

On the syntax of dependency in late sixteenth-century Europe¹

The need for studies on the history of dependency linguistics has been recently pointed out, aiming at tracing back to the origin of hierarchical grammatical relations and dependency-oriented approaches before the advent of the most renowned Tesnière's model (Imrényi & Mazziotta 2020). This study investigates on the emergence of the concept of syntactic dependency in missionary linguistics, focusing on the role of Jesuit grammarians on the development of the notion of subordination. In particular, the analysis concentrates on the first grammar of the indigenous South American language of Aymara, written by the Italian missionary Ludovico Bertonio at the end of the sixteenth century. I will focus on the second part of the grammar, which is devoted to syntax, by dwelling upon the innovative syntactic metalanguage that is shared by all the Jesuit grammarians working at the same school of Juli near Lake Titicaca in the Andes Mountains. Although these Jesuit grammars still lack a systematic theory of dependency, Bertonio uses the term *dependencia* and is aware of the verb centrality in constructing the whole sentence, differently from the more traditional approach in terms of binary subject-predicate division of the clause. Moreover, he extends the traditional word-based notion of determination (and government) (cf. Luthala 2020: 43; Colombat 2020) to the relationship between two different sentences, i.e. the main or independent clause (*oración determinante*) and the dependent clause (*oración determinada*), which are described as pertaining to different levels of dependency. Thus, contrarily to what previously assumed (Percival 1990; Auroux 2008; Graffi 2019; 2021), an earlier distinction between linear order and structural order seems to emerge before that the concept was refined within the syntactic analysis of Port-Royal grammarians.

1. Introduction

Although the early-modern descriptions of non-Indo-European languages have been overlooked in view of the traditionally well-known sources such as grammars of standard European languages (cf. Zwartjes 2007: 296 and references therein), the study of missionary linguistics has gained growing attention in the last decades (cf. Zwartjes 2012: 185). Indeed, although missionary works and grammars were written by priests with practical purposes of evangelization, they nonetheless offer a

¹ This article has been developed from the conference paper presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences, ICHoLS XV (University of Milan, Italy, 24-28 August 2021). The investigation is part of the project of national relevance funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, named "Parts of speech meet rhetorics: searching for syntax in the continuity between the Middle Ages and the Modern Age" (PRIN 20172F2FEZ, funded from January 2020).

huge amount of data that prove to be extremely useful in reconstructing the history of the Western linguistic thought. In particular, this paper aims at reconstructing the syntactic concept of dependency that emerges in early modern linguistics before the advent of the theories of Port-Royal (1660). The Port-Royal grammarians are indeed considered the first inventors of important syntactic notions such as the distinction between ‘main clause’ and ‘dependent clause’ (Graffi 1998; 2019: 87; 2021: 35) or the distinction among different types of sentence (Auroux 2008: 1027). I will focus on the first grammar of the indigenous South-American language of Aymara, a pre-Incaic language that is still spoken in the high Andean region located among Bolivia, Southern Peru and Northern Chile. Along with Quechua, it was the predominant language (*lengua general*) of the Inca empire and then of the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru. Today, it is classified as a nominative-accusative language, with an agglutinative suffixing morphology, a predominant SOV word order, a modifier-head construction, and its verbal system is characterized by a very rich derivational morphology (cf., among others, Adelaar with Muysken 2004; Cerrón-Palomino 2008; Coler 2014). The first grammar of this native American language was written in Castilian Spanish by the Jesuit missionary Ludovico Bertonio at the end of the sixteenth century (1596) and published in Rome a few years later (1603). The Italian Jesuit worked at the mission of Juli, near the lake Titicaca, with other Fathers of the Society of Jesus, namely Diego de Torres Rubio, who wrote a grammar of both Aymara (1616) and Quechua (1619), and Diego González Holguín, who wrote a grammar of Quechua in 1607. In fact, the structure and content of the grammars of these very similar languages betray both the mutual exchange and the great influence the three missionaries had on each other (Calvo Perez 1997; Segovia Gordillo 2016; Peetermans 2020). For a long time, colonial grammars have been considered «unreliable because of their alleged adherence to the Latin model» (Adelaar 2012: 7). However, besides the undeniable role the Graeco-Latin model had in shaping grammars of American indigenous languages, early missionaries show to be aware of the limits of traditional metalanguage and often move beyond the established schemas. Thus, on the one hand, since Aymara exhibits morphological and syntactic characteristics that were entirely new at the time, Bertonio tends to use familiar traditional Graeco-Latin classifications in order to make the language easier to learn. On the other hand, already in the prologue of his grammar, he emphasizes the distance between Latin and Aymara, mostly with reference to what he calls *dependencia*, i.e. the syntax of the language. As he explicitly admits, his syntactic model cannot be the Latin grammar, because it is necessary to analyse the specific peculiarities of Aymaran syntax (Bertonio 1603: 13). The syntactic approach of humanist grammarians, which was still based on the traditional Latin descriptions found in Donatus and Priscian and which continued throughout the medieval thought, proves to be insufficient for Bertonio. Both the Priscianic word-based dependency syntax (cf. Law 2003: 91) and the main role of positional

(left or right) order in verbal government as described by medieval and other humanist grammarians (Percival 2001: 9) could not find an adequate counterpart in the syntactic system of Aymara. It is also for this reason that in the seventeenth century the grammarians of Port-Royal seriously criticized the traditional syntactic theory of government, even going so far as to say that «la syntaxe de régime est presque toute arbitraire» (Auroux 2008: 1028). Thus, if it is true that, as a legacy of the Latin traditional model, the main concern of missionary grammarians was first morphology (cf. Zwartes 2002: 31), the need to describe an exotic language forces Bertonio to reinvent syntactic terms by exploiting the extant metalanguage. In the following sections, after briefly describing the structure and content of the first Grammar of Aymara, I will focus on the syntactic constructions discussed by Bertonio in the specific part devoted to syntax (2). In particular, I will dwell into the innovative metalanguage used to identify different types of sentence, showing how Bertonio and the Jesuit grammarians working with him at the mission of Juli were acquainted with a sentence-based syntax rather than a word-based syntax (3). Moreover, in the last section (4) I will argue that the Jesuit missionaries of early modern Spanish America were aware of an earlier concept of subordination and of the difference between main clause and dependent clause, before that these notions were later refined by Port-Royal grammarians after the mid-seventeenth century.

