Privative constructions in Mesoamerica: How do languages without 'without' actually function?

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Abstract

Languages in the Mesoamerican linguistic area have been reported to lack a dedicated means of expressing the privative meaning that encodes the absence of a participant in a situation. This micro-typological study identifies alternative strategies that the languages in this area employ to function without dedicated privative markers, namely borrowing the Spanish preposition sin, the use of regular negative constructions, including negative existential and copulative constructions, and developing functionally restricted markers for particular semantic domains (body parts, clothes, and so forth). The fact that Mesoamerican languages are averse to the use of negative comitative or instrumental constructions supports that privatives have a more complex semantic nature than a simple negation of possession, existence, or comitativity. A notable similarity in the privative constructions employed in Mesoamerica and in the languages to the north reflects the linguistic relationship between Mesoamerica and the American Southwest.

Keywords: privative; Mesoamerica; linguistic typology; areal linguistics; negation

1. Introduction

This paper presents an areal micro-typological study of privative constructions in the languages of Mesoamerica. Stolz et al. (2007) described this linguistic area as lacking a dedicated means of expressing the privative meaning that encodes the absence of a participant in a situation. Nevertheless, this feature does not make the languages of this area less relevant for linguistic analysis. Some languages naturally lack dedicated grammatical or lexical means of expressing certain meanings for which other languages do have dedicated markers. These missing elements are rarely discussed in reference grammars; however, they are of particular interest for linguistic typology because they shed light on the alternative structures that are employed to function without a clearly dedicated device, thus highlighting differences among the world's languages. Commonly lacking elements in a group of

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geographically related languages can be considered to be an areal feature, as the lack of a dedicated privative marker is for the Mesoamerican linguistic area.

This section introduces the privative meaning (§1.1), the Mesoamerican linguistic area (§1.2), and the data on which this study is based (§1.3). Section 2 reviews the main strategies that the languages of Mesoamerica employ to express the privative meaning. These include the borrowing of a foreign lexeme (§2.1), the development of semantically restricted markers that only serve for a specific lexical class of absentee (§2.2), the use of negative constructions (§2.3), and the negation of affirmative comitative constructions (§2.4). Section 3 discusses the integrity and limits of the Mesoamerican area in view of the study of privative constructions in neighboring languages. Some theoretical conclusions concerning the privative expressions are drawn in Section 4.

1.1. Privative meaning and privative constructions

The notion of the privative typically refers to lexical and grammatical markers such as *without* in *Mary came **without** John*, and *-less* in *A beard**less** man came*. According to Stolz et al. (2007, p. 66), a preliminary definition of the privative can be formulated as follows: "The gram used to encode the relation between two (or three) participants in a situation as being one of absence (=negated accompaniment). One participant – the absentee – fails to be co-present with the other – the accompanee or the user – in a given situation"; see also Hamari (2011).

More recently, Oskolskaya et al. (2020) attempted to provide a typologically valid definition of the privative gram that could be applied to any language irrespective of whether it has a dedicated lexical or grammatical privative marker or not. These authors defined the privative as a gram that describes the non-involvement (including, but not limited to, the absence) of a participant (absentee) in a situation, with the non-involvement predication semantically modifying the situation or a participant of a different situation. This definition postulates a complex semantic structure that consists of two different 'sub-situations,' reflecting the tendency of many languages to employ complex multi-clausal constructions to express the meanings associated with privative semantics. This is also true of Mesoamerican languages.

Based on this definition, the privative meaning is not limited to *without* and *-less* in English. In fact, it includes more complex, but functionally similar syntactic constructions, such as ***In the absence of John, Mary came alone***, *John came **with no** beard*, and ***having no** beard, John came to the party*, among others. Hence, even languages that have dedicated privative markers sometimes use non-dedicated strategies to express the respective meanings. The term "non-dedicated" is understood in the sense that a given construction has a set of possible readings, of which the privative meaning is only one, and is not the most common.

At least two other terms with a similar meaning are commonly used, namely "caritive" and "abessive"; see also Haspelmath (2009) for some less common terminological alternatives. The label abessive has traditionally been restricted to languages in which the corresponding meaning is expressed by morphological cases. The term "privative" (instead of caritive) has been preferred in this paper because it is widely used in the descriptive tradition of American indigenous languages.

The variety of terms and definitions arises due to the heterogeneity of ways in which the corresponding meaning can be expressed in the world's languages. Privative markers can belong to different syntactic blocks, from word to phrase and clause, and can even trigger an additional clause in a multi-clause construction. Privative markers can produce a new word, as in the case of the suffix *-less* in English, or create a new word form, as in the case of the abessive case suffixes in Estonian or Finnish. Below are some examples that illustrate the heterogeneity of linguistic phenomena that a

typological study of privatives addresses, such as a suffix (1), a postposition (2), a phrase complement (3), and multi-clausal constructions (4, 5).

