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Zapotec Grammar without Tears (Except Perhaps for the Grammarian)

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Zapotec Grammar Without Tears (except perhaps for the grammarian)

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1. Introduction and background

In this talk I'll present some of the wonders of the grammar of Valley Zapotec and describe the problems I've encountered in my work describing these for an ongoing pedagogical grammar project.¹

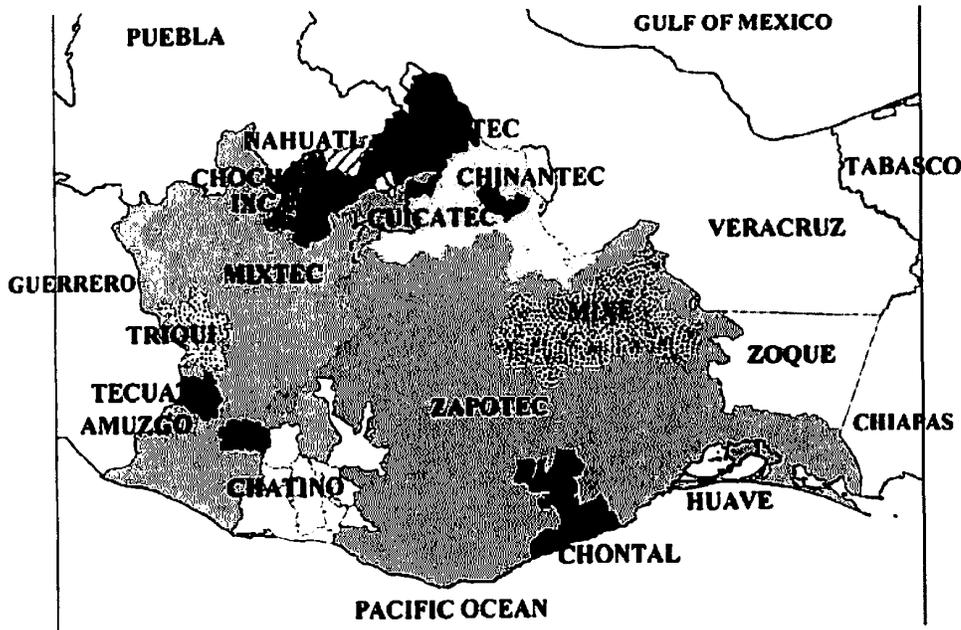
As participants in the COOL conference were well aware, many linguistic and ethnic groups are represented in Oaxaca. (One interpretation of their distribution is given in Map 1 on the next page.) Each of the groups on the map is a language family, not a single language; most of them include a sizeable number of distinct languages. According to the *Ethnologue* (Grimes and Grimes 2003), the Zapotec family (which is connected with Chatino and, more distantly, with many of the other groups in Map 1 as part of the Otomanguean stock) includes 58 mutually unintelligible languages.

"Valley Zapotec" (Ethnologue code ZAB) is spoken about where the word "Zapotec" appears on Map 1 (next page), in the northwest Tlacolula District of Oaxaca, which is southeast of the capital, Oaxaca City, as well as by perhaps 5000 immigrants to the Los Angeles area (Felipe H. Lopez, personal communication; for some ethnographic background, see Lopez and Munro 1999). The name Valley Zapotec is potentially confusing, since the Valley of Oaxaca and even the smaller Tlacolula Valley cover a considerably wider area than that where the language I refer to here as Valley Zapotec is spoken. However, the Ethnologue's name, "Guelavía Zapotec", seems inappropriate, since it singles out just one of many pueblos where the language is used. (For some discussion of the differences among San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec, San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, and Tlacolula de Matamoros Zapotec, see section 3 below and Munro 2003a.)²

¹ The pedagogically oriented work described here is funded by a Department of Education Title VI grant "San Diego Consortium: NRC and FLAS", subcontract to UCSD (Charles L. Briggs, PI), subcontract to UCLA (Pamela Munro). Earlier work on Valley Zapotec has been funded by the Chicano Studies Research Center, Department of Linguistics, and Academic Senate of UCLA; by the UCMexus Foundation, and by NSF. I am particularly grateful to my co-authors on the pedagogical project, Brook Lillehaugen and my longtime collaborator Felipe H. Lopez, but many others (most mentioned in the text or listed in the references) have contributed through their work on Valley Zapotec or other Zapotec languages. Special thanks to Brook Lillehaugen, Olivia Martínez, and wonderful audiences at UCSB and COOL for their very helpful comments.

² As noted in the text below, I use the abbreviations SLQZ (for San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec), SJGZ (for San Juan Guelavía Zapotec), and TMZ (for Tlacolula de Matamoros Zapotec) to identify these different varieties of Valley Zapotec. Other abbreviations are introduced in section 4.

Map (1) *Linguistic Groups in Oaxaca, Mexico.* (By Felipe H. Lopez)

