

**INTRO:** In this abstract, we propose a novel account that relies on a highly local Agree relationship in order to feed copular agreement in double nominal constructions (DP-BE-DP). Using data from Spanish, we show that this language forces agreement with the *intensional argument* (i.e., the referential subject), which we refer to as **DP1**, and consistently avoids agreement with the *extensional argument* (i.e., the predicate nominal of the subject), which we call **DP2**. We show that this local Agree relationship is necessary in order to account for several non-canonical patterns, all resulting in agreement with **DP1** as when: i) the predicate **DP2** is more featurally specified than **DP1** (3>1), an illicit construction in, e.g. German (Keine, Wagner & Coon 2019); and ii) **DP2** undergoes predicate inversion to [Spec,T] yet does not agree with the verb (Hartmann & Heycock 2018, *i.a.*).

**DATA:** Since Higgins (1973), four primary copular types have been the object of considerable investigation: *predicational* (1), *specificational* (2), *identificational* (3), and *equative* (4). Specificational and identificational have often been considered the same category due to the fact that the predicating **DP2** seemingly undergoes inversion to the canonical subject position [Spec,T]. Although it is **DP2** that ends up in preverbal position in (2-3), agreement stems from the postverbal **DP1** (*tú* ‘you’ in these examples). In this sense, Spanish copular agreement may appear ‘omnivorous’ (in the sense of Nevins 2011) with respect to the feature [PARTICIPANT]. Moreover, in 3>3 combinations, Spanish also shows omnivorous behavior with respect to number, agreeing with a DP bearing [PLURAL] over one bearing [SG] (5). However, regardless of which determines agreement, they are parasitic on one another and may not probe and agree with separate DPs as in, e.g. Icelandic.

- (1) Tú eres / \*es mi hermana ‘You are my sister.’  
you be.PRS.2SG be.PRS.3SG my sister
- (2) Mi hermana eres / \*es tú ‘My sister is you.’  
my sister be.PRS.2SG be.PRS.3SG you
- (3) Ésa eres / \*es tú ‘That (one) is you.’  
that be.PRS.2SG be.PRS.3SG you
- (4) Bruce Wayne es Batman ‘Bruce Wayne is Batman.’  
Bruce Wayne be.PRS.3SG Batman
- (5) El problema son / \*es las mesas ‘The tables are the problem.’  
the problem be.PRS.3PL be.PRS.3SG the tables

What some have deemed a subcategory of equatives— so-called *assumed-identity* copular structures— has been the focus of several recent studies (Keine, Wagner & Coon 2019; Béjar & Kahnemuyipour 2017, 2018; Hartmann & Heycock 2018a,b, 2022, *a.o.*). These constructions are unique in the sense that they do not denote real-world scenarios and, thus, their truth conditions are not upheld when the order of the two nominals is reversed.

- (6) Context: You enter a party with a friend and see someone in a costume impersonating your friend:  
¡Mira! ¡Ella es / \*eres tú! ‘Look! She is you!’  
look.IMP.SG she be.PRS.3SG be.PRS.2SG you
- (7) Context: A friend posts pictures of himself in a costume of the four members of KISS.  
Él es / \*son ellos ‘He is them.’  
He be.PRS.3SG be.PRS.3PL they

What we find in (6-7) is unlike the behavior shown above in (1-3, 5) in that the preverbal DP provides verbal agreement despite the fact that the postverbal nominal bears further specification in person and/or number. However, this pattern is also possible in predicational constructions (8).

- (8) Tu tío es / \*son las dos cosas ‘Your uncle is both of those things.’  
your uncle be.PRS.3SG be.PRS.3PL the two things

**PROPOSAL:** Our line of investigation is rooted in a typological distinction whereby agreement may be derived via syntactic relations that feed specific interpretations at the syntax-semantics interface. We claim that some languages (e.g. Spanish) require that **DP1** (i.e., the referential DP) provide agreement

based on an interpretative basis, forcing **DP2** (i.e., the predicate DP) to never participate in verbal agreement. Other languages (e.g. Eastern Armenian (9) & Galician (10)) do not show this restriction, allowing for agreement patterns that do not implicitly reflect which DP is the referential subject but, instead, rely on extra-linguistic information. This is seen in (10), where either nominal may serve as **DP1** based on a given context, although the more specified DP (*ti* & *eles*) will always bear agreement.

- (9) ays yeraz-um martaspan-ə yes ei isk goq-ə du eir  
in dream-LOC murderer-SP I be.PST.1SG but thief-SP you be.PST.2SG  
'In the dream, the murderer was me, but the thief was you.'
- (10) Ela es / \*é ti (3>2) / Ela son / \*é eles (SG>PL)  
she be.PRS.2SG be.PRS.3SG you she be.PRS.3PL be.PRS.3SG they  
'She is you/You are her.' 'She is them/They are her.'

