Nominal Sentences

A B Nominal Sentences

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ink šw h5w “I am free of excess” [ShS. 12-13]. The noun phrase šw h5w is a nfr ḥr construction.

ink ʾšk3 “I am accurate/straight” [Khetty Stela 1, 6-7], and the sentence continues as šw m snkt “devoid of darkness/obscurity” with šwi adjective-verb (+ m “devoid of”), not a nfr-ḥr construction.

ink ḫd-ḥr “I am cheerful” lit. “bright of face” [Khetty Stela I, 8];

ink ḥtm(t)-nfr “I am a royal seal bearer/treasurer” [Khetty Stela 2, 2];

ink ḥmww ʾikr “I am an excellent craftsman” [Irtysen Stela 8];

ink nfr ib “I am kind/considerate” lit. “smooth of heart” [Kanais B, 4];

nfrti rn.f “his name is Neferti” [Neferti 9-10].

b3b3 z3 rint rn.f “Baba, son of Ra-Inet, was his name,”

¹ May include kinship.
² "name."
[Urk. IV, ..] 4-5. Note the use of the Egyptian ditto sign `zp 2 in the name bḥḥ.  

rn n mwt.s twt “The name of her mother is Tuia;”

ink nswt ddw.(i) irrw “I am king, what I say is what is done”

[Semna Stela 2, 5] with ddw the imperfective relative form of the verb dḥ “say, speak,” and irrw the imperfective passive participle of the verb ir “do, make.”

ntsn dḥdḥt “they are the judges/assessors” [Kanais C, 12];

pr.f pr iti.f “His house is his father’s house.”

A pw Nominal Sentences

An A pw nominal sentence consists of a noun or noun phrase A, and the neutral demonstrative pronoun pw. Depending on the context it is translated as “he/she/it/this/that is A” or “they/these/those are A.”

Examples:

zḥ.i pw “He is my son” [Semna Stela 2, 18];

ḥfḥw pw “It was a snake” [ShS. 61-62];

ṣps pw “He is a nobleman” [Neferti 10];

ssf pw “It is soothing” [Pr. I, 10] with A being the infinitive (used as a noun) of the verb ssf “soothe;”

nswt pw “He is a king” [Neferti 57];

ḥn pw “It is an attack” [Kamose 2, 9-10].

The pronoun pw stands as close to the front of the sentence as possible, and it is placed “inside” a noun phrase with separable parts such as an indirect genitive or a noun + adjective combination.

Examples:

wḥw pw n ḡḥ-d wr “It was the wave of the sea” [ShS. 58-59].

3 Reconstructed.
More complex examples:

z3 hmt pw n t3-st ms pw n hn-nhn

“He is the son of a woman of Ta-Seti, a child of (the interior of) Nekhen” [Neferti 58-59]. This sentence justifies Amenemhet I’s legitimacy to the Egyptian throne. His mother’s land t3-st is the southernmost part of Upper Egypt (which usually includes Nubia). Royal birth is asserted by hn-nhn in which the first part of the direct genitive usually means “home, interior,” and also “(royal) residence,” and the second part is the name of the 2nd nome of Upper Egypt, “Nekhen,” one of the ancient birthplaces of royalties in Egypt.

rh-hwt pw n i3bt n(i)-sw b3stt m wbn.s ms pw n hkh3(t)-5d “A wise man of the East, he belongs to Bastet-in-her-Rising, born of (the nome of) the flourishing scepter” [Neferti 17].

pw nominal sentences the A’s are rh-hwt n i3bt “wise man of the East” (in which i3bt “East” appears in early spelling), and ms pw n hkh3(t)-5d “born in the nome of the undamaged/prosperous/flourishing scepter.” In the latter, ms itself is a perfective passive participle, and the location is the Lower Egyptian 13th nome with main city iwnw “Iunu,” the Greek Heliopolis and the Biblical On. Apart from the eroded part the sign indicates “nome.” The middle adjectival sentence of possession has typical structure. The location is b3stt m wbn.s, lit. “Bastet-in-her-Rising/Glory.”

