

Nominalization in Himalayish Languages

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The nominalization of verbs, locative expressions, adverbial phrases, and whole clauses is a pervasive feature of Bodic languages – viz. the Bodish (Tibetic) and Himalayish (East Himalayish and Central Himalayish) branches of Tibeto-Burman. Such nominalizations are used both in subordination (as adnominals and sentential complements) and in “free-standing”, finite predications.¹ In the latter function, especially, it becomes clear that nominalization and finiteness are not at all contrastive terms in these languages, nor does nominalization necessarily signal subordination. There appears to be little agreement, however, on what it is that free-standing, unembedded nominalization does signal.

Indeed, judging from the literature, it is not entirely clear if we should expect that a comparative study of nominalizations across Bodic languages can produce useful generalizations at all. We may have to resign ourselves to the fact that a particular grammatical structure – nominalization – has carved out different niches in different languages, and that in the modern languages some of the functions are incompatible. That, of course, is a possibility, maybe even a probability. It is amply clear that nominalization is a multi-functional instrument and that different languages seem to favor certain functions over others. But what I hope to do here is to draw upon descriptions of numerous Bodic, and more specifically Himalayish, languages and attempt to delineate, in an integrated way, the general compass of nominalizing structures and functions in those languages.

As in most comparative studies, part of the problem is that one is immediately plagued by a plethora of terminology, sometimes in describing the same phenomenon, and in other cases equivalent terms used to describe different things.

1. Nominalizers in various Himalayish languages

Most Himalayish languages have more than one nominalizer, and some of the nominalizers are used in more than one function. Thus, to distinguish the different nominalization types, authors of Himalayish grammars have often described them in functional terms, and it is not always clear that we are dealing with the same category in two different languages, or, in some cases, even a nominalization at all. Thus, for example Watters (1975) referred to one nominalization type as an “orientation mode” and later (1985) as a “parenthetic mode” because of its primary function in a narrative discourse. Likewise, Rutgers, in his grammar of Yamphu (1999), describes several nominalizations that go by more-or-less functional names – ‘factitive’, ‘factitive infinitive’, ‘agent participle’, ‘object participle’, ‘active present participle’, ‘passive participle’, ‘locative participle’, and ‘adverbial participle’. The ‘factitive’ construction, it turns out, can also be used in relative clauses and in complementation, a dead

¹ There have already been several studies on nominalization in Bodic languages, e.g. Noonan 19??, 2005, DeLancey 20??, but those studies have been weighted heavily on the side of the Bodish branch of Bodic. This study concentrates primarily on the Himalayish side, and especially on Kiranti.

ringer of its status as a nominalization.

Opgenort, in his description of Wambule (2004), takes the reader on a dizzying tour of nominalizations labelled as ‘*nomen actionis*’, ‘reification’, ‘factual verbal adjective’, ‘active verbal adjective’, ‘passive verbal adjective’, and a nominalized clause “which is used for the arguments of verbs other than ‘be’ – i.e. complements. Several of these nominalizers use the same nominalizer *-me* or its variants.

In many Kiranti languages, like Kulung (Tolsma 1999), Limbu (van Driem 1987), Chamling (Ebert 1997), and Athpare (Ebert 1997), there appear to be two basic nominalizing morphemes – one a nominalizer that has been variously called an ‘active participle’, an ‘agentive participle’, or an ‘agentive noun’, and the other a ‘general’ nominalizer used in numerous other functions that I will elaborate on later. The ‘agentive participle’ in the four languages I have enumerated here is a nominalization that references the S/A of the modified clause, and makes use of a *-pa* nominalizer (derived from TB ***pa**). The *-pa* nominalizer in this function sometimes stands on its own and sometimes occurs in combination with a prefix *ka-* or *kε-*. In Kulung and the NW dialect of Chamling, for example, the ‘agentive participle’ is formed by *-pa* alone, as in Kulung *khai-pa* [go-NML] ‘one who is going’ or *lə-p-ci* [sing-NML-PL] ‘those who are singing’; or in NW Chamling *dip-pa* [beat-NML] ‘blacksmith/one who beats’ or *khur-pa* [carry-NML] ‘carrier/one who carries’. In Limbu, the ‘agentive participle’ requires a prefix *kε-* in addition to the suffix *-pa*, as in *kε-sep-pa* ‘he who kills’ or *kε-si-ba* ‘one who is dying’. In Athpare and SE Chamling, the *-pa* suffix is optional in agentive participles, the more important indicator being the *ka-* prefix, as in Athpare *ka-thuk-(ba)* ‘cook’ or SE Chamling *ka-dip-(pa)* ‘blacksmith/one who beats’. Finally, in Dumi the agent participle combines *-pa* and the ‘*k*’ element (possibly the same etymon as the *kε-* ~ *ka-* of Limbu, SE Chamling and Athpare), but both as suffixes. This can be shown in the following:

(1) ‘Agentive participles’:

Limbu	kε-	-pa
SE Chamling	ka-	(-pa)
Athpare	ka-	(-pa)
NW Chamling		-pa
Kulung		-pa
Dumi		-kpi ~ -pi / -kpa

In Limbu, the *-pa* nominalizer (where it occurs without *kε-*) fills all functions *but* the ‘active participle’. It can occur on verb stems, on adverbs or on interrogative pronouns “to create a nominal which can be used adnominally as an adjective or independently as a noun taking case suffixes”. The nominalizer *-pa* has been extended even to take on an ‘imperfective’ function.

In the other Himalayish languages, the second nominalizer, if it exists at all, takes on various forms. In Kulung, for example, the second nominalizer is a suffix *-kə* that functions as a ‘relativizer’ in relative clauses, and as a means for deriving ‘demonstrative pronouns’ from locative expressions – like ‘the one up there’, ‘the one down here’, etc. It can also be used as an adjective nominalizer – ‘the red one’, and to form free-standing independent

clauses (in which the main finite verb is nominalized by *-ka*) to yield notions like ‘[The fact is] I haven’t eaten since yesterday’.

In Dumi, van Driem (1993) describes a nominalizing suffix *-m* which “can attach not only to verbs, but to adverbs, locative expressions, and even to nouns” (esp. in the locative case). He also describes, as he did for *-pa* in Limbu, an ‘imperfective’ *-m*, which he relates to the nominalizer *-m* – “[it] presents”, he says, “an event as a temporally articulate situation and to present an event as a matter of fact”. (Later in §4 I will comment on the relationship between nominalization and imperfectivity.)

In the Kham group of languages (Watters 2002; Central Himalayish), there are two vestigial nominalizers *-pa* and *-za* that are lexicalized on a very small subset of adjectives. The first morpheme, *-pa*, is augmentative, very likely derived from TB ***pa** ‘male’ which we have seen already, as in: *gehp-pa* ‘big’, *khyö-pa* ‘long’. The other, *-za*, is diminutive, very likely derived from TB ***za** ‘child’, as in: *zim-za* ‘small’, *twî:-za* ‘short’, *cw-za* ‘narrow’, *dehm-za* ‘low’, and *bom-za* ‘light (weight)’. All other nominalizations in Kham are formed with the nominalizer *-wo* ~ *-o* ~ *-u* (probably from ***p** < ***pa** or ***po**).

Nominalizations in Kham are used in all the functions cited for Kiranti languages – in free-standing, finite independent clauses, in interrogatives, in imperatives, in miratives, in sentential complements, in relative clauses, in appositives, in the formation of adjectives, in agent nominalizations, in object nominalizations, in locative nominalizations, in emphatic assertions, and in the formation of demonstrative pronouns from ‘deictic primitives’.

2. Nominalizations as phrasal modifiers

The use of nominalized structures in modifying functions is a feature found in all Himalayish languages and beyond, in Bodish and Indo-Aryan. Though in some Himalayish languages a single nominalizing structure can be used in multiple functions, in other Himalayish languages there are different nominalizing structures for different functions. As we have already seen, the same etymon in different languages can have different functions. Thus, for example, the morpheme *-pa* is used as a general nominalizer in Limbu, as a specific nominalizer for loan words in Yamphu, as an ‘active participle’ in Kulung, and as a vestigial nominalizer in a half-dozen Kham adjectives. Where *-pa* is not a general nominalizer, other nominalization strategies have often moved in to fill the vacuum.

