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Latvian agent nouns: their meaning, grammar, and use

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This article explores semantic and grammatical properties of Latvian agent nouns that are derived from verbs by the suffix *-ēj-* (for primary verbs) or *-tāj-* (for secondary verbs). These formations show several peculiarities that distinguish them from agent nouns in other European languages and from similar Latvian nouns formed by other means. They are specialized in meaning, highly regular and transparent. They show verbal features such as aspectuality and combinability with adverbs, and they may inherit verbal arguments. The productivity of the formation is almost unlimited, and many *ad hoc* formations are found in colloquial style, for example in social media. In discourse, agent nouns often have a referential function, either as the only function or in combination with a concept-building function. The focus of the article is on less institutionalized tokens which show the potential of this morphological process that challenges traditional views about the functions of derivation or its delimitation.

1. Introduction

An agent noun or *nomen agentis* is derived from a verb and designates an individual, most often a person. The general meaning of an agent noun derived from a given verb *v* is ‘one that *v*-s’, for example, a *reader* is ‘one that reads’. In Latvian there are several means by which nouns that meet this definition are formed, but two suffixes are specialized in this function and will form the center of interest of this paper: *-ēj-* and *-tāj-*. The building of agent nouns with these suffixes is formally regular, semantically transparent, and highly productive. These agent nouns are used for several purposes and frequently found in various styles and genres. Their productivity and range of usage goes far beyond that of agent nouns in Germanic or Romance languages which in recent years have come into the focus of interest among scholars of word-formation (see Rainer, forthcoming, for an overview). The syntactic and semantic features of Latvian agent nouns have been very little described — to

my knowledge, there is no single study devoted to this topic and the only source of information is dictionaries and general descriptive grammars, of which Endzelin (1922) still gives the most details. The main goal of this article therefore is to present and discuss the characteristic features of Latvian agent nouns and to outline questions for further research in Baltic and general linguistics. The presentation will take into account several questions that have been of general interest for morphological theory, such as productivity, institutionalization and lexicalization, the inheritance of verbal features in derived nouns, and the functions of word-formation. While far from exhausting any of these topics, I hope that the Latvian data may introduce new insights for general morphology and that this paper will lay the ground for further, more specialized studies of Latvian agent nouns.

The structure of this paper and its main questions are as follows: Section 2 introduces formal and semantic characteristics of Latvian agent nouns and shows how the formations with *-ēj-* and *-tāj-* differ from other derived nouns in Latvian. Two functions of agent nouns in discourse are distinguished: the designation of a type and the reference to a role. In section 3 I will explore what restrains the building of agent nouns: are there formally or semantically definable groups of verbs that do not allow the formation, or from which agent nouns are built only rarely? Another central question in the recent literature on agent nouns is whether they may inherit verbal features such as valency and modification by adverbs. Latvian seems to go farther than other European languages in this respect, as will be shown in section 4. The use of agent nouns in texts is a topic deserving a separate study, but some of its aspects will be discussed in section 5, where I will equate my distinction between a type and a role reading with the one made by Baayen & Neijt (1997) between a conceptual and a referential function.

As my focus is on the use of agent nouns and I am more interested in the potential of the formation within the system than in a stock of nouns that belong to the norm, I did not work with dictionaries but searched for agent nouns in texts, mainly on the Internet. I also used the corpus of modern Latvian (Mio2) that is compiled from chosen sources published between 1991 and 2009 (see Levāne-Petrova 2012 for details). With 3.5 million word-forms this corpus is rather small and the fact that an agent noun of a certain verb is not attested there

does not prove that it is extremely rare, let alone impossible. Some further examples stem from my personal unsystematic collection of interesting constructions, mostly found in press texts. In many instances the linguistic context is necessary to understand the function of an agent noun in text. To keep long examples readable, I will give a free translation of the whole example, but provide glosses only for a fragment where the agent noun appears. All English translations are mine.

2. Morphology and semantics of Latvian agent nouns with *-ēj-*/*-tāj-*

Agent nouns containing the suffix *-ēj-* or *-tāj-* are exclusively derived from verbs. Both suffixes attach to the past stem, which in case of verbs combining with *-tāj-* is identical to the infinitive stem¹. Synchronically, the two suffixes can be regarded as allomorphs, with *-ēj-* selecting verbs with a short past stem, ending in a consonant ('primary verbs' in traditional terminology) and *-tāj-* selecting verbs with a long past stem, that is, stems ending in a long vowel or the diphthong /uo/ (written <o> in standard orthography). Examples are given in the table below. The suffix is followed by an inflectional ending for case and number, with two parallel sets of endings for masculine and feminine nouns. Masculine nouns inflect according to declension class I (nominative *-s*, dative *-am*), feminine nouns according to declension class IV (nominative *-a*, dative *-ai*). The same sets of endings are used with adjectives and other words that inflect for gender, number and case. When citing an agent noun out of context, in this paper only the masculine noun will be given.

¹ Note that 'past stem' and 'infinitive stem' are just convenient labels for two of the three stems of a Latvian verb. In the formation of agent nouns, the 'past stem' does not contain a meaning 'past tense'.

Table 1. Formation of agent nouns (AN) with the suffix -ēj-/-tāj-

verb (infinitive)	past stem	AN masculine	AN feminine	meaning
<i>braukt</i> ‘go (by means of transport)’	<i>brauc-</i>	<i>brauc-ēj-s</i>	<i>brauc-ēj-a</i>	‘one who goes (by means of transport)’
<i>iet</i> ‘go, walk’	<i>gāj-</i>	<i>gāj-ēj-s</i>	<i>gāj-ēj-a</i>	‘one who goes/ walks; pedestrian’
<i>strādāt</i> ‘work’	<i>strādā-</i>	<i>strādā-tāj-s</i>	<i>strādā-taj-a</i>	‘one who works’
<i>lasīt</i> ‘read’	<i>lasī-</i>	<i>lasī-tāj-s</i>	<i>lasī-tāj-a</i>	‘reader’
<i>dejo-t</i> ‘dance’	<i>dejo-</i> [dejuo]	<i>dejo-tāj-s</i>	<i>dejo-tāj-a</i>	‘dancer’

For the formation of agent nouns from reflexive verbs see section 3 below.

Semantically almost all of these agent nouns are transparent — knowing the meaning of the verb is enough for deriving the meaning of the agent noun as ‘one that v-s’. If a verb has several meanings, so does the agent noun. Its referent may be habitually involved in the action described by the verb, or only on a given occasion. A typical example is the noun *braucējs*, derived from the verb *braukt*. This verb has about the same meaning range as the German intransitive² verb *fahren*: ‘go/travel by means of transport’. The agent noun, which is found 92 times in Mio2, designates someone using a vehicle (on land or water) either in a given situation or habitually. In the latter case, we often find a further specification, such as *sacīkšu braucējs* ‘race driver’, *rīteņbraucējs* ‘cyclist’ (literally ‘bike-rider’), *jūrasbraucējs*

² Unlike German *fahren*, Latvian *braukt* is not used as a transitive verb. The meaning ‘drive a car’ is expressed either with a prepositional phrase (*braukt ar mašīnu*) or with the verb *vadīt*. There is a corresponding agent noun *vadītājs* ‘driver’, but a professional driver is more often referred to by the borrowed word *šoferis*, as in example (2).

‘mariner, sailor’ (literally ‘sea-goer’), *tālbraucējs* ‘long-distance (truck) driver’ (*tālu* ‘far’). Note that all of these examples have an equivalent in German: *Rennfahrer*, *Fahrradfahrer*, *Seefahrer*, *Fernfahrer*, and some may be calques. Without a modifier the Latvian agent noun is used more broadly than the German *Fahrer*. It may designate anyone using a vehicle (not necessarily the driver and not necessarily a car) in a given situation. The following examples from the corpus of Modern Latvian illustrate this. In example (1), *braucējs* refers to anyone showing up on the road with a vehicle (car, motorbike, bike, bus...), while in (2) it refers to the passengers of a bus.

- (1) *kur-u* *katr-u* *brīd-i* *no*
 which-ACC.SG any-ACC.SG moment-ACC.SG from
vien-as *vai otr-as* *pus-es* *var*
 one-GEN.SG.F OR other-GEN.SG.F side-GEN.SG may.PRS.3
parādīties *kād-s* *gāj-ēj-s* *vai*
 show.up.INF some-NOM.SG.M walk-AN-NOM.SG OR
brauc-ēj-s.
 go-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘at any moment from one side or the other someone walking
 or **someone driving** may turn up.’ (Mio2, fiction)
- (2) *Kā tad mūsu autobus-a šofer-is* *varēs*
 how PTC 1PL.GEN bus-GEN.SG driver-NOM.SG can.FUT.3
zināt, *vai brauc-ēj-s* *ir* *rajon-a*
 know.INF Q go-AN-NOM.SG be.PRS.3 district-GEN.SG
iedzīvo-tāj-s?
 inhabit-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘But how can our bus driver know if a **passenger** lives in
 the district?’ (Mio2, press)

Another regular use of agent nouns in Latvian that is not usually found in other European languages³ is with reference to a future action (cf. Endzelin 1922, 131), expressing the readiness to do something. Thus, *braucējs* may designate someone planning to go somewhere using a vehicle, for example:

³ As a reviewer pointed out, one may recall here the use of agent nouns in the periphrastic future in Sanskrit.

- (3) *Bet tagad, tik vēlu viņ-š ne-būs brauc-ēj-s.*
 but now so late 3-NOM.SG.M NEG-be.FUT.3 go-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘But now, at this late hour, he **won’t go/drive** (he will not
 be inclined to go)’ (Mio2, fiction)

The suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* is not the only suffix used in creating agent nouns, and it is worth taking a look at some of its competitors to understand in which way formations with *-ēj-/-tāj-* stand out. The second most productive device in contemporary Latvian is the suffix *-niek-*, for example in *rakst-niek-s* ‘writer’, *strād-niek-s* ‘worker’. In feminine nouns the suffix has the form *-niec-* and they inflect according to class v (nominative *-e*, dative *-ei*): *rakst-niec-e*, *strād-niec-e*. This suffix is not restricted to verbs; it combines with roots and stems of various parts of speech: *padomnieks* ‘adviser, counselor’ < *padoms* (noun) ‘advice’; *slimnieks* ‘one who is ill, a patient’ < *slims* (adjective) ‘ill, sick’, *virsnieks* ‘officer’ < *virš* (preposition) ‘above’. The meaning of nouns derived by *-niek-/niec-* is not always predictable: the relation the person designated by the derivation has to the concept expressed by the base may be of various kinds. A more rarely found suffix is *-āj-*, which combines with the past stem of primary verbs and thus is similar to *-ēj-*, for example *cēl-āj-s* ‘builder’ < *celt*, past stem *cēl-* ‘build’. Apart from derivational suffixes Latvian also uses so-called ‘derivational endings’ for the formation of nouns. This means that a declensional ending is attached directly to the base, sometimes with stem alternation. Cases in point are formations such as *plāp-a* ‘babbling’ (formed with the root of the verb *plāpāt* ‘babble’), *ne-praš-a* ‘know-nothing’ (with the negative prefix *ne-* and the root of the verb *prast* ‘be able, know’, with consonant alternation). These nouns may designate both men and women and are used with the same endings for both genders, only in the dative singular there are different endings for masculine and feminine nouns. This type of formation is not very frequent. A more often found ‘derivational ending’ combining with roots of verbs and adjectives is masculine *-is*, feminine *-e* as in *mel-is*, *mel-e* ‘liar’ (< *mel-ot* ‘lie’), *slīņķ-is*, *slīņķ-e* ‘lazybones’ (< *slīņķ-s* ‘lazy’). It is also used in compounds, for example *gard-ēd-is* ‘gourmet’ (< *gard-s* ‘delicious, savory’, *ēd-* ‘eat’), a productive type of formation that will not be considered further in this paper. The endings *-is*, *-e* are also found in combination with two nowadays unproductive suffixes: *-l-*, as in *zag-l-is*, *zag-l-e* ‘thief’ (< *zagt* ‘steal’), *bēg-l-is*, *bēg-l-e*

‘fugitive; refugee’ (< *bēgt* ‘flee’), and *-v-*, for example in *bur-v-is* ‘wizard’, *bur-v-e* ‘witch’ (< *burt* ‘conjure, do magic’).

Among all these derivational devices, formations with *-ēj-/-tāj-* are the most frequent, most regular and most productive. With these suffixes, nouns designating agents are derived only from verbs, in opposition to the next most productive devices with *-niek/niec-* and *-is/-e*. The derivation always involves the same kind of base (a verbal stem) and is sensitive to verb classes (primary vs. secondary verbs). As will be shown in the next section, there are hardly any limits to the formation.

