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Constructional meaning of verbo–nominal constructions in English and Croatian

The research of the use of complex lexical and syntactic structures in English which contain the so–called *light* verbs such as *have, take, give* and *make* and deverbal nouns has shown some evidence of a network of meanings. This network is a result of combining the syntactic functions of intransitive verbs into a prototypical transitive construction by introducing the conceptual metaphor EVENTS ARE THINGS (*look* v. → (*take*) *a look* n.) and the process of schematization of *light* verbs.

This process of the so–called *predicate decomposition* has been recorded in Croatian, too, as well as in many other languages. There is, however, an obvious detachment from the prototypical English structure, which points at the usage based value of Croatian constructions. It is derived from their contextually determined pragmatic meaning, which is particularly evident in functional styles such as administrative and journalese.

Our approach to studying this type of constructions is based on the model of constructional meaning which proposes that the grammatical organization of language systematized by specific construction types forms a continuum of causal links. In that model the constructions are studied within a specific *ecological niche* (Taylor 2004) in which there is a mutual interaction of several construction types. They are the product of specific characteristics of the lexicon and the language typology. The stress is put on the *usage–based model of language* (Barlow and Kemmer 2000) which serves as a framework to compare the usage value of verbo–nominal constructions in the two languages. The principal goal of the study is to stress their constructional meaning at the expense of flouting the traditional division of syntactic and pragmatic meaning.

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1. Introduction

The research presented in this paper aims at establishing a usage–based framework (*usage based model*) (Langacker 1987, Barlow and Kemmer 2000) for recognizing the usage value of verbo–nominal constructions with the so–called *light* verbs in English and Croatian. We hope to present some plausible arguments for creating a universal constructional profile which may prove to blur the traditionally enforced and artificially imposed separation of syntactic and pragmatic meaning.

English *light* verb[1] constructions have mostly been studied as phraseological units with a certain degree of conventionalized meaning, and precisely this conventionalized meaning has presented a challenge to many linguists dealing with idioms as well as with the processes of grammaticalization. The most recent stream of cognitive–linguistic research focuses on their constructional meaning as form–meaning pairing which establishes a direct link between a phonological pattern and its symbolic meaning (Langacker 2005:102). The same theoretical framework provides a well balanced relationship between the idiosyncratic status of the constructions and the 'normal' structures which do not exhibit any additional features which may set them apart from the prototypical category. Whether we call them phraseological units or constructions, these structures definitely remain hybrids at the borderline between lexicon and grammar, which requires a sharp turn in studying them.

Further point of interest will be a phenomenon of transforming an intransitive verb into a nominal part of a transitive construction, imposing a specific, constructional meaning on the presupposed syntactic structure of the intransitive verb. Our argument will follow the logic of constructional meaning being of higher value than the presupposed predicate argument structure, especially when the actual instances of language use (Barlow and Kemmer 2000: viii) come into play. We would like to claim that a speaker's linguistic system is formed on the basis of the speaker's experience accumulated in the course of usage events. In this sense it is important to infer the pragmatic value of actual contextual entrenchment of these constructions, which slightly diverges from language to language. However, although the linguistic system is built from instances, the importance of lexically specific instances does not disappear with the abstraction of more abstract representations. As suggested above, both coexist in a complex but motivated system of linguistic representations (cf. particularly Langacker 2000).

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1 Further labels for *light* verbs (as proposed by Jespersen 1942) in semantic terms include adjectives such as *empty, lexically empty*, *semantically emptied* and *delexicalized* where this category includes the verbs *have, take, make, give, do, get, put* etc. Although in the light of Cognitive Linguistics there are no semantically 'empty' linguistic units we considered this term to be appropriate for the use these highly polysemous verbs (Brugman 2001) have in terms of their (super)schematic nature. In their schematic role those verbs are emptied of all traces of elaborated lexical meaning and contain only the 'skeletal' or 'light' (in terms of 'not heavy' or 'without unnecessary components', viz. 'light yoghurt') structure necessary for activating the constructional schema.

In this sense, Croatian usage based counterparts show an interesting feature: the translational equivalents of English constructions bifurcate into two different strands: one influenced by its synthetic nature where prefixation directs the constructional meaning of lexical aspect (e.g. Eng. *take a walk* → Cro. **pro**šetati) and the second strand which retains the analytical structure but with a strong shift towards pragmatically governed contexts with strong historical roots in German verbo–nominal structures known as *Funktionsverbgefüge*[2] (e.g. Cro. *vršiti utjecaj* ← Ger. *Einfluss ausüben* 'perform influence'). We set out from the position that languages establish *the ecological niche* for a structure in a language system, i.e. the relations between the analysed structure and already established language conventions (Taylor 2004: 50).

In order to account for the most relevant elements of the constructional schema in English and Croatian we have structured the paper as follows. In Part 2 we briefly survey the English *light* verb construction and provide the motivation for its comparison with Croatian equivalents. Part 3 provides the theoretical basis for our study. In Part 4 we will present the results of our research. The paper will conclude with a summary of our main ideas and findings.

