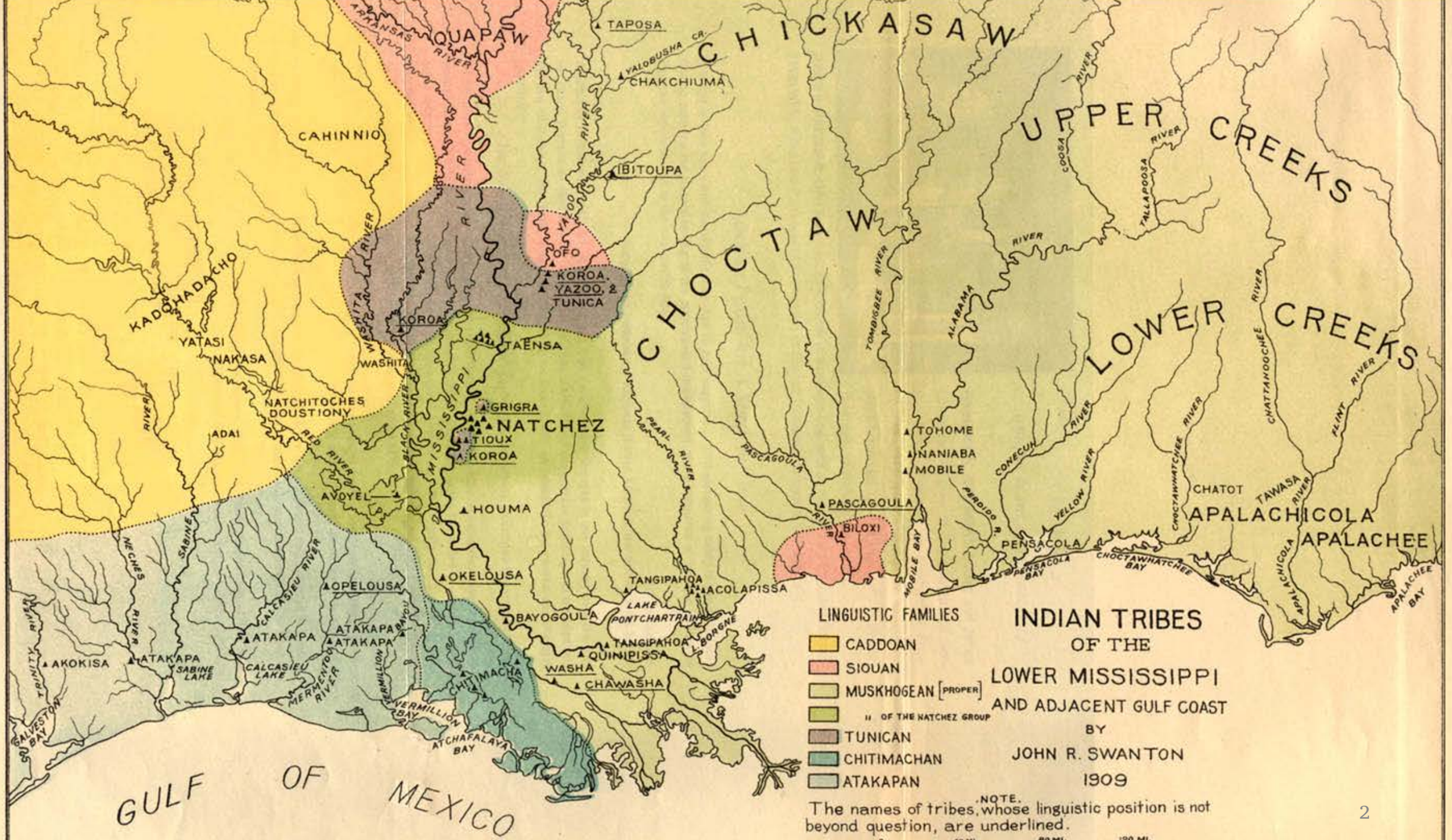# Lessons from an isolate:
Chitimacha diachrony in areal perspective

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handout and slides available at:

danielhieber.com/cv

GULF OF MEXICO

CHICKASAW

UPPER CREEKS

LOWER CREEKS

CHOCTAW

QUAPAW

TAPOSA

YALOBUSHA CR.

