Tone overlay in Copala Triqui: Nominal compounds and other syntactic domains

Overview: This paper provides an analysis for the interface of phonology and syntax in 'denominalized adjectives' in Copala Triqui (CT). The analysis is one of tone overlay—a productive system in which the lexical tone melody of a target item is overriden in a specific syntactic context (Heath and McPherson 2013). We propose that CT has two types of N–N compounds: (i) the head asymmetrically c-commands its modifier, which results in a syntactic configuration triggering tonal overlay; and (ii) the head symmetrically c-commands its modifier and tonal overlay does not apply. Our analysis makes it possible to integrate a seemingly lexical processes (Hollenbach 1984, 2008; Broadwell 2011) into a broader, syntactically-defined tonal phenomena.

Data: Hollenbach (1984, 2008) describes a process in which a noun becomes an adjective via tone lowering (1). In support of her lexical analysis, she reasons "neither the existence of a derived form nor its meaning is predictable" (Hollenbach 1984:238).

1	a.	aga'^{3}	'metal'	*aga'*^{13}	'metallic'	
	b.	*cunj*^{32}	'dough'	*cunj*^{2}	'doughy'	
	c.	*yanj*^{5}	'wax'	*yanj*^{1}	'waxy'	Hollenbach (2008:63—64)

Instead, we find that this process is productive for our speakers. We view the resulting meaning as largely predictable, as in (1) and (2a), and when idiosyncratic meanings arise, they do so in combination with a specific head noun, e.g. *ya'aj*^{1} can have either a figurative meaning, e.g. 'hot wind' or a literal one, e.g. 'chili plant' depending on the context (2b). In other cases, both figurative and literal interpretations are available (2c).

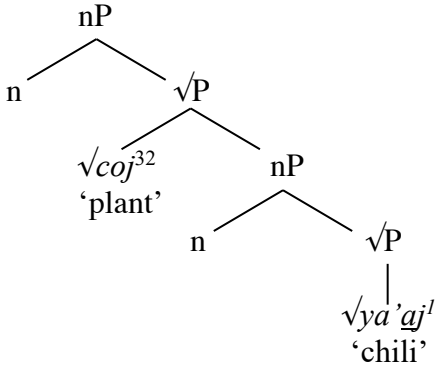
2	a.	*nuj*^{3}	'hide'	*chamara*^{4} *nuj*^{1}	'leather jacket'
	b.	*ya'aj*^{3}	'chili'	*nana*^{1} *ya'aj*^{1}	'hot wind' lit: chili wind
				coj^{32} *ya'aj*^{1}	'chili plant'
	c.	*yu've'*^{3}	'snow'	*chii*^{3} *yu've'*^{1}	'snowman, cold-hearted man'

Analysis: We propose that the tonal patterns in (1-2) are the result of a syntactically-defined tonal overlay rule (3). See also McPherson (2014) for tonal overlay that refers to c-command in Dogon languages.

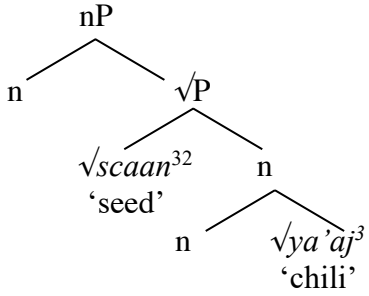
3. **Tone lowering:** a word's lexical tone is lowered when it is asymmetrically c-commanded by a word of the same category.

On our account, 'denominalized adjectives' are found in N-N compounds for which the head asymmetrically c-commands the modifier (4a). In this configuration, (3) applies and the head triggers a tonal overlay on its modifier resulting in /3/ *ya'aj*^{3} 'chili' → *coj*^{32} *ya'aj*^{1} 'chili plant'. CT also has N–N compounds for which (3) does not apply. We take these cases to reflect symmetrical c-command between the head and modifier (4b), as in *scaan*^{32} *ya'aj*^{3} 'chili seed' (cf. *coj*^{32} *ya'aj*^{1} 'chili plant').

4 a. N–N phrasal compound (~Siddiqi 2009)



b. N–N head compound



Implications: CT has many tone lowering processes that apply in a variety of syntactically defined domains (Hollenbach 1984, 1992, 2008), e.g. Broadwell (2011) proposes an account of tone lowering in complex verb constructions that refers to branching. Cross-domain tone overlay paradigms include aspectual inflection (see 5), possession, constituation negation, and apposition.

5. Tone overlay in one nominal and verbal domain

	Nominal Domain			**Verbal Domain**		
Overlay	Simplex	Compound	Gloss	Completive	Potential	Gloss
a. 31 → 1	tachri<u>i</u>^{31}	tach<u>ii</u>^{1}	'feather'	can<u>uu</u>^{31}	can<u>uu</u>^{1}	'thunder'
b. 32 → 2	rmii^{32}	rm<u>ii</u>^{2}	'ball'	cotoj^{32}	cot<u>o</u>j^{2}	'sleep'
c. 3 → 1	yu've'^{3}	yu've'^{1}	'snow'	cavi'^{3}	cav<u>i</u>'^{1}	'die'
d. 3 → 13	aga'^{3}	ag<u>a</u>'^{13}	'iron'	caraa^{3}	car<u>aa</u>^{13}	'fill'
e. 4 → 2	agüeé^{4}	agü<u>ee</u>^{2}	'coffee'	cachén^{4}	cach<u>e</u>n^{2}	'pass'

We show how our syntactic account of 'denominalized adjectives'—and the general language of the tonal lowering rule in (3)—allows for the unification of CT tone lowering across domain types, each resulting from c-command relations.

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