

The derivation of verb-initiality in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec

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Verb-initial word orders are relatively common in the world's languages, but generative research has discovered that verb initiality can have two distinct structural sources: the verb on its own can be displaced in front of its argument (a Verb Raising approach), or a small constituent containing it can move (a Predicate Raising approach). These analyses make predictions about word order and constituency that we test in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec (SLZ). Using evidence from adverb placement, copular clauses, and light verb constructions, we argue that SLZ verb initiality arises from Predicate Raising, since this analysis more parsimoniously accounts for generalization within and across these constructions. This research contributes to a growing awareness of syntactic variation within the Zapotec family: some varieties have been argued to pattern like SLZ in employing Predicate Raising (Lee 2006), while others have been argued to employ Verb Raising (Black 2000, Foreman 2006).