THE SYNTAX OF BE AND HAVE:

AUX OR MAIN VERB

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0. Introduction

In this article I propose a new analysis of the English auxiliary system.

As is well-known, previous research on the auxiliary can be divided into two general proposals: the Phrase Structure analysis and the Main Verb analysis. The deciding difference between the two is that in the PS analysis a category of AUX is posited as a syntactic node in phrase markers, while in the MV analysis there is no such category. In this regard, my analysis to be presented below belongs to the former group; that is, I agree with the PS analysis in claiming that the postulation of AUX as an independent category is necessary for (at least) English grammar, in view of its syntactic behavior distinct from that of any other syntactic category.

In section 1, a new version of the PS analysis will be proposed and the differences between it and other PS analyses will be clarified. In section 2, four kinds of syntactic arguments will be provided to justify this proposed auxiliary system. Finally, section 3 will contain some statements about consequences of our new analysis.

1. A New Analysis of the English Auxiliary System

I propose the following phrase structure for the English auxiliary system:

* This paper is a revised version of part of my MA thesis submitted to the University of Tsukuba in December, 1982.

1 All the tree diagrams in this paper have been simplified so as not to contain such nodes as Š, COMP, Tense, because these are not directly relevant to the present discussion.
This analysis has three marked characteristics which clearly distinguish it from previous PS analyses.

First, in the present analysis, *be* and *have* are divided into two groups on the basis of whether they are "stative" or "dynamic"; the stative *be* and *have* are generated as members of AUX and the dynamic *be* and *have* as true verbs.1 (For the sake of distinction, we notate by means of subscripts the former as *be*$_1$ and *have*$_1$, and the latter as *be*$_2$ and *have*$_2$.) Notice that this dichotomy enables us to give a very simple account of familiar facts about Subject-AUX Inversion (SAI); as shown in (2)–(3), the transformation applies to the stative *be* and *have*, but not to the dynamic *be* and *have*; in the latter case, *do*-periphrasis is required as in the case of normal main verbs:

(2) a. Is she a pretty girl?
    b. Was he seeing the play?
    c. Has she any money?²
    d. Have you seen George anywhere?

(3) a. Why don’t you be a good boy and sit down?³ (Swan,

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1 The same sort of proposal is found in Williams (1984), who, in the course of discussion of *there* constructions, has postulated two kinds of *be*, i.e., the auxiliary *be* and the main verb *be*.

2 It should be noted that, in some dialects of English, SAI does not apply to *have* when *have* functions as a so-called main verb. In such cases, *do*-supporting is required as in the case of true verbs.

3 Note that for some reason that is unclear to me, occurrence of the dynamic *be* is restricted, compared with that of the stative *be*. The dynamic *be* can appear in request interrogatives, besides imperative and progressive constructions, etc.:
   i) Why don’t you be quiet?
   ii) Will you be quiet?
   But it cannot occur in simple yes-no interrogatives. It is why the following sentences are unacceptable.
   iii) *Did he be quiet?
   iv) *Does he be hard on you?
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1980)

b. Did you have a good holiday?

Thus, in our analysis, the elegant generalization is available: the elements which are generated in the \textsc{Aux} node and only these can serve as the so-called sentence operator.

Second, in our framework, there is no shifting rule with respect to \textit{be} and \textit{have}. Note that every recent PS approach contains a rule that has the effect of moving the \textit{be} and \textit{have} dominated by the VP category into the \textsc{Aux}; e.g., "\textit{Have-Be Raising}" in Jackendoff (1972), "\textit{Be (Have) Shift}" in Akmajian and Wasow (1975), "\textit{Verb Raising}" in Emonds (1976), "\textit{Do Replacement}" in Culicover (1976), and "\textit{Be (Have) Shift and Do Replacement}" in Akmajian, Steele, and Wasow (1979) (henceforth, AS\&W). These rules were needed to account for auxiliary-like properties of \textit{be} and \textit{have} such as observed in (2), since, in their frameworks, the elements were originally generated inside the VP node. However, we should notice that those shifting approaches make quite a wrong prediction as to such data as (3); because their shifting rules were formulated so as to apply without regard to any distinction of \textit{be} and \textit{have}, they wrongly predict that the (dynamic) \textit{be} and \textit{have} in (3) are also subject to SAI; and further, in section 2, we will see some more examples of this kind in which, though the structural condition of the shifting rule is perfectly met, yet \textit{be} and \textit{have} do not behave as \textsc{Aux} elements. These suggest that shifting rules are not appropriate ways to describe the syntax of \textit{be} and \textit{have}. Our analysis dispenses with such a rule.