Furthermore, there are some semantic differences between the various types of word-formation. What the derivations presented above have in common is their use to characterize the referent: they designate a **type**. Agent nouns formed with *-ēj-/-tāj-* are however not restricted to this use. They may simply indicate that someone has, at a given moment or in a given situation, a certain **role**. The difference between type and role becomes apparent when comparing nouns derived from the same base by different means.

Table 2. Comparison of agent nouns derived by different means

Verb	AN with <i>-ēj-/-tāj-</i> : assignment of a role	other formations: designation of a type
<i>rakstīt</i> ‘write’	<i>rakstītājs</i> ‘one who writes’, ‘author of a given text’	<i>rakstnieks</i> ‘one who writes professionally’, ‘writer’
<i>strādāt</i> ‘work’	<i>strādātājs</i> ‘one who is working’	<i>strādnieks</i> ‘someone who does (physical) work for a living’, ‘member of the working class’, ‘worker’
<i>dzert</i> ‘drink’	<i>dzērējs</i> ‘one who drinks’	<i>dzērājs</i> ‘a person who has the habit of drinking alcohol’, ‘drinker’
<i>melot</i> ‘lie’	<i>melotājs</i> ‘one who lies, one who has lied in a given situation’	<i>melis</i> ‘a person that lies habitually’, ‘liar’

Continuation of Table 2.

Verb	AN with <i>-ēj-/-tāj-</i> : assignment of a role	other formations: designation of a type
<i>plāpāt</i> ‘chat, babble’	<i>plāpātājs</i> ‘one who chats’, ‘a chatter (on the Internet)’	<i>plāpa</i> ‘babbling’

The existence of an institutionalized agent noun formed with one of the other means seems to block the type reading of an agent noun with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-*. If there is no other formation in use, then an agent noun is ambiguous and allows both a type and a role reading. For example, *dziedātājs* (< *dziedāt* ‘sing’) can designate a professional singer or someone singing at a given moment. Note that the same is true for English *singer*, only in Latvian the use of agent nouns for designating a role seems to be more widespread and systematic. This becomes further apparent with formations that are less common (less institutionalized). Consider the following examples of the agent noun *aizmirsējs* (< *aizmirst* ‘forget’):

- (4) *Es esmu profesionāls lietussargu aizmirsējs. Nelaižu garām nevienu izdevību. Šodienas kontā 2 reizes.*
esmu profesionāl-s lietus-sarg-u
 be.PRS.1SG professional-NOM.SG.M rain-guard-GEN.PL
aizmirs-ēj-s
 forget-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘I am a professional umbrella-forgetter. I don’t miss a single occasion. On today’s account there are 2.’ (tweet archived at *civciv.lv*)
- (5) *un te pēkšņi uz bankomāta pusi skrietu skolnieciņš, iespējams, potenciāl-ais naud-as aizmirs-ēj-s.*
 potential-NOM.SG.M.DEF money-GEN forget-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘probably the one who forgot the money’; literally: ‘the potential money-forgetter’
 (context: what would you do if you noticed someone forgot money in a cash dispenser ...) ‘and suddenly a small schoolboy came running towards the cash dispenser, probably the one who forgot the money.’ (post on a forum at *irc.lv*)

In example (4), the agent noun is used to establish a type: a person who notoriously forgets their umbrella is termed ‘umbrella-forgetter’. In this circumstance the use of an agent noun is possible in English as well⁴. In contrast, example (5) describes a single situation where someone forgot something, and the agent noun is used to refer to the person in that role. The formation of an agent noun *forgetter* in English is very unlikely here; instead, a relative clause is used for this purpose. The systematic use of Latvian agent nouns for referring to a role distinguishes formations with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* from other types of agent nouns in Latvian⁵ as well as agent nouns in other languages. It also accounts for the high frequency of these nouns in texts.

There are some parallels to my distinction of type vs. role in the literature on agent nouns which I will briefly present. The first to name is Benveniste’s distinction between the agent of a function (‘l’agent d’une fonction’, similar to what I call ‘type’) and the author of an act (‘l’auteur d’un acte’, similar to my ‘role’) (Benveniste 1948, 62). Benveniste tried to show that two suffixes for the formation of agent nouns in ancient Greek (and other old Indo-European languages) were each specialized for one of these two functions. His analysis of the linguistic data has been criticized by several authors (see Schubert 2000, 15–16 for a summary), nevertheless his description of the two functions is still important. As the Latvian data show, both meanings may be expressed by one and the same suffix, and the competition with other derivational means does not lead to a specialization. In the same contribution, Benveniste also treats action nouns, which have been much more discussed in recent linguistic theory. A distinction between eventive (or event-related) and non-eventive nominalizations has been important in generative theory ever since Chomsky’s influential “Remarks on nominalization” (Chomsky 1970). Agent nouns — or, more broadly, participant nouns, as English nouns with the suffix *-er* and French nouns with the suffix *-eur* include nouns denoting instruments — have been analyzed in this framework as well (for references

⁴ Indeed, several (native) English posts by persons acknowledging to be umbrella-forgetters can be found in blogs and tweets on the Internet.

⁵ A role reading can be occasionally found with agent nouns formed with the suffix *-niek/niec-*.

and recent contributions see Alexiadou & Schäfer 2010; Roy & Soare 2012). Several ways of distinguishing subclasses have been proposed, for example, a distinction between ‘dispositional’ (non-eventive) and ‘episodic’ (eventive) agent nouns. In my above examples, the ‘umbrella-forgetter’ in (4) would be dispositional and the ‘one that forgot (the money)’ in (5) episodic. This distinction is certainly reminiscent of the one made by Benveniste. Another contribution within the generative framework is made by Baker & Vinokurova (2009), who, among other things, point out the distinction between (eventive) agentive nominalizations, which are first and foremost nouns denoting an individual and therefore cannot have real ‘verbal’ features, and headless relative clauses. In one of the languages they investigate, Mapudungun (Chile), there are two suffixes that at first sight seem to derive agent nouns. The authors argue that one in fact is ‘a participle-like verbal affix’ and the structure in which it occurs is a headless relative clause. Some of the Latvian data presented here may present a challenge to that account, for Latvian agent nouns with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* show features of both types distinguished by Baker & Vinokurova. The closest parallel to my distinction between a type and a role reading of an agent noun is Baayen & Neijt’s distinction between a conceptual (concept-building) and a referential function of a Dutch abstract noun with the suffix *-heid* (Baayen & Neijt 1997). I will come back to this parallel in section 5.

Another semantic difference between agent nouns formed by *-ēj-/-tāj-* and other Latvian formations is that their meaning is both more general and more specialized. It is more general as it does not include the notion of being professionally or habitually engaged in the processes described by the verb, or a negative attitude, as do formations with *-a*. The only invariant meaning is ‘one that v-s’, and it is this meaning for which the formation is specialized. As mentioned above, with derivations with *-niek/niec-* the relation between the individual referred to and the concept expressed by the base may be of various kinds. This suffix is also used to derive the names of inhabitants of a place, mostly places in Western Latvia, for example *Ventspil-niek-s* ‘inhabitant of Ventspils’ (compare English *Dublin-er*, German *Kiel-er*).

In comparison with other European languages, it is especially interesting to note that agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* never express instruments in the narrow sense (‘something to v with’). A polysemy agent/

instrument is known from Germanic and Romance languages and has been widely discussed in different frameworks (see, for example, Ryder 1999; Panther & Thornburg 2001; Luschützky & Rainer, eds., 2011). Among the Latvian formations discussed here, only nominalizations with *-is/-e* show this polysemy. For example, *slauķis* (< *slaucīt*, present stem *slauk-* ‘wipe, sweep’) may designate ‘one who wipes/sweeps’, as in *skursteņslauķis* ‘chimney-sweep’ (*skurstenis* ‘chimney’), or ‘something to wipe/sweep with’, as in *kājslauķis* ‘doormat’, ‘foot-scraper’ (*kāja* ‘foot’). Semantic roles such as agent and instrument must not be conflated with concepts such as person and object (cf. Rosenberg 2007, 363). While persons are the typical agents, they are not the only ones, at least not since there have been machines that ‘do’ what persons used to do. Therefore, the agent noun *plāvējs* ‘mower’ (< *plaut*, past stem *plāv-* ‘mow’) may designate a person – and that is the traditional meaning — or a machine, but not a scythe. Likewise *griezējs* (< *griezt* ‘cut’) may designate several kinds of electric cutters, but not a knife. Knives and scythes are instruments in a narrow sense, or tools, as opposed to a lawnmower that is regarded as an inanimate agent. Another such agent is *modinātājs* (< *modināt* ‘to wake’ (trs.)) ‘alarm clock’. No traditional tool is designated in Latvian by a formation using *-ēj-/-tāj-*. Besides formations in *-is* another productive means for designating instruments involves the present passive participle (marker *-am-/-ām-*) and the definite ending, for example: *rakst-ām-ais* ‘something to write with’ (base for the compound *rakstāmmašīna* ‘typewriter’), *brauc-am-ais* ‘something to drive, vehicle, car’, *šauj-am-ais* ‘something to shoot with, gun’. Thus, Latvian makes a clear distinction between ‘one that v-s’ and ‘one to v with’. The latter is restricted to objects while the former can denote humans, animals, plants, objects, even abstract concepts (*sāpētājs* ‘what aches’, ‘a pain’; *uztraucējs* ‘someone or something that worries’). Note that agents that are objects (artifacts) are common only in an industrialized world. Studies by Rainer (2004; 2005b) and Rosenberg (2007) have shown that Impersonal Agents (in Rosenberg’s terminology) are attested in Spanish and French from the 19th century on, thus with the beginning of the industrial revolution (Rosenberg 2007, 367). While I haven’t carried out diachronic research, I suppose that the same is true for Latvian, that is, words for machines such as *plāvējs* ‘mower’ and *griezējs* ‘cutter’ are relatively recent formations.

Half a century ago, the authors of the Latvian Academy Grammar (MLLVG-I, 1959) noted that the number of agent nouns designating technical tools and machines (in addition to designating a person) was growing steadily, as “the incessant technical development creates a constantly growing demand for names for new technical inventions, and therefore all the time new derivations enter this group that earlier designated merely the actor, the person doing something” (MLLVG-I, 154)⁶. Taking into account the existence of ‘intelligent tools’ in today’s world we may expect this process to go on, and the border between machines that ‘do’ something and tools that are used by agents to do something may become blurred. One of the first results of this process is the use of the agent noun *lasītājs* (< *lasīt* ‘read’), in the context ‘e-book (or e-grāmatu) *lasītājs*’ to refer to an electronic device which stores and displays reading material (while the actual reading is still done by a human). Thus, when maintaining that Latvian agent nouns with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* are never used to designate tools, I probably take a somewhat outdated stance. In addition, Latvian names for new artifacts are very often formed after the model of an agent noun in another language — today mostly English, before Russian and especially German —, and I suppose this also has been the case with the use of *lasītājs* ‘reader’ for an e-book reader (by semantic extension of an existing word).

Leaving these recent developments aside, Latvian agent nouns most often designate persons, but are not restricted in this way. Animals are likewise possible referents if they are in the focus of attention, as in the following example.

- (6) *Aivita Vītoļiņa teica, ka slimo-tāj-i*
Aivita Vītoļiņa say.PST.3 that be.ill-AN-NOM.PL
galvenokārt bijuš-i jenot-i un
mainly be.PPA-NOM.PL.M raccoon-NOM.PL and

⁶ “Ši atvasinājumu grupa mūsu dienās pastāvīgi paplašinās, jo nepārtrauktā tehnikas attīstība izvirza arvien augošu vajadzību pēc nosaukumiem tehnikas jaunizgudrojumu apzīmēšanai, tādēļ šai grupai pievienojas arvien jauni atvasinājumi, kas agrāk apzīmēja tikai tiro darītāju, darbības veicēju.” (MLLVG-I, 154). The argumentation is however not very convincing — the need for new vocabulary alone cannot be the motivation for the preference of one particular means of word-formation. We could as well expect an increase of nouns formed with *-amais/-āmais*.

laps-as.

fox-NOM.PL

‘Aivita Vītoļiņa said that it was mostly raccoons and foxes that were infected (with rabies).’ (*Kurzemes Vārds* 04/01/2001)

Agent nouns may be derived from verbs designating processes and actions associated with animals and plants, for example *rējējs* < *riet* ‘bark’, *dējēja* < *dēt* ‘lay eggs’, *didzējs* < *dīgt* ‘sprout’:

- (7) *Miež-us var iz-mēģinā-t, vai viņ-i*
 barley-ACC can.PRS.3 PFX-TRY-INF Q 3-NOM.PL.M
ir didz-ēj-i, vai nav
 be.PRS.3 sprout-AN-NOM.PL Q NEG.be.PRS.3
 ‘One may test whether barley will sprout or not.’ (Literally:
 ‘whether it is a sprouter or not’)’ (Tic. 20549)

In my opinion, this is not a case of metaphor (a personalization of barley??) but an instance of the regular meaning of Latvian agent nouns: *dīgt* ‘sprout’ > *didzējs* ‘one that sprouts’.

