Specificity and Definiteness in Copular Structure

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Ⅰ. Introduction

There have been argued to be no structural differences between predicational and specificational copular sentences, in that both take the small clause as their complements. In spite of this structural similarity, however, there are two positions toward specificational copular sentences. Some linguists such as Heggi (1988), Moro (1977), and Mikkelsen (2005) claim that the specificational copular sentence is an inverse predicational copular sentence, and that the predicational copular sentence and specificational copular sentence take one and the same *be*. They claim that the subject of the specificational copular sentence is an underlying predicate, experiencing inversion from the post-copula position to the pre-copula position by a rule called predicate raising. Others such as Rothstein (2001) and Heycock and Kroch (1999) claim that the specificational copular sentence is not derived by inversion, but the subjects of the specificational copular sentence are original, proposing that the specificational copular sentence is a subtype of equative sentences.

   This paper follows the latter's assumption with no derivations. As Rizzi (1997) points out, we propose that the nominal structure is parallel to the clausal structure, sharing the similar properties which will be discussed in Chapter 2. In the sense that definite DPs are not necessarily specific, there must be structural distinctions between functional projections in which specificity definiteness are checked, respectively. We will examine the validity and application of two functional projections newly suggested: DefP (Definite Phrase) and SpP (Specific Phrase). Thus, the definiteness of pre-copula and post-copula elements is responsible for various interpretations of copular sentences. Accordingly, the difference arises from whether the DP HEAD bears either [+definite] feature or [−definite] feature and whether [+definite] nominal is specific and unspecific. The projection holding the [definite] feature is assumed to be syntactically on a par with the clausal finiteness projection [FP], and the [+specific] feature supposedly characterizes a projection sharing some properties with the clausal Topic projection which holds information which has already been introduced in the discourse.

   The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses four kinds of English copular sentences which Mikkelsen (2005) proposes. Section 3 makes a more convincing proposal based on revised Mikkelsen's claim, Thus, the presence or absence of [definite] feature and [specific] feature of their heads plays a crucial role in distinguishing predicational copular sentences and specificational copular ones. More specifically, it points out that in predicational copular sentence, the pre-copula element has [+definite,+specific] features and the post-copula element has [−definite,−specific] features; in specificational copular sentence, the pre-copula element has [+definite,−specific] and the post-copula element has [+definite,+specific]. In this sense, the subject of the specificational copular sentences is not a predicate and nonreferential as well as it

appears to partly be definite in the pre-copula position. Illuminating the presence and the absence of definiteness of a DP, we will be able to formulate the generalization about the impossibility of predicate inversion. According to Mikkelsen (2005), section 3 will focuses on copular sentences of the form "DP be DP", with recognition that the copular, in many language, is truly cross-categorial and its real scope of inquiry is "XP be XP". I distinguish four types of copular sentences, which are determined by whether the DPs, located in pre-copula and post-copula position have [definite] feature or not. Section 4 is a conclusion.

Ⅱ. Previous Analysis

Mikkelsen (2005) assumes that copular sentences are a minor sentence type in which the contentful predicate is not a verb but some other category such AP, NP, or PP and distinguishes four types of copular sentences:

(1) Predicational
   a. The hat is big.
   b. The hat/present/thing I bought for Harvey is big.
   c. What I bought for Harvey is a hat.
(2) Specificational
   a. The director of *Anatomy of a Murder* is Otto Preminger.
   b. The only director/person/one I met was Otto Preminger.
   c. Who I met was Otto Preminger.
(3) Identificational
   a. That (woman) is Sylvia.
   b. That (stuff) is DDT.

(4) Equative

  a. Sylvia Obernauer is HER.

  b. Cicero is Tully.

According to Mikkelsen, predicational copular sentences in (1) show that they predicate a property of the subject referent. In this respect, actually, they appear like noncopular sentences, since they obviously differ from the others in that the property is contributed entirely by the predicate complement. However, the other three kinds of copular sentences do not involve predication. Equatives in (4) equate the referents of the two expressions (the pre-copula nominal and the post-copula nominal). Neither is predicated of the other. Specificational copular sentences in (2) involve valuing of a variable: the subject expression sets up a variable (the x that directed *Anatomy of a Murder* in (2a)) and the post-copula expression provides the value for that variable. Identificational sentences in (3) are unique in that they usually take a demonstrative subject and are typically used for teaching the names of people or of things (according to Higgins (1979)).

