

Indeterminate valency & verbal ambivalence in Chitimacha

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SSILA 2017, Austin, TX, Jan. 5–8

Valency

- long history, but few crosslinguistic surveys (Dixon & Aikhenvald 2000; Kulikov, Malchukov, & de Swart 2006; Malchukov & Comrie 2015; Tsunoda & Kageyama 2006)
- minority but persistent concern: Are valency classes a concept equally applicable to all languages?

Valency as a comparative concept

- Martin (2000): Valency classes in Creek are a side effect of changes in event perspective, and have no real grammatical status in the language.
- Mithun (2006: 214): In Mohawk (Iroquoian), a language with agent-patient alignment, “voice alternations are not exploited for purely syntactic purposes. They can serve important semantic, lexical, and discourse functions, however.”

Valency as a comparative concept

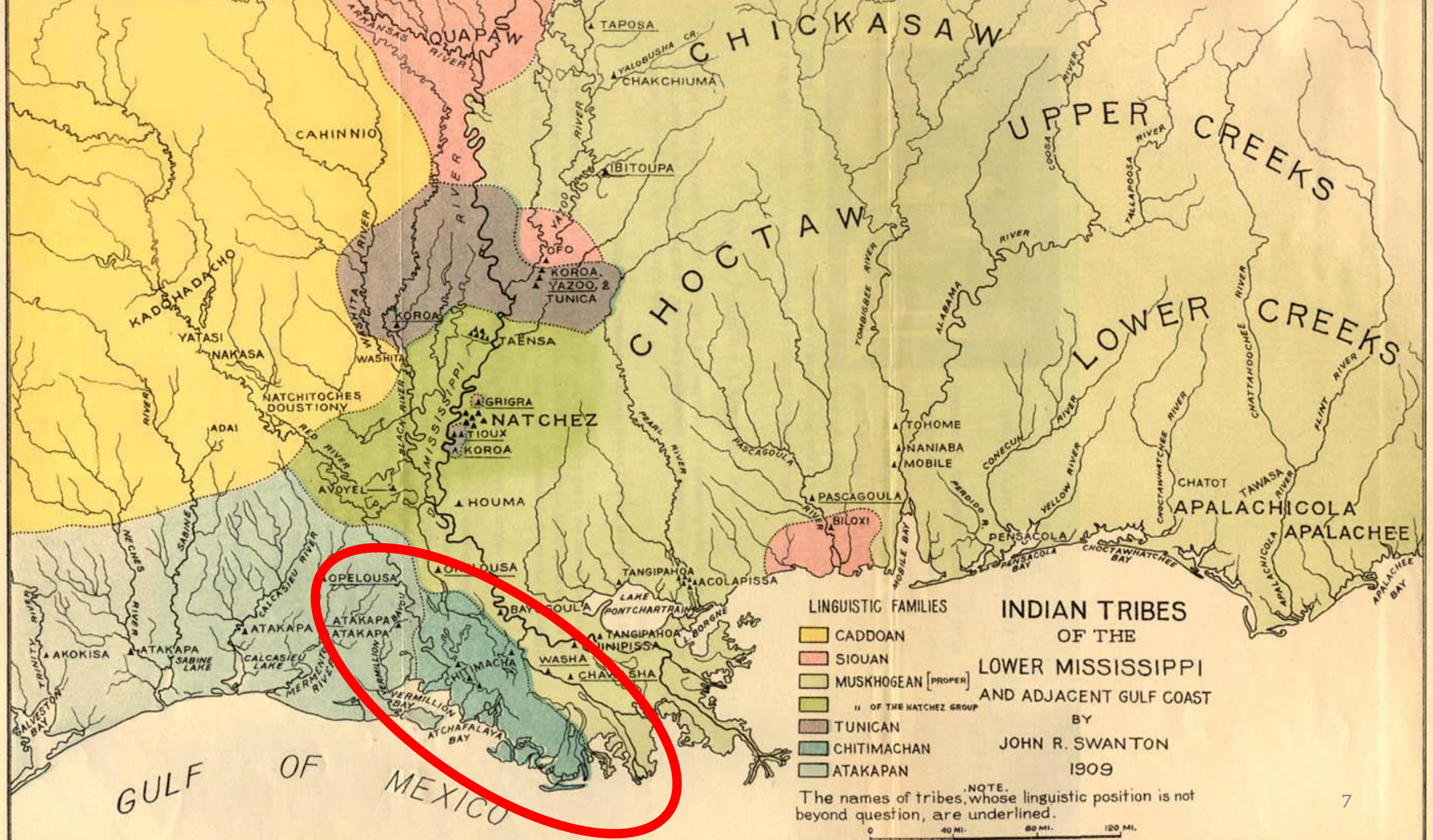
- Shibatani & Artawa (2015: 930): In Balinese (Malayo-Polynesian), “The valency-increasing property associated with [applicatives and causatives] is simply a consequence or a side effect of their fundamental function,” which involves the manipulation of Figure and Ground.
- Nordhoff (2015): In Sri Lanka Malay (Austronesian creole), “The distinction between intransitive, transitive and ditransitive is thus not an important one,” due to the fact that nominal flagging correlates directly with semantic roles.

