

**The internal structure of proper names:  
Surnames, patronymics  
and relational elements**

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**Abstract**

This article researches patronymics in a broad sense – taken as components of a proper name that, morphologically, can be decomposed in a first name and a morpheme – with a focus on Spanish and Belarusian – the second conforming to a narrow definition of patronymic, where it is a component of a proper name distinct from both the first name and the surname. Our claim is that patronymics are the syntactic result of combining a first name with relational structure, a PP layer in the case of Spanish, and both a pP and a PP layer in the case of Belarusian. This research will allow us to probe inside the internal structure of complex proper names, including the relation between first name and surname, first name and patronymic, complex first names and complex surnames.

**Keywords**

proper names, patronymics, prepositions, reference, comparative linguistics

## **Wewnętrzna struktura imion własnych: nazwiska, patronimika i elementy relacyjne**

### **Abstrakt**

Ten artykuł dotyczy patronimiki w szerokim znaczeniu, rozumianej jako elementy składowe imienia własnego, które morfologicznie można rozłożyć na imię i morfem, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem języka hiszpańskiego i białoruskiego. W wąskim znaczeniu patronimika jest składnikiem imienia własnego, odrębnego zarówno od imienia, jak i nazwiska. Głównym twierdzeniem jest to, że patronimika jest syntaktycznym wynikiem połączenia imienia ze strukturą relacyjną; frazą przyimkową w przypadku języka hiszpańskiego, a w przypadku białoruskiego pP (small p phrase) oraz PP. Badania te pozwolą nam zagłębić się w wewnętrzną strukturę złożonych imion własnych, w tym w relacje między imieniem a nazwiskiem, imieniem a patronimem, złożonymi imionami i złożonymi nazwiskami.

### **Słowa kluczowe**

nazwy własne, patronimiki, przyimki, odniesienie, językoznawstwo kontrastywne

### **1. Introduction**

Despite the attention paid to proper names in formal semantics (Kripke 1980, Evans 1982, Kaplan 1989, Recanati 1997) and syntax (Longobardi 1994; see also Abbott 2002, Matushansky 2008, Sainsbury 2015), surprisingly little has been said about the internal structure of proper names, and more specifically about the type of heads and configurations that combinations of proper names within the same constituent contain. In a language like Spanish, English or Norwegian, human proper names can be simple (1) or complex (2), and when they are complex they typically correspond to what is socially called 'first name plus surname' (2a), combinations of

two first names into a complex one (2b) or combinations of two surnames into a complex surname (2c).

- (1) *Pedro, Salvador, María, Federico, Marta, Luis...*
- (2) a. *Salvador Dalí*
- b. *José María, María José, Pedro Pablo...*
- c. *García Lorca*

The question that immediately arises is whether all combinations in (2) are of equal status, and what type of configurations they represent.

In this article we will pay particular attention to cases of complex proper names where the second element carries a designated suffix that marks it necessarily as a surname or another type of complement or modifier of the first name. For the case of Spanish this involves the suffix *-ez*, which was used to create so-called surnames from the first name of the father (3). A relevant point of comparison is the so-called patronymic in Slavic, here and in the rest of the article illustrated with Belarusian, which is also characterized by a specific morpheme (*-avich / -yevich* for the masculine) which attaches to the first name of the father (4). There are several dimensions where the Spanish suffix and the Belarusian one differ, and we will review these in due course, but the point of interest here is that in both cases we have a decomposable morpheme that is used to introduce the second member of a complex proper name.

- (3) *Fernández* → *Fernánd-ez*
- (4) *Aliaksandr* → *Aliaksandr-auna, Aliaksandr-avich*

The main question is the following: what is the nature of these suffixes, what type of head and configuration underlies to them, and as a result what type of complex proper name they produce? We will argue, in fact, that these suffixes correspond to relational structures that at a certain level of abstraction are identical: truncated prepositional phrases which produce a complex constituent that is later on nominalized through little *n*.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In the next section (§2) we will provide a description of patronymic and patronymic-like members within complex proper names, where we will also discuss the main asymmetries between the Spanish and the Belarusian affixes. In §3 we will provide a more detailed description of the syntactic behavior of the first name + surname combinations in Spanish, and in §4 we will do the same with the Belarusian patronymic. Section §5 provides the analysis, which is divided in two parts: the aspects that are shared by the two languages and the specificities that differentiate them, which ultimately reduce to the presence or absence of uninterpretable phi features in the case of Belarusian.

## 2. Morphological patronymics in Spanish and otherwise

Patronymics can be defined both in a broad sense and in a narrower sense, of which the broader sense will be the one that is relevant in this article. In the broad sense, a patronymic is a human proper name derived from the first name of one of the parents, typically the father (Kohlheim and Kohlheim 2000, van Langendonck 2007). Crucially, the patronymic in this broad sense is always a component of a complex proper name which cannot be used as a first name. The patronymic in this broad sense has the morphological shape in (5), depending on whether the morpheme acts as a suffix or as a prefix.

- (5) a. [[first name] morpheme]  
 b. [morpheme [first name]]

This broad sense, from now on called 'morphological patronymic', allows the structure in (5) to be the so-called surname, but it does not force it to be. In the narrow sense, the patronymic is one of the three components of the basic human proper name in many Slavic languages, in contrast both to the first name and the surname. The social conditions of usage of

patronymics in this narrow sense are different from those involving first names or surnames; using the first name and the patronymic without the surname is normally associated to a high degree of respect –e.g., students to teachers–, and it is common that the morphemes used for narrow patronymics are different from those used to derive surnames (e.g., Russian *Ivanovich* vs. *Ivanov*).

A Slavic surname that is derived from a human first name, like *Ivan-ov*, is a patronymic in the broad sense used in this article, a morphological patronymic, even if it is clearly distinct in morphological shape and social usage from the patronymic *Ivan-ovich* in the narrow sense. From now on, when we refer to patronymics the reader should interpret that with them we mean the broad sense of the term, those that correspond to the structures in (5).

Even though the goals of this article do not include attempting to present a typological overview of patronymics, a few examples are relevant in order to define two main dimensions of grammatical behavior that we will consider in our analysis. Cross-linguistically, patronymics are typically built through affixes (6) or kinship terms corresponding or etymologically related to the nouns that denote the descendants of someone, such as 'son' and 'daughter' (7).

