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### CASE MARKING OF THE PREDICATIVE IN ESTONIAN\*

**Abstract.** In Estonian the prototypical non-verbal predicate is a noun or an adjective in the nominative case. The noun expresses class-inclusion, the adjective — a property. The prototypical predicative is non-marked in regard to time-stability. Time-stability can be marked by a non-prototypical form both in the case of class-inclusion as well as in the case of property. In the case of class-inclusion, temporary and random class-membership are marked by the translative, not by the essive. This feature makes Estonian similar to Russian and the Baltic languages and distinguishes it from Finnish. The essive is a relatively new case in Standard Estonian and its use is restricted. In copula sentences the essive can only be found as a marker of secondary predication. Temporariness of a property is marked by a non-prototypical clause pattern. The ways of marking the property depend on the semantic type of the property.

#### 1. Introduction

The encoding of adjectival and nominal predicates in the languages of the Circum-Baltic area has a peculiar feature, noticed recently once again by Leon Stassen (2001). Namely, in most languages of this area the nonverbal predicate can be encoded in two ways — in the nominative and in some oblique cases. In L. Stassen's opinion, the nominative is used in situations that are relatively 'time-stable' (in the sense of Givon 1984), whereas the encoding emphasizes the temporary nature of the situation. More concretely, for predicate adjectives, the nominative points to the 'permanent' or 'inherent' character of the property predicated by the adjective, for predicate nominals the use of the nominative indicates class-membership, which is, in some way, essential to the subject. In contrast, encoding of the nonverbal predicate by means of some oblique expression designates a 'temporary', 'contingent', or 'non-essential' property or class-membership (Stassen 2001 : 569).

Similar statements can be found also in previous grammatical descriptions of the Slavonic, Baltic, and Finnic languages. However, the double case marking of the predicative seems to be only one possible way to

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encode the above-mentioned meanings. It seems to be a special case of a more general opposition — *prototypical vs non-prototypical* encoding of nonverbal predication. At least in Estonian, if the predicate expresses the property, the differences of time stability (there can be other differences as well) are reflected in the whole clause pattern, not only in the case marking of the predicative.

The present paper will consider the prototypical and non-prototypical coding of class-inclusion and property predication in Estonian. The first section discussed class-inclusion, and the second section is devoted to the coding of property predication. The analysis of the coding of property predication is based on the corpus of the Standard Estonian of the 1990s (<http://www.cl.ut.ee/ee/corpusb>).

## 2. Encoding of class-inclusion

Class-inclusion in Estonian is expressed by the predicate noun in the nominative (1) or (2) translative.

- (1) *Kaja on Eesti suursaadik Inglismaal*  
 Kaja is Estonia:GEN ambassador:NOM England-AD  
 'Kaja is the Estonian ambassador to Great Britain'
- (2) *Kaja on Eesti suursaadikuks Inglismaal*  
 Kaja is Estonia:GEN ambassador-TR England-AD  
 'Kaja is the Estonian ambassador to Great Britain'

It is usually claimed (Stassen 2001; Pajunen 2000) that the nominative indicates a permanent class-membership. However, we believe that the nominative case is just a non-marked form of time stability, denoting class-membership as such. In sentence (1) the nominative predicate does not imply that being an ambassador must definitely be understood as stable — the interpretation is free. Although it is widely known that being an ambassador is a temporary position, it does not prevent anybody from using the nominative here. On the other hand, the marked form, the translative clearly refers to the temporary or non-essential character and is unavoidable in case the temporary or non-essential nature is absolutely obvious, as in (3).

- (3) *Ta oli mulle emaks, kui mu päris ema ära suri*  
 she was I:ALL mother-TR when my own mother died  
 'She acted as a mother for me when my own mother died'

The main function of the translative in the Finnic languages is to express the result of a process or an action. It is often used together with the verbs that mean 'become', 'make', or 'go'. The result state is expressed by the translative not only in the case of nouns but in adjectives as well (4)–(8).

