Arguments for the Heterogeneity of English *Be**
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1 Introduction

Recent studies of copular sentences have focused on the question of how copular *be* should be characterized in relation to the classification of copular sentences (Heycock (1995), Rothstein (1995), Zaring (1996), etc.). As is well known, copular sentences of the form *NP₁ be NP₂* have several distinct types, and the descriptive classification of these types provides a basis for constructing a theory of *be* that can answer the question. Unfortunately, it must face up to a puzzle about the 'meaning' of *be*: Is it meaningful or meaningless? As is often the case with issues in semantics, the answer to such a puzzle is liable to depend on the theory that a researcher assumes. This is very elusive. It might be argued that such a question should not be addressed because it inevitably leads to the puzzle, and that the study of copular sentences may be advanced independently of the consideration of the nature of *be*. We do believe, however, that the question merits discussion and that certain positive answers will emerge on the basis of syntactic and semantic analyses of the relevant data. We should find a heuristic method of describing copular sentences systematically in order to explain the phenomena concerning the verb *be*. To attain this goal, we will discuss not just a matter of theory comparison, but empirical coverage that a particular theory makes possible.[1]

To date, three types of approaches to the question on the nature of English *be* have been made without satisfactory conclusions. They are: (a) the empty *be* theory, (b) the monosemous *be* theory, and (c) the multiple *be* theory. We will survey the three theories in this order.

(a) Scholars with various backgrounds have espoused the theory that copular *be* is devoid of substantial meaning and functions as just a grammatical element of tense marker. They include Lyons (1966), Bach (1967), formal semanticists like Carlson (1977), generative syntacticians like Scholten (1988), and so forth. This theory, when considered in the context of typology, takes the form of the zero-copula hypothesis. It appeals most to the impression that copular *be* differs from the other verbs in that it does not seem to contribute positively to the meaning of the sentences in which it occurs, aside from the

very idiomatic use of ontological statements like *God is*. We will argue in section 2.1, however, that this theory is a popular myth (cf. Stassen (1994)).

(b) The basic idea of the second theory is that although it has a good number of uses, *be* keeps a single abstract meaning as its core, whose tenet has a strong conceptual affinity with the monosemic bias developed by Ruhl (1989). This approach is advocated by, for example, Jackendoff (1983), Partee (1986), and Fauconnier (1991).[2] They concur with the scholars listed under the heading of theory (a) in claiming that the nature of *be* is unitary. Following Zaring's (1996) terminology, therefore, both theory (a) and theory (b) are dubbed the single-*be* approach. The monosemous treatment of *be* is, if possible, desirable on conceptual grounds, because it enables a unitary correspondence between form and meaning. However, such an approach is likely to lead to the tautology that *be* is simply *be*, and it is doubtful that this theory can be maintained when faced with the fact that one cannot describe copular sentences without referring to the internal semantics of copular *be*, as we will see in detail in sections 2 and 3.

(c) The gist of the third theory is as follows: There are several different *be*'s, or rather, *be* is heterogeneous in nature. This view has been adopted by Halliday (1967-1968), Safir (1985), Rothstein (1987), and Bowers (1993), to name a few. Following Zaring's (1996) terminology, we will refer to such a stance on the question as the dual-*be* approach, because it reduces the contrast between copular sentences of predication and those of identification to the contrast between *be* of predication and *be* of identification.[3]

The comparison between the single-*be* approach and the dual-*be* approach is the vital concern of this paper, from a theoretical point of view. I have referred to the question about the nature of *be* as elusive in that it has a strong tendency to be just a matter of theorizing. As far as I know, no linguist has seriously discussed the merits and demerits of the two approaches. In order to arrive at a proper appreciation of the two, we have to get back to the factual observation of copular sentences. In particular, Declerck (1988) offers a large amount of data, and we can rely on this descriptive study to be a rich source of information. It should be stressed that although Declerck has consistently avoided adopting a particular theory about the question under discussion, we can make use of the substantial results of his study to construct

an appropriate theory that aims to answer it.

As it stands, theory (c) is open to serious criticism, for the logic behind the subdivision of *be* is too simplistic; that is to say, the *be* in one sentence is different from the *be* in another, just because the two sentences are different. Such a reasoning is far from being adequate for a proper linguistic analysis. It is a pity that no serious attempt has been made to elucidate the heterogeneity of *be* in spite of a mass of evidence in support of theory (c). In this paper, I will carefully examine copular sentence data to defend and refine the theory. In particular, I will clarify the grammatical properties that the different kinds of *be*'s have and attempt to define them. By so doing I demonstrate that the account in the present paper can precisely pinpoint the cause of heterogeneous phenomena copular *be* triggers, showing that my account is advantageous over the existing accounts including theory (c).

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we will survey the basic facts of copular sentences with reference to languages of the world. In the course of the survey we will find out the chief characteristics that the English copular sentence has so that we can grasp our problem. We will observe there that both theories in the single-*be* approach, the empty *be* theory and the monosemous *be* theory, fail to describe the grammar of English copular sentences. Section 3 will be devoted to the analysis of the English copular sentence, and there we will argue that the dual-*be* approach is the only way to properly describe and account for the difference between two types of copular sentences. In section 4 we will attempt to extend the dual-*be* approach, so as to render it applicable to a wider range of copular sentences. Concluding remarks will be made in section 5.

2 Predicational and Specificational Sentences

It is widely known that English copular sentences divide into two major types of predicational (PR for short) and specificational (SP for short) sentences that differ from each other in many respects. For example:

(1) a. John is a genius.   (PR sentence)

    b. The bank robber is Charles Hopkins.   (SP sentence)

In (1a) the property of being a genius is predicated of *John* and in (1b) the definite description is identified as *Charles Hopkins*. It follows that the same

verb *be* is employed in two different environments: the context of predication as in (1a) and that of identification as in (1b).[4] We will claim that the PR/SP distinction of copular sentences is not merely a matter of conceptual difference, but rather one of the basic contrasts of grammar that can attract empirical support both from parallelisms across languages and from phenomena specific to English. A number of phenomena that are concerned with the PR/SP distinction converge on the claim that copular *be* has two separate meanings in itself.

2.1 English Be *and Its Synonyms in Other Languages*

Typological considerations will often cast new light on the study of a particular language. The English grammar is no exception in this regard. In this section I will review basic facts and findings of the contrastive study between English and other languages in relation to copular sentences (Verhaar (1967-1973), Kuno and Wongkhomthong (1981), Stassen (1994), Zaring (1996), etc.). It will be argued that the empty *be* theory is at odds with English and the multiple *be* theory is well motivated on typological grounds.

