

On Copular Sentences in Yucatec Maya*

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1. Introduction

Mayan languages are among those that lack a verbal copula, thus there are sentences in these languages with no verbs. In (1) two such examples from Yucatec Maya are shown. In each case the main predicate is either a noun (1a) or an adjective (1b).¹

- (1) a. Koolnáal-en (teen)
farmer-1s.B I
'I am a farmer'
- b. Polok-o'ob (leti'o'ob)
fat-3p.B they
'They are fat'

The basic components of copular sentences in Mayan languages are a predicate and an argument. The argument is expressed as a post-predicate pronominal suffix and can optionally surface in full pronominal/nominal form following the predicate-pronominal suffix complex.² These types of sentences raise interesting questions about the clause structure and morphosyntax of predication. In this paper the primary issue addressed is whether we need a syntactic head (Pred) to mediate the relationship between the predicate and the argument in these sentences.

Following traditional syntactic approaches to predication, a plausible assumption is that there is nothing more than a small clause associated with some type of default (stative) tense/aspect (Williams 1980; Stowell 1981, 1983; Moro 1997; Benmamoun

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¹In this paper the main focus is nominal and adjectival predicates. Predicate constructions like those in (1) are also possible with prepositions, question words, adverbial expressions and quantifiers. Sentences containing the existential copula *yaan* are not treated here.

²These pronominal suffixes are referred to as set B cross reference markers in the Mayanist literature and correspond roughly to absolutive case in that they cross-reference O and S arguments. Yucatec exhibits an aspectual split in which the S argument of intransitive verbs is only marked with the set B suffix in complete aspect and subjunctive mood. They are enclitics and the morphological paradigm is as follows.

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1	-en	-o'on
2	-ech	-e'ex
3	-Ø	-o'ob

2008) in sentences like (1). This view is presented in a variety of forms: (i) subject and predicate are immediately dominated by a node labeled S or SC (= small clause), (ii) the subject occupies a specifier position projected by the non-verbal predicate (AP or NP for example) or (iii) the subject is generated within a projection that houses tense/aspect that is null (Benmamoun 2008). However, a different set of approaches has argued against the existence of the small clause in any of these forms, claiming instead that all predicative relationships are mediated by a syntactic head called Pr/Pred/R(=Relator) (Bowers 1993, 2001; Adger & Ramchand 2003; Baker 2003; Den Dikken 2006).³ The arguments presented in favor of the Pred head are quite varied and not all of them agree as to why this head is necessary and what it does morphosyntactically and semantically. The main objective of this paper is to propose a working syntactic structure for the copular sentences of Yucatec Maya like those in (1) based on some data that was collected in the towns of Santa Elena, Oxkutzkab and Yaxcabá, Yucatán. In doing so, I hope to bring Mayan languages into this important discussion about the morphosyntax of predication and also lend empirical support to one of the possible views mentioned above.

The main claim of this paper is that the sentences in (1) have a syntactic structure in which the single argument is generated in the specifier of a syntactic head, Pred, which takes the non-verbal predicate as its complement. The data offered in support of this claim center on the presence and position of linking elements such as *bey* (= like) as well as the presence and position of the set B suffix that cross-references the single argument. It is argued that these suffixes are clitics that are morphological realizations of predicative relationships. This correlation is captured by proposing that set B suffixes are agreement morphemes that are generated in Pred. The last sections of the paper explore some phonological and semantic restrictions on copular sentences and attempt to integrate the overall idea into a general hypothesis about the types of predicative expressions that have been argued to exist in Yucatec Maya.

2. Non-verbal Predicates in Yucatec Maya: Background

Though recently disputed in the literature (Gutiérrez Bravo & Monforte y Madera 2008), it is generally argued that Mayan languages have a ‘basic’ or ‘neutral’ word order in which the predicate precedes the subject (Durbin & Ojeda 1978; Aissen 1992; Bohmeyer 2009). This is shown for copular sentences in (2a/b) and for a sentence that contains a verbal core (2c).

- (2) a. K'éek'en-ech teech
 pig-2s.B you
 ‘You are a pig’
- b. K'oja'an-Ø in suku'un
 sick-3s.B 1s.A older brother
 ‘My older brother is sick’

³For Den Dikken (2006) the relator is simply a cover term for predicative relationships. There is no syntactic head that is specified to occur solely in the sentences like those of (1).

- c. T-u ts'on-aj le k'éej-o' in nool.
 PERF-3s.A hunt-COMP.3s.B DEF deer-DISTAL 1s.A grandfather
 'My grandfather killed the deer'

In each case the subject occurs to the right of its predicate, which is a noun in (2a), an adjective in (2b) and a verb phrase in (2c) (note that constituent order within the verb phrase is VO, yielding a basic VOS word order).