(1)   Udmurt (Uralic)

oćki-**tek**   lịdʑiśkị-nị   bịgat-iśko   na

glasses-**PRIV**   read-INF   be.able-PRS.1SG   still

'I can still read without glasses.' (Hamari, 2011, p. 47)

(2)   Mongolian (Mongolic)

bagsi   surgaguli-acha   bogchi **ügei**   yabuna

teacher   school-ABL   bag   **PRIV**   leave

'The teacher leaves the school without his bag.' (Stolz et al., 2007, p. 86)

(3)   Southern Sierra Miwok (Utian)

ʔissak-ho-ʔ   nymih   ʔyhtyjja-ʔ   **ʔewwa**-ʔ

he-3PL-NOM   like   clothes-NOM   **without**-NOM

'…he [looked] as if he had no clothes on.' (Broadbent, 1964, p. 88, my glosses)

Complex syntactic constructions are typically registered when no dedicated privative marker exists in a language. For example, a biclausal construction, as in (4), is obligatory for rendering the privative meaning in Kobon. In Turkish, a converbal negative existential is employed for the same purpose (5).

(4)   Kobon (Papuan)

[yad Laule **aip**   au-**ag**-in]^clause 1   [yad   nöp   au-bin]^clause 2

I   Laule   **with**   come-**NEG**-PST.1SG I   EMPH come-PERF.1SG

'I came without Laule.' (Davies 1989: 113, cited by Stolz et al., 2007, p. 73)

(5)   Turkish (Turkic)

ben konser-e   [Hasan **ol-ma**-dan]   git-ti-m

I   concert-DAT   Hasan **be-NEG**-ABL   go-PST-1SG

'I went to the concert without Hasan.' (Kornfilt 1997: 228, cited by Stolz et al., 2007, p. 75)

This cross-linguistic heterogeneity provides the following implications for this study:

✓   The privative meaning can be expressed in any language;

✓   a language may have more than one privative marker; and

✓   a language may have both dedicated and non-dedicated ways of conveying the privative meaning.

1.2. The Mesoamerican linguistic area

The Mesoamerican cultural area and its borders were first defined by Kirchhoff (1943). Although the area emerged around 2500 BC, its geographic configuration did not remain intact over time. Moreover, there is no consensus in the literature concerning the continuity of the Mesoamerican area after the Spanish Conquest. It is evident that this area has a nucleus and peripheral regions in which some traits are present and others are absent (López Austin 2001). These cultural considerations can also be easily mapped onto the linguistic picture (Suárez 1983).

Mesoamerica has been considered to be a linguistic area since the classic publication by Campbell et al. (1986) in which the authors identified several prominent linguistic features dispersed throughout the region from Northern Mexico to the mid-north of Central America, uniting dozens of genetically unrelated languages. These features include head-marking in nominal possession, the use of relational nouns instead of prepositions, vigesimal numeral systems, non-verb-final basic word order, and several widespread semantic calques; see also Smith-Stark (1994) and Brown (2011). All these features were shared due to language contact among speakers of different languages within that region long before the Conquest.

Map 1. The Mesoamerican area (adapted from http://mapsof.net)

The Mesoamerican linguistic area occupies an enormous territory that encompasses Central and Southern Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala (see Map 1). It extends along the Pacific coast from Northern Mexico to the coast of the Honduras and Nicaragua. The frontiers of the Mesoamerican area have been debated, and their gradated nature is universally accepted (van der Auwera 1998, Chamoreau 2017). For example, some researchers prefer to extend the northern frontier further to the north, while others limit it to Central Mexico; this issue will be discussed in Section 3.

The nuclear part of the Mesoamerican linguistic area includes languages belonging to at least five language families, namely Uto-Aztecan, Mayan, Totonacan, Oto-Manguean, and Mixe-Zoquean, along with several isolates such as Oaxaca Chontal, Xinka, Cuitlatec, Huave, and Purépecha. Dialects of Oaxaca Chontal are sometimes considered to constitute a small Tequistlatecan language family; see Campbell (2016). The same is true of the Xinka and Xinkan family, with the difference that this

language is extinct, as is Cuitlatec. The inclusion of Purépecha in the Mesoamerican area was questioned by Chamoreau (2017).

1.3. Materials for the study

The language sample for this study was chosen with the aim of representing all the families and subgroups within the area. Given the fact that the majority of languages in this area are still far from being described and documented in detail, the goal was not to obtain a perfectly representative and balanced sample; instead, the languages selected were those for which the most accessible and complete sets of linguistic data were available. Table 1 provides a list of the language families, the subgroups, and the languages that represent them in this study.

