

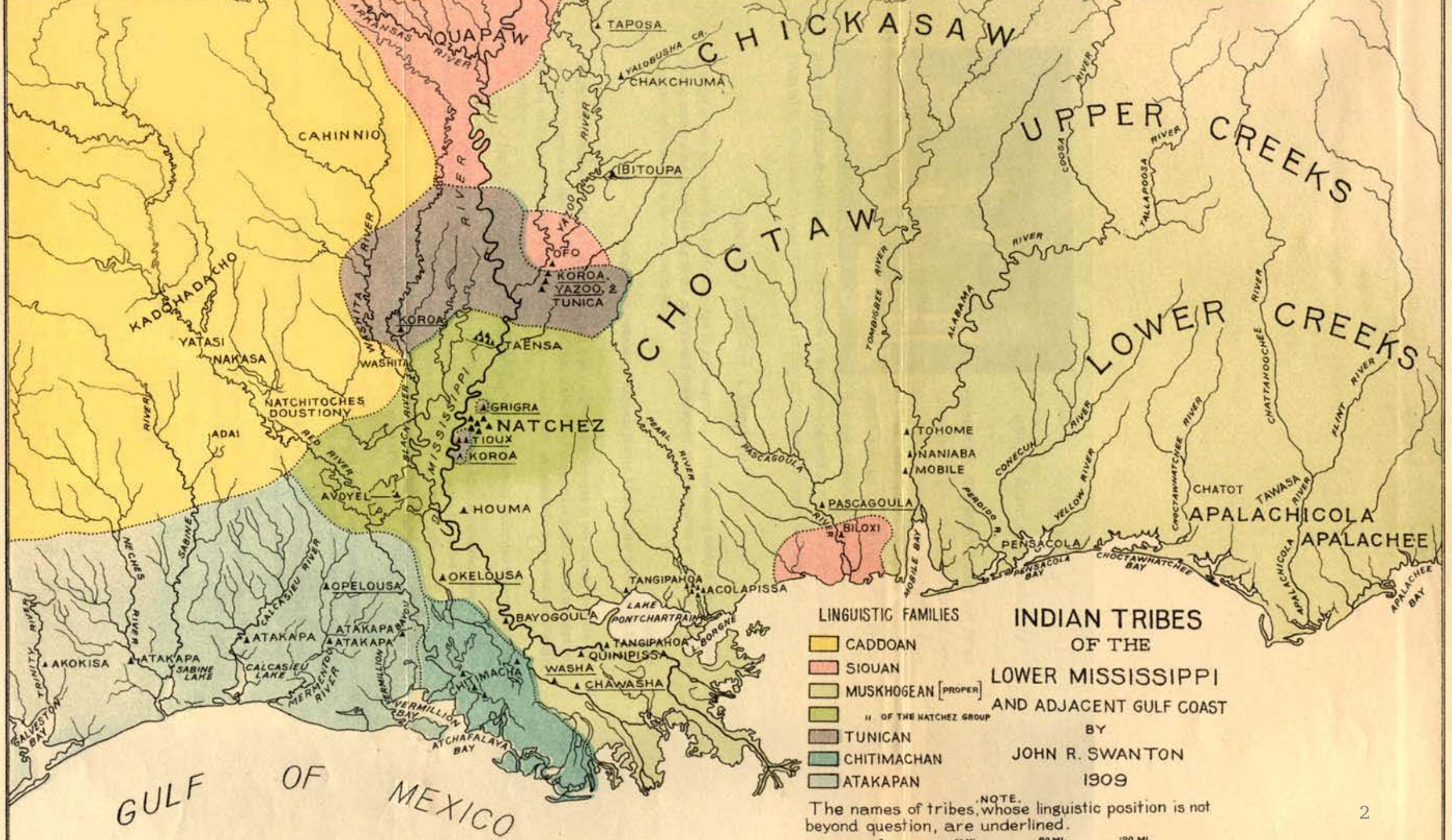
Nominal alignment in Chitimacha

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Documentary Materials

- 1802: Jefferson List (Duralde, Jefferson)
- 1881–1882: lexicon, a few texts (Gatschet)
- 1907–1921: dozen texts, sketch grammar (Swanton)
- 1930–1934: 120 texts, 3,500-word lexicon, 200-page grammar (Swadesh)

