

THE SYNTAX OF INDICATOR PARTICLES IN SOMALI  
PART TWO: THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
INTERROGATIVE, NEGATIVE AND NEGATIVE-INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES\*

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In Somali there is an obligatory focus marking system. Every main declarative clause must have one (and only one) constituent marked for focus. This marking is carried out by means of a set of particles traditionally called "indicators". The focus system appears to have a pervasive influence on the syntax of the language: all of the major syntactic processes affecting a clause (relativization, subordination, noun modification, question formation, negation, etc.) are dependent on it. This paper attempts to show that significant generalizations regarding the formation of interrogative, negative, and negative-interrogative clauses can be captured only with reference to the focus structure of corresponding main declarative clauses.

1. Introduction

This article is a continuation of a study on the syntactic organization of the Somali language according to a certain perspective which was outlined in its predecessor (see Antinucci and Puglielli [1980], hereafter referred to as "Part One"). There we wrote: "We will try to show that most of the Somali sentence patterns (relative and subordinate clauses, yes-no and focalized questions, negative, co-ordinated and 'presentative', etc.) can be optimally accounted for if we derive them from a basic kernel containing only main declarative sentences. The different types of sentence patterns will naturally correlate with the different types of main declarative clauses, once these are defined in terms of their indicator structure." In Part One we presented evidence for the correctness of this approach by applying it to the description of relative clauses, subordinate clauses and certain types of noun modifiers in Somali. More evidence will be presented in this paper through the analysis of yes/no questions, negative clauses, and negative yes/no questions. Specifically, we will argue that significant

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generalizations concerning the behavior of these types of sentences can be naturally captured when

- (a) they are derived from main declarative sentences;
- (b) this derivation makes crucial reference to the indicator structure of the sentence.

As will be clarified below, indicators are particles whose function is to mark the constituent focussed upon in a sentence. They are, therefore, focus markers.<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of Somali that: (a) every main declarative sentence must contain one (and only one) focus marker; (b) focus markers can mark only one of the major constituents of the sentence, i.e. either a NP or the verb. From (a) it follows that a sentence like:

- (1) \*Axmed yimid<sup>2</sup> "Axmed came"  
 A. came

is ungrammatical because it doesn't contain any focus marker. From (b) it follows that there are two (and only two) grammatically acceptable ways of expressing the propositional content of (1). Since in (1) there are two major constituents (NP and verb), we can either mark for focus the NP, as in:

- (2) Axmed baa yimid "Axmed came"  
 A. P came

or the verb, as in:

- (3) Axmed waa yimid<sup>3</sup> "Axmed came"  
 A. P came

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<sup>1</sup>The term "indicator" is taken from Andrzejewski [1975], which provides the most extensive treatment of this topic of the Somali grammar. This term is here retained because it is largely traditional in the literature on Somali, though more appropriate terms might be "focus-marker", "focus-particle", or "focus-indicator".

<sup>2</sup>Except when otherwise indicated, Somali sentences are quoted following the conventions of the national Somali orthography (see Andrzejewski [1974]). Notice that c stands for a voiced pharyngeal fricative, x for an unvoiced pharyngeal fricative. In the English glosses, "P" stands for "indicator".

<sup>3</sup> Baa is the NP-focus marker (which has a variant form ayaa) and is

We call the "indicator structure" of a sentence the whole complex of phenomena, both formal (form of the noun, form of the verb, agreement pattern, etc. —see below for details) and semantic, associated with the use of a given indicator. In what follows we will see that both the formal and the semantic properties of the various types of yes/no questions, negative clauses, and negative yes/no questions match those of main declarative sentences that have the same indicator structure. In our exposition we will first illustrate the formal aspects of this correspondence and then the semantic ones.

## 2. Interrogative Sentences

2.1. The structure of yes/no questions. Yes/no questions (henceforth, Y/N questions) are formed in Somali by marking the sentence with an interrogative particle *ma*. This particle can occupy a number of different positions in the sentence, depending on the number of sentence constituents which are present. Thus, in a sentence with two constituents (NP and verb) *ma* can occupy two possible positions:

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always placed at the end of the NP to be marked for focus; *waa* is the verb focus marker and is instead placed in front of the verb complex. When a NP followed by *baa* ends in a short vowel, a regular contraction takes place by which the short vowel ending and the initial *b-* of *baa* undergo elision. Thus, sequences such as *Cali baa* or *hiibka baa* are pronounced as *Calaa* and *hiibkaa*. For the sake of clarity, we will disregard these contractions and will always spell the NP and the indicator in their full form. Choice of the constituent to be marked for focus depends on which part of the sentence is considered to constitute new information for the hearer. To take the clearest case, (2) would be an appropriate answer to the question 'Who came?', while in this context (1) would be totally inappropriate; on the other hand, (1) would be appropriate (and (2) inappropriate) as an answer to the question 'What did Axmed do?'. A precise statement of the contextual conditions governing focus choice would require a detailed analysis of texts and conversations, a task which is outside the scope of this article concerned more with the structure of the various sentence types than with their use. Some aspects of the use of indicators are dealt with in Andrzejewski [1975], Hetzron [1965], and Zholkovskiy [1971]. Notice that glosses included in double quotes (as those of (2), (3) and following) indicate that the sentences to which the glosses refer have the same "cognitive" or "propositional" meaning, while they differ in focus choice.

- (4) a. ma Axmed baa yimid "did Axmed come?"  
 Q A. P came  
 b. Axmed ma yimid "

In a sentence with three constituents (two NPs and a verb), *ma* can occupy three different positions:

- (5) a. ma Axmed baa hilibka cunay "did Axmed eat the meat?"  
 Q A. P the-meat ate  
 b. Axmed ma hilibka buu cunay<sup>4</sup> "  
 A. Q the-meat P-he ate  
 c. Axmed hilibka ma cunay "

and so on. In general, in a Y/N question *ma* is placed in front of any one of the sentence major constituents, i.e. NP's or verb. There are, however, many cooccurrence restrictions on the placement of *ma*. Thus, all of the following sentences are ungrammatical, although *ma* does precede one of the major constituents (a NP in (6), (8), (9), (10), (11) and the verb in (7), (12), (13)):

- (6) \*ma Axmed yimid  
 (7) \*Axmed baa ma yimid  
 (8) \*ma Axmed hilibka cunay  
 (9) \*ma Axmed hilibka buu cunay  
 (10) \*Axmed ma hilibka cunay  
 (11) \*Axmed baa ma hilibka cunay  
 (12) \*Axmed baa hilibka ma cunay  
 (13) \*Axmed hilibka buu ma cunay

A comparison between (4-5) on the one hand and (6-13) on the other allows us

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<sup>4</sup> *Buu* in this sentence is a combination of the indicator *baa* plus the short form of the 3p. sing. subject pronoun, *uu*. The short forms of the subject pronouns are the following:

1p. sing. and pl. aan	3p. sing. fem. and 3p. pl. ay
2p. sing. and pl. aad	3p. sing. masc. uu

Their combinations with *baa* give rise to *baan*, *baad*, *bay*, *buu*. The conditions of occurrence of such pronouns are discussed below.

to pick up the relevant properties involved in this grammaticality contrast:

- (c) *ma* can be placed in front of a NP if and only if this NP is marked by the indicator *baa* ;
- (d) *ma* can be placed in front of the verb if and only if no NP is marked by *baa* (and, in general, no indicator occurs in the sentence).