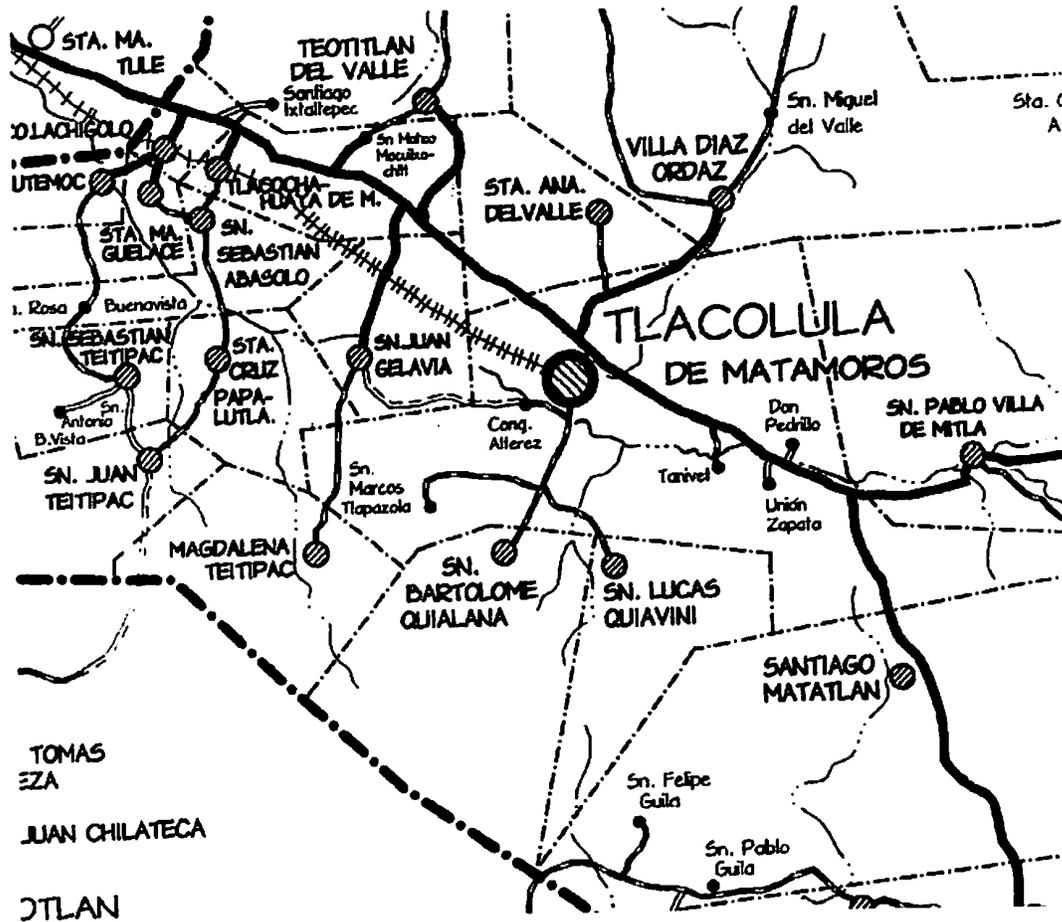


People at UCLA have been working since 1993 with different varieties of Valley Zapotec (in the sense I use the name here), especially those spoken in the pueblos of San Juan Guelavía, San Lucas Quiavini, Santa Ana del Valle, and Tlacolula de Matamoros (see Map 2 (next page); cf., e.g., Munro 1996, Galant 1998, Lee 1999, Munro and Lopez et al. 1999, Méndez [Martínez] 2000, Esposito 2002, Lillehaugen 2003, etc.). Work by other scholars (especially Ted and Kris Jones for San Juan Guelavía Zapotec, Kristine Jensen de López for San Marcos Tlapazola, and George A. Broadwell for Santa Ana del Valle) and our work with speakers from other pueblos has also informed the research. I refer to each of these varieties as “languages”; differences between pueblos (in all areas of grammar) can be considerable.

The current status of these languages ranges from fairly secure (San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec has the largest percentage of native speakers of any Valley community (98.1%; Smith Stark 1994)) to seriously endangered (there are no speakers of Tlacolula Zapotec under 50 (Brook Lillehaugen, personal communication)). Even in San Lucas, however, the language is threatened: at any time, probably 25% or more of the town’s population is working in Los Angeles where, typically, their children do not learn the language.

Currently, work is in progress (under contract from UCSD, in collaboration with Brook Danielle Lillehaugen and Felipe H. Lopez) on a pedagogical grammar of Valley Zapotec, creating which has revealed many complex and unexpected analytical problems. *Cali Chiu?: A Course in Valley Zapotec* is the first pedagogical work ever on Valley Zapotec (other than Jones et al. 1999, a short alphabet book for San Juan Guelavía Zapotec). The book has a general Valley focus, but of necessity presents mainly the language of San Lucas Quiavini (and to some degree Tlacolula), hereafter SLQZ. (Our title, *Cali Chiu?*, means ‘Where are you going?’, a standard greeting in Valley Zapotec.) It presents grammatical background along with readings, dialogues, and other supplementary material, all designed to be used in conjunction with conversationally oriented classroom instruction.

Map (2) The area around Tlacolula de Matamoros, northwest Tlacolula District, Oaxaca. (From García García, et al., n.d.)



In the remainder of this paper I'll discuss a number of issues in Zapotec grammar and how we are handling them for the *Cali Chiu?* project, for which 20 of 24 planned lessons have been drafted so far. As anyone who has tried to prepare such a grammar knows, this is an enormous juggling act because of the interdependence of so many features of the language. Although SLQZ has already received a fair amount of attention from theoretical linguists, describing its grammar for learners requires a completely different approach.

2. Phonology and orthography

Orthography has been a concern since Lopez and I began our work in 1993 (recently, cf. Munro and Lopez 2003, Munro 2003a, Munro 2003b, as well as work by Martínez, e.g. in preparation). I will introduce the phonology of SLQZ using the "academic" orthography of Munro and Lopez et al. (1999).

2.1. Consonants

The consonants of SLQZ (in Table 1) are similar to those of other Valley Zapotec languages.

(Several languages have lenis affricates corresponding to the fortis ones in Table 1; Jones and Knudson (1977) also report a retroflex fortis affricate for San Juan Guelavá Zapotec (SJGZ).)

Table (1) *The consonants of SLQZ.*

	labial	den-alv	alv-pal	retroflex	velar
fortis stop	p	t			c / qu [k]
lenis stop	b	d			g / gu [g]
fortis affricate		ts	ch [č]		
fortis fricative	f	s	x [š]	x: [ʂ]	j [x]
lenis fricative		z	zh [ž]	zh: [ʐ]	
lenis nasal	m	n			ng [ŋ]
fortis nasal	mm	nn			nng (fortis [ŋ])
lenis lateral		l			
fortis lateral		ll			
flap (lenis?)		r			
trill (fortis?)		rr			
glide (lenis)	w		y		

Zapotec languages generally contrast fortis and lenis obstruents and sonorants. Fortis obstruents are voiceless. Lenis obstruents are canonically voiced but may devoice in many positions. Fortis consonants are longer in duration than the corresponding lenis consonants. The lenis-fortis contrast in sonorants is an unusual feature, but bears an insignificant functional load. The alveopalatal-retroflex distinction seems similarly unimportant, with virtually no minimal contrasts. However, the *r-rr* distinction is important, and particularly salient for Spanish speakers. Although it is not clear that *rr* is in fact a unit phoneme outside of loanwords, *rr* occurs in native words as a cluster of *r* plus *r*, in clear contrast with a single *r*. *F* and *j* occur primarily in loans.

2.2. Vowels

The languages of the Tlacolula Valley have very complicated vowel systems, with vowels differentiated not only in terms of quality but also by phonation and tone, with vowels of different phonation types often occurring together in a single syllable.³

Most languages have vowels of six qualities, *a e i o u* and high back to central unrounded [u / i], which we write as *ë*; SLQZ has ten diphthongs, *ai au ei eu ia ie iu ua ue ëi*.

Most languages have four phonation types.⁴ Vowels may be modal (plain, written with a plain vowel in the academic orthography, e.g. *a*), creaky (written with a vowel with a grave accent, e.g. *à*), checked (postglottalized, written with a following apostrophe (usually a straight

³ The analysis outlined here is essentially that of Munro and Lopez et al. (1999), which Felipe Lopez and I worked out with helpful input from Matthew Gordon, Jie Zhang, and others, to whom we are most grateful.

⁴ In addition to the phonation types described in the text, there may be a fifth phonation type (represented as *àa* in Table 2 below), which we currently refer to as "funny phonation". Our representation of this vowel type as a sequence of creaky plus plain vowels reflects Felipe Lopez's intuition but does not correspond fully with instrumental data, which nonetheless supports characterizing this vowel type as nonmodal and distinct from the other SLQZ phonation types.

rather than “smart” apostrophe), e.g. *a'*), or breathy (written with a following *h*, e.g. *ah*).⁵ (The glottal stop (') and *h* that occur orthographically as elements of these complex vowel types are not considered to be consonant phonemes in our analysis.)

