

A Cross-linguistic Comparison of Copular Predication: Some Basic Assumptions Revisited

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Abstract

This paper explores the syntax of copular predication within and across the varieties of Cape Verdean Creole bringing new insights about the morpho-syntactic properties of the copula with respect to functional and lexical categories. The behavior of the copula will be shown to reflect both superstratal, substratal and universal influences present in other languages. Furthermore, the study of copular predicates in which the copula is absent will reveal the specific underlying conditions in which such type of predicates occurs. A cursory typological study of semi-creoles such as AAVE and other non-creole languages will show that the same underlying conditions are present in a number of other world languages. Finally, a theoretical analysis will account for two types of copular predicates in Cape Verdean Creole: the first part highlights the distributional properties of the Cape Verdean copula within and across varieties. The second part illustrates copulaless predicates and the conditions under which they occur.

0. Introduction

The goal of this paper is three-fold. First, I focus on the distribution, morphology and overall nature of the Cape Verdean copula across the varieties of Cape Verdean Creole (henceforth, CVC) in both the Barlavento (Boa Vista, S. Nicolau, São Vicente, Santo Antão) and Sotavento (Brava, Fogo, Santiago, Maio) islands of Cape Verde.¹ This contrastive empirical

¹ This paper is based on data collected during field trips conducted from 1997 to 2003 on all nine islands of the Cape Verdean archipelago. Other data from other scholars such as Veiga (2002) and Cardoso (1989) will be used whenever relevant. This will eventually constitute a chapter from the book project I am currently writing which involves the comparison of all nine dialectal varieties of Cape Verdean Creole (hence, between the clusters of Sotavento and Barlavento and within each group).

analysis will highlight the different distributional and morphological properties of the copula across the two groups of islands and within each cluster. Second, I offer a theoretical analysis for the various copular behaviors documented by the corpus at hand. The third and last objective is to demonstrate that an accurate description of copular predication in CVC and other (semi)creoles such as AAVE or Gullah and non-creole languages such as Cantonese, Turkish, Michoacán Nahuatl, Russian and Hungarian among others must take into account a distinct set of factors. As will be shown in this paper, the following variables influence the morpho-syntactic properties of copular predication. The tense of the copular predicate, as well as the person feature of the subject and its nominal category (pronominal versus full noun), the kind of predicate the copula is linked to (nominal versus adjectival) and whether Negation is involved all contribute to different copular behaviors. The same set or subset of variables will be shown to affect copular behavior cross-linguistically. Ultimately, the point of this comparative analysis is to demonstrate that any precise description of the copula in a given language needs to take account of each of the variables presented here in order to draw an accurate picture of copular properties.

This paper is organized as follows: in the first section, I focus on the distribution of the copula across the varieties of CVC. This description will include constructions displaying the absence of copula and the conditions underlying it (Negation, adjectival predicates and passivization). In the second section, I will offer derivations of the various types of copular predicates, showing how they behave with respect to Tense, Negation and Voice. In the third and last section, I will draw cross-linguistic comparisons between the CVC copula and its counterpart in other languages.

1. Distribution of the copula

In this section, I discuss the position of the Cape Verdean copula across the varieties as it introduces nominal, adjectival and prepositional predicates in affirmative sentences.² I will then investigate the behavior of the copula with regard to Tense, Negation, pronominal selection in subject position. The last subsection will examine the cases where the copula is absent and the conditions underlying its absence.

While some of the facts presented in this paper have already been discussed in Baptista (1999, 2002), the comparative and corpus-based methodology used here brings to the fore empirical insights that have been previously overlooked and contradict previous generalizations and conclusions. As a result, this paper offers a much more comprehensive view of copular predication, not only in CVC but also cross-linguistically.

² I will ignore for the purpose of this paper its stage-level counterpart *sta*, as a comparison between the two copulas was already discussed in Baptista (1999, 2002).

