Main auxiliaries in English and Laali : A Contrastive Analysis

Robson Perrin MBERI NGAKALA
Maître-Assistant CAMES, Enseignant-chercheur
Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines/
Centre de Recherches
en Linguistique et Languages Orales (CERELLO)
Université Marien NGOUABI, Congo Brazzaville
robsonngakala@gmail.com

Abstract

This study contrasts main auxiliaries between English and Laali, a Bantu language spoken in the South-west of Congo Brazzaville. The study is carried out on the basic of Chomsky's Minimalist Program. The analysis proves that English intensively makes use of main auxiliaries in its sentential constructions. Accordingly, English attests three main auxiliaries namely be, have and do. Be is responsible for deriving progressive and passive structures. Have is used to construct perfective structures whereas do is utilized for realizing a number of syntactic constructions predicated on by lexical verbs. In fact, the English lexical verbs fail to realize negative, interrogative, emphatic and anaphoric constructions without a do-support. Yet, Laali attests only one main lexical auxiliary namely óbá (be) which is used to realize progressive and past perfective constructions. However, it's have congener is expressed syntactically thanks to the merger of the óbá (be) and ŋà (with) but also by the affix màà which appears in the prefix position of the verb stem to denote present perfect. Indeed, if English requires an intensive use of main auxiliaries for many of its syntactic constructions, Laali however, does not need main auxiliaries to derive structures like negatives and interrogatives.

Key words: Main auxiliaries, English, Laali, contrastive analysis

Résumé

Cette étude oppose les auxiliaires principaux entre l'anglais et le laali, une langue bantoue parlée dans le Sud-ouest du Congo Brazzaville. L'étude est réalisée sur la base du Programme minimaliste de Chomsky. L'analyse prouve que l'anglais utilise intensivement les principaux auxiliaires dans ses constructions phrastiques. En conséquence, l'anglais atteste trois auxiliaires principaux à savoir be, have et do. Be permet de former des structures progressives et passives. Have est utilisé pour construire des structures perfectives alors que do est utilisé pour réaliser un certain nombre de constructions syntaxiques basées sur des verbes lexicaux. En fait, les

verbes lexicaux anglais ne parviennent pas à réaliser des constructions négatives, interrogatives, emphatiques et anaphoriques sans l'appui de do. En revanche, le laali n'atteste qu'un seul auxiliaire lexical principal à savoir óbá (be) qui est utilisé pour réaliser des constructions perfectives et progressives passées. Cependant, son congénère have s'exprime syntaxiquement grâce à la fusion de óbá (être) et ŋà (avec) mais aussi par l'affixe màà qui apparaît en position préfixale du radical verbal pour désigner le passé composé. En effet, si l'anglais requiert une utilisation assez imprtante des auxiliaires principaux pour bon nombre de ses constructions syntaxiques, le Laali n'a cependant pas besoin d'auxiliaires principaux pour dériver des structures comme les négatifs et les interrogatifs.

Mots-clés : Auxiliaires principaux, anglais, laali, analyse contrastive

Introduction

This paper is concerned with contrasting the functioning of main auxiliaries in English, an Indo-European language and Laali, a Bantu language. In fact, according to Chomsky's Universal Grammar postulate, world languages share many similar properties (principles) although they are distant in terms of families. Correspondingly, this article seeks to find out what is similar and dissimilar between English and Laali as regards main auxiliaries' operation. As such, it aims at reinforcing Chomsky's UG hypothesis. Actually, auxiliaries constitute a subcategory of verbs distinguishing from lexical verbs through some semantic and syntactic criteria. From Latin *auxiliaris* meaning '*giving aid*', auxiliaries are viewed as helping verbs (Bussmann 1998 : 113) as they usually occur before lexical verbs to which they assign morphosyntactic features such as tense, aspect, voice, negative and question forms, emphasis, number, person, etc. Accordingly, Damanik (2010 : 16) asserts that "*in English the extra meaning of the auxiliary verbs alters the basic form of the main verb*". Indeed, in English auxiliary dependent constructions, morphosyntactic features supposed to occur on main verbs appear on auxiliaries. As such, when helping the main verb, the auxiliary may change its morphology. Furthermore, the use of English relative tenses implies the mastery of different variations of the English auxiliaries. This shows how the notion of auxiliary is relevant to a large extent. However, this work is restricted to answering the following questions: (1) What are the main auxiliaries attested in English and Laali? (2)

What are the morphological aspects of main auxiliaries in the two languages? (3) What are the possible syntactic distributions of main auxiliaries in the two languages? (4) How similar and dissimilar are main auxiliaries in the two languages ? The work is based on the following hypotheses :

(1) No language is somehow free from the utilization of auxiliary ; as such, its scrutiny in world languages would be worthwhile.

(2) Many language morphosyntactic constructions are auxiliary based; consequently, a particular attention should be paid to both its form and function.

(3) As word order is language specific, main auxiliaries might have different positions related to each language.

(4) Chomsky's UG hypothesis claims languages to share both variant and invariant aspects. The veracity of such a hypothesis could only be proved through the comparison of linguistic notions of different languages.

The work is structured as follows : section 1 introduces the term auxiliary. Section 2 analyses main auxiliaries in English. Section 3 scrutinizes main auxiliaries in Laali.

1. Auxiliaries : An overview

This section is concerned with presenting the term auxiliary. To start with, Crystal (2008 : 46) argues what follows:

> Auxiliary is a term used in the grammatical classification of verbs to refer to the set of verbs, subordinate to the main lexical verbs, which help to make distinctions in mood, aspect, voice, etc.; also called auxiliary verbs. In English the main auxiliaries are **do**, **be** and **have**, e.g. *she **is** leaving*, ***does** she know? she **has** taken*. (…) The class of auxiliaries is distinguished grammatically from lexical verbs in several ways; for instance, they have a special negative form (e.g. isn't, hasn't, can't, as opposed to *walkn't), and they can be used with subject inversion (e.g. is he, does he, will they, as opposed to *walks he).

Taxonomically, auxiliaries are regarded as a sub class of the verb whose main part is to provide additional morphosyntactic information that should appear on the main verb. Indeed, except the positive statements linked to the simple present and past tenses such as *I teach syntax*, *I taught syntax* and the positive imperative statement like *Teach syntax*, all other English constructions require an auxiliary to be grammatically meaningful. In other words, apart from the forms indicated above, every tensed structure either absolute or relative in any mood needs an auxiliary for its well-formedness. Greenbaum *et al* (2002 : 22) refers to auxiliaries as "*operators*" because they are the first elements of the verb phrase predicate via which many syntactic operations are realized. Yet, auxiliaries are further cleaved into main or primary and secondary or modal auxiliaries. Main auxiliaries include ***do***, ***have*** and ***be***. ***Do*** is referred to as a dummy auxiliary (Newson *et al*, 2006 :198) as it is purely used for syntactic reasons rather than semantic ones. Its main task is to help the transformation of basic declarative sentences whose main verbs are ordinary into other forms including negative, interrogative and emphatic. ***Have*** and ***be*** are also known as aspectual auxiliaries (Newson *et al*, 2006 :197). ***Have*** is used to form perfect aspect structures whereas ***be*** is referred to as a progressive as well as passive auxiliary. Progressive, because it allows the construction of progressive derivations ; and passive, because the passivization process in English implies ***be*** insertion in its derived constructions. Furthermore, auxiliaries include different properties. First, they are grammatical devices, and as such, they belong to the functional word category (Radford 2009 :5) in much the same way as determiners, pronouns and complementizers. Second, they belong to a 'closed' category of words because they cannot generate new words based on derivational processes. Also, they are finite and fixed. Third, they are elements which overtly or covertly inflect for tense and agreement when occurring before main verbs. Fourth, they are almost semantically empty, i.e., they bear less semantic meaning and cannot therefore assign semantic roles to different arguments of the sentence. Fifth, they have the WH/Q feature which allows the *subject-auxiliary-inversion* which entails yes-no questions in their interrogative sentences (including tag questions). Sixth, they enable the negative particle ***not*** to occur after them in

negative structures (Aarts 2001 :39). Finally, unlike main verbs that select nominal arguments as their complements, auxiliaries usually take main verbs under their c-commanded domain. In Minimalist Programme (MP), auxiliaries are viewed as occurring in complementary distribution with tense affixes. As a result, they appear as heads of the TP projection. The following sub-section is concerned with main auxiliaries in English.

