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MARKO SIMONVIĆ – PETRA MIŠMAŠ

## Use it or lose it: Secondary imperfectivizers in Slovenian deverbal nominalizations

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### ABSTRACT

The empirical focus of this paper is a subtype of deverbal *lec*-nominalizations, specifically those in which various secondary imperfectivizing suffixes are replaced by the default suffix *-ov-*. This adjustment results in deverbal nominalizations with bases not attested in actual verbal forms. The adjustment of the secondary imperfectivizer, while consistently resulting in the introduction of *-ov-*, applies irregularly, i.e. to a subset of *lec*-nominalizations. Furthermore, with some bases, both the adjusted and unadjusted versions are possible, and in an even smaller subset of cases there is also a third form, which encompasses elements of both versions. In order to understand the optional adjustment of the secondary imperfectivizer, we examine the broader role of aspect and aspect morphology in *lec*-nominalizations. Based on quantitative data and the available candidates for aspectual pairs of *lec*-nominalizations, we observe that aspect is not actively included in the interpretation of *lec*-nominalizations and that apparent aspectual pairs show divergent lexicalizations or total synonymy. We argue that the optional loss of distinction between different secondary imperfectivizers is due to the fact that the relevant morpheme remains on the surface but does not get interpreted. This in turn leads to a loss of allomorphic conditioning, which results in the emergence of the default exponence.

### KEYWORDS

deverbal nominalizations; aspect; secondary imperfectivization; derivational morphology; Slovenian

## 1. Introduction and empirical focus

In a variety of languages, participial morphology is commonly analyzed as the derivational base for eventive, agentive and other deverbal derivations. Slovenian is a prime example: the most productive eventive nominalizations (in *-nje/-tje*, e.g., *spa-nje* ‘sleeping’ from *spa-ti* ‘to sleep’) incorporate passive *N/T*-participles, whereas the most productive agentive *lec*-nominalizations (at least apparently) have the active *L*-participle (sometimes referred to as *past* participle) as their base. Nonetheless, Marvin (2002) and subsequent work on Slovenian nominalizations have argued, based on prosodic, syntactic and semantic facts, that nominalizations that contain *N/T*-participles behave much more as participial than those that (appear to) contain the *L*-participle.

In this paper we discuss *lec*-nominalizations, which in most cases can be characterized as nominalizations that “denote an external argument of the base verb whose thematic role can be *agent*, *experiencer* or *instrument*” (Marvin 2016: 321). Typical examples of such nominalizations are illustrated in (1). As can be read off the examples, verbs of different levels of complexity can derive *lec*-nominalizations. The example in (1a) has the minimal structure, consisting of a root, a theme vowel (TV), the *L*-morpheme and the suffix *-ec*, which we gloss as *-er*. In example (1b), the verbal base has an additional prefix, glossed with the most common meaning of the corresponding preposition. Finally, in (1c) there is also a secondary imperfective (*SI*) morpheme *-ov-*.

- |     |    |                     |                      |
|-----|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| (1) | a. | igr-a-ti            | igr-a-l-ec           |
|     |    | play-TV-INF         | play-TV-L-er         |
|     |    | ‘play.IPFV’         | ‘player’             |
|     | b. | raz-del-i-ti        | raz-del-i-l-ec       |
|     |    | apart-divide-TV-INF | apart-divide-TV-L-er |
|     |    | ‘divide.PFV’        | ‘divider/adaptor’    |
|     | c. | ob-isk-ov-a-ti      | ob-isk-ov-a-l-ec     |
|     |    | at-search-SI-TV-INF | at-search-SI-TV-L-er |
|     |    | ‘visit.IPFV’        | ‘visitor’            |

The verbs in (1) can be used to illustrate the most typical pattern of encoding aspect in Slovenian. The verb in (1a), which displays the minimal structure (a root, a theme vowel (TV) and an inflectional ending) is imperfective. The verb in (1b), which additionally includes a prefix, is perfective. Finally, the verb in (1c) is derived by suffixation from a prefixed perfective verb (*ob-isk-a-ti* ‘visit.PFV’) and is imperfective. The latter process is commonly referred to as secondary imperfectivization.

