

## The Chontal Language.

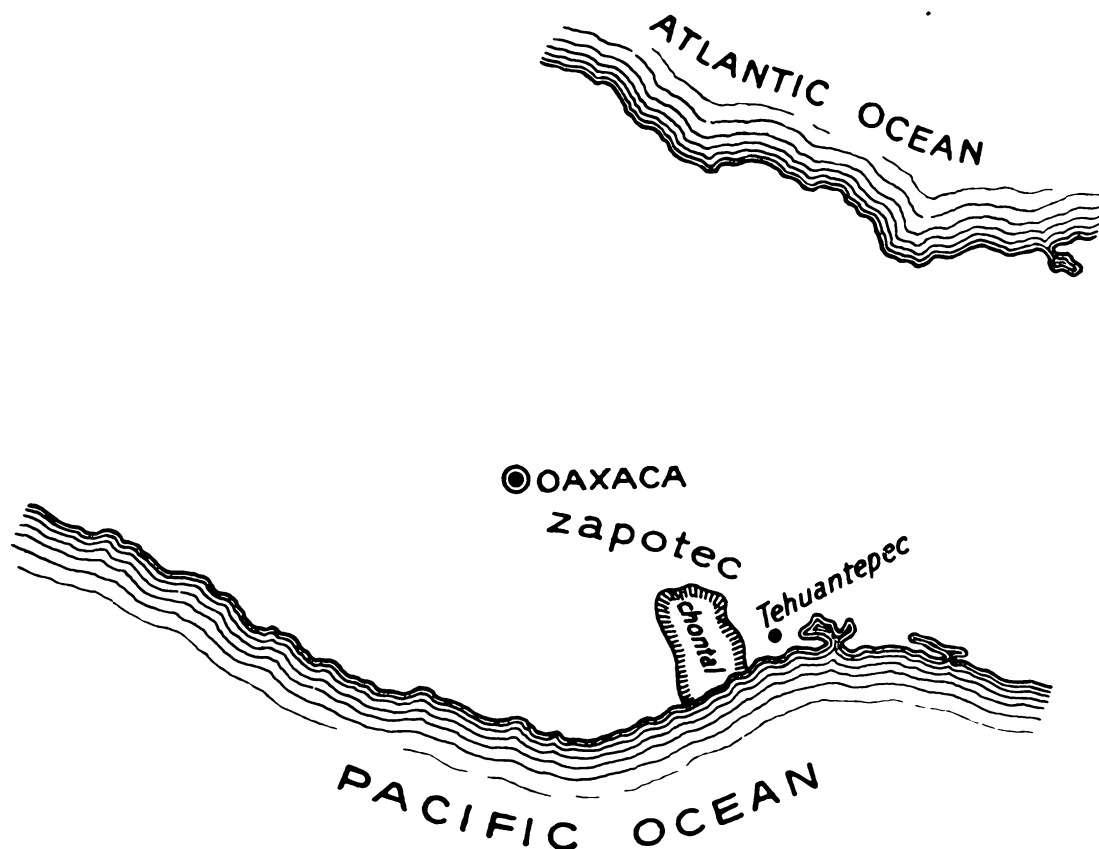
### (Dialect of Tequixistlan.)

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The material for the present study was obtained in Oaxaca during the course of a linguistic survey of that region for the Department of Anthropology of Mexico under the direction of Manuel Gamio. This survey has been temporarily interrupted on account of the unsettled conditions of the country but will be resumed in the near future.

#### § 1. Geographical Distribution.

The Chontal language is spoken in the mountainous region of the southeastern part of the state of Oaxaca in the southern part of Mexico. This



region is remarkable for its linguistic diversity, there being no less than fourteen separate tongues spoken within the borders of the state.

Chontal territory is delimited on one side by the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and on the other it is separated from contiguous Zapotec territory by a line running outside of the following border towns: *Majada, Tenango, Tequixistlan, Lachixonaxe, Yautepec* (San Bartolo), *Lachivia, Quieri, Toltitepec, Sosoltepec, Chongo, Chacalapad.*

This whole territory is extremely mountainous and inaccessible, forming a sort of island between two avenues of travel, rough travel to be sure, from Oaxaca and the low lands to the north (toward the Atlantic where Aztec is spoken), to the sea: one by way of Miahuatlan and Pochutla, the other like a long diverticulum of Zapotec territory by Lachixela and Jalapa down to Tehuantepec. A people living in this situation would resist invasion for a long time.

As happens in all parts of Oaxaca, the names of towns in Chontal territory are of Aztec origin, the natives when speaking in their own tongue use the real Chontal names, when there are any<sup>1</sup>.

The most important Chontal town is Tequixistlan. This is also an Aztec name. There is no distinctive name for it in Chontal. It is referred to as *al riya* "the town".

### § 2. Name of people and language.

Unlike many primitive peoples, the Chontals have a name for themselves in their own tongue. *jale* means not man or person or people, but Chontal. Thus: *nula jale kwe* "a Chontal man", *ige xoçgu jale* "he speaks Chontal".

*taygi* means "word" or "language".

### § 3. Linguistic relationship.

In 1915 KROEBER pointed out the resemblance of some thirty words in Chontal to similar words in various languages of the Hokan family<sup>2</sup>. The position of Chontal in the Hokan family may now be considered definitely proved from the material here adduced.

All the words listed by KROEBER are substantially correct. KROEBER's material is taken from BELMAR who altho a great collector of linguistic data and a pioneer in the Oaxaca field, was a very poor linguist and a worse fonetician. BELMAR does not mention from what pueblo he got his material. It may represent a different dialect from ours. That would account for the minor differences in all the words in KROEBER's list. In several cases there are grammatical elements included in the radical, which do not belong to it. For instance the word he gives for eye *ipiwa*, really means "my eye".

Four of his words do not occur in our material.

For "star" he has a native word. Ours is a mere Hispanism, *lusero*.

His word for "woman" is our word for "old man".

His word for "old" is ours for "man".

In three cases our words are quite different from his: "hot", "two" and "large". For "two" our word *kwesi* is nearer the general Hokan word than his.

<sup>1</sup> The reason of this is probably that the Aztecs, who were great commercial travellers, had names in their own tongue for all these towns. When the Spaniards came they probably got the names from Aztec guides and interpreters.

<sup>2</sup> Serian, Tequistlatecan, and Hokan. Univ. of Calif. Publ. in Amer. Arch. and Ethn. 1915.

We have compared our larger vocabulary with word lists of several Hokan languages published in the literature<sup>3</sup>. In the section on Semasiology we give Hokan words for comparison wherever significant ones can be found.

#### § 4. Fonology.

The fonetics of Chontal present very little difficulty for a European. There is no pitch tone. The stress accent is placed almost invariably on the last syllable. This is especially noticeable in words borrowed from the Spanish, where those words in Spanish carry the stress on the penultima. To a Spanish ear this comes as a shock.

##### Vowels.

The vowel system is practically the same as in Spanish.

To this must be added the nasalized  $\bar{a}$  (pronounced as in French (*an'*)). However, this nasalized sound occurs only in the case of the pronouns.

##### a) Labial.

##### Consonants.

- 1) Plosive: There is no differentiation between surd and sonant. In our texts we write indifferently *p* and *b*. They are often preceded by a nasal resonance: *mb* . . . , *mp* . . . They are never 'glotalized'.
- 2) Fricative: Only the surd *f* occurs. This is distinctly labio-dental. It is equivalent in other Hokan languages to *w*, *hw*, *xw*, *h*, *v* (Seri), &c.
- 3) Nasal: The *m* occurs frequently. Often assimilated to *b*.

