

Possession Classification Systems Across Mesoamerica: Areal and Historical Implications

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Possession

- A relationship established between two entities
 - Ownership
 - Kinship
 - Part-whole
 - other types

Attributive

- Phrasal syntax
- Possessor/Genitive, Possessum/Noun
 - Possessum is the head of the NP
 - Possessor is the dependent modifier

Not included

- Predicative possession
- Other phenomena

Possession Splits

- Posesión escindida
- Different noun classes defined by means of different morphology or phrasal structures
 - morphological marking
 - order of constituents
 - oblique/periphrastic expression
 - based on possessor or possessum

Examples

- English: *The roof **of** the car* (inanimate possessor)
John's car (animate possessor)

Haspelmath (2008:2)

SBZZ: Example I

- Zapotec
(Sonneschein
2004:65, 134)
- *Alienable* (36) by
means of oblique/
relational
construction with
che 'of'

(36) libr chebe'
libr che=be'
book of=3inf
'His/her book'

SBZZ: Example II

- Zapotec (Sonneschein 2004:65)
- *Inalienable* (36) with juxtaposition of two nouns or a noun and pronoun

(7) yichgh lalo

head lalo

‘Lalo’s head’

(8) yichgh=a’

head=1 sg

‘my head’

SBZZ: Example III

- Zapotec (Sonneschein 2004:63-64)
- “*inherent possession*” (*alienable, but “closely associated with the possessor”*)
- x-
- x-possessum + possessor

(1) x-migw=a’
poss-friend=1 sg
‘my friend’

(2) x-kuzh lalo
poss-pig lalo
‘Lalo’s pig’

Nichols (1992:119-120)

- “Thus we find that **inalienable possession** is simply a classification of nouns into two sets, one of which—the inalienables—is always a closed set and often small. Inalienables typically include kin terms or body parts or both; part-whole relations may also be included, as may a few culturally basic objects (e.g., clothing, “house”) and words like “name”. The exact membership varies from language to language but the guiding principle is the same.”

Possession Classification

- Nichols and Bickel 2013a

(1) Mesa Grande Diegueño (http://wals.info/languoid/lect/wals_code_die)

(Langdon 1970 (<http://wals.info/refdb/record/Langdon-1970>): 143)

a. *ʔ-ətalʔ*

1SG-mother

‘my mother’

b. *ʔə-nʔ-ewa:*

1SG-ALIENABLE-house

‘my house’

Nichols and Bickel

2013a

- “We use the term classification because the marking of possession in examples like (1) divides, or classifies, the nouns of Mesa Grande Diegueño [...] into two sets: those that behave grammatically in possessive NPs like 'mother' and those that behave like 'house'.”

Nichols and Bickel 2013a

Chichimeca-Jonaz (http://wals.info/languoid/lect/wals_code_cjo) (Oto-Manguéan (<http://wals.info/languoid/family/otomanguéan>); Mexico (<http://wals.info/country/MX>)) has twelve (or possibly even more) possessive classes of nouns, where the classes are defined broadly as involving tone changes, prefix-like elements, various internal changes, and combinations of these as well as suppletion. (Each of these classes, or at least some of them, contains both bound and non-bound nouns as these are defined in Chapter 58 (<http://wals.info/chapter/58>). In addition, the language has four possessive classifier nouns.) The examples in (9) display this variety.

(9) Chichimeca-Jonaz (http://wals.info/languoid/lect/wals_code_cjo)

(Lastra de Suárez 1984 (<http://wals.info/refdb/record/Lastra-de-Suarez-1984>): 24-25)

(*M* = lenis nasal)

| <u>1sg</u> | <u>2sg</u> | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>námenʔ</i> | <i>naménʔ</i> | 'face' |
| <i>suní</i> | <i>síni</i> | 'lip' |
| <i>kútún</i> | <i>utún</i> | 'neck' |
| <i>túmbiʔir</i> | <i>númbiʔir</i> | 'tail' |
| <i>nahí</i> | <i>úngo</i> | 'friend' |
| <i>tásócʔ</i> | <i>kisócʔ</i> | 'belt' |
| <i>namá</i> | <i>éMə</i> | 'carrying rack' |
| <i>kúndí</i> | <i>kirí</i> | 'water' |
| <i>nambá</i> | <i>úngwa</i> | 'hat' |
| <i>kúmboʔ</i> | <i>kibóʔ</i> | 'land' |
| <i>kaʔá</i> | <i>kanʔa</i> | 'hand' |
| <i>masú</i> | <i>uniʔí</i> | 'wife' |
| <i>táta</i> | <i>úngwæ</i> | 'father' |

Types of marking

- Nichols and Bickel 2013b
 1. head-marked
 2. dependent-marked
 3. double-marked
 4. no marking
 5. other

Predicative

- Clausal syntax
 - Variety of constructions and schemas (Heine 1997 on predicative possession)
 - verbs 'have' and 'belong' and the like
 - existential particles 'there is' used in conjunction with dative forms 'there is X to me' = 'I have X'

Variety within a single language

- Yucatec Maya (Maaya T'aan)
 - Predicative
 - Existential
 - Dative: alienable
 - Non-dative: inalienable/intimate
 - Dative
 - Relational
 - (Attributive)

Yucatec: Predicative I

- Existential *yàan* ‘there is’

1. *Yàan* *ten* *tàak'in*
 to:me money

‘I have money (in my pocket to go buy something)’

2. *Yàan* *in* *tàak'in*
 my money

‘I have money (I’m wealthy)’

Yucatec: Predicative I

- Existential *yàan* ‘there is’

1. *Yàan in wíits’in*

my younger sibling

‘I have a younger sibling’

2. *:(Yàan ten (in w)íits’in*

to:me (my) younger sibling

:(‘I have (a/my) younger sibling’

Yucatec: Predicative II

- Relational with Set.A + *ti'-al*

1. *le nòok'-a' in ti'-al*

the shirt-PRX my PREP-ABSTR

'this shirt is mine'

'la camisa es mia'

Preposition *ti'* derived into a relational noun

Yucatec: Predicative III

5.4. -tsil ti'...

This type of possession appears to involve kinship terms only, and involves additional nuances of meaning.¹⁴

| Predicate Noun Phrase | Kinship term | -tsil | Preposition | Possessor |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------|-----------|
| Pedro | íits'in | -tsil | ti' | jLuut |
| jMaat íits'intsil ti' jLuut | | | | |
| <i>Mateo is a younger sibling of/to Eleuterio</i> | | | | |

Example: jPeedroe' ma' chéen k'ube'en b'ai' íichantsil ti' xMaruch.
Peter is not just living here; he's Mary's real husband.

Yucatec: Attributive

1. *in k'ab'* (inalienable, only occurs possessed)

my hand/arm

2. *in p'àak* (alienable)

my tomato (purchased)

3. *in p'àak-il* (intimate)

