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## **A Tzeltal Maya Dictionary**

**Research Year:** 1995

**Culture:** Maya

**Chronology:** Classic

**Location:** Chiapas, México

**Site:** Tzeltal Maya Dictionary

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### **Introduction**

The present report describes the activities carried out during the period January 1995-December 1996 under the project "A Tzeltal Maya Dictionary", funded by FAMSI.

As described in the grant application, the aim of this project was creating an extensive computerized lexical database on Tzeltal Maya. Tzeltal is the main Mayan language of Chiapas, México, closely related to the Cholan languages of the Classic Maya Lowlands, and quite possibly the language whose ancestor is recorded in the inscriptions of the Classic Maya site of Toniná, in Chiapas. Understanding the lexicon of this language, for which no full-scale description is so far available, is essential to the study of the Classic Maya script. The project was intended as the first stage of a longer-term research plan aimed at elaborating a comprehensive dictionary of Tzeltal. It consisted in assembling, systematically organizing, and computerizing the existing lexical materials on the Tenejapa dialect of Tzeltal Maya (the Tzeltal dialect with the most extensive documentation), as well as other linguistic and cultural information contained in ethnographies of Tenejapa Tzeltal communities, as the basis on which to

build for the later extensive lexicographic research. Materials on other Tzeltal dialects were also to be entered for comparison and as aids to further research on Tenejapa Tzeltal.

The project was carried out by the PI (Maffi), then at University of California at Berkeley, in collaboration with Dr. Martha Macri of University of California at Davis. Dr. Macri freely contributed her Mayanist as well as computer database expertise in support of the project. She also provided some of the computer equipment used for the project, in particular a scanner. The project also employed two research assistants, Ms. Heidi Altman and Mr. John Whitmer, both Anthropology graduate students at UC Davis. Altman and Whitmer were involved in scanning part of the materials (see below), cleaning up the scanned files, and performing the conversion of these files to a computer database in the Panorama application for Macintosh. Additional tasks consisted in entering ethnographic information contained in the body of some of the texts listed below. The PI worked at 25% time over the 24 months of the project. She was based in Berkeley and paid monthly visits to Davis to work with the other collaborators.

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## **About the Project**

The project elaborated on an initial database consisting in the electronic version of the ms. *A Tenejapa Tzeltal Dictionary* (Berlin and Kaufman 1963), computerized by Maffi (see Berlin and Kaufman 1988), and used for the present project by permission of the authors. The database, devised by Dr. Macri, organizes lexemes by root, while allowing for sorting of the data by lexical item; root and stem classes are indicated, followed by English and Spanish glosses, botanical or zoological scientific name (if appropriate), semantic domain, examples of the lexeme in context, comments (any additional linguistic and/or ethnographic information on the lexeme). The Berlin and Kaufman database included over 4,500 records.

To this database, the following materials were added during tenure of the FAMSI grant:

1. Glossary of Tenejapa Tzeltal medical terminology from Maffi's doctoral research on Tzeltal ethnomedicine (Maffi 1994). About 1200 records are included in this set.

2. A list of Tenejapa Tzeltal illness names, also from Maffi (1994), consisting in almost 650 records.
3. Two glossaries of Tenejapa Tzeltal illnesses and theft definitions, again from Maffi (1994), for a total of over 380 items.
4. Two lists of Tenejapa Tzeltal anatomical terminology, from Stross (1976) and Berlin and Castro (1988), for a total of about 550 items.
5. A list of Tenejapa Tzeltal plant names, from Berlin, Breedlove, and Raven (1974). The data in the main index, including Tzeltal plant names and their botanical identifications, were scanned and converted to database format, yielding over 2,400 items.
6. A list of Tenejapa Tzeltal animal names, from Hunn (1977). The same procedure was followed as in the previous case, yielding about 1,000 items.
7. A list of Tenejapa Tzeltal numeral classifiers, from Berlin (1968), also scanned and converted, resulting in almost 530 items.

