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A Grammar of San Miguel Chimalapa Zoque

by

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The variety of Zoque described in this grammar is spoken in San Miguel Chimalapa, a small town in southern Oaxaca, México. The town has some 5,000 citizens; there are perhaps 1,800 speakers of Zoque, all over the age of forty. The language is thus moribund. Given the paucity of linguistic work on this and other members of the Mixe-Zoque language family, my goal in writing this grammar was to provide as comprehensive a description as possible. Grammatical terminology is drawn from the functionalist theory of Role and Reference Grammar. Zoque is an ergative, agglutinating, polysynthetic language. It is a head-marking language. Core NPs are not case-marked; postpositions mark non-core NPs. Word order amongst NPs is free, except that the actor NP must precede the undergoer NP if it is possible to confuse them (if they are both human, for example). The bulk of this grammar is concerned with the description of verbal morphology. In addition to the pronominal agreement markers, agreement with core arguments can be marked by the plural suffix or by the

valency-increasing affixes - the causative and the applicative. Valency reducing affixes are the passive, the antipassive, and the impersonal. There is a set of positional affixes that refer to the resultant shape and state of the undergoer argument. Both noun incorporation and verb stem compounding are highly productive processes in this language. Dependent verb constructions can also be formed with a small set of auxiliary verbs; these constructions exhibit an agreement pattern known as ergative shift. Verb compounding is another extremely productive and powerful process in this language. This grammar also discusses syntax within the clause and in multi-clausal expressions, including relative clauses, coordinated and comparative clauses, and subordinate clauses. It includes chapters on question formation and aspect. Finally, there is discussion of discourse-level processes, including word order and discourse markers. The use of Spanish grammatical function words, independently and in tandem with Zoque formatives, is discussed where relevant. This grammar also serves as documentation for a dictionary of Zoque, with glosses in Spanish and English, that is accessible as a searchable on-line database at <http://www.albany.edu/anthro/maldp/>.

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