

# The grammaticalization of Northern Mansi *mā* 'earth, world, land, place'<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper I discuss the grammaticalization of the word *mā* 'earth, world, land, place' into a nominalizer in Northern Mansi.

Mansi (or Vogul) is one of the most endangered languages of the Uralic (Finno-Ugric) language family. It is spoken by the river Ob and its tributaries in Western Siberia by less than 1,000 people. The only Mansi dialect that is still spoken today is Northern Mansi, and this dialect serves also as the basis of the Mansi literary language. The data used for this research are taken from written sources dated between the 1890's and 2016.

## 2. The Northern Mansi *mā*

The word *mā* has several meanings in Northern Mansi: 'earth, country, land, place, region, world, ground; part; field', e.g.:

- (1) *mā ēntəptanə mōjt* 'tale of the girdling of the Earth',
- (2) *sēməl mā* 'black soil',
- (3) *ūnlənə mā* 'place of living' (lit. 'living place'),
- (4) *hāl mān ti pēlyati* 'the arrow bores into the ground',
- (5) *χoti mā* 'any region' etc.

(cf. WW: 288–290)

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But in many cases it seems to have only a grammatical meaning, i.e. when combining with a participle it serves as a nominalizer<sup>2</sup>, creating abstract nouns, e.g.:

- (6) *ʔuś-nə*                      *mā-tū-nəl*                      *pojt-s*  
 cry-PTCP.PRS                      NLZR-3SG-ABL                      stop/cease-PST[3SG]  
 ‘s/he stopped crying’

(WW: 448)

There are several other nouns in Northern Mansi which can function also as nominalizers – similarly to *mā* –, and combining with adjectives or participles they can create concrete and abstract nouns. These nouns are the following: *ās* ‘matter, thing, work’, *ut* ‘something, thing’, *χar* ‘something, thing, creature’, *nak* ‘joint, part, thing, place, space’, *wārmal* ‘thing, work’ (Riese 2001: 142–147). Cf.:

- (7) *pəl*    *wat-ne-ās*  
 berry pick-PTCP.PRS-NLZR  
 ‘berry-picking’
- (8) *mas-n-ut*  
 dress-PTCP.PRS-NLZR  
 ‘clothes’
- (9) *sāli*                      *janmalta-n*                      *wārmal*  
 reindeer                      breed- PTCP.PRS                      NLZR  
 ‘reindeer-breeding’

*Mā* has not been mentioned in the literature as a nominalizer, although on the basis of both older and recent texts it seems to have this kind of function, too.

### 3. The grammaticalization of words meaning ‘earth, land’, ‘area’ and ‘place’

Grammaticalization is the process when lexical forms develop into grammatical forms, and/or grammatical forms develop into even more grammatical ones (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 2). Grammaticalization consists of four interrelated steps:

- (i) desemantization (or “semantic bleaching”) – the lexical form loses its meaning and semantic content gradually;

<sup>2</sup> Nominalizers are auxiliary nouns used for creating (concrete and abstract) nouns, and they are grammaticalized from participial relative clauses (cf. Skribnik 2008).

- (ii) extension (or context generalization) – the given form starts to be used in new contexts;
- (iii) decategorialization – the given form loses those morphosyntactic properties characteristic of lexical and other less grammaticalized forms;
- (iv) erosion (or “phonetic reduction”) – the given form loses its phonetic substance (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 2).

Concerning the sources of grammaticalization, the most frequent sources are lexical items with a considerably general meaning and also those items which occur frequently in the language. They are typically basic level terms (*back*, *hand*) or superordinate terms (*person*, *thing*). Body part terms, relational nouns and verbs meaning ‘go, come, say, keep, take’ typically tend to grammaticalize in most languages (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 41).

According to Heine and Kuteva (2002), the words *area* (‘area’, ‘region’), *earth* (‘earth’, ‘soil’, ‘land’, ‘ground’) and *place* can often serve as a source of grammaticalization, too. It seems, however, that the result of the grammaticalization is usually not the same in other languages as the one found in Mansi. Both *earth* and *place* can commonly be grammaticalized into locative markers. *earth* can serve as a source of adverbs, prepositions or postpositions meaning ‘below’, ‘under’, ‘down’, ‘beneath’, e.g. Latvian *zeme* ‘earth’, ‘ground’ > *zem* ‘under’ (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 121–122). *Place* typically serves as the basis for prepositions or postpositions with the meaning ‘at’, ‘toward’ and ‘to’, e.g. Finnish *kohta* ‘place’ > *kohdalla* (kohta-ADESS) ‘at’ (postposition): *talon kohdalla* ‘at the house’ (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 240).