2. *Light* verb construction in English and its Croatian equivalents

The conspicuous features of the English *light* verb construction which are to be considered against the background of their Croatian equivalents are the following:

a) They are mostly found in spoken discourse[3] (based on the data from the Bank of English, cf. Gradečak–Erdeljić 2009a);

b) They usually denote activities of short duration, performed for one's own pleasure (*have/take a bite/drink/lick/shower/sip/walk*) (Wierzbicka 1982);

c) Syntactically they conform to the monotransitive construction with *light* verbs as highly schematic, polysemous lexical items and nominalized verb roots as results of the process of conversion;

d) Adjectival premodification of the nominal phrase is their major motivational factor, since many examples prove easier encoding of qualities in adjectival, rather than adverbial form:
*He had a **quick** read of the article.* → *He **quickly** read the article.*
*He **gave a** baritone **chuckle.** →? He chuckled **with his baritone voice**.*

2　Due to a lack of space, a very extensive study on the parallel corpora with German *Funktionsverbgefüge* ('structures with functional verbs') with a special emphasis on the German *light* verb constructional schema is to be left out from this paper, but references will be made to several of the results ensuing from both horizontal and vertical contrastive analysis (cf. Gradečak–Erdeljić 2009a).

3　But cf. Biber et al. (1999:1028) for different results, in our opinion due to different choice of corpora and initial search strings.

e) Iconicity of the structure is achieved by the shortness of all constructional elements being reflected in short duration of the verbal process encoded by the construction (e.g. *give a kick, have a lick, make a move, take a look*) (Gradečak–Erdeljić 2009b).

A prototypical constructional schema of the English *light* verb construction is presented in Fig. 1, the elements of which are elaborated in Section 4:

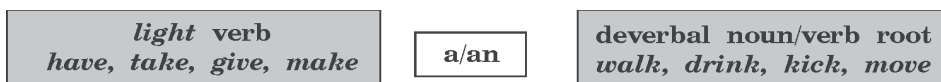| *light* verb *have, take, give, make*	a/an	deverbal noun/verb root *walk, drink, kick, move*

Fig. 1. The structure of the 'light' verb construction in English

In the schema above the *light* verb and deverbal noun elements turned out to be the elements of meaning with instantiations relevant for the encoding of the same schema in Croatian, whereas the indefinite article element proved to be a weak element in the schema due to the morphological structure of Croatian which does not have a category of articles (thus the contrast in the shading of the elements).

The following sentences contrasting intransitive verbs with their use in *light* verb construction should exemplify the schema:

1. a. He walked.
   b. He had a walk.
2. a. He drank.
   b. He took a drink.
3. a. He moved.
   b. He made a move.
4. a. He kicked him.
   b. He gave him a kick.

Examples 1–3 exhibit the process of conversion of the verb root into its nominal expanding thus the intransitive structure into a monotransitive one, and example 4 follows the similar pattern of expansion and transforms a monotransitive construction into a ditransitive one with the *light* verb *give*.

We have tried to establish the existence of this constructional schema in other languages[4], and concentrated our efforts on proving that Croatian exhi-

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4   Many Indo–European and non–Indo–European languages exhibit the similar constructional schema, among others the Germanic branch, very extensively described in German (Helbig and Buscha 1994, Von Polenz 1977) and within the cognitive framework (Drößiger 2004, Wildgen 2008) and as attested by Hollebrandse (1993) in Dutch, who mentions constructions with *light* verbs such as *brengen* 'bring', *doen* 'do', *gaan* 'go', *geven* 'give', *hebben* 'have', *komen* 'come', *krijgen* 'get', *maken 'make'*, *nemen* 'take' and *stellen* 'put'. Romance languages also make use of this construction so that Samek–Lodovici (2000) described expressions such as: *fare una camminata ('do a walk')* or *dare una lavata alle camicie* ('give a wash to the shirts') as examples of firmly entrenched prototypes of *light* use of these basic verbs. Alba–Salas (2002) mentions them in the context of other Romance languages and especially in French where this constructional schema is highly productive (all in reference to the historical links to their English equivalents to be found in the Middle English period) where there is mention of verbs such as *prendre* 'take', *avoir* 'have', *faire* 'do', *donner* 'give'

bits the same schema with a slight divergence in their usage contexts which seem to be much more heterogeneous than is the case in English. Some of the examples which might prompt the establishing of analogies are the following:

5. a. Predosjećao   je.
        Foreboded 3.Ps.Sg.M. AUX
        'He foreboded.'
    b. Imao   je   predosjećaj.
        Had 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX foreboding (Nom.).
        'He had a foreboding.'
6. a. Odgovorio   je.
        Answered 3.Ps.Sg. AUX
        'He answered.'
    b. Dao   je   odgovor.
        Gave 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX answer (Nom.).
        'He gave an answer.'
7. a. Udahnuo   je.
        Breathed 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX.
        'He breathed (in).'
    b. Uzeo   je   dah.
        Took 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX breath.
        'He took a breath.'
    a. Predahnuo   je.
        Paused 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX
        'He paused.'
    b. Napravio   je   predah.
        Made 3.Ps.Sg.M AUX pause (Nom.)
        'He made a pause.'

