8.0 Introduction

In an early work on types of copular clauses, Benveniste (1966b) notes that the copular verb "to be" is in fact a typologically rare phenomenon\(^1\), basically limited to a subset of Indo-European languages and a few scattered exceptions. He notes that "...one could more quickly enumerate the inflected languages that do not have [be-less sentences] ...", than list the ones that do. The class of languages which contain be-less sentences is widespread; it includes languages from practically every language family and from every continent. What is particularly interesting, is that a large number of these languages use a construction similar to the Irish equative which uses an extra pronoun\(^2\) to mark the sentence as equative. In particular it can be noted that without exception in all these languages this pronoun is obligatory in equatives and optional in predicatives. This is true of such widespread languages as Hebrew, Irish and Haitian Creole. The fact that the identical construction appears in a wide variety of languages means that this kind of construction is one easily accessed by UG. Any account of these facts must necessarily account for all the

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\(^1\)As opposed to auxiliary verb *be*.

\(^2\)A different group (for example Russian and some dialects of Arabic and Chinese) seems to use determiners for this function. I will have little to say about these languages here.
languages that have this construction. In this chapter, I will examine a few previous accounts of be-less sentences. In particular, I will examine a set of analyses of the extra agreement pronoun which use the notion of lexical government and the ECP (Empty Category Principle) to account for the distribution. I will show that all such accounts fail for Irish, thus must be rejected. After this, I will present the single theoretical account of Irish, that of Doherty (1992, forthcoming), which I show is not consistent with other aspects of Irish syntax.

8.1 ECP Accounts of be-less sentences.

Heggie (1988, 1990) and DeGraff (1992) present ECP analyses of be-less copular constructions in Hebrew and Haitian respectively. In this section, I will sketch out their arguments and then show why these accounts cannot be extended to Irish.

8.1.1 Heggie (1988, 1990)

Recall the facts of Hebrew, which are similar to those of Irish. Hebrew has no verb "to be" in the present tense. Predicative sentences (1) allow an optional agreement pronoun. Equative sentences require this pronoun (2):

1) a) Dani more
   Danny teacher
   "Danny is a teacher"

   b) Dani hu more
   Danny 3sng teacher
   "Danny is the teacher"

2) a) *Dani ha-more
   Danny the teacher
   "Danny is the teacher"

   b) Dani hu ha-more

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3for discussion of this principle see, for example, Kayne (1981, 1984)
4A descriptive account of the facts is found in Ó Siadhail (1989) and an old account assuming flat structure is found in Stenson (1981).
5Several accounts of Hebrew predate these accounts, for example Doron (1986), Berman and Grosu (1976). For convincing arguments against these approaches see Rapoport (1987)
Heggie (1988, 1990) proposes that the obligatoriness of the pronoun in equative clauses follows from the interaction of several principles. She proposes that referring attributive NPs in equative constructions must move for case reasons. She suggests that the surface position of predicate NPs is the VP-adjoined Constructional Focus position of Rochemont (1986). The structure she proposes is thus seen in (3) (where \( \lambda \) is her null copular verb — roughly equivalent to my COP).

The subject has raised to the specifier of IP for case reasons. The null \( \lambda \) verb raises to INFL, the Predicate NP raises to constructional focus position. According to Heggie the obligatoriness follows as follows:

Assuming the ECP as formulated in Aoun, Hornstein, Lightfoot and Weinberg (1987) where two requirements are placed on a trace — lexical head government at PF and generalized binding at LF — an understanding of equatives can be achieved. ... NP2 does not lexically head govern its trace. This state of affairs forces \( \lambda \) to raise to INFL and undergo lexicalization with AGR so that it may lexically head-govern the trace of NP2 via the trace of \( \lambda \) under V. The obligatoriness of [the agreement pronoun] in equative sentences and its optionality in predicatives can thus be understood in terms of the need for proper government of a predicate trace in the case of equatives.

In other words, the pronoun must be overt in order to lexically head govern the trace of the predicate, and save the sentence from a violation of the ECP.
Heggie's account is simple and straightforward. Unfortunately, however, it is empirically flawed both for Irish and, surprisingly, for Hebrew itself. Recall the basis of Heggie's claim: the pronominal surfaces to serve as a lexical governor of an ungoverned trace. The problem with such an account is that both Irish (McCloskey 1990) and Hebrew (Fox 1994) are languages that strictly use resumptive pronoun strategies for resolving violations of the ECP and subjacency (see chapter 6 above for discussion). To posit that the agreement pronoun surfaces to lexically govern an ungoverned trace completely fails to capture the generalization that Hebrew and Irish consistently use resumptive pronouns to save ECP violations, not some "lexicalization" of abstract heads.

