The Development of the Copula in Arabic

Language Contact, Continuity and Change in the Emergence of Modern Hebrew

Faruk Akkuş

Yale University

July 4-7, 2016
The talk is concerned with the properties of the copula across Arabic varieties, particularly in the light of the so-called *peripheral Arabic dialects*, which have gone unstudied to date.

The goals of the talk are multi-faceted, e.g.

- to provide a comprehensive cross-dialectal typology of the copula in Arabic varieties,
- to explain the potential ways that made possible the proliferation of the copula from a diachronic perspective,
- to account for the person-based (1/2 vs. 3) split in several varieties,
- to provide a synchronic account for the syntax of verbless sentences in Arabic (and Hebrew).

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Aim of the talk

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- to explain the potential ways that made possible the proliferation of the copula from a diachronic perspective,
- to account for the person-based (1/2 vs. 3) split in several varieties.
- to provide a synchronic account for the syntax of verbless sentences in Arabic (and Hebrew).
Roadmap

- Copula in Non-peripheral Dialects
  - Properties of PRON
  - Syntax of Verbless Sentences
  - PRON from a historical perspective

- Copula in Peripheral Dialects
  - Introducing peripheral dialects
  - Variation across the varieties and a historical account
  - Synchronic account
Copula in non-peripheral varieties

Copula in Arabic dialects

Modern Arabic dialects, e.g. Moroccan, Egyptian, Lebanese, and Gulf dialects of Arabic, pattern the same in their lack of a copula in non-generic present tense sentences (and word order (SVO/VSO)) (Benmamoun 2000).

Only past (and future tense) displays an overt verbal copula which agrees with the subject.

(1) a. d-dar kbira
    the-house big
    ‘The house is big.’

b. d-dar kanət kbira
    the-house be.PAST.3FS big
    ‘The house was big.’ (Moroccan Arabic)
The use of the pronominal copula (PRON) is in fact possible in non-peripheral Arabic dialects. It is limited to equational sentences, where the predicate is referential, (2) and (3), e.g. (Adger and Ramchand 2003; Citko 2008; Den Dikken 2006; Higgins 1979).

(2) predicational (Lebanese Arabic, Choueiri (2016, p. 102))
l-bornayţa ∅/keen-it/*hiyye māškle/hālwe/b-l-beet
the-hat.fs ∅/was-fs/*she problem/nice/in-the-house
‘The hat is/was a problem/nice/at home.’

(3) equational
Amal Alamuddin ?*∅/keen-it/hiyye Amal Clooney
Amal Alamuddin ?*∅/was-fs/she Amal Clooney
‘Amal Alamuddin is/was Amal Clooney.’
Copula in Hebrew

Hebrew also exhibits the grammaticalization of the demonstrative pronoun ‘hu’ or ‘hi’ to copula in present nominal sentences, e.g. (4) (Li and Thompson 1977, p. 427).

(4) a. david ha-ganav
    David def-thief
    ‘David the thief./*David is the thief.’

   b. david hu    ha-ganav
      David COP.ms def-thief
      ‘David is the thief.’

Berman and Grosu (1976: 266): “[l]n identity sentences, the presence of a copula morpheme is obligatory when the subject is full NP.”

Distributionally, while PRON is prohibited in predicational sentences in Arabic (2), the null copula is said to be unacceptable in equational sentences (3). The verbal copula $K(W)N$ occurs in both types of copular sentences.
Verbless Sentences


- Distributionally, while PRON is prohibited in predicational sentences in Arabic (2), the null copula is said to be unacceptable in equational sentences (3). The verbal copula K(W)N occurs in both types of copular sentences.
Pronominal Copula, Choueiri (2016)

(5)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{TP} \\
\text{T'} \\
\text{KN} \rightarrow \text{T} \quad \text{(FP)} \\
\text{F'} \\
\text{PRON} \rightarrow \text{F} \\
\text{PredP} \\
\text{Subj} \\
\text{Pred'} \\
\text{Pred} \\
\emptyset \\
\text{AP/NP/PP/(DP)}
\end{array}
\]

(Choueiri 2016:104)
An asymmetric *small clause* structure (PredP) where thematic relations are licensed, which is delimited by a head, Pred.