1.1. Position of the copula with regard to predicates in affirmative sentences

In Cape Verdean Creole, nominal, adjectival and prepositional predicates may be introduced by the morpheme *e*, as illustrated in (1), (2) and (3) respectively:

- (1) a. *Un e mulher.* (Santiago)
 one is woman
 'One is a woman.'
- b. *Li e so rabulis.* (Maio)
 here is only noise
 'Here is only turmoil.'
- (2) a. *Ano e animadu, ano e rixu.* (Santiago)
 NonCL COP courageous NonCL COP strong
 'We are courageous, we are strong.'
- b. *Praia e prigu.* (Maio)
 Praia COP dangerous
 'Praia is dangerous.'
- (3) *Ke kusa e di seriu.* (Santiago)
 that thing COP of serious
 'That thing is to be taken seriously.'

Just as in its Portuguese lexifier, the CVC copula occupies the position between a subject NP (when present) and a predicate:

- (4) a. *Ela é aluna.* (nominal predicate) (Portuguese)
 she is student
 'She is a student.'
- b. *Meu irmão é alto.* (adjectival predicate)
 my brother is tall
 'My brother is tall.'
- c. *A capital é no Distrito Federal.* (prepositional predicate)
 the capital is in+the district federal
 'The capital is in the Federal District.'

The behavior of the copula in negative sentences is more complex and reveals a number of discrepancies with regard to their Portuguese counterparts. This is the topic of the next subsection.

1.2. Position of the copula with respect to Negation

In this section, it will be shown that the copula does not behave in the same fashion in the present tense and in the past tense.

1.2.1. Present tense copula and Negation

With respect to Negation, the copula appears in many varieties including my own (and does so obligatorily) in a pre-Neg position. This is in stark contrast to main verbs. Indeed, all verbs obligatorily follow Negation in CVC as illustrated by *baba* and *gosta* in (5) and (6).

- (5) a. *Kes djentis bedju ka ta baba skola.* (Santiago)
 those people old NEG ASP go+Past school
 ‘Those old people used not to go to school.’
 b. **Kes djentis bedju ta baba ka skola.*
 those people old ASP go+Past NEG school
- (6) a. *N ka gosta propi di odja gera.* (Maio)
 CL NEG like really of see war
 ‘I really don’t like to see people fighting.’
 b. **N gosta ka propi di odja gera.*
 CL like NEG really of see war

The morpheme *e*, however, is pre-Neg (across and within varieties, as will be shown below) and allows the negative morpheme to immediately precede nominal, adjectival or prepositional predicates, as in (7), (8) and (9) respectively:

- (7) *PAIGC e ka PAICV.* (RS)
 PAIGC COP NEG PAICV
 ‘The PAIGC is not the PAICV.’
- (8) a. *Praia e ka sabi.* (Maio)
 Praia COP NEG pleasant
 ‘Praia is not pleasant.’
 b. *I es tanbe e ka mufinu.* (Fogo)
 and they too COP NEG coward
 ‘And they too are no coward.’
 c. *Nos e ka diskurajadu.* (Santiago)
 NonCL COP NEG discouraged
 ‘We don’t lack courage.’
- (9) *Ke kusa e ka di seriu.* (Santiago)
 that thing COP NEG of serious
 ‘That thing is not to be taken seriously.’

Although *e* can be said to be the only verb that may be found in a pre-Neg position, a post-Neg position conforming to the syntactic distribution of regular verbs is also possible, as shown by the example in (10):

- (10) *N sabe ma es kusa ka e dretu* (Santiago)
 I know COMP this thing NEG COP good
 'I know that this thing is not good.' (Veiga, 2000: 157)

The same word order may obtain in S. Nicolau and in São Vicente (the São Vicente dialect may use the Negator *ne*); both islands belong to the Barlavento cluster:

- (11) *Ka e mi.* (S. Nicolau)
 NEG COP me
 'It's not me.' (Cardoso, 1989: 68)
- (12) a. *N sabê ke es koza n' ê drete.* (São Vicente)
 I know COMP this thing NEG COP good
 'I know that this thing is not good.' (Veiga, 2000: 157)
- b. *Mi n' é ken bo ti ta pensá.* (São Vicente)
 I NEG COP who you TMA TMA think
 'I am not who you are thinking of.' (Veiga, 2000: 161)
- c. *Bo n' é dode.* (São Vicente)
 NonCL NEG COP crazy
 'You are not crazy.' (Veiga, 2000: 165)

Interestingly, *ne*, the negator in (12), which is most likely inherited from the Portuguese Negator *não*, can only appear in a post-Neg position, following exactly the same Portuguese word order, as shown in (13).

