

Categori(c)al misperception: participles, “transitive nouns”, and categorizers

1. Background Recent generative work on participles has argued that participial suffixes spell out verbal functional heads such as Asp if movement to or agreement with a higher position (T or Agr) is blocked (Embick 2000, Bjorkman 2011, Alexiadou et al. 2015), thus dispensing with the need for a categorial head PTCP (*vel sim.*). The syntax and semantics of participles then depends on the amount of functional structure incorporated below the participle suffix, and especially on whether the projection Voice is included (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 2008). However, transitive agentive “nouns” in languages like Vedic Sanskrit (VS) and Ancient Greek (AG) are sometimes presented as a challenge to this approach since they show variation w.r.t. their object case (genitive vs. accusative) and apparently violate the generalization that agent nouns are incompatible with adverbial modification and structural case objects (Baker & Vinokurova 2009), cf. Lowe 2015, 2017. The aim of this paper is to use data from precisely these languages to defend the “PTCP-less” approach and show that it correctly predicts the properties of different deverbal adjectives, assuming a fine-grained typology of Voice heads (Alexiadou et al. 2015, Schäfer 2017).

2. Data VS and AG have a variety of adjectives derived from verbal roots or stems with “verbal” qualities, such as structural case (ACC) objects, (1), adverbial modification, (2), and demoted agents in *by*-phrases, (3), (PTCP = participle, A = adjective).

1)	a.	<i>dhán-āni</i> prizes-ACC.PL	<i>dáya-māna</i> distribute.IPFV-PTCP.NOM.SG	<i>ójas-ā</i> might-INSTR	b.	<i>mah-ā</i> great-ACC.PL	<i>kárm-āṇi</i> deeds-ACC.PL	<i>cákr-i-ḥ</i> do-A-NOM.SG	
		‘distributing the prizes with might/mightily’ (VS, RV 1.130.7)				‘doing great deeds’ (VS, RV 9.88.4)			
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2)	a.	<i>eū</i> well	<i>naió-menon</i> inhabit.IPFV-PTCP.ACC	<i>ptolíet^hron</i> citadel.ACC	b.	<i>ni-jaghn-í-r</i> down-strike-A-NOM	<i>ójas-ā</i> might-INSTR		
		‘a well-inhabited citadel’ (AG, Homer, <i>Ilias</i> 1.163–4)				‘striking down mightily’ (VS, RV 9.53.2)			

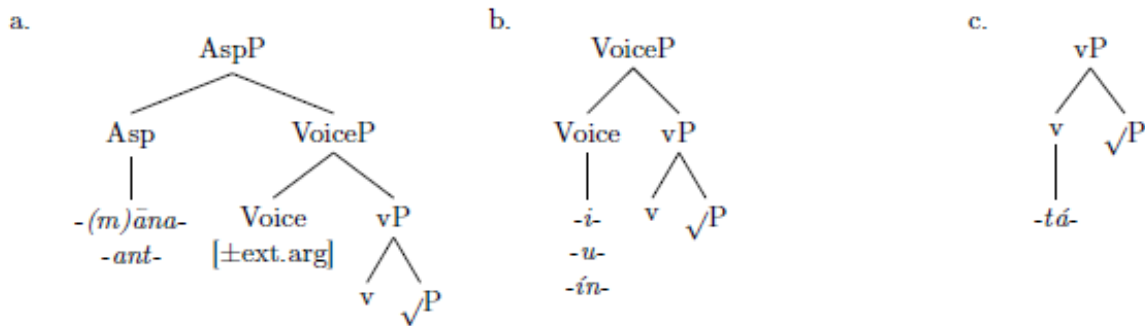
3)	<i>lēi-ou</i> crop-GEN	<i>empipra-mén-ou</i> burn.IPFV-PTCP-GEN	<i>hupò</i> by	<i>tēs</i> the.GEN	<i>stratiēs</i> army.GEN
	‘(when) the crop was being burned by the army ’ (AG Hdt., Hist. 1.19.1)				

Suffixes which show verbal stem forming morphology (ipfv., pfv., perfect) and are part of a verbal paradigm are traditionally classified as **participles** (specified for “active” and “middle” Voice in VS and AG), (4a)-(5a). Suffixes which have “verbal” properties without being part of a particular paradigm are called (verbal) **adjectives**, (4b)-(5b). Adjectives like (4c)-(5c) resemble past passive participles (PPPs) and never take ACC objects. Moreover, the suffixes in (4a-b) and (5a-b) can also be used as substantives with genitive objects, arguably blurring their categorial status.

