Nominalization beyond the nominal domain – the case of Yakkha

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1 Introduction

- Sino-Tibetan > TB > Kiranti > Eastern Kiranti
- spoken in East Nepal
1 Introduction

Map: caingram.info

YAKKHA

KIRANTI
(~ 30 Lgs.)
1 Introduction

• Sino-Tibetan > TB > Kiranti > Eastern Kiranti
• spoken in East Nepal
• 14,000 speakers (probably less), 17,000 ethnic Yakkha
• monolingual speakers are hard to find
• 4 dialects in the core area (named after villages): Tumok (Tamaphok), Ankhinbhuin, Dandagaun, Kharang
1 Introduction

- many morphophonological processes: voicing, ‘copying’ of nasals, vowel harmony, various repair operations at syllable borders
- complex verbal morphology: intransitive and transitive paradigms; person, number, polarity, tense, aspect, mood
- very productive system of complex predication
- etc.
2 Nominalization in TB languages

- pervasive and versatile characteristic of Tibeto-Burman languages
2 Nominalization in TB languages

• functions:
  (a) participant identification: noun phrases, relative clauses, any nominal modifying material
  (c) beyond the referential domain: embedded complements, purpose clauses, auxiliary constructions, **finite main clauses**

• proposed as the major driving force for syntactic change in TB (DeLancey 2011)
3 Yakkha nominalization patterns

• lexical: \(-pa/-ma\)
  miksrumba ‘blind man’, caleppa ‘bread’, hibumba ‘dung beetle’

• syntactic:
  (a) subject nominalizer \(-khuba\)
      (for S/A arguments)
  (b) universal nominalizers \(=na/=ha\)
      (any kind of participant, except A)
3 Yakkha nominalization patterns

• subject nominalizer -\textit{khuba}
  • for S/A arguments
  • always attaching to the verbal stem, no infl. categories allowed

(1) \textit{mok-khuba} \quad (\textit{babu})
\textit{beat-NMLZ} \quad (\textit{boy})
‘the boy who beats (others), the beater’

• also non-canonically marked (e.g., experiencer as possessor)

(2) \textit{o-pomma} \quad \textit{kek-khuba} \quad (\textit{yapmi})
\textit{3SG.Poss-lazyness come.up-NMLZ} \quad (\textit{person})
‘lazy guy’
3 Yakkha nominalization patterns

• resulting unit = phrase

(3a) \( \text{samundra}=\text{ga} \quad u\text{-yum}=\text{be} \quad \text{inca-\textit{khuba}} \)

\begin{align*}
\text{ocean}=\text{GEN} & \quad 3\text{SG.Poss-side}=\text{LOC} & \quad \text{play-\textit{NMLZ}} \\
\text{‘someone (who is) playing on the shores of the ocean’}
\end{align*}

(3b) \( \text{sa}=\text{maʔniŋ}=\text{ca} \quad \text{\textit{leŋ}-\textit{khuba}} \)

\begin{align*}
\text{meat}=\text{without}=\text{ADD.FOC} & \quad \text{be.\textit{alright}-\textit{NMLZ}} \\
\text{‘someone who is fine also without (eating) meat’}
\end{align*}

• but lexicalizations are possible, e.g. \( \text{khuncakhuba} \text{‘thief’}, \text{thukkhuba} \text{‘tailor’} \)
3 Yakkha nominalization patterns

• universal nominalizers:
  \( =na \ & =ha \) (sg & nsg/mass reference)

• clitics; attach to rightmost element of a phrase, to elements of any word class

• NPs, RCs/participles, complement clauses, finite main clauses

• etymologically related to a set of demonstratives: 
  \( na \) ‘this’, \( kha \) ‘these/this (substance)’
3   Yakkha nominalization patterns

• lexicalized instances:

  *tum*na  ‘senior’   (ripen-NMLZ)
  *pak*na  ‘junior’   (be.unripe-NMLZ)
  *haŋ*ha  ‘spice’    (taste.hot-NMLZ)
  *chem*ha  ‘liquor’   (be.transparent-NMLZ)
  *bhenik*na  ‘morning ritual’  (morning-NMLZ)