2. Main auxiliaries in English

Murthy (2007 :128) defines main auxiliaries as '*verbs used to form negatives, questions and tense*'. This definition has some weaknesses because except the overt morphosyntactic tense markers, modals can give rise to negative and interrogative structures on their own in spite of being secondary auxiliaries. The definition which matches main auxiliaries is the one by Damanik (2010 : 15) which states that main or primary auxiliaries are mainly used to change the tense, the aspect or the voice of the main verb, but also to make questions and negatives. As stated earlier, Crystal (2008 : 46) divides main auxiliaries up into three namely ***be***, ***have*** and ***do***. The subpart below focuses on the English ***be***.

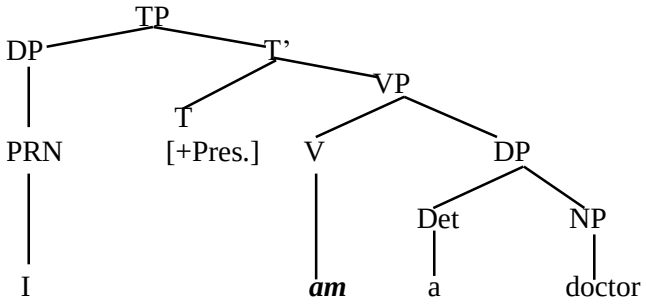
2.1. Be

Be is the English auxiliary which has more finite forms than other English auxiliaries. Its finite forms are summarized in the chart (1) for the present tense and (2) for the past one.

(1) *The finite forms of the auxiliary **be** in present tense*

	Person	**Present**
Singular	1st	I **am** handsome
	2nd	You **are** sent a pen.
	3rd	S/he/it **is** handsome
Plural	1st	

(4)



However, ***be*** is used as an auxiliary when it plays the role of the helping verb occurring before the main verb and bearing all the grammatical properties of the latter as instanced below :

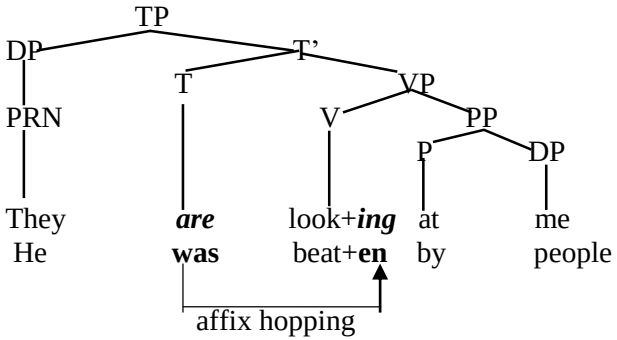
(5) a- They **are** [**VP** look**ing** at me]
b- He **was** [**VP** beat**en** by people]

As it is noticeable, ***be*** utilized as an auxiliary as an auxiliary, goes in conjunction with the '*ing*' or the '*en*' forms of the verb (Newson *et al*, 2006 : 155). The former refers to progressive aspect whereas the latter alludes to the passive voice. Accordingly, the progressive aspect is actualized through the following formula **be + V-ing**. This means that the '*ing*' form of the main verb in progressive structures is ***be*** conditioned as shown in (5a).

However, in English passive structures, ***be*** is inserted before the main verb that it entails the morphological change. In fact, ***be*** requires the past participle morphology on its following verb. So, the format for the English passive structures is as follows : **Be + V-ed/-en**.

According to Minimalist Program, it is argued that since the auxiliary is the only tensed unit in passive and progressive constructions, it is considered as head of the Tense Phrase. Of interest is also the fact that the progressive and the passive affixes which are basically associated with the auxiliary do not inflect on the auxiliary itself, but they rather lower onto the following verbal element thanks to the process known as affix hopping that Radford (2009 :277) refers to as "*an operation by which an unattached affix in T is lowered onto a verb*". All of this is summarized via the following P-marker :

(6)



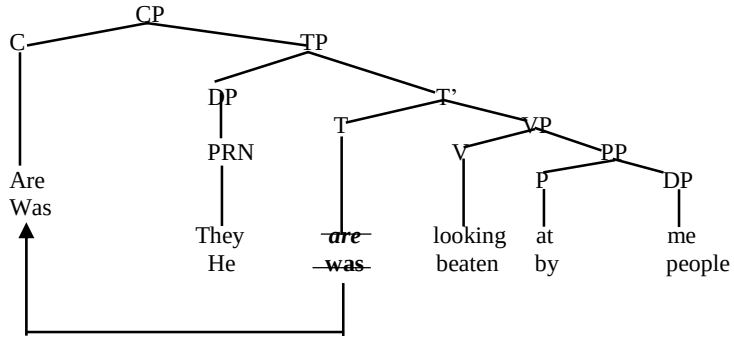
Having a strong WH/Q feature, ***be*** in (3) and (5) structures can be promoted to the Compelementizer position via the *subject-auxiliary-inversion* mechanism. The Minimalist Program jargon refers to this this inversion as T-to-C movement (Radford 2009 :151, 481) i.e. a movement of an auxiliary verb from the T position to C position. Consider the following examples :

(7) a- Am I a doctor ?
c- Are they look**ing** at me?
e- Was he beat***en*** by people?

These sentences are in PF because the words making them do not occur in their canonical distribution as it is the case for their LF counterparts in (3) and (5). In fact, the auxiliary ***be*** whose underlying position is pre-verbal in (3) and (5) occurs in ex-situ position in (7) sentences. The issue which arises at this level is to know whether the moved *be* in interrogatives can still be viewed as head of TP as in the (6) tree diagram. Put otherwise, does *be* play the same role before and after movement ? The answer to this concern is provided by Radford (2009 :443) as follows : "*Complementizers are not the only kinds of word which can precede subjects in clauses. […], auxiliaries can also precede subjects in yes-no questions […]. In this respect, inverted auxiliaries seem to resemble complementizers*". In fact, in addition to complementizers such as *if, that, whether, who, where, for, to, because* etc. introducing subordinate clauses, the notion of complementizer can also be fulfilled by moved auxiliaries in interrogative constructions. Indeed, interrogative sentences are characterized by feature [+WH/Q]

(Haegeman 1994 :117, Mberi Ngakala 2014 : 63) which is strong in English in that it attracts the T to C via Attract Closest Condition. Consequently, *be* in (7) structures is head of the CP rather than TP as shown in (8) below :

(8)

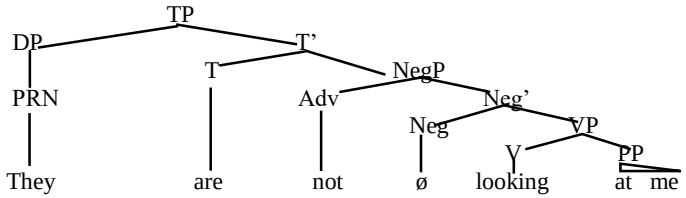


The additional issue to point out about ***be*** is that the negative particle ***not*** can directly occur after it. To exemplify :

(9) a- I *am* **not** a doctor.
b- They *are* **not** looking at me.
c- The thief *was* **not** beaten.