CHAKCHIUMA

IBITOUPA

CAHINNIO

KADOHADACHO

YATASI

NAKASA

KOROA,
YAZOO, 2.
TUNICA

OFO

KOROA

TAENSA

WASHITA

NATCHITOCHES
DOUSTIONY

ADAI

GRIGRA

NATCHEZ

TIOUX

KOROA

TOHOME

NANIABA

MOBILE

AVOYEL

HOUMA

PASCAGOULA

CHATOT

TAWASA

APALACHICOLA

APALACHEE

BILOXI

PENSACOLA

OKELOUSA

OPELOUSA

TANGIPAHOA

ACOLAPISSA

AKOKISA

ATAKAPA

ATAKAPA

ATAKAPA

ATAKAPA

CHITIMACHA

BAYOGOULA

LAKE
PONTCHARTRAIN

TANGIPAHOA

QUINIPISSA

WASHA

CHAWASHA

LINGUISTIC FAMILIES

CADDOAN	
SIOUAN	
MUSKHOGEAN [PROPER]	
" OF THE NATCHEZ GROUP	
TUNICAN	
CHITIMACHAN	
ATAKAPAN	

INDIAN TRIBES
OF THE
LOWER MISSISSIPPI
AND ADJACENT GULF COAST
BY
JOHN R. SWANTON
1909

NOTE.
The names of tribes whose linguistic position is not
beyond question, are underlined.

0   40 MI.   80 MI.   120 MI.

2
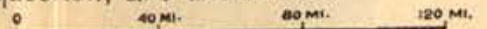
3 features of Chitimacha grammar

I.   positional auxiliary verbs ('sit', 'stand', 'lie')

II. switch-reference

III. agent-patient alignment

Positional Copular / Auxiliary Verbs

- *hi-* 'be sitting (neutral)' (default form)

- *či-* 'be standing (vertical)'

- *pe-* 'be lying (horizontal)'

hi-, default, neutral use

1) Waʔaš   his   kečmi-ːk'   **hi**-ʔi-n.
   other   3SG   wait-PTCP   **NEUT**-NF.SG-PROG
   'He **was** waiting for the others.'

2) Kaye   **hi**-ʔuy-i.
   alive   **NEUT**-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG
   'He **was** alive.'

hi-, sitting

3) Hi   tey-k'-š   **hi**-ʔuy-ki-n.
   DIST   sit(SG)-PTCP-SUBORD   **NEUT**-PAST.IPFV.1SG-PROG
   'I was **sitting** down.'

4) Tey=k'iš   **hi**-ʔi.
   sit(SG)=alone   **NEUT**-NF.SG
   'He just **sat** [there].'

či-, vertical

5) We   ʔakšuš   kuː   =ki   **či**-ʔi.

    DET   cypress   water   =LOC   **VERT**-NF.SG

    'That cypress **stands** in the water.'

6) ʔuybi=nk   piːhni-ːk'-š   **či**-ʔuy-i   we   šuš   =ki.

    blood=NOM   be.red-PTCP-SUBORD   **VERT**-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG   DET   tree   =LOC

    'The blood was red **on** that tree.'

pe-, horizontal

7) Ɂiš Ɂinčʼ Ɂatin kiš natʼi-ːkʼ-š **pe**-Ɂe sa šuš kuti=nki.
    1SG father big dog lie-PTCP-SUBORD **HORIZ**-NF.SG DEM tree head=LOC
    'My grandfather's dog is **lying** in the top of that tree.'

8) Him čiski nowa=nki Ɂapš šahtʼi-ːkʼ-š **pe**-Ɂe.
    2SG pumpkin mellow=LOC CIRC crawl.in-PTCP-SUBORD **HORIZ**-NF.SG
    'He **crawls** about amongst your watermelons.'

Plural forms of the auxiliaries

- *naka*   1PL   'we are sitting/standing/lying'

- *naʔa*   NF.PL   'y'all/they are sitting/standing/lying'

Plural Auxiliaries (with 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie')

9) ʔiš ʔinčʼi ʔiš ne we kʼinkkʼank kin hi teni-ːkʼ **naku**-n.
   1SG father 1SG and DET girls with DIST sit(PL)-PTCP **AUX(1PL)**-PROG
   'My father and I and those girls were **sitting**.'

