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A Grammar of Bantawa : grammar, paradigm tables, glossary and texts of a Rai language of Eastern Nepal

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Chapter 5

Subordination

Deverbatives The primary aim of this chapter is to shed some light on strategies to use and embed nominalised verbs, non-finite verb forms or fully finite clauses in a wider context. These are all deverbatives, a name that subsumes a number of derivations of verbs or verb roots that somehow have lost the primary verbal character of their roots. The syntactic function of heading a clause may have been lost, or finiteness in terms of tense marking and person agreement has been reduced or lost.

There are different strategies in Bantawa to subordinate, i.e. embed, verbs or full clauses into another phrase or clause. The first strategy is to form nominalisations from the verb root. The instances of this strategy are discussed in §5.1. The different syntactic properties of these non-finite deverbatives and the way they are embedded are discussed as well.

Another, entirely different strategy is to employ the procedure of general nominalisation, identical to genitive formation, to finite verb forms, or rather, full clauses. Nominalised verb phrases function in sentence subordination and serve as nominal constituents, while they maintain their internal structure, tense and valence. As an areal feature, nominalised clauses may also be free-standing, without an obvious subordinating function. The different uses of the general nominaliser is discussed in §5.2.

5.1 Non-finite verb forms

This section describes the morphology of non-finite verb forms. These verb forms are non-finite in the sense that they cannot form the nucleus of a main clause but only occur in a subordinated, embedded clause or as a modifier. The distribution of non-finite verbs corresponds to the fact that they are not marked for tense, nor have they any implied tense associated with them. Thus, while non-finite verbs do not ground an event in time, these forms otherwise express other verbal categories, viz. polarity, number and degree of transitivity, but not person marking.

I distinguish the following groups of non-finite verb forms: a) participles, that

are primarily nominal, b) the infinitive, that can be subordinated to verbs that subcategorise for the infinitive and can also be considered nominal, c) converbs, that only occur in embedded positions and are limited in distribution.

Bantawa has three different participles: the active (§5.1.1), the passive (§5.1.2) and the purposive nominaliser (§5.1.3). Participles are nominal: Participles may fill a nominal argument position and accept nominal morphology. Participles can also be used adnominally to modify a noun.

The infinitive (§5.1.4) is used a) as citation form, b) as a noun to denote the verbal activity itself and c) as main verb in modal complex verb constructions.

The supine (§5.1.5) forms a category of its own. The supine differs from converbs, e.g. selectively collocates with verbs of movement and location only. However, supine clauses, like converb clauses, are not nominal, are optional modifiers and obligatorily share the agent or subject of the matrix clause.

Converbs differ from infinitives in that verbs do not subcategorise for converbs, and from participles in that they are not nominal. No nominal morphology attaches to converbs and converbs do not fill adnominal or nominal grammatical positions. Converbs form embedded sentences and function in the matrix clause in a role that is syntactically similar to that of adverbial modifiers¹. Ebert (2003) gives a handy overview of converbs and participles in Kiranti languages. There are two converbs in Bantawa, viz. the simultaneous converb (§5.1.6) and the negative perfect converb (§5.1.7).

5.1.1 Active participles

Morphology Active participles are nominals that are derived from verb stems, that can be used as independent nouns or attributively in noun phrases. Active participles are morphologically derived from verb stems, using the pre-consonantal stem, by the following affixes:

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<ka-Σ>	APPREF-Σ	active participle, attributive and nominal use
<ka-Σ-pa>	(APPREF-Σ-APm)	active participle, neuter or male gender in fixed expressions
<ka-Σ-ma>	(APPREF-Σ-APf)	active participle, female gender, in fixed expressions only
<ka-Σ-ci>	(APPREF-Σ-APpl)	active participle, plural form

Across Kiranti languages, cognates of the Bantawa <ka-> prefix are found with the function of marking active participles, cf. Limbu <kε-Σ-pa>. Similarly, cognates of the Bantawa <-pa>, <-ma> and <-ci> suffix markers for male, female and plural are found all over the Tibeto-Burman area. Active participle forms that have both a prefix and suffix could be called full forms. Full forms are somewhat marked and sometimes indicative of fixed idiom.

¹In linguistic tradition, 'converbs' have conventionally been called 'gerunds'. For some deverbal forms I chose the converb terminology, as this terminology expresses more clearly that these deverbal derivations contribute a verbal sub-predicate to the matrix clause.

The productive derivation of active participles is with the prefix only. Active participles function in this form in attributive position, as in examples (356). Active participles without the participle male suffix <-pa> (APM), female suffix <-ma> (APF) or plural suffix <-ci> (APPL) may also function as an independent head noun, cf. examples (357), but less frequently so.

Syntax The participle suffixes are usually not dropped in participle forms that have a lexicalised meaning, but this is not a fixed rule. Sometimes the participle suffixes are dropped in this type of idiom as well.

- (356) a. ka-set kint^həkwa-ci-ʔenan
 APpref-kill rebels-PL-COM
 ‘together with the murderous rebels’
- b. ka-ta mukla
 APpref-come group
 ‘the coming group’
- c. ka-tok mīna
 APpref-receive man
 ‘a seen man, a respected man’
- (357) a. sakonɕ^hiŋ ka-pop-ʔa
 heart APpref-betray-ERG
 ‘by the traitor’
- b. ka-tuk
 APpref-be.ill
 ‘ill person’

When the plural ending <-ci> (APPL) suffixes to an active participle, the ending <-pa> (APM), if present at in the singular, can be dropped. However, even the retention of the participle suffix in plural forms varies lexically, resulting in alternative forms for plural active participles.

- (358) yɪŋk^han ka-yiŋ-ci mi-ban-a-ki
 message APpref-say-APpl 3pl-come.level-PT-SEQ...
 ‘after the messengers came...’

Full participles usually have a fixed meaning and therefore cannot be used in attributive or modifier position. Full participles retain the gender suffix even in plural forms.

- (359) ka-sen-pa
 APpref-ask-APm
 ‘interviewer’ (lit. ‘the asker’)
- (360) ka-d^huk-pa-ci
 APpref-hit-APm-PL
 ‘blacksmiths’

Reflexive active participles are formed regularly and have a predictable interpretation.

- (361) ka-sat-ma-n-ci-n
 AP_{pref}-pull-AP_f-REFL-DUP-REFL_c
 ‘reptile’ (lit. one that drags itself)

5.1.2 Passive participle

Morphology The passive participle is a deverbal nominal, that denotes the thing done in the verbal action, or the object of the verbal action. The passive participle is formed by affixing the passive participle suffix <-yiŋ> (PP) to the infinitive of the verb. The infinitive denotes the verbal action itself as a nominal. The Bantawa independent word *yiŋ* means ‘word, thing’. The derivational history of the passive participle is quite transparent. The compound means the thing achieved by the verbal action.

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<Σ -ma-yiŋ>	(Σ-INF-PP)	passive participle

Syntax The passive participle can be used attributively and independently as head noun.

