

Where are Zapotec negative constructions situated from a typological perspective?

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Syntax of the World Languages VIII, Paris, Inalco, 2018

Teotitlan del Valle Zapotec (TdVZ)

TdVZ is spoken in Teotitlan del Valle, a town located in the Valley of Oaxaca (Mexico), 18 miles from the city of Oaxaca. This language is part of the Otomanguean family, and within the Zapotec family it is considered among the central group (Smith-Stark 2007).

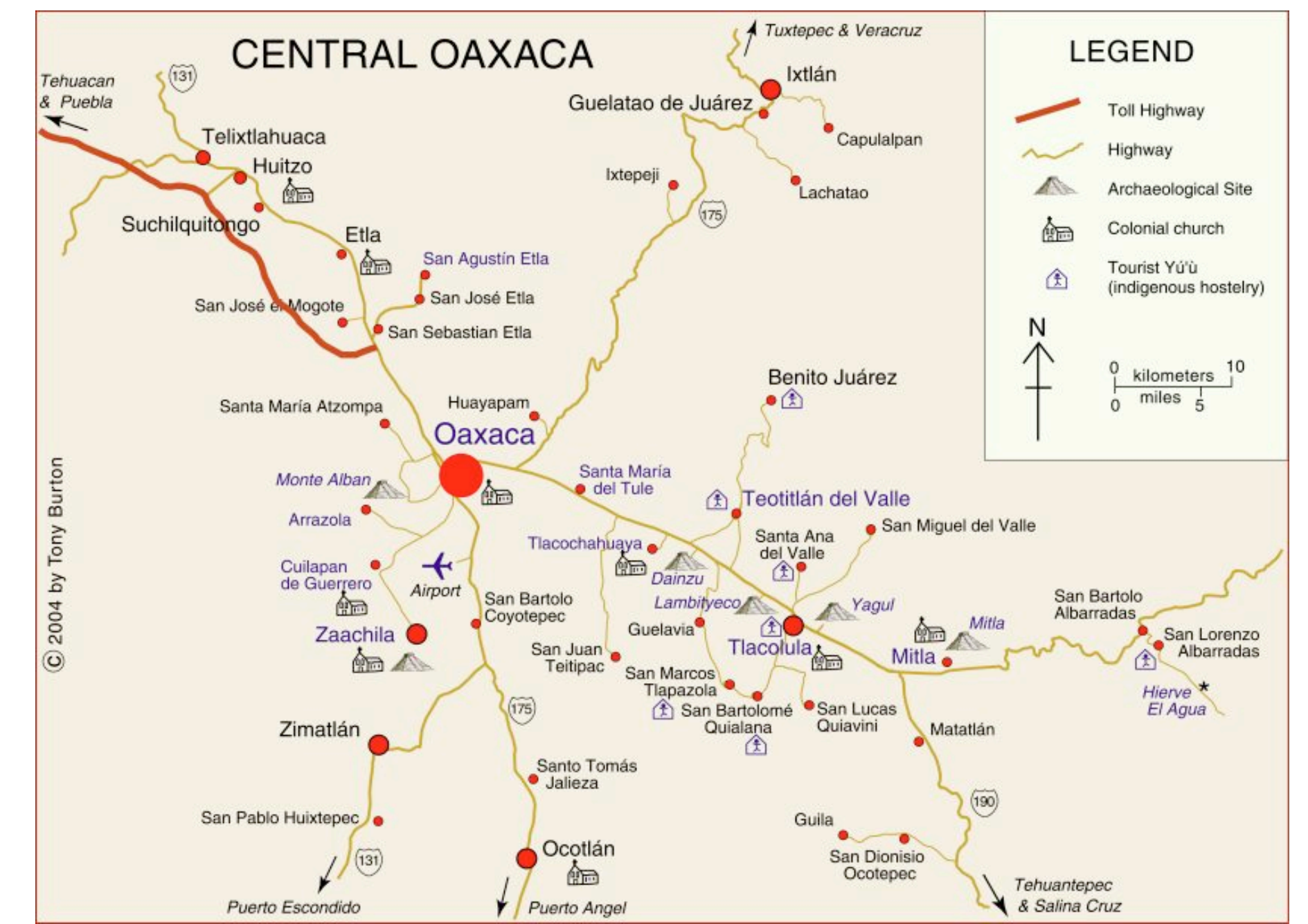
Phonological and morphosyntactic features