The above examples in the b. set (5b., 6b., 7b. and 8b.) may suggest that there is a parallel equivalence in the process of transforming intransitive into transitive constructions. However, the initial research which prompted the in–

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(e.g. *avoir peur* 'have fear', *faire une promenade* 'do a walk', *donner une gifle/un coup* 'give a slap/blow'). Barrier (2006) mentions that the constructions with the so–called *verbe supporte* appear for the first time in Old French and arese in Arabic, Persian and Malay. In analytical languages these structures have been described very thoroughly (albeit in the generative tradition) where the Japanese *light* verb *suru* (with the approximate meaning of 'do') shows many typical features of schematic meaning possessed by the English *light* verbs (cf. Grimshaw i Mester (1988), Shimada i Kordoni (2003)). In Mandarine Chinese the *light verb da* ('hit') participates with its causative meaning in the process of nomina-lization of lexical verbs and in the construction of verbo–nominal constructions (Lin 2001) and Chae (1997) described the same use of the Korean *ha* ('do'). In the tradition of her Constructional Grammar theory Goldberg (1996) described a complex verbo–nominal con-struction in Persian (*harf zad* ('hit word' = *to talk*) or *guS kardan* ('do ear' = *to listen*) and Butt (1995) gives a detailed description of *light verbs in Urdu* (*k* 'do', *li* 'take', *di* 'give' and many others in different combinations claiming that the phenomenon can be noticed in other South Asian languages as well. Bowern (2006) mentions complex predicates in Australian languages (Bardi) and Johns (2005) mentions merging of nouns and *light* verbs in polysynthetic languages Inuktitut and Mahawk.

depth study of *light* verbs in general (Gradečak–Erdeljić 2004a, 2009a) showed that there is a strong tendency for Croatian translation equivalents of English *light* verb constructions to appear as derived verb forms without the nominal complement. Table 1. below presents the results of the horizontal contrastive analysis of a literary work in English translated into Croatian[5] with the ratio representing the relationship of English *light* verb constructions translated into Croatian as either simple verb forms, *light* verb + noun constructions or structures with verbs other than those categorized as *light* with the corresponding nominal complements.

V+ N (Eng) → (Cro)	1. simple verb form	2. light verb+N	3. other verbs+N	Ratio 1:2:3 %
give a N	4	4	2	40,00:40,00:20,00
have a N	5	4	0	55,55:44,45: 0,00
take a N	22	0	6	78,57: 0,00:21,53
make a N	15	3	4	68,18:13,64:18,18
Total:	46	11	12	66,67:15,94:17,39

Table 1. Ratio of different Croatian translation equivalents of English *light* verb Constructions.

Guided by the proposals on the analytical trend of English[6] and the verbo–centric nature of synthetic languages such as e.g. Croatian and German, we hypothesized that the horizontal, i.e. structural analysis of translational equivalents would reflect the tendency of a language towards a particular structure determined by its typological setting. Even on a sample so narrow as is a number of 69 isolated examples of English *light* verb constructions, the Croatian translational equivalents in Table 1. display a clear predominance of simple verb forms (66,67%) in comparison to a very low frequency of Croatian *light* verb constructions (15,94%) with the rest of 17,39% representing verbo–nominal constructions with verbs which may not be considered *light*, i.e. schematic, but are very frequently in direct relationship with the verbs originating from the German verbo–nominal structures, e.g. Cro *vršiti utjecaj* Ger *Einfluss ausüben* 'perform influence', Cro *baciti pogled* Ger *Blick werfen* 'throw a look'.

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5   Grisham, John (1992) *The Pelican Brief*. New York. Dell Publishing
     Grisham, John (1994) *Slučaj Pelikan*. Zagreb. Algoritam, prijevod: Goran Pavelić

6   Cf. the works by the representatives of the Prague School: Mathesius (1961), Renský (1966) and Vachek (1961). This theory aims at gradual disintegration of the synthetic structure of Old English and the obvious restructuring of lexical units into lexical complexes, one of which is the periphrastic *light* verb construction. Slavic languages and e.g. German, however are considered to be verbo–centric languages defying this analytical trend.

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The most frequent English construction, *take a + N*[7], as the most frequent one, is highlighted in order to point out another parallel, namely, that the essential constructional meaning of lexical aspect in terms of its inchoative or punctual value finds its translational equivalent in Croatian prefixed verbs such as: *popiti* 'have/take a drink'*, otpiti* have/'take a sip'*, zagrliti* 'have/take a hug'*, poljubiti* 'give a kiss'*, nasmijati se* 'give a laugh'*, udahnuti* 'take a breath'. Structures with Croatian *light* verbs *imati* 'have'*, dati* 'give'*, uzeti* 'take' and *napraviti* 'make' are fairly equally distributed in reference to their English counterparts, but it is rather remarkable that there are no examples of Croatian constructions with *uzeti* 'take' or with either of its close synonyms. The above results in translation equivalence render themselves as obvious answer to this puzzling mismatch; high ratio of *take* a N constructions (*take a drink, take a look, take a seat, take a sip* etc.) with nominal elements profiling punctual acts were consistently translated into Croatian with derived verbs which show a higher degree of entrenchment in the given context of a natural setting, everyday conversation or dialogue, (i.e. spoken discourse).

