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Stative Verbs and Possession in Guarani

1 Syntactic Slots in Guarani

- Two syntactic slots can be identified: a referential phrase and a predicative phrase

(1) *h-embireko o-puka*
3:POSS-wife 3A-laugh
REF.PHRASE PRED.PHRASE
“The wife laughs”

- The referential phrase can be identified by the referential tense markers, e.g. *-rã* for future
- The predicative phrase can be identified by the predicative tense markers, e.g. *-ta* for future

(2) *h-embireko-rã o-puka-ta*
3:POSS-wife-REF.FUT 3A-laugh-PRED.FUT
“The fiancée will laugh”

2 Three types of predications

- Three types of predications exist:
 - *o*-predication
 - *i*-predication
 - \emptyset -predication

(3) *h-embireko o-puka*
3:POSS-wife 3A-laugh
“The wife laughs.”

(4) *h-embireko i-pochy*
3:POSS-wife 3I-angry
“The wife is angry.”

	active	inactive
1	<i>a</i>	<i>che-</i>
2	<i>re-</i>	<i>nde-</i>
3	<i>o-</i>	<i>i-</i>

Table 1: person prefixes for the singular pronouns

- (5) *h-embireko (ha'e) paraguai-gua*
 3:POSS-wife (COP) Paraguay-ORIG
 “His wife is from Paraguay.”

3 Functions of the different predications

3.1 *o*-predication

- The *o*-predication is mainly used for dynamic actions (running, laughing, dancing).
- In the literature, it is termed the “active” predication.
- It can be understood as encoding ACTOR.

3.2 *i*-predication

- The *i*-predication is mainly used for states and involitive actions (be.big, forget).
- It can be understood as encoding UNDERGOER.
- In the literature, it is termed the “inactive” or “stative” predication.

3.3 \emptyset -predication

- The \emptyset -predication is mainly used for identification and specification (I am Sebastian, the murderer was the butler.).

4 Polysemy of prefixes

- One set of pronouns is used for active predication. See table 1.
- Another set of pronouns can be used in a threefold way:
 - as subject pronoun
 - as inactive person verbal prefix (in transitive predications as well)
 - as possessive prefix

- (6) *che* (*ha'e*) *h-embireko*
 1S:SUBJ (COP) 3I-wife
 "I am a/the wife."
- (7) *che-r-embireko* *o-puka*
 1S:POSS-LINK-wife 3A-laugh
 "My wife laughs."
- (8) (*che*) *che-pochy*
 (1S:SUBJ) 1sI-angry
 "I am angry."
- (9) (*che*) *che-r-esarai*
 (1S:SUBJ) 1sI-LINK-forget
 "I forget."

- This kind of polysemy is quite common in the languages of the world (cf North America)

5 Me, my wife and I

- The literature distinguishes nouns, active verbs and stative verbs.
- Active verbs are easily identified, being the only roots taking active morphology.
- Adjectives cannot be distinguished from stative verbs.
- I claim that nouns cannot be distinguished from stative verbs.

- (10) *che che-r-embireko*
 I 1sI-LINK-wife
 "I have a wife."
- (11) *che h-embireko*
 I 3I-wife
 "I am a/his wife."
- (12) *che nda-che-r-embireko-i*
 I NEG-1sI-LINK-wife-NEG
 "I have no wife."
- (13) *che nda-ha'e-i h-embireko*
 I NEG-COP-NEG 3I-wife
 "I am not the/his wife."

- Non-relational "nouns" can be used in this way as well.

- (14) *che che-kyse-ta*
 I 1sI-knife-PRED.FUT
 "I will have a knife."

- NB: A full verb is available as well to express possession.

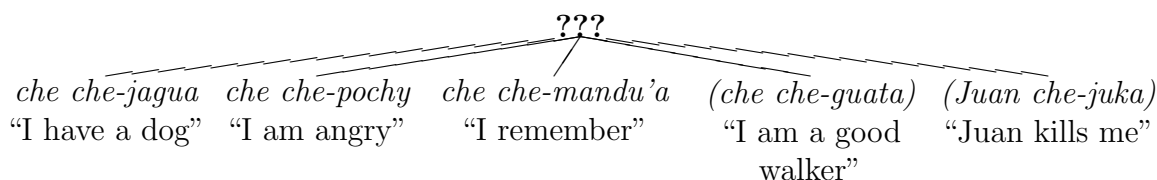
- (15) *che a-guereko kyse*
 I 1sA-have knife
 "I have a knife."

