

# Chol and Chontal: Two Mayan Languages of the Agentive Type

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## 0. Introduction

- Chol and Chontal together with Chorti and Cholti (†) are Mayan languages of the Cholan subgroup. Together with Tzeltalan languages (Tzotzil and Tzeltal) they form the Greater Tzeltalan Group (Kaufman and Norman 1984).
- Chol and Chontal are spoken in the states of Chiapas and Tabasco, Mexico.
- The two languages exhibit three patterns for coding grammatical relations: (1) ergative pattern, (2) split ergative pattern motivated by aspect producing a nominative-accusative alignment, (3) agentive pattern motivated by semantic role: agent vs. patient.
- The agentive pattern had not been recognized in these languages until recently (for Chol see Vázquez 2002, Gutiérrez 2004). Two major types of intransitive verbs that occur in different constructions according to the semantic role of the subcategorized participant: agent vs. patient.
- Goals:
  - Characterization of the agentive pattern.
  - Parameters for the classification of predicates.
  - Fluid-S pattern with 3 types of predicates.
  - Comparison of the agentive systems in the two languages.
  - Comparison with Mopan (Yukatekan branch) (Danziger 1996).
  - A special type of construction within Agentive languages.
- Chol data come from the Tila dialect, whereas Chontal data come from the Nacajuca dialect (Tecoluta).
- Joint research project with students of the MA program at CIESAS: **Chol**: Vázquez Álvarez, Juan Jesús (2002), Gutiérrez Sánchez, Pedro (2004), López López, Rubén (2005); **Tabasco Chontal**: Osorio May, José del Carmen (2005).

## 1. The Ergative Pattern in Chol

Chol and Chontal, similar to the rest of the Mayan languages, are head marking and ergative languages. They have two sets of pronominal markers, known in Mayan linguistics, as Set A and Set B.

Person	Set A (Ergative)		Set B (Absolutive)
	/-C	/-V	
1	<i>k-</i> ( <i>k</i> → <i>j</i> / <i>-k</i> )	<i>k-</i>	<i>-oñ</i>
2	<i>a-</i>	<i>aw-</i>	<i>-ety</i>
3	<i>i-</i>	<i>y-</i>	<i>-ø</i>
1PL (INC)	<i>la= k- ~</i> <i>k- =la</i>	<i>la= k- ~</i> <i>k- =la</i>	<i>-oñ</i>
(EXC)	<i>lon=k- ~</i> <i>k- =loñ ~</i> <i>k- -lojoñ</i>	<i>lon=k- ~</i> <i>k- =loñ ~</i> <i>k- -lojoñ</i>	<i>-oñ-loñ ~</i> <i>-oñ-lojoñ</i>
2PL	<i>la'-</i>	<i>la'w-</i> <i>aw- -la</i>	<i>-ety=la</i>
3	<i>i- -ob</i>	<i>y- -ob</i>	<i>-ob</i>

Table 1. Set A and Set B in Chol

Set A marks the participant with the role of agent of transitive verbs (A)

- (1) *2nd person Set A / \_V: Agent of transitive*  
 ixku wa'al=i bajche' tyi **aw**-il-ä-ø  
 instead now=ENC how PRF **A2**-see-SSTVPRF-B3  
 'Now it is how you see it'
- (2) *2nd person Set A / \_C: Agent of transitive*  
 mäk'-äch-bä tyi wits mi **a-päk'**-ø  
 AUX\_IMPRF-ASEV-REL PREP mountain IMPRF **A2**-plant-B3  
 'Yes, you can plant it in the mountain'

Set A also marks possessor of nouns

- (3) wä-k'ux-u-ø-x la-**a**-muty  
 in\_advance-eat-IMP-B3-already PL-**A2**-chicken  
 'You should eat your chickens in advance!'

Set B marks the primary object of transitive verbs (PO) and the subject of intransitive predicates (verbs and non-verbal predicates) (S).

- (4) *2nd person Set B: “PO” of transitive*  
 ibi li k-amigo tyi i-päy-ä-y-ety maja  
 QUOT DET A1-friend PRF A3-call-SSTVPRF-EP-B2 DIR:thither  
 ‘My friend took you’
- (5) *2nd person Set B: “S” of intransitive verb in perfective aspect*  
 tyi majl-i-y-ety tyi kaskada  
 PRF go-ITV-EP-B2 PREP waterfall  
 ‘You went to the waterfall’
- (6) *2nd person Set B: “S” of non-verbal predicate*  
 wiñik-ety  
 man-B2  
 ‘You are a man’

Intransitive verbs take Set B in perfective aspect, as in (5). Set B also marks “S” of intransitive verbs occurring with two auxiliaries: the progressive *chonkol* and the imperfective *muk’*. The intransitive lexical verb in second position appears headed by the subordinator *tyi*. In these contexts, the aspectual auxiliaries carry the subject marker.

(7) **AUX-Set B + SUBORDINATOR + intransitive Lexical verb**

- a. muk’-oñ tyi majl-el  
 AUX IMPRF-B1 SUB go-NMZR  
 ‘I go’
- b. chonkol-oñ tyi majl-el  
 PROG-B1 SUB go-NMZR  
 ‘I am going’

- Summary of the ergative pattern:

Type of verbs	S	A	PO	Contexts
<i>Intransitive</i>	Set B			Perfective, ASP AUX-SetB + <i>tyi</i> + Lexical Verb
<i>Transitive</i>		Set A	Set B	All aspects

Table 2. Ergative Pattern

## 2. The Split Ergative Pattern in Chol. S = A ≠ PO. Nominative-Accusative

Chol and Chontal, together with Yucatekan languages, present a second pattern to code the core arguments of the clause. In the imperfective aspect, Chol codes subjects of intransitive predicates with the same pronominal marker as agents of transitive verbs (Set A), whereas the primary object of transitive verbs is coded differently (Set B).

Kaufman and Norman (1984: 90) have suggested that Cholan languages acquired the split-ergative pattern through contact with Yucatecan since ProtoYucatecan also presents the split

system, and this is not attested in the Tzeltalan subgroup (Tzeltal and Tzotzil) that together with Cholan forms the Greater Tzeltalan.

Origin of the split-ergative pattern in Mayan: Nominalization of the intransitive verb following a matrix predicate requires the “S” argument being coded as a possessor (Set A). (Bricker (1981), Larsen and Norman (1979), Larsen (1990)).