Valency as a comparative concept

- Yoder (2016): In Abawiri (Lakes Plain, Papuan), “There are no grammatical criteria on which one can base a coherent definition of subject vs. object, core vs. oblique, or any other systematic relation between the argument and the clause.”
- Yikes.

Valency in Chitimacha

- How does one determine valency classes in a language where there is no consistent means of deciding the number of arguments that a given verb has?
- **Each of the potential morphological valency-adjusting devices in Chitimacha are not valency-adjusting *per se*, but rather alter the lexical semantics of the verb in ways that license and abet – but do not require – changes in valency.**



Chief Benjamin Paul (1867-1934)

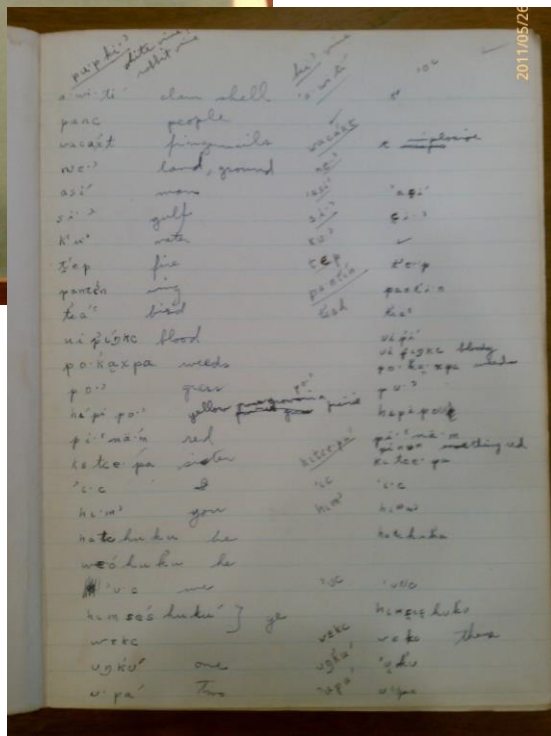
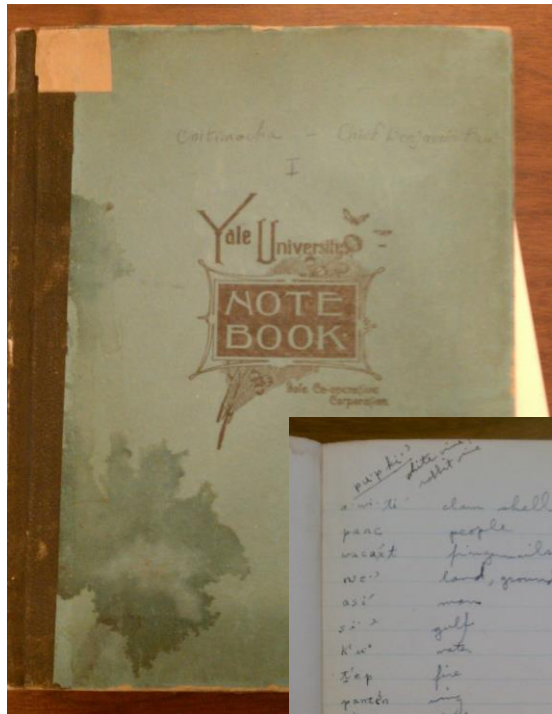


Ill. 2. Benjamin Paul

Mrs. Delphine DuCloux (1872-1940)