The sum of all these databases amounted to over 11,200 items including repetitions. However, no repeated forms were discarded, since glosses needed to be compared and cross-checked and dictionary entries had to be set up, synthesizing the appropriate information from the various sources. In addition, the extensive textual materials from Maffi (1994) were converted to word-by-word format, as sources of new lexical items and/or additional meanings. Once duplicates were eliminated, these texts yielded close to 1,730 items, bringing the total of entries in the database to 12,930. Each item in the database was coded as to source for easy retrieval of the original.

Separate databases were created for lexical items derived from existing glossaries of other dialects of Tzeltal (to be checked with Tenejapa Tzeltal speakers to assess their applicability to the Tenejapa dialect): for the Bachajón dialect, Slocum and Gerdel (1971), including almost 2,700 items; for the Oxchuc dialect, Sarles (ms. 1961), of about 1,200 items. These glossaries also required scanning and converting.

Data entry of this massive amount of materials and quality control on data entry accuracy took up most of the project's time during the period funded by FAMSI. Each of the sources presented specific problems for conversion to database format. This was particularly the case with Berlin et al. (1974) and Hunn (1977), respectively the sources of Tenejapa Tzeltal ethnobotanical and ethnozoological terminology. The glossaries contained in these two volumes are structured in such a way as to reflect the native taxonomic organization of Tzeltal ethnobiological nomenclature (similar, although not identical to, Western systematic biological taxonomy). In other words, the information was structured along several increasingly inclusive levels of classification.

These glossaries also provide correspondences between named Tzeltal plant and animal species and equivalent Latin binomials according to systematic biological taxonomy. Such correspondences are rarely one-to-one, but most commonly one-to-

many or many-to-one (one named Tzeltal species corresponding to more than one biological taxon, or several Tzeltal taxa corresponding to one biological species). It was essential to maintain as much of this information as possible in the dictionary database, as a part of the ethnographic information on the corresponding lexical entries. However, this presented special challenges in moving from the scanned texts to database conversion. This work was completed on the ethnozoological data, while it is still in progress on the more extensive and far more complex ethnobotanical data.

Control of data entry quality was completed on the other data sets. Maffi, Altman and Whitmer also updated the transcription of lexical items according to the current Tzeltal Maya orthography. Maffi began the task of initial checking of glosses and comparison of repeated lexical items from different sources. Macri undertook the task of cross-checking or identifying roots and root classes for the items in the database.

At this stage, Maffi and Macri are seeking some additional funding for a research assistant to complete the work on the ethnobotanical database. Subsequently, they plan to elaborate a research proposal to conduct the main body of research for the compilation of a comprehensive Tzeltal dictionary. This will require further analytical work on the existing database and further data entry from ethnographic sources, as well as fieldwork to check the existing data with Mayan collaborators and to collect additional data, especially in semantic domains not well covered in the available sources.

### **Tzeltal of Tenejapa: Dictionary Draft 11/97**

lajtz'apil	armpit body part [skin: apon chakal, batz'il chakal, ixim chakal, jojtet, nelab]
lajun	lajun ten
laktz'un	lak push through it, to (barrier)
laktz'un	lak break through it, to (barrier)
lam	layer body part qualifier [skin: cha'lam ejk'echil;???: cha'lam tzotz]
lam te'	remedy, plant
lamaj	lam calm down, to
lamaj	calm down illness, general; illness gravity [gint/wom: ib'un k'inat/xexjun k'inat; sleep: jowil wayel]
lamal	lam calm
lamal	lam gathered
laman	lam stack it, to
lap [k'u'(il)]	lap put it on, to (clothes)

lapal julul	that goes from one side to the other symptom [gint/wom: yik'al ch'ujtil]
lapis	lapis pencil
laso	laso rope
lata	lata tin can
latre	latre brick
latz	latz stack it evenly
latz ba	form one on top of another, in heaps symptom [skin: ch'ojk]
latzal	latz stacked
latzalz(il)	latz wrinkles
lawux	lawux nail
laxaxet	feel very tingling symptom [skin: cham ch'ich'ubel andr: tzu atil]
laxaxetik okil	tingling sensation before numbness in whole body
laxlajet	be tingling in various places symptom [skin: ti'lajan bak'etalil]
le	le
le	le look for it, to
le	look for [remedy] illness, general
le si'	le fetch firewood
le si'	looking for firewood cause of illness, collecting firewood
le'p'oj	peel symptom [skin: k'a'el, sak'al ja']
lebeleb	round spots [?] one next to the other symptom [skin: sak pejtz]
lebe[y] smul	le slander s.o., to
leboj	le hunt, to
lech	lech 1 make it (thin, leaf-like object)
lech	lech 2 milk
lechuka	lechuka lettuce
lek	lek good
lek	good; well illness, general; symptom [resp: ijk'al obal]
lek ta pasel	lek easy
lek'	lek' lap it, to (liquid)
lek'	lek' lick it, to (liquid)
lek'ubel	
lek'ubel atil	

