Possession Classification Systems Across Mesoamerica: Areal and Historical Implications

David F. Mora Marín

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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 1

- **Zapotec** (Sonneschein 2004:65, 134)

- **Alienable** (36) by means of oblique/relational construction with *che* ‘of’

  $\begin{align*}
  \text{(36)} & \quad \text{libr chebe'} \\
  & \quad \text{libr che=be'} \\
  & \quad \text{book of=3inf} \\
  & \quad \text{‘His/her book’}
  \end{align*}$
SBZZ: Example II

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

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>yichgh lalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>head lalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Lalo’s head’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>yichgh=a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>head=1sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘my head’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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=1sg
    ‘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)  

a. ʔ-ətað
   
   1sg-mother

   ‘my mother’

b. ʔə-n’-ewaː
   
   1sg-ALIENABLE-house

   ‘my house’
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'.”
Chichimeca-Jonaz (http://wals.info/languoid/lect/wals_code_cjo) (Oto-Manguean (http://wals.info/languoid/family/otomanguean); 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)

\(M = \text{lenis nasal}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1SG</th>
<th>2SG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>námén?</td>
<td>namén?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suní</td>
<td>síní</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kútún</td>
<td>utún</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tūmbi?ir</td>
<td>nūmbi?ir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nahi</td>
<td>únho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tásóc?</td>
<td>kisóc?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namá</td>
<td>éMa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kūndí</td>
<td>kirí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nambá</td>
<td>úngwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kūmbo?</td>
<td>kibó?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ka?á</td>
<td>kan?a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masú</td>
<td>uni?í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāta</td>
<td>úngwae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 1

• Existential \( \text{yàan} \) ‘there is’

1. \( \text{Yàan ten tàak’in} \)
   to:me money
   ‘I have money (in my pocket to go buy something)’

2. \( \text{Yàan in tàak’in} \)
   my money
   ‘I have money (I’m wealthy)’
Yucatec: Predicative 1

• Existential yàan ‘there is’

1. Yàan in wiïts’in

   my younger sibling

   ‘I have a younger sibling’

2. :(Yàan ten (in w)ïits’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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicate Noun Phrase</th>
<th>Kinship term</th>
<th>-tsil</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Possessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedro</td>
<td>iits'in</td>
<td>-tsil</td>
<td>ti'</td>
<td>jLuut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jMaat iits'intsil ti' jLuut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mateo is a younger sibling of/to Eleuterio</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: jPeedroe' ma' cheen k'ube'en b'ai' ichantsil 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
(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’.
(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).
(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.
(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).
(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)

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 CVVC stem.
  n8   ownership possession indicated by CVVCVC stem.
  n9   possession only with noun specifier (ʔàalak’ or ʔ6ʔoč).
  n10  never possessed.

Bricker et al. 1998:360
Attributive

1. Dative
2. Vowel lengthening
3. Inalienable/unknown possession
4. Intimate
5. Alienable/ownership
6. Partonymic/Systemic
7. Inanimate
8. Suppletive
9. Never possessed
10. Always possessed
11. Diphrastic/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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Morphology</th>
<th>Common Labels</th>
<th>Semantics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC, CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Alienable/ownership</td>
<td>Owned objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Set.A-CVVC, CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Vowel lengthening</td>
<td>Owned objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC, CVC-VVC</td>
<td>Inalienable</td>
<td>Kin terms, body parts, clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC-VI, CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>Objects/entities produced or inherently related to an individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC-VVI, CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Systemic</td>
<td>Parts of the body, parts of an organism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC-VI, CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Inanimate/part-whole/associative</td>
<td>Parts of objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC₁, CVC₂-Ø</td>
<td>Suppletive</td>
<td>House, food, animal, clothes, parts of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC Set.A-CVC</td>
<td>Diphrastic</td>
<td>Parents, grandparents, deities, metaphors, metonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Natural phenomena (sun, star, cloud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Set.A-CVC(-VI), ⊕CVC-Ø</td>
<td>Always/obligatory</td>
<td>Relational nouns (in front of, behind, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(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-č’iː 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
(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, Nahuaatl 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-Aztec can was an SOV language (Langacker, 24), and so are most of the other languages bordering MA—e.g. Tonkawa, Coahuilteco, Yuman, Seri; Lenca, Jicaque, Miskito, 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)
(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 pronominal 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-wiq-a 'on me' (n- 'my')
   t-wiq 'on him' (t- 'his')
   n-xaq'-a 'below me'
   t-xaq' 'below him'
(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.
(h) ABSOLUTIVE AFFIXES. Some MA languages have a nominal suffix called the ‘absolutive’, 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 ‘absolutive’ 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 absolutive, as does Nahuatl. These are not really equivalent, however: thus, in Quiché, the so-called absolutive suffix occurs only on a certain class of otherwise intimately possessed nouns, but in Nahuatl the absolutive is much more general, occurring with most nouns when they bear no other affixes. In the key languages surrounding MA, an absolutive 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
  - Otomanguean
  - 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 Otomanguean, Mixe-Zoquean, Totonacan families


