an argument structure and, therefore, to take
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an external and internal argument obligatorily, while for sailkapen ‘classification’ to lack this argument structure and, therefore, to take an external argument and an internal argument optionally.

Consider the following Basque examples with no little pro:

(10) a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun
    Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying.D.ERG three day last
    zuen.
    AUX.PST.3S3S
    ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika lasted 3 days’

    b. *Suntsiketak hiru egun iraun zuen.
       destroying.D.ERG three day last AUX.PST.3S3S
       ‘The destroying lasted 3 days’

    (11) a. Euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
        dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.3S.PRS
        ‘The classification of the dialects is tremendous’

    b. Sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
       classification.D tremendous.D be.3S.PRS
       ‘The classification is tremendous’

The event noun suntsiketa in (10a) takes the internal argument Gernikaren in order to fulfill the argument structure requirement, because if it does not, the sentence is ruled out (10b). In (11c–d), however, we can see that it is optional for the result noun sailkapen ‘classification’ to take the internal argument Euskalkien. Assuming that arguments cannot appear as predicates with a copula since they would not be able to receive a thematic role from the head noun (Anderson 1983, Artiagoitia 2006), the following examples (12a–b) confirm that both Gernikaren in (10a) and Euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ in (11a) are the arguments of suntsiketa ‘destroying’ and sailkapen ‘classification’ respectively:

(12) a. *Suntsiketa Gernikarena da
      destroying.D.ERG Gernika.GEN.D be.PRS.3S
      ‘The destroying is of Gernika’

    b. *Sailkapena euskalkiena da
       classification.D dialect.GEN.D be.PRS.3S
       ‘The classification is of the dialects’

Gernikaren ‘of Gernika’ in (12a) and euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ in (12b) appear as predicates with a copula and, therefore, they are not able to receive a thematic-role. The ungrammaticality of (12a–b) indicates that Gernikaren ‘of
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Gernika’ and Euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ are arguments of suntsiketa ‘destroying’ and sailkapen ‘classification’ respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that Gernikaren in (10a) and Euskalkien ‘classification’ in (11a) are the internal arguments of suntsiketa ‘destroying’ and euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ respectively.

In regard to external arguments, Grimshaw (1990) argues that event nouns must always take the external argument while the result nouns take it optionally. This is illustrated in the following examples in Basque with no little pro:

(13) a. *Gernikaren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun zuen
   Gernika.GEN destroying.D.ERG three day last AUX.PST.3S3S
   ‘The destroying of Gernika lasted three days’

   b. Euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
   dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.3S.PRS
   ‘The classification of the dialects is tremendous’

Neither the event noun suntsiketa ‘destruction’ in (13a) nor the result noun sailkapen ‘classification’ in (13b) takes an external argument. However, the ungrammatically of (13a) in contrast with the grammaticality of (13b) show that event nouns have to take an external argument, while result nouns do not have to.

In fact, for Grimshaw (1990) the only true external argument is the event argument that event nominals take. The external argument that result nouns take, on the contrary, is an adjunct-argument, which appears either as a by-phrase or as a possessor. Let’s contemplate the Basque sentences (14a–b):

(14) a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun zuen
   Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying.D.ERG three day last
   AUX.PST.3S3S
   ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika lasted three days’

   b. Bonaparteren euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
   Bonaparte.GEN dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.3S.PRS
   ‘The classification of the dialects by Bonaparte is tremendous’

Following Grimshaw (1990), in (14a) the event noun suntsiketa takes the event argument Francoren ‘Franco’s’ whereas in (14b) the result noun sailkapen ‘classification’ takes the adjunct-argument euskalkien ‘of the dialects’. Yet how do we know that Francoren in (14a) and Bonaparteren in (14b) are different? If event nouns take a true external argument, while result nouns take an external adjunct-argument, we will expect to be impossible for the external argument of event nouns

*Both subject and object genitives, as well as regular possessors, are isomorphic and equally prenominal Artiagoitia (2012b).
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to appear in a predicate position, but possible for the external argument of result nouns. In fact, this is true as examples (15a–b) show:

(15)  a. *Gernikaren suntsiketa Francoren da
        Gernika.GEN destroying.D. Franco.GEN.A be.PRS.3S3S
    ‘The destroying of Gernika is Franco’s’

b. Euskalkien sailkapena Bonaparteren da
        dialect.GEN classification.D Bonaparte.GEN.A be.PRS
    ‘The classification of the dialects is Bonaparte’s’

The ungrammaticality of (15a) proves that *Francoren is a true argument of suntsiketa ‘destroying’. On the other hand, the ungrammaticality of (15b) indicates that Bonaparteren is not a true argument of sailkapen ‘classification’, therefore, it is an adjunct-argument.

