

Chapter 10: Noun Incorporation

In noun incorporation (NI) constructions, an argument of the verb is compounded with the verb stem, thus appearing inside the agreement markers and forming part of the whole verb complex. This is a highly productive process in MIG Zoque. The incorporated noun usually fills the patient role, but other arguments can be incorporated as well. Adjectives may also be incorporated (example 10.1 iii; further discussion below). Modifiers of the incorporated noun can be stranded outside the verb complex, provided they also are non-specific, such as adjectives or relative clauses (iv; further discussion below). NI in MIG Zoque is an example of type I incorporation, according to Mithun's hierarchy (Mithun, 1984).

(10.1)

- (i) də ʃəkwištammə
 də+ ʃək=wiš-tam-wə
 1A+ bean=uproot-1/2PL-COM
 'We were uprooting bean plants.' (ZOH1R7 010)
- (ii) kəʃkuymeʔcpay wittə
 0 kəʃ.kuyʔ=meʔc-pa ʔəy+ wit-wə
 3A eat.INSTR1=look_for-INC 3E+ walk.dINC
 'He's walking along looking for food.' (ZOH1R26
 062)
- (iii) ʔəy malʔaŋcoŋŋə
 ʔəy+ mal=ʔaŋ.coŋ-wə
 3E+ bad=MOUTH.join-COM
 'He answered badly.' (ZOH1R24 581)

- (iv) nəkpay kuytəŋŋə rrama
 nək-pa ʔəy+ kuy=təŋ-wə rrama
 go-INC 3E+ tree=cut_w_machete-dINC branch
 'They're going to cut tree branches.' (ZOH1R22 020)

The incorporated argument is most commonly the patient, in which case the verb complex is made intransitive and marked with one of the absolutive agreement markers. The incorporated noun does not function as a classifier, as in classificatory NI (Mithun, 1984), so no additional, more-specific noun may appear in the role of patient. Incorporated patients are non-specific: you can say "I was tree-cutting", but not "I was that-tree-cutting" with reference to a particular tree.

(10.2)

- (i) dəš dey də məkəkminpa
 dəš dey də+ mək=pək=min-pa
 1Prn now 1A+ corn=get=come-INC
 'I'm carrying corn now.' (ZOH1R28 047)
- (ii) dəš ya də tukšmeca
 dəš ya də+ tukšiʔ=meʔc-A
 1Prn NEG 1A+ fight=look_for-nINC
 'I'm not looking for a fight.' (ZOH1R18 340)
- (iii) ʔaybeses porke hakkem niwikəšpa
 ʔay beses porke hakke ʔəm+ niwiʔ=kəš-pa
 there_are times because a_lot 2A+ chile=eat-INC
 'Sometimes (it's) because you eat a lot of chile.' (ZOH1R36 067)
- (iv) našhecpa
 0 naš=hec-pa
 3A earth=scratch-INC

'He's scratching the ground (a bull).' (ZOH1R25 116)

- (v) cəwihuyšukpa
 0 cəwiʔ=huy-šuk-pa
 3A tobacco=buy-3PL-INC
 'They buy tobacco.' (ZOH1R17 008)

As mentioned in chapter 8, when NI occurs inside a dependent verb construction, the agreement marker is ergative, even though the construction as a whole is intransitive. This is the result of the ergative shift that occurs in these dependent constructions.

(10.3)

- (i) minnə ʔəy koyoškuymece
 min-wə ʔəy+ ko.yoš.kuyʔ=meʔc-E
 come-COM 3E+ SOC.work.INSTR1=look_for-dCOM
 'He came to look for a job.' (ZOH1R18 206)

- (ii) nəmmən kahwecəktammə
 nəmmə ʔən+ kahwe=cək-tam-wə
 PROG 1E+ coffee=do-1/2PL-COM
 'We were making coffee.' (ZOH1R7 017)

- (iii) nəkpay šošʔanecakhayšukkə
 nək-pa ʔəy+ šoš=ʔane=cak.hay-šuk-wə
 go-INC 3E+ bean=tortilla=leave.APPL-3PL-dINC
 'They go to leave bean tamales for him.' (ZOH1R22 026)

It is possible to incorporate patient arguments that refer to human entities, although most patients tend to be non-human.