2. The term ‘dependency’ in the first Grammar of Aymara

The *Arte y Grammatica muy copiosa de la lengua aymara* shows a tripartite structure: the first part (pp. 19-52) is devoted to the eight parts of speech, both the variable parts (noun, pronoun, verb, participle) with their morphology (declension and conjugation), and the invariable parts (preposition, adverb, interjection, conjunction). The second part (pp. 53-253) is devoted to syntax or construction (*construcion*) of the eight parts of speech (cf. fig.1 below). The construction is analysed in terms of two traditional grammatical relations, namely ‘convenientia’ (*conveniencia*), i.e. agreement or concord, and ‘determinatio’, i.e. government. The third part (pp. 253-343) is devoted to about seventy particles (*particulas*), i.e. lexical items that can be added to nouns and verbs. They are classified as not pertaining to syntax, although the term *particula* in Bertonio is polysemous. Indeed, it is used alternately with *terminacion* ‘termination’ and *preposicion* ‘preposition’, referring to both inflectional endings and derivational suffixes of nouns and verbs. In general, Bertonio does not seem to realize that *particulas* can have not only a morphological, but also a syntactic or pragmatic value. As has been shown, some particles act indeed as conjunctions coordinating two sentences, as modifiers of the illocutive force of the sentence, as evidential markers (Bartolotta 2022: 54-55). Let us now focus more narrowly on the second part devoted to syntax (fig. 1). Although the grammar has a separate section on syntax, some basic syntactical concepts are introduced in the prologue, where a

first definition of syntax is given and reminds us the medieval *constructibilium unio*: «el modo de construyr y juntar las ocho partes dela oracion: en lo qual se ha tenido atencion no tanto ala grammatica Latina, quanto ala dependencia que ay en esta lengua» [the way of constructing and putting together the eight parts of the sentence: in which attention has been paid not so much to Latin grammar, as to the dependency that exists in this language] (Bertonio 1603: 13). This programmatic definition at the beginning of the grammar allows us to notice a first important fact, that the term ‘dependencia’ was still circulating among Renaissance grammarians. In fact, it has been thought that, after having been introduced in the 13th century, the medieval word *dependentia*, which was «another way of capturing Boethius’ notion of ‘determination’», disappeared from Latin grammars during the early modern age, from the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century (Percival 1990: 35-36).² Like other sixteenth-century missionary grammarians of American indigenous languages, Bertonio frequently makes explicit reference to the Latin grammatical model, albeit without mentioning his specific sources, also because Latin was a very well-known language among Jesuits. And yet, he does use the term *dependencia*, with explicit reference to at least two main traditional syntactic constructions, i.e. that between adjective and noun, and that between the verb and its complements. The relationship of ‘dependentia’ turns out to be strictly interrelated to that of ‘convenientia’ or agreement. Indeed, in the chapter devoted to the ‘constructio’ or syntax of adjective and noun, Bertonio makes clear that the construction of adjectives involves both concord, i.e. «conveniencia que ay entre el adiectiuo y substantiuo» [concord that is between the adjective and the substantive] and government, i.e. «construccion delos casos que piden los adiectiuos» [construction of cases that adjectives ask for] (Bertonio 1603: 144). Thus, he uses the term *dependencia* in commenting examples in which «los adjetiuos son muchos dependientes de vn substantiuo» [there are many adjectives depending on a noun] (Bertonio 1603: 144-145). He points out that the agreement between adjective and noun is realized by placing the adjective before the noun. As a matter of fact, he gives word order a prominent place, by emphasizing that the dependent or governed element regularly comes before the governing element in any construction, and that the unmarked word order in Aymara has the finite verb in the final position. This means that each relation of government follows a word order that is precisely the opposite of what predicted in the Graeco-Latin model and preserved by Middle Ages grammarians (cf. Law 2003: 167). The other construction in which the notion of *dependencia* is explicitly mentioned in Bertonio’s grammar is the relationship between the verb and other elements within the same sentence. More specifically, in the chapter devoted to the relative nouns, the Jesuit missionary

² The Latin *determinatio* is related to the government theory (*regimen*) elaborated by medieval grammarians starting from the XII century: a word causes another word to take on a particular case in order to *determine* its own meaning (cf. Luthala 2020: 43).

