

The Simplex Clause in Boruca¹

*Damaris Castro*²

Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica

Resumen

Se describe la cláusula simple en boruca, una lengua chibcha de la zona sur de Costa Rica. Se acude a otras descripciones generales sobre la lengua como fuentes complementarias. Se analiza el orden y la organización de los principales constituyentes de la oración a nivel de frase y oración (frase verbal y nominal). Con particular atención se examinan el papel del orden en la oración, así como la codificación de las relaciones sintácticas principales (sujeto y objeto). El análisis se completa con el estudio de las relaciones gramaticales y los procesos sintácticos, así como con un texto donde se muestran los aspectos presentados en el análisis.

Abstract

A description is provided of the simplex clause in Boruca, a Chibchan language once spoken in the south of Costa Rica. Other general descriptions of the language are used as complementary sources. This study deals with the various word-order patterns at the clause level and phrase level (noun and verb phrases). Special attention is given to the role of word order in the codification of the major syntactic relations (subject and object, in particular). An analysis of grammatical relations, syntactic processes and a sample text complete the paper.

Palabras claves: lenguas chichas, boruca, cláusula simple, relaciones gramaticales

Keywords: Chibchan languages Boruca, simplex clause, grammatical relations

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² Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje. Correo electrónico: dcastro@una.ac.cr

Introduction

This study presents a description of the simplex clause in Boruca, an indigenous language belonging to the Chibcha family.³ Other very general descriptions of the language are used as secondary sources (Constenla and Maroto⁴; Quesada Pacheco⁵).⁶ Information is provided on word order in the main clause; in addition, word order is analyzed within the noun and verb phrases. Attention is then given to the grammatical relations in the language: subject, object, dative and obliques, as well as possession. The syntactic processes are also covered; both valence-increasing and valence-decreasing operations are included. The sample text in the last section illustrates the information presented in the paper.

The Boruca indigenous group is located in the southern part of Costa Rica, in an area known as Buenos Aires, in the province of Puntarenas. The people live mainly in two reserves: Boruca and Curré. The total number of inhabitants on these reservations is 2017.⁷ Only two of them are terminal speakers of Boruca; the rest use Spanish as their mother tongue, hence confirming Boruca's classification as an

3 This paper completes a research project partially financed by the Universidad Nacional (Costa Rica); it is part of a series of studies about Boruca grammar: Damaris Castro, "Brúnhahk Tek: An Extinct Language," *Letras* 43 (2008): 51-74; Damaris Castro, "The Noun Phrase in Boruca: Studying a Recently Extinct Language," *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 63 (2010): 196-220; Damaris Castro, José Manuel Murillo, J. Diego Quesada, "Evolución morfosintáctica en las lenguas chibchas," *Letras* 45 (2010): 25-67; Damaris Castro, "The Boruca Verbal Dimension," *Amerindia* (Francia), forthcoming; Damaris Castro, "The Complex Clause in Boruca," *Forma y Función* (Colombia), forthcoming.

4 Adolfo Constenla and E. S. Maroto, *Leyendas y tradiciones borucas* (San José: Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 1986).

5 Miguel A. Quesada Pacheco, *Hablemos boruca* (San José: Ministerio de Educación Pública. San José, Costa Rica, 1995); and *Narraciones borucas* (San José: Ministerio de Educación Pública. San José, Costa Rica, 1996).

6 Given the state of the language, the author has relied primarily on these secondary sources, complemented by examples of sentences produced by Nemesio González, one of the two last terminal speakers of the language. Only when the examples are taken from secondary sources is their respective citation given; examples with no reference citation correspond to Nemesio's production and were collected personally by the author of this article; the English versions of the glosses and English translations are also provided by the author.

7 INEC. Instituto Nacional en Estadística y Censo. *Censo 2000*.

extinct language. Regarding the genetic affiliation of the language, Boruca is a Chibchan language. This family originally occupied the territories of the present-day Costa Rican-Panama border zone, along the Talamanca mountain range. According to Quesada,⁸ the Chibchan family is a large language family now distributed throughout Honduras, Nicaragua, most of Costa Rica, and areas of Panamá, Colombia and Venezuela. The Chibchan family is divided into the Paya and the Southern languages. The latter, in turn, are divided into the Pota, Isthmian and Magdalenian languages. Boruca comes from the Isthmian branch, and like Teribe and Cuna, has no immediate sister languages. The other members of the Isthmian branch are Bribri and Cabécar (in the Viceita branch), Guaymí and Bocotá (in the Guaymian branch) and the deceased Chánguena and Dorasque (in the Doracic branch). Except for the Cunas and the members of the Doracic branch, the rest of the Isthmian languages are spoken in Costa Rican territory (plus Guatuso, from the Pota group).⁹

Word Order

The basic word order of main, unmarked declarative sentences in Boruca, as in the Central American Chibchan languages in general, is SOV. According to Quesada,¹⁰ in the Colombian Chibchan languages some variations can be found. In the case of Chimila, it alternates between SOV and SVO, and in Barí a tendency in younger generations for SVO constructions may be observed. In the noun phrase, nouns are followed by adjectives; possessors precede possessed nouns; numerals and quantifiers precede nouns; and postpositions appear after nouns.

⁸ J. Diego Quesada, *The Chibchan Languages* (Cartago: Editorial Tecnológica de Costa Rica, 2007) 31-40.

⁹ For further, detailed information, see Quesada (2007).

¹⁰ Quesada, 144.

Word Order in the Main Clause

The basic word order in the main clause (SOV) is shown in (1); SV order can be observed in intransitive sentences such as (2). Independent subject pronouns behave the same way as NPs in terms of words order. Boruca also allows for alternative orders in cases where emphasis or focus is given to a particular constituent, which is then placed in sentence initial position as shown in (4), the focused version of (3). In other cases the basic word order is altered when the object is new and the subject is given; the subject then can be post-verbal, resulting in OV structure, focusing on the grammatical object (5). Note how in this case the subject is affixed to the verb, resulting in OV_s constructions, where –s stands for a person-indexing suffix. Intransitive verbs can also occur with subject indexing suffixes, as in example (6); as in the case of transitive sentences, no NP cooccurs in the clause. Aspect does not affect word order in Boruca since it is also affixed to the verb.

- (1) *Di' róhk Ki¹¹ aúh tsít ki bag-rá.*
 1_{pl}L pL emph dog dim emph have-actL.
 'We have a little dog.'

- (2) *Di-ng deg-rá Rédi íh.*
 1_{pl}.emph gO-actl San José to.
 'We go to San José.'

- (3) *At ki bihg-rá dué'shi.*
 1_{sg} emph getup-actl Early.
 'I get up early.'

¹¹ Three markers reflect the grammaticalization of subject coding in Boruca: *ki*, *ang* (-ng) and *abí*. These forms mark noun phrases depending on their function in discourse. They may mark the subject, topic, focus, emphasis, agreement with a previously mentioned subject, and specificity. Thus, each of these forms will be glossed differently throughout the paper, depending on the function observed in context.