Nominal Marking: /hiš/ & /(n)k/

“Nouns are uninflected except for certain ones, including kinship terms and several others, which distinguish singular and plural.”
(Swadesh 1939:101)

- Swadesh and Swanton both describe various “postpositions” that sound suspiciously like case markers

Swadesh (1939) on /hiš/

1. indicating subject of an active verb
2. by means of [instrument]
3. made out of, consisting of [material]
4. occasionally used in place of *kin* ‘with’ [postposition]

“In connection with the first meaning, it is to be noted that the subject of active verbs need not be marked by any formal sign: *hiš* is a device for indicating the subject unambiguously. *-nk* is also used.” (Swadesh 1939:120)

Swadesh (1939) on /hiš/

- ergative ?
- instrumental > ergative grammaticalization pathway ?
- discourse optional ?

Swanton (1920) on /*(n)k*/

“*-nk*, *-nki*, *-k*, or *-ki*. This is very widely used and covers all those locative relations expressed in English by *at*, *to*, *in*, *into*, etc. The form in *-nk* appears after vowels; the form in *-k* after consonants.” (Swanton 1920:51–52)

Swadesh (1939) on /*(n)k*/

-(n)ki [postposition]

1. spatial location ('at, in, on, among')
2. temporal location, used with terms referring to temporal periods ('at, in, during'), and with predications ('when, while')
3. partitive ('of, from, among')

“The spatial locative notion includes simple location and the indication of the part of an entity to which an action applies or affects. *-(n)ki* is used with verbs expressing or implying movement from, through, or to, to give a combined meaning of ‘from, from in, from at, through, to, into onto’. In the simple allative sense, *hup* [postposition ‘to’] is commonly used, but *ki* may be used instead.” (Swadesh 1939:116)

Swadesh (1939) on /-(n)k/

1. -k “emphatic”
2. -(n)k “general relationship” (/k/ after Cs, /nk/ after Vs)
3. “-(n)k is used mainly in postvocalic position as an equivalent of either *hiš* or *hup* [‘to’] and occasionally for *ki* [‘in, at, on’]. It is very common as a substitute for *hiš* or *hup* in cases where no ambiguity is likely because of the nature of the context.

(1) ?unk’uš nus **hup** ču:-k’ = š ?unk’uš k’ast’a-**nk** čuy-i
one west **to** go-SS = TOP one north-**??** go-NF.SG
‘one went toward the west and one went toward the north’

Swadesh (1939) on /*(n)k*/

4. “*-k, -tk* (after /*n*/) indicates mild contrast or emphasis (‘on the other hand’). The meaning is often so attenuated that one can hardly be certain of the basis for use. It occurs only with terms and is apparently limited to use only after a consonant. Formally it coincides in at least some phonologic positions with *-(n)k* and it is often difficult to know which of the two is involved in a given context. This is especially true in view of the semantic weakness of the present postposition. In the cases where the use of *-(n)k* is optional (marking the subject), one is quite at a loss.” (Swadesh 1939:134)

Swadesh (1939) on / $(n)k$ /

- two forms in complementary distribution ?
- one morpheme with multiple functions ?
- optionally marks subject (sometimes substitutes for *hiš*)
- absolutive ?

Problems

(2) kiči heč'in **hiš** we ša:hken hus = up hi nahw-i?i
woman holy **??** DET basket 3SG = to AND throw-NF.SG
'the holy woman threw that basket at her'

(3) we kiči nahc'ip'u hus ko: hi ?am-i
DET woman young 3SG aunt DIST see-NF.SG
'the girl saw her aunt'

(4) we siksi-**nk** **hiš** hesik'en ?apš heyšt-i?i
DET eagle-**??** **??** again back pick.up-NF.SG
'the eagle picked him up again'

Problems

(5) ?iš-**k** him-**k** hac-k'a
1SG-**??** 2SG-**??** measure-DES
'I want to measure you'

hiš

- 424 occurrences of this form
- corpus: 3,528 clause chains (each with multiple clauses)

= *hiš* INSTR

(6) ko:š = **hiš** k'et-ki-:k'
stick = **INSTR** kill-1SG.P-SS
'they would have struck me **with** a switch'