- (362) o-so-ʔo i-tup-ma-yiŋ
 this-PRN-GEN his/her-understand-INF-PP
 ‘its meaning’
- (363) lo-ma-yiŋ
 speak-INF-PP
 ‘the command’
- (364) yiŋ-ma-yiŋ
 say-INF-PP
 ‘the word’, Nepali: *kurā* कुरा, lit. the thing said
- (365) o-na i-niŋwa cin-ma-yiŋ-wa e mu-Ø-yaŋ-Ø.
 this-TOP his/her-new teach-INF-PP-LIKE EMP_he be-NPT-PROG-NPT
 ‘Now, this is like a new teaching!’
- (366) ap-ma-yiŋ c^hoŋwa
 shoot-INF-PP bird
 ‘a shot-at bird’

5.1.3 Purposive nominaliser

Morphology In Bantawa, the purposive nominaliser suffix <-k^ha>, affixed to the pre-consonantal verb stem, derives purposive or locative nominalisations of the verb. Purposive or locative nominalisations have to my knowledge not been

reported for immediately neighbouring Kiranti languages, but the Thulung suffix *-khop* ‘functional suffix’ is an apparent cognate, considering the formal and functional correspondances².

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<Σ -k ^h a>	(Σ-PNOM)	purposive nominaliser, ‘in order to X’

Syntax The nominalising suffix <-k^ha> (PNOM) derives an adnominal modifier from a verb, i.e. a deverbal adnominal. The derived noun denotes something that serves to achieve the action denoted by the verb. Nouns in *-k^ha* can be translated as ‘somewhere where the verb happens’, ‘in the event of the verb happening’ or ‘something to perform the verb’. These nominalisations could be subsumed under the heading supine, but there are significant differences. Unlike the supine, deverbatives in <-k^ha> are nominal or adnominal and grammatically pattern with participles. Deverbatives in <-k^ha> have a wider meaning, denoting a location, purpose or instrument, and when they are further affixed with the locative <-da>, can come to mean ‘in the occasion, event of’. Examples include the following.

(367) Purposive nominaliser, modifier usage

- a. *i-do-da pak-k^ha kəreli*
his/her-mouth-LOC place-PNOM *bridle* (N)
‘a bridle to place in the mouth’
- b. *cakawalawa-ci tiŋ-k^ha k^han-k^ha sawa*
spirit-PL drive-PNOM send-PNOM power
‘the power to drive out spirits’
- c. *sawa tom-k^ha len*
power support-PNOM day
‘the resting day’
- d. *mi-suw-a-da-ø-ʔo-ci hiŋ-k^ha-lon-k^ha sawa*
3pl-die-PT-eff-PT-NOM-PL save-PNOM-take.out-PNOM power
‘the power to make the dead live again’
- e. *chek-k^ha k^him-da*
block-PNOM house-LOC
‘in jail’

The above are all examples of modifier usage. It is clear that the modified noun serves the purpose of the verb that is nominalised in an instrumental or locative way.

(368) Independent usage, locative reading

- a. *laŋ nem-k^ha maddiŋ-yaŋ.*
leg stretch-PNOM NEG.be-PROG
‘there was no room to stretch the legs’

²Allen (1975: 60), Lahaussais (2002: 129). See also §8.6.

- b. im-k^ha
sleep-PNOM
'bed'
- c. yuŋ-k^ha
sit-PNOM
'place to sit'
- d. maŋ mu-k^ha-da dowa t^hom-ma dot-Ø.
worship do-PNOM-LOC shaman dance-INF must-NPT
'While worshipping, the shaman must dance.'

In the examples of independent usage (368a-368c), the locative reading is evident. The nominalised verb denotes the place of action. The locative semantics of *-k^ha* are most prominent and apparently relate to the homophonous locative nominal suffix. However, the verbal suffix *-k^ha* covers a more diffuse functional area that can be described as the nominalisation of all non-grammatical roles, i.e. the roles of location, purpose, instrument and occasion. The event reading of this nominalisation as in (368d) is repeated in examples (371) below. Strictly instrumental nominalisations with *-k^ha* are listed here.

(369) Independent usage with instrumental reading

- a. i-c^hak-k^ha batt-u-k^h-o.
his/her-chisel-PNOM bring-3P-see-3P
'bring the chisel here'
- b. rin-k^ha
plane-PNOM
'a carpenter's plane'
- c. d^hok-k^ha
dig-PNOM
'something to dig with'
- d. duŋ-k^ha
drink-PNOM
'something to drink from'

The nominalisations of this kind are generic, i.e. unspecific, e.g. a *cat-k^ha* (make eat-PNOM) 'utensil' may be any eating utensil, anything at all.

5.1.4 Infinitives

The Bantawa infinitive is a verb nominalisation that denotes the verbal action as such. The infinitive functions as the verb's citation form and in subordinated position.

Morphology The infinitive is formed by adding the infinitive suffix <-ma> (INF) to the pre-consonantal verb stem. Further affixes found are a) a non-singular marker <-ci> (DU), corresponding to the object of transitive infinites only, and b) the reflexive morphology <-ncin> (REFL-DUP-REFLC).

The infinitive is never inflected for person. Infinitive forms are negated by the negative prefix <man-> (NEGPTp).

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<Σ-ma>	(Σ-INF)	infinitive, 'to X'
<Σ-ma-n-ci-n>	(Σ-INF-REFL-DUP-copy)	reflexive infinitive, 'to X oneself'
<Σ-ma-ci>	(Σ-INF-DU)	plural infinitive, 'to X (pl)'

Syntax Infinitives can enter into clausal relations, such as temporal or sequential relations, with other infinitives by suffixation of clausal morphology. For instance, it is valid to say 'to do this and then to do that' using the sequential morpheme <-ki> (SEQ) affixed to the sequentially first infinitive, cf. example (370c).

(370) infinitives

- a. set-ma
kill-INF
'to kill'
- b. man-set-da-ma
NEGPTp-kill-NEGPTs-INF
'to not kill, not to kill'
- c. ləuri tom-ma-ki ma-ʔaŋ mo-du
stick support-INF-SEQ NEGPTp-be that-LOC.high
ruŋ-ma-n-ci-n-ʔo?
shake-INF-REFL-DUP-REFLc-NOM
'It should be shaken, supported on a stick, isn't it?', lit. a stick to support and then, isn't it, on top of that, to shake ...?
- d. ai im-ma da-ma ta i-tokt-im-in-ʔo.
today sleep-INF eff-INF FOC (N) NEGPTp-receive-12plSP-NEGn-NOM
'Today we shall not get to sleep.'
- e. mo-daŋka i-ki-ma kar-a-ŋ-a ni.
that-ABL his/her-fear-INF feel-PT-PROG-PT NAR
'Her fear of that came to grow...'

Infinitives are used for

- citation, as in examples (370a, 370b),
- nominalised verb forms, as in example (370e)
- as a complement to verbs that take infinitival complements such as *rɪma* 'can', *lamma* 'seek' or *tokma* 'get', as in example (370d)
- as an imperative or something that simply must be done (you must..., one must...), example (370c)

The plural marker <-ci> on the infinitive agrees with the understood patient of the verb only, never with the subject. The plural suffix <-ci> therefore never appears on intransitive infinitives. Once a plural marker appears on an infinitive, the infinitive is immediately understood as transitive. Compare the following sentences.