(6) a.	<i>Adán</i> Adam	→	<i>Adán-ez</i> Adam-PTR	Spanish
b.	<i>Aliaksander</i> Alexander	→	<i>Aliaksandr-avich</i> Alexander- PTR.MASC	Belarusian
c.	<i>Owen</i> Owen	→	<i>B-owen</i> PTR-Owen	Welsh
d.	<i>Kowal</i> Kowal	→	<i>Kowal-ski</i> Kowal-PTR	Polish
e.	<i>Yousaf</i> Yousaf	→	<i>Yousaf-zai</i> Yousaf-PTR	Afghan
f.	<i>Donald</i> Donald	→	<i>Mac-Donald</i> PTR-Donald	Irish
(7) a.	<i>Peder</i> Peder	→	<i>Peder-sen</i> Peder-son.of	Norwegian

b. <i>Johan</i>	→	<i>Johan-s-son</i>	Swedish
Johan		Johan-of-son	
c. <i>Jón</i>	→	<i>Jón-s-son</i>	Icelandic
Jón		Jón-of-son	

There are other attested options, which can co-occur with the procedures described above in particular languages. A typical case is to build a patronymic through the use of a functional preposition roughly corresponding to 'of', as can be done for instance in Portuguese (*Da Silva* 'child of Silva'). In examples (7b) and (7c) above the internal morphological shape of the patronymic shows an additional linking element -s- which plausibly corresponds to this type of relational element.

There are two factors that differentiate the grammatical behavior of morphological patronymics across languages. The first one is sensitivity to the gender of the referent that carries that proper name. In a language like Norwegian or Swedish, there is no gender sensitivity, which means that the patronymic is built by adding -son / -sen independently of whether the person carrying that surname is male or female. In contrast, systematically, Slavic patronymics –now in the narrow sense, that is, as opposed to surnames– differentiate gender of the referent by masculine or feminine endings of the suffix.<sup>1</sup>

(8) <i>Aliaksandr-avich</i>	→	<i>Aliaksandr-auna</i>
Alexander- PTR.MASC		Alexander-PTR.FEM

Icelandic also makes this differentiation: from the same father called Jón, his male sibling would carry a surname built with -sson, while his daughter would carry a surname built with -dóttir, obviously related to the word for 'daughter'.

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<sup>1</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out an important caveat to this generalization: in some languages where agreement takes place, like Polish, when the surname is adapted to another language, for legal reasons it becomes fixed in gender (e.g., *Monica Lewinski*, not *Monica Lewinska*).

(9) <i>Jón-s-son</i>	→	<i>Jón-s-dóttir</i>
Jón-of-son	→	Jón-of-daughter

The second broad distinction is the compositionality of meaning. In some languages, the patronymic is compositionally derived from the name of the male parent; in examples (8) and (9) above the person carrying that proper name must necessarily have a father called Aleksander or Jón: the meaning of the patronymic is compositionally decomposable through the morphemes. In contrast, in other languages, like Norwegian, Icelandic or Irish, being called Jonsson or MacDonald does not allow us to conclude that the father of that person is called Jon or Donald.

Even though we have not gathered a rich enough data set representing enough languages, a preliminary observation that can be made is that – at least for the languages considered here – the two properties partially correlate: languages whose patronymics are semantically decomposable (that is, where N-patronymic means 'child of N') are languages where the patronymic is sensitive to the gender of the referent. We have not found languages where the patronymic is assigned arbitrarily without reference to the first name of the actual father and the resulting proper name does not take gender into account, although not having a lot of languages we would not feel comfortable claiming that this is necessarily a typological generalization. It is, however, strong enough to be worth considering as part of the explananda in our analysis, as we will see in section §5.

It is crucial for our purposes to show that even if the patronymic is not semantically transparent it still has an internal morphological structure, that is, that it can be decomposed. Let us discuss this concentrating now (and from now on, in the rest of the article) in the case of Spanish.

Spanish patronymics are traditionally called 'surnames', and they are composed of a base that corresponds to a human male first name and the suffix *-ez*. A list of some of the most unusual surnames following this morphological pattern is pro-

vided in (10), where the original proper name is given in parenthesis.

- (10) a. *Fernandez (Fernando), Álvarez (Álvaro), Martínez (Martín), Sánchez (Sancho), Íñiguez (Íñigo), González (Gonzalo), Rodríguez (Rodrigo), Garcés (García), Benítez (Benito), Jiménez (Jimeno), Domínguez (Domingo), Antóniez (Antonio), Antolínez (Antolín), Adánez (Adán), Javiérez, Javier), Bernárdez (Bernardo), Diéguéz (Diego), Márquez (Marcos), Segúndez (Segundo)...*
- b. *Pérez (Pero ~ Pedro), Élez (Elio), Ibáñez (Iván), Peláez (Pelayo)*
- c. *Gómez (Gumo), López (Lope), Velásquez ~ Velázquez (Velasco ~ Velazco), Gutiérrez (Gutierre), Suárez (Suaro ~ Suero)*

The patronymics in (10a) have bases that are easily recognized as proper names in contemporary Spanish; those in (10b) contain either non unusual versions of existing proper names, or the addition of the suffix has produced some changes on the base that make reconstructing the proper name difficult. Those in (10c) are also derived as patronymics, but from bases that are no longer used generally as first names in contemporary Spanish.

My claim is, however, that in all cases speakers identify the word as a patronymic, independently of whether they identify the base as a first name or not, and even though the meaning of the patronymic is not compositional. The next few paragraphs present my arguments for this claim.

The surnames that have the patronymic morphological shape in Spanish – see below, section §3, for those surnames that lack this morphological shape – are not sensitive to the gender or the referent and non-semantically decomposable, but I will claim that they are still segmented as derived in the minds of contemporary speakers, even when the base proper noun is difficult to identify. My first argument for this claim is that, trivially, all surnames in (10) are systematically charac-



terized by the same, phonologically stable sequence, final *-ez*. Even when the base that results from decomposing this final sequence is not directly identifiable, speakers do recognize that *-ez* is a segmentable unit that is associated with a stable set of grammatical and semantic properties, specifically indicating 'formation of a surname'.

The second argument is related to this: contemporary speakers, in humorous styles, can produce neologisms that contain *-ez* from different types of bases, to create surnames that characterize someone by their properties. Among the examples that can be easily documented are those in (11).

(11) a. <i>puta</i>	→	<i>Pút-ez</i>
whore, bitch		bitch-PTR (cf. <i>hijo de puta</i> , 'son of a bitch')
b. <i>cretino</i>	→	<i>Cretín-ez</i>
idiot		idiot-PTR
c. <i>bestiajo</i>	→	<i>Bestiáj-ez</i>
beast		beast-PTR

These neologisms show that (i) speakers, even in contemporary Spanish, where the patronymics are not semantically decomposable, segment a morpheme *-ez* and (ii) that this morpheme is clearly associated to building surnames.

My third argument has to do with the phonological transparency of the patronymics in Spanish. Unlike most derivational suffixes, *-ez* is special in systematically keeping the stress of the base. When the base has the stress in the second-to-last syllable, which is the most frequent case, the patronymic keeps stress in that same syllable (12a). When the base is proparoxytone, the stress is also kept in that syllable also in the patronymic (12b). If the first name ends in a stressed syllable, the suffix is added to it without shifting stress (12c), and when the base has stress on a final or almost final vowel that is cancelled phonologically when *-ez* is added, stress falls on the last syllable, that is, on *-ez* itself (12d, where avoidance of

two interdental consonants leads to dissimilation of the final segment).

