



The Spanish loanword *lado* in Otomi spatial descriptions

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ABSTRACT

The word *lado* ‘side’ in San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi (SIT Otomi) is a Spanish loanword and is used in descriptions of location and orientation involving five different types of spatial frames of reference (FoRs) according to data collected with a referential communication task in San Ildefonso Tultepec, Querétaro, Mexico. The task consists of matching pictures featuring both a ball – in different locations – and a chair – with different orientations – through linguistic descriptions of such images (Bohnenmeyer, 2008). *Lado* occurs in different constructions involving different FoRs and it constitutes a frequent strategy when the relative FoR is used in SIT Otomi.

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1. Introduction

San Ildefonso Tultepec (SIT)¹ Otomi is an indigenous language spoken in the village of San Ildefonso Tultepec in Central Mexico in the state of Querétaro. Together with other Otomi languages, SIT Otomi belongs to the Oto-Pamean family, the north-easternmost branch of the Oto-Manguan stock of Mesoamerican languages. See Map 1 below.

This article explains how in SIT Otomi the use of the relative *frame of reference* (FoR), a frame which is apparently not favored in the Mesoamerican linguistic area (de León and Levinson, 1992; Bohnemeyer, 2008), occurs almost only in conjunction with the loanword *lado* ‘side’ (< Sp. *lado*). An FoR is a coordinate system that is used in the interpretation of spatial relations between objects (O’Meara and Pérez Báez, 2011); in the relative FoR, the coordinate system depends on the orientation of the observer’s body. The goal of this paper is twofold: first, we describe constructions containing *lado* in the five FoRs available in SIT Otomi; second, we point out the relation between the use of *lado* and the existence of the relative FoR in SIT Otomi. Of the five FoRs available in SIT Otomi, the relative FoR is the only one that depends entirely on the use of the word *lado*. To show this, we compare the distribution of relative descriptions with *lado* to descriptions that contain *lado* but involve other FoRs.²

Abbreviations: A, adjusted stem; ACT, actualizer; ADV, adverb; ALLO, allocentric; B, bound form; CD, cardinal point; DEIC, deictic; DEL, delimitative; DEF, definite; DIM, diminutive; DIST, distal; DU, dual; EGO, egocentric; EMPH, emphatic; EXTR, extrinsic; FoR, frame of reference; GR, ground; IRR, irrealis; LM, landmark; M, middle voice; MOD, modifier; NP, noun phrase; NPS, non-present stem; P, particle; P.LOC, locative preposition; PL, plural; POSS, possessive; PREP, preposition; PRS, present; REL CL, relative clause; REL, relative clause marker; SG, singular; SIT, San Ildefonso Tultepec; Sp., Spanish; SUBJV, subjunctive; TOP, topological marker; wrt, with respect to.

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¹ Deviations from IPA in the transcription of SIT Otomi: <’ > /ʔ/, <f > /pʰ/, <j > /kʰ/, <ñ > /ɲ/, <ɾ > /ɾ/, <ɿ > /ɿ/, <ɿ > /ɿ/, <ɿ > /ɿ/, <x > /ʃ/, <y > /j/, <a > /ɔ/, <ɛ > /ɛ/, <ɔ > /ɔ/, <ɹ > /r/, <ã > /ã/.

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