

H10

Our first sentences

adjectival and nominal sentences

Hieroglyphs Beginners

Dr Katharina Zinn

Associate Professor in Egyptian
Archaeology and Heritage, UWTSD

From phrases to sentences

- Words / phrases = ways to refer to something, but do not say about *what* they are referring to
 - *shr pn jkr* - this excellent plan
 - *shr* *pn* *jkṛ*
 - Plan this excellent
 - Noun pronoun adjective
 - = reference to a specific kind of plan, pronoun + adjective explain the characteristic of the plan
 - BUT does not say anything what is happening with the plan
 - For this, we need sentences: to say something ABOUT words/phrases

Sentence structures

- Every sentence contains at least TWO parts

- Subject – what is talked about
- Predicate – what is said about it

<i>shr</i>	<i>pn</i>	<i>jkr</i>
Plan	this	excellent
Noun	pronoun	adjective

- What is missing for a sentence in the English translation?

- Predicate!

- sentence would be *This plan is excellent.*

- *Plan* – noun, but in the function of a subject (this plan)
- *Excellent* – adjective, but in the function of a predicate (to be excellent)

English:

- ❑ Each sentence needs a VERB
- ❑ So: predicate consists of verb + adjective: *is excellent (to be excellent)*
- ❑ In English, each sentence MUST have a verb, either form of be or any other verb
- ❑ *This plan **is** excellent.*
- ❑ *This plan **seems** excellent.*

In Middle Egyptian

- Middle Egyptian has verbs
 - full verbs = complicated structures, not dealt with here
 - auxiliary verb → Middle Egyptian DOES NOT have them (to be)
- *This plan is excellent.* would be
- ☼ *This plan excellent.*
 - → without any verb at all!
- Egyptian does not have equivalent of “be” — same for Russian, Arabic

Non-verbal sentences

- For this, we need sentences: to say something ABOUT words/phrases
- **Every sentence contains at least TWO parts**
 - **Subject**
 - **Predicate**
- Subject: is what is talked about
- Predicate: what is said about it

Non-verbal sentences

ADJECTIVAL SENTENCES

Adjectival Sentences

- **Every sentence contains at least TWO parts**
 - **Subject** is what is talked about
 - **Predicate** what is said about it
- *This plan is excellent.*
 - Verb “is” does not contain information, only adjective “excellent”
 - *is excellent* = adjectival predicate
- In Egyptian – adjectival predicate is only adjective
- Adjectival sentence = short for *sentence with adjectival predicate*

Adjectival sentences

- Always form **PREDICATE** – **SUBJECT**

jkr

Excellent

Adjective

shr pn

this plan

nominal phrase

- Nominal phrase *this excellent plan* would be *shr pn jkr* (possessive pronoun is first in string) as apposition to noun

Adjectival predicate

- In adjectival sentences – adjectives always in simplest form (masculine singular) irrespective number/gender subject

□ *nfr*

Adjectives - usage

- Modifier
 - Then adjectives have the **same gender/number as noun**

Noun Endings		
Number	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	-	ⲉ <i>t</i>
Plural	ⲛⲓ ⲙⲓ <i>w</i>	ⲛⲓ ⲙⲓ ⲉⲓ <i>(w)t</i>
Dual	ⲛⲓ ⲙⲓ ⲉⲓ <i>wy</i>	ⲛⲓ ⲙⲓ ⲉⲓ <i>ty</i>

Egyptian adjectives are often used to modify nouns. In this use, adjectives generally have the same gender and number as the noun; this feature is known as “agreement.” In Middle Egyptian, modifying adjectives have three basic forms: masculine singular, masculine plural, and feminine. The masculine singular is the basic form: primary and secondary adjectives have no ending in this form, and nisbes have the ending *-j*:

ⲛⲃ *nb* “all”

ⲛⲓⲣ *nfr* “good”

ⲛⲓⲧⲓⲧⲓ *njwjtj* “local.”

Masculine plural adjectives add the ending *-w* to the singular form. This is the same ending used for masculine plural nouns (§ 4.5), and is written in the same ways (§ 4.6): for example,

ⲛⲃⲱ *nbw*

ⲛⲓⲣⲱ *nfrw*

ⲛⲓⲧⲓⲧⲓⲱ *njwjtjw*¹

Feminine adjectives add the ending *-t* to the masculine singular form of primary and secondary adjectives, and *in place of* the ending *-j* of masculine nisbes:

ⲛⲃⲧ *nbt*

ⲛⲓⲣⲧ *nfrt*

ⲛⲓⲧⲓⲧⲓⲧ *njwtt*.

Adjectival predicate

- In adjectival sentences – adjectives always in simplest form (masculine singular) irrespective number/gender subject

nfr rn=f His name is beautiful.

nfr hm.t tn This woman is beautiful.

nfr pr.w nn These houses are beautiful.

- Only exception: usage of old masculine form dual –wj in exclamatory sentences

nfr.wj hm.t tn Oh, how beautiful is this woman!

jkṛ.w(j) šḥr.w = How excellent are these plans! NOT “The plans are excellent.”