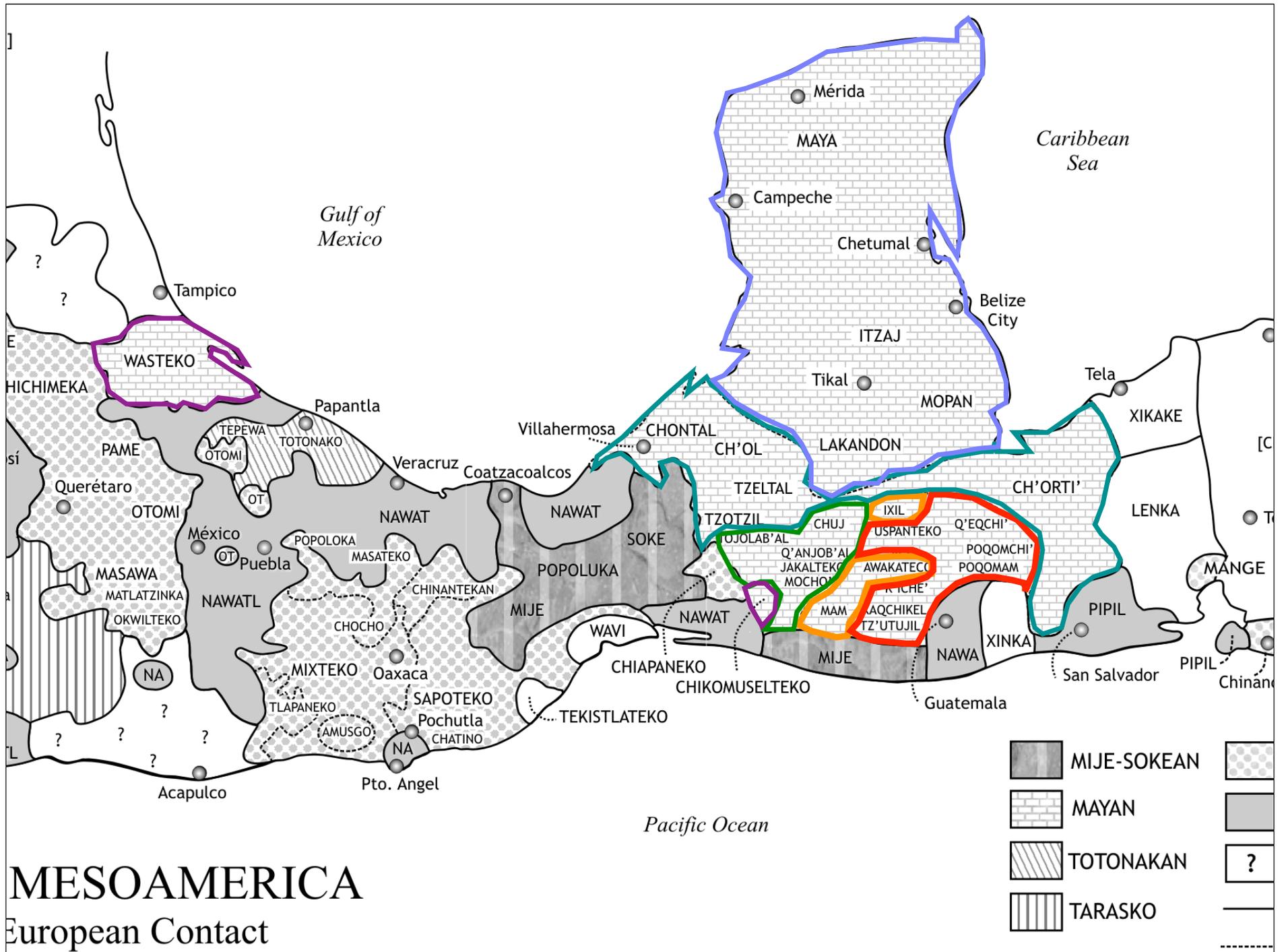
my tomato (cultivated in my garden)

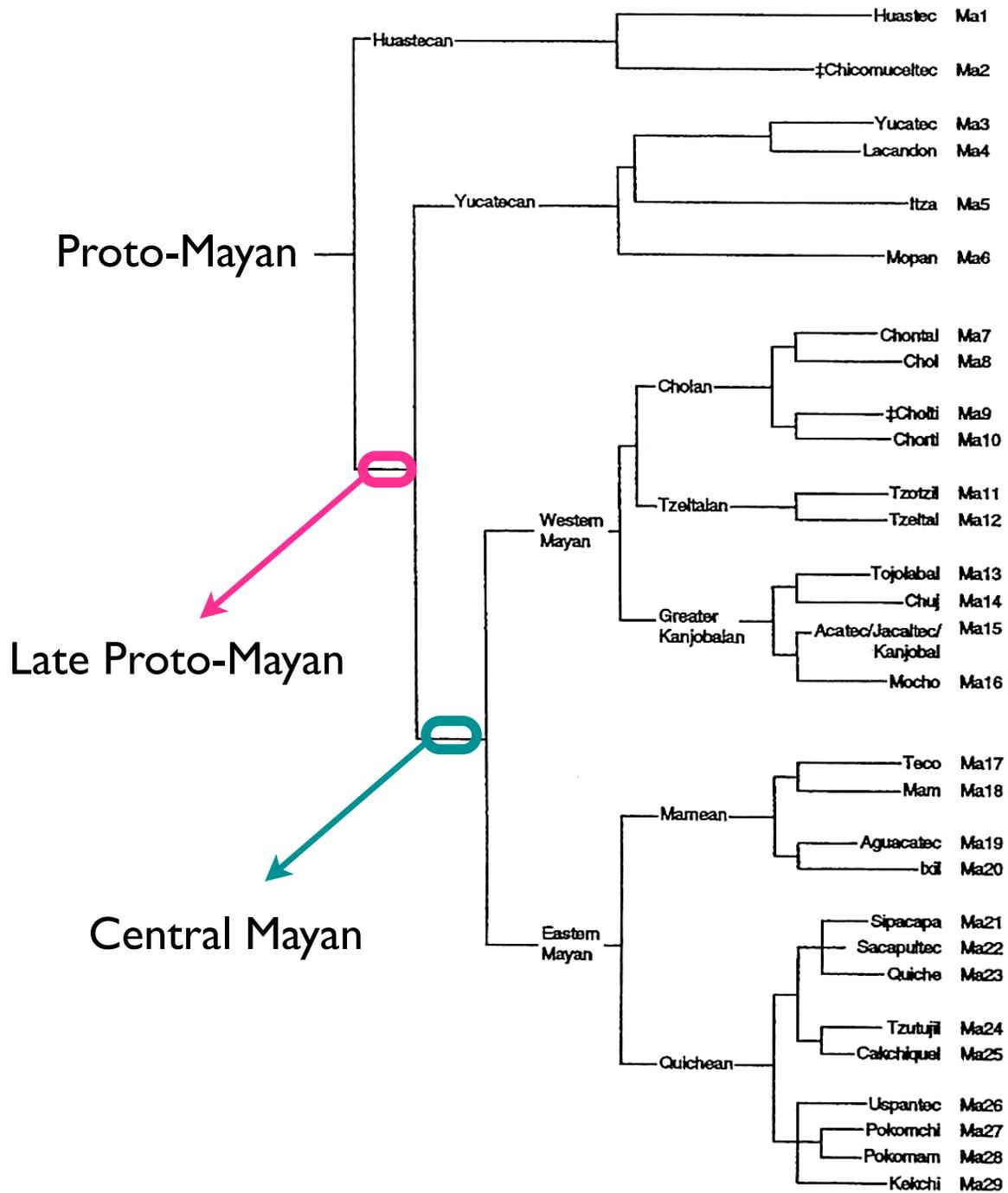
4. *in bàak-el* (extended)

my bones (in my body)

Mayan typology

- VOS
- Ergative-absolutive morphology
- Ergative-extraction operations (syntactic ergativity)
- Agglutinating, some noun incorporation in verbs (V=N)
- Head-marking
- VO-consistent order throughout, except for AN





Contact spheres

- Huehuetenango sphere (Greater Mamean, Greater Q'anjob'alan)
- Greater Lowland Mayan (Ch'olan, Tzeltalan, Yucatecan)
- Lowland Mayan (Ch'olan, Yucatecan)
- Chiapas (Western Ch'olan, Tzeltalan)

Reconstruction

- Backward
 - Bottom-up reconstruction
- Forward
 - Top-down reconstruction (taking advantage of the distribution of traits within the family tree)

Previous proposals

- Smith-Stark 1976
- Kaufman 1989
- Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001

Smith-Stark 1976:49

(1) In order to predicate possession, *PM used an existential verb with a possessed noun. That is, 'I have a house' would literally be something like 'exists my house'.

Smith-Stark 1976:49

(2) The possession of one noun (N1) by another (N2) in *PM was expressed by a construction of the form x-N1 N2 where x is a possessive pronoun cross-referencing N2 in person (and optionally, number).

Kaufman 1989:8

(3) Cotoque [Kotoke] and Pocom [Poqom] show reflexes of a Proto-Mayan suffix *-itz ~ -atz on the absolute (non-possessed) form of many nouns that normally occur possessed.

Robertson in Houston et al. (2001:45)

(4) *-b' and *-tz are reconstructed to Common Mayan, as parts of a two-morpheme marker of kinship terms (e.g. -b'-Vj in Q'eqchi', -b'-es in Poqomchi', -b'-ir in Ch'orti', -atz in K'iche', and -tz-il in Yucatec).

Robertson in Houston et al. (2001:45)

(5) *-Vj is reconstructed to Common Mayan, with reference to articles of clothing, body parts, and also kinship terms (e.g. Q'anjob'alan, Mamean, K'iche'an, and Classic Lowland Mayan texts).

Nora England (Ixkem)

- 1988. Introducción a la Lingüística: Idiomas Mayas. Antigua, Guatemala: PLFM.
- 1993. Maya Chii'. Los idiomas mayas de Guatemala. Guatemala: Cholsamaj.