5. Delphine Ducloux



Overview of Chitimacha grammar

Verbs distinguish 1st vs. non-1st person

1st Person

- 1) ʔam-**iki**
see-**1SG.A**
'I saw'

Non-1st Person

- 2) ʔam-**iʔi** (2nd person)
see-**NF.SG**
'you see'
- 3) ʔam-**iʔi** (3rd person)
see-**NF.SG**
'he saw'

Agent-Patient alignment in 1st person

(Hieber, in revision)

Intransitive with Agent

- 4) ʔapš ʔe-h-**iki**
back be-LOC-**1SG.A**
'I returned'

Intransitive with Patient

- 5) hi ʔe-h-**ki**
to be-LOC-**1SG.P**
'it happened to me'

Transitive without Patient

- 6) k'et-**iki**
hit/kill-**1SG.A**
'I killed it'

Transitive with Patient

- 7) k'et-**ki**-ʔi
hit/kill-**1SG.P**-NF.SG
'she beat me'

Verbs do not index their syntactic objects

8) he:čpi-ču-k
help-IRR-1SG.A
'I'll help (you)'

9) siksi k'e-ču:-š
eagle kill-IRR-COND
'if one kills an eagle'

10) hus tep c'ismam ʔuka-:š-i
his fire pieces count-IPFV-NF.SG
'he counted his pieces of fire'

Any argument may be omitted

11) Wetk kunuk'u we panš hi šam-tk-š t'ut-na?a.
then QUOT DET people AND go.out-PTCP-SBD go(PL)-NF.PL

ʔašinč'at'a kunšin hani ʔašinč'ata = nki hi tup-t-na?a.
old some house old = LOC DIST find-TR-NF.PL

Panš hiš k'et-k ʔo:š hup hi hokšte-pa, ʔo:š
people ERG kill(SG)-PTCP buzzard to AND feed-SBD buzzard

hepši = nk kap mesti-:k' čī-ʔuy-i. Tutk
excrement = ABL STAT be.white-PTCP COP(VERT)-IPFV-NF.SG then

wey-š kin ʔapš ne:č'i-mi-naka.
DEM=TOP with RECIP speak-PLACT-1PL.A

‘The people got out and went on. They found an old man at an old house. He was all white with buzzard excrement, because some people had killed him and left him to the buzzards. We spoke with him.’

Determining transitivity in Chitimacha

12) Hi kima-ki k'an [...] **ni** k'uš-**m**-puy-na.
DIST believe-1SG.P NEG **DTRZR** eat-**PLACT**-IPFV-NF.PL
'I do not believe they ate [in that other land].'

13) Kamčín ʔap šam-k'ust-i-nki t'emi-naka. Weyt
deer VEN go.out-sudden-NF.SG = TEMP kill(PL)-1PL.A thus
ni k'uš-**mi**-:t'i-nakun.
DTRZR eat-PLACT-IRR(PL)-1PL.A

'As the deer came out, we killed them. Thus we shall eat them.'

Transitivity-Adjusting Devices in Chitimacha

Preverbs

| | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|--|
| <i>hi</i> | andative 'to' distal 'there' | <i>kap's</i> | 'back up' |
| | | <i>ka</i> | 'across' |
| <i>his</i> | 'back to' repetition / response | <i>kas</i> | dislative 'apart' reversive |
| <i>kap</i> | inceptive 'starting' inchoative 'becoming' punctual stative 'up' | <i>ni</i> | 'back across' detransitivizer 'thing' with imperatives 'it' nominalizer 'down' |

Preverbs

ʔap proximal ‘here’
 venitive ‘coming’

ʔapš circumlative ‘about’
 ‘coming here’
 ‘coming back’
 reciprocal / reflexive
 sociative ‘together’

Preverbs: Andative *hi* ‘to, there’

No Goal

- 14) miš k’ap-t-k, t’ut-naka
road take-TR-PTCP go(PL)-1PL.A
‘taking to the road, we went’

Overt Goal

- 15) Wetk kunuk’u k’ast’a = nk **hi** t’ut-na?a.
then QUOT north.wind = LOC **AND** go(PL)-NF.PL
‘Then, they say, they went toward the north.’

