THE NOUN PHRASE IN MAZAHUA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I describe the structure of the noun phrase in a variant of Mazahua spoken in San Pedro Potla, district of Temascalcingo, State of Mexico. The analysis is carried out according to Role and Reference Grammar. I focus my attention on the syntactic structure of the noun phrase, inside the core, as well as outside the core, noun phrase operators and core level operators. In this language there are different types of noun phrases, the nucleus can be simple or compound, the articles and demonstratives are continuous or discontinuous. Adjectives, nouns, adjuncts and relative clauses modify the nominal nucleus. Those appear on pre-nominal or post-nominal position and are nuclear or core periphery modification. Just as clauses have operators, noun phrases also have operators. Definiteness (definite articles and demonstratives) is a noun phrase operator and quantity (number and quantifiers) are core operators.
Key words: structure, nucleus, core, modifiers, operators.

INTRODUCTION

Mazahua is an Otomanguean language from the Otopamean branch. It is a tonal language which has four tones; two level tones: high, low, and two contour tones: rising and falling. As for word order, it is a verb-initial language. The order in transitive sentences is VOS and VS in intransitive sentences. It is a head-marking language. It is a nominative accusative language. It has split intransitivity alignment system. Participants are coded in a complex system of affixes. Subjects are marked through prefixation. On this prefix are also encoded time, aspect and mood. Object and dative are encoded on a suffix with considerable allomorphy. This language has complex morphophonemic features in word stems. Mazahua words are disyllabic and undergo phonological processes like vowel harmony, insertion, assimilation, deletion, retraction, palatalization, pre-nasalization, metathesis and voicing.

I proceed to describe the structure of noun phrases in Mazahua; the analysis is carried out according to Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997, Van Valin 2005 and Pavey 2010). I adapted some concepts about noun phrases from Stewart (1966), Lopez Marin (2002), Knapp (2011) and Mora-Bustos (2012). This paper will proceeds as

follow: noun phrase syntactic structure, structure inside the core, structure outside the core, noun phrases operators, core level operators and conclusion.

Noun phrase syntactic structure

There are different kinds of noun phrases, as in (1). Nominal without modifiers, *tʰẽndʒẽ* ‘tamal’, as in (1a); compound nominal, *ɓomәʃә* ‘black turkey’, as in (1b); demonstrative and article modifying the same head noun, *k’ɨ nu ɓezo* ‘that the man’, as in (1c); continuous and discontinuous demonstratives forming a constituent, *nuna…nu* ‘that…that’, in (1d); restrictive relative clause, *k’o… nu mbante Toño nu*, ‘Antonio is the devil who…’, as in (1e); and head possessed and dependent possessor are juxtaposed, *nu ŋgumɨ nu pʰũnto Lanu* ‘the late Laureano’s house’, as in (1f). In Mazahua, there are three types of noun phrases: simple noun phrases, which contain pronouns or nouns plus simple modifiers like articles, demonstratives, adjectives, nouns, or numerals; complex noun phrases, which contain complex modifiers, like possessive modifiers and relative clauses; and noun phrases which lack a head noun (Givón 2001, Dryer 2007). Here I describe noun phase.

(1) a. ra-ʃõnrɨ ra-kʰaa *tʰẽndʒẽ*
FUT-tomorrow 1.FUT-make tamal
‘tomorrow I will make tamales’

b. *nu=ɓo-mәʃә*
ARTSG=black-turkey
‘a black turkey’

c. ø-ndũũ *k’ɨnu=ɓezo*
3.PRS-die DEM=man
‘that man died’

d. ne *nuna* pʰe mehe=*nu*?
CONJ DEM QU be=DEMSG
‘and what is that?’

e. ŋge k’o o-dʲopʰɨ *nu=mbante* *Toño=nu*
FOC REL 3.PST-write ARTSG=devil Antonio=DEMSG
‘Antonio is the devil who wrote’

f. *nu=ŋgumɨ* *nu=pʰũnto* Lanu ta-ndaro
ARTSG=house ARTSG=dead.man Lanu AUM-stone
‘the late Laureano’s house from big stone’

Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) argue that there are similarities in the structure of NPs and clauses. The correspondence between NPs and clauses is that both have a layered structure. In the layered structure of the NP, there is a nominal nucleus and a nominal core consisting of the nucleus and the arguments. Besides there is a periphery for each level. As in the clause, there are operators projections at all three levels. Operators in the NP follow the same iconic order as operators within the clause (Van Valin 2005, Rijkhoff 2002, 2008). NP operators include nominal aspect ($Nuclear_N$); number, quantification, negation ($Core_N$) and definiteness and deixis (NP).

