

Adjacency Requirements in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec

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Today's Topics

1. Topic: Noun-Verb Adjacency Effects
 - a. Nominal Licensing: Adger 2000; Levin 2015
 - b. Prosodic Grouping: Richards 2014; Clemens 2019
2. Claim: Adjacency via Licensing
 - a. Typical pattern: subject must be verb-adjacent
 - b. Special context: this requirement is called off.
 - c. **Claim:** adjacency required **only** for licensing
3. Terrain: Santiago Laxopa Zapotec
 - a. Zapotec language; Oto-Manguean family
 - b. 1,500 speakers; Central Oaxaca, Mexico
 - c. Collaboration: Zapotec Language Project (UCSC)
 - d. Special thanks: Fe Silvia Robles



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Adjacency Effects

1. The Empirical Pattern
2. Cross-Linguistic Typology
3. Previous literature
4. Split Predictions

Adjacency Effects

1. The Empirical Pattern

- a. Certain elements have to be linearly adjacent
 - i. Typical pattern: a head and its arguments
 1. The verb and the internal argument
 2. A preposition and its complement
 - ii. Indirect relationships:
 1. The verb and the indirect object
 2. Often: the verb and the subject
- b. Independent of other syntactic movements

2. Cross-Linguistic Typology

3. Previous literature

- 1) John kisses Mary
- 2) *John kisses often Mary
- 3) He gave the boy the book
- 4) *He gave quickly the boy the book
- 5) Jean embrasse souvent Marie
- 6) *Jean souvent embrasse Marie

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(Pollock 1989)

Adjacency Effects

1. The Empirical Pattern

- a. Certain elements have to be linearly adjacent
 - i. Typical pattern: a head and its arguments
 - ii. Indirect relationships:
- b. Independent of other syntactic movements
 - i. Some movement operations feed adjacency
 1. English verb movement (Larson 1988)
 2. English object shift (Johnson 1991)
 3. Conspiracy: surface V-O adjacency
 - ii. Other movements forcibly preserve adjacency
 1. Verb stays low → no object shift
 2. V-to-T → pronominal object shift
 3. Paradigm: English; Scandinavian

- 1) John kisses Mary
- 2) *John kisses often Mary
- 3) He gave the boy the book
- 4) *He gave quickly the boy the book
- 5) Jean embrasse souvent Marie
- 6) *Jean souvent embrasse Marie
- 7) I expect John to be there
- 8) I expect usually John to be there
- 9) I kid you not
- 10) *I kid not you
(+Scandinavian; Holmberg 1986)

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- 9) I am not kidding you
- 10) * I am you not kidding
- 11) I kid you not
- 12) *I kid not you
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Adjacency Effects

1. The Empirical Pattern

- a. Certain elements have to be linearly adjacent
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2. Cross-Linguistic Typology

- a. Adjacency effects hold in many places
 - i. Verb-Object adjacency effects: English
 - ii. Subject-verb adjacency effects: French
- b. Verb-initial languages: VS adjacency common
 - i. Irish: McCloskey 1996
 - ii. Scottish Gaelic: Adger 1999
 - iii. Santiago Laxopa Zapotec: Adler et al. 2018

3. Previous literature

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- 5) Verb Subject Object
- 6) *Verb Adverb Subject Object

Adjacency Effects

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- b. Independent of other syntactic movements

2. Cross-Linguistic Typology

- a. Adjacency effects hold in many places
- b. Verb-initial languages: VS adjacency common

3. Previous literature

- a. One Approach: Adjacency for Licensing
 - i. DP arguments require licensing (Vergnaud 1977)
 - ii. Adjacency satisfies licensing requirements
 - 1. Adger 1999; van Urk 2015
- b. Another Approach: Adjacency for Prosody

Adjacency Effects

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- b. Independent of other syntactic movements

2. Cross-Linguistic Typology

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- b. Verb-initial languages: VS adjacency common

3. Previous literature

- a. One Approach: Adjacency for Licensing
- b. Another Approach: Adjacency for Prosody
 - i. Specific syntactic relations exist in prosody (Kaisse 1985)
 - ii. Prosodic constraints force movement (Richards 2014)
 - iii. Argument structural constraints force PF-adjacency (Clemens 2019)

- 1) Argument- φ (Clemens 2019):
A head H with a categorial feature [C] and head C with the same [C] feature must constitute a φ -phrase.
- 2) Result: post-syntactic movement
 - a) Verb and internal argument
(Clemens 2019)
 - b) T and external argument
(Equally plausible)
 - c) C and an A'-element
(Roughly, Richards 2014)

