For Barney and Ben
2 Text from Talk in Tzotzil

John Haviland

Tzotzil Literacy

There is a growing literature on the nature of written language and its relation to spoken forms. Part of the interest of this relationship derives from the con-

powerful influence at least on people’s conceptions of language, if not on their o-

evolved linguistic practices. The relation of spoken to written language is thus of

compelling linguistic interest. More widely, for scholars such as Goody (1977),

writing as an institution—as a “technology of the intellect”—transforms the
cognitive possibilities of social beings, with profound effects on the resulting

social forms. More locally, the habits and standards of literacy are often taken
to be the measure against which people’s intellectual achievements of capaci-
ties are measured: here the canons of writing, instilled through education, be-

come normative instruments of power—the power to define what counts not

merely as “correct,” but also as “sensible,” “logical,” “coherent,” or even

simply “reliable.” In this sense, a theory of written language becomes a potent
instrument of social policy and political maneuver.

If we are to assess the theories that underlie such instruments, we need to un-
derstand what the canons of writing are, and where they come from. Here
one ought to go beyond the literary traditions of the West, although little work
has so far been done with naive or spontaneous writers, whose written pro-
ductions emerge free from imposed standards, free from prevailing literary

traditions.

For their comments on earlier drafts, I would like to thank Dan Barnines, Sherry Heath,

Charles Ferguson, Joshua Laitz, Leonard de Leeuw, and John Haviland in addition to the editors

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When naive writers, newly literate and familiar with few canons of textual form or content, produce written versions of originally spoken material, how do they go about it? In recent years, a few Tzotzil speakers from the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, have begun to write. Some of these writers began their careers as bilingual teachers, promotores culturales (cultural promoters) for government agencies, or as “informants” for anthropologists or linguists; their incentive was, in the first instance, the standard peso-per-page salary that they could thereby command. Many Tzotzil writers have begun to produce stories, books, or pamphlets, modeled on similar products familiar elsewhere in Mexican society. Recently there have appeared Tzotzil plays, organized around writers more seriously in the tradition of the indigenous theater. Tzotzil travelers have begun to compose letters, telegrams, and even essays in their native tongue.

A few Tzotzil texts have also tried explicitly to render into written form material which starts its life as speech texts from talk. Writing dramatic dialogue, transcribing a speaker’s prayer in an ethnography, or inscribing a customary spoken greeting onto facsimile note require just such a rendering. A dual process is involved: first detecting the speech from its indexical surround, its natural home; and second repackage the written words in an appropriate textual form.

I will discuss two special sorts of such contextualized speech, one produced by a Tzotzil writer from a tape-recorded multiparty gossip session, and the other the conjoint product of a group of Indian literacy trainees who transcribed a staged conversation as part of a literacy workshop. In neither case were external

writers literate in English, but they transcribe texts in Mexican or Zapotec, and there are various styles and manner to the craft of writing. These features begin to appear although in a new form appropriate to the novelty of a written medium. Robert M. Logan (in press) considers the relations of style and voice that obtain between a spoken Tzotzil anthropological narrative and an written rendition by a trained Tzotzil writer. He observes many of the same sorts of changes I mention here and characterizes the style of the written text as “less personal” than that of the original spoken narrative.

3. See, for example, Acosta (1986); or Pérez López (1986a); also the growing production of Estela Jiménez, a Tzotzil-Tzeltal writer-cooperative, founded by Robert M. Logan. In his bilingual Tzotzil-Spanish monograph about the history and culture of the municipality of San Pedro Chamula, Estela makes a single conversion to marked forms: his conclusion is offered in the present poetic parallel of traditional oral speech (see Hasland 1987a).

4. Although this study took to field beyond the bounds of this paper, it is worth noting how the normal etiquette of speech greeting - both preserved and transformed, for example, a few weeks to his family, a husband, a twenty-two-year-old Zapotec, visiting in the United States in July 1987. The literal question which of standard greetings - in any “Are you there?”, “ja” or “hola” - was unclear, in this medium which translates from “have” to “there” which has an oblique and delayed reply.


6. See Hasland (1977) for more results of this exercise.
comfortable writing Tzotzil. After showing him a few of the sample transcripts I had produced, I gave him his own tape recorder and some of the tapes and asked him to write down selected parts by himself. As I had done in my own transcripts, Little Romin kept track of individual participants. I further urged him into writing down what at first seemed to him inessential repetition. Little Romin had to construct for himself some notion of (more or less) faithful or accurate rendering into writing of what he heard on tape, although he evidently also felt the pull of narrative coherence as he wrote.

Armed with a different standard of the detail appropriate to conversational transcripts, I have recently retyped some of the passages that Little Romin wrote on his own. The present study analyzes fragments from one of these gossip sessions, matched pairs of the two written renditions: my transcription of what I hear on the tape, and the version Little Romin decided to write down. The excerpt in question comes from one of the most hilarious sessions of all, which cropped the original participants with riotous, convulsive laughter long into a rainy Chiapas afternoon.

The original impetus for this study, though, came from a subsequent experience in Chiapas. As part of a Tzotzil literacy workshop, conducted together with Lourdes de León, I recorded a short conversation between two Tzotzil speakers from different municipios (townships) in Highland Chiapas. Both were alfarabucadores, adult literacy teacher-trainees, with basic but minimal Spanish literacy skills, who were learning for the first time to read and write in their native language. For the most part these Indians had never seen a written text in Tzotzil, nor had they considered the possibility of such an object.

