

THE MORPHO-SYNTAX OF INDEFINITE PRONOUNS IN ILIATENCO ME'PHAA

By

© 2013

Philip T. Duncan

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Linguistics and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Chairperson Prof. William H. Torrence

Prof. Clifton L. Pye

Prof. Utako Minai

Date Defended: May 17, 2013

The Thesis Committee for Philip T. Duncan
certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

THE MORPHO-SYNTAX OF INDEFINITE PRONOUNS IN ILIATENCO ME'PHAA

Chairperson Prof. William H. Torrence

Date approved: May 17, 2013

Abstract

In this thesis I investigate the indefinite pronoun system of Iliatenco Me'phaa, an Otomanguean language from Guerrero, Mexico. I adopt a primarily descriptive approach in order to provide an account of salient properties pertaining to morphological derivation and syntactic distribution of indefinite pronouns in the language, which are mainly based on the numeral 'one'. The analysis I present follows the typological approach developed in Haspelmath (1997). Indefinite paradigms with a robustly developed series of 'one'-based pronouns are considered to be cross-linguistically rare (Haspelmath 1997:20). However, in Haspelmath's extensive survey, Otomanguean languages, specifically, and Mesoamerican languages, more generally, are severely underrepresented. Thus, Iliatenco Me'phaa constitutes a potentially unique case to apply Haspelmath's typological framework. I demonstrate that the Iliatenco Me'phaa system of indefinites exhibits a cross-linguistically unexpected pattern where the numeral 'one' is the primary base for deriving indefinite pronouns. Moreover, I present data from other Mesoamerican languages to suggest that 'one'-based systems may not be as rare as previously thought. However, the indefinite pronoun system in Iliatenco Me'phaa does reflect a common tendency for languages to encode a person *vs.* non-person distinction through the way that indefinites are derived. In addition to contributing to the growing literature on Me'phaa varieties and to the morpho-syntax of Otomanguean languages, this work contributes to the overall typology of indefinites by providing a new and empirical test of Haspelmath's claims.

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the gracious help and guidance of many people, especially the Me'phaa speakers who collaborated with me. I owe an immense amount of gratitude to Jacinta Simón, Eduardo Luna, Félix Castañeda, Rubén Castañeda, and Raúl Castañeda. I am grateful to each of them for sharing their language with me, as well as for their continued patience, cheerfulness, humor, and insight. I hope that this work honors the time and effort we spent together.

I would also like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Professor Utako Minai, Professor Clifton Pye, and Professor Harold Torrence, for their support as well as their helpful comments and criticism that have enriched my work. Professor Torrence especially dedicated a great deal of his time and energy assisting me with this project over the last few years. Moreover, I am grateful to Professor Pye for nurturing my interest in indigenous languages. Professor Arianne Dwyer also has been a great support in my academic work, generally, and she helped me refine some of the methodology that I employed in this thesis.

Early on in my project I was additionally encouraged by Abad Carrasco Zúñiga and Stephen Marlett. I am thankful for their willingness to share materials and discuss aspects of the Me'phaa language via email. My fellow students in the Department of Linguistics and the Indigenous Studies Program were an incredible help and indispensable resource while working on this project.

I am forever indebted to my wife, Monica, for her unceasing love and support during my research and the writing of this thesis. Our beautiful children, Jace and Juliette, provided many necessary distractions that helped my sanity to remain intact. (The imminent arrival of our third child also supplied extra motivation for completing this!)

Finally, while I was working on my research, a good friend and collaborator, Rubén Castañeda, passed away. Rubén taught me some of my first Me'phaa words long before I even knew what linguistics was. As I wrote this thesis, I often recalled his warm smile and his laughter as he would jokingly tell me *nátxa Felipe!* when we worked together. I dedicate this thesis to him and his family.

Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	viii
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Background & Methods.....	4
2.1 Language background.....	4
2.2 Iliatenco Me'phaa.....	7
2.3 Iliatenco Me'phaa Grammar.....	9
2.3.1 Phonetic Inventory.....	9
2.3.2 Suprasegmentals.....	13
2.3.3 Syllables: Stress/Prominence and Structure.....	14
2.3.4 Basic word order.....	15
2.3.5 Adverbs.....	15
2.3.6 Verb morphology.....	16
2.3.7 Negation.....	18
2.3.8 Animacy.....	21
3 Typology of Indefinite Pronouns.....	22
4 Motivating 'One'-based Indefinites.....	26
4.1 The Numeral 'One' in Me'phaa Literature.....	26
4.2 Numerals Involving the Use of 'One'.....	28
4.3 A Triad of Indefiniteness: The Indefinite Article, the Numeral 'One', and Indefinite Pronouns.....	31
4.4 Summary.....	32
5 Affirmative 'One'-based Indefinites.....	34
5.1 Morphological Derivation.....	34
5.2 Syntactic Properties.....	37
6 Negative Indefinites.....	40
7 Interrogative-Based Indefinites.....	47
7.1 Questions.....	47
7.1.1 Yes/No Questions.....	47
7.1.2 <i>Wh</i> -questions.....	48
7.2 Interrogative-based Indefinite Pronouns.....	53
7.3 '-Ever' Indefinites.....	58
8 Further Cross-Linguistic Evidence for 'One'-based Indefinites.....	61

8.1	Cocuilotlazala Mixtec	61
8.2	San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec.....	63
8.3	Tz’utujil (Mayan).....	64
8.4	Summary	65
9	Conclusions.....	67

Abbreviations

1	1 st person
2	2 nd person
3	3 rd person
A	agent
AFF	affirmative
AN	animate
CLF	classifier
COMP	complementizer
COMPL	completive aspect
COP	copula
DP	determiner phrase
EMPH	emphatic
EXCL	exclusive
EXIST	existential
F	feminine
IMP	imperative
INAN	inanimate
INCL	inclusive
INDF	indefinite
IPFV	imperfective aspect
IRR	irrealis
M	masculine
MI	Iliatenco Me'phaa
N	neutral
NEG	negative
NPI	negative polarity item
O	object
PFV	perfective aspect
PL	plural
PST	past
Q	question/interrogative particle
RC	relative clause
REL	relative
S	subject
SG	singular
V	verb

1 Introduction

In this thesis, I investigate morphological and syntactic properties of indefinite pronouns (e.g., *mbáa tsi* ‘somebody’, *mbá* ‘something’ in [1]) in Iliatenco Me'phaa, a topic that has not been explored in Me'phaa literature.

- (1) *mbá-a tsi ni'-tá mbá*
AFF.INDF-AN REL.AN PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN AFF.INDF.INAN
‘Someone wrote something’

I adopt a primarily descriptive approach in order to provide an account of salient properties pertaining to morphological derivation and syntactic distribution of indefinite pronouns in the language, which are mainly based on the numeral ‘one’. The analysis I present here follows the typological approach developed in Haspelmath (1997). In Haspelmath’s extensive work, indefinite paradigms with a robustly developed series of ‘one’-based indefinites are considered to be a cross-linguistically rare phenomenon (Haspelmath 1997:29). Thus, Me'phaa constitutes a potentially unique case to apply Haspelmath’s framework. In addition to contributing to the growing literature on Me'phaa and an understanding of the morpho-syntax of Otomangean languages, I aim to contribute to the overall typology of indefinites by providing a new and empirical test of Haspelmath’s claims.

The organization of this thesis is as follows. Section 2 provides background information, both to my overall project as well as to the Me'phaa language(s) in general. I include a brief discussion of the Iliatenco Me'phaa grammar (phonetic inventory, suprasegmentals, basic word order, verb morphology, negation, and animacy). This terse grammatical description is offered not only as a means of creating a foundation for working through the language examples presented herein but also as an opportunity to present a more elaborate description of this underdocumented variety. Though necessarily incomplete, this nonetheless works toward

beginning to fulfill an immediate need to provide descriptions for all Me'phaa varieties.

Moreover, the data underlying this thesis comes from work with Me'phaa speakers living in the U.S., and descriptions or analyses of varieties spoken in diasporic communities are nonexistent at present.

In Section 3 I define indefinite pronouns and outline the three principal morphological types as stipulated by Haspelmath (1997). Afterward, in Section 4 I take a bit of an aside to motivate my argument that Iliatenco Me'phaa indefinites are truly derived from the numeral 'one.' This provides the foundation for Sections 5-7 where I present the Iliatenco Me'phaa indefinite pronoun paradigm. Sections 5 and 6 cover both affirmative and negative 'one'-based indefinites, respectively. Following this, in Section 7 I turn to interrogative based indefinites in the language, including non-pronominal, alternative means of expressing the semantic concept of indefiniteness. Section 8 presents some preliminary data from other Otomangeuan and Mesoamerican languages to address the typological status of 'one'-based indefinite systems (i.e., whether they are truly rare). Finally, I close in Section 9 with some concluding thoughts and directions for further research.

Based on the description and analysis provided here, I argue, *contra* expectations from Haspelmath (1997), that the Iliatenco Me'phaa indefinite pronoun system is primarily 'one'-based. Moreover, cross-linguistic evidence from genetically affiliated, as well as typologically similar and geographically proximal, languages suggest that 'one'-based indefinites may not be as rare as previously thought. However, this system still integrates important properties of a mixed type wherein the morphological derivation of 'someone' is unique. Therefore, while the overall paradigm constitutes empirical grounds for revisiting Haspelmath's typology, the language still preserves a tendency that Haspelmath observes to be inexplicably common,

namely, that indefinite paradigms find a way to uniquely encode a referential means that emphasizes “the individuality of people” (Haspelmath 1997:29).

2 Background & Methods

2.1 Language background

Me'phaa is an Indigenous language (or, possibly, a group of Indigenous languages) of Mexico that belongs to the Subtiapa-Tlapanecan branch of the Otomanguean¹ family (Rensch 1977; Suárez 1977; Lewis 2009), as seen in Figure 1 below.

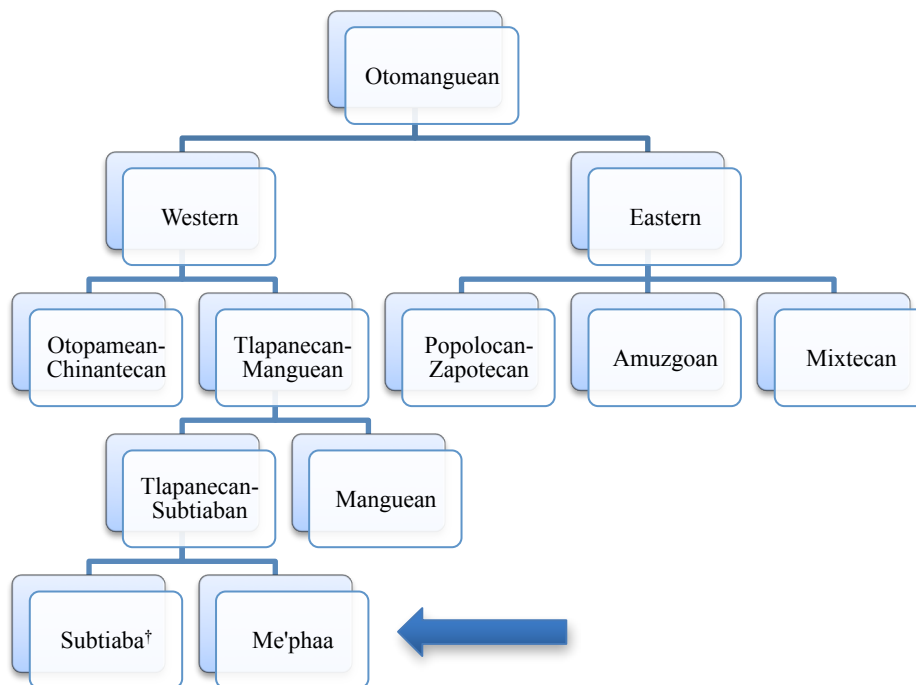


Figure 1. The Otomanguean language family.

Formerly called “Tlapanec,”² Me'phaa constitutes a language genus (Dryer 1989) with at least eight varieties (Cline et al. 2012) spoken by nearly 100,000 people (INEGI 2005). Varieties of

¹ Following Lehmann (1920) and Sapir (1925), Me'phaa was considered to be part of the Hokan family prior to being recognized as Otomanguean. The works of Suárez (1977, 1980, 1986) and Rensch (1973, 1977) were particularly influential in establishing the genetic affiliation of Me'phaa as being in the Otomanguean family (Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b:17; Cline et al. 2012:2).

² Etymologically, the name Tlapanec (Spanish: *Tlapaneco*) is a Nahuatl name meaning “one from Tlapa.” Carrasco Zúñiga (2006a:7, 2006b:13) notes that the name Me'phaa is itself derived from *mbo a'phaa* ‘one from a'phaa/Tlapa.’ Among the speakers that I worked with, some preferred “Me'phaa” over “Tlapanec” to refer to the language, and this preference is also common among Me'phaa people within communities in Guerrero. Others that I worked with did not express any preference, and these especially referred to the language as “Tlapaneco” when we were conversing in Spanish.

Me'phaa are principally spoken in the eastern part of Guerrero, Mexico (see Figures 2 and 3; Me'phaa is coded 13 in Figure 3), though speakers also reside in other parts of central and southern Mexico as well as the United States (Cline et al. 2012; Wichmann 2007).



Figure 2. Location of the state of Guerrero in Mexico.³

³ From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrero>.