- (13) a. *Meu irmão não é alto.* (Portuguese)
 my brother NEG is tall
 'My brother is not tall.'
- b. **Meu irmão é não alto.*
 My brother is NEG tall

(14) shows that contrary to negator *ka*, which can appear before or after the copula, CVC *ne* can only be post-Neg.

- (14) **Bo é ne dode.*
 NonCL COP NEG crazy

While the copula may appear in the present tense in pre-Neg or post-Neg position when *ka* is the negator, the next subsection shows that, in contrast to the negator, its distribution is more much restricted in past tense utterances.

1.2.2. Past tense copula and Negation

Unlike *e*, its past tense counterpart *era* always appears in post-Neg position, as illustrated by the examples in (15) and (16):

- (15) a. *Korenta ka era brinkadera.* (Fogo)
 forties NEG were fun
 ‘The forties were no fun.’
- b.* *Korenta era ka brinkadera.*
 Forties were NEG fun
- (16) a. *Mi’ N ka era di li* (Santiago)
 NonCL CL NEG was from here.
 ‘I was not from here.’
- b. **Mi’ N era ka di li.*
 NonCL CL was NEG from here.

Subject pronominal selection is yet another area where the copula does not behave like its lexical verb counterparts. This is the topic of the next section.

1.2.3. The copula and subject pronouns

In Baptista (1999) and (2002), I showed that Cape Verdean verbs may select pronominal clitics (17), nonclitics (18) or a combination of both in subject position illustrated in (19).

- (17) *N pode panha-l.* (Brava)
 CL can take-it
 ‘I can take it.’
- (18) a. *Ami fika si, mi sozinha.* (Santiago)
 NonCL stayed this way me alone
 ‘I stayed like this, all on my own.’
- b. *Bo sabê es koza drete.* (São Vicente)
 NonCL know this thing well
 ‘You know this thing well.’ (Veiga, 1996: 363)

- (19) a. *Ami'N ka sabe, N ka sabe ler.* (Fogo)
 NonCL+CLNEG know CL NEG know read
 'I don't know, I don't know how to read.'
- b. *Ami'N dizanima.* (Santiago)
 NonCL+CL lost hope
 'I lost all hope.'

E, however, may only select nonclitic pronominals, as illustrated in (20a), yielding otherwise ungrammaticality, as in (20b).

- (20) a. *Mi'N ka baba pamo mi e ma nobu.* (Brava)
 NonCL+CLNEG went because NonCL am more young
 'I didn't go because I am the youngest.'
- b. **N e mas nobu.*
 CL am more young

This is further evidence that *e* does not display regular verbal behavior. Furthermore, the evidence that *e* is of a different nature from its past counterpart *era* is provided by the position of the latter not only vis-à-vis negation, as seen in (15) and (16) above, but also in relation to pronominal selection – see (21a).

- (21) a. *Bu/bo ka era timozu.* (Sotavento)
 CL NonCL NEG was stubborn
 'You were not stubborn'
- b. *Bo ka era temozu.* (Barlavento)
 NonCL NEG was stubborn
 'You were stubborn'

E, on the other hand, occupies the same position as a clitic pronominal. This will be shown in the theoretical analysis presented in section 2. The clitic status of *e* is not surprising given that it is homophonous with the pronominal clitic *e* which stands for "it, she, he". The pronoun also occurs pre-Neg, as illustrated in (22):

- (22) a. *E ka mexe-m.* (Santiago)
 CL NEG touch-me
 'He didn't touch me.'
- b. *E ka ta pode djuda-m.* (Brava)
 CL NEG ASP can help-me
 'He cannot help me.'
- c. **Ka e ta pode djuda-m.*
 NEG CL ASP can help-me

