



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Parts of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the narrative portion of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and applicants are urged to prepare a proposal that reflects their unique project and aspirations.

Prospective applicants should consult the application guidelines at <https://www.neh.gov/program/dli-del-fellowships> for instructions.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Research Division staff well before a grant deadline.

This attachment only contains the narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

The application format might have been changed since this application was submitted. You must follow the guidelines in the currently posted Notice of Funding Opportunity (see above link).

Project Title: *A Reference Grammar of Itunyoso Triqui [ISO 639-3 trq]*

Institution: SUNY Research Foundation, University at Buffalo

Project Director: Christian Thomas DiCanio

Grant Program: Dynamic Language Infrastructure - Documenting Endangered Languages (DLI-DEL) Fellowship

A reference grammar of Itunyoso Triqui [ISO 639-3 trq]

I. Significance, impact, and endangerment:

The current proposal seeks funding to produce a comprehensive reference grammar of Itunyoso Triqui. The Triqui languages comprise a group of three related Otomanguean (Mixtecan) languages spoken in the western region of Oaxaca, Mexico and in expatriate communities in Mexico and the United States: Itunyoso Triqui (ISO trq), Chichahuaxtla Triqui (ISO trs), and Copala Triqui (ISO trc). In total, there are approximately 30K speakers, with the vast majority speaking Copala Triqui (~22K). These languages are all listed as *threatened* on the AES scale (Campbell et al 2017) and this assessment matches my personal observations. Virtually all adults and children in San Martín Itunyoso and Concepción Itunyoso speak Itunyoso Triqui, though Spanish is the dominant language for communication with outsiders and within educational contexts. Recent economic development within the region has made Spanish a more popular medium of communication than before. Itunyoso Triqui, with 2,750 speakers (INEGI 2020), is more closely related to the Chichahuaxtla Triqui variant than to the Copala Triqui variant. Its mutual intelligibility with the former is approximately 50% (Elliot et al 2016, p.c.). As a sign of the lack of intelligibility, speakers use Spanish instead of Triqui as a lingua franca in cross-community interaction. A short, practical grammar written for speakers of Copala Triqui exists (Hollenbach 2004), but there is currently no reference grammar of any of the Triqui languages.

Though Otomanguean languages are generally known for their complex tonal systems (DiCano & Bennett 2020), the Triqui languages have long been *particularly* recognized for their tonal complexity (Hollenbach 1984; Longacre 1952). The tonal inventories of these languages are large, with 8-10 lexical tones and additional grammatical tones (DiCano 2008, 2016; DiCano et al. 2020a; Elliot et al 2016; Hernández Mendoza 2017; Hollenbach 1984, 2004). Tone permeates the grammar of these languages and it is used for marking distinctions in verbal aspect, person, negation, compounding, obviation, and mood. A deep understanding of how tone works is crucial for providing a comprehensive description of many aspects of Triqui grammar. Related to the tonal complexity, there is little evidence for higher-level prosody/intonation (DiCano & Hatcher 2018, submitted). Perhaps as a consequence, the language extensively uses final particles to mark pragmatics in discourse. There are over 41 final particles marking speech act, evidentiality, negation, and nuances in information structure (see DiCano & Hatcher, submitted, for a brief overview). The complexity among these particles appears exceptional in comparison with many East and Southeast Asian languages which are known for their final particle complexity (Panov 2020). Of particular theoretical interest is also the complex set of rules involved with possession in the language, where features for humanity, animacy, and alienability of the possessor determine how possessive structures work. These are just a few of the significant linguistic aspects of the Triqui grammar that would be documented within a reference grammar.

