

On rare typological features of the Zamucoan languages, in the framework of the Chaco linguistic area



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The Zamucoan family



Ayoreo

ca. 4500 speakers

Old Zamuco (a.k.a. Ancient Zamuco)
spoken in the XVIII century, extinct

Chamacoco

(Ibitoso, Tomarâho)
ca. 1800 speakers

The Zamucoan family

The first stable contact with Zamucoan populations took place in the early 18th century in the reduction of San Ignacio de Samuco.

The Jesuit **Ignace Chomé** wrote a grammar of **Old Zamuco** (*Arte de la lengua zamuca*).

The **Chamacoco** established friendly relationships by the end of the 19th century.

The **Ayoreos** surrendered rather late (towards the middle of the last century); there are still a few nomadic small bands in Northern Paraguay.

The Zamucoan family



Main typological features

- Fusional structure
- Word order features:
 - SVO
 - Genitive + Noun
 - Noun + Adjective

Zamucoan typologically rare features

- Nominal tripartition
- Radical tenselessness
- Nominal aspect
- Affix order in Chamacoco 3 plural
- Gender + classifiers
- 1 person \emptyset -marking in Ayoreo realis
- Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco
- Greater plural and clusivity
- Para-hypotaxis

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Nominal tripartition

All Zamucoan languages present a morphological **tripartition** in their nominals.

The **base-form** (BF) is typically used for predication. The singular-BF is (Ayoreo & Old Zamuco) or used to be (Cham.) the basis for any morphological operation.

The **full-form** (FF) occurs in argumental position.

The **indeterminate-form** (IF) is used in the same syntactic contexts as the FF, but refers to a non-specific referent.

Nominal tripartition

Examples from Ayoreo

FORMS:	FULL	BASE	INDETERMINATE
‘neck’	<i>etabi</i>	<i>etabit</i>	<i>etabitic</i>
PL	<i>etabidode</i>	<i>etabicho</i>	<i>etabitigo</i>
‘trench’	<i>erui</i>	<i>eruc</i>	<i>erutic</i>
PL	<i>erugode</i>	<i>erucho</i>	<i>erutigo</i>
‘pupil’	<i>acadí</i>	<i>acadic</i>	<i>acaditic</i>
PL	<i>acadi gode</i>	<i>acadi cho</i>	<i>acadi tigo</i>
‘girl’	<i>gapua</i>	<i>gapu</i>	<i>gapurac</i>
PL	<i>gapudie</i>	<i>gapui</i>	<i>gapurigui</i>

Nominal tripartition

Derivation from the singular-BF in Ayoreo

gachidi 'pet/vehicle', BF *gachit*

→ M *gachisôri* / F *gachito* 'owner of pet/vehicle'

charidi 'resting place, sit', BF *charit*

→ M *charisôri* / F *charito* 'one who sits'

garani 'origin', BF *garât*

→ M *garasôri* / F *garato* 'creator'

guejnai 'completed, destroyed', BF *guejnac*

→ M *guejnangôri/-sôri* / F *guejnato* 'destroyer'

achêrai 'grabbed, attacked', BF *achêrac*

→ M *acherangôri* 'tempest, strong wind'

Nominal tripartition

Ayoreo: Nominal predication with/without overt copula

1) **Jnani** **catad-ab-i** deji enga
man.MS.FF small-DIM-MS.FF 3.there_is COORD
i-pis-i tu **Tiritai.**
3.name-ELAT-MS.FF COP Tiritai

‘There was a very tiny man, whose nickname was Tiritai.’

2) Cajire to! **Arocojna-quedajna!**
look too alligator.MS.BF-different.MS.BF

Arocojna-quedajna-i deji ne!
alligator.MS.BF-different-MS.FF 3.there_is there

‘Look there! It’s an alligator! There’s an alligator right there!’

3) **Dita-i** tu yu nga **cuchape** yu ee hh!
 killing_weapon-MS.FF COP 1S COORD big.MS.BF 1S EXCL

‘I am the killing weapon and I am powerful!!!’

The indeterminate-form

(1) **Old Zamuco** (Chomé 1958: 164)

Ca y-a-**tic** uz.

