

January 2012, in Cluj-Napoca, determined by the decision of the local council to offer a space for the construction of a crematory by RDK Cremation,¹ in the Mănăştur graveyard, shows that the researcher was right to expect changes in the social and cultural landscape of cremation in contemporary Romania. Cremation will have a hard time imposing itself. It is certain that research such as the one carried out by Marius Rotar, is capable of breaking the layers of reality which are similar to illusions, made out of myths, preconceptions and the presence of negative imagery, manage to shed some light on the path which should be a step towards normality: accepting cremation as a total alternative to burial, having no social or religious sanctions for it..

A kopula és a nominális mondatok a magyarban (The Copula and the Nominal Predicates in Hungarian) by Edit Kádár

– Review –

*Boglárka NÉMETH
Babeş-Bolyai University
Faculty of Letters*

Keywords: non-verbal predication, nominal and adjectival predicates, copula, predication and identificational sentences, small clause, inflexion, referential noun phrase, predicative noun, typology.

E-mail: nemethbogi@yahoo.com

*

Edit Kádár's monographic work² was published as the 161st volume of the prestigious series of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, *Nyelvtudományi Értekezések* (Studies in Linguistics) in December, 2011.

The book aims to establish the syntactic structure of sentences involving nominal predication using the framework of generative grammar, based on Hungarian linguistic data. The author does not describe the chosen theoretical framework in the book: she assumes familiarity with it given the fact that it is a widely known and employed linguistic theory. However, the theoretical notions are usually defined or explained at their first occurrence.

¹ All the links for press articles regarding the crematorium in Mănăştur district can be found on the *Amurg* website. It can be seen how the Romanian Orthodox Church along with some political leaders, went from a rather neutral attitude to mobilizing citizens from Mănăştur to protest in order to show their disapproval of the Local Council's decision. The result was a prohibition to build a crematorium in Mănăştur district and anywhere else in Cluj, for that matter. <http://www.incinerareamurg.ro/>.

² Edit Kádár, *A kopula és a nominális mondatok a magyarban* (The Copula and the Nominal Predicates in Hungarian), *Nyelvtudományi Értekezések* (Studies in Linguistics) 161 (2011), 122 p. ISBN 978 963 05 9042 6.

The main problems the thesis aims to clarify include the question of how sentences with a mere nominal predicate relate to those involving a nominal predicate and a copula (whether or not a hidden copula is also present in the former sentence type), and what role the copula plays in general (whether it is a verbal element or the instantiation of a bundle of inflectional features).

Nominal sentences have been traditionally divided into a predication subtype and an identificational subtype. The presented work resumes the results of a research built around the question of whether these two types of sentences – distinguished on the basis of functional criteria – instantiate different syntactic structures. The author observes various differences in their syntactic behaviour, and her goal is to assign to the two sentence types structures from which the syntactic differences attested fall out automatically.

As it has been mentioned above, the analysis is based on Hungarian material, but – in accordance with the assumptions of generative linguistics concerning universal grammar – it is highly relevant from the perspective of general linguistics, as well. The monograph fills in a blank space in Hungarian generative linguistics, since the problem of nominal predication has been a poorly explored research domain in Hungarian theoretical linguistics. The topic also lacks generally accepted theoretical explanations or models, so it involves several open questions with respect to many languages other than Hungarian, as well. Below we present a short outline of the main chapters of the book, emphasizing the most important theoretical conclusions drawn based on the analysis.

The two introductory chapters in the first section of the work are followed by two chapters establishing the tools, among them the basic notions and structural alternatives to be employed in the analysis of Hungarian nominal constructions. These two chapters are based on a survey and analysis of the relevant literature.