An Itunyoso Triqui grammar would significantly impact our understanding of Mixtecan languages. The syntax and semantics-pragmatics of Otomanguean languages with particularly complex tonal systems often remain undescribed since researchers have often focused on the phonological and morphological aspects of the grammar and neglected the syntax and semantics. Thus, there are more comprehensive grammars produced of Zapotecan and Otomian languages than there are of Mixtecan and Chinantecan languages - these latter two families have more complex tonal systems than the former two (DiCano & Bennett 2018). Moreover, a reference grammar would also serve to consolidate information from disparate sources on the language and incorporate new findings from original fieldwork. I have done fieldwork with the Itunyoso Triqui community since 2004 and have produced a number of descriptive publications related to the language's phonetics and phonology (DiCano 2008, 2010, 2012a, 2012b; DiCano & Hatcher 2018; DiCano et al. 2020a) and its morphophonology (DiCano 2016, 2022, to appear; DiCano et al 2020a). As part of an NSF DEL documentation grant from 2014 - 2019 (DiCano 2019), I taught several Triqui consultants native language literacy and transcription. They digitally-transcribed approximately 28 hours of conversational dialogue, narratives, folktales, and oral histories which we had recorded. These recordings and transcriptions have been archived. A large portion of these recordings have also been force-aligned and phonetically segmented for phonetic research purposes. From

2021 - 2022, an institutional Humanities grant at the University at Buffalo supported the careful translation of an additional 3 hours of Triqui texts (into Spanish). Throughout this period, an extensive Spanish-Triqui dictionary with almost 4,000 detailed entries has been developed within FLEx. Despite the amount of materials and research on Itunyoso Triqui, the sources of information on the language remain scattered across journals, book chapters, text translations, and handouts. A reference grammar would significantly and conveniently bring together this research in a single location.

In addition to its scientific merit and impact, a reference grammar of Triqui would have significant broader impacts since it would support the production of future language learning materials in Mexico and in expatriate Triqui communities in the United States. Within the Triqui community, I have led literacy workshops for children (in 2018 and 2019) and heavily utilized my existing knowledge to develop pedagogical tools (available on my website). A reference grammar would allow me to continue working with community members to develop improved tools for language learning both in these workshops and in the community's bilingual primary school.

II. Organization, concepts, and methods:

Since this project builds upon past federally and locally-funded research, a large amount of material for writing a reference grammar is already available. I have worked substantially on the phonetics and phonology of the language, producing a description of the segmental phonology and tonal phonology in my dissertation (DiCano 2008) and in subsequent publications (DiCano 2010, DiCano et al 2020a). Research on aspects of the phonetics has focused on tonal coarticulation (DiCano 2012a, 2014), the consonant length contrast (DiCano 2012b), and the phonetic implementation of information structure (DiCano & Hatcher 2018, submitted). More recent work has delved into aspects of the language's tonal morphology and verbal morphology (DiCano 2016, 2022, to appear, DiCano et al 2020a). These projects and the past NSF documentation grant have produced a large amount of carefully elicited recordings and spontaneous speech data for investigating additional aspects of the language's phonetics and for mining translated sentences within the corpus. Each of my consultants was trained in the transcription of Triqui during the NSF project and is well-versed in use of ELAN and FLEx. The data is continually supplemented by regular, remote meetings that I hold with my Triqui consultants via Skype.

Funding is sought for six months of full-time research to take place during summer 2023 and summer 2024 (June - August 2023 and June - August 2024). This will cover fieldwork trips to Mexico and payments to consultants during the entire fellowship period. I will devote my own research time during the academic year to work on the grammar. Consultants for this project will work on Triqui text translation in ELAN during the academic year, which will improve the existing text materials for the purposes of the grammar. Extracting representative examples of speech from the time-aligned text corpus in ELAN has been extremely useful for the preliminary work I have done on the chapter on Triqui parts of speech (see attachment 1). Alongside elicitation recordings and past experimental work, this corpus will serve as the basis for grammatical generalizations made within the reference grammar.

During the first fellowship period in 2023, I will visit Oaxaca, Mexico for 3-4 weeks to make additional elicitation recordings, text recordings, and to work closely with my consultants. The focus of research during this period will be on additional aspects of the phonetics, phonology, and morphology that remain unaddressed in past work. New recordings of both controlled sentences/wordlists and elicitations will be made with a particular focus on recording the complex tonal and laryngeal alternations within the inflectional morphology (see attachment 2) and on gaps within morphological paradigms. What is currently missing from the clitic morphophonology is a discussion of case distinctions among the clitics as well as how emphatic clitics interact with obviative person marking. Moreover, while I have assembled morphological paradigms for hundreds of verbs with my Triqui consultants (see DiCano et al. 2020), there is as of yet no written description of the derivational morphology. Work undertaken during this period will help consolidate research on Itunyoso Triqui phonetics, phonology, and morphology into the initial chapters of the grammar.