NEG 1S-child-MS.**IF** EXIST

‘I don’t have any **son**.’

(2) **Ayoreo** (QCCB, II: 45)

Que i-boca-**raque** cuse enga ch-ijna d-ojo-die.

NEG 3-gun-FS.**IF** EXIST and 3-bring RFL-arrow-FP.FF

‘He does not have his **gun**, and he brings his arrows.’

(3) **Chamacoco** (Ciucci 2013: 473)

¿L-ati-**rãk** chihi?

3-mother-FS.**IF** 3.EXIST.IRLS

‘Does he/she have a **mother**?’ (lit.: ‘Is there his/her **mother**?’)

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Radical tenselessness

- Müller (2013) found 9 “tenseless” languages in her South-American corpus:
Baure, Mapuche (i.e. Mapudungun), Mocovi, Nasa Yuwe (or Paez), Pilaga, Trumai, Tsafiki (or Colorado), Urarina, Yanam.
- However, they simply lack devices to morphologically convey temporal notions, but do present (in some cases even abundant) aspectual, modal as well as evidential devices.
- Thus, they are tenseless in the same way as, e.g., Chinese, or Classical Arabic, or Biblical Hebrew are.

Radical tenselessness

- As far as Ayoreo, Old Zamuco and Chamacoco Ibitoso are concerned (NB: we leave aside Tomarâho), they definitely are “radical tenseless” languages, for they lack any morphological device to express temporal and aspectual notions.
- Such notions are merely conveyed by adverbs, which may be optionally used depending on context requirements.
- Radical tenselessness is a highly rare feature. Maybrat, spoken in New Guinea (Dol 1999) is the only other example known to us.

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Nominal aspect

“No language presents nominal aspect, while there are several examples of nominal tense and nominal mood.” (Nordlinger & Sadler 2004:)

However, Ayoreo presents a striking counter-example: the **habitual suffix** *-be/-me* (FS), *-beil/-mei* (MS.FF), *-bec/-mec* (MS.BF), first described in the Higham *et al.*'s dictionary.

Nominal aspect

- From Higham's *et al.* (2000)
 - *oide*, PL *oidedie* (F) 'what is carried or used' → *oidebe*, PL *oidebedie* (BF *oidebe*, pl *oidebei*) 'what is customarily carried or used'
 - *uru*, PL *uruode* (M) 'word' → *urubei*, pl *urubeode* (BF *urubec*, pl *urubecho*) 'what is customarily said'
 - *aquiningai*, PL *aquiningane* (M) 'meeting place' → *aquingamei*, *aquingameone* (BF *aquingamec*, PL *aquingamecho*) 'customary meeting place'

Nominal aspect

From fieldwork:

- *iguidebe* ‘usual dress’
- *acadisôrimei* ‘usual teacher’
- *mochapibei* ‘usual/preferred bed’
- *dajebec* ‘habitual path’
- *pibosebei* ‘what one usually eats / favorite food’
- *yicharidebei* ‘the place where I usually sit’
- *urôsobei* ‘habitual pain’

- **tiebe* ‘habitual river’
- ?*tamocobei* ‘the dog that one often encounters’.

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Affix order in Chamacoco 3P verb inflection

- Universal tendency:

Person markers precede **number** markers irrespective of their position with respect to the root
(Trommer 2003; Mayer 2009)

The Chamacoco 3P verb inflection is a violation of this generalization (Ciucci & Bertinetto, to appear):

ts-amur (**3**) → **o**-**ts**-amur (**3P**) ‘to like, to love’

Affix order in Chamacoco 3P verb inflection

- Ayoreo and Old Zamuco have no form for the 3P person, they optionally use the 3P-pronoun *ore*. Chamacoco presents the 3P pronoun *õr*: possibly *õr* > *o-*.

Ayoreo:

tç-i-mesêre ‘s/he/they want(s)’ (3); *ore* tç-i-mesêre (3P)

Old Zamuco:

ch-i-mêcêre ‘s/he/they love(s)’ (3); *ore* ch-i-mêcêre (3P)

- The innovative Chamacoco 3P-prefix *o-* might in turn have yielded, under morphomic re-use, the identical *1PE-prefix*. Alternatively, the latter was imported from the 1PE-prefix of Guarani (*ro-*) and re-used for the 3P.