Functional theorists like Dik (1983) claim that typological adequacy should play an important role in describing a particular language, and thus approve of the empty *be* theory on the ground that in many languages of the world, equivalents of copular *be* are simply absent, as is the case with Guarani (2) and Mokilese (3):

(2) Ne soldado
    2SG soldier
    'You are a soldier.'

(3) John johnpadahk -men
    J. teacher -INDEF
    'John is a teacher.'   ((2) and (3) from Stassen (1994:108))

Similarly, proponents of the tense element analysis of *be* base their arguments on languages such as Russian, where the equivalent of the verb *be* is normally absent from sentences in the present tense, but shows up in those in the past tense. For example:

(4) a. On soldatom.   (present)
      he soldier
      'He is a soldier.'

b. On byl soldatom. (past)

he was soldier

'He was a soldier.'

These languages are taken to be suggestive of the meaninglessness of English *be*. According to the empty *be* theory, then, English copular sentences like *John is a teacher* are analyzed in terms of the interpretive relation between the two NPs. In this case it is an inclusive relation between *John* and *a teacher*. This theory asserts that such interpretations can be predicted independently of the meaning of *be*.

Counterarguments to such a stance on English can be developed on two grounds. One is concerned with the comparison between English and Japanese, and the other the comparison between English and Thai. The former argument shows that copular *be* makes certain contributions to the semantics of English copular sentences, and the latter shows that there are indeed languages where the equivalents of the copula are sensitive to the difference between predication and identification.

Japanese copular sentences have the form NP_1 *wa* NP_2 *da* (cf. Makino (1968)). Interpretation of these sentences depends completely on various relationships between the two NPs, and the particle *wa* and the predicate marker *da* have little to do with the substantial meaning of copular sentences. For example:

(5) a. John wa   kyoosi   da.

J.   Part. teacher   Pred.

b. John is a teacher.

The sentence in (5a) conveys an equivalent meaning of the English sentence in (5b) in that the referent of *kyoosi* is dependent on that of *John*. The same applies to the English sentence.

Onoe has convincingly argued in his series of papers (Onoe (1979, 1981a, b, 1982)) that the particle *wa* has no content in itself except for the function of marking juxtaposition of two NPs, and that the function is equivalent to copula in the context of NP_1 *wa* NP_2 *da* sentences. In fact the particle *wa* can combine any two NPs to produce a sentence as far as semantic or pragmatic conditions satisfy the relevance between the two, and therefore Japanese allows a very wide range of expressions including the following

sentences:

    (6) a. Doituzin   wa   gironzukina seikaku   da.
           Germans Part. controversial character Pred.

      b. Asita   wa   gakkoo da.
          Tomorrow Part. school Pred.

In view of the pragmatic orientation of sentences like (6b), the claim that *wa* has no inherent semantics seems to be on the right track. At this juncture an analogy can be drawn between Onoe's 'empty *wa*' theory and the empty *be* theory with respect to the 'meaninglessness' of copula. If English *be* were completely devoid of meaning just like Japanese *wa*, and the reading of an English copular sentence would depend solely on semantic or pragmatic associations of the two NPs, then Japanese sentences like (6) should be directly translated into English copular sentences like (6'), contrary to the fact:

    (6') a. *The Germans are controversial character.

      b. *Tomorrow is school.   (*Genius* (1994:147))

The fact that English *be* cannot make a sentence from a mere juxtaposition of two NPs immediately suggests that it has some roles to play in making a copular sentence. It would be difficult for the empty *be* theory to give an account for the fact that English excludes sentences like (6'). Thus, one can reason that the empty *be* theory is inadequate for English in comparison with Japanese.

    Further evidence against the empty *be* theory comes from the fact that there are languages that have multiple equivalents for copula. Thai, for example, has two equivalents of English *be* that differ in morphology and semantics: *pen* and *khi:*. Kuno and Wongkhomthong (1981) make a detailed report on the contrast between the two equivalents and demonstrate that it is sensitive to what they call characterizational and identificational meanings. Examples include the following with rough transcriptions:

    (7) a. Yi: pun {pen/*khi:} prathe:d   udsa:hakam.
         Japan   is   country industry
         'Japan is an industrial country.'

      b. Co:n {pen/*khi:} khru:.
         John   is   teacher
         'John is a teacher.'

(8) Khon   thi: dichan rag {*pen/khi:} khun Co:n.
person that   I   love   is   Mr. John
'The person that I love is John.'

In sentences like (7), where the properties are predicated of their subject NPs, only *pen* is appropriate. However, in (8) *khi:* is the verb that can identify the person in question as *Mr. John*. Even a glance at this contrast of the two copula equivalents reveals that it is in line with our PR/SP distinction of copular sentences in English.

The phenomenon specific to Thai has important implications for the English grammar. An English copular sentence with interrogative *who* is sometimes ambiguous with respect to characterization or identification of a person. Consider the following example:

(9) Who is Jack Smith?

Declerck (1988:128) states that when it is expected to receive an answer like (10a), it turns out to be characterizational, but when it receives an answer like· (10b), the identificational meaning arises.

(10) a. He is a neighbor of mine.

     b. It is that man over there.

This *he/it* contrast in meaning will be examined in section 3.1, and in particular, sentences like (10a) will be recalled in section 4.1 in relation to Descriptionally Identifying sentences. This contrast takes the form of the lexical difference between *pen* and *khi:* in Thai. For example:

(11) kha:te: {pen/khi:} khray?

     Carter is   who

     'Who is Carter?'

Kuno and Wongkhomthong (1981:81) observe that the choice between *pen* and *khi:* depends on whether the speaker asks for the characterization or identification of *Carter*.

The fact that Thai differentiates the two copulas in accordance with the difference between characterization and identification shows that some of the points that have been advanced in support of the empty *be* theory are in fact unsound. The upshot is that the empty *be* theory motivated by the copulaless languages is one-sided, since it ignores languages that have multiple equivalents of copular *be*. In this connection, Benveniste (1966:71-72) observes that

similar phenomena to the Thai sentences are also found in Ewe, a language spoken in Togo, where five equivalents for the verb *be* are at work.[5]

2.2 Basic Facts about English Copular Sentences

Having seen that the multiple *be* theory is well motivated, let us return to the discussion of the English grammar proper and focus on the grammatical properties that *be* has. Although it exhibits a unitary behavior with respect to NICE properties as an auxiliary verb, the *be* in the SP sentence will be shown to have a different meaning from the *be* in the PR sentence. In other words, I will argue that the contrast between the two types of copular sentences is reducible to the heterogeneity of copular *be*; namely, PR *be* and SP *be*.

