

# PROPERTY CONCEPTS IN OTOMI: A LANGUAGE WITH NO ADJECTIVES<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In this article, I study the way property concepts such as “big”, “red”, “high”, etc. are lexically treated in Otomi, an Otomanguean language from Central Mexico. I show in extensive detail that such concepts are not encoded as adjectives, but as verbs and nouns. Lexemes denoting such concepts also occur in an interesting type of nominal compounds. The present analysis is based on the dialect of San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi, but the claims made may be extended to other Otomi variants.

**Key words.** Adjectives, property concepts, stative verbs, Otomi, Otomanguean.

**1. Introduction to Otomi and Property Concepts.** Otomi is an Otomapean, Otomanguean language spoken in Central Mexico. Given its great dialectal diversification, the language should be considered a complex linguistic dia-system consisting of a variety of “Otomi languages” -to use the term coined in Suárez (1983). The phenomenon I study here is a feature of Otomi because it is found in all varieties despite their dialectal differences. Most of the data in this article come from the dialect spoken in the village of San Ildefonso Tultepec, in the state of Querétaro, Mexico. The data from this dialect were collected from texts and field-notes from my work in the dialect. This dialect will be referred to as SI Otomi. I also present data from other sources, and mention them accordingly.

Property Concepts (henceforth PC) are also known as “adjectival” concepts because they are commonly expressed by adjectives across languages. In a fundamental article, Dixon (1982) proposes various semantic categories for PCs in a wide variety of languages. Such categories include properties regarding Dimension (i.e. “big”, “thin”, “long”, etc.); Age (i.e. “new”, “old”, etc.); Evaluation or Value (i.e. “good”, “bad”, “fair”, etc.); Color (i.e. “white”, “black”, etc.); Physical Properties (i.e. “soft”, “hard”, “heavy”, etc.); and properties associated with Human Propensity or character, such as “ugly”, “jealous”, “envious”, etc. Dixon proposes that languages vary with respect to the number of members they have in the adjectival class. The study covers a spectrum from languages of an Indo-European-like type, which have an open and productive class, to languages like Igbo (Kwa; Niger-Congo) or Hausa (Chadic) with only eight and twelve core members, respectively.

More recently, Dixon (2004) has proposed that adjectives are a part speech existing in all languages. Dixon readily warns the linguist that the criteria available to distinguish adjectives from nouns and verbs may be very subtle at times. In the core of this proposal, the author predicts that lexemes encoding PCs in a given language are treated in a special fashion within the linguistic system. Such a special treatment could be realized by means of a distinct part of speech (i.e. by adjectives in the traditional sense) or by a given sub-class of verbs or nouns (see Chafe 2004 for an apparent counterexample to this generalization in Iroquoian languages).

Dixon (2004) takes this typological insight to its farthest consequences, and thus calls “adjectives” any well-defined class containing PCs in a given language, regardless of whether the lexemes in question are treated as adjectives, nouns, or verbs by a more traditional approach. For example, a large number of lexical items expressing PCs in Korean have been regarded as verbs by Martin (1992) attending to syntactic criteria. More recently, Sohn (2004) presents enough evidence to prove that the lexemes in question form a distinct subclass of verbs if one applies morphological criteria, but prefers to call such a subclass “adjectives” instead of verbs, following Dixon (2004). In my opinion, this is a problematic stance because it implies granting morphology with the same definitional power as syntax in the characterization of a part of speech.

In contrast, Beck (1999, 2002) maintains that syntactic criteria are crucial to the definition of a part of speech, and proposes a characterization of adjectives by using a fully revised and adapted revision of the markedness theory in Hengeveld (1992). In this article, I follow Beck’s proposal -also in Beck (2000) applied to Totonac- because I think it is more convenient for the purposes of linguistic description. In this light, the word “adjective” is only used here in its traditional sense; that is, as an independent part of speech fully distinct from nouns and verbs.

**1.1. Property Concepts in Otomi.** In this article, I study the lexical treatment of PCs in Otomi in a rather extensive way, and I claim that Otomi is a language with no adjectives. Lexical items denoting PCs in Otomi can be divided in two main lexical groups: Group 1 and Group 2. All members of Group 1 are verbs, while all members of Group 2 are nouns. For this reason, the PC lexemes in the groups could be equally called “PC verbs” and “PC nouns”.

Group 1 -the PC verbs- form a large class that encodes prototypical PCs; a number of examples are given in (1).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) **Group 1 of PC lexemes**—*dóta* ‘be big’; *mě* ‘be hard’; *tx’úlo* ‘be small’; *hěts’i* ‘be high/tall’; *pothi* ‘be black’; *t’áxi* ‘be white’; *xidi* ‘be wide’; *pídi* ‘be thick’; *má* ‘be long’; *noho* ‘be fat’; *’ódi* ‘be rough’; *hú* ‘be heavy’; etc.

In contrast, Group 2 -the PC nouns- form a much smaller class with just a few members, and they denote properties ascribable to human beings; some examples are given in (2):

- (2) **Group 2 of PC lexemes**—*měfo* ‘a short person’; *bó<sup>h</sup>ka* ‘a cruel person’; *zone* ‘an evil or cruel person’; *ndúxte* ‘a naughty person’; *bíbo* ‘a clever person’; etc.

Additionally, speakers of Otomi commonly employ PC verbs and PC nouns in nominal compounds. Two examples of such compounds are presented in (3), where the PC verb *dóta* ‘be big’ and the PC noun *měfo* ‘a short person’ function as dependant members:

- (3) a. *dóta-m’asmé*                      b. *měfo-ndǒ*  
be.big-napkin                              short.person-man  
‘table cloth’                                ‘short man’

While many authors acknowledge the verbal character of lexemes in Group 1, these lexemes nevertheless have been labeled “adjectives” (cf. Ecker 1952, Hess 1968, Voigtlander and Echevoyen 1985, Hekking and Andrés de Jesús 1984, Lastra 1992, Andrews 1993, Hekking 1995, Lastra 1997, and Bartholomew 2004). These authors motivate the treatment of these forms as adjectives on semantic grounds: the lexemes in question express concepts similar to the ones rendered by adjectives in Spanish or in English. I propose a novel position, that, despite their semantics, the PC lexemes in SI Otomi are verbs (Group 1) and nouns (Group 2).

The article has the following structure. In the next section, using markedness theory in Beck (1999, 2002), I show that lexemes belonging to Group 1 are indeed verbs. In §3, I also show that such verbs form a well-defined subclass which is solely devoted to the expression of PCs (i.e. the alleged “adjectival class” according to Dixon 2004). This subclass involves two further subclasses. Having studied PC verbs in full detail, I briefly study the lexemes of Group 2 in §4, and show that they are nouns. Both PC verbs and PC nouns show interesting inflectional overlaps, which are presented in §5. Finally, in §6, I

describe in detail the type of nominal compounds illustrated in (3). In §7, the article concludes with a short prospective summary of the proposal.

**2. “Without Further Measures”:** a key concept to the lexical encoding of PCs. Beck (1999, 2002) presents criterial definitions of the major parts of speech (i.e. noun, verb and adjective) based on a theory of syntactic markedness.<sup>3</sup> Lexical classes are characterized in terms of both their semantic prototypes and their unmarked syntactic roles. In this theory, lexical elements may also appear in other extended syntactic roles beyond their prototype (i.e., verbs as heads of NPs, verbs as modifiers, nouns as syntactic predicates, etc.). As Beck (2002:25) points out, lexical items require “additional grammatical machinery” to appear in such extended cases, and for this reason they could be said to be “marked” cases. Hengeveld (1992) refers to this “additional grammatical machinery” as “further measures” (FM).

Borrowing Hengeveld’s concept, and modifying it slightly, Beck defines FM as “the morphological, syntactic, or semantic properties acquired by an element in a non-prototypical syntactic role” (1999:20). In other words, markedness theory claims that a given lexical element will act as an unmarked element in its most natural or prototypical context, but will require FM to function elsewhere. If “marked” is equated with FM, “unmarked” is synonymous to what can be called “without further measures” (WFM).

In this light, an adjective is defined as follows:

Adjective—a lexical item expressing a semantic predicate that can be WFM a syntactic dependant of a lexical item expressing its semantic argument. (Beck 2002:84)

In other words, AN ADJECTIVE IS AN UNMARKED MODIFIER; an element that may function as a modifier WFM. To illustrate this, consider the examples in (4), from Beck (2002:25), (taken from Hengeveld 1992:58):

- (4) a. *the **intelligent** detective*  
b. *the **singing** detective*  
c. *the detective **who is singing***

All the elements in bold in (4) modify the noun *detective*, which expresses a semantic argument. The element *intelligent* in (4a), a semantic predicate depicting a PC, is the only element in (4) which functions as a modifier WFM. In contrast to adjectives such as *intelligent*, verbs in English cannot function as modifiers WFM. This is illustrated in (4b) and (4c) because the verb *sing* uses

FM to function as a dependant in this noun phrase structure, i.e. in (4b) by means of suffix *-ing* (a morphological measure), and in (4c) by means of a relative clause (a syntactic measure).

The examples in (4) show the contrast involving the markedness of verbs in an attributive context with respect to adjectives. Relevant contrasts between adjectives and verbs may also occur in syntactic predication. Following Beck, a verb is defined as:

Verb—a lexical item expressing a semantic predicate which can WFM be syntactic head of a lexical item expressing its semantic argument. (Beck 2002:78)

In this way, consider the following examples:

- (5) a. *the detective sings*  
b. *the detective is intelligent*

The elements in (5) are both syntactic and semantic predicates. However in (5a), the verb *sing* functions as a predicate WFM (the *-s* being inflection). This is the prototypical function of a verb. In contrast, *intelligent* in (5b) cannot function predicatively WFM; it requires a copula to do so (a syntactic measure).

Using contrastive structures similar to (4) and (5) could prove useful to solving a dilemma of whether a given PC element is an adjective or a verb. Of course, the linguist needs to establish what criteria count as WFM for a particular language. Once the class to which a given lexical element is established attending to syntactic criteria, it is then necessary to establish whether there are subclasses. This is mainly achieved by studying morphological deviations.

As for Otomi, beside a number of nouns, the vast majority of PCs are lexically treated as verbs; the crucial point is that there are no adjectives in Otomi. I treat these lexical items as verbs because like verbs, they cannot work as syntactic modifiers WFM, and because like verbs, they serve as syntactic predicates WFM. I present evidence for this in the following two sections. Later, I introduce a full detailed description of the classes found attending to morphological criteria.

**2.1. Group 1 PC Lexemes in Attribution.** Verbs in Otomi modify nouns with FM by means of a relative clause (a syntactic measure). Otomi relative clauses are post-nominal and often lack an overt complementizer, as illustrated in (6a). Nevertheless, the definite determiner *nú/nǒ* is occasionally used as a

(pronominal) relativizer, as shown in (6b), (parentheses indicate the scope of a syntactic phrase):<sup>4</sup>

- (6) a. (*nú=ya nóbió (Ø mí= 'něhě-Ø)*RC)NP  
 DEF=PL boyfriend REL 3.IMP=have.animate.F-3OBJ  
*'yá 'i-mí=já<sup>h</sup>-p-a=nkásó*  
 P NEG-3.IMP=do-3DAT-B=notice  
 'The boyfriends she had took no notice of her'.
- b. *yá da = <z> ōng-a = (nō = r n'wó*  
 P 3.FUT=<NPS>arrive.there.B-B=DEF.SG=SG boa  
*(nō da = xot'-Ø-a = nō = r bágá)*RC)NP  
 REL.SG 3.FUT=coil.around-3OBJ-B=DEF.SG=SG cow  
 'The boa that coils around the cow would arrive (there)'.

In (6a), the relative clause *mí 'něhě* '(that) she had' modifies the head noun *nóbió* 'boyfriend' restricting its reference. In (6b), the RC *nō da xot'a nōr bágá* 'that coils around the cow' shows the use of the definite determiner *nō* as a (pronominal) relativizer.

