



Language and Culture Archives

Bartholomew Collection of Unpublished Materials

SIL International - Mexico Branch

© SIL International

NOTICE

This document is part of the archive of **unpublished** language data created by members of the Mexico Branch of SIL International. While it does not meet SIL standards for publication, it is shared “as is” under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) to make the content available to the language community and to researchers.



SIL International claims copyright to the analysis and presentation of the data contained in this document, but not to the authorship of the original vernacular language content.

AVISO

*Este documento forma parte del archivo de datos lingüísticos **inéditos** creados por miembros de la filial de SIL International en México. Aunque no cumple con las normas de publicación de SIL, se presenta aquí tal cual de acuerdo con la licencia "Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-CompartirIgual" (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) para que esté accesible a la comunidad y a los investigadores.*

Los derechos reservados por SIL International abarcan el análisis y la presentación de los datos incluidos en este documento, pero no abarcan los derechos de autor del contenido original en la lengua indígena.

FIGURES OF SPEECH FOUND IN TZOTZIL by Marion Cowan

First, none of the following types of figures of speech have been found in Tzotzil:

apostrophe, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metaphor,
metonymy, personification, synecdoche

Secondly, some of the following types of figures of speech have been found:

1. Rhetorical questions. ONLY NEGATIVE RHETORICALS occur in the language. Affirmative rhetorical questions are translated as statements with the emphasis indicated by the use of the free form of the pronouns.

These are introduced by the two phrases:

bu ba "¿where would.....?" and

¿Mi yu'un chacuyic ti lec ti te chba ac'anic chapanel ti
stojol ti much'utic mu sch'unobuc sc'op ti Diose? iBu ba
lecuc!

Do you suppose/ think wrongly that it is good to go and ask
unbelievers to take care of your problems? Where would that
be good! = That isn't good to do. 1 Cor. 6.6

bu c'amba ¿where could.....?"

iBu c'amba ju'uc yu'un tspas avi jchop o abtel li'to ti
much'u oy smule! --schiic

!Where could one who has sin be able to do this miracle! --
they said. John 9.17

It's like our English "how could a sinner do a miracle
like this! (meaning "he couldn't).

2. Euphemism. There is a euphemistic form in Huixteco for
death and for sexual relations. These are all I found.

Death:

The verb -cham not only means 'to die' but also "to faint,
to go unconscious"

Icham ti mole. The old man died OR the old man fainted.

Euphemism:

Ivay ti sbec'tale. His body slept.

Sexual Relations:

The two verbal phrases that are used euphemistically for sexual relations, have that meaning only in the context of talking about a fellow and a girl; otherwise, they are used much in ordinary conversations for their regular meaning.

Laj sc'opon sbaic. (lit. they talked to each other)

Laj xchi'in sbaic. (lit. they accompanied each other)

If talking about a fellow and a girl, either of those phrases would mean "they had sex".

Regular use:

laj xchi'in sbaic ti jteclum. They went to town together.

laj xchi'in sbaic ti q'uejimol. They sang together.

Tsc'opon sbaic oc'om. They will talk together tomorrow.

3. Doublets. Doublets sometimes occur in which the affirmative statement of the idea is followed by the negative.

e.g. Nichimuc me avo'nton, mu me xavich' mul.
Be happy, don't be sad.

Thirdly, Tzotzil does have **SIMILE**. Using the dialect of Huixtan I have listed in the attached paper 18 forms that are used in making comparisons in this language. As English speakers, it is hard for us to see the differences between some of them so as to explain their use or to master them perfectly in conversation.

WORDS USED IN HUIXTECO TZOTZIL TO MAKE COMPARISONS

Also apply to Chenalho Tzotzil, San Andres Tzotzil
and Zinacantan Tzotzil with a few changes in
phonetics

1. JECH CHAJ C'U CHE'EL - like, as

Rev. 15.3 Chq'uejinic jech chaj c'u che'el iq'uejin ti Moisesese.

They sing like Moses sang.

Rev. 16.14 Ista xa yorail jech chaj c'u che'el yaloj ti Diose.

The time came like God had said.

Lk. 6.49 Ja' jech chaj c'u che'el jun vinic ti ismeltsan snae ti
lum no'ox,...

He is like a man who built his house on just earth.

2. JECH CHAJ C'U CHE'EL (clause), JA' NO'OX JECH (clause) - like____,so____

Jn. 10.14 Jech chac c'u che'el ti lequil jq'uelcarnero lec tschabi ti
scarnero, ja' no'ox jechun uc jo'oni lec ti jchabi ti much'utic tsch'unic ti
chcolic ti jventae.

Like the good shepherd takes good care of his sheep, so also I take good care of those who
believe they will be saved through me.

Heb. 9.9 Jech chac c'u che'el ti much'utic laj yac' ti
ch'ayilanel smul ti vo'onen muc x'och ti jelaven ch'ul cuarto, ja' no'ox jech uc
ti hora to...

Like those who asked for pardon for their sins long ago did not enter the holiest place, so also
now...

3. CO'OL - same

OTS120 Ja' lec ti co'oluc nichamtutic schi'uc ti jchi'iltaque.

