Shared Encoding of Nominal and Adjectival Predicates

It was investigated whether the same copula could be applied equally to nominal and adjectival predicates. Ashkun, as in (1), is an example of a language in which nominal and adjectival predicates normally are encoded in the same way, i.e. with an inflected copula verb.

1. Ashkun [ask] (Nuristani)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | aːjaː | jak | kitaːb | tuwə | **səj** |
|  | q | this | book | 2sg.gen | be.prs.3sg |
|  | ‘Is this book yours?’ (ASK-Dem-WS:004a) | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| b. | paːj | amə | mələ | məjstaːk | **səj** |
|  | that | house | very | good | be.prs.3sg |
|  | ‘That house is very beautiful.’ (ASK-Dem-WS:006a) | | | | |

Purik, on the other hand, is an example of the negative value of this feature. As can be seen in (2), two different copulas are used. For the nominal predication, an equative copula *in* is used, whereas for the adjectival predication an existential copula *duk* is used.

1. Purik [prx] (Sino-Tibetan)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | di | mju | ɬiŋspa | **in** |
|  | this | man | hunter | eq |
|  | ‘This man is a hunter.’ (PRX-Val-MM:070) | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| b. | a | naŋ-po | rdemwik | **duk** |
|  | that | house-def | beautiful | ex |
|  | ‘That house is very beautiful.’ (PRX-Dem-MH:006a) | | | |

This feature is present in the majority of the sample. It is absent in the sample’s Sino-Tibetan languages.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 49 | 83 |
| Absent | 6 | 10 |
| Indeterminate | 4 | 7 |