

On the Interpretation of Demonstratives in Macuilianguis Zapotec

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1. Introduction¹

Macuilianguis Zapotec (MacZ), an Oto-Manguean language spoken in Oaxaca Mexico, has a series of three deictic adnominal enclitics, which naively might be translated as *this*, *that* and *that (invisible)*. However, a variety of properties distinguishes the MacZ clitics from the English demonstratives. In this paper, I show that these differences suggest an account parallel to that of adnominal *here* and *there* instead of *this* and *that*.

2. Background

Macuilianguis Zapotec (MacZ) belongs to the Zapotec family, which is part of the Otomanguean stock. Like other Zapotec languages, it has a VSO basic word order. The MacZ data presented in this paper are from my fieldwork conducted in Los Angeles and the state of Oaxaca, Mexico.

It is spoken in the town of San Pablo Macuilianguis in the district of Ixtlán in Oaxaca, Mexico and also by a number of townspeople living in Oaxaca City, Mexico City and Los Angeles. The 2000 census figures put the population for the municipio at 1135, with the population about equally divided between the towns of Macuilianguis and San Juan Luvina (www.inegi.gob.mx).

MacZ is part of a dialect chain. The Zapotec of the region varies from town to town (and within towns) with decreasing intelligibility across greater distances. The variety closest to MacZ is spoken in Luvina, where only a few lexical differences have been noted. There is also a high degree of intelligibility with the Zapotec of Abejones and San Juan Atepec, though the differences are more significant. Atepec Zapotec, which has been documented with a dictionary (Nellis and Nellis 1983) and grammar (Bartholomew 1983), among other works, differs in lexicon, phonology, and morphosyntax.

3. The Demonstratives

Macuilianguis Zapotec has a series of three demonstrative enclitics which might roughly be translated as *this*, *that*, and *that (invisible)*. And Nellis and Nellis (1983)

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identify the cognate morphemes in the closely related language of Atepec Zapotec with *este*, *ese* and *aquel*. There are certain differences, however. I argue in this paper that these differences in meaning stem from the fact that the source of the Macuilianguis Zapotec demonstratives are *here/there*-type demonstratives, distinct from both demonstrative pronouns like *this/that* and prepositional uses of *here/there*. Further parallels with English post-nominal *here/there* can be used to illuminate the syntactic structure of the Macuilianguis nominals and to provide alternate accounts to recent proposals made by Bernstein (1997) and Kayne (2000) concerning the structure of post-nominal deictics.

The MacZ demonstrative clitics are given below in (1), along with a gloss and grammatical abbreviation:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | =nì ² | 'this here' | =PROX ³ |
| | =à'/'nà' ⁴ | 'that there' | =DIST |
| | =á/'ná | 'that far away' (not perceivable) | =INVIS |

The clitics are unstressed and attach to the last word of the preceding noun phrase:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. | carruni | ca i'yanà' | ùtó'á |
| | 'this car' | 'those mountains' | 'that child (unseen)' |

4. Differences between MacZ demonstratives and *this/that*

MacZ demonstratives are absolute not relative. This is most easily seen with the proximate clitic =nì. It is possible to use *this* to refer to objects that are closer to the speaker than some other reference point. In contrast, the MacZ proximate clitic indicates that the referent is adjacent to the speaker at utterance time. This can be taken to roughly be within arm's length.

Another difference involves proper nouns. With certain classes of exceptions, the deictic clitics are obligatory with all non-pronominal definite NPs. This includes proper names:

² For MacZ, the following orthographic conventions are used: c/qu=[k], ch=[tʃ], cch=[tʃ:], j=[x], th=[θ], tth=[θ:], x=[ʃ], y=[j/dʒ], yh=[z] and '=[?]. Lengthened stressed vowels are indicated by a double orthographic vowel. Those vowels followed by two consonants are not lengthened and not written by a double vowel. MacZ has three level tones, H[á], M[a] and L[à] and two contours, rising [áá] and falling [àà]. (See Broadwell and Zhang 1998 for a more detailed description of the tonal properties).

