

In contrast (surprisingly) nominalized adjectives follow the pattern of nonrelational nouns:

- (5) a. Músò ɓà z̄5̄z̄5̄-d̄ɛ è gbí. (deadjectival Ns: ɓa needed w/ theme)
 Muso POSS foolish-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS big.
 ‘Muso’s foolishness is great.’
- b. mā z̄ɪ-d̄ɛ è já. (mā= ɪ+ɓa)
 I.POSS old-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS bad
 ‘My oldness is bad.’
- c. ɓéé ɓá kpéé-d̄ɛ è s̄.
 shirt POSS dry-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘The dryness of the shirt is good.’

English shows no obvious difference between deverbal and deadjectival Ns along these lines:

- (6) a. John’s arrival, the arrival of John
 b. the city’s destruction, the destruction of the city
 c. Mary’s foolishness, the foolishness of Mary

The goal of this talk is to derive the difference between (3)-(4) and (5) from Baker’s (2003) theory of the lexical categories—in particular, his claim that verbs can combine directly with theme arguments in Spec VP, but adjectives cannot take a theme in Spec AP.

The Dan pattern hence gives new support for this approach to the lexical category distinctions.

2. Possession in Dan

We follow the classic generative treatments of Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992), Barker (1995), and Alexiadou (2003) in assuming that relational nouns take directly an internal argument ((7a)), whereas nonrelational nouns do not ((7b)).

- (7) a. gò ‘head’ <X>, gbí ‘son’ <X>, ...
 b. ná ‘child’ <>, já ‘yam’ <>,

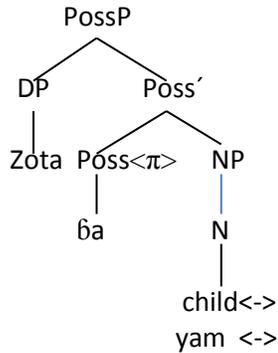


Other nouns in the relational class besides obvious kin terms and body parts: w̄ɛ̄ ‘place where one usually sits’, t̄ɛ̄d̄o ‘friend’, j̄àj̄o ‘neighbor’, ḡm̄ɛ ‘boss’ (literally ‘head-man’), ɓ̄ɛ ‘fruit’ (of a tree), ḡá ‘seed’ (of a tree), sl̄óŋ ‘injury’, ní ‘life’ and sl̄ó-p̄á ‘wages, earnings’.

Nonrelational nouns can have a possessor if a Poss head *ba* is present (perhaps a subtype of D) $\langle\pi\rangle$ (cf. Barker 1995: ch.2, Alexiadou 2003). Compare 's (or a null D head) in English.

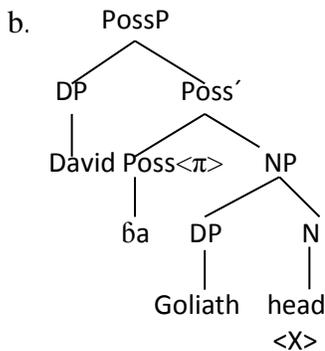
(9) *ba* Poss (D), Subcategorization [$__\text{NP}$], argument structure $\langle\pi\rangle$

(10)



In addition, it is possible for an N to have both an alienable and an inalienable possessor:¹

- (11) a. Dàvīdà *ba* góliatà gò
 David POSS Goliath head
 'David's head of Goliath'
 (David carries around the head severed from Goliath's body)



3. Lexical categories in Dan

There is adequate evidence that Dan has a rather standard three-way category system, with Ns acting as natural arguments, As as natural modifiers, and Vs as natural predicates.

¹Note that there is evidently no case theory problem with having two DPs inside a nominal in (11). Either the Case filter does not apply at all in Dan (cf. Diercks 2012), or both N and Poss are case assigners in Dan, or any DP can get case by default in Dan.

Only nouns can be used by themselves as subjects:

- (12) a. nÁ è s̄.
 child 3.SG.PRES good
 ‘The child is good.’
- b. *dõ è s̄. (NB: Some Vs are homophonous with Ns, as in English)
 go 3.SG.PRS good
 (lit. ‘Go is good.’)
- c. *zõzõ è já.
 foolish 3.SG.PRS bad.
 (lit. ‘Foolish is bad.’)

