What's up with 'verbal' morphology in BCS agent nominals?

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Introduction

https://www.masabeslin.com/assets/pdf/beslin_fdsl_nominals.pdf

Introduction

Main claim:

'Verbal' morphology in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian agentive nouns is not verbal.

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- I'll be looking at a sample of BCS agentive nominals, which contain what is traditionally analyzed as verbal morphology

(1)

a.	b.	c.
pozn-av-á-telj	prouč-av-á-telj	reš-av-á-telj
know-AV-TH-N	study-AV-TH-N	solve-AV-TH-N
'expert'	'researcher'	'solver'

(2)

a.	b.	c.
predsed-av-a-áč	pred-av-a-áč	ugnjet-av-a-áč
chair-AV-TH-N	lecture-AV-TH-N	oppress-AV-TH-N
'chair'	'lecturer'	'oppressor'

(3)

a.	b.	c.
prod-av-a-ác	dar-o-d-av-a-ác	posl-o-d-av-a-ác
sell-AV-TH-N	gift-L-give-AV-TH-N	job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'seller'	'giftgiver'	'employer'

- A noun like *proučavatelj* is often segmented as *pro-uč-a-va-telj* 'LP-learn-V-SI-N', because of the similar verbs *proučavati* 'be researching', *proučiti*, and *učiti*

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⋆ We'll see reasons to doubt that these nouns have verbal structure

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(5)	a.	predsed-av-a-áč chair-AV-TH-N 'chair'	b.	pred-av-a-áč lecture-AV-TH-N 'lecturer'	c. ugnjet-av-a-áč oppress-AV-TH-N 'oppressor'
(6)	a.	prod-av-a-ác sell-AV-TH-N 'seller'	b.	dar-o-d-av-a-ác gift-L-give-AV-TH-N 'giftgiver'	c. posl-o-d-av-a-ác job-L-give-AV-TH-N 'employer'

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⋆ Then, the 'verbal' morphology in these agent nominals may not be verbal after all

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§1 Some background on Distributed Morphology (DM), cyclic domains, the role of categorizers, and allomorphy

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→ This follows from a DM conception of cyclic domains

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- An alternative analysis for 'verbal' morphemes (≠ verbal extended projection)

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→ Theme vowels as morphemes that attach to (certain) roots more generally;

→ 'Lexical prefixes' observed in contexts in which a deverbal analysis is dubious

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§4 Conclusions

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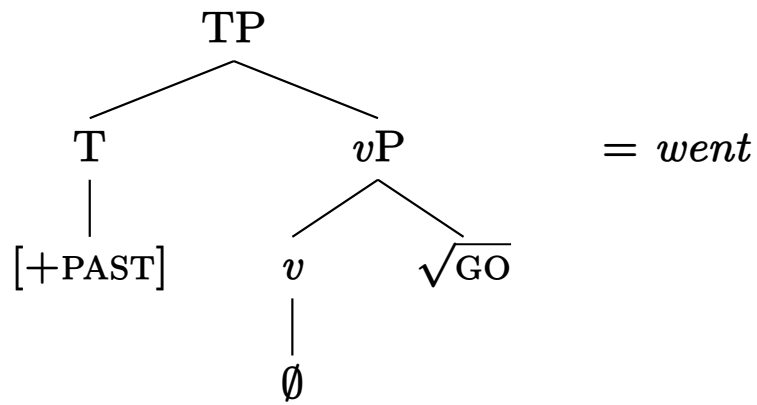
- Words are built up syntactically out of (discrete) abstract morphemes which receive form (and meaning) at the interfaces
- Morphemes: roots and functional heads (including categorizers)
- The form (and meaning) of a morpheme may be contextually determined, (7)
- Allomorphs are in competition with each other ('Elsewhere principle')

(7)



= *went*

Theoretical background & assumptions

- Transfer to the interfaces happens cyclically, at certain points of the derivation
- Categorizers (v, n, a) are the relevant cyclic heads

(8) Schematization of cyclic domains (Embick 2014):

a. Cyclic y merged in [y [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ ...]]]

