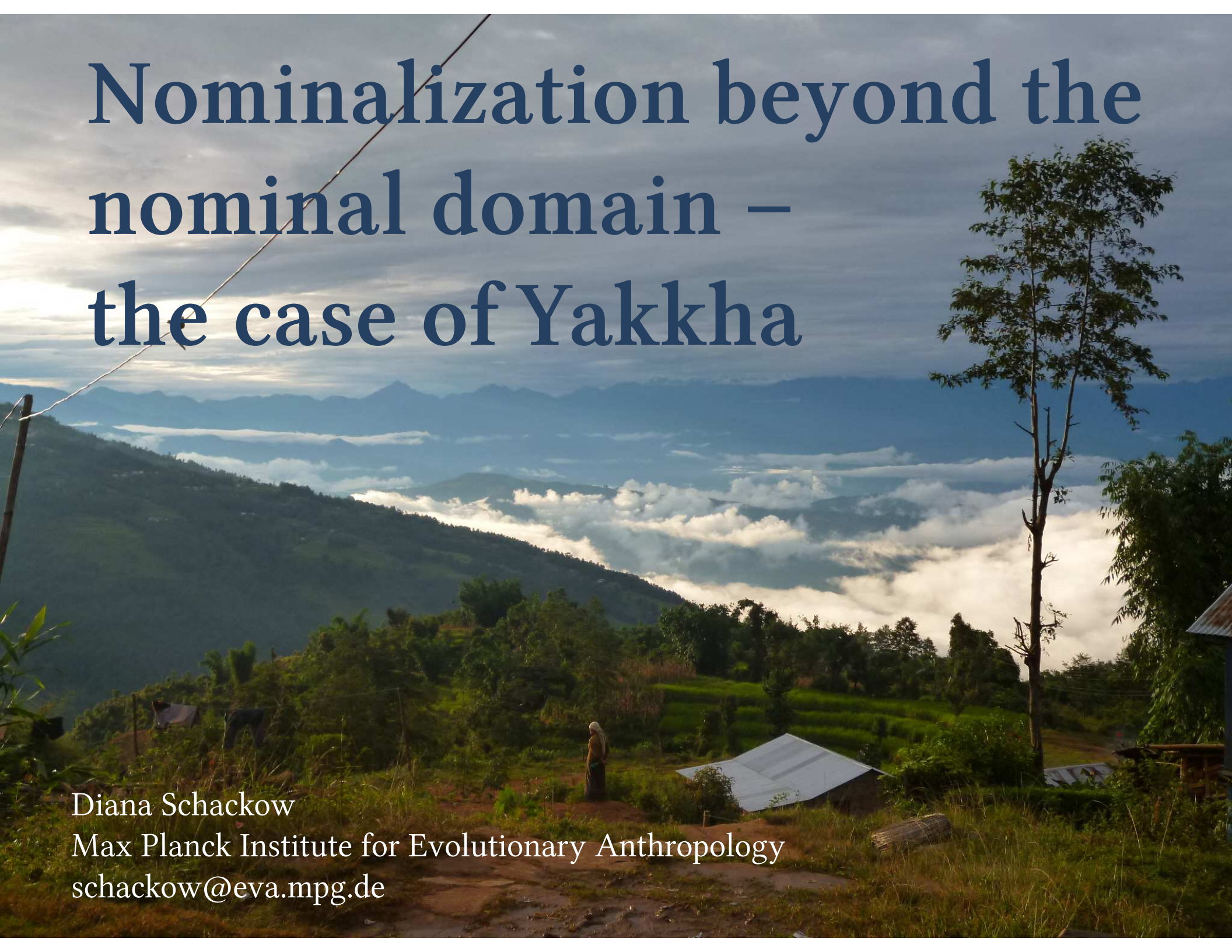


Nominalization beyond the nominal domain – the case of Yakkha

A scenic landscape of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a person stands on a grassy hillside. A small building with a corrugated metal roof is visible. The middle ground is filled with lush green vegetation. The background shows a vast valley filled with a sea of white clouds, with distant mountain ranges under a cloudy sky. A power line runs across the upper left portion of the image.

