Michael Dürr

Reference to space in colonial Quiché

Electronic edition

Resumen

Se examinaron diversas estrategias para la aprehensión gramatical del espacio, partiendo de una oposición básica de dos principios, el de referencia déictica en que se tiene en cuenta la posición del hablante, y el de la referencia intrinseca o descentrada, en que el centro no es el desplaza del ego, sino que se mantiene en el espacio interno de los objetos, También se analizó el papel de ciertas partes del cuerpo y los usos metafóricos de las expresiones locales.

Michael Dürr

Reference to space in colonial Quiché[*]

1. Introduction

In **16**th-century Quiché documents space is of great importance as a grammatical and cultural theme.[1] In narrations such as the Popol Vuh a great number of morphemes indicate position and motion of the protagonists whereas characterizations the western reader is more familiar with are not present. It is possible, therefore, to describe the domain of spatial reference in some detail even if there are gaps – in part by chance, in part resulting from the discourse genre.

The first part of this article will give a brief sketch of spatial reference in **16**th-century Quiché. It aims at a general characterization of the subdomains of spatial reference and of the interaction of these subdomains. Semantics, which is also of great interest, will not be treated in this first part because data are not sufficient for an analysis of the field in detail. In the second part of the article a feature of Quiché spatial reference will be discussed which has been neglected in prior studies, namely the exclusively intrinsic system of reference within one of its subdomains. The concept of "intrinsic" permits us not only to eliminate several seeming inconsistencies but also helps lead us to a better understanding of cosmological beliefs in Quiché culture.

2. Subdomains of spatial reference

Within the general domain of space several subdomains can be established which are related to particular lexical and syntactic units and their functions:

subdomain	unit	function
1. motion and direction	verb phrase	predicate
2. position	noun phrase	predicate
3. location	noun phrase	oblique

This system corresponds to the clear-cut division between verbs and nominals according to the opposition of dynamic vs. static: motions and actions are dynamic and are therefore expressed by means of finite verbs, whereas positions and states must be referred to by means of nominals even in predicative usage. Moreover, predicates determine the interpretation of the oblique noun phrase associated with the subdomain of location:[2]

predicate	oblique noun phrase
1. motion and direction	directional
2. non-motion verbs	positional
3. noun phrase (positional, equational)	positional

2.1 Motion and direction

Motion and direction are expressed within verbal predicates either as a verb of motion, motion auxiliary or as a directional clitic. Verbs of motion imply an inherent orientation either to source, goal or position:[3]

pe(t)	"come from (source)"
el	"leave from (source)"
oc	"enter (goal)"
ul	"arrive here [base] (goal)"
opon	"arrive elsewhere [non-base] (goal)"[4]
be	"go to (goal)"

2) The following scheme is intended as a general statement and thus does not take into account several details of semantics, especially those involving transitive verbs.

3) Examples are presented according to the following conventions. Sources are indicated by page and line and a distinctive letter: R corresponds to the Títulos published in Recinos (**1957**), T to the Título de Totonicapán (Carmack and Mondloch **1983**), no letter for the Popol Vuh (Schultze Jena **1944**). Spelling follows that of the source, in the case of the Título de Totonicapán and the Popol Vuh that of the original manuscript. The spelling in these three editions is based on the conventions of **16**th- and **17**th-century Spanish. It is defective, especially as to glottalized consonants. Thus the graphemes *c/qu* represent any of the phonemes /k/, /k'/, /q/, and /q'/. Special graphemes are used inconsistently for glottalized consonants: *g* (*g* in print, called "cuatrillo") for /k'/, ɛ ("tresillo") for /q'/, *g,* for /¢'/ and *gh* for /č'/ instead of defective *c/qu*, *tz* and *ch*. Sometimes postvelar /q/ is indicated by *k*. Vowel length, probably a distinctive feature as in several modern dialects, is not recorded. Following Spanish orthography *u/v* are used ambiguously for both /u/ and /w/ and *i/y* for /i/ and /y/. *ç* and *z* represent /s/, *h* /x/. For details see Dürr (**1987**).

2

bin	"go (position)"
icou	"pass (position)"

With these verbs of motion, location is always inherently present even if there is no overt locative noun phrase. Moreover, the semantic interpretation of the locative noun phrase depends exclusively on the orientation of the verb of motion:

(1)   *cate puch ta   x-ø-be-c   pa   abix*
       then   and   TA   COM-3sA-go-IS LOC cornfield
       and then she went to the cornfield (52.15)

(2)   *ta   x-e-pet-ic   chi   tulan*
       TA   COM-3pA-come-IS LOC   <name>
       they came from Tulan (108.27)

(3)   *ta   x-ø-opon   chi   tulan*
       TA   COM-3sA-arrive   LOC   <name>
       he arrived at Tulan (108.32)

Within the verb phrase there are two sets of morphemes indicating motion or direction. Both sets are derived from intransitive verbs of motion and add a goal orientation to the verb phrase. The class of motion auxiliaries consists of two members: *be* "go" and *ul* "come". These two elements follow the tense-aspect marker and the absolutive pronominal prefix and precede the ergative pronominal prefix of transitive verb stems or the intransitive verb stem. Being part of a transitive construction, *be* and *ul* indicate the movement of the agent, contrary to the general ergative pattern of Quiché. In contrast to the other members of the auxiliary class, motion auxiliaries must be combined with the phrase-final suffix used with imperatives:

(4)   *ta x-e-be   cam-oc   ri   qui-cahau*
       TA COM-3pA-go   die-IIS   DEF 3pE-father
       their fathers went to die (68.3)

(5)   *qu-ix-be   na   cu   nu-vab-a*
       INC-2pA-go   Prospective then 1sE-lead-ITS
       I'll go and lead you (30.8)

(6)   *c-ø-ul   qui-tzono-h   ri   a-ɛaɛ*
       INC-3sA-come 3pE-ask-TS   DEF 2sE-fire
       they came to ask you for fire (112.19)

The class of directionals is restricted, too. These adverbial modifiers follow the verb. The most frequent ones are:

vbic	away from here
cahoc	downward, descending
acanoc	upward, ascending
vloc	toward here [base]
apanoc	toward another place [non-base]
canoc	remaining at a place

Except for *vbic*, directionals are goal-oriented and therefore the locative noun

phrase has to be analysed as goal. In transitive sentences they indicate the direction of the patient in accordance with the general ergative pattern of the language. With the exception of *vbic*, directionals can be analysed as verbs of motion followed by the phrase-final suffix *-oc* "intransitive imperative".

