

Brown, P. (2007). 'She had just cut/broken off her head': Cutting and breaking verbs in Tzeltal. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 18(2), 319-330. doi:10.1515/COG.2007.019.

This paper describes the lexical resources for expressing events of cutting and breaking (C&B hereafter) in the Mayan language Tzeltal. This notional set of verbs is not a class in any grammatical sense; C&B verbs are formally undistinguishable from many other transitive state-change verbs. But they nicely reveal the characteristic specificity of Tzeltal verb semantics: C&B actions are finely differentiated according to the spatial and textural properties of the theme object, with no superordinate term meaning 'either cut in general' or 'break in general'. The paper characterizes the semantics of these verbs and shows that in the great majority of cases it does not predict their argument structure.

[Link to source \(DOI\) >](#)

[Downloadable fulltext >](#)