On the basis of (c) and (d) above, we could formulate a rule that directly generates Y/N questions in Somali. The rule could be stated in the following way:

- (e) enclose one of the NPs of the sentence between the particles *ma* ... *baa* ;  
or else
- (f) place *ma* in front of the Verb.

Yet (e) and (f) are still inadequate, in that they will also generate ungrammatical sentences. Let's consider (e) first.

Notice that in (5b) *baa* occurs combined with a pronominal copy of the subject NP, constituted by the short form of the subject pronoun ( *uu* ), while it occurs alone in (4a) and (5a). This feature will have to be specified in rule (e), because if we change it the sentences become ungrammatical:

- (14) \*Axmed *ma* hilibka *baa* cunay (cf. 5b)
- (15) \**ma* Axmed buu hilibka cunay (cf. 5a)
- (16) \**ma* Axmed buu yimid (cf. 4a)

Since in (4a) and (5a) *ma* ... *baa* marks a subject NP while in (5b) a non-subject NP,<sup>5</sup> this could be done by adding to (3) the specification that *baa* must be combined with the subject pronoun when *ma* ... *baa* marks a non-subject NP. However, this is not enough. If we invert the order of subject and object in (14), the sentence becomes grammatical:

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<sup>5</sup>We use the term "non-subject NP" rather than "object NP" because NPs other than subjects are not functionally distinguishable in Somali. See "Part one", n.4.

(17) ma hilibka baa Axmed cunay "did Axmed eat the meat?"

Inverting instead the order of subject and object in (5b) does not alter the grammaticality of the sentence:

(18) ma hilibka buu Axmed cunay "did Axmed eat the meat?"

If, however, the subject NP is shifted to postverbal position, then again the ma ... baa marking a non-subject NP must carry the subject pronoun:

(19) ma hilibka buu cunay Axmed "did Axmed eat the meat?"

(20) \*ma hilibka baa cunay Axmed

Furthermore, the distribution of the subject pronoun accompanying baa changes if the subject NP happens to be first or second person, rather than third person as in all the examples considered so far. In this case the subject pronoun must always be present, no matter what the order of the NPs is:

(21) adigu ma hilibka baad cuntay "did you eat the meat?"  
you Q the-meat P-you you-ate

(22) \*adigu ma hilibka baa cuntay

(23) ma hilibka baad adigu cuntay "

(24) \*ma hilibka baa adigu cuntay

(25) ma hilibka baad cuntay adigu "

(26) \*ma hilibka baa cuntay adigu

This fairly complex set of restrictions will have to be included in the formulation of (e), if the rule has to generate directly all the correct Y/N questions. Even if we do this, however, the rule will still be inadequate.

In fact, it must be noticed that in the ma NP baa questions the verb shows two different sets of forms, depending on which NP is marked by the particles. In (5a) (and also in (4a)) the final syllable of the verb carries a high-tone, while in (5b) a middle tone (tones are not shown in the standard orthography):

(5') a. ma Axmed baa hilibka cunáy

b. Axmed ma hilibka buu cunay

This difference emerges even more clearly when the subject NP is plural:

- (27) ma wiilasha baa hilibka cunáy            "did the boys eat the meat?"  
 Q the-boys P the-meat ate-3 sg
- (28) wiilashu ma hilibka bay cuneen            "  
 the-boys Q the-meat P-3 pl ate-3 pl

Although the subject NP is plural the verb retains its 3 p. singular form in (27), while taking the 3 p. plural form in (28). In the present tense, besides the different agreement pattern, there is a difference in the length of the final vowel of the verb inflection:

- (29) ma Axmed baa hilibka cunaya            "is Axmed eating the meat?"  
 Q A. P the-meat is-eating
- (30) Axmed ma hilibka buu cunayaa            "  
 A. Q the-meat P-he is-eating

This distinction is carried over, through different formal means, in all classes of verbs and in all tenses. We will not dwell on this anymore, since it has been described by Andrzejewski [1964], who called the two sets of forms "restrictive" and "extensive" paradigms. The important point to notice for our purposes is that when *ma ... baa* marks the subject NP of the sentence the verb appears in the "restrictive" paradigm, while when *ma ... baa* marks a non-subject NP the verb appears in the "extensive" paradigm. Rule (e) will also have to include this specification. There is, of course, finally the question of which of the NPs will get *ma ... baa* by rule (e).

Also rule (f) needs some refinements to generate the correct set of Y/N questions of the *ma* verb type. First of all, since, as we have just seen, Somali has two different complete sets of verbal forms, we will have to state that a Y/N question of the *ma* verb type always requires the "extensive" paradigm:

- (31) Axmed hilibka ma cunay            = (5c)
- (32) \*Axmed hilibka ma cunáy
- (33) wiilashu hilibka ma cuneen            "did the boys eat the meat?"  
 the-boys the-meat Q ate-3 pl
- (34) \*wiilashu hilibka ma cunáy

- (35) Axmed hilibka ma cunayaa "is Axmed eating the meat?"  
 A. the-meat Q is-eating
- (36) \*Axmed hilibka ma cunaya

Second, rule (f) does not generate some perfectly grammatical Y/N questions of the *ma* verb type. In fact, in addition to (4b) and (5c), the following sentences are also possible:

- (37) Axmed muu yimid (cf. (4b))  
 (38) Axmed hilibka muu cunay<sup>6</sup> (cf. (5c))

*Uu* is again the short form of the subject pronoun, which can occur together with *ma*. Contrary, however, to the cases where the subject pronoun occurs in the *ma ... baa* questions, this occurrence is not syntactically conditioned. The subject pronoun can freely occur or not, no matter what the order of the NPs in the sentence:

- (39) Axmed {muu} cunay hilibka  
           {ma}
- (40) hilibka {muu} cunay Axmed  
               {ma}
- (41) hilibka Axmed {muu} cunay  
                       {ma}

Furthermore, it can be freely present or not even when the subject NP is not 3rd person:

- (42) adigu hilibka {maad} cuntay  
           you the-meat Q you-ate  
                       {ma}

Thus, in our rule (f) we will have to state that a pronominal copy of the subject NP can optionally occur together with *ma*.

A third problem, finally, has to do with the definition of the position which is to be occupied by *ma* in these sentences. Up to now we simply said that *ma* is placed in front of the verb. This is not enough, however, because in a Somali sentence the verb can be immediately preceded not only

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<sup>6</sup> *Muu* = *maa* + *uu*. Other combinations of the interrogative particle plus the subject pronouns are *maa* + *aad* = *maad*, etc. These combinations can also appear in their full form: *maa uu*, *ma aad*, etc.

by a NP, but also by a series of elements of various nature: adverbs, possessive pronouns, prepositional particles, object pronouns, etc. (the full list of these elements and their relative ordering is given in Zholkovsky [1971]).

