Studies in OTOMANGUEAN PHONOLOGY
STUDIES IN

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# Table of Contents

Introduction 1

A Problem in Tone Analysis 3
  John P. Daly

Silacayoapan Mixtec Phonology 21
  Joanne North and Jana Shields

Phonetic vs. Phonemic Correspondence in Two Trique Dialects 35
  Barbara E. Hollenbach

Stress and Tone in Tlacoyalco Popoloca 69
  Sharon Stark and Polly Machin

Chiquihuitlan Mazatec Phonology 93
  Allan R. Jamieson

Chiquihuitlan Mazatec Tone 107
  Allan R. Jamieson

Choapan Zapotec Phonology 137
  Larry Lyman and Rosemary Lyman

Guelavía Zapotec Phonemes 163
  Ted E. Jones and Lyle M. Knudson
INTRODUCTION

This volume of phonology papers, treating languages of the Otomanguean group, includes materials from three of its major families: Mixtecan, Popotecan, and Zapotecan.

The Mixtecan family is represented by two quite diverse approaches to Mixtec languages and a contrastive analysis of two Trique dialects. Daly provides an innovative and detailed discussion of a Mixtec tone problem for Peñoles Mixtec which challenges the kind of traditional interpretation that has dominated much of Mixtec phonological analysis. North and Shields, in contrast, present a traditional description, combining an analysis of segmental and tone phonemes with a few morphophonemic observations. Hollenbach takes a different tack altogether in her topological comparison of two Trique dialects by first inquiring into the details of the two phonological systems and then speculating upon the kinds of adjustments the speaker of one must make to understand a speaker of the other.

The Popotecan family is here represented by descriptions of both a Popolocan and a Mazatecan language. Stark and Machin highlight the roles of stress and tone in their description of the phonological word and phrase in a northern Popolocan language, while Jamieson provides a description—divided into two papers because of its thoroughness and careful attention to phonetic detail—of Chiquihuitlan Mazatec segments and tone.

Finally, the Zapotecan family is represented by two papers. Larry and Rosemary Lyman bring the fruits of several years of research to bear upon a hierarchical study of Coapan Zapotec phonology, dealing with phoneme through sentence levels, including a discussion of an extensive system of tone sandhi; and Jones collaborates with consultant Knudson to give us a first look at Guelavía Zapotec with a traditional analysis of segmental phonemes and tone, highlighting contrastive features and distribution.

Although two or three papers in this collection do address interesting theoretical questions or innovative approaches, the volume finds its major strength and usefulness in the presentation of a wide range of phonological facts which will stand us in good stead for many years to come as we seek a greater understanding of an important group of Meso-American languages.

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1