The imperfective in Central Zapotec: Evidence from Tlacochahuaya Zapotec

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1 The Puzzle

An imperfective TAM prefix of the form /r-/ (typically labeled a “Habitual”) is apparent in all branches of the Zapotec language family (see Figure 1, Table 1) and can be reconstructed to Proto-Zapotec. Central Zapotec, however, has innovated a progressive prefix /ka(j)-/ (see Broadwell 2015; Smith-Stark 2004).

Figure 1: Classification of Central Zapotec (Campbell 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western (Lachixío)</th>
<th>Papabuco (Texmelucan)</th>
<th>Northern (Macuiltianguis)</th>
<th>Central (Tlacochahuaya)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Habitual”</td>
<td>/r-/</td>
<td>/r-, /ri-, /re-</td>
<td>/r-/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>/u-, /ud-</td>
<td>/gb-</td>
<td>/be-, /bī-, /gu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completive</td>
<td>/∅-</td>
<td>/k-</td>
<td>/i-, /e-, /g-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>/∅-, /d-</td>
<td>/k-</td>
<td>/i-, /e-, /g-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreal</td>
<td>/ngy-</td>
<td></td>
<td>/ngy-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>/n-, /ne-</td>
<td></td>
<td>/n-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: TAM categories in various Zapotec languages (Campbell 2017; see Persons et al. 2009 on Lachixío, Speck 1984 on Texmelucan, and Foreman 2006 on Macuitianguis)

1Thank you to my mentors, Brook Danielle Lillehaugen and Anthony C. Woodbury, for their advice and support throughout the research process. I am also grateful to my cohort at UT Austin for feedback on this paper. Finally, my greatest thanks go to my Zapotec teachers, in particular Moisés García Guzmán and José Ángeles Martínez, for sharing their language and time with me.

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This paper represents my current understanding of Tlacochahuaya Zapotec grammar. All errors are my own.
This raises the question: how has the introduction of this progressive impacted the semantics of the general imperfective?

- Deo (2015) proposes a diachronic model where new progressive categories restrict the semantics of general imperfective categories.
- Broadwell (2015) described Colonial Valley Zapotec has having an intermediary stage, where the imperfective /r-/ was still used for events-in-progress.
- Many descriptions of Central Zapotec refer to a “Habitual” /r-/ and a Progressive /ka-/, but hint that the “Habitual” might do more (see also Smith 2019).

Here, I draw together evidence from three modern Central Zapotec languages — including my own research on Tlacochahuaya Zapotec — in comparison with Colonial Valley Zapotec data, to create a fuller picture of the development of these TAM categories.

![Central Zapotec family tree](image)

Figure 2: Central Zapotec family tree (Campbell 2017; Smith-Stark 2007), with Colonial Valley Zapotec attestation range (Foreman & Lillehaugen 2017)

I give background on the Central Zapotec subgroup in §2. I outline my framework for discussing TAM, and imperfectives in particular, in §3. Data from Colonial Valley Zapotec, Tlacochahuaya Zapotec, Mitla Zapotec, and Quiégolani Zapotec are described in §4, §5, §6, and §7, respectively. I draw some general conclusions in §8.
2 Background on Central Zapotec

2.1 Language context

Zapotec ([zab]; Otomanguean) is a highly diverse language family with a time depth similar to Romance. Zapotec languages are indigenous to Oaxaca, Mexico, although they are also spoken by diaspora communities in the United States. Central Zapotec languages originate in the Valles Centrales region of Oaxaca; Isthmus Zapotec is spoken in the Istmo in the east of the state, following migration between 1300 and 1500 A.D. (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Map of Oaxacan districts](Image)

Like other indigenous languages of Mexico, Zapotec languages are severely marginalized (see Pérez Ruiz et al. 2015). Due to discrimination, particularly in schools, fewer parents are teaching Zapotec languages to their children. Language vitality varies significantly from region to region, however, and even from town to town. In the town of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya, for example, the youngest speaker is in his 40s. In nearby San Lucas Quiavini, on the other hand, teenagers still speak the language.

2.2 Notes on data citation & presentation

Where I cite data from other research, transcriptions, glosses, and translations are presented as they appear in the original source, with the exception of superficial changes to gloss abbreviations in order to maintain consistency. Orthography there varies considerably.