As discussed in Baptista (1999), the unorthodox/“unverbal” behavior of *e* arises from the duality of the morpheme *e* in CVC which acts both as a pronoun in subject position and as a copula in a verbal position (see Degraff 1992 and Déprez 2003 for a similar analysis of Haitian *se*). This state of affairs may find some resolution by considering that the morpheme *e* combines nominal properties of its substrates and the verbal properties of its superstrate. More precisely, African languages such as Wolof may be responsible for the nominal properties of the morpheme with regard to Negation, Tense and pronominal selection. In such a language, a pronoun may appear in the place of a copula. Portuguese, on the other hand, may be responsible for the parallel use of *e* as a copula. It is quite reasonable to assume that the Cape Verdean morpheme *e* has evolved and undergone both substrate and superstrate influences, which accounts for its nominal and verbal properties and dual behavior.

Copulaless predicates are alien to Portuguese but common in CVC under certain conditions, a trait that may have been inherited from substrates such as Wolof. Consider the following Wolof sentences featuring copulaless structures.

- (23) *Liggéy -u-l tey, da-fa oppa.* (Wolof)
 work + NEG + he-VII³ today he-IV sick
 ‘He didn't work today, he is sick.’ (Njie, 1982: 143)
- (24) *doom -am laa.* (Wolof)
 child + his me-IX
 ‘I am his child.’ (Njie, 1982: 144)
- (25) *xale laa.* (Wolof)
 child me-IX
 ‘I am a child.’ (Njie, 1982: 145)

Copulaless constructions can be found in specific environments in CVC, as will be discussed in the next section.

1.3. Absence of Copula in CVC and its underlying conditions

In this section, I examine copulaless constructions in CVC while noting that they occur in specific structures involving negative adjectival or possessive predicates, as well as affirmative/negative passives. First, let us consider the negative adjectival predicate in (26):

- (26) *Bo bu ka dodu.* (Santiago)
 NonCL CL NEG crazy
 ‘You are not crazy.’ (Veiga, 2000: 165)

³ The Roman numerals in these Wolof examples correspond to classes of pronominals. Njie (1982) identified 13 of them in his study on Wolof syntax.

Copulaless predicates involving Negation occur not only in the Sotavento islands (i.e., Santiago) but in the Barlavento islands as well. For instance, in São Nicolau, the copula may be absent in negated adjectival and possessive predicates:

- (27) *N ka kulpòd* (S. Nicolau)
 I NEG responsible
 ‘I am not responsible for it.’ (Cardoso, 1989: 68)
- (28) *El ka seu* (S. Nicolau)
 it NEG his
 ‘It is not his.’ (Cardoso, 1989: 68)

While the copula may be absent, as in (26), or present, as in (29a), in a negative adjectival predicate, it is worth noting that an affirmative adjectival predicate with no copula is ungrammatical, as shown in (29b):

- (29) a. *Bo e ka dodu.*
 NonCL COP NEG crazy
 ‘You are not crazy.’
- b. **Bo (bu) dodu.*
 NonCL CL crazy

At this point, a few observations are worth making: (26) and (29a) point in the direction that both the clitic pronominal *bu* and *e* may be occupying the same position in the tree structure. This would account for their complementary distribution; *e* is only allowed to appear with a nonclitic pronominal (i.e., *bo*). This does not, however, explain why a copulaless affirmative sentence such as (29b) is prohibited in CVC. A tentative explanation will be offered in section 2.

Given the adjectival nature of past participles involved in passive formation, one should not be surprised that copulaless predicates are also possible in passive constructions. In such utterances, a clitic typically appears in subject position, which corroborates our assumption once again that the copula and the clitic may occupy the same position in the sentence structure, as shown in (30).

- (30) *Na sidadi, bu ka ta pristadu gran di sal.* (Santiago)
 in city CL NEG ASP lent grain of salt
 ‘In the city, you are not even lent a grain of salt.’

Naturally, a clitic does not have to be present and a full NP may appear in its place in subject position, as shown in (31):

- (31) *Kuza di djenti ka ta panhadu.* (Brava)
 thing of people NEG ASP taken
 ‘People’s belongings should not be stolen.’

Interestingly, while copulaless affirmative adjectival predicates are ungrammatical, as shown in (29b) above, copulaless affirmative passives are perfectly acceptable; this is an empirical fact that the analysis in section 2 will try to account for, in part.