(7) ku: heč'in = **hiš** hi popšmi-na?a
water holy = **INSTR** AND splash-NF.PL
'they splashed it **with** holy water'

= *hiš* INSTR

(8) ?uč ke ?iš = up ša:hken čipniš k'an = **hiš**
someone 1SG = to basket finished NEG = **INSTR**

?ap neh-ki-na?a
VEN strike-1SG.P-NF.PL

‘someone struck me **with** an unfinished basket’

(9) we ka:cpa = nk'iš = **hiš** ?am k'ust-k
DET stick = only = **INSTR** thing eat-SS

‘**with** only that stick, I shall (be able to) eat something’

= *hiš* INSTR

(10) si:c = **hiš** wa:k'ipi ?uči-:k = š
moss = **INSTR** pillow do-SS = TOP
'he made a pillow **with** moss'

(11) hus kanin = **hiš** wey hi ?am-i
3SG eye = **INSTR** DEM DIST see-NF.SG
'he had seen that **with** his (own) eyes'

hiš INSTR

- Accounts for 65 of the 424 occurrences of *hiš*

hiš ERG

- Remaining 357 instances of *hiš*
- Only occur with 2- or 3-argument verbs
- No clear cases of *hiš* marking the subject of a patientive verb

hiš ERG: Subject of Transitive

(12) ʔo:š = **hiš** we kipi kap k'ušmi-naʔa
buzzard = **ERG** DET meat up eat-NF.PL
'the buzzards ate the meat'

(13) we haksik'am = hiš hus kani = š ʔapš huktmi-ʔi
DET young.man = **ERG** 3SG eye = TOP together close-NF.sg
'the young man closed her eyes'

hiš ERG: Subject of Ditransitive

(14) we pu:p = **hiš** na:kšp'u hečma-?-i
DET rabbit = **ERG** children care.for-BEN-NF.SG
'the rabbit took care of the children for them'

(15) we pu:p = **hiš** hus po: č'iwin
DET rabbit = **ERG** 3SG hay
neki šiš k'amin nuku = nki kap pehčt-i?i
elephant back = LOC up put-NF.SG
'the rabbit put his hay on the elephant's back'

hiš ERG with activated participants

(16) panš = **hiš** k'et-k
people = **ERG** kill-SS
'some people had killed him'

(17) wey = š = **hiš** miš ʔap ʔam-pa-m-kuy-iʔi
DEM = TOP = **ERG** way VEN see-CAUS-PLACT-1PL.P-NF.SG
'he showed us the way'

hiš with proper names

(18) we Karankawe = **hiš** kap ʔo:knemi-:k'
DET Karankawa = **ERG** STAT steal-SS
'the Karankawa [people] would steal them [the children]'

(19) Francis = **hiš** natma-:-ki [...]
Francis = **ERG** tell-BEN-1SG.P [COMP]
'Francis told me [...]'

hiš with independent pronouns

(20) ?iš = **hiš** wayt-iki
1SG = **ERG** surpass-1SG.A
'I had beaten him'

(21) him = **hiš** ?apš kim-pa-ki [...]
2SG = **ERG** REFL believe-CAUS-1SG.P [COMP]
'you remind me [...]'

Does not occur with third person independent pronouns

hiš with different NP types

Supernatural

- (22) kutnehin = **ERG** ?apš nahw-i
God = **ERG** back send-NF.SG
'God sent him back'

Human

- (23) panš ?ašinč'at'i ?apš ču:mam = **hiš**
person old.man about traveler = **ERG**
we ka:cpa = š ?ap ?a:-ki-?i
DET stick = TOP VEN give-1SG.P-NF.SG
'an old man gave me a stick'

hiš with different NP types

Animal

(24) ʔukš = **hiš** ha kičant'a = š k'aht-iʔi
snake = **ERG** DEM old.woman = TOP bite-NF.SG
'a snake has bitten this old woman'

Indefinite

(25) neškun = **hiš** wa:č-čuy-i-nk'
someone = **ERG** marry-IRR-NF.SG-DEB
'someone must marry her'

hiš with different NP types

Inanimates

(26) ?iš mahči = š ku: = k = **hiš** kap ni:-ki
1SG tail = TOP water = ?? = **ERG** STAT soak-1SG.P
'the water soaked my tail'

hiš with modifiers

Negation / Indefinites

- (28) ʔuč = hiš k'an ka:kw-iʔi ʔašt [...]
who = ERG NEG know-NF.SG how [COMP]
'nobody knows how [...]'