Returning to nominalizations, we specifically focus on a subclass of *lec*-nominalizations whose base verb is not independently attested in Slovenian. There are two classes of unattested verbal structures that can appear in such *lec*-nominalizations: (i) unattested combinations of roots and theme vowels and (ii) unattested combinations of verbal bases and secondary imperfective (s<sub>I</sub>) morphemes, which are the central focus of this paper. The former type, illustrated in the rightmost column in (2), almost exclusively comprises inanimate neuter-gender nominalizations in *-lo*. Considering these nominalizations as a subtype of *lec*-nominalizations has its roots in Marvin’s (2002) proposal that the morpheme *-ec* has three allomorphs in three genders: masculine *-ec*, feminine *-ka* and neuter *-o*.<sup>1</sup> *Lo*-nominalizations with unattested combinations of roots and theme vowels, (2), have previously been considered in Marvin (2002), Simonović (2020), Simonović et al. (2025).

(2)	a.	rez-a-ti	rez-a-l-o	rez-i-l-o
		cut-TV-INF	cut-TV-L-er	cut-TV-L-er
		‘cut.INF’	‘cutter’	‘blade’
	b.	ravn-a-ti	ravn-a-l-o	ravn-i-l-o
		straight-TV-INF	straight-TV-L-er	straight-TV-L-er
		‘straighten.INF’	‘regulator’	‘cutter’
	c.	/	/	zrc-a-l-o
				?-TV-L-er
				‘mirror’

The latter type, i.e. nominalizations with unattested combinations of verbal bases and s<sub>I</sub> morphemes, shown in (3), belong to the predominantly

1 This is a representational simplification that lumps together the representation of the *-er* morpheme and the NOM.SG ending. The more precise notation would be *-ec-∅* for masculine, *-ka* for feminine and *-∅-o* for neuter.

animate masculine-gender type in *-lec* (with productively derived feminine counterparts in *-lka*). What unifies all the *lec*-nominalizations of this type is that a *SI* other than *-ov-* is replaced by *-ov-*,<sup>2</sup> arguably the default *SI* morpheme in Slovenian.

This type of exceptional *lec*-nominalizations has been mentioned in Simonović et al. (2025) but has not received a formal account so far. Additionally, while Simonović et al. (2025) mention examples such as (3a), which is their (15a), i.e., nominalizations whose verbal base does not correspond to an existing *SI* form, there are also *lec*-nominalizations that appear to have a *SI* base, but the corresponding *SI* verb is not actually attested in present-day Slovenian (4).

(3) a.	ob-račun-a-ti at-calculate-TV-INF 'calculate.PFV'	ob-račun-av-a-ti at-calculate-SI-TV-INF 'calculate.IPFV'	?ob-račun-ov-a-ti at-calculate-SI-TV-INF 'calculate.IPFV'	ob-račun-ov-a-l-ec calculate-SI-TV-L-ER 'calculator'
b.	po-sn-e-ti on-record-TV-INF 'record.PFV'	po-snem-a-ti on-record-SI-TV-INF 'imitate.IPFV'	*po-snem-ov-a-ti on-record-SI-TV-INF 'imitate.IPFV'	po-snem-ov-a-l-ec on-record-SI-TV-L-ER 'imitator'
c.	pri-mer-i-ti at-measure-TV-INF 'compare.PFV'	pri-mer-j-a-ti at-measure-SI-TV-INF 'compare.IPFV'	*pri-mer-j-ev-a-ti at-measure-SI-TV-INF 'compare.IPFV'	pri-merj-ev-a-l-ec at-measure-SI-TV-L-ER 'comparator'

(4)	kis-a-ti vinegar-TV-INF 'acidify/ferment.IPFV'	o-kis-a-ti over-vinegar-TV-INF 'acidify/ferment.PFV'	no SI / /	o-kis-ov-a-l-ec over-vinegar-SI-TV-L-ER 'acidifier'
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Finally, there are also cases in which a *SI* verb can derive a *lec*-nominalization without any adjustment, but a version with an unattested *ov*-base also exists. This is illustrated in (5).

(5)	o-svoj-i-ti on-self-TV-INF 'conquer.PFV'	o-svaj-a-ti on-self-SI-TV-INF 'conquer.IPFV'	o-svaj-a-l-ec on-self-SI-TV-INF 'conqueror'	*o-svoj-ev-a-ti on-self-SI-TV-INF 'conquer.IPFV'	o-svoj-ev-a-l-ec on-self-SI-TV-L-ER 'conqueror'
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2 This affix surfaces as *-ev-* after a set of consonants traditionally termed soft (*j*, *c*, *č*, *ž*, *š*). This is illustrated by e.g., (3c), (5) and (7). This surface allomorph of *-ov-* is distinct from the secondary imperfective suffix *-ev-*, see Footnote 5.

