

119. Nominal and Locational Predication

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1. Defining the values

This map shows the possible relationships between the encoding of nominal and locational predicates. In particular, the map shows for each language whether nominal predications (such as *John is a tailor*) and locational predications (such as *John is in Paris*) can or cannot be encoded by the same strategy. In the terminology of Stassen (1997), a language is called a **share-language** if the encoding strategy for locational predications is (or can be) used for nominal predications, and a **split-language** if the encoding strategies for the two constructions must be different.

An obvious example of a share-language is English. As the above example sentences demonstrate, this language can use the lexical item *be* both as a nominal copula and as a locational support verb. In contrast to this, Mandarin is a split-language, as the copula and the locational verb are not the same.

(1) Mandarin (Li and Thompson 1977: 422; Li and Thompson 1981: 365)

- a. *nèi-ge rén shì xuéshēng*
 that-CLF person COP student
 ‘That man is a student.’
- b. *Lǐsì zài hǎi-biān*
 Lisi be.at ocean-side
 ‘Lisi is by the ocean.’

The following values are shown on the map:

@	1. Split (i.e. different) encoding of nominal and locational predication	269
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@	2. Shared (i.e. identical) encoding of nominal and locational predication	117
		total 386

2. Variation in split-languages

As was shown in example (1), Mandarin is a split-language by virtue of the difference between the lexical items involved in nominal and locational predication. This type of split encoding is rather common. Spanish, with its difference between the copula *ser* and the locational verb *estar*, is another well-known case in point, as is Irish.

(2) Spanish (Max Kerkhof, p.c.)

- a. *Julia es enfermera*
 Julia COP.3SG.PRES nurse
 ‘Julia is a nurse.’
- b. *Julia está en Barcelona*
 Julia be.3SG.PRES in Barcelona
 ‘Julia is in Barcelona.’

(3) Irish (Greene 1966: 40, 43)

- a. *is múinteoir é*
 COP teacher he
 ‘He is a teacher.’
- b. *tá sé sa tseomra*
 be.PRES he in.the room
 ‘He is in the room.’

However, this “lexical” form of split encoding is not the only way in which a language can achieve split-status. A second, also fairly frequent type of split encoding involves a contrast between a full supporting verb for locational predication and the absence of any overt linking item (a “zero copula”) for nominal predication. Examples of split languages in which this situation

holds are Mokilese (Oceanic; Micronesia) and Waskia (Madang; Papua New Guinea).

(4) Mokilese (Harrison 1976: 142, 209)

a. *John johnpadahk-men*

John teacher-INDEF

‘John is a teacher.’

b. *ih mine Hawaii*

he be Hawaii

‘He is in Hawaii.’

(5) Waskia (Ross and Natu Paol 1978: 11, 12)

a. *aga bawa taleng-duap*

my brother police-man

‘My brother is a policeman.’

b. *kadi mu kawam se bage-so*

man ART house in stay-3SG.PRES

‘The man is in the house.’

Finally, a third variant of split encoding is based on the difference between a full support verb for locative predicates and a verbal encoding for nominal predicates. Since there are not that many languages in which predicate nominals are treated as verbs anyway, it will be clear that this variant of split encoding will be less frequent than the other two. An example of this encoding option is the Philippine language Kapampangan: as is shown by sentences (6a–b), predicate nouns in this language have the same morphosyntactic properties as predicate verbs.

(6) Kapampangan (Mirikitani 1972: 137, 44, 72)

a. *tinerak ya ing anak ku*

dance 3SG ART child my

‘My child danced.’

b. *mestro ya ing lalaki*

teacher 3SG ART boy

‘The boy is a teacher.’

c. *ati ya ing lalaki king eskwela*

be 3SG ART boy at school

‘The boy is in school.’

For the purposes of this map, the three possible forms which split encoding can take have been ignored. Thus, a language is rated as a member of type 1 if there is split encoding of any sort, regardless of whether this involves a lexical contrast, a zero-verb contrast, or a contrast between verbal and nonverbal encoding.

3. Variation in shared encoding

Parallel to split encoding, shared encoding of nominal and locational predication can be attested in three variants. Of these variants, the “lexical” form, which involves the use of the same lexical item for nominal copula and locational support verb, is by far the most frequent. In addition to English, some other examples of this variant are Miskito (Misumalpan; Nicaragua) and Luganda (Bantu; Uganda).

(7) Miskito (Anonymous 1985: 213; Conzemius 1929: 110)

a. *Giovanni tuktan sirpi kum sa*

Giovanni child small one COP.3SG.PRES

‘Giovanni is a small child.’

b. *aisi-kam bāra sa*

father-your here be.3SG.PRES

‘Your father is here.’

(8) Luganda (Ashton et al. 1954: 434, 82)

a. *Mukasa n-ange tu-li babazzi*

Mukasa and-1SG 1PL.PRES-COP carpenters

‘Mukasa and I are carpenters.’

- b. *omugaati gu-li mu kabada*
 loaf 3SG.PRES-be in cupboard
 ‘The loaf is in the cupboard.’

