

LESSON 10 CONTENTS HELPING VERBS

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VERB ROOTS

bis	stay.there
bó	use.rock-like.object
bót'ak'	ride
c'í	dress
ha, ma	be, do
hémno	read
hón	breath
?ítu	have cramps
káj	fall
k'ólo	lack
méji	give
túj	sleep

NOUN ROOTS

c'á:	tree
c'úk'u	acorn soup
k'ámi	belly
kaw	ground
káwaju	horse

PRONOUNS

mi(n)	you
my	him/her
ni	I

PRONOUN + HELPING VERB COMBINATIONS

mihano	you
mihani	you
minaj	I to you
mýhaj	I to him
mynaj	I to him/her
nihaj	I

VERB SUFFIXES

-bok'òj	unable
-bỳ	prohibit
-ha	to be
-(i)s	1st.per on a main verb
-j	per on a helping verb
-ja:	dual for the helping verb
-jeh	continious.action, around
-kàs	strong emphatic
-ki:	down
-kì	future
-m	relational
-m	past.tense
-ma	be, do
-mo	2nd.person "you" on verbs
-m	2nd.person "you" on verbs
-ni	2nd.person "you" on verbs
-no	2nd.person "you" on verbs
-sa	habitual
-sa	used to
-ti	cause
-wòno	long ago

NOUN SUFFIXES

-Ø	3rd.person "he, she" (that is, nothing, no suffix)
-sa	dual for the pronoun

OTHER

homo	where
?ati	that
néh	lots

PART 1 HELPING VERBS

What we call the *main verb of a sentence* is the *verb* that tells about the action that's central to the sentence. In the previous lesson, we wrote about *person marking on main verbs*. There are also *helping verbs*. In English, in a sentence like "I have eaten," the *main verb* is "eaten" and the *helping verb* is "have." Konkow has *helping verbs* too, with the most important one being **ha** 'be, do', and the less-common **ma**, which means the same thing and functions the same way.

We introduced *helping verbs* in the lesson on *pronouns*. In part 5 of that lesson, we talked about special forms where a *pronoun* links up with a *helping verb*. We also pointed out that the *helping verb* had *person and number suffixes* on it.

IF YOU USE A HELPING VERB IN A SENTENCE,
ALL THE PERSON MARKING GOES ON THAT,
NOT ON THE MAIN VERB!

In fact, this way of making a sentence is much more common than a sentence without a *helping verb*. Remember that in the previous lesson we said that a *main verb with person and number markers* usually does not translate as a simple statement. Instead, you need a *helping verb* when you are trying to make a statement. *Helping verbs* can be used to form sentences with complex meaning too, like the sentences you saw in the previous lesson. Whether the sentence has a simple or a complex meaning, the most common kind of sentence in Konkow has a *helping verb* in it.

Helping verbs are a special kind of word. They usually attach to other words, so they don't stand on their own the way other words do. But they are not *suffixes* either. For purposes of this chapter, when we segment the different *components* we will use a different mark in front of the *helping verb* instead of a dash (-). The *helping verb* will have an equals sign (=) before it instead. See below.

Here are some of the pronoun + helping verb constructions we showed in the lesson on pronouns.

nihaj
ni=ha -j
I-be-1st. person
I

mihano
mi=ha-no
you-be-2nd. person
you

mihani

mi=ha-ni

you-be-2nd. person

you

minaj

min=(h)a-j

you-be-2nd. person

I to you

RULE: the **(h)** in **ha** 'do, be' disappears after a consonant.

mynaj

myn=(h)a-j

him/her-do-1st. person

I to him/her

PART 2 PERSON SUFFIXES ON HELPING VERBS

In each of the words above, the *helping verb* carries a *person suffix for the subject*.
NOTE that if the 1st.person subject is suffixed directly to a helping verb it is different from the 1st person on main verbs. On main verbs the 1st.Person suffix is **-(i)**.