(7)   *c-at-el*   *vbic*
       IMP-2sA-leave   away
       go away! (52.3)

(8)   *x-ø-qui-tuyuba*   *acanoc*   *ch-u-vi*   *nima*   *cutam*
       COM-3sA-3pE-put   upward   LOC-3sE-top   big   trunk
       they put it on top of a big trunk (60.28)

Note that there are two verbs of arrival and two related directionals as well which differ in regard to the classification of the goal either as base or as non-base. "Base" frequently corresponds to the permanent residence of the person referred to as the argument and may vary in size from one's house to one's hometown:

(9)   *anim*   *chi*   *cut*   *x-ø-pe*   *ri*   *atit*
       quickly   again   then   COM-3sA-come   DEF   old*woman
       x-ø-ul   *chi*   *cut*   *chi*   *r-ochoch*
       COM-3sA-arrive*home   again   then   LOC   3sE-home
       the old woman came quickly and arrived again at her home (54.1)

(9a)   *x-e-vl*   *chiri*   *pa*   *tinamit*   *cumarcaah*
       COM-3pA-arrive*home   there   LOC   town   <name>
       they arrived there at Cumarcaah (150.17)

In general, all other places are considered as non-base even if they are such important towns as Tulan Zuiva (see example (108.32) above) where the tribes stayed for some time and received their gods.

     There are few exceptions which point to a more sophisticated attribution sensitive to discourse pragmatics – compare the following gloss in a modern dictionary (Diccionario Quiché **1980** s.v.): *c-ul-ic* "llega aquí o al punto de orientación de un relato", but data are not sufficient to analyse this aspect in detail:

(10)   *ri*   *zamahel*   *x-ø-opon*   *r-ug*   *c-atit,*   [...]
       DEF   messenger   COM-3sA-arrive   3sE-with   3pE-grandmother
       ta   *x-ø-ul*   *canoc*   *v-zamahel*   *xibalba*
       TA   COM-3sA-arrive*home   remaining   3sE-messenger   <name>
       the messenger came to the grandmother('s home), [...] the messenger of Xibalba arrived to stay for a while (66.29)

In this example the shift from non-base to base is due to a change of viewpoint. Even though "messenger" is argument of both verbs, the second verb has the base viewpoint of the more prominent grandmother of the twin heroes Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Moreover, especially in the mythological part of the Popol Vuh, the usage of *opon* and *ul* seems to be a rhetorical device for

4

highlighting conflicts, e.g. after becoming pregnant, the girl Xquic returns home to non-base:

(11)   *ta*   *x-ø-opon*   *cut* *chi* *r-ochoch* *ri*   *capoh*
        TA   COM-3sA-arrive then LOC 3sE-house DEF girl
        the girl arrived at her home (48.9)

And indeed, when the girl's father noticed her pregnancy she had to flee to avoid being killed. After another disturbance of their family life (the transformation of their half-brothers into monkeys), the twin heroes Hunahpu and Xbalanque, too, no longer return home to base even though there are no overt consequences of their behaviour in the story. Finally, beside interfering discourse pragmatics, another difficulty is the understanding of sequences of verbs of motion and motion directionals which interact to create numerous shades of meaning:

(12)   *a*   *pa*   *c-at-pe*   *vi*   *vloc*
        what? Question INC-2sA-come LdL   here
        where do you come from (now being here)? (52.1)

(13)   *anim*   *x-e-be-c,*   *x-e-opon*   *ch-u-chi*   *choh*
        quickly COM-3pA-go-IS COM-3pA-arrive LOC-3sE-edge oven
        they left quickly and arrived at the edge of the oven (88.29)[5]

2.2 Position

Position is expressed by a special root class within Quiché (and Maya languages in general). Members of this root class cannot be used as free lexical items without a derivational suffix; the most frequent suffixes for predicative usage are:

    $+V_{root}l$ *participle of state*
                     "be in a certain position"
    $+e$ /+eʔ/   *intransitive verb*
                     "take a certain position"
    $+V_{root}ba$ /+Vbaʔ/ *transitive verb*
                     "put an object into a certain position"

In static (participial) usage positionals indicate the position of the object referred to in space. In dynamic (verbal) usage they indicate the position achieved by the object as a result of the motion or action, according to the ergative pattern:

(14)   *cub+ul* *cu*   *ri*   *gahol* *pa*   *be*
        sit+PSt then DEF boy   LOC road
        a boy is/was sitting on the road (68.11)

---

5) Contrast the first example (52.15) quoted in chapter 2.1 which shows the goal orientation of *be* without a second verb of motion.