SLQZ tone can be specified as level high, level low, rising, or falling. The tone melodies on SLQZ vowel complexes in final syllables of lexical items are derived from the number and phonation type of a syllable's complex of up to three (or, in certain citation forms, four) vowels rather than representing primary contrasts (in other words, a given vowel complex always has the same tone, and there are no tone contrasts on instances of the same vowel complex).

Table 2 (next page) presents the 27 phonation/tone types that may occur in SLQZ on monophthongal syllables, most of which have direct analogues in other Valley Zapotec languages (additional patterns are used only on diphthongs). The first column presents the type of vowel complex (single checked vowel, sequence of two modal vowels, etc.), shown schematically with the vowel *a*. The second column gives an example. The third tells the tone associated with each pattern. Tone is not otherwise marked, since the tone associated with any given vowel complex is always the same. There are three or more different vowel complex types for each of the four different tones, which supports the claim that phonation sequence rather than tone is basic.

As the examples suggest, a monosyllabic word in SLQZ has the canonical shape CCGVVCCG, where C = any consonant, V = any vowel (i.e. *a*, *à*, *ah*, *a'*), and G = the glide *y* or (more rarely) *w*. (A surprisingly large number of words end in final *-y*.) Word-finally, VVVV may also occur (I have sometimes referred to the final V in such sequences as “extrametrical”). A single V is the only obligatory element of the template, but vowel-initial words are quite rare.

2.3. Orthography

Valley Zapotec has an enormously complex phonological system, for which two different orthographies have been used in published work (there is still no standard):

- One, used by Ted Jones and his colleagues in their translation of the New Testament (Liga Bíblica 1995), does not represent every contrast in all dialects of Valley Zapotec, and simplifies its representation of other contrasts: the vowel of a given monophthongal syllable may be written in one of only five ways. This system is thus not appropriate for full documentation and it can be difficult to be sure how to write a given word, but it has been more or less successfully learned by a number of readers.
- The other, used in Tables 1-2, is an “academic” system that distinguishes every vowel contrast in the language. Several native speakers have learned to read and write fluently with this system, and non-speakers familiar with the system can use it to accurately transcribe new words and read them back later. However, even trained linguists familiar with the system may have trouble recalling some certain aspects of it. Other speakers' reaction to this orthography has been fairly strongly negative: the system is seen as too complex and too hard to learn.

⁵ SJGZ is described as not having contrastive breathy vowels (Jones and Knudson 1977; Ted Jones, personal communication), although the language does have many phonetically breathy vowels (Olivia Martínez, personal communication). The SJGZ vowels that correspond to phonemic breathy vowels in other Valley Zapotec languages have a distinctive low tone and seem likely to be different in phonation from modal vowels, though this hypothesis awaits instrumental confirmation. I will not review here all the differences between the description of SLQZ presented here and the description of SJGZ phonology in Jones and Knudson (1977), prepared after 13 months' fieldwork by Jones (1977: 180). One difference is that Jones and Knudson analyze SJGZ as having three contrastive level tones (without presenting any minimal sets) and briefly mention the possibility of mid-to-high contours before lenis consonants or finally; however, they give only two-way minimal sets. Jones and Knudson also suggest that certain vowel types corresponding to some we represent as sequences of different phonation types may be conditioned.

Table (2) *SLQZ* vowel complexes and associated tones.

Pattern	Example (from Munro and Lopez et al. 1999)	Tone
a'	cha't 'kiss'	high
aa	syudaa 'city'	high
ah	zah 'grease'	low
ahah	lohoh 'face'	low
àa	dàany 'mountain'	low
a'a	da'ad 'father'	rising
a'aa	gami'iizh 'blouse'	rising
àaa'	àaa' 'yes, that's right'	rising
àaa	nnàaan 'mother'	rising
aha'	rlaha't 'gets unloaded'	falling
a'ah	cu'uhb 'tejate'	falling
a'ahah	gahllgui'ihihzh 'sickness'	falling
a'aha	Byu'uhu 'young person from Mitla'	falling
a'âa'	zhi'ii'zh 'pineapple'	falling
a'âa	zhi'iilly 'sheep'	falling
a'aah	gyibzhi'iihly 'type of bamboo'	falling
a'aa'	ca'aa'n 'will stroke'	falling
âa'	rcâa'z 'wants'	falling
âa'ah	dâa'ah 'petate'	falling
âa'a	zhii'iny 'son'	falling
ââa'	mnnââa' 'woman'	falling
ââa'ah	rcwââa'ah 'throws'	falling
aah	baahly 'flame'	falling
aa'	bax:aa't 'toad'	falling
aa'ah	baa'ah 'earlier today'	falling
aâa'	yaâa' 'up'	falling
aâa'ah	rlòò'oh 'floods'	falling

In *Cali Chiu?*, however, we have adopted a new minimalist system for writing Valley Zapotec that uses no apostrophes, accents, postvocalic *h*'s, or repeated identical vowels in single morphemes. (Repeated vowels are used in certain inflected verb forms, as described in section 5 below.) Consonant representations are simplified by omitting the colon indicating retroflex and writing lenis and fortis sonorants the same,⁶ as in the headings for the columns in Table 3 (next page), which presents some minimal sets. Significantly, speakers will often observe that words in minimal sets like these are (or should be) "spelled the same". Despite the inevitable homographies of this system, the native speakers who have tested materials in the new orthography have little trouble reading: context seems to provide enough cues to aid in determining which of several homographs is used in a given passage, though of course the system could not represent

⁶ A recurring question is that of what spelling should be used for *zh/zh*: We use *zh*, but the Jones and Church orthography uses *ll* (reflecting a common Oaxacan pronunciation of Spanish /y/).

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contrasts like those in Table 3 out of context. When new words are introduced in the book, we give dictionary-style “pronunciation guides” (in the academic orthography of Tables 1-2) in square brackets, as in Table 3:

Table (3) *Some contrastive sets for Valley Zapotec vowels (from SLQZ), with column headings in the Cali Chiu? orthography and pronunciation guides in square brackets.*

<i>tone</i>	bel	gyia	na	nda
high		[gyiia] ‘will go home’		
high	[Be'll] ‘Abel’			
low	[behll] ‘fish’		[nah] ‘now’ [nnah] ‘says’	
low		[gyihah] ‘rock’		
low		[gyia] ‘agave root’	[nàa] ‘is’	[ndàa] ‘sensitive’
falling				[nda'ah] ‘had been poured’
falling		[gyii'ah] ‘will drink’		
falling	[bèè'l] ‘snake’	[gyià'] ‘flower’		
falling	[bèe'l] ‘naked’ [bèe'll] ‘sister (w.s.)’		[nàa'] ‘I’	[ndàa'] ‘loose’
falling			[nnàa'ah] ‘heavy’	[ndàa'ah] ‘had broken’
falling	[beèe'l] ‘meat’		[nnaàa'] ‘hand’	[ndaàa'] ‘hot’

Lecsyony (lessons) 1-4 of *Cali Chiu?* introduce the language and its sound system. We present phonation using the following symbols: P = plain (modal) vowel, B = breathy vowel, C = checked vowel, and K = creaky vowel. This allows referring to the lines in Table 3 above, for example, as PPP (a pattern used only for diphthongs), C, B, BB, KP, CB, PCB, KKC, KC, KCB, and PKC. (This approach is a notational variant of the system used in the first column of Table 2, of course, but it seems to make the discussion clearer, and it has facilitated the presentation of some generalizations about phonation changes in inflection.)

