Linguistic Contact and the Complementation of Regular Action Nominals in Irish

Abstract

The paper discusses the range of complementation patterns available to regular action nominalizations in Irish and raises the issue of possible interference of English. Cross-linguistically, verbal nominalizations exhibit the process–result dichotomy, which is closely connected with the co-occurrence of NP and PP modifiers corresponding to event participants. In syntax-oriented accounts, such as Grimshaw (1990), Alexiadou (2001), Alexiadou and Grimshaw (2008), a distinction is made between Complex Event Nominals with an associated argument structure and Simple Event or Result Nominals which lack it. The basis for this classification is, among others, their ability to take obligatory arguments, license event-related PPs and the ability to pluralize. Doyle formulates a hypothesis that there may be some constraint in Irish “to the effect that nominalizations do not inherit the subcategorization frames of their verbal bases” (Doyle 2002: 101). In Grimshaw’s terms, this would amount to there being no Complex Event Nominals in Irish. This statement is argued to be too strong. However, it has to be conceded that verbal nominals characterized by a greater affinity to their source verbs are hard to come by, though not impossible, in Traditional Late Modern Irish and that they are more readily attested in Non-Traditional Late Modern Irish, i.e. in a variety influenced by English and L2 speakers of Irish (Ó Béarra 2007).

Keywords: Complex Event Nominals, Neo-Irish, Traditional Irish, language contact.

Introduction

The paper discusses the range of complementation patterns available to regular action nominalizations in Irish and raises the issue of possible interference of English.
There is general agreement that, cross-linguistically, verbal nominalizations are closely related to their corresponding predicates (cf. Comrie 1976; Comrie & Thompson 1985; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993), as obtaining between (1a) and (1b).

(1)
   a. The professor examined the students.
   b. the examination of the students by the professor

The same semantic relationships with syntactic satellites seem to hold in the nominal and the verb. The question frequently addressed in the relevant literature is whether it is only the thematic grid that is inherited from the verb, or also the argument structure. The semantic and syntactic regularities involved may prompt an analysis involving the syntactic relationship. Given the fact that the nominal could be further expanded by an aspectual modifier, e.g. the examination of the students by the professor for hours on end, it seems plausible that the nominal preserves aspectual properties of the verb as well.

Another unquestionable hallmark of action nominalizations is that they exhibit the process–result dichotomy, which is crucially interlocked with the number of accompanying satellite phrases, as in (2) below.

(2)
   a. The examination of the students by the professor took a long time.
   b. The examination took a long time.
   c. The examination was on the table.

The nominal in (2c) denotes a concrete result, lacks aspectual characteristics and accompanying satellite phrases, and cannot be directly associated with the thematic roles of Agent and Theme borne by the verb. It is a count noun.

In lexicalist accounts of nominalization it is assumed that there is one process with regular semantics which yields derivatives denoting ‘(act)ion’ or ‘process of Verb-ing’, as in (2ab), and that concrete nominals (2c) are offshoots of lexicalization phenomena (e.g. Malicka-Kleparska 1988). In syntax-oriented accounts, such as e.g. Grimshaw (1990), Alexiadou (2001), Alexiadou and Grimshaw (2008), a distinction is made between Complex Event Nominals (2a) with an associated argument structure and Simple Event or Result Nominals which lack it (2bc). The basis for this classification is, among others, their ability to take obligatory arguments, license event-related PPs and the ability to pluralize. Since this paper is more empirically oriented, we will not resolve to settle the issue of whether action nominalizations are a product of lexical or syntactic derivation. Let us only note in passing that the actional interpretation is available without overtly expressed event participants, as in (2b) above, which means that nouns unquestionably inherit the Lexical Conceptual Structure of corresponding verbs which may be expressed with the aid of non-obligatory complements.

With reference to the Irish data, Doyle (2002: 100–101) voices the opinion that the usage of verbal nouns as ordinary nouns is limited and that “when there is an accompanying complement, it is most unusual in the contemporary language.” He hypothesizes that Irish nominalizations may be exceptional in that they do not inherit the subcategorization frames of their verbal bases. In Grimshaw’s terms, this would amount to there being no Complex Event Nominals in Irish.
This statement is too strong and it will be demonstrated that we cannot rule out the existence of verbal nominals characterized by a greater affinity to their source verbs with respect to the realization of event participants (cf. Bloch-Trojnar 2010a). However, it has to be conceded that such structures are hard to come by, though not impossible, in Traditional Late Modern Irish and that they are more readily attested in Non-Traditional Late Modern Irish, i.e. in a variety influenced by English and L2 speakers of Irish (Ó Béarra 2007).

