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10 April 1987

Prof. Clifton Pye
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Dear Cliff,

I hope I have your address right. The Linguistics Department will surely know where you are if you are in another department. I'm writing with comments on your paper "Conversations with Quiché Children," which you prepared to the NAIS issue that I'm editing on Mayan Texts and Discourse. The title for that issue is now Mayan Voices: Mayan Text and Discourse. I hoping finally to get the thing together this spring, and I apologize for the hold up, some attributable to me and some to "mechanical failure," which is to say the whole technology problem. That seems mostly solved now.

I like your paper quite a lot, and find little to comment on, and what I do have to say is pretty minor. I particularly like the way you have been able to insert text into the paper proper, so we get some introduction to the enterprise and the text itself, then the text, then a discussion of what it all means. I have two main comments: First, I liked your use of the structured units (I-XX). Could you compare them, what constitutes them, and their sequencing, etc., in this text with such units in other conversations among children and adults, adults and adults, children and children? Have you any general information of a comparative nature from your other material that you could draw on to expand discussion of this derive?

Second, How does this information, and findings from analysis of this text, pertain in a larger theory of discourse? Can you generalize out from this instance, or perhaps out from a child's learning of discourse conventions, to the general theory of discourse? Can you extend this beyond the Quiché, indeed the Mayan case? Give it some thought. I should think that the language acquisition information gives a particularly generalizable angle to work from.

Little things, by page:

Pg. 2 -- Snow & Ferguson 1977 -- references have just Snow 1977. What is it? Also, see Pye in press b, etc. It has been a while since we started this. Help me as we come down to the wire to catch all these in presses that are now published and fill out the citations.

Pg. 5 -- I'd like the list of conventions for transcription referred to at the start of the transcription of the text; right now it is tacked on way at the end, long after I needed it.

Here and there -- we have $q_{yes/no}$ vs. $q_{y/n}$, either of which is fine, but pick one and stick with it.

Pg. 24 -- last paragraph, (cf Scollon 1973?). In the references we have Scollon 1976. Which is it?

Pg. 27 -- Cross 1977 in last paragraph, and in references we have Cross 1977. Check that one too.

Here an there I did some light editing. I'll send you edited copy before things get set in concrete, but on the whole, I've little to change.

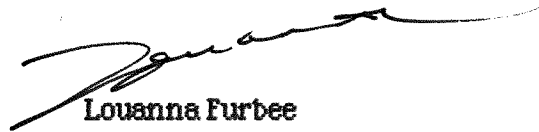
I hope you'll be able to get this back to me this spring. That way I can get the copy off to Mouton for its approval during the summer. I leave for Peru on May 27,

returning at the end of July. I'd like very much to see this come out in the fall. If I can have Mouton looking it over while I'm in Peru, it will hurry things along.

How are things with you? Are you enjoying Kansas? Any chance you'll be at the CLS week after next? I'm planning to attend, and looking forward to the change and lots of new info on Amerind typology and metrical phonology.

Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with all this. And thanks again for both your interest in this project and patience with the the conduct of it.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Louanna', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Louanna Furbee

Conversations with Quiché Children

Clifton Pye

The University of Kansas

May 1987

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Conversation with Quiché Mayan children

Clifton Pye

Introduction

Conversations with young children who are in the process of acquiring language raise a multitude of questions beyond those usually considered with adult discourse. There is, of course, the question of whether the children have some knowledge of the grammatical and discourse rules of the language. Grammatical abilities include such matters as word order, verbal morphology, and grammatical relations. Discourse abilities include the establishment of appropriate pragmatic conditions for interpretation, taking turns in the conversation, and learning what behavior is appropriate for a speaker or listener. There is also the consideration of the discourse space in which such conversations exist. All too frequently examples of adult discourse are limited to exchanges between two people or even a single person reciting a narrative. Conversations with children on the other hand may involve three or more people--siblings, parents, and visitors. There is no single conversation in such a situation, the people involved select from a range of possible interlocutors, now participating in one conversation, now another.

The picture is further complicated by research that shows parents do not treat children as simply another conversational partner. Parents in many societies have special ways of

addressing language learning children (Ferguson 1978; Snow & Ferguson 1977). This special mode of speaking reflects parents' beliefs about the capacities of their children as conversational partners and the parent's role in the socialization of children. Parents may talk to their children about their toys or games, but their conversation is built on and demonstrates their beliefs about the child's role in society (cf. Pye 1986a).

As part of my research on the acquisition of the Mayan language Quiché I recorded several Quiché children talking with their parents, siblings, cousins, my assistants, and myself (Pye 1980). I transcribed the tapes with the help of Augustin Huix Huix, Santos Quiej Huix, and Pedro Quixtan Poz, all inhabitants of Zunil since birth and native Quiché speakers. The tone and pace of such conversations is very different from those of North American parents and children. Quiché speech to children is markedly different from that of parents in the United States. The differences include a lower pitch in Quiché, a normal conversational rate, a lack of pronoun shifts, and an absence of morphological reductions (see Pye, 1986b for a fuller discussion of these features).

