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The effects of K'ichean/Mamean contact in Sipakapense*

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1. Introduction

Sipakapense is a K'ichean language in the western highlands of Guatemala, spoken in an area southwest of Huehuetenango (see map next page). Sipakapense was first reported in the literature by Kaufman (1976a) and has been briefly discussed in the work of Kaufman (1976b), Campbell (1977), and DuBois (1981). The relationships between languages in the Eastern Mayan family are given below:

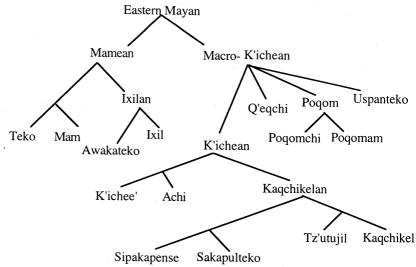
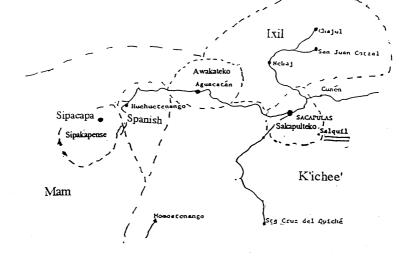


Figure 1: Genetic relationships within Eastern Mayan¹

Sipakapense has undergone numerous changes due to language contact and exhibits a number of linguistic features that cannot be explained through internal change. Because of these changes (and Sipakapense's geographic isolation from other K'ichean languages), Sipakapense is the most unique of all K'ichean languages.² In this paper, I will outline the effects of language contact in Sipakapense. I propose three distinct periods of contact: an early period of contact between Proto-Ixilan and Proto-Sakapulteko-Sipakapense (PSS), an ongoing and intense period of contact with Mam, and a period of contact with K'ichee'.³



Present location of languages discussed

1.1. Historical background

The Kaqchikelan languages were most likely separated into Sipakapense-Sakapulteko and Tz'utjuil-Kaqchikel by the westward expansion of the K'ichee' (see DuBois 1981: 84-6). According to Sipakapense oral history (Ambrosio Zacinto 1995), the Sipakapense and Sakapultekos were orinially a single people, living in the area of present day Sacapulas, with the Sipakapense occupying Saquil, just to the southeast of Sacapulas (see map above). The Sipakapense were forced to leave Saquil because of land disputes and moved into the Mam region to their Later, during the 14th century, the K'ichee' ruler K'iq'ab' current home. (Q'uik'ab'), moved westward, conquering the Mam capital of Saqulew (Zaculeu).4 Even after the K'ichee' left the Mam region, the K'ichee' and Sipakapense regions shared a border until fairly recently, when this area became primarily Spanish speaking (Coiti et al. 1992).

This historical situation has placed Sipakapense in close contact with several other Mayan langauges. When the Sipakapense inhabited Saquil, PSS was in direct contact with an early form of Ixil (a Mamean language). After moving to the area of Sipacapa, Sipakapense entered a long period of intense contact with Mam. From the 14th to 20th centuries, Sipakapense was also in contact with K'ichee', although this

contact was probably less intense than that between Mam and Sipakapense.

2.0 Proto-Sakapulteko-Sipakapense contact with Proto-Ixilan

Sipakapense and Sakapulteko share several borrowings from Mamean (in particular from Proto-Ixilan) which are not found in other K'ichean langauges. These words are not found in Mam, which is understandable, as there is no historical evidence for contact between Mam and PSS. These borrowings are most readily explained as resulting from contact between PSS and an early form of Ixil or Proto-Ixilan, a branch of Mamean distinct from Mam. Two examples of such borrowings are given in Table 1.

Language (Subgrouping)	"skunk"	"buzzard"
Sipakapense (Kaqchikelan)	ksiy	qu?s
Sakapulteko (Kaqchikelan)	kisiy	
Ixil (Mamean-Ixilan)	t∫isi (>*kisi)	qu?s
Mam (Mamean)	∫i?wil	k'uts/lo∫
Awakateko (Mamean-Ixilan)	∫iwl	qu?s, kilit∫
K'ichee' (K'ichean)	paar	k'ut∫
Kaqchikel (Kaqchikelan)	par	k'ut∫

Table 1: Eastern Mayan words for "skunk" and "buzzard"⁵

2.1 Negative potential marker

Negation in K'ichean languages is typically marked with a particle /ma/ or /man/ preceding whatever is being negated, often (but not always) in combination with the irrealis marker /ta(χ)/, which follows whatever is negated, as shown in example 1, from Tz'utujil⁶.

