

On the impossibility of agent-denoting gerunds in Sakha

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1. Introduction

Event-denoting deverbal nominals:

- (1) The finding of the wallet took all afternoon.

Event-denoting gerunds:

- (2) Finding the wallet took all afternoon.

- Different attachment levels for –ing but not for –er:

Agent-denoting deverbal nominals:

- (3) The finder of the wallet returned it to the front desk.

Agent-denoting gerunds:

- (4) * (The) finder the wallet returned it to the front desk.

The claim:

1) For a nominalization to have the meaning of the agent of an action, the nominalizing suffix has to attach to VP at the same level of structure as *v*, the verbal head that introduces an agent into a transitive clause → *v* being one of the lowest functional heads in the clausal architecture, lack of full VP structure with agentive nominalizations is explained

2) In contrast, eventive nominalizers operate over the event argument which need not be introduced by a functional head and is accessible from VP to TP → as a result, an event nominalizer can combine with a bare VP or with a larger constituent lower than TP

2. Two types of nominals in Sakha: –YY and –AAccY

Sakha has gerundive nominals formed with –YY (-hYn after verbs ending in vowels) and agentive nominals formed with –AAccY.

- (5) Masha terilte-ni salaj-ar.
Masha company-acc manage-aor
'Masha manages the company.'
- (6) Masha terilte-ni salaj-yy-ta
Masha company-ACC manage-YY-3
'Masha's management of the company'

(7) Terilte-ni salaj-aaccy kel-le
Company-ACC manage-AAccY come-past.3
'The manager of the company came.'

- There is no verbal functional structure in (7): section 3
- Accusative case in Sakha, unlike English, is not assigned by functional heads: section 4

3. -YY nominalizations vs. -AAccY nominalizations

3.1. Adverb placement

- (8) a. Misha tünnüg-ü sorujan aldjatyy-ta aqa-tyn kyyhyr(t)-ta.
Misha window-acc intentionally break-YY-3 father-3.acc anger-past.3
'Misha's intentionally breaking the window angered his father.'
- b. Tünnüg-ü (*sorujan) aldjat-aaccy kel-le.
window-acc intentionally break-AAccY come-past.3
'The one who (intentionally) breaks the window came.'
- (9) a. Terilte-ni ücügejdik salaj-yy ülehit-ter xamnas-tar-yn ürdet-ie.
company-ACC well manage-NOM worker-pl salary-pl-3.acc increase-fut
'Managing the company well will increase the workers' salaries.'
- b. Terilte-ni (*ücügejdik) salaj-aaccy kel-le.
company-ACC well manage-AAccY come-past.3
'The one who manages the company (*well) came.'
- (10) a. Student biir caas ustata etii-ni yrytyy-ta ucuutal-yn sylat-ta
student one hour for sentence-acc analyze-YY-3 teacher-3.acc tire-past.3
'The student's analyzing the sentence for an hour made his teacher tired.'
- b. *Biir caas ustata etii-ni yryt-aaccy ucuutal-yn sylatta.
one hour for sentence-acc analyze-AAccY teacher-3.acc tire-past.3
'The analyzer of the sentence for an hour made his teacher tired.'
- (11) a. Student biir caas ihinen sorudaq-y tolur-uu-ta ucuutal-yn sohutta
student 1 hour in assignment-acc finish-YY-3 teacher-3.acc surprise-past.3
'The student's finishing the assignment in one hour surprised the teacher.'
- b. *Biir caas ih-inen sorudaq-y tolur-ooccu ucuutal-yn sohut-ta.
one hour in assignment-acc finish-AAccY teacher-3.acc surprise-past.3
'The finisher of the assignment in one hour surprised the teacher.'
- (12) a. Misha tünnüg-ü xat aldjatyy-ta aqa-tyn kyyhyr(t)-ta.
Misha window-acc again break-YY-3 father-3.acc anger-past.3
'Misha's breaking the window again angered his father.'
- b. Tünnüg-ü (*xat) aldjat-aaccy kel-le.
window-acc (*again) break-AAccY come-past.3
'The one who breaks the window (again) came.'

