Finiteness and nominalization: An overview.

Claudine Chamoreau, Zarina Estrada Fernández

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Claudine Chamoreau & Zarina Estrada-Fernández
CNRS, CEMCA/SeDyL-CELIA / Universidad de Sonora

This volume constitutes one of the results of a seminar organized in 2003 by Zarina Estrada-Fernández. For three years, each November, the seminar was held at the University of Sonora in Hermosillo, and brought together many general linguists and specialists in particular languages to discuss issues related to the morphosyntactic feature of voice. As a result, two books have been published: the first volume in Sonora in 2007 (Estrada-Fernández et al. 2007) and the second in 2008 (Estrada-Fernández et al. 2008). Since 2006, the members of the seminar have been discussing issues related to the identification, analysis, and genesis of linguistic complexity, with a major focus on subordination and related types of clause combining, especially in indigenous languages of the Americas (Comrie & Estrada-Fernández 2012; Estrada-Fernández, Chamoreau & Alvarez González forthcoming). In 2009, some linguists working in European universities and research centers joined the seminar within the International Program of Scientific Cooperation (PICS). The discussion of complex constructions attested in the different languages led us to study the evolution of nominalization processes and to describe nominalized clauses functioning as dependent clauses. In October 2011, a workshop was organized in Paris. Its goal was to explore specific topics, including the link between finiteness and nominalization and the characterization of, and changes in, the process of finitization.

This edited volume contains selected papers that document the main topics discussed in the workshop. These thirteen contributions reflect the wide range of topics offered regarding the relation between finiteness and nominalization analyzed cross-linguistically from synchronic and/or diachronic perspectives. The majority of the contributions study Amerindian languages; however, one paper describes Beja, a Cushitic language, and another Haruai, a non-Austronesian language of Papua New Guinea, while yet another primarily describes Oceanic languages. As the authors generally take a typological perspective, examples from many languages are proposed in all the papers in order to compare phenomena. This volume is organized in four sections, reflecting the main topics discussed in each paper. However, some papers were allocated to a different section because they address more than one relevant topic.

The two papers in the first part (Bisang and Estrada-Fernández) present a topic little studied in the literature, the fact that the analysis of the correlation between finiteness and nominalization should take into account a third factor, namely the information structure. The second section includes two papers (Comrie and Chamoreau) that discuss in particular the correlation between the continuum of finiteness and the scale from main and independent clauses to dependent clauses. The five papers in the third section (Alvarez González, Palancar, Moyse-Faurie, Queixálos, and Heine) mainly focus on the study of different types of nominalization structures that appear principally in dependent clauses, but also in independent clauses. They also study the position of these nominalized constructions on the scale of nominalization and their relation to the scale of finiteness. The fourth section contains four papers which discuss cases of the diachronic process of re-finitization (Givón, Mithun, and Vanhove) and of finitization (Rose).

1.   Finiteness, nominalization, and information structure

From a traditional morphological perspective, finiteness may be viewed as a morphological property of verbal forms. The question is then which verbal categories are absent from non-finite forms compared to finite ones. This question has received considerable attention in the typological literature (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993, 1999; Cristofaro 2003, among others). The standard candidates are tense and subject agreement. For example, the finite verb is marked by tense, aspect, mood, number, and person agreement, while the non-finite verb is not marked by these categories (or has a reduced set of verbal features, such as person agreement but not tense, aspect, and mood markers) and it cannot normally be the only predicate of independent sentences (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1999). Non-finite forms comprise action nominals (including infinitives and gerunds), participles, and converbs (Nikolaeva 2010). Verbal agreement with the subject is normally lost in non-finite verb forms. Agreement with the object is more likely to be retained in nonfinite verb forms. Finite and nonfinite verbs across languages vary also with regard to a syntactic property, combinability with an overt subject. In this tradition, finiteness is generally treated as a discrete phenomenon.

