



**Natalie Operstein and Aaron Huey Sonnenschein (eds.)  
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diachrony, typology [Typological Studies in Language  
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In this volume, Operstein and Sonnenschein(henceforth O&S) have edited a collection of important papers on the Zapotec languages, which constitute a family of closely related American-Indian languages of Mexico that belong to the Oto-Manguean macro-family. The volume is welcome, because it makes both Zapotec data and the complex morphological phenomena they illustrate available to the wider linguistic audience. Up to now the materials talked about in this book were of restricted availability either because they were only presented at local conferences or they were published in venues with a poor distribution.

More specifically, the book is on valence changing mechanisms in Zapotec. There is a reason for this. In the lexicon of Zapotec languages, as Operstein puts it, "[t]he majority of verbs come in morphologically related pairs of opposite valence" (p.27), e.g. Chichicapan Zapotec *too'* (tr) 'sell' vs. *doo'* (intr) 'be sold'; Papabuco Zapotec *coo'* (tr) 'eat something' vs. *too'* (intr) 'have a meal'; etc.

The derivational rules producing such lexical pairs are opaque for the most part. The phenomenon reminds one of verb pairs in English such as *sit* and *set* or *lie* and *lay*. The only difference with English is that in the Zapotec languages, the number of such pairs is enormous. To this, one can also add interesting morphology, because the verbs in the pairs often display different inflectional properties (i.e., they inflect as members of different inflectional classes). As most of such pairs must be learned as independent lexemes, the phenomenon constitutes a very interesting problem for a theory of valence change. A necessary starting point in addressing this problem is good descriptions. O&S have recognised this gap in the literature and they have provided the discipline with this volume, which has plenty of novel data.

Taking a historical approach to account for the morphological idiosyncracies we observe in the lexical pairs of the Zapotec languages appears to be a good place to start in order to make sense of them. This is where the volume edited by O&S is of interest for the readership of this journal. The synchronic situation in Zapotec, which varies in interesting ways across the different languages, is accounted for by taking a common historical model which is based on reconstructions of Proto-Zapotec in various manuscripts by Terrence Kaufman. Such materials are difficult to access outside Zapotec academia.

The data provide intriguing examples of how elements that were once derivational in function were reanalyzed as inflectional exponents as their derivational function became opaque. The result is a bounty of inflectional allomorphy that can be accounted for by way of inflectional classes. For example, all authors accept a reconstructed causative prefix *\*o-* for Proto-Zapotec. In most languages, like in Macuilianguis Zapotec (Chapter 12, Foreman & Dooley), the reflex of *\*o-* is /u/, as it appears in valence pairs. This can be seen in the inflected forms of such verbs in the habitual and the potential: ‘get lost’ (intr) *ri-nitti*’ {HAB-get.lost} and *i-nitti*’ {POT-get.lost} vs. ‘lose’ (tr) *r-u-nitti*’ {HAB-*\*o*-get.lost} and *g-u-nitti*’ {POT-*\*o*-get.lost}; but not in the completive: *bi-nitti*’ {CPL-get.lost} vs *be-nitti*’ {CPL-lose}. The lack of the causative prefix in the completive can be apparently explained by appealing to the existence of a morphophonological rule in Proto-Zapotec aimed at avoiding hiatus. But as such a rule is only historical, Foreman & Dooley prefer to treat all material preceding the stems of verbs like these as allomorphs in the exponence of aspect/mood inflection and treat them as members of two different inflectional classes, one class has *ri-* {HAB}, *i-* {POT} and *bi-* {CPL} while the other has *ru-* {HAB}, *gu-* {POT} and *be-* {CPL}; the reflex of old causative *\*o-* having fused with the old inflection. On the other hand, because of their historical origin, the membership of the modern inflectional classes is biased towards a certain valence profile: most verbs of the *ri-*, *i-*, *bi-* class are intransitive, while most of the *ru-*, *gu-*, *be-* class are transitive (characterizing the agentive semantics of some of these transitive classes is the topic of Chapter 10 by Sicoli).

