

What does *a cireși* ‘to cherry’ mean? Revisiting Kiparsky’s (1997) Canonical Use Principle from an experimental and theoretical standpoint

Abstract

The paper brings to attention the issue of creativity in the interpretation of denominal verbs from an experimental and theoretical perspective by looking at non-existent, but possible denominal verbs. More specifically, by asking a group of ten Romanian native speakers for paraphrases and sentences for twenty denominal verbs (such as a cireși ‘to cherry’, a struguri ‘to grape’, a vulpi ‘to fox’ a.o), the paper supports the validity of Kiparsky (1997)’s Canonical Use Principle, bringing some amendments regarding its extension to animals, human roles, by proposing that the lexicon contains ‘BEHAVE (LIKE) x’, ‘BECOME (LIKE) x’ structures a.o.

Keywords: denominals, creativity, Canonical Use Principle

1. Aim

The aim of this paper is to bring to attention the creativity in comprehension/interpretation of possible, but non-existing denominal verbs, i.e. verbs derived from nouns, and discuss its consequences for the organization of the lexicon. In so doing, the paper relies on the experimental method, eliciting from Romanian native speakers paraphrases and examples of sentences with possible, but non-existing given denominals, such as *a cireși* ‘to cherry’. This is done with the purpose of testing whether Kiparsky’s (1997) Canonical Use Principle for actions named after things truly holds for denominal verbs. The paper aims to show that it does (with certain amendments), but that this does not entail that denominal verb formation is a matter of pragmatics. Rather, the lexicon contains an array of lexical-syntactic representations for every verb, reflecting various uses of a thing, out of which the speaker chooses the interpretation he prefers. Moreover, in certain figurative interpretations, the lexico-syntactic representations rely on a relation of semantic similarity (BEHAVE LIKE x, BECOME LIKE x), targeting an object/entity type x rather than x itself (as in *to fox*, for instance). If such structures are present at l-syntax, this can neatly account for creative uses/ interpretations of denominals.

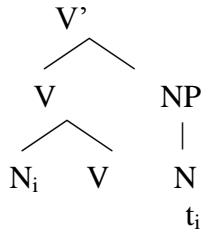
2. The interpretation of denominal verbs

The question of the interpretation of denominal verbs has troubled many linguists (Kiparsky 1997, Hale & Keyser 2002, Harley 2006, 2008 a.o.), since deciding upon the way in which the meaning of a verb is interpreted proves crucial for establishing where it is formed:

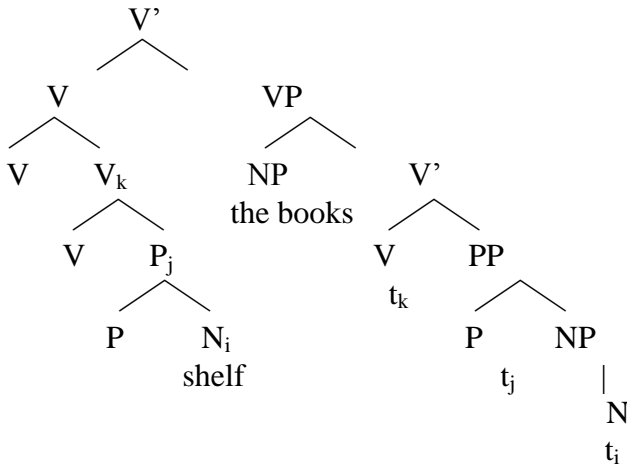
- (a) in syntax, observing a general syntactic rule, or
- (b) in the lexicon, observing a rule or no rule whatsoever

According to Hale & Keyser (2002), a theme verb like *dance* has the lexico-syntactic representation ‘DO dance’, while a location verb like *shelve* has the lexico-syntactic representation ‘PUT ON shelf’:

(1) (a) for a verb such as *dance*:



(b) for a verb such as *shelve the books*:



Contrary to syntacticians such as Hale & Keyser (2002), Kiparsky (1997) argues that the internal structure of denominal verbs cannot be fully captured syntactically. Rather, such verbs observe a Canonical Use Principle, acting like a pragmatic amendment to a syntactic rule:

(2) Canonical Use Principle

If an action is named after a thing, it involves a canonical use of that thing.

The verb *to shelve*, for instance, means ‘to put on shelves’, it does not mean ‘to throw a shelf at somebody’, the verb *to hammer* means ‘to use the hammer in order to give a certain shape to a certain alloy’, it does not mean ‘to bend a hammer’. In this sense, the actions named after things reflect a canonical, typical use.

Although this canonical constraint seems very appealing, it fails to explain all verbs, nonetheless. First of all, it leaves out all verbs that are somewhat idiosyncratic in meaning and which do not seem to involve a canonical use of the thing denoted by the root noun. One example could be *to book*, whose meaning nowadays of ‘to reserve a room for a certain period of time’ might seem quite far from the original meaning from the 13th century ‘to enter into a book’, although this can receive a historical explanation. While booking may originally have involved a book of records, booking nowadays may very well be bookless. Secondly, it leaves out all the actions named after nouns which refer to [+animal] entities or which express human roles, and which can clearly not be argued to involve a typical ‘use’ of the ‘thing’ (actions are not only named after things). While “thing” is a term which can be used for concrete or abstract objects, it

is quite inappropriate for other entities. *To dog*, for instance, means ‘to chase tirelessly’, an extension of the typical behaviour of a dog, which often involves chasing some other animal or running after a ball. Thirdly, not all actions involve canonical uses of things, some may involve processes or behaviour (typical of a particular animal or human role). Fourthly, there are many possible ‘actions’ which can be characterized as ‘canonical’. While it is perfectly true that behaving like a dog may also involve barking at other animals or people, an action typical of dogs, *to dog* does not mean ‘to bark at others’, for some reason.

Bearing in mind considerations such as those above that all verbs denote actions and not all nouns denote things, this paper sets out to test the Canonical Use Principle, and based on the results of the experiment, rephrase it in a way that gives it more explanatory power with respect to the data one has to account for.

An essential distinction for the aims of this paper is the one between RD (rule-derived) denominals, such as *to bike*, and ID (idiosyncratic) denominals, such as *to dog*, meaning ‘to chase tirelessly’ (Kelly 1998). I leave below two tables with the RD and ID denominals that Kelly (1998) used in the experiments he conducted:

(3) Table 1: Rule derived denominal categories used in the experiments along with general definitions of verbs formed from each category

Category	Definition
Vehicles	To travel/convey by X
Musical Instruments	To play the X
Dances	To dance the X
Flavorings	To add X to food
Colors	To make smth have the color of X
Dwellings	To occupy or live in X

(4) Table 2. Idiosyncratically derived denominal categories used in the experiments along with selected definitions

Category	Definition
Animals	to attempt to catch fish ("fish"); to act in a mischievous manner ("monkey")
Body Parts	to bear without overt reaction ("stomach"); to look at ("eye")
Building Parts	to surround with a wall ("wall"); to unite or make firm ("cement")
Kitchen Utensils	to take up in a spoon ("spoon"); To cover with a lid ("lid")
Tools	to strike blows ("hammer"); to fasten with a nail ("nail")
Furniture	to install in office ("chair"); to remove from consideration ("table")

While the RD denominals are created by means of a rule, the ID denominals seem to be the result of a metonymical or metaphorical extension¹.

In one experiment, thirty-six members of the University of Pennsylvania community were asked to produce sentences with verbs coming from nouns that had no verbal counterpart. The results revealed that RD verbs are easier to produce than idiosyncratic ones. Other experiments also showed greater speaker ease in the comprehension and paraphrasing of RD verbs.

