



Lessons from an isolate: Chitimacha diachrony in areal perspective

Daniel W. Hieber
University of California, Santa Barbara

handout and slides available at:

danielhiebert.com/cv

This research was funded in part by a NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Grant #1144085.

3 features of Chitimacha grammar

I. positional auxiliary verbs ('sit', 'stand', 'lie')

II. switch-reference

III. agent-patient alignment

Positional Copular / Auxiliary Verbs

- *hi-* ‘be sitting (neutral)’ (default form)
- *či-* ‘be standing (vertical)’
- *pe-* ‘be lying (horizontal)’

hi-, default, neutral use

- 1) Waʔaš his kečmi-:k' hi-ʔi-n.
other 3SG wait-PTCP NEUT-NF.SG-PROG
'He was waiting for the others.'
- 2) Kaye hi-ʔuy-i.
alive NEUT-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG
'He was alive.'

hi-, sitting

- 3) Hi tey-k'-š hi-ʔuy-ki-n.
DIST sit(SG)-PTCP-SUBORD NEUT-PAST.IPFV.1SG-PROG
'I was sitting down.'
- 4) Tey = k'iš hi-ʔi.
sit(SG) = alone NEUT-NF.SG
'He just sat [there].'

čī-, vertical

- 5) We ʔakšuš ku: =ki čī-ʔi.
DET cypress water =LOC VERT-NF.SG

‘That cypress stands in the water.’

- 6) ʔuybi = nk pi:hni-:k’-š čī-ʔuy-i we šuš =ki.
blood = NOM be.red-PTCP-SUBORD VERT-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG DET tree =LOC

‘The blood was red on that tree.’

pe-, horizontal

- 7) ʔiš ʔinč' ʔatin kiš nat'i-:k'-š pe-ʔe sa šuš kuti = nki.
1SG father big dog lie-PTCP-SUBORD HORIZ-NF.SG DEM tree head = LOC
'My grandfather's dog is lying in the top of that tree.'
- 8) Him čiski nowa = nki ʔapš šaht'i-:k'-š pe-ʔe.
2SG pumpkin mellow = LOC CIRC crawl.in-PTCP-SUBORD HORIZ-NF.SG
'He crawls about amongst your watermelons.'

Plural forms of the auxiliaries

- *naka* 1PL ‘we are sitting/standing/lying’
- *na?a* NF.PL ‘y’all/they are sitting/standing/lying’

Plural Auxiliaries (with ‘sit’, ‘stand’, and ‘lie’)

- 9) ʔiš ʔinč'i ʔiš ne we k'inkk'ank kin hi teni-:k' naku-n.
 1SG father 1SG and DET girls with DIST sit(PL)-PTCP AUX(1PL)-PROG
 ‘My father and I and those girls were sitting.’
- 10) We kimi sek'is tapšmi-:k' na-ʔuy-na.
 DET branch among stand-PTCP AUX(PL)-PAST.IPFV-NF.PL
 ‘They were standing among those limbs.’
- 11) Kamčin namč'emi-:k'-š naʔa šuš tapšn keta = nki.
 deer be.camped-PTCP-SUBORD AUX(NF.PL) tree upright side = LOC
 ‘Deer are lying beside that upright tree.’

Irrealis

12) Kaya = nk ni k'ap-čuy-i.

rain = NOM DEF get-IRR(SG)-NF.SG

‘The rain will get you.’

13) ʔampi = nk kin k'ušmi-ṭi-naka.

what = ABL with eat-IRR(PL)-1PL.A

‘With what shall we eat it?’

Irrealis Reflexes

14) Č'a: šahyn = iš hup čuy-i?i.
sun going.in = TOP to go(SG)-NF.SG
'He went toward the sunset.'

15) K'ast'a = nk hi t'ut-na?a.
north = LOC AND go(PL)-NF.PL
'They went toward the north.'

Past Imperfective

16) ?iš=k šuš hup nuhč-k ša-?uy-ki-n.

1SG=NOM tree to run-SS sleep-PAST.IPFV-1SG.P-PROG

‘I used to run off to the woods and sleep (there).’

17) We=nki hi šak’it-k hi-?uy-i.

DEM=LOC DIST hang-PTCP AUX(NEUT)-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG

‘[During the flood], he hung there.’

Past Imperfective Reflex

18) Hatka = nkiš hi ʔuy-naka.

six = alone DIST arrive(PL)-1PL.A

‘Only six arrived (there).’ (also ‘happened upon there’)

Present Imperfective

19) Ha nasta kap tohw-ʔiš-i.

DEM root INCH break-PRES.IPFV-N F.S G

‘This root is breaking.’

20) Kaya kap tey-ʔiš-i.

rain INCH stop-PRES.IPFV-N F.S G

‘The rain is stopping.’