The specific verb in (5) actually also has a third attested nominalization *osvajevalec* ‘conqueror’, which combines the apophony from the first secondary imperfective verb (*o-svāj-a-ti*) and the adjusting *s<sub>I</sub>-ov-*.

While the *s<sub>I</sub>* adjustment is attested for all *s<sub>I</sub>*’s other than *-ov-*, it is not exceptionless with any of them. For instance, the *s<sub>I</sub>* *-av-* is in the same structural position in *ob-račun-av-a-ti* ‘calculate’ and in *u-ravn-av-a-ti* ‘regulate’. However, while *-av-* is always adjusted to *-ov-* in the *lec*-nominalization of *ob-račun-av-a-ti*, (3), it remains unadjusted in the *lec*-nominalization of *u-ravn-av-a-ti*: *uravnavalec* ‘regulator’ This is also confirmed by the frequencies in the Slovenian national corpus Gigafida 2.0 (*obračunovalec* 1, *obračunavalec* 0, *uravnovalec* 0, *uravnavalec* 10).

To sum up, the *s<sub>I</sub>* adjustment in *lec*-nominalizations is fully regular in terms of its results (i.e., it always boils down to a shift of the *s<sub>I</sub>* morpheme to *-ov-*), but it applies irregularly and optionally. Moreover, at least in the cases like (4) there is no real adjustment, because the *lec*-nominalization contains an *s<sub>I</sub>* base that does not occur in an attested verb.

The central question of this contribution is what causes this neutralization of the contrast between the different *s<sub>I</sub>* morphemes in *lec*-nominalizations and what is the status of *-ov-* in these nominalizations. Specifically, does *-ov-* still mark the imperfective aspect as in the verbal forms (though see Section 2 for the assumed analysis) or is it part of nominalizing morphology, as an effect of affix telescoping?

The answer we will argue for is that despite incorporating *s<sub>I</sub>* morphemes on the surface, *lec*-nominalizations do not really carry aspect. As will be shown, *lec*-nominalizations do not form true aspectual pairs even in the few pairs of nominalizations derived from aspectual pairs of verbs. The choice for optionally switching to *-ov-* in the context where there is no true aspect is likely related to the fact that *-ov-*, unlike the other *s<sub>I</sub>* morphemes, plays a more general role of a verbalizer combined with bases of other categories (e.g., denominal, as in *pot* ‘path’ *pot-ov-ati* ‘to travel’, and deadjectival verbs, as in *hud* ‘angry’ *hud-ov-ati* ‘to be angry’, see Simonović – Mišmaš 2000 and Simonović 2023).<sup>3</sup> This is relevant because considering only Slovenian *s<sub>I</sub>* verbs yields no clear default *s<sub>I</sub>* morpheme, as shown in Simonović – Mišmaš

3 Clearly denominal and deadjectival verbs derived using *-ov-* are all imperfective. Throughout this paper, we gloss *-ov-* as a secondary imperfectivizer in all cases where *-ov-* is suffixed on a prefixed verb, consequently yielding an imperfective verb. As shown in Arsenijević (under revision), most uses of *-ov-* in the verbal domain fit this characterization (166 out of 263). This glossing is meant only as a descriptive label, as we

(2023), who discuss the four most common *si* affixes in Slovenian. The most frequent is *j(-a)*,<sup>4</sup> illustrated in (3c), (in the sample they consider 48.7% of *si* verbs have this suffix), *ov(-a)*, (1c), is second (and appears in 38.8% of *sis* in their sample), while *av(-a)*, (3a), and *ev(-a)*<sup>5</sup> are used less often (6.2% each). Despite being second most frequent, *ov(-a)* clearly stands out as the most general in Simonović – Mišmaš (2023)'s sample, as it combines with perfective verbs of most theme-vowel classes. This suggests that *-ov-* functions as the elsewhere exponent, making its use unsurprising in contexts where aspectual information is either neutralized or absent. In such cases, *-ov-* likely emerges due to its underspecified nature and broader compatibility with various structural configurations. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we briefly sketch the assumed analysis of *lec*-nominalizations in general. Section 3 focuses on (the lack of) aspect in *lec*-nominalizations. Section 4 summarizes the proposal and concludes the paper.

