EXPLORING PREDICATION OPERATOR *KUM* IN MEETEILON

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1. Introduction

Small clauses (SC) are the clauses which have the subject-predicate constituents without a finite verb. In this case, a NP, AP or PP serves as the predicate within the constituent. To say little more clearly, SCs are clausal in the sense of which they contain a subject and predicate phrase and they are small in that they contain no complementizers or inflectional nodes as comparatively observed in other structures such as CP and TP. In this paper, I propose that the particle *kum* is a predication operator that turns a bare common noun into a predicate.

As for the structure of SCs, I adopt den Dikken's (2006) claim that small clauses are headed by a R(elator) head and assume that -*kum* in Meeteilon is a lexicalized Relator head. From the semantic point of view, I endorse the idea of Åfarli & Eide (2000) that the predication operator *kum* is a function that takes the property element ⟨π⟩ and forms a propositional function ⟨e, p⟩, which in turn takes an entity⟨e⟩ to form a proposition ⟨p⟩, which corresponds to the phrase structure of a clause in which there is a relation between Specifier and Head. This makes us think of the existence of predicational relations in all the functional projections in the clause. Section 2 opens up the idea of nominal small clauses in both English and Meeteilon. Section 3 explores the predication operator *kum* and its syntactix-semantic interface properties. Section 4 depicts the permissibility of the scrambling within the small clauses and their restriction in terms of anti-locality in movement. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Nominal Small Clauses

A small clause in English contains neither a finite nor infinitival verb preceded by *to* (Stowell 1981, 1983, among many others). In the following examples (2a &b), the noun *a genius* and the adjectival *intelligent* are analyzed as a predicate nominal and a predicative adjective respectively, which are predicated of *Mary* in the nominal small clause *Mary a genius* in (2a) and of *him* in the adjectival small clause *him intelligent* in (2b).

(2) a) John considers [sc Mary a genius].

b) We consider [sc him intelligent].

The above examples are considered to be the 'canonical' epistemic small clause constructions in English. The embedded clause, which is the complement of an epistemic verb (Svenonius, 1994), describes a characterization about which a judgement or an opinion can be expressed, as remarked by Rapaport (1995: fn.13).

A nominal small clause predicate in Meeteilon, however, forces the presence of particles *kum*/gum 'as' with no business to the semantics of their own. Here, I would like to argue that Meeteilon does have small clauses, whose exposition had never been made in the past literature. In (3), for instance, there is a predication relation via the predicate operator[1] *gum* between *mabu* 'him' and *əpəŋbə* 'fool'. With a predicate operator mediating between these two nominals, I propose that the sentences in (3) and (4) belong to the small clause constructions, in which the first pre-verbal nouns in accusative case and the second pre-verbal noun to which a predicate head is suffixed form a small clause. The second pre-verbal nominal is the predicate nominal predicated of the first pre-verbal nominal.

(3) *əi-nə*   *ma-bu əpəŋbə-gum*[2]   *ləu-i*

I-nom   he-acc fool-as   consider-decl

'I consider him a fool.'

(4) *mijam-nə*   *ma-bu lairəbə mi-gum*   *khəl-li*

People-nom   he-acc poor   man-as   thinkl-decl

'People thought of him as a poor man.'

Predicative nominals like *əpəŋbə* 'fool' in (3) involve a stronger subjective judgement of the speaker and hence are easier to convey the speaker's belief. Nouns that may carry a

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[1] Again, there is also a predication relation via an optional predicate operator, the copula *ni*, between *mabu* 'him' and '*əpəŋbə*' 'fool' as shown below:

i. *əi-nə*   *ma-bu*   *əpəŋbə-ni*   *ləu-i*

   I-NOM   he-ACC   fool-COP   consider-DECL

   'I think that he is a fool.'

However, the whole subject-predicate constituents *ma-bu əpəŋbə-ni* can be further embedded within a qualitative non-factive *hainə* 'SAY-QUATATIVE' as shown below:

ii. *əi-nə*   *ma-bu*   *əpəŋbə-ni*   *hainə*   *ləu-i*

   I-NOM   he-ACC   fool-COP   SAY-QUT   consider-DECL

   'I think that he is a fool.'

