

### Three-way copular contrast in Kifuliiru

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From a typological perspective, it is not uncommon to find languages that grammatically distinguish temporary vs. permanent predication (Milsark, 1974; Carlson, 1977; Kratzer, 1995, Diesing, 1998; a.o.). In many languages, this contrast corresponds to the use of distinct copular verbs, e.g., Spanish *estar/ser* (see Deo et al., 2017). Using novel fieldwork data, I show that Kifuliiru (Bantu, JD63; Maho, 2009) exhibits a similar temporary/permanent contrast in its two copular verbs, *-li* (temporary state) and *-tula* (permanent state). However, unlike other complex copula systems, Kifuliiru exceptionally exhibits a third *be*-verb form, *-muba*, whose distribution and interpretation is distinct from the aforementioned *-li/-tula* (see Otterloo and Otterloo (2011) for discussion of other aspects of the Kifuliiru copular system). The observed three-way copular contrast in Kifuliiru provides novel evidence against a strictly binary distinction between stage/individual-level predication, instead favoring the three-way distinction advocated for in Roy (2013).

**Copular BE.** Much like the distinction between *ser* and *estar* in Spanish (Deo et al., 2017), we find that the two Kifuliiru copulas, *-li/-tula*, encode a general distinction between temporary and permanent predication, with *-li* yielding a time-bounded, stage-like interpretation of the locative description “in Kinshasa” (1), and *-tula* yielding a ‘permanent’ interpretation (2).

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| (1) <i>Maneno ali</i> <i>Kinshasa</i><br>1.Maneno 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>LI</sub> Kinshasa<br>‘Maneno is in Kinshasa’ (right now; he’s visiting) | (2) <i>Maneno atula</i> <i>Kinshasa</i><br>1.Maneno 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>TULA</sub> Kinshasa<br>‘Maneno is in Kinshasa’ (permanently; he lives there) |
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While reminiscent of the stage/individual distinction reported in the copular systems of languages like Spanish (Carlson, 1977; Kratzer, 1995; Arche, 2006; a.o.), the distribution of *-li/-tula* does not align with previous descriptions of this contrast. We find that the ‘temporary’ state copula *-li* is sometimes available with canonically individual-level predicates; though unavailable in contexts where a property holds indefinitely (3), *-li* may be use with an individual-level predicate, e.g., ‘short’, to yield a contextually bound interpretation (4).

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| (3) <i>Context: Safari is shorter than everyone in town, and everyone knows this fact about him.</i><br><i>Safari #ali/√atula</i> <i>mu:fi</i><br>1.Safari 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>LI</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> 1.short<br>‘Safari is short’ | (4) <i>Context: Safari is usually considered tall, but he’s currently standing next to someone much taller than him.</i><br><i>Safari √ali/#atula</i> <i>mu:fi</i><br>1.Safari 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>LI</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> 1.short<br>‘Safari is short’ |
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In addition to *-li/-tula*, Kifuliiru also exhibits a third copula in non-verbal predication, *-muba*. Like the ‘permanent’ state copula *-tula*, *-muba* may be used to yield a ‘permanent’ interpretation of locative descriptions (5) and so-called characterizing predicates (6).

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| (5) <i>Maneno √amuba/√atula</i> <i>Kinshasa</i><br>1.Maneno 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> Kinshasa<br>‘Maneno is in Kinshasa’ (permanently; he lives there) | (6) <i>Safari √amuba/√atula</i> <i>munganga</i><br>1.Safari 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> 1.doctor<br>‘Safari is a doctor’ (has been his whole life) |
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Despite the fact that *-muba* yields ‘permanent’ interpretations elsewhere (5)-(6), it cannot ascribe canonically individual-level properties like ‘tall’ to definite subjects; unlike *-li* and *-tula*, *-muba* is unavailable regardless of context in (7)-(8).

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| (7) <i>Context: Safari is taller than everyone in town, and everyone knows this fact about him.</i><br><i>Safari #amuba/#ali/√atula</i> <i>mula</i><br>1.Safari 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> /be- <sub>LI</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> 1.tall<br>‘Safari is tall’ | (8) <i>Context: Safari is usually considered short, but he’s standing next to someone much shorter than him.</i><br><i>Safari #amuba/√ali/#atula</i> <i>mula</i><br>1.Safari 1SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> /be- <sub>LI</sub> /be- <sub>TULA</sub> 1.tall<br>‘Safari is tall’ |
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However, *-muba* may co-occur with an individual-level predicate in the presence of a generic subject. In this environment the use of *-muba* yields a kind-reading; the properties in (9)-(10) characterize kinds of trees.

