

Nominal suffixes in Zamucoan

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The Zamucoan family consists of no more than two living languages: Ayoreo (**AY**) and Chamacoco (**CH**), spoken in northern Chaco (in southern Bolivia and northern Paraguay) by approximately 4500 and 2000 people, respectively. While the first stable contacts with the Ayoreo began at the end of the Forties, the Chamacoco were already in contact with the Western civilization at the turn of the 19th century, with intense linguistic contact with Spanish and Guaraní. Zamucoan also includes the now extinct Old Zamuco (**OZ**), described in the early 18th century by the Jesuit Father Ignace Chomé (1958 [*ante* 1745]). OZ and AY are very close from the lexical point of view as opposed to CH (Kelm 1964), but all three languages show obvious morphosyntactic correspondences, allowing robust diachronic insights (Ciucci 2016 [2013]; Ciucci & Bertinetto 2015, 2017).

In contrast with all surrounding languages, the Zamucoan ones are fusional. Nouns and adjectives share the same suffixation paradigms, expressing the following categories: gender (masculine / feminine), number (singular / plural) and form. By “form” we refer to a peculiar morphological tripartition (base form vs full form vs indeterminate form), which appears to be a unique feature of these languages. The purpose of the talk will be to compare the nominal morphology of the three languages, in order to get an insight into the Proto-Zamucoan nominal inflections, as part of a project aiming at Proto-Zamucoan reconstruction.

The base form (**BF**) is characteristically used for nominal predication (a possibly unique typological feature), but its singular is also the starting point of any inflectional and derivational operation, as well as the form adopted as the first member of a compound. The full form (**FF**) and the indeterminate form (**IF**), by contrast, occur in argumental contexts and differ among themselves in terms of specificity vs non-specificity of the intended referent. Although these features are to be found in all Zamucoan languages, there are interesting language-specific differences, as shown in the following table, which summarizes the main BF and FF allomorphs (from Ciucci 2016). As can be seen, gender, number and form exponents exhibit remarkable similarities, allowing the formulation of robust hypotheses on Proto-Zamucoan nominal suffixation and its subsequent evolution:

	OZ		AY		CH	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Masculine BF	Ø	-o, -jo	Ø	-o, -jo	-k, -ak	-o, -e, -tso, -lo
Masculine FF	-tie	-odoe	-i	-ode	-t, -te	
Feminine BF	Ø	-i	Ø	-e	Ø, -a(?), -e?, -o?, -i?	-e
Feminine FF	-tae	-jie	Ø, -e, -a, -ia	-(i)die	-ta, -tea	

OZ is the most conservative language. CH, on the contrary, is the most innovative: it has lost the BF/FF contrast in the plural and has developed new allomorphs for the BF singular, owing to root reinterpretation. According to recent lexical comparison (Holman *et al.* 2011; Müller *et al.* 2013), CH split long ago from OZ and AY, and indeed it only shares 30% of its lexical roots with AY (Bertinetto 2014 [2009]). However, CH exhibits singular FF allomorphs (masc. *-t, -te* and fem. *-ta, -tea*) that closely correspond to their OZ cognates *-tie* (masc.) and *-tae* (fem.). This suggests that OZ and CH preserve the original Proto-Zamucoan singular FF allomorphs that went

lost in AY. Thus, as also observed in verb morphology (Ciucci & Bertinetto 2015), some archaic features may be shared by OZ and CH as opposed to AY, despite the striking lexical similarity between OZ and AY.

Finally, we will also point out occasional traces of possibly remote contact with other Chaco languages (Ciucci 2014).

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