The regularity of meaning and the transparency (decomposability) of formations with *-ēj-/-tāj-* correlates with a high productivity and frequency of this suffix. This confirms the general observation summarized by Plag:

If in a morphological category there is a large preponderance of derivatives with a decomposition bias, the pertinent affix will have a strong representation and will therefore be readily available to the speaker to be used in new combinations. (Plag 2006, 125)

Even agent nouns that are highly institutionalized and frequent in texts, such as *lasītājs* ‘reader’, *skatītājs* ‘spectator’, *braucējs* ‘one that goes/drives’ (see examples above), are still decomposable. The same holds for names of professions such as *pārdevējs* ‘sales person’ (< *pārdot* ‘sell’), *šuvējs* ‘sew-er’ (< *šūt* ‘sew’), *kurinātājs* ‘stoker’ (< *kurināt* ‘heat; stoke’), *audzinātājs* ‘educator; kindergarten teacher, child care worker’ (< *audzināt* ‘educate; raise (a child)’). In the terminology used by Laurie Bauer, institutionalization is the process by which a derived word becomes part of the language norm and is no longer consciously analyzed, though in principle it is still possible to form it using productive word-formation rules (Bauer 2000, 836–837). Lexi-

calization, on the other hand, “is the process by which actual words become idiosyncratic so that some part of their behavior ceases to be predictable” (Bauer 2000, 834). There are only a few agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* that are lexicalized in this sense. A case in point may be the small group of agent nouns that designate pains and painful diseases, for example *lauzējs* ‘rheumatic pain’ (< *lauzt* ‘break’), *dūrējs* ‘stitch; back-ache, lumbago’ (< *durt* ‘sting, prickle, stab’), *žņaudzējs* ‘gripes’ (< *žņaugt* ‘strangle; press, squeeze’). Among agent nouns designating persons, an idiosyncratic word is *mācītājs* ‘priest’ (not ‘teacher’) < *mācīt* ‘teach’. This word is an exception to the general rule that Latvian agent nouns are transparent and decomposable.

3. Productivity: restrictions and tendencies

As mentioned above, the formation of agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* is a highly productive process in contemporary Latvian and has been so for a long time. Endzelin (1922, 282) notes that the suffix *-tāj-* may attach to all [!] secondary verbs, while the Academy Grammar of 1959 is a bit more cautious, saying that for “almost all” primary verbs there is an agent noun with *-ēj-* and “almost all” non-prefixed secondary verbs may build an agent noun with the suffix *-tāj-* (MLLVG-I, 106 and 152). The question to be explored in this section is: what is the reason for this “almost” — are there systematic restrictions to the formation of agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* from verbs, such that verbs with certain properties do not allow, or disfavor, the derivation?

I adopt here the definition of productivity given by Plag:

The productivity of a word-formation process can be defined as its general potential to be used to create new words and as the degree to which this potential is exploited by the speakers. (Plag 2006, 127)

While I am ultimately interested in the ‘general potential’, with the methods used in the current research I can only investigate how this potential is exploited: which agent nouns are attested, which are more frequent and which are found rarely. An important resource for this investigation is social media: blogs, forum posts or tweets are text types which partly reflect spontaneous speech and contain more instances of creative (less institutionalized) word-formation. In addition,

I systematically checked the corpus of contemporary Latvian with 3.5 million word-forms (Mio2). While many of the rarer derivations are not found there, this corpus is a more reliable resource for comparing the frequency of more institutionalized formations and analyzing their meaning and syntactic behavior in written standard Latvian.

Possible systematic restrictions of the derivation of agent nouns are (i) competition with other derivations or with non-derived words, so-called blocking, and (ii) structural or semantic properties of the base verb. Two kinds of blocking are distinguished in the literature: type blocking and token blocking (Rainer 2005a; Plag 2006, 126). Type blocking concerns rival affixes: an affix cannot be applied in the domain of its (synonymous) rival. The distribution of *-ēj-* and *-tāj-* can be seen as an instance of successful type blocking. Taken together as allomorphs of one morpheme, the common domain of the suffix *-ēj-/ -tāj-* is (potentially) all verbs and no further type blocking occurs. The existence of other means of forming agent nouns does not prevent the formation with *-ēj-/ -tāj-* with any verb. As shown in section 1, it may lead to a specification of meaning; recall the example *rakstnieks* ‘(professional) writer’ and *rakstītājs* ‘writer (of a given text)’. Token-blocking, on the other hand, means that a regular process of word-formation is not applied because a word with the intended meaning is already available. This constraint can be observed as a tendency, though not as an absolute law: the presence of an established word with the meaning of a potential agent noun makes the formation of the agent noun less likely and its occurrence rare, or special. This is the case with *zaglis* ‘thief’ which may be said to block the formation of *zadzējs* ‘stealer’ from *zagt* ‘steal’, as with the English equivalents (the supposedly impossible **stealer* is a textbook example for blocking). Nevertheless, *zadzējs* is attested in texts on the Internet (and so is *stealer*). Many more such examples may be found, which show that the effect of blocking is not to prevent the formation by a speaker⁷, but rather to prevent the insti-

⁷ I am speaking here only of the formation under discussion and do not intend to challenge at this place Rainer’s claim that “blocking has to do with processing” and “what really matters is the existence of an established synonym in the mental lexicon of the speaker or writer in question, not in the language as a social institution” (Rainer 2005a, 336–337). In any case these two aspects of blocking (what prevents a speaker to use a certain means of word-formation and what prevents a newly formed word from becoming part of the *langue*) should be distinguished.

tutionalization of a formation within the speech community — unless the new formation finds a semantic, stylistic or sociolinguistic niche where it can get established (for example, the open online-dictionary of slang and colloquial English *urbandictionary.com* gives definitions for both *thief* and *stealer*).

Properties of verbs that may hinder the formation of agent nouns may be related to

- morphology (concerning the formal makeup of the verb, for example the presence of certain prefixes and suffixes),
- semantics (concerning the meaning of the verb, its aktionsart, or the semantic role of the argument that is the referent of the agent noun), or
- syntactic (concerning the argument structure of the verb).

They will be discussed in this order. However, formal and semantic properties are often connected and the usefulness of the above grouping beyond providing a structure for this text is limited.

In the passage from the Academy Grammar cited above, the authors suggest that prefixed verbs are not as generally the base for an agent noun as non-prefixed verbs — speaking about the suffix *-tāj-* they say that agent nouns are formed from “almost all” non-prefixed verbs and “also from many prefixed verbs”⁸ (MLLVG-I, 152). However, it is not clear in which instances and for which reasons a prefix disfavors the building of an agent noun. On the following page the grammar names the agent nouns *padarītājs* (< *pa-darīt* ‘PFX-do’ = ‘accomplish’) and *izlasītājs* (< *iz-lasīt* ‘PFX-read’ = ‘read through’, ‘finish reading’) as examples of “theoretically possible derivations that are not used” (“teorētiski iespējami, bet netiek lietoti”, MLLVG-I, 153). The suggested reason is that because of their aspectuality such verbs cannot be the base for a noun designating an individual that is engaged in the respective activity at a given moment. However, this is only one of the possible meanings of an agent noun. Examples found in Internet resources show that the derivation as such is not impossible. The respective agent noun can be used with either a habitual meaning, as in example (8), where the prefix indicates the thoroughness of the action (she always

⁸ „[...] šādi atvasinājumi iespējami gandrīz no katra ar piedēkli atvasināta bezpriedēkļa verba un arī no daudziem ar piedēkli atvasinātiem priedēkļa vārdiem” (MLLVG-I, 152).

read through the whole text), or with reference to a completed action ('one who has v-ed'), as in example (9):

- (8) *Oma — visu rajona avīzes sludinājumu centīga izlasītāja — tikai vienreiz vēlējās būt publiski apsveikta — savā septiņdesmit gadu jubilejā.*

vis-u rajon-a avīz-es
all-GEN.PL district-GEN.SG newspaper-GEN.SG
sludinājum-u centīg-a
announcement-GEN.PL **zealous**-NOM.SG.F
iz-lasī-tāj-a
PFX-read-AN-NOM.SG

'Granny — a zealous **reader** of all announcements in the local newspaper — only once wanted to be greeted publicly: on the occasion of her seventieth birthday.' (Laila Pakalniņa in a column in *Diena*, 11/04/2011).

- (9) *ne-vien-s šo rind-u*
NEG-one-NOM.SG.M DEM.GEN.PL line-GEN.PL
iz-lasī-tāj-s tev-i vairāk ne-precēs
PFX-read-AN-NOM.SG 2SG-ACC anymore NEG-marry.FUT.3
'no one **who has read** these lines will marry you anymore'
(forum post at *tauta.lv*)

Thus, it is not the formal property of having a prefix that disfavors the formation of agent nouns, but rather semantic features that are expressed by prefixes. The details are certainly worth more research.

Reflexive verbs — verbs with the reflexive postfix — provide a similar case of interrelation of formal and functional features. In general it may be observed that agent nouns are less often derived from reflexive verbs, though the formation is not in principle restricted. When deriving an agent noun from a reflexive verb, it is possible to preserve the reflexive ending. Examples given in grammars and textbooks are *klausī-tāj-ies* (masculine noun), *klausī-tāj-ās* (feminine noun) 'listener' (< *klausī-t-ies* 'listen') and *smēj-ēj-ies*, *smēj-ēj-ās* 'one who laughs' (< *smie-t-ies*, past stem *smēj-* 'laugh'). The resulting reflexive noun is defective: it lacks a dative and a locative case. The reflexive postfix amalgamates with the case ending. According to textbooks, the following endings may occur (based on Guļevska *et al.* 2002: 63):

Table 3. Potential case endings of agent nouns derived from reflexive verbs

	masc., sg.	fem., sg.	masc., pl.	fem., pl.
nominative	-ies	-ās	-ies	-ās
genitive	-ies	-ās	-os	-os
accusative	-os	-os	-os	-os

For feminine nouns, the endings are the same as in action nominals derived from reflexive verbs with the suffix *-šan-*, for example *tikties* ‘meet’ > *tik-šan-ās* ‘meeting’ and (potential) *tic-ēj-ās* ‘one or those (females) that meet’.

However, reflexive forms of agent nouns are very rare — in contemporary Latvian they are almost obsolete. What can be found occasionally are agent nouns ending on *-ies* and *-ās* derived with the suffix *-tāj-*, still more rarely with the suffix *-ēj-*. The forms are most often used in the function of a nominative, but sometimes also in functions that demand another case. So far, I haven’t found examples for the accusative singular/genitive plural suffix *-os* in contemporary texts. Most examples of reflexive agent nouns come from older sources, such as the collection of folk beliefs (Tic.) that reflects the language of the late 19th century. The following example shows an agent noun derived from the reflexive verb *baidīties* ‘fear’:

- (10) *Ne-ēd* *zaķ-a* *gaļ-u,*
 NEG-eat.PRS.3 hare-GEN.SG meat-ACC.SG
lai *bērn-s* *ne-bū-tu* ***baidī-tāj-ies.***
 CONJ child-NOM.SG NEG-be-IRR scare-AN-NOM.SG.REFL
 (A pregnant woman) ‘doesn’t eat hare’s meat, in order for the child not to become **one who fears** (one that is easily scared).’ (Tic. 27293)

The following two examples are from contemporary sources (21st century).

- (11) *Sieviet-es* *biež-āk* *bija* *auditorij-ā*
 woman-NOM.PL often-COMP be.PST.3 lecture.room-LOC.SG

kā klausī-tāj-ās un vēlē-tāj-as
 as listen-AN-NOM.PL.REFL and vote-AN-NOM.PL

‘Women were present [during political debates] more often as **listeners** and voters’ (*Mediju loma...*)

- (12) *Tā kā lielos gaudotājies un diženos priecātājies — labāk ejiet ārā pastaigāt ar bērniem*

liel-os gaudo-tāj-ies un dižen-os
 big-VOC.PL whine-AN-NOM.PL.REFL and grand-VOC.PL

priecā-tāj-ies
 rejoice-AN-NOM.PL.REFL

‘Therefore, you big whiners and great rejoicers — better go out for a walk with your children’ (comment in a discussion at *tvnet.lv*)

In example (12), the use of the reflexive forms clearly carries an ironic tone. The verb *gaudoties* ‘whine’ is actually much more common in its non-reflexive form (*gaudot*), and the usual form for ‘whiners’ is *gaudotāji*, so the choice of reflexive *gaudotājies* in this utterance was conscious, with the purpose of mocking. Note also the unusual (non-standard) use of a vocative with the adjectives modifying the two agent nouns, another proof of the author’s conscious choice of archaic forms in order to ridicule other discussants.