A basic structural difference exists between equational and predicational sentences. Only the former projects a functional phrase, FP, in the extended projection of Pred. F hosts PRON, while K(W)N spells out the tense head, T, which is always projected in verbless sentences, as in Aoun, Benmamoun, and Choueiri (2010) and Benmamoun (2008).

The common view of PRON as an exponent of agreement features in T cannot be upheld (contra Doron 1983, 1986; Eid 1991; Benmamoun 2008).
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PRON vs. K(W)N

Doron (1983, 1986) and Eid (1983, 1991) established many of the characteristics of PRON in Arabic and in Hebrew that indicate that PRON and K(W)N cannot be generated in the same position.

▶ While K(W)N shows person agreement with its nominal subjects, PRON is said to agree with them only in number and gender.

(6) a. inta kunt/*kaan il-muškila
   you.ms was.2ms/*was the-problem.fs
   ‘You were the problem.’

   b. il-ṭalaba kaan*(-u) il-muškila
   the-students was*(-3p) the-problem.fs
   ‘The students were the problem.’
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        the-students was*(-3p) the-problem.fs
        ‘The students were the problem.’
PRON vs. K(W)N

- PRON takes only the form of 3rd person independent pronouns, even when the subject is non-3rd person, as in (7) and (8).

(7) inta huwwa/*inta il-mudarris (Lebanese Arabic)
    you.ms he/*you.ms the-teacher
    ‘You are the teacher.’

(8) ana huwwa/*ana il-mudarris
    I he/*I the-teacher
    ‘I am the teacher.’

Thus, PRON does not seem to express agreement in person with the subject.
**PRON vs. K(W)N**

- **PRON** is not compatible with verbal predicates.

  (9)  
  a. ma ḥada (*huwwe) am yirkuḍ  
      neg. someone (*he) asp. run  
      ‘No one is running.’  
  b. ma ḥada keen am yirkuḍ  
      neg. someone was asp. run  
      ‘No one was running.’ (Lebanese Arabic)

- While K(W)N can precede the subject (10a), **PRON** must always be sandwiched between the subject and the predicate (10b).

  (10)  
  a. (keen-it) Alya (keen-it) l-meškle  
      (was-fs) Alya (was-fs) the-problem  
      ‘Alya was the problem.’  
  b. (*hiyye) Alya (hiyye) l-meškle  
      (*she) Alya (she) the-problem  
      ‘Alya is the problem.’ (Lebanese Arabic)
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       (was-fs) Alya (was-fs) the-problem 
       ‘Alya was the problem.’
   b. (*hiyye) Alya (hiyye) l-meškle 
      (*she) Alya (she) the-problem 
      ‘Alya is the problem.’ (Lebanese Arabic)
PRON vs. K(W)N

Choueiri (2016) agrees with the implications of many of the contrasts between the PRON and K(W)N for the structure and properties of PRON, but takes issue with the Doron’s (1983, 1986) conclusion.

- She notes that an analysis that takes PRON as the realization of the agreement features on T cannot account for its lack of agreement in person.
- Accordingly, she offers a structure where FP hosts the PRON, while K(W)N is realized in TP.

\[
(11) \quad [ \text{TP} [T \text{ KWN} [F \text{ PRON} [\text{PredP} \text{ subj [Pred ... } \text{ ]}\text{ ]}\text{ ]}\text{ ]}\text{ ]}\text{ ]}
\]
Summary:

- Descriptively, modern Arabic dialects (and Hebrew) distinguish two types of verbless sentences: predicative/predicational and equational.
- The common view takes PRON to be the realization of the agreement features of T, while Choueiri (2016) argues that it is generated in FP, and Eid (1991) proposes that it is the “identity predicate”.
PRON in a historical perspective

Historically, PRON seems to be very conservative in maintaining the same properties, as confirmed by the data from Classical Arabic.

► No copula is used in predicational sentences.

(12) Allah-u ghanii-un hamiid-un
                                   Allah-Nom rich-Nom praiseworthy-Nom
‘Allah is free of need and praiseworthy.’
   (Quran; 64:6, from Alsaeedi (2015, p. 24))

► However, PRON is employed in equational sentences.

(13) Allah-u huwa al-ghanii-u al-hamiid-u
                                   Allah-Nom he Def-rich-Nom Def-praiseworthy-Nom
‘Allah is the free of need and praiseworthy.’ (Quran; 35:15)
In past sentences, the verbal auxiliary/copula is required.

