Nominalization across Arawakan languages

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Nominalization is the grammatical and derivational process that creates referring expressions such as lexical nouns and NPs (Givón 2001:24). The strategies used to produce nominal entities, and their resulting functional, semantic, and morphosyntactic features are incredibly diverse, both across languages and language internally (Yap, Grunow-Hårsta, and Wrona 2011:2). This issue is of particular interest for languages of the Americas at large, and South America in particular, where nominalization is often reported as one of the major subordination strategies attested (van Gijn, Haude, and Muysken 2011; Zariquiey, Shibatani, and Fleck 2019).

This workshop aims to contribute to the discussion on the typology of nominalization and its role in the languages of the Americas, by focusing specifically on the Arawakan language family. With some 40 extant languages, scattered from Brazil up to Belize, the Arawakan family constitutes a rich and diverse sample for the study of nominalization. Indeed, individual case studies have highlighted the major role of nominalization in the grammar of languages of the family and shed light on various interesting features. We note the presence of large and semantically complex inventories of nominalizers as in Mojeño (9 nominalizers, for different participants and with different aspectual semantics (Rose 2011)), the use of structures such as *clausal nominalizations* as clause-linkage devices as in Baure (relative, complement, and adverbial clauses achieved through nominalization (Danielsen 2011)), the multifunctionality of nominalization markers, often employed in discourse related strategies as in Yukuna (nominalization constructions used in A/S focalization and adverb focalization (Lemus Serrano 2020)), and lastly, the grammaticalization of nominalization markers into main clause morphology, as in Wayuu (gender/number suffixes formerly used as nominalizers now fully grammaticalized as subject agreement (Stark 2018)).

Despite the growing body of research on nominalization in the Americas, there is currently no available family-wide study exploring both the divergent patterns and shared tendencies in nominalization phenomena within the Arawakan family. The questions we want to address at the workshop include the following:

Descriptive/typological questions

- Size and complexity of nominalization repertoire: how many different nominalization types are attested in an individual language, in terms of number of nominalizers, and their degree of semantic specialization (event vs. participant nominalization, aspectual distinctions). (Mihas 2013; Rose 2011)

- Argument encoding: how are verbal arguments encoded within nominalizations in comparison with finite verbal clauses? How does the language fit within existing typologies of nominalization types (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; Malchukov et al. 2008)?
- Presence of verbal features in nominalizations: are there various types of nominalizations with respect to their retained verbal features? Are there nominalizations of the 'clausal' type, and if so, how similar or different are they from finite verbal clauses? (Rose 2011; Lemus Serrano 2020)
- Nominalization and clause-linkage: are nominalizations used as clause-linking strategies in the language? If so, which nominalizations are associated with which clause-linking types? Are there other clause-linking strategies besides nominalizations in the language, and if so, how do they differ? (Danielsen 2011)
- Nominalization and discourse: are nominalized verb forms used in functions outside of clause-linkage, as discourse strategies in interaction? (reference-tracking, focalization/topicalization, others) (Lemus Serrano 2020)

Comparative/diachronic questions

- Source of nominalizers: Can the source of nominalizers be identified? Are they linked to nominal affixes such as gender/number markers and suffixes encoding (non)-possession (Aikhenvald 2021), or to generic nouns (e.g. 'thing', 'person') and demonstrative pronouns? (Cristofaro 2019; Gerner 2012)

- Comparative perspective: Are the nominalizers cognate across the family, or within specific sub-branches?

- Internal reconstruction: Does the synchronic morphosyntactic structure of nominalization constructions give some indications on their possible source and the chronology in the diachronic development of these nominalizations? (Rose 2016)

- Grammaticalization of nominalizers into main clause morphology: Can any of the main clause verbal inflection markers be traced back to former nominalizers? (Haurholm-Larsen and Stark 2016) Are there cases of synchronic ambiguity where nominalization markers display main clause uses? (Lemus Serrano 2020)

To facilitate comparison among individual Arawakan languages, once the workshop is accepted, potential participants will be invited to start their talk with a summary table of the repertoire of nominalizations in their language(s) of expertise. Also, participants will be encouraged to follow a shared practical methodology for the description of nominalization, based on the work of Lemus Serrano (2020). Beyond the exploration of the research question, a secondary aim of this workshop is to bring together specialists of Arawakan languages into a community organized around the common scientific goal of a better understanding of the family, and a better visibility of these languages within linguistics academia. We aim to develop the papers presented at this workshop into the first collective volume dedicated to nominalization across Arawakan languages.

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