

**The complex exponence relations of tonal inflection
in San Juan Quiahije Eastern Chatino verbs**

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The Chatino languages [Oto-Manguean; Mexico], verb inflection depends on a rich system of tones. Superficially, this dependency appears to be highly complex, and to be sure, it is complex: Twelve of the fifteen morphological categories of melody are "exponed" by one toneless, linked, and floating tonemes. Additionally, the tone of a given verb form depends on the inflection-class membership of the lexeme that it realizes as well as on the particular combination of person, number, and aspect/mood that it expresses.

These dimensions of complexity are especially prominent in the variety of Chatino spoken in San Juan Quiahije, which is remarkable both for the centrality of its tone system for distinguishing a verb's inflected forms and for the large number of inflection classes into which its verbal lexemes are partitioned on a tonal basis. Yet this complexity is moderated by a kind of modularity in the organization of the system's tonal exponents. At the core of this system, which I will share in my talk, is an inventory of tone triplets which serve to express person/number distinctions and aspectual/modal distinctions.