Numerals

- (29) haksik'ank = hiš ʔupa we k'imniš-k
young.men = ERG two DET young.girl-LOC.NZR
ʔap tut-k ʔam-ʔiš-na
VEN go-SS see-IPFV.NF.PL
'the two young men came to see the girl'

hiš with verbs of speaking

- In a sample of 200 instances of *hiš* (including instrumental uses), 111 (55%) occur with verbs of speaking ('say', 'tell', 'answer', 'ask', etc.).
- Characters are taking turns speaking, frequently switching the active topic.

hiš with verbs of speaking

(27)

ni ti:km = iš = **hiš** wey te:t-i?i.

Governor = TOP = **ERG** DET say-NF.SG

‘The Governor said that [aforementioned thing].’

wetkš ni ti:km = iš = **hiš** ni wopm-i?i, [...].

then Governor = TOP = **ERG** DEF ask [COMP]

‘The Governor asked, [...]’

hiš with verbs of speaking

wetkš heki ?atkank = **hiš** te:t-i?i, [...]
 then minister = **ERG** say-NF.SG [COMP]
 ‘The minister said, [...]

tutk we ni ti:km = iš = **hiš**, k’ayi, te:t-i?i, [...]
 then DET Governor = TOP = **ERG** no say-NF.SG [COMP]
 ‘The Governor said, “No, [...]”’

hiš in discourse

- *hiš* is discourse optional
- Not many contexts for it to occur in anyway
- Continuing topics are omitted from the clause
- When NPs are overt, *hiš* (or *-(n)k*) tends to appear
- Especially when both arguments are animate
- Never appears with third person pronouns
- Of the 89 cases of *hiš* with non-speech verbs, 77 (86.5%) involve a change in the activated topic

/(n)k/ forms

- -(n)k Locative Nominalizer
- =(n)ki Locative Postposition
- -(n)k Agent/Subject Nominalizer
- =(n)k Case Marker (Nominative)

Will show mainly /nk/ rather than /k/ forms (easier to find)

-(n)k Locative Nominalizer

- (28) še:ni-**nk** hup hi ničw-i?i
pond-**LOC** to_{PP} AND move.to.water-NF.SG
'he came to the edge of a pond'
- (29) we še:ni waʔa-**nk** hi peš-i?i
DET pond other-**LOC** AND fly-NF.SG
'he flew toward the opposite side of the pond'
- (30) ʔasi = š ha-**nk** ʔap nenšw-i?i
man = TOP PROX.DEM-**LOC** VEN cross.water-NF.SG
'man came over here [crossing water]'

-(n)k Locative Nominalizer

(31) k'ast'a-**nk** hi t'ut-na?a
north.wind-**LOC** AND go-NF.PL
'they went toward the north'

(32) we ti:km = iš hus hana-**nk** we panš hi ko:m-i?i
DET Governor = TOP 3SG house-**LOC** DET people AND call-NF.SG
'the Governor called the people to his house'

-(n)k Locative Nominalizer

(33) we ʔašinč'at'a = š hus hi-ʔi-**nk** kas čuy-i
DET old.man 3SG be-NF.SG-**LOC** back go-NF.SG
'the old man went back home'

(34) we pu:p paňš naʔa-**nk** hi ču-:k' = š
DET rabbit people be(NF.PL)-**LOC** AND go-SS = TOP
'the rabbit went to some people (lit. 'where the people were)'

= (n)ki Locative Postposition (V_)

(35) ʔamč'-a:š-i sa = **nki**
do.what-IPFV-NF.SG DIST.DEM = **LOC**
'what are you doing there?'