- (4) Est. *Peeter sai kooli direktoriks*  
 Peeter became school:GEN headmaster-TR  
 'Peeter became the headmaster of the school'
- (5) Est. *Peeter läks Tartu-sse koolidirektoriks*  
 Peeter went Tartu-ILL headmaster of the school-TR  
 'Peeter went to Tartu to work as a headmaster'

- (6) Fin. *Petteri meni kouluun rehtori-k si*  
 Petteri went school:ILL headmaster-TR  
 'Petteri went to school to work as the headmaster'
- (7) Est. *Peeter muutus rõõmsa-k s*  
 Peeter became glad-TR  
 'Peeter rejoiced'
- (8) Fin. *Petteri tuli iloise-k si*  
 Petteri came glad-TR  
 'Petteri rejoiced'

The translative has extended to copula sentences only in Estonian and Livonian (Kont 1955), and only in predicate nouns, e.g. the Livonian example (9).

- (9) Liv. *Sigādpaint vōļ biskap õ-k s*  
 swineherd was bishop-TR  
 'The swineherd acted as a bishop'

Estonian also uses the translative as the complement of other verbs with a static meaning, e.g. *pidama* 'consider, regard':

- (10) *Ole-n sind pida-nud aumehe-k s*  
 be:PRS-1SG you:PRTV hold-PART gentleman-TR  
 'I have considered you to be a gentleman'

In other Finnic languages the static nature is expressed in the case of copula and some other verbs as well by a special local case — the essive, e.g. in Finnish:

- (11) *Petteri on koulu-n rehtori-na*  
 Petteri is school-GEN headmaster-ESS  
 'Petteri is the headmaster of the school'
- (12) *Ole-n pitä-nyt sinu-t kunno-n miehe-n ä*  
 be:PRS-1SG hold-PART you-ACC honour-GEN man-ESS  
 'I have regard you to be a gentleman'
- (13) *Maria on sairaana*  
 Maria is ill-ESS  
 'Maria is ill'

Estonian and Livonian act like Russian and Baltic languages when expressing class-inclusion — they use the same case in the static and dynamic functions.

- (14) Rus. *Он ста-л директором школы*  
 he become-PST headmaster-INS school-GEN  
 'He became the headmaster of the school'
- (15) Rus. *Он бы-л директором школы*  
 he be-PST headmaster-INS school-GEN  
 'He was the headmaster of the school'

However, in Estonian there also exists the essive case (16), which is to a certain extent also used in copula sentences (17). But there it expresses secondary predication only, e.g. the first claim of the sentence (17) is that

Kaja is in Great Britain and the second one that she is working as an ambassador there.

- (16) *Peeter tööta-b koolidirektori-na*  
 Peeter work-PRS-3SG headmaster-ESS  
 'Peeter works as the headmaster of the school'
- (17) *Kaja on Eesti suursaadiku-na Inglismaal*  
 Kaja is Estonia:GEN ambassador-ESS England-AD  
 'Kaja is in Great Britain as the ambassador of Estonia'

Until the end of the 19th century the essive was rarely used in Estonian. It was used only to mark some secondary predications expressing time relations (Leetberg 1934), as in

- (18) *Ta käi-s noore-na karja-s*  
 s/he go-PST young-ESS herd-IN  
 'He looked after a herd as a young person'

Early grammars did not regard it as a separate case at all and such word forms were treated as adverbs. At the end of the 19th century Karl August Hermann included it in his grammar (Hermann 1884), following the example of Finnish and the northeastern dialect. This form was promoted during the forced Finnish-inspired period of the development of Standard Estonian, which followed. The campaign met with success, and in contemporary Estonian the essive has firmly occupied the position of secondary predication. The essive may have become a complement of static and functioning verbs due to the Finnish influence, cf. (19), and some other verbs.

- (19) Fin. *Petteri toimii koulu-n rehtori-na*  
 Petteri act:PRS:3SG school-GEN headmaster-ESS  
 'Petteri works as the headmaster of the school'

Nevertheless the invasion of the essive did not reach the copula sentence — neither copula sentences with substantive nor with adjective predicatives. The translative has clearly preserved the function of expressing a temporary state in class-inclusion clauses, i.e. Estonian retained here the Baltic-Slavic predicative-marking system, which does not distinguish between the dynamic and static state with the help of case endings.

### 3. Encoding of the property

The most common means to express the property of something is the adjective. However, unlike the substantive, the time-stability opposition in the case of adjectives is not expressed by case opposition in Estonian. The predicative adjective in the copula sentences is always in the nominative case.

- (20) *Peeter on haige*  
 Peeter is ill:NOM  
 'Peeter is ill'

In this respect, Estonian differs from Finnish where the non-permanent character of the property is marked on some occasions by the essive, e.g. (13), and also from Russian, where the instrumental case may be used, as in (21).