During the second period in 2024, I will return to Oaxaca, Mexico for in-depth elicitation and work with my Triqui consultants on the syntax and semantics-pragmatics. Funding will cover flights,

accommodations, and consultant payments for both elicitation sessions and transcription/translation work on recorded texts. The elicitation sessions will focus specifically on patterns of clausal subordination and additional gaps in our existing knowledge of the syntactic structure of the language. The remainder of this summer period will be devoted more closely to writing about the syntactic structure and pragmatics of the language; and to meeting remotely with my consultants. I have done preliminary work on Triqui syntax, focusing on parts of speech; the structure of possessive phrases and noun phrases; and clausal subordination. I have also begun research on the pragmatics of the final particle system (mentioned above). I anticipate continuing this work in the second period of the fellowship as a foray into writing about Itunyoso Triqui pragmatics for the grammar. One distinct advantage of working on a language with a larger speaker population like Itunyoso Triqui is the ability to investigate pragmatic nuances in the conversational speech data with the Triqui consultants.

III. Competencies, skills, and access:

I am uniquely qualified to write a grammar of Itunyoso Triqui. I have studied the language since 2004, I have produced a body of research on the language (discussed above), and I have directed and completed a documentation grant for the language. Moreover, I have published fieldwork research on related Mixtecan languages, such as Yoloxóchitl Mixtec, spoken in Guerrero, Mexico (see DiCanio et al. 2018, DiCanio et al. 2020b). From 2010 - 2014, I did original fieldwork on Ixcatec, a moribund Popolocan language, as a collaborator of an HRELP grant from Michael Swanton and Denis Costaouec. Within each of these projects, I have had a particular focus on the phonetics, phonology, and morpho-phonology of the tonal systems. In an Otomanguean context, this expertise logically entails a focus on the complex tonal patterns found within the person marking systems of the languages.

Independent from my fieldwork research, from 2012 - 2014, I taught classes on the linguistics of tone to Mixtecan language speakers at a series of workshops held in Oaxaca, Mexico directed by Emiliana Cruz and Tony Woodbury. In 2014, I taught a four-week field methods class on Apoala Mixtec with José Carlos Jiménez Hernández in the Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) at the University of Texas, Arlington. I have directed doctoral dissertations on Otomanguean languages at the University at Buffalo and I have been an external dissertation or MA thesis committee member for theses on Chicahuaxtla Triqui, Copala Triqui, and other Mixtecan languages. From 2014 - 2019, I was the PI of the NSF DEL grant (#1360670) *Understanding Prosody and Tone Interactions through Documentation of Two Endangered Languages (Itunyoso Trique [trq] and Yoloxóchitl Mixtec [xty])*, which was awarded a supplement. From 2021 - 2022, I was awarded an institutional grant through the Humanities Institute at the University at Buffalo focusing on Triqui text translation. This newer grant continued previous translation work on the language, which has involved close collaborative work between me and my consultants where work together to produce Triqui text translations in Spanish.

IV. Final product and dissemination:

As part of this project, I will submit a grammar proposal to Language Sciences Press or another entity. I anticipate the grammar to also include a selection of interlinearized and annotated texts from the previous language documentation project and from during the fellowship. The grammar will be submitted by late 2024 or early in 2025, after the fellowship has ended. Additionally, I foresee at least three papers arising out of this grammatical research after the grammar is published. First, I envision a paper describing derivational morphology in the Triqui verbal system (a topic that is, as of yet, unexplored for any of the Triqui languages). Second, I foresee extending some joint work with Rui Chavez at the University at Buffalo on creating a syntactic parser for Triqui using the Natural Language Toolkit (nltk) in Google's Collab space. Third, I foresee a paper on the semantics-pragmatics of the complex final particle system of the language. I have begun to discuss this work and to collaborate with Jürgen Bohnemeyer on this project. An existing bilingual Triqui-Spanish dictionary is already available on my website alongside pedagogical materials. While existing transcribed and translated Triqui texts are available to community members and the public via AILLA, additional fieldnotes, recordings, transcriptions, databases, and data analyses will be archived with AILLA during this time.