

On a transitivity-based split in Yucatec Maya control complements

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WSCLA 19 – Memorial University - April 25-27, 2014

1 Introduction

- In a wide variety of environments¹, Yucatec Maya has verb forms which have been traditionally called ‘subjunctive’.
- For transitives, (1a), subjunctive clauses have no overt status marker (i.e. \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans}).
 - Both subject (Set A) and object (Set B) agreement present.
- For intransitives, (1b), an overt status suffix appears (*-ak* in this case).
 - YM is a split ergative language, here the absolutive Set B marker appears.

- (1) a. In k’áat káa u yil- \emptyset_{voice} - \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans} -en
A1sg want for A3sg see-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
‘I want for him to see me.’ **Transitive Subjunctive**
- b. A k’áat káa meyaj-n-ak-en.
A2sg want for work-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
‘You want for me to work’ **Intransitive Subjunctive**

In cases of **subject control**, the complementizer *káa* is omitted (cf. English *for*).

- Transitive complements like (2) are identical to the forms seen above.
- Intransitive complements, however, subjunctive complements are unexpectedly ungrammatical: (3a).
- Instead, a ‘bare’ form appears with no agreement: (3b)

- (2) U k’áat u yil- \emptyset_{voice} - \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans} -en
A3sg want A3sg see-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
‘He wants to see me.’ **Transitive Subjunctive**

¹Aside from the embedded cases in (1), these include: unconditional antecedents, counterfactual antecedents, optatives introduced by *káa*, and matrix clauses w/ *sáam*, *uuch*, and *bín*.

- (3) a. *In k'áat meyaj-n-ak-en.
 A1sg want work-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
 Intended: 'I want to work' ***Intransitive Subjunctive**
- b. In k'áat meyaj
 A1sg want work
 'I want to work.' **Intransitive 'bare' form**

- We dub this pattern SPLIT SUBJUNCTIVE PATTERN (SSP) and will call predicates which select it SSP predicates.
- While the presence of the lower set A marker makes the transitive appear unlike English control², the downstairs subject must be identical³.

- (4) *In k'áat a/u/k (w)il- \emptyset_{voice} - \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans} -en
 A1sg want A2sg/A3sg/A1pl see-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
 Intended: 'I want you/her/us to see me.'

This talk:

1. Propose basic syntactic analysis for YM capturing agreement and structure of subjunctive and other clauses.
2. Use this syntax plus movement theory of control (Hornstein (1999), Hornstein & Polinsky (2010), Grano (2012) *inter alia*) to explain the ungrammaticality of (3a).
3. Motivate the idea that the attested 'bare' forms like (3b) are in fact nominal.

Road map:

§2 proposes syntactic structures (including agreement) for subjunctive and other matrix clauses;

§3 presents the SSP in detail;

§4 analyzes subjunctive control complements (i.e. (2) and (3a)) in detail, and motivates the idea that the attested bare forms, (3b) are in fact nominal;

§5 concludes.

²While such a pattern is not common, the transitive control clauses in YM are reminiscent of so-called 'copy control', e.g. as described by Polinsky & Potsdam (2006) and references therein for San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec. Exactly how close this parallel is depends on whether or not YM is regarded as 'Pronominal Argument' language (as argued by Norcliffe (2009)). Here, we adopt the traditional view with the Mayanist literature with set A and B as agreement markers rather than arguments, though we believe the core of our account is consistent with either approach.

³For reasons of space, we will not show it in detail, but the semantics of this construction is broadly similar to control in other languages as well (e.g. obligatory *de se* interpretations). One point of semantic difference worth noting is that YM to our knowledge only allows for *exhaustive* control, whereas English allows for either exhaustive or partial control depending on the embedding predicate.

2 Basic clause structure

- YM is typically taken to have VOS as the basic word order⁴ in transitive clauses:

(5) T-u yuk'- \emptyset_{voice} -aj- \emptyset_{B3} le sa'-o' Juan
 PFV-A3sg drink-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg DEF atole-DISTAL Juan
 'Juan drank the atole.'

