

CSILLA HORVÁTH (Helsinki–Tromsø), NIKOLETT MUS (Budapest)

TWO NOMINAL CLAUSE-TYPES IN NORTHERN MANSI: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE VARIATION

Abstract. The paper examines the structure and distribution of two types of nominal/adjectival predicates in the Northern Mansi language. A nominative noun or adjective serves as the predicate in one construction. The other predicate type contains a predicate noun or adjective that takes translative case marking. In both constructions, the stative-like copula *ōl-* 'be, exist' can also appear, though under different conditions. In the paper we focus on (a) the licensing conditions of the *ōl-* copula, (b) the predicate-subject agreement morphology, and (c) concord within the predicate phrase in both predicates. Our findings demonstrate that the two types exhibit systematic structural differences: the copula *ōl-* is utilized in the nominative construction in the past, while it must be omitted in the present. The *ōl-* copula is always obligatory in the translative predicate. The nominative predicate noun/adjective takes the morpheme of the subject agreement in number, and we attested inter- and intra-speaker variation in Number concord in this construction when there is an overt copula in the predicate phrase. The translative-marked nominal/adjectival predicate does not take any inflectional suffix, and agreement that indicates both the person and the number of the subject is marked on the *ōl-* copula. Additionally, we will show that only the translative-type is acceptable in identificational clauses. As a result, the identificational reading/interpretation is where the semantic division of labor between the two constructions lies. Our data come from fieldwork where Mansi native speakers helped us with survey research. Northern Mansi newspaper texts were also used to clarify certain inconsistencies between our findings and the literature.

Keywords: Mansi, nominal/adjectival clauses, nominal/adjectival predicates, experimental methods, endangered language.

1. Introduction

In Northern Mansi, two types of nominal/adjectival predicate constructions are traditionally distinguished (Скрибник 1990; Keresztes 1998 : 411, 417; Riese 2001 : 29, 61; Sipőcz 2017 : 384–386; Bakró-Nagy, Sipőcz, Skribnik 2022 : 554–555; Virtanen, Horváth 2023 : 678–680, 694). One construction requires a nominative (or alternatively caseless) noun or adjective as the predicate, which may occur with the stative-like copula *ōl-* 'be, exist, live, reside' if certain conditions are met, see (1a–b) and (2a–b).

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- (1) a. *Иван л̄ккар*
Ivan l'ēkkar
 Ivan doctor
 'Ivan is a doctor'
- b. *Ты кол м̄ань*
ti kol māń
 this house small
 'This house is small'
- (2) a. *Иван л̄ккар о̄лыс*
Ivan l'ēkkar ol-əs
 Ivan doctor be-PST.3SG
 'Ivan was a doctor'
- b. *Ты кол м̄ань о̄лыс*
ti kol māń ol-əs
 this house small be-PST.3SG
 'This house was small'

The predicate noun or adjective in the other construction type takes the marker of the translative case, and the copula *ol-* 'be, exist, live, reside' also occurs in the phrase (3)–(4).

- (3) *Иван л̄ккарыг о̄лыс*
Ivan l'ēkkar-ɣ ol-əs
 Ivan doctor-TRSL be-PST.3SG
 'Ivan was a doctor'
- (4) *Ты кол м̄аниг о̄лыс*
ti kol māń-ɣ ol-əs
 this house small-TRSL be-PST.3SG
 'This house was small'

We will focus on two types of non-verbal predication in Northern Mansi. In the typological literature, one of them is often referred to as "predicational" copular sentence (cf. Higgins 1979; Mikkelsen 2004), or "true nominal predicate" (e.g. Dryer 2007). The predicate in this sentence-type is a noun phrase that is indefinite or nonreferential, see the Northern Mansi examples in (1a), (2a), and (3). An adjectival phrase functions as the predicate in the other non-verbal sentence-type, which is termed as an "attributive sentence" in the literature (see, e.g., Payne 1997). The adjective predicate in this sentence-type describes a property that is attributed to the subject of the sentence, see the Northern Mansi examples in (1b), (2b), and (4). We put aside the discussion of further types of non-verbal clauses in Northern Mansi, and get back to them in Section 5.2. When used as the predicates in either of the aforementioned constructions, nouns and adjectives have no (known) grammatical and/or structural differences. Therefore we will treat these two syntactic categories as members of a homogeneous group, and we will refer to this group as Nominals.

