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Texmelucan Zapotec Verbs

Charles H. Speck

Texmelucan Zapotec verb conjugations illustrate some common phonological processes like deletion, palatalization, lenition, assimilation and dissimilation. At least some of these function to accommodate syllabification. Most of these processes can be seen in the data from Table 1 (Regular verbs, the positive paradigm). Verbs in this table are inflected for Potential aspect, which occurs in frames with the adverb meaning *tomorrow*; Imperfective aspect, which occurs in frames with *always*; Completive aspect, which occurs in frames with *yesterday*; and the Unreal aspect, which occurs in counterfactual clauses.

The morphology of the negative paradigm shown in Table 2 is not very straightforward. Neither the Completive prefix nor the Imperfective prefix co-occurs with the Negative prefix. I analyze the Potential prefix as occurring in the form elicited with *never* and the form meaning *did not*, but not with the form meaning *will not*; no aspect at all occurs on the latter. (This skewing between form and meaning is discussed in Speck 1984.) Given an analysis of the morphology along these lines, some of the same phonological processes seen in the positive paradigm are illustrated in the negative paradigm.

Table 3 (Causative forms) shows that the causative stem is formed by laryngealizing the stem of the non-causative and adding a prefix. These data illustrate some of the same phonological processes seen in the other paradigms.

In Table 4, *ride* and *seek* have the same underlying stem, {jub}, but conjugate differently. The conjugation of *seek* illustrates a highly marked positive exception to the rule of velar deletion. Underlying {k-} (Potential) shouldn't delete before *j*, but it does with the verb for *seek*.

Most stems that begin with *d*, *l*, or *r* are irregular in that they have a different form in the first person than in the second and third persons. The second person and third person completive is sometimes like the first person and sometimes like the rest of the second person paradigm. These data provide yet additional evidence for some of the processes shown above. They also show some exceptional behavior with respect to several of them.

IPA symbols are used in the transcription of the data. However, the symbols *kj* and *gj* represent palatalized palatal stops (hence the nasal assimilation facts) derived from underlying velars. Tilde under a vowel represents a laryngealized vowel.

Texmelucan Zapotec is spoken by about 4000 people in the District of Sola de Vega, Oaxaca, Mexico. The data have been collected by the author during continual work on the language since 1972.

Reference

- Speck, Charles H. 1978. Texmelucan Zapotec Suprasegmental Phonology. *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session* 22:1-28.
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Texmelucan Zapotec Verbs (Mexico)

Table 1. Regular Verbs, The Positive Paradigm

	<i>Tomorrow</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Yesterday</i>	<i>Would have</i>
<i>die</i>	gat	rat	gut	ngjat
<i>hear</i>	gjen	ren	gwen	ngjen
<i>do</i>	gikj	rikj	bikj ¹	ngikj
<i>drink</i> ²	go?	ro?	go?	ngjo?
<i>ride</i>	gjub	rjub	bjub	ngjub
<i>count</i>	lab ³	lab	blab	nlab
<i>teach</i>	ljɿ	ɿɿ	bljɿ	nljɿ
<i>leave</i>	rɿ	drɿ	brɿ	nrɿ
<i>lose</i>	ne?	rne? ⁴	mne?	nne?
<i>guard</i>	na	rna	mna	ɱna
<i>twist</i>	tel	rtel	ptel	ntel
<i>cross</i>	ded	rded	bded	nded
<i>be dry</i>	kwigj	rbigj	bigj	mbigj
<i>change</i>	tʃa	rtʃa	ptʃa	ntʃa
<i>bend</i>	dʒoŋ	rdʒoŋ	bdʒoŋ	ndʒoŋ
<i>love</i>	ka	rka	pka	ŋka
<i>tie</i>	kjig	rkjig	pkjig	ŋkjig
<i>move</i>	kwen	rkwen	pkwen	ŋkwen
<i>connect</i>	gjid	rgjid	bgjid	ngjid
<i>lie</i>	gu	rgu	bgɿ	ŋgu
<i>see</i>	gwi	rgwi	bgwi	ŋgwi
<i>slice</i>	sug	rsug	psug	nsug
<i>study</i>	sjɔ	rsjɔ	psjɔ	nsjɔ
<i>be drunk</i>	zugj	rzugj	bzugj	nzugj
<i>tear</i>	ʃa	rʃa	pʃa	nʃa

¹ The few *i*-initial stems known to exist appear to be irregular in the Completive. One would expect forms like *gwiɿj, but they have never been attested.

² The verb for *drink* conjugates this way in the second and third person (see Table 5).

³ In some ill-understood semantic or discourse environments, a velar stop can appear in the onsets of the forms in this column. The conditions for the appearance of this segment, however, are not purely semantic, but seem also to be related to sonority sequencing. It appears frequently before sonorants producing forms like glab, gljɿ, grɿ, and gne?. There are fewer examples before sibilants, producing forms like ksug, ksja, and gzug. Although its appearance before stops has been attested, producing forms like gded or ktad, they are very rare. It never appears before another velar.

⁴ The sound written *r* is voiceless except when it precedes a vowel or glide.