Third, unlike other PS analyses, our auxiliary system (1) does not refer to descriptive categories of \textit{be} and \textit{have} such as ‘progressive’, ‘passive’, ‘perfective’, etc. In our framework, such categorization, if it is required, will be done in an interpretive way; if \textit{be}$_1$ (the stative \textit{be}), for example, is followed by a verb in the form of present participle (-\textit{ing}), the construction is interpreted as the progressive, and if \textit{be}$_1$ is followed by a verb in the form of past participle (-\textit{en}), the construction is interpreted as the (statal) passive. Similarly, if \textit{be}$_1$ is followed by a noun or an adjective phrase, it is the copula construction, and if \textit{be}$_1$ is followed by a locative adverbial, we may call this \textit{be} ‘existential’. But, in spite of these various uses, \textit{be}$_1$ is still \textit{be}$_1$; there is no inherent distinction among all occurrences of \textit{be}$_1$ at least from the
syntactic point of view; let us look at the following set of sentences, for example:

(4) a. They are working now. (progressive be)
b. The mayoral election is held annually. (passive be)
c. Mary is a beautiful girl. (copula be)
d. His house is on the corner of that street. (existential be)

In our analysis, (4a-d) all have exactly the same structure (5), apart from the choice of X.\(^1\)

(5) NP-[AUX be\(_1\)]-XP. (X=V, A, N, or P)

As we can observe in SAI and other phenomena that will be discussed in section 2, all occurrences of this be\(_1\) behave similarly with respect to syntactic operations, regardless of what they are descriptively called; therefore, we need not refer to any descriptive category so long as we deal with the syntactic behavior of these constructions.

The same line of consideration is applicable to be\(_2\), have\(_1\), and have\(_2\), as well; be\(_2\) (dynamic) is either copula or passive, depending on whether it is followed by an adjective (or noun) phrase or by a verb phrase whose head verb is in the form of past participle (-en); have\(_1\) (stative) is perfective when it precedes a past participle verb (-en) and is possessional when it takes a noun phrase complement; and have\(_2\) (dynamic) appears as actional have in the sense of eat, take, spend, etc. and as causative have when it takes a sentential complement. Thus, we can classify instances of be and have as follows:

(6) Stative
- progressive be
- stative copula be
- stative passive be
- existential be

Dynamic
- [dynamic copula be]
- [dynamic passive be]
- [actional have]
- [causative have]

\(^1\) An immediate result of this analysis is that some sentences do not have main verbs. This means that we need to revise the traditional rewriting rule of S (S → NP AUX VP) into the more general one, i.e., S → NP AUX XP (X=V, A, N, or P). Cf. Williams (1984).
A caveat may be in order here. It should be understood that, in spite of making no reference to descriptive categories such as 'perfective', 'progressive', 'passive', etc., our system can guarantee the fixed ordering among such occurrences of *be* and *have*. For example, consider the following sentences, which are quite different in grammaticality:

(7)  
a. John has been being examined by a psychiatrist.  
   b. *John has been being taking heroin.

In (7a), the sequence *has been being examined* is the perfective *have*, followed by the progressive *be*, followed by the (dynamic) passive *be*, and followed by the inflected verb (*en*). This pattern is permitted in our auxiliary system (1) and hence a grammatical sentence. On the other hand, (7b) has the sequence of the perfective *have*, the passive *be*, the progressive *be*, and the inflected verb (*-ing*). But this sequence is excluded in our theory because the progressive *be* is always stative and cannot occur in the position following another instance of *be* (there is only one position to be occupied by the stative *be*). Hence (7b) is an ungrammatical sentence. That is to say, the fact that the progressive *be* and the passive *be*, if they co-occur in a sentence, must appear in that order is an automatic result of our theory. For other cases, also, a similar kind of explanation is available, though its verification is left to the reader.

A comment is necessary in connection with the status of the possessional *have*. As we saw in (2), the stative *have* (perfective and possessional) acts as an auxiliary in interrogative sentences. This fact can be accounted for by generating the stative *have* under the AUX node as in (1). But the situation is a little more complicated; as mentioned in note 2 on p. 276, the possessional *have*, unlike the perfective *have*, has an alternative way of questioning like (8), and the choice between the two options is subject to dialectal variation.