##### b) Frontal.

- 1) Plosive: The sonant *d* is very rare. The surd *t* is quite frequently palatalized to *ty*. It is usually alveolar but produced by contact with the blade of the tongue instead of the tip.
- 2) Fricative: Sonants do not occur. The surds *s* and  $\zeta$  (as in English 'shoe') are interchangeable. The *s* is often pronounced as an affricate *ts*.
- 3) Liquid: The *l* is always sonant. It never occurs as *tl*. The *r* is always surd and of one single vibration.
- 4) Nasal: The *n* is frequently palatalized to *ny*. It is sometimes preceded by a 'glotal catch', written as *'n*. More often it is followed by this glotal catch which separates it from the following vowel: *n'a* . . . In this case the *n* is sometimes hardly audible.

##### c) Palatal.

- 1) Plosive: *ty* and *ky* occur as true palatal stops, fonetically, but they are always the result of the tendency to palatalization which is very strong in this language and which is an important factor in fonetic evolution. It is noteworthy that the corresponding sonants do not occur.

<sup>3</sup> SAPIR: The Position of Yana in the Hokan Stock. U. of Cal. Pub. 1917. — KROEBER: The languages of the coast of California North of San Francisco. U. of Cal. Pub. 1911 — KROEBER and HARRINGTON: Fonetic elements of the Diegueno language. U. of Cal. Pub. 1914. — BARRETT: The ethnogeography of the Pomo. U. of Cal. 1908.

- 2) **Fricative:** The surd (as in German *ich*) does not occur. The sonant *y* is a true semi-consonant.
  - 3) **Liquid:** *ly* occurs as a true palatalized *l*, but the same remarks apply as above in the case of the plosives.
  - 4) **Nasal:** same remark —
- d) Guttural.*
- 1) **Plosive:** The sonant *g* is rare. The surd *k* is often palatalized. It is never velar. It is never 'glotalized' nor aspirated. When the sonant *g* occurs it is hardly ever a true stop, but has a marked affricate character. We write it: *gg*.
  - 2) **Fricative:** The sonant is only present as the affricate just described. The surd *x* is velar rather than palatal, but it is quite free from uvular trill.
  - 3) **Nasal:** The velar *n* is rare. Even when followed by *p*, *b*, *s*, and even *k* or *g*, the *n* keeps its frontal character.
  - 4) **Liquid:** All forms of guttural *l* or *kl* are absent. Uvular trills do not occur.
- e) Laryngeal.*
- 1) **Epiglottal:** The plosive (so-called 'glotal stop') occurs frequently. The fricative occurs as a surd, written as *n*. The corresponding sonant does not occur.
  - 2) **Glotal:** The vowel system has already been described. The fricative occurs both before and after vowels, and is written in both cases with *h*<sup>4</sup>.

### § 5. Semasiology.

For practical purposes we have arranged the semantic material into six large groups, subdivided according to a decimal numeration as follows:

1. Nature . . .	12 the elements	11 sky, heavens, Sun, Moon, star, &c.	{	121 fire, burn, hot, &c.	{	122 earth, mountain, minerals	{	123 water, rain, ice, river, wet, flow	{	124 air, wind, blow	
		13 time		14 space . . . . .		{		141 dimentional .		{	large, small, short, long
		15 number						142 relational . . .			{
				2. Animals . . .		21 deer, horse, cow, bear		{		22 cat, tiger, puma	
	23 dog, wolf, fox	24 sheep, goat, hog	25 rabbit, squirrel, skunk, rat		26 birds						
	27 snake, frog, lizard, turtle										
	28 fish, crab, clam										
	29 insects, bugs, flies										

<sup>4</sup> We prefer this method to the writing of it with the sign ' because this is likely to involve confusion with the sign for epiglottalization: '.

- |                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| 3. Plants . . .   | { | 31 tree, wood, shrub  |
|                   |   | 32 grass, leaf, thorn   |
|                   |   | 33 root, onion, potatoe   |
|                   |   | 34 nut, acorn   |
|                   |   | 35 berries  |
|                   |   | 36 fleshy, fruits   |
|                   |   | 37 grain, corn  |
| 4. Man . . . . .  | { | 41 people, man, woman, stranger, child, boy                                       |
|                   |   | 42 relationship terms   |
|                   |   | 43 pronouns and demonstratives  |
|                   |   | 44 professions, chief, priest   |
|                   |   | 45 tall, strong, pretty, short, &c.   |
|                   |   | 46 personal names of individuals and tribes                                       |
| 5. Body . . . . . | { | 51 head . . . . . {   |
|                   |   | 511 eye, see, look  |
|                   |   | 512 mouth { 5121 eat, drink, taste, swallow, such, &c.                            |
|                   |   | 5122 speak, tell, say, tongue, language   |
|                   |   | 513 nose, smell, snut   |
|                   |   | 514 ear, hear, listen, deaf   |
|                   |   | 52 hand . . . . . {   |
|                   |   | 521 touch, feel, heavy, smooth, rough, hard, soft                                 |
|                   |   | 522 . . . . . { 5221 have, take, hold, give, get, &c.                             |
|                   |   | 5222 make, do, mould, stretch, tear   |
|                   |   | 5223 hit, pound, press, push, pull  |
|                   |   | 5224 put, place, lay  |
|                   |   | 53 foot . . . . . {   |
|                   |   | 531 go, come, walk, run, jump   |
|                   |   | 532 depart, enter, ascend, descend  |
|                   |   | 533 bring, leave, carry   |
|                   |   | 534 stand, fall, rise, lie, sit   |
|                   |   | 535 kick  |
|                   |   | 54 organs . . . {   |
|                   |   | 541 bone, skin, hair, breast, sweat, &c.  |
|                   |   | 542 heart, liver, kidney, blood, fat, flesh, &c.                                  |
|                   |   | 543 genitals, phallus, podex, feces, fart, fuck, piss, &c.                        |
|                   |   | 55 life, death, to be, thinking, emotions   |
| 6. Tool . . . . . | { | 61 special tools and actions referable (knife, ax, cut, split, wedge, drill, &c.) |
|                   |   | 62 material cult. {   |
|                   |   | 621 hunt, war, kill   |
|                   |   | 622 agriculture   |
|                   |   | 623 clothing  |
|                   |   | 624 household   |
|                   |   | 625 art   |

In the following list we give only the semantic elements found in the language, but it must be noted that this includes not only the radical elements but also the grammatical elements, when these appear as affixes. Thus the fonema *pa*, which does not occur alone but is the temporal suffix indicating the Perfect (in other words is a grammatical element), is nevertheless included in this semantic list because as a fonetic phenomenon it is the *sign* which embodies the concept of the past. Therefore it is a *semantema*. All such affixes however, are preceded or followed by a hyphen, according to their position relatively to the radical.

Abstracted radical elements (like so-called 'verb stems'), are placed in parenthesis: to sleep (*sma*). This indicates that the radical *sma* is never found as an independent word, but always followed by some suffix as *smapa*, *smama*, *smara*, &c.