The rare occurrence of reflexive agent nouns cannot be explained by formal reasons alone, such as the length and potential clumsiness of word-forms, or the defective paradigm. After all, reflexive action nouns show the same formal characteristics and are fully productive. For example, the action noun *iepirkšanās* ‘shopping’ (< *iepirkties* ‘to shop’) is well established, while an [?]*iepircējās* ‘shopper (female)’ is not attested (although women going shopping are as common a phenomenon in Latvia as in other European countries). Latvian linguists have expressed their approval of these forms and regret their obsolescence⁹. However, it seems doubtful that these forms have ever been completely

⁹ For example, Kalme & Smiltneiece (2001, 112): “Mūsdienās šie atvasinājumi valodā ir maz produktīvi, kaut gan to lietojums būtu motivēts un pat vēlams prestatā attiecīgajiem neatgriezeniskajiem lietvārdiem.” “Today these derivations are little productive in the language, although their use would be motivated and even desirable in opposition to the respective non-reflexive nouns.” An example of such a situation where the formation of a reflexive agent noun would be ‘desirable’ is the formation of *mācītājiem* ‘learner’ < *mācīties* ‘learn’ in opposition to (lexicalized) *mācītājs* ‘priest’ < *mācīt* ‘teach’, see below.

productive. They are not very frequent in traditional folk texts collected in the 19th century, either.

It is also possible to form an agent noun from a reflexive verb by dropping the reflexive marker: *priecātājs* instead of *priecātājies* < *priecāties* ‘rejoice, be delighted’, as in the following example:

- (13) *Priecāties, ka cilvēki nonāca nelaimē, ir nožēlojami. Smieklīgākais, ka **lielie priecātāji** pat tuvu nav bijuši tādos apstākļos, kādi bija tobrīd, kad notika avārija.*

liel-ie priecā-tāj-i pat tuvu
big-NOM.PL.DEF rejoice-AN-NOM.PL even nearly
nav bij-uš-i tād-os
NEG.be.PRS.3 be-PPA-NOM.PL such-LOC.PL
apstākļ-os
circumstance-LOC.PL

literally: ‘the big rejoicers haven’t even nearly been in such circumstances’

‘To be delighted when people had bad luck is pathetic. Even more ridiculous is the fact that **those who are so delighted** have never been in any such circumstances as those at the time of the accident.’ (comment on a derisive comment on news about a stranded yacht at *tvnet.lv*)

A few non-reflexive agent nouns of reflexive verbs are institution-alized and frequent, especially *klausītājs* ‘listener’ < *klausīties* ‘listen’ (115 tokens in Mio2) and *skatītājs* ‘spectator, viewer’, pl. ‘audience’ < *skatīties* ‘watch’ (345 tokens). For most reflexive verbs, however, the formation of an agent noun is avoided, although it is systematically possible. One reason for this avoidance is a possible conflict when there is a corresponding non-reflexive verb with a different meaning. For example, it is not possible to replace the reflexive agent noun *baidītājies* ‘one who fears’ (*baidīties* ‘fear, be scared’) in example (10) by the non-reflexive agent noun *baidītājs*, for the latter is firmly associated with the non-reflexive verb *baidīt* ‘frighten, scare’ and thus means ‘one who scares’. As the reflexive form *baidītājies* is not used by all speakers today, it can be replaced by a relative clause, as in the following example:

- (14) *bail-es nav **baidī-tāj-a** rok-ās,*
fear-NOM NEG.be.PRS.3 scare-AN-GEN.SG hand-LOC.PL

bet tā kas baidās sirdī
 but DEM.GEN.SG.M who.NOM fear.PRS.3 hear-LOC.SG
 ‘fear is not in the hands of **the one who scares**, but in the
 heart of **the one who fears**’ (forum post at *lelb.lv*)

The noun *mācītājs* ‘pastor, clergyman’ is a lexicalized agent noun derived from the non-reflexive verb *mācīt* ‘teach’, and its existence blocks the formation of the potential agent noun *mācītājs* ‘learner’ < *mācīties* ‘learn’, while the reflexive *mācītājies* is not in common use. On the other hand, the lexicalized agent noun *klausītājs* ‘listener’ (< *klausīties* ‘listen’) blocks the formation of the agent noun *klausītājs* ‘one who obeys’ from the non-reflexive verb *klausīt* ‘obey’. It seems that the more an agent noun of a non-reflexive verb is institutionalized, the less likely is the formation of the agent noun of the respective reflexive verb (and the other way around in the case of *klausītājs*). While this kind of constraint is not usually classified as blocking, the finding is in line with Plag’s following statement:

In order to be able to block a synonymous formation, the blocking word must be sufficiently frequent. The higher the frequency of a given word, the more likely it is that the word will block a potential rival formation. Idiosyncratic words as well as regular complex words may block other forms if and only if the blocking word is stored. (Plag 2006, 126)

Note that Plag speaks about the blocking of a derivation that would be synonymous to an existing one, while my examples concern homonymy. Nevertheless the cases are similar and may be explained by the same rule.

If however the degree of institutionalization is low — which means that the word is not stored in either meaning — and the potential ambiguity can be resolved by the context, then homonymous agent nouns can be built from reflexive and non-reflexive verbs¹⁰. The following two examples illustrate the point. In (15) the base for the agent noun *ticējs* is the non-reflexive verb *tikt* ‘get, reach’, while for the homonymous agent noun in (16) it is the reflexive *tīkties* ‘meet’ (note that the

¹⁰ This thesis has yet to be tested by broader empirical research.

utterance contains two incidents of finite forms of this verb as well as the action nominal *tikšanās* ‘meeting’). None of these agent nouns is attested in Mio2.

- (15) *Pagājušogad kād-i bija rezultāt-i*
 last.year which-NOM.PL.M be.PST.3 result-NOM.PL
iekšā tic-ēj-iem?
 inside get-AN-DAT.PL
 ‘What results did **those who got in** have last year?’ (post on a forum of the University of Latvia at lu.lv/forums; ‘those who got in’, literally ‘the in-getters’ = those who got a place in a study program)
- (16) *šo pirmdien četratā tikāmies, visu ko izrunājām un optimistiski sarunājām, ka tiksimies nākampirmdien. Un tikai šodien viens no lielajiem ticējiem zvana un tā “eeee...par to pirmdienas tikšanos... zini, 26. decembris, izrādās, ir brīvdiena”.*
vien-s no liel-ajiem tic-ēj-iem
 one-NOM.SG of big-DAT.PL.M.DEF meet-AN-DAT.PL
 literally: ‘one of the big meeters’
 ‘on Monday the four of us **met**, talked everything through and optimistically agreed that we’ll **meet** again next Monday. And only today one of **those eager to meet** calls and he’s like “er... about the **meeting** on Monday... you know, turns out December 26 is a holiday”.’ (post on the social network ‘Sviesta Ciba’ at klab.lv)

Thus, while in general the formation of agent nouns from reflexive verbs is not favored and few are lexicalized, there is no principled restriction and ad-hoc formations are far from infrequent, especially in colloquial Latvian, the variety used most often in social media.

Another reason why one doesn’t find agent nouns derived from reflexive verbs so often is the semantic properties of these verbs. Many reflexive verbs in Latvian, especially those that do not have a non-reflexive counterpart, denote states rather than actions: *priecāties* ‘be happy, rejoice’, *dusmoties* ‘be angry’, *brīnīties* ‘wonder’, *uztraukties* ‘worry, be nervous’, *šaubīties* ‘doubt, be in doubt’, and others. Non-reflexive verbs denoting states include *skumt* ‘be sad, grieve’, *slimot* ‘be ill’, *sirtgt* ‘suffer from a disease’, *ticēt* ‘believe’, *uzskatīt* ‘consider,

hold a view'. Of these verbs, only *ticētājs* 'believer, one who believes' (1 token) and *sirdzējs* 'one who suffers from a disease; patient with a certain disease' (3 tokens) were found in the Mio2 corpus. Agent nouns derived from almost all verbs were found on the Internet, except for *uzskatītājs* 'holder of a view' (*brīnītājs* 'wonderer' appeared only as a nickname). The formation of agent nouns is in general more productive with agentive verbs, especially verbs where the subject is a so-called 'strong agent' (Rainer, forthcoming, with reference to Fradin 2005), that is, an agent that causes an effect and/or is volitionally involved in the event. In Latvian, agent nouns may also have 'weak agents' or refer to participants that are not agents at all, but these nouns are clearly less frequent and rarely become institutionalized. What is interesting is that agent nouns derived from state verbs such as the ones mentioned above may carry a notion of agentivity and/or volitionality, especially in the type-reading. Consider the following fragment of a blog, showing one of the few tokens of the agent noun *skumējs* derived from *skumt* 'be sad'. Here, being sad is pictured as a voluntary action, and those who regularly engage in this activity are characterized as a type.

- (17) *Un uznāk reizes, kad gribas skumt. Gribas skumt vienatnē un vientulībā. Tā skaisti un romantiski. Esot tāda cilvēku suga — skumēji. Nez, var jau būt.*

Es-ot *tād-a* *cīlvēk-u* *sug-a* —
 be-obl such-NOM.SG.F man-GEN.PL species-NOM.SG
skum-ēj-i.
 be.sad-AN-NOM.PL

'And there are times when one wants to be sad. One wants to be sad in solitude and loneliness. In a pretty and romantic way. They say there is such a human race — **those who are being sad**. Maybe that's true.' (blog of the user 'aminoskaabe' at *klab.lv*)

Another example is the agent noun *slimotājs* (< *slimot* 'be ill'). While its only invariant meaning is 'one who is ill', it is often used in contexts that suggest some action or conscious decision of the participant. For example, it denotes a person on sick-leave, implying a decision to stay at home instead of going to work or school. In the type-reading

it also implies that the state of being ill occurs on a regular basis. The following two examples illustrate these implications:

- (18) *a viņ-š mums ļaunprātīg-ais*
 PTC 3-NOM.SG.M 1PL.DAT ill.intentioned-NOM.SG.M.DEF
slimo-tāj-s, tāpēc tagad laidisim vaļā
 be.ill-AN-NOM.SG therefore now let.FUT.1PL free
 ‘but he is ill with ill intention, therefore we will give him
 the sack’ (literally: ‘he is for us an ill-intentioned ill-be-er’)
 (forum post at *calis.lv*)
- (19) *Lab-āk policist-s ir pensionār-s*
 good-COMP policeman-NOM.SG be.PRS.3 pensioner-NOM.SG
nekā policist-s dīkdien-is, slaist-s un
 than policeman-NOM.SG idler-NOM.SG lazy-NOM.SG.M and
slimo-tāj-s.
 be.ill-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘It is better a policeman is retired than an idler, lazy and
 (constantly) ill.’ (forum post at *bauskaszive.diena.lv*)

However, these implications are not obligatory; *slimotājs* is equally often used in the neutral meaning ‘one who is ill’ (recall example (6), where the referents were animals that surely did not choose their illness).

