

## **Shifting Degrees of Finiteness: Definitization, Refinitization, and Emancipation**

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A common device cross-linguistically for forming dependent clauses is nominalization. Technically dependent clauses refer rather than predicate. But nominalizing constructions can vary in scope. The nominalization may be morphological: a verb stem may be converted to a nominal form by means of a derivational nominalizer, for example, without specification of tense or modality. Arguments may be expressed as possessors or not at all. The nominalization may be syntactic: a clause may still show full marking for tense, aspect, modality and/or arguments, but be set off by a complementizer and/or determiners. The functions of formally dependent clauses do not necessarily stop at the syntactic level: they may develop into independent sentences. There are at least three main ways in which this can happen. 1) Grammaticalization of an erstwhile matrix clause: An original matrix clause may be reduced to an auxiliary, particle, clitic, or affix indicating distinctions such as tense, aspect, modality, negation, etc. 2) Ellipsis of an erstwhile matrix clause: Speakers may simply omit a matrix clause, letting the non-finite form of a dependent clause convey such distinctions as modality, politeness, etc. This is the process termed ‘insubordination’ by Evans (2007). 3) The function of dependency may simply be extended beyond the sentence to discourse to indicate pragmatic dependency of various sorts, with no loss of substance. Formally dependent clauses may come to function as syntactically independent sentences conveying background information, setting, parenthetical information, explanation, speaker evaluation, and more (Mithun 2008). Here connections between nominalization and finiteness are examined in three unrelated languages: Tuscarora (Iroquoian, New York State), Barbareño Chumash (Chumashan, California), and Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Eskimo-Aleut, southwestern Alaska). Perhaps contrary to expectation, in these languages it is the morphological nominalizing constructions that have been extended to marking pragmatic dependency within discourse.

### **References**

- Evans, Nicholas. 2007. Insubordination and its uses. *Finiteness*, ed. by Irina Nikolaeva, 366-431. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mithun, Marianne 2008. The extension of dependency beyond the sentence. *Language* 83.69-119.