Diana Schackow

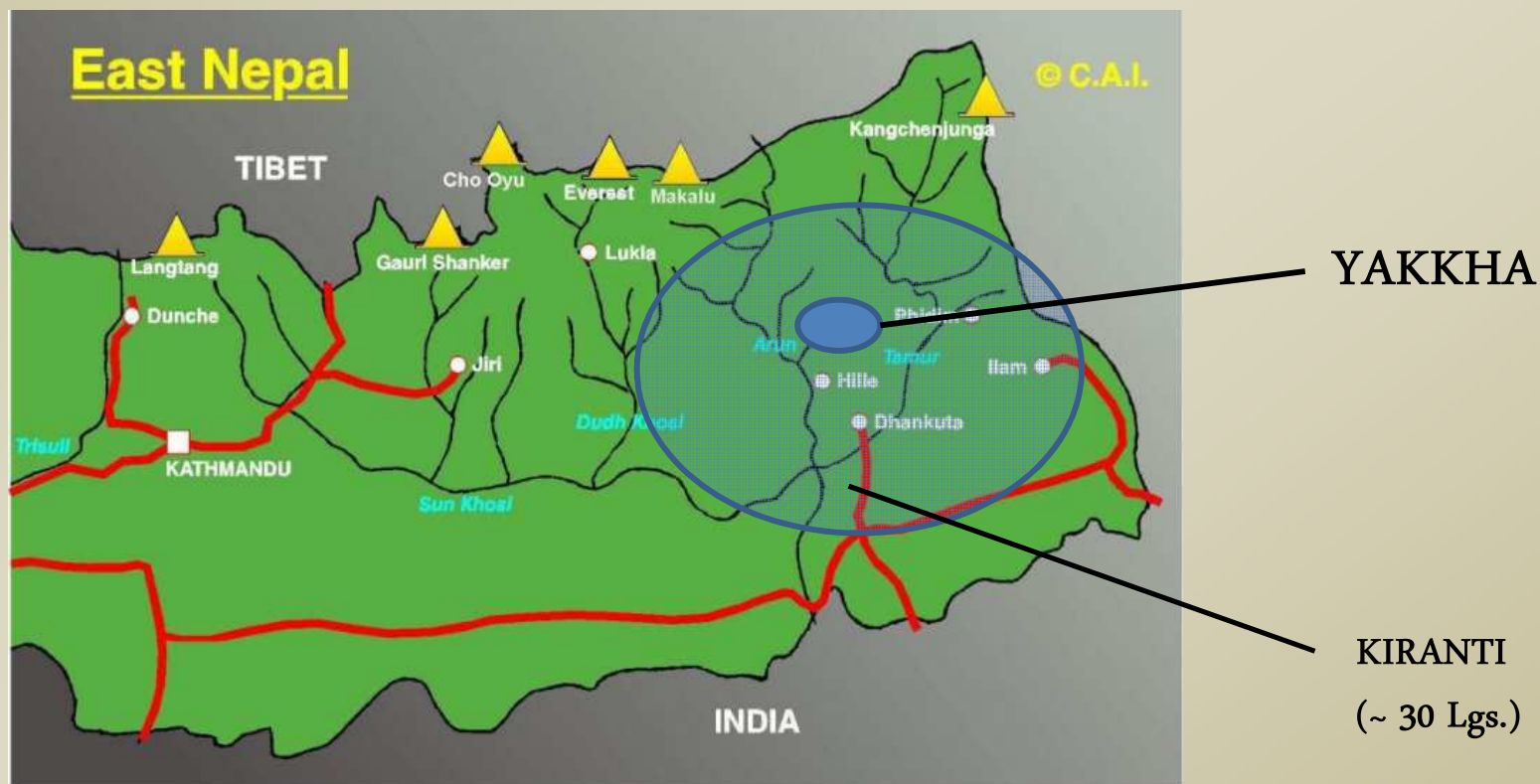
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

schackow@eva.mpg.de

1 Introduction

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

1 Introduction



Map: caingram.info

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
- of continuing interest:
Noonan 1997; 2008, Bickel 1999, Doornenbal 2008, Genetti et al. 2008, DeLancey 2011, Watters 2004, 2008, many others...