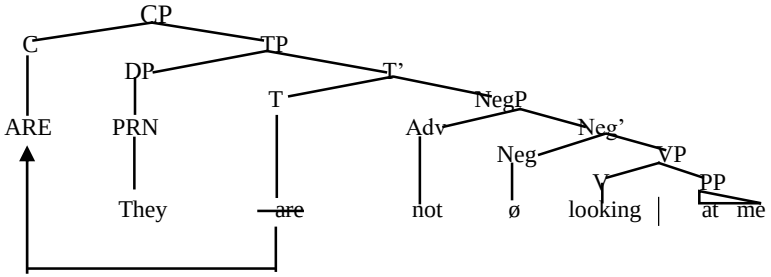
In these examples the negative occurs in the position between ***be*** and its complement. If in (9a) *not* is followed by a nominal, in (9b) and (9c) it is rather followed by a main verb. As a matter of fact, when *not* is positioned in front of the main verb, it is said to occupy the specifier position of the Negation Phrase (Radford op. cit.: 468). Accordingly, the derivation of (9b) can be represented in the way which is as follows :

(10)



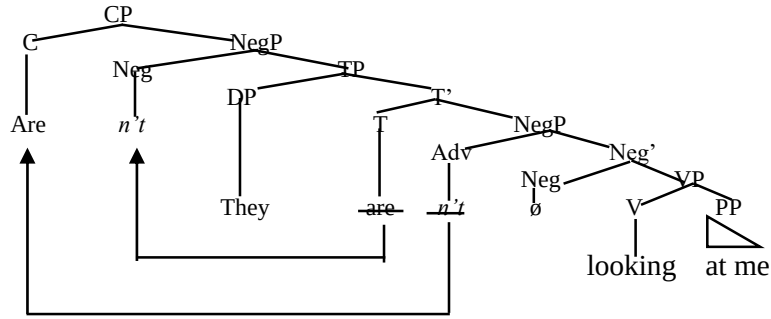
In non-contracted interro-negative sentences, the finite *be* raises from the head T to the Spec-CP thus leaving its associate negative particle *not* in situ in the Spec-NEGP. To be indebted to Radford (op. cit.: 478), the finite *be* in non-contracted interro-negative sentences c-commands the negative particle *not* insofar as *not* cannot raise from the Spec-NEGP to the position higher than the TP as shown below:

(11)



However, in the contracted interro-negative sentences, the negative particle *n't* is pie-pipped i.e., dragged along with its nearby auxiliary as illustrated in (12) where *are* is raised up from its lower position below the T node to the higher position above T.

(12)

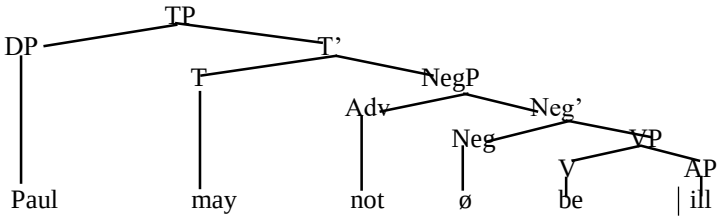


Another point about *be* is its status of a raising auxiliary. Indeed, when used as a main verb or as an aspectual progressive verb in negative constructions, ***be*** often entails a raising auxiliary movement known as V-to-T. Let us look at the following of sentences to see how this works:

(13) a- Paul may not *be* ill
b- Paul *is* not ill

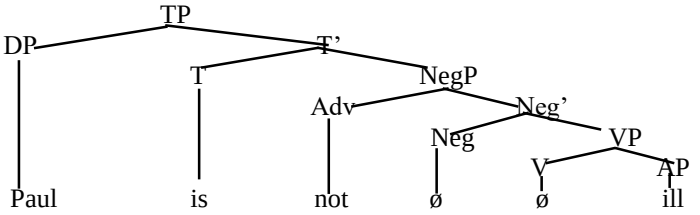
In these examples, *be* is a copulative verb. If, in (13a) *be* appears in non-finite form, preceded by the negative particle *not*, in (13b), however *be* is finite and is followed by the negative particle *not*. Basically, according to Radford (op. cit.: 160) when *be* is in its bare form preceded by the negative marker *not* which in turn is preceded by an auxiliary occupying the head position of Tense (T) in the TP as in (13a), *be* occupies the head position of V in the VP as shown in the tree diagram below:

(14)



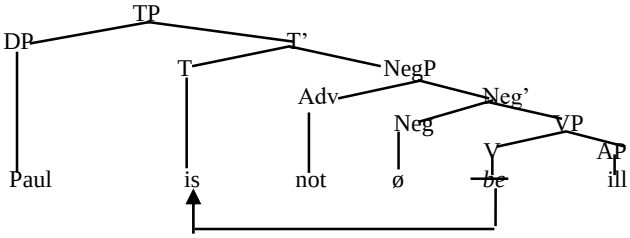
However, when *be* is finite and followed by the negative particle *not* as in (13b) above, it is said to occupy the head position of T as represented in the following tree :

(15)



This amounts to saying that *be* in bare form appears as head of the VP and when it is finite, it moves from that position into that of the head TP as shown in (16).

(16)



In the following subsection, I am going to deal another main auxiliary namely *have*.

2.2. Have

The auxiliary ***have*** in English is the main concern of this subsection. The charts below charts presents the finite forms of the auxiliary *have* in both present and past tenses.

(17) *The finite forms of the auxiliary **have** in present tense*

	Person	**Present Tense**
Singular	1st & 2nd	have
	3rd	has
Plural	1st, 2nd & 3rd	have

(18) *The finite forms of the auxiliary **have** in past tense*

	Person	**Preterit**
Singular	1st & 2nd	had
	3rd	had
Plural	1st, 2nd & 3rd	had

Actually, in addition to the non-finite form *having*, *have* has three main finite forms namely *has*, *have* and *had*. Like *be*, *have* can be utilized both as a main verb and an auxiliary verb. When used as a main verb, *have* attests the same syntactic features as other ordinary verbs. In other words, its negative, interrogative and emphatic constructions will contain the same syntactic information as other lexical verbs as presented in the following examples.

(19) a- I have children.
b- I **do** not have children.
c- **Do** I have children?
d- I **do** have children.