Standard noun classification

- When possessed:
 - Lengthen or change the vowel
 - Add a suffix
 - Remove a suffix
 - Always possessed
 - Never possessed
 - Suppletive
- No change
- Relational nouns
- Abstract nouns
- Compound Forms
 - Possessed as one word
 - Possessed separately
 - Second term is possessed (part:whole)

Noun classification

- Maaya T'aan (Yucatec Maya)

- n1 ownership possession with *-∅*.
- n2 ownership possession with *-il*.
- n3 associative possession with *-il*.
- n4 inalienable possession with *-el*.
- n5 ownership possession with *-al*.
- n6 ownership possession with *-Vl* (vowel in suffix echoes vowel in root).
- n7 ownership possession indicated by C \acute{V} VC stem.
- n8 ownership possession indicated by C \acute{V} VCVC stem.
- n9 possession only with noun specifier (*?àalak'* or *?ó?oč*).
- n10 never possessed.

Bricker et al. 1998:360

Attributive

1. Dative
2. Vowel lengthening
3. Inalienable/unknown possession
4. Intimate
5. Alienable/ownership
6. Paronymic/Systemic
7. Inanimate
8. Suppletive
9. Never possessed
10. Always possessed
11. Diphthastic/Colexicalized nouns
12. Compound types
13. Possessive classifier
14. Nominal classifier
15. Numeral classifier
16. Supine/purposive
17. Ordinal numerals

A problem

- Semantic classes can be a problematic or complicated criterion to use
- Better to use a *combination of criteria*
- *Focus on morphological inflection*
- Focus initially on simplex (non-compounded) forms

My classification

| Type | Morphology | Common Labels | Semantics |
|------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| P1 | Set.A-CVC, CVC-∅ | Alienable/ownership | Owned objects |
| P2 | Set.A-CVVC, CVC-∅ | Vowel lengthening | Owned objects |
| P3 | Set.A-CVC, CVC-VVC | Inalienable | Kin terms, body parts, clothing |
| P4 | Set.A-CVC-VI, CVC-∅ | Intimate | Objects/entities produced or inherently related to an individual |
| P5 | Set.A-CVC-VVI, CVC-∅ | Systemic | Parts of the body, parts of an organism |
| P6 | Set.A-CVC-VI, CVC-∅ | Inanimate/part-whole/associative | Parts of objects |
| P7 | Set.A-CVC ₁ , CVC ₂ -∅ | Suppletive | House, food, animal, clothes, parts of the body |
| P8 | Set.A-CVC Set.A-CVC | Diphthastic | Parents, grandparents, deities, metaphors, metonyms |
| P9 | CVC-∅ | Never | Natural phenomena (sun, star, cloud) |
| P10 | Set.A-CVC(-VI), ⊕CVC-∅ | Always/obligatory | Relational nouns (in front of, behind, etc.) |

Campbell, Kaufman, Smith-Stark 1986:545

(a) **NOMINAL POSSESSION.** The possession of one noun by another typically has the form in MA languages of ‘his-noun₁ (the) noun₂’, meaning ‘(the) noun₂’s noun₁’—e.g. Quiché *u-ç'i:ʔ le: ačih* ‘the man’s dog’, lit. ‘his-dog the man’. (This order is the more widespread in MA, but the equivalent of ‘the noun₁ his-noun₂’ also occurs.) The construction is typical of most MA languages, and can be taken as a diagnostic trait of MA.⁵

Campbell, Kaufman, Smith-Stark 1986:547

(d) **BASIC WORD ORDER.** It seems significant that only non-verb-final languages exist in MA, although the area is surrounded by SOV languages. MA has basic VSO (Mixtec, Trique, varieties of Chinantec, varieties of Zapotec, Mam, Nahuatl etc.); VOS (Xincan, many Mayan languages, Copainalá Zoque, Otomí, another variety of Chinantec etc.); and SVO (Huave, Mazatec, Tequistlatec etc.) Southern Uto-Aztecan languages characteristically exhibit VSO order; but Proto-Uto-Aztecan was an SOV language (Langacker, 24), and so are most of the other languages bordering MA—e.g. Tonkawa, Coahuilteco, Yuman, Seri; Lenca, Jicaque, Mískito, Sumu, Guaymí, and Bribri. Moreover, some cases of clear diffusion seem to be documented within the area; e.g., Xincan and Pipil apparently acquired VOS order from Quichean (Campbell 1978b).

Typological correlations

- These two orders are expected to co-occur typologically
 - V + O
 - N + G (possessum + possessor)
 - (Head + Dependent)

Campbell, Kaufman, Smith-Stark 1986:545

(b) **RELATIONAL NOUNS.** Another feature shared by nearly all MA languages is that of relational nouns—expressing locative and related notions, but composed of a noun root and possessive pronomial affixes. These correspond to prepositions in English or Spanish. Examples from Pipil, Mam, and Chol are:

(1) Pipil

nu-wan 'with me' (*nu-* 'my')
mu-wan 'with you' (*mu-* 'your')
i-wan 'with him/her' (*i-* 'his/her')

(2) Mam (England, 71)

n-wiɕ-a 'on me' (*n-* 'my')
t-wiɕ 'on him' (*t-* 'his')
n-xaq'-a 'below me'
t-xaq' 'below him'

Campbell, Kaufman, Smith-Stark 1986:549

(f) INTIMATE POSSESSION. Typically, kinship terms and body parts are intimately possessed (either do not occur unpossessed, or require special morphological marking when unpossessed) in MA languages. Since this feature is characteristic of many languages throughout the Americas, it is not particularly useful for defining a LA in MA. The term 'inalienable' is widely used for this kind of possession, but it is semantically inappropriate.

Campbell, Kaufman, Smith-Stark 1986:549

(h) ABSOLUTE AFFIXES. Some MA languages have a nominal suffix called the 'absolute', borne by nouns that have no other affix, e.g. Nahuatl *tlaškal-li* 'tortilla-ABS', *no-tlaškal* 'my-tortilla'; Quiché *xolom-a:x* 'head-ABS', *a-xolo:m* 'your-head'. The 'absolute' suffix has no real semantic content, but occurs on nouns which are otherwise morphologically isolated—i.e. show no other affixes. In MA, most Mayan languages have an absolute, as does Nahuatl. **These are not really equivalent,** however: thus, in Quiché, the so-called absolute suffix occurs only on a certain class of otherwise intimately possessed nouns, but in Nahuatl the absolute is much more general, occurring with most nouns when they bear no other affixes. In the key languages surrounding MA, an absolute is found in Paya and the Misumalpan languages on the southern border, and in the Uto-Aztecan languages to the north. This trait is not significant as an areal feature, since its distribution is very limited within MA,

Genetic Units in MA

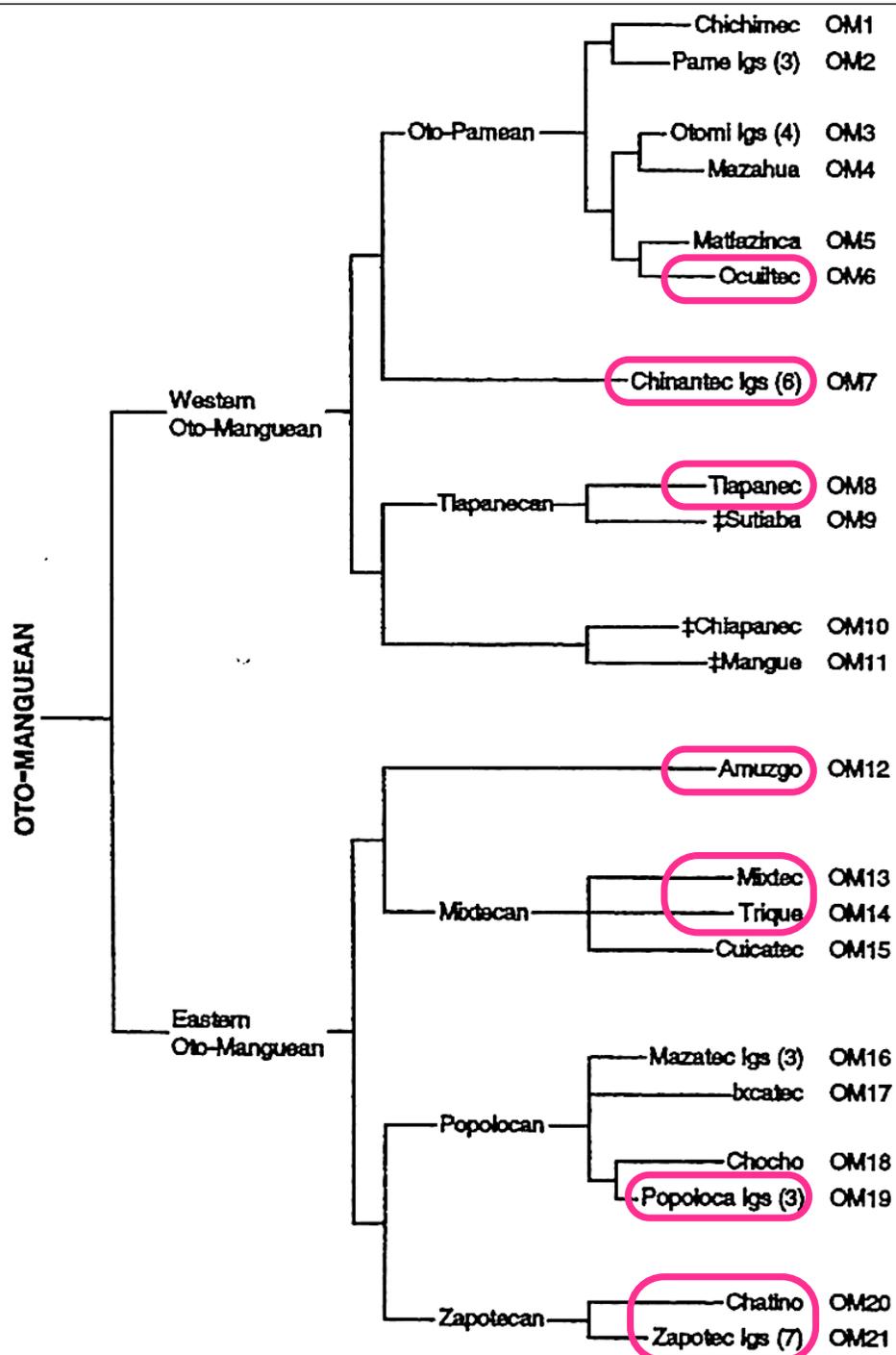
- Families
 - Mayan
 - Otomanguen
 - Mixe-Zoquean
 - Totonacan
 - Nawan (< Yuta-Nawan)
 - Tequistlatec/Slijuala-Jicaque/Tol (< Hokan)
- Isolates
 - Tarascan/P'urhepecha
 - Cuitlatec
 - Xincan/Xinkan
 - Huave/Wave
 - Lencan/Lenkan (with Misumalpan? cf. Constenla Umaña 2002)