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 *-khuba*
 - for S/A arguments
 - always attaching to the verbal stem, no infl. categories allowed

(1) *mok-khuba* (*babu*)
 beat-NMLZ (boy)
 ‘the boy who beats (others), the beater’

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

(2) *o-pomma* *kek-khuba* (*yapmi*)
 3SG.POSS-lazyness come.up-NMLZ (person)
 ‘lazy guy’

3 Yakkha nominalization patterns

- resulting unit = phrase

(3a) *samundra=ga* *u-yum=be* *inca-khuba*
ocean=GEN 3SG.POSS-side=LOC play-NMLZ
'someone (who is) playing on the shores of the ocean'

(3b) *sa=maʔniŋ=ca* *leŋ-khuba*
meat=without=ADD.FOC be.alright-NMLZ
'someone who is fine also without (eating) meat'

- but lexicalizations are possible, e.g. *khuncakhuba* 'thief', *thukkhuba* '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:

<i>tum</i> na	‘senior’	(ripen-NMLZ)
<i>pak</i> na	‘junior’	(be.unripe-NMLZ)
<i>haŋ</i> ha	‘spice’	(taste.hot-NMLZ)
<i>chem</i> ha	‘liquor’	(be.transparent-NMLZ)
<i>bhenik</i> 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) *to* *taŋkhyan=be*
up sky=LOC
'up in the sky'

(4b) *to=na* *paŋ*
up=**NMLZ** house
'the upper house/the house uphill'

(4c) *to=ha* *cuwa*
up=**NMLZ** beer
'the beer uphill' (*tona cuwa* would imply a bounded quantity)

4 Referential phrases

- interrogatives:

(5a) *imin cogagana?*
how do.2sg
'How did you do it?'

(5b) *imin=na nwak?*
how=NMLZ bird
'What kind of bird?'

4 Referential phrases

- temporal adverbs:

(6a) *khem* *nisuŋ=na*
before see.1sg.A>3sg.P=NMLZ
'I saw him/her/it before.'

(6b) *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=ŋa* *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-me?*]=*na* *se?ni=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) [*jarman=be?*]=**na** *mamu*
Germany=LOC=**NMLZ** girl
'the girl from Germany'

(9b) [*bhenik*]=**na** *cama*
morning=**NMLZ** cooked.grains
'the (portion) of rice of the morning'

(9c) [[*he?*]=**na=be?**]=**ya=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) *yagasyaŋ=na(=bhoŋ)* *nnisamaŋgan=na?*
be.exhausted.PST.1SG=**NMLZ**(=COMP) 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* *njiŋda* *yoŋmecuga,*
what=NMLZ 2DU.ERG search.NPST.2DU>3

ŋkha *kanij* *pime?nenin=ha*
that 1PL.ERG 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

eko Selele-Phelele ban̄na nwak waya=na=bu
one Selele-Phelele so-called bird exist.3SG.PST=NMLZ=HSY
'(Once) there was a bird called Selele-Phelele.'

(13b) turning points, pivotal events

siŋ-choŋ=be so-ŋ=niŋa=go
tree-top=LOC look-1SG.PST=WHILE=TOP

phopciba=le weʔ=na!
owl=MIR exist.3SG.NPST=NMLZ
'When I looked up into the tree, there is an owl!'

