SYNTACTIC ALIGNMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF THETA-ROLE SUBGROUPS IN MEHINÁKU STATIVE VERBS

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Abstract: In this work, I present a first analysis of the syntactic alignment in the Mehináku (Arawak) language to show how this language behaves in terms of its different verbal predicates and the arguments that these predicates take. I argue that this language tends to manifest an active-stative alignment (or split ergativity, as proposed by Aikhenvald (1999, 2001, 2002, 2018, 2019) for other Arawak languages), since it is the semantic type of the verb that determines which type of argument functioning as subject will be taken and, moreover, in what syntactic position this argument will appear. I show that transitive verbs, agentive intransitives, non-agentive intransitives, and most stative intransitive verbs (type 1) align in the same way, taking as subject one of the pronominal proclitics of the language positioned *before* the verb, while a small portion of the stative intransitive verbs (type 2) align with the direct object of the transitive verb since it takes as its subject the full pronouns of the language positioned *after* the verb. Furthermore, I show that the subject of the transitive verb (A) and the subjects of the agentive, non-agentive, and type 1 intransitive verbs are marked with the thematic role of agent or experiencer, while, in turn, the object of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb of type 2 (So) are marked with the thematic role of theme or patient.

Keywords: Syntactic alignment. Theta-role. Stative verbs. Mehináku language.

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PREDICADO VERBAL E ALINHAMENTO SINTÁTICO EM MEHINÁKU: DISCUSSÕES E HIPÓTESES PRELIMINARES

Resumo: Apresento, neste trabalho, uma primeira análise do alinhamento sintático na língua Mehináku (Arawak), a fim de evidenciar como se comporta essa língua em termos de seus diferentes predicados verbais e dos argumentos que estes predicados tomam. Defendo que esta língua tende a manifestar um alinhamento ativo-estativo (ou de ergatividade cindida, como propõe Aikhenvald (1999, 2001, 2002, 2018, 2019), uma vez que é o tipo semântico do verbo que determina que tipo de argumento em função de sujeito será tomado e, mais ainda, em que posição sintática esse argumento irá figurar. Mostro que verbos transitivos, intransitivos agentivos, intransitivos não-agentivos e a maioria dos verbos intransitivos estativos (tipo 1) se alinham da mesma forma, tomando como sujeito um dos proclíticos pronominais da língua que se posiciona antes do verbo, enquanto uma pequena parcela dos verbos intransitivos estativos (tipo 2) se alinha com o objeto direto do verbo transitivo, já que toma como sujeitos os pronomes plenos da língua, que se posicionam após o verbo. Além disso, mostro que o sujeito do verbo transitivo (A) e os sujeitos dos verbos intransitivos agentivos, não-agentivos e intransitivos do tipo 1 são marcados com o papel temático de agente ou experimentador, enquanto, por sua vez, o objeto do verbo transitivo e o sujeito do verbo intransitivo do tipo 2 (So) são marcados com papel temático de tema ou paciente.

Palavras-chave: Alinhamento sintático. Papel-temático. Verbos estativos. Língua Mehináku.

1. Introduction

The aim of the paper is to present a first attempt at describing the syntactic alignment in Mehináku. This work is the result of the grammatical description of this language that I developed during my doctorate (DE FELIPE, 2020c), and it helps to fill the gap that exists in the scientific knowledge of the Arawak Xinguan languages, especially in terms of their syntax, which lacks any further description. In the classification of Arawak languages proposed by Aikhenvald (1999), for example, although the Pareci-Xingu group is one of the main branches of the family, the Xingu subgroup - which includes the Mehináku, Wauja, and Yawalapiti languages - is very little described or known despite the high degree of vulnerability of these languages (MOSELEY, 2010). The Mehináku and Wauja languages have around 300 to 400 speakers each (DE FELIPE, 2020c; POSTIGO, 2014), while Yawalapiti is practically extinct with around 3 speakers.[2]

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2 Aikhenvald's (1999) classification, for example, already considers Yawalapiti as extinct.