Gloss abbreviations: ?? = unknown, 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, COMP = complementizer, COMP = completive, CONT = continuous, CTFL = counterfactual, EMPH = emphatic, EXCL = exclusive, FUT = future, H/P = habitual/progressive, HAB = habitual, IMPF = imperfect, INFORM = informal, NMLZ = nominalizer, PFV = perfective, PL = plural, POT = potential, PRF = perfect, PROG =
(particularly in the colonial data).

Unless otherwise noted, Tlacochahuaya Zapotec data comes from my own research, and the glosses reflect my current personal understanding of Tlacochahuaya Zapotec grammar.3

2.3 Brief grammar sketch

I present here a sketch of the grammar of Tlacochahuaya Zapotec, which will serve as a brief introduction to the grammar of Central Zapotec.

My proposed consonant inventory is shown in Figure 4, using the practical orthography which I will use in this paper. Plosives, nasals, and fricatives have a fortis-lenis distinction. Word-final glides surface as highly reduced, voiceless segments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Lab. dent.</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>P-alveo.</th>
<th>Retroflex</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive</td>
<td>p b</td>
<td>t d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>k g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>[mm] m</td>
<td>[nn] n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ñ [nng] ng</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>(f) s z zh zh: zh:</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td>ts ch dzh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>rr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lat. appr.</td>
<td>[ll] l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Tlacochahuaya Zapotec consonant inventory (segments in square brackets are more tentatively phonemic; segments in parentheses are found only in loan words)

The Tlacochahuaya Zapotec vowel inventory is shown in Figure 5. Tlacochahuaya Zapotec has four contrasting phonation types: modal (a), breathy (ah), creaky (a’), and interrupted (a’a). I choose to not represent tone here, although four tones (high, low, rising, progressive, prog = progressive, r = SJTZ ‘habitual’ prefix, sg = singular, st = stative.

3Sentences are marked as either: elicited (“elic”); constructed by the researcher (“const”); spontaneously produced by a Zapotec speaker during an elicitation session (“spon”); or produced as part of a naturalistic text (“txt”). In the case of constructed data, sentences judged ungrammatical are marked with a star (*). The pound sign (#) marks data judged to be syntactically sound but semantically or pragmatically unusual. Sentences which are of dubious grammaticality are marked with two question marks (??); most of these sentences are cases where my Zapotec teacher told me that the construction was “understandable, but not common”.

3
falling) are contrastive in the language. Tone is not relevant to the current semantic discussion, although tone does play a significant role in TAM morphophonology.

Like other Zapotec languages, Tlacochahuaya Zapotec has canonical VSO word order (with argument fronting in some pragmatic contexts) and is predominantly head-marking. Subject and object pronouns appear as enclitics on the verb.

(1) VSO word order

if already COMP-keep person PL field well already COMP-keep person
verb subj obj verb subj

de  leyu
PL  field
OBJ

‘If people kept the fields, well, people kept the fields’ (txt;abasolo)

(2) Subject and object enclitics

r-ats  =ê  =ni
R-tell  =1sg  =3sg.inform
verb subj obj

‘I told him’ (txt;susto)

Sentences are constructed based on the verbal template given in (3). The TAM/causative morphology and the verb root form a stem; however the categorial status of the various other elements is unresolved (see Gutiérrez Lorenzo et al. 2019). For the purposes of this presentation, I mark TAM and causative morphemes as prefixes, while other elements of the verbal template I mark as clitics.

(3) Tlacochahuaya Zapotec verbal template:

(NEG)  (TAM)(CAUS) root  (ADV)(SUBJ PRO)(OBJ PRO)
stem

3 Framework for discussing TAM

Languages communicate information about tense-aspect-mood using a closed set of TAM categories, e.g. the English Past Perfect or the Spanish Imperfecto. (Upper-case labels give the name of the category and should be understood as language-specific.)

Descriptions of aspect typically distinguish between perfective categories, where the situation\(^4\) is viewed from the outside, with the endpoints visible, and imperfective categories, where the situation is viewed from the inside, and the endpoints are exterior to the temporal focus (see e.g. Smith 1997).

\(^4\)I use situation as a neutral term to include by events and states.
This discussion focuses on imperfective TAM categories. Following Deo (2015), I distinguish three types of imperfective situations:

(4) a. CHARACTERIZATION: a event that repeats over an interval; i.e. a habitual or generic event
b. STATE: an ongoing quality or state of being
c. EVENT-IN-PROGRESS: an ongoing event

For example, the English Progressive is natural for events-in-progress (Fred is baking a cake) but pragmatically-marked for states (#Fred is being happy).

