

## TYPES OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PREDICATION: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

*Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla qizi*

*Xidirova Dilnoza Nurali qizi*

*Jizzakh branch of the National University of Uzbekistan  
named after Mirzo Ulugbek*

*The faculty of Psychology, department of Foreign languages  
Phylology and foreign languages*

**Annotation:** Primary and secondary predication are fundamental concepts in the study of syntax and sentence structure. Primary predication refers to the core, obligatory relationship within a clause, typically between a subject and a verb. Secondary predication, on the other hand, involves an additional, often optional, descriptive layer that modifies or provides information about the subject, object, or another aspect of the sentence. This article examines the distinctions and types of primary and secondary predication, providing examples and discussing their syntactic and semantic roles. By understanding these forms of predication, linguists can gain insights into sentence structure, meaning, and cross-linguistic variation.

**Key words:** Primary predication, secondary predication, depictive secondary predication, resultative second predication

### INTRODUCTION

Predication is a fundamental concept in linguistic theory, encompassing the ways in which information is structured around subjects and predicates to form meaningful propositions. In both syntax and semantics, understanding the distinctions between types of predication is essential for analyzing sentence structure and meaning. Two principal forms of predication have been identified in linguistic literature: primary predication and secondary predication. These categories not only serve distinct syntactic functions but also contribute to the formation of complex meanings within a sentence. Primary predication forms the backbone of a sentence, establishing the main relationship between a subject and its primary verb. This type of predication is central to conveying the core meaning of a sentence, typically linking a subject to a state or action, as seen in simple declarative structures. In contrast, secondary predication introduces additional descriptive information about a subject or an object without forming the sentence's main proposition. Secondary predication often surfaces through structures like participial phrases, adjective phrases, or non-finite clauses, adding depth and nuance to the core message. This paper aims to provide a detailed analysis of

primary and secondary predication, examining their syntactic structures, semantic roles, and functions within various linguistic contexts. By exploring both types of predication across multiple languages, we aim to shed light on the universal and language-specific aspects of predicative structures, contributing to a deeper understanding of how human languages encode complex relationships within a single clause.

### MATERIALS AND METHOD

Predicative word combinations are distinguished on the basis of secondary predication. Like sentences, predicative word-groups are binary in their structure but actually differ essentially in their organization. The sentence is an independent communicative unit based on primary predication while the predicative word-group is a dependent syntactic unit that makes up a part of the sentence. The predicative word-group consists of a nominal element (noun, pronoun) and a non-finite form of the verb: N + V non-fin. There are Gerundial, Infinitive and Participial word-groups (complexes) in the English language: his reading, for me to know, the boy running, etc.). Primary predication is a foundational concept in syntax and semantics, describing the core relationship in a sentence between a subject and a predicate (typically a verb) that provides essential information about the subject. In any sentence, primary predication is necessary to convey a complete thought, as it forms the main propositional content of the clause. This relationship, often referred to as the subject-predicate relationship, is the basis of a sentence's meaning and structure. Key Characteristics of Primary Predication:

- a. **Obligatory Structure:** Primary predication is essential for a sentence to be complete. Without it, a clause lacks meaning. For example, in English, sentences must have a subject and a verb to form a coherent statement, as seen in "The cat sleeps."
- b. **Core Proposition:** Primary predication expresses the main proposition or idea in a sentence. The verb (or predicate) describes an action, state, or quality that is attributed to the subject. This relationship is usually the focus of the sentence's meaning and determines the essential content conveyed to the listener or reader.
- c. **Subject and Predicate Relationship:** Primary predication involves a direct syntactic relationship between a subject (the entity the sentence is about) and a predicate (what is being said about the subject). In the sentence "The bird sings," the bird is the subject, and sings is the predicate, telling us something about the bird.
- d. **Determines Agreement:** In many languages, the subject and predicate must agree in number and sometimes gender, affecting how the sentence is structured. For example, in English, "The dog runs" (singular) and "The dogs run" (plural) both follow subject-verb agreement rules.

e. Central to Syntax: Primary predication organizes the clause and establishes syntactic relationships between words. It determines dependencies such as subject-verb agreement, word order, and often the presence of other grammatical elements like objects, complements, or modifiers. Examples:

1. The sun rises. This is a simple primary predication structure where "the sun" (subject) is related to "rises" (predicate), describing an action associated with the subject.