- Such sentences, though, are quite rare in natural speech (Skopeteas & Verhoeven (2005)) with surface word order being driven by discourse-related notions like topic and focus.
- Beyond this, YM has subject and object pro-drop, (6), with agreement markers co-referencing transitive subjects (SET A) and objects (SET B):

(6) T-u yuk'- \emptyset_{voice} -aj- \emptyset_{B3}
 PFV-A3sg drink-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg
 'He/she drank it.'

- YM is a *split ergative* language with the split conditioned by the overt aspect/modal marker in the clause (which in turn select for different v_0 morphemes):
 - Set A (i.e. nominative) agreement in imperfective, desiderative, progressive, ...
 - Set B (i.e. absolutive) agreement in perfective, recent past, predictive future, ...

2.1 Verbal functional architecture

- We assume the basic functional structure proposed by Coon et al. (2011) for clausal verbal predicates in Mayan languages.
- Beyond the verb root itself, we posit that clause contains the heads Voice⁰, v^0 , Infl⁰ and claim that they are instantiated by (at least) the following:

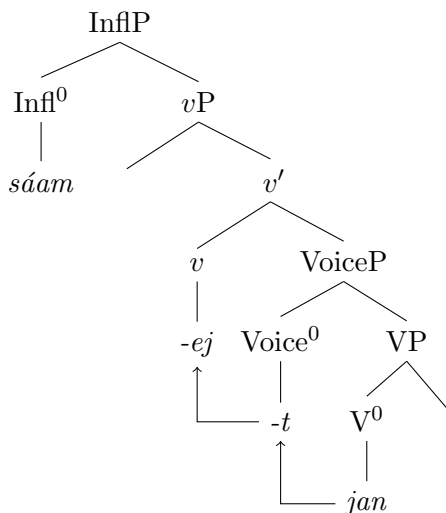
Head	Class	Examples
V ⁰	Verb roots	<i>meyaj</i> 'work', <i>il</i> 'see', <i>wen</i> 'sleep', <i>t'i'it'</i> 'disperse', ...
Voice ⁰	Valence and voice	<i>-t</i> , <i>-s</i> , <i>-n</i> , <i>-V'V</i>
v^0	Status suffixes	<i>-Vl</i> , <i>-ik</i> , <i>-ak</i> , <i>-aj</i> , <i>-Vk</i> , \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans} / <i>-ej</i> , $\emptyset_{Inc}^{Intrans}$
Infl ⁰	Aspect/Modals	<i>tak</i> DESID, <i>k-</i> IMP, <i>sáam</i> REC, <i>t-</i> PFV...

- Setting aside arguments and agreement, then, a sample clause structure is seen in (7).
- We further assume that V⁰ undergoes head movement through Voice⁰ to v^0 producing the attested surface form:

⁴See Gutiérrez-Bravo & Monforte y Madera (2010) for an alternative view on which SVO is basic.

- (7) Sáam in jaan-t-ej- \emptyset_{B3}
 RECPAST A1sg eat-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg
 ‘I just ate it.’

Transitive Subjunctive



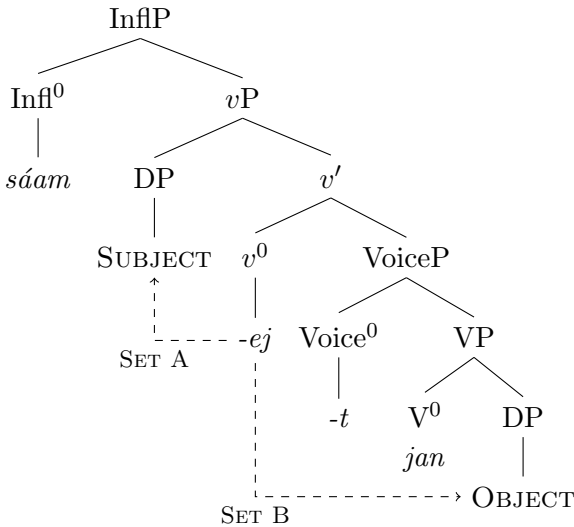
2.2 Agreement in transitives

Basic assumptions:

- Internal arguments of transitives base-generated as complements to V^0
- External arguments of transitives base-generated in spec, vP .
- Agreement (following Coon (2010) among others):
 - Set A (Erg/Nom) is assigned by v_0 in a spec-head configuration.
 - Set B (Abs/Acc) is also assigned by v_0 within its c-command domain.