- (371) infinitives with plural marking
- a. maŋ mu-k^ha-da wa set-ma dot-Ø.
worship do-PNOM-LOC chicken kill-INF must-NPT
'While worshipping, a chicken must be killed.'
 - b. maŋ mu-k^ha-da wa-ci set-ma-ci mi-dot.
worship do-PNOM-LOC chicken-PL kill-INF-PL 3pl-must
'While worshipping, chickens must be killed.'
 - c. maŋ mu-k^ha-da dowa t^hom-ma dot-Ø.
worship do-PNOM-LOC shaman dance-INF must-NPT
'While worshipping, the shaman must dance.'
 - d. maŋ mu-k^ha-da dowa-ci t^hom-ma-ci mi-dot.
worship do-PNOM-LOC shaman-PL dance-INF-PL 3pl-must
'while worshipping, the shamans must be made to dance'
** 'while worshipping, the shamans must dance.'
 - e. * maŋ mu-k^ha-da mi-na-ci ta-ma-ci mi-dot.
worship do-PNOM-LOC man-PL come-INF-PL 3pl-must
** 'While worshipping, people must come.'
 - f. maŋ mu-k^ha-da mi-na-ci ta-ma dot-Ø.
worship do-PNOM-LOC man-PL come-INF must-NPT
'While worshipping, people must come.'

For the obligatory things to be done here, the infinitives that describe them must agree in number with the patients, e.g. example (371a). If an infinitive is ambiguous with respect to transitivity, the presence of the plural marker forces the transitive reading, and then intransitive readings are not possible. See example (371d).

Number marking on infinitives cannot agree with the subject of intransitive clauses, see examples (371e,371f). The infinitive forms a nominal phrase together with its patient or subject arguments, of which the number again must agree with the verb of the matrix clause.

5.1.5 Supine

Morphology The supine is formally marked by the supine suffix <-si> (SUP), affixed to the pre-consonantal verb stem.

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<Σ -si>	(Σ-SUP)	Supine, 'in order to X'

Syntax The supine or purposive infinitives are used as complements to finite verbs of direction. Supine forms indicate the purpose of the movement or action described in the matrix verb. While supine clauses may have their own nominal patient arguments, their agent or subject always is one and the same as that of the matrix clause.

(372) Supine

- a. lap-si ka-ta mukla
 catch-SUP APpref-come group
 'The group that came to catch.'
- b. g^hoɖa k^hi-si k^har-a ni.
 horse (N) steal-SUP go-PT NAR
 'He went to steal a horse' [Tt]
- c. mo g^hoɖa ca-si ta-Ø-ʔo.
 that horse (N) eat-SUP come-PT-NOM
 'He had come to eat horses' [Tt]
- d. g^hasa hek-si k^har-a-ʔo.
 grass (N) cut-SUP go-PT-NOM
 'He went to cut grass.'

Traditionally, the supine is considered as akin to the infinitive because the relationship obtaining between supine and infinitive clauses and their host matrix verb is more intimate than the relationship obtaining between gerund or converb clauses and their respective matrix verb host. In Bantawa, however, the supine does not syntactically differ from the simultaneous converb, apart from the restriction that the matrix verb of supine constructions must be a verb of movement or location.

5.1.6 Simultaneous converb

Morphology

The simultaneous converb is a non-finite verb form, affixed with the simultaneous suffix <-sa> (SIM), that indicates that the described action goes on at the very same time as the matrix verbs. The simultaneous suffix <-sa> selects the pre-consonantal stem of verbs.

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<Σ -sa>	(Σ-SIM)	simultaneous converb

Syntax and semantics

Ebert (1997b: 79) calls the Athpahariya cognate <-sa> of this marker a simultaneous converb, which describes it adequately³. The simultaneous marker forms embedded clauses that serve as subordinate modifier to the matrix verb. Similar to negative perfect converb clauses, simultaneous clauses are placed before the verb in the main clause. The subject or agent of the action may be mentioned first as argument to the simultaneous clause and be left out of the matrix clause, thus encapsulating the simultaneous clause in the main clause. The subject or agent of the simultaneous

³An alternative, more traditional terminology for this deverbal form would be 'present gerund'. In the traditional label 'present gerund', 'present' conventionally means 'simultaneous with the matrix clause event'.

clause always coindexes with that of the main clause, i.e. not with the patient. Also, the object of the action described by the embedded clause cannot be referenced in the matrix clause in any way. In summary, as with the supine, the subject patterns with the agent. The simultaneous clause inherits the time reference from the main clause. For this reason, Bickel (2004: 147) labels the Belhare cognate of this marker SS ‘same subject/same tense’.

By the simultaneous nature of the marker, the progressive marker of the verb, which operates much like a compounding verb in finite clauses, is often inserted in simultaneous converb forms.

- (373) t^hom-yaŋ-sa k^har-a
 dance-PROG-SIM go-PT
 ‘He went, dancing.’
- (374) ciya duŋ-yaŋ-sa yuŋ-ŋa-Ø-ŋa
 tea drink-PROG-SIM sit-1s-PROG-1s
 ‘I shall be sitting, drinking tea...’

Simultaneous verb forms seem to be synonymous with finite verb forms embedded with the phrasal simultaneous marker <-hida> (SIMP) (§8.4). However, there are situations where the <-sa> converb is not possible, while the alternative formation with the phrasal simultaneous marker <-hida> is. The point is that any activity described by a simultaneous clause marked with <-sa> is supposed to continue as long as the matrix clause verb lasts. This contrasts with finite clauses marked by the simultaneous marker <-hida>, Cf. §8.4.3.

With verbs in the matrix clause that express a perfective, resultative event, such as ‘to fall down’, the sentence becomes ungrammatical if the embedded clause is a simple simultaneous converb, cf. (375b) vs. (376b).

- (375) The difference between the phrasal simultaneous marker <-heda ~ -hida> and the simultaneous converb in <-sa>.
- a. t^hom-a-ŋ-a t^hom-a-ŋ-a-heda d^hams-a.
 dance-PT-PROG-PT dance-PT-PROG-PT-SIMP fall.down-PT
 ‘While he was dancing, he fell.’
- b. *t^hom-yaŋ-sa d^hams-a
 dance-PROG-SIM fall.down-PT
 ?? ‘he fell while dancing.’
- (376) while walking down
- a. yiinpa d^ha-Ø-ŋ-a-hida leŋs-a-k^har-a.
 down descend-PT-PROG-PT-SIMP slip-PT-go-PT
 ‘He slipped while he was walking down.’
- b. *yiinpa d^ha-sa leŋs-a-k^har-a.
 down descend-SIM slip-PT-go-PT
 ?? ‘He slipped while he was walking down.’

Example (375a) is grammatical and means that at some point, the subject fell down, while he or she had been dancing continuously, as expressed by the repeated progressive verb form. Example (375b) is considered funny because what is said is that someone fell and still continued dancing, both continuously. The contrast between examples (376a) and (376b) is the same.