- (12) a. *M[á]rcos* → *M[á]rquez*, *Dom[í]ngo* → *Dom[í]nguez*  
 b. *[Á]lvaro* → *[Á]lvarez*, *[Í]ño* → *[Í]ñiguez*  
 c. *Ad[á]n* → *Ad[á]nez*, *Antol[í]n* → *Antol[í]ñez*  
 d. *Garc[í]a* → *Garc[é]s*

Tellingly, there is at least one case which, although historically related to *-ez*, does not keep *-ez* on the surface for phonological reasons: *Muñoz*, from the old proper name *Munio*, stressed (as far as we know) as *M[ú]nio*. This case, where *-ez* is not visible on the surface, is exceptional in carrying stress in a different syllable from the base noun, also lost in contemporary Spanish: *Muñ[ó]z*, not \**M[ú]ñoz*. There is then nothing phonological that can explain why those surnames derived with *-ez* keep stress on the same syllable as the base, rather the opposite: as it is generally the case in Spanish, a word ending in a consonant prefers to carry stress on the last syllable. Segmentation of *-ez* is what explains that stress is preserved on the base in contemporary Spanish.

My fourth and final argument in favor of decomposing the surnames in (10) into morphemes, despite the lack of semantic motivation, is the fact that nouns that contain *-ez* can never behave as first names. In Spanish, there is a lexical test that differentiates between first names and surnames, at least in formal registers: the honorific *don* / *doña* can only be attached to first names, while the title *señor* / *señora* can only be combined with surnames. Outside from very stigmatized sociolects, combinations like those in (13c,d) are out, in contrast with those in (13a,b); we mark with '%' the fact that the combinations in (13c,d) are only acceptable in those sociolectal varieties.

- (13) *Salvador Dalí*  
 a. *Don Salvador*  
 HONORIFIC *Salvador*

- b. *Señor Dalí*  
Mister Dalí
- c. %*Señor Salvador*
- d. %*Don Dalí*

Importantly, with proper names that contain *-ez* the test shows that they must be used as surnames and are blocked as proper names.

- (14) a. %*Don Martínez*  
b. *Señor Martínez*

This is not always the case with proper names without this morpheme. Social conventions definitely define some proper names as most frequently used as surnames or first names, but it is easy to find cases of proper names that can be used as both. In fact, *Martín*, the base for the patronymic in (15), is one such case. A male could be called *Martín Martín*, the first as birth name and the second as surname, but nobody can have as first name *Martínez*, which must be a surname.

- (15) a. *Don Martín*  
b. *Señor Martín*

Speakers, then, identify that human proper names with *-ez* are surnames, which is another argument to say that even when the base is not identifiable the role of the suffix is identified within the formation. The obvious question at this point is what happens with surnames that have no identifiable *-ez* ending, and specifically whether these are different or not from the ones where the patronymic is built overtly. Our claim will be that, as surnames, these behave also as the patronymics with *-ez*, and the reason is that in them the internal structure is identical but the head corresponding to the patronymic is not represented by a separate exponent. But before we argue for this, let us look deeper at the internal structure of proper names in Spanish.

### 3. The internal structure of human proper names in Spanish

As was already mentioned in the introduction, human proper names can be complex in three senses, which now we can be more precise about. First, a human proper name can correspond to the combination of proper names of different status: first name and surname, with relevant for instance for Belarusian, patronymic (16); a combination of two first names (17) or a combination of two surnames (18).

- |         |  |            |
|---------|--|------------|
| (16) a. | <i>Felipe</i> <sup>first name</sup> <i>González</i> <sup>surname</sup>   | Spanish    |
|         | b. <i>Aliena</i> <sup>first name</sup> <i>Aliaksandrauna</i> <sup>patronymic</sup><br><i>Ramancuk</i> <sup>surname</sup> | Belarusian |
| (17) a. | <i>Camilo José</i>   |            |
|         | b. <i>José María</i>   |            |
|         | c. <i>María José</i>   |            |
|         | d. <i>Gloria Camila</i>  |            |
| (18) a. | <i>Álvarez Martínez</i>  |            |
|         | b. <i>Ibáñez Serrador</i>  |            |
|         | c. <i>Fernández Sánchez</i>  |            |

The questions that we want to address for Spanish in this section are the following: (a) are the combinations in (17) and those in (18) of the same status or not?; (b) what type of relation is established between the members in (16a), which we have seen are differentiated at least by the combination of *don* / *señor*? This section will present the facts for Spanish, which will be the base of our analysis in §5.

Let us first determine the distribution of patronymic surnames in Spanish, starting with tests that show that they are properly classified as proper names – something that might be trivial in Spanish, but will not be so when we confront them with Belarusian patronymics. Crucially, surnames can be used in Spanish as proper names in the absence of a first name.

- (19) *Gómez*            *llegó*                            *anoche*.  
       *Gómez*            arrive.PAST.3SG            yesterday-night  
       ‘Gómez arrived yesterday evening.’

The context, of course, must be one where not mentioning the first name is enough to identify the referent, but (19) displays one of the crucial properties of proper names in Spanish: the possibility of appearing as preverbal subjects without any overt determiner or quantifier. The contrast in (20) shows that this is impossible with common nouns, but possible with first names, in sharp contrast to some Germanic languages where determiner-less common nouns can appear in preverbal subject position under certain conditions.

- (20) a.\* *Profesora*            *llegó*                            *anoche*.  
       professor            arrive.PAST.3SG            yesterday-night  
       Int.: ‘The professor arrived yesterday evening.’  
       b. *Marta*                    *llegó*                            *anoche*.  
       Marta arrive.PAST.3SG            yesterday-night  
       ‘Marta arrived yesterday evening.’

Second, with proper names the combination with qualifying adjectives has two effects (Longobardi 1994): the adjective must appear prenominally, never postnominally (21, unless of course reinterpreted as part of the proper name, therefore losing its predicate status), and a determiner must be used in combination with the proper name (22) when used as an argument.

- (21) a. *Mi*                    *querido*                    *Pedro*.  
       my                    beloved                    Pedro  
       b.\**Mi*                    *Pedro*                    *querido*.  
       my                    Pedro                    beloved  
       (22) a.\**Querido Pedro* *llegó*                            *anoche*.  
           beloved Pedro arrive.PAST.3SG yesterday-night  
       b. {*El/ Mi*} *querido Pedro* *llegó anoche*.

The same pattern of data emerges with surnames, when used without proper names in the contexts mentioned for example in (19).

- (23) a. *Mi querido Álvarez*  
           my beloved Álvarez  
       b.\**Mi Álvarez querido*  
           my Álvarez beloved  
       c.\**Querido Álvarez llegó anoche.*  
           beloved Álvarez arrive.PAST.3SG yesterday-night

Thus, the tests tell us that (unsurprisingly) patronymics in Spanish are proper names, just like first names. However, this does not mean that they are the same type of proper names, as suggested by a set of asymmetries between them that we believe have not been described in the literature before.