• note: ‘spice’ and ‘liquor’ as mass nouns take =ha
4 Referential phrases

- adverbial vs. adnominal use of spatial adverbs:

(4a) \textit{to} \quad \textit{tankhyan}=be

\text{up} \quad \text{sky}=\text{LOC}

‘up in the sky’

(4b) \textit{to=} \textit{na} \quad \textit{paŋ}

\text{up=} \textit{NMLZ} \quad \text{house}

‘the upper house/the house uphill’

(4c) \textit{to=} \textit{ha} \quad \textit{cuwa}

\text{up=} \textit{NMLZ} \quad \text{beer}

‘the beer uphill’ (\textit{tona cuwa} would imply a bounded quantity)
4 Referential phrases

• interrogatives:

(5a) \textit{imin} \textit{cogagana}?
how \textit{do.2sg}
‘How did you do it?’

(5b) \textit{imin=na} \textit{nwak}?
how=\textit{NMLZ} bird
‘What kind of bird?’
4 Referential phrases

• temporal adverbs:

(6a) \textbf{khem} \ nisun=na
    before \ see.1sg.A>3sg.P=NMLZ
    ‘I saw him/her/it before.’

(6b) \textbf{khem}=na \ kamnibak
    before=NMLZ \ friend
    ‘the friend from before’
4 Referential phrases

• relativization over object arguments:

(7a) \( nda \ nisuga=na \ chem \)
2SG.ERG know.2sg.A>3sg.P=NMLZ song
‘a song that you know’ (P)

(7b) \( chemha \ yuktu=na \ mamu \)
liquor put_for.3A>3P.pst=NMLZ girl
‘the girl that was served liquor’ (G)

(7c) \( beula=na \ khutu=ha \ tephen \)
groom=erg bring.3a>3p.pst=NMLZ clothes
‘the clothes brought by the groom’ (T)
4 Referential phrases

• over non-core participants:

(8a) [nna o-hop waya]=na siŋ
    that 3SG.POSS-nest exist.3.PST=NMLZ tree
    ‘the tree [where his nest was]’ (location)

(8b) [la mem-phem-meʔ]=na seʔni=ŋa
    moon NEG-shine-NPST=NMLZ night=INS
    ‘in a [moonless] night’ (time)

(8c) [men-ja-m]=ha yapmi
    NEG-eat-INF.DEONT=NMLZ people
    ‘people [with whom we should not eat]’ (comitative)
4 Referential phrases

- other than verbal bases:

(9a) \[\text{jarman} = \text{beʔ} = \text{na} \quad \text{mamu}\]
    Germany = LOC = NMLZ \quad \text{girl}
    ‘the girl from Germany’

(9b) \[\text{bhenik} = \text{na} \quad \text{cama}\]
    morning = NMLZ \quad \text{cooked.grains}
    ‘the (portion) of rice of the morning’

(9c) \[\text{heʔ} = \text{na} = \text{beʔ} = \text{ya} = \text{ci?}\]
    INTERR = NMLZ = LOC = NMLZ = NSG
    ‘Those (people) from which place?’ (i.e., ‘Where are they from?’)
5 Complement clauses

• verbs of saying, perception or cognition
• optional addition of complementizers
• double agreement: embedded subject (S/A) indexed on the matrix verb AND on the embedded verb

\[(10) \quad \text{yagasya}n=\text{na}(=\text{bho}n) \quad \text{nnisama}n\text{gan}=\text{na}\?\]

\[\text{be.exhausted.pst.1sg=NMLZ}(=\text{comp}) \quad \text{see.prf.2>1.neg=NMLZ}\]

‘Didn’t you see that I am exhausted?’
6 Main clause nominalization

• common in TB languages (and beyond):
• functions grounded in discourse
• various, at first sight contradictory usages of main clause nominalization in Yakkha and other TB lgs.
6 Main clause nominalization

