

Exuberant Complexity in Amuzgo: Triple-marked plural verb phrases and PRO

THE DATA

i) Eye-catching data in Xochistlahuaca Amuzgo:

A typical verbal phrase is constructed thusly
TAM-PRE+v=SUB

The subject marker typically conveys number, but number may also be marked on the verbal root, on preceding light verbs and TAM markers. In all, a verb phrase may be triple-marked for number. This is what we call lending "exuberance" to complexity.

THE PROBLEM

Violates principles central to Government and Binding:

- ⊗ The Extended Projection Principle: all clauses must have a subject
- ⊗ The Theta Criterion : every verb has theta roles that must be represented in the sentence structure

THE PROPOSAL

☺ The null category PRO stands in as subject satisfying the EPP and fulfilling the Theta Criterion as agent.

IMPLICATIONS

☹ This data challenges McClosky's (1996) proposal that VSO languages do not follow the EPP.
Non-finite agreement features projected in Spec of IP

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|---|---|
| a) ma- kà ⁿ =a [·]
PROG.SG- ask =A1SG
<i>I am asking.</i> | b) kwi- tà ⁿ =já
PROG.PL- PL.ask =A1PLINCL
<i>We are asking.</i> |
| c) ma- nto? =ntjò [·]
PROG.SG- lean out =B1SG
<i>I am leaning out.</i> | d) kwi- hntò? =ntjò
PROG.PL- PL.lean out =B1PLINCL
<i>We are leaning out.</i> |
| e) ma- tsé+ kíá [·] =já [·] tassa
PROG.SG- CAUS.SG+ knock/lay down =A1SG cup
<i>I am knocking a cup down.</i> | f) kwi- la? ⁺ kíá [·] =já tassa
PROG.PL- CAUS.PL+ knock/lay down- =A1PLINCL cup
<i>We (incl) are knocking a cup down.</i> |
| g) ma- tsé+ kàntù [·] =ntjò [·]
PROG.SG- CAUS.SG+ lie =B1SG
<i>I am gossiping.</i> | h) kwi- la? ⁺ kàntù [·] =ntjò
PROG.PL- CAUS.PL+ lie =B1PLINCL
<i>We (incl) are gossiping.</i> |

ii) Verb phrases are maximally triple-marked for number :

TAM_{PL}-V_{PL}=SUB_{PL}
TAM_{PL}-PRE_{PL}+V=SUB_{PL}

Phonological pluralization strategies include

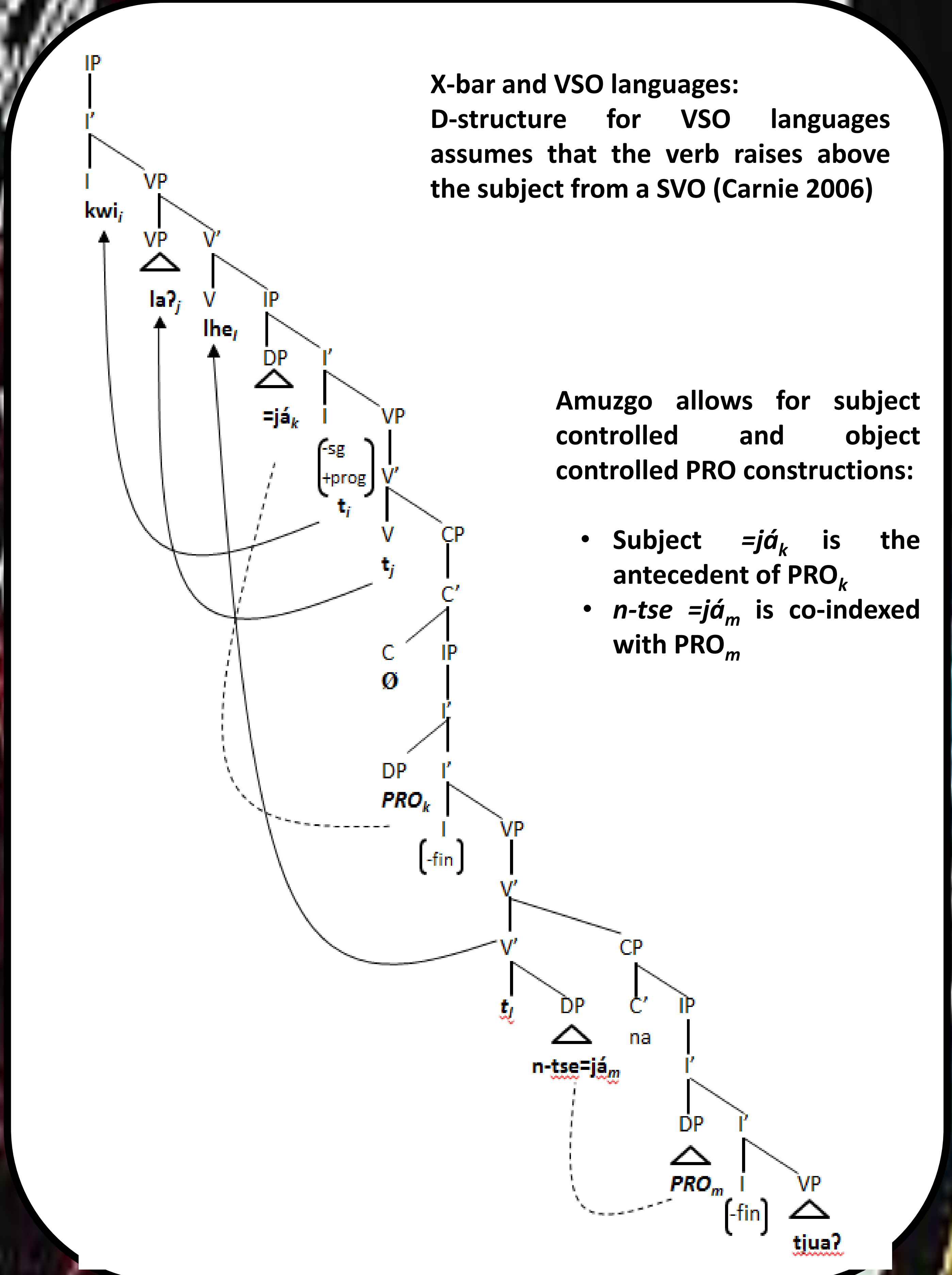
- allomorphy - TAM markers: *ma/kwi*, causative preverb: *tsé/la?*
- consonant mutation – examples (a) and (b)