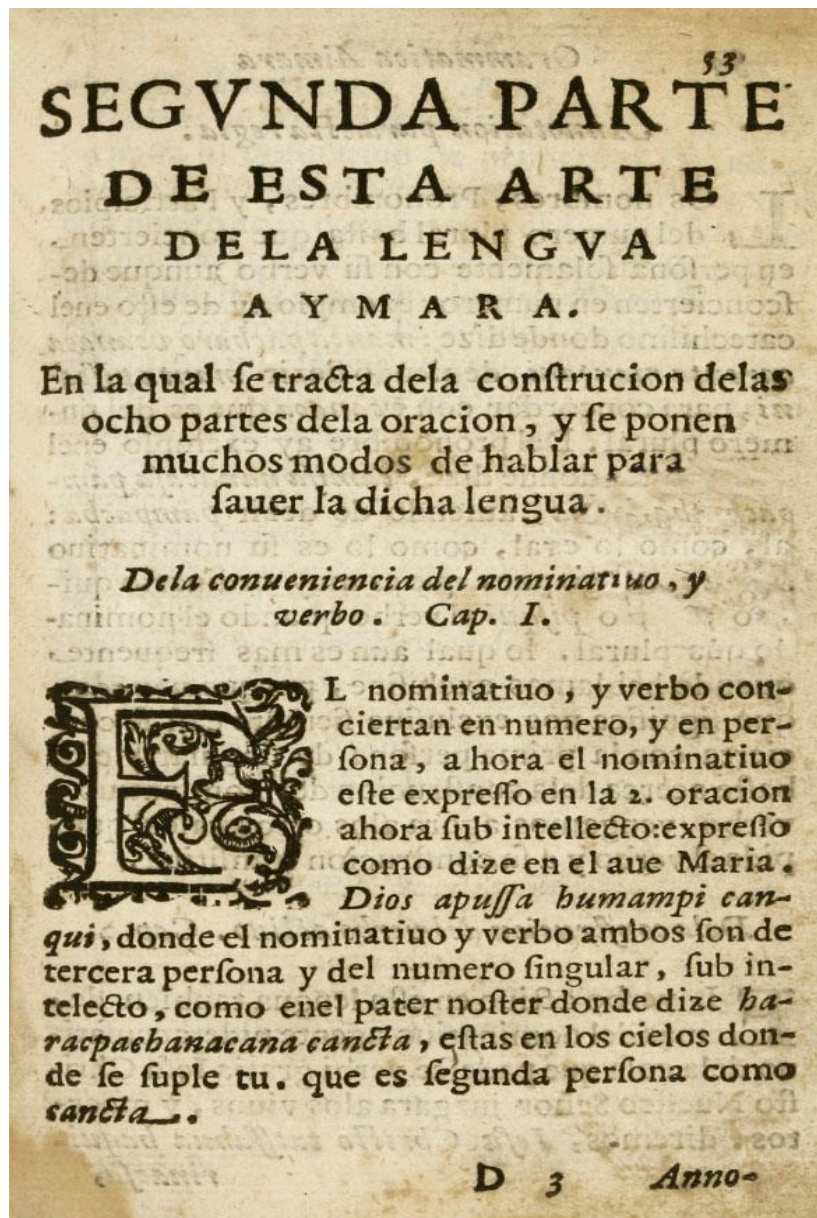


Fig. 1: The first page of the section devoted to syntax in Bertonio's Grammar

examines some Aymara sentences translated from Castilian, pointing out that the verb is located in the final position of the relative sentence, i.e., *oracion del relativo* (or *oracion relativa*),³ after all the elements that depend on it, i.e., «aviendo primero puesto todo lo que depende de aquel verbo» [putting first everything that depends on that verb] (Bertonio 1603: 165). Thus, for example, in the Aymara relative sentence quoted in the same chapter, i.e., *tunca sara plaçana churcsmaca, ucathua naca* «yo soy el que te di diez pesos en la plaça» [I am the one who gave you ten pesos in the square], the transitive verb *churcsmaca* 'I gave you' governs more elements at the same time. Specifically, in the

³ Although the expression *oracion del relativo* 'clause of the relative' instead of *oracion relativa* 'relative clause' is not found in the grammar, Bertonio commonly alternates between *del relativo* and *relativa*, for instance with reference to the *particula del relativo* 'particle of the relative' and *particula relativa* 'relative particle' or to the *verbo relativo*, so that the same extension can be supposed for clause (*oracion relativa*). In fact, the exact terminology *oracion relativa* is attested in the contemporary González Holguín's grammar (1607: 281).

relative sentence ‘who gave you ten pesos in the square’ it involves not only the subject (*I*) and the recipient (*you*), but also the object (*diez pesos*) and the locative (*in the square*), which simultaneously depend on one and the same verb, thus forming a sentence. This means that Bertonio considers the verb as first in the hierarchy of the sentence, differently from other grammarians that placed the subject at the same level as the verb. Indeed, it is widely held that verb centrality is viewed as one of the defining features of a dependency-based syntax (Mazzotta & Imrényi 2020: 12-17). Additionally, Bertonio indicates that the main sentence, i.e., the *oracion del antecedente* ‘antecedent clause’ (see *infra*, § 3), is located after the relative sentence, according to the specific syntactic order of Aymara. Here it is noteworthy that the construction of the verb and its depending elements is no longer regarded as a binary linkage between single words, as according to the Latin grammatical model, but refers to the notion of dependency at a sentential level, as firstly suggested by some late medieval grammars (Kneepkens 1990: 171).

After having focused on those few explicit occurrences of the term *dependencia* ‘dependency’ in the *Arte*, let us now follow the order of syntactic constructions as described by Bertonio in the section of the grammar devoted to syntax. Following the tradition of other humanist grammars (cf. Colombat 2020: 63), the missionary grammarian starts the chapter by presenting the relation between the nominative and the verb in terms of concord (*conveniencia*) rather than government, by using the same term *concertar* ‘agree’ found in Nebrija’s *Gramática de la Lengua Castellana* (1492: libro cuarto, capítulo primero), which heavily influenced other missionary grammarians in the New World: «el nominativo y verbo conciertan en numero y en persona» [the nominative and the verb agree in number and in person] (Bertonio 1603: 53). However, differently from Nebrija, the first concord is that between nominative and verb,⁴ which is not considered as a mere relationship of agreement, but as a true syntactic construction, i.e., *construcion* (Bertonio 1603: 54), a term Nebrija reserves for the relation of government between verb and cases other than nominative. And indeed, in the rest of the chapter Bertonio describes the relation between the verb and the many morphological cases in terms of government. More specifically, three different verbs are used to describe such syntactic relation: *rejar* ‘govern’ (p. 98: «el verbo... **rije** diversos casos»), *tener* ‘have’ (p. 119: «el verbo... **tiene** accusativo»), *pedir* ‘ask’ as in the following example: «el verbo activo demas del nominativo **pide** accusativo dela cosa que padesce» [the active verb besides the nominative requires the accusative of the patient] (Bertonio 1603: 54), probably due to the lack of a common syntactic terminology. The latter example seems to suggest that what would now be called ‘verb arguments’ are placed on the same level, since the nominative, the case for the subject (i.e., *supuesto*), is put on a pair with the

⁴ In the fourth chapter devoted to syntax, Antonio de Nebrija follows ‘the three concords’ or *Regule* ‘Rules’ that are listed in the works of many Italian Humanists (see Luthala 2018: 61), by first describing the relationship between adjective and noun.

case for the object. Again, the verb assumes a central role in the description of syntactic constructions. Immediately after dealing with the first ‘concord’, Bertonio moves on to deal with the construction of the transitive verb, which governs the accusative. Here the notion of transitivity is adapted to the phenomenon of the pronominal cross-referencing, which characterizes the verbal system of many Andean languages, such as Quechua and Aymara (cf. also Adelaar 1997: 261; Schmidt-Riese 2010: 136). More in detail, the marking of the main syntactic functions of subject and object is realized through both case inflection of NPs and verbal cross-referencing, i.e. by adding specific subject and object pronominal affixes to the verb. Bertonio is well aware of employing the traditional terminology with a new meaning to describe a peculiar phenomenon that is not common to Latin or Romance languages but is only specific of Aymara and Quechua. This metalinguistic awareness emerges in his own words, as illustrated below:

mostraremos ahora que terminaciones o particulas se ponen en el verbo en cada una de las quatro maneras: y para mayor claridad **a estos verbos los llamaremos verbos transitivos** o accusativos porque encierran en si el accusativo de la persona en quien passa la action del verbo (Bertonio 1603: 55)