- 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/POSS₁-Possessum + Possessor₁
  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/POSS₁)-Possessum + Possessor₁
• 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)

te’ paused tyac
ty’ paused-is ytac
the man-GEN 3sPOSS-house
la hombre-GEN 3sPOSS-casa
the man’s house
la 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

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

England 1988:31

Prevocalic subset
“Firm glottal stops”
Other morphology

- Suffixes
- Vowel lengthening
- Ablaut
PI: CVC-∅, Set.A-CVC-∅

- 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)
P1: no possessive suffix, no unpossessive suffix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>Subfamilies</th>
<th>pM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huastecan</td>
<td>-Ø ~ -Vl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td>*-Ø</td>
<td>Late pM *-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td>*-Ø</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater K’iche’an</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td>*-Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
P2: CVC-Ø, 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’àak’ ‘my meat (bought at the market)’
- ?in b’ak’-el ‘my flesh (of my body)’
- ?in wo’och b’ak’ ‘my meat (for eating)’
- lak ‘clay cup/dish’
- ?in làak ‘my clay cup/dish’
- ?okom ‘house pillar’
- ?u yòokom ?in nah-il ‘my (house-)pillar’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Attested</th>
<th>pM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huastecan</td>
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<td>CVVCVC</td>
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<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>CVCVVC</td>
<td>pM *CVCVVC &gt; *Set.A- *CVCVVC</td>
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<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
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<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>CVVCVVC</td>
<td>GK’ Innovation?</td>
</tr>
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## P2: Vowel lengthening

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>VV and suffixes</th>
<th>Subfamilies</th>
<th>LpM</th>
<th>pM</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huastecan</td>
<td>-Ø, -il/-al/-hil(^{12})</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø, CVCVVC-Ø, CVCVVC-il/-al</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø, *CVCVVC-Ø</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø, CVCVVC-Ø</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø, *CVCVVC-Ø</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø, *CVCVVC-Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K'iche'an</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø, CVCVVC-Ø</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø, *CVCVVC-Ø</td>
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<td>*CVVC-Ø, *CVCVVC-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q'anjob'alán</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø</td>
<td>*CVVC-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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’ił ‘Lord!’
  • a yuum ‘your father’
Huastec

- Generic
  - 'leaf, in the branch, on the tree'
  - 'leaf, in general'
- 'bone, in the body'
- 'bone, in general'
Q’eqchi’