This said, there is an obvious alternative to Heggie's account. This being the possibility that the pronoun is itself a resumptive pronoun (rather than a lexical governor), and that its presence is triggered as a means of making a trace overt, so that it is not subject to the ECP. This approach is the one taken in DeGraff (1992) discussed below in 8.1.2

8.1.2 DeGraff (1992)

DeGraff (1992) is concerned with the distribution of a pronominal element in Haitian Creole. This pronoun has precisely the distribution we have come to expect. It is completely disallowed with AP and PP predicates, causes slight ungrammaticality with bare NP predicates, but is obligatory with DP predicates:

4) a) *Bouki se malad (cf. Bouki malad)
   Bouki SE sick
   "Bouki is sick

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6 Calling this element a "pronoun" is perhaps prejudging the situation slightly. This is especially true since it does not agree in person number or gender with the subject. This case may well be one of those languages that uses determiners to play out the role served by the agreement pronouns in languages like Irish or Hebrew.

7 In Irish and Hebrew, with indefinite NPs the presence of the pronoun is optional. In Haitian by contrast, it causes mild ungrammaticality. Notice that although this is a different result, the contrast is cut in the same way: pronouns are obligatory in equatives and marginally allowed/or optional in predicative NPs.

8 This is true of both definite and indefinite NPs (as seen in 4d), in this Haitian also differs from Irish and Hebrew.
b) *Bouki se anba tab la (cf. Bouki anba tab la)
   Bouki SE under table the
   "Bouki is under the table"

c) ??Bouki se doktè (cf. Bouki doktè)
   Bouki SE doctor
   "Bouki is a doctor"

d) Bouki se {yon doktè/Aristide} (cf. *Bouki {yon doktè/Aristide})
   Bouki SE DET doctor/Aristide
   "Bouki is {a doctor/Aristide}"

DeGraff proposes that the *se morpheme is simply a resumptive pronoun of the subject NP. This morpheme is simply present to rescue an un govered trace. DeGraff proposes that Haitian small clauses take the following forms:

5) a) [AP subject [A\(^{\prime}\) ...A\(^{\circ}\)...]]
   b) [PP subject [P\(^{\prime}\) ...P\(^{\circ}\)...]]
   c) [NP subject [N\(^{\prime}\) ...N\(^{\circ}\)...]]
   d) [DP subject [DP ...[D\(^{\prime}\)...D\(^{\circ}\)...]]

DPs are different from all other small clauses in that the subject is adjoined to the phrase rather than occupying the specifier position of that XP. This, he claims, derives the crucial difference between the DP clauses and the others. In AP/PP/NP small clauses, extraction of the subject is legitimate since there is a lexical governor for the trace: the head of the small clause:

6) \[
\begin{array}{c}
A/P/NP \\
t_{\text{subj}} \\
\text{lexical government} \\
A^{\circ}/P^{\circ}/N^{\circ} \\
\end{array}
\]

In DPs, however, the trace of the subject lies outside the immediate maximal projection of the head D\(^{\circ}\). So the D\(^{\circ}\) cannot lexically govern the trace of the subject:

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9This sentence becomes ungrammatical if a tense morpheme or a negative marker is inserted into the clause. *Se is always omitted in these contexts. This behaviour is entirely predicted, under my account where *Se is simply some spell out of a node in tense. A different spell-out of the T node (such a tense particle) would necessarily block the presence of *Se.
The trace of subject is thus not lexically governed. To rescue this kind of sentence from an ECP violation then, DeGraff proposes that the trace is replaced by a resumptive pronoun in the form of *se*. *Se*, being overt, requires no lexical government, so the structure is rendered grammatical.

Unfortunately, DeGraff’s account simply cannot be extended to Irish. This is evidenced by the word order facts of Irish equatives. The Irish equivalents to *se*: *í, é, iad* appear to the left of both arguments:

7) Is é Proinseas an Platapas
    C agr Francis the Platypus
    “Francis is the Platypus”

Recall, from chapters 2 and 3, that Irish is a language that is strictly left headed and has its specifiers to the left. This means that the underlying structure of the DP small clause would have to be (under DeGraff’s analysis):

8) 

Under such an analysis, we would predict that the extra pronominal would appear after subject NP, in the base position of the subject NP:
9) *Is Proinseas é an Platapas
   "Francis is the Platypus"

This sentence is completely ungrammatical\(^\text{10}\). It is completely unclear to me how the subject NP in an equative NP could appear between its own trace and the head of its small clause:

10) Is [DP é [?? Proinseas] [DP an Platapas]]
    pronoun      Subject      predicate

The fact that subjects appear between the so called resumptive pronoun trace of that subject and the predicative NP seems to me to be strong evidence against a resumptive pronoun account of Irish.

8.1.3 Section Summary

I have shown here that accounts using the ECP as an explanation for the presence of the extra pronominal morphemes in *be*-less copular clauses are inadequate. This is true whether we consider the pronoun to be a lexical governor (as does Heggie) or a resumptive pronoun (like DeGraff). The only empirical account that seems to adequately account for the Irish facts is the one sketched above in chapters 4-6, where the pronoun is simply a realization of agreement features, either on a nominal predicate head, or as the obligatory realization of the null equative head COP.

8.2 Doherty (1992, forthcoming)\(^\text{11}\)

In this short section, I will quickly examine the ground breaking analysis of Doherty (1992, forthcoming) and show that while I adopt many of his conclusions (see chapters 4-6 for example), the basic principles upon which his analysis are founded are flawed. Therefore my analysis is to be preferred.

