Syntactic Evidence for a Tensed, Null Equative Copula in Okanagan
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Summary and Background. This paper presents syntactic evidence for a null equative copula in T(ense) position for Okanagan (Interior Salish, British Columbia). There are two types of non-verbal predication in Okanagan (Lyon, 2013), *predications* consisting of a DP argument and an intransitive lexical predicate (2), and *DP-DP Structures* consisting of two DPs and no obvious predicate (1) (Mattina, 1996, 30). Though there is no overt copula for either predications or DP-DP structures, there is converging semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic evidence evidence for a null, equative copula (Heycock and Kroch, 1999) in DP-DP structures: While the NPs in (2) are sentential predicates, there is no obvious sentential predicate for the sentences in (1), assuming that Okanagan, similar to other Salish languages, lacks DP predicates (Matthewson, 1998). DP-DP structures (1) also display a word order restriction: A DP headed by the determiner *i?* cannot precede a directly referential DP (3, cf. 1), implying that DPs cannot occur in syntactic positions reserved for predicates, and thus that there is a structural distinction between (1) and (2). Lyon (2013) claims that DP-DP structures are semantically equative.

(1) a. [Spike $_{DP}$] [i? ylmíx^{w}əm $_{DP}$].
Spike   DET chief
Spike is the chief.

b. *[i? ylmíx^{w}əm $_{DP}$] [Spike $_{DP}$].

(2) a. [s-yx^{w}áp-məx $_{NP}$]   i? pəptwínax^w.
NOM-shuswap-person DET old woman
The old woman is Shuswap.

b. i? pəptwínax^w [s-yx^{w}áp-məx $_{NP}$]

Data and Analysis: Okanagan DP-DP structures (1) share the same word order restriction with future *mi* predications (3). I first provide evidence that *mi* is in T(ense) position (4a). I then suggest that the null equative copula undergoes head raising from a base equative clause ('IdP') to T (4b), and that an EPP feature on T enforces subject DP raising in both cases (4a,b).

(3) a. John mi səx^w-m̓a?-m̓áya?-m.
John FUT OCC-RED-teach-MID
John is going to be a teacher.

b. *səx^w-m̓a?-m̓áya?-m mi John.

(4) a. [[Subject $_{DPi}$] [mi $_T$] [t_i [Predicate $_{XP}$] $_{PredP}$] $_{TP}$]

b. [[Subject $_{DPi}$] [= $_{Tj}$] [t_i t_j [Complement $_{DP}$] $_{IdP}$] $_{TP}$]

Evidence for positing this structural parallel comes, first, from data showing that *mi* is never used in DP-DP structures. Such complementary distribution follows from an analysis whereby the null equative copula must raise to T (4b), but is otherwise blocked if *mi* is present (4a). Second, both are incompatible with contexts involving number agreement (5), and negation (6, *mi* data not shown).

(5) ixí?-əlx   (*i?/*mi)   səx^{w}píx̌əm-əlx.
DEM-3PL (*DET/*FUT) hunter-3PL

They're hunters./*They will be/are the hunters.

(6) (*lut) ixí? i? x̌yáɬnəx̌^{w}.
(*NEG) DEM DET sun

That's (*not) the sun.

I claim that the subjects in DP-DP structures and the *mi* predication variants of (5) are higher than the subject in the grammatical bare predication, and that plural agreement is blocked by locality. I also suggest that both DP-DP structures and *mi* predications are aspectually impoverished, and that semantically, negation requires an aspectually provided situation argument (Davis, 2001), which neither sentence type can provide: Ungrammatical negative future *mi* predications, for example, are routinely corrected instead to constructions involving verbal prospective aspect prefix *ks-*. Positing a structural parallel between DP-DP structures and future *mi* predications helps to explain similar behaviour with respect to a range of otherwise unconnected syntactic phenomena.

References

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