I transcribed the recorded conversation according to my own standards and presented a written version of the transcript to the group for their comments, reactions, and revisions. Somewhat to my surprise, they evinced spontaneous criteria both for correcting, and subsequently for altering my original transcript. That is, they quickly understood that I had tried to get down on paper exactly what had been said, and by whom. Yet they showed no hesitation in pronouncing some parts of the resulting transcript inappropriate for a written text, prompting them to edit it in various ways.

The main empirical moral I should like to extract from these serendipitous materials is this: those speakers, whose experience with reading and writing in any language (let alone their own) is next to nil, nonetheless by their

7. See Atkinson and Herregraff (1984a, ch. vii) for recent iterations of the standard, which tradition did not exist in 1978 in the public domain.
8. The workshop in San Cristóbal de las Casas in October, 1985, was sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Educación para los Adultos (see Holland and de León 1985).

practice are able implicitly to indicate what a text should be like. Of what does their actual canons consist? Where does it come from?

**ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTS**

First let me explain the Tzotzil materials, excerpted in what follows. There are two "complete texts" involved. The first is based on the staged workshop conversation about the day when the volcano El Chichón erupted, at Easter 1982, snuffing out the sun and blanketing the entire Tzotzil area with a thick layer of volcanic ash. The emerging tale is one of fear and confusion, thoughts of the end of the world and mythological disaster and frantic attempts by Indians to return to their villages to die in their own land.

The second text is extracted from a gossip free-for-all about the exploits of a fictitious old woman and one Proyano, her former lover, with whom she had carried on a celebrated affair involving cornfield tryss and mischievous spring schoolchildren with slingshots.

Fragments from both conversations appear with my glossed transcription in one version and, in corresponding lines, the edited (native) rendition-resulting either from a collaborative editing session in the part of the lowery trained, or from a single naive Tzotzil writer's understanding of the task of transcription—on the other forms in boldface have been altered or eliminated in the native rendition. The text from which each line is drawn can be identified by the names: "Volcano" for the fictional story, "Lover" for the gossip session, and when necessary by a suffixed number: 1 denotes my detailed transcript, and 2 denotes the edited written version. Thus, for example, Lover2 refers to the anthropological informant Little Romin's rendition of the Proyano gossip session, while Volcano1 is my native transcript of the literacy workshop conversation.

**NAIVE WRITERS' WRITTEN RENDITIONS OF SPOKEN TZOTZIL**

It seems clear that the surgery performed on the original conversational materials in order to produce a native written text falls into discrete categories. Let me consider several varieties.

**PRAGMATIC NORMALIZATION**

The most obvious difference between the conversation and the resulting textual segment is the nature of the context in which each exists: the world, both social and material, within which it lives its pragmatic life. In the conversational
world, there are participants whose very faces, let alone voices, are present and self-evident. Thus, in purposes, personalities, and power. There is also a breathless, almost breathlessly, competitive, creativity about the conversational moment: speakers vie with each other for the floor, the word, and the moral, pushing topics in edge-wise and interjectors aside. In the written text, all of these features are peculiarly toned, or as I have put it, normalized.

Consider such pragmatically active words as nonreferential indices. The quotative particle la, for example, accompanies declarative sentences in Tzotzil to mark them as hearsay, not directly attested by the speaker. The particle is, for example, particularly appropriate to myths.9 The indexicality of such a word is particularly obvious when it appears in an interrogative sentence, as in line 4 of the volcano conversation.10

9. Michael Silverstein, in conversation, suggests the following formulations: the particle is in functional relations to other languages, which mark a proposition (appropriately modulated) as originating with or vouched for by someone other than the speaker, create a new frame, "a perspective that the unequivocal relation between some [implicational] author" and the addressee of the actual message. See also Givón (this volume), Hanks (this volume), and Harlan (1987a, 1987b). Since the actual speaker may or may not be included in the purview of this implicated other, he also may have a referential force in conversation, for instance:

10. See LaPiana (1977, 1984), who describes a generic Zinacantec storyteller as follows: "Quite deliberately he negates to add the_particle la which indicates that the story was only hearsay, for he wants you to know that he nowhere at the time of the creation."11

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unconcerned with Tzotzil translator's, left for the moment. Thus the speaker phrases it as follows: "I want him to know that I have been there."

He put shut la in the balls with a sibilant, they say, I have heard.

The native writer introduces a further external remove in his more colorful rephrasing:

12. Notice that the particle la does not survive at other points in the volcano text. For example at Volcano 90, the projector remains about his brother and another companion, whom from whom he was separated at the moment of the eruption. Note the compositional transparency of the phrase "me, destroyed, OR He-Come-4." Or how easy it might be to spot the ambiguities and errors of both participants and employed interpreters, who survive as characters in the textual narrative of Volcano 90.92
John B. Haviland

Lovers2

219 cc: keben pero ke s-a-sa ti bay s-nigan s-bek
dunn but what ICN-3:beek CONJ where ASE-swinging N3:eed y-tak e siik in
3:openu-Cl. sy-Pl. L A CL.

Dunn, but what is he up to flogging his bulls about like that, they said ha.

In the original line, the ICN records the fact, also represented explicitly by the framing verbs n3:is, they said and n3:is: ha I have heard, that the speaker is reporting what someone else has said about what happened: that the miscreant lover was shot in the testicles with a shotgun. In the embellished text, the speaker puts alleged words directly into the mouths of the little children who watched the lovers in the comfield, and the ha now suggests, “This is what they are said to have said (as they watched).”

At Lovers: 190, another ha is lost in the native writer's normalization of the conversation. Judging from my own transcript of the sequence, the particle was interactionally the prelude to a joking invitation to another interlocutor to elaborate on the tale. R is telling about the mischievous students who went out to recesso-ia, it is said—and later discovered the lovers in the comfield. R goes on to suggest that M, another man present in the gossip session, was himself one of those schoolchildren.