The linguistic production available on the Xinguan Arawak languages is limited to papers and dissertations that provide preliminary grammatical descriptions of topics in phonology and morphology. For Wauja and Yawalapiti, there are available works by Carvalho (2016a/b/c); Corbera Mori (2004, 2010, 2012); Jackson and Richards (1966); Mujica (1992); Postigo (2014); and Richards (1973, 1977, 1988), Richard and Jackson (1960). On Mehináku, specifically, the available works are limited to a set of word lists (MARTIUS, 1961 [1895], 1863; STEINEN, 1940 [1886]); a master's thesis on introductory aspects of phonology (SILVA, 1990); and articles on aspects of phonology and morphology (CARVALHO, 2015; AWETI, 2014; CÂMARA-CABRAL *et al.*, 2014; CORBERA MORI, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; MEHINÁKU; FRANCHETTO, 2015; CORBERA MORI; DO CARMO FERREIRA, 2019; DE FELIPE, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2019, 2018a, 2018b).[3]

De Felipe (2020c) was the first work to describe some syntactic issues and give a broader view of various grammatical aspects of the Mehináku language. There is no comprehensive audiovisual record of any of the Arawak languages of the Xingu subgroup, nor are there dictionaries, reference grammars, pedagogical grammars, collections of transcribed texts, or any more in-depth syntactic analysis, especially on the issue of alignment, which is important to linguistic comparison and to understanding how the languages of the family are organized. During my last period of fieldwork, I collected videos of stories and elicited some data that currently represents the only corpus recorded in the Mehináku language in open access. In view of these issues, and above all in light of the vulnerability and imminent risk of these languages disappearing, it is essential and urgent to continue research involving the linguistic description of these languages, such as the one I present in this paper.

2. Data collection and research methodology

The examples presented in this work come from the collection of language data carried out during my fieldwork between 2016 and 2019 and the subsequent treatment of this data in terms of translation, transcription, and glossing. These data were collected in the Utawana village (see §3) and translated and analyzed with the help of five bilingual

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3 It is also important to highlight that, although I mentioned only the linguistic production about the Mehináku, given the purpose of the paper, some works with an anthropological bias on this language deserve full recognition, including: Gregor (1982), whose work "Mehináku: the drama of daily life in an Upper Xingu village" is inaugural in terms of a broader description of the social life of the Mehináku people; and Costa (1986, 1988, 1997); Galvão (1950, 1953); Gregor (1963, 1970, 1977, 1988, 1994, 2001, 2002); and Medeiros (1993). Other linguistic-anthropological works with other Xinguan Arawak languages, such as Ball (2007, 2008, 2011, 2014), and Ireland (1991), for example, are also noteworthy, as they contribute to the linguistic comparison between Mehináku and its sister languages.

(*Portuguese-Mehináku*) collaborators, who made up the work team and whom I thank in advance: *Waxamani Mehináku*, *Yutá Mehináku*, *Kauruma Mehináku*, *Wayeru Mehináku*, and *Assalu Mehináku*.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to carry out extensive and in-depth linguistic training of the indigenous collaborators due to the limited budget available for fieldwork and permanence in the village. The entire cost of travel, including staying in the village, materials used for data collection, and payment of Mehináku collaborators, both those who only provided the data and those who provided the data and helped in the translation (the aforementioned work team), was covered only with financial resources from the researcher's doctoral grant, financed by *The São Paulo Research Foundation –* FAPESP (Process: 2016/18391-4). Despite this, I did preliminary training with the speakers, guiding them on how to identify words and morphemes in their language, segment words into smaller meaningful units, and understand the grammatical meanings of these units (morphemes, especially). For the training of speakers, I used as a theoretical basis Maia's (2006) book "*Manual de Linguística: subsídios para a formação de professores indígenas na área de linguagem*" (Linguistics Manual: Material for the Training of Indigenous Teachers').

Data collection comprised two stages: (i) recording of speech samples from stories, daily reports, songs, and speeches of indigenous leaders; and (ii) lexical and grammatical elicitation of the data. The examples that I present in this work, when taken from traditional stories, songs, or personal reports, are identified with the name of the story in parentheses at the end of the translation of the example. In collaboration with the indigenous people, I partially translated a set of stories. These stories were then analyzed and glossed. The indigenous collaborators used the *ELAN* software to segment and translate the stories, while the researcher, with the help of the collaborators, checked the translation and performed the theoretical analysis of the data.

In all fieldwork, I collected 14 traditional stories and eight personal accounts from the speakers (such as accounts of their marriages, moving villages, fights between them, etc.), in addition to several excerpts from everyday conversations. Only a small part of this data is completely translated and glossed. The traditional stories from which the excerpt used as an example in this paper are: (i) *Itxuna* 'timbó' (a plant used to stun fish), story of timbó, who became a woman; (ii) *Kukühü* 'manioc worm', story of the little manioc worm that makes people sick when touched; (iii) *Walama* 'anaconda', story of the man who became an anaconda; and (iv) *Yanumaka Yalaki* 'black jaguar', story of the black jaguar who lives at the bottom of the river.

