# A Heritage Reference Grammar of Selk'nam

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Master of Arts

2014

Para mi abuela, Edelmira Giurfa Vda. de Berscia, mi eterno ejemplo de vida
y soporte en las peores situaciones;

Póstumamente, para Doña Herminia Vera Ilioyen, mujer Selk'nam cuya voz
permanecerá por siempre en los vientos fueguinos, allá donde el sol nace y
los sueños se hacen realidad;

**Ana kaps Selk'nam čann ni̧ ya,
ma ancora an piemontèis.**

**Supervisors:**

**Dr. P.C. Muysken**

**Dr. E.I. Crevels**

# Contents

# Conventions

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [] | phonetic form | ES | essive |
| // | phonological form | EV.MOD | evidential mood |
| <> | ortographic representation | GEN | genitive |
| Nx | example from Najlis (1973) | HAB | habitual aspect |
| Tx | example from Tonelli (1926) | HYP | hypothetical mood |
| FWx | example from field notes | ILAT | illative |
| 1 | first person | IMP | imperative mood |
| 2 | second person | INF | intentional fixation classifier |
| 3 | third person | INST | instrumental |
| 4 | fourth person | INTER | interactive |
| A | subject of a transitive clause | LOC.I | locative (inside) |
| O | object of a transitive clause | LOC.F | locative (in front of) |
| V | verb | LOC.E | locative (to the east of) |
| S | subject of an intransitive clause | MED | mediative |
| T | object of a ditransitive clause | MIR | mirative |
| R | receiver of a ditransitive clause | MOT | motive |
| ABL | ablative | MYTH | mythical past tense |
| ABL.R | ablative (referential) | NEG.V | negative verb |
| AD | alien displacement classifier | NEUT | neutre |
| ANM | animate | PL | plural |
| BEY | beyond past tense | PRES | present tense |
| CAUS | causative | PRIV | privative |
| CERT | certitive mood | PROG | progressive aspect |
| COMIT | comitative | PROHIB | prohibitive mood |
| DAT | dative | REC | recent past tense |
| DIM | diminutive | REL | relational particle |
| DUB | dubitative mood | REM | remote past tense |
| EDUC | eductive | VERT | verticality classifier |

# 1. Introduction

Selk'nam is an obsolescent language, spoken in what is nowadays Tierra del Fuego, in the southernmost territories of the South American Republics of Chile and Argentina. Its people suffered from a progressive decimation, which ended in the last decades of the 20th century when the last fluent speakers of the language passed away. This was not only a great loss in humanitarian terms but a substantive loss of important anthropological, historical and linguistic information which we will not be able to retrieve again.

   From a linguistic point of view, there were several attempts to provide thorough descriptions of the language at different moments of the 20th century. One of these first descriptive enterprises was accomplished by the missionary José María Beauvoir in 1915, with his book which provides a small grammar sketch of the language and a substantial glossary and phrasebook. Antonio Tonelli, a Salesian missionary, published a grammar and a glossary of the language in 1926, including very insightful explanations for every grammatical aspect studied. Both sources remain highly relevant. Later, in the second half of the century, Elena Najlis (1973) published *Lengua selknam*, a grammar of the language. As happened with many other grammars written then, the competition between theoretically-oriented linguistic schools was a priority, leaving grammar description *per se* in second place (Lehmann & Maslova 2004). Najlis herself dubbed her work "a generative grammar". Generative linguistics has changed a lot, and this makes Najlis' grammar somewhat obsolete, written in the Standard Theory (Chomsky 1957), and many of data presentations are incomprehensible for grammarians and typologists coming from different backgrounds. In the eighties, two phonologies of the language were written, segmental (Ocampo 1982), and suprasegmental (Martini 1982), followed by some historical-comparative and grammatical studies by the Argentinean linguist Viegas Barros (1992, 1995, 2005).

   Unfortunately, the last fluent speakers of the language passed away between the seventies and the eighties, leaving any attempt to write a complete modern scientific description of the language as an unattainable dream. Nowadays the only active speaker/semi-speaker of the language is the 23-year old Joubert "Keyuk" Yanten. His attempts to revitalise the language

in the form of music and poetry have been of great interest to the Chilean media. The second speaker of this language discovered during my trip to Tierra del Fuego in May 2014 was Ms. Herminia Vera, a 91-year old lady, who spoke Selk'nam until the age of 8. It was unfortunate that she did not remember many vocabulary items and structures of the language due to this immense time gap; however, I did manage to get some help from her and from some notes she wrote down more than ten years ago in case she forgot her language. Two months since our fieldwork trip she has passed away on July 5th in the city of Río Grande. For this thesis, Keyuk was my main helper. His knowledge of the language as the only remaining fluent rememberer is central, of course.

The present work will attempt to provide a general overview of Selk'nam in its morphological and syntactical aspects from a semasiological perspective, following the current practice of the linguistic discipline known as Grammaticography, as in Lehmann and Maslova (2004); cf. also Mosel (2006); Comrie and Smith (1977), and other sources. Since two serious phonologies have already been published, I will focus on an acoustic analysis of the vowel repertoire. The basic sources used for the development of the present document have been what we call heritage sources, namely the sources mentioned, a corpus collected by Dr. Emma Gregores with one of the last speakers of the language, Ángela Loij, in 1974, and deposited at AILLA (Austin, Texas) by Dr. Yolanda Lastra, as well as some elicitation and textual sources gathered with the only remnant speaker of the language, Keyuk Yanten, and Ms. Herminia Vera before she passed away. As a last attempt to revitalise this extinct language in the present century with the materials we have at the moment, a Frog Story Text produced by Keyuk and Ms. Vera together will be provided by the end of the dissertation.

## 1.1. Aims and procedure

With my thesis I wanted to accomplish four things:

1) Provide an acoustic documentation of the Selk'nam vowel inventory.

2) Describe and document the morphosyntax of the language, emphasising the semasiological main objective of the thesis, and giving typologically-oriented explanations when possible.

2) Make the reader familiar with the history of Selk'nam and people, emphasising the urgent character of a new description of its language and on historical issues from more updated perspectives.

4) Realise an incipient revitalization of the language, in the form of modern texts for future possible instructive or scientific uses.

**For this reason, I propose to:**

1) Offer a state of the art of Selk'nam linguistic studies and examine critically previous descriptions of the language, especially Beauvoir (1915), Tonelli (1926) and Najlis (1973).

2) Check grammars of adjacent related or unrelated languages (Mapuche, Kawésqar, Yahgan, Tehuelche, Puelche), in order to trace possible areal linguistic similarities between the languages involved.

3) Analyse the AILLA Ona corpus in its syntactical parts and reanalyse the examples provided by the previous authors.

4) Report on brief linguistic fieldwork in Tierra del Fuego with the help of the only two competent speaker/semi-speakers of the language, Keyuk Yanten, and Ms Herminia Vera, collecting and analysing new data. During this last fieldwork trip I started to look for more potential rememberers of the language.

## 1.2. Thesis structure

The present thesis is organised as a grammar sketch of the language. A language cannot be analysed without general knowledge of the history of its speakers, a chapter dedicated to the history and customs of the Selk'nam will open the discussion. In the same chapter, some general characteristics

of the sociolinguistic situation of the language in the 20th century will be
provided, followed by a description of the recent attempts to revive the
language in the form of music and poetry by one of the last rememberers and
descendants of these people.

The second part of the thesis will present a grammar profile of the
language. Then, the vowel acoustic analysis will be done using the
recordings available at AILLA and the phonetic analysis program Praat. The
main objective of this part will be to give accurate acoustic information
on each one of the vowels of the language from a descriptive perspective.
This part will be followed by a discussion of word classes, with detailed
information, when possible, about the most frequent morphological processes
in each word class. The final part of this work will be a discussion of the
syntax of the language. Since not many texts in the language are available,
most of the explanations will be based on our analysis of the phrases and
sentences from the heritage sources, as well as on the feedback given by
our main consultant, Joubert "Keyuk" Yanten.

The dissertation will end with a Frog Story (Mayer 1969) text elicited
with my main consultants. This is an attempt to provide a text fully
written in Selk'nam for future studies on the syntax of the language or for
more historical/comparative purposes.

## 1.3. Methodological framework

### 1.3.1. The art of writing grammars

Studies on the lexicon of particular languages are wide-spread and part of
the discipline known as lexicography. Languages, however, are not only
lexicon. They all have grammars, which have the same value as the lexicon.
Currently more than 7,000 languages are spoken, 90% of which, according to
some linguists (Krauss 1992), may be moribund or extinct by the end of the
21st century. As it is widely accepted in the modern language sciences, the
only accurate way to understand how language interacts with cognition and
how it is structured is knowing how languages actually are constituted
(Evans & Levinson 2004). Grammar writing has been trying to cope with this
mission, often with fruitful results in the last decades.

The study of the craft of writing grammars, nevertheless, has only
recently been addressed in the discipline currently dubbed Grammaticography

(Lehmann & Maslova 2004; Mosel 2006). The main concern of this discipline is the study of how grammars are written and how to generate or improve traditions of grammar crafting. Since our study of the grammar of Selk'nam is inserted into this tradition, modern discussions related to it and how grammars should be organised for a grammar-reading audience (Noonan 2005) cannot be left apart.

Grammar can be considered the skeleton of a language or, in a more scientific fashion, "the systematic part of the way language maps meanings onto expressions" (Lehmann & Maslova 2004: 1). Moreover, it can be chopped down into specific linguistic competences related to language sound recognition and use (Phonology), word formation (Morphology), concatenation (Syntax) and situation fitting (Pragmatics). Many people not in touch with the language sciences confuse a mental grammar and a grammar written by linguists. The latter, however, is only a scientific representation of the former, materialised in the form of a book, a computer program or an internet site (ibid: 1).

Modern grammars can be classified along various dimensions, leading to different types (Mosel 2006: 42):

  **a)** Semi-standard grammar, i.e., the language data used for the description will be mostly based on previous descriptions; nevertheless, the regional or societal sub-standards will be mentioned when necessary.

  **b)** Bilingual grammar, i.e., the meta-language used for the description is e.g. English and not e.g. Selk'nam itself.

  **c)** Descriptive grammar, i.e., the explanations will be based on what is found in the corpus rather than on artificial prescriptive rules.

  **d)** Passive grammar, i.e., it is a grammar intended to provide analyses of the sentences and constructions available in the corpus in order to help the readers understand the grammatical nature of the language.

  **e)** Grammar intended for both language specialists and non-specialists, i.e., the explanations will use a meta-language not derived from any specific linguistic theory.

  **f)** Grammar for **heritage** purposes, i.e., since the language is in a state of obsolescence or even extinction, a grammar which consolidates all the information available in one single document is needed in order to preserve the knowledge of it.

The first linguist to discuss grammar crafting meta-theoretically was Gabelentz (1891) who said[1]:

> I know a language firstly means: I understand it, when I hear or read it, and secondly, I use it correctly when talking or writing. Understanding the language means that it appears to me as a phenomenon, or better as a whole (system) of appearances, which I interpret. When using it, language is a means, or better a whole (system) of means of expressing my thoughts. In the former case the form is given and the content, the thought (the content expressed by the form) has to be found, whereas in the latter case the content of the thought is given and the form, i.e. the expression, has to be found (Gabelentz 1984: 84).

In this way, every linguistic utterance can be viewed from two perspectives: the view of the hearer and that of the speaker. The former, which takes into account how speakers analyse languages or how they break it into pieces is called the analytical perspective, while the latter, which takes into account how speakers use grammatical means for speech purposes, is called the synthetic perspective. The first perspective gave rise to the semasiological way of grammar crafting, while the second one to the onomasiological way of grammar crafting. From a rough point of view, a semasiological grammar focuses on form, while an onomasiological one, function.

Ideally, a modern descriptive grammar should take into account both perspectives. This holds for languages which are very much alive, but unfortunately not for the language I am studying for the present thesis. Since Selk'nam is an almost dead language, I chose to write a semasiological grammar.

## 1.3.2. A semasiological heritage grammar

For Lehman & Maslova (2004) the system of such a grammar must include "with some imprecision, the distinction between expressive and significative systems" (ibid: 19). This means that a grammar should include sections

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[1] Even though this art dates back to Pāṇini in the fourth century BC with his Classical Sanskrit grammar organised in sutras.

related to specific grammatical competences, i.e. phonology-morphology-syntax-discourse, and expand them into more specific categories of these, such as stems, words, X-phrases, syntagms, clauses, sentences.

Most grammars follow this semasiological perspective. However, two approaches can be found when checking how most of them were organised: the bottom-up approach and the top-down approach. The bottom-up approach organises the linguistic description from the minimal units, namely phonemes, to the more complex constructions, namely texts in discourse. This way of building a grammar is the most popular[2].

This thesis will adopt the general principles of arrangement of a semasiological description suggested by Lehmann & Maslova (2004):

I) The description works bottom-up through the hierarchy of grammatical levels.

II) For the grammatical unit of each of these levels, the categories into which it is articulated are identified and its syntagmatic structure analysed.

III) Only the internal syntagmatic structure of a given unit is part of the treatment of that unit[3] (ibid: 21).

Since the division in linguistic levels is to some extent arbitrary and all of them complement each other in one way or another, the present heritage grammar will try to compensate this division with a substantive cross-referencing strategy. Moreover, since I want this work to be used and useful for a wide range of audiences, it will try to be user-friendly, avoiding theory-specific terminology and providing plenty of examples, as well as interlinear morpheme translations and glosses (Noonan 2005: 355-356), something unavailable in previous descriptions.

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[2] In the Comrie & Smith (1977) *Lingua Descriptive Studies* the second approach was used, in which the study of a language was started from the most complex structures, finishing the discussion with the organization of the phonological system of the language.

[3] Information of the context of appearance will be sometimes, however, added when necessary.

As mentioned at the beginning, the present grammar will be based on two types of sources, heritage and modern ones. The following two sections will give some details about both types.

### 1.3.2.1. Heritage sources

There are two main heritage sources which will be employed for the analysis of the language. The first of them is the grammar sketch or "gramatiquilla", written by José María Beauvoir in 1915. His phrasebook as well as some of the examples he provides in his sketch will be reanalysed with a modern linguistic point of view when possible, and discarded when they seem too obscure or collected in the wrong way. The second heritage source is Tonelli (1926), a traditional bottom-up approach grammar. His explanations and copious examples will all be taken into account and reanalysed when necessary. Last but not least, it has to be added that both authors based their grammars on the northern dialect of Selk'nam, a.k.a. Chonkoiuka, which will also be the basis of our description since Joubert "Keyuk" Yantén's ancestors come from the same zone.

It must be noted, however, that the process of reanalysis of the early sources will not be arbitrary. Of course the linguist's perspective is subjective; nevertheless, my main consultant, Joubert "Keyuk" Yantén, who has substantial linguistic training, checked all the analyses as well. Since these two missionaries were the first important sources of documentation, I included "heritage" as part of the title, since this work will be based on their corpora, without disregarding my own contributions to the description of the language, as well as those of Najlis'(1973).

### 1.3.2.2. Modern sources

One of the main modern sources which will be used for my description is the grammar of Najlis (1973). As I mentioned in the introduction, it is rather unfortunate that her description is chaotic because of her decision to fit a linguistic fashion of the seventies. Her examples and some of her explanations are, nevertheless, very accurate. Without the syntactic spectrum given by her, I would not be able to organise accurately the chapters related to morphology and syntax.

Najlis' main informants came from the three dialectal areas of Tierra del Fuego[4]. It is not surprising then that many of her transcriptions and analyses diverge from those of the heritage authors. Since this grammar attempts to give a panorama of the language in its present state, both modern and heritage explanations will be discussed and reanalysed when necessary. When completely different, comparative charts will be presented for future possible dialectogical surveys.

The second sources for our survey are all the articles related to Selk'nam grammar and historical internal reconstructions written by Viegas Barros (1992, 1995, 2005). His explanations of several grammatical phenomena will be discussed in the thesis as well and compared to mine when necessary.

The third main source for our description is the Ona corpus available at the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA) deposited by the Mexican linguist Dr. Yolanda Lastra, and originally kept by her husband, Dr. Jorge Suárez. The authorship of the collection was a mystery some months before the writing of this dissertation. It turns out, however, that the author was Dr. Emma Gregores, and the consultant Ms. Ángela Loij, one of the last speakers of Selk'nam who passed away in the seventies. There are approximately three hours of recordings including exhaustive lexical elicitation, some intransitive, transitive and ditransitive clauses elicitation, as well as some handwritten notes available in PDF format. Some of the lexicon available will be segmented with the help of Audacity and transcribed, and later analysed for our acoustic documentation of the language. Unfortunately, the recordings are not of great quality, limiting the value of my acoustic description; nevertheless, such an opportunity cannot be abandoned and the best tools for an accurate analysis of it using modern sound quality-improving techniques will be employed. Furthermore, all the elicited phrases will be analysed and used as examples for the present grammar, especially for the syntactic part, as well as for some morphological aspects. Since no text was recorded, the validity of all the examples has to be retested in future research if possible.

Finally, some elicitation and text collection will be attempted with our consultants when possible. My trip to Tierra del Fuego and the contact I established with other potential rememberers and descendants of the

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[4] This includes the *Herska* zone. The former sources had no data on this dialect.

Selk'nam was also an opportunity to collect more data and analyse it. This last type of memorized data is the one I will try to gather. This eventual contact was also an opportunity to update the sociological situation of this almost extinct language and declare it an obsolescent, rather than an extinct, language in the present century.

# 2. The Selk'nam

## 2.1. People

Providing an overview of how the people that spoke this language were is
almost the work of a historian, due to the virtual disappearance of this
ethnic group during the last decades of the twentieth century. Hereby I
present a summary of the main characteristics of these people[5]. This
Fueguian group is commonly dubbed Selk'nam, Fueguino or Ona. According to
the first accounts of the people who spoke this language, Selk'nam meant
'their race' (Gallardo 1910: 97). This denomination, according to the
author, was wide spread and used to refer to their place of living as well,
*Shilkenam ka haruchin* 'the land belonging to the Selk'nam'. According to
the only linguist who worked with the language in the seventies, the first
ethnonym, Selk'nam, can probably be derived from the main nucleus *nám*
'offspring', yielding a new interpretation of the whole word as 'clan of
the separate (or selected) branch' (Najlis 1973). This analysis, however,
is speculative and needs more detailed study. Ona, however, was the name
that Yahgan canoe-faring people gave to the pedestrian hunters, i.e.
Selk'nam. According to Lehman-Nitsche (1913: 232), the name could have been
a deformation of the Selk'nam word *chon.* This explanation is, however, very
improbable. The most interesting analysis was provided by Gusinde (1982
[1931]: 112) who said that this name could originate from the reduction of
the Yahgan *aóna-yámana* 'the people from the north'. This explanation could
indeed be the most accurate one, since Yahgan communities occupied the
southernmost part of the region. The term Fueguino is not very useful,
since it was given to almost any group of people inhabiting this place.

  The Selk'nam were surprisingly different phenotypically from the other
inhabitants of the region. Their height (175-190cm) compared with the Yahgan
and Alakaluf canoeists was very remarkable. However, the differences
between these people were not only physical but cultural and linguistic.
The Yahgan and the Alakaluf were considered "nautical" by Gallardo (1910:
96). These people survived from the trade of fishing products. The Onas or

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[5] For further explanations (cf. Galllardo 1910; Beauvoir 1913; Chapman 2008)

Selk'nam, however, had no vessels and dedicated themselves to gathering and hunting with archery.

The main diet of the Ona consisted of what they hunted and gathered. One of these goods consumed daily was the guanaco (lat. *lama guanicoe,* slq. *yowen)* meat, and the tucotuco, a type of hare (lat. *lepus magellanicus*), meat. The guanaco was not only the main item of the Ona diet but also their means for clothing. Women and men used the guanaco skin to cover and protect themselves from the very low temperatures and strong winds of the region. The tucotuco was considered a delicacy in the diet, since the encounter with this type of animal was more seldom. Other animals present in the diet of these people were seals, ducks, which are pretty abundant in the region, and shellfish, which could be found in the shores of the island by the gatherers, as well as whales when they ran aground. The Onas were also very well-known because of their archery capabilities. Their arrows achieved a range of 200m when launched by the most experienced archers.

All these characteristics were also embedded in a complex cosmovision. The paradoxical conflicts in between the Moon *Kre'en* as a female character and the Sun *Kre* as a male character build up many of Selk'nam traditions and beliefs, as well as their social organization (Chapman 2008). Much of the women's belief that men led the clans came from these myths, in which the Moon, *Kre'en,* had to escape from the Sun after a lie from her involving the destruction of the entire Selk'nam people was revealed by him. This myth more or less portrays a world in which men have to lead, followed by women, who are dedicated to gathering and taking care of children rather than dealing with more organizational affairs.

Other very well documented ritual performed by the Selk'nam was the *Hain,* a secret rite which involved all the clans and which was part of a transition from children to men or *klóketen*. The ritual consisted of keeping women and young children further apart, mostly enclosed in huts while young men had to confront, face to face, the Selk'nam god *Xalpen*. Normally, the young man just had to receive a shove from the god, in order to discover that this was originally a disguised member of the tribe. Then the young man shoves this man and becomes a new *klóketen.* Of course, this

was kept as a secret to women and children in the communities, as a way to maintain social stability and the men in power[6].

The contact with white people was, however, devastating for this community. In the times of Gallardo (1910), there were still 300 "free" Onas, while the others were located in the Salesian missionary settlements for Christianization and Westernization. The sudden contact with unknown foreigners exposed the Onas to new diseases and a quick decimation. This was further sped up by what is today called the Selk'nam genocide, led by the shepherd companies in the zone, which paid for every Selk'nam killed. In 1974, the last true Selk'nam, Ángela Loij, passed away. More half-blood members of the Selk'nam communities survived and by 2000 there were still nine speakers of the language. They have all passed away now, taking with them the last memories of these people. The only remaining memories were recorded by the scholars Anne Chapman, Martín Gusinde and by the already cited linguists and missionaries. Without them, all the Selk'nam patrimony would have been lost.