(10.4)

- (i) nəkəkəy hentepekə
 nək-wə ʔəy+ hente=pek-E
 go-COM 3E+ people-get-dCOM
 'He went to get some people.' (ZOH1R24 643)
- (ii) ʔəm ʔawinmeʔcpa pam ʔekpa
 ʔəm+ ʔawinʔ=meʔc-pa para ʔəm+ ʔek-pa
 2A+ sibling=look_for-INC for 2E+ harvest-INC
 'You look for a friend so you can harvest (corn).' (ZOH1R13 051)

It isn't always possible to tell if the single argument of an unaccusative verb has been incorporated or not, since the third person absolutive marker is **0**. One way of testing this is to make the expression negative, in which case the incorporated noun will appear inside the negative marker (10.5 i). In example (ii), phonological evidence suggests that the noun hama 'day' has been incorporated, because it has been shortened to a single syllable. Examples (iv) and (v) may or may not be incorporation constructions, though it seems likely that they are, especially (iv) which is probably lexicalized.

(10.5)

- (i) ya ʔaŋpənʔotowa
 ya 0 ʔaŋpən=ʔotoŋ-A
 NEG 3A zoque=speak-nINC
 'She doesn't speak Zoque.' (elicited)

- (ii) ya təmʔəwə
ya 0 təm=ʔəŋ-A
NEG 3A fruit=fall-nINC
'Fruit isn't falling (because of the cold).' (elicited)
- (iii) ʔən ʔəkšpan mok para ha:mpəʔtpa
ʔən+ ʔəkš-pa ʔən+ mok para 0 hama=pəʔt-pa
1E+ shell-INC 1E+ corn for 3A day=pass-INC
'I shell my corn so the day passes (well).' (ZOH1R53 048)
- (iv) cu:muknəmpa
cuʔ muk-Anəm-pa
night fall-IMPERS-INC
'Night falls.' (ZOH1R36 057)
- (v) ʔašta ke təmtukpa
ʔašta ke təm=tuk-pa
until that fruit finish-INC
'Until the fruit sets' (ZOH1R13 048)

The incorporated noun phrase can be modified by elements external to the verb complex; that is, modifiers may be stranded. These must be non-specific sorts of modifiers, such as relative clauses. The examples in (10.6) illustrate the contrast between modification of an incorporated noun (i) and of an unincorporated noun (ii). Notice that in (i) the modifying adjective has been relativized: "He builds houses that are big."

(10.6)

- (i) təkçəkpa komíʔ
0 tək=çək-pa komiʔ+Vʔk
3A house=do-INC big+REL
'He builds big houses.' (elicited)

- (ii) ko:mtək ʔəy cəkpa
 komiʔ=tək ʔəy+ cək-pa
 big=house 3E+ do-INC
 'He builds big houses.' (elicited)

Non-existential relative clauses are also allowed as stranded modifiers (10.7 i-v). These can be full clauses, with no restrictions on mood, polarity, valency, etc.

(10.7)

- (i) tək cəkpa syempre humpáʔ
 0 tək=cək-pa syempre 0 hum-pa+Vʔk
 3A house=do-INC always 3A crumble-INC+REL
 'He builds houses that always fall down.' (elicited)

- (ii) tək cəkpa šəŋŋanəmpahi
 0 tək=cək-pa 0 šəŋ.ʔa-Anəm-pa+hi
 3A house=do-INC 3A fiesta.VERS1-INDEF-INC+LOCREL
 'He builds houses where they have parties.' (elicited)

- (iii) yotekommə ʔəy pəkminhawóʔ bi hente
 0 yoteʔ=kə-m-wə ʔəy+ pək=min.hay-wə+Vʔk bi hente
 3A clothes=mend-COM 3E+ get=come.APPL-COM+REL DEF people
 'She mends clothes that people bring her.' (elicited)

