

HIERARCHICAL AGREEMENT AND SPLIT INTRANSITIVITY IN REYESANO¹

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This paper discusses, for the first time, the peculiar system of person marking in Reyesano, an Amazonian language from northern Bolivia. Person marking in Reyesano is quite unusual. First, it is discontinuous, involving a prefix slot for the indexation of first and second persons and a suffix slot for the indexation of third persons. Second, the use of the person markers in the slots is conditioned by the complex interaction of distinct factors, involving the grammatical function of the participants (S, A, and O), their ranking on a person hierarchy (2 > 1 > 3), and their number (singular vs. plural).

[KEYWORDS: person hierarchy, Reyesano, Tacanan languages, Amazonian languages]

1. Introduction. Reyesano (also known as Maropa) is an Amazonian language of northern Bolivia. It belongs to the Tacanan family (together with Araona, Cavineña, Ese Ejja, and Tacana). This language is moribund, with about a dozen fluent speakers left; these speakers are all more than 60 years old and most of them have a dominant command of Spanish over Reyesano. Reyesano has never been described or documented before. The present study is based on my own fieldwork (eight months), conducted between 2004 and 2005, which resulted in the collection of a corpus of about 5,800 sentences corresponding to approximately 12 hours of recorded, transcribed, and

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translated texts of various genres (including about one hour of conversation) in addition to about 2,100 sentences elicited in controlled settings.² I have also produced the draft of a dictionary and a grammatical sketch (Guillaume 2006*b*).

One of the most noteworthy features of Reyesano is its person-marking system, which involves distinct verbal slots for the person markers and a combination of distinct conditioning factors for their use. The first part of the paper is a detailed description of this system. It begins with basic facts concerning the structure of the clause and the predicate in Reyesano (2) and continues with a presentation of the use of the person markers in intransitive clauses (3) and transitive clauses (4). In the second part of the paper, this system is discussed within the context of linguistic typology. I propose that the person-marking patterns of Reyesano are best interpreted in terms of a combination of a hierarchical system combined with a split intransitive system (5). The third part considers (and refutes) an alternative analysis on both descriptive and typological grounds (6).

2. Reyesano: morphosyntactic profile. Reyesano is a head-marking language. NPs and independent pronouns in core functions (S, A, O)³ are unmarked for case⁴—unlike oblique NPs/independent pronouns, which take case/postpositional marking. Genitive/possessor pronouns have distinct shapes and must precede the possessee.⁵ The independent pronouns in core and genitive functions are listed in table 1.

² This corpus is archived at the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Programme (SOAS, London).

³ Abbreviations used in this paper are: A = most agentive argument of a transitive predicate; ASF = (dummy) adjective suffix; BEN = benefactive; BM = boundary marker; CONTR = contrastive; DESID = desiderative; DISC = discourse particle; ERG = ergative; FILL = filler; FOC = focus; FUT = future; GEN = genitive; IMPFV = imperfective; INTERJ = interjection; INV = inverse; LOC = locative; NEG = negative; O = most patientive argument of a transitive predicate; PL/pl = plural; REDUP = reduplication; REP = reportative; S = single argument of an intransitive predicate; SG/sg = singular; SAP = speech-act participant; UNCERT = uncertain.

⁴ As such, Reyesano is unique among the Tacanan languages, which are all essentially dependent-marking, making use of (ergative/absolutive) case-marking systems: Araona (Pitman 1980 and Emkow 2006), Cavineña (Guillaume 2004; 2006*a*; 2008), and Ese Eja (Chavarría 2003).

⁵ Reyesano vowel phonemes are: *i*, *e* (with allophones [e] and [ɛ] in free variation), *a* and *u* (written *u*; with allophones [u] and [o] in free variation). Reyesano consonant phonemes are: *p*, *^mb* (prenasalized bilabial voiced stop; written *b*), *t*, *k*, *kw*, *tʃ* (apico-alveolar voiceless affricate; written *ts*), *tc* (alveopalatal affricate; written *ch*), *ⁿdʒ* (prenasalized apico-alveolar voiced affricate; written *dz*), *s*, *c* (alveopalatal fricative; written *sh*), *h* (written *j*), *ð* (lingual-dental voiced fricative; written *d*), *r* (alveolar tap), *l*, *m*, *n*, *w* (with allophones [w] before *a* and [β] before *i* and *e*), and *j* (written *y*). Syllable structure is (C)V(V). Stress is predictable, falling on the penultimate syllable. Some words borrowed from Spanish have not been integrated into the Reyesano phonological system and are pronounced just as in Bolivian Spanish. In this study, they are written according to their Spanish orthography (e.g., the proper name *Casilda*, the place-name *Cozar*, the noun *patrón* ‘boss’, etc.).