Although less commonly, but *area* ‘area’, ‘region’ can also be the source of locative markers, locative adverbials and postpositions meaning ‘around’, e.g. Imonda (Trans-New Guinea) *la* ‘area’ > ‘around’ (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 44).

In addition, *place* can often be the source of relational grammatical markers with the meaning ‘instead of’, and less frequently, the source of causal markers (conjunctions ‘because’ or ‘therefore’). (For this latter case the examples involve one language family only.) E.g. Hungarian *hely* ‘place’ > *helyett* ‘instead of’ (postposition), Bambara (Niger-Congo) *yòrò* ‘place’ > *o yòrò kama* ‘for this place’ > *o yòrò kama* ‘therefore’ (conjunction). (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 239–240).

#### 4. *Mā* as a nominalizer in Northern Mansi

The word *mā* as a nominalizer mostly combines with the present participle and creates action nominals (10) and – more rarely – result nouns (11–12).

- (10) *χōntlaytā-nə*      *mā-tū-nəl*      *ti*      *poj-t-əs.*  
 fight-PTCP.PRS      NLZR-3SG-ABL      PTCL      stop-PST[3SG]  
 ‘S/He stopped fighting’  
 (VNGy II: 24)
- (11) *manər-sir*      *pil-ne*      *mā-n?*  
 what-kind      fear-PTCP.PRS      NLZR-2SG  
 ‘What are you afraid of?’  
 (lit. ‘what kind of fearing thing of yours’ i.e. ‘what kind of fear do you have?’)  
 (Chernetsov Archives Nr. 42/10)
- (12) *Tot ań*      *χōntl-ən*      *mā-t*  
 there PTCL      fight-PTCP.PRS      NLZR-LOC  
  
*piγ-ēn*      *porsl-uw-es.*  
 son-3DU      dirty-PASS-PST[3SG]  
 ‘There in the war their son dirtied.’ [most probably a euphemism for ‘died’]  
 (LS. 2015/24: 12)

More rarely *mā* can also be combined with the past participle, cf. (13):

- (13) *jaγ-ən*      *opariš-ən*      *ta*      *untmit*  
 father-2SG      grandfather-2SG PTCL      sign[cut in the trees to show the way]  
  
*jal-um*      *ma-te-t*      *sorumpat-s.*  
 walk.travel-PTCL.PST      NLZR-3SG-LOC      die-PST[3SG]  
 ‘The grandfather of your father died following that sign.’  
 (lit. ‘in his walking that sign’)  
 (Chernetsov Archives, Nr. 44)

As has been mentioned before, *mā* as a nominalizer mostly creates action nominals. The two most frequent structures are the following:

**a) present or past participle + *mā* + Px + LOC**

- (14) *naη*      *jäl-nə*      *mā-n-t*  
 you      travel-PTCP.PRS      NLZR-2SG-LOC

<i>matər</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>vār-s-ən!</i>
something	PTCL	do-PST-2SG

‘During your travelling you did something wrong!’

(VNGy I: 3)

This structure mostly expresses simultaneous action or event and the base verb of the participle is usually a motion verb (‘go’, ‘walk’, ‘travel’ etc.).

**b) present or past participle + *mā* + Px + ABL + (jol)pojti ‘to stop, to cease’**

(15)	<i>am</i>	<i>sāyra-ne</i>	<i>mā-m-nəl</i>
	I	cut-PTCP.PRS	NLZR-1SG-ABL

<i>jol-pōjt-ēyum,</i>	<i>taw</i>	<i>χortal-i</i>
stop-1SG	(s)he	bark-3SG

‘I stop cutting [the tree with an axe], s/he [the dog] is barking.’

(Chrest. Vog.: 81)

In the more recent texts this construction appears typically without the possessive suffix:

(16)	<i>Tuwəl</i>	<i>tot</i>	<i>āyməŋ-əy</i>	<i>jēmt-s-um,</i>
	then	there	ill-TRANSL	become-PST-1SG

<i>taji-māyəs</i>	<i>χańistaχt-ən</i>	<i>mā-nəl</i>
therefore	study-PTCP.PRS	NLZR-ABL

<i>jol-pojt-s-um,</i>	<i>os</i>	<i>juw</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>mina-s-um.</i>
stop-PST-1SG	and	home	PTCL	go-PST-1SG

‘Then I got ill there, therefore I gave up my studies and went home.’