This discussion focuses on aspectual distinctions. In general, the progressive /ka(j)-/ in Central Zapotec is unmarked for tense. The imperfective /r-/ is typically unacceptable in future/irrealis contexts, but used equally in present and past contexts.

4 Colonial Valley Zapotec

Colonial Valley Zapotec is a Central Zapotec language attested in a set of documents, written in the Valley of Oaxaca between the 16th and early 19th centuries. The language is documented in Cordova’s grammar (1578a) and dictionary (1578b), a corpus of handwritten administrative documents (such as wills and bills of sale; see Lillehaugen et al. 2016), and a series of religious materials produced by the Catholic church (e.g. Feria 1567). The exact connection between Colonial Valley Zapotec and modern Central Zapotec languages is unclear, but the colonial language clearly represents a form of Central Zapotec (see discussions and classifications in Foreman & Lillehaugen 2017, Broadwell 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthographic forms</th>
<th>Smith-Stark’s gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t(i)</td>
<td>habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c(a)</td>
<td>H/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c/qui ~ qui ~ ca</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c/qu      ~ fortion</td>
<td>PROG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of stem-initial con-</td>
<td>POT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sonant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pi ~ pe ~ co ~ co with</td>
<td>completivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stem changes</td>
<td>PFV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n(i(y))</td>
<td>contrafactual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n(a(y)) ~ ∅</td>
<td>CTFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hua(y) ~ huey ~ hu</td>
<td>perfecto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n(a(y)) ~ ∅</td>
<td>PRF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participio estativo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Selected Colonial Valley Zapotec TAM categories (Broadwell 2015; Smith-Stark 2008)

As shown in Table 2, Smith-Stark (2008) identifies a wide range of TAM prefixes in the Colonial Valley Zapotec corpus, including a Habitual t(i)-, cognate to modern Central Zapotec r- (see Smith-Stark 2003 on the colonial orthography). Broadwell (2015) further
identifies a prefix \(c(a)\)- which he calls the Progressive. Broadwell refers to Smith-Stark’s “Habitual” as “T”. For the purposes of this discussion, I adopt the gloss “Habitual/Progressive”, to reflect Broadwell’s findings outlined below.

In Broadwell’s discussion of the Habitual/Progressive category, he gives examples which I categorize below as characterizations, states, and events-in-progress.

(5) Colonial Valley Zapotec Habitual/Progressive
   a. Characterization
      \[
      \begin{array}{llllllllll}
      \text{chi} & \text{ti-zaà} & \text{beni} & \text{neza} & \text{quila=cahuí} & \text{ciani} & \text{liaça} & \text{t-aca} \\
      \text{when H/P–walk person road NMLZ=dark many time H/P–be} \\
      \end{array}
      \]
   ‘When a person walks down the road in the dark, many times it happens that...’ (Broadwell 2015: 160)
   b. State (cognitive/attitudinal)
      \[
      \begin{array}{llllllllll}
      \text{niacani} & \text{anna} & \text{t–acapea=to} & \text{oa–lij=ca} & \text{citoo} & \text{tete} \\
      \text{thus now H/P–know=2PL PRF–true=EMPH abundant very} \\
      \text{co–xiguie} & \text{bezeloo} & \text{lato} \\
      \text{PFV–trick=EMPH devil 2PL} \\
      \end{array}
      \]
   ‘So now you know truly that the devil tricked you’ (Broadwell 2015: 175–76)
   c. Event-in-progress
      \[
      \begin{array}{llllllllll}
      \text{ti–nni=a} & \text{anna} & \text{oa–lij=ca} & \text{quitaalij} & \text{beni} & \text{Christiano} \\
      \text{H/P–say=1SG PRF–true=EMPH all person Christian} \\
      \text{co–na–chahuí=to} & \text{ticha} & \text{ca–nni=a} \\
      \text{PFV–hear–well=2PL word PROG–say=1SG} \\
      \end{array}
      \]
   ‘Hear well what I am saying’ (Broadwell 2015: 171)