In summation, Basque event nouns have to take an internal and an event argument in order to fulfill their argument structure. Basque result nouns, on the contrary, do not have an argument structure so they are not required to take arguments. When they do, however, they take an internal argument, and an external adjunct-argument. Hence, given that deverbal nouns show these verbal-like properties, this section will argue for a VP and vP projection within the nominal constituent of such nouns.

2.1 VP projection

As it has been shown in (10a–b, 11a–b), repeated here as (16a–b, 17a–b), event nouns must take an internal argument, while result nouns do not have to.

(16)  a. Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun zuen
        Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying.D three day last AUX.PST.3S3S
    ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika lasted 3 days’

b. Francoren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun zuen
        Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying.D three day last AUX.PST.3S3S
    ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika lasted 3 days’

(17)  a. Euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
        dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.PRS
    ‘The classification of the dialects is tremendous’

b. Sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
        dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.PRS
    ‘The classification is tremendous’

It has been suggested that the internal argument is originated inside the root phrase (√RP) and assigned the thematic role by the root-head [Alexiadou 2001]
If this were true, assuming that all nouns are syntactically derived from a categorically unspecified root, which is nominalized by an n-head, nothing would prevent common nouns to take an internal argument too. However, this is not possible as the following examples (18a–b) show:

(18) a. *Gernikaren ura hotza da
    Gernika.gen water.d cold.d be.prs.3s
    ‘The water of Gernika is cold’
    b. *Euskalkien aulkia polita da
    dialect.d.gen chair.d beautiful be.prs.3s
    ‘The chair of the dialects is pretty’

In (18a) the common noun ur ‘water’ takes Gernikaren ‘of Gernika’ as its internal argument causing the sentence to be ungrammatical. In (18b), the common noun aulki ‘chair’ takes Euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ as its internal argument also causing the sentence to be ungrammatical. We confirm that Gernikaren ‘of Gernika’ and aulki ‘chair’ in (18a–b) are arguments of ur ‘water’ and aulki ‘chair’ respectively by showing that they are not allowed as predicates with a copula (19a–b):

(19) a. *Ura Gernikaren da
    water.d Gernika.gen be.prs.3s
    ‘The water is of Gernika’
    b. *Aulkia euskalkien da
    chair.d dialect.d.gen be.prs.3s
    ‘The chair is of the dialects’

Given that Gernikaren ‘of Gernika’ in (19a) and euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ in (19b) appear as predicates with a copula, they are not able to receive a thematic-role. The ungrammaticality of these examples confirms that Gernikaren ‘of Gernika’ is an argument of ura ‘water’ and that so is euskalkien ‘of the dialects’ of aulki ‘chair’ in (19a–b). Thus, Gernikaren in (18a) and Euskalkien ‘classification’ in (18b) are in fact the internal arguments.

I claim that the internal argument cannot be originated inside the root phrase (√RP) and assigned the thematic role by the root-head. Yet, I propose that the internal argument is originated in the Specifier position of VP, which allows event nouns and result nouns to take an internal argument. Hence, under the standard assumption that adverbs modify VPs and not NPs [Jackendoff 1997], we would expect for adverbs to appear with deverbals. Consider the following examples, one with an aspectual adverb (20a) and another with a manner adverb (20b).
(20) a. *Francoren Gernikaren bonba bidezko suntsiketa
Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN bomb through destroying.d
‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika through bombs’
b. *Francoren Gernikaren eguneroko suntsiketa
Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN daily destroying.d
Franco’s daily destroying of Gernika

The ungrammaticality of (20a–b) may suggest that a verbal projection is absent from deverbal nouns. Nevertheless, as noted by Alexiadou (2001), adverbs can appear in Greek nominalizations with event nouns.