TABLE 1
REYESANO INDEPENDENT PRONOUNS¹

	S, A, O		GEN	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	<i>eme</i>	<i>ekama</i>	<i>ki ~ ke</i> ²	<i>eka(da)</i>
2	<i>mi(w)e</i>	<i>mika(we)</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>mika</i>
3	<i>tu(w)e</i>	<i>tuna(we)</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>tuna(da)</i>

¹ The material in parentheses is optional: the full forms tend to be used in slow/careful speech and/or for emphasis/focus. At any rate, these variants have nothing to do with differences in grammatical functions.

² The form *ke* is used instead of *ki* by some speakers. Speakers using *ke* usually find *ki* acceptable. Speakers using *ki*, on the other hand, often refuse *ke*, suggesting that *ki* might be the traditional form.

TABLE 2
PREDICATE STRUCTURE

Slot A	Pronominal prefix
Slot B	TAM prefix
Slot C	Valency-changing prefix
Slot D	Incorporated noun
Slot E	VERB ROOT
Slot F	Auxiliary
Slot G	Valency-changing suffixes
Slot H	Aktionsart suffixes
Slot I	Desiderative suffix
Slot J	Pronominal suffix
Slot K	Aktionsart suffix
Slot L	TAM suffix

NPs and independent pronouns in core function are optional. When they are expressed, they tend to follow a VOA, VS order. However, this order is not fixed; it can be modified without altering the grammatical function assignment of the participants.

The verb/predicate structure of Reyesano is fairly complex. It can be described in terms of 12 slots (from A to L), as shown in table 2.

I briefly illustrate the verbal inflectional morphology (given in boldface in table 2). (For a more detailed discussion, see Guillaume 2006b.) Slots A and J are filled by obligatory pronominal markers (although not necessarily both at the same time; see the full discussion below). Slot A is filled by pronominal markers that distinguish person (first vs. second) and number (singular vs. plural) but not grammatical function (i.e., they can refer to all of S, A, and O). The pronominal prefixes are shown in table 3.

TABLE 3
REYESANO PRONOMINAL PREFIXES

PERSON	SG	PL
1	<i>m-</i>	<i>k-</i>
2	<i>mi-</i>	<i>mik-</i>

TABLE 4
PARADIGM OF TAM INFLECTIONS

<i>a- . . . -a</i>	'PAST'
<i>e- . . . -da</i> ¹	'IMPFV1'
<i>e- . . . -ani</i>	'IMPFV2'
<i>e- . . . -neti</i>	'IMPFV3'
<i>e- . . . -badze</i>	'IMPFV4'
<i>e- . . . -bu</i>	'IMPFV5'
<i>e-</i>	'FUT'

¹Occasionally, we find the form *e- . . . -de*, as in (11*b*) in the text. The exact conditions for the use of this variant are still unknown.

Slot J is filled by a marker *-ta* which I analyze as a third-person plural S marker in intransitive clauses and a third-person (singular or plural) A marker in transitive clauses. The exact meaning of *-ta*—i.e., whether third-person plural S or third-person A—is hardly ever ambiguous since in Reyesano, as in (apparently) any Tacanan language, most verbs have a strict transitivity value, being either intransitive or transitive (whether mono- or ditransitive).

Slots B and L are filled by obligatory TAM affixes. These consist of seven members, listed in table 4. There are six circumfixes (consisting of a prefix in slot B and a suffix in slot L) and one prefix (in slot B). These encode two tense distinctions—past vs. future—and two major aspectual distinctions—perfective (in the past) vs. imperfective (in any tense).⁶

The example in (1) shows a transitive verb root (slot E) marked by two prefixes (slot A and slot B) and two suffixes (slot J and slot L):⁷

⁶The aspectual distinctions encoded by the five imperfective circumfixes are very subtle and are not yet fully understood. In the glosses, these morphemes are differentiated by numbers from 1 to 5 (for more information, see Guillaume 2006*b*).

⁷Unless explicitly indicated, the examples provided in this study come from natural discourse (i.e., my corpus of recorded texts and conversation).

- (3b) *Eishe*^{E=be} *te* (*a*^B-)*a*^F-*ta*^J(-*a*^L) *te* *iba* *te* *waka*.
 let.go.of=DISC BM PAST-make-A3-PAST BM jaguar BM cow
 ‘The jaguar let go of the cow’.

Noninflecting verbs can be basic, as in (3), or derived, as in (4), where the transitive inflecting verb root *ina-* ‘grab’ has been turned into a non-inflecting verb stem *ina-ya* by the desiderative suffix *-ya* ‘DESID’ (slot I). (Another morphological process that derives a noninflecting verb is full reduplication; see the example in 16*a* below.)