In these structures, (19a) is referred to as the underlying structure as it appears in a simple declarative form. However, the remaining are known as transformed or surface structures due to the additional information brought to them. In (19b) for instance, the dummy ***do*** is inserted after the DP subject in order to allow the occurrence of the negative particle *not* whose syntactic distribution is always after the auxiliary in negative structures. In (19c) the dummy ***do*** is introduced to the initial position of the basic sentence so as to turn it into an interrogative structure ; which operation is usually applied to lexical verbs. However, (19d) denotes emphasis with the dummy ***do*** appearing before *have* for the sake of that emphasis.
Semantically, *have* used as a main verb is much more similar to the verb *possess* or *own*. Consider the following examples :

(20) a- Maryse ***has*** a very beautiful face.
b- Collin Powel ***had*** a huge knowledge of American politics.
c- Those managers ***have*** many petrol companies in our economic city.
d- I ***have*** a small shop just at the corner of this street.

In these examples, the finite form of *have* can be replaced by the verbs *possess* or *own*. In this regard, Bailleul (2013:16) asserts that "*la possession est sans aucun doute une relation exprimée par les verbes* ***have*** *et* ***avoir****, les énoncés en* ***have*** *ou* ***avoir*** *dénotant cette relation semblent très bien supporter une paraphrase en* ***own***, ***possess***"[188]. Accordingly, (20) examples can be paraphrased as follows :

(21) a- Maryse ***possesses*** a very beautiful face.
b- Collin Powel ***possessed*** a huge knowledge of American politics.
c- Those managers ***own*** many petrol companies in our economic city.

[188] *The possession is arguably a relation expressed by the verbs* ***have*** *and* ***avoir****, utterances containing* ***have*** *and* ***avoir*** *that denote that relation seem to sustain a paraphrase in* ***own*** *and* ***possess***. (My translation)

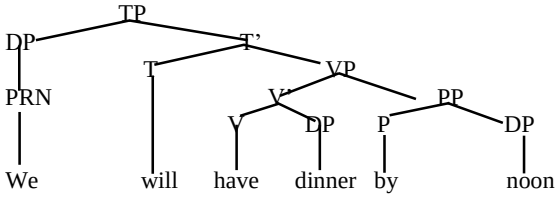
d- I ***own*** a small shop just at the corner of this street.

Since *have* can be substituted by *possess* or *own*, it is thus viewed as a content verb and hence can theta-mark its DP specifiers and complements. So, all the arguments clustering around the verb *have* in (19) and (20) examples are assigned a THEME role by the latter.
In addition to *possess* and *own*, *have* can also mean *take* ; especially when it is followed by such DP complements as *breakfast*, *lunch* or *dinner* as exemplified in the sentences below :

(22) a- I *had* breakfast early this morning.
b-They *have* lunch late back in Pointe Noire.
c- We will *have* dinner by noon.

Have in these sentences has the same connotation as *take* or *eat*. In this respect, it is viewed as a main verb. Being a main verb, *have* in (19), (20) and (22) appear under the V node in a tree diagram. Accordingly, (22c) will be represented as follows :

(23)



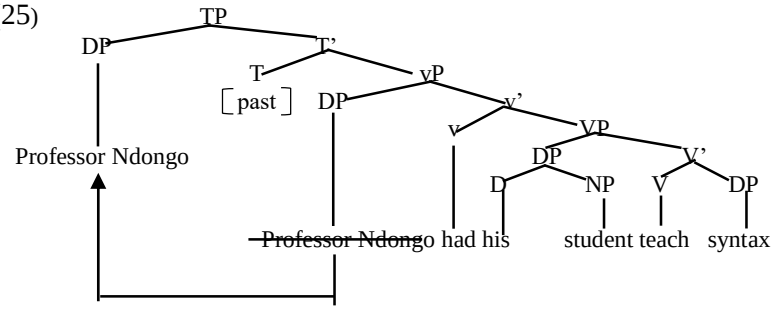
Another aspect of *have* is its capacity to act as a causative verb. Consider the following data:

(24) a- Professor Ndongo *had* his assistant *teach* syntax.
b- I will *have* Yemine *cook* that food very quickly;
d- Relfy *has* my son *read* his lessons every night.

In these data, *have* has a meaning similar to causative verbs such as *cause*, *let*, *get* and *make*. When a VP includes two verbs one of which is causative and the other lexical, the current conventions for the structural representation calls for the VP shell hypothesis to solve the situation. The VP shell hypothesis is about the division of a VP into two distinct layers namely the light verb phrase (vP) headed by the

light verb (v) and the VP headed by the lexical verb (V)[189]. Based on Baker's (1988) Uniform Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH) which states that each theta-role assigned by a particular kind of predicate is canonically associated with a specific syntactic position: e.g. spec-vP is the canonical position associated with an agent argument (Radford 2009: 482), the causative *have* in (24) VPs assigns the AGENTIVE role to its subjects *Professor Ndongo*, *I* and *Relfy*. However, the verbs *teach*, *cook* and *read* assign the THEME role to their subjects *his assistant*, *Yemine* and *my son* and to their objects *syntax*, *that food* and *his lesson*. The (24a) sentence would give us the following structure :

(25)



However, as an auxiliary verb, *have* is used to fulfill the aspectual perfective part. The perfective aspect indicates that the action was completed prior to some point of reference in the present, past or future. The verb that follows perfective *have* occurs in past participle as shown below :

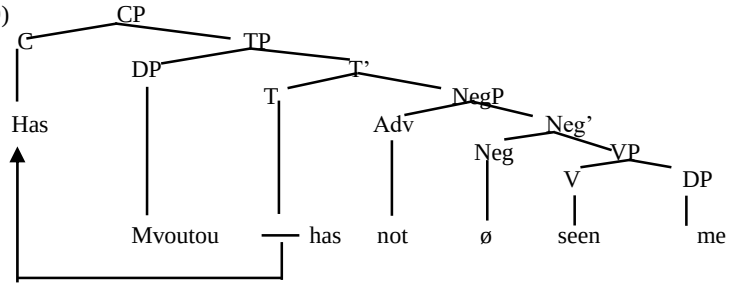
(26) a- Bossine **has** call**ed** me.
b- My mother **had** brok**en** the pot when I entered the house.
c- The teacher will **have** arriv**ed** by that time.

As it can be seen from these examples, *have* expresses the perfective aspect because it requires the past participle morphology on its following verb. Yet, since *have* in (26) structures are followed by the main verbs *call*, *break* and *arrive* which select the number of

[189] The light verb in this case is fulfilled by the causative verb *have* which is head of the light verb phrase. The light verb is represented by the lower case v and the light verb phrase by vP. Under the verb shell analysis, the vP occurs as the higher projection of the VP which is its complement and therefore occurs as the lower projection of vP.