Nevertheless, these verbal properties have a bearing on the syntactic behavior of these elements. This is the reason that, from a syntactic perspective, finiteness is a property of the clause that may be defined as "the systematic grammatical means used to express the degree of integration of a clause into its immediate clausal environment" (Givón 1990:853). As Estrada-Fernández indicates (this volume), finiteness belongs to the grammar of inter-clausal connectivity. The syntactic dependence of the clause – its finiteness – is thus used to code the thematic dependence of an event/state on its

discourse context. Thus from this perspective finiteness is characterized by multiple features: nominal markers, verbal modalities, presence or not of person agreement, of determiners, of case marking, and so on.

Finiteness and nominalization are generally described as correlated and interacting (Givón 2001, Bisang 2001). For example, a highly nominalized clause is an indicator of a low degree of finiteness. Thus, nominalization is a typical pattern of embedding (Lehmann 1988). Walter Bisang (this volume) demonstrates that "it is not possible to fully understand the effects of nominalization and finiteness in clause linkage without taking into account their interaction with information structure, even though each of these three domains is basically independent from the other." Thus he highlights the information structure as a "central factor with a crucial impact on grammaticalization together with nominalization and finiteness."

According to Bisang, the correlation between finiteness and nominalization is frequently discussed in the literature. His paper introduces information structure as a third factor that has an important impact on processes of grammaticalization. His argument for taking information structure into account is extremely important, as it takes up the idea that grammaticalization starts out from discourse and then moves on to syntax, morphology, and so on (Givón 1979). The paper shows how nominalization, finiteness, and information structure interact in clause linkage. Each zone of overlap of these three domains contributes in its own way to processes of language change and grammaticalization in the morphosyntax of clause linkage. Nominalized verb forms can be used in the formation of relative clauses and clefting. With these functions, they can become part of focus constructions. With the integration of the focus function of nominalized verb forms, a considerable part of what is described as insubordination (Evans 2007) can be explained in terms of a grammaticalization process, moving from the use in a focus construction to the reanalysis as a finite form. He illustrates these processes with examples in Nakh-Daghestanian, Austronesian, Oceanic, Sino-Tibetan, Mongolian languages, in particular.

In her paper, Zarina Estrada-Fernández aims to provide a characterization of finite and non-finite clauses in Pima Bajo, a Uto-Aztecan language from the Tepiman branch. Her questions are related to the relevant features that characterize finiteness: how to address the topic of finiteness in a language without morphological tense marking, and what are the relevant properties that distinguish finite and non-finite constructions in a language with no obligatory agreement markers. She analyzes finite and non-finite constructions in Pima Bajo, taking into consideration different morphosyntactic features, including those that express illocutionary force and those that anchor the event, such as reportative or evidential markers. Her analysis shows that tense, aspect, mood, and agreement markers are not the best criteria for characterizing finiteness in this Uto-Aztecan language. She also discusses the relation between finiteness and the continuum from main clause to dependent clause.

2.   Correlation between the continuum of finiteness and the scale from dependent to independent clause

The nature of finiteness has to do with the semantics of subordination – the asymmetry between dependent and independent clauses (Nikolaeva 2010; Estrada-Fernández this volume). The function of non-finite clauses is to refer to dependent predications within a larger sentence (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1999). Canonical finite clauses express more distinctions on the verb than non-finite clauses do. It is commonly agreed that the reduction of finiteness signals thematic dependence on the context. Dependent clauses are often based on uninflected or poorly inflected forms, because certain types of subordinate predication are semantically and pragmatically dependent on main predicates in terms of time reference and the identity of participants (Givón 1990; Cristofaro 2003).

Finiteness is correlated with main clause status without being restricted to it, since it can also be found in dependent clauses. Non-finiteness is generally used to mark the downgrading of a clause to a noun phrase. However, other researchers argue that the finite/non-finite opposition is broader because it applies to independent clauses as well. Thus there is no strong correlation between non-finiteness and dependent clause status, since some dependent clauses are finite and some non-finite clauses may diachronically come to be used as main clauses.

