

Relativization and Nominalization in Bodic

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## **Relativization and nominalization in Bodic**

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While the Tibeto-Burman (T-B) languages show considerable typological diversity along some dimensions—most notably in the structure and morphological complexity of the verb—in terms of most of the major typological parameters they show an impressive consistency. With the exception of the Karen branch, T-B languages are resolutely SOV, with all of the attendant stigmata (postpositions, postverbal auxiliaries, clause-final subordinators, etc.) Like many other SOV languages T-B languages are clause-chaining. And while, when considered from a T-B internal perspective, certain languages or branches do show some isolating (Loloish) or inflectional (Tibetan) behaviors, in a larger perspective the fundamental typology of the family is essentially agglutinative.

Besides this basic SOV-agglutinative structural plan, the synchronic syntactic organization and diachronic tendencies of these languages can be largely understood in terms of two syntactic tendencies: verb serialization (see Matisoff 1969, 1974, 1991, Smeall 1975, DeLancey 1991) and nominalization. The importance of both of these was first recognized by Matisoff in his analysis of Lahu,<sup>1</sup> and brought to the attention of the Tibeto-Burmanist world by two seminal papers (Matisoff 1969, 1972), which between them have informed the majority of the work in T-B syntax which has appeared since. The determining role of nominalization in T-B syntactic structure and diachrony is far too large a topic to do justice to here; my purpose is only to survey one manifestation, relativization, which throughout the family is based in the grammar of nominalization.

### **1.0 Nominalization in T-B syntax and diachrony**

Early investigators of Tibeto-Burman languages seem to have had a sense of the centrality of nominalization to their syntactic organization, but were never really

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1. In fact Matisoff clearly had a strong sense of the importance of verb serialization in T-B even before he encountered Lahu, as Matisoff 1974 was actually written ten years before that, prior to his first fieldwork on Lahu.

able to come to grips with its resolutely non-Indo-European manifestations. But the serious study of nominalization and relativization in Tibeto-Burman begins quite recently, with Matisoff's seminal paper "Lahu nominalization, genitivization, and relativization" (1972). In the ensuing 20 years the connection between these two phenomena has become received wisdom in the field; Bickel (1999) has recently referred to the "Standard Sino-Tibetan Nominalization" pattern (see also Herring 1991, Genetti 1992, Noonan 1997), and grammatical descriptions now routinely have a section on nominalized clauses in which relativization is discussed along with other uses of nominalization.

In Lahu, as described in detail by Matisoff (1972, 1982), a single morpheme, *ve*, functions as a nominalizer, complementizer, relativizer, and genitive marker. A similar complex of functions revolving around a single morpheme occurs in other T-B languages, e.g. Jingphaw, Southern Chin (Houghton 1892), and Chantyal (Noonan 1997). While the inclusion of genitivization on this list of functions is far from a universal T-B feature (though impressively widespread, as the list above suggests), the identity of relativization with nominalization constructions does seem to be nearly universal throughout the family, the only clear exceptions being a handful of Himalayan languages which are reported as having developed Indo-European-style relative pronoun constructions. Other apparent exceptions may have more interesting histories. One example is Burmese, which is a *prima facie* exception to the claim that relative clauses are universally nominalizations in Tibeto-Burman. The Burmese relative clause is an ordinary finite clause, ending in one of the finite declarative final particles *te* or *me*, and marked as subordinate by "induced" grammatical creaky tone (Okell 1969:18, 59-61, see also Wheatley 1982:104-9, Soe 1999:50-6, Herring 1991). But while induced creaky tone is not synchronically a form of nominalization, there is ample evidence to support Benedict's (1972) suggestion that it reflects the old PTB genitive morpheme *\*ki* (Thurgood 1981), and thus that the modern Burmese relative clause reflects an older construction more in line with the "Standard Sino-Tibetan Nominalization" pattern.

## **2.0 Variations on a theme**

The fundamental relativization pattern is the same throughout the family: relativization is a subspecies of clausal nominalization. The modifying clause is nominalized, and then stands in either a genitive or an appositive relation to the head noun. Beyond this basic commonality, however, there is a substantial amount of variation in the complexity and organization of the nominalization—relativization system. In this section I will present three quite different patterns in some detail; we will see further variations on the basic theme in the following section.