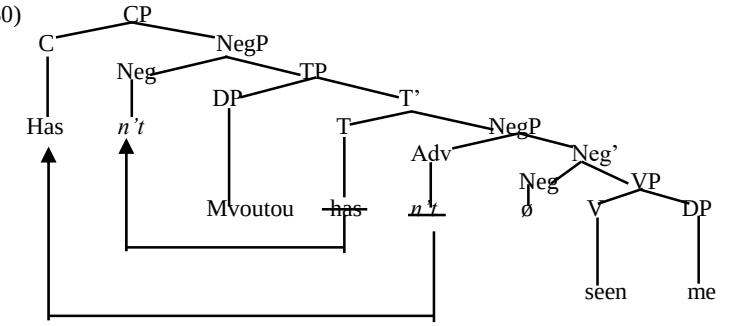
However, in the structures wherein *not* is not contracted, *have* moves from its basic distribution under T where it is the head of TP to the head of CP leaving its enclitic negative particle ***not*** in situ has the (29) structure shows it:

(29)



In contracted interro-negative sentences however, *have* attracts its *n't* negative enclitic from below T to above T as shown below :

(30)



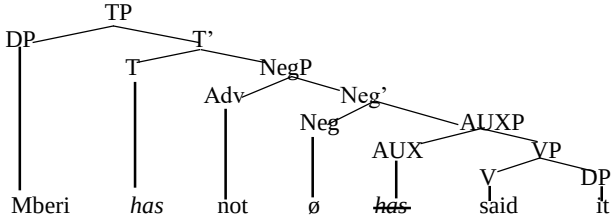
In perfective negative structures, the auxiliary *have* can imply the Aux-to-T movement. When this occurs, the auxiliary *have* raises from the head position of the Auxiliary Phrase (AUXP) in front of the negative *not* onto the head T position in TP before the negative *not*. Consider the following :

(31) a- Mberi may **not** *have* said it
b- Mberi *has* **not** said it

The head position of TP in (31a) is occupied by *may* and the head position of VP by *said*. Since *may* and *said* in (31a) are respectively

heads of TP and VP, the issue arises as to what the non-finite perfective *have* is the head. This concern is compensated for by Radford (op. cit.: 161) who proposes that the non-finite perfective *have* lying between a modal auxiliary and a main verb and occurring after *not* as in (31a) is rather an auxiliary serving as head of the auxiliary phrase (AUXP). In (31b) however, the finite *has* occurring before *not* is head of the TP. In short, if the perfective *have* is non-finite and is preceded by the negative particle *not*, it is the head of the auxiliary phrase (AUXP), but when it is finite and followed by the negative particle *not*, it raises from that position to that of the tense phrase (TP) as presented below :

(32)



In the next sub-section is concerned with the English auxiliary ***do***.

The English dummy auxiliary Do

This subsection scrutinizes the utilizations of the auxiliary *do* in English. Newson *et al.* (2006 :198-199) states that "*The auxiliary **do** seems to have a variety of uses, mainly to do with providing an element to fulfil a purpose that the main verb is not suited for (...), this auxiliary is used to do something that main verbs cannot do*". This assertion accounts for the idea that *do* insertion in English is due to the poverty of that language to operate some syntactic operations. Consider the following examples :

(33) a- Yemine **is** meeting me today.
b- Yemine **is** not meeting me today.
c- Is Yemine meeting me today?
d- Leshem **has** met me today.
e- Leshem **has** not met me today.
f- Has Leshem met me today?

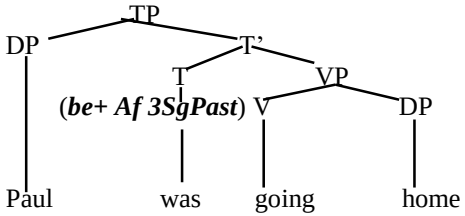
What we realize with examples is that the auxiliaries *be* and *have* allow the negative particle *not* to be immediately adjacent to them to form negatives. Equally, they occur in initial position for the sake of interrogative structures. The question which emerges is to know whether the same mechanisms can also apply to main verbs such as *eat*, *go* or *meet*. Put differently, can we negate or turn into questions structures whose core verb is a main verb as it is the case for the following sentences ?

(34) a- Bossine meets me every day.
b-*Perrine not meets me every day
c-*Meets Perrine me every day?

As a matter of fact, to turn such a structure as (34a) into negative and interrogative forms, the convention calls for a *do-support rule*. Consequently, the auxiliary *do* can be thought of as an auxiliary whose main function is to help lexical verbs operate the same syntactic processes performed by *be* and *have* auxiliaries.
The auxiliary *do* has three main finite forms viz *do*, *does* and *did*. The finite form *do*

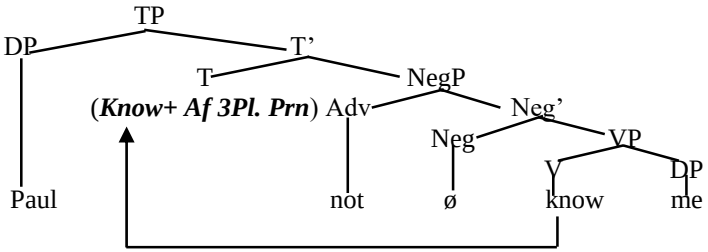
finite fo

(35)



or by attracting some item below T to adjoin to (***attract closest condition***), the example of V-to-T movement in Elizabethan English. Concretely, in Elizabethan English the V which underlyingly occurs after the negative particle *not* appears before it in the spell-out, entailing the V-to T movement as the verb *know* in the following tree diagram illustrates :

(36)



Radford (2009 : 153) explains this movement in the following terms :

> In Elizabethan English, T was strong enough to attract the V to it. This means that in a sentence in which the T position is not filled by an auxiliary, the verb moves from V to T in order to fill the strong T position. (…) When a finite T in Elizabethan English contains no auxiliary, the verb moves out of the head V position of VP into the head T position of TP in order to fill T.

In Radford's view, T in Elizabethan English, was so strong that it had to be filled either by an overt finite auxiliary or by an attracted finite item of V.

However, if T can still be filled by overt finite auxiliaries with clauses containing auxiliaries in present-day English, it can no more be filled by the V-to-T movement operation in auxiliariless clauses ; the reason being that T in current English contains a weak tense affix which is

unable to attract the V. In this respect, such derivations as those in (37) below are said to converge in Elizabethan English but to crash in present-day English.

(37) a- Their sons not know me.
b- My father not calls my mother.

The causes of the crash of (37a) and (37b) is explained by Newson *et al* (2006 : 223) inasmuch "*apparently in English, the negative is not the sort of verbal element that can support tense and hence the only option available is to insert an auxiliary. As there is no aspectual morpheme to deem otherwise, the inserted auxiliary will be* ***do***.
As a matter of fact, the structures in (37) have an abstract tense affix occurring between the DP subject and the negative phrase. As such, (37b) can be label-bracketed as follows :

(38) [TP *My father* [T *Af*] [NEGP *not* [NEG *ø*] [VP [V *calls*] my mother.]]]]

As it is generally known, the V-to-T movement is impossible in present-day English. Consequently, the abstract affix T in (38) cannot attract the verb *call* from its V underlying occurrence so as to form a negative structure. According to Radford (2006 :168), since an unattached weak tense affix such as the one in (38) has a V feature, it needs to lower onto its nearest verbal element (***Head Movement Constraint***) through the Affix Hopping process. But by looking at the (38) representation, we realize that the tense affix is followed by a non-verbal element, i.e., the negative particle *not* which is inappropriate to be attached to because of its verbless property. In Minimalist terminology, the affix T in this case is stranded or blocked. The strandedness of T then turns the tense affix (T *Af*) to the dummy or the expletive auxiliary *do* which is the appropriate inflected form for the negative particle *not* to attach to. So, *do* is in complementary distribution with auxiliaries and other tense affixes as Radford (2009 :168) opines :

> If H has a complement headed by an overt verb, the affix is lowered onto the relevant verb [=Affix Hopping].

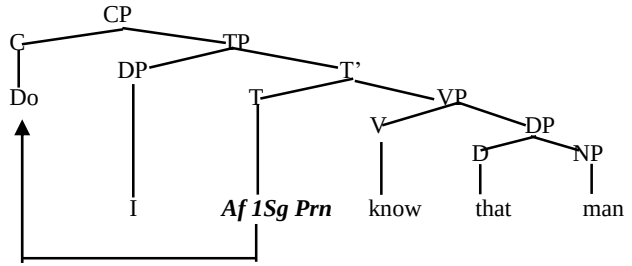
if not (i.e. if H does not have a complement headed by an overt verb and the affix is stranded), the affix is spelled out as an appropriately inflected form of do [= do support].