Only adjectives can be used directly to modify a noun:

- (13) a. mē zõzõ já gā.
 person foolish 3.SG.PST die
 ‘The foolish person died.’
- b. *nÁ p̄ já gā. (OK is: nÁ í p̄ já gā)
 child fall 3.SG.PST die child REL fall PST die
 (Lit. ‘The fall child died.’) ‘The child who fell died.’
- c. *nÁ ði já gā. (OK is: nÁ ði-sù já gā)
 child dirt 3.SG.PST die child dirt-ADJ PST die
 (lit. ‘The dirt child died.’) ‘The dirty child died.’

Expected: only verbs can be primary predicates of a clause. However, this is concealed by the (unremarkable) fact that T remains a separate word in Dan (and there is no distinct overt copula).

- (14) a. nÁ (è) gā. (T can be dropped in fast/casual speech)
 child 3.SG.PRES die
 ‘The child dies.’
- b. Músò (è) zõzõ.
 child 3.SG.PRS foolish
 ‘Musò is foolish.’
- c. Klà (è) nÁ ká.
 Kla 3.SG.PRS child with
 ‘Kla is a child.’

But the two tests that work straightforwardly still give a three-way distinction in the categories. Note also that predicate nominals need to have the P *ká* ‘with’, unlike predicate adjectives.

4. Basic nominalization in Dan

The same tests show that *-suu* and *-dɛ* are category changing affixes in Dan, creating nouns.

Erstwhile verbs and adjectives bearing these affixes can be used in subject position:

- (15) a. *dõ-sú* *è* *sā*
 go-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘Going is good.’
- b. *zõzõ-dɛ* *è* *jà.*
 Foolish-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS bad.
 ‘Foolishness is bad.’

These forms also lack the ability to modify a noun directly (but adjectivizing *-suu*; see note 2)

- (16) a. *[*mē* *Klà* *zā-sū*] *jà* *pɔ̀.*
 person Kla kill-NMLZ 3.SG.PST fall
 (‘The person killing Kla fell.’ Lit. ‘The person killing of Kla fell.’)
- b. *[*mē* *zõzõ-dɛ*] *jà* *pɔ̀.*
 person foolish-NMLZ 3.SG.PST fall
 (‘The foolish person fell.’ Lit. ‘The foolishness person fell.’)

And they cannot be used by themselves as the head of a main clause predicate:

- (17) a. **Músò* *jà* *Klà* *zā-sū.*
 Muso 3.SG.PST Kla kill-NMLZ
 (‘Musa was killing Kla.’ Lit. ‘Musa was (the) killing of Kla.’)
- b. **Músò* *è* *zõzõ-dɛ.*
 Muso 3.SG.PRS foolish-NMLZ
 (‘Muso is foolish.’ Lit. ‘Muso is foolishness.’)

However, the suffixed verb can be used in a sentence like (17a), if *ká* is included as well:

- (18) *Músò* *è* *Klà* *zā-sū* *ká.*
 Muso 3.SG.PRS Kla kill-NMLZ with.
 ‘Musa kills Kla.’ (lit. something like: ‘Muso is at (with) the killing of Kla.’)

Stative verbs are nominalized by *-suu*, not *-dɛ*, suggesting that the conditioning factor is grammatical category (verb vs. adjective), not semantics (state-denoting vs event-denoting):

- (19) a. *Klà* *è* *swò.* Cf. *ná* *(*ý*) *swò*
 Kla 3.SG.PRS fears child REL fear
 ‘Kla fears; Kla is afraid.’ ‘the child who fears’, *‘the fear child’
- b. *Klà* *swó-sú* *è* *sā.* (**Klà* *ɓà* *swó-dɛ*)
 Kla fear-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good Kla POSS fear-NMLZ2
 ‘Kla’s being afraid is good.’

6. Theories of nominalization

In principle, two kinds of theories of nominalization are possible: (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2007)

- “Lexical” nominalization, in which the nominalizer combines with the root before the root combines with any arguments (or adjuncts) (Chomsky 1970, Wood 2019)
- “Syntactic” nominalization, in which the nominalizer combines with the root after the root combines with (at least) its complement (Hazout 1995, Marantz 1997, etc. See Alexiadou et al. 2007: 515-541 for many variants)

Arguably the two kinds of nominalization can exist side-by-side in the same language, even using the same morphological resources (see also Arsenijević (2011) on de-Adj Ns in Serbian).