(21) i katastrofi ton stihion olosheros (mas kateplikse)
the destruction the evidence-GEN completely us shocked

(21) contains the adverb olosheros ‘completely’ modifying the deverbal katastrofi ‘destruction’. The fact that the sentence is grammatical shows that there is a verbal projection within this nominal constituent. However, Alexiadou (2001) also argues that in Greek manner (22a) and aspectual adverbs (22b) are acceptable, whereas modal (22c) and speaker-oriented ones (22d) are not.

(22) a. i katastrofi ton eghrafon toso prosektika
the destruction the documents-GEN that carefully
b. i katastrofi ton eghrafon kathimerina
the destruction the documents-GEN daily
c. *i katastrofi ton stixion pithanos
the destruction the evidence-GEN possibly
d. *i katastrofi ton stixion ilikrini
the destruction the evidence-GEN frankly

Alexiadou (2001) explains that this variation is related to the hypothesis that claims that adverbal phrases are related to specialized function projections (Alexiadou 1997, Cinque 1999). According this hypothesis, aspectual adverbs and manner adverbs are linked to Aspect Phrase and Voice Phrase respectively and these two Phrases are in a lower projection than the modal and speaker-oriented adverbs. Thus, she argues that the incompatibility of modal and speaker-oriented adverbs (22c–d) indicates that low verbal projection is present within Greek deverbal

nouns (23a). Following this line of argumentation, I suggest that the incompatibility of manner and aspectual adverbs with Basque deverbals (20a–b) indicates that the verbal projection in Basque is even lower than in Greek (23a). In the following section I will claim that Basque deverbal nouns present the verbal projection (23b):

(23)  
   a.  \[
   \text{AspP/VoiceP} \\
   \text{Asp/Voice} \quad \text{vP} \\
   \text{v} \quad \text{VP} \\
   \text{Internal Arg.} \quad \text{V'} \\
   \text{V} \quad \text{\sqrt{RP}} \\
   \text{\sqrt{R}} 
   \]

   b.  \[
   \text{vP} \\
   \text{VP} \quad \text{v} \\
   \text{Internal Arg.} \quad \text{V'} \\
   \text{\sqrt{RP}} \quad \text{V} \\
   \text{\sqrt{R}} 
   \]

2.2 vP projection

As it has already been demonstrated, one difference between an event noun and a result noun is that the former takes an external event-argument and has an event reading, whereas a result noun has the option to take an external adjunct-argument and has a referential reading. Consider one sentence with an event noun (24a) and another sentence with a result noun (24b):

(24)  
   a.  \[
   \text{Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketak hiru egun iraun} \\
   \text{Franco's destroying of Gernika lasting three days}
   \]

   b.  \[
   \text{Franco's destroying of Gernika lasted three days'}
   \]
b. Bonaparteren Euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da.

Bonaparte GEN dialect GEN classification D tremendous D be 3S PRS

‘The classification of the dialects by Bonaparte is tremendous’

This difference suggests that event nouns project a v that introduces the event reading and the event argument, while result nouns project a v* that has a non-active reading and does not introduce an external argument. Furthermore, given that v* can get an external argument incorporated through a preposition (Kratzer 1996), result nouns have the option of taking an external adjunct-argument. In conclusion, event nouns will project the syntactic structure shown in (25a), and result nouns the one shown in (25b):

\[
\text{(25) a.} \\
\text{NP} \quad \text{n} \\
\text{vP} \quad \text{Spec} \quad \text{v'} \quad \text{Event Arg.} \\
\text{VP} \quad \text{v} \quad \text{Internal Arg.} \\
\text{V'} \quad \sqrt{RP} \quad \text{V} \quad \sqrt{R} \\
\text{b.} \\
\text{NP} \quad \text{n} \\
\text{vP} \quad \text{(Adjunct Arg.)} \\
\text{VP} \quad \text{v'} \quad \text{Internal Arg.} \\
\text{V'} \quad \sqrt{RP} \quad \text{V} \quad \sqrt{R}
\]