## 2. *Lec*-nominalizations are not participial, but they are deverbal

Marvin (2002) and Simonović et al. (2025) argue that, despite including an *L*-element, Slovenian *lec*-nominalizations are *not* derived from verbal *L*-participles. Due to space limitations, we will not reiterate the full argument, but only the main claims which serve as the basis for the present paper.

Considering examples of *lec*-nominalizations that seem to have attested *L*-participle bases, as in (1), and those without such bases, primarily the ones such as (2), Simonović et al. (2025) claim that *L*-participles in fact contain a larger structure than the basis of *lec*-nominalizations. This, however, is not to say that *lec*-nominalizations are not verbal. The authors follow Quaglia et al. (2022) in assuming that theme vowels surface as exponents of the verbalizing head  $v^0$  and given that all *lec*-nominalizations include a theme vowel, this consequently means that *lec*-nominalizations must include a *vP*. Working within a specific “all derivational affixes are roots”-framework

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assume the theory of secondary imperfectivization presented in Quaglia et al. (2022) and summarized in Section 2, which views secondary imperfectivization as reverbalization.

4 The portion between brackets is the theme vowel that follows the *si* in question.

5 This is not the ‘soft’ allomorph of *-ov(-a)*, but a different morpheme. It has stress on *-év-* in all forms and can show up after all consonants.

(Lowenstamm 2014), they maintain that both *-L* and *-ec* are roots. Showing that the affix *-ec* cannot select a *vP* as a complement, but can select a root, they propose that *-L* acts as a “root extension” in the sense of Acquaviva (2009). Such a root-extension analysis had already been proposed in Marvin (2002) for subclass (i) in Section 1, illustrated in (2). Put differently, Simonović et al. propose that *-L* in *lec*-nominalizations is a root that takes as its complement a *vP*, thus extending it. The resulting structure can be taken as a complement by the transitive *ec*-root (resulting in a structure that is only then nominalized by a categorial  $n^0$  head). (6) shows the proposed structure of *lec*-nominalizations.

(6) [nP [n][ $\sqrt{ec}$  [ $\sqrt{ec}$ ][ $\sqrt{L}$  [ $\sqrt{L}$ ] [vP [v] [RootP [ $\sqrt{Root}$ ] [Object]]]]]]]

As for *-L* in participles, Simonović et al. (2025) propose that *-L* is a root merging in the head of AspP (that is realized as *-N/T* in passive contexts, while *-L* is the elsewhere realization).<sup>6</sup> This also means that aspectual markers are not directly related to the (im)perfectivity of the verb. Specifically, they assume based on previous work that *sr*'s are reverbalsers i.e. “morphemes that combine with perfective verbs [...] and return bare *vPs*” (their fn. 18). This in turn means that the presence of such a morpheme is an indicator of imperfective aspect, which is why we keep using the term secondary imperfectivizers. In this system the existence of the perfective verb is key to restricting the interpretation of the secondary imperfective verb to imperfective meanings, i.e. the aspectual restriction is triggered by anti-presupposition. As stated in Arsenijević (2023: 5–6, referring to Arsenijević 2018) “that the speaker has not used a verb specified as perfective implies that the speaker did not want to convey a perfective meaning, but its disjunctive alternative, i.e. the imperfective one”. As we will show in the following section, the existence of true aspectual pairs is exactly the big difference between verbal forms and *lec*-nominalizations.

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6 We do not consider the issue of tense in the paper but note that while *L*-participles are used in the past tense, they are also used in the future tense and the conditional (together with specific auxiliary clitics, see Marvin (2002: 83–84). This has led Marvin (2002) and Simonović et al. (2025) to argue that *-L* itself does not have a tense feature.