The discussion is organized as follows. In section 1, I present the category of action nominals against the backdrop of various categories, both inflectional and derivational, which traditional grammars subsume under one cover term – the verbal noun (henceforth VN). I delimit the scope of our interest, discuss the differences in the syntactic behaviour of nominals and illustrate the process–result dichotomy. In section 2, I address the problem raised by Doyle (2002) and present linguistic evidence which weakens, but does not completely disprove, his claim.

1. Verbal nouns in Irish – basic facts

The verbal noun lies at the heart of the grammar of Irish on account of its pervasiveness and formal complexity. It is an umbrella term used with reference to forms featuring in a variety of contexts performing different syntactic functions. Some of them are set out in (3), where tógáil is the VN form of the verb tóg 'lift, raise, build.' Notably, the suffix -áil is one of about 20 morphophonological markers of VNs. It is as if the English nominalization suffixes such as -ation, -ment, -al, -ure etc. additionally served as exponents of non-finite verb forms.

(3)

a. Caithfidh tú teach a thógáil duit féin.\(^1\) Infinitive
   must you house PRT build-VN for-you self
   ‘You have to build a house for yourself.’

   Táim tar éis teach a thógáil. Perfect Participle
   I-am after house PRT build-VN
   ‘I have built a house.’

   Tá siad ag tógáil tithe. Progressive Participle
   Is they PRT build-VN house-gen.pl.
   ‘They are building houses.’

b. tógáil tithe
   build-VN house-gen.pl.
   ‘construction of houses’

   Is breá na tógálacha iad. Lexicalised Nominalization
   COP fine the-pl. build-VN-pl. they
   ‘They are fine structures.’

---

\(^1\) The letter h which immediately follows the initial consonant is the marker of its lenition, caused by the particle a (tógáil – a thógáil). The examples in (3) are taken from Ó Dónaill (1977: 1214, 1245, 1247).
It is possible to tease apart verbal from nominal categories by making recourse to their different syntactic and morphological properties. Convincing arguments for treating VNs in (3a) as non-finite verb forms and those in (3b) as nouns can be found in McCloskey (1983), Doyle (2002), Bloch-Trojnar (2003, 2006) and, most recently, Carnie (2011).

We are interested in VNs which fill the slot of the head of an NP. Consider the examples in (4), where the form siúl ‘walk-VN’ is preceded by the definite article an (4ae), modified by typical nominal modifiers such as an adjective (4cd), or a noun in the genitive case (4b). Case and number inflection (4f) are morphological indicators of its nominal status. We can observe a cline with a non-count action nominal and a count result nominal as extremes. Typically, the nominalization shows polysemy between an abstract action reading and more concrete meanings, such as result or object of activity. The VN siúl ‘walk-VN’ can refer, among other things, to the process, the way of walking/travelling, or the result thereof, i.e. an excursion or journey.\(^2\) The ability to pluralize is a clear indicator of lexicalization.

(4)  
a. Is \(\text{COP}\) iontach \(\text{an}\) rud \(\text{an}\) siúl. \(\text{‘walking’}\)  
\(\text{COP wonderful the thing the walk-VN ‘Walking is a wonderful thing.’}\)  
b. Is \(\text{COP}\) ar éigean atá \(\text{siúl}\) na sráide \(\text{in-me}\) ionam. \(\text{‘ability to walk’}\)  
\(\text{COP barely is walk-VN the street-gen. in-me ‘I can hardly walk the street.’}\)  
c. Tá \(\text{is}\) \(\text{siúl}\) \(\text{direach}\) \(\text{aige.}\) \(\text{‘manner of walking, gait’}\)  
\(\text{is walk-VN straight at-him ‘He walks straight.’}\)  
d. Bhí \(\text{was}\) \(\text{siúl}\) \(\text{breá}\) \(\text{againn}\) \(\text{cois na trá.}\) \(\text{‘excursion on foot’}\)  
\(\text{was walk-VN good at-us near the beach ‘We had a fine walk along the strand.’}\)  
e. \(\text{an}\) \(\text{siúl}\) \(\text{a}\) \(\text{dhéanamh}\) \(\text{‘travel, journey’}\)  
\(\text{the walk-VN PRT do-VN ‘to make the journey’}\)  
f. \(\text{ar mo shiúlta}\) \(\text{(pl.)}\) \(\text{‘travel, journey’}\)  
\(\text{on my walk-VN.pl ‘in my travels’}\)  
\(\text{capall maith siúil}\) \(\text{‘a good riding horse’}\)