- 11 sky *maa* [Hok. *-apa, amma-, imoa*]; sun *fonar* [Moh.-Dieg. *anya, inya*]; sunlight (same as 121) *nyu*; day *kuna*; morning (dawn) *pukia* (perhaps from *pu* to go out. and day *kine*); night *pugi*; last night *tinba*; to-morrow *moggi* (Cf. night *pugi* and Hok. night *amok, himok*); late, late in the day, evening (Cf. to-morrow *mui*; to be late in the day (*ka*); moon *mura*; month *mura*; star *lusero* (Hisp.).
- 121 fire *ngwa* [Hok. *'au, awa*]; light, firelight (same as fire) *nyu*; ashes *pigg* (Cf. stone 122) [Hok. *mari, matre, imagh, hanmulye*]; charred wood, coal, charcoal *çna'*; hot (same as sunlight *nyu*); cold *sita* [Hok. *hatsit, xatsa, xatsil*]; to burn (*nas*), (*pi'*); to boil (*mb' ula*); to dry (*hur*).
- 122 earth, soil, land, ground *mas, mats* [Hok. *amt, ammata, ama, ma, maksala*]; mountain *mala*; stone *pih*; salt *weh*; sand *puçi*; ravine *nya*.
- 123 water *xa* [Hok. *xa, ha, ka*]; river *pana' m'am*; to bathe (*pos*); sea *maxa* (Cf. water, river).
- 124 air *ba*.
- 13 to last, pass (*xika*); week (Hisp.) *çamana*; (Perfect) *-pa, -ba* [Pomo-*hiba*]; (Continuous) *-ngu* (Sg.), *-mi* (Pl.); (Present Future) *-ma* (Sg.), *-me* (Pl.); (Imperative) *-ra* (Sg.), *-re* (Pl.), (temporal suffix of obscure meaning) *-li*; (Andative) *-kiç*; (Causative) *-mu*; (Impending Future) *-ga* (Sg.), *-ri*.
- 141 high, long, *çogî* [Hok. *djut, hitçun, itçul*]; low, short, *koki*; big be [Hok. *bate, ba'te, baten*]; little *taç, çoçi, tyof* [Pomo *tuya*].
- 142 here, there, *fa, ir, rpe* (*ir + pi*) [Pomo *ba, there*]; out, outside, outdoors *nia*; after, *hoy, toy* (also used as "in order to" "with").
- 15 one *nula, nuli*; two *kvesi* [Hok. *ux, axak, xokwa, xwak*]; three *çane* [Hok. *ka-xpa-m, ha-mo-k*]; four *malbu*; five *mage* [Hok. *çpom, djiman*]; six *kandjiç*; seven *kote* [Hok. *koba, koina, latko*]; eight *malfa*; nine *pela*; ten *mbama*; eleven 10 + 1; twelve 10 + 2; fifteen 10 + 5; twenty *nuçans* (perhaps from *nuli çans* "one person" [twenty fingers make a whole man]); thirty 20 + 10; thirty-five 20 + 10 + 5; forty 2 × 20; fifty 2 × 20 + 10; fifty-five 2 × 20 + 10 + 5; sixty 3 × 20; eighty 4 × 20; hundred *masno*; two hundred 2 × 100; four hundred 4 × 100.
- 15 yes *akya, oy*; not *çi, çite*; so, positive *oy, ony*; much *yeste, yate*; and (no word); like, as *tor*; with *ki* or *k* + ... (fusion); if *or*.
- 20 animal no general word. Hispanism *animala*.
- 21 deer *mur* (now used for cattle) (at present *benadu* [Hisp.]); horse *kabayu* (Hisp.).
- 22 jaguar *yesma, tigre* (Hisp.).
- 23 dog *tsigi* [Hok. *susu, çitçella, çitçiwi*].
- 24 sheep *siggo*; goat *çiibe* (Hisp.); hog *kutçi* (Hisp.).
- 25 squirrel *tsetse*; rabbit *koneçu* (Hisp.).
- 26 bird no general term; chicken *giti* (probably originally the word for turkey). *puyu* (Hisp.); egg *pivi*; parrot *genge, utçu*; crow *bo', pumli*.
- 27 snake *nyofar*; lizzard *moh*; turtle *çiba*.
- 28 fish *tu'u*; shrimp *tiçmu*.
- 29 bee *diçir*; wax *pasi*; honey *koça*; fly *hangwa*; scorpion *nyayçpo*.
- 31 tree, wood, plant *eh* [Hok. *'ina, 'iwi, ii, a'i, i-ly*].
- 32 grass *pasto* (Hisp.) *ça* (doubtful); leaf *pela*.
- 34 pine-nut *weka*.
- 36 fruit no general term; gourd, squash, *aba*; cactus, nopal *pala*; chile, pepper *kasi*; sugar cane *pah*; platano, banana *owe, labe*; tomato *ngone*.
- 37 corn, maize *kosa'*; bean *r'ane*.
- 38 flower *pipi*.
- 41 person *sans* (Sg.), *sanu* (Pl.) [Hok. *is, iç, itçi, tçatç, tça*]; man, adult *kwe* (Sg.), *gurbe* (Pl.) [*gawk, kwora'aka, kwirak*]; old man *kano*; young man, boy, youth *mulî*; woman *tee* (Sg.), *deya* (Pl.) [Pomo *mata da, dake*]; old woman *kyopaya* (see "adult"); girl, *bata* [Hok. *madi, mata*]; child (either sex), daughter, son *'wa* (Sg.), *naske* (Pl.) [Hok. *'anna, 'alla, 'ulla, obai* (Pl.)]; baby, infant (either sex) *çer* [Hok. *sepxa, semta*]; husband *pewe* (*pi* semi-possessive + *kwe* man); wife *pete* (*pi* semi-possessive + *tee* woman) [Hok. *pidi, put*]; paramour *kye*; to marry (*man*), (*pan*), (*panu*).