3. Pronouns

An important area in which speakers routinely notice differences in the speech of other pueblos is the system of third person pronouns (cf. Munro 2002). Table 4 below presents the third person singular pronominal clitics in three Valley languages, SLQZ, San Juan Guelavía Zapotec (SJGZ), and Tlacolula de Matamoros Zapotec (TMZ), each of which shows a different set of six categories of deixis and respect.⁷ (With the plural pronouns, each language has 12 third person categories in all.)

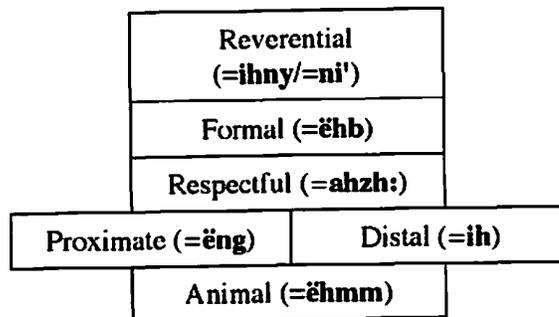
⁷ The SLQZ forms are slightly adapted from Munro (2002) and the SJGZ is from Jones and Church (1985). Thanks to Brook Lillehaugen for the TMZ data, and to Brook Lillehaugen and Olivia Martínez for other helpful input. The SLQZ and TMZ data are presented in the academic orthography of Munro and Lopez et al. (1999), while the SJGZ follows the orthography of Jones and Church (cf. section I). Here and below = indicates a clitic boundary.

Table (4) *Third person singular pronominal clitics in three Valley Zapotec languages.*

<i>San Lucas Quiavini</i>	<i>San Juan Guelavía</i>	<i>Tlacolula de Matamoros</i>
=ihny / =ni' reverential	=ny honorific	=ni' reverential
=ëhb formal		=ba respectful
=ahzh: respectful	=ll / =ll̥ male > male	
	=b / =b̥ familiar	
	=by child	=by child
=ëng proximate		
=ih distal		
	=ni inanimate	=ni inanimate proximate
		=na inanimate distal
=ëhmm animal/child	=m / m̥ animal	=mma animal

In Munro (2002) I argued that the SLQZ pronouns reflect a hierarchy of respect, as diagrammed in Table 5:

Table (5) *A hierarchical diagram of the SLQZ third person singular clitic pronouns.*



Each of these SLQZ pronouns can be used to refer to an adult human, as shown in the example sentences in Table 6 on the next page, though most of them have other uses as well. (Only the formal and respectful pronouns are used solely to refer to for adult humans.)

This hierarchy is flexible: in a single discourse, speakers can move up or down the scale with reference to the same individual, depending on changes in empathy and point of view, while the deictic pronouns may be used to show psychological as well as physical closeness or distance (Munro 2002).

Table (6) *Examples of SLQZ third person singular clitic pronouns (in Cali Chiu? orthography).*

REVERENTIAL	Bgutyiny conejw. “He (a specially revered adult, a saint, or God) killed the rabbit”
FORMAL	Bgutyëb conejw. “He (an adult accorded special respect who would be addressed with a formal pronoun) killed the rabbit”
RESPECTFUL	Bgutyazh conejw. “He (a normally respected adult familiar to the speaker [who is most likely male]) killed the rabbit”
PROXIMATE	Bgutyëng conejw. “He (a non-Zapotec or someone especially familiar to the speaker, nearby) killed the rabbit”
DISTAL	Bgutyih conejw. “He (a non-Zapotec or someone especially familiar to the speaker, farther away or out of sight) killed the rabbit”
ANIMAL	Bgutyëm conejw. “He (an animal, child, or disrespected adult) killed the rabbit”

In *Cali Chiu?* we introduce only the SLQZ pronouns in the text, though there will be notes on other systems at the end of the book. Presenting pronoun use poses numerous pedagogical challenges and some terminological problems.

In addition to the complex set of third person pronouns mentioned above, for example, SLQZ has formality oppositions in second person pronouns as well, plus first person pronouns, as shown in Table 7:

Table (7) *SLQZ non-third person clitic pronouns.*

=a'	first person singular	=ëhnn	first person plural
=ùu'	second person singular informal	=ahd	second person plural formal
=yuu'	second person singular formal	=yüad	second person plural formal

We thought it would be confusing to use the term “formal” for both second and third person forms, so we decided to re-name the third person formal pronouns (in the terminology of Table 6) “respectful”. This, of course, meant that the third person respectful pronouns (in the terminology of Table 6) needed a new name. Finding a suitable one was very difficult, but we have settled on “familiar”. Thus, two of the six third person pronouns have different names in *Cali Chiu?* from their names in the previous literature on SLQZ.

We have introduced the pronouns gradually. Singular proximate and distal pronouns were introduced in *Lecsyony* 7; first person singular and second person singular informal pronouns in *Lecsyony* 8; second person formal pronouns, respectful (old “formal”), plural proximate and distal, first person plural, and second person plural informal pronouns in *Lecsyony* 9; animal pronouns in *Lecsyony* 11; and familiar pronouns in *Lecsyony* 17; we plan to introduce reverential pronouns (and the reverential idioms based on them!) in *Lecsyony* 21.

We originally planned to delay the introduction of the formal pronouns till we realized that they were needed for students to be able to address their teacher! A pedagogical advantage of these forms is that they involve less morphological irregularity than every other pronoun.

4. Repetition and binding

Several Zapotec languages are well known for using repetition where other languages would use anaphoric pronouns (Black 2000, Lee 2003). SLQZ uses the repetition construction for reflex-

ives, for example, as in (1-3) (given in the academic orthography):⁸

- (1) B-gu'ty=ëng la'anng. 'He killed himself' (also: 'He killed him')
 perf-kill=3s.prox pron.3s.prox
- (2) Zhii wxi'ihny g-ùu'ny=ùu' sacrificaar Ìlu'.
 tomorrow evening irr-do=2s.inf sacrifice pron.2s.inf
 'Tomorrow evening you are to sacrifice yourself'
 (from a retelling of "The Story of Mezcal" by Silvia Lopez)
- (3) Jwaany b-guhty Jwaany. 'Juan killed himself' (also: 'Juan killed Juan')
 Juan perf-kill Juan

Repetition is also used in expressing anaphoric possession:

- (4) B-tòò'=ëng x:-ca'rr=ëng. 'He_i sold his_j car'
 perf-sell=3s.prox poss-car=3s.prox
- (5) B-tòò' Jwaany x:-ca'rr Jwaany.
 perf-sell Juan poss-car Juan
 'Juan_i sold his_i (own) car' (also, 'Juan sold Juan's car')

These examples demonstrate that SLQZ is a VSO language (though as (3) indicates a focused constituent may appear before the verb). Pronominal subject clitics (cf. section 3) must appear in the normal subject position following the verb. Verbs have prefixed aspect markers (cf. section 5 below). The language follows a consistent verb-initial typology: thus, possessors (nouns or clitic pronouns) follow possessed nouns (which, when alienable, have a possessed prefix *x:-*).