- (32) a. *Bu ta dadu gran di sal.* (Santiago)
 you ASP given grain of salt
 ‘You are given a grain of salt.’
 b. *N dadu un kuza.* (Santiago)
 I given a thing
 ‘I was given something.’

Once again, the passive structures exemplified in (30)-(32) are alien to Portuguese, which requires the use of the copula *ser* ‘to be’.

- (33) *O Brasil foi descoberto em 1500.* (Portuguese)
 the Brazil was discovered in 1500
 ‘Brazil was discovered in 1500.’

The range of passivization strategies is quite broad across Cape Verdean dialects and includes structures identical to the Portuguese lexifier, as shown in (34), as well as structures with no copula and no past participle/passive marker of the *-du* type, as seen in (35) and (36) below.

Barlavento

- (34) *Es stòria e kontòd pa un psóa.* (S. Nicolau)
 this story COP told by a person
 ‘This story is told by someone.’ (Cardoso, 1989: 68)

Absence of copula and passive marker

- (35) *Es kantíga ta kanta oj.* (S. Nicolau)
 this song TMA sing today
 ‘This song is sung today.’ (Cardoso, 1989: 74)

- (36) *Ali, ta fala Kriol.* (S. Nicolau)
 here TMA sing creole
 ‘Here, creole is spoken.’ (Cardoso, 1989: 74)

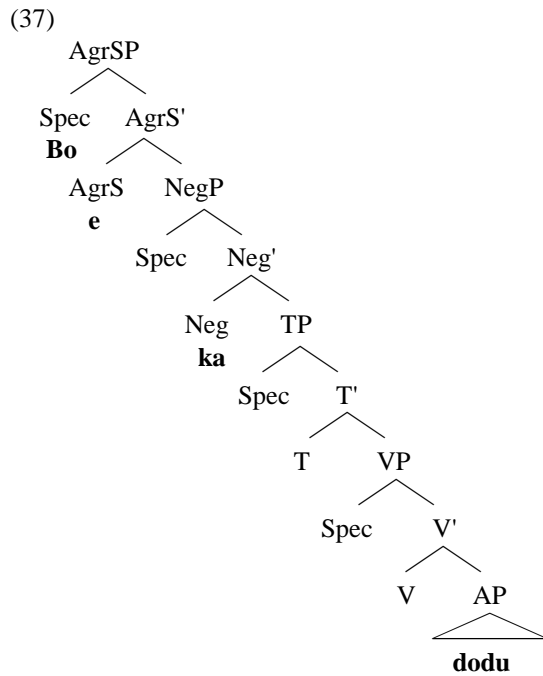
In the next section, I offer a theoretical analysis of copular and copulaless predicates highlighting the environments where each type of structure occurs.

2. A theoretical analysis

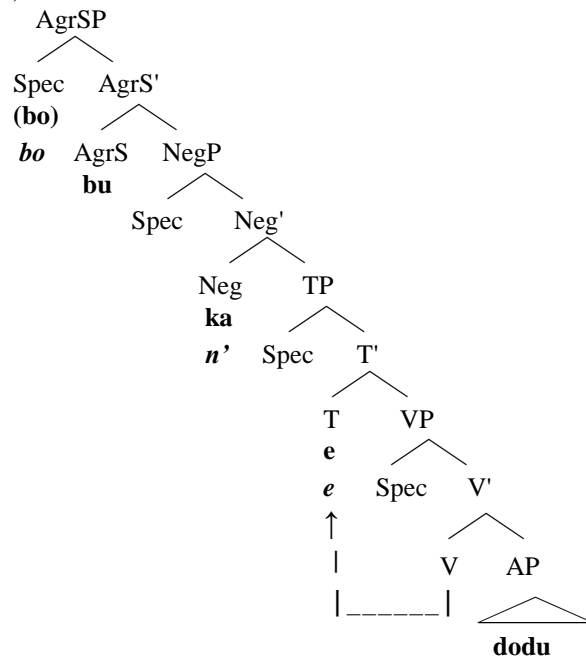
The tree in (37) shows the derivation of a copular predicate involving the copula *e*. In this tree, the nonclitic pronominal subject is base-generated in SpecAgrSP and the copula-like morpheme *e* is base-generated as a head in AgrS. If, as we assumed in the previous section, *e* has nominal properties inherited from substrates such as Wolof, then it is not surprising that it appears in the same head position as clitic pronominals in the language. This explains why a nonclitic pronominal must then appear in Spec-AgrSP and that *e* and the other clitics are in complementary distribution. The tree in (38) reflects the varieties of CVC in which the verbal properties of the copula prevail, presumably under the influence of Portuguese; in such cases, *e* is base-generated in V and moves to T.