Based on Burzio’s generalization (1986), it is widely accepted that the v that introduces the external argument assigns Case to the internal argument. There-
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Therefore, we would expect the internal argument in Basque to be in absolutive since Case/Agree source of absolutive is v [Laka 2000, Rezac 2008, Rezac et al. 2011]. Let’s consider the following contrastive examples:

(26) a. *Francoren Gernika suntiketa
   Franco/gen Gernika/abs destroying/d
   ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika’

   b. Francoren Gernikaren suntiketa
   Franco/gen Gernika/gen destroying/d
   ‘Franco’s destroying of Gernika’

An internal argument in absolutive makes the sentence ungrammatical (26a), while an internal argument in genitive makes it grammatical (26b). This fact may be possible evidence against the existence of a vP in event nouns. Nevertheless, this paper follows Keskin (2009) to maintain the claim of a vP projection.

Assuming Chomsky’s (2005) proposal that the $\phi$-features that T uses to agree with the subject are not inherent to T but are derivative from C, Keskin proposes in the case of deverbal nouns the $\phi$-features in v are derivative from D. That is, Case assignment to objects in the event nouns is attributed to D, and not to v. Keskin demonstrates that Case in event nouns correlates with subject agreement morphology. To do so, he provides examples of Turkish (27a), in which the event noun shows agreement with the possessor, and Korean (27b–c) and Japanese (27d–e), in which that agreement does not exist.

(27) a. Siz-in Rohan-ı istila-nız
   2pl-gen Rohan-gen ACC invasion-2pl
   ‘your invasion of Rohan’

   b. John-uy yenge-uy kongpu
   John-gen English-gen study
   ‘John’s study of English’

   c. *John-uy yenge-lul kongpu
   John-gen English-acc study
   lit. ‘John’s study English’

   d. Gun-no sono machi-no hakai
   army-gen that city-gen destruction
   ‘the army’s the destruction of that city’

   e. *Gun-no sono machi-o hakai
   army-gen that city-acc destruction
   lit. ‘the army’s the destruction that city’ (Keskin 2009: 139–140)
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In (27a), in the present of a subject (external argument) sizin ‘your’, the event noun istila ‘invasion’ is marked with a subject agreement affix -niz, and, furthermore, the internal argument Rohan-t ‘Rohan’ is in accusative case. In (27b–e), on the contrary, the event noun does not show agreement with the external argument, and the internal argument cannot be in accusative case (27c, e), but has to be in genitive (27b, d).

These crosslinguistic examples suggest that when subject agreement morphology (i.e. \(\varphi\)-features instantiating in D) is not present in the event nouns, accusative case assignment to the object is barred, which indicates that \(v\) depends on these \(\varphi\)-features in order to assign Case. In the case of Basque, since event nouns do not show agreement with the external argument, and the internal argument cannot be in accusative case (26a), but has to be in genitive (26b), we conclude that the subject agreement morphology (i.e. \(\varphi\)-features instantiating in D) is not present in event nouns, and therefore, \(v\) cannot assign Case.

2.3 Lack of verbal projections

With respect to common nouns, they do not have an argument structure making them impossible neither to take an internal argument (28a)\(^5\), nor an external argument (28b)\(^6\).

(28) a. *Euskal literaturaren aulkia polita da

   Basque literature.D.REN chair.D beautiful be.PRS.3s

   ‘The chair of Basque Literature is pretty’

b. *Arotzaren aulkia polita da

   Carpinter.D.REN chair.D beautiful be.PRS.3s

   ‘Carpinter’s chair is pretty’

Therefore, assuming that the arguments are originated and assigned thematic roles in the verbal projections (vP and VP), I claim that common nouns show the following structure:

(29) nP
    \(\sqrt{RP}\) n°
    \(\sqrt{R}^\circ\)

\(^5\)This sentence is grammatical if Euskal literaturaren ‘of Basque literature’ is interpreted as possessive. For instance, imagine we organize a discussion with the representatives of Iberian literature (Galician, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese and Basque) and each of them has to sit down on a chair. In this context we can understand as ‘the chair that Basque literature happen to get’.

\(^6\)(28b) is grammatical under the interpretation of Arotzaren ‘Carpinter’s’ being the owner of the chair.
All nominal syntactic constructions, event nouns (25a), result nouns (25b) and common nouns (29), project an nP. The following section will discuss the syntactic properties of this layer.