As a prelude to proposing a set of rules that can account for the heterogeneity of *be*, let us catalog a series of facts that are characteristic of English *be*. First of all, English *be* is obligatorily present in tensed clauses in both types of copular sentences. For example:

(12) a. The winner *(is) a good runner.   (PR sentence)

b. The winner *(is) Mary.   (SP sentence)

This is one of the fundamental differences between English and languages like Russian where the equivalents of copula are simply absent in the present tense.

In the context of small clauses, a crucial difference emerges between the two types of sentences, where PR sentence equivalents are allowed to appear without *to be*, but SP sentence equivalents are not:

(13) a. I consider the winner (to be) a good runner.

b. I consider the winner *(to be) Mary.

Given that the small clause of *consider* is a context of the subject-predicate relation, the absence of (13b) without *to be* shows that SP sentences do not constitute such a relation.[6] In this context the referentiality of complement NPs bears on the distributional difference between the two types of sentences.

Among copular verbs, *be* alone takes referential NPs as complements (cf. Horton (1996)). The *was* in (14b) is unique in its distribution in this sense, since the other copular verbs such as *become* cannot take a referential NP as its complement:

(14) a. John {was/became} a philosopher.

b. The bank robber {was/*became} John Smith.

Notice that the monosemous *be* theory would have difficulty accommodating

this contrast: if both *be*'s are the same, why the *be* in (14a) can be replaced by *become* while the *be* in (14b) cannot? The difference in referentiality of complement NPs indicates that copular *be* is not homogeneous. When we take advantage of the *pen/khi:* distinction in Thai to analyze English copular sentences, we may suppose that the *was* in (14b) is different in kind from the *was* in (14a). From this point of view, the contrast lends itself to a hypothesis that the referentiality of complement NPs is sensitive to the internal semantics of copular *be*. In other words, it is not PR *be* that takes referential NPs as complements, but it is SP *be*. We will defend this hypothesis in section 3.

Presumably, the most striking difference between PR and SP sentences is reversibility. SP sentences can undergo reversion without damaging their original contents, but PR sentences cannot:

(15) a. The winner is Mary. -> Mary is the winner.　(SP sentence)

    b. John is a teacher.　-> *A teacher is John.　(PR sentence)

We must be careful not to confuse reversion of SP sentences with inversion frequently found with locative existential sentences, as in (16a). Inversion cannot accept Subject Auxiliary Inversion, but reversion can.

(16) a. On the porch is a large wicker couch.

    b. *Is on the porch a large wicker couch?

(17) a. Is the winner Mary?

    b. Is Mary the winner?

This makes a clear difference between the two superficially similar phenomena, and we are not concerned with inversion in this paper.

The contrast in reversibility cannot be too emphasized, for it suggests that PR and SP sentences have different sorts of grammar from each other. In particular, they differ with respect to the referentiality of complement NPs. This difference can be illustrated by the fact that the two types of complement NPs cannot be coordinated in a sentence, as the unacceptability of (18c) shows:

(18) a. That man is Duncan.　　　　(SP sentence)

    b. That man is a fool.　　　　(PR sentence)

    c. *That man is Duncan and a fool.　　　(Bowers (1993:605))

Apparently, the unacceptability of (18c) can be attributed to the difference in referentiality, but this fact motivates us to assume that although they are superficially similar in form, the two types of sentences differ semantically.

2.3 Property versus Value

We have seen that the referentiality of complement NPs is crucial in distinguishing between PR and SP sentences. There is sufficient evidence to prove that NPs in complement position of PR sentences (predicate nominals) are nonreferential in nature. Consider the following sentences:

(19) a. My brother is a doctor. I cannot trust {him/*the doctor}.

b. In 1961 she was still young and an innocent child.

In (19a), *the doctor* fails to refer back to *a doctor*, which suggests that the predicate nominal does not refer to a person in the universe of discourse. In (19b), the NP and the AP coexist in complement position despite the difference in category. This coordination across categories clearly shows that predicate nominals are on a par with adjectives in complement position in grammatical status.[7] This is tantamount to saying that predicate nominals are employed to ascribe properties to referents in subject position as AP complements are. We call this semantic relation the property-to-referent relation. As the absence of (18c) suggests, however, the semantics of SP sentences cannot be covered by this relation. Instead, we will introduce the value-for-variable relation for interpreting SP sentences.

The data that we have examined so far tell us how to classify copular sentences in terms of referentiality. When the complement NP is referential as in (18a), the sentence in which it appears is an SP sentence, and when it is nonreferential as in (18b), the sentence is a PR sentence. It is true in itself. However, we will argue that the surface difference is due to the internal difference of *be* by showing that the PR/SP distinction is not merely a matter of referentiality, and that the grammar of the two kinds of sentences needs to be built on two different areas of semantics: property-to-referent and value-for-variable. We will focus on SP sentences in order to effectively highlight how they differ from PR sentences in light of their syntax and semantics.

The following sentence can be cited in illustration of the relation of value-for-variable for SP sentences:

(20) The only girl who helps us on Friday is {*very tall/Mary}.

(Okuno (1989:36))

This sentence has a reading on which the definite subject NP is not anaphoric to an antecedent, but is regarded as a list entry. On this reading, the subject NP is

incompatible with property-expressions like adjectives, but compatible with proper names, which indicates that this sentence differs from the property-to-referent relation that underlies PR sentences.

It is now clear that the major difference between PR and SP sentences bears on the difference between property expressions and referring expressions in complement position. Semantically speaking, properties depend referentially on the objects which include them. We call this dependence of reference a class-inclusion. Here the term *predication* is employed to mean this relation. Syntactically, property expressions realize as predicates. However, referring expressions in complement position cannot be conceived of in this way. We will argue that the function they fulfill is different from the function of predicate nominals in that they are referentially independent of the expressions in subject position of SP sentences. To state this relation in technical terms, values are referentially independent of variables.

This difference of complement NPs has to do with syntactic behaviors of predicates. An illustrative example is the French pronominalization exhibited by the accusative (masculine) pronoun *le* (cf. Ruwet (1982), Verheugt (1990), Fauconnier (1991)). We adopt *it* for *le* in the gloss for the sake of translation. Consider the following sequence of PR sentences (notice that *le + être* makes *l'être*):

(21) Son père est professeur. Il voudrait *l*'être.
     his father is teacher he wants it-be
     'His father is a teacher. He wants to be one.'

The predicate nominal in the first sentence *professeur* is replaced by *le* in the second sentence. The predicate nominal lacks an article, which hints that predicate nominals expressing properties are not referential to objects. This is the rule of French.