In contrast to Macuilianguis Zapotec, the modern reflex of the old causative prefix *\*o-* is said (in Chapter 3 by O) to be "productive" in other languages, as for example in Isthmus Zapotec, e.g. (intr) *niti* ‘be lost’ vs. (tr) *u-niti* ‘lose’. This causative formation is judged by O to be historically recent based on the fact that the reflex *u-* is also found tacked onto stems that are already marked as outcomes of an even older causative marker *\*k-* (mainly responsible for the occurrence of consonant mutations in the stem of the transitive member of the valence pair, (intr) *giže* ‘pay’ vs. (tr) *u-kize* ‘charge’). This is also the analysis taken in Chapter 6 by Pérez Baez. However, I wonder whether its alleged late productivity is linked in Isthmus Zapotec to the powerful transitive semantics of a distinct inflectional class like in Macuilianguis Zapotec which could have absorbed more members, and accordingly this *u-*, which is taken to be a causative morpheme, works rather as a phonological element of preceding inflectional exponence. It seems to me rather unlikely that material that is so old can be singled out by speakers and retaken as a "productive" derivative morpheme, although I am open to surprises.

This brings me to a word of caution about the use of the term "productive" in many places in this volume (I have seen it used in the same way elsewhere in the volume), where it is used to characterize the scope of morphological material found across many pairs, although *in strictu sensu*, the material in question does not abide by a productive derivational rule, that is, one that can be applied to produce new lexical items in the creation of novel valence pairs. This in turn brings me to the datasets used by the authors of the volume. The data are abundant and of high-quality, but only a few contributions use percentages for the distribution of the mechanisms under discussion. I would have appreciated having been given a little more information about this by way of a summary at the end of each paper. It would have helped to create a snapshot, an DNA profile as it were, of the lexicon of each of the languages under discussion.

The book is structured as follows. A preface by Kulikov, serving as chapter 1, praises the historical approach in the volume which he labels as novel 'genetically oriented typology'. This is followed by an introduction by O&S of the general grammatical traits of Zapotec. Real content starts in chapter 3, which is a typological overview by O of valence changing mechanisms in Zapotec. I consider this well-documented chapter, together with chapter 15 (also by O) on the relation between such mechanisms and verbal inflection, to be most informative about the morphological properties of verbs and verb pairs in Zapotec. Chapter 3 could have served as a position paper, delineating a methodology for the study of similar mechanisms which, had it been thoroughly followed, would have rendered a substantial amount of comparable results. However, not all authors followed it, which I think is regrettable because it is clear. The overall quality of the descriptively oriented papers (chapters 4–11) is very good. I find Chapter 9 on Zanizapotec redundant because most of the information there is already found in other chapters by O. I also felt that a clear division of contents in the book by way of parts was lacking.

Chapters 12 to 15 involve heterogeneous topics on valence: causatives in Chapter 12 by Foreman & Dooley; a typology of reciprocal constructions by Munro in chapter 14; and the aforementioned chapter on valence and inflection by O (chapter 15). Chapter 13 by S is the odd man out. It is on possessive prolepsis and beneficiaries ('I give your book' for 'I give you the book'), which is called indirect object lowering. Though the construction is interesting, it has nothing to do with the general theme of the book. All contributors except for the first one (Kulikov) and the last one (Kittilä) are linguists with an expertise in one or some Zapotec languages, who also have connections to the USA by birth, training, or work, or a combination of the three; but there are a number of Mexican scholars who work on Zapotec

languages who could also have contributed to this volume with equally high-quality contributions and so is it somewhat regrettable that this is not the case.

The final chapter is by Kittilä. I would have liked a little editing of this chapter on the part of the editors, because the first twenty pages are on well-known types of valence changing mechanisms. On the positive side, these pages could readily be used as pedagogical materials for a linguistic typology class, but otherwise they could have been omitted. The rest of the chapter is an evaluation of Zapotec within a more general typology of valence changing mechanisms.

What is remarkable about Zapotec are the high number of causatives (pointing to a heavily intransitivizing proto-language), the lack of a productive passive and the very complex morphology to realize the various mechanisms. This last characteristic raises the question for me as to how much of the morphology involved in valence changing mechanisms should be viewed from the syntax or whether it should start to be viewed seriously from its link to the lexicon. This volume on the Zapotec languages is an important contribution to the building of a solid typology of valence changes from languages which take a solid lexical stand on the phenomenon. This volume presents Zapotec morphology, for the first time, to a wide audience. This is a laudable achievement in its own right.