TZOTZIL CONVERSATION: STANCE & EVIDENCE

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Tzotzil and typology

- **Tzotzil**
  - Tzeltalan [Cholan] (Mayan)
  - highland Chiapas, Mexico (Spanish based orthography)
  - ~300,000+ speakers

- **Important typological results**
  - Word order & clause structure
  - Ergativity, voice, argument alignment
  - Syntactic markedness
  - Predication (e.g., secondary predication) & complementation types
Extraordinarily well documented

- Colonial grammars and dictionaries
- Modern grammars and dictionaries
  - SIL dictionary and grammars
  - Haviland 1981
  - Aissen 1987, many papers in *Language* etc.
  - Laughlin 1975, 1988
- Published text collections
  - Laughlin 1977 (tales); also dreams, diaries etc.
  - Sna Jtz’ibajom and Escritores Maya-Zoques
- Massive, multilayered ethnography
My own corpora of natural talk

- Gossip
  - Multiparty “Who’s Who” sessions from 1970
- Conversation, over 40 years
  - Multiple interlocutors, interruption, overlap, repair
  - Extremely varied natural settings
  - Gossip, narrative, dinner conversation, work, “small talk”
- Prayer & other marked genres
  - Parallel constructions of ritual language
  - Stereoscopic semantic imagery
  - Curing and religious contexts
- Ethnographic and video corpora
Who’s Who audio: ~40 hours, all roughly transcribed

- “rough” here is important
- Multiple entextualizations
  - Handwritten by literate Tzotziles in 1970
  - Typed by me, with Tzotzil consultants in 1970
  - Transcribed to a different standard in 1980s by native Tzotzil speaker
  - Transcribed to “conversation analytic” ++ standards by me over the years
- Perhaps 40k words carefully transcribed & annotated
  - Much more indexed and loosely annotated for content
More than 1100 hours of audio, about 400 hours of video and film, virtually all unstaged

Transcription totaling about 1.5 million words
- Seriously anarchic transcriptional standards
- About 180K words of the highly specialized ritual genre, mostly from curing prayer

Video selectively transcribed
- Conversational transcripts of talk
- Special attention to gesture in interaction
- Selected other topics: direction, shape, acquisition
Multiparty “Who’s Who” gossip sessions
- Highly entertaining, scurrilous, competitive
- All male, ergo many male preoccupations
  - Kinship relations
  - Careers in ritual and civil service
  - Sexual adventures
- Men from distinct villages, different knowledge
Everyday interaction

- Unstaged, “natural” settings
  - Heavy reliance on routine recording
  - Everyday events in quotidian life, work, in a family
- Multiple genres & settings
  - Narrative, joking, scolding
  - Men and women, children, specialists …
- Example: “thieves”

People are real bastards.
Highly structured parallel speech

Paired doublets or triplets for single “concepts”

- *Jelol/lok’ol* “substitute, replacement” = sacrificial offering
- *Ip/k’ux* “disease/pain” = illness
- Loan combinations: *toj/kantela* “pine/candle [archaic]” = candles in offering
Repair and morphosyntax
- Ergative, absolutive, and aspect “affixes” as frequently recycled proclitics (66% of self-repairs)
- Apparent predicative use of sub-clausal phrasal units which serve as full “turns”

Prayer, parallelism, and semantics
- Striking dual imagery of substitute lexicon
- Cf.: MiL language, “upside down” Warlpiri, special semantic manipulations, and lexical structure (Dixon 1971, Hale 1971)
- Person, and the inversions of participant roles in prayer (e.g., who is the addressee?)
Most striking fact about this large natural corpus:
- the dedication of linguistic resources to STANCE (a trendy cover term) as opposed to “truth-functional” predication
- dubious as this dichotomy obviously may be

Tzotzil clause structure has a single fixed slot for stance (mostly an evidential), and therefore much conversational effort seems to fall outside clausal syntax

Indexical rather than referential or denotational force; “indicating” rather than “describing”
Paul Kockelman 2004
- “those semiotically indicated modes of evaluative and intentional commitment that speakers take toward states of affairs, from epistemic possibility and necessity to deontic permission and obligation, from fear and desire to memory and disgust.”

Jack DuBois 2002
- multiple linguistic devices, including gesture (winks, crossed fingers); primacy of linguistic devices? segmentability?
- “simultaneously evaluates an object, positions the self, and aligns with other subjects”
- “public act … achieved dialogically through overt means”
- See Shoaps 2004, for another Mayan example
“Participant centering” (S,A, both); whose stance is being captured?

Type of epistemic evaluation ([un]certainty, evidentiary warrant, other epistemic commitment re possibility, importance, etc.)

“Denotational segment evaluated” (denotatum, assertion, presupposition, or even participant)

Asif Agha 2002
Particles and clitics that grammaticalize evidentiality, epistemic and other stances
- 2nd position
- Phrasal pro- and en-clitics

Complement-taking predicates

Less syntactically regimented expressions (including “interjections”) of evidential and status categories (Jakobson 1957)

“Reflexive language” and the strategic stylistics of ‘quotation’; explicit verbs of saying: chi-, -ut, -al…

Semi-grammaticalized epistemic and evidential framing devices: chkal, kaloj, ka`tik…
2nd position clitics, grammaticalized, small closed set, fixed scope in the phrase or clause, linked to illocutionary and aspectual frames and “epistemic stance”

Initial and final positions in the phrase: relate this turn (or this epistemic move) to the ongoing flow of talk, and the play of presuppositions. (Note the possible sequential implications.)
WHY because INTENS bad then AGREE

- “(Responding to what you just said) the fact is that (I myself really think) it is bad, then, (agreeing with you, and I knew it all along).”

