

Double nominalization in Yukaghir: structural ambiguity as semantic duality

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1 Double Nominalization Construction

DET [NP₁ ... V]-**uol**[-*moraw*][*-PERSON(A/S)*][*-CASE*]

- (1) *qad'ir tude moŋo-pul-hane men-delek kejeten ma:-m*
now 3SG hat-PL-P take-SS:PFV in.advance wait-3SG
tude ekya kelu-j-uol-moraw-le
[3SG sister come-0-DNR-PRSP-P]
'He took his hat in advance and waited for his sister to return.'

- (2) a. [... WAIT(*he*, COME(*his sister*))]
b. [... WAIT(*he*, *his sister*) & BE.GOING.TO.COME(*his sister*)]

Unambiguous paradigmatic alternatives:

- (3) *Complement*
mit wa:j jaba-l-gi ma:-nu-j
we also die-ANR-3SG wait-PROG-TR:1PL
'We are waiting for his death, too.'
- (4) *Head-final relative clause*
jaba:-l'el-d'e kode-gi joqodile-n-deŋ neme-n'e-reŋ
die-INFR-SN person-RP horse-COM-SS:IPFV what-COM-SS:IPFV
kelu-j
come-3SG
'Her husband, who had been reported to have died, came (home) with horses and what not.'

- Why would the speakers use an ambiguous (DN) construction when unambiguous alternatives are readily available, that is, what are the factors that trigger the DN-construction (for participant reference and for event reference)? Is this ambiguity resolved (and if yes, then how)?
- Is the DN-construction indeed ambiguous, i.e. whether it lumps together two different structures, one (at some level) identical with that of (unambiguous) relative clause construction, and the other, with that of (unambiguous) complement construction?

2 Grammar note

This talk is based on one of two extant Yukaghir languages, Tundra (or Northern) Yukaghir.

- ✓ a consistently head-final language;
- ✓ lots of mostly agglutinative suffixes (and some prefixes);
- ✓ no adjectives, i.e. qualitative lexemes are mostly verbs; as a result, relative clauses play a major role in discourse; the order of relative clauses (lexical modifiers) and determiners/quantifiers is relatively free.
- ✓ complementation plays a very marginal role.

3 Semantics of DN-construction

3.1 The DN-phrase refers to the DN-event

- (5) a. *mo:rquon' ielger kötke-j-uol-e kurel'i-mele*
only [the.other.side arrive-0-DNR-P] know-OF:3
'He only knew that he reached the other side.'
- b. *eguojie juora-j-uol-moraw-lek n'ied'i-ni*
[tomorrow play-0-DNR-PRSP-INSTR] discuss-3PL
'They arranged to play the next day.' ('They talked so as to play tomorrow')

3.2 The DN-phrase refers to S/P of DN-event

- (6) a. HEADLESS RC (P-ORIENTED)
qol-l'e tet qohi-j-uol?
Where-is [2SG dig-0-DNR]
'Where is [the pit] you have dug?'
- b. HEAD-INTERNAL RC (S-ORIENTED)
ma:rquon' erime eju:-j-uol-ek l'e-j
only [SNOW fall-0-DNR-F] be-3SG
'There was nothing but the snow that had fallen (meanwhile).'

3.3 The DN-phrase refers to the location of DN-event

- (7) a. *tiden tude gorat ahuol-uol-ha kötke-t'*
that 3SG town stand-DNR-LOC arrive-3SG
'He arrived to the place where his town used to be.'
- b. *qada: sew-j-uol-moraw-le el-gurel'i*
[where enter-0-DNR-PRSP-P] NEG-know(3SG)
'He didn't know where to enter.'

4 Syntactic roles of DN-phrase

4.1 Independent sentence

- (8) *tujun-hane ma:rqan peldudie-hat tuj jalhil-hane quodi: tite*
this-P one old.man-ABL this lake-P why so
kirije-l'el-ŋa?' monu-l-ha n'ied'i-j-uol-gi.
call-INFR-3PL say-1/2-DS tell-0-DNR-3SG

[The final sentence of a story about a man drowned in a lake] 'This (story) (P) was told by an old man when I asked him why this lake is called so.'

4.2 Peripheral quasi-nominal roles

4.2.1 *Instrumental*

- (9) a. $S_{DN} = S_{MATRIX}$ (\emptyset representation in the DN-phrase)
tude ekya kelu:-nu-da-ha n'a:t'-in' pulge-t'
3SG sister come-PRG-3SG-DS face-DAT come.out-3SG
kewe:j-j-uol-moraw-lek.
go.away-0-DNR-PRSP-INSTR
'As his sister was coming (back), (he) went outside, so as to leave (in order to leave right away).'
- b. $S_{DN} = P_{MATRIX}$ (cross-reference "possessive" marker on the DN-form)
el-t'ahad'e-j-uol-de-moraw-lek *mo:j-m lukul.*
NEG-move-0-DNR-3SG-PRSP-INSTR hold-3SG soil
'The ground pressed him so that he could not move.'

