Adjectival Sentences

Most of the sentences with adjectival predicate, adjectival sentences for short have the pattern:¹

(secondary) adjectival predicate + subject.

The adjectival predicate is MS regardless the number and gender of the subject. The predicates are tenseless and usually the context gives a good clue whether it is past, present or future.

Pronominal subjects are dependent pronouns and they are restricted to second and third persons. Examples:

\[
\text{nfr st} \quad \text{“It was good.” [Pr. II, 6] (pronominal subject);}
\]

\[
\text{wd3 sndw} \quad \text{“The respectful (man) is prosperous” [Pr. I, 1];}
\]

\[
\text{spd dsw} \quad \text{“The knives are sharp” [Pr. I, 12];}
\]

\[
\text{nfr st r ht nbt} \quad \text{“It is better than anything.” The preposition r is used to express comparison, lit. “It is good with respect to everything.”}
\]

\[
\text{mik3 ib.sn r m3w} \quad \text{“Their hearts were braver than the lions” [ShS. 29-30], lit. “…brave with respect to…”}
\]

\[
\text{dsr sn} \quad \text{“they will be red” (like a firebrand, king Sety I’s future threat) [Kanais C, 12];}
\]

\[
\text{3w ib.f} \quad \text{“his heart was happy,” lit. “long” [Kamose Stela 2, 35];}
\]

\[
\text{3h 3dwt n mniw} \quad \text{“Pasture is profitable to the herdsman” [Kanais B, 8];}
\]

\[
\text{mnh zp.i} \quad \text{“My situation is beneficent” [Kamose Stela 2, 10];}
\]

\[
\text{wr mnw.k r nswt nb hpr} \quad \text{“Your monuments surpass those of all kings of the past,” lit. “Your monuments are great with respect to all the kings who evolved” [Urk. IV, 618, 15]. Here hpr is a participle, lit. “who happened/evolved” of the verb hpr “happen, evolve.”}
\]

¹ Nisbe adjectival predicates occur only in special constructions to be discussed separately.
nfr irr ḫr r n nfr “Good is (he) who acts on the word of god” [Kanais B, 13].

Here, *irr* is an (imperfective active) participle “who acts” of the verb *iri* “do, make, act.”

Note that *irr* is an exceptional biliteral in that it does not have phonetic complement, so that *ir* is spelled as *irr* and not *ir*.

The next two passages are from the Prophecies of Neferti:

\[\text{“The land is scarce, (but) its controllers are many…its taxes are great” [Neferti 50]. The sage Neferti describes adverse times. Note the contrasting adjectival predicates } \text{“few, scarce,” } \text{“many” and } \text{“great.” The subjects are } tī \text{ “land,” } hrpw.f \text{ “its controllers/administrators,” and } bkw.f \text{ “its taxes, revenues.”}\]

\[\text{“The barley is little, (but) the grain measure is large” Neferti 50-51]. Neferti now turns to the failing crops. This passage parallels the previous. Note again the contrastive pair of adjectival predicates } ktt \text{ “small, low,” and } wr \text{ “great, large.” The subjects are } iti \text{ “barley, grain,” and } ipt \text{ “measure of grain” (oipe = 4 heqat = 19.2 liter).}\]

A more complex example:

\[\text{“The harsh one is gentle to him with respect to his mother” depending on whether or not the preposition “to” is employed (and depending on whose mother is being referred to): “the harsh is kinder to him than (to) his mother.”}\]

Exclamatory or emphatic adjectival sentences use the masculine dual form of the adjectival predicate and they are usually translated as: How…!
mntwi tw m st.k nt nhḥ “How firm are you in the seat of eternity!” [Nebankh Stela 3];

ndmwi imšt.k “How sweet is your grace!” [Urk. VI, 612, 4];

špss dmi hr(i) ḫwt-ntr “How noble is a town that has a temple!” lit. “…that is under a temple” [Kanais B, 9].

Possession

Adjectival sentences of possession use the MS nisbe n(i) of the genitival adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n(i) A B</th>
<th>A dependent pronoun</th>
<th>“A belongs to B”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A independent pronoun</td>
<td>“B belongs to A”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A and B nouns (in personal names)</td>
<td>“A belongs to B”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If A is a pronoun, the combination n(i) A is usually contracted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n(i) A</th>
<th>transliteration</th>
<th>contraction</th>
<th>transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(i) wi</td>
<td>น(ī) วิ</td>
<td>nw(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(i) sw</td>
<td>น(ī) สว</td>
<td>nsw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(i) si</td>
<td>น(ī) สิ</td>
<td>ns(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(i) ink</td>
<td>น(ī) อินก</td>
<td>nnk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n(i) ntk</td>
<td>น(ī) อินทก</td>
<td>ntk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

n(i) wi rī “I belong to Re” [Lesestücke 47, 11];
nnk sw “He is mine” lit. “He belongs to me;”
"gold belongs to you" [Urk. IV, 96, 6];

"It was 30 cubits long" lit. "he belonged 30 cubits"² [ShS. 62-63]

(health of a snake) with the cardinal number sign  for 10;

“He belongs to Montu” (personal name with honorific transposition of the god’s name);

"She belongs to me" (personal name);

“It (jurisdiction, feminine) belongs to the steward (lit. overseer of the house) [Peas. B I, 16] (with the prepositional nisbe construction imi-r).

² 1 cubit = 20.66 inches.