- (4) *Ina*^E-*ya*^I *te* *e*^B-*a*^F-*ta*^J-*da*^L *te* [*ki* *paku*].
 grab-DESID BM IMPFV1-make-A3-IMPFV1 BM 1SG.GEN dog
 ‘(The giant anteater) wanted to grab my dog (with his claws)’.

Having laid down the major characteristics of the clause and the predicate structure in Reyesano, I now turn to a detailed presentation of the person-marking system, first in intransitive clauses (3), then in transitive clauses (4).

3. Person marking in intransitive clauses. In intransitive clauses, the pronominal prefix straightforwardly refers to the S, as illustrated with first-person S in (5) and with second-person S in (6). (Singular in *a* examples and plural in *b* examples.)

- (5a) *M-e-puti* *te* [*ki* *etai=du*].
 1SG-FUT-go BM 1SG.GEN house=LOC
 ‘I’m going to my house’.
- (5b) *Tupebe* *te* *k-a-puayu-a* *te* *etai=du*.
 then BM 1PL-PAST-come-PAST BM house=LOC
 ‘Then we came back home (lit., to the house)’.
- (6a) *Ai!* *Jiawe* *mi-(e-)manu* *jeda*.
 INTERJ now 2SG-FUT-die UNCERT
 ‘O dear, you (sg) might die’.
- (6b) [*Pea badzi*] *jeda* *te* *mik-e-puayu?*
 other month UNCERT BM 2PL-FUT-come
 ‘Maybe you (pl) will come back next month?’

There are no third-person pronominal prefixes but if a third-person intransitive S is plural, the verb is normally marked by a suffix *-ta* ‘3S.PL’. This can be seen by comparing (7*a*) to (7*b*) (both elicited examples) and (8*a*) to (8*b*) (both text examples). (Singular in *a* examples and plural in *b* examples.)

(7a) *A-manu-a te tuwe.*
 PAST-die-PAST BM 3SG

‘He died’. (elicited)

(7b) *A-manu-ta(-a) te tuna.*
 PAST-die-3S.PL-PAST BM 3PL

‘They died’. (elicited)

(8a) *A-wudzudzu-a te awadza.*
 PAST-run-PAST BM tapir

‘The tapir ran away (when I shot at it)’.

(8b) *A-wudzudzu-ta(-a) te [ki paku kwana].*
 PAST-run-3S.PL-PAST BM 1SG.GEN dog PL

‘My dogs were already running (searching for some game animal)’.

At the present time, it is not entirely clear whether or not *-ta* is obligatory when the S is a third person and is plural. In (7b), for example, Reyesano speakers rejected the form **a-manu-a*. In texts, however, I have a few examples where *-ta* is missing in that context. Usually, this happens when the S argument is inanimate, as in (9a), or in presentational constructions with the verb *ani* ‘sit, exist’, as in (9b).

(9a) [*Pebi semana*] *a-dawawa(-a) te [nada kwana].*
 one week PAST-ripen-PAST BM plantain PL

‘The plantains ripened within a week’.

(9b) *E-ani [ki buwi kwana] Cozar=du.*
 IMPFV-sit 1SG.GEN male.nephew PL El.Cozar=LOC

‘I have (male) nephews in El Cozar (lit., my male nephews sit in El Cozar)’.

4. Person marking in transitive clauses. In transitive clauses, the person prefixes do not reflect the grammatical functions (whether A or O) of the participants but rather signal their ranking on a person hierarchy. The SAPs (Speech-Act Participants, i.e., first and second persons) are higher than third and second is higher than first (i.e., $2 > 1 > 3$). In any given combination, the higher-ranked participant on this hierarchy takes precedence for the prefix slot. The third-person suffix *-ta*, on the other hand, does reflect its grammatical function, namely A.

In the following, I discuss the person-marking system of Reyesano by looking at the three different combinations: SAP/3 (4.1), 3/3 (4.2), and

SAP/SAP (4.3). In 4.4, I consider (and refute) the possibility that the transitive suffix *-ta* can be analyzed as a plural marker.

4.1. SAP/3 combinations. Transitive verbs used in clauses involving a SAP and a third-person participant have the following characteristics: (1) they carry a pronominal prefix that refers to the SAP, regardless of its grammatical function, and (2) they carry a third-person suffix *-ta* if the third-person participant is in A function. This is illustrated in (10) with combinations of first- and third-person singular participants:

- (10a) 1SG → 3SG
M-a-ba(-a) *chenu* *te* *berashi*.
 1SG-PAST-see-PAST EMPATHY BM sloth
 ‘I saw a sloth’. (*‘A sloth saw me’).

- (10b) 3SG → 1SG
M-a-ba-ta(-a) *te* [*ki* *patrón*].
 1SG-PAST-see-3A-PAST BM 1SG.GEN boss
 ‘My boss saw me’. (*‘I saw my boss’).