In the first chapter of section II., the author focusses on the notion of nominal predicate. First she presents a survey of the traditional, pretheoretical analyses of nominal predication in Hungarian, trying to disentangle the terminological confusion concerning the verb *van* 'be', referred to in the traditional literature by the terms 'verb of existence', 'copula' and 'auxiliary'. According to the author, *van* can be analyzed as a copula when it has no descriptive content but accompanies a nominal predicate, carrying merely the suffixes of tense, mood, person, and number. A verb of existence is identified, as well: it is homophonous with the copula, but also spelled out in third person, indicative mood, present tense. It is also argued in this chapter that the various functions associated to *van* in the traditional grammars can all be traced back to either the copula or the existential *van*. The second part of the chapter lists the literature written in a formal, theoretical framework on the Hungarian nominal sentences.

The next chapter of the section contains a typological overview of nominal predication. Its goal is to identify the parameters along which nominal sentences can differ across languages. It is shown – on the basis of Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Russian, Polish, Hebrew, English and Hungarian material – that predication and identificational nominal clauses display systematic syntactic differences across languages. The two sentence types may differ from the point of view of the case-marking of the predicative nominal (e.g. in Russian and in Polish) and the perspective of the overt or covert nature and verbal or pronominal type of the copula (e.g. in Polish and Hebrew). As the exceptionally well documented analysis shows us, Gaelic provides evidence that

predicational nominal sentences involve a spatiotemporally anchored event variable, whereas identificational nominal sentences do not.

An obvious difference between predicational and identificational nominal predication is the category of the predicate (noun or noun phrase versus determiner phrase). In the surveyed literature, the properties of copular sentences are considered to be derivable from three main parameters: the properties of the copula, the syntactic structure, and the properties of the different elements from the structure. After an overview of the relevant literature employing one of these lines of thought, the analysis proposed in the presented work attempts to derive the difference between the syntactic behaviour of predicational and identificational sentences from their different syntactic structures. The outlined approach differs in its details from all previous analyses put forward for the Hungarian nominal sentences, although at some points it converges with them.¹



Șerban Savu, *Close to Nature*, 2011, 30 x 40 cm, oil on canvas

¹ The mentioned analyses are originally presented in the following works: Katalin É. Kiss, *The syntax of Hungarian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); László Kálmán, *Magyar leíró nyelvtan. Mondattan I.* (Hungarian descriptive grammar. Syntax I.), (Budapest: Tinta Publishing House, 2001), András Komlósy; Complements and Adjuncts, in *The Syntactic Structure of Hungarian*, edited by Ferenc Kiefer and Katalin É. Kiss (New York: Academic Press, 1994), 91–178; Gábor Alberti – Anna Medve, *Generatív grammatikai gyakorlókönyv I–II.* (Practice book in generative grammar) (Budapest: Janus-Books, 2002), and others.

The most important results of the research summarized in the monograph – concerning the structure of nominal sentences in Hungarian – are presented in the third chapter of the section and in a short summary of the main conclusions. The author convincingly proves that predicational nominal sentences (e.g. *János tanár* 'John teacher [John is a teacher]') and identificational nominal sentences (e.g. *János a tanár* 'John the teacher [John is the teacher]') represent two different syntactic constructions. In the former, the predicate section of the clause consists of a noun phrase, instead of the verb phrase predicted by the universal grammar of generative theory. The head position is occupied by the noun, and that is why a fixed position is assigned to it even in a language where complements have a free word order. In the structure assumed by the author, the tense and person features are generated under the inflection node of the sentence structure. When they are phonologically null, they are combined with the nominal head. The placement of the nominal in a head position also explains why it cannot undergo contrastive topicalization via movement, which is a phrasal operation. Similar to a tensed verb, the nominal predicate can only be topicalized via copying (compare: *Futni futott János* '(As for) running, John ran' and *Tanárnak tanár János* '(As for being) a teacher, John is a teacher'). When the tense and person features are realized by phonologically salient morphemes, they need a verbal carrier, hence a dummy verbal element, the so-called copula is generated.

