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Predication in Ixcatec (Otomanguean)

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Introduction

This paper presents the relationships that exist between a predicate, whether verbal or non-verbal, and a noun phrase (NP) in Ixcatec. The so-called predications were identified only when the language disposed of formal means to code them, such as inflectional marking, on the predicate or the NP, specialized predicates, or linear order, when applicable (see Frajzyngier & Shay 2016). The predications are presented by the name of their function to achieve better cross-linguistic comparability, but each predication is introduced by a language specific definition. Under "constructions", I present the formal means that code this predication in Ixcatec and under "contrasts" the relevant predications with which the predication is in contrast. Up to four examples are presented in order to illustrate each predication, some of them being the prototypical examples, in accordance with the definition, and others more peripheral or problematic. The examples are extracted through the spontaneous conversations and the data elicited through the Pear Stories films (Chafe 1975). All the data were annotated using IPA. Glosses follow the standardized glossing rules elaborated within the project and significantly expanding the Leipzig glossing rules.

Language information

IXCATEC

Name and ISO code: ʃhwa ni, better known in the literature under the name Ixcatec (IXC), ixcateco (in Spanish), based on Nahuatl ichcatl ‘cotton’ + -teca/-tecatl ‘inhabitant of a place (whose name ends in -lan or -lan)’.

Speakers: Ten identified speakers, of whom only four are fluent. Most of them -with one exception- are in their late 80s. All are bilingual in Spanish. They have had little formal education in Spanish and no formal education in Ixcatec.

Region: Ixcatec is spoken in the municipality of Santa María Ixcatlán in the state of Oaxaca, in Mexico. Today, Santa María Ixcatlán has some 400 inhabitants but at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in 1522 it was an important centre for the Mixteca zone with an estimated population of 10,000 to 30,000 people.

Classification: Ixcatec belongs to the Popolocan branch of the Otomanguean stock together with Ngiba/Ngigua (also known as Chocho), Popoloc, and Mazatec.

Dialectology: There are no known dialects.

Status: Ixcatec is a critically endangered language, with less than ten speakers. An orthography was developed in the 1950s by a native Ixcatec speaker, Doroteo Jiménez, in collaboration with linguists of the Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, the Mexican branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Doroteo Jiménez's orthography uses the Latin script and relies on the graphic correspondences with Spanish with some additions when necessary.

Main typological features: Ixcatec is a tone language, with three lexically contrastive tones: a high tone, transcribed with a superscripted¹, a mid tone, transcribed with², and a low tone, transcribed with³. Its phonology is complex and not yet well understood. The existence of stress is under discussion. Consonant inventory ranges from 24 to 52 depending on whether glottalized and aspirated consonants are analyzed as clusters of two segments, complex single
segments or simple onsets followed by simple nuclei. It has five vowels which may be oral, /a e i o u/, or nasal /ã ẽ ĩ õ ũ/. Ixcatec makes a clear distinction between verbs and nouns; some adjectives may also function as predicates. It is a head-marking language, i.e., grammatical relations are marked on the verb. It has accusative alignment in indexing (A = S ≠ P), i.e., only the single argument of intransitive verbs (S) and the agent-like argument of transitive verbs (A) are indexed on the verb through suffixes. A dozen experience predicates take a different coding, namely through possessive suffixes. Ixcatec is a pro-drop language, i.e., free pronouns are optionally used for all functions, and NPs are generally omitted. It has a VS/SVO unmarked order. When an S argument is moved to the preverbal position, a cross-reference morpheme is suffixed on the verb. The Ixcatec cross-reference morphemes (-da² 'male', -kw²a² 'female', and -βa³ 'animal') corefer to nouns formed with the noun classifiers, di²- 'man', k²w²a²- 'woman', kʰu²- 'animal', to some animate nouns even though they have no classifier, and to the masculine and feminine third singular pronouns which bear the same suffixes as those used for the cross-reference morphemes, i.e., su¹wa¹-da² 'he' and su¹wa¹-kwa² 'she'. Noun classifiers are distinct from so-called class terms which partake in word formation for inanimates but are not associated with any cross-reference morphemes.