While state verbs in general allow the formation of agent nouns, verbs denoting a change of state often do not. More precisely, the meaning ‘getting into a physical or emotional state’ seems to strongly disfavor agent nouns. Thus, we find *slimotājs* ‘one who is ill’ and *sirdzējs* ‘one who suffers from a disease’, but not [?]*saslimējs* < *saslimt* ‘fall ill’, and while *skumējs* ‘one who is sad’ is attested, [?]*noskumējs* ‘one who grows sad’ (or ‘one who has grown sad’) is not, and neither is [?]*kļuvējs* < *kļūt* ‘become’ or [?]*tapējs* < *tapt* ‘become’. The latter examples show that it is not the prefixes that prevent the building of agent nouns, but the meaning of the verb. However, some verbs denoting a change of state do allow agent nouns. The agent noun *mirējs* < *mirt* ‘die’ is well attested in older as well as modern texts. It usually has a role-reading, denoting either ‘one who is dying’ (at a given moment) or ‘one who is bound to die’ (as Latin *moriturus*). In the type-reading an agent noun derived from a change-of-state verb includes the notion that the change of state happens regularly, as in the following example with an agent noun derived from the reflexive *iemilēties* ‘fall in love’:

- (20) *Es parasti iemīlos visā, kas kustās un elpo... Ar leprumu teikšu, ka es esmu vislielākais iemīlētājs pasaulē...*
es esmu vislielākais iemīlētāj-s
 I be.PRS.1SG biggest.NOM.SG.M.DEF fall.in.love-AN-NOM.SG
pasaul-ē
 world-LOC.SG
 ‘I usually fall in love with everything that moves and breathes... I proudly declare that I am the world’s biggest faller-in-love’ (post at the portal *meeting.oho.lv*)

Agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* are also derived from all kinds of motion verbs, including verbs that do not allow agent nouns in English or French (for the latter see Fradin 2005), such as ‘go’, ‘come’, ‘fall’, ‘sink’, ‘arrive’, ‘leave’, ‘return’. Restrictions on the productivity of such agent nouns have different reasons and cannot be explained by a common semantic factor. The nouns *gājejs* < *iet* ‘go’, *nācējs* < *nākt* ‘come’, *atnācējs* < *atnākt* ‘arrive (on foot)’ and *atbraucējs* < *atbraukt* ‘arrive (by means of transport)’ are well attested with several tokens in Mio2. The agent noun *aizgājējs* (< *aiziet* ‘leave, go away’) is lexicalized in the meaning ‘one who has passed away; deceased’ and probably for this reason is not used in the meaning ‘one that leaves/has left (on foot)’. In contrast, *aizbraucējs* < *aizbraukt* ‘leave, drive away’ is used in the expected meaning ‘one that leaves/has left (by means of transport)’, ‘emigrant’. The verb for ‘return’, *atgriezties*, is reflexive, and the agent noun *atgriezējs* usually is associated with the non-reflexive verb *atgriezt* ‘to turn something around’. The reflexive agent noun *atgriezējies* ‘one that returned’ is rare, but I found it in a newspaper article of 1927. Verbs denoting an involuntary motion, such as ‘fall’ or ‘sink’, are less likely to form agent nouns, but there is no systematic restriction and these nouns are attested. Again, as in the case with verbs denoting physical or emotional states, these nouns may include a notion of intentional action, especially in the type reading. In the following example, ‘fall on one’s knees’ is such an intentional action, and even ‘faint’ is pictured as agentive:

- (21) *tālab ģībēji, ceļos kritēji, pantiņu skaitītāji un prasti gultā grūdēji slapstijās apkārt vai strīpām, taču Anna Buršite, kā par sodību, baidījās no vīriešiem.*

ģīb-ēj-i, ceļ-os krit-ēj-i,
 faint-AN-NOM.PL.M knee-LOC.PL fall-AN-NOM.PL
pant-iņ-u skaitī-tāj-i un prast-i
 verse-DIM-GEN.PL recite-AN-NOM.PL and simple-NOM.PL.M
gult-ā grūd-ēj-i.
 bed-LOC.SG push-AN-NOM.PL
 literally: ‘fainters, fallers-on-knees, verse-reciters and simple
 pushers-into-bed’
 ‘that was why around her there was an abundance of [men]
 who fainted, who fell on their knees, who recited poetry
 or who simply pushed into bed, but Anna Buršīte, as if by
 punishment, was afraid of men.’ (Mio2, fiction)

Again, this implication is not obligatory. For example, the agent noun *palicējs* < *palikt* ‘stay’ is used both for one who intentionally stays (as opposed to one who leaves) and for one that stays/remains as the result of being left behind (similar *atpalicējs* < *atpalikt* ‘fall behind, get behind, lag’).

Thus, there seems to be no principled semantic restrictions for the formations of agent nouns. The label ‘agent noun’ must not be taken literally, as the semantic role of the verb’s argument becoming the referent of the noun is not restricted to agent. Agent nouns can be formed from almost all verbs with a nominative subject, whether it is an actor or an undergoer. In the following example the agent noun denotes the subject of the intransitive verb *lūzt* ‘break’:

- (22) [...] *bet antonovkām visi zari šitādi un viens jau vakar padevās un nolūza. Tagad gaidu, kurš un kurai ta būs nākamais lūzējs.*
tagad gaidu kur-š un kur-ai
 now wait.PRS.1SG which-NOM.SG.M and which-DAT.SG.F
ta būs nākam-ais lūz-ēj-s.
 PTC be.FUT.3 next-NOM.SG.M.DEF break-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘but the Antonovkas all have such branches (= loaded with apples), only yesterday one surrendered and broke. Now I am waiting: which [branch] and of which [tree] will be the next **one that breaks.**’ (forum post at *sapforums.lv*; Antonovka is a popular apple tree)

With regard to the fact that the semantic role is not decisive for the

derivation, Booij (1986) proposed to speak of ‘subject names’ rather than of ‘agent nouns’:

Traditionally, Dutch deverbal nouns in *-er* [...] are called agent nouns (*nomina agentis*). However, it is more adequate to call them subject names, because the basic effect of the suffix *-er* is that it binds whatever θ -role is linked to the subject position of the base verb. (Booij 1986, 507)

The approach has been criticized as not being able to account for all derivations with the suffix in question (see Rainer, forthcoming, for a short summary). One argument is that the referent of the derived noun can also be other than the subject of the verb, another one the possibility of deriving agent nouns with the same suffix from bases other than verbs. Both arguments can be applied to Latvian nouns derived with the suffix *-niek/niec-* or the derivational ending *-is/-e* (see section 2 above). Latvian agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-*, on the other hand, are derived exclusively from verbs and do not denote instruments in the narrow sense (tools), therefore Booij’s statement seems to fit Latvian even better than Dutch or English.

There are some verbs in Latvian where determining which argument is the subject is not straightforward because subject properties are distributed between two arguments — one in the dative and one in the nominative (see Holvoet 2013, forthcoming). The dative argument typically denotes a person. With regard to semantic roles, several patterns occur: the dative argument may denote a possessor or experiencer, the nominative argument denotes the possessed, a stimulus, or a theme.

Table 4. Semantic roles with verbs with a dative and a nominative argument

dative	nominative	example (<i>man</i> = 1SG.DAT)
possessor	possessed	<i>piederēt</i> ‘belong’, ‘be the possession (of someone)’ <i>Man pieder dārzs.</i> ‘I am in possession of a garden’.

Continuation of Table 4.

dative	nominative	example (<i>man</i> = 1SG.DAT)
experiencer	stimulus	garšot ‘taste (good, bad)’, ‘be pleasant in taste’ <i>Man garšo zirņi.</i> ‘I like peas.’ patikt ‘please’ <i>Man patīk zirgi.</i> ‘I like horses.’
experiencer	theme	sāpēt ‘hurt’ <i>Man sāp galva.</i> ‘My head hurts.’ <i>Galva sāp.</i> ‘[My] head hurts.’ <i>Man sāp.</i> ‘I am in pain.’

I have not found any example of an agent noun [?]*piederētājs*, neither with the meaning ‘one that belongs’ nor ‘one who is in possession’ and think it highly unlikely to occur.

The agent noun *garšotājs* does occur, but it is derived from the transitive verb *garšot* ‘taste’, for example, *vīna garšotājs* ‘wine taster’ (not ‘one who likes the taste of wine’). It is possible that this blocks the formation of *garšotājs* in another meaning, in the same way as *baidītājs* ‘one that scares’ blocks the formation of *baidītājs* in the meaning ‘one that fears’ (see above).

For the other two verbs in Table 4, agent nouns are attested and their meaning is rather astonishing. The agent noun derived from *patikt* ‘please’ usually denotes the experiencer — it refers to the dative argument of the verb. Thus, *paticējs* is ‘one who likes’ and not ‘one who pleases’, as the following example clearly shows:

- (23) *Vācieši ir lieli ēst paticēji. Visur ir visvisādas ēstuvītes, kuras smirdina simts reižu vairāk par makdonaldu.*

Vācieši *ir* *liel-i* *ēst*

German.NOM.PL.M be.PRS.3 big-NOM.PL.M eat.INF

patic-ēj-i.

please-AN-NOM.PL

literally: ‘Germans are big eat-likers.’

‘Germans really like to eat. There are all kinds of small snack

bars at every corner that you can smell a hundred times more than a MacDonald's.' (<http://vikistation.wordpress.com/2009/08/02/vacija-un-skaips/>)

It is possible that this word has only recently become popular (most of my examples are from the past couple of years¹¹) and one factor may be its use in social media, for example, for a person who has clicked the 'I like' button¹². It may be the first step on a way to making *patikt* a transitive verb, a development English *like* experienced some centuries ago. In the following example, the agent noun *paticējs* 'liker' is coordinated with the agent noun *nīdējs* 'hater', which is derived from the transitive verb *nīst* 'hate'. The object of the emotion is expressed in both cases by a genitive NP, which means that the underlying nominative argument of *patikt* is treated the same way as the direct object of *nīst*.

(24) *Varbūt bija sieviešu nīdējs un zēnu paticējs, un tādā veidā centās nosist zēniem apetīti uz meitenēm?*

sieviešu nīd-ēj-s un zēn-u
 woman.GEN.PL hate-AN-NOM.SG and boy-GEN.PL
patic-ēj-s
 please-AN-NOM.SG

literally: 'a women hater and boy liker'

'Maybe he hated women and liked boys, and in that way he tried to kill the boys' appetite for girls?' (forum post at *lelb.lv*)

However, among the two dozens of examples with *paticējs* that I found in Internet resources there were two where the agent noun had the meaning 'pleaser', referring thus to the underlying nominative argument. In one of these examples, reference is made to the type of man that pleases all women:

¹¹ The oldest example I found is from a poetic prose text by the poet Ziedonis, published in 1971. At that time it was an occasionalism.

¹² One may note a similar process going on in German. The German verb *gefallen* has the same argument structure as Latvian *patikt* — a dative experiencer and a nominative stimulus. The non-standard agent noun *Gefaller* has recently appeared in social media (at the moment of writing it is still less frequent than its Latvian equivalent), where it can designate both a thing 'liked' by users (*Das ist ein Gefaller*) or a user that 'likes' something (*Ich bin ein Gefaller*).

- (25) *par vis-ām patic-ēj-u — varon-i*
 about all-DAT.PL.F please-AN-ACC.SG hero-ACC.SG
 ‘about a hero that pleases all [women]’ (forum post at *forums.delfi.lv*)

The other example is similar: in an article about the motives why men take up running, those who said they did it to please their wives are referred to as *sievai paticēji* (wife.DAT please.AN.NOM.PL ‘wife-pleasers’; found at *tvnet.lv*). This variation attests to the hybrid nature of the verb *patikt*.

The agent noun *sāpētājs* I found attested in one utterance with the meaning ‘one that is in pain’, hence referring to the experiencer (example 26). It is probably derived from the structure where the dative experiencer is the only argument (*man sāp* ‘I am in pain’), not from a structure where the theme is realized, as in (*man*) *sāp galva* ‘my head hurts, I have a headache’. An agent noun referring to the theme — a body part that hurts — seems unlikely and has not been found (?*galva ir sāpētāja*, intended meaning: ‘(my) head is one that hurts’).

- (26) *Cita radītas sāpes ir, kad ar augstpapēdeni uz “šlopkā” ģērbtu kāju. Bet sāpes no cerētās mīlas nepiepildīšanās rada pats sāpētājs un neviens cits.*
sāp-es [...] rada pat-s sāpē-tāj-s
 pain-ACC create.PRS.3 self-NOM.SG.M hurt-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘[An example for] pain caused by someone else is when one steps with a high-heel on a foot dressed in a soft slipper. But in the case of unfulfilled hope for love it is nobody else than **the one who is in pain** himself who creates the pain.’
 (forum post at *attiecibas.jautajums.lv*)

In addition, *sāpētājs* is a few times attested in the meaning ‘one that inflicts pain’, ‘a pain’:

- (27) *Lai kādos dziļumos nolaidies, lai kādos kalnos tu kāp, mīlestība ir — sāpētāja. Jo vairāk mīli — jo vairāk sāp.*
mīlestīb-a ir — sāpē-tāj-a
 love-NOM.SG be.PRS.3 hurt-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘love is a hurt’ (‘love hurts’)
 ‘You may descend into the deepest depths or climb the high-

est mountains — love always hurts. The more you love the more it hurts.’ (written by the poet Māris Čaklais)

This meaning is old; the noun *sāpētājs* ‘pain’ is included in Mühlentzsch & Endzelin’s dictionary of 1927–1929 (ME). The authors link it to a second verb *sāpēt* ‘hurt, inflict pain’, which is transitive and has a long present stem (3rd person *sāpē*), while intransitive *sāpēt* ‘ache, feel pain’ has a short present stem (3rd person *sāp*). We may conclude that *sāpētājs* ‘pain’, the agent noun that appears in example (27), is lexicalized, while *sāpētājs* ‘one who is in pain’ in example (26) is a spontaneous formation. It follows the same pattern as *paticējs* ‘one who likes’, choosing the experiencer dative argument of the verb as the referent for the agent noun. More research is needed to find out whether these formations mark a tendency to change the argument structure of the respective verbs, or on the contrary prove that the basis for an agent noun is not the grammatical relation subject, but rather the semantic macrorole actor, or even semantic roles on a lower level of abstraction.

