

## Oto-Pamean

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In this chapter, I elaborate on a number of grammatical highlights that make Oto-Pamean languages interesting and sometimes unique from a typological perspective, while at the same time keeping track of those features from a larger Mesoamerican context.

Oto-Pamean languages constitute the North-most branch of Oto-Manguean. In contrast to the languages of other Oto-Manguean branches, mainly spoken in the Southern states of Oaxaca or Guerrero, Oto-Pamean languages are spoken in and around Central Mexico, and constitute an outlier within Oto-Manguean both geographically and structurally. According to well-established scholarly agreement, Oto-Pamean is now seen as split into the Pamean and the Otomian groups. Pamean includes Chichimec and three Pame languages (one of them extinguished). Otomian is further split into Atzinca (including two sister languages: Matlatzinca and Ocuiltec) and Otomi-Mazahua. The latter subgroup includes Mazahua on the one hand and Otomi, on the other. Otomi is a much diversified language family, spread over different states, which also happens to have the largest number of speakers within the branch.

Following the requested outline, I first concentrate on aspects of the phonology, singling out the complexities of the Pame languages and the large inventory of segments in Mazahua. I will also tackle tone. Being Oto-Manguean, Oto-Pamean languages also have tone, but in contrast to other branches of the phylum, the tonal inventory in Oto-Pamean is relatively simple, Pamean has two tones and Otomian three. However, this simplicity is compensated by a complex at times puzzling distribution. For the one hand, tone does not play a major role in keeping lexical contrasts, but it is nonetheless there. For the other, it plays a very different role in the makings of morphological patterns. In Otomian, the grammatical role of tone is limited, although inflectional formatives often contrast suprasegmentally, especially in Otomi-Mazahua. In Pamean, inflectional formatives are toneless and are subject to word level prosody, but instead, stems change tone in intricate ways in verbal paradigms.

I will then move into aspects of the morphology and the morphosyntax. The internal structure of words in Oto-Pamean (involving verbs and nouns) still reflects traces of an old model of word-formation consisting of a root plus a stem formative. Due to phonological erosion, the system has largely disintegrated, although it is still relatively well-preserved in Otomi-Mazahua where it plays an important role in the verbal lexicon, and in the morphotactic behaviour of verbal stems in relation to enclisis. Nouns are relatively simple in Otomian, but in Pamean the grammar of possession involves tonal inflection and genitive classifiers. In all the languages of the branch, verbal inflection posits the most challenges. In Pamean, especially Chichimec, verbs fall into at least six prefix classes while also displaying complex stem alternation patterns involving both segmental and suprasegmental changes. Otomian inflection still show traces of some old analytical structure consisting of auxiliaries plus non-finite forms of verbs, which suggests a very old state of affairs in Oto-Pamean, now vanished in Pamean. As the old auxiliaries lost phonological and semantic content, the old system disintegrated creating paradigms with a rather intricate internal structure. The Atzinca subgroup preserves the greatest number of conjugations, while in Mazahua and Otomi languages in contact with it have reduced the inflectional class distinctions to a minimum.

The syntax of Oto-Pamean languages is still a largely unexplored territory for most of the language groups, except for Otomi, where we have a longer descriptive tradition and thus know a little more. For this reason, in my chapter, I will elaborate on Otomi and I will be concentrating on the grammar of focus, and on the relation of subordination and juxtaposition, which is an issue of interest for Oto-Manguean studies.