Until now, my research strategy has been to concentrate on the analysis of individual aspects of these conversations in isolation from the actual conversations. This has enabled me to demonstrate how a few features develop over a nine-month period for three Quiché children. However, it has also meant that I had to ignore the wealth of material that did not fit conveniently

into one of my preselected frames. In this paper I present a fragment of an ordinary conversation that took place one rainy afternoon in a Quiché home. Following this excerpt I will point out a few of its characteristics which make the analysis of such samples exciting to me and illustrate the richness of detail to be found in a simple conversation.

The sample was recorded in the home of a two-year-old Quiché girl, Al Tiya:n. She lives with her father, mother, aunt, three brothers, and a three-year-old sister in Zunil, a small village south of Quetzaltenango. Al Tiya:n's family has a small house compound with one room for cooking and another for working and sleeping. Al Tiya:n's father makes a barely adequate existence tending a corn field in the nearby hills. The boys usually help him with the work. The girls remain at home in the care of their mother or aunt. They would amuse themselves with scraps of cloth, sticks, stones, or whatever came to hand while their mother cooked or wove.

This conversation took place the second time I visited Al Tiya:n's house to record her speech. During the course of the one-hour session, Al Tiya:n produced 417 utterances with a mean length in morphemes of 1.07. She is basically limited to one-word utterances. For this visit I had brought a set of plastic farm animals for the children. I spent most of the visit showing how the animals made different sounds. I did not think they were a success until Al Tiya:n's father arrived back from work and Al Tiya:n rushed to tell him about the animals.

The following is a four-and-a-half minute extract which starts on page 48 of my transcription of the tape. I indicate the speaker with a capital letter followed by a dash followed by the addressee(s). The participants are: A Augustine, K Al Tiya:n's father, N Al Tiya:n's mother, U Al Tiya:n's 10-year-old brother, S Al Tiya:n's 3-year-old sister, T Al Tiya:n, and C myself. I supply a grammatical sentence in parentheses for those cases where Al Tiya:n did not produce a completely grammatical utterance. These interpretations were offered by my assistants as their best guess of what the children were trying to say. I relied on both the Quiché text and a Spanish translation provided by Augustin to translate the sentences into English. I found the Spanish translation particularly useful in translating idiomatic expressions in Quiché. I have marked pauses in the conversation that were greater than one second. In addition, I use Roman numerals to indicate conversations revolving around a single topic. I discuss these units in greater detail following the text. Abbreviations are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Abbreviations

A Ergative person marker set		B Absolutive person marker set	
1st sing. prefix	A1		B1
2nd sing. prefix	A2		B2
3rd sing. prefix	A3		B3
1st pl. prefix	A4		B4
2nd pl. prefix	A5		B5
3rd pl. prefix	A6		B6
Cmp	completive aspect prefix		
Inc	incompletive aspect prefix		
Imp	optative-imperative prefix		
go/Imp	optative-imperative prefix incorporating verb 'to go'		
Mv	optative-imperative/incorporated movement suffix		
Pf	perfective aspect suffix		
Pl	plural suffix or plural particle		
Prg	progressive verb		
Pv	passive voice inflection		
Ag	agentive voice inflection		
Tv	transitive verb derivational suffix		
Iv	intransitive verb derivational suffix		
Inst	instrumental derivational suffix		
Neg	Negative particle		
Trm	phrase-final suffix		
Comp	Complementizer		
Q ^{y/n}	yes/no question particle		

Loc locative proadverb
Emph emphatic
P possessive prefix
Dim diminutive word
Sp Spanish loan

Special symbols used in the transcription:

C /tʃ/
S /ʃ/
c /ts/
: vowel length (phonemic)
+ line continuation

The Conversation

I.1. A-K: ux-k'o: ux Ci-ri ri?
4B-exist 4B at-here here

We are right here.

2. K-A: a le:-iS-i k'o:-lik?
Q^y/ⁿ the-5B-here exist-Trm

Are you all here?

II.3. -C: bwenas tardes, kan (Sp.). [2 sec.]

Good afternoon, white.

4. C-K: k'o: xab'.
exist rain

It's raining.

5. K-C: k'o: ri xab', ombre (Sp. hombre). [5 sec.]
exist the rain, man

It's raining, man.

III.6. A-K: S-at-totax b'a lo-q.
Cmp-2B-finish indeed toward-Trm

Have you finished then?

7. K-A: S-0-tola la?,
Cmp-3B-finish that one
+ esramey (<Sp. es que) S-0-pe le: xab'-e?.
because Cmp-3B-come the rain-here

That is finished, because it rained here.

8. A-K: pares (Sp. por eso),
+ S-0-pe le: xab'-e?.
Cmp-3sB-come the rain-here

Because of that, it rained here.

9. K-A: S-0-pe k'u-t.
Cmp-3B-come then-Trm

It sure did.