6 Consequences

- Normally, the *i*-predication is said to cross-reference the undergoer on the predicate.
- Hence, *rembireko* in (10) is the predicate, and *che* is the undergoer.
- It is common for the possessor to be coded as undergoer

- It is not common for the possessum to be the predicate of the possessor. Compare some common possessive constructions:
 - *have*(P'or,P'um)
 - *belong*(P'um,P'or)
 - *be.at*(P'um,P'or)
 - *exist*(P'or's(P'um))
- all these constructions show one existential/possession/copula verb, the Guarani construction does not.
- The predicate *wife*(I) would be read as “I belong to the class of wives”, rather than “I belong to the class of wife-possessors”.

7 Possible readings of the *i*-predication



- X has a dog, X has anger, X has remembrance, X has a sneeze.
- X is attributed a dog, X is attributed anger, X is attributed remembrance, X is attributed a sneeze.
- Active roots can take inactive prefixes in order to convey habitual reading.

(16) <i>che a-guata</i> I 1SA-walk “I walk.”	(17) <i>che che-guata</i> I 1SI-walk “I am a good walker.”
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- X is attributed running = X is a good runner.

8 Summary

- In Guarani, nouns cannot be differentiated from stative verbs.
- Both use the *i*-predication to convey a non-active meaning.
- I am still in quest for a good term to designate this class.
- Possession is a one-place predication. The possessum is the predicate.
- Guarani is special in that it codes inactive actions the same way as possession.
- Some other active/stative languages might exhibit a similar behavior.

9 Further ideas

- time-stability as a criterion for the differentiation of word classes

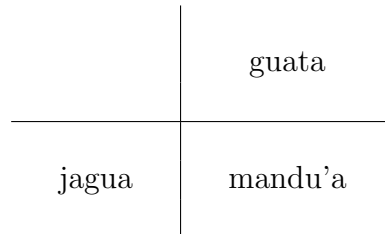


Figure 1: Time stability or “attributedness”

- encoding of possession in the languages of the world (very rough draft):
 - I=inflectional, C=Copula, E=existential verb, H=“have-verb”, O=oblique form(non-nominative),V=full verb

	Guarani
Peter walks	I ₁
Peter sneezes	I ₂ ←
Peter is tall	I ₂ ←
Peter is a teacher	C ∅
Peter is my husband	C ∅
Peter is in the forest	V+O
Peter has a dog	H/I ₂ ←

Table 2: Guarani

	German	Albanian	Greek	Serbian	Georgian
Peter walks	I	I	I	I	I
Peter sneezes	I	I	I	I	I
Peter is tall	C	C	C	C	C
Peter is a teacher	C	C	C	C	C
Peter is my husband	C	C	C	C	C
Peter is in the forest	C+O	C+O	C+O	C+O	C+O
Peter has a dog	H	H	H	H	H

Strategy 1

Table 3: Strategy 1

	Latin	Finnish	Swahili	Hungarian	Arabic	Tamil
Peter walks	I	I	I	I	I	I
Peter sneezes	I	I	I	I	I	I*
Peter is tall	C \emptyset	C	C	C \emptyset	C C+0	\emptyset C+A
Peter is a teacher	C \emptyset	C	C	C \emptyset	C C+0	\emptyset C+A
Peter is my husband	C (\emptyset)	C	C	C \emptyset	C C+0	\emptyset C+A
Peter is in the forest	\emptyset +O	C	C+O	C	\emptyset +O C+O	\emptyset +O
Peter has a dog	H C+0	C+O	C+O	C+O	\emptyset +O C+O	C+O
Strategy 2						

Table 4: Strategy 2

	Spanish	Turkish	Wogeo	Tagalog	Hebrew
Peter walks	I	I	I	mag um	I
Peter sneezes	I	I	I	ma	I
Peter is tall	C	C \emptyset	0	0	C \emptyset
Peter is a teacher	C	C \emptyset	0	0	C \emptyset
Peter is my husband	C	C \emptyset	0	0	C \emptyset
Peter is in the forest	V	0+O	0+O	0+O	C+O
Peter has a dog	H	E+POSS	x+POSSYE	E+O	E+O
Strategy 3		Strategy 4			

Table 5: Strategies 3+4

	Chinese	Basque	Tok Pisin	Inuit	Bambara	Desia
Peter walks	I	I	I	I1	I	I
Peter sneezes	I	I	I	I2	I	I*
Peter is tall	I	I	I	I3	ka	C
Peter is a teacher	C	I	I	I4	ye-ye	0
Peter is my husband	C	I	I	I5	ye-ye	?
Peter is in the forest	P	V	V	I6	I+O	P
Peter has a dog	C+O	V(H?)	H	I7	I+O	C+O
Strategy 5		Strategy 6		Strategy 7	Strategy 8	Strategy 9

Table 6: other Strategies

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