- (8) Sáam in jan-t-ej- \emptyset_{B3}
 PROG A1sg eat-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg
 ‘I am eating it.’

Transitive Subjunctive



2.3 Agreement in intransitives

YM exhibits aspect/mood-based split-ergativity⁵ which we derive from two assumptions:

- Intransitive subjects are uniformly⁶ base-generated as complements to V⁰.
- Different intransitive little v⁰ morphemes assign either set A or set B:
 - “Nominative” agreement arises when v heads (e.g. -Vl) assign set A to its specifier as in transitives⁷.
 - “Absolutive” agreement arises when v heads (e.g. -Vk) assign set B in their c-command domain.

(9) “Nominative” agreement

Táan in wen- \emptyset_{voice} -el
 PROG A1sg sleep-VOICE-STATUS

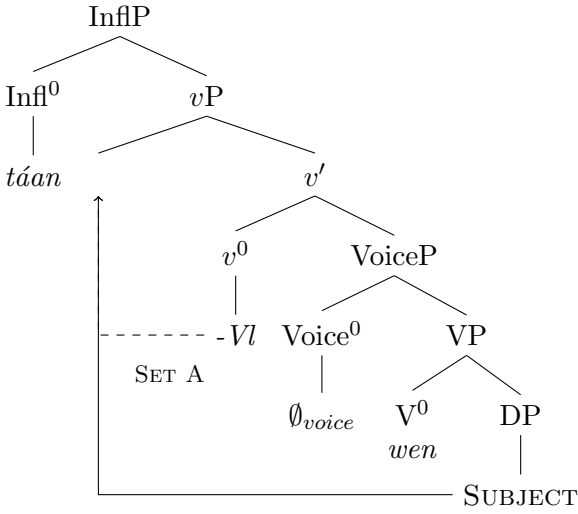
‘I am sleeping.’

Intransitive incomplete

⁵Note that we do not follow Coon (2010), which argues that apparent nominative-accusative forms in other Mayan languages such as Chol are nominalizations. While a plausible historical explanation for YM (see Bricker (1981)), we believe such an approach to be untenable synchronically. First, unlike in Chol, more clearly nominal elements (e.g. eventive nouns) do not occur in the putatively nominal position. Second, conversely, the putatively nominal elements do not occur in more plainly nominal environments (e.g. in the definite/demonstrative construction). Third, aspect markers in Chol but not in Yucatec can host overt set B markers in a so-called ‘raising’ construction.

⁶NB: unlike in some other Mayan lgs (e.g. Chol), there is no obvious reason to assume a different syntax for unergatives and unaccusatives.

⁷This agreement is presumably preceded by movement into this position in the case of intransitive incompletives as shown, though we leave detailed investigation to future work.

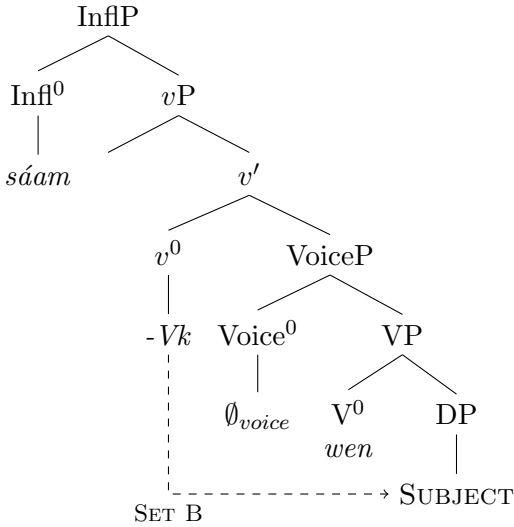


(10) “**Absolutive**” agreement

Sáam wen- \emptyset_{voice} -ek-en
 RECPAST sleep-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg

‘I just slept.’