10) We kimi sekʼis tapšmi-ːkʼ **na**-ʔuy-na.
    DET branch among stand-PTCP **AUX(PL)**-PAST.IPFV-NF.PL
    'They were **standing** among those limbs.'

11) Kamčin namčʼemi-ːkʼ-š **naʔa** šuš tapšn keta=nki.
    deer be.camped-PTCP-SUBORD **AUX(NF.PL)** tree upright side=LOC
    'Deer are **lying** beside that upright tree.'

Irrealis

12) Kaya=nk ni k'ap-**čuy**-i.
rain=NOM DEF get-**IRR(SG)**-NF.SG
'The rain will get you.'

13) ʔampi=nk kin k'ušmi-**ːt'i**-naka.
what=ABL with eat-**IRR(PL)**-1PL.A
'With what shall we eat it?'

Irrealis Reflexes

14) Č'aː šahyn=iš   hup   **čuy**-iʔi.
    sun   going.in=TOP   to   **go(SG)**-NF.SG
    'He went toward the sunset.'

15) K'ast'a=nk   hi   **t'ut**-naʔa.
    north=LOC   AND   **go(PL)**-NF.PL
    'They went toward the north.'

Past Imperfective

16) ʔiš=k   šuš   hup   nuhč-k   ša-**ʔuy**-ki-n.
    1SG=NOM   tree   to   run-SS   sleep-**PAST.IPFV**-1SG.P-PROG
    'I used to run off to the woods and sleep (there).'

17) We=nki   hi   šak'it-k   hi-**ʔuy**-i.
    DEM=LOC   DIST   hang-PTCP   AUX(NEUT)-**PAST.IPFV**-NF.SG
    '[During the flood], he hung there.'

Past Imperfective Reflex

18) Hatka=nkiš   hi   **ʔuy**-naka.

   six=alone   DIST   **arrive(PL)**-1PL.A

   'Only six arrived (there).' (also 'happened upon there')

Present Imperfective

19) Ha   nasta   kap   tohw-**ʔiš**-i.

    DEM   root   INCH   break-**PRES.IPFV**-NF.SG

    'This root is breaking.'

20) Kaya   kap   tey-**ʔiš**-i.

    rain   INCH   stop-**PRES.IPFV**-NF.SG

    'The rain is stopping.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: *ʔiš*- COP

21) Kaye **ʔiš**-iki-n.
alive **COP**-1SG-PROG
'I'm still alive.'

22) ʔus=k kaːkumi-ːkʼ **ʔiš**-naku-n ʔuš nitiya.
1PL=NOM know-PTCP COP-1PL-PROG 1PL master
'We knew that it was our master.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: *= (i)š* TOP

23) Hus   naːnčaːkamank = **š̱**   we-t = k   hi   hokm-iʔi.

3SG   brothers = **TOP**   DET-ANA =NOM   DIST   leave-NF.SG

'He left his brothers.'

24) Ɂašantʼi   Ɂunkʼu = **š̱**   nus = up   kun   namki-ːkʼ   hi-Ɂuy-i-n.

old   one = **TOP**   west = to   some   live-PTCP   AUX(NEUT)-PAST.IPFV-NF.SG-PROG

'A certain old man lived in the west.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: = *(i)š* TOP

25) Ho kačm=**iš**   =hiš   načpi-ːtʼi-na-n   hesikʼen.

DEM doctor=**TOP** =ERG   cure-IRR-NF.PL-PROG   again

'Those doctors will cure you.'

Present Imperfective Reflexes: *ʔiška* 'they say'

26) Kutnehin   č'ah   **ʔiš**-ka.

God   bird   **COP**-PL

'They say it is God's bird.'

