Tense/aspect/mood morphology

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visit glottothèque at: https://spw.uni-goettingen.de/projects/maya/

tense/aspect/mood morphology in Mayan

Tense/aspect/mood = TAM

This unit is about **morphology**, not about semantics

This unit is about **grammar**, not about lexicon

Tense/aspect/mood as a functional category / grammatical system
 (complex semantic domain)

Implications for (Mayan) historical linguistics

a surprising diversity

- ✓ structure

- ✓ size of the paradigm

- ✓ individual elements

- ✓ degree of autonomy (affix/clitic status) of the markers

- ✓ their lineal position in the verb complex

illustration 1: Yucatecan subgroup

Two interconnected TAM paradigms

(1)   ka'   t-u   t'än-ah-een=oo'

              then   COM-3   talk-PFV-1SG=PL

              'then they talked to me' (Itza'; Hofling 1991: 65, #28)

(2)   tak-in   han-t-ik-ech

              DES-1SG   eat-TR-IPFV-2SG

              'I want to eat you' (Itza'; Hofling 1991: 125, #158)

15-20 prepositive markers and 3 suffixes

Further reading: Bohnemeyer, Jürgen. 2002. *The grammar of time reference in Yukatek Maya*. Munich: Lincom.

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illustration 2: Chol

Two interconnected TAM paradigms

(1)   tyi   a=mel-e   aw=otyoty

          COM   2A=build-COM   2A=house

          'you built the house' (Chol; Vinogradov 2016: 52)

(2)   mi   i=jub-el   ya'   tyi   lum=l

          INC   3A=go.down-INC there   PREP   land=ENCL

          'it goes down to that land' (Chol; Pérez López et al. 1994: 350)

3 or 4 prepositive markers and 2 suffixes

Further reading: Vázquez Álvarez, Juan Jesús. 2011. *A grammar of Chol, a Mayan language*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

illustration 3: Chontal of Tabasco (& Huastec)

Suffixal TAM paradigm

(1)   a=chon-**e'**   ni   tsimim=ba

        2A=sell-**INC**   DEF   caballo=ENCL

        'you sell the horse' (Chontal; Relatos chontales 2002: 32)

(2)   ojala   ni   a=mim   se'   yul-**ik**

        I.wish   DEF   2A=grandmother   soon   get.well-**SBJV**

        'I wish your grandmother gets well soon' (Vinogradov 2018: 167)

2 or 3 suffixes depending on transitivity

Further reading: Vinogradov, Igor. 2018. Grammatical periphery of Chontal Maya
        verb. *University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics* 46: 266-280.

illustration 4: K'iche'an subgroup

Prefixal TAM paradigm (and a remnant of the suffixal paradigm)

(1)   ewer   **x**-in-t'ane'   sa'   b'e'

         yesterday   **PFV**-1SG.ABS-fall PREP   road

         'yesterday I fell on the road' (Q'eqchi'; Vinogradov 2015)

(2)   anaqwan   **t**-oo-'aatin-**aq**   chi_rix   li   kaqaliin-k

         now   **FUT**-1PL.ABS-talk-**IRR**   about   DEF   envy-NMZ

         'now we are going to talk about envy' (Q'eqchi'; Vinogradov 2015)

5 or 6 prefixes depending on dialect

2 suffixes (≈ realis / irrealis), not fully obligatory

illustration 5: Tsotsil and Tseltal

Prepositive TAM paradigm

(1)   mala-o   **ta**   j-tak   ta   ik'-el

        wait-IMP   **IPFV**   1-send   PREP   call-NMZ

        'wait, I will send for her' (Tsotsil; Laughlin 1977: 33)

(2)   **i**-vay   ta   o'lol   y-ikats

        PFV-sleep   PREP   center   3POSS-load

        'he slept in the midst of his packs' (Tsotsil; Laughlin 1977: 63)

Basic binary perfective/imperfective opposition

Further reading: Polian, Gilles. 2013. *Gramática del tseltal de Oxchuc*. México: CIESAS.

illustration 6: Ch'orti'

No dedicated TAM morphology

(1)   sajmi   ixin=en   t=uy-otot   in-k'ajti

              today   go=1SG.B   PREP=3A-house   2SG.A-ask

              'today I went to his house to ask' (Ch'orti'; Pérez Martínez 1996: 27)

(2)   ejk'ar   i<n>xin   ta   chon-ma'r

              tomorrow   <1SG.C>go   PREP   sell-LOC

              'tomorrow I will go to the market' (Ch'orti'; Pérez Martínez 1996: 19)

No gramatical TAM distinctions with transitive verbs

Further reading: Del Moral, Raúl. 1988. Introducción al sistema verbal del chortí de Guatemala. *Estudios de Cultura Maya* 17: 397-421.

sum up

Yucatec Maya: Two paradigms of obligatory markers, the prepositive
one is extremely extensive

Chol: Two paradigms of obligatory markers (reduced)

Chontal: One suffixal paradigm

Q'eqchi': One prefixal paradigm (with a suffixal remnant)

Tsotsil: One prepositive paradigm

Ch'orti': No dedicated TAM morphology, perfective/imperfective
opposition is marked by personal indices (set B / set C) only with
intransitive verbs

why Mayan TAM systems are so diverse?

Two possibilities:

- ✓ Contact

    can only explain some individual innovations
    see Quizar (2023) for Xinkan influence on Ch'orti'

- ✓ Independent developments in individual languages/subgroups

    diachronic hypothesis
    proto-Mayan -> modern languages

Further reading: Quizar, Robin. 2023. Xinkan influence on Ch'orti' verbs. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 89(2): 255-281.

diachronic hypothesis

Proto-Mayan: multifunctional "status" suffixes (plain/dependent)

1) There is a demand for the expression of finer temporal, aspectual and modal distinctions

2) A heterogeneous set of (optional) prepositive markers appears

3) The prepositive paradigm grammaticalize

4) The old suffixal paradigm gets lost or changes its function

Further reading: Hopper, Paul J. 1991. On some principles of grammaticalization. In Elizabeth Closs Traugott & Bernd Heine (eds.), *Approaches to grammaticalization*, volume I, pp. 17-36. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

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evidence for recent grammaticalization

✓ The class of prepositive TAM markers in Yucatec is open (to some extent)

✓ In Q'eqchi', some TAM prefixes can be omitted in certain contexts

✓ Exaggerated allomorphy of prepositive TAM markers in Chol

✓ Presence of optional prepositive TAM particles in many languages

questions for historical linguistics

Why are different languages located at different stages of this
     diachronic path?

Why do different languages grammaticalize different meanings?

What are the internal and external factors that govern this change?

What are the factors that affect the velocity of this change?

[…]

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