Preverbs: Andative *hi* ‘to, there’

Goal Added to Lexical Semantics of Verb

- 16) **hi** t’ut-na?a hesik’en
AND go(PL)-NF.PL again
‘they went on again’

Preverbs: Reflexive *ʔapš*

Reduced Valency with *ʔapš*

- 17) hus mahči kuh = hiš **ʔapš** neh-pa-puy-na
his tail feather INSTR **REFL** cover-CAUS-IPFV-NF.PL
'they adorn themselves with his tail feathers'

No Valency Change with *ʔapš*

- 18) Wetkš we paňš pinikank ʔašinč'ata = š **ʔapš** čuy-i.
then DET Indian old = TOP **back** go(SG)-NF.SG
'Then the old Indian came back.'

Preverbs: Reflexive *ʔapš*

No Valency Change with *ʔapš*

- 19) Huyi waytm **ʔapš** wok-t-i.
good more **REFL** feel-TR-NF.SG
'He felt (himself) better.'

Preverbs: Detransitivizer *ni*

Transitive without *ni*

- 20) ?iš=k ?iš nu:p k'as-ka-nki-š
1SG=NOM 1SG potato plant-PL=TEMP=SBD
'when I planted my potatoes'

Intransitive with *ni*

- 21) hus=k ney =ki **ni** k'as-t-'iš-i?i
3sg=NOM ground=LOC **DTRZR** plant-TR-IPFV-NF.SG
'he was planting in the ground'

Preverbs: Detransitivizer *ni*

22) Tutk namu=š hi čuh-mi-ʔi.
then town=TOP DIST build-PLACT-NF.SG
'Then he built a town.'

Hani ne **ni** čuh-mi-ʔi.
house just **DTRZR** build-PLACT-NF.SG
'He built houses.'

Locational Suffixes

- Attach to a limited set of verbs
- *-n* 'out'
- *-h* 'in'
- *-k* 'at'

Locational Suffix: *-h* ‘on’

Without Locational Suffix

- 23) Weyt pe-ʔe-nki [...]
thus be(HORIZ)-NF.SG-TEMP
‘while he lay thus, [...]’

Locational Suffix with Overt Ground

- 24) Wetk napšč’a = nk kiš ʔatin pe-**h**-k kap tey-i.
then black = NOM horse be(HORIZ)-**on**-PTCP STAT stay-NF.SG
‘Now a black person on a horse stopped.’

Locational Suffix: *-h* ‘on’

Ground Added to Lexical Semantics of Verb

- 25) We ku:k=š k'amik'i wetk his pe-**h**-w-i.
DET water=TOP long then DUR be-**on**-moving-NF.SG
'The water was on (the land) a long time.'
- 26) Šuš=up kap pe-**h**-i?i. Hi pe-**h**-i-nki [...]
tree=to up be-**on**-NF.SG AND be-**on**-NF.SG=TEMP
'He climbed a tree. When he had climbed it, [...]

Transitive Suffix *-t*

Without *-t*

- 27) Wetk panš pinikank ʔo:nak kap hok-naʔa.
then Indian all STAT leave-NF.PL
'The Indians all left.'

With *-t*

- 28) kičant'i ʔunk'unk = š hok-**t**-naʔa
old.woman one = TOP leave-**TR**-NF.PL
'they had left only one old woman'

Transitive Suffix *-t*

Without *-t*

- 29) wetk hus hana = nki hi hu-h-ni-na
then his house = LOC AND enclosure-in-NEUT-NF.PL
'they entered his house'

With *-t*

- 30) Wetk we panš ?iš =ki hi kimi-:k'-š na
then DET people me =LOC AND believe-PTCP-SBD COP(NF.PL)

sa hana = nki hi hu-h-**t**-iki.
DIST house = LOC DIST enclosure-in-**TR**-1SG.A

'I have put people who believe in me in that house.'

Transitive Suffix *-t*

Undergoer Added to Lexical Semantics of Verb

31) Weyč'i:k's hi?niš hi hok-t-na?a.

therefore alone DIST leave-TR-NF.PL

'Therefore they left (it) alone.'

32) Weyt huk'u ?i:-č-**t**-'iš-na?a.

DEM COP turn-handling-**TR**-IPFV-NF.PL

'That is the way they turn-weave.'