It good if the same we had died along with our people.

Js.5.17 Ti jtotic Eliase ti vo'one co'ol cristianoucitic schi'uc.

Our father Elijah long ago the same person like us.

Lk. 6.32 Co'ol chapasic schi'uc scotol ti much'utic ti c'utic chopol
tspasique..

The same you do like all those who do what is evil.

4. CO'OL (clause/noun) JECH CHAJ C'U CHE'EL - the same like

Jud.11 Co'ol yo'ntonic jech chaj c'u che'el ti Caine ti vo'one.

The same their hearts like Cain long ago.

2 Ti.2.11-13 Mi co'ol ti jts'ictic ti vocole jech chac c'u che'el its'ic
yu'un ti Cajvaltique,

If the same we bear troubles like our Lord bore them,

---or reversed order---

Heb. 4.1 Jech chac c'u che'el laj yalbe ti jtatomoltic ti vo'onene ti Diose,
co'ol chijyalbutic ti hora to...

Like God told our forefathers long ago, the same he says to us now.

5. CO'OL XAJ (noun) X'ELAN - the same in appearance seemingly

Rev. 4.3 Co'ol xaj me'q'uinobal x'elan te ti sjoylejal ti smuc' ti naclebe.

The same like a rainbow it appeared there around the big chair.

6. CO'OLTIC - more or less the same ??

p.2

Ja' co'oltic sjam tse'imol.

Its meaning is more or less laughter.

7. -CO'OLTAJES -BA - to cause one's self to become like

Heb. 2.16 Ma'uc laj sco'oltajes sba jech chac c'u che'el ch'ul abat. Ja' laj sco'oltajes sba jech chac c'u che'el jo'ocutic ti yol snich'oinucutic ti Abrahame.

It was not that he caused himself to become like an angel. He caused himself to become like us who are descendants of Abraham.

2 Cor. 12.11 Laj xa jco'oltajes jba jech chac c'u che'el ti much'utic bolique.

I have caused myself to become like those who are foolish.

8. (noun/stative verb) X'ELAN - look like, have the appearance of

Rev. 15.2 Espejo x'elan.

It looked like a mirror.

Mt. 7.15 Manso x'elan jech chac c'u che'el carnero. Ti yo'ntone jech chac c'u che'el bolom chti'van.

They appeared quiet/humble like a sheep. Their hearts are like a carnivorous animal.

Lk. 10.30 Chamen x'elan icom yu'unic.

They left him dead in appearance.

2 Cor. 13.4 Jech chac c'u che'el ti Cristo ti mu'yuc yip x'elan c'alal icham ti cruz

Like Christ who appeared to be without power when he died on the cross

Rev. 1.20 xiyutun ti Cajvaltique, ja' ti cristiano x'elan laj quile.

--the Lord said to me, he who was like a person that I saw.

9. JUN TO (noun/clause) - it was like, it was as if

Rev. 8.8 Jun to muc' ti vits yac'oj sba chtil itenat ochel ti yut nab.

What looked like a big burning mountain was thrown into the ocean.

Rev. 9.7 Ti sjole oy jun to scorona pasbil ti c'anal taq'uin.

On his head there was like a crown made of gold.

Mt. 3.12 Jun to stsacoj ti sc'ob ti sjorquetae yu'un chic'a strigo.

It was like he had in his hand his branched stick to separate the chaff from his wheat.

10. JUN TO (noun) X'ELAN it appeared to be like (something)

Rev. 4.6 Te oy jun to muc' ti nab x'elan.

It looked like a big sea was there.

OTS report of spies

Jo'ontutic jun to p'ilixuntutic x'elan ti stojol.

We looked like grasshoppers before them.

Rev. 16.3 Jun to sch'ich'el anima x'elan.

It looked like the blood of a dead person.

Mt. 3.16 Jun to culajte x'elan ti c'alal iyal tal ti sbae.

He had the appearance of a dove when he came down on him.

11. JUN TO JA' JECH CHAC C'U CHE'EL - appeared to be like

Rev. 9.7 Ti c'ulube jun to ja' jech chac c'u che'el ca' ti yich'oj smaquic yu'un chbat ti pleito ti yajvale.

The locusts appeared to be like horses that had on protectors because their riders were going to battle.

12. JECH (stative verb) - thus, like that

p.3

Jn 8.48 Jech ono'ox jech chac c'u che'el laj jnoptutic.

Thus it was like we thought.

Jn. 15.4 Jechoxuc uc, mu xu' avu'unic chapasic ti c'usi leque mi mu teucuxuc ti jtojole.

You are thus(like that) also, you cannot do what is good if you do not stay with me.

13. JECH X'ELAN - this is what were like

Rev. 9.17 Jech x'elan ti ca'etique schi'uc ti much'utic scajlebinojique ti ni'ac'bat jq'uele.

This is what were like the horses and those who were riding them that I was given to see.

14. -C'OT/C'OTEM - become like

Lk. 8.21 Ja' jme' ja' quits'inab c'otemic.

They have become like my mother & my brothers.