We can see that the verb indexes the first-person argument with the same prefix *m-*, whether it refers to the A (as in 10a) or to the O (as in 10b), and indexes the third person with the suffix *-ta* when it refers to the A (as in 10b) but not to the O (as in 10a).

The same characteristics can be observed with combinations of second- and third-person participants:

- (11a) 2SG → 3SG
Mi-(e-)tsaba *te* [*pea* *tiri*] *cha*.
 2SG-FUT-hear BM other melody CONTR
 ‘You are going to hear another melody (that I will play on my harmonica)’.

- (11b) 3SG → 2SG
E-pue-de *te* *karetu*, *mi-(e-)pacha-ta*.
 IMPFV1-come-IMPFV1 BM cart 2SG-FUT-stamp.on-3A
 ‘(Be careful!) A cart is coming and will run over you (lit., stamp on you)’.

The same principles operate whether the SAPs are singular, as in (10) and (11), or plural, as in (12):

(12a) 1PL → 3SG

K-a-maneme-a awadza.

1PL-PAST-kill-PAST tapir

‘We killed a tapir’. (*‘A tapir killed us’.)

(12b) 3SG → 1PL

K-e-dai-ta-da chenu te tue.

1PL-IMPV1-cure-3A-IMPV1 EMPATHY BM 3SG

‘(My niece) cures us’. (*‘We cure my niece’.)

As can be seen in (10b), (11b), and (12b), the third-person A marker *-ta* in transitive clauses, unlike the third-person S marker *-ta* in intransitive clauses, does not require a plural referent. Note, however, that it does not require a singular referent either, as illustrated in (13):

(13) 3PL → 1SG

Lasha te m-a-kachi-ta(-a) te [wabu kwana].

ALMOST BM 1SG-PAST-bite-3A-PAST BM peccary PL

‘The peccaries almost bit me’.

In all of the examples above, I have assumed that the verbs are transitive. However, one could propose an alternative analysis in which the verbs that take *-ta* are intransitive, in which case *-ta* would be interpreted as a detransitivizing morpheme, such as a passive marker. Such an analysis could well account for the fact that the pronominal prefixes are the same whether they refer to the A (when *-ta* is absent) or the O (when *-ta* is present): this phenomenon would simply be a reflection of the fact that the prefixes refer to the A of an active clause (when *-ta* is absent) and to the former O of the active clause that has become the S of a passive clause (when *-ta* is present). An argument in favor of this analysis may be found in the fact that Reyesano does not have any other passive marker or construction. A passive analysis will nevertheless be rejected because there is absolutely no evidence of detransitivization, which is, at least for some linguists (e.g., Dixon 1994:146), a defining criterion for a construction to be called a passive. Clauses with transitive verb stems marked by *-ta* are as transitive as those where *-ta* is absent: both require two core arguments which, if overtly expressed, are unmarked for case (recall that obliques are obligatorily case-marked).

In SAP/3 combinations, even though the grammatical function of the first- and second-person participants is not recoverable from the form (or the position) of the first- and second-person prefixes, their grammatical function can be inferred from the absence vs. presence of the third-person A suffix *-ta*: when *-ta* is absent, we know that the first- or second-person prefix refers to the A, as in (10a), (11a), and (12a), while when *-ta* is present, we know

that the first- or second-person prefix refers to the O, as in (10*b*), (11*b*), (12*b*), and (13). Functionally speaking, this role of *-ta* is reminiscent of what happens with inverse markers in direct/inverse systems. The possibility of analyzing *-ta* as an inverse marker is considered (and rejected) in 6 below.

4.2. 3/3 combinations. Transitive verbs used in clauses involving only third-person arguments have the following characteristics: (1) they bear no pronominal prefix and (2) they obligatorily carry the third-person suffix *-ta*:

(14*a*) 3SG → 3SG

A-kachi-ta(-a) *te* *iba* *te* *awadza*.
 PAST-bite-3A-PAST BM jaguar BM tapir

‘The tapir bit the jaguar’. (Or, in a different context: ‘The jaguar bit the tapir’.)

(14*b*) 3PL → 3PL

A-bakwina-ta(-a) *pa* *te* [*wabushapi* *kwana*] *te*
 PAST-find-3A-PAST REP BM peccary PL BM
 [*ta* *paku* *kwana*].
 3SG.GEN dog PL

‘His dogs encountered peccaries’. (Or, in a different context: ‘The peccaries encountered his dogs’.)

Omitting *-ta* in a transitive verb in a 3/3 combination, whether in connected speech, as in the examples in (14), or in elicited individual sentences, is ungrammatical (see more on this in 6).

