Background: This study investigates case and Voice properties of complex event nominalizations (CENs) in Lithuanian. I provide evidence that the genitive (GEN) case assigned to the theme in nominals is not only a structural case (Alexiadou 2001, a.o.), but one which can only be assigned under A-movement. I argue that the locus of structural GEN assignment is the nominalizing head n, and the theme raises to SpecnP position to receive it. Just like passives (PASS), CENs are demonstrated to contain a thematic Voice that introduces an external θ-role (Alexiadou 2009, Bruening 2013). However, novel evidence from Lithuanian shows that CENs differ from PASS in that CENs have a projected implicit external argument (Sichel 2009, 2010; Bruening 2013), while PASS lack it.

Basics: In CENs marked with the suffix -i/-im-, the accusative theme and the nominative agent become GEN, and precede the nominal (cf.1-2). Following Alexiadou and Grimshaw’s (2008) tests, (2) behaves like a CEN: it allows (i) telic modifiers and (ii) agent-oriented adverbials, (iii) the theme is obligatory under a complex event reading, (3). (2) also has a vP layer: it allows the causative morpheme -in, and the Inner Aspect prefix su- originating inside a vP. The two GEN DPs are structurally different as evidenced by morphology. 1st and 2nd person pronouns have two GEN forms: mano ‘me.GEN’ and tavų ‘you.GEN’ stand for the agent/possessor; whereas manęs ‘me.GEN’ and tavęs ‘you.GEN’ refer to the theme, (4), (Pakerys 2006). The former always precedes the latter.

(1) Jonas su-naik-in-o
Jonas.NOM PRF-destroy-CAUS-PST
augalus.
plants.ACC
‘Jonas destroyed the plants.’

(2) Jono augal-ų/-us su-naik-in-im-as
Jono.GEN plants-GEN/-ACC PRF-destroy-CAUS-NMLZ-M
per kelias minutes within couple minutes
pergal-e/-ės
victory-ins/gen
abejoj-im-as
doubt-nmlz-m
‘Jonas’ doubt of victory’

(4) [tavo/*tavęs [manęs/*mano palaik-ym-as]]
you.GEN me.GEN support-nmlz-m
Intend. ‘your support of me’ (Pakerys 2006:138)

Case: The GEN of the theme patterns like structural case assigned under A-movement. I), the theme with structural accusative becomes GEN and occurs pre-nominally (cf.1-2), whereas the theme with inherent case cannot receive GEN and it occurs post-nominally (5). II), the GEN is not assigned by a silent P since, unlike the theme, PPs follow the nominal (6). III), verbs like pritar-ti ‘approve’ take a dative object, (7), which optionally advances to nominative in PASS behaving like a structural case (Sigurðsson et al. 2018). In CENs, this DP dative is retained when in situ, (8), or it moves to the pre-nominal position, (9), and is assigned GEN showing that structural case alternation takes place under movement.

(5) Jono (*pergal-e/-ės) abejoj-im-as
Jono.GEN victory-INS/GEN doubt-nmlz-m
pergal-e/-ės
victory-INS/GEN
‘Jonas’ doubt of victory’

(6) Jono (*ant vaiko) šauk-im-as
Jono.GEN on child.GEN shout-nmlz-m
ant vaiko
on child.GEN
‘Jonas’ shouting at a child’

(7) pritar-ti projekt-ui/-q
approve-INF project-DAT/-ACC
‘to approve a project’

(8) Jono greitas pritar-im-as
Jono.GEN quick approve-nmlz-m
'Jonas' quick approval of the project'

Voice: CENS pattern like PASS in that they allow instruments (10-11) and agent-oriented adverbials (2-11) signaling the presence of the agentive Voice (Alexiadou et al. 2015). However, CENS have a projected implicit agent, whereas PASS don’t. I) the agent binds the subject-oriented anaphor savo in the CEN (12), while that of PASS doesn’t, (13). II) The agent of CENS binds reciprocals (14), but it is not possible in PASS (15). III) The agent of CENS triggers singular masculine agreement on the secondary predicate (16), which is expected if the agent is projected in the syntax.

(11) Namai buvo sunaikinti su buldozeriu tyčia.
‘The houses were destroyed with a bulldozer intentionally.’

(12) [Augalu naik-in-im-as savo išėtis]
‘the destruction of plants in one’s garden is not a good idea’ (agent’s)

(13) *Augalai buvo sunaikinti savo išėtis
‘The plants were destroyed in his garden.’

(14) *[vienas kito išėtis]
‘Each other were destroyed.’

Analysis: CENS inherit their argument structure of the verb, (2-3), and therefore n head attaches on top of the verbal projections, Voice and vP, (17), (Alexiadou 2001). CENS have the thematic Voice head, but it is passive-like (Alexiadou 2009, Bruening 2013) in that it doesn’t assign accusative case to the theme. The GEN of theme behaves like a structural case, and thus it needs to be assigned by a functional head. The theme is base-generated post-nominally, but it receives GEN pre-nominally (cf.8-9). Therefore, I propose that the theme raises to SpecnP position to receive its case from the n head, which is analogous to A-movement to SpecTP driven by case assignment (e.g., like in Faroese see Sigurðsson 2017). If no overt agent is present, CENS, unlike PASS, have a projected implicit agent (IMP) (Sichel 2009, 2010; Bruening 2013). The agent, be it overt or implicit, cannot be generated in SpecVoiceP because it would predict that the Voice head should assign accusative, and it would derive a wrong word order. Instead, I propose that the agent is