- (4) *Dué'shi a-ng Bihg-rá.*
 Early 1_{sg-emph} get.up-actl.
 'Early, I get up.'
- (5) *Jose ki shés-kr-i-ng.*
 Jose emph kick-pnt-3_{sg-emph}.
 'She kicked Jose.'
- (6) *Daba-kr-í-ng.*
 Arrive-actl-3_{sg-agr}.
 'He arrived.'

Example (7) illustrates the case of an intransitive sentence where the subject appears post-verbally, as the single argument of the verb; these structures are rare, yet still attested. This order serves the function of downplaying the role of the subject in running discourse. Example (8) presents another instance of defocusing the subject in an intransitive sentence; the subject is outranked in this case by the object of the sentence; in other words, the object is given more importance.

- (7) *De-krá dó'k.*
 Leave-pfv otter.
 'The otter left.' (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 66)
- (8) *Di' brúngkahk néngwáhk róhki tegí ki bag-rá*
 poSS borucas first pL poSS story Spec have-hab
di-ng é'tse.
 1_{pL-Sbj} one.
 'We have the story of our first Borucas.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 84)

In terms of word order in the simple sentence, Boruca also has a large set of postpositions to express different semantic roles. Example (9) below shows the case of a locative postposition, taking the general position for this element; i.e., after the verb.

- (9) *At kóngát ki á'r isht-kra néngkra tá.*
 poSS husband Spec poSS see-pfv road in.
 'My husband saw me on the road.' (Quesada Pacheco 1996: 94)

Other word orders

Reordering of various elements of the main clause is also found quite frequently to serve different functions in Boruca. These are exemplified below.

a. Left dislocation

These constructions do not add or drop participants; rather they rearrange the arguments in the clause. The dislocated element moves to the left of the subject position in the class. Although they may alter the normal alignment of constituents in the sentence, these constructions conserve the same number of original arguments. The main function of these constructions is to downplay the centrality of the grammatical subject or object. In (10), the recipient takes sentence initial position, and it is then followed by the subject and object.

- (10) *I be ki ka di-ng i yuag-rá.*
 poSS mother Spec to 1_{pL}-Sbj 3_{SG} tell- hab.
 'To his mother, we told it.' (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 66)

The following examples illustrate other types of left movement which serve for other elements in the sentence (objects or indirect object) to outrank, information-structurally, the subject of the sentence. Example (11) below is an example of the canonical word order in Boruca (SOV). Another type of leftward movement is shown in (12) and (13), where the benefactive is placed between the subject

and object of the sentence in the first case and in preverbal position in the second case, thus indicating that the indirect object does not always take sentence final position.

- (11) *Ramróhk ki jubú ki bag-rá tebék yet.*

Woman Spec drink art have-hab snake for.

‘The woman has the drink for the snake.’

(Constenla & Maroto: 1986: 54)

- (12) *Péro a-ng, ba yet, báhkanng só't ki wí'-kra.*

But 1_{SG}-s_{bj} 2_{SG} for, four bluegills art bring- p_{fv}.

‘But, I, for you, the four bluegills brought.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 64)

- (13) *Mang i-ng duríh i' ramat ki ká dó'-kra.*

Then 3_{SG}- s_{bj} poison p_{oSS} wife Spec to give-p_{fv}.

‘Then, he gave poison to his wife.’

(Literally: ‘He, a poison to his wife gave’)

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 116)

b. Clefting

Given that in Boruca the OV functions as a unit, the only way to extract the object from this unit is through the clefting of the object, achieved by the use of the form *yabí*, referring to the object. Example (14) below shows an instance of this type of clefting. According to Quesada,¹² *yabí* splits the sentence into two by acquiring verbal morphology; it also appears rather commonly in sentence initial position.

¹² J. Diego Quesada, “En Route to Subject-Coding: The Case of Boruca,” *Theoretical Linguistics* 27 (2001): 55-86 (71).

- (14) *Yabih-ir-i-ng yabí beyáng-ir-ang ke ba ki*
 dem-dur-3SG-aGr dem-emph want-dur-1SG comp 2SG Sbj
at ká yuag-irá.
 I_{SG} to say- dur.
 ‘It is exactly that that I wanted you to tell me.’
 (Literally: That’s exactly what I wanted to say)
 (Quesada Pacheco 1996:162)

The Noun Phrase

The structure of the noun phrase in Boruca is represented here. There are multiple members that can comprise the noun phrase. The noun phrase usually has to be marked by one of the three information-structure markers—*ki*, *ang*, *abí*—described below. The elements present in square brackets represent all the possible elements that could be contained in a noun phrase. Curly brackets indicate the two possibilities that a noun phrase exhibits when containing demonstratives: they can be followed by the plural marker (*róhk*) or a definite marker (*ki*), or they can stand alone before the noun. Elements in parentheses represent optional members of the noun phrase. The order of the constituents of the noun phrase is provided here for a clear representation of the distribution of its members.

- (15) (NP [(dem/det) (pl) (def) (poSS) (quant) N (iS) (Gen) (n)]
 1
 5 { }
)
 (quant) (pL) (iS) (adj) (dim) (pL) (adj) (iS)]_{NP}

The constituents can be organized preceding and following the nucleus; N represents the only obligatory constituent of the NP. Most NP constituents are post-nominal; however, demonstratives or determiners and possessive pronouns must precede the head, and plural

markers optionally precede the head. In contrast, the genitive marker (the case of *íguí*) and another noun (in possessive NPs), adjectives,

diminutives, and the markers of informational status must follow the noun; quantifiers and plural markers optionally follow the noun. It is important to note that plural markers that occur before the noun pluralize a preceding demonstrative, whereas plural markers occurring after the noun pluralize the noun itself; plural concordance, however, between nouns and demonstratives in the same NP is not obligatory.

Depending on the type of demonstratives used (one that can be immediately followed by an information-structure marker or one that has to be followed by a noun or its modifiers), there are examples such as (16). Demonstratives, plural markers, and the information-structure marker (expressing specificity in this case) can also precede the noun as in (17). Demonstratives, as in (18) can be followed immediately by an information structure marker preceding the noun, and then another information-structure marker follows the head noun. Demonstratives and possessives can also occur together before the noun, followed by one information structure marker as in (19). In the first NP of example (20), demonstratives and numerals precede the noun, which in turn is followed by the plural marker and one information structure marker. In (21) a demonstrative, a plural marker, a definiteness marker and a possessive marker precede the noun, whereas a plural marker and an information structure marker follow it; lastly, in (22) a quantifier precedes the noun while the plural marker and the information structure marker follow the first noun.

(16) *Wá ki é'tse kangkwá's kwíng kri'eh-írá kí bang ká.*

dem def one rock very big-dur sea shore at.