- 42 grandfather *kube* (Cf. "man"); grandmother no special term; father 'ai', 'yayi' [Hok. *gal, gai, aka*]; mother *mama* [Hok. "grandmother" *ma, ama, amo, mama*]; grandson, no term ("son of my son"); son, daughter, no term other than "child"; elder brother *sapi* (Sg.), *sarpi* (Pl.); younger brother *bepo*; older sister *nota*; younger sister, same as "younger brother"; uncle, same as "elder brother"; aunt same as "elder sister".
- 43 I *ya* [Pomo *ha, a*]; thou *ma* [Hok. *ma, mai, mi, mo, ma*]; he *gge*; we *yā* [Pomo *ya, wa, aya*]; ye *mā*; they *re*; "it" (an indefinite demonstrative pronoun equivalent to "he", "the", "that", &c.) *i* (Sg.), *n* (Pl.) [Hok. *ye, aya, he*]; the *al, dal, gal, la* [Hok. *da*]; mine expressed by "the it"; his (expressed by "it he"); thine *ak*; indefinite possessive article *pi* [Hok. "that, the" *be, pa, pe*]; what? *kya*; who (this relation not expressed).
- 45 pretty *tçili*; grown up, adult *tyopa* (see "old woman"); old same as "old man"; young same as "youth", "girl".
- 46 stranger *gwaya*; Chontal *fale*; Zapotec *nye*; Yalalag *xoço*; Tehuantepec *uçia*; Oaxaca *pampala*; Tequixistlan *al riya*, i. e. "the village".
- 510 head *fa* [Hok. *ina, çina, lax, naxa, çna, xiya, ço*]; neck *nukma*; face 'a (Cf. "head").
- 511 eye 'uh [Hok. *oy, us, uç, ui, yu*]; to see, look (*mai*) [Hok. *mi, me, ima*], (*sin*) (*çin*). [Hok. *tçadin, çitadu, tçido*].
- 5120 mouth *ko*; tooth *ai'* [Hok. *itsa, sa, yao*].
- 5121 to eat (*te*), (*tes*) [Pomo *tça, tsa*]; to drink (*sna*), (*çna*) [Hok. *si, iç, çi*]; to swallow (*n'u*), (*n'uk*); to feed a drink (*k'ai*); to feed (expressed by "eat + Causative"); to taste good (*xana*); sweet *çuçki, tçutski* [Hok. *tçup, tsama, tsep*]; bitter *kwuh* [Hok. *kai, koi*]; poison *çi*.
- 5122 tongue *pala* [Hok. *bawa' la, ipalya*]; word, language *taygi*; to speak, tell, say (*go*) [Hok. *ga, go*], (*xi*), (*xoç*) [Hok. *xe, xay*], (*toho*), (*tom*); to ask (*n'uma*) [Hok. "to say" *mau*]; to sing (*ça*) [Hok. *-çe-, -es-, -x-*]; to cry (*poh*), (*hoh*) [Hok. "to blow, whistle" *p'o, p'u, puç, xu*]; to call (*hoy*).
- 513 nose 'nali [Hok. *lili, la, ila, li*].
- 514 ear *smatsi, çmatsi* [Hok. *smalgu, isim, ismak, asmak, isan*].
- 520 hand (the same term is used for hand, finger, arm, forearm) *mane*; shoulder *çaye*.
- 5021 to have, hold, get (*oy*) (Cf. "yes, good, positive"), (*tuç*), (*tçu*); to lift (*ðana*); to give (*kay*) [Hok. *dikam, dikau, hoxat*]; to sell (*ku'*); to buy (*n'a*); to steal (*nans*).
- 5222 to work, make, do (*pa*), (*pas*), (*pat*); to work also expressed by compound "make-have" (*patçu*).
- 5223 to throw (*ohm*) [Pomo *ul-ol*]; to hit (*na*).
- 5224 to put, place (*ponj*) [Hok. *ban-, -man-, ban* "to fall, throw, put"].
- 530 foot (same term used for foot, toe shin, leg) *mitçi* [Moh-Dieg. "leg" *hime, hemi-ly*]; knee *nyingole* [Hok. "step, go, walk" *neh, nex, negi, neni*]; thigh *pate* (Hisp.).
- 531 to go ('wa) (Sg.), (*lye*) (Pl.) [Hok. *-ua-, -uam-*]; "let's go" *endza* [Hok. "move, run" *dja-, tça*]; to come (*pa*); to run (*nu*), (*nyu*); to jump (*tsolu*); to meet together (*kyo*). (*to*), (*tyo*); to visit (*nulka*); to walk (*tas*); to go with, to accompany (*lek*). (*legg*); way, road, *ne* [Hok., *hia, ihdu, hissa, da, inya*].
- 532 to go out, to pass (*pu*) [Hok. \**bu* foot; *bui*, kick; *bu-ri*, dance]; to pass by (*kas*), (*ka*); to leave, abandon (*gansa*); to ascend go up (*fha*).
- 533 to bring ('u) [Pomo "come, go" *uhu*]; to take out (*kan*); to send (*gah'm*) (Cf. "to go"); to carry ('wa) (same as "go").
- 534 to stand (*kas*); to stop ('ay); to sit (*pah*), (*pan*) [Hok. *wa-, we-, -wo-, ouan*]; to lie (*tabi*) [Hok. *phe, pib, pid*]; to fall (*kye*). Imper. *ter*.
- 541 hair *fah* (see "head"); flesh, meat *çi'* [Hok. *biçe, bese*, "deer, deermeat", Yana: *ba-deer basi* meat; skin, no special term. One says "the flesh of my hand, the flesh of my face"; hide (of animals) *çimi* (Cf. "meat"); leather *baketa* (Hisp.); nail *nalu*; breast *pare*; milk *letçe* (Hisp.); belly *kun* [Hok. *hwil, koi, uka, xo, woxa*]; back *napo*.
- 542 heart *nusma, nuçma* [Pomo *xam, samai, mate*]; liver *bi* [Hok. *ima, äpçi, hipasa, -ipesi*]; kidney *rinyon* (Hisp.); blood *fas* [Hok. *wat, axta, hata, akat, ahwat, axwat, awat*].

- 55 to be, exist (essentially) (*pa*); to live, to exist (*laç*); alive *çax*; to die (*ma*); to bury (*muya*); to sleep (*çma*), (*sma*) [Hok. *samsi*, *itsmas*, *isma*]; to awake (*çmafa*); to wish, will, want (*he*); to love (*fu*); to know (*çina*); to hurt (*kwan*); to play, to amuse oneself to go visiting (Cf. Sp. *pasear*) (*sans*) (Cf. "people" *sans*); thought *ja*; to think (*fasmu*) (thought + Causative).
- 61 to cut (*ke*); knife *nabaxa*, *kutçilu* (Hisp.).
- 621 to kill (*man*) (Cf. "die" *ma*); to frighten (*çpatsa*).
- 622 hay *sakate* (Hisp.); field *nyagga* (from *nya* outdoors); to sow (*fa*); brown sugar, *panela pana* (Hisp.).
- 623 clothes *tçale*, *manta* (Hisp.); hat *speba*; guepil (woman's blouse) *perkasko*; petticoat *bofai*; trousers *sarber*; shoe *kaï*; to dress (*me*).
- 624 house *xur*, *hur* [Hok. *wa*, *awa*, *ava*]; village *riya*; plaza *naxki* (from *n'a* to buy); door *pwerta* (Hisp.); table *mes* (Hisp.); chair *çila* (Hisp.); bench *bangu* (Hisp.); bed *kanga*; hammock *some*; cushion *tifle*; cage *xaula* (Hisp.); metate *djima*; tenate woven basket) *tapa*; *petate* (straw mat) *pihma*; jicara (small bowl) *laba*; cantaro (jug) *xuti*; olla *piçu*; *apaxtle* (cooking stone) *pogo*; comal *kwahi*; fork *trintçe*; spoon *kutçara* (Hisp.); plate *pimi*; food, meal *tefa*, *xaybe*; bread *in*; sugar *asukra* (Hisp.); tortilla *skur*; chocolate *txura*.
- 625 money *tomi*; to dance (*sov*); church (*soykve*) (Cf. "to dance"); to pray (*sa*), (*ça*) Cf. "to sing"; "santo", idol, sacred, holy *ndyuç*, *nuç*; music (*poh*).

## § 6. Morfology.

### 1. General.

The structure of Chontal is exceedingly simple. We find none of the nominal complexities so frequent in American languages, none of the intricate and subtle patterns to express action, none of the tightly woven holofrastic expression that almost defies analysis. Chontal is bare to the point of indigence. The reader may have already noticed the semantic scantiness of the vocabulary. For instance, incredible as it may seem, there is only one word to express any part of the upper extremity: arm, hand, finger, is all the same. Similarly for foot, leg, ankle, thigh, calf, shin,—only one term. Skin is 'flesh'. Head, face, thought, are practically the same word. The terms of relationship are reduced to a minimum. There are no special terms for son, daughter, uncle, aunt, younger brother and younger sister are the same. It is not necessary to give any more instances of his semantic paucity. One would expect that to compensate, there would be a certain amount of morfological subtlety, but the morfology is equally bare and scanty. One wonders how the Chontal understand one another! Yet, of course they do, and this is a commentary on language in general and its psychological genesis. The barest expression is all that is really necessary for mutual intercourse, and elaboration is the result of a sort of playing at ornamentation and artistic endeavor.

### 2. Grammatical Processes<sup>3</sup>.

a) *A f f i x a t i o n*: Prefixation is absent. However, the element *i*, a sort of indefinite demonstrative article (V, 4), is so closely joined to many words that it may be on the road to becoming a prefix. — Suffixation is present. It is found only associated with words of action. The suffixes express mostly temporal and modal ideas. Their number is small, not more than a dozen. Infixation is absent.

<sup>3</sup> SAPIR: Language, p. 64.



b) Reduplication is absent.

c) Accentual differences are absent.

d) Internal modification is found in two cases in the grammatical element. In those two cases it is vocalic, not consonantal. It is found in one case to express a pronominal relation (change of *-ma*, *-me*, *-mi*, *-pa*, *-ngu* to *-mo*, *-po*, *-ngo* to express the relation I-you. See 6). It is found in the other case to express the plural (Fut. sing. *-ma*, pl. *-mi*. See 6). — It is also present in one radical as a consonantal change: he *gge*, they *re*.

e) Composition is absent.

f) Order appears to be rather loose. However it would be necessary to study a much larger amount of text material than what we have collected to express a definite opinion.

### 3. Formal Types of Word<sup>6</sup>.

The great majority of words are of the type: *A* (radical alone). Of this type are all the names of animals, plants, things, natural elements, &c., and also the pronouns, the demonstratives and articles, and words which express quality, quantity and time.