[now we will show that terminations or particles are put in the verb in each of the four ways: and for greater clarity **we will call these verbs transitive** or accusative verbs because they enclose in themselves the accusative of the person to whom the action of the verb passes]

Although the Italian grammarian explicitly recognizes that the same phenomenon is already described in the grammar (*arte*) of Quechua,⁵ he wants to emphasize the different order of *transiciones* ‘transitions’ that is unique to Aymara (Bertonio 1603: 54). In addition, he advisedly remarks that the phenomenon of *transicion* in the Aymara sentence is far different from that observed in the Romance transitive sentence (p. 127). After a detailed discussion of the *transiciones* in the active verb, the author dwells upon cases other than accusative, and upon double accusative constructions as well, which are governed by different classes of verbs (active, passive, neuter). He adds to his description examples in Castilian translated into Aymara. The traditional notion of government is here applied to the relationship between verbs and nouns in the precise order in which the oblique cases were usually described by humanistic grammarians, such as Nebrija (Percival 2001: 9). An interesting development in the theory of government or dependency seems instead to appear in the discussion concerning the syntactic construction of sentences, as will be argued in the next section (3).

3. From word-based to clause-based syntax

⁵ At that time two grammars of Quechua had already been published, i.e., the *Grammatica o Arte de la lengua general de los Indios de los reynos del Peru*, by Domingo de Santo Tomás (1560), and the anonymous *Arte, y Vocabulario en la lengua general del Peru* (1586). The *Gramatica y arte nueva de la lengua general de todo el Peru, llamada lengua Quichua, o lengua del Inca*, was published a few years later by Diego González Holguín (1607).

As has been mentioned in the preceding section, Bertonio's grammar was written with practical and not scientific purposes, so it is not surprising that it lacks a technical definition of the notion of basic sentence or proposition. Both of them are commonly referred to with the term *oracion*, although Bertonio sometimes uses the term *clausula* (p. 243-244) and even *phrase/phrasi* or *frasi* alternatively.⁶ Like in other humanistic grammars, the term *suppositum* 'subject' is not frequently used (cf. Zwartjes 2002: 56; Fernandes 2017: 237; Colombat 2020: 64), and Bertonio generally refers to it (i.e., *supuesto*) with the term 'nominative', as seen for the first concord between verb and subject described at the beginning of the second part of his grammar. The Italian missionary interprets the subject / predicate relation in terms of government that proceeds from the verb to the nominal subject, as shown by those passages in which it is said that «verbos **tienen** por supuesto alguna cosa» [verbs govern something as a subject] (Bertonio 1603: 111; 164). As mentioned before (§ 2), the verb *tener* is indeed one of the three non-technical terms adopted by Bertonio to express the relation of 'government'.⁷ Importantly, such a relation is applied by Bertonio not only to a word-based syntax, that deals with constructions involving two single nominal elements or a verb and its governed noun, but also to a sentence-based syntax. Despite the lack of any systematisation or definition of a higher syntactic level, this noteworthy change of perspective is clearly identifiable in Bertonio, who frequently thinks in terms of syntactic units that are higher than single words, like word groups and clauses (*oraciones*). Differently from the traditional Latin model or from previous humanistic grammarians such as Nebrija, he marks a move from word-based to sentence-based grammatical descriptions, by shifting the focus from verb to clause (*oracion*), as if they were mirror images of each other. Thus, starting from the primacy attributed to the verb at the constructional level by a part of the preceding medieval and humanist tradition (cf. Kneepkens 1990: 159; Fernandes 2017: 232; Nebrija 1500: 'de ordine partium orationis'), Bertonio goes one step further, paving the way to the analysis of structural relations rather than classifying words as if they occurred in isolation. In particular, in the chapter devoted to syntax, he refers to larger units such as the main or independent clause (*oracion determinante*), which is explicitly distinguished from the secondary or dependent clause (*oracion determinada*), thus breaking a complete or complex sentence down into smaller units or clauses. Indeed, the distinction among different types of clause is supposed to circulate at that time, since the Italian missionary often describes grammatical constructions in terms of the following clause types: affirmative clause, i.e. *oracion afirmativa* (Bertonio 1603: 86; 107; 316; 326), negative clause, i.e. *oracion negativa* (Bertonio 1603: 86; 107), interrogative clause, i.e. *oracion interrogatoria*

⁶ The terms *phrase*, *phrasis* and *frasi* 'clause, sentence' are not attested in the first grammar of **Aymara** but occur respectively in Bertonio's more recent grammar *Arte de la lengua aymara, con una silva de phrases dela misma lengua, y su declaracion en Romance* (1612b: 3-4) and in his *Vocabulario de la lengua aymara* (1612a: 2; 263; 398).

⁷ In Bertonio the verb *tener* occurs meaning 'have' in non-syntactic contexts of use.

(Bertonio 1612: 353) or *interrogativa* (Torres Rubio 1616: 14), infinitive clause, i.e. *oracion de infinitivo* (Bertonio 1603: 79-80; 255), conditional clause, i.e. *oracion condicional* (Bertonio 1603: 80; 236; 248; 275), temporal clause, i.e. *oracion temporal* (Torres Rubio 1616: 38, 42),⁸ relative clause, i.e. *oracion relativa/del relativo* (González Holguín 1607: 281; Bertonio 1603: 160; 162; 240), dubitative clause, i.e. *oracion dubitativa* (Bertonio 1603: 275), prohibitive clause, i.e. *oracion prohibitiva* (Torres Rubio 1616: 14), comparative clause, i.e. *oracion comparativa* (González Holguín 1607: 270; *oracion por los comparativos* in Bertonio 1603: 146), partitive clause, i.e. *oracion de partitivo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 193; 1612: 202), active clause, i.e. *oracion activa* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 105), passive clause, i.e. *oracion passiva* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 165), inclusive clause, i.e. *oracion inclusiva* (Bertonio 1603: 26; 28; 65; 103), exclusive clause, i.e. *oracion exclusiva* (Bertonio 1603: 26; 63; 65; 103), absolute ablative clause, i.e. *oracion por ablativo assoluto* (Bertonio 1603: 81). Yet, the notion of clause is never defined or developed in any systematic treatment. However, it is noteworthy that in most cases the clause type seems to take its name directly from the corresponding verb, e.g. *verbo affirmativo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 109), *verbo negativo* (cf. Bertonio 1612: 35), *verbo interrogativo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 109; 1612: 35), *verbo passivo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 93), *infinitivo del verbo* (cf. Bertonio 1612: 59; 1603: 254), *verbo condicional* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 247), *verbo relativo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 146), *verbo activo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 13; 1612), *verbo passivo* (cf. Bertonio 1603: 93).⁹ As a consequence, the verb and the clause are seen as coinciding to one another, as in the instance below:

[...] la oracion del verbo digo o *satha*, el qual llamaremos verbo determinante, y otra [oracion] alla qual llamaremos **oracion o verbo** determinado (Bertonio 1603: 114).
[the sentence of the ‘say’, i.e., *satha*, verb, which we will call determining verb, and another sentence, which we will call determined **sentence or verb**]

In a similar vein, the description of the passive clause shows that it is the whole sentence and not the single verb to be transformed from the active into the passive:

[...] en tal caso **la oracion se resuelve por passiva**, y assi lo que era accusativo viene a ser nominativo (Bertonio 1603: 165).
[in this case the sentence is rendered with passive, and thus what was accusative becomes nominative]

⁸ To be precise, the temporal clauses are denominated *oraciones temporales* by Diego de Torres Rubio, another missionary grammarian who worked together with Bertonio at the same ‘Escuela de Juli’ of the Society of Jesus. He was commissioned to both correct and approve Bertonio’s dictionary (1612a). A few years later than Bertonio, in 1616, he wrote another Grammar of Aymara, which shows a strong influence of Bertonio’s model.

⁹ In a similar vein, **in addition to** Bertonio’s sentence **types**, González Holguín added the potential clauses (*oraciones potenciales*), based on the potential verb, i.e. *verbo potencial de optativo* (González Holguín 1607: 83), and the permissive clauses (*oraciones permisivas*), based on the ‘permissive’ verb forms of imperative and optative (González Holguín 1607: 118).

This shift from verb to clause is confirmed by the marked tendency found in the grammar to name the clauses also after specific non-finite forms of the verb, as can be seen not only for the infinitive clause, but also for the *oracion de gerundio* ‘gerund clause’ (Bertonio 1603: 81) and the *oracion de supino* ‘supine clause’ (Bertonio 1603: 88). Such tendency precisely arises from the peculiar characteristic proper to the indigenous languages of South America, i.e. the use of nominalizations (*verbo sustantivato*), including participial or other non-finite verb forms, as a strategy to encode subordinate events. Put in other words, Bertonio does not consider complex sentences as monoclausal structures involving a verb and a noun, but as constructions involving a biclausal structure (see section §4 below). Accordingly, the subject is no longer described only with reference to its predicate, from which it is governed and receives the nominative case, but also to the whole sentence or clause, as can be seen for instance in the section devoted to complex sentences involving two different clauses with two different subjects. In these sentences «el supuesto dela oracion determinada» [the subject of the dependent clause] (Bertonio 1603: 119) is clearly distinguished from that of the main clause.

A different source is used for the temporal clause, whose definition is given by the coeval Jesuit grammarian Torres Rubio within the chapter devoted to the adverb, namely *adverbio temporal*: «Qualquier oracion temporal, digo, que signifique tiempo» [Any temporal sentence, I say, that means time] (Torres Rubio 1616: 38). Similarly, the prohibitive clause seems to be named after another adverb, i.e., *adverbio prohibitivo* (Torres Rubio 1616: 17). Instead, the dubitative clause is discussed by Bertonio with reference to particles, i.e., *particulas dubitativas*, that is, lexical elements that are not considered as pertaining to syntax or morphology (Bertonio 1603: 244, 275).¹⁰ The reason for such an association is due to the peculiar linguistic system of Aymara, an agglutinative language that expresses many grammatical relations through lexical particles that are usually added to the verb. Both comparative and partitive clauses are described in the chapter devoted to comparative, superlative, and partitive nouns, although Bertonio recognizes that in Aymara these are not real nouns as in Latin (Bertonio 1603: 187), but specific particles added to the verb or used alone. The name of the inclusive/exclusive clause derives from the 1st person inclusive/exclusive pronouns, which are obligatorily added to the verb (cf. Bertonio 1603: 25). Finally, the absolute ablative clause is referred to the well-known Latin construction. Differently from the analysis proposed by Humanist grammarians (Colombat 2020: 82), Bertonio is aware of the fact that this construction behaves like an independent sentence. Firstly, he explains how the Latin ablative absolute corresponds to a clause with a finite verb in Aymara:

¹⁰ For an analysis of the term *particula* in Bertonio see also Bartolotta (2022) and references therein.

todas las veces que en Latin se hiciera **la oracion por ablativo absoluto**, en esta lengua se deve hacer por subjunctivo (Bertonio 1603: 81).

[all the times that in Latin the sentence is made by absolute ablative, in this language it must be made by subjunctive]

Secondly, the missionary grammarian clearly identifies that ‘absolute’ not only refers to the independence of this autonomous construction from the rest of the sentence, but also to the independence or non-coreference of the subject, as can be read from the same page:

Pero para los que no se acuerdan del precepto de la gramatica Latina, digo que quando **el gerundio en Romance y el verbo de donde se determina el gerundio tienen un mismo supuesto, la oracion se hara por gerundio**, v.g. enseñando yo la palabra de Dios a los Indios me huelgo mucho [...], porque elque enseña y el que se huelga en esta oracion es vna misma persona; Pero si dixeramos enseñando yo la doctrina a los Indios, los demonios se entristecen, diremos [...]; porque una es la persona que se entristece y otra la que enseña, y asi se hiço por subjunctivo como en Latin se hiciera por ablativo absoluto (Bertonio 1603: 81-82).

[But for those who do not remember the precept of Latin grammar, I say that when **the gerund in Romance and the verb from which the gerund is determined have the same subject**, the sentence will be made by gerund, e.g. while (I am) teaching the word of God to the Indians I really enjoy, because in this sentence the one who teaches and the one who enjoys are the same person; but if we were to say that while I am teaching the doctrine to the Indians, the demons are saddened, we will say [...]; because one is the person who is saddened and another is the one who teaches, and so it (*scil.* the sentence) was made by subjunctive, as in Latin it was made by absolute ablative]

In the passage quoted above, Bertonio clarifies that if the Romance gerund verb/clause has the same subject of the main clause, i.e., the verb/clause from which the gerund is governed, then in Aymara the gerund (a verb nominalization) is used. Otherwise, if there is no coreference and there are two different subjects, then in Aymara the finite verb form of subjunctive is used, that corresponds to the ablative absolute in Latin. As a matter of fact, the gerund referred to by Bertonio corresponds to what is currently called adverbial switch reference clause. Given these premises, it is plausible that Bertonio was acquainted not only with the difference between dependent and independent syntactic constructions, but also with the existence of a hierarchical relation between two different clauses within the same complex sentence, as he speaks in terms of determination or dependency between the gerund verb/clause and the main verb/clause. This topic will be addressed in the next section (4).