With reference to the syntactic properties of nominalizations, Doyle (2002: 100–101) observes that when VNs are used as ordinary nouns they are hardly ever accompanied by a complement. He provides two examples which, in his opinion, border on ungrammaticality:

\(^2\) The examples in (4) are taken from Ó Dónaill (1977: 1104–1105).
Linguistic Contact and the Complementation…

(5)
a. */? Chuir briseadh na gcloch ionadh orm.
   put-past break-VN the stones-gen. surprise on-me
   ‘The breaking of the stones surprised me.’
b. */? Chuala siad briseadh na gcloch.
   hear-past they break-VN the stones-gen.
   ‘They heard the breaking of the stones.’

He concludes that there may be some constraint in Irish “to the effect that nominalizations do not inherit
the subcategorization frames of their verbal bases” (Doyle 2002: 101). Irish action nominalizations would,
thus, be the odd ones out, not fitting the general cross-linguistic pattern.

The alleged ungrammaticality of examples in (5) may stem from something else. Commonly, we
encounter cases of logical polysemy, where the derivative preserves an actional interpretation in addition
to the result/object/state reading, as in (4) above. The availability of a given interpretation hinges, to a large
extent, on the semantics of the superordinate predicate. Notably, the superordinate predicates selected by
Doyle enforce non-actional readings which less readily co-occur with satellite phrases. A predicate such
as surprise triggers a factual meaning, while the predicate hear requires the result interpretation – you
cannot hear the action, only its acoustic result (cf. Puzynina 1969: 166).

In what follows we shall see whether indeed there are no Complex Event nominals in Irish, or to
put it in other words, whether action nominals can or cannot be used with a full set of satellites.

2. Patterns of complementation of verbal nominals in Irish

It has been repeatedly noted that action nominals modified by NPs and PPs corresponding to event
participants are, as a rule, avoided on account of stylistic considerations (cf. Herbst 1988: 297; Koptjevskaja-
Tamm 1993: 14–16; Jędrzejko 1993: 61; Rozwadowska 1997: 13). Furthermore, certain language specific
constraints may delimit contexts suitable for specific types of nominalizations. As for English, Cetnarowska
(1993: 58) observes that some bare nominalisations are restricted to complex predicates with semantically
light verbs, and are virtually unattested in the subject or subject complement position in a clause (6ab).
In these contexts, gerunds and action nouns in -ing are felt to be more appropriate. Grimshaw (1990: 55)
points out that CE-nominals are not found predicatively, or with equational be, as shown in (6c):

(6)
a. *A clean of the lab twice a day will be your duty.
b. *His favourite pastime was a listen to jazz records.
c. *That was the/an assignment of the problem.

3 According to Jędrzejko (1993) the factive interpretation, i.e. ‘that something is taking place or has taken place in reality,’
is incompatible with predicates relating to anticipated activities, or verbs referring to sensory reception, which focus on
the development of the activity (e.g. widzieć ‘see,’ słyszeć ‘hear,’ przyglądać się ‘watch’). Predicates referring to psychic reactions
(e.g. wstydzić się ‘be ashamed of,’ oburzać się ‘be indignant at,’ denerwować się ‘be nervous about’) can trigger construals of fact,
process and manner.
The examination of the distribution and complementation patterns of VNs showing an actional reading has led Bloch-Trojnar (2006, 2013) to put forward the existence of two nominal categories, which following the Slavic tradition are referred to as verbal nominals (nomina verbalia) and deverbal nominals (nomina deverbalia). The former are characterized by a greater affinity to their source verbs with respect to the realization of event participants, whereas the latter show up with semantically specialized prepositions, and are predominantly used in support verb constructions.

2.1. Verbal nominals (nomina verbalia)

Verbal nominals are not often encountered with a full array of satellite phrases. However, they are an available option, which is more likely to be selected in formal, literary or legal language. They usually feature as complements of prepositions (7), subjects (8) or objects (9). Examples illustrating these contexts have been extracted from literary and other texts. Only those examples are cited which are accompanied by an NP genitive corresponding to the object of the transitive verb (7df, 9abc) or the subject of an intransitive verb (7ab, 8ab). The external argument of transitive verbs in nominalizations features as a PP headed by the proposition ag (7c, 8c).