All the words of action are of the type (*A*) + (*b*) [abstracted radical + grammatical element]. They can be formulated as follows:

$$(A) \pm (c) \pm (a) + (t) \pm (p)$$

Where:

*A* = radical of action.

*c* = Causative suffix.

*a* = Andative suffix.

*t* = Temporal suffix.

*p* = Internal vocalic modification of the Future suffix

#### Examples.

<i>te-ma</i>	will eat	<i>te-mu-kiç-ma</i>	will go to feed
<i>te-mu-ma</i>	will feed	<i>te-mu-kiç-mi</i>	will go to feed (Pl.)

All other types of word are absent.

### 4. Articles and Demonstratives.

The language is rather rich in these.

There is a definite article expressed by any one of the following forms: *al*, *dal*, *ga*, *la*, *ar*. There is an indefinite article expressed by: *i*. There is what may be termed an indefinite article of possession expressed by *pi*.

All the names of objects, animals, plants and natural phenomena are always preceded by one of them, or two, or all three of them. Examples of usage will convey the rule better than any description:

<i>al xur</i>	the house
<i>i xur</i>	a house
<i>la i xur</i>	the house ("the very house")
<i>i pi xur</i>	somebody's house
<i>la i pi xur</i>	my house ("the very possessed house")

<sup>6</sup> SAPIR: Language, p. 29.

<i>dal xur</i>	the house ("said house")
<i>ga i xur</i>	the house (always in the sense of "my" house)
<i>ak xur</i>	the house (always in the sense of "thy" house)
<i>ar xur</i>	the house (always in the sense of either "our" or "your" house)

The plural of *i* appears to be *n*. This however is only used in conjunction with *la*:

<i>i 'wa</i>	a child	<i>la i 'wa</i>	my child ("the" child)
<i>al 'wa</i>	the child	<i>la n nyaske</i>	my children

Similarly, the plural of both *ga* and *ak* is *ar*. Thus:

<i>ga i 'wa</i>	my child	<i>ar 'wa</i>	our child
<i>ak 'wa</i>	thy child	<i>ar 'wa</i>	your child

It might well be argued that these last forms represent possessive pronouns. Our feeling is rather that they must be looked upon as specialisations of the article on the way to become pronoun. Our reasons are: first, the fonetic similarity between *al*, *la*, and *ak*, *ga*. Second, that 'his' is expressed merely by the indefinite article (thus *i 'wa* means 'his child, their child', as well as 'a child'). Third, that the element *r* is in many cases the index of the plural; thus it would be easy to derive *ar* from *ak* or *al*. Fourth, that in practice the independent pronoun is usually added to the whole expression:

<i>ga i 'wa ya</i>	my child	<i>ak 'wa ma</i>	thy child	<i>i 'wa gge</i>	his child
<i>ar 'wa yā</i>	our child	<i>ar 'wa mā</i>	your child	<i>i 'wa re</i>	their child

In short, our feeling is that the original definite article is *al*. That *al* becomes by metathesis *la* in connection with *i*, and then becomes a more intense definite article with a tendency toward expressing the possessive 'my'. That another way to express this possessive is by change of *la* into *ga*. Then by metathesis again, *ga* gives rise to *ak*. Finally *ar* is derived from *al* by assimilation to other plurals, when the use of certain forms of the article have already been fairly well specialized and restricted to possessive cases, while non-possessive plurals are expressed by a change not of the *al* (or *la*) element, but of the *i*:

<i>la i mur</i>	the bull	<i>la n mur</i>	the bulls
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#### 5. Pronouns.

I	<i>ya</i>	we	<i>yā</i>
thou	<i>ma</i>	you	<i>mā</i>
he	<i>gge</i>	they	<i>re</i>

These forms occur regularly as independent words. Usually they are placed after the word of action. This is true whether they represent the subject or the object of the action. Ex.:

"They want me to go and see them, but I shall die here and they will never see me again."

*hemi re 'wama ya maita | makan fa ya | tçi mai ya re.*  
 Want they go I see die here I not see I they.

They often occur in close connection with the indefinite article *i*:

"We saw you walking, we spoke to you but you did not see us."

*maibo iyā tasma | xoçpo iyā | tçi maimi imā.*  
See × you we walk speak × you we not see you.

It is well to note in the above example that *maibo* and *xoçbo* contain expressly the relation I-you (otherwise it would be *maiba*, *xaçba*). But the relation you-me is not similarly expressed in *maimi*.

In connection with the negative, the first person singular often appears as *tya* which is perhaps a fusion of *tçi* and *ya*.

"I will not be feeding you any longer, I will not be clothing you."

*iya tçi tesmu ya tya | tçi ya mego tya.*  
I not feed I not-I not I clothe-you not-I.

Note that *tesmu* is not changed to *tesmo* (to express the relation I-you) because the element *mu* is the Causative suffix, *te* or *tes* is the radical of 'eat'. *tes-mu* to cause to eat, to feed. Only the temporal suffixes proper undergo the *-o* change. In the present case there is no temporal suffix, contrary to the general rule. This is often the case in negative sentences.

The reader can see from the preceding examples that the position of the pronoun in regard to the word of action is by no means a hard and fast one. It is usually placed after, but it may also precede it. When it precedes, it is usually associated with the article *i*. It may be placed both before and after:

*iya tespa ya* I ate  
*ima tespa ma* you ate

In such cases it is often abbreviated:

*i tespa ya* I ate  
*im tespa ma* you ate  
*ig tespa ge* he ate

But the repetition of the pronoun may be entirely omitted, and then forms are obtained which are pretty close to real prefixes:

*i-tespa* I ate                      *iyā-tespa* we ate  
*im-tespa* you ate                *imā-tespa* you ate  
*ig-tespa* he ate                 *ir-tespa* they ate

It is interesting to note that there are thus two tendencies toward the formation of 'incorporated pronouns', one toward suffixation and another toward prefixation. And to note further that these semi-prefixes contain an element which has nothing of the pronominal character, but is really an article primarily. Indeed in the case of the first person singular the pronoun is entirely absent and only the article remains.

#### 6. Words of action.

The pattern of these is extremely simple. The formula has already been given (3). There is no formal expression for passivity, transitiveness or intransitiveness.

The concept of time is expressed by 'aspect' rather than tense. The exact connotation of this will be discussed later (6) but for the present we may consider the following: Perfect-Past, Continuative, Present-Future, Imperative.

Altho there is hardly a word of action that does not depart at one point or another from the normal pattern (a special section will be devoted to the treatment of Irregularities), such a normal pattern can be given as follows:

	Singular	Plural
Perfect-Past	- <i>pa</i> (or <i>ba</i> )	- <i>pa</i> (or <i>ba</i> )
Continuative	- <i>ngu</i> (or <i>ku</i> )	- <i>mi</i>
Present-Future	- <i>ma</i>	- <i>me</i>
Imperative	- <i>ra</i> (or <i>la</i> )	- <i>re</i> (or <i>le</i> )

Singular and plural refer to the number of the subject, not of the object.

All of these temporal suffixes change their vowel to o to express the relation I-thou or I-you (except of course the Imperative): *maipo* I saw you, *maiko* I am seeing you, *maimo* I see you or I will see you.

**Andative.** All or nearly all the words of action can be modified to express the idea of 'going to do a thing', not in the sense of an Incipiative or a Future, but of going to some other place to do it. This is expressed by the insertion between the radical and the temporal suffix, of a secondary suffix *-kiç*.