This means that if the c-commanding domain of T is headed by an overt verbal element, the affix hopping process is possible, but if it is c-commanded by a non-verbal host (the case of the negative particle *not*) or a covert verbal host (the case of VP anaphora), the affix hopping process is impossible and so gives rise to the *do-support* operation. Consequently, *affix hopping* and *do-support* are also complementary distribution notions. That is the reason why *do* is capable of performing syntactic operations like other auxiliaries. It can for example allow the negative particle *not* to occur after it as shown below :

(39) a- I **do** *not* know that man.
b- My father **does** *not* call my mother.
c- We **do not** own a company.

Like other auxiliaries, *do* can also undergo the *T→C movement* operation through the Affix Attachment process as it is represented in the following P-marker.

(40)

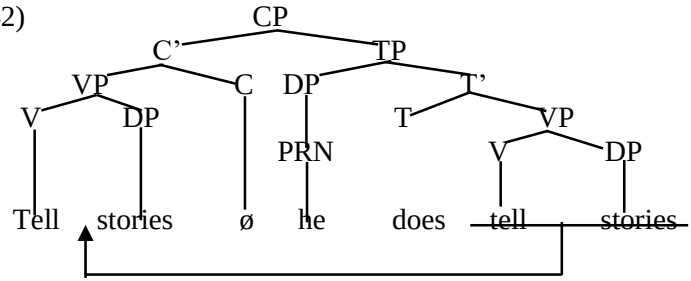


The auxiliary *do* is also relevant for VP anaphora and polarity phrases. The VP anaphora is about the replacement of VP by an anaphoric auxiliary *do* as exemplified in:

(41) Tell stories, he *does*.

It emerges from the (41) sentence that by economic reasons, the elliptical auxiliary *does* replaces the VP *tell stories*. Based on Chomsky's (1981) Binding theory, the auxiliary *does* would be said to be co-indexed to the VP *tell stories*. The derived structure would thus look like the following :

(42)

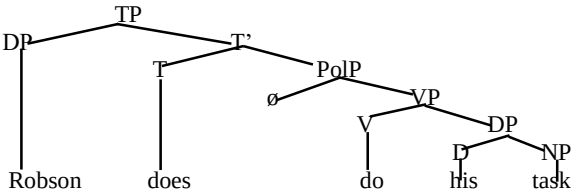


However, polarity is about the morphological, syntactic or lexical negative-positive contrastivity found in a language (Crystal 2008 : 373). Regarding syntax, Radford (2009 : 473) affirms that "*a polarity phrase (henceforth PolP) constituent is a phrase which marks whether a sentence is positive or negative*". Basically, an English sentence has a positive polarity if it has no negative particle inside, however it has a negative polarity if it has a negative particle inside it. Consider the following :

(43) a- Robson *DOES* do his tasks.
b- Robson *DOES NOT* do his tasks.

In these examples, (43a) has a positive polarity whereas (43b) has a negative polarity. The (43a) structure can thus be represented as follows:

(44)



The following section tackles main auxiliaries in Laali

3. Main auxiliaries in Laali

This section looks at main auxiliaries in Laali. In this respect, I start with the Laali auxiliary *óbá* which is the English congeneric auxiliary *be*.

3.1. Be counterpart in Laali

Óbá is the counterpart of the English *be* in Laali. This auxiliary is threefold. It can be used as a main verb, a progressive auxiliary and a perfective auxiliary. The following structures illustrate *Ó-bá* as a main verb.

(45) **a-** Mɛ̀ n***dì*** mùùntò.
Me I-be person
"I am a person"

b- Yɛ̀dùùrò ***àlì/àbì*** mùùtnò (Laali proverb)
Ghost it-be person
"The ghost was once a living person. (remote past)"

c- Yɛ̀ ***lì*** wà-bɛ̀lɛ̀.
You be you-ill
"You (Sg) are ill."

d- Bísɛ̀ ***bì*** ŋà tàátà.
Us be with father
"We were with father. (recent past)"

e- Bɛ̀nɛ̀ dɛ̀***lì*** dà-bɛ̀lɛ̀.
You you-be you-ill
"You (Pl) are ill."

f- Bàànà bà***lì*** mùnsà nzò.
Children they-be inside house
"Children are inside the house."

g Bɔ bà***lì*** ŋà/àŋɔ
Them they-be here/there.
"They are here/there"

It results from these examples that *óbá* used as main verb can be followed by a DP as illustrated in (45 a & b), an AP (45 c & e), a PP (45 d & f) or an AdvP (45g). Accordingly, phrases following the finite

forms of *óbá* are predicative complements of their respective DP subjects. What is worth highlighting is that ***lì*** whose variant is ***dì***[190] in the first person singular is the finite form of *óbá* in present tense. Equally, ***àlì/àbì*** and ***bì*** are its past tense forms. However, ***àlì/àbì*** is concerned with the remote past tense whereas ***bì*** with the recent past one. The following charts which stick on the morphological structure of the auxiliary *óbá* summarize both its present and past finite forms.

(46) *The finite forms of óbá auxiliary in present tense*

	Object personal pronouns	agreement prefixes	*óbá* present finite forms
Singular	1st Mɛ̀	n-	lì
	2nd Yɛ̀	ø	lì
	3rd Ndɛ̀	ø	lì
Plural	1st Bísɛ̀	dɛ̀-	lì
	2nd Bɛ̀nɛ̀	dɛ̀-	lì
	3rd Bɔ	bà-	lì

(Mberi Ngakala, 2017: 210)

(47) *The finite forms of óbá auxiliary in recent past tense*

	Object personal pronouns	agreement prefixes	*óbá* recent past finite forms
Singular	1st Mɛ̀	ø	bì
	2nd Yɛ̀	ø	bì
	3rd Ndɛ̀	ø	bì
Plural	1st Bísɛ̀	ø	bì
	2nd Bɛ̀nɛ̀	ø	bì
	3rd Bɔ	ø	bì

(Mberi Ngakala, 2017: 210)

[190] The change of *lì* to *dì* is due to the fact that many Bantu languages the sound /l/ often tends to turn from/l/ to /d/ in the environment of /n/ in the 1st person singular. The formula is thus as follows: l → d/n —

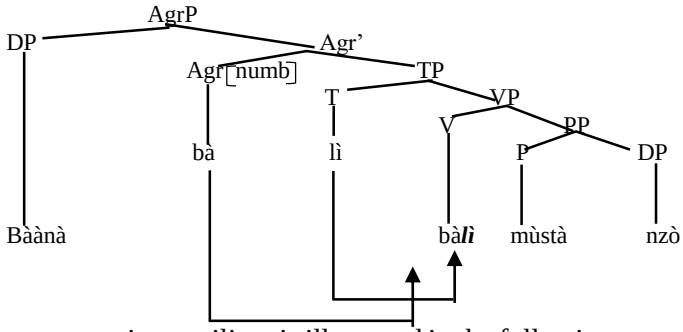
(48) *The finite forms of ó-bá auxiliary in remote past tense*

	Object personal pronouns	agreement prefixes	*óbá* remote past finite forms
Singular	1st Mɛ̀	ø	àlì/àbì
	2nd Yɛ̀	ø	àlì/àbì
	3rd Ndɛ̀	ø	àlì/àbì
Plural	1st Bísɛ̀	ø	àlì/àbì
	2nd Bɛ̀nɛ̀	ø	àlì/àbì
	3rd Bɔ	ø	àlì/àbì

(Mberi Ngakala, 2017: 211)

What is outstanding in these charts is that in present tense there is an agreement between the object personal pronouns (except the 2nd and 3rd person singular pronouns *Yɛ̀* and *ndɛ̀*) and the finite form of *óbá* auxiliary via the resumptive pronouns whilst in remote and recent past tenses there is no agreement. What is more, in charts (46) and (48), we realize that in the present tense and in one of the realisations of the remote past, the verb root of the auxiliary *óbá* which is *-b-* turns into *-l-*. Based on Bobaljik (1995) Free Agr Parameter, the (45f) structure would have the following derivation:

(49)



Óbá as a progressive auxiliary is illustrated in the following sentences.