The distribution of the two construction-types in (1)–(2) and (3)–(4) is controversial in the literature. Some claim that the sole difference between the nominative and translative constructions is their structure (e.g. Riese 2001 : 29, 61; Sipőcz 2015 : 384). According to some (e.g. Virtanen, Horváth 2023 : 694), the translative construction is employed to express temporary state or status.

Several open questions regarding this topic are still to be found, some of which we aim to answer here. In our paper we will systematically examine the complete paradigms of the two types by focusing on the licensing requirements of the *ōl-* copula, subject agreement, and concord within the Nominal predicate. We describe the two constructions in detail and provide grammatically acceptable and not acceptable constructions based on native speakers' judgements. Our results show that the two types exhibit systematic structural differences in (a) allowing an overt copula, and (b) taking subject agreement inflection: in the nominative construction there is obligatory subject agreement in number in the present tense on the Nominal predicate, and the copula is only used in the past, where we attested both inter- and intra-speaker variation in Number concord. In contrast, the translative-marked Nominal predicate cannot take any (further) inflectional suffix, and agreement that indicates both the person and the number of the subject is marked on the obligatory copula. We assume that the two Nominal predicates have different underlying structures, but the analysis of these two constructions is beyond the scope of this paper.

Additionally, we will investigate the distribution of the two constructions in various contexts. The translative-marked predicate construction is usually regarded as a direct result of Russian contact in Northern Mansi (Скрибник, Афанасьева 2007 : 53; Sipócz 2017 : 385). This implicitly assumes that the construction with the nominative Nominal predicate is the original Mansi structure, whereas the translative-marked one is an innovation. This claim is partly supported by our findings: we attest to a widespread variation between the two constructions in the past tense, but the translative-marked construction is hardly, and certainly not automatically, available in the present tense. This patterns with the Russian Nominal predicate system, where there is also an alternation in morphological case marking: the Nominal predicate can be marked with nominative case (5) or instrumental case (6) (see e.g. Pereltsvaig 2001). The non-marked nominative and the marked instrumental opposition is only observed in the past (and the future) tenses (Pereltsvaig 2001).¹

(5) *Čexov byl pisatel'*
Chekhov was writer.NOM
'Chekhov was a writer' (Pereltsvaig 2001 : 1)

(6) *Čexov byl pisatelem*
Chekhov was writer.INSTR
'Chekhov was a writer' (Pereltsvaig 2001 : 1)

We will show, however, that in Northern Mansi there is inter-speaker variation in the availability of the translative-type in the present tense. This observation suggests that the two constructions coexist within the same grammar of certain speakers. The fact that the variation is not the consequence of two competing systems (but more likely the part of a single grammar) is further supported by our data, i.e. we found an additional context in which only the translative type is allowed. In identificational constructions only the translative type is accepted. Thus, the semantic division of labour of the two construc-

¹ Unlike Russian, where it is permissible, Northern Mansi does not allow the translative predicate to appear in the plural (nor in dual). This may be explained by the fact that a translative marked noun/adjective cannot take any inflectional morpheme in general.

tions lies along the identificational reading/interpretation of the constructions (we will define the semantic terms in Section 5.2).

In Northern Mansi there are also predicate Nominal-like constructions formed with semi-copulas such as *jēmt-*, and *pat-* 'become', i.e. dynamic verbs. In these clauses, the Nominal part of the predicate takes the translative ending too, see (7) and (8) respectively.

(7) *Агум янзыг емтыс* (LS 2013/10 : 10)²

āγi-m janγ-jγ jēmt-əs
girl-1SG large-TRSL become-PST.3SG

'My daughter has grown up (lit. became large)'

(8) *Хуньт сав мирн олым навлыт ань*
χuńt sāw mir-n ol-im pāwl-ət ań
sometime many people-DAT live-PST.PTCP village-PL now

акваг вуньщалыз патэгыт (LS 2013/10 : 5)

akwaγ wuńśal'-jγ pat-ēγ-ət
completely unnecessary-TRSL become-PRS-3PL

'The villages once inhabited by many people now become unwanted'

In our paper, we focus on constructions with the stative copula and exclude constructions containing dynamic semi-copulas from our discussion (like those in (7) and (8)).

