Semantic and discursive functions of noun classification morphemes in kamëntsá
Plan of the talk

- Introduction: People and language
- Noun classification in kamëntsá
- Semantic functions
- Pragmatic-discursive functions
- Conclusions
Introduction

This presentation aims:

- Offer a general overview of the semantic and pragmatic/discursive functions found in the noun classification morphemes of kamëntsá (a.k.a. camsá, kamsá, ISO: kbh), based on the proposal of Contini-Morava and Kilarski (2013).
- Give keys to understand the factors that intervene in the choice and use of such morphemes by speakers.
Map 1 Sibundoy Valley. From Google Maps (2019).

Map 3 Sibundoy Valley. From McDowell (s.f.).
The Kamëntsá are around 5000 people.

**Sociolinguistic situation**

- Monolingual in Spanish: 48.0%
- Bilingual Spanish-Kamëntsá: 51.0%
- Trilingual Spanish-Kamëntsá-Inga: 12.0%

**Skills of kamëntsá speakers**

- Understand but not talk: 33.0%
- Talk and understand: 51.0%
- Only write and read: 12.0%
Typological aspects of kamëntsá

- Complex morphology:
  - nominal and verbal roots allow to affix several number of morphemes
  - Incorporation of nominal roots to verbs
  - Defined morphemic limits

- Order of constituents:
  - SV for intransitive
  - VO for transitive

- Agreement
  - Person markers in the verb.
  - Anaphoric: Pro-drop language
Generalities of noun classification system

- Morphemes have semantic criteria of material, shape, consistency and configuration.
- No all nouns suffix classification morphemes: generally inanimate and non-human nouns, but not always.
- Animate nouns can suffix these morphemes but the prototypical semantic changes.
- The choice of classification markers is determined by the speaker's purposes.
## System generalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nº</th>
<th>Morpheme</th>
<th>Allomorph</th>
<th>Semantics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-bé</td>
<td>-xe, -xa, -xua</td>
<td>Round shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-x</td>
<td>-xe, -xa, -xua</td>
<td>Long and flexible shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-fx</td>
<td>-fxe, -fxa, -fxua</td>
<td>Long and rigid shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-ʃ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flat shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-tʃ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fleshy material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-ʃ</td>
<td>-ʃa, -ʃe</td>
<td>Dry material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-ʃ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crumbly material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liquid material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-ʃá</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Morphosyntactic characteristics

- Bound morphemes (suffixes).
- Morphemes heterogeneity: each noun can suffix different marks.
- They are suffixed to nouns, adjectives, numerals, demonstratives and verbs.
- Concordance of the classification mark just within FN.
- Concordance between adjective and head just in the order HEAD + ADJ.
No obligatory markers

(1) (a) ak ko-n-ts-e-bomna uta ndøtš-bé,

2.SG 2.SG-ACER-PROX-VAL-have two stone-CL:ROUND

“You have two stones”.

(b) uta ndøtš-tem ftʃendə-tema-t

two stone-DIM blue-DIM-DL

‘two little blue stones’

(c) Shem ndētš-á.

woman stone-EP.V

‘woman statue’
Semantic functions
‘expansion of the lexicon’

Elements of the plant world:
- Tree, plant, fruit, juice, flower, fiber, seeds

2. (a) *tausə-bé*
   - *curuba-CL:ROUND*
   - “curuba fruit”

(b) *tausə-xua*
   - *curuba-CL:LONG.FLEXIBLE*
   - “curuba plant”
Expansion of the lexicon

- Elements of the plant world:
  - Tree, plant, fruit, juice, flower, fiber, seeds.

3 (a) kuakxay-ə-ʂ

  cabuya-EP.V-CL:CRUMBLY

  “cabuya plant”

(b) kuakxay-ə-x

  cabuya-EP.V-CL:LONG.FLEXIBLE

  “cabuya fiber”
Expansion of the lexicon

- Elements of the plant world:
  - Tree, plant, fruit, juice, flower, fiber, seeds.

4 (a) buatəntsme-ʃ  (b) buatəntsme-ʃá  (c) buatəntsme-ʃ-a-tʃ
“achirilla plant”  “achirilla seeds”  “hoja de achirilla”
Expansion of the lexicon

- Animal parts vs. Plant parts:

5 (a) buakua-ʃ arm-CL:DRY
   “tree branch”

(b) buakua-tʃ arm-CL:FLESHY
   “human arm”
Expansion of the lexicon

- Derivatives functions
  - Adjective to noun:

  6  (a) ADJ
     nguəʃnán  green.blue
     “color green.blue”

  (b) NOUN
     nguəʃna-bé  green.blue-CL:ROUND
     “bluebird”
### Expansion of the lexicon

- **Derivatives Functions**
  - Adjective to noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a) ADJ</th>
<th>(b) NOUN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>tšabe</td>
<td>tšabe-bé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good-CL:ROUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“good”</td>
<td>“plum”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expansion of the lexicon

- Derivative Functions
  - Verbs to nouns

(8) wa-mats-axonjan-fá

thing-ear-hang-CL:GROUP

“earring”
Differentiating referents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a) niŋ-ə-f</th>
<th>(b) niŋ-bé</th>
<th>(c) niŋ-ə-fxa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;firewood&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;piece of wood&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;wooden stick&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction  | noun classification  | Semantic functions  | Discursive functions  | Conclusions
Differentiating referents