lek'ubel atil	ma sna'
lek'ubel sitil	sleep in eyes
lek'ubel ti'il	secretion of the lips [pellagra?] illness name, skin; relatedness [skin: chin]
lek'ubel ti'il	cheilitis/ scaly lips
lek'ubel ti'il/ ijk' ti'ubel	<p>Chikan k'an ta ya xp'alín yilel te banti yabenal jti'tik, sok ay me sak ya spas sba, o ya x'ijk'ub te ti'ile, sok joyob nax welel lok'el yilel te yabenal jti'tik.</p> <p>Se ve que parece que se pela en los labios, y a veces se ponen blancos, o se vuelven negros los labios, y todo el tiempo esta puntado afuera el labio. Treatment: ma'yuk spoxil 9bis.3 Grupo swenta chamel te ayik sk'uxul ta chikinil, ta sitil, ta eil. Una clase de enfermedades que tienen dolor en los oídos, en los ojos, en los dientes: Jten chamel te ya xyaxub ti'il yu'un, sok ay ya sakub yilel.</p> <p>Una clase de enfermedades que los labios se ponen verdes oscuros/negros, y a veces se ponen blancos.</p>
lekil	lek good
lem	lem ignite it (flammable materials)
lem	lem shine, to
lem	lem glitter
lem	lem glow, to
lem	lem gleam, to
lememet	burn intensely symptom [gint: k'ajk'al nuk';??? lemlun o'tanil]
lemlajan	see lemlun o'tanil; ['the heart burns in various places'?] Illness name,???
lemlun	burn every now and then symptom [gint: k'ajk'al nuk'; skin: schuyel akanil; urinary: k'ux chuxil]
lemlun o'tanil	'the heart burns repeatedly' illness name,???
lemlun o'tanil	
lemlun o'tanil/ lemlajan o'tanil	<p>Chikan xlememet ya xlijk ta ko'tantik ta mero sbakel sni' ko'tantik, sok ay me ya xbajt ta joltik te sti'awe sok ta kakantik, ja' te me ya xlijk jk'ajk'altike.</p> <p>Se siente que empieza a arder bastante en el pecho en el [abajo del] mero esternón, y a veces el dolor se va a la cabeza y a los pies, es cuando nos enojamos. Treatment: yakan k'ulub wamal (spisil) sok yak' tz'i' wamal (spisil) sok inójo wamal (yabenal) 1.9 Grupo swenta puro schamel ch'ujtil. Grupo de puras enfermedades de barriga/estómago:</p>

	Jten chamel lom k'ux ta o'tanil sok bayel ta kum sti'aw. Una clase de enfermedades que dan mucho dolor de corazón/estómago y hay muchos diferentes dolores.
leon choj	leon mountain lion
leon choj	leon puma
leon choj	leon panther
leon choj	leon cougar
leon choj	leon catamount
lep	lep carry it, to (loads on the back)
lep'ajtik	that are spotted symptom [skin: sak pejtz]
les ba	develop, spread [in round shape?] symptom [skin; ch'ojk;???: chamel ta eil]
lesla ba	develop, spread thickly [in round shape?] symptom [skin; ch'ujch'ul chin, sak pejtz;???: chamel ta eil]
lew	lew open it, to (esp.legs)
lich	lich flutter it in the wind, to
lich'	lich' spread it (clothing in the sun)
lijk	lik 1 begin, to
lujch	Treatment; chik'il ta k'ajk' sok kusbil ta yach'il tzekel [quemado con fuego y limpiado con enagua nueva] 9.2 Grupo swenta chamel te ayik sk'uxul ta chikinil, ta sitil, ta eil. Una clase de enfermedades que tienen dolor en los oídos, en los ojos, en los dientes: Jten chamel te ay bayel sk'uxul ta chikinil sok ay sk'alel. Una clase de enfermedades que tiene mucho dolor en los oídos y tiene calentura.
lujtaj	lut 1 be joined together, to
lujtaj	lut 1 be joined together, to
luk	luk use it, to (hook-like instrument)
luk chay	luk fish, to
lukum	lukum earthworm
lukum	worms illness name, gint; cause of illness, animal
lukum	intestinal worms
lukum	Chikan puro k'ux ch'ujtil, sok ma'yuk sbujtz' jwe'eltik yu'un, ay me ya xburaj tal jch'ujtik yu'un, sok chikan ya sakubotik yu'un. Se siente puro dolor de barriga, y la comida no tiene sabor por eso, a veces se abulta la barriga por eso, y se ve que nos enflaquecemos por