<i>i tespa</i>	I ate
<i>i teskiçpa</i>	I went to eat
<i>igge xima</i>	he will tell
<i>igge xikiçma</i>	he will go to tell
<i>i maiko</i>	I am seeing you
<i>i maikiçko</i>	"I am on my way to see you"

The Andative forms are somewhat different in the Imperative:

Sg.:	- <i>ski</i> or - <i>kiçki</i>
Pl.:	- <i>tsa</i> or - <i>kitça</i> or - <i>kiçta</i>
<i>teski</i>	go to eat! ( <i>tera</i> eat!)
<i>maiski</i>	go to see it! ( <i>maira</i> look at it!)
<i>tetsa</i>	(Pl.)
<i>maitsa</i>	"

**Causative.** Certain words of action, not many, can be modified in the sense of 'causing someone else to do it'. This is expressed by inserting the suffix *-mu* between the radical and the temporal suffix (but sometimes the temporal suffix is then dropped out).

*i tespa* I ate,

*i tesmupa* I made someone else eat, i. e. 'I fed him'. This form appears not to be well seated.

**Impending future.** A good many, but not all, of the words of action can be modified in the sense of 'it will happen in the near future'. This

expressed by inserting between the radical and the temporal suffix the element *-ga*.

<i>(nulka)</i>	to visit
<i>i nulkama</i>	I shall visit
<i>i nulkagama</i>	I am going to visit soon

**Subjunctive.** There is no formal method to express either the conditional or the subjunctive other than by preceding the word of action with such independent words as *or, tor* if *ni, nite* although. The word of action is not modified in any way, altho sometimes the Imperative is used.

<i>(wirka)</i>	to search
<i>i wirkaba</i>	I searched
<i>nite i wirkaba</i>	even though I had searched
<i>i wirkama</i>	I will search
<i>nite i wirkama</i>	even though I should search

**Temporal aspects of the words of action.** *Perfect-Past.* This indicates not so much that the action has occurred at a previous time, as that it is completed, perfected, no longer being done, no longer taking place.

*Continuative.* This indicates that the action is taking place with a certain continuity of time and execution. In this way it may be used in Chontal, both in the past and in the future: 'yesterday I am doing it' or 'to-morrow I am doing it' or 'yesterday I went there and I am cutting wood'.

*Present-Future.* This indicates not so much that the action will take place at a future time, as that it has not yet actually begun although it may be on the very verge of commencing. Thus one would say *tesma* not only in a sentence like 'I will eat after I have finished this work' but also 'I eat fruit'.

The above remarks may appear naive. It was necessary to voice them, because the natives always give the same form *-ma* for the equivalent of both Present and Future in Spanish verbs, while the form *-ngu* is given only to translate expressions like 'estoy comiendo, estoy cortando'.

**Irregularities.** Irregularities of pattern are so numerous in the treatment of the words of action, that irregularity of form must be looked upon as a positive factor in this language.

In the following list the numbers correspond to those used in the Semasiology. In each case the whole pattern is given in the same order always:

Perfect-Past Sg.	Perfect-Past Pl.
Continuative Sg.	Continuative Pl.
Present-Future Sg.	Present-Future Pl.
Imperative Sg.	Imperative Pl.

When certain persons require special note. They are indicated by abbreviations:

1. Sg. first singular	2. Sg. second singular
1. Pl. first plural	&c.

- 121 to burn *nasmupya nasmuba* Variants: *naspa, naskaba*  
*nasmungu nyasmumi* *nyasku*  
*nasmumya nasmume* *naskama, nasma*  
*nasmura nasmure*

The difference is probably between transitive and intransitive. See notes 26, 28, 29 of texts.

- |   |                               |                 |                           |                 |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
|   | <i>pi'pa</i>                  | <i>pi'pa</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>pi'ngu</i>                 | <i>pi'mi</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>pi'ma</i>                  | <i>pi'me</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>pi'ra</i>                  | <i>pi're</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | to boil Reg.                  |                 |                           |                 |
|   | to dry Reg.                   |                 |                           |                 |
| 123 to bathe                                  | <i>pospa</i>                  | <i>pospa</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>podze</i>                  | <i>posmi</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>posma</i>                  | <i>posme</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>posla</i>                  | <i>posle</i>    |                           |                 |
| 13 to last, to pass                           | <i>xikaspā</i>                | <i>xiliba</i>   |                           |                 |
|   | <i>xikangu</i>                | <i>xilimi</i>   |                           |                 |
|   | <i>xikama</i>                 | <i>xilime</i>   |                           |                 |
|   | <i>xikara</i>                 | <i>xilire</i>   |                           |                 |
| 41 to marry                                   | <i>manba</i>                  | <i>manriba</i>  |                           |                 |
|   | <i>mangu</i>                  | <i>manrimi</i>  |                           |                 |
|   | <i>manma</i>                  | <i>manrita</i>  |                           |                 |
|   | <i>manra</i>                  | <i>manrire</i>  |                           |                 |
| 511 to see, look                              | <i>maiba</i>                  | <i>maiba</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>maingu</i>                 | <i>maimi</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>maima</i>                  | <i>maime</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>maiha</i>                  | <i>maihe</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>çinba</i>                  | <i>çinba</i>    | Andative: <i>içpa</i>     | <i>içpa</i>     |
|   | <i>çingu</i>                  | <i>çinmi</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>çinna</i>                  | <i>çinme</i>    | <i>sinta</i>              | <i>sinta</i>    |
|   | <i>çinra</i>                  | <i>çinre</i>    | <i>sinçki</i>             | <i>betsa</i>    |
| 5121 to eat Reg.                              |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to drink Reg.                                 |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to swallow Reg.                               |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to feed a drink Reg.                          |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to taste good Reg.                            |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| 5122 to speak, tell, say Reg. except Pr.-Fut. | <i>xoçta</i>                  | <i>xoçta</i>    |                           |                 |
| to ask Reg.                                   |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to sing Imper.                                | <i>çalira</i> or <i>çabra</i> | <i>çalire</i>   |                           |                 |
| to cry  | <i>pohpa</i>                  | <i>pohlipa</i>  | Andative: <i>pohkiçpa</i> | <i>pohkiçpa</i> |
|   | <i>pohgu</i> or <i>pohka</i>  | <i>pohlimi</i>  |                           |                 |
|   | or <i>pohki</i>               |                 |                           |                 |
|   | <i>pohma</i>                  | <i>pohlime</i>  | <i>pohta</i>              | <i>pohta</i>    |
|   | <i>pohla</i>                  | <i>pohle</i>    | <i>pohkiçki</i>           | <i>pohlitça</i> |
| to call Reg.                                  |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| 5221 to have Reg.                             |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to lift Reg.                                  |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to give Reg.                                  |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to sell Reg.                                  |                               |                 |                           |                 |
| to buy Reg. Andative:                         | <i>n'aspa</i>                 | <i>n'aspa</i>   |                           |                 |
|   | <i>n'akatyā</i>               | <i>n'akatyā</i> |                           |                 |
|   | <i>n'ata</i>                  | <i>n'ata</i>    |                           |                 |
|   | <i>n'anski</i>                | <i>n'andza</i>  |                           |                 |

- to steal *nanspa nanspa*  
*nansku nansmi*  
*nansma nansta*  
*nansla nansle*
- 5222 to work *paspas paspa*  
*patse pasmi*  
*pasma pasme*  
*pasla pasle*  
*patsni paspani* Andative: *patskiçni patskiçni*  
*patseni pasmini*  
*patsumni pasmeni* *pasni pasni*  
*patsurni pasleni* *paskiçkini paskiçkani*
- 5223 to throw Reg.  
to hit *napanaliba*  
*nangu nalimi*  
*nama nalime*  
*naranalire namubo*  
or *napyo* I hit you
- 5224 to put Reg.
- 531 to go Reg.  
to come Reg. Imp. Sg. *pamba*  
to run *nubanuliba*  
*nungunulimi*  
*numanume*  
*nuranure*
- to jump Reg.  
to go with Reg.
- 532 to go out *pubapuluba*  
*pungupulumi*  
*pumapulume*  
*purapulure*
- to pass oy Reg.  
to leave Reg.  
to ascend Reg.
- 533 To bring Reg.  
to take out Reg.  
to send Reg.  
to carry Reg.
- to stand *kaspakasliba*  
*kaskukaslana*  
*kasmakaslime*  
*kaslakaslire*
- to sit *pahbapahliba*  
*pahgupahlimi*  
*pahmapahlime*  
*pahlapahlire* Andative: *pahnanski pahnantsa*
- to lie Reg.  
to fall Reg. Imper. Sg. *ter*
- to be *pa'apa'a*  
*pangupami*  
*pamapame*
- to live Reg.