(6) Colonial Valley Zapotec Progressive
   a. Characterization not reported
   b. State (cognitive/attitudinal)
      \[
      \begin{array}{llllllllll}
      \text{anna} & \text{c–acapea=to} & \text{oa–lij=ca} & \text{co–xiguie=xò} & \text{bezeloo} \\
      \text{now PROG–know=2PL PRF–true=EMPH PFV–trick=EMPH devil} \\
      \text{lachi=to} \\
      \text{heart=2PL} \\
      \end{array}
      \]
   ‘Now you know truly that the devil tricked your heart’ (Broadwell 2015: 175)
   c. Event-in-progress
      \[
      \begin{array}{llllllllll}
      \text{co–na–chahuí=to} & \text{ticha} & \text{ca–nni=a} \\
      \text{PFV–hear–well=2PL word PROG–say=1SG} \\
      \end{array}
      \]
   ‘Hear well what I am saying’ (Broadwell 2015: 171)
A summary of Colonial Valley Zapotec data is shown in Table 3. The semantic range of the Habitual/Progressive and the Progressive overlap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>H/P</th>
<th>PROG</th>
<th>(distribution)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous state</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>overlapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive/attitudinal</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>overlapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event-in-progress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>overlapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary: Imperfective range of the Colonial Valley Zapotec Habitual/Progressive and Progressive

5 Tlacochahuaya Zapotec

In my preliminary research on Tlacochahuaya Zapotec, I have identified the eight primary TAM categories listed in Table 4, including the Imperfect\(^5\) \textit{r-} and the Progressive \textit{ka-}.

Example: \textit{ndyeny} ‘come up, rise’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Gloss</th>
<th>Surface-level description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r\textit{ndyeny}</td>
<td>situation occurs habitually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k\textit{ndyeny}</td>
<td>situation is in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b\textit{ndyeny}</td>
<td>situation has finished/ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i\textit{ndyeny}</td>
<td>situation has not yet occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z\textit{ndyeny}</td>
<td>situations will definitely occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n\textit{yendyeny}</td>
<td>situations was supposed to occur but didn’t/won’t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Tlacochahuaya Zapotec TAM categories

As we expect, I see the Imperfect marking characteriations, as in (7).

(7) Tlacochahuaya Imperfect marking characterization

\begin{verbatim}
Bn Zaa r-yan Yabni de bêdguidy
people Zapotec R-feed (type.of.fruit) PL chicken
\end{verbatim}

‘Zapotec people feed yabni fruit to chickens’ (txt;twitter)

I also find the Imperfect marking states, but only on specific statives. As shown in (8), I divide these verbs into three categories: cognitive/attitudinal states, bodily states/sensations, and non-agentive activities. In elicitation, these verbs are always marked with the Imperfect (where they appear in an ongoing contexts). These verb sets, particular the non-agentive activities, are quite limited.

\(^5\)Here I focus on the imperfective uses of the Imperfect; see Plumb 2020 for further details on the use of the this category.
(8) Tlacochahuaya Imperfect marking states
   a. Cognitive/attitudinal states
      \textit{r–ilu=a Juwany i–nda’a gehl zhi}
      \begin{align*}
      \text{r–think=1SG Juan POT–harvest tomorrow} \\
      \end{align*}
      ‘I think Juan will harvest corn tomorrow’ (elic)
   b. Bodily states/sensations
      \textit{r–ndeny\_ be’ekw}
      \begin{align*}
      \text{r–be.hungry dog} \\
      \end{align*}
      ‘The dog is hungry.’ (elic)
   c. Non-agentive activities
      \textit{r–a’asy bdo}
      \begin{align*}
      \text{r–sleep baby} \\
      \end{align*}
      ‘The baby is sleeping’ (elic)

Finally, I find the Imperfect marking events-in-progress in some narrative contexts, for example in the tweet shown in (9a). This use has been difficult to elicit and might be pragmatically governed. As we will see below, the Progressive is used in very similar contexts.

(9) Tlacochahuaya Imperfect marking event-in-progress
   a. \textit{Ba r–zulo r–du’nlo be’ nagats la’n Danyadoo}
      \begin{align*}
      \text{now R–begin R–emerge mushroom yellow in mountain} \\
      \end{align*}
      ‘Yellow mushrooms are beginning to sprout in the mountains.’ (tweet)
   b. \textit{G–U’TI TUBi, SHI TUBi INGULBEZ \textbf{R–E’–TOO} GUIT’UEZ,}
      \textit{COMP–?? one day one opossum R–go–eat chilacayota}
      \begin{align*}
      \text{NEZ LOO’NIA} \\
      \text{road/in? field?} \\
      \end{align*}
      ‘There was a day, an opossum was going to eat chilacayota in the fields’ (txt;tlacuache)
      Written text, originally documented by Juan José Rendón. Original translation: ‘Hubo un dia, un tlacuache iba a comer chilacayota, por el campo’

Moving on to the distribution of the Progressive: as shown in (10), it is attested on some states, but on a different set of verbs that the Imperfect. It is not attested on cognitive/attitudinal states, but is used for some bodily states/sensations and some non-agentive activities.