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| (9) <i>Kino kiti kimuba</i> <i>kirefu</i><br>7.DEM 7.tree 7SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> 7.tall<br>‘This (kind of) tree is tall’ | (10) <i>Kino kiti kimuba</i> <i>kiofi</i><br>7.DEM 7.tree 7SM.PRES.be- <sub>MUBA</sub> 7.short<br>‘This (kind of) tree is short’ |
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**Temporary/Permanent Contrast and BE.** In an attempt to capture the observation that languages sometimes distinguish between properties that hold temporarily of an individual and properties that hold indefinitely, accounts like Milsark (1974), Carson (1977), Diesing (1992), Kratzer (1995), a.o., posit a binary distinction between stage-level and individual-level predicates. For some of these accounts, the stage/individual contrast is entirely lexical; only stage-level predicates have an eventuality argument (see Kratzer, 1995). For others, the source of the stage/individual contrast is instead syntactic; assuming all predicates are predicates of eventualities, interpretive contrasts must arise due to differences in the structure of nonverbal predicates (Roy, 2013). Based on predicational contrasts in French, Spanish and Russian, Roy (2013) posits three (syntactically) distinct types of non-verbal predicates: *dense* (situation-descriptive) predicates range over mass (non-atomic) eventualities, *non-dense* (characterizing) predicates range over atomic eventualities, allowing for ‘gaps’ in interpretation, and *maximal* (defining) predicates range over maximal eventualities.

I propose that the three-way copular contrast in Kifuliiru mirrors the the interpretive contrasts proposed of the three predicate types in Roy (2013). The ‘permanent’ copula *-tula* corresponds with defining interpretations; it describes a property that is true of a maximal eventuality. In contrast, *-muba* corresponds with non-dense, characterizing interpretations; it describes a property that need not be true of every subpart of an eventuality *e*. Finally, the ‘temporary’ copula *-li* corresponds with situation-descriptive interpretations; it describes a property that is non-atomic (contra *-muba*) and does not hold of a maximal eventuality (as with *-tula*).

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| (11) <b>-li</b> (SITUATION-DESC.):<br>$\exists e[P(e) \ \& \ \text{Subj}(e,x)]$<br>There is an event of x being P | (12) <b>-muba</b> (CHARACTERIZING):<br>$\exists e[P(e) \ \& \ \text{Subj}(e,x) \ \& \ P \ \text{is nondivisive}]$<br>There is an event of x being P<br>where P is nondivisive (P need<br>not hold of all subparts of e). | (13) <b>-tula</b> (DEFINING):<br>$\exists e[\text{MAX}(e) \ \& \ P(e) \ \& \ \text{Subj}(e,x)]$<br>There is an event of x being P, and for all<br>e P(e), there is no e' such that e is a proper<br>part of e' and P(e'). |
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This three-way system directly accounts for the fact that *-li* yields contextually bounded interpretations of locative (3) and individual-level descriptions (4), whereas *-muba/-tula* each yield ‘permanent’ interpretations (5)-(6); the use of *-li* results in the implicature that the property described is both dense/divisive and does not hold of a maximal eventuality, whereas the use of *-tula*, for example, results in the implicature that the property holds specifically of a maximal eventuality. This analysis also explains why *-muba* cannot attribute individual-level properties to definite subjects, despite generally yielding ‘permanent’ readings; if *-muba* corresponds with characterizing interpretations, it describes properties that need not be true of all subparts of an eventuality, whereas individual-level descriptions, e.g., ‘tall’ (7)-(8), hold of maximal eventualities, and are therefore true of all subparts of an eventuality. However, since *-muba* describes nondivisive properties (i.e. it allows ‘gaps’), it can attribute an individual level property to a generic subject to yield a kind-reading; there is a (general) eventuality of x being P, e.g., *this kind of tree is (usually) tall*, but not all subeventualities of e must be P eventualities, e.g., *this kind of tree is (usually) tall, but the one in front of me is not*.

## References

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