Deviations from this 'basic' or 'neutral' word order are often attributed to information structure. When subjects are topics, they precede the predicate and are marked with the topic clitic *-e'*. This is shown in (3).

- (3) a. Tech-e' k'éeek'en-ech
 you-TOP pig-2s.B
 'As for you, you are a pig'
- b. In suku'un-e' k'oja'an-Ø
 1s.A older brother-TOP sick-3s.B
 'As for my older brother, he is sick'
- c. In nool-e' t-u ts'on-aj le k'éej-o'
 1s.A grandfather-TOP PERF-3s.A hunt-COMP.3s.B DEF deer-DISTAL
 'As for my grandfather, he killed the deer'

Focus constructions have unique properties in all Mayan languages, particularly those in which the A argument of transitive clauses is in focus (see Bricker 1978; Bohnermeyer 1998, 2002; Tonhauser 2003; Gutiérrez Bravo & Monforte y Madera 2009). In copular sentences, whose sole argument is an S argument, focused subjects appear to the left of the non-verbal predicate just as the subject appears to the left of the verbal core in A-focus constructions. In addition, each of these constructions gives rise to a unique type of morphosyntactic marking on the extrafocal constituent: optional presence of the set B clitic on the non-verbal predicate and the absence of any aspect marking, pronominal subject marking (with the set A prefix) or completive status marking on the verbal core in the A-focus construction.⁴ This is shown in (4) - (6).

⁴I need to collect more data on this particular point. The contrastive situations in (4) and (5) are the only ones I was able to get a clear judgment on. I have indicated that the predicate takes the set B suffix in parentheses because there was some variability with respect to its presence. However, I still do not know if this constitutes a real pattern. The preliminary generalization seems to be that topics need the suffix to appear on the predicate whereas focused subjects may do without the suffix. If this indeed constitutes a real pattern, it could provide additional evidence in favor of the views supported in Bricker (1978), Bohnermeyer (1998, 2002) and Tonhauser (2003) that focus constructions constitute their own special type of clause in Yucatec and cannot be derived via displacement of constituents from a more basic clause type (Aissen 1992). Topics, on the other hand, would not form a separate clause type, explaining why the suffix appears on the predicate.

- (4) CONTEXT: There are two men and someone asks ‘which of you is a farmer?’
 Teen koolnáal(-en). Leti’-e’ k-u beet-ik jmesero-il
 I farmer(-1s.B). He-TOP HAB-3s.A do-INC.3s.B waiter-REL
 ‘I am the one who is a farmer. As for him, he works as a waiter.’
- (5) CONTEXT: Someone tells you that everyone in your family is sick at the moment.
 In suku’un k’oja’an(-Ø). Ten-e’ ma’alob in w-u’uy-ik-im-baj
 1s.A older brother sick(-3s.B) I-TOP well 1s.A glide-feel-INC-1s.A-self
 ‘My older brother is the one who is sick. As for me, I feel good’
- (6) CONTEXT: Who killed that deer?
 In nool ts’on le kéej-o’
 1s.A grandfather hunt.SUBJ.3s.B DEF deer-DISTAL
 ‘My grandfather (was the one who) killed the deer’

Depending on one’s particular view of the role that information structure plays in syntax, we might imagine a subject position that is to the right of the predicate and all variations on this basic word order are driven either by some type of displacement (this could be the case for topics) or by a completely different type of clause structure (this could be the case for focused elements). Possible clause structures based on the small clause approach and the Pred approach are shown in table 1. The Pred head structure is meant to mimic that of a verbal core in Yucatec, where the verb takes an internal argument to its right and this verb phrase is followed by the subject.

Table 1

Small Clause	Projection of Predicate X	Pred Head
<pre> graph TD SC[SC] --- XP_PRED[XP_PRED] SC --- DP_Subj[DP_Subj] </pre>	<pre> graph TD XP[XP] --- X_prime[X'] XP --- DP_Subj[DP_Subj] X_prime --- X_PRED[X_PRED] </pre>	<pre> graph TD PredP[PredP] --- Pred_prime[Pred'] PredP --- DP_Subj[DP_Subj] Pred_prime --- Pred[Pred] Pred_prime --- XP_PRED[XP_PRED] </pre>

The rest of the paper will be dedicated to answering the question: which of the structures in Table 1 is more adequate for copular sentences in Yucatec Maya?