The pronominalization applies to sentences with AP complements, too. The dislocated element in (22b) is the appositive of *le* (*le + est* makes *l'est*):

(22) a. Christine est tres seduisante.
     C. is very attractive
     'Christine is very attractive.'
    b. Christine *l*'est, tres seduisante.
     C. it-is, very attractive

In (22b), *le* is a substitute for the AP complement *tres seduisante*. The parallelism between (21) and (22) indicates that the nonreferential NP in (21) obtains a status equivalent to the AP complement. This reminds us of the coordination fact given in (19). In the postcopular position, both indefinite NPs and APs are grouped under the heading of property-expression without referentiality to particular objects. They form predicates.

In contrast to the copular sentences with property-expressions, the pronominalization does not apply to SP sentences in which NP complements are referential to particular individuals. For example:

(23) a. Le meilleur ami   d'Hamlet est Horatio.
         the best   friend of-Ha.   is Ho.
        'The best friend of Hamlet is Horatio.'

    b. *Le meilleur ami   d'Hamlet *l*'est, Horatio.
         the best   friend of-Ha.   it-is, Ho.

As is evident from the absence of (23b), the referential complement NP does not form a predicate. We call the function that it fulfills in an SP sentence a value, as distinguished from a property. A value NP cannot undergo the pronominalization by *le* in French nor the coordination in (19), which marks SP sentences off sufficiently from PR sentences.

In view of the cross-linguistic comparisons and the phenomena specific to the English grammar both, we have fairly good grounds for claiming that *be* is meaningful and contains different elements with respect to the PR/SP distinction. In section 3, we will examine several patterns of copular sentences that are fully productive but would be wrongly excluded under the single-*be* approach. I will argue there that these patterns are precisely described only when one takes into account the semantic difference inherent in copular *be*.

2.4 A Proposal

The facts that have been accumulated so far suffice to demonstrate that an indefinite NP in a PR sentence combines with copular *be* to form a predicate, but a referential complement NP in an SP sentence does not combine with it. In other words, it is not a predicate nominal. The interpretation of SP sentences, therefore, requires a notion that is specially devoted to them, as is distinguished from the property-to-referent relation for PR sentences. Now, consider the SP sentence in (24B):

(24) A: Who's the murderer?

B: The murderer is that man over there.

This sentence is paraphrased in the following way:

(25) The murderer is the following: that man over there.

This paraphrase, whose credit goes to Higgins (1979), is characteristic of SP sentences, and cannot apply to other copular sentences. Behind this paraphrase with the intervening word *the following* lurks the idea that the position of the value *that man over there* is independent of the domain of copular *be*. This style of paraphrase will be recalled in section 3.4 in relation to *is*-contraction.

Semantically, the variable is what is in question, whose identity is unknown, and the value is its answer (cf. Nishiyama (1990)). To put it concretely, variables are nominal expressions in which the presupposition about the answer is encoded. It follows from this definition that they are concerned with words rather than objects; they do not refer to objects by themselves. In this respect they are impersonal in nature. On the other hand, when some expression qualifies as a value, it must have the power to restrict the range of a variable as narrow as possible so that the variable may be identified. When the range of the variable in question is presupposed to *include* only one candidate, it must be determined uniquely; hence the compatibility between value and uniqueness. This we call identification. Proper names are typical of uniqueness by virtue of the fact that each person has his own name. SP sentences are expressions of the identification process.

We have adduced evidence that copular *be* is meaningful. We have also argued that the meanings that *be* is concerned with are predication and identification. The conclusion of this argument is that there are two different sorts of copular *be*: PR *be* and SP *be*, each of which has its own syntax and semantics. I propose that the essence of predication and that of identification should be incorporated into the internal semantics of PR *be* and that of SP *be*, respectively. PR *be* and SP *be*, then, should be defined as follows:

(26) PR *be*: (of referents) be included in the class of the property P_x

(27) SP *be*: (of variables) include uniquely the value V_x

(26) states that a particular referent qualifies as a member of a class that is characterized in terms of the property P_x. (27) states that a variable is uniquely identified as a particular individual that qualifies as a value. Both

differ in meaning in this way. In section 3, I will show that the PR/SP distinction of copular sentences naturally follows from the definitions of the two kinds in (26) and (27) with two pairs of derivative rules. The first is concerned with subject selection:

(28) a. PR *be* selects referential subjects.

b. SP *be* selects impersonal subjects.

The second is concerned with the agreement form of copular *be* that can reflect the semantic difference between the two relations:

(29) a. PR *be* is oriented to agreement association.

b. SP *be* is oriented to agreement dissociation.

To put it differently, the pair of rules in (29) states that property expressions depend referentially on the objects that include them, but values are referentially independent of variables that are associated with them. Section 3 is devoted to the justification of these definitions.

3 An Analysis Based on the Dual-*Be* Approach

In this section we will see that the proposal presented in the last section is empirically supported by the data that have been reported and accumulated in previous studies, notably Declerck (1988). It will be clear that the dual-*be* approach, as is formulated in (26-29), can provide a consistent account for various contrasts between PR and SP sentences.

3.1 Pronominal Marking

The pronoun *it* has an impersonal character because it is employed to refer not to persons but rather to a thing or an event. This impersonal trait of *it* contrasts drastically with the referential nature of the personal pronoun like *he* or *she*. The difference between the two kinds of pronouns can be cited in support of our definitions of the two kinds of *be*'s.

Gundel (1977:555) points out that the negative copular sentence in (30) is ambiguous between PR and SP readings.

(30) The one I dislike isn't Bill's wife.

On a PR reading, this sentence asserts that a particular person whom the speaker dislikes is not described as *Bill's wife*. This reading negates the property to be ascribed to that person, and thus Bill may not be married. On an SP reading, Bill must have a wife and she is required not to be identified as

the one I dislike. Gundel paraphrases (30) into (31), where the pronominal marking in the second clause assists in disambiguation:

>   (31) The one I dislike is one of Bill's relatives, but {she/it} isn't his
>   wife.   (Gundel (1977:555))

In (31) the paraphrase with *she* has the PR reading alone, but the paraphrase with *it* the SP reading alone.[8]

This observation leads to the hypothesis that PR *be* and SP *be* differ in subject selection. While PR *be* selects referential subjects marked by gender and number, SP *be* selects impersonal subjects that are unmarked with respect to these features. In defense of this hypothesis, the following examples of tag questions are available:

>   (32) John is a good teacher, isn't {he/*it}?
>
>   (33) A: Who was the guest?
>
>   B: I'm not sure, but I think the guest was John, wasn't {??he/ it}?