The outline of the paper is as follows. In Section 2 we give a brief overview of the Mansi language. Then we discuss our data collecting methods in detail in Section 3. Section 4 focuses on structural aspects of the two Nominal predicate types where we take a closer look at (a) the licensing conditions of a zero/non-zero copula, (b) the marking strategies of subject agreement, and (c) concord within the predicate complex. In Section 5 we focus on the contrastive properties of the two variants in terms of tense and semantic/pragmatic factors. Section 6 contains our concluding remarks.

2. The Mansi language

2.1. Demography

Mansi is a severely endangered Uralic language spoken in Western-Siberia. According to the 2020 census data of the Russian Federation, there are 12,228 Mansi in Russia (Census RF 2020 5/1), the majority of whom reside in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Yugra. The remaining roughly 1,000 people live mostly in the neighbouring administrative districts of the Russian Federation: 526 people in other parts of the Tyumen region, 345 people in the Sverdlovsk area, and 5 people in the Komi Republic (Census RF 2020 5/17). 2,093 Mansis stated that they had Mansi as their mother tongue (Census RF 2020 5/20). A total of 1,346 people stated that they spoke Mansi (Census RF

² When not marked otherwise, the Mansi sentences presented in this paper originate from our survey research. In all the other cases, the source of the language data is indicated. Data cited from the Лүимā сәрипос [Lūimā Sēripos] newspaper are marked in the following formats: LS Year/Volume : Page, for example, LS 2001/8 : 15.

Mansi data are presented in the original Cyrillic spelling, the way our consultants decided to write them, also in accordance with the contemporary orthography used by Mansi professionals. In order to facilitate the annotation of the data, we decided to deliver the data using Béla Kálmán's simplified transcription system as well (cf. Kálmán 1976).

2020 5/4), and 1,236 of them were of Mansi ethnicity (Census RF 2020 4/19). The Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug has a population of 1.7 million, the majority of whom are Russian (51.9%). The actual indigenous population of the Okrug forms approximately 2% of the total population, while the Mansi represent only 0.65%. According to the Ukrainian census data from 2001, 43 Mansi live in Ukraine, of whom 5 named Mansi as their mother tongue (Census Ukraine 2001).

Four Mansi dialect groups were documented in the nineteenth century: Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Mansi, each of which had several (sub-)dialects. The southern and western dialects are already extinct, the eastern dialect is either extinct or moribund (cf. Riese 2001 : 7; Ромбандеева, Вахрушева 1984 : 3). Henceforth in this paper where the Mansi language is mentioned, we refer to Northern Mansi. Mansi is used in both spoken and written form. It is spoken most often in private life with relatives and childhood friends. The written language is used primarily in the monthly newspaper *Lüimā Sēripos*.

The level of speakers' proficiency in Mansi is typically related to their age: the older the speakers are, the more likely they are to have native competence in Mansi. This general tendency is often counterbalanced by the speaker's place of birth and residence: younger speakers born and raised in smaller Mansi settlements also often have good command of Mansi language (cf. Horváth 2020).

2.2. Preliminaries on the structure of Northern Mansi

Mansi is an agglutinating, transitive-accusative language low in fusion and inflection. The basic constituent order in a neutral clause is S(O)V. The finite verb is in clause-final position in both active and passive sentences.

Nouns in Mansi are inflected for number, person, possession, and case. There are three numbers: singular, dual, and plural. There are six cases: nominative, lative, locative, ablative, instrumental, and translative. The translative case is generally not used in the dual and plural. Verbs have the inflectional categories of subject person, subject and object number, tense, mood, and voice.

The verb *ōl-* 'to be' is used both in the meaning of 'to be, to exist' and 'to live, to reside', it is inflected in all persons and numbers (e.g. Virtanen, Horváth 2023 : 678).