Traditionally, morphological perspective describes finiteness as a discrete phenomenon: the finite/non-finite distinction depends on the obligatory linguistic expression of certain cognitive domains. Bisang (2001, 2007, this volume) retains this binary characterization from a functional perspective: based on the obligatory occurrence of certain categories and on the asymmetry observed between independent vs. dependent clauses, he argues that finiteness can be considered as a "discrete, binary phenomenon." He suggests that the scalarity of finiteness in functional typology matters for cross-linguistic typology, but not for individual languages. The finite/non-finite distinction depends on the obligatory linguistic expression of certain cognitive domains such as tense, illocutionary force, person, and politeness. A category is obligatory if the speaker is forced to overtly express its value. Languages create asymmetries between main/independent and dependent clauses. An asymmetry arises if a cognitive domain that is obligatorily expressed in an independent clause cannot occur at all or can only occur with a reduced set of subcategories in a dependent clause. Asymmetries of this kind are far from being universal. This is why other linguists view finiteness as a scale (Givón this volume). Taking into account the fact that a definition of finiteness – in which finite clauses possess certain features while non-finite clauses lack them – cannot hold cross-linguistically, "functionalists suggest that finite and non-finite clauses are two extremes on a scale motivated by different

functional effects and that many intermediate variations exist. Thus, functionalists are concerned with the overt manifestations of prototypical properties rather than defining a set of morphological features banned in non-finite constructions" (Nikolaeva 2007: 7). For these functionalists, this is a matter of degree: "At the very top of the finiteness scale, one finds the prototype verbal clause… At the very bottom one finds radically-nominalized clauses…But many clause-types fall in-between, and thus exhibit intermediate degrees of finiteness or nominalization" (Givón this volume, scalarity of finiteness).

This scalar phenomenon is due to the fact that languages usually use multiple mechanisms to mark the dependencies observed between clauses. Thus, as Nikolaeva (2010: 1179) points out, a functional and typological perspective anchors finiteness as a "clausal category that is only secondarily reflected on the verb." In this volume, there are various examples of languages that treat finiteness as a non-discrete and scalar phenomenon (Chamoreau, Estrada-Fernández, Givón, and Palancar, among others).

Bernard Comrie describes two of the factors considered as relevant to characterizing finiteness, namely indexing of the person-number of the subject in verb morphology and the distinction between dependent and independent clauses in Haruai, a non-Austronesian ("Papuan") language of Papua New Guinea. He demonstrates that in terms of the indexing of person-number in the verb, Haruai distinguishes between finite, semi-finite, and non-finite verb forms. There is an interesting (not absolute) correlation between this scale and the scale from main clause to dependent clause. Finite verbs have five-way person-number opposition and occur primarily in main clauses, although they can also occur in certain dependent clauses. Semi-finite verb forms are characterized by the fact that they make some but not all of the person-number distinctions made by finite verbs; they have only two- or three-way person-number opposition. Depending on the structures, they can occur in main or dependent clauses. Non-finite verb forms make no distinction whatsoever of person or number. They are restricted to dependent clauses.

In her paper, Claudine Chamoreau describes and discusses in detail the uses of non-finite chain-medial clauses and the position of these non-finite clauses in the continuum of finiteness in Purepecha, an isolate spoken in Mexico. On the continuum of finiteness that can characterize clauses, Purepecha is one of the languages in which the predicates of both independent and dependent clauses are generally finite. The use of non-finite clauses in clause-chaining, especially chain-medial clauses in narratives, is a phenomenon that appears to be frequent. Its primary function is to maintain event coherence. Reference tracking is possible, but in specific contexts a new referent may be introduced in non-finite chain-medial clauses (participant discontinuity). Non-finite chain-medial clauses seem to display more finiteness features than the other non-finite clauses, such as non-finite complement and purpose clauses.

3.   Nominalization structures and their relation to the scale of finiteness

Nominalization is a process by which something turns into a noun; that is, a functional change takes place from one lexical category to another, the noun category (Comrie & Thompson 2007: 334). This is a re-categorization process, the creation of a nominal constituent that fulfills the most essential nominal function; that is, the referring expression. According to Givón's definition (this volume), nominalization "is, at least initially, a diachronic process via which a finite verbal clause – either a complete clause or a subject-less verb phrase – is converted into a noun phrase." Mithun (this volume) distinguishes between nominalization constructions characterized in terms of the function of the resulting structure (action nominalization, participant nominalization) and nominalization constructions classified by their degrees of finiteness. In this latter classification, the processes of nominalization may affect finiteness by losing verbal properties – illocutionary force marker, agreement, tense, aspect, mood, valency – and by acquiring nominal properties – case-marking, determiners, possessive marking of arguments, number and gender marking (Comrie & Thompson 2007; Cristofaro 2003; Givón 2001 this volume; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993, 1999; Malchukov 2006).