4. Verbal features of agent nouns: What can be inherited?

A prominent issue in the recent discussion of agent nouns has been the question of how far they show verbal features — features that they inherit from the verb from which they are derived (see Baker & Vinokurova 2009; Haspelmath & Sims 2010, 255–256; Rainer, forthcoming). Most of the discussion has focused on valency. However, there is more an agent noun may inherit from its base verb than argument structure. This has been pointed out already by Endzelin (1922), who lists the following features: (i) reflexive forms, (ii) modification by adverbs and prepositional phrases, (iii) valency¹³. Two further features may be added: aspect and negation.

¹³ “Die verbale Natur der Nomina agentis auf *-ējs* [...] ist noch so lebendig, daß von ihnen auch reflexive Formen gebildet werden [...] und daß sie auch durch Adverbia oder Verbindungen einer Präposition mit einer Kasusform (wie das Verbum) bestimmt werden [...] und eventuell bei sich denselben Kasus haben können wie das entsprechende Verbum” (Endzelin 1922, 202)

Reflexive forms of agent nouns have already been discussed in the previous section. Examples included *priecātājies* (masculine) < *priecāties* ‘be delighted, rejoice’, *klausītājās* (feminine) < *klausīties* ‘listen’. It was shown that nominative forms still can be found today, but they are very rare and felt to be archaic, which may give rise to ironic overtones in their use. It is doubtful whether they have ever been as productive as reflexive action nouns, which are in common use despite their defective paradigm. Still, the fact that reflexive forms of agent nouns are possible is a remarkable feature and distinguishes formations with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* from agent nouns formed by other devices.

Agent nouns also show traces of the verbal categories tense and aspect, which stem from the inheritance of the verb’s aspectuality (aktionsart). Usually agent nouns include the meaning of an ongoing, non-finished action or process: ‘one that v-s’ (habitually or occasionally), ‘one that is v-ing’ (at the moment in focus). Some agent nouns derived from achievement verbs may denote ‘one that has v-ed’, thus refer to a completed action. Usually both meanings are possible with the same noun. Compare the meaning of *aizmirsējs* ‘forgetter’ in examples (4) and (5) above: in (4), the meaning is ‘one who (habitually) forgets’, while in (5) it is ‘the one who forgot, had forgotten’ (before the event that is the focus of attention). One meaning may be more common: *atradējs* ‘finder’ usually refers to a person who has found something, but it may also be someone or something that finds habitually, for example a device such as the *GPS stāvvietas atradējs* ‘GPS parking place finder’ that finds your car in case you forgot where you parked it. With some verbs from other aspectual classes, sometimes pairs of a simple and a prefixed verb can be found which form an aspect-like opposition:

lasīt (activity) / *izlasīt* (accomplishment) ‘read’: *lasītājs* ‘one who reads, reader’ — *izlasītājs* ‘one who has read’ (cf. example 9 above)

darīt (activity) / *padarīt* (accomplishment) ‘do’: *darītājs* ‘one who does something, doer, agent’ — *padarītājs* ‘one who has done/committed/accomplished something’

slīkt (state) / *noslīkt* (accomplishment) ‘drown’: *slīcējs* ‘one who is drowning or will drown’ — *noslīcējs* ‘one who drowned’

mirt (state) / *nomirt* (accomplishment) ‘die’: *mirējs* ‘one who is dying or is bound to die’ — *nomirējs* ‘one who (has) died’

Recall that *padarītājs* was one of the examples given in the Academy Grammar for a potential word that is not actually used (MLLVG-I, 153). The meaning the authors had in mind was ‘one who accomplishes (at a given moment)’, which indeed seems to be impossible. However, as a quasi-aspectual partner of *darītājs* the agent noun is attested. The opposition was used by the poet Ojārs Vācietis in the following line:

- (28) *Darī-tāj-s turpinās baudī-t pa-darī-tāj-a*
 do-AN-NOM.SG continue.FUT.3 enjoy-INF PFX-do-AN-GEN.SG
laim-i.
 happiness-ACC.SG
 ‘The doer will further enjoy the happiness of one who has done.’ (Ojārs Vācietis, *Sī minors*)

Examples of the pair *mirējs/nomirējs* are found in the collection of folk beliefs:

- (29) *Mir-on-a krekl-am, kas mir-ēj-am*
 die-AN-GEN.SG shirt-DAT.SG which.NOM die-AN-DAT.SG
mirstot bijis mugur-ā
 die.CNV be.PPA.SG.M back-LOC.SG
pār-plēš krūt-is un ie-met ugun-ī.
 PFX-rip.PRS.3 breast-ACC and PFX-throw fire-LOC
 ‘The dead man’s shirt, which **the dying person** was wearing when they died, is ripped at the front and put into the fire.’ (Tic. 20741)
- (30) *Tanī viet-ā, kur kād-s*
 DEM.LOC.SG place-LOC.SG where someone-NOM.SG
miris, ie-sit grid-ā nagl-u,
 die.PPA.SG.M PFX-hit.PRS.3 floor-LOC.SG nail-ACC.SG
lai no-mir-ēj-s ne-nāk-tu atpakaļ.
 CONJ PFX-die-AN-NOM.SG NEG-COME-IRR back
 ‘At the place where someone has died they drive a nail into the floor so that **the one who died** would not come back.’ (Tic. 20785)

The co-occurrence of the respective agent noun with certain forms of the base verb in this pair attests further to their association with one aspect/tense: *mirējs* refers to the event expressed by the simultaneous

converb *mirstot* ‘dying’, while *nomirējs* refers to the event expressed by the past participle *miris* ‘dead’.

Another feature that agent nouns inherit from their base verbs is negation. Negated agent nouns are often found in the vicinity of the same agent noun without negation. A typical example is the following:

- (31) *liek par mais-iņ-iem maksā-t vis-iem*
 let.PRS.3 for bag-DIM-DAT.PL pay-INF all-DAT.PL.M
pirc-ēj-iem (plastmas-as mais-iņ-u
 buy-AN-DAT.PL plastic-GEN.SG bag-DIM-GEN.PL
lieto-tāj-iem un ne-lieto-tāj-iem)
 use-AN-DAT.PL.M and NEG-USE-AN-DAT.PL
 ‘[this policy] makes all clients pay for bags (those who use plastic bags and those who don’t)’; literally: ‘plastic bag users and non-users’ (Mio2)

I assume that negation is inherited in a derivational chain *lietot* ‘use’ > *ne-lietot* ‘not use’ > *nelieto-tāj-s* ‘non-user’. One might argue that negation is added to the agent noun and propose a derivational chain *lietot* ‘use’ > *lieto-tāj-s* ‘user’ > *ne-lietotājs* ‘non-user’. In this case negation would not be a verbal feature. While this may be a plausible explanation for English words such as *nonsmoker*, there are some hints that in Latvian things are different. First, negation of agent nouns is quite widespread and shows no particular signs of lexicalization (in contrast to English or German words such as *Nichtraucher* ‘nonsmoker’, *Nichtschwimmer* ‘non-swimmer’). Second, in compounds the negation attaches to the verb, for example *lasīt-ne-prāt-ēj-s* ‘illiterate person’ (read-NEG-KNOW-AN-NOM.SG.M) and not **nelasītprātējs*, which we would expect if the word were derived by negation from *lasītprātējs* ‘literate person’. Third, we find spontaneous formations, as in the following example, where the agent noun phrase *roku nenolaidēji* ‘those who don’t let their hands down’ is derived from a verb phrase *nenolaist rokas* ‘not to let one’s hands down’:

- (32) *Bet nevajag zaudēt pozitīvismu un nolaist rokas. [...] Tāda “roku nenolaidēju” dzimta meklējama Vidzemē.*
rok-u ne-no-laid-ēj-u dzimt-a
 hand-GEN.PL NEG-PFX-let-AN-GEN.PL family-NOM.SG
 ‘But one mustn’t lose a positive mind and let one’s hands

down (= sit back and do nothing). A family of such “**who don’t let their hands down**” can be found in Vidzeme.’ (SestDiena 18.–24.07.2009)

If a noun derived by other means is combined with the negative prefix, the effect is different: *ne-rakstnieks* ‘non-writer’ could only mean ‘one that isn’t a writer’, but not ‘one that doesn’t write’ (actually, they may write quite a lot), while *ne-rakstītājs* has exactly this meaning. The possibility of inheriting verbal morphology (reflexive marker, aspectual prefixes, negative prefix) distinguishes agent nouns formed by *-ēj/-tāj-* from other agent nouns in Latvian. The same is true for the syntactic features to which I will turn now.

An unusual feature mentioned by Endzelin (1922)¹⁴ is the possibility to modify an agent noun by an adverb instead of an adjective. Endzelin (1922, 479) cites four examples from traditional folksongs. He does not distinguish between semantic or formal groups of adverbs (his examples contain the adverbs *agri* ‘early’, *tālu* ‘far’, *nopakaļu* ‘in the rear; after’, *daiļi* ‘prettily’ and the quantifier *daudz* ‘much’). However, such a distinction may be crucial, as manner adverbs, local adverbs and temporal adverbs do not behave in the same way. In the modern language, manner adverbs or the intensifier *ļoti* ‘very’ are not common as modifiers of agent nouns, but I have found several examples such as the following on the Internet:

- (33) *ātr-i un lab-i brauk-t māk tikai*
 fast-ADV and good-ADV drive-INF can.PRS.3 only
procent-u desmit-daļ-a no ātr-i
 percent-GEN.PL ten-part-NOM.SG of fast-ADV
brauc-ēj-iem
 drive-AN-DAT.PL
 ‘only a fraction of **those who drive fast** are able to drive fast and well’ (comment at *iauto.lv*)
- (34) *Ne vien-s vien skaļ-i bļāv-ēj-s*
 NEG one-NOM only loud-ADV shout-AN-NOM.SG

¹⁴ “Auch im Lettischen dienen die Adverbia gewöhnlich zur näheren Bestimmung der Verba, Adjektiva und Adverbia, wofür Beispiele überflüssig sind; gelegentlich auch zur Bestimmung von Substantiven, namentlich Nomina agentis” (followed by examples) (Endzelin 1922, 479)

patiesīb-ā ir ček-as aģent-i.
 reality-LOC.SG be.PRS.3 KGB-GEN agent-NOM.PL
 ‘More than one of **those who loudly shout** are actually
 agents of the KGB’ (forum post at *forums.delfi.lv*)

- (35) *Ko pēc koncert-a runās*
 what.ACC after concert-GEN.SG speak.FUT.3
tie bilešu ļoti gribē-tāj-i?
 DEM.NOM.PL.M ticket.GEN.PL very want-AN-NOM.PL
 ‘What will **those who very much wanted** tickets say after
 the concert?’ (comment at *tvnet.lv*)

Usually agent nouns are modified by adjectives, as any other noun. Semantically an adjective often relates to the action or state, not the individual. Thus, if we replace the adverbs in the examples above by adjectives, the semantic relation remains the same: *ātrs braucējs* ‘fast driver’, *skaļš blāvējs* ‘loud shouter’, *liels gribētājs*, literally ‘big wanter’. This phenomenon can be seen in English as well: a *frequent flyer* is not a frequent person who flies, but a person who flies frequently, a *deep thinker* thinks deeply, and a *big pretender* pretends in a big way. In *hard worker* we may even suspect *hard* to be an adverb, as the adjective has a different meaning. In Latvian, adverbs are formally clearly distinct from adjectives by their ending. Relating to time and duration, the following adjectives were found, for example, with the agent noun *slimotājs* ‘one who is ill’: *biežs* ‘frequent’, *rets* ‘rare’, *ilgs* ‘long, prolonged’, *ilgstošs* ‘lasting’, *regulārs* ‘regular’. These adjectives typically modify a process or situation, not an individual. Intensity of action is expressed by the adjective *liels* ‘big’, which can be seen in several examples throughout this paper; a colloquial variant is *baigais* ‘terrible’.