In (32) *he* alone is possible, because the subject NP is referential. In (33), by contrast, *it* is preferred to *he*, suggesting that the subject NP *the guest* is different in kind from the referring expression *John*. This difference in pronominal marking follows naturally from the selectional difference between PR *be* and SP *be*, as is formulated in (28).

It is noteworthy that impersonal *it*, despite its singularity, occurs in the plural contexts in (34):

>   (34) a. Our new neighbors, {it is/*they are} John and Mary!
>
>   (Declerck and Seki (1990:34))
>
>   b. Bill thinks the ones who voted for him were George and
>   Alice, but I know {it was/?they were} Mary and Joe.
>
>   (Gundel (1977:555))

In much the same way as the singular context in (33), *it* wins over *they* in these plural contexts. Is it illogical that *it* equals plural expressions like *our new neighbors* as well as singular expressions like *the guest*? Or is it that *John* and *Mary* constitute one and the same personality? No. Here we face a curious disparity between pronominal reference and identification. These data suggest that variable subjects selected by SP *be* are unmarked with respect to gender and number when they are pronominalized.[9] In section 3.3, we will show that this kind of disparity is no idiosyncrasy, and that it is only an extreme example

of much more general phenomena that SP sentences display.

Notice, in this connection, that SP sentences with the variable *it* do not undergo reversion, as witnessed in (35):

(35) *John is it.

Similarly, the sentences with the variable *that* are not reversible:

(36) a. THAT's the chairman.

b. *The chairman is THAT.   (with capital letters stressed)

These facts imply that although SP sentences are reversible when they consist of full NPs, they have canonical order sensitive to pronominal variables. We will argue that the order is *Variable is Value* on independent grounds.

3.2 It-*cleft*

Let us begin the argument for the proposed word order by observing basic facts about the kinship between focus and value. One of the most effective way to show the PR/SP contrast in constructional terms is exemplified by *it*-clefting. As is well known, SP sentences, but not PR sentences, successfully correspond to *it*-clefts. For example:

(37) a. John is a genius.   (PR sentence)

b. The murderer is John.   (SP sentence)

(38) a. *It is a genius that John is.

b. It is John who is the murderer.

This correspondence correlates deeply with the uniqueness of the value NP. In *it*-clefts, focused NPs are the ones that qualify as values. Proper names are able to stand as values in the focus position, for they are directly linked to referents to be identified. By contrast, it is difficult if not impossible for a predicate nominal to stand as a focus to be identified, because it is not linked to a referent in the universe of discourse. In other words, it is not unique.

The relationship of value to focus is demonstrated by the following example, where only the determiner referential to particular individuals matches with a focused NP:

(39) A: Who was the first guest to arrive?

B: It was {our/*many/*few} neighbors (that were the first guest

to arrive).   (Declerck (1988:132))

Capitalizing on this regular correspondence between SP sentences and *it*-clefts, we can verify the correctness of the formulations in (29).

3.3 Number discord

It might be obvious at first sight that *it*-clefts display number discord between the singular subject pronoun *it* and the focused plural NP, as in (40):

(40) It {is/*are} they who are responsible for this chaos.

When we stop to think of the mechanism that underlies this phenomenon, however, it turns out to be of direct relevance to the nature of SP *be*.

The subject and complement NPs in the property-to-referent relation are required to exhibit number concord in principle, because the property depends referentially on the referent (cf. Itagaki (1971), Huddleston (1984: 186-187), among others). For example:

(41) a. They are {teachers/*a teacher}.

     b. Ed was {a lawyer/*lawyers}.

In PR sentences number concord of this kind is regular.[10] By contrast, the number concord is not always the case with SP sentences, as shown in (42):

(42) a. The best part$_{(sg.)}$ of the show was the acrobats$_{(pl.)}$.

     b. Our only guide$_{(sg.)}$ was the stars$_{(pl.)}$.

This contrast in number concord doesn't make sense when we treat the *be* in (41) and the *be* in (42) alike. The single-*be* approach fails to describe how the plural-to-singular correspondence in (42) differs from the singular-to- singular correspondence in (41), because copular *be* is supposed to do the same job in both cases. This is totally nonsense. The dual-*be* approach can reduce the plural-to-singular correspondence to our initial assumption that in SP sentences, the value is referentially independent of the variable, so that asymmetrical correspondences between them are possible. This is exactly what the pair of rules in (29) predicts: the agreement association of PR *be* encourages number concord, but the agreement dissociation of SP *be* encourages number discord between subject and complement NPs.

Sentences of the sequence $NP_{(sg.)}$ *is* $NP_{(pl.)}$ are generally SP sentences with plural NPs as values and singular NPs as variables, which is confirmed by their successful correspondence with *it*-clefts. Notice that focused NPs in (43) are in plural.

(43) a. It is the acrobats that are the best part of the show.

     b. It was the stars that were our only guide.

The singular NP in this context is a variable, which can be attested by the

unacceptability of *it*-clefts such as (44):

(44) *It was our only guide that was the stars.

Only values can stand in focus position of *it*-clefts.

In SP sentences with number discord, copular *be* agrees with variables even when reversed as in (45b).

(45) a. The aim of our policy {is/*are} improved relations with the
       Soviet Union.

   b. Improved relations with the Soviet Union {is/?are} the aim
      of our policy.   (Declerck (1988:80))

Potential for number discord of this kind seems to distinguish SP *be* sharply from PR *be*. PR *be* is oriented to agreement association, but SP *be* is to agreement dissociation. Given that English verbs basically agree with NPs on their left, it is reasonable to suppose that the canonical order of SP sentences is *Variable is Value*. There is one caveat. The linear order may constitute a controlling factor in the agreement of copular *be*, and this factor bears on the reversibility of SP sentences. The agreement with the value NP by *are* is allowed in (45b), though being marginal, when the NP preceeds *be* as in (45a). Similar remarks apply to the agreement in pseudo-clefts (cf. (58a)).

3.4 Ambiguity and Is *-contraction*

We have adopted a hypothesis that predicate nominals fall inside the domain of PR *be*, but values stand outside of the domain of SP *be*. Further evidence in favor of this hypothesis comes from *is*-contraction phenomena. In general, *is*-contraction is restricted with respect to syntactic gaps or disparities of constituents. For example:

(46) a. Mary is good at hockey, and Jean is _ at volleyball.

   b. *Mary is good at hockey, and Jean's _ at volleyball.

Kuno (1977:97) states that in 'identificational' sentences like (47), a pause is required to occur between copular *be* and infinitival or gerundive complements (the mark : is employed to stand for the pause):

(47) a. His plan is : to come here tomorrow.

   b. His hobby is : going to parks.

