

Morphological Characterization of Nonverbal Predication in Huave (isolated), México.

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Huave (HUV) is a language isolate spoken in the lagoon area of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca, Mexico. This paper describes the morphological strategies employed in contexts of nonverbal predication, based on data from different sources, including the *Fieldwork Questionnaire on Copular Clauses / Nonverbal Predication*. It further shows that several expressions, including independent personal pronouns, interrogative quantifiers, and numerals, can receive person marking and function as nonverbal predicates without requiring a copula or an independent linking element.

In (1a), the nominal predicate *nendüy* ‘healer’ contains the relativizing prefix *ne-*. The subject noun phrase *müm na-jtaj* ‘the woman’ likewise contains the relativizing prefix *na-*. In (1b), the negative counterpart of the same expression, the predicate incorporates the negation clitic *ngo=* and the second-position clitic *me=*.

1. a. *nendüy müm najtaj*
ne-ndüy müm na-jtaj
REL-heal woman REL.SG.HUM-woman
‘The woman is a healer.’
- b. *ngomenendüy müm najtaj*
ngo=me=ne-ndüy müm na-jtaj
NEG-C2-REL-to heal woman REL.SG.HUM-woman
‘The woman is not a healer.’

Plurality in nominal predication may also be expressed morphologically in both the subject and the nominal predicate. In (2), the predicate receives the nominal plural suffix *-ej*, whereas the subject is marked by the human plural relativizer *mon-*.

2. *nenü:bayej müm montaj*
ne-nüüb-ay-ej müm mon-taj
REL-sell-RR-PL woman REL.PL.HUM- woman
‘The women are vendors.’

Likewise, nominal predicates may receive tense and number morphology. In (3), future is expressed by means of the clitic *ap=*, and the nominal predicate bears the plural marker *-iw*, which differs from the plural marker in (2).

3. *ajküw nine monüx kiaj ngome apmekeajchiw*
ajküw nine mon-nüx kiaj ap=me=keajch-iw
DEF little REL.PL.HUM-girl DEIC FUT=C2=teach-PL
‘Those girls will be teachers.’

In addition to lexical nominals, other expressions may participate in nonverbal predication constructions. First- and second-person independent personal pronouns are morphologically complex: they consist of a root that I refer to as a speech-act participant root, person marking, and associative-number markers. As shown in (4), the pronouns in (4a–d) bear first- and second-person prefixes, respectively.

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|---|----|---|----|--|
| 4 | a. | xi-k-e
1-PAH-ENF
‘I’ | b. | xi-k-on-a
1-PAH-PL.ASOC-ENF
‘We (EXCL)’ |
| | c. | i-k-e
2-PAH-ENF
‘You’ | d. | i-k-on-a
2-PAH-PL.ASOC-ENF
‘You.’ |
| | e. | ik-oots
PAH-INCL
‘We (INCL)’ | f. | nej-iw
3-PL.3
‘They’ |

An interrogative quantifier such as *kas* ‘how many’ may receive inclusive marking *-oots*, as shown in (5b). Examples (5c–d) show that numerals may also incorporate person and inclusive marking in nonverbal predication constructions (cf. 5).

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| 5. | (a) | kas mineat
kas mi-neat
how POS-year
‘How old are you?’ | (b) | kasoots
kas- oots
how-INCL
‘How many are we?’ |
| | (c) | arojpoots
aroj-p- oots
three-CL-INCL
‘We are three.’ | (d) | xijpüson
x-ij-p- üs -on
1-two-CL-1-PL.ASOC
‘We are two.’ |

Overall, the data suggest that nonverbal predication in HUV is not expressed through a single strategy. The poster examines how different classes of expressions -nominal predicates, pronouns, interrogative quantifiers, and numerals- incorporate morphological resources to encode predicative properties, and explores the semantic factors that condition the distribution of these strategies.

abbreviations: 1 ‘first person’; 2 ‘second person’; CL ‘classifier’; COL ‘collective’; DEF ‘DEFINITE ARTICLE’; DEIC ‘deictic’; ENF ‘emphatic’; FUT ‘future’; INCL ‘inclusive’; PAH ‘speech-act PARTICIPANT’; PL.3 ‘plural’; PDO ‘past’; PL.ASOC ‘associative plural’; POS ‘possessive’; REL ‘relativizer’; RR ‘reciprocal-reflexive’.