3. Research methods

In order to get a better understanding of the contemporary representations and distribution of the constructions, we decided to gather more information by conducting survey research with the help of Mansi native speakers. The survey research, completed by Mansi consultants with the assistance of the authors, took place during fieldwork conducted in Khanty-Mansijsk in 2018, as well as independently by the consultants in 2019.

We set up our surveys by using standard data collection techniques, especially stimulus-driven and target-language-manipulation elicitation techniques. We approached the consultants in two stages. First, we contacted a group of native Mansi speakers and requested them to fill in our exploratory survey. Then, based on the results, we manipulated the Mansi data, i.e. we designed a grammatical and contextual acceptability judgment survey and got some of our consultants to fill out this second, control survey.

The consultants participating in the research were Mansi specialists working with the Mansi language on a daily basis (mostly journalists and teachers). They are all native speakers of the Mansi language, bilingual in Mansi and Russian, and alumni of the Institute of the Peoples of the North.³ The total number of questionnaires completed is seven.

4. Structural differences between the two Nominal predicates

This section focuses on two parameters of Nominal predicates: the conditions that license the presence/absence of the *ōl-* copula in the nominative and the translative Nominal predicates, and the subject agreement inflection realised on the predicate of the Nominal clause (incl. Concord).

It is claimed in the literature that these predicates differ in the case of the predicate Nominal and whether they appear with or without a copula. It has been shown that a copula is usually missing in the present tense in the nominative type in any number and person (e.g. Kálmán 1976 : 66; Keresztes 1998 : 411; Riese 2001 : 29). Our findings are in line with the literature and show that the nominative predicate construction does not contain the copula in the present tense. Examples (9)–(11) illustrate construction with a 3rd person singular, dual, and plural subject respectively, and in (12) the subject is a 1st person singular subject. None of the sentences below contain the *ōl-* copula.

- (9) *Кол* *мāнь*
kol *māń*
house.SG small.SG
'The house is small'
- (10) *Колыз* *маниз*
kol-ǰγ *mań-ǰγ*
house-DU small-DU
'The houses (dual) are small'
- (11) *Колыт* *манит*
kol-ət *māń-ət*
house-PL small-PL
'The houses are small'
- (12) *Ам хаництан нē*
am *χańiŕtan* *nē*
1SG teaching woman.SG
'I am a/the teacher'

³ The authors find it necessary to note that they have never felt obliged to follow the outdated, but still widely used standards for choosing supposedly ideal research participants, which are frequently used not only in dialectal research but also in the study of indigenous languages. Contrarily, the authors believe it is important to interact and work with consultants who are not NORMs (nonmobile, old, rural, male, cf. Chambers, Trudgill 1998). Taking into account the influence of education, the authors do not think that Mansi consultants who hold degrees in Mansi philology would have less proficiency in their first language or less established judgement about the grammaticality of the sentences than other speakers. On the other hand, the fact that these consultants have Mansi as their first language, work with Mansi on a daily basis, and are literate in Mansi, made their involvement in our research project an enormous benefit and addition to our research.

Our survey further revealed that the copula is invariably absent in the present tense in the nominative construction (13). Thus whenever the copula is missing from the construction, it must be obligatorily absent.

- (13) *Кол м̄ань (*̄олы)*
kol māñ (̄ol-i)*
 house.SG small.SG be-PST.3SG
 'The house is small'

In the past tense, the nominative predicate construction requires the *̄ol-* copula that takes the tense inflection (14). Tense feature morphology is not indicated on the predicate Nominal.

- (14) *Кол м̄ань ̄олыс*
kol māñ ̄ol-as
 house.SG small.SG be-PST.3SG
 'The house was small'

As already mentioned, the translative predicate Nominal construction is normally available in the past tense, where the *̄ol-* copula is obligatory, and it takes agreement and tense inflection, see (15). The translative predicate Nominal does not take any morphological marker other than the translative marker. As example (15) further suggests, the copula cannot be absent in this type of predicates.

- (15) *Кол м̄аниг *(̄олыс)*
*Kol māñ-iγ *(̄ol-as)*
 house small-TRSL be-PST.3SG
 'The house was small'

In the translative predicate construction, nevertheless, the copula *̄ol-* appears even in the present tense (16)–(18). (In Section 5.1, we go into further detail on the availability of the translative Nominal predicate in the present tense.) The copula cannot be absent in the present tense either.