### **2.1 A simple system: Classical Tibetan**

Classical Tibetan exemplifies a very simple system, which I will argue can be ascribed to Proto-Bodic. The basic nominalizer, *pa*, is the only relative marker, and the relative construction is indifferent to distinctions of case, tense/aspect, and animacy.

### 2.1.1 Nominalization and relativization in Classical Tibetan

The relative construction is a nominalized clause functioning as either prenominal modifier of a head noun or a postnominal appositive (see Mazaudon 1978, Beyer 1992, DeLancey 1999). Pre-head relatives are always marked as genitive, indicating their subordinate status within the NP; post-head relatives never are. Relativization can be off of any grammatical role:

- (1) *shi-ba-'i*      *ro*  
die-NOM-GEN   body  
'a dead body'
- (2) *slob=dpon*   *med-pa-'i*                      *brtul=zhugs-chan*   *'di*  
teacher   not.exist-NOM-GEN   ascetic                      DEM  
'this ascetic who has no teacher'
- (3) *rgyal-po*   *ngan-pa-'i*   *g.yog=po*   *rnams-kyis*   *snying=rje*  
king   bad-GEN   servant   PLU-ERG   compassion  
      *med-pa-s*                      *bsad-pa='i*        *bram=ze*  
      not.exist-NOM-INSTR   killed-NOM-GEN   Brahmin  
'the Brahmin whom the servants of the evil king mercilessly killed'<sup>2</sup>
- (4) *ltad=mo*   *lta-ba-'i*        *lam*   *du*  
sights   see-NOM-GEN   road   LOC  
'on the way to see the sights'

Although both the Classical Tibetan and the Lahu system involve a single nominalizer in a single construction, they differ significantly in that the Tibetan prenominal relative clause is marked as a dependent by genitive case, while in Lahu the nominalizer is itself the genitive morpheme. The motivation for the Tibetan construction is self-evident. The function of the genitive is to mark one nominal as subordinate to another, typically as a modifier. Since a nominalized clause is, by definition, nominal, it can, like any other nominal, be subordinated to a head noun using the genitive. The postnominal construction appears to be an appositive, a common construction in Tibetan and some other Bodic languages (see Watters 2002).

In older forms of Tibetan, *-pa* is a ubiquitous, general-purpose nominalizer:

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2. This example is cited by Hahn (1974:74), who notes that it is typical of the extremely long and complex modifying clauses which are often found in Classical texts.

The infinitive, as well as the participles, makes use of the terminations in *pa* and *ba*, as do the substantives and adjectives. Very often it is practically impossible to decide at once, whether a certain word is meant to be an infinitive or a participle; *mthong-ba* may mean: to see, seeing, or seen; *zer-ba* may mean: to say, saying, or said. (Francke 1929:146)

By “participle” Francke, like some modern authors, is referring to a range of uses including what I have been discussing as the relative clause construction. For examples see Bacot 1948:72-4. Francke explicitly notes that *-pa*, both as a nominalizer (“infinitive”) and relativizer (“participle”) is indifferent to tense, which is to say that the aspectual restrictions on its use which we will see in modern Central Tibetan are not apparent in the Classical language.

### 2.1.2 *-pa* and *-ma*

Scholars generally distinguish this *-pa* from another identical morpheme which alternates with *-ma*, *-po*, and *-mo* in a rough system of gender marking in nouns and adjectives. In the modern language, many nouns referring to human beings or conspicuous animals are specified for gender by one of these suffixes: *rgyal-po* ‘king’, *rgyal-mo* ‘queen’, *btsun-pa* ‘monk’, *btsun-ma* ‘nun’, *chen-po* ‘elder brother’, *chen-mo* ‘elder sister’, etc. The suffixes appear in many other nouns, where they have no gender reference: *nyung-ma* ‘turnip’, *mjing-pa* ‘neck’, *bra-bo* ‘buckwheat’, *ri-mo* ‘picture’; the classic problem example is *bla-ma* ‘lama’, with the “feminine” *-ma* suffix but unambiguously masculine reference. Francke notes that many nouns which in the modern language have no suffix occur with one in the older texts, from which he infers an earlier system of grammatical gender. A few adjectives inflect for gender through alternation of these suffixes, e.g. *rgad-po*. *rgad-mo* ‘old’, *mdzes-po*, *mdzes-ma* ‘beautiful’, but for the most part the use of these suffixes in adjectives is lexically fixed and invariant.

