On the Perfect tense-aspect in K'iche' Mayan
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Goal: develop an LFG grammar for the perfect (P) tense-aspect
- show that the perfect tense-aspect is not a verb nor a participle
- P: a stative non-verbal predicate, always grammatically intransitive
- P: a participial adjective or a possessed noun, categorically demonstrate that the P inserts a state into discourse
- propose constituent structures & functional structures

Finite verbs: tenseless, prefixed aspect markers obligatory
- single agglutinated constituent (excluding periphrastic modals)
- aspect marker: Absolutive AM — Ergative AM — root/stem
(1) x-x-e-w-i-o
- Transitive verb (2) k-i-x-bi-in-ik
- Intransitive verb
- COM-3P-LABS-1sERG-see-TPF INCL-2P-LABS-walk-IPF
- ‘I saw them.’
- ‘You all walk.’

Non-verbal predicates (NVP): structural configuration differs from verbs
- prefixed aspect markers never used: therefore, NVPs are not verbs
- zero-copula: no mediating (verbal) copulas, like Arabic, unlike English
- yet, NVPs are ‘finite’ & predicative because they host subjects

ABS AM is free morph: Absolutive AM + nominal (adjective/noun)
- third person singular Absolutive AM is null (a)

(3) saq-(*)a leej jaa (4) sib’alaj ee (*sib’alaj)jej’b’al white-ATT DET small house very.much 3P-LABS very pretty
- ‘The small house is white.’
- ‘They are very pretty.’

Mayanist literature: general consensus on the perfect tense-aspect
- Ps considered verbs & infrequently, participles
- P’s morphology is inflectional, same as the prefixed aspect markers
- P is an intransitive verb in (5), P is a transitive verb in (6)
- P intransitive suffix — naq, P transitive suffix — oom (K’iche’)

(5) ee war-naq (6) in ki-ku-ana
- 3P-LABS sleep-IV-PERF
- 1sABS 3P-LABS-cure-DTV-PERF
- ‘They have slept (Dayley 1985).’
- ‘They have cured me (D 1985).’

Transitive stems: may also be passive participial adjectives (L 1988)
- P: intransitive passive participial adjective (7); P: transitive verb (8)

(7) jx ajo-on (8) jx q-ajo-on
- 2P-LABS love:ADJ-PERF
- 2P-LABS love:ADJECTIVE-DTV-PERF
- ‘You all love (Dayley 1985).’
- ‘We have loved you all (D 1985).’

Ps: attributable participles & possessed nominals (Larsen 1988)
- Ps in (9): attributable adjectival predicate; P in (10): possessed noun

(9) tzak-on saqm’ol (10) nu-mok-on
- cook-PERF egg
- 1sPOS-ask services.of egg
- ‘my servant (Larsen 1988:235)’

P-stems: actor focus; mediopassive, causative, noun-incorporation
- actor focus: aree in ch’ay-oo-naq ‘He has hit me.’
- mediopassive: sok-tat-naq ‘have gotten wounded’
- inchoative -ir, causative-isa: baq’ir-isa-am ‘have been made thin’
- noun-incorporated: u-b’an-on k’ax ‘his having been pain-making’

Not only
- Problems with Mayanist interpretations of the perfect
- absolute AM: always NVP’s SUBJ, except for the ‘transitive’ perfect
- oom: morphologically marks intransitive Ps (7) & transitive Ps (8)
- identical exs. except for the AM prefixed to the P-marked predicate

Perfect arguments: subject & possessive
- subject at agrees with ABS (11); poss prefix → references topic (12)
- passive by-phrase (e.g. ‘by me’) permitted in (11)

(11) at il-om at (12) riin at w-i-l-oom
- 2sABS see-PERF 2sPRO d 1sPRO 2sA 1sPOS-see-PERF
- ‘You are the person-who-has-been-seen.’
- ‘For me, you are my person-who-has-been-seen.’

 Parsing of P: Mondloch (1978) (1), this author (Duncan) (2)

(13) leej niujii’ i
g1 r-uuk’a’m
- lee chimi
- det 1sPOS-son-in-law 3sABS 3sPOS-carry-PERF DET bag
- areetaq x-oopan chuwa w-o’ch
- when COM-arrive PREP at 1sPOS-house
- ‘As for my son-in-law, the bag is his thing-that-has-been-carried when he arrived at my house.’

Conclusions: perfects (non-periphrastic) are not verbs nor participles
- Ps: non-verbal predicates, therefore Ps are not verbs
- Ps: not verbs because (PRED-less) auxiliaries do not exist
- Ps: not participles because Ps are never verbs

Perfect: category: derived from verbs, outputs an adjective or a noun
- category unspecified for adjective or possessed noun

Perfect Versions: XN, Experiential, Result
- extended now (XN): ‘love’ atelic (8); ‘carry’ atelic (13)
- experiential: ‘see’ (12)
- result: telic
- resultatives & perfect of result: require telic predicates

Perfect adverb use: not like English Present Perfect
- Temporal adverbs acceptable: ‘now, at last, yesterday, etc.’
- Temp adv: in same clause, or adjacent clause in bi-clausal sentence
- apparent ‘definite’ temporal deictic, which is element of simple past
- adverbs of motion acceptable: no jimal ‘slowly’, aninaq ‘quickly’

Therefore: this construction is a perfect, not a resultative

Perfect Semantics — Temporal or Static analysis:
- Temporal: Reichenbach, Neo-Reichenbachian, like Klein (1994)
- Problems: strictly syntactic, fails to adequately account for aspect
- Static: PP holds between past event & current state (N&K 2004)
- P: inserts a ‘state’ into discourse, is ‘background’ material (K&R 1993)

Conclusion: ‘K’iche’an suits static analysis
- And pragmatics?

Figure 1: c-structure for (13)

Figure 2: c-structure for (11)

Figure 3: f-structure for (13)