Elicitation was performed based on questionnaires for specific elicitation purposes, as suggested by Samarin (1967), Kibrik (1977), Payne (1997), Vaux and Cooper (1999), Dixon (2007), and others. I also considered the suggested research questions presented by "The Language Descriptive Studies Questionnaire" (COMRIE; SMITH, 1977). The interlinear glossing of text follows the parameters of "The Leipzig Glossing Rules", developed by the Department of Linguistics of the Max Plank Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig.

Each fieldwork lasted approximately 20-30 days. The analysis presented in this paper is preliminary, as it is a first attempt to understand syntactic alignment in Mehináku. More data is needed for the complete identification of this phenomenon, as well as it is still necessary to translate most of the stories already collected, which is why I apologize in advance for any lack of more in-depth data on syntactic alignment in the language. I intend to seek greater funding to carry out more extensive fieldwork, which will allow for adequate training of indigenous collaborators and a more detailed description of the language.

3. The Mehináku people and their language

The Mehináku[4] (or *Imiehünaku*[5], as this people calls itself) Indians of central Brazil are one of several peoples living along the Xingu River, one of the great tributaries of the Amazon (GREGOR, 1982). The Mehináku people, speaking the Mehináku language, are inhabitants of the cultural area known as the Upper Xingu (in Mato Grosso State, Brazil), and are part of a large complex of peoples who share many similarities - especially in relation to culture - but have distinct languages and histories (ISA, 2006).

According to Corbera Mori (2008), unlike some other indigenous peoples, in the case of the Mehináku, there is a close correlation between the population size and the number of speakers. All members of the Mehináku villages speak their traditional language. Men over 60 are monolingual, speaking only the indigenous language. Similarly, older women speak only Mehináku. Some younger women understand Portuguese but speak very little. Many young men, by contrast, speak Portuguese with some fluency. However,

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4 ISO code: 639-3 mmh/ Glottolog code: mehi1240. Latitude: -12.5423/ Longitude: -53.2403.

5 The name "Mehináku", by which they are currently known, is the result of phonological accommodation to Portuguese due to the difficulty of non-indigenous people to pronounce the sounds of this language, especially the central vowel [ɨ], orthographically represented by <ü>. The [i] following the nasal consonant is not the syllable nucleus but the spelling result of a palatalization of [m] when preceded by [i], as in [i.mje.hinaku].

when they go out to sell handicrafts in cities like Campinas, São Paulo, and Brasília, among others, they like to speak in their own language.

The Mehináku people currently live in four villages: Uyaipiyuku, the largest among the four; Utawana, the second largest; Kaupüna; and Aturua. The Utawana village is the closest to the urban perimeter - located about 35 kilometers from the city of Gaúcha do Norte (MT) - and maintains a certain proximity to the Kaupüna and Aturua villages, so it is possible to move from one to the other quickly - by car during the low river or by boat during the flood period. The Uyaipiyuku village is the farthest from the urban perimeter and is situated approximately 4 hours by boat from the Utawana village.

In my last fieldwork, I noticed a political split taking place in the Utawana village which, seems to be triggering a geographical subdivision of that village. Indigenous people agree, for example, that there are two villages in Utawana: Utawana village, which is larger and where the circle with 11 traditional Xinguan houses is located; and Kurisevo village, named for the river to which it is closer than the Utawana village, where about 7 or 8 families live in houses generally made of wood. Given the Mehináku migration trajectory, which evidences an intense change of villages due to conflicts and socio-political issues, it is possible that in the not-too-distant future, the total number of Mehináku villages could perhaps increase to five.

Regarding Mehináku demography, there is no consensus among researchers on the exact current number of indigenous people of this ethnicity living in the aforementioned villages, and the numbers may vary between 200 (MOSELEY, 2010), 300 (CORBERA MORI, 2011, 2012), and 350 (AWETÍ, 2014). In De Felipe (2020c), I presented an approximate number of 400 people, but in a recent survey, I conducted a recount, excluding from the total indigenous people of other ethnicities who live among the Mehináku (mainly because of marriages), and the total number of indigenous people suffered a sharp drop. The current number of indigenous people living in the four Mehináku villages is approximately 326 (see De Felipe, 2020c, p. 46-64).

The Mehináku language belongs to the Arawak family. In Aikhenvald's classification (1999, p. 67-70), the Mehináku, together with the Wauja and the Yawalapiti, is included in the Pareci-Xingu group, Xingu subgroup.