## Functions in the domain of Predication for the language Ixcatec (Otomanguean)

### 1.1. existential and equational

**Definition**

The existential predicate encodes the general existence of an entity X. It is also used as an equational predication indicating that an entity A is identical with an entity B (no occurrences in the corpus).

**Construction**

The existential predicate si¹.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>si¹</th>
<th>EXS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tʃi²tse¹</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a party

```plaintext
si¹ ʔu¹tʃa¹ tsu¹tʰe² si¹ /
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>si¹</th>
<th>EXS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʔu¹tʃa¹</td>
<td>QUANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsu¹tʰe²</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

there's a lot of garbage,

```plaintext
βe²g# βa²ni²nga²ɲa¹na³ ndi²ʃe²ra² la² nda¹ ʃta¹ si¹ <ma²ma²si¹ta²> //
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>βe²g#</th>
<th>FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>βa²ni²nga²</td>
<td>PROG-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲa¹na³</td>
<td>-POSS.1SG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndi²</td>
<td>TAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃe²ra²</td>
<td>COMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la²</td>
<td>COMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nda¹</td>
<td>what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃta¹</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si¹</td>
<td>EXS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I'm getting upset because it's so ugly <woman>.

### 1.2. negative existential

**Definition**

The negative existential denies the existence of an entity.

**Construction**

The negative existential is expressed through the non-verbal predicate ka²ʔa².

**Contrasts**

The negative existential contrasts with the existential predicate si¹.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ka²ʔa²</th>
<th>NEG.EXS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>na²</td>
<td>FOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃi²ka²</td>
<td>ADP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he²e²</td>
<td>ADV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔi¹a²na²</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not like now, no,

```plaintext
ka²ʔa² hu²ku²ti²pa² //
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ka²ʔa²</th>
<th>NEG.EXS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hu²ku²ti²pa²</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It's not Hukutipa.
1.3. presentational

Definition
The presentational predication is used to introduce a referent in a deictic situation.

Construction
The presentational predication involves the presentational predicate ʃe².

Contrasts
The presentational predicate is distinct from verbs because it does not receive any S or A suffixes. It is distinct from the other non-verbal predicates because of its form.

So, my son is there at the municipality.

He arrives, there is all the fruit, it seems.

1.4. possessive

Definition
The possessive predication indicates that an entity X owns/has an entity Y.

Construction
The possessive predication involves the possessive predicate ja¹. It is followed by an NP and can be preceded by another NP: (NP) ja¹ NP.

Contrasts
The possessive predicate is distinct from verbs for not receiving the S or A suffixes. It is distinct from the locative and existential predicates because of its form.

He has all the fruit in his bag. He carries the fruit.

1.5. stative locative

Definition
The stative locative predication indicates the presence of an entity at the place X or of an event that occurs at the place X.

Construction
The stative locative predication involves the stative locative predicate ki¹i² which is preceded by an NP and can be followed by another NP: NP LOC (NP)

Contrasts
The stative locative predicate is distinct from verbs for not receiving the S or A suffixes and distinct from other non-verbal predicates because of its form.
There, he is in his house. That’s why they are going.

And here there is a square.

It stands, looks around, where is that animal.

2.1. human antipassive

**Definition**

The antipassive triggers the suppression of the patient-like (P) and the recipient-like (R) arguments which are pragmatically identifiable. With stative predicates it indicates that the state is particularly affecting the participant.

**Construction**

The antipassive morpheme -mi² is suffixed on the verbs and stative predicates.

2.2. causative

**Definition**

The causative introduces a new argument, semantically a causer and syntactically an A argument. In several cases, the causative has been lexicalized, e.g. tseʰhi² *sell* < *do-go*.

**Construction**

The causative tse⁵ / tse² attaches to verbs.

**Contrasts**

The causative derives from the verb tse¹ *to do*, which is still used as a verb and an auxiliary. Note the use of tse² as a light verb with Spanish verb borrowings. As a valency-increasing suffix, the causative contrasts with the valency-decreasing antipassive and can co-occur with it suppressing the causee.
He has gathered all the fruit.

2.3. instrumental

Definition

The instrumental serves to add a prototypically non-human argument, often indicating that the action is realized with an instrument.

Construction

The instrumental is expressed in two ways: 1) The applicative-instrumental -ʃi² attaches to verbs or experience predicates (note some lexicalized uses). However, the applicative-instrumental does no longer seem very productive in its prototypical uses. 2) The coordinating conjunction kə’ e.g. "talk with the microphone", "clean with the scarf".

Constraints

For the applicative-instrumental to be used, the object has to be in a marked position, i.e., preverbal.

Contrasts

The instrumental contrasts in particular with the comitative kə’hu², which indicates that the agent executes the action with a human co-agent.

2.4. comitative

Definition

The comitative indicates that the agent executes the action with a human co-agent.

Construction

An uninflected comitative morpheme, kə’hu², is used as a free morpheme. It can also be found in lexicalized verbs, e.g. ɸi²kə’hu² ‘bring’ < 'come-with'.

Contrasts

The comitative contrasts with the instrumental, which applies to non-human arguments.

It’s fine with the grandmothers, the grandfathers, they do, they go for their money
2.5. sociative

**Definition**
The sociative is used to express an action realized together with other participants, e.g. "go together", "meet". Some examples indicate a passive use, where the patient is promoted as a subject, e.g. "he is hot" = "the heat affects him". Examples not attested in the corpus indicate a reciprocal meaning.

**Construction**
The sociative -te³ʔe³ attaches to the verb.