3. Morphosyntactic Arguments in favor of Pred

3.1 The Relator *bey* (= like)

In this section I will go through a few morphosyntactic arguments from Yucatec that support the Pred head analysis for this language. As many of the arguments in the literature on this subject (principally Bowers 1993, 2001; Baker 2003; Den Dikken 2006) are language specific, I present this section as a rough idea of what morphosyntactic areas

in which we can look for arguments in favor of Pred in Yucatec in the hopes of finding more solid arguments in the future.

One of the major arguments that has been generated in favor of the Pred approach is that this head can be morphologically realized in a variety of ways in many different languages. Relator elements (following Den Dikken 2006)⁵ are words such as English *like*, *as*, and *for*, which appear principally in tenseless embedded predicative constructions as shown in (7).

- (7) a. I regard John *as* my best friend.
b. She considers him (*as*) a fool.
c. He treats her *like* dirt.
d. She takes him *for* a fool.

It has been argued that such elements are morphological realizations of a syntactic head that mediates predicative relationships (Bowers 1993, Baker 2003, Den Dikken 2006). In English, both its presence and its form depend on the matrix verb; for example, the verb *treat* selects a PredP in which the Pred head is lexicalized as *like*. Predicative and copular particles that appear solely in non-verbal predicate constructions have been claimed to exist in Korean and Japanese (Bowers 2001), in Celtic languages (Adger & Ramchand 2003) as well Edo and Chichewa (Baker 2003). The presence of relator elements in standard, ‘tensed’ copular sentences is much more restricted as shown by Moro (1997) (Den Dikken 2006 argues that in these examples the copular verb is the lexical realization of the relator element, though there are arguments against this in Bowers 2001).

- (8) a. John is (**as*) a singer.
b. Sue is (**for*) a dancer.

As far as I can tell, Yucatec does not allow the types of embedded small clause sentences in (7) at all (see Bohnemeyer 1998, chapter 4 for a detailed overview of what types of constituents can be embedded under verbs). Furthermore, the ‘tenseless’ environment that is a favorable one for the presence of relator elements is typical of the matrix copular sentences in Yucatec that we have seen in sections 1 and 2, which lack any kind of aspectual/mood marking. The question is whether relator elements can surface in these matrix clauses in Yucatec. This will be explored below.

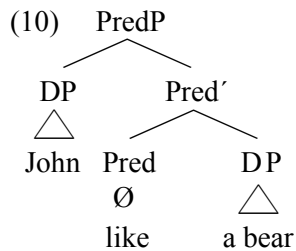
One apparent exception to the idea that matrix copular sentences prohibit the presence of relator elements is exemplified by predicative similes involving *like*, which can appear in standard copular constructions in languages such as English and Spanish.

- (9) a. John is (like) a bear.
b. Juan es (como) un oso.

Obviously, the sentences in (9) do not mean the same thing in the presence of *like/como* that they do without it. The question is whether they have a different syntactic structure.

⁵These are also called lexicalizations of Pred (Bowers 1993, 2001) or copular particles (Baker 2003).

If we assume that the verb *be/ser* is a raising verb (just like *seem/parecer*), we could say that the structure of a sentence with or without *like/como* is basically the same. Essentially, the copular verb *be/ser* can select a complement in which the predicative head is null or realized by a relator. The semantic contribution of the relator in this case could give rise to a different type of predicative relationship between the subject and the predicate.⁶ This is shown in (10).



Den Dikken (2006) argues that a small clause analysis cannot possibly account for pervasive presence of these types of elements in ‘tenseless’ predicative constructions cross-linguistically. Put simply, there is no position for them. On the other hand, if we assume that there is a syntactic head that mediates the predicative relationship, we have a possible position for these elements.

A possible candidate for a relator element in Yucatec is the word *bey* (= as, like). Like both English *like/as* and Spanish *como*, this word can appear in nominal predications as shown in (11) and (12). Its presence alters the meaning of the sentence slightly, as *like/como* do in English and Spanish.

- (11) a. Ko’olel-ech (teech)
 woman-2s.B (you)
 ‘You are a woman’
- b. Bey ko’olel-ech (teech)
 like woman-2s.B (you)
 ‘You are like a woman’
 = You have the characteristics of a woman (but you’re not one)
 (most common interpretation = you like to gossip)

- (12) a. síinik-Ø le xi’ipal-o’
 ant-3s.B DEF boy-DISTAL
 ‘That boy is an ant’
 (i) He is an ant (he is a *wáay*, a shape-shifter, who turns into an ant)
 (ii) He has the characteristics of an ant (but is not one)

⁶I assume that an idea like this could account for the different ways in which a sentence like (9) can be expressed morphosyntactically.

