

2. Description of the proposed research

2a. Research topic

One of the basic insights into the nature of human language, starting from Aristotle (*De interpretatione*) and taken up again in Frege and Montague is the distinction between subjects/arguments and predicates/functions. While arguments and conditions on becoming an argument have been extensively studied, relatively little attention has been dedicated to predicates and constraints on their creation. What does it take to be a predicate? And is the answer the same for different lexical categories?

The standard assumption in semantic literature has been that the three main lexical categories (nouns, adjectives and verbs) enter linguistic computation as functions and thus most of them are predicates to begin with. However, cross-linguistically, at least three different functional elements may be required to accompany a non-verbal predicate (a noun phrase (NP), an adjective phrase (AP) or a prepositional phrase (PP)) in a given language: predicative Case (1), a copular particle (2) or a (verbal) copula (3):

- (1)

Salma	i?tabarat	walad-a-ha	wazir-an	
Salma	consider-PRF	child-ACC-her	minister-ACC	
<i>Salma considers her child to be a minister.</i>				

Arabic: predicative Case
- (2)

a.	Mae	Siôn	*(yn)	ddedwydd.	
	is	Siôn	PRT	happy	
<i>Siôn is happy.</i>					
b.	Y	mae	Siôn	yn	feddyg.
	PRT	is	Siôn	PRT	doctor
<i>Siôn is a doctor.</i>					

Welsh: copular particle (Rouveret 1996:128)
- (3)

a.	María Callas	✓es/*está	una cantante.	
	Maria Callas	is	a singer	
<i>Maria Callas is a singer.</i>				
b.	María Callas	*es/✓está	en Roma.	
	Maria Callas	is	in Rome	
<i>Maria Callas is in Rome.</i>				

Spanish: verbal copulas

Whereas argument noun phrases and modificational adjectival phrases appear “as-is”, neither NPs nor APs seem to be able to function as predicates without the support of these functional elements. This fact suggests that (in these languages at least) being a predicate is not a simple matter of being underlyingly a function. What does it take then to make a predicate?

It is a standard assumption (see Hengeveld 1992, Wetzer 1996 and Stassen 1997, among others) that verbal predication should be distinguished from its non-verbal counterpart, and that within the domain of non-verbal predication AP, NP and PP predicates do not behave the same. This leads one to believe that the three variants of non-verbal predication can offer important insights into predicate creation.

I propose to investigate the matter by studying the typological diversity of functional items appearing in non-verbal predication, such as copulas, copular particles and predicative cases. The very existence of non-verbal predicate marking is the first indication that, while verbal phrases are predicates par excellence (a standard assumption), non-verbal predicates have to

be created. Furthermore, copulas, copular particles and predicative cases can all be sensitive to various aspects of the predicate, such as its lexical category (AP, NP or PP), whether it denotes a more or less transient state, etc. Such cross-linguistic variability in non-verbal predicate marking permits a detailed investigation of the functional structure of the minimal unit of non-verbal predication (the *small clause*) while offering a unique insight into syntactic and semantic distinctions between various lexical categories.

2b. Approach

Method: An item with a particular function can be detected not only by its phonologically overt realization, but also by the effect that it has on its environment. The former is exemplified in situations where a functional item is clearly a source of a particular meaning, as with number-marking in English:

(4) ten little Indians English

The presence of a functional category whose role is to contribute the semantics of plurality is indicated by an overt affix. Conversely, a noun phrase appearing as the subject of a tensed clause is likely to be marked with the nominative case (in nominative-accusative languages) and the main verb is likely to reflect some (formal) properties of the subject, such as number or person:

- (5) a. Nina znaet matematiku. Russian
 Nina-NOM know-PRES-3SG mathematics-ACC
 Nina knows mathematics.
- b. Vy znaete matematiku.
 you-PL-NOM know-PRES-2PL mathematics-ACC
 You know mathematics.

This seems to indicate that the functional categories triggering such marking (the tense of the clause or the person of the subject) are present covertly even when no overt evidence of their own presence is available:

- (6) a. Nina umnica. Russian
 Nina smart.one
 Nina is a smart one.
- b. Znaete?
 know-PRES-2PL
 Y'know?

The morphological nominative case marking on the subject indicates the presence of tense in (6a) and the 2PL morphology on the verb in (6b) suggests that a second person plural subject is present.

