

On Some Unique Features of Pronoun Structure in the Huastec (Mayan) Language

El aislamiento geográfico del huasteco dentro de la familia de lenguas mayas parece estar correlacionado con cambios radicales y únicos en la estructura del pronombre. Muy notables son entre éstos 1) la transformación de todos los morfemas pronominales en determinadas formas antepuestas al verbo, 2) el desarrollo de un acusativo propio en la primera persona del singular y del plural, 3) la introducción de un paradigma bireferencial pero monomorfémico formado por la eliminación de todos los morfemas que no son de primera persona. Además, ciertas homonomías entre los grupos A y B, resultantes del intercambio de referentes en contextos transitivos contra intransitivos, marcando esta diferencia más agudamente que en otras lenguas mayas.

La aparición de un acusativo sólo en primera persona, corresponde a las formulaciones de Silverstein (1976) con respecto a ciertos rasgos universales de los sistemas de marcación dividida. Algunos de los desarrollos del huasteco reflejan, como sea, tendencias de una naturaleza más específica, perceptible sobre todo en lenguas de las tierras altas. Se considera, pues, que los cambios son motivados internamente y para sugerir una afinidad estructural con estas lenguas.

INTRODUCTION

Occupying an isolated geographical position, far to the north of the principal contiguous language groups of the Mayan family, the Huastec language has posed special problems for comparative and historical Meso-American studies, both as regards its intra-Mayan linguistic affinities, and the nature of migrations and contacts involved. Since Huastec deviates notably in vocabulary, as well as in structure, from patterns regarded as most typically Mayan, two general views have been advanced: 1) Huastec represents an archaic conservative remnant, preserving features of a proto-Mayan ancestor, 2) Huastec represents a more individual, advanced development, evolving apart from the unifying influence of general Mayan contact and interchange. It has also been conjectured that Huastec may represent more than one Mayan substrate, extensive influence having occurred from an unidentifiable Mayan relative, now extinct, and that important non-Mayan influence is to be reckoned with as well. Existing data, in any event, tend to support the view that Huastec development has been quite individualistic, and not at all conservative. The number of roots shared with general Mayan is, for example, notably small, though overall structure is unequivocally Mayan. The Huastec verb shows extreme prominence of re-derivation, doublets, weakening of the basic Mayan CVC root canon, certain overlapping tense formatives and conjugation class memberships, along with reduction of the role of aspect particles, and concomitant multiplication of temporal suffixes. Similarly, in everyday usage, Huastec shows a relatively unique potential for agglutinative build-up of multiple benefactive and causative suffixes. (1)

Deviant aspects of Huastec pronoun structure are, perhaps, even more striking and readily illustrated, however, they have not, to the present, formed the subject of any published study. The present analysis, therefore, seeks to explore and account for certain patterns within the pronominal paradigms under the hypothesis that they represent a transition to a significant revamping of traditional Mayan structure.

Previous Studies

Early publications of Tapia Zenteno (1747, 1767), and the largely derivative material of Alejandro (1870, 1890) and contemporaries, are lacking in clarity, providing little help in the present context, except to register some obsolescent forms, indeed, one is obliged to conclude that these authors were unable to formulate essential distinctions between certain pronoun sets. Ramón Larsen, however, has published relatively complete paradigms of modern pronominal usage under the title "Proclíticos Pronominales del Dialecto Huasteco que se habla en el Estado de San Luis Potosí" (1953). These are likewise found in his "Vocabulario" (1955) of the Potosí dialect. Nevertheless, because of an extreme degree of homonymy and apparent ambiguity within the system, as well as the appearance of allomorphs of uncertain distribution, and a bireferential pronoun set not otherwise encountered in Mayan, initial consideration of these paradigms is likely to prove bewildering to the student. Thus, the

present analysis attempts to supply an organizing principle of both didactic and heuristic value, invoking the notion of an incipient split marking system, with the appearance of certain de facto accusative forms.

Phonemics and Orthography

Huastec phonemes and intonations have been defined by Larsen and Pike (1949). The practical orthography of Larsen (1955), based upon Spanish usage, is followed here. Stress is not customarily marked, and is not central to our theses, however, vowel length is phonemic and indicated by overlining. Glottalized consonants and the phonemic glottal stop are rendered by the apostrophe. The velar phoneme [k], as in Spanish, is represented by qu before e and i, otherwise as c. Both vowel and consonant values are generally close to those of Spanish, with the following to be noted: Huastec /th/ is the interdental [θ]; Huastec /x/ is phonetically [χ]; the Huastec digraph /hu-/ followed by vowel is employed for phonetic [w]; Huastec /j/ is somewhat smoother than in Spanish, usually closer to English h.