The asymmetries – beyond the morphological shape, where *-ez* proper names must always be used as surnames – emerge particularly when one considers combinations of two first names or two surnames.

Both sequences of two first names and sequences of two surnames can be built in Spanish, as we have seen. However, despite appearances, the combination of two (or more) first names is not equivalent to the combination of two surnames, as a number of asymmetries show.

- (24) a. *José María*  
       b. *Fernández Álvarez*

Let us start with the prosodic properties of first names and surnames. Consider a sequence like (25), where the intermediate proper name *–Martín–* is one that can be used both as a first name and a surname.

- (25) *Luis Martín Álvarez*

Prosody differentiates between the structure where *Martín* is part of the first name and the one where it is part of the surname. In the first case, there is an intonational break after *Martín* and the first proper name is deaccented (26a). In the second case, the intonational break is after *Luis*, carrying stress, and there is a second intonational break after *Martín*. None of the proper names gets deaccented.

- (26) a. (*Luis Martín*) (*Álvarez*)  
 b. (*Luís*) (*Martín*) (*Álvarez*)

Deaccenting the first member of a complex first name is, in fact, frequent, while this never happens with complex surnames. The male first name *José* is pronounced with stress when it is the only first name, as in (27a), but in the complex first name *José María* the stress in the final syllable disappears and a secondary stress appears in the first syllable (*Jòse*) (27b).

- (27) a. *Jos[é] Pérez*  
 b. *J[ò]se Mar[í]a P[é]rez*

As can be seen in (27a), there is no avoidance of stress clash between the first name and the surname: the syllables /sé/ and /pé/ can both carry stress despite their being adjacent. The same is not true of complex first names. A colloquial form of the complex first name *José María* is *Josemari*, where compulsorily the syllable /se/ is deaccented, with rhythmic stress in the initial syllable. Similar stress-clash avoidance involves the male first name *Miguel* in combination with *Ángel*.

- (28) a. *J[ò]sem[á]ri*  
 b. \**Jos[è]m[á]ri*  
 c. *Migu[é]l*  
 d. *M[ì]guel [á]ngel*  
 e. \**Migu[é]l [á]ngel*

In complex surnames, there is no problem in having stress in two adjacent syllables; (29) contrasts with (28e).

(29) *Muñ[ó]z [á]lvarez*

This set of prosodic properties suggest that a combination of two first names is tighter – that is, they form a more cohesive constituent– than a combination of two surnames, or a combination between a first name and a surname: surnames form each its own intonation group, independent of other surnames and first names, so stress clashes might occur; first names form one intonation group, with a strong tendency to deaccent the first one, and avoiding stress clashes. If one assumes that prosody reflects syntactic structure (Wagner 2005) or that at least the prosodic structure is sensitive in part to syntactic labels (Nespor and Vogel 1986), this distinction is giving us information about two types of syntactic structures for first names and for surnames.

There are other, now syntactic, properties that differentiate combinations of first names and combinations of surnames. Even though related to a more formal style, surnames can be coordinated instead of juxtaposed; (30) is one grammatical way of expressing *Pedro Fernández López*.

(30) *Pedro [Fernández y López]*

In contrast, complex first names are never overtly coordinated. (31) is not a possible syntactic manifestation of the name *José María*, but is necessarily interpreted as the coordination of two referential expressions, one naming someone called José and one naming someone called María.

(31) #*José y María*

Again, this insists on the general idea that combinations of surnames are less cohesive than combinations of first names.



A contrast going in the same direction emerges when one considers contrastive focus structures. Imagine that we work in a company where there are two employees named María, María Fernández and María Pérez. If we need to contrast between them, we can do so with corrective negation and *sino* 'but'. Although less natural, negation could be external to the proper name (32b) and still scope over the surname.

- (32) a. *María, no Fernández sino Pérez*  
 María, not Fernández, but Pérez  
 b. *?No ha venido María Fernández, sino Pérez.*  
 not has come María Fernández, but Pérez

This is not possible with complex first names. Imagine that in this company we have two employees called María, but one is María José and the other is María Dolores, both with complex first names. We cannot contrast between the two of them as in (32).

- (33) a. *\*María, no José sino Dolores*  
 María, not José but Dolores  
 b. *#No ha venido María José, sino Dolores*  
 not has come María José, but Dolores

The only way of interpreting (33b) is that a woman called Dolores – not María Dolores – arrived, and (33a) can only be interpreted as somehow denying that a man called José – not someone called María José – is being referred to.

A final contrast is more lexical, but it also insists on the idea that the group formed by two first names is more cohesive than the one formed by two surnames: it is possible to have complex surnames consisting of two identical names (34a), but it is impossible to have two identical first names in a complex structure (34b).

- (34) a. *José Fernández Fernández*  
 b. *\*José José Fernández*

For this reason, a structure like (35) must necessarily be pronounced as (36a), with the middle element treated as a surname, and not like (36b), with the middle one treated as a first name.

(35) *Martín Martín Martín*

(36) a. (*Martín*) (*Martín*) (*Martín*)

b.\*(*Martín Martín*) (*Martín*)

Let us now move to Belarusian patronymics and their properties.

#### 4. Belarusian patronymics

Remember that Slavic patronymics, here illustrated with Belarusian, are patronymics in a narrow sense that differentiates them from surnames and first names, as intermediate constituents which carry morphemes that are sometimes morphologically distinct from those that build surnames. In contrast to surnames in the same languages, the patronymic is semantically transparent –the first name of the father must be the base–. Patronymics are built with suffixes that always agree in gender with the referent, while only some suffixes used for surnames (*-ski*) show agreement (*-skaja*).

In what follows, instead of providing a full account of Belarusian patronymics, we will highlight the differences with Spanish surnames, beyond the agreement property.

First of all, it is generally not possible to use the patronymic alone in a proper name context. The example in (37c) contrasts with the examples in (37a) and (37b) in this regard. Native speakers consulted report that (37c) can be documented in some rural old-fashioned varieties, with a flavor of excessive colloquiality, but even there the feeling that one gets is that the patronymic is used as some sort of pet name to refer to the person, that is, instead of being a patronymic it is felt like some kind of alias or conventionalized way to refer to the person.

- (37) a. *Maryja Aliaksandrauna Sadoŭskaja*  
 Mary Alexander-PTR.FEM Sadouski.FEM  
*pryjechala ŭčora.*  
 arrive.PAST.3SG.FEM yesterday
- b. *Maryja Sadoŭskaja pryjechala ŭčora.*  
 c.% *Aliaksandrauna pryjechala ŭčora.*

This initial piece of data suggests that the patronymic should be viewed as an adjective, both due to its compulsory agreement with the first name and its inability to appear alone as a proper name, unless recategorized as its own proper name, a pet name of sorts.