Table 1. The language sample

Language family	Subgroup	Language and source of data
Uto-Aztecan	Aztecan	Mecayapán Nahuatl (Wolgemuth 2007)
		Pipil (Campbell 1985)
Totonacan	Totonacan	Filomena Mata Totonac (McFarland 2009)
	Tepehuan	Huehuetla Tepehua (Smythe Kung 2007)
Oto-Manguean	Zapotecan	San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec (Sonnenschein 2004)
	Otopamean	Mezquital Valley Otomi (Priego Montfort 1989)
	Mixtecan	Chalcatongo Mixtec (Macaulay 1996)
	Popolocan	Chiquihuitlán Mazatec (Jamieson 1988)
Mixe-Zoquean	Zoquean	San Miguel Chimalapa Zoque (Johnson 2000)
		Sierra Popoluca (de Jong Boudreault 2009)
	Mixean	Ayutla Mixe (Romero-Méndez 2008)
Mayan	Cholan-Tseltalan	Oxchuc Tseltal (Polian 2013)
		Chol (Vázquez Álvarez 2011)
	Yucatecan	Itza' (Hofling 2000)
	Q'anjob'alan	Akatek (Zavala Maldonado 1992)
	K'iche'an	Q'eqchi' (Stewart 1980)
	Mamean	Mam (England 1983)
	Huastecan	South Eastern Huastec (Kondic 2012)
[Isolates]	Huave	San Francisco del Mar Huave (Kim 2008)
	Xinka	Xinkan, reconstruction (Sachse 2010)

Grammatical descriptions of Mesoamerican languages typically do not discuss the privative meaning and its means of expression. This scarcity of linguistic information about privatives was noted cross-linguistically by Stolz et al. (2007, p. 69-70) who considered the effect to be "an indication of a rather low cross-linguistic frequency" of the category of privatives as a separate grammatical or lexical element. Hence, if there is no mention of privative markers in the grammars and dictionaries of a

certain language, this can be seen as an evidence of the lack of a dedicated privative marker in that language.

Among the sources listed in Table 1, only three grammars provide information about certain elements that can be considered to be privative markers. Sachse (2010) mentioned a morpheme in an early nineteenth-century Xinka manuscript that can be translated as not and without. A privative postposition in Sierra Popoluca was discussed by de Jong Boudreault (2009), although other Mixe-Zoquean grammars in Table 1 do not mention the privative meaning. Priego Montfort (1989) noted two alternative markers that expressed the privative meaning in Mezquital Valley Otomi, and listed several semantic contexts in which they were employed. Nevertheless, the grammar of another Otomi variety by Palancar (2009), does not discuss privative expressions. Section 2 will show that Xinka, Sierra Popoluca, and Mezquital Valley Otomi are not exceptions and, by contrast, conform fully to the idea proposed in this paper.

Table 1 only includes grammatical descriptions that were used in the first stage of determining whether a particular language had a dedicated privative marker. Alternative strategies to express the privative meaning were identified on the basis of analyses of texts. If no published natural texts for an individual language or its variety were available, out-of-context examples taken from grammars or dictionaries were used.

2. Strategies for expressing the privative meaning in the languages of Mesoamerica

This paper proposes that Mesoamerican languages do not have their own dedicated privative markers, and use borrowed elements or different types of circumlocutory negative constructions to express the corresponding meaning. In general terms, this conforms to what Stolz et al. (2007) said about the languages of Mesoamerica. However, their tentative study was based on only one sentence ('He went out without hat') elicited in 16 Mexican languages within the "Archivo de Lenguas Indígenas de México" project. This paper proposes a more in-depth study of a wider corpus of data that is not limited to Mexico and extends to the entire area.

The absence of an inherent, dedicated privative marker can lead to the emergence of a new one, which can be borrowed from another language. In the case of Mesoamerica, this source language is Spanish. The use of the borrowed preposition *sin* is discussed in Section 2.1. The absence of a dedicated general privative marker can also trigger the development of a semantically restricted marker that is only used with specific types of absentees; these markers are explored in Section 2.2. Obviously, regardless of the presence or absence of a dedicated means of expression in a particular language, some non-dedicated markers and constructions can be also involved. As privative semantics presupposes the absence of a participant, most such constructions naturally imply some kind of negation. Negative constructions that are used to express the privative meaning can be divided into negative predicative constructions (§2.3) and negative comitative constructions (§2.4), the latter being somewhat uncommon in the Mesoamerican area.