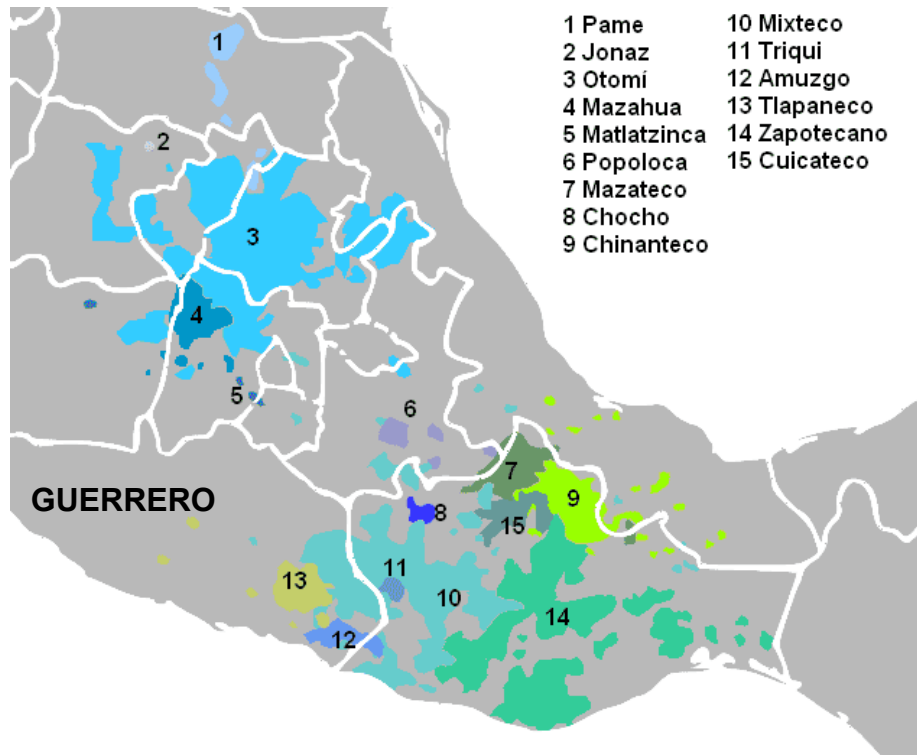


Figure 3. Geographical distribution of Otomanguan languages in Southern Mexico in relation to Guerrero.⁴

Me'phaa is largely underdocumented, with sparse amounts of materials that are both available and accessible (Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b). Me'phaa peoples and their language(s) are referenced in documents that appear as early as the 16th century, such as in Bernadino de Sahagún's *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* (Dibble & Anderson 1961:187). However, academic research on the language did not begin until the late 19th and early 20th centuries (e.g., Pimentel 1874; Radin 1935), with dedicated linguistic analysis primarily emerging in the 1970s and after (e.g., Weathers 1976; Suárez 1983, 1989; APLT 1988). Among the eight or so varieties of Me'phaa, the most comprehensive work has been done on Malinaltepec Me'phaa (*me'phaa Mañuwĩn*; e.g., Suárez 1983, 1988; Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b; Navarro Solano 2012) and Azoyú Me'phaa (*me'phaa Tsindí*; e.g., Wichmann 1996, 2005). More

⁴ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oto-Manguan_languages.

recently, an extensive project aiming at describing and documenting all Me'phaa varieties was undertaken (Marlett 2011). Notwithstanding, Me'phaa is still generally underrepresented in linguistic literature. Moreover, to my knowledge there is no explicit treatment of indefinite pronouns in any Me'phaa variety.

2.2 Iliatenco Me'phaa

In this work I draw primarily from collaborative research with immigrant Me'phaa speakers in the United States. The data underlying this research was obtained through a series of structured elicitation sessions, held in Spanish, which took place from June 2010-April 2013. These were primarily one-on-one sessions between a Me'phaa speaker and myself. In order to test for grammaticality and semantic interpretations, especially for anything deemed questionable by a speaker, I presented utterances from one speaker to another and asked them for their judgments. Utterances that speakers strongly or collectively disagreed upon were not included in this thesis, except to illustrate ungrammaticality.

All of the consultants with whom I have worked are bilingual Me'phaa-Spanish speakers (some with English as a third language) from the Iliatenco municipality in Eastern Guerrero, which can be seen (in black) in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4. Location of the Iliatenco municipality in eastern Guerrero.⁵

Iliatenco (*Mixtruwijn* in MI) is not one of the eight geographical centers that are commonly associated with recognized Me'phaa varieties. Instead, the language variant spoken in this region is typically subsumed under the variety of Malinaltepec Me'phaa (Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b; Lewis 2009). However, all of the speakers with whom I worked noted differences between their variety of Me'phaa and that which is spoken in Malinaltepec, though both are known as *ajngáa me'phaa* 'word Me'phaa' among speakers in each region. At present it is difficult to assess how such differences should be analyzed, though, notably, they pertain to multiple domains of grammar, including the lexicon, semantics, and syntax. For these reasons, I employ the term "Iliatenco Me'phaa" (henceforth, MI) in this thesis to refer more precisely to the variety I discuss. Though I do not take an explicit position with regard to the status of MI, recent work has categorized it as potentially a subdialect of the Malinaltepec variety (Cline et al. 2012).

⁵ From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliatenco_\(municipality\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliatenco_(municipality)) and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrero>.

2.3 Iliatenco Me'phaa Grammar

2.3.1 Phonetic Inventory

MI has a phonetic inventory of 37 segments, including 32 consonants and 5 monophthong vowels.⁶ Tone, vowel length, and nasalization are all contrastive. The analysis I present below is largely in accordance with that of Marlett (2012), though I do not attempt a detailed account of phonetic or phonological processes. Instead, I here choose to focus almost exclusively on the diverse sounds in MI without attending to affects from phonology.

Table 1 lists the 32 consonants in the phonetic inventory of MI. Symbols are rendered according to the orthography developed in Carrasco Zúñiga (2006a),⁷ with the exception that I here render labialized back consonants as 'kw', 'gw', 'ngw', and 'hw' rather than as CV sequences.

⁶ In addition to those consonants listed in Table 1, I have recorded one instance of a the voiced interdental fricative [ð], which occurred in the word *xede* [ʃeðe] 'steak.' However, because of its rarity I have not included this sound in the phonetic inventory. I suspect that the appearance of [ð] in [ʃeðe] may actually be an influence from Spanish phonology, since all the speakers I have worked with are fluent speakers of Spanish, as well. That is, in Spanish, /d/ surfaces as [ð] intervocalically, a condition which is satisfied in the phonological environment of *xede*. Thus, the application of this rule (i.e., /d/ → [ð] / V_V) may be the result of transfer from Spanish.

⁷ Carrasco Zúñiga (2006a) is a collaborative work that has aimed to produce a normative writing system of Me'phaa, though it has not been met with equal reception in all communities.

Table 1. MI Consonants (Orthographic).

<i>Manner</i>	<i>Place</i>				
	<i>Bilabial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Stop</i>	p, b ph, mb	t, d th, nd		k, g kh, ng kw, gw ngw	'
<i>Nasal</i>	m	n	ɲ		
<i>Trill</i>		r			
<i>Fricative</i>	b	s ts	x		h hw
<i>Affricate</i>			tx, dx ndx		
<i>Approximant</i>	w	l	y		

Examples of each consonant in word initial and word medial positions are in Table 2.

Consonants are not permissible in word-final position because, as I note below, codas are illicit in the language. When 'n' follows a vowel, it is either the accepted orthographic convention for rendering vocalic nasalization, or it represents the onset of the following syllable.

Table 2. Examples of consonants in MI.

<i>Consonant</i>	<i>IPA Symbol</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>English Gloss</i>
p	p	pahnu wapa	'clear' 'wide'
ph	p ^h	phú wapháá	'very' 'quickly'
b	b	biyú (h)ubá ⁸	'eagle' 'mountain'
mb	^m b	mbóó wamba	'one (INAN)' 'finished'
t	t	tatija	'father'
th	t ^h	thana ngwátha	'medicine' 'how much? (INAN)'

⁸ Marlett (2012:9) notes that 'mountain' is *húbá* in the variety from Cruz la Villa, Iliatenco, and *kúbá* in Me'phaa from Zilacayotitlán. Both of these are also commonly recognized as Malinaltepec Me'phaa. I mark /h/ with parentheses in Table 2 because not all the speakers pronounced it. That is, the initial /h/ appears to have deleted, which could be an MI innovation or just an idiosyncrasy among certain speakers.

<i>Consonant</i>	<i>IPA Symbol</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>English Gloss</i>
d	d	dine ada	‘what?’ ‘child’
nd	ⁿ d	ndiyalá nando	‘I saw them’ ‘I want’
k	k	- nindátika	- ‘I lost (something)’
kh	k ^h	tákha	‘has come (3SG)’
kw	k ^w	kwee skwáha	‘open’ ‘devil’
g	g	gon’ maga	‘moon’ ‘onion’
ng	^ŋ g	dé’ngo	‘why?’
ngw	^ŋ g ^w	ngwátiin nanguá	‘how much (AN)?’ ‘no’
ʔ	ʔ	- gu’uwá	- ‘house’
m	m	mo’mo’ guma	‘yellow (INAN)’ ‘tortilla’
n	n	naña nana	‘mother’ ‘woman’
ñ	ɲ	ñaú xiñu	‘my hand’ ‘grandparent’
r	r	ragapa	‘toad’
b	β	nabehe	‘
s	s	seyo	‘I don’t know’
x	ʃ	xaña rixí	‘fingernail’ ‘yesterday’
h	h	hobo	‘frog’
hw	h ^w	nanguhwá	‘sell’
ts	^t s	tsá watsa	‘who?’ ‘what’s up?’
tx	tʃ	txa’wan nátxa	‘ear’ ‘quickly’
dx	dʒ	dxagu idxu	‘girl’ ‘my head’
ndx	ⁿ dʒ	ndxá nandxá’wa	‘party (noun)’ ‘I am thinking’
w	w	witsu guwa	‘five (INAN)’ ‘ten (INAN)’
l	l	lahwin -	‘small’ -
y	j	yaha mbaya	‘bean(s)’ ‘I will see you’

MI has 5 monophthong vowels, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Monophthong vowels.

	<i>Front</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Back</i>
<i>High</i>	i		u
<i>Mid</i>	e		o
<i>Low</i>		a	

Each of these vowels is contrastive, although MI does at times allow for what appears to be free alternation among two vowel pairs: [i] ~ [e] and [u] ~ [o]. These alternations can be seen in the following examples, wherein [e] alternates with [i] in the affirmative perfective prefix (2a-b), and [o] alternates with [u] on the verb root (2b):

- (2) a. *ne'-ne/ni'-ne* *gu'ma*
 PFV.AFF-make.3SG.AN/PFV.AFF-make.3SG.AN tortilla
 'S/he made tortillas'
- b. *ne-rot-i/ni-rut-i* *maga*
 PFV.AFF-cut.3SG.AN/PFV.AFF-cut.3SG.AN onion
 'S/he cut the onion'

The allowance for some degree of free alternation may be an artifact of historical change. At present it is unclear as to what specific contexts, if any, trigger such alternation. For example, the present alternation pattern could be due an innovation within the Me'phaa genus (or some other type of development, such as borrowing) since, historically, Me'phaa may have only had a three vowel inventory of /i/, /a/, and /u/. This is the historical analysis that Carrasco Zúñiga (2006a:46) suggests. The relatively later development/innovation of /e/ and /o/ might explain, then, the great degree of alternation that speakers exhibit. However, under such an account it still needs to be determined in detail how and when these phones were integrated into the Me'phaa phonetic inventory. Moreover, this issue is further complicated by vowel harmony in Me'phaa (Suárez 1983). For example, in (2b) above, when the affirmative perfective prefix is pronounced [ne-],

the vowel in the verb root is [o]. However, when the same prefix surfaces as [ni-], the vowel in the root is [u].

2.3.2 Suprasegmentals

Like Malinaltepec Me'phaa (Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b), MI has four principal contrastive suprasegmental features: vowel length, vowel nasalization, vowel glottalization, and tone.

	<i>Vowel Length</i>	<i>Vowel Nasalization</i>	<i>Vowel Glottalization</i>
(3)	a. <i>mbá</i> 'a/something (INAN)'	c. <i>a'wá</i> 'voice'	e. <i>idi</i> 'lime'
	b. <i>mbáá</i> 'a part of'	d. <i>a'wán</i> 'rise, ascent'	f. <i>i'di</i> 'blood'

In the data that I have collected to date, long vowels appear exclusively in word-final position.

Moreover, vowel length is often associated with morphological properties (see discussion of [4d] below). Also of note is that, since the glottal stop only appears post- and inter-vocally (as in *i'di* 'blood' and *mbi'i* 'day'), it seems plausible that this phone is not necessarily a full consonant, but rather a true feature of vowels.

Traditionally, Me'phaa has been analyzed as having three level tones: high, mid, and low. MI displays this same tone paradigm (4a-c)⁹. In addition to the three level tones, MI has a series of contour tones,¹⁰ such as in the one in (4d).

(4)	a. <i>mbáá</i> 'a part of'	HIGH
	b. <i>mbaa</i> 'terrain'	MID
	c. <i>mbaa</i> 'large'	LOW
	d. <i>mbá-a</i> 'a/something (AN)'	HIGH-MID

Contour tones in Me'phaa may occur in the lexical domain, though I take it that this is somewhat rare, as Wichmann has demonstrated with the Azoyú variety (Wichmann 2005:133). More

⁹ This minimal triplet is from Carrasco Zúñiga's (2006:68) data on Malinaltepec Me'phaa. However, as the speakers with whom I worked noted, this same contrast is also present in MI.

¹⁰ Carrasco Zúñiga (2006b) suggests the possibility of 13 contour tones for Malinaltepec Me'phaa.

commonly, contour tones are associated with morphosyntactic properties, such as the addition of an animate suffix on the indefinite in (4d).

2.3.3 Syllables: Stress/Prominence and Structure

Me'phaa syllables have been characterized as iambic (Rensch 1978:361; Suárez 1983:26; Marlett and Weathers, in preparation). That is, Me'phaa syllables are “prosodically right-headed” (Marlett and Weathers, in preparation:23). At present, though, it is unclear as to whether Me'phaa (including MI) grammar includes stress as an operative feature.

As in other Me'phaa varieties, MI has a constraint on syllable structure that disallows codas.¹¹ There are four basic syllable structures in Me'phaa: V, CV, CCV, and CCCV.¹² However, Marlett and Weathers (in preparation:24) proposes that words with complex onsets may be a consequence of historical change. Vowel reduction or deletion, for example, seems to target the vowel on the leftmost edge in words like *kambaa* ‘road’ in Tlacoapa Me’phaa. Etymologically, *kambaa* is a compound, formed by combining *ika* ‘path’ with *mbaa* ‘big’. Marlett and Weathers thus leave open the possibility that complex onsets were originally bimoraic.

¹¹ This is under the assumption that, as noted above, the glottal stop is not a full consonant, but should rather be analyzed as a feature of glottalization on vowels. Sapir (1925:429) noted a similar observation about Subtiapa (now extinct), the closest relative of Me'phaa, which he claimed “seems to tolerate no final consonants.” His observation is of further interest because of how he conceptualized the relationship between Subtiapa and Tlapanec. Although this is now recognized as inaccurate, Sapir considered Subtiaba and Tlapanec to be “dialects of a single language” (Sapir 1925:403).

¹² Carrasco Zúñiga (2006b:59-66) proposes that a fifth type exists in Me'phaa, namely, CCCCV. Examples of this patterning that he provides are always according to the structure C[ŋgr]V, where C is either [s], [ʃ], or [h]. In my analysis, following Marlett (2011), I consider the traditionally analyzed [ŋg] consonant cluster to be an instance of a prenasalized voiced velar stop, which results maximally in a CCCV structure, as in *naxngró'oo* [na˧.ʃʷgroʔ˧.o˧˧] ‘s/he returns it’.