Checking another motivational factor for the creation of *light* verb constructions in English, we checked the role of attribution. Out of the total number of 149 constructions with *light* verbs which served as an initial research corpus, as many as 78 (52%) contained an adjectival premodifying element. Out of the 88 elicited Croatian translation equivalents, however, 52 contained adverbial phrases, (59%) e.g.:

9. a) He **gave a** baritone **chuckle**.
    b) Duboko **se**   **zahihoće**.
       'Deeply REFL. chuckled 3.Ps.Sg.M.PERF.
10. a) She **took a** deep **breath** and crammed the note in her pocket
    b) Duboko je   **udahnula**   i gurnula cedulju u džep.
       'Deeply AUX breathed 3.Ps.Sg.F.PAST and crammed note in pocket.'

Still, there were many examples of complete lexical and structural overlap:

11. a) Darby **took** the first tiny **swallow** from the bottle.
    b) Darby **uzme** prvi mali **gutljaj** iz boce.
12. a) The President **had** one brief little **chat** with Voyles,...
    b) Predsjednik je **imao** kratak **razgovor** s Voylesom,...
13. a) I think he felt guilty for **making** such **a** big **mistake**.
    b) Mislim da se osjećao krivim što je **učinio** veliku **grešku**.

The above results of an ad hoc horizontal contrastive analysis were offered primarily with the purpose of reaffirming the initial, intuitive impressions of the surface discrepancy of what seemed to be an idiosyncratic feature of English. Still, puzzled by its more peripheral findings, we have decided to explore

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7 There is a varietal distinction between the British use of *have* and the American use of *take* in *light* verb constructions (more on this topic in Trudgill et al. 2002). Higher frequency of *take* a N construction is to be attributed to the U.S. origin of the novel's author.

further and search for a piece of evidence that *light* verb constructions may be somewhat quirky in the system of the English language, but follow a pattern that is universal to a degree sufficient for it to be found in languages as typologically distant as Croatian seemed to be at this first of all glances.

3. Theoretical background – converging and diverging points

As a basic theoretical model we used Langacker's *Cognitive Grammar* (1987, 1991, 2000) as one of the most widely accepted theories of what has recently been called *Construction Grammar*[8]. It is Langacker's position (1991: 37) on periphrasis which prompted our research in view of constructional meaning of *light* verb constructions: "(W)hat distinguishes the periphrastic variants is their application to a particular cognitive domain, namely the conception of a process". We have noted that the traditional position on the analytical tendency of English to serve the strengthening of the syntactic potential of the sentence (cf. Algeo 1985, Quirk et al. 1985 where they claim that English prefers the SVO structure) reflects a basic postulate of Cognitive Grammar, that of a transitive construction as a natural reflection of the action chain (Langacker 1991: 13) and Talmy's (1988) force dynamics with the energy transfer towards its natural end point.

In Croatian, the same tendency is unnatural and goes against the naturally imposed verbal unit as a central part of the sentence and is a marked feature which sets the analytical structure as a signal of a detached, stylistically marked linguistic type (cf. Footnote 6. above). However, what has been noticed by many Croatian linguists is a basic fact that in Croatian there is also a monotransitive construction with semantically impoverished verbs and verbal nouns which may signal lexical aspect as a separate syntactic category (e.g. *dati mig* 'give a wink'). This phenomenon was differently labelled and the structures were recognized as specific lexical units used to create a category as a prototypical feature within a discourse type. This discourse type, however, diverges from the spoken discourse typically found as the setting for English constructions and is a feature of the administrative or journalistic style. Pranjković (2001: 78) mentions that this type of decomposed predicate was traditionally labelled *analytical predicate* which supports our idea on the analytical character of the construction. In his discussion of Radovanović's (1990) notion of *sentence condensation* Pranjković (ibid.: 76) notices that this process is in the background of nominalization, more specifically, by using non–sentential means, i.e. structures without finite verb forms to express sentential content (e.g. infinitives and participles, or deverbal or deadjectival nouns). Condensation, i.e. nominalization is a question of grammatical, i.e. syntactic make up of a linguistic expression as much as it is a question of its usage value, that is of its pragmatics. In that sense were those structures studied most frequently from the position of normativity and were often proscribed and expelled from all text types, but what was neglected was the initial motivation for their

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8   Cf. Fillmore (1988) as its formal founder, Goldberg (1995) as its most fervent promotor, together with Croft (2001) who proposed its radical variant *Radical Construction Grammar*.

creation, and in Croatian it was precisely the question of pragmatics, i.e. intended use with an aim of attaining a well defined functional style. Neither Radovanović nor Pranjković consider this phenomenon to be the consequence of the influence by analytical languages as English (quite correctly, namely, the analytical tendency was noted as early as in the Middle English period and in many different directions). In comparing Croatian and Serbian treatment of decomposed predicate Pranjković stresses the influence of "…extralinguistic universals, abstract thought, cultural affinities and similarities in functional and situational contexts of language use."

Our research of nominalization follows this notion of universality since we have found several features operative in both English and Croatian, first of all the effects of the conceptual metaphor EVENTS ARE THINGS which encodes the sphere of the abstract (the concept of a process) into the physical reality. This cognitive basis is reflected in Pranjković's position (2004: 25) on the categorial characteristics of nouns, the so–called *opredmećenost* ('the state of being a thing') regardless of their referring to real physical objects (*knjiga* 'book') or deadjectival (*dobar>dobrota* 'good>goodness') or deverbal nouns (*plivati>plivanje* 'swim>swimming').