10. A-K: ma k'o: ta Ci modah (Sp. modo) la k-iS-Cak-un-ik.
Neg exist Neg any way Comp Inc-5B-work-Iv-Trm
There isn't any way you all can work.
11. K-A: a: ya (Sp.) ma k'o: ta Cik, dah.
ah no longer Neg exist Neg any more, boy
Ah, it can't be any longer, boy.
12. Saq'ol Ci-k.
mud already-Trm
It's already mud.
13. A-K: Soq'ol Ci-k.
It's already mud.
14. K-A: Soq'ol Ci-k, ombr (<Sp. hombre). [3 sec.]
mud already-Trm, man
It's mud already, man.
15. xe-la q'e.
like-this just
it's just like this.
16. A-K: ko:l Sa mas (Sp.) k-0-reb'orob' le: xun.
just only more Inc-3B-fall apart that one
It's just falling apart more.
17. K-A: mas (Sp.). mas.
More. More.
- IV.18. T-K: tu ta:t. (= le: C'iw ta:t).
the chick father
Chick, dad.
- III.19. K-A: Sa kaq'ol Ci-k ...
only mud already-Trm ...
It's just mud already.
20. A-K: pares (<Sp. por eso) [2 sec.]
Because of that.

IV.21. K-T: saC? (<xas u-wa:C)
What 3P-face

What?

22. T-K: le?.
that one.

That one.

23. K-T: saC?

What?

24. T-K: ?iw (= C'iw)

Chick.

25. K-T: k'o: inaj a-C'i:w?
exist Dim. 2P-chick

You have a little chick?

26. T-K: le?

That one.

27. K-T: la k'ute?

Just so.

28. T-K: le?, le?.

That one, that one.

29. K-T: xawi: S-0-e-a-m-a wi-h?
where Cmp.-3B-go-2A-get-Mv Loc-Trm

Where did you go get it?

30. T-K: C'iw.

Chick.

31. U-K: xawa? (xewa?)

Here.

32. K-T: xawi: S-0-e-a-m-a wi l-a-C'iw?
where Cmp-3sB-go-2sA-get-Mv Loc the-2P-chick

Where did you go get your chick?

33. T-K: aq.
Pig.
34. lina
?
35. U-K: qa-c'i:ʔ Caʔ.
4P-dog say
She said "our dog".
36. T-K: pe-leʔ (= C-0-aw-il-aʔ impe leʔ)!
Imp-3B-2A-look-Mv Emph here
Look here!
leʔ!
That one!
37. K-T: m. la k'uteʔ.
hm, just so.
38. T-?: (peck) (laughter) [5 sec.]
?
39. K-T: xaCin S-0-ya-oʔw C-aw-e:ʔ
who Cmp-3B-give-Agt to-2P-of
Who gave it to you?
40. T-K: xah?
Huh?
41. K-T: xaCin S-0-ya-oʔw C-aw-eh, xah?
Who gave it to you, huh?
42. U-T: muʔs k-at-Caʔ. (laughter) [2 sec.]
whiteman Inc-2B-say
Say "white man".
43. K-T: dih.
Girl.

44. T-K: xah?
Huh?
45. K-T: xaCin e S-0-ya-o?w l-aw-ec'a-b'a?l?
who there Cmp-3B-give-Agt the-2P-play-Inst
Who gave you your toy?
46. T-K: no?. [1 sec.]
No.
47. at. [1.5 sec.]
You.
48. ?oh. (= no, at S-at-ya-o?w-ik) [3 sec.]
no, 2B Cmp-3B-give-Agt-Trm
No, you gave it.
- V. 49. N-S: x-0-a-k'a-S-tax la xun sila? (<Sp. silla) C-aw-e?.
go/Imp-3B-2A-bring-?-? toward one chair to-2P-of
Go get that chair of yours.
- IV.50. T-K: pinah. (<Sp. fina)
It's nice. (Not clear whether Quich or Sp. syntax)
51. K-T: m?
Hm?
52. T-K: le?.
That one.
53. K-T: la kute?
Just so.
54. T-K: pina, le?.
That one's nice.
55. K-T: S-0-aw-il-oh?
Cmp-3B-2A-see-Trm
Do you see it?

56. T-K: pina le?
That one's nice.
57. pina le? le?
That one's nice.
58. K-T: pina le: r-ec'a-b'al-e?
nice the 3P-play-Inst-there
His toy is nice.
- VI.59. A-N,K: pina le: r-ec'a-b'al, (laughter)
His toy is nice,
60. pina le: r-ec'a-b'al .. Sa ..
His toy is nice.
61. K-A,N: pina le: r-ec'a-b'al
His toy is nice.
- VII.62. N-S: x-0-a-k'a-S-tax l-aw-ac'yaq, dih.
go/Imp-3B-2A-bring-?-? the-2P-clothes, girl
Go get your clothes, girl.
63. K-S: taj-in k-0-a-cuk-uj le: w-ac'yaq ...
Prq-Iv Inc-3B-2A-look for-Tv the 1P-clothes
You're looking for my clothes.
- VIII.64. A-K: paresa, k-ux-cix-on Ci-ri ri?
because, Inc-4B-talk-Iv at-here here
Of course, we're talking right here.
- IX.65. C-T: xas u-wa:C le: le??
what 3P-fact that one there
What is that thing there?
66. T-C: la?y (<Sp. radio)
Radio.