6 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 ensimeŋ=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* *meŋ-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,* *he?ne* *khyan=na=lai,* *ka?*
oh!?! where go.1SG.PST=**NMLZ**=EMPH 1SG

lambu=go *na?mo=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 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:

[proposition]=DEM /NMLZ

- same structure also found synchronically

(15) *[kanciŋ moktaŋcuŋ=**na**]* *men=**na***
 [1DU.ERG beat.1DU.EXCL>3.PST=**NMLZ**] NEG.COP=**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)

	INTRANS.	TRANS.					
		1SG.P	1NSG.P	2SG.P	2NSG.P	3SG.P	3NSG.P
1SG.A	=na			=na			
1NSG.A	=ha			=ha			
2SG.A	=na	=na					=na
2NSG.A	=ha	=ha					
3SG.A	=na	=na					
3NSG.A	=ha	=ha					

7 Historical development

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

(17) *ka* *ka-khuba* “*ka* *honwan̄ciŋ=ha!*”,
 1SG say-NMLZ 1SG open.NPST.1SG>3NSG=NMLZ

a-phu *ka-khuba* “*ka* *honwan̄ciŋ=ha!*”
1SG.POSS-eB say-NMLZ 1SG open.NPST.1SG>3NSG=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)

References

- Bickel, Balthasar. 1999. Nominalization and focus constructions in some Kiranti languages. In Yogendra P. Yadava & Warren W. Glover (eds.), *Topics in Nepalese linguistics*, 271 – 296. Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy.
- Bickel, Balthasar. 2005. On the typological variables of relativization. Handout of a paper given at the *Workshop on the typology, acquisition, and processing of relative clauses*, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, June 11,
- DeLancey, Scott. 2011. Finite Structures from Clausal Nominalization in Tibeto-Burman. In Foong Ha Yap, Karen Grunow-Hårsta & Janick Wrona (eds.), *Nominalization in Asian Languages: Diachronic and Typological Perspectives*. Typological Studies in Language Series. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Doornenbal, Marius A. 2008. Nominalization in Bantawa. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 31.2. 67–95.
- Doornenbal, Marius Albert. 2009. *A grammar of Bantawa. Grammar, paradigm tables, glossary and texts of a Rai language of Eastern Nepal*. Utrecht, The Netherlands: LOT Publications.
- van Driem, George. 1987. *A grammar of Limbu*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ebert, Karen H. 1994. *The structure of Kiranti languages*. Seminar für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Zürich.
- Ebert, Karen H. 1997. *A grammar of Athpare*. München: LINCOM Europa.
- Genetti, Carol, A.R. Coupe, Ellen Bartee, Kristine Hildebrand & You-Jing Lin. 2008. Syntactic aspects of nominalization in five Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayan Area. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 31.2. 97–139.

References

- Lehmann, Christian. 1984. *Der Relativsatz*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Matisoff, James A. 1972. Lahu nominalization, relativization, and genitivization. In John P. Kimball(ed.), *Syntax and Semantics, vol. 1*, 237 – 57. New York: Academic Press.
- Noonan, Michael. 1997. Versatile nominalization. In J. Bybee, J. Haiman, S. Thompson, *Essays on language function and language type in honor of Talmy Givón*, 374-94. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Noonan, Michael & Teresa Fanego. 2008. Nominalizations in Bodic Languages. In Elena Seoane López-Couso, María José (ed.), *Rethinking grammaticalization: New perspectives for the twenty-first century*, 219–238. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sasse, Jürgen. 2006. Theticity. In G. Bernini & M. L. Schwartz (eds.), *Pragmatic Organization of Discourse in the Languages of Europe*, 255-308. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Watters, David E. 2002. *A grammar of Kham*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wegener, Claudia. 2012. *A grammar of Savosavo*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter
- Woodbury, Tony. 1985. Noun phrase, nominal sentence, an clause in Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo. In J. Nichols and A. Woodbury (eds.), *Grammar inside and outside the clause*, 61–88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yap, Foong Ha & Karen Grunow-Hårsta. 2010. Non-Referential Uses of Nominalization Constructions: Asian Perspectives. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 4(12). 1154–1175.