- (8) *1st person Set A: Agent of transitive*  
 mi k-äk'-eñ-ø tyak'ĩñ  
 IMPRF A1-give-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 money  
 'I give him money'
- (9) *1st person Set A: Subject of verbal intransitive*  
 ba' mi k-sujty-e(l)-loñ maja  
 where IMPRF A1-return-NMZR-PL1EXC DIR:go  
 '... to the place where we go back'
- (10) *1st person Set B: PO of transitive*  
 jiñi mi i-xik'-oñ-o'=la  
 DET IMPRF A3-order-B1-PL3=PL1INC  
 'They order us'

The subject of intransitive verbs is marked with Set A in the imperfective aspect, (9), and in the auxiliary constructions with *chonkol* 'progressive' and *muk'* 'imperfective' when the lexical verb in second position carries the subject marker. Compare the examples in (11) with the ones in (7).

- (11) **AUX + SetA-Intransitive Lexical verb**
- a. muk'-bä i-tyejch-el  
 AUX IMPRF-REL A3-get up-NMZR  
 'The one who gets up.'
- b. chonkol i-ñum-e(l) x-il-k'ĩñ-o' wä'=i  
 PROG A3-cross-NMZR NCL-see-festival-PL3 here=ENC  
 'The pilgrims are crossing down here.'
- c. ñoj aläl-o'-tyo chonko(l)-bä y-och-el-o' tyi primaria  
 very child-PL3-still PROG-REL A3-enter-NMZR-PL3 PREP primary\_school  
 'The ones who are going to primary school are still very young.'

- Summary of the split-ergative pattern:

Type of verbs	S	A	PO	Contexts:
<i>Intransitive</i>	Set A			Imperfective ASP AUX + Set A-Lexical verb
<i>Transitive</i>		Set A	Set B	All aspects

Table 3. Split Ergative Pattern (Nominative-Accusative Type)



<i>och-el</i>	‘enter’	<i>puts’-el</i>	‘escape’
<i>ju’b-el</i>	‘descend’	<i>säj-l-el</i>	‘cross’
<i>jul-el</i>	‘arrive here’	<i>sajp’-el</i>	‘descend’
<i>k’äj-k-el</i>	‘ascend, go up’	<i>sojl-el</i>	‘cross’
<i>k’ax-el</i>	‘cross’	<i>sujty-el</i>	‘return’
<i>k’oty-el</i>	‘arrive there’	<i>ts’ojty-el</i>	‘turn, return’
<i>lets-el</i>	‘ascend’	<i>tyäl-el</i>	‘come’
<i>majl-el</i>	‘go’		
<i>ñijk-el</i>	‘move’		

## b. Change of state

<i>ujp’-el</i>	‘collapse, crumble’	<i>ñäjch’-el</i>	‘calm down’
<i>bajk’-el</i>	‘be wrapped’	<i>ñäm-el</i>	‘get used to’
<i>bäj-l-el</i>	‘set the sun’	<i>ñum-el</i>	‘exceed’
<i>bijty’-el</i>	‘get a fright, startle’	<i>p’ajty-el</i>	‘fell’
<i>bo’oy-el</i>	‘get bored’	<i>p’ijty-el</i>	‘break’, ‘come off’
<i>bijy-el</i>	‘rub’	<i>p’ix-el</i>	‘wake up’
<i>bojty’-el</i>	‘detach’, ‘lean out’	<i>p’ojl-el</i>	‘breed’
<i>bul-ul</i>	‘come off, detach’	<i>pajay-el</i>	‘die’
<i>ch’ojy-el</i>	‘get up’, ‘wake up’	<i>päj-k’-el</i>	‘get dirty’
<i>ch’uj-el</i>	‘get up’	<i>pajm-el</i>	‘rise above level’
<i>chäm-el</i>	‘die’	<i>pas-el</i>	‘sprout’ ‘come up’
<i>chijp-el</i>	‘get loose’	<i>poj-m-el</i>	‘blister’
<i>chojp-el</i>	‘come off’ ‘peel’	<i>pujch-el</i>	‘spoil’
<i>jäj-l-el</i>	‘slip’	<i>pujk-el</i>	‘spread’
<i>jajm-el</i>	‘clear up’	<i>poj-m-el</i>	‘have pus’
<i>jejm-el</i>	‘collapse’	<i>säj-p’-el</i>	‘reduce, burn down’,
<i>jijl-el</i>	‘rest’	<i>sajty-el</i>	‘get lost’ ‘die’
<i>jijts’-el</i>	‘come off’	<i>sijp’-el</i>	‘come off’
<i>jojch-el</i>	‘fell’ ‘be born (birds)’	<i>sijty-el</i>	‘fell’
<i>jojm-el</i>	‘pile up’	<i>sojk-el</i>	‘get crazy’
<i>jujp’-el</i>	‘get fat’	<i>sojp’-el</i>	‘become deshydrated’
<i>k’ajl-el</i>	‘come unstuck’	<i>sujp’-el</i>	‘immerse’
<i>k’ojk-el</i>	‘pull off’	<i>sujty-el</i>	‘become something’
<i>k’ojk-el</i>	‘come off’	<i>ts’äj-m-el</i>	‘be flooded’
<i>k’ojoy-el</i>	‘get bored’	<i>ts’ijp-el</i>	‘skin off’
<i>k’ujy-el</i>	‘come off’	<i>ts’ojk-el</i>	‘peel’
<i>kijts’-el</i>	‘break up’	<i>ts’ujl-el</i>	‘peel’
<i>kol-el</i>	‘grow’	<i>ts’ujy-el</i>	‘hang’
<i>lajm-el</i>	‘get well’, ‘finish’	<i>tsijk’-el</i>	‘set ... on edge’
<i>lejb-el</i>	‘break’	<i>ty’ajch-el</i>	‘detach’
<i>lejm-el</i>	‘burn’	<i>ty’ujy-el</i>	‘drip’
<i>lijk’-el</i>	‘get tired’	<i>tyäjts’-el</i>	‘slip’
<i>lojm-el</i>	‘sink’	<i>tyejch-el</i>	‘get up, wake up’
<i>lujk’-el</i>	‘warp’	<i>tyijl-el</i>	‘fray’
<i>mäj-k-el</i>	‘get cloudy’	<i>tyojm-el</i>	‘exploit’
<i>ñajay-el</i>	‘forget’	<i>tyojp’-el</i>	‘be born’

