Headless Relative Clauses
in Mesoamerican Languages

Edited by

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Preface

This volume is the result of a research project that started in May 2016, when two of the co-editors—Ivano Caponigro and Harold Torrence—were invited by the third co-editor—Roberto Zavala Maldonado—to teach a one-week seminar on free relative clauses at Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) Sureste in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. At CIESAS Sureste Roberto and his colleagues have created a unique team of graduate students and scholars working on Mesoamerican languages. Graduate students who are admitted to the program must already know the languages they want to investigate: almost all of them are native speakers or heritage speakers; the rest arrive with previously-acquired high-level knowledge of the languages. Ivano and Harold were amazed and excited by the fact that they could present a construction one day and have attendees present data about it from their own languages the following day.

Everybody enjoyed that intense and highly interactive experience so much that we decided to extend it and broaden its scope to cover other headless relative clauses besides free relative clauses, and to include further languages. We co-editors applied for grants to support the project and were awarded a UC MEXUS-CONACYT Collaborative Research Grant. Ivano was also awarded a grant from UC San Diego Social Sciences, Harold was awarded a grant from the UCLA Academic Senate, while Roberto secured additional funds from CIESAS. This support allowed us to carry out our project in two workshops, to ask Prof. Judith Aissen, Prof. Scott AnderBois, and Prof. Jessica Coon to join us in leading those workshops, and to invite a team of more than twenty-five graduate students and scholars. Both workshops were held at CIESAS Sureste and could have never happened without Roberto’s commitment, organizational skills, and capacity to overcome any kind of last-minute obstacle.

The first workshop took place from November 27 to December 2, 2017. Together with Profs. Aissen, AnderBois, and Coon, we provided theoretical and methodological overviews of the main aspects and issues concerning the varieties of headless relative clauses at the center of our investigation—three kinds of free relative clauses, light-headed relative clauses and other headless relative clauses—and two related constructions—interrogative clauses and headed relative clauses. The discussion that followed the presentations allowed us to agree on the basic definitions, structure, and methodology to apply to the investigation of individual languages.

The second workshop was held six months later, from May 28 to June 2, 2018. Participants submitted a draft paper ahead of time and then gave a presentation at the workshop. The group discussion after each presentation and individual meetings throughout the workshop provided important additional insights and refinements and helped us ready each paper for the next step.
We editors made a preliminary evaluation of whether each submitted paper could be considered as a possible chapter for the current volume and could be sent to reviewers for evaluation. A team of sixteen reviewers together with us editors reviewed the papers and provided crucial feedback.

The editorial duties were divided as follows. Ivano was the sole editor for Chapters 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 15. Ivano was the primary editor for Chapters 5, 6, and 10, with help from Roberto. Ivano and Roberto shared editorial duties for Chapter 12. Harold was the primary editor for Chapter 7, with help from Ivano.

Further information about our project, our workshops, and their participants can be found on the project website:

https://sites.google.com/view/mesoamerican

This edited volume does not have a traditional introduction that summarizes the following chapters and highlights the main issues. This function is assumed by Chapter 1, which collects and compares some of the main findings from the subsequent chapters, which are all language specific, and highlights similarities and differences between our results and previous crosslinguistic findings. But Chapter 1 also defines all the constructions that are investigated in each chapter, provides arguments supporting conceptual distinctions between them, and introduces the methodology and tests that are used in the language-specific investigations in the other chapters. Last, Chapter 1 illustrates the uniform structure that every language-specific chapter follows and explains the reasons behind this choice of format. Chapter 1 should, therefore, be seen as complementary to the other chapters and as crucial to their full understanding and appreciation.

Ivano Caponigro
Harold Torrence
Roberto Zavala Maldonado
Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all the participants in this project who accepted the challenge of exploring a new and unusual topic and generously shared their language knowledge and linguistic skills. We are extremely grateful to Judith Aissen, Scott AnderBois, and Jessica Coon for being willing to join our project, finding time and space for it, teaching and providing feedback at our workshops, and bringing so much knowledge, focus, and enthusiasm to the table. It wouldn’t have been possible without them.

We are also grateful to our sixteen reviewers for their crucial contribution. We list them here and thank them warmly: Judith Aissen, Scott AnderBois, Heriberto Avelino, Jürgen Bohnemeyer, Una Canger, Jessica Coon, Nora England, John Foreman, Lilian Guerrero, Robert Henderson, Lynda de Jong, Danny Law, Enrique Palancar, Gilles Polian, Stavros Skopeteas, Fernando Zuñiga.

We would like to thank our research assistant September Cowley, who joined us in the second workshop, helped us translate some of the chapters from Spanish, and helped us with the preliminary editing and formatting. Special thanks to Christine Bartels for the precious, rich, multi-layered, and detailed final editing. Thanks to Hisako Noguchi for preparing the index.