Sources and Scope

Data here presented are derived from an original corpus gathered in Tanlajás and Aquismón, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, in the Spring of 1975. They represent only the Potosí dialect, which differs from that of Veracruz. Particular thanks are due my principal informant, Antonio Hernández-Reyes, age 42, of Barrancón, Tanlajás, S.L.P., a native speaker of Huastec.

The basic pronominal paradigms are thought to be complete, however, the obligatory combinations of pronoun with aspect particle are omitted from consideration at this time, as are the optional contractions of pronouns in apposition, and those involving verbal auxiliaries. Certain conservative and obsolescent forms not given by Larsen (1953, 1955) have, however, been included, because of comparative interest.

COMPARATIVE DATA

Ergative Structure in Mayan Languages

Although topicalizing demonstrative structures are frequent in Mayan, (though not in Huastec), the noun does not vary with case as such. Pronouns, on the other hand, universally show a sharp division into two Sets, traditionally designated A and B. Their functions may be shown thus:

Set A (Ergative Paradigm)

Subject of transitive verb

Possessive

Set B (Absolutive Paradigm)

Subject of intransitive verb
(equative, stative, processual
passive, middle, etc.)

Object of transitive verb.

In general Mayanist usage, this identity of possessive and transitive agent on the one hand, contrasting with transitive patient and intransitive subject on the other, is designated as the ergative pattern, characteristic of Mayan (2). A distinctly different system of case-marking characterizes languages such as those of the Indo-European family, where there is identity of transitive and intransitive subject forms (the nominative case, often without suffix), while transitive object is commonly distinguished by suffixation, resulting in the nominative-accusative pattern.

Several Mayan languages display some departure from the pure, apparently ancestral pattern as here defined, varying pronoun usage according to tense or finer distinctions in meaning as in Yucatecan and Cholán, or showing differing prefixed and suffixed absolutive paradigms as in Tsotsil. With the exception of a problematical honorific second person in Quiché, however, Mayan languages have not been noted to show variation in case-marking system according to the feature person. Silverstein (1976), in examining the apparent relationship between inherent lexical content of substantives and splits in case-marking systems which occur within languages generally, finds that the locations of such splits within the lexicon are not random or arbitrary, but seem rather to be governed by an inherent "naturalness" or tendency for a given noun-phrase to be cast in the role of ergator more usually or rather as patient primarily. The less expected context would, thus, require more distinct marking. In this view, the first person pronoun, as an indexical, and the second person to a large extent as well, would be ergators par excellence, hence a minimal or incipient shift towards a distinct accusative, if such were to occur within a system of Mayan type, would be expected to appear within this area of the pronoun. This prediction accords well with the Huastec case, however, differing terminologies, and interpretations of the course of events, permit various formulations of the present status of pronoun structure in the language.

Proto-Mayan Pronouns

T. Kaufman (1972) has proposed the following reconstructions of basic proto-Mayan pronoun sets, where the second alternate applies to initial vowel in the following word (International Phonetic Symbols).

| Ergative Pronoun (Set A) | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Singular | | Plural |
| 1. | in / w- | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} qa \\ x \end{array} \right\} / q-$ |
| 2. | a' / a' w- | e / $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} y- \\ w- \end{array} \right\}$ |
| 3. | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} u \\ s \end{array} \right\} / y-$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} u \\ s \end{array} \right\} / y- \dots \text{eb}'$ |

Absolutive Pronoun (Set B)

| | | |
|----|----|-----|
| 1. | in | oŋ |
| 2. | ʌt | eš |
| 3. | ∅ | eb' |

THE HUASTEC PRONOUN TYPES

The Independent Pronoun

(disjunctive, caseless, used in isolation, emphasis, and in apposition with pronouns of Sets A and B for resolution of ambiguity).

| | Singular | Plural |
|----|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | nanā' | huahua' |
| 2. | tatā' | xaxā' (conservative, formal) tatā'chic (colloquial, usual) |
| 3. | jajā' | babā' (obsolete, but re- cognized) jajā'chic (usual) |

As indicated, one notes drift within the historical period, tending to eliminate the distinctive pan-Mayan second and third person plural morphemes, in favor of pluralization of the singular by means of the suffix -chic (Cf. Tseltalan -tik, Yucatec -tak, *tvac). A certain degree of confusion exists at present, and one may frequently encounter the redundant pluralizations huahua'chic and xaxā'chic. Similarly, independent forms of the second person plural may appear in apposition with pronouns of Sets A and B of singular as well as plural number.