2.1 Participles and agent nominalizations

Most, but not all, Himalayish languages have one or more ‘participial’ verb forms that make specific reference to one of the verb’s arguments – to the subject or agent in ‘active participles’, to the patient in ‘passive participles’, and to the object or locative in specific object and locative participles.. Yamphu provides examples of all four:

(2) YAMPHU:

a. ‘ACTIVE PARTICIPLE’:

i-be? ya?mi khak-khus-æ? coŋ-khus-æ? cu-tta-m-e
 this-LOC person pierce-AP-ERG cut-AP-ERG fight-PF-3PL-FCT
 ‘Some stabbers and slashers have been fighting here’

- b. ‘PASSIVE PARTICIPLE’:
 phim-braʔa-ji
 sieze-PP-NS
 ‘those who are seized’
- c. ‘OBJECT PARTICIPLE’:
 i-doʔ-ha cet-cira-ji
 this.like-PLNR plow-thing-NS
 ‘like these plowing things’
- d. ‘LOCATIVE PARTICIPLE’:
 wa:wa pen-dham yaksa-beʔ
 elder.brother sit-LCP hut-LOC
 ‘in the hut where elder brother stays’

Participles in the Kiranti languages are first and foremost nominalizations, though in most grammars they are defined as separate and more specific than the more general kind of nominalization used in relative clauses and complement clause constructions. Turning to Yamphu again for an example, Rutgers defines relative clauses as nominalizations that make use of a ‘factitive’ construction – a fully finite nominalization marked by the general nominalizer *-æ ~ -e ~ -ye*:

- (3) YAMPHU:
- a. SUBJECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:
 [kiriya hæk-pe:tt-æ] yaʔmi
 oath cut-RES-PFV-FCT person
 ‘a person who has taken an oath’
- b. NON-SUBJECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:
 [am-mi cabaŋ-æʔ khi:-ghi:tt-æ] mottitel
 your-GEN guest-ERG carry-bring-PFV-FCT kerosene
 ‘the kerosene your guest brought’

The distinction between the ‘subject relative clause’ and the ‘non-subject relative clause’ in (2a–b) is in the differential syntax. In (3a) the subject *yaʔmi* ‘person’ has been made the head of the NP and deleted from the nominalized clause, whereas in (3b) the object *mottitel* ‘kerosene’ has been made the head of the NP and deleted from the nominalized clause.

Thus, not only do participles generally make use of a unique and more specific set of nominalizers (like those in 2a–d), it is also the case that participles are characterized as non-finite, attaching only to bare, uninflected verb roots, as in *khak-* ‘pierce’, *phim-* ‘seize’, *cet-* ‘plow’, and *pen-* ‘stay’.

Taking ‘finiteness’, then, as a basic criterion in distinguishing a participle from other kinds of nominalization,² it turns out that most Kiranti languages make use of participles primarily in agent nominalizations and very little elsewhere. The ‘non-participial’ nom-

² This generalization is not entirely true – some Kiranti languages, e.g. Athpare, have some provision for marking the person of the object in some agent participles.

- b. kəphi tu:ca-m byala
 coffee drink-PURP-RES time
 ‘time to drink coffee’
- c. diskān rwam-ca-m muyo
 tomorrow meet-PURP-RES person
 ‘the person [someone] is going to meet tomorrow’

More usual in Kiranti is a binary distinction – an agent participle (sometimes referred to as an ‘active participle’), and if a second participle exists, a ‘passive participle’. Beyond those two, a general nominalizer that occurs on fully finite clauses, is used for relative clauses, sentential complements, and for referencing objects (as in 3b). Thus, in addition to Yamphu, which we have already seen, Wambule, Kulung, Dumi and Limbu all have active and passive participles, as shown in (7–10). None appear to have object or locative participles.

(7) WAMBULE:

- a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (referred to as the ‘active verbal adjective’):
 gwaɕa phic-co muyo
 horse bring-ACT man
 ‘the man bringing the horse’
- b. PASSIVE PARTICIPLE (referred to as the ‘passive verbal adjective’):
 ryag-bumco
 write-PAS
 ‘written, drawn’

(8) KULUNG:

- a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE:
 espa ta-p mic
 yesterday come-AP man
 ‘the man who came yesterday’
- b. PASSIVE PARTICIPLE:
 hui-mpa samkʰe
 roast-PP potato
 ‘roasted potatoes’

(9) DUMI:

- a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE:
 tsem-mi-kpi mi:n
 play-do-AP person
 ‘the person playing’
- b. PASSIVE PARTICIPLE:
 thip-mpo su:le
 sew-PP thread
 ‘sewn thread’

(10) LIMBU:

a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE:

kε-sep-pa mi:n
 AP-kill-NOM person
 ‘the person who kills’

b. PASSIVE PARTICIPLE:

mək-mna-ba cwaʔl pitnu
 heat-PP-NML water milk
 ‘heated water and milk’

These same languages have a more general nominalizer that functions on finite clauses for everything else – relative clauses and complements. This will be the topic of section §2.2 ‘Non-subject nominalizations’.

Athpare appears to be unusual here in that the ‘agentive participle’ can also mark the person of the patient, making it inflectionally more complete than the other Kiranti languages, but still not the equivalent of relative clause nominalizations (which will be treated later in §2.2). Notice that this is different from the finite ‘subject nominalization’ illustrated in example (34a). Following are examples:

(11) ATHPARE:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| a. a-ka-lem | b. yaŋ-ka-lem |
| 1P-AP-beat | INDEF-AP-beat |
| ‘one who beats me’ | ‘one who beats someone’ |

While still on the topic of participles, it should be noted, too, that the *-co* of the Wambule active participle is used also for nominalizing intransitive verbs of ‘bodily sensation’, as in the following:

(12) WAMBULE:

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| a. jur-co | ‘sour’ |
| b. kha-co | ‘bitter’ |
| c. bro-co | ‘tasty’ |

Likewise, the *-pa* nominalizer of the Limbu active participle (minus the *kε-* prefix) is also used as the regular marker of adjectival concepts, as in:

(13) LIMBU:

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| a. lem-pa | ‘sweet’ |
| b. har-pa | ‘dry’ |
| c. gugur-pa | ‘black’ |

And a similar thing is true for Dumi:

(14) DUMI:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. lem-pi | ‘sweet’ |
| b. gol-pi | ‘large’ |
| c. khəni-kpa | ‘beautiful’ |

In languages with limited nominalizers, like the Kham group of languages, the same nominalizer is used in multiple functions, whether for ‘participial’ kinds of functions or for adjectivals, relative clauses and complement clauses. Thus, in Takale Kham, the nominalizer used to create ‘agent nominalizations’ in non-finite constructions like *ba-o mi:* [go-NML person] ‘the person who went’ (thus qualifying in some senses as a participle) is the same as the nominalizer used throughout the whole language – *-wo ~ -o ~ -u* – used in finite and non-finite constructions alike. As in the languages illustrated in (7–10), Kham too distinguishes between an agent participle/nominalization and a passive participle/nominalization:

(15) TAKALE KHAM:

a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (referred to as a ‘subject nominalization’):

syakəri kəi-wo mi:
 meat bite-NML person
 ‘the person who ate the meat’

b. PASSIVE PARTICIPLE:

hip-si-u syakəri
 burn-PASS-NML meat
 ‘roasted meat’

Kham uses the same nominalizer for adjectivals, relative clauses, and sentential complements, as in the following:

(16) a. ADJECTIVAL:

khyo:-wo mi:
 long-NML person
 ‘a tall person’

b. RELATIVE:

ŋa: ŋa-jəi-wo zihm
 I 1S-make-NML house
 ‘the house I built’

c. COMPLEMENT:

la:rə ŋa-ra-səih-zya-o rĩ:h-na-ke-o
 leopard-PL 1S-3P-kill-CONT-NML see-1S-PFV-3S
 ‘He saw me killing leopards.’