(15) *tac+al*   *v-bac*   *vvb*   *ch-u-caɛate*
stand+PSt   3sE-bone   blowgun   LOC-3sE-jaw
the blowgun pellet stands out from his jaw (20.15)

(16) *x-ø-qui-col+oba*   *cut*   *chi*   *qui-vach*   *ahau-ab*
COM-3sA-3pE-hang+Suf   then   LOC   3pE-face   king-Pl
they let it hang down in front of the kings (94.3)

(17) *x-ø-col+e*   *apanoc*
COM-3sA-hang+Suf   elsewhere
it was hanging down elsewhere (94.10)

2.3. Deictic reference

In Popol Vuh Quiché there is a three-way distinction among demonstratives:

	demonstr. pronouns		*(demonstr.) article*
	free	enclitic	
visible			
– proximate	*va*	*va*	*(ve)*
– distal	*(la)*	*la*	*(le)*
invisible	——	*ri*	*ri*

There are two more demonstrative deictics: the pronoun *are* "that" which is neutral as to proximity and visibility, and the adverbial element *varal* "here". These deictic expressions are documented only in part because of the discourse genre the texts represent – Quiché texts narrating myths and mythic history are characterized by the abundance of the "invisible" set, whereas the other two, especially the "proximate" forms, are not used except within direct speech or within exophoric frames including personal involvement of the narrator/writer addressing the audience. In rare cases, even in mythical or historical narrations the usage of deictic expressions is triggered by inherent semantics, e.g. toponyms and, due to the daily visibility of sunrise, the locative noun phrase *chi r-elebal quih* "at the place of the sunrise, in the east" as well are classified as *la* "far and visible".

2.4 Locative noun phrases and relational nouns

Locative usage of noun phrases is indicated by one of two particles, the general marker *chi* and the less frequent specific marker *pa* expressing internal location.[6] The semantic interpretation of location within the sentence is deter-

---

6) In addition to spatial reference, *chi* is used as a marker of all oblique case roles, but in this article only the locative usage will be discussed.

mined by the predicate. As previously mentioned, verbs of motion and verb phrases with motion auxiliary or directional enclitic trigger the directional interpretation of locative noun phrases either as source or goal (examples see above, chapter 2.1) whereas most other verbs and all nominal predicates lead to a positional interpretation of the locative noun phrase:

pa [positional ————————— "in, within"
     directional [afferent —— "into"
                   efferent —— "out of"

chi [positional ————————— "at"
      directional [afferent —— "to"
                    efferent —— "from"

(18) *xa   pa   vvb   x-e-var   vi*
      only   LOC   blowgun   COM-3pA-sleep   LdL
      they slept in a blowgun (82.25)

(19) *ma   pa   x-e-cam-ic   chi   xibalba*
      NEG   Question   COM-3pA-die-IS   LOC   <name>
      didn't they die at Xibalba? (52.1)

(20) *tiqu+il   chi   pucbal chah*
      stand*upright+PSt LOC   <name>
      it stands upright at Pucbal Chah (46.15)

(21) *x-ø-qui-tzahiza-h   cu   ha   pa   quebal*
      COM-3sA-3pE-make*dry-TS   then   water   LOC   jar
      then they dried the water in the jar (64.33)

Only a small group of transitive verbs has a directional interpretation of the locative noun phrase, e.g.

(22) *naqui   la   xchi-ø-ca-ya   pa   zel*
      what?   Enclitic   FUT-3sA-1pE-give LOC   bowl
      what can we give into the bowl? (48.34)

The specific location of objects in relation to others is expressed by a class of obligatorily possessed body part terms – the so-called relational nouns – within a locative noun phrase of the type *chi* ERG-<relational noun> <noun>, in which the object referred to is the possessor of the relational noun. In general, relational nouns correspond to English prepositions even though the utilization of body-part terms gives room for complex mechanisms of metaphoric attribution of location; the most important difference is the exclusively intrinsic usage of relational nouns in Quiché which will be discussed in chapter 3. These relational nouns include:

body-part		metaphorical spatial usage
vach	"face"	"in front of, ..."
vi	"top"	"on top of, over, above"
pam	"stomach"	"in, into"
ih	"back"	"behind, ..."
xe	"root"	"under"
chi	"lip, edge"	"at the edge of"

(23)   *maui*   *nu-hox+bal,*   *ri*   *go*   *chi*   *nu-pam*
      NEG   1sE-fornicate+NIn   DEF   exist   LOC   1sE-stomach
      it is not the result of fornication that is within me (48.27)

(24)   *x-ø-cah*   *vloc*   *ch-u-xe*   *che*
      COM-3sA-descend   here   LOC-3sE-root   tree
      he fell from the tree (56.19)

(25)   *x-e-be*   *chi*   *r-ih*   *ri*   *vmul*
      COM-3pA-go   LOC   3sE-back   DEF   rabbit
      they went after the rabbit (86.17)

(26)   *cate*   *puch*   *x-e-acan-ic*   *ch-u-vi*   *che*
      then   and   COM-3pA-ascend-IS   LOC-3sE-top   tree
      and then they climbed the tree (56.21)

(27)   *tac+al*   *ch-u-vach*   *v-bate*   *hunahpu*
      stand+PSt   LOC-3sE-face   3sE-bate   <name>
      he stopped in front of the bate[7] of Hunahpu (76.28)

(28)   *x-ø-u-cat*   *ri*   *pom*   *ch-u-vach*   *ri*   *ah*
      COM-3sA-3sE-heat   DEF   incense   LOC-3sE-face   DEF   reed
      she burned incense in front of the reeds (96.31)

Several other relational nouns do not refer to spatial relations but to grammatical ones. Most of them are not introduced by the locative particle *chi*. One member of this group, *-ug* "with (comitative, associative)", has to be used with animate nouns as a substitute for a nonspecific locative: in contrast to inanimate nouns, persons cannot be referred to with locative "at, to, from" via the locative particles *chi* or *pa*:[8]

(29)   *ta*   *x-ø-ul*   *cut*   *ri*   *ixoc*   *xquic*
      TA   COM-3sA-arrive*home   then   DEF   girl   <name>
      r-ug   *v-chuch*   *hun batz,*   *hun choven*
      3sE-with   3sE-mother   <name>   <name>
      the girl Xquic came to the mother of Hun Batz and Hun Choven (50.31)

---

7)   The *bate* is an instrument used in ballplaying.
8)   *chi* with a relational noun may be used to indicate specific location with persons.