Summary: Diachronic origins of aspectual markers

Aspectual Marker		Diachronic Origin	
-*čuw-* / -*t'i-*	IRR	*čuw-* / *t'ut-*	'go'
-*ʔuy-*	PAST.IPFV	*ʔuy-*	'happen'
-*ʔiš-*	PRES.IPFV	*ʔiš-*	COP

Positional auxiliary verbs in several Southeastern languages

Language	'sit'	'stand'	'lie'
Chitimacha (isolate; Swadesh 1933)	*hi-*	*či-*	*pe-*
Atakapa (isolate; Swanton 1929)	*kē*	*ta*	*tīxt*
Choctaw (Muskogean; Broadwell 2006:209–211)	*átta-*	*hikíya-*	*ittóla-*
Tunica (isolate; Haas 1946:349–351)	*-na*	*-hki* 'exist'	*-ra*
Biloxi (Siouan; Kaufman 2013)	*nąki*	*nê*	*mąki*
Yuchi (isolate; Linn 1994)	*či*	*fa*	*e*

Switch Reference

"[T]he compound sentence is not common. Instead subordination, particularly participial subordination, is used. For example, a closely connected sequence of events is commonly put into a series of participial clauses except for the last one, which is expressed as the main clause[.] The same device is used in the connection of ideas into a subordinate group[.]" (Swadesh 1946:331)

27) Piya ših hi **k'aːct-k**, wetk we nuš **k'apt-k** ʔutp =k
cane belly DIST **cut-ss** then DET stone **take-ss** leather =LOC

ʔapš **waːct-k**, huyk'i ʔapš **ʔuti-ːk'**, wetk we piya k'aːcn =ki
SOC **wrap-ss** good SOC **tie-ss** then DET cane cut.piece =LOC

hi **šahčt-k**, wetkš huyk'i kas **hukt-k**, wetkš hesik'en ʔutp
AND **put.in-ss** then good back **close-ss** then again leather

hi **k'apt-k**, we piya k'aːcn we ʔutp =ki ʔapš **waːct-k**,
DIST **take-ss** DET cane cut.piece DET leather =LOC SOC **wrap-ss**

huyk'i ʔapš **ʔuti-ːk'**, wey-t huk'u kas **nučmi-ːk'**,
good SOC **tie-ss** DEM-ANA COP(EMPH) back **work-ss**

kas **hamča-ːš-naʔa**.
back **keep-PRES.IPFV-NF.PL(DS)**

'They cut a cane joint, take the stones and wrap them in hide, tie them well, put them into the section of cane, cork them well, again take hide and wrap the cane section in the hide, tie it well, and, having prepared it in that way, they save it.'

23

28) Wenk hi   **ču-ːk'**=š   kuː   **k'apt-k**   we   Ɂakšuš
    now   DIST   **go(SG)-SS**=TOP   water **take-SS**   DET   cypress

    hi   **t'eyktepi-ču-ø-ːš**,   kayi paːhmpa   him
    AND   **splash-IRR-NF.SG(DS)-COND**   thunder   2SG

    ni   **k'apt-'iš-i**.
    DEF   **get-PRES.IPFV-NF.SG(DS)**

    'Now if you go there, take water, and (if) you splash that cypress, thunder gets you.'

Participle

29) Kiš   ʔatin   nuhčpa-pa   **k'iht-k**   hi-ʔi   ?
dog   big   make.run-NZR   **want-PTCP**   AUX(NEUT)-NF.SG
'Do you want your horse to run?'

30) Kaːcpa=nk   ʔam ʔoonak   =hiš   **k'et-k**
stick=ABL   everything   =INSTR   **beat(SG)-PTCP**

ʔap   t'uːt-š-naʔa.

VEN   go(PL)-PRES.IPFV-NF.PL

'They came beating him with sticks and so forth.'

Locative Nominalizer -*(n)k*

31) Šeːni-**nk**   hup   hi   ničwi-ʔi.
    pond-LOC   to   DIST   move(VERT).to.water-NF.SG
    'He came to the edge of a pond.'

32) Hi   čuy-iʔi   namu   hi   kuti-**nk**.
    AND   go(SG)-NF.SG   town   DIST   end-LOC
    'He went to the end of that village.' (lit. 'the village's end')

Locative nominalizer with verbs

33) ʔiš   hi-ki-**nk**   naʔa.
    1SG   COP(NEUT)-1SG-**LOC**   COP(NF.PL)
    'You [pl.] are at my place.'

34) […]   ža: kap   šan-i-**nk**   k'iš.
           sun   up   go.out-NF.SG-**LOC**   until
    '[…] until the sun comes up.'