- Fortis vs Lenis consonants
- Three-way distinction in phonation (modal, creaky, and glottalized vowels)
- Five contrastive tones (low /a/, mid /ā/, high /á/, falling /à/, and rising /ǎ/)
- Due to its prominence, syllables are categorized in Tonic vs Non-tonic. In Tonic syllables any phonation and tone type can occur while in non-tonic, only modal phonation and level tones occur. In addition, a vowel lengthens in word final position in a tonic syllable or when followed by a lenis consonant; in non-tonic syllables this does not occur.
- VSO word order
- Nominative-accusative alignment

Morphosyntactic words, clitics and affixes

Properties	Complex morpho-syntactic word	Simple morpho-syntactic word	Static clitic	Movable clitic	Prefixes
Phonological	Multisyllabic One tonic syllable per word	Monosyllabic Tonic	Mono-syllabic Tonic	Mono-syllabic Non-tonic	Mono-syllabic Some are composed by one single consonant Non-tonic
Morphological	Complex	Complex/simple	Simple	Simple	Simple
Syntactical	Independent/free	Independent/free	Independent	Bound	---
Semantic	Compositional meaning	Concrete meaning	Concrete meaning	+/- Concrete meaning	Abstract meaning

Teotitlan del Valle and other Zapotec villages



Clausal negation in TdVZ

Background

Dahl (1979), Payne (1985), and Dryer (2013) all present classifications of negative constructions focusing on the status of the negative markers according to the following three-way taxonomy: 1) affixal negation; 2) negative particles; or 3) negative verb. The first type is categorized a morphological construction, while the last two a syntactic construction. Another type of classification for clausal negation is proposed by Miestamo (2005), who distinguishes between symmetric and asymmetric negative constructions. That is, whether there are structural differences (asymmetries) between the affirmative sentences and their negative counterpart.

In TdVZ, clausal negation occurs with the markers: *kēd=* and *=di* (1). Both elements are obligatory in indicative monoclausal constructions and in interrogative polar questions (2).

1) *Kēdbi' xhūdi* 'nngy
kēd=bi-xhu=di nngy
NEG=COM-tremble=di yesterday
'It didn't tremble yesterday.'

2) *(l)ákēd' rōwdi* 'bækwrē 'dzit?
(l)á=kēd=r-aw=di bækw=rē dzit
INTG=NEG=HAB-eat=di dog=DEM bone
'Doesn't that dog eat bone(s)?'

However, only *kēd=* occurs in prohibitives (3), if *=di* appears the negative construction is interpreted as the negation of an indicative statement (4).

3) *kēd' rōw* 'ndǎn
kēd=r-aw=ɥ ndǎn
NEG=HAB-eat=2SG.IF that
'Do not eat that!'

4) *kēd' rōwdy* 'ndǎn
kēd=r-aw=di=ɥ ndǎn
NEG=HAB-eat=di=2SG.IF that
'You do not eat that.'

Also, *=di* becomes optional in (some) content questions (5), and in several subordinated constructions that denote irrealis modalities (6). In addition, there are subordinated clauses in which *=di* triggers ungrammaticality (7).

5) 'Xīxh *tékēd' gwá(dy)u* 'xkwily 'nna' dxi?
xīxh *té=kēd=gu-æ(=di)=u* xkwily nna'dxi
why SUB=NEG=COM-go(=di)=2SG.IF school today
'Why you didn't go to school today?'

6) 'Blé *kēd' nyáw(di)á* 'bǎl' kütx
Blé *kēd=nī-aw(=di)=a* bǎl-kütx
Hopefully NEG=CONTRF-eat(=di)=1SG meat-pig
'I wish I hadn't eaten pork'

7) 'Bǎll *kédri' kázan* *ga' dxágan,*
Bǎll *kēd=ri-káz=an* *ga'-dxág=an*
If NEG=HAB-want=3SG.IF POT-get.tired=3SG.IF
'syǎnēn
sǎ=an=en
POT.buy=3SG.IF=3SG.INAN
'If he doesn't want to get tired, he better buy it (something to help).'

Negation of potential mood clauses (A subtype of Clausal negation)

- Same structural and functional characteristics as (main)clausal negation.

