EMAI'S PRESENTATIONAL CONSTRUCTION

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Copular forms have received far less cross-linguistic attention over the last few decades than transitive verbs (Hopper and Thompson 1980, 1982, Declerck 1988) Serving as grammatical support items, copular forms typically link a subject noun phrase to a nominal, adjectival or locative phrase Recent cross-linguistic investigations by Stassen (1997) bring new energy to copular studies Although his findings emphasize typological and functional regularities affecting intransitive predicates, Stassen draws attention to contrasting predicational and identificational functions of sentences like That man is a farmer In the predicational function, an entity is assigned to a general class (e.g. class membership), but in one expression of the identificational function two entities are advanced as holding a relationship of equational identity Still another identificational function is structured by presentational sentences of the form It's a farmer, which introduce entities and are often accompanied in conversation by a pointing gesture In Stassen's terminology, equational identity constructions instruct the hearer to close down a cognitive file previously viewed as unrelated to another file (collapsing files), while presentational identity constructions instruct the hearer to open a cognitive file (introducing files) Of the two identity construction types, only presentational ones concern us in this paper

According to Stassen, identity constructions regardless of type exhibit three formal characteristics reflecting their semantic and functional character They show a preference for third person form and a tendency to be atemporal and non-predicational in nature His database, including that from sub-Saharan Africa, reveals that the morphosyntax of identity expressions reflects grammatical devices employed in marking information structure

For this paper, we will assess previously undescribed grammatical properties of the presentational construction (PC) in Emai, a Benue-Congo language of Nigeria's Edoid group (Bendor-Samuel 1989) The examination is grounded to data emanating from our ongoing documentation effort aimed at describing Emai's lexical, grammatical and discourse structure Emai PCs reflect the non-predicational, atemporal and third person tendencies noted by Stassen, although not all are equally transparent And consistent with Stassen, the structural character of PCs demonstrates an affinity for the grammar of information structure

Emai PCs occur frequently in the discourse of riddles introduced by gbže ałe. They designate a riddle's response (1), no other copula serves in this capacity

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2 Orthographic conventions for Emai are consistent with those in Schaefer (1987), where a represents a half open back vowel, e a half open front vowel, vb a voiced bilabial approximant, high tone is represented by an acute accent, and low tone is unmarked
As illustrated with a different example, PCs comprise two fundamental structural components, an initial noun phrase and the form α.

There are three principal reasons for rejecting the bi-morphemic hypothesis. First, no subject pronoun for first or second person singular can precede low tone α.

Third, if high-toned α were a third person singular form, one would expect number agreement between a plural initial noun phrase (éli i māhe na) and a plural third person pronominal subject (yan), as shown by
the number agreement requirement of the focus construction in (6a) and (6b). No number agreement exists in PCs, since plural noun phrases occurring in initial position, although grammatical (6c), are never acceptable with plural subject pronouns (6d).

6 a eli mohe na li yan gbe oh akhe a
   the men these PF 3p break the pot CS
   it is these men who broke the pot'

   b * eli mohe na li o gbe oh akhe a
   the men these PF 3s break the pot CS

   c eli mohe am oo
   the men those COP
   its those men'

   d * eli mohe am yan o
   the men those 3p COP

Such facts argue against a bi-morphemic structure for oo, as well as against a subject pronoun interpretation for its initial a. Additional facts argue that the contour tonal shape of a is not a necessary element of its composition and that a single tone-bearing unit exists. In constructions with an auxiliary particle, the contour shape of a is lost and only a final low tone a appears. In (7a), the Certaintive auxiliary ma assumes a high tone, preserving an overall contour of high low tone across ma and a. Contour tonal melodies normally characterize the Emai verb phrase (Egbokhare 1999), as shown by the contour high low high of ma, che and welu (7b).