Adjacency in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec

1. The Adjacency Effect
2. The Backward Raising Construction
3. Implications

Santiago Laxopa Zapotec: Background

1. Santiago Laxopa Zapotec: Quick Facts

- a. Northern Zapotec language; Ixtlán District; Oaxaca
- b. Roughly 2,000 speakers in the town of Santiago Laxopa
- c. Small diaspora community in central California

2. The Zapotec Language Project

- a. Ongoing work at the University of California, Santa Cruz
- b. Talking dictionary; Zapotec language classes; outreach
- c. Collaboration with three speakers of Santiago Laxopa Zapotec
 - i. Primary Consultant: Fe Silvia Robles
 - ii. Additional thanks: Rosa Mendoza, Flavio Antonio



Adjacency in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec

1. The Adjacency Effect

- a. Verb and subject strictly adjacent; cannot be split by freestanding adverbs

2. The Backward Raising Construction

- a. Construction: subject expressed inside the object
- b. Not incorporation: ok if the indirect object splits the verb and the direct object
- c. Backward raising:
 - i. Subject ellipsis construction; exclusively targets subjects; possible with possessor in BB
 - ii. Result: the possessor really behaves like the subject
- d. Backward Chain reduction: one tree

3. Implications

- a. The adjacency effect has to reduce to licensing: the verb is still selecting the subject in BB
- b. The subject gets licensed inside the object as a possessor; bears genitive case
- c. Result: no requirement for adjacency with the verb.
- d. Zapotec just allows this construction; no claim about typological predictions

The Adjacency Effect

Strict Word Order: VSO

1. Blee Pedronh Betwnh
Saw Pedro Beto
`Pedro saw Beto.'
#`Beto saw Pedro.'

The Adjacency Effect

The subject and verb cannot be split by freestanding adverbs.

2. a. Kun tu lize **tsug** **Betw**
 always writing Beto
 ‘Beto is always writing’
- b. ***Tsug** kun tu lize **Betw**
 Writing always Beto

The Adjacency Effect

The subject cannot be null.

3. (What is Beto doing?)

a. Shtahs ba'
 Sleeping he
 `He's sleeping.'

b. *Shtahs *pro*
 `He is sleeping.'

The Backward Raising Construction

There is one context where the subject can be null:

When it is coreferent with the possessor of the object.

3. Tsu'a ∅ llume tse Betwnh
touch basket of Beto

'Beto is touching his basket.'

The Backward Raising Construction

The same pattern recurs across the Zapotec family.

1. The subject and verb must be **adjacent**.
2. Under normal circumstances, the subject **cannot be null** (no pro-drop).
3. The subject can be null **iff** it is **coreferent with the possessor of the object**.

An Abbreviated Zapotec Bibliography:

1. Verb-Subject adjacency:
2. The lack of pro-drop:
3. The special construction:

The Backward Raising Construction

This construction: covert raising.

1. The object is not incorporated
2. The possessor behaves as the subject
3. There is covert movement

No Noun Incorporation

The object is not incorporated into the verb.

- The **object** can be separated from the verb by an **oblique argument**.
- The **object** can contain **definiteness marking** outside the possessor.

4. Tsu'a **pelot**=nh **na'a**=ba=nh
putting ball=the hand=his=the
'He is putting the ball in his hand.'

Covert Subject Movement

An ellipsis test shows that the possessor is a subject.

- SLZ has a stripping construction which preserves only the **subject**.
 - cf. Spanish: ... *y yo también*. (and *i too*.)

5. Gúlu u ka'akse **neda**
will.sing you also i
'You will sing and also me.'

Covert Subject Movement

An ellipsis test shows that the possessor is a subject.

- SLZ has a stripping construction which preserves only the **subject**.
- The backward raising construction can antecede stripping of the **subject**.

7. Tsyib **na'a=ba**=nh ka'a kse **neda'**.
washing hand=his=the and.also i.
'He's washing his hands and I am too.'
LIT: 'washing his hands and also me.'

Covert Subject Movement

An ellipsis test shows that the possessor is a subject.

- SLZ has a stripping construction which preserves only the **subject**.
- The backward raising construction can antecede stripping of the **subject**.
- Fact: **ellipsis is subject to an antecedent identity condition in SLZ**
- **Result:** the backward raising construction has a subject.