1) Tz'utujil (Dayley 1985: 321): Ma ∫+ø+b'e ta χar Aa Lu?.

NEG CMP+3sABS+go IRR DET CLS Pedro.

Pedro didn't go.

Thus, K'ichean languages (other than Sakapulteko and Sipakapense) maintain the Proto-Mayan negative particle *ma (Kaufman 1964: 124). In both Sipakapense and Sakapulteko, this negative particle has been lost. In Sakapulteko, the majority of negative forms use only the K'ichean irrealis particle (which has been reanalyzed as a negative marker). (Negation in Sipakapense is further discussed in section 3.3 below):

2) Sakapulteko (DuBois 1981: 241): feelaa tax. silk NEG
It is not silk.

Both Sipakapense and Sakapulteko have specific forms of negation for potential or imperative constructions. In these forms, the optative/hortative aspect markers are not used, with both the potential and negative meanings carried by a single prefix. The form of the negative potential is /mi?/ in Sipakapense and /m(i)-/ in Sakapulteko:

3) Sakapulteko (DuBois 1981: 165): mi+ø+peet+aq

NPT+3sABS+come+PFM

Let him not come!

4) Sipakapense⁸: Mi? $+\phi+n+tz'ul+i\chi$

NPT+3sABS+1sERG+hug+DRV

I won't hug him/her.

While distinct structures for different types of negation do not occur in other K'ichean languages, they are found in the Mamean family. Although Ixil does not contain a particle that corresponds exactly to the negative potential markers in Sipakapense and Sakapulteko, it does contain a negative marker /mih/ which is used in negations meaning "neither" or "none at all," shown in example 5) below:

5) Ixil (Ayres 1991: 194)¹⁰: Mih va?q vinaq opoon t tyeempo. NEG DET people arrive PREP time Nobody arrived on time.

The particle for verb negation in Ixil, /ye?/, is an innovation. Comparison with Mam, in which all forms of negation (including a special form for negative potential) begin with /mi-/ suggests that the /mih/ form in Ixil is a reflex of the Proto-Mamean negative particle. It is probable that at some earlier stage of Ixil, the marker /mih/ had a broader range of uses, possibly including negative potential constructions. Thus, the negative potential marker in Sipakapense and Sakapulteko may have also been borrowed from contact during an earlier stage in the history of Ixil.

2.2 The interrogative particle

In addition to these borrowings, the interogative particle in Sipakapense is a borrowing from Mamean, but not from Mam itself. In Sipakapense, yes/no questions are formed by the addition of the particle /mu/ at the begining of a sentence. In all other K'ichean languages (including Sakapulteko), these questions are formed with a particle /la/ (also at the beginning of a sentence). The /mu/ particle in Sipakapense is most likely a borrowing from Ixil, in which yes/no questions are formed with a particle /ma/ or /mo/11, as in example 6):

6) Ixil (Ayres 1991: 184): Ma la b'en a∫ s vi'?

INT POT go 2sABS REL 1s

Are you going with me? (Nebaj dialect)

The /mu/ particle in Sipakapense is used in exactly the same way:

7) Sipakapense:

Mu $\int k+i\int+b'e+k$ $t\int waq$ $t\int+\chi ay$?

INT FUT+2pABS+go+PFM tomorrow PREP+house

Are you going home tomorrow?

As this /mu/ particle must be explained as a borrowing and it does not occur in Mam, its presence in Sipakapense suggests that it may be another influence from contact with Ixil. These examples suggest that PSS was in contact with Pre-Ixil (or Proto-Ixilan) for several reasons. The presence of the negative potential marker in both Sakapulteko and Sipakapense suggests that the borrowing occurred before the two langauges separated. In addition, Sipakapense would not have direct contact with either Sakapulteko or Ixil after the point at which the Sipakapense left Ixil. Finally, these forms do not occur in any of the dialects of Mam or K'ichee' that are geographically between Sipakapense and Ixil, ruling out the possibility of a later local diffusion.

3.0 The effects of Mam-Sipakapense contact

After splitting off from Sakapulteko, Sipakapense began a period of intense contact with Mam. This contact continues today and is currently increasing due to an influx of Mam speakers into the Sipakapense region. The effect of Sipakapense contact with Mam is a case of language maintenance with moderate to heavy structural borrowing (Thomason and Kaufman 1988), as Mam influences can be found at all levels of Sipakapense grammar. This section outlines these influences.