The problem of ID verbs is extremely interesting, given that, if the Canonical Use Principle is observed in the creation of new denominal verbs, then the question arises how come there are idiosyncratic verbs, to begin with. It becomes clear that either one of two things happens: either the Canonical Use Principle is not observed, and metaphor sneaks in, as an alternative way of conceptualizing situations, or the Canonical Use Principle is observed, and the metaphor is somehow related to a rule deriving the denominals. In order to see how things stand, it is necessary to have an empirical view on the matter.

3. Test

The issue of the distinction between RD and ID denominals and its relation to ease in production/comprehension is very important, and it has been studied in English, where denominals are highly productive (see Kelly 1998). The various experiments conducted show that RD verbs are easier to produce (Experiment 1), quicker to produce (Experiment 2), easier to comprehend (Experiment 3), easier to paraphrase than idiosyncratic ones (Experiment 4). In Experiment 4, for instance, a sentence such as 'I harmonicaed by the campfire' receives only one paraphrase 'I played the harmonica', while 'She balconied over to Romeo' receives several paraphrases ('She climbed over the balcony to get to Romeo', 'She hastened towards Romeo', 'She jumped from balcony to balcony', 'She leaned over the balcony towards Romeo', 'She made her way over to Romeo on the balcony', 'She met Romeo at the balcony', 'She moved across the balcony to Romeo', 'She spoke from the balcony to Romeo', 'She tiptoed (as if walking on a balcony) over to Romeo', 'She walked across the balcony to Romeo', 'She walked across the balcony to talk with Romeo').

Given the absence of such experiments for Romanian, I decided to do an experiment similar to Experiments 3 & 4, in order to test the ease in comprehension and paraphrasing of denominal verbs of various degrees of semantic transparency.

3.1. Research question

The main research question is: how are denominal verbs used/ interpreted? Are they rule-derived or idiosyncratic? When given a non-existent but possible denominal verbs, do speakers interpret it as derived according to some Canonical Use Principle or not? Do they prefer RD interpretations over ID ones? If they prefer one over the other, what exactly favours this?

¹ It is not clear to me why Kelly (1998) lists kitchen utensils and tools as items giving rise to verbs with idiosyncratic meanings, as the actions involving them may be considered canonical (see Hale & Kayser 2002).

3.2. Predictions

The prediction made is that if there is a certain canonical use of the object, then one would expect the interpretation of a RD verb, otherwise, one would expect idiosyncrasy, metaphor. For objects, the first expected interpretation for denominals derived from objects would be its canonical use (a term comprising an array of possible actions involving that object). Secondly, one might expect a change of state reading ('to become like that object') or a typical behaviour reading ('to behave like that object'), both metaphorical readings. Naturally, if the denominal verb given to the participants in the experiment is derived from a noun that does not denote an object, but an animal or a function a person could hold, it would become rather odd to talk about a canonical use of an animal or a function/ job. For animals, one would expect a reading such as performing a typical action affecting that animal (catching, killing, setting traps for that animal a.o.). One could also expect either a typical behaviour reading ('to behave like that animal') or a change of state reading ('to become that animal/ like that animal'), both yielding potentially metaphorical interpretations. For function/ jobs, one would expect either a change of state reading or a typical behaviour reading, either in the literal or more figurative sense.

One more prediction would be that the presence of a certain syntactic element (a clitic) could favour a certain interpretation, notably, a 'become x/like x' or 'behave like x' interpretation. If the subject is [+animate], the interpretation could be either one of the above, if the subject is [-animate], the interpretations available would be 'become x/ like x'.

3.3. Participants

The participants in the experiment were 10 Romanian native speakers, with no knowledge of the Canonical Use Principle, and, hence, no bias towards a certain answer.

3.4. Method

In the experiment, the participants were given a number of 20 possible, but nonexistent denominal verbs, for which they were asked to provide a paraphrase (expressing the meaning of the denominal) and a sentence where they exemplify their use of the denominal verb. While English denominal verbs have a form identical to the noun they derive from, Romanian denominal verbs add a verbal suffix to the root, thus differing in form from the noun: this suffix can be *-a*, *-e*, *-i*, *-î*. While there are several linguistic analyses arguing that the noun and the verb derive separately from a common (possibly acategorical) root (Arad 2003, 2005, Borer 2014a, b, Nevins 2016, Parrott 2017 a.o.), throughout the experiment and the paper, for that matter, I embrace the underlying assumption that the verb is derived from the noun, relying on the idea that, more often than not, the verb and the noun are semantically related, which would result as a direct consequence if one assumed they are syntactically related. Asking the subjects to provide paraphrases containing the nouns the verbs are derived from reflects this underlying assumption.

The subjects were explained how to give a paraphrase (including the corresponding noun, if possible): *a bucura*= *a da/ oferi bucurie* 'to give/ offer joy', *a se pisici*= *a face ca pisica* 'to behave like the cat', *a ciocăni*= *a da cu ciocanul* 'to hit with the hammer' a.o. This was done with the purpose of being able to relate the results of the experiment to Hale & Keyser's (2002) incorporation theory. In most cases, the subjects provided noun paraphrases for the given denominals. However, in some cases (not many), they failed to do so, either because they forgot

or they did not pay enough attention or explaining the meaning without a paraphrase seemed easier.

Two sets of ten denominal verbs were given:

(a) the first set consisted of the verbs:

a cireși ‘to cherry-VB SUFFIX’, *a struguri* ‘to grape- VB SUFFIX’, *a vulpi* ‘to fox- VB SUFFIX’, *a renui* ‘to reindeer- VB SUFFIX’, *a profesori* ‘to teacher- VB SUFFIX’, *a marinări* ‘to sailor-VB SUFFIX’, *a piei* ‘to skin- VB SUFFIX’, *a furculi* ‘to fork- VB SUFFIX’, *a șezlongui* ‘to sunbed-VB SUFFIX’, *a microfoni* ‘to microphone- VB SUFFIX’

(b) the second set simply repeated the first set but adding the clitic *se* ‘(one)self’:

a se cireși ‘to CL. cherry-VB SUFFIX’, *a se struguri* ‘to CL. grape-VB SUFFIX’, *a se vulpi* ‘to CL. fox-VB SUFFIX’, *a se renui* ‘to CL. reindeer-VB SUFFIX’, *a se profesori* ‘to CL. teacher-VB SUFFIX’, *a se marinări* ‘to CL. sailor-VB SUFFIX’, *a se piei* ‘to CL. skin-VB SUFFIX’, *a se furculi* ‘to CL. fork-VB SUFFIX’, *a se șezlongui* ‘to CL. sunbed-VB SUFFIX’, *a se microfoni* ‘to CL. microphone-VB SUFFIX’

The reason for giving subjects two sets of verbs was to see if there are any differences between set (a) and set (b). My own intuition as a native speaker suggested to me that set (b) with the reflexive clitic was more prone to change of state interpretations (‘become X/ like x’) or typical behaviour interpretations (‘behave like x’), some of them leading to idiosyncratic/ metaphorical readings.

The chosen verbs could be argued to be derived from nouns that are rather concrete, denoting either objects or animals or functions/ jobs people could hold (more specifically, 6 objects, 2 animals, 2 functions/ jobs), rather than from abstract nouns (denoting feelings or emotions or abstract entities). While other tests could (and should) be devised in order to test the interpretation and use of denominals derived from abstract nouns, the motivation behind the choice for verbs derived from concrete nouns in the case of this particular experiment was to keep it simple and make it easier for the subjects to relate the verb and the object/ animal/ function. Nevertheless, given that emotions can be felt or caused, the results for abstract denominals would probably not run counter to the idea of ‘canonical’ use of verbs. However, this remains a matter of future research.

