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When roots become names

An issue of locality

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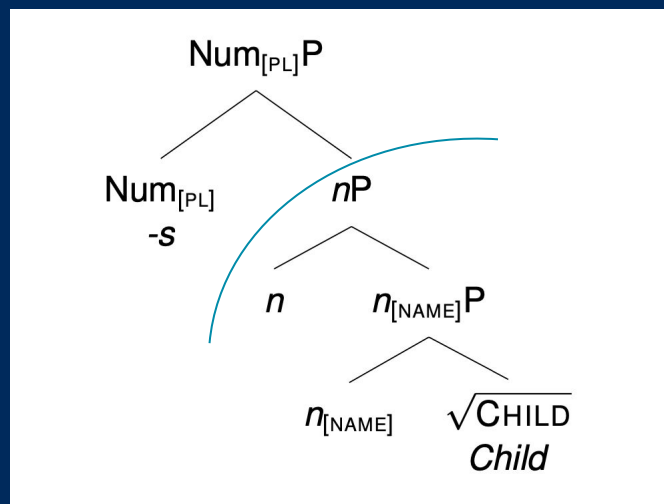
Background

Proper names are not the only nominal elements that regularize. Common nouns and exocentric compounds involving a naming process show similar behavior, providing evidence that “namehood” and “properhood” are independent notions.

Literature Review

- Proper names are predicates and have internal structure (Matushansky 2008, 2015; Thomsen 1997).
- Proper names minimally consist of two features, [PROPER] on D and [NAME] on N (Ghomeshi & Massam 2009).
- Proper names are incompatible with number (Ghomeshi & Massam 2020).
- NumP is the domain of canonical plurality (individuation of count nouns), while nP is the domain of idiosyncratic plurality (mass nouns, lexical plurals) (Acquaviva 2009, Alexiadou 2011, Kramer 2016).

Claim: Names are roots categorized by a distinct nominalizer, $n_{[NAME]}$, that cannot be selected by NumP. To inflect for number, names must be recategorized as count nouns, introducing an additional cyclic head (n) between Num and the root that prevents contextual allomorphy (Embick 2010, Marantz 2013).



This structure accounts for the regularization of proper names (1) and sheds light on the inflectional behavior of “common” names (2) and exocentric compounds (3).

- (1) *Julia and Paul, the Childs* (*Children)
- (2) *a collection of old geese* (*geese), or *tailor’s irons*
- (3) *temporarily satisfied sweet teeth* (*sweet teeth)

Cross-Linguistic Data

Proper Names

- German** *Wiese* → *Wiesen*
 (*Wiese* → *Wiesen* ‘meadow’)
- Hebrew** *Barak* → *Barakim*
 (*barak* → *brakim* ‘lightning’)
- Hungarian** *Ló* → *Lók*
 (*ló* → *lovak* ‘horse’)

“Common” Names

- Dutch** *blad* → *bladen* ‘sheet, tray’
 (*blad* → *bladeren* ‘leaf’)
- French** *œil* → *œils* ‘eye (of needle)’
 (*œil* → *yeux* ‘eye’)
- Italian** *labbro.M* → *labbri.M* ‘rim’
 (*labbro.M* → *labbra.F* ‘lip’)

Exocentric Compounds

- French** *ciel de lit* → *ciels de lit*
 ‘bed canopy (lit. sky of bed)’
 (*ciel* ‘sky’ → *cieux*)
- Italian** *braccio di terra* → *bracci d. t.*
 ‘isthmus (lit. arm of land)’
 (*braccio.M* ‘arm’ → *braccia.F*)

Generalization: Regularization is an epiphenomenon of naming because names are not countable nominal elements.