

Nominalization in Asian Languages

Diachronic and
typological perspectives

edited by

Foong Ha Yap, Karen Grunow-Hårsta
and Janick Wrona

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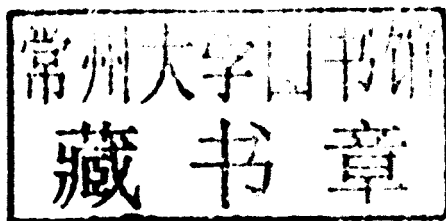
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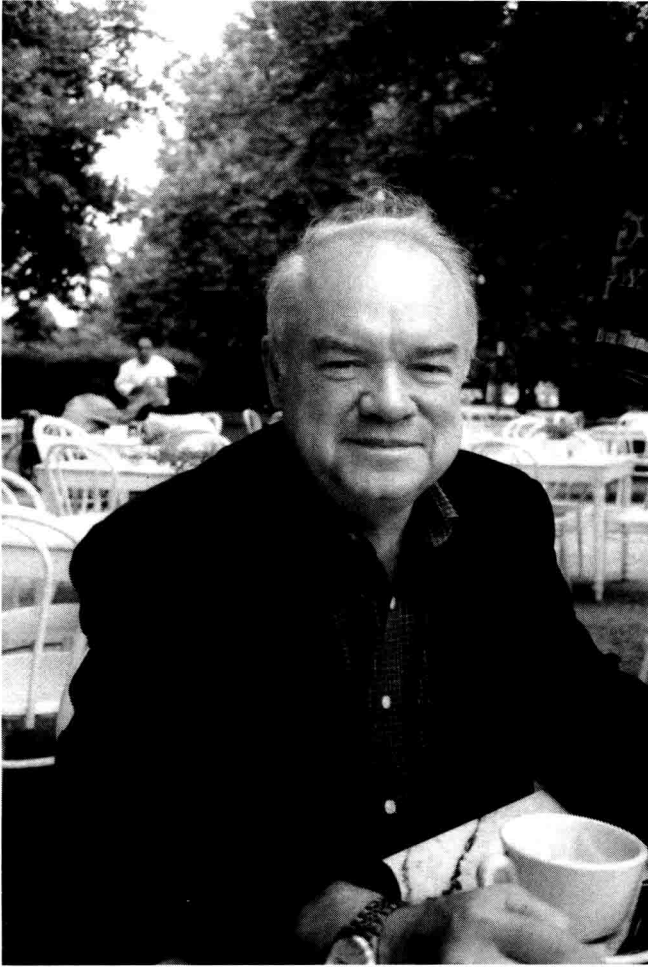
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This volume is dedicated to Michael Noonan (14 September 1947, Auburn
NY – 23 February 2009, Whitefish Bay WI) whose insightful work on
nominalization has inspired many of us.

Preface

This volume grew out of collaborative efforts to investigate why morphemes that signal nominalization and relativization constructions were also found as sentence final particles in a wide range of Asian languages. Investigations originally had an East Asian focus (e.g. Japanese, Korean and Chinese languages). However, a workshop at the conference on New Reflections on Grammaticalization (NRG3) at Santiago de Compostela in Spain in July 2005 highlighted that related nominalization phenomena exist in languages farther afield as well (e.g. Burmese, Jingpo, and the Bodic languages of Nepal, among many others). Following this, a special workshop focusing on nominalizers and copulas was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in January 2007. These combined research efforts gave rise to several publications, among them a series of papers on nominalizations in Asian languages in *Rethinking Grammaticalization: New Perspectives*, edited by Mariá José López-Couso & Elena Seoane, in collaboration with Teresa Fanego (eds). These include papers by Michael Noonan (“Nominalizations in Bodic languages”), Andrew Simpson (“The grammaticalization of clausal nominalizers in Burmese”), Kaoru Horie (“The grammaticalization of nominalizers in Japanese and Korean: a contrastive study”), Seongha Rhee (“On the rise and fall of Korean nominalizers”), and Foong Ha Yap & Stephen Matthews (“The development of nominalizers in East Asian and Tibeto-Burman languages”).