VIII.67. A-K: la uc k-ux-kow-in k-ux-cix-on Ci-ri Ci?
Q^y/n good Inc-4B-can-Iv Inc-4B-talk-Iv at-here he said

He said, "Can we talk here?"

68. K-A: pares

Of course.

69. N-A: S-0-tane? k-e:-C'aw l-ak'al-a:b'-e?
Cmp-3B-stop Inc-3B-talk the-child-P1-there

Those children there have stopped talking.

IX.70. C-T: (pin).

Fine.

71. T-C: le?

That one.

72. C-T: a k-0-aw-il, C-u-pa:m, le?
Q^y/n Inc-3B-2A-see at-3P-stomach there

Do you see inside it there?

73. T-C: le?

That one.

74. C-T: a k-0-aw-il C-u-pa:m l-ale?
Q^y/n Inc-3B-3A-see at-3P-stomach the-it

Do you see inside it there?

75. T-C: le?

That one.

76. le?

That one.

77. le?

That one.

78. C-T: C-0-aw-il C-u-pa:m!
Imp-3B-2A-see at-3P-stomach

Look inside it!

79. T-C: pin.
Fine.
80. C-T: Cawil Cupa:m!
Look inside it!
81. N-T: k-0-b'in C-u-pa:m Ca?.
Inc-3B-travel at-3P-stomach he says
He says it's moving inside it.
82. T-C: pa:m. (= C-u-pa:m)
Inside it.
83. miti:t (=mi<Sp?>-C'i:C'),
my-car
(My car),
84. le?,
That one,
85. le?.
that one.
86. pin.
Fine.
87. C-T: k-0-aw-il C-u-pa:m.
Inc-3B-2A-see at-3P-stomach
Look inside it.
88. T-C: len.
Penny.
89. C-T: k'o: ta-x xoron.
exist Neg-Trm water
There isn't any water.

90. K-T: xoron k-0-b'i:-S-ik. (laughter) [4 sec.]
 water Inc-3B-say-Pv-Trm
 Water, it is said.
91. C-T: k'o: ta-x.
 exist Neg-Trm
 There isn't any.
- 92 T-C: non, (= xoron)
 Water,
93. leh.
 there.
- X.94. A-K: S-0-pe? nim e: xab'.
 Cmp-3B-come big the rain
 It has rained a lot.
95. K-A: pe k'u-t-e?, oy a?. [2 sec.]
 come just-Trm-Emph, oh
 It sure has, ...
96. A-K: mas tax-in Ci k-0-u-ya? Ca-r-e?.
 more Prg-Iv Comp Inc-3B-3A-give to-3P-of
 It is giving more now to it.
- XI.97. T-K: ta:t.
 Dad.
- X.98. K-A: tak'-en Ci k'u-t,
 Prg-Iv more Emph-Trm,
 It *is* more.
- XI.99. -T: xasaC?
 What?
100. T-K: lon-e?. (= le: xoron-e?)
 the water-there
 That there water.

101. K-T: le: xorone?. [13 sec.]
 That there water.
- XIII.102. C-T: m k'o: ta moda,
 Neg exist Neg way
 No way,
103. T-C: xah?
 Huh?
104. C-T: m k'o: ta moda!
 No way!
105. T-C: non. (= xoron)
 Water.
106. C-T: C-0-a-ya u-q'a:b'!
 Imp-3B-2A-give 3P-hand
 Give its hand!
107. T-C: lon. (= xoron) [2 sec.]
 Water.
108. C-T: xoron.
 Water.
109. T-C: ek lon le?. (= S-0-?e xoron le?)
 Cmp-3B-go water here
 The water went from here.
110. C-T: xoron. [3 sec.]
 Water.
111. T-C: ay. [8 sec.]
 Ay.
- XIII.112. C-T: le: xun C'ix.
 the one sheep
 That sheep.

113. T-C: m?
Hm?
114. C-T: le: xun C'ix.
That sheep.
115. T-C: ay, mank (<Sp mango) (laughter)
Ay, mango.
116. C-T: le: xun C'ix k'o: C-u-pa:m. [4 sec.]
the one sheep exist at-3P-stomach
That sheep is inside it.
117. xun aq k'o: C-u-pa:m.
one pig exist at-3P-stomach
A pig is inside it.
118. T-C: kik'-i?. (= k'o: kik'-i?)
exist blood-here
There's blood here.
- XIV.119. A-K: maxa ani medi (<Sp año y media) wa pa?
not yet year and a half though perhaps
She's not yet a year and a half, true?
120. K-A: keb' Ci-k,
two already-Trm
She's already two,
- XV.121. T-K: a le da, ta:t, (= ch-0-aw-il-a le ta:t)
Imp-3B-2A-see-Mv there dad
Look there, dad, (shouting)
- XIV.122. A-K: maxa dos y media <Sp> wa?.
not yet two and a half though
Not yet two and a half though.
- XV.123. T-K: ta:t.
dad.