3 noun-phrase

This paper assumes the Distributed Morphology framework (Marantz 1997) in that nouns are syntactically derived and show an internal structure as the one of sentences. Under the framework of Distributed Morphology, lexical categories do not have a specific categorical feature [+/-N] or [+/-V], but the roots are interpreted as neutral. The roots are assigned a categorical feature by the syntactic structure, that is, the root is governed by a functional head that will determine the lexical category. The lexical category will manifest as a noun when the root is governed by a nominal functional head (30a) or a verb when the root is governed by a verbal functional head (30b).

\[
(30) \quad a. \quad NP \\
\quad \quad n^o \quad \sqrt{RP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \sqrt{R^o} \\
\quad b. \quad vP \\
\quad \quad v^o \quad \sqrt{RP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \sqrt{R^o}
\]

The following subsections will address the two syntactic functions that the n-head has. The first one will deal with nominalization, while the second will discuss which are the properties of the n-head that allows or blocks it to introduce a possessor.

3.1 n-head assigns [+N]

The event nouns’ and result nouns’ roots are neuter in position until they enter into relation with a higher functional head resulting in a nominalization. Marantz (1997) argues that the head responsible for assigning [+N] lexical category to the root is n.

In Basque there is a long list of deverbal nouns that are derived from the root adding a nominalizer suffix. In the following examples (31) we can see some roots and their corresponding deverbal nouns after the suffix incorporation:
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(31) **Root**
suntsi ‘destroy’  
azter ‘examine’  
irakur ‘read’  
ebalua ‘evaluate’  
garbi ‘clean’  
konpon ‘fix’  
gomendio ‘advice’  
sor ‘create’  
eraiki ‘build’  
ager ‘appear’  
aurkez ‘present’

**Deverbal noun + D**
suntsiketa ‘the destruction’  
azterketa ‘the examination’  
irakurketa ‘the reading’  
ebaluaketa ‘the evaluation’  
garbiaketa ‘the cleaning’  
konponketa ‘the fixing’  
gomendio ‘the advice’  
sorkunta ‘the creation’  
eraikunta ‘the building’  
agerpen ‘the appearance’  
aurkezpen ‘the presentation’

The suffix, which gets attached to the root, is situated in the n-head position and nominalizes its complement. **(32)** shows the syntactic structure of a deverbal noun such as suntsiketa ‘destroying’:

(32)

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{nP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{vP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{n} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Spec} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{v’} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{suffix} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{VP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{v} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Internal Arg.} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{V’} \\
\downarrow \\
\sqrt{RP} \\
\downarrow \\
\sqrt{R}
\end{array}\]

Taking this into consideration and under the Distributed Morphology framework, my hypothesis suggests that also common nouns are neutral until they are assigned [+N] category by the n-head. Common nouns, as mentioned before, differ from deverbal nouns in that they lack verbal nodes (vP and VP), which explains their impossibility to take arguments. The syntactic tree **(33)** shows the structure of a common noun:
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Summarizing, we have a root that does not have a specific categorical feature [+/-N] or [+/-V] until it is assigned one by the n-head. Deverbal nouns have verbal nodes (vP and/or VP) between the √RP and nP, while common nouns do not.

3.2 Types of n-heads

I follow Longobardi (2001) and Alexiadou et al. (2007) in that the possessor argument also originated inside the nominal domain and it c-commands both subject and object arguments, and also assume that the possessor is originated in the Spec-nP (Radford 2000). For the sake of this paper, the label ‘possessor’ is used to refer to the argument that has a referential relation to the following nominal constituents: nouns with inherent part-whole relations (34a–b) and ordinary nouns (34c–d):

(34)  a.  Aulkiaren lau hanka
corner.D.GEN four leg
‘The chair’s four legs’

b.  Aulkiaren lau hankak
corner.D.GEN four leg.PL
‘The chair’s four legs’

c.  Neskaren etxe asko
girl.D.GEN house many
‘The girl’s many houses’

d.  Neskaren etxe hau
girl.D.GEN house D.PROXIMAL
‘This house of the girl’