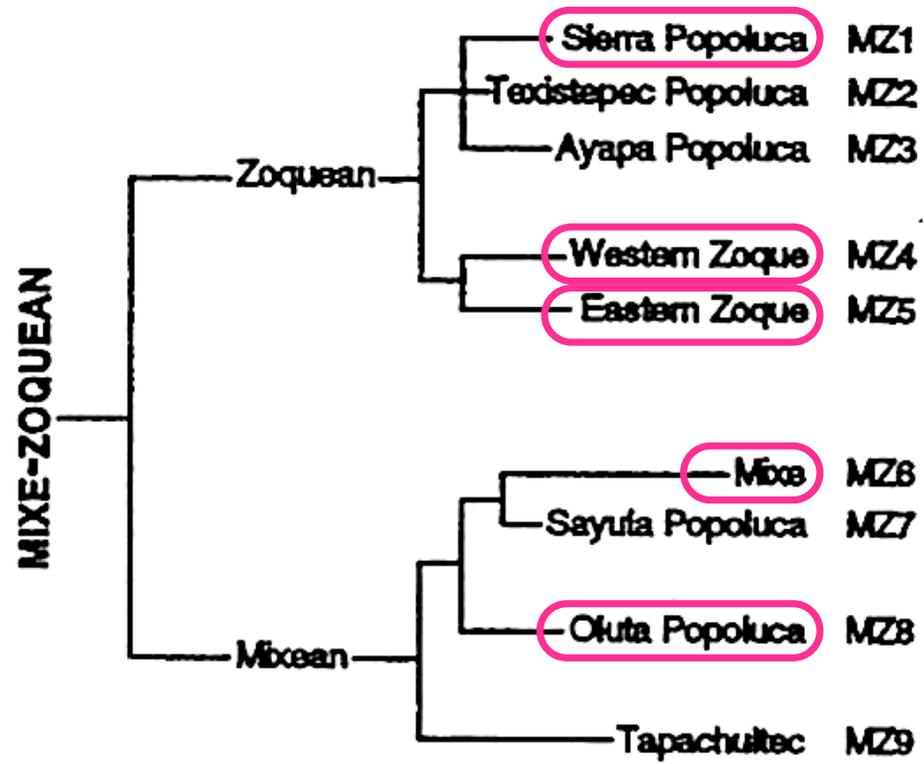
Methodology

- No comprehensive reconstructions of attributive possession available for Otomanguan, Mixe-Zoquean, Totonacan families
- Mixe-Zoquean grammatical morphemes (Wichmann 1994, 1995; Kaufman and Justeson 2004)
- Beck (2012) reviews comparative data for possessive agreement markers and impersonal possession prefix for Totonac and Tepehua varieties

Sampling

- For this reason I have attempted to sample each language family as widely as possible





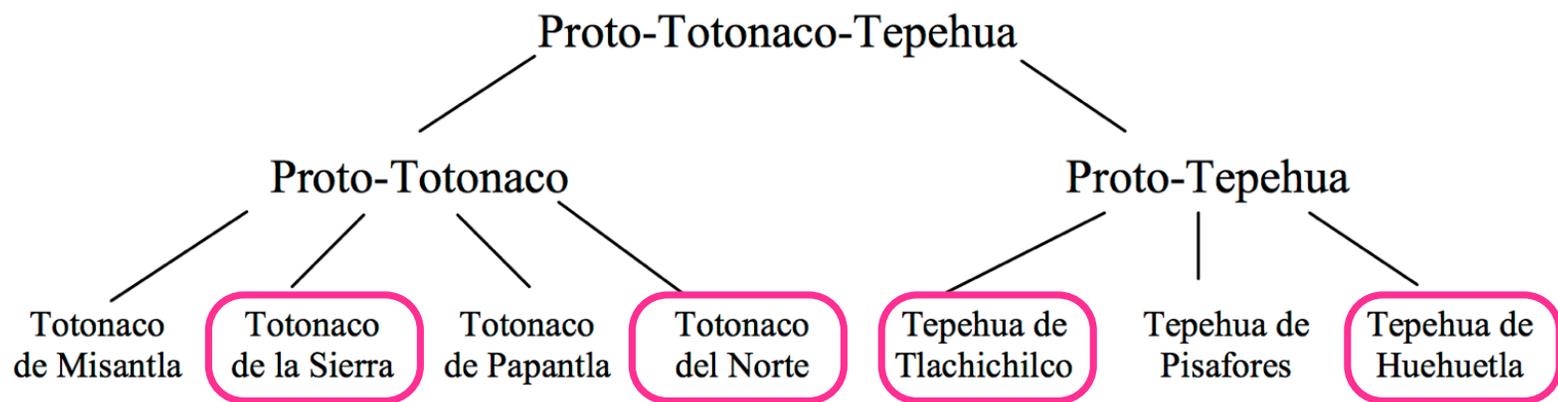


Figura 1: Familia totonaco-tepehua - agrupación tradicional

Non-MA neighbors

- Mayo (< Yuta-Nawan)
- Seri (< Hokan?)
- Chibchan
 - Paya
 - Teribe
- Misumalpan
- Sumu
- Miskitu
- Matagalpan

More variables

- Relative order of N/G
- Head- or dependent-marking
- Prefixes/proclitics vs. suffixes/enclitics vs. other vs. tonal morphemes
- Double-marking
- No marking/Juxtaposition
- Periphrastic/oblique possession

Possession in Maaya T'aan

- ERG/POSS_I-Possessum + Possessor_I

u-'áanalte' Òoskar

his-book Oscar

'el libro de Óscar'

'Oscar's book'

ERG/POSS agreement markers are proclitics

Traits

- Consistent with VO order
 - (ERG/POSS_I)-Possessum + Possessor_I
 - Head + Dependent
 - Head-marking only

Mixe-Zoquean

- General remarks
 - possessor-possessum (consistent with other OV characteristics), also possessum-possessor
 - head-marking
 - dependent (possessor) marked for ERG/GEN in some languages
- obligatory vs. optional possession in some (perhaps depending on possessor's animacy)
- Co-lexicalized nouns (cf. Mayan)
- However, external possession and noun-incorporation in some Mixean and Zoquean languages seems complex and semantically related (body parts > body secretions > meronyms > kinship)

Copainalá Zoque

- Harrison et al. (1981:410)
- Double-marking on head (agreement marker) and dependent (case, GEN = ERG)