Comparison with the foregoing proto-Mayan reconstructions of Kaufman demonstrates derivation of the distinctive consonants rather straightforwardly from Set B, the usual case in Mayan (Cf. Quiché /ux/, Tsotsil /utik/, etc., in the case of first person plural). The third person morpheme corresponds to the interrogatives jant'o 'what?', jita 'who?', ju'tām 'where?' etc. in Huastec, while /h/ is common as a pronoun formative elsewhere in Mayan

The Ergative Pronoun

(Set A, possessor, and agent of transitive verb, providing that patient or possessed item is third person, an important peculiarity of Huastec! The paradigm is explicitly bireferential, and the ∅ morpheme of third person patient always present).

| | Singular | Plural |
|----|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | u | i |
| 2. | a | i (conservative, properly with xaxā') |
| | | a (colloquial, with tata'chic) |
| 3. | in | in....chic |

As noted for the second person plural of the Independent Pronoun, there is variation in usage, and either xaxā' or the redundant xaxā'chic may at times be combined with the properly singular form a, rather than with i, the historically correct but obsolescent plural. Less frequently tata'chic may occur with i.

Three notable deviations from the proto-Mayan model appear in Huastec Set A. The third person form in seems most aberrant, in being characteristic rather of first person singular throughout Mayan, both in Sets A and B (3). The form is, however, attested by Tapia Zenteno in the Eighteenth Century, along with an alternative second person ana. It is possible that these represent remnants of an earlier more complete n paradigm formed from an aspect particle, or an earlier phonological constraint. Chol and Ixil show i here, and Chol has /hini/ in the Independent Set. According to Day (1973), an apparently innovative /nah/ in Jacalteco shows both transitive and intransitive contexts, however, no clear-cut cognates for this form have been encountered in Mayan generally, or in available material from the extinct Coahuiltecan languages, once the neighbors of Huastec.

First person plural i is likewise unexpected, [g] or [k] being characteristics of this person throughout Mayan, although in some languages the consonant may be suppressed (Yucatec), or converted to [h] (Tseltalan group) by phonological constraints. Of particular interest, however, is the fact that Tsotsil alone in this latter group shows a partially differentiated special paradigm for the prefixed intransitive subject, formed from elements of both Sets A and B, displaying /ih-/ in first person plural, and singular as well, the latter having been re-formed from the plural. Though the evidence is not strong, a link with the Huastec form may be suggested.

The first person u is unusual, and could be a reflex of the proto-Mayan vowel-initial alternate, or be equally consistent with a later reconstruction of Kaufman (personal communication) [*nu], a form which occurs incidentally also as first person alternate in Quiché.

Pronouns of Set B

(Quasi-absolute, subject of intransitive verb, and of verbless equatives and attributives, but may not appear as object of transitive in Huastec!)

| | Singular | Plural |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | in | u |
| 2. | it | ix (conservative, formal) it...-chic (colloquial, usual) |
| 3. | ∅ generally u with verbs in pas- sive voice, proces- sual emphasis middle sense i equative, partitive | same as singular ...-chic |

With the exception of the relatively optional third person i, which is generally characteristic of Set A elsewhere in Mayan (Cf. Robertson 1977a), these forms are readily derivable from the proto-Mayan model. For first person plural one may compare Kekchi /o/, Quiché /ux/, Tsotsil /-utik/. While the peculiar function of third person i seems unique to Huastec, it is strictly obligatory only with passives. The third person equative i, along with forms given for other persons, may function much as an indefinite article.