Table 2. Regular Verbs, The Negative Paradigm

	<i>Will not</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Did not</i>
<i>die</i>	wat	wagat	wangat
<i>hear</i>	wajen	wagjen	wangjen
<i>do</i>	wajikj	wagjikj	wangjikj
<i>drink</i>	wo?	wago?	wango?
<i>ride</i>	wajub	wagjub	wangjub
<i>count</i>	walab	waglab	wanlab
<i>teach</i>	walju	waglju	wanlju
<i>leave</i>	waru	wagru	wanru
<i>lose</i>	wane?	wagne?	wanne?
<i>guard</i>	wana	wagna	wanpa
<i>twist</i>	watel	waktel	wantel
<i>cross</i>	waded	wakted	wanted
<i>be dry</i>	wabigj	wakwigj	wankwigj
<i>change</i>	wat ʃa	wakt ʃa	want ʃa
<i>bend</i>	wadʒoŋ	wakt ʃoŋ	want ʃoŋ
<i>love</i>	waka	waka	wanka
<i>tie</i>	wakjig	wakjig	wankjig
<i>move</i>	wakwen	wakwen	wankwen
<i>connect</i>	wagjid	wagjid	wangjid
<i>lie</i>	wagu	wagu	wangu
<i>see</i>	wagwi	wagwi	wangwi
<i>slice</i>	wasug	waksug	wansug
<i>study</i>	wasja	waksja	wansja
<i>be drunk</i>	wazugj	waksugj	wansugj
<i>tear</i>	wa ʃa	wak ʃa	wan ʃa

Table 3. Regular Causatives

	<i>Tomorrow</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Yesterday</i>
<i>be born</i>	ga1	ra1	gu1
<i>give birth</i>	ga1	rga1	bga1
<i>be on</i>	gwa	rgwa	bgwa
<i>put on</i>	kwq	rkwq	bkwq
<i>be attached</i>	ka	rka	pka
<i>attach</i>	kq	rkq	pkq
<i>be dry</i>	kwigj	rbigj	bigj
<i>dry</i>	kwigj	rkwigj	pkwigj
<i>be full</i>	d3a	rd3a	bd3a
<i>fill</i>	t ʃq	rt ʃq	pt ʃq
<i>be finished</i>	la3	ɭa3	bla3
<i>finish</i>	la3	ɭa3	bla3
<i>take a bath</i>	la3g	ɭa3g	bla3g
<i>bathe</i> ⁵	la3g	ɭa3g	bla3g
<i>walk</i>	za	rza	bza
<i>transport</i>	sq	rsq	psq
<i>slip(int)</i>	rilj	drilj	brilj
<i>slip(tr)</i>	rilj	drilj	brilj
<i>be attached</i>	da?	rda? ⁶	bda?
<i>attach</i>	ta?	rta?	pta?

⁵ la3g appears to be like the English verb *open* where the agent is optional and the patient is obligatory. I know of no other Zapotec verbs like that. The fact that the intransitive stem is laryngealized and that it begins with a sonorant suggests a phonological relationship.

⁶ Most verbs do not have a Progressive form distinct from the Imperfective form. This verb has a distinct Progressive form ta?.

Table 4. The Two Conjugations of {jub}

<i>ride</i>	gjub wajub	ɾjub wagjub	bjub wangjub	ngjub
<i>seek</i>	jub ⁷ wajub	ɾjub wagjub	bjub wanjub	njub

Table 5. Verbs With Irregular Stems

		<i>Tomorrow</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Yesterday</i>	<i>Should have</i>
<i>grind</i>	(1st	dō	ɾdō	bdō	ndō
	(2nd)	gof	ɾof	gof	ngjof ⁸
<i>beaten</i>	(1st	ruzā	druzā	bruzā	nruzā
	(2nd)	gaz ru	ɾaz ru	guz ru	ngjaz ru
<i>pay</i>	(1st	ɾi jā	dɾi jā	bɾi jā	nɾi jā
	(2nd)	kji j ru	ɾgji j ru	bɾi j ru	ngji j ru
<i>distribute</i>	(1st	lezā	ɬezā	blezā	nlezā
	(2nd)	kjez ru	ɾgji z ru	bli z ru	ngji z ru
<i>wait</i>	(1st	lezā	ɬezā	blezā	nlezā
	(2nd)	kwez ru	ɾbez ru	blez ru	mbez ru
<i>call</i>	(1st	redzā	dredzā	bredzā	nredzā
	(2nd)	kwedz ru	ɾbedz ru	bredz ru	mbedz ru
<i>sing</i>	(1st	dulā	ɾdulā	bdulā	ndulā
	(2nd)	gu l ru	ɾul ru	bi l ru	ngju l ru
<i>relate</i> ⁹	(1st	do dū	ɾdo dū	bdo dū	ndo dū
	(2nd)	go nur	ɾo nur	bi nur	ngjo nur

⁷ The form gjub has been attested, albeit rarely (see note 3).

⁸ Alternations in laryngealization are the result of interaction with tone which is not represented here (see Speck 1978).

⁹ The meaning of *relate* is literally *grind with*. The stem for the morpheme *with* has two forms; {du} occurs with the first person and {nu} with the second and third person.