Two types of agent nominalization. It should also be noted that some Kiranti languages distinguish between two kinds of agent participle/nominalization. One such language is Yamphu where we find one agent nominalization type marked by *-khu ~ -khus* and the other marked by *-yaŋ*. The latter names a time-stable trait of the referent and the former ascribes the attribute of a single action to the referent, as the following sentences illustrate:

(17) YAMPHU:

- a. SINGLE-ACTION ATTRIBUTE (referred to as the ‘active participle’):
 yok-cæk-khuba-ji
 seek-bring-ACT-NS
 ‘the ones who search and bring’
- b. TIME-STABLE ATTRIBUTE (referred to as the ‘*nomen agentis*’):
 na seʔ-yaŋ-ji
 fish kill-AGP-NS
 ‘fishermen’ (those who kill fish)

Wambule also qualifies for this distinction but uses different labels. An ‘attributive verbal adjective’ describes a ‘trait or characteristic’ of the referent (and thus includes also a gender marker [as the feminine suffix *-mo* in b]), whereas the ‘active verbal adjective’ is a temporally and contextually determined attribute, as in:

(18) WAMBULE:

- a. SINGLE-ACTION ATTRIBUTE (the ‘active verbal adjective’):
 jwa-co
 eat-ACT
 ‘a person who eats’
- b. TIME-STABLE ATTRIBUTE (the ‘attributive verbal adjective’):
 jwa-ji-mo
 eat-ATTR-FEM
 ‘a female glutton’

Apparently all Kiranti languages that have an active participle (as in 7a–10a) can also modify the subject/agent with the more general relative clause nominalizer. We have seen this already in the Yamphu distinction between (2a), an active participle, and (3a) a subject relative clause. Both make reference to a subject/agent. Likewise in Kulung, Tolsma refers to the nominalization in *-pa* as an ‘active participle’, but he gives other examples of subject/agent nominalizations marked by the general nominalizer *-kə*. Whether one can be used as a more permanent attribute, as in Yamphu and Wambule, is not known. Following are two types of agent nominalization exemplified at different places in the Kulung grammar:

(19) KULUNG:

- a. ACTIVE PARTICIPLE:
 espa ta-p mic
 yesterday come-AP man
 ‘the man who came yesterday’
- b. RELATIVE CLAUSE NOMINALIZER:
 wa: khim woŋ-kə
 chicken house enter-NML
 ‘the chickens entering the house’
 (an internally headed relative clause)

A careful examination of Dumi, too, yields two nominalization types for making reference to a single argument type. One, which is referred to as an ‘active participle’, is nevertheless used, in one example, to make reference to a non-subject argument – ‘place’ – as in:

- (20) DUMI:
 mi:n dumo: ho:-kpi thomphi
 man many come-AP place
 ‘a place where many people come’

and in an almost identical sequence ‘place’ is modified by a finite clause nominalized by the general nominalizer *-m*, as in:

- (21) dumo: mi:n ham-ho:-t-i-m thamphi-bi mo:
 many man 3p-come-NPT-23S-NOM place-LOC be
 ‘He was in a place where many people come.’

2.2 Non-subject nominalizations

Apart from the passive participle and some defective ‘object’ participles mentioned above, the primary means of effecting a non-subject nominalization in Himalayan and Kiranti languages is through the use of a finite nominalization of the sort used in relative clauses. I have already hinted at such structures in examples like (3b) and (16b).

Kham. For some Himalayish languages, like Kham, the distinction between subject and non-subject nominalization is based first and foremost on different morphosyntactic structures (and secondarily on making the appropriate noun the head of the NP and deleting it from the nominalized clause). The same nominalizer *-wo ~ -o ~ -u* is used throughout.

In Kham, a subject nominalization is uninflected for person and number, the nominalizer (or optionally a progressive + nominalizer) attaching directly to the bare verb root, much like the Kiranti participial structures. The resulting structure makes reference only to a third person argument – the subject or agent. We saw this already in the Takale Kham example (15a). At the other end of the spectrum, a non-subject nominalization is inflected for the person and number of one or two participants, depending on whether it is transitive or not (and also depending on the particular dialect). When intransitive verbs participate in this structure, the nominalization makes reference to some non-subject peripheral argument, usually location.

At the risk of being repetitive, I will first present a few examples of subject nominalization to establish a base from which to compare the non-subject nominalization:

- (22) TAKALE KHAM:
 SUBJECT NOMINALIZATION (non-inflecting):
 a. zihm jəi-wo mi:-rə
 house make-NML person-PL
 ‘the people who built the house’

- b. ba-o mi:
go-NML person
'the person who went'
- c. si-u-rə
die-NML-PL
'the ones who died'
- d. zyu-wo-ra-lai
eat-NML-PL-ACC
'to the ones who ate'

Note that the suffix *-wo* ~ *-o* ~ *-u* attaches directly to the verb root and includes no other inflection. Note too from (22) that verbs nominalized by subject nominalization can be used as adnominals (22a–b) or function as full nominals (22c–d), taking pluralization or any other nominal case marking.

Non-subject nominalization stands apart from subject nominalization in that it always inflects for at least one participant – obligatorily the subject. In a sense, this is a kind of gapping in verbal agreement markers – if there are no agreement markers in the nominalization, the nominalization makes reference to the highest participant, the subject. If, on the other hand, there is a subject agreement marker in the nominalization, the nominalization makes reference to some non-subject participant further down the hierarchy:

- (23) TAKALE KHAM:
WITHOUT PERSON INFLECTION:
- a. ba-o mi:
go-NML person
'the person who went'
- WITH SUBJECT INFLECTION:
- b. ŋa-ba-o po:
1S-go-NML place
'the place where I went'

In Takale Kham, such nominalizations are fully inflected for the person and number of two participants in transitive clauses (with some limitations on tense/aspect). Thus, in the following 'non-subject' relative clauses, object indices are also included:

- (24) TAKALE KHAM:
- a. nə-ra-səih-wo bas-ma-rə
2S-3P-kill-NML goat-FEM-PL
'the (female) goats you killed'
- b. nə-ra-səih-wo-ra-lai ŋa-ra-kəi-ke
2S-3P-kill-NML-PL-ACC 1S-3P-eat-PFV
'I ate the ones you killed.'

- c. ge: nə-sə-thəi-si-zya-o nakhar-la-o-rə zə
 we 2S-CAUS-hear-1P-CONT-NML village-IN-NML-PL EMP
 ‘We are of the village where you made the proclamation (to us).’

In (24a–b), the nominalization ‘the ones that you killed’ includes a third person plural referent – ‘the you-killed-them goats’. A third person plural is part of the nominalization as well as pluralization being a part of the head noun. Likewise, in (24c) ‘villagers’ is modified by a nominalization that includes first person plural – ‘we are “the you-proclaimed-to-us villagers”’ – even though the nominal ‘villagers’ is third person.⁴

Gamale Kham and Sesi Kham are more restricted in this respect, allowing only subject marking in non-subject relative clauses (disallowing all the constructions in 24a–c). In Sesi, the marking of two participants in nominalization is admitted only in sentential complements, and in Gamale two participant nominalizations are not allowed for third person objects (the equivalent of 24a). Thus we get the following contrasts:

- (25) THIRD PERSON OBJECTS:
- a. TAKALE (marked for subject and object):
ŋa-ra-poh-wo mi:-rə
1S-3P-hit-NML person-PL
 ‘the people I hit’
- b. GAMALE (marked only for subject):
a-co-wo ru:-rə
1S-hit-NML person-PL
 ‘the people I hit’
- c. SESI (marked only for subject):
ŋa-tup-o ru-yaŋ
1S-hit-NML person-PL
 ‘the people I hit’

With first or second person objects, Sesi is more restricted than either Takale or Gamale, as in the following contrastive examples:

- (26) FIRST OR SECOND PERSON OBJECTS:
- a. TAKALE:
ŋa-poh-ni-u chyam
1S-hit-2S-NML day
 ‘the day I hit you’
- b. GAMALE:
a-co-sə-o chyaŋ
1S-hit-2P-NML day
 ‘the day I hit you^{pl}’

⁴ In reference to these kinds of constructions, Ebert (1997:54–55) makes the claim that “the concept of ‘agreement’ does not apply to the Camling verb.”

c. SESI:

nəŋ-jən ŋa-tup-o chim
 you-ACC 1S-hit-NML day
 ‘the day I hit you’

Kulung. In Kulung, as in Kham, the difference between subject and non-subject relative clauses appears to be based on inflecting versus non-inflecting nominalizations. With the scant examples in Tolsma’s grammar, however, the evidence is inconclusive. The ones translated as object nominalizations contain a certain amount of person marking, as in:

(27) KULUNG:

a. SUBJECT (non-inflecting):

wa: khim woŋ-kə
 chicken house enter-NML
 ‘the chickens entering the house’

b. NON-SUBJECT (inflecting):

lat-u-kə
 wash-3-NML
 ‘the one I have been washing’

c. NON-SUBJECT (inflecting):

koŋ khat-o-kə lei
 I go-1s.PT-NML day
 ‘the day I went’

Wambule. It is a bit difficult to determine the status of Wambule. There appears to be no straightforward way to reference the object of a two participant clause, as in ‘the house that I built’. Opgenort makes no overt mention of relative clauses in his grammar that I can see except for a single veiled comment, “relativization by means of active verbal adjectives involves the deletion of the argument of the modified verb that is co-referential with the nominal head”. In another section he talks about ‘factual verbal adjectives’, marked by *-meya* ~ *-mei* (a form related to the ‘reifying’ suffix *-me*), that can be used as adnominal modifiers. Unfortunately, most of his examples are complements and free-standing nominalizations, but there is a single example of a ‘factual verbal adjective’ that appears to function as the adnominal modifier of an object:

(28) [dʌmbi-m rat-lva par-ai pa-Ø-meɪ] yor
 before-RES night-LOC read-LN do-1s-FCT word
 ‘the things [=words] that I had learned the night before’

Apart from relative clauses, which would be the most likely place to find non-subject reference, the only other viable possibility is the ‘passive verbal adjective’ which, in fact, *does* make reference to a patient, or locative, but only in the absence of an agent (see also example 7b), as in:

- (29) a. se-bumco
kill-PAS
'killed, the thing killed'
- b. le-bumco lam-no
take-PAS road-LOC
'[along] the road where he was taken'

Wambule has another nominalizer referred to as a 'reifying suffix' *-me*, similar to the 'factual verbal adjective' suffix *-meya* ~ *-mei*. The reifying suffix is used primarily to create adnominals from adverbs, postpositions, and case marked nouns. This is a common occurrence in all Himalayan languages, and I will take up this topic in section §2.3.

Yamphu. On the surface of it, Yamphu appears to use two different nominalizers to distinguish between subject nominals and object nominals, but as we have already seen, both of these are participles – the 'active participle' and the 'object participle' (see the examples in 2a–d) – both of which are non-finite.

The more general nominalization (which corresponds more closely to the relative clause nominalizations of Kham) is a fully inflected finite clause nominalized by what Rutgers calls the 'factitive' (FCT). The factitive nominalization turns the entire clause into an attribute, which can then be used to make reference to either the subject or the object, depending on which argument is made the head of the NP. Unlike Kham, however, even 'subject' nominalizations in Yamphu are fully finite (which is also true for at least Athpare and Camling, and probably others – see examples 33–34), as in the following:

- (30) YAMPHU:
- a. SUBJECT:
[kiriya hæk-pe:-tt-æ] yaʔmi
oath cut-RES-PFV-FCT person
'a person who has taken an oath'
- b. OBJECT:
[am-mi cabaŋ-æʔ khi:-ghi:-tt-æ] mottitel
your-GEN guest-ERG carry-bring-PFV-FCT kerosene
'the kerosene your guest brought'
- c. MANNER:
[chito im-be-m-æ] khaʔla-ma
quickly take.off-RES-INF-FCT manner-ATNR
'in a quickly taking off manner' (the kind that can be taken off quickly)

A unique thing about the factitive nominalization in Yamphu is that it occurs following all sorts of structures, like finite verbs (30a–b) and even infinitives (30c).

Yamphu has another nominalizer, the 'attributive nominalizer' *-ma* ~ *-m*, which is likely related to the 'reifying' morpheme *-meya* ~ *-mei* of Wambule and the nominalizing morpheme *-m* of Dumi. The attributive nominalizer is used primarily in creating adnominals from postpositional phrases and demonstratives, a topic that we will look at in section §2.3, but

also in creating special adnominals from adjectives that are more ‘delimitative’ than their non-nominalized counterparts (see Rutgers 1998:89).

Dumi. We have already seen that Dumi has an ‘active participle’, a non-finite structure that makes reference to the subject/agent of a nominalized clause. We have also seen an example, in (20), of the same active participle modifying a non-subject argument in *mi:n dumo: ho:-kpi thomphi* [man many come-AP place] ‘a place where many people come’. The more usual structure for non-subject nominalizations appears to utilize the general nominalizing suffix *-m* on a finite structure (as in 21), in combination with a ‘gapping’ strategy. Following are additional examples parallel to the one in (21):

(31) DUMI:

- a. [kur-u-m] b̥li
 carry-1s->3/PT-NOM money
 ‘the money I was carrying’
- b. [ani-ʔa a-kits-ini-m]-m̥l
 you^P-ERG MS-buy-p23-NOM-PL
 ‘the things you guys bought’
- c. [natsirmi-mil-ʔa ka:nd-ini-m] sura-m̥l
 savage-PL-ERG throw.out-p23-NOM paddy-PL
 ‘the grains that the savages threw out’

Limbu. The general nominalizing suffix in Limbu is *-pa*, a morpheme that commonly occurs on adjectives, as we saw in the examples in (13), and also in combination with a prefix *kε-* in creating the active participle *kε- -pa*, as we saw in (10a). Elsewhere, *-pa* can occur on adverbs and postpositions, the topic of section §2.3, but more relevant to the discussion here, on fully finite clauses to be used in modification (as relative clauses). It is in such constructions that the nominalization is capable of referencing objects, either in headed or headless relatives, as the following examples illustrate:

(32) LIMBU:

- a. [re:diyo:-lle pa:tt-u-bε]-n
 radio-ERG speak-3P-NOM-ABS
 ‘what the radio was saying’
- b. [anchige thuŋ-ε-tch-u-ge-bε-n] thi:
 we^{di} drink-PT-dA-3P-EXCL-NOM-ABS beer
 ‘the beer we drank’
- c. [na:m-ille cɔ-ba] ho:rik
 sun-ERG eat-NOM skin
 ‘sunburnt skin’

Athpare, Camling and others. The same constructions, especially finite ‘subject nominalizations’ and finite ‘non-subject nominalizations’, can be shown for any number of

Kiranti languages, and I give just a few examples here:

- (33) ATHPARE:
- a. SUBJECT (here a headless relative):
 [ka-paŋ-i taya-ci]-ga
 2POSS-house-LOC come-DL-NML:ns
 ‘the two who came to your house’
 - b. OBJECT:
 [aŋa nis-u-ŋ-na] kiba
 I see-3U-1s-NML tiger
 ‘the tiger I saw’
- (34) CAMLING:
- a. SUBJECT:
 [m-cha lais-yu-ko] wama
 3POSS-child take.out-3P-NML hen
 ‘a hen that has hatched chicks’
 - b. OBJECT:
 [mahowa-pahowa-ci pa-tata-ko] dim-ci
 forefather-NS ??-bring-NML story-NS
 ‘stories that the forefathers brought’

2.3 Nominalized locatives, deictic primitives and demonstratives

All Himalayish languages are capable of creating complex locationals from deictic primitives and postpositions. But before they can be used in modification, as is the case with demonstratives, the locational element must be nominalized. Once nominalized, it can be used as a nominal head, or as an adnominal element modifying another head noun, as in the following from Kham (Takale dialect):