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Gender and possessive classifiers

- **Aikhenvald** (2000: 126, 133) claims that possessive classifiers «do not involve agreement». However, in some Chaco languages possessive classifiers agree in **gender** and/or number with the *possessum*.
- One can also observe some cross-linguistic similarities, possibly due to contact:
 - **Ayoreo** *gachit* (MS.BF) *gachidi* (MS.FF), *gachide* (FS) ‘domestic animal’ (noun and classifier)
 - **Chamacoco** *echit* (MS.FF), *echita* (FS.FF), ‘domestic animal’
 - **Kadiwéu** *wiGadi* (M) *wiqate* (F) ‘animal’ (noun and classifier)
- «It is well known that classification systems often diffuse in situations of language contact. [...] The examples from Gran Chaco confirm the importance of classifiers in areal diffusion» (**Aikhenvald** 2011: 175).

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First person zero marking in Ayoreo realis

“First person zero marking is extremely rare. The Romanian present tense is an example [...]. The only other examples that I know are the pronominal inflections from Alagwa [...] and Burunge [...], two Southern Cushitic languages from Tanzania.” (Cysouw 2008)

In the most conservative form of Ayoreo, the 1 person prefix is absent in the ‘realis’ form:

tɕ-i-go ‘to tell, to show’

1S j-i-go → Ø-i-go in **realis** contexts

1P j-i-go-go → Ø-i-go-go in **realis** contexts

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Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

A conjunct / disjunct system* “is a binary system, with ‘**conjunct**’ used for **first person in statements** and **second person in questions**, while ‘disjunct’ is used for second and third person in statements and first and third person in questions.” (Curnow 2002: 611)

	Statements	Questions
1-person	conjunct	disjunct
2-person	disjunct	conjunct
3-person	disjunct	disjunct

(Curnow 2002: 614)

*For a different terminology, see Creissels 2008, Tournadre 2008 and Post 2013.

Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

In some paradigms of Old Zamuco (which presents a full opposition between realis and irrealis) the 1S-realis coincides with the 2S-irrealis...

cho ‘to look like, to be like’

Realis

o (1S)

do (2S)

cho (3)

oco (1P)

doyo (2P)

Irrealis

cho (1S)

o (2S)

do (3)

choco (1P)

oyo (2P)

Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

If one takes into account that:

- The 1S-realis occurs more frequently in (positive) statements than its irrealis counterpart
- The 2S-irrealis occurs more frequently in questions than its realis counterpart

Then, the morphological overlapping of 1S-realis and 2S-irrealis reminds of a conjunct in so-called conjunct /disjunct systems.

Traces of Conjunct/Disjunct system in Old Zamuco

- 1-realis (a-/∅-) = 2-irrealis (a-/∅-)

Old Zamuco: <i>chimêcêre</i> 'to love'		
Person	Realis	Irrealis
1S	a-/∅ + V + ROOT / <i>a-i-mecêre</i>	ch-/z-/y- + V + ROOT / <i>ch-i-mecêre</i>
2S	d- + V + ROOT / <i>d-a-mecêre</i>	a-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>a-∅-mecêre</i>
3	ch-/t-/z-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ch-i-mêcêre</i>	d-/n-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>d-i-mêcêre</i>
1P	a-/∅ + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>a-i-mecê-co</i>	ch-/z-/y- + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>ch-i-mecê-co</i>
2P	d- + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>d-a-mecê-ño</i>	a-/∅ + (V) + ROOT + SUFF / <i>a-∅-mecê-ño</i>
3P	ore ch-/t-/z- /∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ore ch-i-mêcêre</i>	ore d-/n-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ore d-i-mêcêre</i>

Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

- The 1S-realis and the 2S-irrealis do not coincide in all paradigms, but they were originally marked by the same morpheme *a-*.

chimêcêre ‘to love’ ‘to look like, to be like’

Realis

a-i-mecêre (1S)

d-a-mecêre (2S)

ch-i-mêcêre (3)

a-i-mecê-co (1P)

d-a-mecê-ño (2P)