- (16) *Ольга ханищтан н̄эг ̄олы*
Ol'ga χańiştan n̄e-γ ̄ol-i
 Olga teaching woman-TRSL be-PRS.3SG
 'Olga is a/the teacher'
- (17) *Ам садикыт л̄еккарыг ̄ол̄эгум (LS 2014/5 : 7)*
am sad'ik-at l̄ekkar-iγ ̄ol-ēγ-um
 1sg nursery.school-LOC doctor-TRSL be-PRS-1SG
 'I am a/the doctor in the nursery school'
- (18) **Ольга ханищтан н̄эг*
**Ol'ga χańiştan n̄e-γ*
 Olga teaching woman-TRSL
 ('Olga is a/the teacher')

As for the realisation of subject agreement on the Nominal predicates, in the nominative predicate it is the number feature of the subject only that is realised in the present tense via regular nominal number inflectional suffixes (19).

- (19) *Колыг м̄аниг*
kol-iγ māñ-iγ
 house-DU small-DU
 'The two houses are small'

This agreement marking is obligatory (20).

- (20) **А́мпыт сѣ́мыл*
**āmp-ət sēməl*
 dog-PL black
 ('The dogs are black')

In example (21), the Nominal predicate takes person-number inflection morphology. It is, however, not the predicate-subject agreement relation that is expressed on the Nominal predicate, but the internal possessive agreement of the complex Nominal predicate.

- (21) *Ам наң каңкын*
am naŋ kaŋk-ən
 1SG 2SG brother-2SG
 'I am your brother'

It is demonstrated in (21) that, in the case of non-third person subjects, the person feature of the subject is also not realized on the Nominal predicate.

In the past form, where the copula is also there, the subject agreement relation surfaces on the copula, too. Note that the copula takes both person and number inflection via a verb suffix (22).

- (22) *Колыт ма́нит о́лсыт*
kol-ət māń-ət ol-s-ət
 house-PL small-PL be-PST-3PL
 'The houses were small'

In addition, the number feature of the subject may be realised by number inflection on the nominative Nominal predicate. Thus, the predicate construction may show partial concord (22). We consider it as partial concord as the Nominal predicate does not agree in person, but in number. Interestingly, we attested both intra- and inter-speaker variation in partial concord in Number. In the production of some speakers an alternative construction appeared where the partial concord in Number is missing (23).

- (23) *Колыт ма́нь о́лсыт*
kol-ət māń ol-s-ət
 house-PL small.SG be-PST-3PL
 'The houses were small'

We were not able to reveal any difference between the concord and non-concord constructions in terms of their use and/or semantics. Still, there were no speakers who only produced the non-concord variant. Therefore, we assume that the non-concord construction is an innovation in the language.

In the translative Nominal predicate, it is only the copula that takes agreement inflection of the person and number features of the subject via the regular verbal agreement marker. The translative Nominal does not take any agreement inflection (24).

- (24) *Колыт ма́ниг о́лсыт*
kol-ət māń-ig ol-s-ət
 house-PL small-TRSL be-PST-3PL
 'The houses were small'

Now let us summarise our findings in Table 1.

Table 1

The structural differences between the two predicate Nominal constructions

	Nominative type	Translative type
Licensing condition of the copula <i>ōl-</i> 'be'	past tense requires the use of the copula <i>ōl-</i> 'be'	the copula <i>ōl-</i> 'be' is always obligatory
Subject agreement inflection on the predicate Nominal	subject agreement is possible and obligatory (at least in number) (via nominal number inflectional markers)	subject agreement is impossible on the translative predicate Nominal
Subject agreement inflection on the copula	the copula always takes agreement inflection indicating the person and number of the subject	the copula always takes agreement inflection indicating the person and number of the subject
Concord	partial concord is attested (although optional for some speakers)	there is no concord

5. The distribution of the two Nominal predicates

This part of the paper focuses on two aspects of the distribution of the two Nominal predicates. On one hand we discuss a dimension along which one can account for the existence of the variation, which is the dimension of past tense. On the other hand, we consider possible interpretational differences that may be found between the two Mansi Nominal predicate types.