2.1. A borrowed morpheme from Spanish

Some Mesoamerican languages have a dedicated privative marker that is of Spanish origin. In the event of the absence of a proper means of expressing the privative, these languages took advantage of the fact that Spanish has a useful preposition to express the corresponding meaning. This is particularly notable given the fact that Mesoamerican languages are generally averse to having a wide set of prepositions, and prefer constructions with possessed nominals instead (Campbell et al. 1986).

One of the languages in this group is Chimalapa Zoque. Although privative markers are not mentioned in the grammar (Johnson 2000) or dictionary (Johnson & Kaufman 2004), the preposition *sin* is found in texts (6).

(6)   Chimalapa Zoque (Mixe-Zoquean)

dä	näk-tam-pa	**sin**	rremedyu
1ABS	go-1PL-IPFV	**without**	medicine

'We go without medicine.' (Sánchez & Sánchez, 1995,p.70, #327)

A similar morpheme exists in Chontal of Tabasco (7).

(7)   Chontal of Tabasco (Mayan)

sin	jop'o	a	bix=on	tä	k'än-k-an	sami
without	sombrero	IMM	go.out=1SG	PREP	use-PASS-NMLZ	today

'I went out doing some errands today without sombrero.' (Keller & Luciano, 1997, p. 215, my glosses)

The preposition *sin* can be adapted to the phonological system of the target language. For example, Mezquital Valley Otomi has the privative marker *nsi* (Hernández Cruz & Victoria Torquemada 2010: 481), which displays initial nasalization and lacks the last consonant (8).

(8)   Mezquital Valley Otomi (Oto-Manguean)

dá	hëkä	rä	ngö	**nsi**	rä	jwai
1.PST	cut	DEF	meat	**without**	DEF	knife

'I cut the meat without the knife.' (Priego Montfort 1989, p.158)

There is an apparent correlation between the presence of the borrowed privative marker and the degree of language vitality. The languages that were more exposed to Spanish as the dominant language are more prone to borrowing lexical items from Spanish, including the preposition *sin*. The Mayan family illustrates this tendency. Chontal of Tabasco is one of the most vulnerable Mayan languages (Schumann Gálvez 2012, Delgado Galván 2013), and exhibits the most common use of the Spanish preposition *sin*. Another Mayan language that has the borrowed privative marker is Ch'orti' (9), which is also endangered (Hull 2013).

(9)   Ch'orti' (Mayan)

lok'oy	ajni	e	Pédru	ketp=ob'	**sin**	wy-a'r	e
leave	quickly	DEF	Pedro	remain=PL	**without**	eat-NMLZ	DEF

winik=ob'	ira
man=PL	DEM

'Pedro fled, and those men were left without food.' (Dugan, 2013, p. 297, my glosses)

The borrowed preposition *sin* is also found in San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec (Long & Cruz 2000). Stolz et al. (2007) included Nahuatl and Yucatec in the group of languages with a borrowed privative marker. It is important to note that there is no evidence that the languages that were mentioned in this section had their own devices to express the privative meaning that would have been replaced by the Spanish morpheme. This borrowed lexeme was not a substitute for another that was already present in a language, but filled a pre-existing gap. It is precisely this gap that explains the common character of this pattern in the Mesoamerican languages.

2.2. Semantically restricted privative markers

Contrary to the general statement in Section 2 above, some Mesoamerican languages do have dedicated privative markers; however, they are used with a restricted class of absentees. This restriction is of a semantic nature; for example, there are privative markers for body parts or clothes. Such markers cannot be considered to be general privative indicators, as they are incompatible with most privative situations.

Yucatec Maya has the morpheme *kul* derived from the word meaning 'stump' which, when being attached to a noun denoting a body part, conveys privative semantics. An example is *ah kul k'ab* 'somebody who does not have a hand' (with the agentive morpheme *ah* and the noun *k'ab* 'hand') and *ah kul neh* 'tailless' (*neh* 'tail'); see Barrera Vásquez (1980, p. 348).

Sierra Popoluca (Mixe-Zoquean) has the proclitic *=tyaaka* 'without' that attaches to nouns denoting parts of the body; for example, *tuʔch=tyaaka* 'without tail', and *puy=tyaaka* 'without leg' (de Jong Boudreault 2009: 307, 286). This marker could have been derived from the Proto-Mixe-Zoquean word **taka'* 'naked' (ibid.: 307).

A related but not identical pattern is identified in Chinantec (Oto-Manguean). Rupp (1980: 107, #406) provided a metaphorical translation of the elicited sentence 'He came out without hat' that literally says "his head was naked." However, it is important to note that this is not exactly the same structure as used in Sierra Popoluca because it does not mean 'without head,' but preserves the literal meaning of the word 'naked.'