These sentences are obviously SP sentences; for example, in (47b) the variable *his hobby* is specified by the value *going to parks*. Interestingly, these sentences are unacceptable when they undergo *is*-contraction:

(48) a. *His plan's to come here tomorrow.

      b. *His hobby's going to parks.   (Kuno (1977:97))

Given that *is*-contraction is in conflict with gaps after *be* in a sentence, it seems entirely plausible that the pause in SP sentences functions as a gap.

Declerck (1988:5) states that a slight pause after *be* matches with SP sentences to produce colon intonation, as in the following:

(49) The bank robber is : John Smith.

It is crucial to observe that SP sentences with the *Variable is Value* order are odd when they undergo *is*-contraction. For example:

(50) A: Who is the king?

      B: The king {is/?'s} George the Second.   (Zwicky (1970:329))

(51) The fact {is/*'s} that smoking kills.

In clear contrast to the oddity of the contracted SP sentences, PR sentences are perfectly acceptable when contracted, as in (52):

(52) Jack's a good friend to Mary.

Unlike PR sentences, SP sentences basically do not accept *is*-contraction, with the qualification that pronominal subjects lead to contraction irrespective of the PR/SP distinction by virtue of cliticization. SP sentences with pronominal variables are susceptible to *is*-contraction, as the sentence in (36a) illustrates.

Although the final cause of the anti-contraction of SP sentences remains to be discovered, it is evident that the difference in acceptability with respect to *is*-contraction comes from the difference of complements. In PR sentences, complements denoting properties fall within the domain of PR *be*, and there is no gap. In SP sentences, complements referring to values maintain their independence from SP *be*, which appears as the presence of pause.

This contrast concerning *is*-contraction serves to classify *wh*-clefts. It is widely known in the literature that *wh*-clefts with NP focus are sometimes ambiguous between a PR and an SP reading in relation to specificity of the indefinite article *a(n)*. For example:

(53) What I bought is a German Shepherd and a St. Bernard.

This sentence is ambiguous in two ways. On a PR reading, the coordinated indefinite NPs *a German Shepherd and a St. Bernard* are nonspecific and make joint type-reference to one dog. It is a mixed breed of the two kinds of dogs. On an SP reading, each of the NPs is specific and has its referent, and the

speaker bought two separate dogs.

There are several ways to disambiguate the sentence in (53) in terms of sentence grammar. One is reversion, as in (54):

(54) A German shepherd and a St. Bernard is what I bought.

This order effects the SP reading, for only SP sentences can undergo reversion. *Is*-contraction, too, can disambiguate the sentence. For example:

(55) What I bought's a German shepherd and a St. Bernard, and
{it sure is a terrible combination/*I sure hope they got on
together}. (Kaisse (1983:115))

This contracted sentence excludes the 'two referents' reading, and so that the plural reference by *they* is blocked. When *is*-contraction is applied, the PR reading alone is possible, by virtue of the fact that an SP sentence does not undergo *is*-contraction in this environment.

Being a terminological issue, *wh*-clefts with the SP reading have another name of pseudo-clefts, and *wh*-clefts with the PR reading another name of free relatives. Applicability of *is*-contraction can differentiate between the two related sentences, as is evident from the following contrast:

(56) a. What I eat's none of your business.

b. What's bothering Jack {is/*'s} your behavior.

(Kaisse (1983:115-116))

This contrast between free relatives like (56a) and pseudo-clefts like (56b) further corroborates our PR/SP distinction.

Declerck (1988:80) observes that the agreement forms of *be* may determine whether the sentence in question is a pseudo-cleft type or a free relative type. Free relatives execute agreement association with complements.

(57) a. What you have bought are fake jewels. (PR reading)

b. What you have bought is fake jewels. (SP reading)

This difference in reading tests the validity of PR/SP distinction of copular *be*. The *be* in (57a) is associated with the number of referents, but the *be* in (57b) is dissociated from it. This is what the formulation in (29) correctly brings about.[11] Number discord goes with pseudo-clefts, for they contain SP *be*.

(58) a. More books {is/?are} what I need. (Declerck (1988:80))

b. What I bought was a punnet of strawberries and a pint of
clotted cream. (Higgins (1979:154))

Pseudo-clefts are SP sentences, and therefore the *be* in (58) exhibits agreement in singular irrespective of the number of NPs that qualify as values.

4 How Many *Be*'s?: Variations of Copular Sentences

We have adduced abundant evidence to show that the only way to properly describe the grammatical difference between PR and SP sentences is to subdivide copular *be* into PR *be* and SP *be*. We have seen that the PR/SP distinction of *be* provides a simple and consistent account for the various patterns that these sentences display. In short, *be* is heterogeneous in nature.

There are sentences that do not conform to either of the two types of copular sentences. Declerck (1988) counts four types of copular sentences other than PR and SP sentences. They are: Descriptionally-Identifying (59a), Identity (59b), Definition (59c) sentences, and Other Type (59d).

(59) a. Mike is my brother.
   b. Marilyn Monroe is Norma Jean.
   c. A motor car is a vehicle that has four wheels and is
      propelled by an internal combustion engine.
   d. Virtue is happiness.

An important question arises concerning the heterogeneous nature of *be* in the face of these sentences. The difference between PR *be* and SP *be* is responsible for the difference between PR and SP sentences. So far, so good. Then the obvious question to ask is: What kind of *be* do these non-conformist sentences have? Should we suppose that the difference between (59a) and (59b), for example, is also reducible to the semantic difference lying in *be*? Or is it that the PR/SP distinction of *be* leads to a nonrestrictive strategy that there are multiple number of *be*'s in proportion to the number of copular sentence types? If so, then the superiority of the multiple *be* theory would be heavily undermined for the lack of simplicity. These are serious questions that any research based on the theory must encounter. In the rest of this paper, I will suggest that some of the sentences in (59) can be regarded as interpretive variants of PR and SP sentences, and that the PR/SP distinction of copular *be* remains to be valid. I will argue that Descriptionally-Identifying (D-ID for short) sentences are considered to be variants of PR sentences, and Definitions are SP variants.

I take up D-ID sentences first. As we noted earlier, an English copular sentence with interrogative *who* is ambiguous with respect to characterization or identification (cf. (9)). This ambiguity is traced back to the difference between D-ID and SP sentences. Typical D-ID sentences occur in contexts like (60) in which the referent in question has already been picked out.

    (60) A: Who won the first prize?
         B: (It is) that man over there (who won the first prize).
         A: Who is he?
         B': He is the son of Judge Harris.   (D-ID sentence)
                               (Declerck (1988:97), Keizer (1990))

As this context illustrates, a D-ID sentence serves to give information that will help the hearer to have full identification of the person picked out by the preceding context. Since the referent of the subject NP has already been picked out, the information that the complement NP conveys contributes not to the identification of the person in question, but rather to the identification of what kind of person that person is. This means that the complement NP in D-ID sentences identifies the role that can describe the identity of a subject individual. The sentence in (60B') is descriptionally-identifying in this sense.

