

REVIEWS

J. Linguistics 43 (2007). doi:10.1017/S002222670700463X
© 2007 Cambridge University Press

Marcel den Dikken, *Relators and linkers: The syntax of predication, predicate inversion, and copulas* (Linguistic Inquiry Monograph 47). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006. Pp. xi + 351.

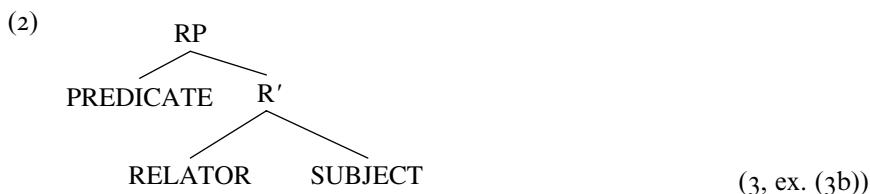
Reviewed by LORIE HEGGIE, Illinois State University

In this work, Marcel den Dikken argues for an approach to the syntax of predication structures that allows him to offer an explanation for a wide range of data at both the clausal and the nominal phrase levels. The languages (and some of their major dialects) considered in the analysis are English, French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Italian, Latin, Dutch, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, Hungarian, Hebrew, Thai, Mandarin Chinese, Welsh, Icelandic, Luhya, Chichewa, Eskimo, Rotuman and Niuean. This very broad range of languages speaks to the erudition backing this research and makes it of interest to a variety of linguists. The book is intended for readers with little background in the study of predication as well as for those working on the topic, with several chapters making excellent introductory readings for graduate students, especially chapter 2, ‘The syntactic configuration of predication’. There are altogether six chapters, including an appendix to chapter 4.

Den Dikken proposes a syntax of predication that is both configurational and nondirectional, differing from past analyses that have either been configurational and directional (Rothstein 1983) or nonconfigurational and nondirectional (Napoli 1989). The first component of his approach is that a predication will always contain a RELATOR (R) that is the head of the predication projection. At first glance, this hypothesis seems in line with any of a number of past analyses regarding predication, notably Bowers (1993). However, den Dikken argues that the relator is an abstract functional head that acts as a placeholder for ANY functional head mediating a predication relation between two terms. Thus, the relator could be the copula, a preposition, or tense. This ‘straight’, canonical predicate–complement structure has the syntactic representation in (1).



The above structure allows for considerable flexibility in the identification of predication relations. Den Dikken's second ingredient to the syntax of predication advances this flexibility even further. Here the claim is that, while predication relationships are always hierarchically asymmetrical, they are also fundamentally nondirectional, that is, predication may occur to the left or to the right. Accordingly, the structure in (2), which allows for a predicate specifier, is hypothesized to be a valid 'reverse' predication configuration.



As for LINKERS, these are identified as elements that are used to extend the minimal domain of the predication in the event of a predicate inversion. The need for this aspect of the analysis is motivated by data such as those in (3).

- (3) (a) Imogen considers Brian (to be) the best candidate. (I, ex. (1a))
 (b) Imogen considers the best candidate *(to be) Brian. (I, ex. (1b))

As these sentences demonstrate, a straightforward predication, such as in (3a), may or may not have the infinitival copula as an overt relator. In (3b), however, the copula must be present. This state of affairs is argued to be the result of the inversion of the predicate over its subject, which forces the copula to serve as a linker (the element that expands the minimal domain) and thus licenses the movement.

Chapter 2 of the book contains an excellent summary of historical views on predication, primarily those of Aristotle and Frege. The discussion, coupled with considerations of past generative analyses (from the barriers framework to Minimalism) of internal subjects, coordination, the generalized light verb, focalization, topicalization, and the Uniformity of Theta-Assignment Hypothesis, allows den Dikken to establish his view of predication, according to which predication is independent of theta-role assignment, configurational, and nondirectional, which supports the idea that all subject–predicate relations have the syntactic structure in either (1) or (2). The second half of the chapter is devoted to exploring the hypothesis of nondirectionality in predication relations. In order to identify structures that instantiate the configuration in (2) above, den Dikken considers adjectival and adverbial modification, the active–passive alternation, and Romance causatives as examples of reverse predications in secondary predications.

Italian unergative verbal predicates with postverbal subjects are identified as examples of reverse predication in a primary predication. Thus, chapter 2 establishes the existence of straight and reverse predications. A straight predicate complement structure is understood to constitute the canonical predication environment, as in *This butterfly is big*. A reverse predicate specifier structure will be found in the phrase *a big butterfly*, where the relator phrase structure is within the determiner phrase.

Chapter 3, 'Small clauses and copular sentences', is devoted to strengthening the argument that predication relations are always asymmetrical and thus must include a functional head. Den Dikken achieves this goal by arguing for a representation of small clauses (i.e. subject–predicate structures lacking tense) as relator phrases. It follows that for den Dikken, all small clauses must include a functional head, contra Moro (2000) and Pereltsvaig (2001), who have argued for 'bare' small clauses and 'bare' copular sentences. Building on the argument that predication relations are necessarily asymmetric, den Dikken proceeds to present evidence for the view that all copular sentences, including specificational and equative constructions, originate from an asymmetrical predicate–complement structure, as proposed and argued for in Blom & Daalder (1977), Heggie (1988), and Moro (1997).