(i) John is like a bear.
 (ii) John is bear-like (incorporation of the nominal head into the Pred head).

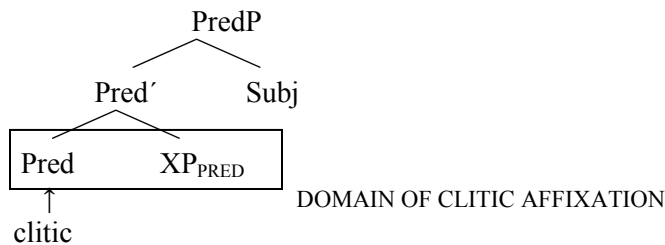
suffix is licensed by the PredP construction. I propose that the set B suffix is an agreement clitic generated in the Pred head.⁷

Building on the conclusion of section 3.1, the first piece of evidence that the suffix is an agreement clitic that is generated in the Pred head is its possible positions in sentences that contain *bey* (= like/as). In addition to the canonical post-predicate position (15a), the clitic may also surface immediately to the right of *bey* (15b).

- (15) a. *Bey ko'olel-ech* (teech) [Pred Predicate]-**clitic**
 like woman-2s.B (you)
 'You are a gossip'
- b. *Bey-ech ko'olel* (teech) [Pred]-**clitic** Predicate]
 like-2s.B woman (you)
 'You are a gossip'

Consultants detected no difference in meaning between (15a) and (15b). That is, as far as I can tell, (15b) is not an appositive construction that means something like 'that is how you are, woman.' It seems to be a matter of choice as to where the clitic ends up. I propose that the clitic is generated in the Pred head and that there is a domain of affixation defined by the syntactic sisters Pred and the XP_{PRED} as shown in (16).

(16)



The clitic is generated via an agreement relationship with the subject and, due to its enclitic nature, may end up attached to the right of any phonologically suitable host⁸ within its domain of affixation. This is merely a generalization at the moment. The rest of this section is dedicated to showing that the generalization holds over a fairly wide spectrum of data.

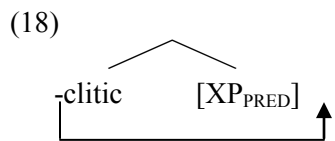
⁷The clitic could also be part of a full DP. The controversy here is similar to that of Romance clitics. These clitics seem to behave as heads and phrases simultaneously. I am assuming that the clitic is generated via agreement with a full (pro)nominal element (that can be null) in spec PredP. It could be the case that the clitic is what is in spec PredP and full pronominal elements are always right or left dislocated if they co-occur with the clitic. Either way, it is the presence of the PredP structure that licenses the clitic.

⁸This idea is currently not very developed. It is unknown what the relevant phonological constituent might be: is it a phonological phrase or a prosodic word? I leave this particular aspect to future research. The data that I am basing this proposal on matches the work of Avelino (2009) and AnderBois (to appear) on prosodic structure in Yucatec Maya. That is, all ungrammatical examples are ones in which the clitic attaches to the right edge of something that is not a phonological phrase or a prosodic word according to these works.

In order to test the prediction made by the structure in (16), it is necessary to review a larger selection of predicate types, paying attention to where the clitic attaches in each case. The canonical post-predicate position is where the clitic appears with possessed nominal predicates as shown in (17).

- (17) a. [In wéetmeyaj]-o'ob
 1s.A coworker -3p.B
 'They are my co-workers'
- b. [A taataj]-en
 2s.A father-1s.B
 'I am your father'

The canonical position for the clitic is captured by a rule like (18). The only suitable phonological host that the clitic can attach to that is also in the domain of affixation is XP_{PRED} .



The same pattern arises with both nominal and adjectival predicates that contain a modifier in the pre-nuclear position as shown in (19).

- (19) a. Chan máak-ech (*Chan-ech máak)
 small man-2s.B
 'You're a small man'
- b. Jach kala'an-o'on (*Jach-o'on kala'an)
 very drunk-1p.B
 'We're very drunk'

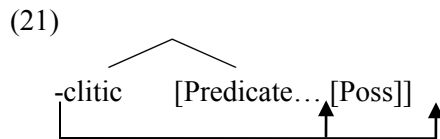
The rule in (18) captures these examples as well. Because the only suitable phonological constituent within the domain of affixation is the entire XP_{PRED} , the clitic must attach to the right edge of the predicate.

Proper name possessors yield a pattern similar to what is shown in example (15) when *bey* is present. Consultants accept both sentences in (20) with no apparent difference in meaning. The clitic can either attach directly to the nominal head (20a) of the predicate or attach to the right of the possessor, which follows the nominal head (20b).