\(^{10}\)Under the appropriate reading. Such a sentence could appear predicatively, where "Francis" is a category (i.e. There is a group of creatures called "the Francises", and the platypus is one of them). The meaning of the sentence would then be "The platypus is a Francis". We are concerned here, however, only with the equative reading: "Francis is the Platypus".

\(^{11}\)Doherty (1995), however, abandons many of the assumptions criticized in this section. See that work for more discussion.
Let us consider Doherty's basic analysis. He claims that copular clauses differ from verbal clauses in the following ways: (i) the subject of copular clauses is base generated in the specifier of IP, whereas the subject of verbal clauses is in the specifier of the VP (or verbal small clause). (ii) The specifier of IP is rightwards, whereas all other specifiers point leftwards. (iii) In verbal clauses, verbs raise to INFL (and subsequently to C°), but in copular clauses there is no overt head movement. He also assumes that the Is morpheme is a combination of INFL and C° heads. These differences are summarized in the following diagram:

Doherty explains the lack of the agreement pronominals in predicational clauses by claiming that predicational clauses only involve NPs which do not trigger agreement, whereas equatives have DP predicates which trigger agreement\textsuperscript{12}.

In chapters 3 and 4, I argued against Doherty's view of verbal clauses, and by extension, in chapter 5, I argued that the bulk of Doherty's arguments for his approach (the highest subject restriction) cannot hold under the assumption that VSO order does not derive via raising to C° in Irish. The entire empirical basis upon which Doherty bases his

\textsuperscript{12}For more on this kind of distinction see Mandlebaum (1991) and Takano (1992)
analysis then disappears. Further, I have shown how the HSR is easily accounted for in the system proposed here. This aside, there are many problems with Doherty's account.

First we can note that Doherty's account misses a fundamental generalization about all kinds of clauses in Irish. The word order in Irish is consistently complementizer+predicate+agreement+subject. This is true whether the predicate is verbal or not. With verbal clauses, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3, this order is derived via head movement of the verb to an Inflectional head. There is no reason that nominal predicates (even complex ones, see chapter 6) should not be derived using the same mechanism. Doherty is forced to claim that the clausal architecture of copular clauses is fundamentally different from that of verbal clauses. My account, on the other hand, neatly unifies the two clause types and derives language-specific variation from the morphological criteria. My approach to non-verbal predicates is supported via evidence from extraction phenomena and by the behaviour of non-verbal clauses with respect to Ellipsis phenomena.

Next, we can criticize Doherty for his positing of a rightwards specifier for IP. Rightwards specifiers are found nowhere else in the grammar of Irish. This is true both of base generated structures (like small clauses), but also of derived positions like that of the subject position in the specifier of AgrSP. Positing them simply for non-verbal predication seems not only *ad hoc* but entirely inconsistent with what we know otherwise of Irish clauses.

Finally, we have the problem of the equative/predicative word order alternations discussed in chapter 5. Doherty seems to make no structural distinction between the two clause types. This leads to two very problematic considerations. Firstly, Doherty is forced to conclude that the first NP in equatives is the "Predicate" NP, not the subject as I claim:
12) Is é Seán an dochtúir  
   C agr John the doctor  
   C agr Predicate Subject Doherty  
   C agr Subject Predicate Carnie  
   "John is the doctor"

This, of course, misses the generalization that agreement in Irish always follows predicates and precedes subjects. This also makes strange assumptions about what can serve as the attributive NP and what functions as the attribute recipient in equative clauses. Under anybody's assumptions, proper names like "John" are the least predicative of all types of NPs. Heggie (1988) for example notes that there seems to be a hierarchy of what can serve as "attributes" and what can serve as "attribute recipients". Attribute recipients must be to the left of or equal to the attribute on the following hierarchy:

13) Deictics > Proper Names > Definite Descriptors > Indefinites  
    Recipients←--------------------------→Attributes

Given this, calling the proper NP "John" in sentence (12) the predicate seems at best counterintuitive and at worst a stipulation. This is compounded by the fact that Doherty's account has the agreement morpheme agreeing with the "predicate" NP instead of the "subject". This seems completely unmotivated to me. Finally, Doherty's account simply cannot account for the fact that the optional agreement morpheme in predicatives appears to the right of the predicate NP:

13) Is platapas é Seán  
    C platypus agr John  
    "John is a platypus"

Given all these problems, which are all simply accounted for by the account given in chapters 4-6, it is obvious that Doherty's account is empirically inadequate to the task of accounting for Irish copular clauses.

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13 as admittedly does the analysis in Carnie (1992)
8.3 Conclusion

To summarize the conclusions of this chapter, I've shown that the only previous theoretical account of Irish copular clauses, Doherty (1992, forthcoming) suffers from severe theoretical and empirical problems. I've also demonstrated that accounts of be-less clauses in Hebrew and Haitian, which make use of the ECP to account for the distribution of pronominal agreement morphemes, simply cannot account for the Irish facts. From this, then, we are led to the conclusion that the account sketched in chapters 4-6 is the only empirically adequate one.