5.1. Variation in past tense

As mentioned in Section 4, the literature accounts for the variation between the two Nominal predicates both in the present and in the past tenses (Sipőcz 2015; 2017). Our results show that for the consultants the alternation is linked only to the past tense. It means that the consultants produced the translative-marked construction as an alternative to the nominative one only in the past tense. This suggests that Northern Mansi displays a similar (or even the same) system as Russian discussed in Section 1 (see e.g. Pereltsvaig 2001). Since the translative construction in Northern Mansi is regarded as acquired from the Russian language, we presumed that the Russian system was adopted into Northern Mansi via the same rules, i.e. the non-marked and marked alternation is only observed in the past in Northern Mansi. Interestingly, corpus data contradict the results of our survey and our preliminary hypothesis. We found examples of the translative-type construction in the present tense as the ones in (25)–(27).

(25) Ам садикыт лѣккарыг *ōl*ѣгум (LS 2014/5 : 7)
am sad'ik-ət *l'ėkkar-ĵγ* *ōl-ėγ-^um*
 1SG nursery.school-LOC doctor-TRSL be-PRS-1SG
 'I am a/the doctor in the nursery school'

(26) Лāтың щирыл мāн рӯтыг *ōl*ѣв (LS 2014/22 : 12)
lātəŋ *širəl* *mān rūt-ĵγ* *ōl-ėv*
 language according.to 1PL relative-TRSL be-PRS.1PL
 'We are language relatives'

- (27) *Хүл алышлан ос в̄ораян хумыг олы* (LS 2013/20 : 5)
χūl ališlan os w̄oraj-an χum-ɣ̣ ɔli
 fish killing and hunt-PRS.PTCP man-TRSL be-PRS.3SG
 'He is a fisherman and hunter'

In order to resolve this contradiction, we controlled for this parameter in our second survey that was filled by a different consultant. The results of this second survey show that the translative-marked predicate nominal is indeed grammatical in the present tense for this consultant (28).

- (28) *Ольга ханищтан н̄эг олы*
Ol'ga χaništan n̄e-γ ɔl-i
 Olga teaching woman-TRSL be-PRS.3SG
 'Olga is a/the teacher'

Based on this finding, it is reasonable to account for the alternation both in the present and in the past tenses. We assume the existence of an inter-speaker variation, and suggest that some Northern Mansi speakers' grammar still contains the Russian rule, and they accept the translative construction only in the past tense, whereas for other Northern Mansi speakers the alternation between the two predicates is not limited to the past.

5.2. Variation in terms of semantics/pragmatics

As was already mentioned in the Introduction, the predicate in sentences with adjectival predicates, i.e. in attributive clauses defines a quality that is assigned to the subject of the sentence (Payne 1997; Dryer 2007). We did not find any noticeable semantic difference between the nominative and translative constructions with attributive function. Therefore, our focus in this Section will solely be on potential semantic variations in sentences containing NP predicates.

The semantic distribution of the nominative and translative type with NP predicates is rather controversial in the literature. Riese (2001 : 29, 61) and Sipócz (2015 : 384), for instance, do not account for any semantic distribution between the two types, while Virtanen and Horváth (2023 : 694) say that the translative construction is employed to express temporary state or status (29).

- (29) *Тав МГУ юридический факультет кафедратэ*
taw mgu juridičeskij fakul'tet kafedra-tē-t
 3sg MGU faculty.of.law department-3SG-LOC
профессорыг олы (LS 2013/12)
professor-ɣ̣ ɔl-i
 professor-TRSL be-PRS.3SG
 'She works as a professor at the Faculty of Law of the Moscow State University'

We adopted several parameters discussed by Roy (2005) to test for potential semantic and/or pragmatic differences between the two constructions. We set up contexts and tested whether both or either of the target constructions are (and can be) used.

The two predicate-types do not contrast in terms of the semantic concept of "lifetime effect", see (30)–(31). This finding partly conflicts with Virta-

nen and Horváth (2023 : 694) in that the term "lifetime effect" can be used to refer to a permanent state. The translative predicate appears to be appropriate in a non-temporary context as well, as shown in (31). However, Virtanen and Horváth's (2023 : 694) examples show the relatively rare present tense translative construction, whereas our instances of the translative-type predicate construction have past tense reference. Therefore, we are unable to confirm whether the present tense reference may activate the temporary reading of the translative-type.