8) *Gádgüt' nyádidán*
gád=gu'-utxnyá=di=dán
NEG=POT-get.married=di=3PL.IF
'They haven't gotten married.'

- The negator is *gád=* instead of *kēd=*
- The negated predicate/verb must be marked with the potential prefix (8)–(9).
- It negate predicates that have not occurred but will potentially do.
- *gád=*, could be interpreted as 'not yet'.

This negative construction has an alternative form.

9) 'Gáti *güt' nyádán*
gáti g'-utxnyá=dán
NEG POT-get.married=3PL.IF
'They haven't gotten married.'

Questions

- Is *=di* a negative morpheme in TdVZ or an emphatic marker?
- Should subordinate clauses be considered in the analysis for clausal negation?

In TdVZ, thus, we are dealing with a syntactic negative construction because of the clitic status of *kēd=* and *=di*.

I posit that (mono) clausal negation in TdVZ is of the type Asymmetric / Emphatic since *=di* seems to be (synchronically) an emphatic marker of negation that has fossilized in monoclausal constructions; diachronically, I consider that *=di* derived from a marker of indicative modality.

Existential negation in TdVZ

Background

Veselinova (2013) develops a cross-linguistic study on the strategies to negate an existential predicate. The main findings of this author in relation to negation of existential predicates and clausal negation are the following.

- Negation in existential predicates is different from clausal negation.
- Negation in existential predicates and clausal negation are formally identical but morphologically different or used in different constructions.
- Clausal negation or a negative quantifier alternate for the negation of existence.
- No special negator is used to negate existential predicates.

In TdVZ, this type of negation occurs with the negative marker *kěty*. The most relevant feature of this negative construction is that the affirmative counterpart has a verb that is deleted in the negative, as noticed in (10) vs (11). Also, this negative marker is not a clitic but a phonological and morphosyntactic element. In addition, *kěty* can be inflected (12). Thus, *kěty* has a more verbal status.

TAKEAWAY POINTS

In TdVZ there is syntactic and asymmetric clausal negation. The negator *kēd=* require the enclitic *=di* post-verbally in monoclausal constructions. *=di* diachronically may have indicated or emphasized the indicative modality, but synchronically it seems to give emphasis to negation.

The existential negator in TdVZ resembles the clausal negator but is not identical to it, not a common pattern in the typology for these type of negation (Veselinova 2013). *kēd=* and *kěty* are historically related. *kēd=* may be an evolved form of *kěty*.

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10) *Kěty* 'nis 'nna' dxi
NEG.EX water today
'There is no water (service) today.'

11) 'Yū' 'nis 'nna' dxi
yū' nis nna'dxi
EST.exist water today
'There is water (service) today'

12) 'Kětyán' 'gwá'
kěty=an *gu-æ=a*
NEG.EX=3SG.IF COM-go=1SG
'He (was) not (somewhere) (when) I went.'

In closer varieties, i.e., San Pablo Güilá Zapotec (Lopez Cruz 1999) and San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec (Lee 2006; Munro & Lopez 1999) *kěty* (or *kity* or *ke'ity* respectively) is the marker for clausal negation. Thus, the marker of clausal negation and the marker for existential negation are historically connected, so they probably have one single source.

Typologically, however, it is important to notice that the form of the existential negator slightly differ from the typology proposed by Veselinova (2013) since the existential negator resembles the clausal negator, but it is not formally identical to it, and the 'word' status of each element differ as well as the constructions in which they appear

Future Directions

Explore other negative constructions such as constituent negation (13) and the negation of indefinites (14). In both of them *=di* is a recurrent element.

13) *ád' dxapdirē* *gú' zǎm*
ád=dxap=di=rē *gu-zǎ=ǎm*
NEG=girl=di=DEM COM-buy=3SG.INAN
'It wasn't that girl who bought it (but someone else).'

14) *Kēd' tū' bǎd'ti*
kēd=tū=b-ǎd=di
NEG=who=COM-come=di
'Nobody came.'

Acknowledgments

My Thanks to Mr. Andrés Contreras Lazo and to Mrs. Martha Montaño Bazán, both speakers of TdVZ, for the discussion on negative constructions in this language. I also thank Anthony C. Woodbury and Patience Epps for their feedback and comments on my research in this topic.

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