Chuj & the Mayan Language Family

- Chuj is one of thirty currently-spoken Mayan languages
- There are three different municipalities in Guatemala where Chuj is spoken: San Sebastián Coatán, San Mateo Ixtatán and San Benito Nentón

Language Endangerment

There are approximately 7,000 languages worldwide.

40% of these languages are endangered.

UNESCO classifies Chuj as “vulnerable” in its vitality scale. This is a critical stage when it comes to language endangerment because there are better chances to help protect a language when younger generations are still learning it.

“Humanity today is facing a massive extinction: languages are disappearing at an unprecedented pace. And when that happens, a unique vision of the world is lost. With every language that dies we lose an enormous cultural heritage... In short, we lose the testimony of centuries of life.”

Endangered Languages Project, 2017

My contribution to linguistic research

- Research the behaviour of adjectives in Chuj
- Adjectives → lexical items that modify nominal constructions without requiring extra morphology (i.e., tense/aspect or person/number markings)
- In Chuj, some adjectives may appear before or after the noun, sometimes with a change in meaning

a. Chuj: iwil' k'énihn karro k'axo.
   English: ‘I saw my old car.’
   (The car is old but still in my possession.)

b. Chuj: iwil' k'énihn k'axo karro.
   English: ‘I saw my old car.’
   (The car is not necessarily old-looking but it could just no longer be mine.)

Works Cited

Endangered Languages Project, 2017.