(LS: 2015/24: 14)

If the finite verb of the sentence is (j)lpojti ‘to stop, to cease’, then almost always this construction is used. There is one example, though, where the lative case suffix is used instead of the ablative:

(17)	<i>kantl-əm</i>	<i>mā-tä-n</i>	<i>poj-t-əs</i>
	be.angry-PTCP.PST	NLZR-3SG-LAT	stop-PST[3SG]

‘S/He was not angry any more.’

(WW: 288)

In this construction there seem to be no restrictions concerning the base verb of the participle: motion verbs as well as any kind of verb can participate in it.

Examples found in my data show that *mā* can also serve as a nominalizer in Northern Mansi. It represents the third stage of the grammaticalization process, namely, decategorialization. *Mā* as a nominalizer behaves similarly to derivational suffixes, creating event and result nouns. It usually takes possessive suffixes and can also take case suffixes. The fact that in the given examples the case suffix and/or the possessive suffix is always attached to the element *mā* instead of the participle shows that this combination is treated as one unit. Participles can also function as action nominals independently (without any nominalizer element), there are hundreds of examples of this in Northern Mansi (cf. e.g. Bíró 2011, 2014). In this function, participles can combine with case suffixes, possessive suffixes (used for subject agreement, i.e. to refer to the subject of the base verb of the action nominal) and postpositions. If the participle/action nominal is combined with both a postposition and a possessive suffix then the latter is attached to the action nominal:

- (18) *jūw jox̣t-əm-ä jui-pālt jol-χuj-əs.*  
 home come-AN-3SG after down-lie-PST[3SG]  
 ‘After s/he had come home, s/he lay down.’

(VNGy IV: 155)

Among the hundreds of examples there are only a few where the possessive suffix is attached to the postposition:

- (19) *p̄γkwə! am naŋən r̄ēχt-əm porä-m-t ušt*  
 little.boy I you.ACC give.birth-AN time-1SG-LOC right.then

*vorti kit χapyä-lūpta kit pait-äŋən ðl-s-eiy;*  
 red two poplar-leaf two cheek-DU.2SG be-PST-3DU

‘Little boy! When I gave birth to you, your cheeks were like two red poplar leaves.’

(VNGy I: 123)

This fact shows that the element *mā* as a nominalizer has gone further on the path of grammaticalization than the postpositions, and that it behaves like a derivational suffix.

## 5. The historical background of this process

The source of the grammaticalization process was most probably the meaning ‘place’. Presumably, the constructions containing similar expressions as *jaləm/jalnə mā* ‘walking/travelling place’ (i.e. ‘place for/of walking/travelling’) could give rise to the grammaticalization: ‘the place for/of walking/travelling’, that is ‘the place where somebody is/was walking/travelling’ can be easily interpreted as ‘while somebody is/was walking/travelling’ (i.e. ‘while somebody is/was away’). (The grammaticalization of spatial terms into temporal ones is a well-known process cross-linguistically – cf. Heine and Kuteva 2002: 6, among others.) Thus, in some of these examples the combination of the participle and the element *mā* allows not only the action nominal interpretation (‘during his travelling’) but also the “original”, lexical interpretation: ‘travelling place’ i.e. ‘the place where somebody is/was travelling’. See (14) again as (20):

- (20) *naŋ jül-nə mā-n-t*  
 you travel-PTCP.PRS NLZR-2SG-LOC  
*matər ti vār-s-ən!*  
 something PTCL do-PST-2SG  
 ‘During your travelling you did something wrong!’

(VNGy I: 3)

Here the collector of the texts translated the participle + *mā* construction as an action nominal (cf. Hungarian “jártodban”, i.e. lit. ‘in your walking’) and there is no reason to question his competence although this sentence could also be translated as ‘You did something wrong at the place where you were travelling’ (‘at your travelling place’).<sup>3</sup>

Example (21) contains a quite similar expression: *tūjtχatəm mā* ‘hiding place’:

- (21) *akw‘ mā-t toχ tūjtχat-əm mā-m-t*  
 a place-LOC like.this hide-PTCP.PST NLZR-1SG-LOC  
*Lōpəχ-āyi-t pūl-uŋkwə ti jōm-eγət.*

<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that the use of the present participle instead of the past participle also supports the original translation (‘during your travelling’) since if the meaning ‘the place where you were travelling’ was intended, then rather the past participle (*jaləm*) would have been used.