Test sentence: Ivan was a doctor, but unfortunately he is no longer alive.

- (30) *Иван лĕккар օлыс*
Ivan lekkar օl-əs
 Ivan doctor be-pst.3sg
 'Ivan was a doctor'

- (31) *Иван лĕккарыг օлыс*
Ivan lekkar-ıg օl-əs
 Ivan doctor-trsl be-pst.3sg
 'Ivan was a doctor'

In addition, the actual practice of the activity expressed by the predicate Nominal is not a relevant distributional criterion either, see (32)–(33).

Test sentence: Larisa was a teacher, and now she works as a journalist.

- (32) *Лариса ханищтан нĕ օлыс*
Larisa xaniştan nĕ օl-əs
 Larisa teaching woman be-PST.3SG
 'Larisa was a teacher'

- (33) *Лариса ханищтан нĕг օлыс*
Larisa xaniştan nĕ-g օl-əs
 Larisa teaching woman-TRSL be-PST.3SG
 'Larisa was a teacher'

Furthermore, both constructions are compatible with (spatio-)temporal modification, i.e. a temporal modifier can appear in both sentences (34)–(35).

- (34) *Дуся нилыт щĕс иу депутат*
Duśa nil-it śos iŋ d'eputat
 Dusya four-ORD time already delegate
 'Dusya has been a delegate for the fourth time already'

- (35) *Дуся нилыт щĕс иу депутатыг օлы*
Duśa nil-it śos iŋ d'eputat-ıg օl-i
 Dusya four-ORD time already delegate-TRSL be-3SG
 'Dusya has been a delegate for the fourth time already'

In the previously indicated contexts, the two constructions are found to be semantically equal. It is clear from these contexts that the two constructions express predicational sentences. The general literature often distinguishes at least two types of NP predicates, as we noted in the Introduction (see, e.g., Higgins 1979; Mikkelsen 2005; Dryer 2007). A non-referential noun phrase serves as the predicate in predicational sentences, also known as "true nominal predicates". Thus in examples (30)–(35), the predicate NP is non-referential/indefinite.

The terms "equative" or "(true) equational clauses" or "identificational" clauses refer to NP predicates in which the subject and predicate complement are both referential expressions (see, e.g., Higgins 1979; Mikkelsen 2005; Dryer 2007). In a context implying identificational reading it is the translative-marked construction that is accepted in Northern Mansi, compare (36) with (37). The sign # is used to mark semantically strange/unacceptable but grammatically well-formed sentences.

Situation: The old man had three sons, Peter, Ivan, and Igor.

(36) #*Пётр щар яныг каҥк ол-эс*
 #*Pjotr śar jaŋiγ kaŋk ol-əs*
 Peter SUPL big brother be-PST.3SG
 'Peter was the oldest brother'

(37) *Пётр щар яныг каҥкыг ол-эс*
Pjotr śar jaŋiγ kaŋk-iγ ol-əs
 Peter SUPL big brother-TRSL be-PST.3SG
 'Peter was the oldest brother'

Consequently, in constructions where the predicate Nominal is definite and contextually identifiable, the translative-marked Nominal predicate is used in Northern Mansi. This means that the translative-type can have both definite and indefinite meaning, but the nominative predicate can only be non-referential/indefinite.

6. Conclusions

In this paper we discussed certain aspects of two Nominal predicate constructions that exhibit case alternation in Northern Mansi. We have shown that the morphological realisation of past tense is the condition of the copula support in the nominative construction. In the present tense, the copula is obligatorily absent in this type of Nominal predicate. In the translative construction, the copula is obligatorily present. In the nominative one, subject agreement in number appears on the predicate Nominal in cases when there is no copula. When the copula is present, agreement takes place both in person and number, and the predicate shows partial concord in Number (that seems to be optional). In the translative-type, there is no subject agreement on the predicate Nominal. Instead, the copula takes the agreement marker that indicates the person and the number of the subject. Finally, we found that the interpretation of the two Nominal predicate-types is distributed along the line of identification. It is only the translative-type that appears in identificational sentences. This semantic distinction is subtle, but it is there.

