AN APPROACH TO THE NOMINAL PREDICATES IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN[1]

Abstract: *The paper is meant to be an approach to the use of nominal predicates in English and Romanian. In English there are two kinds of nominal predicates: the nominal predicate proper, concerned with the state or quality of the subject, and the double/complex predicate, which is a rather widespread form in English.*
In Romanian nominal predicates can be split into two categories: the proper nominal predicate, made up of a predicative and the copula "a fi" and the verbal nominal predicate, made up of a predicative and a lexical and grammatical copula. The predicative achievement within the nominal predicate structure is often similar to the subject achievement.

Key words: *predicative, nominal predicate proper, copula, predicative syntagm, predicative achievement*

Résumé: *L'objectif de cet article est de mettre en contraste les prédicats nominaux en anglais et roumain. En anglais il existe deux types de prédicat nominal: le prédicat nominal propre portant sur l'état ou la qualité de l'objet, et le prédicat double/complexe, qui est une forme assez répandue en anglais.*
En roumain, il existe deus catégories de prédicats nominaux: le prédicat nominal propre, formé d'un attribut du sujet et la copule ***être*** *et le prédicat nominal verbal, constitué d'un attribut du sujet et une copule lexicale ou grammaticale. Le rôle de l'attribut du sujet dans le cadre du prédicat nominal est similaire à celui du sujet.*

Mots-clés*: attribut du sujet, prédicat nominal propre, copule, syntagme prédicatif, rôle prédicatif*

The predicate is the principal part of the sentence which shows what the subject does, what the subject is or what the subject is like. In English the classification of predicates is made first according to the criterion of content and then according to the criterion of composition. So, we can identify: *verbal predicates, nominal predicates, and mixed types of predicates*.

1. Nominal Predicates. The Nominal Predicate Proper

The nominal predicate proper shows the state or quality of the subject or the evolution of this state or quality.

The nominal predicate proper is made up of a *linking verb* and a *predicative*:

George *was ready* to talk; it was only time that *seemed to be wanting*.

The linking verbs or *copulas* (sometimes called semi-auxiliaries because they discharge a grammatical function, either having a little meaning of their own or without contributing essentially to the meaning of the predicate) are all intransitive verbs. They take upon themselves the task of indicating the morphological categories of the verb, therefore

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the formal elements of the predicate: aspect, voice, mood, tense, person and number. The meaning of the predicate is generally expressed by the *predicative*.

There are several categories of semi-auxiliary verbs which can be used as linking verbs:

● Verbs of *being* or *state* – like: *to be, to stand, to feel*;

The ground *was wet* with dew.

The meeting *stands adjourned*.

Betty *was a very shy* girl.

● Verbs of *remaining* or *continuing* – like: *to continue, to keep, to remain, to hold, to stay;*

The weather still *continues fine*.

The boy *remained deeply amazed*.

The rule still *holds good*.

● Verbs of *becoming* or of *transition* from one state to another – the most numerous category of linking verbs like: *to become, to get, to grow, to turn, to fall, to run, to go, to prove, to turn out;*

This river *runs dry* in summer.

They all *get upset* at times.

The mountains chain *grew visible*.

The leaves *were turning red and brown*.

The children were whispering together before they *fell asleep*.

This thing may *turn out rotten*.

● Verbs of *seeming* or *appearing*, that retain a certain modal force – like: *to seem, to appear, to look;*

He *looked aged and bent*, and quite *bowed down*.

She *appeared vexed*.

Yet he *looked a wiser man* than in the days he wanted nothing but facts.

A certain variety can also be found among *predicatives* which may be expressed by various parts of speech in the sphere of nomina:

● a *noun* in the nominative or genitive:

She is a *teacher.*

The dictionary is *Jane's*.

It is my *brother's*.

● *predicative adjectives*;

It is *nice* of you to have come.

Her face is *aglow*.

● *personal, possessive, indefinite or interrogative pronouns*:

This house is *theirs*.

Who's there? It's *me*.

What are the wages of crime?

● *a noun, a gerund or pronoun accompanied by a preposition*:

Her son looked *like her.*

The girl looked *in perfect health*.

● a cardinal or an ordinal *numeral*:

We were *nine.*

He is *the third*.

● An *infinitive* or *infinitival phras*e:

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To be or not to be, that is the question.

● *a gerundial phrase*:

His hobby is *hunting the second-hand bookshops.*

● *a predicative clause*:

What are you telling me is *exactly what I had expected*.

The truth is *I don't like it at all*.

2. Nominal predicates. The Double / Complex Predicate

The double predicate is a rather widespread form in English which hardly finds proper equivalents in other languages. The prototype can be the famous sentence *"The moon rose red"* which shows that in fact, in a double predicate we have to do with the contraction of the predicates of two sentences and clauses, easily to be reconstituted (*The moon was red when it rose*, or *The moon rose. It was red*.).

The cords of his neck *stood out hard and lean*.

The general meaning of this type of predicate is that a nominal predicate of being, at other times it is one of becoming, of appearing, of remaining, etc:

The sun *came out hot*.

The ground *rode soft* that morning.

The tents *lay silent* in the moonlight.

That house *has* long *stood empty*.

In the second example the interpretation is rather controversial, some authors favouring the conception of "predicative adjunct". The interpretation is either that in this case the verb *to ride* functions almost like a linking verb (as in the *Moon rose red*):

I rode that morning. The ground was soft; or

The ground was soft / I felt the ground soft when I rode that morning; or

Riding that morning, I felt the ground (to be) soft (under the hoofs of my house).

3. Nominal Predicates in Romanian

The most widely-used linking verb in Romanian is the verb "*a fi*". There is a difference between the verb *a fi* and the other linking verbs which add a semantic characteristic to the nominal predicates structure:

Marcu *părea fratele* mai mare; nenea Ghiţă *era fratele* mic.