While the progressive naturally fits well with the simultaneous, the progressive is not required and can actually render contrasting meanings.

(377) Progressive and simultaneous

- a. k^ho-sa-ʔa k^hata-da ims-a-ŋ-a-hida i-low-a-ŋ-ʔo.
 he/she-PRN-ERG bed (N)-LOC lie-PT-PROG-PT-SIMp 3AM-tell-PT-1s-NOM
 ‘He told me while he was lying on the bed...’
- b. k^ho-sa-ʔa k^hata-da im-sa i-low-a-ŋ-ʔo
 he/she-PRN-ERG bed (N)-LOC lie-SIM 3AM-tell-PT-1s-NOM
 ‘he told me, *during the time that he lay down* on the bed...’
- c. k^ho-sa-ʔa k^hata-da im-yaŋ-sa i-low-a-ŋ-ʔo
 he/she-PRN-ERG bed (N)-LOC lie-PROG-SIM 3AM-tell-PT-1s-NOM
 ‘He told me while he was laying himself down on the bed...’

The contrast between examples (377a) and (377c) is due to the inherent perfectivity of these Bantawa verbs. Examples (377a) and (377b) describe, that he spoke when the situation was such that he had lain down, while (377c) tells us that he spoke while this situation was brought about.

It has already been mentioned that embedded simultaneous clauses have the same subject and tense as the matrix clause. The subject that a simultaneous clause shares with the matrix clause must agree with the matrix verb in case marking and cannot be realised as the agent or subject of the embedded simultaneous clause.

(378) An intransitive main clause does not allow ergative marking on embedded clause

- a. mo-ko mina-ci madala mok-yaŋ-sa mi-t^hom-a-ŋ-a.
 that-REF man-PL drum (N) hit-PROG-SIM 3pl-dance-PT-PROG-PT
 ‘While they hit the drums, they were dancing’
- b. *moko minaci-ʔa madala mokaŋsa mit^homaŋa.
-ERG ...
 ‘invalid with ERG marking.’

Even though *mokma* ‘to hit’ is a transitive verb and the object of the beating is mentioned, an ergative marking on the agent of the hitting is ruled out.

A note on the clause status of simultaneous converbs Each embedded verb marked with the simultaneous morpheme <-sa> is a clause of its own, independently denoting an event. This fact has implications for the form of this marking applied to compounded verbs in Bantawa (§7.2). Normally, the first suffix after the verb stem is reduplicated in a compound, e.g. the infinitive for ‘to keep writing’ is: *c^hapma-yakma*. However, the simultaneous suffix <-sa> is not repeated, for *c^hapsa-yaksa* would yield

a reading ‘while writing and while staying’, but not the intended ‘while (he) kept writing’. To arrive at that reading, the verb must first be compounded, and then affixed: *c^hapyaksa* ‘while keeping on reading’. Example (379) provides a further illustration.

- (379) *maŋkolen c^hintuk* *k^hip-sa c^hap-sa k^hatt-u-m-nalo appi-ŋe*
 tomorrow day.after.tomorrow read-SIM write-SIM take-3P-12plA-COND self-EMPH
o yij not-yaŋ-sa k^hat-∅.
 this language be.easy-PROG-SIM go-NPT
 ‘If we keep reading and writing, tomorrow and later, the language will become easier by itself.’ [Bw]

5.1.7 Negative perfect converb

Morphology

The negative perfect converb is a non-finite verb form that loosely translates as ‘not having done X’. The negative perfect converb is formed by prefixing the negative prefix to the infinitive of the verb and suffixing the negative perfect converb suffix <maŋ> (NPC). The negative perfect converb suffix can be analysed as a compound of the infinitive suffix <-ma> and the emphasis marker <ŋ> (EMPH). Even though the derivation of the form may be transparent, we shall give the suffix a single gloss to avoid the idea that this is an emphasised negative infinitive.

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<man-Σ-maŋ>	(NEGPTp-Σ-NPC)	negative perfect converb

Syntax

The negative perfect converb can be the head of embedded clauses that function as subordinate modifiers to the matrix verb. Subordinate clauses are placed before the head verb of the main clause. The subject or agent of the action may be mentioned first as an argument to the embedded negative perfect converb, thus properly encapsulating the embedded clause in the main clause. The subject or agent of the embedded converb coindexes with that of the main clause, and not with the patient. The positive counterpart of the negative perfect converb is a fully finite form expanded with a sequential marker <-ki>, as shown below.

- (380) a. *yaŋ man-c^hon-maŋ bəs-da kon-ma i-nu-nin.*
 money NEGPTp-pay-NPC bus-LOC walk-INF NEGNP-be.good-3NEG
 ‘It’s not good to ride on the bus not having paid money.’
 b. *yaŋ c^hon-ma-ki bəs-da kon-ma dot-∅.*
 money pay-INF-SEQ bus-LOC walk-INF must-NPT
 ‘One must ride on the bus after paying money.’
- (381) a. *kok man-ca-maŋ i-ri-niŋ.*
 rice NEGPTp-eat-NPC NEGNP-can-NEG1s
 ‘I cannot do it, not having eating.’

- b. kok ca-ŋa-ki-na ri-ŋa.
 rice eat-1s-SEQ-TOP can-1s
 ‘I can do it after I eat.’

The positive and negative pairs in examples (380) and (381) demonstrate the function of the negative perfect converb construction. While there is functional and formal correspondance between the negative perfect converb and the infinitive, infinitives need additional morphology to signal the sequence of events (380b). Therefore, the negative perfect converb is a distinct morpheme.

5.2 Nominalisation

5.2.1 Verb nominalisation

In section 5.1, we reviewed a number of non-finite verb forms. By definition, non-finite forms only appear in a position subordinated to and embedded in a matrix clause or in an otherwise subordinated or modifier position. A number of non-finite deverbatives are also nominal in the sense that they show typically nominal properties, i.e. a) non-finite nominal deverbatives can have nominal morphology, b) syntactically, non-finite nominal deverbatives only appear as nominal modifiers or nominal heads, i.e. as verb arguments where noun phrases headed by a noun would be equally valid, or c) non-finite nominal deverbatives can be modified by nominal modifiers.

5.2.2 General nominaliser

Apart from specialised non-finite morphology, Bantawa has a procedure to nominalise finite verbs, i.e. verb forms fully marked for tense and heading a clause. It is more correct, therefore, to speak of nominalised clauses rather than verbs. This nominalisation is morphologically marked by the very general nominaliser suffix <-ʔo> (NOM).

<i>marker</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>function</i>
<-ʔo>	NOM	General nominaliser

This nominaliser has a very wide applicability, nominalising adverbial, nominal and verbal phrases. When the general nominaliser <-ʔo> applies to noun phrases, we refer to it by its classical name *genitive*, abbreviated GEN.

