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Extraction and referential constructions in Movima

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The language

General

- South-Western Amazon (Bolivia)
- genetically unclassified
- less than 1000 speakers
- all fluent speakers are older than 60, all bilingual (Movima/Spanish)

The data

- Annotated spontaneous discourse corpus of >130,000 words (30h) produced by ~50 m/f speakers

Some morphosyntactic characteristics

- largely configurational: **predicate initial**
- direct-inverse alternation in transitive clauses
- split ergativity: direct = ergative, inverse = accusative
- **weak noun-verb distinction**

Overview

1. Verb-initial clauses and "extraction"

2. Syntactic properties of the verb in non-initial position
   antipassive
   negation with *loy*

3. The non-initial position as a subordinated position?
   fronted pronoun
   headed relative
   "verbal DP"

4. Conclusion:
   The non-initial position is a referential environment, typically occupied by a noun

Verb-initial clauses

Transitive direct

***Vel-na**=sne* *kis* / *is* *dichi:ye.*

watch-DIRECT=3F 3PL.OBV   ART.PL child

'She watched them / (the) children.'

Intransitive

Kuyna:nak *is* / *is* *dichi:ye.*

play   3PL   ART.PL child

'They/(The) children played.'

Verb-initial clauses

Less than 20% of the world's languages have basically verb-initial (or V1) syntax (see Clemens and Polinsky 2015)

Languages with verb-initial syntax are particularly susceptible to pragmatically conditioned word-order changes (Payne 1995)

In Movima, verb-initial clauses are the default: verb-initial clauses are pragmatically unmarked, and in spontaneous discourse, over 90% of all verbal clauses are verb-initial. Therefore, Movima can be considerd a verb-initial language.

We will look at one type of word-order change in Movima, by which the verb is preceded by a referential expression.

Clemens, Lauren Eby & Polinsky, Maria. 2015. Verb-initial word orders (primarily in Mayan and Austronesian Languages). Ms, to appear in *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax*, 2nd edn. <http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/002004> (22 April 2016).
Payne, Doris L. 1995. Verb-initial languages and information order. In *Word Order in Discourse* [Typological Studies in Language 30], Pamela Downing & Michael Noonan (eds), 449-485. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

"Extraction": the pronominal clause (PC)

Basic clause　　　　　　**Vel-na**=*sne*　　　*kis.*

(transitive direct)　　　　　watch-DIRECT=3F　3PL

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　'She watched them.'

Pronominal clause　　　　*Isko*　　**vel-na**=*sne.*

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　PRO.3PL　watch-DIRECT=3F

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　'Them she watched.'

The verb in the pronominal clause has different syntactic properties than the verb in initial position.

"Extraction": the pronominal clause (PC)

Basic clause   *Vel-na=sne*   *kis.*

(transitive direct)   watch-DIRECT=3F   3PL

'She watched them.'

Pronominal clause   *Isko*   *vel-na=sne.*

PRO.3PL   watch-DIRECT=3F

'Them she watched.'

The verb in the pronominal clause has different syntactic properties than the verb in initial position.

Syntactic properties of the verb in the pronominal clause: Antipassive

Basic clause   ***Vel-na*=*sne***   *kis.*

(transitive direct)   watch-DIRECT=3F   3PL

                     'She watched them.'

Antipassive PC   *isne*   ***kaw***   ***vel-na***   *(n-isko)*

                PRO.F   **ANTIP**   watch-DIRECT   **OBL-**PRO.3PL

                'SHE watched (them).'

The antipassive is not possible in a basic clause:

         *Kaw   ***vel-na***   *sne*   *(n-isko).*

          ANTIP   watch-DIRECT   3F   **OBL-**PRO.3PL

         ('She watched (them).')

Syntactic properties of the verb in the pronominal clause: Negation

Pronominal clause

Isko   *vel-na=sne*

PRO.3PL   watch-DIRECT=3F

'Them she watched.'

Negated verb in PC

Isko   *loy*   *vel-na=sne*

PRO.3PL   NEG.SUB   watch-DIRECT=3F

'Them she did not watch.'

Cf. negation of basic clause:

Ka=s   *vel-na-wa=sne*   *kis*

COP.NEG=DET   watch-DIRECT-NMZ=3F   3PL.OBV

'She did not watch them.'