Below, we don't find the same plurally marked verb root in j) as in l).

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|---|--|
| i) ma- lhe =ja [·] kwi tèsá
PROG.SG- encounter, obtain =A1SG one banana
<i>I got a banana.</i> | j) kwi- liù =já kwi tèsá
PROG. PL.encounter, PL- obtain =A1PLINCL one banana
<i>They got a banana.</i> |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| k) ma- tsé+ lhe =ja [·] n-tse=ja [·] na tjua?
PROG.SG- CAUS.SG accustom =A1SG PL.child=1SGPOSS COMP early
<i>I accustom my children to waking up early.</i> | |
|---|--|

- | | |
|--|--|
| l) kwi- la= lhe =já n-tse=já na tjua?
PROG.SG- CAUS.PL accustom =A1PLINCL PL-child=1PLINCLPOSS COMP wake.early
<i>We accustom our children to waking up early.</i> | |
|--|--|



l) kwi-la?+ [CP_{IP} PRO_k lhe=já_k n-tse=já_m [CP_{IP} na [PRO_m tjua?]]].

kwi-la?+lhe=já n-tse=já na tjua?.

We accustom our children to waking up early.

PRO has a wide distribution in Amuzgo:

Appearing in all complex verbs of the type TAM_{PL}-PRE_{PL}+v=SUB_{PL} in which V are verb roots

Preverbs make up a large inventory of light verbs marking a majority of verbs:

PV+	PLURAL MARKED VERB ROOT	SUBJECT CONTROLLED PRO CONSTRUCTIONS
tsé+ do	ma-ntò- PROG.SG-spy.3SGA kwi-hntò=nà PROG.PL-PL.spy=3PLA	ma-tsé+[CP _{IP} PRO _j ntò· PÉ _j tshó ⁿ] PROG.SG-CAUS+spy.3SGA Pedr village He is informing/advising the village. kwi-la?+[CP _{IP} PRO _j ntò·=ná _j tshó ⁿ] PROG.PL-CAUS.PL+spy=3PLA village They are informing/advising the village.
kwhi? ⁺ remove	ma-lkwe? [·] PROG.SG-return.3SGA He is returning (home).	ma-kwhi? [·] + [CP _{IP} PRO _j lkwe? [·] Nacio _j w?a] PROG.SG-remove+return.3SGA Ignacio house Ignacio is repossessing the house. kwi-thèi? ⁺ + [CP _{IP} PRO _j lkwe? [·] =ná _j w?a] PROG.PL-PL.remove+return.3PLA house They are repossessing the house.
ntò ⁺ come	kwi-lkweé=nà PROG.PL-PL.return=3PLA They are returning (home).	ntò ⁺ + [CP _{IP} PRO _j lkwe? [·] Maria _j] come.3SGA+return Maria goes back. nkio ⁺ + [CP _{IP} PRO _j lkwe? [·] =ná _j] come.3PLA+return=3PLA They go back.
há+ go	ma-kà=jé· ná·tá PROG.SG-sweep=3SGB road He is sweeping the road. kwi-ta=ntè·ná ná·tá PROG.PL-PL.sweep=3PLB road They are sweeping the road.	há+[CP _{IP} PRO _j ka=jé [·] ná·tá] go.3SGA+sweep=3SGB road He goes sweeping the road. ?ó+[CP _{IP} PRO _j ka=ntè ⁿ ná·tá] go.3PLA+sweep=3PLB road They go sweeping the road.

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