³ Abbreviations for MacZ: for clitic pronouns, 1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person, s = singular, p = plural, INCL = inclusive, EXCL = exclusive, F = formal, G = genitive, A = accusative; PL = plural; PROX = proximate; DIST = distal; INVIS = invisible; DIM = diminutive; C = completive, H = habitual, P = perfective, S = stative; NEG = negation; EMP = emphatic; FOC = focus; PREP = preposition; COMP = complementizer. = represents a clitic boundary, - an affix boundary, / fused morphemes and . separates multi-word glosses.

⁴ The =à'/'nà' variants and the =á/'ná variants are phonologically conditioned allomorphs which do not impact the present discussion.

3. **Gwa'aya' gwenee Cristiá ttu saa mierculi nna**
 gwa'a =ya' gwenee Cristi =á ttu saa mierculi =nna
 C/go =1 I/talk Cristina =INVIS a day Wednesday=and
I went to call Cristina one Wednesday and
4. **belanya' nna attianna rpaaya' Taa Laani,**⁵
 bellani =ya' =nna attia =nna rpaa =ya' Taa Laa =ni
 C/go.back=1 =and then =and C/tell =1 Sr. Braulio =PROX
I returned and then I told Sr. Braulio,
5. **"I'yariu' laati café què'ní stiitó'te risaa."**
 i'ya =riu' laati' café què'ní stii =tó' =te risaa
 P/drink =1INCL little coffee because moment =DIM =INT H/get.late
"Let's drink a little coffee since it's quickly getting late."

In the Spanish and English cases not only are the demonstrative determiners not obligatory with proper names, their inclusion leads to presuppositions not present in the Zapotec:

6. ...atti'a nna rpaayà' Taa Laani, "I'yariu' laati café que'ni stiitó'te risaa."
7. ...y cuando regresé, le dije al Sr. Braulio, "Vamos a tomar un poco de café, porque el tiempo se va rápido."
8. ...and when I came back, I told Sr. Braulio, "Let's drink a little coffee, because it's already getting late."

adding *este* and *this*

9. ...y cuando regresé, le dije a este Sr. Braulio, "Vamos a tomar un poco de café, porque el tiempo se va rápido."
10. ...and when I came back, I told this Sr. Braulio, "Let's drink a little coffee, because it's already getting late."

In the Spanish and English cases, if *este* and *this* are interpreted deictically then *Sr. Braulio* is interpreted as a common noun and the implication is that the referent is being distinguished from others named *Sr. Braulio*. That is, they imply the existence of other *Sr. Braulios* in the relevant discourse context.

However, the MacZ use of =ni does not have such implications. It merely locates the referent in space with respect to the speaker. There are no implications that other individuals of the name *Sr. Braulio* are present in the relevant discourse context or that others so named even exist. Even if *Sr. Braulio* is a uniquely named entity, the MacZ version is still felicitous while the Spanish and English ones are not. The MacZ

⁵ Note that =ni could only be used here because the referent was with the speaker at the time of utterance.

demonstrative does not pick out subsets of objects with the property of being named *Sr. Braulio*.

5. Demonstrative Source

These differences have come about because the MacZ deictics are grammaticalized forms of *here* and *there* deictics, similar to *-ci* and *-là* in French and post-nominal *here* and *there* in English (among other languages):

11. Examples from Bernstein (1997):

- a. ce livre -ci
DEM book -here
this book
- b. ce livre -là
DEM book -there
that book

- 12. a. this guy here
- b. that boy there
- c. my son here

There are a large number of parallels between the MacZ demonstratives and English post-nominal *here/there*. The post-nominal *here/there* demonstratives are interpreted like the MacZ demonstratives. The deictic reference becomes absolute not relative and when used with proper names no longer presupposes the existence of others with the same name:

- 13. a. My son *here* would like an ice cream cone.
- b. Your friend *there* is not very talkative.
- c. Eddie *here* has been a friend of mine for a long time.

Again the use of post-nominal *here* in such cases invokes scenarios in which the referent and speaker are adjacent. *There* meanwhile indicates that the referent is visible though distant, corresponding to MacZ *=nà'*. English does not have a counterpart to the invisible *=á*.