Given the preceding discussion of (1-4), Mikkelsen shows that in terms of referentiality, each kind can be characterized as in (5):

(5) | | NP1 | copula | NP2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| equative | referential | | referential |
| predicational | referential | | non-referential |
| specificational | non-referential | | referential |

The term *specificational* derives from the intuition that these sentences are used to specify who (or what) someone (or something) is, rather than to say anything about that person (or entity). Thus (2a) is used to say

who directed a particular movie, not to say something about that person. Evidence from the nonreferential status of the subject of specificational copular sentences comes from pronominalization. *He* or *she* is used to pronominalize referential DPs, and *it* and *that* are used to pronominalize nonreferential DPs, including predicative DPs. There are two environments in association with pronominalization to probe the semantic type of copular subjects. First, the form of the pronoun in a tag question is determined by the subject of the tagged sentence. In tag questions, predicational copular sentence in (6) has a referential subject such as *she*; specificational copular sentence in (7) has a predicative subject such as *it*:

(6) [The lead actress in that movie] is Swedish, isn't {she/*it}?
(7) [The lead actress in that movie] is Ingrid Bergman, isn't it?

As for left dislocation, likewise, it leaves resumptive pronoun inside CP. Using subject left dislocation to probe semantic type of copular subjects, the predicational copular sentence in (8) has a referential subject such as *she*; the specificational copular sentence in (9) has a predicative subject such as *it* or *that*:

(8) The lead actress in that movie, she/*it/*that is Swedish.
(9) The lead actress in that movie, it/that is Ingrid Bergman.

Mikkelsen (2005:64−86) argues that this is evidence that the subject of specificational copular sentences is nonreferential and that of predicational copular sentence is referential.[1] In this article, we will focus in general on

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1) Williams (1997)'s argument is different from Mikkelson (2005)'s in that he notes that in specificational copular sentences such as (i), the first DP is less known or less directly knowable. In (i), we know who *John* is, but wonder who *the mayor* is, and the specificational copular sentences tells who the mayor is:
   (i) The mayor is John.

predicational copular sentence and specificational copular sentence.

Ⅲ. Proposal

We suggest that specific and nonspecific noun phrases both have a DP construction. We further propose that all kinds of determiners are placed in only one position within DP, experiencing some derivations based on (a) their definiteness-related semantic nature (cf., strong vs. weak), and (b) the semantic reading of the DP within the sentence with respect to specificity.

1. The Semantics of DP

We start the discussion by characterizing the semantics of each DP under the assumption of the DP Hypothesis. In this section, we suggest that specificity and definiteness of DPs in both pre-copula position and post-copula position have a crucial effect on determining characteristics of

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Williams notes that the small clause construction with consider corresponding to (i) is ungrammatical as in (iia), although (iib), which corresponds to (iic), is grammatical.

    (ii) a. *I consider the Mayor John.
        b. I consider John the Mayor.
        c. John is the Mayor.

The same thing can be said about a pair of sentences in (iii), which are not synonymous as Williams notes: the first DP in each sentence is known but the identity of the second DP is not known.

    (iii) a. I consider John Bill.
        b. I consider Bill John.

Williams's claim about the specificational copular sentences and their occurrences in the small clause construction is interpreted as follows. If a clause contains two DPs, The first DP in the underlying structure is a known DP and the second DP is a less known DP. In the small clause construction, that order is always preserved.

each copular construction. In order to make our description explicit, we will use the following definitions, described in Ihsane and Puskas (2001):

(10) a. Definiteness: selects one object in the class of possible objects
　　　b. Specificity: relates to pre-established elements in the discourse.

　　Enç (1991) also assumes definite and specific NPs in terms of their relation to previously established discourse referents. Moreover, not only does Enç state that "names, pronouns, and definite descriptions are definite NPs but he also works on a formalism which ensures that all definite NPs are specific. This predicts that there will be no nonspecific NPs. (Enç 1991:9) and that there is an "identity" relation between definite NPs and their discourse referents. However, we can observe that definite DPs can have a nonspecific reading. The example in (11) below is ambiguous between specific and nonspecific reading:

(11) John took the bus to Phoenix.

　　In (11), the definite DP *the bus* can get a specific interpretation, as predicted by Enç, but it can also be interpreted as a nonspecific DP, where the referent of the DP *the bus* is not pre-established in the discourse. It seems that with modes of transportation a singular definite description can be used despite the fact that there are many buses to phoenix. Next, we have to discuss characteristics of indefinite DPs, which are ambiguous with respect to specificity, as shown below:

(12) a. John saw a woman.
　　　b. John saw a woman. She was carrying a box.