An ordinary pronoun cannot show coreference with a noun argument in the same clause:

- (6) *Jwaany b-guhty la'anng. *'Juan killed himself' (ok as: 'Juan killed him')
 Juan perf-kill pron.3s.prox
- (7) *B-tòò' Jwaany x:-ca'rr=ëng.
 perf-sell Juan poss-car =3s.prox
 *'Juan_i sold his_i (own) car' (ok as: 'Juan_i sold his_j car')

SLQZ has one true anaphor, the clitic =*nìi'*, which can be used in a paraphrase of (5):

- (8) B-tòò' Jwaany x:-ca'rr=nìi'. 'Juan_i sold his_i (own) car'
 perf-sell Juan poss-car =anap

These repetition constructions exemplified above are interesting and challenging to linguists,

⁸ Abbreviations used in the examples in the rest of this paper include anap : anaphoric, cop : copula, def : definite, hab : habitual, inf : informal, irr : irrealis, neg : negative, perf : perfective, poss : possessive, pron : (independent) pronoun, prox : proximate, rel : relative, s : singular, 1 : first person, 2 : second person, 3 : third person. The equals sign, =, indicates a clitic boundary and a period (.) separates elements of a complex gloss.

but this feature has proven to be one of the easiest complexities to implement in *Cali Chiu?* Despite the claims of universal grammar, I think if you just tell people that this is the way the language does it, they will believe you (and not whine for reflexive pronouns). We'll see.

5. Verb conjugation and inflection⁹ (and noun paradigms)

Zapotec languages do not have tense marking per se, but rather have verb forms differentiated for “aspect”, a category that can express various tense-aspect-modality oppositions.¹⁰ Most verbs have six or seven different aspectual forms, as exemplified in (9) for two verbs (using the aspect terminology of Munro and Lopez et al. (1999)):

(9)	<i>Habitual:</i>	ra'ahcw 'puts on (a shirt)'	rzh:ùu'nny 'runs'
	<i>Perfective:</i>	gwu'aht 'put on...'	bzh:ùu'nny 'ran'
	<i>Irrealis:</i>	ga'acw 'will put on...'	yzh:ùu'nny 'will run'
	<i>Subjunctive:</i>	nya'ahcw '(if...) had put on...'	nzh:ùu'nny '(if...) had run'
	<i>Progressive:</i>	caya'ahcw 'is putting on...'	cazh:ùu'nny 'is running'
	<i>Definite:</i>	za'ahcw 'will surely put on...'	x:ùu'nny 'will surely run'
	<i>Neutral:</i>	naa'cw 'is wearing...'	—

In most analyses the Habitual stem is taken as basic (the *r-* Habitual prefix is the most regular aspect prefix, and the Habitual form is most commonly listed in dictionaries); we translate the Habitual with a third person singular present form). For these two verbs the unprefixated forms (“bases” in the CC terminology, listed here in <>'s) are <a'ahcw> and <z h:ùu'nny>. The two paradigms in (9) illustrate several irregularities of Valley Zapotec verb conjugation:

- aspect prefixes may vary from verb to verb (generally consonant-initial bases like <z h:ùu'nny> work in a more regular fashion than vowel-initial bases like <a'ahcw>)
- the phonation of the base may change from one aspect to another (e.g. the Irrealis and Neutral of 'puts on a shirt')
- the base may suppletive in some aspects (e.g. the Perfective of 'puts on a shirt')
- the prefix and the initial consonant of the base may coalesce (e.g. the Definite of 'runs')

SLQZ has a great many irregular verbs.¹¹ (10)-(11) below provide some more examples of Habitual, Perfective, and Irrealis stems of SLQZ verbs. Those in (10) are regular, while those in (11) illustrate different patterns of irregularity.

(10)		<u><i>Habitual</i></u>	<u><i>Perfective</i></u>	<u><i>Irrealis</i></u>
	'gives'	rdèèi'dy	bdèèi'dy	ydèèi'dy
	'spills'	rre'ch	bre'ch	yre'ch
	'stings, pokes'	rgùad	bgùad	ygùad

⁹ This section and the presentation in *Cali Chiu?* owe something to almost everyone who has written on Zapotec, but those who have influenced my thinking most include Chris Adam, Argelia Andrade, Olivia Martínez, and Natalie Operstein. Previous work and discussion with Silvia Lopez was especially helpful.

¹⁰ Lee (1999) discusses the syntax of tense in SLQZ.

¹¹ My collaborator Felipe Lopez was charmed when he realized (early in our joint work) that his language had more irregular verbs than Spanish!

(11)	<i>Habitual</i>	<i>Perfective</i>	<i>Irrealis</i>
'bathes'	ra'ahz	gwa'ahz	gaaz
'calls'	rbu'uhuhzh	bree'ihzh	cuuzh
'crosses'	rdèèi'dy	bdèèi'dy	tèèi'dy
'does'	ruhny	bèèi'ny	guuny
'grabs'	rnnàa'az	mnnàa'az	ynnàa'az
'hugs'	rguèe'ez	bdèe'ez	quèe'ez
'pierces'	rguàd	bzùad / bdlad	quàd
'puts on (pants)'	rbèe'cy	blèe'cy	cwèe'cy
'scratches'	rgùuunny	blùuunny	cùuunny
'sings'	rù'll	blì'lly	gwù'all
'sucks'	rgùùu'b	bdùùu'b	cùùu'b
'tells'	re'ihpy	— ¹²	gue'ipy

The greatest irregularities in verb conjugation, however, occur when pronominal subject clitics are added to the base.