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→ Intended outcome: The root is accessible to the first cyclic head x and any intervening non-cyclic heads (X, Y) (think *go–went*)

→ $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ and y cannot interact for the purposes of allomorph selection because they are in separate spell-out domains

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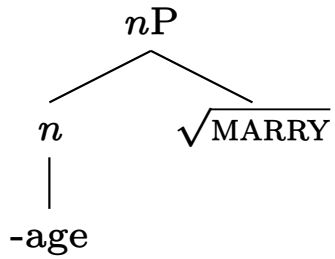

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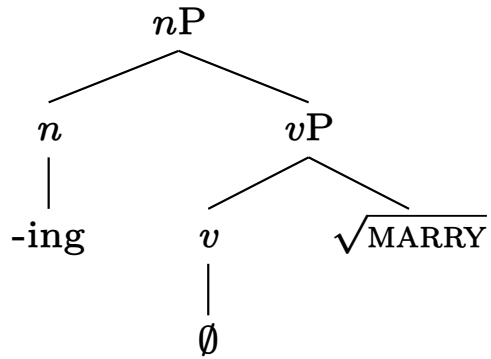

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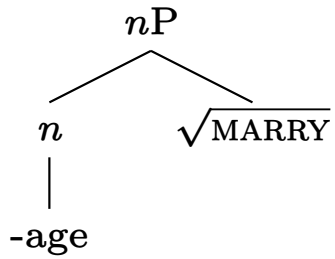

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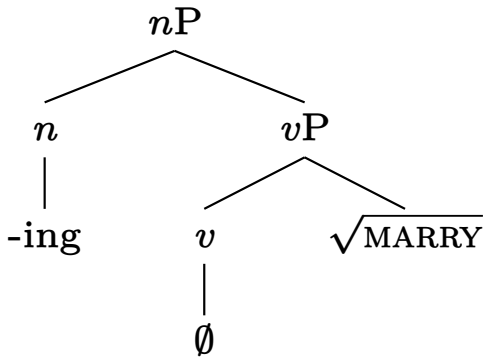

→ Categorization has the same effect on allomorphy and accent placement in BCS

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals

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- In §3, we'll see that 'deverbal' agentive nouns pattern with root-derived nouns

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

- Looking again at agent nominals, the broadly agentive *n*-suffixes in BCS are at least *-ar, -aš, -er, -(a)c, -ač, -ic(a), -ik,* and *-džij(a)*
- Root-derived nouns (**ROOT-*n***) may take any of the *n*-allomorphs on offer; the choice of *n* is determined by the root ('lexically-conditioned allomorphy')

(12)

a.	kormil-***ar***	'helmsman'	e.	voz-***ač***	'driver'
b.	batin-***aš***	'beater'	f.	izdaj-***ica***	'traitor'
c.	poz-***er***	'poser'	g.	proza-***ik***	'prose writer'
d.	pis-***ac***	'writer'	h.	bureg-***džija***	'börek maker'

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- **NB:** I clearly do not subscribe to the view that all agentive nouns contain verbal structure, even if they seem to correspond to the external argument of a verb

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a. plaš-*ljiv*-*ac* 'scared one'
b. smrd-*ljiv*-*ac* 'stinky one'
c. grab-*ljiv*-*ac* 'predatory one'
d. povod-*ljiv*-*ac* 'gullible one'
e. var-*ljiv*-*ac* 'cheating one'
f. vaš-*ljiv*-*ac* 'lousy one'

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(15) a. hajduk-*ov*-*ac* 'H. supporter'
b. dinam-*ov*-*ac* 'D. supporter'
c. isus-*ov*-*ac* 'Jesuit'
d. maček-*ov*-*ac* 'Maček follower'
e. nobel-*ov*-*ac* 'Nobel winner'
f. oskar-*ov*-*ac* 'Oscar winner'

(16) a. smrt-*n*-*ik* 'mortal one'
b. put-*n*-*ik* 'traveler'
c. boles-*n*-*ik* 'sick one'
d. bestid-*n*-*ik* 'shameless one'
e. duž-*n*-*ik* 'debtor'
f. gubit-*n*-*ik* 'loser'

- Only *a* can now influence the form of *n*, which is uniform regardless of the root in question (either due to *a*-conditioned allomorphy or *elsewhere*)

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ALLOMORPHY

- The locality effect is best observed when the same root can produce both a root-nominal and a deadjectival nominal (cf. **gubit-n-aš*, **gubit-ik*)
- Same root, same meaning, different nominalizer due to the presence of *a*

