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# On rare typological features of the Zamucoan languages, in the framework of the Chaco linguistic area



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# The Zamucoan family



## **Ayoreo**

ca. 4500 speakers

**Old Zamuco** (a.k.a. Ancient Zamuco)  
spoken in the XVIII century, extinct

## **Chamacoco**

(Ibitoso, Tomarâho)  
ca. 1800 speakers

# The Zamucoan family

The first stable contact with Zamucoan populations took place in the early 18th century in the reduction of San Ignacio de Samuco.

The Jesuit **Ignace Chomé** wrote a grammar of **Old Zamuco** (*Arte de la lengua zamuca*).

The **Chamacoco** established friendly relationships by the end of the 19th century.

The **Ayoreos** surrendered rather late (towards the middle of the last century); there are still a few nomadic small bands in Northern Paraguay.

# The Zamucoan family



## Main typological features

- Fusional structure
- Word order features:
  - SVO
  - Genitive + Noun
  - Noun + Adjective

# Zamucoan typologically rare features

- Nominal tripartition
- Radical tenselessness
- Nominal aspect
- Affix order in Chamacoco 3 plural
- Gender + classifiers
- 1 person  $\emptyset$ -marking in Ayoreo realis
- Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco
- Greater plural and clusivity
- Para-hypotaxis

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# Nominal tripartition

All Zamucoan languages present a morphological **tripartition** in their nominals.

The **base-form** (BF) is typically used for predication. The singular-BF is (Ayoreo & Old Zamuco) or used to be (Cham.) the basis for any morphological operation.

The **full-form** (FF) occurs in argumental position.

The **indeterminate-form** (IF) is used in the same syntactic contexts as the FF, but refers to a non-specific referent.



# Nominal tripartition

Examples from Ayoreo

FORMS:	FULL	BASE	INDETERMINATE
‘neck’	<i>etabi</i>	<i>etabit</i>	<i>etabitic</i>
PL	<i>etabidode</i>	<i>etabicho</i>	<i>etabitigo</i>
‘trench’	<i>erui</i>	<i>eruc</i>	<i>erutic</i>
PL	<i>erugode</i>	<i>erucho</i>	<i>erutigo</i>
‘pupil’	<i>acadí</i>	<i>acadic</i>	<i>acaditic</i>
PL	<i>acadigode</i>	<i>acadicho</i>	<i>acaditigo</i>
‘girl’	<i>gapua</i>	<i>gapu</i>	<i>gapurac</i>
PL	<i>gapudie</i>	<i>gapui</i>	<i>gapurigui</i>

# Nominal tripartition

## Derivation from the singular-BF in Ayoreo

*gachidi* 'pet/vehicle', BF *gachit*

→ M *gachisôri* / F *gachito* 'owner of pet/vehicle'

*charidi* 'resting place, sit', BF *charit*

→ M *charisôri* / F *charito* 'one who sits'

*garani* 'origin', BF *garât*

→ M *garasôri* / F *garato* 'creator'

*guejnai* 'completed, destroyed', BF *guejnac*

→ M *guejnangôri*/*-sôri* / F *guejnato* 'destroyer'

*achêrai* 'grabbed, attacked', BF *achêrac*

→ M *acherangôri* 'tempest, strong wind'

# Nominal tripartition

## Ayoreo: Nominal predication with/without overt copula

1) **Jnani**                      **catad-ab-i**                      deji                      enga  
man.MS.FF                      small-DIM-MS.FF                      3.there\_is                      COORD  
i-pis-i                                      tu                      **Tiritai.**  
3.name-ELAT-MS.FF                      COP                      Tiritai

‘There was a very tiny man, whose nickname was Tiritai.’

2) Cajire to!                      **Arocojna-quedajna!**  
look                      too                      alligator.MS.BF-different.MS.BF

**Arocojna-quedajna-i**                                      deji                      ne!  
alligator.MS.BF-different-MS.FF                      3.there\_is                      there

‘Look there! It’s an alligator! There’s an alligator right there!’

3) **Dita-i**                                      tu                      yu                      nga                      **cuchape**                      yu                      ee hh!  
                    killing\_weapon-MS.FF                      COP                      1S                      COORD                      big.MS.BF                      1S                      EXCL

‘I am the killing weapon and I am powerful!!!’