Intransitive subjunctive



A caveat on overt arguments:

One thing to note about the above trees is that we have not dealt with the positioning of overt arguments since this depends on independent considerations:

- If the set A/B morphemes are themselves pronominal arguments (as argued for YM by Norcliffe (2009)), then the position of the set A and B is exactly as expected in the view we have sketched.
- If they are agreement markers, as assumed traditionally (and here as well), then an independent account of the realization of overt arguments is needed (NB. the same would be true in the pronominal argument view too of course, they simply would not be true arguments).
- On the latter view, linearization of the set A and B morphemes could occur in various ways:
 - It is also possible that set A could be agreement and set B is an enclitic as discussed in Coon (2010)
 - Alternatively, if both set A and set B are spelled out as agreement with v^0 they could be ordered as sets of person features that are linearized on either end (set A, left and set B, right) of the complex head that is pronounced in v^0

3 Transitivity and complementation in YM

- We return now to our main focus – the transitivity-based split in control complements like (11):

- (11) a. U yojel u páats'-t- \emptyset_{Subj}^{Trans} - \emptyset_{B3} u k'ab maak]
 A3sg know A3sg message-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg A3sg hand person
 'He knows how to massage people's hands.' SSP_{Trans}
- b. *U yojel [páats'-n-ak- \emptyset_{B3}]
 A3sg know message-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg
 Intended: 'He knows how to massage.' *Expected Intransitive
- c. U yojel [páats']
 A3sg know message
 'He knows how to massage.' SSP_{Intrans}

3.1 Comparison with other non-finite complements

- Comparing with other kinds of non-finite complements in the language, we see that the SSP is unique in showing a transitivity-based split⁸.

⁸See Bohmeyer (2002), ch. 4 and Verhoeven (2007), ch. 4 for details.

Irrealis

- Subordinator *káa* present (cf. English *for*), no overt Infl^0 , subjunctive status:

(12) a. In k'áat káa [a] wáant- \emptyset_{voice} - $\emptyset_{\text{Subj}}^{\text{Trans}}$ -[en]
 A1sg want for [A2] help-VOICE-STATUS-[B1sg]

'I want for you to help me.'

Transitive Irrealis

b. In k'áat káa [meyaj-n-ak-[ech]]
 A1sg want for work-VOICE-STATUS-[B2sg]

'I want for you to work.'

Intransitive Irrealis

Dependent

- No subordinator, no Infl^0 , incompletive status (examples from Verhoeven (2007)):

(13) a. K-in náay-t-ik [in] bi-s-ik-[\emptyset_{B3}] in chan
 IMP-A1sg dream-VOICE-STATUS A1sg go-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg little boy
 xibpal]

'I dream of taking my little boy.'

Transitive Dependent

b. T-in náay-t-aj [u] k'áax- \emptyset_{voice} -al ja']
 PFV-A1sg dream-VOICE-STATUS A3sg fall-VOICE-STATUS water

'I dreamt it rained'

Intransitive Dependent

Summary: Outside of control complements, complementation in YM is uniform across transitives and intransitives.

3.2 Control and SSP

- While SSP complements are similar to DEPENDENT and IRREALIS complements in many ways, they are unique in that they require a control interpretation:

(14) a. *In k'áat- \emptyset_{B3} [a/k] xok- \emptyset_{voice} -ej- \emptyset_{B3}
 A1sg want {A2sg/A1pl} read-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg

Intended: 'I want you to read it.'

Transitive SSP

b. In k'áat [xímbal]
 A1sg want walk

'I want to walk.'

NOT 'I want you/someone/us to walk.'

Intransitive SSP

- The predicates that take SSP complements⁹ can be divided into two main syntactic categories:

⁹To our knowledge, object control does not exist in YM. Obvious candidates like *k'áat* 'ask' and *a'al* 'tell' take only an embedded IRREALIS with *káa* and incorporate the recipient argument as an oblique rather than a direct object.