Likewise, post-nominal *here/there* locate referents of proper names as well without presupposing the existence of other individuals:

- 14. a. "Chewbacca *here* is first mate on a ship that might suit us." (Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*)
- b. Fred *there* thinks you're a moron.
- c. Bill *here* disagrees with you.
- cf
- d. *This* Bill disagrees with you.

In (14a-c), the referents are merely located in space with respect to the speaker. There are no implications that other similarly named individuals are present in the discourse or even exist. Uniquely identified individuals such as *Chewbacca* are compatible with *here/there* demonstratives.

For *Bill* in (14d), however, the presence of *this* contrasts the referent in (14d) with other individuals named *Bill*, thus presupposing that such other individuals exist and are present in the relevant discourse.⁶

That the demonstratives in MacZ are related in form to related locative adverbials can easily be seen by comparing morphological forms:

15. **Chi gwiiàlù' nàà'?**
 chi gwiià =lù' nàà'
 already C/go =2N there
Have you ever been there?
16. **Ttulte bidaayà' nìi.**
 ttulte bidaa =yà' nìi
 once C/come =1N here
I have come here once.

The locative adverbials have stress and occur as independent words. The only other difference is that the =nà' clitic also has an *n*-less allomorph =à'. (I have not found a clear instance of a locative adverbial corresponding to the invisible demonstrative =à).

Note though that neither the English nor the MacZ demonstratives are compositionally derived from prepositional *here* and *there*. In other words (17a) is not derived from (17b):

17. a. Bill here disagrees with you.
 b. Bill, who is here, disagrees with you.

Here in (17b) can be interpreted as designating an arbitrarily large place: *in the room, in the building, on campus, in the city, in the state*, etc. There is no longer a requirement that the speaker and the referent be directly adjacent, so long as Bill is located somewhere in the area defined by *here*:

18. a. Bill, who is here (at the party), is upstairs using the restroom.
 cf b. !Bill here is upstairs using the restroom.
 cf c. !Is Bill here upstairs?

⁶ There are also non-demonstrative uses of *this/that* which can be used with proper names without implying that others exist such as in (i) below:

i. I'm going to get that Calvin.

Thus, when *Bill* is modified by locative *here* as in (18a), it is possible for Bill to be at a distance from the speaker, even out of sight in this case. With deictic *here*, however, Bill (or perhaps a representation of Bill), must be near the speaker at the time of utterance. If Bill is not, as indicated by the sentences in (18b-c), the result is grammatically infelicitous. The only possible interpretation, if there is one, is that a representation, for example a picture, of Bill is near the speaker at utterance time.

The same holds true for MacZ:

19. ! **ɔ̀Bàdúúá Felíipèni?**

Bà= dúúá Felíipé =ni
 EMP= s/live Felipe =PROX
 !Is Felipe here at home?

This is also true with post-nominal *there* and MacZ =nà', though the requirement here is not that the referent be near, only visible. If the context of the sentence indicates that this is not true, then the sentence again becomes infelicitous (except under the representational reading).

20. a. Fred, who is there (at the party), is missing.
 b. !Fred there is missing.
 c. !Is Fred there upstairs?

21. ! **Peedruà' gwiíánà Lóóla'á na'a sáá.**

Peedru =à' gwiíá =nà Lóóla'á na'a sáá
 Pedro =DIST C/go.to =3 Oaxaca now day
 !Pedro there went to Oaxaca today.

That prepositional *here/there* are not the source for demonstrative *here/there* is further evidenced by the former's compatibility with indefinites in both English and MacZ and the latter's incompatibility.

Thus in (22), *here* and *there* can only be interpreted prepositionally as *in this place*, *in that place* and deictically.

22. a. Nobody here likes me.
 b. A judge here was accused of taking bribes.
 c. People there are real friendly.
 d. Who here knows the answer?

Similarly in MacZ, only the independent prepositional elements can occur after indefinites (as in 23a-b). The demonstrative clitics are ungrammatical with indefinite NPs (23c-e).