2.5 Metaphoric usage

Spatial relations often can be attributed metaphorically to the abstract or the temporal domain. Positional roots, e.g. *cub* "sit", are used to express mental or emotional states and processes, especially in combination with body-part terms as *gux* "heart":

(30) *are   cut   cub+ul   vi   v-gux   ri   atit*
      that   then   sit+PSt   LdL   3sE-heart   DEF   old*woman
      the old woman was consoled (52.9)

(31) *ta   x-ø-qui-cu+ba   v-gux*
      TA   COM-3sA-3pE-sit+Suf   3sE-heart
      they consoled him (98.18)

As an argument of verbs of motion or as an oblique locative noun phrase abstract and verbal nouns metaphorically become "moving objects" or "places":

(32) *go   nu-tzih   chi   nu-pam*
      exis   1sE-word   LOC   1sE-stomach
      my words are within me (64.10)

(33) *ta   x-ø-pe   cut   v-tzih   varal*
      TA   COM-3sA-come   then   3sE-word   here
      then his word came from here (4.16)

(34) *xavi   ca-ø-qui-tacchi-h   ri   c-atit   chi   tze*
      only   INC-3sA-3pE-tempt-TS   DEF   3pE-old*woman   LOC   laughter
      they caused their grandmother to laugh (58.22)

(35) *xa   cu   chi-ø-coz   qui-gux   chi   qui-tzucu+x+ic*
      only   then   POT-3sA-become*tired   3pE-heart   LOC   3pE-search+PAS+VN
      they became tired of searching for them (128.26)

(36) *x-e-ɛacvachi+n   chi   qu-ib   ch-u-vi   r-ahil   c-anab*
      COM-3pA-envy+AP   again   3pE-REF   LOC-3sE-top   3sE-price   3pE-sister
      they were jealous of each other because of the price of their sisters (150.5)

Temporal relations can also be expressed by metaphoric expansion of spatial ones:

(37) *vae   xchi-ø-ca-tziba-h   ch-u-pan   chi*
      here   FUT-3sA-1pE-write-TS   LOC-3sE-stomach   again
      v-gha+bal   dios,   pa   christiano+il   chic
      3sE-speak+NIn   <name>   LOC   <name>+Suf   again
      we'll write it here, in the time of the word of God, in Christianity (2.11)

(38) *ta   x-e-cam   chi r-ih   balamquitze*
      TA   COM-3pA-die   LOC 3sE-back   <name>
   they died after Balamquitze (142.24)

3. Intrinsic reference

Reference to space can be arranged according to one of two principles, a deictic or an intrinsic. These two strategies differ in regard to the point of origin with respect to which spatial relations are expressed. The *deictic* strategy expands the egocentric viewpoint of the speaker to create a framework for spatial reference (Miller and Johnson-Laird **1976: 395**):

> "Egocentric use of the space concept places ego at the center of the universe. From this point of origin ego can lay out a three-dimensional coordinate system that depends on his own orientation. With respect to this landmark other objects can be directionally located as above or below (ego), in front or in back (of ego), to the left or to the right (of ego)."

Figure 1: Deictic reference (adapted from Wunderlich **1982**)
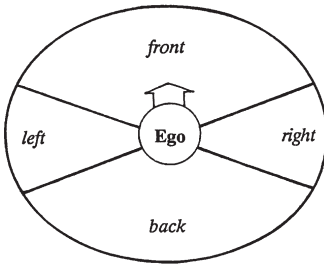
Expansion of the human body prototype   Deictic reference
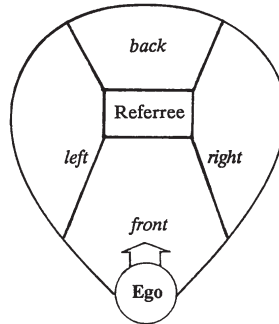
In contrast, the *intrinsic* strategy gives credit to the object as center of spatial reference (Miller and Johnson-Laird **1976: 396**):

> "the intrinsic system, where spatial terms are interpreted relative to coordinate axes derived from intrinsic parts of the referent itself."