- (15) **Subject marked w/ Set A:** *k'áat* ‘want’, *k'áatik* ‘ask’, *óot* ‘want, desire’, *tuk(u)l* ‘fear, think’, *ojel* ‘know (how)’, *lep'ik* SET.A *óol* ‘hurry’, ...
- (16) a. **Motion verbs w/ Set B:** *bin* ‘go’, *taal* ‘come’, *na'ak* ‘ascend’, *éem* ‘descend’, *ok* ‘enter’, *suut* ‘return’, *k'uch* ‘arrive’, *líik'* ‘get up’, *kul(tal)* ‘sit (down)’, *chil(tal)* ‘lie (down)’, ...
- b. **Other SSP predicates w/ Set B:** *sajak* ‘afraid’, *su'ulak* ‘ashamed’, ...

- The split in SSP complements is seen across both classes:

- (17) Set A (=ERG) controller
- a. In *k'áat* [janal]
A1sg want eat
‘I want to eat.’ SSP_{Intrans}
- b. In *k'áat* [in jaan-t- \emptyset _{Subj}^{Trans}- \emptyset _{B3} k'úum]
A1sg want A1sg eat-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg squash
‘I want to eat squash.’ SSP_{Trans}
- (18) Set B (=ABS) controller
- a. J-bin-en [janal]
PFV-go-B1sg eat
‘I went to eat’ SSP_{Intrans}
- b. J-bin-en [in jaan-t- \emptyset _{Subj}^{Trans}- \emptyset _{B3} k'úum]
PFV-go-B1sg A1sg eat-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg squash
‘I went to eat squash.’ SSP_{Trans}

4 Tackling the transitivity split

- In this section, we propose an analysis of control complements which derives the SSP split.
- We will focus here on SSP predicates with Set A-marked subjects (e.g. *k'áat* ‘want’) since their argument structure is clearest ¹⁰.

4.1 Transitive control complements

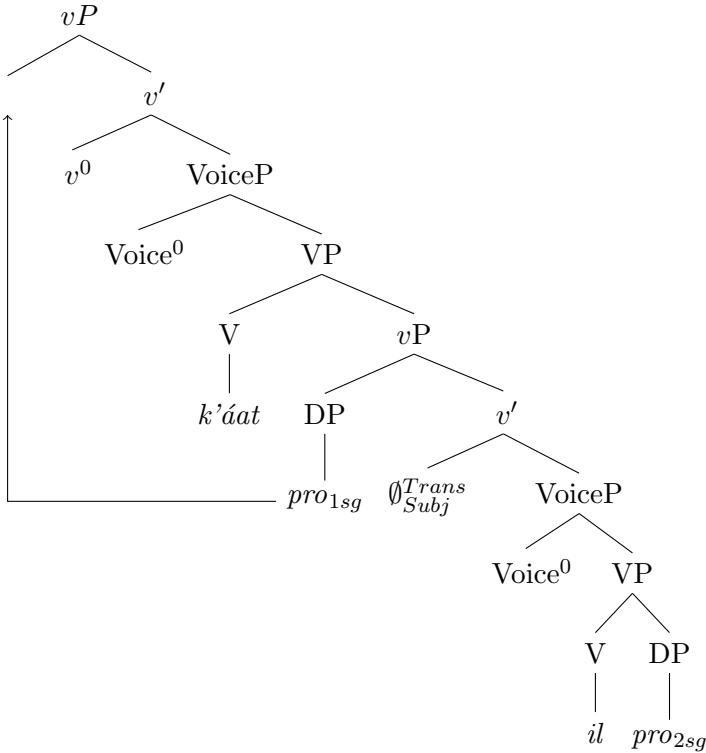
- Despite lacking Inf^0 and a status suffix, *k'áat* ‘want’ can nonetheless be shown to be transitive (e.g. uses of *k'áat* with a DP object such as ‘I want you’ trigger overt set B markers).
- We therefore treat control complements as internal arguments of *k'áat*.