23. a. **Baliinlù'. Bènnè' nù ráppì icchácani.**

baliini =lù' bènnè' nù ráppì icchá =ca =ni
 C/be.correct =2s person here H/happen head =PL =3G

You were right. People here are crazy.

b. **Ttuchúppá bènnè' nì rulaasicayéntè'.**

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|------|---------|-----|-----|-------|
| ttuchúppá | bènnè' | nì | rulaasi | =ca | =yé | =ntè' |
| few | person | here | H/like | =PL | =3F | =1SA |

Few people here like me.

c. **Ànúúdi(*=nì) rulaasinintè'.**

| | | | | |
|--------|----------|---------|-----|-------|
| ànúúdi | (*=nì) | rulaasi | =ni | =ntè' |
| nobody | (*=PROX) | H/like | =3G | =1SA |

Nobody likes me.

d. **Ttu béccú'(*=nà') gutooya'anà miiyhí chà'nì**

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|----------|-----------|-----|--------|--------|-------|
| ttu | béccú' | (*=nà') | gutooya'a | =nà | miiyhí | chà' | =nì |
| a | dog | (*=DIST) | C/bite | =3 | cat | of/1sg | =PROX |

A dog bit my cat.

e. **Felípeá niidí ttu conééjú(*=á) làbíi bettinà.**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|-------|-----|---------|-----------|-------|--------|-----|
| Felípe | =á | niidí | ttu | conééjú | (*=á) | làbíi | betti | =nà |
| Felipe | =INVIS | no | a | rabbit | (*=INVIS) | NEG | C/kill | =3 |

Felipe didn't kill any rabbits.

The definiteness restriction follows straightforwardly from the semantics of demonstrative *here/there* and $=nì/=à'/=á$. If they are always interpreted deictically and serve to locate the nominal referent with respect to the speaker then the NP must be definite. However, prepositional *here/there* and $nì/nà'$ define an area or location and can thus be used restrictively with indefinite NPs.

6. Syntactic Structure

If demonstrative *here/there* and $=nì/=à'/=á$ aren't PPs, what are they? Interestingly, English and MacZ share not only semantic properties but syntactic ones as well.

In both languages, these demonstratives follow the entire NP. In MacZ, this is obligatory, in English optional. In MacZ, they can follow post-nominal adjectives, possessors and even entire relative clauses.

Following adjectives:

24. a. **líbrú gwéndi xeenini**

| | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|--------------|
| líbrú | gwéndi | xeeni | <u>=ni</u> |
| book | very | big | <u>=PROX</u> |

this very big book

b. **bestíidú yhánaa yaayhià'**

| | | | |
|----------|--------|-----------|--------------|
| bestíidú | yhánaa | yaayhi | <u>=à'</u> |
| dress | red | expensive | <u>=DIST</u> |

that expensive red dress

that although French *-ci* and *-là* may follow adjectives and certain PPs, they cannot follow relative clauses (example from Bernstein):

29. *Ce livre que j'ai acheté ci... This book that I bought

Bernstein claims that *ci/là* may appear before the RC but only if it is non-restrictive. If the RC is restrictive, *ci/là* may not appear:

30. a. *Ce livre-ci que j'ai acheté...
 b. Ce livre-ci, que j'ai acheté...

Other native French speakers I have asked have not supported this claim, but it does seem consistent with MacZ and English, in that non-restrictive relative clauses occur after the demonstratives:

31. a. **Felíipéà', nu' bembia'yà' náàyá', naaná nu' Lóóla'á**
 Felíipé =à' nu' bembia' =yà' náàyá' naa =ná nu' Lóóla'á
 Felipe =DIST REL C/meet =1s yesterday S/be =3 REL Oaxaca
Felipe (there), who I met yesterday, is from Oaxaca.

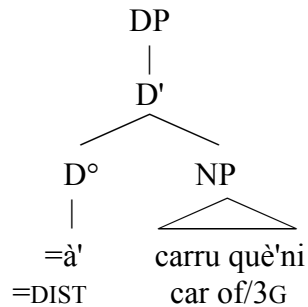
- b. My friend here, who speaks French, just returned from Montreal.

Why then French does not allow *ci/là* to follow a relative clause is not certain, but it does not stem from a general incompatibility between demonstratives and restrictive relatives.