Since nominalization or nominal style, as it has often been termed in German literature, confers a high level of abstractedness and generalization on the text, used as a "means of intelectualization" (Pranjković 2001: 77), it is obvious why it is widely used in functional discourse styles such as administrative, scientific, political or legal. If a text is pragmatically organized on the principle of a decomposed predicate the effect which is attained is that of indefiniteness and general reference. The basic tool for that is the elimination of a direct object from the predication of a transitive verb, which itself gets nominalized, and a verb of general meaning is introduced (Pranjković (ibid.: 78) calls it a *copula* or *semicopular verb*), e.g. *vršiti procjenu* ('perform evaluation') instead of *procjenjivati vrijednost nečega* ('assess the value of something').

On a more fundamental level we describe the processes which are the foundation for these metaphoric mappings, i.e. the cognitive processes of concept profiling with the principle of sequential scanning of process verbs which scan sequentially through a series of temporally distributed component states. Each of these component states profiles a relation, which in Langacker's theory is an entity, and which form a continuum when temporally scanned. This continuum of states creates an abstract bounded region which may be profiled by a noun. Langacker (1991: 25) maintains that the "semantic contribution of nominalization is limited to profiling (an aspect of construal)".

Another reason for neglecting this type of constructions was the tendency in Croatian linguistic literature to isolate pragmatic and stylistic elements of meaning in a separate category, limiting itself to mostly compartmentalised morphological or syntactic levels. A praiseworthy dettachment from such a traditional and old–fashioned approach is Silić's (2006)[9] very detailed description

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9   Silić (2006: 66) notices a feature typical for the nominal nature of the administrative and business functional style, namely the replacement of a full verb by a *semiverb* (or semicopular verb) in combination with a deverbal noun.

of usage value of different morphological and syntactic structures dispersed across different functional styles (previously published as a series of papers in *Kolo* in the period from 1996–1998).

The constructions are analysed by Silić and Pranjković (2005: 188ff.) in the section on *periphrastic verbs*, as they call them, in the context of a syntactic description of verb types as elements in various morphosyntactic relationships. Periphrastic verbs are considered to be semantically and syntactically dependent forms participating in structuring the so–called *analytical tagmemes* where there obtains a semantically independent (in our case a nominal part) and a semantically dependent word (a periphrastic, i.e. *light* verb). These authors subsume much wider choice of structures under the category of verbal constructions, taking into account not only pure nominal complements, but prepositional phrases as well, which, however, overlaps with the treatment these construction types have received in German (see Footnote 4).

Silić and Pranjković's (2005: 188–189) set reveals that their choice of periphrastic verbs covers a much wider range of usages and structures than the proposed set of prototypical *light* verb constructions we opted for initially, as well as there are many constructions for which there obtains no equivalent single verb form, e.g. *izraziti sućut* 'express condolences' for which obvious English equivalents show the same high level of idiomaticity which clearly sets them apart from the *light* verb construction. It is important to stress that in the set there are Croatian translational equivalents of all English *light* verbs *have* (*imati*), *give* (*dati*), *make* (*činiti, načiniti*) and *take* (*uzeti*).

Further morphosyntactic features noticed by Silić and Pranjković are almost identical to those found in the English construction: morphosyntactic variability of *light* verbs as finite verb forms and the invariability of the nominal constructional element, which differentiates them from the so–called "nouns in a free relationship" (ibid.). Blocking the pronominal anaphorization of the nominal element seems to be the most obvious one, e.g. *doći do daha* 'catch one's breath', lit. 'come to a breath', where the noun in the prepositional phrase cannot be replaced by the pronoun: ?*doći do njega* '?come to it' and where the noun cannot be pluralized: *doći do dahova '*come to breaths'.

Naturally, many examples offer exceptions to the generally observed rules which sets apart these constructions from other verbo–nominal complexes, so that we have found evidence of anaphorization of the nominal phrase, which may suggest further distancing of this construction type from it fixed idiomatic status:

14. **Imao je** **mogućnost** popraviti situaciju, ali **ju**
    Had 3.Ps.Sg.M.PAST **possibility** to fix situation Sg.F, but **it** Sg.ACC.F.
    je propustio svojim bezobzirnim ponašanjem te večeri.
    missed3.Ps.Sg. M. PAST his Poss.Refl.INSTR. insolent behavior that evening.

'He had an opportunity to fix the situation, but he missed it by behaving insolently that evening.'

15. Odgovor na to pitanje **dat će** nam **rješenje** pitanja,
    Answer on that question **give** 3.Ps.Sg.FUT us DAT **solution** question GEN
    kako piće djeluje na čovjeka. Može li **ono** biti i konačno,
    how drink influences on man. Can 3.Ps.Sg. **it** N. beINF also final,
    treba ostaviti znanstvenicima.
    needs leaveINF scientistsDAT.

'The answer to that question will give us a solution to the question of how drink influences the man. Can it also be a final one, needs to be left to the scientists.'

4. Constructional schema as a basis for analysis

Since we cannot take as a basis for our vertical contrastive analysis a prototypical English *light* verb construction simply because in Croatian certain morphological categories such as indefinite article do not exist or are, as the process of conversion seems to be, marginalized in comparison with other word–formational processes (cf. Kuna 2007, Tafra 1998) our first step was to resort to the analysis of possible constructional elements such as the Croatian equivalents of the English *light* verbs and potential candidates for verbal nouns as either products of affixation or conversion.