Following this line of reasoning, case-marking on predicates should indicate the presence of a functional category assigning (or providing a value for) Case under the standard Case Theory (Chomsky 1981, Vergnaud 1982, Chomsky 1986, 1993, Chomsky and Lasnik 1993, Chomsky 2001). This hypothesis is also supported by recent investigations of environments where the value of the Case is appears to be determined by the verb (the so-called *inherent Case*) by Svenonius to appear and Koopman 2006. These studies suggest that inherent Cases, just like structural cases (nominative and accusative), reflect a dependency on a functional projection in the extended verbal phrase (i.e., the clause) rather than on the lexical verb, as previously believed. If this analysis can be extended to predicate Case as detailed below, then the typological variety in predicative case assignment (see below) indicates a corresponding variety in the functional domain of non-verbal predication. An in-depth study of predicative

case assignment can thus lead to a better understanding of what functional structure is required for a non-verbal predicate in function of both its lexical category and its immediate syntactic and semantic context (Project 1). The results obtained will be verified and refined via an investigation of the alternative mechanisms of non-verbal predicate marking: copular particles (Project 2) and copulas (Project 3).

Expected results: Predicative case assignment sheds light on several modules of syntax and semantics. The typological variation in predicative case marking (as detailed below) and in phonologically overt realization of copulas and copular particles must be accounted for, and I will argue that the general theory of Principles and Parameters offers a simple way of doing so: while the mechanics of creating a non-verbal predicate are essentially the same cross-linguistically, they are parameterized with respect to which parts of the system are phonologically overt and whether they can assign Case. Consequently, we will be able to widen the domain of Case theory by reducing the scope of so-called “semantic case”, i.e., the case associated with a particular meaning or change in meaning. For instance, if case-marking on predicates depends on the presence of a particular functional category, then case-marking itself is not what turns an NP or an AP into a predicate, and the case of predicates is therefore not a semantic case.

Likewise, the cross-linguistic distribution and behavior of copulas and copular particles are also affected both by the lexical category of the predicate and by the immediate syntactic and semantic environment of non-verbal predication, thus permitting not only a verification of the results obtained through the study of predicate case, but also a better estimate of the role of tense, finiteness, copula itself and other extraneous factors in non-verbal predication.

To summarize, determining what mechanisms underlie predicate marking will permit (a) an elaboration of Case Theory, which has so far paid little attention to predicates; (b) new insights into the underlying semantics of NPs, APs and PPs; (c) a better understanding of the internal structure of small clauses and (d) a deeper comprehension of the differences between verbal and non-verbal predication ensuing from the juxtaposition of the role of the copular particles as opposed to verbal copulas across languages. In addition, we hope to be able to apply the results to situations where predicates appear to be less marked than arguments, as in (7), where a predicate noun phrase appears without an article, in contrast to (8), where an article is obligatory in the corresponding argument noun phrase (for a discussion of the phenomenon, see Pollock 1983, Rapoport 1987, Stowell 1989, 1991, Longobardi 1994, Chierchia 1998, Roy 2001, Matushansky and Spector 2005, de Swart, Winter and Zwarts 2005, Beyssade and Dobrovie-Sorin to appear, among others):

- (7) a. Jan is advocaat/ Belg/ christen. Dutch: de Swart, Winter and Zwarts 2005
Jan is lawyer Belgian Christian
Jan works as a lawyer/has Belgian nationality/is of Christian faith.
- b. Jan is een advocaat/ Belg/ christen.
Jan is a lawyer Belgian Christian
Jan is a lawyer/a Belgian/a Christian.
- (8) Ik heb *(een) leraar gezien.
I have a teacher seen.
I have seen a teacher.

Finally, the question of what in a language determines the choice of the mechanism for marking (or not marking) non-verbal predicates is also essential for discussion of cross-linguistic parameter setting.

Project 1: Predicate case cross-linguistically and a new Case Theory

The central questions to be answered by this project are (a) the mechanism of predicate case assignment, (b) the factors affecting the choice of the surface case and their syntactic and

semantic effects, (c) what does predicate case reveal about the structure of non-verbal predication?

At least the following patterns of Case-marking on non-verbal predicates are observed (see also Comrie 1997):

- Default or undetectable case (putative lack of case), as in (9)
- Case-agreement (the predicate is marked with the same case as the subject), as in (10)
- Dedicated predicative case(s), as in (11) and (12)
- A combination of the above

(9) rina (hayta) mora/ yafa. Hebrew: lack of overt case-marking
Rina was teacher beautiful-FSG
Rina is/was a teacher.

(10) a. Ciceronem clarum habent. Latin: Case-agreement
Cicero-ACC famous-ACC consider/hold
They consider Cicero famous.
b. Cicero clarus habetur.
Cicero-NOM famous-NOM consider/hold-PASS
Cicero is considered famous.

(11) a. Ja sčitaju ee lingvistkoj. Russian: predicative case
I consider her-ACC linguist-INSTR
I consider her a linguist.
b. Ona vernulas' krasavicej.
she came back beauty-INSTR
She came back a beauty.