to die *maba maba*  
*mangu manmi*  
*manta manta*  
*manra manre*

to oury Reg.

to sleep Pr.-Fut. 1. Sg. *smatya* or *smamya* 1. Pl. *smunanda*  
 2. Sg. *smama* 2. Pl. *smunanda* or *smunme*  
 3. Sg. *smata* 3. Pl. *smunanda* or *smunme*

Cont. Sg. *smangu*. Pl. *smunmi*  
 other forms reg.

to awake Reg.

to wish Reg.

to love Reg.

to know Reg.

to hurt Reg.

to play *sanspa sanspa*  
*sanze sansmi*  
*sanstea sansme*  
*sansra sansre*

61 to cut Reg.

to kill Reg. Pr.-Fut. *manta*

to frighten Reg.

to sow Reg.

to dress Reg.

to dance Reg.

to play music Reg.

## § 6. Classification <sup>7</sup>.

Technique. Chontal is *isolating, weakly agglutinative, weakly symbolic*.

Architectonic. Chontal is *analytic, mildly synthetic*.

Grammatical concepts:

- I. *Concrete Basic Concepts* constitute the great bulk of the language.
- IV. *Pure Relational Concepts* are represented by independent words in only a small number, like "if" "although" "with" "not". We find however no terms corresponding to at, in, into, and, but, then, for, by, to, who, where, when, &c.

Position is evidently the main method for expressing the relations between the different basic concepts contained in a proposition.

There is no gender nor classes of any sort in Chontal, but number is certainly expressed and is used as a means of establishing relations. However number in the words of action is expressed not as a concept in itself, but mixed up with the element of time. Thus "the child is crying" and "the children are crying": *la i 'wa poh-gu, la nanyaske po-limi*. The grammatical element *-gu* indicates at once two concepts: that the action of crying is taking place now, and that it is performed by one individual only. Similarly the element *-limi* indicates also that the action is taking place now, but also that it is performed in that manner by several individuals. Plurality is also expressed ipso facto in

<sup>7</sup> SAPIR: Language, p. 145.



the word *nyaske*, for *'wa* means one single child and *nyaske* a plurality of children. But in that case the fact of the plurality is as concrete as the fact of the child. Similarly with the independent words *i* and *n*, they express nothing in particular, nothing concrete, merely a relation between the idea of child and the idea of to cry, and would be words of pure relation like *la*, were it not that they mix with the concept of relation a concept of number which ought not to have anything to do with relation but ought to remain as concrete as it is in *nyaske*. Now time is not of itself a concept of relation, but in *-gu* and in *-limi* it is allied inextricably to number, and number is used in sentences like the above to connect, to relate the concrete members of a proposition. Therefore the temporal suffixes must be classed with.

- III. *Concrete Relational Concepts* (note on the contrary that the vocalic change to *-o* to express the I-you relation is a pure relational concept IV). Other concrete relational concepts are: *a*) the plural of the pronouns (expressed by inner modification of the radical); *b*) the plural of the Andative suffixes.

It is well to point out that all in all this is not a very large list for this class of concepts.

- II. *Derivational Concepts*. These are even less in number. We can only think of the Causative and the Impending Future, besides the somewhat dubious Incipiative.

Fundamental Type. In view of the very limited number of derivational and concrete-relational concepts present, the Chontal language will be better classed with the *Simple Pure-relational* languages than with the *Complex Mixed-relational*.

### Texts.

#### I. Tale of the little dog.

*la i pi riya pa nula kwe | laçma ki nula tsigi | tçi smangu al*  
the it mine village is one man live with one dog not sleeps the

In my village there is a man, who has a dog who never sleeps on

*mats | fhangu i nyapo al boyes | pukia smafa la i mur | tsolongu tsigi*  
ground ascend it back the ox early awake the it bull jump dog

the ground, but gets up on the back of an ox. In the early morning the bull

*kyengu al mats tor aba | pogi | nyungu || paba nula gwaya al ria*  
fall the ground like gourd cry run came one stranger the village

gets up, the dog jumps and falls to the ground like a gourd, and he cries, and he runs. A stranger came to the village.

*i xanapa al tsigi | i n'aba por ni tçili | yeste funba | tabingu i*  
he like the dog he bought because that pretty much loved slyng the

He liked the dog and bought him. He was pretty. He was fond of him.

*kanga por yeste funa ||*  
bed because much love.

He slept right on the bed because he loved him so much.

*kwesi kine maiba yate nigwa onipa | çpatçpa | gansapa tsigi |*  
two day saw much niguas (jiggers) there is frightened abandoned dog.

A couple of days later he saw that he was full of jiggers. He was frightened and abandoned the dog.

*fasmuba la i kanga onipa nigwa | kyambasyaya<sup>8</sup> | dal ora nas-*  
thought the it bed there is jiggers. What'll I do? this hour I will

He thought: "There must be jiggers in the bed. What will I do! Right

*mumya<sup>9</sup> |*

burn.

now I will burn them."

*uba xa' ponfpa nula piçu | mbulapa xa' | ohmba lan tçale | hoypile<sup>10</sup>*  
brought water put one jar boiled water threw the clothes later on

He brought water and put it in a jar. He brought it to a boil and threw

*kanba al nya | hurnama<sup>11</sup>.*

took out the sunlight are going to dry.

in the bedclothes. Then he took them out in the sun to dry.

## II. Conversation.

*la i pi riya yeste tefa oyba | fa pampala puli pala kyemi |*  
the it my village much food there is here Oaxaca only (Sp. puro) nopal eat

In my home (of Tequixistlan) we have all kinds of food. Here in

*la i pi riya oyba tu'u | pii çiba | koneçu | tiçmu | | oyba giti puyu*  
the it my village there is fish egg turtle rabbit shrimp the is chicken chicken

Oaxaca, all they eat is cactuss. At home we have fish, turtle eggs, rabbits,

*nimur<sup>12</sup> | kutçi | siggo lyemi al maxa | 'wami tareya | mankuta<sup>13</sup> tu'u.*  
bull hog sheep go the sea take taraya (seine) kill (fish) fish.

shrimps, chicken, chicken, beef, pork, mutton. They go to the sea with seines.

## III. Conversation.

*la i komale paba al fi | xiba tçi lyemi uçia | al ne pulumi*  
the she comadre came the fiesta sald not go Tehuantepec the road go out

My commère came here to the fiesta<sup>14</sup>. She says that they do not go

*manmi sans | nansmi al ne | | al riya tçi tefa.*

kill people rob the road the village not food.

these days to Tehuantepec, because robbers are out on the roads, killing people, robbing out on the road. Tequixistlan is without food.

<sup>8</sup> *kya* what, *pa* make, *ya* I.

<sup>9</sup> *nas* burn, *mu* Causative suffix, *ma* temporal suffix Future, *ya* I.

<sup>10</sup> *hoy* later, *i* it, *al* the.

<sup>11</sup> *hur* dry, *na* modal suffix Incipiative, *ma* temporal suffix Future.

<sup>12</sup> The wordt for bull is *mur*. The value of the element *ni* is not clear.