The PC lexemes of Group 1 modify nouns in attributive position by means of relative clauses. This is illustrated by the following examples:

- (7) a. *da = ' <ñ> ét'-Ø-a = (nō = r bojó*  
 3.FUT=<NPS>place.volume-3OBJ-B=DEF.SG=SG iron  
*(Ø Ø = dótá)*RC)NP  
 REL 3.PRES=be.big  
 'They'd set up the big iron (i.e. the crane)'. (Lit. '...the iron that is big'.)
- b. *dá = hōx-'-a = ('na = r t'ó*  
 1.PST=bring.S-2DAT/OBJ-B=IND.SG=SG stick  
*(nō xi = mě)*RC)NP  
 REL.SG 3.PERF=be.hard  
 'I brought you a hard stick'. (Lit. '...a stick that is hard'.)

Like verbs, lexemes such as *dótá* 'be big' in (7a) and *mě* 'be hard' in (7b) require a relative clause to modify a noun. In other words, such lexemes are not adjectives because they are not "unmarked" modifiers, as they cannot function as dependants in an attributive context WFM (i.e., without a syntactic measure such as a relative clause). Other combinations like the ones in (8) are impossible (AP indicates "adjectival phrase"):

- (8) a. \*('na=r t'ó (mě)<sub>AP</sub>)<sub>NP</sub>  
 IND.SG=SG stick hard  
 Intended meaning: 'a hard stick'.
- b. \*('na=r (mě)<sub>AP</sub> t'ó)<sub>NP</sub>  
 IND.SG=SG hard stick  
 Intended meaning: 'a hard stick'.

**2.1.1. Degree of comparison.** Like many other Mesoamerican languages, Otomi lacks a genuine comparison construction. The language expresses comparison by means of a relative clause and the adverb *más* (a borrowing from Spanish *más*). An example of a superlative structure in attribution is given in (9), where a focus relative clause is used:

- (9) *bi* = <*d*> *ang-Ø-a* = (*nō* = *r* *ngü*  
 3.PST=<NPS>buy.B-3OBJ-B=DEF.SG=SG house=3SG  
 (*gó* *más* *Ø* = *dóta*)<sub>RC</sub>)<sub>NP</sub>  
 REL.FOC more 3.PRES=be.big  
 'He bought the biggest house'.  
 (Lit. '...the house that is the one more big').

Example (9) shows that degree of comparison for a given PC lexeme of Group 1 is encoded by means of a relative clause when the lexeme functions attributively. This represents the same type of evidence as in (7) to show that lexemes of Group 1 cannot function as modifiers WFM.

**2.2. Group 1 PC Lexemes in Predication.** Otomi verbs inflect for Tense/Aspect/Mode and for subject agreement by means of proclitics, which I treat here as function words (FW).<sup>5</sup> Two examples are given in (10) with intransitive verbs:

- (10) a. *nō* = *r* *ndō* *mí* = 'bu<sup>h</sup> = 'pú  
 DEF.SG=SG man 3.IMP=live.S=DISTAL.II  
 'The man lives over there'.
- b. *yá* *xí* = ' <*n̄*> *é<sup>h</sup>* = *nú* *nó* = *r* *jödö*  
 P 3.PERF=<NPS>come.S=DISTAL.I DEF.SG.3POSS=SG brother.of.man  
 'His brother is coming over there'.

The examples in (10) show the use of two proclitics or FWs for third person with the verbs *'bui* 'live' and *'éhě* 'come'. The FW *mí* in (10a) encodes imperfect (past), while *xi* in (10b) encodes perfect.<sup>6</sup> In (11), I give a paradigm of the most common FWs found in SI Otomi. The FWs in (11) are used with both intransitive and transitive verbs:<sup>7</sup>

(11)	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Present	<i>dí</i>	<i>gí</i>	$\emptyset$ / <i>bí/ í</i>
Imperfect (Past)	<i>n-dí</i>	<i>n-gí</i>	<i>mí</i>
Future	<i>ga</i>	<i>gi</i>	<i>da</i>
Imperfect Future	<i>n-ga</i>	<i>n-gi</i>	<i>n-da</i>
Past	<i>da</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>bi</i>
Perfect	<i>(x)tá</i>	<i>(x)ká</i>	<i>xi</i>
Pluperfect			<i>(x)ki</i>

Like any other verb in the language, the PC lexemes of Group 1 can function as intransitive predicates WFM. Consider for this purpose examples in (12):

- (12) a. *ma ngǔ mí = dótá*  
 1POSS house 3.IMP=be.big  
 'My house was big'.
- b. *nú = nǔ = r zǎ xi = mě*  
 DEF=DEM.II.SG=SG wood 3.PERF=be.hard  
 'That stick is hard'.

Examples in (12) illustrate the predicative use of two PC lexemes in Group 1, *dótá* 'be big' and *me* 'be hard'. Such lexemes do not require additional grammatical machinery to work as verbal predicates; that is, they function as syntactic predicates WFM; just like the verbs *'bui* 'live' in (10a) or *'éhě* 'come' in (10b).

**3. PC verbs.** In the last section, we have seen that PC lexemes of Group 1 are not "unmarked" modifiers; that is, they cannot modify a noun WFM. Similarly, such lexemes work as syntactic predicates WFM. These two facts support a full treatment of such lexemes as verbs. However, if one now attends to morphological criteria only, these verbs in SI Otomi form a subclass with respect to the great bulk of intransitive verbs in the language. Given that the most relevant semantic feature of this subclass is the expression of PCs, I have called the verbs of Group 1 "PC verbs". For convenience, other intransitive



verbs that do not belong to this subclass will be called “active verbs”.<sup>8</sup>

For example, in contrast to active verbs, which can only use the FW *mí* for the imperfect of third person, PC verbs may inflect by means of the FW *már*. This is shown in the contrast in (13):

- (13) a. *ma t'ó már = dótá/mě*  
 1POSS stick 3.IMP.PC=be.big/be.hard  
 ‘My stick was big/hard’.
- b. *mí = /\*már = 'ótho té n-ga = tsi-Ø = hé*  
 3.IMP=/3.IMP.PC=be.nothing what IMP-1.FUT=ingest-3OBJ=PL.EX  
 ‘There was nothing we could eat’.

This is a relevant morphological criterion to distinguish a PC verb in SI Otomi.<sup>9</sup> Quantification is yet another area where PC verbs stand out from active verbs. Active verbs receive the quantifier FW *xa*, as shown in (14), while PC verbs cannot:

- (14) a. *xa = mí = níxt'í/ 'ófó*  
 INT=3.IMP=run/write.F  
 ‘She used to run/write a lot’.
- b. *\*xa = már = dótá/mě*  
 INT=3.IMP.PC=be.big/be.hard  
 Intended meaning: ‘It was very big/hard’.

On the other hand, PC verbs receive the prefix *řá-* or the FW *ká* as intensifiers, while active verbs cannot. The contrast is shown in (15) and (16):

- | PC Verbs   | Active Verbs  |
|--|---|
| (15) a. <i>Ø = řá-dótá/mě</i><br>3.PRES INT.PC-be.big/be.hard<br>‘It’s very big/hard’.     | b. <i>*Ø = řá- 'ófó</i><br>3.PRES=INT.PC-write.F<br>Intended meaning: ‘She writes a lot’. |
| (16) a. <i>ká = Ø = dótá/mě</i><br>INT.PC=3.PRES=be.big/be.hard<br>‘It’s rather big/hard’. | b. <i>*ká = Ø = níxt'í</i><br>INT.PC=3.PRES=run<br>Intended meaning: ‘She runs a lot’.    |

PC verbs can be further divided in two main subclasses attending to subtler morphological criteria. Verbs like *dótá* ‘be big’ belong to a first subclass, which I call “Class 1 PC verbs”. This class is very similar to active verbs

regarding inflection. On the other hand, verbs like *mě* ‘be hard’ belong to a second subclass, which abounds in inflectional idiosyncrasies. I call the second subclass “Class 2 PC verbs” or “Stative Verbs”. These two subclasses are described in detail in the following sections.

**3.1. Class 1 PC verbs.** This is a closed class with a few members. The verbs involved are presented in Table (1), organized according to the categories advanced in Dixon (1982, 2004):

INSERT TABLE (1) ABOUT HERE

The two verbs rendering the most prototypical instances of dimension (i.e. “big” and “small”) are found in this class. Seven out of eleven members denote properties that are only applicable to a human or an animate entity. This is a relevant semantic feature of the class. The last three verbs in Table (1) are lexemes that can also occur as nouns. In contrast to their use as verbs, the nouns identify the sex of the referent rather than his or her age. Such trans-categorial lexemes are common across languages when they reflect properties related to Human Characteristics, e.g. Spanish *viejo* (adj/n) ‘old man’; *vieja* (adj/n) ‘old woman’; *joven* (adj/n) ‘young’; etc. (for a full discussion see Beck 1999, 2002, who treats them as words with nominal and verbal properties).

All the verbs in this class receive the special intensifier markers presented in (15) and (16) above. Exceptionally, the verb *tx’úlo* ‘be small’ uses the diminutive prefix as a (first order) intensifier, as shown in (17):

- (17) *ma ngǔ Ø = (řá-)txi-tx’úlo*  
 1POSS house 3.PRES=INT.PC-DIM-be.small  
 ‘My house is (very) very small’.

As for inflection, the verbs of this class behave much like other active verbs. As an illustration, compare how the FWs used in the inflection of the verb *dótá* ‘be big’ are the same as the ones used with an active verb *’ófo* ‘write’, an intransitive verb. Both verbs have been inflected for all grammatical persons in the present (18a) and in the imperfect (18b):<sup>10</sup>

- |      |   |   |  |
|------|---|---|--|
| (18) | 1st   | 2nd   | 3rd  |
| a.   | <b>dí</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>1.PRES=be.big/write<br>'I'm big/I write'.               | <b>gí</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>2.PRES=be.big/write<br>'You're big/You write'.                | <b>Ø</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>3.PRES=be.big/write<br>'He is big/He writes'.       |
| b.   | <b>n-dí</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>IMP-1.PRES=be.big/write<br>'I was big/I was writing'. | <b>n-gí</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>IMP-2.PRES=be.big/write<br>'You were big/You were writing'. | <b>mí</b> = <i>dótá/'ófo</i><br>3.IMP=be.big/write<br>'He was big/He was writing'. |

Despite the similarities in (18), not all PC verbs of this class inflect in the tenses available for active verbs. For example, Class 1 PC verbs may receive past tense inflection, but when they do so they express a present state of affairs. This is shown in (19) with the verb *txu* 'be old (for a woman)':

- (19) *nō=r*            *'béhñó*    **bi** = *n-txu*  
 DEF.SG=SG woman    3.PST=NI-be.old(for.a.woman)  
 'The woman is old'. (Lit. 'The woman got old'.)

In contrast, active verbs that depict states render a resultative state reading when they are inflected in the past, but do not have a present time reading. This is illustrated in (20):<sup>11</sup>

- (20) *nú*    *ma*        *nōno*    *xa=bi* = *n-jóhyá*  
 DEF 1POSS mother INT=3.PST=NI-be.glad  
 'My mother got very happy'. (resultative state)  
 \*'My mother is very happy'.

However, other PC verbs of this class cannot receive past morphology, as shown by the impossibility of (21a) with the verb *dótá* 'be big', as the verb appears to express a stative reading only. The language uses an alternative construction to express state change, which involves the verb *te* 'grow', as shown in (21b):

- (21) a. \**nú*    *ma*        *bötsí*    **bi** = *dótá*  
 DEF 1POSS mother 3.PST=be.big  
 Intended meaning: 'My children got big'.
- b. *nú*    *ma*        *bötsí*    **bi** = *te*        **Ø** = *dótá*  
 DEF 1POSS mother 3.PST=grow 3.PRES=be.big  
 'My children got big'. (Lit. 'My children grew, they are big'.)

**3.2. Class 2 PC verbs or “Stative verbs”.** This is an open and productive class of PC verbs (i.e. adjectives from Spanish enter the lexicon as members of this class). A non-exhausted list of members of this class in SI Otomi appears in Table (2) in the Appendix. Class 2 PC verbs have a number of morphological idiosyncrasies which make them look different at times from other Class 1 PC verbs or any other verb in general. Since they form a special subclass, I have labeled them “stative verbs”.