Syntactic properties of the verb in the pronominal clause

What does it mean that the verb has special properties when preceded by a pronoun?

Myhill (1985: 181):

"It is characteristic of verb-initial languages that ... Verb Forms in non-initial position are presuppositional, backgrounded and **either nominal or otherwise dependent**" (emphasis mine).

→ The Movima "extraction" may have a subordinating effect. However, is there
            independent evidence for this ?

Perhaps by analogy, since

1. the same properties also show up in headed relative clauses.
2. the same properties also show up in verbs inside a "verbal DP".

Myhill, John. 1985. Pragmatic and categorial correlates of VS word order. Lingua 66: 177-200.

The verb in a headed relative clause

Basic clause

Vel-na=kinos   *kwe:ya*   *is*   *dichi:ye.*

watch-DIRECT=ART.F   woman   ART.PL   child

'The woman watched (the) children.'

Headed RC

is   *dichi:ye*   ***di'***   ***vel-na*=kinos**   *kwe:ya*
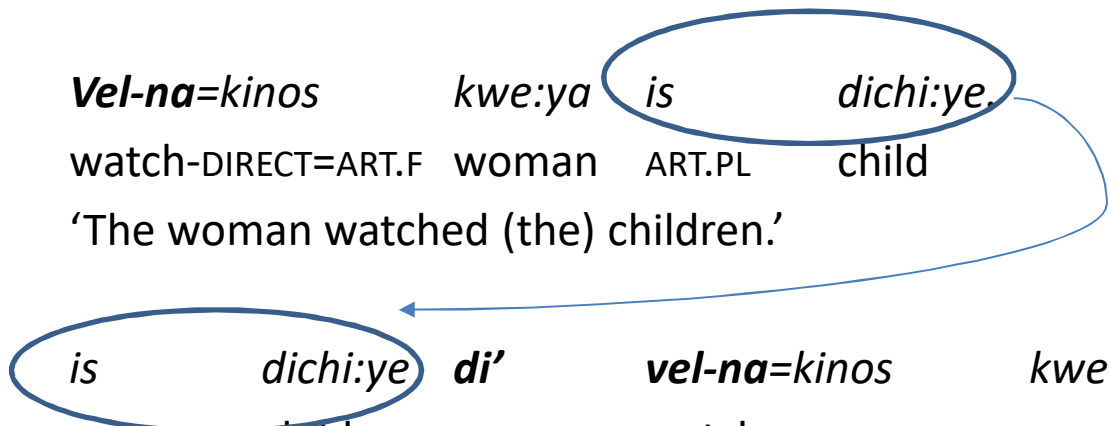
ART.PL   child   REL   watch-DIRECT=ART.F   woman

'the children whom the woman watched'

The verb in a headed relative clause

Basic clause   *Vel-na=kinos*   *kwe:ya*   *is*   *dichi:ye.*

watch-DIRECT=ART.F   woman   ART.PL   child

'The woman watched (the) children.'

Headed RC   *is*   *dichi:ye*   ***di'***   ***vel-na**=kinos*   *kwe:ya*

ART.PL   child   REL   watch-DIRECT=ART.F   woman

'the children whom the woman watched'

The verb in a headed relative clause

Basic clause   ***Vel-na**=kinos*   *kwe:ya*   *is*   *dichi:ye.*

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'The woman watched (the) children.'

Headed RC   *is*   *dichi:ye*   ***di'***   ***vel-na**=kinos*   *kwe:ya*

ART.PL   child   REL   watch-DIRECT=ART.F   woman

'the children whom the woman watched'

Antipassive   *kinos*   *kwe:ya*   ***di'***   ***kaw***   ***vel-na***

ART.F   woman   REL   **ANTIP**   watch-DIRECT

*(**n**-is*   *dichi:ye)*

OBL-ART.PL   child

'the woman who watched (the children)'

The verb in a headed relative clause

Basic clause

Vel-na=kinos　　*kwe:ya*　*is*　　*dichi:ye.*

watch-DIRECT=ART.F　woman　ART.PL　child

'The woman watched (the) children.'