Notice in (34b, d) that possessors are compatible with determiners, which cause the examples to have a definite reading, whereas in (34a, c) there is not an overt determiner and the example does not have definite interpretation. Thus, this data provides evidence to support Artiagoitia’s (2012b) claim that as in Catalan Picallo (1991), Italian Schoorlemmer (1998), and Hungarian Szabolcsi (1994), definiteness and possessor are dislocated in Basque.
Anderson’s (1983) predicate test shows that Aulkiaren in (30a–b) and Neskaren in (34c–d) are possessive genitives because they can appear as predicates (35a–b), and therefore they receive the thematic-role neither from the V-head nor the v-head.

(35) a. Lau hankak aulkiarenak dira
dirfour leg.D.PL chair.D.GEN.AK be.PRS.3PL
‘The four legs belong to the chair’
b. Etxe hau neskarena da
dirhouse d.proximal girl.D.GEN.D be.PRS.3S
‘This house is the girl’s’

Additionally, possessors can co-occur with results nouns, but not with event nouns (36a–b):

(36) a. *Nire Francoren Gernikaren suntsiketa
poss.1S Franco.GEN Gernika.GEN destroying.D
‘My Franco’s destroying of Gernika’
b. Nire Euskalkien sailkapena ikarragarrizkoa da
poss.1S dialect.GEN classification.D tremendous.D be.3S.PRS
‘My classification of the dialects is tremendous’

In order to explain why possessors can co-occur with ordinary nouns, nouns with inherent part-whole relations and result nouns, while they cannot with event nouns, this paper proposes that, parallel to the two types of v (one introducing an external argument and another not), there are also two types of n; n* does not contain an event argument in its denotation and can introduce the possessor, while n contains an event argument in its denotation and does not introduce a possessor. Expanding on Kratzer’s (1996) ‘Event Identification’, n* will be incompatible with the vP that has v as its head, whereas it will be compatible with a vP that that has a v* as its head or a common noun. n, on the other hand, with an event argument in its denotation, will match the former vP with its own e-argument. Hence, we derive the possibility of a possessor with result nouns (37a), nouns with inherent part-whole relations and ordinary nouns (37b), but not with event nouns (37c).
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The syntactic tree (37a) predicts that result nouns can have a possessor, an adjunct argument and an internal argument co-occurring. Eguzkitza (1993) shows that this is possible with picture nouns (38a–b). In fact, not only it is possibility to
have the three genitives with picture nouns but also with result nouns (38c):

(38) a. Von Thyssen-en Riberaren eskalearren erretratua
    Von Thyssen.gen Ribera.gen beggar.d.gen portrait.d
    ‘Von Thyssen’s Ribera portrait of the beggar’ (Eguzkitza 1993: 166)

b. Monzonen Leizarragaren bibliaren itzulpena
    Monzon.gen Leizarraga.gen bible.gen translation.d
    ‘Monzon’s Leizega’s translation of the bible’ (Eguzkitza 1993: 170)

c. Nire Bonaparteren Euskalkien hiru sailkapen
    poss.1s Bonaparte.gen dialect.gen three classification.d
    ikarragarrizkoak dira tremendous.d be.3pl
    ‘My three classifications of the dialects by Bonaparte are tremendous’

Given that the possessor, the external argument and the internal argument share the same case morphology (-ren), it is only the hierarchy which determines the thematic role of each of them as it will be shown in the next section.

4 The Functional Phrase

After the possessor, the external argument and the internal argument DPs are originated, the unvalued Case feature [u-Case] in their respective D has to be valued. Artiagoitia (2009, 2012a) proves that both the external argument and the internal argument move to a Spec-FP[a] a projection above NP and below DP, and argues that they check genitive case with the F-head under this multiple specifier configuration. Assuming that the possessor is originated in the Spec-nP, I claim that the possessor also raises to the Spec-FP position. By showing that the possessor raises to a position higher than the QP but lower than the DP, I will conclude that it moves to the Spec-FP.

First, as in (1) the QP is higher in the structure than the nP, a quantifier originated in the Spec-QP (e.g. hainbat ‘many’) would precede the possessor if there were no movement involved. Nevertheless, as it can be observed in the following examples (39a–b), a quantifier originated in the Spec-QP must appear between the possessor and the deverbal noun.