The idiosyncrasies involve the following features: (a) their argument is encoded with object morphology; (b) they receive a morphologically conditioned nasal prefix; (c) they use a special set of FWs; and (d) they lack a morphosyntactic bound form. These morphological idiosyncrasies identify stative verbs as a verbal subclass.<sup>12</sup> I describe each of the characteristics separately in the following sections.

**3.2.1. The active/stative split.** The argument of stative verbs is encoded with the same morphology that encodes objects of transitive verbs. Consider for example (17) where it is shown that object anaphora is encoded by means of suffixes:<sup>13</sup>

- (22) *yá gá = tǒn-kagí*,  
 P 2.PST=win.S-1OBJ  
*pé ga = pǝng-i ga = tsǝx-’-i*  
 but 1.FUT=return-F 1.FUT=take.animate.S-2OBJ-F  
 ‘You beat me, but I’ll come back to get you’.

The same morphology is also used to encode the argument of a stative verb, as illustrated in (23):

- (23) a. *xi = m-pá-gagí*  
 (3.)PERF=ST-be.hot-1OBJ  
 ‘I’m hot’.
- b.  $\emptyset = \check{r}á-nǐ^h-kagí$   
 (3.)PRES=INT-be.fast.walking.S-1OBJ  
 ‘I walk steady’.
- c. *xi = ñ-hěts ’i-’í*  
 (3.)PERF=ST-be.high-2OBJ  
 ‘You’re tall’.

- d.  $xi = no- 'a' i = hu'$   
 (3.)PERF=be.fat.S-2OBJ=PL  
 'You (PL) are tall'.

The pattern shown in (23) reveals that Otomi has an active/stative split involving its intransitive verbs, just as the one proposed for Guaraní by Mithun (1991). As for the active verbs in this split, a number of them display another type of split, this time of the agent/patient type, similar to the ones found in other Otomanguean languages like Amuzgo (Smith-Stark and Tapia García 2002) or Chocho (Veerman-Leichsenring 2000). Active/stative splits are based on an aspect dimension, while agent/patient are based on volition, control, etc. (for more details see Mithun 1991). Consider for example (24); an instance of the agent/patient split:

- (24)  $ya' bi = <z> a^h-kagi'$   
 P (3.)PST=<NPS>get.tired.S-1OBJ  
 'I got tired'.

Since FWs in Otomi cannot express Tense/Aspect/Mode separately from grammatical person, I have placed between angled brackets the grammatical third person in (23) and (24). In this way, the FWs used with stative verbs should be interpreted as encoding Tense/Aspect/Mode only.

The split is clearly observed when the verb is inflected in first or second person, as in (23). However, the language has a zero as the marking of third person object -as in (25); this necessarily implies that the split is covert when the verb has a third person argument, as may be seen in (26):<sup>14</sup>

- (25)  $ntonsé him-bi = <z> i-\emptyset$   
 then NEG-3.PST=<NPS>ingest-3OBJ  
 'Then (the man) did not eat it'.

- (26) a.  $ka' = \emptyset = n-tsé-\emptyset$   $ri$   $ngó$   
 INT.PC=(3.)PRES=ST-be.cold-3OBJ 2POSS flesh/skin  
 'Your skin is rather cold'.
- b.  $pé híngí \emptyset = kũhi-\emptyset,$   $ka' = \emptyset = n-jũ-\emptyset$   
 but NEG (3.)PRES be.tasteful-3OBJ INT=(3.)PRES=ST-be.bitter-3OBJ  
 'But it's not tasteful, it's quite bitter'.

**3.2.2. The stative prefix.** A number of examples in the previous section show that stative verbs receive a nasal prefix. I have treated this nasal prefix as a “stative marker”.<sup>15</sup> The prefix is not used when the stem has a nasal consonant in initial position (i.e. *mě* ‘be hard’; *noho* ‘be fat’; etc.).<sup>16</sup> Examples of verbs with the stative prefix are given in (27):

- (27) a. *bi* = <z> *i-Ø*                      *ya t'ěi nú xi = n-k'angi-Ø*  
 3.PST=<NPS>ingest-3OBJ PL wheat REL (3.)PERF=ST-be.green-3OBJ  
 ‘They ate green wheat’.
- b. *ga = kuñ-Ø = hé*                      *njabú xi = ñ-'óni-Ø*  
 1.FUT=grind.S-3OBJ=PL.EX this.way (3.)PERF=ST-be.dry-3OBJ  
 ‘We’d grind it (the chili) that way, while being dry’.
- c. *'yá Ø = řá-m-pá-Ø*  
 P (3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.hot-3OBJ  
 ‘It’s very hot’.

The stative prefix has three allomorphs with regular phonological conditioning: [n-] in (27a) is the default realization of the morpheme; [ɲ] (*ñ*) in (27b), appears before a glottal ([ʔ, h]); and [m-] occurs before a labial consonant ([p, ph, b]), as in (27c).<sup>17</sup>

There are places in the inflectional paradigm of a stative verb where the nasal prefix is not used. For example, the marker is not found when the verb appears in the negative in the present, as in (28a), and in the imperfect with the FW *mí*, as may be seen in (28b):

- (28) a. *nō ma ngü híngí Ø = (\*n-)t'áxi-Ø*  
 DEF.SG 1POSS house NEG (3.)PRES=(ST-)be.white-3OBJ  
 ‘My house is not white’.
- b. *hí-mí = (\*n-)tsé-Ø*  
 NEG-(3.)IMP=(ST-)be.cold-3OBJ  
 ‘It wasn’t cold’.

However, the prefix is used when the verb receives special PC verb morphology, presented in §3. This is seen for example in (29) with the use of the FW *mar*, despite the co-occurrence of the negative:

- (29) *hí-már = n-hu-Ø*  
 NEG-(3.)IMP.PC=ST-be.heavy-3OBJ  
 ‘It wasn’t heavy’.

**3.2.3. Special uses of FWs.** Stative verbs use FWs available to other verbs, but they have a number of morphological deviations. To express a present time state of affairs, stative verbs use perfect morphology, as in (30), rather than a zero FW, which is common with other verbs to express present, as in (31):

- (30) *xi = ñ-hěts’i-Ø*  
 (3.)PERF=ST-be.high-3OBJ  
 ‘S/he is tall’.

- (31) a. *xa = Ø = n-tsú = ’na*  
 INT=3.PRES=M-be.scared=CUOT  
 ‘They say he’s afraid’.

- b. *ri páhni Ø = ’rá’yo*  
 2POSS upper.garment 3.PRES=be.new  
 ‘Your shirt is new’.

Nevertheless, the use of the perfect to express present is not an anomaly; as examples in (32) show, motion verbs and inchoative verbs commonly use perfect for this purpose:

- (32) a. *nó = r béhñó xi = <m>á = nú*  
 DEF.SG=SG woman 3.PERF=<NPS>go=DISTAL.I  
 ‘The woman is now passing by’.

- b. *nó = r thó yá xi = ’<y>ót’-i*  
 DEF.SG.3POSS=SG corn P 3.PERF=<NPS>dry-F  
 ‘His corn is dried’

Moreover, a zero FW is still used with stative verbs in other circumstances to express present time. This is for example seen in the negative, as in (33), or when the verb receives PC intensifiers, as in (34):

- (33) *yá híngí Ø = kǔhi-Ø*  
 P NEG (3.)PRES=be.tasteful-3OBJ  
 ‘It doesn’t taste nice’.
- (34) a. *kó xa = Ø = <z>ǒ-’ = nǒ = r* *ñǔní*  
 because INT=3.PRES=<NPS>arrive.here.B-B=DEF.SG=SG smell  
*Ø Ø = řá-n-txö-Ø...*  
 REL (3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.stinky-3OBJ  
 ‘Because a very stinky smell arrives...’.
- b. *ká = Ø = n-tsé-Ø*  
 INT.PC=(3.)PRES=ST-be.cold-3OBJ  
 ‘It’s rather cold’.

For the imperfect, stative verbs employ the FW *már*. As seen in §3, this is a characteristic of all PC verbs. However, in contrast to Class 1 PC verbs, this is the only FW available for a stative verb to express imperfect (in the positive polarity). Besides the FW *már*, these verbs also use the FW *dar* for the future, which is a unique marker to stative verbs. An example is given in (35):

- (35) *nú ma bötsí dar = ñ-hěts’i-Ø*  
 DEF(PL) 1POSS child (3.)FUT.ST=ST-be.tall-3OBJ  
 ‘My children will be tall’.

**3.2.3.1. A word about PC intensifiers.** When a PC verb occurs with the intensifier *řá-* ‘very’, the FWs *már* and *dar* drop the sonorant /r/ (*r*). An example is given in (36):

- (36) *gǎ’thó ha (bi) = <z>u<sup>h</sup>-k-a = ma* *wá*  
 all where 3.PST=<NPS>reach.S-1OBJ/DAT-B=1POSS foot/leg  
*má = řá-ñ-’ú-Ø*  
 (3.)IMP.PC=INT.PC-ST-be.painful-3OBJ  
 ‘Everywhere where it (i.e. the hail) hit my legs was very painful’.

In example (34) above, I showed that stative verbs use a zero FW with PC intensifiers to express a present state of affairs. Alternatively, the intensifier *ká* ‘rather’ may also be used with the perfect, but when it does so, it follows the FW *xi*. This is shown in (37):



- (37) *xi = ká = n-tsé-Ø*  
 (3.)PERF=INT.PC=ST-be.cold-3OBJ  
 ‘It’s rather cold’.

The word order of FWs in (37) is unusual because in other circumstances *ká* ‘rather’ precedes FWs, as shown for example in (38):

- (38) *nú'mu n-dá = pěng-i ká = mār = n-tsé-Ø*  
 when IMP-1.PST=return-F INT.PC=(3.)IMP.PC=ST-be.cold-3OBJ  
 ‘When I came back, it was rather cold’.

The prefix *řá-* ‘very’ is not used when the verb is negated, as shown in (39a), although *ká* ‘rather’ may be used, as can be seen in (39b):

- (39) a. *\*pórke híngi Ø = řá-n-kŭhi-Ø*  
 because NEG (3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.tasteful-3OBJ  
 Intended reading: ‘because it isn’t very tasteful’.
- b. *yǒ gí = ta-Ø-i*  
 IMPER.NEG 2.PRES=buy-3OBJ-F  
*pórke ká = híngi Ø = kŭhi-Ø*  
 because INT.PC=NEG (3.)PRES=be.tasteful-3OBJ  
 ‘Don’t buy it because it’s not that tasteful’.

The distribution in (39) suggests that there is some semantic contrast involving the degree of intensity of the property conveyed. I have assumed that this degree is subtler for *ká*, and have thus regarded it as closer to possible English counterparts like *rather* or *enough*. The prefix *řá-* appears to have a more intensive reading, and I have thus translated it using English *very* or *much*. It is rather common to find both markers used together with the same PC verb, as for example in (40):

- (40) *nǒ = r déhé = 'ä ká = Ø = řá-ñ- 'ŭxi-Ø;*  
 DEF.SG=SG water=3SG INT.PC=(3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.salty-3OBJ  
*dá = tsǒñ = hé, dá = n-txá = hé*  
 1.PST=arrive.there.S=1PL.EX 1.PST=M-bathe.S=1PL.EX  
*kó de\_ge^h\_nú ká = Ø = řá-m-pá-Ø*  
 because over.there INT.PC=(3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.hot-3OBJ  
 ‘That water is very very salty; we got there and we went for a bath because it was so very hot over there’.

**3.2.4. Lack of a morphosyntactic bound form:** The vast majority of verbs in Otomi have a stem formative (e.g. *tsé* + *t'-i* 'get cold'; *k'ó* + *ts'-i* 'go to see someone'; *zó* + *n-i* 'weep' etc.). For the most part, such stem formatives are no longer semantically transparent. Palancar (2004) has shown that such verbs have two inflected forms, i.e. a "free form" and a "bound form". Free forms are phonologically free and are used before a prosodic or a clausal boundary. Bound forms are phonologically bound and they occur intraclausally. The examples in (41) illustrate the use of the forms, (|| represents a prosodic boundary):

- (41) a. Free Form  $dá = hók-Ø-i$  ||  
1.PST=fix-3OBJ-F  
'I fixed it'.
- b. Bound Form  $dá = hók-Ø-a = ma$   $ngǔ$  ||  
1.PST=fix-3OBJ-B=1POSS house  
'I fixed my house'.

