

(J) It's True: The truth about Chalcatongo Mixtec (1/2)

J1. Answers:

	Chalcatongo Sentences		English Translation
1.	Nduča kaa ñí?ní.	a.	<u>The water</u> is hot.
2.	Maria kúu iñ xasúčí.	e.	Maria is a young person.
3.	Ñí?ní nduča.	f.	The water is hot.
4.	Juan kaa lúlí.	i.	<u>Juan</u> is small / short.
5.	Ndežu kaa ža?u.	h.	<u>The food</u> is expensive.
6.	Súčí Maria.	g.	Maria is young.
7.	Juan kúu xažiirí.	c.	Juan is my husband.
8.	Pedro kúu xalúlirí.	b.	Pedro is my child.
9.	Kaa kwíí.	d.	<u>It</u> is green.

J2. Translate the following into Chalcatongo Mixtec:

- a. depth = xakúnú
- b. heat = xañí?ní
- c. Maria is brave = Nde?é Maria.
- d. Pedro is tall. = Pedro kaa súkú.
- e. Pedro is a tall person. = Pedro kúu iñ xasukú.
- f. The fruit is red. = Kwa?á xabíší.
- g. My fruit is the green one. = Xabíší kúu xakwíí.
- h.* It is true. = Kaa ndáa.
- i.* It is true. = Ndáa.
- j.* It is the truth. = Kúu xandáa.

*There is no equivalent in Chalcatongo Mixtec of the English “it” in these sentences.

Notes:

This problem is based on several features of Chalcatongo Mixtec – however, for the purposes of the problem, some of the tasks & the discussion below have been simplified.

1. Two copulas:

Chalcatongo Mixtec has two verbs that can be used as copulas: kúu and kaa.

Kúu is used when the predicate is a noun phrase, as in example sentence 2: Maria kúu iñ xasí?í. = Maria is a woman.

However, when the predicate consists of an adjective, the copula is kaa. This can be seen in example sentence 4: Juan kaa lúlí.= Juan is short / small.



(J) It's True: The truth about Chalcatongo Mixtec (2/2)

2. The copula "kaa" as optional & its role in adding emphasis to the subject as sentence topic:

The copula *kaa* is also optional – as example sentences 1 and 3 demonstrate. Sentence 1 features the copula *kaa*. *Nduča kaa ñí?ní.* – this means that the subject of the sentence, *nduča*, is stressed or emphasised. The speaker is referring to a particular volume of water, whereas in sentence 3, the copula *kaa* can be omitted: *Ñí?ní nduča*. In this case, the speaker is not emphasising a particular volume of water, they are not putting any emphasis on the water as topic & subject of this sentence.

Interestingly, the word order (which is mostly VSO in Chalcatongo Mixtec, but not consistently) changes when the copula *kaa* is omitted, the predicate (adjective) precedes the subject.

3. Nominalization: making nouns out of adjectives

By adding the prefix *xa-* to an existing adjective, you can create a noun with a similar meaning as the original adjective. In example sentence 6: the adjective *súčí* translates as “young”, while in example sentence 2: *Maria kúu iñ xasúčí.*, a new noun has been formed by adding *xa* to *súčí*, creating the noun “young one (young person)”.

4. Possessive marker –rí:

The suffix *-rí* can be added to the end of a noun to express first person singular possessive (e.g. “my” or “mine”). Example sentence 8 demonstrates this: *Pedro kúu xalúlírí*. Here the original adjective *lúlí* (small, short) has become a noun through having the nominalizer *xa-* prefixed (making it mean “child”) and the adding of the suffix - *rí* can be translated as the possessive determiner “my”.

References:

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