3.5. Results

Set 1

The verb *a ciresi* ‘to cherry-VB. SUFFIX’ has received the following interpretations: (i) ‘a culege cireșe’ ‘to pick cherries’ (4 answers)-see (5a), (ii) ‘a mânca cireșe’ ‘to eat cherries’ (3 answers)-see (5b), (iii) ‘a pune cireșe in iaurt’, ‘to put cherries in yoghurt’, (iv) ‘a umple de cirese’ ‘to adorn with cherries/ to put cherries (on a cake)’- see (5c),(v) ‘a lua cireșe’ ‘to take cherries’:

(5) a. Am ciresit vreo doua ore ieri. (Gabriela)

- 'I cherried for two hours yesterday.'
- b. Maria a ciresit deja doua castroane .(Irina D.)
'Maria has already cherried two bowls.'
- c. Am ciresit tortul pâna nu s-a mai văzut ciocolata. (Ioana D.)
'I cherried the cake until one could not see the chocolate.'

The verb *a struguri* 'to grape-VB. SUFFIX' has received the following interpretations: (i) 'a culege struguri' 'to pick grapes' (6)-see (6a), (ii) 'a produce struguri' 'to produce grapes' (2 answers)-see (6b), (iii) 'a mânca struguri' 'to eat grapes'-see (6c), (iv) 'a bea vin' 'to drink wine' (2 answers)-see (6d), (v) 'a se da cu ruj' 'to put lipstick on' (2 answers):

- (6) a. Am strugurit cu spor anul acesta. (Gabriela)
'We graped with a lot of success this year.'
- b. Via n-a prea strugurit anul ăsta. (Ioana D.)
'The vineyard did not grape much this year.'
- c. Stă pe scaun și strugurește de zor. (Alina)
'He's sitting on the chair graping on and on.'
- d. Hai să mâncăm o portie de pastramă si să strugurim un paharel. (Irina D.)
'Let's eat some ham and grape a little glass'.

The verb *a vulpi* 'to fox-VB. SUFFIX' has been interpreted as: (i) 'a se comporta ca o vulpe' 'to behave like a fox', (ii) 'a fura' 'to steal'-see (7a), (iii) 'a pândi' 'to spy'-see (7b), (iv) 'a minti' ('to lie), 'a păcăli pe cineva' ('to trick somebody')-see (7c), (v) 'a prinde vulpi' ('to catch foxes')-see (7d):

- (7) a. A vulpiti un măr din copacul vecinul. (Alina)
'She stole an apple from the neighbour's tree.'
- b. Ana a vulpiti-o pe Maria ieri toată ziua. (Diana)
'Ana foxed Mary all day yesterday.'
- c. Mă vulpește ori de câte ori are ocazia! E un mare mincinos! (Irina D.)
'He tricks me every time he has the chance to! He's a big liar!'
- d. Am vulpiti vreo trei ore ieri. (Gabriela)
'I foxed for two hours yesterday.'

The interpretations 'to steal', 'to spy' and 'to lie to somebody'/'to trick somebody' can actually be subsumed under the interpretation 'to behave like a fox', thus, the verb *a vulpi* seems to have two interpretations on the whole: (i) to behave like a fox, and (ii) to catch foxes .

In the case of the verb *a renui* 'to reindeer-VB. SUFFIX', the subjects came up with the readings: (i) 'a face ca renul (a scoate un sunet, a căra)' 'to act like a reindeer' (2 answers)-see (8a), (ii) 'a lega reni de sanie' 'to tie reindeers to the sleigh'-see (8b), (iii) 'a se preface că e ren' 'to pretend to be a reindeer (8c)', (iv) 'a trage renul de coadă' 'to pull the reindeer by the tail', (v) 'a prinde reni' 'to catch reindeer'-see (8d), and some subjects even said they cannot find any interpretation:

- (8) a. El renuiește de fiecare data cand se enervează. (Ioana M.)
'He reindeers every time he gets angry.'
- b. Moșul a renuit sania și a pornit la drum. (Ioana D.)

- ‘Santa Claus reindeer the sleigh and got going;
- c. El a avut un rol la teatru unde a reinit timp de zece minute. (Diana)
 ‘He had a theater role where he reindeer for ten minutes.’
- d. Au reinit de vreo doua ori cand au fost la Polul Nord. (Gabriela)
 ‘They reindeer two times since being at the North Pole’

The interpretation ‘to pretend to be a reindeer’ can be subsumed under the interpretation ‘to behave like a reindeer’.

The verb *a profesori* ‘to teacher-VB. SUFFIX’ has received the interpretations: (i) ‘a face pe profesorul’ ‘to pretend to be a teacher, to pretend to be a know-it-all’- see (9a), (ii) ‘a preda’ ‘to teach’- see (9b), (iii) ‘a forma pe cineva ca profesor’ ‘to (help) form sb as a teacher’-see (9c), (iv) ‘a se comporta autoritar’ ‘to act in an authoritarian manner’-see (9d).

- (9) a. Întotdeauna ii place sa profesoreasca chiar si atunci cand stie ca nu are dreptate. (Irina D.)
 ‘He always likes to teacher even when he knows he is not right.’
- b. Le-ai profesorit astăzi? (Gabriela)
 ‘Did you teacher them today?’
- c. A fost profesorit de către cei mai buni în domeniu. (Oana)
 ‘He was teachered by the best in the field.’
- d. Nu mai profesori atât! (Diana)
 ‘Don’t teacher so much!’

For the verb *a marinări* ‘to marinar-VB. SUFFIX’, speakers have provided the following interpretations: (i) ‘a umbla pe mare’ ‘to travel on the sea’ (most answers)-see (10a), (ii) ‘a face pe marinarul’ ‘to pretend to be a marinar’, (iii) ‘a deveni marinar’ ‘to become a marinar’.

- (10) a. A marinărit vreo doi ani si dupa aceea s-a lăsat de meserie. (Gabriela)
 ‘He marinared for about two years and then he gave up his job.’
- b. El marinărește de față cu fetele.
 ‘He marinars in front of the girls.’

The verb *a pieli* ‘to skin-VB. SUFFIX’ has received the paraphrases: (i) ‘a lua/ jupui pielea’ (‘to take the skin’), (ii) ‘a pierde din piele’ (‘to lose part of the skin’), (iii) ‘a acoperi cu pielea’ (‘to cover with skin’):

- (11) a. Am pielit o portocală. (Alina)
 ‘I skinned an orange’.
- b. Ai cam pielit de când nu te-am văzut! (Oana S.)
 ‘You’ve kinda skinned since the last time I saw you’.
- c. Rana se vindecă, a început să pielească. (Ioana D.)
 ‘The wound is healing, it started to skin’.

Interestingly, speakers provided both transitive verb answers, where *piele* takes a direct object, and intransitive verb answers, where *piele* denotes a process referring to the subject.

For the verb *a furculi* ‘to fork-VB SUFFIX’, subjects provided the following readings: (i) ‘a mânca cu furculița’ ‘to eat with the fork’ (4 answers)- see (12a), (ii) ‘a amesteca cu furculița’ ‘to mix with the fork’- see (11b):

- (12) a. Furculiți, vă rog ! Nu e frumos să mâncați cu mâna. (Irina D.)
‘Fork, please! It’s not nice to eat with the hand.’
b. A furculit puțin cous-cous-ul pentru a ii da o textura pufoasa. (Gabriela)
‘She forked the cous-cous a bit in order to give it a fluffy texture.’
Nu-i frumos să furculești mâncarea! (Ioana D.)
‘It’s not nice to fork the food!’

The second interpretation is very close to the first one, hence, it can be subsumed under it.

In the case of the verb *a sezlongui* ‘to sunbed’, all speakers came up with the interpretation ‘a sta pe șezlong’ ‘to sit on the sunbed’:

- (13) Am șezlonguit vreo două ore în grădină la tine. (Oana)
‘I sunbedded for two hours in your garden.’