Moreover, one can diagnose that the patronymic is an adjective that combines with the first name, not the surname. The following contrast suggests this: it is possible to have a sequence 'first name + patronymic', without the surname, but it is ungrammatical to have a sequence 'patronymic + surname' to the exclusion of the first name.

- (38) a. *Maryja Aliaksandrauna pryjechala ŭčora.*  
 b.\**Aliaksandrauna Sadoŭskaja pryjechala ŭčora.*

The constituency suggested by (38), with the first name and the patronymic forming a constituent to the exclusion of the surname, is reinforced by the prosody. The combination of the three parts of the proper name receive a prosodic packaging where the patronymic is with the first name, not the surname.

- (39) a. *(Maryja Aliaksandrauna) (Sadoŭskaja)*  
 b.\**(Maryja) (Aliaksandrauna Sadoŭskaja)*

Thus in parallel with Spanish, we would expect that the patronymic, like the elements of a complex proper name, should not allow for focalisation. However, this is not the case. With respect to the cohesion between the patronymic and the first name, we can diagnose that, like in the case of Spanish surnames, the patronymic and the first name show some inde-

pendence of each other. Imagine that in your company you have two women named Maryja, differentiated by the patronymic: Maryja Aliaksandrauna and Maryja Dzmitryeuna. Contrastive focus can be applied to the patronymics.

- (40) *Maryja, nie Aliaksandrauna a Dzmitryeuna.*  
 Mary not Aliaksandrauna but Dzmitryeuna

As expected, the same focalization can apply to surnames:

- (41) *Maryja, nie Sadoŭskaja a Caŭloŭskaja.*  
 Mary not Sadoŭskaja but Caŭloŭskaja

With complex first names, as in the case of Spanish, this type of focalisation is not allowed. Imagine that your company has a woman named Anna Maryja Aliena and one called Anna Sofya: the contrast in (42) is not possible: it would mean that some woman called Maryja is not the correct referent, but Sofya.

- (42) # *Anna, nie Maryja a Sofya.*  
 Anna not Maryja but Sofya

Thus, the properties of Slavic patronymics are somewhere in between combinations of first names and combinations of first names with surnames in Spanish, with the additional caveat that their distribution is similar to adjectives, rather than nouns. Along the same lines, the last relevant distinction emerges: patronymics cannot be grammatically iterated, even if one makes up the sufficient social conventions to grant that one person carries two patronymics (eg., one for the biological father, who died, and one for the adoptive father or the new husband of your mother, who died, or one for the mother and one for the father):

- (43) \* *Maryja Aliaksandrauna Dzmitryeuna Sadoŭskaja*

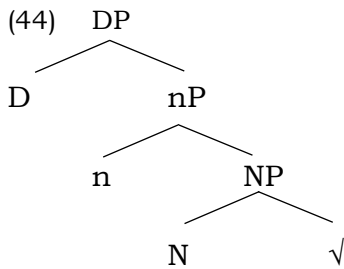
With these facts in mind, let us move to the proposed analysis.

## 5. Analyzing the internal structure of proper names

Let us start our analysis, first summarizing the generalizations identified:

- (i) Taken in the broad sense, patronymics exhibit in their morphological structure evidence of a segmentable morpheme that correlates with them being unable to function as first names; this property extends to its narrow sense, here illustrated with Belarusian.
- (ii) That patronymic in Spanish corresponds to the surname, which can appear alone as a proper name, and in Belarusian to an intermediate member of the full proper name that cannot appear naturally alone or with the surname in the absence of the first name.
- (iii) In Spanish, a complex first name forms its own prosodic phrase with a high degree of internal cohesion, generally involving deaccenting of the first name and avoiding stress clashes in general.
- (iv) There is an intonational break between the first name and the surname, which preserves stress in the two sides; in Belarusian the patronymic forms an intonational group with the first name.
- (v) Complex surnames assign a separate intonational break to each one of the surnames, and no stress clash leads to deaccenting of either surname.

Let us lay down our assumptions. We assume a complex functional structure for noun phrases projected above common nouns, including the following heads that are relevant for our analysis: D(eterminer), n (little n) and N (big N or lexical noun). These dominate a root that in the context of being the complement of N gets categorized as a lexical noun.

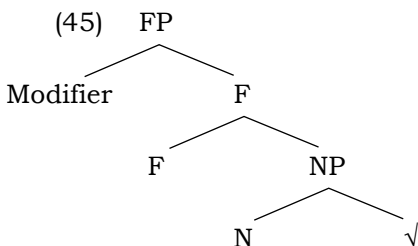


The role of D (Abney 1987) is to assign reference to the description provided by the noun. The determiner, by establishing reference and potentially identity if carrying the right type of head, has an anchoring function within the nominal domain that, following Wiltschko (2014), I take as equivalent to the role of tense in the sentential domain. As for N, which turns the root into a lexical noun, I follow Borer (2005) in the proposal that N is responsible for turning the root into a predicate of kinds – with the possibility that a further head turns it into a predicate of individuals given the right configuration. The root is assigned a conceptual meaning in the context of this categorizing head (Arad 2005), which associates with the constituent a set of properties which ultimately describe the type of kind or entity. N is, crucially, the head responsible for the descriptive content of a common noun. As for little *n*, I take it to be a functional nominal head lacking descriptive content, but responsible for several formal properties, most relevantly in Spanish or Belarusian the assignment of gender. Although not represented in the structure because they are not relevant for the analysis, I assume the standard heads for number and quantification, which are projected between D and *n*, as well as possible additional heads adding further descriptive content to the noun between *n* and N.

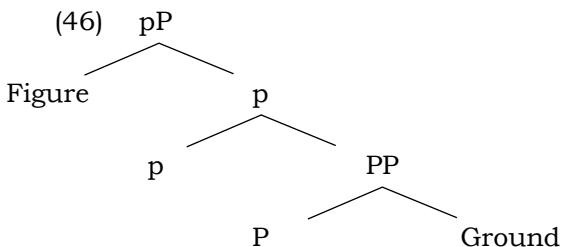
I assume, with strongly Neo-Constructionist approaches, that roots are elements deprived of syntactic features, including information about their grammatical category (Marantz 1997). The root, in this view, also lacks semantic information of its own, acting as nothing more than a placeholder to intro-

duce a specific lexical exponent (Borer 2013). Thus, the root in itself lacks syntactic and semantic properties, which are assigned to the set formed by the root and the first categorizer that dominates it.

The analysis will involve modification. I adhere to the idea that modification of a noun can be performed at several points in the structure (Svenonius 2008), depending on the type of content that is being modified. Thus, adjectives that intersect with the descriptive properties provided by N are introduced below n; those that provide information that is potentially relevant for the grammatical content of the nominal structure would be introduced below D. For explicitness, I assume Cinque's (2010) general take on modification as a specifier-complement relation intermediated by a functional head F, as in (45), which represents a modifier that intersects with the descriptive content of NP.