Present Imperfective Reflexes: *ʔiš-* C O P

21) Kaye ʔiš-iki-n.

alive COP-1SG-PROG

‘I’m still alive.’

22) ʔus=k ka:kumi-:k’ ʔiš-naku-n ʔuš nitiya.

1PL=NOM know-PTCP COP-1PL-PROG 1PL master

‘We knew that it was our master.’

Present Imperfective Reflexes: = (i)š T O P

- 23) Hus na:nča:kamank = š we-t = k hi hokm-i?i.
3SG brothers = TOP DET-ANA = NOM DIST leave-NF.SG
'He left his brothers.'

- 24) ?ašant'i ?unk'u = š nus = up kun namki-:k' hi-?uy-i-n.
old one = TOP west = to some live-PTCP AUX(NEUT)-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG-PROG
'A certain old man lived in the west.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: = (i)š T O P

- 25) Ho kačm = iš = hiš načpi-:t'i-na-n hesik'en.
DEM doctor = TOP = ERG cure-IRR-NF.PL-PROG again
'Those doctors will cure you.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: *ʔiška* ‘they say’

- 26) Kutnehin č’ah ʔiš-ka.
God bird COP-P L
‘They say it is God’s bird.’

Summary: Diachronic origins of aspectual markers

Aspectual Marker		Diachronic Origin	
<i>-čuw-</i> / <i>-t'i-</i>	IRR	<i>čuw-</i> / <i>t'ut-</i>	'go'
<i>-ʔuy-</i>	PAST.IPFV	<i>ʔuy-</i>	'happen'
<i>-ʔiš-</i>	PRES.IPFV	<i>ʔiš-</i>	COP

Positional auxiliary verbs in several Southeastern languages

Language	‘sit’	‘stand’	‘lie’
Chitimacha (isolate; Swadesh 1933)	<i>hi-</i>	<i>či-</i>	<i>pe-</i>
Atakapa (isolate; Swanton 1929)	<i>kē</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>tīxt</i>
Choctaw (Muskogean; Broadwell 2006:209–211)	<i>átta-</i>	<i>hikíya-</i>	<i>ittóla-</i>
Tunica (isolate; Haas 1946:349–351)	<i>-na</i>	<i>-hki</i> ‘exist’	<i>-ra</i>
Biloxi (Siouan; Kaufman 2013)	<i>nąki</i>	<i>nê</i>	<i>mąki</i>
Yuchi (isolate; Linn 1994)	<i>či</i>	<i>fa</i>	<i>e</i>

Switch Reference

“[T]he compound sentence is not common. Instead subordination, particularly participial subordination, is used. For example, a closely connected sequence of events is commonly put into a series of participial clauses except for the last one, which is expressed as the main clause[.] The same device is used in the connection of ideas into a subordinate group[.]” (Swadesh 1946:331)

27) Piya ših hi k'a:ct-k, wetk we nuš k'apt-k ?utp =k
cane belly DIST cut-ss then DET stone take-ss leather =LOC

?apš wa:ct-k, huyk'i ?apš ?uti-:k', wetk we piya k'a:cn =ki
SOC wrap-ss good SOC tie-ss then DET cane cut.piece =LOC

hi šahčt-k, wetkš huyk'i kas hukt-k, wetkš hesik'en ?utp
AND put.in-ss then good back close-ss then again leather

hi k'apt-k, we piya k'a:cn we ?utp =ki ?apš wa:ct-k,
DIST take-ss DET cane cut.piece DET leather =LOC SOC wrap-ss

huyk'i ?apš ?uti-:k', wey-t huk'u kas nučmi-:k',
good SOC tie-ss DEM-ANA COP(EMPH) back work-ss

kas hamča-:š-na?a.
back keep-PRES.IPFV-NF.PL(DS)

‘They cut a cane joint, take the stones and wrap them in hide, tie them well, put them into the section of cane, cork them well, again take hide and wrap the cane section in the hide, tie it well, and, having prepared it in that way, they save it.’

28) Wenk hi ču-:k'=š ku: k'apt-k we ʔakšuš
 now DIST go(SG)-SS=TOP water take-ss DET cypress
 hi t'eyktepi-ču-ø-:š, kayi pa:hmpa him
 AND splash-IRR-NF.SG(DS)-COND thunder 2SG
 ni k'apt-'iš-i.
 DEF get-PRES.IPFV-NF.SG(DS)

‘Now if you go there, take water, and (if) you splash that cypress, thunder gets you.’

Participle

- 29) Kiš ʔatin nuhčpa-pa k'iht-k hi-ʔi ?
dog big make.run-NZR want-PTCP AUX(NEUT)-NF.SG
'Do you want your horse to run?'