- (43) hilibka ma la cunay "was the meat eaten?" (lit. "did  
the-meat Q impers-pro ate one eat the meat")
- (44) Cali warshaddaas ma ka shaqeyaa "does Ali work in that factory?"  
C. that-factory Q from works
- (45) shineemada maad igu aragtay "did you see me in the cinema?"  
cinema-the Q-you me-in saw

In (43) the verb is preceded by the impersonal pronoun ( *la* ), in (44) by a prepositional particle ( *ka* ), in (45) by the combination of an object pronoun ( *i* ) plus a prepositional particle ( *ku* ). As it can be seen, *ma* has to precede all these elements. Thus, in order to place *ma* in the right place, rule (f) will have to list all the elements that can precede the verb and state that *ma* precedes all of them.

To sum up, any attempt to formulate directly the rule to generate Y/N questions in Somali will have to include, in addition to (e) and (f) above, statements correctly describing (at least) the following phenomena:

- (g) conditions of occurrence and distribution of the subject pronouns both in the *ma* NP *baa* and in the *ma* verb questions;
- (h) conditions of occurrence of the "extensive" and "restrictive" paradigms of the verb both in the *ma* NP *baa* and in the *ma* verb questions;
- (i) placement of *ma* with respect to the preverbal elements in the *ma* verb questions.

The crucial point we wish to make is that the inclusion of information relative to (g-i) in the rule for generating Y/N questions will constitute unnecessary duplication, since statements correctly accounting for (g-i) are already included in the Somali grammar. In fact, they are independently needed to generate the set of grammatically well-formed main declarative sentences.

2.2. Formal correspondences between declaratives and Y/N questions. Consider first the *ma* NP *baa* questions. Statements accounting for (g) are already available, because they are needed to describe the behavior of subject pronouns in simple declarative clauses containing *baa*. In fact, the behavior of subject pronouns is exactly the same in the *ma* NP *baa* questions and in the *baa* declaratives, as the reader can see by comparing the following declarative sentences with the *ma* NP *baa* questions indicated on the left side (sentences (46-53) mean "Axmed ate the meat"; (54-55) mean "you ate the meat"):<sup>7</sup>

(46)	Axmed	{ baa }	hilibka cunay	cf. (5a)
(47)		{ *buu }		" (15)
(48)	Axmed	hilibka	{ buu } cunay	" (5b)
(49)			{ *baa }	" (14)
(50)	hilibka	{ baa }	Axmed cunay	" (17)
(51)		{ buu }		" (18)
(52)	hilibka	{ buu }	cunay Axmed	" (19)
(53)		{ *baa }		" (20)
(54)	hilibka	{ baad }	adigu cunay	" (23)
(55)		{ *baa }		" (24)

Rules concerning the selection of the restrictive v. the extensive verbal paradigm (point (h)) are already available too. In main declarative clauses the restrictive paradigm appears only (and always) when the indicator *baa* marks the subject NP, in all other cases the extensive is used; exactly as in Y/N questions where the restrictive appears only when *ma ... baa* marks

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<sup>7</sup>Definitions of the conditions governing the occurrence of subject pronouns are given in "Part One". We summarize them here:

(a) if *baa* marks a subject NP, then the subject pronoun can never occur;

(b) if *baa* marks a non-subject NP and the subject is first or second person, then the subject pronoun must always be present;

(c) if *baa* marks a non-subject NP and the subject is third person, then the subject pronoun must always be present, except when the non-subject NP precedes the subject NP and they are both preverbal. In the last case the pronoun can be freely present or absent.

the subject NP. Compare again the following declaratives with the questions indicated on the left side:

(56)	Axmed baa hilibka cunáy	"Axmed ate the meat"	cf. (5'a)
(57)	Axmed hilibka buu cunay	"	" (5'b)
(58)	wiilasha baa hilibka cunáy	"the boys ate the meat"	" (27)
(59)	wiilashu hilibka bay cuneen	"	" (28)
(60)	Axmed baa hilibka cunaya	"Axmed is eating the meat"	" (29)
(61)	Axmed hilibka buu cunayaa	"	" (30)

Therefore, we can avoid the duplication involved in stating (g) and (h) if, instead of generating Y/N questions directly, we are allowed to make reference to the structure of the independently generated declarative sentences. In this case the rule for the *ma* NP *baa* questions can be formulated in a very simple way:

- (j) a Y/N question is formed by taking a main declarative clause and inserting the particle *ma* in front of the NP which is marked by *baa* .

The rule thus stated accounts for Y/N questions in two steps. First a declarative sentence is generated, and then it is transformed into a question through the appropriate insertion of *ma* . Thus, to generate, for example, (3a), (5b), (17), (18), (19), we will start from (respectively) (46), (48), (50), (51), (52) and apply rule (j) to them. In this way all the peculiarities listed in (g), (h) are automatically taken care of by the rules that generate the declarative sentences and need not be mentioned at all in the rule of Y/N question formation.

The same approach can easily solve the problems of the *ma* verb questions listed in (g), (h), (i) above, since in this case too there are corresponding declarative clauses whose behavior is identical to that of the *ma* verb questions. As we said in "Part One", every Somali main declarative clause must contain an indicator particle. There are two types of indicators: *baa* , marking NP's, and *waa* , marking the verb. Thus, an alternative way of constructing declarative sentences like (56-57) is by using the indicator *waa* instead of *baa* :

- (62) Axmed hilibka waa cunay "Axmed ate the meat"  
 (63) Axmed waa yimid "Axmed came"

Declarative sentences of the waa type have, among others, the following properties. A pronominal copy of the subject NP, constituted by the short form of the subject pronoun, may freely appear together with waa :<sup>8</sup>

- (64) Axmed hilibka wuu cunay same meaning as (62)  
 (65) Axmed wuu yimid " " " (63)

This occurrence is syntactically unconstrained: no matter what the relative order of the NP's and Verb is, both the simple waa and the waa + pro constructions are possible ((66-68) have the "same meaning" as (62)):

- (66) Axmed { waa } cunay hilibka  
           { wuu }  
 (67) hilibka { waa } cunay Axmed  
               { wuu }  
 (68) hilibka Axmed { waa } cunay  
                       { wuu }

In waa sentences the verb always appears in the extensive paradigm:

- (69) Axmed hilibka waa cunay = (62)  
 (70) \*Axmed hilibka waa cunáy  
 (71) wiilashu hilibka waa cuneen "the boys ate the meat"  
 (72) \*wiilashu hilibka waa cunáy  
 (73) Axmed hilibka waa cunayaa "Axmed is eating the meat"  
 (74) \*Axmed hilibka waa cunaya

Besides being placed in front of the verb, waa must also precede all the preverbal elements accompanying the verb:

- (75) hilibka waa la cunay "the meat was eaten" cf. (43)  
 (76) Cali warshaddaas waa ka shaqeyaa "Ali works in that factory" " (44)  
 (77) shineemada waad igu aragtay "you saw me in the cinema" " (45)

<sup>8</sup>Combinations of waa + subject pronoun are: waa + aan = waan; waa + aad = waad ; waa + ay = way , cf. fn. 4.

Comparing the set of sentences (64-77) with (31-45), it is easy to see how these properties of the *waa* declaratives match exactly those of the *ma* verb questions listed in (g-i) above, once *ma* is substituted for *waa*. Therefore, if we have already in our grammar the rules to generate the correct set of *waa* declarative sentences, stating directly the rules for *ma* verb questions will again involve a good deal of duplication. This can be avoided if we allow *ma* verb questions to be derived from *waa* declaratives by means of a rule of the following type:

- (k) a Y/N question is formed by taking a main declarative clause and substituting *ma* for the indicator *waa* in it.

