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Two Approaches To The Analysis And Description  
Of The Relations Represented By Chiquihuitlan  
Mazatec Function Words.

or:

A Study Of Chiquihuitlan Mazatec Function Words.

by

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## Chapter 1. Introduction.

Chiquihuitlan Mazatec (hereafter written Chiqui. Maz.) contains a number of function words. I call them "words" even though some of them are technically clitics (-ja 'the') and some are phrases (hya xi 'when').

After I got into translation I began to feel that one of the most important areas of the language in which I still lacked proficiency was in the meanings and uses of some of these function words.

I had been calling them "relational words" after the ideas put forth by John Beekman and others in seminars and articles on relations between propositions, because many of them fall into the category of relational words. I now feel that "function words" is a better cover term for the whole class, since some of the words have a deictic function (-ja 'the' is a demonstrative) and others just add a semantic flavor to a word or phrase rather than relate two elements (-ni 'emphatic/just' adds a flavor of emphasis to the noun or verb that it is attached to, but it does not change the meaning or relate the word to anything else).

I used two different approaches in this study. One approach is represented by Longacre's recent Philippine and New Guinea reports, and the other is represented by several chapters from Beekman's forthcoming book on translation principles. The bibliography of materials related to this

subject could be greatly expanded, but I have listed only those I used during this study.

One of the first things that became apparent when I looked at a Chiqui. Maz. text from Longacre's viewpoint was that different ones of these function words were operating on different levels, from phrase level through clause and sentence levels, right up to paragraph level. Therefore, to work on sentence level function words, for example, meant that I would ignore some of the more common and interesting ones that operate on other levels.

As I attempted to isolate sentence types (having chosen the sentence level as the starting point) I came to realize that to discover all the meanings and uses of the function words, I would have to do fairly thorough systematic analyses of Chiqui. Maz. clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and at least a rough analysis of discourses, since so far, in the grammatical realm, only the phrases of Chiqui. Maz. have been systematically analysed (C. Jamieson:1972).

Two factors entered into my decision not to undertake that task. The first was that the analysis of all those levels is too big a job to attempt in one workshop period, and the second was that grammatical analysis is my wife's area of interest, while mine is phonology.

Since I had previously been exposed to the idea of making explicit, unambiguous statements of relations between propositions (through seminars during two workshops and through articles in Notes on Translation) I thought it might

be profitable to look at the Chiqui. Maz. function words from that viewpoint. What I found was that a modified relational display approach yielded a relatively quick, general view of the various grammatical structures used to express semantic relations, or, to use terminology more like Longacre's, it yielded a general view of the various surface structure realizations of the deep structure relations.

## Chapter 2. Procedure.

The first step I took was to look at a Chiqui. Maz. narrative text and underline all the clitics, words, and phrases that I considered to be function words. It turned out that about 39% of the 627 words in the text fell into the ~~■~~ class of ~~■~~ function words. This 39% represents all the occurrences of 35 different function words, some used up to 40 times throughout the text and others only once.

Then I selected one of the function words and listed the various types of sentence structures in which it occurred within that one text. Then I looked up that function word in my concordance (A. Jamieson:1971) and checked to see if it occurred in other types of sentence structures in other texts. The more extensive examples in the concordance revealed added uses of the term. I repeated this exercise for several of the other function words in the first text.

Then I did a rough discourse analysis of the same text more or less a la Longacre, which revealed, among other things, how the function words expressing 'time' were the dominant markers of paragraph and section units in the body of this narrative text.

Then I made a relational display of the same text more or less a la Beekman, which revealed, among other things, that the relations that existed did not always simply relate



one proposition to another. Sometimes they related a group of propositions to another group of propositions, and sometimes they related a proposition to what preceded generally.

Then I began to concentrate on analysing sentence types a la Longacre. And here is where I ran into trouble. The sentences which contained these function words kept turning out to be mostly simple sentences with various types of margins. And some of the sentences that I posited as different sentence types (with a nucleus consisting of two bases joined by a function word) seemed somehow to be mere stylistic variants of some of the simple sentence types (with a margin and a nucleus).

After studying these sentence phenomena for a time, it became apparent to me that I would have to do some analysis of clauses and paragraphs also, to be able to come to any definite conclusions about the sentence level. And at that point, time would not permit such an exhaustive approach.

During the course of the procedures mentioned above, I decided that what I really wanted to accomplish was to learn what surface grammatical structures were used in Chiqui. Maz. to express the various deep structure relations.

As I looked over what I had been doing, it occurred to me that the modified relational display could give me a very good idea of what I wanted to know, without the detailed grammatical analysis required by a study of the various levels from clause to discourse.

So then I restudied Beekman's material and did a modified relational display of a second Chiqui. Maz. narrative text. In this second text, the function words came to 42% of the total number of words (750) in the text.

Then I listed all the sentences which expressed a given relation (as indicated on the right hand margin of the relational display), repeating the procedure for several different relations.

As I studied these specific relations and the sentences expressing them, I discovered some additional types of sentence structures which expressed one of the deep structure relations (for instance, of CONDITION-CONSEQUENCE), in which the normal function word for that relation ("if") did not occur. Instead, either a different ~~f~~unction word occurred, or none at all (mere juxtaposition). These latter sentence types are easily observed in a relational display, whereas they might be easily overlooked if some other approach is taken.

### Chapter 3. Comments

on my modified relational displays.