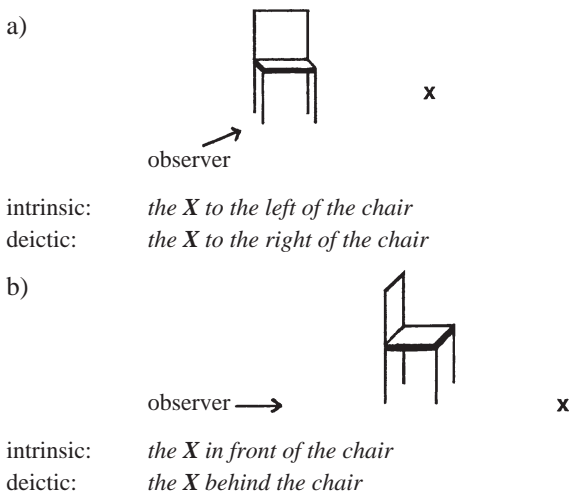Figure 2: Intrinsic reference (adapted from Wunderlich **1982**)
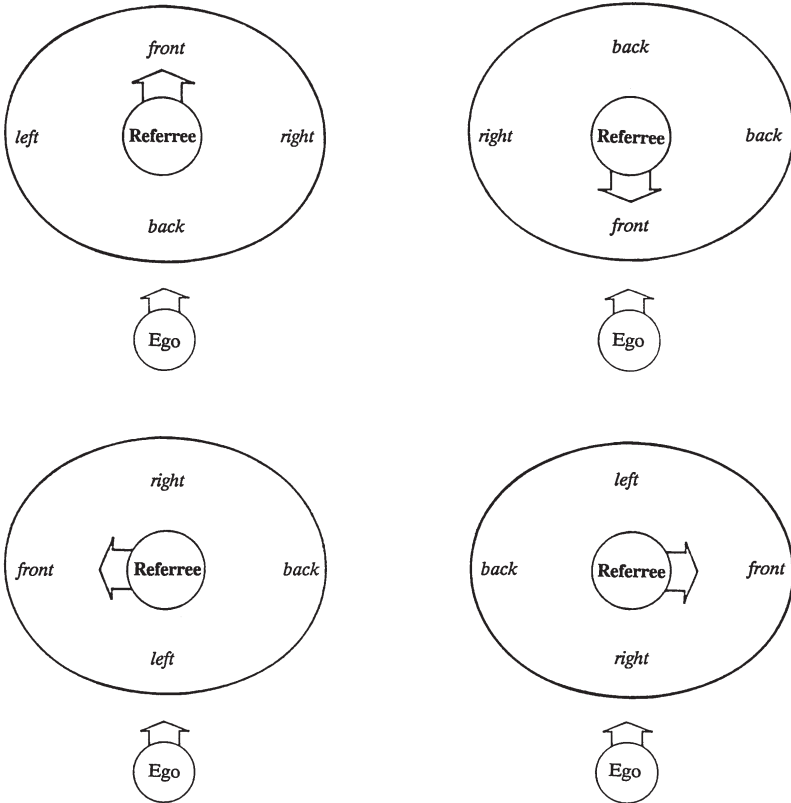
Even though the existence of two competing strategies creates possibilities for confusion as to which point of reference is being used, both are necessary to communicate successfully: whereas it is no problem for a speaker to lay out a coordinate system by expanding deictically his own front or right side etc., it is a problem for the hearer, who cannot understand what is meant unless he knows where the speaker is and in which direction he is facing; on the other side, the intrinsic strategy frees spatial reference from the immediate context of a shared situation, although it may be difficult to attribute an intrinsic front or right side to things like trees or hills.

The subdomain of space most sensitive with regard to the point of origin is that of specific location, in particular those universal binary oppositions front/back and right/left which structure space by expanding metaphorically parts of the asymmetrical human body.

For illustration of this, a glance at English may be helpful before turning to Quiché. In English, as in most other European languages, front/back and right/left can be attributed either deictically or intrinsically depending on the referent: the usage of intrinsic reference is highly probable with objects resembling the prototype of the human body; the less the resemblance, the higher the probability of deictic reference will be. Therefore persons, animals, dolls, etc. are mostly referred to intrinsically, whereas hills, trees, boxes, etc. are referred to deictically. If the object only has a few prototypical features but a front side can still be assigned to it metaphorically, either strategy can be used.

Figure 3: Ambiguous reference (adapted from Wunderlich **1982**)

a)

observer

intrinsic: *the X to the left of the chair*
deictic: *the X to the right of the chair*

b)

observer ⟶   x

intrinsic: *the X in front of the chair*
deictic: *the X behind the chair*

In contrast, no such ambiguity arises in Quiché where the subdomain of specific location is expressed by means of locative phrases with relational nouns which constitute a special usage of possessed body-part terms:

(39)   *ch-u-va   ha*
        LOC-3sE-face   house
        in front of the house, or, literally, at the face of the house (38.13)

Within such a system body-part terms must be assigned directly or metaphorically to all referents, and, as a result, only the intrinsic strategy can be used. Of course, data from **16**th-century Quiché documents are not sufficient to analyse the problems of attribution in detail and the following statements should be considered as preliminary.[9]

9) An interview with a native speaker of the related language Cakchiquel during a
     visit to Sololá, Guatemala, in January **1988** provided good evidence for the gen-
     eral validity of my suggestions but, as well, pointed to a much more complicated
     system with competing strategies of attribution.

3.1 The relational noun *vach* "face"

Good evidence for the differences between Quiché relational nouns and English prepositions can be found in the usage of *vach* "face": the translation one would expect, "in front of" is only one of several possibilities:

(40) *x-ø-kobiza+n-ic*   *ch-u-vach*   *ynup*
      COM-3sA-worship+AP-IS   LOC-3sE-face   ceiba*tree
      he worshipped in front of a ceiba (R 174.18)

(41) *ch-ø-el*   *ch-u-vach*   *v-quebal*
      POT-3sA-leave   LOC-3sE-face   3sE-jar
      it (the water) came out of the side of the jar (66.6)

(42) *chi-ø-hoc*   *qui-baqui-il*   *ch-u-vach*   *abah*
      POT-3sA-grind+PAS   3pE-bone-Suf   LOC-3sE-face   stone
      their bones should be ground on a stone (88.19)

To understand this usage the shape of the object referred to must be taken into account. With objects of vertical orientation *vach* corresponds to "in front of", with those of horizontal orientation to "on, over". This attribution of a face side results from the metaphorical expansion of the human body prototype: the face side of a standing person is the space in front of the person, that of a person lying on one's back is the space above. Thus, referring to flat objects as stones, blankets, bark and even the earth or topographic entities as rivers or slopes, *ch-u-vach* consistently has to be translated as "on, over":

(43) *x-ø-cheque*   *ch-u-vach*   *tzalic*
      COM-3sA-lie*flat   LOC-3sE-face   bark
      it lay on bark (94.10)

(44) *x-u-tziba-h*   *ch-u-vach*   *cul*
      COM-3sE-paint-TS   LOC-3sE-face   blanket
      he painted it on a blanket (132.31)