One could say that, in 3/3 combinations, there is no reason to analyze *-ta* as marking the A rather than the O. As in SAP/3 configurations, *-ta* is insensitive to the number of the third-person participants: *-ta* is always present, whether both the A and the O are singular, as in (14*a*), whether both the A and the O are plural, as in (14*b*), whether the A is plural and the O singular, as in (15*a*), or whether the A is singular and the O is plural, as in (15*b*):

(15*a*) 3PL → 3SG

Epuanie=be *a-tsunetia-ta(-a)=be* *te* *tuna* *te*
 later=DISC PAST-meet-3A-PAST=DISC BM 3PL BM

usubandera.
 giant.anteater

‘A little later, they (my dogs) encountered a giant anteater’. (Or, in a different context: ‘A giant anteater encountered my dogs’.)

(15*b*) 3SG → 3PL

[*Tata cura*] *te e-iwa-ta-da tuna.*
 Mr. priest BM IMPFV1-call-3A-IMPFV1 3PL

‘The priest would call them’. (Or, in a different context: ‘They would call the priest’.)

In this study, I do analyze the third-person marker *-ta* in 3/3 configurations as marking the A, by analogy to its behavior in SAP/3 configurations, where it unambiguously has this function.

A corollary to the nonspecification of *-ta* for number is that in 3/3 configurations, the identification of the grammatical function of the participants completely depends on the context. Even the form (or the position in the clause) of overt NPs or independent pronouns does not help with this task, since Reyesano does not have any case-marking system. As shown by the translation of the examples above, the grammatical function of the participants involved can always be reversed if an appropriate context is provided.

4.3. SAP/SAP combinations. Transitive verbs used in clauses involving only SAP arguments carry only a pronominal prefix—there is no third person involved. Interestingly, this prefix can refer only to the second person, suggesting that second person ranks higher than first person in Reyesano:

(16*a*) 2SG → 1SG

“[*Maita puji*] *te kweda-kweda k-e-pu,*”
 tomorrow BEN BM tell-REDUP 1PL-FUT-be
mi-(a-)a-a te eme.
 2SG-PAST-make-PAST BM 1SG

‘“We’ll talk tomorrow,” you said to (lit., made) me’. (Or, in a different context: ‘I said to you’.)

(16*b*) 1SG → 2SG

Mi-a-b-a te miwe.
 2SG-PAST-see-PAST BM 2SG

‘I saw you (crossing the plaza yesterday afternoon)’. (Or, in a different context: ‘You saw me’.)

Note that the verbs of both (16*a*) and (16*b*) are marked with the second-person singular prefix *mi-*. From the context (but not from the form of the verbs), we know that the second-person prefix refers to the A in (16*a*) and

to the O in (16*b*). But in a different context, the second-person prefix could as well refer to the O in (16*a*) and the A in (16*b*).⁹

Example (17), in which the O is a first-person plural, suggests that second person outranks first regardless of the number of the SAPs:¹⁰

(17) 2SG → 1PL

Ma te mi-(e-)deta te ekama.
 NEG BM 2SG-FUT-forget BM 1PL

‘You (sg) won’t forget us (when you return to your country)’. (Or, in a different context: ‘We won’t forget you.’)

4.4. Intransitive *-ta* versus transitive *-ta*. I have already discussed the fact that the plural specification of the intransitive suffix *-ta* is not present in the transitive suffix *-ta*; as I showed, this marker can refer to either a singular or a plural third-person participant (in A function). Still, one might want to suggest that the transitive *-ta* marks plurality of third-person participants, i.e., the total number of third-person participants involved in the event, therefore including third-person participants in O function as well. This characterization is easily discarded, on the following basis: First, *-ta* is present in situations where there is only one third-person participant involved, as in the 3SG → SAP configurations in (10*b*), (11*b*), and (12*b*). Second, *-ta* is absent in situations where there is more than one third-person participant involved, as in the SAP → 3PL configuration in (18):

(18) 1SG → 3PL

M-e-tsa-da te [dzejawe kwana].
 1SG-IMPV1-search.for-IMPV1 BM young.man PL

‘(When it was time to pick up grapefruits and oranges,) I would search for young men (to help me)’.

One could still maintain that plurality of participants is not restricted to third-person participants but that it can also include SAPs. However, this view yields new problems: we then cannot explain why *-ta* is absent in SAP → 3 configurations, as in (10*a*), (11*a*), and (12*b*). Moreover, this proposal also fails to account for the fact that in intransitive clauses, plurality of SAPs

⁹Note that if no overt NP or independent pronoun is present, or if there is only a second-person independent pronoun, as in (16*b*), the verb forms of these examples can also refer to combinations of a second-person A and a third-person O. Thus (16*b*), in an appropriate context, can correctly be interpreted as meaning ‘you saw him/her/it/them’.