In his paper, Albert Alvarez González studies the evolution of grammatical nominalizations in Cahita languages (Tehueco, Yaqui, and Mayo, from the Uto-Aztecan family) and shows that relativization is not structurally distinct from nominalization. In these languages with overlap between nominalization and relativization, grammatically nominalized expressions may be used as referring or modifying mechanisms. Since the same constructions and the same markers are used in Cahita for referential nominalizations and modifying nominalizations, it is preferable to view relativization from the perspective of nominalization. The analysis shows that the source of grammatical nominalizers is mainly postpositional in Cahita, and that an old agent nominalizer with temporal-aspectual restrictions has now become a new patient nominalizer. This change clearly demonstrates that the referential function associated with this grammatical nominalization is prior to the noun-modifying function, showing that in Cahita relativization has to be considered as merely one specialized function of nominalization, namely the modifying function of an appositive grammatical nominalization.

Enrique Palancar studies the distribution of two nominalization structures in two closely related Amerindian languages of Mexico (Eastern Otomi and Northern Otomi). The structures involve intransitive nominalizations depicting a customary activity performed by humans (hunting, sowing, etc.) as they appear in a complementation frame. He analyzes these structures in order to characterize them as non-finite forms or as nouns, and shows that in these two close languages these structures can be found on the two ends of a nominalization scale. In Eastern Otomi, the

structure is a typical case of syntactic nominalization in a non-finite environment; it is morphologically inflectional in that the nominalized form of a verb should be analyzed as an intransitive infinitive, while its equivalent in Northern Otomi should be accounted for as an instance of word-formation and should be seen as an action deverbal noun.

Claire Moyse-Faurie shows that nominalized constructions are a very frequent phenomenon in Oceanic languages, used in nominal, relative, or imperative clauses as arguments, adjuncts, or the prototypical expression of exclamations. Contrary to a widespread view, she demonstrates that tense, negation, and aspect markers do occur in nominalizations. She shows that hierarchical constraints often formulated for nominalization and deverbalization processes do not fully apply to Oceanic languages, since the occurrence of tense and aspect markers is not only attested in lexical nominalizations but is also quite frequent, as far as Oceanic languages are concerned, in phrasal and clausal nominalizations, that is, at the syntactic and discourse levels as well.

Francesc Queixalós describes in detail nominalized forms with a thetic function that become able to express semantic elements (events, states, etc.) similar to those normally expressed by finite verbs. Sikuani is a language in which existential predication does not require a verb of existence with the subject as the thematic element; this type of construction is well adapted to the thetic communicative intention, since it is organized around a noun phrase conveying rhematic information that is not connected to any thematic element apart from the world, or the situation. This language, a member of the Guahibo linguistic family, makes a great deal of use of verb nominalization constructions in order to fulfill the goal of thetic communication.

Bernd Heine presents an original study of imperatives, in particular canonical imperatives, which have been called extragrammatical forms as they resemble nominalized verb forms in being non-finite. Heine claims that cross-linguistically imperatives exhibit a wide range of structures, which makes it difficult to generalize about them or to propose a structural definition that would apply to all or at least to most of them. His paper is concerned with canonical imperatives; that is, information units that have an (implicit) second person singular subject referent as a listener and that express commands or requests directed at the hearer. Canonical imperatives resemble nominalized verb forms in being non-finite but have little in common with nominalization and other forms of verbal non-finiteness. Imperatives do not seem to serve primarily the structuring of a sentence; they belong to a different space of discourse organization that concerns the component of speaker-listener interaction. Thus imperatives constitute a thetical category. However, they differ from most other thetical categories in being superficially similar to grammar clauses in corresponding sentences: they are co-opted as propositional structures with a verb and its arguments and adjuncts, and may take subordinate clauses.