(36) ʔiš = k ku: keta = **nki** ʔap ni:-k-'š-iki
1SG = ?? water side = **LOC** VEN to.water-SS-IPFV-1SG.A
'I have come to the water's side'

= *(n)ki* Locative Postposition (C_)

(37) kaš kas niči-ču-k hu:h = **ki**
clam back put.in.water-IRR-1SG.A lake = **LOC**
'I shall put clams back into the lake'

(38) we ti:km = iš ʔakšuš šuš = **ki** hi peh-k
DET Governor = TOP cypress tree = **LOC** AND be-SS
'the Governor got up on a cypress tree'

= *(n)ki* Locative Postposition (V?_)

- (39) ku: =ki hi nikin-ču-ki-nk'
water =LOC AND drop.in.water-IRR-1SG.A-DEB
'I'll have to drop you into the water'
- (40) we še:ni si: =ki hi tey-k'-š-i?uy-i-n
DET pond edge =LOC DIST sit-SS-IPFV-NF.SG-CONT
'he sat by the edge of the pond'

Aside: *-nki* Temporal Subordinator

- = (n)ki extended its use to fully-inflected clauses
- Became a temporal subordinator for adverbial when-clauses:

kap nu:p-i-**nki** hus kut katma = š k'apt-'iš-na
STAT die-NF.SG-**TEMP** 3SG brain = TOP take-IPFV-NF.PL
'they take his brain when he dies'

-(n)k Agent / Subject Nominalizer

Attaches to verbs, especially after pluractional *-ma*

(41) huyk'i we paň ni:k-ma-**nk** ʔuč-a:š-naʔa
good DET people be.sick-PLACT-**A.NZR** do-IPFV-NF.PL
'they made sick people well'

(42) t'ut-ma-**nk** his nuyt-iʔi
go-PLACT-**A.NZR** response answer-NF.SG
'he answered the travelers'

-(n)k Agent / Subject Nominalizer

(43) ney heč-ma-**nk** = hiš kunuk'u hi te:t-iʔi, [...]
land watch-PLACT-**A.NZR** = ERG QUOT AND say-NF.SG [COMP]
'the land-watcher (dove) said, [...]'

(44) hesik'en ču:-ču-ki-nk' wašti ka:yč'i-ma-**nk** = ki
again go-IRR-1SG.A-DEB day be.three-PLACT-**A.NZR** = LOC
'I must go again on the third day'

-(n)k Agent / Subject Nominalizer

(45) ʔuč =hiš wayti-čuy-i-**nk** we k'imniš wa:č-čuy
who =ERG win-IRR-NF.SG-**A.NZR** DET girl marry-IRR(NF.SG)
'whoever wins will marry the girl'

(46) him waši ki:ct-i-**nk**
2SG finger point-NF.SG-**A.NZR**
'your index finger' (lit. 'pointing finger')

= *(n)k* Case Marker (Nominative)

- Identified all the other functions of /nk/ first
- Then looked at remaining /nk/ forms (unknown # of /k/ forms)
- Again, identified easy cases first (SIMIL, SING, INSTR)

= (n)k + *te:t* Similative ('like, as')

39 occurrences in corpus, nearly all with =š TOP as well

(47) huyk'i k'an hi-ʔi = **nk** = š te:t ču-:š-iʔi
good NEG be-NF.SG = **SIMIL** = TOP like go-IPFV-NF.SG
'I used to do as the old man [did]'

(48) heyč'i husa = **nk** = š te:t hi ʔuymi-naʔa
ten five = **SIMIL** = TOP like DIST reach-NF.PL
'about fifty reached there'

= (n)k + = (n)k'iš Singulative ('just, only, until')

7 instances in corpus

(49) ki:cti ?unk'u = **nk** = k'iš nam č'aht-'iš-i
finger one = **SING** = only brand press-IPFV-NF.SG
'she embosses only one finger'

(50) ?iš wey čun ?apš kima-ka = **nk** = k'iš natm-iki
1SG DEM about REFL believe-1SG.P = **SING** = just tell-1SG.A
'I told just what I remember about it'

= *(n)k* Instrumental

- Functionally equivalent to instrumental *hiš*
- Occurs 72 times in corpus (instrumental *hiš* occurs 66 times)

= (n)k Instrumental

(51) ney t'a:pa = nk hani hapšč'i-čuy-i
earth dirty = INSTR house build-IRR-NF.SG
'you will build a house of mud'

(52) ?ampi = nk kin k'ušmi-:t'i-naka
what = INSTR with eat-IRR-1PL.A
'with what shall we eat it?'