(45) *x-u-ya*   *qu*   *r-akan*   *ahau*   *ch-u-vach*   *hun*   *abah*
      COM-3sE-give   then   3sE-foot   lord   LOC-3sE-face   one   stone
      the lord put his foot on a stone (R 112.11)

(46) *maui*   *chi-ø-gaze*   *vinac*   *varal*   *ch-u-vach*   *vleu*
      NEG   POT-3sA-live   man   here   LOC-3sE-face   earth
      man cannot live here on earth (18.20)

(47) *qu-ix-choy*   *ch-u-vach*   *ha*   *ch-u-vach*   *çivan*
      INC-2pA-cut+PAS   LOC-3sE-face   water   LOC-3sE-fac   barranca
      your remains will be spread over the rivers and barrancas (T 13r.8)

In contrast, objects with horizontal orientation which are of considerable height, such as houses or hills, will be classified as "standing":

(48) *e*   *pil+ol*   *r-ech*   *nima*   *maçat*   *ch-u-ua*   *ha*
      3pF   slaughter+NA   3sE-REC   great   deer   LOC-3sE-face   house
      they were butchers of great deers on the patio of the house (T 20v.15)

(49)   *x-e-acan*   *cut*   *ch-u-vach*   *huyub*
         COM-3pA-ascend   then   LOC-3sE-face   hill
         they climbed the mountain (138.27)

(50)   *ma*   *cu*   *hun* *g,iquin, caib g,iquin* *x-ca-cam*   *ch-u-vach*
         NEG then one   bird   two   bird   COM-1pE-take LOC-3sE-face
         we couldn't get any bird on the slope of that mountain[10] (32.24)

The flexibility of usage becomes evident if *vach* locatives are contrasted with other relational nouns which are far more specific in meaning, e.g. *vi* "top":

(51)   *e*   *chacachax+inac* *ch-u-vach*   *tac*   *abah*
         3pF   be*wet+PPer   LOC-3sE-face Pl   stone
         they lay wet on the stones (132.11)

(52)   *xa*   *ch-u-vi*   *tac*   *abah*   *x-e-icou*   *vloc*
         only LOC-3sE-top Pl   stone   COM-3pA-pass here
         they came walking over small stones (116.11)

(53)   *x-e-cah-ic*   *ch-u-vach*   *huyub*
         COM-3pA-descend-IS   LOC-3sE-face   hill
         they descended the hill (140.7)

(54)   *chiri* *chac+atah+inac*   *vi*   *ch-u-vi*   *huyub*
         LOC   defeat+PAS+PPer   LdL LOC-3sE-top   hill
         they had been defeated there on the hill (140.20)

(55)   *cub+i*   *ri*   *vvcub caquix* *ch-u-vach*   *v-calibal*
         sit+Suf DEF   <name>   LOC-3sE-face 3sE-throne
         Vucub Caquix sat on his throne (22.7)

(56)   *x-e-cat*   *chi*   *cut*   *ch-u-ui*   *tem*
         COM-3pA-burn+PAS   again   then   LOC-3sE-top seat
         they were burnt (while sitting) on the seat (42.18)

In the first pair of examples the two relational nouns refer to flat (lying) stones vs. standing pointed stones (the top projecting over the water), in the second pair to hillside vs. peak, in the third to chair/throne with back vs. stool.

In any other respect the "face side" is ascribed, according to the same general principles as in English, either directly, functionally or by the "facing" default. Direct attribution is restricted to prototypically faced persons, animals and objects depicting persons, as e.g. carved idols:

(57)   *x-e-opon*   *ch-u-vach*   *ahau*   *nacxit*
         COM-3pA-arrive   LOC-3sE-face   lord   <name>
         they came to lord Nacxit (144.21)

(58)   *qu-e-cat+on-ic*   *ch-u-vach*   *tohil*
         INC-3pA-heat+AP-IS   LOC-3sE-face   <name>
         they burnt in front of the idol of Tohil (126.30)

---

10) The mountain in question has been mentioned before and is thus referred to anaphorically.

(59) *x-u-liquiba   acanoc   v-viqui cab ch-u-vach   bac*
      COM-3sE-stretch   upward   3sE-right hand LOC-3sE-face   bone
      she stretched out her right hand to touch the skull (46.23)

(60) *xa   cu   nac+al   ri   vg   ch-u-vach   r-e   xpec*
      only then sticking+PSt DEF louse LOC-3sE-face   3sE-tooth toad
      the louse was sticking to the teeth of the toad (70.13)

If the usage of an object without prototypical face gives prominence to one of its sides, this side will become the face side, as with chairs, tools or objects used as support, and painted objects, such as blankets or jars:

(61) *cub+i ri   vvcub caquix ch-u-vach   v-calibal*
      sit+Suf DEF   <name>   LOC-3sE-face   3sE-throne
      Vucub Caquix sat on his throne (22.7)

(62) *tac+al   cu   ri   quic ch-u-vach   bate*
      stand+PSt then DEF   ball LOC-3sE-face   <name>
      the rubber ball stopped in front of the bate (86.13)

(63) *x-∅-cheque   ch-u-vach   tzalic*
      COM-3sA-lie*flat LOC-3sE-face   bark
      it lay on bark (94.10)

(64) *x-∅-u-tziba-h   ch-u-vach   cul*
      COM-3sA-3sE-paint-TS   LOC-3sE-face   blanket
      he painted it on a blanket (132.31)

(65) *ch-∅-el   ch-u-vach   v-quebal*
      POT-3sA-leave LOC-3sE-face   3sE-jar
      it (the water) came out of the side of the jar (66.6)

Of course, usage may differ owing to cultural patterns. For example, the "face" side of a house in Quiché is the side facing the courtyard ("patio") whereas the street side is "at the back" of the house, as Ximénez translated *chi r-ih ha, ch-u-va ha* "a la puerta de la casa o detras de ella" (**38.13**; Ximénez Ms. fol. **13**r), see also Tedlock's note (Tedlock **1985: 270**):

> "In Quiché terminology, as Andrés Xiloj explained, the "back" of a house is the side that has a door or entrance way giving access to a public road or path, while the "face" is the side that gives onto a patio (whether enclosed on all four sides or not)."