(8) Does she have any money?

To accommodate this fact, we assume that as for the possessional *have*, there are two different PS rules according to dialects; in the dialects using the (2c) version, this *have* is included in the AUX node while, in the dialects adopting the (8) version, it is generated under
the VP node. Note that this dialectally varied behavior of the possessional *have* is also observed in other syntactic phenomena that we will examine below.

2. AUX and Syntactic Phenomena

In this section, we will present four arguments for our auxiliary system by investigating four kinds of syntactic phenomena; in the course of discussion, we will also point out a number of deficiencies of previous PS approaches.

2.1. *Verb Phrase Deletion (VPD)*

First of all, let us compare the following pairs of sentences:

(9) John can’t be a genius and Mary *(a. *can’t) *(b. can’t be), either.

(10) For God’s sake, will you be quiet?—Yes, *(a. I will) *(b. *I will be.

(11) John must be honest and Bill *(a. must) *(b. must be), too.

Interestingly enough, *be* behaves differently with respect to VPD; the occurrence of *be* in the second conjunct is obligatory in (9), illegal in (10), and optional in (11). Notice that the variety of these deletion patterns cannot be accommodated by any previous PS theories that appeal crucially to *be* shifting rules in explanation of these phenomena, since, in those analyses, (9)–(11) are assigned a syntactically identical structure and, then, their *be* shifting rules should apply in the same way. In AS&W’s analysis, for example, the second conjuncts in (9)–(11) all have such structures as (12) on the relevant level (*Be* Shift takes place because the progressive *be* is not present) and, therefore, there is no way to distinguish between (9)–(11) in regard to application of VPD.

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1 Taking into account the general S-rewriting rule suggested in note 3 on p. 276, VP Deletion is better called XP Deletion. For the sake of familiarity, however, here we use the traditional terminology.
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(12)

\[S\]

\[NP \quad AUX \quad V^3\]

\[V^2\]

\[V^1\]

a. Mary can’t be a genius.
b. I will be quiet.
c. Bill must be honest.

Note that the above three examples are different from each other with respect to whether they have the stative or the dynamic reading; (9) is stative from the nature of the predicate, and (10) is dynamic because of its status as a request interrogative; on the other hand, (11) is ambiguous; it can be paraphrased in two ways: "John is required to be honest and so is Bill" (dynamic reading) and "It is certain that John is honest and it is certain that Bill is so" (stative reading); a closer examination of (11), however, will tell us further that the version without *be* (i.e., (11a)) always has the dynamic reading and the version with *be* (i.e., (11b)) takes only the stative one. From these observations, the following generalization may suggest itself: in VPD, the *be* in the dynamic reading must be deleted while the *be* in the stative reading must be retained. If this generalization is correct, we can account for the grammaticality difference of (9)–(11) in terms of our auxiliary system (1) and the simplest possible VP (in fact, XP) Deletion rule (13):

(13) VP (XP) Deletion: Delete VP (XP).

The dynamic copula *be* as in (10) and (11a) is dominated by the VP node in our system, and therefore, should be deleted by rule (13). On the other hand, the stative copula *be* as in (9) and (11b) is included in the AUX node and is not affected by the rule of VPD.

Shumaker and Kuno (1980) (henceforth, S&K) have adduced many examples relevant to our present discussion. For instance:
(14) Can I be allowed to go?—Yes, a. you can. 
        b. *you can be.
(15) Do you think I might be taking this too seriously? 
        —Yes, a. ??I think you might. 
        b. I think you might be.

Incorporating the observations of Levin (1979), S&K have accounted for the difference of grammaticality in sentences like the above as follows:

...the general principle governing be deletion is that if the VP headed by be represents an action for which control is assigned, either to the surface subject, as proposed by Levin, or to the speaker, the hearer, or some other immediately available NP, then be can be deleted. If control is not assigned, as in cases in which the VP represents a statement of general principle, then be is retained. (p. 41)

S&K’s explanation is based on the notion of ‘controllability’. In our analysis, on the other hand, the explanation comes from the distinction between the dynamic be in (14) and the stative be in (15). Note that, although both explanations make little difference empirically because of a close relationship between their basic notions (controllability and the dynamic/stative distinction), there is one crucial argument showing that our analysis is favored over S&K’s; the principle that S&K have laid down is the one applicable only to be deletion phenomena, while our explanation takes into account VPD as a whole, treating be deletion as one special case of it. It is obvious that our analysis is superior in generality to S&K’s.