<sup>13</sup> This appears to be a coalescence of Present singular *mangu* and the Future plural (irregular in this verb) *manta*.

<sup>14</sup> This refers to a visit from a friend from the informant's home town of Tequixistlan, the main Chontal village, but a small pueblo and dependent for provisions and food on the town of Tehuantepec, over a mountain pass.

## IV. Conversation.

*ga i 'yayi oytçupa<sup>15</sup> nula mas<sup>16</sup> | i fama nyagga<sup>16</sup> | kuhma kosa'.*  
 the it father has one field I will sow crop will sell maize.

My father owns a piece of land, I am going to plant a crop and then I will have corn to sell.

## V. Conversation.

*i pamba 'nugmo<sup>17</sup> ak 'wa panuma<sup>18</sup> la i 'wa | toy xoçta al*  
 I came ask you your child will marry the it child in order to the  
 I came to ask you for your daughter to marry my son, so that I may

*'ai | toy manrimire<sup>19</sup>.*  
 father in order to they marry.

Speak to the priest so that they may get married.

*la i 'wa puba nulkata<sup>20</sup> i sapi | mangama<sup>21</sup> dal çamana.*  
 the it child went out will visit it uncle will marry this week.

My daughter went to visit her uncle who is going to get married this week.

## VI. Conversation.

*al presidente xipa la n muli kyomala<sup>22</sup> | toy lyeme al mala*  
 the presidente told the them boys will get together in order to go the mountain

The mayor told the young men to get together for a leopard hunt in

*manta yesma.*

will kill tiger.

the hills.

## VII. Conversation.

*tiniba le k nyaske | sanskiçpa | taskiçpa al naxki || tespa tçuçki |*  
 last night go with children went to amuse went to walk the plaza ate sweet

Last evening the children and I we all went for recreation to walk around

*hoypile pamba porke yeste sita || paxliba pohmi | ir maibo iyã lasma |*  
 later on went because much cold sat play music there see you we walk

the plaza. We ate sweets. Later we went away because it was very cold.

<sup>15</sup> *oy* yes, to be, so; *tçu* to have, *pa* temporal suffix Past.

<sup>16</sup> *mas* lit. ground; *nyagga* lit. a cultivated field. Compare a similar use of "labor" in Spanish to mean first a worked field, then standing crop.

<sup>17</sup> *'nugma* I will ask, *nugmo* I will ask you. Internal vocalic modification of the grammatical element to express the relation I × you. As the temporal suffixes in Chontal in all other cases express a purely concrete (not relational) conception of time, this must be looked as an exceptional appearance of mixed-relational concepts in this language.

<sup>18</sup> To marry  $\sqrt{man}$  or  $\sqrt{pan}$  or  $\sqrt{panu}$ . Irregular in this plurals:

Past (Plural)	<i>manriba</i> ,	instead of	<i>manba</i>
Present	„ <i>manrimi</i>	„	„ <i>manmi</i>
Future	„ <i>manrita</i>	„	„ <i>manme</i>

<sup>19</sup> Contraction: *manrimi ire*, *ire* they, Plural of *igge* he.

<sup>20</sup> Irreg.

<sup>21</sup> *ga* modal suffix Impending Future.

<sup>22</sup> Irreg.

*lekma kwesi yā gurbe || xoçpoli iyā | tçi maimi imā.*  
 go with two are men spoke to you we not see ye.

We sat near the orchestre. We saw you walking around with two men. We spoke to you but you did not see us.

#### VIII. Conversation.

*gongu mā wame pi riya la n xoço | ir n'ama ak some.*  
 say ye go their village the they Yalalag people there buy thy hammock.

You say that you all are going to Yalalag. There you can buy yourself a hammock.

#### IX. Conversation.

*dal ora kiniba<sup>23</sup> pipa la i nuç | la n sanu<sup>24</sup> yeste hohlimi | muy*  
 this hour dawned burned the it idol the they people much cry late

Early this morning the statue of the Virgin burned up. The people are

*kaba dal ora | tçi 'ai'mi la n sanu | nula lyemi | nula pami || al soykye'*  
 took this hour not stop the they people one go one come the church  
 crying a great deal. Late this evening the people have not stopped yet. They

*tçi te kyembia<sup>25</sup> dal ora | la n 'ayi hohlimi | i çami | paspa nula*  
 not not closed this hour the they father cry they pray said one  
 are coming and going. The church has not closed its doors yet. The priests

*miça | i muyanpa al pigg al çna' nyaskaba<sup>26</sup> al mamarno.*  
 mass they buried the ashes the coal was burned the our mother.

are lamenting. They have said a mass. They have buried the ashes of the burned Virgin.

#### X. Conversation.

*la i pi riya pa la i xur | ir pa la i sapi | laçma la i nota |*  
 the it (my) village is the it house there is the it brother live the it sister

In my village I have a house. My brother lives there with my sister.

*yeste hohlimi por ni fa ya | hoyngu | hemi re 'wama ya maita<sup>27</sup>*  
 much cry because that here I call want they go I see

The are crying a great deal because I am here. They call me. They want

*makan<sup>28</sup> fa ya | tçi mai ya re.*  
 die here I not see me they.

me to go and see them. I will die here. They will not see me.

<sup>23</sup> From *kine* day.

<sup>24</sup> Plural of *sans*.

<sup>25</sup> *kyembipa* becomes *kyembia* in the negative.

<sup>26</sup> The element *ka* in this case appears to indicate an intransitive character. It is not found in other verbs, and not always in the verb to burn. The radical *nas* may be used without any modifying derivational suffix, but to be precise it is better to say *nasmu* to burn trans. and *naska* to burn intrans. The suffix *mu* (Causative) is found often, but not *ka*.

<sup>27</sup> Irreg.

<sup>28</sup> The analysis is not clear. It should be *manma*. This is perhaps another case of the Intransitive suffix *ka* alluded to above in note 26.

## XI. Conversation.

*ga i 'yayi al ora çimba tyopa' ya miba | i ya tçi tesmu ya tya*  
 the it father the hour saw big I said it I not eat-make I not-I

When my father saw that I was grown, he said: "I am not going to

*tçi ya mego tya | i ma wirkara kya modo tesya<sup>29</sup> ma | patsumni<sup>30</sup> | mo-*  
 not I dress you not-I it thou find! what mode eat thou work! day  
 feed you any longer. I will not clothe you. Find out how to make a living.

*pitçu<sup>31</sup> manma ya gansamo | or tçi sina patsumni<sup>32</sup> ma | kya modo*  
 after to-morrow will die I will abandon thee if not know will work thou what mode  
 Work! I may die any day, and abandon you. If you dont know how to

*xikama al kine ma | wirkara al tomy para mankama<sup>33</sup> | laçma ok pete*  
 will pass the day thou search the money for (Sp.) will marry will live your wife  
 work how will you manage to live? Look for the money wherewhit to marry.

*ma | nite mar<sup>34</sup> simbola<sup>35</sup> ya oy tçuma nes mã.*  
 thou although die I will know you I well have well ye.

Then you will live with your wife and although I may die I will know that you are well off.



<sup>29</sup> The *ya* is here a euphonic element to avoid the confusion between *tesma* the Future of *tes* to eat, and *tes ma* to eat, thou.

<sup>30</sup> Irreg.

<sup>31</sup> From *moggi* morning, and *pitçu* to-morrow.

<sup>32</sup> Irreg.

<sup>33</sup> This is another example of the dubious Intransitive suffix alluded to above in notes 26 and 28. It is well to note that the two verbs to kill and to marry, which are semantically similar, also have many points in common in the irregularities of their conjugation. Possibly a case of fonetic assimilation.

<sup>34</sup> Imperative form, used here as a subjunctive.

<sup>35</sup> *sin* to know, *sima*, *simba* Future, *simbo* I × thou relation. The element *la* is irregular.