(14) Kull-u at-t’aam-i kana hill-an li-bani Israeal-a
     All-Nom Def-food-Gen COP lawful-Acc for-sons Israel-Acc
     ‘All food was lawful to the Children of Israel.’
     (Quran; 3:93, from Alsaeeedi 2015: 27)

Thus, the properties of the verbless sentences in Classical Arabic have been preserved in modern Arabic dialects.
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Thus, the properties of the verbless sentences in Classical Arabic have been preserved in modern Arabic dialects.
Peripheral Arabic Dialects

The so-called *peripheral Arabic* dialects, i.e. those which lost contact with the mainstream Arabic-speaking world (Akkuş 2016; Owens 2009), provide crucial empirical data for the diachronic and synchronic study of the copula.

- They are different from Arabic-based pidgins and creoles, spoken as a medium for interethnic communication (e.g. Tosco and Manfredi 2013).
- Although some of them have undergone extensive structural changes (Owens 2009; Talay 2011), there is in fact a continuum of change (Akkuş 2016).
- They manifest various linguistic peculiarities that are mainly due to close linguistic contact with Iranian, Turkic languages, Aramaic or Greek.
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Anatolian $qəltu$-dialects

(i) Mardin group
(ii) Siirt group
(iii) Diyarbakır group
(iv) Kozluk-Sason-Muş group

(Jastrow 1978, 2006a)
Anatolian Arabic Varieties

(Jastrow 2006b)
Central Asian Arabic Varieties

(a) Uzbekistan Arabic
   (i) Bukhara dialect
   (ii) Qashqa-darya dialect

(b) Arabic dialects in Afghanistan

(c) Arabic dialects in Iran
    (Akkuş 2016; Seeger 2013)
Central Asian Arabic Varieties

The Central Asian Arabic enclaves

In brackets after the names of the regions the number of villages with Arabic-speaking inhabitants

Ulrich Seeger, 2013.
First published in the article:
Zum Verhältnis der zentralasiatischen arabischen Dialekte.
In: Nicht nur mit Engelzungen. Beiträge zur semitischen Dialektologie.

(Seeger 2013)
Peripheral dialects manifest striking historical developments, with various paths.

**Path I: PRON across the Paradigm**

Extension of the copula to the whole paradigm where the copula has the form of the independent personal pronouns or derived from them. e.g. Siirt, Mardin, Daragözü, Cyrpiot Maronite Arabic.

(15)  

a. ūwe/kemal ūwe awne  
   he/kemal  cop.3m here  
   ‘He/Kemal is here.’

b. īye īye awne  
   she cop.3f here  
   ‘She is here.’  (Siirt Arabic, Jastrow 2006: 92)
### Path I paradigm in some dialects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Siirt</th>
<th>Cypriot (Borg 1985)</th>
<th>Mardin (Grigore 2007)</th>
<th>Daragözü</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3m. sg.</strong></td>
<td>ūwe ūwe awne</td>
<td>áda o xáyti</td>
<td>hūwe gbīr we</td>
<td>hīyu ... -ū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘he is here’</td>
<td>‘this is my brother’</td>
<td>‘he is big’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3f. sg.</strong></td>
<td>īye īye awne</td>
<td>l-ıkńîse e maftúxa</td>
<td>hīya gbīre ye</td>
<td>hīya lbayt-ī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the church is open’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3pl</strong></td>
<td>ṣanne ṣanne awne</td>
<td>p-pkyára enne ma āk</td>
<td>hənne gbār ṣanne</td>
<td>hīyaŋ ... -ən</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the wells are deep’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2m. sg.</strong></td>
<td>ṣant ṣant awne</td>
<td>ṣant gbīr ṣant</td>
<td>ṣant məni ṣant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the wells are deep’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2f. sg.</strong></td>
<td>ṣanti ṣanti awne</td>
<td>ṣanti gbīre ṣanti</td>
<td>ṣante ... ṣante</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2pl</strong></td>
<td>ṣanten ṣanten awne</td>
<td>ṣanten gbār ṣanten</td>
<td>ṣanto ... ṣanto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1sg</strong></td>
<td>anā anā awne</td>
<td>anā</td>
<td>anā gbīr anā</td>
<td>nā ḫāš nā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I am good’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I am good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1pl</strong></td>
<td>nāḥne nāḥne awne</td>
<td>nāxni naxni mpsallin</td>
<td>nāḥne gbār nāḥne</td>
<td>nāḥne ... nāḥne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘we are educated’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In Siirt, the copula is identical to the personal pronoun. Other varieties use the shortened version of the pronoun in the 3sg. and pl.
- In Siirt and Cypriot Arabic varieties, the copula precedes the predicate, whereas in Mardin and Daragözü, it appears in post-predicate position (see also Tillo Arabic, Lahdo (2009)).
Path I - Tillo Arabic

“The copulative pronoun is identical to the independent personal pronoun” (Lahdo 2009: 172).