While grammatical marking of gender is not widespread in Bodic, the traditional attribution of the Tibetan pattern to older levels is supported by its attestation in Limbu (sec. 2.2). The Limbu evidence supports the idea that the gender system is closely related to the *-pa* nominalization system; in Limbu they are not distinct. The forms in *o* are probably originally demonstratives, related to such forms as the Tibetan 3rd person feminine pronoun *mo*, and a definite suffix *po* ~ *bo* which still occurs in the western dialects. In Ladakhi this occurs “with singular nouns when the person or object being referred to ... has to be particularized” (Koshal 1979:108), as in *i-mi-rde=mo-bo* “this-man-good-SPEC” = ‘this good man’. (Note the lexically specified “feminine” suffix in *rde=mo* ‘good’, although the reference of this example is masculine). Francke finds this form more widely used in earlier forms of the language (cf. also Csoma de Kőrös 1834:108):

The demonstrative pronoun is often replaced or strengthened by the optional article *bo*, which may be added to any noun, furnished with an article (sexual determination) or not. It emphasizes the word to which it is added: *khyi-bo*, that dog; *myi-bo*, that man; *'adi-khang-pa-bo*, this house. (Francke 1929:112)

## 2.2 Case distinctions in Limbu

Limbu has a more elaborate system than Classical Tibetan, but it is built around the same *-pa* morpheme. There are three relative constructions in Limbu, distinguished by the grammatical role of the head noun in the relative clause. The simplest is almost exactly like the Tibetan—a clause nominalized with *-pa*. However, in Limbu the relative clause does not have genitive marking:

- (5)    *na:m-ille*    *cə-ba*        *ho:rik*  
          sun-ERG    eat-NOM    skin  
          ‘skin which has been burned (‘eaten’) by the sun’ (van Driem 1987:198)

Van Driem (1987) does not describe the distribution of this construction in terms of case or role, but Genetti (1992:412) notes that in his data it occurs only as nominalization or relativization off a non-subject. Subject relativization is the function of the “active participle” construction, in which the verb is marked with a prefix *ke-* as well as the *-pa* nominalizer:

- (6)    *na:-nu*            *ke-bhem-be-n*            *ke-ndzum-in*  
          there-from    AP-come-NOM-ABS    2sg-friend-ABS  
          ‘your friend who is coming from over there’ (van Driem 1987:203)

This construction is found also in the closely-related Athpare, where the “agentive participle” *ka-STEM(-ba)*, as in *ka-phu-ba* ‘tailor’, *ka-khub-ba* ‘thief’, can be “used as a noun or as an attribute” (Ebert 1997:79).<sup>3</sup> The Athpare form can be inflected for the person of the object argument by means of possessive prefixes: *a-ka-lem* ‘who beats **me**’, *ka-ka-pik* ‘who speaks to **you**’. A third construction, deriving Patient nominalizations, involves a passive participle in *-mna* plus the *-pa* nominalizer.

Limbu also shows the same adjective-forming function of *\*-pa* that we find in Classical Tibetan. Indeed, there can be little doubt simply on the basis of these two languages that some version of this formation existed in Proto-Bodic; cf.

3. The prefix is also strikingly similar to the Angami (Naga) general nominalizer (and relativizer) *ka-* (Herring 1991:56-9). Thus while Genetti's suggestion (1992:413) that simple nominalization with *\*-pa* is older in Limbu than the composite form is undoubtedly correct, the prefix might itself be quite old in some function which allowed its development into a modifying construction in more than one language.

Limbu *təŋ-pa*, Tib. *thung-ba* ‘short’, which presumably represents a direct inheritance from a Proto-Bodic form in both languages. In Limbu, as in CT, these formations are marked for gender:

- (7) *kheŋ nu-ba co:k*  
 3rd good-NOM be  
 ‘he/it is good’
- (8) *kheŋ nu-ma co:l*  
 3rd good-NOM/FEM be  
 ‘she is good.’

While van Driem does not discuss this phenomenon at length, it appears that gender marking in Limbu is much more productive and consistent than in any attested variety of Tibetan.