• *ma  k’am  li  che?*
  NEG take-it the wood

• *ab’an an  aʔan  siʔ-ej*
  because that (is) firewood-UNKWN.POSS

‘Don’t take that wood because it’s firewood (and belongs to someone)’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Attested</th>
<th>pM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huastecan</td>
<td>-laab’, -lek, -ak(?)</td>
<td>*-laab’ &lt; -Vl-aab’, *-l-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-b’il, -tsil, -il</td>
<td>*-b’, *-ts, *-il</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>-aaj, -eej, -iij, -ats, -its, -b’ej, -b’eesh, -ak, -(w)ik</td>
<td>*-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-iij, *-b’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>-b’aj, -j, -b’il</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-e, -its, -ats, -ots</td>
<td>*-ej, *-its, *-ats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-il, -al, &lt;-ij&gt;, &lt;-aj&gt;, &lt;-is&gt;, &lt;-as&gt;, -b’il</td>
<td>*-Vl(?); *-(VV)b’; *-ats ~ *-its; *-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-iij; *-ak(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subgroup</td>
<td>Attested</td>
<td>LpM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huastecan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yucatecan</strong></td>
<td>-ts[-il]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>-ats, -its, -[b’]-ees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td></td>
<td>**<em>-ats ~ <em>its</em></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-its, -ats, -ots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>&lt;-is&gt;, &lt;-as&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subgroup</td>
<td>Attested</td>
<td>CM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>-aaj, -eej, -iij, *[b’]ej</td>
<td>*-aaj ~ *-eej ~ *-iij, *-b’-Vj</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>*[b’]aj, -j</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>*-e(e)j, *-a(a)j, *-i(i)j</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>&lt;-ij&gt;, &lt;-aj&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subgroup</td>
<td>Attested</td>
<td>LpM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-b’il</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>b’[-ej], -b’[-ees]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>-b’[-aj], -b’il</td>
<td>*-b’ ~ *-b’-il</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-b’il</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nahuatl</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tetaj</td>
<td>el padre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tye'</td>
<td>la madre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tepiltzin</td>
<td>el hijo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te'coco</td>
<td>el hermano mayor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Por ejemplo, en los siguientes sustantivos, se suprime la última sílaba para obtener la raíz dependiente.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chiquihui'</th>
<th>canasta</th>
<th>nochiqui</th>
<th>mi canasta</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cósca'</td>
<td>collar</td>
<td>nocós</td>
<td>mi collar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>atimi'</th>
<th>piojo(s)</th>
<th>noatin</th>
<th>mi(s) piojo(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tecoma'</td>
<td>tecomate</td>
<td>notecon</td>
<td>mi tecomate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upper Necaxa Totonac

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

(11) $iʃnáp$ ‘aunt’
    $iʃnaːná$ ‘grandmother’
    $iʃfeːʔeːn$ ‘leg’
    $iʃRóʃ'a$ ‘skin, leather’
    $iʃpaːʃiapún$ ‘kidney’ (lit. ‘belly-bean’)
    $iʃRóʃ'isni'$ ‘tip, protruding portion’
    $iʃtampún$ ‘lower part, underside’
    $iʃliːmá:n$ ‘oneself’
    $iʃiapáː$ ‘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)
1. *in kih*
   
   my henequen (that I purchased)

2. *in kih-*i*l*
   
   my henequen (that I have planted on my land)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Attested</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-il, -al</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>[P5]</td>
<td>Yucatecan and GTz may have innovated and diffused -il ~ -al as a P4 marker (co-opted use of ‘abstractivizer’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>[P5]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-il, -al (later -VI-el)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
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</table>
P5: CVC-∅, Set.A-CVC-eel

- 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. ?in 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”
<table>
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<th>pM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-el, -al</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
<td>-eel, -iil, -aal, -uul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>-il, -eel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-il, -al</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-el, -al</td>
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</table>

*-aal ~ *-eel
Abstractivizer of Adjectives

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subfamilies</th>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>LpM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Huastecan</td>
<td>CVVC-Ø, CVC-tal, CVVC-tal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>-il</td>
<td>*-il</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>-ab’iil ~ -al, -leen, -le7n</td>
<td>*-iil ~ *-aal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’iche’an</td>
<td>-iil (K’ic), -il (Kaq); -iil ~ -aal (Poq); -aal, -eel, -iil, -uul (Tz’u)</td>
<td>*-iil ~ *-aal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
<td>-il ~ -al</td>
<td>*-il ~ -al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>-il, -al, (-VI-el)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic Mayan</td>
<td>-il, -al, -(V)l-el</td>
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</table>
Parallel to Mayan *-eel