Lōpəχ-girl-PL      bathe-INF      PTCL      come-3PL

‘At a place as I am hiding like this, the girls from Lōpəχ come to bathe.’

(VNGy II: 186)

Here the expression ‘hiding place’ could also be interpreted literally (‘a place for/of hiding’, i.e. ‘to the place I’m hiding, the girls come to bathe’), however, here it is not only the original translation but also the presence of the adverb *toχ* ‘like this, so’ that contradicts this interpretation. Thus, in this sentence the item *mā* appears in two functions: at first as a lexical item meaning ‘place’ (*akw*’ *māt* ‘at a place’) and secondly as a grammatical item, as a nominalizer: *tūjtχatəm mā* ‘hiding’ (*tūjtχatəm māmt* ‘during my hiding’).

Thus, the grammaticalization of *mā* as a nominalizer (and probably even as a derivational suffix) supposedly has proceeded as follows:

- (i) ‘the (concrete) place of the action’ (e.g. ‘travelling place’, noun) >
- (ii) ‘time of the action’ (e.g. ‘during your travelling’ or ‘(while) travelling’, action nominal) >
- (iii) ‘the name of the action’ (e.g. ‘travelling’, action nominal)/ ‘the result of the action’ (e.g. ‘trip’, result noun).

## 6. Similar grammaticalization processes in the same area

As has been mentioned before, the grammaticalization of words meaning ‘place’ as nominalizers does not seem to be common cross-linguistically, at least at first sight. After taking a closer look, however, we can see that very similar grammaticalization processes can be found in other Mansi dialects as well as in other languages of the Siberian and the neighbouring Mongolian area.

### 6.1. Eastern Mansi

The Eastern Mansi dialect was still spoken in the 1970’s along the river Konda, but it can be considered extinct today. A very similar grammaticalization process of the noun *mōḍ* ‘earth, land, place’ (~ Northern Mansi *mā*) can be observed in this dialect (cf. Heikkonen 2013). The two most frequent structures containing *mōḍ* are the following:

(i) action nominal(/past participle)<sup>4</sup> + *m̄ōō* + PX + LOC

This structure occurs almost only with the action nominal derived from the verb ‘to go’, e.g.

(22) *m̄on-n̄ō-m̄ōō-m-t*  
 go-AN-NLZR-1SG-LOC  
 ‘during my walking, as I walk(ed)’

(Heikkonen 2013: 15)

There are some examples also with other motion verbs, but in these *m̄ōō* is attached to the past participle instead of the action nominal, e.g.

(23) *j̄âl-woj̄ōlp-ääm*                      *m̄ōō-tää-t*  
 down-fly-PTCP.PST                      NLZR-3SG-LOC  
 ‘during his/her descending’

(Heikkonen 2013: 15)

Structures where *m̄ōō* is combined with the action nominal usually express simultaneous action while those containing the past participle generally express prior action. According to Heikkonen, this form has been grammaticalized and its function is to create adverbs (i.e. converbs) (Heikkonen 2013: 15).

This construction completely corresponds to the one found in Northern Mansi except that the non-finite verbal form appearing in the Northern Mansi construction is the (present or past) participle since there is no distinct form of the action nominal in Northern Mansi.<sup>5</sup> (Usually the participles are used as action nominals.) Heikkonen considers these Eastern Mansi forms (action nominal + *m̄ōō*) converbs (‘[while] travelling’) while I consider their Northern Mansi counterparts action nominals (‘during travelling’). Distinguishing between action nominals and converbs can be

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<sup>4</sup> There are six non-finite verbal forms in Eastern Mansi (Kulonen refers to them as “nominaalimuodot”, i.e. “nominal verb forms”). They are the following: the infinitive, four participles (the present participle in *-p*, the past participle in *-m* and two other, more rarely used participles in *-i* and in *-s*) as well as the action nominal in *-n*. According to Kulonen, considering its function the action nominal is a verb form rather than a derived noun. (Kulonen 2007: 182–190).