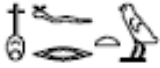
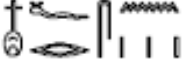
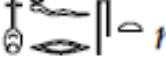
Adjectival predicate

- Middle Egyptian – three types of adjectives
 - Primary – only *nb* all, every
 - Secondary – most adjectives; created from specific verb-form (participle)
 - *nfr* good, beautiful, perfect → from to be/to become good, beautiful, perfect
 - Derived – formed from nouns or prepositions (**nisbe**)
 - *nwt* town → *nwtj* “local”
 - Also preposition “n” – genitival adjective (indirect genitive)
- Only secondary adjectives used as predicate in adjectival sentences
 - Examples with *nisbe* appear, but very rarely
 - Primary can only appear as modifier to noun, not as adjectival predicate

Subject in adjectival sentences

- Subject – nouns, pronouns, noun phrases, adjectives
 - Noun: *nfr rn* The name is beautiful.
 - Pronoun: *nfr nn* This is beautiful.
 - Noun phrase: *nfr rn=f* His name is beautiful.
 - Adjective: *nfr dšrwt* The red (ones) are beautiful.
- When personal pronoun
 - DEPENDENT pronoun
 - Second and third person pronouns (different sentence structure with first person pronouns)

Forms of dependent pronouns used in adjectival sentences

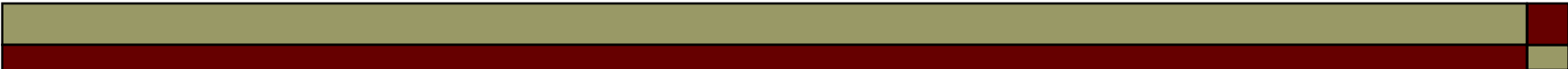
2MS		<i>nfr tw</i> “You are good” (also  <i>nfr tw</i>)
2FS		<i>nfr tn</i> “You are good” (also  <i>nfr tn</i>)
3MS		<i>nfr sw</i> “He is good”
3FS		<i>nfr sj</i> “She is good”
2PL		<i>nfr tn</i> “You are good” (also  <i>nfr tn</i>)
3PL		<i>nfr sn</i> “They are good”
3N		<i>nfr st</i> “It is good”; “They are good” (also ).

Non-verbal sentences

NOMINAL SENTENCES

Combinations of nouns

- Noun – pronoun
- Noun – noun: connections
 - Conjunction (*and*)
 - Disjunction (*or*)
- Noun – noun: Genitive
 - Direct
 - Indirect
- **Nominal sentences**



Nominal sentences

- A sentence only formed by nominal phrases!
 - Nouns
 - Pronouns
 - Adjectives

Nominal sentences

□ A sentence only formed by nominal phrases!

□ That means:

- Subject will be noun/pronoun
- Predicate will be noun/pronoun
- **Nominal predicate**

□ *The plan (is) a disaster.*

□ Subject (nominal) predicate

□ nominal phrase nominal phrase

□ noun, pronoun, or noun phrase a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase

□ construction is nonverbal

Nominal sentence types

- A – B
 - With pronouns → independent
 - With nouns
- A *pw* – *bipartite nominal sentence*
- A *pw* B – *tripartite nominal sentence*

A – B Nominal Sentences

- two elements: A and B
- A: independent pronoun or noun (phrase)
- B: noun or noun phrase
- no word can appear in between A and B, stand side-by-side, bound together
-
- *ink sš nsw*
- “I am a royal scribe” “I am the king’s scribe”

Independent pronouns



ink sš nsw

"I am a royal scribe" "I am the king's scribe"

Independent pronouns



ink sš nsw

"I am a royal scribe" "I am the king's scribe"

1s *jnk*

The signs and are determinatives and can be replaced by the other signs that are used as ideograms in writings of the 1s suffix and dependent pronouns: for example, or when the speaker is a god or king.

2MS *ntk*

2FS *ntt* ; also *ntt* (see § 2.8.3)

3MS *ntf*

3FS *nts*

1PL *jnn*

These are later spellings. This pronoun has not been found in any texts earlier than the New Kingdom, but it certainly existed in Middle Egyptian.

2PL *ntn* ; also *ntn* (see § 2.8.3)

3PL *ntsn*

A – B Nominal Sentences

□ Introduction of names:



ḏdi rn.f

"Djedi is his name"



rn n mwt m3't

"the name of his mother is Maat"

- Stress on Djedi as the name
- Stress on noun phrase: rn n m mwt over actual name

A *pw* Nominal Sentences

- only two elements: A and *pw*
- translated as “It is A.” → “it” may be replaced with other pronouns, depending on context A
- element A was the noun “son,” then “he” would be used, or if the noun “daughter,” sat in position A, “she” would be used.



ink pw

“it is I”



sš pw

“he is a scribe”



sḥty pw n sḥt hm3t

“He is a peasant of the Wadi Natrun.”

A pw B – tripartite nominal sentence

□ A is B OR B is A



pr-ʿ3 pw 3ḥ-n-itn

"Akhenaten is the pharaoh"



itn pw it.f

"his father is Aten"

Nominal sentence types – subject (S) and predicate (P)

- A – B → both A and B can be S or P (depending on context)
 - With pronouns → independent → third person independent pronoun (*ntf*, *nts*) always P
 - With nouns → kinship: A = kinship form (father, mother etc) and S; B = P; noun phrase with *rn* = always S
- A *pw* – *bipartite nominal sentence* → always *pw* as S → P – S
- A *pw* B – *tripartite nominal sentence* → both could be S and P, but usually A = P (when both nouns/noun phrases) → context; always A = P when A – independent pronoun