In Ch'orti', there is the word *koror* 'without' (also 'loose'), which is apparently used with nouns denoting clothes. This semantic restriction can be inferred from the examples provided by Hull (2016), as in (10).

(10) Ch'orti' (Mayan)

e	sitz'	**koror**	u-wex	xachar
DEF	boy	**without**	3POSS-pants	sitting

'The boy doesn't have any pants.' (Hull, 2016, p.205, my glosses)

The word *koror* is a participle derived from the transitive verb *kori* 'undress, take clothes off'; compare the use of a finite form of this verb in (11).

(11) Ch'orti' (Mayan)

in-**kori**	ni-wex	twa'	a<'n>ti
1SG-**take.off**	1SG.POSS-pants	to	bathe<1SG>

'I take off my pants to bathe.' (Hull, 2016, p. 204, my glosses)

The markers presented in this section can be formally considered as dedicated privative markers, although they impose an important restriction on the semantics of absentees. These devices are not universal because they cannot be used in any situation that fits the definition of the privative meaning given in Section 1.1. It would seem that the development of these markers was conditioned and reinforced by the absence of a general privative marker; thus they could fill the free semantic slot that is only contextually covered by non-dedicated constructions in a grammar.

2.3. Negative constructions

The most common way of conveying the privative meaning in the languages of the Mesoamerican area is the addition of a negative construction. This strategy is obvious in the vast majority of the languages that have been studied. Even if it has not been registered in a particular language, it may also exist but remain unrecognized due to the scarcity of linguistic documentation. This section examines several subtypes of negative constructions that are employed to express the privative meaning.

Negative copulative predications are one of the most common possibilities. These constructions can literally be translated as something akin to 'John came, there was not Mary.' For example, this pattern is observed in Mezquital Valley Otomi (12).

(12) Mezquital Valley Otomi (Oto-Manguean)

dá	hëkä	rä	ngö	**hinge**	rä	jwai
1.PST	cut	DEF	meat	**without**	DEF	knife

'I cut the meat without the knife.' (Priego Montfort, 1989, p.158)

Example (12) is similar to Example (8) presented in Section 2.1 above, with the only difference being the privative marker: *hinge* is used here instead of the borrowed morpheme *nsi* in (8). The word form *hinge* is the negative form of the copulative verb *ge*. It is typically used in sentences such as 'A is not B,' as in (13).

(13) Mezquital Valley Otomi (Oto-Manguean)

ha	**hinge**	hä
Q	**NEG**	truth

'Isn't this truth?' (Hernández Cruz & Victoria Torquemada, 2010, p.82)

Another closely related option is to employ a negative existential predicate, as illustrated in (14) and (15).

(14) Poqomchi' (Mayan)

x-nu-yeq'	i	ha'	chi	**ma'xtaj**	nu-xijab'
PFV-1SG.ERG-step	DEF	water	SUB	**NEG.EXIST**	1SG-shoe

'I stepped in the water without a shoe.' (Dobbels, 2003, p. 416, my glosses)

In (14), the privative meaning is expressed via an additional dependent clause introduced by the general subordinator *chi*. In fact, the use of negative existentials is a common device to express the privative semantics in Mayan languages; another example from Mam can be seen in (15).

(15) Mam (Mayan)

milaay-x	qo	aanq'a-n	qa-**nti'**	t-qan	q'iij	q-iib'aj
NEG-always	1PL	live-AP	if-**NEG.EXIST**	3SG-foot	sun	1PL-over

'We cannot live without sunlight over us.' (England, 1983, p. 178)

The following example illustrates the use of the word *nti'* in its typical function as a negative existential predicate (16).

(16) Mam (Mayan)

nti'	chib'aj
NEG.EXIST	meat

'There isn't meat.' (England 1983, p. 246)

The same pattern is also found outside of the Mayan family; for example, in Chimalapa Zoque (17).

(17) Chimalapa Zoque (Mixe-Zoquean)

picämmä	**yamä**-y	sombreru
go.out.PFV.3SG	**NEG.EXIST**-3POSS	sombrero

'He went out without a sombrero.' (Knudson, 1980, p.120, #406, my glosses)

A literal translation of (17) would be 'He went out, there was no his sombrero.'

There are also less widespread strategies that involve additional negative clauses. For example, speakers can use a standard negative sentence with a negated noun, as in (18).

(18) Chalcatongo Mixtec (Oto-Manguean)

ni-kexaʔá=rí	xãã=rí	nužaʔu	te	**tú**=šũʔũ	ñábaʔa=rí
PFV-start=1	buy=1	market	and	**NEG**=money	have=1

'I started to buy (things) in the market, but I did not have any money.' (Macaulay, 1996, p.124, #121)

In (18), a standard negator *tú* is added to a noun phrase. This construction forms an additional clause that is attached to another via the standard conjunction *te* 'and,' resulting in a compound sentence. Another option is a standard negative verbal clause (19).