7 a oli onohe na ma o
   the man this CER COP
   it's surely this man'

   b oli onohe ma che welo oti oti
   the man CER REP sweep the ground
   the man surely swept the ground again'

Taken together, these facts are consistent with Stassen’s non-predication claim for PCs. Predication has the function of assigning a particular object to a general concept and assumes the representational form of a predicate and its arguments, one of the latter being the subject. Since Emai PCs manifest no grammatical subject, they are not predicational in this sense. Instead, they exhibit an identificational function in which grammatical subject plays no role.

Assuming PCs are not predicational in Stassen’s sense would account for their failure to accept predicate negation with the 1 particle (8a), while true predicates normally accept it (8b).

8 a * oti i i o
   thief SC NEG COP

b oti omohe i i welo oti oti
   the man SC NEG sweep the ground
the man did not sweep the ground'

A non-predicational, subjectless character would also prevent PCs from occurring in imperative constructions (9a), which require predicates and their understood subjects (9b)

9 a * olo omohe ao
   the man COP
   'be the man'

b wela ah otoi
   sweep the ground
   sweep the ground'

We direct attention now to the atemporal tendencies of PCs. To what extent do PCs accept tense/aspect marking or other marking of utterance time? To explore this question, we will assume for the moment that the PC initial noun phrase accepts the subject tonal melodies and α the verbal melodies required for Emai's tense/aspect marking. Despite this assumption, PCs disallow tense/aspect marking and adverbial marking of utterance time.

Emai PCs fail to admit tense/aspect distinctions designated by morphological and/or tonal elements. Perfective tense/aspect is conveyed by a high tone verb and either an unmarked melody subject (low tone na) for the completive present or a marked melody subject (high tone na) for the completive past (10). Assuming the initial noun phrase expresses these melody contrasts and that aa conveys verbal tone, perfective tense/aspect marking is unacceptable.

10 * olo omohe na oo / * olo omohe na ao
   the man this COP the man thus COP

Relying on similar subject and verb assumptions for purposes of tonal expression, we find that PCs fail to admit the morphological marking of imperfective aspect. Neither the continuous (11a) nor habitual (11b) particle and their obligatory subject agreement (SC) particles are admitted in PCs.

11 a * olo omohe na ao ao ao
   the man thus SC C COP

b * olo omohe na ao ao ao
    the man thus SC H COP

The PC's atemporal character is further reinforced by its failure to admit any postverbal temporal adverbs (12).

12 * olo ao oena / oda / akho
   thief COP today yesterday tomorrow

Likewise, it does not accept postverbal complement particles characterizing temporal contour. The terminal particle lée's 'already' sense, illustrated in (13b), is unacceptable in PCs (13a).

13 a * olo ao lee
    thief COP TER
b oti òmohe wela oti oto lee
the man sweep the ground TER
the man has swept the ground already'

The PC's atemporality extends to relative tense particles Emari's anterior, subsequent and sequential particles, which convey temporal relations between a clausal event and another event expressed as a clause or as part of discourse context, are unacceptable in PC constructions (14)

14 * oti ke / kpe / re o
thief ANT SUB SEQ COP
it was previously / subsequently / then a thief

Assuming an atemporal and non-predicational character for PCs would also preclude their occurrence with deontic modality particles, which incorporate a tense element Contrastive tone marking of subject noun phrases distinguishes the proximal/distal deontic range of Emari's deontic potentiality 'The deontic particle la's predictive sense will requires a marked melody subject (high tone na 15a), while its anticipative sense about to' demands an unmarked melody subject ( low tone na 15b) Nonetheless, la is ungrammatical in PCs

15 a * oti òmohe na la o
the man this PRED COP

b * oti òmohe na la o
the man this ANTI COP

Although PC acceptance of auxiliary particles is severely constrained, it is not entirely so Less dependent on temporal or predicational features are epistemic particles, which reflect speaker judgment about a proposition's truth value Epistemic particles from two of three classes are grammatical in PCs Speculative judgment particles, which convey varying degrees of confidence in proposition truth value despite circumstances to the contrary, are acceptable (16) Included are certainive ma, and the dubitatives vba and bia in Yes/no questions

16 a ikhumi ekpa ma o
medicine vomit CER COP
it is certainly vomit medicine'

b oti vba o?
thief DUB COP
could it really be a thief?'