3.1 Lexical borrowings

Sipakpense contains numerous lexical borrowings from Mam which do not occur in Sakapulteko (or any other K'ichean language). Some examples are given in table 2 below, with corresponding examples from Kaqchikel for comparison with K'ichean.

Sipakapense	Mam	gloss	Kaqchikel	
yol	yoolat	to speak, converse	tsiχ	
wi?toon	wi?tan	cypress tree	k'isis	
muuχ	muuχ	cloud	suts'	
pu?t	pu?t	butterfly (Sip) moth (Mam)	mala∫, palama∫	

Table 2: Some borrowings from Mam into Sipakapense¹²

3.2 Phonology

Mam underwent a sound change of dissimilatory palatalization in which a velar stop was palatalized before short non-back (or unrounded) vowels when followed by a uvular consonant (England 1990: 224). This process spread into K'ichean languages (cf. Grimes 1969, Campbell 1974), including Sipakapense. In Sipakapense the effects of this change were subsequently undone by a further sound change in which short /a/ went to short /e/ between velar stops and uvular consonants. Hence those examples in which palatalizations due to dissimilation (i.e. short /a/ before a uvular) were regularized (becoming /e/) to fit the less marked palatalization before front vowels (which also occurs in Sipakapense). Examples include the following:

8) Sipakapense: /ike χ / [ic y e χ] "axe" (cf. K'ichee' [ic y a χ] "axe") /keq/ [c y eq] "red" (cf. K'ichee'[c y aq] "red")

In Mam, short unstressed vowels are usualy dropped before a stressed vowel (cf. England 1983, 43-4). Sipakapense has adopted this process of dropping vowels before stress (which generally falls on the last syllable of a word). Thus, many root vowels drop or surface depending on morphology:

9) Sipakapense: i∫iím "corn" w+∫ím "my corn" lsERG+corn

"I did it." "Do it."

Primarily due to differences in morphological structure, vowel dropping in Sipakapense produces series of up to six consecutive consonants (compared with only four in Mam):

∫t+φ+q+p∫οχ ∫t+φ+q+sb'χαχ
FUT+3sABS+1pERG+shatter
We are going to shatter it.

∫t+φ+q+sb'χαχ
FUT+3sABS+1pERG+whack
We are going to whack him/her/it.

3.3 Morphology

Although Proto-K':chean distinguished between completive and recent (or proximate) past aspects (Robertson 1992: 125), the recent past has been lost in all K'ichean languages other than Sipakapense. It is possible that the maintenance of the recent past in Sipakapense was influenced by the fact that Mam also makes a distinction between past and recent past (cf. England 1983: 162). The presence of a large number of Mam-Sipakapense bilinguals may have contributed to the retention of this aspectual distinction.

Negation in Sipakapense is quite different from that found in other K'ichean languages (see 3.1 above). As in Sakapulteko, the K'ichean negative particle /ma(n)/ has been lost. In Sipakapense, verbs are negative with the particle /qa(l)/,

which is not found in any other K'ichean language. ¹³ One possible source for this particle is the Mam conditional particle /qa/ ("if"). This particle can combine with /mii/ to form a negative conditional, /qamii/, which immediately precedes whatever is negated (England 1983: 244). It is possible that this particle /qa/ was borrowed into Sipakapense as a general negative marker.

3.4 Syntactc change

England (1991) has reconstructed Proto-Mayan word order as VOS, with VSO allowed for certain marked objects. The majority of Mamean languages (all but the Cotzal dialect of Ixil) have a fixed VSO word order. The spread of VSO word order in Mamean is part of a local diffusion of a variety of linguistic features, including a series of retroflex consonants and the use of noun classifiers (England 1992: 45-57). Although Sipakapense is located in the area of this diffusion, the only diffusion feature found in Sipakapense is the change to VSO word order, which is not a complete change.

Word order in K'ichean languages resembles that proposed for Proto-Mayan. In K'ichean languages, VOS is the predominant order, with VSO typically occurring when both subject and object are definite NPs. In addition, K'ichean languages often allow for either VSO or VOS word order when a sentence contains one definite and one indefinite NP, with the definite NP always interpreted as the subject. Sipakapense maintains this variability for sentences with definite subjects and indefinite objects, but has moved to VSO word order in all other cases. Thus, Sipakapense has VSO order for the vast majority of instances in which other K'ichean languages would have VOS order. Table 3 below contains exmaples of the word order found with different combinations of definite and indefinite NPs in Sipakapense and Tz'utujil (which is typical of the patterns found in K'ichean languages).