(19) Yatzachi Zapotec (Oto-Manguean)

| (chacya'a yichja' catə' chona' žin lao' bgüiž) na' | **bi** | nzo | xlapa'a |
| … | CONJ | **NEG** | be.STAT | sombrero |

'(I have a headache when I work in the sun) without sombrero.' (Butler, 2000, p. 50, my glosses)

In (19), the privative meaning is expressed via a negative clause introduced by a standard conjunction *na'* 'and,' and is formed by the stative verbal form *nzo* with the negator *bi*. Instead of saying 'without sombrero,' this sentence can be roughly translated as 'and a sombrero is not put on.' Such "periphrastic" constructions are widespread in Mesoamerica because they allow for the avoidance of a straightforward expression of the privative meaning that is impossible in these languages.

The strategies considered in this section are quite diverse, although they all include some type of negative element. There is logic underlying this variation. The grammars and lexicons of Mesoamerican languages do not predetermine which marker should be used in privative contexts, and each language (and each speaker) chooses any of the available means considered appropriate in the given circumstances. There are many possible semantic roles that participants can play in a privative situation, and many angles and perspectives from which such a situation can be viewed. In addition, the majority of languages have multiple ways of forming a negative sentence. All these factors naturally offer wide room for variation.

2.4. Negative comitative constructions

Negative comitative constructions are the most obvious option for replacing dedicated privative markers because these two meanings are opposed to each other with regard to polarity. However, this strategy remains somewhat marginal in the languages of the Mesoamerican linguistic area. Constructions that literally say "not with," meaning "without," are rarely found in these languages.

There is some evidence indicating that constructions of this type are possible in at least two languages. Keller & Luciano (1997) mentioned the construction *mach t'ok* as a possible translation of the Spanish word *sin* in Chontal of Tabasco. The other option is the borrowed preposition *sin*, which appears consistently in the examples in the dictionary and published texts. The combination *mach t'ok* consists of the negator *mach* and the word *t'ok*, which means 'with,' and is typically used in comitative constructions in Chontal. However, whether *mach t'ok* is actually employed productively in Chontal, remains unclear.

Other evidence of negative comitative clauses as a valid device for expressing the privative meaning can be seen in Tseltal. In some dialects of this language, it is possible to combine the standard negative marker *ma* with the word form *sok* 'with' (Jaime Pérez González, p.c.). The additional irrealis marker *-uk* that typically accompanies negative non-verbal predicates should be added to this construction resulting in *ma sok-uk*.

Both Chontal and Tseltal belong to the Mayan family. It is still unclear whether their genetic relationship may play a role here and, consequently, whether the possibility of the use of negative comitative constructions to express the privative semantics can be considered as a typically Mayan feature, rather than a feature of Mesoamerican in general. Both *t'ok* and *sok* in Chontal and Tseltal, respectively, are exceptional forms in the sense that they are frozen relational nouns that do not attach personal possessive prefixes synchronically. In the vast majority of Mesoamerican languages, including those of the Mayan family, the comitative relational nouns must be employed with the respective possessive markers, as in (20).

(20) Poqomchi' (Mayan)

xa	r-utkeel	r-**uuk'**	ru-tuut	r-ajaaw
INT	3SG.POSS-alone	3SG.POSS-**with**	3SG.POSS-mother	3SG.POSS-father

'She was alone with her parents.' (Vinogradov, 2016, p. 181)

In (20), the comitative meaning is expressed via the relational noun *uuk'*, which is employed together with the possessive prefix *r-*. This structure is critically distinct from the privative construction in Poqomchi' that was illustrated in (14) above. Comitative constructions in Mesoamerican languages are rarely used in combination with a negator to express the privative meaning.

3. Mesoamerica and neighboring areas

The claim that Mesoamerican languages have no dedicated means of expressing the privative meaning cannot be generalized to the Amerindian languages in general. In fact, dedicated privative morphemes and constructions have been observed in a wide range of languages in South, Central, and North America. One of the most prominent examples can be seen in the Arawak family. Arawak grammars consistently document privative markers (Michael 2014), and a specific privative prefix has been reconstructed for Proto-Arawak (Michael & Granadillo 2014). A privative postposition was documented by Olawsky (2006) for the Urarina language, which is an isolate from north-western Peru; see Example (21).

