On the challenges of letting a language tell its own story:

evidence from the Amazon

Rosa Vallejos
rvallejos@unm.edu
Any difference?

- A grammar of...
- A reference grammar of...
- A typological grammar of...
Grammar writing

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course students will be able to:
- understand the goals and limitations of grammars
- develop a template for a model grammar
- make effective use of grammars, both “good” and “bad”
- incorporate new technologies and formats into writing grammars

Apr 5 – Grammar templates
This week students will present the grammar template they have developed for their adopted languages.

Apr 12 – Toward a unified grammar template
Building on the presentations from last week will work together to create a unified template that can be used for writing grammars.
A typology of good grammars (Rice 2005: 395)

- Comprehensive
- **Complete**
- Clear
- Wealth of data:
  - appropriate and authentic
  - meticulously checked
- Argumentation
- Accessibility
  - Clarity of writing
  - User friendly organization
Grammar writing and theory

• “The grammar should be informed by theory” but “theory is not the goal of a grammar” (Rice 2005: 403)

• “the theory can be likened to a ghostwriter – its job is to allow the story of the language to be told, bringing out that story in a compelling way. The theory should let the language reveal itself. Too blind adherence to a theory, any theory, will not allow that genius of the language to shine through. But without the theory, one may not even be able to see aspects of a language.” (Rice 2006: 263)
Grammar writing and typology

Croft’s wish list (Morphosyntax, In Prep):

• a “framework-free” description
• place the structure of a language in the context of the range of grammatical variation of the world’s languages
• distinguish language-specific constructions from comparative concepts
• probably the best way to organize (the syntax part of) a grammar is in terms of information-packaging functions
Peruvian Amazonia

Secoya

Kukama-Kukamiria
Kukama-Kukamiria

Ethnic population: ~20,000
Speakers: 1,185 (Census 2017)
Gender indexicality

• Encoding of the social gender of the speech act participants
• Haas’s (1944) typology:
  ✓ Type 1: gender of the speaker
  ✓ Type 2: gender of the addressee
  ✓ Type 3: relational gender

• The domains in which gender of the speech act participants is indexed:
  ✓ phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon

Gender indexicality in Kukama

1) a. raepe ta umi ikian awa=kana=uy tana taira=muki
   then.M 1SG.M see this.M person=PL.M=PAS 1PL.M son.M.EGO=COM

   b. yaepe tsa umi ajan awa=minu=uy penu mimira=muki
   then.F 1SG.F see this.F person=PL.F=PAS 1PL.F son.F.EGO=COM

‘Then I saw these people with our son’

(Vallejos 2015)
Gender indexicality in Kukama

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<th>FS</th>
<th>MS</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1 person singular</td>
<td>tsa, etse</td>
<td>ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 person plural exclusive</td>
<td>penu</td>
<td>tana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 person singular short form</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ra</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 person singular long form</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>uri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 person singular object</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>ura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 plural</td>
<td>inu</td>
<td>rana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural clitic</td>
<td>=kana</td>
<td>=nu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proximal demonstrative</td>
<td>ajan</td>
<td>ikian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distal demonstrative</td>
<td>yukan</td>
<td>yukan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite demonstrative</td>
<td>yama/yamua</td>
<td>rama/ramua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like this</td>
<td>ajaya</td>
<td>ikiara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like that</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>yai</td>
<td>riai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>iyan</td>
<td>urian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there, then</td>
<td>yaepe</td>
<td>raepe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after that</td>
<td>yaepetsui</td>
<td>raepetsui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exhortative</td>
<td>yxwa</td>
<td>rawa/riawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection: pain</td>
<td>akatsai</td>
<td>akatai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection: frustration</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>atatai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection: cheer-up</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>atashai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possession

- possession is a universal phenomenon
- cross-linguistic observations:
  i. languages have conventionalized means of encoding possession
  ii. there is not a universal linguistic structure to all possessive constructions
  iii. possessive constructions can also express concepts other than ownership
  iv. possessive concepts can be expressed by linguistic forms not generally associated with the domain of possession; and,
  v. there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between possessive form and possessive meaning

