

Studies of Amuzgo-Mixtecan Tones

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Amuzgo-Mixtecan tones have been studied for a long time and the Proto-Mixtecan tone system was reconstructed by Longacre (1957) more than fifty years ago. However, it was reconstructed based on only four Mixtecan languages (San Miguel el Grande Mixtec, Atatláhuca Mixtec, Concepción Pápalo Cuicatec and Chicahuaxtla Triqui) and its reliability is questionable. San Miguel el Grande and Atatláhuca Mixtecs share similar tone patterns, while other Mixtec languages like Diuxi, Jicaltepec and Peñoles Mixtecs show somewhat different ones. Longacre (1952, 1957) did not analyze the Chicahuaxtla Triqui tone system properly and the Cuicatec tone system is not understood well even now. Although we have much more data on Amuzgo-Mixtecan tones now, more comprehensive and reliable data are necessary to reconstruct the Proto-Mixtecan and Proto-Amuzgo-Mixtecan tone systems. In this presentation, I will briefly review the previous studies of Amuzgo-Mixtecan tones and discuss what kind of information is further necessary to make more reliable reconstruction of the Proto-Mixtecan and Proto-Amuzgo-Mixtecan tone systems. I will also present some interesting tonal phenomena of Amuzgo-Mixtecan languages and discuss how the studies of Amuzgo-Mixtecan tones contribute to the theoretical discussion in linguistics, especially in the fields of phonetics/phonology, historical linguistics, typology and linguistic universals.