(21) Urarina (isolate)

itɕafwa	**kulane**=te	ne-ɨre=lɨ	katɕa-ɨrɨ
rifle	**without**=FOC	be-3PL=REM	man-PL

'The people lived without rifles.' (Olawsky, 2006, p. 241)

Dedicated morphological devices also are found in some languages spoken to the north of Mesoamerica. For example, Southern Sierra Miwok, an almost extinct Utian language of California, has the nominal privative lexeme *ʔewwa* 'without', as reported by Broadbent (1964); see Example (3) in Section 1.1. The Muskogean language Koasati has the privative adverb *áskon* (Kimball 1994). Further to the north, the Aleut language also has a privative postposition; *uglagán* 'without, except' (Geoghegan 1944). The presence of dedicated lexical or grammatical means of expressing the privative meaning in many indigenous languages of the Americas makes the absence of such devices in the languages of the Mesoamerican area more prominent.

It is interesting that the languages spoken to the south of Mesoamerica generally have dedicated privative markers. This is true of at least Miskitu, Pech, and Garifuna. There are two dedicated privative markers in Miskitu, a Misumalpan language spoken in Nicaragua and Honduras, which are the suffix *-s* and the postposition *luha*, as shown in (22).

(22) Miskitu (Misumalpan)

a.   naipa-**s**

   my.tooth-**PRIV**

   'without my tooth' (Salamanca, 1988, p. 219)

b.   maha   **luha**

pay   **PRIV**

'gratis, free of charge' (Melgara Brown, 2008, p. 127)

In addition, Miskitu may also express the privative meaning via non-dedicated constructions, as seems to be typical in any language (see §1.1). These constructions may involve the negative existential predicate *âpu* (see, for example, Melgara Brown 2008). However, the peculiarity of Miskitu that differentiates it from languages in the Mesoamerican area is the presence of dedicated devices to convey the privative meaning. In this respect, Miskitu is similar to Pech (Chibchan) and Garifuna (Arawak). Pech has the privative suffix *-nǔ́wǎ́*, which attaches to noun stems in combination with the possessive prefix *a-*, as in *a-tùs-nǔ́wǎ́* 'fatherless' (Holt 1999). The privative prefix *ma-* in Garifuna was reported by Haurholm-Larsen (2016).

By contrast, the languages spoken to the north of Mesoamerica are structurally very similar to Mesoamerican languages with regard to the expression of the privative meaning. The Uto-Aztecan languages Choguita Rarámuri (Caballero 2008) and Hopi (Jeanne 1978), the isolate Seri (Marlett 2009), the Athabascan language San Carlos Apache (de Reuse & Goode 2006), the Yuman languages Cocopa (Crawford 1989), Maricopa (Gordon 1986) and Tiipay (Miller 2001), and the Algonquian language Arapaho (Cowell & Moss 2008) do not have dedicated privative markers. These languages seem to employ different strategies to replace them; as there are few published texts in these languages, it is difficult to identify the kinds of alternatives that these languages prefer. An example from Seri illustrates the use of a negative verbal predicate (23).

(23) Seri (isolate)

cafee	xiica_an_icaai	ipi	an	**impaii**	quih
coffee	sugar	INT	3POSS.in	**3POSS.NEG.PASS.NMLZ.make**	DEF

'coffee without sugar' (Marlett, 2009, p. 271)

The phrase 'coffee without sugar' has been restructured as "coffee in which sugar has not been put" in (23), using the negative predicate 'not to put.'

It is notable that Stolz et al. (2007) included all the languages in the periphery of Northern Mexico and the American Southwest within the truly Mesoamerican languages in their micro-study of privatives. This is perfectly understandable because there is no evident difference among these languages with regard to the strategies used to express the privative meaning. Although more research on the languages of Northern Mexico and of the Mexican-US border is needed, they seem to conform to the Mesoamerican privative pattern at present. Hence, a question about the validity of the northern border of Mesoamerica arises. In fact, it has been questioned on the basis of numeral systems in the work of Avelino (2006). This border is extremely complex, and does not correspond well to any natural geographic limit. This also implies division within a single language family, namely Uto-Aztecan: Some languages in this family belong to the Mesoamerican area, but others do not.

Multiple parallels between Mesoamerica and the cultures of the American Southwest have been identified thus far, ranging from mythology (Taube 1986) and iconography (Hays-Gilpin & Hill 1999) to economic relations (Ericson & Baugh 1993). There is no doubt that these two areas have been interrelated since prehistoric times. This is not surprising due to the extent of the border zone and the absence of any natural geographical barriers that would have impeded communication among the

inhabitants. As Kaufman and Justeson (2009, p. 229) stated, "there has been almost no linguistic effort to detect diffusion between Mesoamerican and more northerly languages." The present study corroborates the fact that the Mesoamerican area is well-defined in the south and, by contrast, is separated vaguely from neighboring areas to the north.