- (21) *Oh* *byl* *bol'ny-m*  
he was ill-INS  
'He was ill'

In Estonian, the translative is used in adjectives only to mark the result state (7). The essive is also used in copula sentences with the adjective but only in secondary predication (18), as we have already seen.

This does not mean that there are no means in Estonian to express non-permanent or non-essential character of the property predication. Estonian just uses some other marked patterns than the ones with adjectival and nominal predicates in the oblique cases. The following sentences differ both in their form and degree of time-stability.

- (22) a) *Laps on arg*  
child is shy-NOM  
'The child is shy'
- b) *Lapse-l on hirm*  
child-AD is fear-NOM  
'The child is afraid'
- c) *Laps on hirmu-l*  
child is fear-AD  
'The child is afraid'
- d) *Laps kardab*  
child fear-PRS:3SG  
'The child is afraid'
- (23) a) *Tool on katkine*  
chair is broken-NOM  
'The chair is broken'
- b) *Tool on katki*  
chair is broken (ADV)  
'The car is broken'
- (24) a) *Maria on murelik*  
Maria is anxious-NOM  
'Maria is worried'
- b) *Maria on mure-s*  
Maria is anxiety-IN  
'Maria is worried'
- c) *Maria muretses*  
Maria worry-PRS:3SG  
'Maria is worried'
- d) *Maria on muretsesja*  
Maria is worrier:NOM  
'Maria is a worrier'

The adjective usually expresses a stable characteristic — the essential property or a permanent state (22a), (23a), but it also allows to mark an unstable (temporary) state (24a). If a noun with the same meaning was used, it would also be in the nominative, and it would not express instability either (24d). The same characteristic is treated as unstable in sentences where the verb *olema* 'be' is accompanied by an adverb (23b), a

noun in a locative case (22c), (24b), as well in possessive constructions (22b) and in sentences with a lexical verb (22d), (24c).

The stable property is expressed by a separative construction (25).

- (25) *Tool on puu-st*  
 chair is wood-EL  
 'The chair is made from wood'

Thus, if the property is expressed by the possessive, locative, or proces-  
 sual constructions, the property is considered to be less permanent than  
 in the case of the adjective. The class-inclusion and separative construc-  
 tions express the more permanent property.

As some properties are by nature more stable than others, the encod-  
 ing also depends on the semantic type of the property  
 (Stassen 1997; Pajunen 2000; 2001). Figure 1 indicates which patterns are  
 used to express one or another type of L. Stassen's hierarchy of proper-  
 ties (1997 : 167) in Estonian.

		N <sub>nom</sub> COP ADJ <sub>nom</sub>			N <sub>nom</sub> COP N <sub>el</sub>
		N <sub>nom</sub> COP ADV			
		N <sub>nom</sub> COP LOC			
N <sub>adess</sub> COP N <sub>nom</sub>					
N <sub>nom</sub> V					
Human propensity	Physical property	Dimension Colour	Value Age Form	Material Gender	
<i>Laps on arg</i> 'The child is shy'	<i>Tool on katkine</i> 'The chair is broken'	<i>Tool on väike</i> 'The chair is small'	<i>Elu on hea</i> 'Life is good'	<i>Tool on puust</i> 'The chair is from wood'	
<i>Maria on mures</i> 'Maria is worrying'	<i>Tool on katki</i> 'The chair is broken'	<i>Tool on valge</i> 'The chair is white'	<i>Peeter on noor</i> 'Peter is young'	<i>Nukk on kesksost</i> 'The doll is neuter'	
<i>Marial on mure</i> 'Maria has a worry'					
<i>Laps kardab</i> 'The child is afraid'	<i>Taevas on pilves</i> 'The sky is cloudy'	<i>Pall on ümmargune</i> 'The ball is round'			
<i>Maria muretseb</i> 'Maria is worrying'					
STATE	PROPERTY				

Figure 1. Semantic types of properties and constructions of their expression.