- (13) a. Misha sorudaq-y bütünnüü tolör-uu-ta aqa-tyn üör(t)-te.
Misha assignment-acc completely finish-YY-3 father-3.acc please-past.3
'Misha's completely finishing the assignment pleased his father.'
- b. Beqehee Misha sorudaq-y (*bütünnüü) tolör-ooccu-nu kytta kepsette.
yesterday M. assignment (*completely) execute-AAccY-acc with talked
'Yesterday Misha talked with the executer of the assignment.'

3.2. Aspectual suffixes

- Two types of affixal aspect are known in Sakha: frequentative-distributive (marked with -tAlAA) and accelerative (marked with -BAxtAA)

- (14) a. Sargy onno-manna bar-ytalaa-ta
Sargy thither-hither go-freq-past.3
'Sargy went to various places repeatedly/several times.'
- b. Suruj-baxtaa!
write-accel
'Write quickly; write a little bit!'
- (15) a. Onno-manna bar-ytalaa-hyn
thither-hither go-freq-YY
'going to various places repeatedly'
- b. Misha onno-manna bar-ytalaa-hyn-a aqa-tyn kyyhyr(t)-ta.
Misha thither-hither go-freq-YY-3 father-3.acc anger-past.3
'Misha's repeated goings hither and thither angered his father.'
- (16) a. onu-many suruj-baxtaa-hyn
this.acc-that.acc write-accel-YY
'writing quickly various bits and pieces'
- b. Misha onu-many suruj-baxtaa-hyn-a aqa-tyn kyyhyrta.
Misha this.acc-that.acc write-accel-YY-3 father-3.acc angered
'Misha's writing quickly various bits and pieces angered his father.'
- (17) a. *Bar-ytal(aa)-aaccy kel-le.
go-freq-AAccY come-past.3
'The frequent goer came.'
- b. *Suruj-baxt(aa)-aaccy kel-le.
write-accel-AAccY come-past.3
'A quick writer came.'

3.3. Periphrastic aspects

- Various aspectual distinctions such as inchoative, progressive, completed, transitory, resultative are marked with the help of auxiliaries (which are all but one related to lexical verbs)

- (18) Masha ülelee-n bar-da.
Masha work-anter.ger go-past.3
'Masha started working.' (inchoative)
- (19) Masha ülelee-n taqys-ta.
Masha work-anter.ger go.out-past.3
'Masha kept working/worked incessantly.' (progressive)
- (20) ??ülelee-n bar-yy / taxs-yy
work-anter.ger go-YY / go.out-YY
- (21) * Ülelee-n bar-aaccy / taxs-aaccy kel-le.
work-anter.ger go-AAccY / go.out-AAccY come-past.3
(intended meaning: 'The one who started working/who works incessantly came.')

3.4. Negation

- Verbal negation is formed with the suffix –BA: *suruj* 'write' – *surujuma* 'don't write', *ahaa* 'eat' – *ahaama* 'don't eat'
- (22) Misha suruj-ba-ta.
Misha write-neg-past.3
'Misha didn't write.'
- (23) Suruj-um-uu Toto ahaa-m-yy Bil-im-ii
Write-neg-YY satisfactorily eat-neg-YY Know-neg-YY
'Not writing' 'undernutrition' 'ignorance'
- Öjdö-h-üm-üü Bas berin-im-ii iteqej-im-ii
understand-rec-neg-YY head give.up-neg-YY believe-neg-YY
'misunderstanding' 'disobedience' 'disbelief, mistrust'
- (24) *Suruj-um-aaccy kel-le.
write-neg-AAccY come-past.3
'The non-writer came.'