Our understanding of nominalization phenomena has benefited greatly from the extensive fieldwork and analytical insights of numerous linguists. In particular, Tibeto-Burman scholarship, as early as the 1970's in the work of James Matisoff, recognized relationships between nominalization, relativization and genitivation. These investigations continued into the 1980's with the work of Scott DeLancey and Michael Noonan, among others. A new generation of active and productive scholars in the 1990's built upon this earlier research, particularly works such as Michael Noonan's seminal paper “Versatile Nominalizations” published in (1997). The result of these investigations has been a number of insightful publications on nominalization, such as those by Bickel, Coupe, Genetti, Grunow-Härsta, Lahaussois, LaPolla, and Watters, among others.

Austronesian scholars have also worked extensively on issues related to nominalization, motivated in part by a debate within the community on issues related to the frequently observed isomorphism between nominalization constructions and finite clause structures, which gives rise to questions about the chronology (and sometimes primacy) of one construction relative to the other. The debate – often pitched

in terms of the nominalist vs. non-nominalist hypothesis – has greatly deepened and broadened our thinking of nominalization issues from both diachronic and typological perspectives, and we wish here to recognize the contributions of the following, among many others: the works of Stanley Starosta, Andrew Pawley and Lawrence Reid (the SPR trio), Malcolm Ross, Nikolaus Himmelmann, Daniel Kaufman and Masayoshi Shibatani for a comprehensive typological perspective on nominalization phenomena across Austronesian languages, and Elizabeth Zeitoun and the contributions of many Taiwanese linguists in her 2002 *Language and Linguistics* special journal issue on nominalization in Formosan languages.

There has been growing recognition and appreciation of the significance of nominalization processes. Recent investigations across Asian languages, such as those seen in this volume, have both affirmed and advanced previous scholarship. For a number of languages in this volume (Chinese, Tibeto-Burman, Japanese, and Korean) it is possible to trace the diachronic development from light nouns to nominalizers. Works in this volume have confirmed that nominalizers are indeed versatile, often developing extended functions. Moreover, it has demonstrated that this extension frequently follows a trajectory from referential to non-referential functions (such as nominalization to subordination and complementation, and the marking of tense, aspect and mood, and of speaker stance).

It has also become clear that nominalization constructions can be signaled not only by dedicated nominalizers. They are often also signaled by noun phrase markers – ranging from the more cross-linguistically common ones such as demonstratives and case markers, as well as possessive pronouns and genitive case (as frequently seen across the Austronesian languages), to the less commonly attested ones such as plural markers (as seen for example in Rawang and Magar from the Tibeto-Burman family) and classifiers (as evidenced in Min and Yue dialects from the Sinitic family). These findings among the Asian languages investigated within this volume are consistent with earlier typological observations that languages frequently rely on noun phrase markers to help identify not only noun phrases but also nominalized clauses – a strategy nicely referred to as ‘substantivization strategies’ (see Malchukov 2006; see also Hopper & Thompson 1984, 1985; *inter alia*).

The papers in the present volume provide in-depth analysis of languages representing several language families that span the Asian landscape, in some cases further clarifying earlier typological insights with diachronic evidence, and in some cases with discourse corpus data. Of particular interest in terms of new directions in research is growing evidence that noun phrase markers often extend their functions along pathways parallel to those of nominalizers. It is our hope that the contributions in this volume will deepen our understanding of nominalization strategies, their diachronic development, and the significance of their ubiquitous presence on other grammatical constructions, as well as their pragmatic effects in discourse, the latter an area of study we hope many more researchers will pursue (see for example recent

works on subjectivity and intersubjectivity among Asian scholars such as Shoichi Iwasaki, Seiko Fujii and Nina Yoshida within the discourse analysis tradition).