By way of illustrating the role of the disyllabic independent pronouns in clarifying ambiguity, one may note the interplay of a large number of homonymies between Sets A and B in Huastec.

| | Set A | | Set B | |
|----|-------|------|---------|--------|
| 1. | u | i | in | u |
| 2. | a | a, i | it | it, ix |
| 3. | in | | ∅, u, i | |

It is clear that, in general, only second person forms have an unequivocal referent in isolation, whereas first and third person largely interchange meaning, according to whether the accompanying verb is transitive or intransitive, in the strict sense. Antipassives have thus far not been encountered in Huastec. To the student who aspires to learn Huastec, the principal obstacle to early automatization of speech is the relatively symmetrical criss-cross relationship illustrated as follows, probably a source of confusion also to early authors, unaccustomed to strict transitive-intransitive distinctions.

| | Set A Possessive and Agent of Transitive Verb | | Set B Subject of Intransitive Verb | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | u | 'I' | in | 'I' |
| 3. | in | 'he' | u / ∅ | 'he' |

A structure of this type has not been encountered elsewhere in Mayan.

Examples (4):

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| u pic'o' | 'my dog' |
| in pic'o' | 'his dog' |
| in c'alel | 'I go' |
| u lē' | 'I want it' |
| in lē' | 'he wants it' |
| c'alel | 'he goes' |
| calel | 'he goes out' |
| an ēm u calel | 'the corn goes out (sprouts)' |
| u tsa'canal an ja' | 'lowers (itself) the water' |
| u aliyāb | 'he is sought after (passive)' |
| in tēnec u lē' | 'I, a Huastec, want it' |
| u pic'o' c'apul | 'my dog is eating (intransitive)' |
| u pic'o' in c'apal | 'my dog is eating it (transitive)' |
| u c'apal | 'I am eating it' |
| in c'apal | 'he is eating it' |
| in c'apul | 'I am eating' |

The Equative Pronouns of Set B

These differ from the regular Set B only in the third person allomorph *i*, replacing *o/u*. This paradigm serves also as indefinite article.

Examples:

| | | |
|----|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | in tēnec | 'I am Huastec' |
| or | pēl in tēnec | 'I am Huastec (with verb pēl 'to be)' |
| or | nana' pēl in tēnec | 'I am Huastec (emphatic pronoun)' |
| | tatā' pēl it cuitōl | 'you are a boy' |
| | jajā' pēl i inic | 'he is a man' |
| | bō' i inic | 'they are five men' |
| | pēl i ū | 'it is some paper' |
| | c'al i its | 'with some chile' |
| | jūn i ū | 'one paper' |

The Bireferential Pronoun

The germ of a bireferential agent-patient paradigm may be discerned in the Mayan Set A pronouns, in that third person object is implied, if no other person is specified. Huastec innovates radically, however, in presenting a full paradigm of "double pronouns", which index simultaneously, by means of a single pronominal morpheme, both subject and object in transitive construc-

tions, or correspondingly, possessor and possessed in equative constructions. Thus, I see you requires the pronoun I → you, he sees us requires the pronoun he → us etc. For the sake of clarity, equatives are best paraphrased as transitives, e.g. I am your father requires the pronoun you → me, i.e. you possess me as father. Similarly, you are his friend is to be translated with the pronoun he → you, equivalent to he has you as a friend. The form of these pronouns suggests origin from an oblique case with initial t-, representing the preposition ti 'to', however, it is clear that no sequence of pronouns can account for this structure.

In transitive contexts, Mayan languages, in general, display one of two types of pronominal patient-agent expression. In languages such as Quiché, the sequence Set B - Set A (object-subject) is prefixed to the verb. In languages such as Yucatec, subject Set A is prefixed, while object Set B is suffixed. In Huastec, however, no single pronominal morphemes exist for transitive constructions.

| | | AGENT | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | Singular | | | Plural | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| P A T I E N T | Sing. | 1 | --- | tin | tin | --- | tin | tin |
| | | 2 | tu | --- | ti | tu | --- | ti |
| | | 3 | u | a | in | i | a,i | in |
| | Pl. | 1 | -- | tu | tu | -- | tu | tu |
| | | 2 | tu.. chic | --- | ti.. chic | tu.. chic | --- | ti.. chic |
| | | 3 | u.. chic | a.. chic | in.. chic | i.. chic | a,i.. chic | in.. chic |

