

(J) It's True: The truth about Chalcatongo Mixtec (1/2)

J1. Answers:

	Chalcatongo Sentences		English Translation
1.	Nduča kaa ñíʔní.	a.	The water is hot.
2.	Maria kúu ñ xasúćí.	e.	Maria is a young person.
3.	Ñíʔní nduča.	f.	The water is hot.
4.	Juan kaa lúlí.	i.	Juan is small / short.
5.	Ndežu kaa žaʔu.	h.	The food is expensive.
6.	Súćí Maria.	g.	Maria is young.
7.	Juan kúu xažiirí.	c.	Juan is my husband.
8.	Pedro kúu xalúlírí.	b.	Pedro is my child.
9.	Kaa kwíí.	d.	It is green.

J2. Translate the following into Chalcatongo Mixtec:

- depth = xakǎnú
- heat = xañíʔní
- Maria is brave = Ndeʔé Maria.
- Pedro** is tall. = Pedro kaa súkú.
- Pedro is a tall person. = Pedro kúu ñ xasúkú.
- The fruit is red. = Kwaʔá xabíśí.
- My fruit is the green one. = Xabíśírí kúu xakwíí.
- * **It** is true. = Kaa ndáa.
- * It is true. = Ndáa.
- * It is the truth. = Kúu xandáa.

*There is no equivalent in Chalcatongo Mixtec of the English "it" in these sentences.

Notes:

This problem is based on several features of Chalcatong Mixtec – however, for the purposes of the problem, some of the tasks & the discussion below have been simplified.

1. Two copulas:

Chalcatongo Mixtec has two verbs that can be used as copulas: kúu and kaa.

Kúu is used when the predicate is a noun phrase, as in example sentence 2: Maria kúu ñ xasiʔí. = Maria is a woman.

However, when the predicate consists of an adjective, the copula is kaa. This can be seen in example sentence 4: Juan kaa lúlí.= Juan is short / small.



(J) It's True: The truth about Chalcatongo Mixtec (2/2)

2. The copula “kaa” as optional & its role in adding emphasis to the subject as sentence topic:

The copula *kaa* is also optional – as example sentences 1 and 3 demonstrate. Sentence 1 features the copula *kaa*. *Nduča kaa ñíʔní.* – this means that the subject of the sentence, *nduča*, is stressed or emphasised. The speaker is referring to a particular volume of water, whereas in sentence 3, the copula *kaa* can be omitted: *Ñíʔní nduča.* In this case, the speaker is not emphasising a particular volume of water, they are not putting any emphasis on the water as topic & subject of this sentence.

Interestingly, the word order (which is mostly VSO in Chalcatongo Mixtec, but not consistently) changes when the copula *kaa* is omitted, the predicate (adjective) precedes the subject.

3. Nominalization: making nouns out of adjectives

By adding the prefix *xa-* to an existing adjective, you can create a noun with a similar meaning as the original adjective. In example sentence 6: the adjective *súčí* translates as “young”, while in example sentence 2: *Maria kúu ʔ xasúčí.*, a new noun has been formed by adding *xa* to *súčí*, creating the noun “young one (young person)”.

4. Possessive marker –rí:

The suffix *-rí* can be added to the end of a noun to express first person singular possessive (e.g. “my” or “mine”). Example sentence 8 demonstrates this: *Pedro kúu xalúlírí.* Here the original adjective *lúli* (small, short) has become a noun through having the nominalizer *xa-* prefixed (making it mean “child”) and the adding of the suffix *-rí* can be translated as the possessive determiner “my”.

References:

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