Headed RC

is　　*dichi:ye*　***di'***　　***vel-na=kinos***　　*kwe:ya*

ART.PL　child　REL　　watch-DIRECT=ART.F　woman

'the children whom the woman watched'

Antipassive

kinos　*kwe:ya*　***di'***　　***kaw***　　***vel-na***

ART.F　woman　REL　　**ANTIP**　watch-DIRECT

*(**n**-is*　*dichi:ye)*

OBL-ART.PL　child

'the woman who watched (the children)'

Negation

is　　*dichi:ye*　***di'***　　***loy***　　***vel-na=kinos***　　*kwe:ya*

ART.PL　child　REL　　NEG.SUB　watch-DIRECT=ART.F　woman

'the children that the woman did not watch'

Does extraction involve subordination?

→ Verbs in relative clauses have the same syntactic properties as verbs in the pronominal clause.

→ In a relative clause, the relativizing particle (*di'*) can be considered a marker of subordination.

→ By analogy, the verb in the pronominal clause can be considered subordinated as well.

Further support:

In the pronominal clause, the pronoun is the main predicate: In embedding/negation, the pronoun is nominalized, just like a main verb.

The construction might therefore be syntactically analyzed as a cleft, although it does not have a focus-marking function (see Haude 2018).

Haude, Katharina. 2018. A topic-marking cleft? In Adamou, Evangelia, Katharina Haude, and Martine Vanhove (eds). 2018. *Information structure in lesser-described languages: Studies in prosody and syntax,* pp. 217-244. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Does extraction involve subordination?

Identifying the pronoun as the predicate: embedding/negation

Negated basic clause

> *Ka=s*   ***vel-na-wa**=sne*   *is*   *dichi:ye.*
>
> COP.NEG=DET   watch-DIRECT-NMZ=3F   ART.PL   child
>
> 'She did not watch the children.' (lit.: "Her watching the children is/was not.")

Negated pronominal clause

> *Ka=s*   *isko-**niwa***   ***vel-na**=sne.*
>
> COP.NEG=DET   PRO.3PL-NMZ   watch-DIRECT=3F
>
> 'It was not them she watched.' (lit.: "Them being [who] she watched was not.")

... But the "cleft" does not have the focus-marking function of clefts (Haude 2018), so maybe this analysis is inadequate.

The "verbal DP"

There is a third construction in which a verb is preceded by a referential expression and shares the same properties: **the "verbal DP".**

Basic clause   ***vel-na**=sne*   *kis*

watch-DIRECT=3F   3PL.OBV

'the (ones) she watched'

"Verbal DP"   *is*   ***vel-na**=sne*

ART.PL   watch-DIRECT=3F

'the (ones) she watched'

The "verbal DP"

Also here, the verb can be antipassivized or negated:

Basic clause
                    _vel-na__=sne_   _kis_
                    watch-DIRECT=3F   3PL.OBV
                    'the (ones) she watched'

"Verbal DP"
                    _is_   **_vel-na_**_=sne_
                    ART.PL   watch-DIRECT=3F
                    'the (ones) she watched'

Antipassive DP
                    kinos   **_kaw_**   **_vel-na_**   _(**n**-isko)_
                    ART.F   **ANTIP**   watch-DIRECT   **OBL-**PRO.3PL
                    'the (woman/girl who) watched (them)'

Negated verb in DP
                    _is_   **_loy_**   **_vel-na_**_=sne_
                    ART.PL   NEG.SUB   watch-DIRECT=3F
                    'the (ones) she did not watch'

The "verbal DP"

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- DPs with verbs are pragmatically marked, usually occurring with nominal predicates as argument-focus constructions:

Rulrul	*os*		***tikoy-na=Ø,***	
jaguar	ART.N.PAST		kill-DIRECT=1SG	
ka=s	*tikoy-ak-na=Ø*	*n-is*		*juyeni.*
COP.NEG	kill-IRR-DIRECT=1SG	OBL-ART.PL		person

'(A) JAGUAR (was what) I killed, I didn't kill a human.' (lit.: "… anyone of humans")

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COP.NEG	kill-IRR-DIRECT=1SG		OBL-ART.PL	person

'(A) JAGUAR (was what) I killed, I didn't kill a human.' (lit.: "... anyone of humans")

→ The placement of a verb in non-intial position might be considered a (zero-marked) relativization. However, maybe it is much simpler ...

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

In Movima, nouns (and adjectives) are syntactically near-equivalent with verbs. They can function as predicates. A possessor is encoded like the agent of a direct-marked verb.

> **Dichi:ye**   *is*   *majniwa=sne.*
>
> child   ART.PL   offspring=3F
>
> 'Her offspring are children (i.e. still young).'