### 2.3 Animacy and number in Newari

Newari has three nominalizers which occur in relative clauses. The system distinguishes animacy and number: *gu(li)*<sup>4</sup> has inanimate reference; animate reference uses *-mha* for singular and *-pi* (< *-pa-ni*) for plural.

These show the standard Sino-Tibetan range of functions (Kölver 1977). They function as a nominalizers and markers of relative clauses:

- (9) *ji-nə khun-a-gu*  
 I-ERG cook-PART-NOM  
 ‘what I cooked’, ‘my cooking’
- (10) *ji-nə khun-a-gu la*  
 I-ERG cook-PART-NOM meat  
 ‘the meat which I cooked’
- (11) *ji-nə nya:n-a:-mha*  
 I-ERG buy-PART-AN.NOM  
 ‘the [living] thing that I bought’
- (12) *ji-nə nya:n-a:-mha nya:*  
 I-ERG buy-PART-AN.NOM fish  
 ‘the [live] fish that I bought’
- (13) *ji-nə nya:n-a:-pi nya:*  
 I-ERG buy-PART-PL.NOM fish  
 ‘the [live] fishes that I bought’

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4. Newari has undergone considerable attrition of final consonants, and in a few cases final syllables; however the eroded segments are retained in certain case forms in the nominal declension. *gu(li)* has the nominative form *gu*, but the second syllable surfaces in the irregular locative and ablative/instrumental forms *guli* and *guli*.

They also sometimes occur in genitive constructions:

- (14) *ra:m-ya:-gu*      *ta:sbir*  
       Ram-GEN-NOM picture  
       ‘Ram’s picture’
- (15) *ra:m-ya:-mha*    *khica:*  
       Ram-GEN-NOM dog  
       ‘Ram’s dog’

However, they are not obligatory:

- (16) *ra:m-ya:*            *kala:*  
       Ram-GEN            woman  
       ‘Ram’s wife’

It turns out, not surprisingly, to be impossible to specify in formal terms the precise conditions under which *gu(li)*-series marking varies. The alternation is discussed at length by Kölver (1977), who demonstrates a set of semantic conditioning factors which can be subsumed under a general statement that the presence of a *gu(li)* morpheme indicates a greater, and the absence a lesser, degree of conceptual independence between the dependent and the head NP—recalling a functionally similar distinction in Lahu between “*ve*-full” and “*ve*-less” genitive constructions. I cannot here enter into the interesting question of the relationship between this system and the Lahu phenomenon, in which the nominalizer has apparently simply replaced an older genitive form. But the facts of the Newari genitive construction are relevant to the problem of the origins of the innovative nominalization-relativization system, to which we will return in section 3.3.

## 2.4 Role and aspect in Lhasa Tibetan

In contrast to the simplicity of the relative construction in Lahu and Classical Tibetan, spoken Lhasa Tibetan has an unusually complex system of relativization (Mazaudon 1978, DeLancey 1999). There are four distinct relative markers, the choice being determined by the semantic role of the head NP in the relative clause, and to some extent also by the time reference of the relative clause. The four in Lhasa are *mkhan* for actor, *sa* locative/dative, and the default nominalizers *yag*, used for patients and instruments in non-perfective relative clauses, and *pa*, used in perfective relative clauses when the head noun is not the actor. All four are clearly nominalizers, occurring in the productive derivation of nouns like *nyo=mkhan* ‘buyer’, *nyo=yag* ‘goods, stuff to buy’. With all but *mkhan* the relative clause is or may be also marked as genitive (see DeLancey 1999).

The inherited Classical Tibetan construction with *-pa* + genitive can be used in Lhasa only in relative clauses with perfective time reference where the

head noun is coreferential with a non-actor NP in the relative clause, as in:

- (17) *kho-s bsad-pa-'i stag pha=gi red*  
 he-ERG kill(PF)-NOM-GEN tiger that be  
 'That is the tiger which he killed.'

Compare *kho-s bsad-pa* 'what he killed', as in:

- (18) *kho-s bsad-pa stag red*  
 he-ERG kill-NOM tiger be  
 'What he killed is a tiger.'

If the relative clause has other than perfective reference, a different nominalizer must be used; with patient head noun this is =yag:

- (19) *kho-s gsod=yag-gi stag*  
 he-ERG kill/FT-NOM-GEN tiger  
 'the tiger that he will kill.'