Intransitivizer *-te*

33) šuš či:š-**e**-pa = nki
tree leaf-**INTR**-CAUS = TEMP
‘when the leaves bud’

34) kap nakt-**te**-ʔiš-iʔi
STAT ice-**INTR**-IPFV-NF.SG
‘it freezes (in winter)’

Intransitivizer *-te*

- 35) Waʔa=š ney kin pokti kin kap t'ik-**te**-mi-ʔi.
other=TOP earth with sky with STAT burst-**INTR**-PLACT-NF.SG
'The earth and sky crushed the others.'
- 36) hak-**te**-ma-š-naʔa
drink(?)-**INTR**-PLACT-IPFV-NF.PL
'they had him drink it (the medicine)'

Intransitivizer *-te*

37) wetk šušeyi hi mem-**ti**-:k',
then fence AND jump(?)-**INTR**-PTCP
'then, jumping the fence,' (transitive)

38) Wetk we waštik sek'is hi mem-**te**-i.
then DET cow among DIST jump(?)-**INTR**-NF.SG
'Then he jumped amongst the cattle.' (intransitive)

Pluractional Suffix *-ma*

Overt Object with *-ma*

- 39) Waʔa=š ney kin pokti kin ʔapš neh-t-k
other=TOP earth with sky with together strike-TR-PTCP
kap t'ik-te-**mi**-ʔi.
STAT burst-INTR-**PLACT**-NF.SG

‘The earth and the sky crushed the others by striking together.’

Pluractional Suffix *-ma*

Undergoer Added to Lexical Semantics of Verb

40) we ʔašant'a his nuy-**m**-i

DET old response call-**PLACT**-NF.SG

‘the old man answered’ (implied by context: ‘them’)

Manner Suffixes

- *-kint* ‘dropping, pushing’
- *-k’es* ‘pouring’
- *-t’uwa / -ptk’uš* ‘suddenly’
- *-čī* ‘handling’
- *-c* ‘touching’
- *-wa* ‘moving’

Manner Suffix: *-t'uwa* 'suddenly'

Without Manner Suffix *-t'uwa*

- 41) hus waši=nk we kimu pek'is ʔapš ʔi:-m-i
his hand=ABS DET branch over CIRC turn-PLACT-NF.SG
'he moved his hands over the limb'

With Manner Suffix *-t'uwa*

- 42) Wetkš k'ast'a=nk kas ʔi:-**t'ui**-ču:-š,
then north.wind=LOC back turn-**sudden**-IRR(SG)-COND
'Then, if (the wind) turns to the north,'

Manner Suffix: *-kint* ‘dropping, pushing’

Without Manner Suffix

- 43) č'a: kap ša-n-i-nki
sun up container-out-NF.SG = TEMP
‘when the sun rises’

Manner Suffix (-kint) with Overt Object

- 44) Wetkš we nitiya-nk = š ?iš hi ša-n-**kint**-ki
then DET master-NOM = TOP me AND container-out-**drop**-1SG.P
‘The (boat) master put me off.’

Manner Suffix (-kint) without Overt Object

- 45) Tutk ku: = ki hi ni-**kint**-i.
then water = LOC AND water-**drop**-NF.SG
‘He threw (it) into the water.’

Other Transitivity-Adjusting Devices

- Causative *-pa*
- Benefactive *-a?*
- Patient Suffixes *-ki*, *-kuy*

Summary

- Location suffixes
 - Manner suffixes
 - Intransitive *-te*
 - Transitive *-t*
 - Pluractional *-ma*
 - Causative *-pa*
 - Preverbs
 - Sometimes transitivity-reducing: adds a semantic Ground
 - Sometimes transitivity-increasing: add participants of various roles
- action relating to [N/Adj]
- adds a semantic Undergoer
- adds a semantic plural Patient
- adds a semantic Causer
- alters lexical semantics of verb
- ?apš* ‘back, together’
- hi* ‘to’

Generalizations

- Each transitivity-adjusting device often licenses a change in argument structure, but does not necessitate one
- The same set of transitivity-adjusting devices may result in clauses of different valency depending on the preceding discourse context.
- Participants are present in the clause when they are a continuing discourse referent.

Conclusions

- Valency is not strongly expressed in Chitimacha.
- The combination of transitivity-adjusting devices and information tracking resolve potential ambiguities, without the need for clearly-defined valency classes.
- Verbal morphology changes the lexical semantics of the verb, enabling but not requiring changes in valency.
- Chitimacha verbal morphology is fundamentally about event perspective and construal (transitivity) rather than argument structure (valency) *per se*.

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