(16) Pronoun Copula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3m. sg.</th>
<th>3f. sg.</th>
<th>3pl</th>
<th>2m. sg.</th>
<th>2f. sg.</th>
<th>2pl</th>
<th>1sg</th>
<th>1pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uww</td>
<td>iyy</td>
<td>ənne</td>
<td>ənt</td>
<td>ənti</td>
<td>ənten</td>
<td>anā</td>
<td>nəḥne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uww</td>
<td>iyy</td>
<td>ənne</td>
<td>ənt</td>
<td>ənti</td>
<td>ənten</td>
<td>anā</td>
<td>nəḥne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that the use of the copula is not constrained by some distributional pattern, such as predicative or equational sentences, as seen in (17).

(17)  

a. Tillo iyy aṭyap  
   Tillo cop.3m better  
   ‘Tillo is better.’ (Lahdo 2009: 153)

b. āk əl-xādəmayn ənten ənten  
   those the-servants.dual cop.2pl you.pl  
   ‘Those two servants are you.’ (Lahdo 2009: 172)
Path I - Afghanistan Arabic

Afghanistan Arabic exhibits the same properties, as seen in (18) and (19). The copula is identical to the object pronoun suffixes (Ingham 2005), as the comparison between (19) and (20) makes clear.¹

(18) Ḣastūn-ak  (Ingham 2005, p. 30)
how-cop.2m
‘How are you?’

(19) duklan minin-in
they.f who-cop.3pl.f
‘Who are they?’

(20) duk xassál-in
he washed-3pl.f
‘He washed them (f.)’

¹The full paradigm is available in Ingham (2005, p. 30).
The essential point is that if Classical Arabic and other non-peripheral dialects, e.g. Lebanese or Moroccan Arabic are to be taken to be at Stage 1, where the use of the copula is subject to certain semantic and structural restrictions, dialects such as Tillo can be taken to be at Stage 2, in which the copula, which derives from the corresponding personal pronoun, is generalized across the paradigm, the *predicational* vs. *equational* dichotomy is not maintained.
Path II: Development of Auxiliary

The dialects in this section have developed a verbal auxiliary/copula in present tense, whose distribution again varies across dialects. In some dialects, the verbal auxiliary is found only with local persons, i.e. *categorical split*, whereas in others verbal auxiliary is found for all persons, but has different properties.
Person-based Categorical Split

The dialects of this group developed a person-based contrast, local vs. non-local persons. For instance, in Khorasan Arabic, in the 3rd person, the enclitic form of the pronoun is used, but the dialect borrowed the Persian auxiliary *haṭt* (< Pers. *hast*) for other persons, as in (21) and (22) (Seeger 2002).

(21)  
\[ \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{miṭalmān } \text{haṭtan} \\
& \text{muslim } \text{be.2PL.F} \\
& \text{‘You are muslims.’} \\
\text{b. } & \text{mašgūl } \text{haṭt} \\
& \text{busy } \text{be.1M} \\
& \text{‘I am busy/at work.’}
\end{align*} \]

(22)  
\[ \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{miṭalmān } \text{hū} \\
& \text{muslim } \text{COP.3M} \\
& \text{‘He is muslim’} \\
\text{b. } & \text{(uhū) mašgūl } \text{hū} \\
& \text{he } \text{busy } \text{COP.3M} \\
& \text{‘He is busy/at work.’}
\end{align*} \]