In examining the above paradigm, one observes, in the case of tin, corresponding to 'you → me' and to 'he → me', that the first person Set B morpheme in, functioning as patient, is apparently given preference in expres-

sion, while distinction of subject person is suspended. The same holds true for first person plural tu, which is, in the last analysis, simply equivalent to 'us'. It is quite unlikely that chance homonymies have generated such a structure, though in is indeed third person Set A, and first person Set B in the singular. The overall picture is rather that object morphemes are clearly present, and subject morphemes absent in the first row of the paradigm of both numbers. One may conclude that these first person forms function as de facto accusatives, in that agent is unspecified, and their occurrence is limited to the transitive object slot, and the possessive equatives, where the notion of transitivity seems implicit in the ergocentric possessive. The paradigm does display significant true homonymies, however, in that tu may signify 'I → you' as well as 'you/he → us', and, as is general in Mayan, there may be uncertainty as to whether the pluralizer -chic applies to object, subject or both. Nevertheless, in context, these ambiguities do not usually cause difficulty, whereas recourse must be had to the independent pronouns to distinguish subject person, with the first person accusatives.

In second person object forms, the situation is different, in that tu 'I → you', clearly shows the first person agent morpheme, while ti 'he → you' shows no identifiable pronominal morpheme likely to be related.

Examples:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Tin aychal | 'You or he waits for me' |
| Tatā' tin aychal | 'You wait for me' |
| Jajā' tin aychal | 'He waits for me' |
| U tāta tin c'uiyāl | 'My father scolds me' |
| U tāta tu c'uiyāl | 'My father scolds us' |
| Tu c'uiyāl | 'I scold you' |
| Ti c'uiyāl | or 'He or you scolds us' |
| | 'He scolds us'. |

If one excludes the rows of the paradigm which lack initial t-, and obviously represent the traditional and older Set A, it is clear that Huastec has operated by deleting all non-first person pronominal morphemes from an apparent underlying sequence of the Quichéan type (prefixed object-subject). The process suggests a rather extreme drive to distinguish and preserve the integrity of first person forms. The operation may be thus formulated:

Rule:

- 1) ti + obj + subj
- 2) delete all non-first person pronominal morphemes
- 3) contract, maintaining the pronominal vowel

Resulting forms :

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----|------------|
| ti + in + \bar{x} | → | tin | 'you → me' |
| ti + in + \bar{ix} | → | tin | 'he → me' |
| ti + \bar{ix} + u | → | tu | 'I → you' |
| ti + \bar{ix} + \bar{ix} | → | ti | 'he → you' |
| ti + u + \bar{x} | → | tu | 'he → us' |
| ti + u + \bar{ix} | → | tu | 'he → us' |

The Bireferential Pronoun in the Equative-Possessive Frame

In order to clarify Huastec constructions of the type you are my friend, I am your son, recourse must be had to an accusative type language, since equivalents in languages such as Quiché and Yucatec are structurally dissimilar (5). Huastec tin is in all cases me possessum.

Pēl tin ja'ūb Literally, 'Is you-(or he)-possessing-me as friend' i.e. I am someone's friend.

Though grammatically correct, the sentence is unsatisfactory out of context (Cf. Spanish Es mi amigo, él o usted).

More usual is

Tatā' pēl tin ja'ūb 'You are possessing-me-as friend' i.e. I am your friend.

Similarly,

Pēl tin tsacāmīl 'You or he (or she) has me as son'
 Jajā' pēl tin tsacāmīl 'He has me as son'. 'I am his son'.

With the form ti there is no ambiguity, and no additional pronoun is necessary,

Pēl ti tāta 'You are his father'.

With the form tu, however, there are several unclear possibilities out of context,

Pēl tu tāta 'You are my father'
 Pēl tu tātachic 'We are your fathers, we are their fathers'.

In the case of third person (\emptyset morpheme) patient, no difficulty arises in direct translation, and structure seems superficially similar to general Mayan:

Pēl in tsacāmīl
Pēl u tāta

'He is his son'
'He is his father'.

Contrary to the case in other Mayan languages, however, one may never, in Huastec, employ the simple (unprefixed) ergative pronoun with other than third person object, either in possessive or transitive contexts.

DISCUSSION

Silverstein (1976) has presented general formulations concerning the types of split in principles of case-marking which occur within the world's languages:

"If we take the notion 'case-marking' in its broadest sense, as the surface means of indicating case relationships of noun phrase adjuncts, then split-ergative systems show a split along the hierarchy of person and number features of the adjunct noun-phrases. If an ergative system splits simply into two two-way case-marking systems, then minimally either the ego (or the tu) forms are nominative accusative, the rest ergative absolutive. . . ." (Silverstein 1976: 122).