　　In (12b), the indefinite DP, *a woman*, is specific if it denotes a weak

relation to previously established discourse; whereas, in (12a), *a woman* is nonspecific if it lacks an antecedent in the discourse altogether. In sum, specific DPs, whether they are definite or indefinite, have the same feature for specificity. This depends on whether they are linked to previously established discourse referents.

2. Finiteness Phrase (FP) and DefP

Finiteness as a linguistic phenomenon seems to be its 'ontological' status. Rizzi (1997) proposes that finiteness exists as a substantial property of morphosyntax of a primitive feature [+/− Fit] of some head, associated with a specific functional value.[2] Within syntactic analysis, (non)finiteness of a clause is usually correlated with other aspects of a derivation, namely with subject-verb agreement ([+/−Agr] AgrS, Φ -features), subject case ([NOM], exceptional [ACC], gerundival [GEN]), and most importantly tense [+/−Tns]). Rizzi (1997) proposes a richly structured C-domain, consisting of a hierarchy of (roughly) discourse-related projections (a so-called split CP).

(13) C -> Force > Top > Foc > Fin (>T...)

Within the C-domain, Rizzi assumes a Fin(iteness) projection which interferes with the propositional TP in its scope, determining its finiteness status (i.e., [+/−Fin]).

In order to account for the elements to be split in DP, we adopt an articulated structure of DP, containing several functional projections. Also, we propose that the definite article hosts a functional category which we

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2) Enc (1991) proposes 'anchoring' as a substantial property of morphosyntax in some form, associated with a specific functional value.

label Definite Phrase (DefP), which corresponds to the clausal Finiteness Phrase (FinP) postulated by Rizzi (1997). Rizzi claims that as FinP contains specifications which match those of the inflectional system, DefP reflects certain properties of the nominal with respect to the choice of the article. For instance, although a determiner selects the nominal domain, a mass noun is restricted in its selection. It is because a mass noun has the unique property that it can only be selected by a null indefinite article, as follows:

(14) John bought (*a) rice.

Ihsane and Puskas (2001) points out that finiteness is traditionally considered to anchor the event in time and determines the truth conditions of the proposition containing the predicate. Temporality is distinct from morphosyntactic tense marking which appears in the Tense Phrase (TP) of the verbal system.[3] Correspondingly, definiteness relates to nominals in the sense that it determines the presupposition on existence of the entity represented by the nominal.[4] However, as shown in (14), it appears that the presupposition of existence as a property of definiteness does not necessarily correspond to the morpho-syntactic reflex of definiteness in the nominal system.[5] The head of DefP is characterized by the feature

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3) Partee(1984) discusses parallels, not exactly between tense and definiteness, but between tense and (definite) pronouns. She observes that, just as pronouns can relate to a referent introduced in the previous discourse or to a referent understood on the basis of the context, so tense can relate to an antecedent time or to an understood time.

4) Ihsane and Puskas (2001) call it as an "existence anchor."

5) The following sentences are wll formed even though rooms typically have more than one wall, rivers more than one side, and people more than one foot.
   I) My uncle wrote something on the wall.
   ii) We camped by the side of a river.
   iii) She shot herself in the foot.

[+/−definite]. [+definite] is realized as the definite article and [−definite] as the indefinite article. An indefinite article represented by [−definite] feataure is not always phonologically realized.

3. Topic Phrase (TopP) and SpP

Under the assumption that as examined in (3), specificity is different from definiteness, we claim that specificity is classified as another nominal functional category. We propose that it corresponds to the clausal Topic Phrase, in that this projection includes old information (Enç (1991)). This logic causes us to assume that this nominal functional category is the highest projection of the nominal structure (henceforth, we will call this projection SpP). We assume that SpP fits into a binary system: elements may be specific, in which case they are related to the previous discourse; on the other hand, they are nonspecific, which means that they are not related to the previous discourse (e.g., [+/−specific]). Such two features as [+/−definite] and [+/−specific] will classify all DPs as four kinds. In other words, given that specificity and definiteness are different and that we associate these properties with syntactic features, the four possible feature combinations are given as in (15) below:

(15)

	[+definite]	[−definite]
[+specific]	[+definite, +specific]	[−definite, specific]
[−specific]	[+definite, −specific]	[−definite, specific]

Let us examine four kinds of copular sentences in order to analyze copular constructions on the basis of (5). (1−4) are repeated below:

(1) Predicational

    a. The hat is big.

    b. The hat/present/thing I bought for Harvey is big.

    c. What I bought for Harvey is a hat.