XIV.124. K-A: maxa ne lo, maxa,
 not yet Emph, not yet

 Not yet, not yet,

XV.125. T-K: le?.

 That one.

126. K-T: xa?

 Huh?

127. T-K: le?, le?, le?.

 That one, that one, that one.

XVI.128. A-K,N: noximal la k-0-C'aw-ik-e?
 slowly Inc-3B-talk-Trm-there

 Little by little they will talk.

129. te kas k-0-C'aw Ci la Ci r-o:S xunab'.
 Emph Inc-3B-talk more ? at 3P-three year

 They talk well in their third year.

130. N-A: k'ate klara <Sp> Ci-k-e
 just clear more-Trm-that

+ le: k-0-el oS-ib' u-xuna:b'.
 Comp Inc-3B-leave three 3P-year

 It's even clearer when they leave their third year.

131. K-A: k-0-etan Ci xub'iq.
 Inc-3B-better more a little

 It is a little better.

132. A-K,N: k'ate pa?
 just perhaps

 Is that, so?

XVII.133. T-C: ah,

 Ah,

134. aq.

 pig.

135. C-T: C'ix.

Sheep.

XVIII.136. N-A: r-eta?-m-a.
3P-know-Pf-Emph

She knows it.

137. A-K,N: k'aS r-ata-m-aS-ik k'u la le: tzix. (laughter)
hard 3P-know-Pf-Pv-Trm just so the words

It's hard for the words to be learned so.

138. N-A: a: xe:?.

Ah yes.

139. k'aS k'u la!
hard just so

it's sure hard!

140. K-A: (xe, k'aS k'u la)

(Yes, it's sure hard!)

141. A-K,N: Sa ma k-0-qa-na te la le: ux.
only Neg Inc-3B-4A-realize Neg so the 4B

Only we sure don't realize it ourselves.

142. N-A: i k-0-qa-na te la.
Inc-3B-4A-realize Neg Emph

We don't realize it.

143. K-A: Sa pwes <Sp>!

Just so!

144. A-K,N: () [3 sec.]

145. N-K,N: ma ta?-m ku-0-b'in-ik-i?.
Neg know-Pf Inc-3B-walk-Trm-here

We are also late in walking.

146. K-A,N: pares. (<Sp por eso)

Because of that.

147. A-K,N: ma-taʔ-m ku-0-b'in-ik-iʔ.
Neg-know-Pf Inc-3B-walk-Trm-here
We are late in walking.
148. N-K,A: ma-taʔ-m k'u-t.
Neg-know-Pf just-Trm
Just so, we are late.
149. A-K,N: are k-0-ʔe-qa-ʔan-a ta-x.
that Inc-3B-go-4A-do-Mv Neg-Trm
That we don't do.
150. N-A: qa-ʔan-a ta-x.
4A-do-Mv Neg-Trm
We don't.
- XIX.151. A-T: C-0-aw-il-a b'a le: kex.
Imp-3B-2A-see-Mv indeed the horse
Look at the horse.
152. N-T: C-0-aw-il-a.
Imp-3B-2A-see-Mv
Look at it.
153. T-N: leʔ.
That one.
154. A-T: C-0-aw-il-a b'a le: kex.
Imp-3B-2A-see-Mv indeed the horse
Look at the horse.
155. C-T: are leʔ. [4 sec.]
it that
That is it.
156. T-C: ay. [2 sec.]
Ay.
157. ih leʔ. [5 sec.]
That one.

XX.158. A-K,N: k-0-u-Se?-x me r-i:b' e: nab'e ...
 Inc-3B-3A-scare-Tv Emph 3P-self here before

She sure is afraid here before ...

159. K-A: Sa pa k-0-u-ta?-m la.
 only perhaps Inc-3B-3A-know-Pf so

It's only perhaps that she doesn't know him.

160. N-A: k-0-ata-n C-e: le:..
 Inc-3B-less-Iv at-of that

It's less than before.

161. K-A: k-0-ata-n C-a-wa:C.
 Inc-3B-less-Iv at-2P-face

It's less before you.

162. N-A: ma k-0-u-Se?-x ta Ci r-i:b'-e:.. (laughter)
 Neg Inc-3B-3A-scare-Tv Neg more 3P-self-that one

That one's not afraid any more.

Discussion

I have broken the sample into twenty conversational units and marked them with Roman numerals. These units correspond to separate conversations which are marked by changes in the participants. The first conversation (consisting of lines 1-2) contains a greeting exchange between Al Tiya:n's father and Augustine. Al Tiya:n's father then addresses me and I respond with a remark about the weather. I am unable to maintain this conversation, however, so Augustin initiates a third conversation, this time about Al Tiya:n's father's work. This conversation is interrupted when Al Tiya:n attempts to get her father's attention in line 18. She succeeds and they begin a conversation in line 21. Al Tiya:n's older brother intrudes on this conversation in lines 31, 35 and 41. I did not mark his speech as a separate conversational unit because he is not speaking for himself. Each of his remarks is really a substitute for or remark about one of Al Tiya:n's utterances.