¹⁰For directed motion verbs such *bin* (= go) one possible analysis is to treat the *vP* as the complement, which is the position for goals of motion, while the internal argument position is the specifier, rather than complement, of *V* (e.g. as discussed by Zubizarreta & Oh (2007)). We leave a detailed treatment of other classes of SSP predicates for further research

- Further, we assume that they are vP with subjunctive status, as in (19).

- The simplest argument for this is the lack of Infl^0 and other higher clausal elements like focus and negation (cf. Grano (2012) on exhaustive control in English).

- (19) In k'áat in wil- \emptyset_{voice} - $\emptyset_{\text{subj}}^{\text{trans}}$ -ech
 A1sg want A1sg see-VOICE-STATUS-B2sg
 ‘I want to see you.’

SSP_{Trans}

- Finally, we adopt a version of the movement theory of control (Hornstein (1999), Hornstein & Polinsky (2010), Grano (2012) *inter alia*).¹¹

- The subject raises from the specifier of the embedded vP to the subject position of the matrix clause as shown.

In a bit more depth:

1. Embedded $v_0 - \emptyset_{\text{Subj}}^{\text{Trans}}$ – agrees with the subject DP, triggering the lower set A marker.
2. We assume, as is standard, that v_0 defines a *phase* in Chomsky (2001)’s sense, meaning that the complement of v_0 is inaccessible to further syntactic operations.

¹¹Depending on how one answers the question of whether Set A markers are pronominal arguments or agreement markers, an agreement-based theory of control (Landau (2013) for a critical overview of such theories) cannot be ruled out at this point. See §5 for further discussion.

3. The specifier of vP is therefore a phase edge and the subject DP is available for movement to the matrix subject position, triggering the higher set A marker.

4.2 Why subjunctive intransitives go wrong

Having proposed an analysis for SSP_{Trans} , we turn now to explaining the ungrammaticality of expected intransitive forms like (20):

- (20) *In k'áat [xímbal-n-ak-en]
 A1sg want walk-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
 Intended 'I want to walk.'

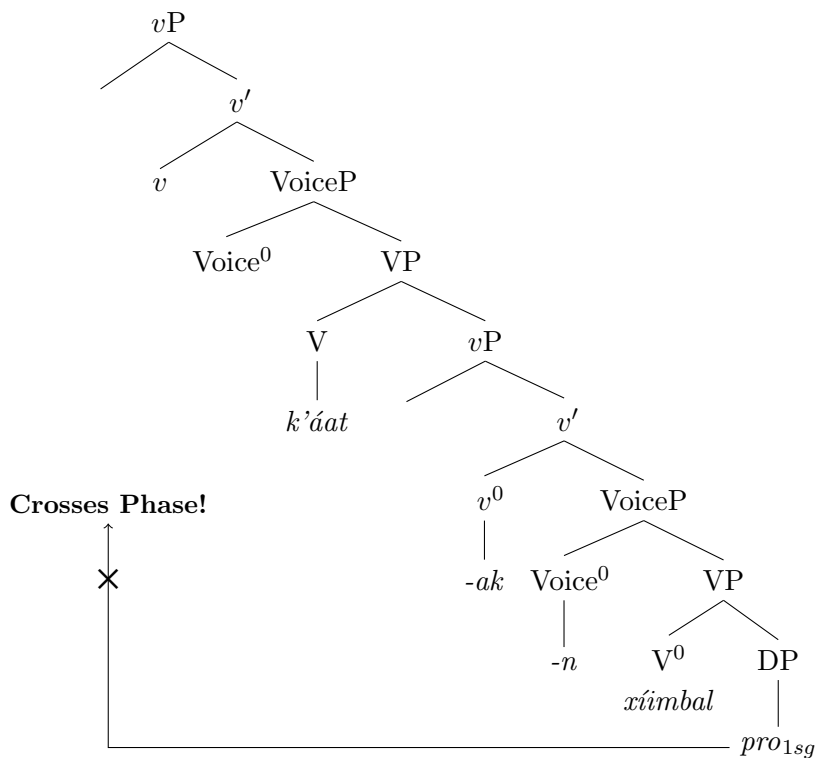
- First, observe that the expected form has the subject receiving Set B (i.e. absolutive case), as we see in (21).
- Recall that in §2.2, we proposed that set B (here, absolutive agreement) was licensed by v^0 in its c -command domain.