The verb *a microfoni* ‘to microphone’ received the interpretations: (i) a folosi microfonul (a cânta, vorbi) ‘to use the microphone (to sing, talk)-these represented most of the answers-see (14a), (ii) a verifica dacă microfonul funcționează, atingându-i suprafața ‘to check if the microphone is working, touching its surface’-see (14b):

- (14) a. Este primul care microfonește când mergem la karaoke. (Alina)
‘He’s the first to microphone when we go to karaoke’.
Interpretul a microfonit melodia. (Miruna)
‘The singer microphoned the song’.
b. Când artista a ajuns pe scenă, a microfonit înainte de a începe să cânte. (Ioana M.)
‘When the artist reached the stage, she microphoned before starting to sing.’

Set 2

As for the second set of verbs, where the verb was accompanied by a reflexive clitic, we obtained similar, yet different results.

The verb *a se cireși*, lit. ‘to CL. cherry-VB. SUFFIX’ ‘to cherry (oneself)’ received the following interpretations: (i) ‘a face/da roade/cireșe’ ‘to make/ produce cherries’ (Gabriela-15b), (ii) ‘a se face roșu ca cireșa’, ‘to become red like a cherry’ (Oana-15a, Elena, Alina, Oana S.), (iii) ‘a-și face cercei din cireșe’ ‘to make earrings out of cherries’ (Ioana D., 15c), (iv) ‘a se murdări de cireșe’ ‘to dirty oneself with cherries’ (Irina D.-15s, Oana), (v) ‘a căpăta forma cireșei’ ‘to gain the shape of a cherry’ (Ioana M., 15e), (vi) ‘a deveni cireășă, dintr-o cireășă mică, verde, s-a făcut o cireășă mare, roșie’ ‘to turn into a cherry; from a tiny, green cherry, it grew into a big red cherry’ (Irina I., 15f), (vii) ‘a se intimida’ (‘to blush) (Diana, 15g), (viii) a culege cireșe (‘to pick cherries’) (Miruna, 15h):

- (15) a. Uite cum s-a cireșit, bietul, se vede că e stânjenit! (Oana)

- ‘Look how he cherried poor guy, you can see he’s embarrassed!’
- b. S-au cireșit pomii din livadă. (Gabriela)
 ‘The trees from the orchard cherried.’
- c. Toate fetele s-au cireșit și s-au împodobit cu flori. (Ioana D.)
 ‘All girls cherried themselves and adorned themselves with flowers.’
- d. Ai mâncat în grabă și te-ai cireșit chiar și pe urechi. (Irina D.)
 ‘You ate in a hurry, and you cherried yourself even on the ears.’
- e. Claudia s-a cireșit de cand mănâncă mereu. (Ioana M.)
 ‘Claudia has cherried ever since she eats non-stop.’
- f. Fetița aștepta cu nerăbdare ca micile sfere verzi să se cireșească. (Irina I.)
 ‘The girl was impatiently waiting for the tiny green spheres to cherry.’
- g. El s-a cireșit ieri când a vorbit cu Ana. (Diana)
 ‘He cherried yesterday when he talked to Ana.’
- h. Ea se cireseste toată ziua, ajutandu-i pe cei din jur! (Miruna)
 ‘She cherries all day, helping the ones around her!’

Interpretation (vii) ‘to blush’ seems quite related to the interpretation (ii) ‘to become red like a cherry’, and can thus be subsumed under it.

In comparison with the variant of the denominal without the clitic, one can notice the presence of additional interpretations, such as ‘to become red like a cherry’, ‘to become like a cherry in terms of shape’, or even ‘to turn into a cherry’, therefore ‘become like X/ become X’ interpretations.

The verb *a se struguri* ‘to CL. grape-VB SUFFIX’ (‘to grape (oneself)’) received the following interpretations: (i) ‘a face/da roade/struguri’, ‘to make/ produce grapes’ (Gabriela, 16a), (ii) ‘a căpăta gust de struguri’ ‘to acquire the taste of grapes’ (Ioana D., 16b), (iii) ‘a se face violet/ mov închis ca strugurele’ ‘to become violet/ dark purple like grapes’ (Elena), (iv) ‘a se coace’ (‘to ripen’), ‘despre struguri verzi care se coc’ (‘green grapes that ripen’) (Irina I., 16c), (v) ‘a se da cu strugurele’ ‘to use lipgloss’ (Oana, 16d), (vi) ‘a se murdări de struguri’ ‘to get dirty with grapes’ (Oana, 16e, Miruna), (vii) ‘a se îmbăta cu vin’ ‘to get drunk with wine’ (Ioana M., 16f), (viii) ‘a se enerva’ ‘to become irritated’ (Alina, 15g), (ix) ‘a se învineți’ ‘to turn blue (from a bruise)’ (Diana, 16h), (x) ‘a se acri’ ‘to turn sour’ (Irina D., Oana S., 16i):

- (16) a. S-au strugurit viile. (Gabriela)
 ‘The vineyards have graped.’
- b. Sucul rămas pe masă s-a strugurit. (Ioana D.)
 ‘The juice left on the table graped.’
- c. Bobițele s-au strugurit în sfârșit și de abia aștept să le mănânc. (Elena)
 ‘The fruit have finally graped and I cannot wait to eat them.’
- d. M-am strugurit, sunt gata și putem merge când vrei tu. (Oana)
 ‘I graped myself, I’m ready and we can go whenever you want.’
- e. M-am strugurit tot culegând astăzi, trebuie să-mi spăl bluza. (Oana)
 ‘I graped (myself) at picking today, I have to wash my shirt.’
- f. Matei s-a strugurit cam mult la petrecere (Ioana M.)
 ‘Matei graped (himself) too much at the part.’
- g. S-a strugurit la el pentru ca i-a mâncat prăjitura. (Alina)
 ‘She graped at him for eating her cake.’

- h. Mi-am strugurit piciorul. (Diana)
‘I graped my foot.’
- i. Vinul asta s-a cam strugurit, nu crezi? (Oana S.)
‘This wine has graped, don’t you think?’

In comparison with the variant of the denominal without the clitic, one can notice the presence of additional interpretations, such as ‘to become purple like a grape’, ‘to become like a grape in terms of taste’, or even ‘to turn into a grape’, therefore ‘become like X/ become X’ interpretations. When the verbs have human subjects, becoming like X may trigger metaphorical extensions (e. g. ‘to become irritated).

The verb *a se vulpi* ‘to CL. fox-VB. SUFFIX’ (‘to fox (oneself)’) received the readings: (i) ‘a deveni viclean’ ‘to become shrewd’ (Gabriela, Oana, Ioana M.-17a, Diana, Miruna), (ii) ‘a se comporta precum o vulpe’ ‘to behave like a fox’ (Irina I.-17d), (iii) ‘a se piti ca o vulpe’, ‘to hide like a fox’ (Oana S., 17g), (iv) ‘a se împerechea (vulpile)’ ‘to mate’ (about foxes) (Gabriela, 16b), (v) a se umple de vulpi’ ‘to become full of foxes’ (Ioana D., 17c), (vi) ‘a face pe vulpea’ ‘to pretend to be a fox’ (Elena), (vii) ‘a deveni vulpe mare’ ‘to become a big fox’ (Irina I., 17d), (viii) ‘a se costuma în vulpe’ ‘to dress up as a fox’ (Oana, 17e), (ix) ‘a se vopsi roscat’ ‘to dye oneself the colour red’ (Alina, 17f):

- (17) a. El s-a vulpit în copilarie. (Ioana M.)
‘He foxed (himself) in his child-hood’
- b. Primăvara se vulpesc exemplarele ajunse la maturitate. (Gabriela)
‘In spring the grown up animals fox (with) each other’.
- c. Pădurea s-a vulpit în doar câteva luni. (Ioana D.)
‘The forest foxed (itself) in only a few months.’
- d. Mariei nu i-a plăcut deznodământul situației cu care s-a confruntat, așa că s-a vulpit, spunându-și ca nu era totuși atât de important (=vulpea care spunea că sunt acri strugurii). (Irina I.)
‘Maria did not like the ending of the situation she confronted, so she foxed (herself), telling herself it was not that important. (= the fox that was saying that grapes are sour’) (Oana)
- e. N-am știut ca te-ai vulpit. (Alina)
‘I had no idea you foxed yourself.’
- f. Nu are rost să te tot vulpești atât! (Oana S.)
‘There’s no point foxing (yourself) so much.’