According to R. Dixon (1977) and L. Stassen (1997), dimension, colour,  
 value, age, and form are prototypical properties in the sense that if a lan-  
 guage has adjectives, then those are typically represented. The previously  
 mentioned prototypical parameters are primarily encoded by adjectives

also in Estonian — there is no possibility to mark the non-permanent character of these properties, e.g. (26)—(30)

- (26) *Tool on väike*  
 chair is small:NOM  
 'The chair is small'
- (27) *Tool on valge*  
 chair is white:NOM  
 'The chair is white'
- (28) *Elu on hea*  
 life is good:NOM  
 'Life is good'
- (29) *Peeter on noor*  
 Peeter is young:NOM  
 'Peeter is young'
- (30) *Pall on ümmargune*  
 ball is round:NOM  
 'The ball is round'

In addition to the adjective, a physical property can also be encoded by an adverb or a locative construction (31).

- (31) *Taevas on pilve-s*  
 sky is cloud-IN  
 'The sky is cloudy'

Human properties are also expressed by a possessive construction and a lexical verb. It seems that human properties tend to change in time and are therefore encoded in the two previously mentioned ways.

In Estonian material and gender are encoded by a substantive in the separative case (25), (32). There are no relative adjectives in Estonian, like the Russian *деревянный* 'wooden'.

- (32) *Nukk on kesksost*  
 doll is neutrum:EL  
 'The doll is neuter'

#### 4. Conclusions

Class-inclusion and property are expressed in Estonian by the predicative and other syntactic means (Figure 2).

Semantic type of predication	TIME-STABILITY		
	stable	non-marked	unstable
CLASS-INCLUSION		S <sub>cop</sub> N <sub>nom</sub>	S <sub>cop</sub> N <sub>trnsl</sub>
PROPERTY	S <sub>cop</sub> N <sub>nom</sub> S <sub>cop</sub> SEP	S <sub>cop</sub> Adj <sub>nom</sub>	S <sub>cop</sub> ADV S <sub>cop</sub> LOC S V Possessive construction ...

Figure 2. Expression of class-inclusion and property in Estonian.

1. In Estonian the prototypical non-verbal predicate is a noun or an adjective in the nominative case. The noun expresses class-inclusion, the adjective — a property. The prototypical predicative is non-marked in regard to time-stability.
2. Time-stability can be marked by a non-prototypical form both in the case of class-inclusion as well as in the case of property.
3. In the case of class-inclusion, temporary and random class-membership are marked by the translative, not by the essive. This feature makes Estonian similar to Russian and the Baltic languages and distinguishes it from Finnish. The essive is a relatively new case in Standard Estonian and its use is restricted. In copula sentences the essive can only be found as a marker of secondary predication.
4. Temporariness of a property is marked by a non-prototypical clause pattern. The ways of marking the property depend on the semantic type of the property.

#### Abbreviations

**ACC** — accusative; **AD** — adessive; **ADJ** — adjective; **ADV** — adverb; **ALL** — allative; **COP** — copula; **EL** — elative; **ESS** — essive; **GEN** — genitive; **ILL** — illative; **IN** — inessive; **INS** — instrumental; **LOC** — locative construction; **N** — noun; **NOM** — nominative; **PART** — participle; **PRS** — present; **PRTV** — partitive; **PST** — past; **SEP** — separative construction; **SG** — singular; **TR** — translative; **V** — verb.

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#### ПАДЕЖНЫЕ ФОРМЫ ПРЕДИКАТИВА В ЭСТОНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

В качестве прототипного неглагольного сказуемого в эстонском языке употребляется имя существительное или имя прилагательное в номинативе. С помощью существительного в номинативе передается принадлежность к классу, не маркированная в отношении временной стабильности, а с помощью прилагательного в номинативе — не маркированное в этом отношении свойство (качество). Маркированную, т. е. временную или случайную принадлежность к классу, обозначает существительное в транслативе, например, *Kaja on Eesti suursaadikuks Inglismaal* 'Кая является послом Эстонии в Англии'. В отличие от финского языка в эстонском эссив в данной функции не употребляется. В этом отношении эстонский язык скорее сходен с русским и балтийскими языками. В отличие как от финского, так и от русского языка в эстонском временность или случайность свойства передается не с помощью падежа (транслатива или эссива), а иными средствами, например, с помощью части речи предиката (глагол, наречие), посессивной или локативной конструкции и т. п., например: *Laps kardab* 'Ребенок боится', *Tool on katki* 'Стул сломан', *Lapsel on hirm* 'Ребенку страшно', букв. 'У ребенка страх', *Mees on mures* 'Мужчина озабочен', букв. 'Мужчина в заботе'. Поскольку некоторые свойства по своей сути более постоянны, чем другие, форма сказуемого зависит и от семантического типа самого свойства.