# The indeterminate-form

(1) **Old Zamuco** (Chomé 1958: 164)

Ca      y-a-**tic**                  uz.

NEG      1S-child-MS.**IF**          EXIST

‘I don’t have any **son**.’

(2) **Ayoreo** (QCCB, II: 45)

Que      i-boca-**raque**      cuse      enga      ch-ijna      d-ojo-die.

NEG      3-gun-FS.**IF**      EXIST      and      3-bring      RFL-arrow-FP.FF

‘He does not have his **gun**, and he brings his arrows.’

(3) **Chamacoco** (Ciucci 2013: 473)

¿L-ati-**rãk**                  chihi?

3-mother-FS.**IF**          3.EXIST.IRLS

‘Does he/she have a **mother**?’ (lit.: ‘Is there his/her **mother**?’ )

- Nominal tripartition
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# Radical tenselessness

- Müller (2013) found 9 “tenseless” languages in her South-American corpus:  
Baure, Mapuche (i.e. Mapudungun), Mocovi, Nasa Yuwe (or Paez), Pilaga, Trumai, Tsafiki (or Colorado), Urarina, Yanam.
- However, they simply lack devices to morphologically convey temporal notions, but do present (in some cases even abundant) aspectual, modal as well as evidential devices.
- Thus, they are tenseless in the same way as, e.g., Chinese, or Classical Arabic, or Biblical Hebrew are.

# Radical tenselessness

- As far as Ayoreo, Old Zamuco and Chamacoco Ibitoso are concerned (NB: we leave aside Tomarâho), they definitely are “radical tenseless” languages, for they lack any morphological device to express temporal and aspectual notions.
- Such notions are merely conveyed by adverbs, which may be optionally used depending on context requirements.
- Radical tenselessness is a highly rare feature. Maybrat, spoken in New Guinea (Dol 1999) is the only other example known to us.

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# Nominal aspect

“No language presents nominal aspect, while there are several examples of nominal tense and nominal mood.” (Nordlinger & Sadler 2004:)

However, Ayoreo presents a striking counter-example: the **habitual suffix** *-be/-me* (FS), *-beil/-mei* (MS.FF), *-bec/-mec* (MS.BF), first described in the Higham *et al.*'s dictionary.

# Nominal aspect

- From Higham's *et al.* (2000)
  - *oide*, PL *oidedie* (F) 'what is carried or used' → *oidebe*, PL *oidebedie* (BF *oidebe*, pl *oidebei*) 'what is customarily carried or used'
  - *uru*, PL *uruode* (M) 'word' → *urubei*, pl *urubeode* (BF *urubec*, pl *urubecho*) 'what is customarily said'
  - *aquiningai*, PL *aquiningane* (M) 'meeting place' → *aquingamei*, *aquingameone* (BF *aquingamec*, PL *aquingamecho*) 'customary meeting place'

# Nominal aspect

From fieldwork:

- *iguidebe* ‘usual dress’
- *acadisôrimei* ‘usual teacher’
- *mochapibei* ‘usual/preferred bed’
- *dajebec* ‘habitual path’
- *pibosebei* ‘what one usually eats / favorite food’
- *yicharidebei* ‘the place where I usually sit’
- *urôsobei* ‘habitual pain’
  
- \**tiebe* ‘habitual river’
- ?*tamocobei* ‘the dog that one often encounters’.

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# Affix order in Chamacoco 3P verb inflection

- Universal tendency:

**Person** markers precede **number** markers irrespective of their position with respect to the root (Trommer 2003; Mayer 2009)

The Chamacoco 3P verb inflection is a violation of this generalization (Ciucci & Bertinetto, to appear):

**ts**-amur (**3**) → **o**-**ts**-amur (**3P**) ‘to like, to love’

# Affix order in Chamacoco 3P verb inflection

- Ayoreo and Old Zamuco have no form for the 3P person, they optionally use the 3P-pronoun *ore*. Chamacoco presents the 3P pronoun *õr*: possibly *õr* > *o-*.

Ayoreo:

tɕ-i-mesẽre ‘s/he/they want(s)’ (3); *ore* tɕ-i-mesẽre (3P)

Old Zamuco:

ch-i-mêcêre ‘s/he/they love(s)’ (3); *ore* ch-i-mêcêre (3P)

- The innovative Chamacoco 3P-prefix *o-* might in turn have yielded, under morphomic re-use, the identical *1PE-prefix*. Alternatively, the latter was imported from the 1PE-prefix of Guarani (*ro-*) and re-used for the 3P.