- (23) a. Mary witnessed {the/John’s} killing of the goat. (lexical nominalization?)
 b. Mary was upset by {John’s/∅/*the} killing the goat. (syntactic nominalization)

Therefore, a “deep” explanation of the asymmetry in Dan should cover both types.

6.1 Lexical nominalization

Baseline assumption about lexical nominalization: (all things being equal) the argument structure of [[X]+NMLZ] is the same as the argument structure of X. Hence the parallelism between *Rome destroyed Carthage* and *Rome’s destruction of Carthage*.

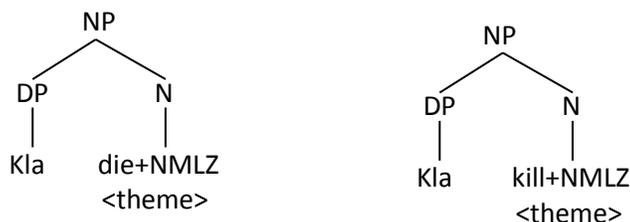
Basic argument structures:

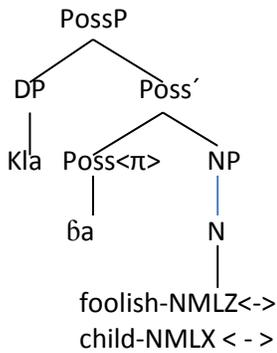
- (24) a. ‘die’ <theme>
 b. ‘kill’ <theme> (agent addable by v/Voice; Chomsky 1993, Kratzer 1996)
 c. ‘foolish’ <> (theme addable by Pred; Baker 2003)
 d. ‘child’ <> (theme addable by Pred; Baker 2003)

Derived argument structures:

- (25) a. gā-sū <theme> (‘dying’) like a relational noun
 b. zā-sū <theme> (‘killing’) like a relational noun
 c. zṣṣzṣṣ-dē <> (‘foolishness’) like a nonrelational noun
 d. nÁ-dē <> (‘childhood’) like a nonrelational noun

(26)





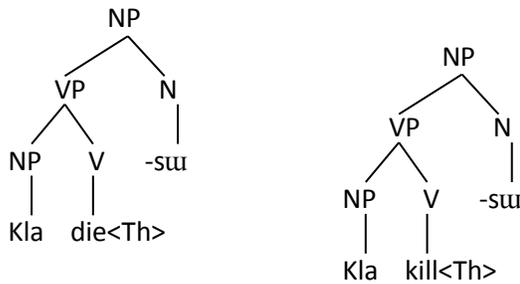
Also noun and adjectives take the same nominalizing suffix, because they are a natural class opposed to verbs with respect to argument structure (cf. verbalization in English: *legalize* and *crystalize*; *enlarge* and *enrage*).

4.2 Syntactic nominalization

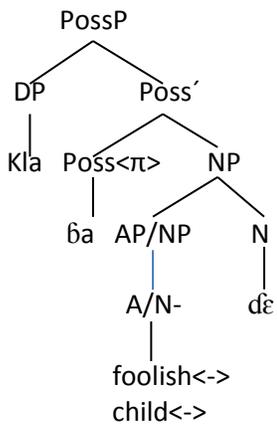
Baseline assumption for syntactic nominalization: the nominalizing head takes a full XP as its complement, where X is a lexical category (V, A or N).

Then the syntactic structures will be:

(27)



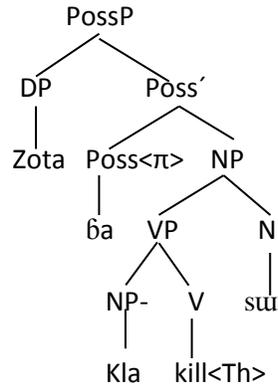
(28)



For transitive verbs, there is the further possibility of both an internal argument and an external argument; compare (11) with the underived noun ‘head.’