<i>xejw-el</i>	‘get tipped over	<i>yäjñ-el</i>	‘change of appearance’
<i>xijty'-el</i>	‘surrender’		
<i>xujl-el</i>	‘break’ ‘fractur e’	<i>ju-juk'-chäm-el</i>	‘faint’
<i>yäjł-el</i>	‘fell’	<i>k'äs-k'uy-el</i>	‘splinter, chip’
<i>yajł-el</i>	‘fell’	<i>pähn-tyäy-el</i>	‘turn into’
<i>jux-k'iy-el</i>	‘slip’	<i>jits'-kuy-el</i>	‘faint’

c. Inchoative (Noun/Adjective + Inchoative suffix)

<i>säk-an</i>	‘become white’	
<i>tsäts-an</i>	‘become hard’	
<i>wiñik-iy-el</i>	‘become a man’	
<i>tyuñ-iy-el</i>	‘become a ston’	etc....

d. Phase and modal verbs

<i>ujty-el</i>	‘finish’	<i>säjł-el</i>	‘finish’
<i>joloñ-el</i>	‘finish’	<i>ñijł-el</i>	‘begin’
<i>jil-el</i>	‘finish’,	<i>kaj-el</i>	‘begin’
	‘become	<i>kej-el</i>	‘begin’
	scarse’	<i>mejł-el</i>	‘be able’

Similarly, derived passive verbs behave as non-agentive intransitives.

- (14) a. *tyi jajts'-i-y-ety*  
 PRF golpear+PAS-ITV-EP-B2  
 ‘You were hit’
- b. *tyi mejk'-i-ø*      *tyi wiñik*  
 PRF hug+PAS-ITV-B3 PREP man  
 ‘She was hugged by a man’
- c. *ya(’-i)x*      *tyi käy-le-y-oñ*      *tyi ma-tye’el*  
 there-already PRF abandon-PAS-EP-B1 PREP inside-mountain  
 ‘I was left there, inside the mountain’

Non-verbal predicates (nouns, adjectives, and derived participles functioning as predicates), stative positionals and the existential predicate do not take aspectual markers. Predicates of this type mark their subject with Set B in all contexts,

(15) *Non-verbal predicates*

*Nouns*

- a. *jiñ-jach mach chajk-oñ-ix*  
 DET-only NEG lightning-B1-already  
 ‘I am not lightning anymore’

- b. trensipal-**ety**  
 authority-**B2**  
 ‘You are the authority’

*Adjectives*

- c. p’ump’um-**oñ**-loñ      wajali  
 poor-**B1**-PL1EXC      before  
 ‘We were poor before’

- d. sã-sãk-**oñ**  
 RED-white-**B1**  
 ‘I am white’

*Participles*

- e. tyäl-**eñ**-ø-tyo      y-al      ya’=i  
 come-**PERF**-B3-still A3(PSR)-son there=ENC  
 ‘His son has come over there.’

- d. p’ix-**em**-**ety**  
 wake\_up-**PERF**-**B2**  
 ‘You are awake’

(16)

*Positionals*

- a. ñoj chak-al-**oñ**  
 very naked-**STAT**-**B1**  
 ‘I was completely naked’
- b. ñak-al-**ety**    tyi    lum  
 seat-**STAT**-**B2**    PREP tierra  
 ‘You are seated on the ground’

(17)

*Existential*

- a. komo añ-**oñ**    tyi    jum-p’e kompromiso  
 since    **EXIST**-**B1**    PREP one-CLF commitment  
 ‘Since I have a commitment’
- b. añ-**ø**    aj-mikel    Franco    ch’oyol-ø tyi    Salto  
**EXIST**-**B3**    NCL-Miguel Franco    native-B3    PREP Salto  
 ‘There is Miguel Franco who is native from Salto’

**3.1.2. Agentive verbs.** Chol has another subclass of intransitive verbs that mark their subjects with Set A (ergative) instead of Set B (absolutive) in most contexts. The subjects of this type of verb are semantic agents and, for this reason, these verbs are referred to as agentive verbs. Intransitive agentive verbs always occur in a nominalized form following the transitive light verb *cha’l* ‘to do, to make’ that takes aspect and the ergative and absolutive pronominal markers. The semantic agent is coded as ergative on the light verb, whereas the absolutive suffix attached to it is in cross-reference with the nominalized agentive verb. Thus in the light verb construction, the nominalized agentive verb is the lexical verb functioning as syntactic object.

- (18) **ASP SetA-Light verb-SetB Lexical verb**  
 SUBJECT OBJECT

Note that in (19) and (20) the lexical verb takes an overt nominalizer, *-VI*.

- (19) ta' i-cha'l-e-∅ tse'ñ-al  
 PRF **A3**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 laugh-NMZR  
 'He laughed'
- (20) bajche' tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ troñ-el tyi montañaj-tyak  
 since PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 work-NMZR PREP mountain-PLINDET  
 'Since I worked in the mountains'

Unlike non-agentive intransitive verbs, agentive intransitive verbs cannot mark their subject with Set B.

- (21) a. tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ ajñ-el  
 PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 run-NMZR  
 'I ran'
- b. \* tyi ajñ-i-y-oñ  
 PRF run-ITV-EP-**B1**  
 (Intended reading: 'I ran')

Agentive intransitive verbs come in several morphological shapes. Some of these verbs take overt nominalizers: *-VI*, as in (19) and (20), or *-bal*, as in (22) and (23).

- (22) bajche' tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ xäm-**ba(l)** tyi moñtañaj-tyak  
 since PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 walk-NMZR PREP mountain-PL  
 'Since I walked in the mountains'
- (23) tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ oj-**bal**  
 PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 cough-NMZR  
 'I coughed'

A second group of agentive verbs does not take an overt nominalizer.

- (24) a. tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ **sek'** pejtye(l) ya'  
 PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **knock** all\_over there  
 'I knocked down all over there'
- b. tyi k-cha'l-e-∅ **ñak**  
 PRF **A1**-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **play**  
 'I played'

- c. tyi i-cha'l-e-ø                    **k'al**  
 PRF A3-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **roof**  
 'He roofed'
- d. tyi k-cha'l-e-ø                    **k'ix**  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **heat**  
 'I heated' (with firewood)
- e. tyi a-cha'l-e-ø                    **ñolok'**  
 PRF A2-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **roll around**  
 'You rolled around'

A third group of agentive verbs consists of action nouns, i.e., nouns that have the semantics of both nouns and verbs without overt derivational morphology.