Thus, sentences like, for example, (4b) and (5b) will be generated by transforming the corresponding *waa* declaratives (63) and (62) through application of rule (k). In this way conditions (g-i) will not need to be specified at all in the question formation rule, since they will be automatically taken care of by the independently needed rules that generate main declarative clauses. Notice, furthermore, that the formulation of rule (k) also predicts the non-occurrence of sentences containing both *ma* and *waa* (as opposed to *ma* and *baa*), since it calls for "substitution" of *waa*, and in fact these sentences are ungrammatical:

(78) \*Axmed waa ma yimid

(79) \*Axmed ma waa yimid

2.3. Semantic correspondences between declaratives and Y/N questions. Up to now we have been arguing in favour of a derivation of Y/N questions from declarative sentences on purely formal grounds. We showed that a number of formal properties of Y/N questions (subject pronoun distribution, verb choice, etc.) are most efficiently accounted for in a grammar of Somali if we generate them as transformations of main declarative clauses, because in this way we can capture significant generalizations regarding the common behaviors of questions and declaratives. The pro-derivational argument can be strengthened even more if we allow semantic considerations to play a role in it. First of all, notice that if we generated Y/N questions directly a very important correlation within Somali grammar would be missed,

namely that the number of ways in which a sentence can be questioned corresponds exactly to the number of ways in which the same sentence can be asserted by varying only its indicator structure. Thus, a sentence meaning "Ali went to Xamar yesterday" can be formulated in Somali in four different ways, by varying its indicator structure:

- (80) shaley    baa Cali Xamar tegay  
       yesterday P    C.    X.    went
- (81) shaley Cali baa Xamar tegay
- (82) shaley Cali Xamar buu tegay
- (83) shaley Cali Xamar waa tegay

Now there are four (and only four) ways of asking the corresponding question "did Ali go to Xamar yesterday?":

- (84) ma shaley    baa Cali Xamar tegay  
       Q yesterday P    C.    X.    went
- (85) shaley ma Cali baa Xamar tegay
- (86) shaley Cali ma Xamar buu tegay
- (87) shaley Cali Xamar ma tegay

More than this purely quantitative correspondence, our rule makes the claim that there is a one-to-one correspondence between statements and Y/N questions: each statement has its corresponding Y/N question (the one generated by the application of (j)/(k) to the statement). It turns out that this syntactic correspondence captures a very neat semantic correspondence. As we said in section 1 (see also "Part One"), the semantic function of indicator particles like *baa* and *waa* is to mark the focus of assertion. *Baa* focuses the assertion on the NP marked by it and *waa* on the verb. Thus, a better approximation for the English translation of sentences (80-83) would be:

- (80') 'it was yesterday that Ali went to Xamar'
- (81') 'it was Ali that went to Xamar yesterday'
- (82') 'it was to Xamar that Ali went yesterday'
- (83') 'Ali did go to Xamar yesterday'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>These glosses are simply suggestive of the differences in focus im-

Y/N questions show the same property: the constituent marked by *ma* is always in focus. Obviously, in this case, it is the focus of the question and not of the assertion. Sentences (84-87) are, therefore, more appropriately glossed with the question equivalents of (80-83), i.e. "was it yesterday that Ali went to Xamar?", etc. This is the reason why sentences like (7), (9), (11), (12), (13) are ungrammatical: *ma* cannot mark for question a constituent which is not in focus. The essential generalization underlying the formation of Y/N questions in Somali<sup>10</sup> is that *in a sentence only the focused constituent can be questioned*. By tying the process of question formation to the focus structure of the corresponding declarative clause, our rule of question formation captures automatically this generalization. Given our framework, the semantic effect of *ma* can be described as simply changing the illocutionary force of the sentence (from assertion to question): the fact that sets like (80-84), (81-85), (82-86), (83-87) have exactly the same propositional meaning and the same distribution of focused v. non-focused information results automatically from the way in which the rule of question formation is formulated. In fact, the two rules (j-k) can be collapsed into a single unitary statement which is much more revealing:

- (1) a Y/N question is formed by marking with *ma* the focused constituent of a declarative clause.

Rules (j) and (k) can then be seen as "spelling" rules specifying the details of placement of *ma* (addition to the left of a *baa* marked constituent and substitution of *waa* ).

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plied by the Somali sentences, but they are not totally appropriate translations. The cleft construction in English is a highly marked, optional construction, suggesting a contrastive value of the assertion. The Somali sentences are unmarked, simple sentences and they do not have any contrastive value, since, contrary to English, choosing one element to focus upon is obligatory in every Somali sentence. See fn. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Presumably, this generalization holds for every natural language, but in Somali it is remarkably transparent.

3. Interrogative Form of Verbless Sentences

The only exception to our rules (j) and (k) is constituted by Y/N questions of verbless sentences. Somali has a class of main declarative clauses of the general form NP waa NP, where no verb appears:

- (88) Cali waa macallin "Ali is a teacher"  
C. P teacher
- (89) kuwaasi waa geedo timireed "those are date trees"  
those P trees of-dates
- (90) kani waa ninkii aan shaley la hadlay "this is the man I talked  
this P the-man I yesterday with talked to yesterday"

As the glosses show, it is a kind of predicate nominal construction, where no copular verb appears and the predicate NP takes the position normally occupied by a verb, i.e. right after the indicator waa. As is frequently the case with these types of sentences, they can be used only if the temporal reference of the sentence is present. For past (or future) reference one has to resort to a normal construction containing the verb 'to be', such as:

- (91) kuwaasi geedo timireed bay ahayeen "those were date trees"  
those trees of-dates P-they were
- (92) kuwaasi geedo timireed waa ahayeen "

The problem for our analysis of Y/N questions is that given the structure of sentences (88-90), rule (k) will automatically apply to them in order to produce the corresponding Y/N questions. Substituting ma for waa, rule (k) will produce:

- (93) \*Cali ma macallin cf. (88)
- (94) \*kuwaasi ma geedo timireed " (89)
- (95) \*kani ma ninkii aan shaley la hadlay " (90)

which are ungrammatical. In fact, the Y/N questions corresponding to sentences (88-90) are:

- (96) Cali ma macallin baa "is Ali a teacher?"  
C. Q teacher P
- (97) kuwaasi ma geedo timireed baa "are those trees of dates?"  
those Q trees of-dates P

- (98) kani ma ninkii aan shaley la hadlay baa "is this the man I  
 this Q man-the I yesterday with talked P talked to yesterday?"