(382) Nominalisation across categories

- a. k^hun-nuch^aŋa o-da iŋka nepala-da-ʔo mec^hac^ha-ci-ʔo watmasi
 he/she-even.though this-LOC I Nepal-LOC-GEN daughter-PL-GEN jewellery
 k^hon-ki hum-ma tit-ʔo dum lu-yaŋ-sa k^hat-ŋa-Ø-ŋa.
 he/she-SEQ put.on-INF clothes-GEN thing tell-PROG-SIM go-1sNP-PROG-1sNP
 ‘However, here I shall go talking of the ornaments and clothes that
 Nepal’s girls put on.’ [Gr]

- b. *nepala-da-ʔo* tʰapsiŋ nepali mecʰacʰa-ci cilok *kʰim-da-ʔo* kaci
 Nepal-LOC-GEN ritual Nepalese daughter-PL many house-LOC-GEN work
 mi-mu-∅ duwacʰa-ci *bunʰkʰa-da-ʔo* kaci mu-ma dot-∅.
 3pl-do-NPT son-PL outside-LOC-GEN work do-INF must-NPT
 ‘In Nepal’s tradition, Nepali girls often do the work in the house, the boys must do the outside work.’ [Gr]
- c. duwacʰa-ci-nalo duwacʰa-ʔa mo-da mu-ma *dot-∅-yaŋ-∅-ʔo*
 son-PL-COND son-ERG that-LOC do-INF must-NPT-PROG-NPT-NOM
 kaci jʰarak mu-ma dot-∅
 work all do-INF must-NPT
 ‘If there are sons, the son must do all the jobs that need to be done in that case.’ [Dt]

Functions of the nominaliser

All of these examples show the function of the nominaliser <ʔo> as an operator that turns phrases of any type into adnominal modifiers. In example (382a), we see the nominaliser function as a genitive⁴. In example (382b) the nominaliser operates on locative adverbial expressions. In example (382c) the nominaliser turns the gapped phrase *mo-da mu-ma dot-∅-yaŋ-∅-ʔo* ‘that need to be done there’ into a modifier for the extracted noun *kaci* ‘the work’.

Nominalised phrases of any kind also appear as independent noun phrases. From the way that independent nominalised clauses translate we see that these are headless noun phrases. These phrases translate as ‘the one...’, e.g. (89), (156). These examples show that while we call the suffix under scrutiny a nominaliser, its essential function is to turn phrases into adnominal modifiers⁵.

In the remainder of this chapter, we shall review the various uses of the general nominaliser. In §5.2.5, we shall highlight the complementiser function. In §5.2.6, we shall discuss the function of <ʔo> as a free-standing sentence nominaliser. First we shall deal with a more modest function of the nominaliser, viz. the formation of the periphrastic perfect.

5.2.3 Perfect and pluperfect

Perfect forms

Past, i.e. preterite, perfective forms are turned into perfect forms by means of an auxiliary. There are two perfects: a present and a past perfect, known as pluperfect.

The present perfect describes a current state of events, viz. that the event described has occurred in the past and is now a fact. In that sense, a present perfect represents a state: A present perfect signals an action in the past that has relevance in the present. The past perfect or pluperfect describes a state that was true at a time

⁴Not as a possessive!

⁵The nominaliser might well be called an adnominaliser. However, we stick to the terminology ‘nominaliser’ as that ties in with terminology used for other languages of the area.

of reference that lies in the past. This combination of tense and aspect is commonly used for backgrounding in narratives put in the past tense.

Both progressive and simple forms can be put in the perfect. This leads to the somewhat confusing combination of the progressive perfect, cf. (Ebert 1997a: 27). The concept of a progressive perfect makes sense if we keep in mind that the perfect is used for backgrounding: Of course it is quite possible that an event that was progressive forms the background to some situation.

Morphology

In Bantawa, the perfect aspect is formed analytically by combining a main verb with an auxiliary. The perfect aspect is disjoint from tense: One can express perfect aspect for past and non-past events alike.

(383) The perfect is formed by the following procedure:

- a. the clause has a finite transitive or intransitive verb form in the past tense.
- b. this verb is nominalised with the general nominaliser <-ʔo>
- c. either of these three

PF1 *t^hiyō*, a past tense form of Nepali ‘to be’ is added.

PF2 a third person progressive form of the verb *yukma*₃ ‘be’ is added.

PF3 a progressive form of either of the intransitive verbs *yuy^hma*₃ ‘sit’ or *yukma*₃ ‘be’ is added, and inflected in agreement with the subject.

In summary, the perfect is analytically formed by nominalising the verb and adding an auxiliary. There is considerable variation in the auxiliary. The auxiliary may either be a loan from Nepali, a form inflected for third person singular, or a form agreeing with the subject or agent. For reference, it can be noted that this is one of the several instances where the subject and agent pattern with one another syntactically.

Tense The tense of the auxiliary determines the tense of the whole construction. The nominalised verb in perfect forms cannot be in the present tense: Example (384) is not acceptable, as the main verb is a non-past form.

- (384) * *k^hat-ŋa-ʔo yuw-a-ŋ-a*
 go-1sNP-NOM be-PT-PROG-PT
 ** ‘I have gone’

In the first perfect formation only the past perfect is expressed. The first perfect formation does not have a non-past form, which would have been formed with the Nepali auxiliary *c^ha*. The absence of this non-past perfect formation is not surprising, as the pluperfect forms are the most common anyway, and there are other means of expressing present perfect.

Perfect forms with an uninflected auxiliary I shall not dwell on the perfect forms with the Nepali auxiliary *t^{hi}yo*, as these are similar to Bantawa forms formed with *yukma* except that the auxiliary is replaced.

(385) PF2 Forms

- a. siw-a-da-Ø
die-PT-eff-PT
'he died'
- b. siw-a-da-Ø-ʔo yuw-a-ŋ-a
die-PT-eff-PT-NOM be-PT-PROG-PT
'he had died'
- c. k^har-a-ŋ-ʔo yuw-a-ŋ-a
go-PT-1s-NOM be-PT-PROG-PT
'I had gone'
- d. ott-u-ʔo yuŋ-Ø-yaŋ-Ø
break-3P-NOM be-NPT-PROG-NPT
'he has broken it'

The thing of note is that the auxiliary is obligatorily in the progressive aspect, which one might not expect in perfect forms. However, the progressive is required in those forms, which is not all strange: The perfect describes an event that has passed and is currently the situation. In agreement with the nominalising usage of the nominaliser suffix <ʔo>, the event is seen as a property of some participant in the event or situation described. The perfect merely ascribes the event by means of the auxiliary to the subject or agent of the nominalised clause.

The fact that perfect can only reference subject and agent participants in the nominalised clause reflects the discourse reference properties of the nominalised clause: Only the last argument of the verb can be referenced. If we wish to say that someone had been killed, which requires a passive in English, this cannot be done using the perfect nominalisation, e.g. with an alternative auxiliary, as in English. However, if the nominalised verb belongs to the class of middle verbs, where intransitive conjugation immediately renders the passive or rather intransitive reading, the passive reading follows necessarily. In order to express in Bantawa that someone had been killed, the agent must be left out from the nominalised clause.