- |      |    | <b>noun</b>                        | <b>verb</b>  |              |
|------|----|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| (25) | a. | pich                               | 'urine'      | 'to urinate' |
|      | b. | tya'                               | 'shit'       | 'to shit'    |
|      | c. | xej                                | 'vomit'      | 'to vomit'   |
|      | d. | ty'añ                              | 'speech'     | 'to talk'    |
|      | e. | tsijb                              | 'writing'    | 'to write'   |
|      | f. | k'ay                               | 'song'       | 'to sing'    |
|      | g. | xujch'                             | 'robbery'    | 'to steal'   |
|      | l. | chu'                               | 'tit'        | 'to suck'    |
| (26) | a. | <i>Functioning as noun</i>         |              |              |
|      |    | tyi k-u'b-i-ø                      | ka'bäl ty'añ |              |
|      |    | PRF A1-hear-SSDTVPRF-B3 many       | word         |              |
|      |    | 'I heard many words'               |              |              |
|      | b. | <i>Functioning as lexical verb</i> |              |              |
|      |    | tyi k-cha'l-e-ø                    | ty'añ        |              |
|      |    | PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 talk         |              |              |
|      |    | 'I talked'                         |              |              |

Agentive verbs that participate in the light verb construction marking their subject with Set A include eventual predicates that convey activities (volitional and non-volitional activities, forms of communication.) There are three major formal subclasses:

- (27) Agentive verbs with overt nominalizer

<i>ajñ-el</i>	'run'	<i>oj-bal</i>	'cough'
<i>ñuxäj-el</i>	'swim'	<i>si'-bal</i>	'cut firewood'
<i>ñuxej-el</i>	'swim'	<i>juch'-bal</i>	'grind'
<i>oñ-el</i>	'scream'	<i>lem-bäl</i>	'get drunk'
<i>jejty-el</i>	'crawl'	<i>k'äñ-ol</i>	'cook'
<i>tsojty-el</i>	'crawl'	<i>ñaj-al</i>	'dream'
<i>kojty-el</i>	'crawl'	<i>tsak-äl</i>	'follow'

*ch'uj-el* 'pray'  
*misej-el* 'sweep'

*tse'ñ-al* 'laugh'  
*p'olm-al* 'sell'

## Agentive verbs without nominalizer

*joy* 'roll'  
*pay* 'call'  
*k'al* 'roof'  
*k'ix* 'heat'  
*beb* 'ask'  
*ch'ajb* 'fast'  
*tyujb* 'spit'  
*tonkoñ* 'swim'  
*ñäkäb* 'nod off'

*ñolok'* 'roll over'  
*bäläk'* 'roll over'  
*suty-ujty* 'turn'  
*p'is-wuty* 'cross oneself'  
*tyuk'-bik'* 'have hiccups'  
*xity-k'itin-ch'ib* 'to roll'

## Action nouns

*kisiñ* 'feel embarrassed'  
*ja'tsijñ* 'sneeze'  
*bots* 'sprout'  
*lojk* 'boil'  
*ñojk'* 'snore'  
*soñ* 'dance'  
*woj* 'bark'  
*mãñajb* 'predict'  
*tsijb* 'write'  
*xej* 'vomit'

*tyis* 'fart'  
*chu'* 'suck'  
*lojk* 'fart'  
*ts'ak* 'cure'  
*ch'uyu'b* 'whistle'  
*loty* 'deceive'  
*jula'* 'visit'  
*ñich* 'bloom'

Noun incorporated verbs and derived antipassive verbs behave as agentive intransitive verbs, i.e., they participate of the light verb construction and their subject is marked with Set A.

(28) *Incorporated object*  
 tyi k-cha'l-e-ø **chuk-chäy**  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **grab-fish**  
 'I fished'

(29) *Absolutive antipassive*  
 tyi a-cha'l-e-ø tsil-oñ-el  
 PRF A2-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 break-AP-NMZR  
 'You broke something'

- (30) a. *Absolutive antipassive with –vyaj*  
 tyi k-cha'l-e-ø mujk-uyaj  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 hide-AP  
 'I hide'
- b. *Antipassive with semiincorporated object*  
 tyi a-cha'l-e-ø tsãñs-ayaj muty  
 PRF A2-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 kill-AP chicken  
 'I killed chickens'

### 3.1.3. Other parameters that distinguish the two major classes of intransitive verbs

In addition to the different pronominal markers and the presence or absence of the light verb *cha'l*, the two classes of verbs behave differently with respect to the following morphosyntactic parameters:

#### 3.1.3.1. Split ergativity.

Only non-agentive verbs change the marking pattern in imperfective. Set B marks subject in perfective vs. Set A marks subject in imperfective.

- (31) a. *Non-Agentive in perfective aspect*  
 ma'-añ tyi majl-i-y-oñ k-baja.  
 NEG-EXIST PRF go-ITV-EP-B1 A1-alone  
 'I didn't go there by myself'
- b. *Non-agentive in imperfective aspect*  
 mi k-majl-el tyi säk'-kajpej  
 IMPRF A1-go-NMZR SUB wash-coffee  
 'I am going to wash coffee'

Agentive verbs mark their subjects with Set A in both aspects.

- (32) a. *Agentive in perfective aspect*  
 tyi k-cha'l-e-ø ñuxej-el  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 swim-NMZR  
 'I swam'
- b. *Agentive in imperfective aspect*  
 mi k-cha'l-eñ-ø ñuxej-el  
 IMPRF A1-do-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 swim-NMZR  
 'I am swimming'

#### 3.1.3.2. Different status suffixes and thematic vowels.

Status suffixes and thematic vowels in Mayan (convey aspectual, modal and transitivity information).



### 3.1.3.4. Different auxiliary constructions.

The auxiliaries *muk* ‘imperfective’ and *chonkol* ‘progressive’ form periphrastic aspectual constructions preceding intransitive verbs. There are three possible periphrastic structures. The distribution of verb classes is shown in Table 4:

<i>Structure</i>	<i>Agentive Verbs</i>	<i>Non-Agentive Verbs</i>
1. AUX-SetB + <i>tyi</i> + V	+	+
2. AUX + SetA-V	-	+
3. AUX + <i>tyi</i> + Set A-V	-	+

Table 4: Possible structures with the aspectual auxiliaries *muk*’ and *chonkol*.

