Reconstructing the possessive inflection of Proto-Zamucoan

Luca Ciucci, Pier Marco Bertinetto

Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

The Zamucoan family consists of two living languages: Ayoreo (**AY**) and Chamacoco (**CH**), spoken in Northern Chaco (between Bolivia and Paraguay) by approximately 4500 and 2000 people, respectively. The Zamucoan family also includes the now extinct Old Zamuco (**OZ**), described in the early 18th century by the Jesuit Father Ignace Chomé (1958 [*ante* 1745]). The first stable contacts with the Ayoreos began around the half of the last century, whereas the Chamacocos were already in contact with the Western civilization at the turn of the XIX century, thus undergoing the linguistic influence of Spanish and Guaraní. The Zamucoan family is divided into two branches stemming from Proto-Zamucoan (**PZ**): According to glottochronological computations (Holman *et al.* 2011; Müller *et al.* 2013), CH split long ago from OZ and AY, and indeed it only shares 30% of its lexical roots with AY (Bertinetto 2009). This notwithstanding, all three languages present morphosyntactic correspondences, allowing robust diachronic insights (Ciucci 2013; Ciucci & Bertinetto, to appear).

Like all Chaco languages, Zamucoan distinguishes *possessable* and *non-possessable* nouns (Fabre 2007). In most languages of the area, the former employ personal prefixes to agree with the possessor, while the latter cannot host possessive markers. The possessive inflection of the Zamucoan languages is reported in the Table below, based on data from Ciucci 2013. From a merely descriptive point of view, one can detect the Person Prefix, the Thematic Vowel and the Root, in this order. The segmentation in the table shows that the first two components are not always obligatory. In the third person there is a contrast between reflexive third person (RFL), expressing coreference with the subject, and non-reflexive third person (3-person) characterized by remarkable polymorphism. The paradigm also includes a generic-form (GF), indicating unspecified possessor.

	Old Zamuco	Ayoreo	Chamacoco
1S	*j-/tɕ-/s*-V-root	*j*-V-root	*p*-V-root
2S	*Ø-a*/V-root	*b*-a/V-root	*Ø-a/e*/V-root
3	*Ø*-V-root *Ø-Ø*-root *d-/g-Ø*-root	*Ø*-V-root *Ø-Ø*-root *d-/g-/k-/p-/j-*/V-root	*Ø*-V-root *Ø-Ø*-root *d-/k-/j-/w-*V-root
RFL	*d-a*/V-root	*d-a*/V-root	*d-a/e*/V-root
1P	*aj-/as*-V-root	*jok*-V-root	–
2P	*aj-/as*-V-root	*wak-a*/V-root	–
GF	*p-/d*-V-root *Ø-Ø*-root	*dVk-/g-/k-/p-*V-root *Ø-Ø*-root	*d-/dVk-/k-*V-root *Ø-Ø*-root o-[3-person]

The aim of this paper is to present a diachronic reconstruction of PZ possessive inflection. OZ is the most conservative language, while AY and CH present some innovations: (1) in CH the original 1S-inflection was replaced by the most frequent

GF allomorph, while a new kind of GF, not to be found in the other Zamucoan languages, emerged; (2) CH has lost the 1P- and 2P-inflections; (3) the AY 1P-inflection and 2S/P-inflections show prefixes stemming from free personal pronouns.

Although CH is the most innovative language, one can find some relics of the original 1S/P-inflections, which are of fundamental importance for reconstruction. In particular, the rare CH exceptions concerning the 1P-inflection show the same prefixes as OZ, never observed in AY despite the genetic proximity between AY and OZ. The paper will also point out that the reconstructed possessive inflections of PZ share remarkable similarity with the verb inflection (in particular with the irrealis mood).

Interestingly, some of these morphological exponents can be found in other surrounding languages (Ciucci 2014). This lends support to the hypothesis that the Gran Chaco constitutes a linguistic area over and above the genetic divergence between its main linguistic families (Comrie *et al.* 2010). Indeed, the Chaco populations, although traditionally in mutual conflict, have been in narrow contact for centuries, so that not only lexical, but even morphological borrowings had a chance to emerge.

Bibliographical references

Bertinetto, Pier Marco 2009. Ayoreo (Zamuco). A grammatical sketch. *Quaderni del Laboratorio di Linguistica della Scuola Normale Superiore* 8 n.s.

Chomé, Ignace 1958 [*ante* 1745]. Arte de la lengua Zamuca. Présentation de Suzanne Lussagnet. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* 47. 121-178.

Ciucci, Luca 2013. *Inflectional morphology in the Zamucoan languages.* Ph.D. thesis. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore.

Ciucci, Luca 2014. Tracce di contatto tra la famiglia zamuco (ayoreo, chamacoco) e altre lingue del Chaco: prime prospezioni. *Quaderni del Laboratorio di Linguistica della Scuola Normale Superiore* 13 n.s.

Ciucci, Luca & Pier Marco Bertinetto (to appear). A diachronic view of the Zamucoan verb inflection. *Folia Linguistica Historica*.

Comrie, Bernard, Lucía A. Golluscio, Hebe Gonzáles & Alejandra Vidal 2010. El Chaco como área lingüística. In: Zarina Estrada Férnandez & Ramón Arzápalo Marín (eds.). *Estudios de lenguas amerindias 2: contribuciones al estudio de las lenguas originarias de América*. Hermosillo, Sonora (Mexico): Editorial Unison.

Fabre, Alain 2007. Morfosintaxis de los clasificadores posesivos en las lenguas del Gran Chaco (Argentina, Bolivia y Paraguay). *UniverSOS* 4. 67-85.

Holman, Eric W., Cecil H. Brown, Søren Wichmann, André Müller, Viveka Velupillai, Harald Hammarström, Hagen Jung, Dik Bakker, Pamela Brown, Oleg Belyaev, Matthias Urban, Robert Mailhammer, Johann-Mattis List & Dmitry Egorov 2011. Automated dating of the world's language families based on lexical similarity. *Current Anthropology* 52,6. 841-875.

Müller, André, Søren Wichmann, Viveka Velupillai, Cecil H. Brown, Pamela Brown, Sebastian Sauppe, Eric W. Holman, Dik Bakker, Johann-Mattis List, Dmitri Egorov, Oleg Belyaev, Robert Mailhammer, Matthias Urban, Helen Geyer &

Anthony Grant. 2013. *ASJP World language tree of lexical similarity*: Version 4 (October 2013). http://email.eva.mpg.de/~wichmann/language_tree.htm