Lovers2

190: k3:al-ta s-bek-ta ti s-niik li jehavan-eik ha uma when ICP ASE-swim-PL. PREP recesso ART student-PL L A CL.

when the school kids went out for recess ha.

192 s-ch3:al-3:arvan ya5 ven jeh3:at-ti3: k'e uma je je M-study-PP perhaps paper ART be-Cl. same-exam-PP here CL.

Perhaps our companion here was in school then kami-ia.

This ha appears both to introduce a joking imputation (that M was one of the shotgun-wielding) and indirectly to invite M either to take up the story, or at least to defend himself from the charge. M in fact proceeds to do just that, starting off with a little laugh.

193: in je

194 k'a chu1: jehavan-an what way student-IA

How could I have been a student?

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By contrast, in the Tzotzil transcriber's version of the sequence, this little interactive scuffle, signaled by the evidential, is represented as an orderly exchange of narrative turns. M is no longer represented as defending himself but simply as continuing the story in a joking vein.

Lovers2

190: k3:al-ta s-bek-ta ti s-niik li jehavan-eik uma when ICP ASE-swim-PL. PREP recesso ART student-PL L A CL.

when the school kids got out for recess.

191 jehavan-3:arvan ya5 ven jeh3:al-3:i3: k'e uma just perhaps when 3:Ex-say-PP paper ART be-Cl. there CL.

Perhaps it was when our companion there still in school?


what where because-DESIRED? 3:Ex-study-PP PP-3:give BEN-PL L A CL.

Dunn, THAT one was the one who watched them doing it.

The textual rendition simply carries the story from out without the negotiated multiple dialogues and interactional aspects that characterized the gossip itself.

Other Evidential Particles and Discursive Coherence

Tzotzil makes frequent use of other evidential particles, two of which also play important roles in subsequent turns in conversation. Both orient the propositional content of an utterance to the preceding utterances, commenting in one way or another on a presumed body of information shared between interlocutors, often called “common ground” (Clark 1992). The two particles are yvun and a'Yo, both usually translated “indeed.” Neither particle easily be attached to a sentence in isolation, however, because both imply in relation to the current utterance an evidential commentary on a (real or presupposed) preceding utterance.

Thus, yvun, in utterance final position, suggests, “of course, indeed, what I am now saying is true, and you should have known it despite the fact that you appear to have forgotten it or to be ignoring it, perhaps deliberately.”15 Since yvun is tied to a prior utterance, when a written text stems out

15. A prosopographic and microanalytical study of this and the interparticles mentioned is necessary here. See Haviland (1987a) and Haviland (1994) for some allegorical appraisals, stressed “of course.” Etymologically, this particle derives from ICN-3:beik, i.e., “because” and yu un “perhaps” only in interrogative contexts this “is it perhaps Because [that]?”
the context of an argument or position, negotiated over several conversational turns, and collapses it onto a single, unitary, synthetic turn, the particle itself has to go. This happens to CN's overlapped remarks, at times Lovers1: 270-271, where he is arguing that the identity of the sling-shot-throwing misconception must have become public knowledge, since even be, a man from another hamlet, had heard the gossip.

Lovers1 270 cn: an: pre: te i visnaq ti te:shad en y'yan
why but there CP-appear PREP later CL YU-VAN
Well, in that case it did come out later after all.
271 k'u ti i visnaq to-ko-lo:ti:ak to i-k'qi: taj un
when CONJ CP-appear still PREP:3E-gossip-PL still CP-1E-hear that CL
since it came out later, they gossiped about her later and I heard about that.

But what starts out as an oppositional or contrastive maneuver in the gossip session becomes, in the native writer's rendition, simply a confirmatory remark, in the midst of seeming general agreement. Thus the particle yu'van disappears.

Lovers2 270 cn: an: pre: yu'van i visnaq so on k'u ti i-k'lo:ti:ak to
why but 3E-cause CP-appear still CL what CONJ CP-3E-gossip-PL still
i-k'qi: taj un CP-1E-hear that CL

Why then must have come out, if they gossiped about it and I heard that.

Sentence final a'ra' means "it's obvious," or "I already knew that." It suggests the speaker's knowing agreement with an immediately prior utterance; thus, where that utterance is absent in an edited text, the particle itself loses its place.

Moreover, when a conversation follows various currents at the same time, it may be necessary for a speaker to design a single utterance so as both to make his own point and to react to another's prior or current turn simultaneously, thus changing horses in a conversational midstream. Such unhinging seems to occur, for example, at Lovers1: 173. M remarks that Poylan went into his cornfield in the first place on a mission to guard his young crop against marauding dogs. However, M's speech is almost totally overflipped; he adds a'ra' apparently in agreement with what has just overlapped him (that Poylan had his love trysts in the corn field):

Text from Talk in Tzeltal 55

Lovers1 169 r; penu tu yut chobotik une
but PREP 3E-inside cornfield CL
But in the midst of the cornfields.
170 cn: ... nabi ti yul-oj un
like CONJ 3E-say-PF CL
the lake, they must have thought,
171 r: ta yut chobotik tu a'a
PREP 3E-inside cornfields LA A'A
Yes, they say right among the cornfields.
172 m: Yul-o: uj-col ... but ta
watch-dog 3E-see-PF ICP-go that
it looked as though that (dog) was going to check for dogs.
173 taj mil Poylan na a'a
that old Poylan perhaps A'A
that old Poylan was yeah--
174 r: ... li Poylan- e che'e yu aik
ART Poylan-CL then ICP-know-PF CL Poylan-ASP go 3E-watch
v-chob na to nub
3E-cornfield PREP mouth lake
Who knows if Poylan was going to look over his cornfield at the edge of the lake.