- Matisoff (1972) on Lahu: increasing the assertive force, establishing facts by objectifying and reifying a proposition
- Ebert (1994, 1997) on Athpare: emphasizing the truth value of a proposition; speaker tries to convince the hearer
- Bickel (1999) on Belhare: lending authority to a proposition
- Watters (2002) on Kham: events in temporal or thematic discontinuity with the surrounding context
- Doornenbal (2008) on Bantawa: backgrounding, factitive, mirative, controversy and assertion, questions
6 Main clause nominalization

- beyond TB:
- signalling **vividness** and sometimes **exclamatory force** (Woodbury 1985 on Yup‘ik Eskimo)
- **presenting a SoA in its entirety**, thetic, event-central, „an additional act of assertion which explicitly signals the low presuppositionality of the SoA expressed“ (Sasse 2006 on Austronesian lgs., Wegener 2012 on Savosavo)
- **discourse-grounding, TAM, speaker‘s stance:** mirative, evidential, epistemic (Yap & Grunow-Hårsta 2010 on various TB and non-TB Asian lgs.)
6 Main clause nominalization

- FREQUENT in:
  - questions
  - assertions (affirmative and negated),
  - deontic statements,
  - mirative statements,
  - exclamations

- ABSENT from:
  - imperative, subjunctive and optative paradigms,
  - counterfactual clauses,
  - adverbial subordination (e.g. supine, sequential, simultaneous; but not conditional)
6 Main clause nominalization

• examples: (context: dowry negotiations)

(11a) *eko=chen ka mituŋ=*na
    one=TOP 1SG.ERG think.1SG>3SG.pst=NMLZ
    ‘I want one particular thing.’

(11b) *saman py-haksa=*na
    property give-send.3SG.PST=NMLZ
    ‘The property was transferred.’
6 Main clause nominalization

- examples: (context: speakers express their gratitude to the addressees)

(12) \( i = ya \quad njënda \quad yoŋmecuga, \)
\( \text{what=NMLZ} \quad 2\text{DU.ERG} \quad \text{search.NPST.2DU>3} \)

\( ñkha \quad kaniŋ \quad \text{pimeʔnenin} = \text{ha} \)
\( \text{that} \quad 1\text{PL.ERG} \quad \text{give.NPST.1>2.PL=NMLZ} \)

‘Whatever you are looking for, we will give it to you.’
6 Main clause nominalization

• genre-specific differences:

conversation vs. narrative

• Watters (2002) observed 3 functions of finite nominalization in narratives in Kham:

(i) stage-setting
(ii) marking pivotal events, turning points in a story
(iii) comments, information set apart from main event line
6 Main clause nominalization

• comparison with Yakkha:

(13a) stage-setting

\[ \text{eko Selele-Phelele baŋna nwak waya=na=bu} \]
\[ \text{one Selele-Pheleleso-called bird exist.3SG.PST=NMLZ=HSY} \]
\[ \text{‘(Once) there was a bird called Selele-Phelele.’} \]

(13b) turning points, pivotal events

\[ \text{siŋ-chon=be so-ŋ=ninja=go} \]
\[ \text{tree-top=LOC look-1SG.PST=WHILE=TOP} \]

\[ \text{phopciba=le we?=na!} \]
\[ \text{owl=MIR exist.3SG.NPST=NMLZ} \]
\[ \text{‘When I looked up into the tree, there is an owl!’} \]
Main clause nominalization

comparison with Yakkha:

(13c) comments, set apart from MEL

jeppa nna len ka ollobak paro=be tasuŋ=na
really that day 1sg almost heaven=LOC arrive.1SG>3.PST=NMLZ
‘Really, that day, ... I had almost gone to heaven.’

(13d) a-tukhruk=pe ogaŋ=na lo?wa ensimen=na
1SG.POSS-head=LOC peck.3>1PST=NMLZ like feel.NPST.1SG=NMLZ
‘It feels as if it was still pecking me on my head.’
6 Main clause nominalization

- much more frequent in *conversations*
- deontic constructions, questions, miratives, exclamations

(14a) *u-milak men₇-khok-ma*=*na=*bu, ... *kahile*=ca
3.POSS-tail NEG-chop-INF.DEONT=NMLZ=HSY when=ADD.FOC
‘They say that their tails (the dogs’) should not be cut off, never.’