2.3.4 Basic word order

Traditionally, Me'phaa has been analyzed as having canonical VSO word order (Suárez 1983), which appears to be a common characteristic of multiple Me'phaa varieties as well as many Otomanguean languages more generally. MI also exhibits VSO order in simple declarative sentences (5a), though other orderings are possible (5b-c):

- (5) a. *ni'-ta* *Maria mbá* *ijé* VSO
 PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN Mary INDF.INAN letter
 'Mary wrote a letter'
- b. *Maria ni'-ta* *mbá* *ijé* SVO
 Mary PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN INDF.INAN letter
 'Mary wrote a letter'
- c. *ni'-ta* *mbá* *ijé* *Maria* VOS
 PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN INDF.INAN letter Mary
 'Mary wrote a letter'

The use of overt pronouns seems to trigger a preferred SVO order, which can (but not always) render the (typical) VSO equivalent ungrammatical:

- (6) *(ikhaa) ni'-ta* *(*ikhaa) ijé* SVO/*VSO
 (3SG.AN) PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN (3SG.AN) letter
 'S/he wrote a letter'

2.3.5 Adverbs

Adverbs in Me'phaa typically surface postverbally (Carrasco Zúñiga 2006:272). For example, they may immediately follow the verb they modify, as in (12). However, adverbs do not typically appear preverbally, regardless as to whether the adverb is immediately preverbal or sentence-initial:

- (7) *(*nátxa) ikhaa* *(*nátxa) na-gaju* *nátxa*
 (quickly) 3SG.AN (quickly) IPFV.AFF-hit.3SG.AN quickly
 'She runs quickly.'

In a transitive event, adverbs can surface in one of two postverbal positions. They can occur immediately postverbal or sentence-final:

- (8) *ikhúún ni-ña* (rixí) *ijá* (rixí)
 1SG PFV.AFF-drink.1SG (yesterday) water (yesterday)
 ‘I drank water yesterday’

Consequently, it appears that there are two principal positions for adverbs, (a) immediately postverbal and (b) sentence-final. However, though the sentence-initial position for adverbs is typically illicit, some of the speakers I worked with did allow for the following:

- (9) %*rixí* *ikhúún ni'-ka* *xwáhen mbro'o*
 yesterday 1SG PFV.AFF-come.1SG village night
 ‘I came to the village last night’

2.3.6 Verb morphology

Like other Me'phaa varieties, MI exhibits a rich verbal morphology that is synthetic and fusional. This complex verb morphology involves portmanteau morphs affixed onto a verb root, a bound morpheme to which affixes attach. Verbal prefixes encode aspect, mood, voice, affirmation/negation, and second person (when functioning as agent). Thus, the basic MI verb template is as follows:

- (10) *Basic MI verb template*
 [Aspect + Affirmation/negation > (2sg A/*S) > √Verb > Person(s)]

Though some early analyses of Me'phaa consider it to have a tense system (Suárez 1983; Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b), my analysis aligns with Marlett (2012) in positing aspectual prefixes for MI. Thus, what were formerly seen as past, present, and future, I treat as perfective, imperfective, and irrealis, respectively. As the following examples illustrate, in affirmative contexts verb-initial prefixes are portmanteau affixes fused with affirmation (as I show in the next section, the same occurs with negation, albeit with one important exception):

- (11) a. *ikhúún ni-xpi'gu xíle*
 1SG PFV.AFF-break.1SG chair
 'I broke the chair'
- b. *ikhúún na-xpi'gu xíle*
 1SG IPFV.AFF-break.1SG chair
 'I break the chair'
- c. *ikhúún ma-xpi'gu xíle*
 1SG IRR.AFF-break.1SG chair
 'I will break the chair'

That the irrealis marker is truly analyzable as such – and not future as in Suárez (1983:72-80) and Carrasco Zúñiga (2006b:174, 201, 209-210) – is evidenced by (12), where the verb that is marked with the irrealis prefix still encodes an event that has both been completed and (in the context of this utterance) taken place in the past.

- (12) *ikhúún ne'-n-e-ló rí ma-xpíg-u xíle*
 1SG PFV.AFF-make-1SG-EMPH.1SG COMP IRR.AFF-break-3SG chair
 'I made the chair break' (Lit., 'I made that the chair will break')

MI person markers on verbs are commonly suffixes (13a-b). However, the second person is marked exclusively with the prefix *t(V)-* when functioning as an agent (13c). That is, the second person prefix only surfaces when it is the subject of a transitive verb. As noted in the verb template in (10), when the 2nd person prefix appears, it does so immediately before the verb, intervening between the verb and the aspect marker. However, 2nd person prefix is does not surface when the second person is the subject of an intransitive verb (13d-e).

- (13) a. *na-rot-o-xo maga*
 IPFV-cut-1PL-EXCL onion
 'We (but not you) cut the onion.'
- b. *ni-háñ-u*
 PFV-die-1SG
 'I died.'

- c. *na-t-rot-o* *maga*
 IPFV-2SG.A-cut-? onion
 ‘You cut the onion.’
- d. *ni-háñ-a*
 PFV-die-2SG
 ‘You died.’
- e. **ni-ta-háñ-a*
 PFV-2SG.S-die-2SG
 (Intended: ‘You died.’)

Some transitive verbs also encode objects, which likewise appear as suffixes:

- (14) a. *tsá ni-xn-í'*
 who PFV-hit-3SG.AN>1SG
 ‘Who hit me?’
- b. *tsá ni-xn-a*
 who PFV-hit-3SG.AN>2SG
 ‘Who hit you?’
- c. *tsá ni-xn-un*
 who PFV-hit-3SG.AN>3SG.AN
 ‘Who hit him?’

2.3.7 Negation

Negation in MI is expressed either with a verbal prefix or an independent negative particle.

Verbal negation appears to be the most common means of negating propositions, and is

expressed on the verb through a portmanteau prefix that is fused with aspect, as seen in (15):

- (15) a. *ne-tse* *guma* *dxah-o*
 PFV.AFF-buy.3SG.AN tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling bought tortillas.’
- b. *ta-tse* *guma(r)* *dxah-o*
 PFV.NEG-buy.3SG.AN tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling didn’t buy (any) tortillas.’
- c. *na-tse* *guma* *dxah-o*
 IPFV.AFF-buy.3SG.AN tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling is buying tortillas.’

- d. *ni-tse* *guma* *dxah-o*
 IPFV.NEG-buy.3SG.AN tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling is not buying (any) tortillas.’

However, irrealis mood triggers a unique negative prefix that is discernibly separate from the modal prefix.

- (16) a. *ma-ri*’*ñ-a*
 IRR-answer-1SG
 ‘I will answer.’
- b. *ma-xá-ri*’*ñ-a*
 IRR-NEG-answer-1SG
 ‘I will not answer.’

In some cases, the negative prefix additionally encodes number, as in (17b):

- (17) a. *ikhaa* *dxah-wá* *ta-g-a* *ija* *nakí* *rixí*
 3SG older.sibling-2SG PFV.NEG-drink-3SG.AN water PST yesterday
 ‘Your older sibling did not drink water yesterday.’
- b. *ikháán-ló*’ *tu-w-aq-ló*’ *ija* *nakí* *rixí*
 1PL-INCL PFV.NEG.PL-drink-1PL-INCL water PST yesterday
 ‘We (inclusive) did not drink water yesterday.’

MI exhibits negative concord, a phenomena wherein the presence of more than one negative element (e.g., a particle, verb prefix, or other constituent form) still only encodes a single instance of negation (Penka 2011:14). Thus, the addition of the negative particle *nanguá* to the sentence in (18a, repeated from 15b above) does not add to the negation is that already expressed on the verbal prefix.

- (18) a. *ta-ts-e* *guma* *dxah-o*
 PFV.NEG-buy-3SG tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling didn’t buy (any) tortillas.’
- b. *nanguá* *ta-ts-e* *guma* *dxah-o*
 NEG PFV.NEG-buy-3SG tortilla sibling-1SG
 ‘My sibling didn’t buy (any) tortillas.’

Importantly, intonation helps demonstrate that the negative particle in (18b) can really serve to encode negation. If *nanguá* is set apart by forming a discreet intonational unit with a distinct pause immediately following it then the reading is “No, my sibling didn’t buy any tortillas.”

Similarly, if the negative particle *nanguá* ‘no’ modifies *guma(r)* ‘tortilla,’ as in (19), it does not add to the negation already encoded on the verb. Consequently, the interpretation of (19) is more or less equal to that of (18b):

- (19) *ta-ts-e* *nanguá* *guma(r)* *dxah-o*
 PFV.NEG-buy.3SG NEG tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 ‘My older sibling didn’t buy (any) tortillas.’

In most cases, the negative particle appears to be licensed by negation, and is therefore illicit when the aspectual prefix encodes affirmation:

- (20) a. **nanguá* *ne-ts-e* *guma* *dxah-o*
 NEG PFV.AFF-buy-3SG tortilla older.sibling-1SG
 (Intended: ‘My older sibling didn’t buy [any] tortillas.’)
- b. **ne-ts-e* *nanguá* *guma* *dxah-o*
 PFV.AFF-buy-3SG NEG tortilla sibling-1SG
 (Intended: ‘My older sibling bought no tortillas.’)

However, the negative marker can serve as the sole bearer of negation when the verb is unmarked in terms of the typical fused prefix.

- (21) *nanguá* *i-k-a* *go’o* *a’dá* *xa’mo*
 NEG IPFV.NEG-go-1SG house child cousin
 ‘I don’t go to my cousin’s house anymore’

I return to the subject of negation in greater detail in Section 5. As I discuss there, one of the major aspects wherein we see an interplay between negation and indefinite pronouns is that negative indefinites must be licensed by negation.

2.3.8 Animacy

Previous work on Me'phaa has regarded animacy as a significant feature in the grammar (Suárez 1983; Carrasco Zúñiga 2006; Marlett 2011), and MI is no exception. Animacy is not marked on nouns, but is instead encoded on dependents of the noun and verbs. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to: quantifiers, determiners, demonstratives, adjectives (both attributive and predicative), numerals, relative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, and the *wh*-element ‘how many?’. Examples of these are in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The encoding of animacy in various domains.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Inanimate</i>	<i>English Gloss</i>	<i>Animate</i>	<i>English Gloss</i>
Quantifier	xúgí	‘all’	xúgí-n	‘all’
	mbámbá	‘each’	mbámbá-a	‘each’
Determiner	mbá	‘a’	mbá-a	‘a’
Demonstrative	ríge’	‘this’	tsíge’	‘this’
Adjective	mo’mo’	‘yellow’	mo’mii’	‘yellow’
Numeral	akh _o	‘four’	akhuun	‘four’
Relative pronoun	rí	‘that’	tsí	‘who’
Indefinite pronoun	nimbá	‘nothing’	nimbá-a	‘no one’
<i>Wh</i> -element	ngwátha	‘how many?’	ngwáthiin	‘how many?’

The effect of animacy is visible in both morphology and syntax, affecting the morphological derivation of complex indefinites as well as placing constraints on syntactic distribution. As I discuss later in Sections 4-7, animacy is especially relevant for this thesis because it has immediate bearing on indefinite pronouns, both affirmative and negative. Animacy effects in the indefinite pronoun system are manifest in the morphological derivation of distinct indefinite elements, and animacy additionally places constraints on the syntactic distribution of indefinite pronouns.

3 Typology of Indefinite Pronouns

As their name suggests, “indefinite pronouns” (e.g., ‘something,’ ‘anyone,’ and ‘nowhere’ in English) are pronominal elements that lack the semantic feature of definiteness. Following Haspelmath (1997:10), I consider “pronoun” to be a “formal” characteristic. That is, indefinite pronouns are grammatically distinct from lexical items and phrases, some of which may bear nearly identical semantic resemblance (e.g., *mbáa xabó* ‘a person’ vs. *tsá/mbáa tsi* ‘someone’). Moreover, I follow Haspelmath’s usage of “pronoun” as both that which can replace a noun as well as the broader meaning which includes, for example, replacing adverbs and adverb phrases. Indefinite pronouns are also frequently categorized as one of five types of pronouns, along with: personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, and interrogative pronouns (Haspelmath 1997:11). In addition to this formal feature, indefinite pronouns have the “functional” characteristic of “express[ing] indefinite reference” (Haspelmath 1997:11).

Haspelmath (1997) presents a typological description of indefinite pronoun systems based on a comprehensive survey of cross-linguistic data taken from 40- and 100-language samples. Indefinite pronouns are often morphologically complex and are “generally derived forms” (Haspelmath 1997:26). Morphologically, he identifies three kinds of formal systems based on the elements from which indefinite pronouns are most commonly derived. “Ontological category-based” indefinites delineate a series that is structured around a set of basic ontological category nouns, such as “person,” “place,” “thing,” etc. (e.g., Persian; Haspelmath 1997:27, 282). Second, “interrogative-based” indefinite pronouns are those that are either homophonous with or built from *wh*-expressions (e.g., Polish; Haspelmath 1997:21, 271). This type is the most common cross-linguistically according to Haspelmath’s survey. Finally, the least common type of indefinite pronoun series is “‘one’-based,” which is built from the numeral ‘one’ (e.g., Lezgian;

Haspelmath 1997:22, 295). For reasons I address below, Haspelmath suggests that entire systems with indefinite pronouns morphologically derived from the numeral ‘one’ are indeed quite rare, and that this type usually appears as an exception to a dominant pattern of a different type.

Examples from the English *some-* series can serve to illustrate each type of indefinite pronoun, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Examples of the three formal types of indefinite pronouns in English.

<i>Ontological category</i>	<i>Ontological category-based</i>	<i>Interrogative-based</i>	<i>‘One’-based</i>
person	some-body	-	some-one
thing	some-thing	-	-
time	some-time	-	-
place	some-place	some-where	-
manner	some-way	some-how	-

Interestingly, English exhibits a curious distinction that is common cross-linguistically. As we see in Table 1, English possesses indefinite pronouns of each formal type, but the ‘one’-based indefinite ‘someone’ is an exception that uniquely distinguishes the ontological category “person.” Haspelmath notes that this phenomenon is present in many languages, wherein ‘one’-based indefinites such as the English ‘someone’ or the Egyptian Arabic *waahid* most frequently have the meaning of ‘somebody’ (Haspelmath 1997:29). He also points out that languages with this property also are not typically interrogative-based, and that ‘one’-based adverbial indefinites are quite rare.

If these attributes are indeed cross-linguistically common for languages with ‘one’-based indefinites, what predictions might this make? Assuming that the patterns Haspelmath observes are typical, we might reasonably expect the following:

- Predictions for languages with ‘one’-based indefinite pronouns*
- (22) a. ‘One’-based indefinites in a language commonly correspond to the ontological category person in direct contrast to non-person categories, which are derived differently.

- b. ‘One’-based indefinites are most likely to occur in a system whose other indefinite pronouns are non-interrogative-based.
- c. Moreover, the existence of ‘one’-based adverbial indefinite pronouns are not to be expected.

However, as I demonstrate in this thesis, none of these predictions are met in MI. Instead, the MI indefinite pronoun system exhibits the following properties:

Properties of the MI indefinite pronoun system

- (23) a. ‘One’-based indefinites correspond to all non-person categories where available.
- b. ‘One’-based indefinites are most common, in contrast to interrogative-based indefinites in the language.
- c. ‘One’-based adverbial indefinite pronouns are present in the MI system.