- verb bases (especially vowel-final ones) may combine in unpredictable ways with following pronominal clitics (especially vowel-initial ones)

There are 19 forms of every Zapotec verb in every aspect: the bare stem, shown above, which is used with noun subjects, and 18 forms with different clitic subject pronouns attached. Often these combinations are phonetically unpredictable (I'll illustrate this shortly), with the first person plural form most likely to be irregular and third person plural and second person formal forms most regular. Moreover, sometimes the base changes with different pronoun subjects:

- verbs may have special bases used only with certain pronominal subjects

For example, some vowel-initial bases add a *d* in the perfective and all first person plural subject forms. (12) illustrates changes in the <àa'nny> 'sits on (something on the ground), pillows his head on', with no suffix and with the clitic subjects =a' 'I' and =èhnn 'we'. The base in each stem in (12) is boldfaced, with the added *d*'s underlined:¹³

(12)	<i>unaffixed</i>	<i>1sg subject</i>	<i>1pl subject</i>
Habitual:	ràa'nny	ràa'nnya'	rdaa'nnjëhnn
Perfective:	bd àa'nny	bd àa'nnya'	bd aa'nnjëhnn
Irrealis:	gàa'nny	gàa'nnya'	ydaa'nnjëhnn
Subjunctive:	nyàa'nny	nyàa'nnya'	nda'a'nnjëhnn
Progressive:	cayàa'nny	cayàa'nnya'	ca da a'nnjëhnn
Definite:	zàa'nny	zàa'nnya'	sdaa'nnjëhnn

¹² Some verbs, like 'tells', are defective for certain stems. Significantly, though, while *re'ihpy* 'tells' has no Perfective in SLQZ, it has an irregular imperative, *gwu'ahs*. Normally the Valley Zapotec imperative is expressed with the Perfective – and *gwu'ahs* is the Perfective of TMZ 'tells'.

¹³ Incidentally, some younger speakers have generalized the paradigm for some of these verbs, using the "d-base" (as we refer to it in *Cali Chiu?*) in all forms.

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The most irregular verbs in Zapotec are ‘go’ and ‘come’. ‘Goes’ (13) is somewhat irregular with almost every subject and has an irregular first person plural subject base <yoo’p>. ‘Comes’ (14) has irregular bases in both first persons, singular <yàa’ll>, plural <yoo’p>.

(13)	<u>unsuffixed</u>	<u>1sg subject</u>	<u>1pl subject</u>
Habitual:	rihah	ri’a’	ryoo’nn
Perfective:	gweh	gwa’a’	byoo’nn
Irrealis:	chiia	cha’a’	choo’nn
(14)	<u>unsuffixed</u>	<u>1sg subject</u>	<u>1pl subject</u>
Habitual:	ri’e’d	ryàa’lla’	ryoo’pèhnn
Perfective:	bie’d	byàa’lla’	byoo’pèhnn
Irrealis:	gyie’d	gyàa’lla’	gyoo’pèhnn

Nouns do not have aspect prefixes, but vowel-final possessed nouns exhibit the same types of alternations as vowel-final stems when followed by pronominal clitics.

In *Cali Chiu?* we have introduced verb irregularity gradually. The minimalist orthography means that there is a lot of homography in conjugated verbs, making pronunciation guides especially important. We began with all regular consonant-initial and consonant-final bases, with only very simple alternations in prefixes – the change from Perfective *b-* to *m-* before *n* in ‘grabs’ in (11), for example, is rule-governed and is presented in *Lecsyony* 6, when the Perfective was introduced.

Here is how we’ve introduced other verb irregularities: *Lecsyony* 10 introduces the Irrealis and a few verbs with irregular Irrealis forms; *Lecsyony* 11, the concept of irregular verbs with paradigms like those for ‘sucks’ and ‘hugs’ in (10); *Lecsyony* 12, ‘does’ and the concept of vowel-initial bases; *Lecsyony* 13, inflection with vowel-final stems; *Lecsyony* 14, possession and the inflection of vowel-final possessed nouns; *Lecsyony* 15, base-changing verbs (including *d-* base verbs like that in (12)); *Lecsyony* 16, vowel-initial bases; *Lecsyony* 17, ‘goes’ and andative verbs (which include an incorporated ‘go’ verb); *Lecsyony* 19, ‘be’; and *Lecsyony* 20, ‘comes’ and venitive verbs (with include an incorporated ‘come’ verb). Forms of many of the verbs named here appear in dialogues and readings long before they are explicitly discussed in the grammar sections, of course.

Representing inflection orthographically can present difficult problems, as illustrated in (15-16) below. We decided (after some agonizing) to write clitics consisting simply of vowels (first person singular *-a* [=a’], second person singular informal *-u* [=ù’], third person singular distal *-i* [=ih]) whenever they appear after vowel-final stems, even when they do not add a syllable or create a new contrast. For example, (15) shows that when a vowel-initial clitic is added to a verb ending in a checked vowel plus a breathy vowel, the breathy vowel drops and the clitic is added as a separate syllable (the syllable boundary is represented in the bracketed pronunciation guide with a hyphen, but is not shown in the spelling):

(15) **rgwii** [rgwi’-ih] < [rgwi’ih] (**rgwi**) plus [=ih] ‘he (distal) looks’

But this is relatively straightforward. (16a-c) are trickier cases, in which the vowel sequences in inflected forms are pronounced the same as certain uninflected forms that are (by our rules) written differently (because they are monomorphemic).

- (16a) **ristii** [rihsti'i'i] < **risti** [rihsti] plus **-i** [=ih] 'he (distal) gets up'
 – but cf. **zhizh** [zhi'i'zh] 'pineapple'
 (16b) **racnaa** [rahcnaa'a] < **racna** [rahcnah] plus **-a** [=a'] 'I hurt'
 – but cf. **na** [nnaa'a] 'hand'
 (16c) **reuloo** [rculoo'] < **reulo** [rculoh] plus **-u** [=uu'] 'you (informal singular) take care of'
 – but cf. **bto** [btòo'] 'type of plant used as soap'

Of course, such problems arise in any orthography where spelling sometimes represents morphology rather than (strictly) pronunciation (for example, in the use of *-s* to represent all English plural endings, even those pronounced with [z]). But they are troubling.

The inflectional material that has been most difficult to present is exemplified in Table 6:

Table (6). *Paradigms of rgue "cusses" and rgue "hauls"*.

rgue [rguèe] "cusses"	rgue [rgueh] "hauls"
rgue [rguèe] :: Rgue buny. "The person cusses."	rgue [rgueh] :: Rgue buny nyis. "The person hauls water."
rgueyu [rguècyuu'] :: Rgueyu. "You (form.) cuss."	rgueyu [rguehyu] :: Rgueyu nyis. "You (form.) haul water."
rgueyuad [rguècyuad] :: Rgueyuad. "You (form. pl.) cuss."	rgueyuad [rguehyuad] :: Rgueyuad nyis. "You (form. pl.) haul water."
rguerèng [rguèrèng] :: Rguerèng. "They (proximate) cuss."	rguerèng [rguehrèng] :: Rguerèng nyis. "They (proximate) haul water."
rgueri [rguècrih] :: Rgueri. "They (distal) cuss."	rgueri [rguehri] :: Rgueri nyis. "They (distal) haul water."
rguerèb [rguèrèhb] :: Rguerèb. "They (respectful) cuss."	rguerèb [rguehrèhb] :: Rguerèb nyis. "They (respectful) haul water."
rguerèm [rguècrèhmm] :: Rguerèm. "They (animal) cuss."	rguerèm [rguehrèhmm] :: Rguerèm nyis. "They (animal) haul water."
rgueb [rguècb] :: Rgueb. "He (respectful) cusses."	rgueb [rguehb] :: Rgueb nyis. "He (respectful) hauls water."
rguem [rguèemm] :: Rguem. "He (animal) cusses."	rguem [rguehmm] :: Rguem nyis. "He (animal) hauls water."
rguead [rguèahd] :: Rguead. "You guys cuss."	rguead [rguehahd] :: Rguead nyis. "You guys haul water."
rgueng [rgue'ng] :: Rgueng. "He (proximate) cusses."	rgueng [rguèe'ng] :: Rgueng nyis. "He (proximate) hauls water."
rgueèn [rguèc-èn] :: Rguen. "We cuss."	rguen [rgueen] :: Rguen nyis. "We haul water."
rguei [rguè'i] :: Rguei. "He (distal) cusses."	rguei [rguè'i] :: Rguei nyis. "He (distal) hauls water."
rguia [rguila'] :: Rguia. "I cuss."	rguia [rguila'] :: Rguia nyis. "I haul water."
rgueu [rguèu'] :: Rgueu. "You cuss."	rgueu [rguèu'] :: Rgueu nyis. "You haul water."