Local adverbs and adverbial phrases are often found with agent nouns. A local adverb could already be seen in *iekšā ticēji* ‘those who got in’ (literally: “inside-getters”) in example (15) above. Another example is the following:

- (36) *Māt-e vispār ne-bija*
 mother-NOM.SG at.all NEG-be.PST.3
tād-a kaut kur gāj-ēj-a
 such-NOM.SG.F somewhere go-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘My mother didn’t go out much’ (*Rīgas Laiks* 7/2009);
 literally: ‘wasn’t such a somewhere-goer’

The local adverb usually precedes the noun (*kaut kur gājēja*), while with verbs the order is more free (*kaut kur iet ~ iet kaut kur* ‘go somewhere’). The same holds for prepositional phrases and locatives as adverbials. Endzelin (1922, 803) lists examples from the folk-songs, such as *pa istabu staigātāja* ‘one who walks around the room’, *aiz galda sēdētāja* ‘one who sits at the table’, *ar ļaudīm runātāju* ‘one (ACC) who talks to people’, *laba ganuos gājēja* ‘a good shepherdess’ (literally: ‘good to-pasture-goer’). The construction is well attested in modern sources as well. Examples from texts published on the Internet include *uz nerviem kritējs* ‘one who gets on (my/others’) nerves’ from the idiomatic phrase *krit uz nerviem* ‘get (literally ‘fall’) on one’s nerves’, *no sievas algas dzīvotājs* ‘one who lives from his wife’s wages’, *braucēji ar riteņiem* ‘those who go by bike’. In the last example the prepositional phrase follows the agent noun because it is contrasted with another:

- (37) *Bet kur-i būs brauc-ēj-i ar*
 but which-NOM.PL be.FUT.3 GO-AN-NOM.PL with
riteņ-iem un kur-i ar mašin-u?
 bike-DAT.PL and which-NOM.PL.M with car-ACC
 ‘But who will go by bike and who by car?’ (travel report at *raid.lv*)

As the examples show, not only adverbials of place, but also those with some other meanings are possible. Only time adverbials seem to be excluded: *braucējs pēc desmit minūtēm* ‘one who will go in ten minutes’, *stundām runātāja* ‘one who talks for hours’, *pavasārī slimotājs* ‘one who is ill in spring’ are not attested and probably impossible. Time adverbials that have the form of a locative when used with a verb are rendered as genitives in a noun phrase headed by an agent noun: *pavasara (GEN) slimotājs* ‘one who is ill in spring’, *4. maija balsotājs* ‘one that has voted on May 4 (1990)’, (see example 38 below). More research is needed to determine whether temporal modification of agent nouns is indeed impossible or may appear in some limited way.

Finally, an agent noun may inherit arguments of the base verb, which may have the form of prepositional phrases, locatives, datives, infinitives and complement clauses. In the linguistic literature, different views have been expressed regarding the possibility for agent nouns

to retain the valency of the verb. In a recent textbook Haspelmath and Sims (2010) state:

In contrast to (complex) event nouns, agent nouns in English and in many other languages do not seem to inherit the verb's argument structure. Expressions such as **voter for Mitterrand*, **thinker about deep problems* or **claimer that Armageddon is near* are systematically impossible. (Haspelmath & Sims 2010: 255–6)

In Latvian, however, equivalents of each of these constructions are attested:

- (38) *Piemēram Pēteris Lazda — jurists, bijušais parlamenta deputāts un 4. maija balsotājs par Latvijas neatkarības atjaunošanu*
 4. maij-a **balso-tāj-s** **par** Latvij-as
 4. may-GEN vote-AN-NOM.SG for Latvia-GEN
neatkarīb-as atjaunošan-u
 independence-GEN renovation-ACC
 lit.: 'For example, Pēteris Lazda — a lawyer, former member of parliament and **voter** [in the historic ballot] **of May 4** [1990] **for the renovation of Latvia's independence**' (*faces.eu/lv/forum-archive/25/9513/*)
- (39) *apgaismības laikmeta spīdeklis, dziļais domātājs par morāli un ētiku Imanuels Kants*
 dziļ-ais **domā-tāj-s** **par** morāl-i
 deep-NOM.SG.M.DEF think-AN-NOM.SG about moral-ACC
un ētik-u
 and ethics-ACC
 lit.: 'the bright star of the enlightenment, **the deep thinker about moral and ethics** Immanuel Kant' (Māris Zanders in *Diena*, 11/10/2011)
- (40) *Nez apgalvotājs, ka Lietuvā ceļi ir labāki, ir braucis arī par kādiem citiem Lietuvas ceļiem kā Paņevēža — Viļņa vai Klaipēda — Viļņa?*
apgalvo-tāj-s, ka Lietuv-ā **ceļ-i** **ir**
 claim-AN-NOM.SG that Lithuania-LOC road-NOM.PL be.PRS.3
labāk-i
 better-NOM.PL.M
 lit.: 'I wonder whether **the claimer that in Lithuania the**

roads are better has also used some other roads in Lithuania apart from Panevėžys — Vilnius or Klaipėda — Vilnius?’ (comment in a discussion at *tvnet.lv*)

Latvian is certainly not unique in allowing certain kinds of verbal complements to appear with agent nouns. Rainer (forthcoming) notes that prepositional phrases as complements “can be inherited more freely” and cites the English examples *a looker at women* and *the first swimmer across lake Ontario*. In Latvian prepositional complements as in (38) and (39) are not unusual, though there certainly are some restrictions which have to be explored in further investigations. Apparently it is possible to replace a prepositional complement of the verb by a genitive preceding the agent noun. For example, *slimot ar bronhīti* ‘suffer from bronchitis’ > *bronhīta slimotājs* ‘one who suffers from bronchitis’.

Especially intriguing is the construction in (40) with a finite complement clause. Its possibilities and limits deserve further investigation. The inheritance of a finite complement clause is doubtlessly more restricted with agent nouns than with nouns referring to the act. For example, while *doma, ka...* ‘the thought that...’ is a common construction, [?]*domātājs, ka...*, literally ‘the thinker that...’, is a highly unlikely one (no hits in an Internet search, in contrast to *apgalvotājs, ka...* ‘the claimer that’, which is attested with about a dozen instances). Infinitives, on the other hand, are often inherited. A single infinitive usually precedes the agent noun, as in *ēst patīcēji* ‘who like to eat’ (cf. example 23 above) or *mācīties gribētāji* ‘those who want to study’, while an infinitive phrase containing dependent elements follows the head, as in the following example with an especially long infinitive phrase:

- (41) NP [**Gribētāju** INFP [*redzēt Disneja ledus šovu Princešu stāsts milzīgajā Arēnā Rīga 10. un 11. februārī*]] *ir bijis tik daudz, ka dienas vidū tiek ieviesta papildizrāde.*

gribētāj-u redzēt Disnej-a led-us šov-u
 want-AN-GEN.PL see-INF Disney-GEN ice-GEN show-ACC.SG
 ‘There were so many NP [**people who wanted** INFP [to see Disney’s ice-show The Princesses’ Story in the huge venue Arēna Rīga on February 10 and 11]] that an additional performance was given at noon.’ (Ieva Puķe in *Diena*, 11/02/2009)

Dative objects are either retained or replaced by a genitive. A single noun in the dative usually precedes the agent noun, while phrases of more than one word tend to follow the head. The latter is the more common word order in noun phrases. The following examples with the agent noun *ticētājs* ‘believer’ (< *ticēt* ‘believe (in)’) illustrate these three options. For ease of understanding the constructions are translated literally — the combination with a genitive as ‘believer of’ and the one with a dative as ‘believer in’.

- (42) *Ne-esmu* *tād-s* *baig-ais*
 NEG-be.PRS.1SG such-NOM.SG.M terrible-NOM.SG.M.DEF
horoskop-u *ticē-tāj-s*
 horoscope-GEN.PL believe-AN-NOM.SG
 ‘I am not a terrible believer of horoscopes’ (forum discussion at *calis.lv*)
- (43) *Nekād-s* *liel-ais* *Diev-am*
 such-NOM.SG.M big-NOM.SG.M.DEF God-DAT
ticē-tāj-s *ne-esmu,* *bet sapratu,*
 believe-AN-NOM.SG NEG-be.PRS.1SG but understand.PST.1SG
ka šoreiz biju ar viņ-u saticies
 that this.time be.PST.1SG with him meet.PPA.M.SG
 ‘I am not a great believer in God, but I understood that this time I had met him’ (Interview in the online-newspaper *la.lv*)
- (44) *Es ceru, ka ar laiku mēs nonāksim tiktāl, jo es esmu ticētājs tiesu varai*
ticē-tāj-s *ties-u* *var-ai*
 believe-AN-NOM.SG court-GEN.PL power-DAT
 ‘I hope with time we will get that far, for I am a believer in the judicial system’ (from a parliamentary debate, archived at www.saeima.lv/steno/st_98/st1105.html)

Apart from dative complements, also free datives expressing an external possessor or a person affected by the action may be combined with an agent noun (Endzelin 1922, 427). Free datives are a frequent phenomenon in Latvia.

Accusative objects, as can be expected, are least likely to be retained. They are regularly replaced by a genitive, for example *sieviešu nīdējs* ‘women-hater’ in (24), *bīlešu gribētāji* ‘those who want tickets’

(35), *plastmasas maisiņu lietotāji* ‘plastic bag-users’ (31). However, it is questionable whether the inheritance of an accusative is in principle ruled out. Some instances attested in folk-songs and older literature are cited by Mühlenbach (1898, 40 [2009, 248]), for example: *alu dzērējiņis* ‘beer drinker’ (beer.ACC.SG drink.AN.DIM.NOM.SG.M), *uguni splāvēju* ‘fire spitter’ (fire.ACC.SG spit.AN.ACC.SG), *augļus briedinātājs* ‘one that makes the fruit ripen’ (fruit.ACC.PL make.ripen.AN.NOM.SG.M). It is possible that accusative objects with agent nouns were more widespread in earlier stages of Latvian. In contemporary Latvian they are hard to find. An example I found in a modern text involves the idiom ‘to twist someone around one’s [little] finger’:

- (45) *Kā tevī vairāk — mātišķuma, rāmas sievišķības vai valdzinātājas, vīriešus ap pirkstu tinējas?*

vīriešus ap pirkst-u tin-ēj-as

man.ACC.PL around finger-ACC.SG twist-AN-GEN.SG

literally: ‘men around the finger-twister’

‘What makes up the greater part in your character: motherliness, gentle femininity or something of one who charms, **one who twists men around [her little] finger?**’ (Santa 2009/8)

The idiomaticity of the phrase may be the reason why the accusative is retained and not replaced by a genitive. It is safe to say that in general accusative objects are not inherited in contemporary Latvian. Interestingly, this means that with respect to inheritance of adverbials and complements Latvian agent nouns show almost the opposite behavior of agent nouns in Sakha as described in Baker & Vinokourova (2009). According to their description, agent nouns in Sakha can have core arguments, but no kind of adverbs or other adverbials, nor free datives. Latvian agent nouns, in contrast, are freely combined with local adverbials and may even be modified by manner adverbs, and the inheritance of non-core arguments (especially prepositional phrases) is more usual than the inheritance of core arguments (especially accusatives). The valency of Latvian agent nouns will be explored in more detail in a forthcoming study.

5. On the functions of agent nouns and their place in morphology

Given the many facets of Latvian agent nouns with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-*, their classification as the product of either derivation or inflection is not straightforward. On the one hand, the formation involves a change of the syntactic as well as the semantic category — from verb to noun and from event or state to individual, a characteristic commonly associated with derivation. Another argument for classifying the process as derivation is that the formations do not form part of a paradigm. On the other hand, with respect to its regularity, transparency, and productivity the process resembles inflectional morphology. Haspelmath (1996) even defines ‘inflectional’ by the three features regularity, generality, and productivity¹⁵ — adopting this view, one has to conclude that the formation of agent nouns with the suffix *-ēj-/-tāj-* in Latvian is an inflectional process. However, I feel more comfortable with the traditional classification of agent nouns, including the ones described here, as derivations.

Many linguists have been uncomfortable with a dichotomous opposition of inflection and derivation. An alternative, widely accepted especially within linguistic typology, is to view the distinction as gradual, and an individual process as more or less similar to the prototype of either inflection or derivation (see especially Dressler 1989; Plank 1994). In an earlier paper (Nau 2001), I found that this approach does not lead to a satisfying account of morphological processes in Latvian: the many instances that do not conform to prototypical inflection or derivation cannot be arranged on a scale and show little correlation of features, thus they defy Plank’s view of “a more or less continuous gradation between kinds of morphological categories” (Plank 1994, 1672). Regarding agent nouns, I stated that they share several formal features with typical inflection (almost unlimited productivity, synonymy due to class, sensitivity to stem-category, preservation of verbal syntactic features), but are derivational by their function and

¹⁵ “Formations are *inflectional* to the extent that they are regular, general and productive; formations are *derivational* to the extent that they are irregular, defective and unproductive.” Haspelmath (1996, 47)

the semantic contribution of the suffix (Nau 2001, 264–265; 272). However, what do we gain by this finding?