(This aspectual distinction also characterizes the use of *-pa* and =yag as nominalizers; see Goldstein 1973).

When the NP head is coreferential with the actor of the relative clause, the relative clause is marked with the agentive nominalizer =mkhan, without genitive marking:

- (20) *stag gsod=mkhan mi*  
 tiger kill-NOM man  
 'the man who killed/kills/will kill the tiger.'

(cf. *stag gsod=mkhan* 'one who killed the tiger, tiger-killer').

Locative, dative, and benefactive nominalizations and corresponding relative clauses are formed with =sa:

- (21) *kho sdod=s-'i khang=pa*  
 he stay-NOM-GEN house  
 'the house where he lives.'

(cf. *kho sdod=s-* '(the place) where he lives').

- (22) *nga-s deb sprod=s-'i mi*  
 I-ERG book give-NOM-GEN person  
 'the person who I gave the book to.'
- (23) *nga-s kha=lag bzo=s-'i mi*

I-ERG food cook-NOM-GEN person  
 ‘the person who I cooked food for.’

(the nominalizer =sa requires the imperfective stem; the resulting relative clause is neutral as to time reference).

### 3.0 Bodic relative clauses in diachronic perspective

#### 3.1 Tamangic

The Tamangic languages reflect minor variations on what must originally have been exactly the Classical Tibetan pattern. There is one relative construction, indifferent to case or tense/aspect, built with a reflex of the \*-pa nominalizer. The one difference is that in many of these languages the nominalized clause appears prenominally as a relative clause with no trace of genitive marking. This is the case, for example, in Thakali (Georg 1996):

*rástá¹ so³-pa mī³*  
 nation create-NOM person  
 ‘founder of a nation’

*kī³-se t’uŋ²-pa kju²*  
 2sg-ERG drink-NOM water  
 ‘the water that you drink’

And the same situation is found in Chantyal, described in detail by Noonan (1997).

But other languages of the branch show the Classical Tibetan pattern, or at least traces of it. Noonan notes that the relative construction with genitive is preserved unchanged in Gurung (Glover 1974:99-100):

(24) *cú-r yú-ba*  
 this-LOC come.down-NOM  
 ‘the one who came down here’

(25) *cú-r yú-ba-e mxi*  
 this-LOC come.down-NOM-GEN person  
 ‘the person who came down here’

Manange (Hildebrandt to appear) seems to represent a transitional stage between the older Gurung-type pattern and the genitive-less construction of Chantyal and Thakali. Manange has a single relative clause construction, with a clause marked with *-pc* preceding the head noun:

(26) *³srə ³se-pə ²mi=ko*  
 goat kill-NOM person-DEF

‘the man who killed the goat’

However, Hildebrandt reports that the nominalizer/relativizer is in apparent free variation with a form *-pe*, with a raised vowel, which obviously correlates with Gurung *-ba-e*, both cognate with the Tibetan genitivized form *-pa-i*.

Thus all of the Tibetan and Tamangic languages have, or can be shown to have had, a specific relative clause structure: a clause nominalized with *\*-pa*, marked as genitive, and preposed to a head noun, and we can easily reconstruct this construction for the common ancestor of Tibetan and Tamangic.

### 3.2 Kiranti

The Kiranti languages consistently show the typical Tibeto-Burman association between nominalization and relativization. However, the actual morphemes involved, and the types of distinction found in the system, show a fair amount of variation from one language to the next. Some languages show a distinction of number. In Athpare (Ebert 1997a) relative clauses are formed from either a finite or non-finite verb form plus one of the nominalizers *-na* ‘singular’ and *-ga* ‘plural’. The latter must certainly be related to the plural agreement suffix *-ga* which occurs in the negative and progressive paradigms of Athpare (and, sometimes restricted to 1st person plural or inclusive, in a number of other Kiranti languages). Since it does not occur in a nominalizing function in closely related languages, and has a ready language-internal etymology, we can take this distinction in Athpare to be a quite recent development.

We do find clear attestation in several languages of this branch of the *\*-pa* construction, which is thus shown to be of at least Proto-Bodic provenience. At a glance, it seems that this is the only morpheme which can be reconstructed in a relativizing function for Proto-Kiranti, although some suggestive similarities among other forms might turn out, with more comprehensive data from this branch, to show that some innovation from the simple Proto-Bodic system had already begun around Proto-Kiranti times. We will look here at only two additional Kiranti languages, Sunwar and Thulung.