- (20) a. Ten-e' u y-iicham-en Ana
 I-TOP 3s.A glide-husband-1s.B Ana
 'As for me, I am Ana's husband'

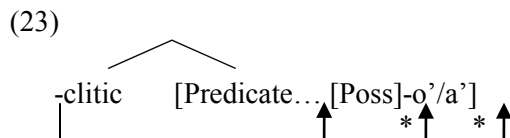
- b. Ten-e' u y-íicham Ana-en
 I-TOP 3s.A glide-husband Ana-1s.B
 'As for me, I am Ana's husband'

Assuming that both the predicate head and the predicate-possessor complex are phonologically suitable constituents, the rule for these must be one of optionality. The key is that the clitic must attach somewhere within the domain affixation, as is the case in (15). This is shown as a rule in (21).



If the possessor is not a proper name and contains demonstrative/definite morphology, only the position immediately to the right of the nominal head of the predicate is permissible. That is, the clitic must 'split' the predicate and its possessor⁹ as shown in (22).

- (22) a. U jmeen-il-en le kaaj-a'
 3s.A priest-REL-1s.B DEF town-PROX
 'I am the priest of this town'
- b. *U jmeen-il le kaaj-en-a'
 3s.A priest-REL DEF town -1s.B-PROX
 Intended: 'I am the priest of this town'
- c. *U jmeen-il le kaaj-a'-en
 3s.A priest-REL DEF town-PROX-1s.B
 Intended: 'I am the priest of this town'



⁹Judith Aissen commented at CILLA that this is the only possibility in Tzotzil, regardless of whether or not the possessor of the predicate is a proper name. I still need to investigate whether the heaviness of the possessor has any say in where the clitic ends up (it seems that it would). This example is from Andrade & Maas Collí (1999: 94) in which a morphologically complex possessor hosts the clitic to its right. This seems to show that it is n't heaviness alone that will trigger affixation on the head of the predicate (*aal* = child, in this case). More needs to be done in this respect.

- (i) u y-aal saj-lu'um-keep-en
 3s.A glide-son fear-earth-penis-1s.B
 'I am the son of a wimp'

Descriptively there are three possible positions for the clitic within its domain of affixation. It can either (i) remain in the Pred head if there is a suitable phonological constituent *bey* (= as/like) to attach to there, (ii) it may attach to a phonological constituent within the phrase that functions as the predicate (split the predicate) or (iii) to the right edge of the entire predicate. It is beyond the scope of this work to define what the relevant phonological constituents for affixation are. What is clear is if we accept the general hypothesis that is supported here, there is a local syntactic domain that explains both why the clitic appears and where it can possibly end up. A small clause analysis does not obviously provide the same types of mechanisms to explain the presence or the position of the clitic.

4. Predicates with Definite Morphology: Some Observations

A further interesting fact about copular sentences in Yucatec Maya is the apparent lack of predicates that contain demonstrative/definite morphology. This morphology consists of a definite marker *le* and a glottalized vowel that appears at the right of the entire noun phrase constituent, indicating relative distance. The glottalized vowel is called a deictic clitic in Mayanist tradition. An example is the vowel *a'* that appears at the right of the word *kaaj* (= town) in (22). If the entire predicate contains such morphology, the set B clitic is ungrammatical in any position as shown in (24).

- (24) a. *Le ts'akyaj-ech-o' teeč
 DEF doctor-2s.B-DISTAL you
 Intended: 'You are the/that doctor'
- b. *Le ts'akyaj-o'-ech teeč
 DEF doctor-DISTAL-2s.B you
 Intended: 'You are the/that doctor'

These examples are strongly rejected by consultants and I have yet to find any naturally occurring examples in which a set B clitic appears with a predicate that contains demonstrative/definite morphology. One possible reason for their ungrammaticality is that the clitic has no suitable phonological host. It could be the case that demonstrative/definite effectively seals the predicate from a prosodic perspective, prohibiting anything from attaching within it or to its right edge. If this were the case, it would be difficult to explain the examples in (25), which are locative constructions that lack the definite marker *le* but do have the deictic clitic. In (25a), a set B clitic appears between a locative element *je'el* and a deictic clitic and in (25c) an adverb with sentential scope appears (for phonological reasons) within a constituent that contains a locative element *te'* and a deictic clitic.