Example (41a) shows the free form of the verb *hók* 'fix'; the verb occurs here at both a prosodic pause and a clausal boundary. In contrast, example (41b) illustrates the use of the bound form of the same verb. The verb in (41b) occurs intraclausally (i.e., it is followed by an NP). The suffix *-i* is the default realization of a free form, while the suffix *-a* is the common exponent of a bound form<sup>18</sup>. The forms are not exchangeable. For example, a free form may not be used in the context of a bound form, as shown in (42):

- (42)  $*dá = hók-Ø-i = ma$   $ngǔ$  ||  
1.PST=fix-3OBJ-F=1POSS house  
'I fixed the house'.

A considerable number of stative verbs are verbs with stem formatives (i.e. *ts'ú* + *t'-i* 'be thin (for wood, thread)'; *hě* + *ts'-i* 'be high'; *thé* + *n-i* 'be red'; etc.). In principle, such verbs should be eligible to have the two forms just like other verbs. However, this is not what we find (at least not in the context where the forms are expected). The pattern is illustrated in (43).<sup>19</sup>

- (43) a.  $ma$   $ngǔ$   $híngí$   $Ø = t'áxi-Ø$  ||  
1POSS house NEG (3.)PRES=be.white-3OBJ  
'My house isn't white'.

- b. *híngí* Ø = *t'áxi*-Ø                      *ma*      *ngǔ* ||  
 NEG (3.)PRES=be.white-3OBJ 1POSS house  
 'My house isn't white'.

If examples (41b) and (43b) are compared, we may observe that the verb *t'áxi* 'be white' does not undergo any change in the context where the use of a bound form is expected. In fact, a form such as *t'áxa*, the predictable bound form of *t'áxi* 'be white', is impossible in the expected context:

- (44) \**híngí* Ø = *t'áx*-Ø-*a* = *ma*                      *ngǔ* ||  
 NEG (3.)PRES=be.white-3OBJ-B=1POSS house  
 Intended meaning: 'My house isn't white'.

Despite the fact that stative verbs deviate in this respect from other verbs, the impossibility of (44) does not entail that the verbs lack a morphological bound form. In §6, I show how stative verbs occur in bound form when they are members of nominal compounds (i.e., *t'áxa-ngǔ* 'white house').

**3.3. PC verbs in other dialects.** All dialects of Otomi have a similar large class of stative verbs that express PCs. In this respect, stative verbs are a diastemic feature of Otomi as a language. Much less is known, however, of the existence of a lexical subclass similar to Class 1 PC verbs in §3.1. In this respect, it is not known whether the different variants have a general class of PC verbs like SI Otomi or whether PC verbs are only circumscribed to stative verbs.

Stative verbs have not been treated as such in the descriptive literature. The tradition has it to call them "adjectives", mainly because they express PCs that are commonly rendered in Spanish and English by adjectives. The choice of this terminology is unfortunate in my opinion. Voigtlander and Echevoyen (1985) treat stative verbs as "conjugated adjectives", whereas Andrews (1993) prefers to view them as verbal forms derived from adjectives by virtue of an alleged stative prefix (i.e. *rá-*). In all the dialects, the lexemes treated as "adjectives" modify a noun in the form of a relative clause with a zero complementizer, although the literature is at times a bit obscure at showing this. In (45), I give an example of a so-called "conjugated adjective" in Sierra Otomi. In order to show a novel interpretation of the item as a stative verb, the example has been adapted from Voigtlander and Echevoyen (1985:69), where it appears without glosses.<sup>20</sup>

- (45) *bi dän ra pahni xím hmadi*  
*bi = <d> an = (ra pahni*  
 3.PST=<NPS>buy.(B?)=(DEF.)SG shirt  
 ( $\emptyset$  xú = m-hmadi- $\emptyset$ )<sub>RC</sub>)<sub>NP</sub>  
 REL (3.)PRES.ST=ST-be.expensive-3OBJ  
 ‘He bought the expensive shirt’.  
 (Lit. ‘He bought the shirt that is expensive’.)

SI Otomi stative verbs share a number of defining features with their counterparts in other dialects. All dialects have a nasal prefix displaying a similar distribution to SI Otomi. Even though the dialects differ considerably from each other regarding the paradigms used to inflect the verbs in question, instances of markers used with active verbs are found in all of them. Similarly, the intensive prefix *řá-* in SI Otomi resembles the prefixes *rá<sub>(n)</sub>-* and *rA-* of Mexico State dialects. Andrews (1993) treats the former as a stative marker for the dialect of San Felipe Santiago, while the latter is described by Lastra (1992) as an exponent of third person continuous present for San Andrés Cuexcontitlán (Toluca) Otomi.<sup>21</sup> The prefix *řá-* in San Ildefonso has a trill /r/, a segment which is utterly foreign to the language, which only occurs in Spanish loans. The prefix is intriguingly similar both in form and function to the Spanish prefix *re-* /re/, which is an adjective intensifier (i.e. *re-grande* ‘very big’). Prefixes of this kind occur only in the dialects of Mexico State and Querétaro State. It is unclear the relationship they bear, but I believe the prefix in SI Otomi emerged from the reanalysis of a genuine Otomi stative marker which at some point became an intensifier on the basis of the Spanish prefix by virtue of their functional and phonological resemblance.

Similarly, all dialects have a stative/active split involving these verbs. The pattern as illustrated in (46) is realized with the dialects’ own morphological idiosyncrasies, (for convenience, I have adapted the glosses in (46a) to the format in this paper, and have glossed (46b) and (46c), which are not explicitly glossed in the sources):

- (46) a. *m- $\emptyset$ -rá<sub>n</sub>-nzæʔ-ki*  
 IMP-(3.)PRES-ST-be.strong-2OBJ  
 ‘You were strong’. (San Felipe Santiago Otomi; Andrews 1993:36)
- b. *xú = n-hěts’i-ga = wi*  
 (3.)ST.PRES=ST-be.high-1OBJ=DU(IN)  
 ‘We’re tall (you and me)’.  
 (Sierra Otomi; Voigtlander and Echegoyen 1985:70)

c. *rΛ-no-ʔki-hí*

(3.)CONT.PRES-be.fat-2OBJ-PL

‘Y’all are tall’. (Toluca Otomi; Lastra 1992:21)

As for the behavior or pertinence of a morphosyntactic free-form, little is known about this phenomenon in other dialects apart from SI, but one may find verbs in bound form sporadically when the verbs are member of compounds, e.g. Sierra Otomi *t’ax-a-hwä* (be.white-B-fish) ‘trout’ (Voiglander and Echegoyen 1985:66), which suggests that forms such as *t’áxi*, and the like, are free forms.

Finally, it is extremely common to find cognates as lexical members of stative verbs across the dialects. The phenomenon is illustrated in (47) with five verbs picked at random in Hekking and Andrés de Jesús (1989), Hernández Cruz *et al.* (2004); Wallis (1956); Voigtlander and Echegoyen (1985); Andrews (1993); Lastra (1992); and Lastra (1997):

(47)	‘be tasteful’	‘be high’	‘be fat’	‘be cold’	‘be white’
San Ildefonso Tultepec	<i>kúhi</i>	<i>hěts’i</i>	<i>noho</i>	<i>tsé</i>	<i>t’áxi</i>
Santiago Mexquititlán	<i>kuhi</i>	<i>hñets’i</i>	<i>noho</i>	<i>tsé</i>	<i>t’axi</i>
Mezquital	<i>kúhi</i>	<i>hñets’i</i>	<i>noho</i>	<i>tsé</i>	<i>t’áxi</i>
Sierra	<i>k#hi</i>	<i>hěts’i</i>	<i>noho</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t’axi</i>
San Felipe Santiago	---	( <i>n̄te</i> ‘grown’)	<i>noho</i>	<i>tsæ</i>	<i>t’áši</i>
Toluca	<i>kíhi</i>	<i>h̄tsi</i>	<i>nohó</i>	<i>cé /tsé/</i>	<i>t’áši</i>
Ixtenco	<i>kíhi</i>	<i>h̄c’i /hěts’i/</i>	<i>nohó</i>	<i>cé /tsé/</i>	<i>(n)t’áši</i>

**4. PC nouns.** In the previous sections, I have studied in full detail the lexemes expressing PCs that belong to Group 1, as it was characterized in §2. I have presented evidence for the treatment of such lexemes as verbs, and have described their characteristics as a subclass with respect to the bulk of intransitive verbs. In this section, I study the PC lexemes pertaining to Group 2, and I show that such lexemes are nouns. The lexemes in question express properties of Human Propensity of the type in Dixon (1982). A list of the most representative members of this group are is given in Table (3):

INSERT TABLE (3) ABOUT HERE

All the lexical elements in Table (3) express properties ascribable to human beings. This is one of the defining features of this class. The last four elements in the table may also occur as Class 1 PC verbs (Table (2) in §3.1),<sup>22</sup> but when they do so they express the age of a given person, whose sex is known.

Nouns are heads of NPs, and in Otomi, the head of an extended NP occurs in final position. This may be seen in (48):

- (48) a. (*nō*=*r*            *mǎ*<sup>h</sup>*jō*)<sub>NP</sub> *bi*= <*d*> *ü*  
 DEF.SG=SG priest      3.PST=<NPS>die  
 ‘The priest died’.
- b. (*nú*    *ma*=*rǎ*            *ya*    *mbóho*)<sub>NP</sub>  
 DEF other=IND.PL    PL mestize.man  
*bi*= <*z*> *ú*<sup>h</sup>*k-Ø-i*  
 3.PST=<NPS>get.somebody.out-3OBJ-F  
 ‘The other men brought him out’.

The nouns in (48) work as syntactic actants WFM. This is a crucial characteristic of nouns. PC lexemes of Group 2 behave in this respect like other nouns in Otomi. This is illustrated in (49)

- (49) a. *yá*    *xi*= <*m*> *á*=*nú*  
 P    3.PERF=<NPS>go=DISTAL.I  
 (*nō*=*r*    *günt*<sup>h</sup>*’ei/xongo/bó*<sup>h</sup>*ka*/etc.)<sub>NP</sub>  
 DEF=SG jealous/silly/cruel/etc.  
 ‘The jealous/silly/cruel (man) is passing by over there’.
- b. *dí*=*hong-Ø-a*=*n*<sup>h</sup>*ǎ*                            *’bego*,  
 1.PRES=look.for.B-3OBJ-B=one worker  
*pe*    *dí*=*ne-Ø*                            (*’na*    *řá*<sub>NP</sub> *mpefi*)<sub>NP</sub>  
 but 1.PRES=want-3OBJ IND.SG hard.working  
 ‘I’m looking for a worker, but I want a hard-working (one)’.

In contrast to verbs, nouns are not expected to function as predicates WFM. This also happens with Otomi nouns, as nouns require a special nominal predication construction to function as verbs, a syntactic measure. The construction in question is encoded by a set of special FWs together with an NP consisting of the noun plus a number determiner. Example (50a) illustrates a singular NP, whereas (50b) illustrates a plural one:

- (50) a.  $n\check{o}=r$   $nd\check{o}$  ||  $\emptyset=ar$   $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}$   
 DEF=SG man 3.PRES=SG priest  
 ‘The man is a priest’.
- b.  $n\acute{u}=’u$   $ya$   $nd\check{o}$  ||  $\emptyset=ya$   $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}$   
 DEF=DEM.PL.II PL man 3.PRES=PL priest  
 ‘Those men are priests’.

Like nouns in nominal predication, the PC lexemes of Group 2 predicate their respective property by means of the same additional apparatus used for nouns, as in (50). This is illustrated in (51):

- (51) a.  $n\check{o}=r$   $j\check{o}’i$  ||  $\emptyset=ar$   $g\ddot{u}nt’ei$   
 DEF=SG person 3.PRES=SG jealous  
 ‘The man is jealous’.
- b.  $g\check{a}’th\acute{o}$   $n\acute{u}$   $ma$   $m\acute{i}xi$  ||  $\emptyset=ya$   $nd\acute{u}xte$   
 all DEF(PL) 1POSS cat 3.PRES=PL naughty  
 ‘All my cats are naughty’.