- 30) Ka:cpa = nk ʔam ʔoonak = hiš k'et-k
stick = ABL everything = INSTR beat(SG)-PTCP

ʔap t'u:t-š-naʔa.

VEN go(PL)-PRES.IPFV-NF.PL

'They came beating him with sticks and so forth.'

Locative Nominalizer *-(n)k*

31) Še:ni-nk hup hi ničwi-ʔi.

pond-LOC to DIST move(VERT).to.water-NF.SG

‘He came to the edge of a pond.’

32) Hi čuy-iʔi namu hi kuti-nk.

AND go(SG)-NF.SG town DIST end-LOC

‘He went to the end of that village.’ (lit. ‘the village’s end’)

Locative nominalizer with verbs

33) ʔiš hi-ki-nk naʔa.

1SG COP(NEUT)-1SG-LOC COP(NF.PL)

‘You [pl.] are at my place.’

34) [...] ža: kap šan-i-nk k’iš.

sun up go.out-NF.SG -LOC until

‘[...] until the sun comes up.’

Temporal Subordinator *-nki*

35) Ney kap šanšw-i-**nk-i**, [...]

earth up go.out-NF.SG -**TEMP-NZR**

‘When the ground emerged, [...]’

36) K’ast’a ʔap ho: k’ih-čuy-i-**nk-i**

north.wind VEN blow want-IRR(SG)-NF.SG -**TEMP-NZR**

weyži:k’ yeht-’iš-iki.

thus cry-PRES.IPFV-1SG.A

‘That is why I cry out when the north (wind) is going to blow.’

Locative Nominalizer > Participle

37) Wetkš ni k'ast-k, [...] weytenk'enkš t'ut-na?a hesik'en.
then DEF plant-PTCP after.that go(PL)-NF.PL again
'Then they planted, [...] and after that went on again.' (lit. 'planting, they went')

38) Kap ten-tk ni k'as-mi-na?a.
STAT stop(PL)-PTCP DEF plant-PLACT-NF.PL
'They stopped and planted (again).' (lit. 'stopping, they planted')

Phonological environments for locative nominalizer and participle

Environment	Locative	Participle
N_	<i>-tk</i>	<i>-t'k</i>
V_	<i>-nk</i>	<i>-:k'</i>
/w, y/_	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k'</i>
C_	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k</i>

Summary: Diachronic origins of switch reference

Switch Reference < Participle < Locative Nominalizer

Switch Reference in Choctaw

39) Kaah sa-nna-haatokoosh, iskali' ittahobli-li-tok.
car 1SI-want-because:ss money save-1SI-PAST
'Because I wanted a car, I saved money.'

40) Kaah banna-haatoko, iskali' ittahobli-li-tok.
car want-because:DS money save-1SI-PAST
'Because he wanted a car, I saved money.'

Nominative-Accusative Alignment in Non-First Person

41) T'ut-naʔa hesik'en. (intransitive)

go(PL)-NF.PL again

‘They went on(wards) again.’

42) Waštik k'et-naʔa. (transitive, accusative unmarked)

cow kill-NF.PL

‘They kill a cow.’

Chitimacha verb template

PREVERB	STEM	<u>PATIENT</u>	ASPECT	<u>AGENT</u> / SUBJECT
---------	------	----------------	--------	------------------------

Intransitive with 1st Person Patient vs. Agent

43) ?iʃ=k ne:m-ki
1SG =NOM be.afraid-1SG.P
'I am afraid'

44) ?iʃ šuʃ sek'is ?apš ču:-m-iki
1SG wood in CIRC go(SG)-PLACT-1SG.A
'I have gone about in the wood sufficiently.'

Transitive with 1st Person Patient vs. Agent (ex. 1)

45) ni-kint-ki-ču:-š

water-drop-1SG.P-IRR(SG)-COND

‘If you drop me into the water’

46) ni-kin-ču-ki-nk’

water-drop-IRR(SG)-1SG.A-DEB

‘I must drop you into the water’