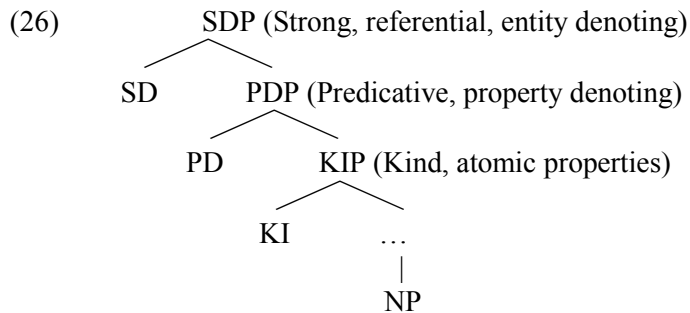
- (25) a. Je'el-ech-a'
 LOC-2s.B-PROX
 'Here you are'

- b. ??Ba'ax k-a beet-ik te' kaaj-o' ka'achij?¹⁰
 What HAB-2s.A do-INC.3s.B there town-DISTAL formerly
 'What did you used to do in that town there?'

 c. Ba'ax k-a beet-ik te' kaaj ka'ach-o'?'
 What HAB-2s.A do-INC/3s.B there town formerly-DISTAL
 (i) 'What did you used to do in that town there?'
 (ii) #'What do you do in that former town?'

Another possible explanation for the ungrammaticality observed in (24) is that Yucatec Mayan predicative relationships mediated by Pred are sensitive to the type of expression that acts as the predicate; that is, the attributive feature of predicates must be satisfied in order for a given constituent to occur in the complement of Pred.

Adger & Ramchand (2003) discuss this issue in terms of how it determines the morphosyntactic characteristics of predicative constructions in Scottish Gaelic. The authors invoke an idea about noun phrases from Zamparelli (2000), who separates them into layers that determine the overall semantic properties of them.



These different levels of denotation can be established in distinct ways cross-linguistically. Lexical determiners (definite determiners, for example) are a typical way of making a noun phrase referential. We could posit that for Yucatec Maya, which has a very elaborate internal noun phrase structure, it is the presence of the demonstrative/definite morphology that activates the strong (referential, entity-denoting) layer of the extended nominal projection. Note that this morphology can co-occur with possessives, numerals, classifiers and other possible candidates that might fill this nominal layer.

- (27) Le in ka'a-túul w-iits'in-o'ob-a' (Briceño Chel 1996: 100)
 DEF 1s.A two-CL.ANI glide-sibling-PL-PROX
 'These two younger brothers of mine'

¹⁰I thank Fidencio Briceño Chel for these two examples and the suggested explanation for the pattern.

Note that Briceño Chel (1996) expresses an intuition that is almost exactly the same as Zamparelli's. This is summarized in his table that shows a sequential order that gradually adds layers definiteness, codified as +/- 'determinado.'

(28)	DEMOSTRATIVO	POSESIVO	NUMERAL
	+DET	½ DET	-DET

An adequate generalization seems to be that possessive clitics (set A cross reference markers) are the boundary between a fully saturated, referential expression and one that can act as a property attributable to a subject (a predicate). This is shown in (29) in a gradable fashion in which the predicate gradually becomes more 'definite' in Briceño Chel's terms.

- (29) a. Ts'akyaj-ech
 Doctor-2s.B
 'You're a doctor'
- b. Jun-túul ts'akyaj-ech
 One-CL.ANI doctor-2s.B
 'You're a doctor'
- c. In ts'akyaj-ech.
 1s.A doctor-2s.B
 'You're my doctor'
- d. *Le ts'akyaj-ech-o'
 DEF doctor-2s.B-DISTAL
 'You're the doctor'

The question that arises is if there is some type of strategy to circumvent this problem. In many languages, predicates that contain definite morphology can enter predicative constructions but these generally follow a morphosyntactic pattern distinct from their prototypical indefinite counterparts (see Ager & Ramchand 2003 and works cited therein for details). According to the data I collected, one strategy is to focalize the subject and simply eliminate the set B clitic. For the examples in (30) – (32) the context is that the speaker has a sick relative and is looking for a particular person in town that he/she knows is the only doctor. They suddenly see that person and utter "you're the doctor." One possibility is shown in (30). In this case, the subject is focused and the set B clitic does not appear anywhere in the predicate.

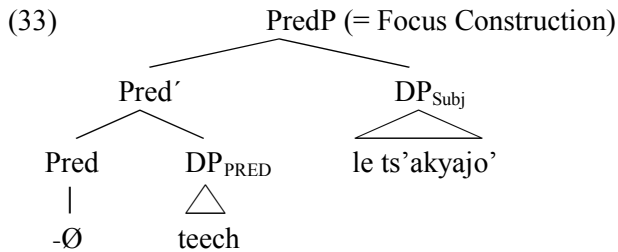
- (30) Teech le ts'akyaj-o'
 You DEF doctor-DISTAL
 'You are the doctor'

Variations of this phrase were also given in which the predicate ‘doctor’ is simply described using an A-focus construction as in (31) or using a relative clause headed by *máak* (= person) as in (32). These were actually the most frequently recorded answers to the context described above.