4.2.2 *Locative*

- b. $LOC_{DNR} = LOC_{MATRIX}$
nondawjey pel-uol-moraw-ha ejuoke gur-t'i:-nun-i
[arrow reach-DNR-PRSP-LOC] close become-HAB-3SG
'He would come close enough for an arrow to reach (the deer).'
- c. $ROUTE_{DNR} = ROUTE_{MATRIX}$
laj-huder titte kelu-j-uol-han me-l'irere-j-ŋa
back-DIR 3PL come-0-DNR-PROL AFF-blow-PFV-3PL
'They blew back along the route of their arrival.'

4.3 Core nominal roles

4.3.1 *S (examples (6), repeated here)*

- (10) a. *qol-l'e tet qohi-j-uol?*
where-is [2SG dig-0-DNR]
'Where is [the pit] you have dug?'
- b. *ma:rquon' erime eju:-j-uol-ek l'e-j*
only [SNOW fall-0-DNR-F] be-3SG
'There was nothing but the snow that had fallen (meanwhile).'

4.3.2 P

□ Complements (event reference)

(11) a. Intransitive DN-clause

mo:rquon' ielger kötke-j-uol-e kurel'i-mele
only [the.other.side arrive-0-DNR-P] know-OF:3
'He only knew that he reached the other side.'

b. Transitive DN-clause

tiden l'iteges-uol-moraw-le me-janaspejre-ŋa
[that beat-DNR-PRSP-P] AFF-forget-3PL
'They forgot that they were going to beat him.'

□ Headless/head-internal relative clause (participant reference)

(12) a. Intransitive DN-clause

e, tuŋn'eŋ tude ugurt'e oŋunbe-j-uol-moraw tiŋn'i:-me-le.
Intj Dct [3SG LEG get.wet-0-DNR-PRSP] pity-OF:3SG
[Context: A cow does not want to get into a river.] "Oh, that's because it is afraid
that its legs are going to soak." [It pities its legs that are going to get wet]

b. Transitive DN-clause

tuŋ tude kone-pul-hat tude na:di-j-o:l-hane men-nun-l'el-u-m
this 3SG person-PL-ABL 3SG need-0-DNR-P take-HAB-INFR-0-3SG
'He used to take from his people whatever he needed.'

4.4 Nominal modifiers

4.4.1 "Possessive" (NP+NP) construction

□ Event reference ("nominal complement"):

(13) a. *taŋ t'i:-pe-gi pot'esej-ŋu-da-ha o:ren'e-j-uol jawul-gi nol-l'el-te-j.*
[those people-PL-3 send-PL-3-DS cry-0-DNR] trace-3 COP-HYP-3SG
'It is probably the trace of her crying at the time when her people sent her away.'

b. *qad'ir me-keju-j, med'uol-uol t'ajle-gi kol-da-ha*
now AFF-come-3SG be.born-DNR day-3SG come-3SG-DS
'Now he came on his birthday (when the day of his birth came).'

□ Participant reference ("head-internal relative clause")

(14) *tuŋ lukunburebe ön'id'e-ŋola:-j-uol kit'il-gi waŋt'i:-t'e-r*
[this SOIL sand-become-0-DNR] end-3SG search-VEN-SS
kewej-te-ŋl'i.
go-FUT-1PL
'Let's go look for the end of the soil that has turned into sand.'

4.4.2 P-oriented head-final relative clauses

(15) a. *qad'ir tiden korel n'ied'i-j-uol gorat-pe-k waŋt'i:-t'e-ŋu-mle.*
now that devil speak-0-DNR town-PL-F search-VEN-PL-OF:3
'They went in search of the towns that the devil had spoken about.'

b. *la:meduor-pe titte köde-ŋin' apta-j-uol kiliep köjle-pul-gi l'e-l*
[puppy-PL 3PL person-DAT gather-0-DNR] bread crumb-PL-3 exist-SF
'There were only crumbs of the bread that puppies had gathered for their master.'

- (16) *taŋ tude pun'-uol-hane talaw-hane t'i:-ŋin' sawasa:-nun-u-m*
 that 3SG kill-DNR-P deer-P people-DAT share-HAB-0-3SG
tude-jlek
 3SG-INTSF
 'He himself would share the wild deer he has killed among (other) people.'

