Two classes of auxiliaries in Paciran Javanese; Two syntactic domains

Investigations into auxiliaries in Paciran Javanese, a dialect spoken in East Java, reveals that there are two classes of auxiliaries: those that can front in yes-no questions and those that cannot. These findings correspond to auxiliary fronting in Peranakan Javanese, a dialect spoken in Semarang, Central Java by ethnic Chinese (Cole et al. 2008). Strikingly, I discover that the same partition is also found in two other constructions in Paciran Javanese: VP-topicalization and subject-auxiliary answers to yes-no questions. That this partition holds across two different dialects and in three distinct syntactic constructions strongly suggests that (i) this is a property of Javanese, and (ii) there is a deeper syntactic explanation for such a partition rather than distinguishing the two sets of auxiliaries featurally, as Cole et al. (2008) propose for auxiliary fronting.

A main insight, also noted in Cole et al. (2008), is that the TAM auxiliaries are already syntactically distinguished via their strict relative order: the set of auxiliaries that permits fronting in yes-no questions, VP-topicalization, and subject-auxiliary answers are syntactically low, while the set that does not allow any of these three constructions are syntactically high, as illustrated in Table 1 for Paciran Javanese.

Table 1. Two classes of auxiliaries in Paciran Javanese

HIGH AUXILIARIES		LOW AUXILIARIES	
wes 'PERF'	*kudu* 'DEONT.ROOT'	*tau* 'EXP.PERF'	*oleh* 'DEONT.POSS'
lagek 'PROG'	*ape* 'FUT'		*iso* 'CIRC.POSS'

In this paper, I capitalize on this syntactic distinction and propose that the two classes of auxiliaries in Javanese are syntactically partitioned by a phase. Specifically, I propose that low auxiliaries are dominated by a phase edge, MP, which serves as an intermediate landing site for A'-extraction for all three syntactic constructions, as in (1). Further, I assume that syntactic XP movement is guided by Abels (2003) anti-locality constraint wherein complements cannot move to the specifier of the projection that selects it.

This proposal is spelled out for VP-topicalization in Trees 1 and 2. With the set of low auxiliaries, as in (2), VP-topicalization is permitted. As demonstrated in Tree 1, in order to be accessible to further movement to Spec, TopP, VP first moves to the phase edge in Spec, MP. This intermediate movement of VP is permitted, since it is low enough to not violate Abels (2003) anti-locality constraint. With high auxiliaries as in (3), illustrated in Tree 2, VP-topicalization results in ungrammaticality. I argue that the unwell-formedness is to due a violation of the anti-locality constraint: VP cannot move to the specifier of the projection MP that selects it to escape the phase. The derivation for subject-auxiliary answers I argue proceed in the same way as VP-topicalization, until the end, where the VP is then phonologically deleted. As such, the difference between the behaviour of high and low auxiliaries in Javanese is purely structural.

The derivation for auxiliary fronting is parallel to VP-topicalization and subject-auxiliary answers in that Spec, MP serves as the landing site for A'-extraction. That is, I propose that auxiliary fronting is derived by XP-remnant movement, unlike Cole et al. (2008) who argue for X^0-movement, given the availability of XP-movement in other types of yes-no questions in Paciran Javanese. Like Cole et al. (2008), however, I admit low auxiliaries to have an optional EPP feature, given a feature-based approach for movement (Chomsky 2001) in order to front in yes-no questions. Therefore, this paper argues not only that two classes of auxiliaries seems to be a property of Javanese as a whole, but also that the distinction between these two classes is structural.

(1)   [CP...[TopP...([HighAuxP...)**[MP** ([LowAuxP...)[VP]]]]]]]
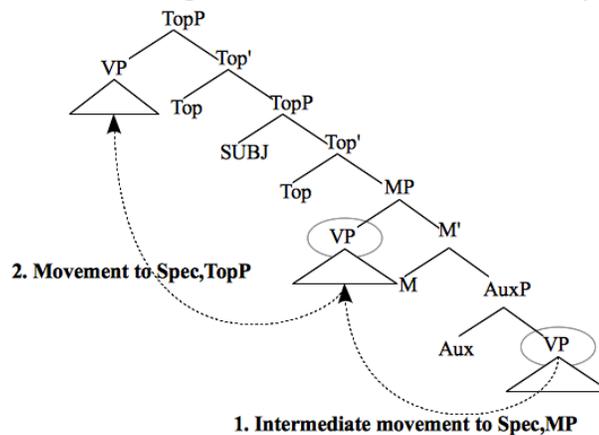
(2)   Context: *Opo mbak Jozina oleh nganggo celono reng ngaji?* (Can Jozina wear
        pants to Holy Qur'an?)
        nganggo   celono reng ngaji,   Jozi **oleh**.
        AV.wear   pants to   *ngaji*, Jozi allow
        'What Jozi is allowed to do is wear pants to Holy Qur'an.'

Tree 1. VP-topicalization with a low auxiliary
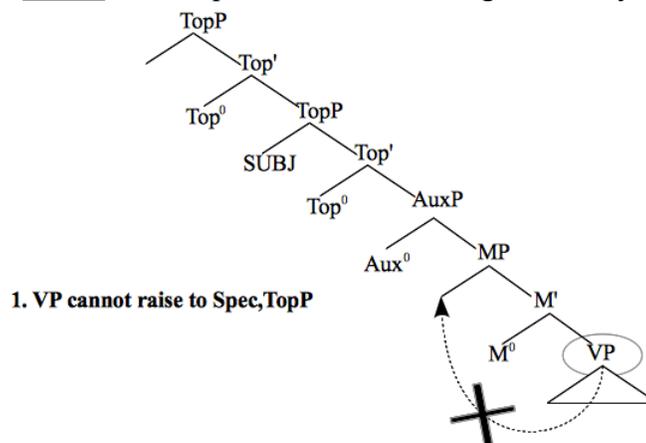

(3)   Context: *Opo Bu Zumaroh ape masak iwak botok?* (Will Bu Zumaroh make
        grilled fish?)
    *   Masak   iwak   botok, Bu   Zumaroh   **ape**
        cook   fish   botok, Mrs. Zumaroh   FUT
        ('Cook grilled fish in banana leaves, Bu Zumaroh will.')

Tree 2. *VP-topicalization with a high auxiliary

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