We are extremely grateful to Luciano Caponigro, who offered his skills as a web designer and a video maker for free and designed a great website for our project with beautiful video clips as well:

https://sites.google.com/view/mesoamerican

Many thanks to Patricia Kat who prepared delicious homemade vegetarian Mexican food for our breakfasts and lunches at the workshops, and to the CIESAS Sureste staff, especially to Karla Thomas, Roberto Núñez, and José González, for all their help.

We thank the agencies that have supported this book and the project behind it: UC MEXUS-CONACYT for a Collaborative Research Grant to the co-editors, UC San Diego Social Sciences for a grant to Ivano, the UCLA Academic Senate for a grant to Harold, and CIESAS for a grant to Roberto.

Ivano Caponigro
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**Judith Aissen** is Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Santa Cruz and recipient of the LSA's 2019 Kenneth L. Hale Award. She received her PhD in Linguistics at Harvard University. Her primary research area is Mayan morpho-syntax and its interfaces with information structure and prosody. Her research projects include *wh*-movement and pied-piping in Tsotsil, topic and focus in Mayan, and the crosslinguistic typology of differential object marking.

**Scott AnderBois** is Assistant Professor of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences at Brown University; he received his PhD in Linguistics from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 2011. His research uses primary fieldwork to explore questions in semantics and pragmatics, with a particular focus on the discourse effects of different sentence types (e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative) and the ways in which different evidentials, miratives, and other discourse particles interact with them. He has explored such questions primarily in Yucatec Maya, Tagalog, English, and A’ingae (Cofán). He also is co-director of a community-engaged language documentation project with speakers of A’ingae to create a multimedia, multi-purpose record of the language and culture of the A’i people.

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Jessica Coon is Associate Professor in Linguistics at McGill University. She received her PhD from MIT in 2010 and then spent one year as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University. She has worked on a number of topics in Mayan languages, including ergativity, split ergativity, verb-initial word order, and extraction asymmetries. She has also been involved in collaborative language documentation and revitalization projects in Latin America and Canada.

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Lucero Flores-Nájera received her MA in Linguistic Anthropology from Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) in Mexico City and her PhD in Language Documentation at CIESAS Sureste in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico in 2019 with a dissertation on The Grammar of Simple Clauses in Náhuatl Tlaxcalan. Her current research uses primary fieldwork to explore questions in the morphology and syntax of Tlaxcalan Nahuatl, which is her second language. She has specifically investigated topics related to syntactic categories, the tense-aspect-mood system, word order, configurationality, interrogative clauses, and relative clauses in Tlaxcalan Nahuatl.

Gabriela García Salido is Associate Professor at the Center for Anthropological Studies (CEA) at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). She received her PhD in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin in 2014. Her dissertation Clause Linkage in Southeastern Tepehuan, a Uto-Aztecan Language of Northern Mexico received the Wigberto Jiménez Moreno-
INAH award for the best doctoral thesis. Her research interests include language documentation, morpho-syntax, language typology, and Uto-Aztecan languages. She has presented and published widely on various aspects of Southeastern Tepehuan grammatical structures. She has also created a substantial database of Southern Tepehuan using a community-based methodology with funding from five organizations.

**Néstor Hernández-Green** is Associate Professor at Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) in Mexico City, where he received his PhD in 2015. His research focuses on prosody, morphology, and morpho-syntax. He has worked on three different Otomi (Oto-Manguean) languages: Acazulco Otomi, Tenango Otomi, and Mezquital Otomi. He has also collaborated in a legacy corpus research project on the prosody of Coatepec Totonac.

**Wendy López Márquez** is a graduate student in Linguistics at the University of California Berkeley. She works on Sierra Popoluca, which is her native language. Her research interests include morphology, syntax, and language documentation. She is part of the ongoing ELDP-Major Documentation Project *Documentation of Five Zoquean Languages Spoken in Mexico: Chiapas Zoque, Jitotolte, San Miguel Chimalapa Zoque, Santa Maria Chimalapa Zoque, and Highland Popoluca*, which is directed by Professor Roberto Zavala.

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**Justin Royer** has a BA in Linguistics from Concordia University. He began his Ph.D. at McGill University under the supervision of Professor Jessica Coon in 2017. His research interests include syntax, semantics, linguistic typology, and language documentation. He has been working on Chuj since 2016 and has also worked on Kaqchikel.

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Abbreviations

From The Leipzig Glossing Rules – List of Standard Abbreviations, Updated on May 31, 2015
Additional abbreviations occur in individual chapters (and will be listed in an early footnote in
the respective chapters).

1  first person
2  second person
3  third person
A  agent-like argument of canonical transitive verb
ABL ablativ
ABS absolutive
ACC accusative
ADJ adjective
ADV adverb(ial)
AGR agreement
ALL allative
ANTIP antipassive
APPL applicative
ART article
AUX auxiliary
BEN benefactive
CAUS causative
CLF classifier
COM comitative
COMP complementizer
COMPL completive
COND conditional
COP copula
CVB converb
DAT dative
DECL declarative
DEF definite
DEM demonstrative
DET determiner
DIST distal
DISTR distributive
DU dual
DUR durative
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