

# VP-movement in a VSO language

## A case study from San Juan Piñas Mixtec

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In this talk, I present in-progress research on the clause structure of San Juan Piñas Mixtec (Tò'òn Ndā'ví), a previously undocumented variety of Mixtec spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico, and in diaspora communities in California. Like other languages of the Oto-Manguean language family, San Juan Piñas Mixtec displays VSO word order (with VOS occurring in very limited contexts). Despite surface appearances, however, I show that this word order in San Juan Piñas Mixtec does not involve head movement of the verb past the subject (contra Macaulay 2005 and Ostrove 2020 on other Mixtec varieties). Rather, it is derived by object-stranding VP-movement. Evidence for this proposal comes from the distribution of VP-level adverbs, as well as from a closer look at the surface positions of certain internal arguments. In addition, I consider how San Juan Piñas Mixtec fits within the broader typology of “VP-raising” verb-initial languages, drawing syntactic parallels with Austronesian in particular (e.g. Massam 2001, Hermon 2009, Potsdam 2009, Clemens & Polinsky 2017). Time permitting, I also evaluate previous accounts of how the object comes to be “stranded” in VP-raising VSO languages (e.g. Lee 2006, Clemens 2014, van Urk to appear), and show that the full range of SJPM facts cannot be easily accommodated under such proposals.