- (21) Sáam [meyaj-n-ak-en]
 RECPAST work-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
 'I just worked.'

Intransitive Subjunctive

- Given the analysis of control developed in §4.1, the failed derivation of (20) would be as in (22):

- (22) *In k'áat [xíimbal-n-ak-en]
 A1sg want walk-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg
 Intended 'I want to walk.'



- The intransitive subjunctive v^0 *-ak* agrees with the subject DP, triggering realization of set B
- Therefore, the intransitive subject remains within the phase defined by v^0 and is not available to move to subject position of the control verb.

Summary: The ungrammaticality of the expected intransitive control complement is a consequence of the fact that Set B agreement for subjects of intransitive subjunctives is assigned lower in the structure than Set A.

4.3 What is the syntax of intransitive SSPs?

- We have given an account of why intransitive subjunctive control complements like (20) are not possible.
- While we leave a detailed account to future work, we would like to suggest that the attested $SSP_{Intrans}$ have a radically different structure – they are *nominalizations*.

The clearest support for this comes from the systematic parallel between the status marking seen in $SSP_{Intrans}$ and more clearly nominal uses¹²:

¹²Similar parallels have been noted for Chol by Coon (2010), who in fact argues that all apparent cases of nominative-accusative forms in Chol are in fact nominalizations with possessors. Such an account is not

(23) **Verbal noun (\emptyset):**

- a. Yaan k'iin-e' le áalkab- \emptyset ^{Inc}_{Intrans}-o' jach toop- \emptyset _{B3}
exists day-TOP DEF run-STATUS.NML-DISTAL really hard-B3sg

'Sometimes, running is very difficult.'

Nominal

- b. In k'áat- \emptyset _{B3} áalkab- \emptyset ^{Inc}_{Intrans}
A1sg want-B3sg run-STATUS.NML

'I want to run.'

SSP_{Intrans}

(24) **Deadjectival/positional (-tal):**

- a. Le polok-tal-o' k-u taas-ik- \emptyset _{B3} k'oja'an-il
DEF fat-STATUS.NML-DISTAL IMP-A3 bring-STATUS-B3sg sick-REL

'Becoming fat brings illness.'

Nominal

- b. Sajak-en polok-tal
afraid-B1sg fat-STATUS.NML

'I am afraid to get fat.'

SSP_{Intrans}

(25) **Celerative (pajal):**

- a. Le t'i'it'-paj-al-o' jach talam- \emptyset _{B3}
DEF disperse-INCH-STATUS.NML-DISTAL really difficult-B3sg

'Dispersing is very difficult.' (e.g. a graduating group of students)

Nominal

- b. Táan k óot- \emptyset _{voice}-ik- \emptyset _{B3} t'i'it'-paj-al
PROG A1pl intend-VOICE-STATUS-B3sg disperse-INCH-STATUS.NML

'We intend to break up.'

SSP_{Intrans}

(26) **Root intransitive (-Vl):**

- a. tumen ts'o'ok a took- \emptyset _{voice}-ik-en ti' le
because TERM A2sg wrest-VOICE-STATUS-B1sg PREP DEF

kíim-il-o', bey xan ti' le lúub-ul-o'
die-STATUS.NML-DISTAL as also PREP DEF fall-STATUS.NML-DISTAL

'Because you have wrested me from death, from falling as well.'¹³

Nominal

- b. Sajak-en lúub-ul
afraid-B1sg fall-STATUS.NML

'I am afraid to fall.'

SSP_{Intrans}

(27) **Verbal noun/antipassive (VV)¹⁴:**

- a. Le chuuy-o' jum p'éel método tu'ux k-u
DEF sew-STATUS.NML-DEF one CL method where IMP-A3sg
nuup-bes-a'al ka'a p'éel wa u je nok'-o'ob ...
pair-CAUS-PASSIVE two CL or A3 other cloth-PL

possible across the board for YM, however, as discussed above.