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→ In a **ROOT-*a*-*n*** configuration, the root is spelled out when *n* is merged, hence the root (*qua* morpheme) can no longer be identified when *n* undergoes VI

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- Bešlin (forthcoming): Pitch-prominence in BCS is realized on the **structurally highest accent-marked element in the first spellout domain**
- The nominalizer *-(á)c* is underlyingly accent-marked, but only realizes that accent if it is in **ROOT-*n***, not in e.g., **ROOT-*a*-*n***

(18) a. pis → pis-ác
$\sqrt{write}$ 'writer'

b. alžír → alžir-ác
$\sqrt{algeria}$ 'Algerian(N)'

(19) a. prlj-av → prlj-av-ac
'dirty' 'dirty one'

b. smrd-ljív → smrd-ljív-ac
'stinky' 'stinky one'

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- If the extended projection of the first categorizer contains non-cyclic heads (e.g., DEG, NEG, DIM) and their exponents are accented, the accent surfaces on them

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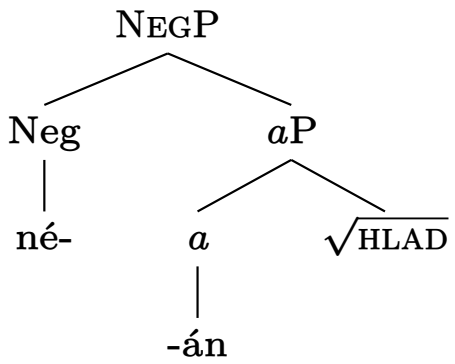
'cold'

b. né-hlad-an
NEG-cold-A
'non-cold'

c.



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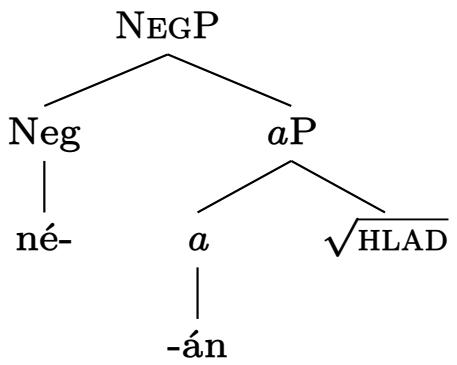

- Accent placement is determined within the first spellout domain, as in (8)/(21)

(21) Schematization of cyclic domains (Embick 2014):

a. Cyclic y merged in [y [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ ...]]]

b. Cyclic domain centered on x = [X [Y [x $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$]]] sent to interfaces

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals: ACCENT

- Root-root compounds behave as expected; the accent placement is still 'frozen' in the spellout domain of the first **categorizer**

(22) a. dub-o-rez-ác
deep-L-cut-N
'woodcarver'

b. pad-o-bran-ác
fall-L-defend-N
'parachuter'

c. led-o-lom-ác
ice-L-break-N
'ice-breaker'

Root-nominals vs. deadjectival nominals

Interim summary I:

Root-conditioned allomorphy and accent placement in BCS are limited to the first spellout domain, including *one* categorizer

'Deverbal' nouns

§1 Some background on Distributed Morphology (DM), cyclic domains, the role of categorizers, and allomorphy

§2 Data from root-derived* vs. deadjectival agent nominals (Bešlin forthcoming)

- **(I) Root-conditioned allomorphy** and **(II) accent placement** determined in the first spellout domain, centered around the first-merged categorizer

→ Second-merged categorizer can't 'see' the root and can't realize its accent

→ This follows from a DM conception of cyclic domains

§3 Back to 'deverbal' agentive nouns...

- A general note about verbal structure in agentive nouns
- They pattern in (I) and (II) with root-derived nouns (one categorizer)
- An alternative analysis for 'verbal' morphemes (≠ verbal extended projection)

→ The morpheme *av* as a root (also Quaglia et al. 2022);

→ Theme vowels as morphemes that attach to (certain) roots more generally;

→ 'Lexical prefixes' observed in contexts in which a deverbal analysis is dubious

§4 Conclusions

A note on deriving meaning from syntax

- Any 'syntax-first' model of grammar predicts that syntactic operations can and will have an effect at both interfaces

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- For starters, there are syntactic operations that only have an effect on one interface (Quantifier Raising, Agreement)
- We also don't think that phonological phenomena exist *because* of syntax, though they can be constrained by it
- So why should we think that meaning differences necessarily arise from differences in syntactic structure?

