

# **Caritive constructions in the languages of Mesoamerica**

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# Outline

- Mesoamerica as a linguistic area
- Language sample
- Strategies for expressing the caritive meaning in the languages of Mesoamerica:
  - borrowing the Spanish preposition *sin*
  - the use of regular negative constructions
  - functionally restricted markers for particular semantic domains: body parts, clothes, etc.
- Mesoamerica and neighboring languages
- Conclusions

# Mesoamerica



# Mesoamerica

- Paul Kirchhoff (1943)
- The cultural area emerged around 2500 BC
- ??? The continuity of the Mesoamerican area after the Spanish Conquest
- Mesoamerica as a linguistic area: Campbell et al. (1986)
- Typical “Mesoamerican” features:
  - head-marking in nominal possession
  - the use of relational nouns instead of prepositions
  - vigesimal numeral systems
  - non-verb-final basic word order

# Mesoamerica

- Five language families:
  - Uto-Aztecan
  - Mayan
  - Totonacan
  - Oto-Manguéan
  - Mixe-Zoquean
- + isolates:
  - Oaxaca Chontal (or Tequistlatecan family)
  - Xinka (or Xinkan family), extinct
  - Cuitlatec, extinct
  - Huave
  - ??? Purépecha

# Materials

- The aim of representing all the families and subgroups within the area
- The languages for which the most accessible and complete sets of linguistic data are available
- Grammatical descriptions of Mesoamerican languages typically do not discuss the caritive meaning and its means of expression
- Analyses of published texts => Alternative strategies to express the caritive meaning
- The sample: 20 languages

<b>Language family</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Language and source of data</b>
Uto-Aztecan	Aztecan	Mecayapán Nahuatl (Wolgemuth 2007)
		Pipil (Campbell 1985)
Totonacan	Totonacan	Filomena Mata Totonac (McFarland 2009)
	Tepehuan	Huehuetla Tepehua (Smythe Kung 2007)
Oto-Manguean	Zapotecan	San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec (Sonnenschein 2004)
	Otopamean	Mezquital Valley Otomi (Priego Montfort 1989)
	Mixtecan	Chalcatongo Mixtec (Macaulay 1996)
	Popolocan	Chiquihuitlán Mazatec (Jamieson 1988)
Mixe-Zoquean	Zoquean	San Miguel Chimalapa Zoque (Johnson 2000)
		Sierra Popoluca (de Jong Boudreault 2009)
	Mixean	Ayutla Mixe (Romero-Méndez 2008)
Mayan	Cholan-Tzeltalan	Oxchuc Tseltal (Polian 2013) Chol (Vázquez Álvarez 2011)
	Yucatecan	Itza' (Hofling 2000)
	Q'anjob'alan	Akatek (Zavala 1992)
	K'iche'an	Q'eqchi' (Stewart 1980)
	Mamean	Mam (England 1983)
	Huastecan	South Eastern Huastec (Kondic 2012)
[Isolates]	Huave	San Francisco del Mar Huave (Kim 2008)
	Xinka	Xinkan, reconstruction (Sachse 2010)

# Strategies for expressing the caritive meaning

- Strategy 1: The use of the borrowed preposition *sin* (from Spanish)
- Strategy 2: The development of a semantically restricted marker that is only used with specific types of absentees
- Strategy 3: negative predicative constructions
- (Strategy 4): negative comitative constructions



# Strategy 1

- Chimalapa Zoque (Mixe-Zoquean)

dä      näk-tam-pa      **sin**      rremedyu  
1ABS   go-1PL-IPFV   **CAR**   medicine

‘We go without medicine.’ (Sánchez & Sánchez 1995: 70, #327)

- Chontal of Tabasco (Mayan)

**sin**      jop’o                      a              bix=on                      tä  
**CAR**      sombrero              IMM      go.out=1SG              PREP  
k’än-k-an                      sami  
use-PASS-NMLZ              today

‘I went out doing some errands today without sombrero.’ (Keller & Luciano 1997: 215, my glosses)

- Mezquital Valley Otomi (Oto-Manguéan)

dá      hëkä      rä      ngö      **nsi**      rä      jwai  
1.PST   cut      DEF      meat      **CAR**      DEF      knife

‘I cut the meat without the knife.’ (Priego Montfort 1989: 158)