While the accusative innovation in Huastec appears indeed in the first person, one may not speak strictly of a nominative-accusative (two-way) pair, in that the subject pronoun remains ergative (may not appear as subject of an intransitive verb). Indeed, if the first person Set A pronoun u did appear with an intransitive verb, its meaning would be third person! One may thus speculate that the peculiar reversal of referents in Set A and B pronouns exerts a blocking influence on an apparent nominative-accusative trend. The independent pronouns cannot well be considered nominatives, since they may occur in apposition with any pronoun, though they occur predominantly with the subject. One may note the following examples:

1. Calel, or Jajā' calel 'He goes out'
 U calel, or Jajā' u calel
2. Jajā' tin c'uiyāl 'He scolds me'
 Tatā' tin c'uiyāl 'You scold me'
3. Jajā' pēl tin ja'ūb 'He has me as friend'
 'I am his friend'

where the independent pronoun, in phrase-initial position functions as nominative. In Example 2, illustratively, Set A pronouns may not appear. It seems justified to conclude that the phrase-initial Independent Pronoun couples in these circumstances with the first person accusative to form a nominative-accusative pair.

Again, with reference to Silverstein's formulations, we are not dealing here with a simple split, but rather with two two-way systems, one incompletely

developed, operating simultaneously within the first person area. An alternative, and perhaps simpler characterization, is therefore that of a partially developed three-case ergative system conforming to the European notion of ergative, as distinguished from pathocentric. In the remaining persons, the bireferential forms do not neutralize subject, but supply distinct transitive object forms, thus filling out the three-way system. The situation appears in many respects transitional, however, it is clear that the extent of the development approaches the point of typological shift, for which only the barest traces are otherwise discernible in Mayan.

Evidence from other Mayan Languages

In seeking motivation for the structural innovations of Huastec, one may ask firstly what other evidence exists in Mayan for disturbance or special development affecting the first person pronoun. Clearly, the reconstructions of Kaufman posit homonymy between Sets A and B in first person singular already at the proto-Mayan stage, such that a significant problem might be foreseen, were morpheme order, or other vehicle of patient-agent distinction to break down. Robertson (1976) presents cogent evidence that Set B was suffixed in Common Mayan, and that the shift to prefixation was gradual development, affecting most Highland languages to varying degrees. It would appear that Huastec has progressed farthest in this direction, having converted the suffixal morphemes into pre-posed free forms, and eliminated two-pronoun sequences, Huastec shows no trace of pronominal suffixation, this position being reserved for temporals, causatives and benefactives. There is no trace of the general Mayan phonological alternates, and certain adverbs may intervene between pronoun and verb. The structure of the bireferentials suggests strongly that they arose at a stage where all pronouns were already prefixed. As a sharp distinction from the Yucatecan and Cholan groups, Huastec shows no trace of use of its Set A forms with intransitive verbs in present tense, in addition to lacking the pronominal suffixations of these languages. It seems clear that Huastec has participated in a general Highland development, as detailed by Robertson, and pursued this development to an extreme degree.

The situation in Mam appears particularly relevant. As presented by England (1975), this language, having developed a polite second person from the third person pronoun, utilizes a clusive enclitic *-ya* to distinguish second person, however, this enclitic has variously extended to first person, rendering it doubly marked. Mam is notable also for relatively arbitrary prohibition of many sequences of prefixed object-subject combinations, often complexly involved with use of the clitic. Thus, common sequences such as 'he → me', 'he → you' cannot be expressed without recourse to auxiliary verbs, while such sequences as 'I → you', 'I → him' are not distinguished. While Huastec shows no clusives, polite second person, or comparable use of auxiliaries, it agrees in rejecting many logically possible bimorphemic prefixed pronominals which occur in other languages, and in adopting a new strategy for handling such expressions, while maximizing first person distinctness. Because of the considerable dialectal variation in the Mam language, it appears quite

unlikely that its characteristic problems with pronoun sequences are the result of the formation of a polite second person alone. In the Greater Mamean group, Aguacatec shows some suggestion of development of a distinct paradigm for transitive object, however, it is but slightly differentiated from the general absolutive.