(2) Specificational

    a. The director of *Anatomy of a Murder* is Otto Preminger.

    b. The only director/person/one I met was Otto Preminger.

    c. Who I met was Otto Preminger.

(3) Identificational

    a. That (woman) is Sylvia.

    b. That (stuff) is DDT.

(4) Equative

    a. Sylvia Obernauer is HER.

    b. Cicero is Tully.

In (4), each DP of both pre-copula and post-copula is definite and preferably has a specific reading, in that it is easily interpreted as pre-established in the discourse ([+d/+s] copula [+d/+s]). In (1), the pre-copula DP is definite and specific, but the post-copula DP is indefinite and nonspecific ([+d/+s] copula [−d/−s]). In (2), the pre-copula DP is definite and nonspecific; however, the post-copula DP is definite and specific ([+d/−s] copula [+d/+s]). In (3), the pre-copula DP is definite and specific; the post-copula DP is definite and nonspecific ([+d/+s] copula [+d/−s]). Our question arises from the pre-copula DP in (2) and the post-copula DP in (3). Although they either have a definite article 'the' or are a referential DP, they have a nonspecific reading. Here, syntactic evidence for a distinction between specific and nonspecific definites should be found. The following classic examples exhibit the contrast between specific and nonspecific NP's:

(16) a. Who did you see pictures of e?
  b. Who did you see a picture of e?
  c. Who did you see many/several/some pictures of e?
  d. *Who did you see the/that/this/John's pictures of e?
  e. *Who did you see every/most/each/ picture(s) of e?

Those in (16a-c) are nonspecific, while the ones in (16d-e) are specific. These examples show that extraction is possible only out of nonspecific NPs.

In order to show the structural difference on extraction out of specific/nonspecific NPs, Kirimi (1999b) assumes a DP for both specific and nonspecific NPs. Namely, Kirimi suggests that definite and indefinite determiners occupy two different positions within the DP, and that the deviation of the ill-formed sentences in (16) follows from a structural difference between the two types of DPs, a syntactic difference that is driven by semantic properties of the determiner phrase. This difference is based on the inherent nature of the determiner, or the semantic interpretation of the indefinite DP within the sentence. Kirimi claims that extraction is possible only when the DP SPEC is not lexically filled. Otherwise, the specific DP will become an island, blocking the extraction. The implication of this analysis is that the semantic property of a DP requires a structural specification in order to block the syntactic movement of a lexical element. Before Kirimi (1999b), Milsark (1974) suggests that there are two types of determiners: weak and strong. The following examples illustrate these two types:

(17) There is/are a/some/a few/three flower (flowers) in this garden.
(18) *There is/are the/every/all/most flower (flowers) in this garden.

The determiners in (17) represent the weak type: they are ambiguous

considering the existence of the entities they are applied to. Those in (18) represent the strong type. Following Milsark (1974), Bowers (1988) makes a distinction between weak and strong noun phrases based on their determiners: the noun phrases in (16b-c) are considered to be weak, whereas those in (16d-e) are classified as strong.6)

On the basis of (10), (15), Bower (1988) and Kirimi (1999b), we would like to argue that the ambiguity we observe in (12a,b) results from the combination of the definiteness property with either a specific or a nonspecific property.

(17)

	DP1	copula	DP2
equative	[+d/+s]		[+d/+s]
predicational	[+d/+s]		[−d/−s]
specificational	[+d/−s]		[+d/+s]
identificational	[+d/+s]		[+d/−s]

When it comes to nonspecific DPs, they cannot be linked to the previous discourse, and hence denote novelty of reference.7) Proper names,

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6)