(7) Prepositional complement

a. *i dtéacht Is sa Chríost ár dtíorna*
in come-VN Jesus Christ-gen. our Lord
‘in the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord’ (Yvan 1955: 9)

b. *de réir bhualadh phras an chloig*
according to strike-VN quick the clock-gen.sg.
‘according to the quick striking of the clock’ (Ó Cearúil (ed.) 1999: 107)

c. *an TÁcht um Rialú Madraí, maidir le beostoc*
the act about control-VN dog-gen.pl as regards livestock

a chosaint óna gciaapadh ag madraí
PRRT protect-VN from-their harass-VN at dog-com.pl.
‘Control of Dogs Act, for the protection of livestock from worrying by dogs’

d. *fior-riachtanach do mhaireachtáil an phobail i dtrathanna*
true-necessary to survive-VN the community-gen.sg. in time-com.pl.
mórghanntanais soláthair
shortage-gen.pl. supply-gen.pl.
‘indispensable for the survival of the community in times of serious supply shortages’

e. *caighdeáin íosta maidir le cáilíú náisiúnach triú tríortha*
standard-pl. minimal as regards qualify-VN national-gen.pl. third country-gen.pl.

---

4 Wherever the source is not indicated, the example comes from an on-line Irish-English dictionary – http://www.englishirishdictionary.com/dictionary
Linguistic Contact and the Complementation…

mar dhídeanaithe
as refugee-com.pl.
‘minimum standards with respect to the qualification of nationals of third countries as refugees’

f. troscán atá déanta nó oiriúnaithe d’imirt cluichí
furniture that-is make-PPRT or adapt-PPRT to-play-VN game-gen.pl.
nó cleachtadh coirp
or exercise-VN body-gen.sg.
‘furniture constructed or adapted for the playing of games or for physical exercise (lit. exercising of the body)’

(8) Subject position

a. Bhí titim na hoíche ann.
was fall-VN the night-gen.sg. there
‘There was falling of the night. / The night was falling.’ (Ó Cadhlaigh 1940: 74)

b. agus crith chos is lámh uirthí
and shake-VN leg-gen.pl. and hand-gen.pl upon-her
‘and the shaking of legs and hands upon her’ (Gagnepain 1963: 302)

c. Déanfar aon diúltú den sórt sin ag oifigeach breithiúnachta a tharchur do-fut. any refuse-VN of kind this at officer judgement-gen. its refer-VN chun oifigeach acomhair.
to officer appeal-gen.
‘Any such refusal by a deciding officer shall be referred to an appeals officer.’

(9) Object position

a. Folaíonn cleachtadh na míochaine cleachtadh na máinliachta,
include-pres. practise-VN the medicine-gen.sg. practise-VN the surgery-gen.sg.
an chnáimhseachais agus araíonachtáil eile…
the midwifery-gen.sg. and discipline-gen.pl. other
‘The practice of medicine includes the practice of surgery, midwifery and other disciplines of medicine.’

b. na rialacha agus na cleachtai a rialaíonn
the rules and the practices that govern bailiú, tiomsú agus dáileadh staidrimh
collect-VN compile-VN and distribute-VN staticts-gen.sg.
‘the rules and practices governing the collection, compilation and distribution of statistics’

c. creatalach a sholáthar a urasaíonn malartú earráí
framework PRT provide-VN that facilitate-pres. exchange-VN goods-gen.
idir tiortha
between countries
‘to provide a framework that facilitates the exchange of goods among countries’
2.2. Deverbal nominals (*nomina deverbalia*)

In deverbal nominalizations, participants representing direct arguments of the underlying verbs do not appear as NPs in the genitive case, but rather act as complements of prepositions. Ó Siadhail (1989: 306) points to the spread of prepositional phrases with *ar on*, as in (10) below:

(10) *Do rug gach comharsa abhaile leis a insint*  
PRT bring-past every neighbour home with-him his tell-VN  
féin *ar an scéal.*  
self on the story  
‘Every neighbour brought home his own version of the story.’ (Ó Cadhlaigh 1940: 75 )

*Cf.*  
*D’inis gach comharsa an scéal.*  
tell-past every neighbour the story  
‘Every neighbour told the story.’

The subject of the verb, in nominalized structures of this type, can be realized by the *ag*-phrase.

