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► To cite this version:

Luca Ciucci. Counterfactual constructions in Zamucoan. 57th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea, Aug 2024, Helsinki, Finland. <hal-04913968>

HAL Id: hal-04913968

<https://hal.science/hal-04913968v1>

Submitted on 27 Jan 2025

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Counterfactual constructions in Zamucoan

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Keywords: Clause combining, Counterfactuality, Grammaticalization, Para-hypotaxis, South-American languages, Zamucoan.

The present talk addresses counterfactuality in the small Zamucoan family (Bolivia, Paraguay): Old Zamuco (18th century), Ayoreo (≈ 5,000 speakers in Bolivia and Paraguay) and Chamacoco (≈ 2,000 speakers in Paraguay). I use data from the available historical sources for Old Zamuco (Chomé 1958 [before 1745]; Ciucci, forthcoming), and from my fieldwork and the available literature for Ayoreo and Chamacoco (cf. Fabre 2005-2023, Ciucci 2016).

Zamucoan verbs have neither tense nor aspect and only distinguish between realis and irrealis mood (Bertinetto 2014a). Counterfactuality is usually associated with the irrealis, which, depending on the language, is also expressed by modality-sensitive negators and subordinators. In Ayoreo, hypothetical manner constructions (1) and counterfactual conditional constructions (2) are encoded through the irrealis subordinator *ujetiga*. Counterfactual conditional constructions are also characterized by the presence of the modal marker *-ras(V)* (Bertinetto 2014b: 404), which may also convey counterfactuality in independent clauses: *ueradi-rase* (beautiful-MOD[SG.PRED]) ‘As if it were pretty’ (Morarie 2006: 81).

- (1) Ayoreo (Morarie 2011: 106)

<i>Cho</i>	<i>ujetiga</i>	<i>y-ab-ipise</i>	<i>ua</i>
[3]be_like	SUB.IRR	1SG-SON-AUGM[M.SG.PRED]	2SG
‘It is as if you were my own child.’			

- (2) Ayoreo (Morarie 2006: 97)

<i>Ujetiga</i>	<i>pota</i>	<i>dirica</i>	<i>ga,</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>y-isi-rase</i>
SUB.IRR	[3]want	yesterday	and	MOD	1SG.IRR-give-MOD
<i>aruré-g-ode</i>	<i>ome</i>				
bread-M.PL	to				
‘If he had wanted (it) yesterday, I would have given him bread.’					

The situation is similar in Old Zamuco, albeit with different morphemes: both hypothetical and counterfactual conditional clauses are introduced by the subordinators *ine* and *pinaco... =o*, with counterfactuality indicated by the modal marker *querehe/quehe* in the apodosis (3). Old Zamuco *querehe/quehe* may also express counterfactuality in simple clauses and is related to the Chamacoco subordinator *kerêhe/kêhe*, which is specific for counterfactual conditional clauses (4). In Ayoreo and Chamacoco, hypothetical counterfactual clauses often appear within para-hypotactic constructions (Bertinetto & Ciucci 2012, Pesini 2013, and Ross et al. 2018).

(3) Old Zamuco (Ciucci, forthcoming)

<i>ine</i>	<i>aca</i>	<i>Agaye</i>	<i>d-unina</i>	<i>yu,</i>	<i>querehe</i>	<i>econi</i>	<i>y-ori</i>
if	NEG	Jesuit_father	3.IRR-hear	1SG	COUNTERFACTUAL	then	1SG.IRR-steal

‘If the Jesuit father had not heard me, I would have stolen.’

(4) Chamacoco (Ciucci, fieldwork)

<i>Kerēhe</i>	<i>tak-aha</i>	<i>dihirb-it,</i>	<i>ich</i>	<i>t-ish</i>
if	1SG-go	morning-M.SG	and	1SG-meet

‘If I had gone (there) in the morning, I would have met (him/her).’

Finally, I deal with hypothetical manner clauses, which in Chamacoco and partly in Old Zamuco have the same markers as real manner clauses. In Zamucoan, the subordinators for hypothetical manner clauses share a similar pathway of grammaticalization involving the verb ‘be like’ (1), which is frequent cross-linguistically (cf. Olguín Martínez 2021).

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