The translation of (i) & (ii) shows that if the copula is considered a lexical verb that takes a small clause as its complement, it should be base-generated in V^0. I suggest that the copula is a spell-out of some feature in the domain of functional projections above the VP. e.g.T^0. The pure nominal small clause is introduced via the predicate operator *kum*.

[2] k~g is because of the morphophonemic change: /k/ occurs after voiceless and /g/ after voiced.

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subjective judgment include *aŋauba* 'mad man' *wakhəl ʧoibə(i)* 'mad man or woman (of mental derangement' *krek ʧubə* 'insane person', *sono* 'idiot', *budhu* 'bastard', etc. These common nouns when placed in the predicative position within a nominal small clause take the lexicalized operator *kum* if the main verb is an epistemic verb.

(5) a) *mijam-na*   *ma-bu*   *wakhal ʧoibi-gum*   *u-i*

    People-nom   he-acc   idea   disorder- as   see-decl

    "People thought of him as a disorder man."

   b) *ma-na*   *naŋ-bu*   *sono-gum*   *khal-li*

    he-nom   you-acc   idiot- as   think-decl

    "He considers you an idiot."

In Meeteilon, There are a handful of common nouns derived from adjectival roots belonging to the eight semantic types that Dixon (1982) has postulated as language universal.

Here evolves the basic intuition of nominal characteristics of Meeteilon that Meeteilon bare common nouns are basically type-neutral. A bare noun cannot be simply taken for granted as a predicate nominal or a kind-denoting term (cf. Amom 2020). The underlying idea here is that predication must be mediated by a predication operator (cf. Bowers's (1993) *Pr*, Adger and Ramchand's (2003) *Pred*, den Dikken's (2006) *relator*, Citko's (2008) π, among others). This conception goes back to the original idea of Chierchia (1985) and Bowers (1993, 2001) and also Åfarli, & Eide (2000) in assuming that, prototypically, predicates are propositional functions that are formed from property expressions by means of a predication operator. A bare common noun can become a predicate only when it is introduced by a predicator and in this case a nominal in the predicative position is not exclusively a property but a property + a predicate operator. It is the predicate operator that turns a property into a predicate, which is unsaturated or incomplete in the sense of Frege. And, this semantic incompleteness is then made complete, or saturate, by composing them via functional application with the semantically complete terms (ie. entities or individuals or truth-values).

3. Operator *kum* and Theoretical Background

Recently den Dikken (2006) proposed that predication is asymmetrical, mediated by a functional head, which he calls R(elator). den Dikken (2006) emphasizes that, though Bowers' (1993) predicative head Pr can be a new functional head in the structure, the name 'Relator' is used in a more abstract sense because the function of a 'Relator' can be instantiated by various sorts of heads connecting predicates and their subjects. As for the structure of SCs, I adopt den Dikken's (2006) claim that small clauses are headed by a R(elator) head and assume that *kum* in Meeteilon is a lexicalized Relator head. The structure of SCs is depicted in (6).

The base-generated configuration of SC is depicted in (6).

(6) The structure of small clauses (adopted from den Dikken 2006: 3)

Relator-P (SC) ⇒ Spell-out domain

subject *ma-bu* Relator'

predicate *əpəŋbə* Relator *gum*
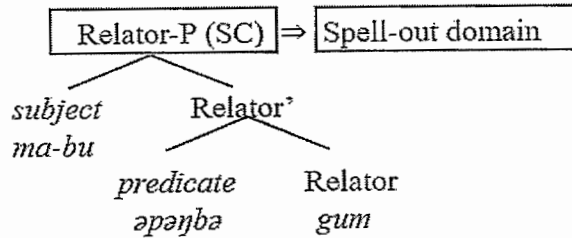
Semantically, a predicate is a propositional function. Following Chierchia (1985) and Bowers (1993, 2001), Åfarli & Eide (2000) assume that predicates are propositional functions that are formed from property expressions by means of a predication operator:

⟨π, ⟨e, p⟩⟩

The predication operator is a function that takes the property element ⟨π⟩ and forms a propositional function ⟨e, p⟩, which in turn takes an entity⟨e⟩ to form a proposition ⟨p⟩. Under this analysis, a property denoting element does not constitute a predicate on its own, but can be turned into one via a predication operator.

Åfarli & Eide (2000) propose that the predication operator constitutes the kernel of a complex semantic operator structure that corresponds to a basic propositional skeleton[3].