Interpretations (ii), (iii) and (vi) can be considered as one single interpretation ‘behave like a fox’.

In the case of the verb *a se renui* ‘to CL. reindeer-VB SUFFIX’ (‘to reindeer (oneself)’), speakers provided the following paraphrases: (i) ‘a se împerechea renii’ ‘to mate (about reindeers)’ (Gabriela, 18a), (ii) ‘a se deghiza în ren’ , ‘to dress up as a reindeer’ (Ioana D., 18b, Oana, 18c), (iii) ‘a face pe renul’ ‘to pretend to be a reindeer’ (Elena), (iv) ‘a îmbrăca haine groase’ ‘to wear winter clothes’ (Ioana M., 18d), (v) ‘a-și aranja părul’ ‘to arrange one’s hair’ (Alina, 18e), (vi) ‘a căra’ ‘to carry’ (Miruna, 18f), (vii) a-i crește coarne de ren ‘to grow reindeer horns’ (Oana S., 18g), no answer (Irina D., Diana):

- (18) a. S-au renuit o vreme după care s-au întors la turmă. (Gabriela)
 ‘They reindereed for a while, after which they went back to the herd.’
 b. Eu mă renuiesc, tu cine o să fii? (Ioana D.)
 ‘I am reindeering myself, what will you be?’
 c. Ne-am renuit toți 3 și pentru o zi am jucat o piesă suedeză. (Oana)
 ‘The three of us reindereed and we played a Swedish play for a day.’
 d. De când a venit iarna, Ioana se renuieste zilnic. (Ioana M.)
 ‘Ever since winter came, Ioana reinderees herself every day.’
 e. Ce frumos te-ai renuit astăzi! (Alina)
 ‘How nicely you reindereed (yourself) today!’
 f. Măgarul este obligat să renuiasca sacii. (Miruna)
 ‘The donkey is forced to reindereed the sacks’.
 g. Nu ești prea cuminte! Ești cam renuit! (Oana S.)
 ‘You don’t behave. You’re a bit reindereed.’

The verb *a se profesori* ‘to CL. teacher-VB. SUFFIX’ (‘to teacher (oneself)’) has been interpreted as: (i) ‘a se face profesor’ ‘to become a teacher’ (Gabriela, Irina I., 19a, Oana, Alina), (ii) ‘a face pe profesorul’ ‘to pretend to be a teacher’ (Ioana D., 19b, Elena), (iii) ‘a se comporta ca un profesor’ ‘to behave like a teacher’ (Oana, 19c), (iv) ‘a da ordine ca un profesor’ ‘to give orders like a teacher’ (Ioana M.), (v) ‘a se cultiva’ ‘to cultivate oneself’ (Irina D.), (vi) ‘a se școli’ ‘to educate oneself’ (Oana S., 19d), (vii) ‘a se preda’ ‘to be taught’ (Diana, 19e):

- (19) a. Ion s-a profesorit după examenul de titularizare. (Irina I.)
 ‘Ion teachered (himself) after the exam for acquiring the teacher title.’
 b. Ne enervează că se profesorește prea mult și prea des. (Ioana D.)
 ‘He annoys us because he teachers (himself) too much and too often.’
 c. Te rog să nu te mai profesorești când mă corectezi, suntem colegi doar! (Oana)
 ‘Please do not teacher (yourself) when you correct me, we are colleagues!’
 d. Unde te-ai profesorit tu? (Oana S.)
 ‘Where did you teacher yourself?’
 e. S-a profesorit o lectie nouă astăzi. (Diana)
 ‘A new lesson was teachered today.’

The interpretations for *a se marinări* ‘to CL. marinar-VB. SUFFIX’ (‘to marinar (oneself)’) were: (i) ‘a deveni marinar’ ‘to become a marinar’ (Gabriela, Ioana D., Irina D., Irina I., Alina, Miruna, Ioana M., 20a), (ii) ‘a se costuma în marinar’, ‘to dress oneself as a marinar’ (Irina D., Oana, 20b), (iii) ‘a se strica’ ‘to get ruined’ (Diana, 20c), (iv) ‘a înota’ ‘to swim’ (Oana S., 20d):

- (20) a. După ce s-a străduit îndelung, s-a marinărit! (Ioana M.)
 ‘After he tried hard for a long time, he marinared (himself)!’
 b. Amândoi s-au marinărit și au început spectacolul, în urma multor repetiții reușite. (Oana)
 ‘They both marinared (themselves) and they started the show, after many successful rehearsals.’
 c. Recolta s-a marinărit! (Diana)

- ‘The harvest marinated (itself)!’
 d. Știi să marinărești? (Oana S.)
 ‘Can you marinar?’

The results were very similar to the non-clitic variant, possibly because there are not many actions which could involve the use of a marinar, hence *a marinări* received almost the same interpretations. In contrast, a verb such as *a struguri* (‘to grape-VB. SUFFIX’) had many other readings in the non-clitic variant, as there are many possible actions involving grapes.

The verb *a se pieli* ‘to CL. skin-VB. SUFFIX’ (‘to skin (oneself)’) received the readings: (i) ‘a se descuama’ ‘to peel off’ (Gabriela- 21a, Elena, Oana, Diana), (ii) ‘a-și cerceta și zgândări diverse imperfecțiuni de pe piele’ ‘to investigate and touch/ scratch various skin imperfections’ (Ioana D., 21b), (iii) ‘a-și lua pielea’ ‘to take off one’s skin’ (Miruna-21 c), (iv) ‘a avea probleme’ ‘to get into trouble’ (Ioana M.), (v) ‘a se arde’ ‘to burn oneself’ (Alina, 21d) no answer (Irina D., Irina I.):

- (21) a. S-a pielit în straturi de la soare. (Gabriela)
 ‘She skinned in layers from the sun.’
 b. După fiecare duș se pieleşte vreo oră. (Ioana D.)
 ‘After every shower, he skins himself for one hour.’
 c. De nervi, copilul a început să se pielească. (Miruna)
 ‘Out of anger, the kid started to skin himself.’
 d. M-am pielit când am scos tava din cuptor. (Alina)
 ‘I burnt myself when I took the tray out of the oven.’

Interestingly, in its clitic variant, the verb can be interpreted as in (ii) or (iii), namely, as doing something to oneself, to one’s own skin, thus revealing its reflexive use. It can also have a process reading as in (i).