A number of features make this excerpt quintessentially Quiché. In the first line Augustine greets Al Tiya:n's father with the remark "Here we are." This would seem to violate the forms of salutation listed in Mondloch (1978) such as "Good afternoon" or "How are you?" It also makes a completely redundant statement given that Al Tiya:n's father has already seen us. Al Tiya:n's father's response also makes it clear that Augustin is not referring to the father's arrival in the way English speakers sometimes do when they say "So, here we are."

Augustin could be justifying our presence, as he does later in lines 64 and 67, but I think his remark is best interpreted as a common Quiché greeting. My assistants also used it occasionally when we approached subjects' houses even though the family could be seen outside or heard within. The origin of this expression and its exact implicature in Quiché conversations remains to be determined.

The third conversational unit turns to a discussion of Al Tiya:n's father's work. During this time the father does not address any greeting to his wife or children nor they to him, despite the fact that they had not seen one another since the early morning. The conversation follows the Quiché order of precedence where the father and visitors are accorded a dominant status. Within Quiché society there are multiple indicators of this hierarchy. Food would be served in the same order: men first, followed by the children and finally the wife. Men and older boys sit on chairs, the others sit on the ground. Although Al Tiya:n does violate this conversational canon in line 18, she still demonstrates more self-control than any two-year-old in the United States.

When Al Tiya:n does intrude on her father's conversation it is significant that she uses the word ta:t "father" to attract his attention. The words na:n "mother" and ta:t are keys which unlock communicative possibilities for Quiché children. Quiché parents make a distinction in their vocal behavior between infants and toddlers. Parents address almost no speech to their

babies, whereas by Al Tiya:n's age (2;1) parents engage in 'real' conversations with them. This corresponds to the transition between baby status (loC') and child status (alih "girl" and alah "boy") which Francesca Cancian (1963) claimed was marked by weaning and cessation of the nearly constant carrying. Children do not have full status as conversational partners (Snow 1986) in Quiché society until they can produce these words. Al Tiya:n does not use the word ta:t again in this conversation once she has gained her father's attention. However, she does use it in lines 97, 121 and 123 to establish new conversations.

The conversation that Al Tiya:n first establishes with her father in line 21 follows a common Quiché pattern. Al Tiya:n showed her father the toy chicken that I gave to her. Her father has some difficulty understanding what she is saying at first since she substitutes an alveolar or glottal stop for the initial glottalized affricate in the Quiché word for chick. Once her father understands what she is telling him, he shifts to the topic of ownership. In line 25 he comments that she has a chick and then in lines 29, 32, 39, 41 and 45 asks where she got the chick and who gave it to her. All the parents that I taperecorded produced this response whenever I gave their child something to play with. These are not the first questions a parent in the United States would ask (cf. Scollon 1976, ~~Fletcher~~ 1985). Instead, North American parents commonly employ the "What's that?" gambit to ask about an object their child is playing with or try to confirm their interpretation of the

child's speech or desire (e.g. "What do you want?"). Note that in lines 65 and 70 through 117 I attempt to engage Al Tiya:n in a conversation by essentially translating a North American conversational mode into Quiché.

While the topic of ownership is not very significant by itself, it is indicative of important cultural distinctions in the types of conversation that are appropriate with young children. The only conversation Al Tiya:n's father initiates with his daughter concerns the origin of her new toy. Otherwise, he simply responds with the remarks saC "What?" or la k'ute? "Just so". One probably should not expect sparkling conversation from someone who has just returned home after a day of physical labor, but Augustine and Al Tiya:n's mother do not try to converse with the children either. Quiché parents do not initiate conversations with their children so much as respond to them.

While Quiché parents do not talk with their children for the sake of their language development, they do seem to be conscious of general changes in their children's language. This segment of Al Tiya:n's transcript contains a passage where Augustin talks with her parents about her language abilities. It begins in line 128 where Augustin says that children learn to talk very slowly around three years of age ('noximal la kaC'awike?. te kas kaC'aw Ci la Ci roS xunab'.) Al Tiya:n's mother agrees and adds that their speech is a little clearer after their third year ('kate klara Cike le: kel oSib' uxuna:b'.) Other parents told me their

children were not talking and could not understand why I would be interested in taperecording their speech.

In my transcripts mothers and older siblings spend a good deal of their time acting as interpreters--either repeating what my assistant or I said to their child or interpreting what their child said to us. For example, at one point I asked Al Tiya:n if she could see inside a bottle (line 74. a kawil Cupa:m le??) After four unsuccessful attempts at getting Al Tiya:n to respond, her mother interpreted for me (re-interpreting my original question in the process). She uses a special verb (-Ca? 'say'). This verb is formally intransitive since it takes the intransitive person marker. Unlike most other Quiché verbs it frequently appears without the aspect, person and termination affixes. Another unusual feature of this verb is that it always appears sentence finally. The usual word order in Quiché is VOS.