4. Arawak languages and syntactic alignment

Aikhenvald (1999, 2002, 2018, and 2019) argues that all Arawak languages are highly polysynthetic, with few prefixes and many suffixes. For Aikhenvald (2018, p. 15), the

essence of split-ergative marking (split-ergative or active-stative) in Arawak languages is the following: the subject of an intransitive verb (S) can be marked/expressed differently depending on the meaning of the verb: the subject of the stative intransitive verb (S) - that is, that verb that refers to states (being rich, being poor), qualities (good, bad), and uncontrolled actions (crying, remembering, forgetting) - is marked in the same way as the object of the transitive verb (O). This subject is referred to as (So), where "o" refers to the object of the transitive verb (i.e., to the similarity of marking between the stative verb argument and the transitive verb object).

On the other hand, the subject of the active intransitive verbs (S) – a group that includes verbs that indicate controlled actions, including movement (go, stay, arrive) – is marked in the same way as the subject of the transitive verb (A). This subject is referred to as (Sa), where "a" refers to the agent subject of the transitive verb (i.e., to the similarity of marking between the subject of the active intransitive sentence and the agentive subject of the transitive). It is also common in Arawak languages for the object marking of transitive verbs to be done through suffixes or enclitics on the verb.

Mehináku is in fact an active-stative language, as Aikhenvald argues, since the meaning of the verb determines the type of syntactic agreement established in this language, but there is a fundamental difference between the classes of intransitive verbs, as I show in the following sections.

5. Syntactic alignment and identification of theta-role subgroups in Mehináku stative verbs

It is necessary to present the set of pronouns in Mehináku – which is essential for the development of the argument that I will make throughout the paper – before dealing with the verbal predicate and the syntactic alignment itself.

In Mehináku, as in other Arawak languages (PAYNE, 1991; AIKHENVALD, 1999), there is only one set of personal pronouns that encode the categories of person (1, 2, and 3) and number (singular and plural). Although the verb meaning is an important parameter in argument type selection, both verbs denoting more control and less control, and even nouns and postpositions, will receive the same set of proclitics, represented by the forms I present below (cf. Table 1). This set is composed of free pronouns and their respective procliticized forms, which differ as to the word class they are attached to: if the procliticized forms are attached to nouns, they function as possessors (genitive), and if verbs or postpositions, they function as subjects or postposition argument, respectively.

Pronominal proclitics cannot function in Mehináku as objects of transitive verbs since this function is performed by free pronouns. In addition, the proclitic establishes a relationship of agreement with the full pronoun (agreement with the subject) in cases where both appear in the sentence. In cases where the free pronoun does not appear because it is not obligatory, the proclitic functions as a subject (see example in (1)), being the mandator in this case. Finally, in cases where the subject is a noun phrase (like a proper name, for example), the pronominal proclitic may or may not occur.

The only difference I could notice in terms of the distinction between verbs, nouns, and postpositions in relation to taking proclitics is in the third person: a few verbs, both transitive and intransitive, do not grammatically mark the subject through a pronoun, while names and postpositions use *i̶=*. The table below shows the full and reduced (proclitics) forms of the pronouns in Mehináku (DE FELIPE, 2020c: 160):

Table 1. Pronouns in Mehináku

Gloss	Free pronouns[6]	Reduced form of the pronouns (personal proclitics)	
		__V	__C
1sɢ	natu	n= ~	nu=
2sɢ	pitsu	p= ~	pi=
3sɢ/ᴘʟ	Ø=	i̶n= ~	i̶ni̶= ~ i̶=
1ᴘʟ	aitsu	au= ~	a=
2ᴘʟ	jitsu	j= ~	ji=

Fonte: De Felipe (2020c, p. 160)

Having presented the pronouns, I now begin to analyze the verbal predicate and syntactic alignment in Mehináku. As far as valence is concerned, Mehináku verbs can be divided into transitives, which require two obligatory arguments (an agent/subject and an object); intransitives, which admit only one argument (a subject); and bitransitives, which take a subject and more than one object as arguments.

Transitive verbs can be divided into two types in Mehináku: direct transitives and indirect transitives. In direct transitive constructions, the subject, whether pronominal (1) or lexical (2), precedes the verb, which requires as a complement an object to its right, represented by a noun phrase (1) or by a full pronoun (2), as shown below:

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6 Free (or full) pronouns are the non-procliticized counterparts of pronominal morphemes. These pronouns correspond to the pronouns themselves plus the focusing morpheme *-tu ~ -tsu* (palatalized under the influence of [i]). Although these pronouns are composed by the focuser -tu, I will always represent them without this segmentation because I believe that the forms of the free pronouns are already grammaticalized in such a way that, when the focuser appears attached to the pronoun, it does not always indicate, in fact, focusing.