One reason that Me’phaa departs from predictions based on Haspelmath (1997) could be an issue regarding sampling. While Haspelmath’s treatment of indefinite pronouns is impressive in its depth as well as its extent cross-linguistically, still Otomanguean and Mesoamerican languages are underrepresented in his analysis. In his 100-language sample, the only Otomanguean language that Haspelmath sampled was Chalcatango Mixtec. Moreover, his sample only included a total of four languages from Mexico and Central America. The apparent uniqueness of Me’phaa in light of previous analyses could then be a result of sampling error.

Despite the incongruous nature of the predictions derived from Haspelmath (1997) and the actual system of MI indefinite pronouns, there is still a salient feature captured in both. This feature is what Haspelmath (1997:29) describes as a tendency to preserve “the unique importance of the individuality of people” as manifest in the indefinite pronoun system. Accordingly, though languages may encode this “individuality” differently, these means may still express a typologically important principle, which we can articulate in the following hypothesis:

Proposed principle for languages with ‘one’-based indefinites

- (24) Indefinite pronoun systems that possess ‘one’-based indefinites uniquely derive a/the indefinite corresponding to the category “person” in an exceptional way.

In light of (24), we can account for both languages like English and MI since each contains an anomaly in the system that singularly delineates the category “person.” However, it still stands to reason whether other languages behave according to this principle. After describing the nature of the MI indefinite pronoun system in Sections 4-7, we will consider some preliminary data from other Otomanguean and Mesoamerican languages and revisit this hypothesis.

4 Motivating ‘One’-based Indefinites

Beginning with this section, I now turn to ‘one’-based indefinite pronouns in Iliatenco Me'phaa. Before detailing the morphosyntactic properties of MI indefinites of this type in Sections 5 and 6, however, I first offer a rationale for why I consider them to be truly ‘one’-based. I begin in Section 4.1 by discussing forms of the numeral ‘one’ as documented in Me'phaa linguistic literature, since the traditional analysis has recently been called into question. My own analysis is based on the claim that the numeral ‘one’ in MI has multiple allomorphs. In order to support this thesis I present data from Me'phaa numerals in Section 4.2, including simple and complex numbers as well as ordinal numbers. Then, in Section 4.3 I consider the MI indefinite article in light of Givón's (1981) typological analysis to suggest that the indefinite article is also ‘one’-based. Finally, Section 4.4 provides a summary of the arguments in favor of analyzing *mbá* as an allomorph of ‘one’.

4.1 The Numeral ‘One’ in Me'phaa Literature

Although Me'phaa varieties in general are quite underdocumented, the Malinaltepec variety has perhaps received the most extensive treatment in terms of linguistic analysis. Many of the works that investigated the Malinaltepec variety include a brief description of cardinal numbers.

Although there are discrepancies with regard to the analysis of tone, the traditional position with regard to the numeral ‘one’ in Malinaltepec Me'phaa is that it is *mbá* (Radin 1935:65; Schultze-Jena 1938:236; Suárez 1983:474, 636, 1988:154; APLT 1988:66; Carrasco Zúñiga 2006a, 2006b). Moreover, these works exhibit a general consensus that the indefinite article also has the same form for inanimate referents. An additional note of potential importance is that, according

to the only data taken from Me'phaa's closest relative, Subtiaba (now extinct), the recorded form of the numeral 'one' is *imba* (Sapir 1925:418).

Given this agreement it would seem that my claim that MI indefinite pronouns are primarily 'one'-based would follow rather straightforwardly. However, Marlett (2012:5-7) has recently called this traditional analysis into question, and proposes that while the inanimate indefinite article in Malinaltepec Me'phaa (and other varieties) is indeed *mbá*, the inanimate form for the cardinal numeral 'one' is unmistakably *mbóó*. Importantly, Marlett notes that *mbá* cannot be used in isolation to mean 'one': if one asks "How many tortillas are on the table?" then *mbóó* is the only appropriate response (Marlett 2012:6).¹³

Part of the discrepancy in extant literature regarding the status of 'one' stems from three salient and potentially interrelated aspects: 1) the majority of the speakers of Malinaltepec Me'phaa and MI are bilinguals, speaking both Me'phaa and Spanish, 2) the form *mbá* is also the form for the indefinite article, and 3) data elicitation commonly takes place using Spanish, where 'un(a/o)' can mean either 'a' or 'one'. However, additionally interesting is the observation that *mbá* is often supplied by native speakers when counting, for example in listing the cardinal numerals 1-10¹⁴ (see also the cardinal numerals in Carrasco Zúñiga 2006b).

The current trend among scholars seems to be one of correcting the possible misunderstandings in prior analyses toward a more unified consensus (see Marlett 2012:6). However, exploring the reasons for such different descriptions may actually offer a significant contribution to the analysis of indefinite pronouns in MI. Ultimately, in my analysis I agree in part with Marlett, adopting his position that the inanimate numeral 'one' is unmistakably *mbóó*

¹³ In his discussion of this particular characteristic, Marlett refers to a construction that uses an existential in addition to the numeral *mbóó* as a response to the question, "How many tortillas are there on the table?" (Marlett 2011:5, see his example [5c]). However, the speakers that I worked with indicated that it is possible to use the numeral without the existential in response to a question.

¹⁴ The speakers with whom I collaborated varied in the form used when counting, using either *mbá* or *mbóó*.

while the inanimate indefinite article is *mbá*. As he has shown, this patterning is consistent across Me'phaa varieties, and from the data I have gathered this pattern is also present in MI.

What I propose for MI, then, is that (a) there are multiple allomorphs meaning ‘one’, which have the string *mbá*, and (b) both the indefinite article and non-interrogative-based indefinite pronouns are morphologically derived from *mbóó*.

4.2 Numerals Involving the Use of ‘One’

Table 6 below presents the simple cardinal numerals 1-10 in MI:

Table 6. Cardinal numerals 1-10 in Iliatenco Me'phaa.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Numeral Form</i>	
	<i>Inanimate</i>	<i>Animate</i>
1	mbóó	mbáwíi
2	ahmá	ahmíi
3	atsú	atsúun
4	akhó	akhuun
5	witsu	witsuun
6	mahun ~ mahon	mahuun
7	hwan	hwiin
8	migiñun	migiñuu
9	mihna guwá'	mihna guwíin'
10	guwá'	guwíin'

As noted above, *mbóó* is the form for ‘one’ when used in isolation, for example, as an answer to a question. It is also used in counting, although speakers also commonly supply *mbá* for ‘one’ when counting. Moreover, Me'phaa numerals also encode animacy. As Table 6 indicates, the animate form of the simple numeral ‘one’ is morphologically complex and utilizes the syllable *mbá*, not *mbóó*.

Taking into account the formation of complex numerals may shed additional light on the relationship between *mbóó* and *mbá*, and the possibility that these are allomorphs meaning ‘one’.

The MI number system is a vigesimal system, using ‘20’ as a base for complex numbers higher than ‘20’. Below are the complex numerals ‘20’, ‘21’, and ‘41’ in MI:

- (25) a. *mbá skijún*
 one twenty
 $1 \times 20 = 20$
- b. *mbá skijún emba*
 one twenty one
 $([1 \times 20] + 1) = 21$
- c. *ahma skijún emba*
 two twenty one
 $([2 \times 20] + 1) = 41$

Notably, for all complex numerals having ‘one’ as an operand, the surface realization always involves the syllable *mba* (tones omitted). As the numerals in (25) indicate, *mba* surfaces when ‘one’ functions as a multiplicand (*mbá*, see [25a-b]) or as an addend (*emba*, see [25b-c]). Accordingly, regardless of the function of ‘one’ in complex numerals, the surface form is consistently not *mbóó* in MI.¹⁵ The form *mbóó* is strictly illicit in complex numerals.

In addition to evidence from cardinal numerals, ordinal numerals also support the claim that ‘one’ has multiple allomorphs. Ordinal numerals are formed by the addition of a prefix to a numeral base, either *ti-* when the base begins with a consonant or *ri-* when the base begins with a vowel. Table 7 below presents three ordinals in Malinaltepec Me'phaa that have a component meaning ‘one’ (APLT 1988:65):

¹⁵ Of 12 Me'phaa varieties that Marlett (2011) provides numerals for, only Huit Me'phaa retains the string *mboo* in a complex numeral. Although the data for higher numerals in this variety in Marlett (2011) is incomplete, *mboo* appears as an addend in *guwa' imboo* ‘11 (inanimate)’ while *mba* appears as a multiplicand in *mbá skíñú* ‘20 (inanimate)’ (Marlett 2011:12, 30).

Table 7. Three ordinal numbers in Malinaltepec Me'phaa.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Numeral Form</i>	
	<i>Inanimate</i>	<i>Animate</i>
1 st	timbá	timbáa
11 th	tiguemba	tiguembjin
20 th	timbáskíñú	timbáskíñúun

For ordinal numerals, then, some variant of *mba* appears whenever ‘one’ functions as an addend or a multiplicand. Again, *mbóó* cannot appear in these numeral forms.

In this thesis, then, I consider ‘one’ to have multiple allomorphs, which vary according to function. Morphological (or even phonological) variants of numerals are not uncommon in languages, and English is a case that illustrates this point. For example, in Old English the component meaning ‘10’ in complex cardinal numbers has two forms, *-tyne* and *-tig*, both of which differ from the word for ‘10’, *tyn*. A similar patterning occurs in Modern English as well, where *-teen* and *-ty* are used. Table 8 presents some cardinal numbers in Old and Modern English where ‘10’ functions as an operand.

Table 8. Some cardinal numerals in Old English and Modern English with ‘10’ as an operand.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Old English</i> ¹⁶	<i>Modern English</i>
10	tyn	ten
13	Þreo-tyne	thirteen
14	feower-tyne	fourteen
19	nigon-tyne	nineteen
20	twen-tig	twenty
30	Þri-tig	thirty
40	feower-tig	forty
90	hund-nigon-tig	ninety
100	hund(red) ~ hund-teon-tig	one hundred
1000	Þusend hund- teon-tig	one thousand

¹⁶ Von Mengden (2010:74, 88, 91)

Comparing Old to Modern English gives rise to multiple instances of phonological change over time. Such historical transformation blurs the distinction between two morphemes meaning ‘ten’. Nowadays, the decimal cardinal numeral system (base-10) of Modern English is less transparent than Old English, as the forms for ‘10’ in complex numerals have changed over the centuries. When ‘10’ functions as an addend in Old English, as in ‘13’ (3 + 10), the suffixal form *-tyn* was used. However, when ‘10’ functions as a multiplicand, as in ‘30’ (3 x 10), the suffixal form *-tig* was used. Thus, *-tyn* and *-tig* are phonological/allomorphic variants meaning ‘10’ in Old English. The distinction between addends and multiplicands in Modern English is less distinct, but it still exhibits variation between *-teen* (addend) and *-ty* (multiplicand). Essentially, part of the argumentation I propose extends this type of analysis to the simple and complex numerals in MI, treating *mbóó*, *mbá*, and *èmbà* as allomorphs all meaning ‘one’ in specific contexts.

4.3 A Triad of Indefiniteness: The Indefinite Article, the Numeral ‘One’, and Indefinite Pronouns

In addition to language-internal evidence for the thesis that MI indefinites are primarily ‘one’-based, along with a cross-linguistic example that supports such analysis, typological evidence may provide further support for this claim. In particular, Givón (1981) investigates processes of grammaticalization by which the numeral ‘one’ becomes an indefinite marker. The phenomenon is so common cross-linguistically that he considers the process to be “seeming[ly] universal” (Givón 1981:35). His analysis centers on Israeli Hebrew, but he notes that the process is indeed prevalent cross-linguistically. Regardless of the explanation as to why the process prevails, still, Givón suggests, languages exhibit an overwhelming tendency to draw from the numeral ‘one’ as

a source of indefinite meaning in articles and indefinite pronouns. Indeed, continuing our above comparison to Old English, the indefinite article *a(n)* is a case in point for this process: it first appeared in Early Middle English as a grammaticalized form of the Old English ‘one’.

Additionally, as we have already seen, the numeral ‘one’ in English appears in the indefinite pronouns *someone*, *anyone*, and *no one*, and even *one* itself may function as an indefinite pronoun.

Haspelmath likewise cites Givón (1981) when discussing the three formal types of indefinite pronouns in terms of their morphological derivation. He notes that, “[s]ince the numeral ‘one’ is usually the source for grammaticalization of indefinite articles (see e.g. Givón 1981), it is hardly surprising that it should be used as the base of an indefinite pronoun as well” (Haspelmath 1997:29). The point we orient toward here is that, given the cross-linguistic inclination for languages to draw from the numeral ‘one’ as a base for indefinite articles, and given the semantic overlap between indefinite articles and indefinite pronouns, and in light of Haspelmath’s observations, it should be rather unsurprising that Me’phaa would exhibit this popular trend.

4.4 Summary

This section has presented a defense for analyzing *mbá* as an allomorph of ‘one’. Although Marlett rightly observes that *mbóó*, not *mbá*, is used in response to questions eliciting ‘one’ as a response (for an inanimate referent), still the discussion above suggests that these forms should not be viewed as unrelated. Though it still is yet to be determined what specific morphological

processes allow for the derivation of each form,¹⁷ we note the following observations in favor of the analysis presented here:

- Early Me'phaa literature is fairly uniform in treating *mbá* as the numeral 'one'
- The numeral 'one' Me'phaa's closest relative, Subtiaba, is *imba*
- Native speakers sometimes supply *mbá* when counting (in addition to *mbóó*)
- Higher, complex, numerals in Me'phaa require some form of *mbá*, not *mbóó*, for their formation
- Ordinal numerals in Me'phaa require some form of *mbá*, not *mbóó*, for their formation
- Number systems in languages (such as Old English) display similar allomorphy
- Cross-linguistically, the numeral 'one' is often a source of grammaticalization for the indefinite article (which in Me'phaa is *mbá*, not *mbóó*) as well as indefinite pronouns

With these supporting arguments in place, I now turn to a description of the MI indefinite pronoun system.

¹⁷ A previous proposal that *mbóó* is formed from *mbá* through the addition of a suffix that encodes the meaning 'only one' (Marlett, personal communication; see APLT 1988:129).

5 Affirmative ‘One’-based Indefinites

According to Haspelmath’s (1997) typology of formal types of indefinite pronouns, we have already noted the following predictions for languages with ‘one’-based indefinites (repeated from Section 3):

- (26) a. ‘One’-based indefinites in a language commonly correspond to the ontological category person in direct contrast to non-person categories, which are derived differently.
- b. ‘One’-based indefinites are most likely to occur in a system whose other indefinite pronouns are non-interrogative-based.
- c. Moreover, the existence of ‘one’-based adverbial indefinite pronouns are not to be expected.