Jn. 4.34 Ja' jve'el c'otem ti jpas ti c'usi tsc'an yo'nton ti Diose ti laj stacun talele.

It has become like my food to do what God who sent me wants.

Jn. 15.15 Jo'oxuque co'ol niyc'otucutic xa, yu'un laj xa cac'boxuc ana'ic scotol ti c'utic ca'yoj ti stojol ti Jtote.

We have now become the same because I have let you know all that I heard in my Father's presence.

Ef. 1.23 Ja' sbec'talucutic c'otemucutic jo'ocutic ti jch'unobetic ti sc'ope.

We have become like his body, we who believe his word.

15. JECH CHAC C'U CHE'EL (noun/stative verb) - ^{had} -C'OT/C'OTEM - become like

Mt. 5.13 Ti jo'oxuque jech chac c'u che'el ats'am c'otemoxuc.

You have become like salt.

Jn. 6.35 Ti jo'one jech chac c'u che'el vaj c'otemun.

I have become like tortillas.

Rev. 1.17 Jech chac c'u che'el anima nic'ot.

Like a dead person I became.

16. YILEL - seeing as it were (something)

Used by Zinacantecos in reporting dreams. Occurs in every sentence. Did not feel it should be used for dreams in Scripture as they felt the people actually saw these things for a purpose.

Same for Huixtecos.

17. YA'YEL - as it were (used when what is mentioned is not the normal function or action of the thing compared)

Rev. 17.6 Jyacubel ti antse laj quil yu'un scoj ti yuch'ojbe sch'ich'el ya'yel ti much'utic t'ujbilic yu'un ti Diose ti vo'one.

The woman was drunk I saw because she had drunk as it were the blood of those who were chosen by God long ago.

Lk. 8.13 Nichim no'ox yo'nton yu'un la sch'un. Mu'yuc yibil ya'yel.

He was happy because he had believed. He had no root as it were.

Mt. 13.22 Jech yu'un ti sc'op ti Diose ti cha'ie, ja' chquevtaat ya'yel yu'un ti sbic'tal yo'ntone.

Therefore the word of God that he hears, it was shaded as it were by his covetousness.

Lk. 12.49 Tal cac' taluc c'oc' ya'yel li' ti balumile...

I came to bring fire, as it were, here in the world.

Heb. 11.12 Jech yu'un ti sventa ti jun vinic ti chamen xa sbec'tal ya'yel
yu'un mu xa xnich'naj, jech yepal yol snich'nab i'an jech chac c'u che'el ti
c'analetique.

Therefore on account of one man whose body was dead as it were because he could not sire
children, thus the number of his descendants were born like the stars.

Rom. 3.13 Ti yut yeic oy veneno ya'yel jech chac c'u che'el oy ti yut ye
veneno ti horachone.

Inside their mouths there is poison as it were, like is inside the mouth of a poisonous
snake.

2 Ti. 2.21 Ti jo'ocutique jech chac c'u che'el spulato ya'yel c'otemucutic
yu'un ti Cajvaltique.

We have become like our Lord's plates, as it were.

Titus 1.12 Ti jo'ocutique jech chac c'u che'el jti'vanejbolomucutic yu'un ti
jti'tic ya'yel ti much'utic ti jlo'latique.

We are like wild animals because we eat as it were those whom we deceive.

18. SJELUC - it's as if

Mt. 23.4 Sjeluc tsmeltsanic icatsil.

It's as if they were preparing loads.

OTHER THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A GOOD TRANSLATION INTO TZOTZIL ARE:

1. Tzotziles never call themselves by that name of Tzotzil. They refer to their people as **my** or **our companions**. So in the translation of the Bible, if the writer is a jew, then he does not call his people "jews" but says "my people, or "our people".

In Tzotzil there is both the inclusive and exclusive first person plural pronoun, so to know which to use, he must know who his audience is as he writes. If his audience is gentile, then he says "our (excl) people"; if his audience is hebrew, then he says "our (incl) people". This is a very important phenomenon of Tzotzil and not only applies to the name they call themselves but also to their church, their nation, etc..

2. A Tzotzil never talks about himself in third person. Their pronouns do not cover that area of meaning. e.g. In the gospel of John, since John is mentioned and he wrote the book, he has to refer to himself in Tzotzil as "I". If he doesn't, then the writer and the John mentioned in the book are not the same person. Every book needs to be considered in the light of this.

Take for example the book of Acts, it is believed that the gentile Luke wrote it for gentiles, so the Tzotzil translator has that in mind as he translates it, so he knows what forms of his language to use.

3. The Bible is the story of the Jews against the rest of the world, and as the translator writing as a Jew introduces new characters into the story, rather than say "a man came to Jesus" he needs to say "one of my people came to Jesus" if the person being spoken of is a Jew. If the translator writing as a Jew introduces the new character by saying "a man came to Jesus", the Tzotzil reader thinks it is a non-jew who came. If one goes all through a book doing that (as I did before I knew about this, then later asked my translation helper about it), the impression one is giving is that just as many gentiles came to see Jesus as Jews, and that was not so. For gentiles the term "other-land people" is used.