I classify my relational displays of Chiqui. Maz. texts as "modified" because they differ in one major respect from the displays of the Greek New Testament being prepared by Beekman and his associates. I have displayed the actual wording and order of the Mazatec original, whereas Beekman restates each Greek proposition in English, matching event words to Events, etc., and stating explicitly any implicit information needed to make the restatement of the proposition complete and unambiguous. (Beekman:chapter 17). My reason for not following Beekman's procedure is simply that my displays are made for a very different purpose than his. His are for purposes of translation, to be used by many who do not control Greek. Mine are for the purpose of seeing what actual surface structures are used in Chiqui. Maz. to represent the various deep structure relations.

The usefulness of such a display can be seen in the following sample page from one of the displays of a Chiqui. Maz. text. (Chart I).

This sample consists of two sentences, sentence 15 and sentence 16, of a narrative text about planting corn. I have divided each sentence into separate propositions more or less as Beekman would, except that I have simply quoted the text (and added literal and free translations for this

report) without any restatement or rearrangement.

To be able to fully read the following display, two of Beekman's rules must be pointed out.

1) Although the basic relations have two parts, i.e. **GENERIC-SPECIFIC**, **CONDITION-CONSEQUENCE**, **MEANS-PURPOSE**, etc., only one part is labeled in the display, with a cross reference to the other half. So, by labeling proposition 16a as the **CONDITION** of 16d, it is meant that 16a is the **CONDITION** and that 16d is therefore the **CONSEQUENCE**.

If both halves of the relation were listed in the display, proposition 16d would have two labels, i.e., **CONSEQUENCE** of 16a (and 16b) and **MEANS** of 16g. Listing both parts of all the relations (as I did in my first display) unnecessarily clutters the display.

2) To say that proposition x is related to proposition y implies that all propositions subordinate to x and y are also related in the same way. That is, the following display states that proposition 16d is the **MEANS** of proposition 16g, the **PURPOSE**. However, it means that by implication, propositions 16d, e, and f are the **MEANS** of propositions 16g and h, since 16e and f are shown to be subordinate to 16d by indentation and labeling (likewise 16h to 16g). Bracketing the groups of propositions (as I did in my first display) unnecessarily clutters the display.

Basically these two rules eliminate redundancy to a point where you get a very simple yet clear statement of the relations existing between the propositions of a text.

15a	<u>Hya xi cuangui</u> When we-ex-will-go	<u>xi xinchá</u> that will-be-placed	<u>tje ja ne</u> seed the ,	
	When we go to plant,			TIME of 15b
15b	<u>hacuaha cuma</u> also will-happen	<u>ngu cjuandia lihndi ta</u> a bother little that		
	a little matter has to be taken care of, that is,			
15c	<u>cueya</u> will-die	<u>ngu xahnda.</u> a chicken.		SPECIFIC of 15b
	(one has) to butcher a chicken.			
16a	<u>Hya xi yje xa</u> When big work ,	<u>ne</u> When the job is big,		CONDITION of 16d
16b	<u>hacuaha cji</u> also many companions	<u>compañeru</u> and there are a lot of helpers		CONDITION of 16d CONDITIO
16c	<u>xi cjue</u> who will-go	<u>cuincha tje ne</u> will-place seed ,		IDENTIFICATION of companions in 16b
	who go to plant,			
16d	<u>tji</u> there-is ,	<u>ne</u> one has		MEANS of 16g
16e	<u>hacuaha cueya</u> also will-die	<u>ngu najñu</u> a turkey		CONTENT of 16d
	also to butcher a turkey			
16f	<u>xi cjue</u> which will-go	<u>chu xcu xa ja ne</u> animal to work the ,		COMMENT of turkey in 16e
	to take to the work site,			
16g	<u>ngaja sine</u> there will-eat	<u>yeje ni</u> all emphatic companions		
	to feed every one of the helpers			
16h	<u>xi sahmi xa.</u> who do work.			COMMENT of helpers in 16g
	on the job.			

## CHART I

Relational Display of a Chiqui. Maz. Narrative Text.(Sample)

## Chapter 4. Observations.

The function words used in the two sentences of the display in Chart I are shown in Chart II.

Function word	Meaning	Number of occurrences
<u>hya xi</u>	when	2
<u>xi</u>	that	4
<u>-ja</u>	the	2
<u>ne</u>	,	5
<u>hacuaha</u>	also	3
<u>ta</u>	for/that	1
<u>-ni</u>	emphatic/ just	1

CHART II

The twenty occurrences of these function words\* constitute 39% of the total of 51 words in these two sentences (vs. 42% for the whole text, see p. 6).

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\*Hya xi is listed as a unit, but is counted as two function words, since it is, in fact, made up of two words. On the other hand, -ja and -ni are technically clitics, but are written in the practical orthography as independent words, and so are counted as words.

Proposition 16a illustrates a case in which a function word other than the normal one occurs. CONDITION is usually introduced in Chiqui. Maz. by sa xi 'if'. However, hya xi 'when', which is normally used for introducing a TIME expression (as in proposition 15a) may also be used to introduce a condition.

Another example is proposition 9b (not shown here), which uses hiscā xi 'where' to introduce a condition.

And proposition 23 uses simple juxtaposition, with no function word at all, to show (or perhaps play down?) the relation of CONDITION-CONSEQUENCE.

The above examples illustrate some of the types of initial observations that I was able to make by studying a modified relational display of a Chiqui. Maz. text.

I am convinced that for me, at this time, the most profitable procedure to pursue is to make a few more relational displays, perhaps of different types of texts (procedural, dialogue, etc.) in order to broaden the base of my initial observations, and then to check for further usages in the Chiqui. Maz. concordance. I should then have a very good picture, and consequently much better personal control, of the various surface structure realizations of the deep structure relations in Chiqui. Maz.

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