Beginning with this section, I provide evidence which suggests that none of these expectations are indeed met for MI. Instead, MI manifests a pattern for indefinite pronouns that is in direct opposition to these predictions, though the language still preserves what Haspelmath notes as the tendency to use a highly selective class of indefinite pronouns to uniquely individuate human referents.

In this section I introduce the series of affirmative ‘one’-based indefinites in MI. I discuss the morphological derivation of simple and complex affirmative indefinites in Section 5.1. I then treat some of their syntactic properties in Section 5.2. Following this, I discuss negative indefinite pronouns in Section 6 and interrogative-based indefinites in Section 7.

5.1 Morphological Derivation

There is no definite determiner in Iliatenco Me’phaa.¹⁸ Thus, (decontextualized) bare nouns are often ambiguous with regard to definiteness and specificity.

¹⁸ However, definiteness can be expressed by using a demonstrative, as in:

ikhaa gu’wá
DEM house
‘this house’

- (27) *Pedro ni-guxno ijé*
 Peter PFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN book
 ‘Peter read (a/the) book.’

Even the use of indefinite article is facultative in some cases, as the possibility for the indefinite interpretation of (27) demonstrates.¹⁹ However, if *mbá* ‘a/one’ is added, then the noun is unambiguously interpreted as indefinite:

- (28) a. *mbá-a xabo*
 INDF-AN person
 ‘a person’/*‘the person’
- b. *mbá ixé*
 INDF.INAN tree
 ‘a tree’/*‘the tree’
- c. *Pedro ni-guxno mbá ijé*
 Peter PFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN INDF.INAN book
 ‘Peter read a/*the book.’

As noted in Section 4.3, though the counting forms of ‘one’ in MI are *mbóó* ‘one (INAN)’ and *mbáwiin* ‘one (AN)’, we can still consider these to be the derivational base for the indefinite article. Again, that the numeral *mbá* ‘one’ is the base for the indefinite article in Iliatneco Me’phaa is not surprising given that indefinite articles are frequently grammaticalized forms of the numeral ‘one’ cross-linguistically (Haspelmath 1997:29; Givón 1981).

Turning to indefinite pronouns, which in MI are likewise derived from the numeral ‘one’, we now consider evidence to show that ‘one’ is the primary derivational base for forming the majority of indefinites in the MI indefinite paradigm. Table 9 compares *wh*-elements (interrogative pronouns) and indefinite pronouns in Me’phaa.

¹⁹ Three speakers with whom I collaborated each affirmed the possibility of either a definite or indefinite interpretation of (27). That is, the utterance is felicitous in a context where there is a particular book in question (i.e., ‘the book that Peter read’) or where one is speaking generically (i.e., of ‘a book that Peter read’). Moreover, under an indefinite reading, (27) may have either a specific reading (i.e., ‘Peter read a book, guess which one’) or a non-specific reading (i.e., ‘Peter read a book, but I have no idea which one it was’).

Table 9. Interrogative and indefinite pronouns in Iliatenco Me'phaa.

Ontological Category	Interrogative pronoun	Indefinite pronoun		
		interrogative-based	'one'-based	
person	<i>tsá</i> 'who?'	<i>tsá, mbáa tsi</i> 'someone'	<i>mbáa tsi</i> 'someone'	<i>nimbáa</i> 'no one'
thing	<i>dí(ne)</i> 'what?'		<i>mbá</i> 'something'	<i>nimbá</i> 'nothing'
place	<i>náá</i> 'where?'		<i>mbá</i> 'somewhere'	<i>nimbá</i> 'nowhere'
time	<i>(gwa)na,</i> <i>nóra</i> 'when?'		<i>mbá xugi</i> 'always'	<i>nimbá mi 'tsú</i> 'never'
manner	<i>xáni</i> 'how?'			
amount	<i>ngwa tha/thin</i> 'how many?'			
reason	<i>ndé(h)ngo</i> 'why?'			

Even a cursory glance at the MI paradigm leads us to some interesting observations that are counter to the expectations derived from Haspelmath's typology. First, as the elements in the above table demonstrate, with exceptions from the ontological category of "person," there is virtually no correlation between the lexical items in the interrogative pronoun column and those in the indefinite pronoun columns. This ratio of interrogative- to 'one'-based indefinites is telling: MI has far more 'one'-based indefinite pronouns than interrogative-based ones, a pattern that is the inverse of what we might predict to find. Additionally, there is an interesting syncretism in the paradigm, as we see the form *mbá* corresponding to both 'something' and 'somewhere' and the form *nimbá* corresponding to 'no one', 'nothing', and 'nowhere'. Finally, we also note that adverbial 'one'-based indefinites are present, though limited.

5.2 Syntactic Properties

As with the indefinite article (29a), the numeral ‘one’ (of the form *mbá*) is the base from which the indefinite pronouns meaning ‘something’ (29b) and ‘somewhere’ (29d) are derived:

(29) a. *ni'-ta* *Maria mbá* *ijé*
PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN Mary INDF.INAN letter
‘Mary wrote a letter.’

b. *ni'-ta* *Maria mbá*
PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN Mary AFF.INDF.INAN
‘Mary wrote something.’

c. *Catalina xtáa* *mixtru'win*
Catalina live.3SG Iliatenco
‘Catalina lives in Iliatenco.’

d. *Catalina xtáa* *mbá*
Catalina live.3SG AFF.INDF
‘Catalina lives somewhere.’

Like ordinary DPs, then, indefinite arguments typically surface post-verbally.

Affirmative numeral indefinites can also occur in the scope of negation. Taking (29b) as an affirmative base, the example in (30a) shows that *mbá* is indeed licit in the context of verbal negation, which also occurs in the embedded clause in (30b).

(30) a. *tá'-ta* *Maria mbá*
PFV.NEG-write.3SG.AN Mary AFF.INDF.INAN
‘Mary did not write anything.’/*‘There is something that Mary did not write.’

b. *na-honmo'* *rí* *ikhaa ta-guxno'* *mbá*
IPFV.AFF-think.1SG REL.INAN 3SG PFV.NEG-read.3SG.AN AFF.INDF.INAN
‘I think that he didn’t read anything.’/*‘I think that there is something that he didn’t read.’

Additionally, in the context of negation, interpretation of the indefinite pronoun takes narrow scope obligatorily, rendering the wide scope option ungrammatical.

As shown in (29b, 30), the bare inanimate indefinite *mbá* can appear postverbally as an object. Alternatively, as a subject it can appear postverbally. However, if it surfaces preverbally

then it requires a special construction: non-human subject numeral indefinites occur with the existential *rígá* ‘there is’ and are used together with a relative clause. An example of this type is seen in (31):

- (31) *rígá mbá* [RC *ri ni-xnu Maria*]
 AFF.EXIST AFF.INDF.INAN REL.INAN PFV-hit.3SG.AN Mary
 ‘Something hit Mary.’ (Lit., ‘There is something that hit Mary.’)

Without the existential, the sentence in (33) is ungrammatical (34), suggesting a subject-object asymmetry (limited to non-human indefinites in Me’phaa) that is common cross-linguistically (Haspelmath 1997:214-218):^{20, 21}

- (32) **mbá (ri) ni-xnu Maria*
 AFF.INDF.INAN (REL.INAN) PFV.AFF-hit.3SG.AN Mary
 (Intended: ‘Something hit Mary.’)

As noted previously, ‘one’-based indefinites behave like ordinary DPs in that they typically surface post-verbally. The indefinite/ordinary DP affinity also extends to word order permutations. Sentences with ‘one’-based indefinites exhibit varying word order (35):

- (33) a. *ni'-t-a Maria mbá* VSO
 PFV.AFF-write-3SG.AN Mary AFF.INDF.INAN
 ‘Mary wrote something.’
- b. *mbá Maria ni'-ta* OSV
 AFF.INDF.INAN Mary PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN
 ‘Mary wrote something.’
- c. *Maria ni'-ta mbá* SVO
 Mary PFV.AFF-write.3SG.AN AFF.INDF.INAN
 ‘Mary wrote something.’

²⁰ This tendency is, however, more common typologically among SVO languages and in the context of negation (e.g., ‘I didn’t see anybody’ vs. ‘*Anybody didn’t come’ [Haspelmath 1997:214]). Iliatenco Me’phaa does allow for inanimate indefinite objects to occur in existential constructions, as in *ríga mbá rí magó mo’phóla ikháánlá* ‘There is something you all can eat’. Crucially, though, this is not required (see [33b]).

²¹ If the inanimate relative pronoun *ri* is present, the sentence is at best incomplete (i.e., ‘Something that hit Mary...’), but still ungrammatical.

However, we again note that some indefinites have a more restricted distribution than ordinary DPs. For example, *mbá* cannot appear as a sentence-initial subject, though it can surface as a preverbal/sentence-initial object (35b). This latter observation is instructive, for it indicates that is not the semantic nature of the non-human indefinite pronoun itself that prohibits its appearing preverbally. Rather, it appears to be the unique combination of semantics in conjunction with a particular grammatical role that generates the subject-object asymmetry present in MI.

In summary, for affirmative ‘one’-based indefinites we have noted the following properties: (1) they are greater in number than interrogative-based indefinites, which suggests an unexpected distribution, (2) they can occur with negation, but only with a narrow scope interpretation, (3) they exhibit a subject-object asymmetry for the indefinite pronoun meaning ‘something’, which is cross-linguistically common, and (4) they bear to some degree affinity to ordinary DPs in that word order permutations involving indefinite pronoun arguments are permissible.

6 Negative Indefinites

Haspelmath (1997:193-200) outlines four principal syntactic means of expressing negated indefinites. Of these, MI utilizes the following two types for negating indefinites: verbal negation plus (ordinary) indefinite, and verbal negation plus ‘negative indefinite’.

As noted in Section 1, negation in MI is expressed in various ways. For example, the negative particle *nanguá* ‘no/not’ can be used in negative constituents, such as negating a proposition.

- (34) a. *na-ni’gú* *guma*
IPFV.AFF-like.1SG tortilla
‘I like tortillas.’
- b. *nanguá nigú’* *guma*
NEG like.1SG tortilla
‘I don’t like tortillas.’

In this construction, the aspect marker (which is typically fused with affirmation or negation) does not appear on the verb obligatorily. However, the affirmative aspect marker cannot surface in the presence of the negative particle (see examples [20a-b]).

A second, and perhaps more common means of negating is through verbal negation, which occurs by way of prefixation.

- (35) a. *tsí-nigú’* *guma*
IPFV.NEG-like.1SG tortilla
‘I don’t like tortillas.’
- b. *tha-yo* *Pedro*
PFV.NEG-see.1SG Peter
‘I did not see Peter.’

These two means of expressing negation can be used simultaneously, as in (36):

- (36) *nanguá tha-yo* *Pedro*
NEG PFV.NEG-see.1SG Peter
‘No, I did not see Peter.’

Since MI exhibits negative concord, the negative particle can co-occur with verbal negation and not contribute to multiple instances of negation.

Two principal characteristics of Me'phaa negative indefinites are as follows. First, they are morphologically complex; the negative prefix *ni-*, which is unique to indefinites, is added to the numeral base:

- (37) [*ni-* [*mbá(-a)*]]
 NEG- INDF(-AN)
 ‘no one, nothing, nowhere’

Second, a greater amount of neutralization occurs in the negative category of MI indefinites than the affirmative ones, collapsing the ontological categories “person”, “thing”, and “place,” as seen in Table 10.

Table 10. ‘One’-based indefinites in Iliatenco Me'phaa.

Ontological Category	‘One’-based Indefinite Pronoun	
person	<i>mbáa tsi</i> ‘someone’	<i>nimbáa</i> ‘no one’
thing	<i>mbá</i> ‘something’	<i>nimbá</i> ‘nothing’
place	<i>mbá</i> ‘somewhere’	<i>nimbá</i> ‘nowhere’
time	<i>mbá xugi</i> ‘always’	<i>nimbá mi'tsú</i> ‘never’
manner		
amount		
reason		

Third, unlike ordinary DPs and affirmative indefinites, negative ‘one’-based indefinites co-occur with verbal negation obligatorily. This property is shown in the examples in (38).

- (38) a. (*ikhaa*) *tá-guxno* *ni-mbá* ✓negative
 (3SG) PFV.NEG-read.3SG.AN NEG-INDF.INAN
 ‘(He) didn’t read anything.’

- b. **(ikhaa) ni-guxno ni-mbá* *affirmative
 (3SG) IPFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN NEG-INDF.INAN
 (Intended: ‘[He] didn’t read anything.’)
- c. *ni-mbá-a tá-guxno ijé* ✓ negative
 NEG-INDF.AN PFV.NEG-read.3SG.AN book
 ‘No one read a/the book.’
- d. **ni-mbá-a ni-guxno ijé* *affirmative
 NEG-INDF.AN PFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN book
 (Intended: ‘No one read a/the book.’)
- e. *tá’-ta Maria ni-mbá* ✓ negative
 PFV.NEG-write.3SG.AN Mary NEG-INDF.INAN
 ‘Mary didn’t write anything.’
- f. **ni’-ta Maria ni-mbá* *affirmative
 IPFV.AFF-write -3SG.AN Mary NEG-INDF.INAN
 (Intended: ‘Mary wrote nothing.’)

Note also that, unlike the affirmative indefinite corresponding to the ontological category “thing” (see example [31]), the negative indefinite in (38c) does not require an existential construction to surface preverbally as a subject.

Negative indefinites also provide further evidence for negative concord (38a, c, e, 39):

- (39) *nanguá tha-yo ni-mbá-a*
 NEG PFV.NEG-see.1SG NEG-INDF-AN
 ‘No, I did not see anyone.’

Although negative indefinites are licensed by negation, they do not, however, require local negation. They can be potentially licensed by non-clausemate negation:

- (40) a. *na-honmo’ ri ikhaa ta-guxn-o’ ni-mbá*
 IPFV.AFF-think.1SG REL.INAN 3SG PFV.NEG-read-3SG.AN NEG-INDF.INAN
 ‘I think that he didn’t read anything.’
- b. *?tsi-nembo ri ikhaa ni-guxno ni-mbá*
 IPFV.NEG-doubt.1SG REL.INAN 3SG PFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN NEG-INDF.INAN
 ‘I don’t think that he read anything.’

That is, in (42a) *nimbá* appears in the scope of verbal negation that is encoded in the portmanteau affix on the verb in the embedded clause, which is where the negative indefinite is located. This construction is rather expected. However, (42b) is less expected, since, though questionable for some, the presence of *nimbá* – which must occur in the scope of negation – is made possible through the non-local verbal negation in the matrix clause, which is not where the negative indefinite is located.