¹⁰Unfortunately, no examples are available for the combinations 2PL → 1SG, 2PL → 1PL, 1SG → 2PL, 1PL → 2SG, or 1PL → 2PL.

never triggers *-ta* (rather it triggers different pronominal prefixes). Given these observations, it appears more reasonable to maintain, at least from a synchronic point of view, distinct semantic values for the two *-ta* suffixes in Reyesano.

5. Proposed typological characterization: hierarchical and split. In this section, I first summarize the main characteristics of the pattern of person marking in Reyesano, then look at this system from the perspective of the typologies of alignment patterns, i.e., those typologies concerned with the various ways languages treat the single argument of intransitive predicates (S) as compared to the two arguments of transitive predicates (A and O).

The Reyesano pattern of person marking and all the distinctions that it makes are recapitulated in the following examples (constructed by me) which involve only verb forms. Examples (19)–(21) show all the possible patterns in intransitive clauses:

(19a) First-person singular

m-a-puti-a

1SG-PAST-go-PAST

‘I went’

(19b) First-person plural

k-a-puti-a

1PL-PAST-go-PAST

‘We went’

(20a) Second-person singular

mi-a-puti-a

2SG-PAST-go-PAST

‘you (sg) went’

(20b) Second-person plural

mik-a-puti-a

2PL-PAST-go-PAST

‘you (pl) went’

(21a) Third-person singular

a-puti-a

PAST-go-PAST

‘he/she/it went’

- (21b) Third-person plural
a-puti-ta(-a)
 PAST-go-3S.PL-PAST
 ‘they went’

Examples (22)–(24) show all the possible (singular) patterns in transitive clauses:

- (22) SAP/SAP combinations
mi-a-ba(-a)
 2SG-PAST-see-PAST
 ‘I saw you’ or ‘you saw me’ (or ‘you saw him/her/it/them’)
- (23) 3/3 combinations
a-ba-ta(-a)
 PAST-see-3A-PAST
 ‘he/she/it/they saw him/her/it/them’
- (24) SAP/3 combinations
- (24a) *m-a-ba(-a)*
 1SG-PAST-see-PAST
 ‘I saw him/her/it/them’
- (24b) *m-a-ba-ta(-a)*
 1SG-PAST-see-3A-PAST
 ‘he/she/it/they saw me’

Most linguists agree that languages generally operate according to one of the following alignment patterns: nominative/accusative, ergative/absolutive, “ergative” (transitive) or “active/nonactive” (intransitive) splits (see Dixon 1994, Lazard 1994, and Harris and Campbell 1995, *inter alia*). However, these categories should be reserved for languages (or patterns) where the distinction between A and O is formally manifested. They should be avoided for languages in which no such distinction is made, as in some hierarchical languages. For these types of languages, some scholars (such as Nichols 1992:65ff. and Siewierska 1998:10; 2004:50ff.) have proposed a new alignment category that they call “hierarchical alignment.”

How can we characterize the Reyesano person-marking system in terms of the proposed alignment types? First, we need to distinguish between two distinct subsystems: (1) a prefixal subsystem for marking SAPs and (2) a suffixal subsystem for marking third persons. The prefixal subsystem is

totally insensitive to grammatical functions: it is entirely governed by the $2 > 1 > 3$ person hierarchy. We could therefore say that it manifests a hierarchical alignment (as per Nichols 1992 and Siewierska 1998; 2004). The suffixal subsystem, on the other hand, does operate according to grammatical function distinctions: if the third person is the A, it is marked by *-ta*; if it is the O, it is unmarked; if it is the S, it is unmarked if singular, and marked by *-ta* if it is plural. This pattern is reminiscent of an intransitive split alignment— $S = A$ when S is plural; $S = O$ when S is singular.

To summarize, Reyesano can be characterized as a language combining a hierarchical alignment system, whose domain is SAP marking in the prefix slot, and a split intransitive system conditioned by number, whose domain is third-person marking in the suffix slot. Note that the intransitive split displayed here is not a prototypical one. First, it is conditioned by number, not by control or activity as is more usually the case in such systems (which are commonly referred to as “active/stative” or “active/nonactive” systems). Second, the match between the S and the O is based on the absence of overt marking for third-person singular S and third-person O, which could be an objectionable analysis. Third, the match between the S and the A is semantically only partial: although both *-ta* suffixes refer to the same person (third), they do not refer to the same number (plural in one case, unspecified for number in the other).

At this point, one might wonder whether it is possible to analyze the pattern of person marking differently, in a way that would make it less unusual from the perspective of alignment typology. In 6 I consider (and discard) an alternative analysis which recognizes a third-person \emptyset prefix marker as part of the person prefix paradigm and which interprets the transitive suffix *-ta* as an inverse marker.