(Heine 2001: 39)
Subtypes (Heine 1997:34-35):

X = possessor, Y = possessum

1. **Physical**: Y is physically contiguous to X:
   – *I want to fill in this form; do you have a pen?*

2. **Temporary**: X temporarily controls Y:
   – *I have a car for commuting but it belongs to Judy.*

3. **Permanent** (Alienable): X owns Y:
   – *Judy has a car but I use it all the time.*

4. **Inalienable**: Y is a kin relation/body part of X:
   – *I have brown eyes/one brother.*

5. **“Abstract”**: Y is an intangible/invisible entity:
   – *He has no time/no mercy/the flu.*
Stassen’s 2009 strategies:

(see also Givón 1984, Heine 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>PSSOR, PSUM</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic possessive</td>
<td>subj, subj</td>
<td>As for me, a knife exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locational possessive</td>
<td>subj, dat, loc</td>
<td>To/At me (is) a knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With-possessive</td>
<td>subj, ins, com</td>
<td>I am with a knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have possessive</td>
<td>subj, obj</td>
<td>I have a knife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnominal possessive</td>
<td>gen, subj</td>
<td>My knife exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicative possessive</td>
<td>subj, predicate</td>
<td>I am knife-having</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possession in Kukama-Kukamiria

- The language does not have verb such as *have, belong*.
- There is not a grammatical construction specifically dedicated to encoding possession
- Possession is inferred from several other constructions

- Do possessive expressions reflect cultural practices?

  (Aikhenvald and Dixon, 2013:46-47)
Vallejos (submitted)
Vallejos (2016)

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<td><strong>JUXTAPOSITION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. NP (MOD) (NEG) NP\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Equative &amp; proper inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. NP (NEG) NP-\textit{yara}_{(T)}</td>
<td><strong>Possessive</strong> &amp; proper inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. NP (NEG) NP-\textit{ra}</td>
<td>Attributive &amp; proper inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. NP (NEG) [V\textsubscript{sta} -\textit{n}]\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Attributive &amp; proper inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXISTENTIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (NEG) \textit{emete} (MOD) NP\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Basic existential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (NEG) \textit{emete} [PSSR PSSED]\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Existential &amp; <strong>possessive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. NP\textsubscript{i}, (NEG) \textit{emete} [PSSR\textsubscript{i} PSSED]\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Existential topic &amp; <strong>possessive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. NP =\textsubscript{LOC} (NEG) \textit{emete} NP\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Existential locative &amp; <strong>possessive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCATIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (NEG) NP PP</td>
<td>Locative</td>
</tr>
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<td>11. PP (NEG) NP</td>
<td>Locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. NP (NEG) [N N\textsubscript{relational}]\textsubscript{(T)}</td>
<td>Locative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Juxtaposition: [PSSOR]NP [ PSSUM-yara]NP

(1) a. mijiri iara-yara
    Miguel canoe-owner
    ‘Miguel has a canoe’
    (Lit. Miguel is canoe-owner’) [PT: permanent]

b. wepe kuniati tìma mena-yara
    one girl NEG husband-owner
    ‘One girl doesn’t have a husband’ [PT: inalienable, social relationship]
    (Lit. One girl is not a husband-owner’)

Stassen’s predicative possession
Juxtaposition: [PSSOR]NP [ PSSUM-yara]NP.

*Yara* is still used as a noun in the language.

(3)

a. `ra=yara` `umi=ura`
   
   `3SG.MS=owner  see=3SG.MS.OBJ`
   
   ‘Its owner sees it’

b. `raepe ikian uka-yara yawachima`
   
   `then  this  house-owner  arrive`
   
   ‘Then, this house owner arrives’
Juxtaposition: $[\text{PSSOR}]_{\text{NP}} [\text{PSSUM-yara}]_{\text{NP}}$.