In the case of the verb *a se furculi* ‘to CL. fork- VB. SUFFIX’ (‘to fork (oneself)’) received the interpretations: (i) ‘(despre cineva) a reacționa virulent ca răspuns la atacuri’ ‘(about somebody) to react virulently as an answer to attacks’ (Gabriela, 22a), (ii) ‘a face scandal’ ‘to make a scandal’ (Alina, Miruna-22b), (iii) ‘a se bate cu furculițele’ ‘to fight with forks’ (Ioana D., 22c), (iv) ‘a gusta’ ‘to taste’ (Irina D.), (v) *a se încovoia* asemenea unei furculițe ‘to bend like a fork’ (Oana, 22d), (vi) ‘a-și aranja părul cu gel’ ‘to arrange his hair with gel’ (Ioana M., 22e), (vii) ‘a se strecura’ ‘to sneak’ (Diana, 22f), (viii) *a se înțepa* ‘to prick oneself’ (Oana S., 22g):

- (22) a. S-a furculit la prietenii lui când s-a simțit încolțit. (Gabriela)
 ‘He forked (himself) at his his friends until he felt cornered.’
 b. Pentru că nu a primit suficienți bani, omul s-a furculit. (Miruna)
 ‘Because he did not receive enough money, the man forked himself.’
 c. Copiii se furculeau într-una până venea desertul. (Ioana D.)
 ‘The children kept forking (themselves/ each other) until the desert would come.’
 d. Nu te mai furculi acolo, deasupra temelor, încearcă să stai cu spatele mai drept!
 (Oana)
 ‘Stop forking (yourself) above your homework, try to keep your back straight!’
 e. S-a furculit cu ocazia anului nou. (Ioana M.)
 ‘He forked (himself) on the occasion of the new year.’

- f. S-a furculit pe lângă mine! (Diana)
 ‘She forked herself near me!’
 g. Au! M-am furculit si ma doare! (Oana S.)
 ‘Ouch! I forked myself and it hurts me!’

While other verbs have received many interpretations, the verb *a se șezlongui* ‘to *clitic* sunbed’, i.e. ‘to sunbed (oneself), has been interpreted either as: (i) ‘a se așeza (comod) pe un șezlong’ ‘to lie comfortably in a sunbed’ (Gabriela, Ioana D.-23a, Elena, Oana, Ioana M., Miruna), (ii) ‘a se întinde ca pe șezlong’ ‘to lie as if in a sunbed’ (Alina, Diana-23b, Oana S.) and even no answer (Irina I.):

- (23) a. M-am șezlonguit la soare și am rămas acolo două ore. (Ioana D.)
 ‘I sunbedded in the sun and I lay there for 2 hours.’
 b. Ana se șezlonguia pe canapea. (Diana)
 ‘Ana sunbedded (herself) on the couch.’

The verb *a se microfoni* ‘to CL. microphone-VB. SUFFIX’, i.e. ‘to microphone (oneself)’ has been interpreted as: (i) *a se da în vileag* (impersonal) ‘to get out/ to become exposed’/ *a da în vileag* (de unul singur) ‘to reveal/ to expose (all by himself)’ (Gabriela, 24a), (ii) ‘a cânta la microfon fără talent’ ‘to sing at the microphone without any talent’ (Ioana D., 24b), (iii) ‘a deveni cântăreț’ ‘to become a singer’ (Miruna), (iv) ‘a vorbi tare în mod ostentativ’ ‘to speak loudly in an ostentatious way’ (Ioana M., 24c), (v) ‘a se înregistra’ ‘to record oneself’ (Alina, 24d), (vi) ‘a face gălăgie ca la microfon’ ‘to make noise as if on the microphone’ (Oana S., 24e) and no answer (Elena, Irina D., Irina I., Diana).

- (24) a. S-a microfonit vestea ca a picat guvernul. / S-a microfonit ca un nătăfleț la prieteni de petrecere. (Gabriela)
 ‘The rumour got microphoned that the government is down.’/ ‘He microphoned like a fool to party friends.’
 b. Antonia nu cântă, se microfo-nește. (Ioana D.)
 ‘Antonia does not sing, she microphones.’
 c. Când ceva nu îi convine, Camelia se microfonește în fața prietenilor ei. (Ioana M.)
 ‘When something does not appeal to her, Camelia microphones in front of her friends.’
 d. S-a microfonit cum cânta balada aceea veche. (Alina)
 ‘He microphoned himself as he was singing that old ballad.’
 e. Copiii aceștia se microfonesc cam tare! (Oana S.)
 ‘These kids microphone themselves a bit too much!’

4. Interpretation of the results and consequences for the organization of the lexicon

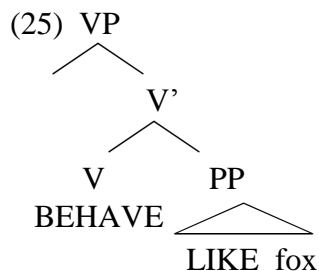
Speakers seem to interpret many of the verbs canonically, but this canonical interpretation depends upon the (kind of) object the verb has (+/ animate), if any, and the kind of subject they pick (+/- animate).

Some verbs were interpreted literally (e.g. *a cireși* ‘to cherry’ as ‘to eat/ pick cherries’, *a struguri* ‘to grape’ as ‘to eat/ pick grapes’), while others were interpreted more figuratively (e.g. *a vulpi* ‘to fox’ as ‘to trick’ mostly), and in some cases, both readings were provided (e.g. *a profesori* ‘to teacher’ interpreted as ‘to teach’ and ‘to scold’).

When the reflexive accompanies the verb, a change of state interpretation is favoured, as well as the ‘behave like X’ interpretation if the subject is [+animate]. While this reading is favoured by the presence of the clitic, it is also available when the verb is not accompanied by any clitic (see *a marinări*-‘to marinar’, which can also mean ‘to act like a marinar’). The ‘behave like X’ interpretation seems to give rise to a metaphorical reading, and seems to arise when the subject is [+animate], building upon a trait that the subject has in common with X. Perhaps the best example for this is the verb *a vulpi* ‘to fox’, interpreted as ‘to behave like a fox, i.e in a sly manner’ (‘to steal’, ‘to trick’, ‘to lie’). In this sense, it could be argued that, in their ‘behave like X’ interpretation, denominal verbs involve a cognitive mapping from one conceptual domain to another (Lakoff 1993), in a similar fashion to mappings such as LOVE IS WAR, IDEAS ARE PLANTS, LIFE IS A GAME. Embracing the view that metaphors are conceptual and they can be found in common speech, not being restricted to poetic speech, one can claim that some denominals involve conceptual mappings such as MAN IS A FOX, MAN IS A REINDEER, MAN IS A TEACHER, MAN IS A MARINAR, THE HUMAN FACE IS A CHERRY.

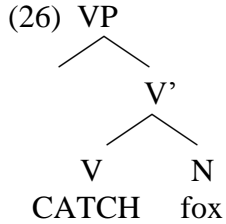
While this conceptual take on the matter is one way to go about it, I adopt a different perspective, arguing that, although from a cognitive perspective, literal and non-literal language trigger different cognitive processes, there is no clear distinction between literal and non-literal denominal verbs, or, in other words, between RD denominals and ID denominals.

Essentially, I argue, starting from the results of this experiment, that ID denominals are also rule-derived, just like RD denominals, the only difference being in the lexico-syntactic structure which generates them. In other words, it is not the case that the cognitive mapping of verb *a vulpi* ‘to fox’ cannot be captured syntactically in any way. Instead, I argue that *to fox* is the result of nominal root-incorporation starting from the basic structure ‘BEHAVE LIKW fox’, where the light verb BEHAVE takes an obligatory manner/ comparative complement:



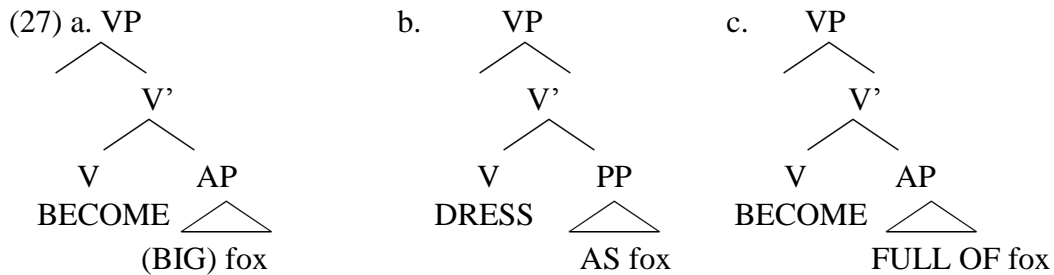
The bare noun ‘fox’ incorporates into the silent preposition LIKE, and the composite P-N further moves into V, giving rise to the verb ‘fox’.