A general schema for the layered structure of the noun phrase in Mazahua is given in Figure 1.

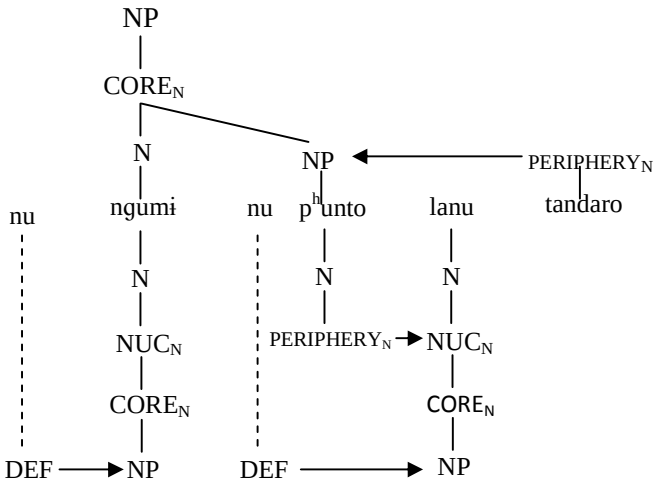

Figure 1 The layered structure of the NP in Mazahua: *nu ngumɨ nu p^{h}unto Lanu tandaro* 'the late Laureano's house from big stone'

Structure inside the core

The noun phrases have a nucleus, since they are headed by a noun. Lexical items that modify the nominal nucleus include adjectives, nouns and adjuncts. Those are modifying this level from the periphery. Also, there are noun phrases without modifiers.

In Mazahua there are adjectives that are expressed differently in the syntax. In (2a) adjectives *hoo* 'good' and *s'oo* 'bad' are predicative. These adjectives function as the main predicate of the clause. The (2b) example is a noun phrase that include a modifying adjective, *nroj'e* 'thin' which appears in the periphery of the noun phrase. This isn't a common type of adjective. Generally, these lexical items are expressed with restrictive relative clauses, as in (2c) and (2d). In (2c) a subordinate nexus like *k'o* 'that' in (2d) isn't

necessary, in this example it is omitted. The reading of this clause is ‘they stole my all chickens that are white’. A general schema for the layered structure of the adjective as modifier is given in figure 2. The example (2b) is illustrated in figure 2 and the adjective functions as the main predicate of clause, as in (2a) is illustrated en in figure 3.

(2) a. nu=k^{h}ɛɛ *ma-hoo* *nu=ndare,* *j’a=ma-s’oo*
ARTSG=year PSR.PRED-good.3 ARTSG=river NEG=PSR.PRED-bad.3
‘that year the river was good, it wasn’t dirty’

b. ne=*nroj’e* *ts’i=t’ii* ø-ɲoni̵ na-punk^{h}i̵
ARTSG=thin DIM=child 3.PRS-eat PRED-mucho
‘the little and thin boy eats a lot’

c. o-nda-pɔ-ŋgi̵=hi *jo=ɲgoɲi=jo* *na-tɔʃi*
3.PST-INCL-steal-1.DAT=PL ARTPL=chicken=DEMPL PRS.PRED-white.3
‘they stole my all chickens that are white’

d. angeze o-ngi̵s’i̵ *jentʃo* *mbajo* *k’o* *ɗaj’o*
3.PRON 3.PST-take out seven rebozo REL new
‘she took out seven rebozos that are new’

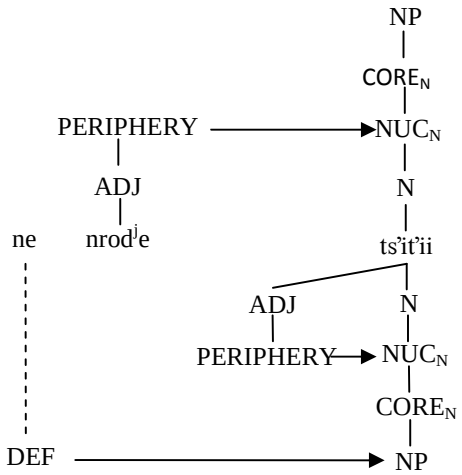

Figure 2 Adjectives in Mazahua NP: *ne nroj’e ts’it’ii* ‘the little and thin boy’

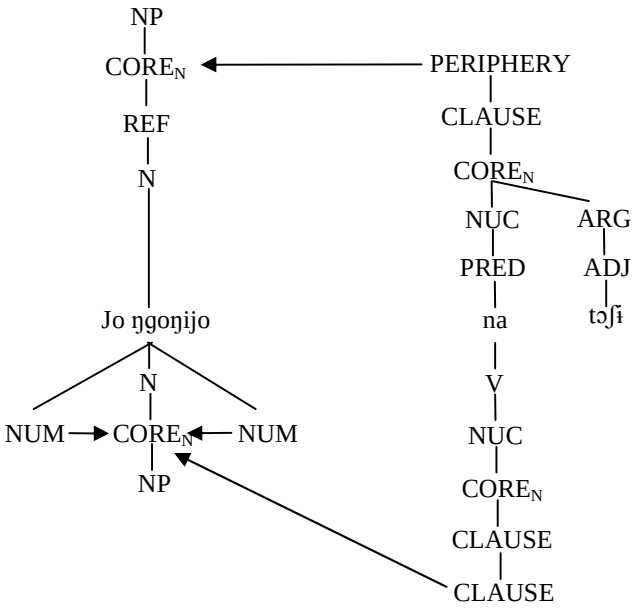

Figure 3 The adjective functions as the main predicate of a clause. *Jo ŋgoŋɨjo na tɔʃɨ* 'the chickens are white'.

A relative clause, as in (1e), (2c) and (2d), is a restrictive modifier of an NP; it is part of the periphery$_N$ of the NP. It is an optional modifier, not a core$_N$ argument (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). As in most languages, relative clauses in Mazahua can lack a relative pronoun, as in (2c), or the relative pronoun occur in the precore slot, as in (2d). The structure of the example (2d) is given in Figure 4.

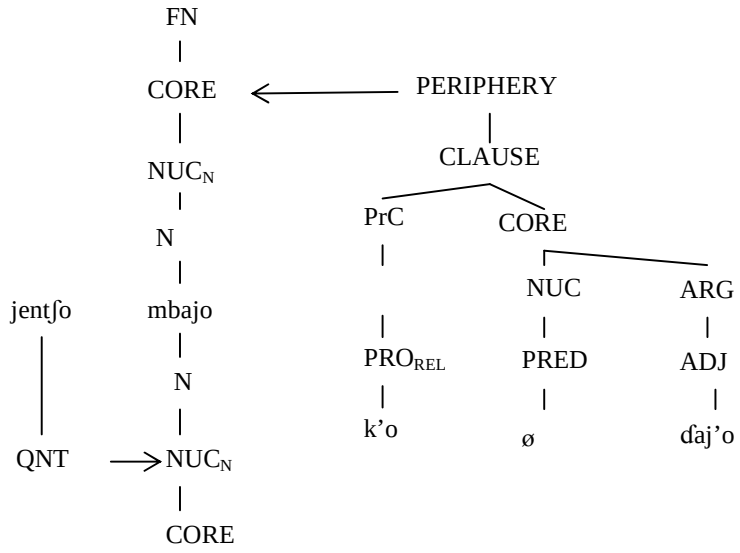

Figure 4 Relative clause. *jentʃo mbajo k'o ɗaj'o* 'seven rebozos that are new'

One type a composition type involves an adjective modifying the nucleus of noun phrase. Morphologically two lexemes by adjoining form a kind of a new lexeme. In (3a) *s'oo* 'bad' and in (3b) *tɔʃɨ* 'white' appear in prenominal position. Their primary function is periphery modification of *ɓɛzo* 'man' in (3a) and *k^{h}oho* 'mushroom' in (3b). It is the unmarked position for adjectives functioning as noun phrase modifiers. Adjectives in compositional form always appear in pre-nuclear position. When the nucleus of the noun phrase is modified by a lexical adjective, the adjective always appears as a prefix on the noun.

(3) a. s'o-ɓɛzo
bad-man
'bad man'

b. t'ɔʃ-k^{h}oho
white-mushroom
'white mushroom'

Another grammatical or modifier element that occurs in the periphery of a noun phrase is a noun. Nuclear noun and modifier noun are juxtaposed. The position of this modifier can be pre-nuclear, as in (4a). The example in (4a) illustrates noun phrase *nu mbante* 'the devil' modifies nuclear noun phases *Toño* 'Antonio'. Nouns can occur in either pre-or-post-nominal position, or both, as in (4b). In the last example, the nucleus, *male* 'grandmother'

is modified by two noun phrases. First noun phrases *nu pʰũnto* ‘the late’ appears in pre-nuclear position and second noun phrase, the proper name *Kʷ’at’ɨ*, is located in post-nuclear position.

(4) a. ŋge k’o o-j’opʰɨ *nu=mbante* *Toño=nu*
FOC REL 3.PST-write ART=devil Antonio=DEMSG
‘it is the devil Antonio who wrote’

b. *nu=pʰũnto* *nu=male* *Kʷ’at’ɨ*
ARTSG=late ARTSG=grandmother Kuat’u
‘the late grandmother Kuat’u’

Example (5) illustrates noun-noun compounds *tʃ’ingundaro* ‘little stone house’ and *ñingalo* ‘ram’s head’. This is analogous to adjective-noun composition as in (3a) and (3b). In (5a), the nucleus is *ngumɨ* ‘house’. The nominal modifier, *ndaro* ‘stone’, occurs in post-nuclear position and affix *tʃ’i* ‘little’ occurs in pre-nuclear position. In (5b), nucleus is *ɲi’i* ‘head’ and the nominal modifier is *ngalo* ‘ram’. It occurs in post-nuclear position. Adjectival and nominal modifiers are also nuclear operators, in that they express distinctive qualities of the referring expressions.

(5) a. mi-hərə a-ɓatʰɨ na=*tʃ’i-ngu-ndaro*
3.PSR-build LOC-prairie ARTINDSG=DIM-house-stone
‘a little stone house was built at the prairie’

b. jo=*ɲi-ngalo* mi-ɛ̃nhɛ̃=k’o
ARTPL=head-ram 3.HAB-come=DEMPL
‘those ram’s head were coming’

The examples in (6) are noun phrases wich include a modifying adverb or adjunct. These peripheral elements may sometimes occur like suffix, as in (6a) or like locative phrase as in (6b). *bə* and *a mabə* as in (6) are both locatives.

(6) a. nujo=*ɓɛzo=bə* ø-pʰɔrɨ ndɛntʃʰɨrɨ
DEMPL =man=LOC 3.PRS-take care of sheep
‘the man from here takes care of sheep’

b. tɛ̃ʃɛ̃ jo=*tee* *a-mabə* mi-ɛɛ in-su=j’a
all ARTPL=people LOC-around here 3.HAB-beat 3.POSS-wife=PTL
‘all people around here beat their wives’

Some nouns take arguments analogous to verbs taking arguments; it is similar but not identical for clauses (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). Noun phrase modifying a noun and expressing possession or a relationship like kinship follow the noun. In (7), the head and dependent noun are in a relationship of possession. The nucleus of the noun phrases are *nu ngumɨ* 'the house', as in (7a); *nu joo* 'her father', as in (7b) and *nu joo* 'her father', in (7c). Dependents or possessor are *mi papago nu*, 'my father' as in (7a); *i male* 'my mother', as in (7b) and *nu Lina* 'Lina', as in (7c). In these constructions there aren't any kinds of grammatical elements that license the argument; moreover, there are argument NPs having a possessive semantic function. In the examples in (7), the possessor is the head noun and the argument noun is the dependent noun; it is the possessed entity. Note that the possessed noun, in (7) bears clitics *mi=*, *i=*, *nu=* indicating that it is possessed by someone. In Mazahua there is a large set of clitics that code possession. The example (7a), is illustrated in Figure 5.

(7) a. mi-hərə *nu-ngumɨ* *mi-papa=go=nu*
3.HAB-build 3.POSS-house 1.POSS-father=1.POSS.ENF=DEMSG
'my father's house was built'

b. *mi-pale=k^{h}o=m̥e,* *nu-joo* *i-male,* ma-s'o=k'ɨ
1.POSS-grantfather=EXCL 3.POSS-father 1.POSS-mother PFV.PRED-bad.3=DEM
'ours grandfather's who is my wife's father was bad person'

c. mi-p^{h}ãnɾã, nzak^{h}a i-pale=k^{h}o=m̥e, *nu-joo* *nu=Lina*
3.HAB-know like 1.POSS-grandparent=EXCL 3.POSS-father ARTSG=Lina
'Lina's father was intelligent like ours grandparent'

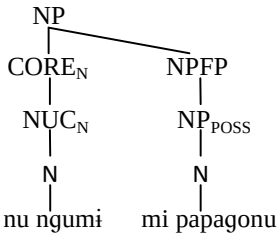

Figure 5 Possessive NP construction in Mazahua. *Nu ngumɨ mi papagonu* 'my father's house'.

Structure outside the core

As well a nuclear level periphery, noun phrases have peripheral elements at the core level. Core level peripheral elements have functions similar to those that modify the periphery in a clause (Van Valin 2005 and Pavey 2010). Peripheries situate the entity expressed in the noun phrase in space or time. The examples in (8) illustrate that peripheries modify the core level. In (8a) clitic *nu* 'there'; in (8b) the locative phrase *aʃo'ɲi* 'above' and in (8d) an adverbial of complex event expression *k'a mi tũns'ɨ k'o ndʒɨnɨ* **'**where they were leading bulls' describe the spatial location of the head nouns. In (8a) aspectual clitic *j'a* 'perfective' and in (8c) adverb *ma j'enk^{w}'a* 'before' locate in time the sense coded in the nuclear noun. The general constituent representation for (8) is as shown in Figure 6.

(8) a. ø-hərə=t^{h}o nu=korral=*j'a*=*nu*
3.PRS-stay=DEL ARTSG= barnyard=PTL=there
'the barnyard stays still there'

b. o-tʃɔ-kɨ=m̥e nu=Fredo *a-ʃo'ɲi*
3.PST-meet-1.OBJ=EXCL ARTSG=Alfredo LOC-above
'Alfredo who is from above met us'

c. *a-k^{h}ak^{w}'a* mi-peʒe jo=pale *ma-j'enk^{w}'a*
LOC-so 3.HAB-tell ARTPL=grandfather PFV-before
'the grandfathers who lived time ago told something like this'

d. mi-k^{h}aa na=ñ̥iñi *k'a* *mi-tũns'ɨ* *k'o=ndʒɨnɨ*
1.HAB-be ARTINDSG=town where 1.HAB-lead DEMPL=bull
'there was a town where they were leading bulls'

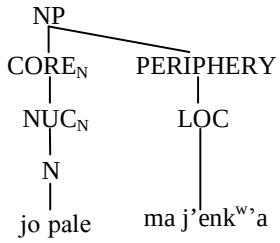

Figure 6 Core level peripheral elements. *Jo pale ma j'enk^{w}'a* 'the grandfathers who lived time ago'.

Following these striking parallels I organize the general schema of the layered structure for Mazahua nominal phrase. Into this schema, there are important interactions among nuclear, core and NP modifiers; just as clauses have operators, noun phrases also have operators, grammatical elements modifying different levels of the noun phrase. I follow the general schema for operators given in Table 1 (Van Valin 2005).

Table 1 *Operators in the layered structure of the NP*

$Nuclear_N$ operator:
Nominal aspect (count-mass distinction)
$Core_N$ operators:
Number
Quantification (quantifiers)
Negation
NP operator:
Definiteness
Deixis

Within the noun phrases illustrated in (9), the head nouns, *t'ap^{h}ɨ* 'pulque' and *mape* 'sack' are represented in constituent projection. The other words in the noun phrase are operators. *Jo* code plural; *ɲi'i* is the number three and *tẽʃẽ* expresses quantification.

(9) a. ra-sɔɔ *jo=ɲi'i* *ʃalo* *in-t'ap^{h}ɨ*
1.FUT-taste ARTPL=three pitcher 1.POSS-pulque
'I will taste three pitchers of my pulque'

b. *tẽʃẽ* *jo=ɲi'i* *i-mape* ro-tum̥ɨ
all ARTPL=three 1.POSS-sack 1.PST-plant
'I planted all three of my sacks of corn'

The locality operators modify the NP as a whole. They are concerned with expressing the location of the referent with respect to a reference point or to the interlocutors themselves (deictics), and with indicating the speaker's assumption about de identifiability of the referent by the hearer (definiteness). The formal expressions of these operators are articles and demonstratives (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997).

Noun phrase operators: definiteness

In Mazahua there are different types of articles, as in (10). The definite articles *ne*, *nu*, *k'ɨ* exhibit dialectal variation. However, *ne* and *nu*, as in (10a) and (10b) appear with nouns that denote collectives or multiple entities like *ɓitu* 'clothe' and *ʃɛj'i* 'tortilla. Example (10c) illustrates that *k'ɨ* occurs with simple entities like *j'ee* 'cane' and *tʃʰɛj'i* 'machete'. In (10), articles are clitics.

(10) a. *ne=ɓitu* o-mbopʰɨ
ARTSG=clothe 3.PST-wet
'the clothe got wet'

b. *nu=ʃɛj'i*=bə na-kiṃi
ARTSG =tortilla=LOC PRS.PRED-tasty.3
'the tortilla made here are tasty'

c. ø-pana *k'ɨ=j'ee* ŋehe *k'ɨ=tʃʰɛj'i*
3.PST-throw DEM=cane CONJ DEM=machete
'he threw the cane and the machete'

The number one, *naha* as in (11a) and *na* as in (11b), is used as an indefinite article in noun phrases.

(11) a. o-zɨrp'ɨ *naha ndʒo-ʃomɨ*? Hãã, o-ndiɓi *naha i-j'ofi*
3.PST-absorb one walk-night AFF 3.PST-take out one 3.POSS-brother
'one witch absorbed him? Yes, his brother took her out'

b. nu=María ø-tũns'ɨ *na=bulto* *na-nojo*
ARTSG=María 3.PRS-load ARTSG=bundle PRS.PRED-big.3
'Maria loads a big bundle'

Some noun phrases can occur with or without articles, as with *ndɛtʃʰɨrɨ* 'sheep' in (12). In example (12b) the addressee may not necessarily know the intended referent of the noun phrase, unlike the definite noun phrase in (12a), but can work out what it is with some inferencing. In (12a), *nujo ndɛntʃʰɨrɨ* 'these sheep', the definiteness is formally indicated by the definite article, in (12b), *ndɛntʃʰɨrɨ* 'sheep', this formal marking is absent though the semantic concept underlying definiteness (identifiability) does hold. (Lyons 1977).

(12) a. *nujo=ndɛtʃʰɨrɨ* na-ndã'ã
DEMPL=sheep PRS.PRED-tall.3
'the sheep are tall'

b. ʃi=ø-j'ẽnhẽ *ndɛntʃʰɨrɨ*?
still=3.PST-have sheep
'do you still have sheep?'

Demonstratives are deictic expressions. Deictic markers locate the reference with respect to the speaker. Deictic expressions form a subtype of definite-referring expressions. They can be thought of as expressions which 'point to' their referent. Demonstratives indicate the locations of referents along certain dimensions using the speaker (and time and place of speaker) as a referent point or 'deictic center' (Cruse 2004).

Like articles, there is a large set of demonstratives, as in (13): *nojo*, *nunu* and *k'onu*. Demonstratives are words that are compounded by two morphemes. Some of them are lexicalized and function as a single unit. When *nojo, nunu* and *kʰonu* are used contrastively, *nojo* and *nunu*, as in (13a) and (13c) denote a referent in relative proximity to the deictic center and *kʰonu*, as in (13b) denotes a referent at a greater distance.

(13) a. *nojo=ŋgitʃa* a-San Francisco j'a=ba-ẽnhẽ
DEMPL=teacher LOC-San Francisco NEG=MV-come
'those teachers who are from San Francisco don't come'

b. ro-tɔmɨ *kʰonu=t'apʰɨ*
3.PST-buy DEMPL=pulque
'I bought this pulque'

c. ri-pãr=go *nunu=male=k'ɨ*
1.PRS-know=1.SUBJ.ENF DEMSG=grandmother=DEM
'I knew that grandmother'

The examples in (14) illustrate that demonstratives appear in continuous form, *nunu* as in (14a) and *k'inu* in (14c), discontinuous form, *nu…nu* in (14b) and (14e) and *nu…k'i* in (14d). Demonstrative operator appears as clitic or affixes. Those positions are labeled the NP-initial position [NPIP] and NP-final position [NPFP]. The layered structure of the noun phrase has one pre-nuclear slot and one post-nuclear demonstrative slot.

(14) a. *nunu=miɲo* o-nda-za'a jo=ŋgoɲi
DEMSG=coyote 3.PST-INCL-eat ARTPL=chicken
'this coyote ate all chickens'

b. *nu=ɓɛzo=nu* ø-hĩʔi jo=mu'u
ART=man=DEM SG 3.PRS-bring ARTPL=pumpkin
'this gentleman brings pumpkins'

c. ø-ndũũ *k'ɨnu=ɓɛzo*
3.PST-die DEM=man
'that man died'

d. *nu=ɓɛzo=k'ɨ* mi=ẽnhẽ
ARTSG=man=DEM 3.HAB-come
'that man is coming'

e. *nu*=ts'i-t'i o-maa na-hẽ=j'a=*nu*
ART=DIM-boy 3.PST-go PRED-away=PTL=DEMSG
'the little boy went away'

A preliminary general schema for articles and demonstratives of the noun phrase is given in Figure (7). Articles and demonstratives occur in the NP-initial position. Discontinuous demonstratives have pre-and post-nominal positions.

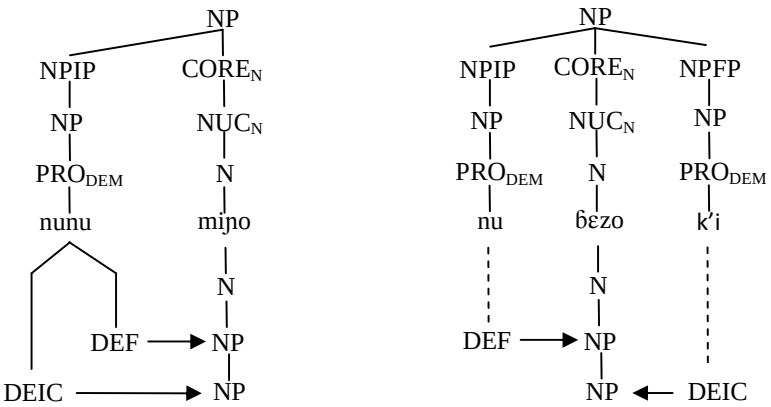

Figure 7 *A preliminary general schema for articles and demonstratives of the noun phrase.*

Core$_N$-level operators: quantity

The term number refers to the grammatical distinction among singular, plural and dual. Singular number is unmarked while plural and dual are both marked, as illustrated in (15) and in (16). Mazahua has a three-way distinction in its number marking. Clitics *jo* and *k'o*

express plural, as in (15a) and in (15b). In some contexts, these clitics occur simultaneously in pre- and post-nuclear position as in (15c).

(15) a. *jo=ɓuru* ø-naŋg^{w}aɗɨ=hi k^{h}a-ɯ̃ãm̰ã
ARTPL=donkey 3.PRS-run=PL LOC-cornfield
'donkeys run in the cornfield'

b. ma-s'oo mi-k^{h}aa k'o mi-kãã a-Toxi, *k'o=espaɲol*
3.PRF-bad 3.HAB-do REL 3.HAB-be LOC-Toxi DEMPL=español
'it was bad what the españoles did'

c. ø-ẽnhẽ *jo=ʃopɨte=jo*
3.PRS-come ARTPL=teacher=DEMPL
'the teachers come'

The enclitics *ɓe* and *bi* are first person dual pronouns. Dual inclusive (*bi*) indicates that the addressee is a participant in the speech event, as in (16b). Dual exclusive (*ɓe*) indicates that addressee is not a participant in the speech event, as in (16a).

(16) a. pota ro-mbiʒi=*ɓe*
maybe 1.PST-frighten=DU.EXCL
'I believe that we got frightened'

b. ʃomɨ ʃomɨ mi-wee mbe j'a=mi-pej'e=*bi* a-t^{h}ii
night night 3.HAB-cry but NEG=1.HAB-leave=DU.INCL LOC-outside
'every night she cried but we did not go outside

The category of quantification includes both numerals and quantifiers. Numerals appear in preverbal position, illustrated here by *ɲ̰i'i* 'three' in (17a) and *je* 'two' in (17b). These may co-ocurr with the plural proclitic, *ɲ̰i'i jo* as in (17a). Numerals precede or follow the number proclitic when those co-ocurr.

(17) a. *ɲ̰i'i* *jo*=ŋdɛtʃ^{h}ɨrɨ=*jo* ø-sɔj'e
three ARTPL=sheep=DEMPL 3.PST-ill
'three sheep became ill'

b. mi-tʃɨ'ɨ ro-sii *je*=ʃalo t'ap^{h}ɨ
HAB-eight 1.PST-drink two= pitcher pulque
'eight days I drank two pitchers of pulque'

In (18a), *tẽʃẽ* ‘all’; in (18b), *k^{wh}arɨ* ‘many’ and in (18c), *tʃ’ike* ‘little’ are quantifiers. Those expressions indicate a quantity of any king of entity. *Tẽʃẽ* ‘all’ has pre-core position. It occurs in NP-initial position. *Na k^{wh}arɨ* ‘many’ appears with a predicative prefix. t*ʃ’ike* ‘little’ can occur modifying a head noun or a verb.

(18) a. ja=ø-k^{w}’eñe *tẽʃ-t^{h}o* *jo=pale* k’o mi-kãrã=j’a
PTL=3.PST-move out all-DEL ARTPL=grandfather REL 3.HAB-vivir=PTL
‘Already they removed all the grandparents who were living’

b. mi-ŋgehe *na-k^{wh}arɨ* *jo=ndɛtʃ^{h}ɨrɨ*
3.HAB-be PRED-many ARTPL=sheep
‘there were many sheep’

c. j’a=ra-zii *na-k^{wh}arɨ,* ra-zii *tʃ’ike*
NEG=3.FUT-drink PRED-much 3.FUT-drink little
‘he will not drink so much, he will drink a little’

Now that I have described the main operators that occur within the noun phrase, some of them are represented in figure 8. Figure 8 illustrates how noun phrase operators, basically numerals and quantifiers, are represented using the noun phrase illustrated in (9b).

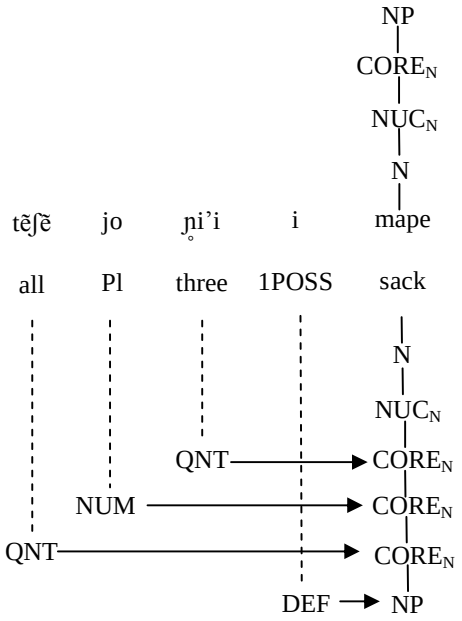

Figure 8 Syntactic representation of the structure of the Mazahua operator’s. *Tẽʃẽ jo ŋi’i i mape* ‘my all three sacks’

Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a brief sketch of the noun phrase in Mazahua. I have described: the syntactic structure of noun phrase, the structure inside the core, structure outside the core, noun phrases operators and core level operators. In Mazahua there are different types of noun phrases, the nucleus can be simple or compound, the articles and demonstratives are continuous or discontinuous. Adjectives, nouns, adjuncts and relative clauses modify the nominal nucleus. Those appear on pre-nominal or post-nominal position and are nuclear or core periphery modification. Just as clauses have operators, noun phrase also have operators. Definiteness (definite articles and demonstratives) is a noun phrase operator and quantity (number and quantifiers) are core operators. For now, the description presented here is very general. In the future, it is important to examine, step-by-step, modifiers and operator that can occur inside Mazahua noun phrases.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ adjective, AFF affirmative, ARG argument, ART article, AUM augmentative, CONJ conjunct, DAT dative, DEF definite, DEIC deictic, DEL delimitative, DEM demonstrative, DIM diminutive, DU dual, ENF emphatic, EXCL exclusive, FOC focus, FUT future, HAB habitual, INCL inclusive, LOC locative, MV movement, NEG negative, NP noun phrase, NPFP noun phrase final position, NPIP noun phrase initial position, NUC nucleus, NUM number, OBJ object, PL plural, POSS possessive, PRCS precore slot, PRED predicative, PRON pronoun, PRS present, PRF perfect, PST past, PTL punctual, QNT quantification, QU question, REF reference, REL relative, V verb

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