4.   Diachronic process: Re-finitization and finitization

The relation between finiteness and nominalization may be characterized as a dia-chronic strategy of finitization (Rose this volume) or re-finitization (Givón, this volume; Mithun & Vanhove this volume). Mithun uses the term re-finitization for functional and formal shifts and Givón restricts it to the acquisition of more finite features by a previously nominalized clause; that is, the gradual displacement of the old nominalized construction by a new finite one. Rose uses the term finitization for the change in formal finiteness within dependent clauses; that is, the "diachronic process by which non-finite dependent clauses acquire finiteness features without a change in their dependent status … It should be clearly distinguished from the functional shift by which a previously dependent clause (whether finite or non-finite) is used as a main clause, that is to say, de-subordinated."

In his paper, T. Givón proposes a more fine-grained investigation of the diachrony of re-finitization, raising the question of the mechanisms that eventually allow nomi-nalized clauses to revert to finite constructions. He claims that the mechanisms via by which subordinate clauses arise are relatively well explored, involving two major diachronic pathways: the first via clause-chaining constructions and the second via nominalization. What is interesting is that many of the formerly nominalized sub-ordinate clauses later undergo re-finitization. Earlier (1994), Givón suggested that in Ute (Northern Uto-Aztecan) the mechanism may involve the gradual re-acquisition of finite features such as tense-aspect. In this chapter, he proposes three other mecha-nisms. First, a new generation of finite subordinate clauses emerges, co-exists with, and slowly supplants the older nominalized clauses, as in some Tibetan languages. Second, certain subordinate clauses are de-subordinated, and their nominalized structure then becomes the new finite main clause standard, as in Cariban, Northern Uto-Aztecan, and Indo-European languages. Finally, in some Northern Uto-Aztecan languages (Guarijio, Tarahumara) the re-finitization mechanism seems to involve a slow elimi-nation of nominalized features, such as genitive subjects, or re-interpretation of their function (Givón 2011).

Marianne Mithun illustrates cases of loss of finiteness in clause nominalization in Barbareño Chumash, a language indigenous to California, including such morphologi-cal features as tense, aspect, mood, and valency, and the acquisition of nominal features such as case, gender, number, possession, and determiners. The constructions cease to function syntactically as predications; however, their evolution does not necessarily end with a complete loss of finiteness. They can continue to develop, re-acquiring morpho-logical and/or syntactic properties of finiteness via various pathways. Barbareño contains nominalized clause constructions at various stages of development, from progressive de-finitization to re-finitization, in which formerly syntactically dependent clauses now function as independent sentences with special pragmatic relations within discourse.

In her paper, Martine Vanhove focuses on the formal properties and uses of nonfinite constructions in Beja (Cushitic) with the manner converb, and its refinitization as a perfect paradigm. This converb functions at several levels: as a predicate in deranked adverbial clauses, in completive and relative clauses for the encoding of inter-clausal relations; as adverb and cognate object at the level of the verb phrase; and as verbal adjective in copredicative and attributive constructions at the level of the verb and noun phrases. The different uses and values in verbal periphrastic constructions (emphasis, volition), and the grammaticalization as a finite verb form (perfect) in main and independent clauses, are also analyzed. She proposes a participial origin for the manner converb because of a lack of Afroasiatic comparative evidence, with three different grammaticalization paths, in which nominal morphosyntax played a crucial role in the refinitization process.

Françoise Rose focuses on the acquisition of morphosyntactic finiteness features by a non-finite dependent construction that remains dependent, namely "finitization." She aims to explore how finiteness and its correlates are affected by language change. According to Rose, the acquisition of finite features by a non-finite construction has been little discussed in the literature and little diachronic analysis of illustrative data has been offered (essentially by Givón 1994; Harris & Campbell 1995; Heine 2009, Givón this volume). She discusses previous proposals concerning the formal shift of non-finite forms, in which a dependent construction acquires morphosyntactic finiteness features without acquiring main clause status. She proposes coining the term "finitization" to mean precisely this acquisition of morphosyntactic finiteness features by a dependent clause, to distinguish it clearly from phenomena in which a non-finite clause comes to be used as a main clause. She also offers illustrative data for the diachronic process of finitization and evaluates the different scenarios suggested in the literature.

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