This, one was a very big rock was at the sea shore.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986:102)

- (17) *Wá róhk ki bu'k kabát-íra*¹³.
 dem pL Spec two brother-dur.
 'These were two brothers.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 102)
- (18) *Yá ki ramróhk ki abí-ng kwí ba-krá*.
 That Spec woman Sbj foc-emph mouse have-pnt.
 'That very woman had mice.'
 (Quesada Pacheco, 1996: 70)
- (19) *Chí' at kabát ki at beyáng-ra*.
 This poSS brother Sbj 1_{SG} love-actL.
 'This, my brother loves me.'
 (Quesada Pacheco, 1996: 73)
- (20) *Wé' bú'k ramróhk róhk ki dékyu'-írá yá ki dí' kahk*
 dem two woman pL Spec run-dur dem Spec water ditch
kí ta nániashi ahtsí.
 Spec in down up.
 'These two women run, up and down, in this particular river.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 60)
- (21) *Wá róhk ki i duríh róhk ki ká'wing-kra ishén i-ng* dem pL
 Spec poSS wizard pL Spec call-pnt as 3_{PL}-aGr
teg-íra róhk dóhguí-r-i-ng róhk yet.
 tell-dur pL listen-actL-3_{PL}-aGr for.
 'These called their wizards to hear what they would say.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 50)

¹³ The structures of this example and the previous one offer a different possibility of analysis as a predicate structure: 'These two' functions as the subject, and the verbalized noun 'brothers' functions in the predicate slot. So the structure is actually NP Pred V; in this case, the verbalizer (-ra) is suffixed to the predicate.

- (22) *Kwíng kákba' róhk ang de-krá déngí ya-kra ba'wí*
 Many day pL emph go-pnt later start-pnt appear-inf
*turi tsít róhk ki*¹⁴.
 calf dim pL det.
 'Many days went by, later the little calves started to appear.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 86)

Possessive noun phrases are mentioned here only in reference to the NP structure; they will be further discussed in the section under the heading of *Possession* below. There are three types of possessive noun phrases, in all of which the possessor always precedes the possessed noun. Example (23) illustrates two of the three types of possessive constructions, one containing a possessive pronoun and another with the structure N + N; in examples (24) and (25), the genitive marker *iguí* follows the possessor. In (24), the augmentative appears between the possessor and the genitive marker. Note that (25) represents a case of a verbal derived possessum, which is very frequent in the language.

- (23) *I' ú karas ta i-ng i' bóh-ra.*
 3_{POSS} house door in 3_{SG-Sbj} 3_{SG} throw-actL.
 'She throws it in the door of her house.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 114)
- (24) *Toví aht-krá tebek kráng íguí wá é'tse.*
 Still remain- pnt snake auG poSS child one.
 'Still one child of the snake remained.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 58)

¹⁴ *Ki* is glossed here as det; *-ki* operates at two levels: a. within the NP, it can modify demonstratives and/or nouns, and does not function as an IS marker; b. at the end of the NP, *-ki* modifies the whole NP and does function as an IS marker.

- (25) *Wá'shi-kra Loréto ígui koht-krá ki.*
 Like.this-_{pnt} Loreto _{poSS} death-_{pnt} Spec.
 'Loreto's death was like this.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 54)

Information-structure markers appear after the head. When the information is focused, *ang* marks the head noun (26). In this case, only the plural marker is allowed before the information-structure marker (27). The other information marker is *ki*, which refers to known information and allows other constituents, such as adjectives (28), the plural marker (29) and others, to come between the head noun and the information-structure marker.

- (26) *E'tsi abí ki e'tsi náí' ang wí'-ira,*
 One man _{Sbj} one wild.pig _{foc} bring-_{dur},
wí'-ir-i-ng sí'kwa róhk yét.
 bring-_{dur} -_{3SG-aGr} white _{pL} for.
 'One man brought a wild pig, he brought it for the white men.'
 (Quesada Pacheco 1996: 53)

- (27) *Ramróhk róhk ang yabáhg-írá.*
 Woman _{pL} _{foc} pass.by-_{dur}.
 'The women passed by.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 62)

- (28) *Ramróhk bush ki tebek kí beyáng-ra.*
 Woman young _{def} snake _{Spec} want-_{actL}.
 'The young woman wants the snake.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 54)

(29) *Wé duríh róhk ki te-kra ke néngwáhk tebek kí*
 det wizard pL def say_{-pnt reL} first snake def
ái'-ishkong-írá.
 die-should- dur.

‘These wizards said that the snake should die first.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 52)

Item (30) exemplifies a possible combination of grammatical elements in Boruca. From the total number of constituents of the noun phrase, only the possessive markers are missing in this sentence. Demonstratives, plurals, determiners and numerals precede the N, whereas an adjective, a diminutive and a plural marker follow the noun.

(30) *Wá róhk ki bu'k wá' bush tsít róhk írá.*
 dem pL emph num girl young dim pL dur.

‘These were two young little girls.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 60)

The Boruca Verb and Verb Phrase

This section presents the structure of both the verb and the verb phrase. In Boruca the verb root is suffixed with different elements such as aspectual, mood and person markings. The order of these elements, as well as other components of the verb, is discussed in this first part of the section. The structure and distribution of the verb phrase is covered in the second part of the section.

The Boruca Verb

The structure of the Boruca verb is summarized in (31) below.

(31) [root (inf) (akt)~(mod)(neG) (aSp) (Sbj-iS)(mood)]

According to (31), besides simply having the bare root, there are three possible forms for verb structure in Boruca. In the first, the verb root and the infinitive marker (*i/ih*) combine as in (32). Infinitive forms are frequently found after one inflected verb (they are highly frequent after the verb *yá* ‘go’ in different aspectual forms) or after a verb that with an *aktionsart* marker (i.e., the ingressive *yá’ sa’* (33), or the continuative *do’a* (34)). The infinitive does not always appear in contexts where it is expected; note the contrast between (33) and (35). The appearance of the infinitive seems to be phonologically conditioned in part; the data indicate that the infinitive marker appears after the mid back vowel <o>, but not after any of the other vowels; it is also allowed after consonants (<g>, <’>, <d>, <ng>, <h>, among others).

- (32) *I kwing-í di-ng yá-ra Káhk Chí’ í, Káhk Chí’ tá*
 3_{SG} put^{-inf} 1_{pL}-emph go^{-actL} K. Ch. by, K. Ch. in
di-ng yá-ra i kwing-í.
 1_{pL}-emph go^{-actL} 3_{SG} put^{-inf}.
 We (are) go(ing) to put it by the *Káhk Chí’*, in the *Káhk Chí’*
 we (are) go(ing) to put it.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 66)

- (33) *Ya’shi sí’kwa róhk ki yá’sa’-krá deg-í Brúngkakh í.*
 Like.this foreign pL Sbj start-pnt walk^{-inf} Boruca to.
 ‘So the foreigners started to walk to Boruca.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 76)

- (34) *Yá ta-ra duríh róhk ki do’a moréng ihchí sá’yeng sod-íh.*
 dem in- actL wizard pL def continue good and bad do^{-inf}.
 ‘There, the wizards continue to do good and bad.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 120)

(35) *I róhk ki yá'sá'-kra jí kráng saté'.*

3_{pL} pL Sbj start-_{pnt} wood bunch light.
 'They started to light a bunch of wood.'