4.4.3 Free restrictors of universal quantifiers

- (17) a. *wal'be-pe, tit-ul met legu-t-uol-moraw neme-ŋol-l'elk ew-l'e*
 friend-PL, 2PL-P 1SG eat-CAUS-DNR-PRSP what-UNV-A/S NEG-exist(3)
 'Friends, there is nothing I could feed you with.'
- b. *neme-ŋol-l'elk lew-j-uol-mora:w-gi ew-l'e.*
 what-UNV-A/S eat-0-DNR-PRSP-3 NEG-exist(3)
 'He had nothing to eat.'
- c. *apanala:-gi aq puŋuole-r neme-ŋol-leŋ wie-j-uol-moraw-le*
 wife-3SG only rejoice-SS what-UNV-P make-0-DNR-PRSP-P
janaspejre-m.
 forget-3SG
 'His wife was so delighted that she forgot whatever she was going (had) to do.'
- d. *kin-uol-leŋ ögete-j-uol-moraw-pe-gi el-gurel'i:*
 who-UNV-P appoint-0-DNR-PRSP-PL-3 NEG-know(3SG)
 'He did not know anyone whom they could appoint.'

4.5 Adjoined nominal modifiers

4.5.1 P-oriented adjoined relative clauses

- (18) a. *ile-le, met an'mil-hane, mer-oŋde-ŋa, met wahane ile-ŋol*
 deer-P 1SG draught.deer-P AFF-harness-3PL 1SG own deer-TRNSF
met t'i: ki:-j-uol-pe-gi
 1SG people give-0-DNR-PL-3
 'They harnessed a domestic deer, my draught deer, my own domestic deer, [given (to me) by my parents].'
- b. *n'ohodahil albe-de-han ul'ege-lek quduo-l'el-u-l,*
 bed under-3SG-PROL grass-FOC lie-INFR-0-SF
alhan pukol'a-ta-j monu-r kuderej-uol-gi
 [[[HORT]soften-FUT-3SG say-SS] put-DNR-RP
tude peldudie juo-da-ha, jaba-l-gi kiejie.
 [3SG old.man sick-3-DS] [die-ANR-RP before]]
 'There was some hay under her bed, put there [by her] before her husband's death, while he was ill, in order to make it softer (lit. 'saying "let it be softer"')

4.5.2 Adjoined nominal complements

- (19) *tude t'amadald'e-hatkerie-j-uol-moraw-gi eguojie t'ajle+ŋol-l'e-n'*
 his king-ABL fall-0-DNR-PRSP-3SG tomorrow day+COP-INFR(3SG)
 'Tomorrow was the day of his dismissal from the post of king.'

5 Structure of DN-phrase

5.1 Intransitive DN-clauses

- Ambiguity resolved by the absence of overt lexical S (event reference)
- Ambiguity resolved by the matrix verb:

(20) *e, tuɲn'eɲ tude ugurt'e oɲunbe-j-uol-moraw tiɲn'i:-me-le.*
 Intj Dct 3SG LEG get.wet-0-DNR-PRSP pity-OF:3SG

[Context: A cow does not want to get into a river.] “Oh, that’s because it is afraid that its legs are going to soak.” [It pities its legs that are going to get wet]

- Ambiguity unresolved:

(21) a. *met pulij-uolde mit en'ie jaba-j-uol-hane ahal'we-reɲ jand-uo-n'*
 1SG brother.in.law-TOP 1PL mother die-0-DNR-P smile-SS sleep-3SG
 ‘As for my brother-in-law, he slept laughing at our mother’s death [at our mother who has died.]’

b. *band'y:t-pul ejk me-neme-pe-leɲ kelu-j-uol-moraw-pe-da-hane*
 [bandit-PL or AFF-what-PL-F come-0-DNR-PRSP-PL-2-P]

mörd'e-s-ɲa

hear-CAUS-3PL

‘They let us know about some bandits or whoever who were going to arrive.’

[~about the bandits’ pending arrival]

- ✓ Control of reflexive possessive pronouns within S (see also (20))

(22) *qad'ir tude moɲo-pul-hane men-delek kejeten ma:-m*
 now 3SG hat-PL-P take-SS:PFV in.advance wait-3SG

tude ekya kelu-j-uol-moraw-le
 [3SG sister come-0-DNR-PRSP-P]

‘He took his hat in advance and waited for his sister to return.’

- Intransitive DN-phrase with overt internal S can always be interpreted as coreferential with its S, whereas event-reference interpretation is not always compatible with the matrix verb. The S-component of DN-clause is treated as a constituent of the matrix clause for the purposes of cross-referencing the possessor.
- However, a relation between the DN-event and the matrix event never amounts to the shared-argument relation (even though it does not always include an argument-predicate relation required for complement analysis). If there is no such relation, an unambiguous relative clause construction is used. Thus, this additional event-event relation – reflected in the syntactic status of DN-phrase – is an inherent part of the correct interpretation of DN-construction; the complement-like structure must be acknowledged (rather than ruled out) in the processing.
- The correct interpretation of this construction involves not a **choice** between two alternative structures (resolution of ambiguity), but rather recognition of a dual semantic link between the DN-event and the matrix event (the quasi-alternative structures complement rather than contradict each other).