17 c ikhumi ekpa bia o?
medicine vomit DUB COP
'was it really vomit medicine?'

Assumptive judgment particles, which reflect the speaker's assumption of proposition truth value, are not each acceptable The concessive rare' particle is grammatical in a Yes/no question (17a), whereas the
hypothetical particle *kha* would have (but didn't) is not (17b)

17 a ọrere ọ?
   thief CONC COP
   'so was it a thief? / is it even a thief?'

b * ikhümekpa kha ọ?
   medicine vomit HYP COP

The deductive judgment particle, which reflects the speaker's absolute certainty of proposition truth value gained through logical calculation or inference, is ungrammatical. Deductive *za* must' never occurs in PC constructions (18)

18 * ikhümekpa za ọ?
   medicine vomit DED COP

PCs restrict preverb particles even more than auxiliaries. Among the former are aspectualizer, discourse evaluative, subject attributive, temporal, manner deictic and quantity forms. They tend to be either event-directed or participant-directed (Schaefer and Egbokhare In press), since their sense applies, respectively, to the verb and arguments of an event, or to the arguments only. Some event-directed aspectualizers with a phasal sensitivity require a temporally boundable, dynamic event, as in the case of the ingressive *ya* particle (19b). It is unacceptable in PCs (19a)

19 a * ọreya ọ?
   thief IG COP

b ọl̄ọmọhelya wẹl̄ọ̀lo̊ọ̀
   the man IG sweep the ground
   the man almost started to sweep the ground'

Preverbs with a nonphasal character and not limited to dynamic events, additive *gbọ* (20b), fail to appear in PCs (20a). Similar patterns arise with other event-directed preverbs

20 a * ọrēgbo ọ?
   thief ADD COP

b ọl̄ọm̄bọ̊ọ̊kere
   the yam ADD be small
   'the yam is small too'

Participant-directed preverbs in the subject attributive and quantity classes are equally ungrammatical. Representative members include *daba* 'deliberately' and the emphatic reflexive *doba*. Since neither the initial noun phrase nor the initial high tone of *ọ* admit subject melodies, it is not surprising that these preverb particles dependent on subjecthood are ungrammatical. The behavior of participant-directed preverbs lends further credence to the hypothesized non-predicational nature of PCs.
Turning now to the initial noun phrase in PCs, we find that it is sensitive to discourse/pragmatic features associated with focus position, not subject position. Although grammatically masked in the affirmative, the PC initial noun phrase occupies contrastive focus position. Negative focus is designated in Emai by the particle *kt*. This particle follows the initial noun phrase and precedes copula *o* in canonical PCs (22).

In instances of positive focus, where one would expect the particle *li*, overt marking by *li* in PCs is disallowed (23a-b).

An additional reflex of focus rests with the appearance of emphatic personal pronouns in PC initial noun phrase position. Non-emphatic personal pronouns are unacceptable in PCs (24a). All emphatic pronouns are acceptable (24b), as they are in focus position outside PCs. Since the full spectrum of emphatic personal pronouns is acceptable, PCs show no third person restriction in their initial noun phrase, as one might assume from Stassen's discussion of identity constructions.

Focus position is also registered through definiteness values of impersonal pronouns. Grammatical in this position are a wide range of pronouns with a definite character (25), e.g., demonstrative, sortal, numeral, universal and anaphoric quantifying classes.
Ungrammatical, however, is the existential quantifying pronoun *a*so, which exhibits indefinite, specific reference.