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <u>te'</u> | <u>pa'nis</u> | <u>tyac</u> |
| <u>te'</u> | <u>pan-'is</u> | <u>y-tac</u> |
| <u>the</u> | man-GEN | 3sPOSS-house |
| <u>la</u> | hombre-GEN | 3sPOSS-casa |
| <u>the</u> | man's house | |
| <u>la</u> | casa del hombre | |

Ayutla Mixe

- Romero Méndez (2008)
 - Possessor-possessum (consistent with OV order)
 - Head-marked
 - No noun classes based on possession

Non-Nawan UA/YN

- Normally dependent-marked: possessor (genitive) takes a genitive case marker (typically the same as the accusative case)
- E.g. Mayo

Set A markers

| Juego A | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Nab'ee | Q'eqchi' | Q'anjob'al | K'iche' | Mam | |
| Mayab' Tzuij | | | | | |
| *nu- | in- | hin- | nu- | n-... -(y)a | <i>mi</i> |
| *aa- | aa- | ha- | a- | t-...-(y)a | <i>tu</i> |
| *u- | x- | s- | u- | t- | <i>su (de él, ella)</i> |
| *qa- | qa- | ko- | qa- | q- | <i>nuestro</i> |
| *ee- | ee- | he- | i- | ky-...-(y)a | <i>su (de ustedes)</i> |
| *ki- | x-...-eb' | s-...-heb' | ki- | ky- | <i>su (de ellos)</i> |

England 1988:31

Prevocalic subset

"Firm glottal stops"

Other morphology

- Suffixes
- Vowel lengthening
- Ablaut

PI: CVC-Ø, Set.A-CVC-Ø

- Alienable:ownership
- Inalienable:voluntary control, never unpossessed (in languages that have lost unpossessive suffixes)
- Roots: artifacts, some parts of the body (voluntary control), parts from dead organisms (ownership), potentially kinterms (in languages lacking P2 category)

PI: no possessive suffix, no unpossessive suffix

| | Suffixes | Subgroups | Subfamilies | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Huastecan | -Ø ~ -VI | | | | *-Ø |
| Yucatecan | -Ø | | *-Ø | Late pM *-Ø | |
| Greater Mamean | -Ø | | *-Ø | | |
| Greater K'iche'an | -Ø | | | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -Ø | | *-Ø | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -Ø | | | | |

P2: CVC-∅, Set.A-CVVC(-VI)

- Alienable:ownership
- Semantics: artifacts, products
- Vowel lengthening
 - CVC > CVVC
 - CV.CVC > CVV.CVC or CV.CVVC or CVV.CVVC
- Suspicion: compensatory lengthening

Yucatec Maya

- ?in b'**à**ak' 'my meat (bought at the market)'
- ?in b'**a**k'-el 'my flesh (of my body)'
- ?in wo'och b'**a**k' 'my meat (for eating)'

- **lak** 'clay cup/dish'
- ?in **là**ak 'my clay cup/dish'

- ?**o**kom 'house pillar'
- ?u y**ò**okom ?in nah-il 'my (house-)pillar'

| Subgroup | Attested | pM |
|----------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Huastecan | CVVC | *CVC > *Set.A-CVVC |
| Yucatecan | CVVC | |
| Greater K'ichean | CVVC | |
| Greater Mamean | CVVC | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | CVVC | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | CVVC | |

| Subgroup | Attested | LpM |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Huastecan | — | |
| Yucatecan | CVVCVC | *CVVCVC > *Set.A-*CVVCVC |
| Greater K'ichean | — | |
| Greater Mamean | CVVCVC | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | — | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | — | |

| Subgroup | Attested | pM |
|----------------------|-------------|---|
| Huastecan | CVCVVC(-il) | <p>pM *CVCVC > *Set.A- *CVCVVC</p> |
| Yucatecan | — | |
| Greater K'ichean | CVCVVC | |
| Greater Mamean | — | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | — | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | — | |

| Subgroup | Attested | Reconstruction |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Huastecan | | |
| Yucatecan | | |
| Greater K'ichean | CVVCVVC | GK' Innovation? |
| Greater Mamean | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | | |

P2: Vowel lengthening

| | Suffixes | VV and suffixes | Subfamilies | LpM | pM |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Huastecan | -∅, -il/-al/-hil ¹² | CVVC-∅, CVCVVC-∅, CVCVVC-il/-al | *CVVC-∅, *CVCVVC-∅ | | *CVVC-∅, *CVCVVC-∅ |
| Yucatecan | -∅ | CVVC-∅, CVVCVC-∅ | *CVVC-∅, *CVVCVC-∅ | *CVVC-∅, *CVVCVC-∅, *CVCVVC-∅ | |
| Greater Mamean | -∅ | CVVC-∅, CVVCVC-∅ CVCVVC-∅ | *CVVC-∅, *CVVCVC-∅ *CVCVVC-∅ | (*laq > *Set.A-laaq) | |
| Greater K'iche'an | -∅ | CVVC-∅, CVCVVC-∅, CVVCVVC-∅ | | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -∅ | CVVC-∅ | *CVVC-∅ | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -∅ | CVVC-∅ | | | |

P3: CVC-VVC, Set.A-CVC-Ø

- Inalienable:intrinsic
- Semantics: kinship, parts of the body, clothing; generics, absolute; unknown possessor; vocative
- -VC, -VVC, -CVC, -CVVC suffixes

Yucatec Maya

- Unknown possessor
 - *Máax atn-**il***? ‘Whose wife is it?’
 - *U y-atan* ‘his wife’
- Vocative
 - *Yuum-**b’il*** ‘Lord!’
 - *a yuum* ‘your father’

Huastec

- Generic
 - \int ek-e:l 'leaf, in the branch, on the tree'
 - \int ek-**lek** 'leaf, in general'
- bek-e:l 'bone, in the body'
- bek-**lek** 'bone, in general'

Q'eqchi'

- *ma k'am li cheʔ*

NEG take-it the wood

- *ab'anana a7an siʔ-ej*

because that (is) firewood-UNKWN.POSS

'Don't take that wood because it's firewood (and belongs to someone)'

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Huastecan | -laab', -lek, -ak(?) | *-laab' < - VI-aab', *-I- | *-VI(?); *-(VV)b'; *-ats ~ *-its; *-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-ijj; *-ak(?) |
| Yucatecan | -b'il, -tsil, -il | *-b', *-ts, *-il | |
| Greater K'ichean | -aaj, -eej, -ijj, -ats, -its, - b'ej, -b'ees, -ak, -(w)ik | *-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-ijj, *-b' | |
| Greater Mamean | -b'aj, -j, -b'il | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -e, -its, -ats, -ots | *-ej, *-its, *- ats | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -il, -al, <-ij>, <-aj>, <- is>, <-as>, -b'il | | |

| Subgroup | Attested | LpM |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Huastecan | | |
| Yucatecan | -ts[-il] | * -ats ~ * its |
| Greater K'ichean | -ats, -its, -[b']-ees | |
| Greater Mamean | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -its, -ats, -ots | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | <-is>, <-as> | |

| Subgroup | Attested | | CM |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Huastecan | | | |
| Yucatecan | | | |
| Greater K'ichean | -aaj, -eej, -iij, -[b']ej | *-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-iij, *-b'-Vj | *-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-iij |
| Greater Mamean | -[b']aj, -j | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -e | *-e(e)j, *-a(a)j, *-i(i)j | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | <-ij>, <-aj> | | |

| Subgroup | Attested | LpM |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Huastecan | | |
| Yucatecan | -b'il | *-b' ~ *-b'-il |
| Greater K'ichean | b'[-ej], -b'[-ees] | |
| Greater Mamean | -b'[-aj], -b'il | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -b'il | |

P3 -VI and GLM

- Houston et al.'s (2001) that “the -VI of the lowland languages must have been an innovation, since it replaces historic *-aj,” is also supported
- This can be extended to the Greater Lowland Mayan languages
- Probably result of **diffusion within this contact sphere**
- Not attested in Classic Mayan

Nahuatl (Veracruz)

- Wolgemuth
2002:53
- Indefinite
possessor *te-*

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>tɛ̃taj</i> | <i>el padre</i> |
| <i>tɛ̃ye'</i> | <i>la madre</i> |
| <i>tɛ̃piltzɪn</i> | <i>el hijo</i> |
| <i>tɛ̃coco</i> | <i>el hermano mayor</i> |

Absolute suffixes

Por ejemplo, en los siguientes sustantivos, se suprime la última sílaba para obtener la raíz dependiente.

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| chiquihui' | <i>canasta</i> | nochiqui | <i>mi canasta</i> |
| cosca' | <i>collar</i> | nocos | <i>mi collar</i> |

En los siguientes sustantivos, la última sílaba, que principia con **m**, se reduce a **n** para formar la raíz dependiente.