Interestingly, this property leads us to a cross-linguistic comparison because it is similar to the distribution of negative polarity items (NPIs) in English. Consider the following examples:

- (41) a. *I don't think* [_{CP} *that he read anything*]
 b. *She doesn't know* [_{CP} *whether he will buy anything*]

Each of these English sentences involves the NPI *anything*, which for many dialects of English must appear in the scope of negation. This requirement is met in both cases, for the matrix verb in each case supplies non-local negation, just as in the MI example of (40b).

With these similarities in mind, we might ask the following question: Are MI negative indefinites NPIs? The question is of potential significance because treating negative indefinites as NPIs in NC-languages is one manner of explaining their syntactic distribution with respect to negation (Penka 2011:20). However, In MI, *nimbáa* occurs in fragment answers (i.e., free-standing), unlike *anybody* in English. The following are responses to the question, “Who did you see?”, in MI (42a) and English (42b).

- (42) a. *ni-mbá-a*
 NEG-INDF-AN
 ‘nobody’
 b. **anybody*

The asymmetry in these examples demonstrates that negative indefinites pattern differently in MI and English, and appealing to the syntactic process of ellipsis can help to explain why. In the case of the former, we can posit the existence of an elided VP. The fuller response in MI would thus minimally be (43).

- (43) *tha-yo* *ni-mbá-a*
 PFV.NEG-see.1SG NEG-INDF-AN
 ‘I didn’t see anyone.’

If the VP undergoes ellipsis, then this crucially satisfies the requirement for licensing the negative indefinite. This produces the following utterance in (44), with the elided portion being unpronounced.²²

- (44) ~~*tha-yo*~~ *ni-mbá-a*
 PFV.NEG-see.1SG NEG-INDF-AN
 ‘(I didn’t see) anyone.’

However, unlike MI, English does not allow for this type of construction with the NPI *anyone*, suggesting that ellipsis does not occur in the English fragment answer. That is, without the relevant constituent to satisfy scope requirements for the NPI *anyone*, it cannot serve as a free-standing response (unlike, say, *no one*, which is acceptable).

Moreover, MI negative indefinites do not align with properties of NPIs in two additional ways. As we saw in (38c), *nimbáa* can surface preverbally, which is not permissible for NPIs (cf. **Anybody didn’t read the book* in English). NPIs are also licensed by polar questions, as (45) shows.

- (45) *Did Mary see anyone?*

However, consider the equivalent in MI:

²² Alternatively, one could posit the elision of a negative existential, which would still bear the relevant negation to satisfy the requirements.

- (46) **aa nde-yo Maria nimbáa?*
 Q PFV.AFF-see.3SG.AN Mary NEG-INDF.AN
 (Intended: ‘Did Mary see anyone?’)

The ungrammaticality of (46) demonstrates that polar questions do not license MI negative indefinites. Consequently, this is yet another distinction between English NPIs and MI negative indefinites, and it also suggests that the latter are truly negative sensitive.

NPIs are one of two types of negative sensitive items (NSIs), the second type being negative concord items (NCIs). Importantly, NPIs and NCIs exhibit different distributional properties (Vallduví 1994; Giannakidou 2000; Alsarayreh 2012). Since MI negative indefinites do not fully pattern like NPIs, this leads us to a second question: Are MI negative indefinites NCIs? One principal characteristic of NCIs is that they appear as fragment answers. Thus, the ability for *nimbáa* ‘no one, anyone’ (as well as *nimbá* ‘nothing, anything,’ and *nimbá* ‘nowhere, anywhere’) to successfully serve as fragment answers suggests that this could be the case. However, an additional characteristic of NCIs is that their licensing is clause-bound. The ability for nonlocal negation to license MI negative indefinites then suggests that they do not completely behave like NCIs (see [40b]).

Consequently, the distribution of MI NSIs suggests that they resist rigid categorization as either NPIs or NCIs. Instead, MI NSIs share a property with NPIs in that they can be licensed by non-clausemate negation. Moreover, they share properties with NCIs in that they can serve as fragment answers, appear preverbally, and are not licensed by non-negative contexts, such as polar questions.

Another property of MI negative indefinites is that, again like ordinary DPs, sentences with negative ‘one’-based indefinites also exhibit varying word order:

- (47) a. *Maria ta'-xuma mbá letra ni-mbá-a SV DO IO*
 Mary PFV.NEG-send.3SG.AN INDF.INAN letter NEG-INDF.AN
 ‘Mary didn’t send a letter to anyone.’

- b. *Maria ta'-xuma ni-mbá-a mbá letra SV IO DO*
 Mary PFV.NEG-send.3SG.AN NEG-INDF.AN INDF.INAN letter
 'Mary didn't send a letter to anyone.'

Finally, as an alternative to indefinite pronouns, negative existentials can be rough semantic equivalents of negative indefinites, in some cases with or without an actual negative indefinite present:

- (48) a. *ndaa (ni-mbá) kafé gehio'*
 NEG.EXIST (NEG-INDF.INAN) coffee here
 'There isn't any coffee here.'

- b. *á ndaa than kafé gehio' táta*
 Q NEG.EXIST 2SG coffee here sir
 'Sir, don't you have any coffee?'

In summary, then, this Section introduced the following properties for negative indefinites:

(1) they are morphologically complex, (2) they exhibit greater syncretism than affirmative 'one'-based indefinites, (3) they provide counter-evidence to the expectation that 'one'-based adverbials are rare, (4) they must occur in the scope of negation, whether local or non-local, (5) they resist categorization as either NPIs or NCIs, and (6) they permit word order permutations. Additionally, negative existentials can function as rough semantic equivalents of negative indefinite pronouns.

7 Interrogative-Based Indefinites

In this section I discuss *wh*-expressions as a derivational base for indefinite pronouns in MI. As noted previously, interrogative-based indefinites are the exception to the rule of what is principally a system of ‘one’-based indefinites in MI. Thus, MI provides counterevidence for the claim that ‘one’-based exceptions are typically relegated to the ontological category “person.” The presence of an internally exceptional interrogative-based indefinite in the MI system does, however, allow for the language to capture an important feature that is common across languages with ‘one’-based indefinites, namely, the unique individuation of human referents.

7.1 Questions

7.1.1 Yes/No Questions

Yes/No Questions in MI are generally characterized by the presence of a question particle, *aa*, that appears sentence initially. For example, consider the typical VSO sentence in (49):

(49)	<i>ni-xnu</i>	<i>Maria</i>	<i>hwán</i>	Declarative
	PFV.AFF-hit.3SG	Mary	John	
	‘Mary hit John.’			

This sentence becomes a question by adding the interrogative particle *aa* preverbally,²³ which results in a Y/N question (50):²⁴

(50)	<i>aa ni-xnu</i>	<i>Maria</i>	<i>hwán</i>	Yes/No Question
	Q PFV.AFF-hit.3SG	Mary	John	
	‘Did Mary hit John?’			

²³ This is not to be confused with the affirmative particle *áán*, which also appears sentence-initially.

²⁴ The sentence-initial position of the question particle is fixed, so that *aa* cannot appear postverbally:

a. **ni-xnu* (aa) *Maria* (aa) *Juan* (aa)
PFV.AFF-hit.3SG Q Maria Q Juan Q
(Intended: ‘Did Mary hit John?’)

In embedded yes/no questions, the question particle *aa* appears on the left edge of the embedded clause.

- (51) a. *aa ni-kha hwán*
 Q PFV.AFF-go.3SG juan
 ‘Did Juan leave?’
- b. *ni-raxi aa ni-kha hwán*
 PFV.AFF-wonder.1SG Q PFV.AFF-go.3SG juan
 ‘I wonder, did Juan leave?’

7.1.2 *Wh*-questions

Wh-questions in MI involve the following *wh*-elements:²⁵

Table 11. *Wh*-expressions.

Wh-element/ Interrogative pronoun	Gloss	
<i>tsá</i> (<i>[ña]hun</i>)	‘who?’	
<i>di</i> (<i>ne [ñahun]</i>)	‘what?’	
<i>náá</i> (<i>ñahun</i>)	‘where?’	
<i>ndé(h)ngo</i>	‘why?’	
<i>nakí;</i> <i>(gwa)na;</i> <i>na ñahun;</i> <i>nóra ~</i> <i>na ora</i>	} ‘when?’	
<i>xáni</i>		‘how?’
<i>ngwá tha</i>		‘how many (INAN)?’
<i>ngwá thiin</i>		‘how many (AN)?’
<i>ná ri</i>		‘which (INAN)?’
<i>ná tsi;</i> <i>ná NP</i>	‘which (AN)?’ ‘which NP?’	

As the elements in the table show, MI *wh*-elements often have varying forms (whether phonologically, as in *ndé(h)ngo* ‘why?’, or morphologically, as in *tsá ~ tsá ñahun ~ tsá hun* ‘who?’). Some *wh*-elements are morphologically complex. Examples include *ngwá tha* and *ngwá*

²⁵ *Wh*-elements are also used as relative pronouns in MI.

thiin, the inanimate and inanimate forms meaning ‘which?’. Moreover, the expressions *na ora* and *nóra*, which are in free variation, appear to be partly composed of the Spanish *hora* ‘time, hour’.²⁶

The *wh*-questions ‘who?’, ‘what?’, and ‘where?’ in MI have both morphologically simplex and morphologically complex expressions as variants. The simplex versions all involve a unique *wh*-element, namely, *tsá*, *dí* (*ne*), and *náá*, respectively. In their complex counterparts, the simple form combines with the copula *ñahun*, which sometimes appears in the reduced form *hun*. In most cases where *ñahun* is present in a *wh*-expression, the copula is facultative.

Wh-questions in MI are formed by *wh*-movement. For example, using the VOS sentence in (52a) as a base, we can illustrate that verbal arguments in a transitive event involve movement in *wh*-question formation.

- (52) a. *ni-ts-iin* *atsún* *xtila* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu’uwá rí*
 PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN
- nanguhwín gahmáa mbúkha rí* *ijé*
 sell with money REL.INAN paper
 ‘Maria bought three chickens at the market yesterday with money.’

Subject

- b. *tsá* *ni-ts-iin* *atsún* *xtila* *náki rixi* *náá gu’uwá rí*
 who PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín

sell

‘Who bought three chickens at the market yesterday?’

Direct Object

- c. *dí* *ne (ñahun)* *né-ts-e* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu’uwá rí*
 what ? (COP) PFV.AFF-buy-? maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín

sell

‘What did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’

²⁶ If this is the case then *na ora* ‘when?’ would be ‘which time/hour?’ if rendered literally, and *nóra* most likely a phonological reduction of this phrase.

The sentences in (52b-c) show subject and object *wh*-questions, respectively. In both cases, the arguments (*atsún xítla* ‘three chickens’ and *Maria* ‘Mary’) are base generated in a VP-internal position, and surface post-verbally. When the questions are formed, though, the *wh*-elements *tsá* ‘who?’ and *di ne* (*ñahun*) move to a higher position, and surface preverbally.

Adjunct *wh*-questions exhibit similar properties in terms of the processes underlying their formation. The questions in (53) show *wh*-movement for adjuncts.

- Place*
- (53) a. **Náá** *ni-ts-ii* *atsún* *xítla* *maria náki rixi*
 where? PFV.AFF-buy.3SG three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday
 ‘Where did Maria buy three chickens yesterday?’
- Reason*
- b. **ndéngo** *ni-ts-in* *atsún* *xítla* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu’uwá*
 why? PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday PREP house
- ri* *nanguhwín*
 REL.INAN sell
 ‘Why did Maria buy three chickens at the market yesterday?’
- Time*
- c. **nakí** *ni-ts-i* *maria* *atsún* *xítla* *náá gu’uwá ri* *nanguhwín*
 when PFV.AFF-buy-? maria three.AN chicken PREP house REL.INAN sell
 ‘When did Maria buy three chickens at the market?’
- Manner*
- d. **xáni** *ni-ts-iin* *atsún* *xítla* *nakí rixi* *maria náá gu’uwá*
 how PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken PST yesterday maria PREP house
- ri* *nanguhwín*
 REL.INAN sell
 ‘How did Maria buy three chickens at the market yesterday?’

Finally, complex *wh*-phrases also involve *wh*-movement to a preverbal (and sentence-initial) position:

Amount

- (54) a. **ngwá thiin** xtila ni-ts-in maria nakí rixi náá gu'uwá
 how.many.AN chicken PFV.AFF-buy-? maria PST yesterday PREP house

rí nanguhwín
 REL.INAN sell

‘How many chickens did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’

Which N

- b. **náá** atsún xtila ni-ts-in maria nakí rixi náá gu'uwá
 which three.AN chicken PFV.AFF-buy-? maria PST yesterday PREP house

rí nanguhwín
 REL.INAN sell

‘Which three chickens did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’

Which

- c. **náá tsi**²⁷ ni-ts-in maria nakí rixi náá gu'uwá rí
 which REL.AN PFV.AFF-buy-? maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín
 sell

‘Which did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’

Wh-movement is obligatory in MI. Again, given the base sentence in (52a), in the sentences below I have replaced each DP (or other relevant XP) with an appropriate *wh*-element. The result is ungrammatical, demonstrating that *wh*-elements are illicit *in situ*.²⁸ Moreover, *wh*-movement is required for arguments (55a-b), adjuncts (55c-f), and complex *wh*-phrases (55g-i).

Subject

- (55) a. ***ni-ts-iin** atsún xtila **tsá** náki rixi náá gu'uwá rí
 PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken who PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín
 sell

(Intended: ‘Who bought three chickens at the market yesterday?’)

²⁷ This utterance seems possible only if one is asking about animate things, as in ‘which [chickens]?’ . If the question is asked without the assumption of animacy then the inanimate *wh*-element *ná ri* ‘which?’ is used, as in *ná ri nitsé maria nakí rixi náá rí nanguhwín* ‘Which did Mary buy at the store?’

²⁸ For (55a-b), the ungrammaticality cannot be resolved by attempting a postverbal *wh*-element in a VSO construction.

Direct Object

- b. **ni-ts-iin* **di ne (ñahun)** *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá rí*
PFV.AFF-buy-? what ? (COP) maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín

sell

(Intended: 'What did Maria buy at the market yesterday?')

Place

- c. **ni-ts-ii* *atsún xtila* *maria náki rixi* **náá**
PFV.AFF-buy.3SG three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday where?
(Intended: 'Where did Maria buy three chickens yesterday?')

Reason

- d. **ni-ts-iin* *atsún xtila* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá rí*
PFV.AFF-buy-? three chicken maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín ndéhngo

sell why?

(Intended: 'Why did Maria buy three chickens at the market yesterday?')

Time

- e. **ni-ts-iin* *atsún xtila* *maria náki náá gu'uwá rí* *nanguhwín*
PFV.AFF-buy-? three.AN chicken maria when PREP house REL.INAN sell
(Intended: 'When did Maria buy three chickens at the market?')

Manner

- f. **ni-ts-iin* *atsún xtila* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá rí*
AFF.PFV-buy-? three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín xáni

sell how

(Intended: 'How did Maria buy three chickens at the market yesterday?')