(386) k^ho i-ser-a-ʔo t^{hi}yo
he 3AM-kill-PT-NOM PERF.aux
'he had been killed' (lit. 'they had killed him')

(387) iŋka-ʔa i-ser-a-ʔo k^ha-ŋ.
I-ERG 3AM-kill-PT-NOM see-1s
'I saw a man that was killed' ('I saw a man that they killed')

Perfect forms can be formed from simple and progressive forms alike. Perfect forms based on progressive finite verbs are progressive perfectives, denoting a fact that had progressively occurred before the time of reference.

(388) k^har-a-ŋ-y-a-ŋ-ʔo yuw-a-ŋ-a
go-PT-1s-PROG-PT-1s-NOM be-PT-PROG-PT

‘I had been going’

Perfect forms with an inflected auxiliary In the last or third perfect formation, the auxiliary agrees with the agent or subject of the nominalised clause.

- (389) Intransitive, present perfect
- a. k^har-a-ŋ-ʔo yuŋ-ŋa-Ø-ŋa.
go-PT-1s-NOM be-1s-PROG-1s
‘I have gone.’
 - b. k^har-a-ci-ʔo yuŋ-ci-ŋ-ci.
go-PT-DU-NOM be-DU-PROG-DU
‘They^{du} have gone.’
- (390) Intransitive, past perfect, pluperfect
- a. ti-k^har-a-ci-ʔo ti-yuw-a-ŋ-a-ci.
2AS-go-PT-DU-NOM 2AS-be-PT-PROG-PT-DU
‘You^{du} had gone.’
 - b. ti-k^har-a-nin-ʔo ti-yuŋ-in-y-in.
2AS-go-PT-2p-NOM 2AS-be-2p-PROG-2p-DU
‘You^{pl} had gone.’
- (391) Transitive, present perfect
- a. ott-u-ŋ-pi-ŋ-ʔo yuŋ-ŋa-Ø-ŋa.
break-3P-1s-BEN-3P-1s-NOM be-1s-PROG-1s
‘I have broken his arm.’
 - b. ot-na-ʔo yuŋ-ŋa-Ø-ŋa.
break-2P-NOM be-1s-PROG-1s
‘I have broken yours.’

The different patient marking on the first verbs in examples (391a) and (391b), but the similar subject marking on the auxiliary in both, illustrates the agent participant agreement on the auxiliary for transitive perfect forms.

- (392) Transitive, past perfect
- a. ot-na-ʔo yuŋ-aŋ-y-aŋ.
break-2P-NOM be-1s-PROG-1s
‘I had broken yours.’

5.2.4 Perfect formed by verbal compounding

The other strategy for adding aspectual semantics to verbs is to compound them. Verbal compounding has briefly been introduced to demonstrate the progressive aspect (§4.6.2), and will be discussed in detail in §7.2. The compounding strategy is also available to explicitly mark perfect or completive aspect on verbs: For the non-past tense, compounding is the only strategy.

The verbs *yujma*₂ or *yukma*₁ ‘to be, to sit, to put’⁶ indicate a perfect aspect of the previous action when used in the second position of a serial verb construction. The verb compound has a distinctly completive semantics that could also be labelled ‘stative’. In isolation, the vector verbs of perfect compounds mean ‘to sit, to put’, but in combinations such as these, they denote that the action has now turned into a situation, a state of affairs that is stable.

- (393) i-c^huk ott-u-ŋ yuŋs-u-ŋ
 his/her-arm break-3P-1s put-3P-1s
 ‘I have broken his arm’ (lit. ‘I broke him, I put him’)

For example (393), the following Nepali translations were offered: भाँचिदिएको छु ‘I have broken it for him’, भाँचेको छु ‘I have broken it’, भाँचिराखेको छु ‘I have put it into broken state’, the last claimed to be the most exact. In Nepali, the verb *rākhnu* ‘to put’ is similarly used to indicate completion of the action and to emphasise the continuity of the resulting state. As this construction is a compound verb, all compound constructions are available, including infinitive formation.

- (394) to finish breaking
 a. ot-ma yuk-ma
 break-INF put-INF
 ‘to finish breaking’
 b. otma yujma
 ‘to finish breaking, to complete breaking, to finish breaking’
 Nepali gloss: भाँचेर राख्नु, ‘to put after breaking’.

The verbs *yujma* and *yukma* ‘to put’ can be inflected in the intransitive forms alike.

- (395) k^har-a-ŋ yuŋs-a-ŋ.
 go-PT-1s put-PT-1s
 ‘I have gone.’

5.2.5 The general nominaliser as subordinator and relativiser

The nominaliser <-ŋo> as used in the examples (382a-382c) has a clear-cut nominalising effect. Suffixed to a sentence, the nominaliser forms a relative or complement sentence that functions as an adjunct, for instance to a noun, or an argument of a verb.

The general subordinator or nominaliser <-ŋo> (NOM) is used in three ways in combining clauses.

⁶The verb *yujma*₂ derives from *yujma*₃ by a regular derivation process, cf. §6.3.1. The relationship between *yukma*₁ and *yukma*₃ is similar, as these two differ only in conjugation type. The difference in transitivity that is frequently associated with the difference in conjugation type is not relevant in this particular compounding context.

- (396) the general nominaliser as a subordinator
- form an adnominal or nominal phrase, viz. a relative clause by relativisation,
 - form a sentential complement to *verba dicendi*,
 - subordinate a sentence by independent nominalisation, i.e. ‘backgrounding’.

The general nominaliser as a relativiser

The nominaliser <-ʔo> serves as a regular noun relativiser, embedding a sentence in a noun phrase as a modifier to the noun. For a sentence to serve as a relative clause, the nominal element that is modified must be extracted from the sentence. The structure of a relative construction is as in example (397).

- (397) [... e_i ...]-NOM_{relative clause} N_i

Extraction The coreferential index i signals that the noun N_i is understood as if this noun functioned in the empty position \emptyset_i in the relative sentence. In example (398) for instance, the relative sentence \emptyset *ram-lai kələm pi-∅-ʔo* ‘that gave Rām a pen’ can be reconstructed as *mina ram-lai kələm pi-∅-ʔo* ‘the man gave Rām a pen’. The modified noun in this type of relativisation can be called an external head, if contrasted with a construction with an internal head, where the noun remains *in situ* while still the construction is interpreted as a noun phrase. An internal head construction is not possible in Bantawa.

Any type of grammatical constituent in the relative clause can become a head in a relativisation construction. In the examples below we see agent (398), subject (399), patient (400) and indirect object, i.e. recipient (401) extraction.

- (398) mo [e_i ram-lai kələm pi-∅-ʔo] $mina_i$ saŋ?
 that Rām-DAT pen give-3P-NOM man who
 ‘Who is the man that gave the pen to Rām?’
- (399) [e_i j^harak-da-ŋka c^hi-∅-yaŋ-∅-ʔo] $cakwa_i$
 all-LOC-ABL be.expensive-NPT-PROG-NPT-NOM water
 ‘The most expensive water’
- (400) [syam-ʔa Ram e_i pi-∅-ʔo] $kələm_i$ rato mu-∅-yaŋ-∅
 Śyām-ERG Rām give-3P-NOM pen red be.pred-NPT-PROG-NPT
 ‘The pen that Śyām gave Rām is red.’
- (401) mo [syam-ʔa e_i kələm pi-∅-ʔo] $mina_i$ saŋ?
 that Śyām-ERG pen (N) give-3p-NOM man who
 ‘Who is the man that Śyām gave the pen to?’