## 2.2. Language, dialects and speakers

The Selk'nam or Ona[7] language is member of the Chonan language family, together with Haush, Tehuelche and Teushen, cf. Appendix, MAP 1. The name "Chon" was given by Lehman-Nitsche (1913), using the Selk'nam word for 'man' *čonn* as a base. This language family can be further subdivided into two branches. The insular branch is made up of Haush and Selk'nam, while the continental branch, of Tehuelche and Teushen (Viegas Barros 2005: 63). According to this author, lexico-statistical calculations suggest a temporal depth separation of ca. 2,300-2,800 for this linguistic family (ibid: 47). These calculations are, however, very questionable, especially knowing the inaccurate recent results of lexico-statistics and glottochronology (Zariquiey 2005.) Nowadays, the only language still spoken in the region is Tehuelche with less than nine speakers (Lewis 2009). Selk'nam consisted of three variants: the Northern dialect, *Chonkoiuka,* which was the most studied one by the Salesian missionaries, the Central

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[6] For further information on the Hain, *cf.* Chapman 2008.

[7] These names were used for both the people and the language. For an explanation on the etymology of these names, consult §2.1.

dialect, *Parika,* and the Southern dialect, *Herska,* cf. Appendix, MAP 2.
This division was not only linguistic but territorial, as a way of
delimitation of hunting and social organization. Information on these three
variants can be found in Najlis (1973), since her informants came from the
three places and, according to her, the variants were all mutually
intelligible. This was not the case, however, for the Haush language,
commonly associated culturally and linguistically with the Selk'nam.
Although we do not have enough information on this language, it is very
probable that it was sufficiently different to Selk'nam to consider it a
different language (cf. Viegas Barros 2005)

   In the last quarter of the 19th century there were ca. 2000 speakers of
Selk'nam; however, at the beginning of the twentieth century they were
reduced to less than 300, and less than a hundred in 1925 (Cooper 1946: 108;
Viegas Barros 2005: 55). This rapid process of language extinction was also
a product of diseases and the explicit extermination of these people (§2.1).
In the 1980s there were only three fluent speakers of the language, with
whom the couple Ocampo-Martini worked to write the two available
phonological studies already cited. By 1990, all the fluent speakers had
disappeared.


## 2.3. Language extinction and revitalization

Nowadays the Selk'nam/Ona language is almost completely extinct.
Nevertheless, there were still two speakers of the language in Tierra del
Fuego, when we arrived[8], and some rememberers of it, in the cities of
Porvenir (Chile), Río Grande (Argentina) and Ushuaia (Argentina). Most of
them just remember words and some sentences taught to them by their parents
or grand-parents. During my trip to Tierra del Fuego, from May 2nd to May
13th 2014, I established contact with most of them. The linguistic
information retrieved from these attempts was very valuable for evaluating
the current state of the language, since it cannot be considered an extinct
language, as claimed by some. Keyuk Yantén and Ms. Herminia Vera had
several linguistic exchanges and produced a Frog Story together.

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   8 Doña Herminia Vera unfortunately passed away in June 5th 2014.

The 22-year old Joubert "Keyuk" Yanten was born in Santiago and his native languages are Spanish and Mapudungun. He realised he was a Selk'nam descendant when he was just 8 years old. After this discovery he tried to get to know a little bit more about his culture and language. Contact with his granduncle – a semi-speaker of Selk'nam - exposed him to many structures and words of the language. Unfortunately, his granduncle has passed away. His mother also remembers some words and songs. She cannot be considered a rememberer though. Later, when he was a teenager, he found some of the written documents written by the Salesian missionaries which helped him improve his knowledge of the language. Nowadays he considers himself a new speaker of the language. Contact with a semi-speaker provided him with sufficient input to learn the phonology and the basic syntax of the language. Since he knows many of the remaining rememberers of the language in Tierra del Fuego, he was our main guide and together we produced a text included in the appendix. Although he is very young, he is the perfect candidate for a viable revitalization effort of the language in the future.

The young "Keyuk" Yanten already started participating in many political events in Chile in order to contribute to the revitalization of the language of his ancestors. Until now, policies have not taken his claims into account. This, however, has not discouraged him. Since 2007 he is the leader of a music group called *Omikeyu*. The group has offered several concerts in Chile with songs composed in Selk'nam by him. Moreover, this year he presented himself in Cuzco (Peru) for a poetry recital, where poems of his in Selk'nam were presented.

# 3. Profile, phonology, word classes and syntax

## 3.1. Grammar profile

Selk'nam is a language with a tendency to agglutination and synthesis as many other languages from the Andean region (Adelaar & Muysken 2002) and the Amazon (Dixon & Aikhenvald 1999). This is, however, not categorical for the language, since many aspects of grammar can be expressed by means of isolated particles as well. Below a couple of examples:

(1)  Ya  **k**-tɨmi  x-**ɨnn**           nɨ-**y**      ya.
     1P   REL-land go-CERT.MASC     PRES-MASC  1P
     'I go to my land.' (FW1)

(2)  Wɨsɨn-**kaş**  mɨşt-ɨ**nn**           nɨ-**y**      tɨlq'n.
     dog-COMIT  sleep-CERT.MASC     PRES-MASC  child
     'The boy sleeps with the dog.' (FW17)

In (1), both the gender and the evidential mood have been suffixed to the verb and the time particle, while the relative particle which marked the possessive phrase has been suffixed to the possessed *tɨmi*. In (2), the comitative oblique case was suffixed to the noun phrase *wisin,* while in the same fashion as (1), both gender and evidential mood have been suffixed to the verb and the time particle. As it can be seen, most agglutinative processes are suffixal; however, many prefixes exist in the language and will be further analysed in the grammar.

   There are two frequent word orders in the language. Najlis (1973) presents the language as OVS, but actually the syntax of the language appears to oscillate between two orders: OVA for transitive clauses, as in (3), and SV/SPred for intransitive clauses and predicative clauses, as in (4). It is true, nevertheless, that language contact with Spanish and language attrition have brought several other word orders into play.

(3)  Yɨpr   t'ɨ-ɨn   hanş   tɨlq'n.
     meat   eat-FEM  HABIT  child
     'The girl usually eats meat.' (N15)
     **O**      **V**             **A**

(4)  Ya  nɨ-y      Selk'nam.
     1   PRES-MASC  Selk'nam
     'I am an Ona.' (FW1)
      **S**         **Pred**

There are just two open word classes in the language: nouns and verbs. There is no adjective class, since most predicative clauses are constructed by means of predicative verbs, e.g. (5).

(5)  Kị̇rrị̇nn  o'lị̇č-ị̇nn.
     day       be.beautiful-CERT.MASC
     'The day is beautiful/Good morning.' (FW1)

Among the closed word classes (Schachter & Shopen 2007) we can find pronouns, numerals, adverbs, deictic classifiers, time particles, conjunctions and ideophones. As in many other Andean languages, Selk'nam presents a first person singular with no documented plural, a second person singular and plural, a third person singular and plural and a fourth person which, depending on the descriptive trend, could be classified as a first person inclusive as well. The deictic classifiers in the as well as to classify them within a special group of nouns, cf. §3.3.2.3.

  Selk'nam seems to be an ergative language as to word order and verbal marking. Nevertheless, case marking is still an issue that remains to be debated, since the data now available is not sufficient to determine the typological nature of the language, which appears to have been an S-marking/A-O unmarked language till the beginning of the twentieth century. Modern sources and our own data lack this type of marking or simply mix it with A-marking. More examples and a more exhaustive analysis are provided in the last section of this thesis, cf. §3.4.8.

## 3.2. Phonology

The sounds of unfamiliar languages like Selk'nam, part of very different phonological inventories, have been the subject of great debate among linguists. Tonelli (1926:19) gathered some impressions of acknowledged scholars by that time that had contact with the Onas:

> The language of the Ona is so difficult that, since heard from the first time, we come up with the idea that the one speaking produces the strangest sounds in order to capture the attention or the astonishment of the listener (Thomas Bridges)[9].

> Their language, to be honest, does not merit the title of articulated, because with rough, clucking and guttural sounds, it is similar to the rumour produced by whom, with a cold, would violently scrape off (Domenico Lovisato)[10].

One similar comment related to the glottalized stops in the language came from one of the most acknowledged scholars of the twentieth century:

> Captain Cook compared (the k') with the sound that a man produced when scraping off: but certainly no European has ever scraped off sending such rough, guttural and clucking sounds."« (Charles Darwin)[11].

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9 Original version in the text: « Le langage des Ona est si dur que, lorsqu'on l'entend pour la première fois, on a l'idée que celui qui parle s'attache à émettre les sons les plus bizarres pour exciter l'attention ou l'étonnement des auditeurs ... » (Thomas Bridges).

[10] Original version in the text: «La loro lingua, a vero dire, non merita il nome di articolata, perchè con suoni aspri, chioccianti, gutturali, qualche cosa di simile al rumore prodotto da chi, infreddato, violentemente volesse raschiarsi» (Domenico Lovisato).

[11] Original version in the text: Il capitano Cook ha paragonato (lo k') al suono che fa un uomo rischiarandosi la voce: ma certamente nessun europeo s'è mai rischiarato la voce mandando suoni così aspri, gutturali e chioccianti» (Charles Darwin).

Hereby I will present a phonological sketch of the language, discussing previous accounts on the vowel and consonantal inventory of the language as well as presenting a new one. Moreover, some ideas frequent phonological processes in Modern Selk'nam will be presented, with an orthography proposal.

### 3.2.1. Phonological sketch

As mentioned in the Introduction, the first phonology of the language was written by the couple Alicia Martini Francisco Ocampo in the eighties. Ocampo (1982) treated the segmentals, while Martini (1982)described the suprasegmentals.

### 3.2.1.1. Consonantal phonemes

According to Beauvoir (1915), there were 17 consonantal phonemes in the language. His account, however, was not very accurate since it was mostly linked to an orthography proposal rather than on a minimal pair phonological test. This can be easily corroborated on the first lines of his grammar where he adds that Selk'nam "can be considered as composed by twenty two letters from which five are vowels and all the others, consonants[12]" (ibid: 1). The lack of glottal stops and the framing of the language in a European language mold makes this account of little value.

Tonelli (1926) assumed 15 consonants. Like Beauvoir, he did not consider the glottal stops as part of the phonological inventory of the language. His analysis, nevertheless, was very serious. The author added the following insightful statement:

> The unvoiced stops *k, č, t, p* can be violent; i.e. that the medio-guttural, palatal, dental or bilabial closure is accompanied by the closure of the larynx. The comprised air between the two articulations is strongly compressed in the same way as the air inside the lungs: indeed, reproducing the sounds, the contraction of the abdominal muscles can be averted. First there is a sudden and explosive opening of the superior closure, which produces a violent rumour, brief, unvoiced, as if it was accompanied by the sounds e˳: *kȩ, čȩ, tȩ, pȩ*. After a

---

[12] Original version: "se puede considerar compuesto de veinte y dos letras de las que cinco son vocales y consonantes las demás".

short time, the opening of the larynx occurs; therefore, these consonants remain separated from the rest of the word by a short variable time, ordinarily the one necessary for the pronunciation of the vowel. That is why it seems logical to represent them with the symbols k', č', t', p', as proposed by Kroeber for similar sounds in Athabascan and Californian languages[13] (ibid: 18).

Najlis (1973) presents 21 consonants. Her proposal is the most accurate in the 20th century and the only one following a consistent theoretical framework throughout the whole analysis.

The only linguistic work completely dedicated to the segmental phonology of this language was Ocampo (1982). According to him (p.5), there are fourteen consonantal phonemes in the language. This information, however, contradicts not only what all the previous scholars had found, but what historical linguists have claimed in relation to Chonan languages in the last twenty years, cf. Viegas Barros (1997). Proto-Chonan has a consonantal inventory consisted of 29 consonants, from which 21 may have survived into the language by the 20th century (Viegas Barros 1997: 222). The problem with Ocampo's work is that he does not recognize the glottal stops as phonemes in the language. This has several problems from two points of view: the areal and the systematic.

It would not be rare for a language to lose the glottal stops in a time gap of more than five centuries, which could have been the case of Selk'nam in if we follow Ocampo's work. According to the author, there is an explanation for the laryngalization of the consonants: "Sonorants become laryngealized when they occur before or after a glottal stop. Consonants

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[13] Original version: I suoni esplosivi sordi *k, č, t, p,* possono essere violenti; cioè l'occlusione medio-gutturale o palatale o dentale o bilabiale è accompagnata dall'occlusione della laringe. L'aria compresa fra le due articolazioni è fortemente compressa e lo è ugualmente l'aria del polmone: infatti, riproducendo il suono, si può avvertire la contrazione dei muscoli addominali. Prima v'è l'appertura repentina ed esplodente dell'occlusione superiore, che produce un rumore violento, breve, sordo, come se fosse accompagnato *da e̥: ke̥, če̥, te̥, pe̥.* Dopo un breve tempo avviene l'apertura della laringe; quindi queste consonanti rimangono separate dal resto della parola per un tempuscolo variabile, ordinariamente quello necessario per la pronunzia d'una vocale. Perciò trovo logico indicarle coi segni *k', č', t', p'* proposti dal Kroeber per suoni simili di lingue dell'Athabasca e della California.

tend to become laryngealized before, and vowels after the glottal stop: […], [kʔárʔ] 'many', […] [tʔòrsáʔ] name of a bird. Sometimes the laryngalization spreads beyond the immediate vicinity of the glottal stop: […] [tʔɪlɪnʔ] 'small' […]" (Ocampo 1982: 9). This explanation suggests that there is a regressive distant assimilation of the glottal stop. This would not be rare, since similar things happen in other languages; however, in this case there are two things to take into account: the isolation of the collected tokens- which may explain the appearance of an inexistent glottal stop in an implosive final position as in [kʔárʔ] –and the isolation of the language in relation to its sister language, Tehuelche/Aonek'enk. The latter presents a system with glottal stops which has a clear phoneme opposition to the normal stops. This last issue, from a scientific point of view, leaves the assimilation theory as very complex and less economic in comparison with the more areal one. Moreover, it is very common in the Andean zone to have glottal stops, as occurs in Southern Quechua, Aymara, Kunza, Uru-Chipaya, etc.

 Pace Viegas Barros (1997), the glottal plosive palatal still seems to be present in the language, in [tʃʔip] 'hand' and [tʃʔown] 'thick'[14], which suggest the existence of this phoneme in the language. Moreover its absence would suggest a rather irregular stop system, in which one of the phonemes of the natural class of stops does not have its glottal counterpart[15]. In a nutshell, contra Ocampo (1982), and following Najlis (1973) and my own thorough lexical analysis, this is the consonantal system I propose for the language[16]:

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[14] Compare with the non laryngealised *čown* 'water'.

[15] Najlis (1973:95) however adds, against my claim, that the palatal affricate is glottalised before a tonic vowel. This could explain the existence of glottalization in my examples; nevertheless, this would anyway generate phonemic opposition in the examples I presented.

[16] Since this is just a phonological sketch, no minimal pair test will be added. This work has already been done before and can be consulted in Ocampo (1982) Martini (1982). A new Selk'nam phonological analysis just dedicated to this part of grammar though remains pendant and necessary in the current state of the language.

**Table 1: Consonantal phonemes in Selk'nam[17]**

| | | Place of articulation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Bilabial** | **Alveolar** | **Palatal** | **Velar** | **Uvular** | **Glottal** |
| **Manner of articulation** | **Plosive** | /p/ | /t/ | /t͡ʃ/ | /k/ | /q/ | /ʔ/ |
| | **Glottal plosive** | /pˀ/ | /tˀ/ | /t͡ʃˀ/ | /kˀ/ | /qˀ/ | |
| | **Fricative** | | /s/ /ṣ/ | /ʂ/ | /x/ | | /h/ |
| | **Nasal** | /m/ | /n/ | | | | |
| | **Tab** | | /ɾ/ | | | | |
| | **Lateral** | | /l/ | | | | |
| | **Semi-consonant** | /w/ | | /j/ | | | |

### 3.2.1.2. Vocalic phonemes

The first description of the vocalic inventory of Selk'nam was provided by Beauvoir (1915). According to this author there were five vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*) in the language, once more guided by orthographic purposes. Nevertheless, he made very interesting observations. One of them is the following: "The vowel *e* cannot be distinguished whether it is *e* or *i*; it would be much better to say that is neither of them, not meaning that it is not something that we actually pronounce[18]" (ibid: 2). This observation is one of the most outstanding of his whole grammar sketch, since this is exactly what can be observed in many languages of the Andean region such as Quechua (cf. Pérez-Silva et al. 2007 & Napurí 2013) or Aymara. Something unusual however is the inclusion of two other phonemes by him when he is

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[17] The orthographic equivalents are presented "<>". They are based on a common Andean linguistic tradition; however, the original word configuration as presented by the authors is maintained in most cases since the difference among them can be due to dialectal differences which are still necessary to maintain for further studies. In the case of an evident concordance, as in pronomina (§3.4.2.2.), a new orthographic version will be provided.

[18] Original version: "La vocal **e** no se distingue si es **e** o **i**; mejor se podría casi decir que no es ni una ni otra, no dejando sin embargo de ser algo que pronunciamos".

interpreted: /y/ and /ø/. In the corpus collected I only found one occurrence of /y/ in the case of the verb 'to sleep' [mýsten]. This issue, however, remains pendant.

In the second major description of the language by Tonelli (1926:17), there are five major frequent vowels in the language: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/. However, he mentions that there are other not so frequent vowels in the language, such as /ę/, which is a vowel between /i/ and /e/ -in the same fashion as Beauvoir –, /å/, a vowel between /a/ and /o/, /ø/ and /y/, as well as some unvoiced vowels which I reinterpret as a /ə/, very common in several phonological processes in the language. It is interesting that the authors includes as well /y/ as a phoneme in the language, and another not documented sound by myself, /ø/. Unfortunately there are no recordings of that time which could support either Beauvoir's or Tonelli's analysis. In the end of the twentieth century, fortunately, this situation radically changed.

The use of sound recorder in the second half of the twentieth century and the improvement of audio-recording techniques allowed linguist to gather better information for phonetic and phonological analysis. That was the advantage that Najlis (1973) and Ocampo (1982) had in comparison to previous linguistic work. For Najlis, there are three main vowels with their corresponding high or low tone[19].

**Table 2: Vocalic phonemes following Najlis (1973:94)**

|  | Anterior | Central | Posterior |
|---|---|---|---|
| High |  |  |  |
| Mid | e |  | o |
| Low |  | a |  |

---

[19] This was later analysed as pitch accent by Martini (1982) in her thesis on the suprasegmentals of the language.

According to the author these three phonemes can be distinguished by zone and by tone (ibid: 94)

**By zone:**

*tel* 'to be thin', *tol* 'heart', *talpàn* 'cascote'
*q'eʔ* 'to carry water', *q'aʔ* 'to shake off', *q'oʔ* 'bone'
*ṣèʔn* 'canteen', *ṣàʔn* 'to evacuate', *ṣòʔn* 'to resound'
*hèòw* 'cliff', hóów 'grandfather', hàw 'before'

**By tone:**

*we* 'to save', *-wè* 'like'
*hehče* 'to drag', *hèčè* 'to stem/to contain'
*xamj* 'to steal', *xàmj* 'lungs'
*wa* 'to live', *wà* 'to observe'
*hor* 'tooth', *hòr* 'low lying part of a field flooded in wet weather'
*q'oʔtʔe* 'to be bony', *wq'òʔtè* 'to lie oneself'

In modern Selk'nam the tone distinction has completely disappeared. This may have been caused by language attrition since it is an almost extinct language. The question to pose to this analysis is where to put tokens with a very high [i] sound, such as *č'ip* 'hand', *yi'penn* 'to be bad', etc. Was the omission of this sound in the language inaccurate? Ocampo's (1982) analysis, completely based in phonology rather than in syntax and from a more descriptive perspective, made a thorough and serious analysis of minimal pairs in the language. He presents the following vowel chart:

**Table 3: Vocalic phonemes following Ocampo (1982:2)**

|  | Anterior | Central | Posterior |
|---|---|---|---|
| High | i |  | u |
| Mid-high | ɪ |  |  |
| Mid-low | e |  | o |
| Low |  | a |  |

Thanks to new techniques and new software developed in the present century it is possible to test this vowel charts. In the following section I present an acoustic analysis of the vocalic system in the language.

### 3.2.1.1. Acoustic analysis

Acoustics can be defined as the study of speech sound production in the vocal tract and the filtering of it by the vocal tract airways. Articulators move with time, causing the sound sources and the filtering to change as well. Examining these phenomena, we can observe some aspects of transformation from articulation to sound which are categorical. Therefore, we can organize the sound sources and their filtering into classes (Stevens 1999: 1)

The analysis of these categories seems to be useful to determine what the phoneme inventory of a language is. Although the quantificational processing of linguistics tokens may result is a tedious and time-consuming task, the results are much more accurate and reliable. Examples of this type of analysis for Andean Spanish can be found in the recent literature, cf. Pérez-Silva et al. (2007), Napurí (2012).