Quiché speakers use the bare stem when interpreting a sentence for the child, as in this case, and the full verb form when responding for the child (see line 42). The verb -Ca? is used in speech to adults in reciting narratives and myths (Norman 1976; Maxwell 1982) as well as in divination (Tedlock 1981). Quiché mothers use the verb -Ca? to interpose themselves between their children and outsiders. Quiché parents believe that outsiders are the source of many childhood diseases (e.g. evil eye, winds, and smallpox). They take extra precautions to guard their children against the intrusions of outsiders. They may use -Ca? as an additional linguistic buffer between their

children and strangers. This excerpt is interesting in that Al Tiya:n's brother acts as an intermediary in Al Tiya:n's conversation with her father (lines 31, 35 and 42).

Besides the appropriate conversational style in Quiché, I am interested in how the children acquired the language. Al Tiya:n may have learned to initiate a conversation, but she seems unable to adapt to the changing demands of the discourse. In lines 22 and 24 she succeeds in pointing out the chicken to her father, but relies on deictics (le: "there") to maintain the conversation. Throughout the transcript her utterances are limited to deictics, a few nouns, verbs, and adjectives (see Table 2). At times an animal name is appropriate, as in line 24, but in other places they lead to conversational failures, as in lines 30 and 33.

Table 2. Tiya:n's word index

Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
ah	1	mango	1
ay	3	my/car	1
blood/here	1	no	1
chick	3	penny	1
dad	4	pig	2
dear	1	radio	1
emph/here	1	there (near)	23
fine	6	there (far)	3

gave	1	water	4
ih	1	water/there	1
inside	1	went	1
look	1	you	1

Al Tiya:n's speech has several features that are typical of children who are just beginning to produce two-word utterances. Her utterances 50 and 52 form a 'vertical construction' in that they express parts of a single proposition (cf. Scollon 1976). They contrast with the 'horizontal construction' in line 54 which expresses the whole proposition in a single utterance. Many times there is no clear-cut distinction between these two types of construction. For example, I broke Al Tiya:n's utterance into three lines beginning with line 46 because there were substantial pauses between each utterance. Yet, all three form part of a single proposition which I show in parentheses in line 48. Lines 46 and 47 end with a rising intonation, indicating that more of the utterance is following. This pattern is similar to one Branigan (1979) noticed for children learning English.

This sequence is typical of a child attempting to produce an utterance beyond her current grammar. Most of Al Tiya:n's two-word utterances consist of some word plus a deictic (see Table 3). Her only other three-word utterance consists of a verb plus a noun and a deictic (line 109). She produces this utterance without pausing between words unlike her production in

lines 46 to 48. Al Tiya:n's utterances fall within the definition of Braine's limited scope formula (1976). They are restricted to a form plus the deictic le: or the word ta:t "dad". Al Tiya:n does not seem to be able to combine words freely at this point.

Table 3. Al Tiya:n's sentence index

Sentence Type	Number
Chick, dad.	18
Look there, dad.	121
Nice, that.	54, 56, 57
Water went there.	109

Al Tiya:n's father did not make any grammatical concessions to Al Tiya:n's limited speech ability. He reduced the number of syllables in the verb in his first question (line 29) from Sak'ama (S-0-e-a-k'am-a, aspect-object marker-go-subject marker-verb root-termination) to Sama. Although this reduces the number of syllables in the verb, it would also seem to obscure the relationship between this form of the verb and the full form. Thus, it is debatable whether such shortening is of any benefit to a child trying to learn the adult language. The verb in his second question (line 39, Syo?w) has been converted to a derived absolutive voice to allow the underlying transitive subject to undergo extraction in the question transformation (cf. Larsen & Norman 1979:358). The derivation converts transitive verbs to

intransitive verbs which agree in person with their former subject (ignoring complications caused by agreement according to an animacy hierarchy). This derivation shifts transitivity and person agreement in a manner that is the opposite of the passive derivation, making it difficult to account for under current acquisition models. Yet, the derivation occurs frequently enough in speech to Quiché children and they eventually learn to make it themselves.

Al Tiya:n attempts to produce the absolutive form in lines 46-48. Since she moved the second person pronoun at to preverbal position, she should also use the absolutive form of the verb ya-h. This form would normally take the intransitive termination -ik, but Al Tiya:n seems to have kept the more usual transitive termination -oh. If she had attempted to produce the first part of the absolutive verb o?w it should still be phonetically distinct from oh. She may not have acquired the absolutive voice, but she has distinguished a typical context in which the agent is in focus. She has also moved the agent from sentence-final position to preverbal position.