= (n)k + = hiš Instrumental

(53) we č'ah=k šuš tiya-nk hi čuy-i?i
DET bird=?? tree close-LOC AND go-NF.SG

pa:nt'in ?unk'u = nk = hiš
wing one = INSTR = INSTR

'the bird went with one wing close to a tree'

(54) hus k'ampa = nk = hiš c'a:t-k
3SG lead = INSTR = INSTR thrust-SS

'he thrust with his lead'

= $(n)k$ Nominative

- After examining the functions covered so far, 383 instances remained
- Expect an absolutive function, in contrast to ergative
- But: Appears on subjects of intransitives and transitives

= (n)k Nominative with Predicate Cxns

(55) ?iš = **k** ?am keysti = nki hi-ki
1SG = **NOM** some trouble = LOC be-1SG
'I am in some difficulty'

(56) ni ti:km = iš ?uyp'i = **nk** pi:hni-:k' = š či-?uy-i
Governor = TOP blood = **NOM** be.red-SS = TOP be-IPFV-NF.SG
'the Governor's blood was red'

= (n)k Nominative with Intransitives

(57) ka:yč'i = nk = š ʔapš t'ut-k
three = **NOM** = TOP back go-SS
'three came back'

(58) ʔiš = k č'akš-iki k'an
1SG = **NOM** lie-1SG.A NEG
'I am not lying'

= (n)k Nominative with Transitives

(59) we na:kšp'u=š we ʔašinč'at'a =nk nuhčpam-a:s-i
DET children DET old.man =NOM chase-IPFV-NF.SG
'the old man chased the youngsters'

(60) ʔiš =k ʔo:ksni-ču-k
1SG =NOM steal-IRR-1SG.A
'I shall steal it'

= (n)k Nominative & Transitivity

(61)

we ʔašinč'at'i ʔaseypa = **nk** ʔapš kay-i-š,
DET old.man brother = **NOM** REFL wake-NF.SG-COND
'when the old man's brother awoke,'

we ka:či = š hus ʔaseypa = **nk** k'apt-k
DET owl = TOP 3SG brother = **NOM** take-SS
'his brother took the owl'

= (n)k Nominative with Inanimates

(62) kaya = **nk** ne ʔuš ʔamin ʔučp-i ka:han
rain = **NOM** even 1PL anything do-GER unable
‘even the rain could not harm us’

(63) k’ampa = **nk** ne him suʔu = nki šahčw-i k’ay-š-iʔi
bullet = **NOM** even 2SG skin = LOC go.in-NF.SG be(NEG)-IPFV-NF.SG
‘even bullets will not enter your skin’

-(n)k NOM + *hiš* ERG

- Very infrequent (~20 examples identified so far)
- Anthropomorphic animals acting on humans
- Inanimates acting on animate
- Youth acting on their social superiors (elders)
- Humans acting on supernatural beings
- Typically *also* involve a switch in activated topic

-(n)k NOM + *hiš* ERG: anthropomorphic > human

(64) we siksi = **nk** = **hiš** hesik'en ʔapš heyšt-iʔi
DET eagle = **NOM** = **ERG** again back pick.up-NF.SG
'the eagle picked him up again'

-(n)k NOM + *hiš* ERG: youth > social superior

(65) we ʔasi nahc'ip'u = **nk** = **hiš** we ʔašinč'at'i hi k'ayp-iʔi
DET man small = **NOM** = **ERG** DET old.man DIST lose-NF.SG
'the boy lost [got rid of] the old man'

-(*n*)*k* NOM + *hiš* ERG: inanimate > animate

- (66) ?iš mahči = š ku: = **k** = **hiš** kap ni:-ki
1SG tail = TOP water = **NOM** = **ERG** STAT soak-1SG.P
'the water soaked my tail'

Future Research: = $(n)k$ as Patient marker?

- Exceptions to the = $(n)k$ nominative analysis
- Marks an object of a transitive instead
- Cannot be interpreted as any other function
- Only happens with independent pronouns
- Only happens with patientive verbs / particularly affected participants
- Chitimacha exhibits agent-patient alignment for first person verbal marking

Conclusions

- Make lists! Tackle clear-cut cases first. Analyze one piece at a time if possible. (e.g. Snider 2017)
- Overlapping functions (subject/ergative, instrumental) suggest competing systems, under influence from other Southeastern languages

Huya!

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