

Acquisition of directionals in Q'anjob'al

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Introduction: This paper discusses the acquisition of directionals in Q'anjob'al, a Mayan language of Guatemala. Motion verbs are grammaticalized to function as directionals (Zavala 1994, Delgado Rojas, et al., 1999; Raymundo González et al., 2000; Mateo Toledo 2008). Motion verbs take markers of aspect, agreement, and status suffixes (1a), while directionals are attached to the main verb (1b) and take the suffix *-oq*, if the verb appears in final position (2b) (Mateo Toledo, 2008). In (1a) *kan* takes aspect and agreement, while in (1b), it does not take any morphological marking. In Q'anjob'al occurs chain of directional as shown in (1c).

1. a. Max-ø **kan** te na tu.
 COM-A3s stay CLF house DEM
 'That house was abandoned.'

b. Max-ø ø-b'-eq-**kan** heb' masanil s-tzet-taq y-et-al.
 COM-A3s E3s-free-DIR PL all E3s-thing-DIST A3s-posses-ABS
 'They left all their belongings.'

c. Max **saq.b'i.kan el.teq.**
 max-ø saq-b'i-**kan** **el-teq.**
 COM-A3s white-DER-DIR DIR-DIR
 'It was clean and taken out'.

Acquisition of directionals in Mayan languages: Studies in Mayan languages report that children acquire verbs beginning with the verb root and a status suffix (Pye et al., 2007; Mateo Pedro 2015). However, little is known about the acquisition of the verb morphology in other contexts. Pye and Pfeiler (2019) studied the acquisition of directionals in K'iche' and Mam. They found that in Mam children produce directionals before the main verb, while in K'iche' children produce directionals after the main verb, as in the adult grammars of both languages.

Acquisition of directionals in Q'anjob'äl: This study aims to answer the following questions: i) Do children distinguish motion intransitive from directionals in Q'anjob'äl? ii) Do these children acquire the distribution and chain of directionals as in the adult grammar of Q'anjob'äl? To answer these questions, spontaneous and longitudinal data from a longitudinal study of two monolingual Q'anjob'äl children were explored: Xhuw (1;9-2;5) and Xhim (2;3-3;5). The results show that children acquire directionals parallel to motion verbs. For example, Xhuw produces the verb *el* as a motion verb and directional as shown in (2). Although there is omission of aspect and agreement, Xhuw uses the suffix *-i* (2a) when the verb occurs as a motion verb. When the same verb occurs as a directional, Xhuw uses the suffix *-oq* (2b). The first line indicates the child's production and the second line, adult form of Q'anjob'äl.

2. a. eli' chi. (Xhuw 1;9) b. yilok. (Xhuw 2;1)
 = chi-ø el-i xhi. = i-el-oq
 INC-A3s exit-IV says take-DIR-SUF
 ‘She gets out, she says.’ ‘Take it off.’

Conclusion: In Q'anjob'al children acquire directionals and motion verbs around the same age. Despite the omission of aspect and person marking, these children produce different suffixes to distinguish motion intransitive verbs and directionals. Additionally, Q'anjob'al children produce chain of directionals, as in the adult grammar of Q'anjob'al.

References

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