For this acoustic analysis I could only use two sources, a Swadesh list collected with one of the last two speakers of the language, Keyuk Yantén, during my fieldwork trip to Tierra del Fuego, and the recordings of the seventies by Emma Gregores with one of the last speakers of the language by those times, Ángela Loij. From all the available tokens I extracted 58 tokens from different lexemes. All the vowels in these tokens were indifferently taken from several contexts (initial-medial-final). All the tokens were analyzed using Praat. With the help of this software I could extract the first and second formants' information in Hz. All this information was tabulated in Ms Excel and later plotted all together into a scatter plot by Praat. All the tokens, extracting the outliers, common to any acoustic analysis, can be seen in the following chart:

**Scatter Plot 1: Vowel dispersion**
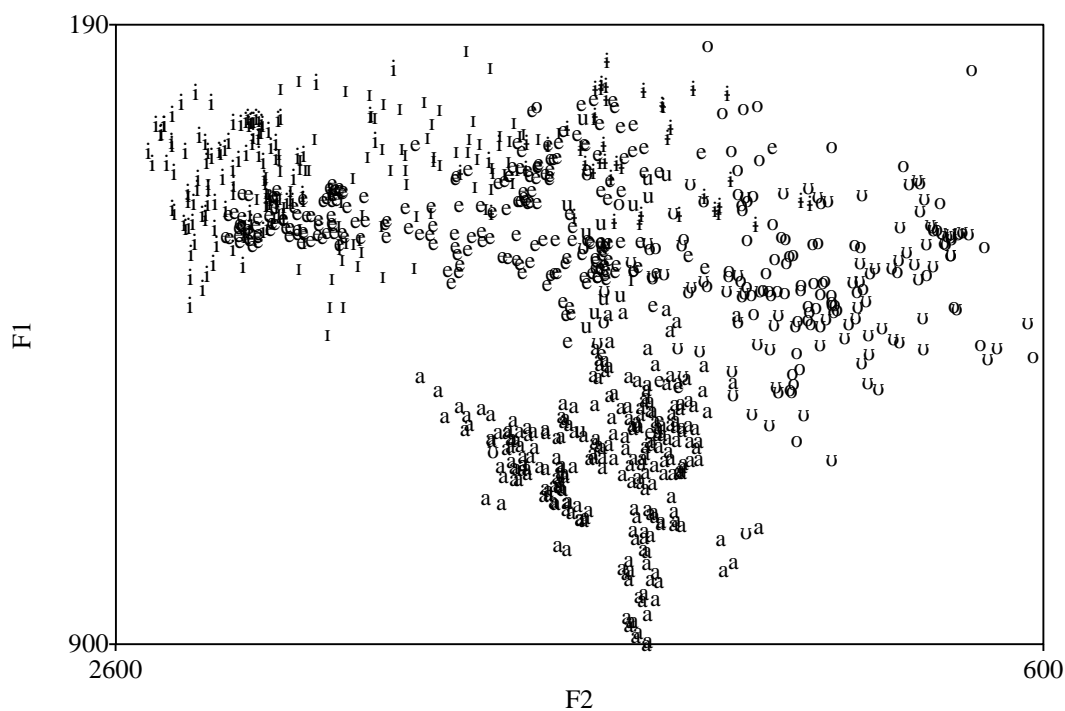


The IPA symbol used for every token was decided based on the vowel quality and my familiarity with the sounds. This, however, was not very important for this preliminary part of the analysis. The most interesting part is looking at the concentration of certain vowel sounds, rather than at their dispersion within the F1 & F2 scatter plot.

**Scatter Plot 2:Token concentration**
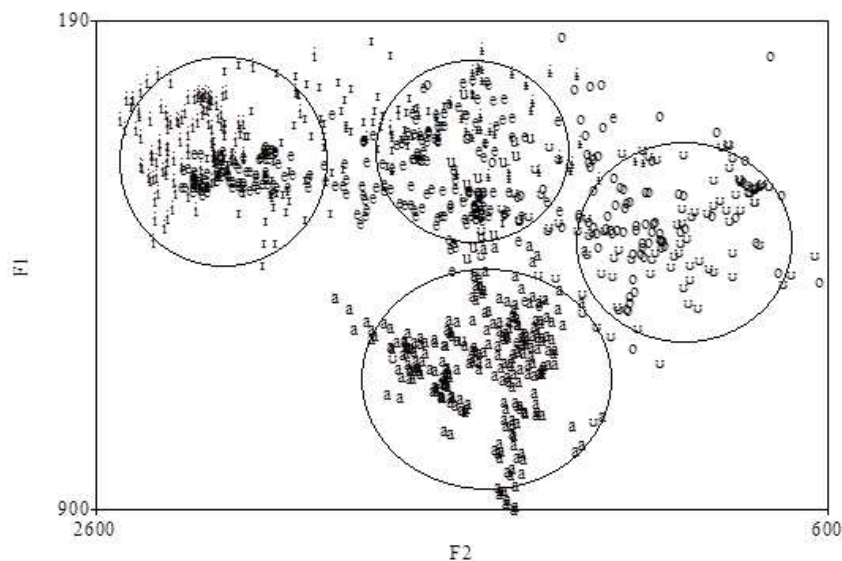
Three concentration circumferences were drawn in the scatter plot. This is just a perceptive symbolization; however, there are several phenomena which can be seen. There is a strong concentration of high F2 and low F2 formants;; the lowest F1 formants appear in a concentration of a vowel which seems to be an [a], there is another concentration in the middle F2 axis with very low F1 formants; and there is finally a concentration of low F2 formants and middle level F1 formants. In the case of the low F1, middle F2, there something to say: there is no such sound documented previously in the language. After this analysis, I averaged the whole F1 and F2 levels of all the concentrations circumferences and the vowels present in the language appeared:

**Scatter Plot 3:vowels**
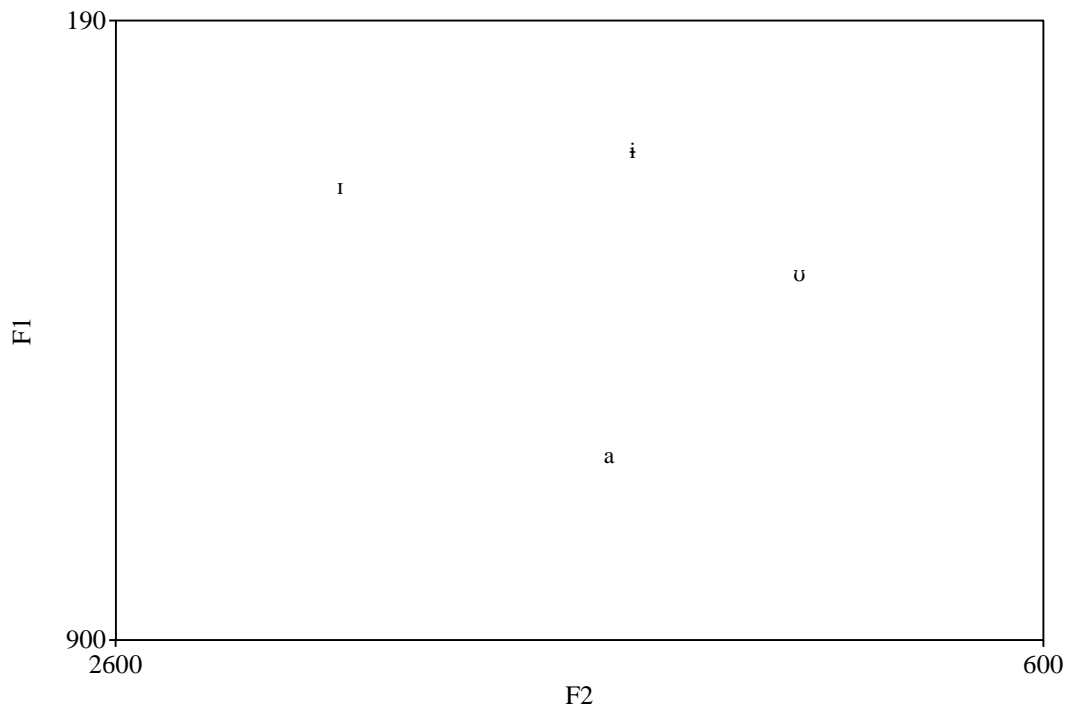


Ocampo's (1982), taking my proposal into account, included only the phonemes /a/, /i/ and /ɪ/. He included other phonemes. However, the question that arises is, why does the phoneme /e/, /u/, /o/ do not appear? In relation to Najlis, my /ɪ/, /ʊ/ and /a/ look rather similar to hers.

   Ocampo presents a /e/ phoneme; however, there is an evident inconsistency in his analysis. Hereby I present some of his minimal pairs in order to differentiate /ɪ/ and /e/ (Ocampo 1982: 2-3, 10):

**Table 4: Phoneme /e/ and /ɪ/ comparison, following Ocampo (1982)**

| Lexemes with /ɪ/ | Lexemes with /e/ |
|---|---|
| *čʔáuɪn* 'to be big' | *uanuén* 'to be equal' |
| *kočkʔónkɪn* 'to twist one's leg' | *karáiken* 'to see' |
| *mɪ́stɪn* 'to sleep' | *ṣákrten* 'to hiccup' |
| *kolkínčɪn* 'to be big' | *káčen* 'to let loose' |
| *ɪč* 'throat' | *échep* 'twisted' |
| | *és* 'leg' |

As can be seen in the examples, most of them are verbs. Verb endings in the language have a –en/-een ending, according to Najlis (1973). What is observed in these examples is that there is just a misunderstanding of the ending –which is just a single one -ɪn -not even taking into account their acoustic nature, but the linguist's intuitions. Moreover, stress is also something that has to be taken into account. Most Ocampo's tokens with /e/ are in initial position and have a stress. This stress may have caused the lowering/fronting of the phoneme into an [e].

   Last but not least, it has to be mentioned that, as in many other South American languages, the phoneme /ɪ/ becomes an [e] near or immediately after/before a postvelar sound or a glottal stop. This may be happening in the language as well. This can be exemplified with the words:

/q'ɪjjn/ → [q'ejjn] 'wings'
/q'ɪhl/ → [q'ehl] 'temples'
/q'ɪjʊw/ → [q'ejow] 'still' (Najlis 1975: 14)

Moreover, all the examples we found in which an [i] sound appeared were preceded by a pallatal consonant, either a glide /j/ or the affricate /č/, as in the examples I presented above, *č'ip* 'hand', *yi'penn* 'to be bad'. Plotting all these ideas related to /ɪ/ together, I can postulate the following allophonic variation phonological process which may alter this vowel and have produced Ocampo's confusion.

**/ɪ/ allophonic variation:**

(a) /ɪ/→ [e] / [glottal$_\alpha$]X__

          [uvular$_\beta$]

          /              __X[glottal$_\alpha$]

                              [uvular$_\beta$]

(b) /ɪ/→ [i]/ [pallatal]_


If Najlis /e/ was of the same nature as my /ɪ/ we may agree in this respect. This, however, will remain unresolved.

   The case of Ocampo's (1982) /o/ and /u/ is of the same nature. He presents the following examples:


**Table 5: Phoneme /o/ and /u/ comparison, following Ocampo (1982)**

| Lexemes with /o/ | Lexemes with /u/ |
|---|---|
| *ótl* 'neck' | *úspin* 'to wait' |
| *óčič* 'hard' | *úlič* 'pretty' |
| *ólis* 'blanket' | *úliučIn* 'to wash' |


The problem with these examples is that most of them were inaccurately transcribed. The word for blanket is originally *oʔli.* In the case of [u], most of these examples do not carry an [u] sound in our corpus, but a kind [o], since they carry the primary stress. What is originally happen in this case, as in the case of /ɪ/, is that primary stress or a glottal consonant is making the /ʊ/ sound a bit lower; therefore, there not enough evidence to divide the sound into two possible mental phonemes.


**/ʊ/ allophonic variation:**

/ʊ/ → [o] / [glottal$_\alpha$]X__

          [uvular$_\beta$]

          /              __X[glottal$_\alpha$]

                              [uvular$_\beta$]


This only shows that the phonemes are of the same natural class. In Selk'nam, all high vowels lower a bit if followed or preceded by an adjacent or near postvelar/uvular or glottal stop. The final phenomenon can

be illustrated with the word /q'ʊmn/, which actually sounds more like [q'omn], 'one of the Onas' deities'.

Among the corpus I found some occurrences, although not many, of the central vowel [ɨ] as it can be appreciated in the vowel concentration scatter plot. As I mention in the introduction, §1, my main informant, Keyuk Yanten, is a speaker of the Mapundungún language as well. This language's phonological inventory possesses this sound, a fact which has to be taken into account for this analysis as well, since the appearance of the sound may be due to language interference. There were other instances, however, in which this sound appeared as well. This will be developed thoroughly in the phonological processes' section.

Taking into account what has been analyzed previously, Selk'nam has the following phonological inventory[20]:

**Table 6: Vocalic phonemes of Selk'nam**

|  | Anterior | Central | Posterior |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mid-High | ɪ |  | ʊ |
| Low |  | a |  |

### 3.2.1.3. Some phonological processes
Since this is just a phonological sketch, some of the main phonological processes noted by previous authors and myself will be presented:

**Aspiration:**
Agreeing with Najlis (1973: 95), the uvular consonants can become aspirated when followed by a vowel:

*q'ṳn* → *qh'ṳn* 'inside'
*ṣq'ṳht'ɨ* → *ṣqh'ṳhtɨ* 'to pick up'

---

[20] It is interesting that this phoneme inventory is completely equivalent to that of Southern Quechua, Aymara (Adelaar & Muysken 2002) and, almost, Shawi (Rojas-Berscia 2013).

Moreover, the non glottalized uvular stop can be preaspirated as well after a vowel or a voiced consonant. This aspirated segment, as noted by Najlis (1973: 95) can be velarized too:

*Harqn* → *harhqn* → *harxqn* 'instep'
*ha'mqn* → *ha'mhqn* → *ham'mxqn* 'coast'

**Homorganic closure:**
Najlis (1973) presents some cases in which nasal consonants develop a homorganic closure before fricative or in an implosive position. I found instances of this phenomenon in the Ángela Loij corpus, where we find some verbal endings such as:

*Kaṣịnịn*  → *kaṣịnent*   → *kaṣịnet* 'to ventilate'
*karraykịn* → *karraykent* → *karrayket* 'to see'
*karryịn*  → *karryịnt*   → *karryịt* 'to sell'

**Centralization:**
According to Najlis (1973: 98), in the Northern dialect, the high anterior vowel can become central. Of course, in Selk'nam, there is no high anterior vowel; however, in most cases, this sound appears when the /ɪ/ is emphasized, preceded by a palatal consonant, and only in some irregular lexemes, as in:

*ịs* → *ɨs* 'thigh'

This would explain why my informant, Keyuk Yanten, had also this type of phonemes rather than because of an influence of Mapuche. Hereby I present some examples uttered by him:

*-wịn* → *-wɨn* 'as'
*wịsn* → *wɨsn* 'dog'

**Fricativization:**
Laterals become fricativized in an implosive position:

*čal* → *čaɫ* 'tongue'

*tį?l* → *tį?ɫ* 'mosquito'


The same happens with taps, although they can be even turned into trills:


*čaɾ* → *čaɹ* → *čar* 'biceps'

*ųtɾ* → *ųtɹ* → *ųtr* 'eye'


**Voicing:**

Voicing occurs just in two specific cases: in one of the personal pronouns and in the relational particle –*k*, § 3.4.1. In the former, since the phoneme /k/ is surrounded by vowels it becomes voiced. In the latter, the relational particle becomes [g] if what follows is a nasal or a glide. If what follows is a vowel, there is a complete change into the glide [w]; this is, however, subject to irregularity.


*įkųwa* → *įgųwa* → *įgwa* 'we (inclusive)'


*k-mįstįn* → *g-mįstįn* 'to sleep'

*k-wačįn* → *g-wačįn* 'to be stinky'

*k-aytįn* → *g-aytįn* → *w-aytįn* 'to lose'

*k-yųsen* → *g-yųsen* → *w-yųsen* 'to say'


## 3.2.2. Orthography proposal

Selk'nam is not a written language. The first attempts to write in Selk'nam were done by the first grammarians and by anthropologists registering voices in the language. This, of course, is just a first attempt to provide the modern Selk'nam community with a suitable alphabet. They are used to transcribing with the graphemes <o>, <e>, <i> and <u>, as well as with consonantal graphemes related to their Spanish "counterpart" when similar. This, however, does not reflect the speakers' knowledge. Therefore I propose the following grapheme alphabet:

**Table 7: Selk'nam Alphabet**

| Letter | Sound |
|--------|-------|
| A, a | /a/ |
| Č, č | /t͡ʃ/ |
| Č', č' | /t͡ʃʔ/ |
| H, h | /h/ |
| I, i̵[21] | /ɪ/ |
| K, K | /k/ |
| K', k' | /kʔ/ |
| L, l | /l/ |
| M, m | /m/ |
| N, n | /n/ |
| U, ʉ | /ʊ/ |
| P, p | /p/ |
| P', p' | /pʔ/ |
| Q, q | /q/ |
| Q', q' | /qʔ/ |
| R, r | /ɾ/ |
| S, s | /s/ |
| Ṣ, ṣ | /ṣ/ |
| Ŝ, ŝ | /ʂ/ |
| T, t | /t/ |
| T', t' | /tʔ/ |
| W, w | /w/ |
| X, x | /x/ |
| Y, y | /j/ |
| ' | / ʔ/ |

This alphabet will be used for the representation of the language in the whole grammar, both in my examples and the ones taken from other authors.

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[21] The lower case graphemes for the phonemes /ɪ/ and /ʊ/, <i̵> and <ʉ> respectively, were chosen as neutral candidates, since, after a discussion with Keyuk, the inclusion of <u> and <i> might cause future learners' confusion.

## 3.3. Word classes

### 3.3.1. Open word classes with rich morphology

Open word classes are those whose membership is unlimited, i.e. speakers can add members whenever necessary (Shopen & Schachter 2007: 3). In the following sections, I will present the main process involving the only two open word classes in the language, namely nouns and verbs.

#### 3.3.1.1. Nouns

The category of noun is used "to label words in which occur the name of most persons, places and things" (Shopen & Schachter 2007: 5). Langacker (1987) argues that nouns are typically used to designate a region in some domain, as opposed to verbs which foreground relations.

Having these basic concepts in mind, I will present the main morphological processes involving the formation of nouns in the language. Among the heritage and modern sources several paradigms have been identified and will be presented in the following order: compounding, derivation and inflexion. A subchapter related to the oblique case system in the language was added since oblique cases are mostly related to the relations of nouns with clauses. This choice is just practical and has no theoretical grounding.

#### 3.3.1.1.1. Noun formation

In Selk'nam there are several basic nouns which appear throughout the corpus, well identified by the Beauvoir (1915: 4). These included proper names, toponyms, and common nouns. Hereby I present a revised version of these lists:

**Table 8: Proper names in Selk'nam (Beauvoir 1915: 4)**

| ♂ | ♀ |
|---|---|
| *Alarkịn* | *Ičak* |
| *Alịtụl* | *Hụlkị* |
| *Čalprr* | *Lilakịr* |
| *Hụkay* | *Mịskị* |
| *Kawčịkụl* | |
| *Kụthịș* | |

Since there are no texts available in the language, I could not find proper names in the corpus. This is to be expected since the language by the times of Beauvoir was already obsolescent, and most Onas were Christianised and their names westernised.

Table 9: Toponyms (Beauvoir 1915: 4)

| Proper Name | Meaning |
|---|---|
| *Kų̇yų̇skà* | Tierra del Fuego |
| *Inskà* | North Coast of Tierra del Fuego |
| *Kų̇lįnkįn* | San Sebastián Cape |
| *Yarkįn* | Sunday Cape |
| *Amįskn* | Peña Cape |
| *Yayįwsk* | Estados Island |
| *Kakįnčų̇w* | Fagnano Lake |
| *Uṣwaya* | Ushuaia |
| *Lapataya* | Lapataia |

The toponyms presented in table 9 are the proper names of places according to the consultants of Beauvoir.

Table 10: Common nouns in Selk'nam

| Common nouns | Meaning |
|---|---|
| *čų̇n* | man |
| *na'* | woman |
| *tįlq'į* | boy |
| *lal* | son |
| *kam* | daughter |
| *aín* | father |
| *am* | mother |
| *čačįn* | bird |
| *yų̇wn* | animal |
| *wįsn* | dog |
| *yų̇wen* | guanaco |
| *čų̇wn* | water |

Najlis (1973), however, noted that common nouns in this language cannot be classified in a single category grouping all of them and treating them in the same way grammatically; lexical gender was an important characteristic present in the language as well. Table 11 is a chart based on her findings, grouping nouns into the three basic gender categories in the language: masculine, feminine and neuter.

**Table 11: Lexical gender in Selk'nam based on Najlis (1973: 18-19)**

| ♂[22] | ♀ | ◌ |
|---|---|---|
| *pu̧'t'* 'paternal uncle' | *pu̧'n* 'maternal or political aunt' | *halp'* 'shell' |
| *'ayr'u̧w* 'Alakaluf man' | *naqn* 'sister' | *k'u̧yi̧n* 'shoulder' |
| *t'u̧hr ṣà?n* 'black male small bird' | *'u̧mte* 'one-year old female guanaco' | *ŝi̧u̧w* 'net' |
| *màri̧n* 'adult guanaco' | *pu̧hsan* 'wasp' | *t'i̧'n* 'edible tubercle' |
| *wi̧sn* 'dog' | *q'i̧u̧m* 'swan' | *p'i̧àri* 'pampa' |
| *ti̧ qàhti̧* 'scratched duck' | *hàplxn* 'blackboard' | *k'u̧ŝ* 'cara' |
| *čeli̧ àmṣ* 'starfish' | *t'ahi̧* 'skin roof' | *yahxi̧* 'sea lion cave' |
| *xu̧ŝl* 'grass' | | |
| *t'i̧'lu̧w* 'fang' | | |
| *wàṣx* 'berry' | | |
| *mu̧'* 'hole; needle' | | |

Gender recognition is an important process in the language that involves agreement in the verb (§3.4.1.2), in mood particles (§3.4.1.2.3.) and even in some nouns depending on their position (§ 3.4.1.1.3).

In the following section, I will provide some processes of compounding in the language, a rather productive morphological process in times of Tonelli (1926).

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[22] The symbols ♂ 'masculine', ♀ 'feminine' and ◌ 'neuter' will be used from now on to indicate gender distinctions.