In (52) below, I present the full paradigm of this nominal predication construction with a singular NP for the present and the imperfect. The paradigm is illustrated both with the noun  $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}$  ‘priest’ and the PC noun  $b\acute{o}^h ka$  ‘cruel’:

	Present	Imperfect
1 <sup>st</sup>	$d\acute{a}=r$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ 1.PRES.NP=SG priest/cruel ‘I’m a priest/cruel’.	$n-d\acute{a}=r$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ IMP-1.PRES.NP=SG priest/cruel ‘I was a priest/cruel’.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	$g\acute{a}=r$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ 2.PRES.NP=SG priest/cruel ‘You’re a priest/cruel’.	$n-g\acute{a}=r$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ IMP-2.PRES.NP=SG priest/cruel ‘You were a priest/cruel’.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	$\emptyset=ar$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ 3.PRES=SG priest/cruel ‘He’s a priest/cruel’.	$m\acute{a}=r$ $m\check{a}^h j\check{o}/b\acute{o}^h ka$ 3.IMP.NP=SG priest/cruel ‘He was a priest/cruel’.

Like PC verbs, PC nouns may receive the intensifier  $\check{r}\acute{a}$ - ‘very’. This is shown in (53). Example (53b) additionally shows that the singular determiner is dropped when the prefix is used:<sup>23</sup>

- (53) a. *nǒ ma bötsí Ø = řá-bíbo*  
 DEF.SG 1POSS boy 3.PRES=INT.PC-clever  
 ‘My boy is very clever’.
- b. *nǒ=r mbóhǒ = ’á ma = řá-t’ixfǎni*  
 DEF.SG=SG mestize.man=3SG 3.IMP.NP=INT.PC-drunkard  
 ‘That man was very drunk’. (Lit. ‘...a very drunkard’.)

The use of this intensifier *řa-* ‘very’ with such nouns is not a complete anomaly given that PC nouns convey a property that can be measured.<sup>24</sup> The prefix has lexicalized in two deverbal nouns *řá\_mpefi* ‘a hard-working person’ and *řá\_mpeño* ‘an industrious person’.<sup>25</sup>

**5. Overlaps across word-classes expressing PCs.** PC verbs and PC nouns show two main grammatical overlaps in SI Otomi. Predication of a third person in the present with the intensifier *řá-* ‘very’ is formally identical across the two classes. This is illustrated in (54):

- (54) Class 1 PC verb a. *Ø = řá-dótá*  
 3.PRES=INT.PC-be.big  
 ‘He’s very big’.
- Stative verb (Class 2 PC verb) b. *Ø = řá-ñ-hěts ’i-Ø*  
 (3.)PRES=INT.PC-ST-be.high-3OBJ  
 ‘He’s very tall’ ~ ‘It’s very high’.
- PC Noun c. *Ø = řá-bó<sup>h</sup>ka*  
 3.PRES=INT.PC-cruel  
 ‘He’s very cruel’.

Similarly, the predication of a third person in the imperfect is again formally identical when this prefix is used, as shown in (55):

- (55) Class 1 PC verb a. *má = řá-dótá*  
 3.IMP.PC=INT.PC-be.big  
 ‘He was very big’.
- Stative verb (Class 2 PC verb) b. *má = řá-ñ-hěts ’i-Ø*  
 (3.)IMP.PC=INT.PC-ST-be.high-3OBJ  
 ‘He was very tall’ ~ ‘It was very high’.



PC Noun

- c. *ma = řa-bó<sup>h</sup>ka*  
 3.IMP.NP=INT.PC-cruel  
 ‘He was very cruel’.

The grammatical overlap between PC verbs and PC nouns perhaps is a consequence of borrowing across paradigms. This topic deserves future study.<sup>26</sup>

In the previous sections, I have described the characteristics of both verbs and nouns that express PCs in SI Otomi. These lexemes may also appear in nominal compounds. The study of such compounds is crucial to the present discussion because the construction in question has been taken in the literature to represent a nominal attributive construction. This is the topic of the next section.

**6. PCs in nominal compounds: adjectives in Otomi?.** In section 1.1, I presented two examples of nominal compounds that involve PC lexemes. More examples of the same structure are given in (56):

- (56) a. (*'na dótá-dó*) *ja = Ø = 'bu<sup>h</sup> = 'pú*  
 IND.SG be.big-stone EXIST=3.PRES=exist.S=DISTAL.II  
*nú há=r wá nõ=r kwéba = 'á*  
 LOC LOC.3POSS=SG foot/leg DEF.SG=SG cave=3SG  
 ‘There’s a big stone at the foot of that cave’.
- b. *dá = hand-Ø-a (= nõ ri tx'úlo-ngü)*  
 1.PST=see-3OBJ-B=DEF.SG 2POSS be.small-house  
 ‘I saw your small house’.
- c. *ya dá = tang-Ø-a (= 'na ma k'áxt'-a-páhni)*  
 P 1.PST=buy.B-3OBJ-B=IND.SG 1POSS be.yellow-B-sweater  
 ‘I bought my yellow sweater’.

The lexical combinations in (56) are instances of an extremely common grammatical strategy in the Otomi to express PCs. I take lexical combinations like these to be nominal compounds, i.e. *dótá-dó* ‘big-stone’ in (56a); *tx'úlo-ngü* ‘small-house’ in (56b); and *k'áxt'-a-páhni* ‘yellow-sweater’ in (56c).

However, the (pseudo-) attributive context in which such PC verbs occur has led a number of authors to claim that such lexical combinations are adjectives in a natural attributive context. Accordingly, the theoretical controversy rests in treating the NPs in (56) as reflecting a syntactic parsing of the type (*'na dótá*

*dó*) ‘a big house’ for (56a); (*nǒ ri tx’úlo ngǐ*) ‘your small house’ for (56b); and (*’na ma k’ǎxt’a páhni*) ‘a yellow sweater of mine’ for (56c), where the lexemes *dótá* ‘big’, *tx’úlo* ‘small’ and *k’ǎxt’a* ‘yellow’ are seen as attributive adjectives. This is for example the position taken by Lastra (1992) and Andrews (1993), who invariably write them as phonological words.

Contrary to such a view, in this section I claim that these elements reflect nominal compounds rather than a syntactic (Adj N) structure, at least for SI Otomi and other dialects. In my analysis, the first member of such compounds is a PC verb (i.e., *dótá* ‘be big’ in (56a), and *tx’úlo* ‘be small’ in (56b) are Class 1 PC verbs, while *k’ǎxt’a* ‘be yellow’ in (56c) is the bound form of the stative verb *k’ǎxt’i* ‘be yellow’). Similar compounds involving PC nouns also exist. In order to show evidence that supports my claims, I compare the combinations in (55) with other nominal compounds in the language.

SI Otomi has two types of (synthetic) nominal compounds depending on the constituent order between the head and the dependant. The two types are illustrated in (57), where the head appears in small caps:

(57) Type 1 a. *’BQTS’E-hmé*  
basket-tortilla  
‘tortilla basket’.

Type 2 b. *měfo-TXÚ*  
short.person-old.woman  
‘short old woman’.

All compound members in (57) are nouns. Type 1 compounds commonly express function (i.e. “basket designed for the tortillas”, etc.) or source material (i.e. “table made of wood”, etc.). In contrast, Type 2 compounds instantiate a special compounding structure where the dependant member expresses a PC about the head. The lexical combinations in (56) are typical instances of Type 2 compounds. All lexemes expressing PCs regardless of whether they are verbs or nouns are in principle potential fillers of the dependant slot in this structure. Additionally, as we will see in more detail in §6.4.4, there are also a number of acategorical lexemes which can only be used in Type 2 compounds.

Several characteristics identify nominal compounds in (SI) Otomi: (a) their syntactic behavior as head nouns in nominal predication; (b) the morphological adjusted forms they present; (c) their function as novel lexemes; (d) their occurrence in lexical pairs; and (e) their restrictions concerning internal modification. Such criteria are common in linguistic theory to define compounds (vid. Fabb 1998 or Spencer 1991). I examine each criterion

separately in order to show that the lexical combinations in (56) are nominal compounds.

**6.1. PC compounds as head nouns in nominal predication.** Compounds behave as head nouns in the nominal predication construction introduced in §4. This construction is encoded by a set of special FWs together with an NP consisting of the noun plus a number determiner. The construction is again illustrated in (58):

- (58) *nú=ya rēbēldé má(=ya bě)*NP  
 DEF=PL rebel 3.IMP.NP=PL thief  
 ‘The rebels were thieves’.

In the nominal predication construction instantiated in (58), the head noun in the predicate has a generic reading depicting a kind. This is a property of the construction because nouns in predication cannot be modified by other determiners. The restriction is illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (59):

- (59) a. \**dá= nú= nú= r ndǒ há= r fǒto*  
 1.PRES.NP=DEF=DEM.SG.II=SG man LOC=SG picture  
 Intended meaning: ‘I’m that man in the picture’.
- b. \**nǒ= r Toño má= ri ’bego*  
 DEF.SG=SG Antonio 3.IMP.NP=2.POSS worker  
 Intended meaning: ‘Antonio was your worker’.

The impossibility of examples like (59) illustrates that the head noun in a predicative NP cannot be modified. The examples also show that the nominal predication construction in Otomi does not express identification, as is common in other languages like English or Spanish. The language has another construction devoted to expressing identification, which involves a cleft relative clause, as illustrated in (60):

- (60) a. *nǒ= r Toño (gó= Ø ma ’bego*  
 DEF.SG=SG Antonio REL.FOC=3.PRES 1POSS worker  
*hmǒ= ’ǎ)*  
 previously=3SG  
 ‘Antonio was my laborer.’ (Lit. ‘...is the one who is previously my laborer’.)

- b.  $n\check{o}=r$        $mb\acute{o}h\acute{o}$     ( $g\acute{o}=m\acute{a}=r$                        $b\acute{e}(\acute{=} \acute{a})$ )  
 DEF.SG=SG mestize    REL.FOC=3.IMP.NP=SG thief(=3SG)  
 $\emptyset$      $d\acute{a}=hant=h\acute{u}$   
 REL 1.PST=see=PL(.IN)  
 ‘The mestize man happened to be the thief we saw’.
- c.  $n\acute{u}=n\acute{a}=r$                        $j\ddot{o}'i$     ( $g\acute{e}=\emptyset=r$                        $X\acute{u}wa=\acute{a}$ )  
 DEF=DEM.SG.I=SG person REL.FOC=3.PRES=SG John=3SG  
 ‘This man (here) is John’.<sup>27</sup>

Compound nouns can also appear as head nouns in the nominal predication construction. This may be seen in (61) with Type 1 compounds, but more crucially in (62) with Type 2 compounds:

- (61) a.  $n\check{o}=r$      $ng\acute{o}$   $\emptyset$      $g\acute{a}=\acute{r}\acute{a}^h\text{-}kag\acute{i}$   
 DEF.SG meat REL 2.PST=give.to.1/2-1OBJ/DAT  
 $m\acute{a}=(r$                        $ng\acute{o}\text{-}pts'\acute{u}d\acute{i}$ )  
 3.IMP.NP=SG meat-pork.B  
 ‘The meat you gave me was pork-meat’.
- b.  $n\acute{u}=n\acute{a}=r$                        $'b\acute{o}ts'e$        $\emptyset=(ar$                        $'b\acute{o}ts'e\text{-}hm\acute{e}$ )  
 DEF= DEM.SG.I=SG basket-tortilla 3.PRES=SG basket-tortilla  
 ‘This basket (here) is a tortilla basket’.
- (62) a.  $n\acute{u}=\acute{u}$                        $ya$   $nd\check{o}$   $\emptyset=(ya$                        $m\acute{e}fo\text{-}nd\check{o}$ )  
 DEF=DEM.PL.II PL man 3.PRES=PL short-man  
 ‘Those men are short’. (Lit. ‘...are short-men’.)
- b.  $n\check{o}=r$                        $ts'oi$   $\emptyset$      $bi=<d>\acute{e}hm\text{-}i$   
 DEF.SG=SG pot REL 3.PST=<NPS>break.volume-F  
 $m\acute{a}=(r$                        $h\acute{u}\text{-}ts'oi$ )  
 3.IMP.NP=SG be.heavy-pot  
 ‘The pot that broke was heavy’. (Lit. ‘...was a heavy-pot’.)
- c.  $n\check{o}$                        $ma$        $m\acute{i}xi$   $h\acute{i}ng\text{-}\emptyset=(ar$                        $'b\acute{o}\text{-}m\acute{t}x\acute{i}$ )  
 DEF.SG 1POSS cat NEG-3.PRES=SG black-cat.B  
 ‘My cat is not a black’. (Lit. ‘...is not a black-cat’.)