In Little Roman's written version, however, both of the first two lines are attributed to M, who now need only argue with the previous suggestion that something happened in the cornfield (hence an a'ra is preserved in Lovers2: 169), and whose talk is no longer bothered by overlapping interlocutors in the edited written text.

Lovers2 169 m: in the cornfields na a'a
he went to check for dogs, Poylan did
171 r: old Poylan went to look in his cornfield...

Another evidential particle, nun 'perhaps,' suggests propositional uncertainty and can thus be a device for conveying interactions (perhaps even modal) effect, functioning as an element in a conversational stratagem. Insomar
as the textual rendering of a conversational moment may represent a rearrangement of the interactional balance between conversants, or a manipulation of their moral stances, it may be useful to adjust such a marker of doubt in a written text.

Whereas, in the rapid flow of conversation, speakers must continually monitor each other's turns, so that they know what will count—in the moment—as agreement or disagreement, the world of the text seems to smooth out such interactional details. Consider the complex exchange, at Line 321-331, where the group session is at a point of transition: having described the old lady's misadventures with young Proyan, the group moves on to consider whether she has engaged in any other improprieties. Two participants, R and CA, seem gradually, and simultaneously, to remember the same story, and their fragmentary turns each prompt the other to continue. As her new sin emerges (sleeping with the people who used to take her home, drunk, after she performed a curing ceremony), the two speakers are in an intricate dance of doubt, agreement, and confirmation, marked by evidential particles that track the state of discourse play at each moment.

*earlier*

321 ca: ni sus pawal li: max korn yan li je-eb'ot Q 3E-do attempt ART more boy other ART 1E-companion-1PL

Has the tried any more of our youngest, our copperment? 323 r: an ja' mu j'na' why? NEG 1E-know Why. I just don't know.

324 an te ka: why? why exist LA CP-3E-

Why. No I did(1) 've heard not'—

R remembers having heard the particle li: at 324; that the old lady had also been in trouble on another occasion. But before he manages to say where and when, CA suggests (with a hedging term 'perhaps') that it involved occasions when she was being taken home:

325 ca: gna ja' no te yack'el-e but 3E-prep 3E-taking-CL

But perhaps that was when she was being taken ...
Lovers2

322. b. u soro lya dash? la ya'cimik'ac won u ur 
but exist ASP-a 3E-receive injection prep other MEI, CL 
but they say she has gotten injections from others.

325c. jjo yal yel'ace 
that ME-i-going-CL.

Tha's when they take her home.

327c. jjo yal yel'ace k'o k'a ko'da a'a 
that 3E-going when ICP-ASP-care A'A

Yes, that's when they take her home after she comes.

329c. jjo ko'da a'a 
/ ICP-ASP-care A'A

Yes, I've heard about that.

330 k'aj saurui u soro li jehseud yel'ace 
when returning PREP 3E-house ART patient it., seems-CL

When she comes back from the house of the patient, it seems.

331 k'o'chub u ithe a'a 
when ICP-goes PREP curling-CL

When she has gone to curl.

The first suggestion about the story (and the evidential hedge represented by jho is now put in the mouth of another speaker, M, in lines 322–3). The rest of the story emerges in a sequence of orderly exchanges between R and CA, with each turn echoing agreement (marked by a/a) with its predecessor. What starts out as disorderly multiple-party conversation in Lovers2 emerges as shared or dialogically animated narrative monologue in Lovers2.

The Imposition of a Standardized or Idealized Speech Context

It was clear to the Tzotzil writers that a written rendition, unlike the spoken conversation from which it derives, has been ripped from its physical setting. The immediate context of speech—the physical as well as the social environment—must recede in prominence. For example, the writers elected to omit a deictic reference, at Volcanol: 41, since no Chupícuaro written text.

15. Little Roma, the Tzotzil transcriber, has here realized the Tzotzil pronunciation of the Spanish learned inversion differently from my own hearing at Lovers2: 327 above.

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suggested that these naive writers began with no established canon of written text for Tzotzil. Of course, they were not without canons of discursive form. Indeed, a central point of interest in this (more or less natural) evolution of a written genre is its indebtedness to existing standards for speech. A prominent feature of much Tzotzil talk is its convergence on a dialogic format. Even when these are multiple conversations, speech tends towards an ideal dyad, with one central speaker and one designated interlocutor, or jox 'ling 'answerer'. (See Haviland 1985, 1990; Goffman 1974.) When speech departs from this ideal—in an angry scuffle before the magistrate, or a joking gossiper free-for-all—social arrangements often conspire to nudge or elbow participants back into orderly line. Indeed, skilled talkers count among their talents the ability to engineer an orderly exchange of turns, to suppress their own voices when they would hinder such exchange, and to trumpet them when such an exercise of verbal power will reinforce order. Such idealized diolocality represents a normalization in its own right, producing in speech a convergence of very different verbal forms and tasks, and often masking the creative, multivocal, social complexity of emerging discourse. It does not surprise us that these novel Tzotzil writers impose a written counterpart of spoken dialogue on their edited texts, thus reducing interactive disorder to a textured but single thread of talk.

In the literacy workshop, for example, writers routinely and consciously purged overlaps and repetitions to straighten out the dialogue. Several passages already cited illustrate the phenomenon. For another example, I transcribed Volcano: 67–70 as follows:

70a. k' in yax ta Jobel
71a. ku
72a. ku' yax-uy ta Jobel
here exist-1A PREP SC
I was here in San Cristobal,

I was here in San Cristobal.

