

Gerundive Nominals in Malagasy

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Malagasy has a nominalizing prefix *f-* that derives action and abstract nominalizations when attached to the circumstantial voice form of the verb (1.a-1.d). These derived nominals cannot appear with overtly expressed internal arguments; phrase-internal 'linked' elements are usually interpreted as possessors; they are usually modified by adjectives; and their interpretation is not always transparently related to the semantics of the verb from which they are derived (c.f. 2). This has led to the assumption that these nominals are formed in the lexicon (c.f. Paul 1996), in agreement to the more general treatment of action nominals as lexical items (Chomsky 1970). I show that this is not the complete picture. In fact, *f*-nominalizations in Malagasy can be divided into a class of nominals that do exhibit nominal properties of the type exemplified in (2) (Result Nominals in Grimshaw's (1990) terminology) and a second, more productive class of *f*-nominals that exhibit internal verbal properties, including adverbial modification, accusative-marked internal arguments, the fact that the linked element is exclusively interpreted as the internal agent, and the fact that these nominals have an eventive interpretation (like gerundive nominals in English) (c.f. 3). The only difference between gerundive *f*-nominals and tensed clauses or clausal nominalizations is that the former do not have overt tense morphology. Consequently the event that they denote is usually interpreted as habitual and not as anchored in some time relative to the time of the utterance (see Stowell 1996). Thus, in (4.a), the manner of 'Rabe's cooking' is habitually fast while in (4.b) a specific event of 'Rabe's cooking' in the past was fast. In particular, (4.a) can be used when the actual cooking of the meat may have taken three hours but during these three hours Rabe was working fast, while in (4.b) the event lasted only a few minutes irrespective of whether Rabe was working in a fast or a relaxed manner. In order to capture these properties I propose that gerundive *f*-nominals are formed in the syntactic component with the nominalizer *f-* projecting a nominal inflection phrase replacing the tense inflection that appears in finite clauses (c.f. also Baker 2005). The analysis maintains the intuition in traditional Malagasy grammars that the nominalizer *f-* replaces the tense prefixes *m-*, *n-*, and *h-*, and predicts that all properties associated with verbal functional projections below Tense should be present in gerundive *f*-nominals, while all verbal properties associated with projections above Tense should be absent. As the example in (3) shows, the prediction is borne out. The lower verbal projections where accusative case (the *an-* prefix on Rabe), adverbial modification, and event interpretation are licensed are present inside these nominals. On the other hand, action *f*-nominals cannot license a subject (arguably in the specifier of TP or a left-peripheral projection in finite clauses) (c.f. 5) and do not allow for topicalization or no-focus structures to appear inside the nominal (5.b). The analysis can be further extended to capture similar divides in other types of nominalizations in Malagasy. Thus, agentive nominals can also have a 'result' interpretation (in profession names like *mpampianatra* / 'teacher') or a reduced (i.e. tenseless) relative clause structure as in (6).

References

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1. ROOT GLOSS CT-FORM *f*-NOMINAL GLOSS
- a. hita ‘vision’ ahitana fahitana ‘sight; a vision’
- b. valy ‘revenge’ amaliana famaliana ‘revenge, punishment’
- c. ahy (worry) anahiana fanahiana ‘worry, anxiety’
- d. foy ‘abandoned’ amoizana famoizana ‘rejection, abandonment’
2. ny f.an.atera.n-dRasoavaovao dia any ambon’ ny tabatra
- D NML.AT.offer.CT/LNK-Rasoavaovao TOP LOC on.LNK D table
- ‘Rasoavaovao’s new offering/gift is on the table.’
- (Rasoavaovao can be the offerer or the receiver of the gift, i.e. has a possessor and not an agent relation to the derived nominal)
3. ny f.amp.i.anara.n’ i Noro an-dRabe ny teny gasy....
- D NML.CAUS.AT.study.CT D Noro LOC Rabe D language Malagasy
- ‘Noro’s teaching of Malagasy to Rabe ...’
4. a. haingana ny f.a.handroan-dRabe hena
- fast D NML.AT.cook.CT/LNK-Rabe meat
- ‘Rabe’s cooking of meat was fast.’
- b. haingana ny nahandroan-dRabe hena
- fast D PST.PFX.cook.CT.LNK-Rabe meat
- ‘Rabe’s cooking of meat was fast.’
5. a. * nandritry ny adiny telo ny f.an.al.an-dRabe ny hidy
- lasted D hour three D NML.AT.remove.CT/LNK-Rabe D lock
- ny fanalahidy
- D key
- ‘Rabe’s opening the lock (with the key) lasted for three hours.’
- b. *ny Rabe dia/no f.an.al.ana ny hidy
- D Rabe TOP/FOC NML.AT.remove.CT/LNK-Rabe D lock
- ‘The, as for Rabe/it was Rabe, opening the lock...’
6. ny mp.aha.ndro sakafo matetika dia Rasoavaovao
- D NML.ABL.cook food often TOP Rasoavaovao
- ‘Rasoavaovao is the (one who) frequently cooks food’