A second and distinct type of development affecting the first person is shown by languages of the Tseltalan group (Tojolabal, Tseltal, and Tsotsil). These languages have not been strongly affected by the prefixation wave, and continue to show the transitive relation across the verb, by prefixing Set A, and suffixing Set B in the manner of Yucatecan and Cholan. They have, nevertheless, manifested instability of the posited proto-Mayan first person morpheme, in that first person singular has been re-formed from first person plural, the old plural being then distinguished by addition of clusives and pluralizers. This seems to be part of a tendency toward reduction in number of pronominal base morphemes, however, it is the more distinct second person singular that comes to form the plural. Tsotsil alone has been slightly affected by prefixation in that a new prefixed intransitive-subject paradigm has appeared, formed from elements of Sets A and B, and showing some forms similar to problematical elements of Huastec. There is, however, no formation of an accusative here, since old Set B still functions in equative, as well as transitive-object contexts. Similarly, Jacaltec, Kanjobal and Chuj, as well as the Quichéan languages, though prefixing Set B as patient, show no formation of an accusative, maintaining other intransitive functions for this paradigm, in the general absolutive sense. It would thus appear that the non-prefixing Tseltalan group has eliminated an unsatisfactory first person singular morpheme in one way, while Mamean and Huastec, early prefixers, have encountered significant problems, requiring prohibitions, and restructuring, based upon a first person priority principle.

Languages of the Greater Quichéan as well as the Greater Kanjobalan groups, though prefixing transitive object and subject generally, have apparently encountered less difficulty with sequences, and with the first person singular morpheme. Scattered observations, however, showsome distinctions between Set B suffixes and prefixes, and Quiché, in particular, shows some tendency to avoid doubly prefixed constructions by use of a dative-like object.

Conclusions

The bireferential character of the innovative Huastec paradigm is seen to have an analogical basis in the general Mayan ergative paradigm, which contains an implicit third person object, providing no other is expressed. The development of a *de facto* accusative in the first person portion of this paradigm seems to result from a need to maximize first person distinctness. The total structure demonstrates complete rejection of prefixed two-pronoun sequences, with increasing reliance on a quasi-nominative function of independent pronouns. Since overmarking of first person is a relatively frequent occurrence in the world's languages, and certain comparable trends and problems

affecting first person are observable in the Highland languages, there is little need to look to external influence for explanation of these developments. From the comparative Mayan standpoint, the overall changes may be viewed either as a shift to a complete three-way ergative system, a trend for which there is some slight and scattered evidence in the Highlands, or as an early move toward a split ergative-accusative system, an interpretation for which fragmentary evidence could likewise be marshalled from the same area. In either case, Huastec must be regarded as showing significant departure from the generally accepted Common Mayan ergative model, and manifesting little structural affinity with Yucatecan and Cholan.

The findings invite re-examination of the position of Huastec in the Mayan family, and suggest that its largely untapped potential for contribution to general Mayan linguistic studies and reconstruction of its own history should not be overlooked or discounted.

NOTES

- (1) One may note, for example: u t'ajāl 'I do it'; u t'ajchal 'I do it to or for him'; u t'ajchinchal 'I do a job in his stead'; u t'ajchinthāl 'I cause a job to be done for him'; u t'ajchinthanchal 'I cause a person to substitute for another in doing a job for a third person'.
- (2) This Mayan-type configuration of case-marking is commonly designated pathocentric by European authors, inasmuch as the transitive patient form serves as intransitive subject, while the term ergative is reserved for the situation where all three principal case forms are distinct. The Indo-European configuration is then ergocentric since transitive agent form serves as intransitive subject. Similarly, possessive usage may be ergo-centric or pathocentric according to whether transitive agent or patient, respectively, serves as possessive. I thank Prof. H.-J. Pinnow for this clarification.
- (3) Robertson (1977a) has presented a detailed study of the Mayan third person ergative pronoun, but has not considered Huastec. His material shows no evidence, however, of phonologically comparable forms in the language family. As an exception, nevertheless, and in Set B, in does occur as third person singular in Pocomchi.
- (4) As a matter of interest, note the origin of the name of the city Tampico, from tam pic'o' 'place of the dog'.
- (5) Note that Quiché Ri'at in tat 'You are my father' is not equivalent to Huastec Tin tāta which has the meaning 'I am your father', and the prefixed t of Huastec cannot be derived from pronoun contractions. In Yucatec, the equivalent is A yūmilēn 'Your father (am) I.' where Set B -en is suffixed to the noun in equatives of this type.

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