As can be seen, the resulting form of these sentences is that of an ordinary NP question, i.e. the one generated by rule (j). What seems to be happening here is that the rule of question formation is sensitive to the NP status of the questioned constituent rather than to the presence of *waa*. The rule treats the predicate nominal as a focused NP and not as a verb, even if this constituent is preceded by *waa*. This is probably due to the ambiguous status of the predicate nominal in (88-90). This constituent behaves like an ordinary predicate, and in fact it shares all the structural properties of a predicate: (a) presence of *waa*; (b) position of *waa*. As with an ordinary verbal predicate, *waa* must precede and cannot be separated from it:

- (99) \*Cali macallin waa  
 (100) \*waa Cali macallin

Compare:

- (101) Cali waa yimid "Ali came"  
 (102) \*Cali yimid waa  
 (103) \*waa Cali yimid

(c) the NP accompanying it behaves as its subject: it is morphologically marked as a subject NP (see Andrzejewski [1964]); it can be omitted as in verbal sentences such as:

- (104) waa macallin  
 (105) waa yimid

It can be switched in post-"verbal" position in sentences such as:

- (106) waa macallin Cali  
 (107) waa yimid Cali

Yet it also has all the properties of an ordinary NP, as shown by the fact that it can take the definite article and it can be modified by any noun modifier: a genitive noun in (89), a relative clause in (90). In view of this ambiguity, it seems reasonable to consider sentences like (96-98) as



precedes the verb. Any other distribution of the negative particles will result in an ungrammatical sentence:

- (112) \*Cali baa hadiyad aan keenin
- (113) \*Cali aan hadiyad buu keenin
- (114) \*Cali aan hadiyad keenin
- (115) \*Cali hadiyad aan keenin
- (116) \*Cali baa hadiyad ma keenin
- (117) \*Cali hadiyad buu ma keenin
- (118) \*Cali hadiyad waa ma keenin
- (119) \*Cali hadiyad ma waa keenin

The situation is, therefore, exactly parallel to that of Y/N questions, where the interrogative particle ( *ma* ) can either accompany the NP marked by *baa* or precede the verb in absence of any indicator. In fact, we can use essentially the same arguments we used for Y/N questions to show that negative sentences are to be derived from main declarative clauses. The rules involved in such a derivation will be very similar to (j) and (k) above, differing only in the spelling details.

Consider first the cases of *aan* negations, i.e., the cases where the negative particle marks a NP. The rule involved can be formulated in the following way:

- (m) a negative sentence is formed by inserting *aan* after the NP marked by *baa* into a main declarative clause and changing the form of the verb into the negative form.

The arguments we used to justify the corresponding (j) rule for Y/N questions in 2.2 were of four kinds: (1) distribution of the interrogative particle; (2) distribution of the subject pronouns; (3) form of the verbal

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The negative conjugation has two forms: an invariable form ending in *-in* and a person inflected one ending in *-o*. The last one is identical to the so-called "dependent" verb form (see Andrzejewski [1968]), which is a kind of subjunctive. The *-o* form can be used only with the negative particle *ma*, in which case it has a present tense value, while the *-in* form has a past tense value. With the negative particle *aan* only the *-in* form can be used, and its value can be both present and past.

conjugation; (4) semantic correspondence between pairs of rule related declarative question clauses. The same arguments can be used to justify (m), except for (3) since in Somali there is a special verbal conjugation which is used in all negative sentences (see fn. 12). Let us briefly review such arguments. Obviously, rule (m) will predict the correct distribution of the *aan* particle. Since *aan* will be inserted only on a NP marked by *baa*, sentences like (109-110) will be generated while sentences like (112-115) will be excluded. Subject pronouns in negative clauses behave exactly in the same way as in Y/N questions and main declarative clauses. If the negative particle marks the subject NP, then the pronoun can never be present, no matter what the order of the NP's is:

(120) \*Cali baanu hadiyad keenin cf. (47)  
C. P-neg-he present bring

(121) \*hadiyad Cali baanu keenin

If *aan* marks a non-subject NP, then the pronoun must appear except when the non-subject NP precedes the subject NP and they are both in preverbal position:

(122) Cali hadiyad  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{baanu} \\ \text{P-neg-he} \end{array} \right\}$  keenin cf. (48)  
C. present bring

(123)  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} *baan \\ \text{P-neg} \end{array} \right\}$  " (49)

(124) hadiyad  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{baan} \end{array} \right\}$  Cali keenin (50)

(125)  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{baanu} \end{array} \right\}$  " (51)

(126) hadiyad  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{baanu} \\ *baan \end{array} \right\}$  keenin Cali " (52)

" (53)

If the subject is first or second person then the subject pronoun must always appear, also in cases like (124-125):

(127) hadiyad baanad (adigu) keenin<sup>13</sup> cf. (54)  
present P-neg-you you bring

<sup>13</sup>The combinations of *baa* + *aan* + *pro.* given in these sentences (and in fn. 12 above) are those characteristic of the dialect spoken in the northernmost regions. South of these regions (approximately from the Mudug area), the relative order of *aan* and *pro.* is inverted, i.e. the negative

(128) \*hadiyad baan (adigu) keenin cf. (55)

Since rule (m) derives negative clauses from previously generated declarative clauses, all these restrictions on the occurrence of subject pronouns are already taken care of (by the rules generating, e.g. (47-54)) and need not be specified for negative clauses.

Finally the semantic argument parallel to 2.3. Rule (m) enables us to capture automatically the semantic correlation existing between pairs of main declarative and negative clauses. In a negative clause the constituent marked by *aan* is always in focus. Thus, more revealing glosses for sentences like (109) and (110) are, respectively:

(109') 'it wasn't Ali that brought a present'

(110') 'it wasn't a present that Ali brought'<sup>14</sup>

Rule (m) derives (109) and (110) from, respectively:

(129) Cali baa hadiyad keenay  
C. P present brought

(130) Cali hadiyad buu keenay  
C. present P-he brought

Now, (129) and (130) have exactly the same focus structure as (109) and (110).

Consider now negative clauses of the *ma* type. The rule involved in the derivation of these sentences parallels the rule for deriving *ma* verb questions:

- (n) a negative sentence is formed by substituting *ma* for *waa* into a main declarative clause, changing the form of the verb into the negative form and, eventually, moving *ma* after the sequence of object pronoun + preverbal particles inside the verb complex.

The last specification is necessary because the position occupied by nega-

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particle is placed after the combination of *baa* + pro., rather than being inserted between them. Thus, *baanad* appears as *baadan*.

<sup>14</sup>See fn. 9, above.

tive *ma* with respect to the verb complex is different from that occupied by interrogative *ma*. Thus, while interrogative *ma* appears, as *waa*, at the beginning of the verb complex (see (43-45) and (75-77)), negative *ma* occurs inside it. Compare the negative equivalents of (43-45):<sup>15</sup>

- (131) *hilibka la ma cunin* "the meat was not eaten"  
 the-meat impers-pro neg ate
- (132) *Cali warshaddaas ka ma shaqeeyo* "Ali doesn't work in that fac-  
 C. that-factory from neg works tory"
- (133) *shineemada igu maad arkin* "you didn't see me in the cinema"  
 cinema-the me-in neg-you saw

Again, the same arguments in 2.2 used to support the derivation of *ma* verb questions from *waa* declaratives can be used to support the derivation of *ma* negatives from *waa* declaratives. Let's briefly review them in the form of predictions that can be formulated from rule (n). If *ma* negatives are derived from *waa* sentences, we will predict that, contrary to the *aan* negatives, *baa* will never cooccur with negative *ma*, and since rule (n) calls for "substitution" of *waa*, negative *ma* will never cooccur with *waa* either. Thus, rule (n) will correctly predict that sentences like (116-117) and like (118-119) are ungrammatical. Rule (n) will also predict that subject pronouns in *ma* negatives will behave in the same way as subject pronouns in *waa* declaratives. We said above that in these sentences the occurrence of subject pronouns is syntactically unconstrained: they can be freely present or absent (see (62-68)). The same applies to *ma* negatives (*ma* negation + pronoun is never contracted):

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<sup>15</sup>This statement applies to the dialects spoken in Northern Somalia, with the exclusion of the coastal and southern regions. In the dialects spoken in these regions, negative *ma* occupies instead the same position of interrogative *ma* and *waa*, i.e. at the beginning of the verbal complex. Thus, sentences like (131-133) would appear in these dialects as:

- (131') *hilibka ma la cunin*  
 (132') *Cali warshaddaas ma ka shaqeeyo*  
 (133') *shineemada maad igu arkin*

*Maad* = *ma* + *aad*. The combinations of negative *ma* plus the subject pronouns are identical to those of interrogative *ma* (see fn. 6) and they can also appear in their full form, as in (134-137).