In support of our claim that D-ID sentences are PR variants, we first point out that they fail to correspond to *it*-clefts. For example:

    (61) A: Bill? Who's Bill?
         B: He's that man over there.

    (62) *It's that man over there that he is.   (Declerck (1991:532-534))

Recall that the focus position of *it*-clefts has to be provided with uniqueness, and the complement NP of D-ID sentences fails to stand in the position. What does this mean? As the examples in (63) demonstrate, the definite complement NPs in D-ID sentences are not uniquely referential to their subject NPs.

    (63) a. John is my friend, and so is Bill.
         b. Not only John but also Bill is Mary's sister's friend.
                                     (Keizer (1990:1059))

Moreover, D-ID sentences like (64a) have their counterparts in the small clause of *consider* without the help of *to be* as in (64b):

    (64) a. John is the professor.
         b. I consider John the professor.

These parallelisms indicate that the essence of D-ID sentences is the same as that of PR sentences, so that we can make use of the definition of PR *be* in (26) to give an account of the sentences as follows: the subject individual is included in a set of roles that can referentially characterize his/her identity. This is a kind of class-inclusion.

This account is justified by the fact that the definite complement NPs can be coordinated in reference to one and the same person, as in (65):

(65) A: Who's that?

B: That's my neighbor and best friend John.

(Declerck (1988:109))

They can be coordinated, because they do not pick out particular individuals, but rather belong to a set of roles.

The difference between PR and D-ID sentences, then, should be attributed not to the nature of copular *be*, but to the level of reference. While the subject NP of PR sentences is included in a set of properties without referentiality, that of D-ID sentences is in a set of roles with referentiality. The two types of class-inclusion can not be coordinated in a sentence because of this difference, as in (66B):

(66) A: Who's that?

B: *That's my friend and a good man.   (Declerck (1988:109))

The classification of D-ID sentences into PR sentences, as we have done here, shows that we need two criteria for classifying copular sentences. One is a criterion that is concerned with the nature of copular *be*, and the other is a criterion that is concerned with the environment in terms of referentiality. The contrast between PR and SP sentences illustrates the former case, and the grammar of D-ID sentences the latter case.

We can give only a brief outline of the classification of Definitions into SP sentences, for the accumulation of data is not sufficient to define what Definitions are exactly. For this the present discussion is somewhat speculative. Semantically, Definitions are related to SP sentences in that they are employed to answer questions and accept the paraphrase characteristic of SP sentences. But they fail to correspond to *it*-clefts. For example:

(67) a. A motor car is the following: a four-wheeled vehicle with an internal combustion engine.

b. ?It is a four-wheeled vehicle with an internal combustion
engine that is a motor car.   (Declerck (1988:115))

The oddity of (67b) remains to be explained, but the paraphrase in (67a) reveals that Definitions and SP sentences are associated with each other.

We argue that a definition is a context rather than a sentence type in which a word's meaning is brought into question and a possible answer to the question is specified as its meaning. A definition of a word, if successful, will inform the hearer that the linguistic paraphrase of the word (*definiendum*) uniquely includes such and such statements (*definiens*). This is a variant of identification that conveys the value-for-variable relation. While SP sentences are sentences in which identification takes place in the level of experience, Definitions are contexts in which it takes place in the level of dictionary knowledge. Identification in itself is the same in both cases.

Definitions are reversible with a slight change in meaning, as in:

(68) a. A telescope is a device for viewing distant objects.

b. A device for viewing distant objects is a telescope.

The reversed sentence in (68b) has a meaning of naming instead of definition (cf. Yasui (1980:45-46)). At present, it is not clear whether the word order *Definiendum is Definiens* is a distinctive feature of Definitions, because there are several variants in definitional statements, as in (69):

(69) A: What is a pyramid?

B: What you see over there is a pyramid./A pyramid is what you
see over there.   (Declerck (1988:114))

We may say that the sentences in (69B) are not Definitions in the strict sense of the word, for it depends, not on linguistic paraphrases, but on deictic expressions like *over there*. Nevertheless, they are reversible, take the form of pseudo-clefts, and answer questions that ask for definitions. As these facts illustrate, it is possible to point out the similarity, but is hard to draw the dividing line, between SP sentences and Definitions, which no doubt shows that definitions are SP variants. In much the same way as we classify D-ID sentences into PR sentences, there is reason to classify Definitions into SP sentences. They contain SP *be*, but the environment in which it occurs is characterized by the genericity of the subject NP. In this respect, they differ from SP sentences.

I admit that there are many problems to be worked out with respect to the environments in which D-ID sentences and Definitions are employed. The problems are mainly concerned with the referentiality of NPs that constitute these sentences. I make no attempt to deal with the rest of the copular sentences in (59), Identity and Other Types, for they elude my understanding at present. I am uncertain whether or not they fit in the PR/SP distinction. My task in the future research is to clarify the complicated situation between the PR/SP distinction of copular *be* and the referential environments that subject and complement NPs conspire to create in fuller detail.

5 Conclusion

This paper is descriptive in nature, but the conclusion has theoretical consequences. We have shown that two types of *be*'s permeates the system of English copular sentences in the form of the contrast between predication and identification. The two rival relations of property-to-referent and value-for-variable can be traced back to the heterogeneity of *be*, which leads to the justification of the dual-*be* approach in English. The basic idea is that heterogeneous phenomena that a particular word triggers derive from the multiple meanings that the word involves in its own. However, there should be some reason that *be* keeps its unity despite its heterogeneity. In other words, we can ask: Why *be* remains to be *be*? Is it a set of homonyms or a polysemous verb? If the latter alternative is correct, then the further question to ask is: On what level of meaning does our PR/SP distinction operate? To answer these questions we must take into account a number of other usages of *be* such as locational existence (*John is in the garden*), *there*-constructions (*There are three boys in the yard*), the passive and the progressive auxiliary, the modal idiom *be to*, and so on.[12]

Notes

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[1] This paper is devoted to copular sentences. Because of this limitation, *be* in this paper is equivalent to copular *be*. We regard *be* as an auxiliary verb with what Palmer (1988) calls NICE properties, but it is not always the case that *be* behaves as an auxiliary. For example, although *do*-support results in ungrammaticality in declaratives like (i), *do* appears in imperatives like (ii):

(i) a. He isn't sad./*He doesn't be sad.   (Negation)

b. John IS sad./*John DOES be sad.   (Emphasis)

(ii) a. Don't be noisy!/*Be not noisy!

b. Do be brave!