Temporal Subordinator *-nki*

35) Ney   kap   šanšw-i-**nk-i**,   […]
earth   up   go.out-NF.SG-**TEMP-NZR**
'When the ground emerged, […]'

36) K'ast'a   ʔap   hoː   k'ih-čuy-i-**nk-i**
north.wind   VEN   blow   want-IRR(SG)-NF.SG-**TEMP-NZR**

weyǯiːk'   yeht-'iš-iki.
thus   cry-PRES.IPFV-1SG.A

'That is why I cry out when the north (wind) is going to blow.'

Locative Nominalizer > Participle

37) Wetkš   ni   k'ast-**k**,   […]   weytenk'enkš   t'ut-naʔa   hesik'en.

then   DEF plant-**PTCP**   after.that   go(PL)-NF.PL   again

'Then they planted, […] and after that went on again.' (lit. 'planting, they went')

38) Kap   ten-**tk**   ni   k'as-mi-naʔa.

STAT   stop(PL)-**PTCP** DEF plant-PLACT-NF.PL

'They stopped and planted (again).' (lit. 'stopping, they planted')

Phonological environments for locative nominalizer and participle

Environment	Locative	Participle
N_	-*tk*	-*t'k*
V_	-*nk*	-*ːk'*
/w, y/_	-*k*	-*k'*
C_	-*k*	-*k*

Summary: Diachronic origins of switch reference

Switch Reference < Participle < Locative Nominalizer

Switch Reference in Choctaw

39) Kaah   sa-nna-**haatokoosh**,   iskali'   ittahobli-li-tok.
    car   1SI-want-**because:SS**   money   save-1SI-PAST
    'Because I wanted a car, I saved money.'

40) Kaah   banna-**haatoko**,   iskali'   ittahobli-li-tok.
    car   want-**because:DS**   money   save-1SI-PAST
    'Because he wanted a car, I saved money.'

Nominative-Accusative Alignment in Non-First Person

41) T'ut-**naʔa**   hesik'en.   (intransitive)
    go(PL)-**NF.PL**   again
    'They went on(wards) again.'

42) Waštik   k'et-**naʔa**.   (transitive, accusative unmarked)
    cow   kill-**NF.PL**
    'They kill a cow.'

Chitimacha verb template

PREVERB	STEM	**PATIENT**	ASPECT	**AGENT** / SUBJECT

Intransitive with 1ˢᵗ Person Patient vs. Agent

43) ʔiš=k   neːm-**ki**

1SG=NOM   be.afraid-**1SG.P**

'I am afraid'

44) ʔiš   šuš   sek'is   ʔapš   čuː-m-**iki**

1SG   wood   in   CIRC   go(SG)-PLACT-**1SG.A**

'I have gone about in the wood sufficiently.'

Transitive with 1ˢᵗ Person Patient vs. Agent (ex. 1)

45) ni-kint-**ki**-čuː-š
   water-drop-**1SG.P**-IRR(SG)-COND
   'If you drop me into the water'

46) ni-kin-ču-**ki**-nk'
   water-drop-IRR(SG)-**1SG.A**-DEB
   'I must drop you into the water'

Transitive with 1ˢᵗ Person Patient vs. Agent (ex. 2)

47) k'et-**ki**-ʔi   we koːš=iš

  beat-**1SG.P**-NF.SG DET switch=INSTR

  'she beat me with the switch'

48) we kaːci ʔatin kap k'et-**iki**

  DET owl large STAT kill(SG)-**1SG.A**

  'I killed the horned owl'

Transitive with 1ˢᵗ Person Patient as Subject

49) Huykš   ʔam   ʔoːnak   ni   šik-**ki**.
    yet   thing   all   DEF   forget-**1SG.P**
    'I have not forgotten everything yet.'

