Evaluating Mayan perfect -\textit{b’il} as a Lowland diffusion

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Summary

- *-b’il* is perfect participle in many Mayan languages
- Kaufman (2015) reconstructs *-b’il* to proto-Mayan
- I argue that *-b’il* was a Lowland diffusion
- Reconstruct *-*Vm
- Evidence:
  - Distribution
  - Internal evidence
  - Inevitability of contact
Background

- Assuming Kaufman (2017) subgrouping

Proto-Mayan
  Wastekan
  Late Proto-Mayan
    Yucatecan
    Core Mayan
      Western Mayan
        Q’anjob’alan
        Ch’olan-Tseltalan
      Eastern Mayan
        Mamean
        K’iche’an
Background

- Lowland contact area (Justeson et al. 1985, Law 2014)
- Heavy influence among Ch’olan-Tseltalan and Yucatecan languages
- Lowland features appear in Q’anjob’alan, Wastekan, some K’iche’an
Basic facts

- All Mayan languages express perfect aspect
- Always as a suffix
  - Other aspect categories: prefixes or proclitics
- Focusing here on transitive verbs
• In some languages, different suffix in active and passive voice
  • Perfect status vs. perfect participle (Kaufman)

Itzaj (Hofling 2000: 16, 171)

(1)  \textit{u-tz’a-m-aj}  \quad (2)  \textit{ch’äk-b’il}
  A3S-give-PERF-COM  \quad \text{cut-PERF.PART}
  ‘s/he has given’  \quad ‘[has been] cut’
Basic facts

- In other languages, -Vm in both active and passive K’iche’ (Larsen 1988: 236)

(3)  
\[ \text{at} \quad \text{nu-ch’ay-oom} \]  
B2s  A1S-hit-PERF  
‘I have hit you’

(4)  
\[ \text{e’} \quad \text{mok-oom} \]  
B3P  bury-PERF  
‘They have been buried’
Two possible reconstructions

- **Hypothesis 1:** \(-Vm\) active, \(-b’il\) passive
  - Like Yucatecan

- **Hypothesis 2:** \(-Vm\) active and passive
  - Like K’iche’an and Wastekan
*-Vm as the active voice perfect is not controversial

- Present in:
  - Wastekan
  - Yucatecan
  - K’iche’an

- No real alternative
  - Tseltalan -ooj is innovative

- The real question is about the passive perfect
Clearly innovative suffixes

- Other perfect participle suffixes are clearly innovations
  - -Vl
    - Ch’olan, Ixil, Uspanteko
  - -maj
    - Sakapultek, Sipakapense, Poqomam, Poqomchi’
    - Probably derived from -Vm
  - -o(o)j
    - Tseltal, Tsotsil, Poqomam, Poqomchi’
    - From *-ooj nominalization
The case for *-b’il

- Kaufman (2015) reconstructs perfect participle *-b’il
- Present in 15 out of ~31 Mayan languages
  - 17 if -Vb’al in Mocho’ and Tojolab’al are included
- Multiple subgroups
  - Q’anjob’alan (all)
  - Ch’olan-Tseltalan (all)
  - Yucatecan (all)
  - K’iche’an (Q’eqchi’)
- De facto interpretation: it is a shared retention
The case for *-Vm

- Despite the predominance of -b’il, I think it is an innovation
- I reconstruct *-Vm in both active and passive voice
The case for \*-Vm

- Distribution
- Internal evidence
- Complexity of reflexes
- Plausible origin for -b’il
- Inevitability of contact
The case for *-Vm

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Geographic distribution

Base map: Law (2014)

Dark gray: -b’il
Light gray: -Vb’al
Geographic distribution

Base map: Law (2014)

Dark gray: -Vm participle
Light gray: -Vm passive
Distribution

• Though -b’il is widespread, it is in a contiguous region
  • Consistent with Lowland contact
• Passive perfect -Vm is present in both Eastern Mayan and Wastek
  • Extremities of the region
  • No other known contact
• **Assume** active *-Vm, passive *-b’il
• Requires independent innovation

Wastek (Kondić 2012)
Active: **-aam-al**    Passive: **-aam-ej**

K’iche’ (Larsen 1988)
Active: **-oom/-uum**    Passive: **-oom/-uum**
Solomá Q’anjob’al has a passive -Vm reflex

(5) Max uqtej-om no tx’i’
COM chase-PAS CLS dog
y-uj naq winaq
A3-RN.by CLS man
‘The dog was chased by the man.’
(Mateo Toledo 1998: 137)

- Possible relic feature; no other Q’anjob’al variety has it
- No other obvious source besides *-Vm
The case for 

*-Vm

- Distribution
- **Internal evidence**
- Complexity of reflexes
- Plausible origin for -b’il
- Inevitability of contact
Kaufman (2015) assumes active *-Vm, passive *-b’il
Requires that EM and Wastek extended *-Vm from active to passive

pM: active *-Vm passive *-b’il
> Wastek/EM: active *-Vm passive *-Vm

Is this plausible as a process?
The passive perfect is the more basic form
All Mayan languages have a passive perfect participle
Many lack active voice perfect altogether
  • Q’anjob’alan (Q’anjob’al, Popti’)
    • Active: ? Passive: -b’il
  • Mamean
    • Active: ? Passive: -V’n (< -*Vm)
  • Ch’olan
    • Active: ? Passive: -Vl, -b’il
Internal evidence

