

Case and ‘antipassive’ in Mayan

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This paper starts from the proposal that Mayan languages have tripartite Case systems (Nominative in finite intransitive clauses, Ergative and Accusative in transitive clauses). It suggests that there is a third basic clause type, which I call ‘neutral’. Neutral clauses are like transitives in containing two core arguments (A,O), but they are like intransitives in having the capacity to directly Case license only a single argument. The tension that is created by this mismatch is resolved in a variety of ways, leading to a set of constructions which are superficially distinct with respect to Case licensing and marking, but all based on the same neutral clause structure.