(Quesada Pacheco 1995: 88)

In terms of verb structure there is also the possibility of having a verbal root that is optionally marked by the negative marker *-í'shi-* and the aspectual markers (*-ra* in this case) as in *kongí'shira* in (36) below. A modality marker (*-chá-*) may also follow the root as in *dabakcháíríng* in (36) where it is followed by the aspectual marker (*-irá*) and the topic continuity subject (*-íng*).

(36) *I ki yá' kong-í'shi-ra náda ká,*

3_{SG} Sbj reFL get.scared-_{neG-dur} nothing of,
dabak-chá-ír-í-ng drik shosát kák ta reshí.
 get-want-_{dur}-3_{SG-aGr} metal painted place to just.

'He didn't get scared of anything, he just wanted to get to the place of the painted metal.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 88)

Furthermore, (37) contains an *aktionsart* marker (*-krog*) preceded by the root of the verb; the aspectual marker follows the *aktionsart* form.

(37) *Ya-bih ta i-ng i' íng-krog-írá.*

dem-_{emph} with 3_{pL-top} 3_{SG} tie-finish-_{dur}.
 'With that very thing they finished tying it.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 98)

The last possibility is to have a verbal root followed by a mood marker such as the imperative (*-á*) as in (38) below. Note that in the negative form there is a negative morpheme appearing in clause initial

position (*dí*) (39), distinguishing this type of negative construction from the regular negative form with the negative marker *-i'shi-*.

(38) *Ba dabag-á.*
 2_{SG} come-imp.
 'You come!' (Come!)

(39) *Dí ba-ng dabag-á.*
 neG 2_{pL}-Sbj come-imp.
 'Don't come!'

The Boruca Verb Phrase

The Boruca verb phrase consists of the verb (whose structure was discussed above), which is the only obligatory constituent of the vp, plus the adverb, which may precede or follow the verb, plus a plural marker, and one or two postpositional phrases. This structure is represented in (40) below:

(40) [((adv) ~ (np)v (pL) ~ (adv)) (pp) (pp)]

The first case is exemplified in (41) below; in this case the adverb appears after the subject of the sentence and precedes the verb. As (42) shows, adverbs can also appear after the verb. Example (43) shows a biclausal transitive sentence with the adverb appearing before the direct object in the first clause and in sentence initial position in the second clause.

(41) *Entonces, tebek róhk ki we'é kawí'ra.*
 Then snake pL Sbj here live-actL.
 'Then the snakes live here.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 56)

(42) *Í ki kawí'-ira wáih.*

3_{SG} S_{bj} live-dur around.here.

‘She lived around here.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 56)

(43) *I'k yá ki ramróhk ang réi i' wá' bag-irá úgé',*

When _{refL} _{Spec} woman _{loc} soon _{poSS} child have-dur so,

kwíng abí róhk ki yá' kongká-irá.

many people_{pL} _{Spec} _{refL} be.scared-dur.

‘When that woman was about to have her child many people were very scared.’

(Literally: ‘When that woman soon her child was going to have, many people were scared.’)

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 50)

The plural marker appears at times after the verb indicating that the subject of the sentence is plural. This can be observed in (44), where the plural marker follows a verb that is not marked by the person suffix; or it can follow a verb containing the person suffix in running discourse as in (45).

(44) *Yá t.i.ng dwahgí yi' ki tóh-kra róhk.*

dem in.3_{pL}-_{loc} on.the.other.side wood _{Spec} lit.up-pnt _{pL}.

‘There, they on the other side, the wood (they) burned.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 56)

(45) *Yi' ki tóh-kr-i-ng róhk.*

Wood _{Spec} lit.up-pnt-3_{pL}-aGr _{pL}.

‘The wood, they lit.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 56)

Postpositional phrases represent the last element that appears in a verb phrase. It is even possible to have two postpositions in the same sentence.

(46) *Yá ta i-ng shigr'-í-ká asta i' ingsa ta, i sagrá ta.* dem in 3_{SG}-aGr
wrap-3_{SG}-in up.to poSS neck in, poSS head in. 'In that, he
wraps her in, in her neck, in her head.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 54)

Grammatical Relations

Since there are several syntactic operations in Boruca that refer to grammatical relations, it is essential to begin with a description of the organization of the basic relations and their expression in Boruca. Boruca makes use of different strategies related to participant-encoding. These include word order, agreement between the verb and the grammatical subject, postpositions and information-structure markers. Combinations of these different strategies are used to index the following grammatical relations: subject, object, dative and oblique. Each one of these relations will be dealt with below.

Subject

In Boruca the grammatical relation of subject is identifiable on different grounds; namely, word order, certain syntactic processes, and verb agreement with overt NPs.

On the basis of word order, in the case of transitive clauses, there are two main types of word order in the simplex clause: SOV, the most common order, is used to ground participants and also to reinforce the identity of participants in discourse. Both full noun phrases and subject pronouns appear in subject position in this type of order. The other possibility is to have OV_S; this word order is more common in running discourse. When we have SOV order, it is not possible to index the subject onto the verb. Furthermore, when

OV_s order is followed, it is not possible to have an overt subject noun phrase (or independent pronouns) in the sentence. These patterns exhibit complementary distribution and they can be observed in (47) and (48) respectively.

(47) *Luis ang Josefina ki ái'kra.*

L. foc J. Spec kill-pnt.

'Luis killed Josefina.'

(48) *Josefina ái'-kr-i-ng.*

J. kill-pnt-3_{SG}-Sbj.

'He killed Josefina.'

In the case of intransitive sentences, SV is the most common order as in (49), while V_s is also widely found even in discourse initial position as in (50) below.

(49) *E'tsi brit ki de-krá Drake í.*

One black Sbj leave- pnt Drake towards.

'One black man left for Drake.'

(Quesada Pacheco 1996: 60)

(50) *Daba-kr-i-ng dí' tsasúh róhk kába.*

Arrive-pnt-3_{SG}-top poSS grandpa pL in.house.of.

'He arrived to our grandparents' house.'

(Quesada Pacheco 1996: 64)

Boruca does not exhibit subject agreement with overt NPs; however, subjects that are NPs can be identified by the morphological markers following them. The sentences below show that the morpheme *ang* can be used with noun phrases (both nominal and pronominal) only in subject (51) but not in object function (52). The morpheme *ki* is used with nominal and pronominal (53) noun phrases

in subject function and with nominal noun phrases in object function, but not with pronominal noun phrases in object function (54).