# Strategy 2

- Yucatec Maya (Mayan) has the morpheme *kul* which is attached to a noun denoting a **body part**:
  - *ah kul k'ab* 'somebody who does not have a hand'
  - *ah kul neh* 'tailless' (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 348)
- Sierra Popoluca (Mixe-Zoquean) has the proclitic =*tyaaka*:
  - *tuʔch=tyaaka* 'without tail'
  - *puy=tyaaka* 'without leg' (de Jong Boudreault 2009: 307, 286)
- Ch'orti' (Mayan), has the word *koror* 'without', which is used with nouns denoting **clothes**

- Ch'orti' (Mayan)

e        sitz'        **koror**    u-wex        xachar  
DEF    boy        **CAR**    3POSS-pants    sitting.3SG

'The boy doesn't have any pants.' (Hull 2016: 205, my glosses)

# Strategy 3

## Negative copulative predication

- Mezquital Valley Otomi (Oto-Manguenan)

dá      həkä      rä      ngö      **hinge**      rä      jwai  
1.PST   cut      DEF      meat      **CAR**      DEF      knife

'I cut the meat without the knife.' (Priego Montfort 1989: 158)

## Negative existential predication

- Poqomchi' (Mayan)

x-nu-yeq'                                  i          ha'          chi          **ma'xtaj**  
PFV-1SG.ERG-step          DEF          water          SUB          **NEG.EXIST**

nu-xijab'  
1SG.POSS-shoe

'I stepped in the water without a shoe.' (Dobbels 2003: 416, my glosses)

# Strategy 3

## Standard sentence with a negated noun

- Chalcatongo Mixtec (Oto-Manguenan)

ni-kexaʔá=rí      xãã=rí    nužaʔu te      **tú**=šũʔũ      ñábaʔa=rí  
PFV-start=1      buy=1    market and      **NEG**=money      have=1

‘I started to buy (things) in the market, but I did not have any money.’  
(Macaulay 1996: 124, #121)

## Standard negative verbal clause

- Yatzachi Zapotec (Oto-Manguenan)

... na'                  **bi**                  nzo                  xlapa'a  
... CONJ                  **NEG**                  be.STAT                  sombrero

‘(I have a headache when I work in the sun) without sombrero.’ (Butler 2000: 50, my glosses)

# Strategy 4

- Negative comitative constructions are rarely found in Mesoamerica
- Chontal of Tabasco (Mayan): the construction *mach t'ok* is a possible translation of the Spanish word *sin* (Keller & Luciano 1997)
  - *mach* 'not' = negator
  - *t'ok* 'with' = comitative
- Tzeltal (Mayan): in some dialects, it is possible to combine the standard negative marker *ma* with the word form *sok* 'with' (Jaime Pérez, p.c.)

# Mesoamerica and neighboring areas

- The languages spoken to the south of Mesoamerica generally have dedicated caritive markers
- Miskitu (Misumalpan)
  - a. naipa-**s**  
1SG.POSS.tooth-**CAR**  
'without my tooth' (Salamanca 1988: 219)
  - b. maha            **luha**  
pay                **CAR**  
'gratis, free of charge' (Melgara Brown 2008: 127)
- Pech (Chibchan):
  - the caritive suffix *-núwǎ́*: *a-tùs-núwǎ́* 'fatherless' (Holt 1999)
- Garifuna (Arawak):
  - the caritive prefix *ma-* (Haurholm-Larsen 2016)

# Mesoamerica and neighboring areas

- The languages spoken to the north of Mesoamerica do not have dedicated caritive markers

Uto-Aztecan: Choguita Rarámuri (Caballero 2008) and Hopi (Jeanne 1978)

Seri (Marlett 2009)

Athabaskan: San Carlos Apache (de Reuse & Goode 2006)

Yuman: Cocopa (Crawford 1989), Maricopa (Gordon 1986) and Tiipay (Miller 2001)

Algonquian: Arapaho (Cowell & Moss 2008)

- Seri (isolate)

cafee	xiica_an_icaai	ipi	an
coffee	sugar	INT	3POSS.in
impaii			quih
<b>3POSS.NEG.PASS.NMLZ.make</b>			DEF

‘coffee without sugar’ (Marlett 2009: 271)

# Conclusions

- The absent linguistic traits can be as equally decisive and important in areal studies as the present traits.
- Three main strategies to express the caritive meaning in the languages of Mesoamerica:
  - the borrowing of the Spanish preposition *sin*;
  - the development of specific caritive markers that have narrow semantics and limited lexical compatibility;
  - the use of negative constructions that can be based on existential or copulative predicates.
- The same language may naturally employ more than one strategy.
- Negative comitative constructions are not a common option for expressing the caritive meaning in Mesoamerican languages.



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