- (35) TAKALE KHAM:
- a. a-o
 prox-NML
 ‘this’
 - b. a-kə
 prox-LOC
 ‘here’
 - c. a-ka-o mi:rə
 prox-LOC-NML person-PL
 ‘the people here / the people of this place’
 - d. a-ka-o-ra-lai
 prox-LOC-NML-PL-ACC
 ‘to those of this place’

(39) WAMBULE:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	hwa-	-na	‘at the same level’
b.	twa-	-ta	‘at a higher level’
c.	ywa-	-ya	‘at a lower level’

(40) KULUNG:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	na:-	-pa	‘at the same level’
b.	to:-	-pto	‘at a higher level’
c.	nu:-	-pu	‘at a lower level’

(41) DUMI:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	lacking	-bu	‘at the same level’
b.	”	-ti	‘at a higher level’
c.	”	-bi	‘at a lower level’

(42) YAMPHU:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	lacking	-yu	‘at the same level’
b.	”	-tu	‘at a higher level’
c.	”	-mu	‘at a lower level’

(43) CHHATHARE LIMBU:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	yo-	lacking	‘at the same level’
b.	to-	”	‘at a higher level’
c.	mo-	”	‘at a lower level’

(44) ATHPARE:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	ya-	lacking	‘at the same level’
b.	to-	”	‘at a higher level’
c.	yo-	”	‘at a lower level’

(45) KHAM:

	<u>root</u>	<u>suffix</u>	
a.	nə-	lacking	‘distal (unmarked for level)’
b.	to- / ro-	”	‘up’
c.	me-	”	‘down’

Some Kiranti languages also have deictic primitives, bound roots from which more complex expressions are created. There appear to be several in Yamphu (all of which have similar functions to the Kham primitives) – *i-* ‘near’, *a(k)-* ‘distant’, *mo-* ‘yonder’, used as a base for pronouns like *i-go* ‘this’ and *ak-kha* ‘that’, or for locative expressions like *i-be?* ‘here’, *ak-pe?* ‘there’, and *mo-be?* ‘yonder’, plus some combinations that suggest ‘this

side’ and ‘other side’. Likewise, in Wambule there appear to be five primitives – *a-* ‘near’, *i-* ‘distant’, *hwa-* ‘distant (same level)’, *twa-* ‘distant (up)’, and *ywa-* ‘distant (down)’. All can be nominalized directly (analogous to example 35a for Kham) by adding the ‘reifying’ suffix *-m* to create the following demonstrative pronouns:

(46)	<u>WAMBULE</u>	<u>GLOSS</u>	<u>morpheme composition</u>
a.	<i>a-m</i>	‘this’	[near-NML]
b.	<i>i-m</i>	‘that’	[distant-NML]
c.	<i>hwa-m</i>	‘that (same level)’	[level-NML]
d.	<i>twa-m</i>	‘that (above)’	[up-NML]
e.	<i>ywa-m</i>	‘that (below)’	[down-NML]

Likewise, as we saw for Kham (in 35b and 36a), a locative suffix (or if not a locative suffix then a nominalizer as in 46) must be added in Wambule to the bare primitive root to create locative expressions like: *a-lo* [prox-LOC] ‘here’ or *i-lo* [dist-LOC] ‘there’; or choosing the allative suffix *-la*, we get *a-la* [prox-ALLT] ‘to here’ or *i-la* [dist-ALLT] ‘to there’. These in turn are subject to nominalization as in: *a-lo-m* [prox-LOC-NML] ‘the one here’ or *i-lo-m* [dist-LOC-NML] ‘the one there’, *i-la-m* [dist-ALLT-NML] ‘the one toward there’, etc. Similar phenomena can be illustrated for Kulung, Yamphu, Dumi, and Limbu.

In addition to the general locational suffixes – the allative *-la*, the ablative *-ŋo*, and the locative *-lo* – Wambule has the facility to mark ‘UP’, ‘DOWN’, and ‘LEVEL’ with suffixes of ‘vertical orientation’, two of which are clearly related to the deictic primitives: *-na* ‘at the same level’, *-ta* ‘at a higher level’, and *-ya* ‘at a lower level’ (see 39a–c). These suffixes, like the others, can be added to the deictic primitives to form vertical orientation expressions – *hwa-na* [level-SAME] ‘there at the same level’, *twa-ta* [up-HIGHER] ‘up there’, and *ywa-ya* [down-LOWER] ‘down there’. (I have been unable to find examples in Wambule of *a-* and *i-* combining with *-na*, *-ta*, or *-ya*, which would presumably mean ‘up here’, ‘down there’, etc. I would be surprised if they did not exist.)

It is in the use of ‘vertical orientation’ suffixes that Kham departs from some of the Kiranti languages. In Kham, vertical orientation is expressed only through deictic primitives, true also for Chhathare and Athpare (see 43–45). Thus, though there are Kham equivalents for Wambule *twa-ta-m* ‘the one up there’ and *ywa-ya-m* ‘the one down there’ – Kham *ro-ta-o* [up-ON-NML] ‘the one up there’ and *me-la-o* [down-INS-NML] ‘the one down there’ – the only way to express notions like ‘at the house up there’ or ‘at the house down there’ requires both a prenominal locative modifier (which contains the vertical orientation) and a suffixed head noun. Languages with vertical-orientation suffixes can employ a shorter version with the HIGH locative affixed directly to the noun, as in Camling *khim-dhi* [house-HIGHER] ‘up at the house’.

(47)	TAKALE KHAM:	
a.	<i>ro-ta-o</i>	<i>zihm-kə</i>
	up-ON-NML	house-LOC
	‘at the house up there’ (at the upper house)	

- b. me-la-o zihm-da
 down-IN-NML house-ALLT
 ‘toward the house down there’ (toward the lower house)

Apart from this, there appear to be few real differences in the sets of local expressions found in Central and East Himalayish. All are generative with their own syntax, capable of creating numerous complex locative expressions.

2.4 Nominalizations as sentential complements

The nominalization of clauses to fill the function of nominal arguments in a higher matrix clause is neither unusual or surprising, nor is it something unique to the Himalayan languages of Tibeto-Burman. The same happens throughout the region, both in the Bodish languages of Tibeto-Burman as well as in the Indo-Aryan languages of the region.

In the Himalayan languages, some of the same kinds of nominalization we saw operating at various levels of the grammar – like in relative clauses or in modification – are used also in complement structures. At least for some Himalayan languages, like Kham, different degrees of finiteness in the nominalization can be used to reflect different degrees of ‘syntactic bond’ and ‘semantic integration’ (Givón 1981??) between the matrix clause and its sentential complements.

Non-finite nominalization. Thus, the non-finite nominalization used in Kham subject relative clauses is also used in complements that share an argument with the higher clause, and the finite nominalization used in non-subject relative clauses is used in complements that do *not* share arguments with the higher clause. The whole system is motivated by the simple pragmatic expedient of participant continuity versus discontinuity. Participant discontinuity requires the more finite marking structure because of its unpredictability.