6. Alternative typological characterization: hierarchical and inverse?

The first peculiarity of the Reyesano person-marking system, as I have analyzed it, is that it is discontinuous, SAPs being marked by prefixes and third-person participants by suffixes. The second peculiarity is the necessity for three distinct factors in order to predict the use of the person markers (grammatical function, person hierarchy, and number). The third peculiarity is that these conditioning factors do not apply uniformly to the whole person paradigm (the distinctions in grammatical function and number are only relevant for third persons).

An alternative analysis that would at first glance simplify the whole pattern would be to say (1) that there is a \emptyset third-person prefix,¹¹ (2) that the intransitive suffix *-ta* only marks plural (and not person), and (3) that the transitive

¹¹ I thank P. Valenzuela for this suggestion.

suffix *-ta* is an inverse marker.¹² As such, all the persons would be encoded by prefixes and (in transitive clauses) none of the persons would be sensitive to grammatical functions (but to the person hierarchy). According to this view, the Reyesano person-marking system would appear as follows:

(25) Person marking in intransitive clauses

<i>m-a-puti-a</i>	[1SG-PAST-go-PAST]	‘I went’
<i>k-a-puti-a</i>	[1PL-PAST-go-PAST]	‘we went’
<i>mi-a-puti-a</i>	[2SG-PAST-go-PAST]	‘you (sg) went’
<i>mik-a-puti-a</i>	[2PL-PAST-go-PAST]	‘you (pl) went’
\emptyset - <i>a-puti-a</i>	[3-PAST-go-PAST]	‘he/she/it went’
\emptyset - <i>a-puti-ta(-a)</i>	[3-PAST-go-PL-PAST]	‘they went’

(26) Person marking in transitive clauses

(26a) SAP → 3 (direct)

<i>m-a-ba(-a)</i>	[1SG-PAST-see-PAST]	‘I saw him/her/it/them’
<i>mi-a-ba(-a)</i>	[2SG-PAST-see-PAST]	‘you (sg) saw him/her/it/them’

(26b) 3 → SAP (inverse)

<i>m-a-ba-ta(-a)</i>	[1SG-PAST-see-INV-PAST]	‘he/she/it/they saw me’
<i>mi-a-ba-ta(-a)</i>	[2SG-PAST-see-INV-PAST]	‘he/she/it/they saw you (sg)’

(26c) 3/3

\emptyset - <i>a-ba-ta(-a)</i>	[3-PAST-see-INV-PAST]	‘he/she/it/they saw him/her/it/them’
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(26d) 1/2

<i>mi-a-ba(-a)</i>	[2SG-PAST-see-PAST]	‘you (sg) saw me’ or ‘I saw you (sg)’
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Although this analysis is tempting, I do not adopt it here. First of all, it seems to me that any analysis that is based on overt rather than (postulated) covert structures is better, whenever possible. Second, the analysis of transitive *-ta* as an inverse marker does not work for combinations involving only third-person participants. As we saw, in this configuration, *-ta* is obli-

¹² I am using the term “inverse” in its traditional sense, as used initially for Algonquian languages (Rhodes 1976, DeLancey 1997; 2001, and Mithun 1999:222ff., among others), i.e., a specific marker that helps recover the grammatical functions of the participants by exploiting the discourse tendency for participants that rank high on the person hierarchy to be used in A function rather than in O function, and for participants that rank low on the person hierarchy to be used in O function rather than in A function. When these predictions are fulfilled, the verb is marked as direct (or unmarked). When they are not, i.e., when a low-ranking participant is the A and a high-ranking participant is the O, the verb is marked as inverse.

gatory. It is worth emphasizing that this constraint holds regardless of any differences in animacy or topicality between the third-person participants. The irrelevance of animacy in this system can be seen by comparing (27a), where A is human/animate and O inanimate, to (27b), where A is inanimate and O human/animate:¹³

(27a) Human A → Inanimate O
A-jemi-ta(-a) te [pebi akwi lulu-me].
 PAST-take-3A-PAST BM one stick long-ASF
 ‘(The man) took a long stick (to beat the jaguar)’.

(27b) Inanimate A → Human O
A-sapu-ta(-a) te beni te Casilda.
 PAST-hit-3A-PAST BM wind BM Casilda
 ‘The wind hit Casilda (so she is sick now)’.

Consequently, the analysis of transitive *-ta* as a third-person A marker makes more sense: *-ta* is obligatory in 3/3 combinations simply because in this context, a third-person argument in A function is necessarily present.