The examples show that both the auxiliary and the copula are compatible with *stage-level* and *individual-level* predicates (Carlson 1977; Milsark 1974), a fact which will be significant later.
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\[
\begin{align*}
(21) & \quad \text{a. } \text{miṯalmân haṭtan} & \quad \text{(22) a. } \text{miṯalmân hū} \\
& \quad \text{muslim} \quad \text{be.2PL.F} & \quad \text{muslim} \quad \text{COP.3M} \\
& \quad \text{‘You are muslims.’} & \quad \text{‘He is muslim’} \\
& \quad \text{b. } \text{mašḡūl haṭṭ} & \quad \text{b. } \text{(uhū) mašḡūl hū} \\
& \quad \text{busy} \quad \text{be.1M} & \quad \text{he} \quad \text{busy} \quad \text{COP.3M} \\
& \quad \text{‘I am busy/at work.’} & \quad \text{‘He is busy/at work.’}
\end{align*}
\]

The examples show that both the auxiliary and the copula are compatible with *stage-level* and *individual-level* predicates (Carlson 1977; Milsark 1974), a fact which will be significant later.
The full paradigm is illustrated in (23).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Copula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3m. sg.</td>
<td>uhū</td>
<td>hū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. sg.</td>
<td>ihī</td>
<td>hī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3m. pl</td>
<td>uhumm</td>
<td>hum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. pl</td>
<td>ihinn(e)</td>
<td>hinne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2m. sg.</td>
<td>inte</td>
<td>hatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2f. sg.</td>
<td>inti</td>
<td>hatti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2m. pl</td>
<td>intu</td>
<td>hattin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2f. pl</td>
<td>intan</td>
<td>hattan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1sg.</td>
<td>ane</td>
<td>hatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>aḥne</td>
<td>hattīn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Path II - Hasköy Arabic

The same split is reported in Talay (2001) for Hasköy Arabic, both with $S$- and $I$-predicates. Same in Kinderib (Jastrow 1978).

(24) Pronoun Copula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3m. sg.</th>
<th>3f. sg.</th>
<th>3pl</th>
<th>2m. sg.</th>
<th>2f. sg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3m. sg.</td>
<td>yū</td>
<td>yā</td>
<td>ənnen, īyen</td>
<td>ənt</td>
<td>ənte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. sg.</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>nne</td>
<td>kət</td>
<td>kətte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(25) a. unī-wa
here-COP.3M
‘He is here.’

b. īmme-ya
my mother-COP.3F
‘She is my mother.’

(26) a. šəmde-kət
how-be.2M
‘How are you?’

b. ande-kət
who-be.2M
‘Who are you?’
Path II - Non-categorial split

Person-based non-categorical Split

The representative dialect of this category is Sason Arabic. As far as the past tense copula is concerned, Sason is not different from other Arabic varieties. Strikingly, the Sason copula paradigm is identical to the past tense paradigm, as in (27) except for the 3rd person where clitic forms of the 3rd person pronouns are used as copula (28).

(27) a. lome raxu kənt
today sick be.2M
‘You are sick today.’

b. ams raxu kənt
yesterday sick be.2M
‘You were sick yesterday.’

(28) a. raxu-ye
sick-COP.3
‘He is sick.’

b. koyse-ye
beautiful-COP.3
‘She is beautiful.’
As seen in (28), the 3rd person copula is used with *individual-* and *stage-level* predicates. Similarly, the auxiliary used for 1st and 2nd person is compatible with both types of predicates, as shown in (29).

(29)  

a. raxu kənt  
sick  be.2M  
‘You are sick today.’

b. gbir kənt  
big  be.2M  
‘You are big.’
Based on these observations, the verbal and pronominal copular paradigms found in present and past tenses in Sason are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3m. sg.</td>
<td>kan</td>
<td>ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. sg.</td>
<td>kane</td>
<td>ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>kano</td>
<td>nen</td>
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<tr>
<td>2m. sg.</td>
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<td>kənt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2f. sg.</td>
<td>kənte</td>
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<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>kənto</td>
<td>kənto</td>
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<td>1sg</td>
<td>kəntu</td>
<td>kəntu</td>
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</table>

Sason seems to pattern with Khorasan Arabic and Hasköy Arabic in terms of person-based split and the compatibility of the pronominal copula and the verbal copula with both \textit{stage-level} and \textit{individual-level} predicates in present.
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However, Sason Arabic differs from those dialects in that it also has a verbal copula version for the 3rd person forms:

(31)  

<table>
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<th>Verbal Copula</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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Interestingly, the 3rd person verbal copula forms in (31) are restricted to *stage-level* predicates.