(51) *Ba-ng íshd-ra.*
 2SG-foc see-actL.
 ‘You see.’

(52) **Ana ki ba-ng báht-kra.*
 Ana Sbj you-foc hit-pnt.
 ‘Ana hit you.’

(53) *Di’ róhk ki di’ aúh ki íshd-ra.*
 1pL pL Sbj poSS dog Spec see-actL.
 ‘They see their dog.’

(54) **At ki báht-kr-i-ng.*
 1SG Spec (obj) hit-pnt-3SG-SS.
 ‘He hit me.’

In Boruca, there are syntactic processes that also help identify the grammatical relation of the subject, particularly in terms of syntactic processes that only operate on subjects. These cases include two-clause sentences—(55) and (56)—where two verbs have the same referent; the second subject may be omitted due to this co-referentiality, since the same NP controls both verbs. In the particular case of (57) and (58), the overt subject of the sentence can be omitted as long as the subject is indexed on the first verb. All of these cases show subject identity in the second clause.

(55) *Ba ki ya-kra di’ ta; ya’ yo’kr-bang.*
 2sg sbj go-pnt River to; refl bathe-pnt-2sg-emph.
 ‘You went to the river; (you) bathed.’

- (56) *É'tse abí sabúk di-ng mang í-rá*
 One person Panamanian 1_{pl}-sbj with cop-actl
kab-i'shi-krá.
 sleep-neg-pnt.
 'One Panamanian person who was with us did not sleep.'
- (57) *I ki yá' sa'-krá dí' yang bík.*
 3_{sg} sbj refl start-pnt water drink yesterday.
 'He started to drink water yesterday.'
- (58) *Yá' sa'-krá-i-ng dí' yang bík.*
 refl start-pnt-3_{sg}-agr water drink yesterday.
 '(He) started to drink water yesterday.'

Coordinated sentences can be taken as partial¹⁵ evidence of the existence of the category subject in Boruca. Thus, (59) shows the coordination of a transitive and an intransitive sentence; the second subject could be either the subject or the object of the first sentence. In (59), the second subject of the sentence is deleted and the verb is controlled by the first noun in the sentence. The correct interpretation is determined only through the corresponding marker (*a*) clitized to the second verb (*at*, 1_{SG}).

- (59) *At ki ramróhk ki ísht-krá ine shit-kr-a-ng.*
 1_{sg} sbj woman def see- pnt And laugh-pnt-1_{sg}-agr.
 'I saw the woman and (I) laughed.'
 (Quesada 2001: 60)

¹⁵ It is only partial because objects can also control verbs as shown below:

At ki ramróhk ki ísht-krá ine Shit-kr-i-ng.
 1_{sg} sbj woman def see- pnt and laugh-pnt-3_{sg}-agr.
 'I saw the woman and (she) laughed.'
 (Quesada 2001: 60)

Object

In Boruca, the direct object is identified by its position; the noun phrase immediately precedes the verb (60) in an unmarked, declarative, transitive clause, as occurs in most Chibchan languages. The existence of the object category in Boruca is also made evident by the topic construction. In these constructions the object, be it a full *np* or a pronominal one, is located in the left periphery and the subject appears post-verbally (61), or it can be indexed in the transitive verb (62). Other Chibchan languages, such as Teribe,¹⁶ use a marker (*e*, in the case of Teribe) to index the grammatical object in the verb; in Boruca this grammatical category is identified only on syntactic and semantic bases, not on morphological grounds.

(60) *E'tse yebeht kí ang wá' ba-kra i' wá' ki tá.*

One man Sbj emph child have-pnt poSS child Spec with.

'One man had a child with his own daughter.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 116)

(61) *Wé' tebek ki yasug-írá móro róhk ki y-ab-é' ki*

dem snake Spec praise-dur moro pL Sbj dem-emph-then Spec

ta ógé i-ng i beyáng-írá róhk.

in all 3_{pL}-Sbj 3_{SG} want-dur pL.

'That (specific) snake, the moros praised, then all these, they wanted her.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 116)

(62) *I' wí'-kr-i-ng yá ih.*

3_{SG} took-pnt-3_{pL}-Sbj there to.

'They took it there.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986:72)

16 J. Diego Quesada, *A Grammar of Teribe* (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2000) 112.

Dative

There is morphosyntactic evidence for the existence of the dative relation in Boruca. This grammatical relation includes the semantic roles of recipients and benefactives. Dative noun phrases can be identified by the postpositions *yét* (63) and *ká* (64) in trivalent verbs, thus these postpositions are used to express one of the arguments of these verbs.

- (63) *Yá ta i-ng suá ki shúng-ra róhk, só't ki*
 dem in 3_{pL}-foc shrimp Spec send-actL pL bluegill Spec
shúng-ra róhk i be ki yet.
 send- hab pL poSS mother Spec for.
 ‘In those, they send shrimp and bluegill for her mother.’
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986:68)

- (64) *Ramróhk róhkki ishd-í-gíra kwíng rahd-írá róhk i*
 Woman pL Sbj see-3_{pL}-dur many come.out- dur pL 3_{SG}
dó'sh do'a ya'de dó'i kró róhk ka.
 like continue food give chicken pL to.
 ‘Women, they saw many, come out to give food to the chicken.’
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 92)

As expected, *yét* is also used in purposive and benefactive clauses. This indicates a semantic nuance in the sense that in the purposive clause *yét* also indicates some kind of benefit for the participants involved. This can be observed in (65).

- (65) *I kwíng-ír-í-ng róhk kak dát ta ch-í-ng*
 3_{SG} put-ipfv-3_{pL}-Sbj pL sun shine in dem-3_{pL}-aGr
kra'é'-í'sh-rá róhk yé.
 see-neG-actL pL so.that.
 ‘They put it in the sunshine so that those could not see.’

Obliques

Oblique noun phrases are those phrases that contain optional participants and that are expressed by postpositional phrases in Boruca. Among the semantic roles expressed by oblique constructions, there are comitative *é'dé* ('with'), benefactive *yet* ('to'), various forms expressing spatial relations *ká* ('against', 'towards', 'around', 'on'), *ta* ('in'), *sháh* ('close to'), *shikuhdé* ('around'), *í/ih* ('towards', 'from'), *wahgí* ('in front', 'through'), *dwahgí* ('on the other side'), *kába* ('in'). We can also find instrumental forms *é'dé* ('with') as in example (75), and accompaniment *tá* ('with') as in (56). In addition, one form expresses time relations: *é'* (in (time)). These noun phrases commonly appear after the verb. See (66) for locative, (67) for benefactive, and (68) for comitative examples.