(45) **a-** Mɛ̀ n**dì** *mò*lyà ngòòmbò
Me I-be prog. eat beef

"I am eating the beef meat"

b- Mɛ̀ **mbì** lyà ngòòmbò (recent past) .
Me I-be eat beef
"I was eating the beef meat."

c- Yɛ̀ **lì** *mò*nwà mààmbà.
You (Sg) be prog. drink water
"You are drinking water."

d- Yɛ̀ **bì** nwà mààmbà (recent past)
You (Sg) be drink water
"You were drinking water."

e- Yɛ̀ **àbì** nwà mààmbà. (remote past)
You (Pl) they-be drink water
"You were drinking water."

f- Bò **bàbì** lyà ngòòmbo.(remote past)
Them they-be eat beef
"They were eating beef."

These examples lead to the conclusion that the Laali present progressive is formed by attaching the morpheme *mò* to the initial position of the verb stem following the present tense of the auxiliary *óbá* **(lì/bì)** as in (45a) and (45c). However, in both recent and remote pasts, the morpheme *mò* is dropped and the recent and remote pasts of *óbá* namely ***bì*** and ***àlì/àbì*** respectively are maintained for the past progressive as instanced in (45b), (45d), (45e) and (45f). However, it is important to point out that in present and past progressive, the DP subject in Laali agrees in number and person with the finite form of *óbá* in its initial position as in (45a), (45b), (4e) and (45f).
The auxiliary *óbá* is also useful for perfective aspect as illustrated in the following structures.

(45)	**Recent past**				**Remote past**			
a-	Mɛ̀	***bì***	**nà**bwà	ngòòmbò	Mɛ̀	***àbì***	**nà**bwà	ngòòmbò
	Me	I-be	I-fall	beef	Me	I-be	I-fall	beef
	"I had fallen down"				"I had fallen down"			
b-	Yɛ̀	***bì***	**wà**lyà	nsü.	Yɛ̀	***àbì***	**wà**lyà	nsü.
	Me	I-be	eat	beef	Me	I-be	eat	beef
	"I had eaten fish."				"I had eaten fish."			
c-	Yɛ̀	ŋa	mɛ̀	***bì*** **dà**yù **y**ò	Yɛ̀	ŋa	mɛ̀	***àbì*** **dà**yù **y**ò

	You and me be we-hear it	You and me be we-hear it
	"You and I had heard about it."	"You and I had heard about it."
d-	Bàngwàlà ***bì*** **bà**bísè óyirɛ̀	Bàngwàlà ***àbì*** **bà**bísè óyirɛ̀
	Uncles be they-refuse come	Uncles be they-refuse come
	"Uncles had refused to come."	

These illustrations show how *óbá* is used to in Laali perfective constructions. The first remarkable issue worth of attention is that the perfective *óbá* is restricted to the only past perfect[191]. The second point is that in past perfect, the agreement marker does not appear in the prefix position of *óbá* (as with progressive aspect), but it rather appears in the prefix position of the main verb following *óbá*.
In interrogative structures the auxiliary *óbá* does not undergo the auxiliary-subject-inversion operation. In fact, in Laali the distribution of words in both questions and statements remains in situ as exemplified below:

(46)	**Declaratives**	**Interrogatives**
a-	Mberi lì moyènè ŋàgwèlɛ̀	Mberi lì moyènè ŋàgwèlɛ̀ èh?
	Mberi be prog.go tomorrow	Mberi be prog.go tomorrow
	"Mberi is going tomorrow"	"Is Mberi going tomorrow?"
b-	Tààtà lì ŋà yɛ̀ àŋò	Tààtà lì ŋà yɛ̀ àŋò òh?
	Father be with you there	Father be ith you there
	"Father is with you there."	"Is father with you there?"

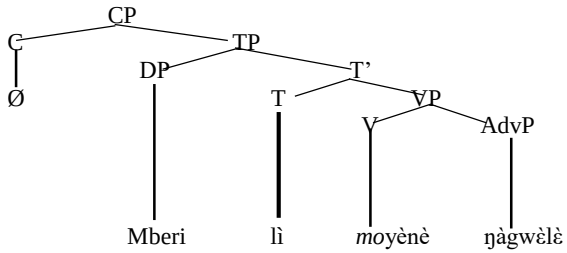
As it can be noticed, both declaratives and interrogatives have the same phonetic form. As a matter of fact, when the structure is used as a statement, the intonation is low but when it is used as a question, the final vowel (usually **i**, **e**, **o**, **a**) of the last word of the structure carries the high intonation.
Dealing with the same issue in Embɔsi, Ndongo-Ibara (2011) argues that in the surface form, both the statements and the yes-no questions appear like ideal declarative sentences, the only difference being in terms of their intonation which is low with statements and high with yes-no questions. Due to the absence of syntactic clue for Embɔsi's

[191] The present perfect construction with *óbá* is not attested in Laali. There is another mechanism for the present perfect construction in that language. In fact, we cannot combine the present simple of *óbá* (to be) which is *dì/lì* with the root of a given verb to have such a present perfect structure as *Mɛ̀ n**dì** nalyà.

interrogative structures Embɔsi, Ndongo-Ibara (2011:55) states that "*if Chomsky (1995) considers C as strong head capable of triggering T to move to C, Ndongo Ibara dissertation offers another point of view which considers C as a weak head in Embɔsi as it fails to attract some of elements bearing its features*"

According to him, since there is no syntactic indication which proves the interrogative form of sentential structures in Embɔsi, the Embɔsi C has a weak head and as such, it fails to attract some of elements bearing its features like [EPP, Tns, Wh/Q]. Ndongo-Ibara's hypothesis is on Embɔsi is also attested in Laali. Basically, in Laali, the T-to-C movement process impossible because its interrogatives resemble its declaratives in the phonetic form, though different regarding their intonation patterns. So, like in Embɔsi, the complementizer in Laali interrogatives has a null (Ø) spell-out as shown in tree representation below.

(47)



However, like other Laali verbs, óbá allows its c-commanding domain to appear in its pre-position especially when it is used as a copulative or main verb as shown below :

(48)	**Underlying structure**	**Derived structure**
a-	Mɛ̀ n***dì*** *mùùntò*.	Mɛ̀ *mùùntò* n***dì***
	Me I-be person	Me person I-be
	"I am a person"	"I am a person/It is a person that I am"
b-	Yɛ̀dù ***àlì/àbì*** *mùùtnò* ùrò	Yɛ̀dùùrò *mùùntò* ***àlì/àbì***
	Ghost it-be person	Ghost person it-be

"The ghost was once a living person."
Bàànà bà***lì*** *mùnsà nzò*.

