## Irrealis to infinitive in Popti': Paradigmatic motivations for functional change

This paper discusses the extension of the irrealis suffix *-? to infinitival contexts in Popti', a Q'anjob'alan Mayan language spoken in western Guatemala and southeastern Mexico. ProtoQ'anjob'alan transitive verbs used a suffix *-ox/-uұ to create infinitives and a suffix *-? to mark irrealis mood. Popti' extended the *-? irrealis suffix to infinitival contexts, replacing *-ox/-ux.

Even though the Popti' -? infinitive now shares the form of the irrealis suffix, its distribution still matches that of the older *-o $/-u \chi$ infinitive. Irrealis constructions take person agreement, accept arbitrarily complex arguments, and can appear in main clauses (1). Infinitives are uninflected, take a bare noun as a generic object, and normally head purpose clauses modifying intransitive motion verbs (2-3). Example (2) from Popti' and (3) from Q'anjob'al (which retains $-o \chi /-u \chi$ ) are structurally parallel.

| hat $f \quad$ w-il-a-? | han |
| :--- | :--- |
| 2S.ABS | 1S.ERG-see-TV-IRR |
| 'I want to see you' (Popti', | 1S.ENC |
| I |  |


| sk-at | to | il-o? | kin |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| COM-2.ABS | go | see-TV-INF | fiesta |

```
Mas-in to \chi tsok'-o\chi si?
COM-1S.ABS go cut-INF firewood
'I went to cut firewood' (Q'anjob'al, Mateo Toledo 2008: 263)
```

In addition, the forms of the Popti' irrealis and infinitive are not identical: irrealis $-?$ attaches to the transitive stem vowel $-a /-o /-u$. The infinitive is $-o$ ? , becoming $-u$ ? after a root vowel $/ \mathrm{u} /$, the same pattern of vowel harmony as *-ox/-ux. The above suggests that while the irrealis *-? replaced $*-o \chi /-u \chi$, this was only a superficial formal replacement: the infinitive's original syntactic distribution and even its pattern of allomorphy were preserved.

I suggest that the formal replacement of the infinitive suffix was motivated by multiple factors: analogical extension, semantic similarity to the irrealis, and phonological changes elsewhere in the verb paradigm. Intransitive verbs in proto-Q'anjob'alan used a single suffix *-oq for both the irrealis and infinitive function. Speakers may have extended the transitive irrealis *-? to infinitival contexts by analogy with intransitive verbs: in both verb classes, the irrealis and infinitive now take the same suffix.

An extension from irrealis to infinitive makes sense semantically. The Q'anjob'alan *-ox/-ux infinitive mainly creates purpose clauses. Purpose clauses are inherently irrealis, as the intended purpose may or may not have actually been accomplished.

In addition, Popti' underwent $* q>\chi$ word-finally, so that intransitive *-oq became $-o \chi$, homophonous with the ${ }^{*}-o \chi$ transitive infinitive. The distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs is fundamental in Mayan languages, and so the resulting ambiguity of -o may have motivated Popti' speakers to innovate a new transitive infinitive suffix to keep the two verb classes distinct. This evokes Heath's (1998) notion of formal renewal, in which an affix is abruptly replaced by a different, more salient morpheme (in Heath's examples, a lexical stem) in order to maintain the distinctiveness of the grammatical category it represents.

## References

Craig, Colette Grinevald. 1979. "The Antipassive and Jacaltec." In Laura Martin, Victoria R. Bricker, and William Norman, eds., Papers in Mayan Linguistics, 139-164. USA: Lucas Brothers.
Delgado Rojas, Edna Patricia, José Aurelio Silvestre Sánchez, María Elizabeth Silvestre Díaz, and Antonio Benicio Ross Montejo. 2007. Stz'ib'nheb 'anil Ab'xub'al Popti' (Gramática Normativa Popti'). Guatemala: Oxlajuuj Keej Maya' Ajtz'iib' and Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala.
Heath, Jeffrey. 1998. "Hermit crabs: formal renewal of morphology by phonologically mediated affix substitution." Language 74(4), 728-759.
Mateo Toledo, Eladio (B'alam). 2008. The family of complex predicates in Q'anjob'al (Maya); their syntax and meaning. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.