Sunwar has two relative clause markers, the familiar *-ba* and *-šo*, both basically nominalizers. (The *-ba* form is identical to the non-past 3rd person singular form (DeLancey 1992a), including the non-past stem augment). As in Central Tibetan, the Sunwar relative formation is sensitive to the aspect of the RC and to the grammatical role of the head NP. For relativization of an intransitive subject, *-ba* tends to occur in perfective, and *-šo* in imperfective, relatives:

- (27) *ŋàʔ-ba      ʔal*  
       cry-NOM    child  
       ‘child who cried’

- (28)    *ŋàʔ-šo*      *ʔal*  
          cry-NOM   child  
          ‘the child who is crying’

However, while the restriction of *-šo* in intransitive clauses seems to be consistent, *-ba* can occur in non-perfective as well as perfective relatives:

- (29)    *ʔaî-ba*      *mur*  
          go-NOM    person  
          ‘the person who will go’

For transitive clauses, the basic system is that *-ba* forms subject relative clauses, and *-šo* non-subject, irrespective of tense/aspect:

- (30)    *ʔal-kal*    *khændi*    *kʏe-ba*      *mur*  
          child-DAT   candy    give-NOM   person  
          ‘the person who gave the child candy’  
 (31)    *ʔa*        *khændi*    *kʏe-šo*      *ʔal*  
          3rdPOSS   candy    give-NOM   child  
          ‘the child who s/he gave candy to’  
 (32)    *ʔa*        *ʔal-kal*    *kʏe-šo*      *khændi*  
          3rdPOSS   child-DAT   give-NOM   candy  
          ‘the candy which s/he gave to the child’

In the non-subject *šo*-relative of a transitive clause, the actor is indexed by a possessive pronominal prefix. These are proclitic to the clause (not the verb): */ã-tup-šo/* ‘the one who I hit’, */i-tup-šo/* ‘the one who you (sg.) hit’. Since the possessive clitic attaches to the clause, not the verb, it can cliticize to the verb only when there is no intervening object NP (see exx. 31-32).

In Thulung (Lahaussais 2002), finite clauses can be nominalized, and used as relative clauses, by two suffixes, *-m* and *-mim*. Although the distribution of these in the modern language is partly phonologically conditioned, Lahaussais reconstructs an earlier stage in which they contrasted in aspectual reference, with *-m* forming perfective, and *-mim* imperfective, relative clauses. Both of these appear to be derived somehow from the certainly older “participial” *-ma*.

Of deeper historical interest is the “participial” construction, with a non-finite verb and one of two relativizers: *-ma* for perfective and *-pa* for imperfective relative clauses. This *-pa* is our familiar *\*-pa* construction:

- (33)    *nem*    *bane-pa*      *a-luak*  
          house   make-NOM   1st-younger.brother  
          ‘my brother who builds houses’

This two-way distinction, based on aspect, is similar to what we observed in Sunwar (ignoring the effect of subjecthood in Sunwar), with two significant differences—the aspectual orientation of the \*-pa form, and the identity of the form which contrasts with it. Both differences would require somewhat imaginative explanation if we were to try to ascribe the aspectual distinction to the common ancestor of the two languages, but make perfect sense if we assume that Proto-Kiranti had only the \*-pa construction, indifferent to aspect, and that the two languages later independently (or perhaps as part of an areal tendency to which both were subject) innovated an aspectual distinction. Each would then have innovated a new relativizer in one or the other aspectual category, leaving the original \*-pa form in the other. The fact that, in Sunwar, the use of -šo is more clearly defined and restricted than that of -ba is perfectly consistent with this scenario.

However, while I see no evident Bodic etymology for Sunwar -šo, the alternate Thulung form may be less mysterious. An alternation between -pa and -ma in the formation of modifying constructions immediately brings to mind the Tibetan “gender” suffixes, in particular their use with adjectives. And, indeed, Thulung -ma occurs in a past participial construction which looks very much like the Tibetan adjectival construction:

- (34) *khok-ma*      *jam*  
       cook-NOM      rice  
       ‘cooked rice’

The apparent reanalysis of an opposition which originally marked gender into one reflecting aspect is a bit mysterious, but examples like (34) make the comparison of Thulung -ma with its Limbu and Tibetan resemblants unavoidable.