The difference between the various interpretations (‘to steal’, ‘to lie’, ‘to cheat’, ‘to trick’) arises from the differences in conceptual representations of fox-like behaviour. However, if one has to account for an interpretation such as ‘to catch foxes’, then this interpretation obviously does not come about from a different conceptual representation of fox-like behaviour, but rather from a different lexico-syntactic structure altogether:

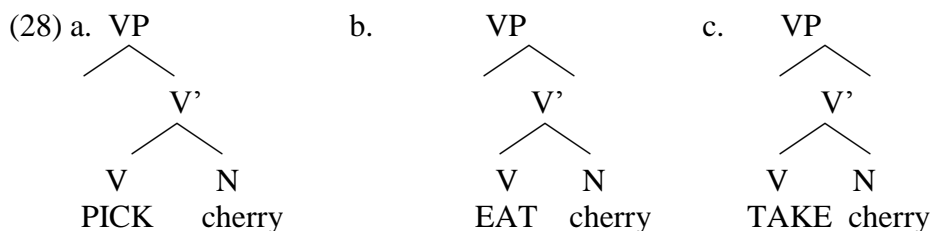


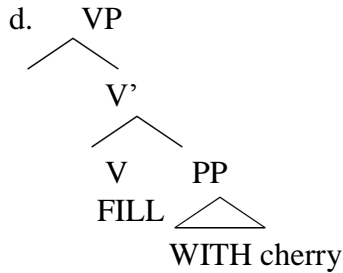
Out of all the possible interpretations, the speaker chooses the interpretation he prefers. Given the fact that the language does not associate the verb *vulpi* with a certain interpretation, the speaker is free to creatively assign his own interpretation to the verb. However, in order to ensure mutual comprehensibility, this creative assignation of interpretation of the denominal verb needs to be decodable by the interlocutor. It more often than not involves, as we have seen, some canonical process in which something/ some animal/ some person becomes X or becomes like X, some canonical behaviour typical of X, or some canonical action involving a certain object/ animal/ person X. And in case the action is not canonical universally, it must be acknowledged as the one the speaker is referring to contextually, in a certain situation, or else the communication does not fall through. One could imagine a situation where a woman hugs four foxes one after another, and, afterwards, says to her friend: “I really like to fox!”, by which she means she really likes to hug foxes. In this particular situation, the verb at stake seems to be TO HUG, since this was the canonical action performed by the woman. However, it is clearly not the case that hugging foxes represents a canonical action generally performed by humans.

In the reflexive form of the verb *a se vulpi* ‘to CL fox-verbal suffix’, the speakers provided a few other interpretations, some of which can be seen in (27):

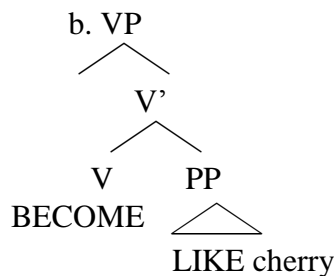
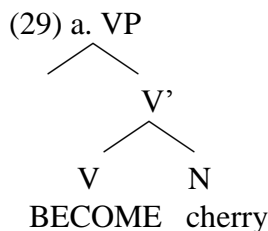


In the case of a verb such as *a cireși* ‘to cherry’, the speakers provided the following interpretations, which I will render below as lexico-syntactic representations:





In the reflexive form of the verb *a se cireși* ‘to CL cherry-verbal suffix’, the speakers provided other interpretations as well:



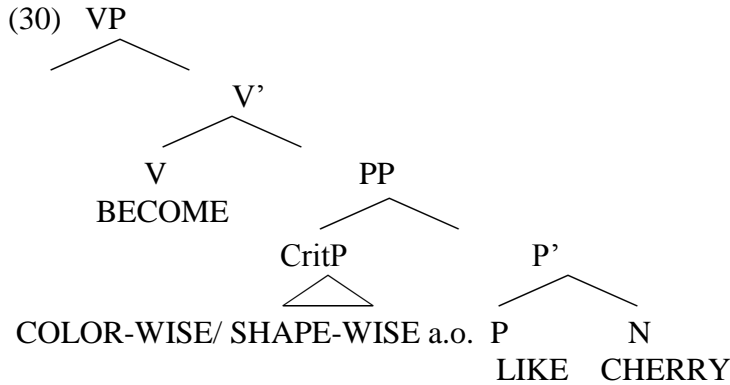
A problem arises, given that there are several respects in which something can become like a cherry, in terms of colour (‘to become red like a cherry’), in terms of shape (‘to gain the shape of a cherry/ to become shaped like a cherry’) a. o., so that it seems to be the case there are several meanings associated with a lexico-syntactic representation, and not just one. This would result in *a se cireși* with the meaning ‘to become red like a cherry’ and *a se cireși* with the meaning ‘to become round like a cherry’ having the same lexico-syntactic representation. Please note that this would not be a problem for a Hale & Keyser (1993) analysis, since, for them, the lexico-syntactic representation is not the meaning of the verb. Speaking about a different verb and its corresponding paraphrase, they argue:

“We do not intend to imply that a conflation like *shelve* “means” the same thing as its analytic paraphrase *put on a shelf* (cf. *put the sand on a shelf, shelve the sand*). We maintain simply that they share the same LRS representation” (Hale & Keyser 1993: 105, fn.7)²

² In addition, Hale & Keyser (1993) refute various counterarguments brought by Fodor (1970) against the decomposition of verbs, making it clear that the decomposition is totally different from meaning:

“The problem we are referring to here is represented by the one which was so eloquently formulated by Fodor (1970) in his famous arguments against deriving *kill* from *cause to die*. His arguments, of course, had to do with the proposal that the simple verb *kill* was derived from a “deep structure” syntactic representation underlying *cause to die*-and the arguments seem correct, for the position he was criticizing. The arguments do not carry over the proposal we are entertaining here, however, since the verbs derived by incorporation in the lexicon are themselves input to d-structure. Thus, for example, the verbs *shelve* and *saddle*, and the like, are lexical items in the true sense, and, as such, each necessarily involves a *single* “event position” (cf. Higginbotham 1985) in its predicate argument structure. Consequently, arguments based on the observation that a complex sentence at d-structure involves multiple events are irrelevant to a proposal to the effect that a lexical item like *saddle* involves a system of relations like that embodied in (X).” (Hale & Keyser 1993: 118)

However, it might seem rather odd that the lexicon would have two store two items *a se cireși* with two different meanings, but the same lexico-syntactic representation, as it would be not so clear which structure is used (the one for one verb or the other). Thus, driven by the desire to be more specific, one might simply add some relevant information within the tree, namely, the criterion of comparison (be it colour or shape):



The criterion of comparison is represented by the properties on the basis of which the object/ person/ animal can be evaluated. These properties represent semantic information stored in the lexicon for a particular item.