<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that the derivational suffixes appearing in these non-finite verbal forms are the same in both Mansi dialects: *-n* for the present participle and *-m* for the past participle in Northern Mansi, and *-n* for the action nominal and *-m* for the past participle in Eastern Mansi.

problematic in some cases since converbs tend to originate – and in fact are continuously developing – from action nominals marked with a case suffix and used as adverbs (cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993: 44, Haspelmath 1995: 49, 1999: 114, Tikkanen 2001: 1121, among others). There are several non-finite verbal forms in many Uralic languages which historically constitute a transition between the transparent forms of action nominals marked by a case suffix and the completely opaque converbs or infinitives (Ylikoski 2003). In separating one from the other we can rely on the fact that “case inflection of action nominals is a living process and reflects their different syntactic and semantic uses” while “the cases of prototypical converbs are fossilized and are interpreted rather as a part of the whole converb marker” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003: 44). Considering this, the Northern Mansi constructions (participle + *mā* + PX + LOC) can be regarded rather as action nominals for the following reasons:

- (a) They are completely transparent.
- (b) The possessive suffix – used for subject agreement, thus, consequently able to appear in different numbers and persons – precedes the case suffix, as it does in the case of non-derived nouns as well. This fact shows that it is the participle + *mā* construction is considered as one unit, a noun (i.e. an action nominal) and not that *mā* + PX + LOC is considered as a fossilized converb marker.
- (c) (ii) action nominal(/past participle) + *mōō* + ABL

Unlike in Northern Mansi, there is no connection between the use of this construction and the finite verb of the sentence. In Eastern Mansi the use of the ablative form of *mōō* is not triggered by the finite verb *pāns-* ‘to stop, to cease’ at all (Heikkonen 2013: 17). In these Eastern Mansi constructions the base verb of the action nominal (or the past participle) can be not only motion verbs but also other kinds of verbs, e.g.:

- (24) *nee-tø*            *roāwlaxt-øš*            ***koj-øm-mōō-tüü-nol***  
 woman-3SG    wake.up-PST[3SG]    lie-PTCP.PST-NLZR-3SG-ABL  
 ‘The woman woke up from her dreams.’ [lit. ‘from her lying’]

(Heikkonen 2013: 17)

Although *mōō* has been translated traditionally as ‘place’ in these examples, Heikkonen argues that on the basis of the context these forms could – and in some cases indeed should – be translated as action nominals or converbs (Heikkonen 2013: 17). Heikkonen claims that this form originally had the meaning ‘the place of

the action’ but then it grammaticalized as an action nominal meaning the action itself. The local case suffixes of the action nominal (especially the locative) then grammaticalized further into the function of the converb. According to Heikkonen, it is noteworthy that while *mōδ*-converbs containing the locative suffix appear in several persons, those containing the ablative occur in the 3rd persons only<sup>6</sup> (Heikkonen 2013: 18–19).

## 6.2. Surgut Khanty

In the Surgut dialect of Khanty (or Ostyak) – the language most closely related to Mansi and also a geographically neighbouring language – a similar use of the word meaning ‘place’ can be found. The word TAHI (*tāyi* ~ *tayi* ~ *tāχə* ~ *tāχi* ~ *tāχa*) ‘place’ combined with participles tends to be grammaticalized and cause the nominalization of the construction. TAHI can create nouns expressing the place, time, result and name of the action (action nominals) as well as other abstract nouns (cf. Csepregi 2008), e.g.

(25) *wǒλ-tə*                      *tāyi*  
 be-PTCP.PRS                      NLZR  
 ‘life, living’  
 (Csepregi 2008: 129)

(26) *nām pǒn-tə*                      *tayi*  
 name put-PTCP.PRS                      NLZR  
 ‘giving a name’  
 (Csepregi 2008: 129)

(27) *əjnam*                      *tǒjəmtə-tə*                      *tayi*                      *tǒj-əλ*  
 every(thing) understand-PTCP.PRS                      NLZR                      have-3SG  
 ‘everything makes sense’<sup>7</sup>  
 (Csepregi 2008: 129)

These structures appear only in the Eastern Khanty dialects and Csepregi considers them to be a relatively new phenomenon. According to her, the broad

<sup>6</sup> As can be seen from (15) and (16), for example, this is not the case in Northern Mansi. Although the majority of the Northern Mansi examples containing *mā* + ablative appear also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> persons, there are examples in other persons as well.

<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank Márta Csepregi for her help in analyzing the Khanty sentence.

semantic structure of the word ‘place’ can cause its grammaticalization as a nominalizer (or even as a derivational suffix) (Csepregi 2008: 132).