(32)  

a. ku  raxu  
be.3M sick
‘He is sick.’

b. *ku  koys  
be.3M handsome
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A Historical Account

Given the variation across Arabic varieties and the general consensus that the proliferation of the copula in peripheral dialects is a later development (Jastrow 1978, 2006a; Lahdo 2009; Seeger 2002; Versteegh 1997), which have been isolated from the Arab world, I propose the following stages.

- **Stage 1:** Classical Arabic and non-peripheral Arabic dialects (Lebanese or Egyptian). Their characteristics are the use of the copula optionally in equational sentences, but not in predicational sentences (2) and (3). The 3rd person form of the copula is used for all persons. Thus, the copula is subject to certain semantic and structural restrictions.

- **Stage 2:** Dialects such as Tillo and Mardin belong to Stage 2. The characteristic of this stage is the generalization of the copula across the paradigm, where the copula has the form of the personal pronouns or derived from them. In addition, presumably in relation to the generalization of the copula, the predicational versus equational distinction is not retained (17).
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Stage 3: This is the intermediate stage which lacks empirical data, yet presumably existed at some period in the history of Arabic. Instead of predicational vs. equational, a categorical distinction between stage-level and individual-level predicates is made, which correlates with the emergence of the auxiliary.

Crosslinguistically, e.g. Spanish *ser/estar*.

(33) Juan es inteligente
    ‘Juan is intelligent.’

(34) Juan está ausente
    ‘Juan is absent.’
Stage 4: This is the stage where person-based split emerges, as in Khorasan Arabic or Hasköy Arabic. Regarding this split, one possibility is that speakers had access to copula only in the 3rd person form in their primary linguistic data (PLD), and thus in the process of generalizing the copula to all persons, they made use of a different strategy for 1st and 2nd persons and adopted the verbal copula.

   e.g. Khorasan Arabic borrowed the Persian auxiliary ḥat (˂ Pers. hast) for local persons, as in (21) (cf. Sason Arabic for a language internal strategy).
A Historical Account

Compatibility of the pronominal copula of 3rd persons and the verbal copula of local persons with I- and S-predicates (25) and (26) in contrast to Stage 3.

▶ a pragmatic reason which relates to communicative purposes of speakers and expressivity potential of a language. If the person-based split is not followed/accompanied with a situation where both auxiliary and copula are compatible with individual and stage-level predicates, then speakers could express only I-predicates for 3rd person, and S-predicates for local persons. This would lead to a restrictive language in terms of expressivity.

▶ another option would be to introduce/create two different types of copulas for 1st/2nd and 3rd person to express individual and stage-level readings. However, this would lead to four different forms of copula. What language learners do is that on the basis of the available PLD, they generalize the scope of both copula types.
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Stage 5: Sason Arabic resembles the dialects in Stage 4 in many respects. Using a language internal strategy (unlike Khorasan Arabic), it extended the past tense auxiliary paradigm to present tense for local persons, and uses the pronominal clitics for 3rd person.

The extension of the past paradigm includes the negation pattern as well. In Sason Arabic, sentential negation is realized by the particle *maa*, which appears left-adjacent to the verb in the perfective aspect, whereas in imperfective the negative markers are *mo-/mə-/mi*.

(35) naze maa qare kitāb
    naze neg  read.past.3f book
    ‘Naze did not read book(s).’

(36) mi y-addel šīne le i-xlo-llu.
    neg 3m-do  what that 3pl-say-to him
    ‘He doesn’t do what they tell him.’
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The past form of the negation, i.e. *maa*, is in cases of verbal copula in the present tense, in contrast with the pronominal copula.

(37) lome raxu maa-kənt
today sick neg-be.2M
‘You are not sick today.’

(38) zgăr nihane me-nnen
children here neg.cop.3pl
‘The children aren’t here.’

An interesting property of Sason is that it also has auxiliary forms that are used with 3rd persons, only with predicates expressing stage-level properties (32). For an explanation for this extension in the context of verbal aspect in the language, see Deo and Akkuş (in prep).
Peripheral Arabic dialects have implications for the syntactic analysis of verbless sentences too.

Against the *Identity Predicate of Eid (1991)*

- Given that PRON occurs only in equational sentences, Eid (1991) analyzes it an *identity predicate*, where it is the expression of the identity relation between the subject and the predicate.