Constituents		Possible word orders			
		Sipakapense		Tz'utujil	
Subject	Object	VOS	VSO	VOS	VSO
Definite	Definite	*	V	*	\checkmark
Definite	Indefinite ("χun")	V	V	1	√
Indefinite ("χun")	Indefinite ("χun")	*14	*	*	*
Indef ("ri/xa ¹⁵ xun") Definite	Indef ("ri/χa χun")	*	√	$\sqrt{}$	*
	Indef ("ri/χa χun")	*	1	√	*

Table 3: Word order in Sipakapense and Tz'utujil¹⁶

4.0 K'ichee' contact with Sipakapense

In addition to contact with Mamean languages, Sipakapense exhibits the effects of contact with K'ichee'. Sipakapense actually seems to have had more influence from K'ichee' than Sakapulteko, even though speakers of Sakapulteko have been in a contact situation with K'ichee' that is as intense as the contact between Sipakapense and Mam. As described by DuBois (1981: 66-70), K'ichee'-Sakapulteko contact is restricted to lexical borrowings. In contrast, Sipakapense has borrowed two morphosyntactic elements from K'ichee': a tense-aspect marker and the comitative relational noun.

4.1 The optative/imperative prefix

Robertson (1992: 68) has reconstructed the optative/imperative prefix in Proto-Mayan as *tyi+ before 3sABS, *q+ before 1pABS and *ki+ before other persons. In K'ichean languages, the *q- form has been lost through paradigm levelling. In Kaqchikelan languages the optative/imperative prefix before 3sABS became t(i)+, while the form for other persons remains k(i)+. In K'ichee', the corresponding forms are $t \int (i)+$ and k(i)+, respectively, although some K'ichee' dialects use $t \int (i)+$ for all optative/imperative constructions (as in the example below).

- 11) Optatives/imperatives in K'ichean:
- a) Kaqchikel (Garcia Matzar et al. 1992: 77):

k+in+a+t∫ap+a?

"Grab me!"

OPT+1sABS+2sERG+grab+OPT

t+ø+a+t∫ap+a?

"Grab him/her/it!"

OPT+3sABS+2sERG+grab+OPT

b) K'ichee' (Suy Tum 1988: 55):

 $t\int +in+a+t\int 'ay+a?$

"Hit me!"

OPT+1sABS+2sERB+hit+OPT

t∫+ø+a+t∫'ay+a? OPT+3sABS+2sERG+hit+OPT "Hit it/him/her!"

The K'ichee' form $t \int (i) + was$ borrowed into Sipakapense, replacing the Kaqchikelan t(i) + in optative and imperative constructions (before 3sABS). The original Kaqchikelan t(i) + was maintained, however, taking a secondary dubative or dislocative meaning. Thus, t(i) + is used to mark uncertainty (without the desire conveyed by the optative) or to indicate that the action conveyed by the verb takes place in a location other than the present location of the speaker. The distinction between these forms is not found in other K'ichean langauges.

12) Sipakapense: k+at+wr+oq

OPT+2sABS+sleep+OPT "Sleep!"

 $t + \phi + a + t \gamma + a$? OPT+3sABS+2sERG+eat+OPT "Eat it!"

 $T+\phi+in+t\chi+a$?

 $\chi ru\chi t + \phi + pe ri t \int iit \int ?$

DBL+3sABS+eat+OPT

When DBL+3sABS+come DET bus

"I'm going to eat (trans.) over there."

"When is the bus coming?"

4.2 The comitative relational noun

Another borrowing from K'ichee' into Sipakapense comitative/instrumental relational noun /+uk'/, "with X" shown in 13) below. As all other Kaqchikelan languages have /+ik'in/ forms for this relational noun, the presence of /+uk'/ in Sipakapense is best explained as a borrowing from K'ichee'.