### 3. Aspect in *lec*-nominalizations

In this section we discuss aspect in *lec*-nominalizations. The main question is whether *lec*-nominalizations allow aspect distinctions, i.e. whether they inherit the aspect of the verbal base they display. Since all shapes of bases occur with *lec*-nominalizations, (1), including *SI* morphemes, based on surface morphology it seems plausible that aspect is present in *lec*-nominalizations. If this were the case, Slovenian *lec*-nominalizations would behave on a par with what Bašić (2010) describes for *nje/će*-nominalizations in Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian (BCMS), i.e., deverbal nominalizations from passive participles. According to Bašić (2010), BCMS *nje*-nominalizations (or Complex event Nominals in her terminology) “take the same type of aspectual modifiers as their verbal counterparts”. Specifically, “[i]f the noun is derived from a perfective verb, it can take the ‘in an hour’ adverbial”, whereas “[i]f it is derived from an imperfective verb, it takes the durative time adverbial (Bašić 2010: 42)”. There are indications that the same holds for Slovenian *nje/tje*-nominalizations, as there are pairs of *nje/tje*-nominalizations derived from both members of an aspectual pair of verbs, (7), and they display the predicted behavior with respect to aspectual modifiers, (8). Note that in (8) the imperfective nominalization is also compatible with the adjective *celodnevni* ‘whole day’s’. Further examples which behave in this way are *zavzetje* ‘capture.PFV’, *zavzemanje* ‘capturing.IPFV’ and *obeleženje* ‘marking.PFV’, *obeleževanje* ‘marking.IPFV’.

(7) iz-vrš-i-ti	iz-vrš-e-n-je	iz-vrš-ev-a-ti	iz-vrš-ev-a-n-je
at-perform-TV-INF	at-perform-TV-PASS-N	at-perform-SI-TV-INF	at-perform-SI-TV-PASS-N
‘execute.PFV’	‘execution’	‘execute.IPFV’	‘executing’

- (8) a. izvrševanje/\*izvršenje ukazov cel dan  
 executing/execution orders all day
- b. \*izvrševanje/izvršenje ukazov v enem dnevu  
 executing/execution orders in one day  
 ‘executing orders for the whole day’
- c. celodnevno izvrševanje/\*izvršenje ukazov  
 whole-day execution orders  
 ‘whole day’s execution of orders’

Against this background we will consider the evidence for aspect in *lec*-nominalizations in the following subsections. First, we will consider the quantitative relationship between perfective and imperfective bases in *lec*-nominalizations in 3.1, whereas we will turn to the interpretation of aspect in *lec*-nominalizations in 3.2.

### 3.1 Imperfective bias and scarcity of aspectual pairs in *lec*-nominalizations

The *lec*-nominalizations with *si* adjustment, which are in focus of this contribution, are exceptional within the class of *lec*-nominalizations in the sense that, in an overwhelming majority of cases, *lec*-nominalizations can readily be analyzed as derived from a verbal base attested in a verb. By far most of these verbal bases are imperfective (be it simplex or secondary imperfective), but perfective bases are attested as well. Probing into the *WeSoSlaV* database (Arsenijević et al. 2024)<sup>7</sup> gives an insight into how common such nominalizations are. Out of 3000 most common Slovenian verbs 1391 (46%) were marked as imperfective or biaspectual,<sup>8</sup> while 1608 (54%) were perfective. Out of 645 verbs which derive *lec*-nominalizations, 597 (93%) are marked as imperfective/biaspectual, the rest 48 (7%) were perfective.<sup>9</sup>

Particularly noteworthy is the scarcity of aspectual pairs among *lec*-nominalizations. Out of 655 bases *lec*-nominalizations, only 12 potential aspectual pairs can be constructed. Example (9) shows this in detail for six such examples. While this extremely low number is telling, it should be noted that pairs could only be attested in *WeSoSlaV* if both base verbs are among the 3000 most common verbs. There are naturally cases in which

7 *WeSoSlaV* (Arsenijević et al. 2024) is an annotated database of verbs and the ability of a verb to derive a *lec*-nominalization was one of the annotated properties (by listing the specific *lec*-noun). In determining if a verb can serve as a base of a *lec*-nominalization, the annotators' intuition was the criteria. In problematic cases (unclear intuitions), the Slovenian national corpus Gigafida 2.0 was consulted.

8 In the column Imperfective of the Slovenian sub-database of *WeSoSlaV*, the compatibility with phrasal verbs was used to determine if a verb is imperfective. This means that this column also marks biaspectual verbs as imperfective (as these pass the test). Perfectivity was not annotated based on the positive test, hence we use the term “perfective verbs” for those that are not imperfective or biaspectual (i.e. do not pass the phrasal-verbs test).