The examples in (62) show Type 2 compounds. Given the restriction of the nominal predication construction regarding internal modification, the PC

lexemes in (62) —*měfo* in (62a), *hǔ* in (62b), and *'bó* in (62c)— are not syntactic modifiers but genuine nominal compound members in a dependant slot.

**6.2. The morphology of nominal compounds.** A number of Otomi compounds bear a nasal interfix between the members involved in the combination. The interfix may be observed in (63):

(63)

<i>n'ǎ-n-jeyá</i>	(one-INTER-year)	'one year (i.e., as a span of time)'
<i>hñü-n-zönö</i>	(three-INTER-month)	'three months (i.e., as a span of time)'
<i>txí-dáda-n-hyádi</i>	(DIM-father-INTER-sun)	'sun' (Lit. 'honorable father sun')
<i>txí-nöñö-n-zönö</i>	(DIM-mother-INTER-moon)	'moon' (Lit. 'honorable mother moon')

Such an interfix is occasionally found in PC compounds too, as shown in (64):

(64)

<i>hǔ-n-dó</i>	(be.heavy-INTER-stone)	'a type of stone which is heavy'
<i>(n-)xǒ-n-thé</i>	(ST-be.stinky-INTER-water.B)	'sweat'

On the other hand, compounds normally display morphophonologically-adjusted members. This is a typical feature of many compounds in Otomi, where both heads and dependants may display the adjustments. Examples of adjusted heads are shown in (65). This only happens in Type 2 compounds, where the head occurs in second (and final) position:

(65) Adjustment of head:		Bound morpheme	Free morpheme
Type 1	<i>dö-THÉ</i> (big-water.B) 'river'	<i>-thé</i>	<i>déhe</i>
	<i>'bó-MTXÍ</i> (black-cat.B) 'black cat'	<i>-mtxí</i>	<i>míxi</i>
	<i>ndǒ-FNÍ</i> (man-horse.B) 'stallion'	<i>-fní</i>	<i>phǎni</i>

Adjusted dependant may be found in both types of compounds:

(66) Adjustment of dependant:		Bound morpheme	Free morpheme
Type 1	a. <i>NGÓ-pts'údi</i> (meat-pig.B) 'pork meat'	<i>-pts'údi</i>	<i>ts'údi</i>
Type 2	b. <i>t'ǎx-a-NGŨ</i> (be.white-B-house) 'white house'	<i>t'ǎx-a-</i>	<i>t'ǎx-i</i>
	c. <i>nǒxk-a-NGÓ</i> (get.stale-B-meat) 'stale meat'	<i>nǒxk-a-</i>	<i>nǒxk-i</i>

As shown in (66), dependant members in compounds can display adjusted forms. The dependants in examples (66b) and (66c) are verbs: *t'áxi* 'be white' is a stative verb, while *nǒxki* 'get stale' is an inchoative verb. Verbs as dependants in Type 2 compounds always occur in bound form, regardless of being inchoative verbs (e.g. *nǒsk-i* (get.stale-F) vs. *nǒsk-a* (get.stale-B); *'ixk-i* (get.sour-F) vs. *'ixk-a* (get.sour-B); etc.) or stative verbs (e.g. *ts'út'-i* (be.thin (for wood)-F) vs. *ts'út'-a* (be.thin (for wood)-B); *t'áx-i* (be.white-F) vs. *t'áx(-a)* (be.white-B); etc.). As I pointed out in §3.2.4, the bound form of stative verbs is only used in compounds, and not in all contexts expected for other verbs.

There is a tonal contrast between the bound form *t'áx(-a)* (be.white-B) in (66b) if compared with the free form *t'áx-i* (be.white-F). The contrast involves an ascending tone vs. a high tone. The pattern may be seen elsewhere, i.e. stative verb *thén-i* (be.red-F) ~ *thěng-a* (be.red-B) as in *thěng-a-xǒju* 'red ant'; inchoative verb *'ót'-i* (get.dry-F) ~ *'ót'-a* (get.dry-B) as in *'ót'-a-ndó<sup>h</sup>-jó* (get.dry-B-seed.of.fruit-nopal.fruit.B) 'dry nopal-fruit seed'; etc. This contrast does NOT reflect a (suprasegmental) derivational operation by virtue of which a verb turns into an adjective. As mentioned in note 17, verbs commonly receive an ascending tone in their bound form if they have a high tone in their free form.<sup>28</sup>

**6.3. Compounds as lexical units.** One of the fundamental characteristics of compounds is their derivational ability to produce new lexemes. PC compounds are widely used in the language to produce new words that express subordinate members of the given category expressed in the head noun. When the compound is conventionalized, it suggests that the subordinate categories they depict are well-established concepts expressing conventional cultural entities. This is the case for example of the different types of chilies found in the lexicon of SI Otomi; the most relevant ones are given in (67), (the translation of the different types is rendered in the conventional name such chilies receive in the Spanish spoken in Central Mexico):

- |         |                   |                    |                    |                           |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| (67) a. | Noun-Noun         | <i>'rǒxa-ñ'í</i>   | (berry-chili)      | 'chile miracielo'         |
| b.      | Stative Verb-Noun | <i>dǒtá-ñ'í</i>    | (be.big-chili)     | 'chile jalapeño'          |
| c.      |                   | <i>thěng-a-ñ'í</i> | (be.red-B-chili)   | 'chile cascabel/guajillo' |
| d.      |                   | <i>gwéero-ñ'í</i>  | (be.blond-chili)   | 'chile amarillo'          |
| e.      |                   | <i>k'áng-a-ñ'í</i> | (be.green-B-chili) | 'chilaca'                 |

- |    |                  |                  |               |                 |
|----|------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| g. | Acategorial-Noun | <i>'bó-ñ'í</i>   | (black-chili) | 'chile pasilla' |
| f. |                  | <i>t'úlo-ñ'í</i> | (small-chili) | 'chile serrano' |

The compounds in (67) reflect different structures. Example (67a) represents a noun-noun combination, while the examples in (67b-e) show a combination of a stative verb plus a noun. The two examples in (67g-f) are more difficult to categorize. As we will see in more detail in §6.4.4, morphemes such as *'bó-* 'black' and *t'úlo-* 'small' are "acategorial" lexical elements.

On the other hand, once a lexical combination is well established and lexicalized, a semantic shift commonly occurs from the original compositional meaning. Because of this extension, the new meaning is no longer recoverable from the meanings of the parts, and the combination is stored as a set expression (i.e. *'ñü-jí* (path-blood) with the meaning 'vein'). Various examples of Type 2 compounds showing this type of lexical shift are given in (68):

- |      |                     |                           |                  |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| (68) | <i>dö́tá-m'asmé</i> | (be.big-napkin)           | 'table cloth'    |
|      | <i>dö́tá-déhe</i>   | (be.big-water)            | 'sea'            |
|      | <i>dö́tá-'ñü</i>    | (be.big-path)             | 'road'           |
|      | <i>xó-thé</i>       | (be.stinky-water.B)       | 'stagnant water' |
|      | <i>(n-)xó-n-thé</i> | (be.stinky-INTER-water.B) | 'sweat'          |
|      | <i>t'ax-a-hwó</i>   | (be.white-B-fish)         | 'trout'          |

On the other hand, not all lexical combinations are possible or existent. This serves as another important piece of evidence to treat such lexical combinations as compounds, and not as adjectives in syntactic attribution. For example, potential combinations such as *\*hěts'-a-ngü* (be.tall-B-house) for 'high house'; *\*pĩ-'libro* (be.thick.B-B-book) for 'thick book'; *\*má-t'ó* (be.long-stick) for 'long stick'; *\*no-'bötsí* (be.fat-B-child) for 'fat child'; or *\*'ó-'du<sup>h</sup>tu* (be.rough.B-B-clothes) for 'rough cloth(es)'; and many others are not possible. The same is true for *\*ndö-zá* (be.thick (of wood)-tree/wood) for 'thick wood', even though the mass noun *ts'üt'-a-zá* (be.thin (of wood)-B-tree/wood) for 'thin wood' exists and designates a type of wood suitable to carve ceiling beams out of it.

Similarly, compounds such as *hũ-n-dó* (be.heavy-INTER-stone) and *hũ-ts'oi* (be.heavy-pot) are actual compounds designating types of stones and pots, which are heavy in contrast to others that are not. In contrast, a noun such as *\*hũ-káhá* (be.heavy-box) is impossible because boxes are not heavy by essence, but by virtue of the content they bear inside. Other relevant examples include non-existent *\*tsé-pá* (be.cold-day) for 'cold day' or *\*tsé-'yé* (be.cold-

hand) for ‘cold hand(s)’, which do not express conventional concepts either. However, both the compounds *tsé-déhe* (be.cold-water) and *tsé-the* (be.cold-water.B) exist. The former depicts a type of refreshment, which is drunk cold; the latter, a type of warm drink, which has become cold.

Finally, despite the fact that the language has *’ú-t’èi* (be.sweet-atole) ‘sweet atole’<sup>29</sup> with the stative verb *’ú* ‘be sweet’, Type 2 compounds often require the inchoative lexical pairs of stative verbs. For example, compounds exist with inchoative verbs such as *’úxk-a-déhe* (get.salty.B-water) ‘salty water/soup’; *’ixk-a-límo* (get.bitter-B-lemon) ‘bitter lemon’; and *nǒxk-a-ngó* (get.stale-B-meat) ‘stale meat’. On the other hand, combinations with their stative counterparts are not possible, such as *’úxi* ‘be salty’ (e.g. \**’úx-a-déhe*); *’ixi* ‘be bitter’ (e.g. \**’ix-a-límo*) or *nǒxi* ‘be stale’ (e.g. \**nǒx-a-ngó*).

**6.4. Attributive-like features of PC compounds.** In the previous section, I have presented a bounty of evidence to treat lexical combinatory structures of the type of *t’áx-a-ngǔ* (be.white.B-house) ‘white house’ as nominal compounds rather than adjective and noun. In this section, I treat other aspects of PC compounds, which are more attributive-like.

**6.4.1. Frequency and productivity of PC compounding.** Type 2 nominal compounding is productive with all PC nouns, all inchoative verbs (e.g. *kúxt’i* ‘get hard (i.e. bread)’; *nǒxki* ‘get stale’; *’ixki* ‘get sour’; *’ót’i* ‘get dry’; *t’áxki* ‘get white’, etc.), and all Class 1 PC verbs (especially with verbs such as *dǒtá* ‘be big’; *tx’úlo* ‘be small’; and *’rá’yo* ‘be new’, which are rather common). In contrast, the use of stative verbs is usually restricted to conventional existing combinations, and for some cases, it is not allowed at all. For example, verbs such as *pǐdi* ‘be thick’; *nóho* ‘be fat’; *’ódi* ‘be rough (texture)’; *’bexiii* ‘be dark’ are never found in compounds. Nevertheless, the combinatory power of stative verbs expressing colors is far richer than other members, as well as the verbs *nzá\_Tho* ‘be beautiful’ or *zéhwa* ‘be silly (for an animal)’. (See §6.4.4, for the status of acategorical members).

Overall, in the light of all the possible word classes that can occur as dependant members in Type 2 compounds, compounding is not a structure that establishes a relevant contrast between a potential class of adjectives and other word classes in Otomi.<sup>30</sup>

**6.4.2. Adding up dependant members.** Type 2 compounds may have more than one dependant member expressing a PC. This is shown in (69):



- (69) a. (*dǔtá*-(*'bó-de\_ thǔ*))  
 be.big-black-grain\_corn  
 'big black corn grains'
- b. (*tx'úlo*-(*t'ǎx- 'bǔ 'ts 'e-hmé*))  
 be.small-be.white.B-basket-tortilla  
 'small white tortilla basket'
- c. (*'rá'yo*-(*'bó-kářo*)  
 be.new-black-car  
 'new black car'

Examples in (69) display instances of potential combinations, which always include free combinatory members. However, such compounds are *never* actual words in the language, and are *never* encountered in natural texts.