- (iv) yotekommə yakki yay kommuššóʔ
 0 yoteʔ=kə-m-wə yakki ya ʔəy+ kə-m=muš-wə+Vʔk
 3A clothes=men-COM nobody NEG 3E+ mend=know-COM+REL
 'She mends clothes that nobody can mend.' (elicited)

- (v) ga təmyukpiŋŋəy mini ʔəŋŋóʔ
 gaʔ 0 təm=yuk.piŋ-wə ʔəy+ min-E 0 ʔəŋ-wə+Vʔk
 that 3A fruit=UP.pick_up-COM 3E+ come-dCOM 3A fall-COM+REL
 'She came along picking up fallen fruit.' (elicited)

Other kinds of stranded modifiers that are allowed are possessive nouns (i), an indefinite quantifier like *mas*, 'more' (ii), and a modifying noun (iii).

(10.8)

- (i) *də yotekommə ʔən manakʔəytiʔ*
də+ yoteʔ=kəm-wə ʔən+ manak+ʔəytiʔ
 1A+ clothes=mend-COM 1E+ child+3PSN
 'I mended my children's clothes.' (elicited)

- (ii) *nəkkəy pənpəki mas*
nək-wə ʔəy+ pən=pək.E mas
 go-COM 3E+ man=get.dCOM more
 'He went to get more men.' (ZOH1R24 644)

- (iv) *nəkpay kuytəŋŋə rrama*
nək-pa ʔəy+ kuy=təŋ-wə rrama
 go-INC 3E+ tree=cut_w_machete-dINC branch
 'They're going to cut tree branches.' (ZOH1R22 020)

The incorporated patient must be non-specific; that is, it must be an uncounted, indefinite, entity. I can say that I am going to 'tree-cut', but I can't point to a particular tree and then say "I will tree-cut (that one)". Example (10.9 i) is ungrammatical: determiners, deictics, and definite quantifiers can not be stranded, because they would make the incorporated noun specific.

(10.9)

- (i) * *də yotekommə yədə*
də+ yoteʔ=kəm-wə yədə
 1A+ clothes=mend-COM this
 * 'I clothes-mended these'

NI thus serves as a means of modifying the verb, narrowing its denotation to a particular subtype of action. In example (10.10 i), 'to coffee-drink' is actually the common idiom for 'to eat breakfast'. While it generally involves drinking coffee, it doesn't specify one cup or two, and most likely includes eating a piece of bread as well. In texts, NI can be a way of describing the action that is being performed without introducing an essentially irrelevant entity into the discourse context (ii). The beans have nothing to do with the story told in this text; the narrator is just setting up the background by explaining what they were doing at the beginning of the story.

(10.10)

- (i) həʔ də kahweʔukpaštám
 həʔ də+ kahwe=ʔuk-pa+štaaʔ+ʔam
 yes 1A+ coffee=drink-INC+ONLY+NOW
 'Yes, I'm just going to drink some coffee.' (ZOH1R10 150)
- (ii) də šəkyuhtammə wayay nəhoʔ
 də+ šək=yuh-tam-wə wayay nəʔ+hoʔ
 1A+ bean=clear-1/2PL-COM cold water+LOC2
 'We were clearing a bean field in Agua Fria.' (ZOH1R7 002)

When the verb complex has three arguments, whether because the root is bivalent (like *ciʔ-*, 'to give') or because affixation has increased its valency, the third argument is typically a human recipient or benefactor. If the patient argument is incorporated, the complex remains transitive. The recipient (or benefactor, etc.) argument can not be incorporated, so you can't say, for example, "He girl-gave flowers." This type of NI resembles Mithun's type II (1984:856-

859), in that the presence of the third argument allows the incorporating verb complex to remain transitive.