9 For comparison, out of 2118 verbs which derive *nje/tje*-nominalizations, 1351 (64%) are imperfective/biaspectual, while 767 (36%) are not.

only one member of the pair is included in the database. One such example is given in (10), where only the perfective verb is included in *WeSoSlaV*.

- |         |   |   |   |   |
|---------|---|---|---|---|
| (9) a.  | iz-vrš-i-ti<br>from-perform-TV-INF<br>'execute.PFV'           | iz-vrš-i-l-ec<br>from-perform-TV-L-ER<br>'executor'               | iz-vrš-ev-a-ti<br>from-perform-SI-TV-INF<br>'execute.IPFV'        | iz-vrš-ev-a-l-ec<br>from-perform-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'executor'               |
| b.      | pri-trd-i-ti <sup>10</sup><br>at-assert-TV-INF<br>'agree.PFV' | pri-trd-i-l-ec<br>at-assert-TV-L-ER<br>'consenter'                | pri-trj-ev-a-l-ec<br>at-assert-SI-TV-INF<br>'agree.IPFV'          | Pritrjevalec<br>at-assert-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'consenter'                     |
| c.      | za-osta-∅-ti<br>behind-stay-TV-INF<br>'lag/fall behind.PFV'   | zaostalec<br>behind-stay-TV-L-ER<br>'laggard'                     | za-osta-j-a-ti<br>behind-stay-SI-TV-INF<br>'lag/fall behind.IPFV' | za-osta-j-a-l-ec<br>behind-stay-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'straggler'               |
| d.      | pre-živ-e-ti<br>over-live-TV-INF<br>'survive/live.PFV'        | pre-živ-e-l-ec<br>over-live-TV-L-ER<br>'survivor'                 | pre-živ-lj-a-ti<br>over-live-SI-TV-INF<br>'survive/live.IPFV'     | pre-živ-lj-a-l-ec<br>over-live-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'survivor/<br>breadwinner' |
| e.      | na-poved-a-ti<br>on-tell-TV-INF<br>'announce.PFV'             | na-poved-a-l-ec<br>on-tell-TV-L-ER<br>'announcer'                 | na-poved-ov-a-ti<br>on-tell-SI-TV-INF<br>'announce.IPFV'          | na-poved-ov-a-l-ec<br>on-tell-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'announcer'                 |
| f.      | raz-del-i-ti<br>apart-part-TV-INF<br>'divide.PFV'             | raz-del-i-l-ec<br>apart-part-TV-L-ER<br>'divider/<br>distributor' | raz-delj-ev-a-ti<br>apart-part-SI-TV-INF<br>'divide.IPFV'         | raz-delj-ev-a-l-ec<br>apart-part-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'divider/distributor'    |
| (10) a. | v-roč-i-ti<br>in-hand-TV-INF<br>'hand in.PFV'                 | v-roč-i-l-ec<br>in-hand-TV-L-ER<br>'process server'               | v-roč-ev-a-ti<br>in-hand-SI-TV-INF<br>'hand in.IPFV'              | v-roč-ev-a-l-ec<br>in-hand-SI-TV-L-ER<br>'process server'               |

Given that our main focus is on *lec*-nominalizations with *SI* adjustments, it is relevant to establish how commonly these participate in potential aspectual pairs. Since *lec*-nominalizations with *SI* adjustments were

10 *Pritrditi* can also have the meaning 'to fasten' and the corresponding *lec*-nominalizations *pritrđilec* is 'attacher' (*SI pritrđevati* 'to fasten' and *pritrđevalec* 'fastener').

not registered in *WeSoSlaV*, we assembled an additional list of such *lec*-nominalizations. To do this, we searched the Slovenian national corpus Gigafida 2.0 for *lec*-nominalizations whose lemma form ends in *-ovalec* or *-evalec*. The results were manually checked to exclude typos. The remaining nouns were matched to verbs included in *WeSoSlaV*. Subsequently we eliminated all nominalizations that have a matching verb in *-ovati/-evati*, i.e. verbs with no *SI* adjustment. The result of this search are 99 *lec*-nominalizations with *SI* adjustment corresponding to the verbs in *WeSoSlaV*.<sup>11</sup> Returning to the question of aspectual pairs with these nominalizations, none of the 99 *lec*-nominalizations with *SI* adjustment in our sample have a potential perfective counterpart.