One possible objection to this kind of structural approach to creative uses of denominals would be to say that there are too many light verbs, and that Hale & Keyser (2002) did not resort to semantically rich verbs such as PICK or EAT, but rather to a limited set of verbs (BE, DO, PUT). While this may very well, and language seems to have a preference for incorporation into semantically lighter verbs, please bear in mind that the verbs we are now trying to account for were associated with the aforementioned meanings by the subjects of the testing themselves, so we need to explain why speakers thought these to be appropriate answers. Please note the existence of verbs such as ‘to apple-pick’ or ‘to cherry-pick’, where incorporation has occurred visibly, rather than invisibly. One might speculate that the language is aware of the semantic richness of the verb ‘pick’ and wants it to be present lexically for reasons of mutual comprehensibility between interlocutors. This would not be the case for other semantically poorer light verbs. An interesting case is that of verbs of eating or drinking, which seem to allow incorporation in English. All over the world, there are places called ‘Let’s chocolate’ or ‘let’s coffee’, meaning ‘Let’s EAT chocolate’ or ‘Let’s DRINK coffee’. One possible explanation for this could be the fact the verbs EAT and DRINK mean ‘CAUSE FOOD/ DRINK TO BELONG TO YOU/ TO BE INSIDE YOURSELF’, being close in meaning to HAVE. In English, they can even be interchanged. The aim of this digression was merely to show that, while semantically lighter verbs seem to be more prone to incorporation, it is not the case that incorporation is strictly forbidden in the case of other verbs, especially in those situations where they can be more or less replaced with a semantically lighter verb without a fundamental loss in meaning. While FILL or EAT may seem semantically richer, FILL can be decomposed as PUT x INSIDE y and EAT as CAUSE x to BE INSIDE yourself, and the list can go on with other examples. To make this clearer, one could argue that the verbs occurring in paraphrases are not actually semantic primitives in the lexico-syntactic decomposition, and one needs an even finer-grained decomposition.

While this may very well be true, it is not the purpose of this paper to establish what exactly the primitives of lexico-syntactic representations are, but rather to argue in favour of the view that the lexicon contains several possible lexico-syntactic representations, and there is a speaker choice among these different potential structures. While in the case of verbs existing in the dictionary of a language, the speaker choice usually conforms to the linguistic community choice, although, for comic effects, one could choose to use a certain denominal verb in a completely different fashion, in the case of verbs which do not exist in the dictionary of a language, the speaker choice varies more, but is, nevertheless, guided to a great extent by Kiparsky's (1997) Canonical Use Principle. Cutting it short, speakers tend to interpret denominals as involving a canonical use of the thing the action is named after.

After having looked at the results of the test, we are now in a position to reformulate the Canonical Use Principle in a more accurate fashion, taking into account that it is not just actions' and not just things that matter, and that the animacy of the subject of the 'action' also counts. Thus, the Canonical Use Principle becomes:

(31) Canonical Use, Process & Behaviour Principle

- a. If an action is named after a thing, it involves a canonical use of that thing or a canonical process through which something/ somebody becomes (like) that thing.
- b. If an action is named after [+animate] entity, it frequently involves a canonical process through which something/ somebody becomes (like) that [+animate] entity, or a behaviour that is typical of a certain [+animate] entity. It may also involve a canonical use of that [+animate] entity/ a canonical action that affects the [+animate] entity (though this is less frequent).

Given that not all verbs denote actions and not all nouns denote things, it might be better to replace the formulation "action named after a thing" with "verb derived from a noun". While this formulation is rather biased, suggesting that, in the derivational history, there is an order where the noun somehow precedes the verb, I adopt it nonetheless, given my own personal adherence to such a view, as opposed to one where verbs and nouns are derived separately from (possibly acategorial) roots. A derivational view captures in a clear-cut fashion the morphological and semantic relatedness between denominals and nouns, namely, the idea that denominal verbs and the nouns they seem to be morphologically related to (at least in part) are also semantically related (most of the time). Thus, we end up with:

(32) Canonical Use, Process & Behaviour Principle

- a. If a verb is derived from a noun, it involves a canonical use of the thing denoted by the noun or a canonical process through which something becomes (like) that thing.
- b. If a verb is derived from a noun denoting a [+animate] entity, it frequently involves a canonical process through which something becomes (like) that [+animate] entity, or a behaviour that is typical of a certain [+animate] entity. It may also involve a canonical use of that [+animate] entity/ a canonical action that affects the [+animate] entity (though this is less frequent).

Interestingly, this principle can explain the difference in the numbers of answers per verb: while, for instance, several possible answers were provided for *a cireși* ('to cherry'), namely, 'to eat/ pick/ take cherries' a. o. , not so many answers were provided for other verbs: a verb such as *a șezlongui* ('to tanning bed') elicited the same interpretation from almost all the speakers,

namely, ‘to lie on a tanning bed’. This is because, conceptually, while one can think of many ‘canonical’ actions involving cherries, one can think of only one ‘canonical’ action involving a tanning bed. Of course, one could envisage a situation where an angry man takes a tanning bed in his arms and threatens to hit others with it, saying: ‘If you come near me, I’ll tanningbed you with this, do you get me?’. However, this is not the canonical way to think of using a tanning bed. While creative situationally-determined uses of denominals may be surprising at times, when asked what they thought a non-existent but possible denominal verb could mean, speakers opted for canonical actions/ processes. The more possible canonical actions involving things/ animals/ people, the bigger the number of interpretations of denominal verbs.

Perhaps the most important result is the fact that, by resorting to such lexico-syntactic representations, one can capture the semantic relation between the noun and the denominal verb. There is no need to assume that denominal verbs and nouns are separately derived from a bare root, rather, the various extended meanings of denominals can be accounted for by introducing additional silent material in the derivation. Instead of arguing that creativity is accounted for by assuming both the noun and the verb *a se cireși* ‘to CL. cherry’ with the meaning ‘to redden’, one can postulate a *BECOME red* lexico-semantic structure. While one might argue this is uneconomical and burdensome, I believe its advantages are clear when thinking about how semantic relatedness is captured for both RD and ID denominals. In this way, lexico-syntactic representations carry the flavour of lexico-semantic conceptualizations. As long as this serves to explain meaning extensions, however, semantically rich lexico-syntactic representations represent a welcome alternative.

5. Conclusion

There is no clear difference between RD and ID denominals, both are created through a syntactic rule, possibly by derivation from a bare noun and some other silent material. ID denominals often result from a structure of the type ‘BECOME LIKE x’ or ‘BEHAVE LIKE x’, triggering various metaphorical extensions, given that something/ somebody can become or behave like X according to various criteria, not just one. Interestingly, some interpretations are favoured by the presence of certain syntactic elements, such as clitic *se* in Romanian, favouring a reflexive action reading, a process reading or an ‘act like x’ reading. Seeing the variety of interpretations speakers provided for non-existent, but possible denominal verbs allows us to look at the lexicon from a different perspective. One can envisage a storage in the lexicon of potential possible lexico-syntactic structures for denominal verbs, guided by a revisited version of Kiparsky’s Canonical Use Principle (1997), with the speakers deciding which structure to pick. While creativity is often thought of as a matter of invention, it seems to be the case that creativity can also be thought of as a matter of choosing between possible alternatives, driven by a Canonical Use Principle. Although it can be argued that a denominal verb can be made to mean absolutely anything the speaker wants, when asked to provide interpretations, speakers were not that crazily creative, but rather opted for a canonical use answer, uncovering through their answers that there is some sort of rule at work even in creativity. X can become Y or like Y, X can use Y in a typical/ canonical way, as a Theme, as an Instrument, or as a Location, X can behave like Y. There is freedom in choosing between these alternatives, but, once the choice is made, it has to reflect a canonical interpretation. Further on, X can be like Y along many dimensions (colour, size, personality/ typical behavioural traits, if Y is an animal or a human role a.o.), choosing one dimension is also a free will issue. However, the likeness can only be

established along certain common dimensions that X and Y can both be evaluated against, and even if there is some freedom in the choice of a particular dimension, the dimensions themselves are a given.

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