- (29) a. Zõtá ðá Klà zā-sū è já.
 Zota POSS Kla kill-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS bad.
 ‘Zota’s killing Kla is bad.’

b.



(We give (29b) in the syntactic nominalization version, but it could also arise in the lexical nominalization version, with ‘Kla’ the complement of the noun kill+NMLZ.)

6.3 A comment on unergative verbs

We are not sure that Dan has any basic unergative verbs (cf. Hale and Keyser 2001: 117, 140 on Basque and Tanoan). The most prototypical unergative verbs in Dan turn out to be transitive constructions consisting of a light verb plus some kind of idiomatic or cognate object: ‘sing’ is ‘song+pick/harvest’, ‘dance’ is ‘song+do’, ‘sleep’ is ‘sleep+kill’, ‘swim’ is ‘water+do’, etc.

- (30) a. Klà ðà tǎ-ðō-sū è sā.
 Kla POSS song-pick-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘Kla’s singing is good.’

- b. mā jí-kā-sū è sā.
 I.POSS water-do-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘My swimming is good.’

There are a few less canonical unergative predicates that are simple verbs. When nominalized, their understood subjects are not marked with the Poss head ðà, but these might be unaccusative.

- (31) a. Klà (*ðà) pè-sū è já.
 Kla POSS vomit-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS bad
 ‘Kla’s vomiting is bad.’

- b. bōō (*ðā) wl̩-sū è sā.
 owl (*POSS) fly-NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘The flying of the owl is good.’

7. Choosing among the two types of nominalization

Like other Mandaean languages, Dan has word order: Subject-Aux-Object-Verb-PP/goal/AP/Adv.

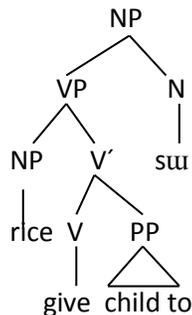
- (32) a. Klà è bǎǎ nū Zõtǎ dǎ.
 Kla 3.SG.PRS rice give Zota to
 ‘Kla gives rice to Zota.’
- b. Klà jà dǒ plǎ̀.
 Kla 3.SG.PST go village
 ‘Kla went to the village.’
- c. Klà jà jǐ kǎ sǎ̀.
 Kla 3.SG.PST water make cold
 ‘Kla made the water cold.’

Nominalized verbs that take a postverbal phrase allow *-su* to appear *after* that phrase:

- (33) a. bǎǎ nū nǎ dǎ sū̀ è sǎ.
 rice give child to NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘Giving rice to a child is good.’
- b. Klà dǒ plǎ̀ sū̀ è sǎ.
 Kla go village NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘Kla going to the village is good.’
- c. jǐ kǎ sǎ̀ sū̀ è sǎ
 water become cold NMLZ 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘The water’s being/becoming cold is good.’

This is clear evidence that the syntactic nominalization structure in (34) exists in Dan. (It is also possible for an adjunct PP or adverb to adjoin to the right of the VP complement of NMLZ.)

(34)



However, the lexical nominalization structure may exist in Dan as well: *su* can also appear affixed directly to the verb as long as the postverbal XP is connected by the linking particle *ǎ*.

- (35) a. [Klà bǎ bǎǎ nū-sū̀ *(ǎ) Zõtǎ dǎ] è sǎ.
 [Kla POSS rice give-NMLZ REL Zota to] 3.SG.PRS good
 ‘Kla’s giving of rice to Zota is good.’

- b. [Klà b̃à b̃áá b̃ɣ-sũ ɣ jí' ká] è s̃ā.
 [Kla POSS rice eat-NMLZ REL water with] 3.SG.PRS good
 'Kla's eating of rice with water is good.'
- c. [jí kλ-sũ ɣ s̃èè] è s̃ā.
 water become-NMLZ REL cold 3.SG.PRS good
 'The water's being/becoming cold is good.'