**Compounding.** Compounding is a word formation process in which a word is build up by two or more different words. This can be exemplified by the English noun 'windshield' (Payne 1999: 92) or the Spanish noun *saltamontes* (*salta* 'jumps'+ *monte* 'hill', 'grasshopper'). The recognition of compounds in Selk'nam will be done following formal criteria (Payne: 92-93), depending on the grammatical category of the bases involved.

 **a) N+N compounds.** In Tonelli (1926) many Noun+Noun compounds can be found. Hereby I present a table grouping all of them:

**Table 12: N+N compounds in Selk'nam, following Tonelli[23] (1926: 34-36)**

| Noun 1 | Noun 2 | Compound |
|--------|--------|----------|
| *Káwị* 'house' | *Úlị* 'cover' | *káwụlị* 'roof' |
| *Káwị* 'house' | *Wáx* 'path' | *Káwịwáx* 'door' |
| *Şịụn* 'sky' | *Úlị* 'cover' | *Şịụnụli* 'cloudy sky' |
| *Şịụn* 'sky' | *Şịtr* 'feather' | *Şịụnşịtr* 'Cirrus cloud' |
| *Şịụn* 'sky' | *Şá* 'excrement' | *Şịụnşá* 'black clouds' |
| *Kụx* 'sea' | *Şá* 'excrement' | *Kụxşá* 'algae and sea garbage' |
| *Wịnčị* 'tree' | *Şá* 'excrement' | *Wịnčịşá* ' tree mushrooms' |
| *Arwịn* 'soil' | *Şá* 'excrement' | *Arwịnşá* 'soil mushrooms' |
| *Xáwxị* 'fire' | *Yár* 'stone' | *Xáwxịyar* 'firestone' |
| *Kolyụt* 'European' | *Ján* 'arrow' | *Kolyụtján* 'bullet' |
| *Uter* 'eyes' | *Şịụn* 'glass, sky' | *Uterşịụn* '(pair of) glasses' |
| *Kụş* 'forehead' | *Kụ'* 'bone' | *Kụşkụ'* 'horn' |
| *Kaá* 'killing' | *Men* 'figura' | *Kaámen* 'holy cross' |

In these cases Noun 2 is the base, while Noun 1 modifies it. This morphosyntactic process mirrors some instances of the determinant phrase structure, §3.4.2, namely the possessive phrases.

 **b) N+Adj.** In Tonelli's corpus some instances of this type of compounding can be found as well. Although there is no proper Adjective word class in the language[24], I will maintain the name for a better understanding of the word formation process. According to Tonelli (1926: 36), this type of words

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[23] Some other compounds using the relational particle *k-* were omitted in this section. They will be further analysed in §3.4.1.

 [24] It must be said that Tonelli noted this as well (*cf.* Tonelli 1926: 45).

were used to name the Onas and to name the *Kolíót* 'Europeans' as well (cf. Table 6).

**Table 13: N+Adj compounds in Selk'nam, following Tonelli (1926: 36-37)**

| Noun | Adjective | Compound |
|------|-----------|----------|
| *Utịr* 'eye' | *Sụl* 'white' | *Utịrsụl* 'blind' |
| *Ut* 'eye' | *Sụs* 'one' | *Utsụs* 'one-eyed' |
| *U'ụl* 'nose' | *Kụin* 'sharp' | *U'ụlkụin* 'pointed-nosed' |
| *U'ụl* 'nose' | *Tịs* 'short' | *U'ụltịs* 'small-nosed' |
| *U'ụl* 'nose' | *Kịčịr* 'skew' | *Urkịčịr* 'skew-nosed' |
| *U'ụl* 'nose' | *Tụw* 'big' | *Urtụw* 'big-nosed' |
| *U'ụl* 'nose' | *Čịk* 'mashed' | *U'ụlčịk* 'flat-nosed' |
| *Kị'ịtụ* 'breast' | *Tụw* 'big' | *Kị'itụw/Kịtụw* 'big-breasted' |
| *Ú'li* 'cloth' | *Tụw* 'big' | *Úlitụw* 'priest' |
| *Ịṣ* 'leg' | *Tịl* 'subtle' | *Ịṣtịl* 'Mr. Reynolds' |
| *Al* 'head' | *Určatịr* 'sharp' | *Alụrčatịr* 'Mission's bell tower' |
| *Tịr* 'finger' | *Pụtịn* 'red' | *Tịrpụtịn* 'crab' |
| *Tịr* 'finger' | *Pụkịr* 'many' | *tịrpụkịr* 'crab' |
| *Kụṣ* 'forehead' | *Kụt* 'horned' | *Kụṣkụt* 'bull' |

**c) V+N**. Some compounds in the language are formed by a verb root and a noun. They can be considered lexicalized phrases, which are either derived from a Verb-Subject-(Verb) construction or an Object-Verb construction. As Tonelli (1926: 36) mentions, they were typically used to express natural phenomena. However, similar words with different meanings can be found as well. Hereby I present a chart with the instances of this type of compounding provided by Tonelli (1926). Both compounding sources will be presented; however, in this case, their presentation does not mirror the order of the compounding product:

**Table 14: V+N compounds in Selk'nam, following Tonelli (1926: 36)**

| Verb | Noun | Compound |
|------|------|----------|
| *Xįn* 'to come' | *Krįn* 'sun' | *Xįnkrįn* 'dawn' |
| *Kays* 'to fall' | *Krįn* 'sun' | *Krįnkays* 'noon' |
| *Kųxįn* 'to rise' | *Krįn* 'sun' | *Kųxįnkrįn* 'sunset' |
| *Tįntįr* 'to tremble' | *Arwįn* 'earth' | *Tįntįrarwįn* 'earthquake' |
| *Páy* 'to carry' | *Pį-y* 'knives' | *Pįypáy* 'dragonfly' |
| *Yįr* 'to talk' | *U'ul* 'nose' | *ųrjįr* 'pig' |
| *Yųsįn* 'to speak' | *Čačį* 'bird' | *Yųsįnčačį* 'papagallus' |
| *Kųm* 'to lack' | *Al* 'head' | *Alkųm* 'crazy' |
| *Kųm* 'to lack' | *Utr* 'eye' | *Utrkųm* 'blind' (name) |
| *Kųm* 'to lack' | *Tįr* 'finger' | *Tįrkųm* 'Fingerless' (name) |
| *Wáytįn* 'to lose' | *Al* 'head' | *Alwáytįn* 'crazy' |
| *Ulkįn* 'to cry' | *Şįn* 'wind' | *Şenųlkįn* 'arrow whistling' |
| *Učįn* 'to clean' | *Kawį* 'house' | *Kawkųčįn* 'broom' |
| *Kįkán* 'to fall' | *Tųl* 'heart' | *Tųlkįkán* 'fatigue' |

**Derivation.** In every language there are derivational processes which change the meaning of a word, by phonological or morphological means. In the case of Selk'nam, most of these processes involve the appearance of a suffix, as in many other Andean languages like Quechua (Soto 1976), Aymara (Hardman 2000), Uru (Cerrón-Palomino 2006) or Shawi (Barraza 2005; Rojas-Berscia 2013). Although some of the following processes may represent a state of the forms in which the roots and the suffixes are already completely fused in the language when the data was collected, it is interesting to see which of these roots are common in the system and how each of these derivational products are related to each other. Moreover, I will assume these roots to be nominal.

Commonly derived roots in the language will be presented, following by small subchapters for every derivational suffix found among the Najlis (1973) and Tonelli (1926) corpora.

**Commonly derived roots.** According to Tonelli (1926: 35), there are some common roots found among his Selk'nam corpus. He provides no meaning for the root itself; nevertheless, its meaning will be provided based on semantic commonalities. One of these roots is *ča-* 'mouth', in words such as

*čal* 'tongue', *čay* 'lip', *čan* 'language, *čaltįn* (v.) 'suffocate, hang oneself'. Other cases include: *ųrk-* 'older sibling', as in *ųrįk* 'older brother' and *ųrkán* 'older sister'; *ar-* 'ground', as in *arųn* 'flat terrain without trees', *arwįn* 'soil' and *arįy* 'root'; *an-* 'nephew', as in *anųt* 'nephew (in general)', *anįnk* 'brother's son', *ankįn* 'brother's daughter', *anwįt* 'sister's son' and *anwįten* 'sister's daughter'. The grammarian also mentions that there is a possible relation between the roots *yar* 'stone' and *yan* 'arrow'. It is, however, inconclusive.

Najlis (1973) presents a rather broader panorama of the common roots in the language. Table 9 presents a reorganised chart of these common roots:

**Table 15: Common roots in Selk'nam, following Najlis[25] (1973: 29-31)**

| Root | Derived words |
|---|---|
| *t'a-* 'fixed to the ground' | *t'a-l'* 'coast' (when the waves of the ocean leave apart and people can collect shellfish) |
| | *t'a-hpį* 'conger' (found in the ground= |
| | *t'a-hn* 'some berries and mushrooms' |
| | *t'a-hį* 'roof made of skin' |
| | *t'a-mn* 'female daughter' |
| *tį-* 'extended' | *tį-s* 'long edible root' |
| | *tį-swn* 'mataverde plant' |
| | *tį-hr* 'tree mushrooms' |
| | *tį-hrwxen* 'hail' |
| | *tį-hnųw* kan 'parasite plant' |
| | *tį-lųw* 'star' |
| | *tį-l sįx kan* 'little finger, pinkie' |
| *tį'-* (v.) 'dispersion, extension' | *tį'-n* 'smoke' |
| | *tį'-l* 'mosquito' |
| | *tį'-i* 'whale's beard' |
| | *k-tį'-itm* 'male whale' |
| | *wah-tį-n* 'strap' |

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[25] Many of the segmentation done by the author was not further explained or explored. It remains as a pendant study for lexical clarity purposes, as well as for historical linguists.

| | |
|---|---|
| | *p'aʔ-**tị**-n* 'belt' |
| | *q'ịu̦l-**tị**-nn* 'collar bone' |
| | *ču̦n-**tị**-nn* 'buttocks' |
| ***q'u̦-*** 'cavity, curve' | ***q'u̦**-h* 'head's extreme' |
| | ***q'**-ị-u̦-qr* 'crown of the head' |
| | ***q'u̦**-u̦-čịlm* 'forehead cover made of leather' |
| | ***q'u̦**-hq* pu̦mịt's 'mountain range's bustard' |
| | ***q'**-ị-u̦-mn* 'black neck swan' |
| | ***q'**-ị-u̦-mnqn* 'autumn' |
| | ***q'u̦**-ŝr* 'emerging' |
| | ***q'u̦**-lṣqn* 'armpit' |
| | ***q'u̦**-hlịn* 'palate' |
| | ***q'u̦**-ʔị* 'uterus' |
| | ***q'u̦**-nịp* 'eye curve' |
| | ***q'**-ị-u̦-nčịrị* 'belting which surrounds the body' |
| | ***q'u̦**-ht'* 'collar' |
| | ***q'u̦**-lu̦wqn* 'corner, plain that penetrates into the forest' |
| | *tu̦h-**q'u̦**-w* 'bucket' |

It is uncommon, however, that nouns consist just of one root. In the language, as it can be seen in compounding (§3.4.1.1.1.), most words consist of two roots or more.

In the following section, the derivative affixes found in the language will be presented.

**Derivative affixes**

**Diminutive –ka.** One of the most common diminutive suffixes in the language is –*ka.* It can be suffixed to almost any type of noun. Hereby I present a table with the derivation process based on Tonelli (1926: 43):

| Noun | Suffixed version |
|------|------------------|
| *tu̧ki̧r* 'ball' | *tu̧ki̧r-ká* 'small ball' |
| *ṣi̧ti̧l* 'bottle' | *ṣi̧ti̧l-ká* 'small bottle' |
| *mu̧u̧* 'pin' | *mu̧u̧-ká* 'small pin' |
| *xáwxi̧* 'fire' | *xawxi̧-ká* 'spark' |
| *xaa* 'bow' | *xaa-ká* 'small bow' |
| *si̧ki̧n* 'torrent' | *si̧ki̧n-ká* 'gutter' |
| *tay* 'basket' | *tay-ká* 'small basket' |
| *yu̧wn* 'guanaco' | *yu̧wn-ká* 'small guanaco' |
| *ku̧ṣku̧t* 'bull' | *ku̧ṣku̧t-ká* 'calf, goat' |
| *wi̧sn* 'dog' | *wi̧sn-ká* 'doggy' |
| *ṣi̧lči̧* 'sheep' | *ṣi̧lči̧-ká* 'lamb' |
| *ti̧r* 'finger' | *ti̧r-ṣi̧x-ká* 'pinkie' |
| *al* 'head' | *al-ká* 'small head' (name) |

**Diminutive –*ani*.** This diminutive seems not to be as productive as –*ka*; however, Tonelli (1926: 44) presents some cases in which it appears:

**Table 17: Instances of the –*ani̧* suffix**

| Noun | Suffixed version |
|------|------------------|
| čų̧ki̧n 'spear' | čų̧ki̧n-ani̧ 'spear's tip' |
| jar 'stone' | jar-ani̧ 'grevel, pebble' |
| kawi̧ 'hut' | kawi̧-ani̧ 'small huty' |
| kawki̧ 'wood' | kawk-ani̧ 'matchwood' |
| tu̧r 'island' | tu̧r-ani̧ 'islet' |
| ti̧lq'n 'young man' | ti̧lq'-ani̧ 'boy' |

**Diminutive –*lal*.** This diminutive suffix is the grammaticalised version of the Selk'nam noun 'child'. It is commonly used to make diminutives of animal words (Tonelli 1926: 44) to indicate their first stages of life.

*Waṣ* 'fox'  →  *Waṣ-lal* 'small fox'

*Wịsnị* 'dog'  →  *Wịsnị-lal* 'doggy'


**Augmentative –*kar*.** Tonelli (1926) mentions an augmentative suffix in the language. There is unfortunately no example available.

Najlis (1973) presents a complex list of derivative suffixes, confusing, however, between inflexion and noun derivation. I therefore had to reorganise this material. Although most of her analyses seem correct, many of them seem to be product of overanalysis of the words in her corpora. I will mention some of these suffixes when the explanation is clear enough, with my proper reinterpretation.


**Ellongative –*x*.** Najlis (1973: 33) named this derivation suffix "line". I prefer the term ellogantive for consistency. This suffix, according to the author, may be derived from the etymological root *xè* 'short' without the theme vowel 'è'. This etymology, however, requires more analysis. Hereby I present some examples:

*Wayụ'* 'run away'   → *wa-x* 'pathway'
yụw 'footprint'   → yụw-x 'tendon, thread'
*mar* 'forearm'        → *ma-x* 'face lines'


**Acutive –*q'*.** Najlis (1973: 34) named this suffix "sharp", and assumed it to originate from the root *q'è* 'bifurcation'. This etymology is, however, not very convincing. It conveys the meaning of sharpness of the derived word. Some clear examples are:

*q'ụ'* 'bone'                → *q'ụ-q'* 'Common Kingfisher'
*hụṣ ịṣ* 'earthworm'      → *a-q' ịṣ* 'sea urchin'[26]


**Interanive –*t'*.** According to Najlis (1973: 34), originally dubbed 'interior' by her, this suffix may be derived from the root *t'è* 'to hide'. This is very probable, since the interanive meaning can be derived from such a verbal meaning. Hereby I present some examples of its usage.

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[26] This case is not clear at all. However, the root *a–* seems as though as being derived by the acutive suffix.

*Ha'yti̧* 'to have a scar' → *ha'y-t'* 'ford'

*Xu̧'* 'anus' → *xu̧'-t'* 'fart'

*q'i̧ytrqn* 'slope' → *q'i̧y-t'* 'slope'


**Emergentive –č.** Najlis (1973:34) mentions this derivative suffix/infix comes from the root *čè* 'to emerge', through a process of grammaticalization. Hereby I present some examples.


*'àwwi̧* 'nest' → *'àwwi̧-č* 'bitter mushroom'

*u̧n* 'formless being' → *u̧-č-n* 'whale'


**Motive –r.** This motive suffix appears also as the root *re* 'walking' (Najlis 1973: 34-36) in the language. The derived base will convey a meaning related to movement. Hereby I present some examples of its usage:


*wax* 'path' → *wa-r* 'stream'

qà 'to be' → qà-r 'being'

hi̧u̧w 'barranco' → hi̧u̧w-r 'arrow tip'


Or some complex words with the original root, such as:


*k-ri̧-nn* 'sun'

ANM-MOT-MASC

*k-ri̧-i̧n* 'moon'

ANM-MOT-FEM


There are also some other words that carry the suffix, although the original base does not have a very clear meaning:


wà? 'blood'

ahw-r 'superior part of the arm'


**Dependentive –n.** The dependentive suffix was documented by Najlis (1973: 35-36) as "dependent". It indicated that the derived word is somehow related or depends on the existence of the base. Examples include:

*sįy* 'head'? → *sįy-n* 'ear'

*yahr* 'stone' → *yah-n* 'arrow'

*ųhr* 'rucksack' → *'aymn ųh-n* 'school utensils'


**Utilitive –h**. The utilitive suffix –*h* was documented by Najlis (1973: 36) as a substantiviser/nominaliser. However, no adverbial or verbal root is losing its formal/semantic properties to become a noun. The utilitive suffix conveys the meaning of 'something used by means of/for [the root]'. Hereby I reanalyse some examples provided by the author:


*wųmke* 'to burn'→ *wų-h* 'mushroom tinder'

*cal* 'tongue' → *ca-h-n* 'word, language'


**Congenitive -ʔ <'>**. This suffix appears in many terms related to kinship. Although Najlis (1973: 36) attempts to present a regular derivational process, its status is rather unclear. The congenitive is a suffix that can be added to whatever being which is considered part of the family, including animals. Hereby I present some examples based on her corpus:


*na-ʔ* 'wife, woman'

*lal-ʔ* 'son'

*čį-ʔ* 'maternal uncle'

*tanųw-ʔ* `old man, father-in-law'

*wįsn-ʔ* 'dog (pet)'


**Constitutive –l**. According to Najlis (1973: 27) there is a suffix called "separable, independent". This suffix, however, more than a separable meaning, conveys an inseparable or inalienable meaning. Since an alienable meaning related to possession has nothing to do with the suffix, a different name has been chosen, 'constitutive'. Although whichever the root was where these suffixes attached is not clear, I will provide some instances in which it appears, commonly in body parts:


*ca-l* 'tongue'

*ųw-l* 'nose'

*ha-l* 'peel'

*q'i̱-l* 'branch, leaf'

*tu̱-l* 'heart'


**Simulative –*m*.** The simulative suffix conveys the meaning of something similar to the root. Although it may look like an oblique comparative case I have not found such an occurrence in the corpus. Hereby I present some examples extracted from Najlis (1973: 37):


*na'* 'wife'                 → *na-m* 'children'

*ṣ-ari̱'* 'to be born'        → *k-ari̱-m* 'recently born guanaco'

*či̱ayi̱* 'inferior lip'      → *či̱a-mn* 'mussel'

*q'à* 'spring, fountainhead' → *q'a-mi̱*[27] 'Fagnano Lake'


**Mollitive –*ŝ*.** This suffix appears to come from a very infrequent grammaticalised classifier. Najlis (1973: 37-38) treats it in the same way as all other derivative suffixes:


*k'u̱-ŝ* 'face'

*xi̱u̱-ŝ* 'snow'

*xu̱-ŝl* 'grass'

*xàh-ŝ* 'feathers put in the body'


**Conplexitive –*ṣ*.** This suffix was noted by Najlis (1973:28) with the meaning 'to hold'. It appears normally in animate nouns. It may be a lexicalised post-grammaticalization version of a former classifier in the language. Here I present some instances of it, although the meaning of this suffix requires further study:


*ṣi̱l* 'arm'            → *ṣi̱-ṣ* 'small penguin'

*hu̱'t'* 'guanaco neck' → *hu̱'-ṣ* 'ears'

*là'* 'to shorten'      → *k-là-ṣwn* 'cholga (big mussel from the Southern Hemisphere)'

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[27] The –j suffix may refer to what Najlis (1973: 37) calls "unitary group suffix". I add no explanation on this derivative suffix since the information available is insufficient to present a general paradigm of its usage with a clear meaning.

**Contenitive −*w*[28].** In the analysis of this suffix I agree with Najlis (1973: 38). It conveys the meaning of 'something that contains [the root]'. Hereby I present some examples:

*ŝị̧y* 'to fish with the hands'  →  *ŝị̧ụ̧-w* 'net'
*ka* 'inhabitant'  →  *ka-w(ị)*[29] 'house'
*harị̧* 'root'  →  *har-wn* 'land, soil'
*wụ̧h* 'tinder mushroom'  →  *wụ̧h-wn* 'Yamana man'
*čị̧amn* 'mussel'  →  *čị̧ar-wrǫn* 'river coast'

**Caritive −*ts*.** In Najlis (1973) I found a suffix which conveys the meaning of 'something that lacks [the root]'. Some examples are[30]:

*tị̧r* 'finger'  →  *tị̧r-ts* 'fingerless'
*hali* 'legs'  →  *hali-ts* 'disabled'

**Humitive −*p(l,r,n)*.** This derivative suffix is related to the ground. Nouns derived with this suffix commonly designated objects or entities coming from the ground or the underground. Hereby I present some examples following Najlis (1973: 38-39):

*čal* 'tongue'  →  *čal-pl* 'worm, insect'
*ṣị̧l* 'arm'  →  *ṣị̧l-pl* 'cane'
*q'ị̧l* 'branch'  →  *q'ị̧l-pl* 'lizard'
*hàl taʔl* 'small forest'  →  *hal-pn*[31] 'underground deity'

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[28] A similarity with the Proto-Aymaran suffix −wi should be noted, as in the language glottonym Aymara, ex. *ayma-ra-wi (Cerrón-Palomino 2000).

[29] Here we can appreciate the contenitive suffix with the exact form as its Aymara counterpart.

