AN INVESTIGATION OF PROJECTIVE CONTENT IN KAQCHIKEL MAYA

This paper provides an initial investigation of a category of meaning called projective content in the language Kaqchikel, which is a Mayan language spoken in the central highlands of Guatemala. Projective content is standardly thought of as the implication of an utterance that survives when embedded under operators that typically block these implications. Content that projects is commonly diagnosed through the Family-of-Sentences tests (Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet 1990), where the implication is embedded under different operators as illustrated by the English example in (1).

(1) Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet 1990:28
   a. The present queen of France lives in Ithaca.
   b. It is not the case that the present queen of France lives in Ithaca.
   c. Does the present queen of France live in Ithaca?
   d. If the present queen of France lives in Ithaca, she has probably met Nelly.

   Implication: There is a present queen of France

In (1a), the implication that there is a queen of France, which is triggered by use of the definite *the* holds in (1b-d) However, the proposition asserting the queen lives in Ithaca does not hold true for (b-d). It has been observed that the property of projection is shared by both presuppositions and Pott’s (2005) style conventional implicatures. In their 2013 paper, Tonhauser et al. develop a set of diagnostics based off of the standard Family-of-Sentences tests that is intended for use in a field setting (as well as in experimental settings) to collect basic facts about projective meaning crosslinguistically. In this paper, I provide data collected using the aforementioned diagnostics in the field and further show that not all implications expected to arise from triggers in Kaqchikel behave as expected based on the similarities in behavior presented for Guaraní and English (Tonhauser et al. 2013).

In the first part of this paper, I show that *most* implications in Kaqchikel behave similarly to English and to Guaraní with respect to the strong contextual felicity condition. Strong contextual felicity refers to the requirement that a linguistic trigger be used in a specific context in order to be interpreted as felicitous, which is referred to as an *m*-positive context (Tonhauser et al. 2013). If the trigger is used in an *m*-negative context, and a speaker judges the utterance to be infelicitous, then the trigger imposes strong contextual felicity on the implication. This is illustrated in (2). In Kaqchikel, *chuqa’* is similar to English *too*. If it is subject to strong contextual felicity (SCF), which in this case requires there to be a salient referent in the context, then *chuqa’* in Kaqchikel is subject to SCF.

(2) Context: Marta is eating her sandwich for lunch at the shop where she works Claudia walks into the empty shop with her children and joins Marta at the table where she is eating. She says:

   #Le ak’al-a’ tajin n-∅-ki-taj kab chuqa’
   det child-pl prog inc-b3s-a3pl-eat candy too.
   ‘The children are eating candy, too.’

The example in (2) suggests that *chuqa’* is subject to SCF. This is confirmed when slightly changing the context in order to test whether or not a minimal contrast in contexts will change the felicity of the utterance.
(3) Context: Marta is eating candy after lunch at the shop where she works Claudia walks into the empty shop with her children and joins Marta at the table where she is eating. She says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Le ak’al-a’ } & \text{ tajin } n-\emptyset-ki-t\bar{a}j \quad \text{ kab } \text{ chuqa’} \\
\text{det child-pl } & \text{ prog inc-b3s-a3pl-eat } \text{ candy too.} \\
‘\text{The children are eating candy, too.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Due to the felicity in the minimal contrast from the context in (2) and (3), where a salient referent is provided in (3), we have strong evidence that \text{chuqa’} is subject to SCF in Kaqchikel.

While \text{chuqa’} behaves similarly to English \textit{too} with respect to SCF, possessive pronouns in Kaqchikel exhibit different behavior than English possessives do. In an English possessive construction, such as \textit{my brother}, there is an implication that the speaker has a brother. This use of the possessive also exists in Kaqchikel as shown in (4).

(4) \text{Ru-wal} yamer x-\emptyset-kam
\text{A3s-child} almost PRFV-B3s-died
‘Her/his child almost died.’

In (4) as well as in the similar English possessive construction, there is an implication the referent of \text{ru-} ‘her/his’ has a child and further this implication is not subject to SCF. However, interestingly there are examples of this possessive construction in Kaqchikel in which there is no implication of possession.

(5) Context: Marta is leaving to buy coffee for herself at the café next door. As she walks out the door, you call out:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Rin chuqa } n-\emptyset-w-ajo & \quad \text{ jun nu-café} \\
\text{1sg too } & \text{ IMPF-B3s-A1S-want one A1s-coffee} \\
‘I want coffee, too! (Literally: I want one my coffee, too!’)
\end{align*}
\]

The construction in (5) (sometimes referred to as the proleptic possessive) is quite commonly used in Kaqchikel, and though it entails possible future possession here, there is no coffee possessed by the speaker at the time of utterance. This data suggests that there are two types of so-called ‘possession’ in Kaqchikel, one in which the possessive implication arises like in English and one in which there is no possessive implication at the time of utterance at all.

From a broader perspective, this paper provides new evidence from an additional minority language that expands on the current understanding we have of how projective contents work crosslinguistically. Though more research is required to understand the divide between the two uses of the possessive construction in Kaqchikel, I have also provided additional evidence that this category of meaning does not behave uniformly in all languages and thus warrants additional investigation in other languages to aid in our understanding of projective content.

\textbf{REFERENCES}