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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>naca'</th>
<th>carne</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posesión</td>
<td>nonaca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parte del cuerpo</td>
<td>nonacayo</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>omí</th>
<th>hueso</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posesión</td>
<td>noomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parte del cuerpo</td>
<td>noomiyo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other parts of the body

- Non-systemic parts do not take -yo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>notzontec</td>
<td><em>mi cabeza</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noxaya'</td>
<td><em>mi rostro</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noquech</td>
<td><em>mi cuello</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nomá</td>
<td><em>mis brazos, mis manos</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nocxi</td>
<td><em>mis piernas, mis pies</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“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-\textit{il}/-\textit{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 -\textit{il} or -\textit{al}; a few have two or more)
Yucatec Maya

Yucatec Maya (Bricker et al. 1998:174)

1. `in luuk’-Ø
   my mud (for building a wall) (P1)

2. `in luuk’-el
   my mud (dust mixed with sweat on body) (P5)

3. `u luuk’-il in nook’
   the mud on my clothes (P6)
Classic Mayan

- ʔu-ts’i-b’a-li yu-k’i-b’i
- ʔu-ts’ihb’-al y-uk’-ib’ ‘the writing of her drinking vessel’
- -al
• 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 -Ø 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>Subfamilies</th>
<th>LpM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huastecan CVVC-Ø, CVC-tal, CVVC-tal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan -il</td>
<td>*-il</td>
<td>*-iil ~ *-aal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean -ab’iil ~ -al, -leen, -le7n</td>
<td>*-iil ~ *-aal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater K’iche’an -iil (K’ic), -il (Kaq); -iil ~ -aal (Poq); -aal, -eel, -iil, -uul (Tz’u)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan -il ~ -al</td>
<td>*-il ~ -al</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan -il, -al, (-VI-el)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classic Mayan -il, -al, -(V)l-el</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
P7: $\text{CVC}_1-\emptyset$, $\text{Set.A-CVC}_2-\emptyset$

- 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-jiiʔ ‘my son-in-law’
Mopan

- *naj* ‘house’
- *in w-otoch* ‘my house’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Attested</th>
<th>pM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatecan</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater K’ichean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
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<td>Greater Q’anjob’alan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Tzeltalan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LpM ✓

*ŋaj ‘house’
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(39) yet chia’</th>
<th>(41) yoo chia’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yet che=a’</td>
<td>yoo che=a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tortilla of=1sg</td>
<td>house of=1sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘My tortilla’</td>
<td>‘My house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chizx=a’</td>
<td>lizh=a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poss.tortilla=1sg</td>
<td>poss.house=1sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘My tortilla’</td>
<td>‘My house’, ’My home’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suppletion

- Huehuetla Tepehua (Kung 2007:363), ‘tortilla’

(492) tortilla (ni7 in (a) is obligatorily possessed, but waati in (b) is not)

a. tz'alukulh juu 7ixni7 juu 7atzi7
   tz'aluku-li juu 7ix-ni7 juu 7atzi7
   make.tortilla-PFV ART 3POS-tortilla ART girl
   ‘The girl made the tortilla(s).’
   [TPWDB: tz'aluku]

b. tz'alukuy juu waati juu t'aku7
   tz'aluku-y juu waati juu t'aku7
   make.tortilla-IMPFV ART tortilla ART woman
   ‘The woman makes the tortilla(s).’
   [TPWDB: tz'aluku]
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. El sustantivo no poseído es normalmente <guma> /gūmā/, y el tema supletivo es algo como <ga'ún-> /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. sa3ganhl1 ‘clothing of’)
  - shkuu3 ‘animal’ (cf. daan4 ‘[domestic] animal of’)

•
P8: Set.A-CVC Set.A-CVC

• Diphrastic 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’
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Diphraistic 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