We quote two more examples from S&K.

(16) I believe John to be a genius, but Mary doesn’t believe him 
        a. to be. 
        b. *to.
(17) He didn’t want to be frank, but I finally succeeded in per-
        suading him 
        a. *to be. 
        b. to.

In (16)–(17), VPD applies in the subordinate to-infinitive clauses. As is well-known, the infinitival complement of believe requires a stative predicate in it and, in contrast, that of persuade always takes a dynamic
predicate. It is these restrictions that are responsible for the deletion pattern in (16)–(17); the stative be in the complement of believe must be retained while the dynamic be in the complement of persuade must be deleted, as required in our theory.

We now turn to the behavior of have in VPD. Our theory (auxiliary system (1) and VPD rule (13)) predicts that the dynamic have must be deleted and the stative have may not. This prediction is perfectly correct, with the only exception of the grammaticality of (21a). The following are examples of the dynamic have (actional and causative):

(18) Johnny should have a bath, and Bill {a. should
   (b. *should have), too.

(19) John must have his watch repaired and Bill {a. must
   (b. *must have),
   too.

The following examples illustrate the stative have (perfective and possessional):

(20) John must have eaten and Bill {a. *may.
   (b. may have.

(21) John hasn’t (or doesn’t have) any problems now, but he
   {a. will
   (b. will have}, soon.

The acceptability of both versions in (21) shows the dialectally varied behavior of the possessional have which we have also observed in the case of SAI; (21) provides another piece of evidence for our assumption that in some dialects the possessional have is generated under the AUX node while in the other dialects it is part of the VP node.

2.2. Imperative Sentences

AS&W have proposed that imperative sentences in English form a special sentence-type, with a basic phrase structure which is fundamentally different from regular declarative sentences, as follows:

(22) The PS Rule for Declarative Sentences (AS&W (103))
    \[ S \rightarrow NP \ AUX \ V^3. \]

(23) The PS Rule for Imperative Sentences (AS&W (104))
    \[ S \rightarrow (NP) \ V^2. \]
We agree to AS&W’s proposal in that imperative sentences, unlike declaratives, contain no constituent of AUX, but we revise the form of the rule into (24) on the basis of our auxiliary system.

(24) The Revised PS Rule for Imperative Sentences

\[ S \rightarrow (NP) \text{ XP}^1. \]

The empirical differences between AS&W’s rule and ours come to light when we examine the behavior of the stative \textit{be} and \textit{have}, on the one hand, and the dynamic \textit{be} and \textit{have}, on the other, in imperative sentences. Our analysis correctly predicts that the latter and only the latter can occur in the construction. For AS&W’s analysis, on the other hand, it is a mysterious fact, because these \textit{be} and \textit{have} (except the perfective \textit{have}) are all generated under or shifted into the node of \textit{V}^2, in terms of which they have formulated their PS rules for imperative sentences. (25)–(26) are examples with the dynamic \textit{be} and \textit{have}, and (27)–(28) examples with the stative \textit{be} and \textit{have}:

(25) a. Be quiet.\(^2\)
    b. Be examined by a dentist.
(26) a. Have a bath!
    b. Have that work finished for once.
(27) a. *Be tall.
    b. *Be reading the book.

\(^1\) The formulation of this rule in terms of \textit{XP} implies that there are verbless imperative sentences. The following are some examples of such an imperative:

i) Quiet!

ii) Off with the lid!

iii) No smoking.

\(^2\) It would be instructive to compare (25a) with a bare adjective imperative like (i):

i) Quiet!

(i) seems to be semantically distinct from (25a), though in a delicate way; exactly speaking, (25a) describes a particular action the speaker wants to be performed by the hearer or hearers, while (i) represents a particular state that the speaker considers the hearer or hearers should be in; so to speak, (25a) is a request for action but (i) is a request for a state. Syntactically, this difference is reflected in the different behavior of \textit{Please}; it can appear in the sentence-initial position of (25a) but not in that of (i):

ii) a. Please, be quiet.
    b. *Please, quiet.

The above semantic distinction, if correct, is quite consistent with our auxiliary analysis. I am indebted to Kozo Iwabe for calling my attention to these interesting data.
(28) a. *Have an older brother.
    b. *Have finished that work.

As for the progressive be and the perfective have, however, there is a set of exceptional examples to be considered:

(29) a. Be studying your Spanish when I get home!
    b. Don’t be napping when the boss comes in!