### 6.3. Siberian Turkic languages

This kind of nominalizing technique is also very frequent in other, non-Uralic, languages of the Siberian area, i.e. in Siberian Turkic languages as well as in Mongolic Buryat. The most usual nominalizers are nouns meaning ‘man, person’, ‘thing’, ‘place’, ‘event, business’ (cf. Skribnik 2008, 2010: 569–570). According to Skribnik (2010: 571), there are four nominalizing techniques in the languages of Western and Central Siberia:

- (i) using non-finite verbal forms,
- (ii) using nominalizers,
- (iii) using nominalizing suffixes with other verbal forms,
- (iv) using the combination of question and demonstrative pronouns.

She states that the use of nominalizers is a technique predominant in the Ob-Ugric languages (Mansi and Khanty) as well as in Selkup (a Southern Samoyedic, Uralic language) while it is quite rare in the Northern Samoyedic languages. In Siberian Turkic languages and in Mongolic Buryat, however, it is one of the two most frequent nominalizing techniques (Skribnik 2010: 571–572). South Siberian Turkic languages, for example, use the following nominalizers:

*kiži* ‘man’,

*čer* ‘place’,

*kerek* ‘thing-to-do, business’,

and ‘things’ of pronominal origin:

Altai-*kiži neme* ‘thing’ < *neme* ‘what’,

Tuvan *čüve* ‘thing’ < *čüü* ‘what’,

Khakas *nime* ‘thing’ < *nime* ‘what’ (Skribnik 2014: 263).

Thus, a nominalizer with the meaning ‘place’ can also be found in the Siberian Turkic languages. It seems, however, that in these languages the nominalizer ‘place’ is not used for action nominalization, but rather for creating locative nouns (expressing the place of the action), e.g. Tofan (Sayan Turkic) *emned=ir čer* (Ort zum Heilen) ‘Krankenhouse’, *ñemnen=ir čer* (Ort zum Essen) ‘Kantine’ (Skribnik 2010: 580) and also (28):

Čalqandu (Altay)

- (28) *Qis* *par=yan* *t'er=de* *t'at=tan*  
 girl give=PRT place=LOC stay=PRT.US  
 'A girl must live where she was married (given) into'  
 (example and glossing Skribnik 2008)

Using nominalizers is a special feature of this area, other Turkic languages do not apply them (Skribnik 2014: 263). Skribnik mentions that in Mansi, Khanty and Selkup these nominalizers often develop into derivational suffixes, e.g. Mansi *tēnut* 'food' < *tē-ne ut* 'eating thing'; Selkup *apsodimj* 'food' < *ap-sodi mj* 'thing to eat'. This phenomenon can also be observed in South Siberian Turkic languages with the Uralic substrate, e.g. Tofan *tin-ar čüme* 'air' < 'thing to breathe' (Skribnik 2014: 268–269).<sup>8</sup>

## 7. Conclusions

The word *mā* 'earth, land, place' has been grammaticalized as a nominalizer in Northern Mansi. It has undergone the third stage of the grammaticalization process, i.e. decategorialization. It behaves similarly to derivational suffixes, combining with participles it creates action nominals and – more rarely – result nouns. *Mā* as a nominalizer usually takes possessive suffixes (for subject agreement, although in the newer texts this is less typical) and it also can take case suffixes (usually the locative and the ablative suffix). It is a productive nominalizer, it appears both in older and newer texts, although it is not a very frequent nominalizer. The reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that there are other, more common nominalizers (cf. 2) as well as that in most cases participles – without any nominalizing element – are used as action nominals (cf. 4).

A quite similar grammaticalization process of the word meaning 'place' into a nominalizer can be observed in other languages of the Siberian (Surgut Khanty, Siberian Turkic languages) and the neighbouring Mongolic area (Buryat). The identification of the possible areal influences, however, requires further investigations.

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<sup>8</sup> Whereas in Mongolic languages as well as South Siberian Turkic languages in contact with Mongolic (e.g. Shor, Khakas, Tuvan) these nominalizer constructions "are used as predicate nominals for purposes of focussing (the scheme 'I did it' > 'I am the person who did it'), which leads to grammaticalization of their NRs [nominalizers] as assertive particles" (Skribnik 2008).

## Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
AN	action nominal
DU	dual
INF	infinitive
LAT	lative
LOC	locative
NLZR	nominalizer
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PTCP.PST	past participle
PTCP.PRS	present participle
PX	possessive suffix
SG	singular
TRANSL	translative
US	habitual

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