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# Gender and possessive classifiers

- **Aikhenvald** (2000: 126, 133) claims that possessive classifiers «do not involve agreement». However, in some Chaco languages possessive classifiers agree in **gender** and/or number with the *possessum*.
- One can also observe some cross-linguistic similarities, possibly due to contact:
  - **Ayoreo** *gachit* (MS.BF) *gachidi* (MS.FF), *gachide* (FS) ‘domestic animal’ (noun and classifier)
  - **Chamacoco** *echit* (MS.FF), *echita* (FS.FF), ‘domestic animal’
  - **Kadiwéu** *wiGadi* (M) *wiqate* (F) ‘animal’ (noun and classifier)
- «It is well known that classification systems often diffuse in situations of language contact. [...] The examples from Gran Chaco confirm the importance of classifiers in areal diffusion» (**Aikhenvald** 2011: 175).



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# First person zero marking in Ayoreo realis

“First person zero marking is extremely rare. The Romanian present tense is an example [...]. The only other examples that I know are the pronominal inflections from Alagwa [...] and Burunge [...], two Southern Cushitic languages from Tanzania.” (Cysouw 2008)

In the most conservative form of Ayoreo, the 1 person prefix is absent in the ‘realis’ form:

tɕ-i-go ‘to tell, to show’

1S j-i-go → ∅-i-go in **realis** contexts

1P j-i-go-go → ∅-i-go-go in **realis** contexts

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# Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

A conjunct / disjunct system\* “is a binary system, with ‘**conjunct**’ used for **first person in statements** and **second person in questions**, while ‘disjunct’ is used for second and third person in statements and first and third person in questions.” (Curnow 2002: 611)

	Statements	Questions
1-person	<b>conjunct</b>	<b>disjunct</b>
2-person	<b>disjunct</b>	<b>conjunct</b>
3-person	<b>disjunct</b>	<b>disjunct</b>

(Curnow 2002: 614)

\*For a different terminology, see Creissels 2008, Tournadre 2008 and Post 2013.

# Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

In some paradigms of Old Zamuco (which presents a full opposition between realis and irrealis) the 1S-realis coincides with the 2S-irrealis...

cho ‘to look like, to be like’

Realis

o (1S)

do (2S)

cho (3)

oco (1P)

doyo (2P)

Irrealis

cho (1S)

o (2S)

do (3)

choco (1P)

oyo (2P)

# Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

If one takes into account that:

- The 1S-realís occurs more frequently in (positive) statements than its irrealís counterpart
- The 2S-irrealís occurs more frequently in questions than its realís counterpart

Then, the morphological overlapping of 1S-realís and 2S-irrealís reminds of a conjunct in so-called conjunct /disjunct systems.

# Traces of Conjunct/Disjunct system in Old Zamuco

- 1-realis (a-/∅-) = 2-irrealis (a-/∅-)

Old Zamuco: <i>chimêcêre</i> 'to love'		
Person	Realis	Irrealis
1S	a-/∅ + V + ROOT / <i>a-i-mecêre</i>	ch-/z-/y- + V + ROOT / <i>ch-i-mecêre</i>
2S	d- + V + ROOT / <i>d-a-mecêre</i>	a-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>a-∅-mecêre</i>
3	ch-/t-/z-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ch-i-mêcêre</i>	d-/n-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>d-i-mêcêre</i>
1P	a-/∅ + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>a-i-mecê-co</i>	ch-/z-/y- + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>ch-i-mecê-co</i>
2P	d- + V + ROOT + SUFF / <i>d-a-mecê-ño</i>	a-/∅ + (V) + ROOT + SUFF / <i>a-∅-mecê-ño</i>
3P	ore ch-/t-/z- /∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ore ch-i-mêcêre</i>	ore d-/n-/∅ + (V) + ROOT / <i>ore d-i-mêcêre</i>

# Traces of conjunct / disjunct system in Old Zamuco

- The 1S-realis and the 2S-irrealis do not coincide in all paradigms, but they were originally marked by the same morpheme *a-*.