4. Conclusions

A first (micro)typological conclusion of this study is that the absent linguistic traits can be as equally decisive and important in areal studies as the present traits. Thus, the absence of dedicated privative markers can be added to the list of distinctive traits of the Mesoamerican area, together with other well-known features that are present in these languages, such as head-marking in nominal possessive phrases, a vigesimal numeral system, and a non-verb-final word order, among others.

Three different strategies to express the privative meaning have been identified in the languages of Mesoamerica. The first is the borrowing of the Spanish preposition *sin*. The diffusion of this strategy may correlate well with language vitality and the percentage of monolingual speakers. The second option is the development of specific privative markers that have narrow semantics and limited lexical compatibility. Some Mesoamerican languages have privative markers that can only combine with nouns denoting body parts or clothes, for instance. It would seem that the development of such markers has been reinforced by the absence of a universal privative marker. The third and most widespread possibility is the use of negative constructions that can be based on existential or copulative predicates. This strategy typically triggers multi-clausal sentences. The same language may naturally employ more than one strategy.

Negative comitative constructions are not a common option for expressing the privative meaning in Mesoamerican languages. This may be considered to be an empirical argument for viewing the comitative and the privative as two meanings that are not as closely related as has been argued thus far; see Haspelmath (2009), for instance. On the semantic level, these meanings seem to be functionally opposed to each other based on the presence or absence of negation. Stolz et al. (2007) noted that, in some languages, privative constructions do not have a distinct form of their own because they are simply negated comitatives. An example of such a language is Hixkaryana, in which the privative construction contains the construction used to encode the comitative, plus an overt negation (24).

    (24) Hixkaryana (Cariban)

a.   ɨ-to-no   Waraka y-**akoro**

       1SG-go-PST   Waraka 3SG-**with**

       'I went with Waraka.' (Derbyshire, 1979, p. 96, glosses from Stolz et al. ,2007, p. 70)

b.   ro-hetx   y-**akoro**-**hra**   k-omok-no

       1SG-wife   3SG-**with**-**NEG** 1SG-come-PST

       'I have come without my wife.' (Derbyshire, 1979, p. 96, glosses from Stolz et al.,2007, p. 71)

The privative expression in (24b) simply adds the negative suffix *-hra* to the comitative marker in (24a). However, Hixkaryana is somewhat of an exception. In many languages, the privative and the comitative meanings are not connected at the level of expression. The Mesoamerican data confirm that the relationship among these meanings is more complex than the privative simply being the negative counterpart of the comitative.

5. Ethics Committee Approval

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Appendix A.

Abbreviations

1 – first person, 3 – third person, ABL – ablative, ABS – absolutive, AP – antipassive, CONJ – conjunction, DAT – dative, DEF – definite, DEM – demonstrative, EMPH – emphatic, ERG – ergative, EXIST – existential, FOC – focus, IMM – immediate, INF – infinitive, INT – intensifier, IPFV – imperfective, NEG – negative, NMLZ – nominalization, NOM – nominative, PASS – passive, PERF – perfect, PFV – perfective, POSS – possessive, PREP – preposition, PRIV – privative, PRS – present, PST – past, Q – interrogative, REM – remote, SG – singular, STAT – stative, SUB – subordination

Mezoamerika'daki özel yapılar: "Olmadan" diller gerçekte nasıl işler?

Öz

Mezoamerikan dil alanındaki dillerin, bir durumda bir katılımcının yokluğunu kodlayan özel anlamı ifade etmek için özel bir araçtan yoksun olduğu bildirilmiştir. Bu mikro-tipolojik çalışma, bu alandaki dillerin özel özel işaretler olmadan çalışmak için kullandığı alternatif stratejileri, yani İspanyolca edat günahını ödünç almak, olumsuz varoluşsal ve çiftleşme yapıları dahil olmak üzere düzenli olumsuz yapıların kullanılması ve işlevsel olarak kısıtlanmış işaretler özellikle anlamsal alanlar (vücut parçaları, kıyafetler vb.) ortaya çıkarır. Mezoamerikan dillerinin olumsuz komitatif veya araçsal yapıların kullanımına karşı olması gerçeği, ayrıcalıkların basit bir mülkiyet, varoluş veya komitatiflik olumsuzlamasından daha karmaşık bir anlambilimsel doğaya sahip olduğunu destekler. Mezoamerika'da ve kuzeydeki dillerde kullanılan özel yapılarda dikkate değer bir benzerlik, Mezoamerika ile Amerika'nın Güneybatı arasındaki dilsel ilişkiyi yansıtır.

Anahtar sözcükler: özel; Mesoamerica; dilsel tipoloji; alansal dilbilim; olumsuzluk

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