(10.11)

- (i) ?ən cənkuycišukkə ?i cənšukkə
 ?ən+ cən.kuy?=ci?-šuk-wə ?i 0 cən-šuk-wə
 1E+ sit.INSTR1=give-3PL-COM and 3A sit-3PL-COM
 'I gave them seats and they sat down.' (ZOH1R10 023-4)

- (ii) dey čanitu ya nəmmo miš ?anecidammám
 dey čanitu ya nəm.ʔoy-A miš+?ane=ci?-tam-wə+?am
 now chanito NEG DO.ANTIP-nINC 1>2+ tortilla=give-1/2PL-dINC+NOW
 'Now, Chanito, we can't give you tortillas anymore.' (ZOH1R27 007)

- (iii) peru syempre yakkə də yoškuyci?
 peru syempre yakkə də+ yoškuy?=ci?-A?
 but always VOL 1A+ work=give-iOPT
 'But let her always give work to me.' (ZOH1R14 053)

- (iv) tigó miš maŋkuykənəkkeppəba
 ti+goo? miš+ maŋkuy?=kə.nək=kep.ʔəy-pa
 what+BNF 2>1+ foot=AWAY.go=kick.SUF-INC
 'Why do you stick your foot out at me?' (ZOH1R18 323)

- (v) gay mašantəkho? ʔəy təmpəhayšukpa
 gay mašan=tək+ho? ʔəy+ təm=pəʔ.hay-šuk-pa
 then church=house+LOC2 3E+ fruit=put.APPL-3PL-INC
 'Then they put fruit for them in the church.' (ZOH1R21 030)

- (vi) ʔəy pamacəkhayšukpa
 ʔəy+ pama=cək.hay-šuk-pa
 3E+ bed=do.APPL-3PL-INC
 'They make the bed for themselves.' (ZOH1R22 007)

Arguments other than the patient may be incorporated, although such constructions are considerably less common. In (10.12 i), the incorporated argument is the goal. (Note that the additional conjuncts are stranded outside the verb complex.) In (ii-iv), the incorporated noun is a location (iv means literally 'It hurt me in the head'). In example (v), a location is incorporated into an intransitive verb of motion. I was unable to elicit sentences with other sorts of incorporated arguments, such as instruments.

(10.12)

- (i) ?əy koke?əŋyohpa wece kana
 ?əy+ koke=?əŋ.yoh-pa wece kana
 3E+ fish=MOUTH.pay-INC shrimp salt
 'They trade it for fish, shrimp, and salt.' (ZOH1R2 072)
- (ii) ?ən huku:tnekkəŋəyapa
 ?ən+ hukutə=nek=kəŋ.ʔəy-pa
 1E+ fire=stack=burn.SUF-INC
 'I stack it up near the fire.' (ZOH1R53 003)
- (iii) gay də ʔornohuku:ttəba
 gay də+ ʔorno=hukutək.ʔəy-pa
 then 1A+ oven=fire.VERS2-INC
 'Then I make a fire in the oven.' (ZOH1R31 013)
- (iv) bweno də kopaktoyyə
 bweno də+ kopak=toy-wə
 good 1A+ head=hurt-COM
 'I had a lot of headaches.' (ZOH1R14 076)
- (v) də našnəktampa
 də+ naš=nək-tam-pa
 1A+ earth=go-1/2PL-INC
 'We're going on foot.' (ZOH1R15 028)

Adjectives can also be incorporated. (Strictly speaking, they are then functioning as adverbs, since they are modifying the verb, rather than some noun.) This naturally has no effect on the transitivity of the verb complex. Examples (10.13 i) and (ii) illustrate the difference between a non-incorporated adverbial modifier and an incorporated one.

(10.13)

(i) pwes wəhəm cəkkə
pwes wəhə ʔəm+ cək-wə
well good 2E+ do-COM
'Well, you did well.'
(ZOH1R18 178)

(ii) nəmmə ʔəy wə:hcəkšukkə
nəmmə ʔəy+ wəhə=cək-šuk-wə
PROG 3E+ good=do-3PL-dINC
'They were repairing it.'
(ZOH1R25 064)

(iii) ʔəy malʔəŋcoŋə
ʔəy+ mal=ʔəŋ.coŋ-wə
3E+ bad=MOUTH.join-COM
'He answered badly.'
(ZOH1R24 581)

(iv) nəmmoba ʔəy kuktəŋšukkə
nəm.ʔoy-pa ʔəy+ kuk=təŋ-šuk-wə
DO.ANTIP-INC 3E+ center=cut_w_machete-3PL-dINC
'They can cut it in half.'
(ZOH1R29 077)