- AN: phrasal proclitic
- ME: “second” position clitic
- A`A: phrasal enclitic
Aikhenvald 2004: typologically strict definition of the category

- Both notional and formal (with priority to meaning)
  - “…expressing an appropriate information source and choosing the correct marking for it, has nothing to do with one’s ‘epistemic stance’, point of view, or personal reliability” (5).
- Tzotzil is by her typology a “simple” type A3, ‘REPORTED vs. everything else’
- A good example of how typology can lead you wrong

- She recommends “analysis of spontaneous texts”
  - “Observing how evidentials are used in various circumstances in day-to-day life is crucial to understanding the systems. Gossip, casual remarks, or overheard conversations often provide many more enlightening clues than narrated stories” (385).
Stacking of 2\textsuperscript{nd} position clitics

- A B C (D1) E (D2)
- xa onox nan ox la ox
- to no van me
- ma
- ka?

- "Form first!" (rather than imposed category 1\textsuperscript{st})
- A typical Whorfian cryptotypic reactance
- Where can these data come from?
no & ono (often + ox → no`ox, onox) ‘just [i.e., less than might be expected]’ & ‘exactly, still [i.e., what would be expected]’

nan & van ‘perhaps’ (van coindexes interrogative syntax);
  ▪ note person conflation and interaction, as with evidentials
Slot E: evidentiary source++

- *la* ‘illocutionary source is other, e.g., hearsay’
- *me* & *ma* ‘illocutionary source is the animating speaker, i.e., emphatic’ (with *ma* linked to interrogative syntax)
- *ka* (¿<v K-a`i ‘I hear/think’) ‘I suspected, and now confirm [or perhaps am surprised to find disconfirmed]’=“mirative”
- clear person deixis, with resulting implicational triggers
- Jakobson’s $E_s/E_{ns}$; Goffman’s ‘principal’
-u`un ‘because, for..’, alone and in combination, e.g., mi`n, ti`n… ‘is it the case?’ ‘were it the case..’
an ‘why! [responds to previous turn]’
yu`van ‘Can you really think that..?’
yu`nan ‘Perhaps it is the case that..’
ku ‘so it’s that way [responsive]’
ya ‘why not? [vaguely critical]’
tzal ‘why? [but critical]’
solel (<Sp) ‘only, it is surprisingly the case that…’
pero (<Sp) ‘but… [contrary to expectation or suggestion]’
pwes ke (<Sp) ‘[considering the discursive moment] it is the case that…’
- bi ‘indeed’
- kik ‘perhaps (with a note of positive encouragement)’
- che`e ‘pues, then, as a consequence, obviously, as expected…’
- un ‘pues, period (. )’
- yu`van ‘clearly, obviously, how could you think otherwise?’
- -a`a ‘indeed, I agree (I already knew it)’
Exclamations, assessments, and the category of “status”

- kere ‘[boy] damn!’
- jkobel ‘[fucker] damn!’
- juta! ‘[whore] damn!’
- chin ‘[fuck] damn!’
- pentejo ‘[pubic hair] damn! How incredibly stupid!’
- kavron ‘[goat, cuckold] damn!’
And for the ladies ....

- *kajval* ‘[my lord] my!’
- *jlo`tzo`* ‘[shit eater] how terrible!’
- *porkiriya* ‘[porquería] how disgusting!’

- Cf. Kockelman 2003, on interjections as indexes
Framing verbs of knowledge, evidence, and speaking

- **-chi & -ut** ‘say and tell’: xi, xichi, xachi, xkut, xavut, xut...
- **-al** ‘say’: chkal, xkaltik, ti kaloje...
- **-il** ‘see’: yavil ‘now that you see, since it is the case..’, k’elavi(l) ‘look here..’
- **-a`i** ‘hear, understand’: ka`tik ‘as we know…’
- **-na`** ‘know’: ana`oj ‘do you think [wrongly]..?’
Do you suppose he’s coming? (impl., he’s not.)

Proposition – ‘he’s coming’

Participant centering – Q, 2nd person

Epistemic evaluation – na` ‘know, think’

Implicature: “you’re wrong if you think so”
Proportions of stance to denotation

- Counting syllables (cf. “wasting breath”):
  - proportion of truth-functional denotational content to “stance” content
- Red indicates “non-denotational” work
- Generous scoring in favor of denotational content
- Note vowel lengthening as “interjection-like”

i:jo de la chingada
Distribution: “you can’t get there from here”

- My “natural corpus”: utterances average ~5 syllables, and 25% of them are doing “stance” work
- Native transcribers: 5 syls., 24% doing stance
- Laughlin’s tales: 7.3 syls, 15% doing stance
- Published texts: 15 syls., 6% doing stance
  - almost all of this 6% the REPORTED evidential la, the most grammaticalized stance-taking form
- Ergo, normalized data eliminate stance taking talk;
  - A good reason to prefer non-normalized corpora
  - Apparently ironically, fewer evidentials and stance markers in “quoted speech”
And language is not just speech

People are real bastards.
Bibliography on the handout

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