-j 1st person

Examples of first person on helping verbs:

nìhaj ?ù:tim k'ólon

nì=ha-j

I-be-1st.person

I have no acorns

?ù:tim

acorns

k'ólo-n

lack-verb.final

nìhaj hónjehbok'òjsam

nì=h-j

I-be-1st.person

I used to have trouble breathing.

hón-jeh-bok'òj-sa-m

breathe-continuous.motion-unable-habitual-past. tense

-ni or **-no** 2nd person

Examples:

mìhano néhwèwe:n!

mì=ha-no

you-be-2nd.person

You talk too much!

néh-wèwe:-n!

lots-talk(redup)-verb. final

mìhani bíssàm

mì=ha-ni

you-be-2nd.person

Were you in the habit of staying there?

bís-sà-m

stay.there-habitual-past

mínaj méjin.

mín=(h)a-j

you(object)-be

I gave it to you.

méji-n

give-verb.final

m̀yhaj méjin

m̀y=ha-j

him-be-1st.person

I gave it to him.

méji-n

give-verb.final

EXERCISE 1

Put the right *pronoun + helping verb form* into the following sentences (Don't bother with dashes and equals signs. Try to say the sentences out loud.)

solbok'ojsan.

You used to have trouble singing.

kawaju méjin.

I gave him a horse.

bélem ?ýkojkì:n.

I will go again.

ANSWERS EXERCISE 1

mihano

solbok'ojsan.

You used to have trouble singing.

myhaj

kawaju méjin.

I gave him a horse.

nihaj

bélem ?ýkojkì:n.

I will go again.

PART 3 HELPING VERBS ATTACH TO FIRST WORD OF A SENTENCE.

There is one important thing we didn't mention before about *helping verbs*. It's not just *pronouns* that the *helping verb* can attach to – a *helping verb* will always attach to the *first word in the sentence*, even if it's not a *pronoun*.

In section 2.1 we showed you this sentence:

nìhaj ?ù:tim k'ólon

nì=ha-j

I-be-1st.person

I have no acorns

?ù:tim k'ólon

?ù:tim k'ólo-n

acorns lack-verb.final

I have no acorns

You can also say it this way:

?ù:timaj k'ólon

?ù:tim=(h)a-j

acorns-be-1st.person

I have no acorns

k'ólo-n

lack-verb.final

In that one there is no pronoun, but “I” is indicated by the subject person suffix on the helping verb. So in all the sentences above, you could either have a *pronoun at the front of the sentence and the helping verb will attach to that*, or leave the pronoun off and the helping verb will attach to whatever else is the first word of the sentence.

Here are other sentences showing various kinds of words that might be the first word of the sentence:

hómohanikàs ?ýk'o:n!

hómo=ha-ni-kàs

where-be-2nd.person-emphatic

Where are you going?

?ýk'o:-n!

go-verb.final

-kàs is a *strong emphatic suffix*. A loose translation might be “Where the heck are you going!”

ʔó:haj k'áwdi bóki:n.

ʔó:=ha-j k'áw-di bó -ki:-n.

rock-do-1st. person ground-on use.rocklike.object-down-verb. final
I threw (put, lay) the rock to the ground.

k'ámihaj ʔítun.

k'ám=ha-j ʔítu-n

belly-be-1st.person have.cramps-verb.final
I have stomach cramps

As you see, in the first sentence, the *helping verb* with its *person marking* is attached to a *question word* ('where'), and in the second and third sentences, it's attached to a *noun*. The *helping verb* can even be attached to the *main verb* itself if it is the first (and therefore generally the only) *verb* of the sentence.

méjinàj.

méj-in =(h)à-j

give-verb final do-1st person
I gave it to him.

RULE: the (h) in ha 'do, be' disappears after a consonant.

In the example above, the *verb* carries the **-(i)n verb.final suffix** because the *verb* itself is not marked for *person*. In that sentence, what I gave and who I gave it to is not expressed.