**6.4.3. Modification of a PC lexeme in a compound.** Like in other positions, PC lexemes in compounds may be modified by the intensifier *řá* 'very'. The phenomenon is illustrated in (70) with an instance of the nominal predication construction, in which we have the Class 1 PC verb *dǔtá* 'be big', as member of the compound noun:

- (70) *nú = ná = r*                      *ngǔ*     $\emptyset = \text{řá-dǔtá-ngǔ}$   
 DEF=DEM.SG.I=SG    house    3.PRES=INT.PC-be.big-house  
 'This house is a very big house'

This property is somehow expected given that dependant members in such compounds commonly express a gradable property. Nonetheless, the intensifier cannot be used in order to modify an internal member in compounds with more than one dependant. This is shown by the ungrammaticality of (71a) in contrast to (71b), which represents a possible alternative:

- (71) a. \**nú ma dǔtá-řá-'bó-kářo*  
 DEF 1POSS be.big-INT.PC-black-car  
 Intended meaning: 'My big, very black car'.
- b. *nú ma řá-'bó-kářo*     $\emptyset$      $\emptyset = \text{dǔtá}$   
 DEF 1POSS INT.PC-black-car REL 3.PRES=be.big  
 'My big, very black car'.

Similarly, while PC verbs may be modified by means of the delimitative morpheme =*tho* ‘just’, when the verbs appear in the compounds, the morpheme cannot be used. The phenomenon is illustrated in the contrast between (72a) and (72b):

- (72) a. *xi = ñ- 'ú-Ø = tho*  
 (3.)PERF=ST-be.sweet-3OBJ=DEL  
 ‘It’s rather/just sweet’.
- b. \**ma 'ú = tho-t'ëi*  
 1POSS sweet=DEL-atole  
 Intended meaning: ‘My rather/just sweet atole’.

**6.4.4. Acategorical lexemes.**<sup>31</sup> Like other dialects, SI Otomi has a number of bound morphemes expressing PCs that can only occur in Type 2 nominal compounds. They form a closed class with very few members, presented in (73):

(73)

			Examples	Gloss	Translation
Productive	<i>'bó-</i>	‘black’	a. <i>'bó-mtxí</i>	(black-cat.B)	‘black cat’
	<i>t'úlo-</i>	‘small’	b. <i>t'úlo-ngü</i>	(small-house)	‘small house’
Non-productive	<i>dö-</i>	‘big’ <sup>32</sup>	c. <i>dö-thé</i>	(big-water.B)	‘river’
			d. <i>dö-ñü</i>	(big-path)	‘dirt-road’
			e. <i>dö-zá</i>	(big-tree)	‘plane tree’
	<i>m'ó-</i>	‘blue’	f. <i>m'ó-hmé</i>	(blue-tortilla)	‘blue tortilla’

The first two elements in (73) have a free combinatory power, while the other two are no longer morphologically productive; that is, they have lexicalized in the formations in which they occur. Nevertheless, an element such as *dö-* ‘big’, as in (73c-e) appears in a large number of compounds (actual words) in all dialects of Otomi, whereas the element *m'ó-* ‘blue’ occurs only in the example provided, at least for SI Otomi. This contrast suggests that *dö-* was a largely productive item in historical times.<sup>33</sup>

A number of these elements still bear a synchronic (segmental) resemblance to counterpart PC verbs. This resemblance may be seen in (74), which suggests some degree of historical relationship:

- (74) a. *dö-* ‘big’ ~ *dö'tá* ‘be big’  
 b. *'bó-* ‘black’ ~ *pothi* ‘be black’; *po'ts'i* ‘be dark colored/navy blue’

c. *t'úlo-* ‘small’ ~ *tx'úlo* ‘be small’,<sup>34</sup>

The elements in (74a) and (74b) resemble the morphological root of the verbs in question (the rest of the morphological material in the verbs represents petrified derivational morphology). This pattern may reflect an old stage of the language in which verbal roots could work as monomorphemic verbs in nominal compounds; a pattern which became opaque later. At times, minimal compound pairs are found involving cognates. Relevant ones are presented in (75) and (76). In such formations, the compounds with the elements in (73) are older formations:

- (75) a. *dö-thé*           big-water.B   ‘river’  
       b. *dö'tá-déhe*   be.big-water   ‘sea’  
 (76) c. *dö-'ñú*           big-path       ‘dirt-road’  
       d. *dö'tá-'ñú*   be.big-path   ‘road’

Most crucially, the elements in question cannot occur in predicative position. This is shown by the impossibility of (77):

- (77) a. *ma míxi xi = \*ñ-'bó-Ø/m-pothi-Ø*  
       1POSS cat (3.)PERF=ST-black-3OBJ/ST-be.black-3OBJ  
       ‘My cat is black’.  
       b. *nó=r ngǔ = 'á már = \*dö/dö'tá*  
       DEF.SG=SG house=3SG 3.IMP.PC=big/be.big  
       ‘That house was big’.

The ungrammaticality of examples like (77) illustrates that the elements in question are lexemes that can only work as dependants of head nouns compounds. Hajek (2004), elaborating on the proposal in Dixon (2004), has suggested that attributive-only elements are perhaps the best place in the grammar of a language to find true adjectives. According to such a view, the elements in (73) look as if they were the alleged true “adjectives” of Otomi. However, I have extensively shown that the structural slot filled by these elements is not of a modifier slot in attributive position but of a dependant member in a nominal compound. The fact that the bound elements in (76) are not found anywhere else in the system proves that the lexemes they represent do not belong to a well-defined word class in the language. For this reason, I have opted to treat such elements as “acategorical” lexemes.

**6.5. Compounds in other dialects.** Type 2 compounds, as described in the previous sections for SI Otomi, are also found in all Otomi dialects. Nevertheless, neither their scope nor their details are well known for some of the dialects. If lexical idiosyncrasies are set aside, one could conclude that Otomi variants have very similar characteristics to the ones described. The dialects display cognate elements to the ones presented regarding stative verbs and acategorial lexemes. Voigtlander and Echevoyen (1985) for Sierra Otomi and Bartholomew (2004) for Mezquital Otomi are the best treatments of Otomi compounds up to the date. Bartholomew (2004) gives a number of combinations with stative verbs (called “adjectives” in her approach) such as *t’áxi* ‘be white’, *théni* ‘be red’, and *mǎ* ‘be long’. From the choice of these verbs, I suspect that stative verbs expressing colors are the most productive members in the class to form compound, just like in SI Otomi. Compounding in Mezquital Otomi appears to be especially productive, as may seen in the corpus by Wallis (1956) or Hernández Cruz *et al.* (2004), but it may also be the case that a similar degree of productiveness still lies undercover for other dialects.

**7. Conclusion.** In this article, I have studied how PCs are encoded in Otomi. I have shown in detail that such concepts are not encoded as adjectives, but as verbs and nouns. There are also special nominal compounds in which lexemes denoting PCs occur as dependent members. The analysis is developed on the basis of the data from the dialect of San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi, but I have also used data from other dialects to show that the phenomena described pertains to Otomi as a dia-system. Unfortunately, very little is known about the lexical treatment of PCs in other Otopamean languages. As for other Otomanguan languages, the analysis in Smith-Stark (2004), Rojas (2004), and López Cruz (2004) points to the existence of a well-defined class of adjectives in various Zapotec languages, but many adjectives in such languages display a very close relationship to stative verbs. Outside Otomanguan, other languages where PCs are related to verbs are Cora (Uto-Aztecan) and Tarascan (Isolate). In Cora, like in Otomi, there are no adjectives (vid. Vázquez 1994, 2004). As for Tarascan, Capistrán (2004) shows that the vast majority of lexemes expressing PCs are deverbal forms from active verbs. The lexical treatment of PCs in languages of the Americas remains for the most part an unexplored land. This study is a cordial invitation to other linguists working with indigenous languages to contribute with their findings in this fascinating area of the grammar.

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## APPENDIX

Table 2. ‘Stative verbs in SI Otomi’.

Dimension	<i>hěts'i</i>	‘be high/tall’	(Human)	
	<i>xidi</i>	‘be wide’		
	<i>ndó'yó</i>	‘be thin (for an animal)’		
	<i>xini</i>	‘be thin (for a thing)’		
	<i>ts'út'i</i>	‘be thin (for wood, thread)’		
	<i>pidi</i>	‘be thick’		
	<i>ndǒ</i>	‘be thick (for wood, thread)’		
	<i>mā</i>	‘be long’		
	<i>noho</i>	‘be fat’	(Human)	
	Physical property	<i>'ódi</i>	‘be rough’	
		<i>hú</i>	‘be heavy’	(Human)
		<i>pá</i>	‘be hot’	(Human)
		<i>tsé</i>	‘be cold’	(Human)
		<i>k'á</i>	‘be wet’	
		<i>xá</i>	‘be humid’	
<i>'óni</i>		‘be dry’		
<i>tsé_tho</i>		‘be insipid’		
<i>'ú</i>		‘be sweet’		
<i>'úxi</i>		‘be salty’		
<i>'ixi</i>		‘be sour’		
<i>jú</i>		‘be bitter’		
<i>'i</i>		‘be spicy/hot’		
<i>kúhi</i>		‘be tasteful/flavory’		
<i>túdi</i>		‘be soft/weak’		
<i>tsedi</i>	‘be strong/firm’	(Human)		
<i>mē</i>	‘be thick (i.e. for a liquid)’			
<i>mē</i>	‘be hard’			
<i>nǒxi</i>	‘be stale’			
<i>'bexüi</i>	‘be dark’			
<i>ndü-pá</i>	‘be lukewarm’			
<i>ndü-tsedi</i>	‘be weak’	(Human)		
<i>xó</i>	‘be stinky’			
<i>'ú</i>	‘be painful, be in pain’			
<i>hēti</i>	‘be noisy/talkative’	(Human)		
<i>řá_níhi</i>	‘be fast, quick, light-footed’	(Human)		
Color	<i>pothi</i>	‘be black’		
	<i>po'ts'i</i>	‘be dark colored/navy blue’		



	<i>t'áxi</i>	'be white/silvery'	
	<i>théni</i>	'be red'	
	<i>k'áxt'i</i>	'be yellow'	
	<i>k'ángi</i>	'be blue/green'	
	<i>hwé'ts'i</i>	'be golden'	
	<i>káfé</i>	'be brown'	
	<i>řosá</i>	'be pink'	
	<i>gwéro</i>	'be blond'	(Human)
Human Propensity	<i>ts'ó_tho</i>	'be ugly/bad'	(Human)
	<i>nzá_tho</i>	'be beautiful'	(Human)
	<i>zehwa</i>	'be silly (for an animal) '	
Evaluation	<i>hó</i>	'be good'	(Human)
Value	<i>hmödi</i>	'be expensive'	

## TABLES

Table 1. ‘Class 1 PC verbs’.

Dimension	<i>dó́tá</i>	‘be big’	
	<i>tx’úlo</i>	‘be small’	
	<i>yá’pú</i>	‘be far away’	
Property	<i>nzá_tho</i>	‘be beautiful’	
	<i>tse<sup>h</sup>_tho</i>	‘be strong’	(Animate)
	<i>tsa<sup>h</sup>_te</i>	‘be prone to biting (for a dog)’	(Animate)
Time/Age	<i>’rá’yo</i>	‘be new’	
	<i>txu</i>	‘be old (for a woman) ’	(Human)
	<i>xíta</i>	‘be old (for a man) ’	(Human)
	<i>ts’únt’u</i>	‘be young (for a man) ’	(Human)
	<i>ntxúntsi</i>	‘be young (for a woman)’	(Human)

Table 3. ‘PC Nouns in SI Otomi’.