Following are illustrations of complements in Kham in which the subject of the embedded clause is coreferential with the subject of the matrix clause – in the ‘desiderative’ and ‘receipt of permission’. Equi-NP deletion occurs and the subject referent of the complement is easily recoverable. Such complements use the non-finite nominalization, as in:

(48) TAKALE KHAM:

- a. DESIDERATIVE COMPLEMENT:

ŋa: ba-o ŋa-pəĩ-zya
 I go-NML 1S-want-CONT
 ‘I want to go.’ (I want I to go)

- b. ‘RECEIPT OF PERMISSION’ COMPLEMENT:

nĩ: thəi-wo nə-dəi-ke
 you hear-NML 2S-find-PFV
 ‘You were allowed to listen.’ (You received [permission] for you to listen)

In causative and ‘granting of permission’ complements, though there is outside causation, the subject of the embedded clause is coreferential with the ‘raised’ object argument of the matrix clause, and predictably, the non-finite form is used. The complex event is conceptualized

as a single event:

- (49) a. PERIPHRASTIC CAUSATIVE:
 ŋa-lai ba-o pərĩ-na-ke-o
 I-ACC go-NML send-1S-PFV-3S
 ‘He made me go.’ (He sent me, I go)
- b. ‘GRANTING OF PERMISSION’ COMPLEMENT:
 je-lai lã:-wo ŋa-ya-ci-ke
 you^{pl}-ACC take-NML 1S-give-2P-PFV
 ‘I permitted you^{pl} to take it.’ (I give you, you take)

Finite nominalization. Finite nominalizations are used in the Kham languages where the embedded clause predicates an event which is different from the matrix clause event, and thereby requires independent participant reference. Very often these are verbs of cognition, as in ‘see’ or ‘know’, as in the following:

- (50) COGNITION:
- a. ŋa: zihm-da ŋa-ba-zya-o rĩ:h-na-ke-o
 I house-ALLT 1S-go-CONT-NML see-1S-PFV-3S
 ‘He saw that I was going to the house.’
- b. kãbul u-ri:h-zya-o ŋa-səĩ:-ke
 blanket 3S-weave-CONT-NML 1S-know-PFV
 ‘I knew that she was weaving a blanket.’

The difference between ‘know-how’ and knowledge by direct perception is thus a difference in degree of syntactic integration, signalled in Kham by the type of complement nominalization. Knowledge by perception utilizes the finite nominalization shown in (50b) and know-how utilizes the non-finite nominalization shown in (51):

- (51) KNOW-HOW:
 kãbul ri:h-wo səĩ:-zya-o
 blanket weave-NML know-CONT-3S
 ‘She knows how to weave a blanket.’

In Gamale Kham and Sesi Kham, the fully finite nominalization is used only in complement clauses and in ‘stand-alone’ nominalizations, which will be the topic of section §3. Relative clause nominalizations are slightly less finite, as shown in (25b–c).

Complements in Kiranti languages. In all Kiranti languages, complement structures make use of the general nominalizer (found also in relative clauses) attached to fully finite clauses – in Yamphu the ‘factitive’ nominalizer *-æ ~ -ye ~ -e*; in Wambule the ‘factual verbal adjective’ *-meya ~ -mei*; in Dumi the general ‘nominalizer’ *-m*; in Kulung the ‘nominalizer’ *-kə*; and in Limbu the ‘nominalizer’ *-pa*.

3. Nominalizations as stand-alone, independent clauses

The nominalization of independent, non-subordinated clauses is a phenomenon that has been reported all across Tibeto-Burman, both within Himalayish and outside it. I refer to it here as ‘stand-alone’ or ‘free-standing’ nominalization. Stand-alone nominalizations are clearly marked with respect to their non-nominalized counterparts, but no two descriptions seem to agree on what semantic or pragmatic function is signaled by the mark. Perhaps Matisoff (1972) was the first to describe the phenomenon in Tibeto-Burman when he described such clauses in Lahu (Loloish) as “objectified, reified, viewed as an independent fact, endowed with a reality like that inhering in physical objects”.

Later, Hargreaves (1986) commented on stand-alone nominalizations in Newar, and says of questions that questions cast in the simple finite (non-nominalized) form have the effect of “extreme disrespect, almost like that of an accusation”. The same question nominalized, he goes on to say, is used for “greetings or polite inquiry”. For Athpare (Kiranti), Ebert (1997a:131) notes that *all* questions are nominalized (which may be a reflex of Hargreave’s ‘politeness principle’). She also notes for Camling (1997b:59) that the sentence-final particle *raicha* (a mirative participle in Nepali) is preceded only by nominalized verbs. The reportative particule *are*, also from Nepali, is optionally nominalized. I will comment later on whether there is an inherent connection between nominalization and mirativity or between nominalization and questions.

Noonan (2005) describes a stand-alone nominalization in Chantyal (Bodish: TGTh) and says that “when nominalizations appear as main clauses, the typical effect is one of mirativity, i.e. the sense that the predication so expressed is in some sense surprising, contrary to expectation, or in some way exasperating.” This appears to be relatable to Ebert’s nominalized clauses in Camling, now bolstered by the sentence final particles *raicha* or *are*. (Kulung appears to have something similar.)

Rutgers (1999) and Opgenort (2004) both report that a major function of stand-alone nominalizations in Yamphu and Wambule, respectively, is for ‘settings’ and marking ‘background’ events.

Bickel (1999) reports for Belhare that stand-alone nominalized clauses are used to mark “a particular instantiation of a variable that competes with other possible variables” as a ‘contrastive focus’ construction, and that such sentences have “an intrinsic potential for controversy”. This is the exact opposite of the ‘backgrounding’ function found in Yamphu, Wambule, and Kham with its strong overtones of presupposition. Likewise, Ebert (1997b:60) says that in Camling “the function of the nominalizer [in stand-alone predications] is to focus on the whole utterance”. How do we reconcile such strong-assertion nominalizations with nominalizations in a backgrounding function?

I show (Watters 1978, 2002) that in Kham (Central Himalayish), nominalization is used in all the functions mentioned above – in free-standing independent clauses, in interrogatives, in imperatives, in miratives, in sentential complements, in relative clauses, in appositives, in the formation of adjectives, in agent nominalizations, in object nominalizations, in emphatic assertions, and as a backgrounding device. All of these functions are found in contrastive contexts, each distinguishable from the other. There are two possible ways, then, to account for the seeming disparity of function with other Himalayish languages – 1) the authors have

touched on just a piece of the whole, probably the ones they encountered first, or 2) different languages have grammaticalized different chunks out of the entire spectrum of possibilities. We have no way of knowing which of these is true, but we can look at the different contexts and try to reconcile them into a larger whole.

3.1 Is it embedded or not?

In Kham, and I suspect that this is probably true in other Himalayish languages as well, a distinction must be made between free-standing nominalized clauses and nominalized clauses embedded to an equative. The two are easily confused (though they can be distinguished in the negative equative). After all, for languages that have no copula for an affirmative equative clause, a nominalized clause embedded to an equative can look identical to a free-standing nominalization, as in the following examples from Takale Kham:

- (52) a. STAND-ALONE:
 sohmlɔ o-ra-kəi-wo
 three 3S-3P-eat-NML
 ‘He ate three of them.’
- b. EMBEDDED TO AN AFFIRMATIVE EQUATIVE:
 sohmlɔ o-ra-kəi-wo (zə)
 three 3S-3P-eat-NML (EMPH)
 ‘It’s absolutely true that he ate three.’
- c. EMBEDDED TO A NEGATIVE EQUATIVE:
 sohmlɔ o-ra-kəi-wo ma:hkə
 three 3S-3P-eat-NML neg.COP
 ‘It’s not the case that he ate three.’

Comparing the sentence in (52a) with the one in (52b) the only difference is the optional emphatic marker *zə* on the second sentence. This simple device, the emphatic marker, functions in Kham almost like an equative copula; it is used to disambiguate any number of constructions where the juxtaposition of a demonstrative and a noun phrase creates an ambiguity, as in (53a). The negative equative (53c), on the other hand, is always unambiguous.

- (53) TAKALE KHAM:
- a. ao mi:
 this person
 ‘this person’ OR ‘This is a person.’ (ambiguous)
- b. ao mi: zə
 this person EMPH
 ‘This is a person.’
- c. ao mi: ma:hkə
 this person neg.COP
 ‘This is not a person.’

The sentence in (53b) differs from the one in (53a) in the same way that (52b) differs

from (52a) – in the (b) sentences the nominal is unambiguously embedded to an equative clause. Thus, in (53b) *ao* ‘this’ and *mi*: ‘person’ are separate noun phrases, related to each other in an equative function. In (53a), on the other hand, *ao* ‘this’ and *mi*: ‘person’ can belong to the same noun phrase as Det + N ‘this person’. The sentence in (52b), then, which is the analog of (53b) must be interpreted as an equative clause, the second NP of which is unexpressed, as in:

- (54) a. [sohmlo o-ra-kəi-wo]_{NP1} [Ø]_{NP2} zə
 [three 3S-3P-eat-NML] [NP] EMPH
 ‘It’s absolutely true that he ate three.’
- b. [sohmlo o-ra-kəi-wo]_{NP1} [Ø]_{NP2} ma:hkə
 [three 3S-3P-eat-NML] [NP] neg.COP
 ‘It’s not the case that he ate three.’