(10) Tlacochahuaya Progressive marking states
   a. Not attested on cognitive/attitudinal states
   b. Bodily states/sensations
Juan ka–dzhag
‘Juan is tired.’ (spon)

‘The child’s teeth are chattering.’ (elic)

And as we would hope, the Progressive is also attested on events-in-progress. It is by far the most common way of marking events-in-progress (the Imperfect examples above being relatively unusual).

(11) a. Jwany ka–za
Juan PROG–walk
‘Juan is walking.’ (elic)

b. ka–yahb nisgye
PROG–fall rain
‘It’s raining / Rain is falling.’ (elic)

Notably, the Progressive appears in very similar narrative contexts to the Imperfect (9a).

(12) Tlacochahuaya Progressive marking event-in-progress
ba ca–zulo ca–dop beld Be’ xnia la’n Gêch
now PROG–begin PROG–be.gathered? ? mushroom red in town

Dañi
mountain

‘[It hasn’t rained well this year, but] some Red Mushroom are now being gathered in The Northern Sierra.’ (tweet)

A summary of these imperfective contexts in Tlacochahuaya Zapotec is shown in Table 5. Notice that the Imperfect has a rather large semantic range, that overlaps at least somewhat with the Progressive in marking events-in-progress. The Imperfect and Progressive both mark bodily sensations and (ongoing) non-agentive activities, but on distinct verbs (a complementary distribution).
Table 5: Summary: Imperfective range of the Tlacochahuaya Imperfect and Progressive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterizations</th>
<th>IMPF</th>
<th>PROG</th>
<th>(distribution)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive/attitudinal</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily sensations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>complementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agentive</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>complementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events-in-progress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>overlapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Mitla Zapotec TAM categories (Smith 2019; see also Stubblefield & Stubblefield 2019/1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Smith’s Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r-, ru-</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca-, cagu-</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-, b-, ba-, gu-, g-</td>
<td>Completive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gui-, j-, x-, cu-, g-, ch-, gu-, Ø-</td>
<td>Indefinite future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si-, s-, su-, ni-, n-, nu-</td>
<td>Definite future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>Unreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Mitla Zapotec

Here I will turn to Mitla Zapotec, basing my discussion off-of work done by Smith (2019). The Mitla Zapotec TAM system is shown in 6; this discussion focuses on the Habitual and Continuous (cognates to the Tlacochahuaya Imperfect and Progressive, respectively).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Smith’s Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r-, ru-</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca-, cagu-</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-, b-, ba-, gu-, g-</td>
<td>Completive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gui-, j-, x-, cu-, g-, ch-, gu-, Ø-</td>
<td>Indefinite future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si-, s-, su-, ni-, n-, nu-</td>
<td>Definite future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>Unreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smith’s (2019) study concludes that the Mitla Zapotec Habitual has retained more general imperfective semantics, similar to what was described for Colonial Valley Zapotec and Tlacochahuaya Zapotec. As shown in (13), the Mitla Habitual is attested on characterizations and events-in-progress; however, like in Tlacochahuaya Zapotec, the events-in-progress reading seems restricted to narrative contexts.

(13) Semantic range of the Mitla Zapotec Habitual

a. Characterization
   
   \[ r-ajw=ni \] \[ yäjt \]
   
   HAB-eat=3SG tortilla
   
   ‘He eats tortillas’ (Stubblefield & Stubblefield 2019/1991: entry =ni; glossing from Smith 2019)

b. Event-in-progress (in narrative)
‘Screaming, that coyote was lying, turning, throwing (himself) down, lying’ (The Rabbit and the Coyote, line 62; Stubblefield & Stubblefield 1994: 71; glossing from Smith 2019)

In comparison, the Mitla Continuous is only described as marking events-in-progress. However, as Smith’s study focused specifically on the Habitual, further research is needed.

(14) Semantic range of the Mitla Zapotec Continuous
   Event-in-progress
   ree kuyot n-agāʔ r-bihš=ni r-tehB=ni agāʔ=ni
   HAB-scream also coyote ST-lie HAB-turn=3SG HAB-fall=3SG lie=3SG
   ‘I am watching this rock,’ said [the rabbit]’ (The Rabbit and the Coyote, line 97; Stubblefield & Stubblefield 1994: 78; glossing my own)

These facts for Mitla Zapotec are summarized in Table 7. Again, we see an overlap between the general imperfective and the specific progressive form in marking events-in-progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>Event-in-progress</th>
<th>(distribution)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>overlapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Summary: Imperfective range of the Mitla Continuous and Progressive

7 Quiegolani Zapotec

As a final mini-case study, I turn to Quiegolani Zapotec. Black (1994) describes the Queigolani Habitual r- as being fully ambiguous between characterization and event-in-progress readings, as shown in (15a). When there is a preposed completive clause, as in (15b), the situation is disambiguated to being an event-in-progress.