Structure 1: AUX-SetB + *tyi* + V

- (37)
- a. Agentive verb  
**chonkol-oñ tyi ajñ-el**  
 PROG-B1 SUB run-NMZR  
 ‘I am running’
- b. Non-agentive verb  
**chonkol-oñ tyi chäm-el**  
 PROG-B1 SUB die-NMZR  
 ‘I am dying’

Structure 2: AUX + SetA-V

- (38)
- a. \* Agentive verb  
**chonkol k-ajñ-el**  
 PROG A1-run-NMZR  
 (Intended reading: ‘I am running’)
- b. Non-agentive verb  
**chonkol k-chäm-el**  
 PROG A1-die-NMZR  
 ‘I am dying’

Structure 3: AUX + *tyi* + Set A-V

- (39)
- a. \* Agentive verb  
**chonkol tyi k-ajñ-el**  
 PROG SUB A1-run-NMZR  
 (Intended reading: ‘Am I running?’)

- b. Non-agentive verb  
**chonkol tyi k-chäm-el**  
**PROG SUB A1-die-NMZR**  
 ‘Am I dying?’

### 3.2. Fluid-S (Dixon 1994). Ambivalent verbs (Smith-Stark and Tapia García 2002)

A few intransitive verbs have non-agentive and agentive behavior. The different behavior produces change in meaning. A verb whose subject is an agent takes Set A and participates in the light verb construction, whereas a verb whose subject is a patient takes Set B and does not participate in the light verb construction.

- (40) a. tyi tyijp’-i-y-oñ (-agt)  
 PRF jump-ITV-EP-B1  
 ‘I jumped’ (I was surprised or scared when it happened)
- b. tyi k-cha’l-e-ø tyijp’-el (+agt)  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 jump-NMZR  
 ‘I jumped’ (I controlled the action, I instigated the action)’
- (41) a. tyi lujty’-i-y-oñ (-agt)  
 PRF jump-ITV-EP-B1  
 ‘I jumped around’ (because some ants bit me)
- b. tyi k-cha’l-e-ø lujty’-el (+agt)  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 jump-NMZR  
 ‘I jumped around’ (I was playing with a rope).
- (42) a. tyi lets-i-ø i-tyojol (-agt)  
 PRF ascend-ITV-B3 A3-price  
 ‘The price went up’
- b. tyi i-cha’l-e-ø lets-el (+agt)  
 PRF A3-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 ascend-NMZR  
 ‘He climbed (on the leader)’

Other pairs:

- |      |               |  |  |
|------|---------------|--|--|
| (43) |               | <b>Non-Agentive</b>  | <b>Agentive</b>  |
| a.   | <i>ñujpuñ</i> | get married under pressure<br>get married without being<br>conscious | get married with a loved<br>person                     |
| b.   | <i>wejl</i>   | flying, being a passenger in<br>a plane                              | flying, being the pilot of an<br>instrument or machine |
| c.   | <i>sujty</i>  | return   | spin   |

- |    |     |                                 |  |
|----|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| d. | wäy | fall sleep                      | sleep as planned, on schedule<br>go to bed |
| e. | uk' | cry (under the effect of onion) | cry (being sad, e.g. someone died)         |

Three causative constructions.

- (44)
- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| a. | <i>Morphological causative</i> –(i)s                  | (-agt)   |
|    | tyi k-wejl- <b>is</b> -ä-ø                            |          |
|    | PRF A1-fly-CAUS-SSDTVPRF-B3                           |          |
|    | ‘I made him fly’                                      |          |
| b. | <i>Analytic Causative: V1 V2</i>                      | (-agt)   |
|    | tyi k- <b>äk'</b> -ä-y-ety wejl-el                    |          |
|    | PRF A1- <b>let</b> -SSTVPRF-EP-B2 fly- NMZR           |          |
|    | ‘I let you fly’                                       |          |
| c. | <i>Analytic Causative: V1 SUB V2</i>                  | (+/-agt) |
|    | tyi k- <b>äk'</b> -ä-y-ety <b>tyi</b> wejl-el         |          |
|    | PRF A1- <b>let</b> -SSTVPRF-EP-B2 <b>SUB</b> fly-NMZR |          |
|    | ‘I let you fly’                                       |          |

Three auxiliary constructions

- (45)
- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| a. | Structure 1: AUX-SetB + <i>tyi</i> + V    | (+/-agt) |
|    | muk'- <b>oñ</b> <b>tyi</b> uk'-el         |          |
|    | AUX_IMPRF- <b>B1</b> <b>SUB</b> cry-NMZR  |          |
|    | ‘I cry’                                   |          |
| b. | Structure 2: AUX + SetA-V                 | (-agt)   |
|    | muk' <b>k-uk'</b> -el                     |          |
|    | AUX_IMPRF <b>A1</b> -cry-NMZR             |          |
|    | ‘I cry’                                   |          |
| c. | Structure 3: AUX + <i>tyi</i> + Set A-V   | (-agt)   |
|    | muk' <b>tyi</b> <b>k-uk'</b> -el          |          |
|    | AUX_IMPRF <b>SUB</b> <b>A1</b> -cry- NMZR |          |
|    | ‘Am I crying?’                            |          |

### 3.2.1. Positionals

Positionals are a special class of roots in Mayan languages that refer to the position or disposition of the figure. The morphology associated to positionals when used as statives, adjectives, and verbs separates them from other root classes (verbs, nouns and adjectives).

- (46) Positional roots

<i>tyach</i>	‘come unstuck	<i>ñok</i>	‘kneel down’
<i>tyak’</i>	‘be together, pile up’	<i>p’ul</i>	‘spread’
<i>ch’ol</i>	‘crouch down’	<i>säts’</i>	‘stretch’
<i>läm</i>	‘crowd together’	<i>tsoty</i>	‘crawl with open legs’
<i>läm</i>	‘form a pool’	<i>bäch’</i>	‘coil up’
<i>pu’</i>	‘be rounded’	<i>bäl</i>	‘roll up’
<i>jom</i>	‘crowd together’	<i>ch’a’</i>	‘be lying on one’s back’
<i>bäch</i>	‘stand up (plants)’	<i>ch’ik</i>	‘be stuck’
<i>lik</i>	‘hang’	<i>jak</i>	‘be with open legs’
<i>mety</i>	‘lie down’	<i>jäl</i>	‘be longish’
<i>päy</i>	‘hang’	<i>jäm</i>	‘be lying on hammock’
<i>tsos</i>	‘crouch down’	<i>kaw</i>	‘have mouth open’
<i>tsoty</i>	‘be sitting with open legs’	<i>koty</i>	‘lean’
<i>ty’ich</i>	‘stand on the toes’	<i>koty</i>	‘stand on four legs’
<i>wuts</i>	‘squat down’	<i>ñak</i>	‘sit’
<i>ty’ik</i>	‘stand on the toes’	<i>ñuk</i>	‘be on one’s chest’
<i>tyich</i>	‘bend, lean over’	<i>pix</i>	‘be wrapped’
<i>buch</i>	‘sit’	<i>tsoty</i>	‘crouch down’
<i>k’uj</i>	‘nod’	<i>ty’uch</i>	‘stand up’
<i>ch’aw</i>	‘stand on (hair)’	<i>tyäk</i>	‘lean’
<i>jich’</i>	‘hang’ (something that can move)	<i>ts’ej</i>	‘be lying on the side’
<i>mey</i>	‘lean’	<i>k’och</i>	‘be crooked’
<i>pom</i>	‘be extended’	<i>ñuk</i>	‘lying on one’s chest’

In Chol, positionals behave as ambivalent verbs, i.e., they share both the features of non-agentive and agentive verbs. With some roots the change of meaning is transparent.