In this connection, see Kaga (1985) for his proposal to separate the *be* in (i) from the *be* in (ii) with respect to their syntactic categories. He argues that the former is an auxiliary and the latter a main verb.

[2] Jackendoff does not object to the subdivision of *be*. Actually, since his (1976) paper he has proposed that the function BE divides into three locational modes: the positional (BE_{Posit}), the identificational (BE_{Ident}), and the circumstantial (BE_{Circ}). Thus, he also considers *be* to be heterogeneous in nature from this point of view. However, our interest in this paper is in the phenomenon that BE_{Ident} (copular *be*) is concerned with. In this respect Jackendoff advocates the monosemous *be* theory.

[3] Although Rothstein took the view that English *be* contains three different elements in her (1987) paper, she has changed her opinion in her (1995) paper to the effect that *be* is "a semantically empty verb." In passing, Zaring (1996) adopts the dual-*be* approach to Welsh copular sentences, but she considers the single-*be* approach to be appropriate for English copular sentences. Her claim is that this difference is in line with one of the parametric differences between the two languages.

[4] In this paper the term *identification* is employed to specifically mean the purpose of SP sentences. An SP sentence is an expression of identification in that it makes the hearer to pick out a particular individual or particular individuals denoted by the definite description from a set. The identification in

this sense is different from the identification that Higgins (1979) has in mind, for example. Higgins' identificational sentence is the one that is called a Descriptionally Identifying sentence to be discussed in section 4.

[5] The fact that many languages of the world lack equivalents of the copula does not invalidate our approach which takes copular *be* to be meaningful. Languages differ in this respect. The typology of copular sentences should be built on multiple factors that are supposed to be limited in number. We have focused on the contrast between PR and SP sentences in view of the fact that the conceptual difference between predication and identification takes the form of grammatical contrast across languages. However, this contrast is only one of the factors that are involved in the typology. Readers are referred to Verhaar (1967-1973) for a large-scale typological survey of the English *be* equivalents.

[6] Williams (1994:42) observes that in the small clause of *consider*, proper names can appear with a 'peculiar' reading, as in (ib):

      (i) a. I consider John the mayor.

         b. I consider the mayor John.

In contrast to the 'straightforward' reading in (ia), (ib) is 'peculiar' in that the speaker is taken to have 'knowledge of what entity is the mayor, but no certain knowledge of what entity the name *John* applies to.' In other words, a proper name without acquaintance with the bearer of the name does not qualify as a value. Rather, it is just a role in a Descriptionally Identifying sentence.

[7] The coordination facts across categories pose serious problems to the syntactic condition that coordination is possible only when identical categories are conjoined. PR sentences can be coordinated with passive and progressive sentences. For example (cf. Sag et al. (1983)):

      (i) a. I am neither an authority on this subject nor portraying

           myself as one.

         b. David Radford is an excellent doctor and respected by

           every patient in his hospital.

In (i), indefinite NPs, APs, and present and past participles are used predicatively. Sag et al. suppose these phrases to share the supercategorical feature [+PRD]. This feature may cover the French pronominalization, for it applies to PP complements, and passive participles alike, as in (ii):

(ii) a. Pierre a été   chassé, et Henri *le* sera   aussi.

      P.   has been sent, and H.   it will-be too

      'Pierre was sent away, and Henri will be too.'

   b. La bague n'est pas à toi, mais elle *le* sera   un jour.

      the ring   not-is not to you, but she it will-be one day

      'The ring is not yours, but it will be (yours) one day.'

The fact that both coordination and pronominalization apply to these phrases in spite of their categorical differences constitutes fairly strong evidence that there is a set of phrases that are assigned [+PRD] feature, the nature of which needs explication in relation to PR *be* (*être*).

[8] Negative SP sentences are an instance of contrastive negation rather than sentence negation. See Kuno (1977) for details.

[9] Declerck and Seki (1990) consider the sentences in (34) to be reduced *it*-clefts, and argue that the initial occurrence of *it* in them is the *it* in *it*-clefts. The impersonal pronoun *it* in these contexts is related to the contextual variables for which values are specified. Traditionally, such a use of *it* has been referred to as 'situation' *it*.

[10] The class of PR sentences is far from being homogeneous and contains a lot of variants whose classification awaits further study. There are apparent cases of number discord in PR sentences, as in (i):

(i) a. Good books {are/*is} a rarity these days.

   b. John and George are a team.

In (ia) the generic class of good books has a property of rareness, and in (ib) the two persons form a team, and therefore they qualify as being one. I stress that the number discord in (i) is different in kind from that in SP sentences, since the agreement with the singular NP is ruled out, as in (ia). This means that predicate nominals do not qualify as variables. Similar remarks apply to copular sentences in which subject position is filled by prepositional phrases.

(ii) a. Under the bed is a comfortable place.

   b. Under the bed and under the table {are/*is} a comfortable place.

                                         (Arimura (1987:22))

In (ii) the referents of the prepositional phrases are included in a single property of *a comfortable place*. One can describe this kind of phenomenon on the basis of a comprehensive survey of the relevant data (cf. Leech and Li

(1995)), but it will inevitably contain a large number of idiosyncrasies.

[11] Agreement in pseudo-clefts is much more complicated than is suggested here as a matter of fact. For example, Gundel's (1977:547) observation seems to be at odds with our exposition:

    (i) a. What I'm getting him is both a tape recorder and a radio.

        b. ?What I'm getting him are both a tape recorder and a radio.

She notes that (ia) is ambiguous between an attributive and an identifying reading in her terms, but (ib) has only the latter reading. There is thus a contradiction between Declerck and Gundel: Declerck says that with *is* the SP reading holds in (57) and Gundel says that with *are* the identifying reading holds in similar environments. I have no account for Gundel's reading at present, but the fact that the difference in agreement helps to differentiate the two readings strongly shows that SP *be* and PR *be* differ in agreement rule.

[12] The following sentences in (i) show that PR *be* has obvious affinities with *be* of locational existence, because PR and locative existential sentences can be coordinated under certain circumstances:

    (i) a. *John is in trouble and in the garden.

        b. John is highly competent and in trouble.

        c. Sandy is either a lunatic or under the influence of drugs.

The relationship of PR sentences to locative sentences with abstract locations is evident from the coordination possibility in (ib-c). Reference to particular places is a key concept in distinguishing abstract and concrete locations. Conversely, predicate nominals may be regarded as abstract locations in which subject NPs are located. The idea that predicates are compared to locatives has been repeated by a number of researchers, notably by Jackendoff (1976).

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