(12) a. Toini on sairaa-na. Finnish: multiple predicative cases
Toini.NOM be.3SG ill-ESS
Toini is ill.
b. Toini tul-i sairaa-ksi.
Toini.NOM become-PAST.3SG ill-TRA
Toini became ill.

The following factors (at least) affect the choice of case on the predicate, cross-linguistically and intra-linguistically (see Maling and Sprouse 1995, Comrie 1997, Bailyn 2001, Fong 2003, Tóth 2006, and Madariaga in progress, to appear, among others):

- Presence of the copula: when the copula BE is present, nominative case may become available (Finnish) or obligatory (Hungarian). It is not clear whether the nominative here results from Case-agreement with the nominative subject or is assigned as the default case of the language
- Tense: if the copula *be* is null in the present tense, nominative case may become obligatory (Russian, Arabic)
- Lexical category of the predicate: adjectival and nominal predicates may be case-marked differently (Hungarian argument secondary predication)
- Semantics of the small clause: a change of state may induce the appearance of a marked case (Finnish, Hungarian)
- Type of predication: resultative, depictive or complement small clause predicates may differ in Case-marking (Georgian)
- The choice of the main verb for complement small clauses (Czech, Old Russian)

Several questions arise:

- In fact, Case-assignment to predicates cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in the framework of the current generativist Case Theory (Chomsky 1981, Vergnaud 1982, Chomsky 1986, 1993, Chomsky and Lasnik 1993, Chomsky 2001):

- To deal with these issues a modification of Case Theory is required (Matushansky to appear). I propose that Case features are assigned by a head to its complement (cf. Stowell 1981). This permits more than one case feature to be assigned to a given term, with the surface case reflecting the resulting combination of case features (cf. Jakobson 1936/1971, and Maling and Sprouse 1995).

This proposed theory accounts not only for predicate case, but also covers the domain of the standard Case Theory, i.e., structural Case-assignment. As a result, the syntactic theory of Case is also made consistent with the morphological theory of Case. A minor modification of the theory can also provide a simple account of the cases assigned along with the thematic role ("inherent cases"), such as benefactive dative.

More importantly for this project, a study of the cross-linguistic variation above provides valuable insight into the structure of small clauses and thus into what it takes to enable a given phrase to function as a predicate. For instance, Case-assignment to predicates has been argued to arise from the projection of a functional head, Pred^0 , inside a small clause (Bailyn and Rubin 1991, Bailyn and Citko 1999, Bailyn 2001, 2002, among others), Pred^0 being the functional head that enables an AP, an NP or a PP to function as a predicate (Bowers 1993, Baker 2003). However, it can be demonstrated that this head alone is insufficient for explaining cross-linguistic predicate Case-assignment. In particular, if the predicative case is assigned by the functional head responsible for enabling an AP or an NP to function as an argument, why, cross-linguistically, does the predicate case tend to revert to the default in primary predication when *be* is missing, as in (13)?

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Similarly, since case-marking on a predicate can reflect the semantic environment of this predicate, we can use predicate case-marking to study how particular semantics translates into syntactic structure. For instance, the fact that in Finnish NP and AP predicates associated with change-of-state semantics (with verbs such as *become* or in resultatives) must be marked with translative case rather than with essive case (Comrie 1997, Fong 2003, Tóth 2006) indicates the presence of a functional head associated with the change-of-state semantics. This head can be straightforwardly assumed to be the light verb BECOME proposed by Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995, Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1998, among others).

Another potential domain of investigation related to this new Case Theory is the question what Case is. Suppose that the Case features assigned by a given head to its complement are in fact the interpretable features composing this head (on the assumption (Matushansky 2006) that a head is defined as a syntactically indivisible bundle of formal features). Then we might expect that the preposition *to*, for instance, would assign the feature [goal] (and most likely other features, as well), as would the verb *go* (or rather, the functional *v* head associated with it). If so, we would have a principled explanation for why different prepositions may assign the same semantically determined case (Bierwisch 1988, Zwarts 2005, 2006, among others), and why verbs can do so as well.

We conclude that a study of predicate Case-marking sheds light on several major topics of interest. First of all, it can yield a better theory of structural Case. Secondly, it can provide us with a new insight into the nature of Case. Finally and most importantly for this project, it permits us to investigate the structure of various types of small clauses and thus the question of what it takes to create a predicate. In particular, since predicate case-marking can be sensitive to the lexical category of the predicate, it can refine upon what the distinctions between various non-verbal predicates are.

Project 2 (AiO): Copular particles

Central to this project is the correlation between the factors affecting predicate case and those determining the presence and choice of the copular particle. Are these factors the same, and if not, why?