We hope both scholars and students will greatly benefit from the data and analyses in the twenty-six papers (including the introductory chapter) of this volume. A lot of people have put a lot of work into preparing this volume, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to those who have made the publication of this volume possible. First, we wish to thank our contributors and our reviewers for generously sharing with us their expert knowledge of the languages of Asia, often situated within the context of a broader ongoing typological discussion on nominalizations in the languages of the world. The names and affiliations of our reviewers – because the list is appreciably long – are listed immediately following this preface.

We also wish to thank our research assistants for their help in preparing for the publication of this volume, among them Shirley Tsang, Jenny Tse, and Jiao Wang. We are also very grateful to Spike Gildea, chief editor of TSL, and the editing staff at John Benjamins for overseeing the publication of this volume. In particular we wish to express our warm and very special thanks to Martine van Marsbergen, Patricia Leplae and Jan-Kees van Oord for their prompt and supportive supervision over the proofcopies, and to Kees Vaes at John Benjamins for his encouragement, support and patient guidance over the long years that have brought this volume to fruition.

The emotional support from our families over the years has also played a crucial role in making this volume possible. Our families have endured, with patient understanding, our many late hours at work and sometimes long-distance absences away from home as we sit down to pull together the diverse voices of our contributors and search for common themes.

Finally we wish to gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong through the following grants (PI: Foong Ha Yap): CUHK Direct Research Grant 2006–2007 (*Development of Stance Markers in East and Southeast Asian Languages*); CUHK Direct Research Grant 2007–2008 (*Diachronic Syntax in East Asian Languages*); CUHK Linguistics and Modern Languages Department Research Grant 2008–2009 (*Nominalization Strategies in Chinese and Other Asian Languages*); HKPU Faculty of Humanities Start-Up Fund 2009–2011 (*Non-Referential Uses of Nominalization Constructions: Asian Perspectives*). We also wish to acknowledge generous support from a grant-in-aid from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science awarded to co-editor Janick Wrona in the form of a postdoctoral fellowship at Kyoto University (2006–2008).

We hope the analysis within this volume will contribute to increased attention to in-depth typological research not only ‘on’ but also ‘beyond’ nominalization phenomena, especially now that we increasingly recognize that nominalization constructions seamlessly evolve and transform themselves for new functions in new environments.

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Introduction

Nominalization strategies in Asian languages

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This paper examines a wide range of nominalization strategies found in Asian languages, and identifies robust grammaticalization pathways that trace the life of versatile nominalizers, particularly those that develop from light nouns and noun phrase markers such as classifiers, plural markers, demonstratives, and case markers. It also focuses on the extended uses of nominalization constructions – from referential to non-referential functions, among them adnominal (e.g. relative clause and genitive) marking, tense-aspect-mood (TAM) marking, speaker stance marking, and subordinate adverbial marking. Examples come from Sino-Tibetan, Iranian, Korean, Japanese, Austronesian, and Papuan languages.

1. Introduction

Much has been written about nominalization over the past fifty years, and we are now in a better position to consolidate some robust generalizations and to chart some new areas for further investigation. In this volume on *Nominalization in Asian Languages*, we approach this task from an areal typological perspective, covering a number of language families that span the Asian continent and the great oceans that surround it. More specifically, we first focus on mainland Asia, covering Sino-Tibetan and Iranian languages, then we expand seaward toward the Korean, Japanese and Austronesian (inclusive of Oceanic) languages, with a representation from the Papuan family as well. Future work will clearly need to redress the lack of representation from other language families, including those from South and Central Asia. We hope papers from this volume will serve as a springboard for further investigations into other Asian languages, with a clear eye toward language universals.

The typological approach adopted here is not the classic questionnaire method such as was undertaken by Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1993) or Malchukov (2004) for nominalization. Rather we opt instead for a collection of in-depth analyses of specific languages grouped around language families, in order to facilitate cross-linguistic comparison of language phyla, analyses that will bring us closer to a comprehensive

understanding of nominalizers, nominalization constructions and nominalization processes. This approach is also chosen because it allows for diachronic analyses; for example for Chinese, Tibetan, Iranian, and Japanese, which have data of appreciable time-depth.