```plaintext
ju¹hu² na² ʃa²tu²te³ʔe³ la² // (IXC_LEA_NARR_01_PEARSTORY-PSG_126)
ju¹hu² na²
ju¹hu²
-FOC
NUM
PTL
V
PRO
LOC.DIST
ADV
//
ju¹hu² na² ʃa²tu²te³ʔe³ la² //
two
FOC
meet
SOC
LOC.DIST
//
NUM
PTL
V
PRO
ADV
//

the two of them meet there.
```

```plaintext
la² tu¹hi²te³ʔe³ // (IXC_LEA_NARR_01_PEARSTORY-PSG_152)
la²
la²
SUB
COMP
tu¹hi²te³
ANTE
SOC
V
TAM
PRO
ADV
//
//
//
//
```

The others are going together.

```plaintext
ʃa²tu²ku¹te³ʔe³ la² / (IXC_LEA_NARR_02_PEARSTORY-RRM_129)
ʃa²tu²ku¹te³'
ANTE
SOC
V
TAM
PRO
ADV
//
//
//
//
```

They met each other there.

3. experiencer

**Definition**
The experiencer predication encodes that a participant is affected by the event, e.g. emotion 'be upset', 'be lazy'; bodily experience 'be sick', 'bathe', but also posture 'sit'.

**Construction**
The experiencer predication consists of a non-verbal predicate (not a noun or a verb) that receives the series of possessive suffixes.

**Contrasts**
Other non-verbal predications.

```plaintext
βe²g# βa²ni²nga²ɲa¹na³ ndi²ʃe²ra² la² nda¹ ʃta¹ si¹ <ma²ma²si¹ta²> // (IXC_LEA_CONV_03_JSB-RRM_007)
β
e²g#
FS
β
a²ni²nga²
ɲ
a¹na³
β-
a²ni²nga²
PROG-
upset
POSS.1SG
TAM
PRED
PRO
ndi²ʃe²ra²
because
CONJ
la²
la²
COMP
COMP
nda¹
nda¹
what
PRO.Q
ʃta¹
ugly
ADJ
si¹
EXS
PRED
ma²ma²si¹ta²
mummy
N.BORR
//
//
//
//
```

I'm getting upset because it's so ugly <woman>.