(11) *Caoinim ... an fáil ar bhás atá *ag* gach a maireann.*  
lament-1stsg. the get-VN on death that-is at every that live-present.ind.  
‘I lament the finding of death by everything that lives.’ (Ó Cearúil (ed.) 1999: 110)

Nominalizations showing this pattern of complementation are attested in the subject and object position. However, they most readily fulfil the function of the complement in constructions with semantically light verbs such as *dean* ‘do,’ *tabhair* ‘give’ or *faigh* ‘get.’ These structures bear a striking resemblance to English complex predicates such as *take a look, do a dance* or *give sth a push.*

(12) *Do dheineas riarú *ar* an leasú.*  
PRT do-1stsg.past apportion-VN on the manure  
‘I apportioned the manure.’ (Ó Siadhail 1989: 306)

*Cf.*  
*Riaráigh mé an leasú.*  
apportion-past I the manure  
‘I apportioned the manure.’

2.3. Problems

The data above demonstrate that action nominals can be modified by NPs and PPs corresponding to arguments of the base verb. However, in order to do justice to linguistic facts it has to be pointed out that the bulk of the examples presented in (8), (9) and (10) have been extracted from non-literary sources.

---

This is significant given the present sociolinguistic situation. There are no monoglots remaining and Irish is under the constant pressure of English. Efforts undertaken to rejuvenate the language transform traditional speech and today a distinction is drawn between Traditional Late Modern Irish, as spoken in the Gealtacht in the 1960s, and Non-Traditional Late Modern Irish or Neo-Irish (cf. Ó Béarra 2007; Doyle 2009; Johnson 2009). Whereas Traditional Irish is impervious to English influence, Neo-Irish is affected at every linguistic level from sound to idiom. This disturbing transformation is the outcome of a number of factors, among others the widespread access to the media featuring non-native speakers or the rise in the number of learners of Irish who vastly outnumber native speakers in the Gealtacht, which, in turn, hinders true immersion in Traditional Irish. Paradoxically, the situation has aggravated since 2003 when the Official Languages Act was passed and further since 2007, when Irish was recognized as one of the working languages of the European Commission. Ó Béarra (2007) laments that this gave rise to an entire “translation industry” which takes on translators for whom Irish is not L1. The influence of English could explain why configurations with the nominal taking the ag-PP expressing the external argument are easier to come by in legal texts. This state of affairs makes our account of complementation patterns more complicated, since scarce as they are, there exist examples from Traditional Irish where action nominals appear with NP and PP complements.

In order to formulate tendencies inherent in the usage of action nominals it is necessary to work on Traditional Irish data that comes from one dialect. This is not an easy task, given the fragmentation of the Irish language, the fact that the number of native speakers is fading fast, and that the compilation of large language corpora is still in the early stages. For the sake of this analysis, I examined VNs collected in the corpus devised by Ó Duibhín (2006). It is a textbase consisting of several collections of texts, which enables the user to search for words and observe their usage in context. I scrutinized the data from Connacht Irish including Ó Direáin (1961), Ó Ruadháin (1967) and Mag Uidhir (1944) and the tentative and preliminary results of my research are as follows.

All in all, the Connacht sub-corpus consisted of 139 175 word-forms. There were 1959 sentences with VNs related to 382 verb lexemes. When VNs are used in sentences, non-finite uses predominate over nominal uses, the ratio being 80% to 20%. There were 760 sentences with VNs used as present participles (ca. 38.5%), about 800 sentences with VNs used as infinitives (ca. 40.8%). VNs in the nominal function featured in the complement position of 121 complex predicates (6%) or else were used as subjects, objects, prepositional complements or copular complements with or without accompanying satellite phrases (14%). The process–result dichotomy divides the nominal uses more or less evenly.

In (13) there are some examples where the VN is clearly lexicalized and refers to the result (be it a material object, an acoustic or optical phenomenon or a psychic state). Therefore, we do not expect modification beyond determiners and adjectives.

(13)

a. Chloisfeá an caoineadh ard ar fud an bhaile.
   hear-cond. the lament-VN loud throughout the town-gen.
   ‘You would hear the loud lamenting all over the town.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 9)

b. Ní fheicim cén bhaint atá aige sin le mo cheist.
   not see-I what-the touch-VN is at-it that with my question
   ‘I don’t see the connection that it has got with my question.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 80)
On the other hand, the lack of modifying NPs need not imply the loss of the actional interpretation, as demonstrated by the examples in (14):