This diachronic approach complements the typological approach, providing insights into how variable, language-specific semantic extensions nevertheless often conform at some macro-level to linguistically-robust grammaticalization pathways. It helps shed light on the origins of nominalizers as well as the nature and direction of the grammaticalization pathways that nominalizers undergo.

This introductory chapter will revisit some of the major issues and thorny questions pertaining to nominalization. Primary and critical questions are, first and foremost, “What is nominalization?” and “What constitutes a nominalizer?” The answers to these questions are complicated by the fact that the functions and forms of nominalizers and nominalization constructions are diverse and extended. Nominalizers often extend beyond their core function of deriving nominal expressions. For example, nominalizers may go on to derive adjectives and relative clauses. This is prevalent in Tibeto-Burman and particularly the Bodic sub-group. Moreover across Asian languages nominalization constructions may also be used as adverbial clauses, as well as complement structures and main clauses, and in some languages they have also come to express tense-aspect-mood and stance. There is also considerable formal diversity among nominalizers, within and between languages. Languages may possess a single versatile nominalizer with multiple functions; or languages may possess multiple nominalizers each with specialized functions. Furthermore, there are languages in which nominalized constructions have no dedicated nominalizer; rather they utilize other categories, such as classifiers, plural markers, possessive pronouns, demonstratives, definiteness markers, and case markers to signal the nominal status of a word or construction. This raises another interesting question: “Can such noun phrase markers be considered nominalizers?”

The body of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 defines and describes types of nominalization constructions; in doing so, it helps answer the question “What is nominalization?” Section 3 identifies diverse nominalization strategies including: morphological nominalization, zero nominalization, and the use of noun phrase markers (i.e. substantivization strategies) and marked argument structure to signal the presence of nominalization constructions. Section 4 sheds light on how nominalization constructions develop from referential to non-referential uses. In particular, it looks at the relationships between nominalization and relative clause constructions, between nominalization and tense-aspect-mood (TAM) marking, between nominalization and speaker stance, and between nominalization and subordination. Where possible, it presents a diachronic perspective to changes undergone by nominalizers and nominalization constructions.

2. Nominalization types

Nominalization in its core sense refers to the process by which we derive nominal expressions (e.g. Comrie & Thompson 1985/2007) – for example, from verbs (e.g. *watch* > *watcher*) or adjectives (e.g. *narrow* > *narrowness*, *narrowing*). Clauses may also be nominalized (e.g. *awaken the public conscience* > *awakening (of) the public conscience*). Nominalization constructions are often distinguished in terms of the following types: participant vs. event; lexical vs. clausal; embedded vs. non-embedded. These we briefly describe in the following sections, with examples drawn primarily from the Asian languages represented in the present volume.

2.1 Participant vs. event nominalization

The term ‘participant nominalization’ (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993) refers to derived nominal constituents that function as arguments with referential status within a clause. More specifically, participant nominalizations refer to first order ontological entities (e.g. persons, objects, locations) and they assume semantic roles such as agents, patients, locations or instruments, as exemplified in (1) from Cantonese (Sinitic). An event nominalization, on the other hand, refers to the nominalization of an action (i.e. second order ontological entities); hence often also referred to as action nominalization, as illustrated in (2) from Toqabaqita (Oceanic), where the event of planting is nominalized with *-aa*.¹

Cantonese

- (1) *daai³ mou⁶ ge³ ho² ji³ jap⁶ nei⁴*
 wear hat NMZ can enter
 ‘the ones who wear hats may enter’

Toqabaqita

(Lichtenberk, this volume: 703)

- (2) *fasi-laa qoe qana baqu qena ki*
 plant-NMZ 2SG GENP banana that PL
 ‘your planting of those bananas’

1. In this paper, the transcriptions appear as they are used in the papers of individual authors. In some cases, these are IPA; in others these are a traditional Romanized orthography. Glosses are defined in each of the individual papers.