

Neil Myler (myler@bu.edu)
Boston University

- (11) a. $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow haber$ /Voice_{trans}___Pred_{exist} b. $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow ser$ /___Pred_{indiv}
 c. $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow tener$ /Voice_{trans}___ d. $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow estar$ /___Pred_{stage}

Existential sentences vary cross-linguistically in terms of whether they involve an expletive in spec-VoiceP, and therefore whether their existentials are structurally transitive. This explains why some HAVE languages use HAVE in existentials (like French), whereas other HAVE languages use BE (like English). The structure of the French sentence in (12) is shown in (14); that of its English translation is in (15). The distribution of HAVE and BE in each language is then explained if they share the schematic Vocabulary Insertion rules in (13).

- (12) Il y a des personnes heureuses ici. (13) $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow HAVE$ / Voice_{trans}___
 It there has of.the people happy here $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow BE$
 ‘There are happy people here.’

(14) [VoiceP il [Voice' Voice [VP VP VBE [PredP y_i [Pred' Pred_{exist} [DP des personnes heureuses]]]] [PP ici]]]]

(15) [VoiceP Voice [VP VP VBE [PredP there_i [Pred' Pred_{exist} [DP happy people]]]] [PP here_i]]]

3.2 The possible and impossible syncretism prediction is that, given this decompositional syntax, complex copula systems will show commonalities in which subtypes of predication can be marked identically cross-linguistically, and which ones never are. This is because Vocabulary Insertion rules must be conditioned by coherent sets of features, or else be ‘elsewhere’ rules. I show that the present system successfully rules out two typological gaps identified by Clark (1978) (these gaps hold of HAVE languages and languages in which predicative possession is marked by existential BE):

(16) *In no language does the existential copula take the same form as the individual-level copula, while stage-level locatives and possession sentences take a second, different copula.*

(17) *In no language do possession sentences take the same form as the individual-level copula, while stage-level locatives and existentials take a second, different copula.*

These systems are correctly ruled out because neither of the groupings (e.g. existential+individual level on the one hand and stage-level+HAVE on the other, in the case of (16)) can be picked out by a coherent feature specification. The full talk will lay out all of the systems predicted to be possible by my approach, and show that they are all either attested or plausible; this cannot be done here for space reasons. **3.3 The impoverishment prediction** is that complex copula systems might undergo morphological neutralization in certain marked environments. This is predicted by the suppletive allomorphy approach to complex copula systems, given the existence of Impoverishment (Bonet 1991). That this prediction is also correct is shown by a case-study from Cochabamba Quechua. In the present tense and in infinitives, this language has an existential copula *tiya-* (also used in an existential-BE-based possession construction), and another copula *ka-* used in all predicative environments. This pattern is exemplified in (18)-(21), and Vocabulary Insertion rules deriving it are given in (22).

- (18) Mesa-pi libru tiya-n. (19) Tom-pata libru-n tiya-n. (20) Libru-s mesa-pi ka-nku.
 Table-on book be_{exist}-3SG Tom-GEN book-3POSS be_{exist}-3SG Book-PL book-on be-3PL
 ‘There is a book on the table.’ ‘Tom has a book.’ ‘The books are on the table.’

- (21) Libru-s Tom-pata ka-nku. (22) $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow tiya-$ / ___Pred_{exist}
 Book-PL Tom-GEN be-3.PL $v_{BE} \leftrightarrow ka-$
 ‘The books are Tom’s.’

However, in the past and future tense, these distinctions are collapsed in favor of *ka-*. This has the profile of a typical case of impoverishment since (i) past and future are relatively marked feature values, and (ii) neutralization is in favor of *ka-*, which is the elsewhere allomorph in (22). Examples showing this neutralization in the past tense are given in (23) and (24), and (25) gives the impoverishment rule, which deletes Pred_{exist} at PF in marked tenses, before Vocabulary Insertion.

- (23) Mesa-pi libru ka-rqa. (24) Tom-pata libru-n ka-rqa. (25) Pred_{exist} → ∅ / ___ T_{fut/past}
 Table-on book be_{exist}-PAST Tom-GEN book-3POSS be_{exist}-PAST
 ‘There was a book on the table.’ ‘Tom had a book.’

4 Conclusion. Complex copula systems are caused by suppletive allomorphy affecting a single BE verb, as shown by crosslinguistic morphological evidence. Therefore, complex copula systems do not in themselves threaten the idea that copulas are meaningless (*pace* Welch 2012).