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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 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

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Texmelucan Zapotec Verbs
(Mexico)

Table 1. Regular Verbs, The Positive Paradigm

	Tomorrow	*Always*	*Yesterday*	*Would have*
die	gɑt	ɾɑt	gut	ŋgjɑt
hear	gjeŋ	ɾeŋ	gweŋ	ŋgjeŋ
do	gjikj	ɾikj	bikj[1]	ŋgjikj
drink[2]	go?	ɾo?	go?	ŋgjo?
ride	gjub	ɾjub	bjub	ŋgjub
count	lɑb[3]	ɬɑb	blɑb	nlɑb
teach	ljʉ	ɬʉ	bljʉ	ŋljʉ
leave	ɾʉ	dɾʉ	bɾʉ	nɾʉ
lose	ne?	ɾne?[4]	mne?	nne?
guard	ŋɑ	ɾŋɑ	mŋɑ	ŋŋɑ
twist	tel	ɾtel	ptel	ntel
cross	ded	ɾded	bded	nded
be dry	kwigj	ɾbigj	bigj	mbigj
change	t ʃɑ̰	ɾt ʃɑ̰	pt ʃɑ̰	nt ʃɑ̰
bend	dʒoŋ	ɾdʒoŋ	bdʒoŋ	ndʒoŋ
love	kɑ	ɾkɑ	pkɑ	ŋkɑ
tie	kjɨg	ɾkjɨg	pkjɨg	ŋkjɨg
move	kweŋ	ɾkweŋ	pkweŋ	ŋkweŋ
connect	gjid	ɾgjid	bgjid	ŋgjid
lie	gʉ	ɾgʉ	bgʉ	ŋgʉ
see	gwɨ	ɾgwɨ	bgwɨ	ŋgwɨ
slice	sug	ɾsug	psug	nsug
study	sjɑ̰	ɾsjɑ̰	psjɑ̰	nsjɑ̰
be drunk	zugj	ɾzugj	bzugj	nzugj
tear	ʃɑ̰	ɾ ʃɑ̰	p ʃɑ̰	n ʃɑ̰

[1] The few *i*-initial stems known to exist appear to be irregular in the Completive. One would expect forms like *gwicj, 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 glɑb, gljʉ, gɾʉ, and gne?. There are fewer examples before sibilants, producing forms like ksug, ksjɑ̰, and gzug. Although its appearance before stops has been attested, producing forms like gded or kted, they are very rare. It never appears before another velar.

[4] The sound written ɾ is voiceless except when is precedes a vowel or glide.

Table 2. Regular Verbs, The Negative Paradigm

	Will not	*Never*	*Did not*
die	wat	wagat	wangat
hear	wajeɲ	wagjeɲ	wangjeɲ
do	wajikj	wagjikj	wangjikj
drink	wo?	wago?	wango?
ride	wajub	wagjub	wangjub
count	walab	waglab	wanlab
teach	waljʉ	wagljʉ	wanljʉ
leave	warʉ	wagrʉ	wanrʉ
lose	wane?	wagne?	wanne?
guard	waɲa	wagɲa	wanɲa
twist	watel	waktel	wantel
cross	waded	wakted	wanted
be dry	wabigj	wakwigj	wankwigj
change	wat ʃɑ	wakt ʃɑ	want ʃɑ
bend	wadʒoŋ	wakt ʃoŋ	want ʃoŋ
love	waka	waka	wanka
tie	wakjɨg	wakjɨg	wankjɨg
move	wakweɲ	wakweɲ	wankweɲ
connect	wagjid	wagjid	wangjid
lie	wagʉ	wagʉ	wangʉ
see	wagwɨ	wagwɨ	wangwɨ
slice	wasug	waksug	wansug
study	wasjɑ	waksjɑ	wansjɑ
be drunk	wazugj	waksugj	wansugj
tear	wa ʃɑ	wak ʃɑ	wan ʃɑ

Table 3. Regular Causatives

	Tomorrow	*Always*	*Yesterday*
be born	gɑl	ɾɑl	gul
give birth	gɻl	ɾgɻl	bgɻl
be on	gwɑ	ɾgwɑ	bgwɑ
put on	kwɻ	ɾkwɻ	bkwɻ
be attached	kɑ	ɾkɑ	pkɑ
attach	kɻ	ɾkɻ	pkɻ
be dry	kwigj	ɾbigj	bigj
dry	kwɨgj	ɾkwɨgj	pkwɨgj
be full	dʒɑ	ɾdʒɑ	bdʒɑ
fill	t ʃɻ	ɾt ʃɻ	pt ʃɻ
be finished	lɑʒ	ɬɑʒ	blɑʒ
finish	lɻʒ	ɬɻʒ	blɻʒ
take a bath	lɻgj	ɬɻgj	blɻgj
bathe[5]	lɻgj	ɬɻgj	blɻgj
walk	zɑ	ɾzɑ	bzɑ
transport	sɻ	ɾsɻ	psɻ
slip(int)	ɾilj	dɾilj	bɾilj
slip(tr)	ɾɨlj	dɾɨlj	bɾɨlj
be attached	dɑʔ	ɾdɑʔ[6]	bdɑʔ
attach	tɑʔ	ɾtɑʔ	ptɑʔ

[5] lɻgj 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 tɑʔ.

Table 4. The Two Conjugations of {jub}

ride	gjub	ɾjub	bjub	ŋgjub
	wajub	wagjub	wangjub	
seek	jub[7]	ɾjub	bjub	njub
	wajub	wagjub	wanjub	

Table 5. Verbs With Irregular Stems

		Tomorrow	*Always*	*Yesterday*	*Should have*
grind	(1st	dõ	ɾdõ	bdõ	ndõ
	(2nd)	goɾ	ɾoɾ	gǫɾ	ŋgjǫɾ[8]
beaten	(1st	ɾuzã	dɾuzã	bɾuzã	nɾuzã
	(2nd)	gaz ɾu	ɾaz ɾu	guz ɾu	ŋgjaz ɾu
pay	(1st	ɾi ʃã	dɾi ʃã	bɾi ʃã	nɾi ʃã
	(2nd)	kji ʃ ɾu	ɾgji ʃ ɾu	bɾi̯ ʃ ɾu	ŋgji ʃ ɾu
distribute	(1st	lezã	ɬezã	blezã	nlezã
	(2nd)	kjez ɾu	ɾgji̯z ɾu	bli̯z ɾu	ŋgji̯z ɾu
wait	(1st	lezã	ɬezã	blezã	nlezã
	(2nd)	kwez ɾu	ɾbez ɾu	blez ɾu	mbez ɾu
call	(1st	ɾedʒã	dɾedʒã	bɾedʒã	nɾedʒã
	(2nd)	kwedʒ ɾu	ɾbedʒ ɾu	bɾedʒ ɾu	mbedʒ ɾu
sing	(1st	dulã	ɾdulã	bdulã	ndulã
	(2nd)	guɪ ɾu	ɾul ɾu	bi̯l ɾu	ŋgji̯l ɾu
relate[9]	(1st	do dũ	ɾdo dũ	bdo dũ	ndo dũ
	(2nd)	go nuɾ	ɾo nuɾ	bi̯ nuɾ	ŋgjǫ nuɾ

[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.