4. Implications for accusative case assignment

- Accusative case does not come from FPs (Marantz 1991), in particular from vP
- Sakha Accusative Case Assignment rule:
Assign accusative case (form: $-(n)I$, possessive allomorph $-(In)$) to NP X if there is another NP Y such that Y and X are in the same phase, [Y unmarked for Case] and Y c-commands X

4.1. Basic consequences

- Objects of transitive clauses are accusative (25), no quirky accusative subjects (26), causatives of unergatives (27) and anticausative alternations (28)

- (25) Min yt-y kör-dü-m.
I dog-acc see-past-1sg
'I saw the dog.'
- (26) Misha-Ø/*Misha-ny kuhaqan tüül tүүhee-te.
Misha-nom/*Misha-acc bad dream dream-past.3
'Misha had a bad dream.'
- (27) a. Aisen ytaa-ta.
Aisen cry-past.3
'Aisen cried.'
- b. Sardaana Aisen-y yta(a)-t-ta.
Sardaana Aisen-acc cry-caus-past.3
'Sardaana made Aisen cry.'
- (28) a. Min caakky-ny aldjat-ty-m.
I cup-acc break-past-1sg
'I broke the chair.'
- b. Caakky/*caakky-ny aldjan-na.
cup/*cup-acc break-past.3
'The cup broke.'

4.2. Accusative marking and object shift

- (29) a. Erel kinige atyylas-ta.
Erel book-Ø buy-past.3
'Erel bought a book/books.'
- b. Erel kinige-ni atyylas-ta.
Erel book-acc buy-past.3
'Erel bought the book.'
- (30) a. Masha salamaat-y türgennik sie-te. (unmarked order)
Masha porridge-acc quickly eat-past.3
'Masha ate the porridge quickly.'
- b. Masha türgennik salamaat sie-te. (unmarked order)
Masha quickly porridge eat-past.3
'Masha ate porridge quickly.'
- c. *Masha salamaat türgennik sie-te.
Masha porridge quickly eat-past.3
- d. Masha türgennik salamaat-y sie-te. (focus on porridge)
Masha quickly porridge-acc eat-past.3
'It was the PORRIDGE that Masha ate quickly.'

4.3. Raising constructions

- (31) a. Min ehigi/ehigi-ni bugün kyaj-yax-xyt dien erem-mit-im.
I you/you-acc today win-fut-2pl that hope-past-1sg
'I hoped you would win today.'
- b. Min ehigi/ehigi-ni bugün kyaj-byk-kyt-yn ihit-ti-im.
I you/you-acc today win-past-2pl-acc heard-past-1sg
'I heard that you won today.'
- (32) a. Keskil Aisen-y [kel-be-t dien] xomoj-do.
Keskil Aisen-acc [come-neg-aorthat become.sad-past..3
'Keskil became sad that Aisen is not coming.'
- b. Masha Misha-ny [yaldj-ya dien] tönün-ne
Masha Misha-acc [fall.sick-fut.3 that] return-past.3
'Masha returned (for fear) that Misha would fall sick.'
- (33) Masha(*-ny) bugün munnjax-xa [ehiil Moskva-qa bar-ar-a]
Masha-(acc) today meeting-dat [next.year Moscow-dat go-aor-3]
cuolkaj buol-la.
certain become-past.3
'It became clear today at the meeting that Masha will go to Moscow next year.'

4.4. Accusative case assignment in PPs

- (34) a. Misha djie-(ni) tula süür-de.
Misha house(-acc) around run-past.3
'Misha ran around the house.'
- b. Masha tünnük-(ü) utary olor-do.
Masha window(-acc) opposite sit-past.3
'Masha sat opposite the window.'
- (35) a. Ambaar-(*y) tula itii.
barn-acc around hot
'It is hot around the barn.'
- b. Tünnük-(*ü) utary tymnyy.
window-acc opposite cold
'It is cold opposite the window.'

5. Conclusion

- Agentive nominalizers are like *v* in introducing an Agent into a representation
- -AAccY nominals are only compatible with agentive verbs
- This agent argument acts as a competitor triggering accusative rule
- Active participles in Turkish, Mapudungun, Quechua only superficially look like ADG's → they are in effect headless relative clauses referring to the subject of the clause which can be an agent but also the sole argument of an unaccusative verb or the theme argument of a passive verb