		<b>As a noun</b>	<b>As a PC</b>
Physical	<i>měfo<sup>35</sup></i>	‘a short person’	> ‘short (for a person)’
	<i>ndó’yó</i>	‘a skinny person’	> ‘thin (for an animate)’
Psychological	<i>hōga-jō’i</i>	‘a good person’	> ‘good (for a person)’
	<i>güint’ei</i>	‘a jealous person’	> ‘jealous’
	<i>bō<sup>h</sup>ka</i>	‘a cruel/aggressive person’	> ‘cruel’
	<i>zone</i>	‘an evil person/vampire’	> ‘evil’
	<i>ndúxte</i>	‘a naughty person’	> ‘naughty’
	<i>xóngo/a</i>	‘a silly person (man/woman)’	> ‘silly’
	<i>bíbo</i>	‘a clever person’	> ‘clever’
	<i>řá_mpefi</i>	‘a hard-working person’	> ‘hard-working’
	<i>řá_mpeño</i>	‘an industrious person’	> ‘industrious’
	<i>t’ixfani</i>	‘a drunkard’	> ‘drunk’
	<i>yozna</i>	‘a homosexual’	> ‘homosexual’
Sex	<i>ndō</i>	‘a man’	> ‘male’
	<i>’bēhñó</i>	‘a woman’	> ‘female’
	<i>dösya</i>	‘an old man’	> ‘male (for an old person)’
	<i>xíta</i>	‘an old man’	> ‘male (for an old person)’
	<i>txú</i>	‘an old woman’	> ‘female (for an old person)’
Marital status	<i>ts’únt’u_tho</i>	‘just a young man ’	> ‘single (for a male person)’
	<i>ntxúntsi_tho</i>	‘just a young woman’	> ‘single (for a female person)’

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The present study was financed by the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro and by the CONACYT (project No 47475). The analysis is the result of the wonderful workshop lead in Mexico on property concepts by Paulette Levy, in which other Mesoamericanists actively participated, such as David Beck, Alejandra Capistrán, Valentín Peralta, Thomas Smith, Ausencia López, Rosa María Rojas, Verónica Vázquez, and Roberto Zavala. I want to deeply thank all these colleagues, especially Paulette Levy, for their immense help and patience in making me understand some of the complexities of Otomi grammar. This article would have never been written without their good many comments on earlier drafts, including the paper presented at the 2003-04 Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas, held in Boston 2004. I also want to thank my referees -one of them being Scott Berthiaume- for all the invaluable comments they made to improve this paper. I am also grateful to Keren Rice, editor of *IJAL*, for all the help provided with the final editing, and to the anonymous associate editor for the expeditious work. As always, my most sincere thanks to Mrs. Anastacia Cruz Vázquez for sharing her ancient wisdom with me. All errors and deficiencies remain my own responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> In the transcription of Otomi, I have used the orthography suggested by Hekking (2002), with only two innovations:  $\tilde{r}$  for a trill /r/, and <sup>h</sup> for a salient phonetic aspiration. Deviations from the IPA convention: ' /ʔ/; f /p<sup>h</sup>/; j /k<sup>h</sup>/; y /j/; x /ʃ/; tx /tʃ/; ñ /ɲ/; r /r/;  $\tilde{r}$  /r̄/; a /a/; a /ɔ/; e /ɛ/; o /ɔ/; u /i/. Umlaut indicates nasalization (i.e. ä /ã/; ü /ũ/, etc.). Otomi has three tones: ascending  $\check{v}$ ; high  $\acute{v}$ ; and low, which is not represented. Tone does not play a fundamental role in the organization of the lexicon and the morphology. In general, (monosyllabic) morphological roots receive an inherent tone, but it is commonly conditioned by prosody. Prosodic parameters also condition the tone of suffixes and other morphemes. Tone does not differ substantially across dialects. Given that tone still is poorly understood in SI Otomi, I have used the excellent transcriptions in Wallis (1956) and Hernández Cruz *et al.* (2004) from Mezquital Otomi as a way to back up the right forms for SI Otomi, which is its closest variant.

<sup>3</sup> Beck (1999, 2002) advances a sophisticated theory of markedness aimed to a typology of adjectival encoding. In his typology, Otomi is aligned with Cora (Uto-Aztecan).

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviations used in these article are: “ - ” morpheme boundary; “ < > ” infix or consonant mutation; “ . ” cumulative morpheme; “ \_ ” lexicalized morpheme boundary; “ = ” clitic; 1, 2, 3 ‘grammatical persons’; ANTI ‘antipassive’; B ‘bound form’; CONT ‘continuative’; DAT ‘dative’; DEF

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‘definite’; DEL ‘delimitative’; DEM ‘demonstrative’; DIM ‘diminutive’; DU ‘dual’; EX ‘exclusive’; F ‘free form’; FOC ‘focal’; FUT ‘future’; FW ‘function word’; I, II ‘types attending to spatial/discourse distance’; IMP ‘imperfect’; IMPER ‘imperative’; IN ‘inclusive’; IND ‘indefinite’; INT ‘intensive’; LOC ‘locative’; M ‘middle voice’; NEG ‘negative’; NI ‘nasal intransitive verb’; NP ‘nominal predication’; NPS ‘non-present stem’; OBJ ‘object’; P ‘particle’; PC ‘property concept’; PERF ‘perfect’; PL ‘pl’; POSS ‘possessive’; PRES ‘present’; PST ‘past’; REL ‘relative’; S ‘suffixal form’; SG ‘singular’; ST ‘stative’.

<sup>5</sup> This happens in SI Otomi, Mexquititlán Otomi, Mezquital Otomi and Sierra Otomi. In other dialects, such as in Mexico State Otomi and Ixtenco Otomi, the existing descriptive literature treats them as prefixes.

<sup>6</sup> The perfect having various uses in SI Otomi; with motion verbs like in (10b), the perfect is used to encode a present state of affairs.

<sup>7</sup> FW paradigms in other dialects can get much more complex as they may include a substantial number of verbal subclasses and other grammatical categories not taken into account here (cf. Sierra Otomi in Voigtlander and Echevoyen 1985):

<sup>8</sup> If one were to follow Dixon’s (2004) terminology, PC verbs in Otomi would be the “adjectives” of Otomi. In other words, they would realize a different part of speech albeit being very close to verbs. Such a label has been used before in similar circumstances. For example, a number of scholars in Dixon and Aikhenvald (2004) study languages where PCs are also encoded as a subclass of verbs (i.e. Korean by Sohn 2004; Semelay by Kruspe 2004; and Lao by Enfield 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Additionally, if compared with active verbs, most PC verbs also show restrictions concerning the number of tenses and aspects in which they inflect. Nonetheless, this restriction is not a defining feature of the class, but rather is largely motivated by the stative semantics the verbs convey.

<sup>10</sup> Third person has been translated for convenience as “he” throughout the paper, although third person in Otomi does not entail gender or number distinctions.

<sup>11</sup> The verb *jóhyá* ‘be glad’ is one of a very few active verbs in Otomi that depict PCs.

<sup>12</sup> Despite morphological idiosyncrasies, the reader should bear in mind that stative verbs are verbs attending to the markedness criteria established in §2. In other words, they are syntactic predicates WFM and are not unmarked modifiers of nouns.

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<sup>13</sup> Object markers display allomorphic patterns that are too complex to treat them here accurately. See for example Voigtlander and Echegoyen (1985), Lastra (1992), or Lastra (1997) for more details.

<sup>14</sup> I take the structure in (26) to be the underlying encoding pattern for all stative verbs inflected in third person. For this reason, all examples above that involve the stative verb *mě* ‘be hard’ should be understood as having the same underlying structure as (26).

<sup>15</sup> The language has at least other seven nasal prefixes. Palancar (In Press) studies three of these prefixes.

<sup>16</sup> For cases like this, Scott Berthiaume has suggested to me that the prefix is still used with nasal stems, but assimilates to the stem.

<sup>17</sup> Additionally, when the nasal is attached to a stem with an initial glottal-labial consonant cluster (e.g. [#ʔbX] or [#hmX], as in *’bexüi* ‘dark’ or *hmödi* ‘expensive’), the labial is dropped, and the nasal assimilates the labial feature, as [m-ʔX] or [m-hX] (e.g. *m-’exüi* or *m-hödi*).

<sup>18</sup> In general, when the morphological root of a verb bears a high tone, the root commonly receives an ascending tone in the bound form (e.g. *ho<sup>h</sup>k-i* vs. *ho<sup>h</sup>k-a* ‘fix’).

<sup>19</sup> The zero for the third person object anaphora is placed in PC verbs after the root because the final /i/ is not a morpheme in this construction, in contrast with (41) where it is.

<sup>20</sup> The adaptation included: written representation, morpheme boundaries, syntactic analysis, and glosses.

<sup>21</sup> Soustelle (1937/1993:173) analyzes the stative prefix *rá-* in San José del Sitio Otomi as if it were a singular morpheme (i.e. *ra-*) plus the possessive morpheme for third person (i.e. the high tone). This implies that a structure such as *tuädē ránini* ‘I’ve come to know he’s ill’ (segmented as *tu-ädē rá-nini* ‘1.PST-hear RA-be.ill’) is interpreted as meaning ‘I’ve heard *his* being ill’. Such an interpretation is unfortunately not adequate because the (definite) singular morpheme plus the possessive in this dialect is *kár-* but not *rá-*.

<sup>22</sup> The lexeme *txu* has high tone when it is a verb and low tone when it is a noun. Such a tonal pattern is particular to this word.

<sup>23</sup> As shown in example (36) above, the same phenomenon also happens with PC verbs.

<sup>24</sup> The use of intensifiers with PC lexemes should NOT be taken to be a piece of evidence that points to the adjectival nature of such lexemes. The use of intensifiers is only motivated because of the semantics of PC lexemes, which express measurable properties.

<sup>25</sup> Apart from PC nouns, the prefix is found sporadically in a few nouns that

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express a mass (i.e. *řá-bojó* ‘a lot of money’), or nouns that express quantity (i.e. *řá-múndo* ‘a (very big) heap’). A noun such as *zone* ‘a male witch’ or ‘a vampire’ is not typically treated as expressing a PC elsewhere, but since this noun may also be used to depict a person as evil, I have included it in Table (3).

<sup>26</sup> The similarities in (54) and (55) appear to point to an extension of the use of the inflectional morphology proper of a nominal predication construction to the realm of PC verbal predication. From this extension, the language obtained a generalized marker to encode a PC lexeme in predication (in third person imperfect). There is yet another piece of evidence that suggests this extension took place. The imperfect FW *már* used with PC verbs resembles the FW *má* plus the singular enclitic =*r* used in the nominal predication construction.

<sup>27</sup> I want to thank an anonymous referee for suggesting an example with a proper name in order to strengthen the argument that this construction expresses identification. The meaning in example (60c) cannot be expressed with the ordinary nominal predication construction.

<sup>28</sup> Besides, elements in compounds often show a rather idiosyncratic behavior regarding tone; it is not rare to find the same elements bearing different tones in similar contexts: e.g. Mezquital Otomi *dáta-nā* (be.big-head) ‘(a) big head’ vs. *dáta-xót’o* (be.big-sunflower) ‘(a large) sunflower’.

<sup>29</sup> *Atole* is a type of hot sweet drink made of corn flour.

<sup>30</sup> I owe this important observation to my first anonymous referee.

<sup>31</sup> I want to thank Paulette Levy for her help and ideas on this section.

<sup>32</sup> The morpheme *dö-* does not appear to have an inherent or consistent tone. In general, the tone in these elements is rather inconsistent as a whole, and it appears to be idiosyncratic to each compound.

<sup>33</sup> Other two members should perhaps be included in the list at least for SI Otomi. The form *hōga* ‘good’ occurs only in one compound *hōga-jō’í* (good-person) ‘good person’. This form appears to be a fossilized bound form of a verb *hogi* ‘be ripe, be at its best point, be good’, whose current bound form is *ho’*. The second form is *mbōnga*, a productive acategorical lexeme used to produce compounds expressing types of wild animals. This element is cognate of *mbānga* in Mezquital Otomi (Hernández Cruz *et al.* 2004:159-60), which is the bound form of the PC noun *mbāngi* ‘wild (animal)’.

<sup>34</sup> Both lexical elements serve as the probable source for the various allomorphs of the diminutive prefix {*tí-*} (i.e. *t’ú-*, *t’í-* and *txí-*).

<sup>35</sup> The noun *měfo* ‘a short person’ appears most frequently in nominal compounds such as *měfo-ndō* ‘short man’ or *měfo-txú* ‘short woman’. Compounds like these are treated in detail in §6.