The same passage appears in the writers' version as follows:

Volcano2
67. ku' he 1A-ku-uy exist where CP-2A-ki-PL
[Or did you go somewhere else?
68. ku' alalik ta ti-ey FCL, I
when come ART ash-CL
Well, I, uh . . .
69. ku' alalik ta ti-ey FCL, I
when come ART ash-CL
L'alalik ta ti-ey xalalik-e,
When the whose car\n70. ku' yax-uy ta Jobel-ey, here exist-1A PREP SC-CL
uh here exist-1A PREP SC-CL,
I was here in San Cristobal.

More interestingly, there is also a smoothing of interactional edges. Where in the original conversations there were frequent struggles not only for the floor but for what might be called rights of authorship (for example, rights to tell a particularly juicy bit, to deliver the punchline, or to be able to finish a story line), the edited versions sometimes reorganize the emerging story so as to make things come out more neatly.16

The recasting of authorship, for example, occurs at Volcano: 77, A is seemingly trying to preempt the narrative floor in preparation for launching his own story.

Volcano2
74. ku' xalalik ek ku' niyin ku-ey xalalik-e we have, uh come to give our flowers, as we say:
75. ku' xalalik ek ku' niyin ku-ey xalalik-e we have, uh come to give our flowers, as we say:
have we number one-CL xalalik-e
because that's the custom we have, as it were.
76. ku' xalalik ek ku' niyin ku-ey xalalik-e we have, uh come to give our flowers, as we say:
because, as we say, it was getting close to Holy Week.

16. Textual reorganitions of this kind, of course, are as much products of the different instructional context of the transcription as results of some emerging written canon. The writers share a common goal—setting in on a text—within an communicativity they were in competition for the floor, rights to tell the story.
In the edited version, his turn is reduced to pure questioning, so that X is represented as continuing, unmoistened, with his own narrative.

Yevon2

74. c. tal kaj 'sichimurtik.

We had to give up an offering of our flowers.

75  yu'm' ich kousmimururkutik.

Because that's our custom.

76  yu'm' nopol xai semuna sanata.

Since it was getting close to Holy Week.

78. a. mi yodal mi qalef-eel?'t?

Was it before (Easter), or already afterwards?

80. c. moq' yodal to 'on

No, it was still before.

A more radical sort of reorganization takes place in a fragment of the gossip session which we have already met.

Lovers2

171 r. ta ya'i chebik la a'a

PREP 3E-inside cornfields LA A'A

Yes, they say right among the corn plants.

11. Such changes as the substitution of Tenzil as for the Spanish proper reflect a conscious decision on the part of the literacy trainees, in which I assume a "Forms, Style, and Register Issues," to purge their written text of Spanish loans in favor of more obvious native equivalences.
versions. Conversely, some transition points in the narrative are made cleaner, disguising the fact that considerable efforts were required to achieve them in the conversational moment.

Related to such interactional smoothing is the ironing out in the edited text of irrelevancies in the participant structure underlying the conversation, including what can be described as relations of identity, dominance, subordination, and deference. In speech, participants negotiate rights to telling the story, and the authority to tell it; they also compete as appropriate hearers or interlocutors; and they may explicitly and implicitly portray their relation and moral stance to the narrative, to its protagonists, and to the other participants in the speech event. Many such issues of "footing" (Goffman 1979) are blunted or eliminated in the naive writers' texts.

Consider, for example, the inappropriate "self-referential honorifics" occurring at one point in the gossip session when a speaker refers to the old lady being discussed as just 'Peta' 'our mother Petrosa.' This first-person plural inclusive possessive form is appropriate to, among others, familiar nonrelatives (where it contrasts with, e.g., me 'me, your' P' appropriate to junior kin-men, of ou'teik Peta' 'mother P' [without the first-person possessive prefix j-] appropriate to a more distant acquaintance). Under the circumstances, such implicit claims to relationship are both inappropriate and somewhat ludicrous (since the whole point of the story is to ridicule the old lady), and in the edited written version the reference is altered to ṭaŋ mwe 'Peta' 'that old lady P.' implying no specific relationship with any of the speakers.

In general, facets of the relationships between interlocutors, patently available and interactationally exploitable if not necessarily exploited in the discursive event, are submerged in the decentered texts I have been presenting. They are only available to be read out behind the pragmatic bleaching and normalization. In the volcano conversation, for example, the fact that one of the narrators is a Zinacantec, whose Tzotzil dialect is also spoken by the workshop leader, gives his words a certain subtle prestige, a slight advantage over the variant of the other narrator, whose Chamele dialect is different. The only residue of this imbalance in the resulting text appears in potentially ambiguous phonological and morphological choices, which during editing were routinely resolved in favor of the dominant Zinacantec forms. I will return below to the evolution of a written standard from such micropractices.

**Processing Issues**

Not surprisingly, these naïve Tzotzil writers discovered that speakers "make mistakes" that must not be slavishly reproduced in written texts. With neither

**Hesitations, False Starts, and Other Dysfluencies**

In the volcano transcript, most of the editing effort was devoted to eliminating hesitations, false starts, and other signs that the original conversationalists were nervous and uncertain in their talk. Pause markers of all kinds, yics, jics, bics, loans from Spanish, and uks, in Tzotzil were routinely omitted from both texts. Similarly, certain repetitive expressions were systematically pruned, particularly statements ("yes we say," a rough Tzotzil equivalent of the ubiquitous American English "you know". Speaker errors and hesitations in the naive writers' texts were smoothed. The writers confidently spliced—and purged—production errors, some involving mistaken intuitions, some involving speaker uncertainty (as, for example, at Volcano 68, in a passage we have already seen), others involving awkward expressions which resulted from mislancing an utterance, which thus required reformulation.