We saw the constructions where the *helping verb* is marked for *subject* and is attached to the *object* (**minaj** and **myhaj**). There are other ways to express the *object* too. Here's one from the "Lost Swimmer" text, where there are two *objects* with the *verb* "give" – the first is "this" (what was given), and the second is "you" (the receiver of the gift). Here the *helping verb* is attached to *first object*, and the second *object* comes after.

ʔàmahaj min méjin.

ʔàma=ha-j min méji-n

this-be-1st.person you(object) give-verb.final
I give this to you.

Here the *demonstrative* for "this, that" is the first word in the sentence, and the *helping verb* attached to that; and then "you" follows it.

EXERCISE 2

Take the sentences from PART 2.1 and remove the *pronoun*, and put the *helping verb* at the end of whatever the first word is. The first one was done for you above and now here:

nìhaj ?u:tim kólon. I have no acorns.

_____ I have no acorns.

nìhaj hónjehbòk'òjsam I used to have trouble breathing

_____ I used to have trouble breathing

mìhano néhwèwe:n You talk too much!

_____ You talk too much!

mìhani bíssam? 'Were you in the habit of staying there?'

_____ 'Were you in the habit of staying there?'

mìnaj méjin. I give it to you.

_____ I give it to you.

mỳhaj méjin. I give it to him.

_____ I give it to him.

ANSWERS EXERCISE 2

nìhaj ?u:tim kólon. I have no acorns.
?u:timaj k'ólon. I have no acorns.

nìhaj hónjehbòk'òjsam I used to have trouble breathing
hónjehbòk'òjsamhaj I used to have trouble breathing

mìhano néhwèwe:n You talk too much!
néhwèwe:nhano You talk too much!

mìhani bíssam? 'Were you in the habit of staying there?'
bíssamhani? 'Were you in the habit of staying there?'

mìnaj méjin. I give it to you.
amahaj mìn méjin I give it to you.

mỳhaj méjin. I give it to him.
amahaj méjin I give it to him.
amahaj myje méjin I give it to him.

PART 4 OTHER SUFFIXES ON HELPING VERBS

Like *main verbs*, *helping verbs* can take other *inflectional suffixes* besides *person marking*. In the first example below you see both *person* and *number on the helping verb*.

káwajudihàjes bót'ak'àjehsam
káwaju-di=hà-s **bót'a-k'àjeh-sa-m**
horse-on-be-je-plural-1st.person ride-around-used.to-past
We used to ride around on horseback.

In the next example, two *suffixes* involving uncertainty work together for a meaning that translates as “must have.”

nihàndes tújwònnon
ni=hà-n-de-s **túj-wòno-n**
I-be-uncertain-questioning-1st.person sleep-long.ago-verb.final
I must have fallen asleep

Notice, however, that when you add more *suffixes*, instead of a **-j** on the *helping verb*, the *first person -s* is added at the end of the word. This is the same *first-person suffix* that *main verbs* take. The *first person -j* is only if it is the *first suffix after the helping verb*.

EXERCISE 3

Practice putting the right form of the helping verb with any additional suffixes at the end of the first word of the the same sentence we put above. Remember, no pronoun on these forms – just the helping verb and person (and number) suffix.

solbok'ojsam= _____
You used to have trouble singing.

kawaju= _____ **méjin.**
I gave him a horse.

bélem= _____ **?ýkojkì:n.**
I will go again.

ANSWERS Exercise 3

solbok'ojsam= _____ You used to have trouble singing.

kawaju= _____ méjin. I gave him a horse.

bélem= _____ ?ýkojkì:n. I will go again.