The sentence in (52b), repeated in (54a), *sohmlo o-ra-kəi-wo zə* ‘It’s a fact that he ate three’, is a strong assertion which intentionally challenges some earlier statement the speaker disagrees with (in the spirit of Bickel’s observations). However, this is not at all what happens in (52a), *sohmlo o-ra-kəi-wo* ‘He ate three’, a nominalization that is *not* embedded to an equative. Such clauses are used as ‘backgrounding’ devices, injecting presuppositions into the discourse which *cannot* be challenged.

Several authors of Kiranti grammars have made the claim that stand-alone nominalizations have a meaning something like “the fact that I said it” or “the fact is...” (Rutgers 1999, Tolsma 1999, Ongenort 2004). This is very likely true for those nominalized clauses that are embedded to an equative copula – indeed, it assumes an equative – though it may or may not be true of many other stand-alone nominalizations in their corpus.

Rutgers refers to the stand-alone nominalization in Yamphu as the ‘factitive category’ and Ongenort refers to it in Wambule as the ‘factual verbal adjective’. Both structures have clearly related functions. In Rutger’s own words (1999:245), the factitive in Yamphu narratives “boils down to the description of situations outside the main train of events in a story.” He also says (1999:247) that, “Another usage of the factitive category in narratives is in the introduction to a story. ...the speaker, who is about to relate various things that befell him, paints the setting of the story.”

Ongenort (2004:314–315) uses similar terminology to describe the ‘factual verbal adjective’ in Wambule – “A factual verbal adjective relates to the background of another event, rather than to a dynamic situation.” Also, “Factual verbal adjectives provide facts relating to the background of the story. Affirmatives, by contrast, present the events in the story line and denote kinetic actions which carry the narrative forward.”

In my grammar of Kham (Watters 2002) I devoted an entire chapter to a discussion of “Nominalized verb forms in discourse”. I show that such forms make sense only within the context of a discourse, a domain large enough that the speaker must include instructions on how the hearer should build a mental representation of what is being narrated. This includes instructions on how to integrate new, incoming information with what is already in memory store – among other things, whether it is part of the narrative event line or something subsidiary to it. In general, everything on the narrative event line is marked by

regular finite forms, while everything subsidiary to it – background, parenthetical material, stage setting – is marked by nominalization.

All of this suggests that so-called ‘stand-alone nominalizations’ of the sort that can be translated as “the fact is...” (which most authors have suggested for at least some of their examples) or that have special assertive functions are, in fact, not free-standing at all – they are embedded as the asserted NP in an equative clause (as in 54). Bickel (1999) in his article on ‘Nominalization and focus constructions’ says as much when he makes the observation that:

“As for the assertive part of focus constructions, variable-instantiation (‘x=a’) is overtly signalled in 20 [‘It’s Hari who is coming’] by an equational mini-clause (it is) that ‘clefs’ the sentence. No such clause is needed in Belhare since... this language does not require copulas in equational structures.”

This allows him to say, later on, that these are “nominalized independent sentences in Belhare” [this is true at least on the surface] and, furthermore, that the structures so marked are “contrastive focus” constructions that have “an intrinsic potential for controversy”. This, of course, is the opposite of the ‘other’ function that many authors have disclosed intuitions about – the backgrounding function. Can the two be reconciled?

It turns out that most of Bickel’s examples are not stand-alone nominalizations of the sort most of us have been talking about, but rather nominalizations inside equative clauses. As such, his interpretation is no longer surprising; it accords well with what we find in Kham and other languages too – a nominalization that marks an emphatic assertion (54a–b). Following are some of Bickel’s examples, which because of their clefted translations, are to be interpreted as being embedded to an implied copula:

(55) BELHARE:

- a. male, i-gira sabun nak-si uŋs-a-ŋŋ-ha
no one-HUM soap ask.for-SUP come.down-SUBJ-EXCL-NML
‘No, it’s in order to ask for soap that I’ve come down here.’
- b. hamba dhankuta khar-a-ŋŋ-ha, rak-khar-e-ŋa, ŋka
today Dhankuta go-SUBJ-e-N tired-TEL-PT-e I
‘That I went to Dhankuta today is why I am tired.’

The question for Belhare is whether or not this is the only kind of ‘stand-alone’ nominalization. In Athpare, Belhare’s closest linguistic relative, Ebert makes no mention of a backgrounding function for stand-alone nominalizations, and likewise, van Driem makes no mention of it in Limbu or Dumi (Limbu being geographically close).⁵

⁵ However, van Driem talks about an ‘imperfective’ in Limbu and Dumi that uses the same mark as a nominalization, and Ebert talks about a ‘past progressive’ in Athpare that is ‘always nominalized’. These structures very likely qualify as the backgrounding function described in other Himalayish languages. See section §4 for further discussion.

3.2 Nominalization in miratives

Bickel also points out that nominalized verbs can be followed by the loan particle *raicha*, which signals mirativity (as it does also in Nepali). Ebert (1997b) reports the same for Camling. In Chantyal (Bodish, Tamangic), Noonan (2005) reports that stand-alone nominalizations most commonly signal a mirative sense. Apparently, nominalization is compatible with mirativity in many Bodic languages. In those languages in which the Nepali mirative particle *raicha* has been borrowed, the notion is further supported. In Kham, the mirative particle *oleo*, itself a nominalization of the verb ‘to be’, occurs only following a nominalized structure, as in:

- (56) TAKALE KHAM:
- a. o-ba-dhu-wo o-le-o
 3S-go-PRIOR.PST-NML 3S-be-NML
 ‘He has already left!’
- b. o-ma-rəĩh-wo o-le-o
 3S-NEG-visible-NML 3S-be-NML
 ‘It isn’t visible after all!’

Likewise, in Wambule, what has been identified as an ‘affirmative’ <AFF> is very nearly homophonous with the general nominalizing suffix *-mei* (and, in fact, Opgenort identifies it as a “grammaticalized instance” of the nominalizer):

- (57) WAMBULE:
- jʌmma gipt-u-Ø-me rʌicha
 in.all roll.up-3npA-23s-AFF NEW
 ‘It had fully wrapped him up!’

In Camling, the original *raicha* (from Nepali) has been reinterpreted in many texts to signal a reportative sense (but always preceded by a nominalization). Ebert says that the particle “characterizes narrative texts and can be repeated sentence after sentence”. Watters (2002:295) shows the same to be true of the Kham mirative – hearsay narratives that are still relatively recent are sometimes reported using the mirative in place of the reportative particle – thus, the mirative is not necessarily incompatible with reported events. In Camling the original nominalizing structure remains even after the introduction of the (reportative < *mirative) *raicha*, as in the following:

- (58) CAMLING:
- i-ra mina jal am-si khata-ko raicha
 one-CL man net throw-PURP go-NML REP
 ‘A man went fishing, it is told.’

3.3 Nominalization in interrogatives

As already mentioned, Hargreaves (1986) in his treatment of non-embedded nominalizations in Newari, notes that questions cast in the simple finite form have the effect of “extreme disrespect, almost like that of an accusation, whereas the same question nominalized is used

for greetings or polite enquiry”. Bickel treats nominalized questions in Belhare, noting here too that the constructions are related to focus. In Athpare, Balhare’s closest relative, Ebert (1997a) notes that all questions are nominalized. This may or may not be a reflex of the ‘politeness principle’:

- (59) ATHPARE:
 un-na pak in-u-t-u-na?
 she-OBL what buy-3U-NPT-[copy]-NML
 ‘What is she going to buy?’

