

Little-*v* agreement and Split-S in Mazahua

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In this work, I explore the Split-S agreement system in Mazahua (Oto-Manguean), an understudied head-marking language where unergative (S_A) and transitive subjects (A) cross-reference the same set of agreement morphemes, which differs from the set that cross-references unaccusative subjects (S_P) and objects (P). Relevant examples are shown below. In the unergative constructions in (1), S_A subjects are cross-referenced by pre-verbal agreement morphemes that also encode TAM. The same set of morphemes show agreement with A subjects in the transitive constructions in (3). Conversely, S_P subjects are co-indexed with verbal suffixes (2), which are also used to cross-reference objects in transitive constructions (3). TAM in unaccusative sentences is encoded through a default third-person morpheme.

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|--------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----|------------------|----------------------|
| (1) a. | ró | ndʒòd̩ | <i>Unergatives</i> | (2) a. | ò | t̩ôyi- yi | <i>Unaccusatives</i> |
| | | 1PST run | | | | 3PST faint-1 | |
| | | 'I ran' | | | | 'I fainted' | |
| | b. | ì | ndʒòd̩ | | b. | ò | t̩ôyi- k̩i |
| | | 2PST run | | | | 3PST faint-2 | |
| | | 'You.SG ran' | | | | 'You.SG fainted' | |
| (3) a. | ró | ^h nâŋ- k̩i | <i>Transitives</i> | | | | |
| | | 1PST see-2 | | | | | |
| | | 'I saw you.SG' | | | | | |
| | b. | ì | ^h nâŋ- yi | | | | |
| | | 2PST see-1 | | | | | |
| | | 'You.SG saw me' | | | | | |

I propose that the agreement pattern in Mazahua can be accounted for by making two generalizations about this language. First, all (and not only transitive) *v*-heads in Mazahua enter the derivation as Probes with [*uπ*] features (Chomsky 2000), which have to be checked as early in the derivation as possible, following the Earliness Principle (Pesetsky & Torrego 2001). Second, DP arguments in Mazahua always agree with a functional head (*cf.* Coon (2010, 2013, 2017) for a similar account for the split system in Ch'ol (Mayan)). As *v*-heads have to Probe for a Goal to check their [*uπ*] as early as possible, they will always enter into an Agree relation with their internal argument. Similarly, all internal arguments will always agree with a *v*-head.

Following the core idea of the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978; Burzio 1986), I argue that S_P and P arguments (merged as complements of the lexical verb) agree with (and receive Case from) little-*v* *in situ*. On the other hand, A and S_A subjects (merged higher in the structure) enter into an Agree relation with (and receive Case from) T—as argued for other languages (Chomsky 1981; Massam 1985; Sportiche 1988; Chomsky 1995, among others). I suggest that, even though *v* enters into an Agree relation and assigns Case, the Case features in T can be left unvalued (Preminger 2011, 2014). Furthermore, I assume that unergative verbs also introduce internal arguments (Hale & Keyser 1993; Roberge 2003; Cummins & Roberge 2004), which can be phonologically null, realized as cognate objects, or as pseudo-incorporated objects (Massam 2009), but also enter into an Agree relation with *v* as other internal arguments.

This work is the first attempt to provide a formal analysis of Mazahua morphosyntax and one of the few existing in Oto-Manguean linguistics. The proposal presented here also rises theoretical questions regarding Case-assignment by *v*. Specifically, it builds on the question whether *v* can assign Case without the existence of a θ -role marked subject (*contra* Burzio 1986)

or without the presence of another Case-marked nominal expression, as proposed by some configurational approaches to Case assignment (Bobaljik 1993; Laka 1993).

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