One feature that is often found in North American conversations with children is a large amount of repetition (Snow 1981, 1986; Keenan 1977). It is present in Al Tiya:n's transcript as well. There is an enormous literature on the affect of repetition on children's language acquisition. The literature shows contradictory results due to different definitions of what counted as a repetition or differences between individual

children in their reliance on a repetition strategy. Nevertheless, many researchers believe that parental repetition provides a child with another opportunity to comprehend the message, while child repetition (or imitation) enables the child to experiment with constructions that may be beyond his or her current syntactic ability. Snow (1986) argues that not only does such semantically contingent speech promote language development, but that it is also shaped by the child's linguistic abilities (p. 81). This argument presupposes that repetition serves the sole purpose of increasing communicative success with a young child.

There is a large amount of repetition in the Quiché transcript. For example, Al Tiya:n's father repeats his questions to Al Tiya:n in lines 21 and 23, 29 and 32, and again in lines 39, 41 and 45. He repeats his questions whenever Al Tiya:n fails to give an appropriate response. In the case of lines 32 and 45 he adds a direct object noun phrase to his final repetition. The direct object would normally remain unexpressed in situations where the referent is obvious, but Al Tiya:n's inappropriate responses to his original questions lead to an expansion of the question. He also repeats and expands Al Tiya:n's utterances. In line 25 he turns Al Tiya:n's comment into a question, adding words which may be missing from Al Tiya:n's utterance. In line 58 he expands Al Tiya:n's preceding comment by adding the subject noun phrase which Al Tiya:n had not overtly expressed herself.

Al Tiya:n also repeats some of the words contained in the previous utterances of others although it is clear that she does not use imitation as a regular strategy. In line 82 she repeated a word produced in her mother's preceding utterance, and in line 109 she expanded my utterance to make a comment of her own. Her most spectacular imitation probably would not be counted as one under most definitions. This occurs in lines 46 to 48 where she produced a vertical construction as a response to her father's persistent questioning about the origin of her new toy. Al Tiya:n uses the same verb her father does, but changes the subject pronoun to make her own statement. In general, Al Tiya:n seems to have her own agenda, resulting in a great deal of self-repetition to make her point.

The unique aspect of the Quiché sample is that it demonstrates repetition is not limited to speech to children. The adult conversations in I, II and III also contain their share of repetition. Thus, in line 2 Al Tiya:n's father turns Augustine's comment into a question while in line 5 he turns my comment into an emphatic statement. Repetition in adult Quiché conversations serves a variety of different functions, including responding to questions, or changing the conversational topic (cf. Brody, this volume). Repetition may even be used to seek clarification to a previous question, as in Augustine's questions in lines 119 and 122. Repetition is noticeably more frequent in Quiché conversations than in English. The repetitions are not exact repetitions or expansions, but rely on intonation and a

wealth of adverbial particles to underline the message. I am not sure of the exact difference between the emphatic particles na-h, k'u-t, la-ʔ, b'a:-ʔ, and me. Many times they occur together to produce yet finer distinctions, as in lines 124 and 139.

Repetition, then, is a rhetorical device that adult Quiché speakers use as a means of indicating closure or continuation of the conversational turn. It is yet another feature of the conversation defined by cultural tradition rather than biological imperative. Thus, it is essential in the case of Quiche conversation with children to distinguish the exact rhetorical function of repetition. Returning to the cases where Al Tiya:n's father repeated her preceding utterances (lines 25 and 58) it seems likely that these expansions serve a very different communicative function in Quiché than they do in English. In Quiché they show the hearer's willingness to continue as listener, while in English they would serve as a check on the listener's comprehension of the message.

The acquisition literature which emphasizes the importance of such expansions for the acquisition of language does not consider the possible functions of such expansions in discourse. This is probably because these responses are primarily a property of speech to children in English. As such it is easy to see why many researchers view them as models for teaching grammar to children. The Quiché transcript makes it clear that cultural conventions are primarily responsible for the types of responses adults provide to children. The provision of expanded utterances

in the input language to children is a function of the rhetorical conventions for expansions rather than the linguistic ability of children. In particular, children must be capable of learning a language where parental expansions are unavailable because of cultural conventions. Children have a much more formidable ability for language analysis than the current literature would suggest.

Conclusion

All in all, Al Tiya:n seems very similar to other young children in conversational ability. She relies on a few routines to see her through the conversation. Her parents may be more interested in talking with Augustine, but they respond to her openings when she is persistent. She lives in a rich conversational world which gives her numerous opportunities to observe and analyze the grammatical subtleties of Quiché.

The details I have discussed serve to underline the difference between learning to converse in Quiché and English. One must acquire more than the sounds and grammatical rules of a language in order to converse with others. As Hymes (1974) and others have made abundantly clear, one must also learn the rules for using language in a culturally appropriate manner. The differences between conversational styles in English and Quiché highlight the role of culture as the determinant of the language directed to children. These conventions determine the form and frequency of the syntactic constructions in speech to children,

the primary data for a child's construction of grammar. I have only been able to analyze a few of these conversational conventions in Quiché, but they indicate how culture affects the course of language development. I expect to spend many more years analyzing the Quiché transcripts before I am completely satisfied that I understand the relationship between conversational style and the acquisition of language.

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