Irrealis

ch-i-mecêre (1S)

a-mecêre (2S)

ch-i-mêcêre (3)

a-i-mecê-co (1P)

d-a-mecê-ño (2P)

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Greater plural and clusivity

Greater plural: “Languages may have a **secondary split into normal and ‘greater’** (sometimes termed ‘lesser’ and ‘greater’) within certain number values. The two which may be split are the paucal and the plural. **There are relatively few known cases of split numbers and the account here is tentative.** [...] **‘greater plural’**, typically implies an excessive number, sometimes called **‘plural of abundance’**, or else all possible instances of the referent, sometimes called the **‘global plural’**. We shall use ‘greater plural’ to cover the different types (abundance, global). The **evidence is limited**, but it comes from a variety of languages and sources, sufficient to indicate that **there is an interesting phenomenon that deserves study.** **More examples** with careful descriptions of their meaning **would be welcome.**” (Corbett 2000: 30)

Greater plural and clusivity

“To **distinguish between a ‘normal amount’ and a ‘greater than normal amount’**, as is done in the Sursurunga paucal **is very rare** and, if anything, is found with the plural yielding a greater plural (or global plural). The distinction would then be something like ‘many’ and ‘very many indeed’.” (Velupillai 2012: 162).

The **greater plural** (GP) is observed in Chamacoco 1-inclusive (1PI) and 2-person free pronouns:

yok (1S)

õryok (1P.exclusive)

eyok (1P.inclusive) **eyoklo** (1GP.inclusive)

owa (2S)

olak (2P)

olaklo (2GP)

(Ciucci 2013: 31)

Greater plural and clusivity

The greater plural is also found in the 1-inclusive of Chamacoco verb inflection:

- (1) a. j-i-tɕew (1PI) ‘we write’
b. **j-i-tɕew-lo** (1PI.GP) ‘we (many, all) write’
c. o-j-i-tɕew (1PE) ‘we write’
d. *o-j-i-tɕew-lo [1PE.GP]

The Chamacoco greater plural is an optional feature. It mostly refers to the totality of the contextual referents, independently of the actual cardinality.

(1) **Y-iĩsi-l** jotsi-t bahlu-t par y-imchaha asa
1PI-dig-GP hole-MS.FF big-MS.FF SUB 1PI-put that.FS
 kemyon bahlu-ta ese jotsi-t ehe-t,
 truck big-FS.FF that.MS hole- MS.FF 3.inside-MS.FF
 pork asa wate s-ihn **eyoklo.**
 because that.FS DET.FS 3-wipe_out **1PI.GP**

‘We will dig (or: let us dig) a big hole in order to put the armored truck in the hole, because [otherwise] that is going to wipe out all of us.’ (Ciucci, field-notes)

(2) Sara, Nené, inaapo ye deychole hn **y-uku-l**
 Sara Nené why NEG tomorrow COORD **1PI-go-GP**
 pehle oskôr
 pehle.fruit.FP oskor.fruit.PF

‘Sara, Nené, why don’t we all go to [collect] fruits tomorrow?’ (Ciucci, field-notes)

Greater plural and clusivity

Minimal / augmented systems

- A 1P inclusive split gives rise to a minimal / augmented system. Minimal / augmented systems are rare in South America (Cysouw 2008: 140, Bickels & Nichols 2005: 53, Crevels & Muysken 2005: 318)
- Chamacoco's clusivity is not prototypical, however, according to the classifications by Cysouw (2008: 85-90) and Bickels & Nichols (2005: 50-53)
- In minimal / augmented systems the expected minimal inclusive element is a dual (not a plural), while the augmented is a plural (not a greater plural).