(15) Quiegolani Zapotec Habitual
   a. Characterization in free variation with event-in-progress
      R–oo noo nis
      HAB-drink 1.EXCL water
      ‘I drink water (regularly)’ or ‘I am drinking water.’ (Black 1994: 43)
   b. Event-in-progress as only available interpretation
      Or ne w-lenza Swa, r–ool Mblid liber
      hour that COMP-arrive John HAB-read Mary book
      ‘When John arrived, Mary was reading a book.’
Méndez Espinosa (2004) describes a Quiegolani Zapotec Progressive \textit{ga/ka}. He does not provide an example, but he compares this category with examples from other languages where the Progressive marks event-in-progress. I therefore tentatively propose the summary in Table 8, where the Quiegolani Habitual and Progressive fully overlap on events-in-progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event-in-progress</td>
<td>✓  ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Summary: Imperfective range of the Quiegolani Habitual and Progressive (tentative)

8 Conclusions

In this overview, we have seen that the “Habitual” /\textit{-}\textit{r-}/ in Central Zapotec languages retains some general imperfective semantics and sometimes overlaps with the Progressive /\textit{ka-}/. The details and level of overlap differs significantly between languages. However, we do not see the same diachronic pipeline described by Deo (2015) where the introduction of a progressive ultimately blocks the general imperfeclive from marking events-in-progress.

There seem to be (as-of-yet undescribed) pragmatic effects governing the use of “Habitual” /\textit{-}\textit{r-}/ for events-in-progress. For example, in the Colonial Valley Zapotec data, the examples where the Habitual/Progressive marks events-in-progress have a very performative reading.

(5c) Colonial Valley Zapotec
Event-in-progress — Habitual/Progressive for performative speech?

\textit{ti–nni=a}  \textit{anna}  \textit{oa–lij=ca}  \textit{quitaalij}  \textit{beni}  \textit{Christiano} \\
\textit{H/P–say=1SG}  \textit{PRF–true=EMPH}  \textit{all}  \textit{person}  \textit{Christian}  \\

‘I say now truly that all Christian people...’ (Broadwell 2015: 173)

Similarly, in Tlacochauaya and Mitla Zapotec, the use of the Imperfect/Habitual is restricted to narrative contexts. Anecdotally — from my own perusing of the text 	extit{The Rabbit and the Coyote} in Stubblefield & Stubblefield 1994 — the Mitla Zapotec Habitual seems more commonly used for events-in-progress in narrative scene-setting, as in (13b), while the Mitla Continous (within this text) mostly appears in dialogue, as in (14).
(13b) Mitla Zapotec
Event-in-progress — Habitual for narrative scene-setting?

\[ r\-olk\-a \quad kuyo?t \quad n\-aga? \quad r\-bi\h=ni \quad r\-tehB=ni \quad aga?=ni \]
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{HAB-scream} & \text{also coyote} \\
\text{ST-lie} & \text{HAB-turn=3SG} \\
\text{HAB-fall=3SG} & \text{lie=3SG}
\end{array}
\]

‘Screaming, that coyote was lying, turning, throwing (himself) down, lying’ (The Rabbit and the Coyote, line 62; Stubblefield & Stubblefield 1994: 71; glossing from Smith 2019)

(14) Mitla Zapotec

\[ \text{ree} \quad \text{kay}\-\text{a}p=\text{ä} \quad gih \quad \text{re} \quad r\-\text{ähp}=\text{ni} \]

Here CONT-watch=1SG stone this HAB-say=3SG

“‘I am watching this rock,” said [the rabbit]’ (The Rabbit and the Coyote, line 97; Stubblefield & Stubblefield 1994: 78; glossing my own)

Ultimately, in order to understand the development of the Central Zapotec imperfective categories, we need more detailed descriptions of Zapotec TAM systems. Much of current reconstruction has been done with not enough data, particularly with regards to the semantics and pragmatics of the TAM categories. The semantics of these TAM categories is clearly more complicated than they might appear on the surface, making this an exciting area for future research.

References