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------------------|
| atimi' | <i>piojo(s)</i> | noatin | <i>mi(s) piojo(s)</i> |
| tecoma' | <i>tecomate</i> | notecon | <i>mi tecomate</i> |

Upper Necaxa Totonac

- Beck (2004:8)
- Obligatorily possessed nouns, third-person citation forms
- xa- or xaa- when unpossessed

- (11) *ifnáp* 'aunt'
ifna:ná 'grandmother'
iftse:ʔé:n 'leg'
ifʔóʃ'a 'skin, leather'
ifpa:stapún 'kidney' (lit. 'belly-bean')
ifʔóʔsnĭ 'tip, protruding portion'
iftampín 'lower part, underside'
ifli:má:n 'oneself'
iftapáʔ 'price, value'

P4: CVC-Ø, Set.A-CVC-VI

- Intimate (especial relationship between possessor and possessee; possessee usually inanimate; possessor usually animate)
- Semantics: possessor responsible for or intimately tied to possessee; e.g. someone's portrait or photo, someone's shadow, a book written by someone (not just owned)

P1 ≠ P4

Colonial Yucatec (Smailus)

1. <u huun ahau>

his book king

the king's book (i.e. that the king owns)

2. <u huun-**il** ahau>

his book-P4 king

the king's book (i.e. that the king wrote)

Modern Yucatec

Bricker et al. (1998:128)

1. *in kih*

my henequen (that I purchased)

2. *in kih-il*

my henequen (that I have planted on my
land)

| Subgroup | Attested | Assessment |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Huastecan | | <p data-bbox="1199 721 1906 1117">Yucatecan and GTz may have innovated and diffused <i>-il</i> ~ <i>-al</i> as a P4 marker (co-opted use of ‘abstractivizer’)</p> |
| Yucatecan | -il, -al | |
| Greater K’ichean | [P5] | |
| Greater Mamean | [P5] | |
| Greater Q’anjob’alan | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -il, -al (later -VI-el) | |

P5: CVC-Ø, Set.A-CVC-ee/

- Inalienable/Abnormal/Special/Systemic possession (perhaps simply *animate inalienable* possessor)
- Semantics: parts of the body that cannot be voluntarily controlled, parts of the body that are systemic (found throughout the body)
- -VVI suffix often has allomorphs; in most languages the allomorphs are lexicalized and not morphophonemically predictable

P5 ≠ P1

1. *in k'i'ik'-el*

‘my blood (coursing through my veins)’

2. *in k'i'ik'*

‘my blood (for a transfusion)’

3. *in b'aak-el*

‘my bones (in my body)’

4. *in b'aak*

‘my bone (for making something out of it)’

But compare

Yucatec Maya

5. *ʔin luuk'-el*

my mud (dust mixed with sweat on body)
(P5)

Examples like this one suggest that *-el* is derivational: 'mud' has been derived into a part of the body

Tz'utujiil

- Dayley (1985:151)
- “It is interesting to note that the suffix –VVI forming **abstract nouns** is identical with the suffix used in **abnormal possession** (see 5.1.2.3). Thus, at least formally, there is a relationship between abstract nouns and abnormally possessed nouns. The full nature of this relationship is unclear, but certainly warrants further study”

| Subgroup | Attested | LpM | pM |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Huastecan | -∅, -aal | | *-aal |
| Yucatecan | -el, -al | *-aal ~ *-eel | |
| Greater K'ichean | -eel, -iil, -aal, -uul | | |
| Greater Mamean | -il, -eel | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -il, -al | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -el, -al | | |

Abstractivizer of Adjectives

- Proto-Mayan likely had one, but not clear what its form was
- Only reconstructible to Late Proto-Mayan as **-iil* ~ **-aal*

| | Suffixes | Subfamilies | LpM |
|----------------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| Huastecan | CVVC-Ø, CVC-tal, CVVC-tal | | |
| Yucatecan | -il | *-il | *-iil ~ *-aal |
| Greater Mamean | -ab'iil ~ -al, -leen, -le7n | *-iil ~ *-aal | |
| Greater K'iche'an | -iil (K'ic), -il (Kaq); -iil ~ -aal (Poq); -aal, -eel, -iil, -uul (Tz'u) | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -il ~ -al | *-il ~ -al | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -il, -al, (-Vl-el) | | |
| Classic Mayan | -il, -al, -(V)l-el | | |

Parallel to Mayan *-eel

- Veracruz Nahuatl (Wolgemuth 2002:58)
- -yo

naca' *carne*

Posesión

nonaca *mi carne (ajena a mi cuerpo)*

Parte del cuerpo

nonacayo *mi carne (parte de mi cuerpo)*

omi' *hueso*

Posesión

noomi *mi hueso (ajeno a mi cuerpo)*

Parte del cuerpo

noomiyo *mi hueso (parte de mi cuerpo)*

Other parts of the body

- Non-systemic parts do not take -yo

notzontecon

mi cabeza

noxaya'

mi rostro

noquech

mi cuello

nomā

mis brazos, mis manos

nocxi

mis piernas, mis pies

“Possessed collective”

- Pittman 1953: defines it thus for Tetelcingo Nahuatl
- Also for certain parts of plants (leaves) not just body of animal

P6: CVC-∅, Set.A-CVC-*il*/*-al*

- Inanimate possessor/partitive/meronymic
- Semantics: possessor is typically inanimate or *collective* (a group); semantics are quite complicated, and interact with pragmatics and syntactic factors (cf. Lehmann 2004), and worth a great deal of intensive and comparative study
- Usually each language has only one suffix (either *-il* or *-al*; a few have two or more)

Yucatec Maya

Yucatec Maya (Bricker et al. 1998:174)

1. *ʔin luuk'-∅*

my mud (for building a wall) (P1)

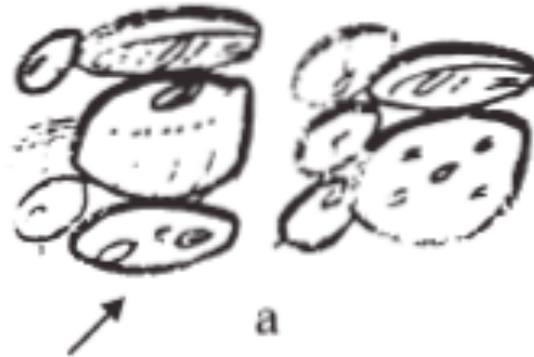
2. *ʔin luuk'-el*

my mud (dust mixed with sweat on body)
(P5)

3. *ʔu luuk'-il in nook'*

the mud on my clothes (P6)

Classic Mayan



- **?u-ts'i-b'a-li yu-k'i-b'i**
- ?u-ts'ihb'-**al** y-uk'-ib' 'the writing of her drinking vessel'
- *-al*

P6

- In Greater K'iche'an in a few instances suffix P5 is used in contexts where P6 is called for in other subgroups, but mostly GK' uses -∅ for P6
- Linguists have described the equivalent constructions in Greater K'iche'an and Greater Mamean as “Sustantivo de Sustantivo”

e.g. Tz'utujiil (García Ixmatá 1997)

ruu-wach **nuu**-chee' 'its fruit (fruit of my tree)'

Abstractivizer of Adjectives

- Reconstructible to Late Proto-Mayan as **-iil ~ *-aal*
- GQ' and GTz have **-il ~ *-al* as P6; perhaps the **-al* form came from the abstractivizer allomorph **-a(a)l*

| | Suffixes | Subfamilies | LpM |
|----------------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| Huastecan | CVVC-Ø, CVC-tal, CVVC-tal | | |
| Yucatecan | -il | *-il | *-iil ~ *-aal |
| Greater Mamean | -ab'iil ~ -al, -leen, -le7n | *-iil ~ *-aal | |
| Greater K'iche'an | -iil (K'ic), -il (Kaq); -iil ~ -aal (Poq); -aal, -eel, -iil, -uul (Tz'u) | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -il ~ -al | *-il ~ -al | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -il, -al, (-Vl-el) | | |
| Classic Mayan | -il, -al, -(V)l-el | | |

P7: CVC₁-∅, Set.A-CVC₂-∅

- Suppletive: cuts across categories
- Semantics: food, tortilla, chicken, cat, house, clothing, kinship terms
- All subgroups and branches of Mayan exhibit suppletive cases, sometimes several per language
- Likely result of competition between synonymous lexemes (until a compromise is achieved), borrowing, semantic shift, obsolescence

Type 7

Tz'utujiil

- Jaay 'house'
- **w-oochooch** 'my house/home'