Amount

- g. **ni-ts-iin* **ngwá thiin** *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá rí*
PFV.AFF-buy-? how.many.AN maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN

nanguhwín

sell

(Intended: 'How many chickens did Maria buy at the market yesterday?')

- Which N*
- h. **ni-ts-iin* ***náá*** *atsún* *xtila* *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá*
 PFV.AFF-buy-? which three.AN chicken maria PST yesterday PREP house
- ri* *nanguhwín*
 REL.INAN sell
 (Intended: ‘Which three chickens did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’)

- Which*
- i. **ni-ts-iin* ***náá*** *maria náki rixi* *náá gu'uwá* *ri*
 PFV.AFF-buy-? which maria PST yesterday PREP house REL.INAN
- nanguhwín*
 sell
 (Intended: ‘Which did Maria buy at the market yesterday?’)

Haspelmath’s (1997) typology shows that, cross-linguistically, interrogatives are the most common source for morphologically deriving indefinite pronouns. Nevertheless, for MI interrogative-based pronouns are the exception in a paradigm that is dominated by ‘one’-based indefinites. In the section immediately following, I discuss the distribution of the interrogative indefinite pronoun based on *tsá* ‘who?’. After I note that, while this type of indefinite pronoun formation is quite rare in MI, the language does exhibit other indefinite expressions that are interrogative-based.

7.2 Interrogative-based Indefinite Pronouns

In MI, affirmative indefinite pronoun forms belonging to the category “person” are interrogative-based.²⁹ Moreover, this category appears to be the only one in the language that includes interrogative-based simple indefinite pronouns.

As noted in the previous section, interrogative elements surface sentence-initially in *wh*-questions, as in:

²⁹ For the present purposes, I consider the forms *tsá* and *mbáa tsi* to both be interrogative-based (see Table 9). However, though there is a superficial resemblance among these, the latter forms may derive from the relative pronoun, *tsí*, which, in turn, seems to be related to the *wh*-elements *tsá* ‘who’ and *na tsi* ‘which (AN)’.

- (56) *tsá ni-xnu hwan*
 who PFV.AFF-hit.3SG.AN John
 ‘Who hit John?’

Moreover, we saw above that *wh*-movement is obligatory, meaning that *wh*-elements are illicit *in situ*:

- (57) **ni-xnu tsá hwan*
 PFV.AFF-hit.3SG.AN who John
 (Intended: ‘Who hit John?’)

The MI indefinite pronoun paradigm has two pronouns corresponding to the category “person,” both of which are interrogative-based. The first of these is homophonous with the *wh*-element from which it is derived, namely, *tsá*. When *tsá* ‘who?/someone’ appears sentence-initially, the *wh*-question and indefinite pronoun readings are (potentially) ambiguous:

- (58) *tsá ni-guxno ijé*
 who/AFF.INDF.AN PFV.AFF-read.3SG.AN book
 ‘Who read the book?’/‘Someone read the book.’

This is an interesting observation because, as an indefinite pronoun, *tsá* has an important syntactic restriction: it cannot appear post-verbally as a subject. Thus, like a *wh*-element, the indefinite pronoun *tsá* cannot appear downstairs, as (57) shows.

However, this restricted distribution (recall that multiple word order permutations are possible for declarative sentences in MI) cannot be purely an artifact of its morphological derivation. That is, it is not the case that *tsá* cannot appear postverbally as an indefinite pronoun because of an affinity to *in situ* restrictions as a *wh*-element. This is because, like regular DPs, the interrogative-based indefinite *tsá* ‘someone’ and the negative indefinite *nimbáa* ‘no one’ appear postverbally as object indefinites (59):

- (59) *Maria ni-xnu tsá*
 Mary PFV.AFF-hit.3SG AFF.INDF.AN
 ‘Mary hit someone.’

Accordingly, the attribute governing subject *tsá*'s distribution appears to be related to grammatical role, which results in a subject/object asymmetry for this particular pronoun.

MI also utilizes a second interrogative-based indefinite pronoun, which is morphologically complex and based on both the numeral 'one' as well as the animate relative pronoun.³⁰

- (60) [*mbá-a* [*tsi*]]
 AFF.INDF.AN REL.AN
 'someone'

Tsá and *mbáa tsi* exhibit both similarities and differences in terms of their syntactic distributions. Both can occur preverbally (58, 61). Unlike *tsá*, however, the interrogative indefinite *mbáa tsi* 'someone' can appear sentence-initially without ambiguity:

- (61) *mbá-a* *tsi* *ni-guxno* *ijé*
 AFF.INDF.AN REL.AN COMPL.AFF-read.3SG.AN book
 'Someone read the book.'/*'Who [is it that] read the book?'

Moreover, unlike *tsá*, the form *mbáa tsi* can appear *in situ* as an indefinite pronoun and occur as the subject of a VSO clause:

- (62) *ni'-t-a* [*mbá-a* *tsi*] /**tsá* *mbá* *ijé*
 COMPL.AFF-write-3SG.AN AFF.INDF-AN REL.AN/*who INDF.INAN letter
 'Someone wrote a letter.'

This pattern suggests that distributions of the "person" indefinite pronouns in MI are sensitive to grammatical role.

³⁰ In this form, animacy agreement between the 'one'-based component and the interrogative-based relative pronoun is obligatory:

- a. **mbá-a* *rí*
 AFF.INDF-AN REL.INAN
 'someone'/'something'
- b. **mbá* *tsi*
 AFF.INDF.INAN REL.AN
 'someone'/'something'

Considered together, the distributions of interrogative-based indefinite pronouns contrast with the permissible distributions of ‘one’-based indefinites. Unlike ‘one’-based indefinites, neither can appear sentence-finally as a subject indefinite (63):

- (63) **ni-guxn-o* *ijé* *tsá* / [*mbá-a* *tsi*]
 PFV.AFF-read-3SG.AN book who/ AFF.INDF.AN REL.AN
 (Intended: ‘Someone read the book.’)

Also, recall from (31) in Section 5.2 that the ‘one’-based indefinite corresponding to the category “thing,” *mbá* ‘something,’ requires an existential + relative construction in order to surface as a preverbal subject. Based on this, we may wonder whether it is possible that *mbáa tsi* requires a similar construction, meaning that it involves an elided existential. However, the fact that *mbáa tsi* can appear both preverbally and postverbally produces an interesting contrast with *mbá*. Rather than positing an elided existential for this form of the interrogative-based indefinite pronoun, this critical syntactic distinction suggests a unique construction for *mbáa tsi*.

In summary, in the above discussion we note the following properties for affirmative interrogative-based indefinites. First, *tsá* ‘someone’ exhibits a subject-object asymmetry in that this form must surface preverbally as a subject though the language does permit it to surface postverbally as an object. Next, the ontological category “person” has two affirmative indefinite pronoun forms. In addition to the simplex *tsá*, the form *mbáa tsi* is morphologically complex and has both a ‘one’-based component as well as an interrogative component. *Mbáa tsi* has fewer constraints governing its syntactic distribution: it can appear preverbally and postverbally as a subject. This points to an additional subject-object asymmetry when considering the interrogative-based indefinite pronouns as a pair.

Extending this argumentation, then, the evidence we have considered this far allows us to propose two broad generalizations, both of which pertain to restrictions placed on syntactic

distribution that are sensitive to grammatical role. First, affirmative interrogative-based indefinites cannot appear sentence-finally as subjects. Second, the indefinite pronoun *tsá* has an additional constraint wherein it cannot appear as a postverbal subject, meaning that the distribution of subject-*tsá* is most like that of the *wh*-element from which it is derived. It is important to note, too, that these generalizations do not hold across-the-board for all indefinite pronouns. Rather, they are specific to those that are derived from interrogatives and, therefore, pertain exclusively to the ontological category “person.”

Additionally, from a typological perspective it is important to note that the fact that MI interrogative-based indefinite pronouns are relegated to a single ontological category suggests that they are both exceptional in MI as well as counter to cross-linguistic expectations drawn from Haspelmath’s (1997) typology. That is, as discussed in Section 2, interrogative-based indefinite pronouns are the most common morphological type. Moreover, in languages with a mixed system the presence of ‘one’-based indefinites is commonly associated with the “person” category, as in English and Egyptian Arabic. The analysis here of interrogative-indefinites completes the paradigm of indefinite pronouns and demonstrates that neither of these expectations is met in MI. Nevertheless, despite these unique properties, the exceptionality of interrogative-based indefinites in MI is of further significance in that it preserves an important cross-linguistic tendency that Haspelmath noted. Namely, the unique derivation of “person” indefinite pronouns is common in languages with ‘one’-based indefinites. From looking at MI, it seems possible that this principle holds regardless of the status of ‘one’-based indefinites (i.e., whether they are the exception or the rule).

7.3 ‘-Ever’ Indefinites

Although interrogatives are not a primary base for indefinite pronouns in MI, nevertheless, they constitute a major derivational base for an additional type of indefinite expression, “‘-ever’ indefinites.” Generally speaking, ‘-ever’ indefinites (also called “‘-ever’ free relatives) are a class of words that express the semantic concept of indefiniteness and involve “*wh*-words [being] morphologically or syntactically modified” (Caponigro, Torrence, and Cisneros 2013:75) by an element that corresponds to ‘-ever’ in English. Examples in English include the following:

(64) *who-ever, what-ever, which-ever, when-ever, how-ever*

Like English, ‘-ever’ indefinites in Iliatenco Me'phaa are also interrogative-based and morphologically complex. They involve the morpheme *ahndo* ‘-ever’ combining with a *wh*-element, according to the structure below.³¹

(65) [*ahndo* [*wh*-element]]

Unlike indefinite pronouns, though, which have a highly restricted distribution of *wh*-elements underlying morphological derivation, multiple interrogative forms provide the base of indefinite expressions in the *ahndo* series:

- (66) a. *ahndo tsá ni'-th-a*
 -ever who PFV.AFF-say-3SG.AN
 ‘whoever has said’
- b. *mago ma-gáhna-lo' ando na*
 can IRR.AFF-leave.1PL-INCL -ever when
 ‘We can leave whenever.’
- c. *ahndo náá ma'-ga catalina ma-táanga nátxa*
 -ever where IRR.AFF-go.3SG.AN catalina IRR.AFF-return.3SG.AN quickly
 ‘Wherever Catalina goes, she will return quickly.’

³¹ The form *ahndo* has three variants, *ahndo*, *ando*, and *a'ndo*. Additionally, it may be related to (e.g., is a grammaticalized form of) the verb *-nd-* ‘want’. If this is the case then the *ahndo* series in MI exhibits a similarity to Spanish ‘-ever’ indefinites in terms of morphological derivation. Spanish uses the subjunctive form of *querer* ‘to want’, *quiera*, in its ‘-ever’ series.

d. *hwán na-ndoo ahndo ngwátha guma gúkhó ri*
 John IPFV.AFF-want.3SG -ever how.many.INAN tortilla hard REL.INAN

gé'do Maria
 have.3SG Mary
 'John wants however many tacos Mary has'

e. *ahndo ndé'hngo ri ná-kh-a catalina gé'doo huma ri*
 -ever why COMP IPFV.AFF-go-3SG catalina have.3SG reason COMP

ma'ni
 IRR.AFF-do.3SG
 'Whyever Catalina leaves, she has reason to do it.'

'-Ever' indefinites in MI can also serve as free-standing answers to questions. For example, *ahndo na* 'whenever' (67b) is an appropriate response to the question in (67a).

(67) a. *na ma'go ma'-g-a*
 when can IRR-go-1sg
 'When can I go?'

b. *ahndo na*
 -ever when
 'whenever'

Interestingly, the *wh*-element *di (ne)* 'what?' cannot be used as a derivational base for the '-ever' indefinite meaning 'whatever'. Instead, the morphologically complex *wh*-phrase *ná ri* 'which (INAN)?' is used, as in (68a-b).

(68) a. *ikhúún ma-goxn-úun a'ndo ná ri / *di (ne)*
 1SG IRR-read-1SG -ever which REL.INAN/ what
 'I'll read whatever.'

b. *mago ma-gan-alo' ando ná ri ixé ri ákhu idu*³²
 can IRR-leave-1PL.INCL -ever which REL.INAN wood COMP four eye
 'We can leave in whatever/whichever car.'

The animate relative *tsi* 'who' can also be used in '-ever' constructions (69):

³² The speakers with whom I worked also commonly used the Spanish *carro* 'car' instead of the phrase *ixé ri ákhu idu* 'wood that (has) four eyes'.

(69) *ahndo ná tsi ndá'-y_o ma'gá náá gu'wa*
 -ever which REL.AN IPFV.AFF-need.3SG.AN IRR.AFF-go.3SG.AN PREP house

ri nanguhwá
 COMP sell

‘Whoever needs to go to the store should leave quickly.’

However, unlike the ‘-ever’ indefinite based on the inanimate relative, the form with the animate relative is not used to the exclusion of the complex ‘-ever’ indefinite based on the *wh*-element *tsá* ‘who?’, as seen above in (66a).

Therefore, while interrogatives are an uncommon derivational base for indefinite pronouns, they are nevertheless prevalent in the MI ‘-ever’ indefinite series. With this in mind, the productive derivation of interrogative-based ‘-ever’ indefinites may indicate the preservation of a salient cross-linguistic tendency, namely, a robust use of interrogatives to form indefinite expressions. If this is the case then MI still uniquely contributes to our understanding of the principles outlined by Haspelmath (1997) because the language suggests a restructuring of the proposed typology.

8 Further Cross-Linguistic Evidence for ‘One’-based Indefinites

Haspelmath (1997) considers ‘one’-based indefinite pronoun systems to be rare. A more recent (though also less extensive) treatment of the subject does not even include ‘one’-based as a major type (Haspelmath 2005). As I noted in Section 2, the apparent rarity of a language such as MI could be an artifact of the languages sampled in Haspelmath’s study. To repeat what was previously discussed, his (impressively extensive) sample only included one Otomanguean language (Chalcatango Mixtec) and was also sparse in its representation of Mesoamerican languages generally. With this in mind, in this section I present preliminary data from my own research on Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec as well as draw from data in published grammars of Otomanguean and Mesoamerican languages to see whether or not MI is truly unique in its derivation of indefinite pronouns. Moreover, after reviewing the data in this section, we will review the hypothesis proposed in Section 3, which claims that languages with ‘one’-based indefinites will use the indefinite pronoun system to encode human referentiality in a unique way.

8.1 Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec

Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec, an Otomanguean language from Guerrero, Mexico,³³ uses the numeral *íin* ‘one’ as a derivational base for many indefinite pronouns. For example, like English the numeral ‘one’ is used for the affirmative indefinite corresponding to the category “person.” Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec has a system of noun classifiers that encode gender. For example, in (70) below the masculine proper name *T̄in̄i* and the feminine proper name *L̄ipa* are associated with their respective classifiers, *táa* and *ñá*.