Univerbation of main verb + auxiliary

$$V_{MAIN} + PERSON \qquad V_{AUX} + PERSON$$

$$\downarrow$$

$$V_{MAIN} + PATIENT + ASPECT + AGENT$$
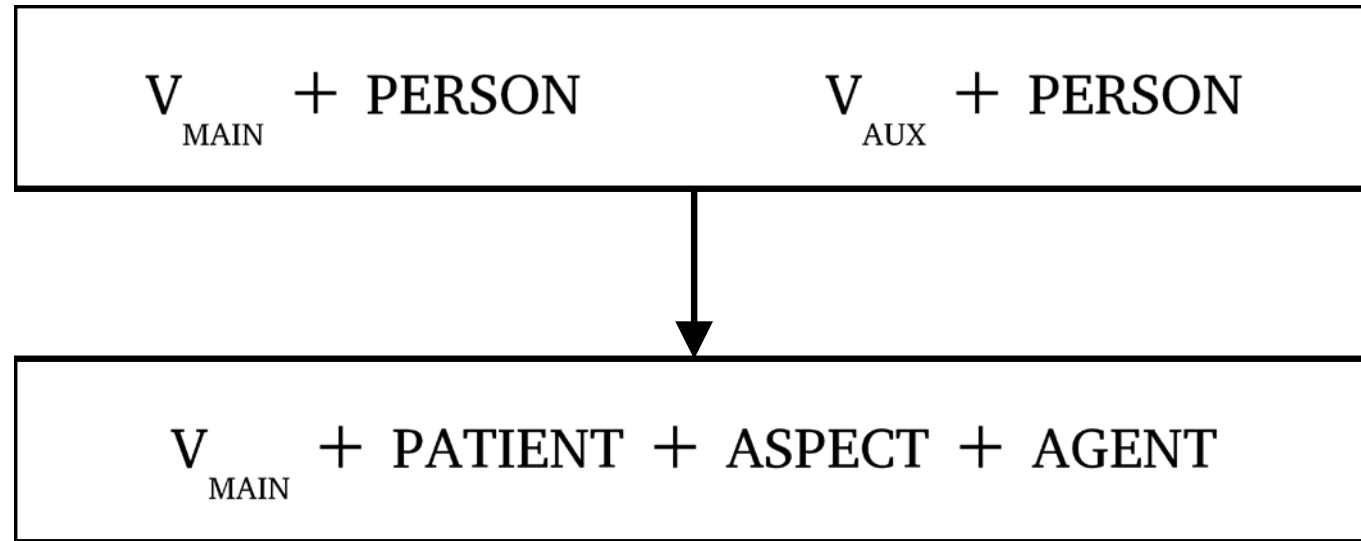
Stem-Final /e/ → /i/ Before Aspectual Markers

50) ʔiš   kiča   hokšt**i**-ču-ki.   < hokste- 'feed'
    1sg   wife   feed-ɪʀʀ(sɢ)-1sɢ.ᴀ
    'I shall feed my wife.'

Transimpersonals > Agent-Patient

"In a language in which (i) intransitive and transitive verbs are not distinguished formally, (ii) topical 3rd persons are usually not mentioned, (iii) few nouns are marked for case, and (iv) word order is predicate final, it would be a simple matter to reanalyse a nominative-accusative system as an agentive one or vice versa. [...] Transitive clauses with omitted 3rd person subjects could be reanalysed as intransitive, and objects could be reanalysed as grammatical patients." (Mithun 2008:308–309)

Pleonastic / Expletive Suffix

51) Wey ne ʔapš kimikiš wekkaːši.

wey ne ʔapš kima-iki-š wek-ki-ʔiš-**i̱**.

DEM just REFL think-1SG.A-SUBORD laugh-1SG.P-PRES.IPFV-**ø̱**

'I laugh when I think about it.'

52) ʔaštkanki k'an ni šik-ki-čuy-**i̱**.

sometimes NEG DEF forget-1SG.P-IRR(SG)-**ø̱**

'I shall never forget.'

Deletion of the Subject / Agent suffix

53) Nuːp-ki-**čuy**   hi   kimi-ːk'-š   huk'u

die(SG)-1SG.P-IRR(**NF.SG**)   DIST   think-PTCP-SUBORD   COP(EMPH)

hi   šankint-ki.

DIST   put_out-1SG.P

'You put me out thinking I would die.'

54) Paːkine-ki-**čuː**-š, […]

be.tired-1SG.P-IRR(**NF.SG**)-COND

'If I get tired, […]'

Deletion of the Subject / Agent suffix

55) Wetkš   we   nitiya=nk=š   ʔiš   hi   šankint-**ki**.

   then   DET   master=NOM=TOP   1SG   DIST   put_out-**1SG.P(-NF.SG.A?)**

   'Then the (boat) master put me off.'

Huya!