**chimêcêre** ‘to love’ ‘to look like, to be like’

Realis

**a-i-mecêre** (1S)

d-a-mecêre (2S)

ch-i-mêcêre (3)

a-i-mecê-co (1P)

d-a-mecê-ño (2P)

Irrealis

ch-i-mecêre (1S)

**a-mecêre** (2S)

ch-i-mêcêre (3)

a-i-mecê-co (1P)

d-a-mecê-ño (2P)



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# Greater plural and clusivity

**Greater plural:** “Languages may have a **secondary split into normal and ‘greater’** (sometimes termed ‘lesser’ and ‘greater’) within certain number values. The two which may be split are the paucal and the plural. **There are relatively few known cases of split numbers and the account here is tentative.** [...] **‘greater plural’**, typically implies an excessive number, sometimes called **‘plural of abundance’**, or else all possible instances of the referent, sometimes called the **‘global plural’**. We shall use ‘greater plural’ to cover the different types (abundance, global). The **evidence is limited**, but it comes from a variety of languages and sources, sufficient to indicate that **there is an interesting phenomenon that deserves study.** **More examples** with careful descriptions of their meaning **would be welcome.**” (Corbett 2000: 30)

# Greater plural and clusivity

“To **distinguish between a ‘normal amount’ and a ‘greater than normal amount’**, as is done in the Sursurunga paucal **is very rare** and, if anything, is found with the plural yielding a greater plural (or global plural). The distinction would then be something like ‘many’ and ‘very many indeed’.” (Velupillai 2012: 162).

The **greater plural** (GP) is observed in Chamacoco 1-inclusive (1PI) and 2-person free pronouns:

**yok** (1S)

**õryok** (1P.exclusive)

**eyok** (1P.inclusive) **eyoklo** (1GP.inclusive)

**owa** (2S)

**olak** (2P)

**olaklo** (2GP)

(Ciucci 2013: 31)

# Greater plural and clusivity

The greater plural is also found in the 1-inclusive of Chamacoco verb inflection:

- (1) a. j-i-tɕew (1PI) ‘we write’  
b. **j-i-tɕew-lo** (1PI.GP) ‘we (many, all) write’  
c. o-j-i-tɕew (1PE) ‘we write’  
d. \*o-j-i-tɕew-lo [1PE.GP]

The Chamacoco greater plural is an optional feature. It mostly refers to the totality of the contextual referents, independently of the actual cardinality.

(1) **Y-iĩsi-l** jotsi-t bahlu-t par y-imchaha asa  
**1PI-dig-GP** hole-MS.FF big-MS.FF SUB 1PI-put that.FS  
 kemyon bahlu-ta ese jotsi-t ehe-t,  
 truck big-FS.FF that.MS hole- MS.FF 3.inside-MS.FF  
 pork asa wate s-ihn **eyoklo.**  
 because that.FS DET.FS 3-wipe\_out **1PI.GP**

‘We will dig (or: let us dig) a big hole in order to put the armored truck in the hole, because [otherwise] that is going to wipe out all of us.’ (Ciucci, field-notes)

(2) Sara, Nené, inaapo ye deychole hn **y-uku-l**  
 Sara Nené why NEG tomorrow COORD **1PI-go-GP**  
 pehle oskôr  
 pehle.fruit.FP oskor.fruit.PF

‘Sara, Nené, why don’t we all go to [collect] fruits tomorrow?’ (Ciucci, field-notes)

# Greater plural and clusivity

## Minimal / augmented systems

- A 1P inclusive split gives rise to a minimal / augmented system. Minimal / augmented systems are rare in South America (Cysouw 2008: 140, Bickels & Nichols 2005: 53, Crevels & Muysken 2005: 318)
- Chamacoco's clusivity is not prototypical, however, according to the classifications by Cysouw (2008: 85-90) and Bickels & Nichols (2005: 50-53)
- In minimal / augmented systems the expected minimal inclusive element is a dual (not a plural), while the augmented is a plural (not a greater plural).