4. The emerging concept of dependent clause and subordination

The question now is if Bertonio and the grammarians working with him at the Jesuit mission of Juli already had an early conception of the syntactic phenomenon of subordination. Indeed, this latter is apparently still absent from Latin grammars of the Renaissance period until the first half of the 17th century (Colombat 2020). A closer scrutiny of the Jesuits’ grammars of Aymara and Quechua written between the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century however shows that such a concept not only existed in the authors’ mind but was also unambiguously explicated, albeit without a unified

theroretical apparatus and a standardized syntactic metalanguage. In fact, what is probably the most peculiar trait of the Andean languages, now as then, is the subordination strategy. Precisely, these languages use nominalizations in the same place where other languages, including Spanish, Latin and other Indo-European languages, have subordinate clauses. As a consequence, this peculiarity forced Bertonio to explain subordination in terms of determination or dependency between two elements, which however are no longer two single words (e.g., a verb and its complement), but a verb and a whole sentence. Initially, such a shift turns out to be somehow inevitable in case of specific verb classes, like for instance verbs of perception, verbs of thinking, and verbs of saying. In these cases, Bertonio turns out to be well aware of dealing with two different sentences, as shown in passages like the following:

En lo que toca ala construccion es de sauer que asi come quando ay videor videris en Latin, o paresceme en romance **siempre entreuiene dos oraciones**, asi quando en esta lengua se habla con el verbo *hamachatha*, ay tambien dos oraciones, las quales si tubieren vn mismo supuesto, **la que se determina del hamachata**, se hara por gerundio, y sino por presente de subiunctiuo; aunque en Latin en ambos casos se hiciera por infinitiuo (Bertonio 1603: 101).

[As far as the construction is concerned, one has to know that as well as when there is *videor*, *videris* in Latin, o paresceme in Romance **there are always two sentences**, in the same way when one speaks in this language with the verb *hamachatha*, there are also two sentences, which if they had the same subject, **the sentence that is determined from the hamachata** will be made by gerund, and if not (it will be made) by the present subjunctive; although in Latin in both cases it would be made by the infinitive]

In this paragraph Bertonio describes the syntax of the Aymara verb *hamachata* ‘seem’, which governs an entire complement clause. He emphasizes that in presence of this verb, which corresponds to the Latin verb *videor*, there are two distinct clauses, namely the clause of the determining verb, that he also calls ‘determining clause’ (cf. *supra*, § 3), and the clause that is governed by the determining clause (or verb). In case of coreference between the two subjects, the dependent clause is realized through a nominalized form (that he calls gerund) instead of the Latin infinitive. Already from this passage it is clear that Bertonio establishes a subordinating complement relation between two different clauses, which are not positioned on the same hierarchical level. Rather, his description of the complex sentence associated to the construction of ‘to seem’ in Aymara includes a sort of embedded structure, so that the main clause and its dependent clause are clearly distinguished from each other, while at the same time being part of one single construction or, in modern terms, a complex sentence. The syntax of dependency emerges in other significant passages in which the relationship between a main sentence and a dependent clause is unequivocally defined:

Una cosa es comun a todas tres lenguas que siempre en este modo de hablar entrevienen **dos oraciones**, la una es del verbo, digo, o *satha*, el qual **llameremos verbo determinante**, y otra que se determina de *sacha*, alla qual **llameremos oracion o verbo determinado**. (Bertonio 1603: 113-114)

[One thing is common to the three languages, that always in this way of speaking there are **two clauses**, one is from the verb ‘say’, i.e., *satha*, which **we will call the determining verb**, and another that is determined from *sacha* (scil. *satha*), which **we will call determinated sentence or verb**]

The above passage discusses the construction of ‘to say’ in Aymara compared to Latin and Spanish, within the chapter entitled “Construcion de algunos verbos que tienen alguna dificultad” [Construction of some verbs that are somehow difficult]. Again, syntax mainly relies on the construction (*construcion*) of the verb, which is placed on top of the hierarchy of the sentence. Besides emphasizing that the verb *satha* ‘say’ governs an entire clause rather than the expected accusative noun (*tiene vna oracion entera por accusatiuo*), Bertonio goes one step further by coining a specific terminology aimed at making clear that we are dealing with a complex sentence or construction made up of two clauses posited at a different level, so that the dependent clause (*oracion determinada*) is governed by the main clause (*oracion determinante*). The dichotomy *determinante/determinado* used to describe the relationship of dependency appears for the first time in Bertonio, who is perfectly aware of inventing a new metalanguage. Although Aymara and Quechua share the same syntactic structure, such terminology is indeed not attested in the preceding grammars of Quechua written by the Dominican Spanish missionary Santo Tomás (1560) and by an anonymous grammarian (1586), while it is later adopted by the Jesuit grammarians working with Bertonio at the mission of Juli (cf. Torres Rubio 1616: 16). Significantly, a few years later González Holguín supplies an important clarification concerning the concept of complex sentence made up of two or more clauses, as illustrated in his grammar at the section entitled “Del orden de dos oraciones o mas entre si, que se ordenan á un sentido entero”¹¹:

Las oraciones de subjuntivo, y su gerundio de ablativo, y las de infinitivo, y las de gerundio de acusativo, y las del primer supino, son siempre indeterminadas, y aguardan á que otra oracion de otro modo las determine, y concluya su sentido y segun lo dicho han de estar primero, y las que las determinan han de estar al fin de ellas. Y así estas **se llaman oraciones indeterminadas**, que no pueden estar por si solas, sin otra oracion que las determine (González Holguín 1607: 261).