(1)   Speaker 1:   *ahã*   *pi=hipialu=pai?*
                    INTERJ,   2SG=be.hungry=IPFV
                    'So, are you hungry?

        Speaker 2:   *hehe*   *ni=hipijalu=pai=*
                    INTERJ,   1SG=be.hungry=IPFV
                    'Yes, I am hungry'

        Speaker 2:   (**natu**) *kuta*   ***n**=aitʃa=pai=hã*   ***kupati**=hã*
                    1SG   DESID   1SG=eat=IPFV=ENF   fish=ENF
                    'I want to eat fish' (Itxuna)

(2)   ***Atapulu***   *u=nupa=pai*   ***pitsu***
        Atapulu   3=see=IPFV   2SG
        'Atapulu is watching you (lit. seeing you)'

The Subject (A) of direct transitive clauses always precedes the verb, while the Object (O), whether lexical or pronominal, follows it. With specific regard to the pronouns, it is possible to notice that the proclitics, which are reduced forms of the full pronouns of the language, always appear as subjects, while the full pronouns figure in the Object position. Full pronouns can also appear as emphatic subjects in transitive constructions, as in (1) and (3), but their use is optional. Only the pronominal subject, represented by one of the personal proclitics in the verb, is obligatory.

In indirect transitive constructions, the verb requires as a complement an indirect object, which can be represented in language by a noun phrase (3) or by a postpositioned pronominal proclitic (4):

(3)   *(**Natu**)*   ***nu**=kiʂuta=la*   ***Atapulu***   *ɨ=u*
        1SG   1SG=cut=FUT   Atapulu   3=DAT
        'I will cut (this) for Atapulu'

(4)   ***nu**=waitʃa=pai*   ***ji**=**tsenu**=wi=ku*
        1SG=play=IPFV   2PL=COM=REP=DECL

        'I am playing with you'

In these constructions, the subject of the verb is also represented by the pronominal proclitics, as in direct transitives, but the indirect object, when it is a pronoun, will always be represented by the attached forms of the pronouns (pronominal proclitics) and not by the free forms, as we saw for constructions with transitive verbs. Both the attached forms of the pronouns and the full noun need to be postpositioned to appear in the indirect object position.

The bitransitive sentence (or direct and indirect transitive) is one that admits two verbal internal arguments. In Mehináku, one of these arguments is a noun phrase in direct

object position (5)-(6) and a postpositioned pronominal (5) or noun phrase (6) in indirect object position:

	A	V	O[direct]		O[indirect]
(5)	*Pitsu*	*ekeku-wa-ta*	*[ṣa*	*ṣepi]*	*[ni=piri]*
	2sg	show-pfv-caus	dem	bench	1sg=ben

'You showed me the bench' (lit. Made me see the bench)

	A=V		O[direct]	O[indirect]	
(6)	*nu=muka=wa*		*[tuapi=tsai]*	*[Paulo*	*i=u]*
	1sg=give=pfv		straw.mat =dim	Paulo	3=dat

'I gave the straw mat to Paulo'

From the examples presented above, it is possible to observe that in both types of transitive constructions, the subject precedes the verb, both in constructions in which the subject is performed through a full name (AVO) and in those in which it is performed through one of the pronominal proclitics (A=VO). The pronominal object, on the other hand, although it is obligatorily placed after the verb, is realized through a full pronoun in direct transitive verbs and by a pronominal postpositioned proclitic in indirect transitive verbs.

Constructs with intransitive verbs, in contrast, are not so uniform, because the argument required by the verb can change depending on the type of intransitive verb. In Mehináku, unlike other Arawak languages such as Paresi (BRANDÃO, 2014), there is only one set of pronominal proclitics that function as subjects of different types of intransitive verbs. What happens is the selection of the same set of proclitics and free pronouns, which differ in terms of the position in which they occur in relation to the verb, depending on the type of intransitive verb. For this reason, I choose to separate the constructions with intransitive verbs into two groups according to the type of semantic behavior of these verbs and in relation to the syntactic position of the nominal and pronominal arguments required by them.

The (i) first group, referred to in this paper as type 1, is semantically formed by the agentive, non-agentive, and stative intransitive verbs, as I show below. Syntactically, the argument in subject position will always appear in pre-verbal position, as we have seen with the subjects of transitive verbs.