Greater plural and clusivity

The **Chamacoco minimal** / **augmented** system

- (1) a. o-j-i-tɕew (1P.exclusive) ‘we write’
b. **j-i-tɕew** (1**P**.inclusive) ‘we write’
c. **j-i-tɕew-lo** (1.**GP**.inclusive) ‘we (many, all) write’

- (2) **yok** (1S) ðryok (1P.exclusive)
 eyok (1**P**.inclusive) **eyoklo** (1**GP**.inclusive)
owa (2S) **olak** (2P) **olaklo** (2GP)

Greater plural and clusivity

- There are morphological and semantic reasons to consider the 1-exclusive a particular kind of plural of the 1S-person (Daniel 2005; Cysouw 2005; Bickel & Nichols 2005: 51-53)
- The inclusive should be considered a person on its own (Daniel 2005)
- In most languages inclusives are morphologically independent from the 1S-person (Daniel 2005: 5).
Cf. CH yok (1S), **ôryok** (1PE), **eyok** (1PI)
- In Chamacoco verb morphology the **1P-exclusive** derives from the **1P-inclusive**: t-i-chew (1S) ‘I write’
j-i-tçew (1PI) ‘we write’ → **o-j-i-tçew** (1PE) ‘we write’
- The interaction between clusivity and greater plural is probably quite rare among the world’s languages and would probably deserve further typological studies...

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Para-hypotaxis

This term was introduced by Sorrento (1950), and is still very popular in Romance linguistics.

It refers to sentences with a proleptic dependent clause, where the main clause is introduced by a coordinator:

dependent clause + coordinator + main clause

This was one of the first attempts to overcome the **dichotomic view** of the contrast parataxis vs. hypotaxis.

Para-hypotaxis in Chamacoco

(1) Chamacoco [Ciucci, field-work]

Uje ye t-uu_leeych, *ich* ese aahn-t
SUB NEG 1S-fight COORD DEM.MS evil_spirit-MS.FF
s-erz yoo.
3-win 1S

‘When/if I don’t fight, that evil spirit will defeat me.’

(2) Chamacoco [Ciucci, field-work]

Kēhe, uu like ishīr lishi sēhe, teehe,
If DET.MS this indigenous_man.MS poor.MS VOL interj
s-ohnimichī=ke, *hn* uhu oy-ihyer ire.
3.IRLS-get_off=PST COORD 2S.CAUS 1PE-arrest 3S

‘If the indigenous man had wanted to get off (the bus), you would have made us arrest him.’

Para-hypotaxis in Ayoreo

(3) Ayoreo [Bertinetto, field-work]

Ujetiga Jate di=rase *nga*, ch-isi=rase yogu=iji

SUB Jate 3.arrive=MOD **COORD** 3-give=MOD 1P=loc

cucha-rique

thing-MS.IF

‘If Jate arrived, he would give us something.’

(4) Ayoreo [Preachers]

Ujetiga a-dute cucha ajmacaca-rique

SUB 2S.IRLS-listen thing.MS.BF ill_fated-MS.IF

maringa je ca a-todo cucha

although MOD NEG 2S.IRLS-fear thing.MS.BF

ajmamacar-ode

ill_fated-MP.FF

‘Even though you might hear threats, do not be afraid of them.’

Para-hypotaxis is a rare syntactic configuration. It has long been considered limited to Old Romance and classical languages (Biblical Hebrew, Greek and Latin).

(5) Old Italian (Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* 30,115)

S' io dissi il falso, **e** tu
If 1S say.1S.PAST.PERF DET.MS false-MS **COORD** 2S
falsasti il conio
alter-2S.PAST.PERF DET.MS minting_die-MS

'If I said something false, you (did worse, for you) altered the minting die.'

Recent research has revealed the presence of para-hypotactical structures in Swahili (Rebuschi 2011) and in the Zamucoan languages (Bertinetto & Ciucci 2012).

Para-hypotaxis and beyond: A reality

The discovery of para-hypotaxis in the Zamucoan languages opens the door for a large scale investigation, which might produce surprising results.

Para-hypotactical structures have been found in other Chaco languages, such as Maká (Mataguayo), Nivaclé (Mataguayo), Wichí (Mataguayo), Mocoví (Guaycurú) and Pilagá (Guaycurú). Iquito, a Zaparoan language, also presents para-hypotaxis.

Chaco has been proposed as a linguistic area (Comrie *et al.* 2010) and in other Chaco languages which have been in contact with the Zamucoan family, some of the above discussed typological rarities can be found, such as: (i) the presence of gender and classifiers; (ii) the traces of conjunct/disjunct system and (iii) number markers preceding person markers (Ciucci 2014).

Eruei ute

End this (Ayo)

Shi ele no ma

Only this no more
(Ceg)

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