Periphrastic nominalization in Kazym Khanty

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The most productive model of nominalizing verbs in Kazym Khanty is periphrastic. We use the term *periphrastic nominalization* to refer to a model of morphological derivation of deverbal nouns which makes use of auxiliary words. A more customary model, which employs bound morphemes, is called *synthetic*.

Khanty has synthetic nominalization, which is formed by the suffix *-əpsi*. However, this nominalization is unproductive: it cannot be formed from a number of verbs (for example **purtəpsi* 'biting', **ara jakəpsi* 'dismantling', **katλəpsi* 'catching'), while periphrastic nominalization is the main way to express sentential arguments for a number of matrix predicates, particularly for mental predicates (*wəti* 'know', *nəmti* 'remember', etc.) and evaluative predicates (*jäm* 'be good', *atəm* 'be bad', *turas* 'discomfort', etc.).

The structure of the Khanty periphrastic nominalization is as follows: the word *wɛr* 'deed, action' which bears the usual nominal morphology expressing the nominal categories of the nominalization, and a non-finite form of the verb, which hosts the nominalization's verbal categories. In (1), this non-finite form, directly preceding the word *wɛr,* is a non-past participle from the verb *λəməttə-* 'to dress'.

(1) täm ewij-en   ńawrɛm **λəməttə-ti**   **wɛr-λ**   ma wə-λ-ɛm
    this girl-POSS.2SG baby   dress-NFIN.NPST deed-POSS.3SG I   know-NPST-1SG.SG
    'I know that this girl is dressing the baby. (lit. I know about the dressing of the baby by this girl')

Nominalization formed by means of a free, rather than bound, morpheme is a typologically rare phenomenon (to the best of our knowledge, a similar construction occurs in Eastern Khanty [Potanina and Filchenko 2007] and in Tundra Nenets, another Uralic language which has been in contact with Northern Khanty [Nikolajeva 2017: 157]); such constructions have not been the object of detailed research. In our report we describe the morphological and syntactic properties of the Khanty periphrastic nominalization and discover the differences between it and synthetic nominalizations.

Periphrastic nominalization inflects for number (2a-b), case (3) and possessiveness (2a-b), i.e. has a full noun paradigm.

(2) a. λʉw   χoŋksa   taλ-ti   wɛr-λ   ma wə-λ-ɛm
       he   cigarette pull-NFIN.NPST   deed-POSS.3SG I   know-NPST-1SG.SG
       'I know about his smoking.'

    b. λʉw   χoŋksa   taλ-ti   wɛr-λ-aλ   ma wə-λ-ɛm
       he   cigarette pull-NFIN.NPST   deed-PL-POSS.3SG I   know-NPST-1SG.SG
       'I know about his (regular) smoking.'

(3)   χoŋksa   taλ-ti   wɛr-en-ən   śi   χθλλ´-əλ-n
      cigarette   pull-NFIN.NPST deed-POSS.2SG-LOC   EMPH cough-NPST-2SG
      'You are coughing because of your smoking.'

However, it cannot be modified by neither adjectives (4a) nor numerals (4b).

(4) a. *ma wə-λ-ɛm   mašaj-en   jak-ti   tθs   wɛr
       I   know-NPST-1SG.SG Maša-POSS.2SG dance-NFIN.NPST skillful deed
       Exp.: 'I know about Maša's skillfull dance.'

b. *waśaj-en tɵrəm λor-a janχ-əm wet wɛr-λ ma
Vasya-POSS.2SG Numto-DAT go-NFIN.PST five deed-POSS.3SG I
wɵ-λ-ɛm
know-NPST-1SG.SG
Exp.: 'I know about five Vasya's visits to Numto.'

Periphrastic nominalization exhibits a wide range of verbal properties: it subcategorizes arguments, inflects for tense (determined regarding to the tense of a main clause) and can be modified with adverbs (5).

(1)' täm ewij-en ńawrɛm λɵmətt-əm wɛr-λ ma wɵ-λ-ɛm
this girl-POSS.2SG baby dress-NFIN.PST deed-POSS.3SG I know-NPST-1SG.SG
'I know that this girl dressed the baby.'

(5) muλχatəλ ajiki-n λoχs-əλ ńɵχt-əm wɛr ma
yesterday boy-POSS.2SG friend-POSS.3SG overtake-NFIN.PST deed I
nɵm-λ-ɛm
remember-NPST-1SG.SG
'I remember a boy was catching up with a friend yesterday.'

The construction has a set of nominal and verbal morphological properties close to full for finite forms like nominalization. According to the examples which Serdobolskaya [2005] and Alexiadou [2001] observe in a large dataset, in a given language tense is expressed in a nominalized clause if it can also be expressed in ordinary noun phases. However, in Khanty, lexical noun phrases do not have the grammatical category of tense, while nominalizations do. Interestingly, the only example provided by Serdobolskaya [2005] which contradicts the universal mentioned above is the Italian perfective infinitive, which is a periphrastic construction, although not exactly parallel to the one under study here.

In our report we will draw a structure of Khanty nominalization that reflects its verbal and nominal properties described above. We are applying an approach presupposing that nominalizations contain some lexical or functional verbal (or clausal) level and a shell of nominal layers [Abney 1976], [Alexiadou 2001].

We also pay attention to another important question: is there a single construction which has been grammaticalized, or should it be considered syntactically compositional? We show that periphrastic nominalization has a number of properties which suggest it has undergone grammaticalization, and cannot be considered to be compositional either syntactically or semantically. We show that grammaticalization affects both the functional element of the construction (the word *wɛr*) and the internal syntax of nominalization.

References

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