eso. Treatment -axux (ye'tal) sok kajk'an (spisil) sok alwéna (spisil)  
 mayil (sbak) [sok nantzin sok salpat te']  
 nantzin (spat)  
 salpat te' (spat)  
 elemonex (sbak) sok lula (yabenal) 1.5 Grupo swenta puro schamel  
 ch'ujtil. Grupo de puras enfermedades de barriga/estómago: Jten chamel  
 ya yak' k'ux ch'ujtil, sok ayik schanul ta ch'ujtil, ya stojkes bayel chamel te  
 ch'ujtil.  
 Una clase de enfermedad que da dolor de vientre, y hay animalitos en la  
 barriga, produce muchas enfermedades en la barriga.

lukum akanil

lukum ta

lum lum town

lum lum earth

lumil tokal lum fog

lumilal lum soil

lumilal lum earth

lumilal lum ground

luna luna (clan name)

luna tzu tzu 1 (surname)

lunaj ch'ajkax (surname)  
 ch'ajkax

lunex(tik) lunex Monday

lup lup take it out of container, to

lup (ja') lup dip it out (water with dipper)

lura lura rue (Ruta graveolens)

lut grab by biting; put in mouth remedy administration

lut' lut' close it (opening, by sewing it shut)

lut (il) lut 2 back of knee

lutil knee, back

lutil back of knee body part [skin: jojtet]

lutlun sitil twitching of eyelid



### **Tzeltal of Tenejapa: Published Vocabulary Hunn (1977)**

p'ajsum chan	'cut at slanted angle snake' <i>Tropidodipsas fischeri</i> [fauna]
p'ejel nujkul chan	cat-eyed snake, 'round, solid skin snake' <i>Leptodeira septentrionalis</i> not observed locally [fauna]
p'ejel nujkul	lyre snake, 'round, solid skin snake' <i>Trimorphodon biscutatus</i> [fauna]
p'ejel nujkul	'round, solid skin snake' <i>Xenodon rabdocephalus</i> ethnographer's invented association [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshopper <i>Acrididae</i> sp., immature [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshopper <i>Acridinae</i> spp. [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshopper <i>Cyrtacanthacridinae</i> spp. [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshopper <i>Oedipodinae</i> spp. [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshopper <i>Pyrgomorphae</i> : <i>Sphenarium</i> sp. [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshoppers <i>Acrididae</i> in part [fauna]
p'ilich	small, short-horned grasshoppers <i>Acrididae</i> in part Residual category [Fauna: grasshopper]
p'itp'it	White-throated Flycatcher <i>Empidonax albigularis</i> naming variation [fauna]
p'itp'it	Empidonax Flycatchers <i>Empidonax</i> naming variation [fauna]
p'itp'it	Pine Flycatcher <i>Empidonax affinis</i> naming variation [fauna]
p'itp'it	Yellowish Flycatchers <i>Empidonax flavescens</i> naming variation [fauna]
p'itp'it	Buff-breasted Flycatcher <i>Empidonax fulvifrons</i> naming variation [fauna]
p'o'ch'in us	flit flies, 'swarming small fly' <i>Chloropidae</i> said to swarm open wounds [fauna]
p'um te'	treehoppers, 'tree chewer' Homoptera: <i>Membracidae</i> [fauna]
p'um te'	leafhoppers, 'tree chewers' Homoptera: <i>Cicadellidae</i> [fauna]
pa'ka	roof of the mouth stem refers primarily to animal anatomy [anatomical term]
pajal matz'	Boat-billed Flycatcher, 'sour corn gruel' <i>Megarynchus pitangua</i> ethnographer's putative category, not elicited from locals [fauna]
pajal matz'	Social Flycatcher, 'sour corn gruel' <i>Myiozetetes similis</i> [fauna]
pajal matz'	Great Kiskadee, 'sour corn gruel' <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i> [fauna]