While there is no case marking to tell apart the indirect object and patient constituents between utterances (401) and (400), pragmatically these are distinguished by animacy. An animate object is more likely a recipient than a patient.

External head Noun phrases that have relative clause adjuncts are headed by the modified noun. The modified noun is never contained inside the relative clause. The relative clause is a modifier to the noun. Sentential adjuncts can also serve as the head of a noun phrase, in which case the phrase will be understood as ‘the one who...’, cf. (402).

- (402) ni-jata-da *k^har-a-ʔo* maŋ-da i-k^hat-nin, ni-ʔo.
 other-caste (N)-LOC go-PT-NOM godhead-LOC NEGNPp-go-NEGn NAR-NOM
 ‘Who joined another caste will not enter the realm of the forefathers.’

The general nominaliser marking sentential complements

Finally, the nominaliser <-ʔo> marks sentential complements. Verbs of perception or speech are subcategorised for both phrasal and nominal complements. Complement phrases must be marked with <-ʔo> (NOM), cf. example (329) or (403).

- (403) [mo-da-ʔo ikcit mi-na-ci-ʔa k^hotni *mi-yiŋ-a-ʔo*] i-en-a-ki
 that-LOC-GEN a.little man-PL-ERG that.way 3pl-say-PT-NOM 3AM-hear-PT-SEQ
 mi-yiŋ-a: "en-a-n-u-m ..."
 3pl-say-PT hear-PT-2P-3P-12pA . . .
 ‘Some of the people there heard him speak like that and said, “Listen...”’

The nominaliser is also suffixed to sentential complements to verbs of perception. For verbs of cognition or utterance it may also be used, but for these verbs, the direct speech subordinator <ni> (NAR) is the marker of choice.

- (404) iŋka syam kələm *i-pu-ʔa-ʔo* k^ha-Ø-ŋ.
 I Śyām pen (N) 3AM-give-PT-NOM see-PT-1s
 ‘I saw someone give Śyām a pen.’
- (405) iŋka Syam-ʔa kələm pi-Ø-ʔo k^ha-Ø-ŋ.
 I Śyām-ERG pen (N) give-PT-NOM see-PT-1s
 ‘I saw that Śyām gave a pen.’
- (406) iŋka Syam-ʔa kələm pi-Ø-ʔo mi-na k^ha-Ø-ŋ.
 I Śyām-ERG pen (N) give-PT-NOM man see-PT-1s
 ‘I saw the man that Śyām gave a pen to.’
- (407) ram-ʔa sarima-ʔa d^hir-u-ʔo bak^hra Syam-ʔeda *in-u-ʔo* iŋka k^ha-Ø-ŋ.
 Rām-ERG disease-ERG find-3P-NOM goat Śyām-COMI sell-3P-NOM I see-PT-1s
 ‘I saw Rām sell a sick goat to Śyām.’

Grammatically, incomplete sentences such as utterances (404) and (405) are ambiguous. In these sentences, one of the participants is not explicitly mentioned in the embedded clause. For that reason, these embedded sentences can also be interpreted as noun phrases with an empty head. For sentence (404), this means that technically the reading ‘I saw who gave Śyām a pen’ is possible. However, this structural ambiguity does not cause problems when the pragmatic context is understood. The availability of the alternative of inserting an explicit noun to avoid any ambiguity, cf. example (406), precludes ambiguity in the less-marked constructions.

Stand-alone sentences marked with the nominaliser

The nominaliser could be considered as a syntactic subordinator in those instances where the nominalised sentence a) is not an adnominal modifier, i.e. not followed by a modified noun, and b) ends the discourse or narrative or is followed by another full sentence without further morphology.

However, stand-alone nominalisation is different from compound subordinators such as *-ʔo deŋda* ‘after’, as described in §8.4, and different from other adnominal or complement usage of the nominaliser, as discussed previously.

Stand-alone nominalisation marks background information and known facts, as discussed in §5.2.6.

- (408) *kami-ma-sudda yuŋs-a-ŋ-ʔo, həi. kʰwatni-cʰaŋ-ʔo iŋka*
 blacksmith-mother-COM (N) sit-PT-1s-NOM hey. that.way-ever-NOM I
kʰim-maŋ-da i-kʰat-ni-ŋ.
 house-godhead-LOC NEGNPp-go-NEGn-1s
 ‘I have stayed with a Kāmī woman, hey. Like that too, I cannot go into the realm of the house gods.’

In the midst of a discourse or narrative, this usage of independent nominalisation can be construed as sentence conjunction. This analysis would be further corroborated by the fact that the nominaliser *<-ʔo>* is in paradigmatic opposition to other conjunctive operators, such as the sequentialiser *<-ki>* (cf. §8.4): Co-occurrence with any other sentence conjunction is ruled out. However, the understood relationship of a nominalised clause with a successive sentence is a result of the functions of stand-alone nominalisation rather than the other way around.

5.2.6 Stand-alone nominalisation

The nominaliser *<-ʔo>* also appears independently as a marker on free-standing sentences. This phenomenon is widespread throughout the region⁷. Watters (2008) cites a host of grammars and grammarians in an attempt to identify typological common denominators and pinpoint a functional core of this type of nominalisation. Even if the function is unsure, syntactically this type of nominalisation is clearly delineated. Clauses can be nominalised even when they are not overtly subordinated. I shall follow Watters in calling this phenomenon ‘free standing’ nominalisation.

Known facts Free-standing nominalisation marks known facts, i.e. knowledge that hearer and speaker share. In the following line (409) from the Ganya narrative this function is explicit in the form ‘you said to me...’ Using the nominaliser, the speaker intentionally implies: You know it, and there is no denying it.

- (409) *lə iŋka kʰananin-ŋa nəu s̄iŋe r̄āga piw-a-nin-ne,*
 OK I you^P-EMPH nine *horned* (N) *buffalo.bull* (N) give-PT-2p-OPT
t̄i-low-a-ŋ-ni-ŋ-ʔo, lə abi piw-a-ŋ-ni-ŋ mo-ko-sa-ʔa dor-u.
 2AS-say-PT-1s-2p-1sc-NOM OK now (N) give-PT-1s-2p-1sc that-ref-PRN-ERG beg-3P

⁷Watters (2008): ‘The nominalisation of independent, non-subordinated clauses is a phenomenon that has been reported all across Tibeto-Burman, both within Himalayish and outside it.’

‘Well, let you give me a nine-horned buffalo bull, you said so, well, now give it, she asked.’ [Gn]

Backgrounding The nominaliser also marks background information, which is perhaps akin to marking known facts. The statements that move a story line forward in a narrative are normally put in unmarked forms, while background information is marked by nominalised forms. The usage of nominalisation is clearly illustrated in the recipe for ‘Hengmawa’. In this recipe, the things that people are expected to know, e.g. facts about the utensils, are put in the nominalised form.