[The subjunctive sentences, and their ablative gerund, and the infinitive (sentences), and those with accusative gerund, and those with the first supine, are always indeterminate, and wait for another sentence with another mood to determine them, and conclude their meaning, and according to what has been said, they must be located first, and those that determine them must be located at the end of them. And so these **are called indeterminate sentences**, which cannot stand alone by themselves, without another sentence that determines them].

Although González Holguín never uses the exact term ‘dependent’, this passage makes clear that there exist dependent clauses, i.e. clauses that cannot stand alone but need to be governed or

¹¹ “On the order of two sentences or more among themselves, which are ordered according to an entire meaning”. Here, the expression *sentido entero* ‘entire meaning’ makes clear reference to the meaning of the higher syntactic unit of the complex sentence taken as a whole, although it is made up of two or more clauses.

determined by another main or determining clause.¹² The only difference with Bertonio is merely terminological, since the ‘determined clauses’ are here called ‘indeterminate’, thus proving that this metalanguage is still in the process of formation.¹³ In fact, the very concept of dependency emerges from the following passage, in which González Holguín explains why the subjunctive sentence cannot stand alone:

Digo pues, que el subjuntivo no se halla solo, ni puede haber una oracion de subjuntivo sin otra que se junte, que eso significa subjuntivo, que **se junta y subjecta á otra oracion que lo determina** (González Holguín 1607: 95-96).

[I say, then, that the subjunctive is not found alone, nor can there be a subjunctive sentence without another (sentence) that joins it, since this means subjunctive, that **joins and subjects itself to another sentence that determines it**].

Here González Holguín introduces a significant terminology for the concept of dependency: the verb ‘to subject’ would indeed be the etymological basis for both ‘subjunctive’ verb and sentence, meaning that they are ‘subjected’ to or dependent from another governing (*determining*) main sentence. Such a term closely resembles the modern concept of subordination, in which besides the linear order of two linked sentences ‘que se juntan’, a structural or hierarchical order emerges. The term *subjectar* makes clear that the dependent sentence is placed under another main or independent sentence, from which it is dominated and controlled. Additionally, Bertonio is correct in noting that the Spanish declarative ‘particle’ *que*, which would correspond to Latin *quod*, has to be associated to the dependent verb or clause, thus prefiguring the subordinating role of what in modern terms is the functional category of complementizer in complement constructions.

[...] y es de saver que asi como en la lengua Latina los verbos sobre dichos puto, &c. **en lugar de accusativo tienen una oracion entera con su verbo y casos**, la qual ordinariamente se hace por infinitivo, asi en esta lengua el verbo *satha*, muchas veces tiene una oracion entera por accusativo, aunque la tal oración no se hace por infinitivo, sino por casi todos los de mas modos como se vera por los exemplos que pusieremos, en lo qual se conforma mas con la lengua Española que con la Latina, [...] **en la lengua Española en la oracion que se determina del verbo** dice, pienso quiero, &c. casi siempre **se usa de aquella particula, que, declarativa**; la lengua Aymara usa de hua, o pi, [...]; la lengua Latina no tiene particula que le corresponda, sino usa del infinitivo poniendo il verbo determinado en el tiempo que la cosa pide, sino es que queramos decir, que la particula quod, es lo mismo que la particula que del romance, pero los buenos Latinos no la usan. (Bertonio 1603: 113).

[and it is to be noted that just as in the Latin language the above-mentioned verbs *puto*, etc. **in place of accusative govern an entire sentence with its verb and cases, which ordinarily is made by infinitive**, thus in this language the verb *satha* often governs a whole sentence in place of accusative, although such a sentence is not made by infinitive, but by almost all the other moods, as it will be seen through the examples that we will show, and in this it conforms more to the Spanish than to the Latin language, [...] **in the Spanish language in the sentence that is determined from the verb** *say, think*,

¹² In his grammar Bertonio had already considered the infinitive as an example of dependent clause, i.e. «oracion determinada» (Bertonio 1603: 80).

¹³ Not surprisingly, a few years after the publication of his first grammar, the same Bertonio in his vocabulary (1612: 390) defines the temporal clause as *oracion indeterminada* ‘indeterminate’ instead of using the expected term *determinada* ‘determined’.

want, etc. that **declarative particle ‘that’ is almost always used**; the Aymara language uses *hua*, or *pi*, [...]; the Latin language does not have a particle that corresponds to it, but uses the infinitive by putting the determined verb in the tense requested by the context, unless we want to say that the particle *quod* is the same as the particle *that* of Romance, but the good Latins do not use it].

The replacement of the accusative with an entire sentence, quoted in the passage above, allows us to catch a glimpse of the shift from the traditional notion of government, which is typically represented by the word-based relationship between a transitive verb and its accusative noun, to the emerging notion of subordination, which puts in relation two clauses¹⁴ that are posited at a different syntactic level, i.e. the determining or main clause at a primary level and the determined or dependent clause at a secondary level. The concept of dependency also emerges when Bertonio discusses the conditional sentence:

No ay particula de por si, con que se explique la conjunction condicional que en Latin es, si, pero sufficientemente se entiende ex antecedentibus & consequentibus, y por una particula, *ucaca*, que entra en **la 2. oracion absoluta** [...]: si no hicieredes penitencia ireis al infierno, *hani penitencia lurapiscahata*, ***ucaca*** *manque pacharo mapinihata* (Bertonio 1603: 247).

[There is no particle for ‘if’, with which to explain the conditional conjunction that in Latin is ‘si’, but it is sufficiently understood thanks to what comes before and after, and by a particle ‘*ucaca*’ that enters **the second absolute sentence** [...]: if you do not do penance you will go to hell, *hani penitencia lurapiscahata*, ***ucaca*** *manque pacharo mapinihata*].

The conditional sentence is here considered as a complex sentence composed of two different clauses,¹⁵ one of which is defined as independent or ‘absolute’. As can be seen from the Aymara example quoted by Bertonio, the second clause of this complex construction represents the main or independent clause, which is marked by the particle *ucaca*. Indeed, given that Aymara is a SOV language, the Italian missionary turns out to be aware that the second clause is always the main clause of a complex construction. It is for this reason that from the outset of the second section devoted to syntax he points out that the nominative or subject, when it is not implied, is always expressed *en la segunda oracion* ‘in the second clause’, i.e., the main independent clause. This means that an early distinction between linear order and structural (or analytical) order is here emerging. Indeed, Bertonio abstracts away from surface linear order, thus exhibiting a non-linear analysis and reasoning. Although being visible, the linear word-based order is not a genuine part of the ‘structural’ hierarchy of the sentence, making it very difficult to grasp the complete structure of a sentence. What Bertonio wants to emphasize is that the subject and its related main or independent (*absoluta*) clause are located in the second part of the sentence, differently to what is apparently found in the Romance languages.