(31) Teech ts’ak-ik máak (A-Focus)
 You cure-INC.3s.B man
 ‘You are the one who cures people’

(32) Tech-e’ le máak k-u ts’a-ts’ak-o’ (Relative Clause)
 You-TOP DEF person HAB-3s.A give-cure-DISTAL
 ‘As for you, you’re the doctor (lit. you’re the person who cure-gives)’

If (30) is really some kind of focus construction, then we have a possible explanation for why the set B clitic does not appear. Following ideas in Bohnemeyer (1998/2002) and Tonhauser (2003), focus constructions actually consist of a focalized element which is the main predicate. That predicate takes a verbal core/clausal argument that triggers the presence of the null 3s.B clitic on the focused element. Thus, the idea is that we do actually have a predicative construction in (30), but the main predicate is *teech* and its argument is the fully saturated nominal expression *le ts’akyajo’*. The following is a slightly modified version of Tonhauser (2003: 214, figure 1) that is consistent with overall idea that has been presented thus far.¹¹



The basic idea here has been to show that there does appear to be a semantic restriction on what can be a predicate in basic copular sentences: predicates with definite/demonstrative morphology seem to be out. A strategy for expressing these types of sentences is to revert to a different type of predicative relationship that exists in the language’s inventory in which the same restriction may not hold: focus constructions. More on the relevance of (33) to the overall idea expressed here is discussed in section 5.

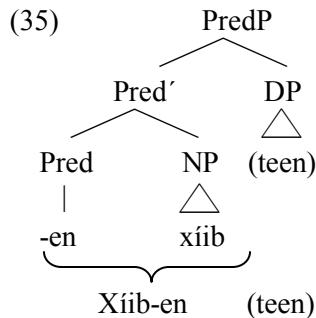
5. Other Predicative Relationships in Yucatec Maya

I have heretofore defended an idea regarding the clause structure of lexical nominal and adjectival predicates in Yucatec Maya in which a syntactic head, *Pred*, mediates a

¹¹This is not meant to be a definitive proposal for Focus constructions, it is simply meant to show that the structural configuration in which they stand is the same as that of the lexical NP and AP predicates that have been treated here, an idea defended in Bohnemeyer (1998, 2002) as well as Tonhauser (2003).

predicative relationship between a subject in its specifier and a predicate in its complement. The Pred head is the locus for the agreement relationship between the argument and the predicate that is spelled out as the set B clitic. The set B clitic then must attach to the predicate as its ‘domain of affixation’ is defined by the syntactic space delimited by Pred’. This is roughly illustrated in (34) and (35).

- (34) Xíib-en (teen)
 Man-1s.B (I)
 ‘I am a man’



In this final section I would like to outline an interesting area of study where the ideas presented here could possibly play an important role. Since the seminal work of Bohnemeyer (1998), it has become increasingly clear that basic clausal architecture in Yucatec can be understood in terms of a set of simple intransitive predicates that take different sized arguments and are marked with the set B clitic that cross-references the argument. The three principle types of predicative constructions are shown in (36) – (38).

(36) STATIVE PREDICATES (= COPULAR SENTENCES)

- a. Uts-Ø [le tsiimin-o']
 good-3s.B DEF horse-DISTAL
 ‘That horse is good’
- b. Uts-Ø t-in t’aan [in ts’u’uts’-ik chamal] (B 1998: 168)
 good-3s.B to-1s.A speech 1s.A smoke-INC.3s.B cigarette
 ‘I like smoking cigarettes’
- c. Uts-Ø ti’k t’aan [ka t’aan-nak-ech k u’uy-ej] (B 1998: 187)
 good-3s.B to 1p.A speech SUB talk-SUBJ-2s.B 1s.A listen-SUBJ
 ‘We appreciate that you talk to us’

(37) VERBAL CORES (WITH UNBOUND ASPECT/MOOD MARKING)

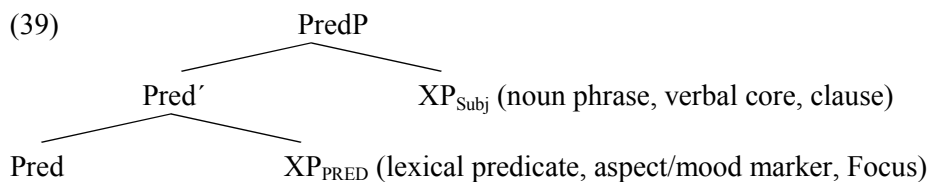
- a. Ts’o’ok-Ø [in wen-el]
 TERM-3s.B 1s.A sleep-INC
 ‘I already slept’ (Lit. My sleeping is achieved)