(3)

a. *ikian* niapitsara *uka-yara* = tsuriay
   this man house-owner = PAS3
   ‘This man was the owner of the house’
   (Lit. This man was the house owner) [PT: permanent ownership]

c. *iminan* = *tsui* = *ka* *kukama* = *kana* *tima* *pitsa-yara* = tsuriay
   long.ago = ABL = LOC *kukama* = PL *NEG* fish.net-owner = PAS3
   ‘A long time ago, the Kukama-Kukamiria people used to not have fishnets’
   (Lit. From long time ago, the Kukama-Kukamirias were not fishnet owners) [PT: permanent]
Existential genitive: \([\text{emete} \ [\text{PSSOR PSSUM}]_{\text{NP}}]\)

(4) a. \text{emete} \ tsa \ mimirakunia=nu \ ai \ ikua
exist \ 1SG.FS \ daughter=PL.FS \ 3SG.FS \ know
\text{yauki-tara=nu}
make-REL.A=PL.FS
‘I have daughters who know how to make it’ (fan)
(Lit. There are my daughters who know how to make it)

b. \text{emete} \ y=irua
exist \ SG.FS=mate
‘He has a partner’
(Lit. His partner exists)
Existential genitive: \([\text{emete } [\text{PSSOR PSSUM}]_{\text{NP}}]\)

(4)  
ac. \(\text{ikia}=\text{ka} \quad \text{emete} \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{irua}=\text{chasu}\)  
here=LOC exist 1SG.MS mate=AFF  
‘Here (in this village) I have my partner’  
(Lit. My partner is in this village)  

d. \(\text{emete}=\text{taka} \quad \text{na} \quad \text{iki}\)  
exist=UNC 2SG chili  
‘You might have chili’  
(Lit. Maybe there is your chili)
Existential topic: \([\text{TOP}_i \text{ emete } [\text{PSSOR}_i \text{ PSUM}]]_{\text{NP}}\)

(5)

b. \text{iwirati} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{tsanuya}_i \hspace{0.2cm} \text{tima} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{emete} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{ya}_i \hspace{0.2cm} \text{tsuwi}
\text{forest} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{rat} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{NEG} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{exist} \hspace{0.2cm} 3\text{SG.FS} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{tail}

‘The wild rat doesn’t have a tail’
(Lit. As for the wild rat, its tail doesn’t) [PT: inalienable, body part]

c. \text{animaru}=\text{kana}_i \hspace{0.2cm} \text{emete} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{inu}_i \hspace{0.2cm} \text{piruara} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{tsa}
\text{animal}=\text{PL.MS} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{exist} \hspace{0.2cm} 3\text{PL.MS} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{skin} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{hair}

‘Animals have skin hair’
(Lit. As for animals, their skin hair exists)

Stassen’s topic possession
Existential locative: [PSSOR_{LOC} emete PSSUM_{NP}]

(6) 

a. *awiri*  *kuriki*  *emete*  *na=ka*
   how.much  money  exist  2SG=LOC
   ‘How much money do you have?’
   (Lit. How much money exists on you?)

b. *Mijiri=ka*  *emete*  *tapira*  *tsu*
   Miguel=LOC  existe  sachavaca  carne
   b1: ‘Miguel has sachavaca meat’
   b2: ‘There is tapir meat at Miguel’s’

c. *tsa*  *ritama-kuara*  *emete*  *wepe-nan*  *yumitawara*
   1SG.FS  village-INE  exist  one-only  teacher
   c1: ‘My community has only one teacher’
   c2: ‘In my community there is only one teacher’

Stassen’s locative possession
Correlations between construction types and possessive relations
(adapted from Heine 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSTRUCTION TYPES</th>
<th>POSSESSIVE SEMANTIC RELATIONS</th>
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<td>Locative schema</td>
<td>physical and temporary possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential schema (genitive, loc, topic)</td>
<td>permanent &amp; inalienable possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comitative schema</td>
<td>physical, temporary &amp; alienable possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equative schema (juxtaposition)</td>
<td>all but physical possession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Semantic possessive relations and construction types (Vallejos 2018)
Final remarks

• Did I produce something for multiple audiences?
• Can this grammar serve language revitalization efforts?

¡Gracias!
References

• Haas, Mary. 1944. Men's and Women's Speech in Koasati. Language 20 (3): 142-149.