

Exploring grammatical categories of Jicaque - a journey into the unknown

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This talk will offer a survey of select grammatical elements which have received little or no attention in past literature, and about which many basic questions still remain unanswered. The research is based on fieldwork carried out by the author at Montaña de la Flor, Honduras, as part of an ELDP funded project in 2011-2012. The following topics will be explored: 1) An element *cha* has been called an imperfect suffix but there are reasons to believe that it is not a suffix but rather an enclitic, since it attaches to members of all word classes. Furthermore, 'imperfect' may turn out not to be the best label for this element. 2) Certain noun suffixes have been analyzed as optional case markers but it is not at all clear which argument role they would mark. A more coherent explanation is that they are tied to discursive prominence involving the notions of topic-comment and definiteness. 3) A set of monosyllabic clitics appear at the edges of utterances and are best analyzed as discourse organizing clitics. They serve to express continuity, either pointing back to earlier discourse, or ahead to new information to come.