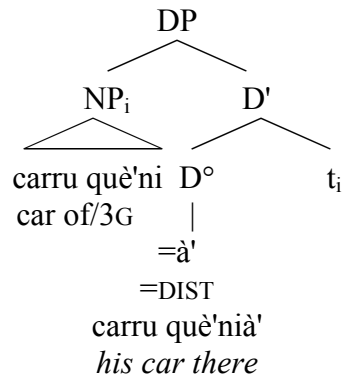
The MacZ structure is pretty straightforward. The post-nominal demonstratives can be treated as a syntactic head around which the entire NP moves. Since MacZ has no other independent definite articles it seems simplest to assume that the demonstratives occupy a D° head. However, it may be the case that actually occupy a still higher position, combining only with definite DPs. Nevertheless, since they are incompatible with clitic pronouns it might seem reasonable to assume that they do in fact occupy D°.

- 32.

a.



b.



For English there is a complication since there is variability in the ordering of the demonstrative:

- 33. a. that guy there
- b. that there guy

In addition, since English has a definite article, there might be more evidence on the exact position of demonstrative *here/there*. Surprisingly, though demonstrative *here/there* seem to be incompatible with *the*:

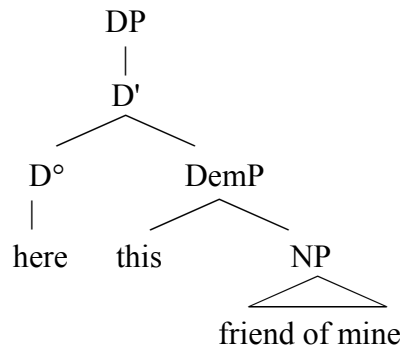
- 34. ??the guy here

It seems only possible to get the restrictive prepositional reading and not the demonstrative interpretation in such cases. This does not seem to be a deep restriction, but may well just be a peculiarity of English. That is, I am not certain we can conclude that demonstrative *here/there* occupy D° , thus preventing the presence of *the*. Again, some higher structural position may be desirable.

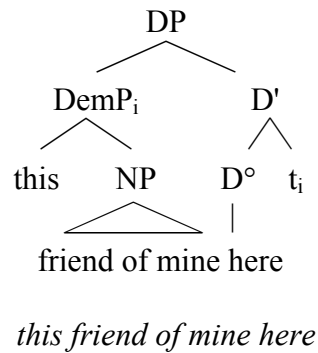
To get the variable word order in English, then, it may either be the entire NP (or DemP, see below) that raises or just the demonstrative determiner:

- 35.

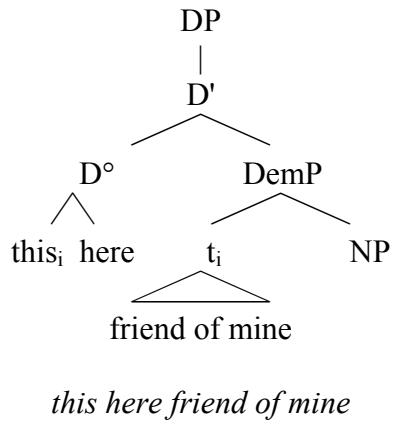
a.



b.



c.



This differs from recent proposals by Kayne (2000) which argued for *this here X* to represent the underlying structure and who argued that demonstrative *here/there* are licensed by the demonstrative determiners, *this* and *that*. Clearly, such examples as *Bill here* and *your friend there* indicate that no such licensing is necessary. Agreement between *this* and *here* can be achieved through direct selectional restrictions of the head on its complement.

7. Conclusion

The demonstrative clitics in Macuilianguis Zapotec exhibit a number of properties held in English by post-nominal *here* and *there* in such sequences as *Bill here*. They have identical semantic interpretations—being absolute not relative, identical semantic restrictions—incompatibility with indefinites, and similar syntax—typically post-nominal. These similarities seem to follow naturally from their historical relation to prepositional locative adverbs (or sub-elements which can form both locative adverbs and post-nominal deictics). This suggests that other languages which have demonstratives derived from historical prepositions may show similar restrictions/interpretations, though this may be mitigated by the degree of grammaticalization. Still, it will be interesting to see if in predominantly head-initial languages, there are consistent interpretative differences between pre-nominal and post-nominal demonstratives.

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