In (38) (representing example (26) above), given that AgrS is not occupied by *e*, whose verbal nature would allow it to move from V to T to check tense features, then a clitic pronominal is free to appear in AgrS and a nonclitic in AgrSP optionally. The same tree represents the São Vicente dialect (in italics and referring back to example (12c) above) that follows the same *Neg-e* sequence but typically selects a nonclitic pronominal (in this case *bo* ‘you’) in Spec-AgrSP, while *ne* appears as the head of Neg and *e* in T.

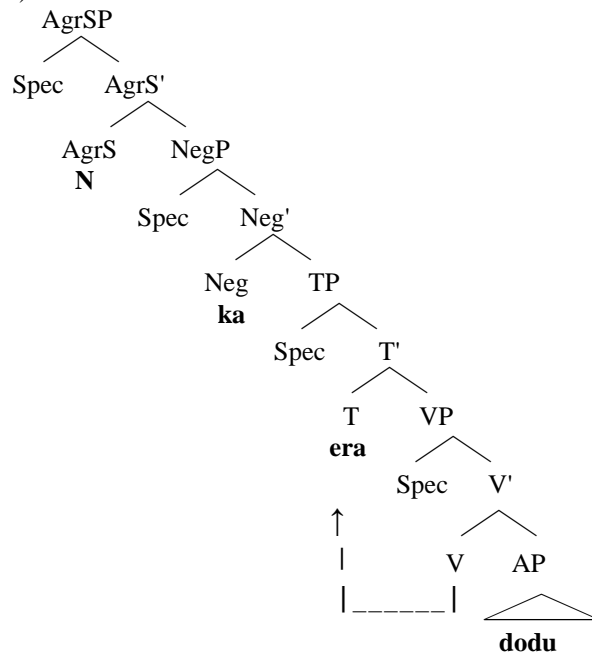
The tree in (39) features the behavior of *era*, the past tense counterpart of *e*, and shows that it behaves like a regular verb, moving from V to T and able to select a clitic in subject position.



(38)

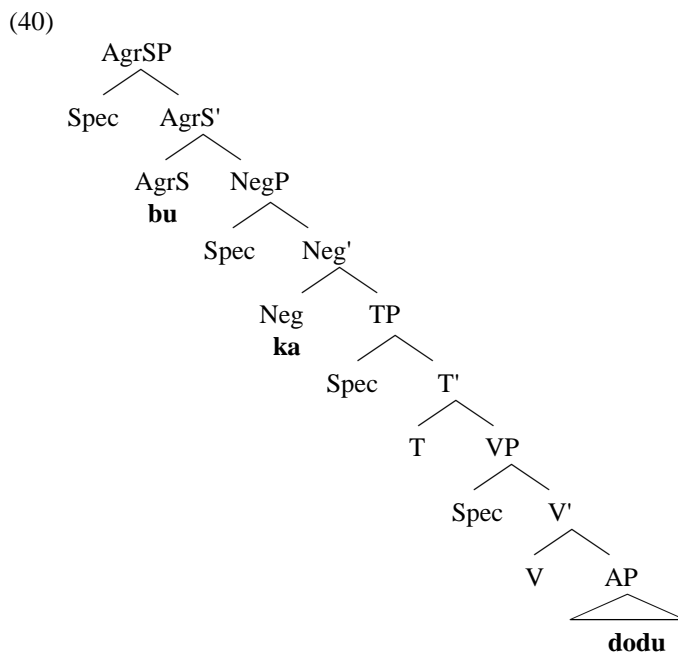


(39)



While the trees in (37)-(39) showed the derivation of copular predicates, the trees in (40) and (45) feature copulaless predicates.

