

(H) From Soup to Nuts (1/2) [Solution]

H1. **chili pepper (ʔich)** is classified as a meat.

H2. **la jtiʔ sk'in wakax** = I ate cow kidney.

H3. Translate the following sentences into Tseltal:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. We ate the peanuts. | la jk'uxtik te kaxlan chenek'e |
| b. You (pl.) ate cow stomach. | la atiʔik stsukum wakax |
| c. They ate meat. | la stiʔik tiʔbal |
| d. You (sg.) ate your (pl.) avocados. | la aloʔ awonik |
| e. I ate my honey. | la jweʔ jchab |
| f. She ate cooked greens. | la sloʔ bok |
| g. She ate bean soup. | la xchik' yaʔlel chenek' |

H4. **jloʔ** (used with soft things)

H5. **sk'ux** (used with hard/individuated things)

H6. **wheat** (lit. “non-indigenous corn”, also parallel between **kaxlan waj** (bread) : **kaxlan ixim** (wheat) :: **waj** (tortilla) : **ixim** (corn))

For alternate answer to H2, H3b, and H3g, see the first “note” on the next page.

Explanation

- There are several different words for “eat”:
 - tiʔ** for meats (meat, liver, kidney, chicken comb, heart, and also chili peppers — also mushrooms, although that’s not in the problem!)
 - loʔ** for mushy things (boiled greens, avocado, banana, honey)
 - k'ux** for hard, crunchy and/or individuated things (radish, panela chunks, nuts, toasted tortilla, corn, popcorn, beans)
 - weʔ** for breads (tamale, tortilla, bread). It can also sometimes be used as a more general verb for eating, but that is not relevant to this problem.
 - chik'** for soups and things soaked and eaten (meat soup, bean soup, bread soaked in coffee)
 - and also **buts'** for things that dissolve in your mouth and **ts'uʔ** for chewy things with pulp (only sugar cane and corn stalks), neither featured here
 - Some nouns, such as “greens” and “mango”, take **loʔ** when they are cooked/ripe, and therefore soft, and **k'ux** when they are raw/unripe, therefore hard/crunchy/individuated.
- la** = perfective [cannot deduce]
- Inflection:
 - Verbs (specifically, transitive ones) and direct objects are given the same suffixes/affixes to denote the person/number of the subject or of the possessor, for the verb and direct object respectively.
 - 1st person: **j-**, with **jʔ > k**
 - 2nd person: **a-**, with **aʔ > aw**
 - 3rd person: **s-**, with **sʔ > y, sch > xch**
 - Number: 1st person plural is **-tik**, 2nd/3rd person plural is **-ik**, unpossessed plural is **-etik**
- Definiteness: **te** NP-e



(H) From Soup to Nuts (2/2) [Solution]

Notes:

- The solution shown on the previous page follows the grammar of Tseltal, which includes a possessive prefix in the description of body parts (e.g., “cow kidney” = “sk’in wakax”, where the s- at the start is the 3rd person singular possessive prefix; this could be literally translated as “cow’s kidney”). While this is what Tseltal actually does, it is also consistent with the data to conclude that there is no possessive prefix in such cases. Answers that consistently applied either conclusion were given full points. Under this alternative solution, H2 should be “I ate her cow kidney”, H3b should be **la ati?ik tsukum wakax**, and H3g should be **la schik’ ya?lel chenek’**.

- You may see a similarity in **ti?** eat meat > **ti?bal** meat and **lo?** eat mushy thing > **lo?bal** banana.

Sources:

[Categories of Eating in Tzeltal and Navaho \(uchicago.edu\)](#)

[Tzeltal \(Mayan\) Noun and Verb Morphology | International Journal of American Linguistics: Vol 14, No 2 \(uchicago.edu\)](#)

https://site.inali.gob.mx/publicaciones/diccionario_multidialectal_en_tseltal.pdf

Consultation with Gilles Polian.

