

## Depicting basic existential/locative clauses in Southern Uto-Aztecan languages

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Previous typological studies have shown that there are different linguistic strategies that languages can use to locate an entity (the figure) at a certain place (the ground) (Newman 2002; Levinson & Wilkins 2006; Ameka & Levinson 2007). Some languages have no verbs (zero copula); in this case, the locative phrase introducing the ground serves as the predicative element. Languages like English use a general copula ('the cup is on the table'), while Spanish uses a locative (semi)copula ('la taza está en la mesa'). Many other languages have a set of contrastive postural verbs, such as 'sit', 'stand', 'lie', 'hang', while others have a large set of verbs that describe the disposition or collocation of the figure with respect to the ground. Other cross-linguistic studies have also shown the relationship among existence, location and possession (Clark 1978; Frezze 1992; Stassen 2009; Koch 2012; Creissels 2013, 2019; Bentley et al. 2015; McNally 2016; Chappell & Creissels 2019; Chappell & Lü 2022, and many others).

Southern Uto-Aztecan languages (Mexico) employ several types of existential/locative verbs to describe the location of the figure. Syntactically, these verbs may have fewer morphosyntactic properties than plain verbs, but they also differ from simple copula. Semantically, the selection of a particular verb depends on the animacy, number and, and inherent geometrical properties of the figure. When the figure is animate, postural verbs describe the actual posture of the entity, e.g., 'the dog is lying inside the house', 'the dog is sitting outside the house', 'the dog is standing outside the house'. When the figure is inanimate, a particular verb can combine with certain type of objects, i.e., classificatory function. In opposition, certain entities require the use of an existential verb. For instance, Yaqui uses existential/locative and postural verbs. The verb *aane* 'exist, be in the vicinity of' tends to occur with human entities; *aayuk* 'exist, be at', *o'orek* 'be at' and *manek* 'be at' (1a) usually combine with 'unbounded' entities (plural/aggregate/mass/non-countable), whereas postural verbs such as *bo'oka/to'oka* 'lying (sg/pl)', *katek/jo'okak* 'sit (sg/pl)', and *weyek/ja'abwek* 'standing (sg/pl)' describe the posture of inanimate figures according to their inherent physical and geometrical features (1b-d). O'dam (Southern Tepehuan) and Wixárika (Huichol) show a similar behavior, although similar figures may combine with different postural verbs in each language. Additionally, O'dam postural verbs also distinguish between animate and inanimate entities, and they may combine with other locative elements around the verb (2). In Wixárika, there are two 'sitting' verbs as well as a set of locative preverbal elements obligatorily attached to the verb (3). In contrast, Nahuatl languages use a single locative copula.

The aim of this paper is twofold: to examine the contexts of use of different existential/locative verbs in eight Southern Uto-Aztecan languages and, to explore the properties of existential/locative constructions in Yaqui. Within Role and Reference Grammar, the logical structure of stative locative verbs is **be-LOC'** (x, y), where 'x' is the location (ground), and 'y' the theme (figure) (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005). However, this standard representation for locative verbs does not capture the semantic complexity of these locative constructions. An additional goal is to suggest a set of logical structures to capture the meaning of these existential/locative verbs.

(1) Basic locative clauses in Yaqui

- a. *U-Ø tasa-Ømesa-po jikat manek*  
DET-NOM cup-NOM table-LOC up.LOCC be.LOC  
'The cup is on the table.' (BOWPED\_1; AM)
- b. *Wepul pelotam mesa-po jikat katek.*  
one ball.PL table-LOC up.LOCC siting.UND.SG.PFV  
'One ball is sitting on the table.' (SFVL\_7; AV)
- c. *U-Ø pino-Ø kawi-bepa weyek.*  
DET-NOM pine-NOM mountain-ABOVE standing.UND.SG.PFV  
'The pine is standing above the mountain.' (BOWPED\_17; GF)
- d. *Kuchara-Ø selvietam-betuk bo'oka.*  
spoon-nom napkin-below lying.UND.SG.PFV  
'The spoon is lying under the napkin.' (BOWPED\_24; ML)

(2) Basic locative clauses in O'dam

- a. *Gu jo'kari' bhammi boo' ba'ak-dham*  
DET spider DEM:up lying.ANIM.SG house-ABOVE  
'The spider is lying up in the roof.' (BOWPED\_7; AB)
- b. *Bha judai-cha'm kat gu ux*  
DIR:toward.speaker stone-ABOVE lying.INAM.SG DET stick  
'The stick is lying [towards] on the stone.' (SFVL\_35; LB)

(3) Basic locative clauses in Wixárika

- a. *Pelota-te 'ipari-tia pa-ye-tei*  
ball-PL chair-LOC ASE-LOC-sitting.volume.PL  
'The balls are sitting under the chair.' (BOWPED\_16a; Em)
- b. *Tuminimexa-tsie pa-a-kate*  
money table-LOC ASE-LOC-siting.no.volume.PL  
'Money is sitting on the table.' (DELOCA\_38; JL)
- c. *Puteyu-te tsikibiti-tsie paa-ti-'u*  
bottle-PL basket-LOC ASE-LOC-standing.PL  
'The bottles are standing inside the basket.' (SFVL\_60; Mo)

### Basic references

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