Third, my third-person analysis for both intransitive and transitive *-ta* is further supported by the identicalness (or at least the similarity) in shape between these suffixes and third-person independent pronouns in Reyesano and/or other genetically related languages: (a) *-ta* is identical in shape to the third-person singular genitive pronoun *ta* ‘3SG.GEN’ (see table 1, and the example in 2c); (b) *-ta* is similar in shape to the root of the third-person independent pronouns: *tuwe* ‘3SG’, *tuna* ‘3PL’ (see table 1); and (c) *-ta* is identical in shape to the root of the third-person dual independent pronouns in the genetically related language Cavineña: *tatse* ‘3DL’ (Guillaume 2004:chap. 15; 2006a; 2008:chap. 15).

For at least these reasons, an analysis of the two suffixes *-ta* as third-person markers appears better than setting up a third-person \emptyset prefix marker and an inverse marker. Nevertheless, it is quite interesting to note the functional

¹³ A thorough study of the role of topicality on the morphosyntax of clauses with only third-person participants has not been undertaken. Nevertheless, preliminary investigation suggests that topicality (or any other discourse category for that purpose) does not have any effect on the coding system and/or the use of *-ta* within the 3/3 combination. Otherwise, such effects should be at least noticeable in my corpus (which includes a fair amount of natural discourse data of various genres; see 2). Note, however, that Reyesano verbal morphology is not yet fully understood. There is notably a vowel *a* that occasionally shows up in some verbs. The presence of this vowel in reflexivized verbs (which are intransitive in Reyesano) suggests that it is not an inverse marker, but more work is needed on this topic. At any rate, this does not downplay the point I am making here, that the use of *-ta* in 3/3 configurations is insensitive to animacy or topicality hierarchies.

similarity between the Reyesano transitive suffix *-ta* and true inverse markers in languages that have them, in the way this suffix helps recover the grammatical function of the participants in some combinations of person.

7. Conclusion. Reyesano has a peculiar way of marking core arguments in the verb, by way of a hierarchical alignment using prefixes for SAPs and an intransitive split alignment using suffixes for third-person participants. This system is interesting typologically for a number of reasons.

First, with its hierarchically aligned person markers, Reyesano adds to the list of languages that defy the common expectation that “agreement is normally on the basis of grammatical relations” (Blake 2001:140) and that have, as a result, a functional need for grammatical function disambiguation. A full typology of the strategies for grammatical function disambiguation in these types of languages remains to be investigated. General typological work is usually confined to the mention of languages with true direct/inverse systems. But we know that this is clearly not the only possibility available. As we saw, in Reyesano, grammatical function disambiguation is (partly) fulfilled by a third-person A marker. In Carib and Tupi-Guarani languages, grammatical function disambiguation is performed by selecting a person marker from one of two formally distinct sets: set 1 if agreement is with the A and set 2 if agreement is with the O (see Gildea 1994, Payne 1997:214–15, and Rose 2003; forthcoming, among others). In several “Himalayish” languages of Nepal, as discussed by Watters (2006), the disambiguation can take the form of alternations affecting some parts of the verb root, such as the final consonant or a vowel. In the Tibeto-Burman language Tangut, as described by DeLancey (1981:631), the grammatical function disambiguation of the participants cannot be recovered by any marking on the verb; rather this is realized by the case-marking system of the language.

Second, the Reyesano system is interesting for having distinct slots for marking SAPs and third-person participants. I am not aware of how common this phenomenon is, but I suspect that it could be present in more languages. It is attested in at least some Algonquian languages such as Plains Cree, in which there is a verbal slot for markers that only make reference to third-person arguments (Zúñiga 2006:80ff. and personal communication). This phenomenon can probably be seen as another manifestation of the common tendency for languages to treat SAPs differently from the third-person participants (this is seen in ergative split systems, for example; Dixon 1994:83ff.).

Finally, the most interesting feature of the Reyesano pattern is perhaps the type of split that it displays. The conditioning factor—number—is not, to my knowledge, a commonly attested one cross-linguistically; intransitive splits are usually based on control or activity rather than on number. Yet it is worth noting that this phenomenon is not unique within the languages which are

genetically and/or geographically close to Reyesano. First, within the Tacanan family, we have clear cognates for the two suffixes *-ta* in (at least) three of these languages, namely, Araona (D. Pitman 1980:44, M. Pitman 1981:202, and Emkow 2006:559–65), Ese Eja (Chavarría 2003), and Tacana (Ottaviano and Ottaviano 1989:107). The cognates have exactly the same distribution—third-person plural S, third-person A unspecified for number. Second, within the Panoan family, which is genetically and geographically close to the Tacanan family, we observe (in at least some languages) a very similar pattern, although it does not apply to person markers but to directional suffixes. This is the case, for example, with different sets of “ventive” and “andative” verbal suffixes in Shipibo-Konibo. These suffixes have two allomorphs: one allomorph is used with intransitive verbs when the S is singular; the other allomorph is used with intransitive verbs when the S is plural and with transitive verbs regardless of number (Valenzuela 2003:273–79 and personal communication).

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