5.2 Transitive DN-clauses

- Ambiguity resolved by the presence of overt lexical P (event reference)

(23) *naruot-ki tude aru: el-t'aw-i-uol-han pujuol-er tude marqil'*
 people-3SG 3SG word NEG-cut-0-DNR-PROL rejoice-SS 3SG daughter
tadi-me-le taŋ gode-ŋin'
 give-OF:3SG that man-DAT
 'Glad that his people obeyed his word, he gave his daughter to that man (in marriage).'

- "Ambiguity" of DN-clauses without overt P

(24) a. *Event-reference*

tiden t'a:rt'eqa:n-hane pun'i:-t'e-r kel-l'el-d'e t'i: ma:lej-r
 Those Ch.-P kill-VEN-SS come-INFR-SN people be.surprised-SS

titte pun'-uol-moraw-hane janaspjre-ŋa.
 [3PL kill-DNR-PRSP-P] forget-3PL

'Those people who came in order to kill Charchehan were so surprised that they forgot that they were going to kill him.'

b. *Participant-reference*

met pun'-uol-hane el-lew-ŋu-han
 [1SG kill-DNR-P] NEG-eat-3PL-IMP

'Let them not eat what I have killed.'

- The P-component of DN-clause is a component of the matrix clause in all examples; if the DN-clause contains overt lexical P, it is treated as a constituent of the matrix clause for the purposes of cross-referencing the possessor.
- The DN-phrase appears in the P-slot of the matrix clause
 - If the participation in DN-event is the only restrictive property of the P-participant of matrix event (headless relative clause, as in (24b)), or
 - If the referential identity of the shared participant is established independently, and the DN-event itself is a component of the matrix clause (as in (23) and (24a)).
- In the latter case, the choice of DN-construction (in contrast to the unambiguous event nominalization alternative) signals the participation of P of DN-event in the matrix clause event. Exactly like in the case of intransitive DN-clauses, the correct interpretation involves recognition of dual semantic link between events.

5.3 Question words (indirect specific questions)

- (25) a. *qada:* *sew-j-uol-moraw-le* *el-gurel'i*
 [where enter-0-DNR-PRSP-P] NEG-know(3SG)
 'He didn't know where to enter.'
- b. *qad'ir puregela:han+de kode el-gurel'i: tanj neme-lede*
 now western+DSJ person NEG-know(3SG) [that what-INSTR
juora-j-uol-moraw-le
 play-0-DNR-PRSP-P]
 'Now that man from the west did not know what they were going to play at.'
 PLAY[S = A_{MATRIX}, WHAT]
- c. *juodi:-pe-gi n'a:rt'u:-l-pe-gi me-kurel'i:-m quodi:r ta:t*
 eye-PL-3 bad-ANR-PL-3 AFF-know-3SG [why so
kurt'i:-j-uol-pe-da-hane tude t'unđe-ha.
 become-0-DNR-PL-3] 3SG mind-LOC
 'Their eyes being bad, he knew, in his mind, why that had happened.'
- d. *tuj tude gorat qada:-t jede:j-uol-da-hane tanj leml'e tude-jlek*
 [that 3SG town where-ABL appear-DNR-3SG-P] this leader he-INTSF
el-gurel'i:
 NEG-know(3SG)
 'Where this town of his had come from, this leader didn't know himself.'
- (26) a. *lukul-ha+de pure+de u:-j-uol-hane el-kurel'-i,*
 [soil-LOC+DSJ above+DSJ go-0-DNR-P] NEG-know(3SG),
qada:-de u:-se-j-uol-pe-da-hane el-kurel'i:
 [where-DSJ go-CAUS-PL-3-P] NEG-know(3SG)
 'He did not know whether he traveled by land or by air, he didn't know how they brought him there.'
- b. *qada:-de u:-j-uol-hane wa:j el-kurel'i:,*
 [where-DSJ go-0-DNR-P] again NEG-know(3SG),
ejk pure-n ejk al-u-n
 or above-PROL or below-0-PROL
 'Again he didn't know where he traveled, by land or by air.'
- Question words and particles indicate a shift to an “unusual” shared component (in this sense, they have the semantic impact similar to that of locative case marking)

Conclusion: The DN construction involves no genuine ambiguity; rather, it signifies co-existence of two relations, one between the events being described and the other between the matrix-clause event and a component of the nominalized-clause event. The hearer is not expected to resolve the (apparent) ambiguity, but to acknowledge both facets of the dual relation signaled by the DN construction; conversely, the speaker is not forced to choose one facet over the other for direct structural encoding, but can express both of them simultaneously.