(14)  
a. *Is orthu a bhios an ropadh.*  
COP on-them PRT is-hab. the rush-VN  
‘They are in a great rush.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 153)  
b. *Rinneamar an oiread gáire.*  
did-we amount laugh-VN  
‘We laughed so much.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 155)  
c. *Bhaintí stad is ciseadh astu ina fhianaise.*  
get-past.hab. halt-VN and jump-VN out-of-them in-its witness  
‘They would halt in surprise in its presence.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 43)  
d. *argóint a bhí ar siúl i dteach comharsan*  
argue-VN PRT was on walk-VN in house neighbour-gen.  
‘There was an argument going on in a neighbour’s house.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 109)  
e. *an t-athrú mall righin a thagann ar aigne*  
the change-VN slow tenacious PRT come-pres. on heart and on mind  
‘the slow relentless change that affects heart and mind’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 142)  
f. *Tá bogadh mór sa bhfarráige ó dheas.*  
is move-VN big in sea from southwards  
‘The sea is very choppy to the south.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 8)  

Least frequent of all, but still attested, are cases where the action nominalization appears with a nominal or PP complement (headed by *ar* ‘upon’ or *de* ‘of’) corresponding to the direct object of the base verb. Note the *ag*-PP in (15f).

(15)  
a. *bionn a gcaidreamh ar a chéile agus ar aon Ghaeilgeoir*  
is their be intimate-VN on each other and on any Irish speaker  
a *bhuailfeann leo teorannta, saorga*  
PRT meet-pres. with-them limited artificial  
‘Their relationship with each other and with any Irish speaker who meets them is limited and artificial.’ (Ó Direáin 1961: 153)
It would not be fair to say that VNs in their nominal usage cannot be used with complements on an actional interpretation. Such structures are not often used, and if they are used the NP is not in the genitive case but rather acts as a prepositional complement. When devoid of modifying NPs or PPs the nominal may retain an actional reading.

We may put forward a tentative hypothesis that verbal nominalizations tend not to be used with NPs in the genitive but rather with NPs headed by specialized prepositions since genitive marking on the complement would hardly contribute to the disambiguation of their nominal status. For example, in the progressive aspect the object of a transitive verb is in the genitive case (16a). However, in topicalized structures, where the NP is preposed and modified by a relative clause it bears accusative marking (Ó Sé 2000: 364–368).

(16)

a. Bhí sé ag déanamh na hoibre.
   was he PRT do-VN the work-gen.
   ‘He was doing the work.’
On the other hand, in a dependent infinitival clause where both the subject and object are present the object may either follow the usual pattern, *i.e.* precede the infinitive and take accusative form or it may follow, in which case it occurs in the genitive case.

(17)

a. *Ba mhaith liom Seán *an leabhar* a léamh.*

would-be good with-me Sean the book-acc. PRT read-VN

‘I would like Sean to read the book.’

b. *Ba mhaith liom Seán a léamh an leabhair.*

would-be good with-me Sean PRT read-VN the book-gen.

‘I would like Sean to read the book.’

The fact that genitive marking is not a hallmark of nominal complementation (*cf.* Carnie 2011) coupled with the prevailing usage of VNs as non-finite verb forms, strengthened by the cross-linguistic reluctance to use action nominals laden with NPs and PPs can be held accountable for the relative invisibility of more complex complementation patterns in Irish action nominalizations.

**Conclusions**

In this paper we attempted to cast some light on complementation patterns of action nominalizations in Irish. It would not be fair to say that there are no Complex Event nominals in Irish, or nominals lacking satellite phrases realizing event participants. Any statement to this effect is not corroborated regardless of whether we base our conclusions on Traditional Irish or Neo-Irish. Notably, configurations with both the external and internal argument are almost unattested in Traditional Irish, and are easier to come by in Neo-Irish, which may be regarded as an interference from English. The actional interpretation does not hinge on the obligatory presence of the NP corresponding to the internal argument of the verb. However, its lack frequently points to the lexicalized status of the action nominal. The primary reason for having nominalizations is their ability to focus on the activity itself, with or without its participants, depending on the communicative needs. If more detailed information regarding event participants is required the verbal means of expression is given the pride of place in Irish.

**References**


Carnie, Andrew (2011) “Mixed Categories in Irish.” [In:] Lingua 121; 1207–1227.


Mag Uidhir, Seamus (1944) Fánaidheacht i gConndae Mhuigheo. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.


Ó Cadhlaigh, Cormac (1940) _Gnás na Gaedhilge_. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.


Ó Ruadháin, Seán (1967) _An Mothall sin ort_. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.


**Online sources**


On-line Irish-English dictionary. Available at: http://www.englishirishdictionary.com/dictionary