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Dichi:ye *is* *majniwa=sne.*

child ART.PL offspring=3F

'Her offspring are children (i.e. still young).'

However, referential (i.e. possessed or proper) nouns do **not** occur as basic predicates:

??Majniwa=sne *is* *dichi:ye.*

offspring=3F ART.PL child

('The children are her offspring.')

*Majniwa=sne *kis.*

offspring=3F 3PL

('They are her children.')

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

Referential (i.e. possessed or proper) nouns can **only** occur in the non-initial position:

DP

is

majniwa=sne

ART.PL

offspring=3F

'her offspring'

Relative clause

is

dichi:ye

di'

majniwa=sne

ART.PL

child

REL

offspring=3F

'the children who are her offspring'

Pronom. clause

Isko

majniwa=sne.

PRO.3PL

offspring=3F

'They are her children.'

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

Antipassive is productive with nouns as well:

DP

kinos	**kwey**	**majni**	**(n-isko)**
ART.F	ANTIP	offspring	OBL-PRO.3PL

'the mother (of them)'

Relative clause

kinos	kweya	**di'**	**kwey**	**majni**	**(n-isko)**
ART.F	woman	REL	ANTIP	offspring	OBL-PRO.3PL

'the woman who is (a) mother (of them)'

Pronom. clause

Isne	**kwey**	**majni**	**(n-isko)**
PRO.3PL	ANTIP	offspring	OBL-PRO.3PL

'She is (a) mother (of them).'

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

Negation is found with adjectives:

DP: *kos*   ***loy***   *rey*   ***mowima-ɬe***
           ART.N   NEG.SUB   EPIST   Movima-NEG.N/ADJ
           'the one/someone who is not Movima, you see'

RC: *kos*   *sot-lo:los*   ***di'***   ***loy***   *rey*   ***lolos-a=n***
           ART.N   other-village   REL   NEG.SUB   EPIST   village-LV=2
           'another village, which is not your village'

PC: *asko*   ***loy***   ***jayaw-ɬe***
           PRO.3N   NEG.SUB   good-NEG.N/ADJ
           'That is not good.'   (very infrequent)

→ There does not seem to be a categorical syntactic distinction between verbs and nouns/adjectives in the non-initial position.

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

Frequency counts:

59% of all counted **relative clauses** (1145) contain a N/ADJ:

is	*so:te*	*di'*	*dichi:ye*
ART.PL	other	REL	child

'the other children' (lit.: "the other (ones) who (are) children")

52% of all counted **pronominal clauses** (453) contain a N/ADJ.

Isko	*dichi:ye*
PRO.3PL	child

'They are children.'

Thus, judging from frequency, the pronominal clause may not be a typical nominal domain. However, ...

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

For a referential noun to function as predicate, the pronominal clause is needed:

Basic clause: ***Majniwa=sne*   *kis.*

offspring=3F   3PL

('They are her children.')

Isko   ***majniwa=sne.***

PRO.3PL   offspring=3F

'They are her children.'

The non-initial position as a nominal domain

For a referential noun to function as predicate, the pronominal clause is needed:

Basic clause:
      Majniwa=sne   *kis.*
      offspring=3F   3PL
      ('They are her children.')

      Isko   ***majniwa=sne.***
      PRO.3PL   offspring=3F
      'They are her children.'

With verbs, in contrast, pronominal clauses have a pragmatically marked status:
→   The construction is a propositionally equivalent alternative to a basic main clause
→   It is a marked alternative: less then 10% of verbal predicates occur in a pronominal clause
→   Therefore, like DPs, pronominal clauses are a prototypical nominal domain.

Conclusions

- The non-initial position is part of a referential environment. The element in this position provides a characterization of the entity referred to by the pronoun/DP/article.
- Nouns and verbs are not easily distinguished syntactically in Movima: except possessed/proper nouns, they all can function as predicates or occur in referential constructions.
- Referentiality is a typical function of nouns. Also in Movima, the non-initial position is typically occupied by a noun.
- Only referential environments allow unrestricted access also to referential (possessed and proper) nouns.
- These environments can also host verbs, but this is less frequent and usually pragmatically marked.

→   There is no "extraction" involved: Particular construction types interact with the different lexical classes to trigger specific pragmatic effects.

Thank you!