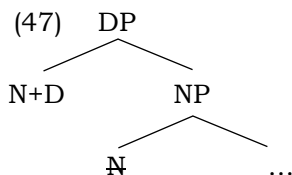
Finally, I will use relational heads –roughly corresponding to traditionally called 'adpositions' in my analysis of patronymics. I assume a structure for the prepositional area along the lines of (46), taken from Svenonius (2010).



With Talmy (2000) I assume that relational elements profile the relations between two entities in a figure and a ground, with the ground being taken as the reference point and the figure being the entity that is located in reference to it. Moreover, I take PP as the layer corresponding to the lexical content of the preposition: P names a relation adding conceptual semantics to it, with options such as Place, Path, Before, After, Instrument, etc., which given the right circumstances can combine with each other in complex PP structures. In contrast, the pP layer is merely functional and has the role of defining in syntax the relation by providing a position of the subject of which the relation is predicated, the figure. This means that functional prepositions without any associated content but required by syntactic conditions are projections of pP not involving PP. Prepositions with lexical content correspond to the structure of (46), and we will see that it is also possible to have a structure involving only P when the relation is lexically named but the second element is not syntactically defined.

### 5.1. The syntax of proper names: basics

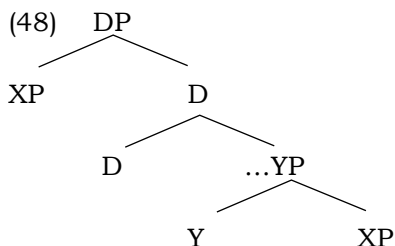
When it comes to the syntax of proper names, I mainly follow Longobardi (1994), but with a twist. In Longobardi's analysis, a proper name is inherently referential because it combines with DP, and carries some kind of feature that triggers movement of N (in his analysis) to the head D, as represented in (47) – with Longobardi's labels.



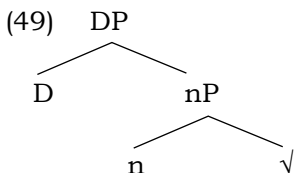
Assuming the core of the proposal, I introduce two minimal changes:



- (i) Even if head movement can explain most of the facts for simple proper names like *Mary*, it does not explain the fact that proper names can be complex, that is, more than heads. I assume, therefore, that when the structure is more complex below DP, the proper name can still satisfy its referentiality by phrasal movement to spec, DP. In such cases, D remains silent, I assume, because of Koopman's (2000) Generalized Doubly-Filled Comp filter, which precludes double spell out of a specifier and a head that share features – in our case, referentiality.



- (ii) I adhere to the non-descriptive theory of proper names where these are taken to be rigid designators (Kripke 1980). This, in my view, has the consequence that NP is not projected within the structure of a proper name, because at no point is the proper name a predicate characterized by a set of properties. However, proper names carry gender, which means that nP is projected in their structure (see also Fábregas 2020 for further arguments of this). Thus, my proposal is that, while (44) corresponds to the structure of a common noun, (49) corresponds to that of a proper name.

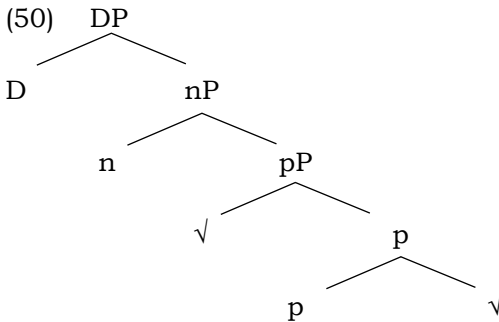


Lacking descriptive properties, proper names cannot be modified by adjectives and still have the grammatical distribution of

proper names. The way in which this theory explains the fact that proper names combined with adjectives must combine with a determiner is that in those contexts they are projected as common nouns (thus, the structure of 44) because the adjective needs NP to be projected. Unlike Longobardi, I do not explain the facts in (21)-(23) as the effect of the adjectival head, or the F head that introduces it, blocking head movement of the proper noun to D, in essence because, as I just said, I assume phrasal movement when the proper name is complex.

## 5.2 Complex first names

The tree in (49) corresponds to a simple first name, like *José*. For the case of complex first names, we propose the following structure: two roots that are embedded under one single nP layer, which nominalizes both of them at the same time.



The structure that we have used to express the relation between the two roots is a functional relational structure, little p (Svenonius 2010). Remember that Spanish first names cannot be combined with each other through a copula, unlike surnames (cf. 31 above). Moreover, someone that is called *Juan José* is not someone that is called Juan and is also called José, as a coordination, but rather someone that carries this complex name. Embedding the two roots through a relational projection that combines them both, and making that set be further nominalized by little n, is the device that we use pre-

cisely to express this lack of coordination and the fact that the complex first name acts as a single unit syntactically.

My claim, given that structure, is moreover that the real combinations of first names is restricted to two, because pP is not iterable. Social conventions allow in Spanish that people receive more than two first names legally, creating combinations such as the well-known (for speakers from Spain) *Felipe Juan Froilán de todos los Santos*. However, these are not used in the language, where such long complex first names are always reduced to one or at most two first names – in our case, *Froilán*.

(50) expresses also the property identified in (33) that the two members of the complex first name cannot be separated by contrastive focal scope. For the purposes of the structure, there is only one nP, which is taking as its root a complex structure where two –or potentially more roots– are contained. Remember that the root lacks its own semantic and syntactic properties. Lacking a grammatical category and other syntactic and semantic properties, each root cannot be affected independently by corrective negation because the negative operator lacks the syntactic or semantic information to act over the root.

(51) \**[María]<sup>√</sup>, no [José]<sup>√</sup> sino [Luisa]<sup>√</sup>*

Negation can affect, however, an nP, which in this case dominates the two roots, because little n adds syntactic and semantic features to the representation which negation can operate over.

(52) *no [María José]<sup>nP</sup> sino [María Luisa]<sup>nP</sup>*

The prosodic properties are also explained by this structure, in a simple way: the constituent that is minimally categorized in (50) is the complex formed by the two roots. Both of them, as a complex constituent, get assigned the nominal category by the same head, little n. Crucially, it is not the case that each root is dominated by its own nP.

We can assume that this is the minimal size of a prosodic constituent in Spanish, as in fact has been argued in the literature: the first categorizing head in the sequence, in our example little *n*, defines its domain as a prosodic word (Arad 2005, Bermúdez Otero 2013). Given that the two roots are categorized together by *nP*, the two roots form one single prosodic constituent, which can maximally carry one stress. This explains the deaccenting of the first element and the stress clashes that trigger changes in the tonic syllable of the first name.

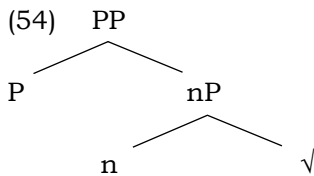
(53) (*Jòse María*)<sup>w</sup>

### 5.3. Spanish surnames

Let us now move to the Spanish surname, specifically the morphological patronymics. We have seen evidence that the segment *-ez* corresponds to a segmentable constituent. Its semantics, as we have seen, is relational, as evidenced by the cases that are semantically compositional ('son or daughter of BASE'). Moreover, patronymics can be built, cross-linguistically, through prepositions, as we saw for Portuguese above.

