Determiners in Tojol-ab'al [toj] Mayan

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Outline

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- Tojol-ab'al has different formal devices comparable to the functions of definite, indefinite and demonstrative articles in other languages.
- Their behavioral properties are however different.
- The particularities of the determiners in Tojol-ab'al are better explained considering at least two factors:
    - i the nature of the nominal domain
    - ii the nature of the phonological phrases

The language

- Tojol-ab'al is a Western Mayan language spoken in the Southeastern Mexican State of Chiapas, Mexico.
- There are at least 40000 Speakers.
- Previous controversy regarding its exact place within the Maya family: Kaufman (1969) and Schumann Gálvez (1981) placed it together with Chuj in the Q'anjob'alan sub branch while Robertson (1977) put it together with Tseltal in the Tseltalan sub branch.
- Law (2011, 2013) and Gómez Cruz (2017) have both concluded, that it is a mixed language.

Typological profil I

- Head marking language
- Aspect based temporal coding
- Mesoamerican traits Campbell et al. (1986): no verb final, vigesimal number system, relational nouns rather than adpositions, possessive construction NG
- VOS/SVO language Furbee-Lose (1976), Brody (1982), Curiel 2007
- VO and VS language Curiel 2007 with Dryer's 2007 predictions
- Morphological ergativity
- No syntactic ergativity but a neutral alignment is possible regarding Equi-NP deletion
- Low absolutive language Coon et al. (2014)
- No agent focus Stiebels (2006) and no restrictions on extraction

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Formal inventory

- definite determiner   ja
- indefinite determiner   jun
- circumclitic determiner   ja...=i'
- proximal demonstrative   it
- distal demonstrative   jaw

The determiners ja and jun

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- There is no particular selection with respect to natural sex or animacy.

(1) *ja   winik / ja   ixuk / ja   ts'i' / ja   ton*
     DET man   / DET woman / DET dog   / DET stone
    'the man' / 'the woman' / 'the dog' / 'the stone'

(2) *jun   winik / jun   ixuk / jun   ts'i' / jun   ton*
     INDF man   / INDF woman / INDF dog   / INDF stone
    'a man' / 'a woman' / 'a dog' / 'a stone'

The determiners ja and jun

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- The first mention of a nominal in a text tend to be with jun.

(3) *Jun   yal   kerem   sok   jun   ts'i'   ti   ay-e'   b'a*
      INDF DIM   boy   INST INDF   dog   EXPL EXIST-PL   LOC

      s-kwarto.
      A3-room
      'A little boy and a dog are in his room.' [Frog_IRL.001]

The determiners ja and jun

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- This is the second mention of the nominal kerem in the same text:

(4)   *Ja*   *yal*   *kerem=i'*   *wan=xa*   *way-el*   *i*   *ja'xa*
     DET   A3-little   boy=DEF   PROG=DISC   sleep-VN   and   T.SHIFT

       ja   *tan*   *wo'=i'*   *el-um=xa*   *el*   *ja*
       DET   MASC   frog=DEF   go.out-AGEN=DISC   go.out   DET

       b'a   *ak'-ub'al*   *och*   *kan=i'.*
       LOC   give-PRF.PASS   enter   stay=DEF

'The boy is sleeping and as for the frog, it is coming out of where it was put'[Frog_IRL.003]

The circumclitic determiner ja...=i'

- Several Mayan languages present a phenomenon in which nominal phrases are wrapped up by a determiner at the beginning and a final enclitic.

(5) Tseltal

te   winik=e'
DET   man=DEF
'the man'

(6) Tojol-ab'al

ja   winik=i'
DET   man=DEF
'the man'

The circumclitic determiner ja...=i'

- Curiel 2007 considers the final enclitic to be a grammaticalized topic marker. According to him, there is a topic *ex situ* at the beginning of the sentence and a topic *in situ* at the end of the sentence. However, it is possible to have two enclitics in the same sentence.

(7) *S-mil-a* [*ja* *mut*] [*ja* *winik=i'*].
     A3-kill-VT DET chicken DET man=DEF
     'The man killed the chicken.'

(8) [*Ja* *winik=i'*] *s-mil-a* [*ja* *mut=i'*].
     DET man=DEF A3-kill-VT DET chicken=DEF
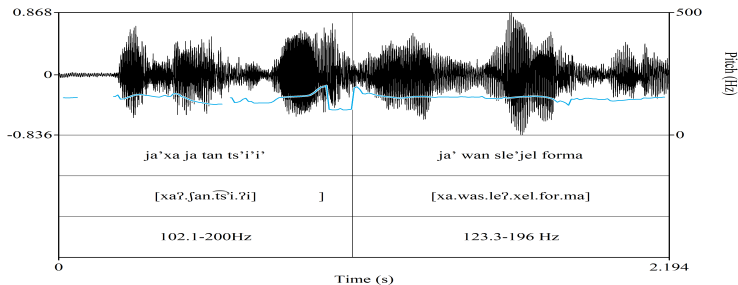   'The man killed the chicken.'

The circumclitic determiner ja...=i'

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- The enclitic =i' attaches only to nominal constituents.

- Relative clauses are within the circumclitic determiner.

