The focus of this paper will be on internally-headed relative clauses (IHRCs) and their relationship to nominalization in Tłı̨chǫ Yatì, a Northeastern Dene language of the Northwest Territories, Canada. IHRCs like the ones found in Tłı̨chǫ Yatì (1a) contrast with the externally-headed relative clauses (EHRC) that are seen in languages like English (1b); the realized pivot token in IHRCs is internal to the subordinate clause rather than the matrix clause. Contrastive examples can be seen in (1) below, where the pivot is marked with a dashed underline and the subordinate relative clause with an unbroken underline;

(1) a. [Ts’ezo ‘o [DP tli] niʔa-a] k’ee legeehtła
Old.woman 3.tepee to path 3.extends-NMLZ along 3DS.PF.leave
‘They started out along the path which extends to Old Woman’s tepee.’ (Saxon, 2000, 3)

b. [[DP My younger brother], [CP [DP whom] you met [e] last night]], has just left. (Grosu, 2012, 1)

Also of note in the Tłı̨chǫ Yatì example in (1a) is the fact that the IHRC is being marked with a morpheme that is frequently glossed as the nominalizer (NMLZ). The syntactic status of this morpheme is of interest because of its use in two other constructions in Tłı̨chǫ Yatì; the nominalized complemented clause (NCC), seen in (2) and the characterizing relative clause (CRC), seen in (3b)

(2) **Nominalized Complement Clause**

[Du ?elà hol-e] ts’o Wilkinson’a wegho haahdu ha dahwho...?
this boat 3.be.built-NMLZ regarding YNQ 3.about 2PS.say 2PS.want
‘Regarding the building of this boat, do you want to talk about it?’ (Saxon, 2000, 5)

(3) a. **IHRC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>do nàz’e</th>
<th>nàz’e do’ó</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dò</td>
<td>nà-zè-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>THM-hunt-NMLZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘person who hunts’</td>
<td>‘hunting-person, hunter’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper will propose that the similarities between these three constructions can be captured by appealing to what level in the verbal spine (CP, TP, vP, VP) nominalization is occurring at. CP level nominalization yields the IHRC construction, which has a relative clause/entity interpretation. Nominalization that occurs at the level of TP results in the eventive/factive interpretation of the NCCs. The contrast between the structure of the CRC seen in (3b) and the IHRC seen in (3a) is captured by the fact that nominalization in the CRC is occurring much lower in the verbal spine, above an AspP, and this prevents an external argument from surfacing as an internal head. The agent must then be expressed in the possessive construction, similar to vP/VP level nominalizations in English (Harley, 2009).

An approach that analyzes Tłı̨chǫ Yatì IHRCs as preceding via nominalization reaps the benefit of being able to unify an account of the formation of IHRCs with other constructions bearing the nominalizer morpheme. Variation in interpretation of the nominalized constructions may be attributable to a distinction between the various clause types with regards to what phrasal level in the verb spine the nominalization occurs at.
References