¹⁴ See the related passage (quoted in section §3), which is included in the same paragraph quoted here.

¹⁵ The notion of complex sentence composed of two different syntactic units or members is also confirmed in Bertonio’s dictionary: «la oracion se entiende ser condicional por la particula *Ucaca* [...], que se antepone al *segundo miembro dela oracion*» (Bertonio 1612: 431) [the sentence is understood to be conditional thanks to the particle *ucaca*, which is placed before *the second member of the sentence*].

Interestingly enough, this separation between linear order and structural order does not emerge in the preceding grammars of Quechua, despite the fact that also that language exhibits a SOV order. Instead, the attention paid by Bertonio to the difference between the linear order and the structure order of the sentence can also be found in the grammars written a few years later by his collaborators of the Society of Jesus (González Holguín 1607: 261; Torres Rubio 1616: 16). A similar treatment is reserved for the relative clause, despite the difficulty posed by its complex construction in Aymara. In the description of relative nouns and verbs,¹⁶ which not by chance comes immediately after the section devoted to the agreement between adjective and noun, Bertonio clearly distinguishes two different clauses composing the complex relative sentence, namely the *oracion del antecedente* ‘antecedent clause’, also called *oracion dela cosa relata* ‘clause of the related thing’, and the *oracion del relatiuo* ‘relative clause’ (1603: 149-150). Also in this case, he emphasizes that the antecedent clause must be postponed after the relative clause in Aymara, by putting in the second clause the antecedent noun with which the relative particle is connected:

[...] y **el antecedente** que en esta lengua se pospone, **mostrara si aquella particula relatiua** interpuesta al verbo **es nominatiuo, o accusatiuo o otro caso** (Bertonio 1603: 155).
 [and **the antecedent** that in this language is postponed, **will show if that relative particle interposed to the verb is nominative, or accusative or another case**]

The passage above shows that the relation between the relative verbal particle (*ca*) and his antecedent noun is not a simple agreement relation between two elements that are equal, but a relation of dependency. One element is in fact under the dependency of the other, which calls for the proper morphological case. It is worth observing that other humanist grammars considered the relationship between the antecedent and the relative noun as word-based and not pertaining to the sentence level. Therefore, such relationship was described in purely sequential terms (cf. Nebrija 1492: *capitulo del nombre*, Libro III. Cap. 2. fol. 29 r.). Differently, the Aymara SOV order forces Bertonio to describe the same relationship not only according to the linear or sequential order, but also analysing the structural dependency between the two elements. In this regard it is noteworthy that the relative particle or pronoun, which is said to be essential in the relative clause, is defined by González Holguín (1607: 288) with the very same terms reserved for the subordinate sentence, i.e., *particula infinita y no determinada* ‘infinite and indeterminate particle’. Given what previously observed about the overlapping terminology between verb/particle and clause (see § 2), this would imply that the condition of dependency is extended from the relative particle to the entire relative clause.

¹⁶ The ‘relative pronoun’ is more clearly defined by the Jesuit González Holguín (1607: 54) a few years after the publication of Bertonio’s grammar: «El que, la que, y se pone en lugar del relativo antecedente, y por eso sono pronombres» ‘*El que, la que* are put in place of the relative antecedent, and for this reason they are pronoun’.

5. Concluding remarks

The first missionary grammarians of South American languages ran into difficulties and challenge in describing the syntactic constructions because of the intrinsic differences with respect to European languages. It has been remarked that «the codification of exotic languages within the context of missionary linguistics has been overlooked in view of the concentration on traditionally well-known sources such as grammars of the standard European Languages» (De Clerq *et al.* 1996: 440 quoted in Zwartjes 2007: 296). The analysis of the first grammars of Aymara written by the Jesuit missionaries between the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century allows us to understand the historical transition from Latin grammar to the grammar of modern languages. In particular, a closer scrutiny of those grammars suggests that Jesuits grammarians began to shift their attention from a word-centered analysis to a sentence-centered one. This had an impact on the development of dependency grammar, since the syntax of Latin humanist grammarians was a dependency model built around the verb that governs noun case markers (Colombat 2020: 68). Bertonio acknowledged the importance of word order in expressing structural relations not only between the verb and its arguments but also between clauses within the same complex sentence. The unusual and unique typological traits encountered in South American languages enriched substantially our understanding of syntactic phenomena and forced missionary grammarians to reason in terms of separation between linear order and structural order. The peculiar characteristics of Quechua and Aymara, such as the basic SOV word order and the subordination strategy through nominalizations and non-finite verbal forms, played a crucial role in the development of modern dependency-based theories of syntax. Jesuit grammarians recognize the centrality of the verb and, in particular, the primacy of the finite verb, which is generally considered to be an important feature of dependency analysis. Thus, although it is widely known that Tesnière placed the verb on top of the hierarchy of the sentence, focusing on the separation between linear order and structural order, he cannot be considered «the founding father of dependency grammar, but only one point in its long history» (Mazziotta & Imrényi 2020). Similarly, Port-Royal syntactic approach to sentence analysis was not unprecedented. This preliminary study has shown how some important achievements that have been attributed to Port-Royal Grammar already emerged in missionary grammars. In particular, contrarily to what has been assumed (Auroux 2008: 1027), the original categorization of different types of sentence is a feature shared by the Jesuit missionaries. Furthermore, the distinction between ‘main clause’ and ‘dependent clause’, that has been considered a late achievement of grammatical theory due to the discovery by Port-Royal grammarians (Graffi 1998; 2019: 87; 2021: 35), finds a clear correspondence in the distinction between what Bertonio respectively calls *oración*

determinante and *oración determinada*. This is one of the most important contributions that the Italian missionary gave to the establishment of dependency syntax, being he fully aware of introducing new terminology for the novel distinction. It is starting from the construction of verbs of perception, verbs of thinking, and verbs of saying, that Bertonio extends the concept of government from two single words, i.e., verb and noun, to two different sentences. Such a change could have happened also because of the syntactic peculiarity of Aymara, in which nominalizations are used in place of subordinate clauses. In conclusion, missionary linguistics should receive more attention than it has been receiving for its historical role in the development of dependency syntax.

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