After we had studied the possibility of whether the morphological level reflected the conceptual one in Croatian, i.e. whether it was possible to perform an alternative reconstruction of the event schema in the sense of a sequential scanning of process by its metonymic dissection into individual acts which can be profiled as cumulative, summarily scanned thing, we found a surprisingly large number of nouns which fit the category. Those are converted lexical bases, sometimes even roots which Babić (2004:338–340) terms *derivatives by zero suffix* ('*izvedenice nultim sufiksom*), i.e. nouns as products of conversion from verbal roots with both abstract and concrete meaning. In the subgroup of the non–prefixed nouns those denoting actual physical object are rather rare (e.g. *šmrk* 'hose', *zaslon* 'screen', *nacrt* 'blueprint', *gaz* 'ford/draught', *zatvor* 'prison/constipation'), and those with more abstract, processual meaning are very numerous and denote some kind of a process (either an activity, an individual act or a phenomenon) or a state. Those denoting processes mostly refer to onomatopoeic sounds (*cvrk* 'chirp', *zuj* 'buzz'), neutral regarding their duration (*cjelov* 'kiss, arch.', *griz* 'bite', *lom* 'break', *pad* 'fall', *rez* 'cut', *strig* 'snip', *zijev* 'yawn') or referring to their punctual meaning (*kret* 'move', *mah* 'swipe', *mig* 'wink', *skok* 'jump'), and sometimes even being aspectually ambiguous, i.e. denoting both imperfective or perfective aspectual force (*klik* 'cry', *krik* 'scream', *srk* 'slurp', *zvek* 'cling', *žvak* 'chaw'). An interesting fact is that a group of nouns denoting bodily sense, movement or change (*have a nap, cry, blink, sniff, take a run*), which Babić also acknowledges as a special subgroup of activity nouns, e.g. *bijeg* 'escape', *boj* 'fight', *drijem* 'nap', *hod* 'gate/walk', *let* 'flight', *plač* 'cry', *ples* 'dance', *spomen* 'mention', *trepet* 'fear', very frequently does not combine directly with *light* verbs in the Croatian translation equiva-

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lents (*imati čudan hod* 'have a strange gate', *izvesti čudan ples* 'do a strange dance'), but offers complementation with prepositional phrases (*dati se u bijeg/let/plač* 'start running/flying/crying; lit. 'give oneself **into** run/fly/cry', *ići u boj* 'wage war, arch.', lit. 'go **into** war') or even a highly stylistically formalized expression *sijati trepet* ('sow fear'). Prepositional complementation exemplified above yields itself to a quite plausible explanation as a metonymic elaboration of the ontological conceptual metaphor EVENTS ARE THINGS which we offered as a conceptual motivation for the process of nominalization as a basic precondition for the constructional schema under consideration. This elaboration would offer another conceptual metaphor EVENTS ARE CONTAINERS, which freely allows spatial manipulation in terms of prepositions reflecting motion events directing the movement of nominalized processes as objects possessed by participants in the process themselves. This topic, however, deserves a special treatment, which, for the lack of space, must presently be postponed.

The prefixed subgroup of converted deverbal nouns was found to be the most productive subgroup since they reflect a very wide range of meanings, from durative, momentary to resultative, which reflects the high identifying power contributed to the construction by deverbal nouns themselves. Lexical aspect thus seems to be the constructional meaning inherited by both the nominal part and the verbal collocate. In order to examine the behavior of these constructions, we have elicited numerous collocates from two Croatian digital corpora, *The Croatian National Corpus* and *The Repository*. Search strings contained deverbal nouns from the subgroup with prefixes and it turned out that the majority of KWIC lines contained typical *light* verbs: *imati* 'have', *dati* 'give', *napraviti* 'make'. An exception was the verb *uzeti/primiti* 'take' for which we have not been able to find deverbal process nouns *(uzeti uvid u što* 'take inspection of sth.' was actually not elicited in the corpora, but was found in a dictionary entry; imati uvid 'be acquainted with sth.' seems to be much more frequent), but was mostly found in more complex idiomatic structures with prepositional phrases as complements, which, however, contained nouns with active processual meaning: *uzimati u obzir* 'take into account', *uzeti sebi na dužnosti* 'take into one's duty', *uzeti pod svoje* 'take under one's protection' etc.

The distribution of hits proved to be highly amorphous, saturated with examples from administrative discourse type (*provoditi nadzor* 'keep surveillance', *izvršiti nalog* 'execute order', *obaviti pregled* 'do an examination') which has crept into the journalistic discourse, so that the previous examples were mostly extracted from the sub–corpus on daily newspaper (*Vjesnik online)*, and on the opposite side with slightly archaic combinations (*dati cjelov* 'give a kiss', *učiniti poklon* 'make a bow', *voditi boj* 'wage war'), mostly from the literary sub–corpus.