Since nominal predication in identificational sentences involves two noun phrases bearing no visible morphological case – one of them functioning as the subject, the other one functioning as the predicate – the primary question is how the subject and the nominal predicate can be identified. For identificational nominal sentences, the chapter shows that, despite assumptions to the contrary, these sentences cannot be considered symmetrical. The author presents evidence demonstrating that in clauses like *János a tanár* 'John is the teacher' or *A tanár János* 'The teacher is John', one of the two noun phrases has predicative properties both interpretatively and syntactically. In order to demonstrate this, the subject tests and predicate tests proposed in the literature are compiled and critically surveyed in the chapter. The tests include the different agreement potential of the two noun phrases in the presence of an overt copula, the position of the two noun phrases relative to the copula, a question test, the placement of the *-e* interrogative particle of yes–no questions (that are attached to the predicate), the location of primary stress, the different specificity feature of the two noun phrases, and others.

In the structure assigned to such sentences, the subject noun phrase occupies the specifier position, while the predicative noun phrase is the complement of an abstract Pred head. With Pred occupying the fixed head position and carrying the zero inflectional morphemes, both the subject and the predicate are free to move to any syntactic position (thus they can be freely topicalized or focussed).

The author also takes care of the problems of case-assignment and thematic role assignment: in predicational sentences the nominative case of the subject is assigned by the phonologically null inflection, its thematic role being assigned by the nominal head. In case of identificational sentences the two DPs in the specifier, and respectively in the complement of the Pred head are not arguments, as functional heads take no arguments. Therefore there is no need for case-assignment, and morphologic module gives a nominative output for them.

The analysis results in a theory of predicational nominal sentences in the sense that it has predictive force. According to the author, the particular properties of

predicational nominal clauses do not have to be enlisted in the generative grammar of Hungarian – they fall out from the syntactic structure assumed.

The presented volume treats the topic of the copula and non-verbal predication summarizing several analyses and conclusions that prove to be truly significant from the perspective of descriptive, typological and theoretical linguistics. The well-structured and logically built work provides original and adequate theoretical explanations stated in a clear professional manner, and a properly summarized contrastive overview of the theoretical and descriptive adaptations of the subject. The monograph serves as an informative and instructive reading for those with an interest in theoretical linguistics and basic knowledge of generative grammar.

***Cornova 1931: The First Monograph of a Monographic
Campaign of Gusti's School
– Review –***

*Ionuț BUTOI
University of Bucharest,
Department of Sociology*

Keywords: Gusti, Dimitrie sociological school, interwar sociology, sociological monographs, social history, Romanian village.

E-mail: ionutbutoi@yahoo.com

*

A new volume appeared among the spontaneous and non-institutionalized recoveries of memory of Gusti's School: Dimitrie Gusti et al., *Cornova 1931*, edited by Marin Diaconu, Zoltán Rostás, and Vasile Șoimaru.¹ The volume is the first monograph of a monographic campaign of Gusti's School, which shows a historical delay of such recoveries, absolutely amazing. It has all the qualities and "defects" of Gustism: starting from an enthusiastic and totally disinterested initiative of a "son" of Cornova (Vasile Șoimaru), summed up, following a remarkable collective effort, a huge amount of information, studies, historical sites required for a monograph assembled in a comprehensive file of the theme. "Defects" are not related to content but to its structuring: the contemporary contributions about the campaign from Cornova and monographists are not clearly defined from the contributions occurred in that historical period, for example. Uninformed readers can get lost in this volume and will not easily capture a unitary view of the village, of the monographic campaign as collective action and of Gusti's School. This does not mean that the image does not exist, on the contrary (even here we shall try to provide one of the possible images) but it is the fault of any

¹ Dimitrie Gusti et al., *Cornova 1931*, ed. Marin Diaconu, Zoltán Rostás, Vasile Șoimaru¹ (Chișinău: Quant Publishing House, 2011), 852 p. ISBN 978-9975-4247-1-4 (We shall quote below with direct reference to page numbers, unlike the other references).