

Uses of anomalous finites - part II

The anomalous finites are used to form inverted sentence patterns.

I had no sooner got into the train than it steamed off.

No sooner had I got into the train than it steamed off.

To avoid repetition of principal verbs

The anomalous finites are used in short answers to avoid the repetition of principal verbs.

'Do you want this?' 'Yes, I do.' (= Yes, I want that.)

'Can you hear me?' 'Yes, I can.' (= Yes, I can hear you.)

'Who broke the window?' 'John, did.' (= John broke the window.)

To form the tag question

The anomalous finites are also used in the formation of the tag question.

It is rather hot today, isn't it?

She can sing very well, can't she?

You like this color, don't you?

They shouldn't have waited, should they?

Notes

When the statement is in the positive, the tag question is in the negative. In the same way, when the statement is in the negative, the tag question is in the positive.

To emphasize an affirmative statement

We can emphasize an affirmative statement by putting the anomalous finite do or its forms before the principal verb.

I want you to come. (Less emphatic)

I do want you to come. (More emphatic)

I invited him. I did invite him.

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If another World War does break out, it will put an end to our civilization.