I first present constructions with agentive intransitive verbs, which are monoargumental constructions in which the verb requires an agent subject who takes control of an action (VELUPILLAI, 2012). In the examples below, I present constructions with lexical (7) and pronominal (8) subject:

(7)　　**eniʂa**=nau　　　　eʐuhɨ-ta=pai=ku=hã
　　　　man=PL fish.hook-VBLZ-IPFV=DECL=ENF
　　　　　　　'men are fishing' (and)

　　　　tineʂu=nau　　　　awa-kulata=pai=ku=hã
　　　　woman=PL　　　　VBLZ-aluminum.pan(loan)=IPFV=DECL=ENF
　　　　'women are cooking'

(8)　　(**Aitsu**)　　　　　**a**=malalaku=wa
　　　　1PL　　　　　　　1PL=scream=PFV
　　　　'we screamed'

The non-agentive intransitive verbs, on the other hand, are those that, in general, take as subject an undergoer participant (patient-like/experiencer), in the sense that it does not exercise control over the action described by the predicate. In Mehináku, examples of non-agentive verbs are: *tawina* 'to live' (9) and *eteme* 'to hear' (10). Note that, as in agentives, the lexical (9) or pronominal (10) subject precedes the verb:

(9)　　*jukaka-ne*　　**walama**　　*tawɨna=pai*　　*putiʂata=ku=hã*,
　　　　thence-DIR　　anaconda　　live=IPFV　　　on.riverbed=DECL=ENF
　　　　'That's why the anaconda lives on the riverbed' (Walama)

(10)　　pi=tsineʂu=la=nau　　　　ekemeju-ta　　　　natu=wi=ku
　　　　2SG=woman=POSS=PL　　　curse-CAUS　　　　1SG=REP=DECL
　　　　'The women in your village were cursing me'.

　　　　n=eteme-tsu　　　　kani=ku=hã　　　　pi=tsineʂu=la=nau
　　　　1SG=hear-FOC　　　　DEM=DECL=ENF　　　2SG=woman=POSS=PL
　　　　'I heard those women from your village (literally: I hear your village women)' (Itxuna)

Type 1 intransitive stative verbs that I present below, as well as the transitives and intransitives presented above, mark the subject by means of proclitics or by nouns that occur before the verb. The type 1 stative verbs seem to semantically denote transient states of the subjects, such as being sick or being afraid. See some examples:

(11)　　**tineʂu**　　　　kau-tai=pai
　　　　woman　　　　hurt=DIM=IPFV
　　　　'the woman is sick'

(12)　　*ahã*　　　　　**pi**=hipialu=pai?
　　　　INTERJ　　　　2SG=be.hungry=IPFV
　　　　'Oh, are you hungry?'

　　　　hehe　　　　**ni**=hipialu=pai=hã
　　　　INTERJ,　　　1SG=be.hungry=IPFV=ENF
　　　　'Yes, I am hungry'

natu	kuta	n=aitʃa=pai=hã	kupatɨ=hã
1SG	DESID	1SG=eat=IPFV=ENF	fish=ENF

'I want to eat fish' (Itxuna)

(13) ***a****=kulata=pai,* ***a****=kau=tai* *pijala=pai*
1PL=be.hot=IPFV 1PL=hurt=DIM DUB=IPFV
'We are hot. I think we may be sick'

After presenting the syntactic behavior of type 1 intransitive verbs, a relationship could be established between them from a semantic point of view: all these verbs, i.e., the agentive, non-agentive, and stative intransitive, seem to be marked with the thematic role of **experiencer.** It now remains for us to verify the behavior of the last type of intransitive verb, as I present below.

Finally, (ii) the second group, referred to as Type 2 intransitive stative verbs, differs both semantically and syntactically from the other intransitive verbs presented above. Semantically, these verbs seem to indicate non-transient states of subjects or states that have persisted for a long time (like being sick for a long time, being tired for a long time, etc.). While the subjects of type 1 stative intransitive verbs and non-agentive verbs are marked with the thematic role of experiencer, the subjects of type 2 stative intransitive verbs seem to be marked with the semantic role of **theme**.

Syntactically, type 2 statives behave differently from the other verbs presented so far, both in terms of the type of subject they take and in relation to the position these subjects assume in the sentence: when pronominal, the subject taken by the verb will not be a proclitic of person but the free forms of the pronouns. Furthermore, both lexical and pronominal subjects follow the verb instead of preceding it, as happens with transitive verbs and other presented intransitives.