(14b) *are, heʔne khyan*=*na=lai,* ka?
oh!? where go.1SG.PST=NMLZ=EMPH 1SG

*lambu*=go *naʔmo*=le *sa*=*na!*
way=TOP down.here=MIR COP.3SG.PST =NMLZ
‘Holy crackers, where did I go? But the way was down here!’
7 Historical development

• demonstratives *na* ‘this’ *kha* ‘these/this (substance)’

  (a) relativizers
  (b) complementizers ((a) & (b) similar to Engl. *that*)
  (c) markers of **assertive force, speaker’s stance**, most probably via a construction:

  \[It \text{ is (the case, that) [PROPOSITION]}.\]

  (cf. Matisoff (1972) on Lahu, Bickel (1999) on Belhare)
7 Historical development

- equational structures do not require a copula in Yakkha (and other TB languages); remaining structure is just:

  \[\text{[proposition]}=DEM /NMLZ\]

- same structure also found synchronically

  \[(15) \ [\text{kancin} \ moktaŋcuŋ=na] \quad \text{men=na} \]
  \[\quad [1\text{DU.ERG} \ \text{beat.1DU.EXCL}\!>3\text{PST}=\text{NMLZ}] \quad \text{NEG.COP=\text{NMLZ}}\]

  ‘It is not the case that we have beaten him.’
7 Historical development

• DeLancey (2011):

“[...] in many Tibeto-Burman languages the finite construction of the verb reflects an earlier construction in which the sentence or verb phrase is nominalized. The construction often includes a copula, of which the nominalized sentence is then an argument, but the copula may be dropped over time [...] Frequently such constructions lose their marked status and become the ordinary finite construction, resulting in the creation of new verbal categories and systems.”

• e.g. the development of an (imperfective) aspect marker out of finite nominalization in Limbu (van Driem 1987), Bantawa perfective aspect, constructed with a nominalized verb form and a copula (Doornenbal 2008)
7 Historical development

• Yakkha: development into person marking
• alignment dependent on scenario:

role-based alignment in scenarios with 3P and 3A>2P: ergative
(choice of =na vs. =ha determined by number of S and P)

(16a) *khepsuŋ* =na
    hear.1SG>3.PST=NMLZ.SG
    ‘I heard it/ him/ her.’

(16b) *khepsuŋciŋ* =ha
    hear.1SG>3NSG.PST=NMLZ.NSG
    ‘I heard them.’
7 Historical development

- Yakkha: development into person marking
- alignment dependent on scenario: **reference-based** alignment (in scenarios with SAP objects, except 3→2)

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17/08/2013 ALT 10, Leipzig
7 Historical development

- side note: participant nominalizer -khuba occasionally found in a similar function

(17) \( ka \) \( ka\text{-}khuba \) \( "ka \) \( \text{honwaŋciŋ}=\text{ha!}" \),
\( 1\text{SG} \) \( \text{say-}N\text{MLZ} \) \( 1\text{SG} \) \( \text{open.NPST.}1\text{SG}>3\text{NSG}=\text{NMLZ} \)

\( a\text{-}phu \) \( ka\text{-}khuba \) \( "ka \) \( \text{honwaŋciŋ}=\text{ha!}" \)
\( 1\text{SG.POSS}\text{-}eB \) \( \text{say-}N\text{MLZ} \) \( 1\text{SG} \) \( \text{open.NPST.}1\text{SG}>3\text{NSG}=\text{NMLZ} \)

‘I said “I will let them out!”’, and my brother said, “I will let them out!”’

- verb of saying (usually sentence-final) nominalized and put before the direct speech, which contains crucial information (because of the fight between the brothers, the chicks get squeezed between the cage doors and die)
8 Summary

• universal pragmatic/functional motivation of main clause nominalization: marking information as discontinuous with surrounding information

• drift from referent identification to event predication via nominalization, further leading to the development of new person markers
Acknowledgements

- I am grateful to Kamala Linkha, Man Maya Jimi and Magman Linkha and many others from the Yakkha community for their hospitality, helpfulness and patience.
Acknowledgements

• German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
• Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA)
• University of Leipzig
• Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (ELDP)
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