[30] Although one may think that this is a suffix such as the oblique Quechua −*naq* (Soto 1976), in the oblique case system part this will be further explained.

[31] It must be noted that both *čal* and *hàl* when derived by −*pC* receive an extra *è* in the main syllable nucleus.

**Inflexion**

In the present grammar inflexional operations will be understood as "those which are required by the syntactic environment in which a root appears, [and which also] do not normally alter the basic meaning of the concept expressed; rather, they ground the concept expressed by a root according to place, time, participant reference, etc." (Payne 1997: 26). In Selk'nam, noun inflexion is not as rich as derivation; nevertheless, animacy, gender and possession are expressed morphologically. The first two will be treated here while the latter in §3.4.2.2.1.

Number in the language can be expressed by means of numerals, context or deictics.

**Animacy k-.** Animacy is expressed only in a couple of nouns, although its appearance is very prominent. It is formally equal to the relational prefix of the language, k-.
There are only two evident cases in the Najlis (1973) corpus:

**K**-rɨ-(ɨ)nn
ANM-MOT-MASC
'sun'

K-rɨ-ɨn
ANM-MOT-FEM
'moon'

It is very probable that this suffix became obsolete when the language started to disappear during the last century. This, nevertheless, needs further checking.

**Gender -(ɨ)nn** ♂, **-ɨn** ♀; **-ɨ** ♂, **-n** ♀. Gender is a very important category in Selk'nam. A single change in it may convey completely different utterances, since most evidential mood particles, as well as some tense particles, must be changed. As I have shown in Table 5 all nouns have a lexical gender. Some of them, however, have a grammatical gender as in the previous examples since they are the result of complex derivational processes. Hereby I present more examples extracted from Najlis (1973: 35):

čų-(į̀)nn
man-MASC
'man'

čų-į̀n
man-FEM
'sister of the spouse of one's own brother or sister'

àwwàyka-į̀n
peasant-FEM
'female peasant'

hį̀àrį̀w-į̀n
upland goose-FEM
'female upland goose'

All gender markers in these examples equal the certitive evidential mood, §3.4.1.2.3. There are some other instances, however, in which nouns are inflected following other patterns with gender clitics:

(6) 'Aymį̀r-nn   k-yį̀r-nn           nį̀y-y      na'    conn=į̀
    bad-MASC    REL-say-EV.MOD.MASC  PRES-MASC   woman  man=MASC
    'The woman says that the man is bad.' (N79)

(7) 'Aymį̀r-į̀n   k-yį̀r-į̀n          nį̀y-n      čųnn   na'=n
    bad-FEM     REL-say-EV.MOD.FEM  PRES-FEM    man    woman=FEM
    'The man says that the woman is bad.'[32] (N79)

In (6) and (7) we can see that all the gender markers agree with the object. Since the verb in both sentences is a *dicendi* verb, another gender marker is needed when the focus of the object appears at the end of the utterance. According to Najlis (1973:79) this gender markers "are identical to the suffixes already known but behave themselves phonologically as a single word". This is inaccurate, since, it is rather uncommon that a single [n] at the end of a sentence behaves phonologically like this. Therefore, I reanalysed them as gender clitics with no phonological independence.

   In the following section, the oblique case system of nouns will be presented, as in modern Andean linguistics (cf. Cerrón-Palomino 2008). This decision has two purposes: A simple overview of the oblique case system in the language and a systematic organization which helps future linguists of the area to perform comparative studies.

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[32] Both examples were reanalysed from Najlis (1973: 79).

**The oblique case system**

Oblique case markers are formal markers in a language to distinguish "nominals that lack a grammatical relation to some predicate" (Payne 1999: 129). In Selk'nam, there are various suffixes of this type.

   Some of them can only be bound, however, to their arguments by means of the relational particle *k-/h-* in order to agree in gender with it[33], as noted by Najlis (1973: 51); others appear just as affixes without any other particle. According to the last author, there are more than seventy documented oblique case markers in the language. This could not be corroborated in her work, nor during our fieldtrip. A more specific search work on this topic is needed. Hereby I present a list of the oblique cases, based on my own corpora and the data from Beauvoir (1915), Tonelli (1926) and Najlis (1973)[34]:

**Table 18: Oblique case marker in Ṣi̱lk'nam**

| Marker | Case |
| --- | --- |
| *-k-ay* | Ablative (referential) |
| *-k* | Instrumental |
| *-q'u̱n* | Locative (inside) |
| *-k'i̱an* | Locative (in front of) |
| *-'ap'n* | Locative (to the east of) |
| *-way* | Interactive |
| *-k-aṣ* | Comitative |
| *i̱-/-i̱* | Dative (only for verbs) |
| *-wi̱(n)* | Essive |
| *-k-ar* | Genitive |
| *-ni̱* | Mediative |
| *-k-u̱ṣ* | Ablative |

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[33] The oblique cases including a relational particle will be a analysed as follows: REL-Oblique.case.

[34] It must be noted that Najlis (1973 (51-53) provided many examples of what she calls 'postpositions'; however, many of them are not attestable. They seem to be product of overanalysis of the data in order to attain a more etymological meaning of them. Many of them were suppressed for the present chart, since they were not recognised by our informants.

| *-kɨ* | Ilative |
|--------|---------|
| *-k-aw* | Privative |

**Ablative (Referential) *k-ay*.** This case marker can only be bound to its argument with the relative particle *k/h-*. It conveys the means of reference, i.e. when the speakers want to refer to something during a conversation. Hereby I present a couple of examples:

(8) Kawɨ-**h-ay,**      ta  nɨ    ya-kar.
    house-REL-ABLT.R 3   PRES   1-GEN
    'In relation to the house, it is mine'. (FW27)

(9) Ya   taykɨr sụ'-nn         nɨ-y        čụnn pɨ=**ay.**
    1    know   NEG-CERT.MASC   PRES-MASC   man  seat=ABL.R
    'I do not know where the man is seated.' (N53)

In the case of (9), the referential marker refers to the whole phrase 'the man'. In an English translation this may sound like a subordinate clause – and this is exactly the way Najlis (1973: 53) interpreted it; nevertheless, this is not the case. The phrase 'the man' is just a circumstantial clause, an external argument marked by the oblique ablative. A more literal translation would be: 'In relation to where the man is seated, I really ignore the fact'.

**Instrumental *-k/ -kjɨ/ -ɨ*.** The instrumental was already documented by Najlis (1973:51) and it is of special interest because it has three different forms depending on the gender of the argument: *-k* is for masculine, *-kjɨ* for feminine and *-ɨ* for neuter.

*pɨyy-**k*** 'with the knife/by means of the knife'
*sụrɨn-**kjɨ*** 'with the bag/ by means of the bag'
*'ulɨ-**ɨ*** 'with the clothes / by means of the clothes'

**Locative (inside) *-q'ụn*.** This type of locative case indicates that the argument is inside somewhere or something. This oblique case does not require the use of the relative particle.

(10) ṣụs tịlq'ị̈   wị̈sị̈n-kaṣ ha'pị̈nn k-ayk-ị̈nn         takar kaw-(**q)ụn**.
    one child    dog-COMIT  louse   REL-see-CERT.MASC   3.PL house-LOC.I
    'One child with his dog were looking at the louse, they were inside the
    house.' (FW16)

In modern Şị̈lk'nam though, due to language attrition and grammaticalization,
de deictic *-pị* is used many times to indicate the notion of location in the
same fashion as this suffix.

(11) Tị̈lq'ị̈   mị̈st-ị̈nn         wị̈sị̈n-kaṣ  kawị̈-**pị̈nn**.
    child    sleep-CERT.MASC   dog-COMIT   house-LOC
    'The child slept with his dog inside the house.' (FW16)

  **Locative (in front of) -k'ị̈an/-kyị̈n**. This type of locative case indicates
that the argument is in front of the interlocutor.

(12) Kị̈yụk nị̈-y        kawị̈-**k'ị̈an**.
    Keyuk PRES-MASC   house-LOC.F
    'Keyuk is in front of the house.' (FW27)

  **Locative (to the east of) -'ap'n**. This type of locative case indicates
that the argument is positioned to the east.

(13) Kị̈yụk k-kawị̈      nị̈-y       Qamị̈-**'ap'n**.
    Keyuk REL-house   PRES-MASC  Lake.Fagnano-LOC.E
    'Keyuk's house is to the east of Lake Fagnano. (FW27)

There is another locative case with indicates 'to the west of' documented
by Najlis (1973: 52), -'*atn*. However, I could not find any example in the
corpus.

  **Interactive *-way***. The interactive suffix, according to Najlis (1973: 53)
is a suffix very similar to a coordination marker. I dubbed it interative
since it gives the idea there is an interaction –of differents kinds- in
between its arguments. Hereby I present a couple of examples:

(14) čụnn   kyeṣ     na'-**way**
    man    between  woman-INTER
    'between the man and the woman' (N53)

(15) Čụnn nị̈-y        x-ị̈nn            na'-**way**.
    man PRES-MASC   come-PRES.MASC woman-INTER
    'The man and the woman came.' (N53)

**Comitative –kaṣ.** The comitative case indicates company, but it can also convey the meaning of instrument as in many other languages of the world. It requires the use of the relative particle *–k/–h* according to the argument's gender. Hereby I present some examples:

(16) Tịlq'ị wịṣ-**k-aṣ**      ha'pịnn  yịw-ịnn.
     child dog-REL-COMIT  louse    take-CERT.MASC
     'The child took the louse away with the dog.' (FW18)

(17) Tịlq'ị ịčịrr-ịnn            'ụl-**h-aṣ**. (Suárez et ál. ~1970)
     child cover-CERT.MASC   clothes-NEUT-COMIT
     '(Someone) covers the child with the clothes.' (FW42)

**Dative *ị-/–ị*.** The dative in the language or the case that indicates aim can only be used in the language with a previously nominalised verbal argument. Hereby I present some examples documented by Tonelli (1926: 39) and Najlis (1973: 53) respectively:

*ị-pịnn* 'something to seat in; 'chair'
DAT-to seat

*ị-k-ar-t-ịnn* 'something to eat; table'
DAT-REL-something-eat-CERT-MASC

The examples by Najlis present the dative as a suffix rather than as a prefix as shown by Tonelli:

*qàr      t'ịj-ị*  'in order to eat something'
Somethịng  to eat-DAT

One possibility is that Tonelli's dative works with nominalised verbs, while Najlis' one with verbs in a clause. This, however, is only a supposition. There are still no syntactic arguments to support it.

**Essive *–wị(n).*** The essive case indicates a permanent state of being. It is a common case among many languages of the world, such as Estonian, Finnish or Shawi (Rojas-Berscia 2013: 37).

This case is of great controversy among modern Ṣịlk'nam rememberers, since one of the most important place names in Tierra del Fuego is Tolhuin –*Tol-wị* for us -which means 'like a heart'. According to them, the name should be written with an –e, since it sounds this way. In the phonology

chapter, §3, I already showed what is happening in the phonological inventory of the language which may be causing this debate. Hereby I present some examples of the case in the language documented by Tonelli (1926: 37) as a comparative case, already lexicalised though[35]:


*apịn-átụ-**wịn*** 'bean', lit. 'like the lower back of the cururo'.
*čal-**wịn*** 'like a tongue; flame'


**Genitive *–k-ar*.**Genitive phrases in Şịlk'nam are normally produced by means of the prefixing of the relational particle *–k* to the possessor. A neutral argument, *ar* 'thing', was lexicalised to the relational particle forming a specific genitive marker in the language. Hereby I present an example:

(18) Ana kawị   nị   ma-**kar**.
     this house  CERT 2-GEN
     'This house is yours.'(FW27)

**Mediative *–nị*.** The mediative case conveys a meaning of 'by means of what/using something'. I found instances of the use of this oblique case in the Ona corpus available at AILLA (Suárez et al. ~1970).

(19) Nị-**nị**   pị-(ị)nn.
     bed-MED  sit-CERT.MASC
     'He sat on the bed/using the bed as a chair.' (FW38)

(20) Yụwn-**nị**   xị-(ị)nn.
     horse-MED come-CERT.MASC
     'He came by horse.' (FW42)

**Ablative *-k-ụṣ*.** The ablative indicates origin of the argument marked. Hereby I present some examples of it found in the Ona corpus available at AILLA (Suárez et al. ~1970):

(21) Qịlq'-**h-ụṣ**     qa     o'lị.
     branch-REL-ABL  be     clothes
     'The clothes are attached from the branch (it can be found there).'
     (FW39)

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[35] A new check of whether the case still works syntactically is pendant.

(22) Wįnčį-**k-ųṣ**     t'čįn-įnn.
    tree-REL-ABL fall-CERT.MASC
    'He falls from the tree.' (FW39)

(23) Wįnčį-**k-ųṣ**     ayn-įnn          yowįn.
    tree-REL-ABL    be-CERT.MASC       horse
    'The horse was attached from the tree.' (FW39)

**Illative −kį.** The illative case indicates the direction towards the arguments moves. I found an instance in the AILLA corpus (Suárez et al. ~1970):

(24) Xalyį  wįn-įṣ   čųwn-**kį**.
    foot   go-HYP   lake-ILAT
    'He went to the lake by foot.'(FW42)

**Privative −k-aw.** The privative case indicated the lack of the marked argument. It seems to require the presence of the relative particle if its argument is animate. Najlis (1973: 52) documented it; however, I only found an example in her grammar. In the AILLA corpus (Suárez et al. ~1970) I found an instance of it:

(25) Utr-**k-aw**      pį-n.
    eye-REL-PRIV   sit-CERT.MASC
    'He is blind' (FW45)

(26) Al-**aw**       pį-n           nį-y      ya.
    Thing-PRIV   sit-CERT.MASC   PRES.MASC  1
    'I have no belongings.' (FW27)

### 3.3.1.2. Verbs

In the Hispanic tradition verbs are parts-of-speech which convey the meanings of actions. This definition, however, is very criticised in modern linguistics. According to Montalbetti (2013) the only word that conveys the meaning of action is the word 'action' itself. In the typological tradition, "*[v]erb* is the name given to the parts-of-speech class in which occur most of the words that express actions, processes, and the like" (Schachter & Shopen 2007: 9). Although this definition copes thoroughly with most of the cases, I prefer to say that a verb is just the nucleus of a Verbal Phrase: a lexical piece which, with the help of different markers, becomes the axis of any sentence in a given language.

In the following sections of the grammar I will present how verbs function in Selk'nam, not only focusing in their derivation and inflexion but also in particles that may alter them semantically. Therefore, this chapter is not only a treatise on the Selk'nam verb but as on how it works in a VP or a sentence.

### 3.3.1.2.1. Verb types

Beauvoir (1915: 6) mentions that he is not able to find out what the conjugation system of the Selk'nam verb is since he did not count with enough data. This might have happened because the Salesian had no background in grammatical description. Tonelli (1926: 46), in an opposite fashion, captures exactly what happens with the Selk'nam verb. Selk'nam possesses two types of verbs: a group ending in a consonant and a group ending in a vowel. This grouping will predict the type of ending in the certitive mood that they will carry, § 3.3.1.2.3. There are, however, some exceptions.

**Verbs ending in consonant:**

*ųḷič–* 'to be beautiful'*; ayk–* 'to see'*; ap–* 'to dry'*; ayn–* 'to want'*; tịn–* 'to eat', etc.

**Verbs ending in a vowel:**

*če–* 'to walk' *; yų–* 'to say'*; sų–* 'to bite'*; xya–* 'to arrive'*; wị–* 'to smile'*; kịka–* 'to fall' *; șaxča–* 'to read' *; ča–* 'to speak', etc.

Moreover, as Najlis (1973:41) described, they can be classified as prefixable and non-prefixable. The prefix in question is the relational particle *k–*, which will relate by means of gender agreement either the subject an intransitive clause, as in (22) and (23), or the object of the transitive clause with the verb, as in (23). Most non prefixable verbs are copulas, or movement verbs, as (25). It is rather uncommon not to see a relational particle in other types of verbs. Hereby I present some examples:

(27) **H**-aștịr-n nị-n 'ųlị.
    REL-tight-CERT.FEM PRES-FEM clothes
    'The clothes are tight.' (N41)

(28) M-**x**-ayn-ịn                  na'.
    2.OBJ-REL-like-CERT.MASC    woman
    'The woman loves/likes you.' (FW1)

(29) **K-**wa-(ɨ)n          nɨ-y      ya.
     REL-fall-CERT.MASC    PRES-MASC  1
     'I fall.' (N41)

(30) Qamɨ-k              ɨn-ɨn       nɨ-n    ya.
     Lake.Fagnano-ILAT  go-CERT.FEM  PRES-FEM 1
     'I'm going to Lake Fagnano.' (FW54)

As it can be inferred from the few examples presented so far, there is person agreement in the verb, but rather a gender agreement depending on the grammatical relations. This topic will be addressed again in § 3.4.3.

### 3.3.1.2.2. Tense
Tense is an operation that grounds the information expressed in a clause according to its temporal orientation. Moreover, it "is associated with the sequence of events in real time" (Payne 1999: 234). In the case of Selk'nam, tense is not directly encoded in the verb, excluding a single exception, but in a series of particles or adverbs. I prefer to classify these particles here since they do not appear in nominal phrases or in any other type of clause except for verbal phrases, even sometimes agreeing with the verb.

   In Selk'nam we can distinguish five tenses, reinterpreting Najlis (1973: 12): Present, Recent Past, Remote Past, Beyond Past and the Mythical Past.

   **Present.** The present tense indicates that the action or phenomenon conveyed by the verb is happening in a current scenario or is related to a general belief.

   In Selk'nam there are two formal options for a present marking: the appearance of a single verb or the addition of the particle *ni* to the clause. It is uncommon among languages to have two different formal ways of conveying the exact same meaning; nevertheless, the use of the *ni*[36] particle as a present tense marker may be the result of language attrition and an extinction process in the language occurring for the last hundred years. Hereby I present a couple of examples:

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[36] It is also true that the *ni* particle may have been used as a marker for S arguments in the language. This information, however, is rather difficult to confirm with the data available at the moment.

(31) Ana kaps ya  tát-ɨn         **nɨ-y**      yųwn.
    today   1    tie-CERT.MASC   PRES.MASC   sheep
    'Today I tie my sheep.' (FW54)

(32) Xɨ-ɨn          **nɨ-n**     na'.
    come-CERT.FEM   PRES.FEM woman
    'The woman comes.'(FW27)

In (26) we can see a case in which the particle *ni* agrees in gender with the object, *yųwn,* in the same fashion as the verb, since, in the language, the verb of a transitive clause agrees with the object. The opposite happens in (26), where the particle agrees in gender with the subject, since it is an intransitive clause –or at least a sentence in which the object is absent.

  It must be added that the present tense is only compatible with the certitive evidential mood, its use with other evidential mood produced ungrammatical readings. Its use in Modern Selk'nam is, however, very restricted.


  **Recent past**. The recent past tense conveys the meaning, as its name suggest, of a recently occurred phenomenon or action. In Selk'nam this tense is expressed by means of the particle *mɨr.* This particle is invariable unlike the present tense one.

(33) Pųkɨr abejas tɨrr-ɨn        **mɨr** wɨṣ.
    many   bees   play-CERT.MASC REC dog
    'The dog was playing/played with the bees.'(N12)

(34) Xɨ-ɨn          **mɨr** na'.
    come-CERT.FEM   REC woman
    'The woman was coming/came.' (N12)

  **Remote past**. The remote past tense conveys the meaning of an action that occurred in a distant past as its name suggests. In Selk'nam, this tense is expressed by means of the particle *nak*. Unlike the present tense one, this particle is invariable. Unfortunately, I could not find any example using this tense in my corpus. Hereby I present an example given by Najlis (1973: 12):


(35) Xɨ-ɨn          **nak** na'.
    come-CERT.FEM   REM woman
    'The woman came (some time ago).' (N12)

**Beyond past.** The beyond past tense conveys the meaning of an action performed by a dead agent, as well as a state of being of that agent. This tense is expressed in the language by means of the particle *jàn.* In modern Selk'nam, in the same fashion as the remote past, it has disappeared. Hereby I present a couple of examples by Najlis (1973: 12):

(36) Xɨ-ɨn        **jàn** na'.
     come-CERT.FEM  BEY woman
     'The woman (already dead) came.' (N12)

(37) H-anɨ-ɨn          **jàn** na'.
     REL-be.good-CERT.FEM  BEY woman
     'The woman, which is dead, was good.' (N12)

**Mythical past.** The mythical past conveys the meaning of a situation which happened during mythical times, in times of the gods, etc. In Selk'nam it is expressed by means of the particle *tɨhnṣ*. As in the previous cases, I could only find examples of it in Najlis' (1973: 12) corpus:

(38) Xɨ-ɨn        **tɨhnṣ** na'.
     come-CERT.FEM  MYTH  woman
     'The woman came (in mythical times).' (N12)

### 3.3.1.2.3. Mood

Mood "describes the speaker's attitude toward a situation, including the speaker's belief in its reality, or likelihood" (Payne 1999: 244). In Selk'nam we can find four different types of mood, two of them carrying evidentiality (Viegas Barros 2010). In this section I'll present the four of them with examples extracted from the authors' work and my own corpus.

**Certitive mood *−n* ♂; *-ɨn* ♀, *-n* ○.** The certitive mood conveys the meaning of something completely confirmed. This is compatible as well with what other linguists call constatative evidentiality (Viegas Barros 2010); evidentiality understood as "a linguistic category whose primary meaning is source of information" (Aikhenvald 2004: 3). Moreover, this linguistic category "has to have 'source of information' as its core meaning" (ibid: 3). This is exactly what happens in Selk'nam: the certitive mood indicated

that the information is first-hand, as in many other languages from the Andean zone[37].