(66) *Yá ki abí róhk ki kawí'ra we'é di' shah ta.*

Those def people pL Sbj live-actL here 1pL close in.

'Those people live here, close to us.'

(Quesada Pacheco 1996: 69)

(67) *Rámróhk ki yubú' ki bag-rá tebek yet.*

Woman Sbj chicha Spec have-actL snake for.

'The woman has chicha for the snake.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 54)

(68) *Wé' durih róhk ki yot-krá é't brúngkahk róhk e'dé.*

dem wizard pL Spec get.mad-pnt other brunca pL with.

'These wizards got mad at (literally *with*) other Borucas.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 60)

Possession

There are three widely used ways of expressing possession in Boruca; in all three cases, the possessor always precedes the possessed noun. There is a fourth type of possessive construction that is

less frequent, expressed through the use of the postposition *ék* ('of'). The first type of possessive construction uses the possessive pronouns, which are isomorphic with the personal pronouns, except for the absence of plural markers in the plural form. Their function is clearly identified in context when they appear before a noun. The first, second and third person singular pronouns show phonologically conditioned allomorphic variations, which are determined by specific consonants in most cases.

In terms of possession, Boruca, like some close relatives such as Guaymí and Buglere, shows an alienable/inalienable distinction. In addition, like most Chibchan languages, it shows internal possession. Although in Boruca all nouns can be possessed, some of them, such as parts of the body or specific objects belonging to the participant subject, must be possessed, as illustrated in (69) and (70). Thus, the absence of a possessive marker in sentences containing parts of the body, for example, would render sentences such as (70) ungrammatical, given that external possession is not allowed. Example (71) shows how the use of the reflexive pronoun does not suffice if the possessive marker is omitted. The possessive marker is not required for those instances in which the elements are understood as possessed or where possession is not determinant to the meaning of the sentence (72, 75). In (73), the fact that there is no possessive marker before the noun indicates that the possessor of the house is not important and thus needs not be mentioned. Example (74) shows possession through the use of a possessive pronoun.

- (69) *At ki at yure' ki túhg-ra.*
 1SG Sbj poSS hand Spec¹⁷ wash-actL.
 'I wash my hand.'

¹⁷ In this context, *kí* functions as a specifier or specificity marker. The gloss should not be confused with the structural position in the Government and Binding theory, daughter of XP, sister to X.

- (70) **At ki yure' ki túhg-ra.*
 1SG Sbj hand Spec wash- actL.
 *‘I wash hand.’
- (71) **At ki ya' yure' ki túhg-ra.*
 1SG Sbj refL hand Spec wash- actL.
 *‘I wash myself hand.’
- (72) *At ki a'r ú ki ishd-rá.*
 1SG Sbj poSS house Spec see- actL.
 ‘I see my house.’
- (73) *At ki ú ki ishd-rá.*
 1SG Sbj house det see- actL.
 ‘I see a house.’ (any house)
- (74) *Yá ki at bríshra.*
 dem Spec poSS sister- actL.
 ‘This is my sister.’

In the second type of possessive construction, there is a combination of two nouns: a possessor noun followed by a possessed noun.

- (75) *I bak ki i báhd-íra kabán kráng é'dé.*
 poSS owner Spec 3SG hit-dur priest stick with.
 ‘His owner would hit him with the priest’s stick.’
 (Quesada Pacheco 1996: 68)

The previous two possessive forms may also be combined in a single noun phrase, as in (76).

- (76) *Luis i turi wá' róhk ki*
 L. poSS cow offspring pL def
 'The calves of Luis's cow'
 [Literally: 'Luis his cow's calves']

The third type of possessive construction in Boruca is expressed through the construction: N_{possr} + *ígui* + N_{possm}; here *ígui* plays the role of a genitive (Gen) marker (similar to the 's' in the English construction 'that man's house'). This construction is observed in noun phrases where the possessed noun (77) is a verbal derived form, or in noun phrases containing regular nouns (78). This type of possessive construction allows adjectives qualifying the possessor noun to appear before the genitive marker and the possessum.

- (77) *Wá'shi-krá Loreto ígui kohtkra ki.*
 Like.this-pnt L. Gen death Spec.
 'Like this was Loreto's death.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 114)

- (78) *I sagrá ki wa'tsinéng turí suhgróhk ígui sagrá dó'sh-íra.*
 poSS head Spec exactly bull old poSS head like-dur.
 'His head was exactly like an old bull's head.'

There is yet another way of expressing possession in Boruca: through the use of the postposition *ék*. In this type of possession, the possessed element does not necessarily need to be specified and the postposition simply follows the possessor noun.

- (79) *I yuak-ch-i'sh-i-ng porque i kabát ék-ra.*
 3_{SG} say-exh-neG-3_{SG}-aGr because 3_{SG} brother poSS-actL.
 'He didn't want to say it because (it) was his brother's'.

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 70)

Syntactic Processes

Valence-Increasing Processes

In Boruca there is only one valence-increasing process: causativity. Applicatives and possessor raising have not been attested, causativity is found in one presumably fossilized collocation.

Causativity

Causativity is mainly expressed by marking the verbal root with modality or aspectual markers. In the data there is one case (see 80) where it is marked lexically through the fossilized collocation *chik-áh* ('to make sound').

- (80) *Kák ki ba'-kra mang i-ng krú ki chicáh-kra.*
 Day art dawn-pnt and 3_{SG-Sub} snail art sound.make-pnt.
 'The day started and he made the snail sound.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 70)

One can hypothesize that the fossilized collocation was reanalyzed as *chikáh* (*chik* 'sound' + *ah* 'make'). This suggests that *ah* originally assumed a causative function: it expresses the idea of making something happen, to cause a particular action to take place. In (66), if the door is closed, this occurs because someone caused it to be closed. This function can be observed in sentences such as (81) below:

- (81) *Rahd-i'sh-i-ng yét di-ng i' ú karás ki i*
 Leave-neG-3_{SG-aGr} for they-sbj poss house door def 3_{PL}
ká du'-áh-ra.
 to close-caus-actL.
 'For he not to leave, they, the door of his house, they caused it to close.'
 (Constenla & Maroto 1986: 56)

In the vast majority of cases, the causative construction seems to have been reanalyzed as an egressive *aktionsart*. It is important to bear in mind that, semantically, both causativity and an egressive phase are very close. The directionality of the semantic evolution appears to go from causativity to an egressive reading, given that there is only one causative with *-áh* in the data, plus the fossilized *chik-áh*; whereas there are many instances of *-áh* expressing egressive *aktionsarten*. The basic order of the constituents of the sentence may be altered when this type of *aktionsarten* is present. See (82) below.

(82) *Ah we'é dabag-áh-ra-ng.*

Ah! here got-already-actL-Sbj.

'I already got here.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 64)

Valence-Decreasing Processes

There are two valence-decreasing operations in Boruca: i. reflexives and reciprocals; and ii. the suppression of participants.