- (134) Cali hadiyad { ma } keenin "Cali didn't bring a present"  
 C. present { neg } brought  
 { ma uu }  
 { neg he }
- (135) hadiyad { ma } keenin Cali "  
 { ma uu }
- (136) hadiyad Cali { ma } keenin "  
 { ma uu }
- (137) adiga hadiyad { ma } keenin "you didn't bring a present"  
 { ma aad }

Finally, rule (n) will predict that the focus of *ma* negatives will always be on the verb (cf. 2.3), since they derive from *waa* declaratives, which have focus on the verb. This prediction is confirmed: in sentences like (134-137) the negation bears in every case on the verb, and they contrast with negative sentences like (109-110) where (as shown by (109'-110')) the negation bears on one of the NP constituents.

Though in the case of negative clauses we lack the argument based on the form of the verb, there is an additional piece of evidence in favour of our analysis, deriving from the behavior of negation in subordinate clauses. Subordinate clauses (which, as we showed in "Part One", are in Somali all relative clauses) may be negated only by means of *aan*, and never *ma*, as the following sentences show:

- (138) wiilkii aan af talyaaniga ku hadlin waad arantay  
 boy-the neg tongue/Italian in speak P-you saw  
 "you saw the boy who doesn't speak Italian"
- (139) \*wiilkii af talyaaniga ku ma hadlin waad aragtay
- (140) inaan Cali imaanin waan doonayaa  
 that-neg C. come P-I want  
 "I want Ali not to come"
- (141) \*in Cali ma imaanin waan doonayaa

In "Part One" we argued that all subordinate clauses are derived from main declarative clauses of the *baa* type. Assuming this derivation, rule (m) automatically explains why only *aan* is found in negative subordinates: since they all come from *baa* sentences only rule (m) can apply to them

(and not rule (n)) resulting, therefore, in the presence of *aan* .

As with Y/N questions, our analysis allows us to capture the essential generalization underlying the construction of negative clauses in Somali, i.e. that only and always focused constituent are negated. In fact, we can explicitly formulate this generalization in a single more abstract rule of negation covering both (m) and (n), as we did in (1) for question formation:

- (o) a negative clause is formed by marking with the negative particle the focused constituent of a main declarative clause.

Then (m) and (n) become (as (j) and (k)) "spelling" rules, specifying how the actual marking is effected.<sup>16</sup>

Finally notice that verbless sentences, such as (88-90), cannot be negated. In order to negate them we have to resort to their ordinary verbal equivalents:

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<sup>16</sup>Before closing this section, we must mention a third type of negative sentence. This is used very rarely and in highly restricted contexts. It is formed by adding *aan* to the indicator *waa* , as in the following sentences:

- (i) *waanu ku arkin* "he didn't see you"  
 P-neg-he you see
- (ii) *waanad ii sheegin* "you didn't tell it to me"  
 P-neg-you me-to tell

Formally, this construction can be accounted for by extending rule (m). Instead of specifying the context of *aan* insertion as the NP marked by *baa* , one can simply say that *aan* is inserted after any indicator:

- (m') a negative sentence is formed by inserting *aan* after any indicator into a main declarative clause and changing the form of the verb into the negative form.

Rule (m') will generate both the *baa + aan* sentences and the *waa + aan* sentences like (i-ii). This rule will still correctly predict the syntactic behavior of sentences like (i-ii) and the fact that they have verb focus. There is, however, no way of predicting the additional idiosyncratic meaning that such sentences have. Compared to focus equivalent *ma* negations, *waa + aan* negations can only be used when the clause implies some sort of opposition to or unfulfillment of the expectations created by the preceding context. Thus, (i-ii) could never be used in isolation, as opposed to the corresponding *ma* sentences. Examples of appropriate use are the following:

(142) Cali macallin ma aha "Ali is not a teacher"  
C. teacher neg be

(143) Cali baan macallin ahayn "  
C. P-neg teacher be

etc.

##### 5. Interrogative Sentences: miyaa Construction

In addition to the particle *ma*, there is another particle in Somali which can turn a sentence into a Y/N question. This is the particle *miyaa*. The syntactic behavior of this particle differs from that of *ma*, although for each *ma* sentence there is a semantically identical sentence with *miyaa*. The use of *miyaa* appears in the following sentences:

(144) Cali miyaa keenáy<sup>17</sup> 'was it Ali who brought it?'

(145) miyaa Cali keenay 'did Ali bring it?'

The two sentences are (as can be seen from the glosses) semantically identical to, respectively:

(146) ma Cali baa keenáy

(147) Cali ma keenay

Notice, furthermore, that although no indicator (*baa* or *waa*) occurs in (144-145), sentence (144) has the restrictive verbal paradigm and sentence (145) the extensive, as shown by the tonal features on the verbal endings.<sup>1</sup>

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(i) Cali agtiisa baad soo martay, waanu ku arkin  
C. vicinity-his P-you hither passed P-neg-he you see

"you passed near to Ali, (and yet) he didn't see you"

(ii) wuu yimid, waanu ii sheegin  
P-he came P-neg-he me-to tell

"he came, (but) he didn't tell it to me"

As can be seen, in order to express in English the appropriate nuance of meaning one has to insert expressions like "and yet" or "but".

<sup>17</sup>In Somali, the third person object pronoun is zero. Thus, when no NP object appears in sentences with transitive verbs, such as (144-149), a definite object is understood.