- Active perfect form is often based on passive perfect
- Probably as possessed patient noun (Larsen 1988)

K’iche’

(6a)  \textit{mok-oom}  
\textit{ask.for.the.services.of-PERF}  
‘(one who has been) asked for the services of; servant’

(6b)  \textit{nu-mok-oom}  
\textit{A1S-ask.for.the.services.of-PERF}  
‘my servant’
• Compare the following (Larsen 1988: 236, 238):

(7)  at  nu-ch’ay-oom
    B3S  A1S-hit-PERF
    ‘I have hit you’/’You are my one-who-has-been-hit’

(8)  at  nu-k’ajooc
    B3S  A1S-man’s.son
    ‘You are my son’
More evidence: Poqom -ooj/-uuj participle

- From a nominalization *-ooj
  - Kaufman (2015) and my ongoing research

- All varieties of Poqom use it as perfect participle
- Colonial varieties turned it into active perfect
Internal evidence

Colonial Poqomam (Moran 1720: 14)

\[ oj \quad ru-b\acute{a}n-ooj \quad Dios \]

B₁P A₃S-make-PERF God

‘we are the creation of God’

Poqomchi’ (Stoll 1888: 87)

\[ nu-ch’ab-uj \]

A₁S-shoot-PERF

‘it is my shot; i.e. I have shot’
Internal evidence

- Akateko uses -b’il in active and passive perfect contexts (Zavala 1992: 59)
- Extended from passive to active
EM and Wastek have passive perfect *-$Vm$

If we reconstruct *-$b’il$, then:
- passive -$Vm$ comes from active *-$Vm$

However, the opposite is expected in Mayan
- passive perfect is basic form
- active perfect usually comes from passive perfect
Internal evidence (summary)

- Passive perfect *-Vm was probably the original form in pre-proto-Mayan
- Active perfect *-Vm in proto-Mayan came from passive form
- Consistent with normal grammaticalization pathway in Mayan
The case for *-Vm

- Distribution
- Internal evidence
- **Complexity of reflexes**
- Plausible origin for *b’il*
- Inevitability of contact
Complexity of reflexes

- Passive -*Vm* reflexes vary widely in form and function
  - *-oom/-uum* perfect participle (Kch)
  - *-oon/-uun* perfect participle (Kaq/Tz’u)
  - *-maj* perfect participle (Sip/Sak/Pqm/Pch)
  - *-V’n* perfect participle (Mam, Teko, Awk)
  - *-aam-ej* passive perfect (Was)
  - *-mal* stative resultative (Ixil)
  - *-maj* verbal passive (Usp)
  - *-om* verbal passive (Q’an)

- Suggests passive -*Vm* is old
Complexity of reflexes

- Passive -b’il reflexes are comparatively uniform
  - -b’il passive perfect participle (Most)
  - > b’ir by regular sound change (Ch’orti’)
  - -oo‘bal perfect participle (Mocho’)
  - -ub’al perfect participle (Tojolab’al)

- Other languages have -b’il or -b’al instrument nominalization - unclear if this is cognate

- Relative similarity suggests recent spread
The case for 
*-Vm

- Distribution
- Internal evidence
- Complexity of reflexes
- Plausible origin for -b’il
- Inevitability of contact
Plausible origin for -b’il

- b’il looks morphologically complex
- Exact source not clear
- Lots of -b’ and -Vl suffixes with related meanings
- Kaufman (2015: 320) suggests *-b’il is *(a)-b’ passive plus -Vl nominalization
The case for */-Vm*

- Distribution
- Internal evidence
- Complexity of reflexes
- Plausible origin for *-b’il*
- Inevitability of contact
Inevitability of contact

- Reconstructing *-Vm participle means that -b’il spread through contact
- Typologically strange
  - Borrowing tense/aspect markers is uncommon (Matras and Sakel 2007)
  - Direct affix borrowing (without loanwords) is difficult, but possible between similar languages (Winford 2005, Seifart 2015, Thomason 2015)
- However, **every scenario** involves direct affix borrowing
Inevitability of contact

- Scenario 1 (my hypothesis)
  - *-Vm is original
  - *-b’il innovated in Lowlands
  - *-b’il borrowed into other Lowland languages
Inevitability of contact

- Scenario 2 (Kaufman 2015)
  - *-b’il is original
  - -Vm innovated in Wastek and Eastern Mayan
  - Q’eqchi’ later re-borrows -b’il from Ch’olan
Inevitability of contact

- Scenario 3 (unlikely; nobody proposes this)
  - *-b’il is original
  - Proto-EM and Proto-K’iche’an retained *-b’il
    - Q’eqchi’ -b’il is a retention
  - -Vm spreads through all other K’iche’an and Mamean languages by contact
Conclusions

- Proto-Mayan: *-Vm was active and passive perfect
- -b’il was a recent innovation
  - Spread through Lowland contact
  - Similar distribution to other Lowland features
• Detailed citations for grammatical forms available upon request

• Hofling, Charles Andrew, with Félix Fernando Tesucún. 2000. *Itzaj Maya Grammar*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.


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Thank you!