³³ Mixtec examples are from elicitation sessions that were part of the course “Field Methods in Linguistic Description” at the University of Kansas in spring 2012.

(70) *táa Tĩni kotoó xini ñá Lipa*
 CLF.M Tini like.INC.3SG ?³⁴ CLF.F Lipa
 ‘Tini Likes Lipa.’

The indefinite pronoun meaning ‘someone’ in Cocuilotlatala Mixtec combines *íin* ‘one’ with a noun classifier that is grammatically neutral.

(71) a. *íin ná kotoó xini ñá Lipa*
 one CLF.N like.INC.3SG ? CLF.F Lipa
 ‘Someone likes Lipa.’

b. *táa Tĩni kotoó xini íin ná*
 CLF.M Tini like.INC.3SG ? one CLF.N
 ‘Tini Likes someone.’

The negative “person” indefinite pronoun in Cocuilotlatala Mixtec is also partly based on the numeral ‘one’. It is additionally complex, however, in that it also is derived from the *wh*-element *ndá* ‘which?’, which encodes negation.

(72) *ndá íin ná koó kotoó xini ñá Lipa*
 which one CLF.N NEG like.INC.3SG ? CLF.F Lipa
 ‘No one likes Lipa.’

Like MI, negative indefinite pronouns in Cocuilotlatala Mixtec must occur in the scope of negation.

While Cocuilotlatala Mixtec provides further support for ‘one’-based indefinite pronoun systems, it does not seem to capture the cross-linguistic tendency to split the paradigm in order to uniquely identify human reference in some way. For example, the indefinite pronoun corresponding to the category “thing” is morphologically complex, and is based on the numeral ‘one’ as well as the noun *ñá’á* ‘something’.

(73) a. *tá Liko sikwa’á ve’é*
 CLF.M Liko build.COMPL.3SG house
 ‘Liko built the house.’

³⁴ Here and in similar examples, the symbol ‘?’ indicates uncertainty. The speaker indicated that *xini* “goes together” with *kotoó* ‘likes’, though it is still unclear exactly what this might mean.

- b. *tá* *Liko sikwa'á* *ún ña'á*
 CLF.M Liko build.COMPL.3SG one thing
 'Liko built something.'

Therefore, in addition to causing us to again question our understanding of 'one'-based indefinites, Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec provides counterevidence for the proposed hypothesis that languages tend to preserve a human/non-human distinction through the manner in which 'one'-based indefinites are derived. Moreover, evidence from this language is of particular interest because it suggests that not all Mixtecan languages (of which there are many) behave like the one in Haspelmath's (1997) sample with regard to the derivation of indefinite pronouns.

8.2 San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec

San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec is spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico, and is another Otomanguean language that has 'one'-based indefinites. Wagner (2009) provides some examples of indefinite pronouns, and it appears that language has a mixed system, comprised of both 'one'-based and interrogative-based indefinites.

Affirmative indefinites are derived from the numeral *dub* 'one' and an ontological category noun, such as *ta'a* 'thing' and *men* 'person' in the examples below.

- (74) a. *dub ta'a* (Wagner 2009:14)
 one thing
 'something'
- b. *dub men*
 one person
 'somebody'

Similar to Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec, these examples show that San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec also does not preserve a human/non-human distinction based on morphological derivation from the numeral 'one'.

Additionally, and also like Cocuilotlitzala Mixtec, San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec uses *wh*-elements in its derivation of negative indefinites.

- (75) a. *na'an xta'an*
NEG what
'nothing'
- b. *na'an ton*
NEG who
'no one'

However, in this language it is the negative particle *na'an* and not the *wh*-element itself that encodes negation, as the examples show.

8.3 Tz'utujil (Mayan)

In addition to Otomanguean languages, we may wonder whether it is possible that Mesoamerican languages more generally may commonly derive indefinite pronouns from the numeral 'one'. Tz'utujil, a Mayan language from Guatemala, largely uses 'one' as a derivational base, and, therefore, suggests that this is at least a possibility. In his grammar of Tz'utujil, Jon P. Dayley notes that "most of [the Tz'utujil indefinite pronouns] are built on juun, which functions as the number 'one', the indefinite pronoun 'one', and the indefinite article 'a, an'" (Dayley 1985:70). This accords with Givón's (1981) and Haspelmath's (1997) proposal of the numeral 'one' as a source of grammaticalization for the indefinite article and 'one'-based indefinite pronouns. Also, similar to MI, negative indefinite pronouns are formed by the addition of a negative prefix on the numeral base.

- (76) a. *ma-juun x-in-tz'at* (Dayley 1985:245)
NEG-one COMPL-1SG-see
'I saw nothing'

b. *ma-juun*

NEG-one

‘no one/nothing’

(Dayley 1985:70)

Notably, too, is that Tz’utujil displays a similar syncretism in the negative forms. Also, though the language does employ ‘one’-based indefinite pronouns, Tz’utujil (and other Mayan languages, such as Kaqchikel) use interrogative pronouns quite extensively for the formation of ‘-ever’ indefinites.

8.4 Summary

Although the data presented in this section is quite preliminary, the implications are nonetheless significant for the typology of indefinites. Even such a cursory glance as this has provided a good deal of positive evidence for ‘one’-based indefinite pronouns in both Otomanguean languages, specifically, and Mesoamerican languages, generally. Accordingly, these cross-linguistic observations suggest the need to reevaluate claims of rarity with regard to ‘one’-based indefinite systems.

Now we are prepared to return to the hypothesis proposed in Section 3. Although MI data supports it, from the cross-linguistic evidence presented in this section it is clear that the hypothesis fails to obtain. Therefore, there is no universal property of indefinite pronoun systems such that they are required to uniquely individuate human referents, even if the system is primarily ‘one’-based or possesses some degree of ‘one’-based indefinites. Nevertheless, it is still an open question as to whether or not the patterning we see in languages like MI, English, and Egyptian Arabic, that is in part motivated by the presence of ‘one’-based indefinites is a majority trend among languages with this derivational type of indefinite pronoun. To test this

possibility, much more extensive analysis integrating data from a larger sample of languages with 'one'-based indefinites is needed.

9 Conclusions

In this thesis, I have presented a description of the indefinite pronoun system of Iliatenco Me'phaa. Morphologically, the MI paradigm is primarily 'one'-based, though two indefinite pronouns restricted to the ontological category "person" are interrogative-based. MI indefinite pronouns can be either morphologically simplex or complex. Additionally, while there is syncretism among both affirmative and negative indefinite pronouns in MI, there is greater neutralization in the forms of negative indefinites, all of which are homophonous.

Syntactically, we have reviewed data, which suggests that the distribution of MI indefinite pronouns is sensitive to a human/non-human distinction as well as grammatical role. The affirmative indefinite *mbá* 'something', which corresponds to the ontological category "thing," requires an existential construction with a relative clause in order to surface preverbally as a subject. The affirmative indefinites corresponding to the ontological category person may, however, surface preverbally as subjects without a special type of construction. Indeed, these indefinite pronouns preferentially surface in this position and are illicit sentence-finally as subjects, though VOS is a permissible ordering for regular DPs. The indefinite pronoun *tsá*, which is homophonous with the *wh*-question *tsá* 'who?', has an additional restriction in that it cannot appear postverbally as a subject. Negative indefinites, on the other hand, do not display similar constraints on distribution. Moreover, MI negative indefinites display a true sensitivity to negation, and they exhibit properties of both NPIs and NCIs.

Typologically, the MI indefinite system exhibits a cross-linguistically *unexpected* person *vs.* non-person distinction in the paradigm. That is, while languages like English and Egyptian Arabic suggest a common tendency to use 'one'-based indefinites as a means of uniquely individuating human referents, MI demonstrates an inverse pattern where interrogative-based

indefinites perform this function. As a result, MI still preserves the same tendency to encode a human/non-human distinction in an indefinite pronoun paradigm. However, data from other Otomanguean and Mesoamerican languages suggests that we must be careful how strongly we articulate this “tendency” in languages with ‘one’-based indefinites.

Moreover, and quite significantly, data from MI suggests that we reevaluate claims with regard to the cross-linguistic rarity of ‘one’-based indefinite pronoun systems. New data from MI and other languages sheds light on what may be an Otomanguean or even Mesoamerican preference for indefinite paradigms of this type.

Finally, in this thesis I have exclusively oriented to empirically testing some of the morphosyntactic aspects of Haspelmath (1997). In addition to this, a major component of his (1997) work is the proposal of a semantic map based on the functions of indefinite pronouns. Given the unexpected characteristics of the MI indefinite pronoun paradigm in light of expectations derived from Haspelmath’s typology, future work could answer whether MI may additionally serve to be an interesting test case for these semantic maps and their implications.

References

- Alsarayreh, Atef. (2012). *The Licensing of Negative Sensitive Items in Jordanian Arabic* [Doctoral Dissertation]. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas. Retrieved from http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/bitstream/1808/9841/1/Alsarayreh_ku_0099D_11947_DATA_1.pdf
- Asociación para la Promoción de Lecto-escritura Tlapaneca (APLT). (1988). *Xó- Nitháán Me'phaa: Cómo Se Escribe El Tlapaneco*. México, D.F.: Editorial Cuajimalpa.
- Caponigro, Ivano, Torrence, Harold, and Cisneros, Carlos. (2013). Free relative clauses in two Mixtec languages. *IJAL*, 79(1), 61-96.
- Carrasco Zúñiga, Abad. (2006a). *Xtángoo Xú Mi'tháán Ajngáa Me'phaa: Normas para la Escritura de la Lengua Me'phaa*. México, D.F.: INALI.
- Carrasco Zúñiga, Abad. (2006b). *Los Procesos Morfofonológicos de la Lengua Me'phaa* [Master's Thesis]. México, D. F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social.
- Cline, Kevin L., Marlett, Stephen A., Patterson III, Hugh, and Weathers, Mark. (2012). Las conexiones externas e internas. In S. Marlett (ed.), *Los Archivos Lingüísticos Me'phaa*. SIL International. Retrieved from <http://www.sil.org/mexico/workpapers/WP013-PDF/MephaaConexiones.pdf>
- Dayley, Jon P. (1985). *Tzutujil Grammar*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Dibble, Charles E., and Anderson, Arthur J.O. (1961). *Florentine Codex: Book 10*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press.
- Dryer, Matthew. (1989). Large linguistic areas and language sampling. *Studies in Language*,

13(2), 257-292.

Giannakidou, Anastasia. (2000). Negative...concord? *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 18, 457-523.

Givón, T. (1981). On the development of the numeral 'one' as an indefinite marker. *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 2(1), 35-54.

Haspelmath, Martin. (1993). *A Grammar of Lezgian*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Haspelmath, Martin. (1997). *Indefinite Pronouns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haspelmath, Martin. (2005). Indefinite pronouns. In M. Haspelmath, M. S. Dryer, D. Gil, and B. Comrie (eds.), *The World Atlas of Language Structures, Vol. 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 190-193.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía.(2005). Retrieved December 11, 2010 from

<http://cuentame.inegi.gob.mx/impresion/poblacion/lindigena.asp>

Lehmann, Walter. (1920). *Zentral-Amerika, I Teil: Die Sprachen Zentral-Amerikas, II*. Berlin: Museum für Völkerkunde.

Lewis, M. Paul (ed). (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th Ed. Dallas, TX: SIL International. Retrieved December 11, 2010 from

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tcf

Marlett, Stephen A. (2011). *The Me'phaa Grammar Files*. SIL International. Retrieved from

<http://www-01.sil.org/MEXICO/workpapers/WP013i-Me'phaaGrammarFiles.htm>

Marlett, Stephen A. (2012). Los números cardinales. In S. Marlett (ed.), *Los Archivos Lingüísticos Me'phaa*. SIL International. Retrieved from

<http://www.sil.org/mexico/workpapers/WP013-PDF/MephaaNumeros.pdf>

Marlett, Stephen A., and Weathers, Mark L. (in preparation). *Me'phaa (Tlapanec)*. SIL

- International. Unpublished manuscript.
- Navarro Solano, Abad. (2012). *El patrón de alineamiento en el meʔ^lphaa^l* [Master's Thesis]. México, D.F.: CIESAS.
- Penka, Doris. (2011). *Negative Indefinites*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pimentel, Francisco. (1874). *Cuadro Descriptivo y Comparativo de las Lenguas Indígenas de México: O Tratado de Filología Mexicana*. México: Tipografía de Isidoro Epstein.
- Radin, Paul. (1935). Notes on the Tlapanecan language of Guerrero. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 8, 45-72.
- Rensch, Calvin R. (1977). Classification of the Otomanguean languages and the position of Tlapanec. In D. Oltregge and C. R. Rensch, (eds.), *Two Studies in Middle American and Comparative Linguistics*. Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of Texas at Arlington, 53-108.
- Rensch, Calvin R. (1978). Typological and genetic consideration in the classification of the Otomanguean languages. In *Actes du XLIIe Congrès International des Américanistes: Congrès du Centenaire, Paris, 2-9 September 1976*. Paris: Fondation Singer-Polignac, 622-633.
- Sapir, Edward. (1925). The Hokan affinity of Subtiaba in Nicaragua. *American Anthropologist*, 27(3), 402-435.
- Schultze-Jena, Leonard. (1938). *Indiana, Band III: Bei den Azteken, Mixteken und Tlapaneken der Sierra Madre del Sur von Mexiko*. Jena: Gustav Fischer.
- Suárez, Jorge A. (1977). El Tlapaneco Como Lengua Otomangue. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Suárez, Jorge A. (1983). *La Lengua Tlapaneca de Malinaltepec*. México, D. F.: Universidad

Autónoma de México.

Suárez, Jorge A. (1988). *Tlapaneco de Malinaltepec*. Archivo de Lenguas Indígenas de México.

Mexico City: Colegio de México.

Vallduví, Enric. (1994). Polarity items, n-words and minimizers in Catalan and Spanish. *Probus*, 6, 263-294.

von Mengden, Ferdinand. (2010). *Cardinal Numerals: Old English from a Cross-linguistic Perspective*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Wagner, W. John. (2009). Pronouns in San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec. *SIL-Mexico Branch Working Papers #003*.

Weathers, Mark L. (1976). Tlapanec 1975. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 42(4), 367-371.

Wichmann, Søren. (1996). The degrammaticalization of agentivity in Tlapanec. In E. Engberg-Pedersen, M. Fortescue, P. Harder, L. Heltoft, and L. Falster Jakobsen, (eds.), *Content, Expression, and Structure: Studies in Danish Functional Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 343-360.

Wichmann, Søren. (2005). Tlapanec cases. In R. Beam de Azcona and M. Paster, (eds.), *Report 13 Survey of California and Other Indian Languages: Conference on Otomanguean and Oaxacan Languages*, 133-145.