

Property and Event Predication in the Koryak Language:  
An Argument for a New Predication Type Theory

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The purpose of this presentation is to expand the concept of the predication type theory, newly developed in the context of Japanese language predication studies, to be applied to the Koryak language of northeast Asia (the Chukchi-Kamchatkan language family), and to provide an example of a contribution to theoretical linguistic research by a descriptive study of a minority language.

The predication type theory, which distinguishes between *event predication* describing events, actions, and situations that develop with time and *property predication* describing fixed or constant attributes that exceed the flow of time, originated with Japanese language predication research (Masuoka ed. 2008). However, the question of the influence exerted by this distinction in meaning on syntactic and morphological structure is yet to be studied. Thus, Kageyama (2009) states that sentences in Japanese, Korean, English, Spanish, Russian, etc, which are regarded admissible although their peculiar syntax opposes the general structural constraints of event predication in effect, demonstrate a decrease in transitivity, and that they assume property predication functions based on this. Kageyama successfully implied the potential for the predication type theory to be extended to the linguistic morphological/syntactic structure. Even so, the focus remains on event predication, and an attempt to grasp property predication is the furthest extent of these efforts.

In contrast, in the Koryak language, we find that there are constructions specific to property predication different from event predication and that the differences between the two are manifested as clear “forms” in the sense of both syntax and morphology, forming the essentials of grammar affecting all parts of speech. Existence of such a language was not known in preceding studies, and further, no such consideration has been undertaken within the context of Koryak linguistics.

The form specific to property predication in the Koryak language is “n-,” a prefix and suffix indicating a person (referred to below as “N form”). Within traditional Koryak grammar, N form plays the role of an affix, which forms qualitative adjectives (Zhukova 1972: 146), yet N form is formed not only by an adjectival stem but also by a noun, adverb, and verb stem expressing constant attributes of properties. Furthermore, mutual conversion is possible between property predication syntax and the corresponding event predication syntax (the non-future imperfective ku-/ko-...-ŋ, referred to below as KU form) (Kurebito 2010). Below are property predication sentences and corresponding event predication sentences composed of (1a) adjective stems, (1b) noun stems, and

(1c) verb stems.

(1) 【Property】	【Event】
a.   ənno       n-ə-ŋot-qen he(ABS)   PRP-E-angry-3SG.SUBJ “He is (constantly) angry”	ənno       ko-ŋot-at-ə-ŋ-Ø he(ABS)   IPF-angry-VRB-E-IPF-3SG.SUBJ “He is (presently) angry”
b.   nutenut       n-ə-muqe-qin tundra(ABS.SG) PRP-E-rain-3SG.SUBJ “It (constantly) rains on the tundra”	nutenut       ku-muq-et-ə-ŋ-Ø tundra(ABS.SG) IPF-rain-VRB-E-IPF-3SG.SUBJ “It is (presently) raining on the tundra”
c.   ənno       n-ewji-qin he(ABS)   PRP-eat-3SG.SUBJ “He (constantly) eats”	ənno       k-ewji-ŋ-Ø he(ABS)   IPF-eat-IPF-3SG.SUBJ “He is (presently) eating”

Cases in which the verb changes from event predication syntax to property predication syntax have particular syntactic significance. In cases in which N forms involve intransitive verbs such as (1c), neither the noun nor the verb change with regard to realization of the argument. However, the following two changes become necessary in sentences with transitive verbs.

- (2) a. N form can take only one argument, either the subject or the object. When it takes the object, the object is expressed in the absolutive case. On the other hand, when it takes the subject, the subject is promoted from the ergative case to the absolutive case.
- b. Sentences with transitive verbs are antipassivized, in other word, intransitivized, either through incorporation or through addition of antipassive or lexifical affixes.

(3a) is an event predication sentence using the transitive verb stem “aŋja” (“to praise”), and (3b), (3c), and (3d) are corresponding property predication sentences. In (3b) the verb continues to be a transitive, the object maintains the absolutive case and the subject is eliminated. (3c) is intransitivized by the antipassive suffix “-cet,” its subject is promoted to the absolutive case, and its object is demoted to the dative case. Also, in (3d), the object is incorporated.

- (3) a. ( Event Predication: S=instrumental [ergative], O=absolutive )  
       kəmiŋ-ə-n       k-aŋja-ŋ-nen-Ø       əllŋ-a  
       child-E-ABS.SG   IPF-praise-IPF-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUBJ   mother-INSTR(ERG)  
       “A mother is (presently) praising the child”
- b. ( Property Predication: S=Ø, O=absolutive )  
       kəmiŋ-ə-n       n-aŋja-qen  
       child-E-ABS.SG   PRP-praise-3SG.OBJ  
       “A child is (constantly) praised”

c. ( Property Predication: S=absolutive, O=dative )

əlla-∅            n-aŋja-cet-qen            kəmeŋ-ə-ŋ  
mother-ABS.SG    PRP-praise-ANT-3SG.SUBJ    child-E-DAT

“A mother (constantly) praises (her own) child”

d. ( Property Predication: S=absolutive, O=incorporated )

əlla-∅            n-ə-kmeŋ-ə-ʔ-aŋja-qen  
Mother-ABS.SG    PRP-E-child-E-praise-3SG.SUBJ

“A mother (constantly) praises children (in general)”

Needless to say, peculiar facts match the “decrease in transitivity” that Kageyama (2009:1–34) demonstrated as the characteristics held in common by “peculiar phenomena,” which oppose the structural constraints applied to event predication syntax.

As seen above, Koryak is a language that clearly distinguishes both morphological and syntactic terms between property predication and event predication forms, supporting the notion that predication pattern theory is an important field of research that holds the potential for cross-linguistic expansion.

## REFERENCES

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