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            DP
         /      \
      SPEC    /    \
       |     D      NP
     Fred's  |       |
      the   many     N
     those  few
     which  several
     each/all numerals
```
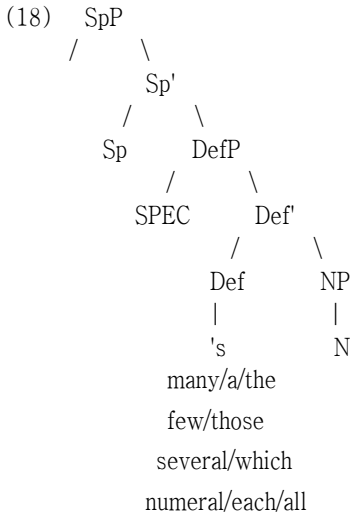
7) Prince (1992) argued that there should be two ways in which information can be novel or familiar, new or old. One is with the speaker's assumption about the addressee (Hearer-Old and Hearer-New called by Prince). In other words, the speaker assumes that the addressee is already aware of the referent of a Hearer-Old NP, while Hearer-New NPs are assumed to introduce new entities to the addressee. On the other hand, the entities can be new or old with respect to a

pronouns, and noun phrases modified by a demonstrative or a definite article are definite, and thus specific. Certain indefinites are predicted to be specific, such as partitives and universal quantifiers.

4. Structure

In addition to the findings described above, we have to arrange the position for DefP under the assumption of the split DP consisting of DefP and SpP. We propose the structure in (18), where Fin selects a noun phrase as its complement, deciding whether this structure represents both specific and nonspecific noun phrases. Here we suggest that all the phrases in (18), whether they are specific or nonspecific, should be located in DefP HEAD. Of course, some have [+definite] feature and others, [−definite] feature:

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discourse, called as Discourse-Old or Discourse-New. The former NPs refer to entities which have already been mentioned in the current discourse, whereas the latter ones refer to entities which have never mentioned before. Prince found that it was the category of Hearer-Old/Hearer-New which correlated roughly with the definite/indefinite distinction, rather than Discourse-Old/Discourse-New. So an indefinite article can be old information in the discourse context.

(18)   SpP
```
              SpP
            /      \
                   Sp'
                 /     \
              Sp      DefP
                     /     \
                  SPEC      Def'
                           /     \
                         Def      NP
                          |        |
                         's        N
                    many/a/the
                    few/those
                  several/which
                numeral/each/all
```

The distinction between specific and nonspecific definites can be attributed to different feature sets. These features appear just on SpP HEAD, which is another functional category. Under the assumption that features need to be checked and that checking can be a movement triggering operation, the immediate conclusion is that the different interpretations result from split DP structures like (18). Let us apply this assumption to (19) and (20):

(19) Predicational
　　　a. The hat is big.
　　　b. The hat/present/thing I bought for Harvey is big.
　　　c. What I bought for Harvey is a hat.
(20) Specificational
　　　a. The director of *Anatomy of a Murder* is Otto Preminger.
　　　b. The only director/person/one I met was Otto Preminger.
　　　c. Who I met was Otto Preminger.

As proposed in the previous section, the definite article is generated in DefP HEAD. The subjects of predicational copular constructions like (19) comes with a set of features [+definite, +specific]. For the feature [+definite] to be checked locally in SpP HEAD, the DefP HEAD moves to SpP HEAD. On the other hand, the subjects of specificational copular constructions like (20) contain a set of features [+definite, −specific]. Therefore, for the feature [+definite] to be checked locally in SpP HEAD, the DefP HEAD need not move to SpP HEAD. At this point, we should keep in mind that the subjects of specificational copular constructions still remain nonspecific in the sense that they are finally specified by the post−copula nominals.

Ⅳ. Conclusion

This paper argues that i) there are no differences with regard to the structural perspectives on both predicational and specificational copular sentences, in that both take the small clause as their complements. ii) the difference between definiteness and specificity of pre−copula and post−copula DPs is responsible for various interpretations of copular sentences. In other words, both sorts of sentences are equally represented on the basis of their own syntactic structures. Differences between both sentences, however, arise from strength of the functional heads included in the splited DP. Two functional categories are proposed: SpP and DefP. In predicational copular sentences, the pre−copula DP has [+specific, +definite] features and the post−copula DP has [−specific, −definite] features. Whereas, in specificational copular sentences, the pre−copula DP has [−specific, +definite] features and the post−copula DP has [+specific, +definite] features. For this reason, several kinds of copular sentences are claimed to emerge.

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Abstract

Specificity and Definiteness in Copular Structure

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   This paper claims that the specificational copular sentence is an inverse predicational copular sentence, and that the predicational copular sentence and specificational copular sentence take one and the same *be*. The difference between definiteness and specificity of pre-copula and post-copula DPs is responsible for various interpretations of copular sentences. In other words, both sorts of sentences are equally represented on the basis of their own syntactic structures. Differences between both sentences, however, arise from strength of the functional heads included in the splited DP. Two functional categories are proposed: SpP and DefP. In predicational copular sentences, the pre-copula DP has [+specific, +definite] features and the post-copula DP has [−specific, −definite] features. Whereas, in specificational copular sentences, the pre-copula DP has [−specific, +definite] features and the post-copula DP has [+specific, +definite] features. For this reason, several kinds of copular sentences are claimed to emerge.

   Key Words: predicational copular sentence; specificational copular sentence; SpP; DefP; specificity; definiteness
   계사구문, 술어적 계사구문, 제한적 계사구문, 한정성, 특이성, 지시성

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