

The Zapotecan languages

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Our paper will give a general overview of the Zapotec and Chatino language clusters of Oaxaca, Mexico, which together comprise the Zapotecan branch of the Otomanguean language family. We plan to cover their diversity, history, and contacts; survey the work that has been done on them; and sketch their special phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical characteristics, discussing for each their areal, typological, and theoretical significance. In so doing we will emphasize recent work in the field, which has included new appraisals of subgrouping among the languages; extensive documentation of the Chatino languages; exploration of tonal systems, the relationship of tone to laryngeal consonants and voice quality, and the role of tone in inflectional morphology; studies of aspect inflection and its relationship to transitivity and verbal derivation; and analyses of syntax in relation to information structure. Drawing on the materials of our paper, our December, 2014 workshop presentation will briefly give general background on the Zapotecan languages; outline their areal, typological, and theoretical significance; and discuss a selection of highlights of recent work on them.