In (40), the most striking trait of the tree is the absence of any verb. Then how can we explain that this verbless negative clause is grammatical, whereas its affirmative counterpart (see example (29b) above) is ungrammatical?



However, the etymology of *ka*, possibly derived from substrates negative auxiliaries such as *katsa* (Manjaku), can provide us with a solution to the puzzle. Kihm (1994) noted that a number of languages having contributed to the formation of CVC have negative items whose phonetic shapes include segments identical or very similar to *ka*. In Mandinka, we find that negative tenses are expressed by the morphemes *buka* or *kana*.

- (41) *m búk'aa dómo* (Mandinka)
 we Neg+Asp it eat
 'We do not eat it'

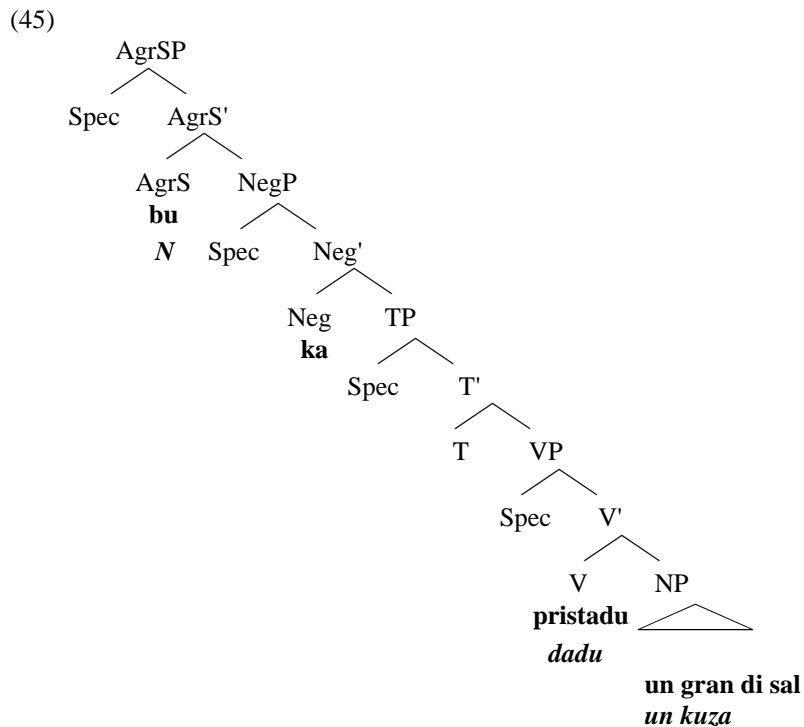
- (42) *íte kána wúli*
 you+Emph Neg+Asp get up
 'Don't you get up'

Manjaku also has two negative morphemes with a *ka*, *dika* for the unaccomplished and *kats(a)* meaning ‘no longer’:

- (43) *m dika ran* (Manjaku)
 you Neg+Asp drink
 ‘You won’t drink’

- (44) *ucaak katsa niua*
 town no-longer build+PASS
 ‘The town was no longer built’ (Buis 1990:41-42)

Following this scenario, if indeed negative verbal properties inherited from substrates are still present in CVC *ka*, this would explain why sentences such as (26) illustrated in the tree in (40) are grammatical, whereas their affirmative counterparts are ungrammatical. The ungrammaticality of (29b) can be accounted for by the absence of both *ka* or a copula. This assumption seems to be corroborated by passive verbs illustrated in the diagram in (45), which is based on the sentences in (30) and (32b) above. In (45), the past participles are base-generated in V (this is compatible with their adjectival properties which allow them to occur in copulaless predicates) and a filled V allows both negative and affirmative passives to occur without a copula.



3. Some broad typological implications

3.1. *On the nature of the variables*

This cross-dialectal study of the Cape Verdean copula clearly reveals that an accurate picture can be drawn only by taking into account a number of variables including the input from both the superstrate and substrate languages. The following triggers emerge as playing a crucial role in the behavior of copular predication:

– Tense

Clearly, in the Cape Verdean case, present tense and past tense copular predicates correspond to different structures in most varieties.

