CHAPTER 6

The Distribution of Implicit Arguments in Paraguayan Guaraní

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1 Introduction

In Paraguayan Guaraní, cross-reference markers, independent pronouns and other noun phrases, as well as combinations thereof, may realize the arguments of the main predicate of a clause. In example (1a), the proto-patient argument of the transitive predicate stem \(-hayhu\) ‘love’ (realized as \(-rayhu\) for morphophonological reasons), which is the speaker, is realized by the first person singular set B cross-reference marker \(\text{che-} ‘\text{B1sg}'\) on the stem.2

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2 Paraguayan Guaraní examples are given in the standardized orthography of the language used in Paraguay (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura 2004; Velázquez-Castillo 2004: 142ff.), except that all postpositions are suffixed to their host. Following this orthography, stressed oral syllables are marked with an acute accent and stressed nasal syllables are marked with a tilde; acute accents are not written for normally accented words, which have stress on the final syllable. I use glosses specified in the Leipzig Glossing Rules and the following additional glosses: A/B: set A/B cross-reference marker, CONTRAST: contrastive topic, DES: desiderative modal, DIM: diminutive, EMPH: emphatic, JE: reflexive/passive, NOM. PROSP: nominal prospective aspect/modal, NOM.TERM: nominal terminative aspect, past:
The proto-agent argument, *Raul*, is not realized by a cross-reference marker but by a proper name. (Following Dowty (1991), I use the terms ‘proto-agent’ and ‘proto-patient’ to refer to the arguments of a transitive verb with the most agent- and patient-like properties, respectively.) In example (1b), the proto-agent argument, the speaker, is realized both by the first person singular proto-agent independent pronoun *che* ‘pron.ag.1sg’ and by the first person singular set A cross-reference marker *a-‘A1sg’.3

(1) Context: Who loves you?
      Raul B1sg-love
      ‘Raul loves me.’
   
      b. *Che* a-je-hayhu.
         pron.ag.1sg A1sg-JE-love
         ‘I love myself.’

In example (2), the proto-agent argument is realized both by the proper name *Toma* and by the third person cross-reference marker *o-‘A3* on the predicate stem -hayhu ‘love’. The proto-patient argument *José* is realized only by the proper name (marked with the postposition -pe; here, to identify it as a proto-patient; cf. Velázquez-Castillo 2004; Shain & Tonhauser 2011).

(2) *Toma* o-hayhu *José-pe.*
    Toma A3-love José-PE
    ‘Tomás loves José.’ (adapted from Velázquez-Castillo 2002b: 145)

Arguments may also be implicit, i.e., not realized by a cross-reference marker, an independent pronoun or some other noun phrase. In the second clause of

3 Examples not marked with a source were judged by native speaker consultants. An example without a diacritic was judged to be acceptable in the context given by all of the consultants with which it was elicited (typically four). An example marked with a hash mark (#) was judged to be unacceptable by all of the consultants with which it was elicited (again, typically four), and is hypothesized to be syntactically well-formed but unacceptable for semantic/pragmatic reasons. All examples from *Mîtãmî* ‘The Little Prince’ (Saint-Exupéry 2005) were checked with at least three consultants.