On the other hand, in the writer version of the gossip session, the transcriber decided to leave intact some speech tics characteristic of several of the participants, much as a novelist will endorse his characters with verbal signature. CN, a well-known fast-talker, retains his habitual form of verbalism—"he ends his phrases with a uke (literally "also then")—even in places where on the original tape he does not appear to use the words. The transcriber puts into this man's mouth words that make him sound like himself. Thus, for example, the following set of lines in Lovers 1 is reduced to a single, stereotyped line in Lovers 2.

**Lovers 1**

287 cn: p-ke
288 bau's šemp' ul k-šešm i k-ši' on neal-wełale ART 1E-brother CP-ME-brother then "What a real asshole my brother is!" is what I heard.

289 zuchi li mde Pučmatk oš-šay ART old Pučmat old man Pučmat say.

**Lovers 2**

288 cn: pempey tajmek h k-ši' on mde Pučmatk uk uke

"My brother is a real asshole," says old Pučmat, too.

18. The introstress bau's 'really' is also replaced, in Lovers 2, with another introstress, tajmek 'very'.
It is unsurprising that the naive writers should apparently have felt free to edit the recorded utterances according to either of standards of grammaticality and "intelligence," or to judgments about register and appropriate levels of formality. They altered everything from lexical items to verbal inflections, from auxiliary verbs to particles showing intercalary linkages. The literate trainees even sought an orthographic solution to an intonational problem, introducing commas to help clarify an otherwise ambiguous parsing.

There is obviously a special problem for the naive writers. We do not face in the written rendition of what started as a spoken conversation: what do to with uninterpretable material or uncertain utterances. In the Volcano conversation, the writers and I jointly decided on a transcription of the original, resolving questions of interpretation by committee, until we had a text from which we could proceed. In the Lovers transcript, the writer was on his own, and occasionally what he wrote seems to result from embellishment and overinterpretation of material on the original tape that is difficult to hear, overlapped, or plainly uninterpretable. There are numerous revealing instances in the text. For example, at Lovers 226: 226: "Ay" (the old fellow, probably, ha ha ha."

The transcription reads as a different joke.

Lovers 226: "Ay" the old fellow, probably, ha ha ha.

The old fellow didn't get to play around very long.

I have already mentioned such embellishment and reorientation in the text of another joke, at Lovers 219-222.

19. The tape recordings I have of the editing session for the Choctaw text contain such evaluative expressions as "chop/d," and, you said, "it's not serve," and a fly, you can't understand it clearly, applied to sentences that need reformulation.

20. I have not, since beginning this investigation, taken the obvious step of listening again to the original tape recoding with the original transcript—now a distinguished ex-President and powerful political figure in the PARIDE Revolucionario Institucional—so I must use my interpretation. There, however, I checked my own transcription with other注释，
so as not to undermine the coming comic sequence in which the lovers are attacked from behind with slingshot pellets, bringing the cornfield tryst to an abrupt and painful end. Perhaps the author does not want his readers—just as, in the original telling he did not want his audience—to see the joke coming before he is ready to deliver it; or perhaps the writer, like the teller, wants the right—and the space—to deliver the punchline himself. Compare the following transcribed fragment of a passage we have met before with the subsequent written formulation by Little Romin.

_Lovers1_

210 r: s-lok'-oj la li s-vex une 3E-remove-PF LA ART 3E-pants CL
They say he had taken off his pants.

211 x-vinaj li s-bek' y-at ta s-pat une ASP-appear ART 3E-seed 3E-penis PREP 3E-back CL
His balls were visible from behind.

212 m: ja ja ja
213 r: y-a'k'-be ech'el 3E-give-BEN away
He was giving it to her (facing away from them).

214 all: ja ja JAA JAA
215 ca: i-k-a'i ti ji-CP 1E-hear CONJ
What I heard was that . . .

216 all: (laughter)
217 ca: y-iich' la-
3E-receive LA
That apparently he got it . . .

218 all: (laughter)
219 ca: y-iich' ya uli' li s-bek' y-at-e xi-ik i-k-a'i 3E-receive LA slingshot ART 3E-seed 3E-penis say-PL CP 1E-hear
that apparently he got hit by the slingshot right on the balls, they say, I've heard.

220 all: (laughter)

_Lovers2_

211 x-vinaj li s-bek' y-at ta s-pat une ASP-appear ART 3E-seed 3E-penis PREP 3E-back CL
His balls were visible from behind.

213 i-y-a'k'-be la ech'el un CP 3E-give-BEN LA away CL
He was giving it to her (facing away from them), it's said.

219 ca: kabron pero k'u tz-sa' ti buy x-jipjon s-bek' damn but what ASP-flinging 3E-seed y-at-e xi-ik la un 3E-penis-CL say-PL LA CL.
Damn, but what is he up to flinging his balls about like that, they said, supposedly.

220 x: aj aj aj aj
221 d: pero batz'i x-mut'lij xa j-na' un but really ASP-jerking/shrinking already 1E-know CL
But he must have been just about to ejaculate, I bet.

Little Romin, in his own transcription, renders the same passage as follows:

Little Romin eliminates CA's upstaging mention of the slingshot, at line 219, and presents the story—which, incidentally, he was telling (he appears as R in the transcript)—in his own way.