¹³Psalms 56:13

¹⁴This class contains stems with short vowels which are lengthened in nominal, incompleted, and SSP_{Intrans} cases.

‘Sewing is a method where two or more cloths are joined¹⁵ ...’ **Nominal**

b. In k'áat- \emptyset_{B3} chuuy
 A1sg want-B3sg sew.STATUS.NML

‘I want to sew.’ **SSP**_{Intrans}

- One important open issue is how exactly the control interpretation arises in these cases.

5 Conclusion

- In this talk, we have shown that control complements in Yucatec Maya have radically different forms in transitive and intransitive forms.
- Based on uses of subjunctive *v*Ps outside of control, we have developed a theory of the clausal structure and agreement of incomplete and subjunctive clauses.
- Finally, we have argued that this syntax, together with the movement theory of control derives the transitivity-based split seen in control structures.
 - N.B. while we believe that the SSP split can be captured in a similar way under certain versions of an Agree-based approach (e.g. Landau (2013)), ...
 - ...it is less clear how to capture the presence of the downstairs Set A marker, esp. if these are indeed pronominal arguments rather than agreement.

Implications for Mayan syntax:

- We have proposed a working hypothesis of how clausal syntax and agreement works in YM based on work by Coon (2010) and Coon et al. (2011) showing that it handles a wide variety of both matrix and embedded clauses.
 - Previous accounts have focused primarily on matrix clauses, whereas we cover split ergatives, DEPENDENT, IRREALIS, and SSP constructions.
- While we have focused on YM today, many other Mayan languages show similar transitivity-based splits (e.g. Vázquez Álvarez (2011) and Coon (2010) for Chol, Osorio May (2012) for Chontal).
- Beyond providing the first explicit formal account of such a split, we also have shown that **Control** is the key factor ...
- ... a fact which is far clearer in YM due to its richer inventory of complement types and, in particular, the minimally different IRREALIS and DEPENDENT forms.

¹⁵<http://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/yua/Chuuy>

Glossing abbreviations and orthographical conventions

Abbreviations used for glosses for Yucatec Maya examples:

CL: numeral classifier, DEF: definite article, IMP: imperfective aspect, IMPER: imperative, INCEP: inceptive aspect, INCH: inchoative, NEG: negation, NEG.CL: negative/extrafocal deictic clitic, NML: nominal form, PFV: perfective aspect, PASS: passive, PL: plural, PREP: preposition, PROG: progressive aspect, REL: relational noun suffix, STATUS: ‘status’ suffixes, TERM: terminative aspect, TOP: topic marker, VOICE: voice suffixes, For agreement morphology, we follow the terminological tradition among Mayanists, referring to Set A (\approx Ergative/Nominative/Genitive) and Set B (\approx Absolutive/Accusative) markers, e.g. A3 = 3rd person Ergative/Nominative. B3 is phonologically null. All examples are from elicitations unless otherwise noted.

Orthography:

The orthography used is 1984 standard orthography established by the Academia de la Lengua Maya de Yucatán. It differs from the IPA in the following non-obvious ways: orthographic *j* is used for IPA [h], *x* for [ʃ], *a'a* for creaky voice [a̰], *b* for the implosive [b], *y* for [j], and *r* for [r]

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following native speakers for their patience and generosity: Julio César Can Tuyu, Angélica Cohuo Kaul, Deysi Yolanda Ku Nahuat, Francisco Moo Chan, and Jerónimo Tun Aban. Thanks also to Carlos Bojórquez Urzaiz, Gerónimo Can Tec, Leidy Ligia Cen Un, Rafael Molina Contreras, and Marta Poot Nahuat for their hospitality and support at the Universidad de Oriente in Valladolid. Finally, thanks to Fidencio Briceño Chel, Gerónimo Can Tec, Polly Jacobson, Laura Kertz, Matt Tucker, Rebecca Shields, Eric Raimy and audience members at Brown and Wisconsin for helpful feedback on aspects of the work presented here.

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