- Jaaxeel 'son-in-law'
- **nuu-jii?** 'my son-in-law'

Mopan

- *naj* 'house'
- *in w-otoch* 'my house'

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|--|--------------------------|
| Huastecan | | | |
| Yucatecan | ✓ | | LpM ✓ *ηaj 'house' |
| Greater K'ichean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Mamean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | ✓ | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | ✓ | | |

Suppletives

- It is possible that some investigators have missed these
- Reconstructible as a phenomenon to Late proto-Mayan
- Likely Late proto-Mayan examples would include 'house' (Yucatecan, Greater K'iche'an)

Suppletion

- Zapotec (SBZZ):
house, tortilla
(Sonnenschein 2004:135)

(39) yet chia'
yet che=a'
tortilla of=1sg
'My tortilla'

(40) chizxa'
chizx=a'
poss.tortilla=1sg
'My tortilla'

(41) yoo chia'
yoo che=a'
house of=1sg
'My house'

(42) lizha'
lizh=a'
poss.house=1sg
'My house', 'My home'

Me'phaa/Tlapanec

- Marlett (2012)
- possessum-possessor
- head-marking
- head-dependent order in general
- suppletion for 'tortilla'

El sustantivo para 'tortilla' tiene la opción de utilizar un tema supletivo cuando es poseído en la mayoría de las variedades.⁷ El sustantivo no poseído es normalmente <guma> /gūmā/, y el tema supletivo es algo como <ga'un-> /gāʔùⁿ-/. Véanse las formas poseídas en la tabla 1. (Las formas en las filas **3SG FN** y **3PL FN** son las que se usan antes de una frase nominal como poseedor. Cuando el poseedor es tácito, la forma puede ser diferente.)

Copala Trique

- Suppletion
- “A few nouns that cannot be possessed are related to special inherently possessed nouns.”
- weh3 ‘house’ (cf. tukwa4 ‘home of’)
- yatsex5 or yatsix5 ‘clothing, garment’ (cf. sa3ganh1 ‘clothing of’)
- shkuu3 ‘animal’ (cf. daan4 ‘[domestic] animal of’)

P8: Set.A-CVC Set.A-CVC

- Diphrastric kennings: a paired set of possessive phrases (a couplet)
- Semantics: metaphorical, metonymic figure of speech (two ideas used to convey a single idea); family (parents, offspring), deities; concrete objects like human body; abstract ideas like war, luck, welfare, etc.
- Thoroughly documented in Eastern Mayan and Greater Q'anjob'alan (many linguists don't look for these, but they're probably present in all the languages)

Type 8

Tz'utujiil

- *n-b'aaq-iil n-b'och'-iil*
- my-bone-INAL.POSS my-vein/nerve-INAL.POSS
- my body

Tz'utujiil

- *atiʔt mamaʔ*
- grandmother grandfather
- grandparent(s)

- *w-atiʔt n-mamaʔ*
- my-grandmother my-grandfather
- my grandparents

Ch'olti'

- **a** *suku'un* **a** *wits'in*

your-older.brother your-younger.sibling

'your siblings'

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|---|------|
| Huastecan | | | |
| Yucatecan | | | |
| Greater K'ichean | ✓ | ✓ | CM ✓ |
| Greater Mamean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | ✓ | | |

Diphrastric Kennings

- It is possible that some investigators have missed these
- Common literary device (metaphor, metonymy) in Mesoamerican languages
- Reconstructible (as only means of deriving certain obligatorily possessed nominals) to Central Mayan at least ('parents', 'grandparents', 'ancestors', 'siblings')

Ayutla Mixe

- Romero Méndez (2008:193-194): Co-lexicalized nouns

43. a) tyeety tyääk
y-teety y-tääk
3POSS-father 3POSS-mother
'parents'

47. m-ween m-ää
2POSS-eye 2POSS-mouth
'your face' (NL2-1173)

b) yë jyëen tyëjk
yë'ë y-jëen y-tëjk
DEM.M 3POSS-fire 3POSS-house
'his home' (Efa1-1090)

P9: CVC-∅, ☐Set.A-CVC

- Unpossessable
- Semantics: natural objects and phenomena (sun, cloud, star; hailstone, mountain; some animals; some people, e.g. curer)
- If possessed, a different meaning is derived (and typically an abstractivizer suffix or an inanimate possessive suffix is called for)
- Some languages have an alternative mechanism to allow for their possession

Type 9

Yucatec Maya

- Máak ‘person’
- Xch’up ‘woman’
- báalam ‘jaguar’
- hwàan ‘Juan’, huulyah ‘Julia’
- ʔiik’ ‘wind’
- kaʔan ‘sky’
- k’aʔnáab ‘ocean’
- yóok’olkab ‘earth’

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|--|----|
| Huastecan | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Yucatecan | ✓ | | |
| Greater K'ichean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Mamean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | ✓ | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | ✓ | | |

Derived when possessed

- Some acquire new meanings when possessed

Upper Necaxa Totonac

- Some nouns that are not normally possessed change meaning when possessed (Beck 2004)

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| (12) | <i>tʃiskú</i> ‘man’ | > | <i>iftiskú</i> ‘her husband’ |
| | <i>puská:t</i> ‘woman’ | > | <i>ifpuská:t</i> ‘his wife’ |
| | <i>?awátʃa</i> ‘boy’ | > | <i>if?awátʃa</i> ‘his son’ |
| | <i>?e:stín</i> ‘north (uphill)’ | > | <i>if?e:stín</i> ‘its dorsal fin, ridge (of hill)’ |
| | <i>táʔtsi</i> ‘toasted squash seed’ | > | <i>iftáʔtsi</i> ‘its seed’ |

Yosundúa Mixtec

- Unpossessable, change in meaning when possessed

yucha 'river', vīko 'cloud', yōō 'moon', kōo 'snake',
vāhu 'coyote', nihna 'ghost', xwáa 'John (Sp. Juan)'

tāchi 'wind, evil spirit'

tāchi da

Wind his

his breath' or 'his voice'

Roundabout possession

Tz'utujiil (Greater K'iche'an, Greater Mamean)

1. *qaa-tee' jab'* 'our mother rain'
2. *qaa-tee' uleew* 'our mother earth'
3. *qa-tata' uleew* 'our father earth'
4. *qa-tata' q'ij* 'our father Sun'
5. *qa-ti't iik'* 'our mother Moon'

PI0: CVC-∅, (PREP +)Set.A-CVC(-VI)

- Always/obligatorily possessed
- Semantics: relational nouns, root abstract nouns (money, debt) and derived abstract nouns (goodness, sweetness), ordinal numbers; some inalienable nouns (kinship terms, parts of the body, such as ‘leg’ and ‘skin/peel’)
- Kaufman (1989) reconstructs about a dozen relational nouns to Proto-Mayan

Tz'utujiil

- -ach'aalaal 'relative', **w-**ach'aalaal 'my relative'
- -achb'al 'photo, reflection, painting', **w-**achb'al 'my photo, etc.'
- -atiʔt 'grandmother', **w-**atiʔt 'my grandmother'
- -maam 'grandchild', **nuu-**maam 'my grandchild'
- -b'eeyaal 'contents', **r-**b'eeyaal 'its contents'
- -k'axeel 'namesake, substitute', **n-**k'axeel 'my namesake, substitute'
- -kaqaal 'redness', **r-**kaqaal 'its redness'

Type 10

Poqom

- -eh 'paciente, beneficiario, poseedor'
- -u'uum 'agente, causativo'
- -uu' 'comitativo'
- -iib' 'reflexivo, recíproco'

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|--|----|
| Huastecan | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Yucatecan | ✓ | | |
| Greater K'ichean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Mamean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | ✓ | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | ✓ | | |

Central Mayan

- Sun, Moon, star, cloud, rain, house₁, air, rainbow, lake/ocean

Late Proto-Mayan

- Sun, Moon, sky, cloud, wind, house_I, rain

Never possessed

- It is possible that some investigators have missed these for some languages (including Huastec)
- Otherwise reconstructible to Late proto-Mayan
- Likely Late Proto-Mayan examples would include 'sun'

Roundabout possession

Tz'utujiil (Greater K'iche'an, Greater Mamean)

1. *qaa-tee' jab'* 'our mother rain'
2. *qaa-tee' uleew* 'our mother earth'
3. *qa-tata' uleew* 'our father earth'
4. *qa-tata' q'ij* 'our father Sun'
5. *qa-ti't iik'* 'our mother Moon'