(7)　⟨p⟩

⟨e⟩　⟨e, p⟩

⟨p,⟨e,p⟩⟩　⟨p⟩
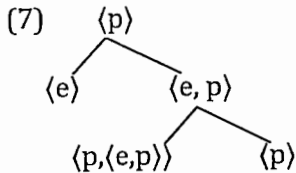
Viewed so, the semantic operator structure that corresponds to the above syntactic representation in (6) is given below. Here, the labels *Pr* (Bower 1993), *Pred* (Adger and Ramchand 2003), *relator* (den Dikken 2006), and π (Citko 2008) stand for "Predication", i.e. the *syntactic* category corresponding to the predication operator.

(8)　⟨p⟩

⟨e⟩　'　⟨e, p⟩
ma-bu

⟨π⟩　⟨π, ⟨e, p⟩⟩
əpəŋbə　*gum*

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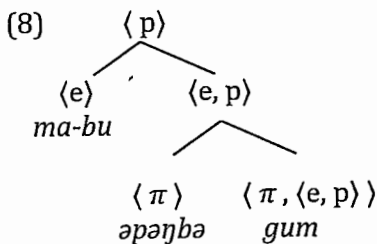
[3] See how Åfarli & Eide (2000) propose the construal of predication into the idea of layered predication.

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Having conceived so far, I suggest that small clauses in Meeteilon contain an asymmetric structure mediated by a functional head, and this functional head takes an unsaturated monadic XP (=NP, AP, PP) as its complement.

4. Scrambling and Small Clauses

In Meeteilon, scrambling within a small clause is not permissible: the scrambling between the subject and its predicate is not acceptable.

(9)   a) *mijam-nə*   *ma-bu inakkhunbə*   *mi-gum*   *khəl-li*

People-nom he-acc   rich   man-as   think-decl

"People thought of him as a rich man."

b) **mijam-nə inakkhunbə mi-gum$_i$ t$_i$ ma-bu   khəl-li*

c) **inakkhunbə mi-gum$_i$ mijam-nə ma-bu t$_i$ khəl-li*

d) ** inakkhunbə mi-gum$_i$ ma-bu t$_i$ mijam-nə khəl-li*

In 9(a,b&c) above, when two constituents of a small clause are scrambled, the sentence becomes ungrammatical. However, the sentence is acceptable as long as these two constituents of a small clause happen to preserve their sequence as shown in (10) below.

(10) *ma-bu$_i$ inakkhunbə mi-gum$_j$ mijam-nə t$_i$ t$_j$ khəl-li*

From the semantic saturation point of view, one may assume that the NP predicate *inakkhunbə mi-gum* 'rich man-as' functions as a semantic predicate of type $\langle e, t \rangle$ and it takes its argument *ma-bu* 'he-acc'. The unsaturated meaning of the NP *inakkhunbə mi-gum* 'rich man-as' is saturated by taking the argument *ma-bu* 'he- acc'. The scrambling of the phrases which are semantically incomplete renders each example in (9) above ungrammatical. On the other hand, the possible case of scrambling of the small clause in (10) shows that the scrambled constituent *ma-bu inakkhunbə mi-gum* 'he-acc rich man-as' is semantically complete and is of type $\langle t \rangle$. The extant asymmetries in the distribution of SC-predicates, such as fronting at the left periphery of the clause shows that movement within and out of an SC is restricted by general computational properties such as anti-locality (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego 2001).

(11) Anti-locality in movement

A complement cannot merge into the specifier of its own.

In (6) & (8), the SC-predicate is merged as the complement of the Relator head. Under anti-locality approach, a predicate will not be able to move to the specifier of its own head, the Relator (see Abels 2003, Boeckx 2007; Grohmann 2003a and Ko 2014). As Ko (2014) suggests, the predication is stronger for SCs and SC-predicate in (6) is simply immobile within SC, the RP and therefore cannot precede the element merged in [Spec,RP].

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Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed that *kum* is a predicate operator. I propose that the particle *kum* is a predication operator that turns a bare common noun into a predicate. Finally, I have also shown that in Meeteilon, scrambling within a small clause is not permissible. The scrambling between the subject and its predicate is not acceptable and the movement within and out of an SC is restricted by general computational properties such as anti-locality.

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