- (47) a. *tyi wa’-le-y-oñ* (-agt)  
PRF stand-SSPPRF-EP-B1  
‘I stood up’
- b. *tyi k-cha’l-e-ø wa’-tyäl* (+agt)  
PRF A1-do-SSDTPRF-B3 stand-SSPIMPRF  
‘I urinated’ (Speaker being a man)
- (48) a. *tyi tsuty-le-y-oñ* (-agt)  
PRF crouch\_down-SSPPRF-EP-B1  
‘I crouched down’
- b. *tyi k-cha’l-e-ø tsuty-tyäl* (+agt)  
PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 crouch\_down-SSPIMPRF  
‘I urinated’ (Speaker being a woman)

Three causative constructions:

- (49) a. *Synthetic: -chok, -ak', -käy* (-agt)  
 tyi k-wa'-**chok**-o-y-ety  
 PRF A1-stand-**put**-SSDTVPRF-EP-B2  
 'I made you stand up'
- b. *Analytic Causative: V1 V2* (-agt)  
 tyi k-**äk'**-ä-y-ety wa'-tyäl  
 PRF A1-**let**-SSTVPRF-EP-B2 stand-SSPIMPRF  
 'I let you stand up'
- c. *Analytic Causative: V1 SUB V2* (+/-agt)  
 tyi k-**äk'**-ä-y-ety **tyi** wa'-tyäl  
 PRF A1-**let**-SSTVPRF-EP-B2 **SUB** stand-SSPIMPRF  
 'I let you stand up'

Three auxiliary constructions:

- (50) a. Structure 1: AUX-SetB + *tyi* + V (+/-agt)  
 chonkol-**oñ tyi** wa'-tyäl  
 PROG-**B1 SUB** stand-SSPIMPRF  
 'I am standing up'
- b. Structure 2: AUX + SetA-V (-agt)  
 chonkol **k-wa'**-tyäl  
 PROG **A1**-stand-SSPIMPRF  
 'I am standing up'
- c. Structure 3: AUX + *tyi* + Set A-V (-agt)  
 chonkol **tyi k-wa'**-tyäl  
 PROG **SUB A1**-stand-SSPIMPRF  
 'Am I standing up?'

### 3.2.2. Affective words

Affective words are a special set of lexemes that are formed by reduplicated syllables followed by the suffix *-ñi*. These words usually encode manner of motion or the sound or noise produced when the event takes place.

- (51) Affective words

*äch-äch'-ña* 'sound produced by a loaded mule'  
*el-el-ña* 'sound of evaporation'  
*ul-ul-ña* 'sound of mud'

<i>boj-boj-ña</i>	‘sound produced by a hammer’
<i>bor-bor-ña</i>	‘sound of boiling water’
<i>ch'er-ch'er-ña</i>	‘sound of a chain saw’
<i>ch'i-ch'i-ña</i>	‘sound produced by chicken’
<i>ch'il-ch'il-ña</i>	‘sound produced by boiling oil’
<i>ch'ol-ch'ol-ña</i>	‘sound of a storm’
<i>chak-chak-ña</i>	‘walk naked’
<i>chik-chik-ña</i>	‘sound produced when somebody walk on dry leaves’
<i>chil-chil-ña</i>	‘sound produced by a rattle’
<i>chok'-chok'-ña</i>	‘sound of constant rain’
<i>jähn-jähn-ña</i>	‘sound of a type of bee’
<i>jos-jos-ña</i>	‘sound produced by ducks’
<i>ju'-ju'-ña</i>	‘sound produced by wind’
<i>k'oj-k'oj-ña</i>	‘sound produced by chickens’
<i>kär-kär-ña</i>	‘sound of snoring’
<i>lej-lej-ña</i>	‘motion of clouds’
<i>lem-lem-ña</i>	‘motion of flames’
<i>lip-lip-ña</i>	‘motion of extended wings’
<i>ma'-ma'-ña</i>	‘stutter, stammer’
<i>ñoty'-ñoty'-ña</i>	‘sounds produced by rats’
<i>p'i-p'i-ña</i>	‘fart’
<i>p'u-p'u-ña</i>	‘fart of horses’
<i>pak'-pak'-ña</i>	‘sound produced when somebody runs’
<i>pil-pil-ña</i>	‘walk naked’
<i>tan-tan-ña</i>	‘sound of big bells’
<i>tin-tin-ña</i>	‘sound of small bells’
<i>tyok-tyok-ña</i>	‘open and close a door’
<i>ts'or-ts'or-ña</i>	‘sound produced by something being roasted’
<i>ts'äy-ts'äy-ña</i>	‘light produced by a star’
<i>we'-we'-ña</i>	‘sound of children crying’
<i>wej-wej-ña</i>	‘sound produced by dogs barking’
<i>wel-wel-ña</i>	‘movement of wings’
<i>woj-woj-ña</i>	‘bark’

In Chol, affective words are ambivalent verbs, i.e., they share both the features of non-agentive and agentive verbs. Each type of construction encodes a different meaning. The subject of the agentive construction has control over the action, whereas the subject of the non-agentive construction is affected by the action

- (52) a. tyi pār-pār-ñi-y-oñ (-agt)  
 PRF ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-B1  
 ‘I was shivering’
- b. tyi k-cha'l-e-ø pār-pār-ñi-y-el (+agt)  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 ‘I moved making the noise of “pärpär”’

- (53) a. tyi wo'-wo'-ñi-y-oñ (-agt)  
 PRF ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-B1  
 'I produce the sound "wo'wo'" (when I was suffering)
- b. tyi k-cha'l-e-ø wo'-wo'-ñi-y-el (+agt)  
 PRF A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'I produced the sound "wo'wo'" (to call the attention of someone)

Three causative constructions:

- (54) a. *Synthetic: -(i)s* (-agt)  
 tyi k-pär-pär-ñi-s-ety  
 PRF A1-ONOM-RED-AFFECT-CAUS-B2  
 'I made you shiver (producing the noise "pärpär")'
- b. *Analytic Causative: V1 V2* (-agt)  
 tyi k-äk'-ä-y-ety pä-r-pär-ñi-y-el  
 PRF A1-let-SSTVPRF-EP-B2 ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'I let you do "pärpär"'
- c. *Analytic Causative: V1 SUB V2* (+/-agt)  
 tyi k-äk'-ä-y-ety tyi pä-r-pär-ñi-y-el  
 PRF A1-let-SSTVPRF-EP-B2 SUB ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'I let you do "pärpär"'

Three auxiliary constructions:

- (55) a. *Structure 1: AUX-SetB + tyi + V* (+/-agt)  
 chonkol-oñ tyi pä-r-pär-ñi-y-el  
 PROG-B1 SUB ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'I am doing "pärpär"'
- b. *Structure 2: AUX + SetA-V* (-agt)  
 chonkol k-pär-pär-ñi-y-el  
 PROG A1-ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'I am doing "pärpär"'
- c. *Structure 3: AUX + tyi + Set A-V* (-agt)  
 chonkol tyi k-pär-pär-ñi-y-el  
 PROG SUB A1-ONOM-RED-AFFECT-EP-NMZR  
 'Am I doing "pärpär"?'

### 3.3. Summary

Parameters	Non-agentive	Agentive	Positional Verb Affective Verb Ambivalent Verb
1. Subject: Set B in perfective	+	-	+
2. Split ergativity	+	-	+
3. Synthetic Causative	+	-	+
4. Analytic Causative with optional SUB <i>tyi</i>	+	-	+
5. Thematic vowel <i>-i</i>	+	-	-
6. AUX + Set A-V	+	-	+
7. AUX + <i>tyi</i> + Set A-V	+	-	+
8. Subject: Set A	-	+	+
9. Light verb: <i>cha'l</i>	-	+	+
10. Analytic causative with obligatory SUB <i>tyi</i>	-	+	-
11. AUX-Set B + <i>tyi</i> + V	-	+	+

## 4. Tabasco Chontal

### 4.1. Ergative pattern.

Set A marks Agent and possessor of nouns. Set B marks PO and S (verbs and NVP's).

- (56) a. **kä-k'ux-i-ø-la**                      **ibam**  
 A1-eat-SSTVPRF-B3-PL1INCL    pejelagarto  
 'We ate "pejelagarto"'
- b.    **u-xuch'-b-on**    **kä-bek'et**    **aj-chiku'**  
 A3-steal-APPL-B1 A1-cow    NCL-Francisco  
 'Francisco stole my cows'
- (57) **wäy-on**  
 sleep-B1  
 'I fall sleep'
- (58) **winik-on**  
 man-B1  
 'I am a man'

## 4.2. Split Ergative pattern (aspect and polarity)

Imperfective (Affirmative)

- (59) a. **aw-och-e**  
**A2-enter-SSIVIMPRF**  
 ‘You come in’
- b. **kä-wäy-e**  
**A1-sleep-SSIVIMPRF**  
 ‘I sleep’

Both patterns in imperfective negative

- (60) a. *Ergative*  
 mach u wäy-**on**  
 NEG IMPRF sleep-**B1**  
 ‘I do not sleep’
- b. *Split ergative*  
 mach **kä-wäy-e**  
 NEG **A1-sleep-SSIVIMPRF**  
 ‘I do not sleep’

## 4.3 The agentive pattern

### 4.3.1. Non-agentive verbs

- (61) *Perfective*  
 chäm-**Ø**  
 die-**B3**  
 ‘He died’
- (62) *Imperfective*  
 u-chäm-o  
**A3-die-SSIVIMPRF**  
 ‘He is dying’

Chontal non-agentive verbs are similar to the Chol non-agentive verb classes: change of location, change of state, inchoative, phase and modal verbs, passives, and non verbal predicates (positionals, existential, nouns and adjectives). Unlike Chol, in Chontal positionals are treated as non-agentive only.

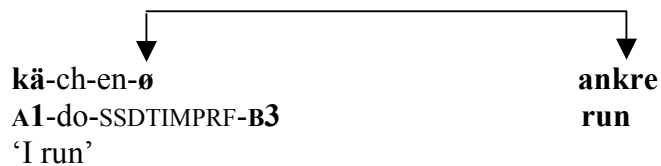
- (63) a. *Absolutive in imperfective*  
 chum-wän-**on**  
 sit\_down-SSPPRF-**B1**  
 ‘I sat down’

- b. *Ergative in perfective*  
**kä-chum-te**  
 A1-sit\_down-SSPIMPRF  
 ‘I am sitting down’
- c. \* *No light verb*  
**kä-ch-i-ø**                      chum-wän  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 sit\_down-SSPPRF  
 (Intended reading: ‘I sat down’)

#### 4.3.2. Agentive verbs

Same structural behavior as in Chol

- (64) **SetA-Lightverb-Status-SetB**                      **Lexical verb**



- (65) a. **with –e suffix**  
*ankre*                      ‘run’  
*nuxe*                      ‘swim’  
*kotoje*                      ‘crawl’  
*k’äxe*                      ‘heat oneself with fire’
- b. **without -e suffix**  
*wäyäk’*                      ‘dream’  
*ch’ujt’an*                      ‘pray’

- (66) *Perfective*
- a. **kä-ch-i-ø**                      nux-e  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 swim-NMZR  
 ‘I swam’
- b. \* **nux-on**  
 swim-B1  
 ‘I swam’

Chontal and Chol share similar agentive verb classes: with nominalizer, without nominalizers and action nouns.