Agentive noun ≠ verbal structure

- Originally, eventive (episodic) interpretation = complement structure = verbal syntax (23a) (e.g., Alexiadou 2001), but cf. (23b-c)

(23) a. a frequent consumer *(of tobacco)

b. a frequent visitor

c. a frequent subject *(of Monet's paintings)

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- Completely divorced from the syntax, accounting for the fact that the *-er* nominals denote the (external) argument of the corresponding verb
- But we know agent entailments ≠ Voice, cf. *hastily* in (24)

(24) The rock rolled down the hill quickly/#hastily.

Agentive noun ≠ verbal structure

- Moreover, if *painter* needs Voice, does *thief* too?

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- At the broadest level, entailments ≠ the presence of hidden structure

(27) a. an illegitimate blond child

‘Deverbal’ nouns: ALLOMORPHY

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- As we saw in the beginning, there are different *n*-allomorphs in ‘deverbal’ nouns

(28)
a.	b.	c.
pozn-av-a-**telj**	prouč-av-a-**telj**	reš-av-a-**telj**
know-AV-TH-N	study-AV-TH-N	solve-AV-TH-N
‘expert’	‘researcher’	‘solver’

(29)
a.	b.	c.
predsed-av-a-**ač**	pred-av-a-**ač**	ugnjet-av-a-**ač**
chair-AV-TH-N	lecture-AV-TH-N	oppress-AV-TH-N
‘chair’	‘lecturer’	‘oppressor’

(30)
a.	b.	c.
prod-av-a-**ac**	dar-o-d-av-a-**ac**	posl-o-d-av-a-**ac**
sell-AV-TH-N	gift-L-give-AV-TH-N	job-L-give-AV-TH-N
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⋆ Allomorphy of *n* in (28)-(30) is lexically conditioned by the root

‘Deverbal’ nouns: Accent

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- As we also saw in the beginning, accent in our ‘deverbal’ nouns can surface on *n*-exponents that underlyingly have it (*-áč* and *-ác*):

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a. pozn-av-á-telj
know-AV-TH-N
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‘researcher’

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‘chair’

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c. ugnjet-av-a-áč
oppress-AV-TH-N
‘oppressor’

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c. posl-o-d-av-a-ác
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sell-AV-TH-N	gift-L-give-AV-TH-N	job-L-give-AV-TH-N
'seller'	'giftgiver'	'employer'

- Recall, accent can only surface in the first spellout domain (one categorizer)

‘Deverbal’ nouns

Interim summary II:

Allomorphy and accent placement patterns suggest that the n in BCS ‘deverbal’ agentive nouns is the first-merged categorizer.

‘Deverbal’ nouns

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Allomorphy and accent placement patterns suggest that the n in BCS ‘deverbal’ agentive nouns is the first-merged categorizer.

Corollary:

‘Verbal’ morphology inside these agentive nouns is not verbal.

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of *AV*

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? THE STATUS OF *AV*

- The morphemes exponed by *-av* and *-iv* appear in so-called secondary imperfective verbs and signal a shift in aspect (34)-(35)

(34) a. prouč-i-ti
study-TH-INF
'research'

b. prouč-av-a-ti
study-AV-TH-INF
'be researching'

(35) a. zatašk-a-ti
coverup-TH-INF
'cover up'

b. zatašk-iv-a-ti
coverup-IV-TH-INF
'be covering up'

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coverup-TH-INF
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coverup-IV-TH-INF
'be covering up'

- They also appear in *some* agent nominals; same meaning in (36a-b) vs. (36c-d)

(36) a. prouč-av-a-telj
study-AV-TH-N
'researcher'

b. zatašk-iv-a-ač
coverup-IV-TH-N
'cover up agent'

c. uruč-i-telj
serve-TH-N
'process server'

d. istovar-a-ač
unload-TH-N
'unloader'

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of *AV*

- They can appear in the context of so-called verbs of creation
  (cf. Kratzer 2000, Embick 2004)

(37)

3D	štampač	je	pokvaren	pa	je	maketa	izašla
3D	printer	is	broken	so	is	model	came_out

iz-u-ništ-av-a-n-a / is-pre-sav-ij-a-n-a.
SP-LP-destroy-AV-TH-PTCP-F.SG SP-LP-bend-IJ-TH-PTCP-F.SG
'The 3D printer is broken so the model came out destroyed/crumpled.'