### 3.3 The development of innovative systems

We have seen, even in this superficial survey of a handful of languages, that there is substantial variation among Bodic languages in their relativization systems. One thing which does not vary is the close relationship between relativization and nominalization. While the distinctions encoded by the different nominalizers in Newari and Tibetan are quite distinct, the existence in both languages of several morphemes with exactly the same set of functions further demonstrates that the overlap of these apparently distinct functions is not accidental, but integral to the grammar of the language. On the basis of such data we can argue that the nominalization function is chronologically and systemically prior to relativization, which is merely one specialized function of nominalization.

We have seen comparative data demonstrating the relative recency of the modern Kathmandu Newari and Lhasa Tibetan nominalization-relativization

systems—a conclusion which, indeed, seems fairly clear on simple inspection. For both of these languages, documentary historical evidence further confirms this conclusion, showing the development of lexical nouns into new nominalizers, which then quickly begin to show up as relative clause constructions. The data from both languages constitute strong evidence that there is a principled basis to the nominalization-relativization syncretism, since we see new nominalizers being quickly and consistently used as relativizers.

Classical Tibetan has semantically more specific nominalizers than *-pa*, one of which is the agentive nominalizer *=mkhan* which is the Lhasa agentive nominalizer/relativizer. According to Jäschke (1881; cf. Beyer 1992), in earlier texts this has a clearly derivational function, occurring with both nouns and verbs to produce items like *shing=mkhan* ‘carpenter (*shing* ‘wood’), while in later texts it is used productively to nominalize clauses, as in Jäschke’s example:

- (35) *nga-i bu=mo ‘dod-mkhan*  
 I-GEN daughter desire-NOM  
 ‘such as are courting my daughter’

Jäschke gives the older lexical sense of *mkhan* as ‘one who knows a thing thoroughly, making a trade or profession of it’; the stem occurs also in the noun *mkhan=po* ‘clerical teacher, professor, doctor of divinity, abbot’, and is etymologically related to the adjective *mkhas=pa* ‘skilled, skillful’. Thus the earliest nominalizing function of the morpheme is a lexical one analogous to English *-ist* or the *-er* of *hatter*, *teacher*; the more general functions of agent (and later subject, see below) nominalization developed relatively recently.

The origin of *sa* is similar. The original function of *sa* is as a noun meaning ‘earth, ground’, with a secondary sense of ‘place’, attested in derivational nominalizations such as *yod-sa* ‘place of residence’ (cp. *sdod-sa* in (21) above). The development is thus parallel to that of *mkhan*, from a derivational function with specific semantic content to a semantically bleached general nominalizing, and hence relativizing, function.

In the case of Kathmandu Newari, Kölver (1977) infers a (presumably rather shallow) nominal origin for the nominalizers on the basis of the alternations in the genitive construction. She points out that a comparison of the genitive construction with and without a *gu(li)* morpheme suggests that these morphemes were originally, and might still be analyzed as, noun heads, thus explaining the genitive marking on the noun to which they are suffixed. Indeed, *mha* still has, besides its grammatical uses, an independent function as a lexical noun meaning ‘body’. This hypothesis is also consistent with the fact that the *gu(li)* morphemes inflect for case just like nouns (albeit with some morphological irregularities) and the participation of all three of the *gu(li)* morphemes in the nominal classifier

system. Hargreaves (1989) shows that in Late Classical Newari texts we commonly find relative clauses with only a participial form of the verb, and no nominalizer at all:

- (36) *ji-n bisya hayâ ratn*  
 I-ERG give bring/PASTCONJUNCT jewel  
 ‘the jewel which I brought’

In these texts the conjunct/disjunct opposition (Hale 1980, Hargreaves 1991, DeLancey 1992b) in relative clauses does not mark the person-oriented conjunct/disjunct distinction, but correlates with a distinction between subject vs. non-subject relative clauses.