Baker 2003 argues that small clauses necessarily involve the projection of a functional head (see also Bowers 1993) which is overt in such languages as Chichewa or Edo, exemplified below. While in Edo different particles are used for AP and NP predicates, Chichewa makes no such distinction. (In both languages, a verb is required for PP predicates, which sheds further light on the differences between various non-verbal predicates.)

- (14) a. Èmèrí *(yé) mòsèmòsè. Edo (Baker 2003)
Mary PRED beautiful.A
Mary is beautiful.
- b. Úyì *(rè) òkhaèmwèn.
Uyi PRED chief.N
Uyi is a chief.
- (15) a. M-kango *(ndi) w-a u-kali. Chichewa (Baker 2003)
3-lion PRED 3-Assoc 3-fierce
The lion is fierce.

- b. M-kango *(ndi) m-lenje.
3-lion PRED 1-hunter
The lion is a hunter.

Another set of languages requires a functional element with nominal predicates but not with adjectival ones. In this category are Irish (Chung and McCloskey 1987) and Scottish Gaelic (Adger and Ramchand 2003):

- (16) a. Chunnaic mi Calum agus [e uamhasach toilichte]. Scottish Gaelic
see-PST I Calum and [him terribly happy]
I saw Calum while he was really happy.
b. Chunnaic mi Calum agus [e *(‘na) thidsear].
see-PST I Calum and [him in-3MSG teacher]
I saw Calum while he was a teacher.

As shown by the absolutive construction (16b), in Scottish Gaelic a nominal predicate must be preceded by the combination of a preposition with a possessive pronoun that agrees in ϕ -feature specification with the subject. Adger and Ramchand 2003 propose that the use of this combination is required to provide a nominal predicate with an event argument, which an adjectival predicate already has. This fits in with the preliminary results obtained from the study of differential predicative case marking on NP and AP predicates.

Unlike copulas, which only appear in the presence of tense and tense-like elements, copular particles are similar to predicate Case in that non-verbal predicates require them in all or nearly all environments where they appear. Thus a cross-linguistic study of copular particles should provide a counterpoint to the study of predicative Case marking, clarifying issues left open by the latter, more indirect, method of investigation into the small clause structure.

The following questions are to be pursued in detail:

- Copular particles may appear with NP predicates only, or be different for AP and NP predicates. Are there other factors to which their presence and appearance is sensitive? In particular, can they be sensitive to the semantics of their environment, as is translative case-marking in Finnish?
- What are the syntactic role and lexical or functional category of copular particles? Are they cross-linguistically the same (modulo the lexical category of the predicate)?
- Are the “overt predictors” of Bailyn 2002, such as *for* or *as* in (17), to be equated with copular particles?

- (17) a. Hilary decided to run **for** president.
b. To be elected **as** president, you need a lot of money.

To answer these questions it will be necessary to consider languages where the copular particle is not sensitive to the lexical category of the predicate (e.g., Welsh), languages where AP and NP predicates are introduced by different copular particles (e.g., Edo and Chichewa) or only NP predicates are introduced by a copular particle (e.g., Japanese, Irish and Scottish Gaelic) and finally, languages where situation is less clear, as in Logo, where the choice of the copular suffix is a matter of preference (Dryer to appear citing Tucker 1940/1967).

Project 3: Copulas cross-linguistically

Since copulas appear only in the presence of tense, it is only with difficulty that copulas can be viewed as a form of marking for non-verbal predication, but it may nonetheless shed light on the structure of the small clause and the distinction between predicates of various lexical categories. We will rely primarily on the extensive cross-linguistic study of copulas by Stassen 1997 and Pustet 2005 to ask the following questions:

- Why does the null copula in the present tense (Russian, Arabic, Hebrew) often affect the behavior of the non-verbal predicate?
- What does the use of copulas with only some non-verbal predicates or of different copulas with predicates of different lexical categories (Japanese) reveal about the semantics and syntax of predication?
- What does the use of different copulas for non-verbal predicates of varying levels of permanence (e.g., *ser* vs. *estar* in Spanish and Portuguese) reveal about the semantics and syntax of predication?

I suggest that answers to these questions will be partly provided by the study of copular particles and predicative case. In particular, the copula can be ambiguous between a genuine verb supplying an event argument to the clause, and a support for Tense. I will show that this ambiguity is not restricted to the tense/verbal domain but reflects the whole range of functional projections required for non-verbal predication.

Due to its more marginal nature, this project cannot be carried out until prior studies of copular particles and predicate case have established what factors are at play in relation to the properties of the predicate (rather than due to the presence of tense).

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