The other two possible forms of shared encoding are rather uncommon. This is due to the fact that, for locational predication, the use of a full locational support item is the overwhelmingly preferred option (see Stassen 1997: 55–61). Thus, we only rarely find that a language has share–status on the basis of a zero–zero encoding. One such case is Pitjantjatjara (Pama–Nyungan; South Australia).

(9) Pitjantjatjara (Douglas 1959: 55, 81)

- a. *wait ngalyayala*
 man doctor
 ‘The man is a doctor.’
- b. *tjitji kutjara ngura-ka*
 child two camp-at
 ‘The two children are at camp.’

Finally, share–status for a language is also possible on the basis of a verbal encoding for both nominal and locational predicates. Since verbal encoding is definitely a minor typological option for both of these predicate types, it follows that a verbal–verbal shared encoding will be very uncommon as well. This variant can be illustrated by Korku (Munda; central India).

(10) Korku (Drake 1903: 149, 132, 80)

- a. *ing shene-ba*
 1SG go–NONPST
 ‘I go/will go.’
- b. *di dhega kad ojha-ba*
 that stone heavy load–NONPST
 ‘That stone is a heavy load.’
- c. *di ura-gen-ba*

it house-at-NONPST
 ‘It is at home.’

As was the case with split encoding, the variation among languages with share-status has been ignored for the purposes of this map.

4. Mixed encoding

In the above discussion, the split-share distinction has been defined as a binary parameter, in a yes/no fashion, and it will be represented as such on the map. It must be noted, however, that this binary definition is a simplification in some respects. For one thing, many languages have not just one encoding item for nominal predicates and locational predicates; commonly, copulas and locational support items come in sets, and these sets usually **coincide only partially**, if they coincide at all. This situation can be illustrated by Dutch. This language has a set of copular items (such as *zijn* ‘to be’, *worden* ‘to become’, *lijken* ‘to appear’), as well as a set of locational verbs (such as *zijn* ‘to be’, *liggen* ‘to lie’, *hangen* ‘to hang’, *staan* ‘to stand’, and *zitten* ‘to sit’). Now, the only overlap between these two sets are the items *zijn* ‘to be’ and *blijven* ‘to stay’, which can be used for both nominal and locational predication; all the other items are specialized for one or the other of the two predicational functions. Furthermore, since the use of *zijn* in locational function is much more limited in Dutch than is the use of *be* in that function in English, one may well ask whether Dutch should not be considered as a split-language rather than as a share-language.

A second factor which tends to blur the distinction between split-languages and share-languages is the phenomenon of **copularization** of the locational support verb. In some languages, the locational support verb has (or has attained) a limited possibility to act as the copula in nominal predication, in

addition to the “real” copula that the language has. This leads to the possibility of a double encoding for nominal predications. Examples are from Spanish and from Tamil (Dravidian; southern India).

(11) Spanish (Max Kerkhof, p.c.)

- a. *Julia es enfermera*
 Julia COP.3SG.PRES nurse
 ‘Julia is a nurse.’
- b. *Julia está de enfermera (en Madrid)*
 Julia be.3SG.PRES PREP nurse (in Madrid)
 ‘Julia is a nurse (in Madrid).’

(12) Tamil (Asher 1982: 49, 50, 51)

- a. *avaru (oru) daktar*
 he (one) doctor
 ‘He is a doctor.’
- b. *ippo oru daktar-aa taan irukkaraaru*
 now one doctor-ADV EMPH be.3SG.HON.PRES
 ‘Now he is a doctor.’
- c. *Raaman tootta-ille irukkaraan*
 Raaman garden-in be.3SG.M.PRES
 ‘Raaman is in the garden.’

In the large majority of relevant cases, this double encoding of nominal predications is connected with a clear semantic difference, which can be described in terms of the notion of Time Stability (see Givón 1984) or Permanency (see Stassen 1997). For example, in the Spanish examples given above, it must be understood that the (a) sentence (which has a form of the “real” copula *ser*) indicates permanent class membership, whereas the (b) sentence (which contains the “copularized” locational verb *estar*) must be interpreted as stating that the class membership is only temporary. In this latter case, the

sentence might well be translated as “Julia works/acts as a nurse in Madrid”.

In view of the possible indeterminacy created by the phenomena of partial overlap and copularization, the map has been constructed along the following guidelines. A language will be called a share-language if at least one of its locational items can be used for copula function, unless this use is governed by conditions of Permanency. In all other circumstances, the language will be rated as a split-language. As a result, Dutch is rated as a share-language, while Spanish has been included among the split-languages.

5. Geographical distribution

As the frequency numbers given above demonstrate, shared encoding is definitely the less frequent option among the world’s languages. Nonetheless, there are a number of areas in which this encoding appears to be the rule. First, shared encoding is encountered in what might be called the Eurasian land mass, comprising Europe, central and northern Asia, the Middle East, Pakistan, and at least the northern part of India; notable exceptions here are some languages of the Caucasus and a number of languages on the western fringe of this mega-area (Celtic, Spanish). Secondly, shared encoding is prominent in Australia and New Guinea. Thirdly, we can note a concentration of shared encoding in an area which comprises the southern part of Central America and the northern part of South America. Finally, shared encoding is found in parts of eastern Africa, mainly due to the progress of copularization in the Bantu languages. Apart from these areas, however, split encoding seems to have a firm foothold.