– Third person

The homophony between the Cape Verdean copula and the third-person singular pronominal clitic can partially account for the position of the nominal copula in some of the varieties.

– Pronouns versus full NPs:

The complementary distribution between the copular clitic *e* and pronominal clitics account for its obligatory selection of nonclitic pronominals in subject position across the varieties.

– Negation

Copulaless predicates occur in negative occurrences endowed with V features (through NEG or a verb) but are restricted to a specific set of categories (adjectives/past-participles).

– Copulaless predicates occur with adjectival predicates (including passive past-participles).

This set of variables has undoubtedly been shown to affect the nature of copular predication across Cape Verdean dialects. The point of this particular section is to show that beyond the Cape Verdean language, such variables also intervene in copular predication cross-linguistically.

3.2. *The case of AAVE and other languages*

Seminal studies by Baugh (1980), Rickford & Blake (1990), Winford (1992), Weldon (1998), and Green (2002) among others have all contributed to drawing a complex picture of the use of the copula in AAVE. Baugh's (1980) study on the copula in AAVE was one of the first to notice that the copula was preferably absent before adjectival predicates, just as in Jamaican Creole and Gullah (Weldon, 1998: 8). Weldon also notes that a copula is favored in the environment of pronouns rather than in the environment of full NPs in AAVE. One should note, however, that some creoles, like Barbadian Creole English, have reverse patterns.

Weldon (1998: 99) clearly states that the copula is preferably absent in AAVE in progressive and future environments and less before nominal, adjectival and locative predicates. However, among the predicates, there is a

hierarchy in which the copula is more likely to be absent before adjectival predicates than nominal predicates.

For both Gullah and AAVE, copula absence may occur in the present and past affirmative but not in the present and past negative.

This succinct description highlights the same variables that are at play in copula predication in CVC: tense and aspect, as well as the nature of the predicate (adjectives versus nouns), negation, and the nature of the NP (full versus pronominal).

Cross-linguistically, the same variables seem to be playing a role in copular predication. Pustet's (2003) comprehensive typological study clearly shows that in many languages that have a copula, the copula can be freely omitted. In other languages, the copula can or must be deleted in specific grammatical environments. The Cantonese copula for instance, *haih*, can occur with nominals only (not with adjectival predicates) and can be omitted in nominal predicates without affecting the meaning of the sentence (Pustet 2003: 34). She notes that, while the Turkish copula suffix *-Dir* is optional in all contexts, copula dropping may sometimes be triggered by specific grammatical contexts such as the present tense. The same goes for Michoacán Nahuatl, where the copula *ka* is optional in present tense. More radically, in Russian, the copula *byl* appears before nominal and adjectival predicates in the past tense, but is obligatorily absent in the present tense. In Hungarian, both nominals and adjectivals use the copula in the past tense, but the copula *van* is obligatorily deleted in the third person indicative when nominal and adjectival predicates are involved (Pustet 2003: 35). The same obtains in Tarma Quechua, a language in which the copula can be skipped in the third person singular only. In Kenya Luo, the copula *ní* occurs with nominal subjects but not with pronominal subjects; the same goes for Swahili. Punjabi illustrates Negation as a factor: in Punjabi, the deletion of the copula *hoNaa* is virtually obligatory in the present Negative (Pustet 2003). From Pustet's typological study, it is very clear that a number of grammatical contexts can be identified as triggering the absence or deletion of the copula or can interact to create such an effect.

Interesting generalizations can be drawn as well: Pustet notes that if any of the lexical classes of nominals, verbals and adjectivals combine with a copula at all in a given language, it is the class of nominals (Pustet 2003: 37). This is in keeping with Croft (1991: 130), who states that predicate nouns are more likely to be structurally marked (with a copula) than predicate adjectives; if the predicate nominal construction does not use a copula, the predicate adjective construction won't either.

To conclude, the point of this paper is to show that a comprehensive study of copular predication must take into account a wide range of variables or triggers in order to draw an accurate picture of copular behavior. All the triggers identified as playing a role across the varieties of CVC also proved to be active in creole and non-creole languages alike, leading to insightful typological generalizations.

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