The certitive mood suffix in Selk'nam agrees in gender with the S of intransitive clauses,as in (34) and with the O in transitive clauses when it is indicated, as in (36), otherwise, it marks A. Hereby I present some examples of its use:

(39) Xat'ɨ-**n**              nɨ-y      čųnn.
     lunch-CERT.MASC     PRES.MASC  man
     'The man is lunching (I know it, I'm sure about it)' (N9)

(40) Yųwn     matɨ-**n**        nɨ-y       ya.
     guanaco  kill-CERT.MASC PRES.MASC   1
     'I kill the guanaco (I'm sure about it)'. (FW26)

(41) Na'    k-ayn-**ɨn**              nɨ-n     čonn.
     Woman  REL-want-CERT.FEM      PRES-FEM man
     'The man likes the woman'. (FW1)


**Dubitative mood -ṣ**[38]. The dubitative mood in Selk'nam indicates that what has been uttered needs confirmation (Najlis 1973: 10). This is what Viegas Barros (2010) has dubbed non-constatated evidentiality[39]. Unlike the certitive mood, the dubitative does not agree with any argument in the sentence. Hereby I present some examples:

(42) '?A'uṣ k-p'a'-**ṣ**        ma?
     INTER REL-be.ok-DUB  2
     'Are you ok?' (N10)

(43) Yų-xɨ-**ṣ**        ya.
     EDUC-come-DUB  1
     'I may come (I'm not sure about it.).' (N10)

(44) Čɨnɨ-**ṣ**  wɨs.
     walk-DUB dog
     'The dog may come.' (FW27)


**Infinitive/Mirative mood  -ɨ.** Although the infinitive is not a mood in the strict sense of §3.3.1.2.3., since it is more of a nominalization of the verb, in Selk'nam this mood can also convey the meaning of a normal

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[37] Cf. Southern Quechua, *-mi* or Aymara *-wa.*

[38] Tonelli (1926: 52) confused this mood with what he calls a future tense.

[39] This particle is very similar to the Southern Quechua *-si.*

mood, also known as mirative mood. The mirative mood conveys the meaning of something which is happening at a precise moment and which was unknown to the interlocutors, generating a surprise feeling. This, according to Viegas Barros (2010), is a sudden realization type of evidentiality, cf Adelaar (1977). Here I present a couple of examples collected by Najlis (1973:10):

(45) K-t'à't'-**ɨ**      wɨnčɨ.
     REL-burn-MIR     tree
     'The tree is burning!' (N10)

(46) K-wyɨ-**y**        ma.
     REL-fall-MIR     2
     'You are falling!' (N10)

(47) Xɨ-ɨ-n        na'.
     come-MIR-FEM   woman
     'The woman arrived!' (N10)

In (47) we can see that, in a very similar fashion as the certitive, the mirative mood can still carry some agreement markers[40]. This, however, is not very frequent.

  **Imperative mood-ø, -ɨ, -kų/-kɨ.** The imperative mood, which is used in the language to express orders can be either unmarked or take the form of one of two possible suffixes in the language, -ɨ/-kų. There may have existed some semantic difference between both suffixes. The difference by now, however, is completely lost. Hereby I present some examples.

**Table 19: Imperative mood formation**

| No marking | Suffix -ɨ[41] | Suffix -kų/ -kɨ |
|---|---|---|
| *čɨnnɨ!* 'scape!' | *xi-y!* 'come!' | *yɨr-kų!* 'say something!' |
| *ayk!* 'look!' | *kt'à't'-ɨ!* 'burn!' | *attɨ-kų!* 'squeeze it!' |
| *ɨk!* 'do something!' | *lųlɨ-y!* 'turn!' | *ayk-kų!* 'like it!' |
| *ųk!* 'run away!' | *pa-y!* 'take it with you!' | *mpɨ-kɨ!* 'attend it!' |

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[40] This is not unusual, cf. *infinitivo personal* in Shawi (Rojas-Berscia 2013).

[41] If this suffix is used to express imperativity with a fourth person, it is inflected into -ɨys (Najlis 1973: 11).

In all these forms the object is not formally expressed. In order to mark an indefinite object we can add demonstrative *ųn*:

*Kį̇w-ųn* 'cut it!'
*Kartį̇-y-ųn* 'eat it!'

Tonelli (1926: 49) has also documented the existence of a negative imperative or a prohibitive, expressed only in the second person singular with the suffix *-sį̇:*

(48) Ųk-**sį̇**-ma!
     run-PROHIB-2
     'Do not run!' (T49)

(49) Mį̇stį̇-**sį̇**-ma!
     sleep-PROHIB-2
     'Do not sleep!' (T49)

### 3.3.1.2.4. Aspect

I take aspect to be what "describes the internal temporal shape of events or states" (Payne 1999: 238). In Selk'nam there are no evident aspect markers with one exception, that I will treat here. Aspectual meanings are normally conveyed with the help of adverbs. Worth of note are the progressive and the habitual aspects. Hereby I will present some ideas on them.

   **Habitual aspect *hànṣ*.** This aspect "expresses an assertion that a certain type of event, […], regularly takes place […] from time to time" (Payne 1999: 241). Najlis treated the habitual aspect as a tense marker. The particle *hànṣ* is used to express it in the language. Hereby I present some examples extracted from Najlis (1973: 12):

(50) Xį̇-į̇n          **hànṣ**   na'.
     come-CERT.FEM  HAB     woman
     'The woman always comes.' (N12)

(51) Han-į̇n          **hànṣ**   na'.
     be-CERT.FEM     HAB     woman
     'The woman is not a good person.' (N12)

**Progressive aspect *–ski, -sk, -s*.** One of the most surprising suffixes throughout the corpus is the progressive aspect marker, understood as conveying an ongoing, dynamic process meaning (Payne 1999: 240). Tonelli (1926:50) dubs it a positive form; however, looking at his examples it seems rather that like a progressive aspect marker. What is most surprising about it is its formal realization - which can also be uttered with a palatal sibilant, i.e. *–ŝki̜* - very similar to Southern Quechua *–chka* and Aymara *–sk* (Cerrón-Palomino 2008). Hereby I present some examples of its earlier use, today probably forgotten:

(52) Karti̜-u̜r    wi̜ni̜-**ski̜**   Tu̜lwi̜.
     eat-after    go-PROG    Tolhuin
     'After eati̜ng, we are going to Tolhuin.'(T50)

(53) Ikuwa  k-arwn   și̜-**s(ki)**      Ku̜ku̜ș.
     4      REL-land abandon-PROG    Kokosh.
     'Kokosh i̜s abandoning our land.' (T50)

### 3.3.1.2.5. Verbal derivation

There are many derivative suffixes in verbs within all the corpora. In this section I will present the most frequent ones, since they may be the only synchronic survivors before the definite extinction of the language. Other derivate markers were describe by Najlis (1973: 45-46), but there is no sufficient corpora to consider them synchronic. As it will be seen in the present section, all derivative markers in the language appear in the form of prefixes.

### a) Benefactive/Malefactive *–w*

In Selk'nam, when a verb is prefixed with *–w* it means that the subject profits from something, benefactive reading, or that something is detrimental to it, malefactive reading. This alignment between the benefactive and malefactive derivations is common among languages from the zone, cf. the Southern Quechua *–pu* (Cerrón-Palomino 2008). Hereby I present some examples extracted from Najlis (1973: 43):

*atni̜'-* 'to struggle' ➔   *w-atni̜'-* 'to be struggled'

*hàj-* 'to be absent' ➔   *w-hàj-* 'to search/ to be searched by someone?'

**b) Cisdative**

In Selk'nam, when a verb is prefixed with *-ș,* it means that an animate object, excluding the subject, is affected by the verb. I dubbed this prefix a cisdative. As Najlis (1973: 43) already noted, it is uncommon with intransitive verbs. It looks very much like an applicative suffix; however, such an assertion still needs to be checked. Hereby I present some examples:

*nuri̧-* 'to be jealous'  → ***ș****-nuri̧-* 'to be jealous of someone'

*yi̧r-*  'to say'    → ***ș-****yi̧r-*  'to advise'

In future research with the only remnant speaker of the language this particle still needs to be checked.

**c) Reciprocal *uki̧l-/ wi̧k-***

The reciprocal prefix indicates that the verb afects not only the interlocutor but an external argument as well. As its name suggests a reciprocal intention is conveyed. Following Tonelli (1926: 54) there are two prefixes that convey this meaning. Hereby I present some of his examples:

*yusi̧n* 'to speak'   → ***uki̧l****-yusi̧n* 'to speak one another/to tell something'

*mati̧n* 'to kill'   → ***uki̧l****-mati̧n* 'to kill one another'

*či̧n*  'to go'   → ***uki̧l****-či̧n*  'to accompany someone'[42]

ųti̧n  'to ki̧ss'   → ***wi̧k****-ųti̧n*  'to kiss one another'

*aryi̧n* 'to change'  → ***wi̧k****-aryi̧n* 'to exchange things'

**d) Causative *m-***

In Selk'nam there are lexical causatives, such as the verb *mati̧n* 'to kill', as well some labile verbs which express causation: *kwhànn* 'to fall sat/ to knock down someone', *kp'i̧'nn* 'to strech oneself/to strech something', *k'aryi̧n* 'to scratch oneself/ to scratch something'.

Causatives in the world languages are formal markers which function as valency changing operators, increasing the valency of the verb, adding

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[42] This seems rather a case of associative causation, meaning 'making someone go somewhere with one's company", as in the Shawi's (Kawapanan) *ichi-* or the Shiwilu (Kawapanan) *ek-* (Rojas-Berscia 2013).

another A argument to the clause. This happens in Selk'nam with the prefix *m–* which can be generalised as a direct causation marker, following Shibatani (2002). If the causative suffix is added to the clause, no relational particle is needed. Hereby I present some examples of its use:

(54) **M**-xɨ-n           nɨ-y      ya.
    CAUS-come-CERT-MASC   PRES-MASC  1
    'I make you come here.' (FW26)


(55) Selk'nam **m**-yus-ɨn            ni-y      ya.
    Selk'nam CAUS-say-CERT.MASC PRES.MASC  1
    'I make you say something in Selk'nam.' (FW26)


It is also interesting that there is periphrastic causation in the language, with the causative verb *mjɨln*[43] in Najlis' (1973: 44) corpus and the causative verb *aykun* 'to make'. Hereby I present two examples:

(56) P'ɨ-y       **mjɨl**-n            nɨ-y      ya.
    sit-MASC   CAUS.V-CERT.MASC    PRES-MASC  1
    'I fix the knife', lit. 'I make it stand'. (N74)


(57) Wɨṣn   matɨ   m-**aykųn**-ɨn         ya.
    dog    kill   2.O-make-CERT.MASC 1
    'I make you kill the dog.' (FW26)

### 3.3.1.2.6. Negation

Negation in many languages of the world is expressed by the addition of an adverb, as the Spanish *no* or the Dutch *niet*. In Selk'nam, however, the addition of the negative adverb *taw* would produce ungrammatical results. Rather, there is a negative auxiliary verb, *sų–*, which carries the entire verb inflexion and leaves its complement, the negated verb, in a root state or in the infinitive mood.

(58) Pɨ-y           sų-n              mɨr tanųw.
    sit-MASC   NEG.V-CERT.MASC     REC old man
    'The old man did not sit down.' (N12)

(59) Mɨstɨ     sų-n              tɨlq'ɨ-ka.
    sleep    NEG.V-CERT.MASC   boy-DIM
    'The boy is awake/ The boy doesn't sleep'. (FW16)

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[43] It can be seen that the causative verb has a lexicalised causative marker *m-* .Unfortunately, according to Najlis (1973: 43), there is no meaning for the root *yɨl*.

There are other auxiliary verbs in Selk'nam, such as *ayn-* 'to want', *'i̧ni̧-* 'to do well', *i'-* 'to be in a hurry to', *i̧n'-* 'to be relaxed to', and *wi'-* 'can', all documented by Najlis (1973). Unfortunately, I could not find any instance of them in my corpus. It is, however, strange that all of them might have disappeared. The ellicitation of clauses with these auxiliary verbs remains pendant.

### 3.3.1.2.7. Interrogation

Interrogation in Selk'nam is marked with the help of an adverb *a'u̧ş* 'by chance' or Sp. *acaso* and the dubitative mood. No interrogation is possible in the certitive mood. This would cause an evidentiality contradition, since facts for which the speaker has a relative certainty are no matter of question. Moreover, it can also be expressed with the help of an interrogative pronoun, cf. §3.4.2.2.3. Hereby I present some examples from Najlis (1973) and myself:

(60) 'A'u̧ş       k-pà'-ş        ma?
     by.chance  REL-be.ok-DUB  2
     'Are you ok?' (N10)

(61) Kuniş   k-pà'-ş-i̧?
     who     REL-be.ok-MASC
     'Which man is ok?' (N10)

(62) 'A'u̧ş       Selk'nam čan-ş      ta?
     by.chance  Selk'nam speak-DUB  3
     'Does he speak Selk'nam?' (FW1)

### 3.3.1.2.8. Copula

Copulas, as their name suggests, is "any morpheme (affix, particle, or verb)that joins, or "couples," two nominal elements in a predicate nominal construction. In the case of Selk'nam, there are three ways to express this equation, either by omitting everything and just juxtaposing the elements, or by means of the copulas *i̧j* or *qà*. The latter, acording to Najlis (1973:39), was used in the south of the island. Hereby I present three cases in which each of these formal methods are represented.

(63) Ya  ni    Selk'nam.
     1   PRES  Selk'nam.
     'I am Selk'nam.'(FW1)

(64) Hu̱'r **i̱j-n** yu̱wn.
    male be-CERT.MASC guanaco
    'The guanaco is a male.' (N15)

(65) Hu̱'r **qà** yu̱wn.
     male be guanaco
     'The guanaco is a male.' (N15)

## 3.3.2. Closed word classes

Closed word classes are those that contain a fixed, and frequently small, number of member words which are commonly the same for all the speakers of a language community (Schachter & Shopen 2007: 3). In Selk'nam, there are six closed word clases: adverbs, deictic classifiers, pronouns, numerals, conjunctions and interjections. Hereby I'll present a general panorama of them, though a more detailed studyis needed.

## 3.3.2.1. Adverbs

Adverbs are commonly known to be a "catch-all" category or as we call it in Spanish, *un cajón de sastre* 'a tailor's box', since "any word with semantic content (i.e. other than grammatical particles) that is not clearly a noun, a verb, or an adjective is often put into the class of adverb" (Payne 1999: 69). Hereby, I will present a list of the documented adverbs in the language with some examples, when possible.

## 3.3.2.1.1. Temporal adverbs
Temporal adverbs indicate the exact time in which a situation represented by a clause occurred.

**Table 20: Temporal adverbs in Selk'nam, mixing Najlis (1975: 109-110) and my own findings**

| Adverb | Translation |
|---|---|
| *ma'* | now |
| *law* | already |
| *haw* | before |
| *hu'ta'i̱, ni̱sṣi̱'* | in the past |

| | |
|---|---|
| *akna hajk kamṣ* | yesterday |
| *ʻu̱wr* | after |
| *q'u̱hj* | during |
| *ya* | in the future |
| *khi̱mti̱n* | frequently |
| *q'i̱u̱mnki̱n* | february |
| *hoṣi̱qn* | winter |
| *ku̱nxi̱nn* | june and july |
| *ʻi̱li̱sqn* | december, summer |
| *kma'q'u̱nki̱n* | tomorrow morning |
| *či̱qn* | just now |
| *ana kamṣ* | today |
| *ma'q'u̱n* | in the morning |
| *nu̱hri̱* | later |
| *q'ari̱s* | many times |
| *hanti̱k* | while |
| *xyanki̱nk'n* | tonight |
| *yu̱wṣqn* | spring |
| *ma'* | just |
| *kyu̱re* | for a while |
| *ṣi̱jnṣ* | rarely |
| *ṣu̱ṣ* | once |
| *q'aw* | already |
| *wanṣ* | during his/her life |
| *q'i̱yow* | still |
| *krin-kaisk* | this afternoon, lit. 'when the sun is falling' |
| *anyanak* | many days |
| *ayneṣa* | during midnight |

### 3.3.2.1.2. Manner adverbs

Manner adverbs in Selk'nam appear many times cliticized to the verb. The most common ones are *klayųw* 'slowly' and *čį'į* 'strongly'. Hereby I present some examples:

(66) Klayų-čį-n              (čųnn).
     slowly-walk-CERT.MASC   man
     'The man walks slowly.' (FW43)


(67) Čį'į-yųsį-n              (čųnn).
     strongly-speak-CERT.MASC  man
     'The man speaks strongly/with a loud voice.' (FW43)


These examples were found among the Ona corpus collected by Suárez at al. (~1970).


### 3.3.2.1.3. Location adverbs

Location adverbs can be built by means of the locative oblique case, §3.4.1.1.4. However, there are a number of lexical location adverbs:


**Table 21: Location adverbs in Selk'nam following (Najlis 1975: 110-112)**

| Adverb | Translation |
|---|---|
| *harnįk/'ayn* | outside |
| *k'oṣ/ 'į/ įn* | up high |
| *Hay* | there |
| *Mahį* | here |
| *'atįnqn* | at the back |
| *Hyųwq* | in the border |
| *Hųnį* | fr. *Chez* |
| Tųhnįsų | close |
| *q'ayųw į* | everywhere |
| *k'yanqn* | įn front |
| *Tohnį* | inside |
| *q'ųyųw* | in the highlands |
| *q'ųlųwqn* | in a corner |

## 3.3.2.2. Pronouns

## 3.3.2.2.1. Personal Pronouns

The personal free pronouns in Selk'nam are as follows according to previous accounts:

**Table 22: Personal pronouns according to previous accounts**

|  | Beauvoir (1915) | | Tonelli (1926) | | Najlis (1973) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Sg. | Pl. | Sg. | Pl. | Sg. | Pl. | Dual |
| **1st person** | *ya* | *ikùa/yikowa* | *iá* | *igwa* | *jah* | *jkoahj* | *jkoah* |
| **2nd person** | *ma* | *mai* | *ma* | *mai* | *mah* | *mahj* | *X* |
| **3rd person** | *ta* | *ta* | *ta* | *tai* | *-* | *-* | *-* |

The authors agree in the first and second persons of the pronominal system; however, only Beauvoir (1915) and Tonelli (1926) provide data on the third personal singular and plural, with a discrepancy though. On one hand, for Beauvoir, the plural form of the third person is not much used (ibid: 5). Tonelli, on the other hand, mentions that "there is no real personal subjective absolute third person pronoun; in analogy with the objective pronouns it should be *ta* 'he', *tai* 'they'[…][44] (ibid: 26). In this respect, although there is more information, Tonelli seems to agree with Najlis in not providing a chart in which the third person is presented.

Najlis gives more information on the first person plural, which differs from the first person singular if compared to the plurals of other persons. According to the author, it means 'we both' (ibid: 21), which makes it a dual pronoun. However, she also mentions that it is used by the speakers as a normal 'we'. Since the other authors never mentioned this dual property, I really doubt it meant this. It is more probable, *contra* Najlis (1973) and Viegas Barros (1995) in comparison with Tehuelche, that it was an inclusive first person plural or a fourth person as in other Andean languages, e.g. Aymara (*cf.* Cerrón-Palomino 2008: 116) or Shawi (Rojas-Berscia 2013). My reinterpretation of the pronominal system of the language is as follows:

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[44] This is my own translation from the Italian original version.

**Table 23: Personal pronouns in Selk'nam**

|  | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| **1ˢᵗ Person** | *ya* 'I' | ⁴⁵ |
| **2ⁿᵈ Person** | *ma* 'you' | ma-y                                   'you |
| **3ʳᵈ Person** | *ta* 'he, she, it' | ta-y                                     'th |
| **4ᵗʰ Person** | *i̧ku̧wa* 'we (inclusive)' | i̧ku̧wa-y                              'we |

These pronouns can be bound as well. They can either be used to express what the possessor of a possessed thing is or what the object of a verb is. Hereby I present a table with them.

**Table 24: Bound pronouns in Selk'nam**

|  | Bound pronouns |
|---|---|
| **1ˢᵗ Person** | *y-* |
| **2ⁿᵈ Person** | *m-* 'you' |
| **3ʳᵈ Person** | *t-* 'he, she, it' |
| **4ᵗʰ Person** | *i̧ku̧-* 'we (inclusive)' |

Examples include:

*y-'u̧li̧*    'my clothes'
*m-wi̧ṣ*    'your dog'
*i̧ku̧-kaw*  'our house'

as in:

(68) **Iku̧**-su̧hi̧mxi̧-n     mi̧r xu̧'i̧n.
     4.O-heal-CERT    REC witch.doctor
     'The witch doctor cured us.' (N21)

(69) **M**-x-ayn-i̧n               ya.
     2.O-REL-like-CERT.FEM   1
     'I love you.' (FW1)

### 3.3.2.2.2. Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns or question words in Selk'nam are characterised by their *k-* sound, in the same fashion as the English *wh-* or the Latin *qu-*.