pajch'am	palm, sole stem refers primarily to animal anatomy [anatomical term]
palomax	domestic pigeon, Rock Dove <i>Columba livia</i> (domestic) introduced, borrowed word [fauna]
pan	Keel-billed Toucan <i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i> [fauna]
pan	toucans CHORDATA: Ramphastidae [fauna]
pan	Emerald Toucanet <i>Aulacorhynchus prasinus</i> [fauna]
pan	Collared Aracari <i>Pteroglossus torquatus</i> [fauna]
pat	back (plant: nonleathery bark, underside of leaf) stem refers primarily to animal anatomy [anatomical term]
patzan sijk'	<i>Ninia diademata</i> [fauna]
pay	skunk Mustelidae: Mephitinae spp. edible, flesh 'hot' [fauna]
pay sit mut	Common Bush-Tanager, 'skunk-faced bird' <i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i> (Thraupidae) [fauna]
pech'	Mallard <i>Anser</i> sp. (domestic) [fauna]
pech'	Muscovy <i>Cairina moschata</i> (domestic) [fauna]
pech'	Domestic Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> (domestic) [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Black-bellied Tree-Duck, 'water duck' Anatidae: <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Blue-winged Teal (female), 'water duck' <i>Anas discors</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	'water duck' <i>Anas acuta</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	'water duck' <i>Anas americana</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	grebes, 'water duck' Podicipedidae [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	American Coot, 'water duck' Rallidae: <i>Fulica americana</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	wild duck, 'water duck' Anatidae [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Ruddy Duck, 'water duck' Anatidae: <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	'water duck' <i>Ceryle torquata</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Belted Kingfisher, 'water duck' Alcedinidae: <i>Ceryle alcyon</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	'water duck' <i>Chloroceryle amazona</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Least Grebe, 'water duck' Podicipedidae: <i>Podiceps dominicus</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	Pied-billed Grebe, 'water duck' Podicipedidae: <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i> [fauna]
pech'ul ja'	American Coot Rallidae, <i>Fulica americana</i> [fauna]

péchu	breast (anatomical term)
pejpen	swallowtailed butterfly Papilionoidea: Papilio polyxenes [fauna]
pejpen	swallowtailed butterfly Papilionoidea: Parides iphidamas [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Macrolepidoptera residual category, unnamed residual classified by phenotypic descriptors of color, size, pattern and texture [fauna]
pejpen	Sister butterfly Nymphalidae: Anartia fatima [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Diaethria anna [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Dynamine sp. [fauna]
pejpen	Checkerspot butterfly Nymphalidae: Euphydryas sp. [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Hamadryas feronia [fauna]
pejpen	Buckeye butterfly Nymphalidae: Junonia lavinia [fauna]
pejpen	Mourning cloak butterfly Nymphalidae: Nymphalis antiopa (adult) [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Prepona laertes [fauna]
pejpen	Lady butterfly Nymphalidae: Vanessa carye [fauna]
pejpen	Gulf fritillary butterfly Nymphalidae: Dione vanillae [fauna]
pejpen	monarch butterfly Danaidae: Danaus plexippus [fauna]
pejpen	sulphur butterfly Colias sp. [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Eurema lisa [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Phoebis eubule [fauna]
pejpen	white butterfly Pieris sp. [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Synchloe callidice [fauna]
pejpen	satyr butterfly Satyridae: Taygetis sp. [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Lymnnaea alena [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly [fauna]
pejpen	moth residual category [fauna]
pejpen	butterfly Plebiinae [fauna]

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