4) VS	Suffix	Designation	Examples
a.	<i>-(m)āna-</i>	middle ptcp.	<i>bruv-āṇá-</i> ‘being called’, <i>cakr-āṇá-</i> ‘having made’
	<i>-(a)nt-</i>	active ptcp.	<i>bhára-nt-</i> ‘bringing’, <i>kr-ánt-</i> ‘making’, <i>y-ánt-</i> ‘going’
b.	<i>-ín-, red-i-</i>	(verbal) adj.	<i>van-ín-</i> ‘desiring’, <i>cá-kr-i-</i> ‘making’, <i>já-gm-i-</i> ‘going’
c.	<i>-tá-, -ná-</i>	verbal adj.	<i>kṛ-tá-</i> ‘made’, <i>hi-tá-</i> ‘placed’, <i>i-tá-</i> ‘gone’, <i>bhin-ná-</i> ‘split’
5) AG	Suffix	Designation	Examples
a.	<i>-menos</i>	middle ptcp.	<i>p^héro-menos</i> ‘carrying’, <i>lelou-ménos</i> ‘having washed oneself’
	<i>-ōn-, -(a)s</i>	active ptcp.	<i>p^hér-ōn</i> ‘carrying’, <i>i-ōn</i> ‘going’, <i>doú-s</i> ‘having given’
b.	<i>-tēs-, -tōr</i>	agent noun	<i>klép-tēs</i> ‘stealing/thief’, <i>ep-amún-tōr</i> ‘helping’
c.	<i>-tós</i>	verbal adj.	<i>do-tós</i> ‘given’, <i>k^hu-tós</i> ‘poured, spilled’

3. Analysis I argue that the suffixes in (4)-(5) can be divided into three classes: **(4a-5a)**, suffixes which spell out Asp and therefore include functional structure relating to Voice and Aspect, i.e., “participles”, **(4b-5b)**, suffixes which spell out different types of Voice and therefore contain Voice-related properties (such as the ability to value accusative case on objects), but not Aspect, and **(4c-5c)**, suffixes which spell out v and contain neither Voice nor aspectual information (other than lexical aspect), resulting in a “theme-oriented” (\approx PPP) interpretation because only the internal argument is included below the suffix. The three structures are illustrated in (6) with selected VS suffixes.

6)



Following Embick 2000 and Grestenberger 2018, I assume that Asp in (6a) is spelled out as active or non-active (“middle”) in VS and AG depending on whether Voice is [+/-ext.arg]. This analysis explains why the (a)-(b) categories pattern together with respect to ACC object case to the exclusion of (c): both contain the ACC-valuing projection Voice. Moreover, the (a)-(b) categories can be used in reduced relative clauses without overt head nouns or relative pronouns, giving the impression of agentive nominals with “verbal” properties (see Baker & Vinokurova 2009 on “false” agent nouns), cf. (7) with an overt relative and (8) with the reduced variant (both variants exist in both languages).

7) *hoi* *dè* *phéro-nt-es* *gēn* *te* *kai* *hūdōr*
 REL.NOM.PL PART bring.IPFV-PTCP.ACT-NOM.PL earth.ACC and also water.ACC
 ‘who (were) bringing earth and water.’ (AG, Hdt., Hist. 7.131)

8) *tarāṇir* *ná* *ārvā* *vyānās-ī* *ródasī*
 overtaking.NOM.SG like steed.NOM traverse-ADJ-NOM.SG world.ACC.DU
 ‘like an overtaking steed, traversing the two world-halves’ (VS, RV 3.49.3)

The substantival use with genitive objects primarily concerns the (4b-5b) class. I argue that these suffixes have dual lexical entries: they spell out the head Voice as in (6b), but can also head an agent noun projection nP. In the latter use, they are in complementary distribution with VoiceP (hence GEN rather than ACC objects), along the lines of Baker & Vinokurova 2009. This analysis is corroborated by evidence from the diachrony of these suffixes.

4. Conclusion Although languages like VS and AG have a broader variety of deverbal adjectives than English, their properties reflect the same cross-linguistic regularities. Crucially, syntactic diagnostics (ACC objects, adverbial modification, etc.) can be shown to correlate with particular structural features, independent of whether a given deverbal formation has traditionally been classified as “participle” or “adjective”.

Selected References: Alexiadou, A. & E. Anagnostopoulou. 2008. Structuring participles. *Proceedings of WCCFL 26*, 33-41. Cascadilla. Alexiadou, A., E. Anagnostopoulou & F. Schäfer. 2015. *External Arguments in Transitivity Alternations: A Layering Approach*. OUP. Anagnostopoulou, E. 2003. Participles and voice. *Perfect Explorations*, 1-36. De Gruyter. Baker, M., and N. Vinokurova. 2009. On agent nominalizations and why they are not like event nominalizations. *Language* 85/3: 517-56. Embick, D. 2000. Features, syntax, and categories in the Latin perfect. *LI* 31/2:185-230. Lowe, J. 2015. *Participles in Rigvedic Sanskrit: The Syntax and Semantics of Adjectival Verb Forms*. OUP. — 2017. *Transitive Nouns and Adjectives: Evidence from Early Indo-Aryan*. OUP.