(14) *kulata=pai* ***kami*** *ni=piri* *ʂa=hã*
be.hot=IPFV sun 1SG=BEN DEM=ENF
'This sun is hot for me'

(15) *kulata=pai* ***pitsu****,* *n=itsu-pa-lu*!
be.hot =IPFV 2SG 1SG=daughter-EST-FEM
'You are hot, my daughter!'

 n=itsu=pa=lu *akama=pai=ku=hã* *ahã*
1SG= daughter-EST-FEM die=IPFV=DECL=ENF INTERJ
'My daughter is dying, oh my! (speaking to the shaman)' (Kukühü)

(16) une=pei=ku p=ija ulei-tʃe=ku
person=IPFV=DECL 2SG=go manioc-CLF.flat=DECL
'(if) someone/you goes/go to the manioc field...'

amunuja   ***pi****= tʃene-tɨ=ku=hã*
many/a.lot   2SG=manioc-CLF.seed=DECL=ENF
'and your manioc is very plentiful/abundant...'

kitepe*-mɨna=pai=ku*   *kukɨhi=hã*
be.happy-INTENS=IPFV=DECL   kukɨhi=ENF
'Kukühü is very happy' (Kukühü)

(17)   ***kau****=pai*   *kata*   *ai.*   *epehe=pei*   *kanati*
       hurt=IPFV   DEM   pepper   3.burn=IPFV   mouth
       'That pepper is hot. It burns the mouth'

With the examples of transitive and intransitive constructions presented, it is possible, then, to resume some assumptions regarding syntactic alignment in Mehináku. The first syntactic alignment relationship that I establish for the Mehináku is the one between the subject of transitive verbs (A) and the subject of agentive, non-agentive and type 1 stative verbs, which are grouped in the same way syntactically: all subjects, whether pronominal or lexical, always appear before the verb, in addition to all pronominal subjects being marked by the same set of pronominal proclitics attached to the left of the verbs, as shown in the following examples, in which I re-present: intransitive agentive verbs in (18)-(19), non-agentive intransitive verbs in (20)-(21), type 1 stative intransitive verbs in (22) and direct (23)-(24) and indirect (25)-(26) transitive verbs:

(18)   ***ni****=hɨmaitsa=wa*
        1SG=run=PFV
        'I was running'

(19)   ***eniʂa****=**nau***   *eʂuhɨ-ta=pai=ku=hã*,
        man=PL fish.hook-VBLZ=IPFV=DECL=Enf
        'the men are fishing'

(20)   *jukaka-ne*   ***walama***   *tawɨna=pai*   *putɨʂata=ku=hã,*
        thence-DIR   anaconda   live=IPFVon.riverbed=DECL=ENF
        'That's why the anaconda lives on the riverbed' (Walama)

(21)   pi=tsineʂu=la=nau   ekemeju-ta   natu=wɨ=ku
        2SG=woman=POSS=PL   curse-CAUS   1SG=REP=DECL
        'The women in your village were cursing me'.

        n*=eteme-tsu*   *kani=ku=hã*   *pi=tsineʂu=la=nau*
        1SG=hear-FOC   DEM=DECL=ENF   2SG=woman=POSS=PL
        'I heard those women from your village (literally: I hear your village women)' (Itxuna)

(22)   ***n****=a-maka-na-tuwa=pai,*   ***papa***   *kau=pai*
        1SG=VBLZ-hammock-LOC-REFL=IPFV   father   hurt=IPFV
        'I'm sad [I'm in my bed], (my) father is sick'

(23) ***mama***   *tuma=pai*   *[makula*   *weke-tɨpe]*
      mother   do=IPFV   clay.pot   big-PL
      'Mommy is making big clay pots'

(24) ***nu***=*nupa*   *ɨ=nai*   *[janumaka]*
      1SG=see   3=LOC   jaguar
      'I saw the jaguar there'

(25) ***amunau***   *kajajaka=pai*   *pi=piri*
      cacique/chief   speak=IPFV   2SG=BEN
      'the chief is talking to you'

(26) ***nu***=*waitʃa=pai*   ***ji***=*tsenu=wi=ku*
      1SG=play=IPFV   2PL=COM=REP=DECL
      'I am playing with you'

The comparison of the sentence in (22) with the sentence in (17), presented earlier, is essential for the defense of my hypothesis that the difference in behavior between the intransitive verbs is a matter of thematic role. In (17), we have *<kau=pai kata ai>* 'the pepper burns' (literally, 'the pepper is sore/hot'), with a subject postponed because it has a thematic role of **theme** (it is a characteristic of the pepper to cause sore/to burn). In (22), on the other hand, we have *<papa kau=pai>* 'my father is sick', with the subject preposed to the verb, indicating that this subject has the thematic role of **experiencer**. In other words, he is experiencing (a) pain, which is not an inherent characteristic.