Summing up, considering surface morphology of the bases of *lec*-nominalizations shows that *lec*-nominalizations with perfective bases are extremely underrepresented in Slovenian. Especially rare are potential minimal pairs. However, the very existence of such minimal pairs may be taken to imply that the interpretative differences we can observe in verbs will also be reflected in the corresponding *lec*-nominalizations that take these verbs as their base. The following subsection explores this issue.

### 3.2 Interpretation of aspect in *lec*-nominalizations

Establishing the aspect for *lec*-nominalizations is complicated by the fact that Slovenian allows habitual interpretation of verbs in a wide variety of contexts. This makes it impossible to use a paraphrase of the *lec*-nominalizations of the type ‘one who Xs’ to establish the interpreted aspect of the verbal base, since both perfective and imperfective verbs are acceptable in paraphrases of *lec*-nominalizations for habitual agents. For instance, *izvrševalec* from (9a) is *kdor izvrši ukaze* ‘one who executes.PFV orders’ or *kdor izvršuje ukaze* ‘one who executes.IPFV orders’. This is why aspectual pairs are especially useful in considering if aspect of the verbal base is preserved in these nominalizations.

As indicated at the beginning of Section 3, perfective verbs are compatible with *in*-adverbials and (secondary) imperfective verbs with *for*-adverbials (which are actually not introduced by a preposition in Slovenian). The relevant contrast is shown in (11).

11 Available at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14276681>.

- (11) a. \*Izvrševali/Izvršili smo ukaz v dveh urah.  
 execute.IPFV/execute.PFV AUX order in two hours  
 ‘We executed the order in two hours.’
- b. Izvrševali/\*Izvršili smo ukaz dve uri.  
 execute.IPFV/execute.PFV AUX order two hours  
 ‘We executed the order for two hours.’

Furthermore, zooming in on the 12 identified aspectual pairs shows that more often than not one of the members of the pair of *lec*-nominalizations has a specialized lexical meaning, so that even if there is a distinction in aspect, this is not the only distinction between the two *lec*-nominalizations. Note also that the “imperfective” member of the pair tends to be much more common (the only exception being the pair *reševalec* ‘paramedic, rescuer’ *rešilec* ‘ambulance’). In Table 1 we overview the attested “aspectual” minimal pairs and their interpretation. In the rightmost column we mark whether the two nouns are perceived as referring to the same meaning of the verbal base.

Tab. 1. “Aspectual” pairs of *lec*-nominalizations

Example	Asp of the base	Gloss	Meaning	Semantic overlap?
razdelilec	PFV	‘power strip/ distributor’	instrument	No.
razdeljevalec	IPFV	‘distributor’	agent	
omejilec	PFV	‘regulator’	instrument	Yes.
omejevalec	IPFV	‘limiter’	instrument	
preživelec	PFV	‘survivor’	agent	No.
preživljalec	IPFV	‘survivor’, ‘breadwinner’	agent	
izvršilec	PFV	‘(legal) executor’	agent	No.
izvrševalec	IPFV	‘executor’	agent	
pritrdilec	PFV	‘fastener’	instrument/ agent	No.
pritrijevalec	IPFV	‘fastener, consenter’	agent	

Example	Asp of the base	Gloss	Meaning	Semantic overlap?
zaostalec	PFV	'laggard/ obscurant'	experiencer	No.
zaostajalec	IPFV	'straggler'	experiencer	
napeljalec	PFV	'wiring device'	instrument	No.
napeljevalec	IPFV	'connector'	agent	
izmenjalec	PFV	'exchanger'	instrument	No.
izmenjevalec	IPFV	'exchanger'	instrument/ agent	
obiskalec	PFV	'visitor'	agent	Yes. Total overlap.
obiskovalec	IPFV	'visitor'	agent	
premagaalec	PFV	'winner'	agent	Yes.
premagovalec	IPFV	'vanquisher'	agent	
vprašalec	PFV	'questioner'	agent	Yes. Total overlap.
vpraševalec	IPFV	'questioner'	agent	
rešilec	PFV	'ambulance'	instrument	No.
reševalec	IPFV	'paramedic, rescuer'	Agent	

The data in Table 1 demonstrates that there are no systematic differences between the members of pairs. Moreover, in some cases there are no differences found (i.e., total synonymy), as in the case of *obiskovalec* and *obiskalec*, as well as *vpraševalec* and *vprašalec*. Still, it could in principle be the case that aspect of the base verb is preserved in *lec*-nominalizations despite the divergent meaning specializations. To test if this is the case, we present our intuitions as for the compatibility of the pairs with three types of aspectual modifiers: in-adverbials (compatible with perfective verbs), for-adverbials (compatible with imperfective verbs) and an adjective which carries the same meaning as the for-adverbial (*dvourni* 'lasting for two hours').