- b. Sáam-Ø [ok-ok-ech]
 PAS.REC-3s.B enter-SUBJ-2s.B
 ‘You entered a while ago’ (Lit. You entering happened a while ago)

(38) F CONSTRUCTIONS (‘HIGHER-ORDER’ PREDICATES)¹²

- a. Juan-Ø [il-ik-ech]
 Juan-3s.B see-INC-2s.B
 ‘It is Juan who sees you’
- b. Ma’ax-Ø [le bo’ot-a’ab u p’ax chúumuk-il-o’]?
 Who-3s.B DEF pay-PASS 3s.A debt half-REL-DISTAL
 ‘Who was the second to get paid what they were owed?’
 (Andrade & Maas Collí 1999: 61)

Bohnmeyer (1998) shows that these three classes of predicative relationships are in complementary distribution in three respects. First, none of them can be embedded directly under a verb or the clausal subordinator *ka*. Second, it is well known that aspectual and mood marking never appears in copular sentences, supporting the idea that these and aspectual and mood marking form a morphosyntactic class. Lastly, there is evidence that focus constructions actually manifest their own system of aspect and mood marking (see the discussion in Bohnmeyer 1998: 192-195 on the irrealis marker *kéen* in F constructions), further supporting the idea that they are separate members of a natural class of predicative constructions. All three are grouped under the term ‘stative predicates’ (following Lehmann 1993, Bohnmeyer 1998). The distributional evidence is grounds for positing an overall structural configuration that encompasses each of the classes. I suggest that the configuration that I have proposed for copular sentences in sections 2 and 3 could be used to capture the structural characteristics that are shared among these, verbal cores with aspect/mood marking as well as F Constructions.



↑
 Set B clitic licensed as a agreement with subject (must cliticize within the domain of affixation)

¹²The entire family of FF-constructions, which includes, according to Bricker (1978), Bohnmeyer (1998, 2002) and Tonhauser (2003), focus, WH-questions and relative clauses has been argued to not instantiate a uniform structural class in Gutiérrez Bravo & Monforte y Madera (2009). Going into the details is beyond the scope of this short work.

There are still many open questions with respect to the ideas presented above and it is probably the case that not all of these clause types share the same configuration with the same label. For example, we might expect to find coordinated constructions involving copular sentences and verbal cores with unbound aspect/mood marking or F constructions, something that I have not seen documented in the literature. The next obvious steps are to relate this to argument realization within the verbal core, expression of aspect/mood and to investigate if the predicate – argument order is derived by some kind of mandatory displacement of an underlying argument – predicate order, an area that has received more attention recently (see Coon 2009a/b for an account of such ideas in Chol). I leave these questions for future research.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have supported an analysis of copular sentences in Yucatec Maya in which a functional head mediates the syntactic relation of predication between a subject and a predicate, which typically appear in Pred-Subject order. It was argued that this functional head is what makes a particular phrase a predicate and houses the morphological mark typical of such relationships in Yucatec Maya: the set B clitic. It was shown that the set B clitic has a domain of affixation defined by the syntactic sisters Pred and the XP_{PRED} (the main predicate of the sentence) within which it can attach to various types of constituents. The restrictions on copular sentences seem to be driven by both phonological factors that play a role in cliticization and semantic factors involving the ‘definiteness’ of noun phrases. The last sections of the paper were exploratory in nature and attempted to integrate the overall idea into a general configurational theory of clause structure in Yucatec Maya that can explain why copular sentences are in complementary distribution with verbal sentences that contain aspect/mood marking as well as the family of F constructions.

Abbreviations

Cross Reference Markers = PersonNumber.Set (example 1s.A = 1st person singular, set A), glide = pre-vocalic w/y (part of set A paradigm), TOP = Topic marker *-e*, COMP = completive verbal status, INC = incomplete verbal status, SUBJ = subjunctive verbal status, PERF = perfective aspect marker, HAB = habitual aspect marker, TERM = terminative aspect marker, PAS.REC = recent past aspect marker, DEF = definite marker, PROX = proximal deictic clitic, DISTAL = distal deictic clitic, REL = relational nominal suffix *-il*, CL.ANI = classifier (animate beings), PL = plural marker *-o’ob*.

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