Remark. An interesting example can be quoted from the Coffin Texts:6

ink miw pw ♂3 n(i) m iwnw dd r♂ pw r z3.f hrw miw sw m n3 n bw-nfr irr.f hpr rn.f pw n miw “‘I am this great cat who is in Heliopolis.’ This is what Re says to his son, Horus. He is cat-like is this goodness which he does. This is how his name of ‘cat’ comes about.” The first sentence is A B nominal with a direct relative clause modifying the subject B miw pw ♂3 marked by nti. The second sentence is A pw nominal. The predicate A of pw is the noun phrase dd r♂, lit. “that which (Re) says” in which dd is a (nominal) relative form. The principal

4 Tobin’s translation.
6 [CT, IV, 412 (162-5a)].
(and debated) issue is the interpretation of the phrase *miw sw* in the third sentence. According to Loprieno⁷ and others, it cannot be nominal because of the following dependent pronoun *sw*. (A nominal pattern should be *miw pw…*) Rejecting nominal status, the only other possibility is that this is an adjectival sentence with *miw* being an *adjective*, a nisbe *miw(i)* “cat-like.” Sami Ujas⁸ challenges this quoting other examples and arguing that this is a genuine (although rare) construction “to bridge the semantic and morpho-syntactic ‘gap’ between nominal and adjectival sentences.” Note that *irr.f* is an imperfective relative form (modifying *bw-nfr*), lit. “that which he does.” Finally, the fourth sentence is a *pw* nominal with predicate the relative form *hpr*, lit. “how (lit. that which) comes about” (used nominally) and subject *rn.f n miw*.

**A pw B Nominal Sentences**

In an *A pw B* nominal sentence both *A* and *B* are nouns or noun phrases. Depending on the context, it can be translated as “A is B” or “B is A.”

Examples:

- mrw.f pw bw-nb “Everyone is his servant” [Pr. I, 12].
- hww pw 3f.c “Voracity is base” [Pr. I, 4] with 3f.c “voracity, gluttony.”
- hz pw hnt “The greedy is miserable” [Pr. I, 6-7]. Here *hnt* is an active participle “(one) who is greedy” derived from the adjective-verb *hnt* “greedy.” Actually, the *B* part of the sentence continues as *hnt n ht.f* “greedy for his belly.”
- ntn pw mi ntrw “you are like gods” [Kanais C, 2].
- swrd pw gd n.k “Talking to you is tiring” [ShS. 20-21]. The verb forms of *swrd* and *gd* are both infinitives used as nouns.

A more complex example:

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⁷ Loprieno, loc. cit.
He is a commoner, valiant of arm, a scribe, excellent of fingers" [Neferti 10]. Two A pw B nominal sentences and two nfr-hr constructions.

"The broken hearted are miserable" [Semna Stela 2, 13]. The phrase sDw ibw is a nfr hr construction, where sDw “broken” itself is a perfective passive participle derived from the verb sD/sD “break.”

As in the case of A pw nominal sentences, the neutral demonstrative pronoun pw stands as close to the beginning of the sentence as possible.

At pw ktt dAr-ib [Pr. I, 4]. The A part is At ktt in which the feminine noun At means “moment, instant” and the matching feminine adjective ktt means “small, a trifle, brief.” B is yet another noun phrase dAr-ib “self-denial, restraint, self-control” derived from the verb dAr “control temper” and ib “heart, mind.”

The meaning of this sentence is that it takes only a brief moment to control one’s desires.

More complex examples:

"Aggression is bravery, retreat is cowardice” [Semna Stela 2, 10]. This is a pair of A pw B nominal sentences. The A parts are knt “bravery, valor” derived from the adjective-verb kni “brave,” and hzt “cowardice” derived from the adjective-verb hzi “wretched, vile, miserable” The B parts are 3d, an abstract noun “aggression” derived from the adjective-verb 3d “aggressive, angry, savage,” and hmt “flee, retire”.

A more advanced example:

w3d pw sri pn nfr š3w nfr hdv [Intef 2] with w3d “fortunate, happy,” š3w “fate, destiny,” hdv (as a noun) “destruction, death, injury,” the
latter is derived from the verb *hdt* “injure, be injured/destroyed, fail.” This passage has been interpreted in different ways. Federn\(^9\) splits the passage into three parts:

\[
w3d\ pw\ sri\ pn\ |\ nfr\ s5w\ |\ nfr\ hdy;\]

interprets the first as an A pw B nominal sentence “B is A” and the last two as adjectival sentences with the same predicate *nfr*:

“A happy one is this prince; good is the destiny; good is the injury.”

Lichtheim\(^10\) splits the passage into two parts

\[
 w3d\ pw\ sri\ pn\ nfr\ |\ s3w\ nfr\ hdy;\]

interprets the first *nfr* as modifying *sri pn* and the second as an AB nominal sentence: He is happy, this good prince! Death is a kindly fate.” But, as we saw above, AB nominal sentence constructions with both A and B nouns or noun phrases are restricted.

Wilson\(^11\) agrees with Lichtheim in the division, but interprets the second part as a sentence with verbal predicate, the prospective subjunctive of the (intransitive) verb *hdt*:\(^12\)

“Prosperous is he, this good prince

Even though good fortune may suffer harm.”

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9 JNES 5(1946) p. 259.
11 ANET, p. 467.
12 The prospective (Allen’s subjunctive) of this verb can receive an *y* ending.