

Specificational copular constructions as inverse clauses: evidence from Maragoli

Among scholars, there seems to be a broad consensus that at least two types of copular clauses need to be distinguished, based on the referentiality of the post copular phrase (Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979) among many others). Maragoli (or Logoori) is a Bantu language mainly spoken in Kenya which provides direct morphosyntactic evidence for a two- way split of copular constructions.

Maragoli shows copular alternation: it has two linkers/copulas: one defective copula (glossed as cop1) which has an invariant form *ni*, regardless of noun class, gender and number of the subject of predication. The other copula *kuva* (glossed as cop2) agrees with the subject in gender, number and noun class, otherwise inflect or TAM like other verbal forms in Maragoli. Whereas both copulas can be used in predicative copular constructions (1), only cop1 can be used in so-called specificational (2b) and identificational (3) copular clauses.

(1) a. *ive ni/ u-ve { mu-sasa/ mo-tambe/ mu-rufo }*

you cop1 2sg-cop2 1-man 1-tall 1-tired

`You are a man / tall / tired '

b. *Johana ni/ a-ve { mu-sasa/ mo-tambe/ mu-rufo }*

John cop1 3sg-cop2 1-man 1-tall 1-tired

`John is a man / tall/ tired'

(2) a. *Obama ni/ a-ve mw-ami w-a vumerica*

Obama cop1/ 3sg-cop2 1-king 1-of America

`Obama is the/a king of America'

b. *Mw-ami w-a vumeRica ni/ *a-ve Obama*

1-king 1-of America cop1/ 3sg-cop2 Obama

`The king of America is Obama'

(3) a. *ora ni/ *a-ve mu-sasa mw-anje*

1.that cop1/ 3sg-cop2 1-man 1-my

`That is my husband'

b. *ora ni/ *a-ve Johana*

1.that cop1/ 3sg-cop2 John

`That is John'

I argue that two possible syntactic derivational configurations are available for predicative constructions in Maragoli: either (i) the small clause subject can raise to subject position (Spec, TP)

and enter in a head-Spec agreement relation with cop2+T, or (ii) the subject can be left dislocated in a focus position, in which case the linker 'ne' is used. On the other hand, only this latter option is available for predicate raising in Maragoli: in specificational and identificational clauses, the predicative phrase cannot raise to subject position i.e. they must be dislocated and the linker 'ni' provide a landing site for inversion.

This correlates with facts noticed by Moro (1997) about French: 'ce' intervenes obligatorily only in what he called inverse copular constructions:

(4) La cause de la révolte *(c)'est moi

'The cause of the riot is me'

Moro 1997:71

Assuming that 'ce' occupies the canonical subject position, the preverbal DP must occupy some higher position. French and Maragoli copular clauses differ in various ways, but the differences can be derived from independent facts about the grammar of these languages such as (i) in Maragoli pro can be licensed while in French it cannot and (ii) contrary to French, in Maragoli copula omission is marginal but attested.

I analyze Maragoli predicative constructions with cop2, kuva following Bowers (2003), Svenonius (1994), Adger and Ramchand (2003), Mikkelsen (2005): I assume that a functional head v_b (which is spelled out as the copula) c-selects a predicational phrase, PredP in which the head Pred takes two arguments: a predicative one (in complement position) and a referential one (in Spec, PredP). Finally, exactly as in French, the external argument raises to subject position.

Maragoli [TP Johana [T' ave [V_bP <kuva> [PredP <Johana> [Pred' Pred mwami]]]]]]

French [TP Jean [T' est [V_bP <etre> [PredP <Jean> [Pred' Pred roi]]]]]]

predicational clauses in which 'ne' is employed in Maragoli parallel French predicational copular constructions in which the preverbal DP is left-dislocated. Unlike French, the projection v_b is missing (T selects for PredP directly as it has been argued for languages that allow null copula in predicative constructions) and pro is licensed in Spec TP.

Maragoli [CP Johana [C' ni [TP pro [T' T [PredP <Johana> mwami]]]]]]

French [CP Jean [C' [TP c' [T' est [V_bP <etre> [PredP <Jean> roi]]]]]]]

Finally, in inverse copular constructions, the predicate DP has to be dislocated in the left periphery.

Maragoli [CP Mwami [C' ni [TP pro [T' T [PredP Johana <mwami>]]]]]]

French [CP Le roi [C' [TP c' [T' est [V_bP <etre> [PredP Jean <roi>]]]]]]]

Also data from question formation and cleft constructions in Maragoli are discussed.

References

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