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⁴⁵ *ya-y 'we' would be the first person plural with the symbol (*), indicating it has not been attested in the corpus but may have existed in the language, as it does in other similar languages.

| Pronoun | Translation |
|---|---|
| *kųnįs?* | who? |
| *kįyįs?* | what? what do you say? |
| *kįsųn?* | which? |
| *kįska?* | how much? |
| *kįs?* | where? |
| *kįsųn/kįsay/kįspį?* | where (loc.)? |
| *kwįn?* | when? |
| *kįskwa?* | how? |
| *kųnįswa?* | why? |

## 3.3.2.3. Deictic classifiers

Viegas Barros (2010b) introduced this term for Selk'nam. They were originally called 'demonstrative themes' by Najlis (1973: 22-23). We prefer to call them 'classifiers', since they select and categorise a noun based on its form, animacity and position in the space, and 'deictic', since they occur obligatorily with deictic elements in the language, such as the demonstratives (Aikhenvald 2000:76). Hereby I present the eight deictic classifiers of the language following Najlis' work:

**Table 25: Deictic classifiers in Selk'nam**

| *q'a-* | mass dispersion | liquids, wounds, words, or to a house or forest seen from the inside |
|---|---|---|
| *ųn-* | informity | flesh, clothes, leather, peel. It can also be applies to a newborn |
| *t'am-* | intentional fixation | things which have been sticked, hung or set on the ground (a house seen from the outsise, a sit, a stick leaning against a wall, a bag hanging from a hook |
| *'ay-* | verticality | vertical animate or inanimate beings when motionless |
| *xa-* | horizontality | animate and inanimate beings in horizontal |

| | | position |
|---|---|---|
| *pɨ-* | balanced position | seated animate beings and for accomodated things' |
| *han-* | displacement in relation to the speakers | animate beings that approach or move away, as well as to the rivers |
| *a-* | alien displacement and individuals' dispersion | As displacement it is attributed to animate beings which have interaction with the speakers and to the sun as a time measure. As dispersion it indicated a mere plurality |

As we have seen before, Selk'nam marks gender. Since these deictic classifiers agree with their modified elements, they agree in gender. Four of them (*a-*, *'aj-*, *xa-* and *pɨ-*) can determine a noun of whichever gender; three of them (*q'a-*, *ųn-* and *t'am-*) can only determine neuter nouns; finally, *han-*, can only determine masculine or feminine nouns (Viegas Barros 2010b).

As I mentioned before, these classifiers appear in many cases followed by a determiner, though not always. This deictics are, *-na* 'minimal distance', *-mɨr* 'medium distance', and *-mah* 'maximal distance'. Therefore, the form the following composed demonstratives, following Najlis (1973: 24-25):

**Table 26: Composed demonstratives in Selk'nam**

| | *-na* | *-mɨr* | *-mah* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *q'a-* | q'ana | q'amɨr | (q'amah) |
| *ųn-* | ųnna | ųnmɨr | ųnmah |
| *t'am-* | t'amna | t'ammɨr | (t'ammah) |
| *'ay-* | 'ayna | 'aynmɨr | 'aymah |
| *xa-* | xana | xamɨr | xamah |
| *pɨ-* | pɨna | pɨmɨr | pɨmah |
| *han-* | hanna | hanmɨr | hanmah |
| *a-* | anna | ammɨr | amah |

This deictic classifiers will always precede the noun. Hereby I present some examples of their use extracted from Najlis' (1973) corpus:

(70) **t'am-na** kawɨ
     IF-D1   house
     'this house seen from the outside' (N24)


(71) **pɨ-na** čųnn
     BP-D1 man
     'this man who is sat'(N24)


(72) **han-na**  sɨken
     DS-D1   river
     'this river near me' (N24)


(73) **a-na**  kren
     AD-D1 sun
     'this sun (today)' (N24)


Something interesting from a syntactic point of view, and noted by Viegas
Barros (2010b,) is that the disposition of the whole determined noun phrase
with a deictic classifier will depend on whether the verb in the sentence
belongs to the prefixable or non prefixable class, following Najlis (1973).
If the verb belongs to the prefixable class, the demonstrative phrase will
be divided, if not, the whole phrase will be maintained:


**Prefixable:**


(74) **Pɨ-na** k-aykɨ-n           nɨ    ya  **na'=n**
     BP-D1 REL-see-CERT.MASC    PRES   1    woman=FEM
     'I see this sat woman.' (N71)


(75) **Pɨ-na** k-aykɨ-n        nɨ    ya  **čųnn=ɨ**
     BP-D1 REL-see-CERT.MASC PRES   1    man=MASC
     'I see this sat man.'(N71)


**Non-prefixable:**


(76) Kųnɨs  t-xɨ-n             **pɨ-na   yar?**
     Who   3.O-come-CERT.MASC   BD-D1   stone
     'Who threw this rock?' (T68)


(77) **Pɨ-na sɨtr** y-syɨ-n K'ųkųṣ.
     BD-D1 ice 1.R-give-CERT.MASC Kokosh
     'Kokosh gave mi this piece of ice.' (T75)

### 3.3.2.4. Numerals

Selk'nam possesses one of those numeral systems with few numbers, as many languages from South America. Hereby I present the list of numbers in Selk'nam, from which we can infer that the language had a stable system till seven, in a base-2 and base-3 fashion, though irregular.

**Table 27 : Numeral system in Selk'nam**

| Selk'nam number | Equivalent |
|---|---|
| *Ṣụṣ* | 1 |
| *Sụkị* | 2 |
| *sawkị* | 3 |
| *kụnị sụkị* | 4 |
| *kịsmarrị* | 5 |
| *karị kịy sawkị* | 6 |
| *čenụwịn* | 7 |
| *karị kịy kụnị sụkị* | 8 |
| *kaụč-kịsmarrị/ kịmarrị kụnị sụkị* | 9 |
| *karị kịy kịsmarrị* | 10 |

They can be used as modifiers of noun phrases, e.g.:

(78) **Ṣụṣ** tịlq'ị wịsn-kaṣ   ha'pịnn  k-ayk-(ị)n.
     One child  dog-COMIT  louse   REL-to see-CERT.MASC
     'One child with a dog were looking at a louse.' (FW16)

### 3.3.2.5. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are those parts of speech which help link clauses. In Selk'nam there is an inventory of them collected by Najlis (1973: 49-50). They were classified in two groups: real and unreal ones:

**Table 28: 'Real' conjunctions**

| Conjunction | Meaning |
|---|---|
| *Haj* | 'because of, when, etc.' |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Wahɨk* | 'as soon as' |
| *Hantɨk* | 'while' |
| *Man* | 'till' |
| *A* | 'in order not to' |

All real conjunctions require the mirative mood in its clause, as well as its gender. According to Najlis (1973: 50), this last requirement was frequently omitted by the consultants. In Modern Selk'nam they are completely omitted. Hereby I present some of Najlis' examples:

(79) xɨ-j       **wahɨk-n**        tɨlq'ɨ
     come-SURP  as soon as-FEM child
     'as soon as the girl came…' (N50)

(80) xɨ-j       **man**-n        tɨlq'ɨ
     come-SURP  till-FEM    child
     'till the girl comes…' (N50)

**Table 29: 'Unreal' conjunctions**

| Conjunction | Meaning |
|---|---|
| *Han* | 'for' |
| *wanṣ* | 'it should not be the case that…' |
| *Waltu̧* | 'even if, however' |
| *'a'u̧ṣ* | 'if, perhaps' |

*Han* is combined with the dubitative mood in the first person and with the imperative in all the others; *wanṣ*, always with dubitative; *waltu̧* with mirative; and *'a'uṣ* with dubitative or imperative. Hereby I present some examples from Najlis (1973: 50):

(81) waltu̧    xɨ-j-n        tɨlq'ɨ
     even if  come-SURP-FEM  child
     'Even if the girl comes…' (N50)

(82) wanṣ xɨ-ṣ-n        tɨlq'ɨ
     N.Conj come-DUB-FEM child
     'lest the girl comes…' (N50)

## 3.3.2.6. Interjections

Interjections "are words that constitute utterances in themselves, and that usually have no syntactic connection to any other words that may occur with them" (Schachter & Shopen 2007: 57). In Selk'nam, there is a big amount of interjections. Here I present a list of them, following Tonelli (1926: 64) and some findings in my own corpus:

**Table 30: Interjections in Selk'nam**

| Interjection | Approximate meaning |
|---|---|
| *ų!/watɨ! /ųtɨ!* | 'oh!' |
| *yaṣ* | 'ouch!' |
| *aɨmɨ* | 'thanks' |
| *saɨk* | 'be ok' |
| *paxay* | 'danger!' |
| *ųnɨ-ųnɨ-a!* | 'perfect!/ it is great!' |
| *kų…kų…kų…arta* | (way of calling the dog) |
| *kanɨ!* | 'let's go' |
| *čɨm* | 'bless you' |
| *kapá* | 'stop!' |
| *akkkkk* | 'silence!' |

## 3.4. Syntax

From a general point of view, syntax is the study of a level of a particular language which "lies between the meaning of utterances: sentences, […], [and] which mediates between sounds that someone produces (organised into words) and what they intended to say" (Carnie 2007:4).

   In this section of the grammar I will present four general discussions on Selk'nam syntax which may unveil how the general clause concatenation system of the language works.

### 3.4.1. Relational particles

As we saw in previous sections of the grammar, there is a very frequent marker in the language that I dubbed 'relational particle'. This relational particle in the language can be used for several purposes:

a) Concatenate a possessor and a possessed in a possessive phrase,

b) Concatenate the verb with the O argument, in the case of a transitive clause, and the S argument, in the case of a transitive clause,

c) Concatenate an oblique case marker with its argument,

d) Concatenate a main clause and a subordinate relative clause.

Although the four of them seem to be completely unrelated, the main thing is that they all share a common structure, the relational particle concatenating two clauses. The relational particles, which agree in animacy with their controlled argument, are concatenative means in the language. Hereby I'll present examples for each of the four cases in the language:

**a) Possessive concatenation**

(83) kawi    k-wiṣ
     house  REL-dog
     'the house's dog' (FW27)

(84) Ma   k-arwn
     2    REL-land
     'your land'   (FW27)

In these cases, the relational particle agrees in animacy with the controlee, the possessed.

**b) Verb-S/O concatenation**

(85) **K-**hapɨ-n              nɨ-y       čunn
     REL-be.dry-CERT.MASC PRES-MASC   man
     'The man is dry.' (N19)

(86) Na'    **k-**ayk-in         ni-n      čųnn.
     woman  REL-see-CERT.FEM  PRES.FEM man
     'The man is looking at the woman.' (FW65)

(87) 'ųlɨ     **h-**ayk-n             ni-n       čųnn.
     clothes REL-see-CERT.NEUT   PRES.NEUT  man
     'The man is watching the clothes.' (FW65)

In (85) we can see how the relational particle concatenates the verb's animacy and the S argument. This can be analysed as well as an agreement phenomenon. In (86) and (87) the particle, however, agree with O. of course, this happens only if the verb is prefixable. This will be further analysed in the grammatical relations section, §3.4.3.

**c) Oblique case concatenation**

As we saw in, §3.4.1.1.4., some oblique case markers, which we will call prefixable case markers, are prefixed with the relational particle agreeing in animacy with its controlee, as in examples (16) and (17).

**d) Relative concatenation**

The relative particle −k/−h is also used to concatenate subordinate clauses in animacy agreement with a main clause. Here we can see an example from Najlis (1973):

(88) 'ay-**k**-na    ułįčį-n
    VERT-REL-D1  be.beautiful-CERT.MASC
    'this standing one who's beautiful' (N73)

(89) a-**k**-na    hayk       kamṣ
    AD-REL-D1 be.absent   day
    'yesterday' lit. the day that passed by (N67)

(90) Un-**k**[46]    ułįčį-n                  h-aykį-n              nį  ya  'ułį.
    INF-REL  be.beautiful-CERT.NEUT  REL-to see-CERT.NEUT  PRES 1    clothes
    'I see the clothes which are beautiful.' (N70)

**3.4.2. Determiner phrases**

As we have seen in previous sections, there are no adjectives in Selk'nam. All predicates indicating a condition or state of a subject will be added by means of verbs and by copula, just in the case the predicate is another nominal piece.

   Nominal phrases, then, will only be part of determiner phrases or possessive phrases[47]. In the case of the latter, the possessor will be

---

[46] In this case I would rather expectan inanimate marker −h. This remains pendant for future studies.

connected to its possessed by means of a relational particle. In the case of deictic classifiers, either including a number marker[48] and a Determiner or not, they will just modify them directly. Hereby I present a structure of the nominal phrase of the latter type in Selk'nam[49].

(91) 'aj-i̧-mah  ti̧lq'i̧
     VERT-PL-D3 child
      'those standing children' (N22)


A) **DEICTIC.CLASSIFIER-NUMBER-DETERMINER-NOUN.PHRASE**


Other structures are the following:


B) **POSSESSOR-RELATIVE.PARTICLE-NOUN.PHRASE,** for possessive phrases.


C) **DEICTIC.CLASSIFIER-RELATIVE.PARTICLE-NOUN.PHRASE-PREDICATE,** for relative clauses


Highly interesting about this distribution of the phrase is that the relational particle, in the case of a relative clause with deictic classifiers, will occupy the same position as the number marker and the determiner, or, at least, will still intervene between the deictic and the noun. This same phenomenon happens in a possessive clause, as in B), where the relative particle separates the possessor and the noun phrase.

   Relational particles are still a topic to be studied in Selk'nam in future research, in order to know what syntactic processes exist behind this type of concatenation in the language, which aligns, as we have seen, different types of phrases in the language. Anyhow, as an initial conclusion, we can see that the language aligns Determiner phrases and sentences in a similar fashion, with an agreement marker that binds the NP with its modifiers, in the former case, and the VPs with subject/object NPs, in the latter.

---

[47] Which are also a type of determiner phrases.

[48] Such as *i̧-* for plural and *-mi̧y* for collective.

[49] The tree diagram is only used for clear presentation purposes. There is no theoretical aim in its inclusion.

### 3.4.3. Grammatical relations

Grammatical relations are "relations between **arguments** and **predicated** in a level of linguistic structure that is independent (or "autonomous") of semantic and pragmatic influences" (Payne 1999: 129). Nowadays, we know that semantic or pragmatic influences can change grammatical relations in a language[50].

The formal properties which commonly identify grammatical relations are:

  a) case marking;
  b) participant reference marking on verbs;
  c) constituent order.

In the following sections I will analyse each of these three formal properties in Selk'nam.

### 3.4.3.1. Case marking

As for case marking, Selk'nam seems to be a language with a neutral aligment at present, since, as we may see in all the previous examples of the grammar, there is no special case marking in any of the arguments. However, in times of Tonelli, at the beginning of the twentieth century, he added the following statement with regard to the particle *ni*:

  The particle *ni* is frequently used a) in nominal propositions, b) with intransitive verbs and also c) with transitive verbs when the object is preposed to the verbs, or completely omitted, d) or when the verb is used in an intransitive sense (Tonelli 1926: 27).[51]

---

[50] Cf. Rojas-Berscia (2013) for Shawi and a small discussion on Shiwilu.

[51] Original version: "[The particle *ni*] è usata con notevole frequenza a) nelle proposizioni nominali, b) coi verbi intransitivi e anche c) coi verbi transitivi quando l'oggetto diretto è preposto al verbo , o è completamente ommesso, d) o quando il verbo è usato in senso intransitivo".

Tonelli provides us with the following examples:


(92) Ma-**nɨ** ṣɨt.
     2-?    liar
     'You are a liar.' (T27)

(93) Ya-**nɨ** yų-xɨ-n.
     1-?    EDUC-go-CERT.MASC
     'I am going.' (T27)

(94) Ma-**nɨ** swaki-n.
     2-?    insult-CERT.MASC
     'You insult (me).' (T28)


In other transitive clauses, the appearance of –*nɨ* would be infrequent. I analysed this particle, in agreement with Najlis (1973), as a present marker. However, as I mentioned before, having a double present marker, a marked one without any particle, and a marked one with –*nɨ* is rather unusual. Maybe this was the original case marking system of Selk'nam. If this was the case, Selk'nam would mark S and would leave A and O unmarked. That is pretty unusual in the languages of the world. However, with what Tonelli says, that would be the conclusion. It would be useful to analyse his corpus with more detail to find out whether this analysis is really plausible or not.


### 3.4.3.2. Verbal concordance
As for verbal concordance, we already saw that, at least in the certitive mood, the verb agrees in gender with S, in intransitive clauses, and O, in transitive clauses. Moreover, the relational particle agrees in animacy with S, in intransitive clauses, and with O, in transitive ones. This is clear in the following examples:


(95) Tɨlq'ɨ-ka **k-**aykɨ-**ɨn**        nɨ-n    wiṣ.
     Child-DIM REL-see-CERT.FEM     PRES.FEM dog
     'The dog is watching the girl.'(FW69)


In this case, the verb agrees in animacy and gender with O.


(96) Wɨṣ nɨ-**y**        mɨstɨ-**n**.
     Dog PRES-MASC   sleep-CERT.MASC

'The dog sleeps.' (FW16)

In (89) the verb agrees gender with S. There is no animacy marker since the verb is not prefixable.

Taking these examples into account, as for verbal concordance, Selk'nam treats S and O in the same way. This is ergative-absolutive alignment.

### 3.4.3.3. Constituent order

In the case of constituent order we are rather dealing with a more subtle set of data. At present, Selk'nam is an almost extinct language with a single speaker and with a considerable influence from Spanish. This is reflected not only in lexicon, but in the syntax as well. It would not be inaccurate to say that the language may be borrowing its constituent order from Spanish.

Nevertheless, taking into account frequency, the most common word order in Selk'nam is SV and OVA. Hereby I present a couple of examples:

(97) **Kɨyuk** kluket-(ɨ)n.
     Keyuk  dance-CERT.MASC
     'Keyuk dances. (FW1)
     **S       V**

(98) **Kulɨut**   matɨ-n         nɨ-y       Kɨyuk.
     European kill-CERT.MASC PRES-MASC  Keyuk
     'Keyuk kills the white man.'  (FW26)
     **O        V                        A**

Just looking at these two examples, and at almost all the examples I presented in the grammar, it seems that S is being aligned with O in constituent order. Taking this into account, Selk'nam would be an ergative language in this formal property. This still has to be rechecked with a bigger corpus.

In a nutshell this is what we can find in Selk'nam:

**Table 30: Grammatical relations in Selk'nam**

| Formal property | Alignment |
|---|---|
| Case marking | Marked S, unmarked A-O?, [non existent according to Payne (1999:140)] |
| Verbal concordance | Ergative-absolutive |
| Constituent order | Ergative absolutive[52] |

### 3.4.4. *Dicendi* constructions

*Dicendi* constructions are constructed with the verbs such as *yi̱r* 'to say', *'ar* 'to assert', *mi̱* 'think wrongly' and *ayki̱r su̱* 'not to know' (Najlis, 1973). The constructions produced with these verbs are of special interest, because they may produce interclausal valency changing operations.

The structure of a *dicendi* verb sentence is the following:

**a) Predicate-Dicendi Verb-Tense-Subject-Object**; if the verb is *yi̱r* or *'ar* and,

**b) Object-Dicendi Verb-Tense-Subject-Predicate**; if the verb is *mi̱* or *ayki̱r su̱*.

(99) 'Aymi̱r-n          k-yi̱r-n                    ni̱-y        na'    ču̱nn=i̱.
     Be.bad-CERT.MASC   REL-say-CERT.MASC          PRES.MASC   woman  man=MASC
     'The woman says that the man is bad.' (N79)

In this case, an a) *dicendi verb,* the subordinate clause 'that the man is bad', since it has a masculine subject, will make the main verb agree with it in gender and animacy, as if it was a normal object. The opposite happens in b) type *dicendi* verbs.

(100) **Wi̱sn** k-mi̱-i̱n              mi̱r na'  **k-șu̱'l-n.**
      dog REL-think-CERT.FEM    REC woman  REL-white-CERT.MASC
      'The woman thought that the dog was white.[53] (N80)

---

[52] This anyway has to be rechecked with a bigger corpus if possible and with a serious statistycal analysis.

In this case, the *dicendi* verb functions in the same fashion as an intransitive verb. This construction is very special in the language, since it contradicts all the predictions we can make about verbal concordance. The most interesting thing to see in b) type *dicendi* verbs is what happens when the predicate moves to the top of the clause, in the topic position. This is what I dubbed *dicendi b topic movement.*

   If the predicate of a b) type *dicendi* verb is moved to the top, while the subject of the predication now moves to the end of the sentence, valency increases in the verb, e.g.:

(101)  **K-ṣu̱'l-n**            na'    t-mi̱-n               mi̱r **wi̱sn.**
       REL-white-CERT.MASC   woman 3.O-think-CERT.MASC REC dog
       'The woman believed that the dog was white.' (N80)

Now that the predicate was raised to the topic, the subject had to move as well to the end. This movement to the top is what I dub a *topic movement.* It seems that this topic movement produces a valency increasing operation, transitivising the formerly intransitive *dicendi* verb and making it look like a) type *dicendi* verbs. The nature of the original b) type *dicendi* verb can be anyhow perceived, since no relational particle is used in the main verb, but a third person object bound pronoun, as in labile[54] verbs.

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[53] It must be noted that once a tense was added to the main dicendi clause, no additional tense is needed in the subordinate clause.

[54] Labile verbs are those whose intransitive and transitive forms are the same, i.e. their causative counterpart looks exactly the same formally as the intransitive one. Some of them can be seen in §3.3.1.2.5.

