Copala Triqui’s Syntactic Causative: Cosubordination across Models of Grammar

Rebecca Dinkel, University at Albany, SUNY

Copala Triqui (CT) is an Otomanguean language of the Mixtecan branch that has a VSO order and is prepositional. Verbs that take complements have a VS[ComplementClause] order. CT’s syntactic causative adheres to normal word order but, the EFFECT clause, and not the CAUSE clause, is the main clause of the construction. The syntactic causative does not display normal properties of control for CT verbs with complements, nor does it behave like an adjunct or covert coordinate clauses. An example is in (1):

(1) [EFFECT EVENT] [CAUSE EVENT]
    VERB SUBJ [2nd CLAUSE]
    Qui³-xra³ xruj³ qui³-'yaj³ na³na¹
    CMPL-break pot CMPL-make wind

‘The wind made the pot break.’

Similar kinds of clause linkages have been labeled by some as ‘cosubordinate’ and distinct because they are non-embedded, yet grammatically dependent (Van Valin 2007). Others have explained such phenomena as mismatches between different levels of grammar (Yuasa & Sadock 2002; Belyaev 2014). A ‘mismatch’ model cannot explain CT’s syntactic causative, as modeled in Lexical Functional Grammar. The properties of CT’s syntactic causative either suggest (1) the acceptance of cosubordination as a type of clause linkage, (2) a reworking of the definition of adjuncts to include dependent IP’s, or (3) consideration of a new kind of clause linkage type not yet identified.

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