Because everyday life takes place on the patio the door leading to the courtyard is far more prominent than the street entrance of the house. Note that *chi r-ih tinamit*, literally: "at the back of the town", by analogy also refers to the outer side of the town.

By default objects not suited to the aforementioned types of attribution will be classified as facing the observer or the object referred to. Thus, the visible side of hills, trees, etc., and the only accessible side of stones and topographic entities, such as the earth, barrancas and rivers, are referred to as "face":

(66) *ca-ø-ziqui+n ri c-atit ch-u-vach ri ah*
INC-3sA-call+AP DEF 3pE-grandmother LOC-3sE-face DEF reed
her grandmother moaned in front of the reeds (96.28)

(67) *x-ø-kobiza+n-ic ch-u-vach ynup*
COM-3sA-worship+AP-IS LOC-3sE-face ceiba*tree
he worshipped in front of a ceiba (R 174.18)

(68) *chi-ø-hoc qui-baqui-il ch-u-vach abah*
POT-3sA-grind+PAS 3pE-bone-Suf LOC-3sE-face stone
their bones should be ground on a stone (88.19)

(69) *qu-ix-choy ch-u-vach ha ch-u-vach çivan*
INC-2pA-cut+PAS LOC-3sE-face water LOC-3sE-face barranca
your remains will be spread over the rivers and barrancas (T 13r.8)

3.2 The usage of "right" and "left"

Whereas most other relational nouns are used frequently, the right/left location is rare. There is no more than one example to be found:[11]

(70) *hun ch-a-mox, hun ch-a-viqui cab chi qu-e*
one LOC-2sE-left one LOC-2sE-right hand LOC 1pE-REC
one of us will be at your left side, the other one at your right side (32.31)

Probably the animateness of the noun used as possessor is not accidental: it seems plausible that right/left associations are rare because this pair of relational nouns resists any kind of metaphorical attribution.

But there is one more occurrence in colonial dictionaries and texts which is of some interest. The entries for cardinal directions are expressed with respect to the course of the sun (Ximénez Ms. fol. 77v):

(71) *chi r-el+ebal quih*
LOC 3sE-leave+NIn sun
east, sunrise, literally: place where the sun comes out

(72) *ch-v-cah+ibal quih*
LOC-3sE-descend+NIn sun
west, sunset, literally: place where the sun descends

The north-south axis is based on metaphor: these two cardinal directions correspond to the intrinsic perspective of the personified sun wandering day by day from east to west:

11) It became evident to me while working with the Cakchiquel informant at Sololá that these two relational nouns are avoided and instead other more suitable ones are chosen.

(73) *ch-u-viqui*   *cab*   *quih*
      LOC-3sE-right   hand   sun
      north, literally: at the right side of the sun
(74) *ch-u-mox*   *cab*   *quih*
      LOC-3sE-left   hand   sun
      south, literally: at the left side of the sun

Figure 4: Cardinal directions
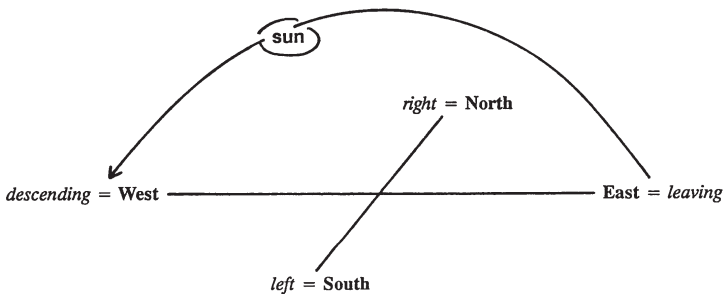
The assignment of right/left to cardinal directions can be found in a number of languages all over the world (Brown **1983**), but the association in most cases is a different one, such as in Dyola or Celtic languages, e.g. in Welsh: *cledd* "left" and *gogledd* "north (prefix "sub-" + "left")". This attribution gives credit to the deictic perspective (Brown **1983**: 136):

> "Three languages of Table **10** equate north with left indicating an eastward fac-ing canonical posture. Given additional evidence described above for the ubiquity of the latter, it is perhaps surprising to find one language, Hawaiian (**60**) with north/right and south/left association indicating a westward canonical orientation."

Taking into account the intrinsic perspective as a possible pattern of attribu-tion, the reversed association in Quiché and other Mayan languages is not sur-prising at all even though the Hawaiian case may be different.[12]

But notably even in Quiché the reversed association may be found, as in Schultze Jena's work on Momostenango Quiché (Schultze Jena **1933**: 25):

---

12) In the light of Hill's distinction of a "facing" vs. an "aligned" attribution of deic-tic reference (Hill **1982**), the Hawaiian case may be considered as an example of an "aligned" attribution and not as the result of a westward "facing canonical posture".