The Tzotzil writers seem to have invented their own version of an inherently propositional view of language, in which superficially different formulations can be reduced to a common shared referential content. The problem is particularly pressing in the task they faced: to reduce a multi-party conversation with considerable overlap and interaction to a coherent linear text. The process of writing seems to allow a pragmatic restructuring, tending towards an ultimately monologic form, where propositional content takes precedence over the indexical microcosm of the parent interaction, and where interactive richness is pruned in favor of monologic narrative.
Some textual reformulations are offered in the guise of mere corrections. During the editing session one speaker, X, offered an improved version of "what he meant to say" at Volcano 46.22 The original line:

Volcano1
k'o-yi'ik yu'um wu'ok nos wu-se
3E-think IRREAL 3E-cause water (IRREAL only: ASP-come CL)
I thought that only rain was coming.
is re-rendered as

Volcano2
ko'o'til x-e'li'ik wu' 7ad
meaning: 3E-with water CPCome
It was the same as if it were about to rain.

The reformulation, according to X, captured his intended meaning better than what he actually heard himself say on the tape.

At a higher level, where, because of interruptions or generalized hilarity, episodes in the original interaction are unable to reach a satisfactory narrative conclusion, the writers occasionally introduce order from without. For example, Little Romain frames the long-shot sequence with an initial "paragraph marker" 7au'um (where the original text has none), and he closes the scene in proper fashion with a clause-final clitic un at line 205.

Lovers2
50. r. wa'um
where CL
so listen
201 li johnson-istik 7ate
the schoolchildren...
202 ta x-bar'-ik un
ICP ASP-go PL CP CLI
they went
203 tu wu'ok mat tu x-lo'-ik jidatu ta rekon wu
ICP 3E-see PL bird ICP ASP-see PL 1-moment:PREP recat CL
they hurried birds when they got out for a moment of recess.

22. In the last line of "...one can't understand what it leads to," the critic X launched against his own recorded utterance.

The written text thus imposes an episodic structure which the original conversation can be inferred only from the interaction and not from the actual language.

**FORM, STYLE, AND REGISTER ISSUES**

Finally, differences between the original conversational performances and the written renditions reflect these Tzotzil writers' decisions about which varieties of language to reproduce in the texts they are creating. (and a talent for ridiculing their neighbor's dialects, the Tzotzil writers were enthusiastic about representing not only their own speech but also that of others, in readable form. The literacy teachers, for example, welcomed an alphabet in which each speaker would write as he or she spoke. The resulting dialogue was imitated with apparent criteria of dialect purity, so that sometimes speakers' written words were adjusted to coincide with their own appropriate dialects, even when the spoken words were, by such a criteria, "in error.""

Moreover, the literacy trainees displayed a developed consciousness about Tzotzil as a dominant language, and (unsurprisingly to a certain extent, as a result of our urgings) began a campaign to purify Spanish from their Tzotzil texts. Throughout the editing process, with increasing enthusiasm the writers excised Spanish loans, including those that are a routine part of ordinary speech, and substituted the nearest and (often inexplicably) used Tzotzil equivalents. Words like porque "because", como "like", and even pero "but", fell aways before Tzotzil paraphrases, or were simply omitted when the writers found them redundant in the context of an overall Tzotzil construction. Even the gloss group created its own special euphemisms. The language of "injections" evolved during the gloss sessions, from an apparently creative initial use to a generalized group in-joke. The expression was incorporated into a basic pattern of every gloss session, and was used in the utterances of every speaker, regardless of whether or not he had been exposed to it before.

23. 'Laughing-in-protests' marks a Chamula's speech as a是个 kind of writing by another Chamula is proof of the relevance to Tzotzil speakers that he has picked up in the course of his working life.
willy-nilly into the written text, and, duly, into the speech of at least a small
group of Zinacantec hamlet-masses—including Little Romin himself, who still
uses it twenty-five years later in joking conversation.24

**The Pragmatic Normalization of the Written Text**

Between a conversational moment and representations of entextualized telos,
the balance between what Silverstein (1976) called relatively presupposing and
relatively creative (entailing) indexicals in speech must necessarily shift. Partly
this is a sequential spilling out of indexical gives in the texts I have presented.
Participants no longer present themselves as human faces, with biographies and
competing interests, but only as disembodied words. There is no longer a ne-
gotiable universe of discourse, but instead a textually established corpus of
common knowledge, whose mutuality is not between interlocutors but between
text-antecedent and reader. The channel eliminates in obvious but occasionally
profound ways the context of situation of some originary text. Any text result-

ing from writing eliminates the warrant of the sun that the original conversations
could point to descriptively. It erases the tension between tellers, the scramble for
punchlines, and the secret animosities between rivals for the floor thinly
masks behind mildly competitive words, that were all too obvious to us gos-
sippers. The remnants of such micropolitics are buried behind the process of
entextualization itself. Little Romin, taking authorial control of the gossip
text, modulates his own words—and his narrative authority—vaguely to center stage.
The literary trainees endow the adopted Tzotoll dialect of the anthropologist
leader with a passive prestige in the textual sediment, even as the anthropolo-
gist himself is rendered descriptively invisible. And so on.