(9) *Cham-ta ja   winik* [$\emptyset$ *jul   eke'=i*]$_{RC}$.
      die-already DET man   REL   come yesterday=DEF
      'The man that came yesterday died already'

The circumclitic determiner ja...=i'

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- The enclitic =i' attaches only to phonological phrases.
- There is a drop in the F0 after the enclitic.

ja'xa ja tan ts'i'i'

[xaʔ.ʃan.t͡s'i.ʔi]   ]

102.1-200Hz

ja' wan sle'jel forma

[xa.was.le?.xel.for.ma]

123.3-196 Hz

Time (s)

The demonstratives

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- There are two demonstratives in Tojol-ab'al: a distal *jaw* and a proximal *it*.
- They are suffixes and cannot appear alone.

(10) a. *ja   ixuk   it=i'*
         DET woman PROX=DEF
         'this woman'

   b. *ja   ixuk   jaw=i'*
         DET woman DIST=DEF
         'that woman'

   c. **ja ixuk it=a'*
         'this one'

   d. *ja ixuk jaw=a'*
         'that woman' (situational and social deixis)

The demonstratives

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- They need the circumclitic determiner for their most basic reading as deitic or anaphoric devices

(11) a. *ja   it=i'*
          DET PROX=DEF
          'this one'

      b. *ja   jaw=i'*
          DET DIST=DEF
          'that one'

      c. **ja it=a'*
          'this one'

      d. *ja jaw=a'*
          'that one'

Characteristics of the noun

- A shared trait with other Mayan languages is the fact that the nouns in Tojol-ab'al are transnumeral, i.e. their default interpretation is not an individuated entity.
- Schumann Gálvez (1993) citing Zavala 1990 says that the function of classifiers in these languages is to erase the property of being non verbal predicates.
- It is commonly stated that Mayan languages (and other Mesoamerican languages) are weak in the dimension of number.
- However, number must be understood as a category realized by different means (Gómez Cruz, 2017).

Characteristics of the noun

- Nouns are divided in several possession classes with respect to alienability.
- Some nominal roots (inalienability reading with body parts, cloths and kinship terms) must occur with possessive inflection in their most simple form.
- If they occur without possessor, then they have to take an -Vl affix (inalienability reading).
- Other nouns can occur without possessor in their most basic form. They can optionally take the -Vl affix to get a particular meaning.

Expansion of the nominal phrase

Gómez Cruz (2010)

Table: Projections of the nominal phrase

6. determiners ja and jun	5. numeral classifiers	4. nominal classifiers tan and men	3. diminutive yal	2. Set A	1. adjectives	nucleus	1. the collective plural jumasa'	2. the demonstratives jaw and it	3. a possessor nominal phrase	4. a relative clause	5. the final position clitics =a' and i'

Corpus data

- Out of a corpus of 27 599 word tokens we get:
- 4497 nouns
- 2885 determiners ja
- 861 determiners jun
- 1963 enclitics =i'
- 147 nominal classifiers tan (3%)
- 58 nominal classifiers men (1.3%)
- 338 diminutives yal (7.5%)

Corpus data

- Out of 4497 nouns we get:
- 511 phrases ja N=i' (11%)
- 1118 POSS-N (25%)
- 538 ja POSS-N

Indefinite article with possesor

- The presence of the indefinite article helps to individuate the referent of the noun. It is the first occurrence of the noun ts'i in this story.

(12) *Ja' k-i'-oj   jun j-ts'i*
      FOC A1-take-TR DET A1-dog
      'I brought one of my dogs (partitive)'
      'It is my dog that I brought (presentational cleft)'
      [Story_CLC.012]

Indefinite article with possessor

- Indefinite article, diminutive and possessor on the first mention of the bear oso.

(13)   *ti*   *s-ta'-a*   *jun*   *yal*   *s-'oso*
       EXPL   A3-find-TR   INDF   little   A3-oso
       'He found a bear'

Definite article with possessor

- Definite article with possessor with kinship term

(14) *Ti*   *y-al-a*   *ja*   *s-tatam=i'*...
      EXPL A3-say-TR DET A3-husband=DEF
      'Then, her husband said. . . '[Story_CLC.002]

Definite and indefinite article

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- Partitive reading. The set was previously presented.

(15) *ja   jun   s-k'ab'=i'   ja   s-yam-unej   ja*
     DET INDF A3-arm=DEF DET A3-take-PERF.TR DET

     s-top   ja   baso
     A3-bottom DET baso

     'One of his arms is grabbing the bottom of the glass.' [NijCutBreak_IRL.137]

Definite and indefinite article

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- Distributive reading. The set was previously presented.

(16)   *ja   jun-e'   ja   winik=i' ay   s-pistola*
        DET INDF-CL DET man=DEF EXIST A3-gun
        'Each one has a gun'[Scope_OSR171]

Other uses of ja...=i'

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- The circumclitic determiner can wrap all kind of syntactic phrases: adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases and can also function as complementizer

(17) *ja   b'a   ak'-ub'al   och   kan=i'.*
      DET LOC give-PRF.PASS enter stay=DEF
      'of where it was put'[Frog_IRL.003]

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