<sup>18</sup>That the restrictive paradigm is involved in sentences such as (144) and the extensive in sentences such as (145) is also proved by the differ-

We are thus in the presence of the same basic facts that justified our derivation of *ma* questions from main declarative clauses, i.e. correspondence of focus and correspondence of verb forms (the third group of facts, those related to the distribution of subject pronouns, will be taken up below). Therefore, it appears natural to postulate also for *miyaa* sentences a derivation from main declarative clauses. In fact, if we derive (144) from a *baa* sentence and (145) from a *waa* sentence, both the semantic value of the resulting question (in terms of focus distribution) and the distribution of verb forms will be automatically accounted for. Sentence (144) will be derived from:

(148) *Cali baa keenáy* "Ali brought it" ('it was Ali who brought it')

where the NP subject (*Cali*) is in focus, and the verb appears in the restrictive paradigm, since *baa* marks the subject NP. Sentence (145) will be derived from:

(149) *Cali waa keenay* "Ali brought it"

where focus is on the verb and the verb appears in the extensive paradigm, as in every *waa* sentence. The rules involved can be formulated in the following way:

- (p) a Y/N question is formed by substituting *miyaa* for *baa* into a main declarative clause;
- (q) a Y/N question is formed by substituting *miyaa* for *waa* into a main declarative clause and moving it to the beginning of the clause.

ent agreement pattern with a 3p. plural subject (the restrictive keeps the 3p. sing. ending):

- (i) *wiilashaas miyaa keenáy* "did those boys bring it?" (restrictive)
- (ii) *miyaa wiilashaasi keeneen* " (extensive)

or by the contrast between the short (restrictive) and long (extensive) vowel ending of the present tense:

- (i) *Cali miyaa keenaya* "is Ali bringing it?"
- (ii) *miyaa Cali keenayaa* "

Furthermore, since both rule (p) and (q) call for "substitution" of the indicators, they also account for the impossibility of occurrence of either *baa* or *waa* inside *miyaa* sentences:

- (150) \*Cali miyaa baa keenay  
 (151) \*Cali miyaa waa keenay  
 (152) \*miyaa Cali baa keenay  
 (153) \*miyaa Cali waa keenay

Up to now, we haven't considered the third major argument we used to justify our claim that both Y/N questions and negative clauses are to be derived from main declarative clauses, namely, the capability of our analysis of accounting, at no extra cost, for the behavior of subject pronouns inside these types of sentences. Evidence parallel to that found in *ma* questions and negatives is available also for *miyaa* sentences, but a more careful analysis is required, since some data appear to contradict the predictions made by rule (p) and (q). Since these rules effect only a substitution of the indicators in the original declarative sentences, we would expect subject pronouns in *miyaa* clauses to show exactly the same distribution they show in main declaratives. Thus, if *miyaa* marks a non-subject NP, we would expect the subject pronoun to obligatorily accompany the NP + *miyaa* when this follows the subject NP or the subject NP is post-verbal, and optionally when the NP + *miyaa* precedes the subject NP and they are both pre-verbal. These predictions turn out to be correct:

- |       |              |  |                      |          |
|-------|--------------|--|----------------------|----------|
| (154) | Cali hadiyad | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{miyuu} \\ \text{Q-he} \end{array} \right\}$  | keenay <sup>19</sup> | Cf. (48) |
|       | C. present   |  | brought              |          |
| (155) |              | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} *miyaa \\ \text{Q} \end{array} \right\}$           |                      | " (49)   |
| (156) | hadiyad      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{miyuu} \\ *miyaa \end{array} \right\}$       | keenay Cali          | " (52)   |
| (157) |              |  |                      | " (53)   |
| (158) | hadiyad      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{miyaa} \\ \text{miyuu} \end{array} \right\}$ | Cali keenay          | " (50)   |
| (159) |              |  |                      | " (51)   |

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<sup>19</sup>The usual contractions take place: *miyaa* + *aan* = *miyaan* ; *miyaa* + *aad* = *miyaad* ; *miyaa* + *ay* = *miyay* ; *miyaa* + *uu* = *miyuu* .

Second, we would expect that when *miyaa* comes from *waa* (and is, therefore, preposed to the whole sentence, as prescribed by rule (q)), the subject pronoun can be freely present or absent, no matter what the order of the NP's is. Also this prediction turns out to be correct:

- |       |                  |                            |          |
|-------|------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| (160) | { <i>miyaa</i> } | <i>Cali hadiyad keenay</i> | cf. (62) |
|       | { <i>miyuu</i> } |                            | " (64)   |
| (161) | { <i>miyaa</i> } | <i>Cali keenay hadiyad</i> | " (66)   |
|       | { <i>miyuu</i> } |                            |          |
| (162) | { <i>miyaa</i> } | <i>hadiyad keenay Cali</i> | " (67)   |
|       | { <i>miyuu</i> } |                            |          |
| (163) | { <i>miyaa</i> } | <i>hadiyad Cali keenay</i> | " (68)   |
|       | { <i>miyuu</i> } |                            |          |

Third, when *miyaa* marks a subject NP, the subject pronoun should never be able to accompany it, since a NP subject marked by *baa* can never be accompanied by a subject pronoun. The rule, therefore, correctly predicts the ungrammaticality of:

(164) \**Cali miyuu keenáy*

and of:

(165) \**Cali miyuu hadiyad keenáy*

There is, however, a problem: if the verb in (164) and (165) is changed from the restrictive to the extensive paradigm, then the two sentences become perfectly grammatical:

(166) *Cali miyuu keenay*

(167) *Cali miyuu hadiyad keenay*

The problem is that there is no way of predicting the grammaticality of (166-167) on the basis of our rules. Given the way (p) and (q) are formulated, sentences like (166-167) will not be generated at all. Sentences (166) and (167) could only come from sentences:

(168) \**Cali buu keenay*

(169) \**Cali buu hadiyad keenay*

which are ungrammatical. Is this then a counterexample for our analysis of miyaa sentences? It would be a counterexample *if in the two sentences the focus of the question were on the subject NP Cali* . In fact, if this were the case, our most general claim that the focus of the resulting question is always predictable from the focus of the corresponding declarative would be falsified. There is no way in which the presence of the subject pronoun and of the extensive form of the verb in (166-167) can be predicted from a main declarative clause where the subject NP is in focus. Fortunately, however, in both (166) and (167) the focus of the question is *not* on the subject NP Cali . In (166) the focus is on the verb *keenay* and in (167) on the object NP *hadiyad* . Thus, in order to preserve the general condition of focus invariance, (166) should be derived from a declarative where the focus is on the verb, and (167) from a declarative where the focus is on the object NP *hadiyad* . It turns out that such sentences do exist and they show both the presence of the subject pronoun and the extensive form of the verb. They are, respectively:

(170) Cali wuu keenay

(171) Cali hadiyad buu keenay

Therefore, the condition of focus invariance does make the correct predictions concerning both the presence of the subject pronoun and the form of the verb. What is wrong with our analysis is not the general claim that the semantic value and the syntactic behavior of miyaa questions can be predicted from those of main declaratives, but the spelling details concerning the placement of miyaa contained in our rules (p) and (q). If sentences like (166-167) are to be derived from, respectively, (170-171), this means that when the subject pronouns are present the placement of miyaa is freer than when they are absent. In fact, from (170-171) rules (q) and (p) would only derive:

(172) miyuu Cali keenay

(173) Cali hadiyad miyuu keenay

(which, by the way, have exactly the same meaning as (166-167)). What seems to be happening is that if a subject pronoun accompanies miyaa , i.e. if a

subject pronoun is present in the starting declarative clause, then

(p') the combination of *miyaa* + *pro*, resulting from a *baa* substitution, can be optionally moved in front of the NP;

(q') the combination of *miyaa* + *pro*, resulting from a *waa* substitution, can optionally remain in its original place (without having to be moved in front of the sentence).