Thus, while we cannot provide an etymology for *-gu(li)*, we have at least a shallow etymology for *-mha*, and structural evidence pointing to a fairly recent nominal origin for the entire category. Thus the elaboration of the nominal-relative system seems to have involved essentially the same diachronic mechanisms in Newari as in Tibetan, although the direction of elaboration is quite different. The one problematic element in this account is the plural animate form. In older texts this is consistently *-pani*, which has an obvious Bodic etymology: our familiar *\*-pa* nominalizer plus a pluralizing *-ni*, corresponding to the plural *ni* found in the verb agreement systems of both West Himalayish and Kiranti languages (Bauman 1975). This is primarily a 2nd person plural form in Kiranti, and this seems to be its original sense (Bauman 1975:140-1), but in Pattani and other western languages it has lost any association with person, and so it could easily have done in Newari.

### 3.4 The *\*-pa* construction

Benedict (1972:96) reconstructs a “verbal noun (infinitive) suffix” *-pa* ~ *-ba*, as well as ‘gender’ (scare quotes are Benedict’s) suffixes masculine *-pa*, feminine *-ma*, for PTB; he notes the likely connection between the nominalizer and the masculine gender suffix. There is no doubt that the Classical Tibetan nominalization/relativization system can be ascribed to Proto-Tibetan. As we have seen, the same prenominal, genitive-marked *-pa* relative construction can be reconstructed for Proto-Tamangic. Thus we can confidently reconstruct this much of the Classical Tibetan system for Proto-Bodish.

In that light, it is interesting to note the rapidity with which the system has changed, and diversified, within Tibetan. Looking only at Central Tibetan, we can see in the variety of Lhasa described here a very innovative system, still incorporating the original *-pa* construction, but with the overall system drastically expanded and elaborated by the incorporation of several new nominalizers. Francke (1929:146-7) states that the “participial” function of *mkhan* is found

already in *Mi-la-ras-pa*, which would place the origins of this construction back to at least the 14th century. However, in my admittedly rather superficial acquaintance with that text it appears that the Classical construction with *-pa'i* is still predominant. From this I would infer that the transition from the Classical to the modern Lhasa system occurred within the span of a millennium. But some Central and other dialects seem to have moved even further in this time: in Tshangla (Andvik 1999), in the western Central dialect of Kyirong (Huber 2002), and reportedly also in some varieties of Lhasa, *mkhan* is becoming the default relativizer, used without regard for role or aspect, and thus replacing *-pa* in most of its remaining functions. Extrapolating this path of development, we can easily imagine a Central dialect of the near future (or the present, for that matter), in which we have something closer to the original Classical system, but with the new form *mkhan* completely replacing the original *-pa*. Note that in Newari we can still unearth a relic of the old *-pa* construction in the modern system (although this is made much easier by the existence of textual materials documenting an earlier stage of the language), but the overall system really must be thought of as completely innovative, simply replacing rather than elaborating the original simple pattern.

And the same story is to be seen in Kiranti. Every Kiranti language for which I have seen documentation has a more elaborate system than that of Classical Tibetan. However, the elaboration has taken place in different directions, involving different etyma, in the different languages. On the basis of the comparative data so far available to me, I can see no basis for attributing any of the attested elaborations even to Proto-Kiranti, much less Proto-Bodic. (Of course, some of the elements of the modern systems, such as the *ke-* prefix in Limbu and the *-ga* plural in Athpare, clearly had some grammatical function considerably earlier on, but their incorporation into the nominalization/relativization system must postdate Proto-Kiranti).

However, we can see from the Limbu, Sunwar, and Thulung data that the *-pa* nominalizer was part of the Proto-Kiranti system, and, since it is the only etymon in this small sample which has any claim to PK status, we may infer, at least provisionally, that PK inherited a version of the Proto-Bodic system built entirely around *-pa*, and that all additional complexities of the modern systems are secondary developments. The inference that the basic PK relative construction was the *-pa* construction is buttressed by the fact that in all of these languages we find examples of *-pa* relative clauses which exactly parallel some of its distribution in Classical Tibetan. But exactly *which* uses varies from one language to another. In Limbu it is non-subject relatives, in Thulung imperfective relative clauses; in Sunwar the distribution of *-ba* is less clearly defined than that of the contrasting *-šo*, but is associated with perfective relative clauses. The obvious inference is exactly the conclusion that we have already drawn—that in the

common ancestor of these languages the *-pa* construction was used for all kinds of relativization, and that each language individually has innovated one or more newer constructions which have taken over one or another part of the original range of *-pa*.

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Scott DeLancey

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