In the first sentence, the subject function of characterization is discharged by the whole predicative syntagm – *părea fratele*; the verb *părea* brings to the predicative syntagm the sign *Appearance*: *Părea* fratele, but ***nu*** *era* fratele. In the second sentence, the linking verb *era* identifies the subject by the predicative *fratele*. If we changed the places of the two verbs, we would also change the meaning of our communication. The other linking verbs can not be replaced by the verb *a fi* without changing the content.

There are two categories of of nominal predicates in Romanian:

a. *the proper nominal predicate*, which is made up of *a predicative* and *the copula* ***a fi***;

b. *the verbal nominal predicate*, which is made up of *a predicative* and *a lexical and grammatical copula.*

Some predicative syntagms are built *in absentia*, without the copula *a fi*. In such cases the verbal element is omitted, so the statement becomes a nominal sentence: Feţişoara

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lui, / *Spuma* laptelui; / Mustăcioara lui,/ *Spicul* grâului; / Perişorul lui, / *Pana* corbului; /Ochişorii lui, / *Mura* câmpului.

The verbal nominal predicate is made up of a predicative preceded or followed by a lexical and grammatical copula and can signify:

● permanence: *Sunt de subt întorsura Buzăului,* ***mă cheamă Radu Suliţă*** *si am fost ucenic la episcopie; Hanul lui Haramin* ***se află aşezat*** *la o răspantie de drumuri;*

● quality keeping*: Tot* ***obraznic ai rămas****, nene Iancule!; Poporul* ***se păstra*** *cu indârjire* ***liber****; Când trece pe langâ nuc, il pufneşte râsul,* ***dar se ţine serios****;*

● equivalence*: "Bunar"****înseamnă*** *in limba nohailor* ***fântană****; O poliţă iscalită in alb,* ***vrea să zică o foaie*** *de astea în care un găgăuţă ca domnu Mihai işi iscăleşte numele fără să puie suma ce a primit; Tu* ***să nu te*** *mai* ***numeşti prieten*** *al meu;*

● assumption*: Dacă insa acum Nuţu* ***îmi părea*** *mie* ***grozav de prost****, eu* ***îi păream*** *lui* ***grozav de înţelept****:* ***Araţi tare si voinic*** *ca un urs!; Razaşul* ***s-a arătat mirat*** *de povestirea monahului;*

● obtaining of a quality*: Am fost oştean cu leafă la Domnia Moldovei şi* ***am ajuns*** *în vremea lui Ion Vodă* ***diac*** *la logofăţia cea mare;* ***Nu se face*** *ăsta* ***ofiţer****, cum* ***nu mă fac*** *eu* ***popă****!; Nedelcu* ***s-a ales un pungaş*** *de rând.*

4. The Nominal Achievement of the Predicative

The predicative achievement within the nominal predicate structure is similar to the subject achievement, because the class units of the predicative are very much alike to those of the subject. The parallelism between the two classes can be noticed starting with the basis scheme of a *subject – nominal predicate relationship* and ending with some aspects of detail: if the subject is achieved by an infinitive, the predicative is usually an infinitive, too:

A susţine aceasta idee înseamnă *a lupta* pentru ea.

Indeed, if the subject and the predicative have the same structure as in the example above, the similarity can not be absolute, so there must be a minimum difference that should ensure the co-occurrence of the two units in the same relation scheme. The difference can also be expressed by other elements of structure. Thus the predicative may be simple or complex, but unlike the subject it is always obvious.

● The nominal achieving of the predicative has the following aspects:

- A noun in the nominative, if determined by expansion: *Ion este* ***inginer****; Maria este* ***economista întreprinderii.***
- If the predicative number and person are different from those of the subject, the usual function of the agreement redundance imposes the order of the structure - *subject – nominal predicate*: *Noi suntem* ***colectivul****; Voi sunteţi* ***echipa;*** *Noi suntem* ***poporul****.*

● The achieving of the predicative by a personal pronoun imposes the copula a person and number agreement: *Eu sunt* ***profesor; Profesorul*** *eşti tu; El este* ***profesor.***

● The predicative achieving by a noun in the genitive which is determined by *al* linked with the a possessive pronoun: *al meu, al tău: Caietul* ***este al lui Paul****; Hainele rămân* ***ale tale****; Pălăria pare* ***a Mariei.***

● The achieving by an adjective or a numeral in the nominative: *Fata este* ***frumoasă şi cuminte****; Fiul meu este* ***al treilea.***

● A prepositional nominal syntagm achieving: *Noi suntem* ***împotriva propunerii****; Ion este dintre cei mijlocii.*

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● The achieving by a nominal form of the verb: *Unul dintre scopurile noastre este **de a combate** lipsurile*; *Calmul lui este **de invidiat**.*

● The achieving by the adverbs which are co-occurrent with a subject expressed by an infinitive, a *supin* or a subjective clause: *A plănui este **mai simplu** decat a îndeplini planul; Este **imposibil** de oprit apa.*

● The achieving by a prepositional predicative, which is introduced by relative pronouns or adverbs or by the conjunctions: *să, că, dacă*: *Acesta nu este **cine crezi tu**; Întrebarea este **ce mâncăm azi**; Problema este **dacă îl mai ajungem sau nu**; Dacă intârzii înseamnă **că nu vei intra in sală.***

5. Conclusions

In English the nominal predicate proper shows the state or quality of the subject or the evolution of this state or quality. It is made up of a linking verb (copula) and a predicative. The copulas discharge a grammatical function, either having a little meaning of their own or not, and they are intransitive verbs. They indicate the morphological categories of the verb. The meaning of the predicate is generally expressed by the predicative.

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