In Table 2. below, however, we have elicited a number of examples which are quite conventional and can be found in the spoken discourse, but we have allowed a wider choice of verbs with both *light* verbs and their more or less close synonyms:

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dati:	*mig, cjelov, dokaz, iskaz, navod, oprost, opis, odgovor, odzdrav, otkaz, potpis, povod, prijedlog, prikaz, raskid (ugovora), ukor, zahtjev*
donijeti:	*propis, rasplet*
doživjeti:	*osjet, preokret, slom, sudar, uzlaz, uzmah*
imati:	*hod, ishod, izgovor, nastup, osjet, odjek, odnos, odziv, popust, porast, pristup, privid, prohtjev, raspad, rasplet, sudar, sukob, susret, zazir*
ispustiti:	*krik, zvuk, poklič, poklik, uzdah, uzvik*
izvršiti:	*nalog, prepad, razmjer, upad, uspon*
napraviti:	*klik, lom, rez, doskok, dovoz, iskok, ispis, ispad, istup, izbor, izmak, izvid, naklon, napad, opis, osvrt, obračun, odmak, odraz, odstup, otklon, poklon, pokolj, pokret, pomak, pomor, popis, potez, pothvat, predah, prekid, preokret, presjek, preskok, prijepis, rascjep, raspored, razdor, razlaz, razmak, saziv, spoj, ulet, unos, uron, uvez, uvid, uvod, uzmak, zastoj*
obaviti:	*let, ophod, pregled, prijepis, upis*
provoditi:	*nadzor, propis, uvoz*
staviti:	*potpis*
učiniti:	*srk, zvek, žvak, kret, skok, zijev, izdah, naklon, okret, poklon, posjet, pozdrav, preljub, premet, prolet, raskol, zahvat, zalet*
uputiti:	*poziv, pozdrav, prigovor, priziv, zahtjev, zaziv*
uzeti:	*primjer, zamah*
voditi:	*boj, obračun, pohod, razgovor*

Table 2. Verbo–nominal constructions with prefixed deverbal nouns extracted from digital corpora

As can be seen above, constructions with *dati* 'give' are very frequent, especially with the concepts of linguistic activity (finding a parallel between the prefixed form *izdati* 'issue' and the spatial and metaphoric elaboration of the superschematic *give*) accentuating another strand of possible research for the *light* verb construction, and that would be the place of CONDUIT metaphor in the motivation for their conceptual encoding.

The verb *imati* 'have' overlaps in many combinations with the verb *doživjeti* 'experience', which is in accordance with the proposed superschematic meaning of English *have*, namely, possessing implies existence ("somebody exists") as a precondition for a person's experiencing something or participating in an event. Those are mostly constructions having equivalents in simple verb forms with possessive–reflexive meaning (*doživjeti slom< slomiti* se 'experience a breakdown< break down (*refl*.)'; *imati izgovor<izgovarati se* 'have an excuse<excuse oneself').

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Certainly the most frequent combination of deverbal nouns can be found with verbs *napraviti* 'make' and *učiniti* 'do' (very frequently as a close equivalent of the *light* verb *make*) reflecting the schematicity hypothesis, too since *make* is at the highest level stripped of its "creative" role implying the status of pure activity denoted by *do*.

The Croatian constructional schema thus closely follows the English schema suggested in Figure 1, so that both the *light* verb element and the deverbal noun element are present, with the exception of the lexical counterpart of *take* 'uzeti', which turned out to be slightly limited in the number of examples:

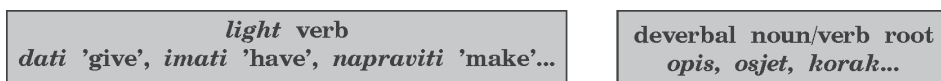| *light* verb *dati* 'give', *imati* 'have', *napraviti* 'make'...	deverbal noun/verb root *opis, osjet, korak...*

Fig. 2. The structure of the 'light' verb construction in Croatian

The only original constructional element missing from the Croatian counterpart is, of course, the indefinite article, being completely non–existent as a word class in this synthetic language. We find, however, that the input it offers, regarding the iconic force of shortness of duration implied by the separation provided by *a/an* between the verbal and the nominal element is to a degree preserved by the obvious shortness of deverbal nouns as elements in the construction (see Table 2. above). Thus, it seems, that another feature of the *light* verb construction is retained, namely, its phonaesthemic quality implied by shortness in pronunciation of all individual constructional units (cf. Gradečak–Erdeljić 2009b).

One of the least explored features of constructional meaning is the feature of lexical aspect which we have mentioned above, but the extent to which that topic would have to be elaborated, first and foremost due to major discrepancy in both grammatical and lexical aspects between English and Croatian, does not allow us to broach the subject at the moment. For further reference on that topic Rosandić and Silić (1979), Dickey (2000), Mønnesland (2002, 2007), Silić and Pranjković (2005) and Gradečak–Erdeljić (2004b) should be consulted.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion we may refer once again to the schematic meaning ascribed to the *light* verbs in English and compare it to the possible schematic meaning of Croatian verbs *dati* 'give', *imati* 'have', *napraviti* 'make' and *uzeti* 'take'. With their much more limited distribution, i.e. much lower frequency in constructional usage Croatian verbs do not reach the level of (super)schematicity ascribed to the English *light* verbs due to a several reasons:

   a) lower frequency of prototypical transitive construction in Croatian on account of very frequent cases of prepositional phrases as verb complements;