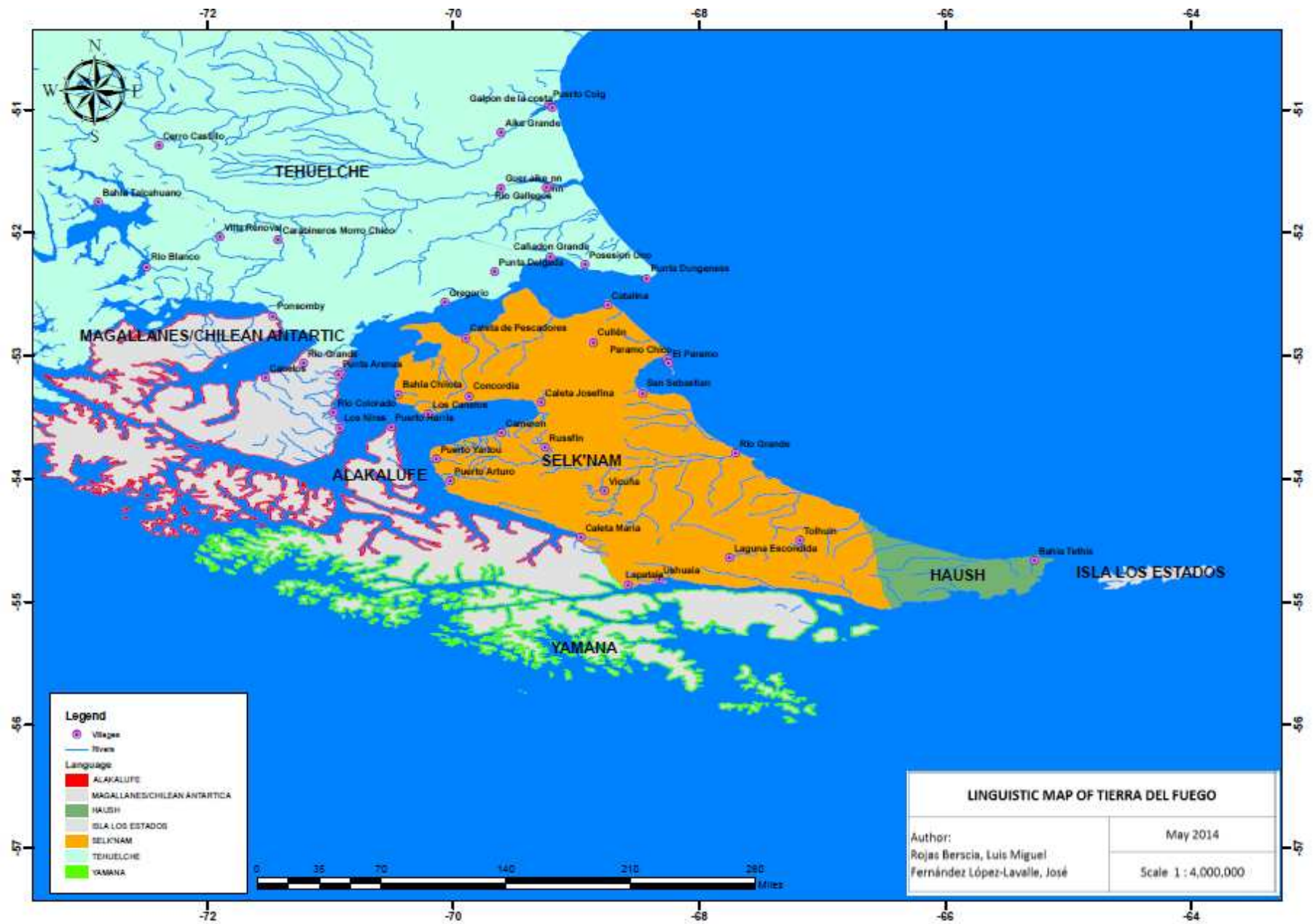# 4. Appendices



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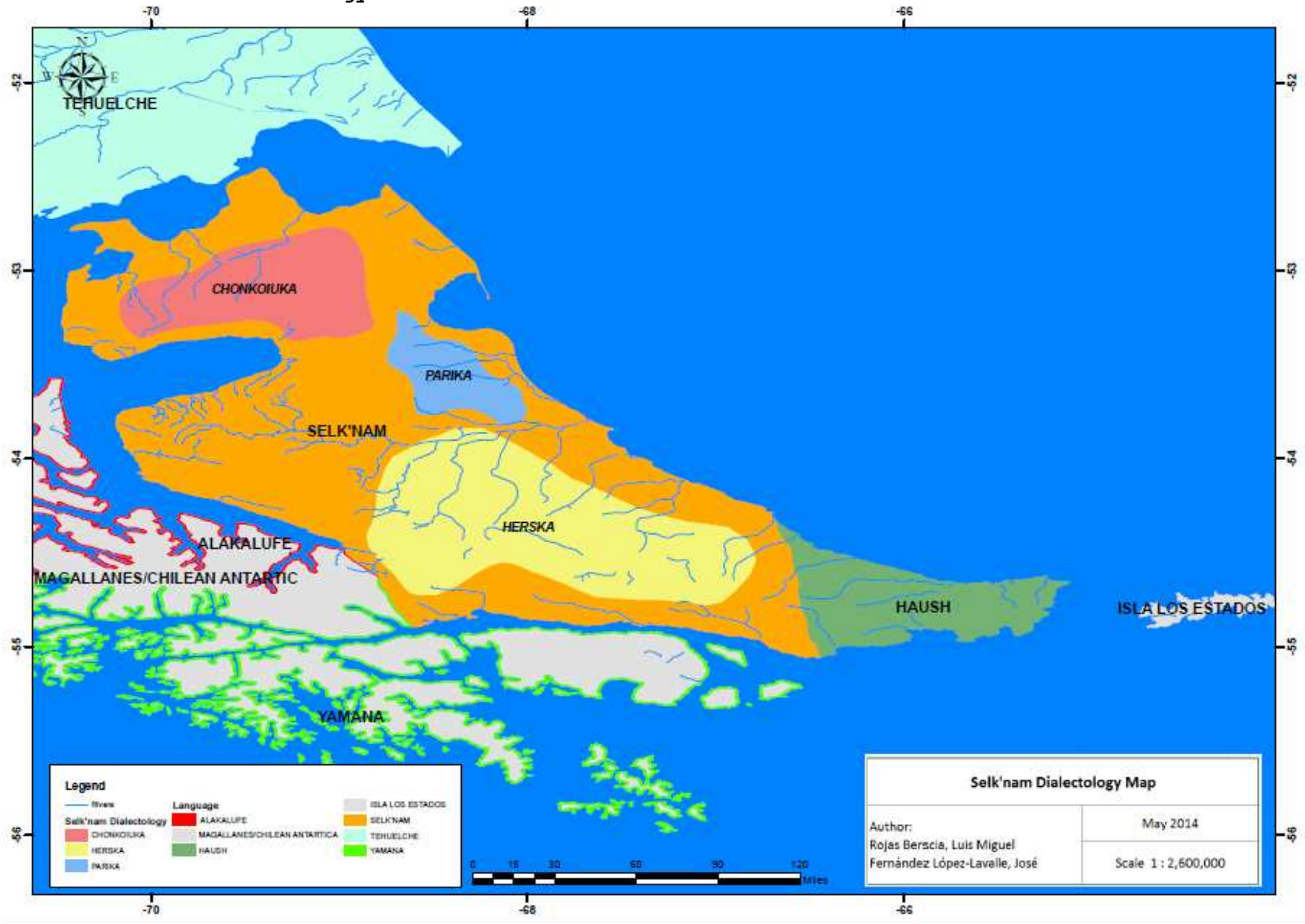The *Hain* © Martín Gusinde



Şelqʼnam © Martin Gusinde 1923



A Guanaco © Alex Proimos

# MAP 1: Linguistic Diversity in Tierra del Fuego



Legend

- Villages
- Rivers

Language
- ALAKALUFE
- MAGALLANES/CHILEAN ÀNTARTICA
- HAUSH
- ISLA LOS ESTADOS
- SELK'NAM
- TEHUELCHE
- YAMANA

LINGUISTIC MAP OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Author:
Rojas Berscia, Luis Miguel
Fernández López-Lavalle, José

May 2014

Scale 1 : 4,000,000

**MAP 2: Selk'nam dialectology**

**HAʼPIN KUINČʼUR ʻTHE LOUSE STORYʼ**

**Authors: Herminia Vera Ilioyen, Keyuk Yantén, Margarita Maldonado & Estela Maris Maldonado.**

**Comment:** The frog story was produced on May 7th, 2014 in Doña Herminiaʼs house in Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego (Argentina) with the help of her two daughters and Keyuk Yantén. It was the product of a discussion, since the speakers wanted it to be published later. Since there are no frogs in the zone, the speakers decided to change the character of the story for a louse.

Ṣụṣ krị, hankịn,   ṣụṣ tịlqʼị wịṣ-kaṣ.   Wịṣ  k-aykị-nn          haʼpịn.
one moon night    one child dog-COMIT   dog  REL-see-CERT.MASC louse
*ʻIt was night, the moon was there. The boy was with his dog. The dog was looking at the louse.ʼ*

Ṣụṣ tịlqʼị wịsn-kaṣ   haʼpịn   k-aykị-nn          takar.
one child dog-COMIT   louse    REL-see-CERT.MASC  3.PL
*ʻOne chil with his dog were looking both at their louse.ʼ*

Tịlqʼị kawị   pị-nn,            kaw-ụn.
child    house stand-CERT.MASC   house-LOC.I
*ʻThey boy was inside his house.ʼ*

Tịlqn mịstị-nn          wịsn-kaṣ,  kawị  pị-nn.          Wịṣ nị-y
child sleep-CERT.MASC   dog-COMIT  house stand-CERT.MASC dog PRES-MASC
*ʻThe child was sleeping with the dog inside the hourse. The dog is sleeping.ʼ*

mịstị-n.           Hapʼịn   yụ-xị-nn.             Ṣụʼụn pị-ṣ        krịị.
sleep-CERT.MASC    louse    EDUC-come-CERT.MASC   sky    stand-DUB   moon
*ʻThe louse escaped. The moon was shining in the sky.ʼ*

Kaṣkịrrịn, haʼpịn   yụ-xị-nn.            K-ayk    sụ-nn             tịlqʼị
tomorrow    louse    EDUC-come-CERT.MASC  REL-see  NEG.V-CERT.MASC   child
*ʻThe day after the louse escaped. The boy and the dog could not see it.ʼ*

wịsn-kaṣ.  Mịstị   sụ-n             tịlqʼị-ka.
dog-COMIT  sleep   NEG.V-CERT.MASC  child-DIM
*ʻThe child was not sleeping.ʼ*

Tụʼụn yụ-xị-nn            haʼpịn. On  sụ-n            k-aykị-nn
Far    EDUC-come-CERT.MASC  louse    it  NEG.V-CERT.MASC  REL-see-CERT.MASC
*ʻThe louse was far. The boy and the dog could not see anything.ʼ*

wịsn tịlqʼị-kaṣ.  Kaṣkịnịk  lyụrr-(ị)n.       Krịn  lyụrrị-nn.
dog child-COMIT   morning    shine-CERT.NEUT? sun    shine-CERT.MASC
*ʻIt was morning time and the sun was shining.ʼ*

Takar kawị   pị-nn.            Wịṣ kawị  pị-nn           tịlqʼị-kaṣ.
3.PL  house stand-CERT.MASC   dog house stand-CERT.MASC  child-COMIT
*ʻThey were at home. The dog was at home with the boy.ʼ*

Atịrqʼn kawị   pị-nn.

side    house stand-CERT.MASC.
*'They were in the bedroom.'*

Ha'pịn m-kụynị-nn tịlq'ị-ka wịsn-kaṣ, kayịn=wayịnka.
louse CAUS-look.for-CERT,MASC child-DIM dog-COM, everywhere
*'The boy and the child were looking for the louse everywhere.'*

Wịṣn-kaṣ    tịlq'ị    k-ventana    ha'pịn    k-aykị-nn,              yịwị-nn
Dog-COMIT   child     ABL?-window  louse     REL-see-CERT.MASC, call-CERT.MASC
*'The boy with his dog were lookin for the louse from the window. They called it.'*

takar.   K-waynị-ṣ    wịsn.
3.PL     REL-fall-DUB dog
*'The dog fell.'*

"Wịṣ yị'pị-nn,        hụtị  parr!"—   wịsn  yụ-ịṣ    tịlq'ị.
dog bad-CERT.MASC, ass    hole        dog   say-DUB  child
*'"You're a bad dog!"-the child said to the dog.'*

Kịrịskịm    tịlq'ị  wịṣ-kaṣ    ha'pịnn  yịwị-nn.
field       child   dog-COMIT  louse    call-CERT.MASC
*'The boy and his dog were calling the louse inthe field.'*

Kịrịskịm o'lịcị-n,              ana     kịrrịn.
Field    beautiful-CERT.NEUT   this    day
*'The field was beautiful this day.'*

Parr t-aykị-nn           tịlq'ị-ka. Wịṣ mer klụkị-nn.
Hole REL-see-CERT.MASC boy-DIM    dog REC dance-CERT.MASC
*'The boy looked into a hole. The dog was dancing.'*

Pụkịr abejas tịrrị-nn        mịr wịsn.
many  bees   play-CERT.MASC REC COMIT?-dog.
*'The dog was playing with many bees.'*

Apịn xị-nn. Parr t-aykị-nn, ṣụs apịn yụ-xị-nn.
kururu come-CERT.MASC
*'A cururo came.'*

Ṣụs wịnčị  pị-nn,           tamna wịnčị mayịn-kị-ṣ  tịlq'ị-ka.
one tree   stand-CERT-MASC  that  tree  over-go-DUB  child-DIM
*'There a tree over there. The child climbed over it.'*

Uklịčịn yụ-xị-nn.              K-wayị-ṣ    tịlqị-ka. Tụ'ụn xịnnị-nn
owl     EDUC-come-CERT.MASC  REL-fall-DUB child-DIM far   run-CERT.MASC
fast dog

čịyịk wịṣ.  Uklịčịn mịr mịwị-ṣyačị-ṣ   tịlq'ị-kar=mayn.
fast  dog   owl     REC start-?-DUB    child-GEN-?
*'The owl threw a rock on the child's head.'*

Puker yar    tụhụn k-aykụnịrr    pe=way.
many  rock   big   REL-be        stand-INTER
*'There were many big rocks.'*

Ṣụm-yar ha'pịn tịlqn t-yịw-ṣ,      mụhụ  nị    kakụ    ụklịčịn.
on-rock louse  child REL-call-DUB  over  PRES  see.INF owl
*'The child was calling the louse from over the rock; the owl was looking*
*from the sky.'*
Kị-nn         yụwn,    tịlq'ị tụụkị-ṣ yụwịn;  ụklịčịn mịstị-nn.
go-CERT.MASC guanaco  child  take-DUB guanaco owl     sleep-CERT.MASC
*'A guanaco came and took the child over, while the owl was sleeping.'*

Yụwn    yụ-xị-nn.           Čịnnị-ṣ wịṣ.
guanaco EDUC-come-CERT.MASC run-DUB dog
*'The guanaco went away. The dog ran.'*

Tịlq'ị yụwịn-kaṣ nị-tịwkị mịr yụ-xị-nn,
child  dog-COMIT  ILAT?-cliff REC EDUC-come-CERT.MASC
*'The child with the guanaco went towards a cliff,*

wịsịn-kaṣ mịr čịnnị-nn=way.
dog-COMIT REC run-CERT.MASC=INTER
*and the dog was running behind.'*

Yụwn    h-aynị-n              mata-ṣ   tịlqị-ka  wịsịn-kaṣ,
guanaco REL-want-CERT.NEUT kill-DUB child-DIM  dog-COMIT
*'The guanaco wanted to kill the child and the dog,*

tịwkị-q   nị    ṣikịn. Ṣikịn mịr k-aykụnịrr tayụ.
cliff-ILAT PRES? river  river REC REL-be     juncus
*throwing them to the river. In the river there were lots of juncus.'*

Čụwn-ụn(ịk) pị-ṣ      tịlq'ị.
water-LOC.I  stand-DUB child
*'The child stood in the water.'*

Wịṣ ṣikẹn maatị-ṣ=way.
dog river fall-DUB-INTER
*'The dog fell to the river as well.'*

"Akkk,   yụ-ṣị-ma,    pahịị wịṣ-ka!".
IDEO     say-PROHIB-2 bad   dog-DIM
*'"SHH, do not say anything, bad dog."'*

Wịnčị cịskị-ṣ. Tịrrị-ṣ mịr tịlq'ị wịsịn-kaṣ.
tree  die-DUB  play-DUB REC child dog-COMIT
*'There was a dead tree (over there). The child was playing with the dog.'*

Tịlq'ị wịsn-kaṣ  k-aykị-nn             čụnn ha'pịn=way   na'   ha'pịn,
Child  dog-COMIT REL-see-CERT.MASC   male louse-INTER woman louse,
*'The child and the dog saw a male louse and a female louse,*

mahi̱ṣ pi̱-nn.      Pu̱ki̱r lal   mi̱r tau̱rri̱-nn      ču̱nn ha'pi̱n=wa
all    be-CERT.MASC many   child REC  have-CERT.MASC male louse=INTER
*all together. The lice had many children.'*

na'    ha'pi̱n.  Ti̱lq'i̱ ha'pi̱n tu̱u̱ki̱-ṣ.
Female louse      child  louse carry-DUB
*'The child took one louse with him.'*

"Wi̱nwayi̱r!"- yu̱-ṣ     ti̱lq'i̱   t-aska.
bye           say-DUB  child    3-family
*'"Good-bye!"- the child said to his family'*

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**Agradecimientos**

Cuando tenía catorce años y realicé mi primer viaje a Chile supe de la existencia de un grupo amerindio conocido con el nombre de "Onas". Su peculiar apariencia así como cultura tan diferente, en comparación con la de otros grupos de Sudamérica a las que cualquier habitante de dicho continente está acostumbrado a ver, me llamaron mucho la atención. Como lo que siempre fue de mi mayor interés fueron las lenguas, decidí encargarle a mi hermano, Christian, que me consiga una gramática de esta lengua. Por supuesto, en Santiago de Chile, jamás la encontró. Casi diez años después esta historia daría un gran vuelco pues sería yo quien escribiría mi propio deseo.

Gracias a un gran amigo quechuista, Hugo Campbell-Sills, supe que existía aun alguien que decía hablar la lengua de dicho grupo amerindio. Contigo, Hugo, estoy especialmente agradecido, pues gracias a ti empezó esta aventura. Dicha lengua, el Selk'nam, decíase extinta por más de dos décadas y esta podría ser la mejor oportunidad para obtener una descripción moderna de dicha lengua. Es así que conocí a Keyuk Yantén, un joven de Santiago de Chile, quien, por azares del destino, aprendió el Selk'nam de un tío abuelo suyo, así como de las pocas cosas que sus otros familiares recordaban. Él, apasionado por su cultura, decidió investigar un poco más sobre su lengua, topándose así con los trabajos de Beauvoir, los más accesibles al público hasta la actualidad. Él, sin embargo, en contra de lo que dicen muchos medios, no aprendió la lengua de adolescente, sino de pequeño en su familia. Fue la obra de Beauvoir la que le permitió luego escribir su idioma. Con él me encuentro especialmente agradecido, no solo por tornarse en un amigo y compañero, sino por abrirle su corazón a un lingüista muy occidental y caótico, con mucha paciencia, una constante sonrisa y buen humor.

Mis más sinceros agradecimientos de manera póstuma se dirigen también a Doña Herminia Vera Ilioyen, mujer Selk'nam del siglo XXI que a los 91 años nos dejó para seguir brillando en los cielos de la Tierra del Fuego, su tierra natal. Mi promesa sigue en pie, Doña Herminia, no sé cómo lo lograré pero mi obra de alguna forma tendrá que llegar a sus manos. Le agradezco también a Margarita Maldonado, hija de Doña Herminia y actualmente uno de los mayores escudos del mundo Selk'nam, por su ayuda incondicional durante

toda mi estadía en la Tierra del Fuego; a Estela Maldonado, también hija de Doña Herminia, por su apoyo y motivación. Del mismo modo, agradezco a la comunidad Selk'nam Rafaela Ishton en Río Grande, en especial, a Doña Lala, también hija de Doña Herminia y mujer Selk'nam, con la que me pude enterar de muchas de las costumbres Selk'nam de antaño. No puedo cerrar este apartado sin agradecer también a Emma Legunda, profesora de Selk'nam en la actualidad y mujer empeñada en la revitalización de la lengua. Espero que pronto podamos compartir un mate para discutir sobre nuestro proyecto del HausH, Emma.

No puedo dejar de lado tampoco a mi familia en la Tierra del Fuego argentina. Llegar allí y hacerme de una madre, tres hermanos y un padre fue una experiencia que jamás olvidaré. Mil gracias, Mabel, por ser mi mamá en Río Grande y apoyarme siempre con una sonrisa en mis problemas y éxitos en la zona. Tú eres una de esas personas a las que jamás olvidaré por su ayuda desinteresada y ángel tan peculiar. Gracias, Checho, Eze, y Anita, por ser mis hermanos en Río Grande. Aprendí mucho de ustedes y espero que tomen mis consejos en cuenta. Finalmente, gracias Don Sergio, su seriedad pero su eterna sonrisa hicieron de muy buena imagen de padre para mí en Río Grande. Gracias por apoyar las locuras de un peruano en su casa.

Finalmente, gracias a los profesores Pedro Viegas Barros, Marisa Malvestiti, Francisco Antonio Ocampo y Yolanda Lastra por su apoyo bibliográfico así como motivacional. Su ayuda se ve reflejada en este producto y espero que muy pronto podamos discutir personalmente. Por otro lado, una vez más mil gracias al maestro Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino por su apoyo durante la elaboración de esta mini gramática. Mi completa admiración hacia su trabajo siempre ha sido uno de mis mayores motivos para continuar.

No puedo cerrar sin antes agradecerle a mi madre, Susana Berscia, la mujer más luchadora que he conocido; a mi padre, Luis Alberto Rojas León, por su fuerza y constante apoyo; a mi abuela, Doña Edelmira Giurfa, por ser el sostén y la motivación de todo lo que hago, a mi hermanito, Christian Rojas, por siempre apoyarme con mis proyectos locos; y a mi mejor amigo y hermano, Corentin Bourdeau, por estar ahí a pesar de todos mis defectos en una eterna discusión sobre lo que los lingüistas debemos hacer y lo que los

humanos debemos ser. Ustedes son una gran pared cuando me ganan las chiripiolcas de la vida.

Este trabajo es para todos ustedes.


Luis Miguel Rojas Berscia

friend in Nijmegen and the best chocolate milk partner in the Cultuur Café; and last but not least, Joshua Birchall, Simeon Floyd, Harald Hammarström, Hedvig Skirgård, Thijs Trompenaars, Cesko Voeten, Lassi Ylimyilu, Tara Struik, Gwen Brekelmans,and Maksim Kudrinksky.

These small Selk'nam grammar is for all of you,

Luis Miguel Rojas Berscia