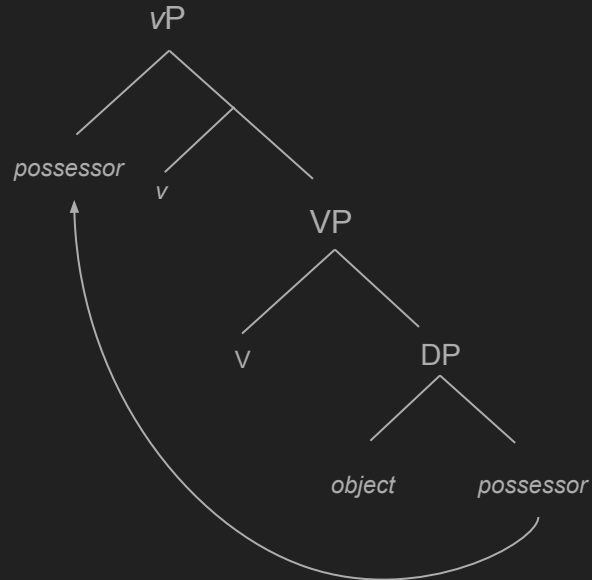
7. Tsyib (ba) na'a=ba=nh ka'a kse tsyib neda' na'aanh
washing he hand=his=the and.also washing i hand=my=the
'He's washing his hands and I am ~~washing my hands~~ too.'

Covert Subject Movement

The possessor raises to subject position.

Possessor raising: Davies 1986; Ura 1996; Lee-Schoenfeld 2006; Deal 2013

8. Tsu'a **ba** pelot=nh na'a=**ba**=nh
putting his ball=the hand=his=the
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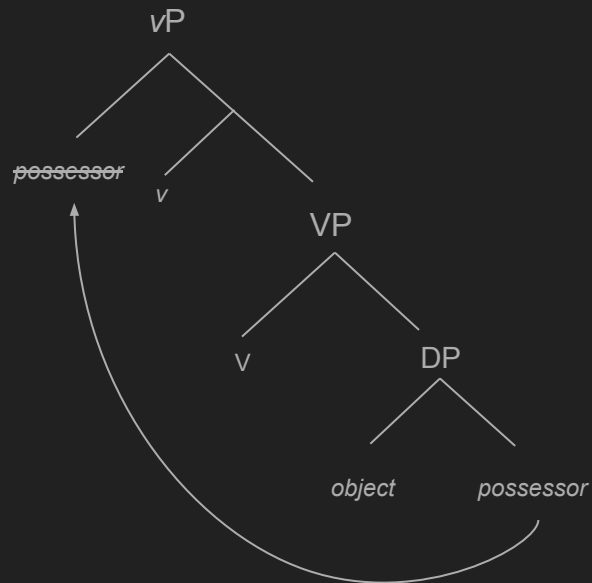
Covert Subject Movement

The possessor raises to subject position:

But this movement is **covert**.

Cf: Bobaljik 2002; Boskovic 2003; Nunes 2004; Potsdam & Polinsky 2014

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putting his ball=the hand=his=the
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Implications for Adjacency

1. The Subject Position can go empty.
 - a. Typical case: subject strictly adjacent to the verb
 - b. Backward raising construction: no overt subject.
2. The clauses with null subjects still have thematic subjects.
 - a. Regular transitive syntax; subject undergoes covert raising.
 - b. The subject and the verb show the same thematic relationship
 - c. The subject and T still interact in the canonical way (cf: additional material on raising)

Implications for Adjacency

1. This pattern suggests that the adjacency effect in SLZ involves licensing.
 - a. Typical clause: subject strictly adjacent to the verb *in order to be licensed*.
 - b. The backward raising construction:
 - i. Subject receives inherent genitive case inside the DP
 - ii. Result: does not require an alternative source of licensing.
 - c. **Claim:** adjacency requirement called off when the subject can be licensed elsewhere.
2. The prosodic grouping account cannot explain the same facts.
 - a. The backward binding construction:
 - i. The subject remains a thematic argument of the verb
 - ii. The subject continues to interact with T (independent evidence: raising constructions)
 - b. However: subject-verb adjacency should still be forced if:
 - i. Adjacency effects arise from the need to maintain *thematic* relations in the prosody, or
 - ii. Adjacency effects arise from the need to maintain *selectional* relations in the prosody.

Conclusions

1. Santiago Laxopa Zapotec shows a Verb-Subject adjacency requirement
2. This requirement is called off in precisely one context:
 - a. The thematic subject is coindexed with the possessor of the object
 - b. Here: the subject goes null and is expressed inside the object.
 - c. Otherwise: strict VS adjacency; no pro-drop.
3. This pattern → the adjacency requirement reduces to a need for licensing.
 - a. The backward raising construction: the subject gets licensed as a possessor inside the object
4. The adjacency requirement does not reflect:
 - a. The prosodic reflex of the thematic relation between V and S
 - b. The agreement relationship between S and T

Citations

1. Polinsky & Potsdam 2012
2. Clemens 2019
3. Richards 2014
4. Bobaljik 2002
5. Nunes 2004
6. The entire Zapotec literature