MAYAN
STUDIES I

with articles by
w. cameron townsend
colin c. delgaty
ray elliott
clarence and katherine church

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benjamin elson

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Editor's Note

This publication contains four articles on Mayan languages written by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The article by W. Cameron Townsend was written in 1926 and is published here as an historical document on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Institute by Townsend. The grammar has never been published, though it was once duplicated (rephotograph) for students. For inclusion in this volume the original format has been changed and regularized. A foreword by Kenneth L. Pike discusses these matters and the value of Townsend's work.

The other three articles were written recently using a different, theoretical approach. Each of the authors has done extensive field work on the Mayan language he is describing, acquiring a speaking knowledge of it as a second language. In these three articles the notion of the tagmeme as the basic unit of grammatical description has been used. However, each author uses a different matrix for description and approaches the material somewhat differently.

Delgaty discusses in great detail the structure of verbs giving minute restrictions of occurrence. He finds it convenient to illustrate these by setting up a number of charts representing different kinds of verb structures. From each chart the occurring morpheme sequences are represented by formulas; one or more formulas are derived from each chart. The result is 21 charts and 34 formulas. An examination of these will give in minute detail the morphemes of the verb phrase, their potential combinations, and their restrictions. A composite chart of verbal morphemes is an appendix to the paper.
Elliott, on the other hand, gives an overall view of clause structure, but does not discuss in detail the syntactic classes which are fillers of the clause-level slots.

It is my guess that most of Delgaty's charts would be descriptions of classes of verbs which fill nuclear (or predicate-like) slots in different clause types. Thus, Delgaty would find in Tzotzil many more clause types than the four Elliott finds for Ixil. On the other hand, some of these differences would be treated by Elliott as different sentence types, rather than different clause types. These differences constitute certain differences in approach.

It is hoped that future papers by the authors will treat these matters more fully; that Elliott will examine in greater detail the verb structure of the various clause types, and that Delgaty will explore the clause. Such information will be welcome additions to comparative Mayan grammar.

The paper by the Churches explores the noun phrase. They find two types of noun phrases based on internal structural differences.

It is hoped that these papers will be a contribution to Mayan studies, particularly comparative Mayan grammar.
# Table of Contents

## I. Cakchiquel Grammar
- W. Cameron Townsend .......................... 3
- Foreword by Kenneth L. Pike .................. 3
- Introduction .................................. 9
- I Prefixes .................................... 12
- II Root Stems .................................. 41
- III Suffixes ................................... 65

## II. Tzotzil Verb Phrase Structure
- Colin C. Delgaty .............................. 83
  0. Introduction ................................ 83
  1. Predicate with transitive verb stems ...... 84
  2. Predicate with intransitive verb stems ... 103
  3. Predicate with positional verb stems ..... 111
  4. Predicate with substantive stems ......... 114
  5. Predicate with descriptive stems ......... 118
  6. Allomorphic variations ..................... 122

## III. Ixil (Mayan) Clause Structure
- Ray Elliott .................................. 129
  0. Introduction ................................ 129
  1. Clause types ................................ 131
  2. Clause-level tagmemes ...................... 142

## IV. The Jacaltec Noun Phrase
- Clarence and Katherine Church ............... 159
  1. Noun phrase types .......................... 159
  2. Constituent tagmemes ...................... 163