For the purposes of Table 2, the adverbials were tested in the context *Tale je bil* adverbial *lec*-nominalization 'This one was *adverbial lec*-nominalization'. As Table 2 shows, 'for two hours' and 'lasting two hours'

are always possible. However, they get the interpretation that something/somebody had the function expressed by the *lec*-nominalization for 2 hours. The rightmost column gives the reading of the nominalization with the in-adverbial (if this is an acceptable option).

**Tab. 2.** “Aspectual” pairs of *lec*-nominalizations and their compatibility with aspectual modifiers

Example	Asp of the base	Compatible w. <i>dve uri</i> ‘for 2 hours’	Compatible w. <i>dvourni</i> ‘lasting for 2 hours’	Compatible w. <i>v dveh urah</i> ‘in 2 hours’	Interpretation with ‘in 2 hours’ (if possible)
razdelilec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
razdeljevalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
omejilec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
omejevalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
preživelec	PFV	✓	✓	✗	
preživljalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✗	
izvršilec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
izvrševalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
pritrđilec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
pritrđevalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
zaostalec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
zaostajalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
napeljalec	PFV	✓	✓	✗	
napeljevalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
izmenjalec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
izmenjevalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
obiskalec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.

Example	Asp of the base	Compatible w. <i>dve uri</i> 'for 2 hours'	Compatible w. <i>dvourni</i> 'lasting for 2 hours'	Compatible w. <i>v dveh urah</i> 'in 2 hours'	Interpretation with 'in 2 hours' (if possible)
obiskovalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
premagaec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
premagovalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
vprašalec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
vpraševalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.
rešilec	PFV	✓	✓	✓	Got the function in 2 hours.
reševalec	IPFV	✓	✓	✓	Each instance lasts 2 hours.

A key feature of the data presented in Table 2 is that no single pair shows the differences expected from true aspectual pairs and attested with *nje/tje*-nominalizations, (8).<sup>12</sup> This indicates that despite the coexistence of *lec*-nominalizations with verbal bases that form aspectual pairs, there is no evidence that these *lec*-nominalizations themselves constitute aspectual pairs. To sum up this section, despite the presence of *si* morphology, we have not been able to find any pressing evidence for aspect in *lec*-nominalizations.

#### 4. By way of conclusion: Simplification mechanism

The central question of this contribution was what causes the neutralization of the contrast between the different *si* morphemes in *lec*-nominalization and what is the status of *-ov-* in these nominalizations. Having presented the relevant evidence, we are now in the position to formulate a solution.

In the domain of *lec*-nominalizations, aspect is neutralized, so that even if *si* morphemes are present in the surface form, do not convey aspectual

12 While we do not provide the results of the same tests applied to *lec*-nominalizations without attested *si* bases, these show that they are compatible with 'for two hours' and 'lasting two hours' (and get the interpretation that something/somebody has the function expressed by the verb for 2 hours). Some of them are also compatible with the in-adverbial despite including an *si* morpheme.

distinctions. The apparent aspectual pairs either show no meaning distinction or display various patterns of divergent lexicalization, whereby the availability of two bases is used to derive two nominalizations with specialized meaning. This neutralization of aspect opens the door for an optional simplification of the structure of *s<sub>1</sub>* bases, whereby the specification which regulates the lexical choice of *s<sub>1</sub>* morphemes is lost and therefore the default *s<sub>1</sub>-ov-* can surface. This neutralization is not fully regular, but applies to a lexical subset of *lec-*nominalization with *s<sub>1</sub>* bases. This scenario – where apparent aspectual pairs develop distinct lexicalized meanings – suggests the potential for divergent lexicalization also between nominalizations with modified and unmodified *s<sub>1</sub>* bases. However, we have not identified any concrete instances of such pairs.

Evidence available at the moment does not point in the direction of a reanalysis of *-ov-* as a part of a bigger nominalizing morpheme (affix telescoping), as it is still limited to contexts of verbal bases that either have an *-ov-* or any of the *s<sub>1</sub>* morphemes.

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