By adding specifications (p') and (q') to (p) and (q), we are now able to obtain the correct results. The newly stated rules will also make some further predictions. For example, they will predict that sentences such as:

(174) *Cali hadiyad miyuu keenay*

(175) *miyuu hadiyad keenay Cali*

are ambiguous as far as focus is concerned, since they have two possible sources: (174) can be derived both from

(176) *Cali hadiyad buu keenay*

via simple (p) and from

(177) *Cali hadiyad wuu keenay*

via (q-q'). Sentence (175) can be derived both from

(178) *hadiyad wuu keenay Cali*

via simple (q) and from

(179) *hadiyad buu keenay Cali*

via (p-p'). And in fact (174-175) have each two interpretations: one where the focus of the question is on the verb and one where the focus is on the NP *hadiyad*. Finally, notice that the qualification in (p'), (q') "if a subject pronoun is present in the starting declarative clause" is essential to allow the additional possibilities of *miyaa* placement. Leaving *miyaa* in its place when it is derived from *waa* (q'), and preposing it to the NP when it is derived from *baa* (p'), is possible *only* if a subject pronoun is present, as shown by the ungrammaticality of the following sentences where no subject pronoun is present:



miyaa as if macallin were a NP marked by baa ,<sup>20</sup> which is what happens also to the ma question form of (182):

(185) Cali ma macallin baa

In view of our analysis of ma questions, however, there is no need to analyze also this case as an exception to rules (p-q). It is obvious that there is only one bit of exceptional behavior: in all cases of Y/N question formation the predicate of sentences like (182) is treated as a NP, and, therefore, it is the rule for NP focus that is applied. Formally, the problem can be easily solved, without having to state the same exception twice, if we reformulate the rules for miyaa questions in such a way that they apply to already formed ma questions, rather than directly to declarative sentences. For example, rule (p) could be formulated in the following way:

(s) .... ma + NP + baa ...  $\Rightarrow$  ... NP + miyaa ...

Thus, to derive (184) we would start from (182), apply the ma question rule, deriving (185), and then apply to the output of this rule rule (s), which is now the ordinary rule for NP focus. Rule (s) would then cover both the ordinary cases of NP focus and predicate nominals. We can make both miyaa rules ((p) and (q)) dependent on the previous formation of a ma question, since this will have no consequences on any other cases (the two formulations make exactly the same predictions, except for the NP waa NP case).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Notice that the rule involved in deriving (184) from (182) cannot be conceived as a sort of "mirror image" of rule (q), i.e. substituting miyaa for waa and moving it to the end of the sentence instead of to the beginning of it. The place of miyaa is not at the end of the sentence but right after the predicate nominal. If the subject is switched in post-"verbal" position as in

(i) waa macallin Cali

the corresponding question appears as

(ii) macallin miyaa Cali

<sup>21</sup>In view of this case, one is tempted to analyze miyaa as a combination of the interrogative particle ma plus the indicator ayaa , an al-

## 7. Negative-Interrogative Sentences

One important consequence of our analysis of Y/N questions and negative clauses is that the rules provided to account for these sentence types will automatically generate negative questions. As we shall see, negative questions result from the simple application of both the rule for Y/N questions and that for negation to the usual starting sequences constituted by main declarative clauses. Given our approach, they can be accounted for at no extra cost in the grammar of Somali.

Consider first negative questions with NP focus:

- (186) ma Cali baan hadiyad keenin "didn't Ali bring a present?"  
 Q C. P-neg present bring
- (187) Cali ma hadiyad baanu keenin "  
 P-neg-he
- (188) Cali miyaan hadiyad keenin "  
 Q-neg

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ternant of baa . Ayaa can always substitute for baa , without any change in the meaning or structure of the sentence. The only case where this substitution is impossible is in the NP-focus questions:

- (i) ma Cali baa yimid "did Ali come?"  
 \*ma Cali ayaa yimid
- (ii) ma macallin baa "is he a teacher?"  
 \*ma macallin ayaa

One could then argue that the difference between a ma NP baa question and a NP miyaa question is only that the first comes from a declarative containing baa and the second from a declarative containing ayaa . The two indicators trigger two different rules of ma insertion: when baa is present, ma is inserted in front of the NP, while when ayaa is present, ma is inserted after the NP but in front of the indicator, thus giving origin to a sequence NP ma ayaa . Besides accounting for the "origin" of miyaa and for the fact that the two types of questions are identical in meaning (since there is no difference in declaratives between the use of baa and that of ayaa , and in both types of questions the same interrogative particle, ma , is inserted), this analysis would also explain the non-occurrence of ma NP ayaa constructions, which is the only asymmetry in the otherwise identical distribution of the two indicators. We are, however, unable to offer any kind of phonological and/or historical evidence justifying the analysis of miyaa as ma + ayaa . Furthermore, this derivation could not be claimed to work synchronically, because it would obviously not account for verb-focus miyaa questions.



miyaa questions are not formed directly from waa sentences but from questions of the ma type. One could render the application of the rule deriving miyaa constructions from ma verb questions obligatory if the sentence is negative.

The second problem is that, as they are formulated now, the rules of negation are not able to insert the negative particle aan into a verb focus clause, since the insertion of aan is dependent on the presence of baa. One way of solving this problem would be to adopt the enlarged formulation of the rule of aan insertion given in fn. 16 (m') in order to account for waa + aan negatives.<sup>22</sup> However, we will not pursue any further the technical problems involved in a more precise formulation of the rules and their interplay, since such problems can be discussed in a meaningful way only on a higher level of formalization than the one we have been adopting throughout this paper.

<sup>22</sup>A possible solution would involve an ordering of the rules along the following lines. The first rule to (optionally) apply would be negative formation. If we adopt the formulation (m') given in fn. 16 above, then (n) and (m') will have three outputs, two for waa sentences and one for baa sentences:



Then the rules for ma question formation apply. Since these rules are dependent on the presence of either waa or baa for their application (see (j) and (k)), they will apply either to (1) and (2) generating simple Y/N questions:

(6) ma V	(7) ma NP baa
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or to (4) and (5), generating negative questions but not to (3), since this structure does not contain either baa or waa. Application to (4) and (5) will generate:

(8) ma aan V	(9) ma NP baa aan
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Now the rules for miyaa question formation can apply, since in the section on "verbless sentences" we made them dependent on the prior application of the ma question rules (see p. 32). These rules can now apply either to (6) and (7), generating positive miyaa questions:

(10) miyaa .. V	(11) NP miyaa
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In any case, once *ma* verb questions are excluded, the rules for question formation will correctly predict that there will be three possible constructions for negative interrogative verb focus sentences. When the starting declarative is a sentence like (196), where no subject-pronoun is present, the output of rules (q-q') is only one, and therefore only (193) will be generated. When the starting declarative is instead:

(199) *Cali hadiyad wuu keenay*

where a subject pronoun is present, rules (q-q') provide two possible outputs, and therefore both (194) and (195) will be generated.

Finally notice that, since there is no negative construction for verbless sentences, such sentences will also lack a negative question form.

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or to (8) and (9) which also contain the relevant substructures needed to trigger the rules, generating negative *miyaa* questions:

(12) *miyaa aan .. V*

(13) *NP miyaa aan*

All we have to stipulate is that in case (8), i.e. when a *ma* verb question is accompanied by *aan*, application of the *miyaa* rule is obligatory, rather than optional as in all other cases. In fact, contrary to (6), (7), and (9), (8) is an intermediate structure which doesn't correspond to any grammatical surface sentence.

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