

Morphological markers expressing the copula function

This paper studies non-verbal sentences in various languages, focusing on the copulas (also known as morphological markers, e.g. verbal elements, pronouns, verbal affixes, predicative suffixes, *particulae*) of the non-verbal sentences; on the presentation of the morphological features of the verbal elements; and on the licensing of their omission. Languages can be divided into two groups from the point of copula use: (1) languages using zero copula and (2) languages not using zero copula. According to the so-called Dummy Hypothesis (Stassen 1997), the copula can only be dropped in present tense, and mainly in third person singular. The use of zero copula is not a predictable feature of languages: it does not depend on language families, typological classes, or geographical closeness. Two hypotheses about the formation of the nominal predicate in Hungarian are also discussed.

The study is based on data collected from WALS 2005 and other papers.

Keywords: non-verbal sentence, nominal predicate, copula, dummy-hypotheses.

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