5. Predicate nominal and predicate adjective constructions

Both predicate nominal and predicate adjective clauses in English employ the following template:

(53)  NP COP PRED

In this formula, "NP" refers to the subject noun phrase, i.e., the item that a property or identity is being predicated of, "COP" refers to the irregular copular verb be 'ser'/'estar', and "PRED" refers to the main predicating noun or adjective (see section 3 for distinguishing features of nouns and adjectives).

(54)  That man is a teacher.  'Ese hombre es maestro.'

DEMO2 hombre ser:3SG:NOPAS INDEF maestro

(55)  Lion-s are mammal-s  'Los leones son mamíferos.'

león-PL ser:PL:NOPAS mamífero-PL

There is no distinction in standard English between permanent conditions (examples above) and temporary states (usually expressed by predicate adjectives):

(56)  That girl is sick.  'Esa muchacha está enferma.'

DEMO2 muchacha ser:3SG:NOPAS enfermo

As is often the case with copular verbs in other languages, the copula in English is very irregular. The following table gives the various forms of this verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/number</th>
<th>Non-past tense</th>
<th>Past tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another expected property of this copular verb, is that it functions as an auxiliary in certain aspectual categories (see section 8). In the non-past tense, it also often contracts in oral speech. For example:

(57)  a. I'm tired.  b. You're silly.

I-am tire-ed  you-are  silly

1SG-ser:1SG:NOPAS cansado-PPART  2SG-ser:2SG:NOPAS gracioso

'Estoy cansado/a.'  'Tú eres gracioso/a.'
Payne: a brief grammatical sketch of English

c. She's  reasonably  happy.
she-is  reason-able-ly  happy
3SG:F-ser:3SG:NOPAS razón-POT-ADV feliz
'Ella está bastante feliz.'

d. They're  defense attorneys.
they-are  defense attorney-s
3PL-ser:3PL:NOPAS defensa abogado-PL
'Ellos son abogados para la defensa.'

This contraction does not occur in the past tense.