Reflexives and Reciprocals

In Boruca, reflexives and reciprocals are expressed analytically and they are signaled by the reflexive pronoun *yá'* in preverbal position. The number of arguments in Boruca's transitive clauses is not reduced given that both arguments happen to refer to the same entity. These clauses are also semantically intransitive because both syntactic arguments refer to a single entity in the message world.

(83) *Ya-kr-i-ng yá' be-i róhk Káhk Chi' tá. Go-*
 pnt-3_{pL}-Sbj refL hide-inf pL K. C. in. 'They
 went to hide (themselves) in Káhk Chi.'

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 74)

Reciprocals are signaled by the same pronoun as reflexives (*yá'*); in these constructions, the two participants equally act upon each other, and both are equally agent and patient.

(84) *Yá ki druk tsúng ki yá' úng-íra róhk, káng ki yá'*
 dem Spec iron machine art rec hit-dur pL, stone def refL
úng-íra róhk, kráng róhk ki úng-íra róhk, i shiská róhk
 hit-dur pL, stick pL def hit-dur pL, poSS nose pL
ki yá' shé-íra róhk, i yé'tsa róhk ki ógé,
 Spec refL tear.off-dur pL poSS arm pL Spec all,
kóngát ramát róhk ki ógé.

man woman pL def all.

'There, they hit each other with knives, they hit each other with stones, they hit each other with sticks, and they tore off each other's noses and arms, men and woman all'.

(Quesada Pacheco 1996: 34)

Suppression of Participants

This operation downplays the centrality of subjects. In (85) an example of \emptyset anaphora in Boruca is observed, whereby in running discourse, the subject can be omitted altogether. Note how the subject is indexed in the first verb (*dená-r-a-ng*), while this is not indicated in the second verb (*wí'-ra*), and then it is found again in the pronominal (*ang*) form before the third verb used in the sentence.

(85) *Úge', ba dená-r-a-ng dó'a. ... ba yét báhkang*
 Yes, 2_{SG} wait-actL.1_{SG-foc} continue ...2_{SG} for four
só't ki wí'-ra... sé'k a-ng ba dená-ra.
 bluegill def bring-hab tomorrow 1_{SG-foc} 2_{SG} wait-actL.
Dí', kahk tá a-ng ba dená-ra, ch-á-ng ba yét bú'k
 Water, ditch in 1_{SG-foc} 2_{SG} wait-actL, for-1_{SG-foc} 2_{SG} for two
só't sá'-ra más.
 bluegill catch- actL more.

‘Yes, I keep waiting...for you, the four bluegills (I) bring... tomorrow I will wait for you. In the river ditch, I will wait, because I will catch two more bluegills for you.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 64)

No evidence has been found to attest to the suppression of objects. This points to a much stronger relation of the OV unit, and suggests that zero anaphora for third person, found in languages such as English, is not possible in Boruca.

Comparison

There are different kinds of comparisons in Boruca. The most common way of comparing similar elements is through the use of the form *do'sh(e)* (‘like’) at the end of the sentence in (86)-(88); (89) shows an uncommon position for the comparative marker *do'sh*, preceding the verb.

(86) *Drik shos-át, káng, kráng, abí sodíhí-r-í-ng wá'*
Metal paint-adj rock stick people make-actL-3_{PL}-aGr child
róhk do'sh.

_{PL} like.

‘They made golden, rock, and stick people like children.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 53)

(87) *Tamáño r-í-ng i yebeht dó'she.*
Big actL-3_{SG}-aGr poss father like.

‘He is big like his father.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 58)

(88) *Shú'k uráng ki wátsinéng comóng-íra kró uráng dó'sh.*
Toad meat Spec exactly smell-dur chicken meat like.

‘The toad meat smelled exactly like chicken meat.’

(Quesada Pacheco 1996: 92)

(89) *Iné sí'kwa róhk ki i do'sh dabag-írá.*

And foreigner _{pL} det _{3_{pL}} like arrive-_{dur.}

‘And like the foreigners they arrived.’

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 76)

Quesada Pacheco claims that this type of comparison requires the personal pronoun *ding* (_{1_{pL}}+*ang*) in the first part of the sentence, plus *ki* may optionally be added at the end of this first sentence, and then *ihchí* (‘like’) or *dó'sh* (‘like’) at the end of the second sentence.¹⁸ However, this type of structure is not attested in texts collected towards the end, when the language was still spoken. It is possible that this structure was simplified and resulted in the type of structure found in the examples above.

(90) *E'tse káng íng-ra di-ng é'tse kúpkra ta do'sh.*

One stone tie-_{actL} _{1_{pL}}-_{foc} one rope in like.

‘(It’s) like tying a stone in a rope.’

(Quesada Pacheco 1995: 131)

According to Quesada Pacheco¹⁹, a second type of comparatives is formed with the words *yá'shi iní'* and *do'sh*, in both the first and second clauses.

(91) *Ya'shi iní'dí' ang moréng-ra dó'sh, yá'shi ing i do'sh*

Just like water _{emph} good- _{actL} like, just too _{3_{SG}} like

kóngróhk ígui enemígo rá.

man _{poSS} enemy _{actL}.

‘Just like water is good, it is also the enemy of man.’

(Quesada Pacheco 1995: 132)

¹⁸ Quesada Pacheco (1995), 131.

¹⁹ Quesada Pacheco (1995), 131.

A third type of comparative form uses the words *kwíng* and *ihchí* ('as much') at the beginning and end of the first clause, and the information-structure marker *ang* in the second clause.

- (92) *Yé' i-ng o'kkwá'sod-ih-irá kí ta i-ng*
 Where 3_{PL}-_{FOC} paper make-inf-_{DUR} Spec in 3_{PL}-_{AGR}
kwíng dí' ki beyáng-ra, 100 000 abí róhk ang
 as.much water Spec need-actL, 100 000 people _{PL} _{emph}
bejáng-ra ihchí.
 need-actL like.
 'Where they make paper, they need as much water as the water
 that 100 000 people would need.'
 (Quesada Pacheco 1995: 132)

In order to make a superlative comparison, *kwíng* (more) is required before the comparative adjective, and the postposition *ka* (in/than) appears at the end of the sentence.

- (93) *Acéro ki kwíng moréng-ra é't drik tsúng róhk ki ká.*
 Steel _{def} more good-actL other iron _{PL} Spec in.
 'The steel is better than other irons.'
 (Quesada Pacheco 1995: 132)

To create a comparison of inferiority, *doyéng* (less) must be used before the noun or adjective that is compared, and *ká* (in/than) appears at the end of the sentence.

abs

- (94) *Kúshiká drub-rá doyéngkrángki ká.*
 Rag burn-actL less wood _{def} in.
 'Rags burn less than wood.'
 (Quesada Pacheco 1995: 133)

This closes the account of the simplex clause in Boruca. Future studies will attempt to provide additional information regarding other aspects related to this indigenous language.