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) yē jyēen tyējk
    yē’e       y-jēen       y-tējk
    DEM.M  3POSS-fire   3POSS-house
    ‘his home’ (Efa1-1090)
P9: CVC-Ø, 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’
- ṭíik’ ‘wind’
- kaʔan ‘sky’
- k’aʔnáab ‘ocean’
- yóok’olkab ‘earth’
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</table>
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) $tʃiʃkú$ ‘man’
$puskáːt$ ‘woman’
$ʔawátʃa$ ‘boy’
$ʔeːstín$ ‘north (uphill)’
$táʔtsi$ ‘toasted squash seed’

> $iʃtʃiʃkú$ ‘her husband’
> $iʃpuskáːt$ ‘his wife’
> $iʃʔawátʃa$ ‘his son’
> $iʃʔeːstín$ ‘its dorsal fin, ridge (of hill)’
> $iʃtáʔtsi$ ‘its seed’
Yosundúa Mixtec

- Unpossessable, change in meaning when possessed

\[\text{yucha} \text{'river', } \text{vīko} \text{'cloud', } \text{yōō} \text{'moon', } \text{kūō} \text{'snake',} \]
\[\text{vāhu} \text{'coyote', } \text{nihna} \text{'ghost', } \text{xwáa} \text{'John (Sp. Juan)'},\]

\[\text{tāchi} \text{'wind, evil spirit'}\]
\[\text{tāchi da} \]
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’iij ‘our father Sun’
5. qa-ti’t iik’ ‘our mother Moon’
P10: CVC-$\emptyset$, (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’
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</tbody>
</table>
Central Mayan

- Sun, Moon, star, cloud, rain, house, air, rainbow, lake/ocean
Late Proto-Mayan

- Sun, Moon, sky, cloud, wind, house, 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’iij ‘our father Sun’
5. qa-ti’t iik’ ‘our mother Moon’
Tz’utujil

- 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’
P10: 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
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</table>
## Ordinals

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<tr>
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<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>Subfamilies</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Huastecan      | (Set.A-)Num-
chiil |                   | *(Set.A-)Num-
VVl               |
| Yucatecan      | Set.A-Num-CL-il   | *Set.A-Num-CL-il  |                     |
| Greater Mamean |                   | *Set.A-Num-Ø      |                     |
| Greater K’iche’an | Set.A-Num-Ø  |                     |                     |
| Greater         |                   | *(Set.A-)Num-Vl    |                     |
| Q’anjob’alan   | Set.A-Num-iil     | *(Set.A-)Num-Vl    |                     |
| Greater         |                   | *(Set.A-)Num-Vl    |                     |
| Tzeltalan      | (Set.A-)Num=CL    |                   |                     |
|                | Set.A-Num=CL-(V)l-Vl |               |                     |
|                | Set.A-Num-al      |                   |                     |

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

Table 14.

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>( t )-Set.A-RN</td>
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<td>*ty[a-]Set.A.-RN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Mamean</td>
<td>Set.A-RN</td>
<td>*chi-Set.A-RN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Various noun roots

**Table 16.**

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<th>pM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Huastecan</strong></td>
<td>-k’ima? ‘homestead’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yucatecan</strong></td>
<td>-chi ‘mouth’ (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater Mamean</strong></td>
<td>-lok ‘root’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-xaaq ‘leaf’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-xk’owl ‘peel’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-xk’oom ‘peel’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-b’aq ‘seed’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-aaq ‘tongue’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater K’iche’an</strong></td>
<td>-ii ‘peel’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ajil ‘money’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-xaaq ‘leaf’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-aa ‘leg’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-aaq ‘tongue’</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greater Q’anjob’alan</strong></td>
<td>-ajaw ‘boss, lord, authority’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-al ‘broth, juice, sweat’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greater Tzeltalan</strong></td>
<td>-tak’i ‘price’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
- Alienables
  - 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 *ŋah ‘house’ vs. *-atyooty ‘home’
• Found farther afield
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-ːtiho* ‘my face’ vs. *toho-ːti* ‘(someone’s) face’) (Aikhenvald 2006:173)

• Alienable nouns: possessed with suffixes
Pan-Americanisms


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)