Specificational and equative constructions, as in *The best candidate is Brian* and *Cicero is Tully*, are consequently argued to be the result of predicate inversion, where the predicate moves to the subject position. A(argument)-movement in equative copular sentences occurs because the predicate is a reduced free relative whose predicate head, realized as *pro*, must be formally licensed in the domain of inflection. The categorization of this *pro*-clause as a 'free' relative is debatable, given that Heggie (1988: 285), on whom den Dikken relies for this aspect of the argument, argues explicitly against the free relative status of the *wh*-clause in pseudoclefts; however, the underlying intuition remains that the structure of the equative predicate parallels that of a specificational pseudocleft, where the fronted element of a reduced relative, in this case *pro*, must be identified. I find the analysis in this chapter intriguing since the stumbling block for a unified theory of copular sentences has always been the status of a referring element in the predicate position. Whether or not den Dikken's analysis of equatives will hold under further scrutiny is a matter for future investigation.

Chapter 4, 'Predicate inversion: Why and how?', addresses the analysis of the syntax of predicate inversion within the theory of Principles and Parameters – more specifically, the Minimalist program (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work). The questions posed concern the triggers of predicate inversion, the locality constraints imposed on the process, and extraction restrictions in this configuration. The two types of predicate inversion that are discussed in detail are copular inversion, as in (4), and locative inversion, as in (5).

- (4) (a) Brian is the best candidate. (8I, ex. (1a))
 (b) The best candidate is Brian. (8I, ex. (1b))
- (5) (a) A picture of Imogen hung on the wall. (8I, ex. (2a))
 (b) On the wall hung a picture of Imogen. (8I, ex. (2b))

Once den Dikken makes the case for A-movement of the predicate, he addresses the more delicate problem of why predicate inversion should exist. Past analyses have relied on information structure and notions such as focus, an approach that den Dikken finds lacking, based on conceptual grounds. He argues instead that it is the empty predicate head of the reduced relative predicate that forces movement to an A-position in order for it to be licensed in the syntax. This movement then results in the subject (which is postverbal) being in a focus position, a fact that explains why extraction from the postcopular position in predicate inversion structures is impossible.

Den Dikken's analysis relies heavily on a theory of locality based on equidistance and the notion of 'phase-extending head movement' (a term introduced by the author). The need for domain-extending head movement in predicate inversion structures motivates the need for a small-clause external functional head, the linker. This linker-head is lexicalized as a copular element whenever there is nothing else available (e.g. aspect) to represent the functional head. The linker serves a number of purposes in the analysis: it creates a landing site for the raised predicate and provides a host for the raised relator, thereby allowing the extension of the phase. As a consequence, den Dikken is able to predict the distribution of the copula in predicate inversion structures in an explanatory manner.

The appendix to chapter 4, 'On the limited distribution of copular inversion', addresses the question of why not all small-clause predicates can undergo inversion. Thus, inversion is impossible in simple predications, such as *Imogen is a girl*/**A girl is Imogen*. What follows is a very interesting discussion of different types of copular sentences that have been claimed to be specificational, and how we might come to understand these differences after examining facts related to agreement, binding of variable pronouns, embedding in non-bridge contexts, and subject-auxiliary inversion. The analysis presented here allows for the possibility that an inversion may involve the base-generation of the preverbal noun phrase in the specifier of a topic phrase (TopP), with a null pro generated as a predicate that undergoes predicate inversion. Den Dikken's main point, however, is that, regardless of where the predicate nominal ends up, whether in SpecTopP or SpecTP, all inverse copular sentences instantiate predicate inversion.

In chapter 5, 'Predication and predicate inversion inside the nominal phrase', den Dikken finds evidence in noun phrases for both straight and reverse predications as well as for predicate inversion. The author

primarily examines qualitative binominal noun phrases but also discusses *wh*-interrogative and *wh*-exclamative constructions, adjectival predication, and possessed noun phrases. The chapter concludes with a discussion of nominal-internal predicate inversion in Mandarin Chinese.

Den Dikken's analysis in chapter 5 is founded on extensive case study of noun phrases such as the following:

- (6) (a) a jewel of a village (162, ex. (3a))
 (b) an idiot of a doctor (162, ex. (3b))

These qualitative binominal noun phrases are argued to be of two different types. While the example in (6a) exemplifies a comparative noun phrase, (6b) illustrates an attributive noun phrase. The comparative case is argued to be base-generated as a predicate-complement structure (see (1) above) that undergoes predicate inversion, whereas the attributive case is argued to be an example of the predicate-specifier configuration, as given in (2) above. The preposition *of* is defined as the nominal copula that fills the function of relator or linker as the situation warrants.

This book is an important contribution to the literature on the syntax of predication. Den Dikken has compiled an impressive array of data to support his account, an account that remains remarkably cohesive cross-linguistically. Moreover, the presentation of historical perspectives on predication gives the analysis depth and clarity. One can disagree with the details, but that is the motivation for further work on the topic. In any case, this book will have an impact on future work on the syntax of predication.

REFERENCES

- Blom, Alied & Saskia Daalder. 1977. *Syntaktische theorie en taalbeschrijving*. Muiderberg: Coutinho.
- Bowers, John. 1993. The syntax of predication. *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, 591–656.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. *The Minimalist program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Heggie, Lorie. 1988. *The syntax of copular structures*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California.
- Moro, Andrea. 1997. *The raising of predicates: Predicative noun phrases and the theory of clause structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moro, Andrea. 2000. *Dynamic antisymmetry*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Napoli, Donna Jo. 1989. *Predication theory: A case study for indexing theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pereltsvaig, Asya. 2001. *On the nature of intra-clausal relations: A study of copular sentences in Russian and Italian*. Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, Montreal.
- Rothstein, Susan. 1983. *The syntactic forms of predication*. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.
- Author's address: Department of Languages, Literatures, & Cultures, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4300, U.S.A.
 E-mail: lheggie@ilstu.edu*

(Received 25 February 2007)