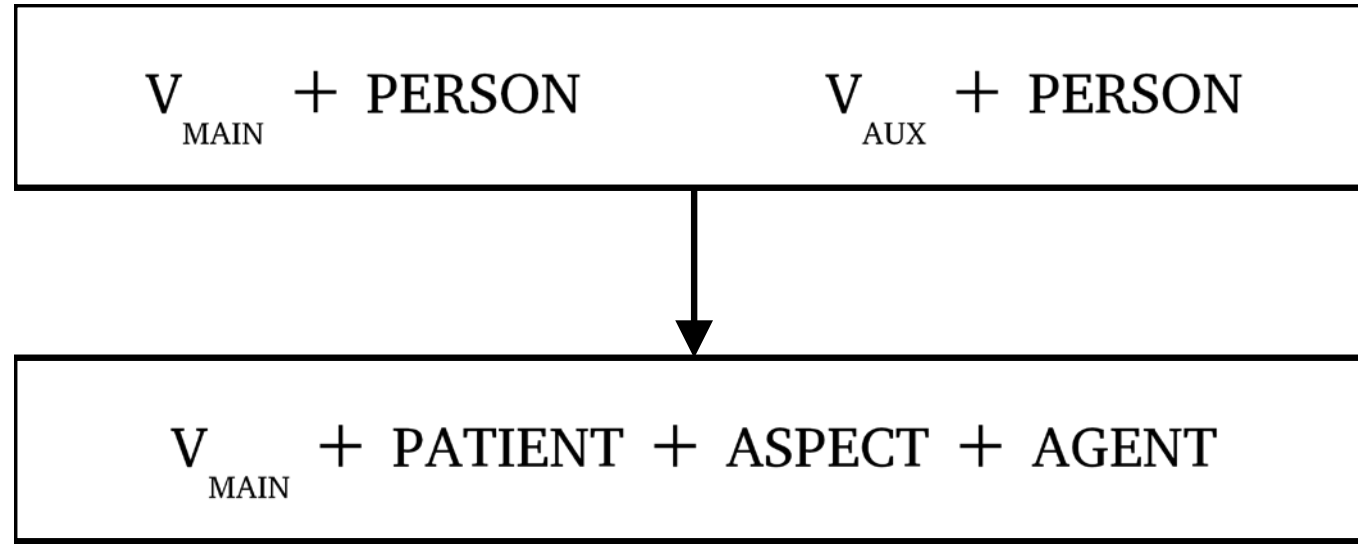
Transitive with 1st Person Patient vs. Agent (ex. 2)

- 47) k'et-ki-ʔi we ko:š = iš
beat-1SG.P-NF.SG DET switch = INSTR
'she beat me with the switch'
- 48) we ka:ci ʔatin kap k'et-iki
DET owl large STAT kill(SG)-1SG.A
'I killed the horned owl'

Transitive with 1st Person Patient as Subject

- 49) Huykš ʔam ʔo:nak ni šik-ki.
yet thing all DEF forget-1SG.P
'I have not forgotten everything yet.'

Univerbation of main verb + auxiliary



Stem-Final /e/ → /i/ Before Aspectual Markers

- 50) ?iš kiča hokšti-ču-ki. < hokste- 'feed'
1sg wife feed-IRR(SG)-1SG.A
'I shall feed my wife.'

Transimpersonals > Agent-Patient

“In a language in which (i) intransitive and transitive verbs are not distinguished formally, (ii) topical 3rd persons are usually not mentioned, (iii) few nouns are marked for case, and (iv) word order is predicate final, it would be a simple matter to reanalyse a nominative-accusative system as an agentive one or vice versa. [...] Transitive clauses with omitted 3rd person subjects could be reanalysed as intransitive, and objects could be reanalysed as grammatical patients.” (Mithun 2008:308–309)

Pleonastic / Expletive Suffix

51) Wey ne ʔapš kimikiš wekka:ši.

wey ne ʔapš kima-iki-š wek-ki-ʔiš-i.

DEM just REFL think-1SG.A-SUBORD laugh-1SG.P-PRES.IPFV-Ø

‘I laugh when I think about it.’

52) ʔaškanki k’an ni šik-ki-čuy-i.

sometimes NEG DEF forget-1SG.P-IRR(SG)-Ø

‘I shall never forget.’

Deletion of the Subject / Agent suffix

53) Nu:p-ki-čuy hi kimi-:k'-š huk'u
die(SG)-1SG.P-IRR (NF.SG) DIST think-PTCP-SUBORD COP(EMPH)

hi šankint-ki.

DIST put_out-1SG.P

‘You put me out thinking I would die.’

54) Pa:kine-ki-ču:-š, [...]
be.tired-1SG.P-IRR (NF.SG)-COND

‘If I get tired, [...]’

Deletion of the Subject / Agent suffix

- 55) Wetkš we nitiya = nk = š ?iš hi šankint-ki.
then DET master = NOM = TOP 1SG DIST put_out-1SG.P(-NF.SG.A?)
'Then the (boat) master put me off.'

Huya!

Many thanks to Kim Walden and the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana for allowing me to work with their language data. Thanks also to Marianne Mithun for useful discussions about this topic. Earlier versions of this talk were presented at the American Indian Seminar at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the America (SSILA) winter meeting. Thanks are due to Pamela Munro, Margit Bowler, John Gluckman, and the other participants of the UCLA seminar for their feedback. This work was funded in part by a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP) Grant #1144085. All errors are of course wholly my own.