13) Comitative relational nouns

a) Sakapulteko:

w+ik'iin 1sERG+"with"

with me (DuBois 1981: 192)

b) Kaqchikel:

ru+k'in/r+ik'in 3sERB+"with"

with her/him/it (Rodríguez Guaján 1994)

c) K'ichee':

r+uk'

3sERG+with with her/him/it (López Ixcoy 1994: 78) d) Sipakapense: r+uk'

3sERG+with with her/him/it

5.0 Conclusion

The above examples demonstrate the ways in which Sipakapense has been effected by contact with other Mayan languages. In addition, these data presented here have implications for the genetic classification of the K'ichean family. The Kaqchikelan branch presented in the tree in section 1 of this paper (originally proposed in DuBois 1981) has not been widely adopted by Mayanists, who often follow Campbell's (1977) original assertion that Sipakapense and Sakapulteko are dialects of K'ichee'. However, the correspondence between the K'ichee' and Sipakapense optative/imperative marker (presented in section 4.1) is best understood as a borrowing (rather than some shared attribute of K'ichee' dialects) both because all other Kaqchikelan languages display a different marker (t(i)+), but also because the original Kaqchikelan marker is maintained with a secondary meaning. This adds to the evidence for Kaqchikelan which DuBois (1981) presents based on internal change. Thus, studies of internal (genetic) change as well as studies of contact phenomena both contribute to understanding the full history of any given language family.

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1 This tree follows Kaufman (1974) with revisions from DuBois (1981). It should be noted that Robertson (1992, 123) argues for a different classification for Mamean, suggesting that Awakateko is closer to Mam and Teko than to Ixil. As Robertson's claim is based solely on the structures of the verbal complex in these languages, I have retained Kaufman's classification for the time being. Also, there are arguments for classifying K'ichee' and Achi as a single language (Sis Iboy and López Ixcoy 1992). Similarly it has been argued that Poqomchi and Poqomam should be classified as a single language (Benito Perez 1992).

2 In a preliminary mutual intelligibility experiment (Cuz 1993), Sipakapense was the least intelligible to speakers of all other K'ichean languages.

3 Of course, there has also been a period of intense contact with Spanish from the mid-1500's to the present, the effects of which are beyond the scope of this paper.

4 Carmack 1981, 135-37) discusses this campaign. The original manuscript sources include Recinos 1984 (1957), 140 ff, and the Popul Vuh (e.g. Tedlock 1985, 213-6).

5 These data are primarily from Dienhart 1990. Throughout this paper, original transcriptions are transliterated into IPA.

6 Abbreviation conventions are as follows: ABS = absolutive, ERG = ergative, CLS = classifier, POT = potential aspect, REC = recent past, OPT = optative/imperative aspect, HOR = hortative aspect, CMP = completive aspect, DBL = dubatitve/dislocative aspect, NPT = negative potential aspect, FUT = future aspect, PREP = preposition, REL = relational noun, INT = interogative particle, NEG = negative, IRR = irrealis, CAUS = causative, DIR = directional, DET = determiner, and PFM = phrase final marker, DRV = derived transitive verb ending

7 The n in the /man/ form found in many dialects of K'ichean langauges is most likely due to a tendency to maintain CVC syllable structure by adding a coda consonant to CV roots, usually either a nasal or a copy of the onset consonant as in Proto-K'ichean "mother" = *tsu, Sipakapense = tsuts, Proto-K'ichean

"man" = *atsi, Kaqchikel = atsin. For more detail, see DuBois 1985.

8 All Sipakapense data are from field notes collected by the author during 1994-1995.

9 For example Mam contains four distinct negative constructions corresponding to different types of negation. For details, see England 1983: 244-8.

10 Ixil glosses are my own based on my understanding of Ayres' grammar.

11 Ayres (1991, 184) notes that sentences using /mo/ are not common, but does not discuss the particular distinctions between the use of /mo/ and /ma/.

12 Mam data from Maldonado Andrés et al. 1986, Kaqchikel examples from Rodríguez Guaján et al 1990.

- 13 Poqomam does have a prefix /qa?/ which is used to form questions (e.g. qa?sa, "what/how"; qa?keh, "who")(Benito Pérez 1994, 111), but the similarity with Sipakapense seems coincidental.
- 14 Sentences with both subject and object marked with " χ un" are ambiguous and can only be interpreted with clarity when the subject is topicalized (under SVO word order).
- 15 Sipakapense $ri \chi un$ corresponds with Tz'utujil $\chi a \chi vn$. Both combine the definite $(ri/\chi a)$ and indefinite (χun) articles to indicate an indefinite.
- 16 Tz'utujil data from England (1991).
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