I have spoken about the pragmatic normalization involved when a text is
extracted from a discursive center—say, a multiparty gossip session—and re-
cast unto-simpler, or at least transformed, indexical terrain: a linear narrative,
or a semantic dialogue with simulated multiple voices presented in a mono-
logic paragmatic medium. Perhaps writing as mere technology is responsible for
much of the normalization I have described. Goody argues that the inven-

tion of writing and its institutional-spread trigger a series of transformations of
mind at the level of society as a whole. Much of the effect he attributes almost
mechanically to the tangible product of writing—the manipulable, examin-
able, physical text-artifact itself:

> When an utterance is put in writing it can be inspected in much
greater detail, as in posts as well as in its writing, backwards as well
> as forwards, out of context as well as in its writing, in whole words,
> it can be subjected to a quite different type of scrutiny and criticism
> than is possible with purely verbal communication. Speech is no
> longer tied to an ‘occasion’; it becomes timeless. Nor is it attached
to a person; on paper it becomes more abstract, more impersonal-
ized. (1977: 44)

The pragmatic reduction of spoken words in the texts produced by native
Tzotoll writers thus exemplifies minuscule preliminary steps down Goody’s
longer road to what is claimed to be a distinctive, “modem” cognition.
In this view, literary emancipates its beneficiaries from the contingency
of the indexical surround, including personae and activities:

> Words assume a different relationship to action and to object when
> they are on paper than when they are spoken. They are no longer
> bound adjectively with ‘reality’; the written word becomes a sepa-
> rate ‘thing’, abstracted to some extent from the flow of speech,
> shedding its close entailment with action, with power over matter.
> (Goody 1977: 46)

However, part of the warrant for pragmatic normalization in these written
texts derives from something deeper than technology. I have suggested, for
example, that narrative may be by its nature exhibit a strong decenetrality, so
that strong that alternate texts and voices are drowned out in the process of creating
coherence around a monologic story line. Bauman argues that

> Events are not the external raw materials out of which narratives
> are constructed, but rather the reverse: Events are obstacles from
> narrative. It is the structures of signification in narrative that give
> coherence to events in our understanding. (Bauman 1986: 5)

Events are thus segments of some entextualized narrative.

Pragmatic normalization in moving to text from talk (evident in the rela-
tion that a narrative conversation has to its text-antecedent representation as
accomplished by writers or transcribers), thus has an analog in what we might

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24. Here Brenchley has pointed out, in discussion, that the process of normalization can be
lead in a later point, to midrash, the intercorporation into speech of something other than
its text. See also Rivard and de La Cote (1988), and Morison (1985: 201 ff.). Here we use a simple
example of the more global process the gossip group develops its own highly context-bound
texts. These are not transfer onto a written page. At the same time, through the facial
process of decanting, the writer himself generates his usage by incorporating such phrases,
now with echoes of their dialogic origins, into less context-bound speech.

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call referential normaliziation, the process by which a narrative core is extracted overlaid on a sequence of events, a feat engineered and accomplished by a storyteller and her or his interlocutors.

There is a further ambiguity. The classificatory imperative of language itself means that all utterances, spoken or written, convey "raw" phenomena—whatever these may be—into the discrete units of experience, specific "narratives" now cast into linguistic chunks whose size and shape depend on grammatical and morpho-logical categories of the language in question, "fashioned" in speech. The agent of this ubiquitous process are, of course, speakers (i.e., actors) in general. There is thus (minimally) a three-step process of normalization, illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Moving from talk to text is thus a single moment in a longer, ubiquitous process of shearing away context to permit representation, the target of our joint metaphors of "decentering" and "enternalization." The process requires filtering of the various indexical phenomena that define narratives and incorporating them into a single voice into the text-artifact. Any narrative that results is more completely and autonomously determined—decentered or enternalized, or, perhaps, "rewritten" in the text-artifact itself—than it was in the interaction from which it spring.

There are few further important matters which have lurked in the background, and which I will simply note in closing. The first is the ethnographic question about Tzeitel's "genres": narratives, conversations, "gossip," or "jokes." How do such models together with local canons of the "interaction order" (Goffman 1981) interrelate with the users of phenomena I have reported?23 Zinacantecos are, I think, less interested in, say, the precise timing of overlap or the mechanics of repair than in what makes a good story, or how mentioned that talk, in Tzeitel's 'as' 'talk, conversation,' via the derived verb victim, implicitly, Zinacantecos, like everyone else know that only certain sorts worthy; not all histograms can be added. By extension, then, one premise that only a few micro- (aspect(s) of) settings can be written, or in the absence of the ethnographer's promptings would be worth writing.

An important aspect of apparent Tzeitel theory about narrative becomes evident in Zinacantec legal discourse. In the courtroom before a Tzeitel magistrate, often centers less on the narrative evidence of a witness's account, that is, inadvertently manage the story, blurring out an incoherence. The times is here seen to involve a referential thread together with the precise writers will need to explore the connections between locally constructed genres of power, authorship, and authority. On the one hand, power is mediated "truth," while a Zeinacantec magistrate searches for a "valid account," re-agreement or at least mutual acquiescence between antagonists. We are again faced with the trick of producing text from discourse has a more immediate products I have surveyed here were in various ways replacing my handwritten notes. What did they want from me? What did they think I wanted from them? Both the literary trainers hoping for a relatively written, and Little Ronon transcribing my group tape at least two of the two texts of For Tzeitel—en referred to my notes on the transcript, exemplified in
from Indian writer funded by development grants to mini-bus driver hoping for a driver's license, or would-be migrant worker looking for travel papers—literacy pays. Perhaps more than pragmatics and in ways to be explored, pesos motivate the production of test from talk.

I have noted that the power of narrative itself may have compelling effects: the stories of Pryylan and the old lady, or the volcanic eruption, may by their very nature warrant decentering/defamiliarizing, thereby producing the illusion of coherence, integrated texts that can stand clear of the circumstances of their production. We engage in this sort of sleight of hand all the time, often perhaps unwittingly. In doing ethnography, I have been recorded the sort of narratives that hereof instance Tzotziles can be induced to engage in similar conjuring tricks.

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