# Greater plural and clusivity

The **Chamacoco minimal** / **augmented** system

- (1) a. o-j-i-tɕew (1P.exclusive) ‘we write’  
b. **j-i-tɕew** (1**P**.inclusive) ‘we write’  
c. **j-i-tɕew-lo** (1.**GP**.inclusive) ‘we (many, all) write’

- (2) **yok** (1S)      ðryok (1P.exclusive)  
                         **eyok** (1**P**.inclusive) **eyoklo** (1**GP**.inclusive)  
**owa** (2S)      **olak** (2P)              **olaklo** (2GP)

# Greater plural and clusivity

- There are morphological and semantic reasons to consider the 1-exclusive a particular kind of plural of the 1S-person (Daniel 2005; Cysouw 2005; Bickel & Nichols 2005: 51-53)
- The inclusive should be considered a person on its own (Daniel 2005)
- In most languages inclusives are morphologically independent from the 1S-person (Daniel 2005: 5).  
Cf. CH yok (1S), **ôryok** (1PE), **eyok** (1PI)
- In Chamacoco verb morphology the **1P-exclusive** derives from the **1P-inclusive**: t-i-chew (1S) ‘I write’  
**j-i-tçew** (1PI) ‘we write’ → **o-j-i-tçew** (1PE) ‘we write’
- The interaction between clusivity and greater plural is probably quite rare among the world’s languages and would probably deserve further typological studies...



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# Para-hypotaxis

This term was introduced by Sorrento (1950), and is still very popular in Romance linguistics.

It refers to sentences with a proleptic dependent clause, where the main clause is introduced by a coordinator:

**dependent clause + coordinator + main clause**

This was one of the first attempts to overcome the **dichotomic view** of the contrast parataxis vs. hypotaxis.

# Para-hypotaxis in Chamacoco

(1) Chamacoco [Ciucci, field-work]

*Uje* ye t-uu\_leeych, *ich* ese aahn-t  
SUB NEG 1S-fight COORD DEM.MS evil\_spirit-MS.FF  
s-erz yoo.  
3-win 1S

‘When/if I don’t fight, that evil spirit will defeat me.’

(2) Chamacoco [Ciucci, field-work]

*Kēhe*, uu like ishīr lishī sēhe, teehe,  
If DET.MS this indigenous\_man.MS poor.MS VOL interj  
s-ohnimichī=ke, *hn* uhu oy-ihyer ire.  
3.IRLS-get\_off=PST COORD 2S.CAUS 1PE-arrest 3S

‘If the indigenous man had wanted to get off (the bus), you would have made us arrest him.’

# Para-hypotaxis in Ayoreo

(3) Ayoreo [Bertinetto, field-work]

*Ujetiga* Jate di=rase *nga*, ch-isi=rase yogu=iji

**SUB** Jate 3.arrive=MOD **COORD** 3-give=MOD 1P=loc

cucha-rique

thing-MS.IF

‘If Jate arrived, he would give us something.’

(4) Ayoreo [Preachers]

*Ujetiga* a-dute cucha ajmacaca-rique

**SUB** 2S.IRLS-listen thing.MS.BF ill\_fated-MS.IF

*maringa* je ca a-todo cucha

although MOD NEG 2S.IRLS-fear thing.MS.BF

ajmamacar-ode

ill\_fated-MP.FF

‘Even though you might hear threats, do not be afraid of them.’

Para-hypotaxis is a rare syntactic configuration. It has long been considered limited to Old Romance and classical languages (Biblical Hebrew, Greek and Latin).

(5) Old Italian (Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* 30,115)

**S'** io dissi il falso, **e** tu  
**If** 1S say.1S.PAST.PERF DET.MS false-MS **COORD** 2S  
falsasti il conio  
alter-2S.PAST.PERF DET.MS minting\_die-MS

'If I said something false, you (did worse, for you) altered the minting die.'

Recent research has revealed the presence of para-hypotactical structures in Swahili (Rebuschi 2011) and in the Zamucoan languages (Bertinetto & Ciucci 2012).

# Para-hypotaxis and beyond: Areality

The discovery of para-hypotaxis in the Zamucoan languages opens the door for a large scale investigation, which might produce surprising results.

Para-hypotactical structures have been found in other Chaco languages, such as Maká (Mataguayo), Nivaclé (Mataguayo), Wichí (Mataguayo), Mocoví (Guaycurú) and Pilagá (Guaycurú). Iquito, a Zaparoan language, also presents para-hypotaxis.

Chaco has been proposed as a linguistic area (Comrie *et al.* 2010) and in other Chaco languages which have been in contact with the Zamucoan family, some of the above discussed typological rarities can be found, such as: (i) the presence of gender and classifiers; (ii) the traces of conjunct/disjunct system and (iii) number markers preceding person markers (Ciucci 2014).

Eruei ute

End this (Ayo)

Shi ele no ma

Only this no more  
(Ceg)

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