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Tojolabal (Mayan)

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UNIVERSAL PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF TOJOLABAL

Julia Supple

March, 1947

The Tojolabal Indians, who number between eight and ten thousand people, are located in a small territory near Comitán, Chiapas, Mexico. The language they speak is of the same name, Tojolabal, which means "plain words". The information in the following manuscript was gathered over a period of three years of field work in the ejidos of Saltillo and Jotana. There have been a number of informants used.

UNIVERSAL PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF TOJOLABAL

Julia Supple

There are two universal phonological processes in Tojolabal, (1) Loss of Phonemes and (2) Assimilation.

I. Loss of Phonemes. Loss of phonemes occur in consonant sequences.

A. All identical consonants in a cluster are reduced to one phoneme.

/jjišap'/ my comb becomes (jišap')

/ssip/ his tick becomes (sip)

/niwan nan/ It's big, mother becomes (niwanan)

B. There is a loss of glottalization on glottalized consonants when immediately followed by another consonant.

/č'ac'jel/ chewing becomes (č'acjel)

/seet'š1/ It was cut becomes (seetš1)

C. The phoneme "j" is lost when preceded by

1. The phoneme č

/šjmana/ I buy it becomes (šmana)

/šjana/ I open it becomes (šana)

2. The phoneme s

/sjutu/ He plowed it becomes (sutu)

/sjimič'/ his slingshot becomes (simič')

D. The phoneme "y" is lost when preceded by č

/čyaaa/ He gave it becomes (šaaa)

/čyila/ He took it becomes (šila)

/čyooo/ He drove it becomes (šooo)

II. Assimilation

All assimilation is regressive, contiguous and according to point of articulation. There are both complete and incomplete assimilation.

A. Complete

1. When unglottalized stops or affricates are followed by their corresponding glottalized stops or affricates, the cluster is reduced to the glottalized phoneme.

/č'ak k'ak'/ It burned becomes (č'ak'ak')

/p'ik'it t'usan/ a little thin becomes (p'ik'it'usan)

/sip p'ajtan/ the tick first becomes (sip'ajtan)

/paʃ p'uʃ'uni/ It whined loudly becomes (paʃ'uʃuni)

/oč č'ay/ He entered quickly becomes (oč'ey)

2. š followed by s becomes s

/šutu/ I turn it becomes (sutu)

/šila/ I shave it becomes (sila)

3. s followed by š becomes š

/sšanap'/ his shoe becomes (šanap')

/sšalu/ its jar becomes (šalu)

/sšelek/ his razor becomes (šelek)

4. č or č' followed by ʃ becomes ʃ

/oč ʃaʃ/ It entered hard becomes (oʃaʃ)

/jč'ač' ʃaʃ/ I'll chew hard becomes (jč'aʃaʃ)

5. \check{e} or \check{e}' followed by \check{g}' becomes \check{g}'

/ə \check{e} \check{g}' ol/ The squash entered becomes (ə \check{g}' ol)

/jə \check{t} ə \check{e}' \check{g}' ol/ I'll chew squash becomes (jə \check{t} ə \check{g}' ol)

6. \check{g} followed by \check{e} becomes \check{e}

/ \check{g} ə \check{e} euuni/ He nursed hard becomes (ə \check{e} euuni)

/ \check{g} ə \check{e} əaani/ He danced hard becomes (ə \check{e} əaani)

B. Incomplete

1. \check{s} followed by \check{g} or \check{g}' becomes s

/ \check{s} ə \check{g} omo/ I gather it becomes (sə \check{g} omo)

/ \check{s} ə \check{g}' ana/ I cook it becomes (sə \check{g}' ana)

2. s followed by \check{e} or \check{e}' becomes \check{s}

/sə \check{e} ol/ its row becomes (š \check{e} ol)

/sə \check{e}' alnup'/ its spinning dish becomes (š \check{e}' alnup')

3. n followed by k becomes η

/pinka/ hacienda becomes (p η ka)

/potranka/ young mare becomes (potranka)

4. n followed by p or p' becomes m

/k'an/ yellow becomes (k'am \check{p}' i) it ripened

/kan/ to remain becomes (kam p'aan) it remained
thrown out