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The table compares full paradigms of two homographous vowel-final verbs: the examples show clearly how difficult inflectional paradigms in Valley Zapotec can be, since although orthographically things may look very regular, in terms of pronunciation they are not. The interaction of vowel-final stems with vowel-initial clitics, presented mainly in *Lecsyony* 13, has been the most difficult part of *Cali Chiu?* to present.

In the course of this work, we have discovered a number of regularities and subregularities in the data that allow formulation of strategic heuristics to help students to guess what form a verb will take with a particular subject. Hopefully, learning about Valley Zapotec conjugation will not be completely impossible for students!

6. Supplementary material

Brinton and Wong (2003) presents a variety of inspiring ways to use “authentic materials” in the less commonly taught languages classroom. Unfortunately, such materials just aren’t available for Valley Zapotec. There are no printed Valley Zapotec weather reports, transportation schedules, recipes, print media, maps, comics, political cartoons, brochures, product labels, magazine pictures, postcards, greeting cards, or menus. There are also (very surprisingly) no Valley Zapotec songs.

6.1. Potential authentic materials

It is difficult to find appropriate materials that include written Valley Zapotec, because the language has been written so seldom. Figure 1 presents one candidate, my collaborator Brook Lillehaugen’s personalized license plate (intended to say ‘my Mini’ in Valley Zapotec), with the possessed noun prefix *x-* [x:-] and the first person singular clitic *=a* [=a’]:

Figure (1). *One authentic material? Brook Lillehaugen’s license plate (‘my Mini’).*



However, Felipe Lopez could not figure out what this was supposed to say at first (perhaps because *mini* doesn’t display appropriate loan phonology), so it certainly cannot be presented as representative Zapotec.

Community efforts like that in Figure 2 (a headline in a Tlacolula community magazine, appearing over an article written in Spanish) are certainly authentic, but typically include idiosyncratic spelling or actual mistranscriptions: should these be used in class?

Figure (2). *Headline from El Tlacolulense (published in Tlacolula de Matamoros): 'word of the elder'.*



The Valley Zapotec orthography is not widely standardized, so *sh* would be another logical alternative to our *x*. In TMZ, however, the phrase in Figure 2 should be *dizh xten bingul*: the sound at the end of the first word is lenis (*zh*), the sound at the beginning of the second word is retroflex (*x* or *sh*), and speakers feel that 'old (person)' is one word.

In *Cali Chiu?* we will be including excerpts from existing (hence, “authentic”?) texts (the narratives in Lopez and Munro, eds., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Christmas story, a few traditional stories, and several other texts) as supplementary readings.

6.2. Lessons from *Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*

In addition, Lopez and I have also written an “inauthentic” story of mystery and intrigue, *Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël* (‘Señor Pánfilo’s Blal’).

Figure (3). A blal (precolonian Zapotec figurine) from the Museo Regional de Oaxaca. (From http://www.surf-mexico.com/states/Oaxaca/Oaxaca/oaxcity_exconvent.htm.)



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(Lillehaugen suggested that all self-respecting introductory language texts need a continuing story, preferably a mystery, with a chapter at the end of every unit.)

Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël is the story of a brother and sister, Lia Len (Elena) and Bed (Pedro) Morales, who come to live in Santa Monica with their father, Chiecw (Chico), a waiter who originally entered the US illegally, while their mother, who speaks no English or Spanish, stays in San Lucas to care for her dying mother. On a school field trip to the Museum of Man in San Diego, they see a *blal* (precolumbian figurine, like that in Figure 3 on the next page) that looks exactly like one their next door neighbor in San Lucas, Tiu Pamyël (Señor Pánfilo), had dug up in his field (a common occurrence in the Tlacolula Valley). Later, on a visit back home, they discover additional identical *blals* in a Oaxaca City antiquities shop and the Regional Museum of Oaxaca – although Tiu Pamyël, they learn, still has his own *blal*.

Eventually, Lia Len and Bed help the police build a case against Raúl Alba, an art forger wanted by Interpol. All the *blals* turn out to be copies except the one Alba had sold to the Museum of Man, which Tiu Pamyël decides to donate to the museum. Most of the story is told in emails between Lia Len and her friends Lia Glory (Gloria) and Lia Tyen (Cristina), Bed and his friend Mazh (Tomás), and Chiecw and their uncle Rony (Jerónimo), an assistant archeologist at the Oaxaca Museum.

Working on this story is one of the hardest (but most rewarding) things I've ever done, but has taught me a huge amount I might never have otherwise learned about Zapotec grammar. Assisting Lopez with the translation was difficult but fun, but what is especially challenging is putting each chapter of the story into the context of the lessons that precede it. It's hard to coordinate vocabulary and level, and each chapter requires extensive notes on new constructions. A recurring issue has been avoiding the excessively difficult verbs 'come' and 'go', some forms of which have had to be introduced as vocabulary items in early chapters of the story.

The repetition construction discussed in section 4 above has proven to be very useful for handling anaphoric possessive situations in our story. Pronouns can't be coreferential to noun phrases in the same clause, and the anaphoric clitic =*nli*' (8) is not introduced until *Lecsyony* 14, but it's fairly easy to present the possessive constructions using repetition. Examples like (17-18) are judged just as natural, even in a narrative context, as examples with pronouns, however, so we have made extensive use of such constructions. Coreferential items are underlined in (17-18):

(17) Buny San Luc Lia Len, per na Santa Mony nu Lia Len.
 person San Lucas Ms. Elena but now Santa Monica live
 Ms.Elena

Ricy nune Lia Len bzyan guny Lia Len
 there live-with Ms. Elena opposite.sex.sibling younger Ms. Elena

cuan x-tad Lia Len.
 and poss-father Ms. Elena

'Elena is a San Lucas person, but now she lives in Santa Monica. She lives there with her younger brother and her father' (*Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*, part 1)

(These and the later examples taken from the story are given in the *Cali Chiu?* orthography; each

of the story's nine chapters includes a pronunciation guide, with a recording read by Lopez.)