Tz'utujiil

- Juyu7 'mountain'
- salk'um 'whirlwind'
- koj 'cougar'
- k'el 'parakeet'
- sanik 'ant'
- saqb'ach 'hailstone'
- kunaaneel 'curer'
- jaaj 'arm's reach'
- q'isaaneel 'witch'
- b'ajlam 'jaguar'

PI0: CVC-∅, (PREP +)Set.A-CVC(-VI)

- Always/obligatorily possessed
- Semantics: relational nouns, root abstract nouns (money, debt) and derived abstract nouns (goodness, sweetness), ordinal numbers; some inalienable nouns (kinship terms, parts of the body, such as ‘leg’ and ‘skin/peel’)
- Kaufman (1989) reconstructs about a dozen relational nouns to Proto-Mayan

| Subgroup | Attested | | pM |
|----------------------|----------|--|----|
| Huastecan | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Yucatecan | ✓ | | |
| Greater K'ichean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Mamean | ✓ | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | ✓ | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | ✓ | | |
| | | | |

Ordinals

Table 13.

| | Suffixes | Subfamilies | pM |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Huastecan | (Set.A-)Num- <i>chiil</i> | | *(Set.A-)Num- <i>VVI</i> |
| Yucatecan | Set.A-Num-CL- <i>il</i> | *Set.A-Num-CL- <i>il</i> | |
| Greater Mamean | | *Set.A-Num- \emptyset | |
| Greater K'iche'an | Set.A-Num- \emptyset | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | Set.A-Num- <i>iil</i> | *(Set.A-)Num- <i>VI</i> | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | (Set.A-)Num=CL Set.A-Num=CL-(V)l- <i>VI</i> Set.A-Num- <i>al</i> | | |

- Expected to see obligatory possession in all subgroups
- Not so for Greater Tzeltalan, Yucatecan, Greater Tzeltalan

Relational Nouns

Table 14.

| | Suffixes | Subfamilies | pM |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Huastecan | <i>t</i> -Set.A-RN | | *ty[a-]Set.A.-RN |
| Yucatecan | <i>t</i> -Set.A-RN Set.A-RN | * <i>t</i> -Set.A-RN *Set.A-RN | *Set.A-RN |
| Greater Mamean | Set.A-RN | *chi-Set.A-RN | |
| Greater K'iche'an | <i>chi/pa</i> Set.A-RN Set.A-RN | *Set.A-RN | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | Set.A-RN | * <i>t</i> -Set.A-RN | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | <i>t</i> -Set.A-RN Set.A-RN | *Set.A-RN | |

Various noun roots

Table 16.

| | Suffixes | Subgroups | LpM | pM |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|-----|----|
| Huastecan | -k'imaat' 'homestead' | | | |
| Yucatecan | -chi' 'mouth'(?) | | | |
| Greater Mamean | -lok' 'root' -xaaq 'leaf' -xk'owil 'peel' -xk'oom 'peel' -b'aaq' 'seed' -aaq' 'tongue' | Peel Leaf Tongue | | |
| Greater K'iche'an | -iij 'peel' -ajil 'money' -xaaq 'leaf' -aa' 'leg' -aaq' 'tongue' | | | |
| Greater Q'anjob'alan | -ajaw 'boss, lord, authority' -al 'broth, juice, sweat' | | | |
| Greater Tzeltalan | -tak'in(-il) 'price' | | | |

Always possessed

- Proto-Mayan trait
- Clear semantic categories
- Typically Set.A-CVC-Ø for root nouns (kinship, body parts), Set.A-CVC-VI/VVI for relational (periphrastic cases) and derived nouns (abstract, ordinals)

Qualifications of results

- Applied a more restrictive family tree model than some scholars would
- Thus, my results are probably more conservative

Results

- Support of several previous proposals
 - *Set.A-Possessum Possessor?
- Revision or qualification of others
- New proposals

Implications

- Proto-Mayan had a possessive classification system of nouns, ca. 2200-2000 BCE
 - Inalienable vs. alienable
 - Suppletives
 - Colexicalized nouns
 - Unpossessables
 - (Generally) always possessed: Relational nouns, Meronyms, Abstract nouns, Ordinal numerals

Morphology

- Possessive suffixes (inanimate possession, partonymic possession)
- Absolute suffixes (perhaps with various functions, perhaps originally case markers) for inalienable nouns (some kin terms, some body parts)
- Vowel lengthening for some alienable nouns (clothes, tools, domestic animals)
- Abstractivizers

Semantics

- Inalienables and always possessed nouns: some body parts, some kinship terms, some meronyms, abstract nouns
- My original assumption: some nouns like 'money' or 'price' or 'permission' were always possessed by virtue of being abstract nouns

Totonac-Tepehua

- General remarks
 - possessum-possessor
 - head-marking
 - head-dependent order in general
- obligatory vs. optional possession
- some use possession for ordinals (like Mayan)
- some: suppletion for ‘tortilla’
- unpossessed prefix (generic, indefinite possessor, unknown possessor) xa- ~ xaa-

Otomanguean

- General remarks
 - possessum-possessor
 - head-marking
 - head-dependent order in general
- obligatory vs. optional possession
- unpossessables, derivation upon possession
- some: suppletion for 'tortilla', 'house'
- oblique/periphrastic construction for alienable
- morphophonological possessed noun classes (sometimes multiple)
- alienable prefix (e.g. x-) (cf. Totonacan)
- some possessive classifiers (like Yucatecan, Yokot'an)

Mixe-Zoquean

- General remarks
 - possessor-possessum (consistent with other OV characteristics), also possessum-possessor
 - head-marking
 - dependent (possessor) marked for ERG/GEN in some languages
- obligatory vs. optional possession in some (perhaps depending on possessor's animacy)
- Co-lexicalized nouns (cf. Mayan)
- However, external possession and noun-incorporation in some Mixean and Zoquean languages seems complex and semantically related (body parts > body secretions > meronyms > kinship)

Attributive Possession in MA

- Inalienables
 - Absolute (unpossessed) affixes
 - (Generally) obligatory possession for inalienables
- Alienable
 - Juxtaposition
 - Periphrastic/oblique
- Suppletion (e.g. *house, tortilla/food*)
- Colexicalized nouns
- Unpossessables (e.g. natural phenomena, celestial bodies)

Broader issues re Possession

- Inalienable/alienable splits
 - Typological correlations (Nichols 1988)
 - Iconicity (Haiman) vs. economy (Haspelmath)
 - Semantics

‘house’ vs. ‘home’

- Attested in Otomanguean and Mayan
- Proto-Mayan *ɲah ‘house’ vs. *-atyooty ‘home’
- Found farther afield
 - E.g. Proto-Arawak *pe ‘house: unpossessed’ vs. *pana/i ‘house: possessed’ (Aikhenvald 2006:173)

Proto-Arawak

- *Inalienable* (body parts, kin terms, ‘house’, ‘louse’, deverbal nominalizations) vs. *alienable* (rest)
- Inalienable nouns: possessed without suffixes, unpossessed form marked with *-tʃi or *-hV ‘absolute’ (e.g. Pareci *no-tiho* ‘my face’ vs. *toho-ti* ‘(someone’s) face’) (Aikhenvald 2006:173)
- Alienable nouns: possessed with suffixes

Pan-Americanisms

- **Campbell, Lyle.** 1991. On so-Called Pan-Americanisms. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 57:394-399.
- **Campbell, Lyle, and Terrence Kaufman.** 1980. On Mesoamerican Linguistics. *American Anthropologist* 82:850-857.
- _____. 1983. Mesoamerican Historical Linguistics and Distant Genetic Relationship: Getting It Straight. *American Anthropologist* 85:362-372.

Causes

- Ancient inheritance
- Areal diffusion
- Common cognitive/cultural/linguistic pressures leading to independent innovation along similar lines

Conclusions

- Besides the diagnostic possessum + possessor (N + G, head + dependent) order, MA languages exhibit other common traits relevant to possession that require further investigation
- Possessive classifications
- Affixes for “alienating” normally inalienable or obligatorily possessed nouns
- Suppletion, Unpossessables

Surprises?

- Otomanguean and Mayan
 - Complex possessive classification systems
 - Unpossessables, derived meanings when possessed
 - Possessive classifiers
 - Suppletives
 - Inalienables vs. alienables

Broader issues

- Some similarities (e.g. semantic domains) are probably not necessarily due to contact, but the result of commonly shared cognitive and cultural contexts
- Even potentially suppletion of 'house' and 'home' cases
- Others are likely result of contact or shared inheritance

Further research

- Documentation, basic description
- Practices often categorized as “ethnography of communication” seem to be more grammatically basic
 - Co-lexicalized nouns (Mayan, Mixe-Zoquean)
 - Roundabout possession (Mayan)