- (410) a. p^heri k^honki-na gagityaŋ-hut-da ik-tet b^hi
 again (N) and.then-TOP distillation.vessel-hole-LOC one-qual earthen.vessel
 yuŋ-ma dot-Ø.
 put-INF must-NPT
 ‘after that, inside the gagityang one must put an earthen vessel.’ [Hm]
- b. i-do nikæi hamko mu-Ø-ʔo.
 his/her-mouth very (N) different be.pred-NPT-NOM
 ‘The mouth of that one is very different.’ [Hm]

As we see, the second sentence is nominalised. This sentence states a fact that is not part of the progressing story.

Factitive Rutgers (1998) labels free-standing nominalised verbs ‘factitive.’ This label nicely sums up the ‘backgrounding’ and ‘known facts’ readings mentioned above, and I shall use it to refer to these two functions.

Mirative Nominalised clauses also serve as complement to miratives. The mirative functional category is a regional phenomenon. Nepali, an Indo-Aryan language, and many Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal have simple grammatical means to mark new information. The Nepali auxiliary *raecha* [ræc^hə] is borrowed as Bantawa *ræc^hə* as a mirative marker. The mirative takes nominalised sentential complements.

- (411) am-c^ha badd^he i-k^haru mett-u-ŋ-o-ʔo ræc^hə.
 your^s-child very his/her-mind apply-3P-PROG-3P-NOM MIR (N)
 ‘your son appears to be very clever’

Controversy and assertion The nominalisation marker has a quite different effect on the non-past forms. Indicative nominalised forms are either understood as assertive such that the speaker expects controversy, but is ready to stand up against it, or they turn the inherent future reading into a proper present tense reading: ‘this is going to happen right now.’

- (412) Effect of nominalisation of non-past forms
- a. k^hat-ŋa
 go-1s
 ‘I shall go’

- b. k^hat-ŋa-ʔo
 go-1s-NOM
 ‘I go’ (or ‘certainly will go’, ‘am going right now’)

Questions Finally, to conclude our survey of different uses for this nominaliser, we must note that questions or instructions are often marked with the nominaliser. This has also been observed for a multitude of languages of the area (Watters 2008: 22).

- (413) am-k^he ham-si ti-k^har-a-ʔo?
 your^s-lice swap-SUP 2AS-go-PT-NOM
 ‘Did you go to swap lice?’ (meaning: did you go to have sex?)

However, this is not so much a matter of politeness as in Newar (Watters 2008: 22), but simply a matter of correct language. Inquiring questions that inform after a statement of fact and would translate as ‘is it the fact that...?’, are normally put in the nominalised form. Imperatives are not nominalised.

Imperfective Van Driem (1987) offers the label ‘imperfective’ for the nominalised forms in Limbu as well as for the parallel forms in Dumi (1993b). The choice for this label is further clarified in Van Driem (1993a), where the author points out the similarities in function of the Limbu nominaliser on one hand and the Russian imperfective on the other. While the nominaliser of Limbu is formally different from the Bantawa nominaliser, in many respects the Limbu nominaliser functions similarly: The nominaliser affixes to finite verbs and appears in similar contexts.

The label ‘imperfective’ originates from the Slavic linguistic tradition and has a well defined meaning in that context. In this grammar, however, I reserve this term for verbal categories that express cursive, i.e. ongoing aspect as in contrast with perfective aspect of the verb. In this notion of the imperfective, all imperfective categories contrast with perfective categories that denote that the verbal action is delimited, has a beginning or end. In this grammar, the imperfective is understood as defined by Payne (1997: 239), i.e. as describing a process ‘from the inside’, as an ongoing process. This functional area of verb aspect is covered in Bantawa by the progressive and continuative verb compound forms. Particularly the progressive is so frequent, that petrified forms are grammaticalising to form a fixed paradigm.

To call the nominaliser an imperfective is infelicitous because all verbs, regardless of their aspect, both progressive and perfective, can be nominalised. Apparently, the categories of aspect and *Aktionsart*, viz. imperfective, progressive and perfective on one hand and factitive or nominalisation on the other hand are functionally disjoint. Moreover, unlike the Russian imperfective, the nominaliser is not a verbal category but a cross-category suffix that primarily turns clauses of any type into nominals or nominal modifiers. For this reason, Bantawa nominalised forms are not described as imperfective.

An account for free-standing nominalisation

Empty copula Watters (2008: 22-26) attributes the assertive and contrastive interpretations of nominalised clauses to the fact that, under the surface, these nominalised clauses are the complement or predicate of an empty equative verb. A sentence such as the following, that concludes a narrative, then must be translated as a cleft sentence. Sentence (414a) would translate as ‘it is like that’, while example (414b) would, more precisely and emphatically, be rendered as ‘The fact is, it was like that’.

- (414) a. k^hwatni lis-a.
 like.that become-PT
 ‘it is like that’
 b. ... kina k^hwatni lis-a-ʔo.
 ... SEQ like.that become-PT-NOM
 ‘... Then, that is what it is like.’

Under this analysis, the statements in (414) are structurally very different from backgrounding or factitive sentences. Sentence (414b) gets the structure of an equative predicate, where the nominalised clause is the single argument of an empty monovalent copula. The nominalised clause in (414b) is interpreted as embedded to an implied, monovalent equative verb.

- (414b) [k^hwatni lis-a-ʔo] [∅]_{copula}
 [like.that become-PT-NOM]_{NP} EQ
 ‘The fact is, it was like that.’⁸

Arguably, Bantawa has an empty equative copula, cf. §4.2.1, so assuming a monovalent reading for this copula is not far-fetched: a) Zero verbs are well established in simple equations, and, more importantly, b) some other copula verbs of the ‘to be’ class are seen to form constructions with a nominalised clause complement, e.g. perfect constructions⁹, but also, in the same vein, the mirative. In summary, this account by Watters (2008) explains the differences in interpretation between two types of stand-alone nominalisations by positing an empty copula for those sentences that have a contrastive or assertive reading. Even if this analysis is hard to prove or falsify, since it involves an inaudible element, this way of describing this structure offers some insight into the semantic effect of nominalisation.

Making an object of a sentence The factive and backgrounding use of nominalised sentences are quite different from contrastive and assertive sentences. To understand the non-contrastive usage of nominalised sentences, we may keep in mind that these sentences, by virtue of nominalisation, are technically no longer propositions but noun phrases. A sentence, as a proposition, would normally be

⁸This analysis is parallel to ex.(54) in Watters (2008).

⁹As a footnote, we might well observe that in many or all Indo-European languages, perfect participles are adnominal. In many languages, the formation of perfect aspect is the process of turning the perfect participle into a predicate.

associated with the logical Boolean type, i.e. a sentence may have a truth value and can be evaluated as true or false. The effect of stand-alone nominalisation on a sentence, is that the sentence is turned into an entity, an object. This sentential object can be an argument to a verb as a sentential complement or become one half of a predication, even with a zero copula, or a circumstance, a general fact providing background information to a story. The general nominalisation in Bantawa has the semantic effect of changing sentences into noun phrases. This procedure spawns all these different possibilities for interpretation and manipulation.

Figure 5.1: Scorching the hair off the hog