- In addition to the counter-arguments in Choueiri (2016), peripheral Arabic dialects provide the strongest evidence against Eid’s (1991) proposal. As is clear by now, peripheral varieties do not exhibit a predicational vs. equational distinction.
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Synchronic Aspect

Against Choueiri (2016)

As clear from varieties which have extended the PRON to the whole paradigm, Choueiri’s (2016) criticism of Doron’s (1983) analysis, that agreement features on T cannot account for its lack of agreement in person, loses its ground.

Thus, the dialects provide support to Doron’s analysis, i.e. PRON is the phonological realization of a feature bundle. Moreover, PRON does not carry (contrastive/exhaustive) stress (Jastrow 2005, Talay 2001, Lahdo 2009), unlike K(W)N.

(39) ənt oratman KINT
      you.m teacher   be.2m
      ‘You ARE a teacher.’

(40) *dani oratman YE
      Dani  teacher   cop.3
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It also supports the view that in non-peripheral Arabic dialects such as Classical Arabic and Moroccan Arabic, verbless (copula) clauses are indeed verbless, i.e., that there is no null copula, à la Benmamoun (2000) and contra, Fassi Fehri (1993), Shlonsky (1997) and Ouhalla (2013).

For instance, Sason, which has developed an overt copula, had to recruit the 3rd person pronoun and past tense paradigm for that purpose. What it didn’t do is conjugate the copula root K(W)N in the present tense which is what would be expected under the null copula hypothesis.
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Sason seems to support the argument advanced in Benmamoun (2000, 2008) where it is argued that the presence or absence of the verbal copula has to do with whether \( T \) contains a verbal feature, in addition to its nominal feature along the lines outlined in Chomsky (1995), where features, including categorial features, play a role in driving the interaction between lexical and functional categories.\(^2\)

\[
(41)\quad \text{TP} \\
| \text{Subj} | \text{T'} \\
| \text{T[+present,+D]} | \text{AP/NP/PP} \\
| \varnothing/clitic | \text{Pred} 
\]

\(^2\)Although the dependency between tense and the verb with respect to the categorial feature of the former has been abandoned in Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) work, a number of recent work have made use of categorial features, e.g. Rizzi (2013), Biberauer et al. (2014), and Hill 2014.
More on the Person-split

Seki (2000) reports that Kamaiurá (Tupi-Guarani in the Amazons) has a person-based split in copular construction, which resembles Sason in terms of person-split, but also differs from it in crucial ways.

Kamaiurá has the particle -eko which is used in nonverbal sentences. With all persons, it expresses a reading that corresponds to the meaning of estar, i.e. stage-level predicate.

(42) a. ’am a-ko ikue=we (Seki 2000: 71)
here 1sg-eko yesterday=retr
‘I have been (lit: am) here since yesterday.’

b. mam tataw-a r-eko-w
onde Tatap-N rel-eko-circ
‘Where is Tatap?’

c. n=o-ko-ite
neg=3sg-eko-neg
‘She is not here’
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\[ \text{mam tataw-a r-eko-w} \quad \text{onde Tatap-N rel-eko-circ} \]
\[ \text{‘She is not here’} \]
\[ \text{c. n=o-ko-ite} \quad \text{neg=3sg-eko-neg} \]
Verbless Sentences

This particle is also compatible with predicates that express individual-level properties in the case of 1st and 2nd person, as shown in (43). However, in 3rd person, in order to express an individual-level reading, this particle cannot be used, instead the demonstrative *a’e* suffixed with the attributive *-ram* is employed (44).

\[(43)\] kara’iw-a a-ko \hspace{1cm} (Seki 2000: 71)
não-índio-N 1sg-eko

‘I am not Indian.’

\[(44)\] kara’iw-a a’e-ram
não-índio-N dem-att

‘he is not Indian.’
Conclusions

- The realization of the copula across Arabic dialects shows a great deal of variation, with various semantic and structural restrictions, e.g. *predicational* vs. *equational*, *stage-level* vs. *individual-level* predicates. Therefore, it has important implications for comparative and diachronic Arabic syntax.

- The peripheral Arabic varieties have developed separate paths: (i) extension of the PRON to the whole person paradigm, (ii) employing a verbal copula for local persons (1st/2nd) in contrast to 3rd person.

- The peripheral dialects seem to support Doron’s analysis of PRON (Akkuş to appear; Akkuş and Benmamoun 2016).
Thanks to Ashwini Deo, Elabbas Benmamoun, Steve Anderson, Lina Choueiri, and Robert Frank for the discussion.
References