"The ghost was once a living person."
Bàànà *mùnsà nzò* bà***lì***

f-

Children they-be inside house
"Children are inside the house."

Children inside house they-be
"Children are inside the house."

The forthcoming subsection is about the auxiliary ***have*** counterpart in Laali.

3.2. Laali have counterpart

Let us look at the following examples to explain the auxiliary *have* counterpart in Laali.

(49) **a-** Mɛ̀ ***ndì*** ***ŋà*** mbòòngò

Me be with money
"I have money." ŋà

Ngwàlà ***lì*** ***ŋà*** énkóó

b-

Uncle be with totem
"Uncle has a totem"

Bàkùùtò ***bàlì*** ***ŋà*** bónzüünzè

c-

Old men they-be with wisdom
"Old men have wisdom."

d- Mɛ̀ ***màà***ndyà ngúúmbó

Me perf. I-eat porcupine
"I have eaten the porcupine"

e- Bìsɛ̀ dɛ̀***màà***lyà nyàmà

Us we-perf. eat meat
"We have eaten meat"

f- Mànzò mà***màà***bwà

Houses they perf. fall
"Houses have fallen down."

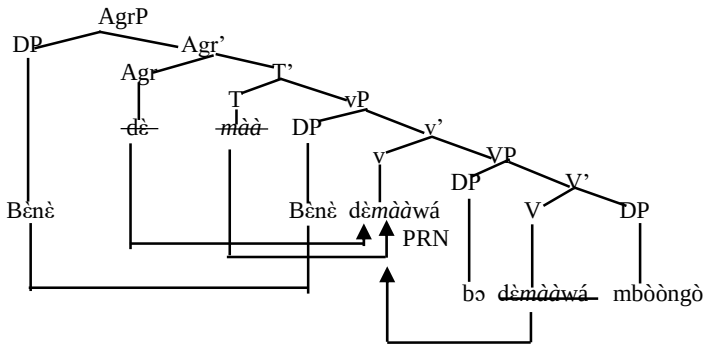
It emerges from these examples that Laali has no specific word counterpart for *have*. In fact, as a non-auxiliary verb, Laali *have* counterpart is syntactically denoted by the merger of *óbá* (to be) and *ŋà* (with) as instantiated in (49a), (49b) and (49c). However, the bound morpheme *màà* when used before the verb root expresses the same function as *have* in present perfect use as exemplified in (49d), (49e) and (9f). Of interest is that with singular personal pronouns, i.e., Mɛ̀, Yɛ̀ and Ndɛ̀, *màà* does not inflect for any number agreement morpheme as illustrated in (49d), while in plural personal ones namely Bìsɛ̀, Bɛ̀nɛ̀ and Bɔ, we notice the number agreement in the initial position of the morpheme *màà* (e.g. (49e). Yet, it is relevant to pinpoint that *màà* agrees in number with its preceding DP via the associative morpheme in case this DP is a Referring expression (henceforth R-expression) as in (49f) above :

According to Mberi (2002 :28), since Bantu verbal particles help mark tense, agreement, aspect, modality and voice, they can be viewed as auxiliaries for Bantu languages. Based on Doke (1935) he states the following :

> Aiding, helping ; particularly applied to assisting to form tenses, moods, etc. of the verb. The term verbal auxiliary can well be applied to what are commonly called verbal particles ; those formative elements which serve to differentiate the various tenses, aspects etc…. But the term auxiliary verb is not strictly applicable in Bantu languages (Mberi, 2002 :32)

In Doke's opinion the term auxiliary verb is not applicable to Bantu languages because some of their morphemes (verbal particles) responsible for marking tense, aspects and agreement are not full verbs. That is the reason why he prefers the term verbal auxiliary for Bantu languages rather than auxiliary verb which, according to him, refers to specific helping verbs whose task is to assign morphosyntactic properties such as aspects, tenses, agreement etc. So, based on Doke's verbal auxiliary hypothesis, the verbal particle *màà* occurring before Laali root verbs in above can be counted as a verbal auxiliary as it serves to mark the present perfect aspect of their following main verbs. With reference to the split VP hypothesis, the (49a) structure will have the following representation :

(49)



Conclusion

This this work has contrasted main auxiliaries in English and Laali. The study has shown that the two languages show some similarities as well as dissimilarities. To start with, English has three main auxiliaries namely *be*, *have* and *do* whereas Laali has one attested auxiliary namely *óbà* which is the equivalent of the English *to be*. The English auxiliary *be* has five finite forms which include *am*, *is*, are, *was* and *were*, and two infinite forms viz *been* and *being*. Additionally, *be* is twofold. First, it is used as a main verb when it is followed by a DP, an AP, a PP or an AdvP. Second, it is used as an auxiliary when responsible for the progressive aspect and the passive process.

The Laali *óbà* however, has three finite forms including *lí* for present, *bí* for the near past and *àbí/àlí* for the remote past. Apart from its infinitive form, *óbà* has no non-finite form. Like the English *be*, *óbà* in Laali can be used as a main verb as well an auxiliary. As a main verb, *óbà* can be followed by a DP, a PP an AP and AdvP. As an auxiliary, *óbà* is used to express the present progressive, the past progressives and the past perfect. In fact, *óbà* is not responsible for the expression of the present perfect in Laali since that language has a specific morpheme for expressing the present perfect namely *màà* which usually occurs in the initial position of the lexical verb stems.

The English auxiliary *have* has three finite forms which include *have*, *has* and *had*, and one non-finite form which is *having*. Like *be*, *have* has two utilizations, i.e., it can used as a main verb as well as an auxiliary. As a main verb, *have* is followed by a DP and is semantically similar to the verbs *own* and *possess*. The additional meaning associated to have as a main verb is that it denotes causativity. However, as an auxiliary, *have* is utilized to express perfective aspect. Laali has no specific counterpart word for *have*. Basically, *have* in that language is obtained through the combination of *óbà* (to be) and *ŋà* (with). Yet, *óbà ŋà* (to be with) can only be used as a main verb and not as an auxiliary. In this respect, *óbà ŋà* is similar to the English lexical verbs *own* and *possess* and not to the English auxiliary verb *have*. The English auxiliary *do* has two finite forms namely *do* and *did*. *Do* is responsible for helping English lexical verbs turn into negative and interrogative forms. It is also relevant for expressing

emphasis in structures headed by lexical verbs in addition to replacing those structures through the anaphoric VP process.

In negative structures, all the above-mentioned auxiliaries allow one single negative particle whose distribution is after them. In interrogative structures, however, they can undergo the subject-auxiliary inversion since the English C is strong and allows the attraction of T which entails the T-to-C movement operation.

Laali does not require any auxiliary to support its negative, interrogative, emphatic and anaphoric VPs structures whose core verb is lexical. As such, Laali disallows T-to-C movement as the Laali Wh/Q feature is weak to attract any constituent from is c-commanding domain. As a consequence, the Laali C in its interrogative sentences is unfilled. Also, Laali does not need an auxiliary to support its negative and interrogative structures whereas many English sentential structures are auxiliary dependent.

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