26 * aso * a * 

certain-one COP

Pronominally headed relative clauses in PC initial noun phrases also require definiteness. Those unmarked by the recurrent (RC) preverb *a* are grammatical (27a), whereas those incorporating this preverb are ungrammatical (27b). In the latter, the preverb *a* assigns an indefinite, generic interpretation to the pronominal grammatical subject of the embedded clause.

27 a * a * li * gbe * akhe * a * a *

one R 3s break pot CS COP

'it's the one who broke a pot / it's he who broke a pot'

b * * li * a * gbe * akhe * a * a *

one R 3s RC break pot CS COP

'it's whoever broke a pot'

PC definiteness is reflected further in the unacceptability of information question words. Usage of such items presumes a lack of shared information between speaker and hearer. Since PCs require an initial noun phrase which is definite, question words are unacceptable (28).

28 * eme / ë / ebé / eka * a *

what who where how-much COP

The distribution of nominals and nominal modifiers in the PC noun phrase also reveals definiteness restrictions. We saw in (1) that this position accepts bare nouns construed as referential and definite. This position also accepts proper names, including names modified by the emphatic particle *akpa* 'alone,' a property associated with focus position.

29 olólo / ololo * akpa * a *

Ololo Ololo alone COP
Many other nominal modifiers are acceptable. The prenominal definite determiner, for instance, is grammatical in PCs' initial noun phrase (30)

30 ələ əmə / ələ ənə ən
   the man the cutlass COP
   it's the man / the cutlass'

A range of postnominal modifiers, all revealing a definite reading, occur. Included are demonstrative, sortal, number, universal and anaphoric quantifying modifiers (31)

31 a ənə ənə / an / nən ən
   the cutlass this that next COP
   'it is this / that / the next cutlass'

   b ənə ənə / ənən ənən
   cutlass that-kind different-kind COP
   'it is that kind of / a different kind of cutlass'

   c əmə əmə / ənəmə / əvə ənə
   men two all other COP
   'it is two / all / other men'

PCs, however, do not allow the indefinite existential quantifier (32)

32 * əmə / əsə / ən
   man certain COP

In sum, Emai's Presentational Construction exhibits two of the prototypical properties postulated for identity constructions by Stassen. It clearly manifests atemporal and non-predicational properties.

What about the third person property advanced by Stassen? This restriction did not appear in assessment of the focus position noun phrase, which allowed first and second person emphatic pronouns, or of a in the assessment of its possible bi-morphemic character. Since PC is subjectless, there is no subject position in which third person could exhibit any dominance via first or second person.

To explore the third person property, we turn to the possible origin of the copular form. According to Stassen, non-verbal copulas employed in identity constructions tend to have their origin in ertshwhile pronominal or particle forms with pragmatic-functional significance. In Emai's neighbor Yoruba, for instance, the copula ən is homophonous with the focus particle ən, leading to the assumption that the copular form arose through a channel of grammaticalization originating with the focus particle.

For Emai, our question is, what served as the source morpheme for the copular ə? A ready answer appears in the morphosyntax of focus constructions. As shown in (33a), the third person resumptive pronoun in subject position is ə. We suggest this resumptive form, as part of a structural frame incorporating the focus particles ə and ən and a noun phrase in contrastive focus position, served as the source for Emai's PC construction (33b). Subsequent grammaticalization processes eroded this frame, in particular omitting positive focus ə, reanalyzing ə as a copula, and assigning an obligatory contour to the phrase incorporating ə (33c).
33 a olo ômohe na li o welo olo otoi
the man  this PF 3s sweep the ground
it's  this man who swept the ground'

b olo ômohe na li / ki o
the man  this PF  NF 3s
it's  this man / it isn't  this man'

c olo ômohe na ola
the man  this COP
it's  this man'

Although Emai's PC has no subject in its current realization, it is our contention that its copular form had its origin in a third person resumptive pronoun for subject position. With this assumption of origin, Stassen’s postulated third person tendency is thus naturally linked to the grammatical evolution of PCs. The Presentational Copula's formal properties thus appear to have their source in the morphosyntax of information framing.

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