(30) a. Please, do have made that call by six o’clock.
    b. Don’t have left the room when I get back!

Most speakers accept these examples though they might have some hesitation in using them.¹ In these sentences, temporal adverbials (e.g., when, by) seem to play an important role. Roughly speaking, the main function of the imperative is to cause the hearer or hearers to do something or not to do something. Then, we can say that imperative sentences always refer to the future, because the present and the past cannot be acted on. Turning to the function of aspectual elements in question (the progressive be and the perfective have), the perfect aspect specifies a time prior to the point of reference, in Reichenbach’s sense, and the progressive aspect specifies an interval of time including the point of reference. One may say that both aspects need to refer to the situation prior to the point of reference at least. Therefore, if we use the perfect aspect or the progressive aspect in imperative sentences, contradiction occurs when the reference point is the present moment, a normal case in the imperative. But, as apparent from the reasoning, if we set up a reference point in the future, the cause of the conflict disappears and, in those cases, acceptable sentences will be effected. The temporal adverbials in (29)–(30) play the role of shifting the reference point to the future and hence these sentences are grammatical.

It is important to note, however, that imperative sentences with the progressive be or the perfective have, though possible under certain circumstances, are severely restricted with respect to their occurrence in utterances. It seems reasonable to regard examples

¹ For example, the following imperative sentence has almost the same meaning as (30a) and is far more natural than it.

i) Please, make that call by six o’clock.
such as (29)-(30) as marked constructions, and therefore I do not think they are serious counterexamples to our analysis.

2.3. *Do-Support*

As we mentioned in section 1, the stative *be* and *have*, on the one hand, and the dynamic *be* and *have*, on the other, behave differently with respect to *do*-periphrasis. Our auxiliary system, being sensitive to the distinction between them, allows a very simple formulation of the rule of *Do-Support*:

\[
\text{(31) } \text{Do-Support} \\
X \rightarrow [\phi]\text{AUX} - [Y]\text{VP} - Z \implies \\
X \rightarrow [do]\text{AUX} - [Y]\text{VP} - Z.
\]

The principle is that *Do-Support* occurs only when the AUX node contains no element (except Tense). This formulation can give a unified account of the pattern of grammaticality in the following list:

(32) modal auxiliaries
a. *You don't must go.
b. *Do you can give me a lift?

(33) the stative *be*
a. *John didn't be working when I came home.
b. *He doesn't be a fool.
c. *Does Antarctica be uninhabited by man?
d. *His house doesn't be on the corner of that street.

(34) the dynamic *be*
a. If you don't be quiet, I will smack you! (Swan, 1980)
b. Why don't you be examined by a doctor?

(35) the stative *have*
a. *Do you have seen George?
b. How many brothers do you have (or have you)?

(36) the dynamic *have*
a. Did you have a good holiday?
b. Did you have the car repaired?

In (35b), again, we find the dialectally varied behavior of the possessonal *have*.

2.4. *To-Be Deletion*

In this subsection, we will be concerned with a rule which is
supposed to relate sentences like (37a) and (37b):

(37) a. I believe Mary to be insane.
b. I believe Mary insane.

This rule, sometimes referred to as To-Be Deletion, is highly idiosyncratic with respect to its application, however. For example, verbs like believe, consider, and seem allow to-be deletion while verbs like know and confirm do not:

(38) a. I consider this discussion (to be) useless.
b. John seems (to be) a great man.

(39) a. I know Sally *(to be) understanding and patient.
b. The FBI confirmed the mad bomber *(to be) blond.

(Borkin (1974))

Furthermore, the rule of To-Be Deletion is sensitive to the characteristics of the embedded complements; the pairs of sentences in (40)–(41) illustrate both acceptable and unacceptable applications of To-Be Deletion as governed by the same matrix verb:

(40) a. I believe Tom capable, if not astoundingly competent.
b. Why, I believe Tom Italian after all.

(41) a. John seemed convinced to run.
b. *John seemed told the bad news. (ibid.)