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b) morphologically conditioned semantic diversity as a consequence of aspectual, i.e. derivational equivalents which relieve *light* verbs of their duty: *činiti* 'perform' as a close synonym of *make* enters constructions in many prefixed variants: ***na****činiti* (*načiniti pogrešku* 'make a mistake'), ***po****činiti* (*počiniti štetu* 'do damage'), ***u****činiti* (*učiniti korak* 'take a step');

c) with their flective markers (person, number, gender and tense) integrated in the single lexical form, verbs are cognitively more firmly entrenched in constructional links with other participants of the event schema and with their derivational links (affixes) they establish stronger semantic and grammatical links with the verb root (cf. theory on *morphosemantic field* in Raffaelli and Kerovec 2008);

d) pragmatically limited usage context rendering Croatian constructions most frequent in administrative, journalistic or scientific functional style where they are treated as subgroups of firmly entrenched phraseological units typical for a particular jargon, which makes them stylistically highly marked and delimit thus a potential expansion of the choice of nouns possibly entering the constructions on the basis of the extracted schematic meaning of verbs.

Defying slightly the working hypothesis on the prevalence of prefixed verb forms as principle Croatian equivalents of the English *light* verb constructions (supported by the initial results of the horizontal contrastive analysis), corpus search revealed what was to become the basis for a vertical contrastive analysis. It was a high frequency of deverbal nouns created in the process of conversion of verbal roots into its nominal profiles. It provided arguments for the reorganization of the research based on the hypothesis on the conceptual metaphor EVENTS ARE THINGS as a cognitive linguistic background for the process of nominalization. Nominalization was recognized as a linguistically universal process based on the metonymic scanning of PROCESS operative in synergy with the process of schematization of *light* verbs. It appears that constraints on the cross–linguistic availability of certain construction types seem to be the result of an intricate interplay of conceptual, structural and discourse–pragmatic factors as direct results of historical development and language contact, all of which structures what Brdar (2007: 28) calls "the ecology of a language".

We have not aimed at providing a detailed contrastive analysis of any two languages but we believe that such detailed contrastive analyses are necessary before any typological generalizations can be made. We have merely pointed out some neglected aspects of contrasting the two languages and in the process established that the aspects of similarity were much greater than was initially hypothesized. The aim was to provide arguments for the construal of constructional meaning as a potential solution for the cases of categorially indistinct cases such as *light* verb constructions where it is only by formal linguistic force that we can impose separate syntactic or pragmatic meaning.

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Konstrukcijsko značenje glagolsko–imeničkih konstrukcija u engleskome i hrvatskome

Istraživanjem uporabe složenih leksičko–sintaktičkih struktura u engleskom jeziku koje u svom sastavu imaju tzv. *lagane* (engl. *light*) glagole kao što su *have, take, give* ili *make* uz imenice nastale procesom preobrazbe iz glagola, dolazimo do spoznaja o ispdepletanju značenja koje proizlazi iz preobrazbe sintaktičkih funkcija neizravnih glagola u prototipne prijelazne konstrukcije uvođenjem konceptualne metafore DOGAĐAJI SU STVARI (*look* gl. → *take a look* im.) i procesom shematizacije *laganih* glagola (Gradečak–Erdeljić, 2009b).

Ovaj je postupak dekompozicije predikata (Pranjković, 2001) uočen i u hrvatskome (pojava tzv. *perifraznih glagola*, Pranjković i Silić, 2005). Kao najočitiji se odmak od prototipne engleske strukture međutim može opaziti upravo uporabna vrijednost ovih konstrukcija u hrvatskom jeziku gdje je vidljivo kako je pragmatičko značenje kontekstualno uvjetovano i mnogo je uočljivije u određenim funkcionalnim stilovima kao što su administrativni i novinarski stil.

Horizontalnom kontrastnom analizom engleskih i hrvatskih primjera uspostavili smo temeljne strukturalne relacije između konstrukcijskih jedinica, a vertikalnom smo analizom utvrdili postojanje prototipne konstrukcijske sheme u oba jezika. Naš se pristup proučavanju ovog tipa konstrukcija temeljio na modelu konstrukcijskog značenja jezičnih struktura u kojima gramatička organizacija jezika, ususstavljena određenim tipovima konstrukcija tvori kontinuum međusobno povezanih uzročno–posljedičnih veza. U ovome modelu konstrukcije se promatraju unutar određene ekološke niše (Taylor 2004) u kojoj dolazi do međusobne interakcije različitih vrsta konstrukcija, a koje pak izviru iz određenih osobina leksikona i tipoloških značajki nekog jezika. Pri tome se naglasak stavlja na uporabni model jezika (Barlow i Kemmer 2000) u okviru kojega ćemo usporediti uporabnu vrijednost glagolsko–imeničkih konstrukcija u ova tri jezika s ciljem isticanja njihova konstrukcijskog značenja, a nauštrb tradicionalno odvojenoga sintaktičkog ili pragmatičkog značenja.

Key words: verbo–nominal constructions, *light* verb, nominalization, contrastive analysis, English, Croatian

Ključne riječi: glagolsko–imeničke konstrukcije, lagani (light) glagoli, nominalizacija, kontrastivna analiza, engleski jezik, hrvatski jezik