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Addresses

Csilla Horváth
 University of Helsinki, University of Tromsø
 E-mail: naj.agi@gmail.com

Nikolett Mus
 Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics
 E-mail: mus.nikolett@gmail.com

Abbreviations

Census RF 2020 5/1 — Национальный состав населения https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_tab1_VPN-2020.xlsx; **Census RF 2020 5/4** — Владение языками и использование языков населением. https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_tab4_VPN-2020.xlsx; **Census RF 2020 5/17** — Население коренных малочисленных народов Российской Федерации. https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_tab17_VPN-2020.xlsx; **Census RF 2010 5/19** — Владение языками коренных малочисленных народов Российской Федерации. https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_tab18_VPN-2020.xlsx; **Census RF 2020 5/20** — Население коренных малочисленных народов Российской Федерации по родному языку. https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_tab20_VPN-2020.xlsx; **Census Ukraine 2001** — Розподіл населення за національністю та рідною мовою. http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/nationality_population/nationality_popul1/select_5/?bottom=cens_db&box=5.1W&k_t=00&p=0&rz=1_1&r_z_b=2_1%20%20%20%20&n_page=1.

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ЧИЛЛА ХОРВАТ (Хельсинки—Тромсё), *НИКОЛЕТТ МУШ* (Будапешт)

**ДВА ТИПА НОМИНАТИВНОГО ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ
В СЕВЕРНОМАНСИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ
ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЯЗЫКОВОГО ВАРЬИРОВАНИЯ**

В статье рассматриваются структура и условия употребления двух типов номинативных и адъективных предикатов в северномансийском языке. В одной конструкции сказуемое — существительное или прилагательное — используется в номинативе, а в другой — в транслативе. В обоих случаях возможно и появление связки (статической копулы) *-ōl* 'быть, существовать', но при разных условиях.

В центре внимания авторов (а) условия употребления связки *-ōl*, (б) согласование подлежащего и сказуемого и (с) соответствие числа в составе предикатива как в случае номинатива, так и транслатива. Результаты исследования показывают, что эти два типа имеют системно-структурные различия.

Кроме того, отметим, что «семантическое распределение труда» между двумя конструкциями проявляется и при идентифицирующем чтении/толковании.

Наши данные получены в экспедициях, когда владеющие родным языком манси помогали нам при изучении исследовательских работ, основанных на опросах. Использованы также газетные публикации на северномансийском языке, чтобы выявить некоторые противоречия между нашими результатами и данными научной литературы.

CSILLA HORVÁTH (Helsinki—Tromsø), *NIKOLETT MUS* (Budapest)

**PÕHJAMANSI KAKS NOMINAALSET LAUSETÜÜPI:
KEELE VARIEERUMISE KATSELINE UURING**

Artiklis vaadeldakse põhjamansi kaht tüüpi nimisõnaliste ja omadussõnaliste öeldistide struktuuri ja esinemistingimusi. Ühes konstruktsioonis on öelditäiteks nimi- või omadussõna nominatiivis, teises aga translatiivis. Mõlema tüübi puhul võib esineda ka staatiline koopula *ōl*- 'olema, eksisteerima', kuigi erinevatel tingimustel.

Artiklis keskendume (a) *ōl*-copula esinemistingimustele, (b) öeldise ja aluse ühildumisele ja (c) arvu kooskõlale öeldistäite sees nii nominatiivi kui ka translatiivi korral. Meie tulemused näitavad, et neil kahel tüübil on süstemaatilisi struktuurseid erinevusi.

Lisaks osutame, et nende kahe konstruktsiooni semantiline tööjaotus ilmneb nn. identifitseerival lugemisel/tõlgendamisel.

Meie andmed pärinevad välitöödest, kus mansi emakeelsed kõnelejad aitasid meid küsitlustel põhinevates uuringutes. Samuti kasutati põhjamansi ajalehetekste, et selgitada meie tulemuste ja teaduskirjanduse seisukohtade mõningaid vastuolusid.