Interestingly, nominalized questions in some of these languages are also used as polite greetings, much as in Newari. For example, Rutgers (1999:240) reports for Yamphu that “one of the everyday greetings used among the Yamphu is the following utterance containing a factitive verb form in the perfect: ‘Have you had your meal?’” He says that the speaker is not inquiring about what happened, but rather “whether a situation is the case or not”.

In Kham, the contexts in which a nominalized versus non-nominalized question is felicitous is clear-cut. Informants will sometimes claim that the direct (non-nominalized) form of a question sounds ‘sharp’ or even ‘rude’, but it is nevertheless true that the non-nominalized forms are not inherently impolite. They imply some kind of personal investment in the situation being questioned and hence a right to the information. Where the context or the social relations between speaker and hearer do not warrant such, the form can sound presumptuous, as in the following:

- (60) TAKALE KHAM:
 a. SIMPLE FINITE FORM:
 kana nə-ba-ya
 where 2S-go-PST
 ‘Where did you go?’ (demands an answer)
 b. NOMINALIZED FORM:
 kana nə-ba-zya-o
 where 2S-go-CONT-NML
 ‘Where are you going?’ (idle curiosity)

It would be considered good form, on the other hand, if the speaker’s friends were about to embark on a journey across high, desolate country, and he asked the following in a direct, non-nominalized form:

- (61) a. kata je-zyu-ke
 what 2P-eat-FUT
 ‘What will you eat?’

The following, too, is the expected form:

- b. nĩ:-lai ŋa-ma-səres-ni-ke
 you-ACC 1S-INTRG-recognize-2S-FUT
 ‘Will I recognize you?’

In both cases, the sentences convey a legitimate concern. Nominalized interrogatives are less intrusive than their simple, finite counterparts because they imply ‘discontinuity’, a distancing as it were. The same can be seen in nominalized forms of the imperative, which, not surprisingly, have the softened force of an optative:

- (62) a. IMPERATIVE:
 ca-o wazə l̥:h-də rəi-yo
 good-NML only buy-NF bring-IMP
 ‘Buy and bring back a good one!’ (I’m holding you responsible)
- b. OPTATIVE:
 ca-o wazə l̥:h-də nə-rəi-kə
 good-NML only buy-NF 2S-bring-OPT
 ‘May you buy and bring back a good one!’ (I hope they don’t cheat you).

Rutgers (1999:249–250) comments on what appears to be a similar principle in the Yamphu ‘factitive infinitive’ (an infinitive followed by a factitive) –“All utterances where a factitive infinitive is the predicate verb are in essence nominal clauses which do not express tense and therefore do not pinpoint the transpiration of the event or the occurrence of the situation in time. ...The ramifications of the modal nature of a factitive infinitive can be observed in the various functions such infinitival predicates may have, viz. modal declaratives, imperatives, adhortatives and optatives.” He provides the following imperative senses:

- (63) YAMPHU:
- a. ma:ma, ca:ma ca:-si? ap-m-æ
 mother rice eat-SUP come-INF-FCT
 ‘Mum, come and have dinner!’
- b. cautara-bes-so na:-ja-ghæ?-m-æn-ji
 rest.stand-LOC-too rest-eat-go-INF-FCT-NS
 ‘Go, resting at every roadside bench!’

4. Nominalization and the imperfective

Van Driem, in both his Limbu and Dumi grammars, makes no mention of stand-alone nominalized clauses except as adnominals, both headed and headless – the general nominalizing suffix, he says, can be attached to several classes of words “to create a nominal which can be used adnominally as an adjective or independently as a noun taking case suffixes”. As adnominals, these are what I have been referring to as ‘relativizing structures’. It turns out that the same nominalizations can also be used as sentential complements.

Van Driem also talks about an ‘imperfective’ that uses the same nominalizing suffix *-m* in Dumi and *-pa* in Limbu. The function of the construction, he says, is “to present an event as a temporally articulate situation and to present an event as *a matter of fact*, a *circumstance* which has taken place at some point in the past or is scheduled to take place at some time in the future. It is the latter function of the imperfective which forms a semantic continuum with the meaning of the nominalizer suffix <*-m*>” (*italics mine*). This description comes very close to the description of the ‘factitive’ in Yamphu, the ‘factual verbal adjective’

in Wambule, and the stand-alone nominalization in Kham. Following is an example from Dumi:

(64) DUMI:

ki:m-po ga:ro thok-k-i-t-i-m
 house-GEN wall build-1p-e-NPT-e-IPF
 ‘We^{pe} are building the walls of the house.’

Is an imperfective reading possible for a nominalized stand-alone clause in Kham and other Himalayish languages? Indeed, where a continuous or progressive mood is part of the nominalization, such constructions are usually translated as past-imperfective or past-progressive in English. Opgenort notes that the factual verbal adjective, “when used with the progressive adverb *maŋ*, [and in combination with *thiyo* < Nep. ‘was’] the result is a ‘past progressive situation’”, as in:

(65) WAMBULE:

- a. aŋ maŋ phyars-u-meɪ thiyo
 she now sew-3npA-23s-FCT was
 ‘She was sewing [at that time].’
- b. im kimsul pəd maŋ los-u-meɪ thiyo
 that door direction now wait-3npA-23s-FCT was
 ‘the one that was waiting at the door’

Likewise, in Ebert’s discussion of the ‘past progressive’ in Athpare (1997a:48), she says that her “informants insisted on the nominalizer with past progressive forms”. In Kham, a past-progressive is the only way to translate certain nominalizations:

(66) TAKALE KHAM:

- a. ahjya uhbyali-kə ge: nahm-ni ge-hu-zya-o
 earlier spring-LOC we low.country-ABLT 1P-come-CONT-NML
 ‘Last spring we were coming up from the low-country.’
- b. gi-n-poh-zya-kə te, bəre:-rə ro-tə chi: ya-en-zya-o
 we-2-hit-CONT-SUBJ CTR, southerner-PL up-ON grass 3P-cut-CONT-NML
 ‘While we were beating it, the Southerners were above cutting hay.’

Clearly, then, an imperfective reading is fully compatible with stand-alone nominalizations. In Kham, Yamphu and Wambule, such nominalizations function independently to mark backgrounded material or ‘stage settings’ – but they are still considered nominalizations.

In Kham, the entire sentence in (66a) ‘Last spring we were coming up from the low country’ or the second half of (66b) ‘The Southerners were above cutting hay’ could be embedded to an equative clause to make them focused assertions, or they could be embedded as object complements of a complement taking verb like ‘to see’. Whether this is true of Dumi or Limbu I do not know. Van Driem apparently sensed that these constructions had become grammaticalized enough in Limbu and Dumi to be regarded as aspectual markers, but he also recognizes that they form a ‘semantic continuum’ with the nominalizer suffix (1993:191).

Bickel, too, in his 1999 article “Nominalization and focus constructions in some Kiranti languages” explores possible links between the two. He notes that in Limbu, “instead of focusing on the polarity of the predication (*he does work*), the nominalizer comes to focus on the internal time structure of the predication (*he is (now) working*).” This has a parallel in Slavic languages, he says, where the ‘constative’ function is covered by the same morphology as the imperfective aspect.

5. Summary

Nominalization has been described as a central phenomenon in the structure of Himalayish languages and works at all levels, converting verbs and adverbial expressions into nominals, adjectivals, participles, demonstratives, appositives, relative clauses, complement clauses, and free-standing predications. Most of the languages distinguish between finite and non-finite nominalizations, the former being used primarily in relative clauses and complement structures, while the latter are used in adjectives, demonstratives, and participles.

All Himalayish languages also use nominalizations in free-standing predications, predications not embedded to a higher matrix clause. Such nominalizations have been defined as functioning in numerous ways by different authors – ‘orientation’, ‘parenthetic mode’, ‘reification’, ‘factitive’, ‘factual verbal adjective’, ‘backgrounding device’, ‘focus device’, ‘mirative’, and others. Each of these functions are circumscribed by specific structural constraints and can be seen as forming different parts of a greater whole.

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