Constraints on Structural Underspecification:
Compound tenses in Old Spanish and East African Bantu

A growing body of work articulated from the perspective of the Dynamic Syntax (DS) framework makes reference – either implicitly or explicitly – to what has been termed the Unique Unfixed Node Constraint (Seraku 2013). This constraint is a restriction which stems from the natural logic of the tree building process as it is articulated within the DS approach. Under the Logic of Finite Trees (LOFT, Blackburn & Meyer-Viol 1994; Kempson et al. 2001), two unfixed tree nodes of the same modality will necessarily collapse on to each other since they have an identical tree node address and, therefore, cannot be kept distinct. The effects of Unique Unfixed Node Constraint have been exploited in accounts of various phenomenon in a number of languages, including Greek (Chatzikyriakidis 2009, 2010) Spanish (Bouzouita 2008a, 2008b), Korean and Japanese (Kempson & Kiaer 2010, Seraku 2013) and a number of Bantu languages (Gibson 2012, 2016).

The present talk continues in this vein and explores data relating to auxiliary placement in Old Spanish and a small set of East African Bantu languages. Concretely, this presentation will focus on variation in auxiliary-verb placement in different compound tenses. While parallel word order patterns exist between these languages, there are also some notable differences, which correlate to the different degrees of grammaticalization that these tenses have undergone. To illustrate, lets compare examples (1)-(4). While in examples (1)-(3) the presence of a *wh*-constituent triggers the auxiliary-verb order in Old Spanish, Rangi and Mbugwe for the present perfect, future and habitual tense respectively, the verb-auxiliary pattern is maintained for the Old Spanish future, as seen in example (4), which always exhibits this order regardless of the syntactic-pragmatic context it appears in.

(1) *por qué* ***eres*** ***venido*** *a esta tierra*? [Old Spanish]
why AUX.2sg come.PASTPART to this land
'Why have you come to this land?' (CdE: *Los siete sabios de Roma*)

(2) *ani* ***á-ri*** ***wul-a*** *ma-papai* *a-ya?* [Rangi]
who SM1-AUX buy-FV 6-papaya DEM-6
'Who will buy these papayas?' (Gibson 2012: 114)

(3) *kee* ***o-jéé*** ***r-a*** [Mbugwe]
what SM2sg- AUX.HAB2 eat- FV
'What do you usually eat?' (Wilhelmsen p.c.)

(4) *Qué* *me* ***dar-ás***? [Old Spanish]
what CL INF.give-AUX.2sg
'What will you give me? (*Fazienda de Ultramar*; Lazar 1965: 52)

We show that the effects of the Unique Unfixed Node Constraint can also be used to account for the distributional patterning found in these two groups languages, therefore adding to the growing body of cross-linguistic work articulated within the DS framework which shows this constraint at work, as well as contributing to the comparative investigation of structure building processes in DS.