Conclusion

The present analysis of the simplex clause in Boruca is more complete than those existing previously. It includes all of the language's possible word-order combinations. In addition, the possibilities of left dislocated elements and clefting included here were not covered in earlier grammatical descriptions. In terms of grammatical relations, this study offers a discussion concerning datives and obliques that did not appear in the analysis of the references mentioned as secondary sources in this study. Further work will attempt to complete the description of the Boruca grammar for an even better understanding of how this language functioned.

Abbreviations

actL	actuaL	mod	modaLity
akt	<i>aktionsarten</i>	mood	mood
ant	anterior	num	numeraL
art	articLe	neG	neGative
cauS	cauSative	pL	pLuraL
dem	demonStrative	poSS	poSSeSSive
dim	diminutive	pnt	punctuaL
dur	durative	quant	quantifier
emph	emphaSiS	refL	refLexive
exh	exhortative	SG	SiNguLar
foc	focuS	Sbj	Subject
imp	imperative	Spec	Specificity
inf	infinitive	top	topic
iS	information StatuS		

Sample Text

Turi róhk uringká

Kwasráng ki kawí'ra. I úge'háce cincuenta año kí ta uringkra difúnto Ponciano Delgado kí ka Kú'rawá ki tá kúchi moréng róhk ihchí turi róhk. Kwíng ekchísi ahdírá difúnto Ponciano i kawí'kra ki Kwasráng ki ká. Difunto Ponciano yá' sa'krá i dí róhk; i kungí'shiring. É'tse kákba' kí ta do'a i dí íng i kungkrá róhk, péro kwíng ukshí Dí' Yang sá ta. Kúchi róhk reshí ishtkríng chíng ahdírá i' wika yét ke Kwasráng abíng i ká i turi róhk ki wí'kirá. Bú'k turi abíng Ponciano kí ka uringkirá, e'tse kóngát étse ramát. Kákba' róhk ang degirá mang é'tse kákba' kí ta do'a i turi uringká róhk dí Kwasráng i kawí'kra í, kwíng yé' abí róhk ang dabagísha tá, í ki dabakrá. Yá ta íng i turi uringká róhk íshkra. Iní yá ki sutángra do'sh, yá tairíng róhk. I turi róhk ki i dená'shkrá úge', í ki i dí'shikra áyi'. Kwíng kákba' róhk ang dekrá déngí yakrá ba'wí turi tsít róhk ki, Kwasráng i turi wá' róhk. Yá' kungíring brúngkakh róhk i turi róhk é'dé, degiríng róhk i do'sh yá ki sutáng ta úge'.

Turi róhk uring-ká

Cow pL lost-adj

Kwasráng ki kawí'ra. I úge'háce cincuenta año kí
 K. Sbj live-actL. 3SG for ago fifty year Spec
ta uring-kra difúnto Ponciano Delgado kí ka Kú'rawá ki
 in get.lost-pnt late P. D. Spec to K. Spec
tá kúchi moréng róhk ihchí turi róhk. Kwíng ekchísi ahd-írá
 in pig good pL and cow pL. Very close remain-dur
difúnto Ponciano i kawí'kra ki Kwasráng ki ká. Difunto
 late P. poSS house Sbj K. Spec of. Late

Ponciano yá' sa'-krá i dí róhk;i kung-í'shi-r-í-ng.
P. refl start-pnt 3_{PL} look.for pL; 3_{PL} find-neG-actL-3_{SG-aGr}.
É'tse kákba'kí ta do'a i dí í-ng i kung-krá
One day spec in continue 3_{PL} look.for 3_{SG-aGr} 3_{PL} found-pnt
róhk, péro kwíng ukshí Dí' Yang sá ta. Kúchi róhk reshí
pL, but very up River Y. spring in .Pig pL only
isht-kr-í-ng chíng ahd-írá i' wíka yét ke Kwasráng
see-pnt-3_{SG-aGr} so.that remain-dur 3_{SG} know so.that that K.
abí-ng i ká i turi róhk ki wí'-kirá. Bú'k turi abí- ng
emph-foc 3_{SG} to poSS cow pL spec took-ant. Two cow emph-foc
Ponciano kí ka uring-kirá, e'tse kóngát étse ramát. Kákba' róhk ang
P. sbj to lose- ant, one male one female.Day pL foc
deg-írá mang é'tse kákba'kí ta do'a i turi uringká róhk
leave-dur and one day spec in continue poSS cow lost pL
dí Kwasráng i kawí'-kra í, kwíng ukshí yé' abí róhk
look.for K. poSS house-pnt by,very high where people pL
ang dabag-í'sh-a tá, í ki daba-krá. Yá ta í-ng i turi
foc get-neG-actL in 3_{SG} Sbj get-pnt. dem in 3_{SG}-Sbj poSS COW
uring-ká róhk ísh-krá. Iní yá ki sutáng-ra do'sh, yá
lost-adj pL see-pnt. Like dem Spec valley-actL like, dem
ta-ir-í-ng róhk. I turi róhk ki i dená-'shi-krá
in-dur-3_{PL-aGr} pL. poSS COW pL Sbj 3_{SG} wait-neG-pnt
úge', í ki i dí-'shi-kra áyi'. Kwíng kákba' róhk
because, 3_{SG} Sbj 3_{PL} look.for-neG-pnt again. Many day pL
ang de-krá déngí ya-krá ba'wí turi tsít róhk ki,
emph leave-pnt later start- pnt appear cow dim pL Sbj,
Kwasráng i turi wá' róhk. Yá' kung-ír-i-ng brúngkahk
K. poSS bull child pL refl mix-dur-3_{PL-aGr} boruca
róhk i turi róhk é'dé, deg-ir-í-ng róhk i do'sh

pL poSS COW pL with, wander-dur-3_{pL}-aGr pL 3_{SG} like
yá ki sutáng ta úge'
 dem Spec valley in for.

(Constenla & Maroto 1986: 86)

Translation

The Lost Cows

Kwasráng lives. This is because, in there, fifty years ago the late Ponciano Delgado lost calves and pigs in Lagarto. Very close to late Ponciano's house was the house of Kwasráng. The late Ponciano started to look for them (cows and pigs), he didn't find them. One day, while he was looking for them, he found them, but they were far away, close to the river Yang. He just saw the pigs; that was enough to know that Kwasráng had taken them. Two calves, Ponciano had lost, one male and one female. The days went by and one day, while he was looking for his calves close to Kwasráng's house, far away, where people don't get to go, he went there. There he saw his lost cows. Since that was like a savanna, his calves were there. His calves weren't expecting him because he had not looked for them again. Many days later, little calves started to appear, these were the offspring of Kwasráng's cows. They mixed with the Boruca calves, because they were wandering in those lands.