We claim that an intermediate head bearing a  $\phi$ -probe feeds agreement (i.e., raises and merges with  $T^0$ ) based on the nature of the copular type, accounting for patterns in which a structurally higher but less specified DP shows agreement with the verb. We take the RELATOR concept (den Dikken 2006; henceforth  $R^0$ ), which mediates the relationship between a subject and its predicate in the representation of *predication structures*, as this intermediate head. Following the ideas of den Dikken, we claim that this head is present in all copular constructions. What distinguishes predicational and assumed-identity structures from specificational and identificational ones is the presence of what he calls a LINKER ( $L^0$ ), present in the latter two, which forces predicate inversion in these constructions. We follow Adger & Ramchand (2003), Citko (2008), a.o., in proposing that both DPs are merged in an asymmetrical  $\pi P$  in which **DP1** is merged in the specifier and **DP2** as the complement of  $\pi^0$ , the head that hosts the copula ( $\sqrt{BE}$ ). We claim that  $R^0$  selects  $\pi P$  as its complement, forcing agreement with the referential subject in the specifier of  $R^0$  and obligatory incorporation of the copula in  $\pi^0$  into  $R^0$ .

In predicational and assumed-identity constructions,  $R^0$  incorporates into  $v^0$  and subsequently  $T^0$ , followed by movement of **DP1** to [Spec,T] (11). In specificational and identificational structures, however,  $L^0$  is merged above  $R^0$  and bears an [EPP]/ $[\bar{A}]$  feature which brings **DP2** from the complement of  $\pi^0$  to [Spec,L] above the subject (in [Spec,R]) (12). We claim that this is the first movement-related step in inversion structures before **DP2** is raised further to [Spec,T].

- (11) [TP  $\uparrow$   $T^0$  ... [ $vP$   $v^0$  ... [RP **DP1**<sub>[ $\phi$ ]]  $R^0$ <sub>u[ $\phi$ ]] [ $\pi P$  ~~**DP1**~~<sub>[ $\phi$ ]]  $\pi^0$  **DP2**]]]]</sub></sub></sub>
- (12) [TP  $\uparrow$   $T^0$  ... [ $vP$   $v^0$  ... [LP **DP2**<sub>[ $\bar{A}$ ]]  $L^0$ <sub>u[ $\bar{A}$ ]] ... [RP **DP1**<sub>[ $\phi$ ]]  $R^0$ <sub>u[ $\phi$ ]] [ $\pi P$  ~~**DP1**~~<sub>[ $\phi$ ]]  $\pi^0$  ~~**DP2**~~<sub>[ $\bar{A}$ ]]]]]]</sub></sub></sub></sub></sub></sub>

This intermediate movement of **DP2** is not *ad hoc* and may also be found in copular sentences in which both DPs remain postverbal and the highest nominal (**DP2**) does not show agreement with the verb.

- (13) Son [la solución]<sub>[3,SG]</sub> [los dos]<sub>[3,PL]</sub> 'Both of them are the solution.'  
be.PRS.3PL the solution the two

The derivation in (12) mirrors the linear order and agreement found in (13). Assuming  $\phi$ -agreement low in the structure via a functional head such as  $R^0$ , we are able to explain all copula patterns shown above without adhering to notions of  $\phi$ -feature defectivity of one DP but not another (Béjar & Kahnemuyipour 2017; see Hartmann & Heycock 2018a,b, 2022 for critiques). Furthermore, it puts *assumed-identity* copulas in line with canonical copular agreement more generally (i.e., predicational), allowing us to dispense with agreement theories, e.g. *Feature Gluttony* (Coon & Keine 2021), centered around hierarchical effects and their concomitant ineffable morphological realizations (e.g. \*3>1).

SELECTED REF.: Béjar, S. & A. Kahnemuyipour. 2017. Non canonical agreement in copular clauses. *Journal of Linguistics* 53: 463-499. den Dikken, M. 2006. *Relators and linkers: The syntax of predication, predicate inversion and copulas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Hartmann, J. M. & C. Heycock. 2018a. A remark on Béjar & Kahnemuyipour 2017: Specificational subjects do have phi-features. *Journal of Linguistics* 54: 611-627. Keine, S., M. Wagner & J. Coon. 2019. Hierarchy effects in copular constructions: The PCC corner of German. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics/Revue Canadienne de linguistique* 64(4): 617-648.