2. She reads a book. Here, "she" (subject) and "reads" (predicate) form the primary predication, while "a book" serves as the object of the action. The primary predication structure remains the main clause or proposition.

3. The flowers smell nice. In this example, "the flowers" (subject) are described by the predicate "smell nice," which conveys a state associated with the subject.

There are different structural forms of primary predication, depending on the type of verb and complements used:

a. Intransitive Predication involves a subject and an intransitive verb that does not take a direct object. For example, She sleeps. Here, the predicate sleeps does not require an object.

b. Transitive type of primary predication includes a subject, a transitive verb, and a direct object. For example, The child reads a book. In this sentence, reads (the predicate) directly affects the object, a book.

c. Copular or Linking Predication: Copular verbs (such as is, seems, becomes) link the subject to a subject complement, often describing a state or quality. For example, She is happy. Here, is serves as a copular verb connecting the subject she to the complement happy.

d. In ditransitive structures, the predicate (verb) takes both a direct and an indirect object. For example, She gave him a book. In this sentence, gave (predicate) takes him (indirect object) and a book (direct object).

e. Complex Predication with Complements: Some verbs require additional complements to complete the predication, such as "consider" or "make" in They consider him smart or They made him captain.

Primary predication is essential because it establishes the primary syntactic and semantic frame of a clause. Determines the basic structure of a sentence, including the relationships among elements. Sets up the core meaning of a clause, defining what the sentence is "about" at a fundamental level. Influences interpretation by setting up thematic roles (e.g., agent, patient) and relationships among sentence elements. The structure of primary predication can vary across languages. For instance: Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) languages like English use a particular word order. Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) languages like Japanese follow a different order, where the object precedes the

verb. Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) languages, such as Classical Arabic, have yet another ordering. Each language also handles agreement, verb morphology, and structural requirements differently, influencing how primary predication appears on the surface.

Secondary predication provides an additional descriptive or modifying element to a clause but does not contribute to the primary proposition. This form of predication is often used to give extra information about the subject, object, or action of the sentence. Secondary predication can be optional and is typically more flexible in structure and meaning. There are two main types of secondary predication: Depictive secondary predication provides additional information about the subject or object, describing its state during the action. Depictive secondary predication is often conveyed by adjectives or adjectival phrases, and it frequently involves a close semantic relationship with the primary predication. This type of predication is usually non-restrictive and can often be omitted without altering the core meaning of the sentence. Examples of Depictive Secondary Predication:

1. She ate the pizza cold. Here, cold describes the state of the pizza during the action of eating.

2. He entered the room tired. In this example, tired describes the state of he while performing the action entered.

Resultative secondary predication provides information about the result or outcome of the action performed by the subject on the object. It indicates a change of state or a resultant condition. Resultative secondary predication often involves a causative interpretation, where the subject causes a change in the state of the object. Examples of Resultative Secondary Predication:

1. She painted the wall blue. Here, blue indicates the resulting state of the wall after the action of painting.

2. He hammered the metal flat. In this sentence, flat describes the resulting condition of the metal after the action hammered.

The main difference lies in the temporal aspect and the relationship to the verb. Depictive predication describes the state concurrent with the action, while resultative predication describes the end state resulting from the action. Additionally, depictives tend to modify the subject or object in a descriptive sense, whereas resultatives focus on the change caused by the verb. Both primary and secondary predications are crucial for understanding sentence structure and meaning. Primary predication is responsible for establishing the core argument structure and syntactic dependencies. Secondary predication, while optional, provides further insight into aspectual and thematic roles. For instance, secondary predicates can convey information about time, manner, condition, and causation, thus enriching the semantics of the clause. The structure and

usage of secondary predication can vary significantly across languages. For example, some languages, such as English, allow flexible secondary predication structures with both depictive and resultative forms. Other languages may restrict secondary predication to specific constructions or lack certain types of secondary predication altogether. The study of secondary predication across languages offers insights into universal grammatical principles and language-specific syntactic patterns.

### CONCLUSION

In summary, primary and secondary predication are fundamental concepts in syntax and semantics, representing different layers of meaning within a clause. Primary predication establishes the essential subject-predicate relationship, while secondary predication adds additional descriptive or resultative information. Understanding the distinctions and types of predication enables a deeper analysis of sentence structure and enriches our comprehension of linguistic variation. Further research into cross-linguistic differences in predication could illuminate the underlying principles that govern sentence structure across languages.

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