All these properties lead me to propose that the layer corresponding to the suffix *-ez* in Spanish is a manifestation of a PP layer with lexical content, where the conceptual meaning related to the relation is the one corresponding to 'child of'. In the compositional cases, as it will be the case of the Belarusian patronymic, this is unproblematic because it directly reflects in the structure. In the non-compositional cases – like Spanish surnames, where being called *Fernández* identifies which family you belong to but does not let you infer that the father is called *Fernando* – I still claim that the relation of being the descent of someone else stays, although deprived of the relational content. That is: the surname is marking that one belongs to the same clan or family as someone else, without expressing overtly the relation between the father or the mother. This is

precisely what it means to be a projection of PP without pP: there is a relation, but it is named through the conceptual content, without the syntactic structure providing support to introduce the second member of the relation. Thus, (54) is the structure of a surname in Spanish.<sup>2</sup>



The base of the noun is itself categorized by little *n*, as a proper name. Remember that *-ez* does not displace the stress of the first name (12 above). This theory explains why: the *nP* layer, as in the case of complex first names, defines a minimal prosodic constituent where the stress is assigned. The patronymic suffix is outside that domain, so once it is added to the word, it cannot modify the prosody of the *nP* layer.

At this point, I would like to say something about surnames that, being surnames with all grammatical properties of them, lack any overt patronymic suffix, such as those in (55).

(55) *Marín, Arche, Vivanco, Gibert, Acedo, Fábregas...*

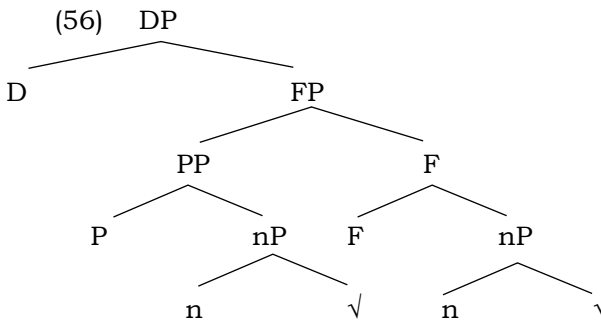
My claim is that these surnames also correspond to the structure in (54), only that in their case the exponent used to spell out the structure includes, as a portmanteau morpheme or a synthetic morpheme, also the head corresponding to *P*. Sur-

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<sup>2</sup> An anonymous reviewer, whom I am very grateful to, notes that perhaps this can be related to the fact that Spanish surnames lack a plural form, in contrast to first names (cf. *los Martín-es* 'the Martin-s', which is grammatical if *Martín* corresponds to a first name but ungrammatical if it corresponds to a surname). I find this idea worth pursuing: PPs lack plural forms. From this approach, languages where surnames have plural forms are either agreeing surname languages – where the plural is actually agreement with a noun – or nominal structures not including *P*, and their properties should be radically different from Spanish surnames. A typological survey might confirm or reject this initial hypothesis.

names in *-ez* let us see the syntactic relation between the base and the patronymic, so that we can identify a structure that is identical for all surnames, including those that spell the PP layer together with the root exponent.

(56) presents my proposal about how the surname can be combined with the proper name. I take it as a modifier of the first name that is merged, like all modifiers, in a specifier position.



Remember that, with the rigid designator theory, I take proper names to lack descriptive properties, so this modification does not result in anything like set intersection. The surname, however, like other modifiers, restricts the modified element: in our case, it restricts the reference of the first name to those that also carry the specific surname, so that different Mariás can be differentiated in the appropriate context.

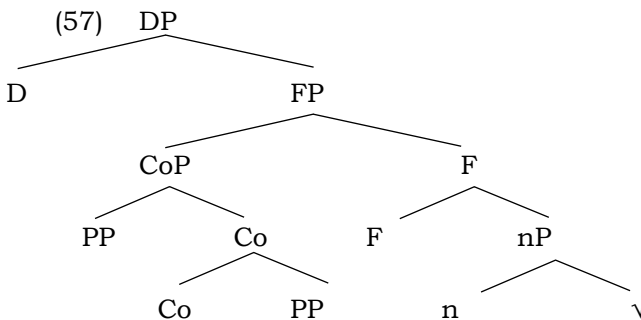
Assuming head movement of the root+n to D or phrasal movement of nP to spec, DP would result in the right syntactic order: first name + surname. I speculate that languages where the convention is to place the surname before the first name, like Hungarian, simply reflect the base generated order without movement to D or DP.

This structure captures the property that the surname can be contrastively negated without the first name and that it establishes its own prosodic constituent, independent of the first name. Note that in the structure the surname constitutes a categorized complex specifier, that is, a specifier consisting

of a projection of XP and not a simple head, as it was the case with the roots in the complex first name. Of course, we know that complex specifiers behave as islands for syntactic extraction, and as units from a phonological and even semantic perspective. Uriagereka's (1999) Multiple Spell Out theory has proposed that complex specifier always behave as closed domains for prosody because, in essence, they must undergo spell out before they are introduced in the derivation and merged as specifiers as another category in the spine of the tree.

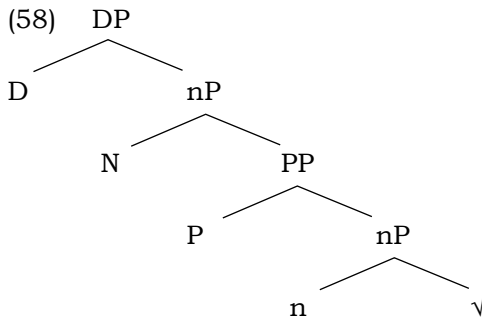
This, in itself, is enough to account for why the surname and the first name belong to two different prosodic domains. It also accounts for the fact that the surname can be negated contrastively because, unlike each member of the complex first name, it is a categorized element that contains syntactic and semantic information.

Surnames can also be complex, and in fact in Spanish they can be overtly coordinated. For them, I simply propose that the modifier in their case is a coordinated phrase –where coordination can be phonologically silent or overt–, as in (57).



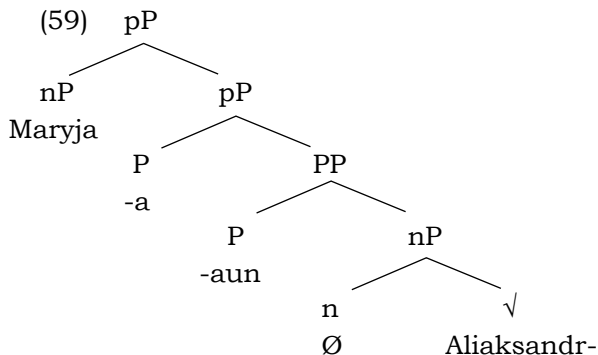
Note that within the coordinated structure (CoP), the first surname is also a complex specifier internal to the coordination; this guarantees, by Multiple Spell Out, that each surname in the coordination will correspond to its own prosodic phrase: each one carries its own stress and stress clash is not avoided.