These examples show that it is a very complex task to specify exactly when the To-Be Deletion rule can apply and when it may not. Thus we put such a problem aside here (see Borkin (1974) and Kubota (1979) for relevant discussion), and limit our attention to structural characterization of the rule. Our point is that To-Be Deletion, like other syntactic (deletion) rules, applies to a full constituent. Specifically, we propose that this rule deletes the constituent of AUX. We posit a rule of the following form:

(42) To-Be Deletion (AUX Deletion)

\[
\ldots NP - [to-be]_{AUX} - XP \ldots \\
\downarrow \\
\phi
\]
Sentence (37a) satisfies the structural condition of (42) and undergoes the rule, thus (37b) with *to-be* deleted being derived:

(43)

The crucial point here is that the *be* in (37a) is stative and, therefore, has been generated under the AUX node. If *be* is dynamic, we predict that *To-Be* Deletion cannot take place because the structural condition is not satisfied. The following examples bear out this prediction:

(44) a. I warned him to be more punctual.
    b. *I warned him punctual.
(44) a. They asked John to be the next chairman.
    b. *They asked John the next chairman.
In the present analysis, we are assuming that the infinitive marker *to* is dominated by the AUX node and, more specifically, that *to* occupies the same spot as modal auxiliaries. (Cf. Bresnan (1976), Williams (1984), etc.) This assumption can be supported by the following three observations. First, the infinitive marker *to* and modal auxiliaries show a disjunctive distribution:

(47) *I believe John to may (or may to) be cruel.

Second, *to* may not be deleted by the rule of VP Deletion, which, as we have shown in section 2.1., does not affect the constituent of AUX:

(48) My parents encouraged me to be a doctor, but I didn’t want *(to).

Third, *Do*-Support may not occur in the *to*-infinitive constructions. We can account for this fact quite simply if *to* is an AUX element.

(49) *I persuaded him don’t to (or to don’t) leave.

Given that *to* is a member of AUX, we have an interesting comment in connection with the verb *make*. This verb takes naked infinitives rather than *to*-infinitives:
(50) I made them (*to) destroy the city.

This suggests that the complements of *make include no node of AUX. The fact related crucially to this point can be observed in the following pair of sentences:

(51) a. They made Mary good.
    b. They made Mary be good.

(51a) and (51b) are different in meaning; in (51b), the object Mary assumes the function of performer in her own right, while (51a) has the interpretation that Mary is entirely under the control of the subject (they). This difference can be derived from the above assumption. If *make takes the complement of the form NP-XP, the be occurring in the construction must be a dynamic one. Hence, (51b) has an agentive reading in the complement sentence:

(52)

On the other hand, (51a), in which good represents the resultant state of Mary, can include no be in the surface, because there is no node of AUX which could dominate such a stative be.

3. Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have proposed a new English auxiliary system in which the stative be and have, on the one hand, and the dynamic be and have, on the other, are formally distinguished. This proposed system, as we have shown, not only accounts appropriately for the distributional properties of be and have but also allows a considerable simplification of the statement of some syntactic constructions and
rules. We have been concerned with four kinds of syntactic phenomena:

(53) a. VP (XP) Deletion: Delete VP (XP)
    b. Imperative Sentences: S → (NP) XP
    d. To-Be Deletion (AUX Deletion)
       \[ \cdots NP \rightarrow [to\text{-}be]AUX \rightarrow \cdots \]
       \[ \Downarrow \]
       \[ φ \]

Note that these simple formulations are impossible to obtain under any previous analysis of the auxiliary. It should be stressed that these desirable results come ultimately from the postulation of AUX as an independent category, particularly as a distinct category from VP, the main theme of the Phrase Structure analysis of the auxiliary. This fact constitutes a strong argument for the PS analysis and against the Main Verb analysis.

The present auxiliary system has many interesting consequences for other various aspects of linguistic research. Here we will take up only one out of them, for lack of space. Consider the following pair of sentences:

(54) a. John is polite.
    b. John is being polite.

Sentences like (54b) have been a serious obstacle to general accounts of the progressive construction because of its great difference in meaning from its corresponding non-progressive form (54a); (54a) may be interpreted as a comment on John’s permanent characteristic while (54b) is taken to refer to John’s temporary action. To my knowledge, there has been no principled basis which can account satisfactorily for this notable difference. Under our analysis, however, a simple explanation is available because these two sentences are, fortunately, treated in quite a different way; (54a) is the NP-AUX-AP construction, with the stative adjective polite as its predicate, while, in contrast, (54b) is the NP-AUX-VP construction, with the
dynamic verb phrase be polite as its predicate; thus, we can account simply for the vast semantic difference between them by attributing the "action" meaning observed only in (54b) to the dynamic be, which is present in (54b) but not in (54a).  

REFERENCES


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1 See Kaga (1983) for detailed discussion about this topic.