```plaintext
me¹nda² ʔi²na¹na³ ʔmẽ¹ʔõ² sja¹ɲa³na³ tsi² tsu² ku²tse²na³ // (IXC_LEA_CONV_03_JSB-RRM_099)
me¹nda²
me¹nda²
for.
this
CONJ
ʔi²na¹na³
1SG
PRO
ʔmẽ¹ʔõ²
also
ADV
sja¹ɲa³na³
idleness
POSS.1SG
COMP
tsi²
say
V
ku²tse²na³
PFV
1SG
TAM
V
PRO
ADV
//
//
//
//
```

that's why to do this I'm lazy, I told him.

4. spatial specification

**Definition**
Spatial specification codes the position of a referent X with respect to a referent Y, e.g., X inside Y, X above Y, etc. Some spatial specifiers derive from body part terms.

**Construction**
The spatial specifiers combine with TMA markers, but not with S or A suffixes. They generally precede the NP: SPCF.SPC NP

```plaintext
tʃi²ka² ti¹nda¹ʰɲa³ ʔmẽ¹ʔõ² ʔa²ku² ʰngu² to²ne¹ le² ʃʰe¹ / (IXC_LEA_CONV_03_JSB-RRM_146)
tʃi²ka²
like
ti¹nda¹hɲa³
municipality
N
ʔmẽ¹ʔõ²
also
ʔa²ku²
inside
SPCF.SPC
ʰngu²
one
INDF
to²ne¹
barrel
N.BORR
la²
la²
REL
ʃʰe¹
big
ADJ
//
//
//
//
```

Like at the municipality also in a barrel that is big...

```plaintext
aj ki¹nda²tʃu²e³na² ʔu²je³ // (IXC_LEA_CONV_04_JSB-RRM_039)
aj
ki¹nda²
1SG
tʃu²e³na²
barrel
N
ʔu²je³
say
N.BORR
//
//
//
//
```

Like at the municipality also in a barrel that is big...
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Synthesis & Discussion

To summarize, I have identified the following predications: existential and equational, presentative, possessive, stative locative, negative existential, human antipassive, causative, instrumental, comitative, sociative, experiencer, and spatial specification. However, note that the syntactic analysis is still ongoing.

Ixcatec presents a number of typologically interesting predications. In particular, the human antipassive verbal suffix, \(-m²\), is typologically rare in many respects (Adamou 2014). Unlike most languages with antipassive constructions (Polinsky 2005), Ixcatec antipassive constructions target highly individuated arguments, namely humans who are also generally speech-act participants. This is due to the origin of \(-m²\), which most likely developed from the Proto-Popolocan **hmi `person` (reconstructed in Veerman-Leichenring 2004: 433 following Gudshinsky) and is still productive in compound word formation, i.e. mi²-

\[n²dᵏh₂⁻ \text{na}² \text{te}²+ \text{ʔ} u² \text{je}³ \text{AFFX N} \] //

Because the animal got tangled in (his) feet, because it didn't want to let go.

Cross-reference morphemes are of typological interest, in relation to the lexical classifiers (see Adamou 2017a for an overview of their uses in relative clauses and methodological challenges for a systematic analysis of a critically-endangered language).

Another interesting feature is the so-called “experiencer” predication. Unlike in other Popolocan languages, as Chocholetec (Nigua/Ngiba) and Popoloc, I consider that this predication cannot be described as a case of semantic alignment in Ixcatec as it is not a pervasive feature but rather characterizes a small number of verbs (Wichmann 2008: 3 offers the following definition of semantic alignment: “an agentive S is encoded, through case marking, verbal agreement, or both, in the same way as A and non-agentive S in the same way as P” and “the agentive vs. non-agentive distinction is a pervasive feature of the grammar”).

Among under-described features of Ixcatec that deserve future research is the so-called “sociative”, which presents a rather wide range of uses that defy easy characterization.

Conclusion

To conclude, Ixcatec is a previously undescribed and critically-endangered language. Although it shares a number of features that characterize the Popolocan languages and more broadly the languages of the Otomanguean stock and the Mesoamerican area, Ixcatec also shows a number of interesting developments that can be of interest to typologists. Clearly, much work remains to be done and the present paper is aimed as an introduction to the complexity of this language.

References