PART 5 WE AND YOU TOGETHER WITH HELPING VERB

There are not many sentences in the data we have available that have plural pronouns with helping verb attached. But we can assume from other examples that a sentence like “We ate acorn soup” could be said relatively simply like this:

nìhajes c'úk'u pèn.

nì=ha-je-s

I(we)-be-plural-1st.person

We ate acorn soup.

c'úk'u

acorn.soup

pè-n

eat-verb.final

However, when Ultan asked for that sentence, he got a more complicated one:

nìsemamdéjemo c'úk'u pèn

nì-se-m=(h)a-m-dé-je-mo

I(we)-pl-sub-be-past-non.interrog-plural-2nd.per

We ate acorn soup.

c'úk'u

acorn.soup

pè-n

eat-verb.final

This sentence has to mean “we, including you, ate acorn soup.” We could infer that the first sentence could mean “we (not including you) ate acorn soup”.

SUMMARY

- Sentences might have just a *main verb* or could also have a *helping verb*. (The *helping verb root* is **ha** ‘be,do’, or less frequently **ma**, with the same meaning.)
- The helping verb is always attached to the end of the first word of the sentence. So it’s not really an independent word, but it’s not really a suffix either.
- In this lesson, when we separate a word into its *components*, the *helping verb* has an equals sign (=) in front of it instead of a dash (-), to indicate its special status.
- The helping verb is marked for person and number. The first person is different from first person on main verbs. 1st.person “I” on a main verb -(i)s on a helping verb -j
2nd.person “you” on both main verbs and helping verbs: -no, -ni, -mo, or -m
3rd.person “he, she” Ø (that is, nothing, no suffix)
- The term number refers to how many we are talking about – just one person, or two (dual), or three or more (plural).
- number is also marked on verbs. Singular (just one person) has no marking. Dual (2 people)
- It seems that the most common way to mark person and number in a sentence is to use a helping verb.
- The helping verb, marked for the subject, will attach to the first word of the sentence.
- The first word can be a pronoun or any other kind of word.
- When the helping verb is in the sentence, the main verb is not marked for person or any other inflectional suffix, and just takes the -n verb final suffix.
- When person is marked on the main verb, the sentence can but doesn’t have to have a pronoun too.
- When there is no helping verb, the person is marked on the main verb.
- For first or second person, a person marker on the main verb means something like a command or like doubtfulness.

Pronoun plus main verb marking

nìsem mí?atib̀jes

nì-se-m

mí?at-b̀j-e-s

I-plural-subject

happen.do-prohibit-plural-1st.person

We’d better not do that.

PRONOUN PLUS HELPING VERB

Perhaps the most common way to *mark person and number* is on the *helping verb*, which will generally attach to the first word of the sentence, whether it is a *pronoun* or another part of speech.

Examples with *pronoun*:

níhaj béle ?ýk'ojkìn.

ní=ha-j

I-be-1st.person

I'm going to go.

?ýk'oj-kì-n

go-future-verb.final

mìhano c'íhton

mì=ha-no

you-do-2nd.person

You got dressed

c'íh-to-n

dress-self-verb.final

mòm-c'á:haja:mo kájtín

mò-m-c'á:=ha-ja:-mo

that-relational-tree-be-dual-2nd.person

We two fell that tree.

káj-ti-n

fall-cause-verb.final

Here it seems like the *helping verb* is actually on the 2nd word of the sentence. But as we remarked in the lesson on *demonstratives*, Ultan usually writes them as being attached to the next word, including in this case where he wrote it as one word. We usually separate the words, but this shows that even though *demonstratives* can stand alone in some cases, they are interpreted as connected to the following *noun*.

nìsa:maja:s hémnon

nì-sa:=ma-ja:-s

I-dual-be-dual-1st.person

We two are reading.

hémno-n

read-verb.final

A number of interesting things about this word: one is the use of **ma** as the *helping verb* instead of **ha**. Ultan writes that **ma** and **ha** both mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably. The other is that both the *pronoun* and the *auxiliary* are both marked with their respective dual forms (**-sa** for the *pronoun*, **-ja:** for the *helping verb*).

Also, as noted before, once you have a suffix (other than person) on the helping verb, the first person marker is not **-j** but rather **-(i)s**, the same as for the person marker on the main verb.