The second type of syntactic alignment that can be seen in Mehináku is that which aligns the subject of the intransitive stative verb of type 2 with the object of the transitive verb. In this alignment, the subject of the type 2 stative verb, whether pronominal or lexical, always appears after the verb, and both the pronominal subject of the intransitive verb and the object of the direct transitive verb are expressed through free pronouns. Compare the examples of intransitive verbs with lexical and pronominal subjects in (27)-(28) with those of transitive verbs with pronominal subjects in (29)-(30):

(27) une=pei=ku   p=ija   ulei-tʃe=ku
      person=IPFV=DECL   2SG=go   manioc-CLF.flat=DECL
      '(if) someone/you goes/go to the manioc field...'

      amunuja   ***pi***=*tʃene-tɨ=ku=hã*
      many/a.lot   2SG=manioc-CLF.seed=DECL=ENF
      'and your manioc is very plentiful/abundant...'

      kitepe-*mɨna=pai=ku*   ***kukɨhi***=*hã*
      be.happy-INTENS=IPFV=DECL   kukɨhi=ENF
      'Kukǘhü is very happy' (Kukǘhü)

(28) *kulata=pai*   ***pitsu***,   *n=itsu-pa-lu!*
      be.hot =IPFV   2SG   1SG=daughter-EST-FEM
      'You are hot, my daughter!'

      n=itsu=pa=lu   *akama=pai=ku=hã*   *ahã*
      1SG= daughter-EST-FEM   die=IPFV=DECL=ENF   INTERJ
      'My daughter is dying, oh my! (speaking to the shaman)' (Kukühü)

(29) *au=**nupa***   ***jitsu***
      1PL=see   2PL
      'we see you'

(30) *pu=**nupa***   ***aitsu***
      2SG=see   1PL
      'you see us'

It is evident, then, that the syntactic alignment in Mehináku, although it follows active-stative patterns, as occurs in several Arawak languages, also presents differences with regard, above all, to the classes of intransitive verbs. From the examples above, we conclude that in the Mehináku language there is the following syntactic alignment: the subject of the transitive verb (A) and the subjects of the agentive, non-agentive, and type 1 intransitive verbs are marked with the thematic role of **agent** or **experiencer**, while, in turn, the object of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb of type 2 (So) are marked with the thematic role of **theme** or **patient**. Although there is no change in the syntactic alignment of the language, what the data seems to show is that there is a division within the class of stative verbs between preposed subjects, which reflex experiencer thematic roles, and theme/patient roles, which appear postposed. This work shows, therefore, in addition to how syntactic alignment works in language, how observed subjects and objects are derived in syntax and receive their theta-roles in Mehináku.

6. Final considerations

This paper, which is far from conclusive, presented a first analysis of syntactic alignment in Mehináku, detailed the problems experienced in describing this phenomenon, and proposed some initial hypotheses. I showed that this language tends to manifest an active-stative alignment (or split ergativity, as proposed by Aikhenvald (1999, 2001, 2002, 2018, and 2019) for some Arawak languages), since it is the semantic type of the verb that determines which type of argument in function of subject will be taken and, even more, in what syntactic position this argument will appear in the language.

This phenomenon needs to be further investigated, however, because it is not yet clear whether this small class of intransitive verbs that aligns with the object of transitive

verbs is, in fact, composed of prototypically stative verbs. Although I have defended, so far, that this class is, in fact, verbal, it is necessary to investigate its behavior in greater depth since one of the hypotheses that could be proposed is that this is a class of adjectives working predicatively. Determining a class of adjectives in Mehináku is quite complex because data has shown that words that could be classified as adjectives can be given the same grammatical formatives (tense and aspect, for example) as verbs. This is an important analysis to be refined because the lack of adjective class is a feature of prototypically active-stative languages, according to Klimov (1974). The proposal, therefore, is to expand the dataset by translating more texts already collected during my doctoral research in order to determine the status of this small class of verbs.

This work, although preliminary, is important for the development of linguistic science, especially for the description and knowledge of indigenous languages, because it allows us to understand how Mehináku, one of the Arawak languages of the Xinguano subgroup, a very little studied and documented subgroup, syntactically behaves.

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Glosses

BEN	Benefactivo	IPFV	Imperfectivo
CAUS	Causativo	LOC	Locativo
CLF	Classificador	PFV	Perfectivo
COM	Comitativo	PL	Plural
DAT	Dativo	POSS	Possessivo
DECL	Declarativo	REFL	Reflexivo
DESID	Desiderativo	REP	Reporativo
DIM	Diminutivo	SG	Singular
DIR	Diretivo/Direcional	VBLZ	Verbalizador
ENF	Enfático	1	Primeira pessoa
EST	Estativo	2	Segunda pessoa
FUT	Futuro	3	Terceira pessoa
INTENS	Intensificador		
INTERJ	Interjeição		