

## Inclined to Agree: from Pronominal Copula to Predicative Agreement

Tamisha L. Tan (Harvard University, Nanyang Technological University)

The diachronic pathway involving the grammaticalisation of a demonstrative or 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject pronoun into a copula has been well-established cross-linguistically (Li & Thompson 1977, Katz 1996, Stassen 1997), providing a rich empirical arena for investigations into formal approaches to syntactic reanalysis (Edwards 2006, Lohndal 2009, van Gelderen 2011, 2015). This research project concerns the next step in this development, focusing on the circumstances in which pronominal copulas grammaticalise into predicative agreement. This talk will present typologically diverse data illustrating the full developmental cline involved in this change, while investigating several factors of variation including 1) the (re-)development of full  $\phi$ -feature agreement; 2) the linearisation of this copular/agreeing element in relation to the predicate; 3) the case marking on the copular/agreeing element, and their implications for linguistic theory.

A notable fact about many pronominal copulas derived from personal pronouns is that they routinely fail to show person agreement (despite agreeing for number and gender in certain languages):

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|-----|----|--|----|---|
| (1) | a. | At <b>hi</b> ha-mora.<br>2FSG 3FSG the-teacher.F.SG<br>'You (FSG.) are the teacher.' | b. | án <b>en</b> àdàktâl<br>1SG 3SG 1SG.doctor.HAB<br>'I am the doctor' |
|     |    | [Hebrew; Sichel 1997, p. 301]  |    | [Lango; Noonan 1992, p. 146]  |

This type of partial or default agreement closely parallels the distribution of non-verbal predicative morphology cross-linguistically, as identified by Stassen's (2003:38) Agreement Universal: a language which employs agreement in predicative contexts will show only number and gender agreement on adjectival predicates and no agreement at all on nominal predicates. However, just as recent work has argued for substantive counterexamples to this generalisation (Abramovitz 2021), this talk highlights data from a number of lesser-studied languages in which a pronominal copula instead shows full  $\phi$ -agreement with pronominal subjects, giving rise to a form of 'pleonastic' pronoun doubling:

- |     |    |  |    |   |
|-----|----|--|----|---|
| (2) | a. | Oa rateo <b>oa</b><br>2SG king 2SG<br>'You (SG.) are king' | b. | ?intin ?ans <b>?intin</b><br>2FSG women 2FSG<br>'You (FPL.) are women.' |
|     |    | [Fordata; Drabbe 1926, p. 54]                              |    | [Tigre, Beaton & Paul 1954, p. 18]                                      |

I argue that the full agreement in (2) comes from the innovative grammaticalisation of these copulas into probes bearing [u- $\phi$ ] features, instantiating a later stage of development than the deficient copulas in (1) rather than a conservative retention of the earlier pronominal's inherent [i- $\phi$ ] features. This gives rise to the apparent 'loss-and-reacquisition' of person marking within the copula cycle itself. In particular, the availability of person agreement across both pronominal copulas and predicative agreement occurs when they instantiate Pred heads in a local enough relationship with the subject of predication, in recognition of Baker's (2008) Structural Condition on Person Agreement – deficient copulas as in (1) instead occur when the subject is in a Topic-Comment or dislocated position non-local to the copula.

Just as 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns are the first to become copulas, I will discuss languages which show that 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronominal copulas are likewise the first to become predicative agreement affixes, exemplifying phonological reduction and expanded distributions. That this phonological reduction also appears to trigger a shift in linearisation from pre- to post-predicate raises questions about the motivations behind headedness change, while languages in which the pronominal copula and predicative agreement marker derive from object pronouns present interesting implications for our theories of case assignment.

**Selected References** Abramovitz, R. 2021. Person and predication in Koryak. Baker, M. C. 2008. The syntax of agreement and concord. Edwards, M. 2006. Pronouns, agreement and focus in Egyptian Arabic. van Gelderen, E. 2011. The linguistic cycle: Language change and the language faculty. Katz, A. 1996. Cyclical grammaticalization and the cognitive link between pronoun and copula. Li, C. N. & S. A. Thompson. 1977. A mechanism for the development of copula morphemes. Lohndal, T. 2009. The Copula Cycle. Stassen, L. 2003. Intransitive Predication.