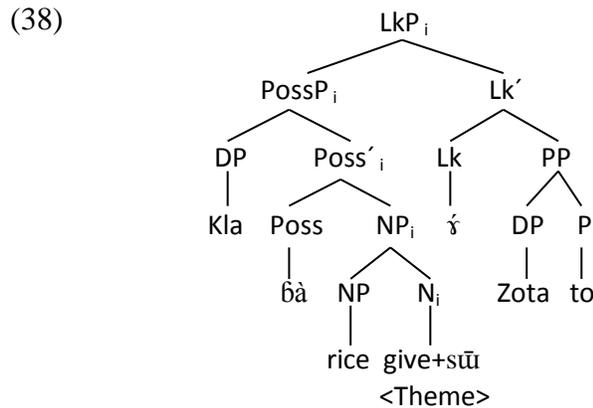
This linking particle also used with modifiers of underived nouns:

- (36) ñàḥ̃ *(ɣ) t̃ò gúú è t̃ítí. (see also (13b))
 chair *(REL) kitchen in 3.SG.PRS small
 'The chair in the kitchen is small.'

The lexical nominalization cannot inherit both internal arguments of the base verb, by (21d).

- (37) a. ñū 'give' <Theme, Goal>
 b. ñū-sũ 'giving' <Theme> (not: * <Theme, Goal>)

Therefore a linking particle is needed to create an extra position where the additional phrase can be generated (cf. den Dikken 2006). (The semantic composition of this structure is left open.)



In contrast, to the extent that adjectives can take (post-adjectival) complements at all in Dan, deadjectival nouns seem to have only the lexical nominalization structure.

- (39) a. Klà è s̃ā t̃á-b̃ō-sũ gúú. Adjectives with a PP complement(?)
 Kla 3.SG.PRS good song-pick-NMLZ in
 'Kla is good at singing.'
- b. ví è já Zòtá gúú.
 fish 3.SG.PRS bad Zota in
 'Fish is bad for Zota.' ('Zota dislikes fish.')

- (40) a. *Klà b̄à s̄ā t̄ǎ-b̄ō-s̄ū gú d̄ě è gbé.
 Kla POSS good song-pick-NMLZ in NMLZ 3.SG.PRS big
 ('Kla's goodness at singing is great.')
- b. *v̄í b̄ǎ já Zòt̄ǎ gú d̄ě è gbé. (Bad with N outside PP)
 fish POSS bad Zota in NMLZ 3.SG.PRS big
 ('The badness of fish for Zota is great.')
- (41) a. [Klà b̄à s̄ā-d̄ē ǎ t̄ǎb̄ō-s̄ū gú] è gbé.
 Kla POSS good-NMLZ REL song-pick-NMLZ in 3.SG.PRS big
 'Kla's goodness at singing is great.'
- b. [v̄í b̄ǎ j̄àà-d̄ē ǎ Zòt̄ǎ gú] è gbé.
 fish POSS bad-NMLZ REL Zota in 3.SG.PRS big
 'The badness of fish for Zota is great.' (OK with PP outside N and linker)

8. Conclusion and brief comparative discussion

Recall that the [NP's N] structure in English does not distinguish alienable and inalienable possession the way Dan does (see (6)). However, there is a bit of a distinction between alienable and inalienable nouns in the availability of the structure [Det N of DP] (see Barker 1995: 51, 76)

- (42) a. the mother of the kitten/?Pat
 the leg of the table/?the child/??Pat
 b. the toy of the ?*kitten/*Pat
 *the car of Pat

This contrast does not carry over into a distinction between deverbal nominalizations and deadjectival nominalizations (cf. Barker 1995: 62-66).

- (43) a. the arrival of the train/the child/?Pat
 the death of the kitten/?Pat
 b. the promotion of the candidate/?Pat
 the dismissal of the employee/Pat
 c. the foolishness of the child/Pat
 the bravery of the child/?Pat

Why don't we see a difference here? One possibility is that *-ness* and other deadjectival nominalizers in English are lexical nominalizers that—unlike in Dan—count as having an internal argument of their own, as a lexical property (cf. also Roy 2010, Arsenijević 2011)

- (44) a. foolish <> +NMLZ = foolishness <> (Dan)
 b. foolish <> + NMLZ <X> = foolishness <X> (English)

Therefore, we should expect to find at most an implicational universal in this area: If a language distinguishes alienable and inalienable possession, and if deadjectival nominalizations and deverbal nominalizations differ in this respect, then deadjectival nominalizations will pattern with alienable possession and deverbal nominalization with alienable possession.