(39) a. Nire hainbat txakurrekin gogoratu naiz
    poss.1s many dog.pl.instr remember be.1s
    ‘I have just remembered my many dogs’

    Artiagoitia (2009, 2012a) calls it Spec-PossP.
b. *Hainbat nire txakurrekin gogoratu naiz  
   many POSS.1S dog.PL.INSTR remember be.1S  
   ‘I have just remembered my many dogs’

In (39a) Nire ‘my’ precedes the Spec-QP hainbat ‘many’, while in (39b) it follows the quantifier. The fact that sentence (39a) is grammatical whereas (39b) is ungrammatical indicates that even though the possessor Nire is originated in the Spec-nP, this constituent must have undergone movement to a position higher than the QP.

Second, assuming that the DP level is associated with referentiality (specifically, +definite) and that elements in Spec-DP will trigger a definite reading, it can be observed in (39a), an example with a –def interpretation, that the possessor does not affect the ±definiteness of the DP. Thus, it has not moved to Spec-DP position. The coordination in (40) corroborates that the possessor is not in Spec-DP as the object does not form a constituent with the determiner.

(40) [Nire txakur] eta [zure katu]-a ikusi ditut  
   poss.1s dog and poss.2s cat-D see AUX.PL3s  
   ‘I have just seen my dog and your cat’

Hence, given that the possessor moves to a position higher than the QP but lower than the DP, we can conclude that it raises to Spec-FP along with the external and the internal argument creating a multiple specifier configuration. Richards (2001) discusses strict ordering effects among multiple specifiers of the same category and proposes the Multiple A-Spec theory, which establishes that movement to multiple specifiers of the same head has to respect superiority, therefore, creating tucking-in effect. Consider sentences (41a–c):

(41) a. *Gernikaren Francoren oin dala asko suntiketak hiru  
   Gernika.GEN Franco.GEN long time ago.KO destroying.D.ERG three  
   hour last AUX.3S3S  
   ‘Franco’s long time ago destroying of Gernika lasted three hours’

b. *Euskalkien Bonaparteren oin dala askoko sailkapena  
   dialect.GEN Bonaparte.GEN long time ago.KO classification.D  
   tremendous.D be.3S.PRS  
   ‘The classification of the dialects by Bonaparte is tremendous’
c. *Bonaparteren Euskalkien nire hiru sailkapen
Bonaparte.Gen dialect.Gen Poss.1s three classification.D
ikarragarrizkoak dira
tremendous.D be.3PL

‘My three classifications of the dialects by Bonaparte are tremendous’

As the ungrammaticality of (41a–b) show, the first example (41a) with a result now and the second (41b) with an event noun, the internal argument cannot precede the external argument. Regarding the possessor, if the external and internal arguments precede it, the sentences turns into ungrammaticality as occurs in (41c). Thus, these examples show that the movement of the possessor, the external argument and the internal argument must respect the order in which they were originated; that is, the hierarchical structure <possessor> <external argument> <internal argument>.

5 Conclusion

This paper has shown that in Basque event nouns project a VP and a vP (with the eventive v as its head) in which the internal and the external argument are originated respectively. Result nouns, on the other hand, project a VP and a vP (with the non-active v* as its head) and may or may not take the internal argument and the adjunct-external argument respectively.

The n is responsible for assigning [+N] lexical category to its complement. We have seen that with deverbal nouns this functional head will take a verbal node (the eventive vP in the case of event nouns, and the non-action vP in the case of result nouns) as its complement, whereas with common nouns it will merge directly with the √RP.

For the introduction or lack of introduction of the possessor two types of n have been suggested: one n-head introduces the possessor and does not have an event argument in its denotation making it incompatible with the eventive vP, while it will be compatible with the non-active vP and the √RP. The other n-head does not introduce a possessor and has an event argument in its denotation allowing the n to take an eventive vP as its complement.

Finally, Artiagoitia (2009, 2012b) provides evidence to support the existence of a FP with multiple specifier positions, to which the external argument and the internal argument are independently raised. This study has shown that the possessor also moves to a Spec-FP position above the external argument.

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