Another way out of the dichotomy is to enlarge the classification. Putting together ideas expressed by several other scholars, Bauer (2004) suggests replacing the traditional binary division of morphology by one that distinguishes between six classes: contextual (inflection demanded by agreement, for example gender in adjectives), inherent (inflection not constrained by syntactic structure, for example tense in verbs), valency-changing (for example causatives), transpositional (purely word-class changing, for example action nominal from verbs), evaluative (for example diminutives), and lexicon-expanding. This approach provides a means for a more adequate characterization of diminutives, action nouns and causatives, three types of formation which have often been described as being somehow “between” inflection and derivation, but are so in different ways. Agent nouns, however, are described by Bauer solely as ‘lexicon-expanding’ formations — that is, they are put into the category that most resembles the traditional view of derivation. In my opinion this classification does not do justice to the Latvian agent nouns presented in this paper.

It is generally assumed that the function of derivation is to enrich the lexicon, to provide new words (lexemes) that are needed by speakers who create them in a given situation, and by a language community that institutionalizes these creations and adapts them as part of the norm (see Bauer 2000, among others). Some linguists relate the opposition derivation vs. inflection to the opposition lexicon vs. syntax: derivation is morphology for the lexicon, while inflection is morphology that is relevant to the syntax (Anderson 1982; Perlmutter 1988; but see Booij 1998 against the ‘split-morphology’ approach). A different approach has been put forward by Baayen & Neijt (1997), who acknowledge that both inflection and derivation can have two different purposes, which they call concept-formation and syntactic functions (Baayen & Neijt 1997, 566; the authors refer to earlier work by Dieter Kastovsky). In their analysis of Dutch abstract nouns with the suffix *-heid* (comparable to English *-ness*), they distinguish a conceptual and a referential function. This distinction is very similar to the one I made between the functions of designating a type and referring to a role. In the following, I will adopt Baayen & Neijt’s terminology and compare my data to some of their findings.

The conceptual and the referential function are not mutually exclusive. Not only can one and the same derivational means be used in both functions, but they also can both be present in a particular instance of derivation:

We view the referential and conceptual functions as two distinct components of the semantics of *-heid*. [...] Note that for any particular word in *-heid*, both functions can be realized. In fact, the two functions can be realized simultaneously. (Baayen & Neijt 1997, 585)

Simultaneous realization can be seen, for example, in example (12) of this paper, where *lielos gaudotājies un diženos priecātājies* ‘(you) big whiners and grand rejoicers’ on the one hand creates concepts (types of persons defined by their action), but on the other hand is used to refer to particular individuals defined by their role (those who have ‘whined’ or ‘rejoiced’ in the forum discussion).

A clearly referential use may be illustrated with examples (13) *lielie priecātāji* ‘those who are so delighted’, (9) *neviens šo rindu izlasītājs* ‘no one who has read these lines’, or (26) *sāpes rada pats sāpētājs* ‘it is the one who is in pain himself who creates the pain’. Characteristic, though not obligatory, for this use is what Baayen & Neijt call anchoring. In case of morphological anchoring the agent noun appears in the vicinity of other words with the same root, among them word-forms of the verb in question. Many anchors of this sort are used in example (16) where *ticēji* ‘meeters’ (agent noun derived from *tikties* ‘meet’) appears in an utterance together with finite forms of the word ‘meet’, the infinitive, and an action nominal ‘meeting’. One may suspect that without this anchoring the highly unusual agent noun *ticējs* would not be immediately comprehensible, especially as there is a homonym derived from another verb. A morphological anchor often precedes — and thus, prepares — the agent noun, for example *priecāties* ‘to rejoice, be delighted’ precedes *priecātāji* in (13), *nolūza* ‘broke’ precedes *lūzējs* in (22), *sāpes* ‘pain’ precedes *sāpētājs* ‘the one who is in pain’ two times in (26). Anchoring can also be done by morphologically non-related words that are semantically close (semantic or thematic anchoring). Thus, the sentence given in (15) which contains the unusual agent noun *iekšā ticēji* ‘those who got in’ (< *tikt iekšā* ‘get in’) was preceded by a sentence containing the verb phrase *iekļūt budžetā* ‘get into the budget-group’ (group of students who don’t have to pay for their studies).

Agent nouns used to designate a type can also be anchored, for example *vislielākais iemīlētājs pasaulē* ‘the world’s greatest faller-in-love’ in (20) is preceded by a paraphrase using a finite form of the verb *iemīlēties* ‘fall in love’. Baayen & Neijt (1997) assume that derivations with a (more) conceptual function are less dependent from the context and less often anchored than those with a referential function. Another hypothesis of the authors is that complex words that occur very rarely — such as *hapax legomena* in a large corpus — have a higher degree of contextual anchoring than words that occur with high frequency (Baayen & Neijt 1997, 570). In their corpus-investigation of Dutch *-heid* they found empirical evidence for this thesis — however, only for thematic, not for morphological anchoring. It would be interesting to investigate on a larger scale how the conceptual/referential functions and word-frequency relate to anchoring in the case of Latvian agent nouns.

Baayen & Neijt further assume a correlation between token-frequency and function:

[...] independent concepts are most likely to appear among the highest-frequency formations, whereas the more productive use of *-heid* and especially its referential function might be primarily instantiated among the lowest-frequency words. (Baayen & Neijt 1997, 568)

With regard to Latvian agent nouns, I would subscribe to the first part of this assumption — very frequent items such as *skatītājs* ‘spectator’ (345 instances in Mio2), *lasītājs* ‘reader’ (253), *lietotājs* ‘user’ (420), or *pircejs* ‘buyer, customer’ (586) are usually used in the type-function. Frequency in this case seems to be related to degree of institutionalization — frequently used agent nouns are established in the speech community and ready to be used as wholes, while those with a low frequency are likely to have been created in the moment of speech. There is also an obvious correlation between conceptual function and degree of institutionalization. However, I am not sure about the applicability of the second part of the above claim — that agent nouns with the lowest frequency of occurrence will predominantly be used in referential function, or that the referential function is most often fulfilled by low-frequency words — that is, nonce-formations, occasionalisms, that show the productivity of the rule. During my search in Internet resources I often came across agent nouns that were attested

with less than 10 examples (that was because I was searching for ‘impossible’ formations that turned out to be possible, though rare), and in many cases they had a concept-building function. This was the case, for example, with *iemilētājs* ‘faller-in-love’ (3 different instances found with Google, none of them with referential function). More systematic empirical research is needed here, whose results will contribute not only to a better understanding of Latvian agent nouns, but also to the general understanding of the different functions of word-formation and the prerequisites for institutionalization.

Another question awaiting further study concerns the constructions in which agent nouns appear: are there special (preferred) constructions for agent nouns with a type or a role reading? How does the construction contribute to the interpretation? Do certain constructions ‘attract’ agent nouns? Even from the limited examples presented in this paper one can see that agent nouns with a type reading are often used in the predicate and that there are some recurrent structures: *X ir (liels/baigais) AN* ‘X is a (big/terrible) AN’, *neesmu tads (liels/baigais) AN* ‘I am not such a (big/terrible) AN’, ‘I am not much of an AN’. A construction with a special meaning uses the future form of the verb *būt* ‘be’, as in examples (3) *nebūs braucējs* ‘won’t go’, (22) *būs nākamais lūzējs* ‘will be the next one to break’, and (37) *kuri būs braucēji ar riteni* ‘who will go by bike’. This pattern is well established in colloquial speech.

The different uses Latvian speakers make of agent nouns with *-ēj-/-tāj-* in discourse show clearly that word-formation has more functions than commonly assumed. Derivation is not only used to expand the lexicon. Even Bauer’s extended classification of the functions of morphological processes (Bauer 2004) is not comprehensive enough. It may be expanded by adding ‘referential’ as a seventh type, or by altering the definition of the ‘transpositional’ type so that it may include agent and abstract nouns besides action nouns. However, as a given morphological means may have several functions, any rigid typology may turn out to be unsatisfactory.

6. Conclusions and questions for further research

The aim of this paper was to give a detailed overview of semantic and

grammatical properties of Latvian agent nouns with *-ēj-*/*-tāj-* and gain some insights into their uses in discourse. The two forms are treated as allomorphs of a single morpheme. In section 2 I emphasized the fact that the formation is specialized — at least traditionally only deverbal agent nouns are derived in this way, no names for instruments or places are built with this suffix. This specialization, alongside regularity and decompositionality of meaning, distinguish agent nouns with *-ēj-*/*-tāj-* from other agent nouns in Latvian, as well as from agent nouns in many other European languages that have been discussed in recent literature. I further distinguished between two functions an agent noun may have in speech: they are used to introduce a type (where the referent of the agent noun is characterized by the action or state expressed by the verb, for example, as ‘umbrella-forgetter’ in example 4), and to refer to a role (where an individual is referred to by its role as the main participant in the event named by the verb, for example, ‘the one who forgot the money’ in example 5). The role-reading is a further characteristic feature of agent nouns with *-ēj-*/*-tāj-*, while other agent nouns are used only or overwhelmingly with the type-reading. An intriguing and still open question is how this functional distinction patterns with formal and semantic features, whose description makes up the main part of this paper.

In section 3 it was shown that the productivity of the formation is not systematically restricted by structural or semantic properties: agent nouns with *-ēj-*/*-tāj-* are built from verbs of all possible semantic groups and their referent can have various semantic roles (agent, experiencer, patient, theme, stimulus). However, while no absolute restriction could be found, there are tendencies that show the influence of semantic factors. For example, agent nouns are rarely formed from verbs denoting a change of state, and their referent very rarely corresponds to a verbal argument with the semantic role of stimulus. Another interesting feature is the possibility to form agent nouns that correspond to a dative argument (experiencer) of a verb, such as *paticējs* ‘one to whom something appeals’. These formations are attested in contemporary sources, but further research is needed to evaluate their status within the language — whether they are only marginal or generally accepted —, and their significance for determining grammatical relations — do they testify to the subjecthood

of dative experiencers, or are they evidence against a view of agent nouns as ‘subject names’?

Another question related to argument structure and semantic roles is the valency of agent nouns themselves. In section 4 I showed that Latvian agent nouns may inherit several kinds of arguments governed by the verb from which they are derived: prepositional arguments, infinitives, complement clauses and dative arguments. The exact extent to which such inheritance is possible (and common) and the factors that limit it will need a more detailed study. In that section I further explored other verbal features of Latvian agent nouns: they combine with local adverbs and are occasionally modified by manner adverbs, they may inherit verbal negation and show traces of the verb’s aspectuality.

In section 5 I briefly addressed the question of the place of the investigated agent nouns within a classification of morphological processes. The binary distinction between inflection and derivation, however it is defined, can yield only a very rough classification. Some more narrowly defined classes have been suggested for morphological processes with peculiar characteristics, for example evaluative morphology (see Stump 1993) or transpositional (inflectional) morphology (Haspelmath 1996). While agent nouns with characteristics as the ones described in this paper — almost unlimited productivity, regularity, transparency, and inheritance of verbal features — may meet Haspelmath’s definition of transpositional inflectional morphology, they are untypical for this class in that they show not only nominalization of a verb, but also a change of the semantic category.

I do not challenge the traditional view of agent nouns as belonging to derivation, although some of their formal characteristics are more typical for inflectional than for derivational processes. However, I do challenge the opinion that the only (or even the main) goal of derivation is to provide new items for the lexicon. Apart from establishing a concept, agent nouns are often used in a referential function. This function was described by Baayen & Neijt (1997), using the example of Dutch deadjectival abstract nouns, whose classification as the product of derivation is less disputable. More empirical studies of the uses of various types of morphology in discourse may lead to new insights about the nature of morphological processes. The Baltic languages,

which are rich in such devices, provide an excellent source for such endeavors.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, ADV — adverb (suffix), AN — agent noun (derivational suffix), , CNV — converb, COMP — comparative, CONJ — conjunction, complementizer, DAT — dative, DE — derivative ending, DEF — definite (ending), DEM — demonstrative pronoun, DIM — diminutive, F — feminine, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, INF — infinitive, IRR — irrealis (mood), LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, OBL — oblique (verb-form), PFX — prefix, PL — plural, PPRA — present active participle, PPA — past active participle, PRS — present tense, PST — past, PTC — particle, Q — question particle, REFL — reflexive, SG — singular, VOC — vocative

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