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3D printer is broken so is model came_out
iz-u-ništ-av-a-n-a / is-pre-sav-ij-a-n-a.
SP-LP-destroy-AV-TH-PTCP-F.SG SP-LP-bend-IJ-TH-PTCP-F.SG
'The 3D printer is broken so the model came out destroyed/crumpled.'

- Quaglia et al. (2022): They also appear in the derivation of (seemingly) simple nouns and adjectives–they are **bound roots**

(38) a. ruk-av-∅
arm-AV-N.M.SG.NOM
'sleeve'

b. bles-av-∅
silly-AV-A.M.SG.NOM
'silly'

c. maz-iv-o
daub-IV-N.NEUT.SG.NOM
'grease'

d. jez-iv-o
shudder-IV-A.NEUT.SG.NOM
'creepy'

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Status of *av*

I tentatively conclude with Quaglia et al. (2022) that *av* is a root.

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  If all major word classes have THs, THs could then equally well be attributed to roots, as in (39) (with contextual allomorphy able to work in the familiar way)

(39) a. ROOT-TH-n

b. ROOT-TH-a

c. ROOT-TH-v

d. ROOT-TH-ROOT

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→ If this is correct, then the appearance of a TH does not necessarily indicate the presence of a verbal categorizing morpheme

What of the 'verbal' morphology, then? The status of LPs

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- Is the decomposition always synchronic? Experimental work needed:

(40)

a.	b.	c.
d-a-ti	**pro**-d-a-ti	**pro**-d-a-av-ac
give-TH-INF	LP?-give-TH-INF	LP?-give-TH-AV-N
'give'	'sell'	'seller'

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'give'	'sell'	'seller'

- LPs appear in all sorts of words for which a deverbal analysis is dubious (41)

(41)

a.	b.	c.
na-uč-i-ti	**na**-uk-a	**na**-uk-∅
LP?-study-TH-INF	LP?-learn-N.NOM.SG	LP?-learn-N.NOM.SG
'learn/teach'	'science'	'lesson'

→ Also *pred-stava* 'play', *pre-preka* 'barrier', *o-stava* 'pantry', *iz-reka* 'proverb', etc.

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- I showed that 'deverbal' agentive nouns containing morphology analyzed as verbal behave for these morphophonological processes like root-derived nouns
- No syntactic evidence for verbal structure in agentive nouns; event/agent entailments do not provide evidence either
- I argued that *av* should be analyzed as a root, and suggested that THs and LPs may not necessarily signal the presence of verbal structure either

- I'm grateful to Masha Polinsky, Dave Embick, Tanja Milićev, Norbert Hornstein, Alex Chabot, Bill Idsardi, Heather Newell, Tobias Scheer, Hannah Sande, Jim Wood, the audience at NELS 55, & the participants of Yale's Syntax Reading Group and UMD's S-lab for valuable discussion and feedback on various aspects of this work.

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Appendix A: Post-accenting elements

- There is a group of examples that form a systematic exception to the accent generalizations made here–so-called "post-accenting" elements (Halle 1997)
- Have an underlying accent, but realize it on the syllable following them
- Assuming the existence of such elements allows us to avoid having a list of pairs of suffixes that are segmentally identical and only differ in presence/absence of accent (uniform for two kinds of roots); root in (a)-(g) is post-accenting

(42)

a.	loz-á	'grape-N.NOM.SG.F'	h.	dúnj-a	'quince-N.NOM.SG.F'
b.	loz-é	'grape-N.GEN.SG.FEM'	i.	dúnj-e	'quince-N.GEN.SG.F'
c.	loz-í	'grape-N.DAT.SG.F'	j.	dúnj-i	'quince-N.DAT.SG.F'
d.	loz-ú	'grape-N.ACC.SG.F'	k.	dúnj-u	'quince-N.ACC.SG.F'
e.	loz-óm	'grape-N.INST.SG.F'	l.	dúnj-om	'quince-N.INST.SG.F'
f.	loz-í.ca	'grape-N.DIM-F'	m.	dúnj-ic-a	'quince-N.DIM-F'
g.	loz-óv	'grape-A.POSS'	n.	dúnj-ev	'quince-A.POSS