NEGATION IN COLONIAL VALLEY ZAPOTEC¹

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(Received 11 February, 2015)

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of negation in Colonial Valley Zapotec (CVZ) based on a corpus of texts written in Valley Zapotec between 1565 and 1808. There are four negative markers in CVZ, two bound (*ya* =, *qui* =) and two free (*aca*, *yaca*). Standard negation employs a negative word and an optional clitic, = *ti*. Understanding the syntax of an historical form of Valley Zapotec allows us to make some observations about related forms in modern Valley Zapotec languages, in particular San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (SLQZ). For example, the morpheme = *ti*, which is required in clausal negation in SLQZ, is not obligatory in any negative constructions in CVZ until around 1800. In Vellon 1808, the youngest text in the corpus, we observe = *ti* required in one type of clausal negation. This allows us to observe details of the development of the modern Valley Zapotec negation system, including the fact that the remaining changes leading to obligatory = *ti* in clausal negation in SLQZ must have occurred within the last 200 years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Valley Zapotec (Otomanguean) is part of the central branch of the Zapotec language family (Smith Stark 2003b). It has a long history of alphabetic writing, with the earliest known text dating to 1565 (Oudijk 2008). Modern forms of Valley Zapotec, such as San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (ISO code [zab], Lewis et al. 2015) are endangered and under-documented. This paper focuses on the form of Valley Zapotec attested in archival documents from the Mexican Colonial period, which we call Colonial Valley Zapotec (CVZ). We use CVZ data from both published sources and our own analysis of documents.

CVZ, like most Zapotec languages, is verb initial, with a basic word order of VSO, though movement of an argument or adjunct to a pre-verbal position is possible in certain

¹ We are grateful to the editor, James Clackson, for his guidance in the revision of this paper and to the three anonymous reviewers for their time and helpful feedback. We owe thanks to Michael Galant, Pamela Munro, Daniel Plesniak, and especially George Aaron Broadwell for their comments on the development of this work. In addition, we are thankful to Michel R. Oudijk, †Thomas Smith Stark, and Kevin Terraciano for helping us understand the grammar of Colonial Valley Zapotec, as well as to the other members of the UCLA Zapotexts group (Christina Esposito, Xochitl Flores Marcial, John Foreman, Mike Galant, Olivia Martínez, Julie Morgenlender, María Ornelas, Diana Schwartz, Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, and Lisa Sousa) and the UNAM CVZ seminar (Rosa María Rojas Torres, Bety Cruz, Uliana Cruz, Mercedes Montes de Oca, and Marita Martín). Earlier forms of this work were presented at the *Coloquio sobre Lenguas Otomangués y Vecinas VI: Mario Molina Cruz* (2014) and the 2015 meeting of the *Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas*.

As always, we owe special thanks to our Zapotec language teachers, especially Roberto Antonio Ruiz, Josefina Antonio Ruiz, and Felipe H. Lopez. ¡Xtyozēn yuad! All errors are, of course, our own.