Clausal nominalization as a complementation strategy in Nivkh

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Nivkh (Paleosiberian) is a polysynthetic verb-final language that makes extensive use of clause combining. The only complementation strategy, in terms of (Dixon & Aikhenvald 2006), is clausal nominalization that scopes over the entire clause and allows it to function as an object argument of a matrix predicate. As a result, the complement clause is reanalyzed as a nominal constituent of a matrix clause.

A nominalized verb form that continues to function as a head of a complement clause does not acquire nominal morphological features and maintains some verbal categories, including tense-aspect marking. It synthesizes with the matrix predicate, triggering the consonant alternation, which serves in Nivkh as a marker of morphosyntactic units (Mattissen 2003).

On the basis of Nivkh data, the paper examines the patterns of lexical and clausal nominalizations, cf. (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993, Comrie & Thompson 2007, Genetti 2011), together with morphological and syntactic aspects of deverbalization and substantivization, cf. (Malchukov 2004), the polyfunctionality of the nominalization marker and the semantic features of complement-taking predicates, cf. (Cristofaro 2003, Noonan 2007). Furthermore, the paper compares the structural similarities and differences both between nominalized and matrix clauses and between same-subject and different-subject complement constructions, cf. (Nedjalkov & Otaina 2013).

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