- (18) X-nan Lia Len cuan Bed, Bied Lia Zhuan, b-yan
 poss-mother Ms. Elena and Pedro Señora Ms. Juana perf-stay
- San Luc cuan x-nan-mam Lia Len cuan Bed, tyen
 San Lucas with poss-mother-gr.parent Ms. Elena and Pedro because
- uas r-acxu x-nan-man Lia Len cuan Bed.
 very hab-get.sick poss-mother-gr.parent Ms. Elena and Pedro

'Elena and Pedro's mother, Señora Juana, stayed in San Lucas with their grandmother, because their grandmother was very sick' (*Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*, part 1)

Some things in the story, of course, are so complex that they must just be treated as idioms, at least till the students learn a great deal more, such as the following thought of Chiecw's:

- (19) Zicy na estad re axta ni queity r-aly re z-ale
 thus cop state this even rel neg hab-be.born here def-be.able
- g-ac gobernador.
 irr-become governor

'In this state, even someone who was not born here can become governor'
 (*Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*, part 2)

The story provides an important exemplification of cultural values. For example, when Bed writes to Mazh, telling him that the family has gone to Oaxaca for his grandmother's funeral, he says

- (20) Cwa Dyoz x-nan-mam=a.
 perf.take God poss-mother-gr.parent=ls

'God took my grandmother' (*Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*, part 4)

Students thus discover that it would be completely inappropriate (even, impossible) for anyone, even a teenage boy, even someone who was not very religious, to say baldly 'My grandmother died'.

There are many things to learn about the use of personal names in Zapotec. The title *Lia* (glossed in (17-18) as 'Ms.') is used before the name of any girl or woman in almost every context, with other titles (such as *Bied*, in (18)) used to show greater respect to senior women. (*Bied*, translated here as 'Señora', is literally 'aunt'; the corresponding respectful male title is *Tiu*, which also means 'uncle'.)

Surnames are very seldom used in Zapotec conversation. Our dictionary lists e.g. *Moraaly* (*Moraly* in the *Cali Chiu?* orthography) 'Morales', but this is not used as an ordinary surname (rather, it seems to be something like a nickname). Further, consider sentence (21):

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- (21) Teiby gyizh ni la *Raúl Alba*, uas zyeiny blal r-ap=i
one city.guy rel be.named Raúl Alba very many blal hab-have=dist
- lainy x-tyend=i.
in poss-store=dist

‘A city person who’s named Raúl Alba, he has a whole lot of blals in his store’
(*Blal Xte Tiu Pamyël*, part 6)

In the initial draft of our story, the evil proprietor of Alba’s Antiquities in the tourist district of Oaxaca City was identified only as Señor Alba. In translating (21) (from the original English “This gyizh Señor Alba has loads more blals at his store,” in an email from Lia Len to Lia Glory), however, Lopez realized that Alba had to have a first name. The usual way to say ‘Señor’, *Tiu*, is used only with first names and wouldn’t be appropriate in any case for Lia Len to use in referring to a nasty non-Zapotec. But ‘a city guy named Alba’ didn’t work here — we were forced to give the character a first name. (Assimilated loans in Zapotec have typically undergone considerable phonological reshaping. In the story, we write unassimilated words like this character’s name in italics.)

I couldn’t figure out why the original sentence was not translatable, but Olivia Martínez pointed out that standard Spanish similarly does not allow a simple sentence with *llamarse* ‘call oneself, be named’ with a surname but not a first name:

- (22) *Se llama *(Raúl) Alba.*

Since the relative clause in (21) is referring to a Spanish name, with Spanish name structure, it makes sense that the Spanish construction might have influenced the Zapotec. Indeed, there are many other such cases of such influence — although Zapotec has also, we believe, influenced the Spanish spoken in Oaxaca (but that’s a story for another time).

7. Admonition

Writing pedagogical materials is an amazing challenge, because it forces you to consider how to deal with difficult issues that linguists are normally able to ignore or mention only briefly in footnotes. It’s a lot of fun, and very satisfying, and it will teach you an amazing amount. Do it, guys!

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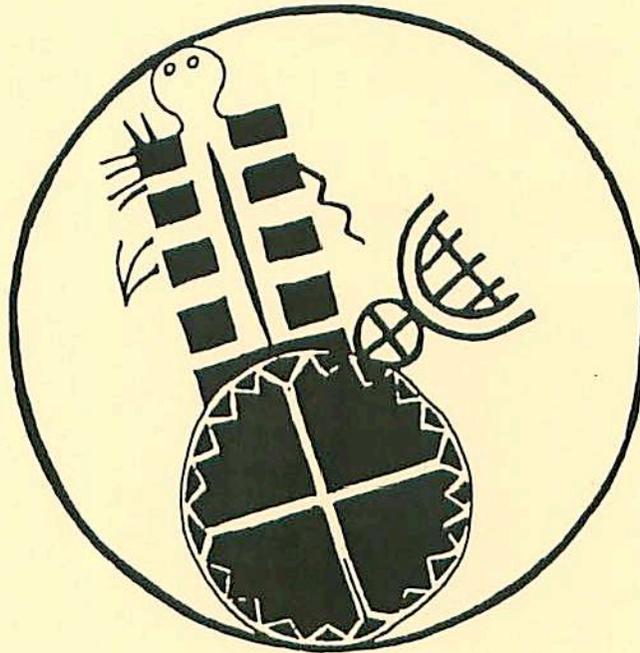
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REPORT 13

**SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA AND
OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES**



**CONFERENCE ON OTOMANGUEAN AND OAXACAN
LANGUAGES**

**March 19-21, 2004
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INTRODUCTION

This volume of Survey reports is a sample of the papers heard at the Conference on Otomanguean and Oaxacan Languages (COOL), which took place at UC Berkeley March 19-21, 2004. There is more scholarly investigation being done on Otomanguean languages and other languages of Oaxaca today than ever before, yet unlike other groups such as Uto-Aztecanists and Mayanists, Otomangueanist and Oaxacanist scholars have not had a regular forum in which to meet and share their ideas. In 2000 a one-time conference took place at UCLA called *La Voz Indígena de Oaxaca*, organized by Pamela Munro, G. Aaron Broadwell, and Kevin Terraciano. As a result of this conference many of the participant linguists were able to make new and fruitful contacts with each other and several proposed that the conference should become a recurring event. With the help of the UC Berkeley Graduate Assembly, Graduate Division, Center for Latin American Studies, and the departments of Linguistics, Anthropology, and Ethnic Studies, four years after the original UCLA conference COOL was finally able to follow in its footsteps. Now there are plans for a third conference to be held very appropriately in the city of Oaxaca at the Centro Cultural Santo Domingo in 2006, organized by Alejandro de Ávila. We all hope that this will become an on-going event and it appears that COOL is on its way to becoming a regular, biannual and international conference.

Rosemary Beam de Azcona
COOL 2004 Organizer

CONFERENCE ON OTOMANGUEAN AND OAXACAN LANGUAGES

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