(67)		<b>noun</b>	<b>verb</b>
	<i>alas</i>	‘toy’	‘to play’
	<i>ak’ot</i>	‘dance’	‘to dance’
	<i>awet</i>	‘scream’	‘to scream’
	<i>oba</i>	‘cough’	‘to cough’
	<i>k’ay</i>	‘song’	‘to sing’
	<i>nich</i>	‘flower’	‘to bloom’
	<i>patan</i>	‘work, job’	‘to work’
	<i>ta’</i>	‘shit’	‘to defecate’
	<i>t’an</i>	‘word’	‘speak’
	<i>tse’ne</i>	‘laugh’	‘to laugh’
	<i>wix</i>	‘urine’	‘to urinate’
	<i>wäyäk’</i>	‘dream’	‘to dream’
	<i>xej</i>	‘vomit’	‘to vomit’

Similar to Chol, Chontal noun incorporation and antipassive constructions behave as agentive verbs:

- (68) a.    *kä-ch-i-ø*                    **ts’ib-jun**  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **write-paper**  
 ‘I wrote’
- b.    *kä-ch-en-ø*                    **p’is-on-le**  
 A1-do-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 **weigh-AP-NMZR**  
 ‘I weigh’
- c.    *kä-ch-i-ø*                    **chämts-aj** *piyo’*  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 **kill-AP**    chicken  
 ‘I killed chicken’

#### 4.3.3. Differences between non-agentive and agentive verbs

Different causative constructions for the two types of verbs

- (69) *Non-agentive*
- a.    *och-es-an-ø*  
 enter-CAUS-IMP-B3  
 ‘Put it inside!’
- b.    *uy-äl-b-on*            *och-ik-on*  
 A3-say-APPL-B1 enter-OPT-B1  
 ‘He made me come in’
- (70) *Agentive*
- uy-äl-b-on*            *kä-ch’-en-ø*            *k’ay*  
 A3-say-APPL-B1 A1-do-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 sing  
 ‘He made me sing’

## Different auxiliary constructions

(71) *Non-agentive*

an-on tā och-e  
 EXIST-B1 SUB enter-NMZR  
 ‘I am coming in’

(72) *Agentive*

an-on kä-ch-en-ø ankre  
 EXIST-B1 A1-do-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 run  
 ‘I am running’

**4.3.3. Ambivalent verbs**

The verbal roots with ambivalent behavior are very limited. The set is larger in Chol.

- (73) a. uk'-on  
 cry-B1  
 ‘I cried’ (I could not stop it)
- b. kä-ch-i-ø uk'-e  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 cry-NMZR  
 ‘I cried’ (somebody did something to me)

- (74) a. k'ux-n-on  
 eat-?-B1  
 ‘I ate well’
- b. kä-ch-i-ø k'ux  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 eat  
 ‘I had a meal’

- (75) a. lotoj-on  
 get\_marry-B1  
 ‘I got married (They married me off)’
- b. kä-ch-i-ø lot-ayaj  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 get\_marry-AP  
 ‘I got married’

## Affective words

- (76) a. päk-päk-n-on  
 ONOM-RED-AFFEC-B1  
 ‘I moved my arms (I am excited)’
- b. kä-ch-i-ø päk-päk-ne  
 A1-do-SSDTVPRF-B3 ONOM-RED-AFFEC-B1  
 ‘I moved my arms on purpose’

## Three types of causatives

- (77) a. pāk-pāk-ne-s-an  
ONOM-RED-AFFEC-CAUS-IMP  
'Move your arms'
- b. äl-b-en-ø u-ch-en-ø pāk-pāk-ne  
say-APPL-IMP-B3 A3-do-SSDTVIMPRF-B3 ONOM-RED-AFFEC  
'Make him move his arms!'
- c. äl-b-en-ø pāk-pāk-n-ak  
say-APPL-IMP-B3 ONOM-RED-AFFEC-OPT  
'Make him move his arms!'

## 5. Conclusion

Another agentive Mayan language: Mopan

- (78) tan in-pāk'-ik-ø in aros  
DUR A1-plant-IMPRF-B3 A1 rice  
'I am planting rice' (Danziger 1996:398)
- (79) a. *Imperfective Non-agentive*  
walak-oo' u-nak'-äl  
HAB-B3PL A3-ascend-IMPRF  
'They always go up' (Danziger 1996:392)
- b. *Perfective Non-agentive*  
nak'-ø -ij t-u-wich tunich  
ascend-PRF-B3 PREP-A3-face stone  
'He went up on top of the stone' (Danziger 1996:392)
- (80) a. *Imperfective Agentive*  
a tz'ub'-u jab'ix tan u-yawat  
DET boy-FOC how DUR A3-scream  
'(he saw) how the kid was screaming' (Danziger 1996:393)
- b. *Perfective Agentive*  
job'-ø-ij u-xej a tz'ub'  
finish-PRF-B3 A3-vomit DET boy  
'The boy finished vomiting' (Danziger 1996:395)

Another ergative language with a light verb construction for agentive predicates: Basque (Fernández 1993). Double marking: ergative, split ergative and agentive language.

## Non-agentive verbs

- (81) Malen etorri da  
 Malen(ABS) come(PRF) AUX-3ABS  
 ‘Malen has come’ (Fernández 1993:308)

## Agentive verbs: light verb construction

- (82) Garazi-k hitz egin du  
 Garazi-ERG word(ABS) do(PRF) AUX-3ABS-3ERG  
 ‘Garazi has talked’ (Fernández 1993:317)

## What type of languages are Chol and Chontal?

- Three alignment subsystems
- Light verb construction for agentive verbs
- Activities vs. the other types of predicates

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### Abbreviations

A	set A pronominal marker	PL	plural
A	agent of transitive	PLINDET	plural for indeterminated nouns
AFFECT	affective suffix		
AP	antipassive	PO	primary object
APPL	aplicative	PREP	preposition
ASEV	aseverative mood	PRF	perfective
ASP_AUX	aspectual auxiliary	PROG	progressive auxiliary
AUX	auxiliary	PSR	possessor
B	set B pronominal marker	QUOT	quotative
CAUS	causative	RED	reduplication
CLF	numeral classifier	REL	relative marker
DET	determinant	S	subject of intransitive
DIR	directional	SSDTVIMPRF	status suffix for derived transitive verb in imperfective
DUR	durative aspect		
ENC	enclitic		
EP	epenthetic segment	SSDTVPRF	status suffix for derived transitive verb in perfective
EXC	exclusive		
EXIST	existential		
FOC	focus	SSIVIMPRF	status suffix for intransitive verbs in imperfective
HAB	habitual aspect		
IMP	imperative mood		
IMPRF	imperfective aspect	SSPIMPRF	status suffix for positional predicate in imperfective
INC	inclusive		
INCH	inchoative		
INT	intensifier	SSPPRF	status suffix for positional predicate in perfective
ITER	iterative		
ITV	intransitive thematic vowel	SSTVIMPRF	status suffix for transitive verb in imperfective
NCL	noun class marker		
NEG	negative		
NMZR	nominalizer	SSTVPRF	status suffix for transitive verb in perfective
ONOM	onomatopoeic		
OPT	optative		
PAS	passive	STAT	stative
PERF	perfect	SUB	subordinator

