Participant Nominalization as Relative Clause Formation

Dimitrios Ntelitheos

United Arab Emirates University

Action and participant nominalizations have mostly received opposing treatments within the debate on whether derivational morphology belongs to a distinct morphological structure-building mechanism or whether it can be reduced to the same mechanisms that build syntactic structure. A large amount of work has promoted various syntactic analyses for deverbal action nominals, which predominately refer to an event or habitual action denoted by the verbal base from which they are derived. However, for corresponding participant nominals (PNs), i.e. deverbal nominals denoting a participant in the event, such as agentive, instrumental and locative nominalizations, both typological approaches (e.g. Comrie and Thompson 1986:349), and most theoretical work have maintain a "lexical" source. Following a number of recent observations about the morphosyntactic and semantic behaviour of some of these nominals (van Hout & Roeper 1992; Baker and Vinokurova 2008; Alexiadou and Schäfer 2010) I propose a purely syntactic derivation. What makes the approach here different is that PNs are assumed to be derived through the same mechanism that derives (headless) relative clauses in the syntactic domain. In other words the proposal here recasts within recent syntactic developments early transformational grammar assumptions (Lees 1960), which derived participant nominals from their sentential relative clause counterparts based on paraphraseability observations (1). On first sight, many of these nominals appear to behave like common noun phrases. This is the case for example with most profession names like 'teacher' or everyday instruments like 'calculator'. However, recent work has shown that PNs fall into different categories, many of which present a number of interesting interpretive properties that are based on aspectual distinctions (e.g. eventive vs. non-eventive agentive and instrumental nominals (Rappaport & Levin 1992) or episodic vs. dispositional nominals (Alexiadou & Schäfer 2010)). Additional evidence that PNs behave differently than common noun phrases (CNPs) comes from their morphosyntactic distribution. PNs get a relative clause interpretation when internal arguments are expressed (2.b), and these arguments are sometimes obligatory (2.c). They allow for apparent violations of i-within-i effects exactly as relative clauses do (3) (Jacobson 1993). Finally, they always allow for a non-intersective interpretation of modifying adjectives, based on an adverbial source, while CNPs rarely do (4) (Larson 1998). Further evidence that these nominals involve a relative clause source comes from Malagasy PNs where the voice verbal morphology within each type of PN (agentive, instrumental, locative) matches the voice morphology on the verb within the relative clause which would have this participant as head. Thus, in (5.a) the external argument of the verb carrying an agent theta role, can become the head of a relative clause only when the verb is marked with agent-trigger morphology (glossed as V in the example), while other voice morphology is not allowed. The corresponding agentive nominalization in the language also has the same voice morphology and no agentive PNs are allowed with different voice morphology on the verbal base (5.b). Similarly, in (6.a), the instrumental participant of the event is relativized with the verb having circumstantial voice (glossed CT) morphology. As predicted, an instrumental PN based on the same verbal base also contains CT voice morphology, while other voice morphology is not available for this specific nominal. Similar patterns are widespread in Austronesian languages (see for example the papers in Zeitoun 2002) and are also clearly observed in Tibeto-Burman languages (Matisoff 1972) and elsewhere. Thus, in addition to the insights drawn from the English and Malagasy data, comparative syntactic observations provide robust evidence for the theoretical claim that participant nominalization is strongly connected to relativization.

1. a. player one who plays
   b. singer one who sings
   c. lawn-mower one who mows lawns

2. a. John is a teacher. (Profession Interpretation)
   b. John is a good teacher *(of modern art). (Relative Clause Interpretation)
   c. John is a devourer *(of fine food).

3. a. * Every picture of its own self/frame should be destroyed.
   b. Every lover of his own self should not be accepted in the group.
   c. Self-lovers will be turned down.

4. a. Mary is a beautiful woman. (Unambiguous: Intersective)
   b. John is a beautiful dancer. (Ambiguous: Intersective -Adverbial)

5. a. ny   olona (izay)   n.i.vídy boky   ho an'ny   mpianatra …
      DET   person (that)   PST.V.buy   books   for' DET   student
      'The person (that) bought books for the student…'

   b. ny   mp.i.vidy   boky   ho an'ny mpianatra dia ny   mpampianatra
      DET   NMLZ.V.buy   books   for' DET student   TOP DET teacher
      'The buyer of books for the student is the teacher.'

6. a. ny   zavatra (izay)   n.an.doah.an-drindrin-dRabe   dia   ny fantsika
      DET   thing   (that)   PST.V.drill.CT.wall/LNK-Rabe TOP   DET nail
      'Rabe's (instrument for) drilling walls is a nail.'

   b. ny   f.an.doah.an-drindrin-dRabe   dia   ny fantsika
      DET   NMLZ.V.drill.CT.wall/LNK-Rabe TOP   DET nail
      'Rabe's (instrument for) drilling walls is a nail.'

References

Alexiadou, A. & Schäffer. 2010. On the syntax of episodical vs. dispositional -er nominals. In A. Alexiadou & M. Rathert (eds.) *Nominalizations across languages and frameworks*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Baker, Mark, and Nadya Vinokurova. 2009. On Agent Nominalizations and Why They Are Not Like Event Nominalizations. *Language 85* (3):517-556.

Comrie, Bernard, and A. Sandra Thompson. 1985. Lexical Nominalization. In *Language Typology and Syntactic Description Vol. 3*, edited by T. Shopen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

van Hout, Angelika, and Thomas Roeper. 1998. Events and Aspectual Structure in Derivational Morphology. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 32*:175-200.

Jacobson, Pauline. 1993. i-within-i Effects in a Variable Free Semantics and a Categorial Syntax. In *Proceedings of the Ninth Amsterdam Colloquium*, edited by P. Dekker and M. Stokhof. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, ILLC/Department of Philosophy.

Larson, Richard. (1998). Events and modification in nominals. In D. Strolovitch and A. Lawson (eds.), Proceedings of SALT 8, Cornell University.

Lees, Robert B. 1960. *The grammar of English nominalizations*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Matisoff, James A. 1972. Lahu nominalization, relativization, and genitivization. In *Syntax and Semantics Vol. I*, edited by J. Kimball.

Rappaport Hovav, Malka, and Beth Levin. 1992. -er Nominals: Implications for a Theory of Argument Structure. In *Syntax and Semantics 26: Syntax and the Lexicon*, edited by T. Stowell and E. Wehrli. New York: Academic Press.

Zeitoun, Elizabeth, ed. 2002. *Nominalization in Formosan Languages. Language and Linguistics 3, 2: Special Issue*. Taipei, Taiwan: Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica.