

Nuclear arguments and their alignment system in wayuunaiki*

Los argumentos nucleares y su sistema de alineamiento en wayuunaiki

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a descriptive analysis of the syntactic role of nuclear arguments in Wayuunaiki to explain their grammatical variation in this language. Based on the descriptive and ethno-linguistic analysis of field data, different syntactic functions of nuclear arguments in Wayuunaiki are proposed. The existence of gender and number verb marks concordant with the arguments of the sentence, which differ according to whether the construction is transitive or intransitive, raises the question of the possible absolutive nature of this language.

Keywords:
syntactic role,
subject, object,
Wayuunaiki,
linguistic data.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo presenta un análisis descriptivo del rol sintáctico de los argumentos nucleares en wayuunaiki para explicar su variación gramatical en esta lengua. A partir del análisis descriptivo y etnolingüístico de datos de campo, se proponen diferentes funciones sintácticas de los argumentos nucleares en el wayuunaiki. La existencia de marcas verbales de género y número concordantes con los argumentos de la oración, que se diferencian dependiendo de si la construcción es transitiva o intransitiva, plantea la inquietud sobre la posible naturaleza absolutive de esta lengua.

Palabras clave:
rol sintáctico,
sujeto, objeto,
Wayuunaiki, datos
lingüísticos.

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present a descriptive analysis of the functions of nuclear arguments and their alignment systems in the syntactic context in Wayuunaiki¹. This indigenous language is spoken by about 416.000 people (Ethnologue, n.d.) who inhabit the semi-desert area of the Guajira peninsula. This linguistic region is dually located in the northernmost part of Colombia and the northwestern part of Venezuela, precisely in the State of Zulia (see the map in Figure 1.). This language belongs to the Northern group of the Arawak linguistic family (Aikhenvald, 1999). According to Mansen and Captain (2000), Wayuunaiki is a member “of the Maipurean subfamily, northern trunk, closely related to the Añún of the Venezuelan coast of Zulia” (p. 795)².

From a typological point of view, according to the criteria proposed by Aikhenvald (2007), Wayuunaiki is one of the Arawak languages that tends to be agglutinative and somewhat polysynthetic, i.e., the morphemes generally have only one meaning (they are not cumulative) and words, in turn, are made up of several adhesive morphemes. The verb is commonly synthetic with the inflection of tense, aspect, gender and number, modality, etc., but there are also, although to a lesser extent, analytic constructions with auxiliaries of very varied functions. In this language, the relationship between the predicate and its arguments is encoded in the verb, either using pronominal indexes that indicate the person or employing gender and verbal number agreement. As for transitivity, there is an evident division between transitive and intransitive verbs, which is conceived as *gradual* because there are several mechanisms to decrease or increase verbal valency.

At the syntactic level, the order (determinant-determined) is dominant with a strong tendency to place the verb at the beginning of the sentence followed by the arguments, VSO being its canonical structure, although due to the fact of not having a nominative and accusative case system, this order enjoys certain flexibility. Nominal or adjectival predication is often expressed as verbal predication. Thus, the noun carries inflections of number, gender, definiteness, possession, and locative.

1 In the Wayuu literature, this term is used in different ways: Guajiro, Wayuu, Wayuunaiki and others. For this study, the term Wayuunaiki will be used.

2 Personal translation from Spanish.

The following are the main results of a recent investigation on the grammatical categories related to nouns in Wayuunaiki, from which the existing relationships between the morphosyntactic case system and the semantic role of the arguments are discussed. This is a recent study based on descriptive linguistics, which involved collecting data in the region of Upper Guajira, Colombia, mainly in the community of Nazareth.

This article starts by describing the study’s goal, the population’s characteristics, the speakers’ locations, and some of the language’s typological traits. After that, it provides a general explanation of the theoretical ideas behind case systems, intransitivity, and alignment. Following a brief presentation of the methodology used, the results pertaining to alignment, syntactic structure, and the syntactic role of nuclear arguments are analyzed. The key findings are summarized at the end of the article.

Picture 1
The Guajira Peninsula



Source: Adapted from *Google Maps*, by Google, 2022.

Theoretical framework

Indexing of arguments

In this study, we analyze the system of person indexing in the verb. The complexity of different alignment systems in argument indexing has been described in many natural languages, especially by typologists.

Haspelmath (2013, p. 209) proposed that the concept of *argument indexing* is useful in typology and language description. In this regard, he argued that linked person forms are best viewed as *sui generis phenomena*, which, in most cases, do not fall under a coherent pronoun concept nor a concord concept. *Argument indexing* is a concept proposed by this author, a term that may be useful and does not refer to agreement or pronouns.

In a study by González (2016) on argument indexing in Toba (an indigenous language spoken in Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia), he cites, among others, the work of Corbett (2003) and Hengeveld (2012) who argue that argument indexing is proposed following a theoretical tradition, based on the distinction between pronominal and concord dependent personal forms. In his analysis, González (2016, p. 46) follows Haspelmath's proposal (2013), who suggests including pronominal-dependent forms and the traditional concept of "concord" within the broader phenomenon of *indexicalization*. This process is defined as "the system by which the core argument of the subject and sometimes the speech act participant (SAP) object are indexed in the UT verb" (Valdez Jara, 2013, p. 117).

In this sense, the central arguments of the verb are indicated by person-bound forms (indexicals) that can be prefixed (S, A, and P/T or R) or suffixed (P, T, and R) to the verbal stem, a fact that corresponds to the pattern called *indexicalization*. This type of phenomenon usually occurs in languages whose verbal morphology is complex, in which the argument indexing system is included in the verb (Messineo, 2015, p. 131).

The indexing morphology of arguments, such as A (agent or actor) and P (patient or subject), has been addressed by Compes (2021) in a study on the morphology of arguments in the Wagi language, a dialect of Beria, in Africa. Arguments A and P are understood as macro-level semantic roles. In this sense, A refers to the most agent-like argument of a verb and P to the most patient-like argument (p. 197). According to the author, three types of formal marking of macro-level roles have been identified: *word order*, *case* (marking on arguments = dependent marking), and *person indexing* (marking on the verb = marking on the nucleus). In a similar fashion, there are other procedures that may be used to express grammatical relations, such as the order of constitu-

ents, the use of affixes and adpositions, as well as person agreement or indexing (Messineo, 2015).

Following Compes (2021) and Messineo (2015), it can be deduced that Wayuunaiki is a language of marked arguments in the verb (typical of head-marking languages) and shows a differentiated system of obligatory person indexes in the verbal nucleus. This person index system acts in concert with word order to identify the role an argument plays in the event structure designated by the verb.

In typical case languages like Latin, case marks affect all syntactic functions, including the subject (nominative case) and the direct object (accusative case). Moreover, case marks are inflectional and generally differ according to the gender and number of the affected nominal. For Blake (2001), *case* is a dependent noun marking system for the type of relationship that supports its nucleus. Traditionally, the term refers to inflectional marks, and typically, cases mark the relationship between a noun and a verb at the sentence level or of a noun to a preposition, postposition, or other nouns at the sentence level. From his study of various languages, the author found that Turkish contains morphological cases. For example, *-i* corresponds to the accusative case in the word *elma-lar-i* 'apple'. The suffix *-i* also indicates that *elma-lari* is specific since, in Turkish, only the specific direct object is marked as accusative. The suffix *-a* in *adam-a* 'man-a' is the dative case and indicates the indirect object. The noun *Mehmet* contrasts with *elma-lar-i* and *adam-a* because it does not carry an obvious suffix indicating the nominative, i.e., the sentence's subject.

Wayuunaiki is one of the many languages in the world that does not present case markers (nominative, accusative, ergative, among others) like Turkish. In *case languages*, case markers mark the different fundamental relations such as transitive subject (A), intransitive subject (S), and transitive (O) direct object (Ramírez González, 2018).

In the specialized literature in syntax, it can be found that to describe the basic systems of grammatical relations in the sense of how arguments are organized in the sentence, three basic semantic-syntactic roles are usually identified: S, A and O. Regarding the first role, S ("single") refers to the only argument in an intransitive construction. A ("agent") refers to the agent argument of a transitive construc-

tion and O (“object”) refers to the patient argument of a transitive construction (Dixon, 1979; Payne, 1996). According to the organization of the arguments in the utterance, then, the alignment system is established.

Alignment system

Alignment could be seen as one of the most discussed topics by typologists in recent years, and even so, some of its features have not been clarified. A recent concept of *alignment* comes from authors such as Malchukov, Haspelmath & Comrie (2010, p. 3) for whom *alignment* refers to the comparison of argument properties across constructions. This concept of alignment refers to monotransitive constructions (with an agent or agent as an argument A and a patient or patient as an argument P) which are usually compared with intransitive constructions (with a single argument S) and thus leads to the classification into three main types of alignment: *accusative alignment* ($A = S \neq P$), *ergative alignment* ($A \neq S = P$), and *neutral alignment* ($A = S = P$). On the other hand, they consider (p.3) that the basic alignment types of ditransitive constructions are distinguished in terms of the coding of T (theme) and R (recipient) compared to the monotransitive P (patient).

An important fundamental of alignment is that of Dixon (1994), who argues that alignment refers to how the core grammatical relations (A, S, and P) are organized and related to each other. This definition relates to the different alignment systems in relation to the arguments of transitive and intransitive verbs, i.e., S (single argument of an intransitive verb), A (agent of a transitive verb), and P (patient of a transitive verb). If S and A are treated as opposite to P the alignment is *nominative-accusative*; if S and P are treated differently or as opposed to A, the alignment is called *ergative-absolutive*. When S is treated sometimes as A and sometimes as P, the system is *active-inactive* so that some instances of S are aligned with A (S) and others with P (S). When A, S, and P are different, the alignment is *tripartite*, and when they are equal, *neutral*. Finally, in hierarchical systems, the treatment of A and P depends on which participants are placed higher in the referential or ontological hierarchy.

In addition, according to some authors, among them Comrie (1978), the grouping of S and O is identified as the absolutive case; the

grouping of A and S is called the *nominative case*; when A is opposed to the absolutive case, it is called *ergative*, and if O is opposed to the *nominative case*, it is called *accusative*.

Transitive and intransitive

According to Dryer (2007), the distinction between verbal predicates is perhaps the distinction between intransitive and transitive predicates, where the former (intransitive) takes a single argument, and the latter (transitive) takes two or more arguments. In some languages, it can be described as the transitive sentence having an object, while the intransitive sentence does not. Also, the author distinguishes transitive sentences with objects from intransitive sentences with adjuncts. The distinction between intransitive and transitive sentences becomes evident in languages with ergative case systems, in which transitive subjects and intransitive subjects occur in different cases; that is, transitive subjects occur with the ergative case, whereas intransitive subjects in the same case as objects, appear with the absolutive case.

Haspelmath (2005) states that the relationship between the two object arguments of a ditransitive sentence can be conceptualized in the same way as that of monotransitive verbs. The prototypical roles of a ditransitive sentence are T (theme argument) and R (recipient argument). When T is treated as P (the sole participant of a monotransitive sentence), the alignment is indirect, and when R is aligned as P, it is of the secondary type.

The ditransitive sentence is among the various topics analyzed by Siewierska (2004, p. 57). From her linguistic theory, this author argues that the predicate draws on the assumption that the analogs of S, A, and P are P, T, and R, respectively, where P represents the transitive patient, T the ditransitive theme (patient), and R the ditransitive recipient. Thus, the correspondence between S and P, A and T, and P and R, respectively, is not morphosyntactic or semantic but tends to the abstract level. The parallel between S and P are relative arguments to which the treatment of A and P in monotransitive sentences and T and R in ditransitive sentences are compared.

Methodology

The data for this study was collected through questionnaires and recordings of spontaneous narratives conducted with seven speakers of Wayuunaiki during four periods of fieldwork. Among the informants were two Wayuunaiki language teachers in their respective communities (in Nazareth, Alta Guajira). The questionnaires requested the translation from Spanish to Wayuunaiki of constructions containing the studied linguistic phenomena (orally and in written form because the informants know written Wayuunaiki).

The data appearing in the transcriptions of the spontaneous narratives collected were used to contrast the regularities found in the data elicited by the artificial means of the questionnaire to test its validity. The transcriptions were carried out by one of the authors of this article, with the support of a native speaker of Wayuunaiki. The fieldwork took place in the Wayuu village of Nazareth. This community is in the region of the Upper Guajira (Department of La Guajira), northern Colombia (see Figure 1), an area where the most significant number of native speakers of Wayuunaiki are found (Ramírez González, 2018, 2019).

Results and analysis

In Wayuunaiki, the “core” syntactic functions (core cases, see Blake, 2001, p.32) of subject and object are marked in syntax, not in morphology³. All other syntactic functions are peripheral and carry morphological marks.

The syntactic role of the subject

In this language, the single argument of an intransitive verb does not receive morphological subject marking. Its function as the sentence’s subject is marked primarily through its position immediately after the verb. Therefore, here we cannot refer to the nominative case (in the morphological sense) but to the syntactic role of the subject.

3 Since in Wayuunaiki there are passive constructions, the terms Subject and Object will be preferred to Agent and Patient since in these cases there is an asymmetry in the functions: the Subject is not always an Agent, and the Direct Object is not always a Patient.

To summarize, the noun whose function is to be the subject of an intransitive verb is identified by 1) its position and 2) the agreement of the number marking (and gender only when the subject is singular). As seen in examples (1) to (4), the noun follows the verb, which obligatorily bears a verbal gender marking *-sü* F and *-shi* M and number *-shii* PL in agreement with the G/N of the noun, which can be a specific name: *Jüseepa*, G/N F (1), *Manuet*, G/N M (2) or a noun, which bears a nominal marking G/N *-i* M (3), G/N *-t*, G/N *-na* PL (4). These names bear not only G/N marks but also the definiteness mark *-ka-*.

Whether the subject is animate, as in the examples from (1) to (4), or inanimate, as in (5) and (6), the syntactic structure does not change from the morphological standpoint of view, i.e., the morphological marks on the verb remain unchanged. As seen in the examples mentioned above, the concord marks, in the case of intransitive verbs, do not contain the meaning of person⁴.

- (5) *Asurulü-sü tü puetta-ka-t.*⁵
close-F DET.F door-DEF-F
'The door was closed.'

- (6) *Ojutü-shi wanee-shia mankü.*
fall-M.SG INDEF-M mango
'A mango fell off.'

In intransitive sentences, pronominal subjects, like nominal subjects, are not marked to indicate their nuclear role in a sentence. If the pronominal subject performs the action voluntarily or has some control over it, and if this does not control the action or is affected by it, it is unmarked (absolutive or experiencer). In this sense, the pronominal subject appears unmarked after the verb in the sentence and in agreement with the verb through the verbal G/N mark. The subject (free) personal pronouns are summarized in Table 1 (Taken from Ramírez González and Dieck, 2019).

- (7) *Makatü-shii waya we-pia-lu'u.*⁶
stay-PL 1PL 1PL-house-INES
'We stayed in our house.'

4 Unlike the subject agreement marks on transitive verbs, which are described below.

5 The word *puettakat* is a loan word from Spanish: "la Puerta" "the door".

6 *-lu'u* is a locative mark of location of an entity, as in *kulaala-lu'u*, 'in/within corral'.

(8) *Asirejü-sü pia.*⁷
laugh-M.SG 2SG.F
‘You were laughing.’

Table 1
Personal subject pronouns (free forms)

1SG	taya
2SG	pia
3SG.M	nia
3SG.F	jia/shia
1PL	waya
2PL	jia
3PL.M	naya
3PL.F	jia/shia-irua

In transitive constructions, the subject is generally the argument immediately after the verb, before the objects (direct, indirect), and agrees with the verb, which obligatorily carries the pronominal indexes shown in Table 2. Pronominal indexes⁸ do contain the meaning of person and number (and gender in the 3rd person), unlike the *-shi* and *-sü* marks that agree with the subject of the intransitive construction. The bound person marks with subject function in transitive construction are those shown in Table 2:

Table 2
Pronominal index marks (subject) bound in transitive verbs⁹

1SG	ta-
2SG	pü- / pi
3SG.M	nü- / ni-
3SG.F	jü- / ji
1PL	wa-
2PL	jü / ji
3PL.M	na-
3PL.F	jia-irua

Since actant 1 or the subject is endowed with dynamic participation in realizing an event (the main participant), it corresponds to the

7 The 3SG.F *-shia* is from the dialectal variant of the Lower Guajira region.
8 The term “pronominal index” is applied to a morpheme linked to a verbal or nominal word that can be analyzed as a substitute for a nominal constituent.
9 The variation between *jü-* / *ji-*, *nü-* / *ni-*, and *pü* / *pi-* is probably related to vowel harmony.

“nominative” case in case languages. On the other hand, actant 2 or the object (the second participant), therefore, corresponds to the “accusative”. As shown in example (9), the verb *nü-ojotü-in* is in the initial position, with the pronominal index *nü-* 3SG.M. In the present investigation, the *-in* mark will then be interpreted as a mark that the verb in question is transitive with a pronominal index and requires the realization of a direct object (and will be glossed as DO). In the same example, we can see that the subject *et-ka-i*, whose nominal mark *-i* (M) agrees with the verbal mark *nü-* 3SG.M, i.e., the agent. The direct object, *atpana-ka-i*, is found after the sequence of the verb and its subject (9). In (10) the pronominal index changes to 3SG.F for agreement effect with the feminine subject *et-ka-t*. If the subject’s gender is changed to feminine, the gender and number agreement mark on the verb also changes.

- (9) *Nü-ojottü-in* *chi* *et-ka-i* *atpana-ka-i*
 3SG.M-bite-DO DET.M dog-DEF-M.SG rabbit-DEF-M.SG
 ‘The dog bit the rabbit.’
- (10) *Jü-ojottü-in* *tü* *et-ka-t* *atpana-ka-i*
 3SG.F-bite-DO DET.F dog-DEF-F.SG rabbit-DEF-M.SG
 ‘The dog bit the rabbit.’

As seen in examples (9) and (10), the agreement of the pronominal index with the subject is seen: *nü*- 3SG.M agrees with the subject *et-ka-i* ‘the dog’ and *jü*- 3SG.F agrees with the subject *et-ka-t*, ‘the dog’ respectively. In these sentences, both the marks *nü*- 3SG.M and *jü*- 3SG.F are encoded as *agents*. Consequently, it can then be stated that morphology does play a role in the identification of the subject, as there is an agreement between the person, gender, and the number of the subject in the verb. Still, the syntactic function of the subject is not marked with any specific morpheme for the subject function in the nominal syntagm in question. As can be seen in the examples above, there are no morpheme markings to explicitly indicate the subject function in ‘the dog’ (nominative case marking).

The syntactic role of the direct object

As for the subject, Wayuunaiki has no specific morphemes to mark the direct object (accusative case marking). This syntactic function is canonically marked with the syntactic position (after the subject). It is clear

syntactic construction, the pronominal index plays the role of the subject and is linked to the verb.

The position of the direct object is placed immediately after the verb. It is interesting to note the location of the subject changes in the sentence with transitive verbs, a situation that occurs due to the notion of empathy hierarchy in the coding of the arguments linked to the verb; that is, the central arguments are indexed in the verb. The hierarchy of the first and second persons is higher in that hierarchy due, in part, to the speaker's higher empathy concerning them. It also allows the incorporation of the proximative-obviative opposition in the third person, as the proximative is higher in the hierarchy than the obviative.

- (13)

Pü-setü-in
2SG-hit-DO

taya
1SG

jü-aka
3SG.F-INST

pa-japü.
2SG-hand

'You hit me with your hand.'
- (14)

Ta-ajü-in
1SG-burn-DO

tü
DET.F

piichi-ka-t.
house-DEF-F

'I burned down the house.'
- (15a)

Nü-ayatü-in
3SG.M-hit-DO

waya
1PL

Mettana.
Mettana

'Mettana hit us.'
- (15b)

Nü-ayat-ee-na
3SG.M-hit-FUT-PL

Jia
3PL.M

Mettana.
Mettana

'Mettana is going to hit you.'

In turn, the transitive verb in the past and present tense not only agrees with the subject through the pronominal index but also bears the *-in* mark, which indicates that a direct object must appear as in (9) to (15a). This mark cannot be analyzed as a concord mark equally “rich” in information as the subject concord since the latter contains information about the person, gender, and number, while the direct object mark *-in* has none of these functions. This is seen in, e.g., (16), (17), and (18), where *-in* remains constant even though the direct object varies in number and gender. The *-in* mark does not change either if the agreement is with a person other than the third person¹¹:

11 In example (15a), although the pronoun *waya*, which here has the function of the direct object, is placed before the subject *Mettana*, the grammatical functions are clear,

- (16)

Ta-øjottü-in
1SG-bit-DO
'I (man or woman) bit the rabbit.'

atpana-ka-i.
rabbit-DEF-M.SG
- (17)

Jü-øjottü-in
2PL.M-bite-DO
'You bit the panela.'

panera-ka-t.
panela-DEF-F.SG

At the nominal syntagma level, the *-in* mark appears as a function of nominal possession as shown in example (18).

- (18)

Nü-luwajü-in
3SG.M-steal-DO

Mettana
Mettana

*jü-peina-in*¹²
3sg.f-comb -POSS

Karmen.
Carmen

'Mettana stole Carmen's hair comb.'

On the other hand, when the transitive verb is in the future, the direct object marking on the transitive verb is no longer *-in*, but *-chi*, *-rü*, *-na* or *-rü-irua*, depending on the gender and number of the object. In (19) and (20), we find agreement of *jü-* 3SG.F with Ana, the subject, and *-chi* SG.M agrees with the direct object *maraja-ka-i* 'the jar' and *ni-* 3SG.M agrees with *Jüsee* as subject and *-rü* SG.F agrees with the direct object *mansana-ka-t* 'the apple'. The agreement of *-chi* and *-ru* with masculine and feminine direct objects, respectively, suggests that *-in* does mark the direct object because of the location of *-chi* and *-ru* on the verb as in (19) and (20).

- (19)

Jü-osott-ee-chi
3SG.F-break-FUT-SG.M

Ana
Ana

chi
DET.M

marajá-ka-i.
jar-DEF-SG.M

'Ana is going to break the jar.'
- (20)

Ni-ek-ee-rü
3SG.M-eat-FUT-SG. F

Jüsee
José

tü
DET.F

mansana-ka-t.
apple-DEF-F

'Jose will eat the apple.'

The indirect object (recipient and beneficiary)

In (21), the term *wane-sia woma* is the direct object of the verb *japüin* 'to give' and *nümüin jintuikai* is the indirect object, which is composed of *nü-* 3SG.M and has an agreement with the noun *jintüi*. In turn, *-müin*

since the agreement of the verb is with the subject Mettana (3SG.MASC) and not with waya (1PL).

12 In other languages the morpheme *-in* has the value of genitive (GEN) at the level of the nominal syntagm.

is the dative mark that is necessarily related to *jintüikai* by means of the pronominal index *nü-* 3SG. M. The dative morpheme marks the actant of a trivalent verb, which becomes the addressee in the utterance; the units *nümüin* or *jümüin* precede the noun, which plays the role of the indirect object (addressee).

- (21) *Jü-apü-in* *Jouner* *wane-sia* *woma* *nü-müin* *jintüi-ka-i*.
3SG.F-give-DO Jouner INDEF-F hat 3SG.M-DAT child-DEF-M
‘Jouner gave the child a hat as a gift.’
- (22) *Nü-asülüj-ee-chi* *Chente* *wanee-shia* *püliikü* *jü-müin* *Cürüstina*.
3SG.M-give-FUT-M Vicente INDEF-M donkey 3SG.F-DAT Cristina
‘Vicente will give Cristina a donkey as a gift.’
- (23) *Jü-lüjü-in* *Masala* *kepeshuuna-irua* *nü-müin* *Peliipe*
3SG.F-bring-DO Masala bean-PL 3SG.M-DAT Peliipe
‘Masala brought beans to Felipe.’

When analyzing the above sentences, in (22), it is evident that the pronominal index *nü-* 3SG.M agrees with Vicente, the subject of the sentence. The morpheme *-chi* M.SG, which marks the masculine in the future verb, agrees with the direct object *wanee-shia püliikü*, ‘a donkey’ and *jü-* 3SG.F of *jü-müin* agrees with Cristina, the indirect object that becomes the addressee, being *-müin* the mark of the dative. In (23), there is some grammatical variation due to the influence of the arguments; *jü-* 3SG.F agrees with Masala, the subject (female); *-in* marks the direct object *kepeshuuna-irua* and *nü-* 3SG.M agrees with *Felipe*, who becomes the indirect object (addressee) and *-müin* again marks the dative.

As for the position of the sentence constituents, the predicative verb is located at the beginning of the sentence. The subject is located after the verb, followed by the direct object, and the indirect object (addressee) is located at the end of the sentence. The grammatical element with dative meaning (DAT) *jümüin/nümüin*, when placed before the noun in the function of indirect object, that is, the addressee, becomes a preposition in the ditransitive syntactic construction, as shown in examples (21) to (23). However, at the level of pronominal constructions, *-müin* can appear in sentence-final position as in example (27). This fact indicates that the dative value is not stable in its position in a ditransitive sentence.

Case is another grammatical category that is frequently associated with the noun. In some of the examples analyzed, locative marks are identified, such as the inessive *-lu'u* in (7), the instrumental *-aka* in (13), and the mark *-in*, which in nominal syntagm has the value of possessive but in the verb, it marks the direct object. The affinity between the dative and the allative is recognized in Wayuunaiki through formal identity. In the following examples, the term in question is an animate *ta-emejü-in*, the morpheme *-müin* corresponds to the dative marking, but *-müin* can also be suffixed to a place name taking in such a case the sense of an allative 'to, toward' as in (25) and (26).

- (24) Ta-e'iraj-ee-rü wanee-sia jajeechi jü-müin ta-emejü-in.
 1SG-sing-FUT-DO INDEEF song 3SG.F-DAT 1SG-girlfriend-POSS
 'I'll sing a song to my girlfriend.'
- (25) O'unü-sü Griselda Nasare-müin.
 go-SG.F Griselda Nazareth-DAT
 'Griselda went to Nazareth.'

In these cases *-müin* will still be labeled as *dative*, even if its function is *allative* as in (26). The above is consistent with the fact that in natural languages it is common for a grammatical mark to express a specific semantic role to have more than one function depending on the context (see Blake (2001, p. 32) and Payne (2006, pp. 215-216)). In languages with case systems, it may happen that the dative case category, for example, expresses several different functions, such as beneficiary or locative, and that the accusative category expresses patient or direction/trajectory, for example, in German. Creissels (2006) warns that

(...) it is particularly frequent to find a single case form that accumulates one of the following function pairs: ergative-genitive, ergative-instrumental, accusative-dative, dative-genitive, dative-adlative, comitative-instrumental, instrumental-ablative, instrumental-modal, locative-adlative. (p. 54)¹³

The *-müin* mark in Wayuunaiki can then express the semantic role of the *dative* and the *allative*, depending on the context. It is not strange that the dative can express beneficiary and direction, since underlying

13 Personal translation from French

both is the notion of directionality: in one case the orientation is a person, in the other, a place.

- (26)
- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| <i>Jouya</i> | <i>wa-epia-lu'u-müin.</i> |
| Let's go | 1PL-house-INES-ALAT |
| 'Let's go to our home.' (lit: 'Let's go to/into our house or home.') | |

Wayuunaiki morphologically distinguishes between dative (27) and beneficiary (28) marks in ditransitive sentences. Although languages with case systems generally express the recipient similarly, Wayuunaiki has a different marking for the dative and the beneficiary. It is difficult to find a clear semantic difference between them. For now, we note that the former is used only with verbs such as “give” “say” and “sing”, while the latter marks with other verbs a recipient who receives a detriment or a benefit. The beneficiary contains a semantic nuance of finality, which in the Spanish translation would correspond to the preposition “para” (Ramírez González, 2018) and in English “to” or “for”.

- (27)
- | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Wa-asülüj-ee-rü</i> | <i>wanee-sia</i> | <i>manta</i> ¹⁴ | <i>jü-müin.</i> |
| 1PL-give-FUT-SG. F | INDEF-F | blanket | 3SG.F-DAT |
| 'We will give her a blanket as a gift.' | | | |
- (28)
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| <i>Ta-anajü-in</i> | <i>wane-shia</i> | <i>rawia</i> | <i>nü-püla</i> | <i>Juan.</i> |
| 1SG-save-DO | INDEF-M | radio | 3SG.M-BEN | Juan |
| 'I saved a radio for Juan.' | | | | |

In summary, the syntactic functions of the subject and direct object are expressed in the syntax, the VSO order being canonical, in case the subject and object nominal syntagms are not pronominal. The verb bears subject and object agreement marks, but the subject marks (which agree in person and number - and gender in the singular forms), are richer than the object marks (which do not distinguish either of the above categories in the past and present tenses, and which agree in gender and number in the verb marked for the future tense).

14 This is the name of the Wayuu woman's clothing.

Alignment system in Wayuunaiki

The following is the type of alignment pattern manifested by this language. The structure of the pronouns that constitute the subject and object nuclear arguments in intransitive and transitive sentences is:

Intransitive	Transitive
Subject: S/EXP	Subject: S/A, Objeto: P
Ditransitive:	
S/T/R	

The categories S (“single”), A (“agent!”) and O (“object”) correspond in Wayuunaiki then to:

S = ABS

A = NOM

O = ACUS

Languages that treat S and A at the morphosyntactic level in the same way and O differently are known as languages with nominative/accusative type alignment patterns, where the nominative corresponds to S and A, and accusative to O.

In Wayuunaiki, the central systems of grammatical relations in terms of the organization of arguments in a sentence, three fundamental semantic-syntactic roles are identified: S, S/A and O. S (“single”) refers to the single argument in an intransitive construction. It is also coded as Absolutive. A (“Agent”) refers to the agent argument in a transitive construction. And O (“Object”) refers to the patient argument of a transitive construction. In this case, the alignment pattern of this language is of the nominative-accusative type in the sense that the subject of an intransitive verb and the subject of a transitive verb receive a different treatment from the direct object of the transitive verb. In this sense, the treatment consists of verbal G/N suffix agreement with the S in intransitive constructions as in examples (1) to (4). The position of the S follows the verb at the beginning of the sentence. To distinguish the role of A, it is also by the position it occupies in the sentence and by agreement: A/S is found after the verb and before O and in agreement with pronominal indexes (examples, (9) and (10)). O is found after the verb and S/A and before the Direct Object. In this language, the function of each verbal argument (S, S/A, O) is identified by the position

that they have in the sentence and by the agreement they have with verbal G/N marks and with pronominal prefixes indexed on the verb and not by special case marks.

Concluding remarks

This article has presented a variety of examples in which it is observed that in Wayuunaiki, the “nuclear” syntactic functions of the arguments of the sentence are marked in syntax, not in morphology. The other syntactic functions are peripheral and carry morphological markings. Given this fact, we assume that this language is not a case language but an agglutinative one since, in its restricted sense, case languages are not considered to be those that do not present a morphological type of opposition to distinguish between the two nuclear functions of subject and object.

The single argument of an intransitive verb is not morphologically marked by S. Its function as S is marked mainly through its position immediately after the verb, that is, we speak of the syntactic role of S. Based on the theory of alignment, S can be encoded as ABS in intransitive constructions. The noun (or pronominal) whose function is to be S of an intransitive verb agrees in gender and number marking with the verb. In this case, the predominant structure is VS.

In transitive constructions, the S/A is generally the argument immediately after the verb, before the O's (direct and indirect), and agrees with the verb, which obligatorily carries the pronominal index prefixes. The pronominal indexes attached to the verb contain the meaning of person and number (and gender of the 3rd person), unlike the G/N suffixes, which agree with the S of the intransitive construction.

As previously stated, the syntactic position of the Direct Object (O) is after the verb and the subject A. Like S, O agrees with the G/N marks and is related to the *-in* mark. The Wayuunaiki argument organization system has three nuclear arguments: S in intransitive constructions and A and O for transitive constructions. The predominant structure is VSO.

In this language, a ditransitive construction results from the transfer of an entity (T) from an (A) to an (R). The arguments T and R of ditransitive constructions are generally encoded in the same way as

the argument P of monotransitive clauses. All three types of arguments appear as unmarked constituents. This type of ditransitive construction in which both objects are marked the same is called *double object construction*. In Wayuunaiki, the recipient R and the theme T are distinguished by word order. However, there is no fixed order of constituents, and they may appear in different positions in the clause; thus, the relative position of the arguments R and T cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish them.

As already stated, the syntactic position of the Direct Object (O) is after the verb and the subject A. Like S, O agrees with the G/N marks and is related to the *-in* mark. In essence, the Wayuunaiki argument organization system has three nuclear arguments: S in intransitive constructions and A and O for transitive constructions. The predominant structure is VSO.

Although in previous works (Ramírez González, 2001, p. 42), the existence of an *-in* mark at the end of the verbal word has been recorded in some cases, it had not been assigned a concrete function. Additionally, Mansen and Mansen (1984, p. 92) also mentions this unit without attributing meaning to it. In the present investigation, observation of the data (see, e.g., (9), as well as (10), (11a), and (13) allows us to propose that this is a Direct Object (DO) mark that appears only with transitive verbs and co-occurs with the prefix marking the subject agreement. However, a more detailed study of this unit needs to be carried out to observe the frequency of its occurrence. The observation of our data allows us to propose that it is a direct object (DO) announcer that appears only with transitive verbs and co-occurs with the pronominal index (bound). However, a more detailed study of this unit would be necessary to observe the regularity of its occurrence and clarify its function more precisely.

The bound person marks with the subject function in transitive constructions are those shown in Table 2. In the singular forms, as is evident from the contrast between (13) and (14), the first-person free pronoun contains no gender information. The same is true for the second-person. The third-person, on the other hand, does mark gender by differentiating between the free forms *nia* (3SG.M) and *jia* (or *shia*) (3SG.F) (see examples 8 and 11). In the plural forms, it is likewise noted that only in the 3rd person is gender marked, with *naya* (3PL.MASC)

and *shia/jia-irua* (3FEM-PL) (Ramírez González & Dieck, 2019). This feature is consistent with the marked tendency, recorded in typological work, to mark for gender only the 3rd person in many languages (Siewierska, 2004, p.7). In essence, this is generally attributed to the fact that marking the gender of the 1st and 2nd person is communicatively redundant since, for participants in verbal interaction, their gender is self-evident (Siewierska, 2004, p. 105).

In summary, the syntactic functions of S and O are expressed through the syntax in Wayuuniaki. The VSO order is the canonical one in the case where the nominal syntagms S and O are not pronominal. The verb bears S and O agreement marks, the S marks being richer (agreeing in person, number, and gender in the singular forms) than the O agreement marks.

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Table 3
Abbreviations

1PL	1 st plural person
1SG	1 st singular person
2PL	2 nd plural person
2SG	2 nd singular person
3PL	3 rd plural person
3SG	3 rd singular person
ABS	Absolutive
ACC	Accusative
ALAT	Allative
BEN	Benefactive
DAT	Dative
DEF	Definite
DET	Determinant
DO	Direct object
F	Feminine
FUT	Future
IND	Indefinite
INES	Inessive
INST	Instrumental
M	Masculine
NOM	Nominative
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
SG	Singular