Finally, let me briefly address what I assume to be the structure of a surname used without first name, as a proper name. In such cases I assume that the surname has been further nominalized, as in (58). As without the first name the surname does not have anything to modify, head movement is possible because all heads are in a sequence with D.



#### 5.4 Belarusian patronymics

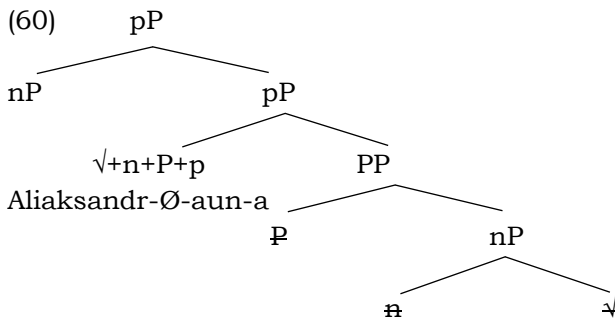
Remember that Belarusian patronymics have two internal differences with surnames in Spanish: they are sensitive to gender agreement, like adjectives, and they are compositional in that they directly express the relation 'son / daughter of BASE', where the base is the first name of the father. I take both differences to follow from the patronymic carrying not only a PP layer, but also a pP layer, as in (59), where I represent the structure of *Maryja Aliaksandrauna*.





The syntactic expression, containing a full prepositional structure, directly reflects the interpretation 'María, daughter of Aleksander'. Importantly, this structure also explains why the patronymic must be with the first name and not with the surname: they belong to the same syntactic constituent, under pP. Note, moreover, that (59) explains why the patronymic can be contrasted excluding the first name: in this structure, the segment corresponding to the patronymic is not simply a root, but a categorized constituent, like a Spanish surname and not like one of the two members of a complex first name.

Assuming head movement of the root to p, as in (60), the structure also explains why –even if the patronymic can be negated independently of the first name– they end up being within the same prosodic domain: after head movement in order to get the patronymic suffix and the gender marker, the root ends in p, while the first name is in spec, pP, therefore obligatorily ending adjacent to each other.

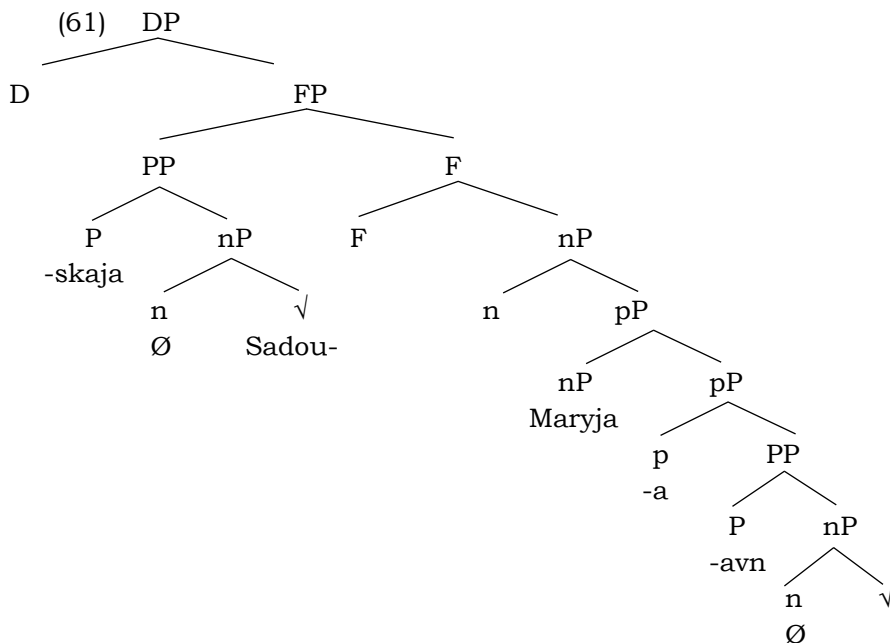


The proposed structure explains why the Belarusian patronymic cannot be iterated and why it cannot stand alone as a proper name, unlike the surname in Spanish: the pP structure syntactically defines the relation as biunivocal, setting only one ground and only one figure by virtue of the presence of pP. By the same reason, pP forces the patronymic taken as its complement to act necessarily as one of the two members of a relation, so that it cannot appear in the absence of the first name.

The feeling that the patronymic used alone acts as a 'pet name', in this view, is explained in the following way: instead of being used as a patronymic with the structure in (59), in those cases the patronymic projects only up to PP, which is further nominalized as in the case of the Spanish surname (58).

In section §2 above we suggested a possible generalization tying together agreement and compositionality in the interpretation of the patronymic: if you are a semantically compositional patronymic, you must agree in gender. Our structure gives a chance to explain this generalization. In (59), the compositional interpretation is related to the presence of pP, which defines at a syntactic level the relation named by the PP layer. The head *p*, however, is a functional head that provides syntactic structure, not lexical meaning. My proposal is that gender agreement is introduced in compositional patronymics by the pP layer, which at the same time provides the compositional reading and the features that trigger agreement in gender with its specifier, the first name *Marya*, which is feminine. However, we insist that the small set of languages considered do not grant that the generalization is correct. Moreover, the generalization is not biconditional, as surnames in Belarusian can be sensitive to gender agreement even though they are not compositional, suggesting that P could in principle also host gender features.

Beyond this, for Belarusian surnames we assume the same type of structure as in Spanish. (61) represents the whole structure; we assume movement of the higher nP to spec, DP in Belarusian to obtain the right order between the components of the proper name.



## 6. Conclusions

In this article we have researched the internal syntax of proper names, triggered by the existence of a class of derived patronymics, both in Spanish and Belarusian, which can be morphologically decomposed. Our proposal highlights several properties that could be eventually checked in further research:

- (i) Proper names have a complex syntactic structure.
- (ii) Relational structure, PP, pP or both, is involved in relating the components of proper names together: surnames are modifiers that restrict the reference of a proper name, and patronymics are grounds which profile first names as figures.
- (iii) As a preliminary hypothesis, the compositional reading of patronymics involves projection of a functional relational structure which must contain agreement features that make the patronymic sensitive to the gender of the first name.

The overarching conclusion of this paper is twofold:

- (a) morphological elements can be used as triggers to identify complex internal structures, even in a domain like proper names where one initially assumes a quite rigid functional structure;
- (b) morphological decomposition can be performed also in cases where there is no compositionality in meaning, because the morphemes involved define different types of configurations and formal properties that are significant for syntax, even when they are not so directly translatable for semantics.

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