(75) *pa*   *ri*   *wik*   *qa-q'ab*
     LOC   DEF   right   1pE-hand
     south, literally: at our right side

(76) *pa ri*   *qa-mo'š*
     LOC   DEF   1pE-left
     north, literally: at our left side

The reader may wonder whether these data are based on misunderstanding, but, considering the intrinsic mode of attribution and the circumstances of elicitation, this possibility has to be rejected. Nevertheless, it has nothing to do with an alternative deictic attribution. Schultze Jena collected his materials in the context of calendrical divination. As described by Tedlock (**1982**), Momostenango Quiché diviners interpret signs, the "speaking blood" coming from within their body, and in so doing "the left, or female, side is aligned with north" (Tedlock **1982**: 140). Thus Schultze Jena's informant provides the association for divining practice and not for everyday life. This reversed attribution of right and left to north and south in divination is another fact which can be explained by the intrinsic strategy. A diviner can be considered as the mirror of what is happening in the world, and, consequently, the projection of the cardinal points onto the diviner follows the same principle as that of an object onto a mirror: right and left are not reversed so that the observer sees the sides reversed.

Figure 5: Cardinal directions in divination
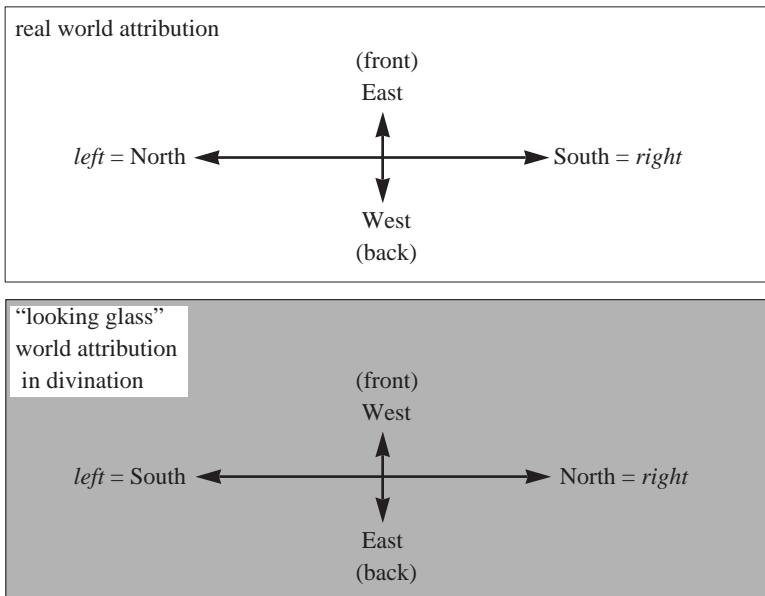
Abbreviations

AP	antipassive voice
COM	completive aspect
DEF	definite article
IIS	imperative intransitive final suffix
INC	incompletive aspect
IS	intransitive final suffix
ITS	imperative transitive final suffix
LdL	enclitic indicating left-dislocation of locative
LOC	locative particle
NA	agentive noun
NIn	instrumental noun
PAS	passive voice
Pl	plural
POT	potential aspect
PPer	past participle
PSt	participle of state
REC	recipient relational noun
REF	reflexive
Suf	suffix
TA	connective particle
TS	transitive final suffix
VN	verbal noun
1/2/3sA	1st, 2nd, or 3rd person singular absolutive
1/2/3pA	1st, 2nd, or 3rd person plural absolutive
1/2/3sE	1st, 2nd, or 3rd person singular ergative
1/2/3pE	1st, 2nd, or 3rd person plural ergative

References

Brown, Cecil H.
   Where do cardinal direction terms come from? In: *Anthropological Linguistics* **25**,2 (**1983**): **121–161**.
Carmack, Robert M., and James L. Mondloch
   El Título de Totonicapán. México: Universidad Autónoma de México **1983** (appeared **1985**).
Diccionario Quiché-Español
   compiled by David Henne Pontious. Guatemala: Instituto Lingüístico de Verano **1980**.

Dürr, Michael

    Morphologie, Syntax und Textstrukturen des (Maya-)Quiche des Popol Vuh. Linguistische Beschreibung eines kolonialzeitlichen Dokuments aus dem Hochland von Guatemala. Bonn: Holos **1987**.

Earle, Duncan M.

    The metaphor of the day in Quiché: Notes on the nature of everyday life. In: *Symbol and meaning beyond the closed community: Essays in Mesoamerican ideas* ed. by Gary H. Gossen, pp. **155**–**172**. Albany, State University of New York **1986**.

England, Nora C.

    Space as a Mam grammatical theme. In: *Papers in Mayan Linguistics* ed. by. Nora C. England, pp. **225**–**238**. Columbia, University of Missouri **1978**.

Gossen, Gary H.

    Chamulas in the World of the Sun. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press **1974**.

Hill, Clifford

    Up/down, front/back, left/right. A contrastive study of Hausa and English. In: *Here and There. Cross-linguistic Studies on Deixis and Demonstration* ed. by Jürgen Weissenborn and Wolfgang Klein, pp. **13**–**42**. Amsterdam: Benjamins **1982**.

Miller, George A. and Philip N. Johnson-Laird

    Language and Perception. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press **1976**.

Recinos, Adrian

    Crónicas Indígenas de Guatemala. Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria **1957**.

Schultze Jena, Leonhard S.

    Indiana I – Leben, Glaube und Sprache der Quiché von Guatemala. Jena: G. Fischer **1933**.

Schultze Jena, Leonhard S.

    Popol Vuh – Das heilige Buch der Quiché-Indianer von Guatemala. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer **1944**.

Tedlock, Barbara

    Time and the Highland Maya. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press **1982**.

Tedlock, Dennis

    Popol Vuh. New York: Simon & Schuster **1985**.

Wunderlich, Dieter

    Sprache und Raum. In: *Studium Linguistik* **12** (**1982**): **1**–**19**.

Ximénez, Francisco

    Arte de las tres lenguas ɛaɛchiquel, quiché y g,utuhil. Photographic reproduction of the Newberry Library manuscript, ca. **1700** (the Popol Vuh is appended).