- **Characterization of plants:**

10 (a) bongue-§

fern-CL:CRUMBLY

“fern (no salient characteristic)”

(b) bongue-ʃ

fern-CL:DRY

“old fern”
Differentiating referents

- Distinctions between animal parts vs. humans parts:

<p>| | | |</p>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 (a)</td>
<td>xuatsa-ʂ</td>
<td>(b) xuatsa-ʃ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- tooth-CL:CRUMBY | tooth-CL:DRY | tooth-CL:GROUP |
- “human tooth”  | “animal tooth”  | “dental prosthesis/jaw”  |
Differentiating referents

12  (a)  atš-be  base  mojexon-bé  buangan-bé
       1.SG-POS  little  ball-CL:ROUND  red-CL:ROUND

"My little red ball" (elicited)

(b)  uta  mojexon-ə-f  wasñindʒan-ə-f
    two  ball-EP.V-CL:DRY  shiny-EP.V-CL:DRY

“two shiny balls” (in the experiment)
Ascribing properties to referents

13. (a) b̥sen-bé
   eye-CL:ROUND
   “eye” (neutral value)
(b) b̥sen-ə-ʂ
   eye-EP.V-CL:CRUMBLY
   “no normal eye” (descriptive value)
(c) b̥sen-ə-x
   eye-EP.V-CL:LONG.FLEXIBLE
   “beautiful and shiny eye” (affective value)

(Jamioy Mushavisoy, 1989: p. 26)
Discursive functions
Referent identification

Morphemes can be present in adjectives, numerals, demonstratives and verbs for anaphoric functions.

14 (a) kanže tomate-bé mas bətsa-bé y inše-bé mas bintʃ-ə-bé


“One tomato is more mature than the other.”

(b) y inše-bé mas buangan-bé y inše-bé-na mas şaxanse-bé

and other-CL:R more red-CL:R and other-CL:R-TOP more white-CL:R

“And the other one is more red and the other is more white”.
Referent identification

15 (a) bobonts e-n-se-x-a-bi-á  ʂoʂo-ng-ə-be  pelota-bé
   the young man was washing the child’s ball
(b) mor  t-o-n-x-o-ta-bé.
   después  PERF-3.SG.AGEN-ACER-DIST-VAL-sit.down-CL:ROUND
   then he sat down [on the ball].
Referent identification

It is not necessary that the noun has been explicit, since the referent may be implicit in the context.

(14)  a. kem-soi  n-ts-e-mne  pseng-ə-x
          DEM=cosa  3.SG.AG-ACER-APROX-VAL-be  black-EP.V-CL:LONG.FLEXIBLE
      This thing is black (referring to a plasticine stick)

   b. kem-fx
       DEM=CL:LONG.RIGID
       This (referring to a pencil)
Re-presentation of referents

Kamëntsá tales

Kamëntsá tales about origin of the animals use to have the same structure:

In the beginning the animal protagonist (rabbit, centipede, weasel, swallow, grasshopper, among others) could become human, but it loses that ability when it is discovered by the true humans. Then, it is resigned to occupy its animal form forever.

The narrator always suffix a classification morpheme to express the transformation of the referent.
Re-presentation of referents

Kamëntsá tales: Example 1

santopes i-n-a-mna botaman shem-bása
centipede 3.SG.AG-ACER-VAL-be beautiful woman-little
“The centipede was a beautiful young lady”.

xoməʂ oxatay-ok ndoŋ kem tobiaş t-f-i-yaténəs, sino santopesə-xa
sijse (plant) point-in NEG DEM young.lady PERF-ACER-1.SG-see but ciempiés-CL:LONG
"At the point of the sijse (plant) harvest I did not see this young woman, but only a centipede (despective)."
Re-presentation of referents

Kamëntsá tales: example 2

The devil is selling chickens with the promise that they are excellent. However, chickens are skinny and sick.

The classification morpheme used by the narrator to refer to the chickens is different when the devil speaks than when the scammed buyer speaks.
Re-presentation of referents

- Kamëntsá tales: example 2

Devil:
morna tʃə boyetə-nga tsentsán ş-m-a-tajatá
now DEM chicken-PL half 2.DL-ACER-VAL-distribute
"Now let's divide the chickens half-and-half."

Buyer:
sertə x-a-ibetata orna ftseng boyeto-fxə-nga mo-x-tsaxamnə-fxə-ng
“Certainly at nightfall the rest of the chickens (skinny and sick) flew out”.
Conclusions

- The kamëntsá classification morphemes have a wide range of functions, both semantic and discursive, that continue to be productive in the use of the language and for its dynamics.
- It is important to note that some of these functions (such as the derivative) not only works with the classification morphemes, but also the morphemes of number, case and other nominal roots. Therefore, it is necessary to study the relationship between the classification system and other parts of the grammar to establish its incidence in the communicative contexts and their functional characteristics.
- This type of results allow to strengthen the linguistic theory since they show how the same inventory of categorization morphemes can present different functions in the use of the language.
Thank you!
Merci!
¡Gracias!
¡Ašlëpay!
References


